

CHAT

COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY AGING TRANSITIONS

Community ASSESSMENT

————— FOR THE —————

TOWN of BROOKFIELD

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH



PUBLISHED: OCT 2022

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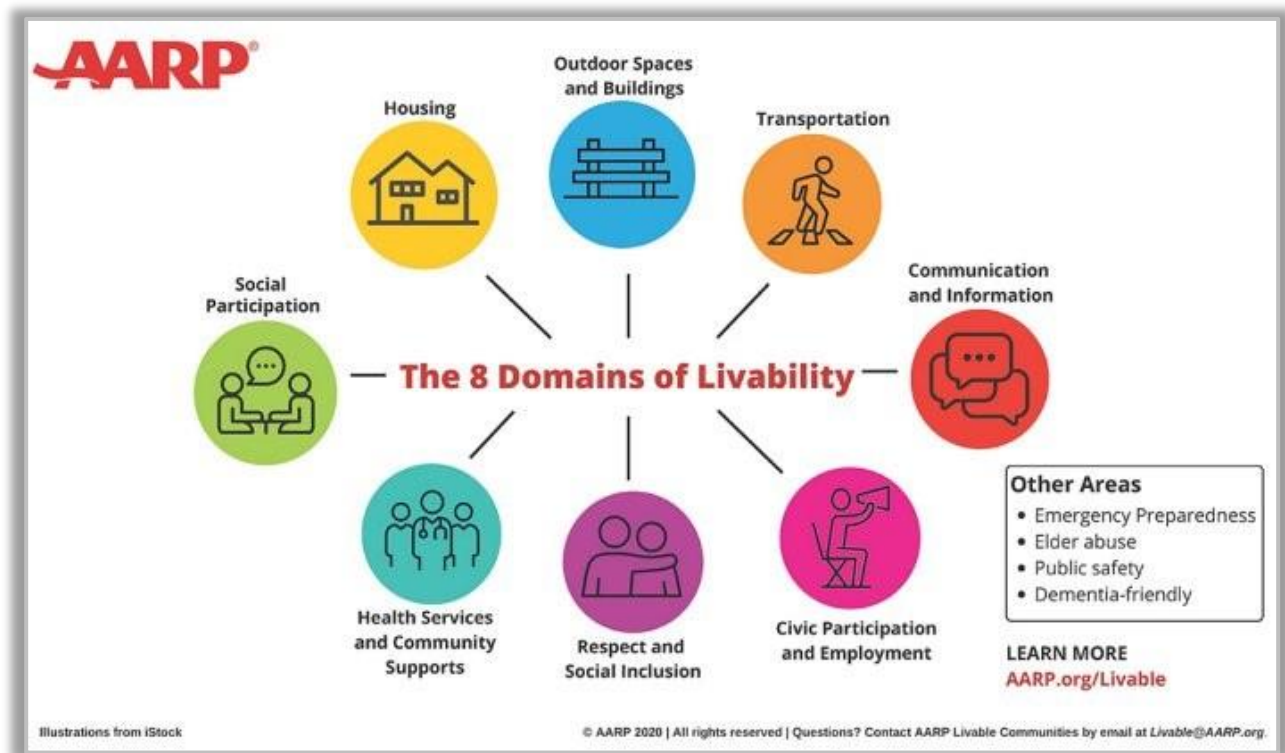
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

[Communities for Healthy Aging Transitions \(CHAT\)](#), a regional project, examined age-friendliness in Strafford County, as well as Brookfield, Wakefield, Newmarket, Nottingham and Northwood in Carroll and Rockingham counties, respectively. The project was funded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and conducted in partnership with Greater Seacoast Community Health (GSCH)'s Strafford County Public Health Network (SCPHN) program.

The project mission was to engage our communities looking at and promoting diverse, equitable, inclusive, livable environments where people can grow and thrive, regardless of age.

To achieve this mission, SRPC and partners at SCPHN designed engagement activities to understand strengths and opportunities in each community, which were framed within [AARP's eight domains of livability](#) from its [Livable Communities program](#): Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Housing, Transportation, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Health Services and Community Support.

The qualitative and quantitative information presented in this Community Assessment was also framed within the eight domains of livability.



CHAT OUTREACH PROCESS

SRPC and partners at SCPHN enacted a modified outreach process due to the pandemic. Most of the outreach for the CHAT project was conducted via online channels as described below.

COMMUNITY ZOOM FORUMS

Residents from across the region were invited to participate in a series of seven municipal or subregional community Zoom forums between February and June 2021. SRPC and SCPHN held a community Zoom Forum for the Town in addition to the surrounding communities of Farmington, Middleton, Milton, New Durham and Wakefield on April 7, 2021. These communities were invited to the same forum given the geographic connection through the Explore Moose Mountains grassroots tourism initiative.

SURVEY

Launched in early 2021, the CHAT online survey was distributed through multiple regional outlets, through social media, and shared with those who participated at the community Zoom forums. Two Brookfield residents responded to the survey. This information was supplemented with data from a survey sent to Explore Moose Mountain area businesses.

POSTCARD ART ACTIVITY

With the pandemic, SRPC and GSCH brainstormed creative ways to engage people and give them a different outlet for expressing themselves. SRPC staff designed and printed postcards that prompted individuals to draw (paint, collage, etc.) or write what it means to age as you play, live or work in each community. These were distributed at various Covid-19 vaccine clinics and a variety of other locations.

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

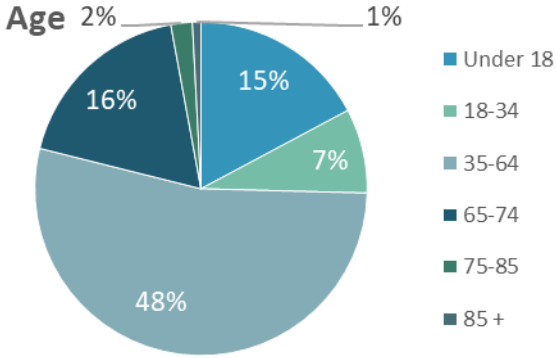
The above outreach strategies were supplemented with community draft assessment reviews by community representatives. Draft review and additional comments were provided by Marshall Goldberg, SRPC Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) member and the Town's Select Board.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Brookfield, formerly part of Middleton, was successfully incorporated as its own town in late 1794 drawing the boundary between the twotowns through the Moose Mountains. Brookfield took on a small agricultural economy and has remained a rural community since. This rural character is beloved by the Town's 735 residents. Brookfield is very much forested and boasts ample conservation land for residents to enjoy the natural beauty of the Town. The Town shares many services with nearby Wakefield to support residents.

The outreach process, combined with supplementary data analysis, was used to outline the many ways in which Brookfield provides an inclusive, welcoming, supportive, and healthy environment for people of all ages, as well as opportunities for improvement. The findings are presented below in relation to each of the eight AARP domains of livability.

Total Population	735
Median Age	46.8
Total Housing Units	303
Number of Jobs in Town	12
Life expectancy	83



Sex



LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #1 - OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

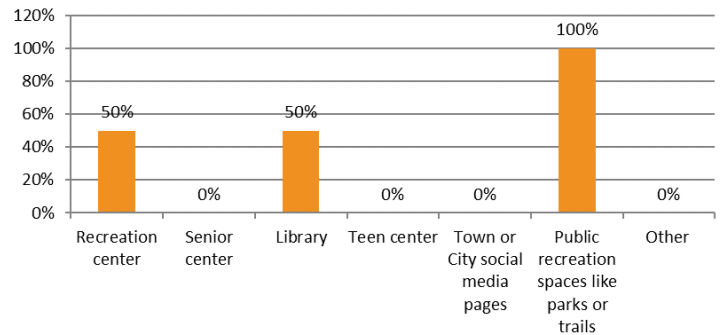
“People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.”ⁱ

DATA

Recreation Site Type	Number of Sites
Beach	0
Boating Access	0
Community Garden	0
Disc Golf Course	1
Dog Park	0
Fishing Access	0
Golf Course	0
Gym	0
Open Space and Trails	3
Park	0
Playground	0
Pool	0
Rail Trail	1
Skatepark	0
Skating Rink	0
Sledding Hill	0
Sports Fields and Courts	0
Total	5

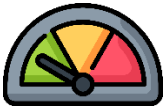
Community Resources	Number of Sites
Places of Worship	0
Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures	1
Libraries	0
Medical and Health Care Facilities	0
Governmental Services	1
Non-Governmental Services	0
Fire and Police Stations	0
Schools	0
Total	2

Do you use any of these public spaces in your town?



24% of land in Brookfield is conserved.

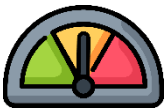




EXISTING CONDITIONS

Rural community character – Residents appreciate the rural community character of Brookfield, with almost a quarter of its land conserved (24%).

- **Plentiful natural beauty and resources** – The Town’s natural resources (Kingswood Lake), outdoor recreation spaces (Ellis Hatch Wildlife Management Area), and many waterways like Pike Brook are important assets to the Town.
- **Recreation spaces** – Residents feel like there are ample places to recreate in town like the Cotton Valley Rail Trail.
- **Moose Mountains Recreation Area** – The Moose Mountains Recreation Area is a great space for the community to enjoy. This large, scenic recreation area on Moose Mountain open for hiking, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, picnicking, yard games, disc golf and more!



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Increased recreational opportunities and access to Kingswood Lake** – In its master plan the town set a goal to, “Provide residents with a reasonable level of recreational services and facilities in a manner that is consistent with the Town’s small population and limited tax base; such as providing Town access to Kingswood Lake.”ⁱⁱ

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #2 - TRANSPORTATION

“Driving shouldn’t be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit nondrivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from the large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to the small (taxis, shuttles or ride share services).”ⁱⁱⁱ

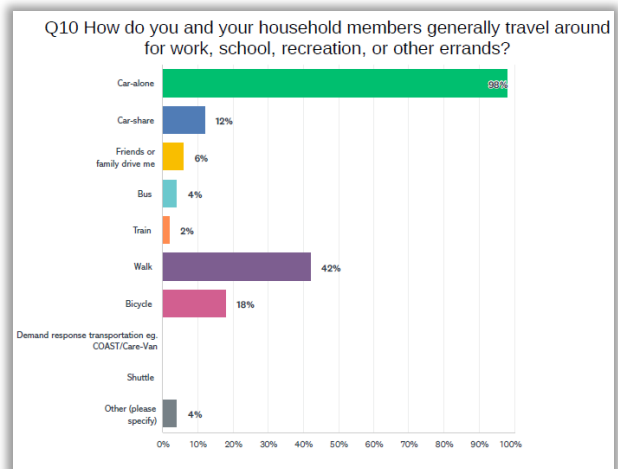
DATA

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

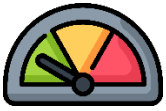


LTS Rating	LTS Rating Description	Population Class
LTS 1	Lowest stress ; suitable for all riders	Kids and Beginners
LTS 2	Lower stress ; suitable for adults with some experience	Willing but Wary Riders
LTS 3	Moderate stress ; suitable for those who ride regularly	Comfortably Confident Riders
LTS 4	High stress ; suitable for experienced riders with tolerance to high speeds and traffic	Exposure-Experienced Riders
LTS 5	Bicycles prohibited	

Source: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress. Year: 2019. Granularity: SRPC.

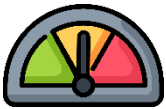


COAST Routes (including ADA On-Demand Transit)	0
Wildcat Routes	0
Demand Response Transit	Yes



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Residents rely on personal vehicles** – Considering that Brookfield is a rural town with a population of 735, most residents require a vehicle for commuting, errands, and leisure. Brookfield is not served by public transit or demand response and Brookfield’s small population does not justify investment in public transportation.
- **Community Rides** – “The Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT) offers curb-to-curb non-emergency medical transportation called Community Rides. Community Rides is open to older adults (60+) or individuals with a qualifying disability who live within ACT's 38-town service area, which includes Farmington. Trips are provided only to destinations within the 38-town service area as well. Community Rides is meant to serve as a "provider of last resort" for people who aren't eligible for other services such as COAST ADA Paratransit, Portsmouth Senior Transportation, or Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels Senior Shuttle.”^{iv}



OPPORTUNITIES

Ridesharing in response to an aging population – There is concern from residents about transportation options for community members as they age. As rideshare services, like Uber, or public transit aren’t the most realistic option for Brookfield, the town could consider other options. Some alternatives could include coordinating a volunteer rideshare program, or promoting carpool matching on the CommuteSmart NH Mobile and Web App. This would be in line with the Town’s Master plan goal of encouraging “a transportation system that will facilitate the safe movement of people, goods, and services.”^v

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #3 – HOUSING

“AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so is possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages.”^{vi}

DATA

Housing Stock

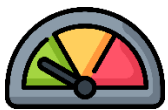
■ Single family ■ Multi-family ■ Mobile Home



Own vs Rent



303 total housing units in Brookfield.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Ample housing stock relative to population** – The Town has ample housing stock for its 735 residents. There are ~587 units in town, 97% of which are single family units, 3% are mobile homes, and 1% are multi-family.



OPPORTUNITIES

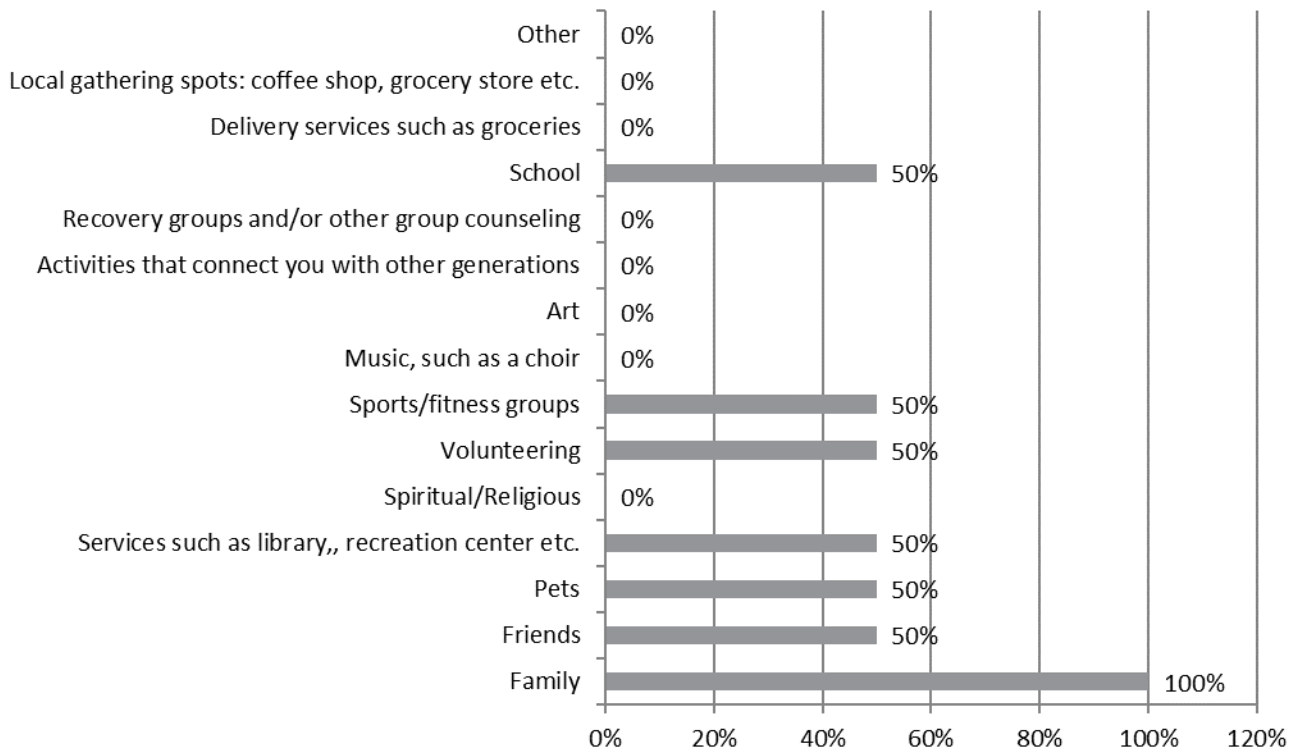
- **Increased, balanced housing stock to respond to demand** – In its master plan the town looks to, “Allow for modest growth in its housing stock and meet its fair share of the regional affordable housing need, in a manner compatible with the Town’s rural character.”^{vii}
- **Affordable housing** – Resident’s advocate for a variety of pricing options in the housing market. As Brookfield is a smaller town, options like accessory dwelling units and tiny homes could be considered as a means to providing affordable choices.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #4 – SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

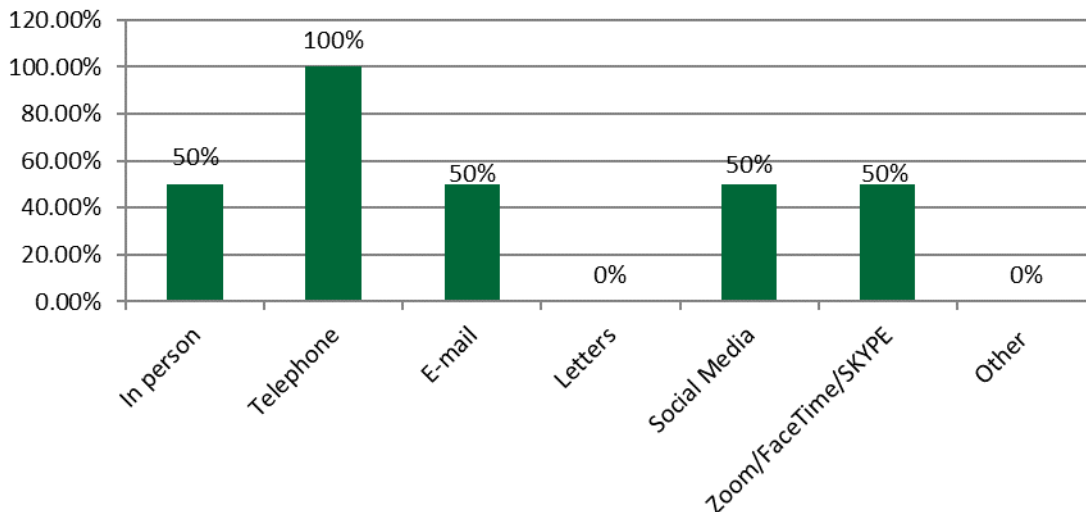
“Regardless of a person’s age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.”^{viii}

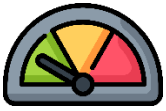
DATA

What are your main social interactions? Check all that apply



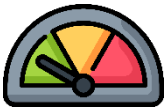
How do you most commonly socialize? Check all that apply.





EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Recreational programming** – As a shared service with Wakefield, Brookfield has access to programming through Wakefield’s recreation department that holds events like the Christmas Tree Lighting, Breakfast with Santa, the Ice Fishing Derby, and trips for seniors and others interested like holiday shopping trips to Portland.
- **Gafney Library** – As a shared service with Wakefield, residents of Brookfield can use resources and participate in programming put on by the Gafney Library like the “Gafney Knit Wits” knitting group.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Using existing resources to advertise community events** – The town could partner with the Gafney Library to utilize its calendar to advertise important events and meetings; this way information could be shared with senior centers, and other entities. The Greater Wakefield Resource Center could also be a beneficial resource in getting information to seniors.
- **Partner with Explore Moose Mountains to share and host events** – The town could partner with the Explore Moose Mountains grassroots tourism initiative to hold events in town at spaces like Tumbledown Farm. Some of these could be geared towards the senior population.

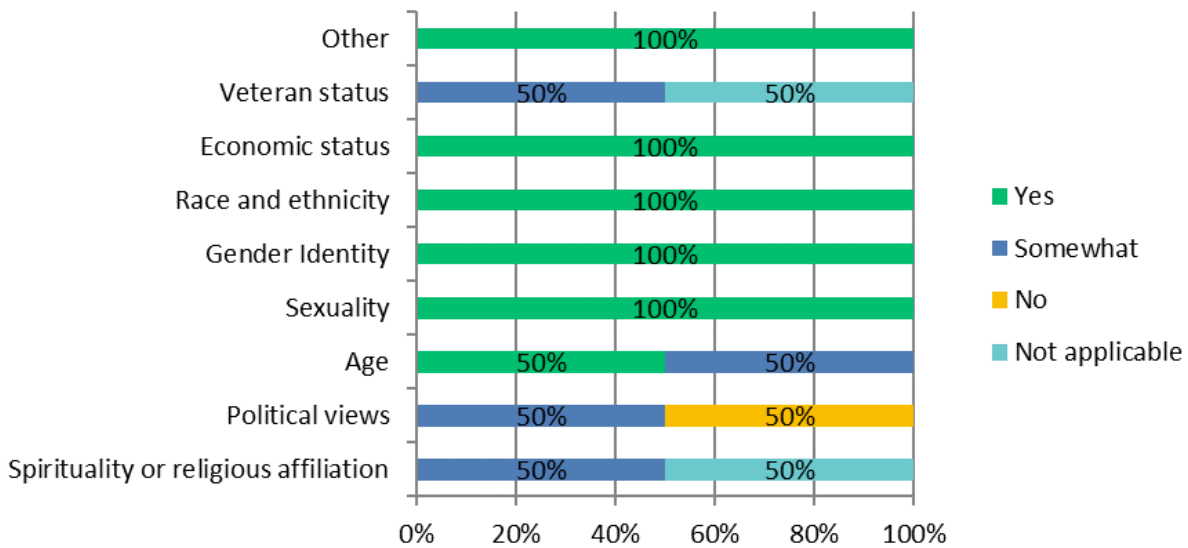
QUOTE FROM RESIDENT SURVEY: What changes would help people’s concerns about growing older in their community? “Planned senior trips and events”

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #5 – RESPECT AND INCLUSION

“Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational gatherings and activities are a great way for young and older people to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.”ix

DATA

Do you feel accepted in your community with regards to:



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Intergenerational connections** – There is a missed opportunity for events that focus on bringing together older and younger generations. Clubs or groups could encourage youth to interact with senior populations. An event like this could be held in conjunction with the Town of Wakefield. This would help promote a strong sense of community and promote acceptance among those of different age groups and backgrounds.
- **Community Run Newsletter** – Ask community members to contribute to a local news source that way they would have buy-in, could engage with their community and provide local news where the Town doesn't often get much news coverage.

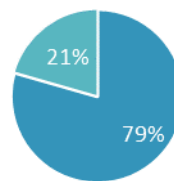
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #6 – WORK AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

“Why does work need to be an all or nothing experience? An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.”^x

DATA

Income	Median Household Income	\$93,523
	Income Inequality (Gini Index)	0.35
	Low income households	12.70%
	High income households	6.60%

Ballots Cast



■ In-Person ■ Absentee

* This data is from the 2020 general election

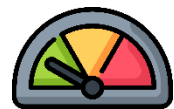


12 total jobs in Brookfield.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Proximity to jobs** – According to the CHAT survey, residents of Brookfield feel like they have access (via Route 109 to Routes 16 and 28, respectively) and proximity to jobs.
- **Posting volunteer opportunities on the Town website** – The Town uses its website to post openings on its boards and committees.
- **High voter participation** – 82% of registered voters participated in the last presidential election.



OPPORTUNITIES

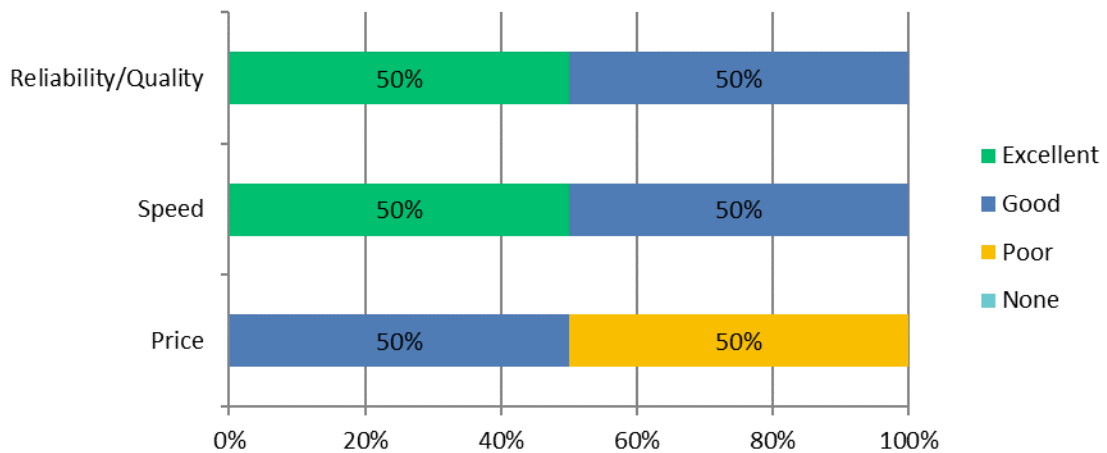
- **Increased community support and volunteers** – Currently it is difficult to get community support and volunteers. It is important to find a way to incentivize this and increase engagement.
- **Promote economic development in line with the town’s rural character** – In the town’s master plan it encourages economic development such as, “traditional home occupations, agriculture and forestry practices.”^{xi}

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #7 – COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

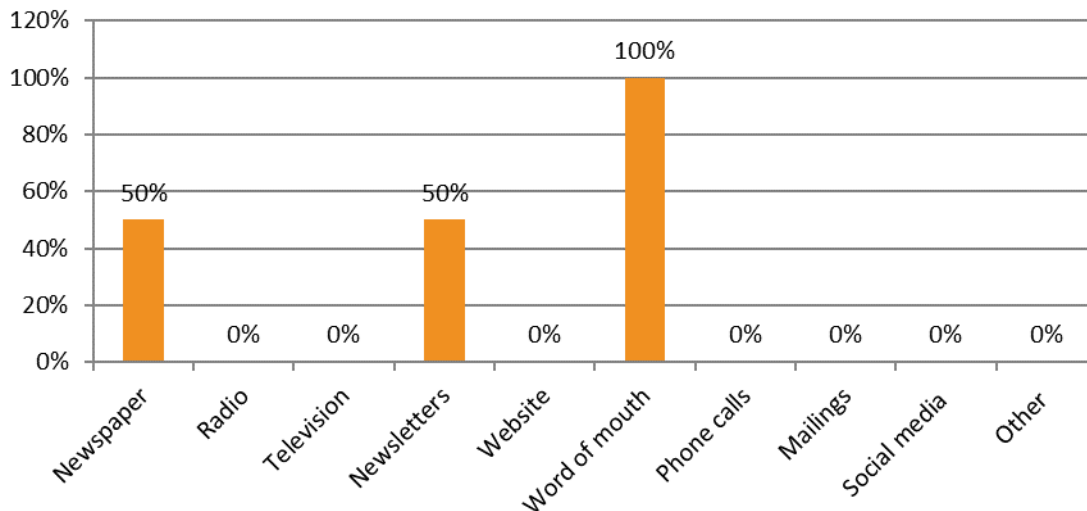
“We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.”^{xii}

DATA

How would you rate your internet access in regard to? Please select none if you do not have internet access.

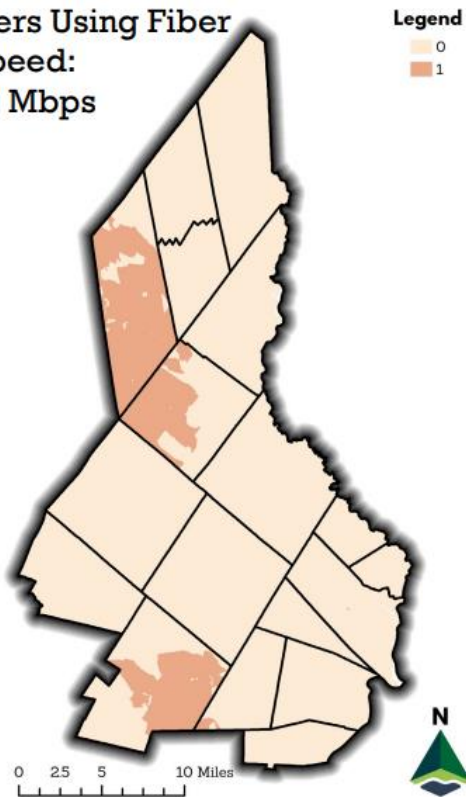


How do you learn about community news and activities? Check all that apply.

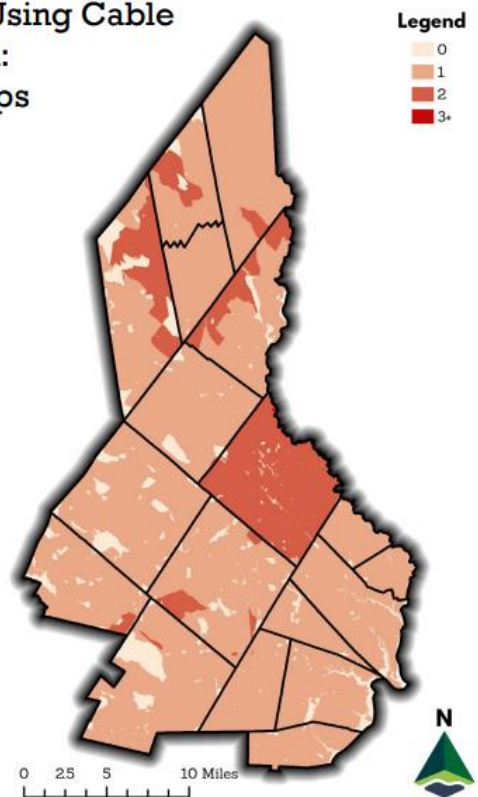


Broadband Access

Providers Using Fiber
Min. Speed:
100/20 Mbps

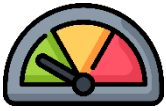


Providers Using Cable
Min. Speed:
100/20 Mbps



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Reliable internet** – Respondents from the CHAT online survey feel their internet is reliable and that speeds are adequate.
- **Communication and transparency with residents via the Town’s website** – The town has a website it uses to communicate with the public. It also films its meetings and posts them online.
- **Facebook town groups** – While not maintained or interacted with by the Town, Facebook groups like “All Things Brookfield, NH” are a popular source of what is going on in Brookfield.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Internet upgrades** – While respondents from the CHAT online survey see the internet as reliable, there are opportunities for increased speed for residents. There may be opportunities for this with new federal broadband infrastructure funding.
- **Text or phone alerts** – This could be useful for important news updates from the community, and especially for times like the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Regional news source** – Brookfield and surrounding towns (Farmington, Wakefield, Milton, etc.) could share resources and collaborate to share local news.

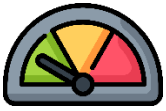
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #8 – COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES

“At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it’s important that assistance and care be available nearby, it’s essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.”^{xiii}

DATA

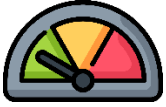
Healthcare and Aging Services	Number of Sites
Assisted Living Sites	0
Nursing Homes	0
Senior Centers	0
Primary Care Providers	3
Hospitals	0
Community Health Centers	0
Home Health Agencies	4
Memory Cafes	0
Dementia Support Group	0
Total	7

Community Resources	Number of Sites
Places of Worship	0
Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures	1
Libraries	0
Medical and Health Care Facilities	0
Governmental Services	1
Non-Governmental Services	0
Fire and Police Stations	0
Schools	0
TOTAL	2



EXISTING CONDITIONS

- **Quality schools in the area** – On the CHAT online survey a resident noted that quality of schools in the area is great as an option for children living in Brookfield to attend.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Increased medical services** – There are currently only a few medical services in the area. 50% of residents that took the CHAT online survey were concerned about lack of medical services. This could be an opportunity to leverage a volunteer rideshare program, or to promote the use of the CommuteSmart NH app. (See #2 Transportation, Opportunities)
- **Increased mental health services** – There is a growing need for mental health services and more community organizations and local counseling options would be beneficial to residents.
- **Community and Health Services** – Brookfield has limited health services. This could be an opportunity for regional partnerships with surrounding towns (Milton, Middleton, Farmington, Wakefield, etc.).

NEXT STEPS

Following completion of the community assessments, SRPC and SCPHN staff will solicit interest from and work with a limited number of communities to develop action plans. Selected municipalities will be able to take the information in the community assessments a step further, to identify specific implementation strategies that respond to the assessment findings and aim to enhance the community’s “age-friendliness.” Communities will be selected based upon interest and engagement in promoting age friendly communities, local support and willingness to implement recommendations, and geographic diversity. With the goal of adoption, final plans will be presented to each community. There is also the opportunity for completion of one or two pilot projects that will be selected from the action plan recommendations. Lastly, SRPC and SCPHN will publish an extensive resource guide that will be widely distributed via channels appropriate to our key audiences.

ⁱ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

ⁱⁱ https://www.brookfieldnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf346/f/uploads/master_plan_0.pdf#page=11

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

^{iv} ⁱⁱⁱ <https://communityrides.org/community-rides-0>

^v https://www.brookfieldnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf346/f/uploads/master_plan_0.pdf#page=11

^{vi} <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

^{vii} <https://communityrides.org/community-rides-0>

^{viii} <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

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- ix <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>
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- xi https://www.brookfieldnh.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf346/f/uploads/master_plan_0.pdf#page=47
- xii <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>
- xiii <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>