

CHAT

COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY AGING TRANSITIONS

Community ASSESSMENT

————— FOR THE —————

TOWN of MIDDLETON

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH



PUBLISHED: OCT 2022

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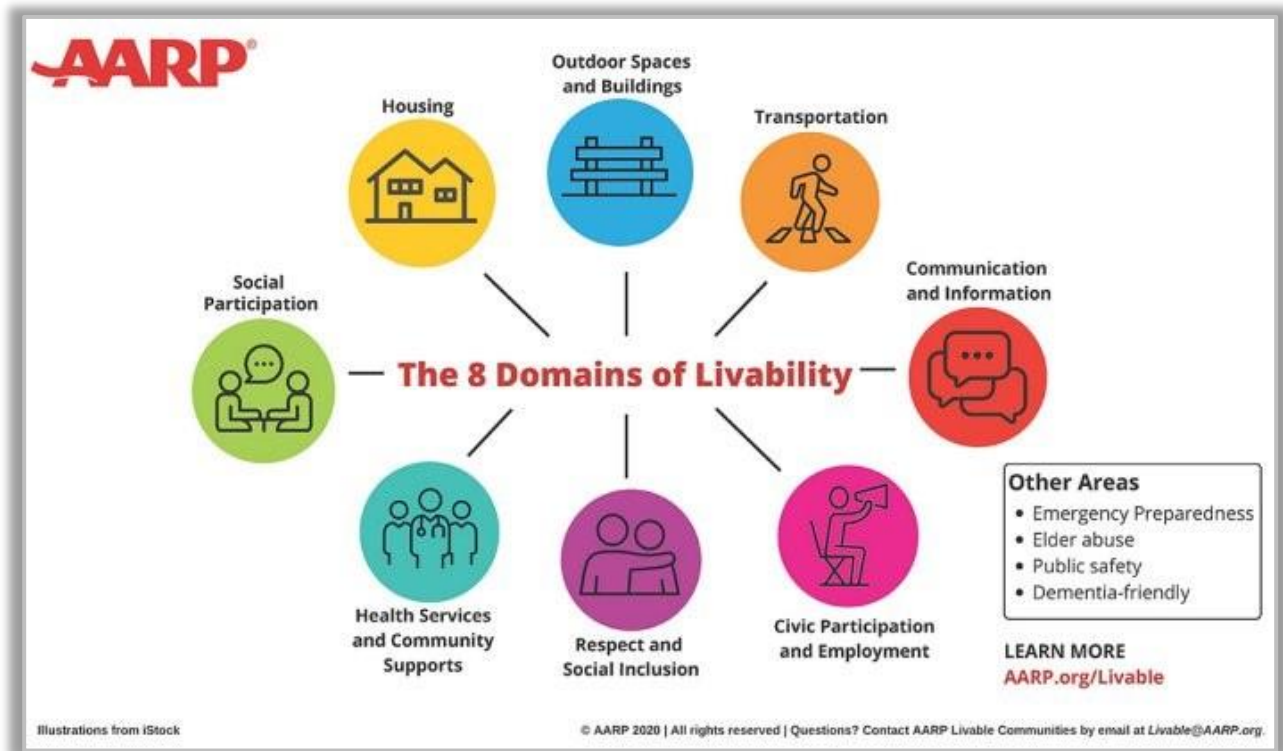
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

[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 Brookfield, 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 Middleton 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 Mackenzie Brisson, Planning Board Chair.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Middleton is a central community of the Moose Mountains region. The Town's Sunrise Lake is an important feature in Town, bringing vacationers from southern New Hampshire, metropolitan Boston, and elsewhere in the Northeast every year. Today the Town is home to many summer residents on the shores of Sunrise Lake.

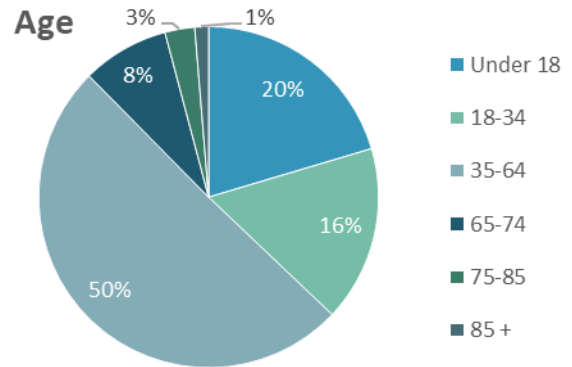
With a quaint population of 1,937, Middleton boasts recreational opportunities and has good community services like its police department and library. Middleton is a community rich in history, strong in volunteerism – a community with small Town dreams and values.i

At the center of Town, known as Four Corners, sits Middleton's Old Town Hall, the current Town hall, the fire department, and the Middleton Gospel Church.

The Town is accessible by State Highway, Route 153, which runs along the east side of the Town and intersects first with Route 125 in Union and then Route 16 in Wakefieldii.

The outreach process, combined with supplementary data analysis, was used to outline the many ways in which Middleton 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 | 1812 |
| Median Age | 42.4 |
| Total Housing Units | 658 |
| Number of Jobs in Town | 140 |
| Life expectancy | 82.9 |



Sex



LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #1 - OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

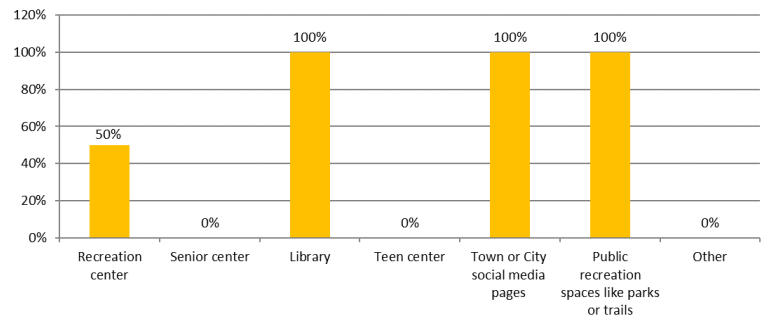
“People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.”ⁱ

DATA

| Recreation Site Type | Number of Sites |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Beach | 1 |
| Boating Access | 0 |
| Community Garden | 0 |
| Disc Golf Course | 0 |
| Dog Park | 0 |
| Fishing Access | 0 |
| Golf Course | 0 |
| Gym | 0 |
| Open Space and Trails | 1 |
| Park | 0 |
| Playground | 1 |
| Pool | 0 |
| Rail Trail | 0 |
| Skatepark | 0 |
| Skating Rink | 0 |
| Sledding Hill | 0 |
| Sports Fields and Courts | 1 |
| Total | 4 |

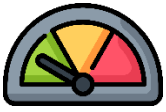
| Community Resources | Number of Sites |
|---|-----------------|
| Places of Worship | 0 |
| Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures | 0 |
| Libraries | 0 |
| Medical and Health Care Facilities | 0 |
| Governmental Services | 2 |
| Non-Governmental Services | 0 |
| Fire and Police Stations | 2 |
| Schools | 0 |
| Total | 4 |

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



21% of land in Middleton is conserved.

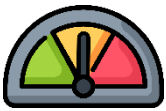




STRENGTHS

“[Middleton is] quiet, but also close to everything”

- **Sunrise Lake** – This 247-acre lake in Middleton is a cherished recreational resource in Town with a beach accessible to town residents that is great for picnics and swimming.
- **Public recreation** – Residents appreciate the ample public recreation opportunities in Town like Moose Mountain Reservation Trails, and the playground and ballfields at Middleton Elementary School.
- **Old Town Hall and The Middleton Elementary School** – These buildings serve as public meeting spaces for the Town for community meetings, gatherings, and events. The Old Town Hall can be reserved by residents and community groups.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Elementary school gymnasium** - The gymnasium space at the school is a strength and could be utilized more for town recreational programming like pick-up volleyball, or basketball.
- **Increased recreational spaces** - There is an opportunity in town for more walking trails, playgrounds, and sports fields throughout Middleton. Currently there are very few publicly accessible recreation options.

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).”ⁱⁱ

DATA

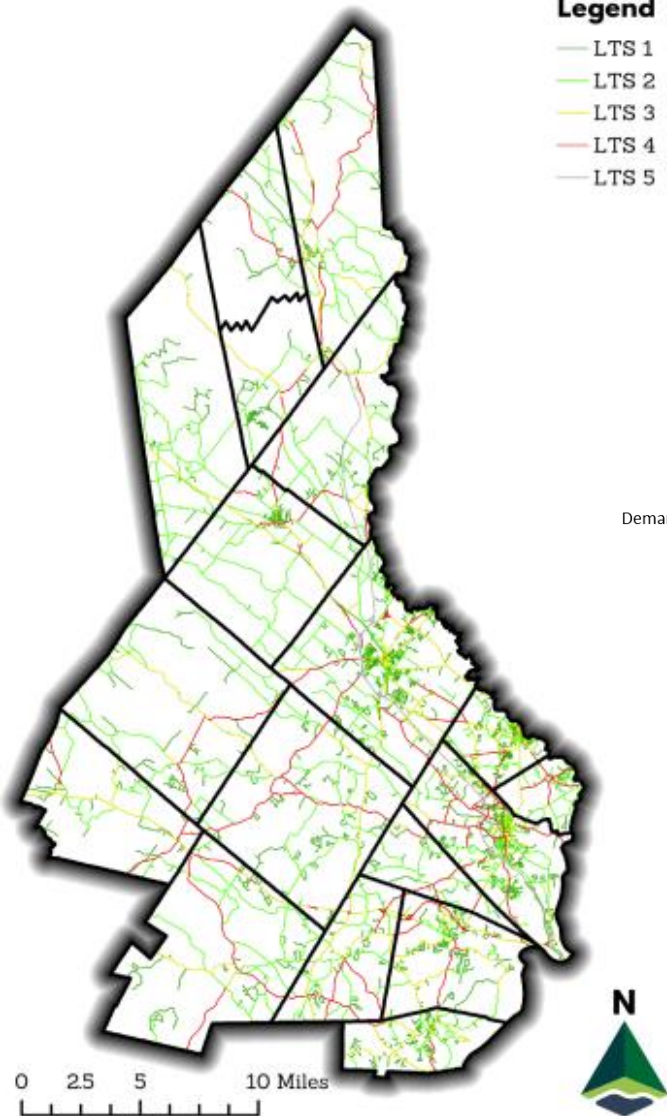
Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Legend

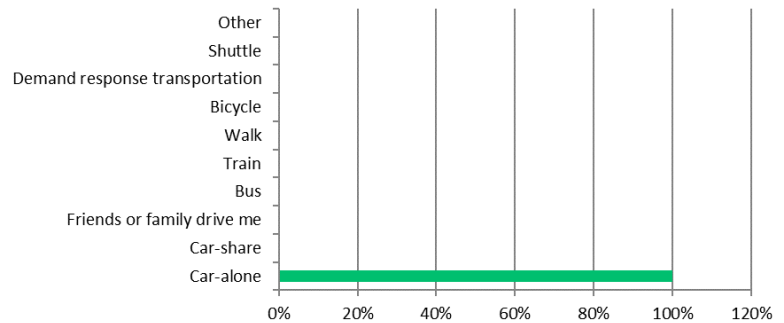
- LTS 1
- LTS 2
- LTS 3
- LTS 4
- LTS 5

| 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 | |

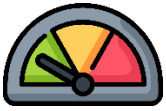
Source: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress. Year: 2019. Granularity: SRPC.



How do you and your household members generally travel around for work, school, recreation, or other errands?



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



STRENGTHS

- **Residents rely on personal vehicles** - Considering that Middleton is a rural town with a population of under 5,000, most residents require a vehicle for commuting, errands, and leisure. Middleton is not served by public transit or Demand Response (outside of Community Rides) and Middleton'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 Middleton. 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.”



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 Middleton, 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.

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.”ⁱⁱⁱ

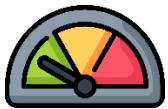
DATA

Housing Stock

■ Single family ■ Multi-family ■ Mobile Home

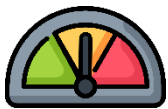


658 total housing units in Middleton.



STRENGTHS

- **Variety of rental and housing market options**– There are options for renting and owning in town. Most of the housing stock in town is single family (91%), followed by mobile homes (8%) and multi-family (<1%). 89% of residents own homes, while 11% rent.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Increase in affordable housing stock** – Middleton could benefit from a greater variety of housing options at different prices. 17% of households in Middleton are considered low-income according to 2019 ACS data.
- **Zoning adjustments** - Some see town regulations, like the town’s 5-acre lots size requirements, as barriers for new developments.
- **Encourage young homeowners** – The Town could build more affordable housing to encourage immigration of younger adults. In its master plan the town prioritizes that, “Housing opportunities should be diverse and represent a balanced community.”^{iv}
- **Tiny homes** - There could be opportunities to embrace the affordable tiny house movement and housing for older people in town. The town set a priority to “Implement and support increased opportunities for small-scale affordable housing options such as accessory apartments and similar uses.” in its Master Plan.^v

Own vs Rent



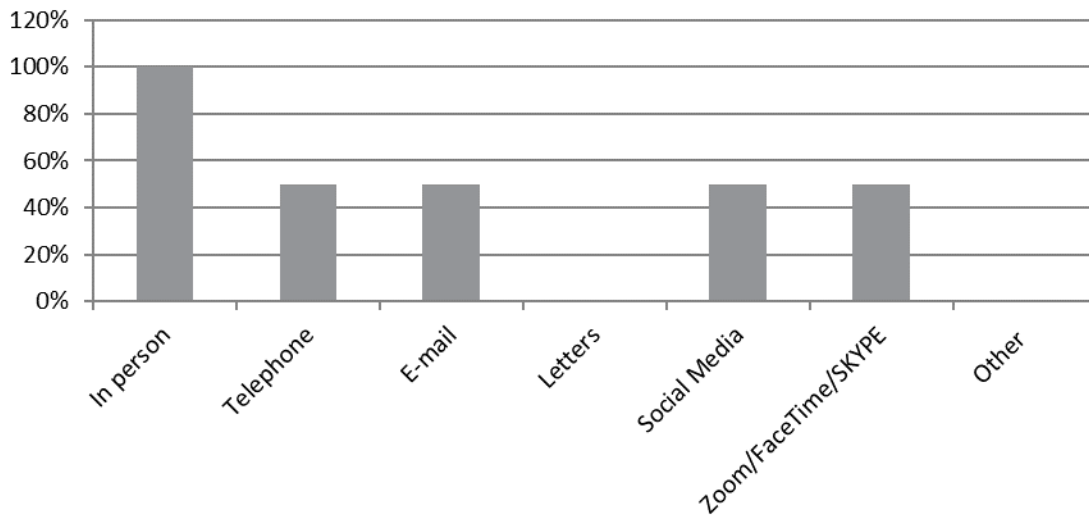
“[There is an opportunity to] create more affordable housing for young people”

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #4 – SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

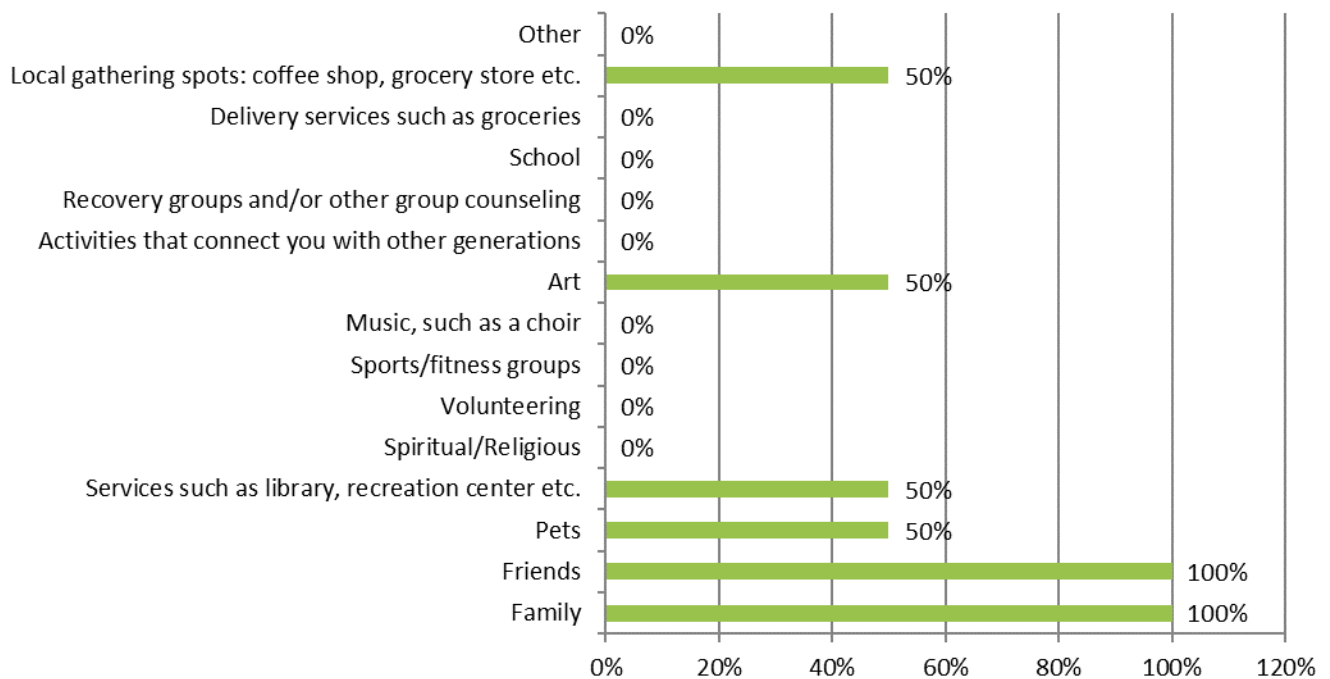
“Regardless of a person’s age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.”^{vi}

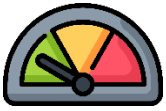
DATA

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



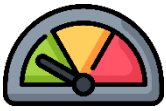
**What are your main social interactions?
Check all that apply**





STRENGTHS

- **Old Home Day** – Middleton’s Old Home Day is thought to be the oldest Old Home Day celebration in New Hampshire.^{vii} This community event promotes the town's history and lets residents show off their historic homes.
- **Community events promoted through the Town’s Recreation Committee** – The town holds events coordinated by its recreation committee like Meet Santa and Trunk or Treat. These are promoted on the Town website, and via the Facebook group, “Middleton NH Recreation.”



OPPORTUNITIES

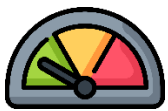
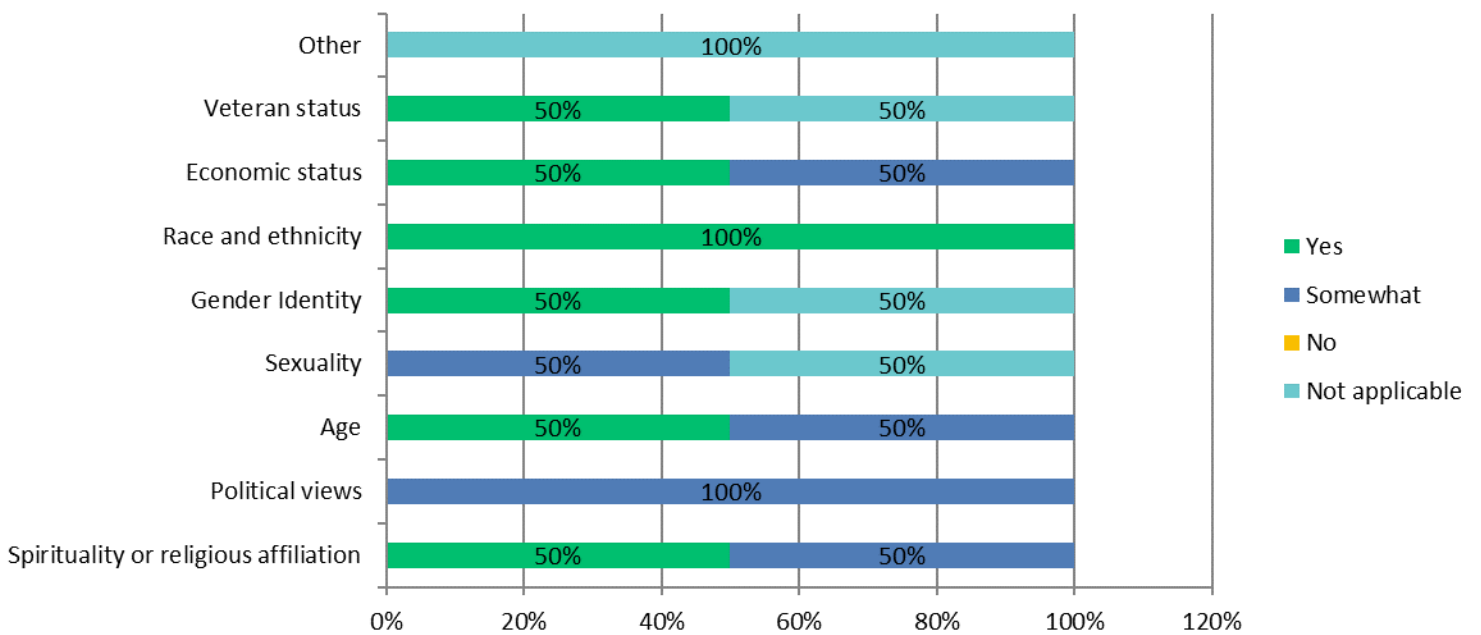
- **Increase participation in social events** – Participation in Old Home Week has decreased in recent years. The town could revitalize this annual event by increased marketing, outreach, and related activities.
- **More community events** - There are opportunities for the Town to hold more community events, such as movie nights, game nights, etc. This would be good for residents and families in Town. In the town’s master plan, one of their guiding principles is to, “Encourage expansion of opportunities for the community to gather and interact from the youth to the adult community...”^x This could be coordinated by the Recreation Committee.

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.”^{viii}

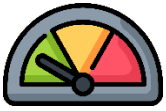
DATA

Do you feel accepted in your community with regards to:



STRENGTHS

- **Balance of young and old** – 20% of town residents are under 18, 16% are 18-34, 50% are 35-54, 8% are 65-74, 3% are 75-85, and 1% are 85+



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Senior partnership with college-aged students** - This could take place through the Town and would encourage older people to share skills with students, and vice versa.
- **Community run newsletter** – The town could ask community members to contribute to a local news source, that way they would have buy-in. This could increase engagement between residents and the town and serve to aggregate local news where the Town isn’t getting much news coverage.
- **Intergenerational connections** – There is a missed opportunity for events that focus on bringing together older and younger generations to create connections and friendships. Clubs or groups could encourage youth to interact with senior populations.
- **Advocate for acceptance** – Residents want to feel a strong sense of community and feel accepted no matter their background.

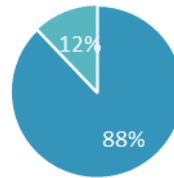
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #6 – WORK AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

“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.”ix

DATA

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| Income | Median Household Income | \$76,964 |
| | Income Inequality (Gini Index) | 0.37 |
| | Low income households | 17.27% |
| | High income households | 6.80% |

Ballots Cast

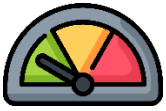


■ In-Person ■ Absentee



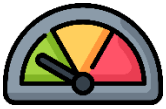
140 total jobs in Middleton.

* This data is from the 2020 general election



STRENGTHS

- **Proximity to jobs** – According to the CHAT survey, residents of Middleton feel like they have access (via Route 153 and Kings Highway to Routes 16 and 28, respectively) and proximity to jobs. Middleton Building Supply & DiPrizio Pine Sales is the town’s largest employer.
- **Variety of communication methods** – The town encourages civic engagement through a sign in front of the town offices, via the town’s official Facebook page - @MiddletonNH03887, and via its website.
- **High voter participation** – 72% of registered voters voted in the last presidential election.



OPPORTUNITIES

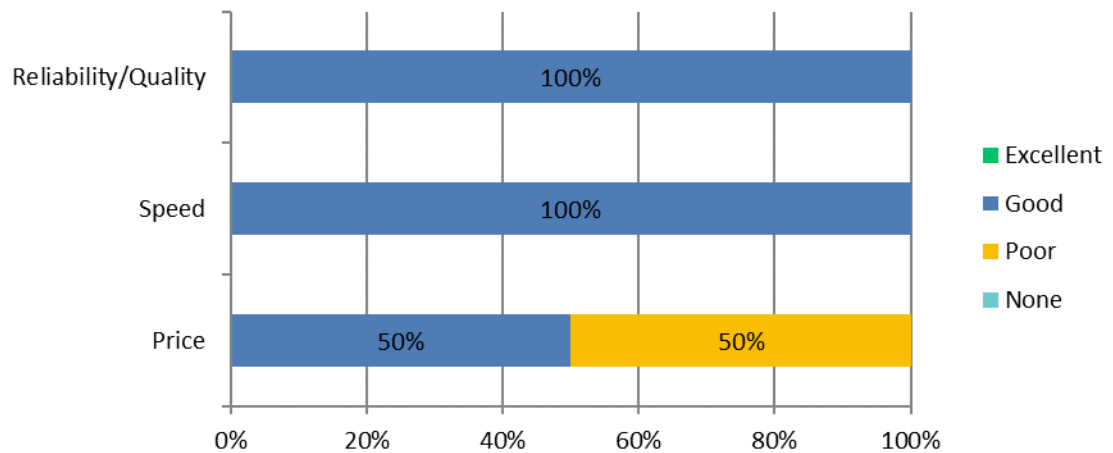
- **Increase community support and champion volunteerism** – The Town could better engage with residents to encourage volunteerism through increased communications, like a town e-newsletter (see bullet below).
- **Town newsletter/ newspaper** - A town newspaper or newsletter could enhance civic engagement by providing increased communication with residents.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #7 – COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

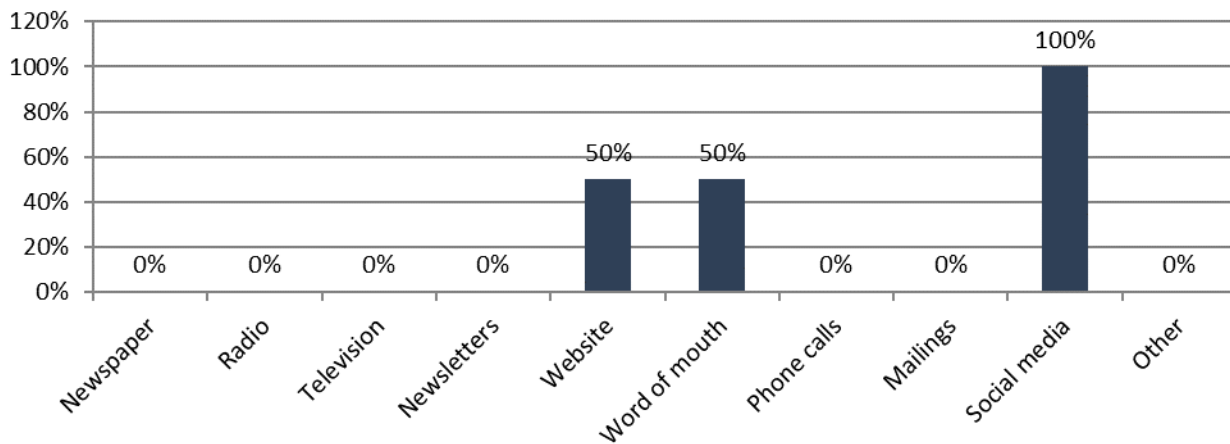
“We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.”^x

DATA

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

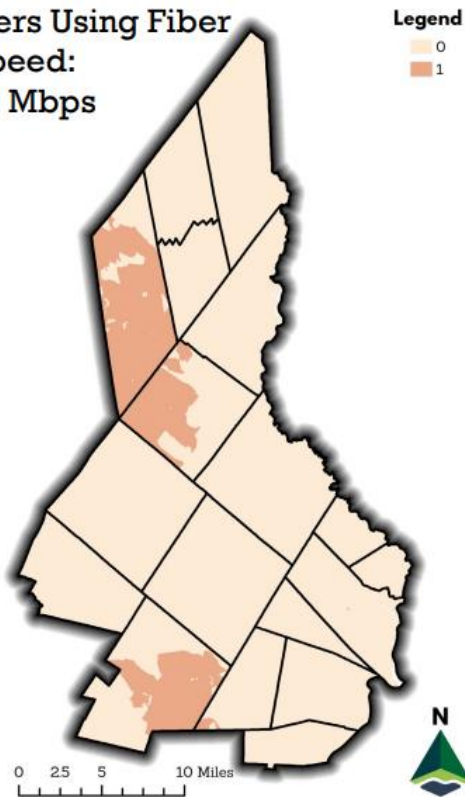


How do you learn about community news and activities? Check all that apply.

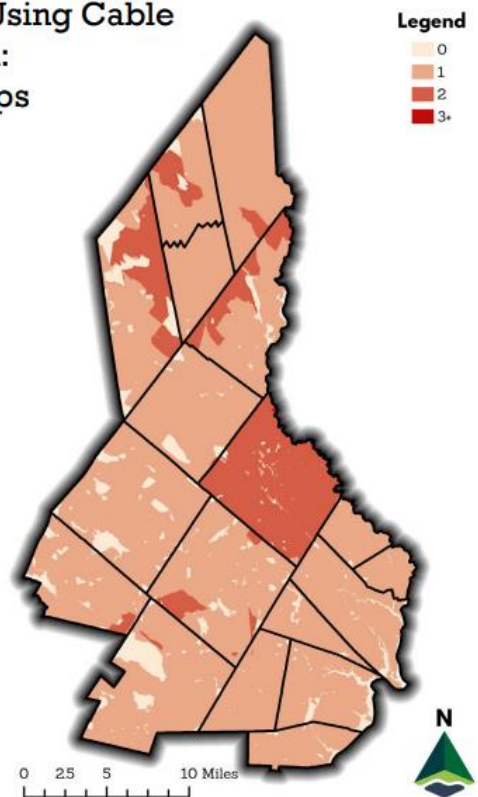


Broadband Access

Providers Using Fiber
Min. Speed:
100/20 Mbps

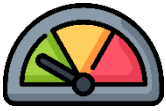


Providers Using Cable
Min. Speed:
100/20 Mbps



STRENGTHS

- **Variety of communication methods** - Much of the town's communication happens through a sign in front of the town offices, via the town's official Facebook page - @MiddletonNH03887, and with notices and news on the town website.
- **Reliable internet** – Residents say they have good speed and quality for Wi-Fi
- **Facebook town groups**– While not maintained or interacted with by the Town, town Facebook groups like “MIDDLETON, NH News and Discussion Forum” prove to be a popular source of what is going on in Middleton.
- **Town E-Subscribe** – The town has the option to join its email list to sign up for urgent alerts, or for news and announcements from different groups like the planning board or just the town in general.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Regional news source** – Middleton and surrounding towns (Farmington, Wakefield, Milton, etc.) could share resources and collaborate to share local news.
- **Offer residents input opportunities** – The town could provide more opportunities for residents to share their thoughts about what is going on in town outside of public meetings, for instance with a public input survey.

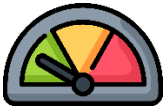
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #8 – COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES

“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.”^{xi}

DATA

| Healthcare and Aging Services | Number of Sites |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Assisted Living Sites | 0 |
| Nursing Homes | 0 |
| Senior Centers | 0 |
| Primary Care Providers | 0 |
| Hospitals | 0 |
| Community Health Centers | 0 |
| Home Health Agencies | 5 |
| Memory Cafes | 0 |
| Dementia Support Group | 0 |
| Total | 0 |

| Community Resources | Number of Sites |
|---|------------------------|
| Places of Worship | 0 |
| Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures | 0 |
| Libraries | 0 |
| Medical and Health Care Facilities | 0 |
| Governmental Services | 2 |
| Non-Governmental Services | 0 |
| Fire and Police Stations | 2 |
| Schools | 0 |
| TOTAL | 4 |



STRENGTHS

- **Reliable police department** – This town’s Police department provides important community services and makes residents feel safe.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Medical center in the area** – There is a need for a local medical center to provide for Middleton residents, so that they don’t have to travel to surrounding towns for necessary medical services.
- **Community and health services** - Middleton has limited community and health services. This could be an opportunity for regional partnerships with surrounding towns (Milton, Wakefield, Farmington, etc.) In its master plan the town prioritizes developing, “...a Capital Improvements program to assist in planning for the future expenditures of Town and the expansion of municipal services.”

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.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

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

^{iv} https://www.middletonnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli6331/f/uploads/master_plan.pdf#page=9

^v https://www.middletonnh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli6331/f/uploads/master_plan.pdf#page=9

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

^{vii} <https://www.middletonnh.gov/heritage-commission>

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

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

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

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