CHAT

COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY AGING TRANSITIONS

Community ASSESSMENT

FOR THE

TOWN of NOTTINGHAM

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH
STRAFFORD COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK

STRAFFORD Regional Planning Commission

TUFTS Health Plan FOUNDATION

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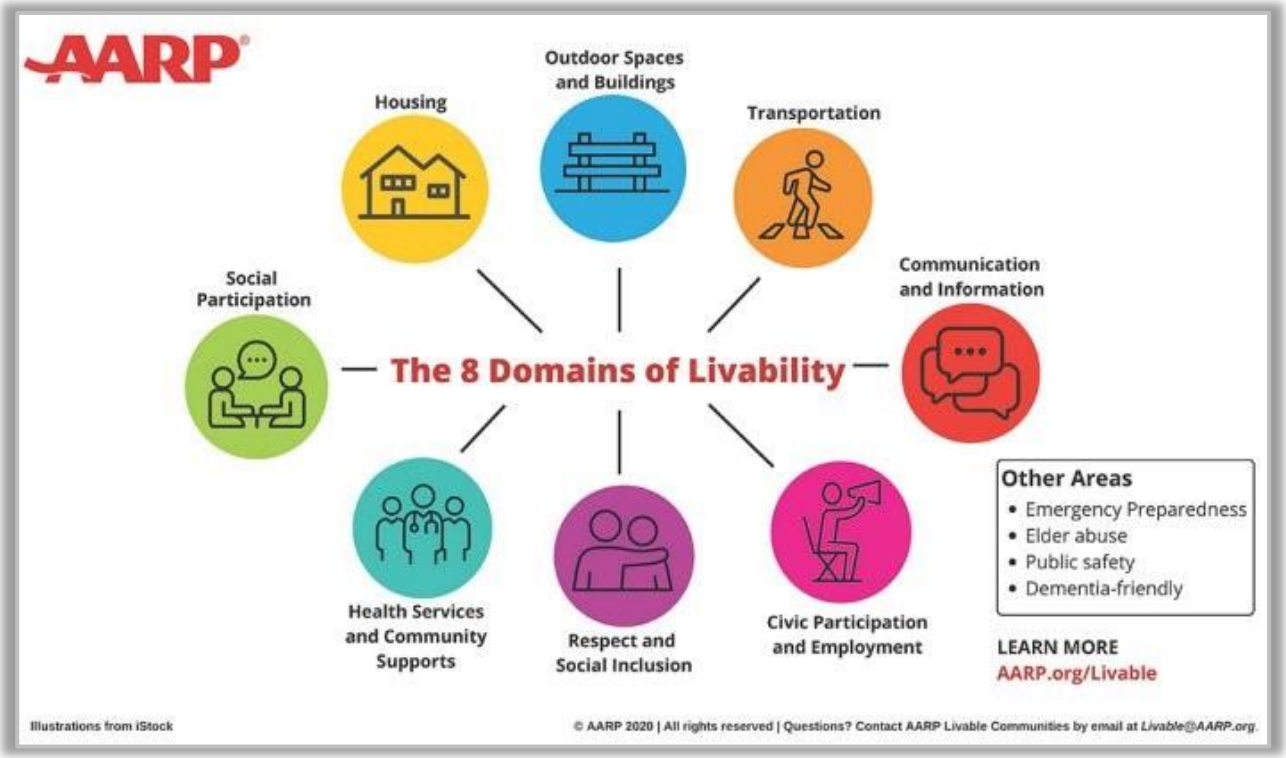
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

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 reached out to each community, but for some an event was not able to be scheduled. A forum was scheduled for Barrington, Northwood, Strafford, and Nottingham on April 19, however, due to the challenges of scheduling such events in the midst of the pandemic and a lack of registered participants, the forum did not take place.

SURVEY

Launched in February 2021, the CHAT online survey was distributed through multiple outlets to the residents of Nottingham. Twelve Nottingham residents responded to the survey.

POSTCARD ART ACTIVITY

With the pandemic, SRPC and SCPHN 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

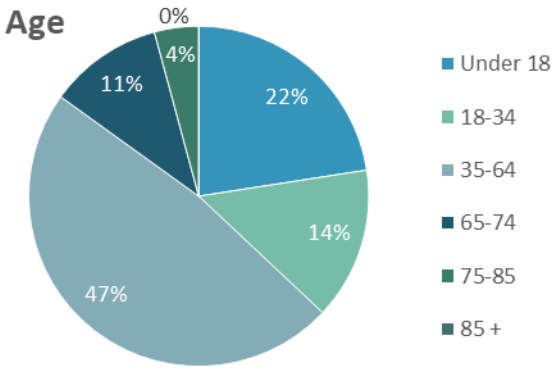
The above outreach strategies were supplemented with key informant interviews and draft community assessment reviews by community representatives. Draft review and additional comments were provided by Gary Anderson, SRPC Commissioner and Nottingham Planning board member, as well as SRPC Commissioner Charlene Andersen.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Nottingham is a rural town in southern New Hampshire, located in Rockingham County. Residents enjoy the natural beauty of the community and its small-town character. A tight-knit atmosphere can be seen in the town's frequent celebrations and programs held by its various departments and committees. The town is defined by a commitment to the preservation of its natural resources, a quality school system, and historic village centers. It is a predominantly residential community with summer cottages nested along lakes and ponds—notably, Pawtuckaway lake which exists partially within Pawtuckaway State Park. Nottingham's location off Route 152 and proximity to the state's larger cities provides residents with the comforts of rural living, and urban conveniences.

The outreach process, combined with supplementary data analysis, was used to outline the many ways in which Nottingham 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	5144
Median Age	44.4
Total Housing Units	1900
Number of Jobs in Town	343
Life expectancy	81.8



LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #1 - OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

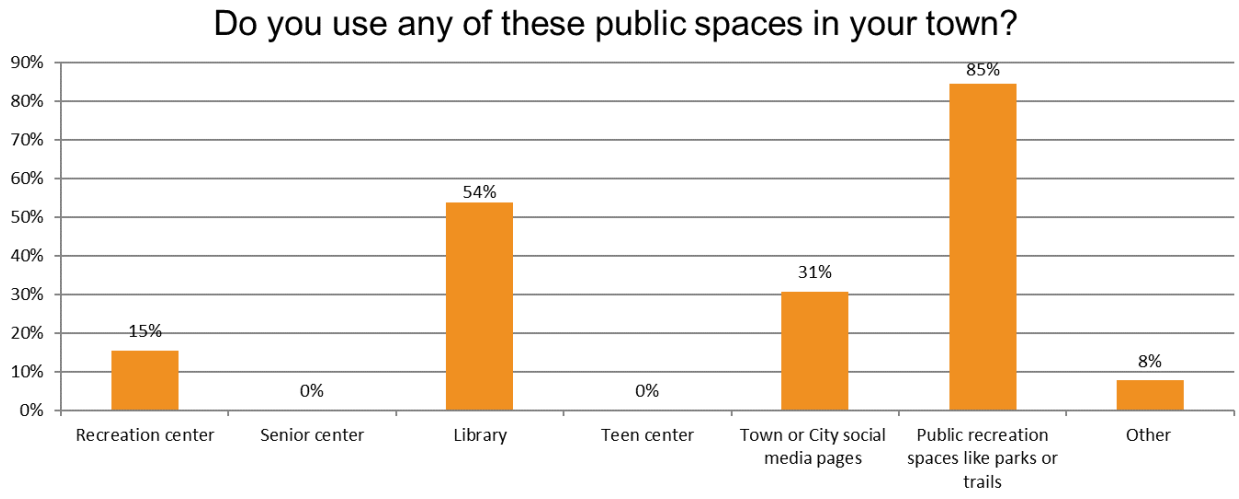
"People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages."[i]

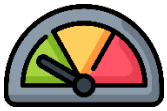
DATA

Recreation Site Type	Number of Sites
Beach	2
Boating Access	2
Community Garden	0
Disc Golf Course	0
Dog Park	0
Fishing Access	1
Golf Course	0
Gym	0
Open Space and Trails	4
Park	1
Playground	3
Pool	0
Rail Trail	0
Skatepark	0
Skating Rink	0
Sledding Hill	0
Sports Fields and Courts	2
Total	**15**

Community Resources	Number of Sites
Places of Worship	1
Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures	2
Libraries	2
Medical and Health Care Facilities	0
Governmental Services	1
Non-Governmental Services	0
Fire and Police Stations	2
Schools	1
Total	**9**

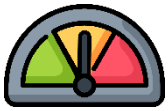
32% of land in Nottingham is conserved.





STRENGTHS

- **Natural resources –** Natural beauty and resources where the #2 reason residents choose to stay living in Nottingham. Some respondents moved to Nottingham for its scenic beauty and proximity to the mountains and ocean.
- **Public library –** Most survey respondents enjoy the town's library as a public space.
- **Community character –** Many survey respondents moved to Nottingham because of its rural character and small-town spirit.
- **Outdoor spaces –** The Town beach and Lake Pawtuckaway were identified as gathering spaces utilized and enjoyed by survey respondents.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Senior center –** Survey respondents expressed a desire for a senior center in town.
- **Optimizing natural resources –** Increasing the amount of bike lanes in Town, especially along scenic roads may better utilize the value of these natural aesthetic resources.

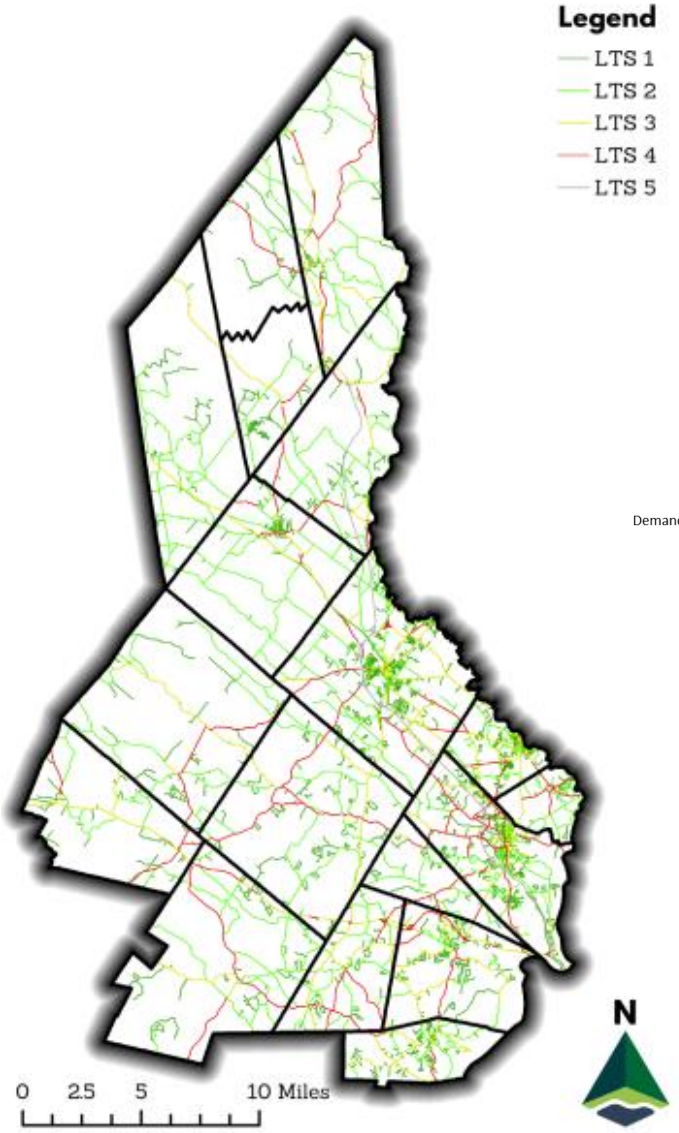
One resident noted that there is "no 'senior' or 'teen center'" in Nottingham.

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

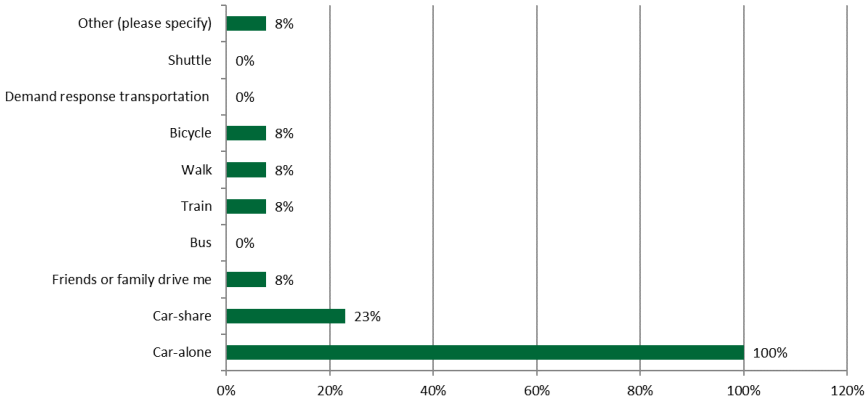
Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress



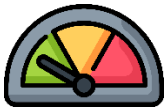
LTS Rating	LTS Rating Description	Population Class
LTS 1	**Lowest stress**; suitable for all riders	Kids and Beginners
LTS 2	**Lower stress**; suitable for adults with some experience	Willing but Wary Riders
LTS 3	**Moderate stress**; suitable for those who ride regularly	Comfortably Confident Riders
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?

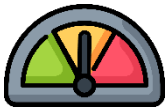


COAST Routes (including ADA On-Demand Transit)	0
Wildcat Routes	0
Demand Response Transit	Yes



STRENGTHS

- **Transportation reliability –** ~93% of survey respondents always have reliable transportation to doctor's appointments and the grocery store, ~91% always have reliable transportation to social engagements, and 80% always have reliable transportation to work.
- **Scenic roads –** The town has at least 8 Scenic Roads, which are roads designated by the town where maintenance and construction are strictly regulated, particularly the cutting of trees and destruction of stone walls.[iii]
- **Major roadways –** The major roadways of NH Routes 152 and 156 and US Route 4 have contributed to the historic growth in the Town.



OPPORTUNITIES

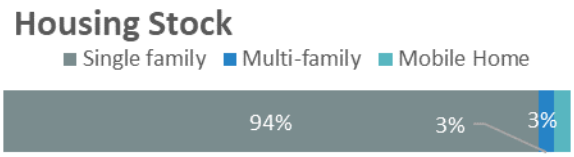
- **Walkability –** Survey participants noted the town's absence of sidewalks, bike lanes, and benches mainly due to the town's rural nature. Working to improve these infrastructure elements may improve transportation options for residents and connect different areas of Town, which could also allow for more informal social interactions.
- **Public transport –** Transportation to community and health services is a concern, particularly as people age. Residents are concerned about what transportation options are available to them.
- **Biking and signage –** In the Town's 2012 Master Plan it identified a need for bicycle lanes along Routes 152 and 156 or at a minimum to "properly mark and sign the state designated bike routes." This need still exists to expand transportation opportunities.

Since Nottingham is a "small town with no sidewalks, no bike lanes, no benches, "people do not congregate in 'town.'"

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."iv

DATA



1,900 total housing units in Nottingham.

Regarding housing affordability, one resident said their "large New England farmhouse would not be affordable to live in/heat as [they] get older and income is less."

STRENGTHS

- **New developments –** According to the New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority, there were 6 manufactured housing units authorized by permit between 2018-2019, which are the first reported since 2001.5
- **Inclusionary zoning –** One resident indicated that Nottingham has zoning allowing for Accessory Dwelling Units and suggested that this could provide a means for aging folks to transition to smaller living spaces with family or friends.

OPPORTUNITIES

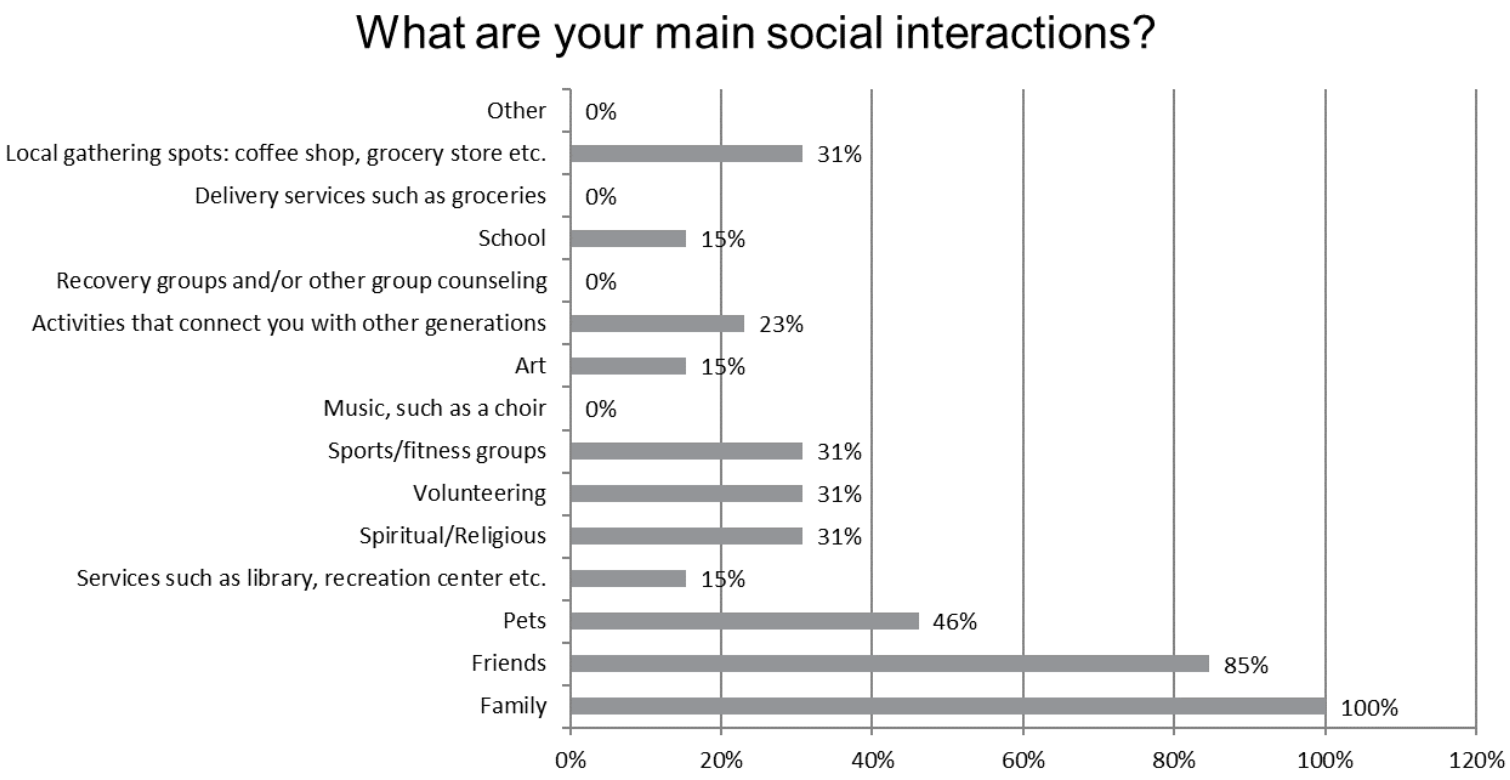
- **Affordable housing –** 25% of survey respondents were concerned about affordable housing options in Nottingham as they age in their community, and some respondents mentioned a need for local low-income housing options.
- **Housing stock diversity –** Single family homes make up nearly 95% of the housing stock in Nottingham, and 93% of residents own their homes. Diversifying the housing stock to incorporate more rental properties can assist with the lack of affordable housing.

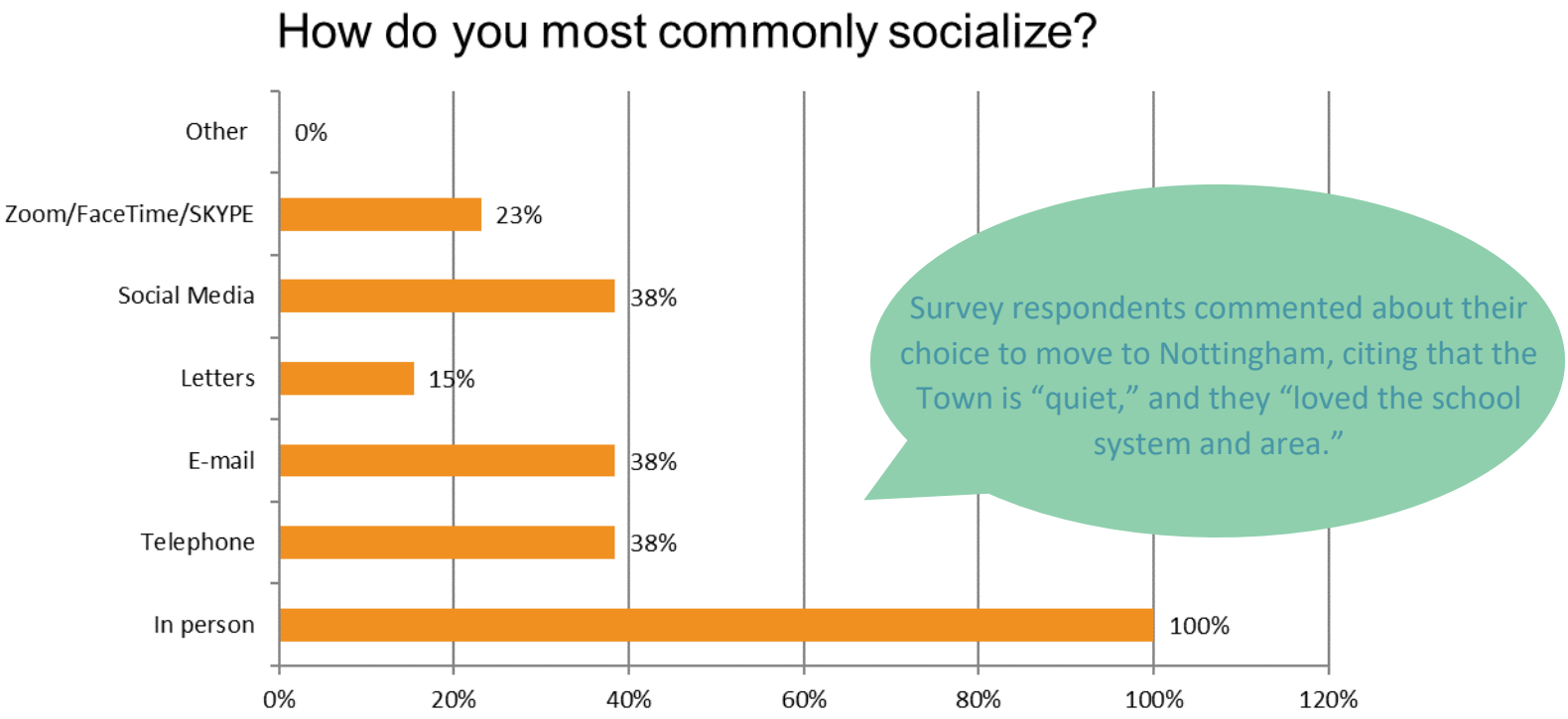
- **Assisted living –** Survey respondents expressed interest in having access to an assisted living facility to enable them to age in place. It was identified in the 2012 Master Plan that affordable and elderly housing needs exist in the Town. According to residents, these 2 needs have not been sufficiently addressed to date.

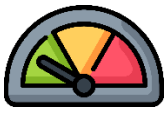
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #4 – SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

"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."[v]

DATA

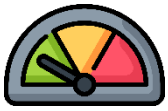






STRENGTHS

- **Variety of Options for Interaction –** The main forms of social interaction among survey respondents are with friends and family, as well as through services like the library, senior center, or recreation center.
- **Community Facebook groups –** One resident noted the existence of multiple community Facebook groups which are used to communicate information about events and local news and happenings.



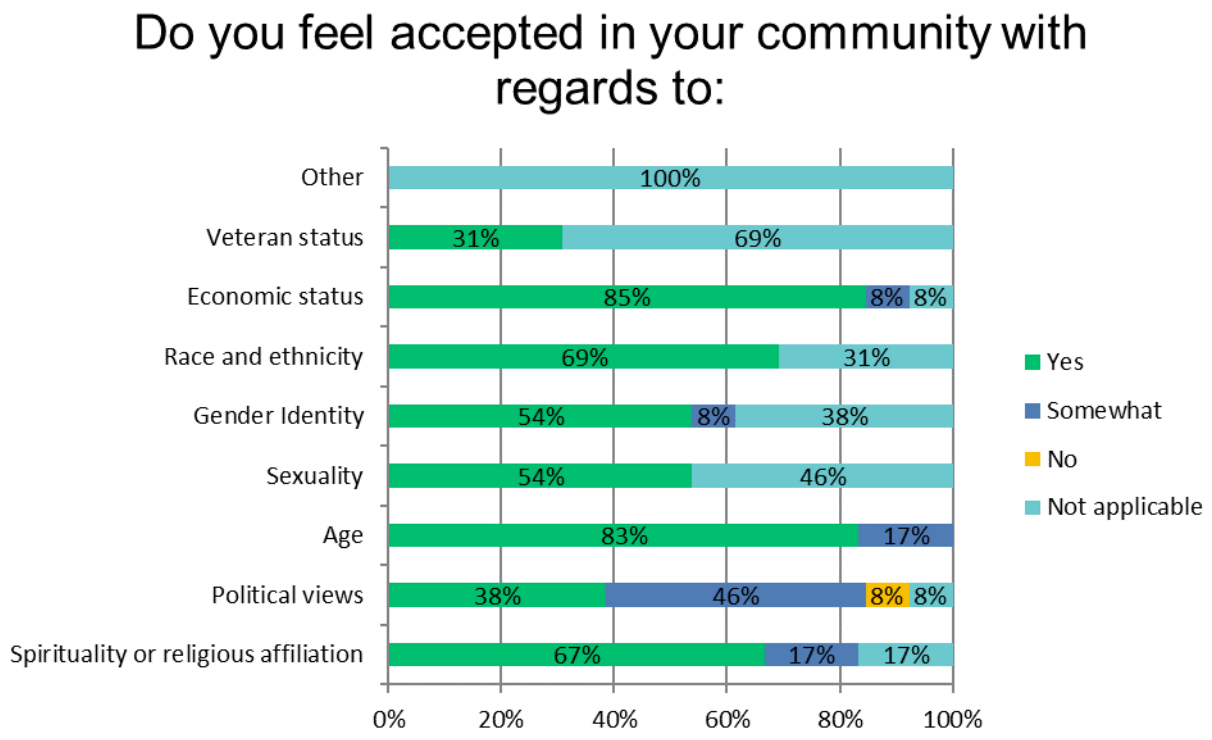
OPPORTUNITIES

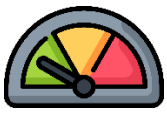
- **Face-to-face interactions –** Greater than 90% of residents who responded to the survey use email as their primary form of socialization, with in person socialization following at a close second. The Town could capitalize on the high use of email to engage the community in local events and activities.
- **Limitations –** Residents expressed concern with finding social opportunities and forms of entertainment particularly due to events like Covid-19. The Town may find opportunity in planning for social participation during times of physical isolation.

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."[vi]

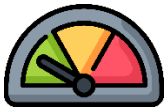
DATA





STRENGTHS

- **Community character –** Overwhelmingly, the #1 reason residents choose to live in Nottingham is because of the community's character.
- **Low crime –** Low crime rates was the #3 reason residents choose to live in Nottingham.
- **Acceptance** – Survey respondents felt that in general, Nottingham is an accepting community.
- **Cultural activities –** Some survey respondents moved to Nottingham due to its proximity to cultural activities.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Mental health –** Destigmatizing mental health assistance and making these services more accessible will have an impact on respect and social inclusion, as survey respondents mentioned mental health side effects from the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly noting feelings of confusion and fear.

- **Isolation –** Residents responding to the survey expressed concern over isolation, related to the Covid-19 pandemic, and how it decreased their quality of life and increased their need for assistance with daily tasks. To address this, the Town might consider what services residents have access to that enable them to live fulfilling lives.

On feeling accepted in their community, one resident said that its "easy to be accepted as older white woman with adequate resources. [I] am uncertain of what would be like if I did not fit the 'norm. Though when [I] moved here, much of the area was '70s, hippies' and I think accepted by the community. Think community/area pretty accepted today too."

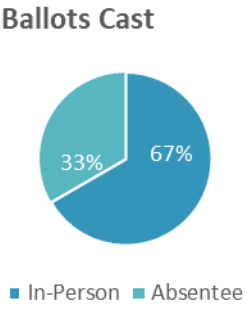
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #6 – WORK AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

"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."[vii]

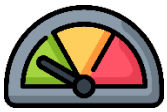
DATA

Income	Median Household Income	$95,227
	Income Inequality (Gini Index)	0.37
	Low income households	10.71%
	High income households	8.80%

343 total jobs in Nottingham.

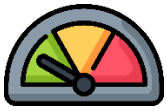


* This data is from the 2020 general election



STRENGTHS

- **Library –** Residents noted some workshops are available at the town library as a training and employment resource.
- **School system –** Some survey respondents indicated moving to the town because of its school system.



OPPORTUNITIES

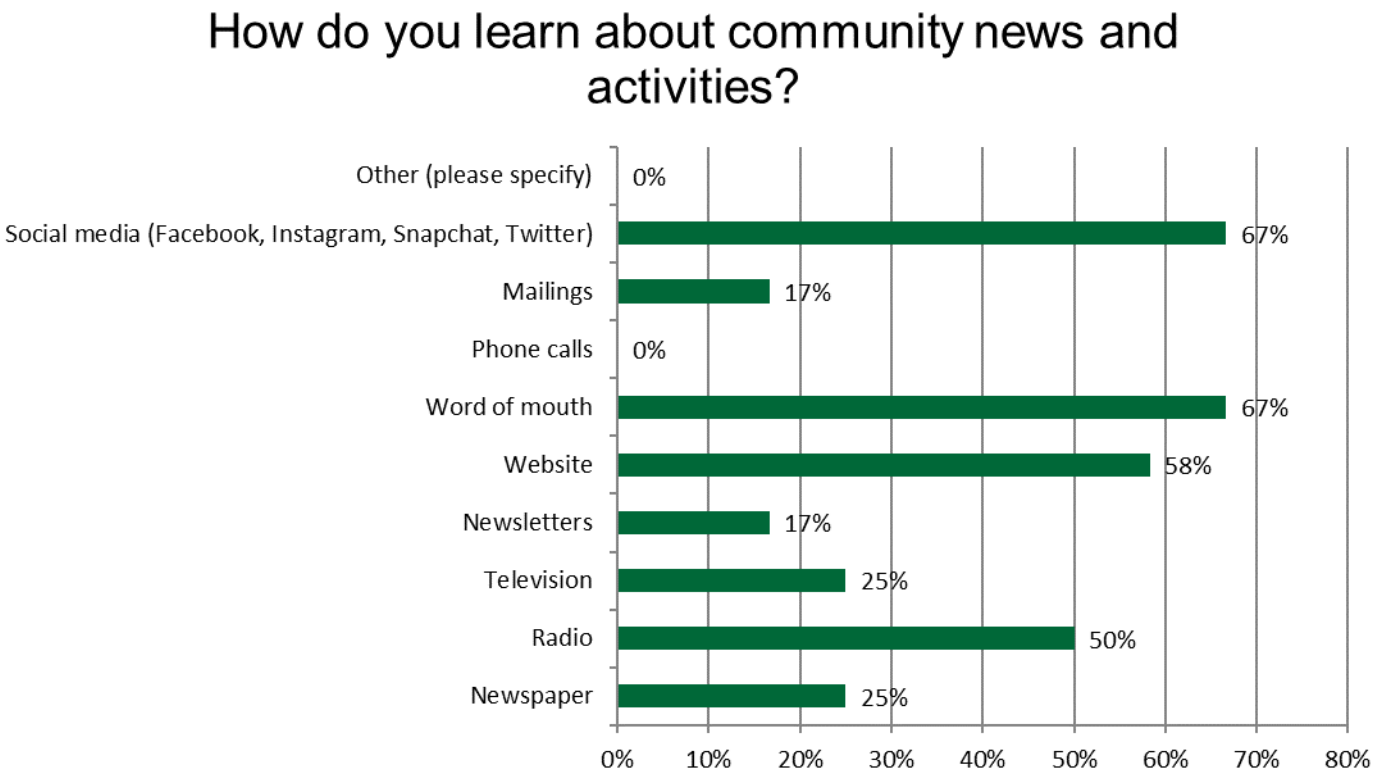
- **Employment opportunities –** Since there is a lack of employment opportunities due to the town's rural nature, focusing on bringing businesses into town that will provide employment opportunities to residents will encourage them to stay in Nottingham.
- **Training –** There may be opportunity to survey interest in training opportunities for residents, to reveal gaps in existing programs.
- **Economic development –** Devoting more resources to economic development while keeping in balance with Nottingham's rural character will help to enrich the local economy and community feel.

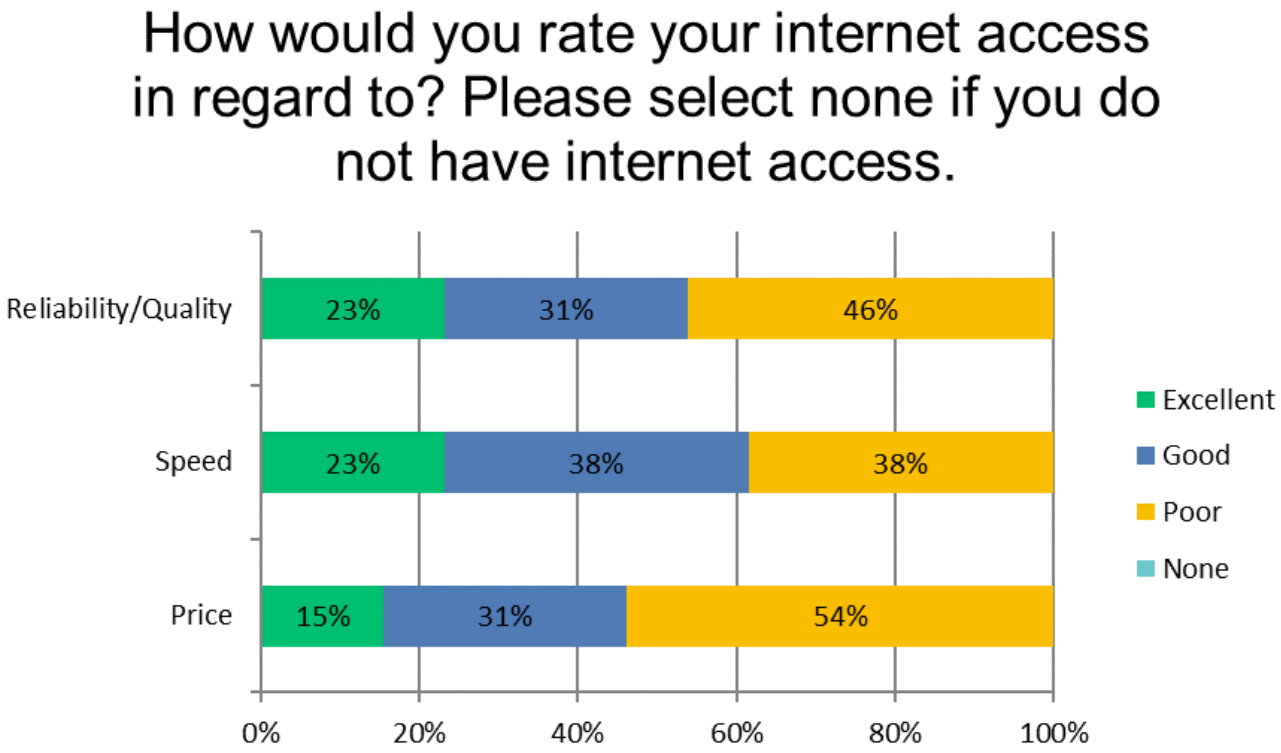
Residents noted that there are "not a lot of job spots," and related to employment trainings, there are "none related to [their] professional background."

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #7 – COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

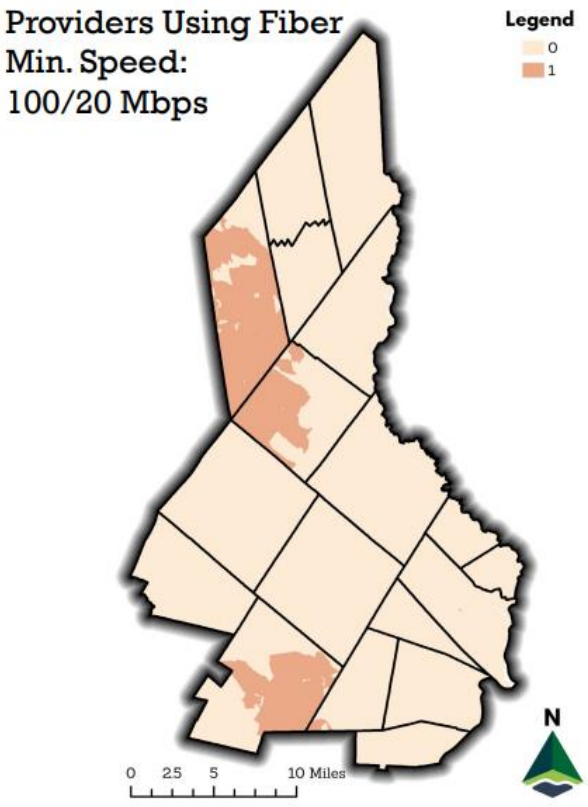
"We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet."[viii]

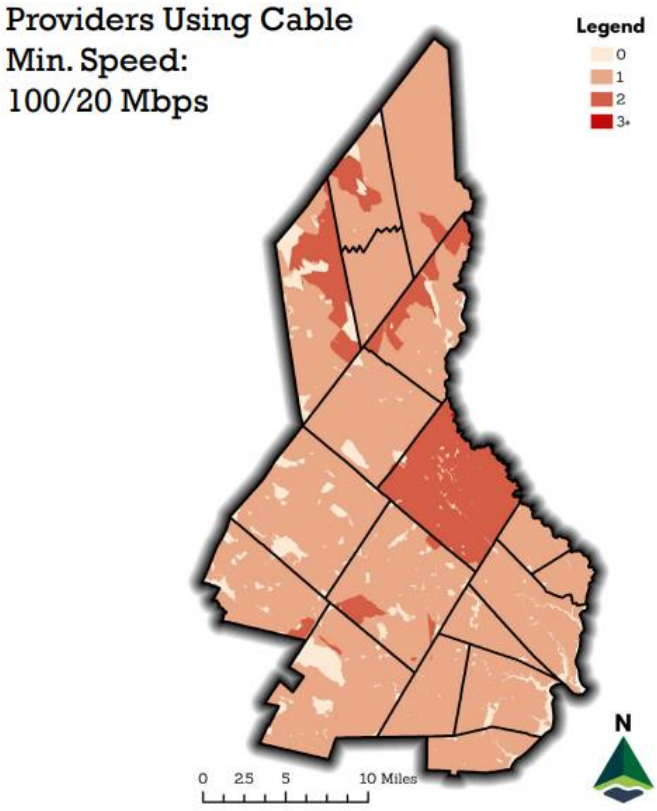
DATA

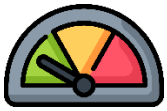




Broadband Access

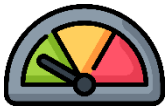






STRENGTHS

- **Communication methods –** ~82% of residents receive information about community news and activities via word of mouth, or newsletters according to survey responses. The town's newsletter is sent to residents through postal mail.
- **Municipal communication –** Nottingham municipality and school utilize cable channels and websites for communication.
- **Social media –** Some residents utilize informal Facebook groups to share information about the Town.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Underutilized communications –** Out of all the outlets to learn about community news and activities, the least used are newspapers, phone calls, and television.
- **Technology gap –** ~58% of survey respondents indicate poor access to internet due to price. Focusing more on communication that is not reliant on residents having internet access could improve flow of information.
- **Staying connected –** Survey respondents expressed concern about staying connected in person and online as they age. There may be potential to hold workshops on aging at the library to enhance communication methods through technology and communicate what kinds of services residents have access to.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #8 – COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES

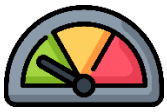
"At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that assistance and care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required."[ix]

DATA

Healthcare and Aging Services	Number of Sites
Assisted Living Sites	0
Nursing Homes	0
Senior Centers	0
Primary Care Providers	5*
Hospitals	0
Community Health Centers	0
Home Health Agencies	6
Memory Cafes	0
Dementia Support Group	0
Total	**11**

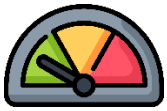
Community Resources	Number of Sites
Places of Worship	1
Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures	2
Libraries	2
Medical and Health Care Facilities	0
Governmental Services	1
Non-Governmental Services	0
Fire and Police Stations	2
Schools	1
TOTAL	**9**

One resident commented they "have to drive 20+/- miles" for certain community and health services. Others suggested having "better medical, hospital, mental health services closer" would help with this issue, especially the mental health component.



STRENGTHS

- **Modes of interaction –** The main forms of social interaction among survey respondents are with friends and family, as well as through services like the library, senior center, or recreation center.
- **Usage of health services –** 100% of survey respondents use primary care health services.
- **Exercise –** Most survey respondents exercise at least once a week.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Elderly services –** At least 2/3 of people who responded to the survey are concerned about access to community services as they age in Nottingham.
- **Food delivery –** Food delivery was the most requested service by residents in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Mental health services –** Residents would like to see an increase in mental health 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.

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[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.nottingham-nh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif3611/f/uploads/chapter6-transportation.pdf

[iv] https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html

[v] https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html

[vi] https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html

[vii] https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html

[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