

Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Senior Citizens: 2019 Findings

Benjamin Church Senior Center



In partial fulfillment of the Rhode Island Foundation's
Organizational Development Grant requirements
for the Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Senior Citizens



presented April 2019 by



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Introduction

The Benjamin Church Senior Center (BCSC) was awarded an Organizational Development grant from the Rhode Island Foundation in September 2019 to conduct a community needs assessment of the local conditions for seniors living in Bristol, followed by strategic planning around priorities discovered through the assessment process.

This report combines research with the results of the town-wide survey undertaken by John Mattson Consulting on behalf of the BCSC. Four hundred and thirteen (413) Bristol residents age 50 and older completed the 52-question survey in November and December of 2019. Additionally, 18 seniors participated in two focus groups in January 2019 and six local leaders were identified as Key Informants and interviewed in February of 2019. The complete results of the survey, focus groups and Key Informant interviews are available in the companion document, “Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Seniors: Survey, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Results.”

Agencies that work with senior citizens in Bristol are encouraged to use the research and survey data presented in this report and its companion document to identify their own priorities and action items for best meeting the needs of older Bristolians.

Key Findings

Demographics

- 24.8% of Bristol's population is age 60 or older.
- Bristol's senior population is predominantly white (99%) and English speaking (73.5%). More than half are married (56.6%) and more than half are female (59.1%).
- 30.3% of Bristolians age 65 or older have an annual household income below \$20,000, with another 28.9% between \$20,000 and \$49,999. 9.1% of Bristolians age 65 or older have incomes below the federal poverty line.
- The number of seniors in Rhode Island is increasing. By the year 2040, the number of people age 74-84 is expected to increase by 100% and the number of people age 85 or older will increase by 72%.

Existing Services in Bristol

- Most Benjamin Church Senior Center (BCSC) survey respondents are satisfied with or have no opinion about the services provided for seniors by the town and the Benjamin Church Senior Center. 48% felt satisfied with the services that are provided by the town, but 45% had no opinion. 54% were satisfied with the services they receive at the BCSC, though 43% had no opinion.
- Lack of awareness of existing programming and services is a significant area for improvement identified by BCSC survey respondents. Even more notable, many respondents were aware of services but still had not made use of them, in part due to perceptions that those services were for "other people" or due to barriers such as transportation or cost. Many expressed confusion or lack of sufficient knowledge about existing services.
- Only 20% of BCSC survey respondents felt that the number of local social services was adequate to meet the town's needs.

Transportation

- 89.1% of BCSC survey respondents retain a valid driver's license. Those without a valid driver's license, rely on family and friends (76.2%), the BCSC bus (27%), and RIPTA (25%) for transportation. Senior drivers are more likely to limit their driving to lower speed roads within 25 miles of home and are at an increased risk for having a serious collision resulting in injury or death.
- 35% of BCSC survey respondents believe there is adequate public transportation in Bristol. Over 60% did not know if public transportation was affordable for seniors.

Basic Needs

- More than half (52%) of (BCSC) survey respondents indicated that affordability of living in Bristol was their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol as they age.
- Bristol's senior population have been Bristolians for many years, with 42.8% of those age 60 or older having lived at the same address for 25 years or more.
- More than half of BCSC survey respondents live in single-family homes with a spouse or partner. 26.6% of Bristolians age 65 or older live alone.
- 36% of BCSC survey respondents did not believe that there was an adequate supply of housing available for older people in Bristol. 37% did not believe that housing in Bristol was affordable for seniors; just 20% thought housing was affordable and 42% did not know. Many respondents mentioned that senior housing is hard to access and is more available for low-income seniors, with moderate-income seniors not qualifying for available housing options, despite the economic strain of remaining in their current living quarters.
- Bristol County is in the bottom third of the country for affordability of housing with an average housing cost of \$1,459 per month compared to the national median cost of \$989 per month. 37% of Bristol households spend more than 30% of their income on housing.
- While Rhode Island ranks first in the country for nursing home quality, it also ranks in the bottom third of the nation in terms of long-term care affordability and access, and choice of setting and provider. Currently there are more seniors in the state needing home health care than there are appropriate providers, with as many as a third of seniors approved for services but unable to receive care.
- 5.7% of Rhode Islanders age 60 or older are considered "very low food secure," the highest percentage in the nation. Those who lack transportation, live alone, lack a high school degree, are female, or are under the age of 70 are more likely to be food insecure.
- 24% of BCSC survey respondents did not believe that healthy food was affordable for seniors in local grocery stores. Focus group participants reported that few restaurants and stores locally offer senior discounts. Many participants reported shopping in other towns to find more affordable prices and greater selection.

Safety

- 75.9% of Bristolians age 60 or older report difficulty living independently. 19.7% report ambulatory difficulty.
- Most BCSC survey respondents feel safe in the physical environment of their home (93.9%) and with those in and around their home (97.0%).
- Bristol's neighborhoods are in the top third in the nation for personal safety and 97.2% of BCSC survey respondents agree that they feel safe in their neighborhood.
- Bristol is somewhat walkable and some errands can be accomplished on foot, but BCSC survey respondents, focus group participants, and Key Informants identified safety issues with existing sidewalks, lack of sidewalks, dim street lights, and poor road conditions, especially on side streets, as significant barriers to the comfort and safety of older Bristolians.
- Roughly half (49.9%) of BCSC survey respondents said that public buildings in Bristol are accessible for older residents. BCSC survey respondents and Key Informants identified a

need for more handicapped parking spaces downtown, and many survey respondents described traffic in town as a barrier to their comfort and safety.

Physical and Mental Well-Being

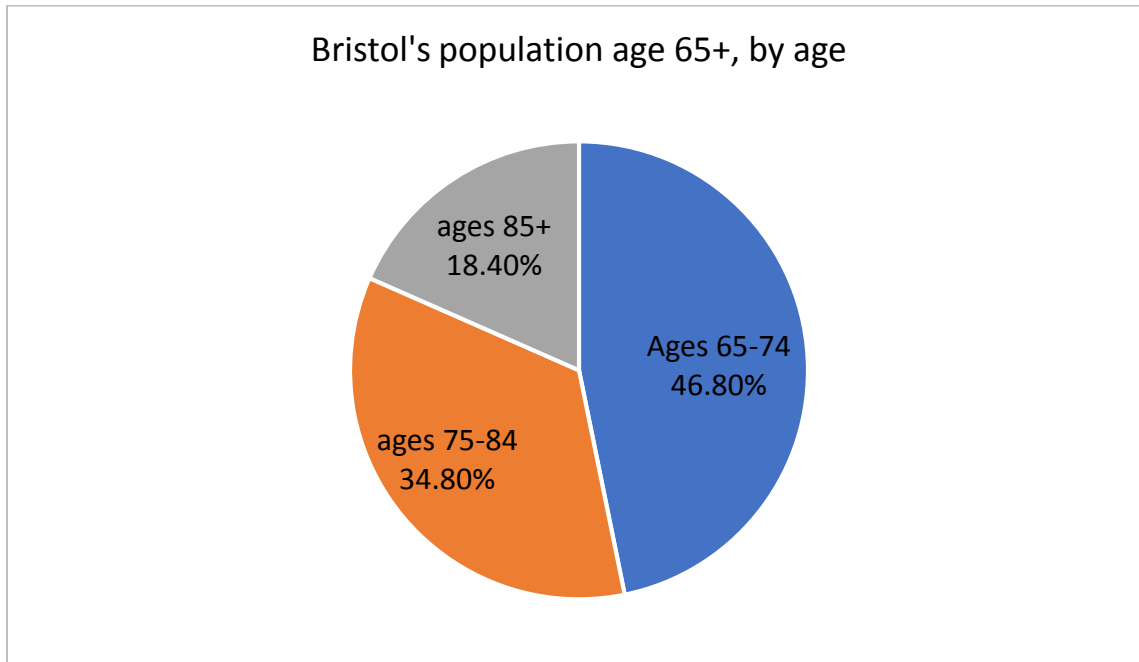
- For most health indicators, older Bristolians are healthier than the RI state averages. 72.5% of Bristolians age 65 or older engaged in some kind of physical activity within the last month and most (93.5%) have had a physical exam in the last year.
- 90.2% of BCSC survey respondents said that they have access to preventative health services and 98.5% said they have access to medical services when they need them.
- More than half (59.4%) of Bristolians age 65 or older suffer from four or more chronic health conditions.
- 96.3% of adults in Rhode Island age 65 or older with a diagnosed depressive disorder do not receive formal mental healthcare treatment.
- 14.3% of older Bristolians have Alzheimer's or related dementias. Alzheimer's is the fifth leading cause of death in Rhode Island and one in nine Rhode Islanders over the age of 45 experiences confusion or memory loss that is happening with increasing frequency or getting worse. Almost half (48.4%) of those experiencing confusion have not talked to a health care professional about the issue. Key Informants identified older Bristolians with mental disabilities and/or the inability to make decisions for themselves as an underserved population in need of increased care.

Social and Civic Engagement

- Older Bristolians have strong social and community ties, with 75.8% talking with family and friends almost daily. 86% of BCSC survey respondents felt satisfied with their connections with family and friends.
- Older adults in Rhode Island rank high in indicators for social isolation, including living alone (26.6% of Bristolians age 65 or older live alone), having few social network ties, and having infrequent social contact.
- Most BCSC survey respondents were satisfied with their opportunities to participate in civic activities (68.9%), cultural activities (65.7%), religious activities (72.3%), recreational activities (64.4%), and volunteer activities (49.5%).

Demographics

According to the Tufts Health Plan Bristol Healthy Aging Community Profile from 2016, 18.5% of Bristol's residents are age 65 or older and 24.8% of the population are age 60 or older.¹ Households with at least one individual age 65 or older account of 31.9% of Bristol's households.²



The Benjamin Church Senior Center (BCSC) conducted a survey in November and December of 2019 (hereafter BCSC Survey) of Bristolians age 50 and older. The survey process was undertaken by John Mattson Consulting. Four hundred and thirteen (413) surveys were successfully completed, though it is important to note that respondents were largely representative of Bristolians age 50-65 (37.3% of respondents), with 25.7% of respondents in the 56-64 age group. While their voice is important to the future of seniors in Bristol, they are not necessarily representative of the full picture of older residents found in the demographics and research presented throughout this report aside from the survey results.

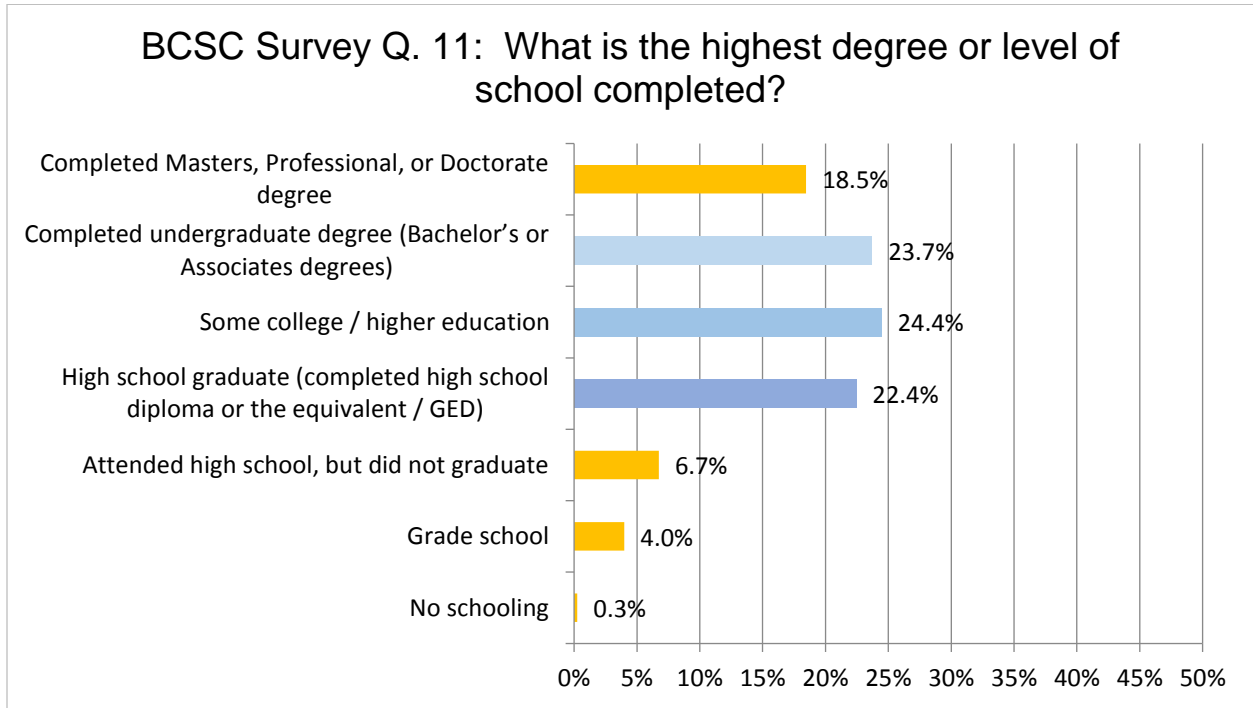
Tufts found that of Bristolians age 65 or older, 59.1% are female and 99.0% are white. Additionally, 73.5% of those age 65 or older exclusively speak English at home. (5% of BCSC survey respondents indicated that they speak Portuguese at home.) Only 1.2% of Bristol residents age 65 or older identify as LGBT. More than half (56.6%) of Bristol's senior citizens are married, while an additional 29.1% are widowed, 7.6% are divorced or separated, and 6.6% were never married. (Tufts)

Bristol's senior citizens have varied educational attainment levels. Roughly half (46.9%) have at least a high school education or some college, with 27.3% having less than a high school education,

¹ "Rhode Island Healthy Aging Community Profile (Bristol)."

² Data Access and Dissemination Systems (DADS).

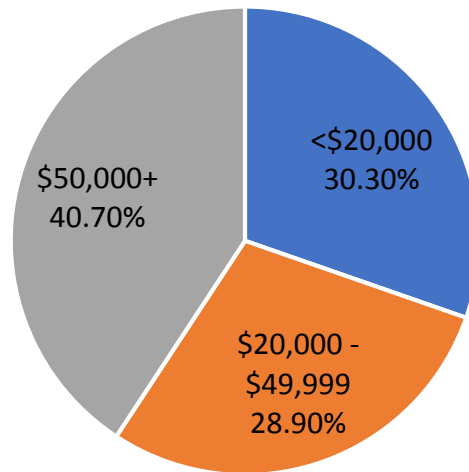
and a further 25.8% having at least one college degree. 22.7% of those age 65 or older are veterans of military service. (Tufts) The BCSC survey responses about educational attainment are below:



Graph originally appeared in "Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Seniors: Survey, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Results" by John Mattson Consulting.

9.1% of Bristol residents age 65 or older have incomes below the poverty level. 17.1% of Bristol residents age 65 or older have worked for wages in the past year. Of those age 60 or older, 10.5% received food stamps in the past year (Tufts).

Annual Household Income for Bristol Residents age 65+



Of Bristol residents age 60 or older, 42.8% have lived at the same address for 25 years or more. 45.3% of those age 60 or older own a home and 46.3% have a mortgage (Tufts). Over half of BCSC survey respondents (54.0%) reported living in a single-family home, 17.9% reported living in senior housing, 14.8% in apartments, 7.0% in a townhouse or condominium, and 4.1% in a multifamily home. Only 1% reported living in an assisted living facility and 1.4% reported “other.” No respondent reported living in a nursing home or being homeless. When asked about monthly housing expenses, more than half of the respondents to the BCSC survey (54.5%) included property taxes. A further 33.9% pay rent and 6.1% pay homeowners association fees. Only 6.1% reported having no housing expenses at all.

More than half of all BCSC survey respondents reported living with a spouse or partner (54.0%), while 36.8% reported that they live alone (26.6% of Bristolians age 65 or older live alone). Nearly 14% of survey respondents live with a child, 1.9% live with another a relative, 1.2% live with their own parents, and 1.2% reported living with “someone else.”

According to City-Data, in the year 2000, 517 people in Bristol lived in nursing homes³ and Rhode Island ranked first in the country for nursing home quality based on the number of available nursing home beds with four- or five-star Medicare and Medicaid ratings.⁴ Rhode Island was ranked in the bottom third of the nation, as of 2014, in terms of long term care affordability and access (ranked 36 out of 50) and choice of setting and provider (ranked 38 out of 50). The average cost of long-term care services in Rhode Island also exceeds the national average in all areas except that of adult day care services according to Genworth’s study of Long Term Care Costs and Cost of Care in 2015⁵:

³ “Bristol, Rhode Island.” *Bristol, Rhode Island (RI 02809) Profile*.

⁴ United Health Foundation.

⁵ “Rhode Island Senior Guide.”

Long Term Care Costs (2015), RI vs. National Averages		
Care Type	RI Average Cost	National Average Cost
Home Health Care (8 hours per week)	\$863	\$693
Adult Day Care (Weekdays only)	\$1,441	\$1,492
Assisted Living	\$5,325	\$3,600
Homemaker Services (44 hours per week)	\$4,481	\$3,721
Home Health Care (44 hours per week)	\$4,744	\$3,813
Nursing Home (Semi-Private, double occupancy room for 1 person)	\$7,756	\$6,692
Nursing Home (Private, single occupancy room for 1 person)	\$8,593	\$7,604

The Collaborative reports that health care support occupations such as CNAs, personal care aides, and home health aides are expected to grow in Rhode Island 13% by 2026. This is good news for Rhode Island’s seniors, as currently there are more seniors needing home health care workers than there are workers to staff the positions. Wait times for staff typically range from two to four weeks after approval of services, but as many as 20% of people who are referred for services from home health aides are turned away due to an insufficient number of workers. The Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs estimates that more than a third of seniors approved for services each month are unable to receive care due to the inability to locate an appropriate health care provider.⁶

Only 7.2% of those who completed the BCSC survey reported that they had a caregiver to help them in their daily life, with 37.9% of those reporting that they are cared for by a spouse or partner. Another 36.8% listed “others” as their main caregivers, with 23% receiving care from their children and 1.2% from another relative. Over 75% of those who report having a caregiver are being cared for by a family member or partner; only 5.8% report receiving care from a paid professional and 3.5% from a visiting nurse. About 37% of those with a caregiver receive care full time. 48.2% only have care available for a few hours each week and 13.05% have someone available for just a few hours each day. Only 10.3% of those who reported needing the help of a caregiver pay someone for this service.

The number of senior citizens in Rhode Island is on the rise. RI Aging in Community reports that by the year 2030, the number of people age 65 or older is expected to account for 23% of Rhode Island’s population. By the year 2040, the number of people age 74-84 in Rhode Island is expected to increase by 100% and people age 85 or older will increase by 72%.⁷

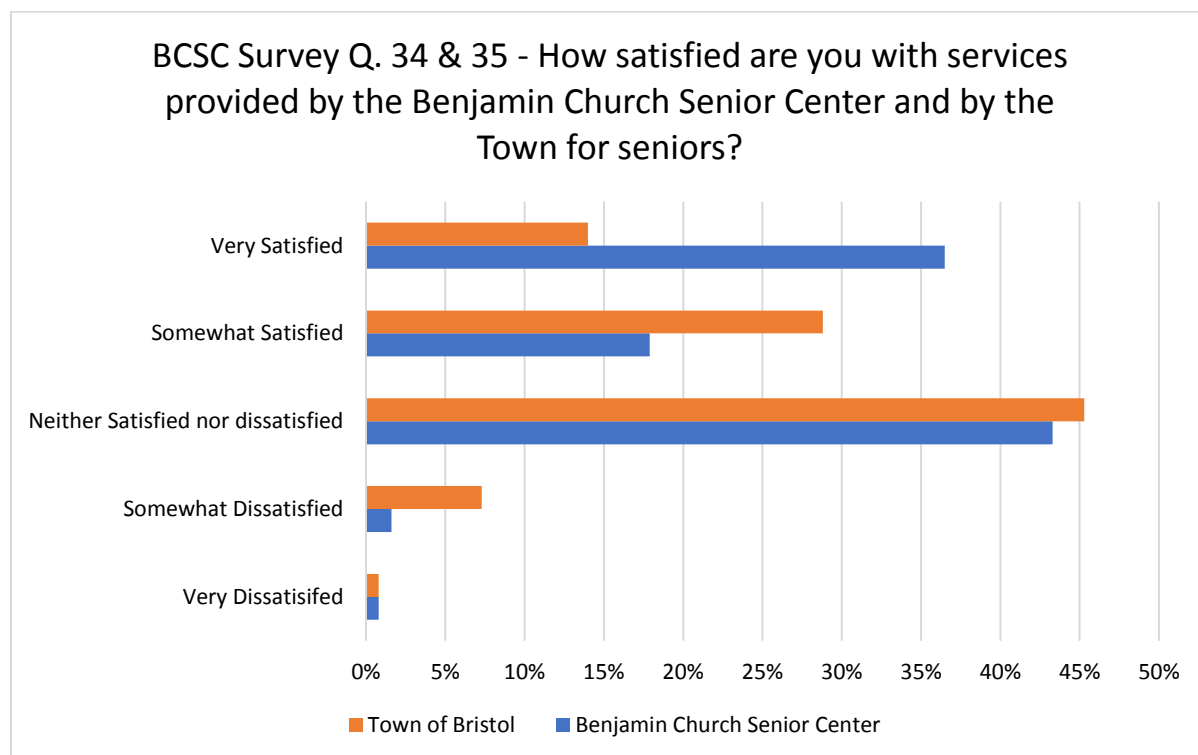
⁶ Milbourne, Connie, et al.

⁷ Maigret, Maureen, chair.

Existing Services in Bristol

Currently, many nonprofit, municipal and religious organizations provide services to Bristol's senior citizens. More than one Key Informant to the BCSC survey spoke about a lack of coordination of local senior services and too much duplication of available services. One Key Informant called for more cooperation between the town and the groups providing services, and for the needs of seniors to be given more consideration at the town level. Overall, the consensus of Key Informants was that the town is doing a good job at providing services for older Bristolians, but that more attention is needed by local leaders to meet the higher service demands of an increasing older population.

Respondents to the BCSC survey were asked about their level of satisfaction with those services for older adults provided by the Benjamin Church Senior Center and those provided by the town. In both cases, nearly half reported that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the current services.



Agencies providing services specifically targeted to residents age 50 or older are listed below:

Nonprofit:

Benjamin Church Senior Center, Inc.



Since 1972, the Benjamin Church Senior Center has continuously served Bristol's senior citizens. The Center operates with a mission of promoting health, dignity and quality of life throughout the journey of aging. Their vision is to provide a centralized location for our seniors to connect with their peers and stay engaged in active living. We strive to establish a setting that is inviting and promotes social, emotional, and physical well-being, as well as lifelong learning. Programs and services include daily meal, SHIP health insurance counseling, recreational and wellness programs, and offering transportation to Center services as well as community-based services (medical, shopping, hair stylist, church, food pantry, etc.).

East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP)

EBCAP is a private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation that provides a wide array of health and human services to the residents of Rhode Island's East Bay. Specific to seniors, EBCAP offers senior volunteer opportunities such as the Foster Grandparent Program and East Bay Retired and Senior Volunteer Program; East Bay Senior Medicare Patrol Program helps Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries prevent, detect and report health care fraud; A Matter of Balance workshops that are designed to benefit older adults who are concerned about falls; Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is a seasonal program that normally runs from October-April, the Ocean State Senior Dining Program provides a well-balanced catered meal to senior citizens and disabled individuals in a social setting (Bristol's site is the Benjamin Church Senior Center); the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP); and various services to provide seniors with options and resources to help them remain in the community and avoid falls, hospitalizations and nursing home placement.

East Bay Community Development Corporation (East Bay CDC)

The nonprofit organization addresses the town's affordable housing needs and the only monitoring agent in the East Bay. The East Bay CDC owns and manages **Franklin Court Independent Living** with 96 units of low-income senior housing and **Franklin Court Assisted Living**, with 68 affordable apartments. Franklin Court Assisted Living is one of only two assisted living facilities in Rhode Island that can offer Medicaid waivers to low income elderly needing financial assistance. There is currently a 4-year wait list for senior units in the Franklin Court Independent Living. Page 73 of Bristol's Comprehensive Plan 2016 (adopted 2017)

East Bay Food Pantry (EBFP)

EBFP operates with a mission of engaging, educating, and empowering the East Bay in creating a hunger-free community. Last year EBFP served 2,228 low-income, at-risk individuals living with food insecurity. The majority of clients reside in Bristol (42%) and 33% percent are senior citizens, which is a growing population (5% increase in seniors served in 2017 and another 2% increase in 2018). Specific programs serving Bristol seniors include Food4Seniors – providing a monthly box of nutritious USDA food to supplement seniors' monthly pantry visits; Mobile Pantry –delivering pantry food to homebound (elderly & disabled) clients; in partnership with the Benjamin Church Senior Center transportation is offered to and from the pantry and senior citizens' homes four times monthly; a Mobile Cart delivers food and personal items to the apartments of senior residents at Franklin Court Assisted Living.



Meals on Wheels of RI

The agency meets the nutritional and other special needs of Rhode Island's elderly in order to help them maintain their independent lifestyles. Last year Meals on Wheels of RI provided more than 6,500 complete, home-delivered meals to 55 Bristol seniors and other homebound adults. The Benjamin Church Senior Center is the drop off site for meals, which are then picked up and distributed throughout town by volunteers.

Visiting Nurse Home & Hospice

The agency is a not-for-profit, independent home caregivers and hospice agency providing optimal health and quality of life since 1950. Visiting Nurses partners with Rogers Free Library, St. Mary's Church (Harbor Lights) and the Benjamin Church Senior Center to offer monthly wellness services at the Center such as blood pressure checks, flu shots, bereavement groups, cholesterol and glucose screenings.

Religious Organizations

There are various houses of worship within Bristol who each care for their senior members in a variety of ways. These include:

- First Baptist Church
- First Congregational Church
- Freedom Road Baptist Church
- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church
- St. Elizabeth's Church
- St. Michael's Episcopal Church
- United Brothers Synagogue

Public / Municipal:

Bristol Housing Authority

The Housing Authority oversees **Benjamin Church Manor**, 220 units which are rented to persons who are 62 years of age or older whose income does not exceed \$40,450 for one person and \$46,200 for two persons as of 2014 data. Eligible applicants are placed on the waiting list with preference given to Bristol residents. According to the Executive Director, there are 148 people currently on the waiting list (as of April 15, 2019).

The Bristol Housing Authority also administers the **Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program**, which provides federal assistance for low-income people to live in private apartments. The program currently has 156 vouchers being used in Bristol and there are 3,000 people on the waiting list (as of April 15, 2019). This number represents people who prefer Bristol. There are 48

senior citizens currently on the Section 8 program and approximately 100 on the Section 8 wait list are seniors (3.3%).

The Bristol Housing Authority owns the historic Benjamin Church building, which has served as the town's senior center for more than 40 years. The senior center is currently under the leadership of the nonprofit Benjamin Church Senior Center, Inc.

Bristol Police Department

Members of the Bristol Police Department, in cooperation with the people of Bristol and in partnership with other public and private agencies, assume a leadership role through a problem-solving approach, working together to make Bristol truly New England's outstanding "community by the sea," to:

- Prevent crime and disorder;
- Reducing citizen fear of crime;
- Providing for the safe and efficient flow of traffic;
- Providing a variety of noncriminal activities;
- Improving the quality of life.

Specific to serving Bristol seniors, the department offers senior citizens a brightly colored informational card they can display on their refrigerator. The card has pertinent information about the senior resident, such as name, date of birth, medical and emergency contacts, etc. During an emergency, medical rescue crews know where to look for this information. In addition, an officer meets with seniors monthly at the Benjamin Church Senior Center for informative discussions called, "Coffee with a Cop."

Department of Social Services and Public Welfare of the Town of Bristol

The mission of the Department is to serve low-and moderate-income individuals and families struggling to make ends meet by providing basic needs assistance in areas such as home heating and utility payment referrals, food, and limited rental assistance. As part of the department's responsibility to the community, it also makes referrals to appropriate state and local agencies regarding food assistance, elderly affairs, health care, child welfare concerns, and other issues.

Resident Suggestions for Improvements to Services

BCSC survey respondents were asked about their single greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol. Several responded with comments about existing services provided to older Bristolians, including expressing a desire for an independent living community or a 55+ housing community in Bristol.

Many respondents identified a need for better coordination of services across the town. One respondent identified the "outward fighting among the people in town who are supplying the services to seniors" as their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely, while one other identified "political agendas" and yet another stated that their "lack of trust in our politicians to do the right thing" was their greatest barrier. One respondent specifically identified a need for the

Town Council to “become better informed about seniors and activities they would like.” Others expressed frustration that “funding of senior programs and benefits keep getting cut,” with a few specifically identifying the need for more funding for the Benjamin Church Senior Center. Finally, others expressed that they felt the BCSC was “too political” or that “the Town doesn’t appear to support seniors,” leading to a general feeling of confusion about senior services currently available in Bristol and if those services will be available in the future.

Other comments are summarized below, grouped by service provider:

Benjamin Church Manor

A desire for off-street parking for visitors, especially for handicapped visitors and those picking up or dropping off residents was expressed by several respondents. Others commented on the lack of available apartments / long wait time for apartments at Benjamin Church Manor, and one respondent suggested specific upgrades to existing apartments, including heated floors and washers and dryers in every residential building. One respondent also commented on the desire for more rent control. Several respondents expressed appreciation for the office and maintenance staff.

Benjamin Church Senior Center

Several respondents made comments about the senior bus, requesting an additional bus or larger bus to be able to provide more transportation to medical and dental appointments and longer transportation hours, especially evening hours. (Transportation was identified by many as their greatest barrier, with a few identifying the BCSC bus as way to remedy the solution.) One respondent noted that the size of the BCSC limits the number of participants to events. Several BCSC respondents identified the BCSC as their “primary place for activities, transport, [and] meals” and expressed appreciation for the activities, information, and staff.

Key Informant Suggestions for Improvement

Key Informants to the BCSC survey were asked to provide suggestions for improving the existing services to seniors living in Bristol. Key Informants identified the following areas of opportunity:

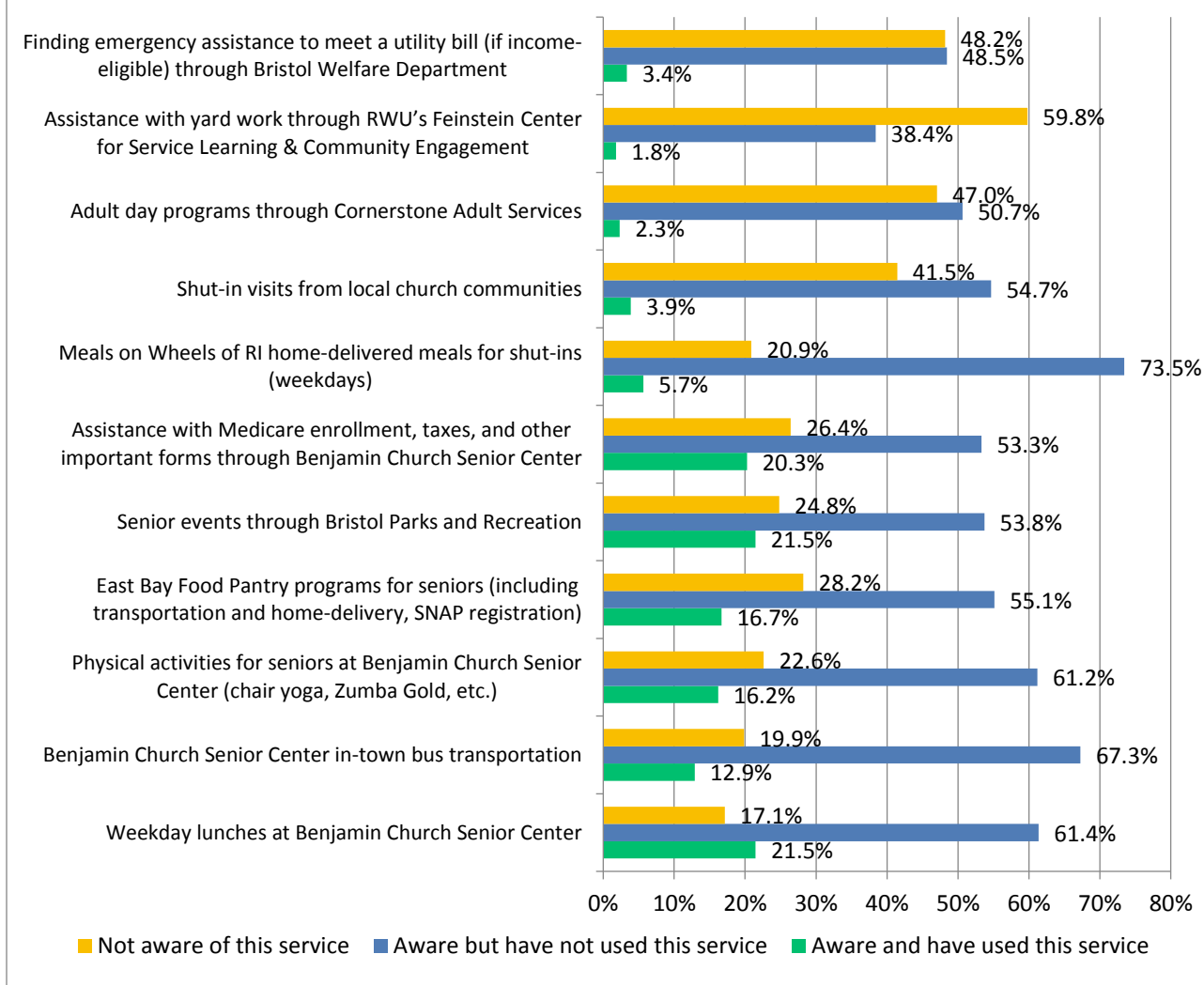
- Better transportation options
- More funding for and town support of the Benjamin Church Senior Center
- Better coordination of senior services across town to reduce duplication of efforts
- Better, more affordable housing options to serve moderate-income residents age 50 and older
- More space devoted to senior activities, especially in the winter months
- More handicapped parking in town and at Benjamin Church Senior Center
- Better maintenance of sidewalks and side streets, including adequate lighting, and expansion of sidewalks to areas not currently being served
- More affordable assistance for homeowners and renters for yard care, snow removal, and other small home improvement and maintenance projects
- Better dissemination of information about available senior services

One Key Informant stressed the importance of evaluating the efforts of senior services to know if the services currently being offered are successful, while yet another thought it was important to continue to plan for the projected increase in the senior population. All Key Informants emphasized that public and elected officials in Bristol should prioritize the needs of seniors and give senior residents more opportunity to have a voice about their own needs.

Awareness of Services

Survey respondents reported on their level of awareness with specific senior services available in Bristol, including if they had ever used the service. Several respondents commented that their lack of awareness of services was their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol. The graph below illustrates level of awareness as well as use of service. It is notable how many people were aware of services but had not used them (indicated by the blue line):

BCSC Survey Q. 21 - Express your level of awareness with each of the senior services available in Bristol.



Graph originally appeared in "Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Seniors: Survey, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Results" by John Mattson Consulting.

Focus group participants shared that their best sources for information about available services are the "Senior Bulletin," the Benjamin Church Senior Center, the Bristol town hall, and the town's website. Concerningly, many focus group participants were unsure where to go if they needed to ask for help, with one participant stating, "Where would you get started? There is no place to go." Key informants to the BCSC survey identified better information dissemination and public relations about senior services and programs as an important need.

Respondents were also asked about their level of satisfaction with the availability of programs to help older Bristolians sign up for services. 42.2% were very or somewhat satisfied, with only 8.0% expressing some level of dissatisfaction with the level of services. Nearly half (49.9%) reported that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

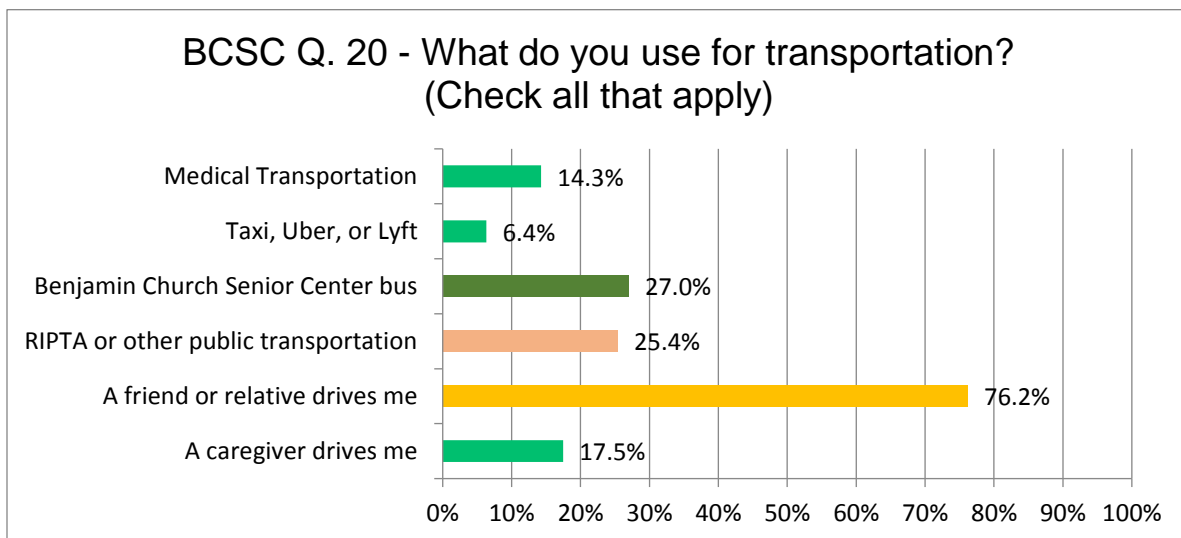
Similarly, most respondents (60.1%) were uncertain about if there are an adequate number of social services available in Bristol to assist older adults. Less than a third (27.7%) responded that they did think there were enough local social services, while 12.2% said there were not enough services. This underlines the lack of awareness among Bristol's older residents about the existing services in town available to them.

Transportation

The majority of the BCSC survey respondents (89.1%) still have a valid driver's license; just 10.9% do not have a valid driver's license. Of those who do not have a valid driver's license, over half (54.6%) gave up their license voluntarily and 43.1% never had a driver's license in the first place. The remaining 11.4% either had their license suspended or revoked. In Rhode Island, people age 75 or older are required to renew their driver's license every two years (as opposed to every five), including passing a vision test.

Nationally, "senior drivers are at a higher risk of having a serious collision per mile driven than any other age group except for those under age 25. Drivers in their late 70s have about the same number of injury-involved crashes per mile driven as drivers in their early 20s" (AAA). Once a driver reaches age 85 or older, their risk of being injured or killed in a car accident is higher than any other age group due to their increased fragility.⁸ Drivers aged 75-79 generally drive the fewest miles and least amount of time per month than drivers age 65-74; they also drive on fewer high speed roads and tend to make most of their trips within 25 miles of home.⁹ Interestingly, drivers in their 60s were found to be the safest drivers by most measures, including the lowest rate of car accidents (AAA Foundation).¹⁰

BCSC survey respondents who do not drive themselves were asked to report what they use for transportation. 76.2% of respondents rely on a friend or relative as their primary means of transportation. The next most popular means of transportation was the Benjamin Church Senior Center bus with 27.0% of responses and RIPTA or other public transportation with 25.4% of responses.



Graph originally appeared in "Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Seniors: Survey, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Results" by John Mattson Consulting.

⁸ AAA Senior Driving,

⁹ Vivoda, Jonathon M., et al.

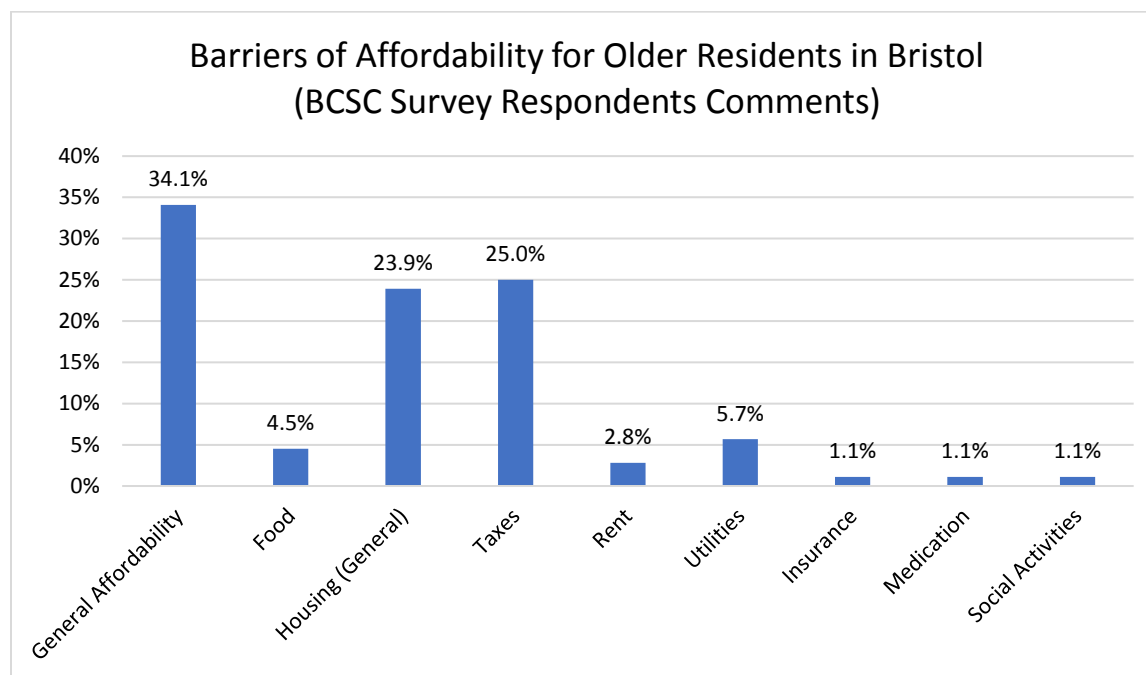
¹⁰ Tefft, Brian.

Survey respondents were also asked if they felt there was adequate public transportation available in Bristol. 38.6% of respondents indicated that they did not know, 35.0% agreed that there was adequate public transportation, and 26.4% said that there was not adequate public transportation. Similarly, a majority of respondents (61.4%) did not know if public transportation was affordable for Bristol's older residents. Just 28.2% indicated that public transportation is in fact affordable for older residents, with 10.4% saying that it is not affordable.

When asked to identify their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol, many BCSC survey respondents identified transportation as their greatest issue. Specific complaints included that RIPTA "does not access cross streets to Metacom;" difficulty in getting to doctors and other medical appointments outside of Bristol and Warren; and a lack of public transportation options in the late afternoon. Some respondents suggested a "regular shuttle loop around town" separate from RIPTA to assist in meeting the public transportation needs of older Bristolians.

Basic Needs

BCSC survey respondents were asked to consider their single greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol. More than half (52%) of those who identified a barrier, responded with an issue surrounding the affordability of living in Bristol as they age. Their responses are summarized in the chart below:



Housing

BCSC survey respondents were asked to consider their satisfaction level with the available services to help older Bristolians with basic needs such as housing and food. Nearly half of respondents (48.1%) were either very or somewhat satisfied, with only 6.7% reporting being dissatisfied to some extent. 45.3% indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the current level of available services.

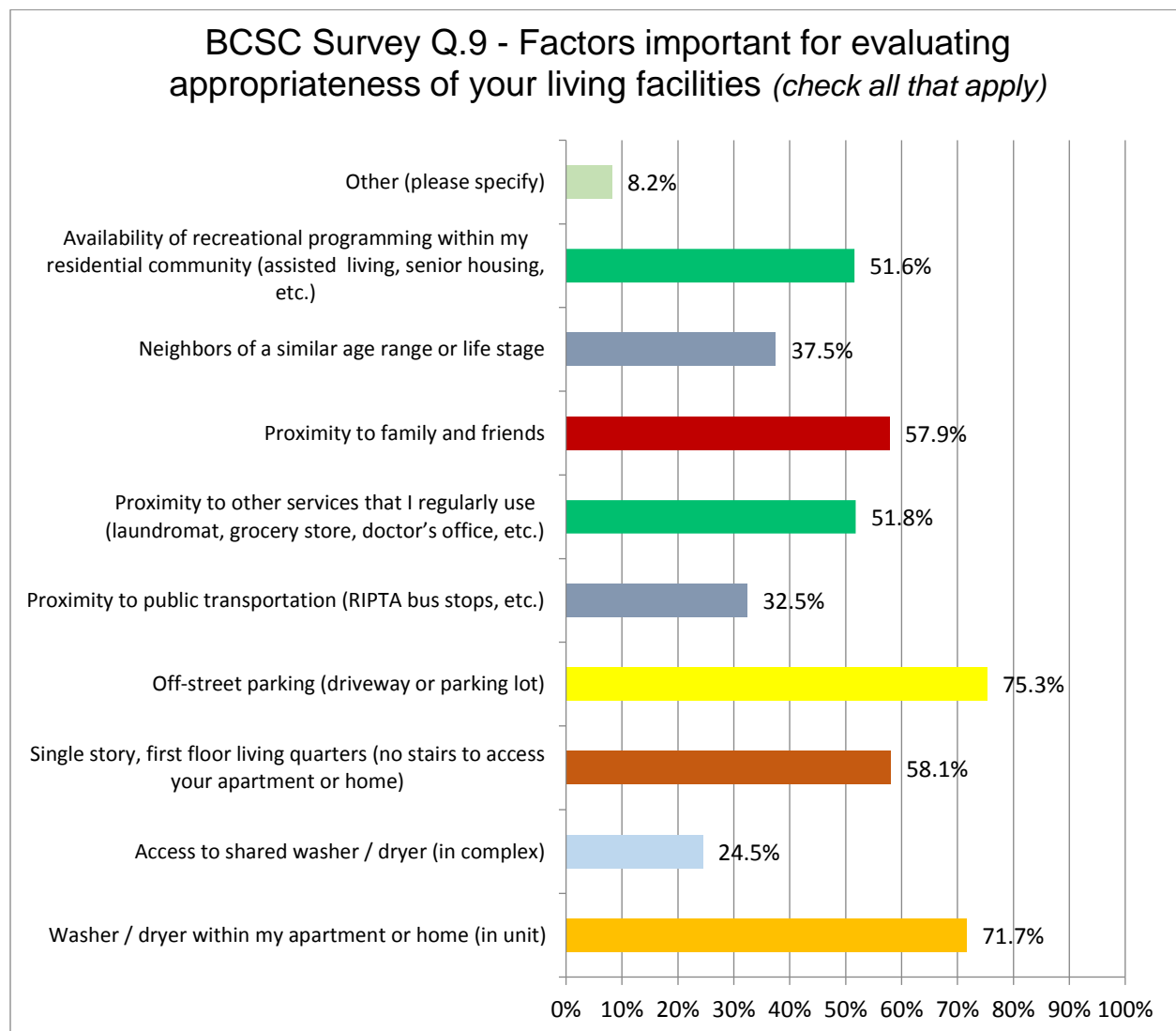
According to AAARP's Livability Index, Bristol County has an overall housing score of 44 out of 100 (with 100 being the best possible score). 43.6% of housing units are estimated to have zero-step entrances, allowing for greater accessibility.¹¹ According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2015, the best strategies for age-friendly housing are:

- Bright lighting at entrances
- Wide entryways and doorways (36 inches)
- Bedroom and full bathroom on the main floor
- Bathroom with a shower with a seat and no threshold
- Lever-style handles instead of knob-style handles

¹¹ "AARP Livability Index."

- Non-slip flooring
- Sturdy hand rails on both sides of stairs
- Anti-scald faucets
- Stair-treads
- Adhesive treads and grab bars in the shower
- Remove clutter

BCSC survey respondents were also asked to consider the most important factors for evaluating the appropriateness of their living facilities. The top two responses were off-street parking, such as a driveway or parking lot (75.3%) and having a washer/dryer within their residence (71.7%). Over 50% of respondents selected each of the following: living in single story or first floor facility with no stairs, near family and friends, near services that they regularly use, and having recreational programming available nearby.



Graph originally appeared in "Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Seniors: Survey, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Results" by John Mattson Consulting.

Other comments included: specific accommodations or assistance within the living facility itself (walk-in showers, pet-friendly communities and facilities, garage, heat, snow removal, non-smoking facility, parking for visitors, and a small space for gardening); proximity to or inclusion of services, amenities and recreational opportunities (fitness center, pool, garden space, transportation to doctor’s offices and local churches, proximity to adult education, social activities, internet access, an on-site hair dresser); affordability; and safety, especially with regards to walking and safety measures on the doors and windows.

38.5% of housing units are available in multi-family housing (the median availability in United States neighborhoods is 17.8%), putting Bristol County in the top third of the country for availability of multi-family housing. 36 units of subsidized housing are available per 10,000 people (AAARP).

The average housing cost in Bristol County is \$1,459 per month, compared to a national median cost of \$989 per month. This puts Bristol County in the bottom third of the country for affordability of housing (AARP). According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data for 2006-2010, 37% of Bristol households spend more than 30% of their income on housing.¹² BCSC survey respondents were asked if housing in Bristol was affordable for senior residents. 42.5% said they did not know, while 37.1% said that it is not affordable and 20.5% said that it is affordable.

The Town of Bristol’s 2016 Comprehensive Plan lists 9,015 year-round housing units of which 535 qualify as long-term affordable with 359 of those reserved for the elderly. The Plan states: “Based on the population projections and the current housing inventory, there will be a need for additional housing for seniors and/or provisions for more residents to age in place.” In order to meet Rhode Island Housing’s 10% threshold for affordable housing, Bristol would need to add an additional 367 affordable units; according to the Income Housing Act of 2004 Bristol intends to meet this 10% affordable housing threshold by 2035, but it is important to note than these units are not specific to seniors.

BCSC survey respondents were asked if Bristol had an adequate number of housing units available for older residents. About half (47.6%) did not know if there were enough housing units available, while 35.8% said they did not believe there were enough units available and only 16.6% said there was enough housing to meet the needs of Bristol’s older residents.

Current community-based housing options for low-income seniors in Bristol are as follows:

Location	Number of Units	Wait List
Benjamin Church Manor	220 units	148 individuals on the current wait list
Franklin Court Assisted Living	68 units	Unknown
Franklin Court Independent Living	96 units	4-year current wait list
Section 8 Housing Voucher	156 vouchers	3,000 on current wait list, 100 of whom are seniors

¹² “Town of Bristol 2016 Comprehensive Plan”

Several BCSC survey respondents, however, identified a need for affordable housing options for middle-income seniors, noting that they do not qualify for subsidized housing but cannot afford the other housing options in Bristol. Several expressed a desire for affordable independent living facilities and a 55+ residential community in town, saying “Some of us will have higher incomes during retirement and will be overqualified income-wise to be on the list for Benjamin Church Manor apartments. A townhouse community dedicated for those over 55 needs to be planned and built. We should not have to leave our beloved town to find living arrangements elsewhere.”

Other survey respondents and focus group participants stated that it is difficult to downsize in Bristol, feeling that renters prefer or cater to the Roger Williams University students who will pay more than the older residents. Key Informants echoed the survey respondents’ sentiments about affordability of housing, especially for moderate-income seniors, identifying the increasing costs of housing, including high rents on residential properties, local property tax increases, and a lack of available moderately priced homes and apartments for those who wish to downsize and retire in the area as among some of the top senior needs in Bristol.

A 2008 national survey by the American Seniors Housing Association found that 41% of seniors want to remain in their communities, with their primary reasons being their friends, family, safety from crime, and enjoyment of their community. The survey also found that nearly 25% of senior homeowners had not made improvements to their homes in the last decade.¹³

Food

In the United States, nearly one in every six seniors faces the threat of hunger and malnourishment (Aging in Place).¹⁴ In Rhode Island, 5.7% of those age 60 or older are considered “very low food secure.” This is the highest percentage in the United States. In 2016 (the most recent data available), 13.6% of Rhode Island seniors were found to be “marginally food insecure” and a further 9% were found to be “food insecure” (Feeding America).¹⁵ Bristolians in general spend an average of 18.9% of their monthly income on food at the grocery store (City-Data).

The 2017 Rhode Island Food Strategy notes that lack of transportation is a primary barrier to senior citizens accessing food.¹⁶ Those who live alone are also more likely to be food insecure. The National Foundation to End Senior Hunger states that “those living alone are twice as likely to experience hunger compared to married seniors.”¹⁷ Seniors under the age of 70 are more likely to be food insecure than those age 70 or older, as are seniors with a high school degree or less (Aging in Place). A higher percentage of senior women (60%) were found to be very low food insecure than senior men (40%) (Feeding America).

¹³ “Measuring the Costs and Savings of Aging in Place”

¹⁴ “The Facts Behind Senior Hunger”

¹⁵ “The State of Senior Hunger in America 2016.”

¹⁶ 2017 RI Food Strategy

¹⁷ “Senior Hunger and Food Insecurity.”

The effect of the stock market volatility in 2007 on seniors cannot be underestimated. Seniors' wealth, including retirement funds, insurance payouts, and pension checks, were impacted and, from 2007 – 2014, there was a 67% increase in senior hunger, in part due to this recession (Aging in Place).

BCSC survey respondents were asked if healthy food is affordable for older Bristolians. 39.1% of respondents indicated that healthy food is affordable, with 23.8% indicating that it is not affordable and a further 37.1% reporting that they did not know. Food group participants felt that food shopping opportunities in Bristol are limited, with many choosing to shop out of town in order to find less expensive options. They also felt that the restaurants in town are generally not affordable; participants believe the restaurants cater to tourists and most do not offer senior discounts.

Community-based options in Bristol that address food insecurity include:

- Benjamin Church Senior Center weekday meals – 5,330 meals / individuals served in 2018. This represents a 2.7% increase over 2017. Meals are provided by EBCAP and the senior bus is used to transport individuals to the food pantry and grocery stores on a weekly basis.
- East Bay Food Pantry – 735 seniors served in 2018. This represented a 2% increase over 2017. Special programs serving the elderly include home delivery of meals and supplemental food for seniors.
- Meals on Wheels of RI – 6,500 complete, home-delivered meals provided to 55 Bristol seniors in 2018. Volunteers deliver on weekdays, picking up meals at Benjamin Church Senior Center.
- Bristol Department of Social Services and Public Welfare provides basic needs assistance such as food assistance.

Safety

In Home

The number of U.S seniors dying from falls has increased 31% in the last ten years. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from May 2018, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and nonfatal injuries among adults age 65 and older, with those age 85 and older at the most risk for fatal falls.¹⁸ The Tufts Health Plan Foundation Healthy Aging Community Profile for Bristol from 2016 found that 8.6% of Bristol seniors reported they were injured by falling in the last year.

26.6% of Bristolians aged 65 or older live alone. The Administration on Aging has linked the social isolation that often comes with living alone to poor health outcomes for seniors, including dementia, depression, increased risk for falls, and increased hospitalizations. 75.8% of Bristol seniors age 60 or older reported that they had difficulty living independently and ambulatory difficulty was reported by 19.7% of Bristol residents age 60 or older (Tufts). Some BCSC survey respondents identified home and property maintenance as their single greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol, including snow removal, yard care, assistance during power outages, and general handyman services. Others worried about falling while living alone or difficulty with climbing the stairs in their current living facility.

BCSC survey respondents were also asked to consider the most important factors for evaluating the appropriateness of their living facilities. The top two responses were off-street parking, such as a driveway or parking lot (75.3%) and having a washer/dryer within their residence (71.7%). Over 50% of respondents said it was important to live in a single story or first floor facility with no stairs. 93.9% of BCSC survey respondents reported feeling very or somewhat safe in the physical environment of their home, with just 3.1% reporting that they feel neither safe nor unsafe, and 3.1% reporting that they feel somewhat or very unsafe. One focus group noted that it is particularly challenging to be an older homeowner in the historic district in town, stating, "They are very restrictive about what you can do to your house. It's hard to get a ramp or make other changes that would help."

The Rhode Island Annual Report on Elder Abuse for 2016 reports that there were 1,247 reported cases of elder abuse and 1,185 reported cases of self-neglect statewide in 2016. Reported cases of elder abuse are at the highest they have been in the last 5 years (up 33% since 2012).¹⁹ The overwhelming majority of BCSC survey respondents (97.0%) reported feeling very or somewhat safe at home when it concerned other people in and around their home. 1.8% reported feeling neither safe nor unsafe, and just 1.3% reporting feeling very or somewhat unsafe.

¹⁸ "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report."

¹⁹ RI Annual Report on Elder Abuse, 2016.

In Neighborhood

60% of Bristol's residents age 60 or older reported that they were satisfied with their neighborhood (Tufts). AARP's Livability Index gave Bristol's neighborhoods a livability score of 57 out of 100 (where 50 is average and 100 is exceptional). AARP noted that Bristol is in the top third for personal safety as compared to neighborhoods across the country with only 140 crimes per 10,000 people (compared to the medium US neighborhood of 261 crimes per 10,000 people). BCSC survey respondents indicated that they largely feel safe in their neighborhoods (97.2%), with only 1.5% reporting feeling very or somewhat unsafe in their neighborhood.

One BCSC survey respondent identified that "the prevalence of drug activity and the undesirable traffic, foot and vehicle" that it brings was their single greatest barrier to living safely and comfortably in Bristol. Others identified Roger Williams University students living in their neighborhoods as their greatest barriers, a sentiment echoed by focus group participants who said that these students also make their neighborhoods less desirable: "Students have caused the structure of the town to change."

BCSC focus group participants expressed confidence in Bristol's police department to keep them safe and be there for them when they need assistance. The Key Informants pointed out that a Bristol police officer has been assigned to focus on senior issues and serve as the elderly affairs officer.

AARP's Livability Index gave Bristol an environment score of 53 out of 100 for clean air and water. 0% of Bristol's residents were exposed to water quality violations, placing Bristol in the top third compared with neighborhoods across the country. Bristol experiences an average of 13.3% of unhealthy air days per year for regional air quality, compared to the national median of 5.7% of unhealthy air days in US neighborhoods. 8.73% of Bristol's population are exposed to air quality near-roadway pollution, meaning they live within 200 meters of a high-traffic road with more than 25,000 vehicles per day.

Accessibility of Public Spaces

Bristol received a walkability score of 65 from walkscore.com, which means that Bristol is somewhat walkable, and some errands can be accomplished on foot. When asked about their single greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol, however, several BCSC survey respondents identified safety issues with sidewalks (including those that are in disrepair, are inaccessible by wheelchair or walker, or are blocked by outdoor diners at restaurants), lack of sidewalks and bike lanes, dim street lights, and "poor road conditions," especially of side streets. Particular note was made by both survey respondents and focus group participants of inadequate sidewalks between Benjamin Church Manor and the Quinta Gamelin Community Center.

According to the 2016 Town of Bristol Comprehensive Plan, adopted in January 2017: "The AARP Public Policy Institute conducted a study as to what older adults want to have close to home. The top things are: a bus stop, grocery store, a park, and a drug store / pharmacy. Bristol prides itself on

having a pedestrian friendly, walkable downtown. However, more needs to be done to connect neighborhoods to the downtown, especially those on the east side of Metacom Avenue and along Metacom Avenue. Using funds for a voter-approved bond in 2004, the town has been upgrading and replaced existing sidewalks in many neighborhoods. Development projects along Metacom Avenue have also been installing new sidewalks as part of the Town's requirements."²⁰

Roughly half of BCSC survey respondents (49.9%) indicated that the public buildings in Bristol are accessible for older residents. Only 12.8% indicated that they did not find public buildings to be accessible, and 37.3% said that they did not know. Some BCSC survey respondents did indicate that older buildings are difficult to access, identifying a need for railings on outdoor steps and places to sit both inside and outside.

Several BCSC survey respondents identified a lack of handicapped parking spaces downtown and general challenges with parking downtown as their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol. One respondent wrote, "I have difficulty parallel parking and I am challenged walking. I also think it is dangerous getting in and out of a car on Hope St. downtown." Many survey respondents described traffic as a barrier to their comfort and safety.

²⁰ "Town of Bristol 2016 Comprehensive Plan".

Physical and Mental Well-Being

According to America's Health Rankings, Rhode Island is ranked in the top ten of the country for a low percentage of smokers age 65 or older, high percentage of seniors having a dental visit, prescription drug coverage, and hospice enrollment, and low incidence of suicide among those age 65 or older.

Conversely, Rhode Island is ranked 42 out of 50 (with 50 being the worst) for the percentage of adults age 65 or older who chronically drink alcohol (defined as more than 60 drinks in 30 days for men and more than 30 drinks in 30 days for women). Older adults are also not immune from the opioid epidemic in the United States. According to the 2017 RI State Health Improvement Plan, "The increased rate of opioid use among older adults has resulted in increased medical emergencies, as evidenced by increased emergency department visits among older adults... A recently published pilot study of patients older than 65 in a hospital emergency department within RI found more than two thirds of the sample of 89 patients had current or prior experience with prescription opioid use; nearly one in five were actively using opioids; and five of the 17 active opioid users surveyed met criteria for opioid misuse" (p58).

Rhode Island is ranked 47th for the percentage of hospitalized patients aged 65 or older who received the recommended care for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, or surgical procedures, and ranked 40th for the percentage of Medicare beneficiaries with four or more chronic conditions (RI Senior Guide).

Tufts found that for most health indicators, Bristol's seniors are healthier than the Rhode Island state averages. 72.5% of Bristolians age 65 or older engaged in some kind of physical activity within the last month and 24.5% report having five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Only 5.8% are smokers and 11% report drinking excessively. Several BCSC survey respondents, however, identified a desire for a local fitness center specifically designed to meet the needs of seniors, with others expressing interest in a pool.

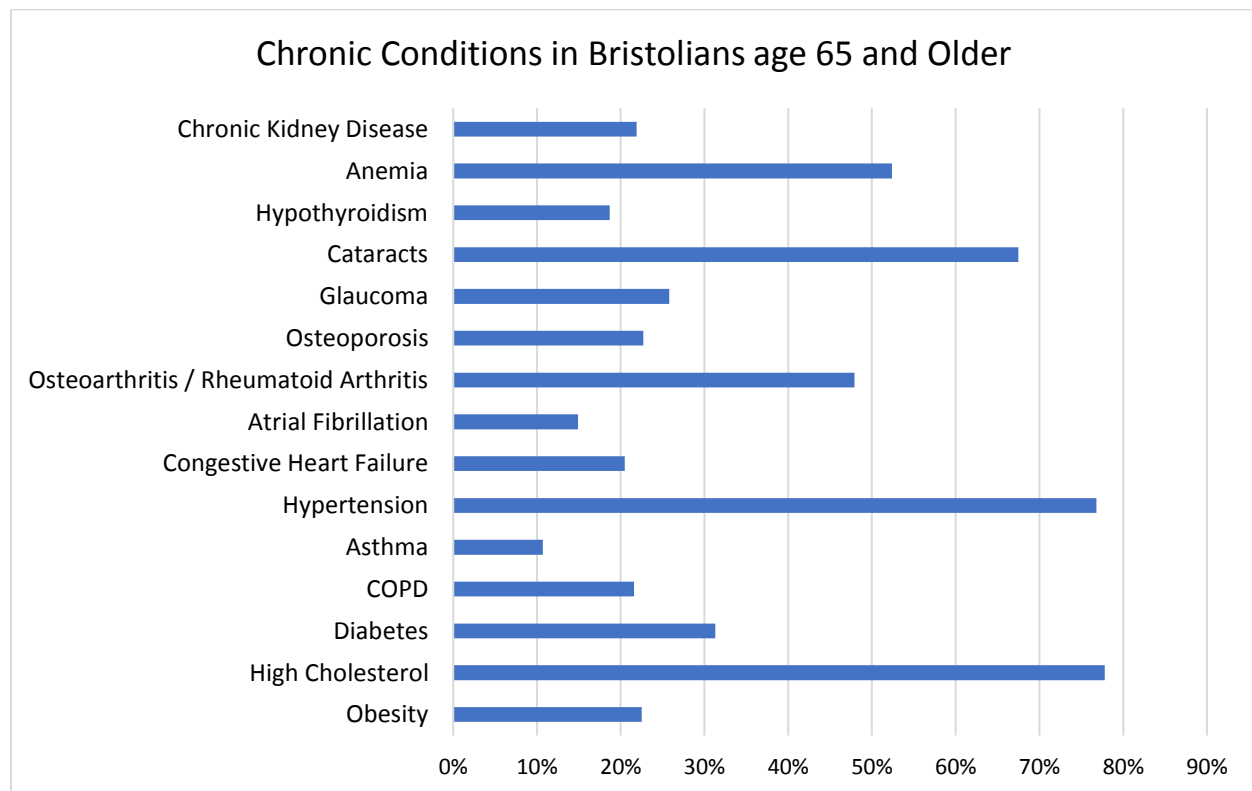
Most of Bristol's seniors believe they are in good health; only 13.7% reported that they are in poor or fair health and 10.5% reported that they had 15 or more physically unhealthy days in the last month. Most Bristolians age 65 or older (93.5%) have had a physical exam or check-up in the last year and 40.1% met the CDC's preventative health screening goals. More than half (58.8%) had their flu shot in the past year, 77.8% had their pneumonia vaccine and 32.6% had their shingles vaccine (Tufts). 90.2% of BCSC survey respondents reported that they have access to preventative health services; only 9.8% said they do not have access to such services.

According to the BCSC survey, most respondents are unsure if Bristol has an adequate number of services to promote healthy behavior (53.1%). This is consistent with other survey responses that indicate a lack of awareness of existing services. 38.3% of respondents indicated that they did believe there were adequate services to promote healthy behavior in Bristol, while just 10.6% disagreed. Similarly, 46.1% indicated that they did not know if there were adequate community activities that enhance well-being, while 43.5% indicated that they were and 10.4% said there were not.

While 81.4% have annual dental exams, a quarter of those age 65 or older in Bristol (25.8%) also have complete tooth loss. 10.2% report hearing difficulty and 3.5% report vision difficulty. 44.6% of Bristolians age 65 or older are Medicare managed care enrollees, but 3.2% of Bristolians in this age group did not see a doctor when they needed to due to cost. 95.6% of BCSC survey respondents have access to medications when they need them and 98.5% have access to medical services when they need them; just 4.4% say they do not have access to medications when they need them and 1.5% say they do not have access to medical services when they need them.

More than three-quarters (75.4%) of respondents said that they are very or somewhat satisfied with the availability of doctors and medical services in Bristol, with only 8.6% expressing some degree of dissatisfaction and 15.9% indicating that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. One BCSC survey respondent indicated that local doctors were not taking new patients and expressed concern that they had to travel out of town to find a primary care physician. Another expressed concern about the “awareness, outreach, and sensitivity of service providers to the LGBTQ community.” Focus group participants expressed concerns about the lack of geriatricians in the area and the need to go to Providence for specialist appointments.

Many Bristol residents age 65 or older suffer from chronic conditions. 59.4% have four or more chronic conditions; only 7.4% have no chronic conditions. According to the Healthy Aging Community Profile for Bristol conducted in 2016 by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation:



According to Tufts, only 5.4% of Bristolians age 65 or older report having 15 or more days with poor mental health in the last month. This is lower than the state average across all age groups for older adults. The available data is contradictory, however. The 2017 Rhode Island Health

Improvement Plan reports that, based on claims made in 2015, only 3.7% of older adults age 65+ with a diagnosed depressive disorder in Rhode Island receive formal behavioral healthcare treatment; this means that 96.3% of older adults with diagnosed depressive disorders do not receive formal treatment. Mental Health America reports that more than half (55%) of older adults treated for mental health concerns receive their care from their primary care physician rather than from a mental health professional.²¹

Tufts found that 11.3% of Bristolians age 65 or older have ever had a stroke and 4.9% report cognition difficulty. 14.3% have Alzheimer's or related dementias. According to the Rhode Island State Plan for 2019, Alzheimer's is the fifth leading cause of death in Rhode Island and one in nine Rhode Islanders over the age of 45 are "experiencing confusion or memory loss that is happening more often or getting worse." Troublingly, 48.4% of those experiencing confusion have not talked to a health care professional about it, even though 54.7% say that it has created "functional difficulties," which caused them to give up to day-to-day activities or interfered with their work and social lives. Key Informants to the BCSC survey identified older Bristolians with mental disabilities and/or the inability to make decisions for themselves as an underserved population in need of increased care.

When asked about their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol, several BCSC survey respondents identified the affordability of doctors and specialists, with one even saying they were not able to have a "procedure I need to survive." Others expressed a desire for reliable, affordable in-home assistance and one identified the lack of hospital services in the immediate area.

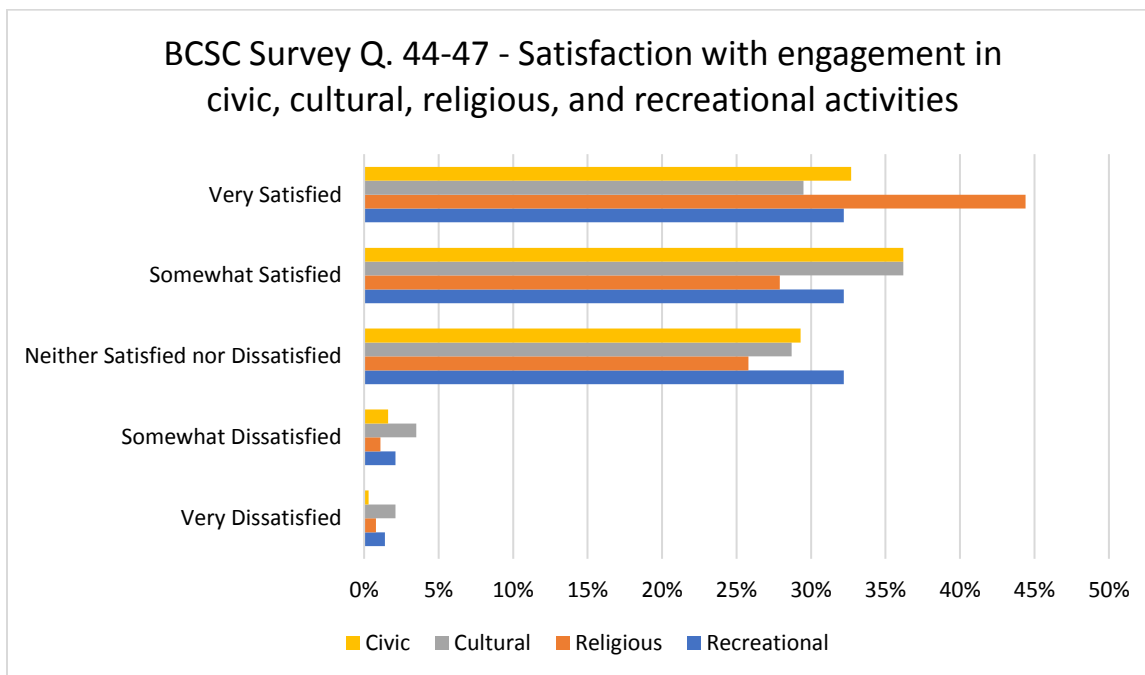
²¹ RI State Health Improvement Plan, 2017.

Social and Civic Engagement

Bristolians age 60 or older report strong connections with family and friends. According to the Tufts Health Aging Community Profile for Bristol in 2016, 75.8% report that they talk with family and friends almost daily. Research published in *Health Psychology: Official Journal of the Division of Health Psychology, American Psychological Association* has shown that those with strong social relationships have improved psychological and physical well-being, including increased sense of belonging, lessening depression, enhanced immune function, and reduced heart attack risk.²² 86.2% of BCSC survey respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with their connections to family and friends, with only 3.8% reporting some level of dissatisfaction. Despite these connections, older adults in Rhode Island rank high in indicators for social isolation, including living alone (26.6% of Bristolians age 65 or older live alone), having few social network ties, and having infrequent social contact (State Health Improvement Plan).

Tufts reports that 46.6% of Bristolians age 60 or older attend community events (including religious services) at least once per month. This is higher than the state average of 44.2%. AARP's Livability Index gave Bristol a social engagement score of .98 on a scale of 0 to 2 (the median score is .98). This score represents the "extent to which residents each dinner with household members, see or hear from friends and family, talk with neighbors, and do favors for neighbors."

BCSC survey respondents were asked about their levels of satisfaction with their participation in civic activities (park clean ups, voting, etc.); cultural activities and events (plays, concerts, etc.); religious activities or events (church services, choir, etc.); and recreational activities (walking, biking, Zumba, etc.); respondents were largely satisfied or had no opinion. Responses are below:



²² Chang, Po-Ju, et al.

Senior Centers often provide a vital link for those age 65 or older to connect with others and combat social isolation as well as to access resources. According to the National Council on Aging, in the United States, 70% of senior center participants are female. 75% of participants visit their senior center one to three times per week and spend an average of 3.3 hours per visit. “Compared with their peers, senior center participants have higher levels of health, social interaction, and life satisfaction and lower levels of income... Research shows that older adults who participate in senior center programs can experience measurable improvements in their physical, social, spiritual, emotional, mental, and economic well-being.”²³

Many senior centers provide educational programming. The AARP Survey on Lifelong Learning from July 2000 found that older adults are most interested in learning activities which help them stay up to date on current events, help them grow personally or spiritually, or teach them something new that they’ve always wanted to learn. Additionally, “older learners are most interested in subjects that would improve the quality of their lives, build upon a current skill, or enable them to take better care of their health. Most want to use what they have learned right away or in the near future; very few are willing to wait longer.”²⁴

Focus group participants noted that while both nutrition and wellness programs are offered at the Quinta Gamelin Community Center, they perceived those programs “as more for younger people, and not for seniors,” in part because “there are no senior discounts at the Rec Center.” Focus group participants expressed a desire for more fitness programming at Benjamin Church Senior Center, specifically access to a gym facility that catered to the needs and physical challenges of seniors; access to a pool in Bristol; and for more programs specifically for seniors at the Quinta Gamelin Community Center that are as “cheap as possible.”

Respondents, focus group participants, and key informants had several suggestions for improving or increasing activities for older Bristolians, including:

- Holding activities during the day to limit the need for seniors to drive at night
- Provide activities for active 55 – 65-year-old singles
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational activity between seniors and children
- Lifetime learning opportunities, perhaps through a collaboration with Roger Williams University
- Programs in the early evening hours geared to those who are transitioning into being seniors or are recently retired
- Offering more activities and events during the winter months (October – April)
- Offering activities for the 50-60-year-old demographic who are working during the day but would participate in evening activities

Only 18.9% of Rhode Islanders over the age of 65 volunteered between 2012 and 2014, according to the RI Aging in Community report. Tufts reports that 28.3% of Bristol seniors age 60 or older volunteer at least once per month. Volunteering is a key strategy for connection senior citizens with their communities and combating social isolation. AARP conducted a study of senior volunteers

²³ “What Is a Senior Citizen Center? Facts & Benefits.”

²⁴ Harris Interactive Inc.

through Senior Corps and found that almost two-thirds of the senior volunteers “reported a decrease in feelings of isolation, and 67% of those who first reported they ‘often’ lack companionship stated that they had improved social connections.”²⁵ Roughly half (49.5%) of BCSC survey respondents believe that there are adequate opportunities for older Bristolians to volunteer their time; only 8.8% disagreed while 41.8% did not know.

Many senior citizens continue to work for wages. According to AARP’s 2017 report *Longevity Economy*, if a person is over the age of 50 and finds themselves unemployed, they are more likely to be unemployed longer, have difficulty re-entering the workforce, face stagnant wages and lack opportunities for advancement. Interestingly, however, when compared to younger employees, “employers say older workers are more reliable and accurate in their work, and often have better social skills.”²⁶ In Rhode Island, 69.2% of people age 55-64 are working for wages, and 18.3% of those age 65 or older are working for wages (RI Aging in Community). According to Tufts, 17.1% of Bristol residents age 65 or older worked for wages in 2016. More than half (69.4%) of BCSC survey respondents did not know if there were adequate opportunities for older Bristolians to obtain paid work, with 11.2% indicating that there are enough opportunities and 19.4% indicating that there are not.

Some BCSC survey respondents and focus group participants identified social and civic engagement issues as their greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol, including difficulties with their neighbors, a fear of loneliness and social isolation, lack of voter education, a need for a place “for people to hang out who are my age,” and a feeling that there are “too many clicks [sic] – even in senior population” or that they don’t fit in with the other older residents since they are new to town.

²⁵ Hayes, Kim.

²⁶ Oxford Economics, and AARP.

Summary of Recurring Comments from the Survey

Several themes emerged from the Benjamin Church Senior Center survey. Respondents, focus group participants, and Key Informants identified many of the same needs. These recurring themes have been summarized below:

- Existing Services in Bristol
 - Improve coordination of services across service providers throughout the town;
 - Increase funding for senior services;
 - Provide opportunities for seniors to voice their own needs to elected and public officials;
 - Elected and public officials, especially the Town Council, should prioritize senior needs;
 - Resolve the “outward fighting” and end the “political agendas” surrounding senior services in town;
 - Improve the dissemination of information about available senior services;
 - Dedicate more space to senior activities and services.

- Transportation
 - Increase transportation options for seniors, including:
 - Increase the availability of the Senior Bus for medical appointments and other appointments outside of Bristol by adding an additional bus, extending the hours of operation, and/or getting a larger bus;
 - Add an affordable in-town shuttle service that operates on a regular loop around Bristol with extended hours.

- Basic Needs
 - Create affordable housing for moderate-income Bristolians age 50 and older;
 - Provide more affordable assistance for homeowners and renters for yard care, snow removal, and other small home and property maintenance projects.
 - Make specific improvements to housing at Benjamin Church Manor, including having a washer/dryer in every residential building, more off-street and handicapped parking for visitors, and more apartment units.

- Safety
 - Better maintenance of sidewalks and side streets, including providing adequate lighting, wheelchair accessibility to sidewalks, and expanding sidewalks to areas not currently being served;
 - Increase handicapped parking throughout town, especially for visitors to Benjamin Church Manor, at Benjamin Church Senior Center, and downtown.

- Physical and Mental Well-Being
 - Provide access to gym facilities, ideally including a pool, specifically designed to cater to the needs and physical challenges of seniors.

- Social and Civic Engagement
 - Increase program offerings, including:
 - Programming for the 60 – 65-year-old demographic who are not yet fully retired and are transitioning into a new phase of life;
 - Programming specifically designed for seniors and offered at a discounted senior rate at the Quinta Gamelin Community Center;
 - More programming in the winter months;
 - Opportunities for intergenerational activity between seniors and children;
 - Opportunities for lifetime learning, perhaps through a partnership with Roger Williams University.

Agencies that work with senior citizens in Bristol are encouraged to use the research and survey data presented in this report and its companion document to identify their own priorities and action items for best meeting the needs of older Bristolians.

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Benjamin Church Senior Center



2019 Survey, Focus Group and Key Informant Interview Results

In partial fulfillment of the Rhode Island Foundation's
Organizational Development Grant requirements
for the Community Needs Assessment of Bristol Senior Citizens



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I. Methodology

The data to support this needs assessment was collected from multiple sources and involved a close working relationship between the staff of the Benjamin Church Senior Center (BCSC) and strategic planning consultants, who formed a planning committee that met on multiple occasions in the Fall 2018 to develop the data collection process. An outside evaluation consultant was retained to conduct survey data collection, facilitate senior focus groups, conduct interviews among knowledgeable local leaders, analyze the data, and generate this final report. A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted related to the search topics of "aging in place" and "elder-friendly community development" (see references), which informed the draft survey instrument developed by the consultant.

The Benjamin Church Senior Center survey is an instrument comprised of 13 demographic questions in addition to 37 perception and level of satisfaction questions, based on the indicators developed by the Center of Home Care Policy for an effective elder-friendly community and from research conducted by the Visiting Nurse Services of New York (2003), presented in the document called "The AdvantAge Initiative." The major indicators included: housing, food security and availability, shopping opportunities, medical care and services, social service availability, transportation, health and wellness, social involvement, and sense of safety.

The BCSC survey was used to collect quantifiable data from the target audience: older residents of Bristol ages 50 to 90+. Survey participants were self-selected, but participation was open to all Bristol residents 50 years of age and older. The BCSC survey was reviewed by Benjamin Church Senior Center staff and a team of strategic planning consultants for question content validity and reliability, format and ease of completion.

On October 11, 2018, a draft form of the senior survey instrument was reviewed at a community forum attended by 21 Bristol community leaders and facilitated by the consultant in the meeting space provided by the Benjamin Church senior housing office, located directly behind the Benjamin Church Senior Center. Participants spent nearly two hours discussing senior needs in the community and reviewing the content and structure of the survey instrument. Several constructive suggestions were made and collected by a

notetaker, which helped to improve the survey instrument's validity and reliability. A copy of the notes taken during this forum are provided in the appendices.

The survey instrument was piloted with eight older people at the BCSC, who volunteered to take a paper version of the survey and provide feedback. Once finalized, the surveys were distributed in English and Portuguese electronically using SurveyMonkey. Paper versions were distributed at several sites, including the BCSC, the town library, Bristol town hall, and other primary locations that might attract seniors. The URL for the survey was distributed in the local newspaper and senior newsletter. The survey data was compiled in an Excel spreadsheet and transferred into a customized database for analysis using IBM SAS 9.2 software.

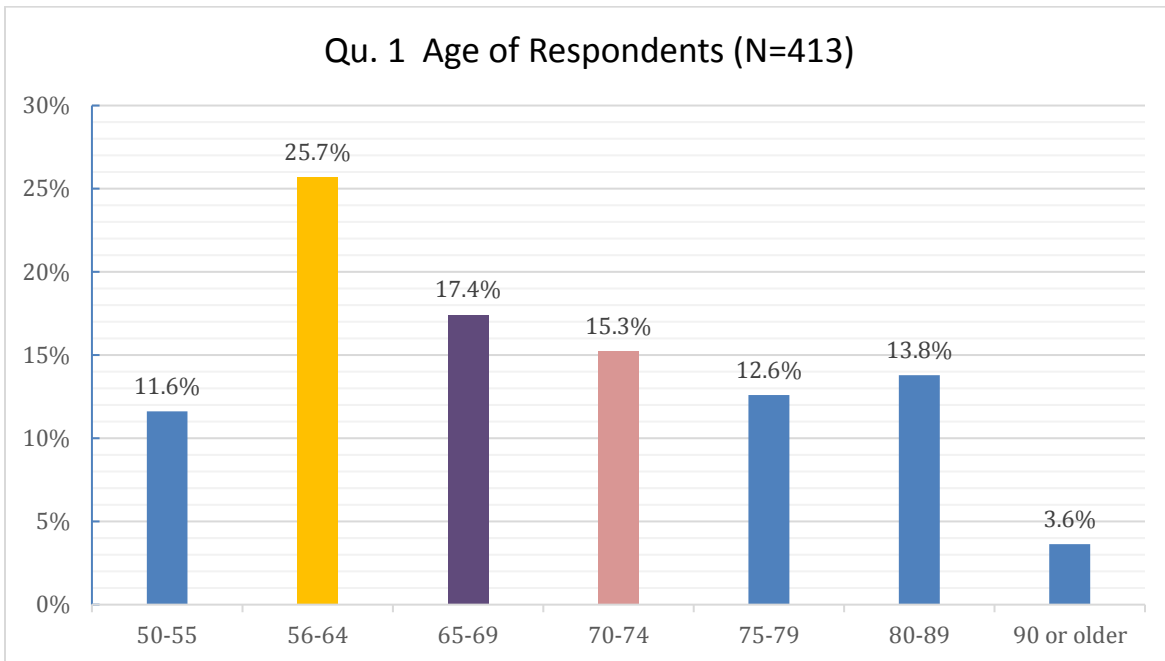
The second phase of data collection focused on qualitative data, which included key informant interviews with six local community leaders and two focus groups with older residents of various ages. Six key informants were interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes each, using a series of questions and an interview protocol that was aligned with the indicator categories and questions asked on the senior survey. Interview responses were captured on note-taking templates, which were later transcribed to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Key points were used as filters and the comments were categorized by similar content using a color-coding technique. A copy of the questionnaire instrument used for interviewing can be found in the appendices. A summation of the findings is presented below.

Finally, two focus groups were conducted with seniors living in different residential situations in Bristol. A total of 18 participants, nine per group, (four males and 14 females), were convened at the Benjamin Church Senior Center in the second floor meeting room. The questions asked were similar in content and structure to those presented on the survey instruments. The focus group sessions were meant to "dig deeper" into key matters culled from the survey results that were important to seniors living in Bristol. Summaries of the focus groups are presented below. Copies of all instruments used in data collection are available in the appendices.

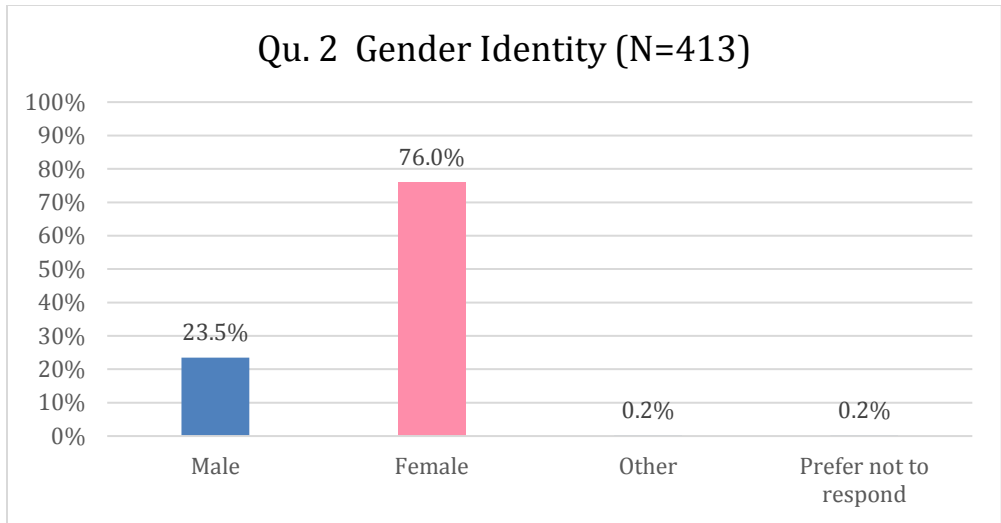
II. BCSC Senior Survey Results

1. Demographic Information

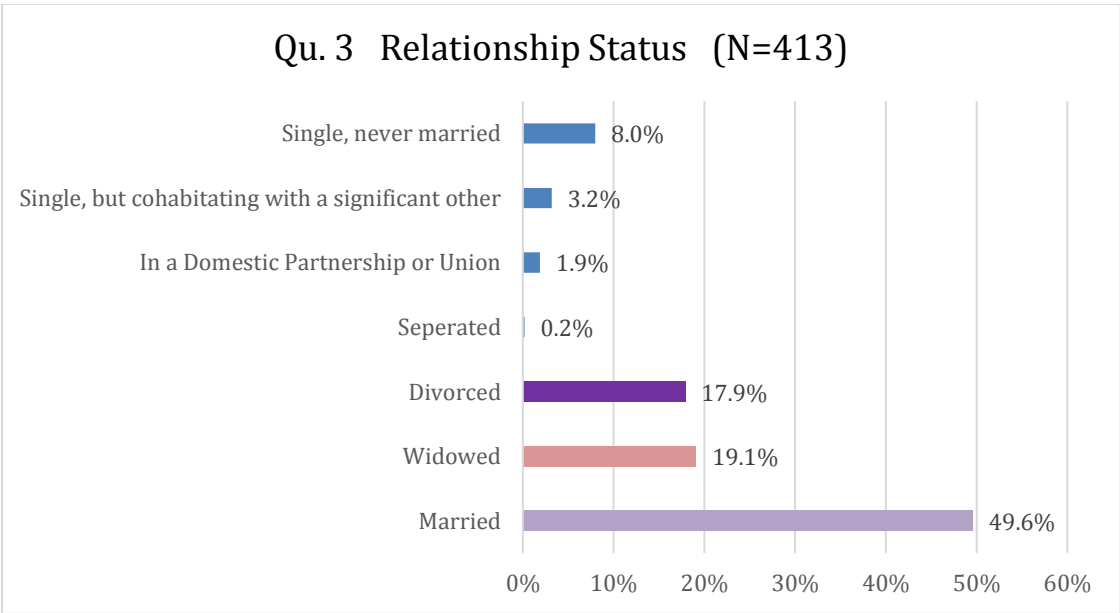
426 survey responses were received, 231 electronically and 194 on paper. Twelve surveys were eliminated due to data response mistakes, which left a total number of 413 successfully completed surveys. Seven surveys were completed using the Portuguese versions, one online and six on paper. The surveys were collected over a seven-week period, from November 4, 2019 through December 31, 2019.



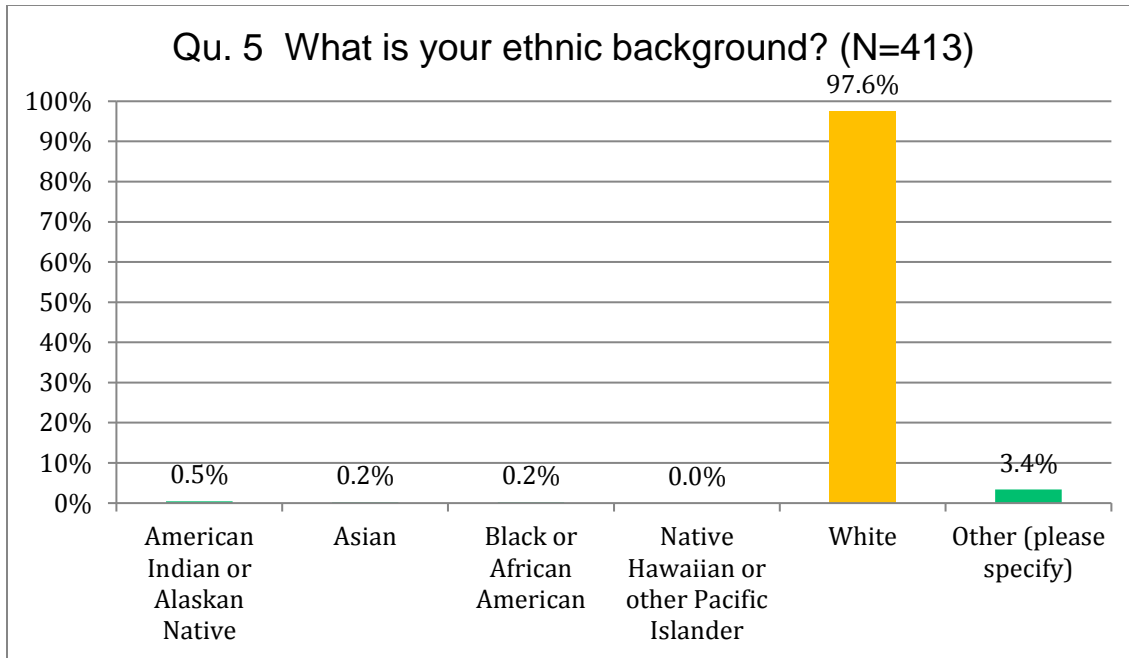
One-quarter of all survey respondents were in the 56-64 age group, with 37.3% representing the two "younger" cohorts (from 50 to 64 years old). Surveys completed and returned by respondents in cohorts ages 65 to 79 represented 45.3% of all surveys. Those representing the two oldest cohorts, 80 years of age and older, represented 17.4% of the total number of surveys returned, with 3.6% from respondents 90 years old or older.



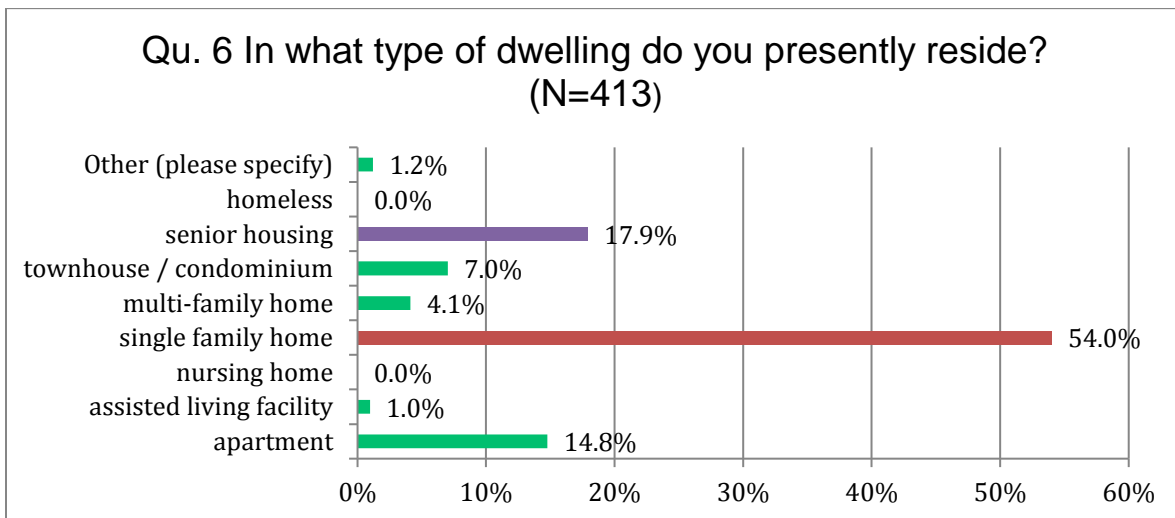
Three-quarters of the respondents identified as female and about one-quarter as male. The number of respondents who identified with other was insignificant (one person).



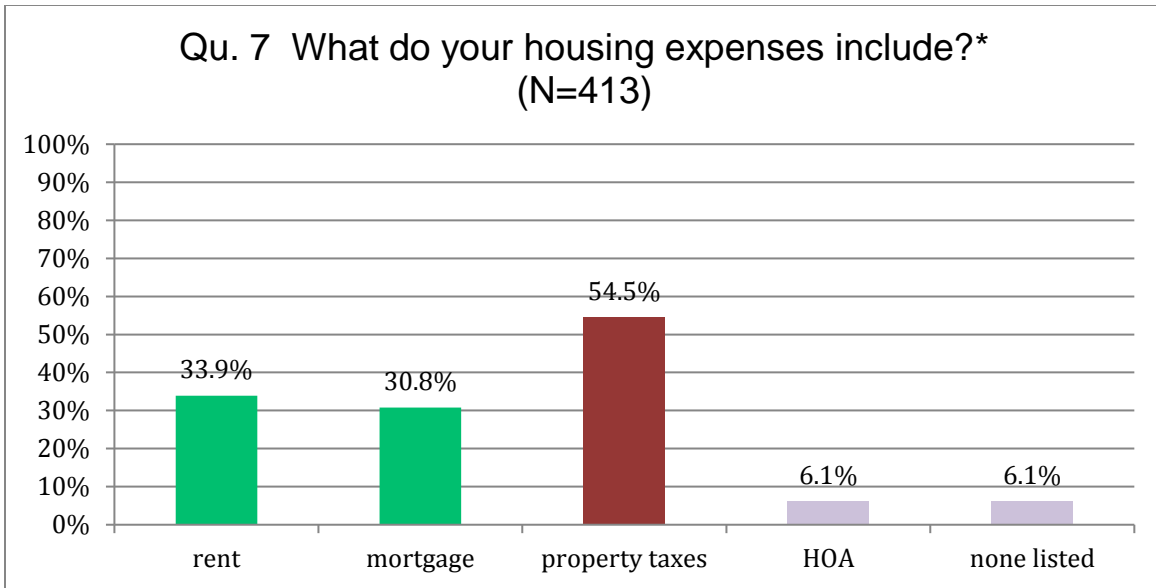
Nearly half of all respondents reported that they were married, 19.1% were widowed, 17.9% divorced, and 0.2% separated, suggesting that 86.8% of respondents had at some time been married. 8.0% reported that they were single and never married, 3.2% single but cohabitating with a significant other, and 1.9% reported being in a domestic partnership or union.



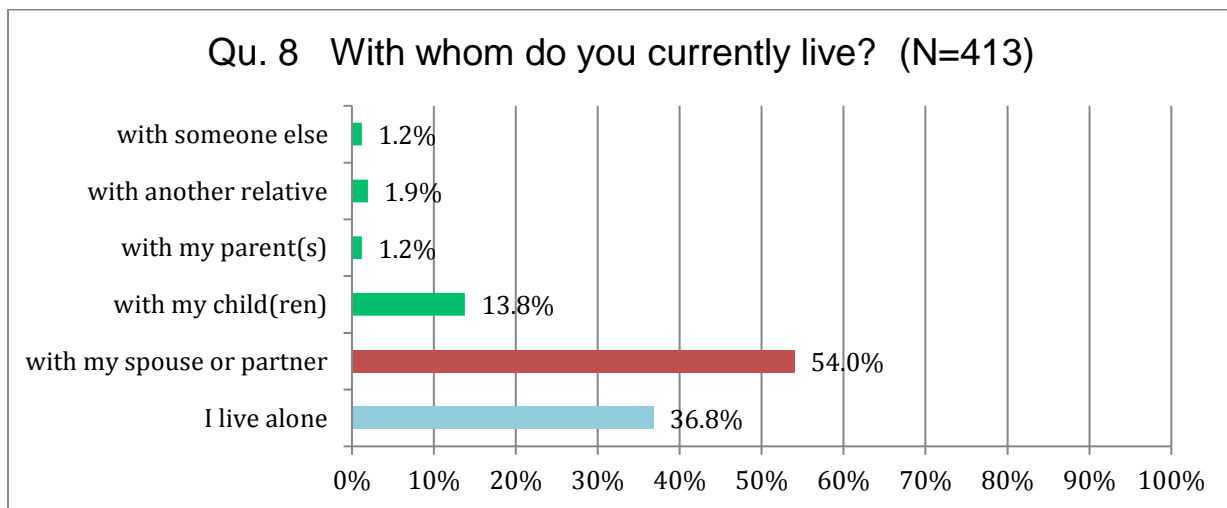
A large majority of respondents identified as white (97.6%), while a very small number reported other ethnic identities (4.4%). A small number of individuals (<2%) elected to identify with more than one ethnic category.



Over half of all respondents (54.0%) reside in a single-family home; 17.9% reported living in senior housing, 14.8% in apartments, 7.0% in a townhouse or condominium, 4.1% in a multifamily home, 1% in an assisted living facility, and 1.4% reporting other. No respondents reported living in nursing homes, and none were homeless.

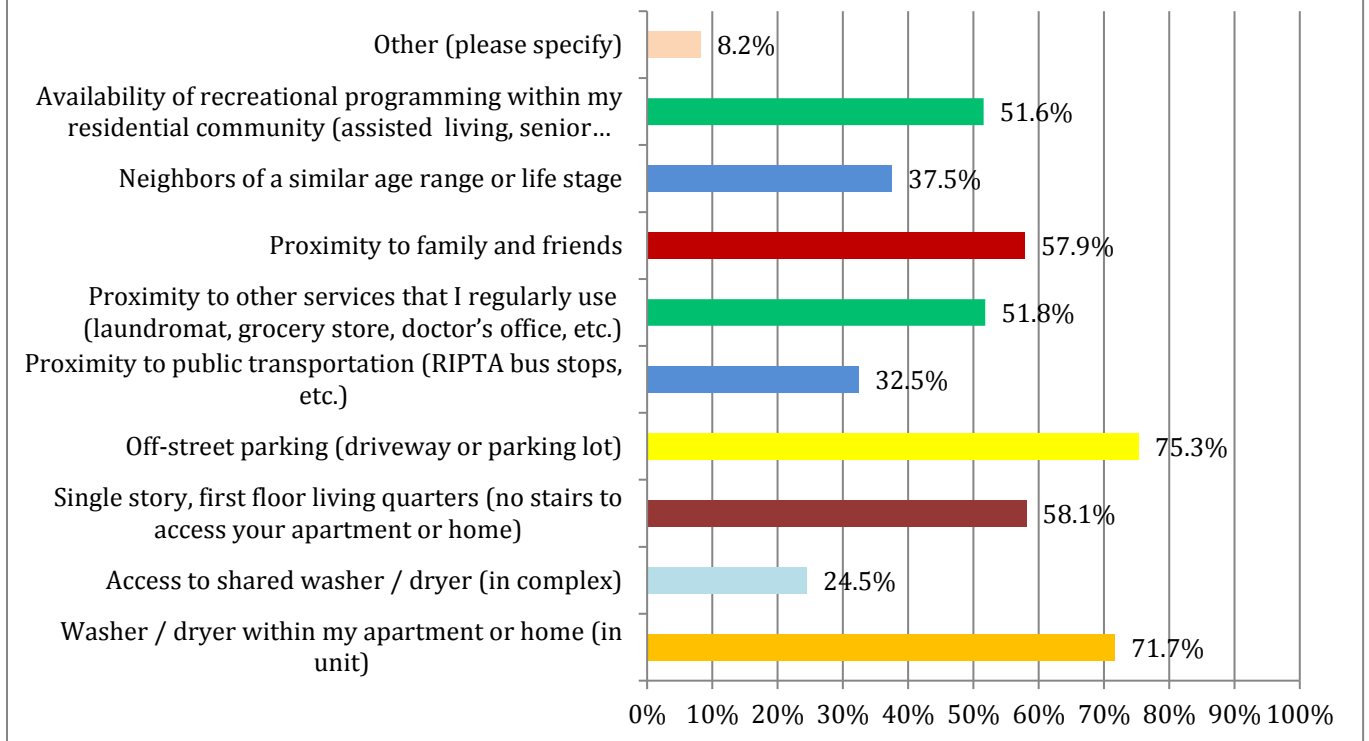


When asked about monthly housing expenses, 54.5% included property taxes, 33.9% pay rent, 30.8% make mortgage payments, 6.1% pay HOA (homeowner association) fees, and 6.1% reported not having any housing expenses. The total exceeds 100% since multiple responses were allowed.



More than half of the respondents reported living with a spouse or partner (54.0%), while 36.8% reported that they live alone. Nearly 14% reported living with a child, 1.9% with other relatives, and 1.2% with their parents. Just 1.2% reported living with "someone else."

Qu. 9 Factors important for evaluating appropriateness of your living facilities? (Please check all that apply)



Respondents were asked to consider what the most important factors were to them when evaluating the appropriateness of their living facilities. Multiple responses were allowed. The top two responses were off-street parking (e.g. driveway or parking lot) at 75.3% and having a washer/dryer within their residence at 71.7%. Over 50% selected each of the following: living in a single story or first floor facility with no stairs, in close proximity to family and friends, in close proximity to services that they regularly use, and having recreational programming available nearby.

Other important considerations identified by respondents in the comments are listed below, grouped by similar themes. Comments have not been edited.

Proximity to / inclusion of amenities, services, and recreational opportunities:

- Transportation to doctor's offices and medical apps, (i.e. RI Hospital, etc.)
- Now senior center/CDA, adequate gym @ S/H
- Garden space, 24 hr. access to community room, gym equipment
- Fitness Center for Seniors

- Pool
- Love swimming in the ocean or Bristol bay
- Being able to attend Catholic Mass on a daily and weekly basis
- Access to my friends at St. Michael's Church, Bristol
- Proximity to adult education
- Social activities, internet access, transportation
- Would love to have a hair dresser available in a senior living facility

Specific accommodations / assistance within the living facilities:

- Walk-in showers
- To allow pets, they are such great company especially alone
- Space for animals
- Pet friendly
- Garage also. Single level and rec programs apply to future needs
- Heat and snow removal is a priority.
- Smoking not allowed.
- Parking for visitors on the property not on the street
- A small space for gardening

Affordability:

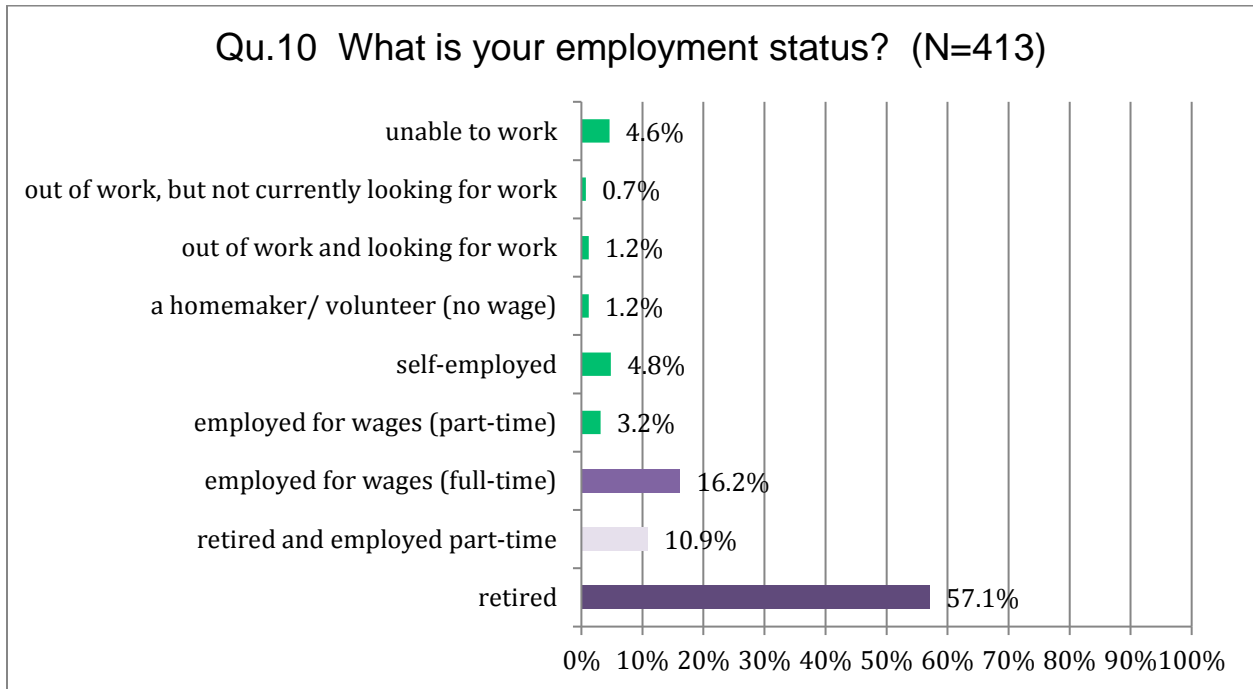
- Cost
- Affordable
- Free Food and Rent
- Rental assistance
- Affordable

Safety:

- Have a problem falling and walking alone !!!
- Safety
- Safety measures on windows/doors

Additional factors identified as important for living facility considerations, based on comments made by respondents, were: 1. cost / affordability (5); 2. gym / exercise opportunities (4); household amenities / care 4; 3. pets allowed (3); 4. garden space (2); safety (2); garage / parking for car (2); near religious facility (2); and one each for

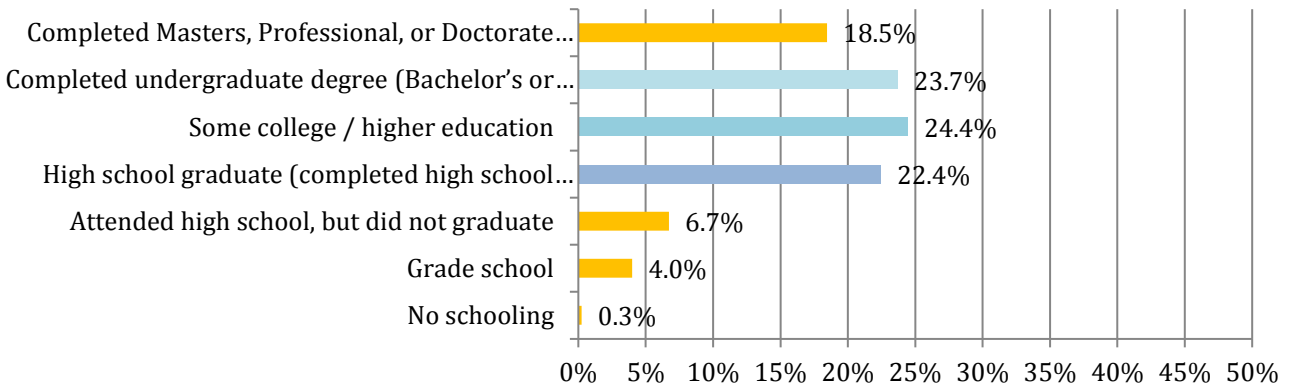
proximity to doctor, nature, adult education, pool nearby, snow removal, transportation, internet access and social engagement.



Most respondents reported being retired (57.1%), 16.2% reported working full-time, 3.2% part-time and another 10.9% reported that they were retired and employed part-time. In total, 87.4% of respondents reported being employed at least part-time. Another 4.8% reported that they are self-employed and 1.2% are not working but are looking for work.

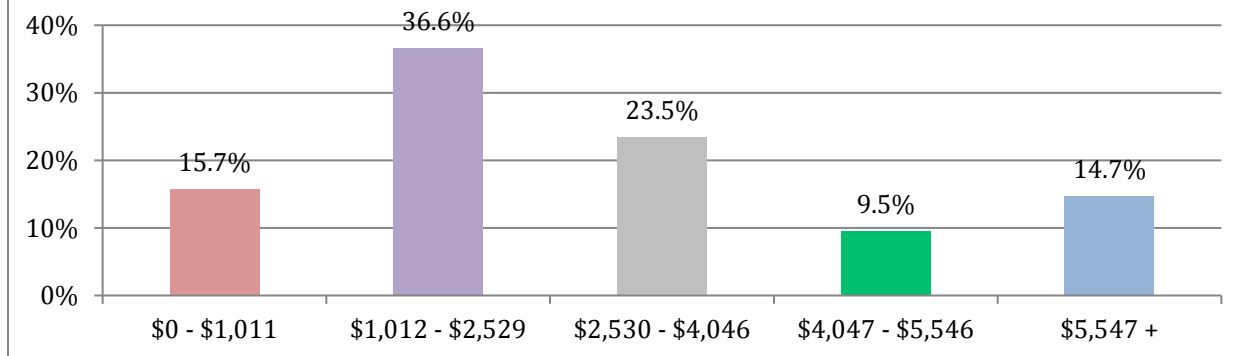
Less than 5% (4.6%) reported that they were unable to work, and 0.7% are out of work and not looking to work. 1.2% of the total reported doing non-paid work (homemaking and volunteering without reimbursement).

Qu. 11 What is the highest degree or level of school completed? (N=401)

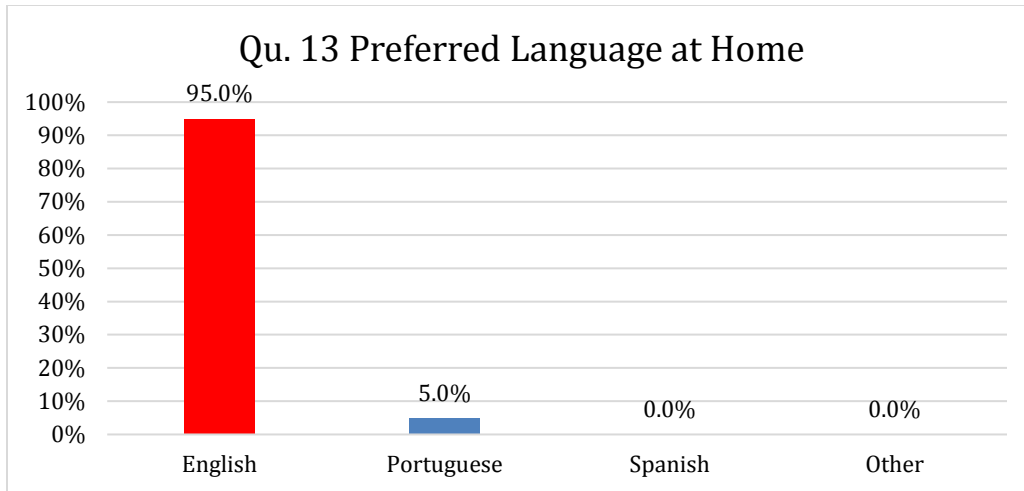


The respondent pool reported a wide distribution of levels of education completed. 11% did not graduate from high school and 22.4% completed high school but went no further with formal education. 66.6% went on to higher education, with 24.4% having some college (no degree), 23.7% attaining a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent, and 18.5% completing Master's, Professional or Doctorate level degrees.

Qu. 12 What is your total personal monthly income? (N=388)

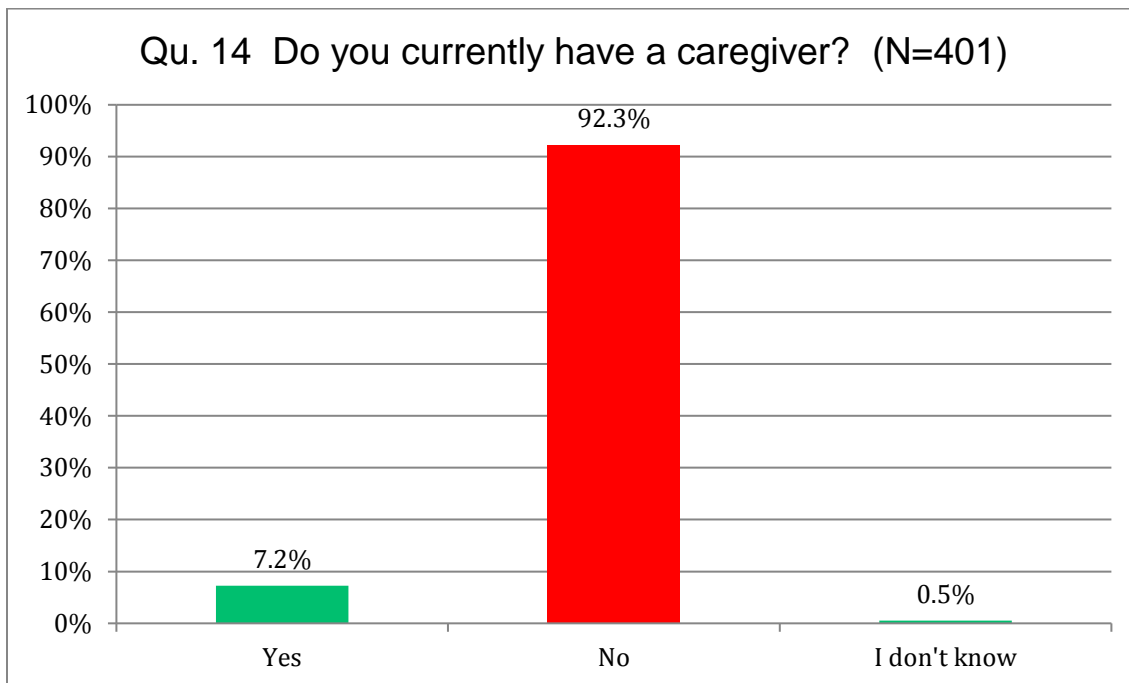


Approximately 6% of respondents chose not to respond with their total household income. Of those that did respond, approximately 16% reported earning less than \$12,000 annually. More than one-third of all respondents (36.6%) reported earning between \$12,000 and \$30,000 per year, 23.5% reported incomes from \$30,000 to around \$50,000; 9.5% from \$50,000 to about \$67,000 per year, and 14.7% percent indicated that they earn more than \$67,000 per year.

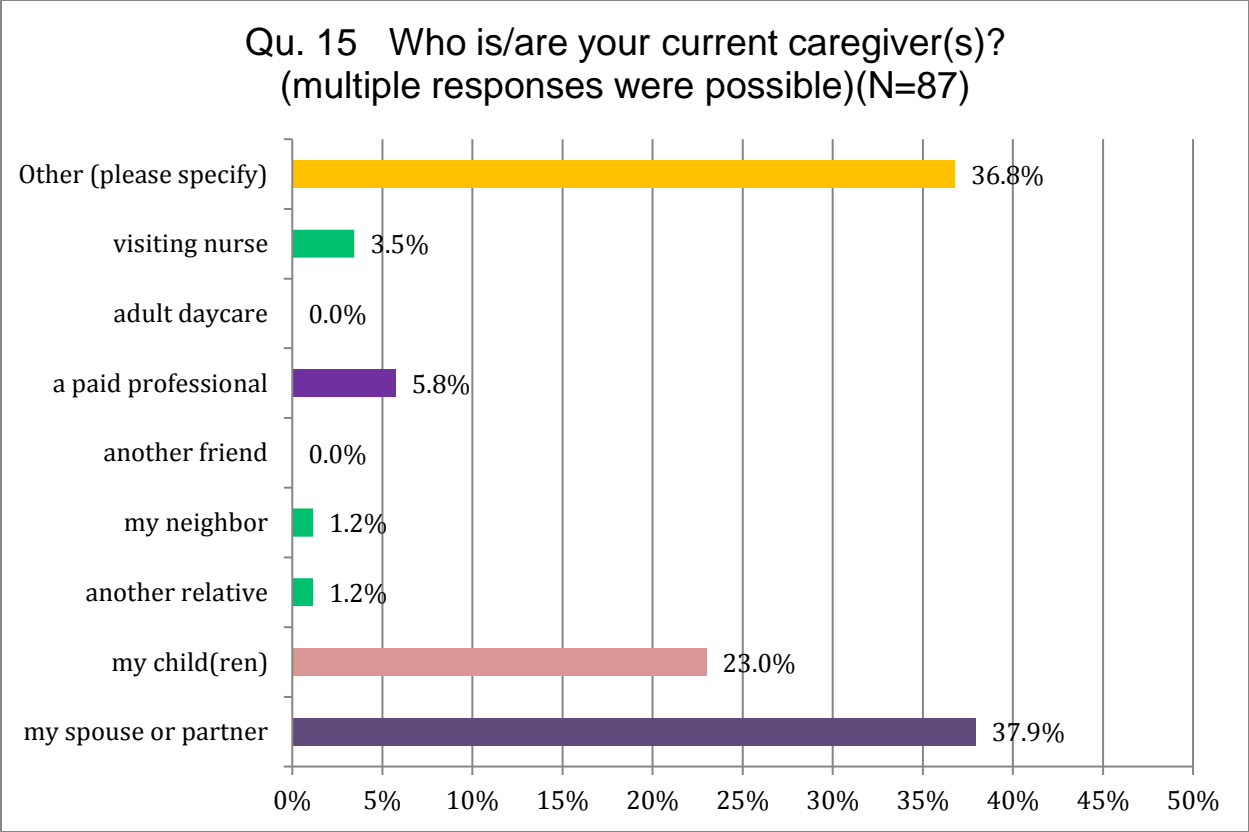


English was far and away the preferred language spoken at home (95.0%), with the other 5% of respondents reporting that Portuguese was their main language at home. No one reported speaking Spanish or any other language as their primary language at home.

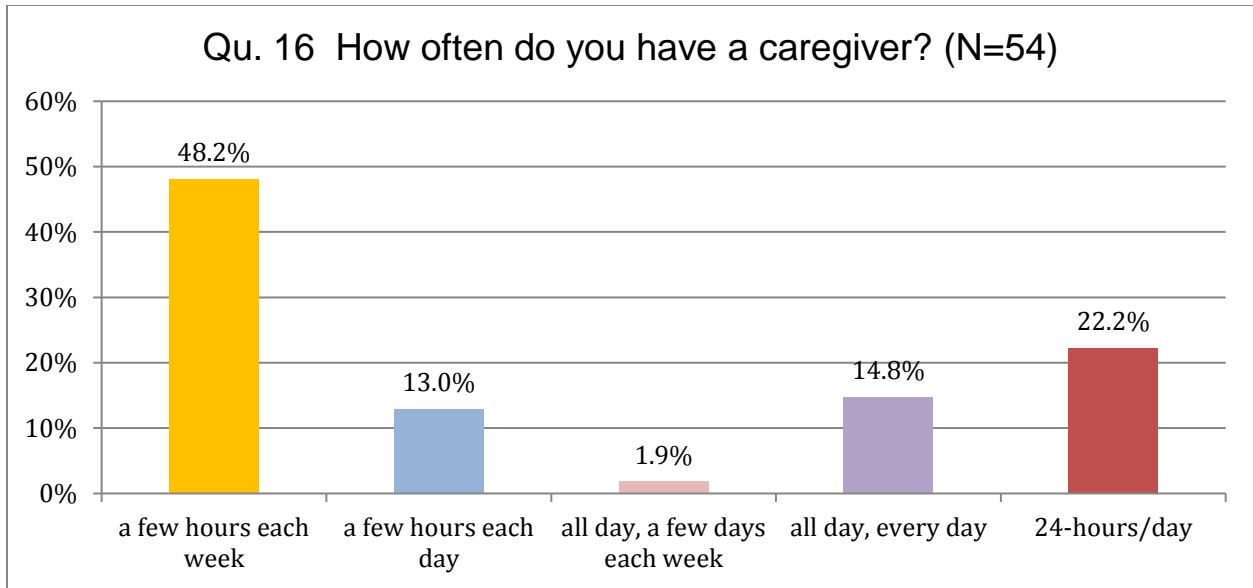
2. Caregivers



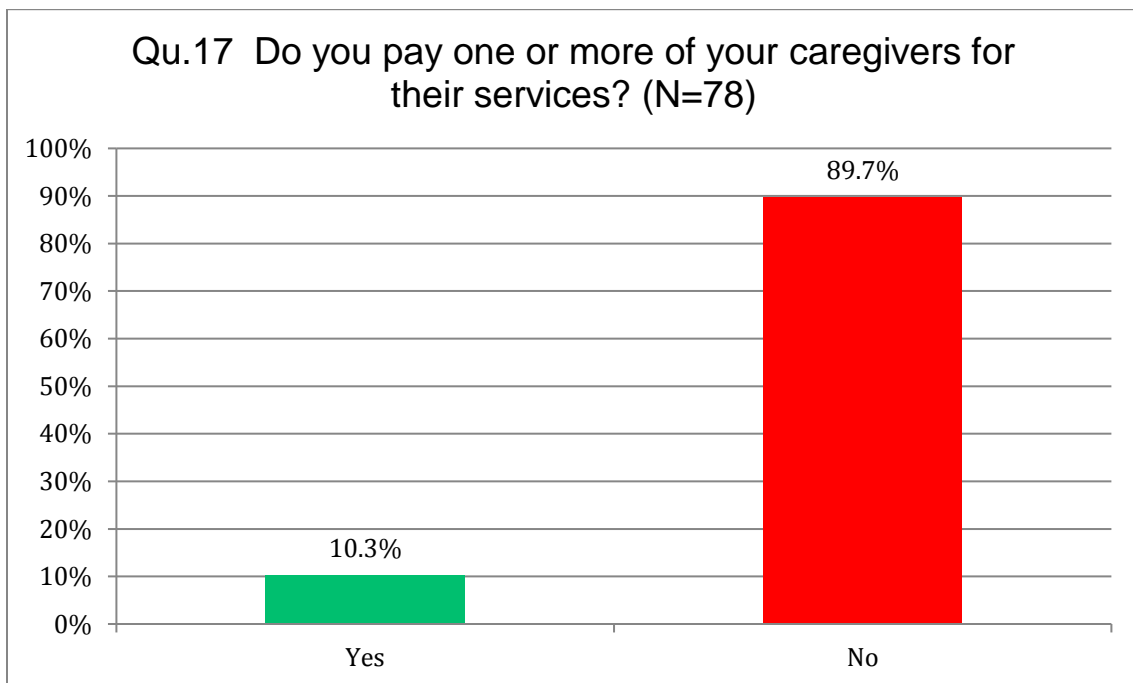
Only 7.2% (30 of 401) of those who completed the survey reported that they had caregivers to help them in their daily life.



Many of those in need of a caregiver are cared for by a spouse or partner (37.9%), while 36.8% listed "others" as their main caregivers. Additionally, 23% of those needing caregivers were being tended to by their children and 1.2% by other relatives. Over 75% of those who report having caregivers are being taken care of by a family member or a partner. Only 5.8% reported that they received care from a paid professional and 3.5% from a visiting nurse. This data seems to confirm that a large number of older people living in Bristol are dependent on their families or close partners to be there for them when they need assistance.

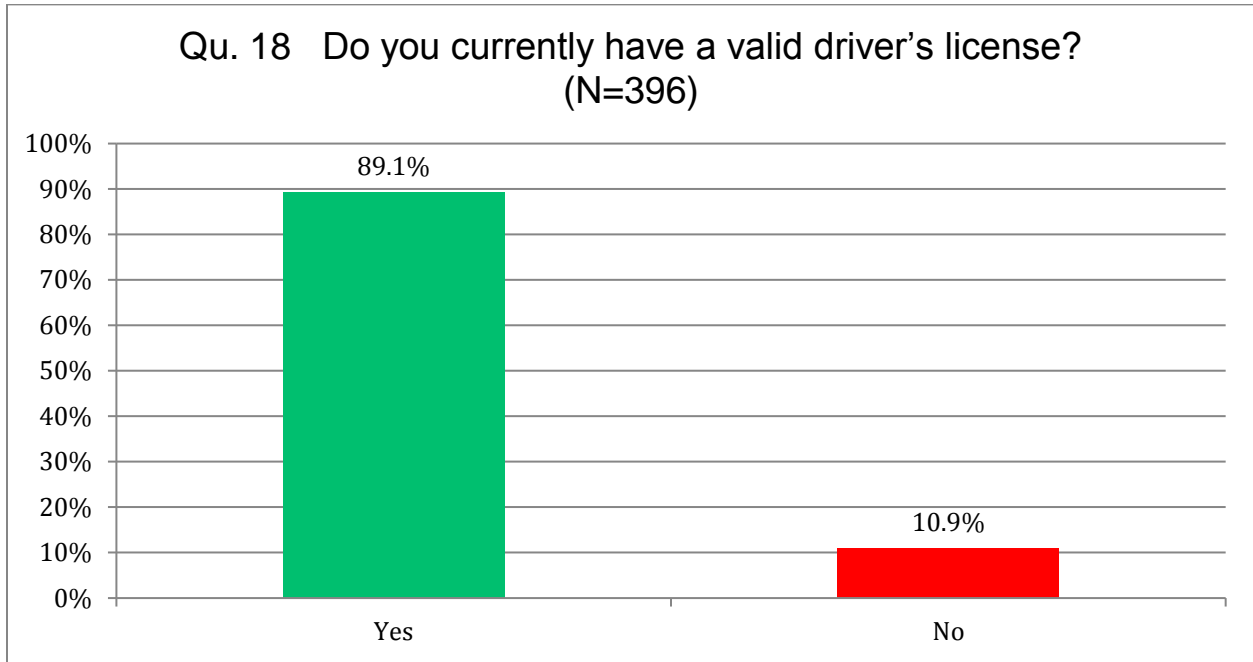


About 37% of those with a caregiver have someone available full time. Nearly half (48.2%) of the total reporting that they are in need for a caregiver have one for just a few hours each week, with 13.0% having someone available for a few hours each day.



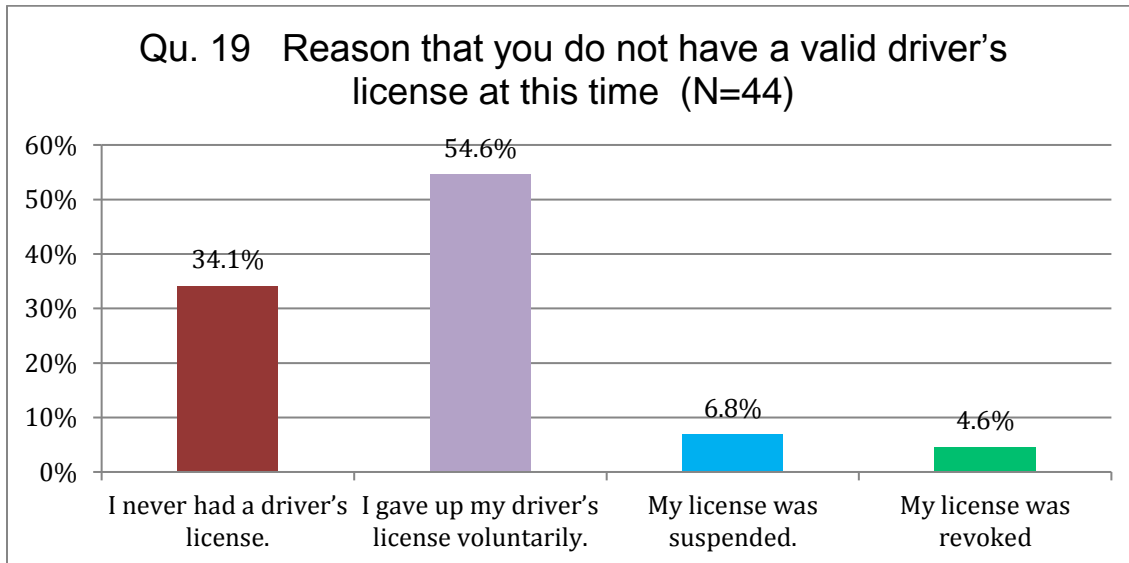
Only a handful (8 individuals) of those who receive care from someone else pay for this service directly.

3. Transportation

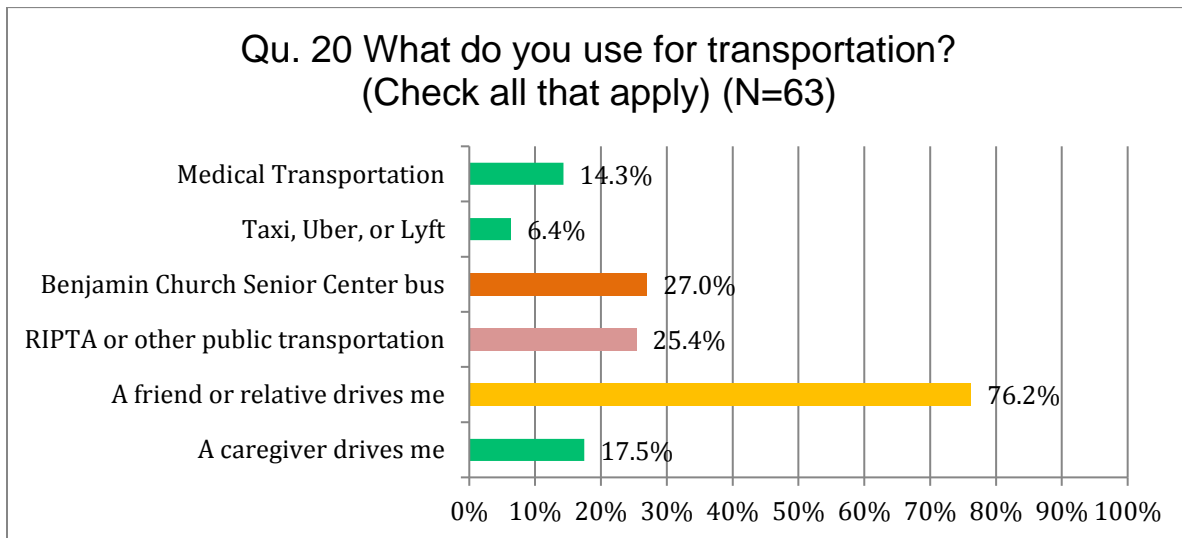


Nearly 90% of those who completed the survey still have a valid driver's license.

Just 44 of the 413 (10.9%) do not have a valid driver's license.

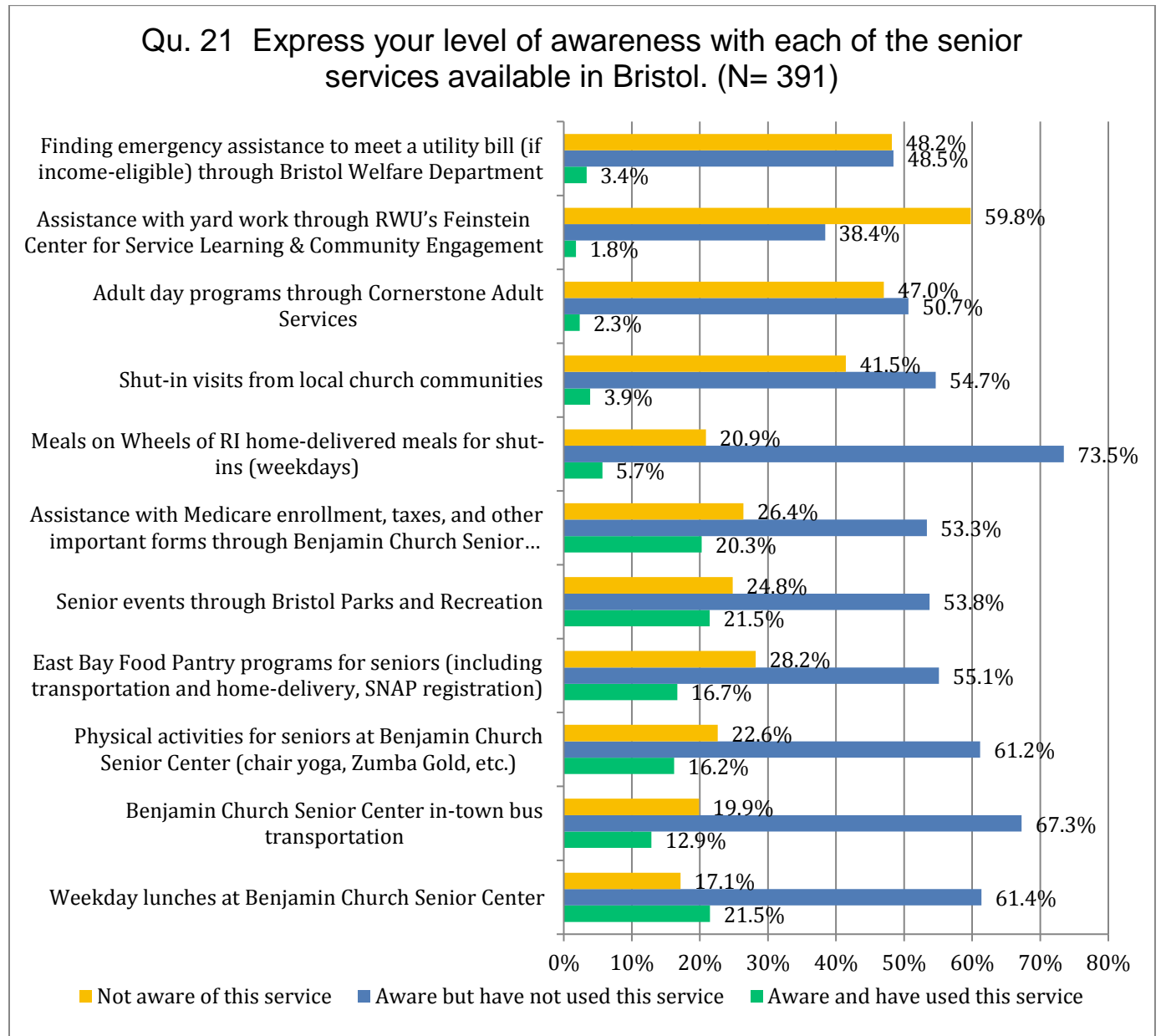


Over half of those with no valid license gave their license up voluntarily, while 34.1% reported that they never had a driver's license. The remaining 11.4% either had their license suspended or revoked.



Nearly three-quarters of those who do not have a valid driver's license depend on a friend or relative to drive them. The Benjamin Church Senior Center bus was selected by 27% and RIPTA by 25.4% of those who do not drive. Other sources of transportation mentioned were a caregiver (17.5%), medical transportation (14.3%) and a taxi / Uber / Lyft (6.4%). Multiple responses were allowed.

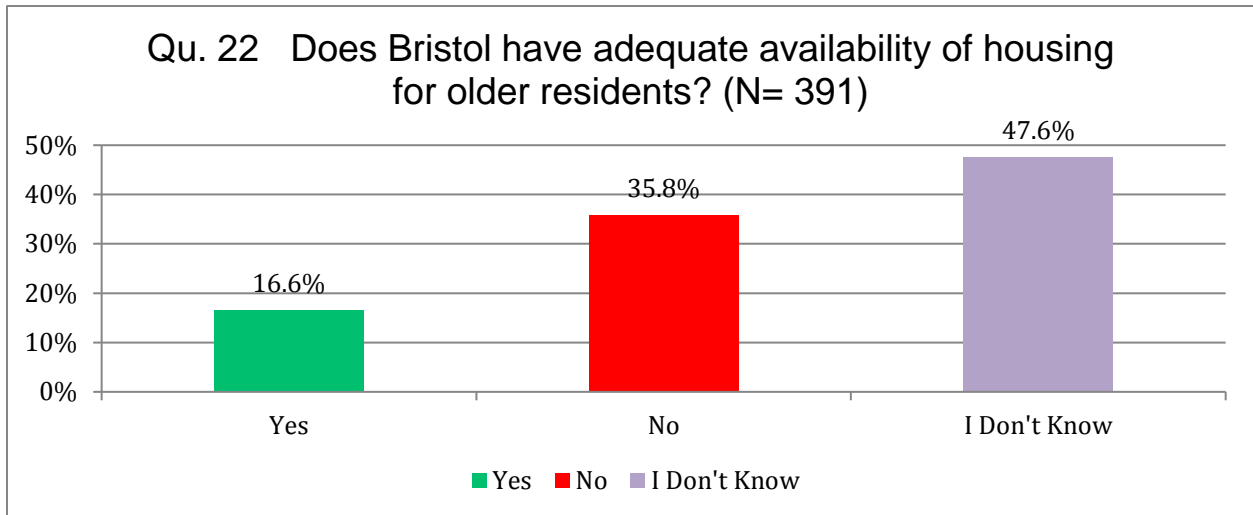
4. Awareness of Social Services in Bristol



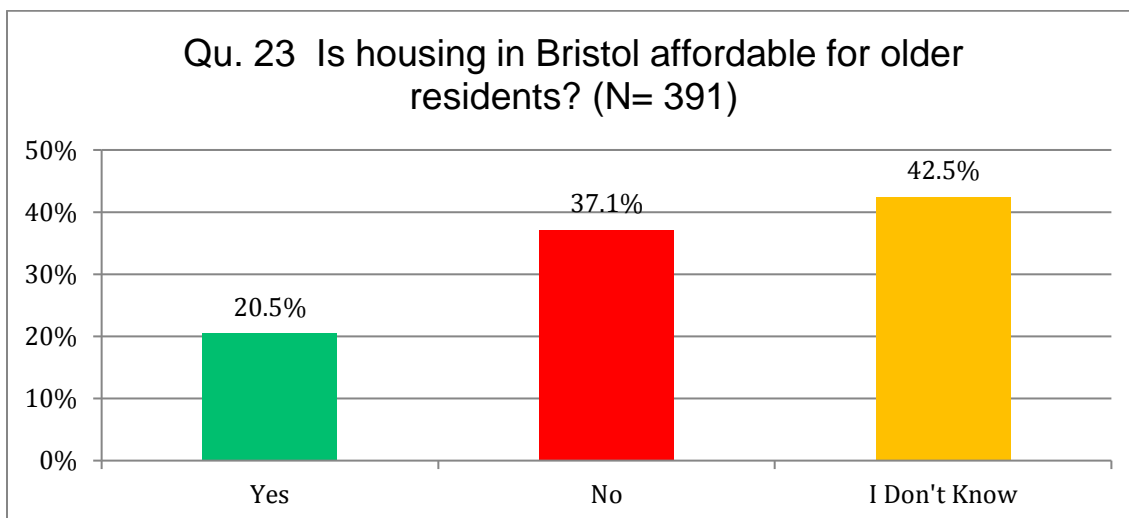
We asked respondents to share their level of awareness with specific senior services, and if they had ever availed themselves of those services. In the graph above, both awareness and use are coded green, awareness but no usage are blue, and lack of awareness is yellow. What is most striking is how many people are aware of services, yet do not use them (blue), and how few actually use services (green).

5. Basic Needs

Questions 22-30 addressed the basic needs considered essential to older people. The questions that follow fall into four core groups: Housing, Food Security, Safety, and Access to Services.

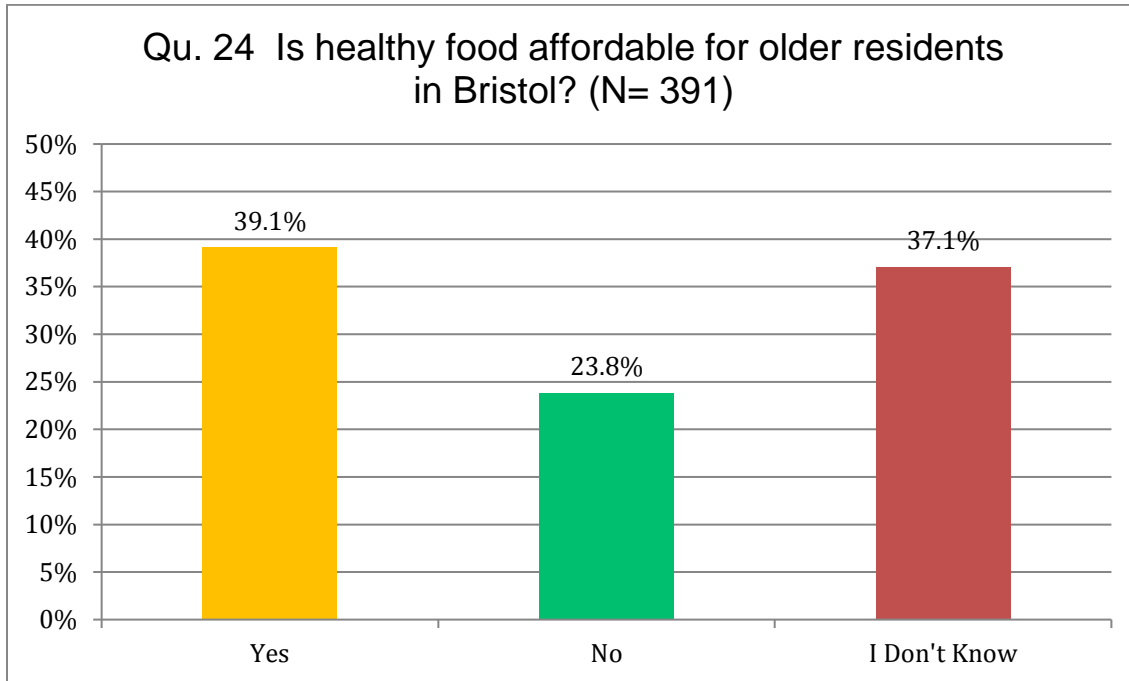


Many respondents (35.8%) did not believe that there is adequate availability of housing for older residents in Bristol. An even larger number (47.6%) were uncertain, suggesting they are not considering buying a house at this time. Just 16.6% believe that there is adequate housing available to meet the needs of seniors.

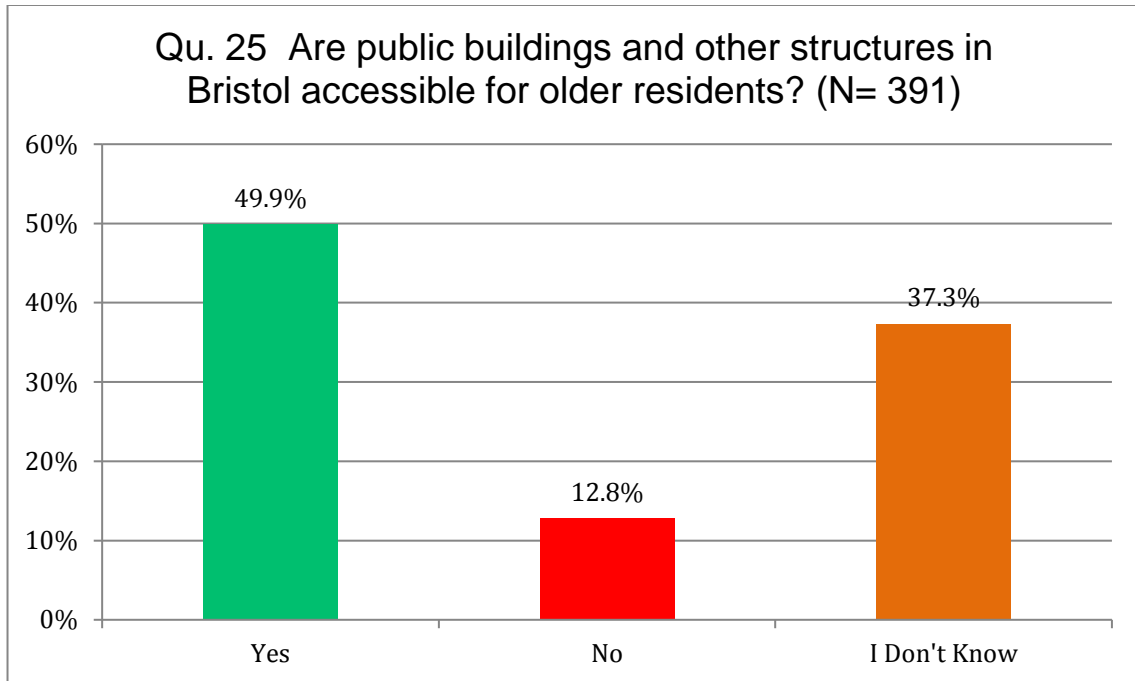


The chart above suggests that there are concerns by some seniors about the affordability of housing in Bristol. A large number of respondents reported that they felt housing was not

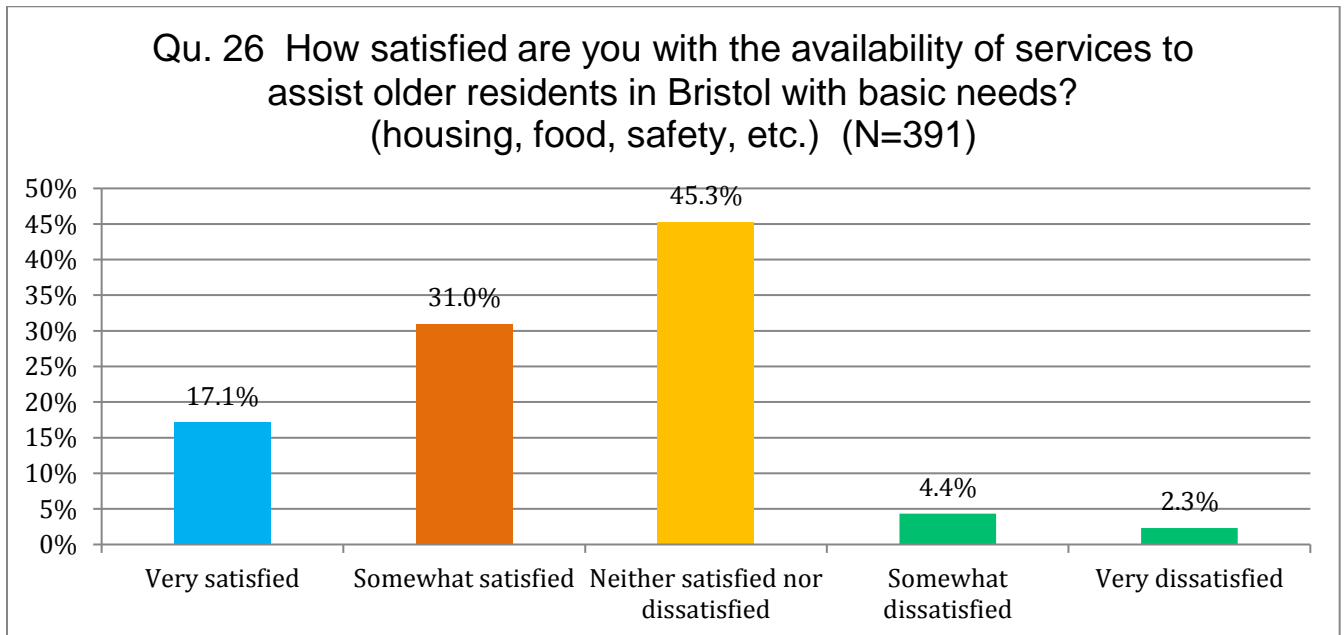
affordable for older residents (37.1%), while just 20.5% reported that housing was affordable for older residents.



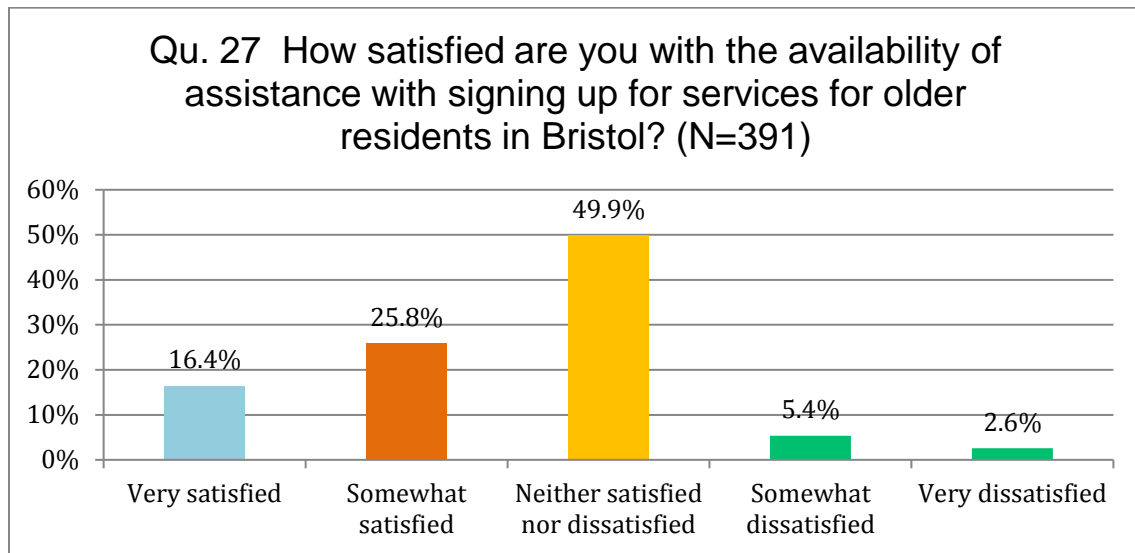
Nearly 40% responded that healthy food is affordable in Bristol, though 23.8% disagreed and 37.1% were uncertain. A majority of Bristol's retired senior residents likely live on fixed or limited incomes. Increases in the cost of basic items, like food, can be a major cause for concern. Choices must be made about how the money will be divided to cover all basic costs. Despite these limitations, Bristol elders expressed a desire to have access to and the ability to purchase healthy, nutritious foods.



Half of the respondents reported that public buildings were accessible for older residents and just 12.8% disagreed. Accessibility becomes a bigger issue as one ages. A large number of people (37.3%) were uncertain, suggesting that they may rarely attempt to access public buildings.

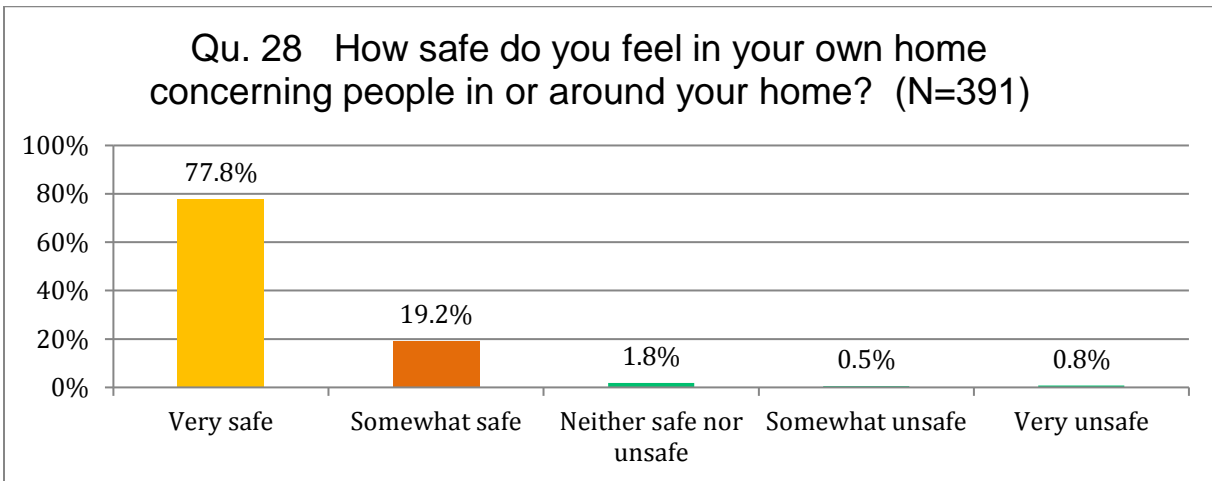


Nearly half of those who responded (48.1%) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of services that meet basic needs for older residents in Bristol. Only 6.7% reported feeling dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Those that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (45.3%) are perhaps not old enough to require services, have limited knowledge of local service availability, or have caregivers who handle services for them.

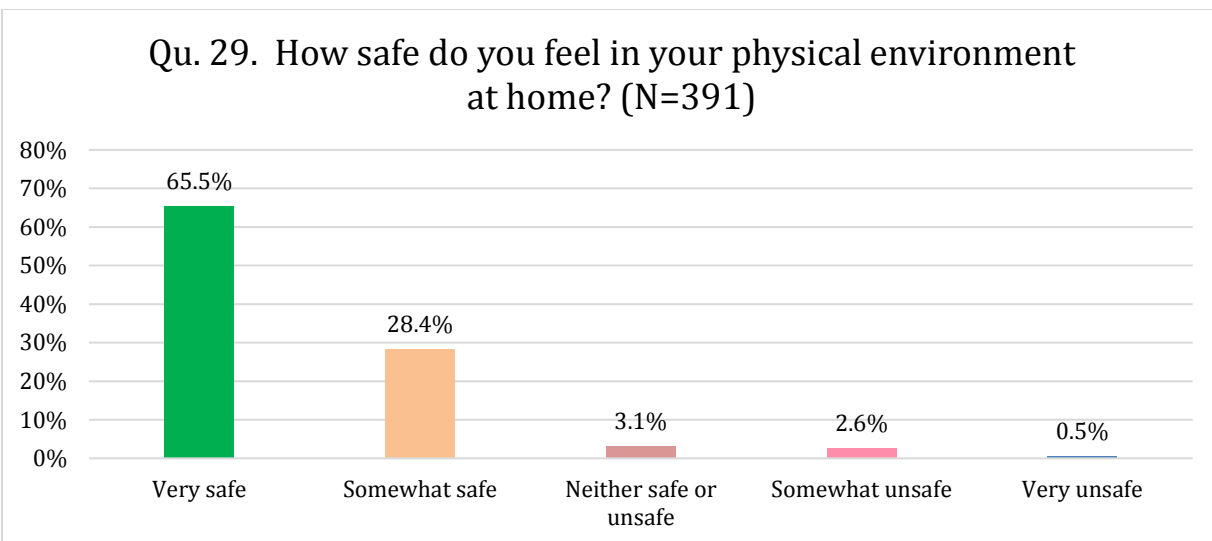


The issue of accessibility to information about services is one that can be a barrier for people of any age. Respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the availability of assistance with signing up for services: 42.2% were to some degree satisfied and 8.0% expressed dissatisfaction. Again, nearly half (49.9%) reported that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

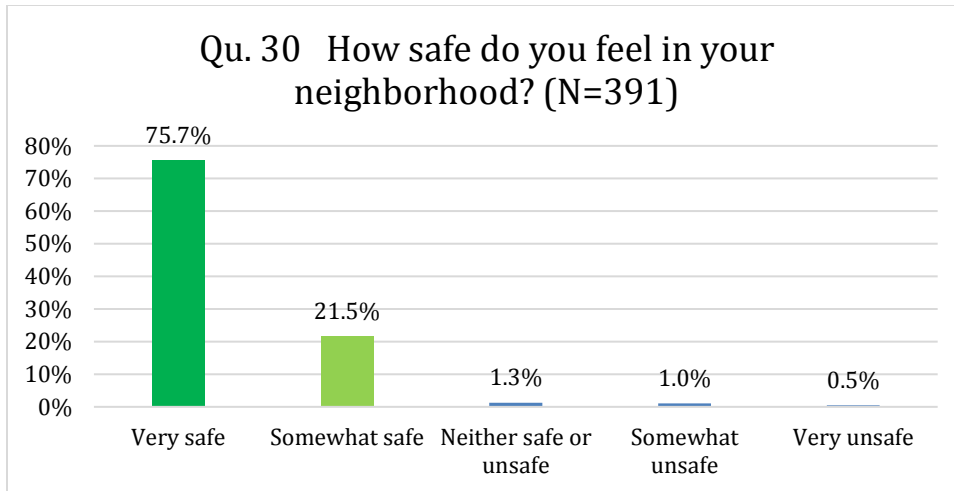
6. Safety



The issue of feeling safe at home is very important to everyone, but especially to older people. A number of seniors spend a large portion of their day at home. Bristol's seniors evidently feel safe at home, with 97% responding that they felt safe or very safe in their home concerning people in or around their home. Just 1.3% reported feeling unsafe.



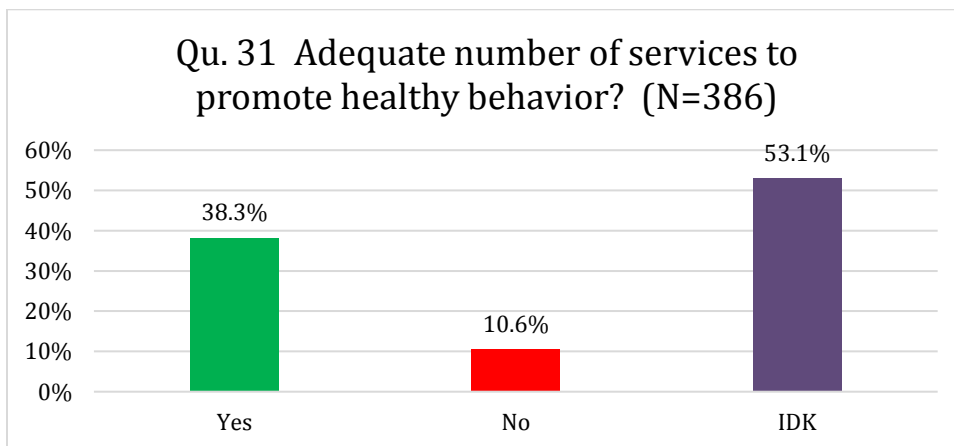
As one ages, new difficulties arise trying to accomplish many activities once common, such as going up and down stairs, crossing slippery floors, bathing, etc. When asked how safe they feel in the physical environment of their home, 93.9% felt either very safe or safe, while just 3.1% felt unsafe. Based on the results of the last two questions, home safety does not appear to be an issue for most seniors living in Bristol.



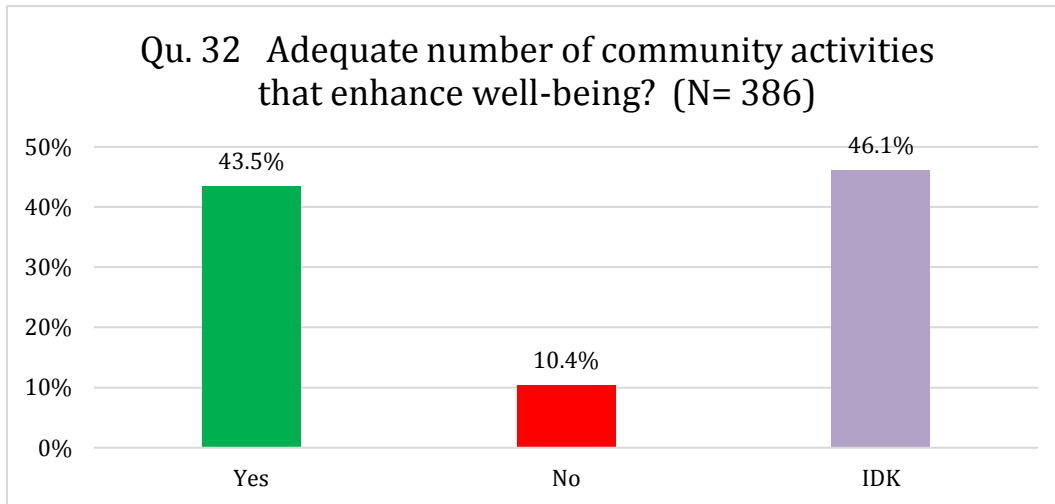
The last safety question pertained to the feeling of safety older residents have in their own neighborhood. A large majority of the seniors who completed the survey reported feeling safe in their neighborhoods (97.2%), with only 1.5% feeling unsafe to any degree. A few comments made on the last survey question (Qu. 52) suggested that there are a few seniors who live in mixed residential neighborhoods (with younger people or inconsiderate neighbors) who reported that they felt a bit unsafe at times.

7. Physical and Mental Well Being

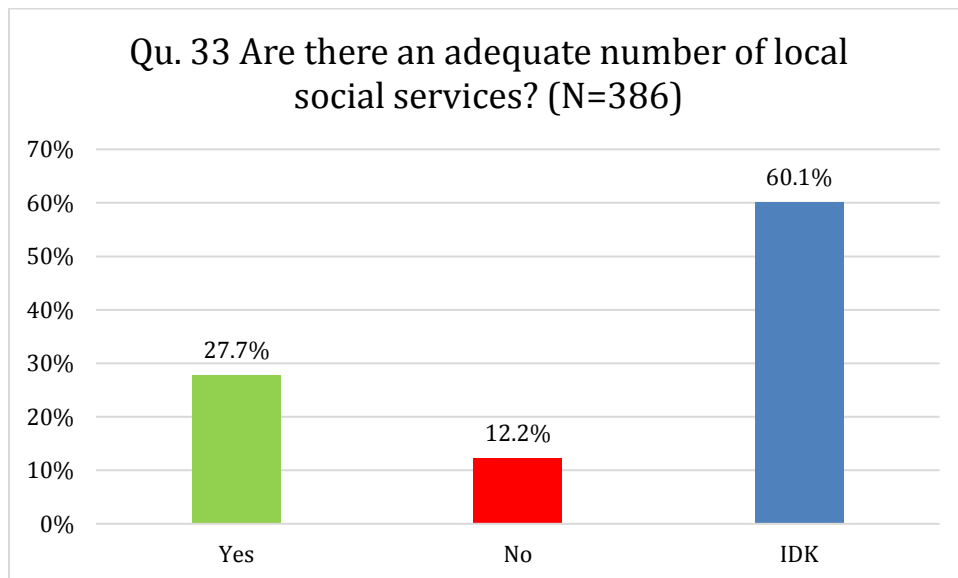
Whether it applies to the need to locate or enter a public building, obtain a specific service for the first time, or gain information about what services are being offered in the community, "access" provides seniors with an important consideration as they plan their daily routines and try to meet basic needs.



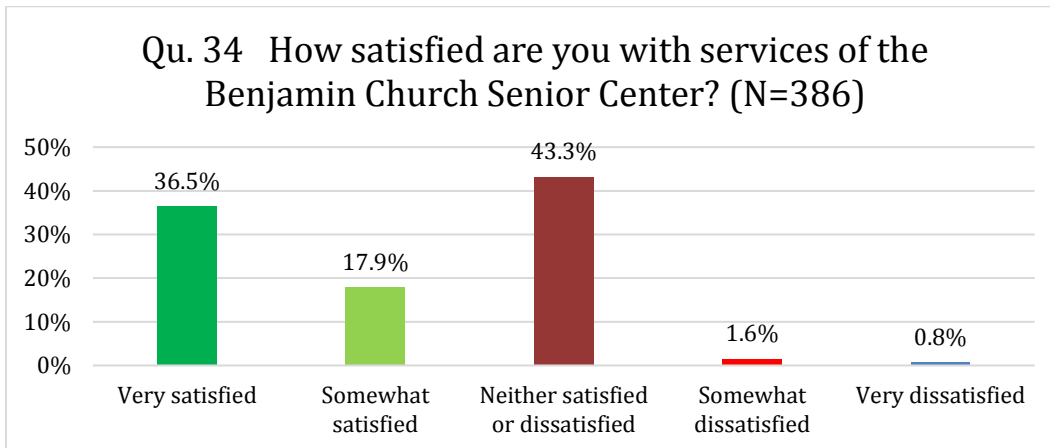
A majority of respondents (53.1%) did not know if there is an adequate number of services to promote healthy behavior in Bristol. This lack of knowledge demonstrates a need for more outreach and promotion of what exists already.



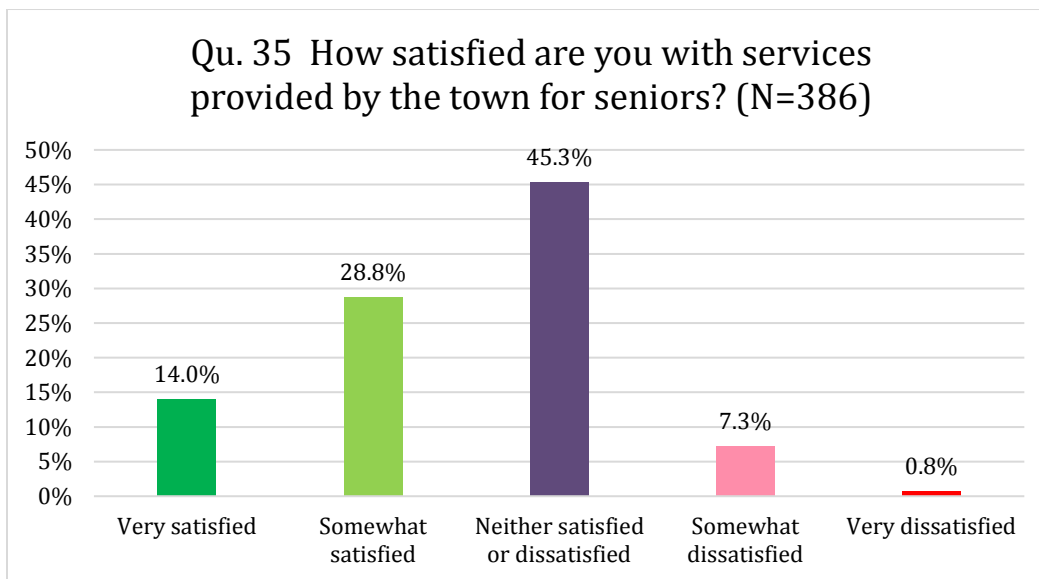
A substantial number of older residents (46.1%) appear uncertain about what activities are available in the community to enhance well-being. Nearly as many responded affirmatively that there are enough activities, while 10.4% did not agree with this statement.



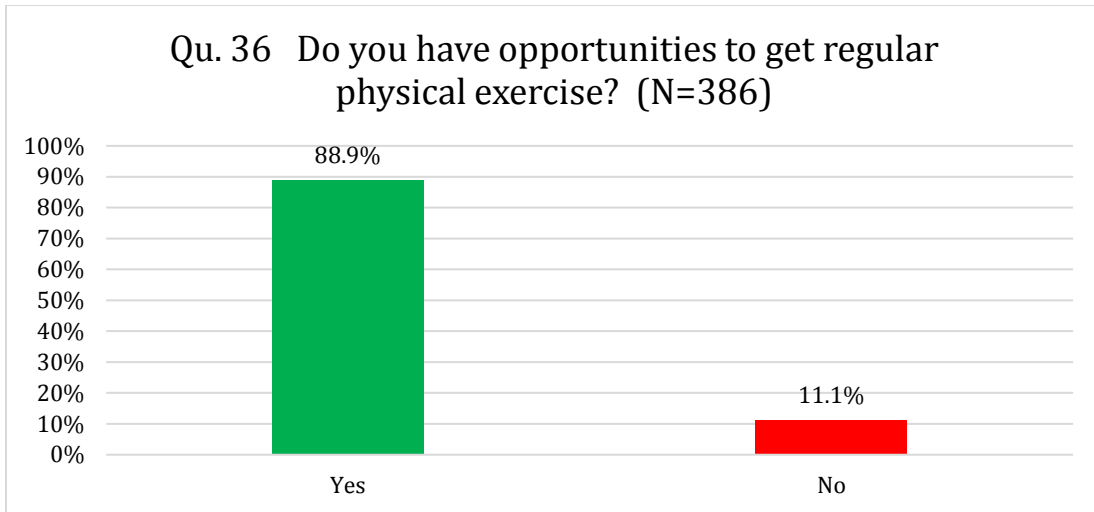
A majority of respondents (60.1%) reported their uncertainty about the adequacy of social services available in Bristol. Less than 30% (27.7%) responded positively while 12.2% said no, there was not an adequate number of local social services.



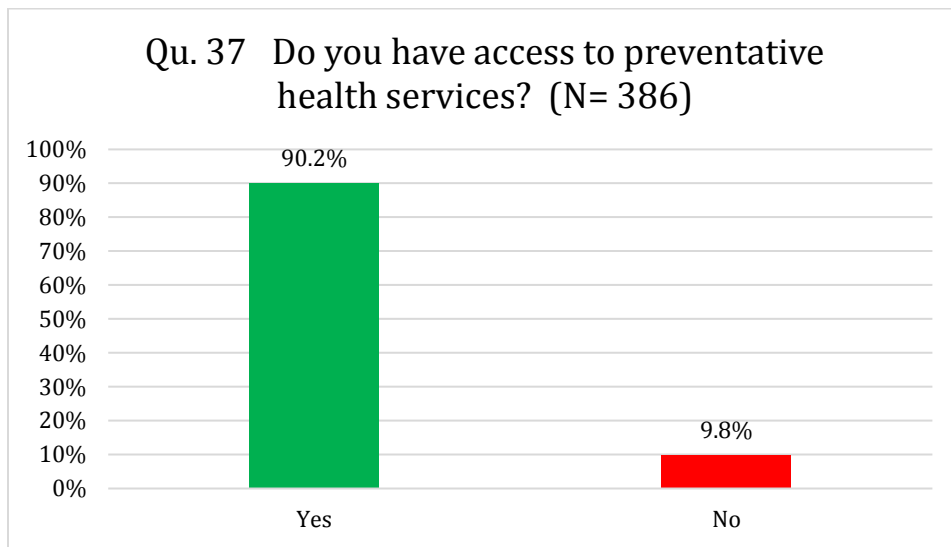
A majority of respondents (54.4%) expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the Benjamin Church Senior Center, but a significant number (43.3%) reported that they did not know if they were satisfied or not. Just 2.4% shared that they were dissatisfied to some degree with the services of the BCSC.



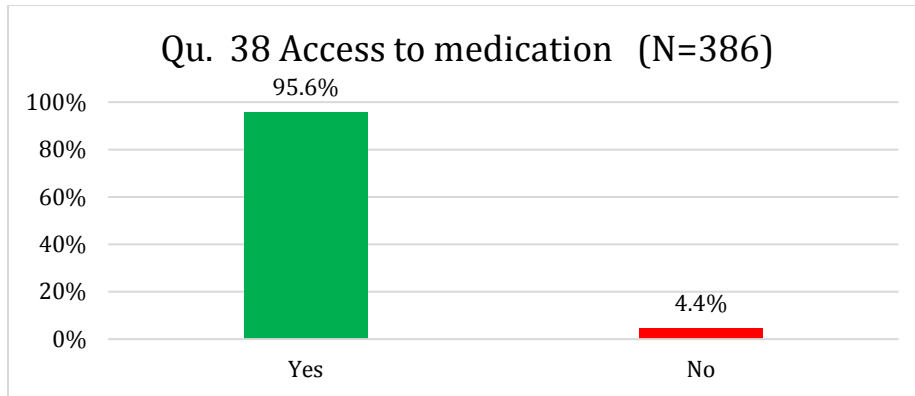
When asked about their level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Town of Bristol for seniors, 42.8% expressed some degree of satisfaction with town services, but even more (45.3%) were neither satisfied or dissatisfied. Around 8% did express their dissatisfaction with services provided by the town.



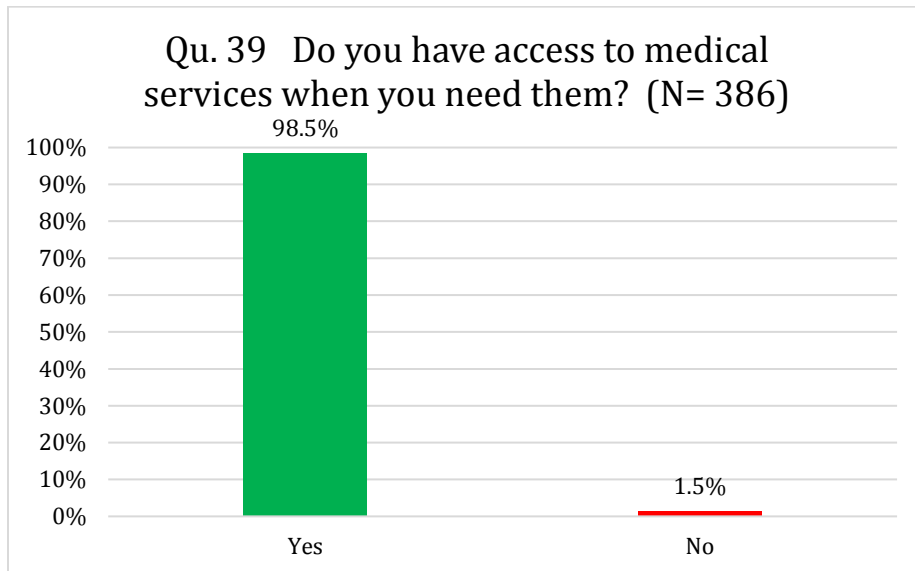
Nearly 90% of respondents (88.9%) agreed that they have opportunities to get regular physical exercise, while 11.1% disagreed.



Over 90% of respondents (90.2%) agreed that they have access to preventative health services, with 9.8% disagreeing.

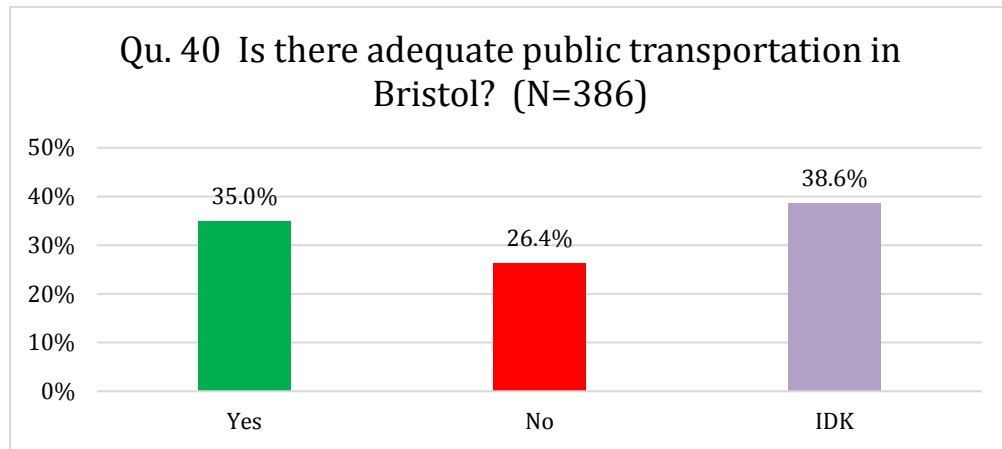


A large majority of respondents (95.6%) agreed that they have access to medications when they need them.

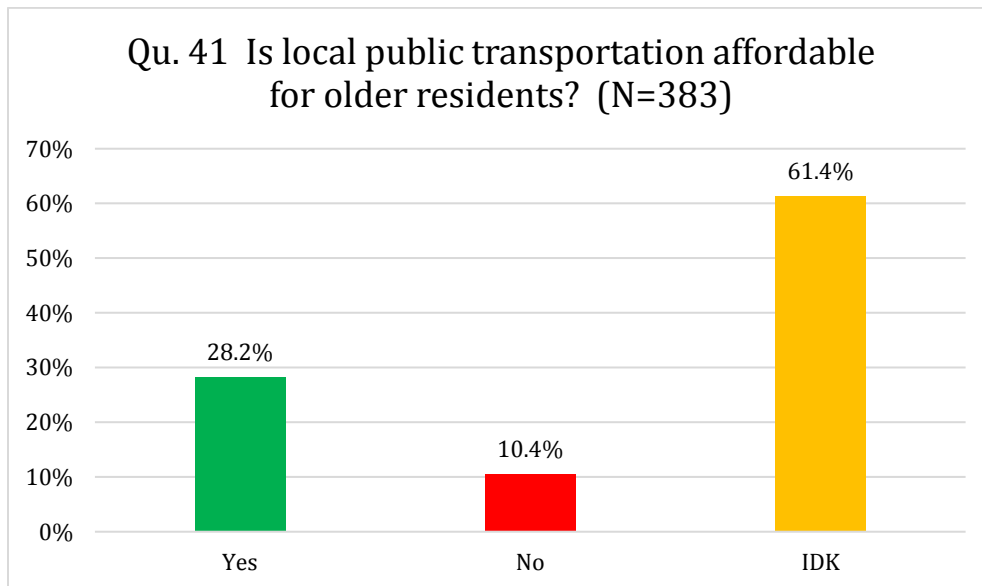


Nearly all of the respondents (98.5%) agreed that they have access to medical services when they need them. Only 1.5% (6 people) did not agree.

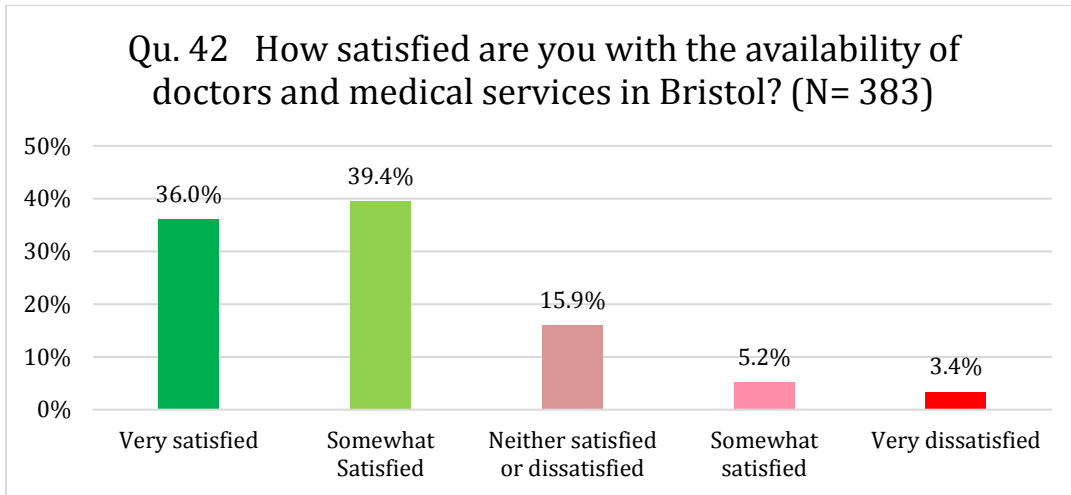
8. Maximizing Independence



More people did not know how to respond to this question (38.6%) than agreed with the statement (35.0%), but over one-quarter (26.4%) did not agree. This is certainly connected to the fact that so many still retain valid driver's licenses.

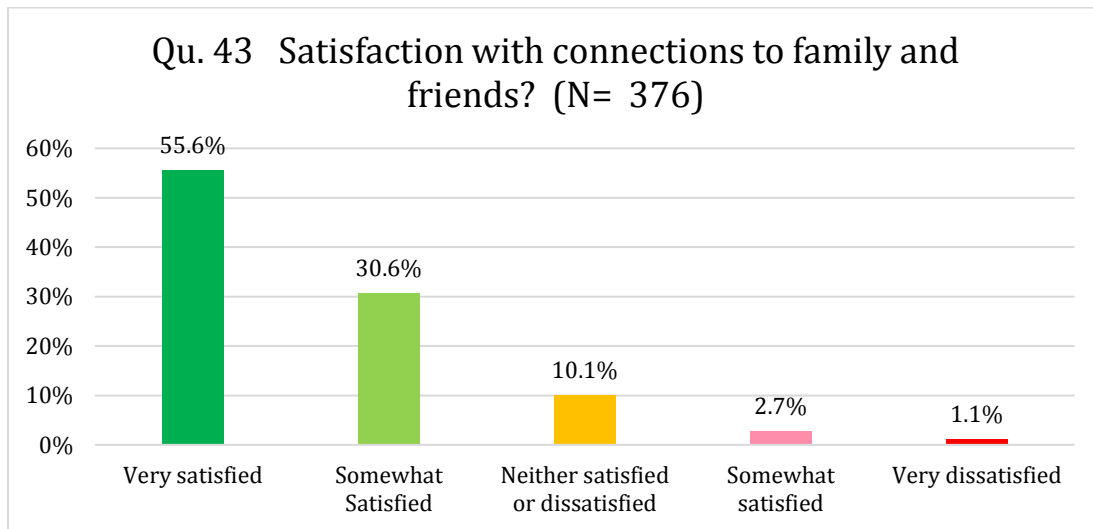


Only about 40% of respondents answered this question positively or negatively. Over 60% did not know, which is, again, a testament to the number of people who continue to drive as seniors, or who have someone they can depend on for transportation.

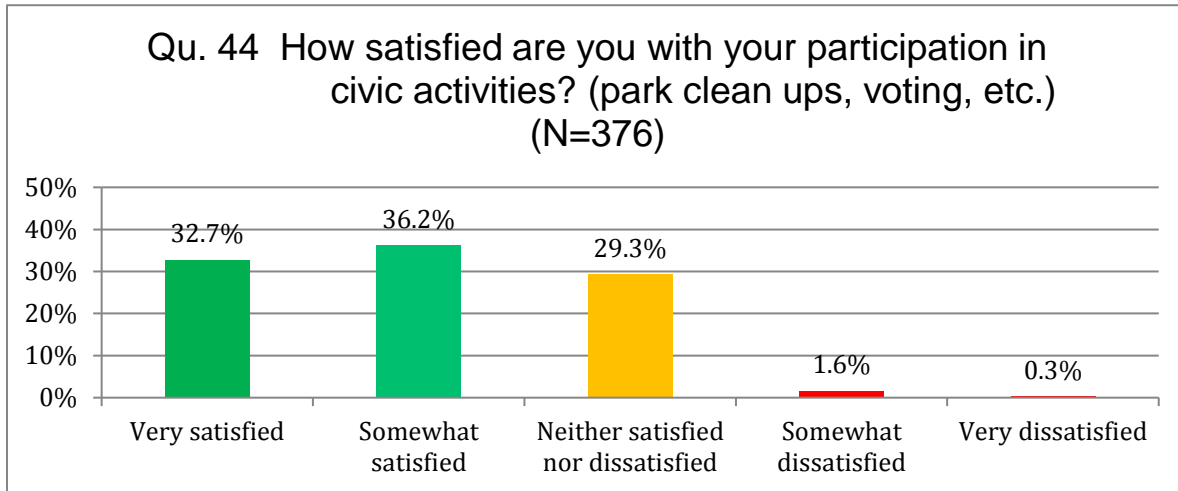


Over 75% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of doctors and medical services in Bristol, while 8.6% expressed some degree of dissatisfaction. Nearly 26% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied, suggesting that they are likely not seeking doctors or medical services at this stage.

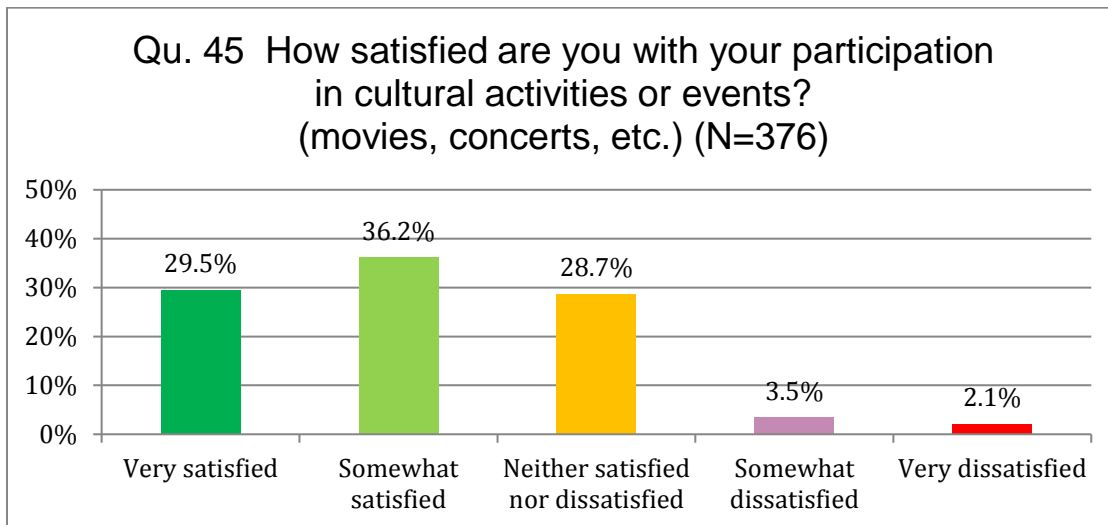
9. Social and Civic Engagement



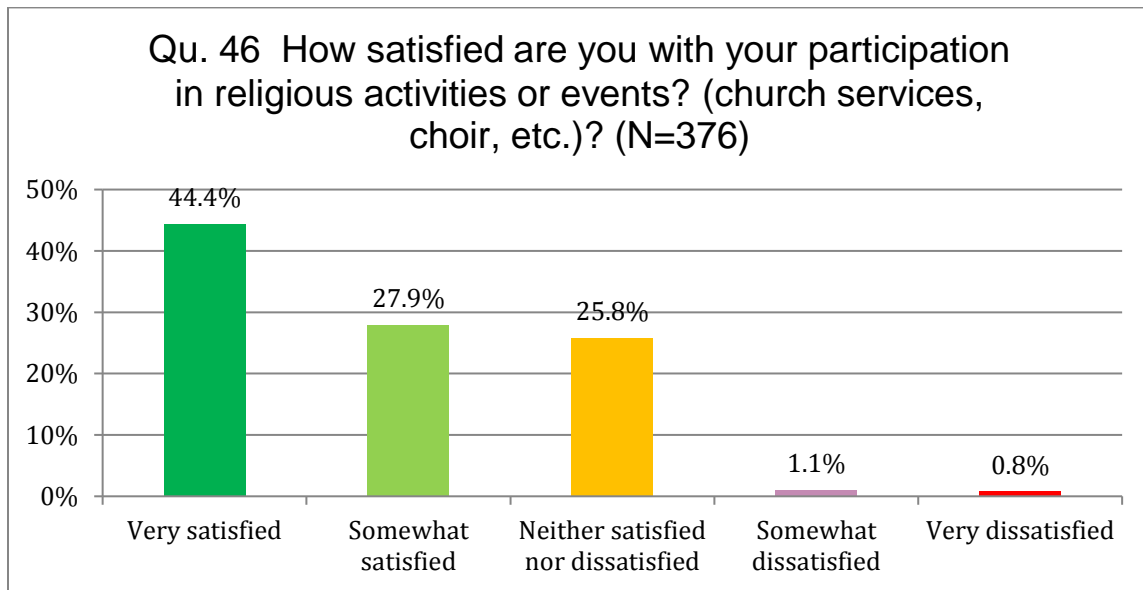
A very large proportion of respondents (86.2%) were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their connections to family and friend. Just 3.8% were not satisfied, and 10.1% had no opinion. This underlines the notion that Bristol is a strong, tight knit community with many families who are interconnected.



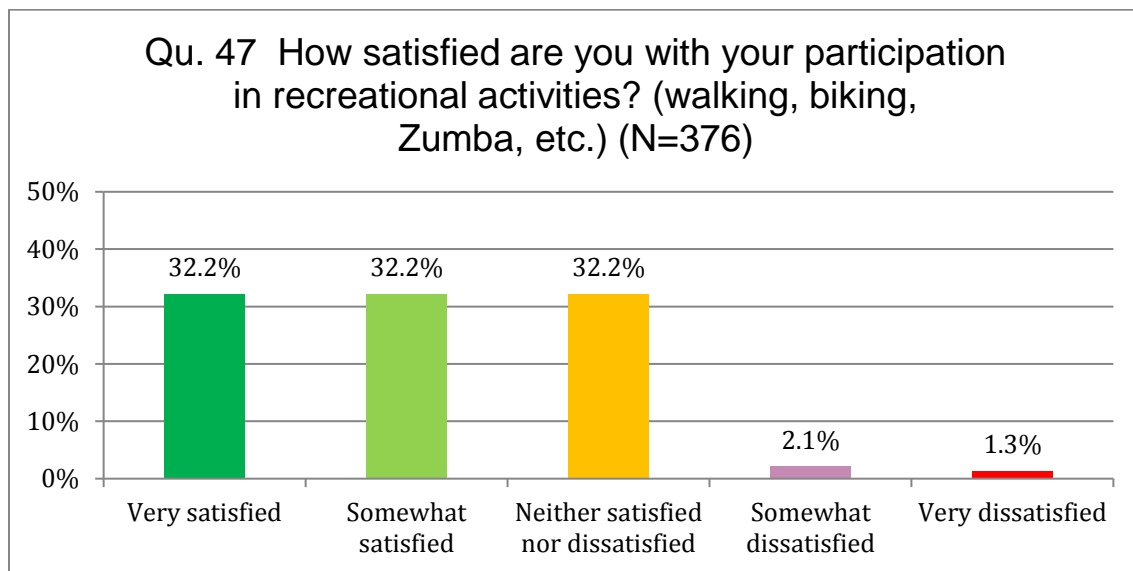
Less than 2% of respondents were dissatisfied with their participation in civic activities, while nearly 70% were satisfied and about 30% had no opinion or were neutral. This correlates with what we heard in focus groups that many people volunteer their time for different causes.



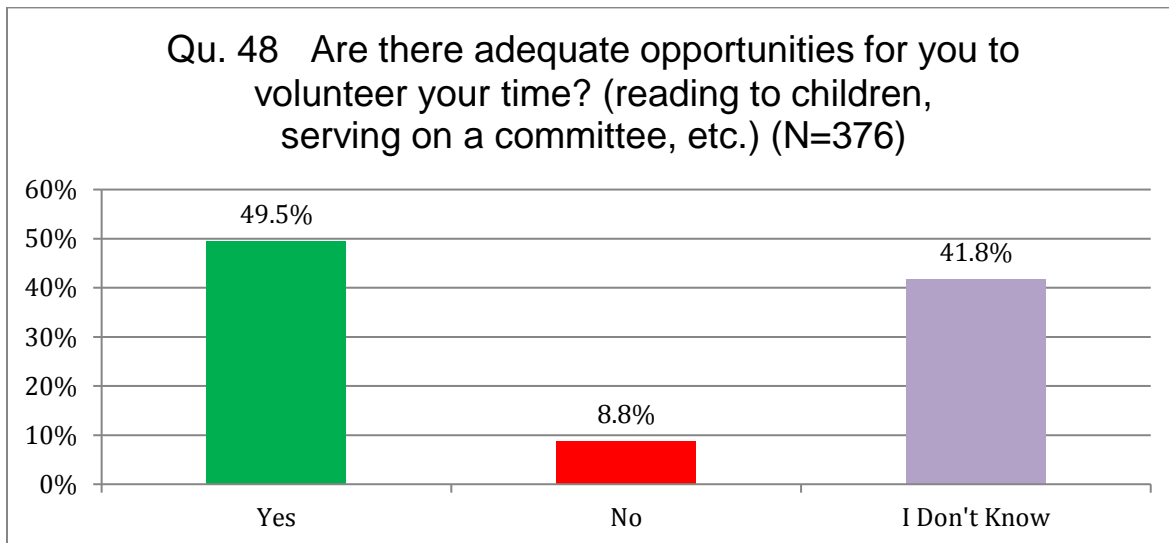
Only 5.6% were dissatisfied with their participation in cultural activities, while 65.7% were satisfied and about 29% had no opinion or were neutral. This correlates with what we heard in focus groups that many people volunteer time for different causes.



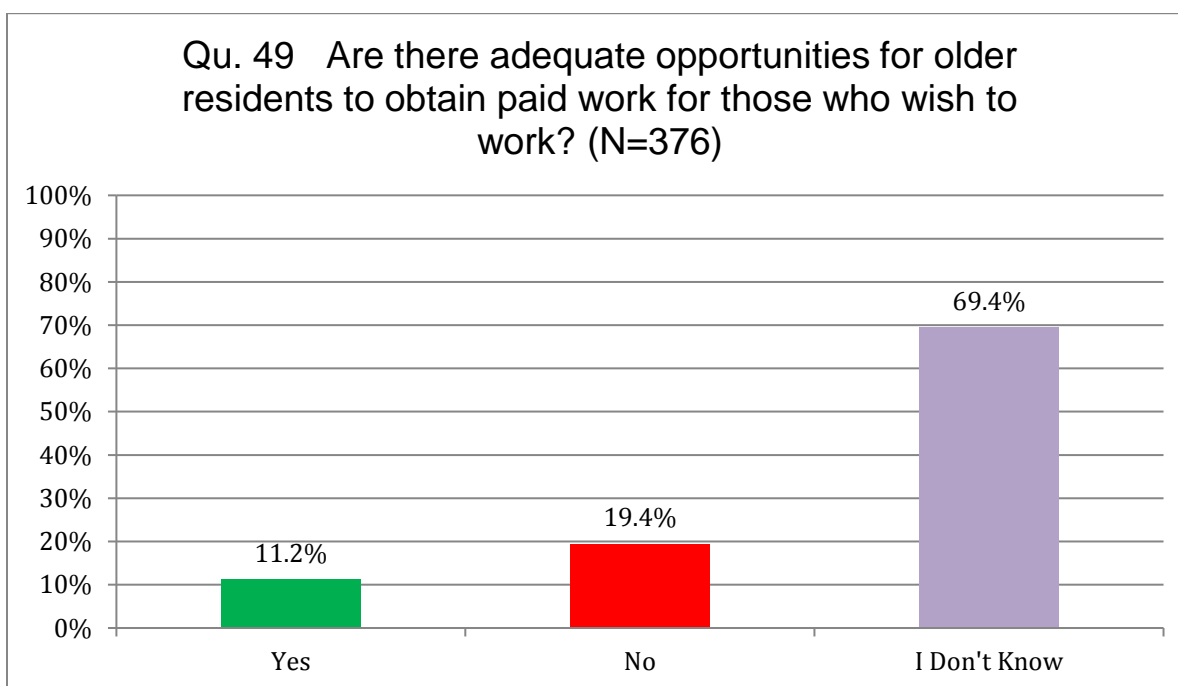
Just under 2% were dissatisfied with their participation in religious activities or events, while over 72% were satisfied and about 26% had no opinion or were neutral. Many people talked about how they get services and social contact via their church relationships.



Only 3.4% reported dissatisfaction with their participation in recreational activities. Curiously, the exact same number of people (121, or 32.2%) reported being very satisfied, somewhat satisfied and neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This correlates with what we heard in focus groups, that many people enjoy some form of recreation.



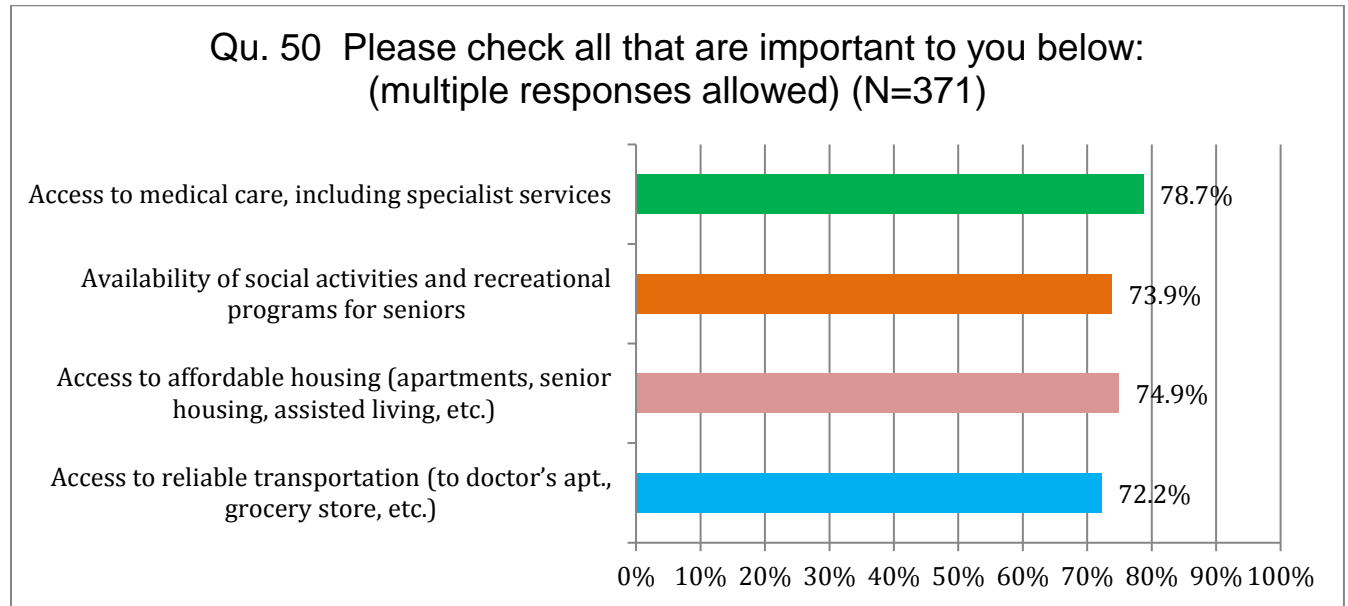
Only 8.8% reported that they did not believe there were adequate opportunities for older residents to volunteer in Bristol, while nearly half responded "Yes" and about 42% had no opinion or were neutral.



Over 50% of the people who responded to the survey reported being retired and not seeking work. That might explain why nearly 70% of people who reported that they did not know if there were adequate opportunities for paid work for older residents. However,

nearly 20% did not think there were enough work opportunities, suggesting that there is some demand in the senior community for paid work opportunities.

10. Setting Priorities



When asked to prioritize four key concerns for many seniors, medical care was selected as the most important (78.7%), followed closely by access to affordable housing (74.9%), availability of social and recreational programming (73.9%) and reliable transportation (72.2%). However, since all four concerns were selected by at least 70% of the 371 respondents to this question, they should all be considered highly significant when planning future services for Bristol's older residents.

11. What is your single greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol?

Responses are listed below, grouped by similar themes. Responses have not been edited but, when appropriate, may appear in more than one category. (Comments about affordability of housing only appear in the “Affordability” category.)

Existing Senior Services:

- Benjamin Church needs off-street parking for services.
- Rents needs to be more controlled. Handicap parking at Benjamin church for family members picking up residents!!!!!!! Heated floors for residents especially on lower levels. Washers and dryers in every building for residents
- The outward fighting among the people in town who are supplying the services to seniors.
- They need another van for medical and dental appt.
- Longer transportation hours for senior bus
- Senior services for the elderly.
- More independent living.
- Finding availability for an apartment at Benjamin Church.
- Not enough given to the elderly Should be important to care for the elderly they need it They are not aware of certain things
- need more knowledge of what's available and where
- I don't know all that is available to take advantage of for assistance and/or activities
- I would like to have an over 55 independent housing community in Bristol.

Transportation:

- Transportation
- Transportation
- Transportation
- Transportation
- Transportation - RIPTA is good but does not access cross streets etc. to Metacom.
- Transportation to events, family functions, see friends, church events and senior events.
- Getting to doctors
- Public transportation
- Transportation in the late afternoon
- The lack of transportation off of the bus route.
- When we can't drive we won't be close to our needs.
- In the future, without driving, lack of enough transportation.
- Visiting doctors who are not in Bristol or Warren. How do I get to my appointments at Miriam and RIH?
- Transportation to doctors. I have had to cancel appointments if they were out of the Bristol , Warren area. Dental , mammogram, surgeon appointment because it was out of town.
- Transportation outside Bristol/Warren without having to ask friends for ride.

Basic Needs:

- Affording to pay for meds, taxes/utilities and food.
- Lack of finances, worried about affording basics for bills, food, taxes for house and car, and insurance etc. and loneliness and isolation going into old age with no support system.
- Not enough housing.
- Housing

Safety and Access to Public Spaces:

- High utility bills. Poor road conditions.
- Accessibility to older bldgs.
- Judge Roy Bean blocks the sidewalk with tables and chairs in summer, hard to get by.
- Safety issue with sidewalks.
- Lack of sidewalks
- I live on Hope Street, not far from Benjamin Church Street. Both the Sidewalk and the street are in awful condition. Where I live, there is no sidewalk on the other side of the street, and the street lights are very dim.
- Lack of enough handicapped parking spaces in downtown Bristol
- Parking downtown is challenging. I have a little difficulty parallel parking and I am challenged walking. I also think it is dangerous getting in and out of a car on Hope St. downtown. It was much safer when at the traffic was one way.
- No access to help clean my care during a snowstorm.
- Someone tholepin clean off our cars when it snows.
- Home and property maintenance
- Walk-in shower, Automatic back door to trash.
- Eventually, transportation and affordable in home assistance as well as yard care and snow removal
- Stair climbing, handyman services, yard work, falling while living alone, loss of power and phone.
- Snow removal & power outages. There should be a list of individuals who could help with small jobs around the house for a nominal fee.
- difficulty in finding help with my yard, rides to airport or train in Prov, people capable of small repairs and maintenance
- Living safely and affordable.
- Rents needs to be more controlled. Handicap parking at Benjamin church for family members picking up residents!!!!!!! Heated floors for residents especially on lower levels. Washers and dryers in every building for residents
- I have two sets of stairs in my condo.
- Ground floor apartment and affordability
- Traffic
- Traffic
- Traffic
- Traffic Congestion
- Too much traffic

- Too much traffic=congestion, ,poor quality of roads, too much new construction
- Need for a series of bike lanes in downtown and surrounding streets.
- Not being able to get around easily

Physical and Mental Well Being:

- My health
- Affordable doctor and specialists copays, not being able to have procedure I need to survive.
- I am totally blind.
- I am new here and I just do not fit
- No East Bay Hospital
- To know that there is always someone to help if I need it.
- Access to affordable, reliable help at home, to assist me to care for my spouse.
- Eventually, transportation and affordable in home assistance as well as yard care and snow removal

Social and Civic Engagement:

- Noisy neighbors - person over me!
- As far as I know there aren't any barriers except my neighbor who harasses me.
- No place for people to hang out who are my age.
- Lack of finances, worried about affording basics for bills, food, taxes for house and car, and insurance etc. and loneliness and isolation going into old age with no support system.
- too many clicks-even in senior population
- I am new here and I just do not fit
- Poor voter registration information and education.

Affordability:

- Lack of finances, worried about affording basics for bills, food, taxes for house and car, and insurance etc. and loneliness and isolation going into old age with no support system.
- Rents are too high
- Rent
- Outrageously
- probably the rent, I like living in town. I'm afraid it will go up and my income will not high rent!
- Affordable rentals
- Creio que o custo de renda mensal em Bristol e exorbitante.
- Property tax increases are becoming a concern, but it's a great town to live in!
- The cost of town taxes (including sewer fees) as well as the rate of tax increases
- Taxes
- I wish I had more money, I live on a very small SS check. Most people live on \$200 a week.

- Not a house for us Bristol people to live in.
- Money
- Cost
- Affordable housing that is appropriate for someone ready to downsize but doesn't want to pay \$1,000,000 for waterfront condos or for subsidized housing. There should be accessible units with elevator access for middle range incomes.
- Increase costs to owning and staying in my home.
- Affordable apartment housing.
- The future status of affordable housing for senior Bristolians.
- Affording to pay for meds, taxes/utilities and food.
- affordability/ lack of social activities.
- Lack of finances, worried about affording basics for bills, food, taxes for house and car, and insurance etc. and loneliness and isolation going into old age with no support system.
- In the future it will be affordability
- Rents needs to be more controlled. Handicap parking at Benjamín church for family members picking up residents!!!!!!! Heated floors for residents especially on lower levels. Washers and dryers in every building for residents
- Affordability
- Cost
- Cost of Real Estate taxes, groceries (healthy)
- Affordability of a smaller home when we downsize. We would love to see a dedicated senior living community in Bristol with single resident homes that are affordable. We want to be able to stay here in our "golden years".
- Money
- Have recently been considering selling our home & moving to a senior living apartment, but because our income doesn't qualify us for the subsidized complexes, our options are limited at best. Could only find one complex that has a few "market" apartments & it was in Swansea. We would much prefer to stay in the East Bay area 😞
- High taxes
- Where to move in future when I can no longer stay in my townhouse due to three levels of stairs. Would like to see affordable over 55 housing...individual small homes that can be rented
- High real estate taxes may eventually be a problem.
- Lack of financial resources
- Taxes
- It is expensive to live in Bristol - taxes & housing in particular.
- Money
- Money
- Affordability
- Cost of housing. Need affordable housing for older 50
- High taxes
- High taxes on retirement budget FORCES the elderly out of BRISTOL... Sad!
- Living expense cost
- Money
- Finances

- Prices everything too high
- Cost of housing and utilities
- Affordability of housing
- taxes and cost of living
- Cost....there are not enough options for quality affordable housing.
- cost of living in Bristol (housing, taxes, food)
- High utility bills. Poor road conditions.
- The taxes
- Cost
- Affordable housing for the elderly
- The difficulty finding apartments that will accept my Housing Choice Voucher and the prevalence of drug activity and the undesirable traffic, foot and vehicle, that it brings.
- Increasing taxes
- House are expensive
- Income
- The cost of apartments in this town is outrageous
- High rents
- Affordability
- Being able to afford it. Husband WI be 62 in 2019. We cannot afford to keep up with our home and will need 1st FL residence as we age. Will look into Benj Church but need more units of same caliber in town to stay here as deeply want to.
- Affordable housing
- High rents
- Cost
- Property taxes are too high!
- Expensive! I've lived here my whole life but high property prices are sure to push us out
- \$
- Affordability
- High taxes
- High cost. Taxes
- Affordable housing and public transportation
- affordable housing on one level with laundry in unit. I'm in my own 2 story home, not good for me and too expensive to keep up.
- Over taxing the seniors with property taxes, and not willing to work within their means, income.
- I currently feel safe and comfortable, However, if I got sick or couldn't afford housing, I would feel challenged by housing and affordability of assisted living.
- The continued rising of taxes
- nothing at this time. Taxes could be a problem eventually
- Ground floor apartment and affordability

Other:

- The difficulty finding apartments that will accept my Housing Choice Voucher and the prevalence of drug activity and the undesirable traffic, foot and vehicle, that it brings.
- Don't look for problems and get involved.
- Time. Not enough
- Keeping busy
- RWU
- Too many college students taking up housing
- Political agendas
- Lack of trust in our politicians to do the right thing

No barriers identified:

- I feel all needs are met to help the people who need assistance.
- Safe place to live!
- I like it Bristol
- I am very fortunate because I live in housing and the rent is subsidized.
- I am lucky that I live at home.
- Gosto muito do meu apartamento em Franklin Court.
- Antes de viver aqui em Franklin Court paga uma renda muito elevada. Agora estoir beni.
- En vivo bem e segura em Franklen Court
- En vivo beni oncle estou
- No concerns
- Good
- Very comfortable in Bristol.
- I am happy being quiet, I read a lot, spend time on telephone and visits with friends and relatives far and wide, plus 1 on 1 visits.
- None. I have not had a single issue.
- Have none at this time.
- Bristol is the greatest town to live in.
- Having been married to a wonderful husband for 70 years and having 3 living children all live in Bristol like us.
- I live very comfortably and safely in Bristol at my present age. But I know when I get older this may well change.
- We just moved to Bristol and thought through many of senior living issues. I hope we found a place that covers many of them.
- Satisfied. Great police and fire departments, awesome paramedics, churches. Great Senior Center.
- My life in Bristol is very satisfactory.
- I am very satisfied with Bristol. No major problems.
- There isn't one
- I am only 54 and still live in my own home. I do not have any barriers at this time.

- I do not have a barrier today.
- I am lucky to be living at North Farm with a daughter in Barrington
- None at this time in my life.
- No barriers yet
- Not applicable
- At this time, I can't think of any
- At this time, I have no barrier.
- I have no barriers I have lived here all of my life and I hope to continue living here.
- None as of yet
- I am a very healthy 60 year old, living in a loving relationship, so I have not experienced any barriers as of yet.
- I don't have any barriers
- I currently feel safe and comfortable, However, if I got sick or couldn't afford housing, I would feel challenged by housing and affordability of assisted living.
- At this point in my life I am fine
- nothing at this time. Taxes could be a problem eventually

12. If you have other comments or concerns you would like to share with us, please do so below:

Responses are listed below, grouped by similar themes. Responses have not been edited but, when appropriate, may appear in more than one category.

Existing Senior Services:

- I understand there is a substantial wait for B. C. which may indicate a shortage.
- Enjoy going to Benjamin Church to eat and (be with) people.
- Benjamin Church lacks guest parking. Walking from Chestnut St. is difficult for seniors
- Most events in Benjamin senior center are limited to a dozen people who can fit in sr. ctr. bus- need o use a school bus so people aren't left out-need nite time events for people who "work" during day. the nite time is the loneliest for seniors!!!!
- Funding of senior program and benefits keep getting cut.
- The Bristol senior center is primary place for activities transport meals they need more funding
- Benjamin church, Assylum rd, what's where, where do we go
- Better relationship with Town Council. They need to become better informed about seniors and activities they would like.
- I feel Benjamin Church provides very good services for the little money they are given to operate. Would like to see this money increased so more services can be provided.
- Ben Church is really nice. The apartments - the office staff - the maintenance staff + great neighbors in Building F. A great place to live!!
- The benefits I receive from Benjamin Church Senior Center and the Senior Housing where I live are the only possibilities I have found in Bristol.
- Great caring people in Senior Center. They are outstanding!

- I would like to commend the staff of Benjamin Church Senior Center for the great job they are doing.
- Maria and Donna are just great. They care about all of us.
- 1. The town must have information about age of residents- the Center should initiate contact with new residents over 60 or current residents who reach 60. 2. Let people on your email list know that they are eligible for a reduction in their property taxes.
- The BCSC is one of the best run centers I have seen. Maria and Donna work so hard for all of us seniors they go out of their way to answer anything we ask, get in touch with who ever we need to talk to. They are the greatest team I have seen. PS and they like one another.
- There needs to be a better system in Bristol and Rhode Island to learn of the availability of services to seniors.
- Senior services need to be more inclusive and part of the town services.
- Bristol has the best sr Ctr compared to other towns!
- The Town doesn't appear to support seniors
- It is very confusing having more than one resource for seniors. Prefer that there be one organization coordinating all services. Services through Benjamin Moore Sr Ctr are limited and not communicated to all seniors. Not everyone feels welcome there. Too political.
- Love the senior center

Transportation:

- I think RIPTA buses should alternate to Hope and Metacom Ave.
- Transportation. It would be nice to be able to go to nighttime theater and plays. It also would be nice to be able to go shopping when we need to go to a store or pharmacy when needed,
- 1. Need a local YMCA or work out ability at Senior Center; 2. Do not drive and No way to get to a gym.
- Need more transportation.
- More transportation
- Lack of sidewalk Hope St. to Quinta Gamelin / regular shuttle loop around town/ community gardens and access to fresh organic food.
- Love living here, great place for retirement years, as long as you can drive.
- My physicians are mostly outside Bristol. I sometimes have procedures that require me to be driven to Providence. To my knowledge, if a friend cannot take me, I have had no other recourse than to hire a driver at a high expense. I do not believe that there is currently any option through elderly affairs.
- We need a trolley circulating that provides public transportation.
- Bristol is a great community. It seems that there should be a grocery store or similar in town where people could walk to who live in town. Or, perhaps a town or county shuttle that could help with transportation (not just for Benjamin Church residents) to shopping, cultural events, medical appointments, etc. For folks who need to drive, there aren't a lot of options, should they become limited to getting out. Transportation would be very important to me.

Basic Needs:

- Housing options are the most important to me. I see myself having to move out of Bristol after living here all my life because I can't physically maintain my house, but can't afford other options that are available. Bristol needs to remember the upper middle/middle class community that built it up.
- Waiting list for housing is too long.
- I understand there is a substantial wait for B. C. which may indicate a shortage.
- More housing for middle income seniors and elderly.
- again..affordable 55+housing.
- I know of people getting into our elderly housing from out of town... I believe our affordable elderly housing should be for Bristol residents only... The need is there for those who have lived in and loved Bristol for many years
- Need housing for couples and vets
- A better use for the property at Old Orchard Farm is a senior living community. Other tracts of land that become available should be considered for this. Some of us will have higher incomes during retirement and will be overqualified income-wise to be on the list for Benj. Church Manor apartments. A townhouse community dedicated for those over 55 needs to be planned and built. We should not have to leave our beloved town to find living arrangements elsewhere. Thank you.
- If Bristol had an "over 55" community, with both purchase and rental availability, with an active social activity program, I would definitely consider living there if affordable, rather than considering moving south where there are plenty of these communities.
- Enjoy going to Benjamin Church to eat and (be with) people.
- Lack of sidewalk Hope St. to Quinta Gamelin / regular shuttle loop around town/ community gardens and access to fresh organic food.
- I'm worried about not being able to stay in my house as I age, because of the expenses of taxes for house, car, insurance, etc. due to lack of money. I have trouble getting plumbers, electricians, repair men for my fence and house to come. I worry about not being able to pay someone to cut my grass as I go into old age. I'm worried about being alone, and having no support system. I have many fears and anxieties at this point in my life, due to many health problems and trying to care for an elderly parent. I eat a lot of cereal because it is cheaper than other food, but it's not good for me, because I'm prediabetic. Food is expensive and I don't eat well. I barely have any savings, and I worry about dying, and paying funeral expenses. I worry that no one will be there for me as I go into old age. I've been a caregiver my whole life, and now I worry about everything and paying basic bills.

Safety and Access to Public Spaces:

- Not enough aids for elderly, i.e., railings on local stores or bldg. steps and not enough places to sit! (outside or inside) for the elderly public.
- Benjamin Church lacks guest parking. Walking from Chestnut St. is difficult for seniors.
- Lack of sidewalk Hope St. to Quinta Gamelin / regular shuttle loop around town/ community gardens and access to fresh organic food.
- Sidewalk at Pleasant and Hope is not accessible for wheelchair access. A bike lane in downtown area.

- Power outages we use a well and my husband needs aC-Pap machine to sleep with. Snow removal is a big problem.
- A walk-in shower would be great!
- Living facilities should have walk in shower stall w/seat and toilet should be higher to sit down on. A fold out ironing board in the apartment would be a good idea, especially for an efficiency apartment.
- walkability (and thus independent access) to stores, library, restaurants and parks
- I believe that problem with Hope Street in Bristol is that it is also state Highway 114. The state and the city each blame the other for lack of maintenance. I wish someone would insist that responsibility be taken before a senior citizen or someone younger gets a serious injury.

Physical and Mental Well Being:

- 1. Need a local YMCA or work out ability at Senior Center; 2. Do not drive and No way to get to a gym.
- I have had to join the Barrington Senior Center (\$12 per year) because they are the only Senior Center within Bristol, Warren and Barrington that offer a fitness room, though it is small, but sufficient enough for my needs. I think it would be wonderful if Bristol could offer this opportunity to Bristol seniors. I would use it in Bristol if it were offered.
- The supply of medical equipment when leaving the hospital should be advertised to public.
- I wish the town had a pool free to senior citizens.
- (Qu 39) It all depends on where it is - in town yes but in Providence, I would need help.
- My physicians are mostly outside Bristol. I sometimes have procedures that require me to be driven to Providence. To my knowledge, if a friend cannot take me, I have had no other recourse than to hire a driver at a high expense. I do not believe that there is currently any option through elderly affairs.
- New to area...Bristol health care providers not taking new patients -have to travel to east greenwich -very disappointing
- As a member of the LGBTQ community who plans to grow old in Bristol, I will become very concerned about the awareness, outreach and sensitivity of service providers to the LGBTQ community.

Social and Civic Engagement:

- Most of my recreational activities take place in Barrington: water aerobics and chair yoga
- Activities should be during the day as driving in the dark is hard for seniors. Example - have a lunch rather than a dinner.
- I have a hobby fixing up things to work again, as well as reading a lot, time just buzzes by, I always go out for breakfast or another meal if the idea makes me happy.
- Active 55 to 65 year old singles seem to be forgotten.
- I think we need togged more programs for the elderly, mix them with children.
- There can never be enough activities for the older generation.
- Enjoy going to Benjamin Church to eat and (be with) people.
- Need to get involved locally via COA

- Can Bristol collaborate with RWU for Lifetime Learning program for Seniors? Opportunities to hear public speakers on topics related to the community and more.
- Ter um lugar para os idosos se entreterem a brincar cartes conseersarem aque eni Bristol nos precisamos nad a nada aqui os homems principalmente nad tem nada facam alguma coisa.
- Lugar para destruo os idoses todos os dios personas reformadas foreincefralmente no inverno os Homens no terri uni lugar para conversareni nada tem segui.
- I would love to see programs geared to those of us that are use transitioning into senior/elderly status. Those of us that only recently retired...or plan to soon don't really have a lot of options. I'd also like to see options for helping to get seniors involved in activities. For instance...have activities in evening hours Gerard for those of us that have elderly loved ones that can help us introduce them into the senior center. You know, it is very very difficult for seniors to make new friends....they don't easily just show up at events on their own looking for companionship. As a result, if you are not already active in the community when you become elderly (or if an adult child has just had you move in with them from out of town), you end up spending your days alone. How about coming up with a program with activities geared to us adult children...that we can have our elderly parents tag along to....and introduce them to new friends. I will bet you that will result in greater participation of those individuals who used to spend much of their time alone. it is hard to get your elderly loved ones to try out activities at the senior center on their own. We need help.
- Most events in Benjamin senior center are limited to a dozen people who can fit in sr. ctr. bus- need o use a school bus so people aren't left out-need nite time events for people who "work" during day. the nite time is the loneliest for seniors!!!!

Affordability:

- Am satisfied!! My only concern is my yard, cleaning leaves, etc. It gets very expensive!
- I'm very concerned with the current revaluation which would (make) my house unaffordable. Current town taxes consume 73.8% of my income.
- If the time comes I hope there is affordable in-home care, so we can remain in our home.
- Seniors should have discounted taxes. We are being forced out of town because of them. We made this town along with our ancestors. We have contributed all of our lives to be pushed out for what?? No consideration is extended to us. This society is so unpersonable!
- I'm worried about not being able to stay in my house as I age, because of the expenses of taxes for house, car, insurance, etc. due to lack of money. I have trouble getting plumbers, electricians, repair men for my fence and house to come. I worry about not being able to pay someone to cut my grass as I go into old age. I'm worried about being alone, and having no support system. I have many fears and anxieties at this point in my life, due to many health problems and trying to care for an elderly parent. I eat a lot of cereal because it is cheaper than other food, but it's not good for me, because I'm prediabetic. Food is expensive and I don't eat well. I barely have any savings, and I worry about dying, and paying funeral expenses. I worry that no one will be there for me as I go into old age. I've been a caregiver my whole life, and now I worry about everything and paying basic bills.
- Once I retire, I will be hard pressed to financially afford my current housing beyond 10 years.
- The cost of homes force elderly to move in a high(er) crime town or move out of state; both are not healthy for people who have lived here most, if not all their lives. Too high taxes for

the elderly who have not had children in the school system for 10, 15, 29, 25, or 30 plus years!!! Basically, RI is only for the wealthy or poor...

- High taxes & expensive repairs, services like lawn care for home owner
- Need more affordable housing units like Benj Church with services to assist aging population
- I wish that seniors could get a much bigger discount on property taxes so we could stay in our homes.

Other:

- Hurrah for your program— as a winter AZ resident I am shocked at how "behind" this RI area is in senior services and information. Contact North Farm and Barrington aging in Place- new groups working to improve senior living!
- Grew up in Bristol, went to school K-12 and worked in Bristol in various capacities including teacher at Oliver. My mom lived in Benjamin Church Manor Bldg. X besides all her life in Bristol.
- The survey is very inclusive. Thank you.
- I'm very happy living here. Everyone does such a great job. I can't say enough about them (super nice people).
- Why can't dog owners pick up their dogs' poop and take it home! Ha Ha. Especially in our beautiful parks.
- Not all seniors are impoverished, limited physically or mentally incapable. Please encourage and utilize our experience and wisdom. Don't treat us all the same, we are individuals.
- The college is taking over Bristol houses because they can pay more money.
- Great staff!
- Very well organized.
- Because I am still working I am able to be on my own doing some traveling and taking day trips.
- Beautiful historical town, Proud of it. Streets, sidewalks, Way too much litter. For 24 years as I walked Scoot I picked rubbish where ever we walked. Not pass and enforce litter free law - it's a shame. First Spring in Bristol I used recycle cart/bin to pick up all the rubbish in and around independence. Maintenance. Since I am a gardener have the will to assist keeping weeds & care for the trees. Our beautiful trees need tone maintained professionally along the streets, sidewalks, parkways, side yards, etc. Pulled, cut, etc. as Red's. Along Thames St., especially lots of tourist are exposed to unsightly natural areas.
- So far no problems. Everyone is very helpful.
- Love living here, great place for retirement years, as long as you can drive.
- Senior care is becoming a bigger and bigger challenge as people live longer and health care is based so much on how much you can afford.
- I think I put enough lol...
- I am doing ok as of now I will see what the future holds for me
- It might be useful to establish a volunteer group who would visit people who are isolated and provide rides to doctor's appts or shopping and errands.
- Great place to live!!!
- Thank you.

- I really haven't reached the age where I am ready to use most senior citizen related amenities. My pension income is decent, I won't need senior housing.
- Share info on 'Around Town Bristol'
- Bristol is a great town to live in. Hope it stays this way.

III. Focus Group Summary

BCSC Focus Group Results

Two focus groups of local senior citizens were convened on February 17, 2019 in the late morning at the Benjamin Street Senior Center in the second floor meeting space. Each group was comprised of nine Bristol residents who were over 50 years of age. The gender breakdown was four males and 14 females. The majority of participants did not live in senior housing, but were living in their own home, renting an apartment or living with family members. The age of participants ranged from 52 to 90+ years of age. Key questions were asked with several topical follow-up questions. The focus groups were facilitated like a general discussion about what it is like to live as an older resident in Bristol. Each group lasted for approximately one hour. A summary of the dialogue is presented below.

How satisfied are you with the following local services / issues?

1. Housing for seniors:

(Is it available? Is it affordable? (show of hands) Feeling safe at home? (show of hands) Why? Feeling safe in their neighborhoods? (show of hands) Why? Having regular contact with family and friends? (show of hands) Why? Having regular contact with neighbors? (show of hands) Why?)

Participants in both focus groups agreed that there was not enough public housing available for the majority of people who need it, but there was for those who met low income qualifications. "There is a long wait to get in to senior housing." Only two of the 18 participants lived in the senior housing at Benjamin Church. There was a strong negative response to the question about housing affordability for older Bristol residents. "It's very hard to downsize. Owners rent to students and there are too many of them."

Some people blame the presence of Roger Williams University students living in the town. "They can charge more for students." "In some cases, parents buy a house for their kid, who then moves in with other friends." But most people agreed that Roger Williams University was an asset to the community. "If the college was not here, Bristol would be dead." However, a majority of participants reported that they either live in their own

homes, rent an apartment, or live with family members. Many home owners were concerned that, as they get older, they will be unable to continue to afford to maintain their family home. Those who rent apartments spoke about how the cost of rentals has been increasing ("up to \$1,400 a month!") and that there were few affordable apartments available for seniors.

Nearly everyone reported feeling either very safe or safe at home (17 of 18). One participant was less certain. "My owners live out of state, and I live next to students." He mentioned that complaints to police often "went nowhere," but at times it can be helpful to get them to stop parties. Some people mentioned having a Medical Alert bracelet.

A majority of seniors reported feeling safe or very safe with their neighbors. But not everyone agreed. "Sometimes neighbors can be a problem." "Students have caused the structure of the town to change. It used to be like Mayberry." Nearly everyone reported feeling safe or very safe in their neighborhoods. "The police are around all the time." Participants tended to trust the police and fire departments to be there for them.

Participants were asked if they felt they had good connections with family and friends. This did not seem to be an issue for anyone. Almost all the participants in both groups have lived in Bristol most, if not all, of their lives and know each other well. One woman said that she had been born in Bristol, then moved away for a time, but was back again at her home. There was consensus that good contacts are around all the time. Many people spoke of having a family with deep roots in the town.

There was some disagreement when asked about getting along with neighbors. Some do (5), and some don't (4). "You have to set boundaries with some neighbors." "People living in senior housing are friendly, but if you live in your own home, it is different." A show of hands in each group revealed that 2 out of 18 live in senior housing, while the others reported living in apartments or private homes. Many participants reported that once they got to know their neighbors, most were "good." A few people reported having issues with neighbors who were sometimes difficult due to noise, or not maintaining their yard or house, or to some other matters.

2. Food security and shopping opportunities for seniors:

(Availability of nutritious food? Affordability and variety of food? Food markets available/location? Shopping center, farmer's markets, etc.? Where? Food/meal providers available and reliable? Meals on Wheels? Restaurants? Markets? Cost and access to restaurants or meal providers? Any Senior discounts? How do you access information about food services? (Internet? Flyers in mail? Newspaper?) How do you access information about nutrition? About living a healthy lifestyle?)

Food availability and affordability were discussed in-depth in each group. The lunch program at the Benjamin Church Senior Center was described as "good and cheap." The senior bus was identified as a way utilized by many seniors to get to the market and to doctors, but not everyone was familiar with this transportation option. One participant shared: "The van comes on certain days at certain times. It would be nice if they expanded services."

Food shopping opportunities and selection were perceived as limited in Bristol. Some people reported that they elected to shop in other towns (like Barrington or Warren), since they had better markets. Dave's Market was mentioned, as was Whole Foods in Providence. The food pantry, the churches and the farmer's market in Warren were also mentioned as good sources for healthy food. Some people in both groups spoke about going out of town to shop because they felt it was cheaper and had greater selection. One woman mentioned going to the Walmart in Swansea to shop, and others agreed that this was a good place to go. Another person talked about ordering groceries over the phone and getting deliveries from Stop and Shop's PeaPod, "if you can afford it." "Markets are expensive, and the quality has been going down." "More people would go to Whole Foods (in Providence) or Dave's Market if there was transportation available." "There is transportation to the Farmer's Market, but it is way too expensive for people on a fixed income." Two local groceries stores were mentioned as good shopping opportunities, as well as the Shaw's in Barrington. People seek out specials wherever they can be found- in the newspaper, on flyers or online.

Restaurants were generally regarded by the seniors as not affordable. One explanation given was: "Because they catered to tourists and most don't offer senior discounts." One person mentioned her disappointment that the community garden only has

13 spots available, so not everyone can get one. Only three people in the groups reported that they subscribe to "Meals on Wheels," but they reflected that "probably not many were doing so town-wide" (estimates ran from 30-40 people). Dunkin' Donuts was cited as one place that gave senior discounts, but many participants were in agreement that most local restaurants and cafes do not offer senior discounts. One woman shared: "You need to ask to find out. They won't tell you if they do."

When asked how they found out about sales or specials in supermarkets, the internet was mentioned by a few people in each group. Others contended that it was problematic for people who are not able to use a computer or who can't afford internet service. Most everyone agreed that newspaper ads and flyers appearing in the mail and in the Bristol Phoenix were their main sources of information about sales. A couple of people shared that "Apps," now popular with many local marketplaces, are a problem. "A majority of the seniors don't have smartphones; they are too expensive." Internet access is available at Benjamin Church senior housing, but one woman who lives there said she only uses it for cable television. Others reported receiving special flyers in their email every week. One person shared her way of obtaining information: "I go to Walmart to check what is there. Some markets will tell you what is for sale if you call." Two people living in senior housing were unhappy that they had no choice for internet or cable television service, that they had to go with Full Channel. They felt this was unfair because there was no competition among vendors, and it was an expensive service because of this.

3. Availability/access to local facilities and services to/for seniors:

(Access to buildings in town? Follow up: Are they handicapped accessible? Access and affordability of public transportation? What is available? Walk-ability of town of Bristol? Access to opportunities for physical exercise and other activities? Cost and access to entertainment? (movies, music, fairs, local events, etc.)

When asked about accessibility to public buildings in town, participants agreed that most of the buildings in town, whether public or not, were easy to access, but senior housing was perceived by two residents as having some accessibility issues for people with disabilities. They shared that, in senior housing, there was a lack of walk-in showers and other special features that might make lives easier for handicapped and elderly people.

Only a few participants had ever ridden the RIPTA bus to Providence or to other locations. The reasons given were: "It used to be free, but now you need to pay;" "The bus only comes once in a while, and then it might not work coming back." "Buses are often not on time." One experienced bus rider mentioned to the others that seniors who are income eligible can purchase a bus card, which is cheaper. "It used to be free, but now it costs me \$0.50 per ride."

Participants in both groups agreed that Bristol's High St. was very good for walking but, in other places, the sidewalks and side roads were in need of maintenance. "They are particularly difficult for people with walkers or wheel chairs." One gentleman complained about the lack of sidewalks from the Benjamin Church Senior Center to Colt State Park. "There is always too much traffic to walk near the road."

A discussion about recreational opportunities for seniors was conducted in both groups. The nutrition and wellness programs offered at the Rec Center were perceived "as more for younger people, and not for seniors." Another person mentioned: "There are no senior discounts at the Rec Center." One woman stated: "The Rec Center has some things available for seniors, but not enough. You need to pay for any programs and there are no senior discounts."

A few people expressed a wish to have a gym located at the Benjamin Church Senior Center just for seniors (one person mentioned a facility at Health Trek). One woman shared that her health insurance covers a program she is involved in called "Silver Sneakers." A few people agreed in one group that it would be great to have access to a swimming pool just for seniors. "RWU has a pool available, but seniors would like to have one they can use just by themselves."

4. How well do you think local health and social service providers meet the needs of seniors?

(Cost and access to health and other social service providers? Provide services that promote healthy behavior? Provide access to preventative health? Provide opportunities for physical exercise? What type? Providing access to medical services? What type? Providing access to medication to relieve or sooth the symptoms of diseases or disorders?)

Participants were asked if, in their opinions, local service providers were meeting the needs of seniors. Different types of services were defined during the course of the discussion. First participants discussed local opportunities for physical exercise. A limited number of responses were given. In both groups, Chair Yoga and other health-related programs at Senior Housing and BCSC were identified as the only available programs. A few people shared that they had attended programs at the Rec Center and described Rec Center programs as "mostly for other people, not for me."

Other recreational opportunities frequently mentioned were the use of the bike path and taking walks at Colt State Park. A number of seniors suggested that they would like to have access to a swimming pool just for seniors. Another request registered was to have access to a gym facility that catered to the needs and physical challenges of seniors.

Questions were asked about access to medical services and medications. Access to medical services was highlighted as a major problem for many seniors and discussed in-depth in both groups. The two main concerns that arose during the medical services discussions were a lack of opportunities to visit specialists and the limited number of general practitioners for geriatrics practicing in the area. Members of both groups agreed that the main sources for preventative health information they received were the doctors they visited. Some people also mentioned how they often first accessed information about healthy eating and wellness at the BCSC.

Many participants in both groups shared that they have someone, either a friend or family member, who will take them to a doctor if they are asked, though a number of people in both groups let it be known that they were still driving themselves for doctor's appointments. One man (who did not drive himself) reflected: "The Senior Bus might be available, but it might not be on the same times as the appointments." Another person mentioned how he went to Providence for an appointment at RI Hospital, only to have to wait for several hours to get a bus back because he missed the scheduled bus because it had come too early.

Participants in the second group agreed that the best source for information about medical services was through the Benjamin Church Senior Center. Gaining access to medications did not appear to cause issues for any of the participants. "There's no problem

getting meds at the CVS, or Walgreen's or the Rite Aid on Metacom Avenue. They all will deliver." Participants mentioned that they received their medications from the pharmacy via the mail. There was consensus in both groups that local general practitioners were very good at giving them medications and advice that they needed.

5. How well are you able to:

(Understand services that are available to you? Attain information about these services? Know how to access the services provided to you? Ask for help when you need it? Rely on others for assistance in handling basic activities? Access support from the community service system to help them live comfortably and safely? Be involved in civic projects? (reading to children, cleaning a park, etc.) Be involved with a preferred religious or spiritual community? Be involved in recreational activities? (Probe: What types are available?) Volunteer opportunities to work for others? (Examples? How are they recruited? Availability of paid work opportunities for elder residents who wish to work full-time? Part-time? Do you feel that community residents in Bristol help and/or trust each other?)

This set of questions was asked to gain an understanding of accessibility to the services seniors used most. Two lead questions discussed were how they were able to attain information about these services, and if any barriers or challenges impacted if they were able to partake in these services. Participants were asked if they understood the extent of the services that were available to them and how they might find something if they did not know. The response echoed by many was: "The Senior Bulletin explains things." Another source identified by participants as most useful was service information they found posted at the Bristol town hall or on the town's website. One woman suggested that "They need to put it out more often for people to find them (i.e. information about service options online)."

Local churches or Roger Williams University were also mentioned as a good source because "they have young people who volunteer and will come to help when called." Some people were familiar with the town's senior services office and mentioned that it was another useful source. One homeowner mentioned that she would specifically like more help with snow removal or cleaning off her car after it snows. Another woman mentioned that "some high school students will volunteer and do it for community service."

Participants were asked if they were comfortable asking for help when it was needed. One woman responded: "Where should you get started? There is no place to go."

She lives alone and is not connected to her family. Her friend in the group spoke out, saying: "It is mostly seniors without families living here who have troubles with asking for help."

Participants were asked to identify who they might turn to for a ride when needed. A number of people shared that they drive themselves, that their spouse drives, or that a neighbor or family member will come by to give them a ride if called. No one mentioned having an outside assisted living helper provide transportation. People in each group identified the family members or friends who they would turn to for assistance with transportation. Two women (both in the second group) reported that they have spouses who do caregiving for them at home.

Participants were asked how many of them accessed support from the community service system to help them live more comfortably and safely. One very revealing response was made by a woman in the first group. She stated that "Only people who don't have much money reach out. They learn how to do this to survive; other people do not know how to because they never had to reach out." Another person shared: "The community provides assistance when it is asked. People come together to help. Or they get what they need at the Senior Center." A resident at senior housing revealed that: "Many people living in Senior Housing do not come to the Senior Center, because some are on special diets."

Finally, the groups were asked if those who like to volunteer their time were involved in any local civic projects and if there were enough opportunity for volunteers. Consensus was reached in both groups was that there were enough opportunities available for everyone who wants to volunteer. "Everyone is looking for volunteers. There is a need to be recognized for doing something good in the community." Participants shared some of their volunteer opportunity stories.

6. What can Bristol do to make the town more "elder-friendly?"

For this question, participants were asked to offer some personal ideas about how Bristol could become a more "elder-friendly" community. The following ideas were generated:

1. Form a committee for the elderly. There is one at the Benjamin Church Senior Center but not for the town.
2. Better, more transportation.
3. "I have to go to Providence to get the medical services I need." (*The participant wanted to have a regular ride to take him to his doctor's office in Providence.*)
4. "The Rec Center should offer more specific programs just for seniors. And make it cheap as possible."
5. "There are not enough senior discounts at local stores or restaurants."
6. Offer more activities and events during the winter months, especially during the day. "No one likes to go out a night when it is dark."
7. Transportation is a barrier for some people. "We need a shuttle that will go around town all the time." "The senior shuttle has a part-time driver, and only goes from the Center and back to the Center."
8. More entertainment and events from October to April.
9. "Please address the cable situation in senior housing, and not have a monopoly."
10. Affordable housing is a big issue for many seniors. "Some people would prefer having their own apartment instead of going to senior housing." "The housing problem need to be addressed with better local rules." "Find ways to offer less expensive opportunities for senior living for those who aren't low income yet want to be independent."

7. Is there anything else that we should know/include that we forgot to ask?

Some final comments were shared in each group:

1. "It is hard as a senior to live in a historic district. They are very restrictive about what you can do to your house. It's hard to get a ramp or make other changes that would help."
2. "It's very expensive to live here in Bristol." (That person plans to move out of the town.)
3. "More cooking demonstrations and more wellness activities."
4. "Seniors volunteer a lot."
5. "The town has a clique-ish attitude."

6. "Stop defining seniors as old people."

Focus Group Demographic Summary

Group:	# Participants	#Males	#Females
1.	9	1	8
2.	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
TOTAL	18	4	14

* Focus groups took place on Monday, Feb. 17, 2019 in a room on the second floor at the Benjamin Church Senior Center

IV. Key Informant Interviews Summary

Six local residents with positions in the community that make them personally aware of senior needs and conditions in Bristol were invited to participate in an interview process that related to the issues of Bristol's older residents. The interviews took place at the Benjamin Church Senior Center on Friday February 22, 2019 in one of the dining areas on the first floor. All interviewees were asked the same set of ten questions. Five interviews were conducted one-on-one in person and one was conducted over the telephone due to a conflicted work schedule. Each interview lasted for 30-45 minutes. Notes were taken by the facilitator and transcribed later into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The results are presented below.

1. How well do you think the average senior citizen who resides in Bristol is living? Why?

Five of the six key informants (KIs) interviewed suggested that there was a clear division in how well older residents are living in Bristol, based mostly on the economic conditions endemic of "haves and have nots." Essentially, those with more wealth are doing better than those with less, though low-income people are able to and know how to access services better than middle income people, including public housing. Some senior participants reported in focus group sessions that they felt they might have to leave the town to find more affordable housing and cheaper food markets.

Another factor identified by KIs as important for local seniors to live well was personal health and wellness - i.e., how well each person takes care of themselves, has caregivers to assist in giving care, has access to medical care and services, and how well they are able to get medication and help to handle the illnesses that arise with age.

A third factor identified by KIs was the economic challenges older people (particularly property owners) face in maintaining a personal residence with rising property taxes and increases in the local costs of living. With the addition of rent increases, this applies also to those who are dependent on finding affordable rental properties.

More than one KI spoke about a lack of coordination of local senior services, with three or four groups providing similar services, and the Town's need for a more qualified coordinator for senior services to bring the disparate senior service groups together. This shared perception is possibly the result of an abundance of local services available, but too much duplication or lack of coordination of available services.

2. What amenities or services are available locally for seniors?

A number of amenities, opportunities and services offered locally were identified by KIs to meet the needs of older residents. Among those mentioned were: 1. the services and activities of the Benjamin Church Senior Center (lunch, tax preparation, health services, information about local programs, health care information, etc.); 2. the Recreation Center (programs that enhance health and well-being); 3. Transportation (using the bus from the BCSC or RIPTA); 4. senior housing (mainly available for low- and moderate-income residents); 5. a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, including several parks (especially Colt State Park), the bike path, walking opportunities, concerts, tree lighting, boating, etc., many with no charge; 6. the Town Library; 7. The East Bay Food Pantry; 8. programs, services and assistance provided by the local churches; and 9. other local events supported by the town during the year.

Senior needs identified by KIs included more space for the Benjamin Church Senior Center to address crowding; increasing costs of housing, including high rents on residential properties, local property tax hikes, and a lack of available moderately priced homes and apartments for those who wish to downsize and retire in the area. One issue raised by a KI was that there are many older residents who do not attend programs at the BCSC or are unaware of them, but are still receiving adequate services, whether independently (for those who still live independently and can afford private services) or those who take advantage of the many local (and free) daytime recreational activities (walking, biking, concerts, etc.).

For the most part, KIs were in full agreement that a reasonable number and variety of services and programs are available in Bristol for older residents and that a number of people in middle- and low-income tax brackets are being priced out of the area.

3. What challenges or obstacles do you think elder citizens might be facing that make their lives more difficult? Probe: Why? Why not?

Key challenges identified by KIs included transportation (for those who no longer drive or those who do not have families living in Bristol); loss of personal independence; need for more affordable housing opportunities; more outreach, advice and services for those who are older about what options are available for services and programs; and more evening programming for those who are busy in the day or still working.

Notable KI statements:

"The challenges? Being able to get out once and a while, to be independent."

"Some lose their license and can't get out without a car or someone to wait on them."

"It's tough losing independence, they really need transportation. Families are not always available."

"It's on a case-by-case basis. Not everyone is in the same box."

"Accessibility- they need transportation to get to places."

"Some aren't leading healthy lives, often they lack support systems."

"Housing is a big issue."

"Transportation for those who can't drive, and need to get to the doctors, or get groceries, which the Senior Center bus can help with."

"There has been a lot of PR around the Senior Center, yet still many people don't know what's going on. They would be happier if they did know. Or that their children knew."

"The Town did not anticipate such an increase in seniors, so many are in significant need."

"Transportation is always a big issue. How many people can they get to in a week? To go to food pantries, etc. They need to promote it more."

"A lot of it is budgetary, concerns are due to money and lack of promotion."

"Loneliness is a big issue for the elderly."

"Paying someone to stay in their home, while paying taxes."

"Ride service for those who need it. We need a simple way to get around town."

"It depends on the age group. If you are a 50-60 year old, there is nothing, everything takes place in the day time. We are missing a big part of the population. There is a lunch bunch, but no dinner bunch."

4. Do you think there are enough laws to protect senior citizens in Rhode Island? In Bristol? Probe for each response: If yes, what are the most effective laws? If no, what additional laws or ordinances need to be passed to benefit local seniors?

There was general agreement among KIs that adequate laws are in place at the state and local levels to protect vulnerable seniors, especially around issues of fraud and abuse. Locally, tax relief is provided for older property owners to help them remain in town (though not everyone is aware of this), while low- and moderate-income people have an option to live in senior housing, albeit often after a significant waiting period.

A Bristol police officer has been assigned to focus on senior issues and serve as the elderly affairs officer. Most everyone was familiar with the local senior newsletter, which is a mainstay providing older residents information about upcoming programs and events. Even with that, better information dissemination and public relations about senior services and programs were identified as an important need.

One population-level issue raised was the increasing size of the senior population as a percentage of the total town population. "The senior population is growing, so we have a greater need and duty to protect them." It was pointed out by one KI that "There are many laws in place that protect seniors, yet these laws still need to be fully enforced and implemented to have an impact." Another area that was perceived as underserved was

care for those who suffer from mental disabilities and for those who lack families nearby who can care for them.

Notable KI statements

"We can over-regulate ourselves. They have done a good job in RI and here in the community."

"Locally, they have assigned a police officer to take care of seniors, an elderly affairs officer."

"There are enough laws - it's how they are carried out and implemented by agencies."

"We have local policies to not have seniors pushed out due to property taxes, policies to help people remain in town. Things like tax breaks."

"Meals on Wheels needs to be funded and supported, especially for those who need help."

"It's getting better. The AG's office came to talk about senior fraud and scams. It was recorded and the information was put into the senior newsletter."

"The State is trying, but we have to do better. The senior population is growing, so we have a greater need and duty to protect them."

"There is a need to give them (older residents) some more information about what is available out there, what's available. Give out the Senior Center newsletter."

"Offer Medical Alert."

"They try. The issue comes down to if the seniors are in control of themselves."

"Fraud and abuse are protected. But there is a need to assist seniors with mental disabilities, who are not able to help themselves."

"Laws are in place to protect local people with no families, but it's hard to get them help if they don't want it."

"Generally, the laws are good. The AG's office is ordered to take care of those matters."

"Yes, there are. The legislature has been active with matters of fraud. It is a reporting issue. People know they got swindled but still need help. They have to have a resource attorney or case manager to help them."

5. How well do you think the Town of Bristol is meeting the needs of its senior population?

KIs concurred that the Town of Bristol is doing reasonably well in meeting the needs and concerns of seniors, but that more could be done. Demographically, older residents are living longer and are more likely to want to stay at home rather than settle into a nursing facility. Many are opting (or hoping) to stay living in Bristol.

Some of the gaps identified by KIs included the need for more space at the Benjamin Church Senior Center and other locations; more senior-related activities and events during the winter months when outdoor opportunities are limited; and more affordable housing for middle-income people who wish to downsize and remain around family and friends in Bristol.

A question was raised by one interviewee that was targeted to decisionmakers: "How can services best be delivered?" According to the KI, this will require that the needs of seniors are given more consideration, with more cooperation among the Town and service providing groups. Some KIs felt that there was too much local competition among providers and that it would be important to address the concerns raised about duplication of some services. This issue is perceived as a major factor that may be causing competition among service providers for clients, and directly leading to lower attendance for programs being duplicated by other vendors or by the Town.

There was across-the-board agreement that more should be done for Bristol's seniors, and that services need to be made available for all seniors and not limited to those who know how to find solutions to their issues. There appears to be a gap in services and support for younger senior residents (ages 55-64) who fall in the middle, and who have not yet reached full retirement age. Some seniors who are retired still are working at least part-time to afford their lifestyles.

Those of moderate means are being challenged by rising taxes, very high rents and increasing costs of living in Bristol. Some seniors blame the presence of affluent Roger Williams University students in Bristol. Multiple informants discussed the needs for meeting the needs of moderately incomeed people, who may not be income-eligible for

senior housing, yet are feeling the economic pressures of trying to retain their homes and are facing a limited amount of affordable housing stock. Overall, the consensus of KIs was that the Town is doing a good job, but that more attention is needed by local leaders to meet the higher service demands of an increasing older population, many of whom have familial connections to the history and development of the community.

Notable KI Comments

"We are about three-quarters of the way there- but there are still quite a few gaps."

"Two big issues are space and transportation. Additional activities would also be welcome, especially during the colder months. In summer they find places to congregate."

"The Town makes efforts to have opportunities for people. There is a focus on caring, seniors are well-respected."

"I don't know everything, but more should be done."

"The 70+ senior population in Bristol is huge! They have lived here and made it what it is today. There is a special need for us to serve these seniors."

"It all goes back to the budget. What we have is good. We need a little more."

"(There is) a rising number of elderly - it's soon to be 50/50 elderly to everyone else."

"The town is doing OK. We do a lot of good stuff. The issues are how can services be best delivered."

"We hear the outcries from people who are not able to stay in their houses when taxes rise. But people are not putting seniors as a priority."

"Several organizations in town are doing a great job, serving the senior audience. The Senior Center, Medicaid, etc."

"One opportunity would be to hire someone to facilitate and advocate with the different agencies to make services more accessible. It's easier to offer services and say you are doing something. But the town offerings often duplicate what is already being done."

"The town should make services are more accessible to seniors. Walls are up at all agencies. They need to see how to expand services. Agencies are fighting for revenue and are putting up walls."

6. How would you improve the lives of seniors living in Bristol?

Many suggestions were made by KIs about how senior services might be improved. A short summary of the top ten issues is listed below. Additional recommendations and comments made by KIs are provided at the end of this section.

1. Better transportation opportunities (i.e. expand the use of local bus service, or develop more volunteer driver services);
2. More support for the Benjamin Church Senior Center, including funding for more space and to increase bus availability;
3. Calls for a coordinated effort for senior services across the town, led by a qualified person to serve as a senior liaison;
4. Better, more affordable housing opportunities to serve those who fall between lower and higher incomes, starting at age 55 or even younger;
5. More space devoted to senior activities, especially in the winter months, when it is most difficult for seniors to leave their homes and find opportunities to exercise or socialize;
6. Better handicapped parking opportunities in town and at the Senior Center;
7. Better maintenance of sidewalks and side street, or expansion of sidewalks to areas not being served;
8. More affordable assistance for home owners and renters for leaf and snow removal, or other small home improvement or maintenance projects.
9. More information provided directly to seniors, many of whom do not seem to know about the availability of existing senior services.
10. Better coordination and less competition between the Town and established service providers, to ensure that the services are being provided by competent agencies and are assessible for all older people who want and need them.

Notable KI Comments

"Get a place where they can stay active. with mental and physical exercises."

"Space, transportation, exercises, meeting places. Volunteering is also a big piece."

"By doing an assessment of needs - find out where we are succeeding and where we are missing the boat."

"We need to have an eye on the future. Do we have the services we will need into the future - we need to address this question today."

"We have different places, just need to make sure that people have accessibility to facilities."

"Concentrate people downtown. They are multi-cultural, people have different backgrounds that need to be taken into account."

"Be supportive of the Senior Center, give them more funds to provide services."

"Bus usage is very limited. They need to have a way to make it more active."

"The Senior Center is the way to get things done for seniors, it needs the town to support it. Have a liaison in town for seniors, to coordinate what's going on."

"More access and understanding of mental services is needed. And family education about how to help them."

"More access to people who know what they are talking about."

"Try to figure out how to do local ride services, maybe the churches with seniors who drive would be willing."

"Need for more 55+ housing that looks well, and is more affordable."

"Places for people to drop in to where they can find out what activities are available."

"More handicapped parking."

"The Senior Center thinks they are the be-all and end-all of senior services. It's much more than that."

"Make sure there is better awareness, coordination, transportation."

"Don't offer more services until existing services are fully utilized."

7. What is the role of public and elected officials in helping improve the conditions for Bristol's seniors?

KIs were in full agreement that Bristol seniors need to be given priority consideration by public officials and decision makers, since many seniors and their families were directly involved in the growth of Bristol as a town during the post-WWII developmental years.

A summary of KI suggestions for public and elected officials is offered below:

1. Support additional funds for accessibility/ transportation.
2. Listen to senior needs and focus on what serves them best.
3. Seniors built this town; their needs have to be a priority.
4. There is a need to expand, they can do so much more.
5. The seniors made the town what it is. They (public officials) need to keep them in the forefront of everyone's needs.
6. They (public officials) need to have first-hand awareness of the needs of seniors. And then find a way to have funding to fill these needs.

Notable KI Comments

"Elected officials are custodians. They have to take into account the needs of seniors. Seniors built this town, their needs have to be a priority. I feel it is like that for leaders in Bristol."

"They should be playing a big role. There is a need to expand, they can do so much more. Younger residents would support this, since it is a quality of life matter for everyone."

"Like everyone else, be more forward thinking, not that it will all be there. Consider how policy changes will affect seniors. We need to let people know what is shared. Be more mindful, they will be elderly someday. We need to impact the future."

"They do play a role by having seniors on their minds all the time. For instance, when taking on taxes. The seniors made the town what it is. They need to keep in the forefront everyone's needs."

"They need to have first-hand awareness of the needs of seniors. And find a way to have funding to fill these needs. The youngest and oldest need to be the first priorities, with funding for these services."

8. How would you improve local laws, policies or procedures to better serve seniors?

When asked about how to improve local laws, policies and procedures to better serve older residents, the most poignant statements included:

1. "We need to merge the senior groups. Right now we have 3 or 4 different groups. Here (BCSC), Franklin Court, a couple of others, St. Mary's Church. Working with one coordinated team, get a coordinator to meet seniors needs."
2. "Things need to be affordable, especially for people on fixed incomes who worked their whole lives. Cost of living should not determine if people can remain in their home."
3. "Not tax social security. It's a travesty!"
4. "Have an easier time to make seniors be better able to get mental health or services for mental health. Unless you are a threat to yourself or others, let them go back into the system. Families sometimes don't care."
5. "People are different. Some want to stay at home. Seniors aren't all the same. The idea that one size fits all is not true. Need better coordination of services."
6. "Prioritization of funds for transportation, this is a top priority."
7. "Address party houses."
8. "Seniors aren't all the same. Some are not going on a bus tour to a casino. The idea that one size fits all is not true. We need better coordination of services."

9. What three priority actions do you think the Town should take to make Bristol a more "elder-friendly community?"

Priority actions identified by multiple KIs that would make Bristol a more "elderly-friendly" community were:

1. Transportation - more bus access, volunteer drivers.
2. Better access to existing services.
3. More space devoted to senior needs.
4. Affordability.
5. Give seniors more opportunity to have a voice in matters pertaining to their needs.
6. Financial support for the Benjamin Church Senior Center.
7. Hire an experienced senior liaison to serve in the town administration.
8. Better PR to reach out and let more seniors know what is available to them.
9. Identify services that will define "aging in place" and what needs to be done.

10. Handicap-friendly streets, with adequate lighting.
11. Home services. Coordinate with the churches, get a list of reliable teens to do things to help seniors at home.
12. Support programming that connects seniors to the elementary, middle, and high school community.
13. Allocate resources for seniors to experience more through networking and social engagements.

Notable KI Comments

KI responses to this question are summarized below, clustered by KI. All the ideas generated during the interviews are worthwhile to consider.

1. Additional transportation. More individuals to drive, smaller vehicles.
 2. Space
 3. More activities, encourage them to be active participants in the community.
-
1. Affordability
 2. Accessibility
 3. Give every opportunity for seniors to have a voice. We need to have it on a day-to-day basis. Let them voice their needs!
-
1. Support the Benjamin Church Senior Center financially and emotionally.
 2. Have a liaison for seniors, for people who are struggling, to get them help.
 3. PR - let seniors know what is available.
-
1. Transportation for the elders who need it.
 2. Access to services, many elderly don't have the ability to use the internet, or get new apps on a smartphone.
 3. Socialization - they need more ability to do that. (meet with others)
-
1. Take a close look at "aging in place." What services are needed? Are there private companies?
 2. Handicap-friendly streets, with adequate lighting.
 3. Home services. Get someone to help with home maintenance issues, like snow removal. Have a list of people to call, like high school students. People who can fix small stuff, help to do little things. Coordinate with the churches, get a teen list of reliable people to do things to help seniors at home.
-
1. Support for transportation
 2. Via funding and leadership, develop programming that connects seniors to elementary/middle/high school community.
 3. Allocating resources for seniors to experience more through networking and social engagements.

10. Do you have any additional thoughts or comments on this matter?

The final question asked to interviewees was to consider what matters most. The following responses were collected:

1. "Accessibility is an issue, not just for seniors, but for kids and the handicapped. Town departments need to take a team approach to improving quality of life."
2. "More PR. Working together in town to provide more support for seniors, that is it in a nutshell."
3. "Help for those who get extra care. Need to effectively provide services to all people, but especially those with mental disabilities. "
4. "I am concerned about relationships with people in town - who works for whom. Bristol will always have senior services. Bristol is an "in" place to be. Some people have no time for other things."
5. "We need a coordinator for all the senior benefits, programs, etc. in town, and to work to leverage services with other towns. Take a nonpolitical look at providing the best senior living as possible."
6. "When you pull back and look, there are lots of unreconciled issues still. The town has a senior coordinator with no experience. We need someone who can listen, plan, coordinate, and be imbedded in the world of senior services and care."

Final KI Comments

"I view it (Bristol) as a multi-generational, multicultural, multicultural community. With services for all. Accessibility is an issue, not just for seniors, but for kids and the handicapped. Town departments need to take a team approach to improving quality of life."

"The Senior Newsletter is everywhere. But some people still don't have any idea what is going on. More PR. Working together in town to provide more support for seniors, that is it in a nutshell. People call town hall, and the Senior Center. The housing authority cares about all seniors. There about 200 seniors with vouchers."

"We need more help for those who get extra care, need to effectively provide services to people, especially to those with mental disabilities. Ease of access, and not make it a big system, to get things done. Money - how do we pay for it???"

"I hope that the study includes a broad representation of people. I am concerned about relationships with people in town - who works for whom. Bristol will always have senior services. Bristol is an "in" place to be. Some people have no time for other things."

"I can't emphasize enough, whether a town or designated entity, to be a clearing house. We need a coordinator for all the senior benefits, programs, etc. in town, and to work to leverage services with other towns. Take a nonpolitical look at providing the best senior living as possible. This has not been done enough. When you pull back and look, there are lots of unreconciled issues still. The town has a senior coordinator with no experience. We need someone who can listen, plan, coordinate, and be imbedded in the world of senior service and care."

V. Key Findings and Recommendations

This section is devoted to summarizing the key data points, recommendations and issues that arose during the data collection process guided by the survey results, the focus groups summaries and the key informant interview summaries. They are clustered by subject to make it easier for use in the strategic planning process.

Demographics

1. The Town of Bristol is aging. The segment of the population that is over 50 years of age is growing, as are the numbers of people who are reaching 70 years old and older. A clearer picture of the actual change will be possible after the 2020 census data is available.
2. More women than men are reaching ages 80 and beyond, but people of every gender identity are living longer than ever before. The survey was completed by more females (75%) than males (25%).
3. 97.8% of those who took part in the survey identify as white. Very few people who identify as minorities are represented in the survey. However, this is in line with local demographics from past census data (2016 census estimates showed white representing 94.5% of the total population).
4. Many seniors are still working at least part-time, even those who have declared themselves retired.

Housing

1. More than half of Bristol's seniors who responded to this survey live in single family homes, while 18% lived in senior housing, 15% rent apartments, 7% live in townhouses or condos, and 4% live in multi-family units. Those living in nursing homes or assisted living facilities were not included in the survey data.
2. Monthly housing expenses reported by senior survey respondents included property tax (54%), rent (34%), and mortgage payments (31%).
3. There is a lack of affordable housing for those who fall in the middle- and lower-income brackets. Many senior homeowners are fearful of rising taxes, higher appraisals and the

inability to afford to downsize to smaller living quarter to stay near family and friends.

Rents are high for seniors (nearing \$1,400 monthly for a two bedroom apartment).

4. Senior housing has a waiting list that can take up to 2 years or longer. Priority for housing selection go to low-income individuals and couples.
5. Many senior homeowners need help with simple home maintenance, such as yard work, shoveling snow, fixing small items, etc. The need for a volunteer registry of reliable high school and college students willing to help for community service was mentioned by different participants.
6. Some seniors believe that the impact of Roger Williams University students living in the community is driving rents up to be cost prohibitive for local people.
7. Nearly all seniors reported feeling safe or very safe in their homes and in the neighborhoods in which they live. Seniors mostly share a good perception of the police and fire departments. The Bristol police have a liaison officer who works closely with the senior community. A low crime rate is one of the attractive features of Bristol for seniors.

Food Security

1. Many Bristol seniors reported that they feel that markets in Bristol are too expensive and are limited in variety. This causes many to seek out shopping opportunities in other towns.
2. Seniors who do not have a valid driver's license or someone to take them to shop are having problems getting to the markets to shop for food and other necessary items. Another issue is that once they arrive at a market, they sometimes have to wait long times for transportation to return home.
3. Many seniors do not believe that local restaurants or markets are providing senior discounts, due to profits they make serving tourists.

Transportation

1. A high number of seniors are maintaining valid driver's licenses, whether they drive or not. Many others have family and friends to provide transportation, but those who are alone are having more difficulty with transportation.

2. The Senior Center bus and RIPTA are sources of transportation for a number of seniors without valid licenses or vehicle access. Many seniors are unaware of this service, but those who are aware claim it is too limited to certain days and numbers of riders. All seniors agree that transportation can be troublesome without having a car available.

Personal Relationships and Contacts

1. Many seniors have family and friends in the area and are from families who have resided in Bristol for a long time. They depend on their networks for more than just social contact. Those who are alone are often facing more challenges than those who have strong local connections.
2. Even for some with families, there is a limit to how much understanding family members have about the needs of seniors. More education opportunities for families about senior issues was recommended.

Medical Services and Access to Medication and Doctors

1. A small number of seniors complained about a lack of local medical services for seniors, specifically specialists and gerontologists who cater to senior issues. Some are forced to seek medical services outside of the area to find the doctors they need for special care and treatment. However, 98.5% reported that they receive the medical services they require, and 96% reported having access to the medications they need.
2. There is no local hospital serving the area, so seniors will go to Providence or Newport for treatment for major medical conditions. This is sometimes problematic, especially for follow-up visits and therapy.
3. Access to medications does not seem to be an issue, since most take advantage of mail delivery or other means of accessing medications they need. Pharmacies are cooperative and provide seniors with special services.
4. Many seniors reported that their doctors are the main source of information about preventative self-care and wellness.

Senior Services Coordination and Support

1. Many seniors are talking advantage of senior services provided locally by the Town and by service providers, such as the Benjamin Church Senior Center, but many others are not aware of what is available, or where to turn to get information. Nearly half of those who completed the survey were unaware of many senior services, or if they were aware, they do not use them, either because they are not needed, or because they lack information about them.
2. Seniors who receive the local Senior Bulletin described this as the main source for information about senior matters and services, along with the Senior Center staff and the Town's website.
3. Some older people do not want to have senior services, or do not need them, since they have family or friends to help them when needed. Many also have personal lives that include activities that take advantage of local amenities offered for all those who live in Bristol (beach, parks, bike path, walking, etc.). Some would like to see more activities in the evenings for seniors who are still working.
4. Key Informants and focus group participants discussed a need for better coordination of senior services. Some KIs felt that the Town and local service providers are in competition for the same clientele, which makes it hard for each program to survive. Better coordination and cooperation were called for.
5. More than one KI and some of the focus group members want to have a liaison person who specializes in senior care available to coordinate senior services. Some feeling exists that the current senior liaison for the town lacks the qualifications necessary to do the job at the level it is needed. Other KIs look for the Town to be providers of information and supporters of service providers. All KIs agreed that seniors deserve to have more representation in the political decision-making process.
6. A number of seniors and Key Informants suggested that they want to see the Benjamin Church Senior Center receive more funding and support from the Town. The desire for additional space (to overcome crowdedness) and additional services would be welcome by many. More support for the use of the senior bus was a high priority for those who use this as a main source of transportation.

7. Seniors across the spectrum mentioned the need to have more recreation opportunities at the Recreation Center and at senior housing that would be specific to serving senior needs. Some of the suggestions included a better equipped gymnasium, a swimming pool, and more programming specifically for seniors.
8. Some seniors complained about the disrepair of sidewalks, or the lack of sidewalks in areas of high traffic. Others mentioned a need for maintenance on side streets beyond the downtown area. People with limited mobility, using walkers and wheelchairs are not able to safely use some of the sidewalks or side streets that are in disrepair.

Focus Group Recommendations

Specific recommendations made by focus group participants included:

1. A town committee on senior and elderly affairs, with representatives from the senior community, to make recommendations for seniors to elected officials and town administrators.
2. More and better public transportation, especially to get around town in a timely manner.
3. More affordable housing opportunities to serve low- and moderate-income individuals. This might include an affordable housing community specifically for those 50 and older.
4. More diverse senior programming at the Rec Center, at the Senior Center and at other locations.
5. A wider variation of entertainment and social activities and events in the winter months, especially during the day for seniors.
6. Additional places where seniors can meet to socialize throughout the year, day and night.
7. More activities and events targeting the 50-64 year-old age cohorts, many of whom are still working full time and cannot attend any functions during the day.

Key Informant Recommendations

1. An economic divide exists between the "haves and have-nots" that is causing consternation and dislocation for some seniors who have lifelong connections to Bristol.
2. More information for seniors to better understand the importance of personal health and wellness.

3. Assistance for senior homeowners to maintain their properties and allow them to continue to live where they are most comfortable, with family and friend nearby.
4. Better coordination of senior services within the town.
5. More space for the Benjamin Church Senior Center to offer services and opportunities for new programs.
6. Better outreach and public relations efforts to reach those seniors and seniors to-be about existing programs and adult educational opportunities (perhaps in partnership with Roger Williams University as a supporter or partner).
7. More evening programs.
8. Laws are sufficient as they are, but enforcement is important if they are to have an impact. Keep senior taxes and costs as low as possible.
9. Develop a full-time position of senior liaison to work together with the police senior liaison and with senior services providers.
10. Include seniors in the decision-making process.

Appendices

- a. Notes from Bristol Community Forum**
- b. Benjamin Church Senior Center Survey (English)**
- c. Benjamin Church Senior Center Survey (Portuguese)**
- d. Question Template for Senior Focus Group Sessions**
- e. Questions for Key Informant Interviews**

Community Forum Notes

Group: Town officials / agency representatives # Participants: 21

Date: October 11, 2018 Place: Benjamin Church Community Center

Interviewer: John Mattson Note-taker: Cara Massey

#Males: 8 #Females: 13

Participants:

- Liz Harvey – liz7257@cox.net
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- Andy Tyska – andy@bristolmarine.com
- Olivia German
- Manny Sardinha
- Domenica C. Canna

Introduction (read by Board chair, Maria Doherty):

On behalf of the Benjamin Church Senior Center, I'd like to welcome you all to today's focus group. My name is Maria Doherty and I am the Board Chair. As you know from the letter of invitation that we sent, the Center has been awarded a grant from the RI Foundation to conduct a town-wide Community Needs Assessment of Bristol's senior citizens. Our consultant, John Mattson, will be conducting the assessment and is creating a survey for Bristol residents aged 50 and older. The goal of the assessment is to determine current and anticipated future needs of Bristol's seniors in order to prioritize and best plan to meet those needs. We're considering that the results will be of interest to all organizations who interact with the town's seniors, as the Senior Center is not the only agency working with that population. So the results will be shared publicly with everyone. You've been asked to come today to help provide input on what you or your organization has observed concerning Bristol's older adults. Your input is important and will be considered

as Mr. Mattson designs the survey for Bristol's seniors. Now I would like to hand over the meeting and introduce our consultant, Mr. John Mattson.

Format:

- The bullets need to be lined up.
- 5 point scale is better than 3
- Instead of the Likert scale, why not just ask some basic check offs? It seems like it would be easier. A specific question with a bunch of answers that they can check off, or your number 1 top issue. You might get more detail if you do that than the satisfied. Maybe just a few questions under each category instead of the satisfied questions.
- I feel like this is very lengthy and I think you're going to have a challenge of getting people to finish it. I think you need to get more specific on what you're trying to find out.
- A little larger print.
- Mis-numbered – you lost question 16

Cover letter:

- I think it's important that you include in the cover letter what the goal is. It doesn't say anything about why we're doing this and what everyone should expect the outcome is. In order to get buy-in, I think clearly stating why, what's the vision, what's the goal – we're taking a step to make sure Bristol continues to be the place to spend your senior years. What's the goal? What's our vision? Include that in the letter to get buy-in. Just one sentence would do it.
- The first paragraph is a lot of – I'm thinking of my grandmother reading it – she'd go very slow, word for word, and a lot of that stuff wouldn't mean anything to her. More simple language I think. "We're doing this for you because of..." – all this "comprehensive community assessment" sounds like too much.
- Also reassure them that there's not a fee involved. The elderly are cautious with money. We don't want people to think they're going to get locked into something by filling it out.
- I think in the beginning you talk about how the Benjamin Church Senior Center has developed this survey – I think it's important to communicate that the leadership of the senior center is undertaking this, but if you have no connection to the senior center in the past or have no intention to have a connection in the future, this is still meant to connect with all seniors in town, so it's really town wide. It's important that people who may not have a connection to the senior center still feel like it's for them.

Suggestions for content of the survey:

- I think if you're going to limit the point of this to people 50 and older to answer, I personally don't think you need to go into the access of healthy food part of it. HEZ



has already done surveys around that. Maybe you need to ask if people are aware of these services (a senior meal site in Bristol, a resource center, getting help with a Medicare applications, a food pantry) rather than asking if there are a variety or availability of healthy food.

- Is this from the lens of the senior center or lens of the seniors? Part of the goal is to understand needs of the seniors but in order to best address those needs we need to figure out the delivery tools we have as a community to address those needs and the survey is a chance to see what resources people are using – where do you go now? St. Elizabeth's? The senior center? Maybe they're going some place where those needs aren't met and the challenge isn't making sure we have those services but connecting people with the services. I think it's not just understanding the needs, but making sure seniors are connected in the best, most effective way possible. Where's their entry point? Maybe the services are there but they just aren't connecting with them.
- Narrow down the goal of this survey to get basic demographics and basic information. If you are to age in place, what is your desire? What is missing? What do you need? People who might be downsizing, build that right in. There are a lot of directions to go in. Maybe you need to simplify and make it basic information.
- If you're asking questions and getting answers that you're not going to do anything about, don't ask the question. Only ask questions that you can put forth a solution for and a plan to address. If you are asking about accessibility of buildings and not going to do anything about it, you shouldn't ask for it.
- I think you need to have a question, like are you aware that these services exist in your community? Help with SNAP, Medicare – you could go through a bunch of areas that people listed off.

Distributing Surveys:

- I would suggest putting it in church bulletins.
- Telephone is very impersonal.
- I can get all my seniors to take this but it's going to skew their results if it's just senior housing taking the surveys. I'm worried about that.
- If people can't get out of their homes, how will they get this survey?
- Share surveys through as many possible ways as possible.
- I think there's still going to be a gap with people who are working. There are certain questions that will be best for most people. The 50-70 age group is hard to capture. A lot of those people will be computer proficient so they could do it online.
- One of the things we have an issue is our seniors don't know what's available so if we did a combo of outreach at different locations saying this is what's available and once we grab their attention then would you mind doing this survey with us. So now you've provided information and then obtained information from them that can assist us to say where are the gaps that are going forward.
- What about approaching RWU to get students to help with data collection.

Review of the Survey Instrument

Questions About You (Questions 1 – 15):

- Question 1: How old are you?
 - We have people 90 and older in the community
 - Have a category for 80 – 89 and then 90+
- Question 2: What is your gender?
 - You might say “what is your gender *identification*” and that can clarify that
- Question 5: What is your ethnic background?
 - Have an “other” option. Put other with a line and they can fill it in when they want to. Group all the “other” answers under other.
 - Don’t overcomplicate it.
- Question 6: How long have you lived in Bristol?
 - I think it would be interesting on #6 to add “lifelong resident” – you’re gonna have some
 - I’ve lived here more than 20 years but I’ve only lived back here for 5. (*Do we need to clarify that we’re asking for total time that you’ve lived in Bristol, not necessarily total consecutive time? Or do we only care about consecutive time?*)
- Question 8: In what type of dwelling do you presently reside?
 - We do have homeless. Add homeless to dwelling type.
 - Assisted living and nursing home are not the same thing. Assisted living is usually a very short period of time whereas nursing home could be a really long period of time. So that might mess up your present address thing #7. I would split those [assisted living and nursing home] up. They’re different things and it’s really a long term vs. a short term situation.
- Question 10: Do you currently... (home ownership):
 - Isn’t #8 and #10 almost the same, too?
 - I think #8 and #10 are separate. They’re different.
- Question 11: With whom do you currently live?
 - #11 is a duplication of the other question #9. You’re basically asking the same question twice. I think #11 is more detailed and makes more sense. Take out #9.
 - I think #11 is separate from #10 – you could live in a multi family house and own it but you could be renting.

- I think it's important for the purpose. If someone is already living with their kids and they're 60 they may not be looking for future housing, but if someone is living alone they may be.
- I think because it's anonymous #11 is okay and I would emphasize that even more in the front letter. Because some of them have a tendency to put their names on things anyway.
- Question 12: What is your employment status?
 - Can you check off more than one? Or do you want retired but working part time to be a category?
 - Retired and working should be an option. It's a whole demographic. They get social security, Medicare, and their wages.
 - Our community is one of the lowest income senior population. A lot of our retirees do get jobs because they can't make ends meet.
 - What about unable to work because of disability – does that need to be a separate category?
 - What do you do with someone who like for example our administrator past and our current one are technically retired from the police department or school department but are working in another whole new career full time?
 - I think it's an ongoing thing aging in our community. People are living longer and want to stay busy so they keep working.
 - Are you considering volunteerism as employment? (*no*)
- Question 13: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
 - Add grade school. We get that a lot at the Food Pantry that that's their highest level of education.
 - Just put it as grade school.
 - Some people never made it to high school.
- Question 14: What is your total household income?
 - I think there are a lot of categories – every \$10,000 of income is a lot. I think it's really detailed. Do like a \$15,000 - \$20,000 range.
 - Did you consider doing monthly and then calculating it out? They'll know that. They know what they get in Medicare every month.
 - You would rather have them not answer income than to answer monthly?
 - There's too many income categories.
 - A certain demographic will answer the yearly income but as you get older, you may only know monthly.
 - How many of those older people will fill this out on their own anyway?
 - Include the word "annually" in the income if that's what you're still going to look for

Core Questions:

- Affordable housing:
 - break that down into purchasing and renting.
- Having regular contact to family, friends / connections?

- yes, we want these questions (duplication with #43?)
- What does it mean – do you have a lot of connections? Do you make time for it?
- Having regular contact to neighbors?
 - yes, we want these questions
- Caregivers:
 - It might be interesting to ask, for those of you who have caregivers, who are they? Are you hiring people? Are they your family and friends? I think that's a huge need, especially for people in middle income. How many hours are you hiring someone?
 - You can have a caregiver and go to daycare during the day. We need to know that. And it goes back to the driving. If you have a caregiver, what kind of caregiver do you have? You might have multiple caregivers.
 - Can you do a section at the end for if someone has a caregiver that others can skip, and its own questions and then you can get a little more detailed. Even the job training program, there's a lot of CNAs and the need for that is being pushed a lot in RI.
- Social interactions:
 - If you're on the younger side, where is there something to do (social interaction)? Things are at 4:30, 3:00, noon time – if you're working full time you can't get to anything.
- Transportation:
 - I'd be interested to know if they are still able to drive. That's a big concern for the police.
 - I think the biggest factor around here is transportation because I get a lot of phone calls that they want to go to the hospital or the doctor, to Providence, or Newport, and that is the biggest factor just in Bristol with the senior center. We don't have enough time because we only have a part time driver.
 - Getting to the doctor is more difficult than having a doctor. Getting there is more the issue. When you have specialists in Providence, you take a day off to take your mother, so my mother say she doesn't want more doctors in the city because there's no way to get there but sometimes that's the best one to go to.
 - Those who shouldn't be driving are driving because they need to go to their appointments and the grocery store.
 - Transportation is a big thing for law enforcement and if they're driving or not is a big thing for us. Transportation especially, once they can't drive, their

freedom is gone so they need to be able to get out of the house again.
Transportation is a big thing.

- The Senior Center bus schedule may not be in sync with when they need a ride (like if they had an appointment). The Senior Center bus doesn't usually take people to appointments outside of Bristol (like Providence or Newport).
 - Some older people can't physically access the public buses (can't step up into the bus or climb down the stairs).
 - Not all seniors can access the public bus line.
 - The police have problems with elderly drivers causing accidents and the problems they face when their licenses are suspended.
-
- Availability of nutritious food?
 - This question doesn't make me think of the meal site or the food pantry. What are you asking for here?

 - Housing
 - You also have to ask about their needs. Like I wish I had a washer and dryer because some days I just can't do it, I can't get to the Laundromat. And there are people that make a decision about Benjamin Church based on washer and dryer. And sometimes I can't walk up to the office, or what if I can't drive?
 - Not enough affordable housing for seniors.
 - Many seniors living on social security and that doesn't cover the high cost of rent and other bills.
 - Seniors saying that the cost of living in Bristol is making it harder to stay here – it's their home and they want to stay.

Top three areas of concern:

- 1. Transportation**
- 2. Housing**
- 3. Social activity OR Medical care**

Other comments:

- **Challenges the elderly face:**
 - Another issue was confusion around health insurance and the dates for open enrollment. The Senior Center does a good job of posting dates for open enrollment but there needs to be broader coverage for the information (possibly newspaper and other media).
 - Medical care - That is one area they know to call 911.

- We have problems existing now with all these issues, transportation and safety, and this is going to grow exponentially when seniors that are my age that are currently working and we're all going to get to the point where we're not going to drive, we're not going to have housing availability and we won't be able to stay in our homes. We need to assess this now so that we can be ready for the future and the growth that we can expect.
- I think there's one more category and that's help with forms and applications for services, surveys.
- There are seniors who are abusing their medications and one older woman in particular the police suspect is selling her prescription opioids to others.
-
- **Increasing awareness about services that already exist:**
 - In terms of getting out information that already exists, all those places you've named where you would leave the surveys, you should have the list of services.
 - Ideally when any senior looks on our town website, there should be that information so while we're having this discussion about learning what those needs are we've missed the boat. There are a lot of services out there that are free to everyone that we can't afford to market so why don't we already now have this information on our town website? Right there we can make that happen by Mary, our Town Councilman, going to our Town Administrator and saying it needs to be there immediately. I think that would be easy to do.
 - I think Bristol is incredible with the amount of services we offer. I would venture to say that 90%, 95% of what seniors need is somewhere in this town. Doing a survey around what the needs are, maybe instead invest some time and energy into connecting people to the services that are here by trying to understand where the people are, what their current access point is, and if they are hitting a barrier to something that they need and don't have, whether its tax services, or healthy eating, maybe we try to figure out how to remove that barrier. Is the recommendation a person in a position, or a team? I think we need to figure out how to connect people to the services that are here rather than understand what the services they need are.



**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KFHP7M2>
1020 Hope St. Bristol, RI 02809
401-253-8458**

Bristol Senior Services Survey

The Benjamin Church Senior Center (BCSC) is conducting a survey of all Bristol residents aged 50+ as part of a larger assessment of the needs of Bristol seniors.

The goal of the assessment is to determine current and anticipated future needs for Bristol's seniors in order to prioritize and best plan to meet those needs.

All Bristol residents aged 50 and over are invited to complete the survey, regardless of any connection you may or may not have with BCSC. Please mail or drop off to the address above. You can also access the survey online at **www.bristolsrctr.com**. Your opinions are important to us and we value your willingness to share your experiences on this survey. **All responses will be kept anonymous.** Please complete this survey only once, either in paper or online. Participation in the survey does not obligate you to anything. We expect to make the final results of this survey available to the public by the summer of 2019. This project is funded by a generous grant from the Rhode Island Foundation.

Section I: Questions About You

1. How old are you?
 50 – 55 56-64 65-69 70-74 75-79 80-89 90 or older
2. What is your gender identification?
 Male Female Other Prefer not to answer
3. What is your marital status?
 Single Married Divorced Separated Widowed Live with life partner
4. What is your racial background?
 Hispanic / Latino Not Hispanic / Latino
5. What is your ethnic background? (Please check all that apply.)
 American Indian or Alaskan Native Asian
 Black or African American White
 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Other:

6. In what type of dwelling do you presently reside?
 apartment assisted living facility nursing home
 single family home townhouse / condominium senior housing
 multi-family home homeless
 other: _____
7. Do your housing expenses include: (*Please check all that apply*)
 rent mortgage property taxes HOA none listed
8. With whom do you currently live? (*Please check all that apply*)
 I live alone with my spouse or partner with my child(ren)
 with my parent(s) with another relative with someone else

9. Which of the following factors are important for you when evaluating the appropriateness of your living facilities for your current and future needs?
(Please check all that apply)

- Washer / dryer within my apartment or home (in unit)
- Access to shared washer / dryer (in complex)
- Single story, first floor living quarters (no stairs to access your apartment or home)
- Off-street parking (driveway or parking lot)
- Proximity to public transportation (RIPTA bus stops, etc.)
- Proximity to other services that I regularly use (laundromat, grocery store, doctor's office, etc.)
- Proximity to family and friends
- Neighbors of a similar age range or life stage
- Availability of recreational programming within my residential community (assisted living, senior housing, etc.)
- Other: _____

10. What is your employment status?

- retired
- retired and employed part-time
- employed for wages (full-time)
- employed for wages (part-time)
- self-employed
- a homemaker/ volunteer (no wage)
- out of work and looking for work
- out of work, but not currently looking for work
- unable to work

11. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Grade school
- Attended high school, but did not graduate
- High school graduate (completed high school diploma or the equivalent / GED)
- Some college / higher education
- Completed undergraduate degree (Bachelor's or Associates degrees)
- Completed Masters, Professional, or Doctorate degree

12. What is your total personal monthly income?

- \$0 - \$1,011 \$1,012 - \$2,529 \$2,530 - \$4,046
 \$4,047 - \$5,546 \$5,547 +

13. What language do you primarily speak at home?

- English Portuguese Spanish Other: _____

14. Do you currently have a caregiver?

- Yes No (*if no, please skip to question 18*)

15. Who is/are your current caregiver(s)? (Please check all that apply.)

- my spouse or partner my child(ren) another relative
 my neighbor another friend a paid professional
 adult daycare visiting nurse other: _____

16. How often do you have a caregiver?

- a few hours each week a few hours each day
 all day, a few days each week all day, every day 24-hours/day

17. Do you pay one or more of your caregivers for their services?

- Yes No

18. Do you currently have a valid driver's license?

- Yes (*if yes, skip to question 21*) No

19. Please indicate the reason that you do not have a valid driver's license at this time. (*check all that apply*)

- I never had a driver's license. I gave up my driver's license voluntarily.
 My license was suspended. My license was revoked.

20. What do you use for transportation? (*check all that apply*)

- A caregiver drives me A friend or relative drives me
 RIPTA or other public transportation Benjamin Church Senior Center bus
 Taxi, Uber, or Lyft Medical transportation
 Other: _____

21. Answer the following question by placing a check mark or an X in the appropriate column to express your level of awareness with each of the senior services available in Bristol. Please only one X per service.

Service	Aware and have used this service	Aware but have not used this service	Not aware of this service
Weekday lunches at Benjamin Church Senior Center			
Benjamin Church Senior Center in-town bus transportation			
Physical activities for seniors at Benjamin Church Senior Center (chair yoga, Zumba Gold, etc.)			
East Bay Food Pantry programs for seniors (including transportation and home-delivery, SNAP registration)			
Senior events through Bristol Parks and Recreation			
Assistance with Medicare enrollment, taxes, and other important forms through Benjamin Church Senior Center			
Meals on Wheels of RI home-delivered meals for shut-ins (weekdays)			
Shut-in visits from local church communities			
Adult day programs through Cornerstone Adult Services			
Assistance with yard work through RWU's Feinstein Center for Service Learning & Community Engagement			
Finding emergency assistance to meet a utility bill (if income-			

eligible) through Bristol Welfare Department			
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Section II: Basic Needs

22. Does Bristol have adequate availability of housing for older residents in Bristol?

- Yes No I don't know

23. Is housing in Bristol affordable for older residents?

- Yes No I don't know

24. Is healthy food in Bristol affordable for older residents?

- Yes No I don't know

25. Are public buildings and other structures in Bristol accessible for older residents?

- Yes No I don't know

26. How satisfied are you with the availability of services to assist older residents in Bristol with basic needs (housing, food, safety, etc.)?

- Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

27. How satisfied are you with the availability of assistance with signing up for services for older residents in Bristol?

- Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

28. How safe do you feel in your own home concerning people in or around your home?

- Very safe Somewhat safe Neither safe nor unsafe
 Somewhat unsafe Very unsafe

29. How safe do you feel in your own home concerning the physical environment of your home (stairs, rails in the bathroom, etc.)?

- Very safe Somewhat safe Neither safe nor unsafe
 Somewhat unsafe Very unsafe

30. How safe do you feel in your own neighborhood?

- Very safe Somewhat safe Neither safe nor unsafe
 Somewhat unsafe Very unsafe

Section III: Physical and Mental Health and Well Being

31. Are there an adequate number of services provided locally to promote healthy behavior in Bristol?

- Yes No I don't know

32. Are there an adequate number of community activities that enhance well-being?

- Yes No I don't know

33. Are there an adequate number of local social services?

- Yes No I don't know

34. How satisfied are you with the services provided by the Benjamin Church Senior Center?

- Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

35. How satisfied are you with the services provided by the Town of Bristol for seniors?

- Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

36. Do you have opportunities to get regular physical exercise?

- Yes No

37. Do you have access to preventative health services?

Yes No

38. Do you have access to medication required to relieve or sooth the symptoms of a disease or disorder when you need them?

Yes No

39. Do you have access to medical services when you need them?

Yes No

Section IV. Maximizing Independence

40. Is there adequate public transportation in Bristol?
 Yes No I don't know
41. Is local public transportation affordable for older residents?
 Yes No I don't know
42. How satisfied are you with the availability of doctors and medical services in Bristol?
 Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

Section V: Social and Civic Engagement

43. How satisfied are you with the amount and quality of connections you have with friends and relatives?
 Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
44. How satisfied are you with your participation in civic activities (park clean ups, voting, etc.)?
 Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
45. How satisfied are you with your participation in cultural activities or events (movies, concerts, etc.)?
 Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied
46. How satisfied are you with your participation in religious activities or events (church services, choir, etc.)?
 Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

- Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

47. How satisfied are you with your participation in recreational activities (walking, biking, Zumba, etc.)?

- Very satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

48. Are there adequate opportunities for you to volunteer your time (reading to children, serving on a committee, etc.)?

- Yes No I don't know

49. Are there adequate opportunities for older residents to obtain paid work for those who wish to work?

- Yes No I don't know

Section VI: Priorities

50. Please check all that are important to you below:

- Access to reliable transportation (to doctor's apt., grocery store, etc.)
- Access to affordable housing (apartments, senior housing, assisted living, etc.)
- Availability of social activities and recreational programs for seniors
- Access to medical care, including specialist services

51. What is your single greatest barrier to living comfortably and safely in Bristol?

52. If you have additional comments or concerns you would like to share with us, please do so below:

Thank You!



1020 Hope St. Bristol, RI 02809

401-253-8458

Bristol Senior Services Survey

O Benjamin Church Senior Center (BCSC) está conduzindo uma pesquisa de todos os residentes de Bristol que tem 50 anos ou mais como parte de de uma avaliação das necessidades dos idosos em Bristol. **O objetivo dessa avaliação é para determinar as necessidades atuais e antecipadas dos idosos de Bristol para priorizar e planejar melhor como atender a essas necessidades.**

Todos os residentes de Bristol com 50 anos ou mais são convidados a completar a pesquisa, independentemente de qualquer conexão que pode ou não ter com a BCSC. Se faça o favor de mandar por correio ou deixar no endereço indicado acima. As suas opiniões são importantes para a gente e valorizamos a sua vontade de partilhar as suas experiencias nesta pesquisa. Cada resposta será anônima. Por favor complete esta pesquisa uma vez só, seja em papel ou online. Pesquisas online podem ser encontradas através do link no sitio web do Benjamin Church Senior Center (www.bristolsrctr.com) ou na página de Facebook (www.facebook.com/BristolRISeniorCenter). Participação nesta pesquisa não o obriga a nada. Esperamos disponibilizar os resultados finais desta pesquisa ao público no verão de 2019. Este projeto é financiado por uma generosa doação da Fundação Rhode Island.

Secção I: Perguntas sobre você

1. Quantos anos tem?

50-55 56-64 65-69 70-74 75-79 80-89

90 ou mais



2. Qual é o seu gênero?
 Masculino Feminino Outro Prefiro não responder
3. Qual é o seu estado marital?
 Solteiro/a Casado/a Divorciado/a Separado/a Viúvo/a
 Vivo com companheiro/a
4. Qual é a sua origem racial?
 Hispano/latino Não hispano/latino
5. Qual é a sua origem étnica? (Por favor selecione todos os aplicáveis.)
 Nativo norte-americano ou de Alasca Asiático Africano-americano
 Branco Nativo havaiano/ polinésio Outra: _____
6. Em que tipo de residência mora você neste momento?
 Apartamento Residência com assistência para idosos
 Casa de repouso Casa de uma família Condomínio
 Residência de idosos Casa multifamiliar Sem residência/ casa
 Outro: _____
7. Os seus gastos residenciais incluem: (Por favor selecione todos os aplicáveis)
 Arrendamento Hipoteca Impostas de propriedade HOA
 Nenhum apresentado
8. Com quem você mora neste momento? (Por favor selecione todos os aplicáveis)
 Moro sozinho Com esposo ou companheiro Com meu(s) filho(s)
 Com meu(s) pai(s) Com outro familiar Com outra pessoa
9. Quais dos fatores indicados são importantes para si quando avaliando o cabimento das suas facilidades de vivência pelas suas necessidades presentes e futuras? (Por favor selecione todos os aplicáveis)
 Máquina de lavar/secar no meu apartamento ou na casa
 Acesso a uma máquina de lavar/secar partilhada (no seu complexo)
 Residência no primeiro andar (sem escadas para aceder seu apartamento/casa)
 Estacionamento
 Proximidade a transportação pública (Paradas de RIPTA, etc.)

- Proximidade a outros serviços que uso regularmente (lavanderias, supermercados, consolatórios médicos, etc.)
- Proximidade a família e amigos
- Vizinhos da mesma idade ou fase de vida semelhante
- Disponibilidade de programas recreativos dentro da minha comunidade residencial (residência de idosos, etc.)
- Outro: _____

10. Qual é o seu estado de emprego?

- Reformado Reformado e trabalho part-time Trabalho full-time
- Trabalho part-time Trabalho por conta própria
- Don/a de casa/voluntário (sem pagamento) Sem trabalho e em busca de trabalho Sem trabalho, mas não buscando trabalho Incapacitado

11. Qual é o grau mais alto ou nível de escola que você completou?

- Escola primária
- Assistiu o colégio, mas nunca graduou
- Completou o colégio (recebeu o diploma ou o equivalente)
- Universidade/ ensino superior até certo ponto (não graduou)
- Completou grau universitário (graduação ou diploma tecnológico)
- Completou grau de pós-graduação

12. Qual é a sua renda mensal pessoal total?

- \$0-\$1,011 \$1,012-\$2,529 \$2,530-\$4,046
- \$4,047-\$5,546 \$5,547 +

13. Qual língua você fala principalmente em casa?

- Inglês Português Espanhol Outra: _____

14. Você tem um(a) cuidador(a)?

- Sim Não (por favor vá diretamente para a pergunta 18)

15. Quem é/são o(s) seu(s) cuidador(es)? (Por favor selecione todos os aplicáveis)

- Meu esposo/a ou companheiro/a Meu(s) filho(s) Outro familiar
- Meu vizinho Outro amigo Um profissional pagado
- Um centro de saúde de idosos Um/a enfermeiro/a visitante

Outro: _____

16. Com que frequência você tem um(a) cuidador(a)?

- Algumas horas cada semana Algumas horas cada dia
Todo o dia, vários dias cada semana Todo o dia, todos os dias
24 horas por dia

17. Você paga um ou mais dos seus cuidadores pelos seus serviços?

- Sim Não

18. Você tem uma carta de condução válida?

- Sim (Por favor vá diretamente para a pergunta 21) Não

19. Se faça o favor de indicar a razão pela qual você não tem uma carta de condução válida neste momento? (Selecione todos os aplicáveis)

- Nunca tive carta de condução A minha carta foi suspensa Desisti da minha carta de condução voluntariamente Minha carta foi revogada

20. Que forma de transporta o usa voc e?

- Meu cuidador me leva A minha fam lia/ amigos me levam
RIPTA ou outra forma de transporta o p blica
O autocarro de Benjamin Church Senior Center T xi, Uber, Lyft
Transporta o m dica Outra: _____

21. Responda à seguinte pergunta colocando uma marca de seleção ou "X" na coluna apropriada para expressar seu nível de consciência com cada um dos serviços para idosos disponíveis em Bristol.

	Sei e tenho usado este serviço	Sei mas não tenho usado este serviço	Não sei deste serviço
Almoços semanais em Benjamin Church Senior Center			
Transportação de camioneta de Benjamin Church Senior Center dentro de Bristol			
Atividades físicas para idosos no Benjamin Church Senior Center (yoga em cadeiras, Zumba Gold, etc.)			
Programas do East Bay Food Pantry para idosos (incluindo transporte, entregas à casa, registro SNAP)			
Eventos para idosos através do Bristol Parks and Recreation			
Ajuda com inscrição de Medicare, impostos e outros formulários através de Benjamin Church Senior Center			
Meals on Wheels de RI dispensa e entrega de alimentos à casa (durante a semana)			
Visitas de comunidades religiosas locais			
Programas de saúde para idosos através de Cornerstone Adult Services			
Ajuda com o trabalho no quintal através do Centro RWU Feinstein para aprendizagem de serviços e envolvimento comunitário			
Ajuda de emergência para pagar uma conta de serviço (se qualifica pela renda) através do Bristol Welfare Department			

Secção II: Necessidades Básicas

22. Bristol tem aviabilidade adequada de residências para residentes idosos em Bristol?
 Sim Não Eu não sei
23. As residências em Bristol são acessíveis (em termos financeiros) para residentes idosos?
 Sim Não Eu não sei
24. Comida saudável em Bristol é acessível para residentes idosos?
 Sim Não Eu não sei
25. Os edifícios públicos e outras estruturas em Bristol são acessíveis para residentes idosos?
 Sim Não Eu não sei
26. Quão satisfeito você está com a disponibilidade de serviços que ajudam os residentes de Bristol com necessidades básicas (residências, comida, seguridade, etc.)?
 Muito satisfeito(a) Mais ou menos satisfeito(a)
 Nem satisfeito(a) nem dessatisfeito(a) Mais ou menos dessatisfeito(a)
 Muito dessatisfeito(a)
27. Quão satisfeito você está com a disponibilidade de ajuda a inscrever-se para serviços de residentes idosos em Bristol?
 Muito satisfeito(a) Mais ou menos satisfeito(a)
 Nem satisfeito(a) nem dessatisfeito(a) Mais ou menos dessatisfeito(a)
 Muito dessatisfeito(a)
28. Quão seguro se sente você na sua própria casa em relação às pessoas dentro ou em volta da sua casa?
 Muito seguro(a) Mais ou menos seguro(a)
 Nem seguro(a) nem inseguro(a) Mais ou menos inseguro(a)
 Muito inseguro(a)

29. Quão seguro se sente você na sua casa em relação ao ambiente físico da sua casa (escadas, corrimões na casa de banho, etc.)?

- Muito seguro(a) Mais ou menos seguro(a)
 Nem seguro(a) nem inseguro(a) Mais ou menos inseguro(a)
 Muito inseguro(a)

30. Quão seguro se sente você na sua comunidade?

- Muito seguro(a) Mais ou menos seguro(a)
 Nem seguro(a) nem inseguro(a) Mais ou menos inseguro(a)
 Muito inseguro(a)

Secção III: O Saúde e Bem-Estar Físico e Mental

31. Existem suficientes serviços oferecidos localmente que promovem comportamento saudável em Bristol?

- Sim Não Não sei

32. Existe um número adequado de atividades comunitárias que melhoram o bem-estar?

- Sim Não Não sei

33. Existe um número adequado de serviços sociais locais?

- Sim Não Não sei

34. Quão satisfeito está você com os serviços oferecidos por Benjamin Church Senior Center?

- Muito satisfeito(a) Mais ou menos satisfeito(a)
 Nem satisfeito(a) nem dessatisfeito(a) Mais ou menos dessatisfeito(a)
 Muito dessatisfeito(a)

35. Quão satisfeito está você com os serviços oferecidos para idosos pelo Town de Bristol?

- Muito satisfeito(a) Mais ou menos satisfeito(a)
 Nem satisfeito(a) nem dessatisfeito(a) Mais ou menos dessatisfeito(a)
 Muito dessatisfeito(a)

36. Você tem oportunidades de fazer exercícios físicos regularmente?

- Sim Não

37. Você tem acesso a serviços de saúde preventivos?

- Sim Não

38. Você tem acesso a medicamentos necessários para aliviar os sintomas de uma enfermidade ou doença quando os precisa?

- Sim Não

39. Você tem acesso a serviços médicos quando precisa deles?

- Sim Não

Secção IV: Maximizando a Independência

40. Existe transportação pública adequada em Bristol?

- Sim Não Não sei

41. A transportação pública local é acessível para os residentes idosos?

- Sim Não Não sei

42. Quão satisfeito está você com a disponibilidade de doutores e serviços médicos em Bristol?

- Muito satisfeito(a) Mais ou menos satisfeito(a)
 Nem satisfeito(a) nem dessatisfeito(a) Mais ou menos dessatisfeito(a)
 Muito dessatisfeito(a)

Secção V: Envolvimento Social e Cívico

43. Quão satisfeito está você com a quantidade e qualidade de conexões que tem com os seus familiares e amigos?

- Muito satisfeito(a) Mais ou menos satisfeito(a)

49. Existem oportunidades adequadas para residentes idosos obter trabalho pago para os que querem trabalhar?
- Sim Não Não sei

Secção VI: Prioridades

50. Por favor selecione todos os que são importantes para você:
- Acesso a transportação confiável (para consultas médicas, supermercados, etc.)
 - Acesso a residências acessíveis (apartamentos, residências para idosos, etc.)
 - Disponibilidade de atividades sociais e programas recreativos para idosos
 - Acesso a cuidado médico, incluindo serviços especiais

51. Qual é o seu maior obstáculo para viver confortavelmente e com segurança em Bristol?

52. Se você tem outros comentários ou preocupações que gostava de partilhar connosco, faça o favor de os indicar aqui:

Obrigado!

Group: _____ # Participants: _____
Date: _____ Place: _____
Interviewer: _____ Note-taker: _____
#Males: _____ #Females: _____

Benjamin Church Senior Needs Assessment

Focus Group Questions

We want to determine how well Bristol is doing in providing services to support its senior citizens. The purposes of this survey are to determine if and how the town serves the needs of its elder citizens, and to inform a strategic planning process that will serve to guide the town to becoming a more "elder-friendly" community.

We are asking for you to give us your own opinions on how well the town, its businesses and its service providers are meeting seniors' life needs. We hope to find answers to the question: "Are we providing adequate health services and assistance to ensure a high quality of life and necessary services to meet the various needs of all our seniors?"

Please base your responses on your personal knowledge or experiences. All responses will be reported anonymously and in aggregate form to ensure confidentiality.

How satisfied are you with the following local services/issues:

1. Housing for seniors:

- a. Is it available?
- b. Is it affordable? (show of hands)
- c. Feeling safe at home? (show of hands) Why?
- d. Feeling safe in their neighborhoods? (show of hands) Why?
- e. Having regular contact to family and friends? (show of hands) Why?
- f. Having regular contact to neighbors? (show of hands) Why?

2. Food security and shopping opportunities for seniors?

- a. Availability of nutritious food?
- b. Affordability and Variety of food?
- c. Food markets available/location? (Shopping center, farmer's markets, etc.) Where?
- d. Food/meal providers available & reliable? (Meals on Wheels? Restaurants? Markets?)
- e. How do you access to information about food services?
(Internet? Flyers in mail? Newspaper?)

- f. How do you access to information about nutrition? about living a healthy lifestyle?
- e. How do you gain access to medication? Information about medications?
- f. How do you gain access social service providers?
- g. How do you access your doctors/health care providers?
- h. Other critical areas?

3. Availability/access to local facilities and services to/for seniors?

- a. Access to buildings in town? (Follow up: Are they handicapped accessible?)
- b. Access and affordability of public transportation? (What is available?)
- c. Walk-ability of town of Bristol?
- d. Access to opportunities for physical exercise and other activities?
- e. Cost and access to restaurants or meal providers? (Any Senior discounts?)
- f. Cost and access to entertainment? (movies, music, fairs, local events, etc.)

4. How well do you think local health and social service providers meet the needs of seniors?

- a. Cost and access to health and other social service providers?
- b. Provide services that promote healthy behavior?
- c. Provide access to preventative health?
- d. Provide opportunities for physical exercise? What type?
- e. Providing access to medical services? What type?
- f. Providing access to medication to relieve or sooth the symptoms of diseases or disorders?

5. How well are you able to:

- a. Understand services that are available to you?
- b. Attain information about these services?
- c. Know how to access the services provided to you?

- d. Ask for help when you need it?
- e. Rely on others for assistance in handling basic activities?
- f. Access support from the community service system to help them live comfortably and safely?
- g. Be involved in civic projects? (reading to children, cleaning a park, etc.)
- h. Be involved with a preferred religious or spiritual community?
- i. Be involved in recreational activities? (What types are available?)
- j. Volunteer opportunities to work for others? (Examples? How are they recruited?)
- k. Availability of paid work opportunities for elder residents who wish to work full time?
Part-time?
- l. Do you feel that community residents in Bristol help and/or trust each other?

6. What three actions can Bristol take to make the town more "elder- friendly?"

7. Is there anything else that we should know/include that we forgot to ask? *(Or other suggestions /comments that you would like to make?)*

Interviewee:
Position:
Date:

Interviewer:
Place:

Key Informant Questions
for Community Leaders, Public and Elected Officials
RE: Improving Bristol Senior Citizen's Standard of Living

1. How well do you think the average senior citizen who resides in Bristol is living? Why?
2. What amenities or services are available locally for seniors?
3. What challenges or obstacles do you think elder citizens might be facing that make their lives more difficult? Probe: Why? Why not?
4. Do you think there are sufficient laws to protect senior citizens in Rhode Island? In Bristol? Probe for each response: If yes, what are the most effective laws? If no, what additional laws or ordinances need to be passed to benefit local seniors?
5. How well do you think the Town of Bristol is meeting the needs of its senior population?
6. How well do you think the Benjamin Church Senior Center is doing in its efforts to meet the needs of seniors?
7. How would you improve the lives of seniors living in Bristol?
8. What role of public and elected officials in helping improve the conditions for Bristol's seniors?
9. How would you improve local laws, policies or procedures to better serve seniors?
10. What three priority actions do you think the Town could take to make Bristol a more "elder friendly community?"
11. Do you have any additional thoughts or comments on this matter?