Livable Communities for an Aging Population

Local Responses to the Age Boom

Massachusetts as a Model for Healthy Aging
September 27, 2010

Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur, Associate State Director, AARP Vermont
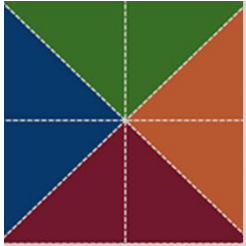
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A Report to the Nation on
Livable Communities:
Creating Environments
for Successful Aging
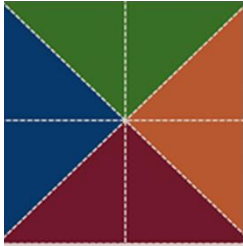
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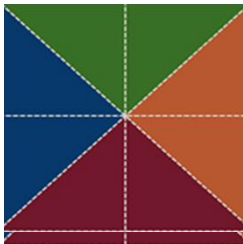
The Beyond 50.05 Survey

- Conducted in 2004 by Roper Public Affairs and Media Group of NOP World

- Surveyed 1,005 50+ Americans

- Demonstrates relationship between community features, community engagement & successful aging

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Community Engagement
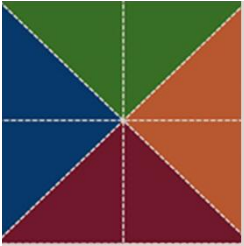
Contributes to and results from successful aging:

- Social encounters with neighbors
- Volunteer service
- Civic action
- Political, religious participation
- Links to groups, clubs, hobbies
- Physical activities
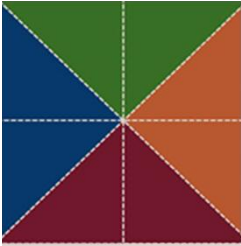
Successful Aging → ← Community Engagement

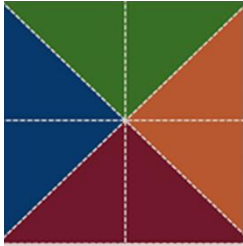| Percent who "Strongly agree"	High Engagement	Moderate Engagement	Low Engagement
I am satisfied with my life the majority of the time	**87%**	**79%**	**56%**
I am able to make choices about things that affect how I age	**80%**	**70%**	**56%**
I have been able to influence others◻lives in positive ways	**81%**	**60%**	**41%**
I have a high quality of life	**85%**	**69%**	**46%**
I am able to meet all of my needs and some of my wants	**78%**	**71%**	**48%**

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A Livable Community

A livable community is one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community services, and adequate mobility options, which together facilitate *personal independence* and the *engagement* of residents in civic and social life.

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What Does this Mean for Municipalities?

˝ Community design plays a key role in positive outcomes for older residents:

- Housing: Accessible homes; affordable housing; community-based supportive services
- Mobility: safe driving environments and robust, safe options for non-drivers

˝ Municipalities and local organizations will play a critical role in the development of livable communities for older residents
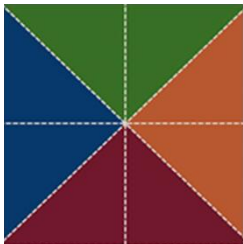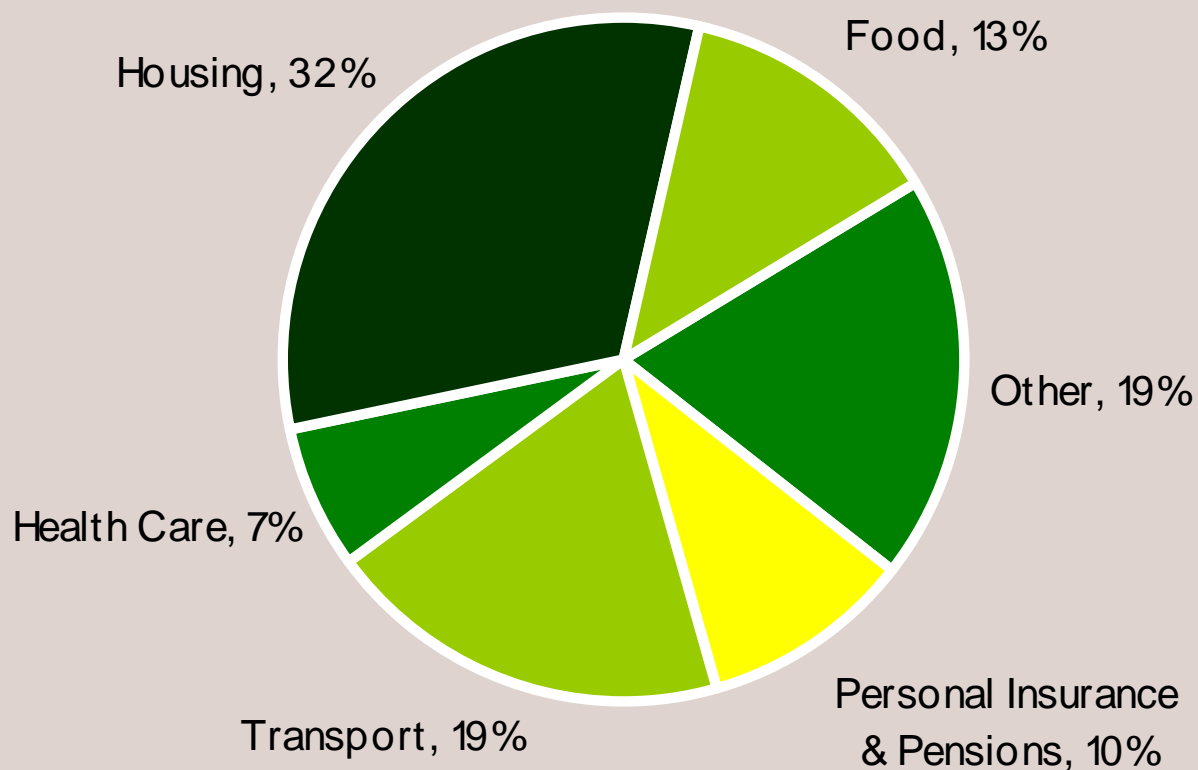
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The Beyond 50.05 Survey

Key Findings

- People whose homes do not meet their physical needs are less likely to age successfully

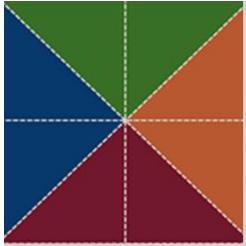- Lack of affordable housing can make it difficult to remain in one's community

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Housing Costs Top Budgets

Housing, 32%

Food, 13%

Other, 19%

Personal Insurance & Pensions, 10%

Transport, 19%

Health Care, 7%

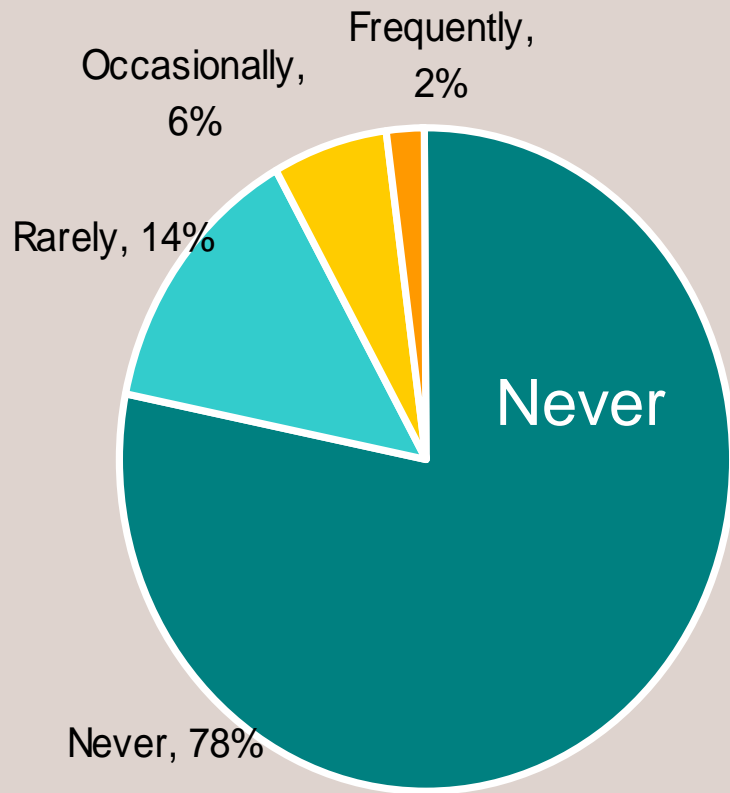**Figure 10: Housing is Largest Expense Category for Age 45+**

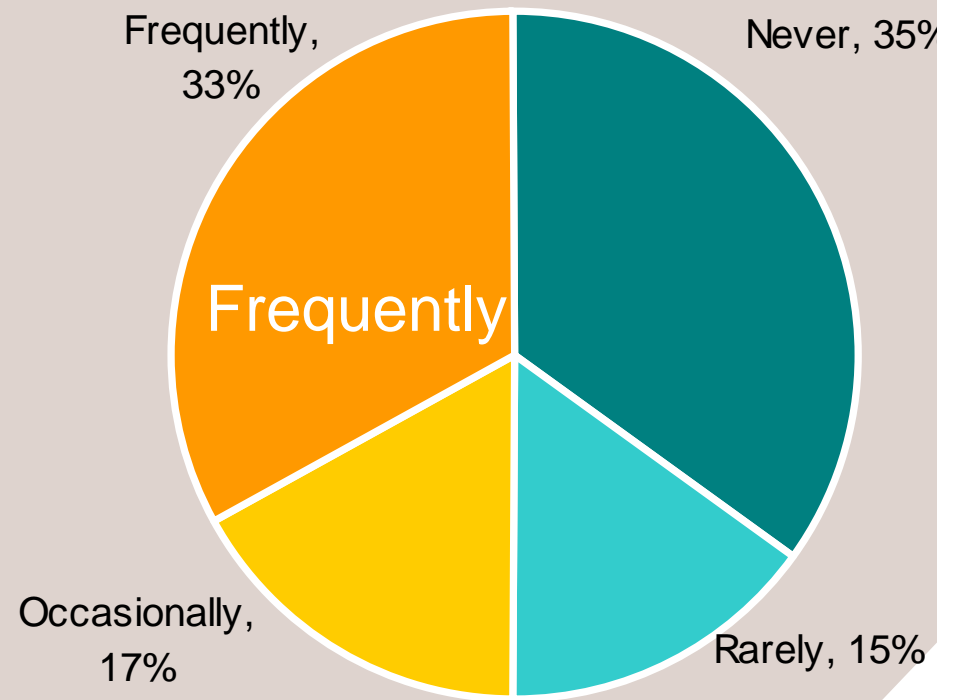beyond 50.05

The Beyond 50.05 Survey

A Key Finding

- 50+ who don't drive have significantly lower levels of outside interaction than drivers 50+

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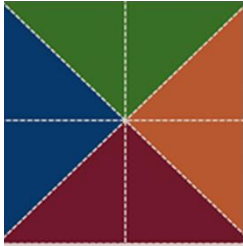
Nondrivers Miss More Events, More Often

Figure 22:   Nondrivers Miss Events Much More Often Than Drivers

Drivers pie chart:
- Frequently, 2%
- Occasionally, 6%
- Rarely, 14%
- Never, 78%
- Never (center label)

Nondrivers pie chart:
- Never, 35%
- Frequently, 33%
- Occasionally, 17%
- Rarely, 15%
- Frequently (center label)

Drivers

Nondrivers

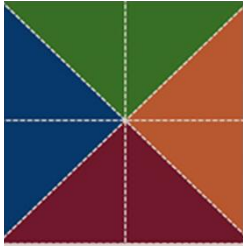beyond **50**.05

The Beyond 50.05 Survey

Key Findings

- Mobility options allow 50+ nondrivers to stay connected to their communities

- Although 50+ overall use public transit for only a small segment of total 50+ trips, transit is key for nondrivers, where available
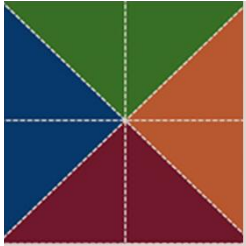
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Toward Livable Communities

Housing Strategies

Promote design and modification of housing to meet physical needs of older people

Consider how to require/encourage universal design in new development
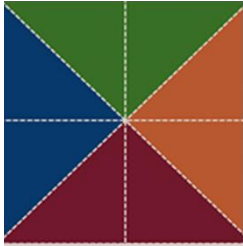
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Toward Livable Communities

Housing Strategies

Ensure an adequate supply of diverse and affordable housing choices
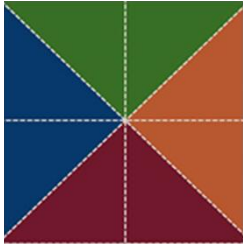
Preserve existing affordable housing

Need both multi-generational and age restricted settings

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Toward Livable Communities

Land Use Strategies

Connect the dots between transportation and land use planning: siting of housing and essential services in proximity to transit or sidewalks is critical
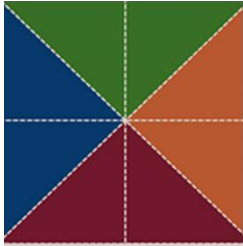
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Mobility Strategies

Provide mobility options including public transportation, volunteer driver programs, walking, bicycling, and specialized transportation
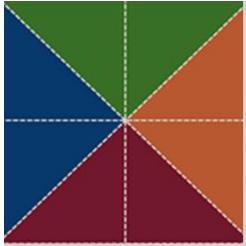
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Mobility

Facilitate driving by older individuals by improving the travel environment, supporting driver education

Complete Streets Policies start to address many issues by planning for all users of all ages on the roadway
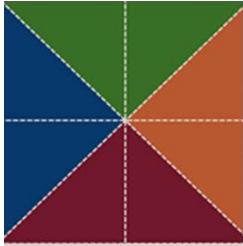
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Community Engagement

Essential to engage residents in preparing for an aging population
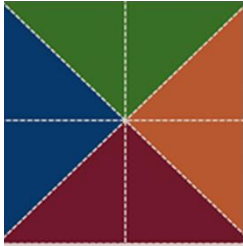
Important to educate about needed changes and build political support

Toward Livable Communities
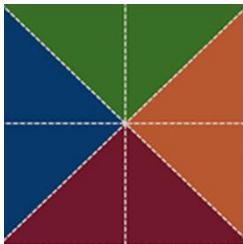
˝ Burlington Livable Community Project

- . Goal was to articulate a community vision and specific action items to prepare for an aging population

- . Engaged local and regional stakeholders

- . Residents participated through study circles, public meeting, focus groups, sidewalk assessments; public opinion survey

- . Final product was report to the city: *A Great City for Older Adults: An Action Plan for Burlington*

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Towards Livable Communities

″ Lessons Learned

. Think strategically about inside vs. outside leadership . what is role of political leaders and stakeholders in vision, plan and implementation

. Engage residents in identifying community vision and build political support

. Many solutions work for all generations

. Mobilize diverse groups who share common agenda for solutions

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