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## Aging in Hamilton: Planning for the Future, A Community Needs Assessment

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# **Aging in Hamilton: Planning for the Future**

**A Community Needs Assessment**

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**PREPARED FOR: THE TOWN OF HAMILTON COUNCIL ON AGING**

Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging  
Gerontology Institute  
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy & Global Studies  
University of Massachusetts Boston



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## Introduction

Like many communities across Massachusetts, the population in the Town of Hamilton is aging. According to projections created by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, a trend toward an older population is expected. Donahue Institute vintage projections suggest that by 2035, more than one out of each three Hamilton residents will be age 60 or older—32% of the Town’s population will be between the ages of 60 and 79, with an additional 9% age 80 and older. As the demographics of Hamilton shift toward a population that is older and living longer, the demand for programs and services that address aging-related needs will likely increase as well.

The Town’s Council on Aging serves as an important and valued resource that is a central point of contact for many older residents. Planning is necessary to ensure that the Town is adequately prepared to meet the challenges and to capitalize on opportunities that an aging population will present. In addition, it is increasingly relevant and necessary for those who provide services and amenities in the Town to recognize opportunities for collaboration and coordination to ensure that residents have the opportunity to age well in their community.

This report presents research findings from a study conducted by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging at the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston), in collaboration with the Town of Hamilton. The purpose of this study was to investigate and document current and future needs and preferences of Hamilton’s older residents. To this end, we conducted a web-based survey of residents as well as four key-informant interviews with the aim of identifying concerns related to aging in Hamilton, with the added benefit of learning about the preferences and intentions of residents as they relate to programming and services offered by the Hamilton Council on Aging (COA).

The contents of this report are intended primarily to inform planning by the Hamilton COA and other municipal departments. In addition, contents may be of interest to community stakeholders in other public and private organizations that operate programs, provide services, and/or advocate for older adult residents in and around the Town of Hamilton.

## Background

The Town of Hamilton, Massachusetts is a small community of 8,031 residents located in Eastern Massachusetts. Hamilton is closely tied to neighboring Wenham, sharing a school system, library, recreation department, commuter rail station, and newspaper.

Previous research in gerontology has documented an overwhelming preference among older adults to remain in their homes and communities as long as possible (AARP, 2005). Despite this

growing trend, a number of common aging-related circumstances often challenge the ability of individuals to age successfully in their homes and communities, and thereby straining the resources available within towns to address the broad range of services and amenities needed.

Many older adults experience physical and social changes that threaten their independence and wellbeing. In addition, older individuals who live on fixed incomes may experience financial constraints that limit their choices and reduce their quality of life in retirement. In communities that actively promote aging in place, older residents may be better able to retain their independence and maintain valued social relationships. Communities that support aging-related needs may also be more successful in retaining a larger share of their vital older residents, and in turn, benefit from the experiences and the local commitment and civic engagement that long-term residents often contribute.

The research described in this report was conducted in Fall 2021 to assess the specific aging-related needs of older adult residents in Hamilton, and to explore preferences of adults in Hamilton as they relate to programs and services that could be offered by the Hamilton COA or in collaboration with the Wenham COA.

## **Methods**

For the Hamilton Community Needs Assessment, we compiled data from several sources including: publicly available information obtained through the U.S. Census Bureau; an online survey of residents age 60 and older; and qualitative data collected directly from Town leaders who interact frequently with the older adult population. All research methods and instruments used in this project were approved by the Institutional Review Board at UMass Boston, which is charged with protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects who take part in research conducted through the university.

### **Hamilton Demographic Data**

As an initial step toward understanding characteristics of the older population in Hamilton, we generated a demographic profile of the Town using data from the American Community Survey (ACS). Whereas the decennial census is a complete accounting of all residents in the country, the ACS is a large, annual survey of the population, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and designed to provide estimates of various demographic qualities in years intervening the ten-year censuses. In towns the size of Hamilton, ACS estimates are available for the most recent five-year period (2015-2019).

## Community Survey

An online resident survey was developed and completed in the Fall of 2021. The questions for the survey were developed by research staff at UMass Boston with consultation from the interim COA director in Hamilton. Efforts were made to widely distribute information about how to participate throughout the community. The link to accessing the survey was distributed through Town offices, emails, social media, and other digital communication mechanisms. As well, surveys were completed by residents who attended COVID-19 vaccine and booster clinics hosted by the Hamilton COA. The survey was open for 3 weeks. Nearly 300 individuals responded to the survey.

## Key-informant Interviews

Four interviews with members of Town leadership were completed in the months leading up to January of 2022. Conversations with the Hamilton Town Manager, Chief of the Fire Department, Chair of the Hamilton COA Board, and the COA Director for the Town of Wenham focused on unmet needs of the community and the potential for sharing programming and services for older residents across the two neighboring communities of Hamilton and Wenham. Interviews were conducted via phone or Zoom and notes from those conversations were used to generate themes, which are presented in the analysis section of this report.

## Data Analysis

We used U.S. Census data for the Town of Hamilton to summarize demographic characteristics including growth of the older population, shifts in the age, gender, and education distributions, householder status, living arrangements, household income, and disability status. Qualitative data collected during interviews were reviewed by project staff and used to characterize and categorize salient ways in which aging issues are impacting older adults in Hamilton. We used information from all sources of data to develop the recommendations found in the final section of this report.

## Results

### Demographic Profile of Hamilton

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), there were about 8,031 residents living in the Town of Hamilton in 2019. Approximately 39% of the population (3,152 individuals) were age 50 and older (See **Table 1**). Residents who were age 50 to 59 (1,452 individuals) made up

18% of the population; residents age 60 to 79 (1,353 individuals) comprised around 17%, and another 347 residents (4%) were age 80 and older.

**Table 1.** Number and percentage distribution of Hamilton’s population by age category, 2019

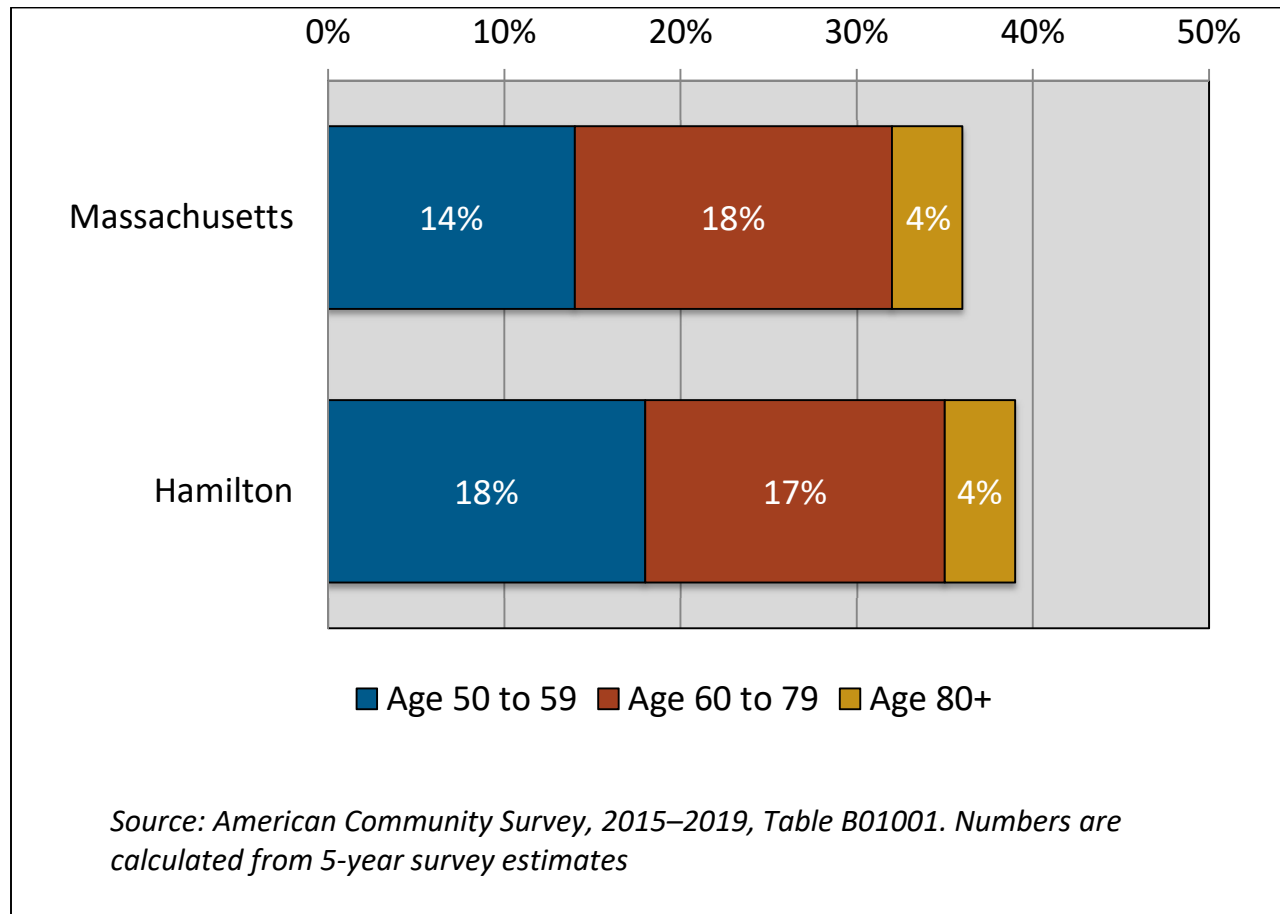
Age Category	Number	Percentage
Under age 18	2,072	26%
Age 18 to 49	2,807	35%
Age 50 to 59	1,452	18%
Age 60 to 79	1,353	17%
Age 80 and older	347	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,031</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: American Community Survey, 2015-2019, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.*

The gender distribution in Hamilton is on average one man for each woman (ACS, 2015– 2019, Table B01001). The share of Hamilton’s population age 50 and older is larger than the overall state of Massachusetts (**Figure 1**). About 37% of the Massachusetts population was in the 50 and older age group in 2019, compared to 39% of the Hamilton population. In contrast to the Commonwealth, however, Hamilton had a slightly lower portion of residents age 60 and older. The share of Hamilton residents age 80 and over is very similar to the one estimated for the state as a whole. In 2019, Massachusetts residents age 60 and over comprised about 22% of the population, including 4% age 80 and over. In Hamilton, about 21% of the population was 60 or older, including 4% who were 80 years or older.



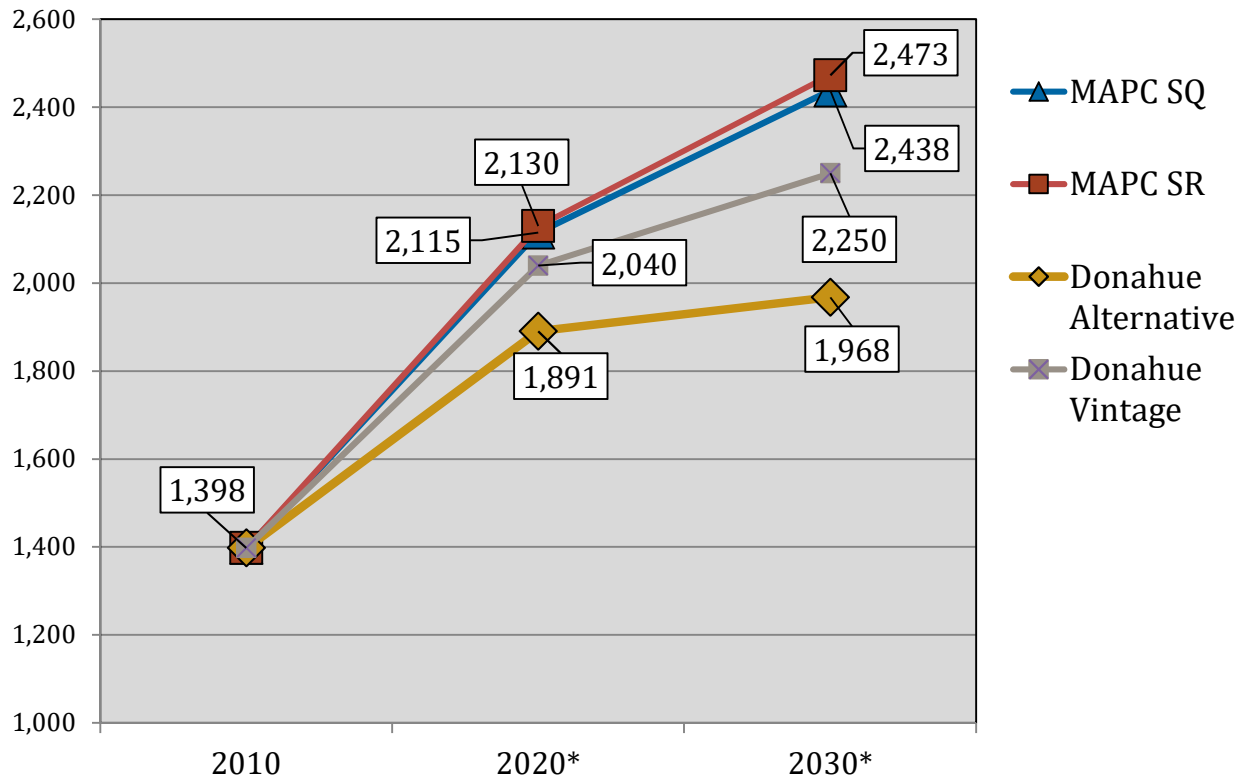
**Figure 1. Age distribution in Hamilton and Massachusetts**



Population growth in both Massachusetts and the Town of Hamilton has been concentrated in older age groups. Between 2000 and 2010, population of all ages decreased by 7% in Hamilton, rising 3% in the state as whole. However, in both Hamilton and Massachusetts, the absolute numbers of residents age 50 and over grew substantially during this time period (*US Census, Table QT-P1*). The segment of Hamilton’s population age 50 to 59 increased in size by 44%, a rate of growth higher than in Massachusetts overall (29%). The population of residents who are age 60 and older increased by 22% in Hamilton, compared to a 16% increase for the state.

The increments in the share of older population are projected to continue in the following decades. **Figure 2** shows four sets of projections for Hamilton’s population age 60 and over. Two sets are generated by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, and two by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). All of them suggest steady increments in the share of older population between 2010 and 2030.

**Figure 2.** Alternative Hamilton projections; number of residents age 60 and older 2010 with projections to 2020\* and 2030



\*Source: Population figures for 2010 are from the U.S. Census.

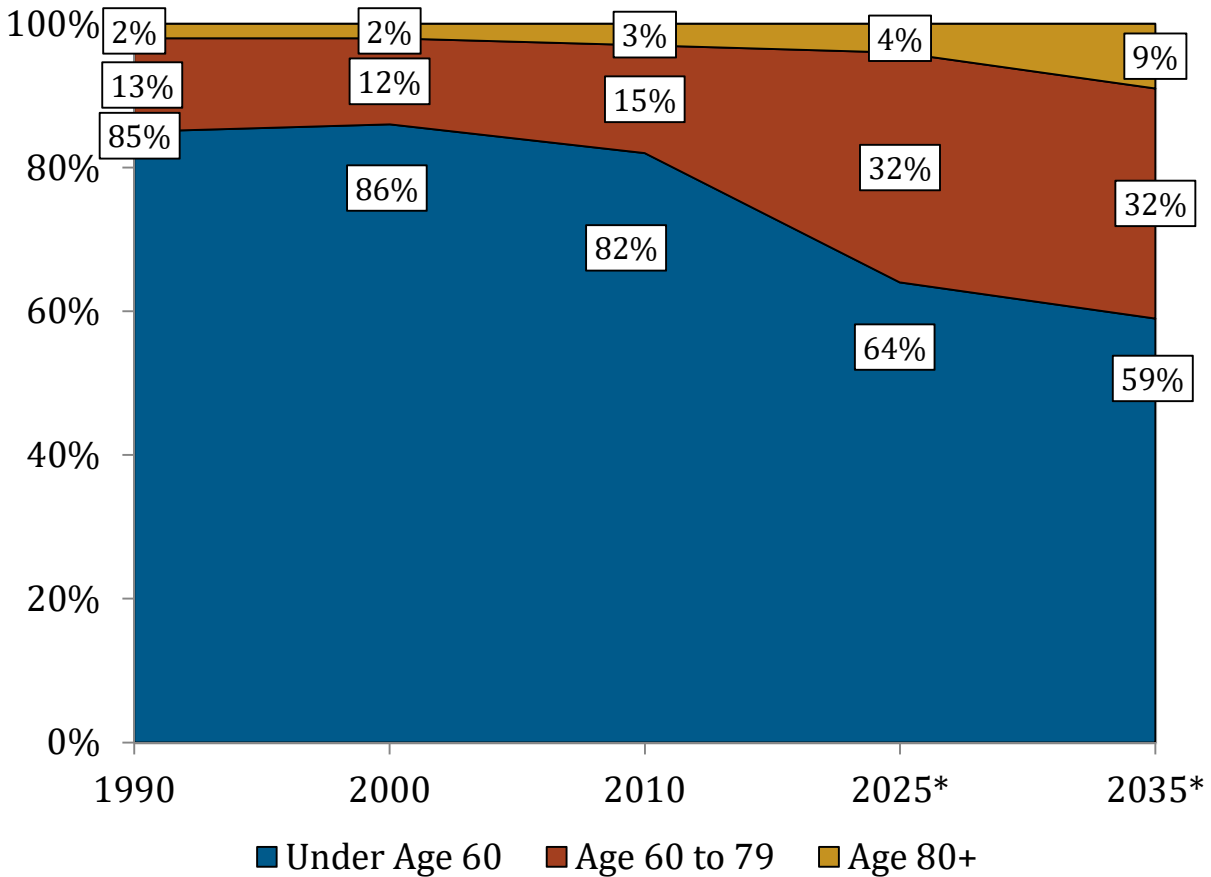
\* The four sets of projections for 2020 and 2030 are from two different sources: 1. Donahue Alternative and Vintage projections are estimated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/>; and 2. MAPC Status Quo (SQ) and Stronger Region (SR) Scenarios projections are prepared by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council <https://www.mapc.org/learn/projections/>

**Figure 3** shows the age distribution of Hamilton’s population from 1990 to 2010, and population projections for 2025 and 2035<sup>1</sup>. In 1990, about 15% of the Town’s population was age 60 and older; this percentage declined slightly in 2000 (14%), and then grew 18% by 2010. According to projections created by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, a trend toward an older population is expected in future decades. Donahue Institute vintage projections suggest that by 2035, more than one out of each three Hamilton residents will be age 60 or older—32%

<sup>1</sup> Population projections are shaped by assumptions about birth rates and death rates, as well as domestic and international in-migration and out-migration. The Donahue Institute projections used here also account for population change associated with aging of the population, which is a strong predictor of future growth and decline of population levels. For more information on the methods used to create Donahue Institute projections, see Renski, Koshgarian, & Strate (March 2015).

of the Town's population will be between the ages of 60 and 79, with an additional 9% age 80 and older.

**Figure 3.** Population trends; age distribution of Hamilton residents under age 60, age 60-79, and age 80 and older, 1990 to 2010 with projections to 2025\* and 2035\*



Source: Population figures for 1990 thru 2010 are from the U.S. Census.

\* Figures for 2025 and 2035 are the Vintage Population Projections generated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts: <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/>

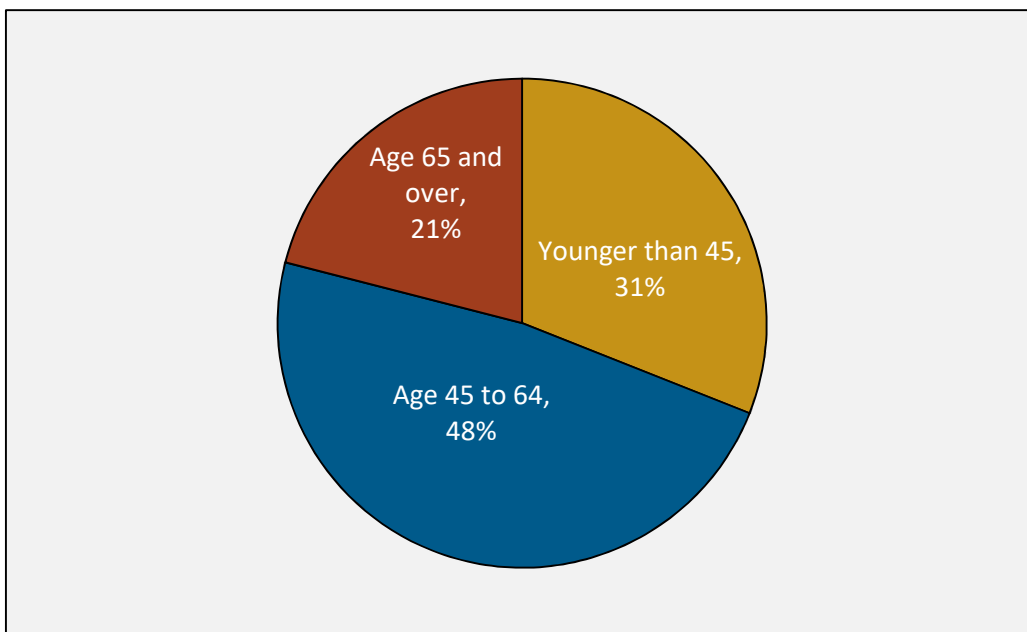
### Socio-Demographic Composition of Hamilton's Older Population

Hamilton is less diverse than the state with respect to race. For all ages combined, about 91% of Hamilton residents report their race as White, compared to 72% in Massachusetts (ACS, 2015–2019, Table B01001). Among older adults, Hamilton is similarly less diverse. The large majority of older residents report White race and ethnicity (98%). The remaining percentage of the population 65 and older identified themselves as Asian (less than 2%) and Black (less than 1%) race and ethnicity (ACS, 2015-2019, Tables B01001A-I).

Additionally, 7% of older Hamilton residents speak a language other than English at home (ACS, 2015–2019, Table B16004). Those who speak a language other than English at home most commonly speak an Indo-European language other than English or Spanish (5%), followed by an additional 1% who speak Spanish and 1% who speak an Asian or Pacific Island language or other language.

A majority of Hamilton’s 2,719 households have householders who are middle-aged or older. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a “householder” is the person reported as the head of household, typically the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. Residents age 45 and older are householders of 69% of all households in Hamilton<sup>2</sup> including 21% who are age 65 and over (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Age structure of Hamilton householders



Source:

*American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Table B25007. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.*

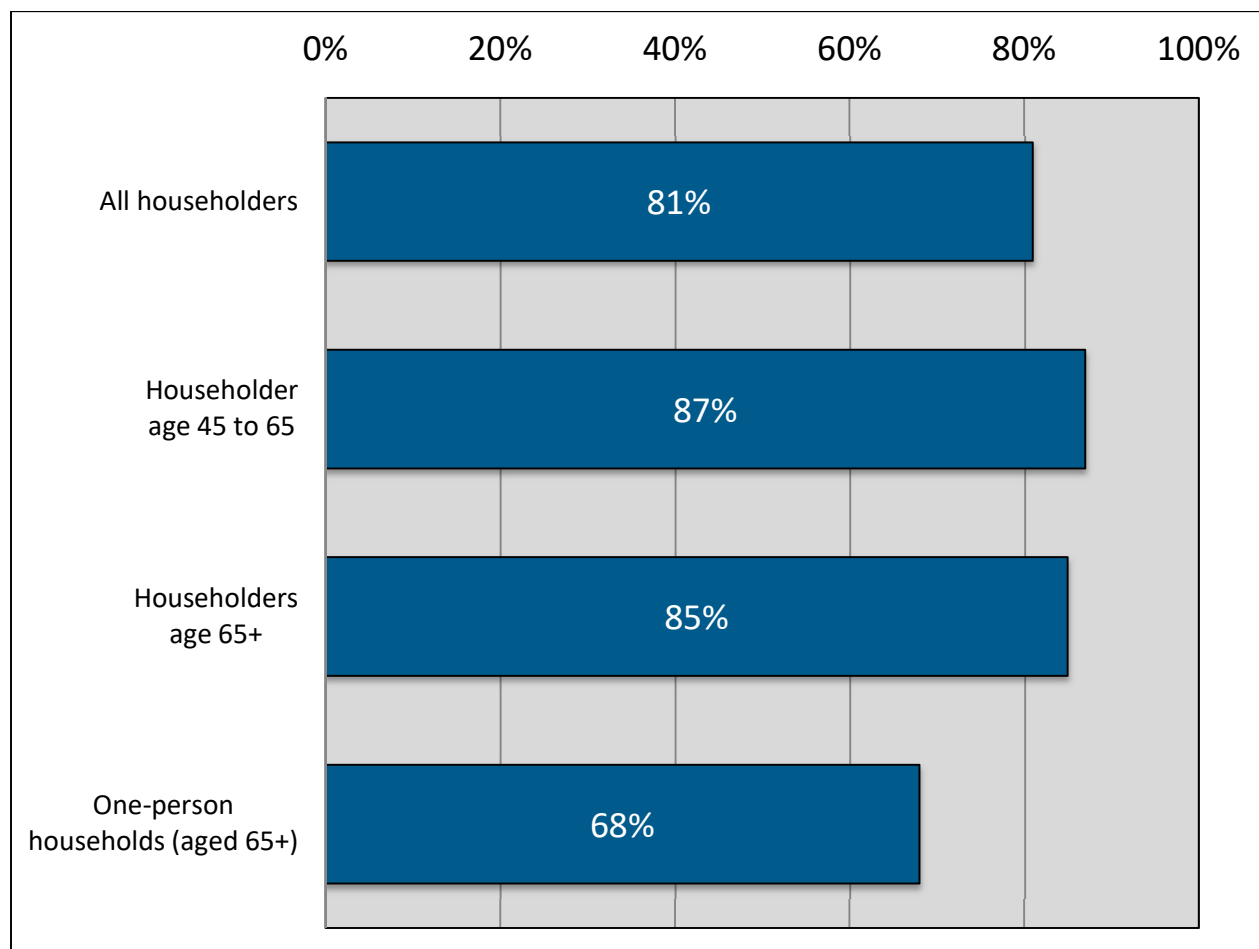
Most Hamilton residents live in homes that they own or are purchasing (81%; Figure 5). Approximately 87% of residents age 45 to 64 own their homes, and 80% of householders 65 and older own their homes. A sizeable share of Hamilton residents who are 65 and older and live alone own their home (68%). The high number of older homeowners has implications for what

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<sup>2</sup> Many available Census data on the older population of Hamilton are based on ages 45 and 65 as reference points rather than ages 50 and 60, as are used elsewhere in this report.

amenities and services are likely to be needed and valued by members of the community. Home maintenance and supports are often necessary for older homeowners—especially those who live alone—in order to maintain comfort and safety in their homes.

**Figure 5.** Percent of Hamilton householders who are homeowners by age category

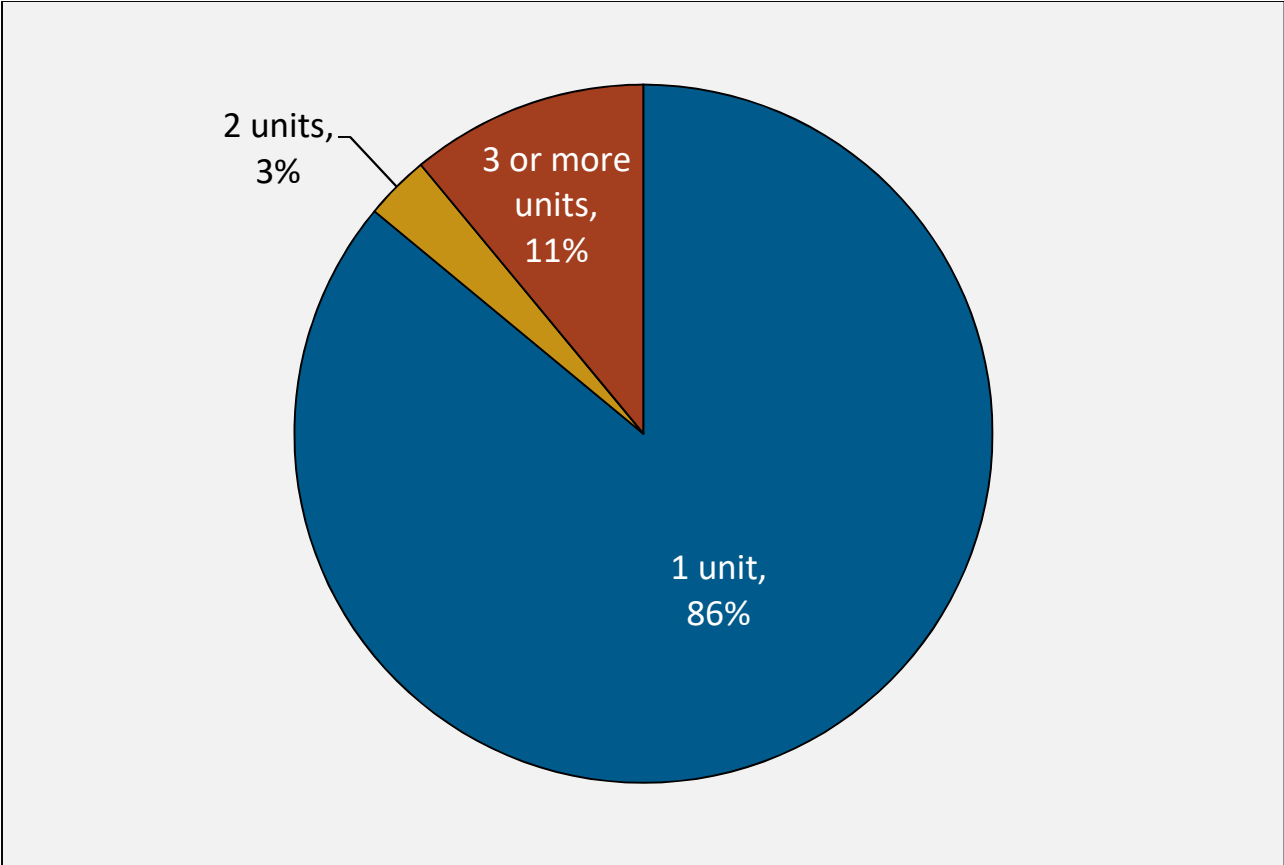


*Source: American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Tables B25007 and B25011. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.*

Additionally, 42% of Hamilton’s 2,719 households have at least one individual who is age 60 or older (ACS 2015–2019, Table B11006). This high proportion— which is likely to increase in the future— generally reflects the widespread demand for programs, services, and other considerations that address aging-related concerns, including health and caregiving needs, transportation options, and safe home environments.

Among the 2,955 housing structures in Hamilton (**Figure 6**), 86% are single unit structures and the remaining 14% are housing structures that contain two or more housing units, which include apartment complexes.

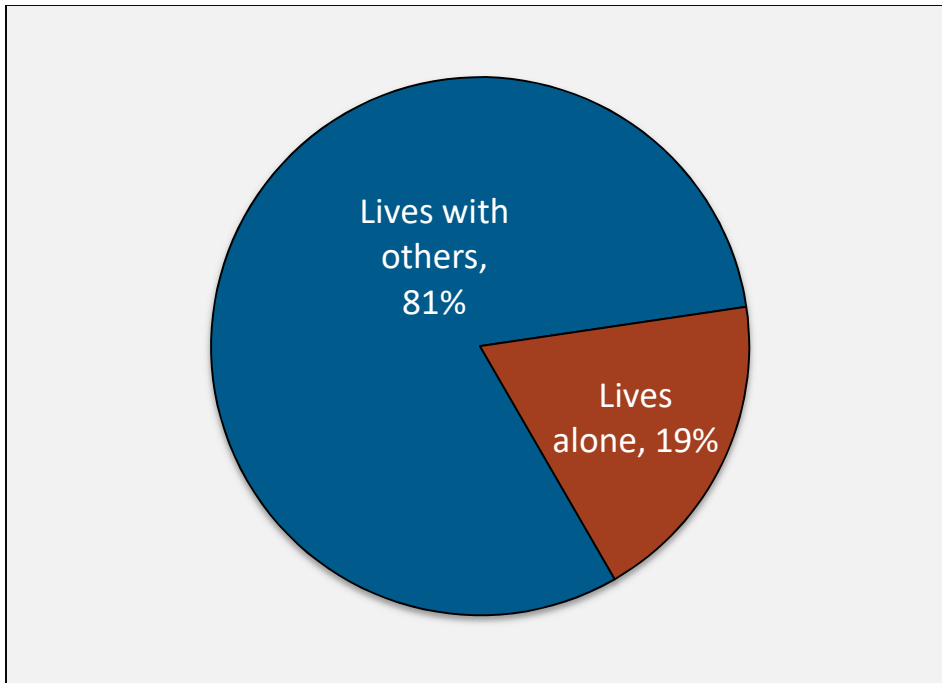
**Figure 6.** Number of units in Hamilton housing structures



*Source: American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Table B25024. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.*

A substantial minority of Hamilton residents who are age 65 and older (19%) live alone in their household whereas 81% live in households that include other people, such as a spouse, parents, children, or grandchildren (**Figure 7**). No older Hamilton residents live within group quarters.

**Figure 7.** Living arrangements of Hamilton residents, age 65 and older



*Source: American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Table B09020. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.*

American Community Survey estimates on education suggest that Hamilton residents are well-educated on average. About 48% of persons age 65 and older have a bachelor’s degree or more, including 21% who reported having a graduate or professional degree (ACS, 2015–2019, Table B15001). This educational profile contributes to the vitality and character of the community, which depends on older adults who value opportunities to be involved through volunteer and civic engagement activities, as well as late-life learning opportunities— activities that are often present in highly educated communities (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014).

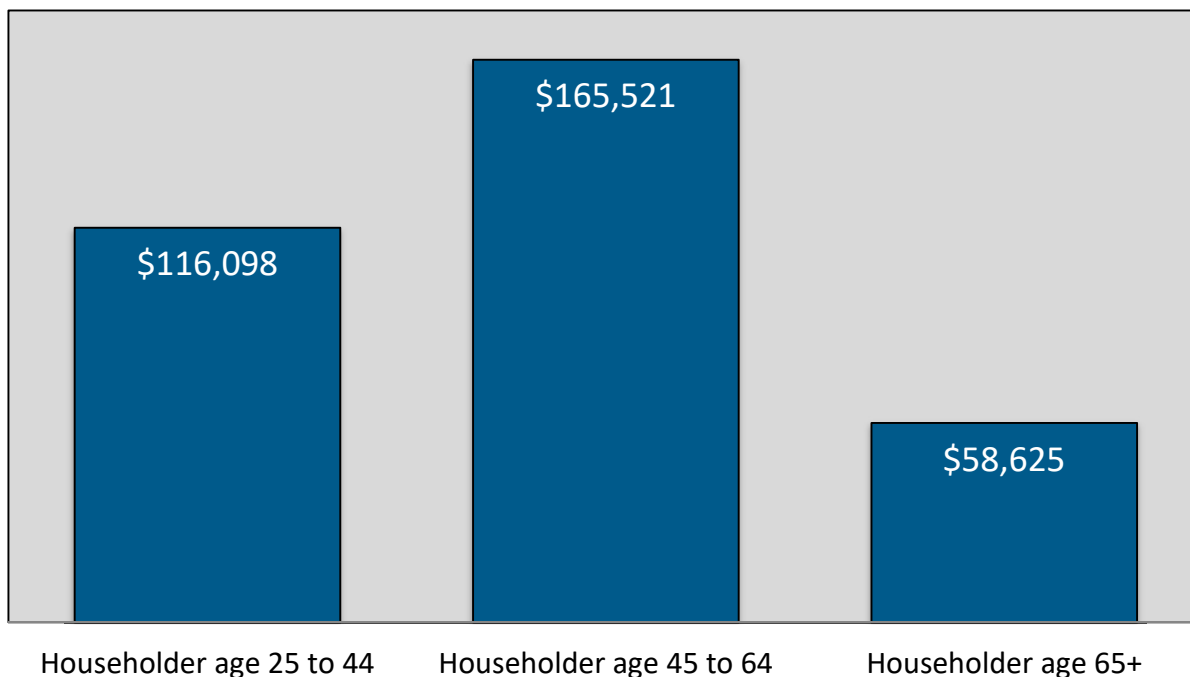
Similar to older adults living in communities throughout the U.S., a large proportion of Hamilton residents aged 65 and over remain in the workforce. Around 43% of adults age 65 to 74 are participating in the labor force. Of those age 75 and older, 3% remain in the workforce (ACS, 2015–2019, Table S2301).

About 48% of Hamilton men age 65 and older report veteran status (ACS, 2015–2019, Table B21001). As a result, many of the Town’s older residents may be eligible to receive some benefits and program services based on their military service or that of their spouses.

With respect to household income, older residents in Hamilton are financially disadvantaged in comparison to younger residents (**Figure 8**). Hamilton residents’ median household income is considerably higher than the one estimated for Massachusetts as a whole (\$127,813 compared to \$81,215). Among Hamilton’s householders, those aged 45 to 64 have the highest median

income at \$165,521—which is also greater than the statewide median for this age group (\$100,386). Among householders 65 and older, the median income is \$58,625, also higher than the statewide median for this age group (\$50,475), and much lower than the median income of younger Hamilton householders.

**Figure 8.** Median household income in Hamilton by age of householder (in 2019 inflation-adjusted dollars)



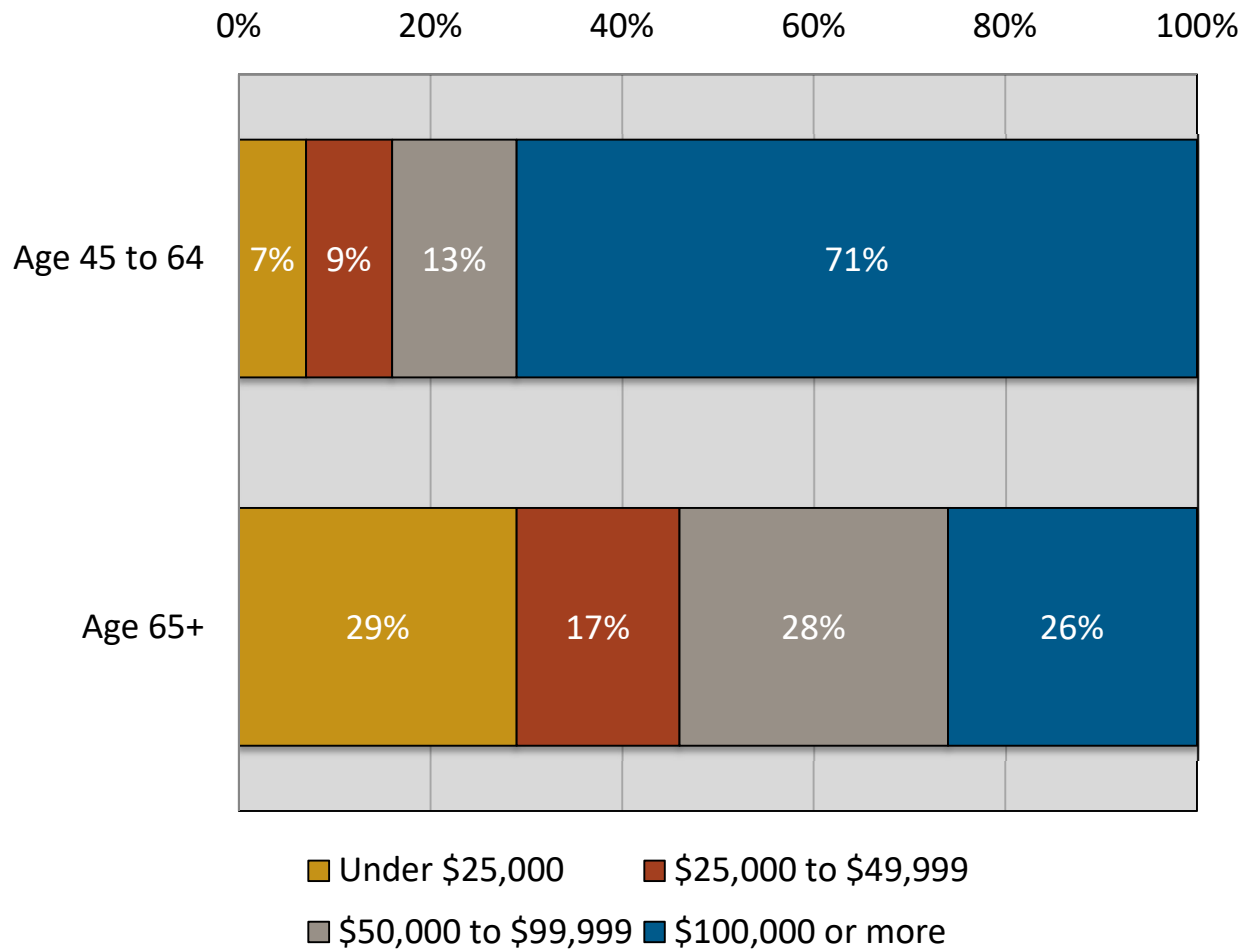
*Source: American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Table B19049. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.*

*Note: Includes only community households, not group quarters such as nursing homes.*

The economic profile of older Hamilton residents relative to younger residents is further illustrated in **Figure 9**, which shows that the older adult population lives on a modest income. About 26% of Hamilton residents age 65 and older report incomes of \$100,000 or more. By comparison, 71% of households headed by residents aged 45-64 report this level of income. A substantial share of households headed by someone age 65 and older (29%) report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with just 7% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64. Thus, there is a sizeable segment of Hamilton’s older population that is at risk of financial insecurity or economic disadvantage.



**Figure 9.** Household income distribution in Hamilton by age of householder (in 2019 inflation-adjusted dollars)

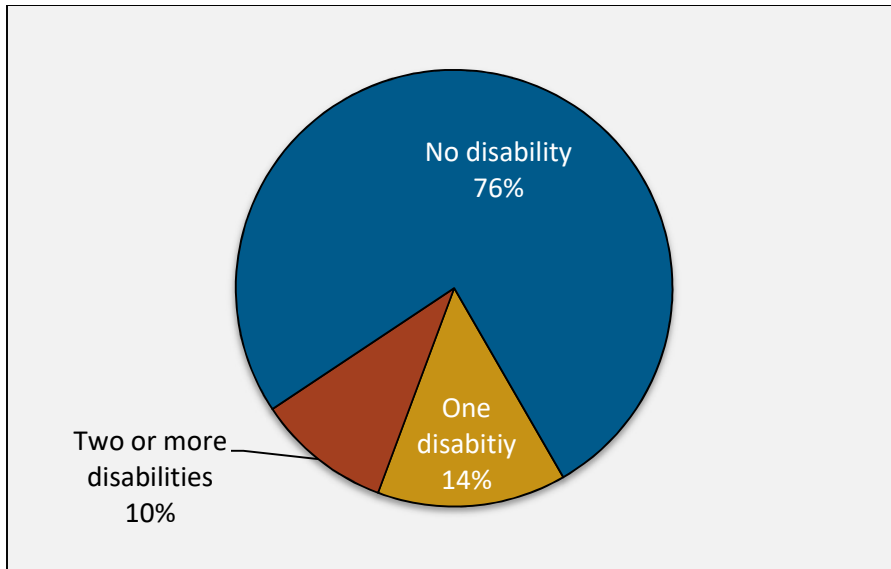


Source: American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Table B19037. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Note: Includes only community households, not group quarters such as nursing homes.

The increased likelihood of acquiring disability with age is evident in data from the ACS. Many Hamilton residents age 65 and older experience some level of disability that could impact their ability to function independently in the community. About 14% of Hamilton’s residents age 65 and older have one disability, and nearly 10% report two or more disabilities (**Figure 10**).

**Figure 10.** Percentage of Hamilton residents age 65 and older reporting at least one disability



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2015–2019, Table C18108. Percentages by age group do not sum to 100% because people may report multiple difficulties and do not include those with no difficulties assessed by the ACS.*

## Community Survey Results

### Social & Community Cohesion

A commonly expressed goal of older adults is to remain living in their own homes as long as possible. Aging in place implies remaining in familiar home and community settings, with supports as needed, as opposed to moving to institutional settings, such as nursing homes (Salomon, 2010). By aging in place, older adults are able to retain their independence, as well as maintain valued social relationships and engagement with the community.

Survey respondents included residents who have lived in Hamilton for many years, as well as relative newcomers. The majority of respondents have been living in Hamilton for more than 30 years (see **Figure 11**). These individuals offer insight based on their years of experience of living in Hamilton. It is also helpful, however, to hear from those who are new to Hamilton. Overall, 13% of survey respondents have been living in Hamilton for less than ten years.

The majority of survey respondents live with a spouse or partner (73%). In contrast, 17% of survey respondents age 60-69 report living alone and among respondents age 80 and older, this proportion is significantly higher (27%). Living alone has the potential to lead to social isolation and has implications for services that may be needed by the older segment of the Hamilton

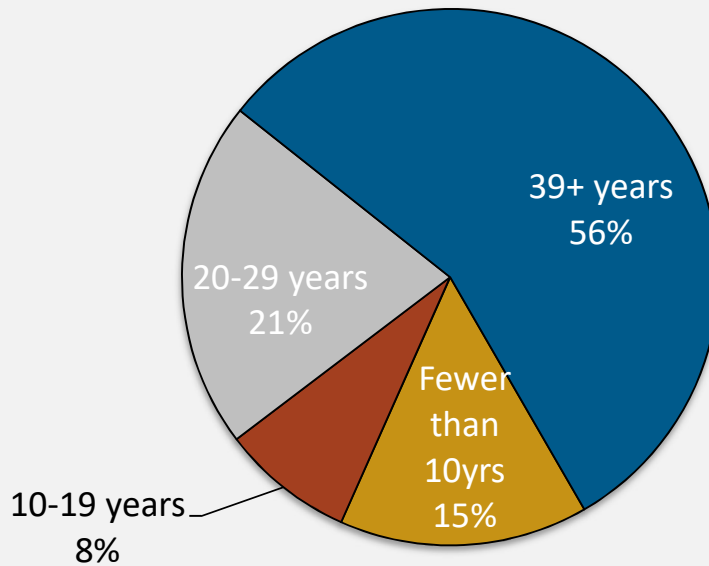
population. Additionally, 10% of respondents reported living with a child, grandchild, or parents. This suggests that for a small percentage of Hamilton’s older residents, significant childcare responsibilities could play a role in the lives of older residents of Hamilton.

A majority of survey respondents reported that it is important to them to remain living in Hamilton as they get older. However, when asked about concerns for being able to do so, respondents wrote in detail about significant barriers to aging well in Hamilton. Themes from those responses, including verbatim quotes, are shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** What concerns you about your ability to stay in Hamilton/Wenham as you age

<b>Home/Property Maintenance or Adaptations</b>
<i>Cost of living and adapting my home or finding alternative without stairs</i>
<i>Adapting my home or finding alternative without stairs</i>
<i>Caring for my home and its grounds</i>
<i>Keeping up maintaining home</i>
<b>Property Tax Increases</b>
<i>Able to afford living in the town and constant increase in taxes</i>
<i>Tax growth that is faster than the rate of inflation</i>
<i>Taxes are continuing to rise, which for seniors on a fixed income means the tax burden has become almost intolerable. I also question how "easy" it is for a senior who needs transportation for essential errands and medical appointments.</i>
<i>Property taxes are getting too high and I want to be sure there are resources for Seniors particularly transportation</i>
<b>Transportation Options</b>
<i>Health and Transportation. I need help with transportation to doctor appointments, grocery stores, senior center and other social activities.</i>
<i>Access to needed transportation, meals and other supports</i>
<i>Senior van availability when I can no longer drive.</i>
<b>Maintaining Good Health</b>
<i>Health would force me to move to different type of housing that does not exist in Hamilton</i>
<i>Not being mobile or able to drive</i>
<i>No issues right now but maintaining my health as I age</i>

**Figure 11.** How long have you lived in Hamilton/Wenham?



## Housing & Financial Security

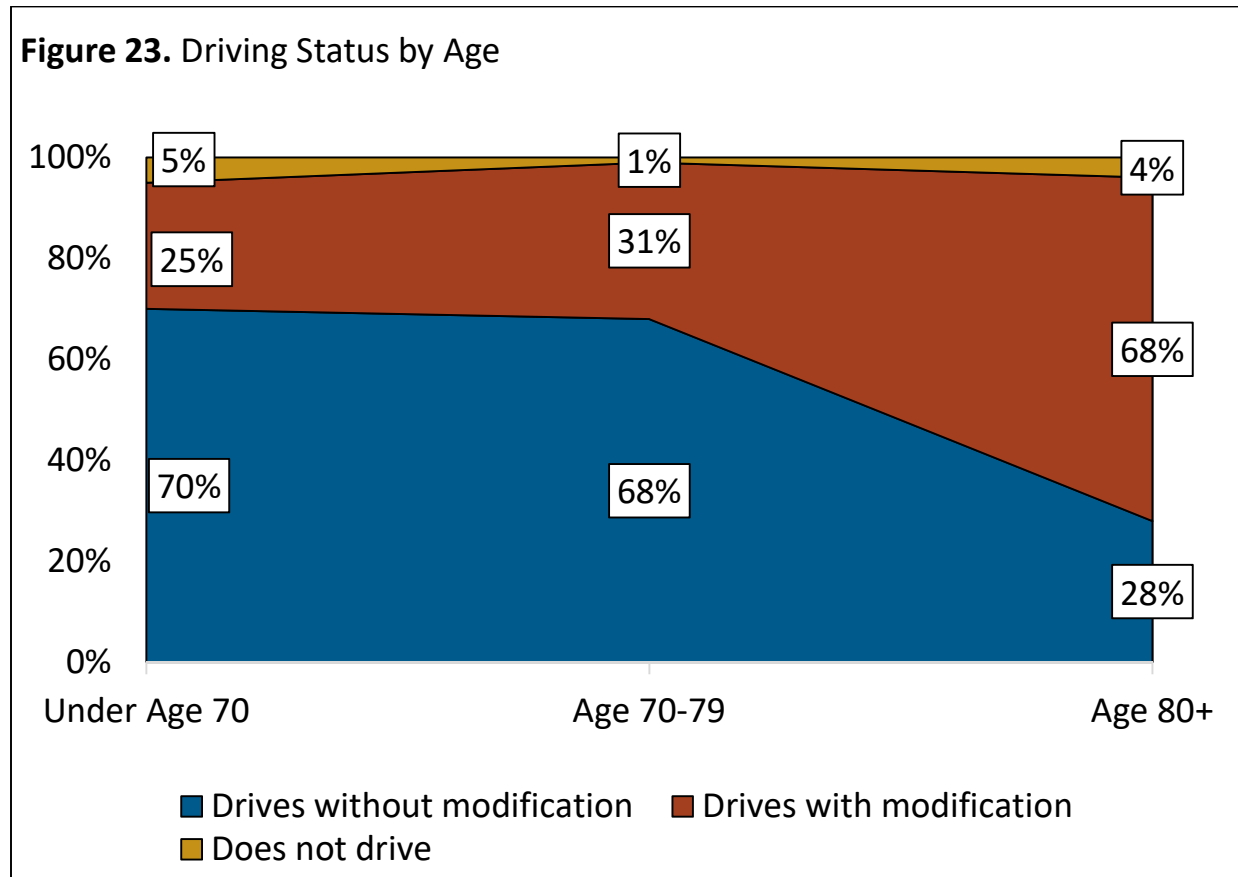
### Transportation

Transportation is a basic need for people of all ages who desire to lead independent, meaningful, and socially engaged lives. For older adults specifically, limited transportation options can lead to challenges in socializing, attending appointments, and fully participating in their community. The vast majority of Americans rely primarily on private transportation to meet these needs, and most individuals drive their own automobiles well into old age. Due to difficulties with transportation, individuals with health conditions and disabilities that adversely affect their ability to drive safely may be unable to participate in activities they previously enjoyed and valued. Indeed, a national survey of people aged 50 and older conducted by the AARP (2005) found that compared to older drivers, non-drivers reported lower quality of life, less involvement with other people, and more isolation.

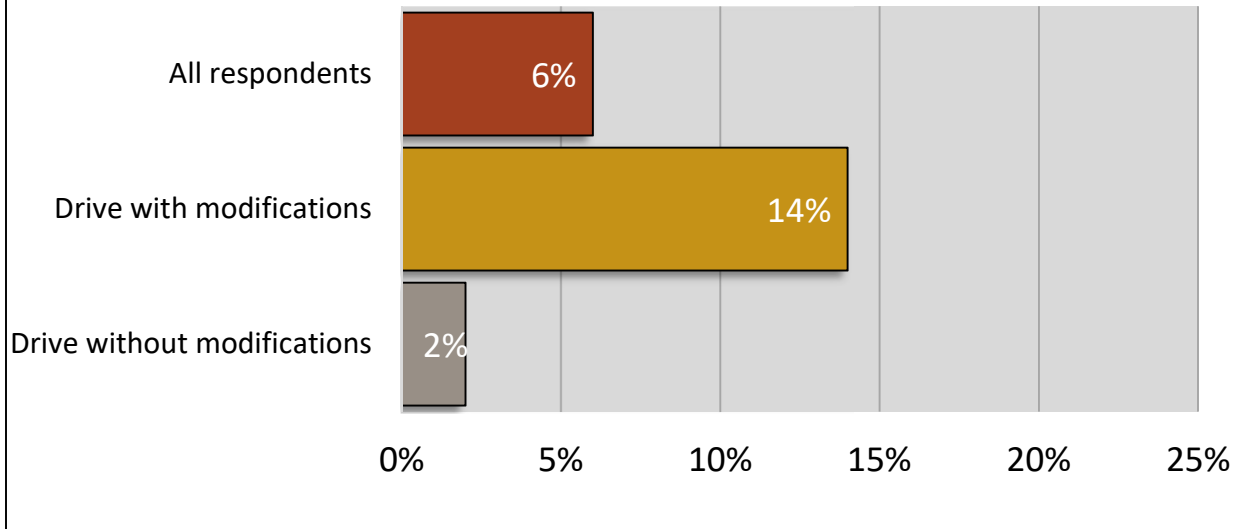
Hamilton is a town with limited public transportation options. In addition to a commuter rail station, Hamilton has a Council on Aging van and access to the Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA). There were several questions on the survey related to transportation. Survey results show that only 4% of respondents do not drive. Nearly one-third (31%) of survey respondents reported that they modify their driving to make it easier or safer (see **Figure 23**). Modifications include

avoiding driving at night, in rush hour, or during bad weather. Modifying driving habits promote safety, but may limit independence and participation, especially if other transportation options are inaccessible, costly, or inconvenient. For example, older adults who avoid driving at night will struggle to participate in evening community meetings and programs. Those who avoid driving in bad weather may become isolated during the winter months.

Transportation barriers can limit a person’s access to obtaining necessary services such as medical care. Respondents were asked if within the previous 12 months they had missed, cancelled or rescheduled a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation. Among all respondents, only 6% reported this experience. However, 14% of respondents who don’t drive or limit their driving in some way missed, cancelled, or rescheduled a medical appointment within the past year (see **Figure 24**). These findings suggest that transportation limitations appear to negatively impact accessing medical care for the most vulnerable segments of Hamilton’s older resident community.



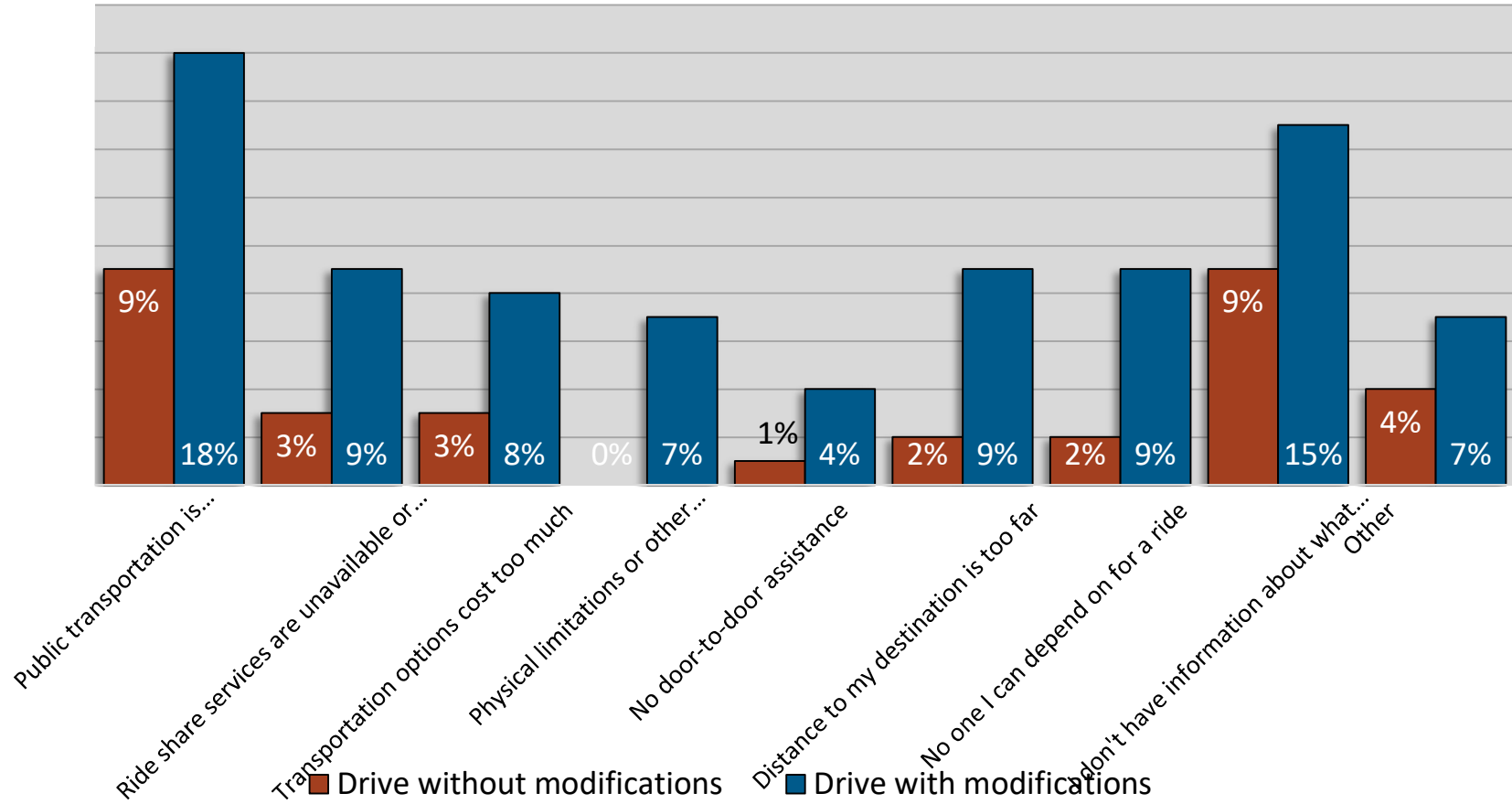
**Figure 24.** Within the past 12 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation? (Percentage responding yes)



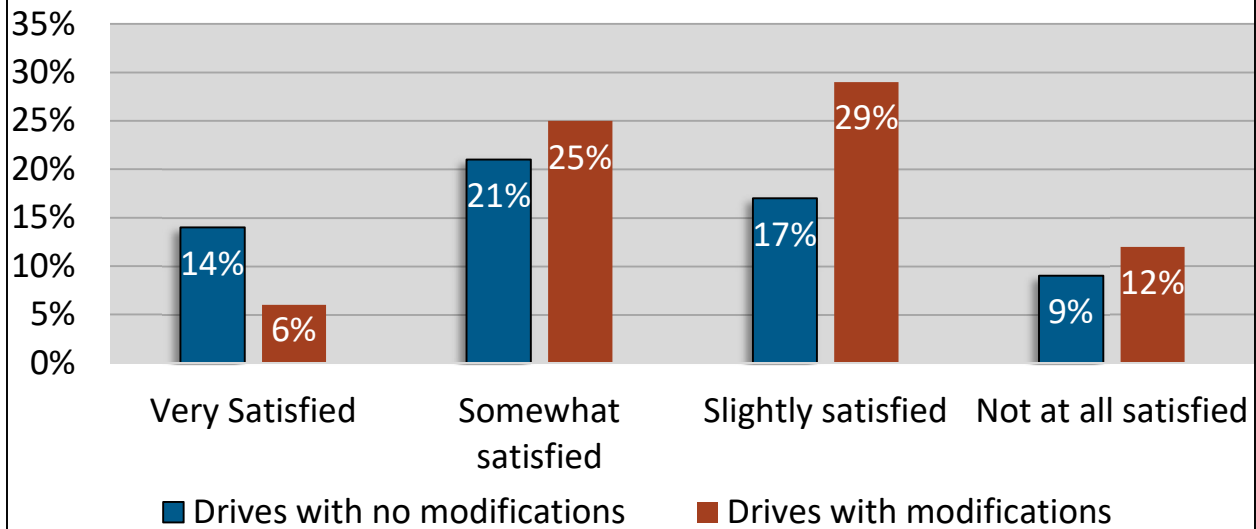
For those who do not drive, having physical limitations that impede access to transportation and for those who drive with some modifications, transportation being unavailable or inconvenient was the most common reasons for transportation difficulties (see **Figure 25**). For this group of individuals who don't drive, where transportation options are critical, the second most common barrier was that they did not have sufficient information about what kind of transportation is available. It is clear that transportation is a need for Hamilton residents who need it the most.

Considering the results from the survey along with data from the focus groups and interviews, transportation is an area that could benefit from improvement and innovation in Hamilton. Noteworthy, those who drive were most satisfied with the transportation options available in Hamilton (see **Figure 26**). Forty-one percent of those who don't drive or drive with limitations reported they are "only slightly" or "not at all satisfied" with transportation options in Hamilton.

**Figure 25.** Difficulties getting where you want to go (check all that apply)



**Figure 26.** Satisfaction with transportation options, by driving status



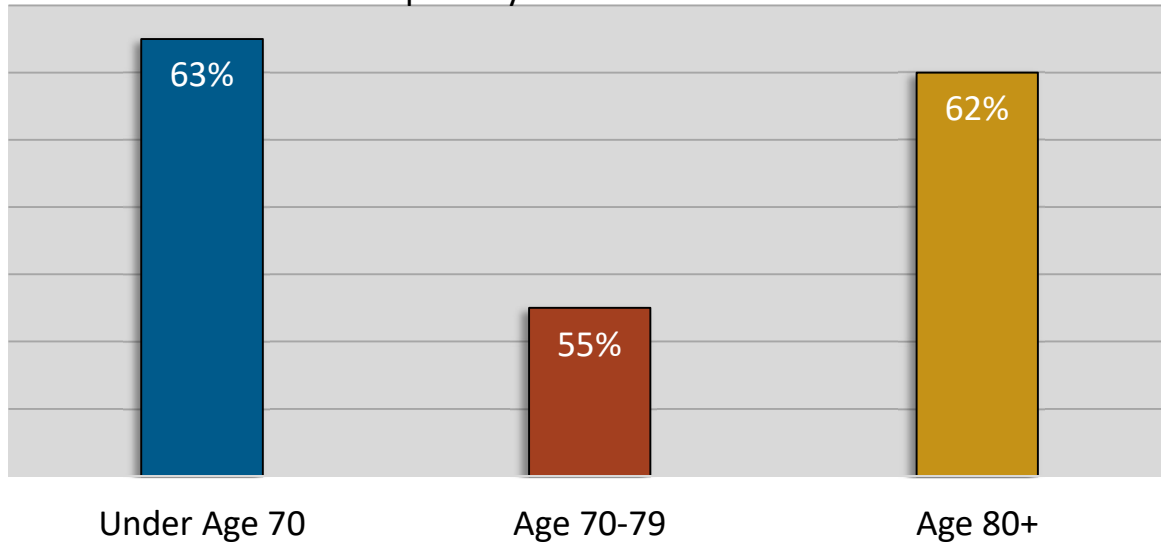
## Caregiving

Nationally, most of the care and support received by older adults due to health difficulties or disability is provided informally by family members or friends. Informal caregivers throughout the country contribute millions of hours of care without financial compensation (see statistics through the Family Caregiver Alliance).

Thirty-eight percent of survey respondents stated that they currently or have in the past 5 years provided care or assistance to a person who was disabled or frail. Moreover, that number is higher among those age 60-69 (see **Figure 27**).



**Figure 27.** Percentage having provided care or assistance to a person who is disabled or frail within the past 5 years



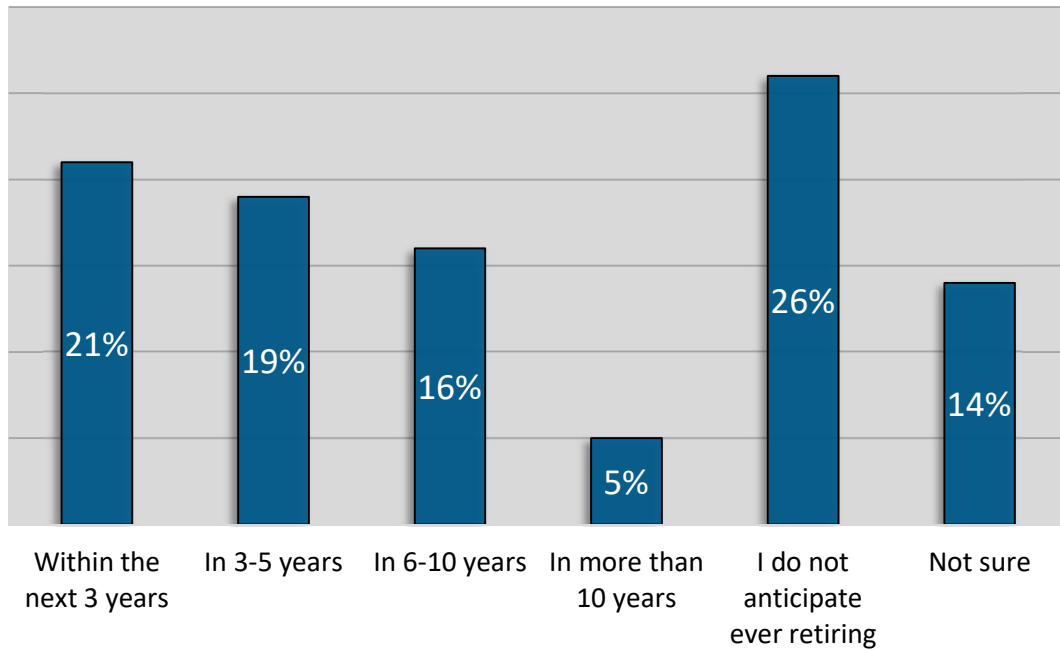
Many of those who have provided care or assistance to someone within the past 12 months stated that it was very or somewhat challenging to provide this care and meet other family and/or work responsibilities. This was especially true for those age 60-69, where 68% of those providing care reported this was very or somewhat challenging (see **Figure 28**). Many in this age group are likely still working and therefore may be struggling to meet the demands of both caregiving and work. Even for the other age groups, between 43% and 61% of those who provide care find it very or somewhat challenging. Services (e.g., transportation to adult day programs) and programming (e.g., support groups) might be needed to support caregivers.

### Employment & Retirement

It is not uncommon for adults to work well beyond the traditional retirement age of 65. Working brings enjoyment, fulfillment, and socialization that is essential for health aging. As well, rising costs of living and healthcare prompt many adults to remain working out of necessity as much as by choice.

For those who responded they are still working, 53% of those 60-69 and 33% of those age 70-79 are considering retiring within the next 5 years (see **Figure 30**). This has implications for the Hamilton Senior Center that could experience and increase in attendance as a result. Interestingly, many older adults do not know when they expect to retire. Implementing evening and weekend programming might be one way to engage these older workers with the Hamilton Senior Center. Additionally, developing new programs that would particularly attract older workers would be useful. For example, convening a job fair for part-time or volunteer positions or hosting seminars on retirement planning—both financial and social.

**Figure 30.** Plans for retirement among those currently working

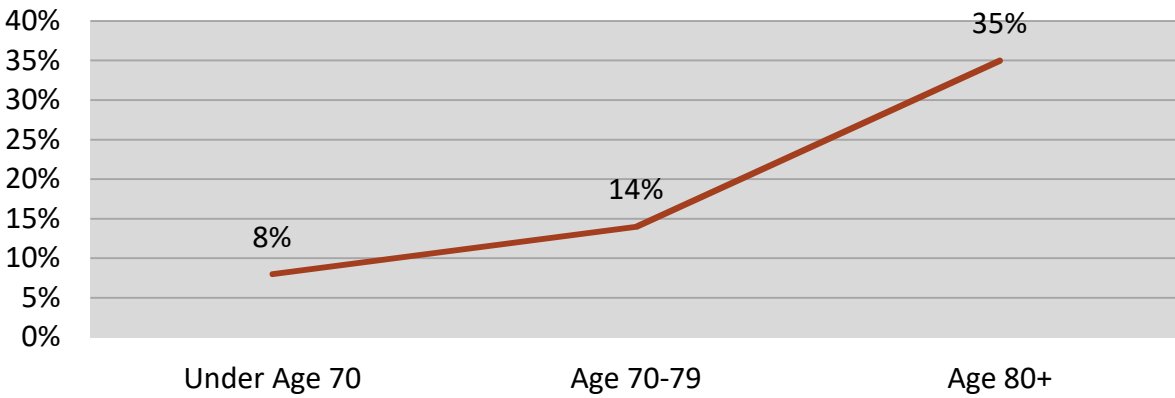


### Hamilton Senior Center

Local Senior Centers play a part in helping older adults age in place and in community. Residents may obtain transportation, health screening, or social services through their local COA. Older adults may seek opportunities for engagement and socialization through volunteer programs, learning opportunities and exercise programs, as well as social activities. These involvements can help community members maintain social support, remain active, prolong independence and improve quality of life. Some research suggests that participating in a Senior Center may reduce one's sense of isolation, a highly significant outcome given the negative consequences of being disconnected socially (Hudson, 2017).

Survey results suggest that participation at the Hamilton COA is considerably more common among older residents. As shown in **Figure 31**, just 8% of those age 55-69 have ever used programs or services offered by the Hamilton COA, rising to 35% of respondents age 80 or older. This age-graded pattern of participation is not unusual in Senior Centers and may reflect the increasing value of the Hamilton COA to older residents.

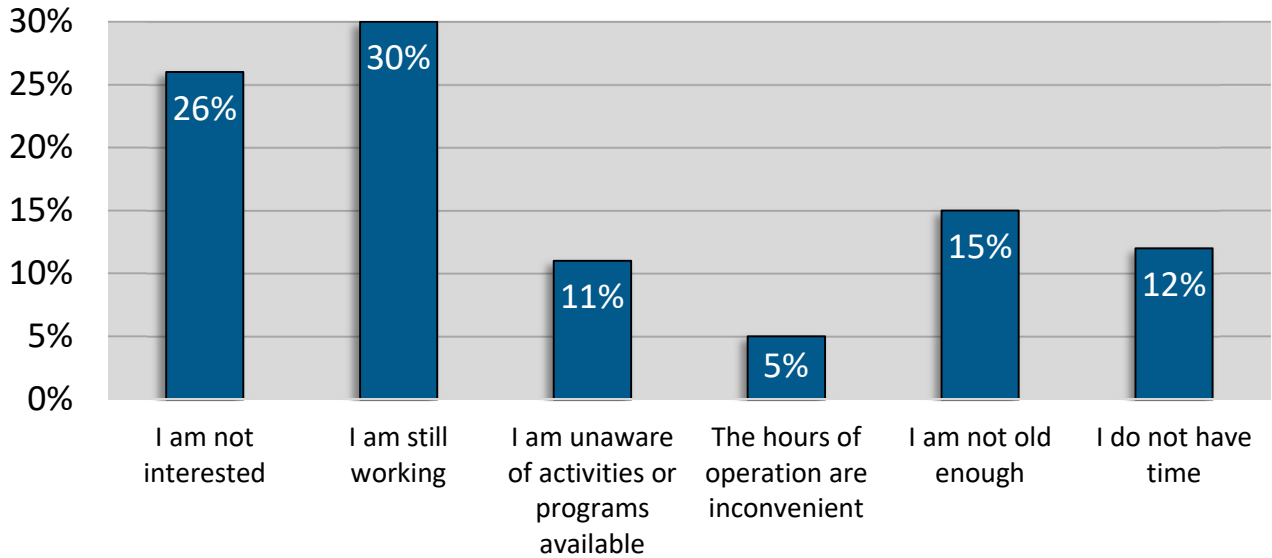
**Figure 31.** Percentage of survey respondents who have ever attended programs or used services offered by the Hamilton COA.



Hamilton’s range of participation levels highlights the broad continuum of affiliation with the COA, with many residents participating just periodically, while others include visits to the Hamilton COA as part of their regular weekly schedule.

Of survey respondents who have never used the Hamilton COA, 30% of all ages state it is because they are still working and 26% because they not interested (**see Figure 32**). Of note, 21% of respondents in their 60s report not being old enough to use the Senior Center (**see Appendix A**). Other common reasons for non-participation include “I am unaware of activities or programs offered” (11%) or “I do not have time” (12%).

**Figure 32.** Reasons for not currently using programs or services offered by Hamilton Senior Center



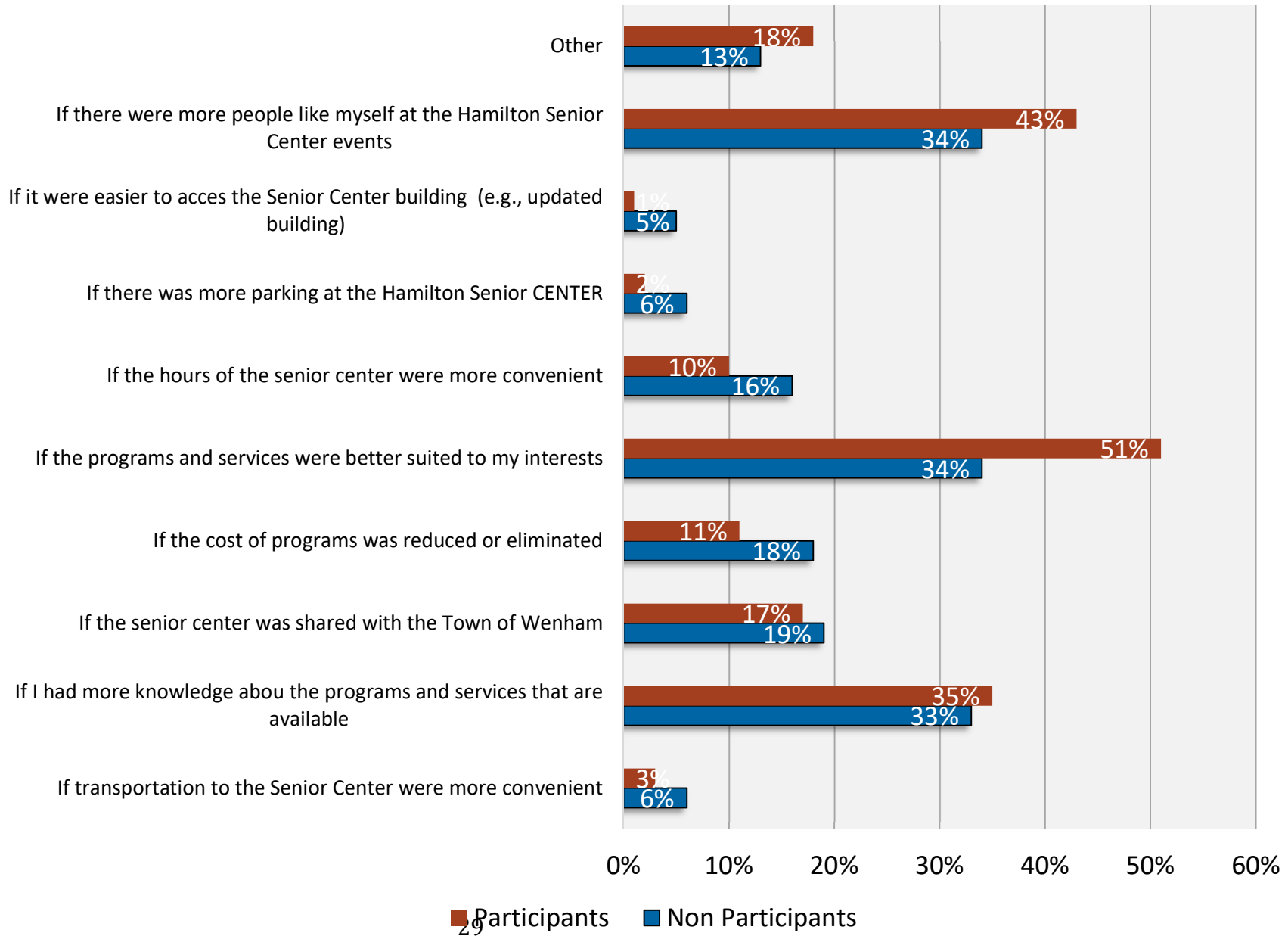
A number of survey respondents wrote-in other reasons for non-participation. For those who provided a response, the most common reply written was related to not having time and still working. In addition, the perception of “not needing” to visit the Senior Center or “not knowing” what goes on at the Senior Center was extracted from write-in responses, suggesting that communicating the purpose of the Senior Center and defining its target audience is a possible future step that would allow a wider range of residents to be drawn in. See **Table 3** for a sampling of verbatim comments from survey respondents about why they do not currently participate at the Hamilton COA.

**Table 3.** Sample responses to question “What is the reason that you do not currently use programs or services offered by the Hamilton Senior Center”

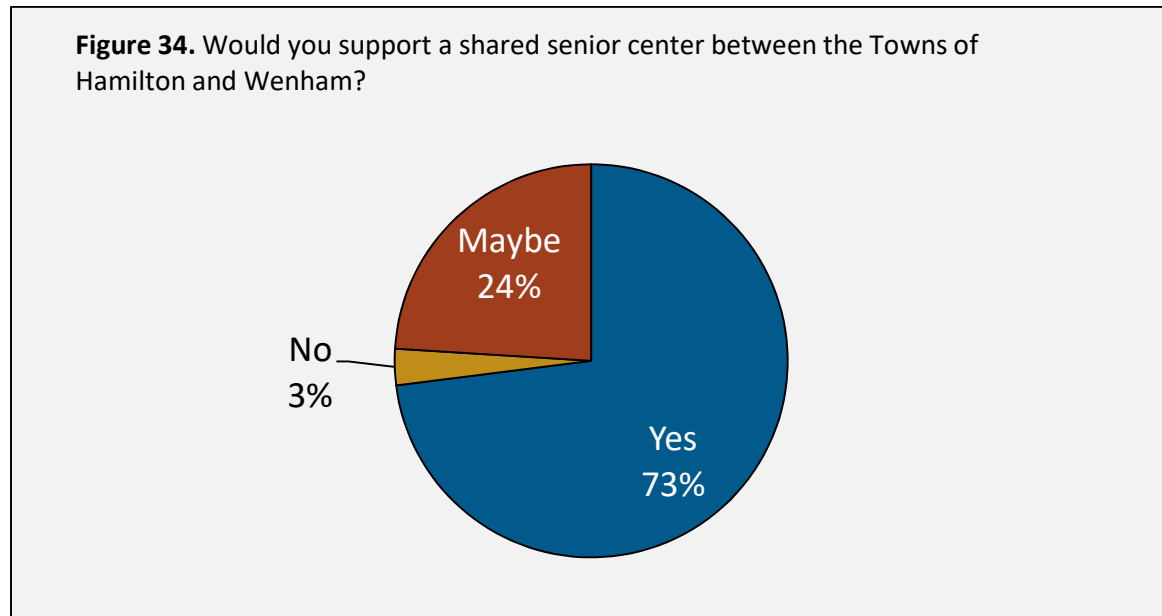
<b>Not old enough or No need</b>
<i>I'm 71 and we did use the senior center to consult with a Shine councilor, but in general I feel to young to participate at the Senior Center. It maybe how it is marketed. I feel someone has to be older, infirmed or lacking social contact to use the Center's services.</i>
<i>If I were older. I am just 61.</i>
<b>Still Working</b>
<i>I will be retiring in 2022 and hope to be more involved</i>
<i>I am still working.</i>
<i>I don't have much time</i>
<b>Not Interested</b>
<i>Improvement in programs to be more current for the active senior</i>
<i>I'm an introvert. Not likely to attend. Besides I get my exercise and social interaction at the Beverly YMCA</i>
<i>I am not interested but thinking of the future</i>
<i>“Seniors” includes such a wide age-range (60-100) and activity interest and ability (hiking vs. knitting). I'd enjoy walking the Hamilton and local trails with someone knowledgeable, for example.</i>

We asked respondents to select the reasons that would increase likelihood of participating at the Hamilton Senior Center (**Figure 33**). Among the respondents age 60-69, the top reason was “If I had more knowledge about the programs and services that are available”, for those age 70-79, the top reason was “If programs and services were better suited to my interests,” and for those age 80 and older the major factor that would increase their likelihood of participating was “If it were easier to access the Senior Center building (e.g., more accessible parking). Understanding reasons for lack of participation provides direction and opportunities for change. Overcoming the obstacle of unfamiliarity, increasing outreach, adapting programming to meet the broad interests of the older adult population, and exploring strategies to update the image and space of the Senior Center may be areas to consider as future Hamilton COA goals.

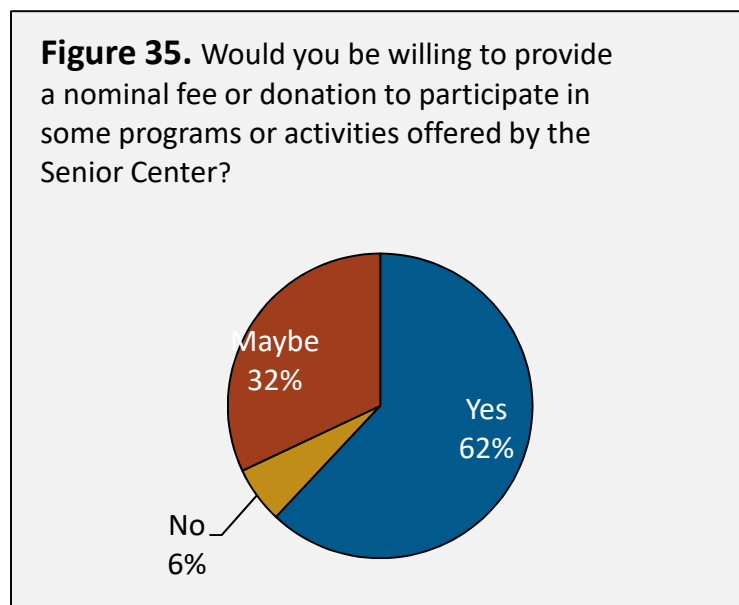
**Figure 33.** Which of the following would increase the likelihood of your participating at the Hamilton Senior Center



Participants were asked if they would support the sharing of a senior center (e.g., via shared programming, space, resources) between the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham, and as shown in **Figure 34**, a majority would support this approach (73%). An effort to determine the best course of action towards a goal of sharing senior centers across neighboring Towns of Wenham and Hamilton would support the preference voiced by the overwhelming majority of survey respondents.

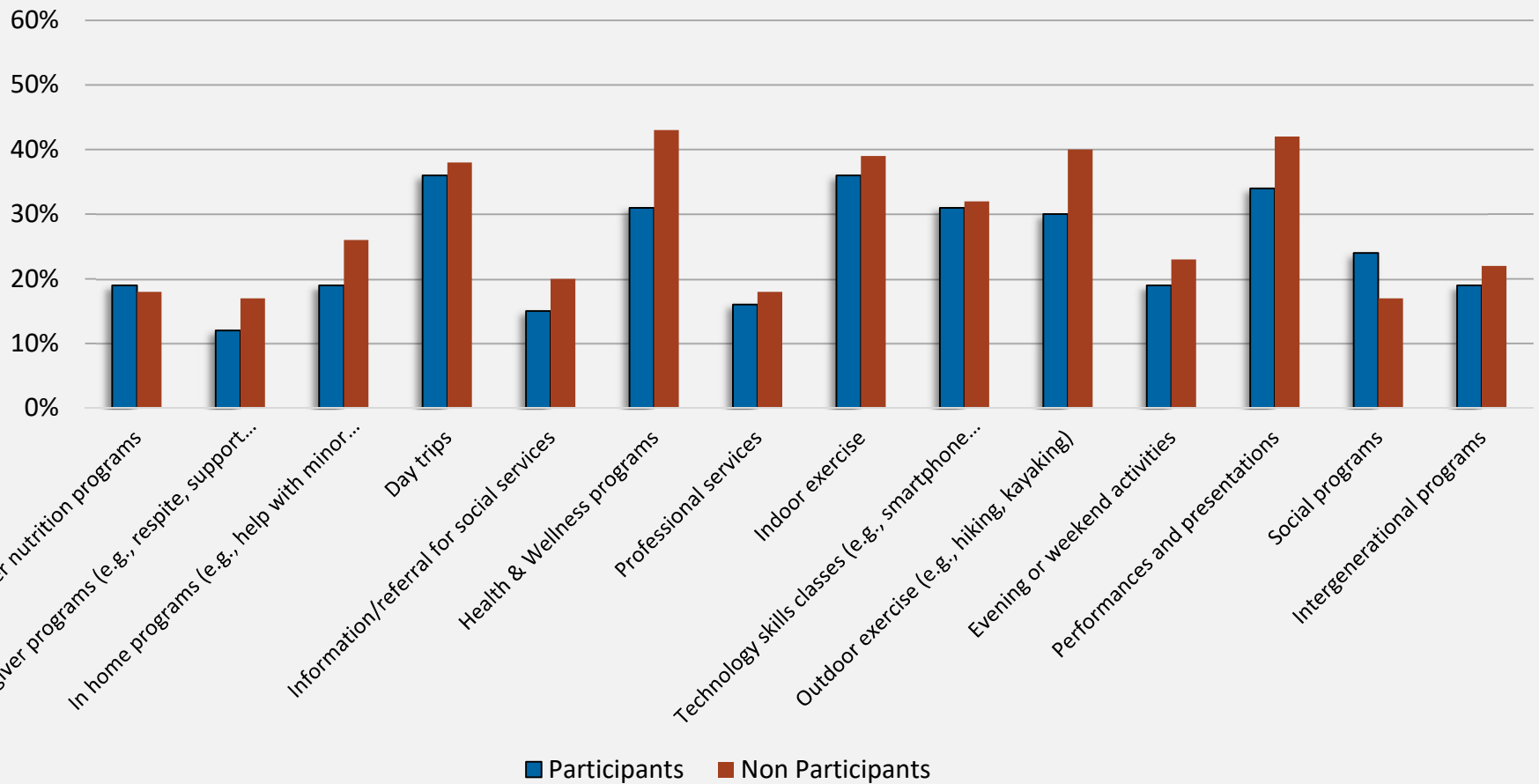


As well, there is overall willingness (62% said yes, see **Figure 35**). to provide a nominal fee or requested donation for some programs and offerings by the local senior center. This information could expand the ability of the senior center to provide unique programming to better align with the preferences of the community.



Participants were asked to rate the importance of existing programs and services offered by the Hamilton COA (see **Figure 36**). Highest importance was given to transportation (40%), social and recreational programming (34%), and fitness activities (34%) among those under age 70. Services like SHINE counseling and assistance with state and federal programs was most important to those over age 70. **Appendix A** describes age differences across these ratings.

**Figure 36.** Which of the following would increase the likelihood of your participating at the Hamilton Senior Center





## **Key Informant Interview Results**

### **Insights from Interview Participants**

In this section, we report findings from one-on-one interviews that were held with four Key Informants representing departments and organizations that have regular interactions with Hamilton's older adult residents. The Chair of the Hamilton COA, the Town Manager for the Town of Hamilton, the Hamilton Fire Chief, and the COA Director of Wenham each participated in these interviews. The emphasis of these discussions was to obtain an assessment of key challenges as they relate to the aging of older residents to identify their unmet needs and explore the role played by the Senior Center, both on its own and in collaboration with other Town departments.

To facilitate each conversation, key-informants were asked about the ways in which the aging of the Hamilton's older adult population had impacted their work. Each discussant cited areas where change had been observed. Taking all of these conversations into consideration, a pattern of themes emerged surrounding communication, transportation, programs, services, housing, and suggestions for the future capacity of Hamilton's Senior Center.

### **Communication and Engagement**

Given that many residents are not connected to the Hamilton COA, it is imperative to identify other ways of both keeping residents socially connected but also aware of the ways they can reach out should they encounter a crisis or develop need. Due to the increase in the number of older adults in Town, the community can expect to hear from this population more and more with respect to advocating for their needs and desires. Concern was expressed by Key Informants for the need to develop communication and outreach with Hamilton's older residents in order to include them in vital community discussions. Interviewees conveyed that the limited voices of a small civically engaged core group may not represent the preferences and needs of the broader community and improved communication will be essential for meeting the needs of Hamilton's older adults. Interviewees suggested that not all, but many Hamilton's older residents are well-educated and more tech-savvy than their peers elsewhere--advocating that an expanded direct online campaign alongside a robust social media approach could be effective in engaging residents. Ultimately, interview participants shared concerns that residents' isolation and fears of venturing out into the community stifle their engagement.

### **Focus on Transportation**

Being able to drive is not only essential to the autonomy and independence of older residents, but is also crucial for accessing Hamilton's amenities and needed resources in and around the region. Strengthening the transportation systems alongside driver safety were noted as major concerns that, if addressed, could benefit residents of all ages. Of note, the majority of falls reported to

emergency services occur when walking to and from an owner's automobile, suggesting that a simple errand like grocery shopping comes with high risk for older residents reluctant or unable to obtain help.

### **Topics around Programs and Services**

Not only was it evident in conversations with Key Informants that they are witnessing an increased demand for senior services, but also for supports, and calls for programming. Participants conveyed consensus that the increased complexity of older residents' needs was also a factor in addressing challenges. It has become increasingly clear that different generations have unique needs. The demand for diversity in programming is explicit.

For most, engagement with programs and services is more or less needs-driven (e.g. meals on wheels), with the exception of a small core group. Interviewees stated that folks are unequivocal in voicing their interest in a broad spectrum of choices with more variety in activities; however, there are lingering doubts about what actual participation numbers would look like in practice. Experience has shown that verbalized requests can have lackluster attendance in the end. Moreover, limited municipal monetary resources are often allocated to meet the needs of young families in lieu of increasing programs and services available to Hamilton's older residents.

### **Challenges for Hamilton Residents at Home**

Several informants described changing family dynamics as a major concern. Adult children moving away from the area can be both a function of choice and of affordable housing options in the region. In either instance, many older adults tend to be isolated in their often difficult-to-maintain homes and are also reluctant to ask for help. Some assistance is available for cursory tasks like snow removal and leaf clean-up; however, as the aging population increases, the situation is untenable. Many issues exist for older adults living alone in single family homes requiring maintenance. Taken together, these challenges have implications not only for the support networks available to seniors, but also for local service providers and municipal departments who take the place of younger family members in this social support role, which includes some things that are typically outside of their traditional scope.

Many seniors are in distress because they are finding it difficult to afford expenses and to remain in their home. Easily manageable housing down-sizing options are not common. With most residents living in single-family homes, challenges related to financial security and isolation were described as unmet needs. Cost of utilities, municipal fees, property taxes and cost of home maintenance (e.g., lawn care, small repairs etc.) was named as a crucial need for some older residents of Hamilton. In general, a crucial aspect for individuals is to remain living in the community as one ages—and this desire was a salient point expressed by key informants. The

strong consensus is that without adequate housing options for residents looking to downsize, older adults will either remain in homes that are inappropriate or unmanageable or they will be forced to leave the community.

### **Awareness of the Senior Center is limited in Hamilton**

Even though the Senior Center's transitional phase was acknowledged during our discussions, it was clear from the interviews that the current capacity of the Hamilton Senior Center is not prepared to deal with increased demands. There is agreement that while the work being done by the Hamilton COA is invaluable to residents, there is room to grow local awareness of the breadth and depth of services. Barriers to engagement that were identified include: 1) an aversion to being considered "old" or, 2) the misconception that one must have "needs" to participate at the COA. It was also mentioned that the Hamilton COA is small and therefore it is possible that the limited capacity of the current center deters residents from considering it a viable resource for them or their families.

### **Opportunities for Collaborations to Strengthen Networks of Support for Older Residents are Prime for Action**

Nearly all key-informants described the values that could be derived from a more collaborative approach to senior services between the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham. That said, there was an emphasis on the need for thoughtful municipal engagement in planning for a process that would allow this collaboration to emerge effectively, potentially by building upon existing area project meetings (e.g., Public Health vaccine distribution) to expand the agendas for sharing ideas, information, and insights. Additionally, the library, the schools, and local faith communities are named as potential strategic partners to spread and strengthen the presence of the Hamilton COA's initiatives.

## **Recommendations**

In recent years, the number and share of older adults in Massachusetts have increased substantially. Population projections suggest that this growth will continue in the coming decades and will impact cities and towns across the Commonwealth. The Town of Hamilton and surrounding communities are no different. While these shifting demographic considerations have implications for all Town offices and organizations, the Hamilton Senior Center has special responsibility for anticipating and responding to the needs and concerns of older residents and their families. By offering programs and services, connecting residents to supports that may be beneficial to them and for which they are already eligible, and by sharing knowledge and exerting leadership in the community around aging issues, the Hamilton Senior Center represents an important asset to the community.

Based on information gathered from key-informant interviews, a demographic profile, and a community survey of residents, it was learned that a majority of older Hamilton residents are committed to remaining on Hamilton as they grow older. Residents recognize the many positive features of Hamilton as a community in which to live—the availability of greenspaces to enjoy, proximity to Boston and its amenities including world class healthcare, and a small-town environment. However, segments of the older population struggle with income shortfalls, health or mobility limitations, or isolation.

Residents look ahead to a time when they may be unable to drive, need to downsize, or may need to frequently access specialized medical services and they do not know how effectively those needs can be met in Hamilton. Some segments of the resident population who experience those situations right now struggle to meet their needs. Based on our research, we offer the following recommendations for the Hamilton Senior Center and the community as a whole.

- Create a formal bridge between the Hamilton and Wenham COAs to facilitate communication and developing shared programming.
  - Begin joint board meetings between the two communities as a way of acquainting each other with their programs and priorities.
  - Appoint a committee aimed at establishing a transition plan towards shared senior center activities and resources. Ensure resident as well as administrative input.
  - Identify and investigate other regions with shared senior services to learn about challenges and best practices.
- Develop information to share with community members about home modifications that can make their homes safer to live in as they age.
  - For example, work with community partners to develop a resource of local handyman services and information about financial support for such modifications.
- Enhance existing cross-departmental and public-private relationships, and encourage the creation of more collaborations, especially relating to supporting vulnerable residents of the community.
  - For example, facilitate a quarterly networking event for local organizations to come together. These events would include community education about the programs and services available through the Hamilton COA but also provide a mechanism by which community stakeholders can stay connected around issues facing seniors in Hamilton.
  - Consider ways that partners to develop resources and mechanisms by which stakeholders in the community who work with seniors (e.g., banks, faith communities, real estate agents, emergency response professionals, and nonprofit service providers) can recognize seniors living with dementia or other vulnerabilities and connect them with appropriate information and resources in Hamilton.

- Strengthen community knowledge about the senior services available to residents in Hamilton.
  - For example, consider creating an incentive for “first-time” COA participants or a similar “welcome committee” at the Hamilton COA to ensure that new participants have a pleasant first experience.
  - Expand capacity for special events, so more residents can participate, feel involved, and understand that the Hamilton Senior Center is for them.
  - Consider the “hub and spoke model” of senior services in which programming occurs at satellite locations throughout the community as a way of maximizing space and visibility.
  - Consider recruiting volunteers to greet and orient new participants.
  - For example, correct misperceptions about who is “eligible” to participate in COA activities. Consider existing outlets like op-ed columns or local cable opportunities to explain eligibility for and resources provided by the Hamilton COA. Feature current participant profiles, invite them to share their initial motivations for participating.
- Expand senior activities in Hamilton, focus program expansion to include health and wellness programs, exercise classes, educational opportunities, and social programs for residents who may be homebound or frail.
  - For example, explore the use of technology (e.g., phone or other mobile devices) to include home-bound residents in existing programs through video technology, or making “friendly visits” by telephone.
  - Identify partnerships (e.g., schools or department of Recreation) to pilot-test fitness programming for older adults specifically looking to engage in activity with their peers.
  - Convene a “digital café” at the library to bring together those wanting to learn more about their devices and connection and those who can lead the discussion and provide one-on-one assistance.
- Consider hosting additional educational programs related to employment and/or retirement planning.
  - For example, to engage older residents of Hamilton who are still working, consider hosting local financial planners and banks to educate the community about saving for retirement.
  - Offer a “Housing Choice” workshop to residents who wish to learn the realities of selling their home. Gather a panel of experts including real estate agencies, bankers, housing developers, and contractors.
- Expand caregiver support opportunities in Hamilton.
  - For example, create new ways of providing information and assistance for caregivers, including the adult social day opportunities, support groups for caregivers, and information and referral resources available through the COA. Consider hosting a family caregiver “resource fair” as an opportunity to connect the Hamilton COA with family caregivers.
  - For example, consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out” to provide residents of Hamilton who might be caring for a spouse, parent, or grandparent to enjoy a

night of entertainment. Explore partnerships with area adult day programs to provide respite care during the event.

- Broaden opportunities to connect older residents with existing resources to improve economic security in Hamilton. Advocate for the creation of new resources and programs to support the economic security of seniors in Hamilton.
  - For example, consider ways to make the tax work-off program more widely available to residents of Hamilton (e.g., adjust eligibility criteria to include residents aged 55 and older or raise the income requirements).
  - Advocate for reduced fees associated with utility costs, including cable/internet

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## Appendix A: Community Survey Results

Note: Appendix tables are based on 290 responses to the Town of Hamilton Survey of residents age 60 and over, conducted in Fall, 2021. 47 respondents did not report their age. See text for additional details. 16 respondents reported living in Wenham and 5 respondents reported living elsewhere.

### How long have you lived in the Town of Hamilton?

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Fewer than 10 years	15%	13%	17%	17%
10-19 years	8%	11%	7%	--
20-29 years	21%	32%	10%	--
30 years or longer	56%	44%	66%	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### How important is it to you to remain living in Hamilton as you get older?

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Important	60%	53%	63%	79%
Somewhat Important	30%	33%	30%	13%
Slightly Important	7%	9%	4%	8%
Not at All Important	3%	5%	3%	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Would you know whom to contact in Hamilton should you or someone in your family need help accessing social services, health services, or other municipal services?

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	60%	55%	61%	87%
No	40%	45%	39%	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following features of Hamilton.

***Accessibility of parking***

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	33%	34%	31%	33%
Satisfied	56%	56%	62%	46%
Dissatisfied	7%	6%	3%	4%
Very Dissatisfied	1%	1%	1%	9%
Not Applicable	3%	3%	3%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Handicap accessibility of walkways, public buildings, and businesses***

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	16%	18%	13%	17%
Satisfied	46%	41%	54%	46%
Dissatisfied	11%	14%	7%	8%
Very Dissatisfied	4%	6%	--	4%
Not Applicable	23%	21%	26%	25%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Availability of maintained sidewalks***

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	12%	11%	13%	12%
Satisfied	44%	37%	58%	35%
Dissatisfied	28%	32%	19%	35%
Very Dissatisfied	13%	19%	5%	9%
Not Applicable	3%	1%	5%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%



***Lighting along sidewalks and trails***

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	9%	8%	10%	9%
Satisfied	47%	41%	57%	48%
Dissatisfied	25%	30%	20%	17%
Very Dissatisfied	10%	14%	6%	4%
Not Applicable	9%	7%	7%	22%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Availability of benches or shaded seating in public areas and along walkways***

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	5%	3%	8%	5%
Satisfied	43%	44%	45%	43%
Dissatisfied	33%	33%	33%	33%
Very Dissatisfied	7%	9%	5%	7%
Not Applicable	12%	11%	9%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

***Clear and consistent signage and wayfinding***

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	8%	7%	8%	9%
Satisfied	63%	65%	62%	52%
Dissatisfied	15%	16%	17%	4%
Very Dissatisfied	3%	2%	5%	--
Not Applicable	11%	10%	8%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Conveniently located public restrooms**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	1%	--	2%	--
Satisfied	18%	21%	18%	4%
Dissatisfied	37%	42%	34%	22%
Very Dissatisfied	23%	20%	24%	30%
Not Applicable	21%	17%	22%	44%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Please select your level of agreement with each statement below.

**How satisfied are you with the extent to which local policy makers take into account the interests and concerns of older residents?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Completely Satisfied	1%	1%	1%	--
Very Satisfied	15%	10%	21%	17%
Somewhat Satisfied	46%	52%	40%	35%
Slightly Satisfied	18%	17%	19%	22%
Not at All Satisfied	20%	20%	19%	26%

**Who do you live with? (Check all that apply)**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I live alone	17%	17%	15%	27%
I live with a spouse or partner	73%	72%	81%	73%
I live with a relative (e.g., children, grandchildren, parents)	10%	15%	1%	15%
Other	5%	6%	2%	8%

**\*Figures do not sum to 100%**

**Which of the following best describes your current place of residence?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Single-family home	91%	95%	88%	80%
Multi-family home (2, 3, or more units)	2%	2%	1%	8%
Apartment	2%	3%	--	4%
Condominium or townhome	4%	--	11%	4%
Other	1%	--	--	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Does your current residence have a bedroom and full bath on the entry level?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	58%	57%	61%	58%
No	42%	43%	39%	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Does your current residence need home repairs (e.g., new roof, electrical work etc.) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes, and I can afford to make these repairs	35%	30%	47%	25%
Yes, but I cannot afford to make these repairs	15%	18%	10%	17%
Yes, but I am not responsible for making these repairs (e.g., I rent my current residence)	3%	2%	2%	8%
No, my current residence does not need repairs	47%	50%	41%	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the next 5 years, if you needed move from your current home, what kind of housing would you prefer in Hamilton? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Smaller single-family home	44%	54%	36%	15%
Multi-family home (2, 3, or more units)	8%	7%	12%	--
Apartment	14%	14%	12%	19%
Condominium, or townhome	37%	34%	43%	31%
A 55+ community	31%	29%	34%	27%
Continuing Care Retirement Community	17%	7%	27%	35%
Assisted Living community	8%	22%	15%	14%
A multigenerational home such as moving in with family	10%	11%	8%	8%
Other	8%	9%	8%	9%

\*Figures do not sum to 100%

What are the primary ways in which you meet your transportation needs? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I drive myself	95%	92%	100%	95%
Walk or bike	39%	40%	42%	19%
Taxi or ride sharing service (e.g., Uber, LYFT)	1%	1%	2%	--
My spouse or child(ren) drive me	20%	15%	23%	31%
Friends or neighbors drive me	5%	2%	5%	15%
Bus	--	--	--	--
The MTBA Commuter rail	15%	19%	11%	8%
Cape Ann Transit Authority (CATA)	1%	1%	2%	--
Transportation provided by the Council on Aging	---	--	-	4%

Other	3%	2%	4%	4%
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*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

Which of the following strategies do you use to modify your driving to make it easier or safer?

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Not Applicable -- I do not drive	4%	5%	1%	4%
I limit my driving ( <i>e.g., I avoid driving at night, during bad weather, in unfamiliar areas</i> )	31%	25%	31%	68%
I drive with no limitations	65%	70%	68%	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Within the past 24 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because of lack of transportation?

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	6%	8%	2%	4%
No	94%	92%	98%	96%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

What kind of difficulties do you have in getting the transportation that you need? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Public transportation is unavailable or inconvenient	12%	11%	8%	31%
Rideshare service are unavailable or inconvenient	5%	3%	5%	15%
Transportation options cost too much	4%	5%	1%	4%
Physical limitations or other impairments make accessing transportation options difficult	2%	2%	1%	8%
No door-to-door assistance	2%	2%	4%	--
Distance to my destination is too far	3%	5%	1%	4%
No one I can depend on for a ride	5%	6%	4%	--
I don't have information about what is available	12%	13%	12%	12%
I have no difficulties	72%	68%	76%	81%
Other	4%	5%	5%	--

\*Figures do not sum to 100%

How satisfied are you with transportation options in Hamilton?

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Satisfied	12%	12%	11%	11%
Somewhat Satisfied	24%	25%	25%	15%
Slightly Satisfied	20%	22%	18%	19%
Not at all Satisfied	10%	12%	7%	11%
Not applicable	34%	29%	39%	34%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

In the past month, how often did you talk on the phone, send email or use social media, or get together to visit with family, friends, or neighbors? (*Check only one per item*)

*Talk on the phone, FaceTime, or Zoom or FaceTime with family, friends, or neighbors*

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Every day	54%	55%	55%	46%
One or more times a week	36%	34%	39%	42%
A few times a month	6%	7%	4%	8%
About once a month	2%	2%	1%	4%
A few times a year (e.g., holidays)	1%	1%	1%	--
Never	1%	1%	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Send email or use social media with family, friends, or neighbors*

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Every day	63%	65%	65%	48%
One or more times a week	26%	25%	26%	32%
A few times a month	5%	5%	2%	8%
About once a month	1%	2%	3%	--
A few times a year (e.g., holidays)	2%	1%	1%	8%
Never	3%	2%	3%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Get together in person with family, friends, or neighbors*

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Every day	21%	21%	19%	23%
One or more times a week	48%	45%	52%	46%
A few times a month	22%	22%	21%	27%
About once a month	5%	6%	5%	--
A few times a year (e.g., holidays)	4%	5%	3%	4%
Never	--	1%	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Do you know someone living close by on whom you can rely for help when you need it?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	86%	84%	84%	100%
<b>No</b>	14%	16%	16%	--
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Would you ask a neighbor for help if you needed assistance with a minor task or errand (e.g., changing a light bulb, shopping, shoveling snow)?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	58%	57%	60%	61%
<b>No</b>	42%	43%	40%	39%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Do you provide any help to neighbors with minor tasks or errands (e.g., changing a lightbulb, shopping, shoveling snow)?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	39%	50%	29%	15%
<b>No</b>	9%	7%	10%	19%
<b>No, but I would be willing if asked</b>	52%	43%	61%	66%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Do you now or have you in the past 5 years provided care or assistance to a person who is disabled, frail, or struggling with a physical or mental health condition (e.g., a spouse, parent, relative, or friend)?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Yes</b>	60%	63%	55%	62%
<b>No</b>	40%	37%	45%	38%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%



**How challenging is/was it for you to care for this person(s) and meet your other responsibilities with family and/or work?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Very Challenging</b>	19%	24%	12%	19%
<b>Somewhat Challenging</b>	40%	41%	19%	40%
<b>Neither Challenging Nor Easy</b>	29%	27%	50%	30%
<b>Somewhat Easy</b>	7%	4%	6%	7%
<b>Very Easy</b>	5%	4%	13%	4%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

*\*This table only includes respondents who reported providing care to someone now or in the last five years.*

**Did this person have any of the following conditions?**

	All Ages
<b>Alzheimer’s disease or dementia</b>	24%
<b>Mobility limitations</b>	67%
<b>Psychological Condition (e.g., anxiety, depression)</b>	17%
<b>Chronic Condition (e.g., cancer)</b>	28%
<b>Intellectual disability (e.g., autism)</b>	3%
<b>Other</b>	17%
<b>Total</b>	100%

*\*This table only includes respondents who reported providing care to someone now or in the last five years.*

**Prior to Covid, how frequently have you used services or attended programs offered by the Hamilton Senior Center?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Two or more times a week</b>	1%	--	2%	4%
<b>About once a week</b>	4%	2%	7%	4%
<b>A few times a month</b>	4%	3%	2%	16%
<b>About once a month</b>	3%	3%	2%	8%

<b>A few times a year (e.g., special events only)</b>	25%	22%	27%	36%
<b>Never</b>	63%	70%	60%	32%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

The following items refer to programs and services that could be offered through the Hamilton Senior Center. Please rate the importance of each program/service to you or your family.(% rated very important)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Transportation</b>	35%	40%	24%	40%
<b>Volunteer opportunities</b>	22%	24%	19%	15%
<b>Support groups (e.g., caregiver, neuropathy)</b>	22%	25%	18%	20%
<b>Health and wellness (e.g., blood pressure clinics, medical equipment loan)</b>	28%	33%	20%	26%
<b>SHINE Health Insurance Counseling</b>	30%	30%	28%	33%
<b>Educational opportunities (e.g., lectures workshops)</b>	25%	32%	17%	16%
<b>Fitness activities (e.g., yoga, tai chi, Zumba)</b>	26%	34%	16%	14%
<b>Assistance with local or state programs (e.g., fuel assistance, SNAP)</b>	25%	30%	16%	29%
<b>Professional services (e.g., tax preparation)</b>	21%	26%	13%	25%
<b>Information referral (e.g., food pantry)</b>	19%	25%	10%	14%
<b>Outreach services (e.g., in-home, by phone)</b>	19%	26%	8%	20%
<b>Outdoor activities</b>	23%	30%	16%	10%
<b>Social or recreational activities</b>	26%	34%	18%	11%
<b>Trips or outings</b>	25%	32%	15%	21%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

**If never or rarely: What is the reason that you do not currently use programs or services offered by the Hamilton Senior Center? (Check all that apply)**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I am not interested	26%	26%	20%	41%
I am not old enough	14%	21%	7%	6%
I am unaware of programs or services available	11%	8%	16%	18%
I am still working	30%	38%	22%	12%
The hours of operation are inconvenient	5%	6%	4%	6%
I do not have time	12%	11%	11%	23%
Other	32%	26%	38%	47%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%.*

**Would you support a shared senior center between the Towns of Hamilton and Wenham?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	73%	76%	71%	65%
No	3%	3%	5%	--
Maybe	24%	21%	24%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Would you be willing to provide a nominal fee or donation to participate in some programs or activities offered by the Senior Center?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	62%	63%	57%	73%
No	6%	7%	6%	4%
Maybe	32%	30%	37%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Which of the following places do you go for leisure activity or other programs? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
The Library	61%	38%	40%	42%
Senior Centers in other towns	12%	8%	15%	19%
Cafes or restaurants	66%	70%	61%	69%
Gym or athletic Center	35%	38%	34%	19%
Other	37%	37%	37%	35%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

Below, please check all factors that would increase the likelihood of your using the Hamilton Senior Center programs and services more often: (Check all that apply)

*I would be more likely to use the Hamilton Senior Center programs and services...*

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
If transportation options to the Senior Center were more convenient	3%	5%	1%	4%
If I had more knowledge about programs and services that are available	35%	41%	46%	39%
If the Senior Center was shared with the Town of Wenham	20%	15%	23%	31%
If the cost of programs was reduced or eliminated	14%	15%	12%	19%
If programs and services were better suited to my interests	55%	57%	49%	62%
If the hours of the Senior Center were more convenient	14%	16%	13%	8%
If there was more parking at the Hamilton Senior Center	3%	3%	4%	--
If it was easier to access the Senior Center building (e.g., updated building)	2%	2%	4%	--
If there were more people like myself at Senior Center events	47%	48%	45%	46%
Other	19%	20%	15%	23%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

Thinking about your own future needs and interests, which of the following areas would you prioritize in expanding the programs available through the Hamilton Senior Center? (Check all that apply)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Arts & Crafts	31%	36%	28%	12%
Lunch or other Nutrition Programs	21%	21%	22%	23%
Caregiver programs (e.g., respite, support groups)	17%	20%	14%	15%
In-home programs (e.g., help with minor chores/errands)	27%	30%	22%	27%
Day trips	43%	47%	36%	46%
Information / Referral for Social Services	21%	23%	19%	15%
Health & Wellness Programs	46%	47%	46%	35%
Professional Services (e.g., financial planning)	19%	24%	15%	8%
Indoor exercise (e.g., yoga, aerobics)	43%	47%	38%	35%
Technology Skills Classes (e.g., smartphone applications)	37%	35%	40%	35%
Outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking, kayaking)	43%	50%	38%	27%
Evening or weekend activities	26%	32%	21%	8%
Performances and Presentations	47%	44%	50%	50%
Social Programs (e.g., parties)	21%	24%	14%	27%
Intergenerational Programs	24%	31%	14%	23%
Other	8%	7%	15%	8%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%*

Where do you prefer to find information about the activities and services offered in the Town of Hamilton? (*Check all that apply*)

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Senior Center Newsletter	35%	58%	69%	89%
Cable TV	4%	2%	6%	8%
Radio	--	--	--	--
Email or text communication	55%	56%	57%	46%
Local community newspapers	13%	15%	14%	4%
Facebook or other social media sites	41%	48%	37%	15%
Town of Hamilton website	46%	47%	46%	39%
Other	5%	5%	3%	8%

*\*Figures do not sum to 100%.*

Please select your gender.

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Male	36%	34%	41%	73%
Female	64%	66%	59%	27%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

What is your age range?

Under age 60	6%
60-69	48%
70-79	35%
80+	11%
Total	100%

**When do you plan to fully retire?**

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>N/A, I am already fully retired</b>	57%	42%	73%	76%
<b>Within the next 3 years</b>	9%	12%	7%	--
<b>In 3 to 5 years</b>	8%	13%	3%	--
<b>In 6 to 10 years</b>	7%	11%	2%	--
<b>In more than 10 years</b>	2%	4%	--	--
<b>Not sure</b>	6%	7%	6%	--
<b>I do not anticipate ever fully retiring</b>	11%	11%	8%	24%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: *“I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses.”*

	All Ages	Under Age 70	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	27%	31%	26%	28%	23%
<b>Agree</b>	59%	58%	60%	57%	60%
<b>Disagree</b>	11%	9%	11%	11%	13%
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%