



NEEDHAM SENIOR SURVEY ON HOUSING AND TRANSIT

Technical Report
June 18, 2016



COUNCIL
ON AGING
Needham

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	1
BACKGROUND AND METHODS	4
Validity and Reliability	4
Analysis Plan.....	5
Analytical Sample.....	5
Generalizability	6
Missing Values Analysis	6
FINDINGS – RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS	7
Gender	7
Age	7
Marital Status.....	8
Perceived Health Status.....	8
Household Pre-Tax Income in Calendar Year 2015	8
Employment Status.....	9
Care Provider for Another Adult.....	9
Internet Use	10
Respondent Characteristics – Summary.....	11
FINDINGS – RESIDENCE IN NEEDHAM	12
Length of Residence in Needham	12
Residence Setting.....	12
Type of Residence	13
Residence in Needham – Summary	13
FINDINGS – ATTITUDES ABOUT RESIDENCE IN NEEDHAM.....	14
Importance of Living Independently.....	14
Ratings of Needham as a Place to Live as People Age.....	14
Importance of Remaining in Needham.....	15
Likelihood of Remaining in Needham.....	16
Comparison Between Importance and Likelihood Ratings	16
Attitudes About Residence in Needham – Summary	16
FINDINGS – POTENTIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS TO MOVE.....	17
Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move	17
Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move – Summary	18
FINDINGS – HOME MODIFICATIONS	19
Existing Home Modifications	19
Existing Home Modifications – Summary.....	20
Barriers to Making Home Modifications.....	20
Barriers to Making Home Modifications – Summary	22

FINDINGS – EXERCISE AND WALKING	23
Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Places to Rest	23
Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Crossing the Street.....	23
Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Summary	24
FINDINGS – COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	25
Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements	25
Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements – Summary	27
FINDINGS – CURRENT TRANSPORTATION METHODS	28
Current Transportation Methods	28
Current Transportation Methods – Summary	29
FINDINGS – TRANSPORTATION METHODS AS RESPONDENTS AGE	30
Importance of Different Transportation Methods in Future.....	30
Importance of Different Transportation Methods in Future – Summary	31
Comparison – Current Methods Versus Importance of Future Methods	32
FINDINGS – Additional Comments	33
APPENDIX A: Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move – Other Responses	34
APPENDIX B: Existing Home Modifications – Other Responses	36
APPENDIX C: Barriers to Making Home Improvements – Other Responses	37
APPENDIX D: Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Other Responses	38
APPENDIX E: Important Community Infrastructure Elements – Other Responses	40
APPENDIX F: Current Transportation Methods – Other Responses	41
APPENDIX G: Importance of Future Transportation Methods – Other Responses	42
APPENDIX H: Additional Comments	43

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Importance of Living Independently (n=626, mean = 4.47 out of 5.00)	14
Figure 2: Needham as Senior Friendly Place to Live (n=627, mean = 3.46 out of 5.00).....	15
Figure 3: Importance of Remaining in Needham (n=626, mean = 3.92 out of 5.00)	15
Figure 4: Likelihood of Remaining in Needham (n=623, mean = 3.86 out of 5.00).....	16
Figure 5: Barriers to Making Home Modifications	21
Figure 6: Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements (Mean Scores)	26
Figure 7: Current Transportation Methods (Mean Scores)	29
Figure 8: Importance of Different Transportation Methods (Mean Scores)	31
Figure 9: Current Versus Future Methods (Mean Scores).....	32

Index of Tables

Table 1: Respondent Gender	7
Table 2: Respondent Age	7
Table 3: Marital Status	8
Table 4: Perceived Health Status	8
Table 5: Household Pre-Tax Income in Calendar Year 2015.....	9
Table 6: Employment Status	9
Table 7: Care Provider for Another Adult	10
Table 8: Typical Internet Use	10
Table 9: Length of Residence in Needham	12
Table 10: Residence Setting	12
Table 11: Type of Residence	13
Table 12: Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move.....	17
Table 13: Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move – Write-In Responses	18
Table 14: Existing Home Modifications	19
Table 15: Existing Home Modifications – Write-In Responses	20
Table 16: Barriers to Making Home Modifications.....	21
Table 17: Barriers to Making Home Modifications – Write-In Responses	22
Table 18: Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands.....	23
Table 19: Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Write-In Responses	24
Table 20: Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements.....	25
Table 21: Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements – Write-Ins.....	27
Table 22: Current Transportation Methods.....	28
Table 23: Current Transportation Methods – Write-In Responses	29
Table 24: Importance of Different Transportation Methods in Future	30
Table 25: Importance of Different Transportation Methods – Write-In Responses	31

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Needham Public Health Department and Needham Council on Aging conducted a survey of Needham residents ages 55 and older to learn about their attitudes, opinions, and needs related to housing, transportation, and senior-friendly community infrastructure. This report presents findings from 650 Needham seniors who took part in the survey during spring 2016.

Respondent Characteristics (Page 7)

Survey respondents were predominantly female (67%). On average, respondents were 69 years of age – half were between 55 and 67 and half were 68 years of age or older. The majority of respondents (70%) were married or living with a partner. Almost all respondents (92%) felt that their health was good or better in comparison to their peers. Roughly half of the respondents (46%) reported that their 2015 pre-tax household income was less than \$100,000 and half (54%) indicated that it was \$100,000 or greater. Over half of the respondents (56%) were retired or outside of the workforce for other reasons. Forty-three percent (43%) are currently employed either part-time (20%) or full-time (23%). Less than 1% of respondents reported that they are currently unemployed and looking for work (0.6%). Almost all respondents (92%) indicated that they use the Internet at least once every few weeks or more.

Generalizing across the sample, the *average* respondent was a 69-year-old married female in better than average health across a wide variety of income levels with an equal chance of being inside or outside of the workforce who typically uses the Internet several times a day.

Residence in Needham (Page 12)

Approximately three-quarters of respondents (72%) reported that they have lived in Needham for 25 years or longer. One of every three respondents has lived in Needham for 45 years or more. Almost all of the respondents (93%) are currently living in a private residence with almost eight of every ten respondents reporting that they live in a single family home.

Generalizing across the sample, the *average* respondent is currently living in a private, single family home in Needham and has lived in Needham for 25 years or more.

Attitudes About Residence in Needham (Page 14)

Almost all of the respondents (91%) reported that it is *very* or *extremely important* for them to be able to live independently in their home as they age. Eighty-two percent (82%) perceive Needham to be a *good, very good, or excellent* place for people to live as they age. Over 90% of respondents feel it is *somewhat, very, or extremely important* for them to remain in Needham as they age, and an equal proportion believe it is *somewhat, very, or extremely likely* that they will do so. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents indicated that it was more important for them to remain in Needham as they age compared to the likelihood that they will do so (n=135).

Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move (Page 17)

Respondents indicated that *if* they were to consider moving out of Needham at some point in the future that the most common reasons for doing so would be: looking for a smaller home size (58%), looking for a home with services to help them live independently as they age (56%), and concerns that it will be too expensive to maintain their current home (51%). Approximately one of every ten respondents (9%) provided an additional write-in response – these responses tended to all be sub-themes of the factors that appeared in the survey. The most common write-in comments were: more affordable housing options (2.3%), single-floor living options (1.8%), and lower property taxes (1.2%).

Existing Home Modifications (Page 19)

Almost half of all respondents (46%) reported that they have made one or more modifications to their home to enable them to stay there as they age. The largest proportion of respondents reported that they have made modifications to their bathroom (36%) and/or installed improved lighting (26%). Four percent of respondents (4%) provided an additional write-in response – these responses tended to all be sub-themes of the list of modifications that appeared in the survey. The most common write-in comments were: having made physical alterations to their home such as changes to doors, adding ramps, or making bathroom improvements (1.5%); having recently downsized or moved to more senior-friendly housing (0.6%); and having installed or signed-up for a monitoring or security system (0.6%).

Barriers to Making Home Modifications (Page 20)

Across the respondent sample, 17% of respondents indicated that they were not able to make modifications to their home that they wanted to make. Among this group, 4% reported that the reason they have not been able to make modifications is that they don't own the property and are not allowed to make modifications. Thirteen percent of respondents (13%) identified another barrier to being able to make their desired modifications. Within this subset, the largest proportion of respondents cited cost (10%) and architecture of the home (7%) as barriers. Few respondents cited a barrier that was not already listed in the survey.

Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands (Page 23)

One-third of respondents (37%) indicated that they would be more likely to walk for exercise or to get to their destination if there were more benches on their walking route. Half of the respondents (49.9%) indicated that they have trouble crossing the street when walking for at least one reason. Respondents were most likely to identify not having enough time on the traffic light (22%), followed by not having crosswalks where they need them (21%), fear that turning cars won't see them crossing the street (18%), and not having traffic lights where they need them (11%). The most common write-in responses for this question were: drivers don't stop at crosswalks (2.8%); drivers are hurried, distracted, or on cell phones (2.0%); not enough sidewalks the further you get from the center of town (1.8%); and the poor condition of many sidewalks (1.7%).

Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements (Page 25)

Over three-quarters of respondents indicated that it was either *moderately important* or *very important* to have the following community infrastructure elements: sidewalks that are in good condition, free from obstruction, and accessible for wheelchairs or walkers (96%); well-maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different physical abilities (92%); bus or shuttle service for older residents (89%); well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities (88%); well-maintained and safe parks that are within walking distance of their home (85%); public parks with enough benches (82%); separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians (81%); and benches in other public places such as shopping and business districts (79%). Write-in comments tended to be sub-themes of the items that already appeared in the survey.

Current Transportation Methods (Page 28)

Respondents were most likely to report that they *sometimes* or *often* drive themselves (93%), walk (74%), have others drive them (28%), or ride a bike (20%). Comparatively fewer respondents report that they *sometimes* or *often* use a public bus or shuttle (9%), take a taxi or cab (8%), or use a special transportation service (6%). Write-in comments tended to be identical to the items that already appeared in the survey.

Importance of Different Transportation Methods in the Future (Page 30)

The largest proportion of respondents reported that it is *moderately important* or *very important* for them to be able to drive themselves as they age (94%), have others drive them (83%), use a public bus or shuttle (62%), walk (62%), use a special transportation service (57%), take a taxi or cab (39%), and ride a bike (24%). Write-in comments tended to be identical to the items that already appeared in the survey.

Comparison – Current Methods Versus Importance of Future Methods (Page 32)

Respondents placed higher importance on being able to take a taxi or cab, use a public bus/shuttle, have others drive them, and using a special transportation service in the future compared to their current use of these different methods of transportation. This was particularly the case for using a special transportation service in the future.

Additional Comments (Page 33)

Respondents were invited to provide additional comments – 150 respondents (23%) provided at least one comment. Qualitative thematic analysis extracted 247 discrete themes. Respondents were most likely to comment on the need for additional transportation options for seniors (6%), and the need for more affordable housing options for seniors (6%).

BACKGROUND AND METHODS

The Needham Public Health Department and Needham Council on Aging conducted a survey of Needham residents ages 55 and older to learn about their attitudes, opinions, and needs related to housing, transportation, and senior-friendly community infrastructure. The survey asked questions in four broad domains: (1) respondent characteristics, (2) housing, (3) community infrastructure, and (4) transportation.

The anonymous survey, which consisted of 61 discrete questions, was administered as both a paper-based and online questionnaire during the six-week period between May 4, 2016 and June 14, 2016. Potential respondents were given the option to complete the survey online or to complete and return the paper-based version to the Public Library, Needham Community Council, Center at the Heights (senior center), or at the Needham Town Hall with the Town Clerk or Town Treasurer. This was the first time this survey was implemented in the community.

Validity and Reliability

One of the challenges associated with survey research is the potential for error in the data. This can stem from multiple sources such as the same respondent submitting multiple surveys, poor question wording, lack of appropriate response options that accurately reflect the experiences of all potential respondents, frivolity, and misinterpretation of the underlying meaning of a question. The likelihood of encountering these potential sources of error can vary depending on the method used to collect the data. This was a multi-modal survey, but the majority of responses were received online. The single largest source of potential error associated with online data collection is lack of knowledge about *who* actually responds to the survey (e.g., did one respondent complete multiple surveys, was the respondent really 55 or older, was the respondent really a Needham resident). While we cannot ever know with absolute certainty, short of having respondents complete the survey under controlled conditions (e.g., having respondents complete the survey in-person), there are several steps that can be taken to increase our confidence in the results. For example:

1. Using clear and unambiguous language in the instructions – prominently indicating who the intended target audience is (i.e., Needham residents 55 years of age and older) and indicating what the questions are about (i.e., housing, community infrastructure, and transportation).
2. Data screening – using visual and statistical screening to identify and remove cases in which the respondent provided obviously frivolous responses (i.e., always choosing the same or extreme response options for every item).
3. Identical case analysis – statistically identifying all duplicate records to minimize the chances that the same person submitted multiple surveys and/or the chances that the survey was accidentally submitted multiple times.

While these are not failsafe methods, they do help to ensure a clean dataset that minimizes the chances that there are gross errors present in the final set of data. Each of these steps was taken during the administration and analysis of the Needham Senior Survey on Housing and Transit.

Ideally, the development of survey items, such as those used in the Needham Senior Survey on Housing and Transit, should be an iterative process. Items should be field-tested with a subset of representatives from the intended target population and psychometric analyses should be conducted to help build the case that the survey items are both valid and reliable. Under real world, non-laboratory conditions, this is often difficult to accomplish. To help guard against this potential for error, survey items should be based either in whole, or in part, on items that have been used successfully in other research projects and in other settings. The Needham survey met this condition for the majority of items. Many of the questions in the survey were taken from AARP Community Survey Questionnaire¹.

During the analysis phase, issues with specific items can be identified based on the pattern of missing responses. If, for example, 25% of respondents did not answer one of the items, this should be noted as part of the results and this item should be modified in any future surveys. By striking a balance of design, logical, and statistical controls, as was the case with the Needham Senior Survey on Housing and Transit, we can minimize the odds of large-scale error creeping into the survey and maximize our confidence in the results.

Analysis Plan

Descriptive statistics are presented for each item in the survey (i.e., the number and percentage of all respondents that answered each response option for each item in the questionnaire). Some of the questions in the survey allowed respondents to write-in (or type-in) a response. These items were thematically coded to extract the major theme(s) present in the data.

Analytical Sample

A total of 526 individuals visited the survey webpage during the six-week period that it was open. Seventy-one (71) of these individuals (13% of those who visited) were removed from the final analytical sample. The reason for removal in each instance was that the respondent either did not answer any of the questions or only answered the first series of demographic questions without going any further. An additional 195 individuals completed the paper-based version of the survey. These data were hand-entered into an Excel database by a project staff member and the data were merged with the online survey dataset.

The final analytical sample consisted of 650 completed surveys – 455 online surveys (70%) and 195 paper-based surveys (30%).

¹ <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/aarp-community-survey-questionnaire.html>

Generalizability

Results are generalizable only to those Needham residents ages 55 and older who took part in the survey and may not reflect the attitudes, opinions, and needs of other seniors in the community. The 2014 American Community Survey estimates that there are 9,284 residents ages 55 and older living in Needham. Based on these estimates, the Needham Senior Survey on Housing and Transit reached approximately 7.0% of this population.

Estimated Sample Size and Response Rate			
	ACS 2014 Population Est.	Senior Survey	Percentage
55-60 years	2,335	118	5.1%
61-65 years	1,839	117	6.4%
66-75 years	2,408	226	9.4%
76-85 years	1,340	109	8.1%
86 years and over	1,362	41	3.0%
Missing	-	39	
Total	9,284	650	7.0%

Missing Values Analysis

A missing values analysis was conducted to identify any items that were skipped by a large number of respondents. All of the items in the survey were answered by at least 80% of the respondents (n=520 respondents). Most items were answered by 95% or more of the respondents. Each analysis presents the number of missing responses and special note is made for any items that had below an 85% response rate.

For the purposes of the current assessment, the effects of missing data appear to be minimal.

FINDINGS – RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Eight of the questions in the survey asked about different respondent characteristics. These questions included the respondent’s gender, age, current marital status, perceived health status, household pre-tax income in calendar year 2015, current employment status, whether they are a care provider for another adult, and typical Internet use. The purpose of these questions is to describe the responding sample as a way to assess the extent to which the finding may be generalizable to the broader community.

Gender

Approximately two-thirds of respondents (67%) indicated that they were female and 33% reported that they were male.

Table 1: Respondent Gender

What is your gender?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Female	434	67.4%
Male	209	32.5%
Missing	7	-
Total Valid	643	98.9%

Age

Respondents were asked to identify their exact age. During the analysis phase, these responses were collapsed into five-year intervals. Respondents ranged in age from 55 years of age to 100 years of age. The average age of respondents was 69 years. Half of the respondents were under 68 years of age and half were over 68 years of age. The largest number of respondents (34) were 70 years of age. Separated into five year increments, the largest proportion of respondents (22%) were between 66 and 70 years of age.

Table 2: Respondent Age

How old are you?		
	Frequency	Percentage
55-60 years	118	19.3%
61-65 years	117	19.1%
66-70 years	135	22.1%
71-75 years	91	14.9%
76-80 years	70	11.5%
81-85 years	39	6.4%
86-90 years	28	4.6%
91-95 years	8	1.3%
96-100 years	5	0.8%
Missing	39	-
Total Valid	611	94.0%

Marital Status

Approximately two-thirds of respondents (68%) indicated that they are currently married, 15% are widowed, 10% are separated or divorced, 6% never married, and 2% are not married but living with a partner.

Table 3: Marital Status

What is your current marital status?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Married	429	67.6%
Not married, living with a partner	13	2.0%
Separated or divorced	61	9.6%
Widowed	93	14.6%
Never married	39	6.1%
Missing	15	-
Total Valid	635	97.7%

Perceived Health Status

The vast majority of respondents (92%) felt that their health was good or better in comparison to their peers. Eight percent (8%) of respondents reported that their health was *fair* (7%) or *poor* (1%) when compared to other individuals in their age cohort.

Table 4: Perceived Health Status

In general, when compared to most people your age, how would you rate your health?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	9	1.4%
Fair	43	6.8%
Good	134	21.1%
Very Good	271	42.7%
Excellent	178	28.0%
Missing	15	-
Total Valid	635	97.7%

Household Pre-Tax Income in Calendar Year 2015

Respondents were asked to estimate their household's pre-tax income level during the prior federal tax year (calendar year 2015). Respondents were fairly evenly distributed across household income levels. Roughly half of the respondents (46%) reported that their 2015 pre-tax household income was less than \$100,000 and half (54%) indicated that it was \$100,000 or greater. The largest group of respondents (21%) reported that their 2015 pre-tax household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,000.

It is important to note that roughly one-fifth of respondents (17%) opted not to answer this question. While it is still informative to know the answer to this question among 83% of the

sample, the summary statistics may over-estimate or under-estimate the income level of respondents to the survey based on the presence of missing data.

Table 5: Household Pre-Tax Income in Calendar Year 2015

Please estimate your annual household income before taxes in 2015		
	Frequency	Percentage
Less than \$25,000	49	9.1%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	64	11.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	72	13.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	66	12.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	113	20.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	67	12.4%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	41	7.6%
\$250,000 or more	69	12.8%
Missing	109	-
Total Valid	541	83.2%

Employment Status

Half of the respondents indicated that they are currently retired (52%) and 4% are not in the labor force for other reasons (56% combined). Forty-three percent (43%) are currently employed either part-time (20%) or full-time (23%). Less than 1% of respondents reported that they are currently unemployed and looking for work (0.6%).

Table 6: Employment Status

Which of the following best describes your current employment status?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Employed or self-employed, part-time	128	20.2%
Employed or self-employed, full-time	148	23.3%
Unemployed, but looking for work	4	0.6%
Retired, not working at all	329	51.9%
Not in labor force for other reasons	25	3.9%
Missing	16	-
Total Valid	634	97.5%

Care Provider for Another Adult

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they have ever provided care for another adult living in their household who needed assistance with everyday tasks. Approximately one-third of respondents (32%) reported that they have provided care for another adult living in their household – 27% did so in the past and 5% are currently providing care for another adult living in their household.

Table 7: Care Provider for Another Adult

Have you ever provided care for another adult living in your household who needed assistance with everyday tasks?		
	Frequency	Percentage
No	427	67.7%
In the past, but not currently	172	27.3%
Yes, I am currently providing care	32	5.1%
Missing	19	-
Total Valid	631	97.1%

Internet Use

Almost all respondents (92%) indicated that they use the Internet at least once every few weeks or more. Eighty-seven percent (87%) typically use the Internet daily, with 78% reporting that they typically use the Internet several times a day.

As noted earlier, 70% of the responses to this survey were received online. This may bias the result of this question and raise questions about the extent to which it may be generalizable to the broader group of individuals 55 years of age and older across the entire community. It is worth noting, for example, that 21% of the 195 respondents who completed the paper-based version of the survey report that they never go online and that the 455 respondents who completed the online version of the survey were significantly more likely than their peers ($p < .001$) to report that they typically use the Internet several times a day (87% of online respondents versus 56% of paper-based respondents). This suggests that the summary statistics for this question may greatly over-estimate typical Internet use among Needham residents 55 years of age and older.

Table 8: Typical Internet Use

How often do you typically use the Internet for things like email, getting information, paying bills, or purchasing? This includes access from home, work, a mobile device, or someplace else		
	Frequency	Percentage
Never go online	41	6.5%
Once a month or less	7	1.1%
Once every few weeks	5	0.8%
1-2 days a week	12	1.9%
3-6 days a week	16	2.5%
About once a day	61	9.6%
Several times a day	492	77.6%
Missing	16	-
Total Valid	634	97.5%

Respondent Characteristics – Summary

Survey respondents were predominantly female (67%). On average, respondents were 69 years of age – half were between 55 and 67 and half were 68 years of age or older. The majority of respondents (70%) were married or living with a partner. Almost all respondents (92%) felt that their health was good or better in comparison to their peers. Roughly half of the respondents (46%) reported that their 2015 pre-tax household income was less than \$100,000 and half (54%) indicated that it was \$100,000 or greater. Over half of the respondents (56%) were retired or outside of the workforce for other reasons. Forty-three percent (43%) are currently employed either part-time (20%) or full-time (23%). Less than 1% of respondents reported that they are currently unemployed and looking for work (0.6%). Almost all respondents (92%) indicated that they use the Internet at least once every few weeks or more.

Generalizing across the sample, the *average* respondent was a 69-year-old married female in better than average health across a wide variety of income levels with an equal chance of being inside or outside of the workforce who typically uses the Internet several times a day.

FINDINGS – RESIDENCE IN NEEDHAM

Three questions in the survey assessed the length of time that respondents have lived in Needham, the setting in which they currently live, and the type of residence in which they currently live.

Length of Residence in Needham

Approximately three-quarters of respondents (72%) reported that they have lived in Needham for 25 years or longer. Twelve (12%) of the responding sample has lived in Needham for less than 15 years. The largest proportion of respondents (30%) – almost one-third of the sample – indicated that they have lived in Needham for 45 years or more.

Table 9: Length of Residence in Needham

How long have you lived in Needham?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	35	5.5%
5-14 years	43	6.7%
15-24 years	99	15.5%
25-34 years	127	19.9%
35-44 years	141	22.1%
45 years or more	193	30.3%
Missing	12	-
Total Valid	638	98.2%

Residence Setting

The vast majority of respondents (93%) reported that they are currently living in a private residence. Four percent (4%) are currently living in a Needham Housing Authority property, 2% in senior housing, and 0.6% in a long-term care facility.

Table 10: Residence Setting

Which of the following describes the setting in which you currently live?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Private residence	584	92.8%
Needham Housing Authority property	27	4.3%
Senior housing	14	2.2%
Long-term care facility	4	0.6%
Missing	21	-
Total Valid	629	96.8%

Type of Residence

Close to eight of every ten respondents (79%) reported that they are currently living in a single family home. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents are currently living in an apartment, 7% in a condominium, and 4% in a town home or duplex.

Table 11: Type of Residence

In what type of home do you currently live?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Single family home	501	78.9%
Town home or duplex	23	3.6%
Apartment	70	11.0%
Condominium	41	6.5%
Missing	15	-
Total Valid	635	97.7%

As shown in the table below, 92.8% of individuals (n=581) who answered both the type of residence and residential setting question reported that they live in a private residence and 7.2% report living in public housing or some form of assisted housing (n=45).

Type of Residence by Residential Setting

	Private Residence	Needham Housing Authority Property	Senior Housing	Long-Term Care Facility	Total
Single family home	498	0	0	0	498
Town home or duplex	23	0	0	0	23
Apartment	23	27	13	4	67
Condominium	37	0	1	0	38
Total	581	27	14	4	626

Residence in Needham – Summary

Approximately three-quarters of respondents (72%) reported that they have lived in Needham for 25 years or longer. One of every three respondents has lived in Needham for 45 years or more. Almost all of the respondents (93%) are currently living in a private residence with almost eight of every ten respondents reporting that they live in a single family home.

Generalizing across the sample, the *average* respondent is currently living in a private, single family home in Needham and has lived in Needham for 25 years or more.

FINDINGS – ATTITUDES ABOUT RESIDENCE IN NEEDHAM

Four questions in the survey assessed respondents’ attitudes about their residence in Needham. Respondents were asked how important it is for them to be able to live independently as they age, how they would rate Needham as a place for people to live as they age, how important it is for them to remain in Needham as they age, and how likely it is that they will remain in Needham as they age.

Importance of Living Independently

Respondents were asked, “How important is it for you to be able to live independently in your own home as you age?” Nine out of every ten respondents (91%) reported that it is either *very important* (32%) or *extremely important* (59%) for them to be able to live independently in their home as they age. Two percent (2%) of respondents indicated that it is *not very important* or *not at all important* to them to be able to live independently in their own home as they age.

Figure 1: Importance of Living Independently (n=626, mean = 4.47 out of 5.00)

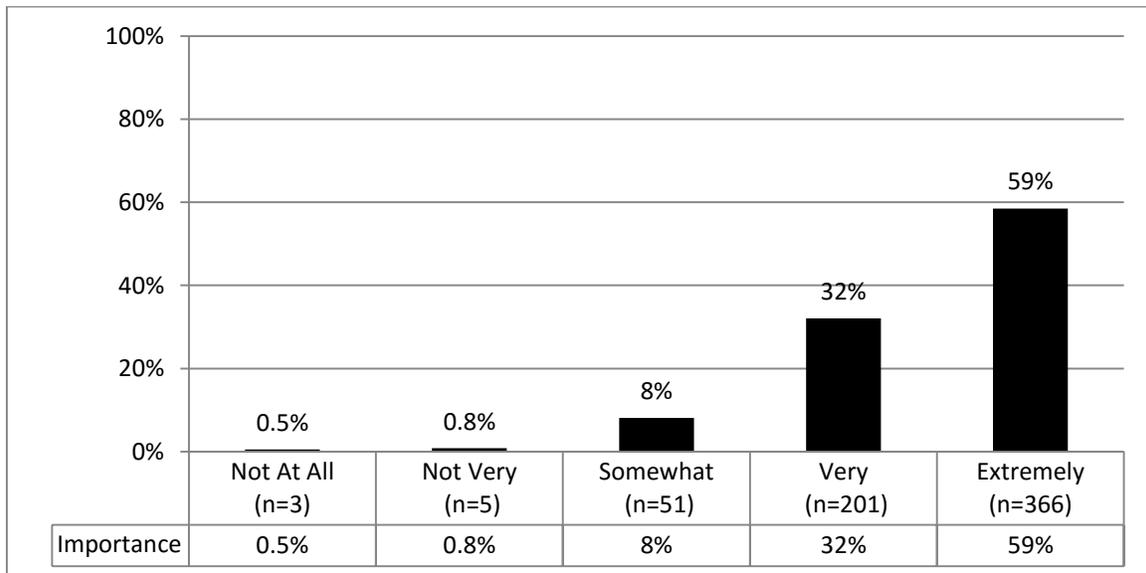


Figure Notes: A total of 626 individuals (96.3%) answered this question.

Ratings of Needham as a Place to Live as People Age

Respondents were asked, “How would you rate Needham as a place for people to live as they age?” Eight of every ten respondents (82%) perceived Needham to be a *good* (32%), *very good* (34%), or *excellent* (17%) place for people to live as they age. Four (4%) of respondents felt that Needham was a *poor* place for people to live as they age.

Figure 2: Needham as Senior Friendly Place to Live (n=627, mean = 3.46 out of 5.00)

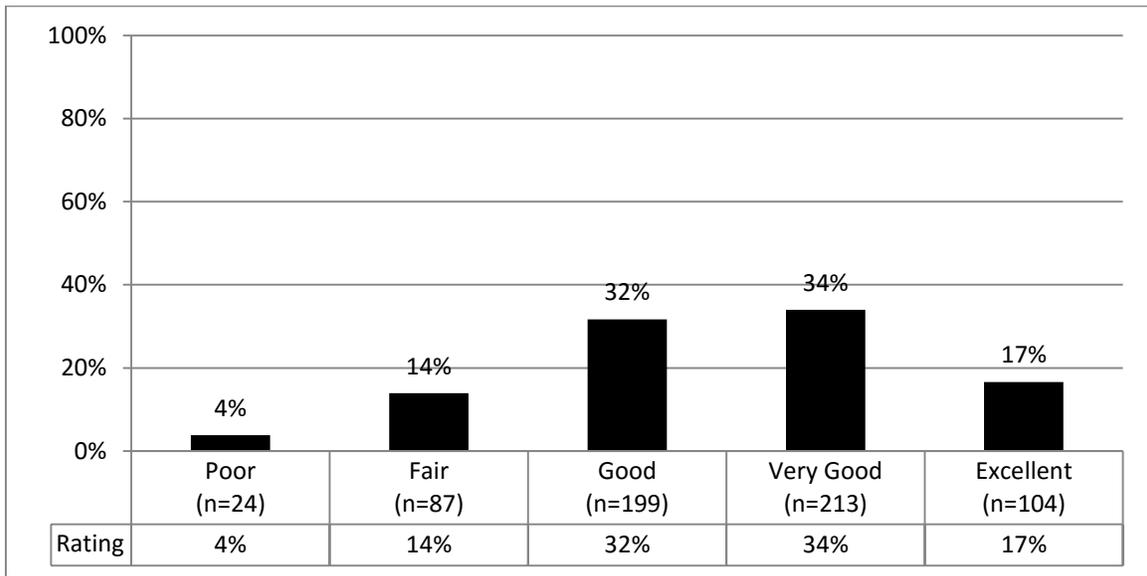


Figure Notes: A total of 627 individuals (96.5%) answered this question.

Importance of Remaining in Needham

Respondents were asked, “How *important* is it for you to remain in Needham as you age?” Nine of every ten respondents (93%) indicated that it is *somewhat important* (25%), *very important* (35%), or *extremely important* (33%) for them to remain in Needham as they age. Seven (7%) reported that it is *not very important* or *not at all important* for them to remain in Needham as they age.

Figure 3: Importance of Remaining in Needham (n=626, mean = 3.92 out of 5.00)

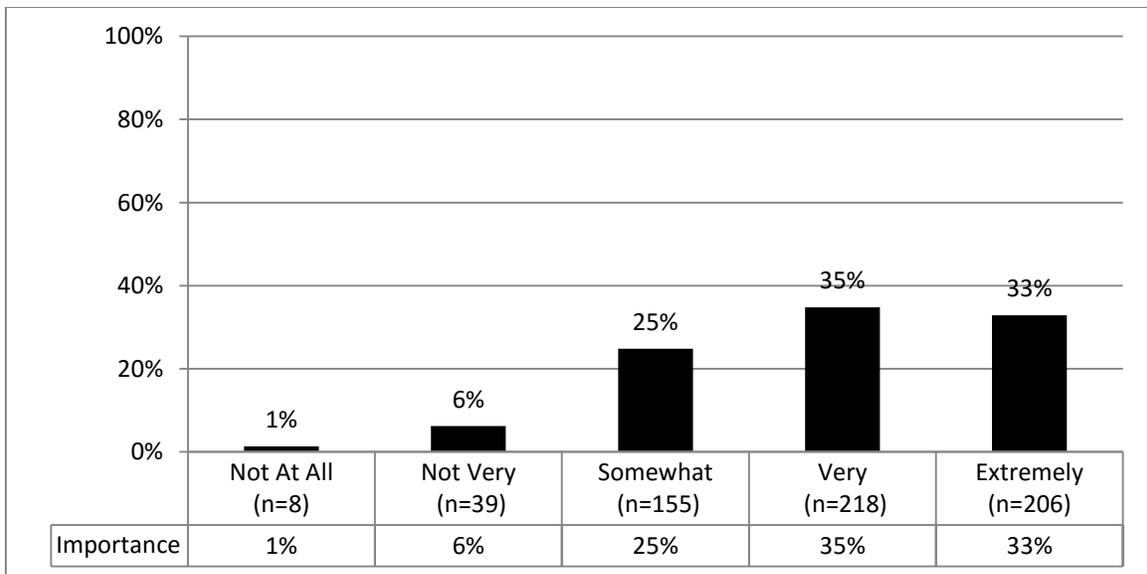


Figure Notes: A total of 626 individuals (96.3%) answered this question.

Likelihood of Remaining in Needham

Respondents were asked, “How *likely* is it that you will remain in Needham as you age?” Nine of every ten respondents (91%) indicated that it is *somewhat likely* (24%), *very likely* (36%), or *extremely likely* (31%) that they will remain in Needham as they age. Nine (9%) reported that it is *not very likely* or *not at all likely* for them to remain in Needham as they age.

Figure 4: Likelihood of Remaining in Needham (n=623, mean = 3.86 out of 5.00)

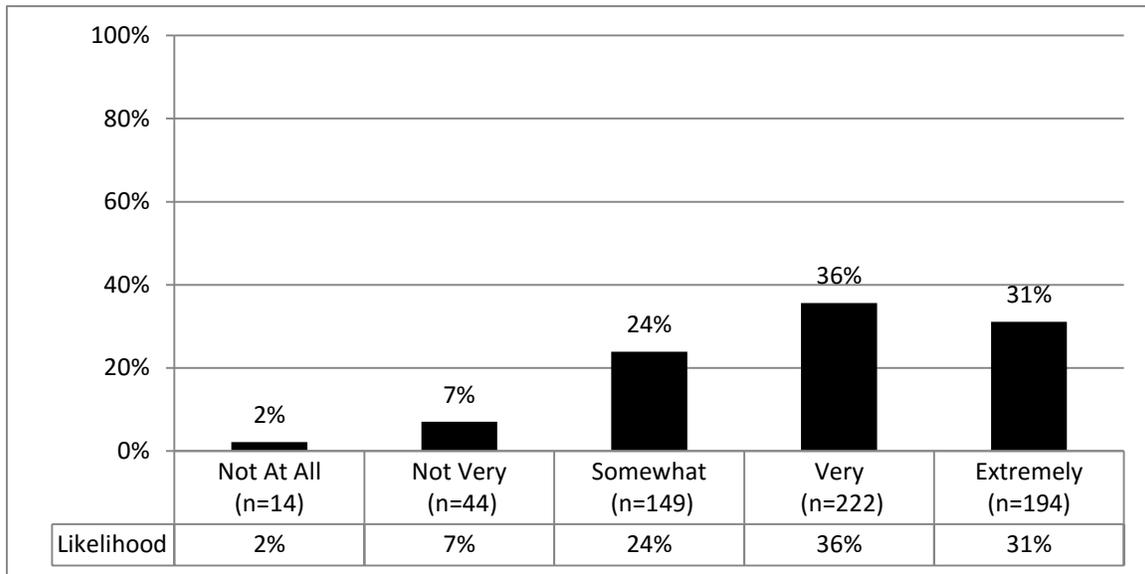


Figure Notes: A total of 623 individuals (95.8%) answered this question.

Comparison Between Importance and Likelihood Ratings

Over half of the 621 respondents that answered both the importance and likelihood questions provided the same rating for *importance* and *likelihood* of remaining in Needham as they age (49%). Twenty-two percent (22%) provided a lower *importance* rating than *likelihood* rating – indicating that it is more *likely* that they will remain in Needham than it is *important* for them to do so (n=134). Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents provided a higher *importance* rating than *likelihood* rating – indicating that it is more *important* for them to remain in Needham than it is *likely* that they will remain in Needham (n=135).

Attitudes About Residence in Needham – Summary

Almost all of the respondents (91%) reported that it is *very* or *extremely important* for them to be able to live independently in their home as they age. Eighty-two percent (82%) perceive Needham to be a *good*, *very good*, or *excellent* place for people to live as they age. Over 90% of respondents feel it is *somewhat*, *very*, or *extremely important* for them to remain in Needham as they age, and an equal proportion believe it is *somewhat*, *very*, or *extremely likely* that they will do so. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents indicated that it was more important for them to remain in Needham as they age compared to the likelihood that they will do so (n=135).

FINDINGS – POTENTIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS TO MOVE

A series of 9 items in the survey asked respondents to identify potential factors that might influence their decision about whether or not to move out of Needham in the future.

Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move

Over half of respondents indicated that *if* they were to consider moving out of Needham, the most common reasons for doing so would be: looking for a smaller home size (58%), looking for a home with services to help them live independently as they age (56%), concerns that it will be too expensive to maintain their current home (51%), and wanting to be closer to their family (50%). Approximately four of every ten respondents indicated that they would look for an area with lower costs of living (44%) or an area with more access to public transportation (42%). Comparatively fewer respondents indicated that wanting to live in a different climate (24%) or wanting to be closer to better health care facilities (23%) would impact their decision. Fourteen percent (14%) indicated fearing for their personal safety or having safety concerns.

Table 12: Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move

If you were to consider moving out of Needham, would the following factors impact your decision to move?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Looking for a smaller home size (n=557)	324	58.2%
Looking for a home with services to help you live independently as you age (n=557)	309	55.5%
It will be too expensive to maintain your current home (n=551)	283	51.4%
Wanting to be closer to family (n=555)	279	50.3%
Looking for an area with lower cost of living (n=549)	242	44.1%
Needing more access to public transportation (n=548)	232	42.3%
Wanting to live in a different climate (n=543)	128	23.6%
Wanting to be closer to better health care facilities (n=542)	127	23.4%
Fearing for your personal safety or safety concerns (n=545)	77	14.1%

Table Notes: Between 542 (83.4%) and 557 (85.7%) individuals answered these questions – average 85%.

In addition to the nine potential factors influencing decisions to move that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other factors. A total of 56 individuals (9% of all respondents) wrote-in another factor. Seventy-seven (77) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments and themes appears in **Appendix A**.

Respondents who chose to write-in a factor were most likely to indicate that a desire for more affordable housing options would potentially influence their decision to move out of Needham at some point in the future (2.3%). Other comments provided by five or more respondents included: wanting to find a single-floor household (1.8%); a community with lower property taxes or special property tax relief for seniors (1.2%); presence of a long-term care facility

(1.1%); availability of affordable condominiums or apartments (1.1%); the ability to downsize their current living space (0.9%); the ability to be within walking distance of services and the downtown area (0.9%); and wanting a change of scenery, lifestyle change, or to be closer to family (0.8%). See Appendix A for the complete list of comments and themes.

Table 13: Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move – Write-In Responses

If you were to consider moving out of Needham, would the following factors impact your decision to move? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix A.		
	Frequency	Percentage
More Affordable Housing Options	15	2.3%
Single Floor Living	12	1.8%
Lower Property Taxes	8	1.2%
Presence of a Care Facility	7	1.1%
Condo/Apartment	7	1.1%
Downsizing	6	0.9%
Walking Distance to Services	6	0.9%
Change of Scenery/Lifestyle/Closer to Family	5	0.8%
Home Maintenance/Home Services	4	0.6%
Close Services	3	0.5%
More Senior Activities	2	0.3%
Future Health Status/Death of Spouse	2	0.3%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move – Summary

Respondents indicated that *if* they were to consider moving out of Needham at some point in the future that the most common reasons for doing so would be: looking for a smaller home size (58%), looking for a home with services to help them live independently as they age (56%), and concerns that it will be too expensive to maintain their current home (51%). Approximately one of every ten respondents (9%) provided an additional write-in response – these responses tended to all be sub-themes of the factors that appeared in the survey. The most common write-in comments were: more affordable housing options (2.3%), single-floor living options (1.8%), and lower property taxes (1.2%).

FINDINGS – HOME MODIFICATIONS

A series of items in the survey asked respondents whether or not they have made modifications to their home to enable them to stay there as they age, whether they wanted to make modifications but were not able to, and barriers to making desired home improvements.

Existing Home Modifications

Almost half of all respondents (46%) report that they have made one or more modifications to their home to enable them to stay there as they age.

Approximately one-third of respondents (36%) reported that they have made modifications to their bathroom and one-quarter (26%) have installed improved lighting. Fewer respondents report that they have added a bedroom, bathroom, or kitchen on the first floor (12%), added a ramp or made other modifications to allow easier access into or within their home (6%), or installed a medical emergency response system (6%).

Table 14: Existing Home Modifications

Have you made any of the following modifications to your home to enable you to stay there as you age?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Bathroom modifications such as grab bars, handrails, a higher toilet, or non-slip tiles (n=595)	211	35.5%
Improved lighting (n=568)	146	25.7%
Added a bedroom, bathroom, and/or kitchen on the first floor (n=579)	71	12.3%
A ramp, wider doorways, chairlift, or elevator to allow easier access into or within your home (n=591)	38	6.4%
Installed a medical emergency response system that notifies others in case of an emergency (n=578)	36	6.2%

Table Notes: Between 542 (83.4%) and 557 (85.7%) individuals answered these questions – average 85%.

In addition to the five types of modifications that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other types of modifications. A total of 23 individuals (4% of all respondents) wrote-in another factor. Twenty-three (23) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments and themes appears in **Appendix B**.

Respondents who chose to write-in a modification were most likely to indicate that they made physical alterations to their home such as changes to doors, adding ramps, or making bathroom improvements (1.5%). Other comments provided by four or more respondents included: having recently downsized or moved to more senior-friendly housing (0.6%) and having installed or signed-up for a monitoring or security system (0.6%). See Appendix B for the complete list of comments and themes.

Table 15: Existing Home Modifications – Write-In Responses

Have you made any of the following modifications to your home to enable you to stay there as you age? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix B.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Physical Alterations (doors, ramps, bathroom improvements)	10	1.5%
Downsized	4	0.6%
Monitoring/Security System	4	0.6%
Cell Phone	2	0.3%
Contract Maintenance Services	2	0.3%
Caregiver Support	1	0.2%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Existing Home Modifications – Summary

Almost half of all respondents (46%) reported that they have made one or more modifications to their home to enable them to stay there as they age. The largest proportion of respondents reported that they have made modifications to their bathroom (36%) and/or installed improved lighting (26%). Four percent of respondents (4%) provided an additional write-in response – these responses tended to all be sub-themes of the list of modifications that appeared in the survey. The most common write-in comments were: having made physical alterations to their home such as changes to doors, adding ramps, or making bathroom improvements (1.5%); having recently downsized or moved to more senior-friendly housing (0.6%); and having installed or signed-up for a monitoring or security system (0.6%).

Barriers to Making Home Modifications

Respondents were asked whether they wanted to make modifications to their home that they have not been able to make.

Across the respondent sample, 83% indicated that they did *not* want to make any modifications to their home that they were not able to make. One-hundred and two (102) respondents (17%) indicated that they were not able to make the modifications that they *wanted* to make.

Four percent of respondents (4%) of respondents reported that the reason they have not been able to make desired modifications is that they don't own the property and are not allowed to make modifications. Thirteen percent of respondents (13%) identified another barrier to being able to make their desired modifications. See Figure 5.

There were several instances in which it appears that respondents were confused by the manner in which these questions were presented. In these instances, respondents indicated that they did not want to make any modifications to their home but then went on to note that they don't own the residence or that there were other barriers to making modifications. This was handled by prioritizing their initial answer to Question #18, "Have you *wanted* to make modifications to your home, but weren't able to?" If respondents answered "No" to this question, any of the barriers they cited in subsequent items were assigned to missing. The

rationale for this change is that the analysis is intended to represent those that *want* to make modifications independent of their ability to do so. If they don't have an interest in making changes, the presence or absence of potential barriers is not applicable at this point in time. If this survey is repeated in Needham or replicated in another community, attention should be paid to examining how to modify Question #18 and #19 to reduce the potential for error.

Figure 5: Barriers to Making Home Modifications

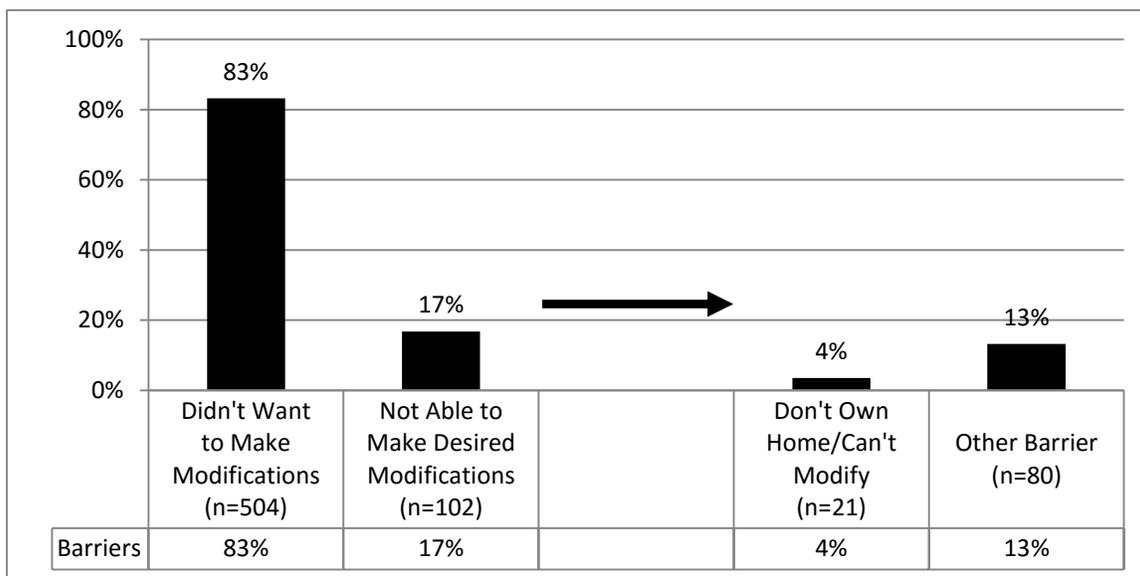


Figure Notes: A total of 606 individuals (93.2%) answered this question.

Among the individuals who wanted to make home improvements yet cited barriers other than not owning the residence (n=80), the largest proportion identified the cost of the modification as being a barrier (10% of all respondents). Other barriers to making desired improvements were: architecture of the home (7%), building codes (3%), finding a contractor (2%), and zoning codes (2%).

Table 16: Barriers to Making Home Modifications

If you were not able to make modifications to your home, what has prevented you from making these changes?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Cost of the modification	61	10.1%
Architecture of the home	40	6.6%
Building codes	17	2.8%
Finding a contractor	14	2.3%
Zoning codes	13	2.1%

Table Notes: A total of 606 individuals (93.2%) answered these questions.

In addition to the five types potential barriers that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other barriers. A total of 5 individuals (0.8% of all respondents)

wrote-in another barrier. Five (5) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments/themes appears in **Appendix C**.

Respondents who chose to write-in a barrier were most likely to identify expense as the barrier (0.5%). The two additional respondents cited time (0.2%) and property lines (0.2%) as barriers to making desired home improvements. See Appendix C for the complete list of comments and themes.

Table 17: Barriers to Making Home Modifications – Write-In Responses

If you were not able to make modifications to your home, what has prevented you from making these changes? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix C.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Expense	3	0.5%
Time	1	0.2%
Property lines (setback requirements)	1	0.2%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Barriers to Making Home Modifications – Summary

Across the respondent sample, seventeen (17%) of respondents indicated that they were not able to make modifications to their home that they wanted to make. Among this group, 4% reported that the reason they have not been able to make modifications is that they don't own the property and are not allowed to make modifications. Thirteen percent of respondents (13%) identified another barrier to being able to make their desired modifications. Within this subset, the largest proportion of respondents cited cost (10%) and architecture of the home (7%) as barriers. Few respondents cited a barrier that was not already listed in the survey.

FINDINGS – EXERCISE AND WALKING

Two sets of items in the survey asked about potential barriers to walking for exercise or errands.

Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Places to Rest

Respondents were asked, “Would you be more likely to walk for exercise or to get to your destinations if there were more benches on your walking route?” Five-hundred and ninety (590) individuals answered this question (90.8% of all survey respondents).

One-third of respondents (37%) indicated that they *would* be more likely to walk for exercise or to get to their destination if there were more benches on their walking route.

Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Crossing the Street

Half of the respondents (49.9%) indicated that they have trouble crossing the street when walking for at least one reason (n=308). Respondents were most likely to identify not having enough time on the traffic light (22%), followed by not having crosswalks where they need them (21%), fear that turning cars won’t see them crossing the street (18%), and not having traffic lights where they need them (11%).

Table 18: Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands

When walking, do you have any trouble crossing the street for the following reasons?		
	Frequency	Percentage
Not enough time on the traffic light	137	22.2%
No crosswalks where you need them	128	20.7%
Turning cars do not see you	109	17.7%
No traffic lights where you need them	69	11.2%
Missing	33	-
Total Valid	617	94.9%

In addition to the four potential barriers that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other barriers. A total of 65 individuals (10% of all respondents) wrote-in another barrier. Ninety-eight (98) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments/themes appears in **Appendix D**.

Respondents who chose to write-in a barrier were most likely to indicate that drivers do not stop at crosswalks (2.8% of all respondents). Five or more respondents also identified: drivers who are hurried, distracted, or on cell phones (2.0%); not enough sidewalks the further you get from the center of town (1.8%); the poor condition of many sidewalks (1.7%); speeding drivers (0.9%); poor visibility and inadequate lighting near several crosswalks (0.9%); and the feeling that there is too much traffic in town (0.8%). See Appendix D for the complete list of comments and themes.

Table 19: Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Write-In Responses

When walking, do you have any trouble crossing the street for the following reasons? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix D.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Drivers don't stop at crosswalks	18	2.8%
Hurried drivers/Distracted Drivers/Cell Phone Use	13	2.0%
Not enough sidewalks	12	1.8%
Sidewalk condition	11	1.7%
Speeding	6	0.9%
Poor visibility/Inadequate Lighting	6	0.9%
Too much traffic in town	5	0.8%
Traffic lights too short	3	0.5%
More signage/painted crosswalks	3	0.5%
Sidewalk obstructions (bushes, construction equipment, snow)	3	0.5%
Great Plain Avenue	2	0.3%
Highland Avenue	2	0.3%
Hillside Avenue	2	0.3%
More audible crosswalk signals	1	0.2%
Bicyclists not yielding right of way	1	0.2%
Handicap ramp condition	1	0.2%
Right turn on red through crosswalk	1	0.2%
Long wait times for traffic light	1	0.2%
Center of town	1	0.2%
Central Avenue	1	0.2%
Grant Street	1	0.2%
Green Street	1	0.2%
Route 135	1	0.2%
The Farm House	1	0.2%
More crosswalks needed	1	0.2%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Potential Barriers to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Summary

One-third of respondents (37%) indicated that they *would* be more likely to walk for exercise or to get to their destination if there were more benches on their walking route. Half of the respondents (49.9%) indicated that they have trouble crossing the street when walking for at least one reason. Respondents were most likely to identify not having enough time on the traffic light (22%), followed by not having crosswalks where they need them (21%), fear that turning cars won't see them crossing the street (18%), and not having traffic lights where they need them (11%). The most common write-in responses for this question were: drivers don't stop at crosswalks (2.8%); drivers are hurried, distracted, or on cell phones (2.0%); not enough sidewalks the further you get from the center of town (1.8%); and the poor condition of many sidewalks (1.7%).

FINDINGS – COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Respondents were asked to rate the relative importance of having eight different infrastructure elements in their community.

Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements

Over three-quarters of respondents indicated that it was either *moderately important* or *very important* to have each of these infrastructure elements in their community: sidewalks that are in good condition, free from obstruction, and accessible for wheelchairs or walkers (96%); well-maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different physical abilities (92%); bus or shuttle service for older residents (89%); well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities (88%); well-maintained and safe parks that are within walking distance of their home (85%); public parks with enough benches (82%); separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians (81%); and benches in other public places such as shopping and business districts (79%).

Table 20: Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements

How important do you think it is to have the following in your community?				
	Not	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Sidewalks that are in good condition, free from obstruction, and are accessible for wheelchairs or walkers	1.5% (9)	2.9% (17)	17.8% (106)	77.9% (464)
Well-maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	2.2% (13)	5.9% (35)	22.3% (132)	69.6% (413)
Bus or shuttle service for older residents	2.5% (15)	8.3% (49)	27.7% (163)	61.5% (362)
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities	2.6% (15)	9.2% (54)	25.4% (149)	62.8% (368)
Well-maintained and safe parks that are within walking distance of your home	4.2% (25)	11.0% (65)	34.9% (206)	49.9% (295)
Public parks with enough benches	4.1% (24)	13.7% (80)	38.5% (224)	43.6% (254)
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	6.8% (40)	12.6% (74)	30.6% (179)	49.9% (292)
Benches in other public places such as shopping and business districts	5.6% (33)	15.6% (91)	35.6% (208)	43.2% (253)

Table Notes: Between 582 (89.5%) and 593 (91.2%) individuals answered these questions – average 91%.

Figure 6 presents these data visually by charting the mean score (average) for each item. Mean scores range from a low of 1.00 (Not Important) to a high of 4.00 (Very Important). As shown in the figure, the mean score for all eight items fell between the *moderately important* and *very important* points on the scale. The most important element was having sidewalks that are in

good condition, free from obstruction, and are accessible for wheelchairs or walkers (mean = 3.72 out of 4.00). The least important element (comparatively) was having benches in other public places such as shopping and business districts (mean = 3.16 out of 4.00). It is important to note that even among this least important item that 79% of respondents indicated that having benches in other public places such as shopping and business districts was *moderately important or very important* to them.

Figure 6: Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements (Mean Scores)

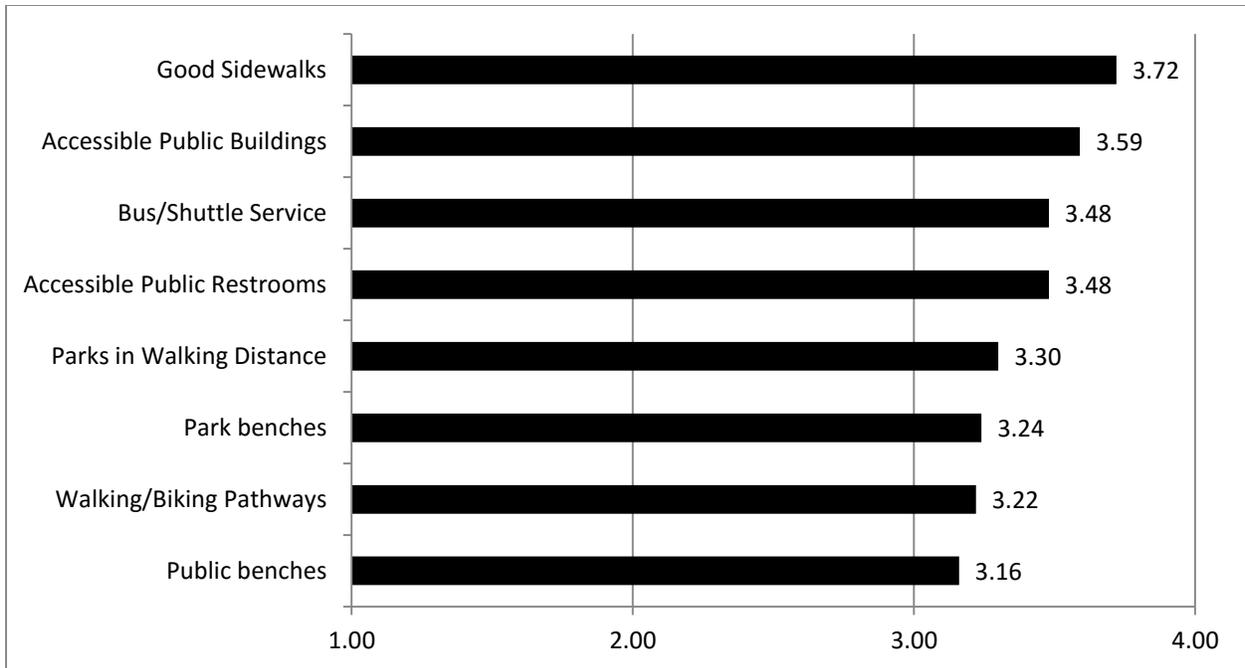


Figure Notes: Mean scores range from a low of 1.00 (Not Important) to a high of 4.00 (Very Important).

In addition to the eight community infrastructure elements that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other important community infrastructure elements. A total of 25 individuals (4% of all respondents) wrote-in another community infrastructure element. Thirty (30) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments/themes appears in **Appendix E**.

Respondents who chose to write-in a different community infrastructure element were most likely to identify sidewalks in good condition and unobstructed (1.1%). Two or more respondents also identified: better street lighting (0.5%); more enforcement of traffic laws (0.5%); pedestrian-friendly improvements (0.3%); more access to restrooms (0.3%); and more audio crosswalks (0.3%). See Appendix E for the complete list of comments and themes.

Table 21: Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements – Write-Ins

How important do you think it is to have the following in your community? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix E.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Sidewalks (good condition; unobstructed)	7	1.1%
Street lighting	3	0.5%
Traffic enforcement	3	0.5%
Pedestrian-friendly (bike-free sidewalks; right of way)	2	0.3%
Business restrooms/Handicap restrooms (higher toilets)	2	0.3%
Audio crosswalks	2	0.3%
Caring community	1	0.2%
Community activities	1	0.2%
Convenient mailboxes	1	0.2%
Great senior center	1	0.2%
Heating at Center at the Heights	1	0.2%
Less traffic in town	1	0.2%
MBTA parking (snow removal)	1	0.2%
More bus routes/Accessible public transportation	1	0.2%
Service with vetted contractors	1	0.2%
Taxi vouchers	1	0.2%
Store-front benches	1	0.2%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Perceived Importance of Community Infrastructure Elements – Summary

Over three-quarters of respondents indicated that it was either *moderately important* or *very important* to have the following community infrastructure elements: sidewalks that are in good condition, free from obstruction, and accessible for wheelchairs or walkers (96%); well-maintained public buildings and facilities that are accessible to people of different physical abilities (92%); bus or shuttle service for older residents (89%); well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible to people of different physical abilities (88%); well-maintained and safe parks that are within walking distance of their home (85%); public parks with enough benches (82%); separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians (81%); and benches in other public places such as shopping and business districts (79%). Write-in comments tended to be sub-themes of the items that already appeared in the survey.

FINDINGS – CURRENT TRANSPORTATION METHODS

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they currently use seven different modes of transportation to get around Needham.

Current Transportation Methods

Respondents were most likely to report that they *sometimes* or *often* drive themselves (93%), walk (74%), have others drive them (28%), or ride a bike (20%). Comparatively fewer respondents report that they *sometimes* or *often* use a public bus or shuttle (9%), take a taxi or cab (8%), or use a special transportation service (6%).

The response rate for these items varied from 83% to 91%. Several respondents answered the question about driving themselves and did not answer any of the other items in the list. Given this, it is possible that the summary statistics for other methods of transportation on the list may be over-estimates under the assumption that these individuals only drive themselves and saw no need to respond to the other questions in the list.

Table 22: Current Transportation Methods

How often do you currently use the following ways to get yourself around Needham for trips like shopping, visiting the doctor, visiting friends, and running errands?				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Drive yourself	5.2% (31)	1.3% (8)	2.7% (16)	90.7% (539)
Walk	10.1% (56)	16.4% (91)	45.8% (254)	27.7% (154)
Have others drive you	42.2% (227)	29.4% (158)	20.4% (110)	8.0% (43)
Ride a bike	59.3% (318)	20.7% (111)	15.5% (83)	4.5% (24)
Use public bus or shuttle	71.8% (389)	18.8% (102)	7.4% (40)	2.0% (11)
Take a taxi or cab	71.9% (386)	19.7% (106)	7.4% (40)	0.9% (5)
Special transportation service, such as one for seniors or persons with disabilities	89.0% (477)	5.0% (27)	3.4% (18)	2.6% (14)

Table Notes: Between 536 (82.5%) and 594 (91.4%) individuals answered these questions – average 84%.

Figure 7 presents these data visually by charting the mean score (average) for each item. Mean scores range from a low of 1.00 (Never) to a high of 4.00 (Very Often). The most frequent method of transportation was driving (mean = 3.79 out of 4.00). The least frequent method of transportation was a special transportation service (mean = 1.20 out of 4.00).

Figure 7: Current Transportation Methods (Mean Scores)

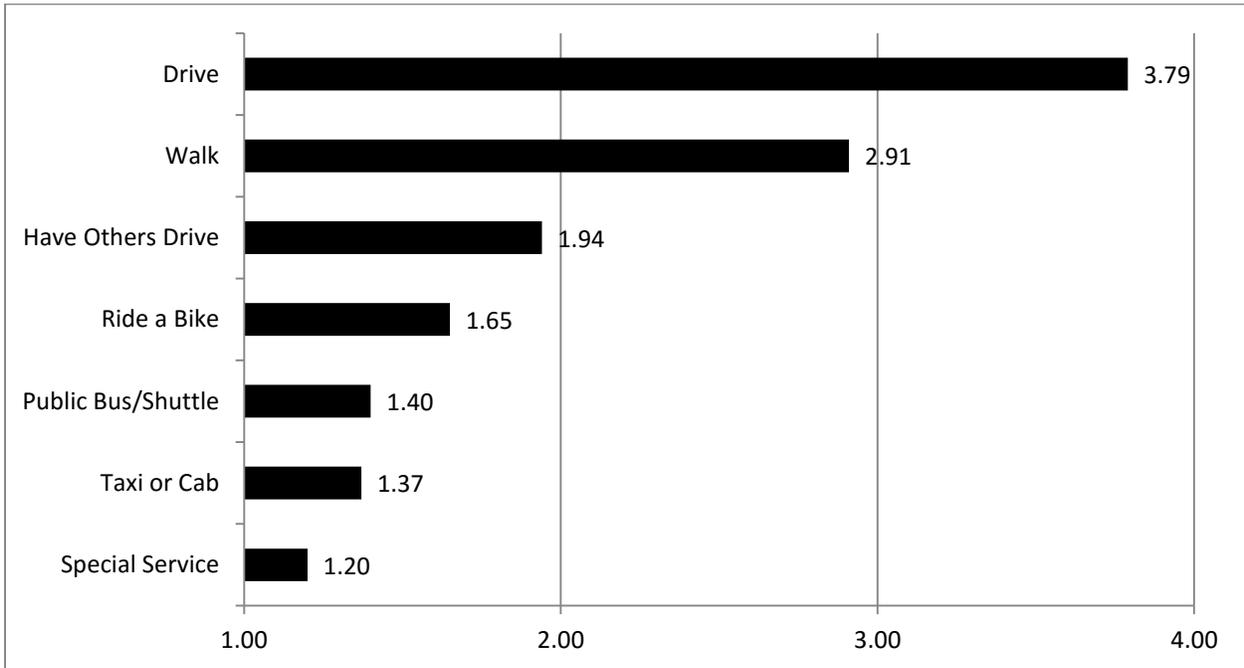


Figure Notes: Mean scores range from a low of 1.00 (Never) to a high of 4.00 (Very Often).

In addition to the seven transportation methods that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other methods. A total of 10 individuals (2% of all respondents) wrote-in another transportation method. Twelve (12) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments/themes appears in **Appendix F**. All of the write-in comments were variations of existing survey items.

Table 23: Current Transportation Methods – Write-In Responses

How often do you currently use the following ways to get yourself around Needham for trips like shopping, visiting the doctor, visiting friends, and running errands? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix F.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Public transportation (train, public bus)	5	0.8%
Special Services (e.g., Council on Aging van)	4	0.6%
Taxi or cab	2	0.3%
Drive	1	0.2%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Current Transportation Methods – Summary

Respondents were most likely to report that they *sometimes* or *often* drive themselves (93%), walk (74%), have others drive them (28%), or ride a bike (20%). Comparatively fewer respondents report that they *sometimes* or *often* use a public bus or shuttle (9%), take a taxi or cab (8%), or use a special transportation service (6%). Write-in comments tended to be identical to the items that already appeared in the survey.

FINDINGS – TRANSPORTATION METHODS AS RESPONDENTS AGE

Respondents were asked to indicate how important it is for them to be able to get around Needham using seven different modes of transportation as they age.

Importance of Different Transportation Methods in Future

The largest proportion of respondents reported that it is *moderately important* or *very important* for them to be able to drive themselves as they age (94%), have others drive them (83%), use a public bus or shuttle (62%), walk (62%), use a special transportation service (57%), take a taxi or cab (39%), and ride a bike (24%).

The response rate for these items varied from 80% to 90%. As with the previous set of items, several respondents answered the question about driving themselves and did not answer any of the other items in the list. Given this, it is possible that the summary statistics for other methods of transportation on the list may be over-estimates under the assumption that these individuals only intend drive themselves as they age and saw no need to respond to the other questions in the list.

Table 24: Importance of Different Transportation Methods in Future

As you age, how important is it for you to be able to get yourself around Needham in the following ways?				
	Not	Slightly	Moderately	Very
Drive yourself	4.3% (25)	1.4% (8)	15.5% (91)	78.9% (463)
Have others drive you	6.9% (38)	9.8% (54)	28.1% (155)	55.3% (305)
Use public bus or shuttle	17.3% (95)	21.2% (116)	31.2% (171)	30.3% (166)
Walk	11.3% (60)	26.8% (142)	38.6% (204)	23.3% (123)
Special transportation service, such as one for seniors or persons with disabilities	20.7% (109)	22.0% (116)	24.7% (130)	32.6% (172)
Take a taxi or cab	30.6% (159)	30.6% (159)	26.3% (137)	12.5% (65)
Ride a bike	60.9% (318)	15.1% (79)	14.8% (77)	9.2% (48)

Table Notes: Between 520 (80.0%) and 587 (90.3%) individuals answered these questions – average 83%.

Figure 8 presents these data visually by charting the mean score (average) for each item. Mean scores range from a low of 1.00 (Not Important) to a high of 4.00 (Very Important). The most important method of transportation in the future was driving (mean = 3.69 out of 4.00). The least important method of transportation in the future was biking (mean = 1.72 out of 4.00).

Figure 8: Importance of Different Transportation Methods (Mean Scores)

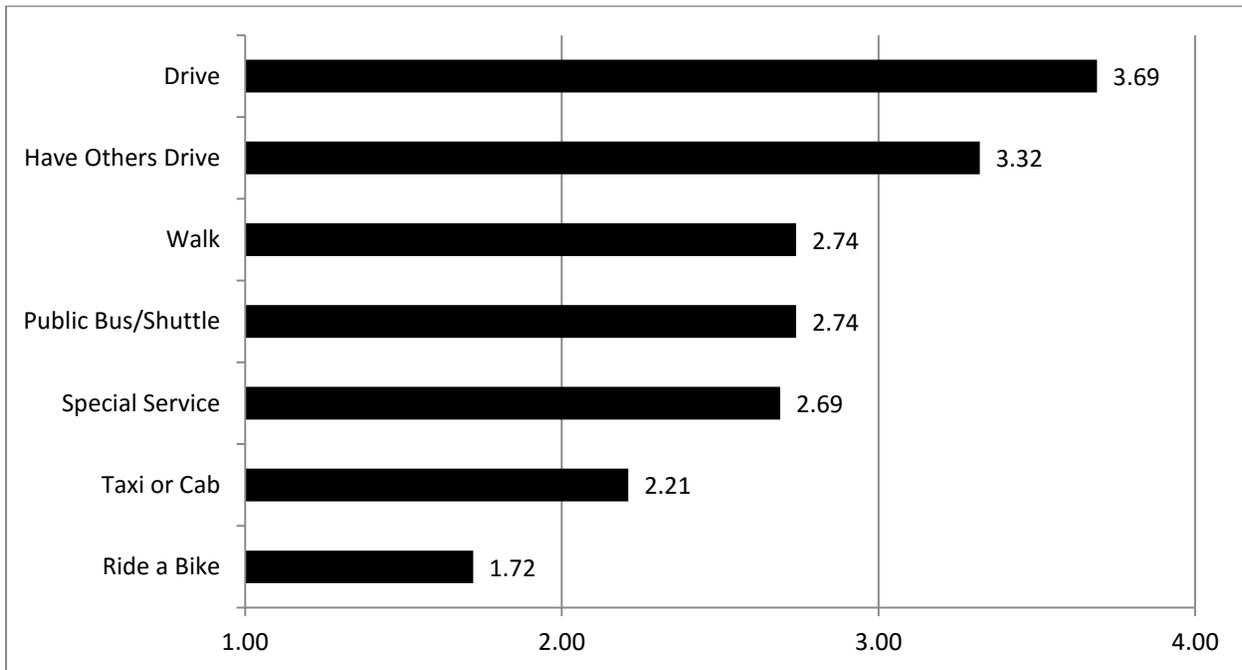


Figure Notes: Mean scores range from a low of 1.00 (Not Important) to a high of 4.00 (Very Important).

In addition to the seven transportation methods that were included in the survey, respondents had the option to write-in other methods. A total of 9 individuals (1% of all respondents) wrote-in another transportation method. Nine (9) discrete themes were extracted from these comments using qualitative thematic analysis. The complete list of comments/themes appears in **Appendix G**. All of the write-in comments were variations of existing survey items.

Table 25: Importance of Different Transportation Methods – Write-In Responses

As you age, how important is it for you to be able to get yourself around Needham in the following ways? – Other (write-ins) – See Appendix G.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Transportation options for seniors	5	0.8%
More accessible van access	2	0.3%
Mini bus	1	0.2%
Ride share	1	0.2%

Table Notes: The percentage column is based on the 650 survey respondents as the denominator.

Importance of Different Transportation Methods in Future – Summary

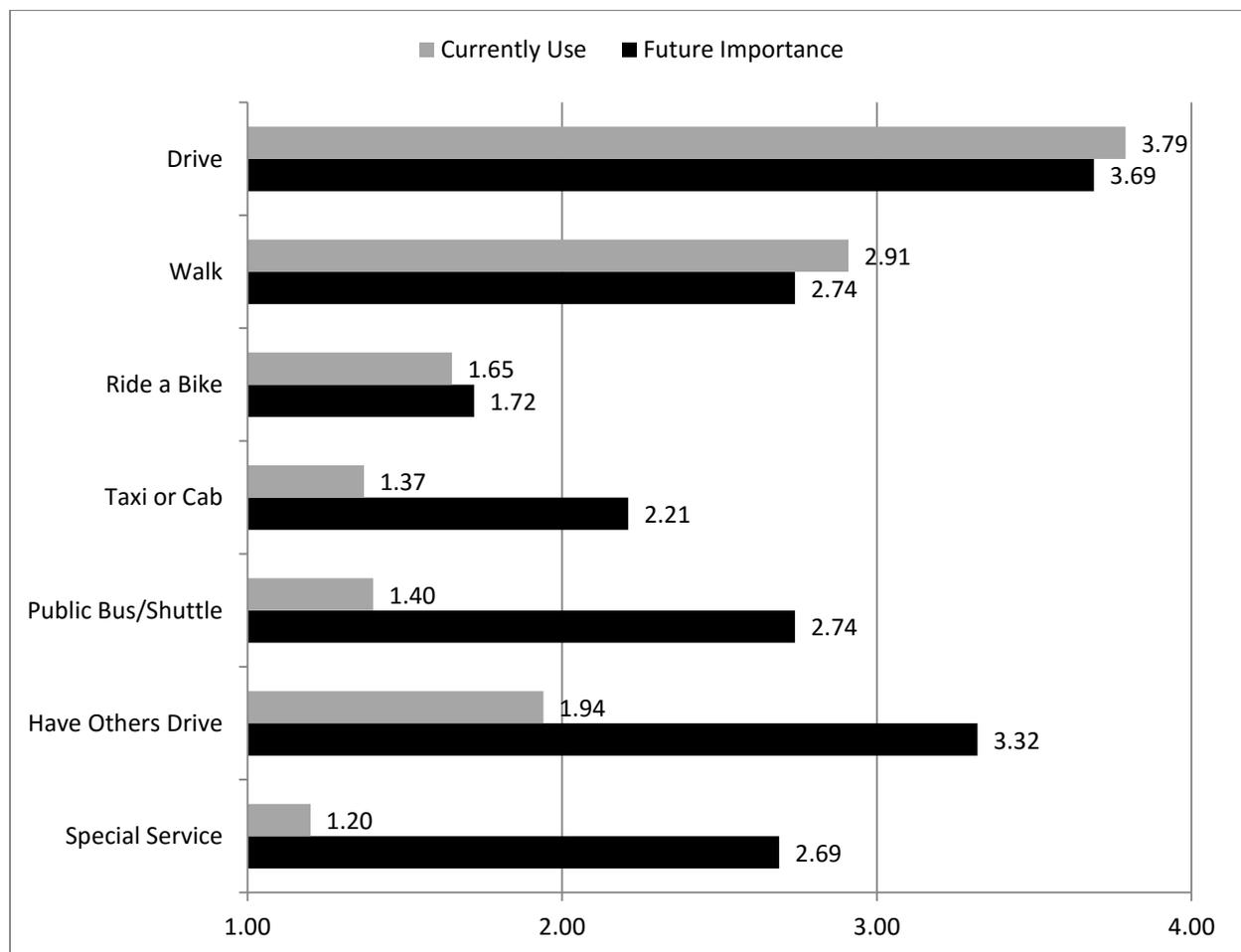
The largest proportion of respondents reported that it is *moderately important* or *very important* for them to be able to drive themselves as they age (94%), have others drive them (83%), use a public bus or shuttle (62%), walk (62%), use a special transportation service (57%), take a taxi or cab (39%), and ride a bike (24%). Write-in comments tended to be identical to the items that already appeared in the survey.

Comparison – Current Methods Versus Importance of Future Methods

Figure 9 compares the frequency with which people currently use different methods of transportation for getting around Needham compared to the degree of importance they place on each of these different methods of transportation in the future as they age.

Ratings for driving, walking, and riding a bike were similar with respect to how often people report that they currently use these methods and the importance that they place on each in the future as they age. Respondents placed higher importance on being able to take a taxi or cab, use a public bus/shuttle, have others drive them, and using a special transportation service in the future compared to their current use of these different methods of transportation. This was particularly the case for using a special transportation service in the future.

Figure 9: Current Versus Future Methods (Mean Scores)



FINDINGS – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondents were invited to provide additional comments – 150 respondents (23%) provided at least one comment. Qualitative thematic analysis extracted 247 discrete themes. Respondents were most likely to comment on the need for additional transportation options for seniors (6%), and the need for more affordable housing options for seniors (6%). The complete list of themes/comments appears in Appendix H.

Additional Comments (write-ins) – See Appendix H.		
	Frequency	Percentage
Additional transportation options for seniors	41	6.3%
Affordable housing	39	6.0%
More condos/apartments	21	3.2%
Undesirable construction priorities (too many tear-downs)	17	2.6%
Positive comments about Needham elderly services	15	2.3%
Sidewalk condition	15	2.3%
More downsizing options	11	1.7%
Lower/reduce property taxes for seniors	11	1.7%
Stricter traffic enforcement	6	0.9%
More single-floor housing stock	6	0.9%
More senior activities	5	0.8%
Group housing	4	0.6%
More street lighting	4	0.6%
Restrictive building codes and zoning bylaws	4	0.6%
Upgrades/modification to Needham Housing units	4	0.6%
High cost of living	3	0.5%
Crosswalks – better signage/painting	3	0.5%
More benches	3	0.5%
More downtown housing	3	0.5%
Don't prohibit tear-downs and lower real estate values	3	0.5%
Issues with the Senior Center	3	0.5%
Bike path	2	0.3%
In-home services	2	0.3%
Meals on Wheels	2	0.3%
Ride/car sharing	2	0.3%
Audio crosswalks	1	0.2%
More traffic lights	1	0.2%
Helper Program	1	0.2%
More public restrooms	1	0.2%
Invest in youth	1	0.2%
Outdoor walking track	1	0.2%
List of vetted contractors	1	0.2%
Pet-friendly housing	1	0.2%

APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISIONS TO MOVE – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #16j: If you were to consider moving out of Needham, would the following factors impact your decision to move?

Response: 56 Individuals Commented (9% of all respondents): 77 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Affordable	Maintenance	Condo	Affordable condo so outdoor and building maintenance not my responsibility.
Affordable	Condo		Affordable Condo.
Affordable	Condo		Affordable condo in Needham.
Affordable	Downsizing		Looking for a small, affordable house.
Affordable	Downsizing		Smaller single family affordable home in Needham.
Affordable	Care Facility		Would want elder apartment, affordable rent.
Affordable	Care Facility		Looking more suitable/lower cost/long term option.
Affordable	Single Floor		Affordable one floor living.
Affordable	Single Floor		Finding a single story affordable home.
Affordable			Affordable housing.
Affordable			Affordable rent.
Affordable			High cost of Needham housing.
Affordable			Price relative to size we would like is not available in Needham due to builders taking all the inventory.
Affordable			Looking for a town in the Metro West area with lower real estate cost.
Affordable			Remaining where I am now unless rent keeps going up.
Bigger Kitchen			Bigger kitchen footage to perform healthy diet. Very little work area now.
Care Facility			Care facility.
Care Facility			Care facility.
Care Facility			Availability of long-term care facility.
Care Facility			Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) nearby.
Change of Scenery			Change it up after 35-40 years.
Close Services	Condo		Condo close to town, food store, library.
Home Services			Community with more services to come into my home.
Condo	Walking Distance	Single Floor	Will want a condo. Home without stairs; walking distance to stores, restaurants, etc.
Condo	Apartment		Condo or apartment.
Death of Spouse			Death of spouse.
Downsizing	Close Services	Single Floor	Moving to another home within the town that is smaller, one level and closer to the center - stores, restaurants, T, medical facilities, etc.
Downsizing			Unable to downsize.
Downsizing			Community that values keeping smaller homes to accommodate youngest and oldest citizens.
Downtown Shopping			A downtown shopping area that provides more options.
Family			What remains of family is on the west coast.

<continued below>...

APPENDIX A: Potential Factors Influencing Decisions to Move – Other Responses <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Lifestyle			Lifestyle choices when I retire.
Property Taxes			Escalating real-estate taxes due to new homes next door.
Property Taxes			Location with lower real-estate taxes.
Property Taxes			Lower assessments and taxes.
Property Taxes			Lower property taxes.
Property Taxes			Property taxes.
Property Taxes			Real estate taxes are disproportionately high for small houses in Needham.
Property Taxes			Each town must provide property tax relief to its senior citizens - they deserve nothing less! Town of Needham (as are all towns) is too greedy - cut back on other programs if necessary!!!
Property Taxes			Lower property taxes for seniors.
Maintenance			Home maintenance issues.
Maintenance			Less home maintenance.
Senior Activities			Swim activities and activities specific for seniors.
Senior Complex	Senior Activities		Looking for an over 55 complex with lots of activities.
Sense of Community			Looking for a better sense of community.
Single Floor Living	Walking Distance	Sidewalks	One floor; sidewalks, and destinations to walk to.
Single Floor Living	Downsizing		Looking for a small house on a single level.
Single Floor Living	Parking		One floor living without stairs and adjacent parking.
Single Floor Living			House or Condo on one level. No stairs.
Single Floor Living			One floor living.
Single Floor Living			One floor living.
Single Floor Living			One floor living in case of knee injuries.
Single Floor Living			Option for one floor living.
Walking Distance			Want to be able to walk more places.
Walking Distance			Wanting more walkable location for shopping, etc.

APPENDIX B: EXISTING HOME MODIFICATIONS – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #17f: Have you made any of the following modifications to your home to enable you to stay there as you age?

Response: 23 Individuals Commented (4% of all respondents): 23 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Comment
Caregiver Support	24x7 caregivers.
Cell Phone	Cell phone with quick dial.
Cell Phone	Cell phone / Jitterbug.
Contract Maintenance Services	Added support for winter-related chores.
Contract Maintenance Services	Have started to contract out some maintenance tasks, like grounds keeping during growing season.
Downsized	I moved to a small ranch house.
Downsized	Recently moved to a smaller home in Needham.
Downsized	Sold home and moved to an apartment.
Downsized	We moved from single family home to condominium with elevators (Rosemary Ridge) in past 2 years.
Monitoring/Security System	Are You Okay Program Sheriff's office.
Monitoring/Security System	Alarm system.
Monitoring/Security System	Did install a security system.
Monitoring/Security System	Wear an alert button.
Physical Alterations	Altered door handles.
Physical Alterations	Heating and Air Conditioner.
Physical Alterations	Moved laundry room to first floor.
Physical Alterations	Porch.
Physical Alterations	Railing outdoors for steps to house.
Physical Alterations	Made a ramp with wood logs, for carrying in groceries.
Physical Alterations	Removed doors for wheelchair access.
Physical Alterations	Removed tub and installed shower considering a tub may be more difficult as we age.
Physical Alterations	Shower bars.
Physical Alterations	Upstairs laundry.

APPENDIX C: BARRIERS TO MAKING HOME IMPROVEMENTS – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #19g: If you were not able to make modifications to your home, what has prevented you from making these changes?

Response: 5 Individuals Commented (0.8% of all respondents): 5 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Comment
Time	Have not applied myself yet to doing so.
Expense	Need to sell bigger house first.
Expense	Labor expenses.
Expense	In process of looking to add bed/bath/ laundry on 1st floor. May be unaffordable.
Property lines	A carport (there is no garage). Setback from neighbor's drive prevents that. There is no protection from the sun and the car gets very, very hot in the summer, and is a challenge to keep clear in the winter.

APPENDIX D: POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO WALKING FOR EXERCISE OR ERRANDS – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #20e: When walking, do you have any trouble crossing the street for the following reasons?

Response: 65 Individuals Commented (10% of all respondents): 98 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Audible Signals			Not enough Audible Signals - I am blind.
Bicyclists			People on bicycles who do not obey rules of road - run lights.
Distracted Drivers	Cell Phones		Drivers are distracted using their cell phones.
Distracted Drivers			Drivers do not seem to pay attention to people walking in cross walks. A vehicle making a turn has nearly hit me while in a cross walk multiple times.
Drivers Don't Stop	Cell Phones	Speeding	Drivers texting, phoning, speeding through town, failing to stop for pedestrians.
Drivers Don't Stop	Distracted Drivers		Drivers do not reliably stop at stop signs on side streets intersecting more major streets. They are on autopilot or otherwise distracted, I think.
Drivers Don't Stop	Hurried Drivers	Cell Phones	Needham drivers are impatient, drive too quickly, and ignore crosswalks. Texting is still a problem.
Drivers Don't Stop	Hurried Drivers		Drivers run the walk lights - crazy drivers in a hurry.
Drivers Don't Stop	Signage/Painting	More Lighting	Crosswalks need lighting or painted differently. At lights, get halfway across street, cars do not stop.
Drivers Don't Stop	Traffic		Steady flow of traffic, cars frequently do not stop for pedestrians.
Drivers Don't Stop			Careless drivers ignore crosswalks.
Drivers Don't Stop			Cars do not always stop at crosswalks.
Drivers Don't Stop			Cars do not stop at marked cross walks in Needham.
Drivers Don't Stop			Cars not stopping at crosswalk.
Drivers Don't Stop			Crosswalks at dangerous locations and drivers who do not slow or stop for pedestrians.
Drivers Don't Stop			Dangers of crossing at a crosswalk where drivers don't stop.
Drivers Don't Stop			Drivers in too much of a hurry to let people cross the street.
Drivers Don't Stop			Drivers NOT stopping at crosswalk.
Drivers Don't Stop			Rude stupid drivers ignoring crosswalks.
Drivers Don't Stop			There is a crosswalk that cars do not pay attention to. You risk your life crossing half the time.
Drivers Don't Stop			Too many drivers ignore pedestrian signal.
Drivers Don't Stop			Vehicles not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalk.
Ramp Condition	The Farm House		Handicap ramps need repair (e.g., in front of The Farm House).
Hurried Drivers	Cell Phones		Drivers in a hurry and self-absorbed, talking on cell phone etc.
Hurried Drivers			Crazy drivers.
Hurried Drivers			Rushing motorist who comes across when lights changing amber into red, etc.
Light too Short	Center of Town		I have noticed the walk light is too short for my 94-year-old mother in law in the center of town.
Light too Short			Lights are too short.
Light too Short			Sometimes walk signs signals at traffic lights are too short in length.
More Lighting			Only intermittent street lights on my street. It is often dark.

<continued below>...

APPENDIX D: Potential Barrier to Walking for Exercise or Errands – Other Responses <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
More lighting			Some areas do not have enough street lighting
No Sidewalks	Green Street		No sidewalk linking Green Street to South Street.
No Sidewalks			No sidewalks.
No Sidewalks			No sidewalks.
No Sidewalks			No sidewalks.
No Sidewalks			No sidewalks - the automobile rules Needham.
No Sidewalks			No sidewalks in places.
No Sidewalks			Places with no sidewalks.
No Sidewalks			There are no sidewalks on our street.
Right Turn on Red			Green light or right-on red to turn across a crosswalk while a pedestrian is crossing with cross light lit.
Sidewalk Condition	Construction Equipment		So much construction equipment in neighborhoods to knock down and rebuild homes. Sidewalks and roads not good in so many places! The equipment (trucks, backhoes) cause unsafe crossings.
Sidewalk Condition	Grant Street	More Lighting	Very uneven and broken sidewalk on northwest side of Grant Street near Dedham Avenue. Dim overhead lighting at the junction of Grant and Dedham makes it hard to see pedestrians.
Sidewalk Condition	Highland Avenue		Sidewalks on Highland Avenue need repair.
Sidewalk Condition	Hillside Avenue	No Sidewalks	Sidewalk on Hillside Ave between West and Dale is poor. No sidewalk on Dale Street.
Sidewalk Condition	No Sidewalks	Obstructions	Missing, broken, and obstructed sidewalks (especially in winter).
Sidewalk Condition	No Sidewalks		Cracked, uneven sidewalks or no sidewalks.
Sidewalk Condition	No Sidewalks		Live too far from town center...side walks out this way are not maintained or are nonexistent.
Sidewalk Condition	Obstructions		Sidewalks themselves are often in terrible condition and obstructed by bushes, etc.
Sidewalk Condition			Broken pavement.
Sidewalk Condition			Need better sidewalks!!
Sidewalk Condition			Very poor sidewalks - broken and easy to stumble or fall.
Signage/Painting	Highland Avenue		Corner of Highland and Hunnewell is treacherous. No cone to indicate pedestrian right of way.
Signage/Painting			Maintain painted crosswalks.
Speeding	Cell Phones		People in this town drive too fast and are on cell phones.
Speeding	Great Plain Ave.	No Crosswalks	Great Plain Ave. Cars travel fast and street is wide. Occasional painted crosswalk would be helpful.
Speeding	Great Plain Ave.		Speeding cars on Great Plain Ave. toward Wellesley make it difficult to cross.
Speeding			Speeding vehicles.
Speeding			The cars go too fast!
Traffic	Central Avenue		Central Ave traffic...anywhere on Central Ave!!!!
Traffic	Route 135		Intimidation by traffic when using crosswalks on rt. 135.
Traffic			Too many cars.
Traffic			Traffic.
Visibility	Hillside Avenue		Concern about visibility at Hillside Ave intersection with Rosemary & West Streets.
Visibility			Tree and homes to block sight lines.
Waiting Times			Sometimes long wait for the walk light.

APPENDIX E: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #22i: How important do you think it is to have the following in your community?

Response: 25 Individuals Commented (4% of all respondents): 30 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Theme	Comment
Bike-Free Sidewalks		Bike-free sidewalks.
Business Restrooms	Store-Front Benches	Bathrooms in front of stores. Benches up front.
Caring Community	Pedestrian Right of Way	Community ethic that cares about others and pedestrian right of way.
Community Activities		More community group walking groups to experience town's hiking trails.
Convenient Mailboxes		Mailbox near Roche Bros.
Great Senior Center		Great senior center.
Handicap Restrooms		Toilets in handicapped restrooms must be higher!!
Heating at Center at the Heights		Center at the Heights - More heat.
Less Traffic		Less traffic.
MBTA Parking (snow removal)		MBTA parking that's cleared of snow and ice in the winter.
More Bus Routes		Easier access to public transportation and more bus routes.
Service with Vetted Contractors		Newton, Wellesley, a Beacon Hill have a central service (w/annual fee) for obtaining vetted services.
Sidewalks	Audio Crosswalks	Good sidewalks and cross lights with audio.
Sidewalks	Traffic Enforcement	I think the police department fails badly and should be ashamed for not making sure the sidewalks are clear. There are many places where cars in driveways block sidewalks because the families have too little space and/or the cars are too large.
Sidewalks		Condition of sidewalk and roadway pavement is often un-walkable - should be kept up.
Sidewalks		Responsiveness by town to citizen calls about dangerously cracked sidewalks and walkways!
Sidewalks		Sidewalks on the side streets need updating in the town center.
Sidewalks		Sidewalks period.
Sidewalks		Sidewalks where there are none.
Street Lighting		Better lighting along sidewalks on Harris Avenue.
Street Lighting		Lighting.
Street Lighting		Well-lit streets.
Taxi Vouchers		Cab vouchers for people who need affordable transportation.
Traffic Enforcement	Audio Crosswalks	Traffic light bells - more police oversight - speeding, running red lights, etc.
Traffic Enforcement		Police presence to catch and fine drivers who fail to stop for red lights, turn on red when not allowed, fail to stop for pedestrians, go too fast through town, etc.

APPENDIX F: CURRENT TRANSPORTATION METHODS – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #23h: How often do you currently use the following ways to get yourself around Needham for trips like shopping, visiting the doctor, visiting friends, and running errands?

Response: 10 Individuals Commented (2% of all respondents): 12 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Theme	Comment
Drive		Drive to full-time job.
Public transportation		I sometimes take the train between Senior Center and my house.
Public transportation	Taxi or Cab	I use public bus or shuttle and UBER traveling outside of Needham.
Public transportation		The bus – I use the #59 to get to T.
Public transportation	Taxi or Cab	Take cab or bus.
Public transportation		Train to Boston regularly.
Special service		Council on Aging van.
Special service		I use the Senior Van and also use Needham Community Council services.
Special service		Town bus (senior) for doctor appointments and food shopping.
Special service		Use transportation service for my mom who lives with me.

APPENDIX G: IMPORTANCE OF FUTURE TRANSPORTATION METHODS – OTHER RESPONSES

Question #24h: As you age, how important is it for you to be able to get around Needham in the following ways?

Response: 9 Individuals Commented (1% of all respondents): 9 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Comment
Mini Bus	Bring back the mini bus.
Ride Share	Ride share service.
Senior Transport	I think the senior center should provide transportation to doctor appointments.
Senior Transport	Much more use of shuttles, etc. Depends on routes and cost.
Senior Transport	Regular rides and pick-ups from the train and subway stations.
Senior Transport	Town bus for seniors.
Senior Transport	Transportation that is free or very low cost.
Van Access	Can't use the steps (on van).
Van Access	Each town should provide wheelchair van for its handicapped residents for purposes of medical appointments, etc.

APPENDIX H: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Question #25: Please use the space below to share any additional comments.

Response: 150 Individuals Commented (23% of all respondents): 247 discrete themes were extracted.

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Affordable	Downsize	Condo/Apts	Construction Priorities	Seniors looking to downsize cannot find condos with 2-bedrooms and bathrooms that are new and affordable. Developers should consider building two smaller units instead of 4-bedroom, 4-bath with large common areas for \$995,000. I would like to see 2 units instead for \$500,000 each. Thank you for advocating for seniors.
Affordable	Downsize	Construction Priorities	Condo/Apts	We will eventually need to sell and leave our large home and property but will probably have to leave Needham as there are no smaller affordable homes and especially no affordable condos or town houses in the town. Needham appears to be becoming a town for two-income professionals; not necessarily a bad thing, but the needs of seniors and lower-income residents are being overshadowed. The tear-down craze shows no evidence of slowing down and the town is showing no diversity of architecture anymore but cookie-cutter homes on lots that are way too small. Having the commuter rail come to Needham is great and we use it a great deal to go into Boston for concerts, museums, and shopping. The senior rate fee is very affordable.
Affordable	Downsize	Construction Priorities		My main concern currently is how we might downsize in this community, given the prevailing trend of small homes being razed to accommodate new construction of 4000- 6000 sq. ft. houses. Given the shortage of smaller homes, most of our friends who have already downsized have moved out of town. While we would prefer to remain in Needham, we are, sad to say, probably going to be forced to follow that option. Needham has yet to consider the needs of all of its citizens. But it sure seems to be doing well with contractors and new young citizens with trust funds. I feel badly for our adult children's friends who would love to move back to Needham, but can't begin to afford to buy here. We are basically still able-bodied and value our current location since we can walk to most places we need to access in town. Would love to maintain that access as we age, so, if we can remain in town, we hope that this survey serves to support seniors being able to live and thrive here. Up to this point, Needham has been a wonderful community in which to live. Thank you for asking these questions!
Affordable	Downsize	Construction Priorities		We are looking to downsize but in Needham the cost of condominiums is prohibitive on our income and the smaller houses seemed to be gobbled up by developers to tear down and build high priced big homes. We have been looking in other communities but would rather stay in Needham where most our supports are as well as close friends and neighbors.
Affordable	Downsize	Construction Priorities		We have raised 3 great kids to adulthood and are now grandparents. We live close to town, which we LOVE, but have thoughts of downsizing. Due to the extremely high cost of even the smallest home (due to the fact that builders will pay a huge sum for these homes in order to replace them with 1 million dollar homes) ...our thoughts of downsizing close to town in the town of Needham are unattainable.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Affordable	Downsize			Wish we could find a smaller place to live in Needham for the same or less money than we currently pay to live in our current home. Even renting in Needham today would be costlier per month than our current mortgage, taxes, and insurance combined currently costs us.
Affordable	Group Housing	Construction Priorities		Affordable congregate housing is totally missing from Needham. Soaring house prices and the building of overly large and expensive houses has made Needham a most undesirable place for those who are aging.
Affordable	Group Housing			Lower cost shared housing is probably the biggest deficit in Needham. Despite being quite well off, I can't afford North Hill. I'll therefore almost certainly move within 10 years.
Affordable	Property Taxes			Cost of housing is an issue. We recently sold our home and bought a single-level home w/garage. Had to add a great deal of money to the price we got for our former house in order to purchase the new one. Also property taxes are a real issue. Needham needs to find a way to stabilize taxes for seniors so that they are not always having to increase amount they withdraw from savings or cut in other areas in order to keep up with increasing tax bills.
Affordable	Condo/Apts	Property Taxes	Sidewalk Condition	More moderately priced condos, say \$300,000 to \$400,000. Real estate tax breaks for seniors. Maintain sidewalks in good condition to avoid falls. Needham is a great town but the lack of lower priced housing will probably force me to sell my house and move somewhere else.
Affordable	Condo/Apts	Single-Floor	Construction Priorities	I would love to stay in Needham, close to family, friends and good medical care. However, to downsize from a single family home to a condo is beyond my means with the high prices in Needham. Also, there are few, if any, affordable condos with one floor living, and small houses are taken by developers to tear down and build huge homes. Sadly, I think that I will have to leave Needham as I age.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			As I age, I am not sure I will be able to find an affordable apartment-style condo in Needham. I am very happy that Needham is for the most part a walkable community and would like us to do even better in that regard.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			It would be wonderful to have moderately priced condos for the senior citizens. I want to sell my home and go to a condo but they are too expensive.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			It would be great to see more affordable housing options for seniors, apartments or small family homes for rent. I currently rent a small house and the advantage of not having to maintain a property as I age is huge. I hope that Needham will consider more senior housing.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			There is very little affordable housing in Needham – places like Charles Court or Hamlin but with an elevator. Other independent living condos are way too expensive or low income.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			Need more low-income 55+ apartments near center of town. Thank you.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			We need affordable condominium type senior housing.
Affordable	Condo/Apts			Would really love to have more options in Needham for housing. We will definitely have to leave our home (too expensive to maintain) and will probably need to leave Needham to find an affordable condo that is very nice, but not over the top. This is sad.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Affordable	Single-Floor			I would love to stay in Needham. I would love to buy a relatively new (built after 1990) small house (under 2000 sq ft) on a single level/ranch, but there are none available and cost of housing and sizing is going up in unprecedented ways It's disheartening to say the least.
Affordable	Transportation	Group Housing	Senior Activities	A moderately priced senior living community with independent living and good transportation; 2 bd. Units and lots of social and educational activities.
Affordable	Transportation			As always, the housing situation is a major issue - affordable housing is an oxymoron in this town. It does not exist. The public transportation is a joke.
Affordable	Transportation			Housing that meets senior needs is fast disappearing in Needham. Large homes with stairs and 2nd and 3rd floors are not convenient, nor affordable. Also, a bus shuttle that once ran in town should be re-instated.
Affordable	Transportation			I live with my husband who is 66 and has Parkinson's. We recently downsized from our home on Tower Ave and bought a smaller condo at Greendale Village. This addresses many of our needs because it has a first floor master suite. However, I'm very concerned about the lack of senior services especially transportation and more affordable housing going forward. As I age it will become more difficult and expensive to care for my husband at home.
Affordable	Transportation			Many seniors in Needham are on fixed incomes. Over the years, Needham's housing has become way too expensive for elders. Please preserve the very small affordable houses in town so that seniors can buy them to live in as they grow older. Also, please provide transportation that runs frequently, taking seniors to stores, to medical appointments, to social programs, etc. This will get seniors off the roads who should not be driving.
Affordable	Transportation			Needham has many seniors but needs better transportation option. Housing needs to be more affordable. Will probably move to a lower cost area within 5 years.
Affordable	Construction Priorities	Downtown Housing	Transportation	I am a senior and I have also worked with seniors for all of my professional career. The theme that consistently is voiced is that there is inadequate public transportation and inadequate options for single floor living (at an affordable price) throughout the western suburbs. Needham is not an exception. The current trend in building in this town in no way addresses these concerns and likely will contribute to less diversity in Needham (especially age). Affordable housing closer to downtown and/or public transportation (that once existed for a period of time in Needham) would maintain many seniors' ability to remain in Needham.
Affordable	Construction Priorities	Transportation		My 76-year-old father currently lives with us. Not being able to drive, when it happens, will be very difficult for him. There are many places he cannot get to using the senior shuttle, which will mean that he has to rely on me, and his world will be much more limited. Improved transportation will be the key for seniors. When our youngest child leaves college, I expect that my husband and I will leave Needham. Housing is too expensive, and smaller houses in my neighborhood (which would otherwise be ideal) are vanishing quickly. Needham has become too upscale too quickly. Once our older children are settled, we will probably choose to move to be near them - they are unlikely to return here because of the cost of housing and other factors.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Affordable	Construction Priorities			Sadly, with all of the building in our community, none is reasonably priced so seniors can sell their home and downsize to a condo, nor can working class families live in Needham. Builders are catering to the million-plus market and ending economic diversity in our town.
Affordable				Affordable housing is the biggest concern. Lots of seniors are on fixed incomes with no place to go. There is a shortage of senior housing here in town. Waitlists are years long.
Affordable				I am an active 61-year-old and still work full-time. My husband and I like living in Needham where we raised our college-aged son. I may retire in a few years and we are not sure if we will be able to afford to stay in Needham. Ideally we'd like to stay for a while.
Affordable				I feel that Needham should have more affordable independent housing and assisted living places that are affordable.
Affordable				I grew up in Needham but it should make more affordable housing available for retirees. It is becoming harder to afford living here and I would love to stay in town the rest of my life.
Affordable				I hope Needham gets more affordable housing. I really want to stay in Needham.
Affordable				Most seniors, middle income earners, and young families can no longer afford to live here.
Affordable				My home is close to the center of Needham so getting to where I need to go is fairly easy. What is to bad is North Hill has priced itself out of reach for people like me and it is people like me that Dr. Willgoose wanted it built for. So far I am very lucky.
Affordable				Needham needs elder housing that is affordable.
Affordable				There is a lack of affordable housing for the middle class.
Affordable				We are getting priced out at Webster Green and don't know where else in Needham has elevators as we can't do stairs. We know Chestnut Hollow has an elevator but their apartments are too small for a couple.
Affordable				One of my greatest concerns is the cost of finding a suitable place to live should I decide that I no longer wish to maintain my own single family home.
Audio Crosswalks	Sidewalk Condition	More Benches		Need good audio crossing signals, good sidewalks, more benches, and more raised markings at intersections for the blind/impaired. Atrocious sidewalks need repair here - so unsafe, especially at intersections and in the community business district in general.
Bike path	Positive Feedback			Needham does a good job with elderly services. Off street bike paths would be helpful.
Bike path				Thanks for looking into these issues. I wish there was a bike path in central Needham or a place that one could safely ride.
Crosswalk Signs/Paint	Traffic enforcement			We live at The Highlands. I frequently walk to Sudbury Farms and most of the stores in Needham Center and the Heights. There is a crosswalk at the corner of Oakland and Highland (at the corner of the High School). Very infrequently do cars stop when you are trying to cross the street. I would like to see better signage in these type of areas to allow elderly, handicapped, and the general public to cross safely.
Crosswalk Signs/Paint				Crosswalks need to be repainted in bright yellow or black and white zebra pattern. Green or red sidewalks do not stand out to drivers.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Downsize	Condo/Apts	Transportation	In-Home Services	Would like to see more condo options to downsize to in Needham and transportation options as I age. How about groups like on Beacon Hill to assist make aging at home feasible?
Downsize	Single-Floor			I needed to downsize from my home in Needham of 49 years due to my husband's health. I needed one-floor living, no stairs and adjacent parking. I looked in Needham for a number of years; town houses seem to prevail. In the end, I had to leave Needham to accommodate my needs. I do think stairs can be a problem for an aging population.
Downsize	Construction Priorities	Pet-friendly housing		Needham has to think about more living accommodations for its seniors. As tear-downs happen - Needham is losing their senior population. Many of my friends are leaving town to downsize. They want to stay in Needham but there aren't many options. Most of my senior friends have pets and this seems to be a challenge to find living accommodations that accommodate animals.
Downsize				Being able to downsize and stay in Needham if we choose to remain in this area. Right now we plan to stay where we are realizing that circumstances (health/physical) can change.
Downsize				Lack of smaller accessible housing for those of us who want to downsize.
Group Housing				Consider establishing private homes for the elderly (maybe 8 to 10 people) where each resident has their own room, a community kitchen etc. Group home model not a nursing home or assisted living. This way elderly can stay in Needham, have companionship etc.
Cost of Living	Property Taxes			I think cost of living in need ham - constant raising of taxes - makes it harder for seniors to stay in town. Some modification of tax burden should be allowed - not sure how, but necessary.
Cost of Living				Older Needhamites are unable to bear the increasing costs of living in this town.
Cost of Living				High expense to maintain housing.
In-Home Services	Construction Priorities			Other towns have good systems and networks of in-home care visiting and helping out so that seniors can stay at home with adequate help and be incorporated into the larger community as valued members who have something to contribute. Other towns have a healthy mix of all ages and income levels and a sense of community that respects the value that well-incorporated different ages and income levels bring to everyone's living experience. Needham is focused on attracting very rich young people who will live in McMansions and pump up the tax revenue while turning the town into a place with less green space and fewer trees than Boston (indeed less than much of Manhattan). This policy results in elderly either forced to leave or to live in houses that are falling apart because they can't afford to pay the taxes and make repairs and eat.
Property Taxes	Street lighting	Contractor List		Need better street lighting. Brighter bulbs would be such an improvement! More assistance with property taxes and discounts in downtown stores. Help with finding tradespeople available to modify the property to allow people to remain in their home.
Property Taxes	Transportation			Reduced taxes for seniors after so many years. Town shuttle bus, etc.
Property Taxes	Construction Priorities			Property taxes and the size of new homes being built to replace homes seniors might downsize to are inevitably going to change demographics. That is sad because many of us who are responsible for the excellence of the Needham community may not be able to stay here.
Property Taxes	Construction Priorities			Senior citizens are moving out of Needham due to high taxes. The large new homes are drawing in the younger crowd with children - and causing for Needham to add to the schools!!

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Property Taxes				I decided to sell my house when I retired because the increasing taxes and upkeep on a 90+ year old house. Just moved out of Needham to a slightly larger space with less than half the taxes.
Property Taxes				Elimination of property taxes for elderly so they can remain in their homes! Stop finding ways to spend - find ways to absolve seniors of onerous tax burdens! Southern states adopted tax relief for seniors YEARS AGO!!
Property Taxes				Real estate taxes much too high.
Property Taxes				Taxes are getting very high for retirees.
Meals on Wheels				Enjoy the Meals on Wheels program.
Meals on Wheels				We need better (BETTER) meals on wheels!
More benches				Perhaps additional benches in neighborhoods. There are two along Chestnut St. Very nice!
More benches				More benches: This is an excellent idea! Start with all of Highland Ave, then Great Plain Ave.
Condo/Apts	Single-Floor			In the past year I have looked to down-size to a 2-bedroom condo (all on 1 floor) in Needham. It's been disappointing at the availability of same.
Condo/Apts	Single-Floor			Needham has been a wonderful community in which to raise our kids. The lack of senior friendly townhomes, such as those with 1st floor bedrooms where maintenance can be taken care of, means that we will likely have to leave this community that we love.
Condo/Apts	Single-Floor			Please allow building of more condos with bedroom on first floor.
Condo/Apts	Transportation			Needham needs more condos with elevators. Only two in Needham (Rosemary Ridge & Avery). Homeowners prefer to buy condo units rather than rent and need walk-to-everything locations. Cab service is terrible - have tried to get home from Newton Highlands by cab - impossible!
Condo/Apts	Construction Priorities	Transportation	Sidewalk Condition	I would be ready to sell my house and downsize except that there is no place to go. All the single level houses are being torn down, the condos/town houses are too expensive, and many don't provide snow removal. If I become unable to drive, Needham is an extremely difficult place to live. Lack of transportation is a problem. Sidewalks are uneven and often not shoveled.
Condo/Apts	Zoning Bylaws	Construction Priorities		It is very important to increase the supply of rental units and condo or townhouses so that aging residents will not have to be responsible for outdoor maintenance and maintenance of the structural elements of the unit (e.g., roof repairs). Zoning By-law needs to be amended to allow these types of developments in more areas of town, with incentives to developers for affordable units. Many other towns have made provisions for this type of housing and Needham lags behind - too much of Needham is restricted to single family residences. Multi-family housing, including 5-10 unit townhouses with an association of unit owners, will enable many aging residents to stay in Needham. This is presently discouraged by town government, either deliberately or because they do not spend enough time thinking about this type of planning.
Condo/Apts				Would like to move to a one level condo in Needham, however, there is a very small supply. There is a need for more over 55 residences, some with outdoor pools.
Condo/Apts				I spend a significant amount of time in Florida. The housing there (private condos) is easily accessible and livable. I would like to see that type of housing in Needham.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
More Downtown Housing	Sidewalk Condition			More housing near center. Needham is an example of much of what is wrong with single family homes in an automobile centric environment. Lively sidewalks a rarity. Read Jane Jacobs.
More Downtown Housing				Senior housing and assisted living residences should be located in the center of town, not on the outskirts as most currently are.
More Traffic Lights	Positive Feedback			Needham Heights is very good for providing frequent benches. Need a traffic light at the corner of Highland Avenue and Hunnewell Street.
Helper Program	Positive Feedback			Needham has a great deal to offer seniors through the Community Council (provided medical equipment for my mother and father-in-law), senior programs (the center has many things to offer), and good medical care in town. Having grown up here and returned, I don't see any reason to leave as we age. I don't know if there is a way to match seniors up with those interested in helping them with daily tasks such as food shopping, mowing lawns, or even just visiting, etc. but if not, this would be ideal for residents to help other residents.
Positive Feedback				The services from the town are very impressive. Rides to doctor appointments, rides to shopping, and so many other good services and programs from the Council on Aging. Mystery Bus ride from the Exchange club of Needham and the Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners are an added plus...Enjoy them all.
Positive Feedback				The situation for older citizens seems to be improving. Good work! Keep on keeping on. Thanks.
Positive Feedback				Needham and being near the center is perfect for active retired people.
Positive Feedback				Needham is a wonderful, friendly town. I had a local police car pull up one day. I was out walking with my cane. I was coming from the library with books. He lived 2 streets over and said "Hop in, I know where you live and will drop you off!" His daughter had collected canned goods from my house for her club. He said "you were generous to her."
Positive Feedback				We have not reached the stage of needing help but hope that it is available when that happens. We are glad that Needham is concerned about its seniors as that makes it a good community.
Positive Feedback				I live at North Hill - a great community!
Positive Feedback				I enjoy the senior center.
Positive Feedback				I think Needham is doing a good job. Love the work done at Senior Center!
Positive Feedback				Senior center offers quite a lot, which I don't need to take advantage of yet, but can see that I will someday. When I fully retire, expect to take advantage of their interesting programming.
Positive Feedback				Center at the Heights offers good shuttle service.
Positive Feedback				Enjoy programming at the Center on the Heights -- films, music, talks & discussions.
Public restrooms				Often our seniors want to have an adventure, but need to know where the nearest bathroom facilities are. Such should be offered and noted.
Real Estate Value	Traffic enforcement			Traffic light timing creates severe congestion and unsafe aggressive driving in the center. Be careful about building/zoning restrictions that harm property values of older, smaller homes.
Real Estate Value				It is important to us that if we ever have to sell our house, we are able to get as much as possible for it. Local regulations and ordinances should not diminish the value of residential real estate.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Real Estate Value				There seems to be a small but vocal minority of people in Needham who want to restrict our ability to sell our old houses, by limiting the ability of developers to tear down and rebuild. As someone living in a 60-year-old modest ranch that will likely be a teardown when we choose to sell, if we see that there will be onerous rules regarding selling our homes, we may choose to move out of Needham early so we don't get caught and possibly lose thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollars from unnecessary restrictions.
Invest in youth				I believe money should be spent on our young people, for their education, not on us seniors. Too much is already being spent on us via Medicare and Medicaid.
Restrictive Building Codes	Condo/Apts			Allowing for multigenerational homes with adaptive living conditions without penalty. Currently, the building codes do not allow for such an item. I have redesigned the first floor of my home to accommodate my aging parents. It would have been great to be able to build an apartment within my home. In contrast, it would be great to have more housing similar to North Hill. As the population in Needham ages, they should be able to age in the town, not age out.
Restrictive Building Codes	Transportation			Luckily I am financially independent, will be able to take Uber when I can't drive and pay caretakers to come in. My biggest complaint is that I can't put a separate apartment in my huge house so I could rent it out, and eventually have a caretaker live there. Although there are five two-family houses on my block that were grandfathered in, apparently at some point a single family (snob) restriction was put in. Make a zoning exception for elderly or disabled people who want to create a separate apartment with kitchen in their houses! When I moved here we had a senior shuttle, which was great. Today, it should be run Uber-style. All seniors should have smart phones. The town can donate them to poor, and students can teach them how to use them. That way the shuttle can take a flexible, on demand route.
Restrictive Building Codes	Construction Priorities			It is most distressing that housing in Needham has come to knocking down the smaller homes for seniors to live in rather than providing or allowing (through codes) homes to be rehabbed with first floor bedroom and full bath with laundry! But it seems Needham is wishing the senior population go out of town along with the middle-income home owner. Very distressing!!!!
Ride/Car Sharing	Senior Activities			Have group hiking/walking groups within town. Share automobile for needy elderly without family or income for a taxi.
Ride/Car Sharing				It would be fantastic to be able to share a car with a cooperative group of co-owners, but my insurance company will not cover this arrangement. I may not be able to afford buying/maintaining another car when my current vehicle gets too old.
Senior Center (issues)				I visited the Senior Center at the new location and I found two reasons that I'm not coming back. The stench from the bathrooms was terrible. It could be smelled from the bathrooms to other rooms. Why is there not a good cleaning service to keep bathrooms and other rooms stench free? Also, parking for seniors visiting the Center is all at the back of the building and the entrance is at the front--this is especially difficult during the winter.
Senior Center (issues)				Senior Center - Most have to keep coats on. Much too cold environment for seniors.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Senior Center (issues)				I think it's horrible that the senior center has no bulletin board and that it is not open on weekends. The senior center is one of the least friendly places in Needham and needs to be changed. There are no group activities for seniors near the town center; only in the Heights.
Sidewalk Condition	Outside walking track			I do a lot of walking, but am aware of many hazards on sidewalks that are crumbling or have different elevations or holes. It would be great to have an outside walking track or path that has a good surface (soft, not concrete). I use the high school track at times, but it is mostly asphalt.
Sidewalk Condition	Street lighting			Sidewalks in better condition and with better lighting.
Sidewalk condition	Traffic enforcement			I love Needham and plan to live here as long as possible. I believe the support services for the aged are very good. As someone who walks and does not drive, I would like to see improvement in the safety of sidewalks, especially in winter weather, and improved enforcement of traffic safety rules for drivers...it can be scary to walk in this town given the driving habits of some.
Sidewalk Condition	Traffic enforcement			Sidewalks in sorry state of repair, likely to trip elderly and disabled. Autos turning corners at too great a speed, too silently. Put more money into capital budget.
Sidewalk Condition				Have spoken with a senator at a community meeting months ago regarding the broken condition of sidewalks on Highland Ave between 757 Highland Ave and Rosemary street, on which I walk daily, fell once due to a break in the sidewalk. No response to my report.
Sidewalk Condition				Mount an effort to improve passage on our sidewalks.
Sidewalk Condition				Too much ice on sidewalks. Sidewalks don't get plowed properly or sanded at all.
Sidewalk Condition				I find sidewalks in the center of Needham very difficult due to the many and varied obstacles. These include signs, poles, sandwich boards, trash containers, trees, plants, parking meters which have the meters intruding into the sidewalk pathway, and merchant items for sale. I am blind, and use a cane for mobility. All of these obstacles make it very difficult for me to travel.
Sidewalk Condition				Lack of sidewalks and poorly maintained sidewalks are main concern.
Sidewalk Condition				Would like to see better cleared sidewalks in winter and to be able to use pedestrian crossing buttons without having to climb over mounds of snow.
Senior Activities				Educational programs available in housing.
Senior Activities				I think every effort should be undertaken to offer a variety of activities outside the house to encourage and allow senior citizens to socially participate, both physically and mentally.
Senior Activities				Year round pool rather than a pool for 6 weeks. A lot of money for 6 weeks.
Street lighting				No complaints. Town could perhaps improve street lighting a bit.
Street lighting				Read about the town wanting to get rid of some street lights. There isn't enough light now, so that would be a dangerous hazard.
Traffic Enforcement	Crosswalk Signs/Paint			Drivers on Highland Ave, especially at Hunnewell, often do not stop for pedestrians, and there is no marking as there is on other intersections on Highland and Great Plain Ave. This addition would help greatly – not just seniors!
Traffic Enforcement				Please use this information to help slow down cars in thickly settled areas.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Transportation	Positive Feedback			Overall this is a great place to live with most services that accommodate all ages. We have not experienced issues with security or ability to get around the town. One can walk or drive as needed although some people might need public transportation which used to exist, but no longer does. We are lucky to have a good hospital and many caring public services in this town.
Transportation	Sidewalk Condition			We live in an area that is about two miles from the center. As we age and drive less, it would be important to have a shuttle or bus service that goes to the different neighborhoods around town. Also, we do walk for exercise, but the sidewalk conditions are often poor and I can see that it could be a problem in the future to get around town.
Transportation	Upgrades			Shopping is very limited. Distance from Roche Brothers to Needham Heights is too far to walk especially if you are carrying items. Not possible to live in Needham and have all your needs satisfied in town. Senior housing is an embarrassment! More attention given to playing fields.
Transportation				The Center at the Heights is a blessing. Shuttle service to the Center would be important for individuals who cannot drive.
Transportation				I am always grateful that the COA provided a limo and very kind drivers who picked my mother up to take her to the Center for lunch. They came to the door and helped her as she was nearly blind. Because The Ride could not help her down the stairs we could never use that option. Available transportation with door to door help is my biggest concern as I age.
Transportation				I miss the mini bus!
Transportation				I think the senior bus service is extremely important. I recently had to give up driving and I couldn't survive so well without this service. Only family lives out of state.
Transportation				I visit the senior center for activities, movies and trips. There may come a time when I can no longer drive, so the senior center van may be a service I would use.
Transportation				I loved the minibus we had in Needham when our children were little. When I do have to give up my license a shuttle bus would help me to feel independent.
Transportation				I remember the shuttle bus in Needham long ago. That seemed like a really wonderful service, even though I did not need it myself at that time.
Transportation				It is extremely important that a shuttle bus be part of the Needham landscape for elderly and for people without licenses. The town has many wonderful facilities and should not be dependent upon cars and the occasional van rides that are available only for specific purposes.
Transportation				Why does Needham not have Veterans Taxi vouchers. All other towns have them for seniors!
Transportation				I love the train and it happens to be fairly convenient for me. However, the walk from the station entrances and the train platforms is a significant drawback.
Transportation				The issue I see my older friends struggle most with is transportation. If they cannot (or SHOULD not!) drive, they have very few options - The Ride is slow and expensive and you can't constantly call friends to drive you around (some of them should not be driving either!), and there is no public transportation other than the #59 bus, which has a limited route. The Senior Center and the residence facilities can cover some of this for their clients, but people who are trying to live at home have real problems.

APPENDIX H: Additional Comments <continued>...

Theme	Theme	Theme	Theme	Comment
Transportation				Having a reasonable, inexpensive, and convenient transportation option. If bus service were frequent to every place I wanted to go, I would not need someone to drive me.
Transportation				I would prefer a community w/bus and T, not just commuter rail which I use every day for work.
Transportation				Need dependable local transportation for medical appointments!
Transportation				Public bus is too rare. Hope to have more buses and a shuttle.
Transportation				No transportation for seniors on Seabeds Way and the T is unreliable on the Senior Bus. The step is too high!!
Transportation				The Senior Center van is a very important asset that I may need at some future time.
Transportation				There is an enormous difference in my experiences at 55 and my mom's at 85. Needham does not address the needs of people who cannot drive yet don't want to be isolated at home.
Transportation				There is no Sunday commuter rail service, so friends visiting, or trips to Boston are limited. Public transportation is a big issue with living in Needham, there is some, but mostly developed around working people needing to get into the city.
Transportation				Thus far, I have been blessed with excellent health, and I can drive my car, but I do believe elderly transportation is VERY important to seniors in Needham.
Transportation				When I first moved to Needham there was some type of senior shuttle bus in my neighborhood that went around town to bring seniors shopping. That would be a welcome service to bring back and help to alleviate parking issues as well. Teens that don't drive could also use it.
Transportation				When I first moved to Needham, there was a shuttle service and I enjoyed using it when needed even as a young person to get to downtown.
Transportation				To successfully age-in-place, Needham residents will certainly need transportation options to cross town boundaries. An important consideration is the level of assistance people may need to utilize transportation options – from door-to-door, door-through-door, and stay at the destination. Moreover, it would be helpful to ask about volunteer driver programs and supportive transportation needs of people with cognitive impairment.
Transportation				It's very important to have frequent train service particularly on weekends.
Transportation				I cannot walk beyond 20 steps and there are times when the car is out of commission and no one else is available who isn't worse off than I am.
Upgrades				Needham Housing does not do much to upgrade apartments.
Upgrades				Needham should consider modifying public housing units for handicap individuals. Builders should be more mindful of the need of more handicap units and study new technology.
Upgrades				Needham Housing Authority [needs to maintain/upgrade units].