

AN ASSESSMENT OF NEEDHAM HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENTS: ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

JANUARY 2020

Executive Summary

The Needham Housing Authority (NHA) is home to 455 Needham residents and is a valuable local resource. In an effort to understand the needs of residents and to increase access to a range of Town services, the Needham Department of Health and Human Services conducted an assessment of NHA residents. The assessment sought to better understand NHA residents' sense of the strengths and challenges regarding needs, resources, and opportunities within the community. The results will be used to inform community planning to improve NHA residents' quality of life.

Through interviews, focus groups, and a survey, assets and challenges were identified and grouped into major themes. The themes are listed below, along with the related key findings.

NHA is an important part of the town's community. It provides homes for a number of families, older adults, and people with disabilities in Needham. The challenges faced by residents can be addressed, but only through the strong partnership of Needham's government, community organizations, and residents.



The Built Environment

The built environment is physical surroundings, such as buildings and open spaces. Respondents:

- » Greatly valued the plant and vegetable garden at the Linden-Chambers complex, noting its beauty and functionality
- » Perceived that maintenance of housing and landscaping was inadequate
- » Were concerned about accessibility for those with disabilities and said the homes were not fully accommodating to those with limited mobility



Community Engagement

Community engagement includes community events, neighbor relations, tenant organization, interactions between cultures, and connection to greater Needham.

» Respondents appreciated events offered on-site and also said that more and higher quality activities could be offered more consistently

"Even though we don't own property, we still consider this our home".

> Needham Housing Authority Resident

- » Some respondents noted a sense of community among residents while others felt that there were excessive neighborhood conflict and social bullying
- » Respondents said they appreciated living at the Housing Authority, as it provided them with an affordable home
- » Respondents were concerned that some residents experienced isolation, based on the number who live alone and those who do not often engage with others
- » The Housing Authority is home to individuals from several cultures, including those who do not speak English as their primary language. Respondents reported a lack of services, translation, and interpretation



Food Access

- » Respondents were grateful for and utilized local food resources, such as the Community Council's food pantry. Some respondents were unaware of local resources.
- » Access to food was a major concern of respondents due to difficulty paying for food and finding transportation to food markets. The high expense at local grocery stores was frequently noted as a barrier



Mental Health

- » Social workers and case managers were viewed as beneficial to the community
- » Respondents noted that some residents experience depression and stress, among other mental health issues

» Several respondents expressed concerns about stigma related to mental health issues, and noted that it may mean fewer people discuss mental health issues or seek services for them



Substance Use

- » Respondents noted that residents were concerned about the use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana by other Housing Authority residents
- » The Housing Authority's no-smoking policy was largely viewed positively, however, many stated the policy was not adequately enforced and, at times, secondhand smoke exacerbated health issues
- » Alcohol and marijuana use at the complexes has led to noise disturbances and concerns of substance misuse



Transportation

- » Many respondents appreciated the Center at the Heights van and the Community Council transportation options, although some were not familiar with such services
- » Respondents were less familiar with other local services, such as those provided by Springwell, Inc.
- » Respondents stated that transportation options were lacking, expensive, or did not meet their needs, especially for social contact and access to community resources such as visiting a nursing home or attending a religious service

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the assessment:



The Built Environment

- » Provide regular and timely maintenance services, including leaf, grass, and snow removal
- » NHA should consider reviewing its maintenance and repair protocols to ensure they are responsive to residents' needs



Community Engagement

- » Provide more services for those whose first language is not English, including English classes at different levels of proficiency, translated materials, and interpreter services
- » Increase on-site activities. Residents have suggested workshops from the public health nurses, assistance with paperwork for benefits such as Medicare, workshops to address bullying, and programs for children and middle-aged adults
- » Find other ways in addition to the tenants' association to provide residents with an opportunity to voice their concerns. Offer mediation services to address neighbor conflicts

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Food Access

- » Provide options for food purchases at the complexes
- » Organize more frequent transportation directly from the NHA to affordable grocery stores

» Provide information to residents about the various food resource programs available in Needham



Mental Health

- » Institute a program to provide wellness checks on elderly and people with disabilities
- » Employ an on-site social worker who rotates among Housing Authority properties

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Substance Use

- » Offer smoking cessation classes on-site
- » Add shelters or canopies to the smoking areas to encourage smoking outdoors, even in poor weather
- » Assess interest in marijuana and alcohol cessation programs, including AA and counseling

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Transportation

- » Increase regular, accessible, and affordable transportation options to locations throughout Needham
- » Compile and distribute a comprehensive and descriptive list of transportation options
- » Promote existing community programs through multiple communication channels, such as newsletters, Needham Cable, and on-site events

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Introduction

The Needham Housing Authority (NHA) is home to 455 Needham residents and is a valuable part of the community. In an effort to understand the needs of residents and to increase access to a range of Town services, the Needham Department of Health and Human Services conducted an assessment of NHA residents. The assessment sought to better understand NHA residents' sense of the strengths and challenges regarding needs, resources, and opportunities within the community. The results will be used to help inform community planning across Town departments.

The Needham Department of Health and Human Services ("the Department") conducted the study, which included key informant interviews, focus groups, and a survey. A research and evaluation consultant designed and analyzed the survey in collaboration with the Department.

About the Needham Housing Authority

The Needham Housing Authority manages 296 housing units across several properties in Needham.¹ This includes properties on Seabeds Way, Linden Street and Chambers Street (often referred to as Linden-Chambers), High Rock Estates, and Captain Robert Cooke Drive. The Needham Housing Authority "strives to create the best living environment and the highest quality housing opportunities for the families and individuals we serve".

About the Needham Department of Health and Human Services

The Town of Needham's Department of Health and Human Services includes four divisions: Public Health, Aging Services, Youth and Family Services, and Veteran's Services. The Department works across its divisions, with other Town departments, and with external partners to serve Needham residents.

Acknowledgements

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The support of the Department's leadership, including Director Timothy Muir McDonald along with the Board of Health and Council on Aging, was instrumental in the report's development.

The Department is grateful for continued collaboration with the NHA, especially that of Hien Tran, NHA's prior Resident Coordinator.

¹ Needham Housing Authority. Available from: http://www.needhamhousing.org/home.html

Methods

Several methods were used to conduct the assessment, including a survey of residents, resident focus groups, and key informant interviews. Participation in all methods was voluntary. Table 1 outlines the data collection methods.

Table 1: Data Collection Methods

| METHOD | TIMEFRAME | QUANTITY |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Key Informant Interviews | Summer and Fall 2017 | 12 |
| Focus Groups | Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 | 8 |
| Survey | Winter 2018-2019 | 115 (out of 296 households²) |

Survey

A survey was designed by Scott Formica, a research and evaluation consultant, in collaboration with the Department. The survey included 58 questions in four categories: demographics; attitudes and perceptions; issues and stressors; and resources and opportunities. Survey questions were determined, in part, by the findings in focus groups and interviews.

The survey was distributed in November 2018 via door-to-door delivery and in January 2019 by mail. One hundred and fifteen households (out of 296) responded to the survey. The response rate was 39%, which was a large enough sample to conduct a meaningful analysis. Surveys were available in English, Mandarin, and Russian.

Detailed information about the methods and respondents can be found in the technical report (Appendix A).

Characteristics of Needham Housing Authority Survey Respondents

Predominantly female (65%) and over 60 years of age (69%)

The Town of Needham has 25% of residents

over the age of 60²

Almost half the sample reported that they were retired or not working at all (48%)

Needham has 34% of residents over 16 not in the labor force²

Most respondents currently live on Chambers Street (34%), Linden Street (27%), or Seabeds Way (23%)

Respondents
were more likely to
report their health as poor,
fair, or good (81.4%) versus
being very good or excellent
(18.5%) when comparing
themselves to others
their age

Largely selfidentified as White, non-Hispanic (79%)

Needham has 87% of residents identifying as White, non-Hispanic²

Most
respondents (82%)
reported that they have
lived in Needham for five
or more years — with half
reporting that they have
lived in Needham for
15 or more years

Three-quarters
of respondents (75%)
indicated that they live
alone and only one in ten (10%)
reported living with someone
under 18 years of age

Needham has 21% of residents
living in a single person
household²

Most often reported speaking English in their home (87%)

Needham has 83% of residents who speak only English at home²

Majority were single, with 34% separated or divorced and 32% never married (32%)

The majority of respondents (84%) reported that they have lived in their current residence for at least three years

Almost twothirds reported having access to a vehicle for personal use (63%)

Many respondents reported difficulty doing errands alone (34%) or reported difficulty walking or climbing stairs (50%)

Focus Groups

Focus groups began in the summer of 2017, followed by additional focus groups in spring of 2018. Five English-speaking focus groups with 11 participants total were conducted in Summer 2017 followed by six focus groups in Spring 2018. Of the six focus groups in 2018, two were for English-speakers (14 attendees), and two were for those who speak Mandarin (4 attendees). There were also two focus groups offered for Russian-speakers, but no one attended. Focus groups were scheduled at various times for 30-60 minutes.

Focus groups were promoted via flyers distributed by the NHA Resident Coordinator and during a tenant association meeting. Flyers were in English, Russian, and Mandarin. One focus group was held in conjunction with a weekly resident coffee hour to promote attendance. Focus groups were held in the community rooms at Seabeds Way complex and the Linden-Chambers complex. Transportation was offered between complexes. All participants received a \$5 gift card to Dunkin Donuts. Staff from the Department facilitated the focus groups and took notes.

Interviews

A total of 12 key informant interviews were conducted with staff from organizations and Town departments in Needham. In addition to flyer distribution, recruitment included individual outreach. Interviews sought to understand the most pressing health and wellbeing challenges, NHA community strengths, and barriers to accessing community resources. Interviews were either recorded electronically or notes were taken.

Qualitative data was coded and analyzed for themes and connections across the different perspectives.

Limitations

The methods have several limitations. First, due to Department capacity, the data were collected over approximately 18 months – a long time span which may introduce biases. For this reason, additional focus groups were conducted in 2018 and all data was triangulated. Second, Russian and Mandarin speakers did not participate as fully as English-speaking residents. Multiple attempts were made to reach all populations, which resulted in some participation in Mandarin-speaking focus groups and in the Mandarin version of the survey. No Russian-speaking individuals participated in focus groups. Several attempts were made to connect with Russian-speaking residents for key informant interviews but were unsuccessful. Additionally, respondents were recruited based on convenience, which may introduce biases, such as only hearing from individuals who chose to participate and not the wider group of residents.

Major Findings

Six quality of life themes related to health and wellness were identified, based on the patterns and frequencies of each during the assessment.

The themes are discussed in detail below and are:



The Built Environment



Mental Health



Community Engagement



Substance Use



Food Access



Transportation

Respondents defined their perception of positive health and wellbeing as:

- » Good mental and physical health
 - » Respondents spoke of "being happy", going to the doctor, and exercising as important to good health
- » Purpose and productivity
 - » Respondents believe having a "reason to get up in the morning", such as a hobby or job is critical to wellbeing
- » Positive living environment
 - » Respondents spoke of the importance of accessible housing and transportation
- » Interpersonal relationships
 - » Respondents noted the importance of being connected to others to avoid isolation
- » Independence
 - » Respondents reported that a sense of independence is important to well-being

Residents clearly stated that they believe these elements contribute to positive health and wellbeing. In the following sections, each of the themes is discussed in detail.



The Built Environment

The built environment is physical surroundings, such as buildings and open spaces. Respondents spoke about the built environment in two ways: maintenance of Housing Authority complexes and accessibility for those with limited mobility.

Assets

One asset of the physical surroundings discussed during focus groups is the garden at the Linden-Chambers complex. Mandarin-speaking residents were particularly enthusiastic about the garden. Focus group participants spoke of how it added beauty to the area and was a welcome improvement to the complex. Being able to grow vegetables and plants was valued by the participants. There was a desire to see more gardens throughout the complexes.

Issues

Respondents spoke of several ways the built environment of the Housing Authority could be improved. Maintenance of homes and outdoor spaces was frequently noted as a concern. Focus group participants discussed slow responses to service requests and described feeling disrespected by having their personal items removed without their consent.

There was also discussion of how maintenance was not done frequently enough. One survey respondent wrote: "There is no regular upkeep to the inside of buildings and no maintenance to clean the grounds and parking lots. No effort to maintain landscaping in a proper way." Focus group participants and survey respondents spoke of a need for better snow removal, especially as it is a challenge for older adults and those with disabilities.

Survey respondents noted several ways the NHA could reduce risk of injury and increase feelings of safety. One respondent wrote: "Railing from sidewalk up to unit has moved and leans too far from sidewalk to be of any use. In addition, water comes off the roof and freezes just outside front door making first step outside dangerous." Another stated: "More outside lighting is needed. Don't always feel safe coming home at night."

Adequate accessibility of apartments and outdoor spaces was noted as a concern in interviews, focus groups, and the survey. One resident commented that if this is a complex for the elderly and people with disabilities then the complex and units should "truly meet the needs of those populations." One key informant noted that there is no elevator at the Seabeds Way complex.

They said,

"My other potential concern is the inaccessibility of the apartments. People with severe mobility problems live downstairs and those [residents] with minimal problems live upstairs. [There is] no elevator, so using the stairs can either be good exercise or a pain in the hip, back, knees and feet! Especially carrying bags."

The above quote illustrates some of the mobility challenges in the complexes: older people or those with limited mobility may find apartments are not well-designed for them. Additionally, laundry facilities located in separate buildings make it difficult for people get to, and the facilities are shared among residents, which causes problems for those with fragrance sensitivities.



Community Engagement

Community engagement, which includes community events, neighborhood relations, tenant organization, and connection to greater Needham, was a significant theme throughout the assessment.

The survey found 48% of respondents feel mostly (24%) or very (24%) connected to Needham and 71% feel mostly (36%) or very (35%) safe in their unit or home. Some respondents stated they felt the surrounding community had a lot to offer, as one respondent stated: "Needham is the greatest community ever in terms of things to do".

Assets

Respondents appreciated several aspects that connected them to one another and the greater community. Among them were activities that are available to residents of the Linden-Chambers complex. For example, Mandarin-speaking residents organized a daily Tai Chi practice, open to all residents, in the community room. Outside organizations have brought in various workshops, such as wellness workshops from public health nurses.

Additionally, several individuals said that the Housing Authority had a sense of community. For example, some residents helped others get rides or borrow goods. Engaging with others and making friends was considered a key benefit.

Respondents identified the Housing Authority itself as a major asset. Having subsidized housing provided "peace of mind" and helped some residents connect to other resources. Residents were grateful for the opportunity to live there, especially to maintain their independence. One focus group participant said, "Even though we don't own property, we still consider this our home".

Another strength consistently noted by key informants and a sentiment voiced in the focus group discussions was a desire to foster community among the neighbors within the complexes. One of the residents from the Linden-Chambers focus group mentioned how tight-knit a community the Mandarin-speaking population is. One key informant described how many residents' care for one another and how they take notice of the wellbeing of their neighbors:

"There are a lot of people that really look out for each other there for sure. It's a lot of people who've lived there for a very long time. That will say 'I haven't seen my neighbor for a week'."

The existence of a tenants' association at Linden-Chambers was recognized as a strength. One key informant said,

"I really think that it's a resource for some of the residents, excluding the social, like cliques or bullying or whatever. They feel comfortable like 'Oh we have this resident representing our voice, or representing our needs.' Or, 'I can go tell her and not have to put my name out there that I contacted the Executive Director of housing because I'm mad'."

The existence and operation of the tenants' association appears to provide some residents with an outlet to voice their concerns. Though it is important to also consider who feels able to access this venue and if there may be other ways to help the residents' voices be heard from all complexes.

Issues

Community engagement was also identified as an area that could be improved. While some respondents' statements were quite positive, other individuals said that there was not enough interaction among residents and that this contributed to loneliness and isolation.

In particular, the older adult residents were noted as lacking quality social relationships. One key informant described it saying: "In fact, probably a majority of our seniors don't really have any quality family relationships. Which definitely leads to isolationism." Another key informant mentioned that some individuals are not on the radar of the Resident Services Coordinator or the Town social workers and may end up without any one to reach out to connect with them. In addition, some of those who are connected to resources in the town, such as the social workers, have also been noted as lacking family support.

While some respondents appreciated the activities offered at the complexes, others felt the activities were lacking and inconsistent. Further, many more activities were felt to be held in the Linden-Chambers community room but not in the Seabeds Way community room.

Conflict among neighbors was also mentioned as an issue. While some had positive relationships with neighbors, others felt that there was social exclusion and bullying between Linden-Chambers residents. As one key informant described it,

"We have like this big thing here between like Linden and Chambers and there's a lot of social bullying between these [two]. It reminds me of high school to be honest. Like, one building is against the other building."

This social bullying atmosphere was illustrated with examples such as residents choosing to sit only with their Linden-Chambers cohort at community meetings and social cliques where residents have reported being targeted because of who they associate with.

Neighbor-to-neighbor conflicts were also characterized by a difference in age and reason for living in public housing. In the interviews it appeared that there is a divide between the younger people with disabilities and the older adult residents. These differences in needs and age seem to create a rift for some residents and feelings that the mixing of these populations within the complexes may be unsafe. One key informant described their concern that older residents may

be uncomfortable and fearful living in proximity with people with mental health disabilities. The Department recognizes that this is a challenging issue with many viewpoints, and that all residents, staff, and community members will need to work together to address this disconnect at NHA.

Neighbor-to-neighbor conflicts were highlighted as an issue that may need additional resources to address. One key informant mentioned the need for mediation services to address neighbor conflicts

Residents have organized a tenants' association at the Linden-Chambers complex to voice their concerns. There had been a similar organization at Seabeds Way, but it was disbanded and there has been no recent interest to revive it. Respondents identified issues with the Linden-Chambers tenant's association, including social bullying and residents' discomfort expressing concerns about the complex. More broadly, interviewees indicated that NHA residents are a population that may not be heard by others in the community.

Respondents also reported that a homicide in 2017 impacted their community and the feeling of safety. One survey respondent stated, "Two years ago, a well-cultured 80-year-old Russian woman was murdered. Therefore, I do not feel safe." Another said, "Since murder occurred, we were promised outside cameras, and nothing has been done."

Cultural and linguistic barriers also exist at the Housing Authority. Residents speak several languages, with sizeable components of the population speaking primarily Russian or Mandarin. Most programming and written materials are not offered in multiple languages, which presents an issue for building community with the entire resident population. The tenant association meetings have a volunteer Mandarin translator, but it is unclear if this is a consistent presence. Focus group respondents specifically requested more services for those whose first language is not English, including various levels of courses to learn English.

Further, cultural sensitivity beyond language can be an issue. One key informant stated:

"I think every month they have a community breakfast [at Linden-Chambers] and I was sitting with the interpreter and a couple of Chinese residents and [a resident]...[we] were talking about the breakfast and...with the interpreter, she [the resident] was saying 'you know we really want you guys to come and X,Y,Z.' And we said, 'you know we really haven't been coming because we don't enjoy this type of breakfast food'. So, there were just little nuances, if that was just communicated more, or a way to communicate what would be beneficial for everybody, I think that it would lead to more community building."



Food Access

Access to affordable and healthy food was discussed often by key informants, focus group participants, and survey respondents. While there are food sources in Needham, many felt that there was inadequate access for NHA residents.

Assets

There are several organizations in Needham that provide free or affordable food, including:

- » Needham Community Council food pantry
- » Springwell free lunch program at Linden-Chambers
- » Needham Community Farm (mobile market that visits three Housing Authority sites)
- » Springwell community dining at the Center at the Heights
- » Needham Public Health Division's Traveling Meals program

Many identified these resources, especially the Community Council food pantry and the Needham Community Farm mobile market, as important in the community. However, about one-third of residents were unfamiliar with the Traveling Meals Program or the Community Dining Program at the Center at the Heights. See Figure 1.

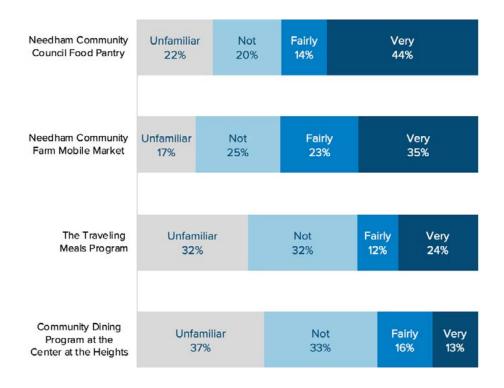


Figure 1: Importance of Food Resources

Issues

A barrier to food accessibility is the cost of food. The Needham Community Council offers a food pantry that some residents of NHA patronize. Some resistance or non-use of the food pantry was noted, but there was not a clear understanding as to why. One key informant hypothesized that residents don't fully understand how the food pantry operates:

"Getting people to come [to the food pantry], for their food, for some people it's not a problem at all, for other people it's a problem. There are people that 1. don't understand it [how to use the food pantry], or 2. don't want to take advantage of that."

Understanding the value of programs, such as the food pantry, and how to access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or SNAP) benefits was identified as a challenge. In addition, residents feel that the local grocery stores in town are too expensive. One survey respondent said,

"I think we do not have enough choices when it comes to grocery stores. Needham is a great town. Nice community where everyone would love to live in. So, we need more options and affordable grocery stores [...] on top of what we have."

Another respondent stated, "I feel that even though our grocery stores do a lot for Needham, their prices are way too high." Several respondents echoed this sentiment.

The Springwell free lunch program was also highlighted as a resource which residents do not always use. In the focus group discussion, the lunches were described as limited to being eaten on-site at the senior center within a 30-minute time frame. They also mentioned that leftover food must be thrown away and that having to sign up in advance with Springwell is a barrier to participating. While the lunch is offered for free, donations are requested. One key informant explained that the request for donations can hinder resident participation.



Mental Health

Mental health issues and the related support were discussed, although to a lesser extent than other themes. This may indicate a smaller perceived problem or a stigma regarding mental health leading individuals to avoid open discussions on the topic.

Assets

Key informants, focus group participants, and survey respondents stated that the Springwell Case Manager at the Linden-Chambers complex (position has been vacant for periods of time in the past) and the social workers at the Center at the Heights are valuable resources to improving mental health among residents. Sixty four percent of survey respondents rated the availability of case managers and social workers as the most important resource in the community. Based on this input, having trained, accessible professionals is important to addressing mental health challenges. Such professionals can provide access to mental health services, coping strategies, and connections to other community supports.

Issues

Respondents spoke of mental health issues, such as depression and stress, impacting residents. The challenges to seeking mental health support included insurance; limited transportation; stigma and resistance to accessing mental health support; and the range and diversity of mental health needs. Generally, respondents requested "more free resources for physical and mental health."

Social and individual stigma related to seeking support for mental health was indicated by some key informants. One key informant described it, "I think sometimes when you talk about counseling, the first thing they go to think about— 'oh am I crazy?'" Other interviewees also spoke of residents' resistance to seeking mental health help.

Hoarding was another mental health issue that came up during interviews. This issue has been identified during routine apartment inspections and was described as having a negative impact on the neighbors of those who hoard.



Substance Use

Substance use, specifically cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol, were identified as a concern among residents.

Assets

Residents who participated in the focus groups generally spoke of appreciating the no-smoking policy throughout the Housing Authority. While residents saw value in the policy, there were concerns with enforcement. Participants also stated that smoking cessation counseling was beneficial, but it appears that such counseling was offered inconsistently. Participants were not able to identify any positive developments regarding preventing or reducing alcohol or marijuana use.

Issues

Cigarette smoking was identified as a major issue. The complexes are smoke-free but have designated tobacco smoking areas. A number of individuals said that the smoking rule is not enforced and smoking takes place throughout the complexes. This upsets residents who prefer to live in an area without second-hand smoke. For example, one survey respondent said, "Regarding neighbors smoking. I was a smoker and after quitting if I go outside and someone is smoking it really bothers me and I start coughing." Secondhand smoke is a particularly difficult issue for residents with respiratory conditions.

In addition, residents who do smoke said that the smoking area has no shelter or canopy to protect from the rain or elements, and they would like to see this added.

Focus group participants also spoke about other substances, such as alcohol and marijuana use, as an issue of concern for their neighbors. One resident from a focus group remarked that there is a lot of substance use and described smelling marijuana frequently from her neighbor's deck area.

One key informant characterized substance use issues in the population as "lots of alcoholism, a lot of marijuana use." A survey respondent noted, "Substance abuse (i.e., alcohol abuse) is spilling out of the apartments. We are experiencing people acting inappropriately in the corridors. Ambulances for rehab for alcohol arrive often. It's destabilizing and raises safety issues."

Another key informant linked substance use with anxiety and depression and said that residents may choose to self-medicate with alcohol and other drugs. They said, "I think it's easy to get access to anything over there...alcohol...different substances."

Residents may choose not to report parties or substance use by their neighbors out of fear of retaliation. One key informant gave an example of a woman in her 80s who lives near a younger person who "like[s] to party with all their buddies." They said, "it's noisy for this woman, but she's afraid to say anything because she's afraid of retribution [from the neighbor]."



Transportation

Transportation was a frequent topic of discussion during focus groups and interviews, and was mentioned widely on the survey. While residents appreciate that there are several transportation services available to them, most note that enhanced transportation options could significantly improve their quality of life.

The survey found that 63% of respondents had access to a vehicle for personal use, making this the most common means of transportation for residents. Residents without vehicles use a variety of transportation methods, including walking, driving with others, public transit, special transportation services and ride sharing services (see Figure 2 below).

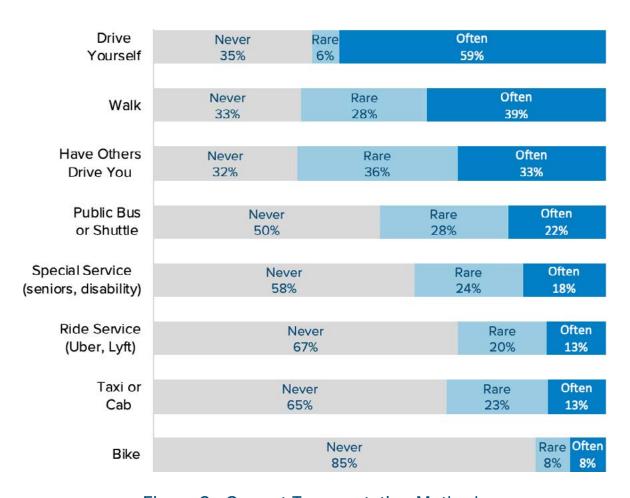


Figure 2: Current Transportation Methods

Assets

Needham has several transportation options available to residents (see Figure 3). Focus group participants and survey respondents stated that the Center at the Heights van and Community Council transportation options were very important to them. Needham's Medical Ride Program and transportation options from Springwell, Inc. were noted as well, although rated as important by fewer individuals.

Strikingly, large percentages of survey respondents were not familiar with several transportation options (see Figure 3).

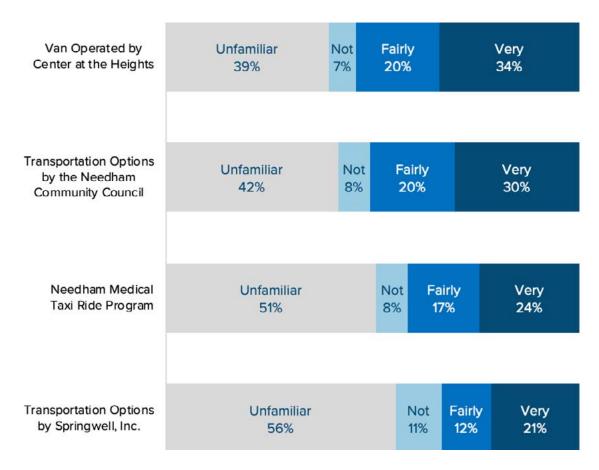


Figure 3: Importance of Transportation Methods

Issues

Throughout interviews, focus groups, and the survey, residents stated that there were few transportation options and those that existed did not meet their needs. Limited transportation options were discussed along with how that made it difficult to get to doctor appointments and community resources such as Riverside, Community Council, and Springwell. While residents may be interested in using public transportation, it is difficult to access and has a limited range within Needham. As one key informant explained:

"Many of them don't drive, so they're over reliant upon either public transportation, which in the Linden and Chambers apartments, public transportation doesn't go by there. If they want to take the bus they would have to walk up to Highland Avenue, which is, if you're elderly, that's a long walk."

A survey respondent stated:

"If there is public transportation, it is not explained to residents. Most have stopped driving due to age or physical restrictions. It would allow residents to attend religious services if they desired or just going to the community."

Other options, such as taxis and shared ride services, are expensive for residents.

As one key informant put it, "if they don't have transportation [for an Uber or taxi service], they say, 'Well, I'm not doing that because that money that I could put towards the Uber, I need to put towards food, or pay a bill this month."

Another key informant commented: "[In] my experience here thus far, that the seniors, that if they don't have a car then that's it. Because [the] Housing Authority here is not built in the middle of the community."

Residents, especially those without cars, may have needs that require special transportation. For example, one survey respondent noted that they need a ride alone or with minimal additional passengers, due to a "low immune system".

The ability to move about the community to get food, mental health and medical services, social interactions, and for day-to-day errands was clearly indicated as an ongoing issue. As one survey respondent stated, "Without better local transportation, one becomes a recluse."

Opportunities and Next Steps

This assessment gathered information from key stakeholders – including residents – regarding assets and issues of concern within the Needham Housing Authority. Based on the findings, several recommendations are outlined below.

To identify high priority issues, the survey asked respondents to rate stressors in their community. When rating 14 stressors, all were rated in the middle of the scale between "not an issue" and "a big issue", indicating that all were moderate stressors (see Appendix A).

The survey also asked the respondents to identify issues they would most want to see changed. They were:

- » Home and building maintenance
- » Public transportation
- » Food and groceries

Organizations should consider what was most important to respondents when deciding which improvements to pursue first. (See Appendix A, Page 27)

Building on Existing Resources

Respondents spoke often of existing positive resources in the community. For example, one key informant said, "I hear from people, particularly people who know how to reach out and access services, I hear that they are just sort of blown away from all that's available." Another interviewee noted, "here in Needham you have such a [...] solid infrastructure in the town that it's [...] a wonderful thing." And another person interviewed spoke about the senior center and the social workers that work for Aging Services and said, "This is a real model for Massachusetts." It was clear that the network and range of available resources is an asset to the residents of Needham. (See Figure 4)

Assets in the community include:

- » Case managers and social workers at the Center at the Heights
- » Library
- » YMCA van
- » Community Council
- » Recycling and Transfer Station
- » Fitness facilities at the YMCA, the Center at the Heights, and the Rosemary Recreation Complex
- » Needham Concert Society
- » Activities and amenities in the community rooms at the Needham Housing Authority (including weekly coffees)
- » Programming at the Center at the Heights
- » Gardening at the Needham Housing Authority
- » Smoking Cessation Counseling services

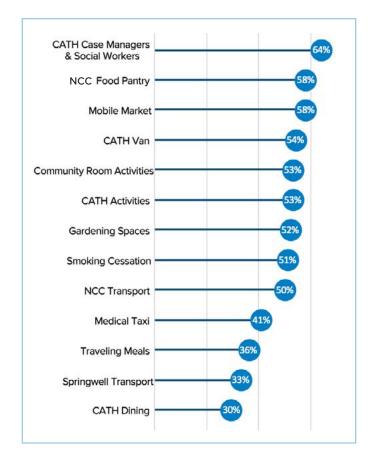


Figure 4: Percent Rating Different Community Resources as Important

Responses in this study indicate that organizations should communicate more effectively about their programs to encourage maximum resident use of these resources. Suggestions include:

- » Provide more organized and direct ways of getting information, beyond using bulletin boards, such as a resource manual
- » Ensure all materials are easy to read for people with lower literacy and visual acuity
- » Use the Needham Housing Authority newsletter as a vehicle for promoting local resources, at least twice a month

Below is a list of recommendations gleaned from residents and specific to each of the themes described above.



The Built Environment

- » Provide regular and timely maintenance services, including leaf, grass, and snow removal
- » NHA should consider reviewing its maintenance and repair protocols to ensure they are responsive to residents' needs



Community Engagement

- » Provide more services for those whose first language is not English, including English classes at different levels of proficiency, translated materials, and interpreter services
- » Increase on-site activities. Residents have suggested workshops from the public health nurses, assistance with paperwork for benefits such as Medicare, workshops to address bullying, and programs for children and middle-aged adults
- » Find other ways, in addition to the tenants' association, to provide residents with an opportunity to voice their concerns
- » Offer mediation services to address neighbor conflicts



Food Access

- » Provide options for food purchases at the complexes
- » Organize more frequent transportation directly from the NHA to affordable grocery stores
- » Provide information to residents about the various food resource programs available in Needham



Mental Health

- » Institute a program to provide wellness checks on elderly and people with disabilities
- » Employ an on-site social worker who rotates among Housing Authority properties



- » Offer smoking cessation classes on-site
- » Add shelters or canopies to the smoking areas to encourage smoking outdoors, even in poor weather
- » Assess interest in marijuana and alcohol cessation programs, including AA and counseling



Transportation

- » Increase regular, accessible, and affordable transportation options to locations throughout Needham
- » Compile and distribute a comprehensive and descriptive list of transportation options
- » Promote existing transportation programs through multiple communication channels, such as newsletters, Needham Cable, and on-site events

Conclusion

The Needham Housing Authority is a valued resource in Needham, providing affordable housing to many town residents. This assessment provides an overview of the residents' sense of the strengths and challenges they face living in the community. The information gathered here can be used to improve the quality of life for residents by building on these strengths and focusing resources on addressing the challenges.

While not all resident comments were included in the body of this report, there is an opportunity to address these and other concerns raised in the course of this study (see Appendix A, Page 27). Residents provided many practical, feasible, and reasonable suggestions that can be pursued. The Town of Needham, the Needham Housing Authority, and community partners should make concerted effort to address the recommendations of residents.

The Needham Housing Authority is an important part of the town's community. It provides homes for a number of families, older adults, and people with disabilities in Needham. The challenges faced by residents can be addressed, but only through the strong partnership of Needham's government, community organizations, and residents.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Technical Report



SURVEY OF NEEDHAM HOUSING RESIDENTS

Technical Report June 2019

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Needham Public Health Department and Needham Housing Authority, in collaboration with an external research and evaluation consultant, conducted a survey of Needham Housing Authority residents to learn more about their perceptions of needs, resources, and opportunities within the community. This report presents findings from 115 heads of household who took part in the survey at the beginning of calendar year 2019.

Respondent Characteristics (page 4)

Survey respondents were predominantly female and over 60 years of age. Most respondents self-identified as White, non-Hispanic and reported speaking English in their home. Few respondents reported being married at the time of the survey – the majority were separated or divorced or had never been married. Approximately one-third of respondents were currently in the labor force either part-time or full-time. Almost half the sample reported that they were retired and not working at all.

Most respondents reported that they lived in Needham for five or more years — with half reporting that they have lived in Needham for 15 or more years. Over half of respondents reported that they have lived in their current residence for more than five years. Most respondents currently live on Chambers Street, Linden Street, or Seabeds Way. Three-quarters of respondents indicated that they live alone and only one in ten reported living with someone under 18 years of age. Almost two-thirds reported having access to a vehicle for personal use.

Respondents were more likely to report their health as *poor*, *fair*, or *good* versus being *very good* or *excellent* in comparison to others their age. Over half of the respondents reported difficulty doing errands alone or reported difficulty walking or climbing stairs.

Attitudes and Perceptions (page 10)

Most respondents reported being satisfied with their unit/home and reported that they feel safe in their unit/home. Less than half of the respondents reported feeling mostly or very connected to the Needham community.

Issues and Stressors (page 11)

Respondents were most likely to report daily stressors and issues related to lack of affordable food and grocery options; people smoking in their units or too close to building entrances; outside property maintenance such as snow removal, landscaping, ramps, porches, steps; and lack of easy access to establishments or places where they can purchase food or groceries.

When asked to identify the <u>single</u> biggest issue affecting their quality of life that they would like to see changed, the largest proportion of respondents identified home/building maintenance, public transportation, and food and groceries. Clarifying open-ended comments revealed perceived issues with the upkeep of properties both inside and outside (including snow removal), lack of convenient public transportation options (especially on weekends), and high prices of groceries at local stores as the biggest issues. Although not a top issue, a sizeable subset of respondents also commented on lack of enforcement of non-smoking policies.

Resources and Opportunities (page 19)

Respondents rated the availability of case managers and social workers at the Center at the Heights as the most important community resource, followed by the Needham Community Council Food Pantry, and the Needham Community Farm mobile market. A sizeable subset of respondents also reported that they use the Needham Public Library and other educational services. When asked what services or resources they need that aren't currently offered (or are perceived as being inadequate) in the community, many identified some type of transportation-related need, the need for more community support services, and more on-site social activities.

BACKGROUND AND METHODS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Needham Public Health Department and Needham Housing Authority, in collaboration with an external research and evaluation consultant, conducted a survey of Needham Housing Authority residents at the beginning of calendar year 2019 to learn more about their perceptions of needs, resources, and opportunities within the community. The results of this survey are intended to help inform community planning efforts across multiple departments within the municipality.

SURVEY CONTENT

The survey instrument consisted of 58 discrete questions across four broad thematic areas.

Respondent Characteristics

- Background and Personal Characteristics: gender, age, race and ethnicity, languages spoken at home, marital status, employment status.
- Housing and Transportation: years living in Needham, years in current residence, location of current residence, number of people in household, individuals under 18 years of age in household, access to vehicle for personal use.
- Health and Physical Mobility: perceived health status, physical mobility.

Attitudes and Perceptions

- Feelings of connection to the community
- Satisfaction with unit/home
- Feelings of safety in unit/home

Issues and Stressors

- Perceived issues and stressors related to public transportation, food and groceries, maintenance, sense of community, and health and wellness
- Biggest issues affecting quality of life

Resources and Opportunities

- Current transportation methods
- Importance of community resources (transportation, food, community activities)
- Other community resources currently being utilized
- Needed services or resources not currently provided in Needham

A complete copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix A.

METHODS

The survey was administered <u>anonymously</u> as both a paper-based and online questionnaire between November 2018 and February 2019. Potential respondents were given the option to complete the survey online, return the survey to one of three convenient locations (Seabeds Community Room, Linden-Chambers Community Room, Center at the Heights), or by mail in a stamped envelope that was provided with the survey. The survey was available in English, Russian, and Mandarin. All Needham Housing Authority residents received a small incentive (\$5 gift card) to a local coffee store with the survey, and everyone who completed and returned a survey was entered in a drawing to win one of four \$25 gift cards for an online retailer. The drawing entry form was completed separate from the survey to ensure anonymity of responses.

SAMPLE AND ESTIMATED RESPONSE RATE

The sample for the survey consisted of the head of household (single respondent) for each unit/home under the purview of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA). According to the NHA website, there are 288 units/homes spread across Captain Robert Cook Drive, Chambers Street, Linden Street, Seabeds Way, and High Rock Estates. The head of household in 115 units returned a completed survey – 40% response rate. This ranged from a low of 8% from High Rock Estates residents to a high of 57% from Seabeds Way residents.

Overall, it is estimated that roughly 2 of every 5 heads of household completed the survey. It is important to note that the results are generalizable only to those Needham Housing residents who took part in the survey and may not reflect the attitudes, opinions, and needs of other Needham Housing residents in the community.

| Estimated Response Rate | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|------------|--|--|
| | NHA Units | Completed Surveys | Percentage | | |
| Captain Robert Cook Drive | 30 | 8 | 27% | | |
| Chambers Street | 80 | 38 | 48% | | |
| Linden Street | 72 | 30 | 42% | | |
| Seabeds Way | 46 | 26 | 57% | | |
| High Rock Estates | 60 | 5 | 8% | | |
| Unknown | - | 5 | - | | |
| Total | 288 | 115 | 40% | | |

NHA data retrieved from Needham Housing Authority: http://www.needhamhousing.org/nhahousingportfolio.html

Of the 115 completed surveys, 99 were completed in English, 8 in Russian, and 8 in Mandarin. Most surveys were completed on paper: 103 on paper, and 12 online.

| Survey Method and Language | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|-------|--|
| | English | Russian | Mandarin | Total | |
| Paper | 89 | 8 | 6 | 103 | |
| Online | 10 | - | 2 | 12 | |
| Total | 99 | 8 | 8 | 115 | |

ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25. 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 responds to write-in (or type-in) a response. These items were thematically coded to extract the major theme(s) present in the data.

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. Several steps were taken to increase confidence in the results from this project.

- 1. Use of clear and unambiguous language in the instructions prominently indicating who the intended target audience was (i.e., Needham Housing Authority residents) and indicating what the questions were about (i.e., perception of needs, opportunities, and resources).
- 2. Anonymity of results ensuring respondents that their answers were anonymous and that they would not face any personal, social, or financial penalties or retribution for providing candid and honest responses to the questions.
- 3. Interpretability and accessibility the survey was written at an eighth-grade reading level, available in three languages, used large serif type font for the visually-impaired, and was made available in multiple formats (i.e., paper and online).
- 4. Use of existing questions when available, questions were taken from existing instruments and standardized scales (e.g., questions about perceived personal health, demographics, etc.).
- 5. Key stakeholder review the survey instrument was reviewed by representatives from multiple town departments to identify potential areas of confusion or ambiguity.
- 6. Data screening visual and statistical screening methods were enlisted 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).
- 7. Identical case analysis statistical sub-routines were programmed to identify any duplicate records to minimize the chances that the same person intentionally or accidentally submitted multiple surveys.

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 Survey of Needham Housing Residents.

FINDINGS – RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Sixteen of the questions in the survey asked about different respondent characteristics. Seven questions assessed respondents' background and personal characteristics, six examined housing and transportation, and three covered health and physical mobility.

BACKGROUND AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Gender. Approximately two-thirds of respondents (65%) indicated that they were female and 34% reported that they were male.

| Which of the following best describes you? | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Female | 71 | 65.1% | |
| Male | 37 | 33.9% | |
| Other | 1 | 0.9% | |
| Missing | 6 | - | |
| Total Valid | 109 | 94.8% | |

The Total Valid percent row is the percentage of all respondents (n=115) that answered each question.

Age. Almost all respondents (96%) were over 40 years of age – with over two-thirds (69%) reporting that they were over 60 years of age.

| How old are you? | | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| 20 or younger | - | 0.0% |
| 21-30 years | 2 | 1.8% |
| 31-40 years | 2 | 1.8% |
| 41-50 years | 12 | 10.5% |
| 51-60 years | 19 | 16.7% |
| 61-70 years | 33 | 28.9% |
| 71-80 years | 34 | 29.8% |
| 81 years or older | 12 | 10.5% |
| Missing | 1 | - |
| Total Valid | 114 | 99.1% |

Race and Ethnicity. Respondents were asked to self-identify their race and ethnicity according to the categories in the U.S. Census. Overall, 98% of respondents selected one race and 2% selected more than one race. Most respondents (82%) identified as White, followed by Asian (8%), and Black or African American (7%). A total of 5% reported Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Not Hispanic or Latino | 106 | 95.5% |
| White alone | 88 | 79.3% |
| Black or African American alone | 7 | 6.3% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native alone | 3 | 2.7% |
| Asian alone | 9 | 8.1% |
| Some other race alone | 1 | 0.9% |
| Two or more races | 2 | 1.8% |
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5 | 4.5% |
| White alone | 3 | 2.7% |
| Black or African American alone | 1 | 0.9% |
| Some other race alone | 1 | 0.9% |
| Missing | 5 | - |
| Total Valid | 111 | 96.5% |

The two multiracial individuals both reported that they were White <u>and</u> American Indian or Alaskan Native. Percentages do not sum to 100% in this table because respondents were able to select multiple race categories.

Languages Spoken at Home. Overall, 87% of respondents reported speaking one language at home and 13% reported speaking multiple languages. Most respondents reported speaking English at home (87%), followed by Russian (9%), Mandarin (7%), and Spanish (5%).

| Which of the following languages are spoken in your home? | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| English | 96 | 86.5% | |
| Russian | 10 | 9.0% | |
| Mandarin | 8 | 7.2% | |
| Spanish | 5 | 4.5% | |
| Other | 6 | 5.4% | |
| Missing | 4 | - | |
| Total Valid | 111 | 96.5% | |

The six individuals who reported speaking other languages at home reported speaking: Albanian, Creole Haitian, Greek, Ukraine, and Vietnamese. Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents were able to select multiple languages.

Marital Status. The largest proportion of respondents reported they were separated or divorced (34%) or never married (32%), 16% were married, and 16% were widowed.

| What is your current marital status? | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Married | 17 | 15.5% | |
| Not married, living with a partner | 3 | 2.7% | |
| Separated or divorced | 37 | 33.6% | |
| Widowed | 18 | 16.4% | |
| Never married | 35 | 31.8% | |
| Missing | 5 | - | |
| Total Valid | 110 | 95.7% | |

Employment Status. Roughly half of the respondents indicated that they are currently retired (48%) and 16% are not in the labor force for other reasons (64% combined). Twenty-nine percent (29%) are currently employed either part-time (18%) or full-time (11%). An additional 7% of respondents reported that they are currently unemployed and looking for work.

| Which of the following best describes your current employment status? | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Employed or self-employed, part-time | 20 | 18.0% | |
| Employed or self-employed, full-time | 12 | 10.8% | |
| Unemployed, but looking for work | 8 | 7.2% | |
| Retired, not working at all | 53 | 47.7% | |
| Not in labor force for other reasons | 18 | 16.2% | |
| Missing | 4 | - | |
| Total Valid | 111 | 96.5% | |

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

Years Living in Needham. Roughly half the respondents (51%) reported they lived in Needham for less than 15 years and 49% reported that they have lived in Needham for 15 years or more.

| How long have you lived in Needham? | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Less than 5 years | 21 | 18.4% | |
| 5-14 years | 37 | 32.5% | |
| 15-24 years | 20 | 17.5% | |
| 25-34 years | 14 | 12.3% | |
| 35-44 years | 6 | 5.3% | |
| 45 years or more | 16 | 14.0% | |
| Missing | 1 | - | |
| Total Valid | 114 | 99.1% | |

Years in Current Residence. Most respondents (84%) reported that they have lived in their current unit/home for at least three years. Over a third of all respondents (34%) reported that they have lived in their current home/unit for 11 years or more.

| How many years have you lived in your current unit/home? | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Less than 1 year | 6 | 5.4% | |
| 1-2 years | 12 | 10.7% | |
| 3-5 years | 27 | 24.1% | |
| 6-10 years | 29 | 25.9% | |
| 11-15 years | 15 | 13.4% | |
| 16 years or more | 23 | 20.5% | |
| Missing | 3 | - | |
| Total Valid | 112 | 97.4% | |

Location of Current Residence. The largest proportion of respondents reported they currently live on Chambers Street (34%), followed by Linden Street (27%), and Seabeds Way (23%), and Captain Robert Cook Drive (7%).

| Where are you currently living? | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Chambers Street | 38 | 33.9% | |
| Linden Street | 30 | 26.8% | |
| Seabeds Way | 26 | 23.2% | |
| Captain Robert Cook Drive | 8 | 7.1% | |
| High Rock Estates | 5 | 4.5% | |
| Other | 5 | 4.5% | |
| Missing | 3 | - | |
| Total Valid | 112 | 97.4% | |

Number of People in Household. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) reported that they are in a single person household.

| Including yourself, how many people are currently living in your household? | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| One | 85 | 75.2% | |
| Two | 19 | 16.8% | |
| Three | 6 | 5.3% | |
| Four | - | 0.0% | |
| Five | 3 | 2.7% | |
| More than Five | - | 0.0% | |
| Missing | 2 | - | |
| Total Valid | 113 | 98.3% | |

Individuals Under 18 Years of Age in Household. Most respondents (90%) reported that there are not currently any individuals under 18 years of age living in their household.

| Are there any individuals under 18 years of age currently living in your household? | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| No | 101 | 90.2% | |
| Yes | 11 | 9.8% | |
| Missing | 3 | - | |
| Total Valid | 112 | 97.4% | |

Access to Vehicle for Personal Use. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) reported that they have access to a car or vehicle for personal use.

| Do you currently have access to a car or other vehicle for personal use? | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|--|
| | Frequency | Percentage | |
| No | 41 | 37.3% | |
| Yes | 69 | 62.7% | |
| Missing | 5 | - | |
| Total Valid | 110 | 95.7% | |

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL MOBILITY

Perceived Health Status. Half the respondents (49%) reported their health was *poor* or *fair* in comparison to others their age.

| In general, when compared to most people your age, how would you rate your health? | | |
|--|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| Poor | 15 | 13.3% |
| Fair | 40 | 35.4% |
| Good | 37 | 32.7% |
| Very Good | 17 | 15.0% |
| Excellent | 4 | 3.5% |
| Missing | 2 | - |
| Total Valid | 113 | 98.3% |

Physical Mobility. One-third of respondents (34%) reported difficulty doing errands alone and 50% reported difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Over half the respondents (57%) reported difficulty in at least one of these areas.

| Do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting your doctor's office or shopping? | | |
|---|-----------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage |
| No | 71 | 65.7% |
| Yes | 37 | 34.3% |
| Missing | 7 | - |
| Total Valid | 108 | 93.9% |

| Do you have difficulty walking or climbing stairs? | | |
|--|-----|-------|
| No | 54 | 50.5% |
| Yes | 53 | 49.5% |
| Missing | 8 | - |
| Total Valid | 107 | 93.0% |

FINDINGS – ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

Three questions in the survey asked about respondents' attitudes and perception of feeling connected to Needham, feeling satisfied with their unit/home, and feeling safe in their unit/home.

ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

Feelings of Connection, Satisfaction, and Safety

Respondents were asked: (1) how connected do you feel to Needham, (2) how satisfied are you with your unit/home, and (3) how safe do you feel in your unit/home? Each question was asked using a four-point scale with the same basic structure [Not at All, Somewhat, Mostly, Very].

Forty-four percent of respondents feel *mostly* (24%) or *very* (24%) connected to Needham, seventy percent are *mostly* (35%) or *very* (35%) satisfied with their unit or home, and seventy-one percent feel *mostly* (36%) or *very* (35%) safe in their unit or home.

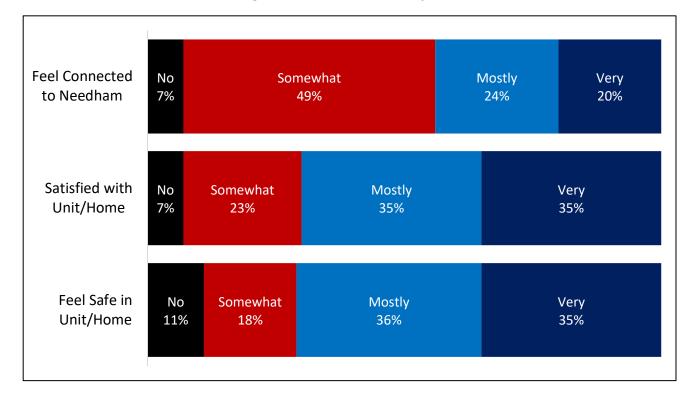


Figure 1: Attitudes and Perceptions

FINDINGS – ISSUES AND STRESSORS

A multi-part question on the survey asked respondents to indicate how much of an issue fourteen different things were that might be affecting their quality of life (i.e., stressors). Respondents were asked to rate each item on a scale from 1 (not an issue) to 5 (a big issue).

The question was divided into five conceptual areas: (1) public transportation, (2) food and groceries, (3) maintenance, (4) sense of community, and (5) health and wellness.

Public Transportation

- Affordable Public Transport Affordable public transportation options.
- Easy Access to Public Transport Easy access to public transportation close to home.
- Public Transport Routes Public transportation options that go where you need.
- Public Transport Schedules Public transportation options on the times or days that you need.

Food and Groceries

- Affordable Food and Grocery Affordable food and grocery options.
- Easy Access to Food and Grocery Easy access to establishments or places where you can purchase food or groceries.

Maintenance

- Outside Property Maintenance Outside property maintenance such as snow removal, landscaping, ramps, porches, steps.
- Inside Property Maintenance Home maintenance such as heat, plumbing, electrical.

Sense of Community

- Feeling Sense of Community Feeling like a part of the community (feeling welcome, having friends and neighbors to talk to).
- Relations Between Neighbors Relationships between neighbors and people treating neighbors respectfully.
- Neighborhood Activities Availability of neighborhood activities (interesting activities, ways to meet and interact with neighbors).

Health and Wellness

- Health and Wellness Services Having services and resources available for positive physical and mental health (exercise, yoga, stress reduction, addiction services, mental health services).
- Access to Health and Wellness Services Easy access to services and resources for maintaining positive physical and mental health.
- Smoking Inside or Too Close to Entry People smoking in their units/homes or too close to building entrances.

ISSUES AND STRESSORS

The 14 different issues/stressors were rated similarly. All fell within a narrow range around the midpoint of the five-point scale [range: 2.61 to 3.32] — indicating that all 14 areas were viewed as being moderate issues/stressors. Figure 2 displays these data according to the five thematic areas and mimics the order in which they were asked in the survey.

The items at the high end of the range were: affordable food and grocery options (mean = 3.32 out of 5.00), people smoking in their units or too close to building entrances (mean = 3.04), outside property maintenance such as snow removal, landscaping, ramps, porches, steps (mean = 3.03), and easy access to establishments or places where you can purchase food or groceries (mean = 3.01).

Figure 2: Issues and Stressors [Grouped by Area]

| | Not An Issue | A Big Issue |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Affordable Public Transport | • | 2.83 |
| Easy Access to Public Transport | | 2.89 |
| Public Transport Routes | • | 2.82 |
| Public Transport Schedules | 2 | .79 |
| Afforable Food and Grocery | | 3.32 |
| Easy Access to Food and Grocery | | 3.01 |
| Outside Property Maintenance | | 3.03 |
| Inside Property Maintenance | 2.7 | 73 |
| Feeling Sense of Community | • | 2.83 |
| Relations Between Neighbors | | 2.89 |
| Neighborhood Activities | 2.6 | • |
| Health and Wellness Services | 2.61 | |
| Access to Health/Wellness Services | | 2.96 |
| Smoking Inside or Close to Entry | | 3.04 |

Figure 3 presents the same set of data that were presented in Figure 2, but rank orders the 14 items rather than grouping them thematically.

Figure 3: Issues and Stressors [Grouped by High to Low]

| | Not An Issue | A Big Issue |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Afforable Food and Grocery | • | 3.32 |
| Smoking Inside or Close to Entry | 3.04 | • |
| Outside Property Maintenance | 3.03 | • |
| Easy Access to Food and Grocery | 3.01 | • |
| Access to Health/Wellness Services | 2.96 | • |
| Relations Between Neighbors | 2.89 | • |
| Easy Access to Public Transport | 2.89 | • |
| Feeling Sense of Community | 2.83 | • |
| Affordable Public Transport | 2.83 | • |
| Public Transport Routes | 2.82 | • |
| Public Transport Schedules | 2.79 | • |
| Inside Property Maintenance | 2.73 | • |
| Neighborhood Activities | 2.67 | • |
| Health and Wellness Services | 2.61 | • |

BIGGEST ISSUE RESPONDENTS WANT TO SEE CHANGED

Respondents were asked to identify the <u>biggest issue</u> currently affecting their quality of life that they would like to see changed based on a list of eight areas: public transportation, food and groceries, home/building maintenance, sense of community, physical health, mental health, substance use, and safety concerns.

The largest proportion of respondents (20%) identified home/building maintenance as the biggest issue currently affecting their quality of life that they would like to see changed, followed by public transportation (18%), and food and groceries (18%).

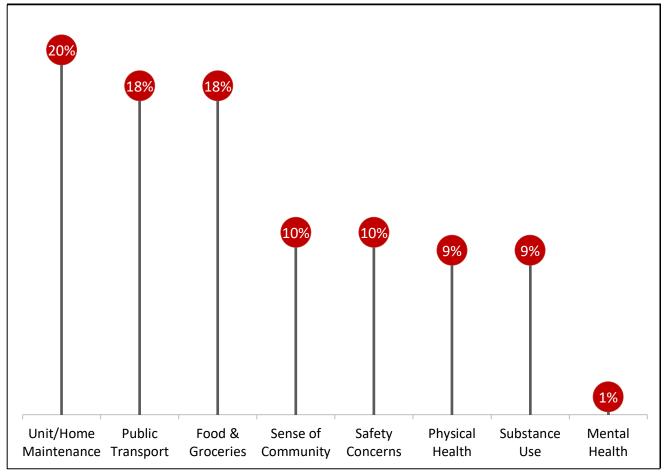


Figure 4: Biggest Issue Respondents Want to See Changed

Three percent of respondents (n=3) indicated that the biggest issue affecting their quality of life that they would like to see changed wasn't listed.

Home/Building Maintenance – Issues. Thirteen of the 20 respondents who identified home/building maintenance as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"NHA refuses to replace broken refrigerator and worn out rugs and comes into the unit when I am not here even when asking them to plan visits."

"Noise. Squeaky floors (loud)."

"There is no regular upkeep to the inside of buildings and no maintenance to clean the grounds and parking lots. No effort to maintain landscaping in a proper way."

"The maintenance guy just sits in his truck half the day. There was no fall clean up this year."

"Please keep in-check residents and visitors driving vehicles on landscape around housing units. They wreck and dig up nice lawn areas."

"It would be helpful to have the whole parking lot resurfaced due to potholes and uneven areas in the parking lot. Also, uneven sidewalks that can throw you off balance when walking."

"Railing from sidewalk up to unit has moved and leans too far from sidewalk to be of any use. In addition, water comes off the roof and freezes just outside front door making first step outside dangerous."

"More washers and dryers needed."

"More handicap accessories in the units."

"More outside lighting is needed. Don't always feel safe coming home at night."

"Clearing of parking spots after snow could use improvement!"

"It's hard to remove snow in the winter. I get back and hand pain from shoveling when the snow is heavy."

"Snow removal. Please do not plow parked cars in. Do not pile snow behind or in front or parked cars. Please shovel sidewalks as well."



Public Transportation – Issues. Seven of the 18 respondents who identified public transportation as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"Bus to supermarket, drugstore, bank, on certain times and days."

"If there is public transportation, it is not explained to residents. Most have stopped driving due to age or physical restrictions. It would allow residents to attend religious services if they desired or just going to the community."

"It is quite challenging for me since I don't have a car. Makes getting around Needham and to the YMCA hard. I need a ride with not too many passengers since I have a low immune system."

"Public transportation is not easily accessed. Walking up St. Mary's Street is difficult, limited bus route, and the RIDE is a joke. Uber and Lyft may be financially stressing, and you need a smart phone. The NCC transportation is limited to specific hours and destination. Plus, a reservation is needed."

"Reliable transit is cut on weekends when we can shop. More frequent access to Needham on weekends would be great."

"The RIDE is great, but not always available when needed or has such lousy scheduling that it is honestly painful to use. Need practical options for food shopping."

"Without better local transportation, one becomes a recluse."

Food and Groceries – Issues. Thirteen of the 18 respondents who identified food and groceries as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"As a senior citizen, Roche Brothers is extremely expensive. I don't drive; therefore, I am limited."

"Roche Brothers is too expensive. I can only get half of the groceries, then eat cereal until next social security check. I called several Roche Brothers to ask about having a morning, once a week, that could be senior morning. Nobody answered my request. Let's see if you can help."

"We should have a Market Basket. Cheap and good quality. We're all being forced into shopping at Roche Brothers/Sudbury Farms and spend a fortune!"

"Only two grocery stores in town. Both are expensive."

"I think we do not have enough choices when it comes to grocery stores. Needham is a great town. Nice community where everyone would love to live in. So, we need more options and affordable grocery stores like Stop and Shop on top of what we have."

"I feel that even though our grocery stores do a lot for Needham, their prices are way too high."

"I am disabled with a rollator to walk. I have nobody to go food shopping for me. Would like help with shopping and not have to spend a lot on expensive products when there are stores that are cheaper."

"Have to travel too far for affordable groceries and too expensive if delivered."

"Poor cost of living increases from social security as costs for many things increase. Have to get help from the Food Pantry."

"The only store close to me is very expensive. I'm on a fixed income, so this poses a real concern."

"Food and groceries are too costly at the local markets."

"Food prices in town are very expensive."

"The food is not affordable."



Safety Concerns – Issues. Six of the 9 respondents who identified safety concerns as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"Abusive neighbor."

"There are too many permanent 'house guests' residing here. Those 'guests' are not on any lease and they have not had to pass background checks."

"Two years ago, a well-cultured 80-year-old Russian woman was murdered. Therefore, I do not feel safe."

"No more murders."

"Since murder occurred, we were promised outside cameras and nothing has been done."



Sense of Community – Issues. Seven of the 10 respondents who identified sense of community as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"I feel isolated."

"Elderly should not have to live with loud music, fire alarms going off all the time, mentally ill that can't live alone successfully. People look down in low income and elderly. Pretty mean sometimes to Captain Cook children. I feel bad for them."

"Noisy neighbors."

"Hope to have friends who I can trust so we can take care of each other, communicate with each other, and learn from each other. Friends who make me feel confident that I am part of the community and someone useful."

"I want to be a neighbor and be loved and liked. Times have changed here. People pass away and are no more. The old days."

"In the four years that I have lived here I have seen a tremendous decline in our community. People do not get along. People don't respect one another. Our current tenant association president is a bully. Something needs to change.

"There needs to be a new election of the tenant's association – the current president is the biggest problem – violent, vulgar.

Substance Use – Issues. All 10 respondents who identified substance use as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"Make sure no smoking rules are enforced. No smoking in apartments."

"Regarding neighbors smoking. I was a smoker and after quitting if I go outside and someone is smoking it really bothers me and I start coughing."

"I have asthma, so I wear a mask when downstairs because of smokers."

"People smoking is a problem."

"People still smoking in their units."

"Tenants still smoke inside units and they need to be more mindful of their neighbors."

"The NHA is too limited by regulations to deal effectively with residents who violate their housing contract by smoking, by causing fire, or by most anything that endangers or blights the community. The NHA has terrible relations with its residents."

"There are many alcoholics here whose behavior affects quality of life and security for others."

"Substance abuse (i.e., alcohol abuse) is spilling out of the apartments. We are experiencing people acting inappropriately in the corridors. Ambulances for rehab for alcohol arrive often. It's destabilizing and raises safety issues."

"There are a group of neighbors that drink a lot, they make noise late at night."

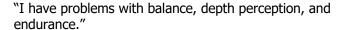


Physical and Mental Health. Three of the 9 respondents who identified physical health or mental health as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"More free resources for physical and mental health."

"Poor physical and mental health are problems."





Other Issues. All 3 respondents who identified an issue not listed in the survey as the biggest issue affecting their quality of life provided a clarifying comment.



"Many of my neighbors have pets. The laundry room has cat hair and bird feathers in and on the machines. I have severe allergies and asthma and can't use the machines. I'm forced to go to laundromats and pay more. My stove is old and rusty. My kitchen is outdated.

"There are no programs for kids or for middle-aged parents in the Linden/High Rock neighborhood. Also, no yard, no snow removal, no grocery store, no transportation, no physical or mental health programs or assistance in times of sickness, loss, injury, crisis, etc. Middle-aged moms and the elderly have no help/support at home with kids when they are sick. I feel scared to ask for help, maintenance, or updates to the unit. NHA charges \$100 for yard help. NHA refused to help with snow removal when I was injured/sick.

"There are myriad issues – lack of respect from staff, lack of concern and/or follow-through when residents violate their lease or cause problems for other residents, sub-standard living conditions in units, fear among residents of speaking out due to backlash, not feeling safe in the building and/or the community, maintenance of common areas is lacking... all this makes living in NHA traumatizing, at worst, and makes us feel unimportant and disrespected, at best. It's a stressful place to live."

FINDINGS – RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The second part of the survey asked respondents about resources and opportunities. The first question in this section asked about transportation resources. Specifically, respondents were asked how often they currently use eight different modes/methods of transportation to get around Needham for trips like shopping, visiting the doctor, visiting friends, and running errands.

CURRENT TRANSPORTATION METHODS

Respondents were most likely to report that they often drive themselves (59%) – which corresponds to the earlier finding that 63% of respondents have access to a vehicle for personal use. An additional 39% reported that they often walk, 33% often have others drive them, 22% often use the public bus or shuttle, 18% often use a special transportation service for seniors or persons with disabilities, 13% often use a ride sharing service such as Uber or Lyft, 13% often take a taxi or cab, and 8% often bike.

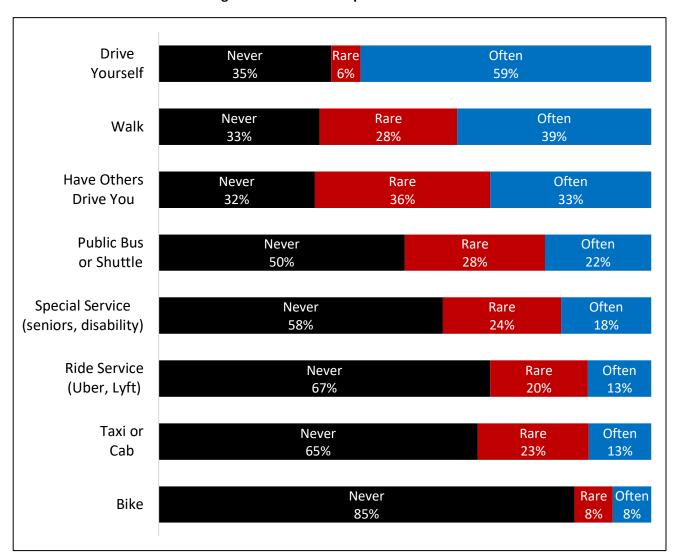


Figure 5: Current Transportation Methods

CURRENT TRANSPORTATION METHODS AMONG THOSE WITHOUT ACCESS TO A VEHICLE

Among the 41 respondents who reported that they do not have access to a vehicle for personal use, 62% reported that they often walk to their destination, 56% often have others drive them, 41% often use the public bus or shuttle, 32% often use a special transportation service for seniors or persons with disabilities, 21% often take a taxi or cab, 15% often bike, and 13% often use a ride sharing service such as Uber or Lyft.

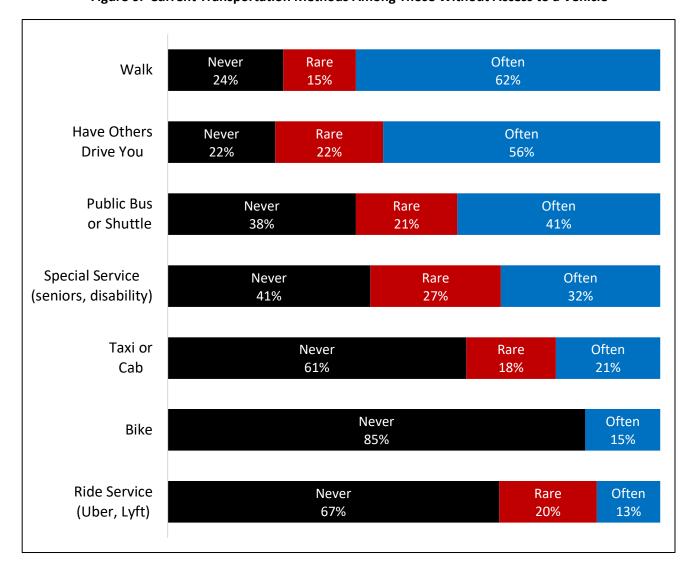


Figure 6: Current Transportation Methods Among Those Without Access to a Vehicle

IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 13 different resources in the community, even if they aren't currently using them. Four items asked about transportation resources, four ask about food resources, and five asked about other community activities, services, and resources. The response options for each of these questions were: I don't know about this, not important, somewhat important, and very important.

Transportation Resources

- The van operated by the Center at the Heights.
- Needham's Medical Taxi Ride Program.
- Transportation options by Springwell, Inc.
- Transportation options by the Needham Community Council.

Food Resources

- Needham Community Council food pantry.
- Community Dining Program at the Center at the Heights.
- The Traveling Meals program.
- Needham Community Farm mobile market.

Community Activities, Services, and Resources

- Community programming and activities at the Center at the Heights.
- Activities and amenities in the community room at your housing development.
- Spaces for gardening or growing at your housing development.
- Smoking cessation counseling services by Needham Housing Authority.
- The availability of case managers and social workers at the Center at the Heights.

Importance of Community Transportation Resources

Among the four community transportation resources asked about in the survey, respondents provided the highest importance ratings to the van operated by the Center at the Heights (54% rated this as important), followed by transportation options by the Needham Community Council (50% rated this as important), Needham's Medical Taxi Ride Program (41% rated this as important), and transportation options by Springwell, Inc. (33% rated this as important).

Less than half of the respondents were familiar with the Needham Medical Taxi Ride Program and with transportation options by Springwell, Inc.

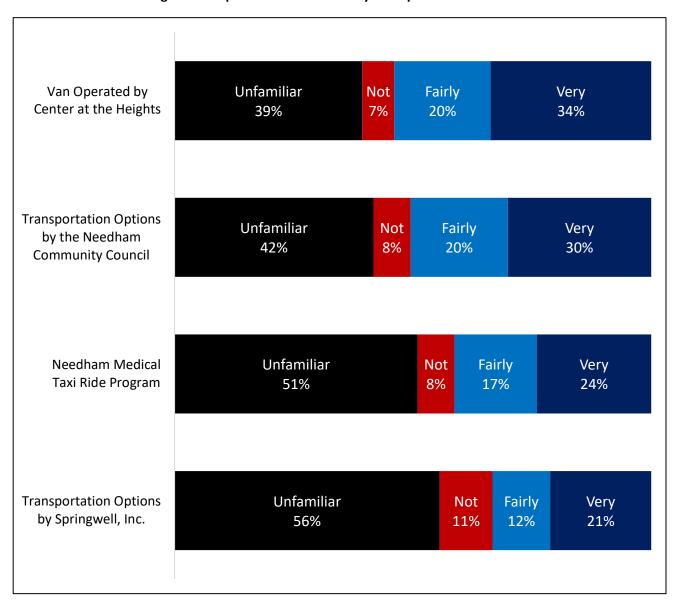


Figure 7: Importance of Community Transportation Resources

Importance of Food Resources

Among the four food resources asked about in the survey, respondents provided the highest importance ratings to the Needham Community Council Food Pantry (58% rated this as important), followed by the Needham Community Farm mobile market (58% rated this as important), the Traveling Meals program (36% rated this as important), and the Community Dining Program at the Center at the Heights (29% rated this as important).

Approximately one-third of respondents indicated that they were not familiar with the Traveling Meals Program or familiar with the Community Dining Program at the Center at the Heights.

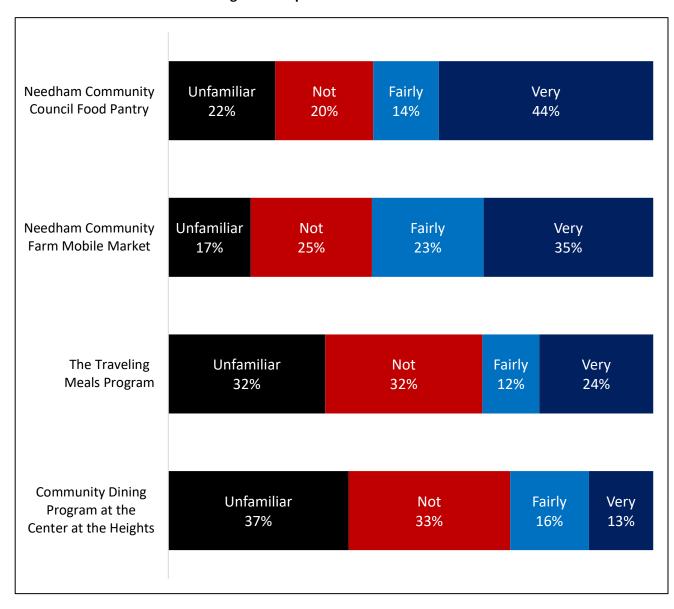


Figure 8: Importance of Food Resources

Importance of Other Community Activities, Services, and Resources

Among the five other community activities, services, and resources asked about in the survey, respondents provided the highest importance ratings to the availability of case managers and social workers at the Center at the Heights (64% rated this as important), followed by activities and amenities in the community room at housing developments (53% rated this as important), community programming and activities at the Center at the Heights (53% rated this as important), spaces for gardening or growing at housing developments (52% rated this as important), and smoking cessation counseling services by Needham Housing Authority (51% rated this as important).

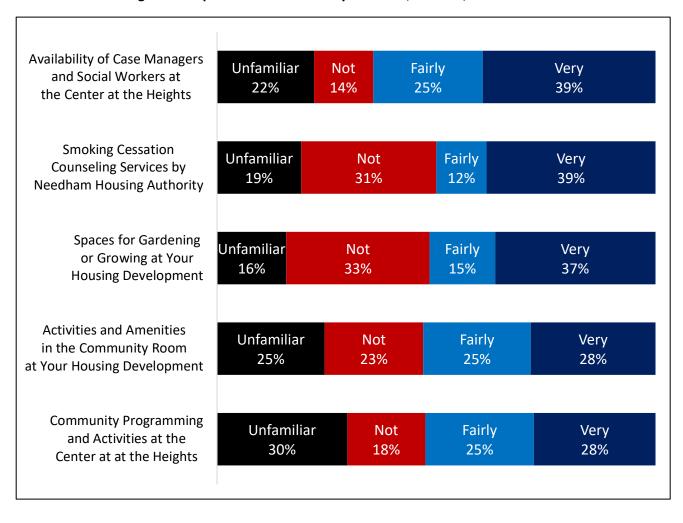


Figure 9: Importance of Community Activities, Services, and Resources

Figure 8 presents the same data as Figure 7 but collapses those who reported that each service was fairly or very important into a single value. Respondents rated the availability of case managers and social workers at the Center at the Heights as the most important community resource, followed by the Needham Community Council Food Pantry, and the Needham Community Farm mobile market.

CATH Case Managers & Social Workers Food Pantry Mobile Market CATH Van Community Room Activities **CATH Activities Gardening Spaces** Smoking Cessation NCC Transport Medical Taxi **Traveling Meals** Springwell Transport **CATH Dining**

Figure 10: % Rating Different Community Resources as Important

OTHER SERVICES OR RESOURCES CURRENTLY USING

Respondents were asked to indicate what other services they currently use in the community. Seven respondents mentioned the Needham Public Library or educational services, six identified transportation services, six mentioned various agencies and services in the community, four identified exercise facilities and pools, two mentioned cleaning services, and two mentioned social activities.

| | "Needham Public Library" (5 mentions) |
|----------------|--|
| ~ ₩ | "Going to the library to use the computer for informational reasons." |
| V V (7) | "Needham Community Education, but their programs are too expensive and they don't allow scholarships unless your family receives free lunch." |
| | "The RIDE." (2 mentions) |
| | "Bus." |
| O (6) | "Lyft provided by Needham Council on Aging for medical appointments with Commonwealth Care Alliance." |
| (-) | "MBTA." |
| | "I use the YMCA van, etc. available on M, W, F." |
| | "Love the Needham Community Council. Especially good bank and thrift shop, holiday program." |
| | "Needham Community Council." |
| No. | "Springwell." |
| (6) | "Tax preparation at Center at the Heights." |
| | "The dump (Needham's recycling and transfer station) – Very well managed." |
| | "Thrift shop." |
| | "Exercise gyms." |
| | "Pool." |
| (4) | "Rosemary pool." |
| | "YMCA." |
| / | "Homemaker laundry service." |
| : (2) | "Springwell Homemaker Services." |
| 111 | "Needham concert society. Great hall performances." |
| (2) | "Weekly coffee. It's a good communication opportunity between housing residents. It has been a real morale booster. It facilitates care. Book groups were great. It reinforces tenant capability." |
| | |

NEEDED RESOURCES NOT CURRENTLY OFFERED

Respondents were asked to identify what services or resources they need that aren't currently offered in the community. Nineteen identified some type of transportation-related need, five mentioned various community services and activities, four mentioned on-site social activities, two mentioned assistance with yardwork and snow removal, two mentioned cleaning services, two identified the need for vending machines, and two commented on relations with NHA.

| | "Rides to different shopping stores. Walmart. Kohls. Home Depot." (6 mentions) |
|--------------|--|
| | "Rides to and from doctor's appointments." (5 mentions) |
| | "Daily local transportation to pharmacies." (2 mentions) |
| | "A local bus that has regular 7-day schedule (route)." |
| | "Bring back the YMCA ride. Clean, courteous, on-time." |
| (19) | "Chambers Street transportation to Needham Center." |
| | "More shuttle services." |
| | "Occasional direct transportation to either Dedham or Wellesley. MBTA green line extension to Needham Heights via Newton Highlands station." |
| | "List of available transportation options and destinations." |
| | "Programs for High Rocks kids/teens." |
| STA | "Regular wellness checks on elderly and disabled. A real social worker at NHA to assist elderly and disabled – not a social director." |
|) | "Some kind of religious services for all faiths." |
| / (5) | "It would be nice to have a drop-in center in Needham – a place to socialize." |
| | "YMCA membership." |
| | "A more active Needham Housing Authority social services coordinator. Something better than Springwell, |
| | "More social activities at the Chambers Community Center." |
| (4) | "More on-site activities." |
| | "Health and wellness programs for middle ages." |
| (a) | "Free help with snow removal and car cleaning for those who are physically limited and personal yard help for raking trapped leaves and trimming small shrubs not planted by NHA." |
| <u> </u> | "There is a huge need for help with leaves, grass, and snow removal." |
| / | "Change machine in the laundry room." |
| (2) | "Get a Busy Bee type service back so there is flexibility – great service." |
| (2) | "Two stores in the area close on Sundays. We can't go anywhere nearby for a coke, sandwich, or quart of milk. Vending machines or a beverage machine might help." |
| | "Vending machine for soft drinks because the neighborhood shuts down on Sunday. We are in no man's land. Everything is closed." |
| 888 | "A more involved NHA Board of Commissioners." |
| ATTITION (2) | "Ombudsman/advocate for NHA-related issues." |
| (4) | |

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Background:

The Needham Department of Public Health is gathering information to inform future programs and activities that aim to improve the health and quality of life for the residents of the Needham public housing locations.

A piece of this process is speaking directly with you, the residents, to gain your thoughts about the needs that you experience so that the activities, programs, and resources developed help to meet the needs you feel are most important.

Participation is completely voluntary. The Town will summarize this information into a brief memo to be shared with the public; however, individual responses and information will be kept strictly confidential.

Questions:

- 1. How do you define health and wellbeing?
- 2. What about living in the residences is beneficial to your physical health and social wellbeing?
 - a. Please describe or give examples.
- 3. Could you describe any challenges you face day to day when it comes to maintaining your health and wellbeing?
 - a. Could you provide examples from your life or stories you've heard from others?
- 4. Could you list the 6 major problems you see in your community?
 - a. Rank these problems in order of importance to you
 - b. Where does health/wellbeing rank?
- 5. What kinds of programs or activities that are not currently offered do you think would help enhance your health and wellbeing as a resident?
 - a. Could you describe or give examples? How might these influence your health and wellbeing or that of your neighbors?
 - b. What specific actions could the town take? What resources do you think would help address these issues?

- 6. In your opinion, what already exists that helps you feel healthy and well? (physically, mentally, emotionally?)
 - a. How do these aspects help? Do you feel like all residents are able to participate?
 - b. Do neighbors help each other? Look out for one another?
- 7. What are the important resources in your community? Where are they located?
 - a. How do you learn about these resources?
 - b. What if any are the challenges for residents to access programs in the town?
- 8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you again for your time. If you find you have anything additional to add or any questions, you can reach out to ---.

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Background:

The Needham Department of Public Health is gathering data as a part of a plan to assess both the strengths and needs of the communities residing in the Needham Housing Authority residences to inform plans and programs that aim to improve the health and quality of life of the residents.

We have asked you to participate as a key informant because of your knowledge, insight, and familiarity working in the community. Through the interview, I hope to learn about your work, thoughts, and perspectives about the health and resource needs and strengths of the communities and individuals who live in the Needham Housing Authority locations.

I will be recording this interview along with the others that I will conduct in order to have an accurate record of our conversation to refer back to. I may reach out to you again following the completion of all interviews to verify my interpretation with you. The themes that emerge from this interview and others will be summarized and compiled into a brief memo to be shared with the public; however, individual interviews will be kept confidential.

Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

Questions:

- 1. Could you describe your role in the community and how long you have been working in this role?
 - a. In what capacity have you worked with the housing authority or its residents?
- 2. In general, how would you rate the health and quality of life for the residents of the Needham Housing Authority locations?
 - a. Is this different depending on which location?
 - b. Why do you feel the health and quality of life is _____?
- 3. What do you think are the most important health issues and needs present among the housing authority resident population?
 - a. Could you describe examples of what you've seen and/or provide stories or anecdotes that illustrate why you believe these needs are present?

- 4. What do you think needs to be done to address these issues?
 - a. What specific actions could the town take? What resources do you think would help address these issues?
 - b. Who should be involved in providing these resources?
- 5. What do you think will improve the health and quality of life of the residents?
- a. Any particular strategies, programs, or activities?
- 6. What do you think helps to facilitate good health and well-being among the residents?
 - a. How do these aspects help? In your opinion, are these facilitators accessible by all individuals and at all locations?
 - b. In your opinion are there ways to build on these strengths to promote good health and quality of life among the residents?
- 7. What barriers, if any, exist to improve the health and quality of life of the NHA residents?
 - a. Could you describe or provide examples of the social, physical, or other aspects that hinder good mental, social, and physical well-being of the residents. Provide examples wherever possible.

Mental Health:

8. In your opinion, what are the most important needs or resources related to mental health for the residents living in the NHA locations?

Social Wellbeing:

- 9. Could you describe the opportunities for the NHA residents to participate in social, leisure, and cultural activities with others in Needham?
- 10. How could the social wellbeing of NHA residents be improved?

Closing:

11. Is there anything else you would like to add before we wrap up for today?

Thank you again for your time today speaking with me about this topic. As I mentioned at the beginning, I may be in touch in the future to verify interpretation of our conversation, or to clarify particular points.

If you find you have anything additional to add to this conversation or any questions for me beyond today, you can reach me at ---.

Thank you again!