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Aging in Lynn: A Community Needs Assessment

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Aging in Lynn: A Community Needs Assessment

2022

Commissioned by the City Of Lynn, Department of Elder Affairs

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

Contributors and Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging (CSDRA), a research unit within the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston's McCormack School. The CSDRA provides resources and research expertise to communities, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies through the Commonwealth.

Caitlin Coyle, PhD, Mary Krebs, MA, Setarreh Massihzadegan, MS are primarily responsible for the contents of this report. Others contributing to the project include doctoral students Nidya Velasco Roldán and Ceara Somerville and undergraduate students Daniel Caron, Roisin O'Keefe, Saralyn Collins, and Sabrin Zahid. We offer our appreciation to city employees Christopher Gomez, the Director of Elder Services, and Michele Desmaris, the Director of Public Health for their leadership and guidance on this process. As well we are deeply grateful to the many residents of the City of Lynn who shared their thoughts as part of the data collection.

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Table of Contents

<i>Contributors and Acknowledgements</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Executive Summary</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Methods</i>	<i>13</i>
Demographic Profile.....	14
Community Survey.....	14
Key Informant Interviews & Stakeholder Focus Group	14
Data Analysis.....	15
<i>Results</i>	<i>15</i>
Demographic Profile of Lynn	15
Results from the Community Survey	30
Community and Neighborhood.....	30
Housing and Living Situation	36
Health & Caregiving.....	41
Transportation.....	43
Lynn Senior Center	49
Key Informant and Focus Group Insights.....	61
<i>Conclusion and Recommendations</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Appendix A: Community Survey Results</i>	<i>66</i>



Dear Lynn Residents and Community Members,

I am pleased to share with you the report *Aging in Lynn: A Community Needs Assessment*, researched and written by the expert team at the University of Massachusetts Boston Gerontology Institute. The City has remained committed to Lynn's senior residents and has demonstrated this support through the recent acquisition and opening of the Lynn Senior Center. Building on this momentum, we embarked on this needs assessment process to chart the future course of Elder Services to ensure that our programs and services align with current community need. It is certainly an exciting time for Elder Services in Lynn.

We are deeply grateful to the Lynn residents, community leaders, service providers, business owners, and municipal leaders who shared with us their time and insight into what can be done to ensure that Lynn remains strong in its commitment to older residents. I hope you enjoy reading this report and are stimulated to engage in the community around seniors' needs. This report is the culmination of this information, including recommendations for moving us forward.

I learned a great deal from it myself, and it stimulated new directions in the effort to improve the lives of seniors in Lynn. We intend to distribute this report to all the stakeholders and use the information to advance relevant projects that will have demonstrable impacts on how seniors live in Lynn. The Elder Services Department is very grateful to all those who took the time and effort to participate in the focus groups and who contributed so thoughtfully. We also are indebted to Caitlin Coyle and her entire team for their time and expertise in creating such a polished and readable document.

Sincerely,

Christopher Gomez
Director of Elder Services

Executive Summary

This report describes research undertaken by the Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging within the Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston, on behalf of the City of Lynn and the Lynn Department of Elder Services. The goals of this project were to investigate the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of residents of the City of Lynn age 60 or older. The contents of this report are meant to inform the planning and operation of the Lynn Senior Center, and organizations that work with and on behalf of older residents of the City of Lynn. The report will also help to build awareness about issues facing community members at large.

A key finding of the report points to the substantial increase in the number of older adults, increasingly those reportedly speaking a language other than English, expected to live in Lynn in coming decades and their desire to remain in the area as they age. Currently, 18% of residents is age 60 or older (and projections suggest that by 2035 this proportion will increase up to 21% of the total population. Another crucial aspect of aging in Lynn is the transition to a municipally operated Senior Center, and its new location in the City. Lynn's Senior Center is an important and valued resource, operating a central point of contact for older residents who seek services to promote healthful aging and fulfilling lives. Taken together, growth of the older population, diversification of this group, and the beginning of a new era for the Lynn Senior Center with respect to location and operations has special significance for the Senior Center, and increasing demand for its services and programs can be expected moving forward.

The study was conducted over the course of 9 months (Fall 2021-Spring 2022). A demographic profile was completed, based on existing, publicly available data about the region from the US Census Bureau and projections from the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts. The project included a sample survey of residents age 60 or older that was conducted in the Winter of 2022. The survey generated 1,170 responses, yielding a response rate of 23%. A series of 7 key-informant interviews were conducted with other leaders in the City to hear about their perspective on needs of older residents and document their ideas for change. Finally, a focus group was held with a group of community stakeholders in Lynn to elucidate both the challenges they are facing in their work and generate ideas for how collaborations could help address some of those challenges.

Recommendations for the Lynn Senior Center

We summarize key findings and make the following recommendations to the City of Lynn as well as the Lynn Senior Center:

➤ **The demand for Senior Center programs and services is expected to escalate in coming years.**

- Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show that in 2020, there were 16,522 residents age 60 or older living collectively in the City. This made up 18% of the total population. Projections suggest that between by 2035, residents age 60+ will comprise 21% of the total population of the City.
- The racial and ethnic diversity of Lynn’s older adult population is also projected to continue changing in coming years. In 2020, 18% of residents age 65+ identified themselves as Hispanic compared to 31% of those age 45-50. Similarly, younger residents are more likely to speak Spanish at home compared to older residents. These results suggest that as new cohorts of residents age in Lynn, the older adult population will increasingly be comprised of Hispanic residents and those who speak Spanish.
- 26% of residents age 64-74 are still working and 5% of those age 75 or older are still working.
- Many respondents took the time to write in about how they have been unable to participate in programs due to the transitions taking place and COVID-19; but many are comforted to know resource exists for them in the future. For example, one resident writes, *“I am glad that it will be available when the time comes that I may need it.”*
- Not only is the size of the older population growing, but the complexity of their needs is increasing.
 - In addition to opportunities to socialize and stay connected, 22% of residents reported worrying about running out of food before they had money to buy more.
 - As well, 19% reported not knowing someone nearby on whom they could rely for help. Additionally, 23% would prioritize expanding mental health programs offered by the Lynn Senior Center. Across these three topics, respondents in their 60s reported higher rates of food insecurity, social isolation, and desire for mental health programs.
 - 26% and 31% of respondents reported being limited by a health condition or needing help at home because of a health reason, respectively.

Recommendations:

- Plan for escalating demand for Senior Center programs and services –including the expansion of both staffing and space.
 - Explore opportunities to delivering programming remotely or to homebound residents or co-sponsoring programs at locations around the City to ensure that participation is not limited by capacity of the current location.
- Consider the hiring of licensed social workers who can respond to more complex needs of the community members and their families, this person would also be able

to host a student social work intern to add to the capacity of the Center to address more complex needs of residents.

- Consider ways to expand access to fresh and healthy foods. For example, farmers market delivery programs or hosting a regular lunch program or weekly community dinner.
- Raise awareness about existing medical transportation resources and the transportation offered by the Lynn Senior Center. For example, decorate the Lynn Senior Center bus brightly so that as it is driving throughout the community, it becomes recognized.
- Expand the programming staff to include additional “volunteer coordinator” position that assists with scaling up the recruitment and support to volunteers to deliver programs—drawing on the wealth of education, expertise, and talent of the area’s residents.

➤ **Consider planning for programming that focuses on physical health, mental health, lifelong learning and should be expanded.**

- 26% of survey respondents reported that if it programs and services were better suited to their interests, they would be more likely to attend. This was the second most commonly reported factor for increasing likelihood of attendance.
- When asked what kinds of programs they would like to see expanded, the top three types were similar across age groups. First was an interest in expanding physical health and wellness classes (42%), educational programs, including technology skills training (33%; 34%) and outdoor exercise (32%).
- Survey respondents rated the importance of services that could be offered by the Lynn Senior Center and the highest rated services include: professional services like health insurance counseling, tax preparation, or legal aid (45%), assistance with applying to state and federal programs (44%), health and wellness clinics like podiatry or blood pressure (43%), and transportation (42%).
- At the time of the survey, the arrangements for the Lynn Senior Center were not satisfactory to residents as observed in write-in responses on the survey. For example, one resident wrote, “I belong to the senior center before COVID, all of a sudden there was no more senior center. I thought a new one was supposed to open, but have no information.”

Recommendations:

- Support the development of a Trailblazers club¹ to connect with adults seeking to connect via outdoor activities.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/SouthboroughTrailBlazers/>

- Coordinate with residents to identify topics and skills they can share with others and pilot-test a lifelong learning program.
- Create mechanisms to consistently infuse the programming schedule with new offerings as a way of engaging a range of residents based on their interests and abilities.
- If exercise space is limited, consider partnerships with the recreation department or schools to consider other ways to host physical exercise courses.

➤ **Awareness of the Lynn Senior Center is limited; and some residents are living in isolation.**

- The number one factor that would increase the likelihood of participating at the Lynn Senior Center is, “If I had more knowledge about the programs and services that are available”, reported by 56% of survey respondents. Lack of awareness was also the number one reported reason for not currently participating (41%). This is in part due to the recent transitions to a new space and staff; but is also an integral aspect of ensuring that all older residents have equal access to resources.
 - One resident wrote, *“I don't know where it is or what is offered”*.
- 33% of the City’s residents age 65 or older live alone.
- Among survey respondents living alone 19% of those in their 60s and 22% of those in their 70s report not knowing someone nearby to call on for help, if needed.
- 42% of survey respondents report not knowing who to contact in their community should they or someone in their family need help with social, health or municipal services.
- The City’s website is the most preferred way of obtaining information, followed by the Senior Center newsletter and email or text communication.

Recommendations:

- Consider a rebranding effort to raise awareness about what is offered by the Lynn Senior Center. Perhaps changing the name to be more inclusive and creating an image that reframes aging as a positive and active experience may empower residents to participate in the community.
- Facilitate a quarterly networking event for local organizations to come together. These events would include community education about the programs and services available through various agencies but also provide a mechanism by which communication about issues of isolation among providers can be streamlined and relationships established.
- Consider implementing a “surrogate grandparent” program that matches older adults with local families for mentorship and socialization to those whose families live out-of-town or are otherwise absent.

- Consider ways to welcome first-time participants who are reluctant to participate on their own (e.g., a “new member day” or a “bring a buddy” program to welcome new participants).
 - Explore the use of technology (e.g., phone or other mobile devices) to include residents who are unable to leave their home in existing programs through video technology, or making “friendly visits” by telephone.
 - Consider developing a resident ambassador program to educate residents with information about existing resources to be conduits between the Senior Center and the community at-large, this could even be a property tax work off position.
 - In order to ensure representation of residents on local boards, committees, and initiatives, consider establishing a “citizen’s civic academy²”. This educates residents about the basics of local policymaking and governance and empowers them with self-advocacy skills.
- **Costs of living and availability of downsizing options are perceived as challenging in the City of Lynn.**
- 59% of survey respondents reported that their home currently needs some type of repair or modification to make it a safe place to age. Among them, 25% reported being unable to afford to make these changes.
 - When asked about preferences for type of housing, 44% of respondents age 60-69 would prefer to live in a 55+ independent living community as would 41% of those respondents age 70-79. Among the oldest old (age 80 or older), assisted living is preferred.
 - When asked about their concerns about being able to remain in Lynn as they age, one of the most commonly reported concerns was the rising costs of living, including property taxes and the lack of downsizing options. For example, one resident wrote that their biggest concern about being able to stay in the area was, *“Being on fixed income the increases on my property taxes prevents other activities to be enjoyed.”* And another writes, *“Fear of continuing increase of taxes. The current increase is very difficult to handle”*
 - 22% of respondents disagreed that they have adequate resources to meet their basic needs.
 - Among households headed by someone age 65 and older (41%) report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with 20% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000.

Recommendations:

² <http://www.healthy-waltham.org/waltham-senior-civic-academy/>

- Distribute educational materials, hold workshops, or offer other opportunities for residents to learn about home modifications that can promote safety in the home.
- Consider developing a way of distributing information about local handyman or repair services. Ensure that this list includes resources for contractors who will provide home modifications to support safety within the home.
- Continue to contribute to local conversations about housing options for older adults. Advocate for options that current residents can afford, including condominiums and other types of housing that offer low maintenance and single-floor living, as well as market-rate housing. Assisted living communities and senior independent living units are desirable housing options.
- Educate the community about currently available programs to support aging in place on a limited income (e.g., property tax exemptions, tax work-off program, small grants for home repairs).
 - Seek out ways to raise funds for small home repair projects to support those living in the community.
- Consider expanding educational workshops on topics related to economic security, such as planning for retirement, finding new employment, creating ways to use home equity to age in place, or seeking alternative housing models like home-sharing or renting out rooms.

➤ **Many residents are caregivers and are in need of supports.**

- 53% of survey respondents in their 60s and 46% of those in their 70s reported having been a caregiver within the past 5 years. Most caregivers reported that it is challenging to provide care and complete their daily responsibilities, including 74% of those in their 60s.
- 14% of all residents age 65 or older have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia, and that is likely an under report given than many people go undiagnosed.

Recommendations:

- Create new ways of providing information and assistance for caregivers, support groups for caregivers, and provide information about referral resources available. Consider hosting a family caregiver “resource fair” as an opportunity to connect the Senior Center with family caregivers.
- Consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out” to provide residents who might be caring for a spouse, parent, or grandparent an opportunity to enjoy a night of entertainment. Explore partnerships with volunteer groups and other aging service providers to provide respite care during the event.
- Consider developing a Memory Café or providing resources of nearby Cafés for residents and their caregivers to attend.

- Encourage City employees or resident volunteers to become “dementia friends³” to learn more about communication and reduction of stigma around dementia.

³ [Become a Dementia Friend | Dementia Friends USA](#)

Introduction

Background

It is a transformational time for older residents of the City of Lynn. In 2021, the City hired its first Director of Elder Services, engaged in a community needs assessment process, and opened a new location for the Lynn Senior Center. These actions took place during and after the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted life for all residents and will result in newly developed capacity for the City to build a vibrant and positive Senior Center that is informative and helpful to the older adult community of Lynn. These actions also come at a time when the senior population is continuing to comprise a significant portion of the City's population. For example, 18% of Lynn's population was age 60 or older in 2020. According to projections computed by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, the older population is expected to grow in future decades. Donahue Institute vintage projections suggest that by 2030, more than one out of five of Lynn's residents will be age 60 or older—17% of Lynn's population will be between the ages of 60 and 79, with an additional 4% age 80 and older. As well, 65% of residents who are age 65+ speak only Spanish—making it imperative that the new Lynn Senior Center have both language and cultural capacity to meet the needs of its Spanish-speaking older residents.

Across Massachusetts, many older adults benefit from programs and services designed to address aging-related needs and prolong independence, offered through their local senior center. As a new municipal entity of City of Lynn, the Lynn Senior Center is an important and valued resource, operating as the City's central point of contact for older residents who seek services to promote healthful and fulfilling lives. Growth of the older adult population therefore has special significance for the Senior Center and increasing demand for its services and programs can be expected moving forward.

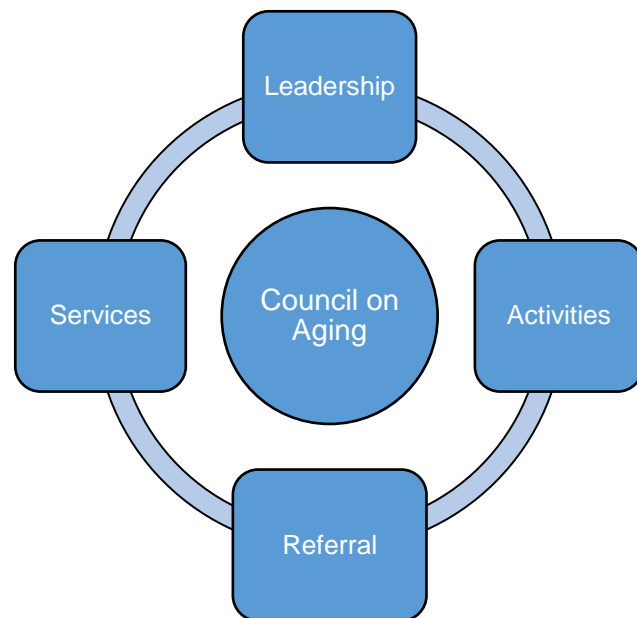
This report presents results of a comprehensive examination of issues relating to aging in the City. A need assessment was undertaken in order to support planning of programs and services on the part of the Lynn Senior Center and the Council on Aging Board. Results presented here focus on the characteristics and needs of Lynn residents who are age 60 and older—considering their needs and preferences both now and in the future. While the primary goal of this report is to support planning on the part of the Lynn Senior Center, a secondary goal is to present information that will be useful to other offices and organizations interacting with older residents.

The Lynn Senior Center

In Massachusetts, Councils on Aging (COAs) are municipally appointed agencies meant to link older residents to needed resources. Virtually every city and town in Massachusetts

has a COA, and in most communities, the COA serves as the only public social service agency. Each COA is expected to establish its own priorities based on local needs and resources. Many COAs are responsible for operating a Senior Center, a community facility housing senior services and programs, along with the staff and volunteers offering them. The Lynn Senior Center is tasked with providing information and some direct services to residents age 60 and older of the City of Lynn.

In general, when considering the mission of Councils on Aging, observers commonly think of two sets of responsibilities. First, COAs promote well-being among older residents by offering activities that appeal specifically to older adults and that promote personal growth and social engagement. Exercise classes, late-life learning programs, and informational programs are good examples. Second, COAs provide services to older residents and their families that promote physical and emotional wellness. Blood pressure clinics and transportation services are common examples of such services. Many observers are not aware of two additional important responsibilities of COAs. COA staff members link older residents in the community to existing programs for which they may be eligible by providing needed information and referring residents to appropriate programs and services. For example, staff may help residents apply for income support programs or health insurance made available through the state or federal government. Finally, COAs provide leadership within the community around issues faced by older adults, by serving on municipal boards, interacting with other municipal offices, and serving as resources to residents and organizations.



The Lynn Senior Center offers an array of services, resources, and programs, many of which are offered for free or at low cost to community members who are age 60 and older. Staff at the Lynn Senior Center also refer eligible residents to services and programs available through other offices and organizations. The Lynn Senior Center plays an important leadership role in the community, serving as a resource to other City offices and organizations working in the community, and collaborating on initiatives broadly beneficial to residents. Senior Center services and programs are funded by municipal appropriation, grant support from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and other sources, including gifts and donations, and nominal fees charged for some activities.

Currently, the Lynn Senior Center operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00pm. Its staff includes a director, a program manager, an outreach coordinator and a clerk. The Council on Aging Board is made up of 11 resident members that are appointed by City Council. These members act as an advisory committee to the Senior Center Director. Many others volunteer to support the senior center in a variety of ways.

Programs and services offered through the Lynn Senior Center include:

- *Outreach Services:* The Lynn Senior Center assists older adults and their family members with their concerns and needs on a daily basis. Social services staff provide residents with information and referrals such as housing options, in-home services, and caregiver information.
- *Transportation:* The Lynn Senior Center operates a bus that provides door-to-door local transportation to Lynn's older residents.
- *Volunteer Opportunities:* Volunteers provide invaluable support to the Lynn Senior Center, assisting with many of the programs, activities, and administrative tasks.
- *Health & Nutrition Programs:* The Lynn Senior Center facilitates weekly congregate meals. As well, the Lynn Senior Center offers a number of exercise and health education programs.
- *Social and Wellness Activities and Programs:* Regularly scheduled Bingo, dancing, Dominoes, and social activities are also coordinated by the Lynn Senior Center.

The need for resources dedicated to this segment of the population will continue to grow and change, especially as the new Senior Center is launched, its functions develop, and clientele increases and diversifies. Thus, it is crucial that the Lynn Senior Center plan in earnest to assure that resources are used efficiently and effectively to meet the current and future needs of older people in the city. The purpose of this report is to describe the research process and key findings of the study. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for the Lynn Senior Center as it moves ahead.

Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to capture a broad and deep understanding of Lynn and its older residents. Demographic material used in this report was drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau (the American Community Survey), from projections generated by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, and from the Healthy Aging Data Report for Lynn (Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative, n.d.). Additional

information about the Lynn Senior Center was retrieved from material drawn from the Senior Center’s website, Facebook Page, and newsletter.

Demographic Profile

As an initial step toward understanding characteristics of the City’s older population through quantitative data, we generated a demographic profile of the city using data from the American Community Survey (ACS)—a large, annual survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. For purposes of this assessment, we primarily used information drawn from the most current 5-year ACS files (2016-2020) to summarize demographic characteristics including growth of the older population, shifts in the age distribution, gender, race and education distributions, householder status, living arrangements, household income, and disability status.

Community Survey

With input from the Director of Public Health and the Director of Elder Services, a survey was developed for this study and mailed to a sample of residents age 60 and over (N=5,000). A mailing list was obtained from the City’s Clerk, based on the most current municipal census. Postcards were mailed to participants alerting them that they would be receiving a survey in the coming weeks. Subsequently, printed surveys were mailed to the sample of Lynn residents meeting the age requirement, along with a postage-paid return envelope. Both the postcard and mailed survey were delivered in both English and Spanish. As well, the survey was installed on a web-based survey platform. A total of 1,170 responses to the survey were obtained, representing a strong return rate of 23% (see **Table 3**). Sixteen percent were returned online and the rest of the responses were returned by mail. A total of 62 surveys were returned in Spanish, and the remainder were returned in English. In **Appendix A**, response distributions are shown by age group.

Key Informant Interviews & Stakeholder Focus Group

In the Fall of 2021, we conducted one-on-one interviews with seven individuals who currently hold leadership positions in Lynn. We spoke with both the outgoing and incoming Mayors of the City, the Chiefs of both Police and Fire Departments, the City Planner, a City Councilor, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for the City. Interviews focused on the interviewees’ perceptions relating to unmet needs of older adults in the community and ideas for how the new Lynn Senior Center can complement and support the work that the key informants do. All interviews were conducted remotely via telephone or video conference. Interviews ranged from 35-90 minutes. The stakeholder focus group represented City offices and organizations that have regular interactions with Lynn’s older adult residents. Stakeholder contributors included the Director of Elder Services for the City of Lynn, a City Councilor, the Program Director of Rainbow ADHC of Lynn, the member-

leader of Neighbor-to-Neighbor, the Director of Community Programs for Greater Lynn Senior Services, and the Director of Organizing for the Mass Senior Action Council.

Data Analysis

Data collected for the resident survey were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, including frequencies and cross-tabulations, and are reported in full in tables contained in **Appendix A** and throughout the results section of this report. Some responses elicited through open-ended questions were extracted and cited verbatim within this report (e.g., "What are your greatest concerns about your ability to continue living in the area?"). Information collected from key-informants and the focus group discussion were reviewed by multiple members of the research team and common themes were developed. We used information from all sources of data to develop recommendations reported in the final section of this report.

Results

Demographic Profile of Lynn

Age Structure and Population Growth

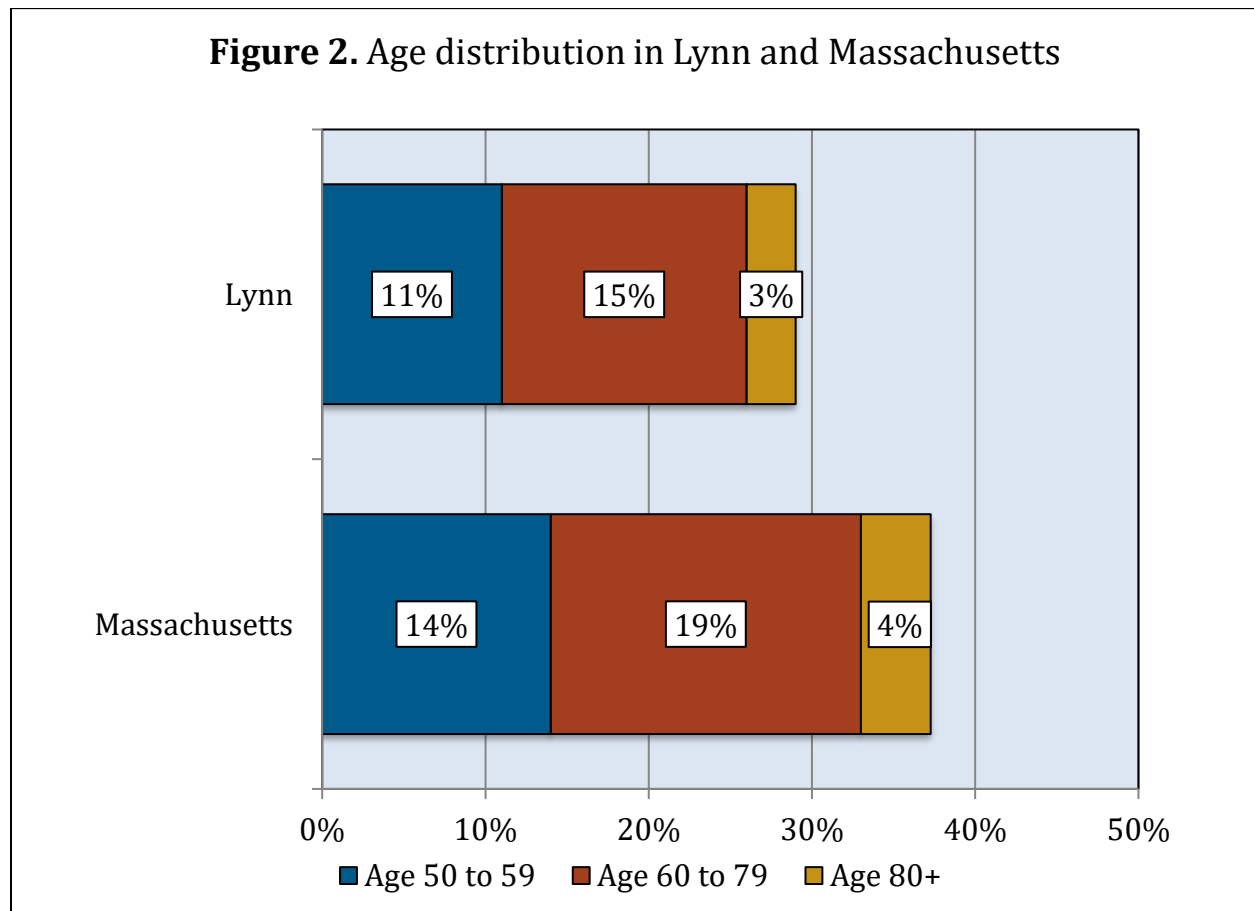
According to American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, there were about 94,201 residents living in Lynn in 2020. Nearly 29% of the population (27,506 individuals) were age 50 and older (See **Table 1**). Residents who were age 50 to 59 (10,984 individuals) made up over 11% of the population; residents age 60 to 79 (13,849 individuals) comprised almost 15%, and another 2,673 residents (3%) were age 80 and older.

Table 1. Number and percentage distribution of Lynn’s population by age category, 2020

Age Category	Number	Percentage
Under age 18	22,632	24%
Age 18 to 49	44,063	47%
Age 50 to 59	10,984	11%
Age 60 to 79	13,849	15%
Age 80 and older	2,673	3%
Total	94,201	100%

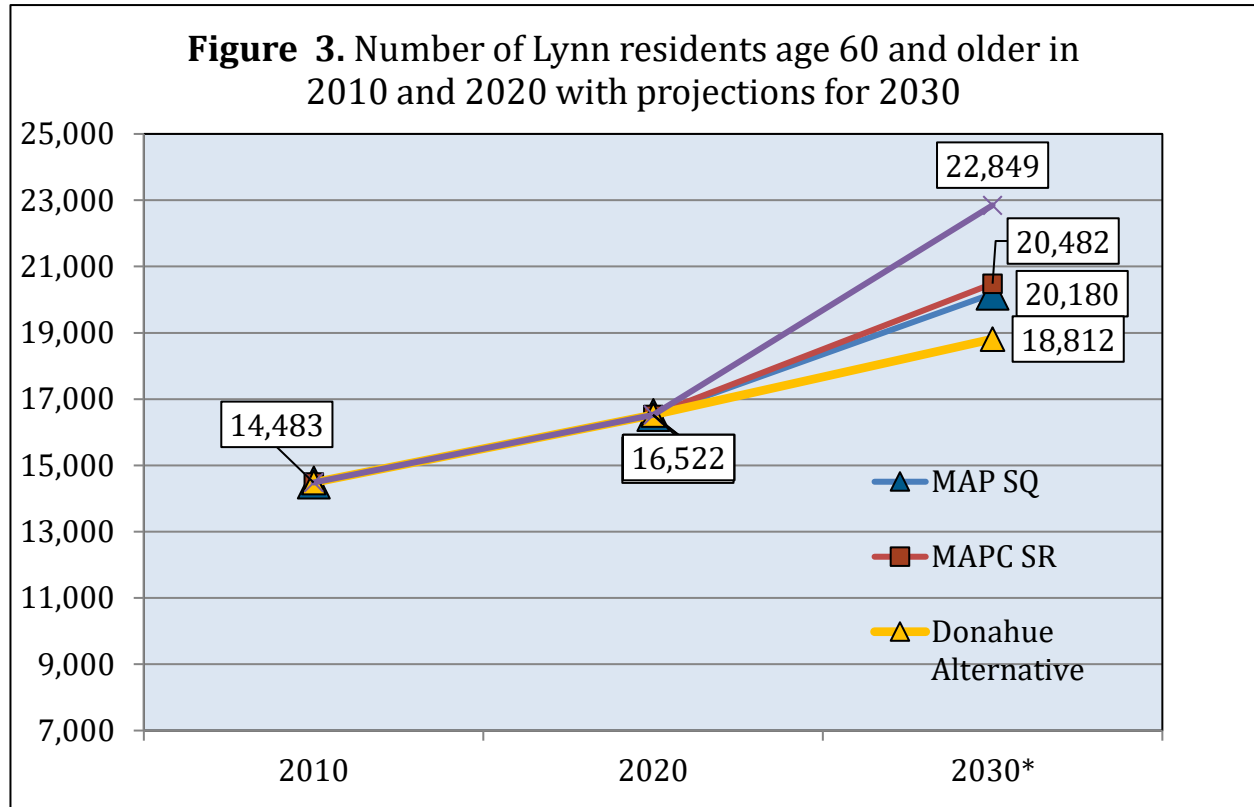
Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

The share of the Lynn population age 50 and older is smaller than the overall state of Massachusetts (**Figure 2**). About 37% of the Massachusetts population was in the 50+ age group in 2020, compared to 29% of the Lynn population. Compared to the Commonwealth, Lynn also had a slightly lower portion of residents age 60 and older (15% compared to 19%). The share of Lynn residents age 80 and over is nearly comparable to the share estimated for the state as a whole. In 2020, Massachusetts residents age 60 and over comprised about 23% of the population, including 4% age 80 and over. In Lynn, about 18% of the population was 60 or older, including 3% who were 80 years or older.



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates

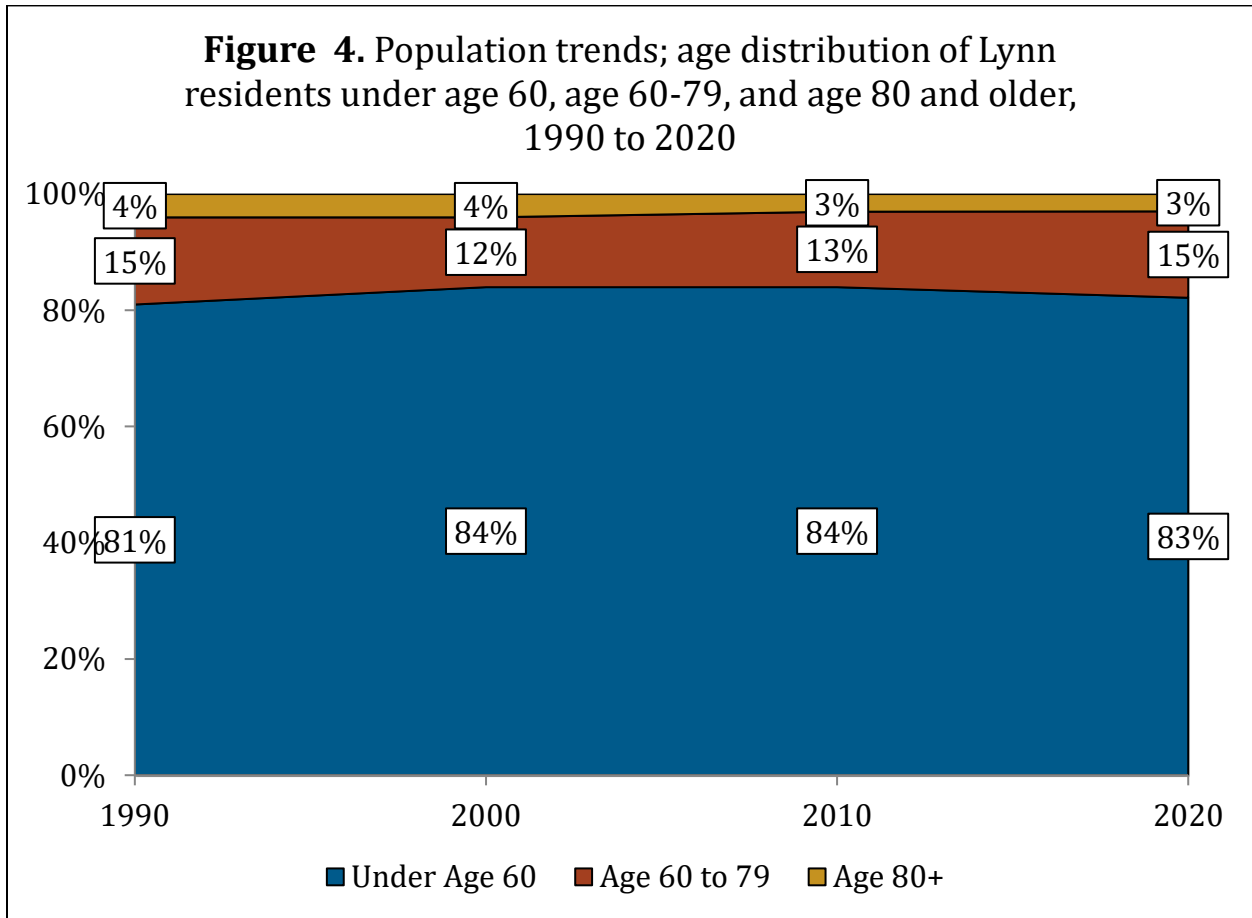
According to projections computed by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts, the population aged 60 and older is expected to grow in future decades (**Figure 3**). Donahue Institute vintage projections suggest that by 2030, more than one out of five of Lynn’s residents will be age 60 or older—17% of Lynn’s population will be between the ages of 60 and 79, with an additional 4% age 80 and older.



Source: Population figures for 2010 are from the U.S. Census. Population figures for 2020 are from the American Community Survey, 2016-2020.

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

Figure 4 shows the age distribution of Lynn’s population from 1990 to 2020. In 1990, about 19% of the City’s population was age 60 and older; this percentage decreased by 2010 (16%) and increased again in 2020 (18%).



Source: Population figures for 1990 thru 2010 are from the U.S. Census. Figures for 2020 are from the American Community Survey, 2016-2020.

Socio-Demographic Composition of Lynn’s Older Population

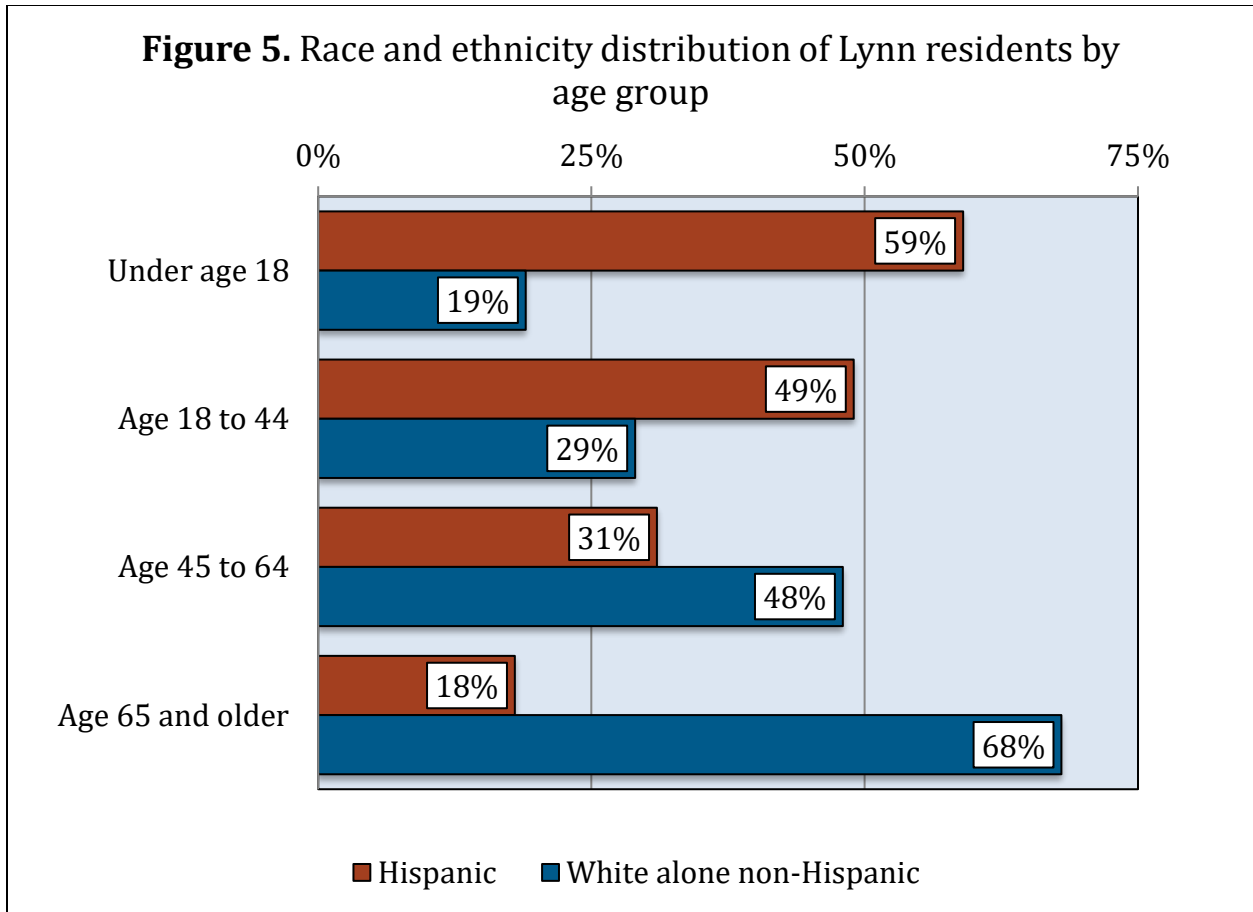
Lynn is more diverse than the state with respect to race. For all ages combined, about 36% of Lynn residents report their race as White non-Hispanic, compared to 71% across Massachusetts (*ACS 2016–2020, Table B01001*). The racial and ethnic diversity in Lynn is also reflected among their older population. **Table 2** displays the race and ethnicity of Lynn residents age 65 and older. The majority of older Lynn residents report White race and ethnicity (73%). The remaining percentage of the population 65 and older reported Hispanic (18%) ethnicity and Black (9%) or Asian (4%) race. Approximately 12% report other race and ethnicity, including those reporting other race alone and two or more races.

Table 2. Race distribution of residents who are age 65 and older in Lynn

Race	Number	Percent
White	8,401	73%
Black	1,075	9%
Asian	500	4%
Other	1,360	12%
Total	11,602	100%
Hispanic	2,122	18%

Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Tables B01001A-I. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

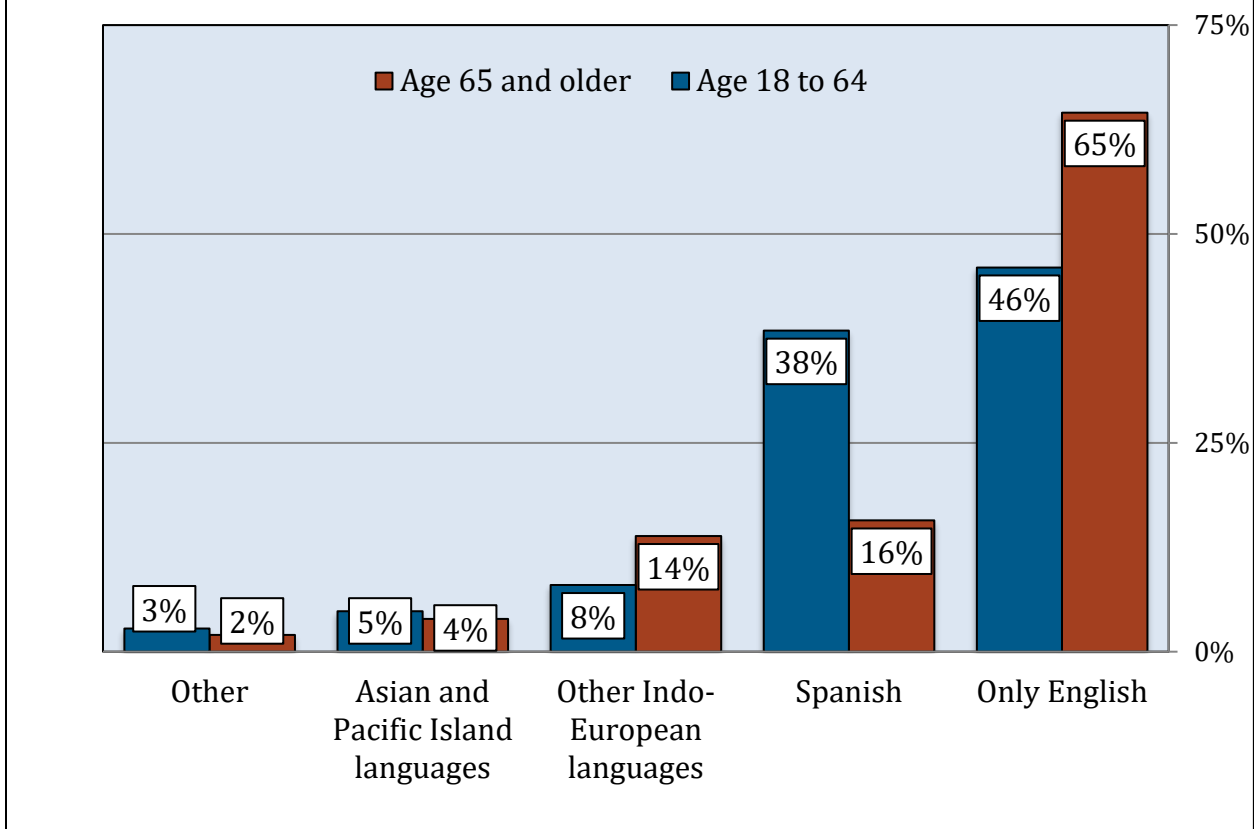
The majority of younger Lynn residents (age 44 and under) report Hispanic ethnicity (**Figure 5**). The proportion of Hispanic residents in Lynn decreases as the age group increases. Only 18% of Lynn’s residents age 65 and older report Hispanic race and ethnicity compared to 59% of those under age 18.



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B01001A-I. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates

The racial and ethnic diversity of Lynn’s residents is also reflected in the language spoken. More than one third of older Lynn residents speak a language other than English at home (ACS, 2016–2020, Table B16004). Older adults in Lynn who speak a language other than English at home most commonly speak Spanish (16%), followed by an additional 14% who speak an Indo-European language (e.g., Haitian Creole, French or Portuguese **Figure 6**). The remaining 6% of the population who speak a language other than English speak an Asian and Pacific Island language, or another language. Younger Lynn residents are more likely than their older counterparts to speak a language other than English at home than, with nearly 38% of residents aged 18-64 speaking Spanish at home.

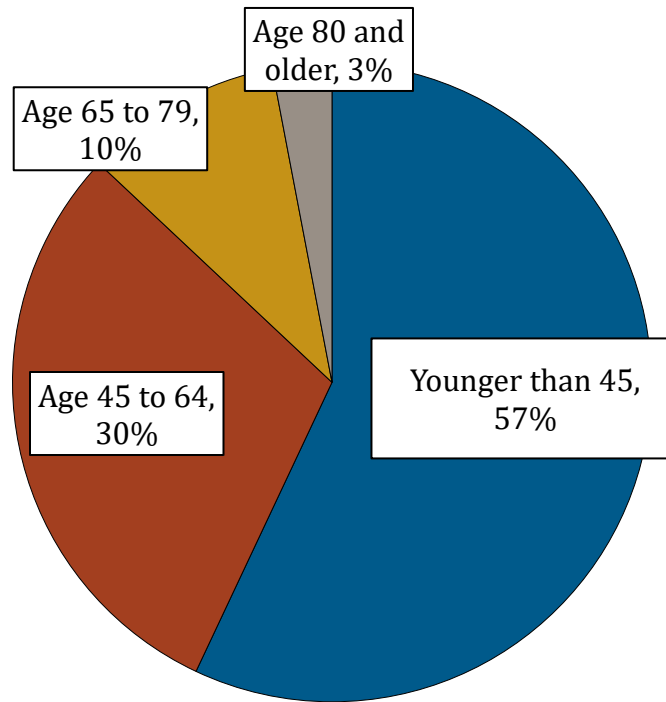
Figure 6. Lynn residents' language spoken by age group



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B16004. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

A sizeable number of foreign-born Lynn residents of all ages were born in a Latin American country (24,667 or 71% of all foreign-born residents; ACS, 2016–2020, Table B05006). Of Lynn residents who hail from Latin America, most come from the Caribbean or Central America, followed by South America. Second to Latin America, 11% of foreign-born Lynn residents were born in an Asian country with the largest number coming from Southeast Asia. Foreign-born residents of Lynn tend to be younger (57% are age 44 or younger; **Figure 7**).

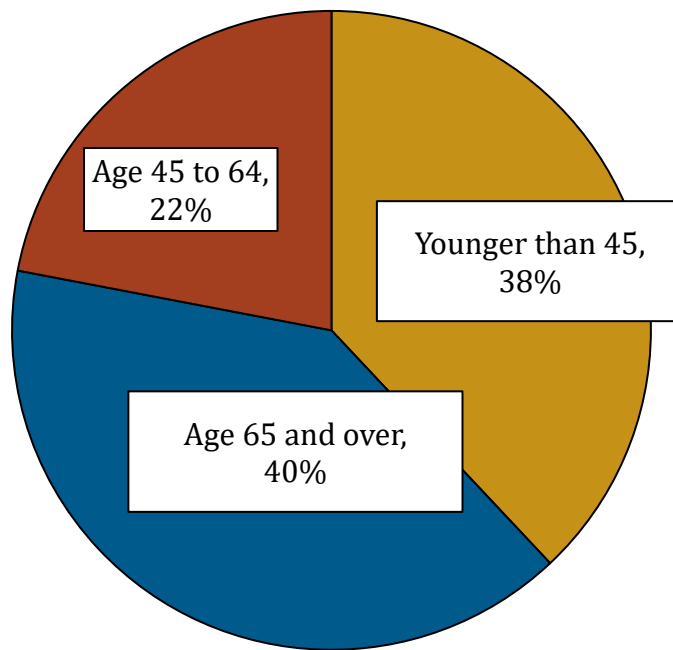
Figure 7. Age distribution of foreign-born Lynn residents



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B05013. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

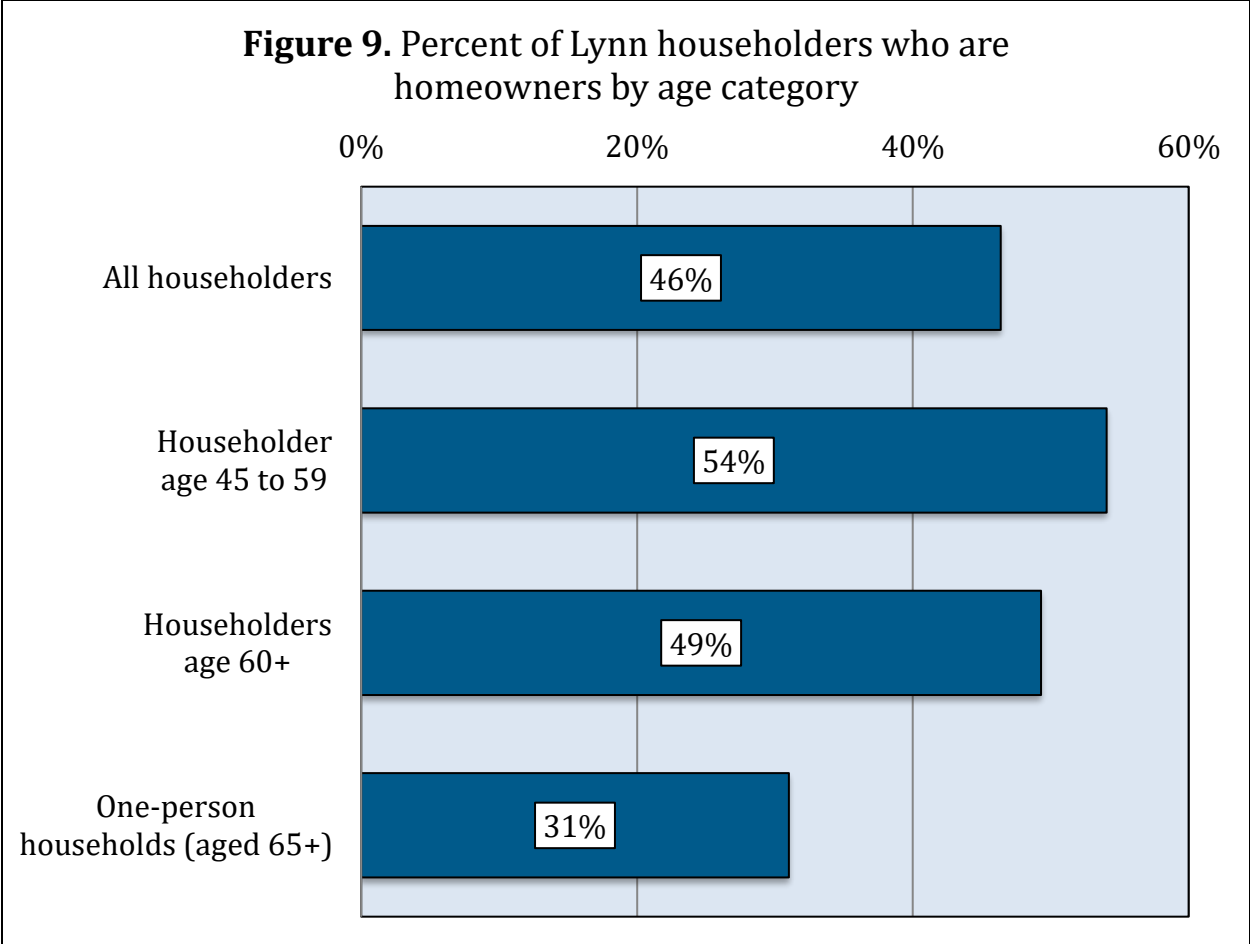
Among Lynn’s 33,261 households, more than half (62%) have householders who are middle-aged or older. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a “householder” is the person reported as the head of household, typically the person in whose name the home is owned or rented. Residents age 45 and older are householders of 62% of all households in Lynn including 22% of those who are age 65 and over (**Figure 8**).

Figure 8. Age structure of Lynn householders



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B25007. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Almost half of all Lynn residents live in homes that they own or are purchasing (46%; **Figure 9**). Nearly 54% of residents age 45 to 64 own their homes, and 49% of householders 65 and older own their homes. Nearly a third of Lynn residents who are 65 and older and live alone, also own their home (31%). The high number of older homeowners has implications for what amenities and services are likely to be needed and valued by members of the community. Home maintenance and supports are often necessary for older homeowners—especially those who live alone—in order to maintain comfort and safety in their homes.

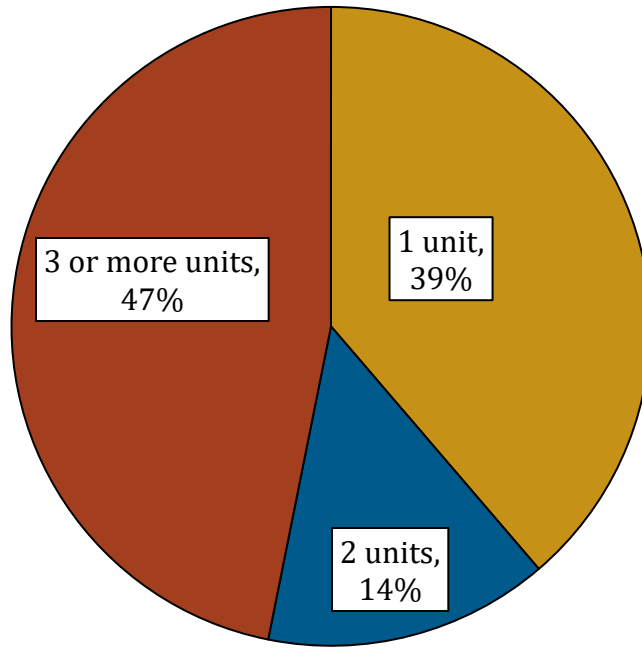


Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Tables B25007 and B25011. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

Additionally, 38% of Lynn’s 33,261 households have at least one individual who is age 60 or older (ACS 2016–2020, Table B11006). This substantial proportion—which is likely to increase in the future—generally reflects the widespread demand for programs, services, and other considerations that address aging-related concerns, including health and caregiving needs, transportation options, and safe home environments.

Among the 34,524 housing structures in Lynn (**Figure 10**), 61% are housing structures that contain two or more housing units, which include apartment complexes and multi-family homes; the remaining 39% are single unit structures.

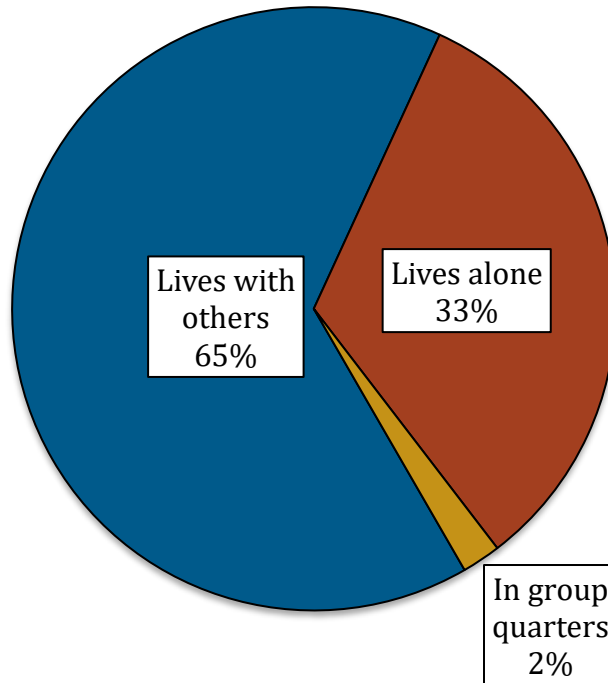
Figure 10. Number of units in Lynn housing structures



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B25024. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

A large proportion (65%) of Lynn residents who are age 65 and older live in households that include other people, such as a spouse, parents, children, or grandchildren, whereas 33% live alone in their household (**Figure 11**). Of those age 65 and older living with another family member (7,028), approximately 30% were living with a spouse and 14% were living with a parent (*ACS 2016–2020, Table B09020*). Around 2% of older Lynn residents live within group quarters, such as nursing homes or group homes.

Figure 11. Living arrangements of Lynn residents, age 65 and older



Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B09020. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

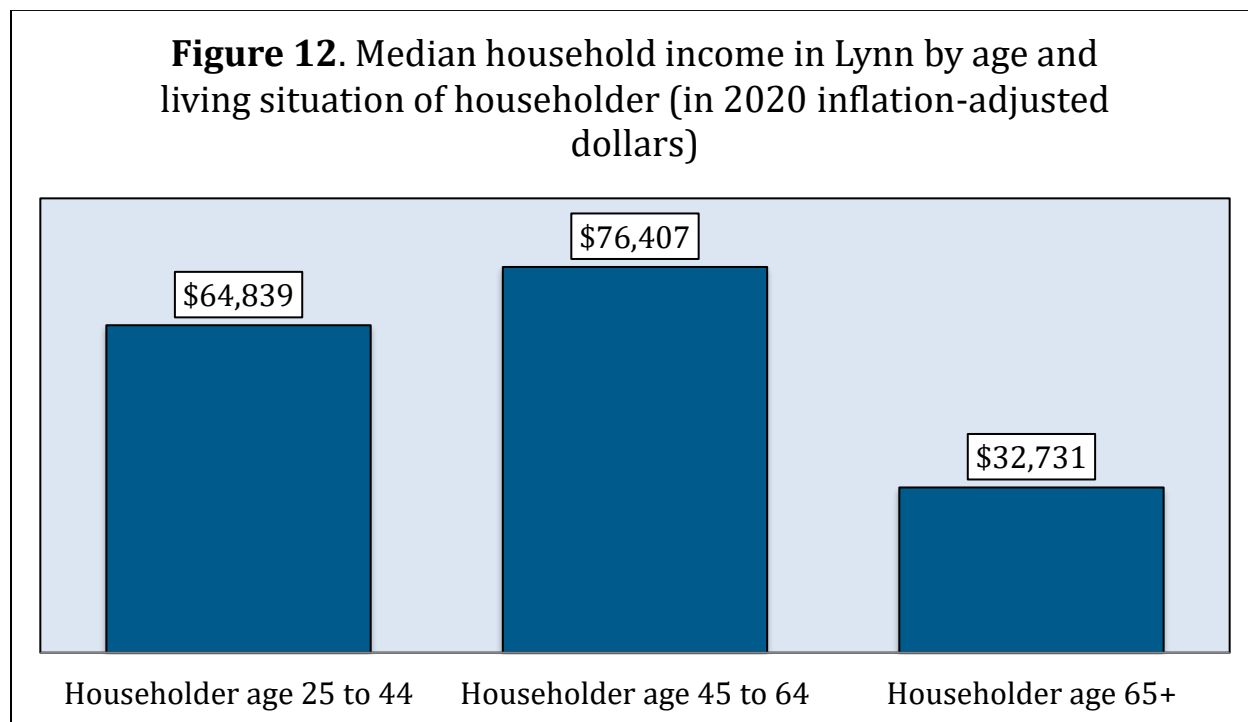
American Community Survey estimates on education suggest that approximately 18% of Lynn residents age 65 or older have had completed at least bachelor’s degree level of education in Lynn. This is compared to 36% of residents age 65+ across the State.

Similar to older adults living in communities throughout the U.S., more than a quarter of Lynn residents aged 65 and over remain in the workforce. About 26% of adults age 64 to 74 are participating in the labor force. Of those age 75 and older, 4% remain in the workforce (ACS, 2016–2020, Table S2301).

Nearly 26% of men age 65 and older report veteran status (ACS, 2016–2020, Table B21001). As a result, many of the City’s older residents may be eligible to receive some benefits and program services based on their military service or that of their spouses.

With respect to household income, there is some comparative disadvantage of some older residents in Lynn (**Figure 12**). The median household income for all Lynn householders is \$61,329, compared to \$84,385 for the state. Of Lynn’s householders, those aged 45 to 64 have the highest median income at \$76,407—which is also significantly lower than the statewide median for this age group (\$103,973). Among householders 65 and older, the

median income is \$32,731, also lower than the statewide median for this age group (\$52,973), and much lower than the median income of younger Lynn householders. Older residents living alone are at the greatest disadvantage in terms of household income.

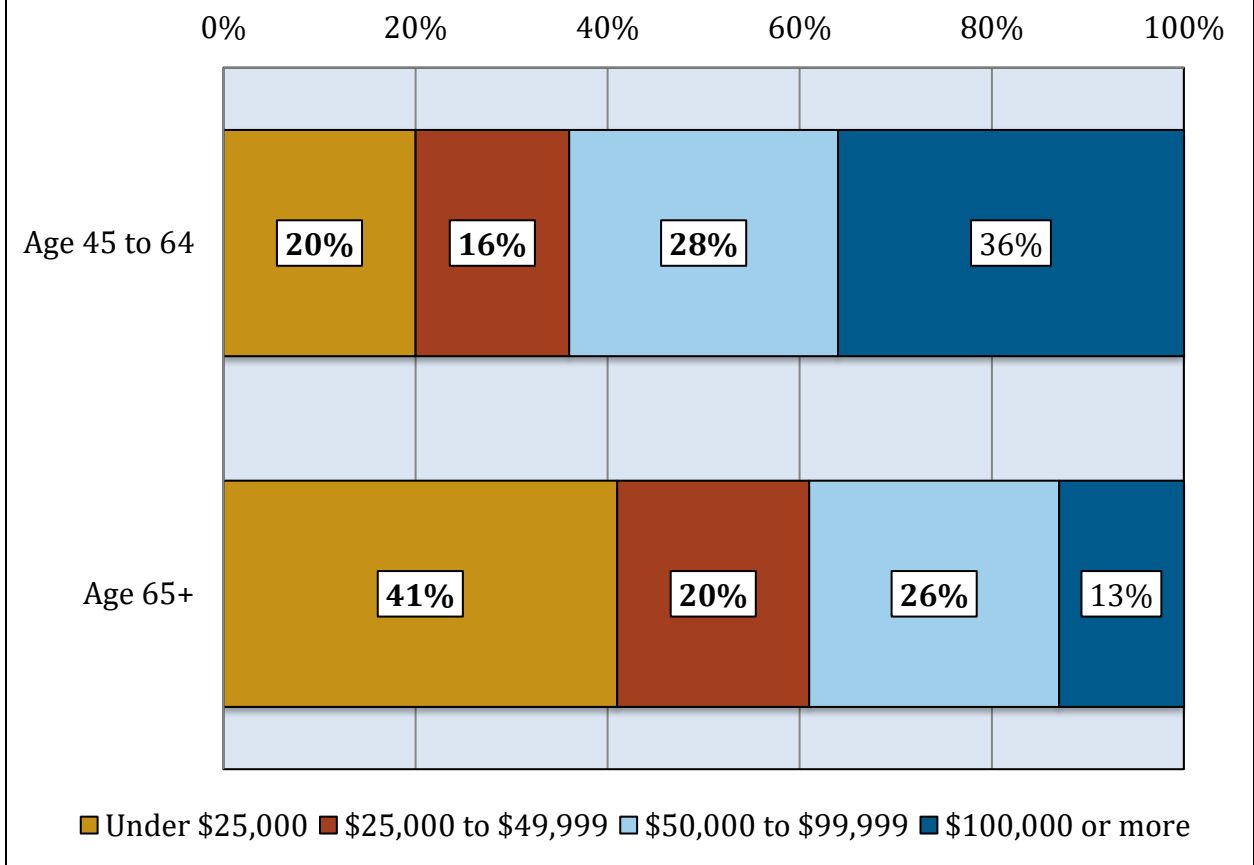


Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Tables B19049 and B19215. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

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

The economic profile of older Lynn residents relative to younger residents is further illustrated in **Figure 13**, which shows that the older adult population lives on a modest income. Only 13% of Lynn residents aged 65 and older report incomes of \$100,000 or more. By comparison, 36% of households headed by younger residents report this level of income. Nevertheless, a large share of households headed by someone age 65 and older (41%) report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with 20% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000. Thus, there is a sizeable segment of Lynn’s older population that is at risk of financial insecurity or economic disadvantage.

Figure 13. Household income distribution in Lynn by age of householder (in 2020 inflation-adjusted dollars)

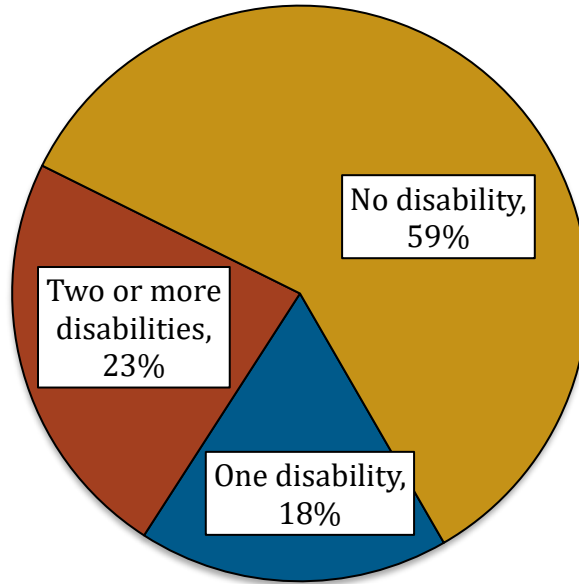


Source: American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table B19037. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates.

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

The increased likelihood of acquiring disability with age is evident in data from the ACS. Many Lynn residents age 65 and older experience some level of disability that could impact their ability to function independently in the community. About 17% of Lynn’s residents age 65 and older have one disability, and 23% report two or more disabilities (**Figure 14**). Among the different types of disability that are assessed in ACS, the most commonly cited by older Lynn residents 65 and older were ambulatory difficulties (difficulty walking or climbing stairs; 31%), independent living limitations (difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping; 22%), and cognitive difficulty and hearing, both cited by 15% of the older adult population (*ACS 2016–2020, Table S1810*). Other disabilities experienced by older Lynn residents comprise self-care difficulties (11%), and vision difficulties (5%).

Figure 14. Percentage of Lynn residents age 65+ reporting at least one disability



Source: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2016–2020, Table C18108.

Results from the Community Survey

In this section we report key findings from each section of the survey. Tables illustrating results in detail are included in **Appendix A**. Respondents to the community survey included 1,170 individuals age 60 and older, representing a response rate of 23% (see **Table 3**). This is a strong return rate and reflects interest among community residents. Compared to the age distribution of Lynn as a whole, we heard from fewer residents from the age 70-79 age group and from more residents in age the age 60-69 age group and the 80+ age group⁴. To facilitate comparison of younger and older segments of the population with respect to needs and interests, we often present results grouped into three age groups; age group 60-69, age group 70-79, and age 80 or older.

Table 3. Community Survey Respondents

	Number of Responses	% age distribution for responses
Age 60-69	509	44%
Age 70-79	421	37%
Age 80+	209	18%
TOTAL	1,393*	100%

*31 respondents did not report their age

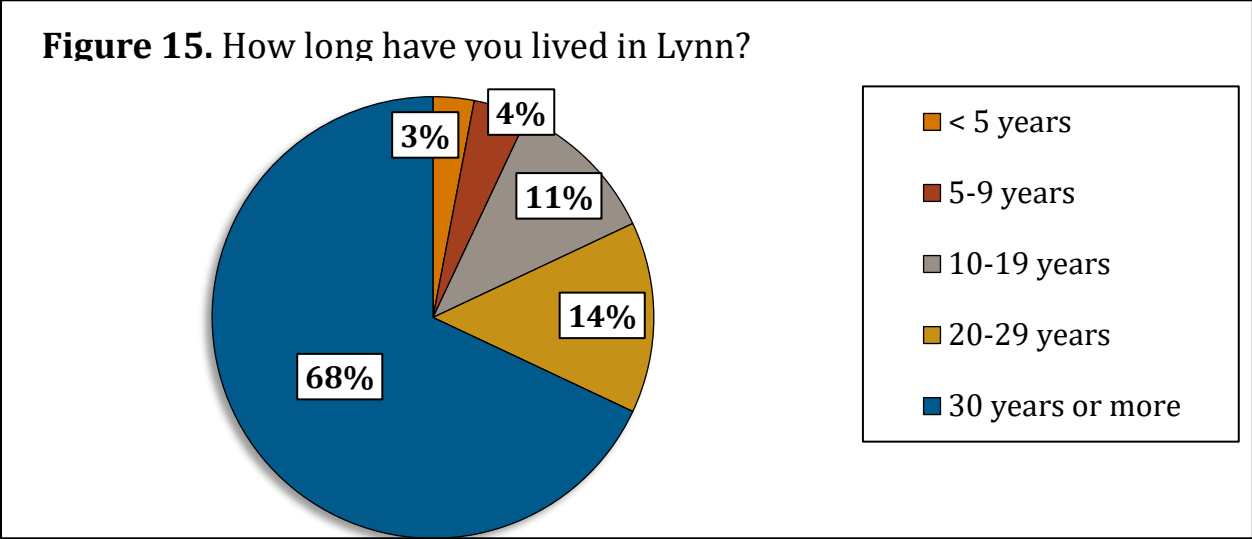
Community and Neighborhood

A commonly expressed goal of older adults is to remain living in their own homes as long as possible. Aging in place implies remaining in familiar home and community settings, with supports as needed, as opposed to moving to institutional settings, such as nursing homes (Salomon, 2010). By aging in place, older adults are able to retain their independence, as well as maintain valued social relationships and engagement with the community. In turn, aging in place may promote wellness by supporting physical activities that reduce risk of chronic disease and by accommodating disabling conditions.

Survey respondents included residents who have lived in Lynn for many years, as well as relative newcomers. Duration of residing in Lynn varies from 19% of respondents who have been in the city less than 20 years compared to 68% who have lived in the city for more than

⁴ Among residents age 60+ in Lynn, 55% are age 60-69, 29% are 70-79, and 16% are age 80+ (Source: American Community Survey, 2016-2020, Table B01001. Numbers are calculated from 5-year survey estimates).

30 years (see **Figure 15**). These individuals offer insight based on their years of experience of living in the City. It is also helpful, however, to hear from those who are new to Lynn.



A majority of survey respondents are committed to remaining in Lynn as they age (see **Figure 16**). When asked what they value most about living in the area, almost every respondent wrote in their thoughts. **Table 4** summarizes the most commonly reported features that are valued by survey respondents, including verbatim examples. Proximity to Boston and all that the City offers is one valuable aspect of living in Lynn as well, residents recognize the cultural richness of the community and the

Feeling safe in one’s community is an important factor to consider for supporting older residents of the community. In Lynn, 84% of survey respondents report feeling safe most or all of the time (**Appendix A**).

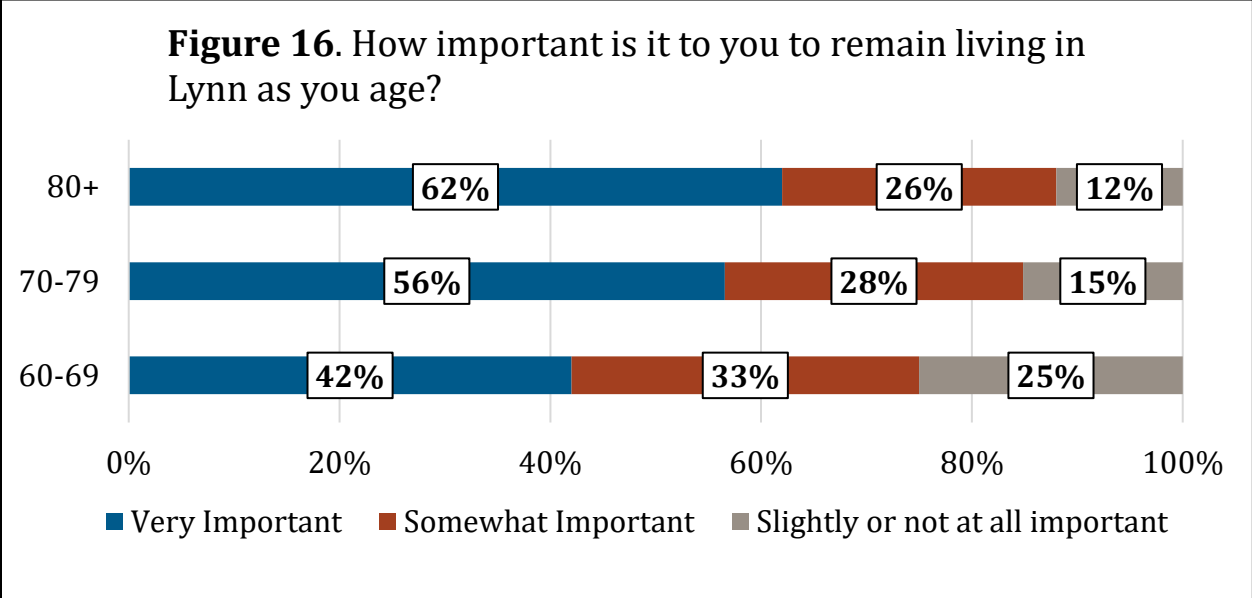


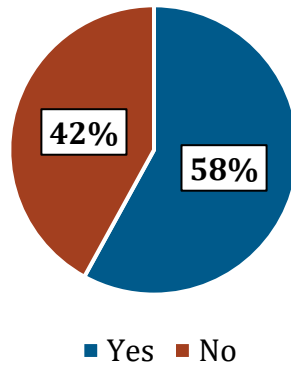
Table 4. “On the whole, what do you value the most about living in Lynn?”

Geographic location of Lynn
<i>“Ease of getting places such as post office, supermarket, and restaurants. I don't have to drive on highway to get there. Also able to walk to church.”</i>
<i>“Being close to the ocean, Less expensive than Boston - far enough from Boston to be quiet but close enough to work in the city.”</i>
<i>“Central location to the ocean & beaches, Lynn Woods, and medical facilities in Salem, Danvers, Burlington, etc.”</i>
History and familiarity
<i>“Born, raised, educated, married and raised my family. Friends and family are readily available when I need them.”</i>
<i>“Knowing the history of our city. My parents having emigrated from Greece, purchased their first home in Lynn in 1955, and we have lived here since.”</i>
<i>“I value Lynn's rich history and all of its ‘firsts’.”</i>
Community resources and services
<i>“It is home. City services- DPW , water, police and fire are good people...do a good job. Schools are focused on taking care of the kids. Sports and other recreation, social, team activities for kids. Parks for all ages and Lynn woods, beach, commons. Elder services.”</i>
<i>“Strength and support of city government; police and fire depts involvement; school system...strong community involvement.”</i>
<i>“First, I feel safe, then to get help from Lynn Senior Center and community, hospitals are in good distance.”</i>
Diverse community and culture
<i>“Living with people from other countries and cultures brings a richness to what life is all about.”</i>
<i>“A community that understands me culturally.”</i>
<i>“The diversity, inclusiveness and friendships we've developed with our neighbors here in the highlands of Lynn.”</i>
<i>“The diverse population (I find it interesting to meet different ethnicities, have them show me who they are, show them who I am).”</i>

It is important that older residents are aware of who to contact in the City if they or someone in their family needed assistance (see **Figure 17**). While a majority said yes, more than 4 out of 10 respondents reported not knowing who to contact. Interestingly, this rate was highest among younger respondents (age 60-69), with 44% reporting that they did not know who to contact should their family need assistance (see **Appendix A**). While it may be that these survey respondents have never had the need for services—and therefore have not looked into the matter, it may also be indicative of a need for continued outreach about basic

functions of both municipal departments but also local organizations. And to consider targeting some outreach to younger residents or newcomers to the City.

Figure 17. Would you know who to contact in Lynn should you or someone you know need help accessing social services?

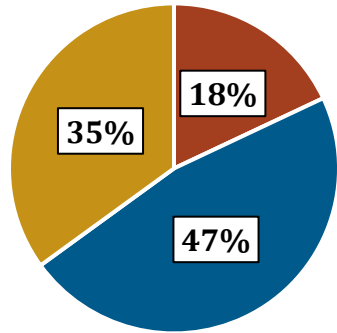


A large majority of survey participants took the time to respond to the open-ended question, "What are your greatest concerns about your ability to continue living in Lynn as you get older?" Despite the high number of comments, they could readily be categorized into five key areas of concern: 1) cost of living; 2) home and property maintenance; and 3) health and independence; 4) safety; and 5) City development and change. **Table 5** summarizes these. When it comes to affordability, it is important to note that 22% of survey respondents (about 257 people) do not believe they have the financial resources to meet their basic needs (see **Appendix A**).

Table 5. Sample responses to question “What are your greatest concerns about your ability to continue living in Lynn as you get older?”

Cost of living and affordability
<i>“Being able to afford Lynn’s high taxes, cost of living, water cost, insurance + home taxes.”</i>
<i>“Affordability of housing and the direct impact it may have on my ability to remain a resident as well as the impact it may have on others who may be forced to move elsewhere.”</i>
<i>“Having enough money to repair our house and remove the mice and pay the rent and get sec 8 to reduce rent.”</i>
Ability to maintain home and property
<i>“My concern is when I cannot afford to keep my home up to date on repairs as needed where will I move to?”</i>
<i>“Adequate resources currently because I can work part-time, assistance and large home projects (roofing, landscaping, snow removal on sidewalk/driveway, electrical).”</i>
<i>“Old house needing...repair which is unaffordable.”</i>
Remaining independent and healthy
<i>“Independent living is much harder. In-home services are expensive and hard to find.”</i>
<i>“Unexpected changes in health and ability to care for myself.”</i>
<i>“Health issues, stay in my home and being able to get assistance for shopping, banking, cleaning, etc.”</i>
Safety
<i>“Dangerousness of area around my senior building, safety.”</i>
<i>“Overcrowding in multi-family homes, overcrowded on-street parking, and especially the way people drive faster than the speed limit, cutting corners, and crossing the center line.”</i>
<i>“Safety on the crowded streets cars parking in areas that make it difficult to drive on some streets and commercial vehicles taking up neighborhood streets.”</i>
City development and changes
<i>“Lynn being too crowded building apartments that nobody can afford.”</i>
<i>“Closure of Union Hospital was a huge concern—Overdevelopment that will affect my property value, increased traffic.”</i>
<i>“New housing keeps being approved—without any real attention paid to the growing crush for parking, particularly during snow emergencies.”</i>

Figure 18. How satisfied are you with the extent to which local policymakers take into account the interests and needs of older residents?



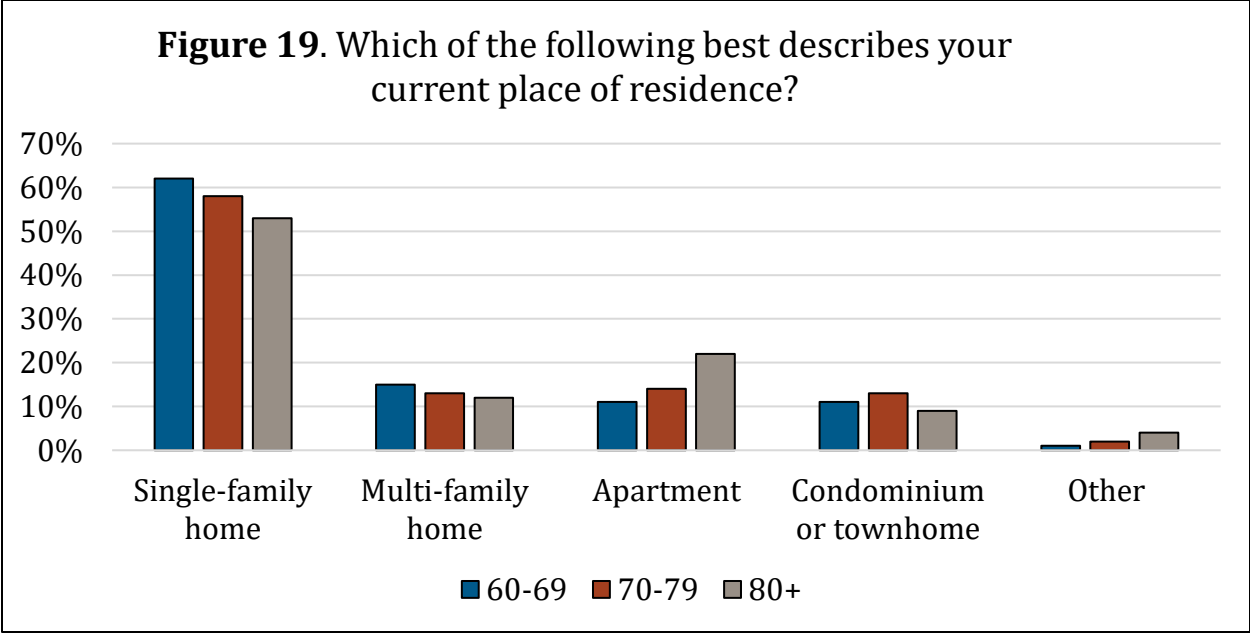
- Completely or Very Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Slightly or not at all satisfied

As well, respondents were asked if they had ever felt discriminated against in Lynn. A total of 38% of respondents said yes (results not shown). Among the types of discrimination, they faced was based on age (17%), race or ethnicity (14%) and income (10%) (**Appendix A**). An important aspect of healthy aging is feeling included in one's community, something that requires continued effort both by the Senior Center but also by other municipal departments and community organizations city-wide.

Housing and Living Situation

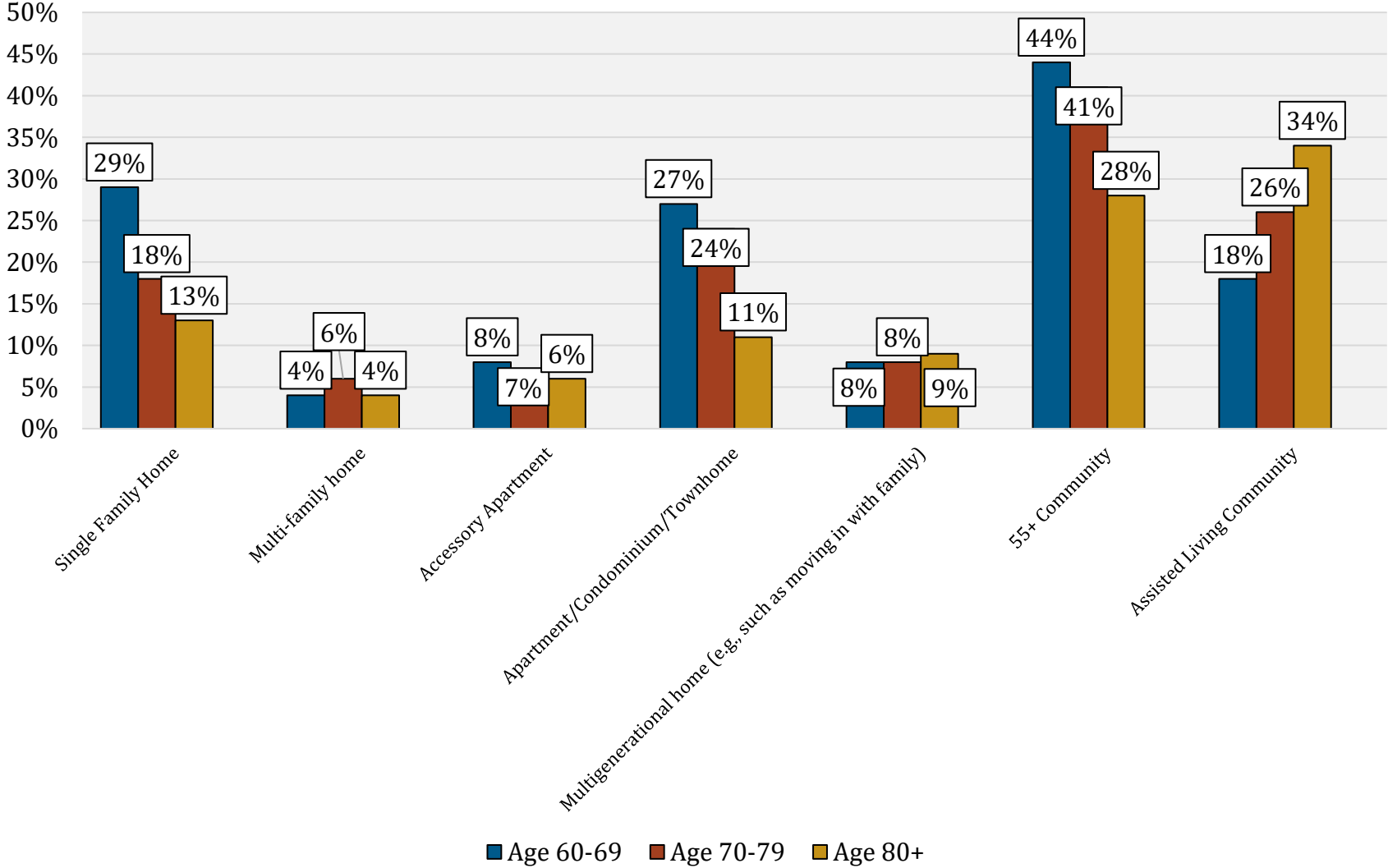
The availability and affordability of housing that is suitable to meet the changing capacity of older people are key factors that influence the ability of residents to age in place, and to lead fulfilling and healthy lives into old age. Many people are attached to their current home, even if the “fit” between individual capacity and the home environment decreases (Pynoos, Steinman, Nguyen, & Bressette, 2012). Homes may become too large for current needs or may become too expensive to maintain on a fixed income. Design features of homes, such as the number of stories and manageability of stairs, may challenge older residents’ ability to remain living safely in their home. Home modifications, including installation of bathroom grab bars, railings on stairs, adequate lighting throughout the home, ramps, and/or first floor bathrooms, may support residents’ safety and facilitate aging in place. Programs that connect older homeowners with affordable assistance for maintaining and modifying their homes and their yards can help protect the value of investments, improve the neighborhoods in which older people live, and support safe living. The availability of affordable housing options, especially those with accommodating features, including assisted living or continuing care retirement communities, may allow residents who are no longer able to stay in their existing homes to remain in their community (AARP, 2005).

A larger proportion of older residents of Lynn are homeowners compared to younger residents. About three-quarters of survey respondents report owning their current residence (77%) and 23% rent. This compares to the 54% of all residents of Lynn that rent and 46% that own their place of residence (*ACS 2016-2020, Table B25106*). Among those who live alone, more than half (56%) report renting their current place of residence. Financial burden of housing costs is also an important factor for those older residents living on a fixed income. According to American Community Survey estimates, 38% of older adult house holders report spending more than 30% of their monthly income on housing (*ACS 2016-2020, Table B25093*). Among renters of any age in Lynn, more than half spend 30% more of their monthly income on housing compared to 36% of those who own their home (*ACS 2016-2020, B25106*).



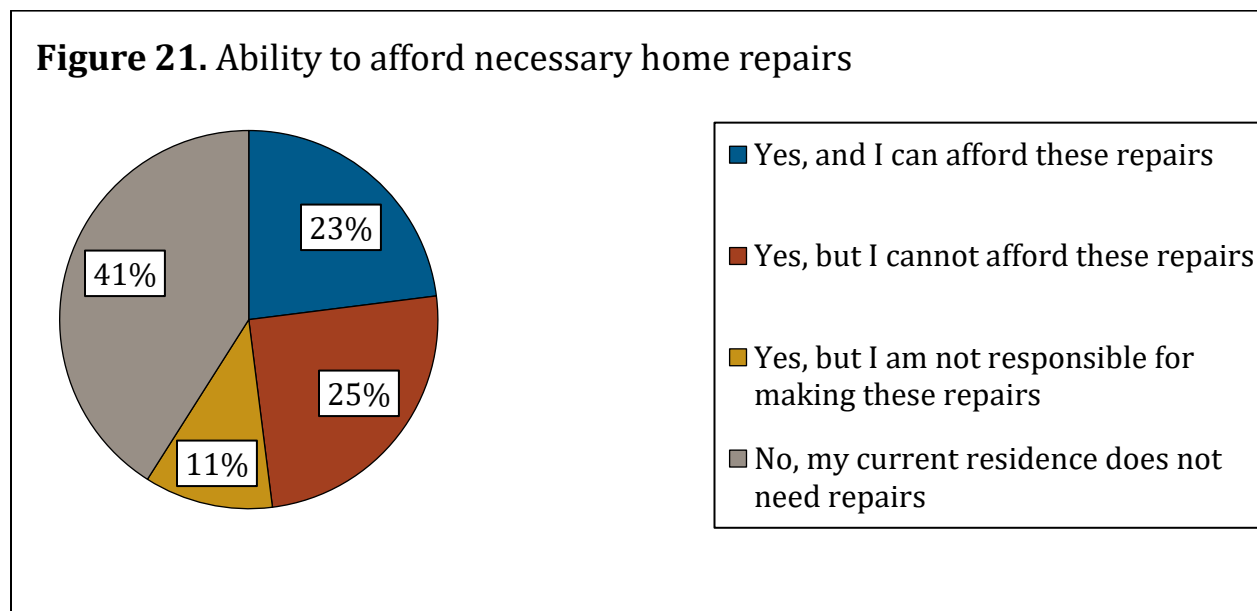
Survey participants were asked the type of housing they would prefer if a change in health or physical ability required moving from their current residence. Responses varied greatly by age group. A 55+ community was preferred by more than 40% of respondents in their 60s and 70s (**Figure 20**). Assisted living communities were considered by 34% of those age 80 and older. This interest in supportive housing options by those age 60 and older has implications for housing stock needs in Lynn.

Figure 20. Future Housing Preference, by Age Category



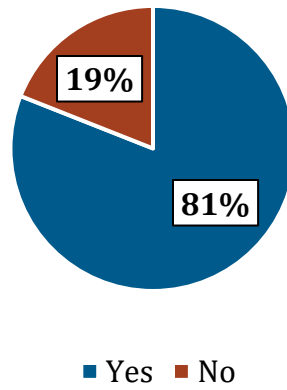
The majority of survey respondents live with at least one other person (67%), but not surprisingly, this number is smaller for the older cohorts. Seventy-three percent of participants age 60-69 live with someone else whereas about 53% of people age 80 and older do. In contrast, 27% of survey respondents age 60-69 report living alone and among respondents age 80 and older, this proportion is significantly higher (47%). Living alone has the potential to lead to social isolation and has implications for services that may be needed by the older segment of the Lynn population. Additionally, 14% (n=167) of respondents reported living with a child under the age of 18. This suggests that for a percentage of the City's older residents, significant childcare responsibilities could play a role in the lives of older adults.

Maintaining a home requires resources, including people who can make repairs and the finances to pay for these repairs. In response to the question, "Does your current residence need home repairs (e.g., a new roof, electrical work, etc.) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?" nearly 59% of respondents stated that their home would need repairs (**Appendix A**). Of those whose current residence needs repairs, 25% stated that they could not afford these repairs (see **Figure 21**).



Nearly 1 out of 5 respondents reported not knowing someone nearby on whom they could rely for help (**Figure 22**), including 22% of those in their 60s (**Appendix A**). This has implications for needs like emergency medical response, connection to supportive services, and opportunities for social engagement.

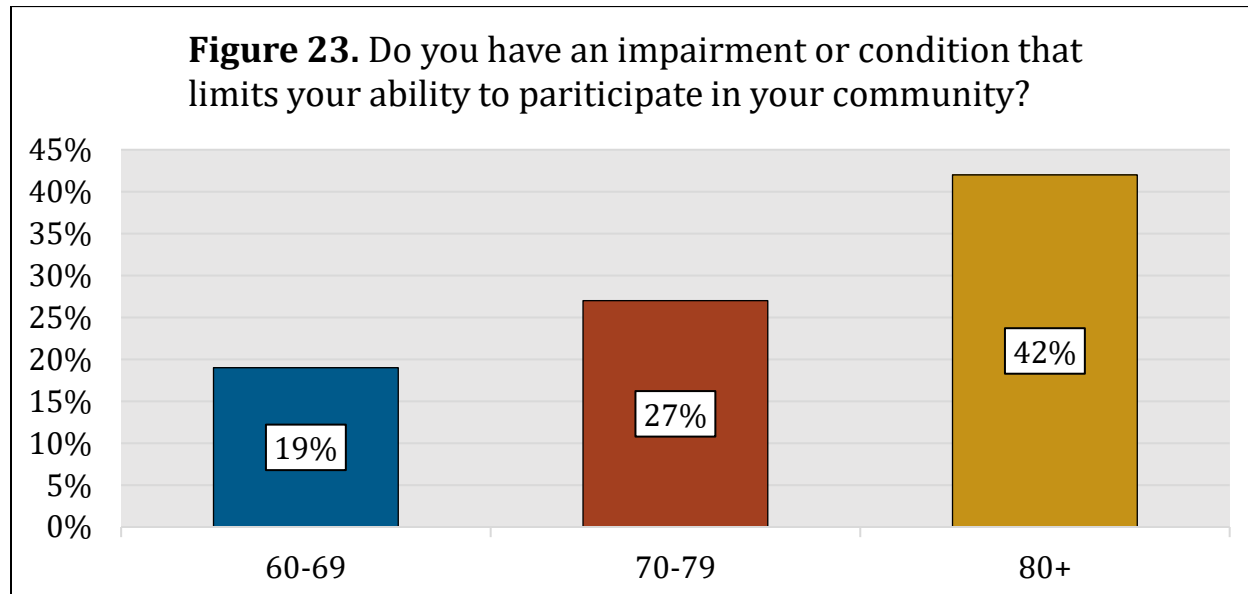
Figure 22. Do you know someone living nearby on whom you could rely for help when you it?



Health & Caregiving

Nationally, most of the care and support received by older adults due to health difficulties or disability is provided informally by family members or friends. Informal caregivers throughout the country contribute millions of hours of care without financial compensation (see statistics through the Family Caregiver Alliance). As well physical limitations can prevent older adults from fully participating in their communities or accessing important services and amenities that contribute to quality

Rates of impairment rise with age (**Figure 23**). Considering ways to make programs and services at the Lynn Senior Center and elsewhere in Lynn accessible is an important endeavor. This could include adaptations to existing spaces or the development of programming that could be delivered to persons remotely or in their own homes.



Similarly, shown in **Figure 24**, the need for in-home assistance rises with age. One-third of respondents in their 70s and half of those in their 80s report needing help with minor chores like cleaning and yardwork. Additionally, approximately 14% of Lynn’s residents age 65 and older have been diagnosed with dementia⁵. This is likely an underreported, as we know that many people go undiagnosed, particularly in early stages of the disease.

⁵https://mahealthyagingcollaborative.org/wpcontent/themes/mhac/pdf/community_profiles/MA_Towncode163_Lynn.pdf

Figure 24. Due to a health issue, do you require help with activities around the house (e.g., doing routine chores like cleaning or yardwork)?

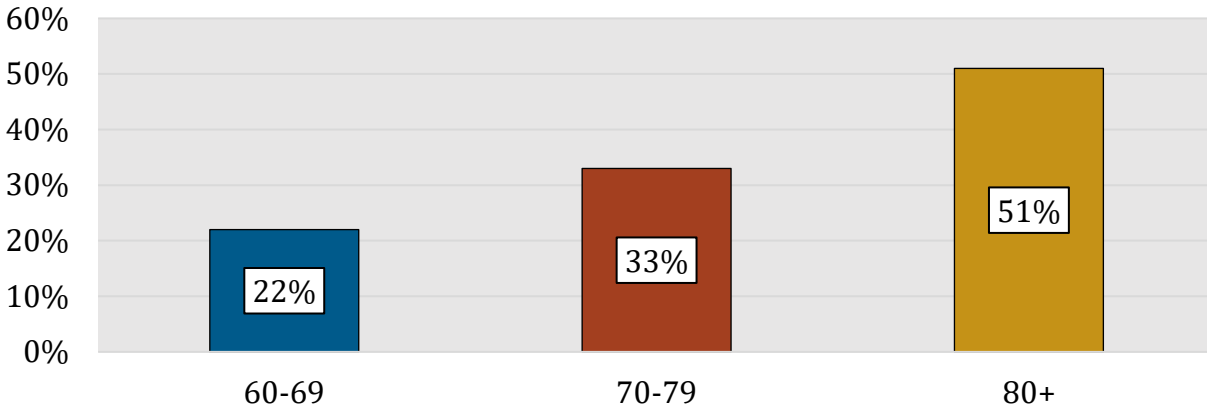
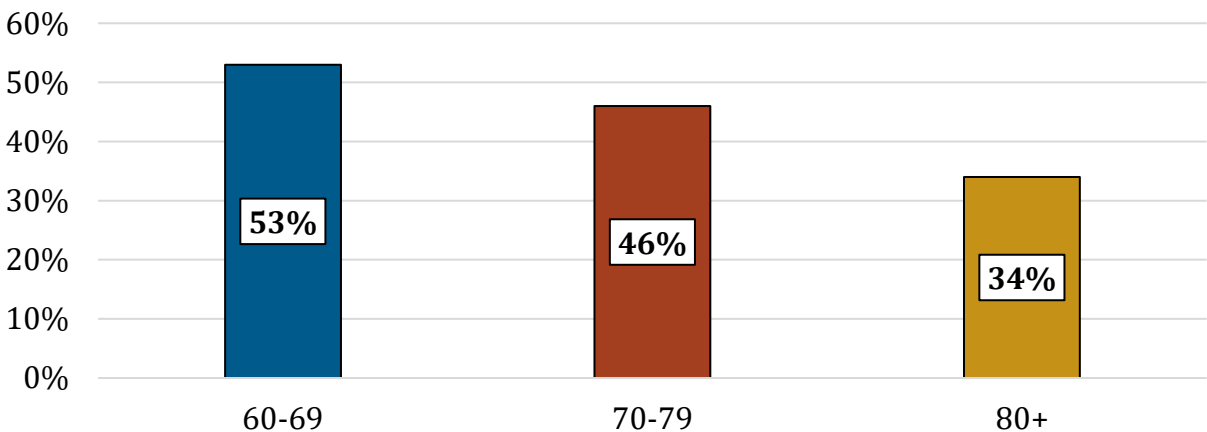
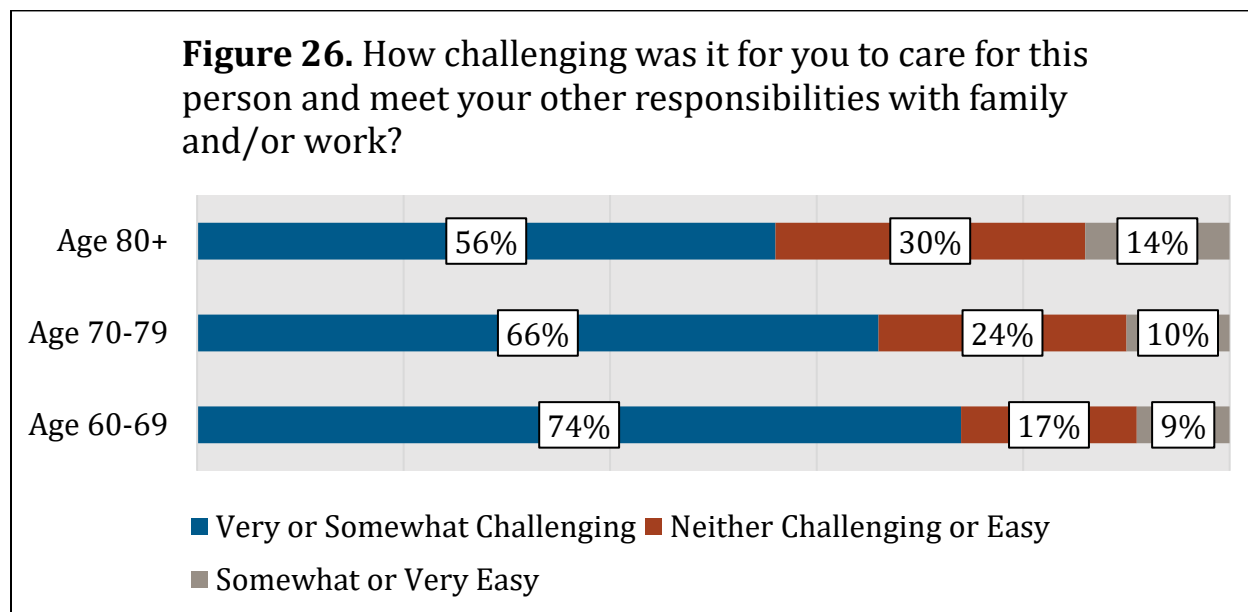


Figure 25. Do you now or have you in the past 5 years provided care to a spouse, relative, or friend?, % yes



Half of survey respondents stated that they currently or have in the past 5 years provided care or assistance to a person who was disabled or frail and that number is highest among those age 50-59 (see **Figure 25**). Many of those who have provided care or assistance to someone within the past 12 months stated that it was very or somewhat challenging to provide this care and meet other family and/or work responsibilities. This was especially true for those age 60-69, where 74% of those providing care reported this was very (29%) or somewhat (45%) challenging (see **Figure 26**). Many in this age group are likely still working and therefore may be struggling to meet the demands of both caregiving and work. Even for the other age groups, between 56 % and 66% of those who provide care find it very

or somewhat challenging. Services (e.g., transportation to adult day programs) and programming (e.g., support groups) might be needed to support caregivers.

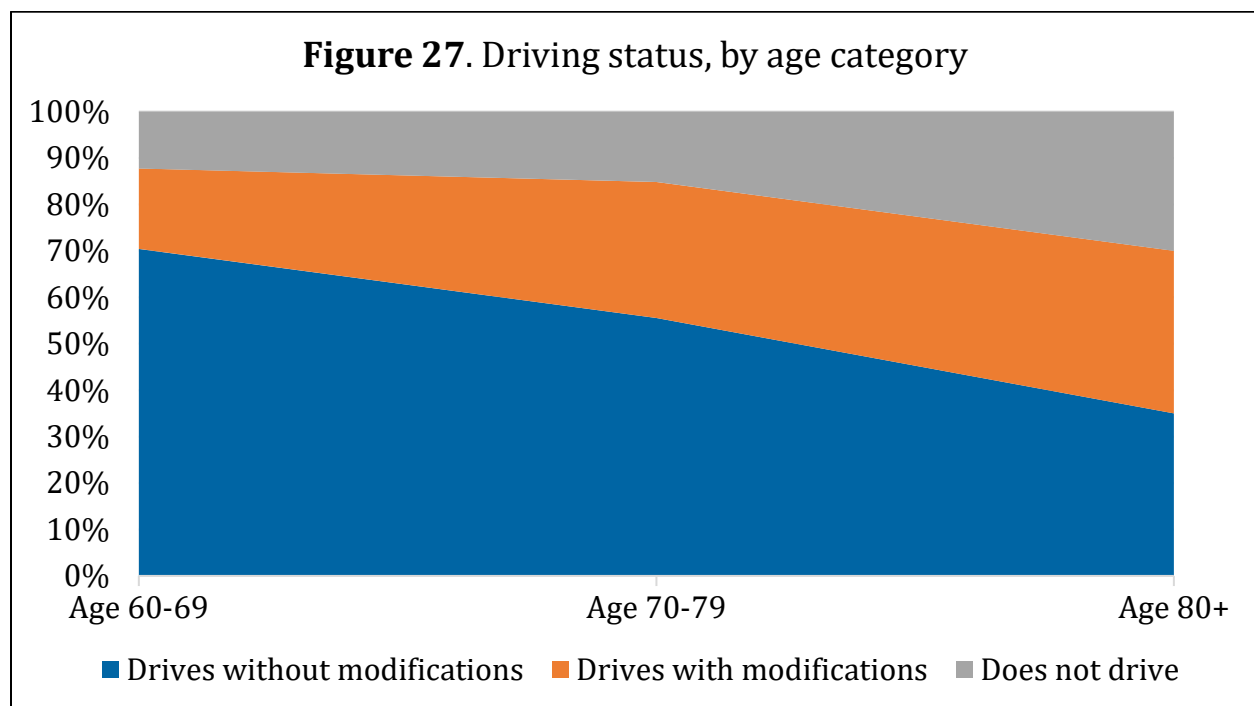


Transportation

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

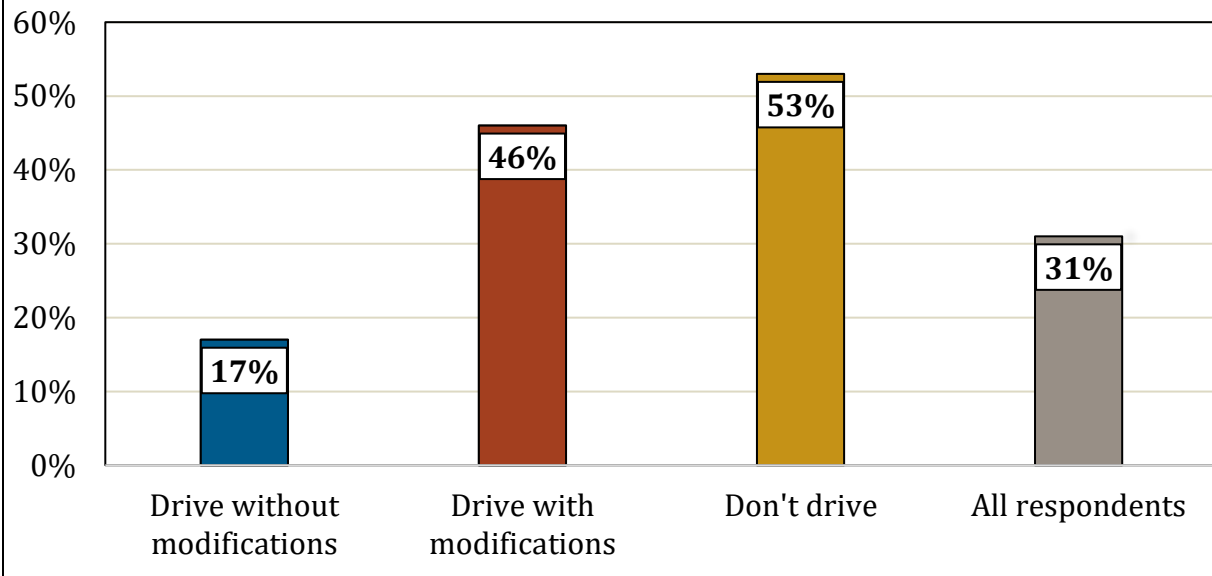
There were several questions on the survey related to transportation. Lynn has multiple public transportation options including MBTA busses, the Commuter Rail, and the MBTA paratransit service (e.g., The RIDE). Lynn Senior Center has a bus for providing door-to-door local transportation. In nearly all cases, advance reservations are required and fees apply.

Survey results suggest that most respondents drive themselves without limitations (57%) (Figure 27). Survey results show that 17% of respondents do not drive, although this number is significantly larger when looking at just those age 80 and older, as 35% of this older segment of the population do not drive (see Appendix A). Many residents (25%) who do drive modify their driving to make it easier or safer. Modifications include avoiding driving at night, in rush hour, or during bad weather. Modifying driving habits promote safety, but may limit independence and participation, especially if other transportation options are inaccessible, costly, or inconvenient. For example, older adults who avoid driving at night will struggle to participate in evening community meetings and programs. Those who avoid driving in bad weather may become isolated during the winter months.



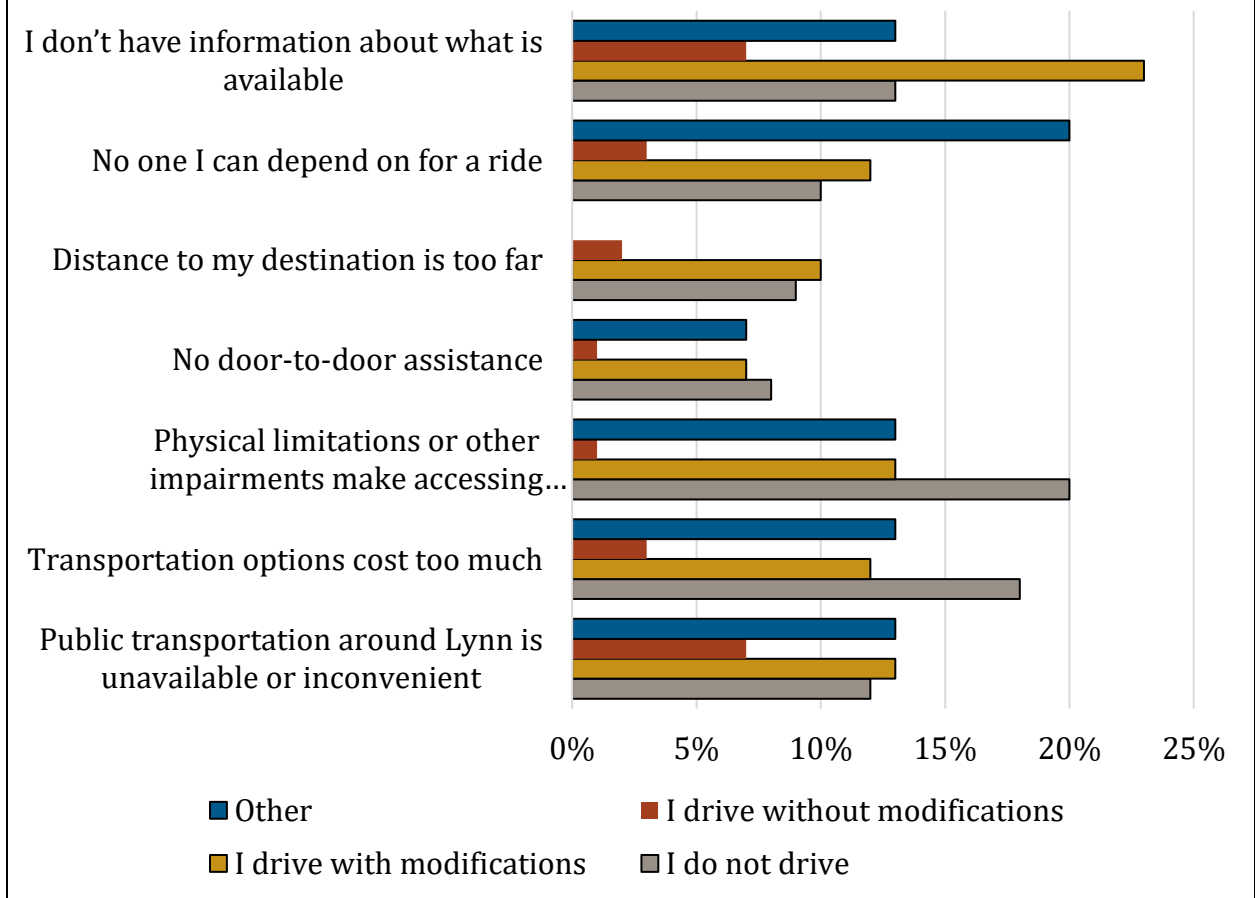
In response to the survey question, “What kind of difficulties do you have in getting where you want to go?” 25% of all survey participants reported at least one challenge (see Figure 28). Those who drive without modifications had the least difficulty getting where they want to go, while 58% of respondents who do not drive and 24% of those who drive with modifications mentioned at least one obstacle to them getting around.

Figure 28. Percentage reporting difficulty getting to where they want to go (check all that apply)



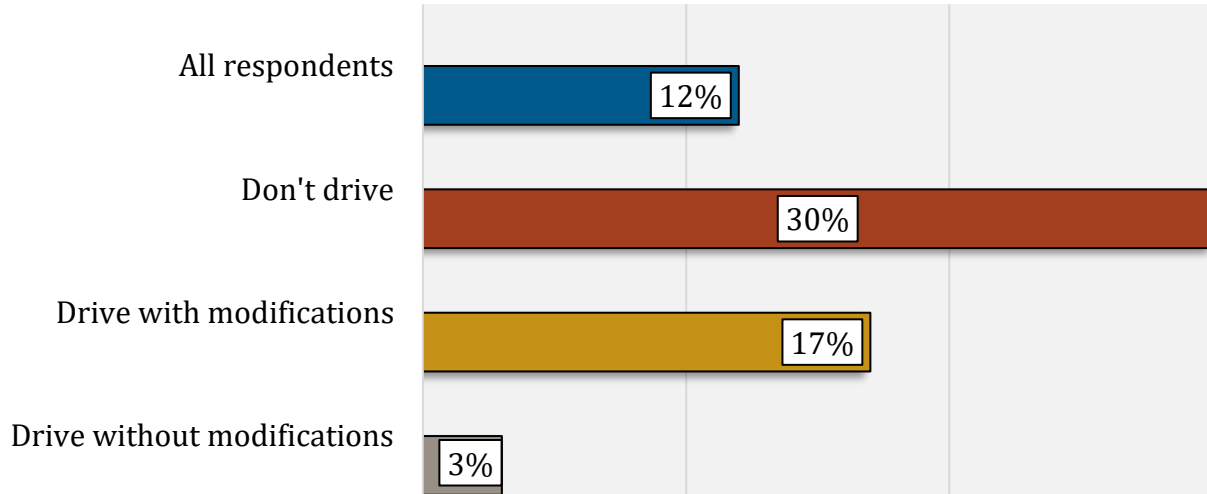
For those who do not drive, having physical limitations that impede access to transportation and cost of transportation options were the most commonly cited limitations. For those who drive with some modifications, having limited knowledge of what kinds of transportation are available was the most commonly cited barrier (**Figure 29**). Four percent of respondents marked “other” in response to the question regarding difficulties getting where they want to go and provided a reason. Write-in responses included depending on family or friends for transportation—which can be inconsistent, others wrote in that the existing medical or paratransit transportation service requires so much advance notice that more spontaneous transportation is inaccessible. It is clear that transportation is a need for Lynn residents who need it the most.

Figure 29. Difficulties getting where you want to go, by driver status



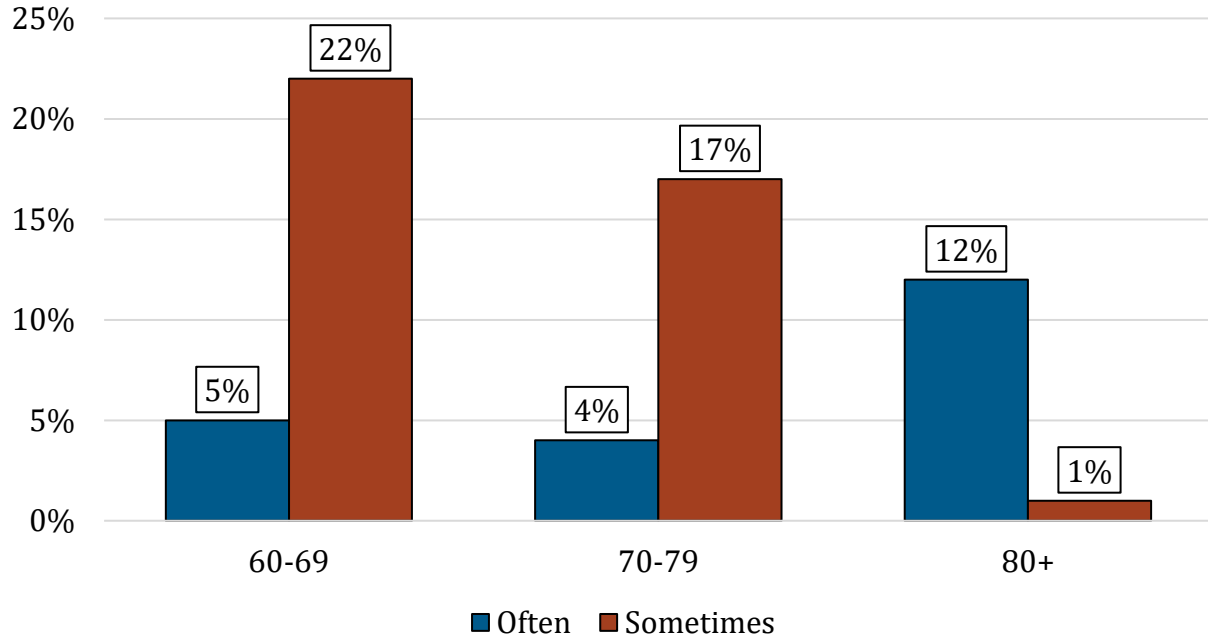
Transportation barriers can limit a person’s access to obtaining necessary services such as medical care. Respondents were asked if within the previous 24 months they had missed, cancelled or rescheduled a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation. Among all respondents, 12% reported this experience and among those who drive with modification, 17% indicated that this had occurred (see **Figure 30**). However, 30% of respondents who don’t drive missed, cancelled, or rescheduled a medical appointment within the past year. These findings suggest that transportation limitations appear to negatively impact accessing medical care for the most vulnerable segments of Lynn’s older resident community.

Figure 30. Within the past 12 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because of a lack of transportation? (Percentage responding yes)



Particularly in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, access to healthy food is an important feature of being able to age in community. **Figure 31** shows that a sizeable portion of survey respondents sometimes or often worried about running out of food before they had money to get more (22%). Ranging from more than 27% of those in their 60s to 13% of those in their 80s or older. Not surprisingly rates of food insecurity were higher among those who identified themselves as economically insecure. For example, 24% of those who reported economic insecurity also reported food insecurity (results not shown).

Figure 31. In the past 12 months, how often is the following true for you: "I worried my food would run out before I got money to buy more."

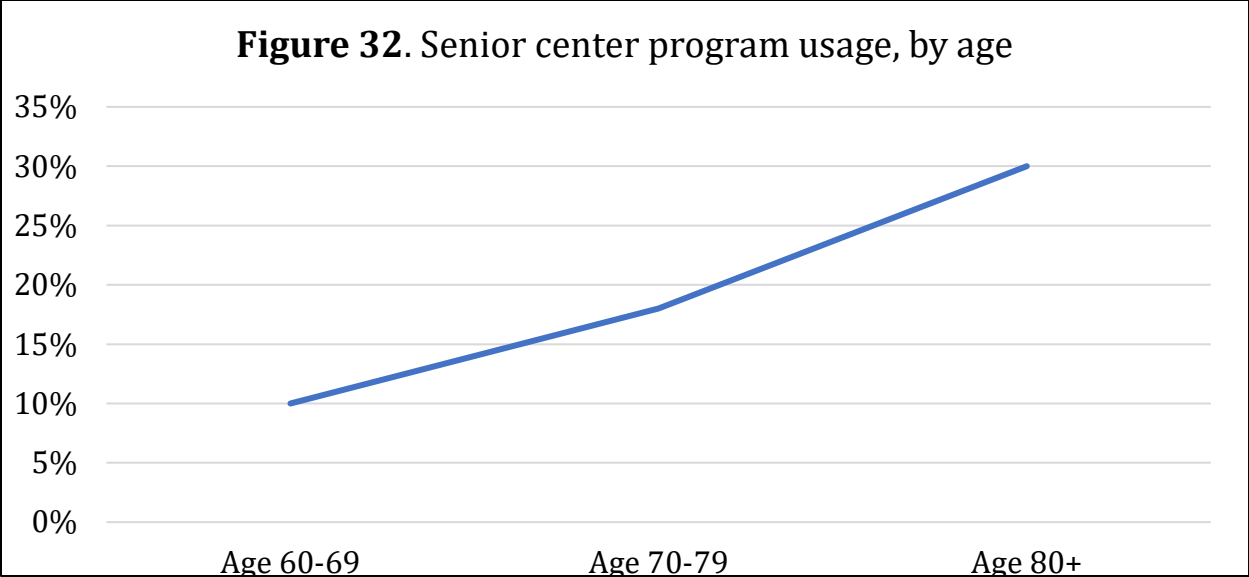


Lynn Senior Center

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

As the City of Lynn transitions to a new senior center facility and new leadership, it is important to understand what residents think about the Lynn Senior Center and how they plan to engage with the Center both now and in the future. Survey results suggest that participation in the Senior Center is considerably more common among older residents⁶. As shown in **Figure 32**, only 10% of respondents age 60-69 have ever used programs or services offered by the Senior Center, while 30% of the respondents age 80 and older indicated they have participated in the Senior Center. This age-graded pattern of participation is not unusual in Senior Centers and may reflect the increasing value of the Senior Center to older residents.

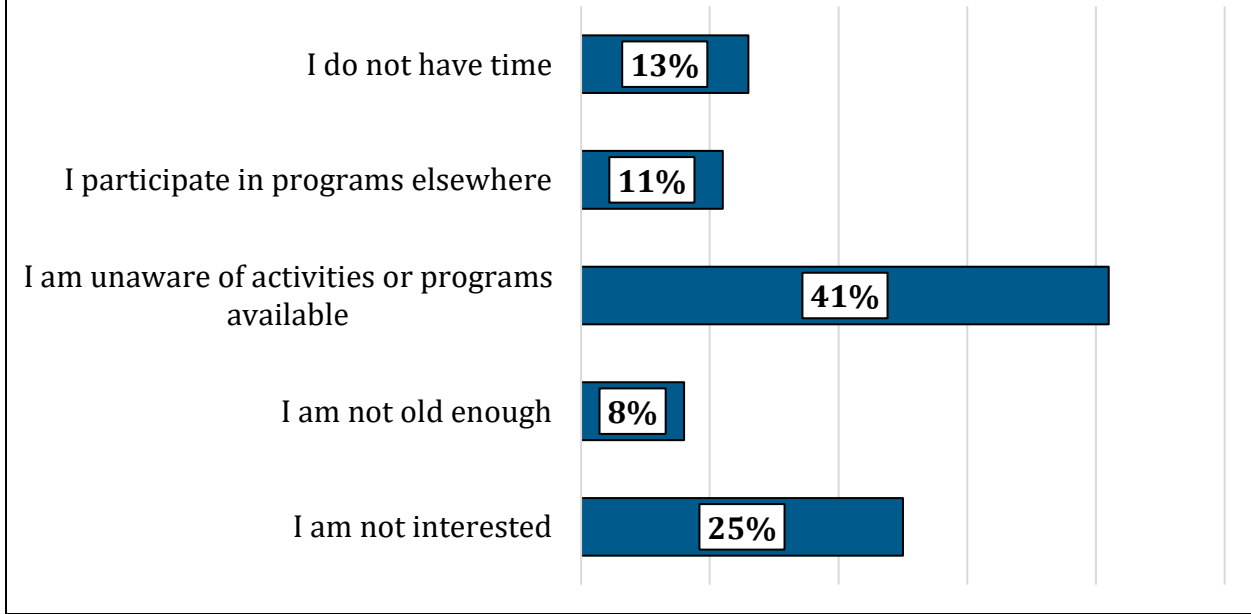
⁶ At the time of the survey, Lynn did not have physical space for the senior center, which may affect results about usage.



Of those who do use the Lynn Senior Center, 44% only visit the Center a few times a year, while 35% of users participate at least weekly (tabulations not shown). This range of participation levels highlights the broad continuum of affiliation with the Lynn Senior Center, with many residents participating just periodically, while others include visits to the Lynn Senior Center as part of their regular weekly schedule.

Of survey respondents who never use the Senior Center, 41% of all ages state it is because they are unaware of activities or programs available and 1 out of 4 respondents report not being interested (see **Figure 33**).

Figure 32. Reasons for not using the Lynn Senior Center



For those who wrote in a response, the most common responses centered around not having time and still working. In addition, the perception of “not needing” to visit the Senior Center or access its offerings was prominent, suggesting that communicating the purpose of the Senior Center and defining its target audience is a possible future step that would allow a wider range of residents to be drawn in. As well, prioritizing the welcoming nature and safety of space will be key to continuing to function as a key asset to the community. Given the recent growth of Lynn Elder Services and the development of a senior center space in Lynn, there is a real opportunity for the City to address some of these concerns by pushing out clear and consistent messaging about the senior center. See **Table 6** with sample comments regarding why survey respondents don’t use the Senior Center.

Table 6. Sample responses to question “What is the reason that you do not currently use programs or services offered by the Lynn Senior Center”

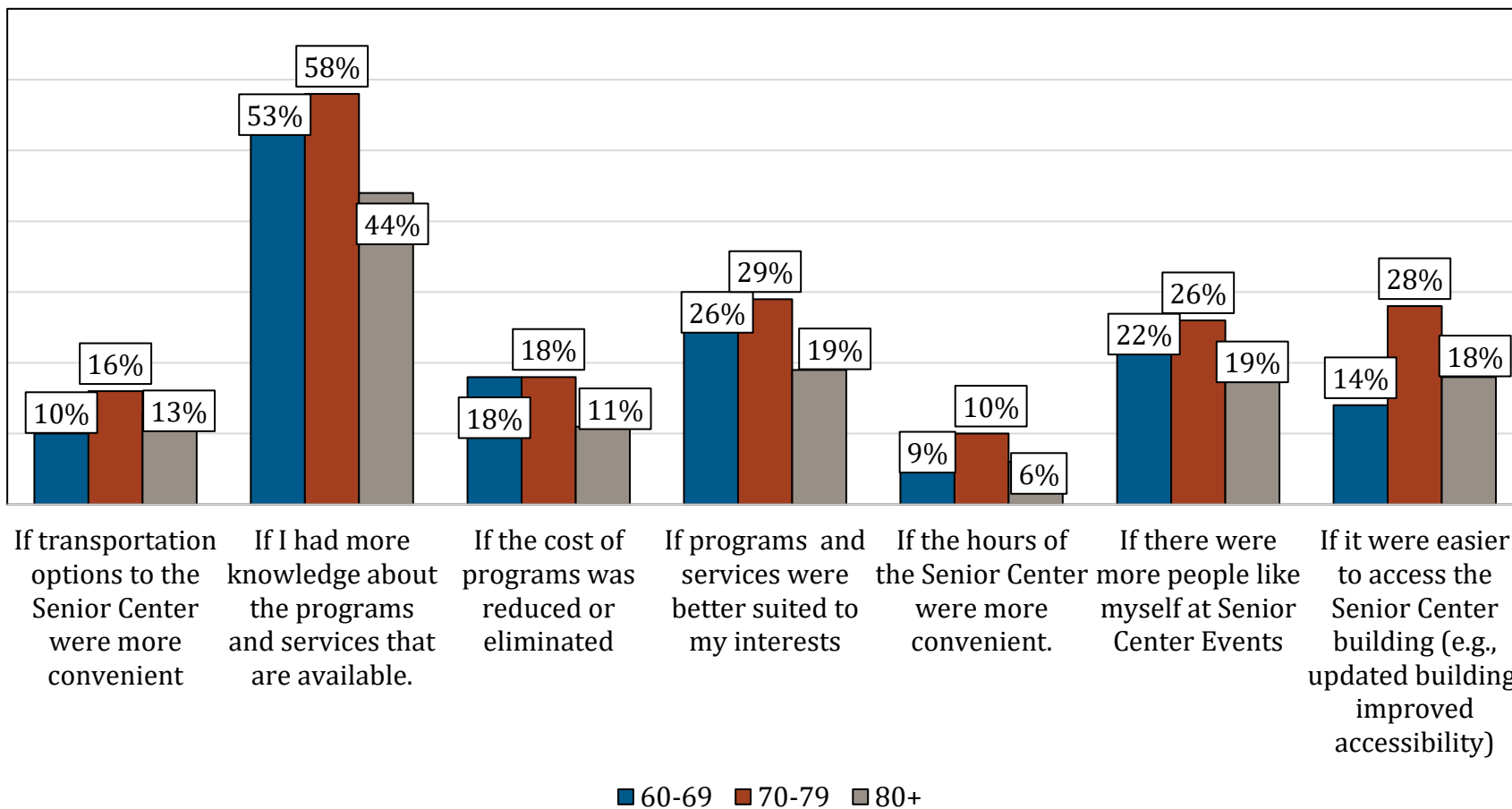
No need
<i>“Do not want to take away from someone who would need it more. I’m not at the point where it’s necessary, yet.”</i>
<i>“Still able to take care of things myself”</i>
<i>“Not much of a ‘joiner”</i>
<i>“I don’t need them now...as I age I imagine I will”</i>
Too busy
<i>“I still have a social life + friends that I meet so I don’t need to attend the senior center yet”</i>
<i>“At this time, I have other commitments”</i>
<i>“83 yrs old still work, no time”</i>

Facility deters participation
<i>"I would like to attend in Lynn. The location and parking will be a concern."</i>
<i>"I have no idea where it is"</i>
<i>"I found the center to be very cliquey"</i>
<i>"Not enough diversity"</i>

We asked respondents to select the reasons that would increase likelihood of participating at the Lynn Senior Center (**Figure 34**). A similar pattern of results emerged across those who currently participate at the Lynn Senior Center and those who do not. The top factors that would increase participation included "If I had more knowledge about the programs and services that are available", and secondarily "If programs and services were better suited to my interests". Similarly, for all age groups, the top factors that would increase participation was more knowledge about what is available and programs that more closely aligned with people's interests. The third most reported factor across age groups was "If there were more people like myself at Senior Center events," with nearly a fifth of each age group citing this as a contributor. A sizable share of respondents reported "other," and 186 people took the time to write in their thoughts. The most commonly reported factor was related to not having a current senior center or where it is located. For example, one person wrote "We haven't had a seniors center in 2 -3 years. I do have connections to services in other ways. A new one needs to be built or found."

Understanding reasons for lack of participation provides direction and opportunities for change. Overcoming the obstacle of unfamiliarity, increasing outreach, adapting programming to meet the broad interests of the older adult population, and exploring strategies to update the image and space of the Senior Center may be areas to consider as future Lynn Senior Center goals.

Figure 34. "I would be more likely to use the Lynn Senior Center...", by age



When asked to rate the importance of programs and services offered by the Lynn Senior Center, the pattern of results was similar across age groups. Trends towards health and wellness and direct-services like transportation or professional services were highest rated by survey respondents. See **Figure 35**.

Figure 35. Importance of existing programs and services, by age

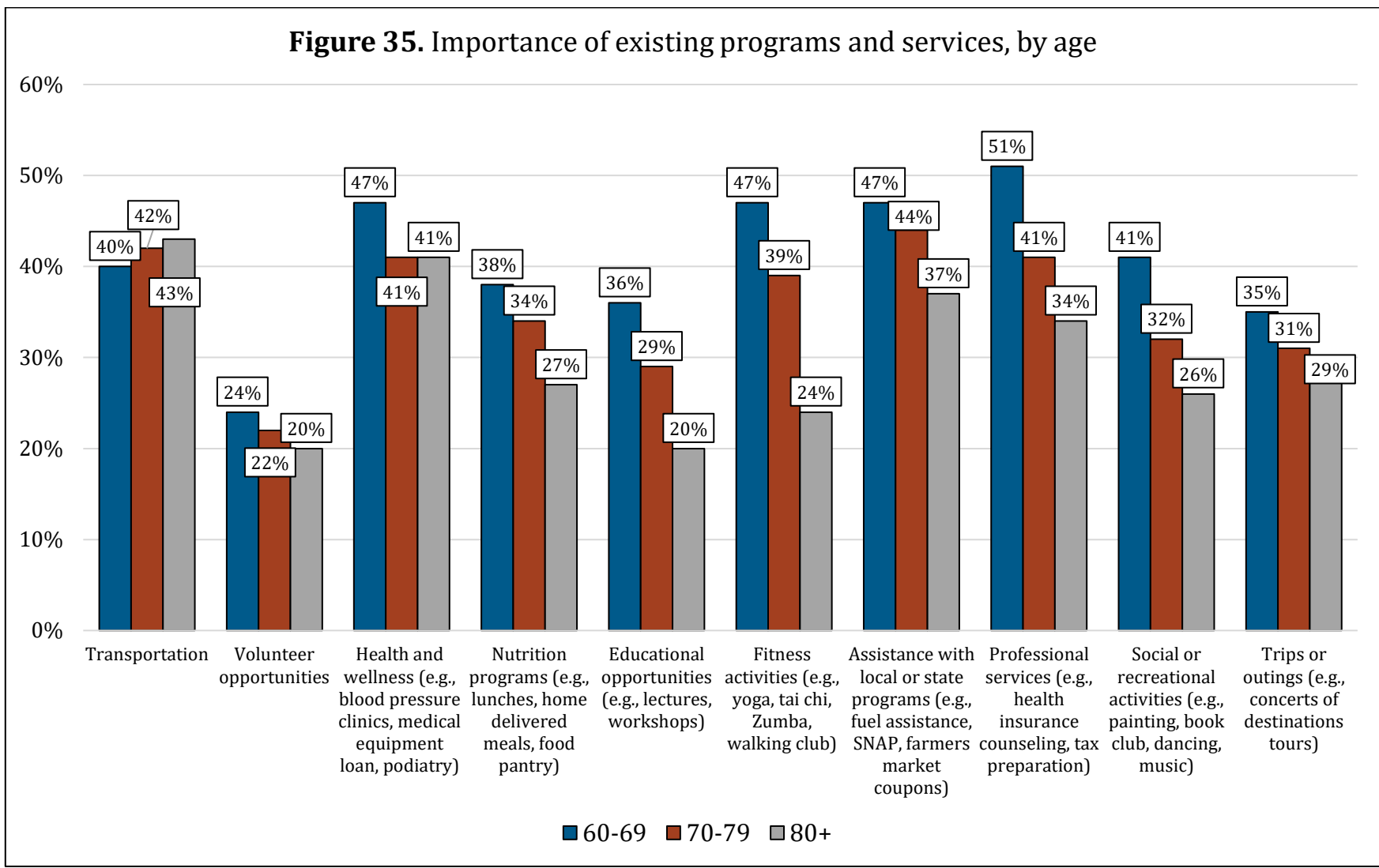
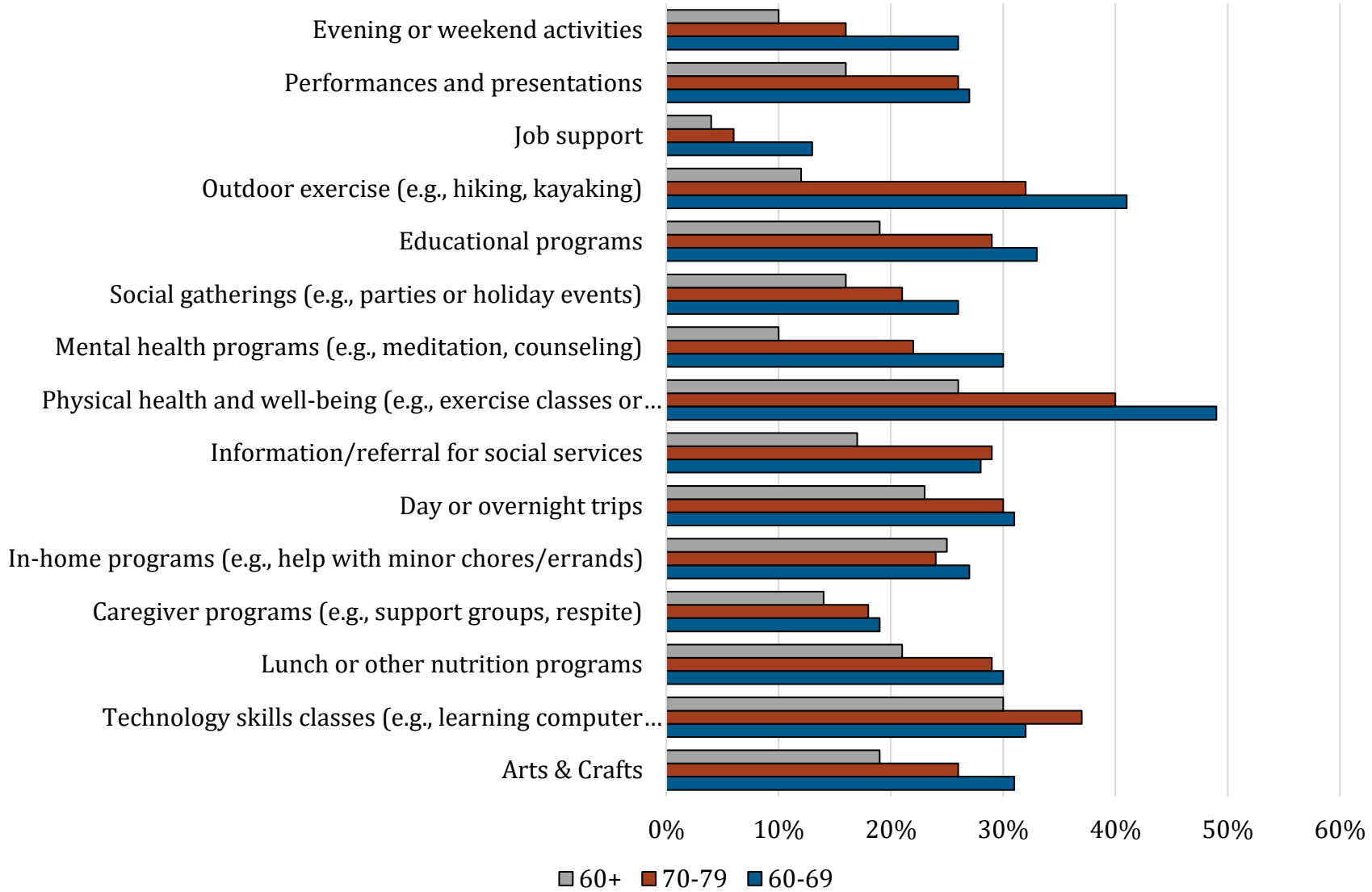
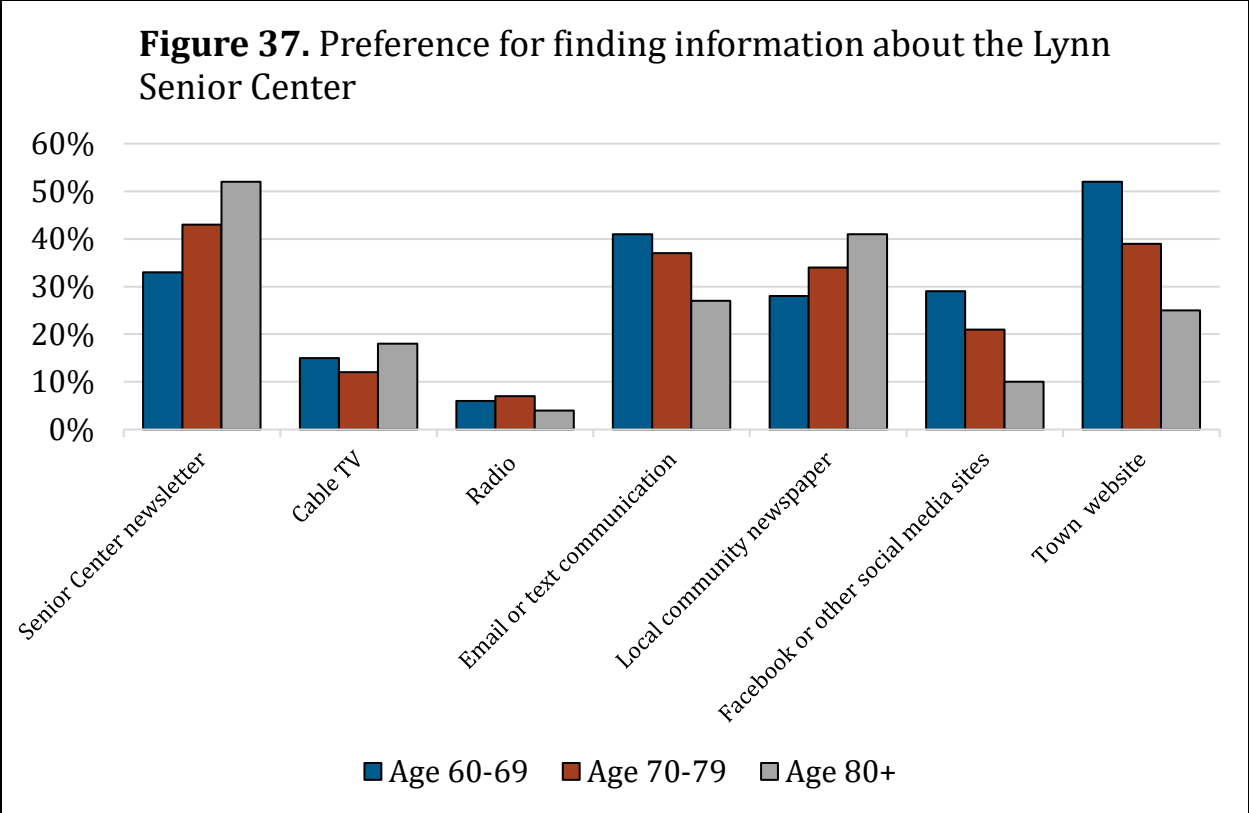


Figure 36. Preference for future programming, by age



Respondents were asked to indicate the types of programming and services they would prioritize in expanding availability of through the LynnLynn Senior Center. When it comes to programming, preferences varied slightly by age (**Figure 36**). Preferences varied slightly by age. For example, among those in their 60s, the top three preferred programs for the future were the same: 1) physical health and wellbeing (e.g., exercise classes or disease management programs); 2) outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking club); and 3) educational programming. Among those in their 70s and 80s, day and overnight trips and technology skills programs were also a preferred type of future programming.

There was one question included in the survey related to preferred method of getting information, “Where would you prefer to find information about the activities and services offered by the City of Lynn?” Preference for email, website, or social media communication varied by age (see **Figure 37**). Among those respondents in their 60s, the City’s website was the most preferred source of information. Among those in their 70s and 80s, the Lynn Senior Center newsletter was preferred by more than two-thirds of respondents in those age groups. Given that current Lynn Senior Center participants are somewhat older; we conclude that continuing to make information about the Senior Center available through print media remains important. Considering ways to amplify the distribution of the Senior Center Newsletter could be useful as well as planning for improvement of information about the Lynn Senior Center on the City’s website would be an effective tool for getting information to the younger age groups.



While most community survey respondents do have access to the Internet from their home (via a smartphone, computer, or tablet), It is important to note that 24% of respondents age 80 or older do not (see **Appendix A**). This is important information both for outreach mechanisms but also to highlight the need for public access to Internet services for those who do not have connectivity in their homes.

At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were invited to write in any additional thoughts or comments about the Lynn Senior Center and more than 400 participants took the time to provide additional feedback. It is evident from the comments that while some of those who complimented the Senior Center take advantage of the programs and services, others do not at this time, but are comforted to know that the Senior Center is available for their future needs (see **Table 6** for examples).

In addition, there were many suggestions regarding additional programs and services, largely focused on addressing needs. Some respondents provided specific ideas, such as financial support, handy-man services, volunteer or employment opportunities, and education and training courses. Other suggestions focused on broader issues such as improving communication about what is available. Many commented on the limited transportation should they no longer be able to drive, including transportation to and from

the Senior Center and more on-demand transportation services (e.g., taxies or ride-sharing service). Medical transportation was a key concern for many respondents.

Many survey respondents commented on the lack of a senior center over the last few years—that it was forced to move from its original location because of building conditions and has yet to find a more permanent arrangement that meets the needs of the community. Respondents cited not having a senior center in recent years as a hardship and how it has and can serve as a valuable resource to the community. Many noted the need for a wide array of programs and services that are accessible and inclusive for all ages, creeds, and abilities. While many suggestions included ways to increase the number of residents who participate at the Senior Center, others recognized that the current space and staffing are not adequate to accommodate the growing number of older residents. A sample of additional comments are presented on **Table 7**.

Table 7. Additional thoughts or comments about aging in Lynn

Senior Center and Elder Services
<i>"Great place for Lynn's old, poor, etc. A large city needs this kind of place for these less fortunate."</i>
<i>"I do not know enough I only know as I do get older and become more handicapped I hope to be able to rely on Lynn Senior Center + senior services to help me live an active and independent life."</i>
<i>"Hopefully under the new administration the senior residents of Lynn will finally have proper services. The city's history of investing in its seniors is abysmal but is hopefully improving. Seniors need a place to gather safely and comfortably, good nutritional offerings, a wide variety of programming, and easy access to resource information."</i>
<i>"Information about the programs or activities need to be available for those who do have email access and for those who do NOT have internet or social medial access. Communication is very important especially to those who do not use social media!"</i>
Need for financial assistance
<i>"I feel my 80 year old mom doesn't get enough services and social security doesn't give her enough to live on to pay her bills."</i>
<i>"Many seniors are working full time and still not making ends meet because of the rising prices. Recreation is not what we need. Financial support is far more important."</i>
<i>"Please make available reasonably prices lawn care maintenance, painters, carpenters, repairmen for seniors. We need reputable helpers at decent costs. Also an increase in tax abatement."</i>
Remaining engaged in the community
<i>"I need and wish to find work consistent with my skills and experience but there is no such thing in Lynn."</i>
<i>"Many seniors miss the interaction with young people. Students should be encouraged to volunteer at the senior center. I think that loneliness is a big issue for seniors. It's important to have a safe place to meet, and just be able to talk to someone."</i>
<i>"For me at 82, in relative good health, I am interested in educational, art and craft classes, and intergenerational volunteer opportunities...For those of us in relatively good health I think activities for engaging the mind and the spirit are key."</i>
Social service and health needs
<i>"I do find it difficult to find the city and social programs that are available to me as a resident of Lynn and MA. The one time I needed assistance with bills, I had to visit 4-5 different departments, groups, buildings, etc. There could be one central portal/location for information and applying for assistance."</i>
<i>"Need volunteers to assist older adults + disabled for transportation, shopping, minor repairs, shoveling during storms... many families have no relatives living in this state."</i>
<i>"I hope they offer services in Spanish that are made thinking in Hispanic people from different nations, since we have cultures that not always agree with others."</i>

Key Informant and Focus Group Insights

The following section highlights insights and findings derived from seven one-on-one Key Informant interviews and a stakeholder focus group. These events took place beginning in September of 2021 and continued through March 2022. The emphasis of these discussions was to obtain an assessment of key challenges as they relate to the aging of older residents to identify their unmet needs and explore the potential role to be played by the Senior Center, both on its own and in collaboration with other City departments.

To that end, seven Key Informants representing City offices and organizations that have regular interactions with Lynn's older adult residents contributed. The former mayor of Lynn (while in office), the newly inaugurated mayor, the Principal Planning Director, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, and a City Council member participated in these interviews. The stakeholder focus group represented City offices and organizations that have regular interactions with Lynn's older adult residents. Stakeholder contributors included the Director of Elder Services for the City of Lynn, a City Councilor, the Program Director of Rainbow ADHC of Lynn, the member-leader of Neighbor-to-Neighbor, the Director of Community Programs for Greater Lynn Senior Services, and the Director of Organizing for the Mass Senior Action Council.

To facilitate each conversation, Key Informants and focus group attendees were asked about the ways in which the aging of Lynn's older adult population had impacted their work. Each discussant cited areas where change had been observed. Taking all these conversations into consideration, a pattern of themes emerged surrounding communication, trust, transportation, walkability, programs, services, access to health care, housing, and promptings for the future capacity of Lynn's Senior Center.

Of note, this assessment was conducted during a time of transition for Lynn, both as new City leadership gained traction and as the opportunity for robust City-wide projects was made possible through substantive federal American Rescue Plan Act fiscal allocations (\$58M).

Trust, Communication, and Engagement

Given that many residents are not able to connect with the Lynn COA at this time, it is imperative to identify other ways of both keeping residents socially connected but also aware of the ways they can reach out should they encounter a crisis or develop need. Due to the increase in the number of older adults in Lynn, the community can expect to hear from this population more and more with respect to advocating for their needs and desires. Key Informants expressed concern for the need to develop coordinated communication and outreach with Lynn's older residents in order to include them in vital community discussions. Focus group participants, alongside Key Informants, stressed the challenges

older adults experience in engaging with City Hall and the gap in trust of government that must be bridged in order to communicate effectively with residents. Both focus group and interview participants emphasized this challenge is further exasperated by the dozens of languages routinely spoken in a majority minority community, with many residents not fluent in English.

Interviewees conveyed that addressing the challenges of representing the preferences and needs of the broader community will require improved communication, beyond steps toward diversity and inclusion already underway.

Moreover, participants stressed that a comprehensive media communication strategy alongside face-to-face interaction will be essential for meeting the needs of Lynn's older adults. The salient point made by stakeholders is to meet folks where they are. This topic was exemplified with suggestions for in-person engagement with faith group congregations, door-to-door visitations, senior housing happenings, and an outreach presence at Lynn events.

Alternately, interviewees suggested that not many, but some of Lynn's older residents might be more tech-savvy than anecdotally expected--advocating that an expanded direct online campaign alongside a robust social media approach could be effective in engaging residents, benefitting all by increasing awareness of assistance and programming beneficial to older residents.

Challenges to Transportation and Walkability

As is safely walking around the City of Lynn, being able to drive is also essential to the autonomy and independence of older residents. The ability to do so is crucial for accessing Lynn's amenities and needed resources, as well as traversing in and around the region. Strengthening the transportation systems alongside driver safety were noted as major concerns that, if addressed, could benefit residents of all ages. Pedestrian safety was expressed consistently as a major concern by Key Informants, citing that a simple errand like going to the bank or grocery shopping can come with high risk for older residents. Similarly, it was reported that the frequency of emergency calls involving older drivers has increased in recent years—a trend that is expected to continue over the coming decade. Focus group respondents noted that residents were not aware of rideshare options and that snow accumulation in winter was a barrier for car owners.

Salient Themes around Programs and Services

Not only was it evident in conversations with Key Informants that they are witnessing an increased demand for senior services, but also an influx of requests for supports, and calls

for programming. Participants conveyed consensus that the demographic complexity of Lynn's aging residents creates challenges to identifying their unique needs. Additionally, housing the plethora of diverse programs and services in a single senior center may be a factor in addressing these identified needs, albeit challenging to accommodate the multitude of cultural preferences. That being said, the demand for diversity in programming was explicitly expressed.

In some instances, interview participants shared concerns that residents' isolation and fears of venturing out into the community stifle their engagement.

The salient theme conveyed by participants is that for most residents, engagement with programs and services is more or less needs-driven (e.g. meals on wheels), with very little understood about the extent of the need. It was noted that throughout the pandemic the need for available food resources increased, however, the extent of food security issues experienced by older residents is not known. Moreover, a general understanding was expressed that many residents are unaware of existing supports such as SNAP benefits and heating assistance.

Focus group participants alongside interviewees stated that folks are unequivocal in voicing their interest in a broad spectrum of choices for activities and opportunities for engagement; however, there are lingering doubts about specific needs with a preference being given to modeling a new senior center based on successful efforts elsewhere. Moreover, concern was expressed for supply chain issues hampering efforts to increase programs and services available to Lynn's older residents. This point was illustrated in the waiting time to obtain transport vans due to an issue with available parts generating a lengthy wait time for delivery.

Barriers to Accessing Health Care for Lynn Residents

Several Key Informants described dynamics controlling access to health care and emphasized that for many older adults in Lynn, these challenges represent a major hurdle, whether it be for routine appointments to facilitate ongoing care or needed support for an emerging crisis. Since the closure of Union Hospital, City departments and organizations serving older residents overwhelmingly reported a lack of existing care options, community supports, and available transportation to access needed care. Moreover, a key barrier affecting crisis care for Lynn's older residents was identified as usual traffic congestion that commonly delays response times for emergency vehicles working to reach an individual and then transport the patient to an area hospital, where emergency room wait times were often lengthy, deterring older adults from seeking necessary care.

Matters of Housing and Maintenance

Key Informants and focus group participants reported that many seniors are in distress because they are finding it difficult to afford expenses and to remain in their homes. Additionally, older adults tend to be isolated in their often difficult-to-maintain homes and can be reluctant to ask for help. Easily manageable housing down-sizing options are not common in the City of Lynn, particularly due to Lynn's desirable proximity to the City of Boston and coastal locale. As the aging population increases, this situation is likely to become untenable. Many issues exist for older adults living alone in single-family homes requiring maintenance. Taken together, these challenges have implications not only for the support networks available to seniors, but also for local service providers and municipal departments who take the place of younger family members in this social support role, which includes some things that are typically outside of their traditional scope.

As a substantive percentage of older Lynn residents currently live alone, challenges related to financial security and isolation were described as not fully understood but both Key Informants and focus group participants were aware of unmet needs. The cost of utilities, municipal fees, property taxes and cost of home maintenance were named as a critical need for some older residents in Lynn. Moreover, one Key Informant with direct knowledge of conditions in Lynn offered an insight that more than 50% of residents are thought to spend more than 50% of their income on rent.

In general, an essential aspect for healthy aging is an individual's ability to remain living in the community as one ages—and the desire to do so was a salient point expressed by key informants. The strong consensus is that without adequate housing options for residents looking to downsize, older adults will either remain in homes that are inappropriate or unmanageable, or they will be forced to leave the community.

The Observed Need for a Senior Center in Lynn is Vast

Even though the Senior Center's transitional phase was acknowledged during our discussions, it was clear from the interviews that without a Lynn Senior Center, available resources are not prepared to deal with current or future increased demands. There is agreement that while the work being done by organizations in the community is invaluable to residents, there is an explicit awareness that the unmet breadth and depth of needed services is immeasurable. The unanimous consensus among focus group stakeholders and Key Informants is that barriers to engagement with Lynn's older residents rest solely on identification of a location for the new senior center and operationalizing programs and services. Strong concern was expressed by many participants that a single center may not be accessible by existing transport, and it is possible that the limited capacity of a single center may deter some residents from considering it a viable resource for them or their families.

Prime for Action: Collaborative Opportunities around the City of Lynn

Nearly all Key Informants described the values that could be derived from a more collaborative approach to senior services in City of Lynn. One such example to benefit older residents is to develop strengthened relationships between the Lynn Senior Center, Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development (LHAND), and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The benefit to residents would be two-fold: first, to facilitate City-wide welcoming spaces for older adults to socialize and engage in the many community spaces LHAND oversees, but to also provide safe havens that assist OEM efforts during extreme weather events (e.g., blizzard, heatwave, etc.) with locations across the City.

Additionally, there was an emphasis on the need for thoughtful municipal engagement in planning for the needs of older residents. For this collaboration to emerge effectively, Key Informants suggested building upon existing area project meetings (e.g., Public Health vaccine distribution) to expand the agendas for sharing ideas, information, and insights. Additionally, local faith communities, City schools, the library, and local faith communities were named as potential strategic partners to spread and strengthen the presence of the Lynn Senior Center initiatives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is an exciting time for older residents of the City of Lynn. Recent commitments by the City to invest in a new senior center space and staff mean that an arrangement of active, social, and educational programs will be available to residents age 60 and older; and that access to services and information about existing supports will be made available via municipal departments. As well, substantial growth in the number of older residents of the City of Lynn is expected within the next decade. This central overarching observation—that the older population of this community is already large and will continue to expand both as a result of human longevity but and also because residents may move to Lynn seeking to be closer to family or to find more a more affordable lifestyle, compared to other Massachusetts Cities—makes clear the importance of considering how well features of the City, the services and amenities available through the Senior Center, and virtually every aspect of the community align with the age demographic moving forward.

In response to the demographic shift and recent developments of the Lynn Senior Center, the City partnered with the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging at the University of Massachusetts Boston to conduct a study to investigate the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of the Towns' residents age 60 and older. As part of this assessment, data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources were examined in support of the project aims. In addition, a survey was developed and administered to a sample of Lynn residents age 60 and older. A total of 1,170 questionnaires were returned, reflecting a

strong return rate of 23%. Information from key-informant interviews and a stakeholder focus group was also collected and incorporated.

A broad range of findings are reported in this document, highlighting the many positive features of the City of Lynn as well as concerns expressed by older residents. The report is intended to inform planning by the Lynn Senior Center and its Council on Aging board as well as other City offices, private and public organizations that provide services and advocate for older people within the City, and the community at large. While many of our findings, and the recommendations that follow, intersect with the scope of responsibility of the Lynn Senior Center, it is understood that responding to many needs and concerns expressed in the community will require the involvement of other municipal offices or community stakeholders, and some will require substantial collaborative effort.

We summarize key findings and make the following recommendations to the City of Lynn and the Lynn Senior Center:

Recommendations for the Lynn Senior Center

We summarize key findings and make the following recommendations to the City of Lynn as well as the Lynn Senior Center:

- **The demand for Senior Center programs and services is expected to escalate in coming years.**
 - Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau show that in 2020, there were 16,522 residents age 60 or older living collectively in the City. This made up 18% of the total population. Projections suggest that between by 2035, residents age 60+ will comprise 21% of the total population of the City.
 - The racial and ethnic diversity of Lynn's older adult population is also projected to continue changing in coming years. In 2020, 18% of residents age 65+ identified themselves as Hispanic compared to 31% of those age 45-50. Similarly, younger residents are more likely to speak Spanish at home compared to older residents. These results suggest that as new cohorts of residents age in Lynn, the older adult population will increasingly be comprised of Hispanic residents and those who speak Spanish.
 - 26% of residents age 64-74 are still working and 5% of those age 75 or older are still working.
 - Many respondents took the time to write in about how they have been unable to participate in programs due to the transitions taking place and COVID-19; but many are comforted to know resource exists for them in the future. For example, one

resident writes, *“I am glad that it will be available when the time comes that I may need it.”*

- Not only is the size of the older population growing, but the complexity of their needs is increasing.
 - In addition to opportunities to socialize and stay connected, 22% of residents reported worrying about running out of food before they had money to buy more.
 - As well, 19% reported not knowing someone nearby on whom they could rely for help. Additionally, 23% would prioritize expanding mental health programs offered by the Lynn Senior Center. Across these three topics, respondents in their 60s reported higher rates of food insecurity, social isolation, and desire for mental health programs.
 - 26% and 31% of respondents reported being limited by a health condition or needing help at home because of a health reason, respectively.

Recommendations:

- Plan for escalating demand for Senior Center programs and services –including the expansion of both staffing and space.
 - Explore opportunities to delivering programming remotely or to homebound residents or co-sponsoring programs at locations around the City to ensure that participation is not limited by capacity of the current location.
 - Consider the hiring of licensed social workers who can respond to more complex needs of the community members and their families, this person would also be able to host a student social work intern to add to the capacity of the Center to address more complex needs of residents.
 - Consider ways to expand access to fresh and healthy foods. For example, farmers market delivery programs or hosting a regular lunch program or weekly community dinner.
 - Expand the programming staff to include additional “volunteer coordinator” position that assists with scaling up the recruitment and support to volunteers to deliver programs—drawing on the wealth of education, expertise, and talent of the area’s residents.
- **Consider planning for programming that focuses on physical health, mental health, lifelong learning and should be expanded.**
- 26% of survey respondents reported that if it programs and services were better suited to their interests, they would be more likely to attend. This was the second most commonly reported factor for increasing likelihood of attendance.
 - When asked what kinds of programs they would like to see expanded, the top three types were similar across age groups. First was an interest in expanding physical

health and wellness classes (42%), educational programs, including technology skills training (33%; 34%) and outdoor exercise (32%).

- Survey respondents rated the importance of services that could be offered by the Lynn Senior Center and the highest rated services include: professional services like health insurance counseling, tax preparation, or legal aid (45%), assistance with applying to state and federal programs (44%), health and wellness clinics like podiatry or blood pressure (43%), and transportation (42%).
- At the time of the survey, the arrangements for the Lynn Senior Center were not satisfactory to residents as observed in write-in responses on the survey. For example, one resident wrote, “I belong to the senior center before COVID, all of a sudden there was no more senior center. I thought a new one was supposed to open, but have no information.””.

Recommendations:

- Support the development of a Trailblazers club⁷ to connect with adults seeking to connect via outdoor activities.
 - Coordinate with residents to identify topics and skills they can share with others and pilot-test a lifelong learning program.
 - Create mechanisms to consistently infuse the programming schedule with new offerings as a way of engaging a range of residents based on their interests and abilities.
 - If exercise space is limited, consider partnerships with the recreation department or schools to consider other ways to host physical exercise courses.
- **Awareness of the Lynn Senior Center is limited; and some residents are living in isolation.**
- The number one factor that would increase the likelihood of participating at the Lynn Senior Center is, “If I had more knowledge about the programs and services that are available”, reported by 56% of survey respondents. Lack of awareness was also the number one reported reason for not currently participating (41%). This is in part due to the recent transitions to a new space and staff; but is also an integral aspect of ensuring that all older residents have equal access to resources.
 - One resident wrote, “*I don't know where it is or what is offered*”.
 - 33% of the City’s residents age 65 or older live alone.
 - Among survey respondents living alone 19% of those in their 60s and 22% of those in their 70s report not knowing someone nearby to call on for help, if needed.

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/SouthboroughTrailBlazers/>

- 42% of survey respondents report not knowing who to contact in their community should they or someone in their family need help with social, health or municipal services.
- The City’s website is the most preferred way of obtaining information, followed by the Senior Center newsletter and email or text communication.

Recommendations:

- Consider a rebranding effort to raise awareness about what is offered by the Lynn Senior Center. Perhaps changing the name to be more inclusive and creating an image that reframes aging as a positive and active experience may empower residents to participate in the community.
 - Facilitate a quarterly networking event for local organizations to come together. These events would include community education about the programs and services available through various agencies but also provide a mechanism by which communication about issues of isolation among providers can be streamlined and relationships established.
 - Consider implementing a “surrogate grandparent” program that matches older adults with local families for mentorship and socialization to those whose families live out-of-town or are otherwise absent.
 - Consider ways to welcome first-time participants who are reluctant to participate on their own (e.g., a “new member day” or a “bring a buddy” program to welcome new participants).
 - Explore the use of technology (e.g., phone or other mobile devices) to include residents who are unable to leave their home in existing programs through video technology, or making “friendly visits” by telephone.
 - Consider developing a resident ambassador program to educate residents with information about existing resources to be conduits between the Senior Center and the community at-large, this could even be a property tax work off position.
 - In order to ensure representation of residents on local boards, committees, and initiatives, consider establishing a “citizen’s civic academy⁸”. This educates residents about the basics of local policymaking and governance and empowers them with self-advocacy skills.
- **Costs of living and availability of downsizing options are perceived as challenging in the City of Lynn.**
- 59% of survey respondents reported that their home currently needs some type of repair or modification to make it a safe place to age. Among them, 25% reported being unable to afford to make these changes.

⁸ <http://www.healthy-waltham.org/waltham-senior-civic-academy/>

- When asked about preferences for type of housing, 44% of respondents age 60-69 would prefer to live in a 55+ independent living community as would 41% of those respondents age 70-79. Among the oldest old (age 80 or older), assisted living is preferred.
- When asked about their concerns about being able to remain in Lynn as they age, one of the most commonly reported concerns was the rising costs of living, including property taxes and the lack of downsizing options. For example, one resident wrote that their biggest concern about being able to stay in the area was, *“Being on fixed income the increases on my property taxes prevents other activities to be enjoyed.”* And another writes, *“Fear of continuing increase of taxes. The current increase is very difficult to handle”*
- 22% of respondents disagreed that they have adequate resources to meet their basic needs.
- Among households headed by someone age 65 and older (41%) report annual incomes under \$25,000. This compares with 20% of households headed by individuals age 45 to 64 having incomes under \$25,000.

Recommendations:

- Distribute educational materials, hold workshops, or offer other opportunities for residents to learn about home modifications that can promote safety in the home.
- Consider developing a way of distributing information about local handyman or repair services. Ensure that this list includes resources for contractors who will provide home modifications to support safety within the home.
- Continue to contribute to local conversations about housing options for older adults. Advocate for options that current residents can afford, including condominiums and other types of housing that offer low maintenance and single-floor living, as well as market-rate housing. Assisted living communities and senior independent living units are desirable housing options.
- Educate the community about currently available programs to support aging in place on a limited income (e.g., property tax exemptions, tax work-off program, small grants for home repairs).
 - Seek out ways to raise funds for small home repair projects to support those living in the community.
- Consider expanding educational workshops on topics related to economic security, such as planning for retirement, finding new employment, creating ways to use home equity to age in place, or seeking alternative housing models like home-sharing or renting out rooms.

➤ **Many residents are caregivers and are in need of supports.**

- 53% of survey respondents in their 60s and 46% of those in their 70s reported having been a caregiver within the past 5 years. Most caregivers reported that it is challenging to provide care and complete their daily responsibilities, including 74% of those in their 60s.
- 14% of all residents age 65 or older have been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia, and that is likely an under report given than many people go undiagnosed.

Recommendations:

- Create new ways of providing information and assistance for caregivers, support groups for caregivers, and provide information about referral resources available. Consider hosting a family caregiver “resource fair” as an opportunity to connect the Senior Center with family caregivers.
- Consider hosting a “Caregiver’s Night Out” to provide residents who might be caring for a spouse, parent, or grandparent an opportunity to enjoy a night of entertainment. Explore partnerships with volunteer groups and other aging service providers to provide respite care during the event.
- Consider developing a Memory Café or providing resources of nearby Cafés for residents and their caregivers to attend.
- Encourage City employees or resident volunteers to become “dementia friends⁹” to learn more about communication and reduction of stigma around dementia.

⁹ [Become a Dementia Friend | Dementia Friends USA](#)

Appendix A: Community Survey Results

Note: Appendix tables are based on 1,170 responses to the Lynn Survey of residents age 60 and older, conducted in Spring, 2022. Sixteen percent of responses were received online with the rest of the responses received by mail. Total response rate was 23%. See text for additional details.

Section I: Community & Neighborhood

Q1. How long have you lived in Lynn?

	All age	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Fewer than 5 years	3%	4%	1%	4%
5-9 years	4%	6%	2%	5%
10-19 years	11%	11%	11%	8%
20-29 years	14%	16%	14%	8%
30+ years	69%	63%	72%	75%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q2. How important is it to you to remain living in Lynn as you get older?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Important	51%	42%	56%	62%
Somewhat Important	30%	33%	28%	26%
Slightly Important	10%	12%	8%	8%
Not at All Important	9%	13%	8%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q5. How often do you feel safe in the neighborhood where you live?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Always	32%	27%	31%	32%
Most of the time	52%	55%	54%	52%
Sometimes	11%	11%	13%	11%
Rarely	3%	5%	1%	3%
Never	2%	2%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q6. Would you know whom to contact in Lynn should you or someone in your family need help accessing social services (e.g., social services, health services, or other city services)?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	58%	56%	57%	67%
No	42%	44%	43%	33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q7. How satisfied are you with the extent to which local policymakers take into account the interests and needs of older residents?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Completely satisfied	3%	2%	2%	3%
Very satisfied	15%	11%	17%	15%
Somewhat satisfied	47%	49%	45%	47%
Slightly satisfied	19%	20%	20%	19%
Not at all satisfied	16%	18%	16%	16%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q8. Have you ever felt discriminated against in Lynn because of any of the following?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Age	17%	17%	18%	15%
Income	10%	11%	11%	7%
Race or Ethnicity	14%	19%	10%	7%
Gender	3%	5%	2%	2%
Sexual Orientation	2%	3%	1%	1%
Other	10%	10%	11%	9%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Section II: Housing & Living Situation

Q9. Do you live alone or with other people?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I live alone	33%	27%	34%	47%
I live with others	67%	73%	66%	53%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q12. Which of the following best describes your current place of residence?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Single-family home	59%	62%	58%	53%
Multi-family home	14%	15%	13%	12%
Apartment	14%	11%	14%	22%
Condominium or townhome	11%	11%	13%	9%
Other	2%	1%	2%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q13. Do you own or rent your current residence?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
The residence is owned by me or someone with whom I live.	77%	78%	80%	70%
The residence is rented by me or someone with whom I live.	23%	22%	20%	30%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q14. Does your current residence need home repairs (e.g., new roof, electrical work etc.) to improve your ability to live in it safely for the next five years?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes, and I can afford to make these repairs.	23%	23%	22%	19%
Yes, but I cannot afford to make these repairs.	25%	26%	27%	20%
Yes, but I am not responsible for making these repairs (e.g., I rent my current residence).	11%	11%	9%	13%
No, my current residence does not need repairs.	41%	40%	42%	48%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Q15. In the next 5 years, if a change in your health or physical ability required that you move from your current residence, what kind of housing would you prefer?
(Check all that apply)**

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Single-family home	22%	29%	18%	13%
Multi-family home (2 or more units)	4%	6%	4%	2%
Accessory apartment (add-on apartment to an existing home)	8%	8%	7%	6%
Apartment, Condominium, townhome	23%	27%	24%	11%
55+ Community	40%	44%	41%	28%
Assisted living community	24%	18%	26%	34%
Multigenerational home (such as moving in with family)	8%	8%	8%	9%
Other	8%	7%	7%	10%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q16. Do you know someone living close by on whom you can rely for help when you need it?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	81%	78%	82%	86%
No	19%	22%	18%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Section III: Health

Q17. Do you have an impairment or condition that limits your ability to participate in your community?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	26%	19%	27%	42%
No	74%	81%	73%	58%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q18. Due to a health issue, do you require help with activities around the house (e.g., doing routine chores like cleaning or yard work?)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	31%	22%	33%	51%
No	69%	78%	67%	49%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q19. In the past 12 months, how often is the following statement true for you: “I worried my food would run out before I got money to buy more.”

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Often True	4%	5%	4%	1%
Sometimes True	18%	21%	17%	12%
Never True	78%	74%	79%	87%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Section IV: Caregiving

Q20. Do you now or have you in the past 5 years provided care or assistance to a spouse, parent, relative, or friend?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	47%	53%	46%	34%
No	53%	47%	54%	66%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q21. If Yes on question 20: how challenging is/was it for you to care for this person(s) and meet your other responsibilities with family and/or work?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Very Challenging	26%	29%	23%	22%
Somewhat Challenging	43%	45%	43%	34%
Neither Challenging Nor Easy	21%	17%	24%	30%
Somewhat Easy	7%	6%	7%	9%
Very Easy	3%	3%	3%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

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

Section V: Transportation

Q22. Which of the following best describes your driving status?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I drive with no limitations	57%	69%	15%	30%
I limit my driving (e.g., I avoid driving at night, during bad weather, in unfamiliar areas)	25%	17%	29%	35%
I do not drive	17%	12%	55%	35%
Other	1%	2%	1%	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q23. Within the past 24 months, did you have to miss, cancel, or reschedule a medical appointment because of lack of transportation?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes	12%	11%	11%	15%
No	88%	89%	89%	85%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q24. Which kind of difficulties do you have in getting the transportation that you need? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Public transportation is unavailable or inconvenient	9%	8%	10%	10%
Transportation options cost too much	8%	7%	10%	7%
Physical limitations or other impairments make accessing transportation options difficult	8%	5%	9%	11%
No door-to-door assistance	4%	4%	4%	3%
Distance to my destination is too far	5%	5%	6%	6%
No one I can depend on for a ride	6%	7%	6%	6%
I have no difficulties	64%	68%	65%	54%
Other	4%	4%	4%	7%

*Figures do not sum to 100%

Section VI: Programs & Services at the Lynn Senior Center

Q25. The following items refer to programs and services that could be offered through the Lynn Senior Center. Please rate the importance of the following programs and services to you or to your family. (%Very Important/Important)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Transportation	42%	40%	42%	43%
Volunteer opportunities	22%	24%	22%	20%
Health and wellness (e.g., blood pressure clinics, medical equipment loan, podiatry)	43%	47%	41%	41%
Nutrition programs (e.g., lunches, home delivered meals, food pantry)	35%	38%	34%	27%
Educational opportunities (e.g., lectures, workshops)	31%	36%	29%	20%
Fitness activities (e.g., yoga, tai chi, Zumba, walking club)	41%	47%	39%	24%
Assistance with local or state programs (e.g., fuel assistance, SNAP, farmers market coupons)	44%	47%	44%	37%
Professional services (e.g., health insurance counseling, tax preparation)	45%	51%	41%	34%
Social or recreational activities (e.g., painting, book club, dancing, music)	36%	41%	32%	26%
Trips or outings (e.g., concerts of destinations tours)	33%	35%	31%	29%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q26. How frequently do you use services or attend programs at the Lynn Senior Center?

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Two or more times a week	4%	2%	4%	10%
About once a week	2%	2%	1%	2%
A few times a month	2%	2%	3%	2%
About once a month	1%	1%	1%	4%
A few times a year (e.g., special events only)	7%	4%	9%	12%
Never, I do not use programs or services offered by the Senior Center	84%	89%	82%	70%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q27. If “never” or “A few times a year”: What is the reason that you do not currently use programs or services offered by the Lynn Center? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
I am not interested	25%	22%	27%	28%
I am unaware of programs or services available	41%	40%	44%	34%
I participate in programs elsewhere	11%	7%	14%	19%
I do not have time	13%	17%	9%	8%
I am not old enough	8%	14%	2%	1%
Other	21%	20%	23%	19%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q28. Below, please check all factors that would increase the likelihood of your using the Lynn Senior Center. (Check all that apply).

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
If I had more knowledge about the programs and services that are available	53%	53%	58%	44%
If the cost of programs was reduced or eliminated	16%	18%	18%	11%
If programs and services were better suited to my interests	26%	26%	29%	19%
If the hours of the senior center were more convenient	9%	9%	10%	6%
If transportation options to the Senior Center were more convenient	13%	10%	16%	13%
If it were easier to access the Senior Center building (e.g., updated building, improved accessibility)	20%	14%	28%	18%
If there were more people like myself at Senior Center events	23%	22%	26%	19%
Other	17%	18%	17%	14%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q29. Thinking about your own future needs and interests, which of the following areas would you prioritize in expanding programs available at the Lynn Senior Center? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Arts & Crafts	27%	31%	26%	19%
Technology skills classes (e.g., learning computer programs or smartphone applications)	34%	32%	37%	30%
Lunch or other nutrition programs	28%	30%	29%	21%
Caregiver programs (e.g., support groups, respite)	18%	19%	18%	14%
In-home programs (e.g., help with minor chores/errands)	25%	27%	24%	25%
Day or overnight trips	29%	31%	30%	23%
Information/referral for social services	27%	28%	29%	17%
Physical health and well-being (e.g., exercise classes or disease management)	42%	49%	40%	26%
Mental health programs (e.g., meditation, counseling)	23%	30%	22%	10%
Social gatherings (e.g., parties or holiday events)	23%	26%	21%	16%
Educational programs	29%	33%	29%	19%
Outdoor exercise (e.g., hiking, kayaking)	32%	41%	32%	12%
Job support	9%	13%	6%	4%
Performances and presentations	25%	27%	26%	16%
Evening or weekend activities	19%	26%	16%	10%
Other	9%	8%	10%	8%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q30. Where do you prefer to find information about the activities and services offered in the City of Lynn? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Senior Center newsletter	40%	33%	43%	52%
Cable TV (e.g., LCTV)	14%	15%	12%	18%
Email or text communication	37%	41%	37%	27%
City of Lynn website	42%	52%	39%	25%
Local community newspaper	33%	28%	34%	41%
Facebook or other social media sites	23%	29%	21%	10%
Radio	6%	7%	4%	9%
Other	10%	11%	11%	7%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q31. Please select your gender.

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Male	56%	54%	56%	60%
Female	44%	46%	44%	40%
Other	--	--		--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Q32. What is your age range?

	All ages
60-69*	45%
70-79	37%
80-89	16%
90+	2%
Total	100%

**Includes 11 people that reported being younger than 60*

31 people did not report their age

Q33. Are you able to access the internet from your home? (Check all that apply)

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Yes, using a smartphone (<i>that is, a cellular phone that provides access to the internet</i>)	57%	67%	58%	32%
Yes, using a home computer, laptop, or tablet	71%	73%	75%	61%
No, I do not have internet access at home	13%	9%	12%	24%

**Figures do not sum to 100%*

Q34. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "I have adequate resources to meet my financial needs, including home maintenance, personal healthcare, and other expenses."

	All ages	Age 60-69	Age 70-79	Age 80+
Strongly Agree	27%	28%	26%	24%
Agree	51%	50%	49%	59%
Disagree	17%	17%	20%	13%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	5%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%