

# **Bangor is Home: Livable Communities Survey of Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus**

Report Prepared by

Kate Bridges

December 2015



AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).

## **Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank former Mayor Nelson Durgin, City of Bangor; Rich Livingston, AARP State President; Lori Parham, Peter Morelli, Jane Margesson, Japhet Els, AARP Maine; Cheryl Barnes, Joanne Binette, Kadeem Thorpe, and Rachelle Cummins, AARP Research; Rodney Harrell PhD, AARP Public Policy Institute; Jeanne Anthony, AARP Programs.

Photo credit: Darling's Waterfront Pavilion, Page 8, Matt Beach, The Cre8tiv Company

Copyright © 2015 AARP

AARP Research

601 E Street NW Washington, DC 20049

[www.aarp.org/research](http://www.aarp.org/research)

---

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents .....	3
Executive Summary .....	4
Key Findings .....	6
COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE .....	7
Community Features.....	12
Transportation .....	15
Community and Health Services .....	17
Employment .....	21
Social Participation in the Community .....	23
Volunteering and Civic Engagement.....	25
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings .....	27
Communication and Information/ Community Resources .....	29
Community Needs .....	31
Demographic Profile of Respondents.....	36
Methodology.....	37

---

---

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***THE TOP REPORTED BANGOR COMMUNITY NEEDS ARE CONCENTRATED IN THREE DOMAINS: OUTDOOR SPACE AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS; COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND RESOURCES; AND TRANSPORTATION.***

A livable community provides resources that allow residents to age-in-place, and fosters residents’ engagement in their community’s civic, economic, and social life. The “2015 AARP Livable Communities Survey of Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus” was commissioned by AARP to help Bangor decision makers achieve the goal of livability. More specifically, the survey sought to:

- establish a baseline for Bangor in regards to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) eight domains of community life among 50-plus adults,
- conduct a Community Needs Gap Analysis to identify and prioritize areas of focus, and
- create a survey that can serve as a template for additional WHO communities in Maine.

The findings show that Bangor residents age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. More than half (57%) have lived in their community for over 25 years. Most do not plan to move, and nine in ten (90%) say their community is a good place for older people to live.

While Bangor residents age 50-plus see the beauty and value in their community, there is room for improvement to make it the most livable community possible. Based on the WHO’s eight domains of livable community, important community features as well as perceived community needs were identified by 448 Bangor residents age 50 and older through this survey conducted in September and October, 2015.

**“A huge need is an affordable way to keep seniors at home and able to age in a decent place”—Survey Respondent**

Among all eight domains (see page 6) studied in the survey, Transportation is rated as the most important livable community domain for Bangor residents age 50-plus. The nine items within this domain relate to the ease of navigating community roadways as well as public transportation. Health Services and Housing appear as the second and third most important community features, respectively.

While all eight domain areas were considered at least somewhat important to respondents, factors that can directly affect a person’s quality of life and experience in their community topped the list of importance. Refer to the Key Findings (page 8) for a summary of the most important community features organized by the Eight Domains of Community Life.

In addition to identifying important community features, community needs were assessed through gap analysis. A “need” can be defined as a gap between what is and what should be. In order to identify the needs of Bangor residents age 50-plus, survey respondents were asked about the importance of a community feature and service, then they were asked if these features and services existed in their community. These questions were then paired together to identify community needs or “gaps.”

The top community needs are concentrated in three domains: Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings, Communication and Community Resources, and Transportation. Refer to the Key Findings for a summary of the top 10 community needs by WHO Domain.

An important element of creating livability for all must be individual preferences. These survey findings help policymakers, planners, and others better understand the needs of an aging population in order to begin to consider steps and policies that can be taken to improve livability<sup>1</sup>

### Three Elements of Livability for all Ages



<sup>1</sup> Harrell, R., Lynott, J. Guzman, S. *Is this a Good Place to Live? Measuring Community Quality of Life for All Ages.* (Washington, DC: AARP) 2014.

## KEY FINDINGS

Among all eight domains studied of community life in the survey, Transportation is rated as the most important livable community domain for Bangor residents age 50-plus. The following table shows what survey respondents consider to be the most important community features within each of the eight domains, as well as the top three areas of need identified through data analysis.

<b>Transportation</b>	Well-maintained streets and roads (96%), that are well-lit and safe for all users (94%) with easy to read traffic signs (93%)
<b>Community and Health Services</b>	Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities (97%), affordable home health care providers (92%), and a variety of health care professionals/specialists (92%)
<b>Housing</b>	Trustworthy, high-quality, and affordable home repair contractors (88%), well-maintained homes and properties (84%), and affordable housing options for adults (80%)
<b>Outdoor Spaces and Buildings</b>	Well-maintained sidewalks (91%), public buildings (89%) and restrooms (79%) that are accessible to all, regardless of physical ability
<b>Employment</b>	Employment opportunities for older adults including job training (76%), workplaces that meet the needs of people with disabilities (76%), and jobs that offer flexibility (73%)
<b>Social Participation</b>	Social activities that are affordable to all (86%), offer senior discounts (76%), and are widely publicized (77%)
<b>Communication and Information</b>	Free access to computers and the Internet in public places (74%); clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering (71%), and accessible in a central location (70%)
<b>Volunteerism and Civic Engagement</b>	Easy to find information about volunteering opportunities (70%), with transportation (73%) and training (71%) available for volunteers who need it.

### TOP 10 COMMUNITY NEEDS BY DOMAIN

<b>Outdoor Spaces and Buildings</b>	Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians; well-maintained sidewalks and public bathrooms; adequate benches in public parks; neighborhood watch programs
<b>Communication and Information</b>	Clearly displayed community information printed with large lettering; information delivered in person to homebound people; automated and easy to understand community information source; access to information in one central source
<b>Transportation</b>	Well-maintained streets and roads

---

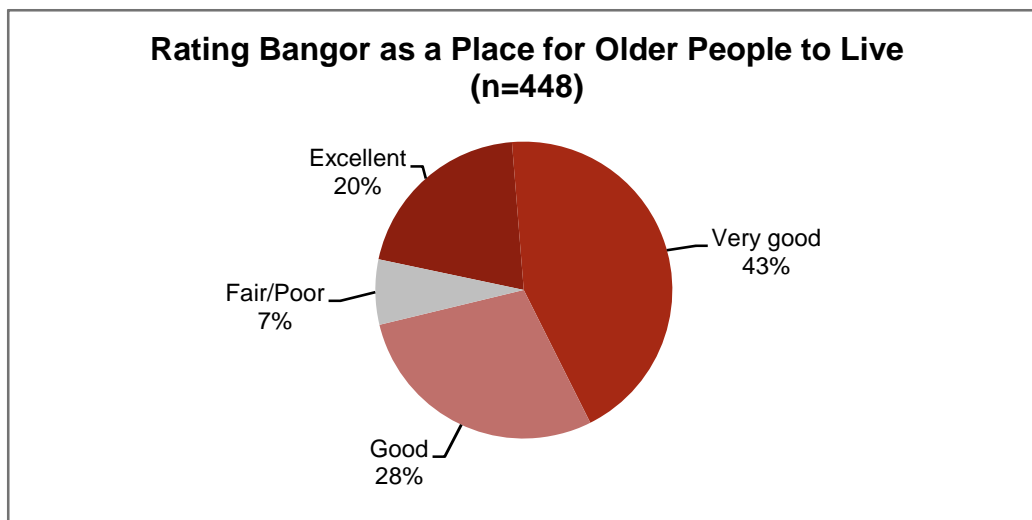
# COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

From a simple perspective, a “livable community” is a place that allows individuals to age-in-place. A comprehensive definition of a livable community is one that is “safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and offers supportive community features and services. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to age in place; and foster residents’ engagement in the community’s civic, economic, and social life.”<sup>2</sup> Across the nation, individuals make connections and commitments to homes, friendships, community organizations, and local social ties within their community and want to age-in-place. Bangor residents express similar desires.



## **Bangor residents age 50-plus believe their community is a good place for older people to live.**

Nine out of ten Bangor residents surveyed say their community is an excellent, very good or good place for older people to live. This high rating of their community is reflective of other survey results, including the longevity of residents in the area as well as their desire to remain in Bangor as they get older.

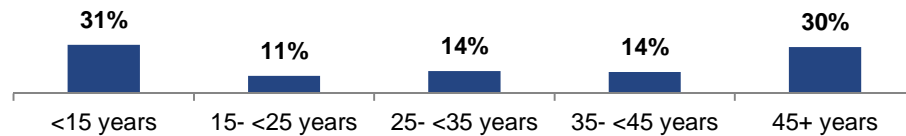


---

<sup>2</sup> AARP. Adapted from “Livable Communities,” in *The Policy Book: AARP Public Policies, 2013–2014* (Washington, DC: AARP) 2013.

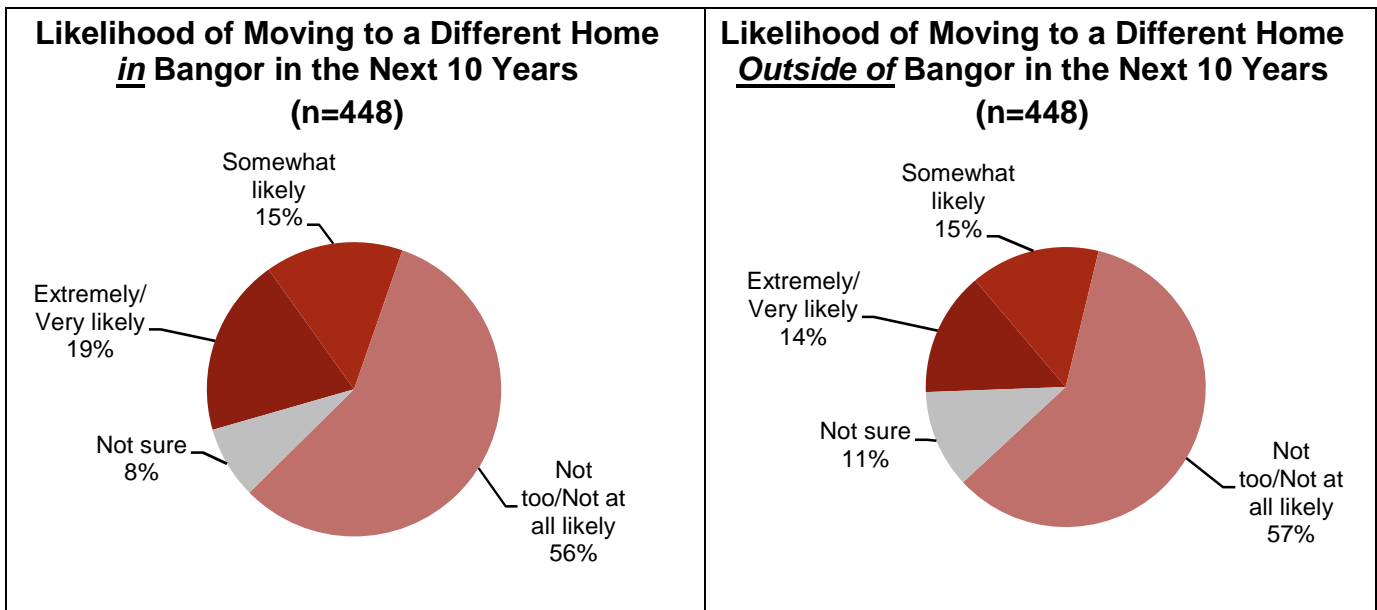
Bangor residents age 50-plus have deep roots in their community. Nearly three-in-five (58%) have lived in their community for over 25 years. One-in-ten (11%) has lived in their community between 15 and 25 years, and an additional one-in-three (31%) has lived in their community less than 15 years.

**Length of Time Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus Have Lived in Their Community (n=448)**



**For many older Bangor adults, independent living would be a factor in the decision to move.**

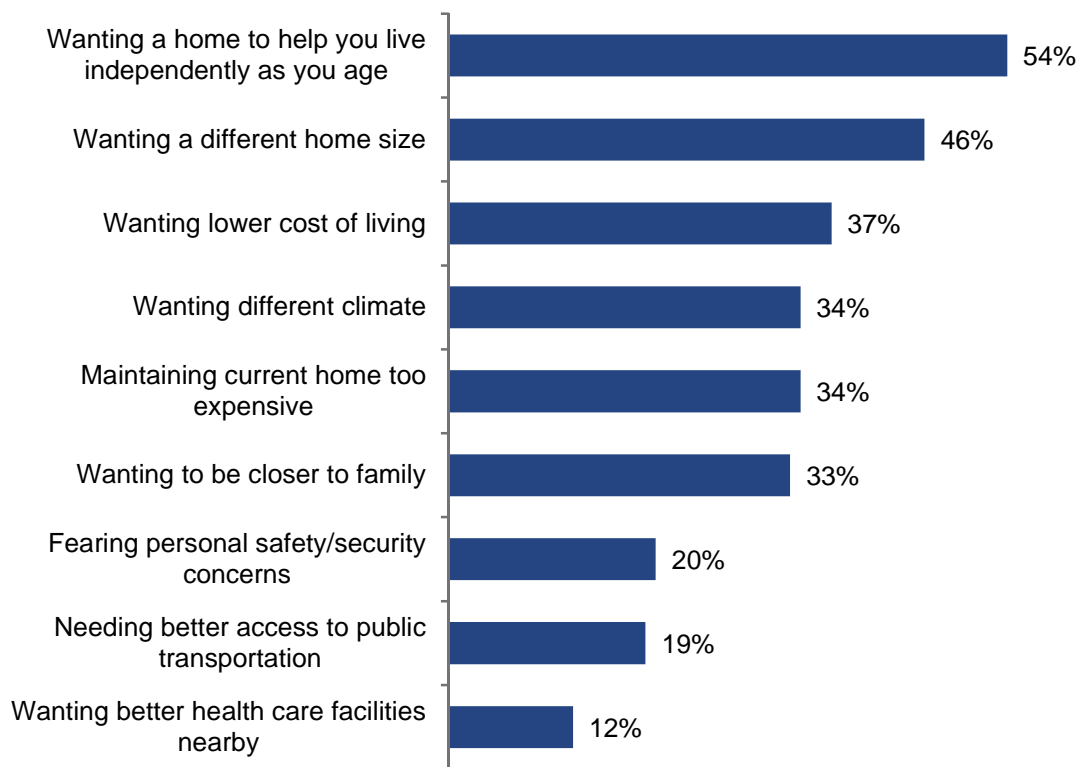
Most Bangor residents age 50-plus are unlikely to move into a different home within their community *or* move outside their community in the next 10 years. Nearly three in five say they are not likely to move outside of their community (57%) or to a different home within their community (56%), and another 15 percent are only somewhat likely to move.





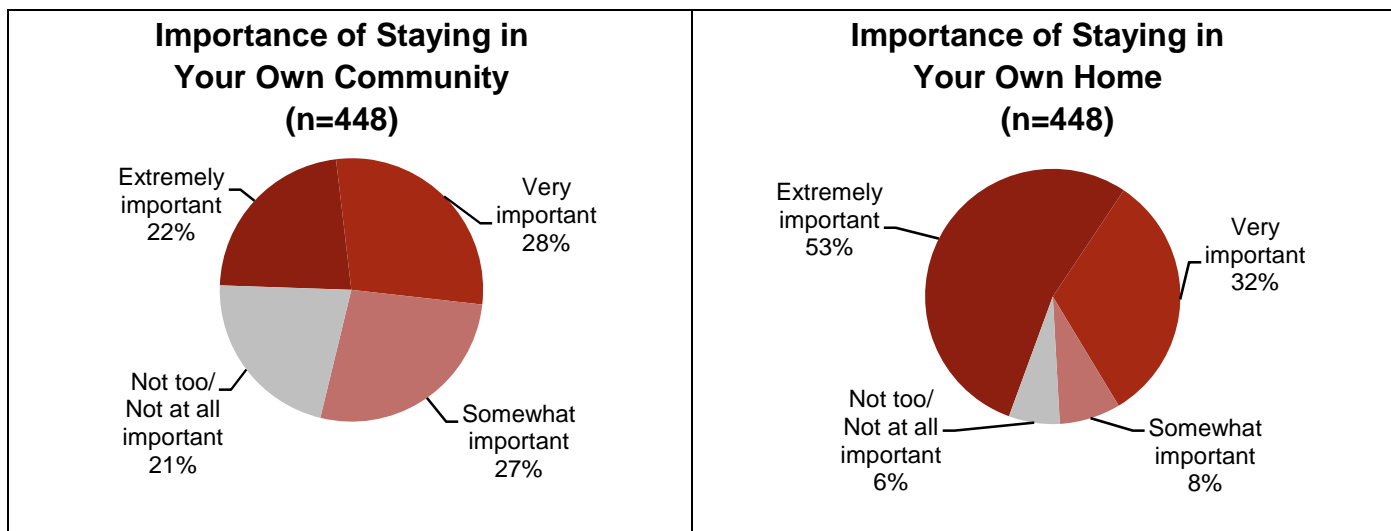
If they were to consider moving in their retirement years, the desire to find a home that would help them live independently as they age is the most common factor that would contribute to a decision to move among these Bangor residents. Finding a different size home than they currently have--likely smaller--is another factor that would be considered by nearly half of respondents.

**Factors That Would Contribute to Bangor Residents' Decision to Move  
(n=448)**



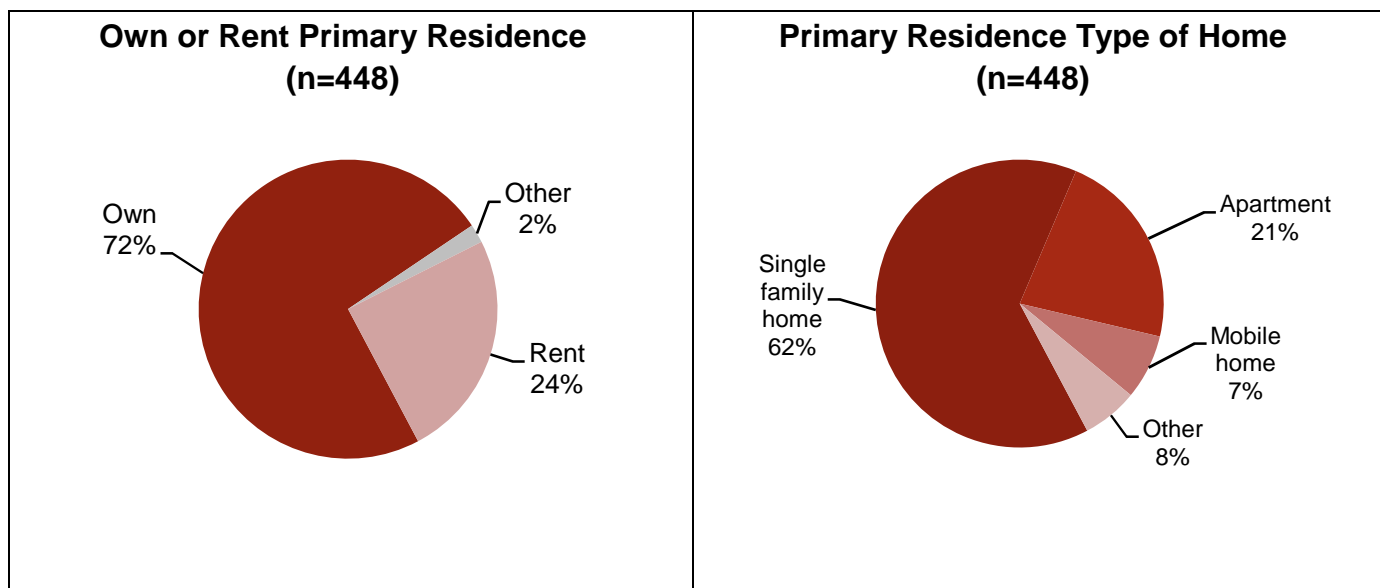
**Bangor residents age 50-plus say it is important for them to remain in their home and community.**

Bangor residents age 50-plus want to continue to live in their community and their home for as long they can. While half (50%) say it is extremely or very important to stay in their community as they age, even more (85%) say it is important to stay in their own home as they age.



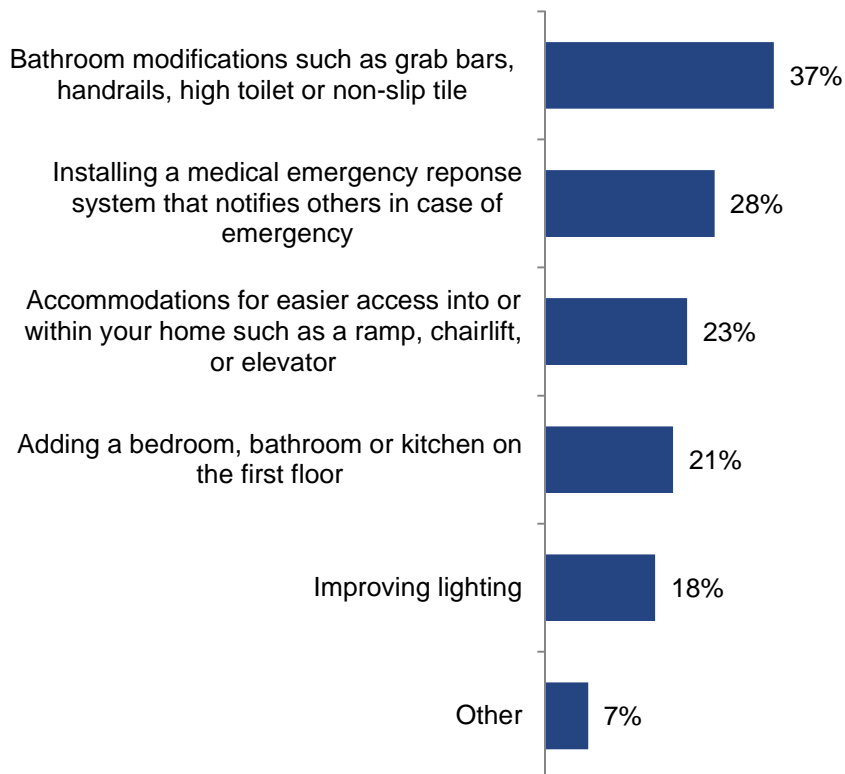
**Most Bangor residents age 50-plus own their own homes, and some say they will need to make home modifications to enable them to stay there as they age.**

More than seven-in-ten respondents (72%) own their homes and about one quarter (24%) rent them. Nearly two-thirds live in a single family home (62%) while about one-in-five lives in an apartment (21%).



While most say they want to age-in-place, many will need to make home modifications in order to do so. The top home modification Bangor residents age 50-plus say they will need to make in order to stay in their home as they age is bathroom modifications, such as installing grab bars, high toilet seats, or non-slip tile (37%). About one-quarter say they will need to install a medical emergency response system (28%) or add things like ramps and chairlifts for easier access into and within their home (23%).

### Types of Home Modifications Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus Plan to Make (n=448)



# COMMUNITY FEATURES

The baby-boom generation, which was born between 1946 and 1964, is aging and will shift the demographic mix in many communities over the coming decades. In 2010, people ages 65 and older represented 13 percent of the population. By 2030, those older adults will represent 20 percent of the population, more than doubling in number from 35 million to over 72 million.<sup>3</sup> Maine has already begun to see this demographic shift with about 23 percent of its population age 60 and older, and projections of more than 30 percent expected by 2030.<sup>4</sup>



As Maine's population ages, it is important for community leaders to address current needs, anticipate future needs, and coordinate the community's responses to an aging population. There are many principles and issues to consider in order to meet the needs of an aging population. One particularly useful resource is the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities.<sup>5</sup>

The Age-Friendly project was created to help cities prepare for two demographic trends: (a) the rapid aging of populations and (b) the increase in urbanization. The program targets the environmental, social, and economic factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults. The WHO has identified eight domains of livability that influence the quality of life of those in a community, particularly older adults.<sup>2</sup> The eight domains are:<sup>6</sup>

## 1. Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, safe streets, sidewalks, outdoor seating and accessible buildings (think ramps, stairs with railings, etc.) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.

---

<sup>3</sup> Harrell, R., Lynott, J. Guzman, S. *Is this a Good Place to Live? Measuring Community Quality of Life for All Ages*. (Washington, DC: AARP) 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Policy Academy State Profile: Maine, October 2012. U.S. Department of Aging. [http://www.aoa.gov/AoA\\_Programs/HPW/Behavioral/docs2/Maine%20Epi%20Profile%20Final.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/AoA_Programs/HPW/Behavioral/docs2/Maine%20Epi%20Profile%20Final.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> *The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities: An Introduction* (AARP) 2014. Retrieved at: <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html>

<sup>6</sup> Stanton, M. *The 8 Domains of Livability*. (AARP) 2014. Retrieved at: <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/info-2014/slideshow-eight-domains-of-livability.html#slide1>

## **2. Transportation**

Driving should not be the only way to get around. Public transit options can be as expansive and as infrastructure-dependent as a train system, or as targeted as a taxi service that provides non-drivers with rides to and from a doctor's office.

## **3. Housing**

Researchers consistently find that older adults want to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Doing so is possible if a house is designed or modified for aging-in-place and if a community includes housing options for varying life stages (and varying income).

## **4. Social Participation**

Regardless of a person's age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combatted by the availability of accessible, affordable, and fun social activities.

## **5. Respect and Social Inclusion**

Everyone wants to feel valued. Intergenerational activities are a great way for young and old to learn from one another, honor what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.

## **6. Civic Participation and Employment**

An age-friendly community provides ways older people can (if they choose) continue to work for pay, volunteer their skills and be actively engaged in community life.

## **7. Communication and Information**

Age-friendly communities recognize that not everyone has a smartphone or Internet access and that information needs to be disseminated through a variety of means.

## **8. Community and Health Services**

At some point, every person of every age gets hurt, becomes ill or simply needs some help. While it's important that care be available nearby, it's essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.

The simple question “what is a livable community?” has a considerable complex range of answers. The “*2015 AARP Livable Communities Survey of Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus*” report operationalizes “livable community” around the eight WHO domains in order to:

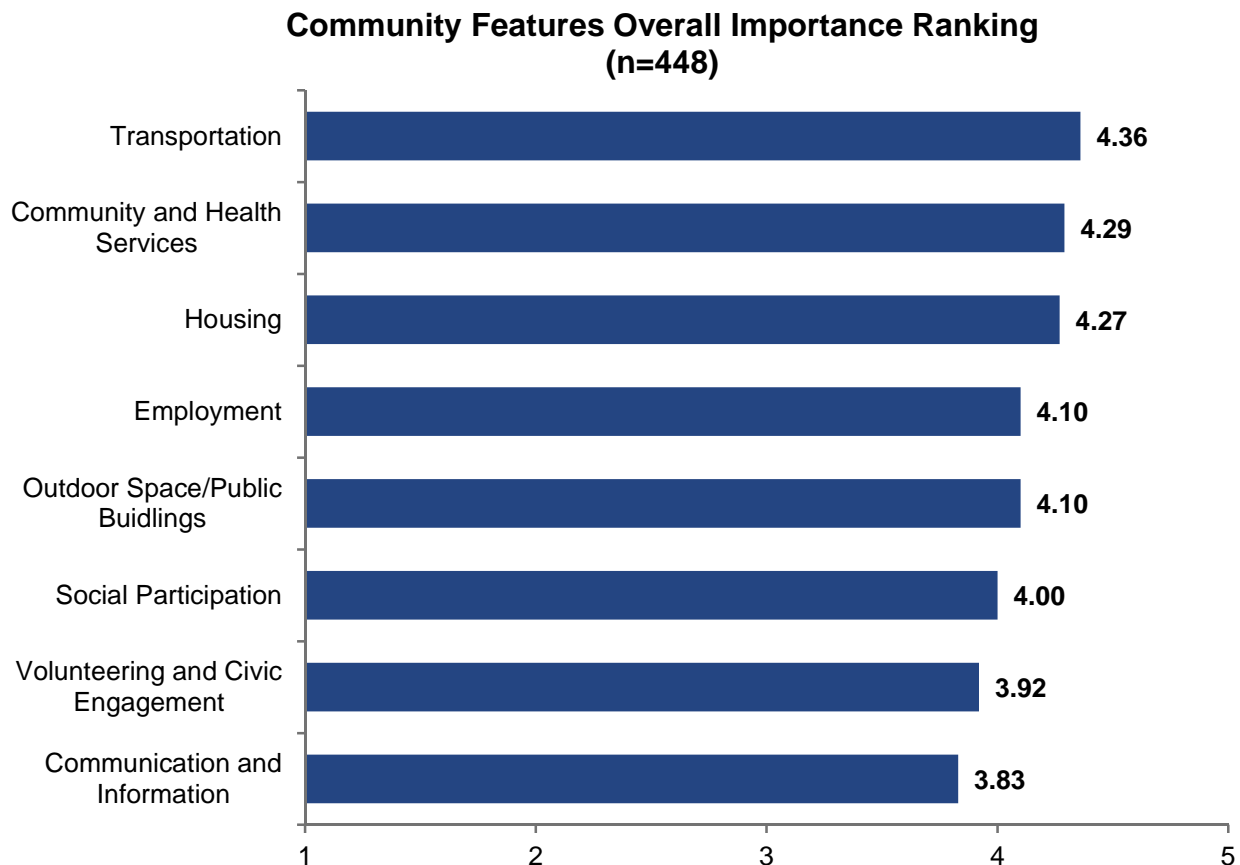
- establish a baseline for Bangor in regards to the WHO eight domains of community life among 50-plus adults,
- conduct a Community Needs Gap Analysis to identify and prioritize areas of focus, and
- create a survey that can serve as a template for additional WHO communities in Maine.

Survey findings are reported in order of ranked domain importance.

## Transportation is the most important livable community domain for Bangor residents age 50-plus.

Among Bangor residents age 50-plus in the survey, the top three domains are Transportation, Community and Health Services, and Housing. Respondents rated items within each domain on a 5-point scale with “5” being extremely important and “1” being not at all important. Ranking was determined by calculating the total mean for all items within each domain section.

While all eight domain areas are considered at least somewhat important to respondents, issues related to available and affordable transportation, available and affordable health services, and a variety of housing options topped the list. This is consistent with data that supports the idea that for many, factors of livability are “personal perceptions of issues that can directly affect an individual’s quality of life and experience in a community.”<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Harrell, R., Lynott, J., Guzman, S. Lampkin, C. *What is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults*. (Washington, DC: AARP) 2014.

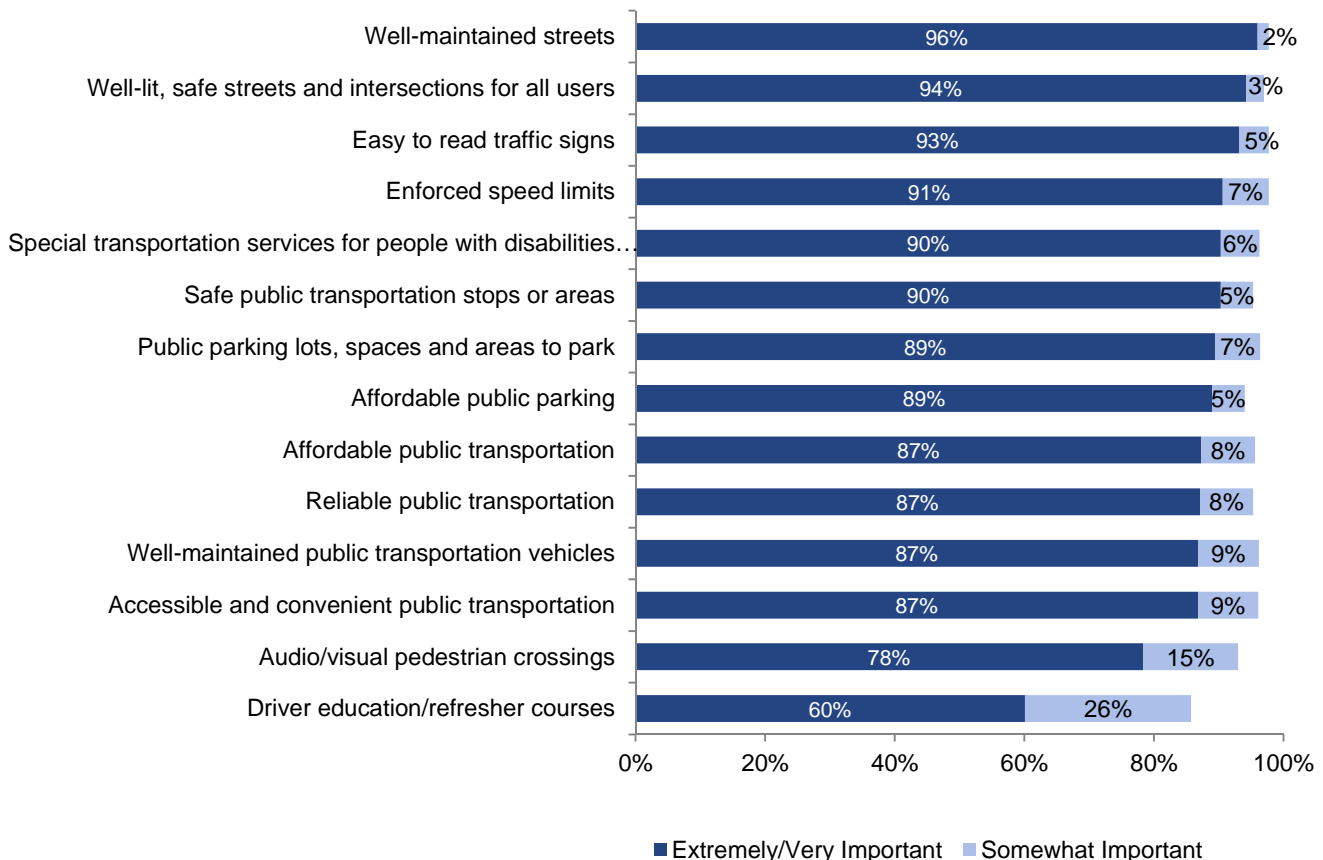
## Transportation

Personal vehicles are the primary mode of transportation for Bangor residents age 50-plus but a considerable number use alternatives. Nine out of ten respondents (89%) say they most often drive themselves when they need to go somewhere. At least two out of five say they sometimes walk (44%) and about one in ten use taxis (12%) or public transportation (11%) to get around.

### Well-maintained roads, well-lit and safe streets, and easy to read traffic signs are the most important transportation-related community features.

Easy to navigate streets promote aging-in-place because they enable individuals to maintain independent mobility in their community. Bangor residents age 50-plus say that all of community transportation features are extremely or very important to them. Given the large percentage that drive primarily, it is not surprising that well-maintained streets (96%) top the list, with well-lit, safe streets (94%), easy to read traffic signs (93%), and enforced speed limits (91%) following close behind. Public transportation items, such as special transportation services (90%), safe public transportation areas (90%), and affordable, reliable and well-maintained public transportation (87%) are community features that are highly important as well.

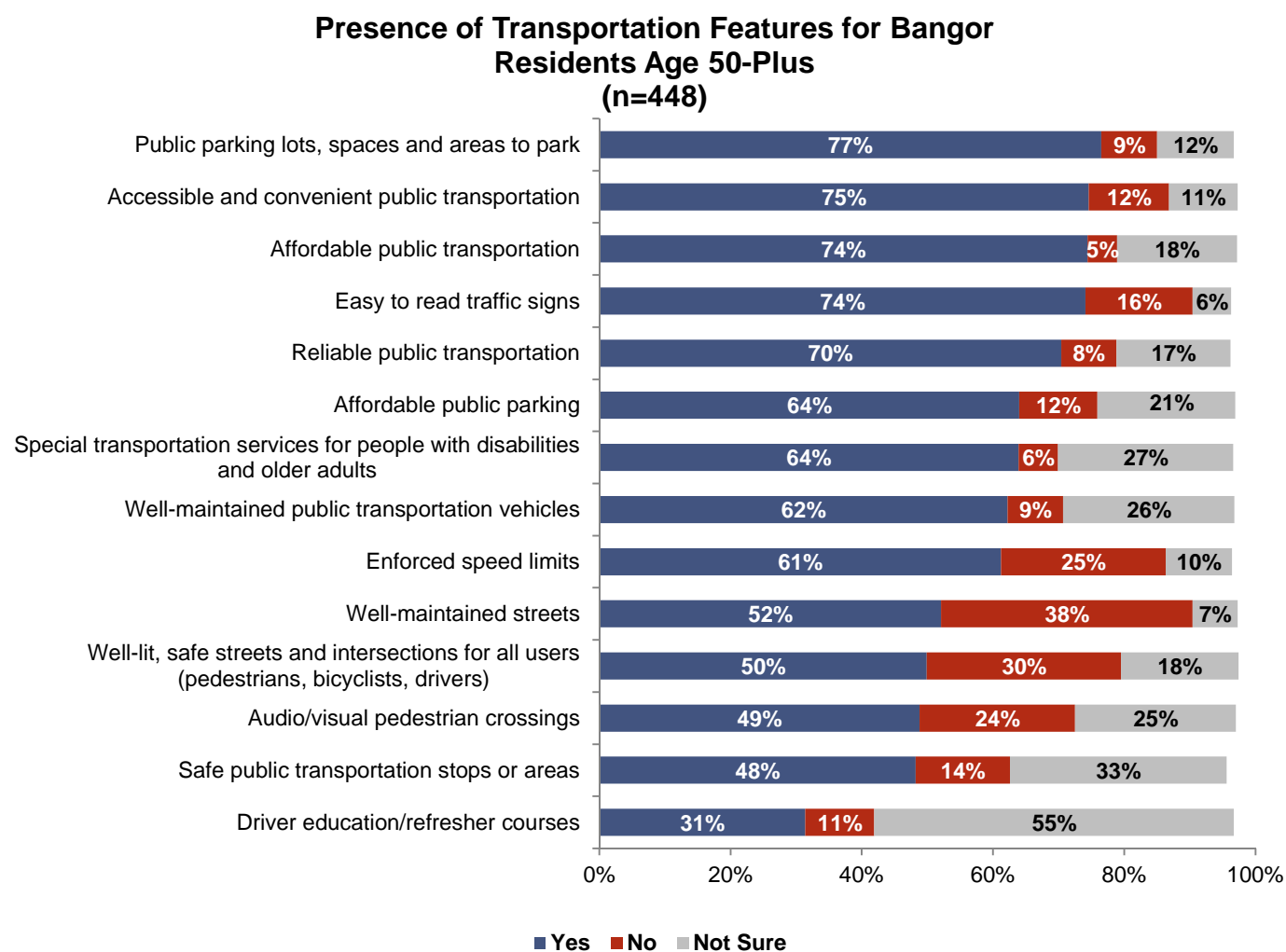
### Importance of Transportation Features to Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)



## Street maintenance is the biggest issue identified by Bangor residents.

While well-maintained roads and streets are extremely important to residents, only 52 percent say the streets and roads in their community are well-maintained. Additionally, most say public transportation features are very important to them, but many respondents are not sure if the services actually exist in their community. For example, more than one-quarter are unsure if special transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities are available (27%).

In addition to a discount in insurance rates, a driver education course provides students with up-to date driving techniques, information about the latest vehicle technologies, and overall driving tips to reduce risk on the road.<sup>8</sup> As most survey respondents drive themselves when they need to go somewhere, it is surprising that two-thirds (66%) do not know if there are driver-education or refresher courses in their community.



<sup>8</sup> AARP Driving Resource Center Retrieved at <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/getting-around/driving-resource-center/driving-welcome/>

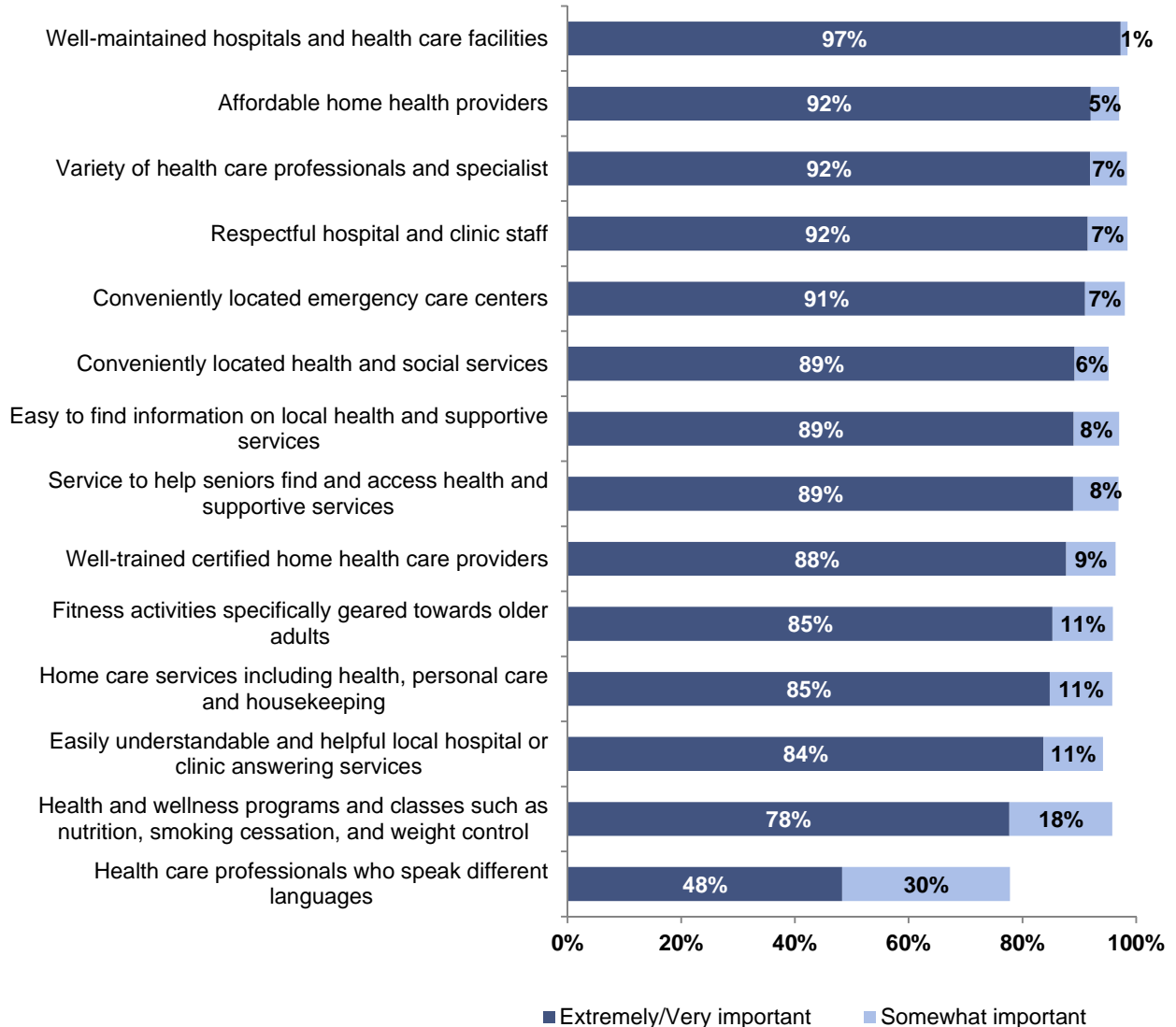


## Community and Health Services

### Having well-maintained health care facilities is extremely important to 50-plus Bangor residents.

When asked about 14 features related to community and health services, well-maintained hospital and health care facilities (97%), affordable home health services (92%), a variety of health care professionals and specialists (92%), and respectful hospital and clinic staff (92%) topped the list. However, nearly all of these features included in the survey are rated as being extremely or very important to Bangor residents age 50 and older.

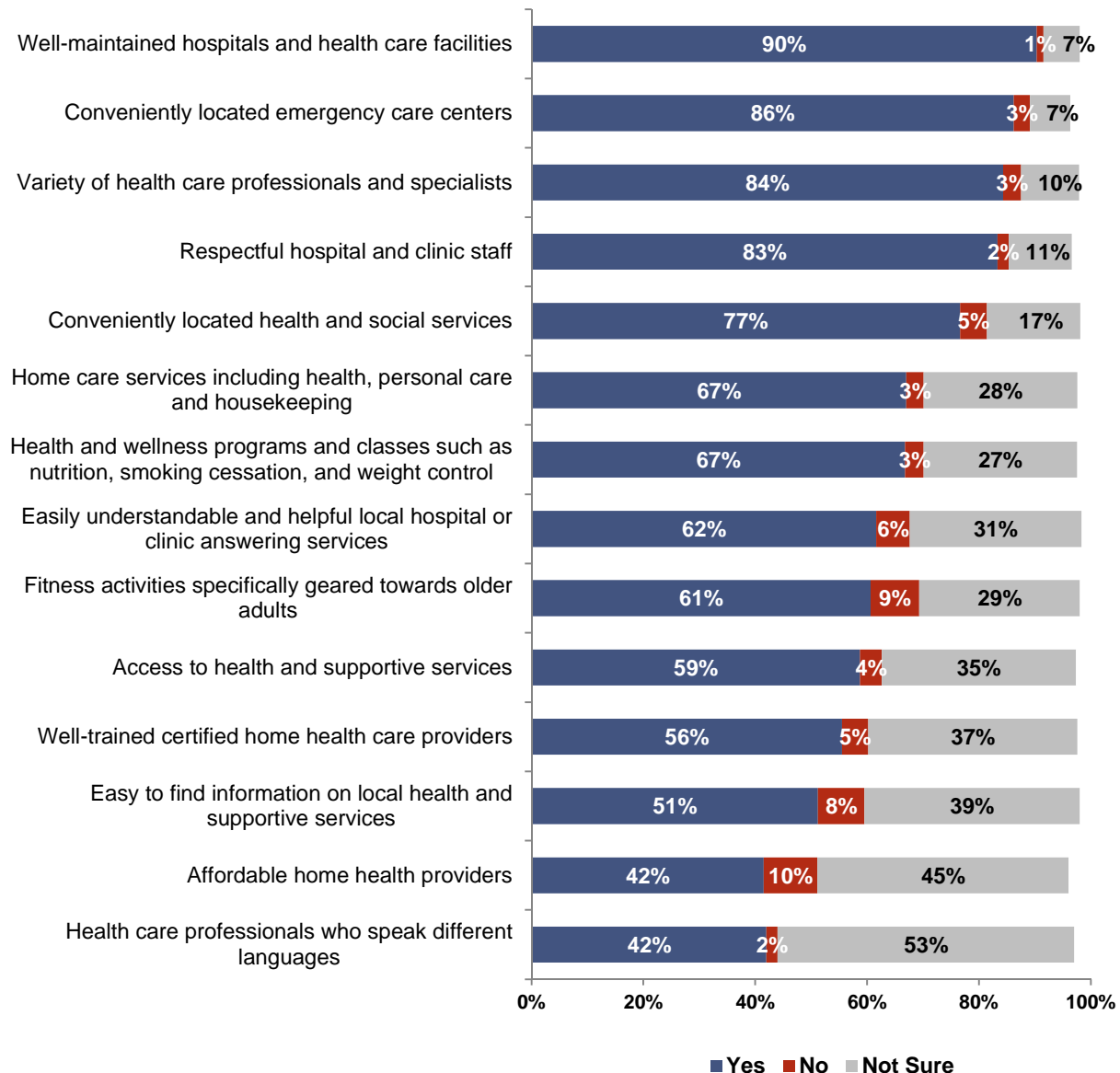
### Importance of Community and Health Service Features to Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)



**Most respondents agree that health care services, such as well-maintained hospitals and emergency care centers are available in their community.**

Respondents say that most of the community and health services that are important to them, for the most part, exist in their community. While older adults consistently say they want to age-in-place, many are not aware of the services they might need to fulfill that desire. For instance, about two out of five say they are not sure there are affordable home health providers (45%) or easy to find information on local health and supportive services (39%).

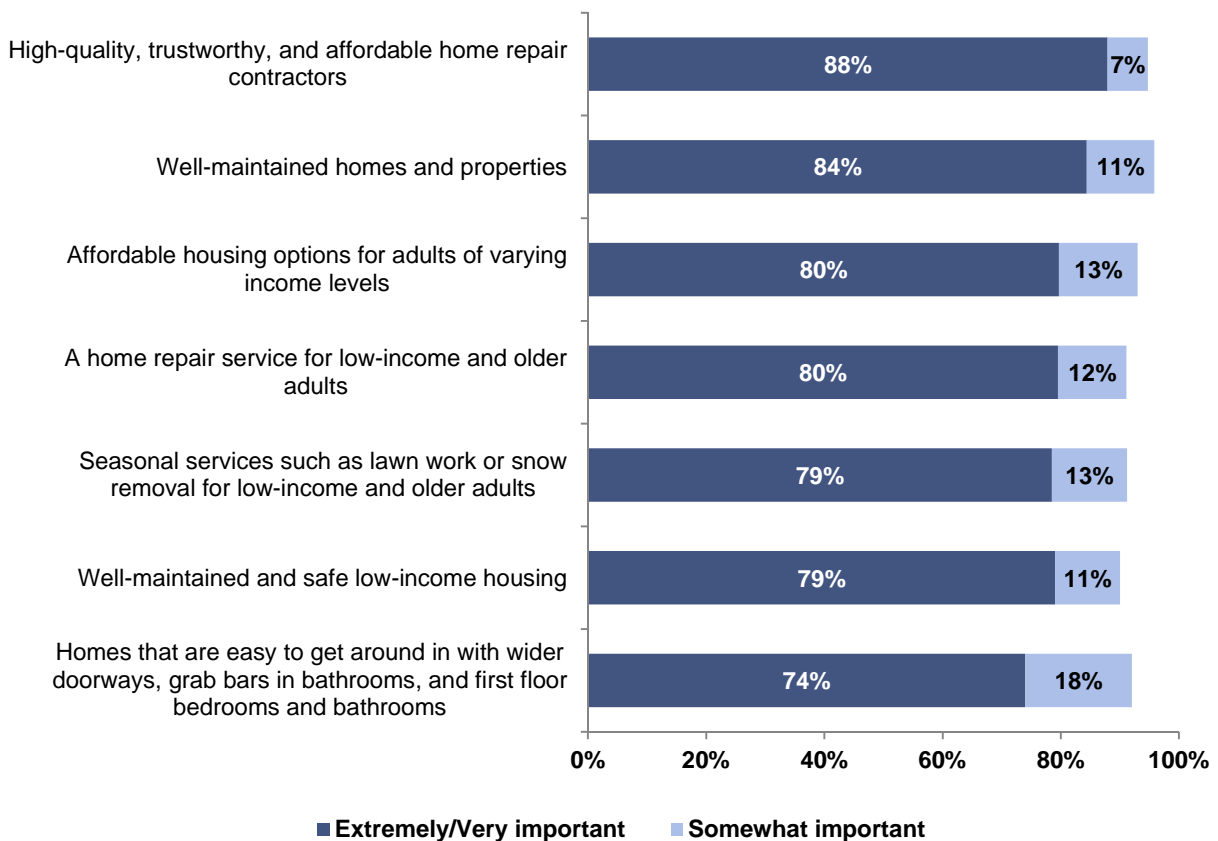
**Presence of Community and Health Service Features of Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**



**High-quality, affordable home repair contractors and well-maintained homes are the most important housing features.**

Most survey respondents are home owners and would prefer to age-in-place so it is not surprising that the top housing issues of importance for Bangor residents age 50-plus relate to home repairs that could enable them to be able stay in their homes. Nearly all respondents say having high-quality, trustworthy, affordable home repair contractors (88%) and well-maintained homes (84%) are extremely or very important to them. Three out of four (74%) say having homes that are easy to get around in with wider doorways and first floor bedrooms and bathrooms are also very important.

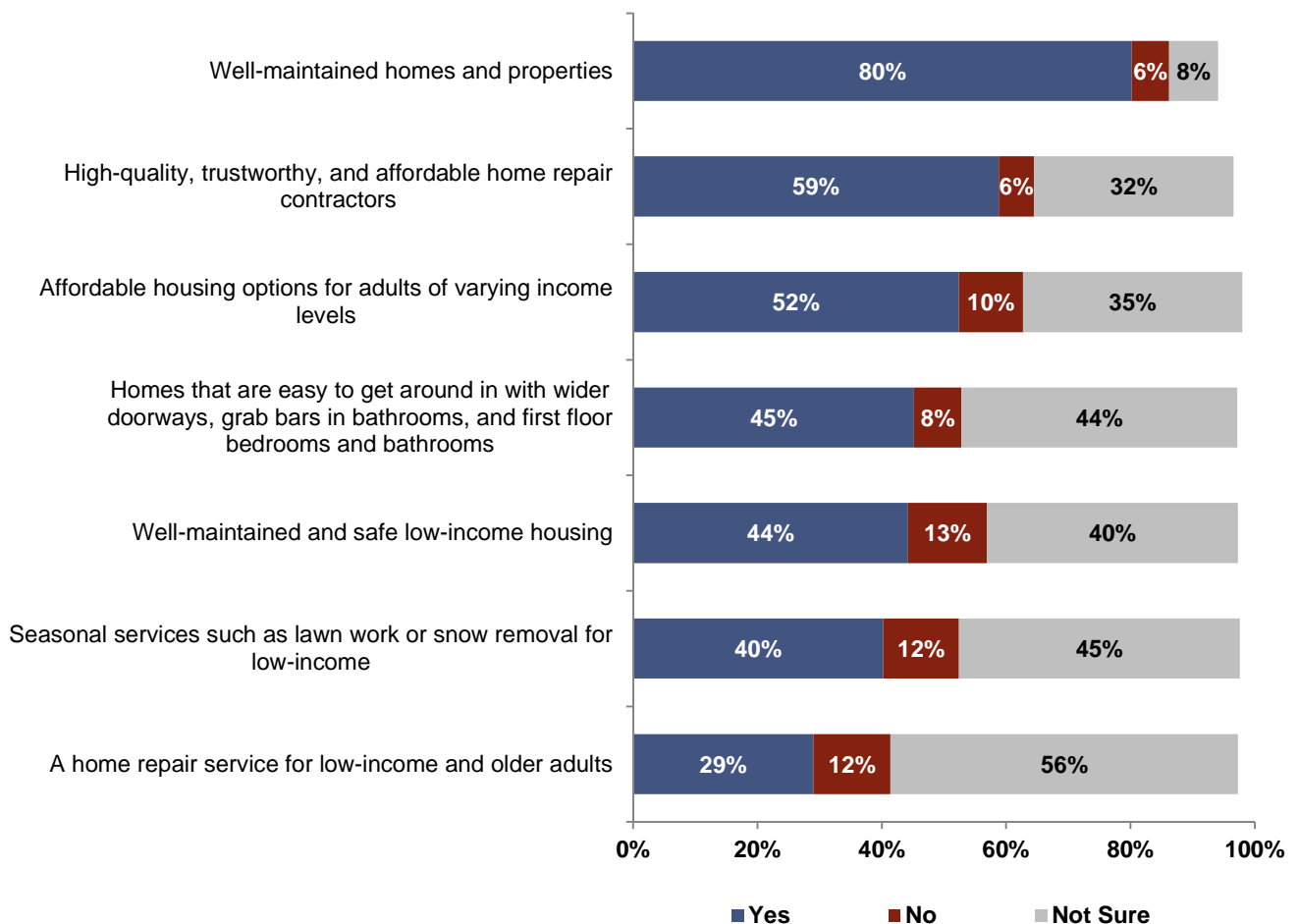
**Importance of Housing Features for Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**



**Most say homes and properties are well-maintained in Bangor, yet many are unsure whether seasonal or home repair services for low-income seniors exist in their community.**

The inability to maintain one’s home with advanced age can present a threat to the highly valued independent living. While most Bangor residents age 50-plus say homes and properties in their communities are well-maintained, almost half of respondents are not sure if seasonal maintenance and home repair services for low-income and older adults exist in their community.

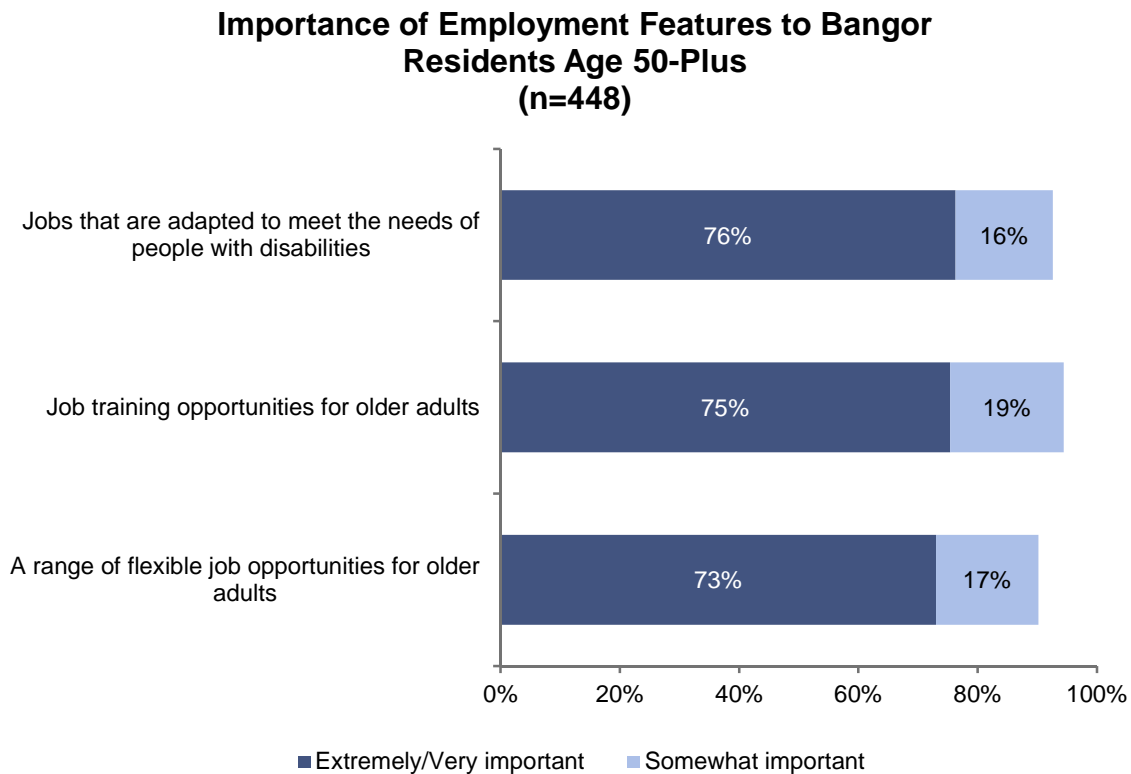
**Presence of Housing Features of Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**



## Employment

**Workplace issues for older adults such as providing training and flexibility are important to Bangor residents.**

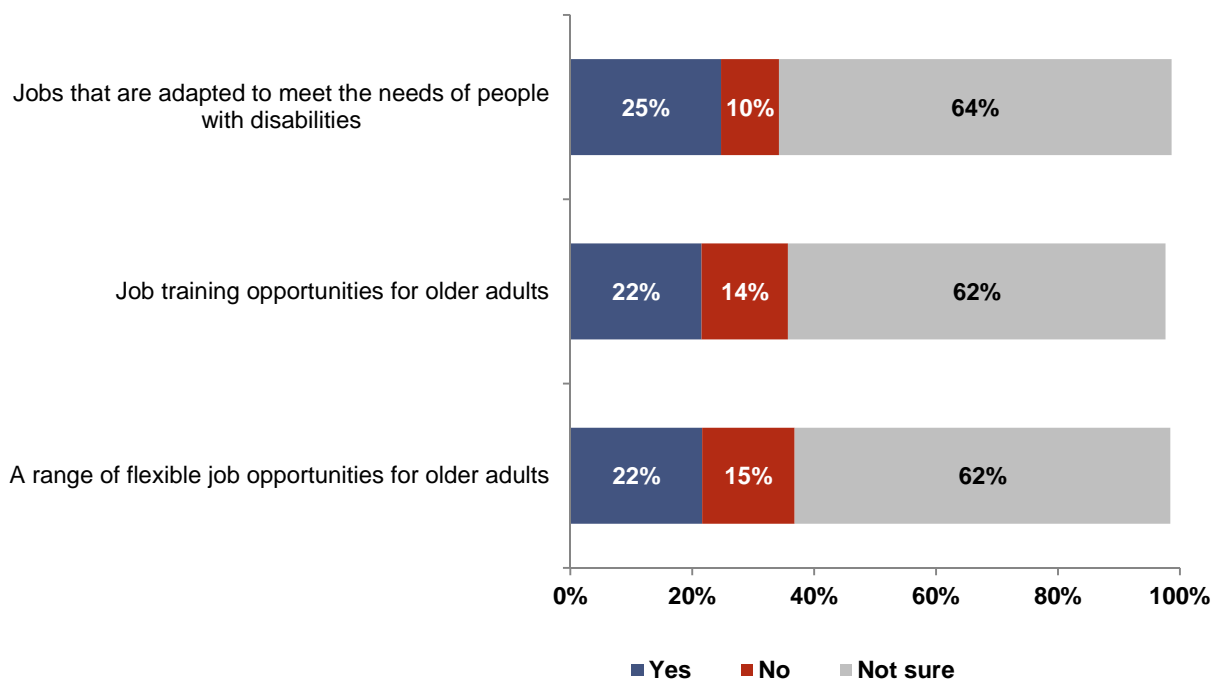
Businesses and communities must work interdependently in order for a community to have a balanced economic system. This includes providing various job opportunities that allow residents across life stages to participate and contribute to society. Nearly half (45%) of respondents surveyed are working, and the majority of these workers (66%) say they will likely continue to work as long as possible rather than retire. As such, it is not surprising that issues specific to older workers ranked high on importance among the 50-plus in Bangor. Specifically, over three-quarters of Bangor residents surveyed thought workplaces that adapted to meeting the needs of people with disabilities (76%), job training opportunities for older adults (75%), and a range of flexible job opportunities for older workers (73%) are important.



**Many Bangor residents do not know whether important employment features that support older workers are present in community workplaces.**

Despite the importance of workplace features that support older workers tested in the survey, only one-quarter affirm they are present among community employers. A relatively small percentage of Bangor adults believe flexible job opportunities (15%) and job training opportunities (14%) for those age 50-plus do not exist in their community. With nearly half of respondents no longer working, it stands to reason that so many are unsure of whether supports for older workers are currently present in the community.

**Presence of Employment Features Observed by Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**

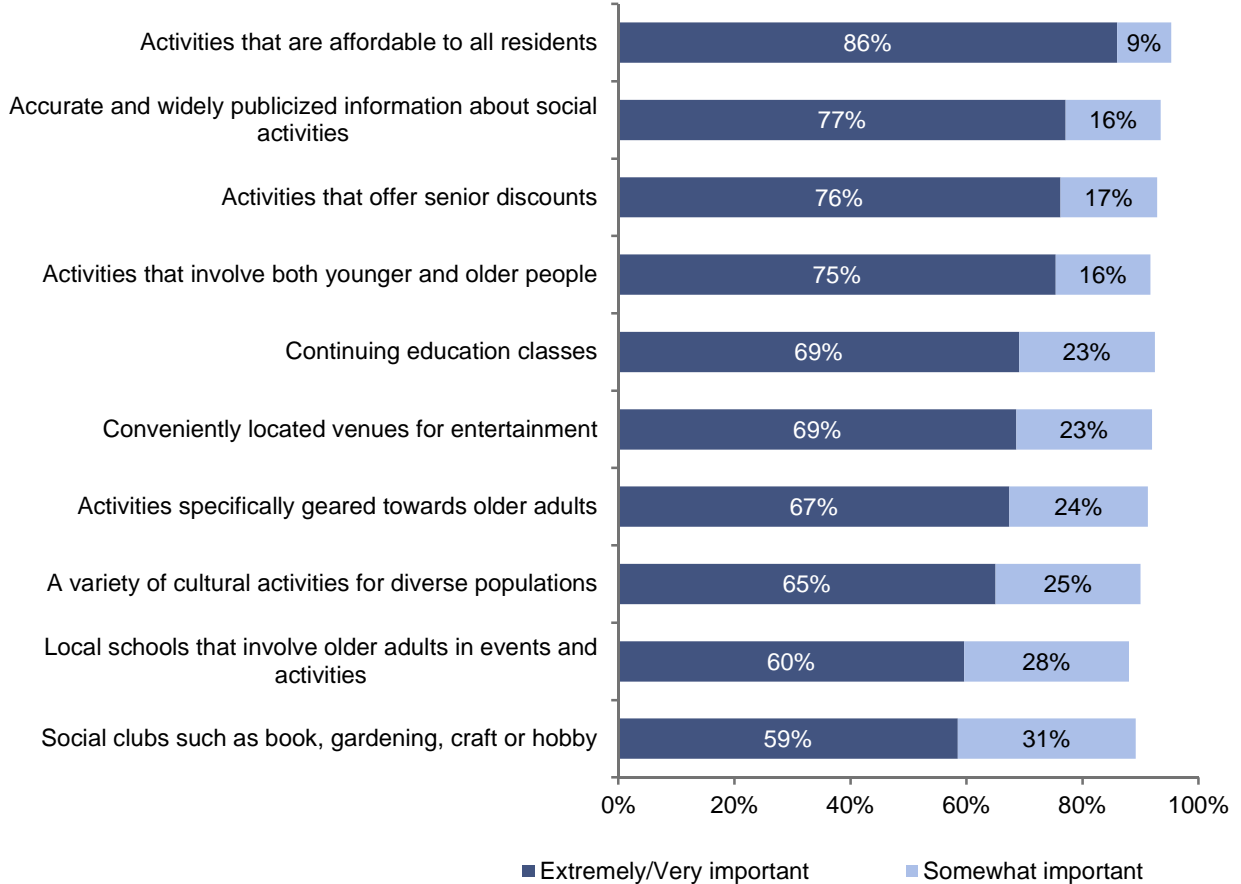


## Social Participation in the Community

### Affordable and well-publicized activities are the most important community features for promoting social inclusion.

Sadness and isolation can be combatted by the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities that engage a variety of residents. Fortunately, nine out of ten (90%) residents surveyed say they interact with family, friends, or neighbors in their community at least once a week. When asked about the importance of features that promotes social participation, the most important feature identified is having activities that are affordable to all residents (86%). However, well-publicized activities, as well as activities that are multi-generational and offer senior discounts are rated as very important too for promoting social inclusion for older adults. It is important to note that all items within this domain are viewed as at least somewhat important by most respondents.

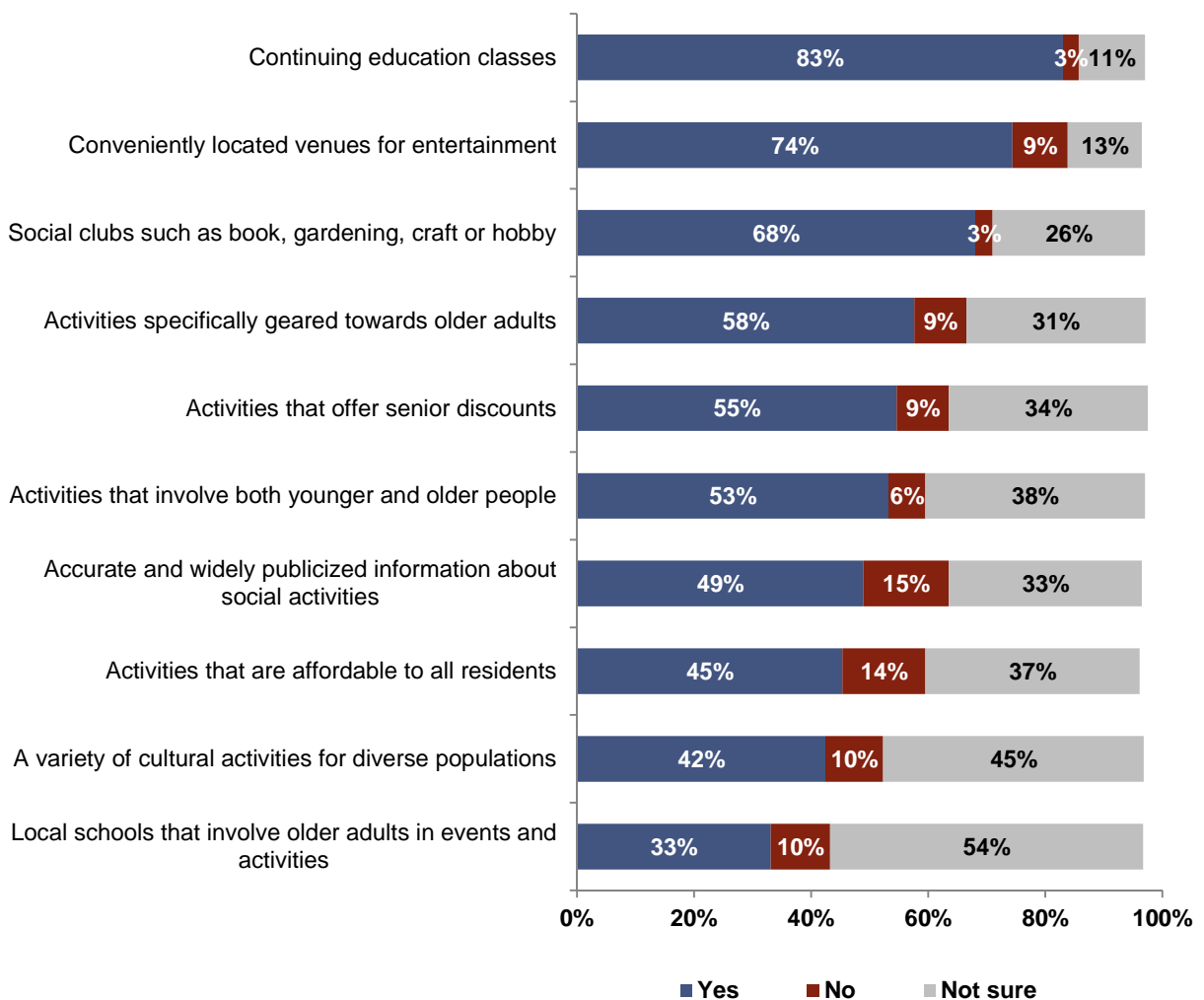
### Importance of Respect and Social Inclusion Features to Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)



**Bangor offers convenient venues for entertainment and continuing education opportunities that provide social outlets for older adults.**

The majority of Bangor residents age 50 and older know continuing education classes are available (83%) and they believe their community has conveniently located entertainment venues (74%) that enable older adults to socialize. However, accessibility to information about multi-generational (38%) and affordable activities (37%) does not share such widespread knowledge among residents with large portions being unsure of their existence.

**Features of Inclusion in the Neighborhoods of Bangor  
Residents Age 50-Plus  
(n=448)**



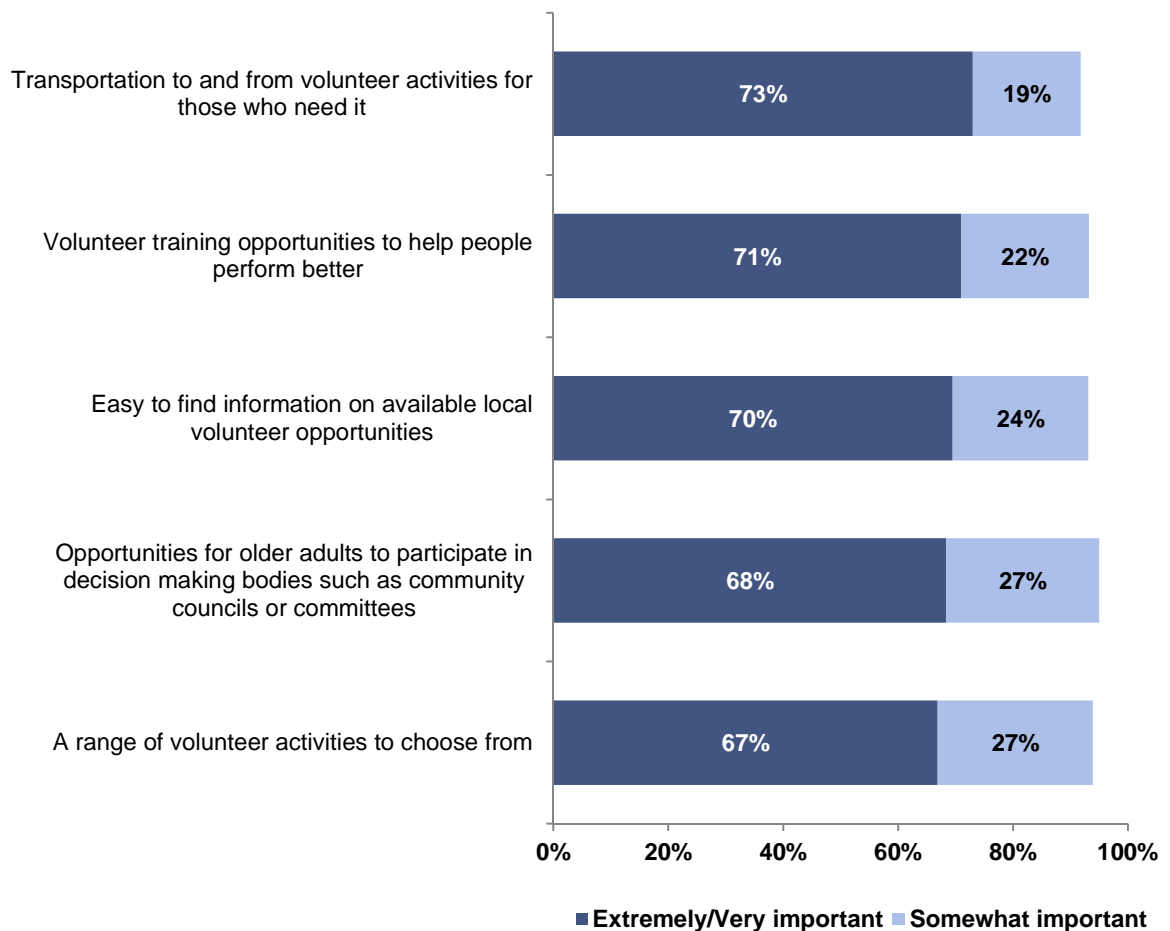


## Volunteering and Civic Engagement

**Support to maximize volunteering in the community is of great importance to the 50-plus population in Bangor.**

A community that values seniors is one that values the wisdom and knowledge experience provides. Bangor residents age 50-plus agree that the ability to participate in one's community as a volunteer is important. All five features promoting social participation in one's community are rated as very important by the majority of respondents. Seven in ten say providing transportation to volunteer activities for those who need it (73%), volunteer training (71%), and easy to find information about what local volunteer opportunities are available (70%) are important to have in the community.

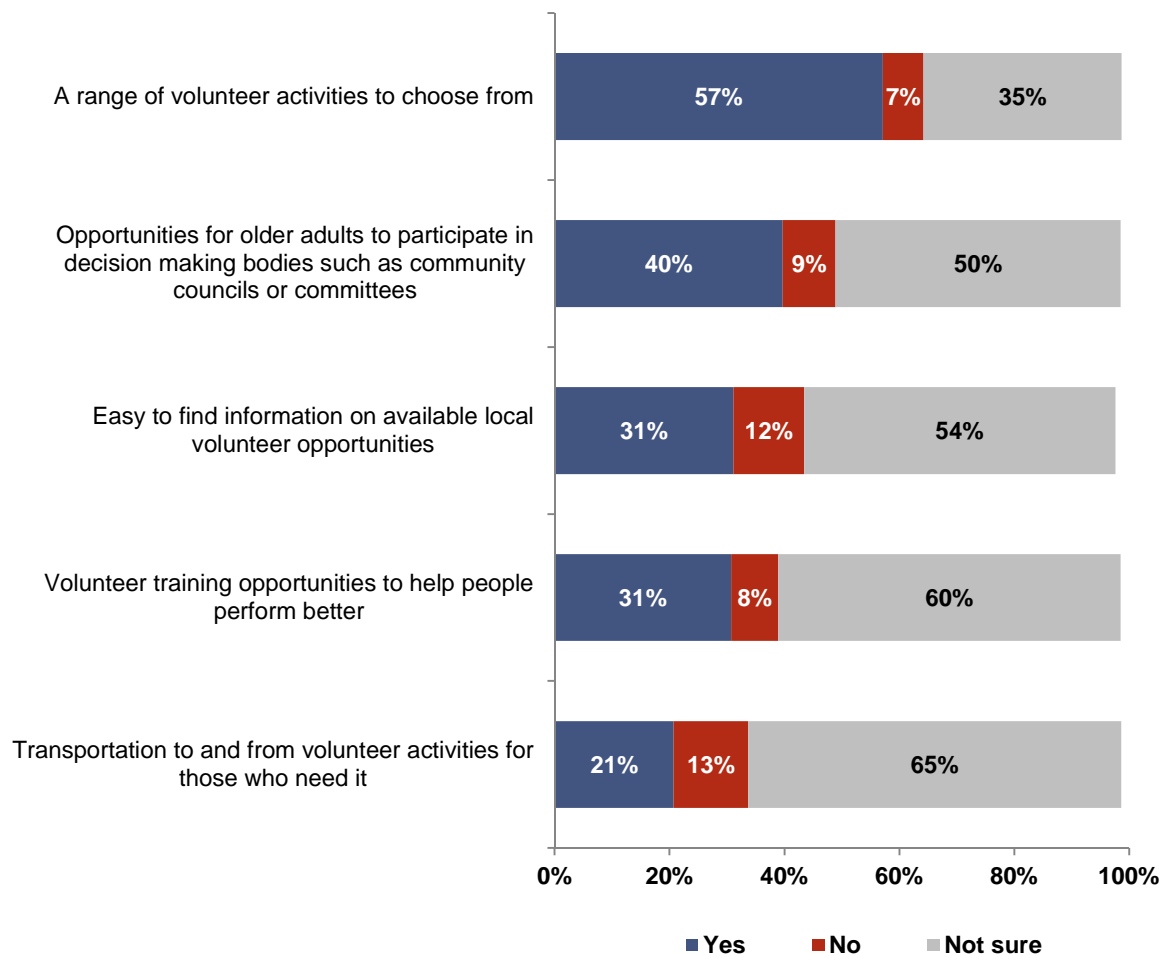
**Importance of Volunteering and Civic Engagement Activities to Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**



**Support to encourage volunteering is important but most residents are not sure they are available.**

Ensuring residents are informed about and able to participate in community activities is an important feature of an engaged community. While transportation for those who need it to volunteer sites, volunteer training, and easy to find information about volunteer opportunities are viewed as important, many residents do not know if they are available. Only about one in three (31%) say training opportunities or easy to find information about volunteering opportunities in their community (31%) are available. Only one in five (21%) say there is transportation available for those who need it to volunteering.

**Presence of Social Activities for Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**

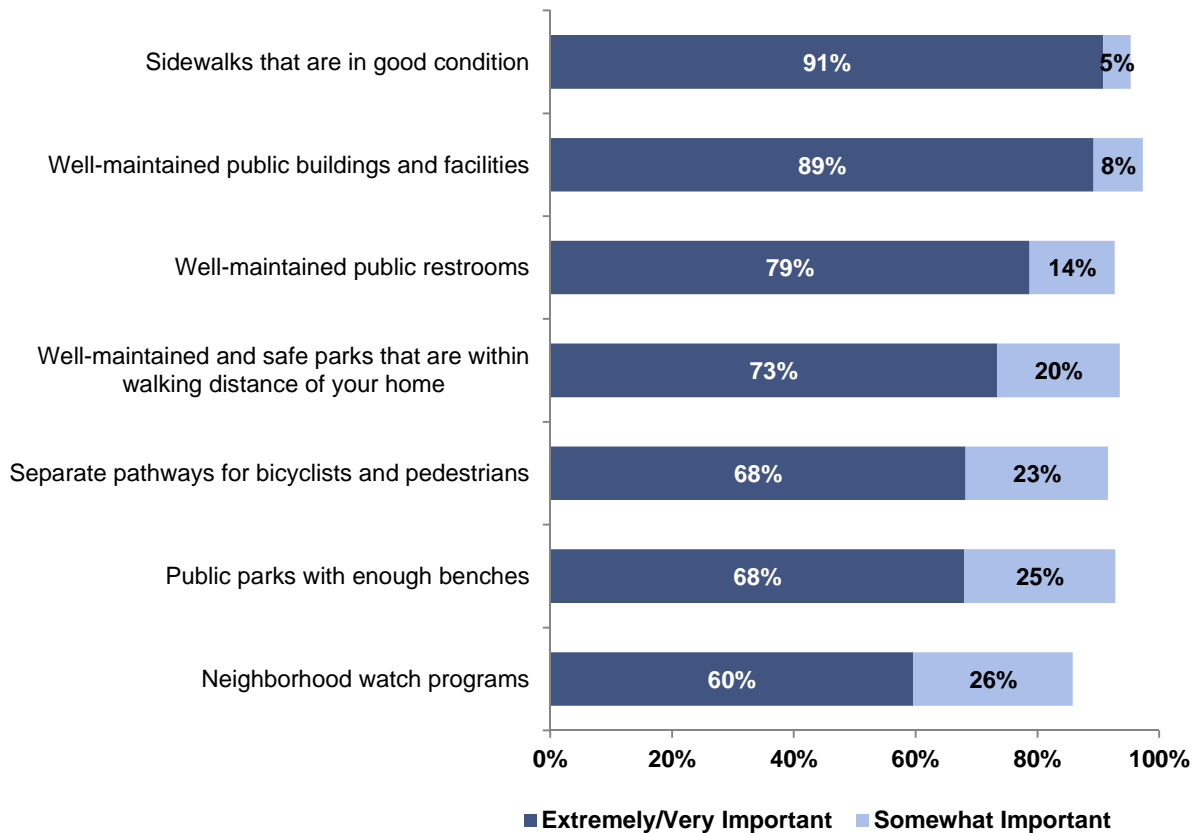


## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

**Bangor residents age 50-plus say sidewalks that are in good condition and well-maintained public buildings are important community features for outdoor spaces and buildings.**

More than one-quarter (28%) of respondents are in a household where a disability limits their own mobility or their spouse's. When thinking about outdoor spaces and public buildings within their community, at least three out of five Bangor residents age 50-plus say that features that allow residents to safely interact with the outdoors are very important to them. These features include sidewalks that are in good condition (91%), as well as well-maintained public buildings (89%) and restrooms (79%) that are accessible to people of all physical abilities. Further, residents view public parks as important features of community, especially those that are well-maintained and safe (73%), and that have an adequate number of benches (68%).

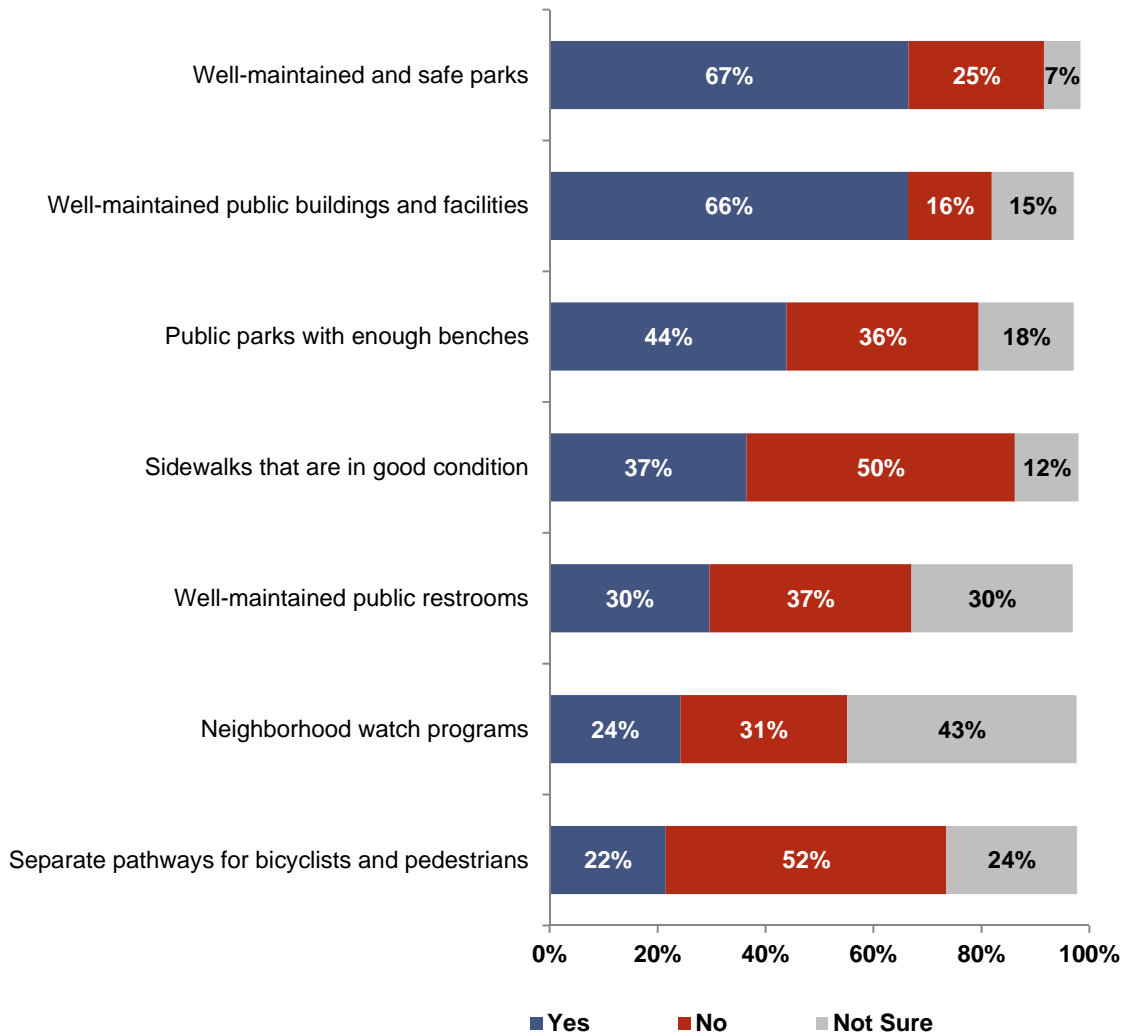
**Importance of Outdoor Spaces and Building Features to Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**



**There is variability about whether the most important outdoor space and building features presently exist in the community.**

The top outdoor space and building community features are well-maintained sidewalks, public buildings and public restrooms, yet half (50%) say sidewalks aren't in good condition in Bangor, and a considerable portion do not think public restrooms well-maintained. When it comes to pedestrian safety, more than half of the respondents say that pathways aren't separated for bicyclist and pedestrians (52%).

**Presence of Outdoor Spaces and Buildings for Residents Age 50-Plus in Bangor (n=448)**

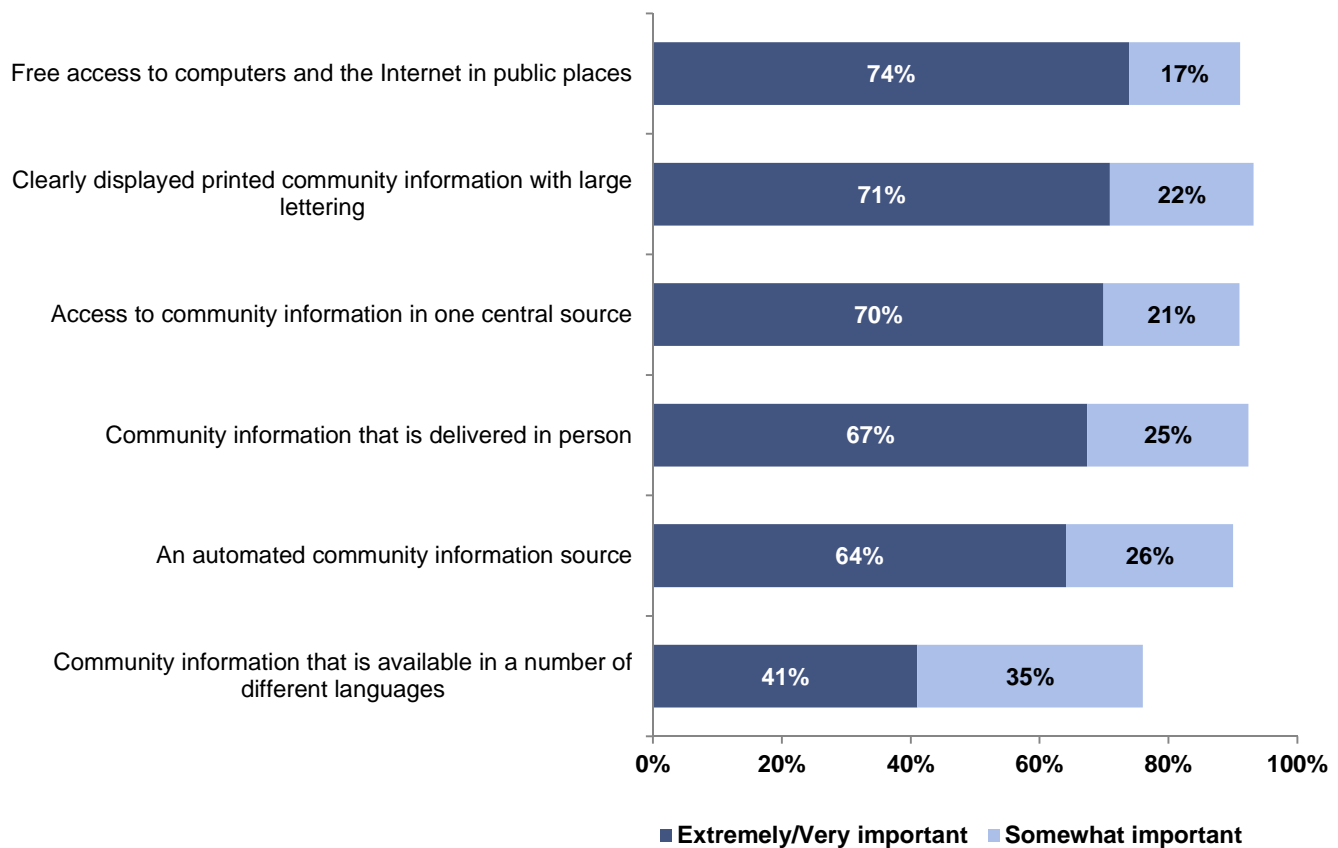


## Communication and Information/ Community Resources

**It is important that relevant community information is clearly displayed and disseminated through a variety of means.**

With one in six (17%) Bangor residents age 50-plus not accessing the Internet at all, relevant community information needs to be disseminated through a variety of means and should be accessible to all. When asked about the importance of communication and community resources, features including free access to the Internet in public places (74%), clearly displayed community information (71%), and a central source of information (70%) are all noted as being very important to the majority of respondents.

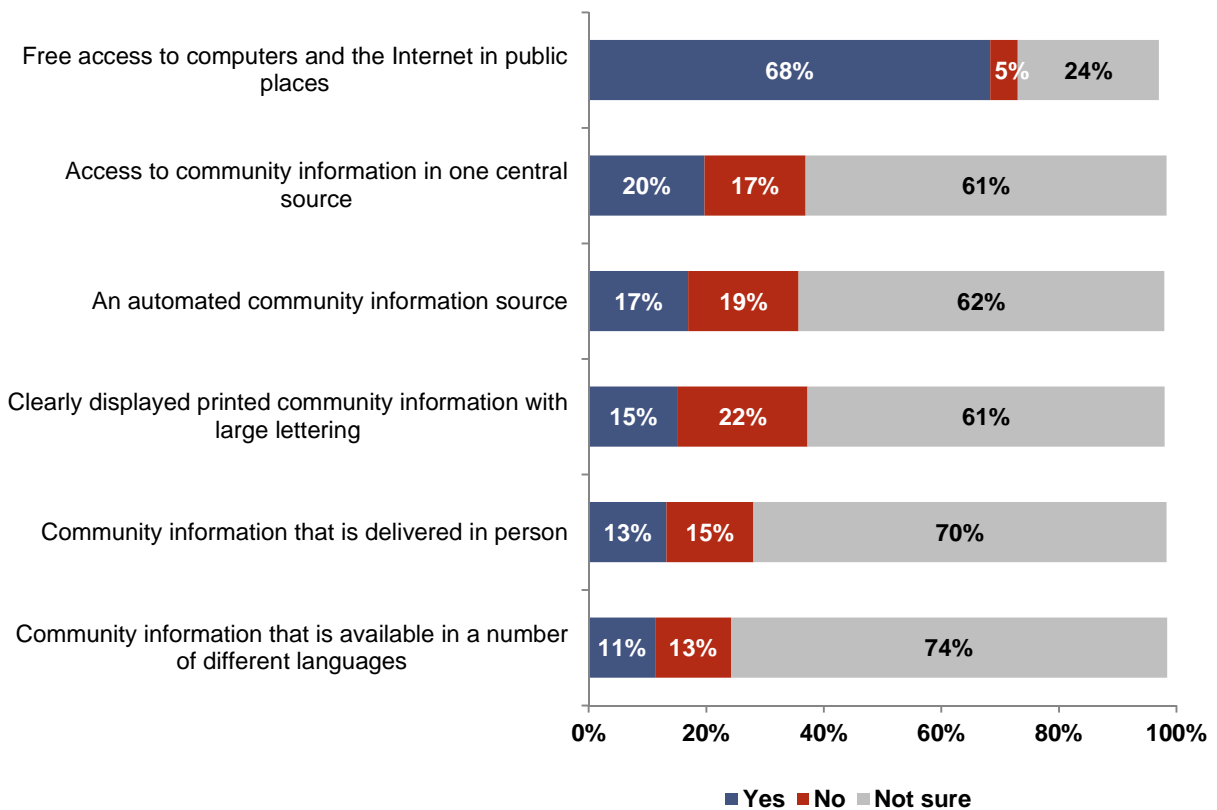
**Importance of Community Resource Features to  
Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus  
(n=448)**



**Aside from free access to computers in the library, most Bangor residents age 50-plus are not sure about community resources available to them.**

Awareness of the public library and other sources that provide free access to computers is high. More than two-thirds (68%) say this resource is available in their community. Conversely, most respondents are unsure about whether the other communications means are available in their communities indicating a large opportunity for outreach.

**Presence of Community Resources for Bangor Residents Age 50-Plus (n=448)**



---

## COMMUNITY NEEDS

A need can be identified as a gap between what is and what should be.<sup>9</sup> Every community has its own culture, social structure, traditions, history and needs. A community need can be something concrete- like more sidewalks, or abstract-like greater social inclusion of a population. A needs assessment is a tool to understand and identify community needs.



In order to identify the needs of Bangor residents age 50-plus survey respondents were asked how important the prior community features and services were to them. Then they were asked if these features and services existed in their community. These questions were then paired together to identify community needs or “gaps.” Pairing these questions allows us to look at “gaps” between the importance of a feature or service and its existence in the community. To compare these questions, respondents who said a feature or service is extremely, very or somewhat important were aggregated and then compared to respondents who said whether or not a feature or service existed in their community. Survey respondents who said they were not sure if a feature or service was in their community were removed from this analysis.

**The top community needs as defined by importance compared to presence gaps are concentrated in three key areas: Outdoor Space and Public Buildings, Community Information/ Resources, and Transportation.**

If we examine individual items across all eight domains, the largest needs, or gaps between importance and presence, are in the Outdoor Space and Public Building domain and the Community Information/Resources domain, both taking four slots, while Transportation takes one slot among the top ten items.

The top issue identified among Bangor adults age 50-plus as important, but lacking in presence in their community is separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians. While this feature may seem most important to those traveling by bicycle or foot, drivers are also affected by this safety concern in their community. Indeed, all of the top ten gap analysis items impact livability for all residents (such as sidewalks that are in good condition) and are not as specific to older adults as some of needs that resulted with lower rankings (such as activities geared toward older adults).

---

<sup>9</sup> *Community Needs*. Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. Retrieved at: <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>

**Top 10 Gap Analysis:  
Which Community Features Are Important Compared to Those That Exist**

Top 10 Overall Gaps	Gap	Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists	Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important	Domain
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	-62%	29%	92%	Outdoor
Sidewalks that are in good condition	-53%	42%	95%	Outdoor
Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering	-52%	41%	93%	Communication
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible	-49%	44%	93%	Outdoor
Community information delivered in person to homebound people	-45%	47%	92%	Communication
Easy to understand, automated community information source	-43%	47%	90%	Communication
Neighborhood watch programs	-42%	44%	86%	Outdoor
Well-maintained streets	-40%	58%	98%	Transportation
Public parks with enough benches	-38%	55%	93%	Outdoor
Access to community information in one central source	-37%	55%	93%	Communication

**Responses from Bangor residents age 65+ show the largest gaps in the areas of Communication and Community Resources.**

The definition of importance to one can not only vary from person to person but also vary by life stage. Over time, perceptions of importance may fluctuate as an individual's circumstances and experiences change. This is noticeable in the examination of top 10 Community Features Gap Analysis by Age where there is some variation in the size of the need gaps when comparing those ages 50 to 64 to those ages 65 and older. This is due for the most part to differences in levels of importance the cohorts assign to the various features tested in the survey. In general, those 65 and older are more likely to rate the various communications features with higher levels of importance.



**Top 10 Gap Analysis:  
Which Community Features Are Important Compared to Which Ones Exist by Age**

Top 10 Overall Gaps by Age Group	Age Groups		Domain
	50-64	65+	
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	-68%	-57%	Outdoor
Sidewalks that are in good condition	-51%	-55%	Outdoor
Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering	-53%	-51%	Communication
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible	-49%	-48%	Outdoor
Community information delivered in-person to homebound people	-34%	-53%	Communication
Easy to understand, automated community information source	-35%	-49%	Communication
Neighborhood watch programs	-38%	-45%	Outdoor
Well-maintained streets	-42%	-38%	Transportation
Public parks with enough benches	-37%	-39%	Outdoor
Access to community information in one central source	-28%	-45%	Communication

**Community needs are varied within each of the domains but health care has the least overall identified gaps.**

The following tables show the gaps for each of the features within the eight domains. As previously noted, the domains of Outdoor Spaces/Public Buildings and Communications/Resources have the largest need gaps. From these tables we can see that the smallest gaps appear within the domains of Health and Social Participation.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings in the Community	Gap	Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists	Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important
Separate pathways for bicyclists and pedestrians	-62%	29%	92%
Sidewalks that are in good condition	-53%	42%	95%
Well-maintained public restrooms that are accessible	-49%	44%	93%
Neighborhood watch programs	-42%	44%	86%
Public parks with enough benches	-38%	55%	93%
Well-maintained and safe parks that are within walking distance of your home	-21%	73%	94%
Well-maintained public buildings and facilities	-16%	81%	97%

Communication and Information/Community Resources	Gap	Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists	Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important
Clearly displayed printed community information with large lettering	-52%	41%	93%
Community information delivered in person to homebound people	-45%	47%	92%
Easy to understand, automated community information source	-43%	47%	90%
Access to community information in one central source	-37%	53%	91%

<b>Transportation Features in the Community</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists</b>	<b>Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important</b>
Well maintained streets	-40%	58%	98%
Enforced speed limits	-27%	71%	98%
Safe public transportation stops or areas	-18%	77%	95%
Easy to read traffic signs	-16%	82%	98%
Driver education/refresher courses	-11%	75%	86%
Well-maintained public transportation vehicles	-8%	88%	96%
Reliable public transportation	-6%	89%	95%
Special transportation services for people with disabilities and older adults	-4%	91%	96%
Affordable public transportation	-1%	94%	96%

<b>Employment Features in the Community</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists</b>	<b>Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important</b>
Job training opportunities for older adults	-34%	60%	95%
A range of flexible job opportunities for older adults	-32%	59%	90%
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities	-20%	72%	93%

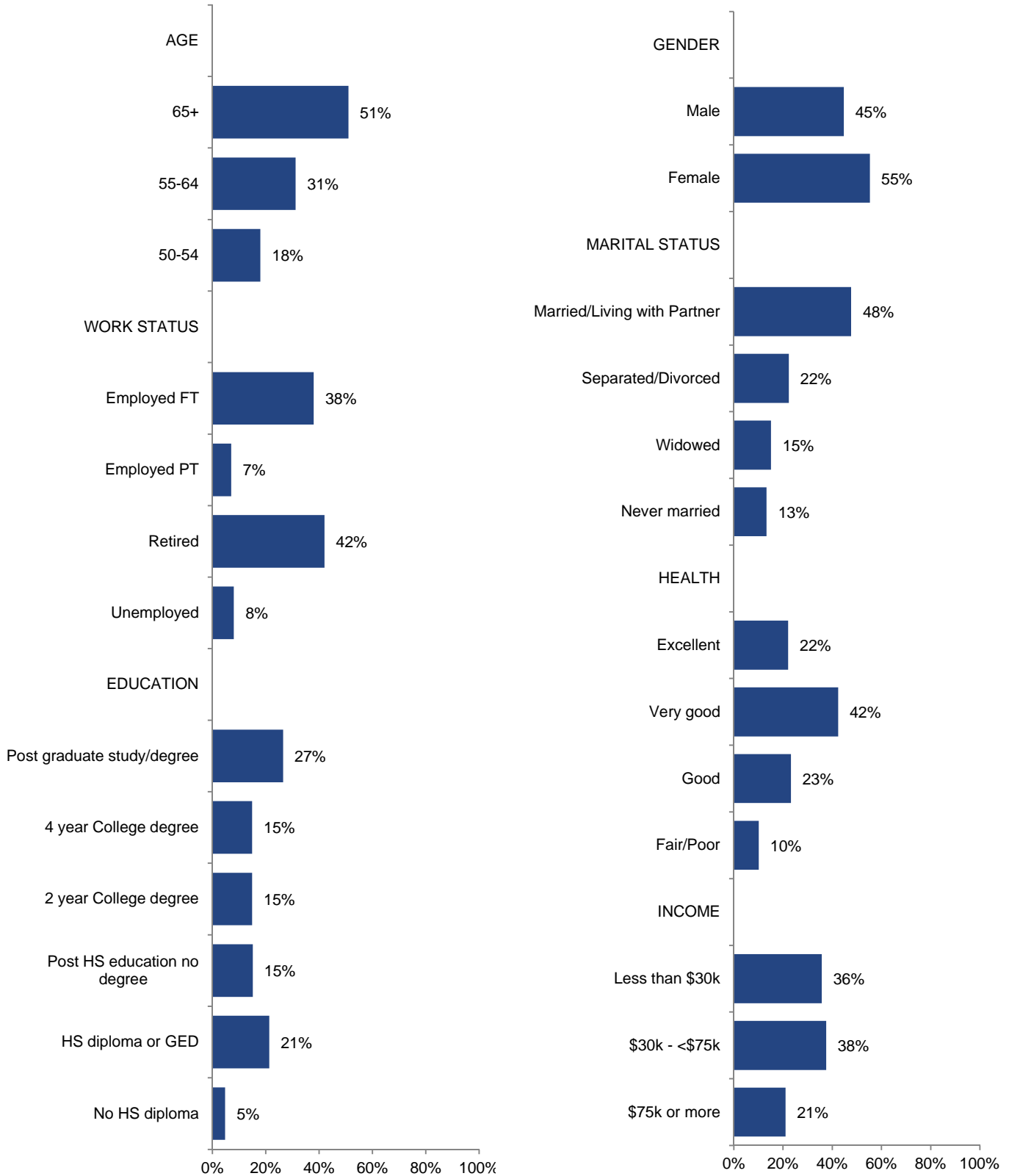
<b>Housing Features in the Community</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists</b>	<b>Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important</b>
A home repair service for low-income and older adults	-21%	70%	91%
Seasonal services such as lawn work or snow removal for low-income and older adults	-15%	77%	92%
Well-maintained and safe low-income housing	-13%	78%	90%
Affordable home options for adults of varying income levels such as older active adult communities	-9%	84%	93%
Homes that are equipped with things like a no step entrance, wider doorways, grab bars in bathrooms, and first floor bedrooms and bathrooms	-6%	86%	92%
Home repair contractors who are trustworthy and affordable	-4%	91%	95%
Well-maintained homes and properties	-3%	93%	96%

<b>Social Participation in the Community</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists</b>	<b>Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important</b>
Activities that are affordable to all residents	-19%	76%	95%
Accurate and widely publicized information about social activities	-17%	77%	94%
Local schools that involve older adults in events and activities	-11%	77%	88%
A variety of cultural activities for diverse populations	-9%	81%	90%
Activities that offer senior discounts	-7%	86%	93%
Activities specifically geared towards older adults	-5%	87%	91%
Conveniently located venues for entertainment	-3%	89%	92%
Activities that involve both younger and older people	-2%	89%	92%
Continuing education classes	4%	97%	93%
Social clubs such as book, gardening, craft or hobby	6%	96%	89%

<b>Volunteering and Civic Engagement in the Community</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists</b>	<b>Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important</b>
Transportation to and from for those who need it	-30%	61%	92%
Easy to find information on local volunteer opportunities	-22%	72%	93%
Opportunities for older adults to participate in decision making bodies such as community councils or committees	-14%	81%	95%
Volunteer training opportunities to help people perform better	-14%	79%	93%
A range of volunteer activities to choose from	-5%	89%	94%

<b>Health Services in the Community</b>	<b>Gap</b>	<b>Yes, Characteristic or Service Exists</b>	<b>Extremely, Very, or Somewhat Important</b>
Affordable home health care providers	-15%	81%	96%
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services	-11%	86%	97%
Fitness activities specifically geared towards older adults	-8%	87%	96%
Well-trained certified home health care providers	-4%	92%	96%
A service that helps seniors find and access health and supportive services	-3%	94%	97%
Easily understandable and helpful local hospital or clinic answering services	-3%	91%	94%
Conveniently located health and social services	-1%	94%	96%
Conveniently located emergency care centers	-1%	97%	98%
Well-maintained hospitals and health care facilities	0%	99%	98%
Respectful and helpful hospital and clinic staff	0%	98%	98%
A variety of health care professionals, including specialists	0%	97%	96%
Home care services including health, personal care and housekeeping	0%	96%	95%
Health and wellness programs and classes in areas such as nutrition, smoking cessation, and weight control	0%	95%	96%
Health care professionals who speak different languages	14%	92%	78%

# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



---

# METHODOLOGY

The present report is based on data from a mail survey of 3,000 residents age 50 years or older living in the City of Bangor. Resident addresses were provided by Survey Sampling International's (SSI) proprietary database. SSI's database is the largest unduplicated consumer database in the U.S. The multi-sourced database merges information from telephone directories with a variety of secondary sources such as birth records, voter registration, real estate transactions, credit sources, motor vehicle, RV, and motorcycle registrations, and other data.

Each respondent was contacted four times receiving the following pieces of mail: pre-notification postcard, the first survey, a reminder postcard, and a second survey.

The survey was fielded from August, 18, 2015 through September 22, 2015. A total of 448 surveys were returned by the cut-off date, for a response rate of 14.9 percent. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.6 percent. This means that if 95 out of 100 samples of this same size and population were given the same survey, the responses to the questions would fall within a range of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every respondent age 50 years or older were asked the same question.

The sample was weighted by age and gender to help ensure the data reflects the 50 plus population, as well as AARP membership to eliminate any membership bias among respondents. Two sources were used for the weighting: AARP Membership Database, 2015 and Nielsen Pop Facts Advanced demographic data, 2015. An annotated questionnaire for the entire sample is contained in the appendix of this report. Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. Also, due to rounding, the percentages in the text may vary slightly from those in the annotation or in the graphs.



**AARP Research**

**For more information about this survey, please contact:**

**Kate Bridges 202.434.6329 or e-mail [kbridges@aarp.org](mailto:kbridges@aarp.org)**