

CHAT

COMMUNITIES FOR HEALTHY AGING TRANSITIONS

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

FOR THE

TOWN OF LEE

GREATER SEACOAST COMMUNITY HEALTH



PUBLISHED: OCT 2022

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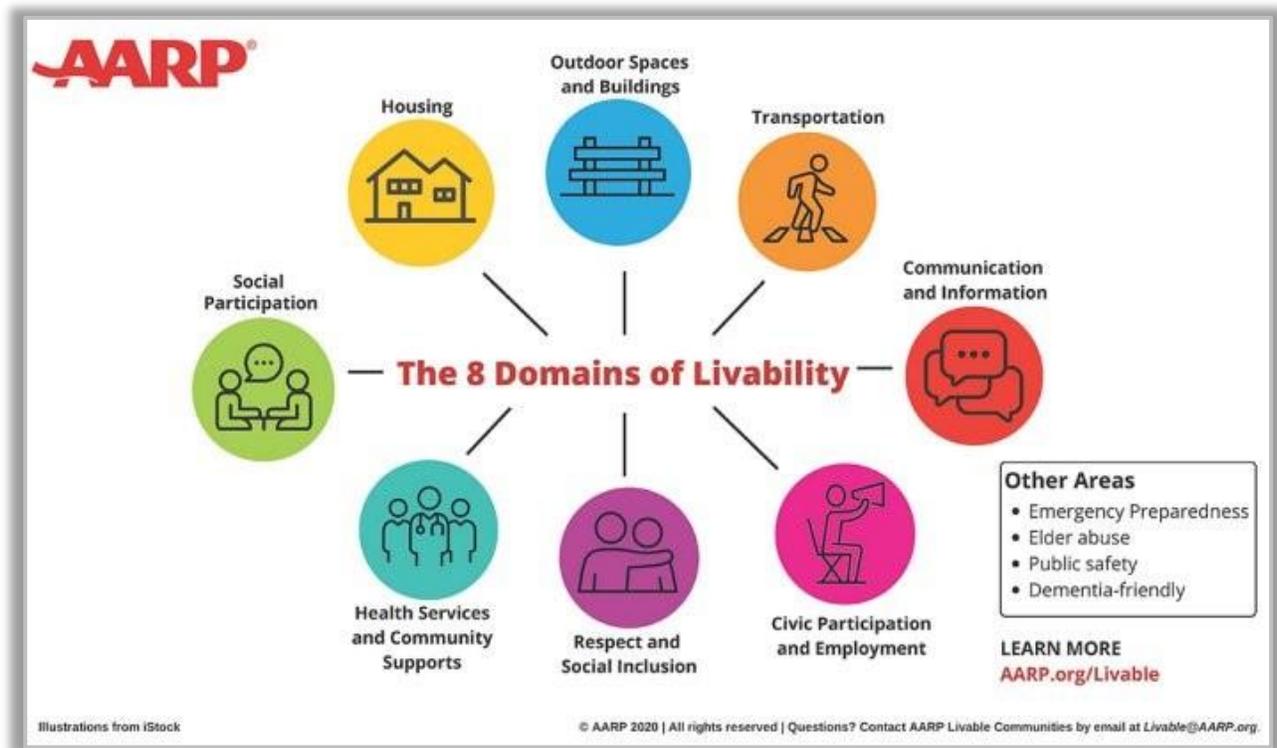
INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

[Communities for Healthy Aging Transitions \(CHAT\)](#), a regional project, examined age-friendliness in Strafford County, as well as Brookfield, Wakefield, Newmarket, Nottingham and Northwood in Carroll and Rockingham counties, respectively. The project was funded by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and conducted in partnership with Greater Seacoast Community Health (GSCH)'s Strafford County Public Health Network (SCPHN) program.

The project mission was to engage our communities looking at and promoting diverse, equitable, inclusive, livable environments where people can grow and thrive, regardless of age.

To achieve this mission, SRPC and partners at SCPHN designed engagement activities to understand strengths and opportunities in each community, which were framed within [AARP's eight domains of livability](#) from its [Livable Communities program](#): Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Housing, Transportation, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Health Services and Community Support.

The qualitative and quantitative information presented in this Community Assessment was also framed within the eight domains of livability.



CHAT OUTREACH PROCESS

SRPC and partners at SCPHN enacted a modified outreach process due to the pandemic. Most of the outreach for the CHAT project was conducted via online channels as described below.

COMMUNITY ZOOM FORUMS

Residents from across the region were invited to participate in a series of seven municipal or subregional community Zoom forums between February and June 2021. SRPC and SCPHN held a Zoom community forum for the Town in addition to the nearby communities of Rollinsford and Madbury, on April 22, 2021.

ONLINE SURVEY

Launched in early 2021, the CHAT online survey was distributed through multiple regional outlets, through social media, and shared with those who participated at the community Zoom forums. 6 Lee residents responded to the survey.

POSTCARD ART ACTIVITY

With the pandemic, SRPC and SCPHN brainstormed creative ways to engage people and give them a different outlet for expressing themselves. SRPC staff designed and printed postcards that prompted individuals to draw (paint, collage, etc.) or write what it means to age as you play, live or work in each community. These were distributed at various COVID-19 vaccine clinics and a variety of other locations.

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

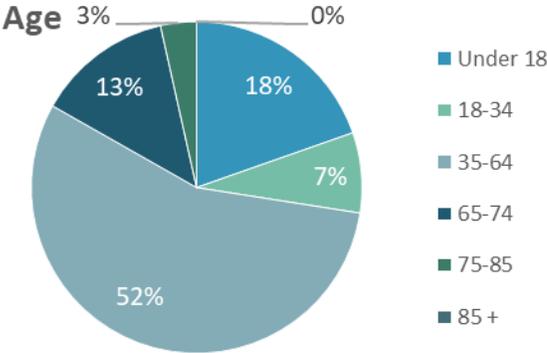
The above outreach strategies were supplemented with key informant interviews and draft community assessment reviews by community representatives.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Lee is a small rural town with a population of 4,483. It is a bedroom and farm community with many residents commuting to nearby towns and cities for employment. It has ample recreation and outdoor space. Lee has grown with Durham, with many students and staff of the University of New Hampshire residing here through the last century. The town is also home to the Lee Speedway, which is a 3/8-mile paved oval track and holds multiple racing series during their season. "Residents choose to live in Lee because of the safe environment, the rural/agricultural character, and the reputation of the school district. Other key factors included the location of Lee, providing access to the seacoast and a reasonable commute to work."¹

The outreach process, combined with supplementary data analysis, was used to outline the many ways in which Lee provides an inclusive, welcoming, supportive, and healthy environment for people of all ages, as well as opportunities for improvement. The findings are presented below in relation to each of the eight AARP domains of livability.

Total Population	4483
Median Age	47.8
Total Housing Units	1876
Number of Jobs in Town	1,302
Life expectancy	81.2



Sex



LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #1 - OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

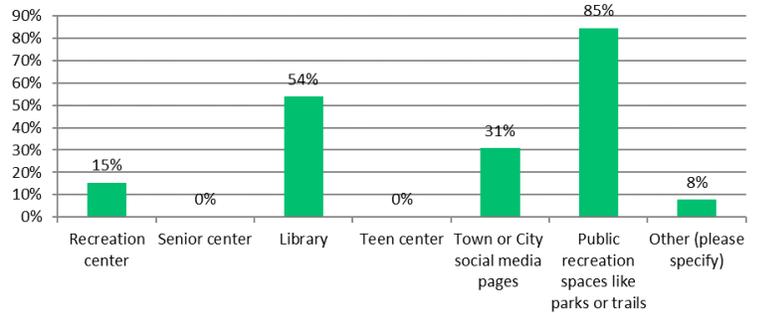
“People need public places to gather — indoors and out. Green spaces, seating and accessible buildings (elevators, zero-step entrances, staircases with railings) can be used and enjoyed by people of all ages.”ⁱ

DATA

Recreation Site Type	Number of Sites
Beach	0
Boating Access	0
Community Garden	0
Disc Golf Course	0
Dog Park	1
Fishing Access	0
Golf Course	1
Gym	0
Open Space and Trails	3
Park	0
Playground	3
Pool	0
Rail Trail	0
Skatepark	0
Skating Rink	0
Sledding Hill	0
Sports Fields and Courts	3
Total	11

Community Resources	Number of Sites
Places of Worship	1
Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures	0
Libraries	2
Medical and Health Care Facilities	5
Governmental Services	3
Non-Governmental Services	0
Fire and Police Stations	1
Schools	1
Total	13

Do you use any of these public spaces in your town?



26% of land in Lee is conserved.





STRENGTHS

- **Public Buildings** – Residents report using the public library and the Town Hall frequently. The schools are also mentioned as a public asset.
- **Public recreation areas** – There are ample public recreation areas including Little River Park which has a playground, courts and fields, and a picnic area. Most survey respondents make use of the parks and trails in Lee.
- **Active Conservation Commission** – The conservation commission works to protect land and water sources and Lee has an abundance of rivers, including the Lamprey. This benefits all residents and maintains the beauty of the community. The Town Masterplan identifies sustainability as a priority.



OPPORTUNITIES

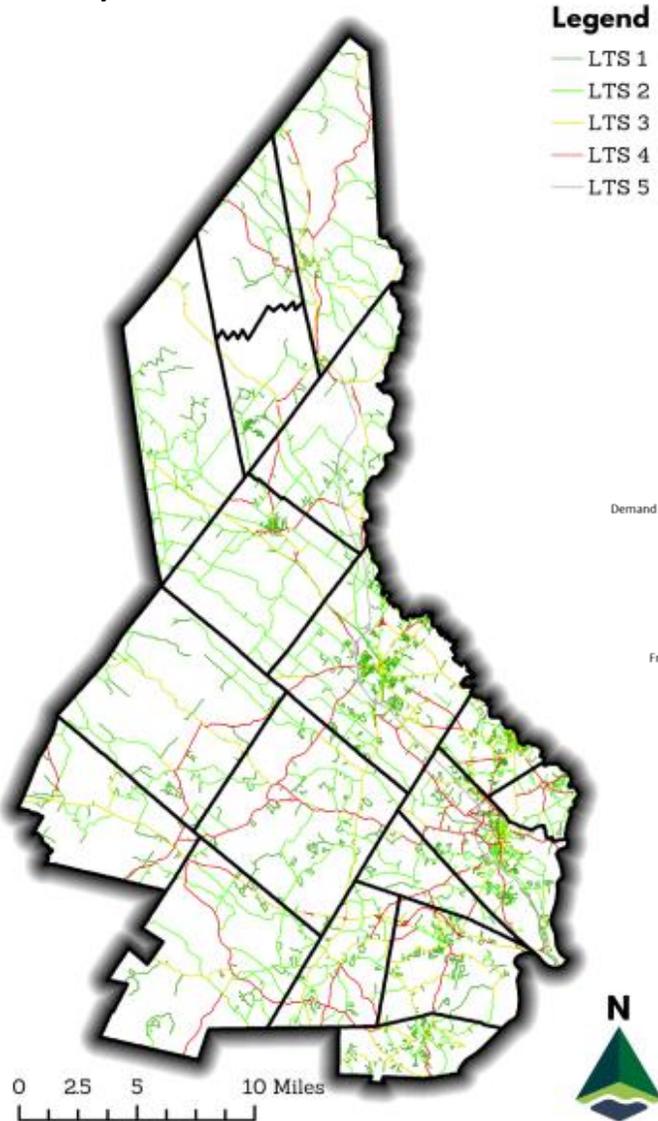
- **Engage More Residents** – While some residents are very involved in town committees, there is an opportunity to further goals by reaching out to and engaging members of the community, especially those with young families and newcomers.
- **Identify More Usable Public Space** – Are there other buildings in town that could be used as social and public gathering spots?

Livability Principle #2 - Transportation

“Driving shouldn’t be the only way to get around. Pedestrians need sidewalks and safe, crossable streets. Dedicated bicycle lanes benefit nondrivers and drivers alike. Public transit options can range from the large-scale (trains, buses, light rail) to the small (taxis, shuttles or ride share services).”ⁱⁱ

DATA

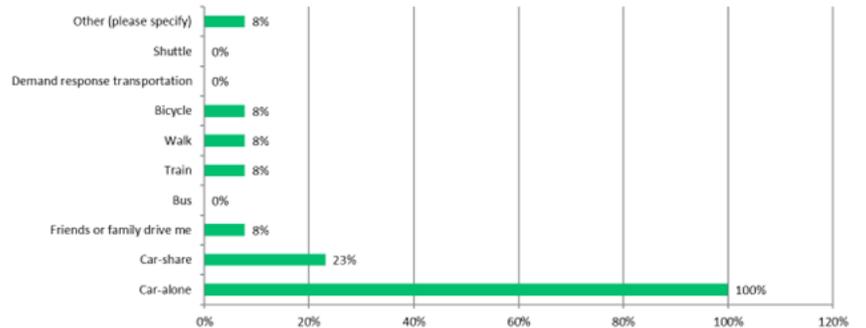
Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress



LTS Rating	LTS Rating Description	Population Class
LTS 1	Lowest stress ; suitable for all riders	Kids and Beginners
LTS 2	Lower stress ; suitable for adults with some experience	Willing but Wary Riders
LTS 3	Moderate stress ; suitable for those who ride regularly	Comfortably Confident Riders
LTS 4	High stress ; suitable for experienced riders with tolerance to high speeds and traffic	Exposure-Experienced Riders
LTS 5	Bicycles prohibited	

Source: Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress. Year: 2019. Granularity: SRPC.

How do you and your household members generally travel around for work, school, recreation, or other errands?

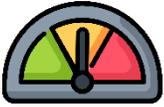


COAST Routes (including ADA On-Demand Transit)	0
Wildcat Routes	0
Demand Response Transit	YES



STRENGTHS

- **Location** – Lee is located to easily access other towns and cities nearby, many residents work in Durham at the University of New Hampshire, and it is an easy commute.
- **Scenery** – Many bicyclists choose the long winding country roads as a scenic ride.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Increased Connectivity** – More public transportation options or ride share services would help residents to get to where they need to go.
- **Safety** – Considering that many residents state they ride bicycles on the scenic country roads, additional safety measures such as bike lanes would make this a safer endeavor.

Sidewalks – More sidewalks connecting well-travelled routes would encourage residents to walk more. Potential to identify increased pedestrian infrastructure investments.

Livability Principle #3 – Housing

“AARP surveys consistently find that the vast majority of older adults want to reside in their current home or community for as long as possible. Doing so is possible if a home is designed or modified for aging in place, or if a community has housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages.”ⁱⁱⁱ

DATA

Housing Stock

■ Single family ■ Multi-family ■ Mobile Home



Own vs Rent



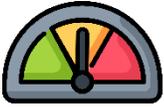
1,876 total housing units in Lee.

“HOUSING PRICES ARE JUST TOO HIGH. IF MY HUSBAND AND I DOWNSIZE, WE WON’T BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO BUY ANYTHING IN THE SEACOAST AREA.”



STRENGTHS

- **Rural feeling** – The rural beauty of Lee makes it a very attractive place to live.
- **Good schools** – The presence of highly respected schools such as Mast Way Elementary School in Lee are a huge draw for families.



OPPORTUNITIES

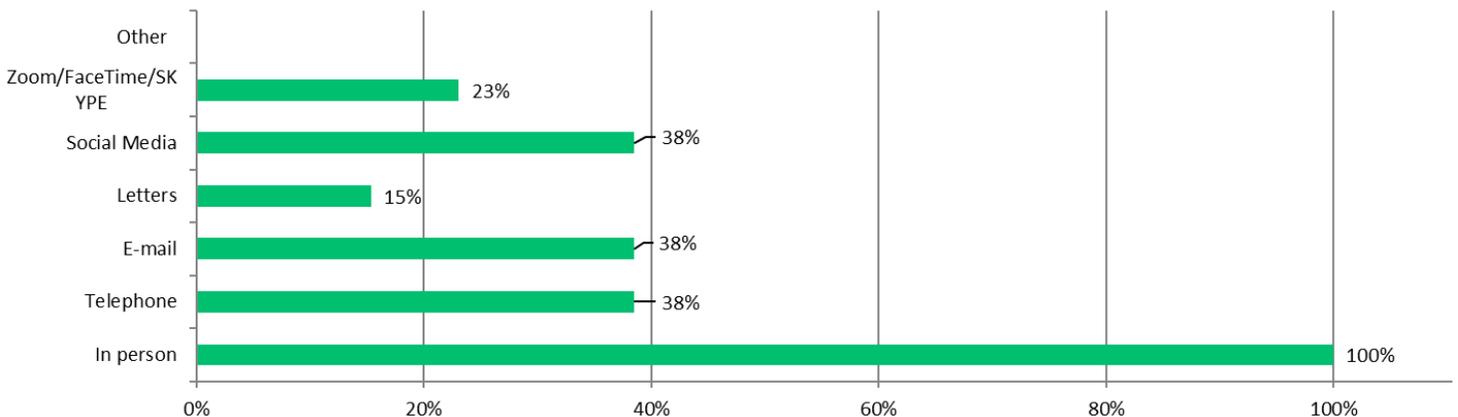
- **Housing affordability** – Residents reported challenges with housing affordability for both renters and current/potential homeowners.
- **Diversifying housing stock** – Most respondents stated they live in single family homes. Exploring development and zoning opportunities for different types of housing such as tiny homes or senior living residences would enable residents to stay in the community.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #4 – SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

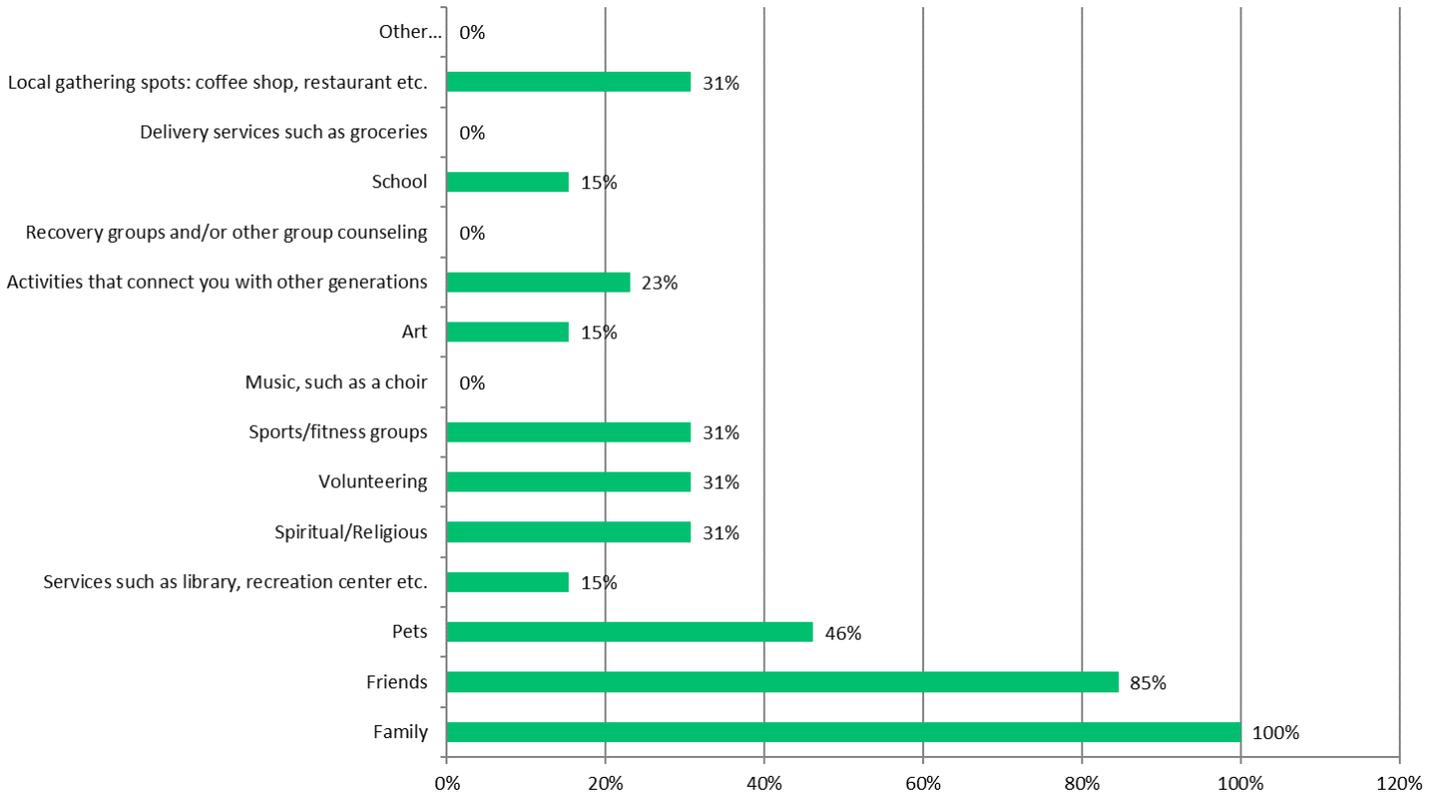
“Regardless of a person’s age, loneliness is often as debilitating a health condition as having a chronic illness or disease. Sadness and isolation can be combated by having opportunities to socialize and the availability of accessible, affordable and fun social activities.”^{iv}

DATA

How do you most commonly socialize? Check all that apply.



What are your main social interactions? Check all that apply



STRENGTHS

- **Public Library** – The library hosts several “clubs” for both youth and adults. These include a knitting club, book clubs, craft groups and youth reading programs.
- **Schools** – There are social activities and events organized through the school system.



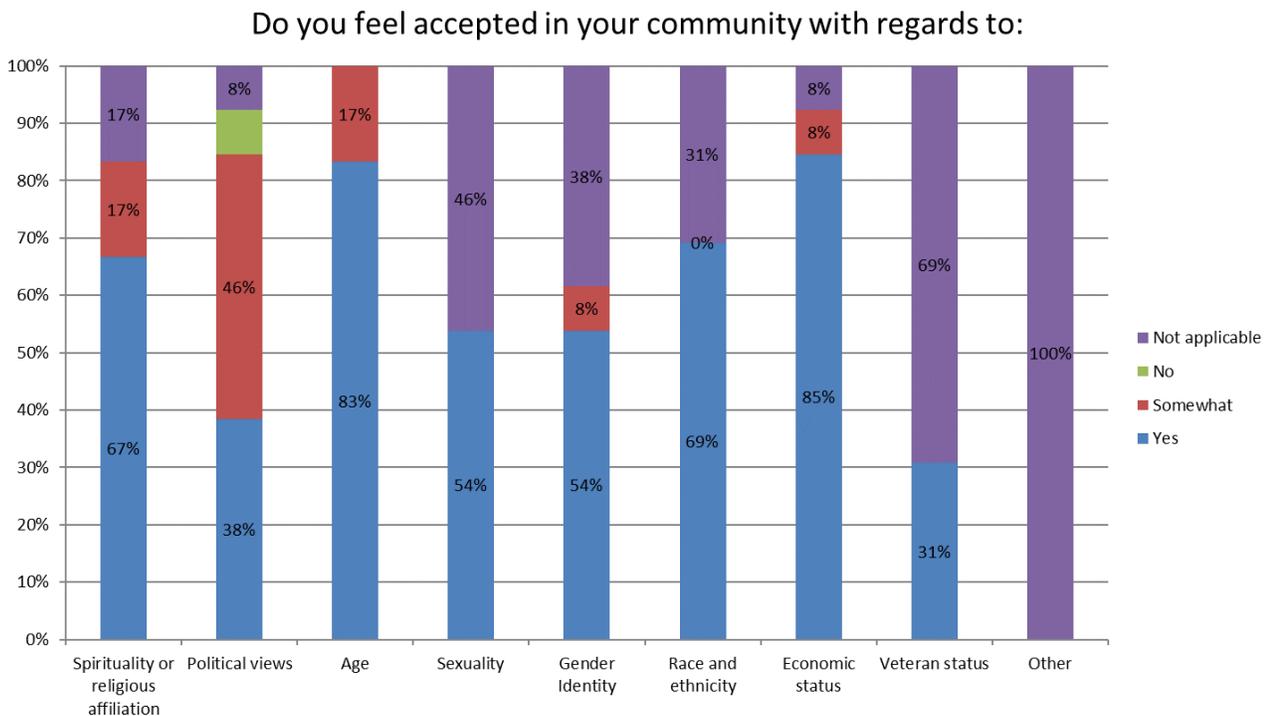
OPPORTUNITIES

- **More organized entertainment and social options for seniors** – Survey respondents expressed that a more organized social activity network would benefit them. This could be organized through the town or by utilizing the already existing social groups as though the library.
- **Connecting the Aging Population and Younger Generation** – While social activities are organized through the schools, there is an opportunity to engage other community members in these activities. Further promotion and advertising of events would help to generate more community participation.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #5 – RESPECT AND INCLUSION

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

DATA



STRENGTHS

- **Historic society** – There is an exerted effort by the historic society in Lee to include more intergenerational events and to include more residents. One goal identified in the Town’s Master Plan is to “Enhance and encourage knowledge and respect for Lee’s heritage through education of both young and old, and community involvement”
- **Schools** – The schools work to encourage participation from the whole community through fundraising events, social events, and engaging with town residents on a variety of issues.
- **Volunteer Opportunities** – Nearby and within the Town there are many volunteer opportunities whether it be with a church, a healthcare organization, or other civic organizations.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **More engagement** – Respondents expressed a lack of knowledge or awareness of civic engagement opportunities. A Town Newsletter or e-mail could alert residents to these options.
- **Examples from other communities** – The Town could look to neighboring communities for strategies and examples of where civic engagement has worked and implement these programs in Lee.

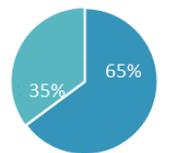
LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #6 – WORK AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

“Why does work need to be an all or nothing experience? An age-friendly community encourages older people to be actively engaged in community life and has opportunities for residents to work for pay or volunteer their skills.”^{vi}

DATA

Income	Median Household Income	\$100,170
	Income Inequality (Gini Index)	0.36
	Low income households	9.48%
	High income households	16.80%

Ballots Cast



■ In-Person ■ Absentee

* This data is from the 2020 general election



1,302 total jobs in Lee.



STRENGTHS

- **Location** – Many survey respondents recognized that Lee is ideally located for employment opportunities in nearby towns and cities. Both Dover and Durham were mentioned as employment centers for residents.
- **Access to training** – There are ample opportunities for training and education at nearby UNH.



OPPORTUNITIES

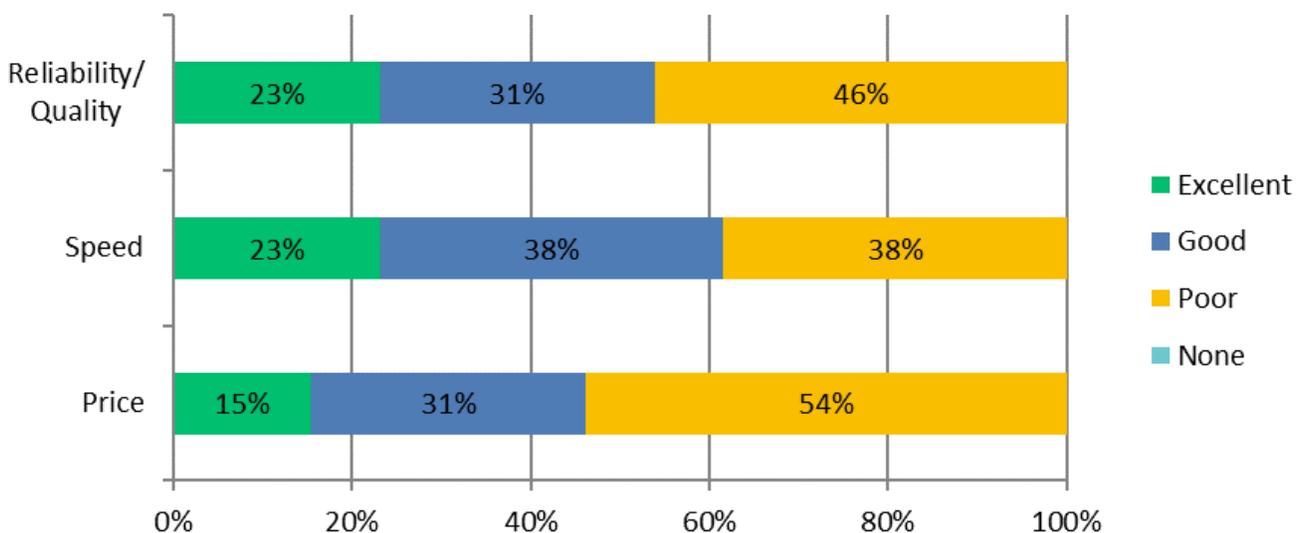
- **Advertise to resident’s employment opportunities** – The Town could take an active role in making sure that residents are aware of the training and education that are offered through newsletters or social media.
- **Public Transportation** – There is an opportunity to work with public transit providers such as Wildcat Transit to expand service to Lee and make it easier for residents to access employment and training opportunities.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #7 – COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

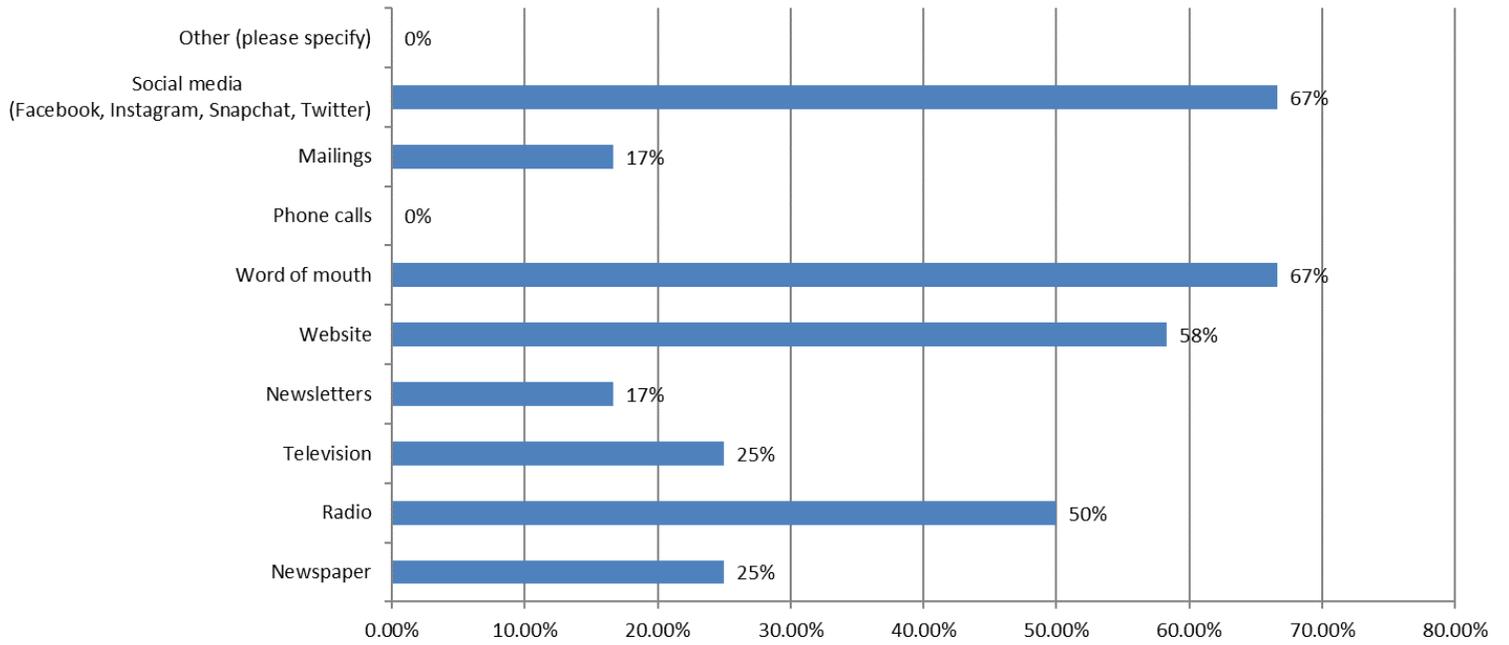
“We now communicate in ways few could have imagined a decade ago. Age-friendly communities recognize that information needs to be shared through a variety of methods since not everyone is tech-savvy, and not everyone has a smartphone or home-based access to the internet.”^{vii}

DATA

How would you rate your internet access in regard to? Please select none if you do not have internet access.



How do you learn about community news and activities? Check all that apply.

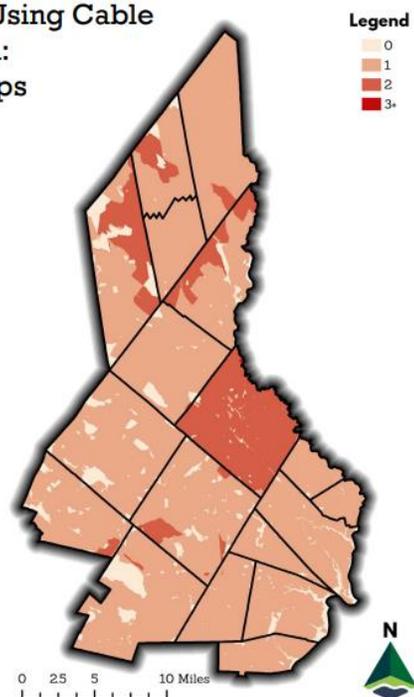


Broadband Access

Providers Using Fiber
Min. Speed:
100/20 Mbps



Providers Using Cable
Min. Speed:
100/20 Mbps



STRENGTHS

- **Local Committees** – Local committees, such as the sustainability committee and the Heritage Commission, are committed to engaging and informing residents about issues.
- **Social Media** – The Lee, Madbury, Durham Facebook page has lots of interaction and engagement and gives residents a forum to discuss local matters and share information.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Internet** – Residents cited that internet upgrades and reliability would enable both social and professional advancement.
- **Text Alerts with Community Information** – Survey respondents said that both internet upgrades and a community alert system via text would improve communication efforts.

LIVABILITY PRINCIPLE #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 assistance and care be available nearby, it’s essential that residents are able to access and afford the services required.”^{viii}

DATA

Healthcare and Aging Services	Number of Sites
Assisted Living Sites	1
Nursing Homes	0
Senior Centers	0
Primary Care Providers	3
Hospitals	0
Community Health Centers	0
Home Health Agencies	10
Memory Cafes	0
Dementia Support Group	0
Total	14

Community Resources	Number of Sites
Places of Worship	1
Historic Places, Buildings, or Structures	0
Libraries	2
Medical and Health Care Facilities	5
Governmental Services	3
Non-Governmental Services	0
Fire and Police Stations	1
Schools	1
TOTAL	13



STRENGTHS

- **Location** – Lee is in a fortunate location to access excellent healthcare services in nearby towns such as Dover and Barrington.
- **Urgent Care** – There is an urgent care center located at the traffic circle which allows residents access to timely care.



OPPORTUNITIES

- **Expanding Transport Options to Healthcare** – There is potential to expand transportation access to healthcare appointments. Public transportation or a volunteer ride service could help.
- **Healthcare cost supports** – At least half of the survey respondents indicated that access to healthcare is one reason they would choose to stay living in Lee.

NEXT STEPS

Following completion of the community assessments, SRPC and SCPHN staff will solicit interest from and work with a limited number of communities to develop action plans. Selected municipalities will be able to take the information in the community assessments a step further, to identify specific implementation strategies that respond to the assessment findings and aim to enhance the community’s “age-friendliness.” Communities will be selected based upon interest and engagement in promoting age friendly communities, local support, and willingness to implement recommendations, and geographic diversity. With the goal of adoption, final plans will be presented to each community. There is also the opportunity for completion of one or two pilot projects that will be selected from the action plan recommendations. Lastly, SRPC and SCPHN will publish an extensive resource guide that will be widely distributed via channels appropriate to our key audiences.

ⁱ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

^{iv} <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

^v <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>

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^{viii} <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2016/8-domains-of-livability-introduction.html>