

Eliot Aging in Place Committee: Community Assessment

The Eliot Aging in Place Committee (AIP)

- Between June 12 and November 6, 2018, AIP distributed a community survey to identify what is working and what is needed for Eliot to be a more age-friendly livable community. 330 residents responded
- An electronic survey was available online. Hardcopies were available at the Library, Transfer Station and Town Office and distributed at the June primaries, November elections, Fall Festival, and a Congregational Church Senior Luncheon.
- Findings from this assessment will be shared at a public meeting in early April. Another public meeting in May will engage residents in creating a community action plan.

Key Findings about Eliot:

- 1) 68% of participants were 60+; 18% between 50-59; and 14% < 50. 51% were retired and 48% working.
- 2) 81% have closest relatives in Eliot or living within an hour. 59% have lived in Eliot >20 years (17% grew up here) and 4% > a year. 96% of participants rated Eliot an excellent/good place to live. Findings for those who grew up here: 45% excellent: 41% good: and 13% fair/poor place to live.
- 3) 93% said it was very important/somewhat important to remain in Eliot. The majority plan to modify their homes to stay here as they age. Despite the desire to stay, 78% identified factors that may influence a future move. These included transportation (55%); medical care, services, or facilities (54%), smaller or more accessible home (53%), and living closer to family or friends (43%).
- 4) 65% felt the town wanted them to stay as they aged. 24% of respondents felt respected and included as older members of the community and 25% did not. 51% felt respected/included most of the time. Of those who grew up here, 11% felt respected/ included.
- 5) 47% said it was easy to find information about community events and local activities. 12% said it was easy to find information about services and resources to support aging in place. The top preferences for receiving information were: 1) email, 2) newsletters, and 3) website.
- 6) Most people were as social as they wanted to be. 11% said they never get out to socialize and this increased to 30% of people 80+. Top barriers for those who want to socialize were: not much to do here (41%), find out too late (28%), and inconvenient times (23%). 80% said they would ask a neighbor for help if they needed it.
- 7) 90% of participants owned their own homes.
- 8) 55% of participants volunteered and many others wanted to find meaningful volunteer opportunities.
- 9) 98% travel in the area by their own car, and 11% ask relatives for rides..
- 10) The following services are likely or somewhat likely to be needed in the next five years: home maintenance: 73%; wellness/fitness classes: 59%; library services: 54%; housekeeping: 44%; and transportation: 26%.
- 11) Many participants had no opinion under the public spaces domain. Those who did weren't satisfied with accessibility to public restrooms, well-lit safe streets /intersections, and sidewalks in good condition. 62% said that civic buildings were accessible to people of all abilities, 10% disagreed.

“Kindness does matter and those who know how to truly treat others especially little children and the elderly make any community one in which to live.”

“Eliot is a great place to live as long as you are independent and have a car.”

Quotes from Participants

Conclusions:

- Participants enjoy living in Eliot (rural atmosphere/small town feel); are impressed by the library and town office staff.
- Older residents are a valuable resource who volunteer and are eager to help Eliot become a more age friendly livable community.
- Opportunities for improvement were: walkability and pedestrian/bike safety; information about local activities and resources; property tax relief, and transportation.
- AIP will build on Eliot's community strengths to meet the needs identified in this assessment.
- AIP will promote opportunities for people to be as involved as they want to be in all aspects of life in Eliot.

FMI: contact Ellen Ceppetelli, Chair, Eliot Aging in Place Committee, my phone: 802-356-5933 or email: ellencepp@email.com