

Aging in Hingham: A Community Needs Assessment

Caitlin Coyle, Ph.D.

Center for Social & Demographic Research on Aging
Gerontology Institute
University of Massachusetts Boston
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Background & Purpose

- ▶ This project was commissioned by the Town of Hingham Council on Aging to investigate and plan for the needs, interests, preferences, and opinions of Hingham's residents age 45 and older.
- ▶ The final report is meant to:
 - ▶ Inform planning of programs and services provided by the Hingham Council on Aging and Department of Elder Services.
 - ▶ Inform the actions of the Senior Center Building Committee, appointed in 2020.
 - ▶ Raise awareness of the needs of older Hingham residents among both the community at large and other municipal departments and organizations that work on behalf of the community.

Components
of the
Hingham
Needs
Assessment

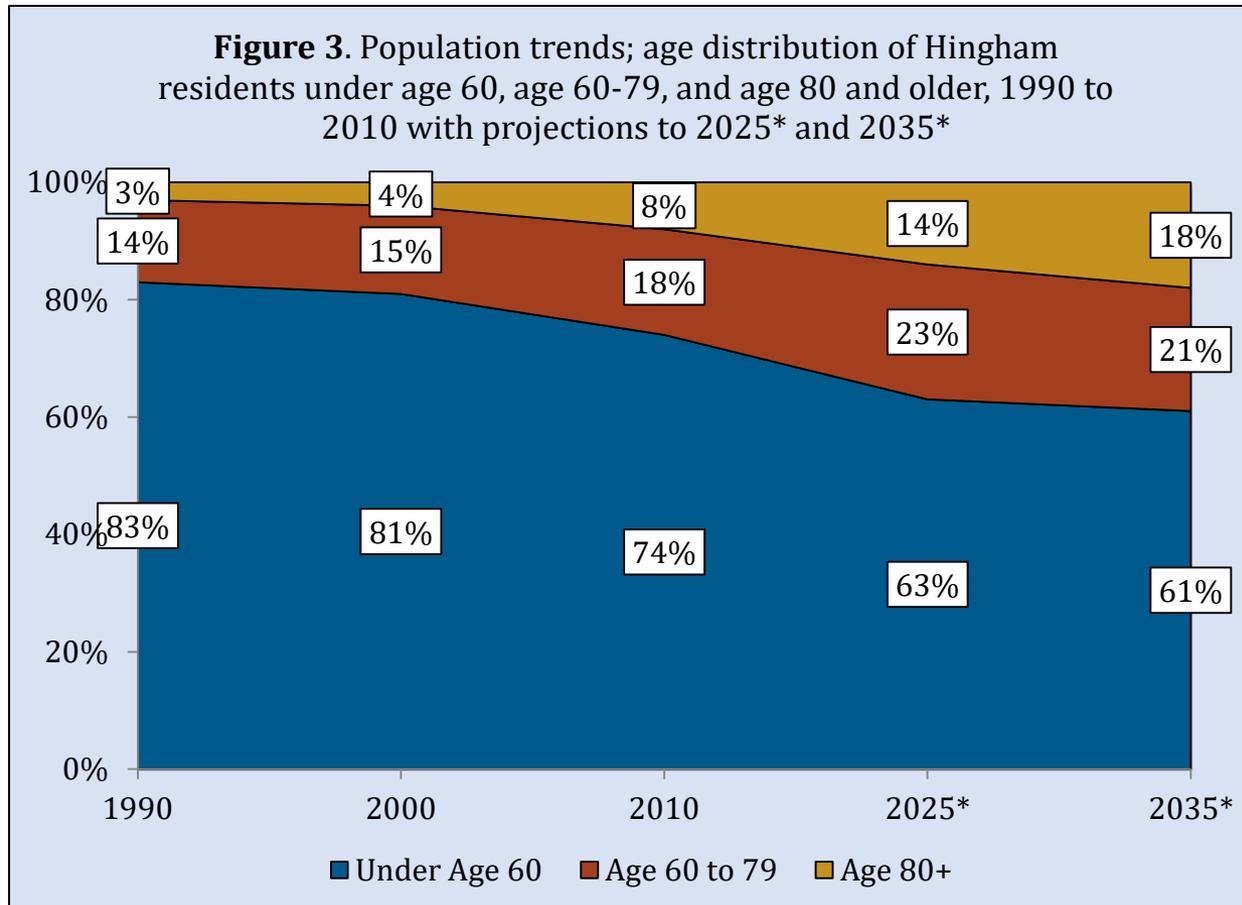
Demographic profile

Key informant interviews (7)

Resident survey 45+ (n=1,179)

Peer community comparison

Hingham is getting older

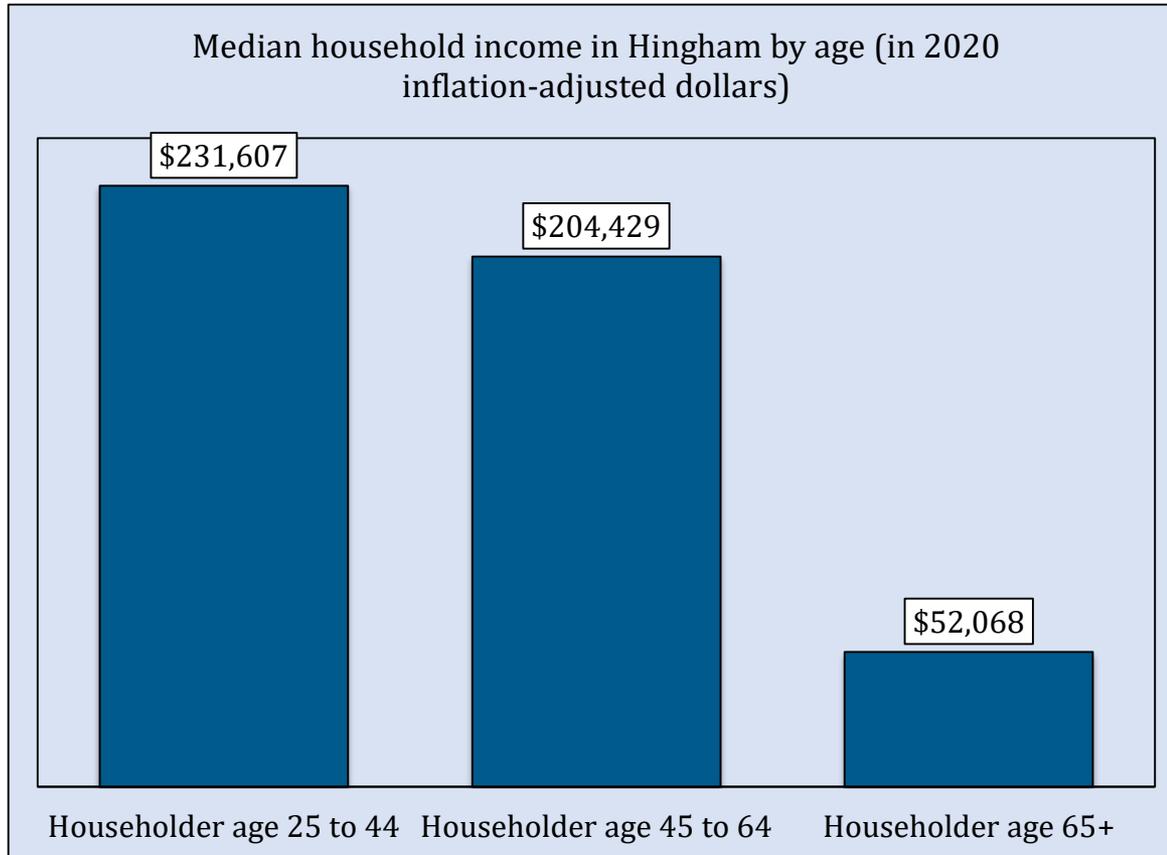


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population for 2010.

*Figures for 2020-2030 are projections generated by the Donahue Institute, University of Massachusetts: <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/> and Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC): <https://www.mapc.org/learn/projections/>

KEY FINDINGS:

A widening economic gap divides Hingham



24% of households headed by someone age 65 and older report annual incomes under \$25,000.

Only 7% of households headed by individuals aged 45 to 64 report having incomes under \$25,000

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

Financial Security is the primary concern among residents

- 1,077 residents took the time to write in about their biggest concerns about being able to age in Hingham. Among the responses, 52% explained that affordability—including taxes, utilities, housing, and basic things like food and transportation was their biggest concern.

“Affordability is my greatest concern and worry. Every day I live on a fixed income, and it has become increasingly difficult each year to live in Hingham.”

“taxes are getting very high; income is not”

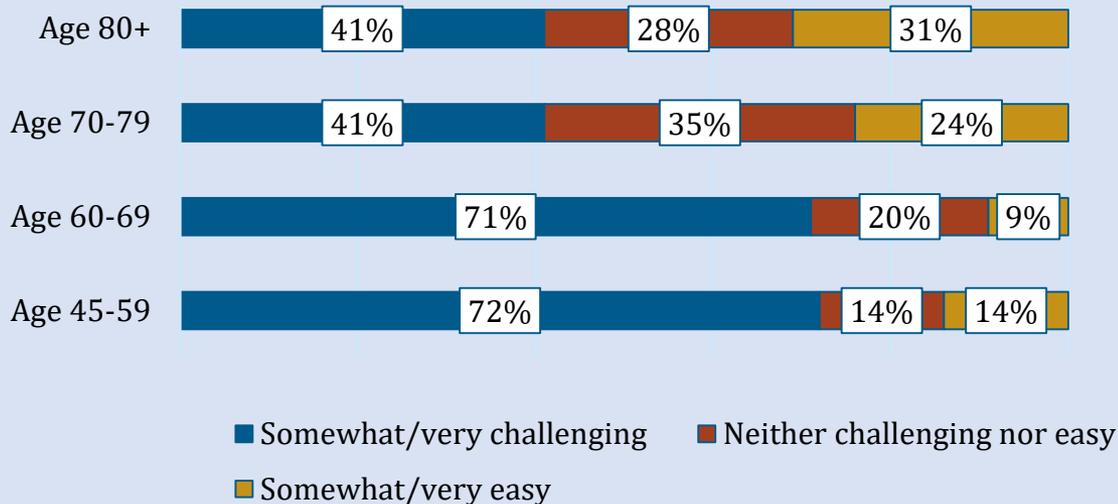
“Affordability in regard to medical expenses”

“Affordability - taxes + home repair”

Caregiving is an issues affecting Hingham's older residents

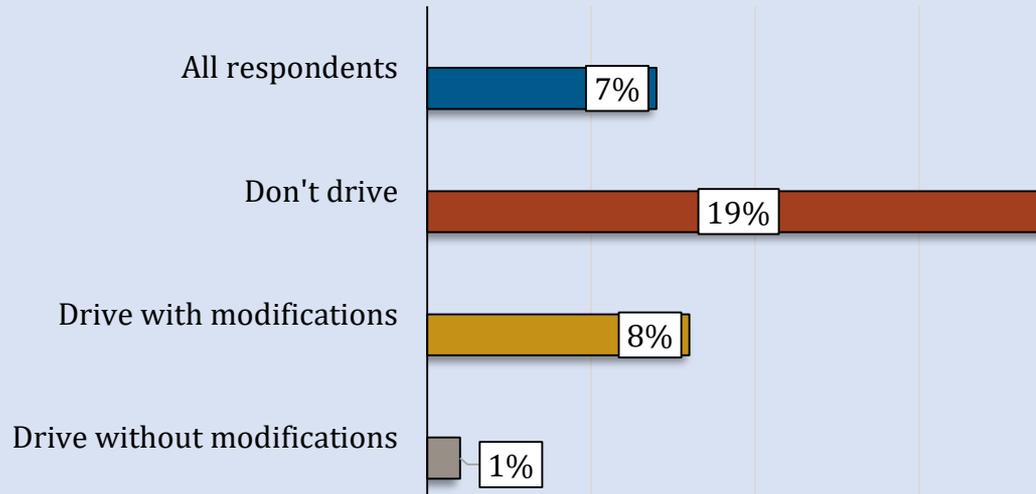
- ▶ 30% of survey respondents have been in the past year, or are currently, a caregiver
- ▶ 31% of caregivers are providing care to a person with dementia

Figure 24. How challenging is/was it for you to care for this person(s) and meet your other responsibilities with family and/or work?", by age



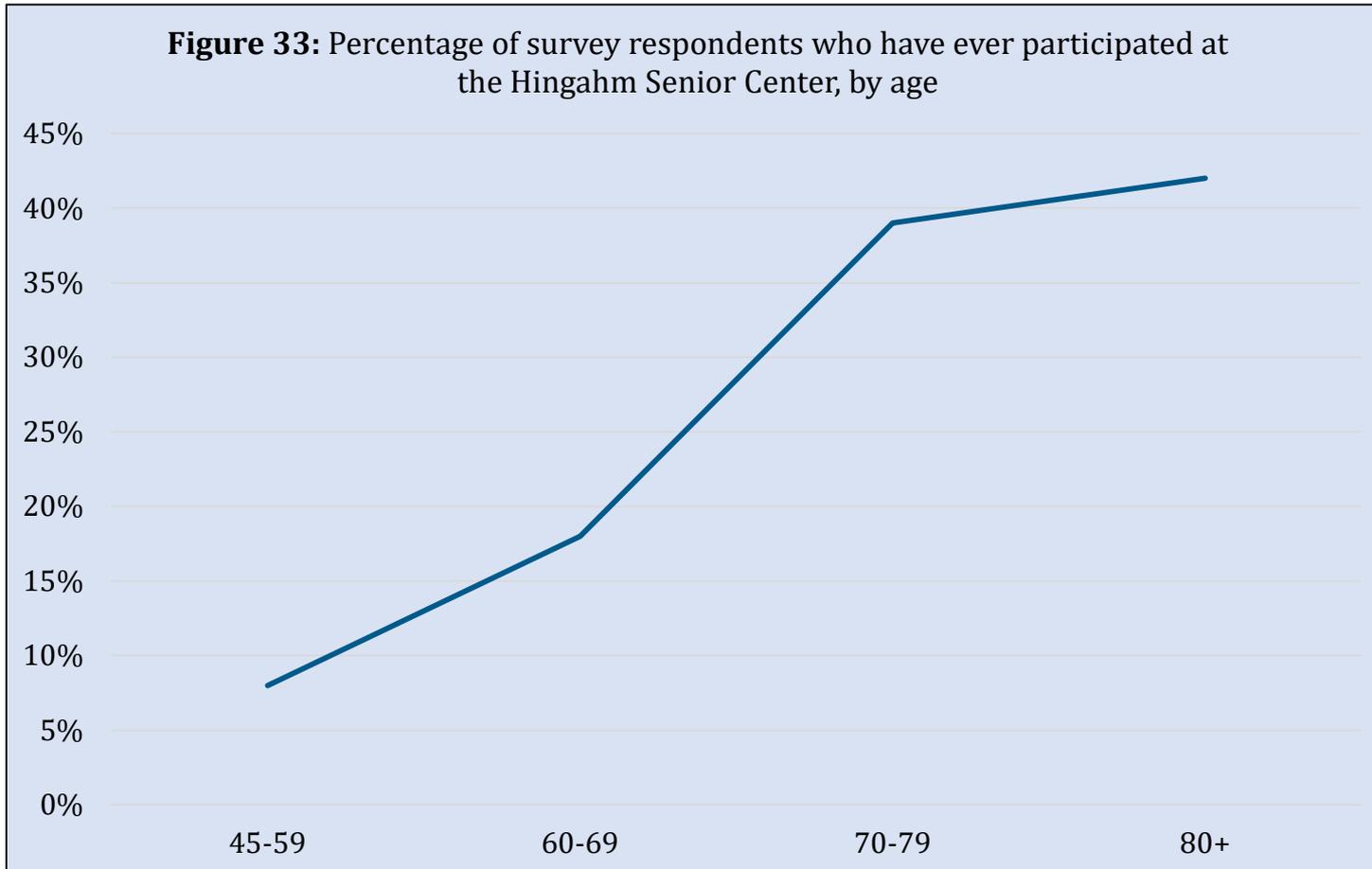
For those who do not drive, lack of transportation options is crucial

Figure 22. 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)



Hingham Senior Center Participation

Figure 33: Percentage of survey respondents who have ever participated at the Hingham Senior Center, by age



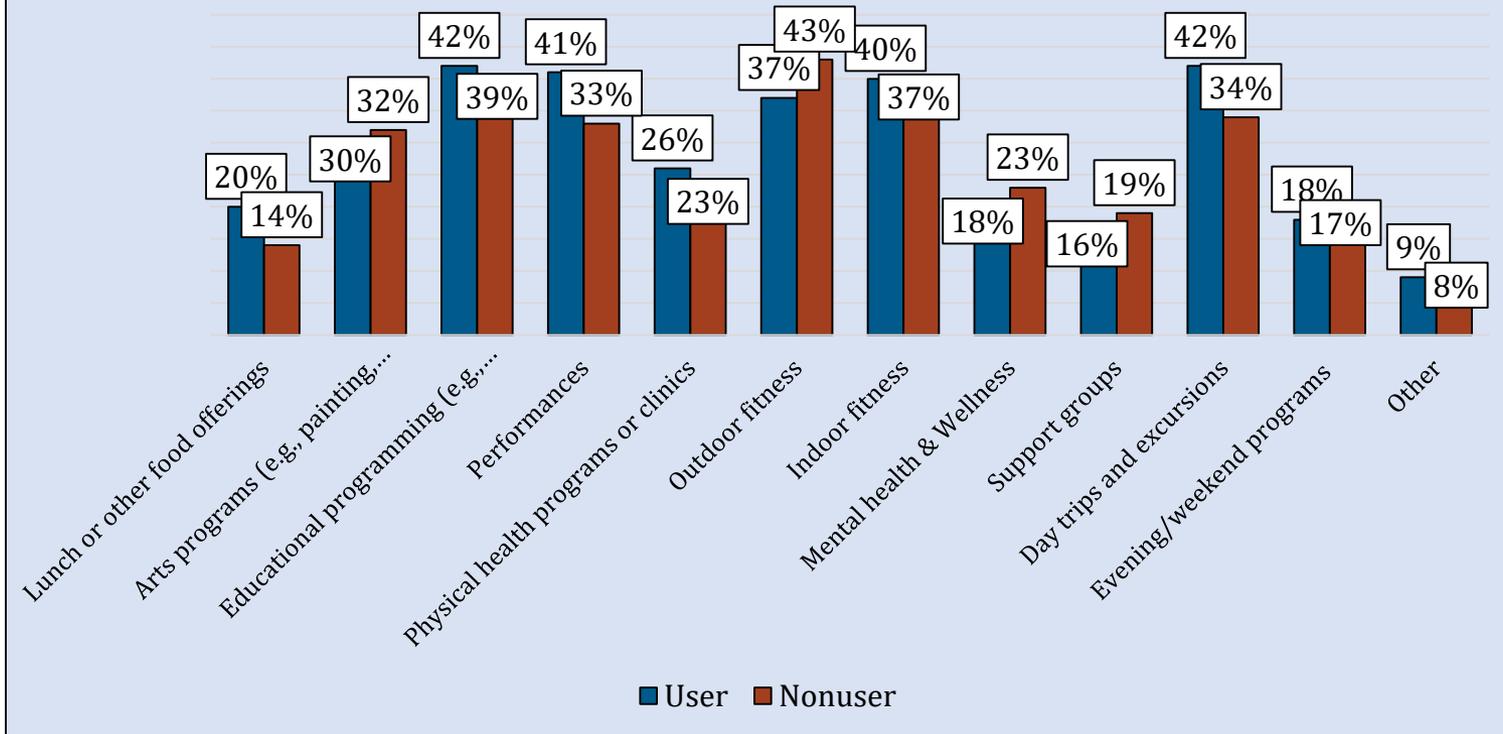
Primary reasons for not going to the Senior Center

- ▶ I am still working
 - ▶ 43% of those age 45-59
 - ▶ 49% of those 60-69
- ▶ I participate elsewhere
 - ▶ 32% of those at 70-79
- ▶ I am not interested
 - ▶ 34% of those age 80+

Not needed
<i>I have no need for them at this time but anticipate the need in the future.</i>
<i>I feel no urgent need yet.</i>
<i>Inertia - not yet ready</i>
Too busy
<i>I am busy enough with family, friends, church.</i>
<i>I am busy with my grandkids.</i>
<i>I am still working 55 hours a week. Work full time.</i>
Facility Deters Participation
<i>Parking is an issue! Building very outdated!</i>
<i>Too small a gathering place</i>
<i>Lack of parking, unattractive facility, poor selection of programs.</i>
<i>Most programs do not appeal to me + parking is challenging</i>
Lack of familiarity
<i>Don't know anyone that goes</i>
<i>Don't like to go alone</i>
<i>I don't feel welcomed there.</i>
<i>I just retired</i>

Educational, physical fitness, and enrichment programs are preferred

Figure 40: Which of the following would you prioritize in expanding the programs available through the Hingham Senior Center?



Peer Community Comparison

	All-age population	# Age 60+	% 60+	Median Household Income	% 65+ with a college degree
Hingham	23,983	7,159	30%	\$ 147,520	59%
Duxbury	15,912	4,652	29%	\$ 126,889	59%
Lexington	33,304	8,490	25%	\$ 185,686	75%
Marblehead	20,530	6,020	29%	\$ 131,293	60%
Marshfield	25,937	6,386	25%	\$ 105,067	46%
Scituate	18,839	6,658	35%	\$ 122,241	51%
Wellesley	28,747	5,685	20%	\$ 213,684	71%

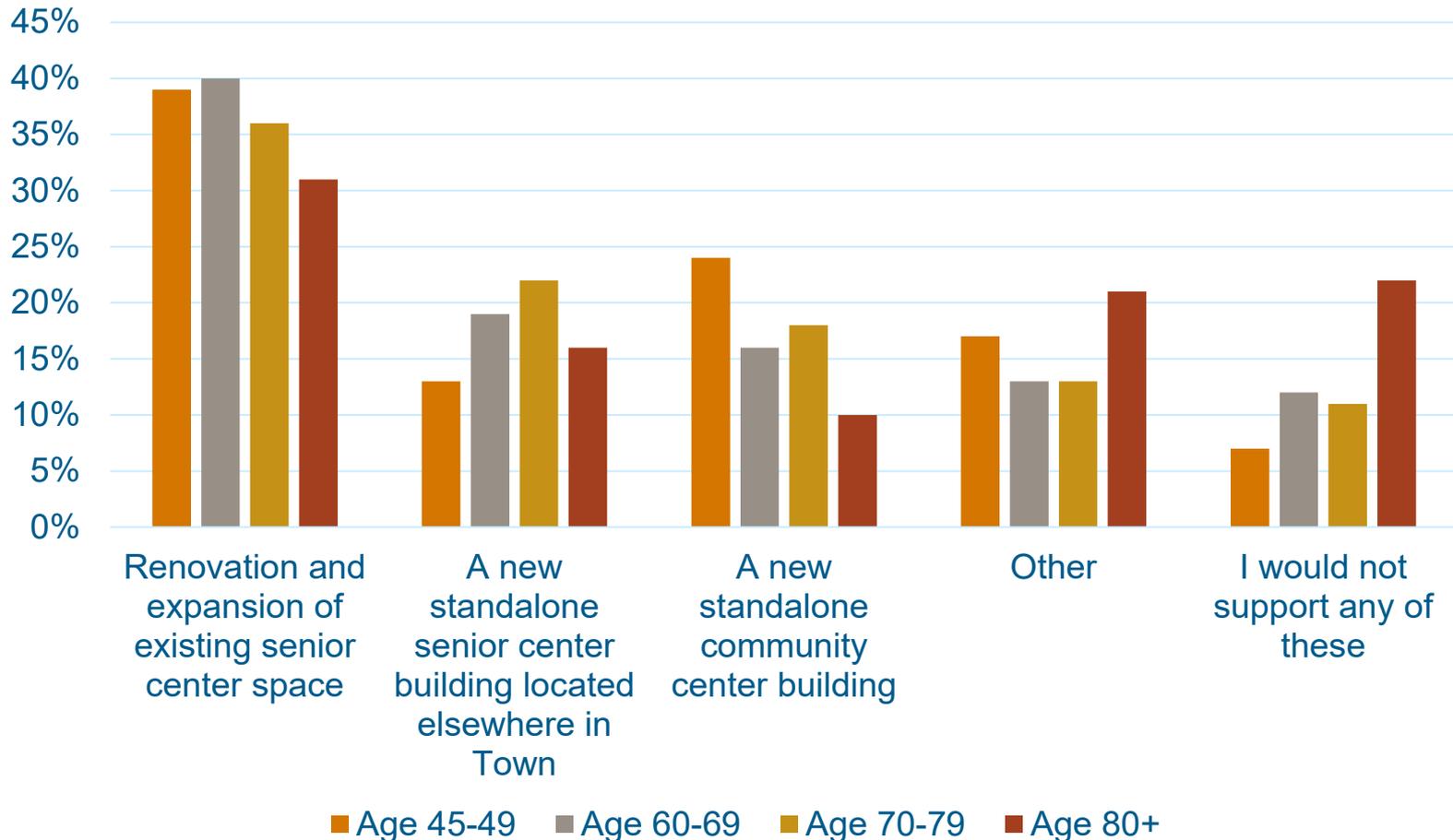
Hingham has smallest space, fewest parking spots, and is only one of its peers that has not completed a renovation or new building project in recent years

	Type of change to space	Year of Project	Cost of Project	Type of Space	Dedicated Square Footage	Square Feet per Resident 60+	Parking Spots
Hingham	N/A	N/A	N/A	Dedicated space in shared building	5,000	0.70	18
Duxbury	Renovation/expansion	2019	\$2.25M	Stand-alone building	16,660	3.58	105
Lexington	Renovation/expansion	2015	\$6M	Community center shared with Rec Dept.	N/A	N/A	40
Marblehead	Renovation/expansion	2016	\$60K	Community center shared with Parks & Rec Dept	N/A	N/A	68
Marshfield	Renovation/expansion	2022	\$7M	Stand-alone building	23,863	3.74	181
Scituate	New building	2021	\$10M	Stand-alone building	15,000	2.25	105
Wellesley	New building	2017	~\$9M	Stand-alone building	13,000	2.29	45

Hingham is only one of its peers without dedicated staff for programming and one of only two of the communities without staff for volunteer coordination

	Staff FT/PT	Transportation?	Adult Day?
Hingham	3/4	Yes	No
Duxbury	9/12	Yes	Yes, social and health
Lexington	2/2	Refers to transportation department	No
Marblehead	5/6	Yes	No
Marshfield	5/11	Yes	Yes, social only
Scituate	5/3	Yes	Coming soon, social only
Wellesley	6/5	Yes	No

Which of the following building scenarios would you be most likely to support?



Recommendations for Hingham

The physical space and location of the Hingham COA are smaller than the spaces occupied by all of its peers. Cannot accommodate the programmatic interests of the community.

- Make plans for increasing space for programming to accommodate growing demand for programs and services. Minimizing costs to residents for the building project and installation of adequate parking are necessary. As well, consider prioritizing the following types of spaces:
 - Large rooms for indoor exercise classes that can accommodate many participants.
 - Classrooms and program rooms that have the technology for audio and visual presentations and also the capability to receive participants who are participating virtually.
 - Space for music or dance performances or to play films.
 - Drop-in space for residents to meet informally and socialize in a café style environment.
- Consider the role of trips and outings out of town, or even to utilize other spaces in Hingham, and plan for staffing and volunteers to aid in that task.

Awareness and understanding of the Hingham COA is uneven among residents, particularly those under the age of 70.

- ▶ Consider developing an “ambassador program” and coach residents to actively encourage new participants. Perhaps this could function as a property-tax work-off position or offer an incentive for the number of new participants they can recruit.
- ▶ Create a “newcomers” group at the Hingham COA so participants feel connected to a group when they first arrive.
- ▶ Establish a “civic academy”, in partnership with other Town Departments, to educate community members about local government processes, resources (e.g., property tax relief programs) and volunteer opportunities.
- ▶ Host programming for newly retired residents or those considering retirement.
- ▶ In order to avoid deterring financially insecure residents from participating, consider noting on any promotional materials that if a resident is unable to pay the requested amount that they can contact the Hingham COA to make other arrangements.

Economic insecurity is a concern for many older adults in Hingham.

- ▶ Consider property tax freezes or widening income eligibility for property tax-relief programs that already exist. Institute a proxy option for the property tax work off program so that a family member or friend can work on behalf of a resident who is not able to work.
- ▶ Consider hosting a program like “How to Cut the Cord” to educate residents how they can access streaming or other online media in order to eliminate or reduce their cable bill.
- ▶ Develop a “help a neighbor” fund that would allow for small grants to be given for home repair projects, subsidizing snow removal or lawn care for older adults who cannot afford it. Engage local fraternal organizations, faith communities, and the COA Friends Group to coordinate.
- ▶ Engage local businesses or Chambers of Commerce to connect older residents with part-time or flexible employment.

Many Hingham residents need support due to physical or cognitive conditions, and many caregivers need help.

- ▶ Develop a “Volunteer Respite Program” in which residents are vetted to assist Hingham caregivers by serving as a companion to the person receiving care while the caregiver has a few hours to themselves.
- ▶ Encourage town staff to become “Dementia Friends” by completing a training program.
- ▶ Explore collaborations between local emergency response services and community based organizations to improve the health and quality of life of those living with dementia and/or their care partners. This model could be expanded to include those with vulnerabilities to falling or other behavioral health conditions.

Obtaining supplementary and accessible transportation is a concern for some of Hingham's residents as they age.

- ▶ Develop a volunteer driver program, not limited to medical appointments.
- ▶ Target information to communities within Hingham who may have particular need for transportation services including those living alone and those with disabilities. Consider additional outreach for transportation when inclement weather is anticipated.
- ▶ Consider the use of Hingham Senior Center, or other Town-owned, vehicles for use on evenings and weekends to facilitate transportation for those wishing to participate in the community during these times.
- ▶ For older residents who could use “fixed-route” public transportation but may have some trepidations, consider developing or connecting residents with a travel training or “bus buddy” program.

Thank you for listening!

Caitlin Coyle:

Caitlin.Coyle@umb.edu

<http://www.umb.edu/demographyofaging>