

AGE-FRIENDLY OXFORD: THE FIRST FIVE YEARS AND BEYOND

Report to the Age-Friendly Oxford Leadership Team
and Community Advisory Group

February 2024

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This study was conducted as an in-kind contribution
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two overarching topics guided this report: 1) evaluation of progress from first five years of Age-Friendly Oxford, and 2) information that can support next phase of this important initiative. The methods used to generate the data that addresses these two topics were a community survey, key informant interviews with the founders of AFO, and focus groups with other leaders who served on committees and work groups during AFO's first five years.

Evaluation of progress:

There is significant evidence of success for the first round of AFO, in spite of challenges introduced by COVID. That evidence includes:

- Heightened awareness about issues of aging and community inclusivity
- Deepened collaborations across multiple sectors within the community
- Goals that were accomplished, especially in the areas of housing and communication

Data that can inform the next phase of AFO includes:

- 87% of respondents think that Oxford is a good to excellent place to live as one ages.
- Having a different size home that better meets their needs (47%), and wanting a home that will help them live independently as they age (63%) were reported as potential major factors if they were to consider moving from current home.
- The highest perceived gaps in Oxford's age-friendliness, and the highest priority areas selected by survey respondents were housing, transportation, and health and wellness services.
- The proportion of survey respondents choosing social participation as a top priority increased notably compared to the 2018 Community Needs Assessment survey, likely reflecting the ways in which isolation and its consequences were magnified during COVID-19 pandemic.
- The proportion of survey respondents who chose communication as an area of high priority decreased over the past 5 years, perhaps reflecting the availability of O-Town News, a monthly newsletter developed by AFO to fill a need for accessible and consolidated information about community events and opportunities.

BACKGROUND

As part of their commitment to the full inclusion of older adults in an increasingly aging world, the World Health Organization (WHO) established the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2010. AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities became the United States affiliate of this global network in April 2012.¹ The AARP Age-Friendly Network supports cities and communities in their efforts to become more age-inclusive in major domains of livability (such as housing, transportation, health and wellness, and social participation); providing resources and tools to assess community needs and to develop a plan to create an environment that is livable and accessible for people of all ages. As of August 2023, there were 11 states, 1 territory, and 786 communities nationwide designated as members of the AARP Age-Friendly Network.

Oxford, Ohio was in the forefront of this significant social movement, having been welcomed into the network in 2017 as the 197th member. This milestone was achieved thanks to a dedicated group of individuals and organizations invested in the livability of the community for people of all ages. The strength of the Age-Friendly Oxford (AFO) initiative resulted from the combination of effective and committed grass roots leaders. A community history of advocacy, and the significant involvement of key organizations including the City of Oxford, Oxford Village Network (the original grassroots organization that began the conversations and advocacy for age-inclusivity and laid the groundwork for AFO), Oxford Seniors Inc., and the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University. Oxford's formal designation as a member of the AARP Age-Friendly Network was the start of a 5-year process that included strengthening the coalition of organizations and individuals invested in a livable community for people of all ages, a community needs assessment to determine the greatest gaps in the domains of livability, development of a strategic action plan, and implementation of specific initiatives that were high priority.

The initial community needs assessment was conducted in fall/winter of 2018; the final report from that research was presented to the AFO leadership and constituency groups in April 2019.² The findings from the 2018 needs assessment suggested that the greatest gaps were in the areas of housing, transportation, community and health services, and communication and information. These gaps were determined by the proportion of respondents who thought that a particular feature of livability was important but either wasn't available in the community, or they were not sure whether it was available or not. Using this information, as well as insights from focus groups and key informant interviews, the AFO Leadership Advisory Group created an action plan, and pursued several initiatives during the next three years.³ The implementation of this plan was influenced by shifts in community-specific priorities, resources, and feasibilities, as any action plan would be. However, this particular action plan was

deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which began shortly after the start of implementation.

Documenting the successes and challenges of implementation is the last of four major steps prescribed by the AARP Age-Friendly process: 1) Engage and understand; 2) Plan; 3) Act and implement, and 4) Evaluate. This report—a formal evaluation of the first five years of AFO—is the culmination of the fourth stage. The purpose of this report is to describe the progress of this initiative and to provide new information that might be useful to the group as it continues its work to ensure the livability and inclusiveness of the Oxford area for people of all ages. To that end, information is presented in response to two overarching questions:

- 1. *What progress has Age-Friendly Oxford made so far toward meeting their goals and improving the age-inclusivity of Oxford?***
- 2. *What lies ahead for the next phase of Age-Friendly Oxford?***

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE AND METHODS

Data from three different sources (key informant interviews, focus groups, and a community survey) were compiled to answer the guiding questions for this report. We began with *key informant interviews* with the two founders and co-leaders of AFO who provided information about the formation, structure, and functioning of the AFO Leadership Advisory Group. They also provided their insights about what went well, what didn't go as expected, and advice for leaders in other communities about establishing an age-friendly initiative. *Focus groups* with six members of the Leadership Advisory Group and AFO Domain Teams provided information about these same topics. Respondents were specifically asked to discuss successes, challenges, drivers for those successes and challenges, and suggestions for other communities interested in the age-friendly movement.

The third source of evidence for this evaluation study was the *AFO 2023 Community Survey*. The survey was designed by adapting the 2018 AFO Community Needs Assessment and survey questions were carefully developed based on the findings from the 2019 AFO Community Needs Assessment Report and the AFO Action Plan developed in the second year of the initiative. City of Oxford and Oxford Township residents aged 18 years and older were considered eligible for the survey. The survey was administered primarily online via the Qualtrics survey platform. Paper copies were also made available upon request and at select locations within in the City of Oxford and Oxford Township including the public library, senior center, township office, and affordable apartment housing. Participants were recruited through 1) paper flyers with

tear-off tags providing an anonymous survey link and the survey QR code, which were distributed to businesses and other locations in the City of Oxford, 2) mass emails via several local listservs (e.g., Oxford Seniors, the Coalition for a Healthy Community, Age-Friendly Oxford, and others), and 3) AFO's Facebook page and a local community Facebook page. The survey was open from February 1, 2023, through March 15, 2023, with a target of 200 usable responses (assuming a response rate between 40 - 50%). Out of 434 recorded surveys, 325 surveys (271 Qualtrics, 54 paper copies) were considered eligible for analysis. The primary reason for exclusion from analysis was less than 13% survey completion.

Data elements included in this report were selected for their ability to answer evaluation questions about the first 5-year cycle of AFO, so not all survey items are discussed here. However, the appendices at the end of this report provide detailed findings and additional data for each question asked in the survey.

About one-quarter of the 2023 respondents said that they had participated in the 2018 community needs assessment, and 30% were not sure if they had. When participants were asked how they knew about the 2023 survey, the most frequently reported sources were Age-Friendly Oxford listserv (34%), Oxford Seniors (32%), and Facebook (30%).

The age distribution for the 2023 survey differed from the 2018 survey in that it was open to people age 18 and older and the 2018 survey was limited to people 50 years and older. Of the 2023 respondents, 14% were younger than 50, 39% were between 50 and 69, and 46% were aged 70 years and above. This age-diverse group provides a broader snapshot of perceived age-friendliness, strengths, and challenges across age groups than was possible from the 2018 survey. Most respondents identified as female (68%) and white (95%). Respondents were, on average, highly educated (about 79% had a college degree or higher). Respondents were also not very diverse with respect to income; nearly a quarter chose not to answer the question, but among those who did, more than half had incomes at or above \$50,000. While the respondents did not represent a broad range of income and education levels, they did represent the demographics of the Oxford area community. Further details about the respondents are provided in the Appendices.

FINDINGS

EVALUATION QUESTION 1:

WHAT PROGRESS HAS AGE-FRIENDLY OXFORD MADE IN MEETING THEIR GOALS AND IMPROVING THE AGE-FRIENDLINESS OF THE COMMUNITY?

From the quantitative and qualitative data, three themes emerged to describe the progress AFO has made during its first five years.

Increased awareness about, and collaboration around, age-friendly principles and actions

Both the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that AFO has succeeded in raising awareness about age-inclusivity, about the AFO initiative, and about the importance of an age-friendly lens. For example, 68% of the respondents had heard of AFO, and 26% had attended informational meetings or educational sessions about AFO. While there is likely some bias in these numbers based on who heard about and completed the survey, 61% said they were aware of the work of AFO but had not participated in any way. This latter statistic suggests that awareness about AFO was not limited to “insiders” who had been directly involved.

A second indicator of success in elevating the importance of age-inclusiveness came from the focus groups and interviews. There was frequent mention of the fact that the City of Oxford had included AFO representatives, and an aging lens, in their comprehensive planning process. As a result of the city’s inclusivity, one of the themes that influenced the development of the comprehensive plan was “focus on becoming a complete, multi-generational, and multi-cultural community”. Some of the other themes and goals reflected in city’s plan map directly to the domains of livability that are central to an age-friendly community, such as affordable housing for people at all incomes and life stages, and safe and efficient transportation. AFO is named in the plan as a potential partner for implementation of the city’s goals. Overall, there was a strong impression that AFO has succeeded in “getting a seat at the table” with community planners and leaders. Similarly, there was a clear message that AFO has broadened, deepened, and strengthened collaborative relationships among organizations and individuals interested in Oxford’s livability for people of all ages and stages of life.

Progress implementing AFO initiatives

The action plan submitted by AFO in December of 2019 focused on four livability domains determined to be of high priority and feasible to address. Those domains were

housing, transportation, community and health services, and communication and information. Three months after the action plan was finalized, the COVID-19 shutdown occurred. Plans for housing, health services, and communications and information moved ahead, but little progress was possible on the transportation domain.

AFO contributed to advocacy and ongoing conversations about affordable housing in Oxford. In the 2023 survey, 73% of respondents had heard about efforts to bring affordable housing for older adults to Oxford, and a high proportion of those who had heard about it wanted to learn more about specifics such as location, affordability, and design. Those ongoing conversations within the community and with housing developers culminated in a huge success: In June of 2023, Oxford City Council voted to allow the construction of an affordable housing complex for families and older adults.

A monumental success of AFO was in the area of communication and information. This was a high priority identified in the 2018 community needs assessment, but the need was magnified during COVID-19. In response, the AFO team conceptualized, designed, and launched “O-Town News”, a newsletter providing information about community events and COVID-19 testing and vaccine information. The newsletter was made available in paper form by postal mail and also electronically distributed by email. Thanks to funding provided by the City of Oxford, the first issue was released October 31, 2020. Distribution continued intermittently throughout 2021 and 2022 through private donations and another grant from the McCullough-Hyde Foundation. In the 2023 survey, 50% of respondents said they had received O-Town News, and 29% said that O-Town News was a source they typically use to find out what is going on in the community.

The formation, development, and current operation of AFO yielded many valuable insights for its own continued effectiveness, but also for other communities working on age-friendly initiatives. The following insights and advice came from focus groups and interviews:

- Champions are important to build and sustain grassroots support.
- An informal structure can be appropriate in the early stages, but a more formal structure with consistent communication, clear expectations, and agreed-upon roles and timelines is important for the long-term sustainability of an age-friendly initiative.
- Stakeholder engagement at every stage helps to build buy-in, and strengthens the action plan.
- Succession planning is crucial for moving to the next stage, especially when the key champions step down.

Impact

The quantitative data from the community surveys also provided evidence that AFO made an impact. As noted, four livability domains (housing, transportation, community and health services, and communication and information) were identified based on the 2018 community needs assessment and were the focus of the goals, strategies, and actions for AFO's first cycle. In order to assess the progress made in those prioritized domains and get a second cross-sectional look at community priorities for the new AFO cycle, the 2023 survey again asked the respondents to select the top three areas from the list of eight livability domains that are most important for Oxford to address. These findings, presented in Table 1, are based on cross-sectional snapshots at two different points in time; they do not represent longitudinal changes within the same group of survey respondents, but they do suggest that there have been important changes in the community.

Housing (chosen by 74% of the respondents in 2023 as a high priority), health and wellness services (52%), and transportation (51%) were the domains most likely to have been selected as one of the top priorities. These were the same top three domains selected by the respondents in 2018 survey. However, the share of respondents reporting housing and health and wellness as important were higher in 2023. The increased importance of housing among the 2023 survey respondents could reflect the increased awareness among Oxford residents about needs and efforts towards senior housing, perhaps increasing expectations about appropriate and affordable housing. Similarly, COVID-19 could have contributed to the increased importance of the health and wellness domain.

Communication was one of the top four priorities for 2018 but dropped down to fifth in 2023. In addition, there was a notable drop in the transportation domain in 2023. Instead, social participation/ inclusion/ educational opportunities moved up to fourth on the list. These shifts in priorities could reflect respondent opinions that the communication need had been somewhat ameliorated thanks to O-Town News. From these quantitative data, the focus groups, and anecdotal information, this channel of communication does help people feel more connected and aware of happenings in Oxford. This is a significant achievement for AFO. The increased importance of social participation could reflect heightened awareness about the negative impacts of social isolation that resulted from stringent measures of social distancing and isolation that were in place during COVID-19. The importance of the social participation domain could also be related to higher expectations for what is possible in the Oxford area community.

Table 1. Percentage Choosing Each Domain as One of Top 3 Priorities for Oxford		
Domain	2023 Survey	2018 Survey
Housing	74.3%	65.0%
Transportation	51.8%	55.6%
Health and wellness services	52.2%	51.6%
Social participation, inclusion, and educational opportunities	37.8%	27.4%
Communication	20.5%	30.3%
Job opportunities	19.3%	17.0%
Volunteering and civic engagement opportunities	14.9%	12.3%
Outdoor spaces & buildings	18.5%	14.4%
Other	5.6%	10.8%

EVALUATION QUESTION 2:

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THE NEXT CYCLE OF AGE-FRIENDLY OXFORD?

In addition to directly asking the respondents to pick areas that Oxford might need to focus on moving forward, the survey asked about the importance, availability, and awareness of specific features of each of these major domains. To effectively use this more detailed data in planning the next 5-year cycle of AFO, we calculated gap scores for each of the specific items, and an average gap score for each domain of livability.

Understanding gap scores

For each domain, there were two sets of questions about a list of specific features or services. The first set of questions asked about the importance of having those particular amenities, and the second set asked whether or not those features are available in the Oxford area. Figure 1 illustrates the set of questions that assessed the importance of having select items/services in Oxford and Figure 2 illustrates the availability of same set of items/services in Oxford area for the housing domain.

Figure 1. Question Assessment the Importance of Having Select Items/Services in Oxford Area

17. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area? Circle the number that most closely matches your current thinking.

	Not at all important		Neutral		Extremely important
	1	2	3	4	5
Affordable housing dedicated to older adults	1	2	3	4	5
Accessible homes with universal design features (e.g., roll-in-showers)	1	2	3	4	5
Affordable housing options for adults of varying income levels	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 2. Question assessing the availability of select items/services in Oxford area

18. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following? Check the response that most closely matches your current thinking.

	Yes	No	Not sure
Affordable housing dedicated to older adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessible homes with universal design features (i.e., roll-in-showers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affordable housing options for adults of varying income levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Based on these two sets of questions, gap scores were calculated for each item. If the item was reported as not important to have in Oxford or if it was important to have and already present, the item received a score of 0, indicating no gap was perceived in that item. If the item was reported as important to have in Oxford, the item received either a score of 1 or 2 depending on the availability of that item. An important item that was reported unavailable in Oxford received a gap score of 2 and if respondents were not sure if the item was available in Oxford, that item received a score of 1. While the overall percentage who perceive a gap on a particular item is important, it can also be useful to know if that gap is due to unavailability of the service/amenity or to the respondents' lack of awareness about whether Oxford has that feature or not. An overview of the gap scores and types is provided in Table 2.

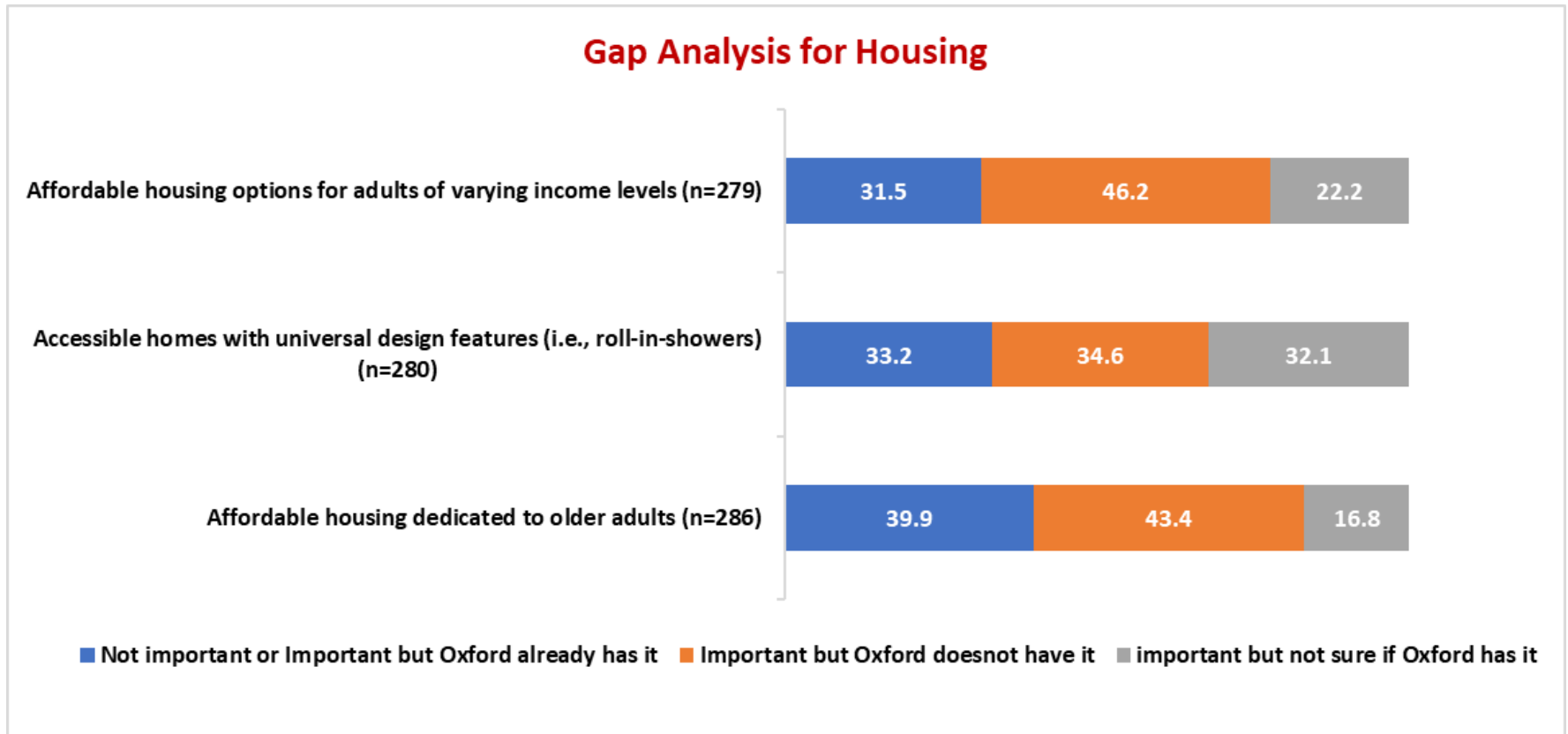
Table 2. Gap Scores & Types	
Gap Score	Type of Gap
0	Not important or Important and Oxford already has it
1	Important, but not sure if Oxford has it
2	Important, but Oxford does not have it

Housing

Housing was the top-ranked domain in the 2018 survey and was included in the AFO action plan. It also was selected by the respondents as the top ranked priority and had the highest gap score in the 2023 survey. Several questions related to housing were asked in the 2023 survey. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said that it is extremely important to live in their own home as they age. Similarly, the majority said that it is extremely important for the Oxford area to utilize universal housing design (58%) and 52% of the respondents reported that they will need to make minor modifications to their own home so they can stay there as they age.

Figure 3 illustrates the gap analysis finding on each item assessed in the housing domain. Findings suggest that almost two-thirds of respondents perceived gaps in all three items assessed in this domain, however, the type of gap varied. For example, 68% and 66% of respondents said that it is important to have affordable housing options for adults of varying income levels and accessible homes with universal design features in Oxford, respectively. The source of the gap is worth noting, as it speaks to the cause of the gap, and then also, to some extent, to the solutions. An “I don’t know if we have this” gap can be addressed through information, while a “we don’t have it gap” might require some new infrastructure. For example, 46% of the housing gaps existed because Oxford does not have it; only 22% was due to respondents not being sure if Oxford has them. For another item, accessible homes with universal design features, there was almost an equal mix of respondents who perceived gaps due to Oxford not having (34%) and not knowing (32%) if Oxford had those kinds of homes.

Figure 3. Gap Analysis for Housing



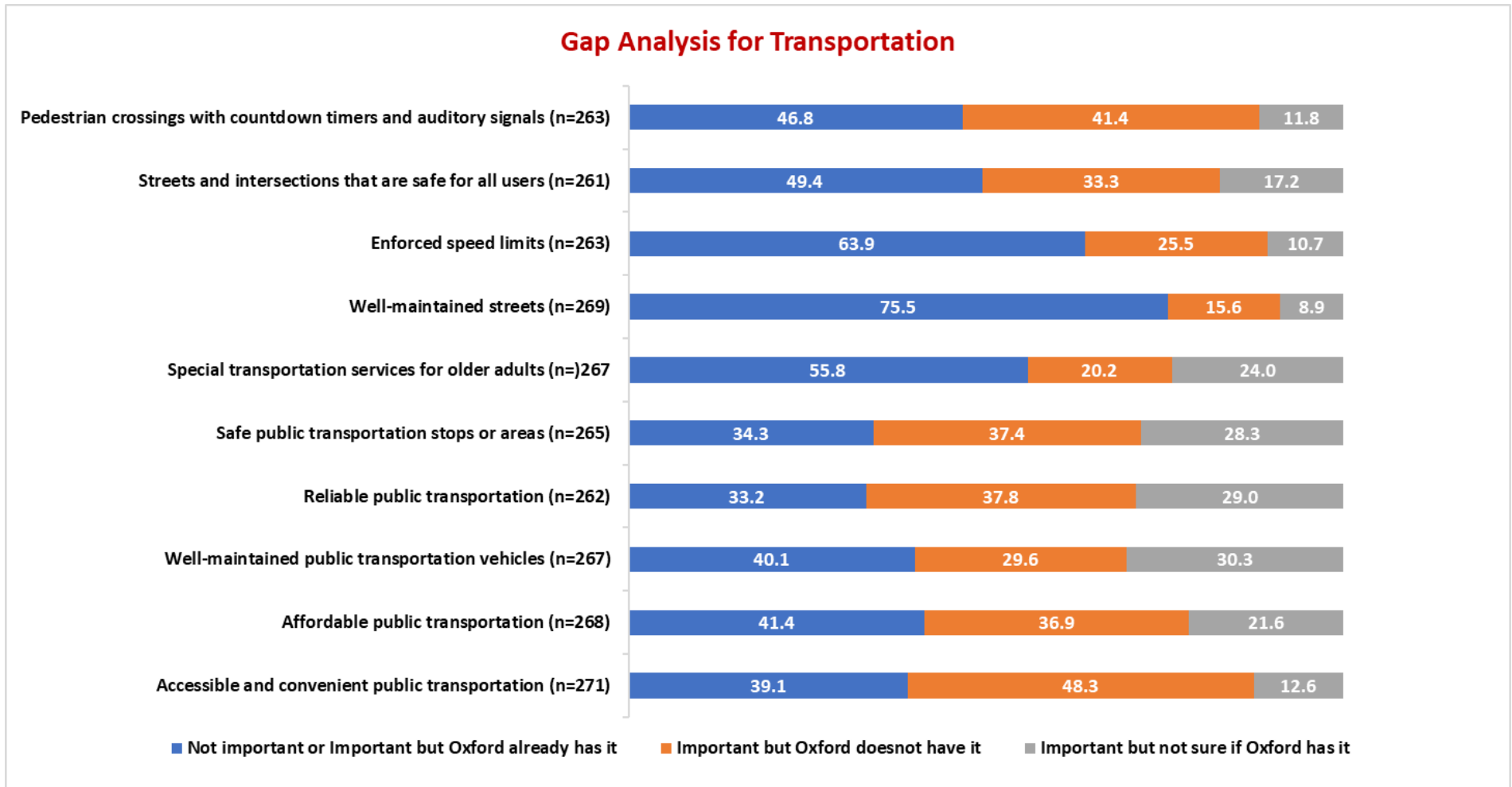
Transportation

Transportation was the second domain included in the AFO action plan and was also indicated as a top priority by respondents in 2023. Although 93% of respondents reported to be self-drivers when they had to get around for various activities in the Oxford area, about 43% also reported that they walked or got a ride from friends/or family (25%). Only 5% reported using a special transportation service such as one for older adults.

Respondents were also asked a series of questions related to the Butler County Regional Transportation Authority (BCRTA) buses that operate in Oxford and the surrounding areas. Most (69%) reported that the bus stops were not close to their house. As shown in Figure 4, more than 50% of respondents reported gaps existed in public transportation (accessibility and convenience, affordability, well-maintained) in Oxford; not being aware of the availability of services contributed to a good portion of the gap percentage. Interestingly 32% said they did not know where/how to find the bus schedule and 24% said they thought the BCRTA buses were only for Miami students. These findings show that Oxford can address this gap on the transportation domain to some extent by increasing transportation awareness among residents, such as organizing programs to navigate the BCRTA app, making bus schedules publicly available, and working with BCRTA to develop new bus stops closer to non-student housing areas.

Figure 4 illustrates the gap analysis finding on each item assessed in the transportation domain. A majority of the respondents did not perceive gaps in items such as enforced speed limits (63%), well-maintained streets (75%) and special transportation services for older adults (55%). However, safe public transportation stops or areas; reliable, accessible, and convenient public transportation were among the items that showed higher perceived gaps. More respondents perceived gaps due to not having those services in Oxford compared to being not sure if those services existed and this was true for almost all items in this domain.

Figure 4. Gap Analysis for Transportation

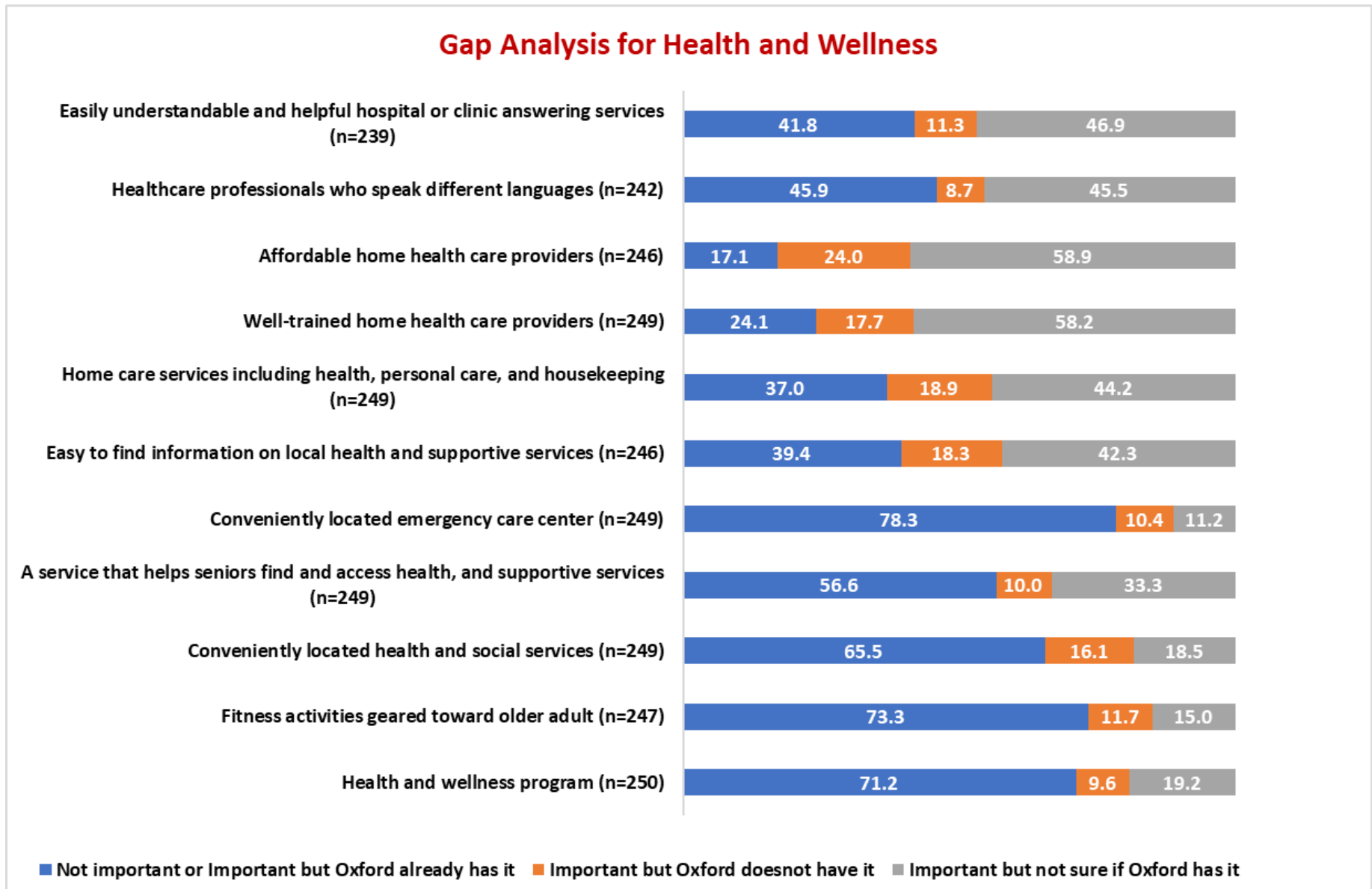


Health and Wellness

Health and wellness was the third domain selected as a part of the AFO action plan, which was also indicated as one of the priority areas needing to be addressed by the 2023 respondents. In general, respondents reported having very good health (43%) and said that either they or their spouse did not have any disability or chronic disease that keeps them from fully participating in work, school, housework, or other activities (70%). Almost 15% said they currently provide unpaid care or support to an adult as a caregiver and about 59% said that it is likely that they will provide unpaid care to an adult in the future.

Figure 5 illustrates the gap analysis finding on each item assessed in the health and wellness domain. Among the 11 items assessed under this domain, more than half of respondents said five such items (e.g., conveniently located emergency care center, health and social services, services that help older adults find and access health and supportive services, fitness activities geared toward older adults, and health and wellness programs) were important and available in Oxford. However, more than half of respondents identified a gap in affordable, high-quality home care, multilingual healthcare providers, and easily understandable and helpful hospital or clinic services, and the gaps were primarily due to respondents' uncertainty of whether Oxford has these services. Similar to transportation domain, these gaps suggest the need to increase awareness regarding health and wellness services, programs, and activities available in Oxford to its residents.

Figure 5. Gap Analysis for Health and Wellness

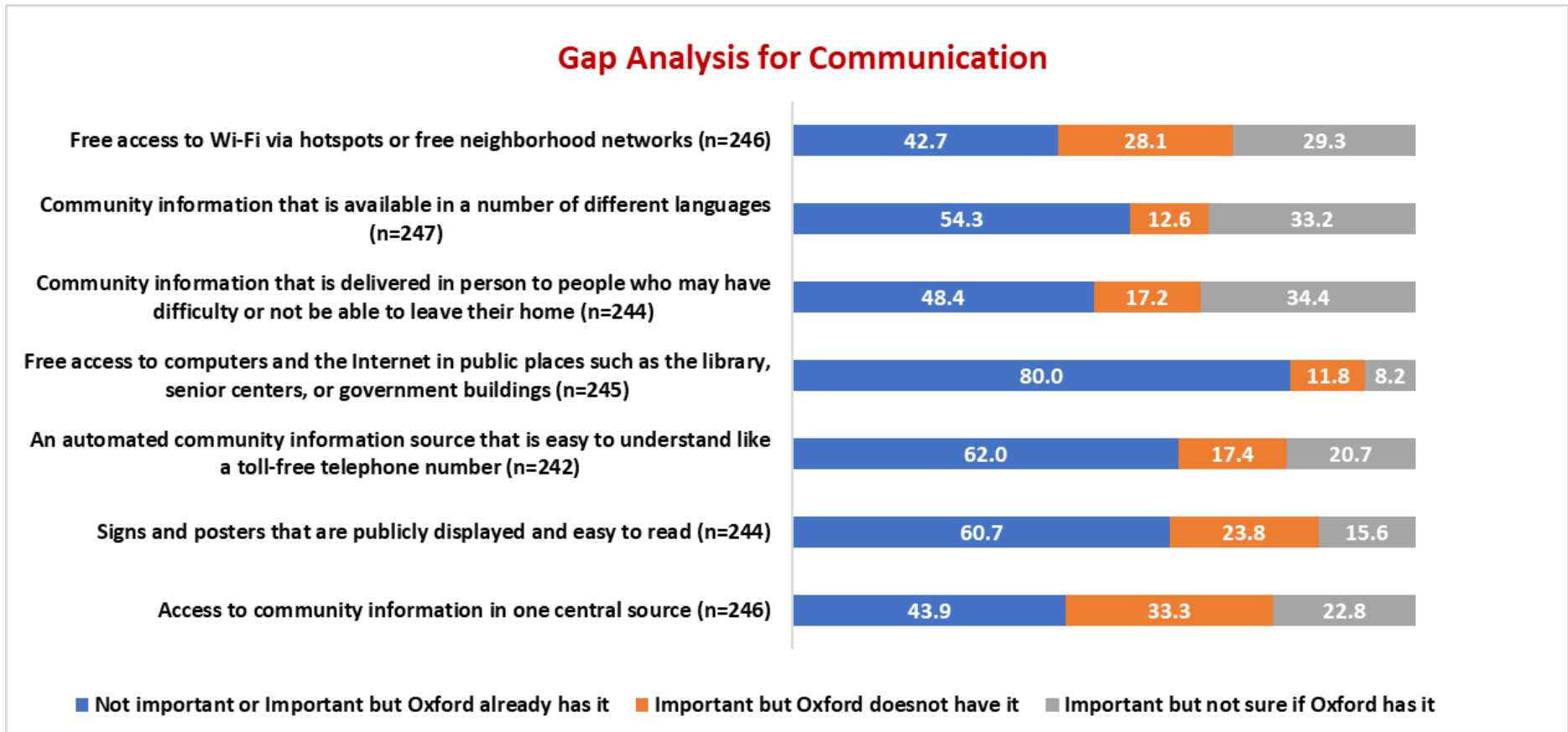


Community Connections

Communication and information was the other domain selected as a part of the AFO action plan which was also perceived as important in the 2023 survey. Approximately 50% respondents reported contacting distant family, friends, or neighbors via phone, email, in person, or using social media daily and 87% said they had friends or family to help when needed at any time of the day or night. Although 77% of respondents said they go online at least once a day for things like email and getting news, they reported word of mouth (72%) as the most frequent source of information about things going on in the Oxford area. The next most-frequent sources of information reported were the City of Oxford website (42%) and Oxford Seniors (39%). Nearly half (44%) of the total respondents reported that they will turn to the Age-Friendly Oxford Community Resource Directory if they, a family member, or friend needed information about services for older adults such as caregiving services, home-delivered meals, home repair, medical transport, and social activities. This resource directory is a result of the AFO initiative; thus, this finding demonstrates the positive impact AFO initiative has made on the lives of Oxford residents.

Figure 6 illustrates the gap analysis findings for each item assessed in the community connections domain. A few examples of items that most residents perceived as gaps were free access to Wi-Fi via hotspots or free neighborhood networks, in-person delivery of community information to those in need, and one central source to access community information.

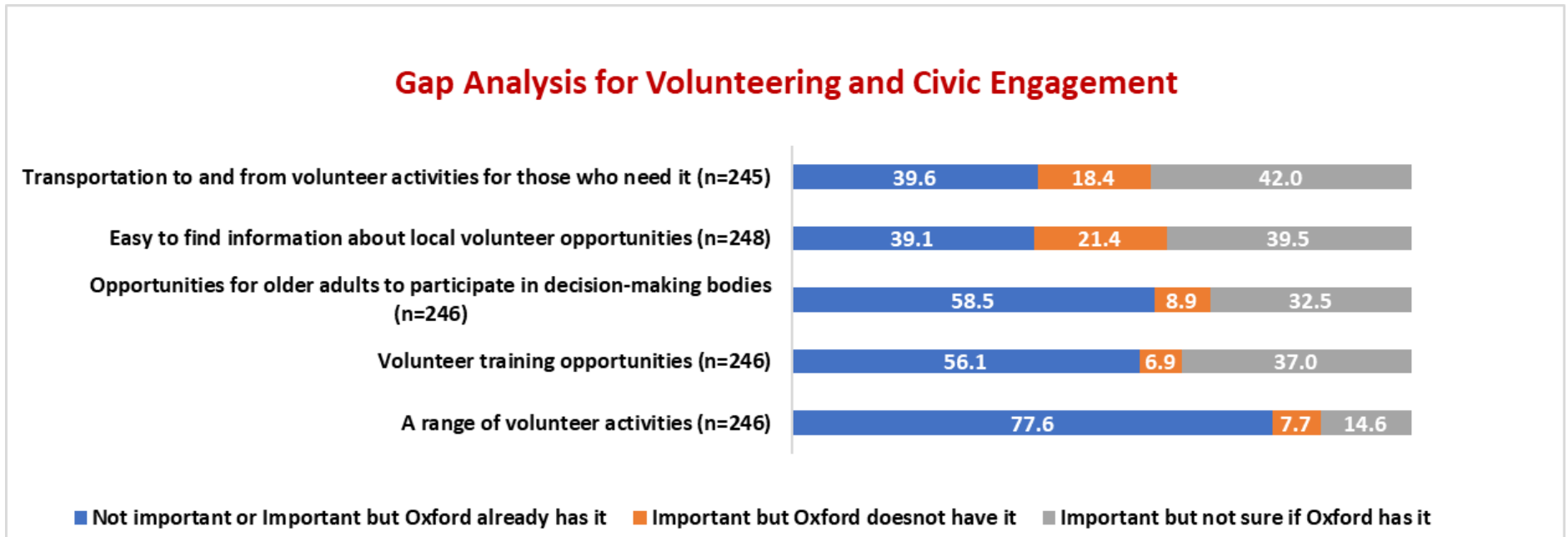
Figure 6. Gap Analysis for Communication



Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Figure 7 illustrates the gap analysis finding for each item assessed in the volunteering and civic engagement domain. More than half of the respondents reported no gaps in items such as opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making bodies, volunteer training opportunities, and a range of volunteer activities in Oxford. In contrast, almost 60% of respondents reported gaps in the availability of transportation to and from volunteer activities and easy-to-find information about local volunteer opportunities.

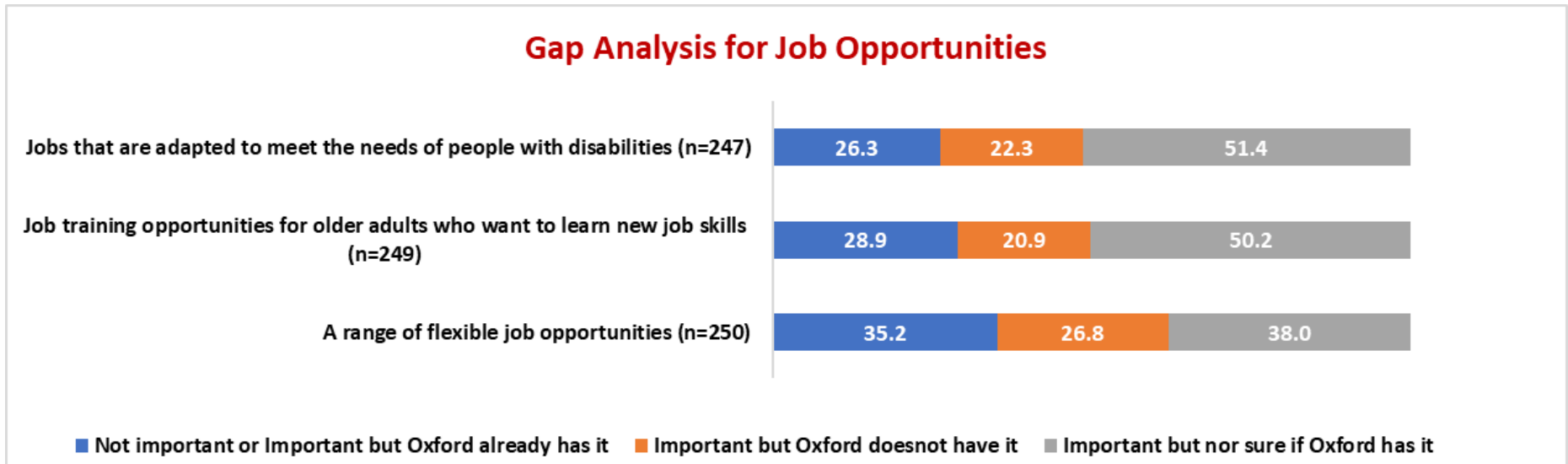
Figure 7. Gap Analysis for Volunteering and Civic Engagement



Job Opportunities

Figure 8 illustrates the gap analysis finding for each item assessed in the job opportunities domain. Almost 70% of the respondents reported gaps in all three items, with a slightly lower percentage (64%) for the item that assessed a range of flexible job opportunities. These gaps were largely due to respondents not knowing whether the item was available in the Oxford area.

Figure 8. Gap Analysis for Job Opportunities



Open-ended responses

At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to share their general thoughts about Oxford by answering two open-ended questions. The first asked what would help the respondent feel more included in Oxford. A few respondents reported that they felt included, while the majority mentioned the need to continue addressing the communication domain. Examples of communication-related responses include “A news source such as the former Oxford Press”, “A town newspaper”, “A locally produced accessible source of information on important events and issues”, “Easy access to communication”, and “Better communication, community events including all ages and abilities...” Other responses included public transportation, better housing, and job opportunities.

The second open-ended question asked for any additional comments on making Oxford more livable for people of all ages. Housing was the most common theme, followed by transportation. Examples of housing-related responses include “Affordable housing please.”, “More low income senior housing”, “More affordable housing for those who need care”, and “Housing is the biggest issue for all age ranges in Oxford.” Other responses included health and wellness and intergenerational opportunities.

Average gap scores for each domain

The gap score for each domain is the average of the gap scores across all items in that domain. After calculating the individual gap scores for each item for each respondent, the number of non-missing items that were answered in the domain and non-missing perceived gaps were calculated. Then, the overall mean gap score for each domain was calculated as the ratio of the number of non-missing perceived gaps over non-missing items answered. The individual domain gap score was multiplied by 100 so that it could be reported as the average percentage of perceived gap across all items in a particular domain.

Figure 9. Average Gap Score Calculation

$$\text{Average percent gap score for domain A} = \left[\frac{\text{Number of non-missing perceived gaps in domain A}}{\text{Number of non-missing items in domain A}} \right] \times 100$$

As shown in Table 3 job opportunities (69%, n=252), housing (64%, n=287), transportation (50%, n=275), and health and wellness services (48%, n=254) were among the top domains with the highest mean percent gap score. Three of the domains with the highest average gaps scores (housing, transportation and health and wellness

services) are also the three top-ranking domains ranked selected as priorities in the “choose the top three priority areas” question (See Table 1). The presence of job opportunities in this list of biggest gaps is due to the fact that people thought that job opportunities were important, but they did not know if they are available or not.

Table 3: Overall Average Gap Score for Each Domain, 2023	
Domains	(%)
Job opportunities	69.8
Housing	64.1
Transportation	50.6
Health and wellness services	48.7
Volunteering and civic engagement opportunities	45.5
Community connections	43.8

CONCLUSIONS

Age-Friendly Oxford initiatives have been instrumental in moving the Oxford area community forward toward goals of livability and inclusivity for people of all ages. Despite the challenges that COVID-19 posed to the AFO initiative in the implementation of its action plan, there are several victories to be celebrated. The successful launch and distribution of O-Town news is one of those. This collective effort created an important resource for Oxford residents during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep informed of testing and vaccine activities and events happening in the Oxford area. Shortly after the close of the 2023 survey, AFO received a grant from the Oxford Community Foundation to produce 12 monthly issues of O-Town, which have been well-received by the community. The Oxford Community Resource Directory is another valuable product of the AFO’s first 5-year cycle, providing older adults and family members with a single document that describes services and resources available in the Oxford area. Additionally, the progress that has been made in securing affordable housing is certainly due in part to the advocacy efforts of AFO leadership.

These measurable domain-specific accomplishments are very significant, and they speak well to the adaptability, commitment, and effectiveness of the AFO co-leaders, Leadership Advisory Group, Domain Teams, community partners, and volunteers. Perhaps one of the greatest impacts of AFO’s first five years is the increased community awareness of issues related to aging, ageism, and livability. That increased awareness is reflected in the fact that 68% of survey respondents had heard of AFO. It is also significant that the City of Oxford included AFO leaders, and an aging lens, in

their comprehensive planning process. As a result, one of the themes of that plan is a “focus on becoming a complete, multi-generational, and multi-cultural community”. This commitment speaks volumes to the success of AFO in building partnerships and collaborations that will certainly continue to bolster age-inclusivity efforts.

Further evidence of the success of the first five years of AFO comes from the AFO 2023 Community Survey in which 87% of respondents rated Oxford as a good to excellent place to live as one ages, and 56% rated it as a very good retirement destination.

A final testimony to the current strength of AFO is reflected in the enthusiastic and talented new and continuing leadership that has stepped in to accept the torch lit by the passion and commitment of AFO’s co-founders, Ann Whelpton and Jessie Leek. This collaborative multi-sector group of stakeholders is well-positioned to move AFO forward.

REFERENCES

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- ² Young, M. A., Dhakal, U., Kessler, V., & Kunkel, S. R. (2019). Age-Friendly Oxford Community Needs Assessment: Report to the Age-Friendly Oxford Leadership Advisory Group. Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University. Available at <https://agefriendlyoxford.org/reports>
- ³ Age-Friendly Oxford. (2019). Year Two Report and Action Plan. Available at <https://agefriendlyoxford.org/reports>

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Table A1. General Characteristics of Respondents	
<i>Did you complete the 2018 AFO Community Needs Assessment Survey? (n=321)</i>	
Yes	23.1%
No	46.7%
Not sure	30.2%
<i>Among those who filled out the survey in 2018; Did you fill out the mailed survey or the online survey? (n=73)</i>	
Mailed	28.8%
Online	67.1%
Both	4.1%
<i>How did you hear about this survey you are filling out now? (n=325)</i>	
Friends/relatives/neighbors	16.0%
Facebook or other social media	23.4%
Age-Friendly Oxford listserv	26.8%
O-Town News	5.8%
Oxford Seniors	24.9%
Others	24.9%
<i>Where in the Oxford area do you reside? (n=325)</i>	
Within the Mile Square (mile around center of town)	10.8%
Outside the Mile Square but still within city limits	55.4%
In Oxford Township but outside city limits	15.7%
Outside Oxford Township	11.7%
Other	6.5%

Table A2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	
Age (n=237)	
Less than 50 years	14.4%
50-59 years	13.5%
60-69 years	26.2%
70-79 years	29.1%
80 years and older	16.9%
Gender (n=250)	
Male	30.4%
Female	68.8%
Non-binary	0.8%
Race/Ethnicity (n=242)	
White/Caucasian	93.4%
Asians	1.8%
Hispanic/Latinx	0.9%
Multiracial/multiethnic	2.1%
Highest Level of Education Completed (n=247)	
Some high school	0.4%
High school graduate, GED, or equivalent	6.5%
Some college, 2-year college degree, Career Tech or trade certification	14.2%
4-year college degree	21.5%
Graduate or professional degree(s)	57.5%
Employment Status (n=255)	
Employed, full-time	10.6%
Employed, part-time	28.2%
Retired	51.0%
Unemployed, but looking for work	1.6%
Not in paid labor force for other reasons	3.1%
Others	5.5%
Annual Household income (n=253)	
Less than \$15,000	4.4%
\$15,000 to \$49,999	17.4%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	26.5%
\$100,000 or more	29.3%
Prefer not to answer	22.5%
Among those who reported annual Household income (n=196)	
Less than \$15,000	5.6%
\$15,000 to \$49,999	22.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	34.2%
\$100,000 or more	37.8%

Table A3. General Awareness of and Involvement in Age-Friendly Oxford	
<i>Have you heard of Age-Friendly Oxford? (n=306)</i>	
Yes	68.0%
No	32.0%
<i>Which of the following best describe your interactions with Age-Friendly Oxford? (n=207)</i>	
I am aware of their work but have not participated in any way.	61.4%
I have visited the Age-Friendly Oxford website.	26.6%
I have followed or liked the Age-Friendly Oxford Facebook page.	17.9%
I have attended informational meetings or educational sessions hosted by Age-Friendly Oxford.	25.1%
I have participated in an Age-Friendly Oxford advisory group, planning group, committee, or work team.	14.0%

Table A4. General Awareness Regarding Housing	
<i>Have you received any information regarding home modification benefits, costs, and resources in the Oxford area in the past few years? (n=297)</i>	
Yes	13.5%
No	79.8%
Not sure	6.7%
<i>Have you heard about efforts to bring affordable senior housing to the Oxford area? (n=296)</i>	
Yes	73.3%
No	26.7%
<i>Do you have any of the following questions or concerns related to senior housing? (n=190)</i>	
Affordability	83.7%
Location	77.4%
Size of the dwelling	53.2%
Design	57.4%
Social opportunities	44.7%
Others	17.4%

Table A5. General Awareness Regarding Communications	
<i>Are you aware of the Age-Friendly Oxford Community Resource Directory that was designed to provide helpful information to those living in the Oxford area and surrounding townships? (n=273)</i>	
Yes, but I do not have access to it.	16.5%
Yes, and I have access to it.	18.7%
No	64.8%
<i>Have you ever received the O-Town News newsletter distributed by Age-Friendly Oxford? (n=274)</i>	
Yes	49.6%
No	50.4%
<i>Did you receive an electronic version of the O-Town News or a printed copy? (n=132)</i>	
Electronic	48.5%
Printed	35.6%
Both	15.9%

APPENDIX B: DOMAINS

Housing

Table B1. Aging in Place	
<i>How important is it for you to be able to live in your own home as you age? (n=300)</i>	
Extremely important	64.7%
Somewhat important	29.3%
Not very important	2.7%
Not at all important	1.7%
Not sure	1.7%
<i>How important do you think it is for the Oxford area to utilize universal housing design? (n=300)</i>	
Extremely important	58.0%
Somewhat important	34.7%
Not very important	3.7%
Not at all important	0.7%
Not sure	3.0%
<i>Do you think you will need to make modifications to your home so you can stay there as you age? (n=298)</i>	
Yes, major modifications	18.8%
Yes, minor modifications	52.0%
No modifications	17.1%
Not sure	12.1%
<i>How important is it for you to remain in the Oxford area as you age? (n=324)</i>	
Extremely important	22.8%
Very important	32.1%
Somewhat important	25.0%
Not very important	12.4%
Not at all important	7.7%
<i>Thinking about your life in the future, do you think you will move to a different community, move to a different residence within your current community, or stay in your current residence? (n=325)</i>	
Move to a different community	15.7%
Move into a different residence within your current community	19.7%
Stay in your current residence	64.6%
<i>Overall, how would you rate the Oxford area as a place for people to live as they age? (n=255)</i>	
Excellent	15.7%
Very good	43.9%
Good	26.3%
Fair	12.6%
Poor	1.6%
<i>Would you recommend the Oxford area as a retirement destination? (n=255)</i>	
Yes	56.5%
Not sure	33.3%
No	10.2%

Table B2. Reasons to Move from Current Home				
<i>As you think about growing older, if you were to consider moving from your current home, would the following be a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to move?</i>				
	Major factor	Minor factor	Not a factor	Not sure
Having a different size home that better meets your needs (n=301)	47.8%	25.3%	23.3%	3.7%
Maintaining your current home will be too expensive (n=298)	18.5%	24.2%	51.0%	6.4%
Fearing for your personal safety or having security concerns (n=297)	17.5%	26.6%	54.6%	1.4%
Wanting a home that will help you live independently as you age (n=301)	63.1%	20.3%	15.6%	1.0%
Wanting to live in an area that has better health care facilities (n=300)	32.7%	28.3%	34.3%	4.7%
Wanting to be closer to family (n=293)	42.0%	20.1%	34.8%	3.1%
Needing more access to public transportation (n=300)	22.3%	37.7%	36.3%	3.7%
Wanting to live in a different climate (n=296)	12.2%	29.1%	54.4%	4.4%
Wanting an area that has a lower cost of living (n=297)	14.8%	31.3%	49.5%	4.4%
Limited availability of home health care services in Oxford (n=298)	22.8%	31.9%	30.2%	15.1%
Other (n=57)	31.58%	7.02	33.33	28.07

Table B3. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?					
	Not at all important (1)	2	Neutral (3)	4	Extremely important (5)
Affordable housing dedicated to older adults (n=289)	1.7%	7.3%	15.2%	37.7%	38.1%
Accessible homes with universal design features (e.g., roll-in-showers) (n=284)	0.7%	4.9%	16.9%	41.9%	35.6%
Affordable housing options for adults of varying income levels (n=284)	2.1%	3.2%	13.4%	27.5%	53.9%

Table B4. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following?			
	Yes	No	Not sure
Affordable housing dedicated to older adults (n=287)	20.2%	55.1%	24.7%
Accessible homes with universal design features (e.g., roll-in-showers) (n=282)	16%	41.8%	42.2%
Affordable housing options for adults of varying income levels (n=284)	16.9%	53.9%	29.2%

Transportation

Table B5. Getting Around in the City

Table B5. Getting Around in the City	
How do you get around for various activities in the Oxford area? (n=287)	
Drive myself	93.4%
Friends and/or family drive me	25.8%
Walk	42.6%
Ride a bike	18.8%
Use public transportation	3.1%
Take a taxi/cab/Uber/Lyft	2.8%
Use a special transportation service, such as one for older adults	5.6%
Other	1.0%
Please CHECK ALL THAT APPLY related to your use of the Butler County Regional Transportation Authority (BCRTA) buses that operate in Oxford and the surrounding areas. (n=284)	
I did not know such buses existed.	2.8%
I think those buses are only for Miami students.	24.4%
I do not know where/how to find the bus schedule.	32.8%
The bus schedule does not match my needs.	14.8%
The bus stops are not close to my house.	69.2%

Table B6. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?

Table B6. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?					
	Not at all important (1)	2	Neutral (3)	4	Extremely important (5)
Accessible and convenient public transportation (n=280)	1.4%	3.9%	20.4%	29.3%	45.0%
Affordable public transportation (n=278)	2.2%	2.9%	18.0%	33.5%	43.5%
Well-maintained public transportation vehicles (n=275)	1.5%	2.2%	15.6%	40.7%	40.0%
Reliable public transportation (n=272)	1.1%	2.2%	13.2%	35.7%	47.8%
Safe public transportation stops or areas (n=275)	1.1%	1.8%	12.0%	34.6%	50.6%
Special transportation services for older adults (n=275)	0.7%	3.3%	14.9%	36.7%	44.4%
Well-maintained streets (n=274)	—	0.4%	8.0%	45.6%	46.0%
Enforced speed limits n=275)	0.7%	5.1%	21.1%	33.8%	39.3%
Streets and intersections that are safe for all users n=275)	—	1.5%	5.8%	37.8%	54.9%
Pedestrian crossings with countdown timers and auditory signals (n=274)	0.7%	4.4%	16.4%	32.9%	45.6%

Table B7. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Accessible and convenient public transportation (n=272)	15.4%	68%	16.5%
Affordable public transportation (n=270)	22.6%	47.8%	29.6%
Well-maintained public transportation vehicles (n=269)	24.9%	38.7%	36.4%
Reliable public transportation (n=267)	20.2%	46.4%	33.3%
Safe public transportation stops or areas (n=268)	24.3%	43.7%	32.1%
Special transportation services for older adults (n=270)	42.2%	25.2%	32.6%
Well-maintained streets (n=273)	72.2%	17.2%	10.6%
Enforced speed limits (n=265)	51.3%	33.6%	15.1%
Streets and intersections that are safe for all users (n=263)	46%	34.6%	19.4%
Pedestrian crossings with countdown timers and auditory signals (n=267)	29.6%	55.1%	15.4%

Community Connections

Table B8. Social Engagement

<i>How often do you have contact with family, friends, or neighbors who do not live with you? (n=277)</i>	
Everyday	50.2%
Several times a week, but not everyday	36.8%
Once a week	5.4%
Once every 2 or 3 weeks	4.7%
Once a month	2.2%
Less than monthly	0.7%
Never	0.0%
<i>If you were in trouble, do you have friends or family who can help you at any time of the day or night? (n=277)</i>	
Yes	87.7%
No	3.6%
Unsure	8.7%
<i>In general, how often do you go online for things like email, getting news, paying bills, or buying products? This includes access from home, work, a mobile device (such as a smartphone), or someplace else. (n=269)</i>	
More than once a day	77.0%
About once a day	10.8%
Several times a week	5.2%
Once a week	0.7%
Once every 2 or 3 weeks	1.1%
Never	0.4%
<i>How do you typically find out what is going on in the Oxford Community? [CHECK ALL THAT APPLY] (n=269)</i>	
The City of Oxford website	42.4%
Oxford Seniors	39.8%
O-Town News	29.0%
Word of mouth	72.5%
Enjoy Oxford/Oxford Visitors Bureau	34.9%

Table B8. Social Engagement

The Oxford Village Network listserv	10.0%
Facebook group	33.8%
Faith-based organization, (i.e., churches, synagogues)	15.6%
Other	19.0%
<i>What social media platforms do you use regularly? (n=273)</i>	
Facebook	68.9%
Twitter	8.8%
Instagram	23.8%
LinkedIn	15.0%
Other	5.1%
None	25.3%

Table B9. Community Resources

If you, a family member, or friend needed information about services for older adults such as caregiving services, home-delivered meals, home repair, medical transport, and social activities, would you turn to the following resources?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Oxford Senior Center (n=266)	88.0%	4.5%	7.5%
O-Town News (n=249)	25.7%	22.5%	51.8%
Age-Friendly Oxford Community Resource Directory (n=252)	44.1%	19.4%	36.5%
Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio (n=248)	50.4%	19.8%	29.8%
Family or friends (n=258)	93.0%	2.3%	4.7%
Local nonprofit organizations (e.g., LifeSpan, Family Resource Center) (n=244)	49.6%	22.5%	27.9%
AARP (n=241)	35.3%	36.5%	28.2%
Faith-based organizations (n=242)	43.8%	39.3%	16.9%
Internet (n=249)	73.9%	12.9%	13.3%
Phone book (n=233)	21.5%	61.4%	17.2%
My doctor or other health care professional (n=252)	81.0%	10.7%	8.3%
Local government offices such as the Department of Health (n=237)	42.6%	27.0%	30.4%
Lane Public Library (n=245)	58.8%	22.5%	18.8%
Other, please specify_ (n=32)	9.4%	25.0%	65.6%

Table B10. Belongingness

How often do you feel the following?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
I lack companionship. (n=268)	40.7%	33.2%	18.3%	7.8%
I feel left out. (n=267)	42.0%	31.5%	18.0%	8.6%
I feel isolated from others. (n=265)	44.2%	29.4%	20.4%	6.0%
I feel like I belong in this community. (n=271)	3.7%	9.6%	30.3%	56.5%
I feel supported in this community. (n=271)	3.7%	12.6%	34.7%	49.1%

Table B11. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?

	Not at all important (1)	2	Neutral (3)	4	Extremely important (5)
Access to community information in one central source (n=262)	2.3%	8.8%	26.3%	31.7%	30.9%
Signs and posters that are publicly displayed and easy to read (n=257)	4.7%	13.2%	30.0%	30.7%	21.4%
An automated community information source that is easy to understand like a toll-free telephone number (n=254)	7.5%	15.8%	35.0%	21.3%	20.5%
Free access to computers and the Internet in public places such as the library, senior centers, or government buildings (n=261)	4.2%	8.8%	14.9%	28.4%	43.7%
Community information that is delivered in person to people who may have difficulty or not be able to leave their home (n=258)	3.5%	11.2%	27.9%	25.2%	32.2%
Community information that is available in a number of different languages (n=259)	7.3%	14.7%	27.8%	30.1%	20.1%
Free access to Wi-Fi via hotspots or free neighborhood networks (n=259)	4.3%	7.3%	15.4%	32.4%	40.5%

Table B12. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Access to community information in one central source (n=249)	13.3%	49.4%	37.4%
Signs and posters that are publicly displayed and easy to read (n=249)	22.9%	47.8%	29.3%
An automated community information source that is easy to understand like a toll-free telephone number (n=250)	6.8%	44%	49.2%
Free access to computers and the Internet in public places such as the library, senior centers, or government buildings (n=249)	69.1%	18.1%	12.9%
Community information that is delivered in person to people who may have difficulty or not be able to leave their home (n=249)	10%	30.5%	59.4%
Community information that is available in a number of different languages (n=251)	9.6%	28.7%	61.8%
Free access to Wi-Fi via hotspots or free neighborhood networks (n=250)	19.6%	37.6%	42.8%

Health and Wellness

Table B13. Health and Well-being

Table B13. Health and Well-being	
<i>In general, when compared to most people your age, how would you rate your physical health? (n=253)</i>	
Excellent	22.5%
Very good	43.1%
Good	25.3%
Fair	7.1%
Poor	2.0%
<i>Do you or your spouse/partner have disability or chronic disease that keeps you from fully participating in work, school, housework, or other activities? (n=252)</i>	
Yes, myself	12.3%
Yes, my spouse/partner	10.7%
Yes, both me and my spouse/partner	2.4%
No	70.2%
Prefer not to answer	4.4%
<i>Are you currently a caregiver providing unpaid care or support to an adult? (n=252)</i>	
Yes	15.1%
No	84.9%
<i>How likely do you think it is that you will provide unpaid care to an adult in the future? (n=252)</i>	
Extremely likely	19.1%
Very likely	15.5%
Somewhat likely	25.8%
Not very likely	19.4%
Not at all likely	13.1%
Not sure	7.1%

Table B14. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?

	Not at all important (1)	2	Neutral (3)	4	Extremely important (5)
Health and wellness program (n=257)	—	3.1%	12.5%	37.7%	46.7%
Fitness activities geared toward older adult (n=254)	0.4%	4.3%	11.0%	42.1%	42.1%
Conveniently located health and social services (n=255)	0.4%	2.0%	8.2%	40.4%	49.0%
A service that helps seniors find and access health, and supportive services (n=256)	—	3.1%	8.6%	37.5%	50.8%
Conveniently located emergency care center (n=257)	0.4%	1.2%	7.0%	29.2%	62.3%
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services (n=254)	—	2.8%	9.5%	40.2%	47.6%
Home care services including health, personal care, and housekeeping (n=258)	0.4%	1.9%	13.2%	34.1%	50.4%

Table B14. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?

Well-trained home health care providers (n=256)	0.4%	0.8%	10.2%	29.3%	59.4%
Affordable home health care providers (n=256)	0.4%	1.6%	8.2%	30.1%	59.8%
Healthcare professionals who speak different languages (n=252)	5.2%	10.3%	28.6%	31.4%	24.6%
Easily understandable and helpful hospital or clinic answering services (n=253)	0.8%	4.4%	15.0%	30.0%	49.8%

Table B15. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following?

	Yes	No	Not sure
Health and wellness program (n=251)	59.8%	14%	26.3%
Fitness activities geared toward older adult (n=250)	64.8%	14.8%	20.4%
Conveniently located health and social services (n=250)	58.8%	18.4%	22.8%
A service that helps seniors find and access health, and supportive services (n=250)	50%	12%	38%
Conveniently located emergency care center (n=249)	74.7%	12.5%	12.9%
Easy to find information on local health and supportive services (n=248)	30.2%	21.8%	48%
Home care services including health, personal care, and housekeeping (n=249)	22.5%	22.9%	54.6%
Well-trained home health care providers (n=250)	14%	20.4%	65.6%
Affordable home health care providers (n=247)	8.1%	26.7%	65.2%
Healthcare professionals who speak different languages (n=244)	3.7%	16.8%	79.5%
Easily understandable and helpful hospital or clinic answering services (n=240)	25%	15.4%	59.6%

Volunteering and Civic Engagement

Table B16. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?

	Not at all important (1)	2	Neutral (3)	4	Extremely important (5)
A range of volunteer activities (n=2452)	1.6%	2.8%	24.2%	40.1%	31.4%
Volunteer training opportunities (n=250)	1.6%	5.2%	24.4%	44.8%	24.0%
Opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making bodies (n=250)	2.4%	5.2%	14.4%	38.4%	39.6%
Easy to find information about local volunteer opportunities (n=252)	1.6%	6.0%	16.3%	44.8%	31.4%
Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it (n=250)	2.0%	5.2%	19.2%	36.8%	36.8%

Table B17. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following?

	Yes	No	Not sure
A range of volunteer activities (n=247)	61.5%	12.6%	25.9%
Volunteer training opportunities (n=247)	30.8%	13.4%	55.9%
Opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making bodies (n=247)	43.7%	10.9%	45.3%
Easy to find information about local volunteer opportunities (n=248)	20.6%	27%	52.4%
Transportation to and from volunteer activities for those who need it (n=247)	17%	24.3%	58.7%

Job Opportunities

Table B 18. How important do you think it is to have the following in the Oxford area?

	Not at all important (1)	2	Neutral (3)	4	Extremely important (5)
A range of flexible job opportunities (n=253)	1.2%	2.4%	14.2%	37.9%	44.3%
Job training opportunities for older adults who want to learn new job skills (n=251)	2.4%	5.2%	16.7%	40.6%	35.1%
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities (n=251)	0.4%	6.0%	10.0%	38.3%	45.4%

Table B19. Does the Oxford area where you live have the following?

	Yes	No	Not sure
A range of flexible job opportunities (n=251)	21.5%	29.9%	48.6%
Job training opportunities for older adults who want to learn new job skills (n=251)	6.8%	24.7%	68.5%
Jobs that are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities (n=249)	10.8%	24.1%	65.1%