

Executive Summary of COA Survey

The East Hampton Commission on Aging surveyed town residents 65 or more years old between 9/17/21 and 10/31/21. The Commission primarily used online SurveyMonkey technology, but also accepted paper surveys. Of the town's 2,160 residents in that age range, 482 (22.3%) filled out surveys. All paper survey responses were transcribed into SurveyMonkey for analysis. All questions except income received at least 400 answers; most received at least 430 answers. The demographics are noteworthy: two-thirds are female, and 27% earned a graduate or professional degree.

Housing questions:

1. 93% think living independently at home as they age is very important.
2. 85% own their housing, and live in a single family house. A quarter are in senior housing, an apartment, or a multi-family house. Nearly a third are overwhelmed by care of the house or grounds.
3. 24% need to make changes to their home to stay there. Top comments were: chair lifts, ramps, walk-in shower or tub, 1-floor living, and move washer-dryer.
4. 24% feel it's very important to stay within 5 miles if they move; 33% feel it's somewhat important.
5. Given their health and finances, respondents strongly prefer to stay in their own home, and a majority prefer a 1-level private house. However, a third have a high preference for a senior apartment or a multi-level senior community.
6. Barriers to preferred housing were: unavailability in town, unaffordability, and need for too much maintenance. The predominant write-in comments focused on high taxes.
7. Most people's ideal apartment or home would have 2 bedrooms, a full and a half bathroom, a separate kitchen, and an open plan living-dining room. 70% wanted handicap-accessible living; many commented on wanting 1 floor living.
8. 40% want more information about Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's)
9. 15% think they might want an ADU in the next few years; 41% want more information before deciding.

Transportation questions:

10. 97% own or have easy access to a car.
11. 22% have health issues that interfere with driving - primarily vision, weakness, and arthritis.
12. 90% get around town primarily by driving themselves. A quarter sometimes walk or get a ride from someone; biking is uncommon. Rarely do they use public transit, senior van, taxi, or Uber.
13. Only 12% leave home less than 3 times a week, but 12 people are nearly or fully housebound.

14. Public transportation is mostly trusted for safety (80%), but felt to be inaccessible and unavailable when needed; nearly 60% think it is inadequate for those with disabilities. A comment noted there were no sheltered waiting areas for public transit.
15. 85% have little or no difficulty getting to out of town medical appointments, but 3% have a lot of difficulty; write-in comment noted it's worse in winter.
16. 65% think streets and crossings are well-designed and maintained for pedestrians. 140 comments were mostly about the need for more sidewalks, especially along Rt. 66 and by the lake. Also mentioned: too brief crossing times at intersections, poor lighting, and potholes.

Healthcare and affordability questions:

17. 31% note an unmet need for safe walking nearby. Over 20% each have unmet needs for each of the following: wellness classes, fitness classes, local health info, home care services and providers, and specialty care providers.
18. 93% are fully vaccinated for Covid-19; 7% answered "no" or "prefer not to say."
19. Primary sources used for news and current events are local news and Rivereast, followed by TV news, social media, and the Senior Center; write-ins mostly cited national newspapers and Hartford Courant.
20. Nearly 20% do not think they will be able to support themselves in retirement.
21. 23% feel they will have to work in retirement due to finances.
22. 19% think they cannot afford to stay in East Hampton during retirement.
23. 40% feel lonely at least occasionally; 3% feel lonely often.
24. In the past year, 9% worried that food would run out without money to buy more.
25. In the past year, 7% actually did run out of food, and had no money for more.

Demographics and final questions:

Note: 424 or more answered each demographic question except for income - only 379 answered.

26. A majority find East Hampton a fair (42%) or poor (12%) place to live as they age.
27. Two-thirds of respondents identify as female.
28. Two-thirds of respondents are from 65 to 74 years old. 18% are over 80 years old.
29. 1% Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
30. 98% White
31. Education varied widely, with 80% trained/educated post-high school, and 27% with a graduate or professional degree.
32. 57% married, 39% divorced/separated/widowed, 3% never married.
33. Annual income before taxes in 2020 ranged widely with a median of \$50,000 to \$75,000; 12% earned less than \$20,000, and 22% earned from \$20,000 to \$40,000.