



Town of Espanola Age-Friendly Assessment

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Date: February 2024



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This project was made possible thanks to funding from the Ontario Government through the Inclusive Communities Grant



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Introduction

Espanola’s Age Friendly Assessment is the culmination of work completed between December 2023, and mid-February 2024. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of all information and data gathered through the first phase of the Age-Friendly Community Planning process.

It includes a project description, community profile, outlines the information gathering process and includes key findings. This information will help inform actions and recommendations developed through the second phase of work.

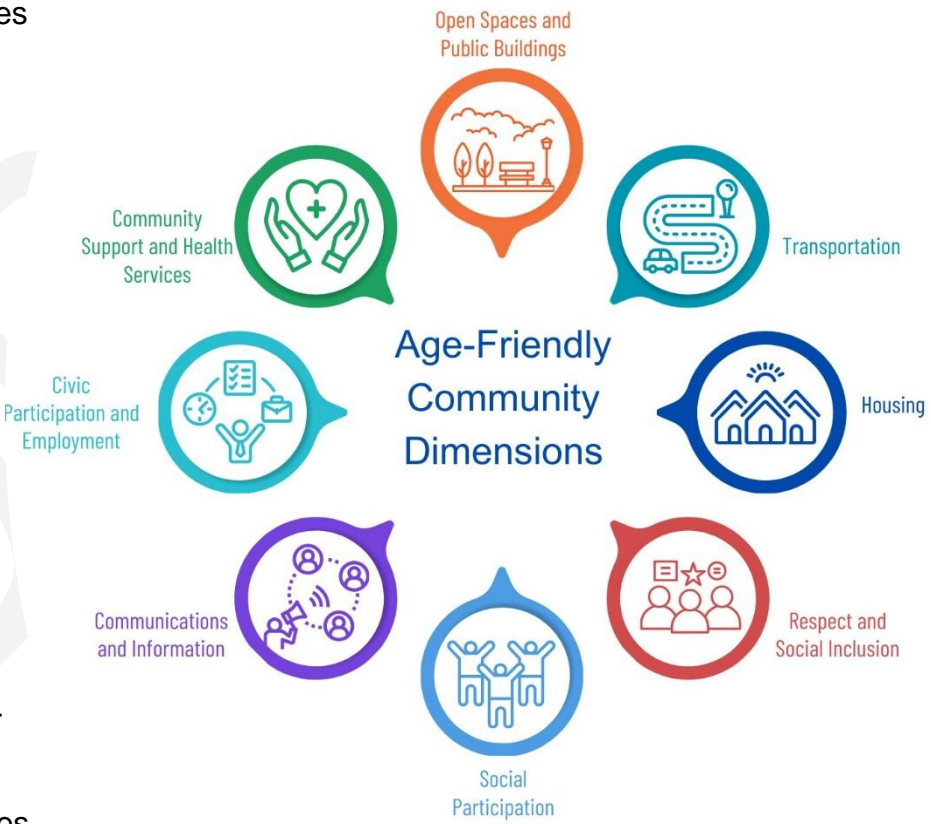
This represents the end of Phase 1: Age-Friendly Community Assessment.

About Age Friendly Community Planning

On a global scale, a discernible demographic shift is evident, with the population aged 60 and above growing at a rate surpassing that of any other age group. This transformative trend underscores the pressing need for municipalities to proactively prepare for evolving needs in terms of facilities, programs, services, and amenities. It has become increasingly imperative for communities to actively support their aging population, facilitating the maintenance of active and healthy lifestyles and promoting comfortable aging in place.

In 2007, recognizing this global demographic shift, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the Global Age-friendly Cities Guide. This guide not only delineated the characteristics of an age-friendly city but also furnished a structured framework for communities

aspiring to become 'age-friendly.' An age-friendly community, as outlined by the WHO, acknowledges the diverse capabilities and resources among older individuals. It actively anticipates and responds to age-related needs, respects the decisions and lifestyle choices of the elderly, safeguards the vulnerable, and fosters the inclusion of seniors in



all facets of community life. This initiative signifies a noteworthy stride towards creating communities that comprehensively cater to the well-being and fulfillment of their aging residents.

Local Context

In developing an Age Friendly Community Plan, the Town of Espanola is demonstrating its commitment to look through an age-friendly lens and make informed decisions regarding all aspects of the community such as access to programs and services or inclusive design of public spaces. This is especially significant when you consider that 2021 Census data shows that 25% of the Town’s population is 65+, and those age 50-64 account for another 18% of the demographic make up.

	% Residents 65+	% Residents 85+
Espanola	25.2	2.9
Ontario	18.5	2.4
Canada	19.0	2.3

Project Description

Recognizing that planning for older adults is a local priority, the Town wanted to create an Age-Friendly Community Plan to guide its actions. Town staff secured funding from the province of Ontario through the Inclusive Communities Grant, and a Request for Proposals was released, and the contract was awarded to K.A. Community Consulting in December, 2023.

The goal is to complete an Age Friendly Assessment, and an Age Friendly Action Plan for the 2023 – 2027 timeframe. The scope is intended to focus on the Town, but to also recognize the role that it plays in serving seniors across the broader LaCloche and Manitoulin regions.

The final Age-Friendly Action plan will be delivered by the end of March 2024.

Project Committee

A project committee has been established as part of the planning process. The role of this team is to help provide general guidance and oversight to the project. This team acts as a liaison between the consultant and community stakeholders, offer quality assurance and support project goals so that timelines are met for a successful outcome. This group meets in-person when possible, and connects virtually as necessary.

Members include:

- Louisa Orford, Economic Development Officer, Town of Espanola
- Traci Denault-Roque, Deputy Clerk, Town of Espanola
- Cori Duplessis, Supervisor of Community and Recreation, Town of Espanola
- Brittany Cormier, Assistant Librarian, Espanola Public Library

Process

The Age Friendly Community Planning Process includes two phases:

Phase 1: Age Friendly Assessment (December 2023 – February 2024)

- Facility Assessments
- Literature Review / Environmental Scan
- Community Engagement & Survey
- Program, Service, Admin and Budget Review
- Complete Inventory and Report to Council

Phase 2: Age Friendly Action Plan (February – March 2024)

- Identify Actions and Create Recommendations
- Identify Resource Requirements and Possible Partners
- Create Marketing and Communications Strategy
- Create Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation
- Complete Age Friendly Action Plan and Present to Council

Phase 1: Age Friendly Community Assessment

The purpose of this phase is to measure the current state of 'Age Friendliness' within the Town of Espanola. It reviews each of the eight community dimensions and includes the study of several strategic guiding documents and policies, assessing facilities, and engaging the community through stakeholder interviews, focus group sessions and via a community survey. This will inform needs, interests, priorities, and opportunities. These findings will be presented to Council mid-way through the project.

Phase 2: Age-Friendly Action Plan

The project will wrap up with the drafting of a Age-Friendly Action Plan. The final plan will include a series of actions that are prioritized, accompanying recommendations to support implementation; tools for monitoring and evaluation; and, an accompanying Communications and Marketing Strategy. The final plan will be presented to Council in March 2024 for adoption.

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Information Gathering

The following is a summary of the information gathering process. It includes information on the approaches used to collect data, and in some cases identifies how the material will be applied in the action planning process. Appendices to this report contain more detail for each of the data collection methods.

Literature Review and Environmental Scan

Several documents, reports, policies, and plans were reviewed insofar as they relate to age-friendliness. Some key themes and priorities emerge when considering these documents as a whole. Local priorities include housing, seniors wellness, accessibility, access to passive and active recreation opportunities in both the natural and built environment, transportation options, and the need for strong and effective collaboration and communications.

Several actions have been identified to address each of these priority areas. The Town, and other stakeholders have been implementing these recommendations steadily and incrementally where staff and financial resources allow. As some of these guiding documents (e.g., Espanola’s Strategic Plan) are relatively new, execution of actionable items is only just beginning, while in other instances, such as actions to improve accessibility (as identified in annual accessibility status and compliance reporting) have been more significant.

- Town of Espanola Strategic Plan: Our Gateway to Growth
- LaCloche Foothills Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
- Espanola Public Library Strategic Plan
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Espanola Community Improvement Plan
- Active Community Charter
- Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2021 - 2026)

It is also important to recognize other external influences and information may inform or guide recommendations, prioritization of actions, and the ability of the Town (and its partners) to effectively implement the Plan. For instance, the impact of the closure of Domtar as a major employer and ratepayer in the Town may only be realized over the coming months and years. To reflect this unknown, actions and recommendations included in the Age-Friendly Action Plan will be fiscally responsible, and will identify – where possible – possible external funding sources.

Opportunities for social engagement to reduce the impacts of social isolation will be heavily weighted given the growing body of evidence demonstrating how harmful it is to overall health and longevity.

While issues such as housing and health services are at the forefront of resident’s minds, it is important to recognize the limitations of the municipality to make significant impact in these areas owing to their role in the overall management and administration of these portfolios which are provincial responsibilities. To this end, actions will take this into account and will focus on tangible efforts that the Town can undertake and will reflect and support appropriate actionable items as identified in other strategic guiding documents.

Finally, the Action Plan will underscore trends in volunteerism, participation in recreation and leisure programs, and other relevant issues.

Lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

Source: Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation, U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community (2023)

One on One Interviews

A total of eleven One on One Interviews were completed with members of Council and with key stakeholders in the community. These were held through January and into February 2024 and were conducted in person, by phone, or through a virtual meeting. The purpose of these learning conversations was to allow for a deeper understanding of local priorities and context.

Focus Group Sessions

Two focus group sessions were hosted on January 26 and 27, 2024. A total of 17 participants volunteered two hours of their time to complete a SWOT analysis and review each of the eight community dimensions in some detail. A copy of discussion topics in the form of a PowerPoint Presentation is included in Appendix 2; and the information and feedback is used to inform key findings.

Community Survey

Community engagement is the cornerstone of good planning, recognizing that the community is not merely a passive recipient, but an active participant in the process. To this end, the Project Team worked to connect with individuals through a community survey. This survey was available between January 11 and February 2, 2024 in both print and digital formats. A comprehensive communications strategy was employed, using radio advertisements, a social media campaign, and word of mouth. A total of 311 surveys were received (293 completed online and 18 in print).

Of the 311 survey participants

- 42% identify as an older adult
- 45% identify as an interested citizen

When asked if they live in Espanola (n=308); 91% indicate that they are a resident. The balance are non-residents but access services in Espanola. Places of residency include: McKerrow, Whitefish Falls, Sables-Spanish Rivers, Willisville, Nairn Centre, Webbwood, and Massey.

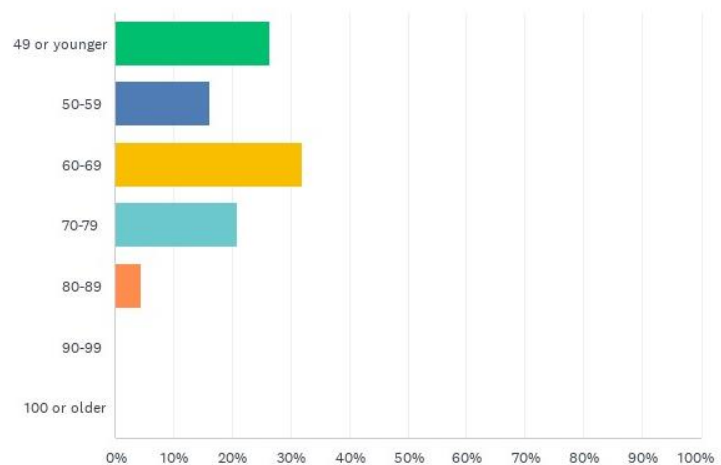


Figure 1: Age Distribution of Survey Participants

Site Visits

Three municipal facilities were visited on Thursday, January 25, 2024, and include:

- Espanola Townhall
- Recreation Complex
- Espanola Public Library

With the guidance of John Maville, the Building Official, an evaluation was conducted on these structures, focusing on accessibility and elements contributing to age-friendliness. This encompassed a thorough examination of factors such as lighting, signage, customer service, and seating arrangements.

Overall, these facilities were found to be largely accessible and accommodating for older adults, for example all three facilities have dropped service counters in the main reception area to accommodate those in a wheelchair. Please refer to Appendix 5 for observations and opportunities for each of the three facilities.

Unfortunately, owing to winter conditions, park assessments were not completed. Instead, information was provided by Town staff as it related to park amenities, accessibility, and future plans. The discussion included: Pinegrove Park and Rock's Pond, W.P. Foster Park and Splashpad, Algoma Playground and Community Garden, Clear Lake Park, Yocum Playground, and the Red McCarthy Parklands.

It is clear from both conversation and in reviewing accessibility status reports, that improvements are being made within the parks setting to improve accessibility. It is also evident that the Town is actively seeking opportunities to make smart investments in these facilities to offer quality experiences for all residents.

Community Profile

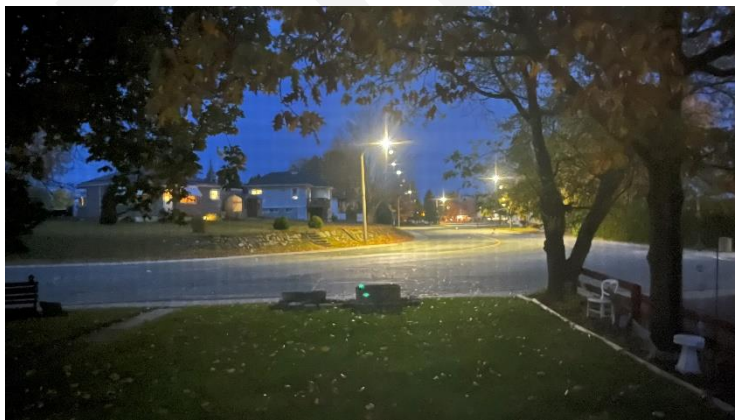
The Town of Espanola is located in northeastern Ontario, approximately 70 kilometres west of Sudbury. It serves as a regional hub for the Lacloche and Manitoulin regions with a range of businesses retail options, health services, and other community supports. Situated along Highway 6, which serves as the main transportation corridor extending from Highway 17 to Manitoulin Island.



Espanola has a range of active service groups including the Elks, Legion, Helping Hands Food Bank, and Lion's Club.

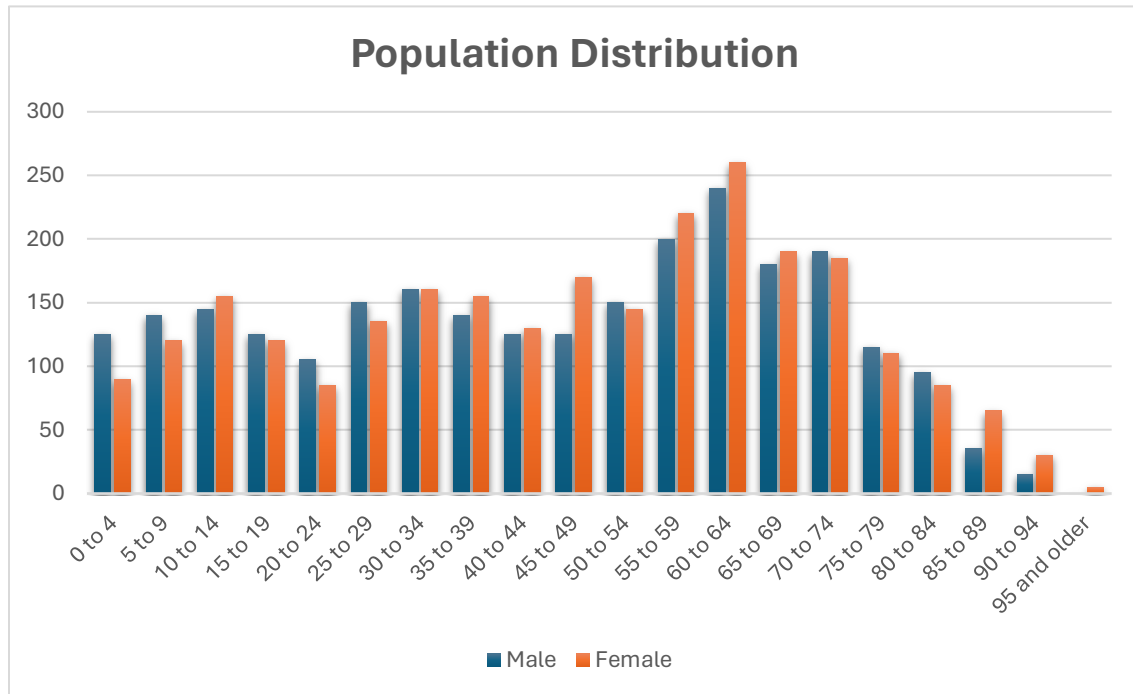
Health services available locally include a regional hospital and health centre, primary and specialized care, pharmacies, mental health services, public health programs, palliative care, heart health screening, group exercise programs, dietary services, physiotherapy, etc. The Town recently approved a new regional medical transportation van for those that need to access services outside of the community.

Espanola is surrounded by the Canadian Shield, and can be characterized by forested areas, lakes, and rugged terrain. This natural playground offered a range of outdoor recreational tourism opportunities and is a tourism draw.



Demographics

Total population in the Town of Espanola, per the 2021 Census is 5185. This represents a 2.7% change from 2016 when the population was 5048. The Official Plan show a population projection of 5187 for the year 2036 (note: current population is lower than projected when the Official Plan was created). When we consider the regional population (LaCloche / Manitoulin) the population is estimated at 40,000.



46 Years
Average Age

12% Indigenous
Population

2305
Occupied
Private
Dwellings

\$68,500
Median After-
Tax Income of
Households

81km²
Total Land Area

25.2%
Age 65+

Key Findings

SWOT

Strengths focus on existing community assets such as the Recreation Complex and Public Library; outdoor spaces such as the trails at Black Creek and Rock's Pond; and, the people, organizations, and service groups who make significant contributions to the Town.

The availability of a variety of housing options and access to healthcare services have been recognized as a weakness, this is also acknowledged in several other recent plans and studies. Additional concerns involve the scarcity of park benches and seating in public spaces, issues related to sidewalks such as their location and maintenance, apprehensions about a declining number of volunteers, challenges in effective communication resulting in a lack of awareness about programs, services, and opportunities, and the identified need for enhanced accessibility in certain areas.

There are abundant opportunities for Espanola to explore. In many cases, this is simply reviewing its existing assets and strengths, and looking for approaches to make them more effective and impactful. An effective and targeted education and awareness campaign could increase overall awareness of programs and services. Additionally, identifying gaps, such as in home and yard services, presents a window for the establishment of new businesses.

Threats to the community have been identified, including the recent closure of Domtar, the potential long-term impacts of which are challenging to measure. A potential decline in population could impact the tax base, while at-risk behaviors in the community are affecting the sense of safety for older adults. Concerns have been expressed about the ability of service providers to keep up with growing demands, and the impacts of social isolation on overall health and wellness are troubling. Aging infrastructure is placing more demand on municipalities to secure resources for regular operations, maintenance, and renewal. Finally, climate change is causing concerns, with factors like freeze-thaw cycles making sidewalk maintenance challenging.



STRENGTHS

- Service groups and community organizations
- Care Van services
- Good basis of medical care and services
- Variety of recreational programs and facilities
- Overall sense of community
- Espanola Public Library programs and services



OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance Care Van services
- Accessibility improvements in the built and natural environment
- Improved communications
- Foster engagement and participation
- Increase and promote volunteerism
- New business opportunities
- Training to build capacity



WEAKNESSES

- Lack of housing supply and options
- Access to health care
- Ineffective and uncoordinated communications
- Declining volunteer base
- Pedestrian corridors
- Limited benches/seating
- Inadequate accessibility noted in some areas



THREATS

- Impact of social isolation
- Domtar closure
- Services keeping up with demand
- Climate change
- At-risk behaviours in the community
- Aging Infrastructure
- Cost of living
- Potential population decline

Vision

One on One Interviews and Focus Group sessions were used to help gathering information on what would be important in creating a vision for Espanola in terms of age friendly community planning. Key words are included in the illustration below.



Partners

While the Town will champion the recommendations that are included in the Action Plan, they will have to also rely on partnerships and effective collaboration to fully realize success in creating an Age-Friendly Espanola. Partnerships may take the form of service delivery, provision of space, or funding.

Rainbow District School Board	Service Groups and Community Organizations	VON and Bayshore	Manitoulin Sudbury Social Services Board
Neighbouring municipalities	Long-term Care Home	Espanola Public Library	Health Care Team
Seniors Club	Paramed Services	Foodbank	Upper levels of government

Public Buildings and Outdoor Spaces



Description

In a community geared towards all age groups, the state, quality, and layout of the physical environment—including parks, sidewalks, and buildings—hold considerable sway over the mobility, independence, and overall well-being of aging residents. A well-thought-out natural and built environment, promoting easy and safe navigation while ensuring accessibility for all, fosters an environment that encourages active and healthy living. Additionally, it creates ample opportunities for social interaction and inclusion, contributing positively to the overall quality of life for residents in their later years.

What We Heard

- The Town of Espanola is found to have public areas that are clean and pleasant; survey findings show 89% agree/strongly agree (n=265), this is also mirrored in focus group discussions
- Sidewalks are found to be wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility devices (55% agree/strongly agree, n=265); but there are some areas in town that do not have sidewalks for safe pedestrian travel
- There was a lot of conversation about winter sidewalk maintenance, which was noted to be somewhat lacking
- While 47% (n=265) of survey participants found pedestrian crossing to be safe and accessible, focus groups noted that there was some concern regarding the crossing times, and that additional crossings could be installed
- Outdoor trails are found to be popular, and 45% agree that they are safe and accessible; yet recent vandalism is impacting trail users' sense of security
- Public buildings were found to have proper lighting (89% agree, n=265), with doors that are easy to open (73% agree, n=265), with available ramps or elevators, and to be assessable overall
- Survey participants agree (70%, n=265) that there is sufficient parking, but when exploring this further, it was noted that more accessible parking near Townhall is needed
- Most areas are well-signed (internally and externally), but comments also point to the need for enhanced signage in some locations

Priorities

- Accessibility
- Seating
- Winter Sidewalk Maintenance
- Pedestrian Crossings
- Parking
- Safety & Security

Opportunities

- Continue to make accessibility improvements in the natural and built environment
- Review and communicate snow removal practices
- Look for suitable locations for additional seating (indoors and outdoors)
- Install signs where missing

Transportation



Description

This dimension involves the development and implementing transportation policies and infrastructure that cater to the evolving needs of aging populations. By prioritizing accessible and convenient transportation options, age-friendly planning seeks to enhance the mobility of older residents. This approach not only supports their independence but also facilitates their active participation in community life by ensuring seamless access to essential services, fostering social engagement, and contributing to an overall age-friendly environment.

What We Heard

- Of survey participants (n=257):
 - 87% walk unassisted, and 6% use a cane or walker
 - 91% have access to a vehicle that they drive themselves
- Care Van is seen as a strong community asset, and 85% of survey participants are aware of the service
 - Comments were received about service hours and whether weekend or evening hours could be considered; there were also questions about 'companion fares'
- Only 40% of survey participants indicated that they were aware of the new LaCloche Medical Transit service
- Just more than 50% of survey participants agree that taxi services are available and accessible
- Roads were found to be well maintained, well-lit with clear traffic lines (55%), conversely, 33% of survey participants disagreed with this statement
- Again, within this dimension comments arose regarding winter sidewalk maintenance
- Through focus group discussions, it was noted that active transportation options were limited within the Town (e.g., lack of designated cycle lanes, and bicycle racks)

Priorities

- Care Van hours
- Medical transportation options
- Advertising of transportation services
- Reliability of transportation services
- Active transportation options

Opportunities

- Review options to increase Care Van hours (especially to align with community events)
- Improve availability of information related to local transportation options
- Explore ways to improve winter maintenance (roads and pedestrian corridors) where possible within Minimum Maintenance Standards

Housing



Description

The suitable structure, location, design, and diverse housing options play a vital role in influencing the independence of aging residents. They enable individuals to age comfortably within their community, maintaining independence, or easily accessing necessary support and care as their needs evolve.

What We Heard

- Of 252 survey participants, 85% indicate that they own their own home, and 83% state that their current living solution meets their needs now, and for the future
- Concern about the range of appropriate and affordable housing supply in the town are very apparent
 - 80% (n=253) do not feel a range is available
 - 63% agree that long-term care options are not available and result in the separation of families
- 53% feel that general maintenance services (yard and home) are not affordable for seniors on a fixed income
- Where information exists regarding financial assistance, it is not found to be readily available or accessible

Priorities

- Increase housing supply
- Access to affordable housing options
- Availability of home support services (home and yard maintenance)

Opportunities

- Promote (residential) development opportunities in the community
- Lobbying for more support from upper levels of government
- Promote financial support systems/options
- Increase options for home and yard maintenance options through volunteerism or new business development

Respect and Social Inclusion



Description

This dimension speaks to fostering an environment where individuals of all ages, particularly older members of the community, are treated with dignity and consideration. Social inclusion involves creating spaces and opportunities that encourage the active participation of older individuals, ensuring they feel valued and integrated into the broader community. By promoting respect and social inclusion, a community cultivates a supportive atmosphere that recognizes the diverse contributions of older residents and enhances their overall well-being.

What We Heard

- Over 66% of survey participants (n=243) feel that Espanola is an ideal place for older adults to live; this was mirrored in focus groups and stakeholder interviews
- It is felt that programs, events, and activities take into consideration the needs of older adults, but that there is an opportunity to enhance or expand these offerings
- More in depth conversations lead to the understanding that there is room for improvements in terms of municipal outreach to seniors to seek their input and that the town could be more proactive here
- The Seniors Appreciation event is found to honour the contribution of seniors to the community, with a few noting that the event is a little 'underwhelming', and that there may be other ways in which older adults can be recognized

Priorities

- Outreach and connectivity with all older adults
- Events and activities that consider all needs, interests, and abilities
- Conduit between residents, organizations, service groups, and the town

Opportunities

- Establish an Age-Friendly portfolio to lead and measure progress on age-friendly initiatives
- Create 'Seniors' Hall of Fame' or other recognition program to honour seniors in the community
- Seek opportunities for intergenerational activities
- Be sure to address accessibility and inclusion of those who are disabled, but not included in the senior population
- Explore means to connect with the vulnerable population

Social Participation



Description

This dimension involves creating an environment that encourages and facilitates active engagement of individuals, especially older community members, in various social activities. The aim is to cultivate a sense of belonging, promote meaningful connections, and provide opportunities for ongoing social involvement. By emphasizing social participation, age-friendly approaches seek to enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for aging residents.

What We Heard

- Seniors in the community are socializing; 29% (n=228) socialize once a day and another 40% do so a few times a week
 - For those who want to socialize more often, lack of information about social events and scheduling are the biggest barriers
- There are a range of program and socialization options when considering all service providers in the community (e.g. Soup to Tomatoes, Quilting Club, church luncheons, aquafit and seniors fitness programs, cards and bingo, Pickleball, golfing, and so much more)
- Generally, these opportunities are held at convenient times, are hosted in appropriate venues, and are affordable

Priorities

- Bolstering participation and engagement
- Effective communications and promotion
- Coordination among service providers
- Ensuring safe and accessible opportunities are available

Opportunities

- Identify and communicate means in which the town can support external service providers
- Improve awareness of programs, events, and activities offered by all service providers
- Continue to ensure a range of passive and active opportunities for engagement are available, and accommodate a variety of needs and interests

Communications and Information



Description

This facet emphasizes the need to provide clear and accessible information to aging residents. By promoting effective communication channels and ensuring the widespread distribution of relevant information, it is possible to empower older community members, enabling them to stay informed, engaged, and actively participate in the social fabric of the community. This pillar underscores the role of transparent and inclusive communication in fostering a supportive and connected environment for older individuals.

What We Heard

- When asked if they feel well informed, survey participants (n=225) respond:
 - 32% feel very informed
 - 57% feel somewhat informed
 - 20% do not feel informed
- The three most popular sources of information used by survey participants (n=224) are word of mouth (70%), the Internet (64%), and social media (58%)
- Participants seeking more information would look to sources such as social media, mail, internet, and print news
- Challenges with communications were noted through several conversations; comments indicate that some residents feel that information isn't provided in a coordinated way and that promotion of events and activities isn't timely

Priorities

- Broader communications and improved access to information
- Coordination of communications efforts

Opportunities

- 211 (information resource available online and by phone)
- Partnership with print media
- Scrolling monitors in key locations
- Increase frequency and distribution of communications
- Consider grant-funded projects to champion and advance coordinated communication efforts (a Seniors Navigator or Ambassador)

Civic Participation and Employment



Description

This dimension underscores the importance of creating opportunities that enable older individuals to actively engage in civic activities and employment. By fostering an inclusive environment that values the contributions of seniors, age-friendly practices aim to promote their active involvement in community affairs and provide avenues for continued professional pursuits. Encouraging civic participation and employment for older individuals not only enhances their sense of purpose but also contributes to the overall vibrancy and diversity of the community.

What We Heard

- Most survey participants (n=238) indicate that they are retired (61%) with 33% employed
- Regarding volunteerism, the survey shows
 - 49% do not volunteer, but would like to in future
 - 26% give one to five hours per week
 - 12% are not interested in volunteering
- Over 40% feel that there are a range of volunteer opportunities, however, less than 20% feel that there is a range of suitable employment opportunities for older adults

Priorities

- Building capacity within the volunteer sector
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Communication of opportunities

Opportunities

- Micro-volunteerism
- Training opportunities for volunteer organizations (e.g., grant writing)
- Volunteer fair
- Engage with businesses to communicate the benefits of hiring older adults

Community Support and Health Services



Description

This dimension revolves around the supportive infrastructure that addresses the unique needs of aging individuals. It emphasizes the provision of accessible community support services and healthcare resources tailored to the elderly population. By fostering an environment that prioritizes well-being, age-friendly communities enhance the overall health and quality of life for older residents. This pillar underscores the importance of creating a robust network of support and healthcare services to ensure the aging population can navigate their changing needs with ease and receive the necessary assistance to maintain a healthy and fulfilling lifestyle.

What We Heard

- Survey participants (n=221) state that they are in good (36%) to very good (37%) in terms of their overall health and wellness
- Only 20% of respondents indicate that they were aware of the video appointment service available at the Espanola Public Library
- Many note that Espanola is fortunate to have a good basis of health services, but that there are some shortfalls and difficulties for some individuals
- There was some concern about awareness of and access to home services that allow seniors to remain in their homes longer

Priorities

- Education and awareness related to the aging process
- Access to physicians and specialized services
- Supporting actions identified in other strategic documents and reports

Opportunities

- Better access to information regarding community support services
- Explore palliative care options (to reduce pressure in other areas)
- Look to upstream preventative measures
- Promote the medical transportation service
- Advocacy for northern and rural support from upper levels of government

Summary and Next Steps

The Town of Espanola, with 25% of its population aged 65 and above, is undertaking an Age-Friendly Community Plan. The project involves an Age-Friendly Assessment and an Action Plan spanning from 2023 to 2027, with a focus on the town's role in serving seniors in the broader LaCloche and Manitoulin regions.

The Espanola Age-Friendly Assessment, conducted between December 2023 and mid-February 2024, is aimed at summarizing information gathered during the first phase of the Age-Friendly Community Planning process. This report includes a project description, community profile, outlines the information gathering process, and presents key findings, intending to inform actions and recommendations in the second phase.

Information gathering methods are described and include a literature review, one-on-one interviews, focus group sessions, a community survey, and site visits. The SWOT analysis identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; the report further explores priorities and opportunities for each dimension: Public Buildings and Outdoor Spaces, Transportation, Housing, Respect and Social Inclusion, Social Participation, Communications and Information, Civic Participation and Employment, and Community Support and Health Services.

Overall, the findings show that Espanola is making progress toward accessibility and inclusivity. It is aware of community challenges, such as housing, and is working to implement solutions within their mandate. The information collected will be used to identify and prioritize actions and corresponding recommendations for the Age Friendly Action Plan. This plan, with an accompanying Communications and Marketing Strategy will be delivered by the end of March 2024.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Literature Review
- Appendix 2: One on One Interviews
- Appendix 3: Focus Group
- Appendix 4: Community Survey
- Appendix 5: Site Visits
- Appendix 6: Project Communications

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Appendix 1: Literature Review

Town of Espanola Strategic Plan: Our Gateway to Growth

In June 2023, Council adopted its 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan. Within the document, five strategic goals were identified and described. Each pillar has a corresponding list of actions that the Town is endeavouring to complete during the term of the Plan.

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- Housing
 - o The challenges related to housing are clearly described within this document and it recognizes that there are concerns about a mix of housing options, particularly for older adults
 - o The actions in the Strategic Plan will be reflected in the Age-Friendly Action Plan, especially where related to provision of seniors housing
- Infrastructure
 - o Where roadwork is being undertaken (Phases 4&5 of Hwy 6 Reconstruction); consider improvements for accessibility and age-friendliness
- Quality of Life
 - o Speaks to several items that also arose in focus groups and survey responses such as the value of the complex and library, the need for more volunteers and volunteer support, and access to health services, among others
 - o Every one of the actions within this section aligns with opportunities and actions to support an aging population

LaCloche Foothills Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan was completed in partnership with Baldwin, Nairn and Hyman, Sables-Spanish Rivers, and Espanola. The completion of this plan was a legislative requirement under the Police Services Act and is intended to address social development, prevention, risk intervention, and incident response. The 2021 – 2025 Plan includes four priority areas that include both Seniors and Affordable Housing.

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- Refer to the various resources referenced within this plan, and they already are proven to assist with priority areas
- Support actions identified within this plan as part of the Age-Friendly Action Plan such as On-Site Programming, Community Mobilization, and Accessible Program Delivery and Supports

Espanola Public Library Strategic Plan

The Espanola Public Library Board created a Strategic Plan for the 2023-2027 timeframe. This document outlines three key goals and corresponding actions to help the library succeed in becoming a community hub

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- Recognize that several actions align with age-friendly planning priorities
- That the EPL is a critical partner in supporting older adults in the community

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2017. The document outlines priorities as identified by community and includes health and well-being with access to opportunities for physical activity; accessibility, fostering partnerships, and communications. There are a total of 43 recommendations for the 10-year horizon, several of which have already been implemented.

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- Support for provision of accessible and affordable opportunities for residents, particularly the senior population
- That engaging in outreach and advocacy (particularly to vulnerable persons) is valuable
- Partnerships, such as that with the Library, should be maintained to support service provision

Community Improvement Plan

Espanola's Community Improvement Plan was adopted in the mid 2010's. In several sections, the Plan refers to and makes recommendations that align with encouraging housing development and improving accessibility in the community.

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- Review recommendations in the plan where they provide support for and suggest incentive(s) toward meeting the goals of creating a barrier-free environment, and increasing the housing supply; determine where it makes sense to bring these forward in reference to the Age-Friendly Plan.

Active Community Charter

Adopted by Council in 2011, the Charter recognizes the benefits of an active community and its contribution to quality of life, health, community safety, and vitality. The Charter identified principles that include community design and infrastructure, partnerships and collaboration, and policies that promote active living.

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- Recognizing the significant impact that an active, healthy lifestyle can have on older adults in contributing to their overall wellness, and ability to stay in their homes longer
- These principles will be reflected in the Age-Friendly Action Plan

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2021 - 2026

This Plan outlines Espanola's commitment to accessibility planning; and to removing barriers that limit individuals with disabilities. The document provides an overview of actions taken from 2010 to date and discusses items related to the built environment, the natural environment, and service delivery. It further provides for progress monitoring, a reporting structure, and communications of the Plan. Also, note that annual reports such as 2022 and 2023 Accessible Compliance Reports further demonstrate Espanola's commitment to meeting and exceeding AODA standards.

Relevant to Age-Friendly Community Planning

- This Plan demonstrates Espanola's commitment to meeting AODA compliance
- Lends to inclusivity and equity
- Disabilities can often accompany the aging process; this might include hearing or vision loss, reduced mobility, and health issues such as arthritis which may impede their ability to fully participate, engage, or access the services they require.

Appendix 2: One on One Interviews

Thank you to the following for participating in a One-on-one interview:

- Doug Gervais
- Ken Duplessis
- Aidan Kallioinen
- Angela Kelly
- Gerry Massicotte
- Jonathan Nadeua
- Erin Neufeld,
- Joseph Burke
- Lori Clark
- Faye and William
- Susanne Cassidy
- Aimee Belanger

A copy of the list of questions and discussion topic follows on the next page. To protect the privacy of survey participants, responses will remain confidential; however, all feedback is considered within the Key Findings.

One of One Stakeholder Interviews

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Please tell me what you think it is like to live in Espanola as an older adult.
2. We are going to do a brief SWOT analysis related to programs, services, infrastructure, etc as it relates to older adults. You can include both the Town and the broader community
 - Strengths
Prompt: What existing resources and services in the community contribute positively to the well-being of older adults? Are there notable community assets that are already working toward age-friendliness?
 - Weaknesses
Prompt: What challenges or barriers exist for older adults in the community? Where does the community fall short in terms of meeting the needs of older adults?
 - Threats
Prompt: What external factors or trends might negatively impact the age-friendliness of the community? Are there potential conflicts or obstacles that might hinder the successful implementation of age friendly initiatives?
 - Opportunities
What potential enhancements could make Espanola more age friendly?
What already exists in the community that we could leverage to be more impactful?
3. What collaborative opportunities do you see between local organizations, schools, and government agencies to support an aging community?
4. When we think of a vision for seniors and inclusivity in the community; what are some key words that come to mind?
5. The Age Friendly Action Plan will cover a span of three years (2024 – 2027). What are the top three priorities that you think should be addressed in this time span?
6. **Council Only:** What criteria might we consider when prioritizing our recommendations / projects (e.g. alignment with other plans, items that can ONLY be carried out by the municipality, cost-recovery, etc)
7. Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss regarding Age Friendly Planning and supporting older adults in the community?

Appendix 3: Focus Group Sessions

Two focus group sessions were hosted in January, with a total of 17 participants. Each session was two hours in length filled with lively conversation. Thank you to each of the 17 people who were so open with their thoughts. Thank you also to Brittany Cormier and Amy Ingram for note-taking.

Following is a copy of the PowerPoint presentation used to facilitate the discussion



Overview

- Welcome and Introductions
- About Age Friendly Community Planning
 - Local Context
 - Process and Timelines
- Engagement
 - Warm up
 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
 - Assessment of Eight Community Dimensions
 - Action Items and Prioritization
- Wrap up and Next Steps
- Evaluation

What is Age Friendly Community Planning

- An Age Friendly Community is one that
 - Recognizes the range of capabilities and resources among older people
 - Anticipates and responds to age-related needs
 - Respects the decisions and lifestyle choices of the elderly
 - Protects the vulnerable
 - Promotes seniors' inclusion in all aspects of community life
- Age Friendly Community Planning considers eight domains and identifies actions that support and enhance the well-being of older adults



Local Context

- Supporting the senior population responds to priorities in the recently adopted Strategic Plan, Our Gateway to Growth (2023 – 2027), and the LaCloche Foothills Community Safety and Well-being Plan (2021 – 2025).
- Espanola has a higher percentage of seniors than the provincial or national average

	% Residents 65+	% Residents 85+
Espanola	25.2	2.9
Ontario	18.5	2.4
Canada	19.0	2.3

Process and Timelines

Phase 1: Age Friendly Assessment (December 2023 – February 2024)

- Facility Assessments
- Literature Review / Environmental Scan
- Community Engagement & Survey
- Program, Service, Admin and Budget Review
- Complete Inventory and Report to Council

Phase 2: Age Friendly Action Plan (February – March 2024)

- Identify Actions and Create Recommendations
- Identify Resource Requirements and Possible Partners
- Create Marketing and Communications Strategy
- Create Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation
- Complete Age Friendly Action Plan and Present to Council

Discussion

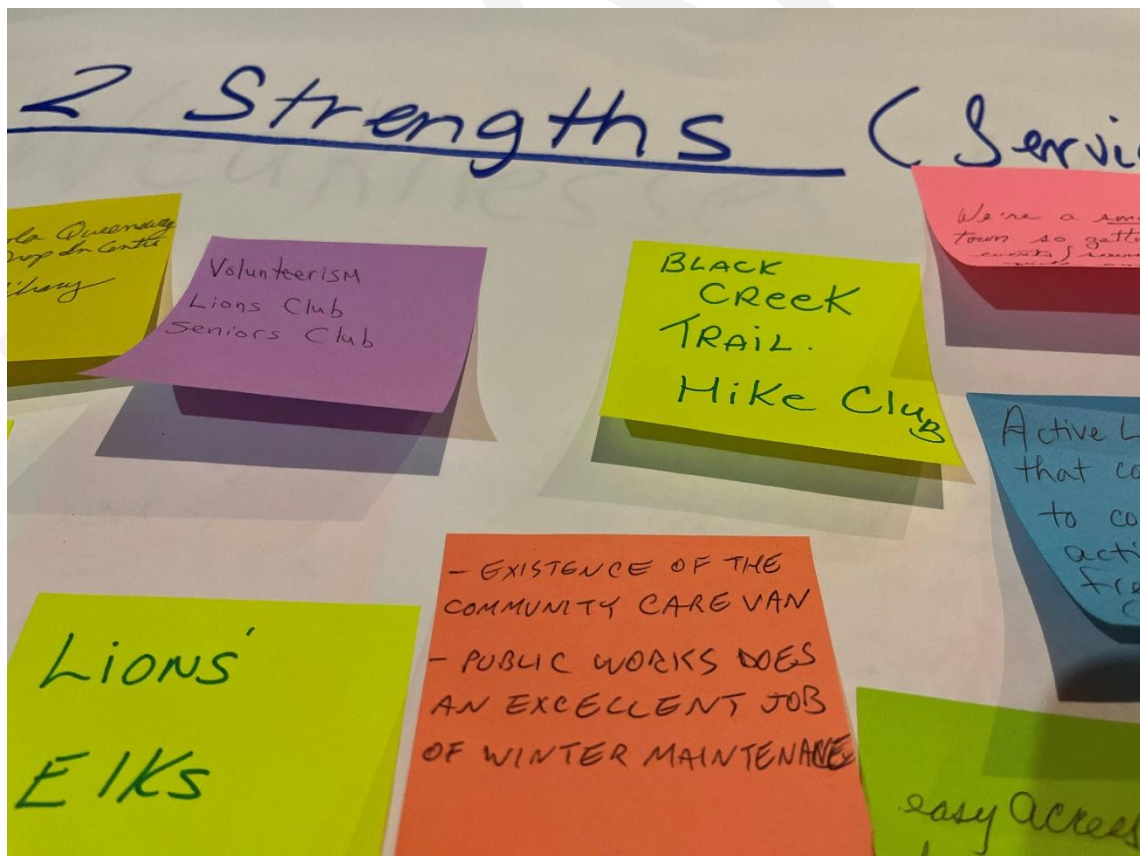
- The goal today is to hear from you!
- Our conversation today will include:
 - SWOT analysis
 - Review of the eight community dimensions
 - Identifying and prioritizing possible action items
- Capturing this information
 - We will be taking notes
 - You will be asked to write on the post-it notes in front of you
 - You have a workbook that follows the discussion where you can leave any additional information

Warm-Up

What is it like to live in Espanola as an older adult?

SWOT Analysis

Use the post-it notes to identify two or three items for each category, when you are done, please stick it on the corresponding board



Topic 1: Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

What is it like to step outside your front door to go for a walk for exercise, or to run errands, or pay a visit?

What is it like to go into buildings such as Townhall, or the post office, or local stores?

Topic 1: Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 2: Transportation

What is it like to drive in the community? What about 'walk-ability'?

What transportation options exist in the community to support those who do not drive? What are your experiences with local transportation services?

Topic 2: Transportation

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 3: Housing

Tell me about the house or apartment where you live?

How do you think your housing needs might change over time? Are there options in the community as your needs change?

Topic 3: Housing

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 4: Respect and Social Inclusion

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 4: Respect and Social Inclusion

In what ways does Espanola show – or not show – respect for its older adults?

In what ways are older adults included or not included in activities and events?

Topic 5: Social Participation

How easily can you socialize in Espanola?

Tell me about your participation in activities including recreation, culture, educational, spiritual, or service related

Topic 5: Social Participation

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 6: Communications and Information

Tell me how you get the information that you need?

Do you feel that you get enough information? In the right format? In a timely manner?

Topic 6: Communications and Information

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 7: Civic Participation and Employment

Tell me about your volunteer efforts

Tell me about your participation in paid work

Tell me about your participation in public community affairs (community associations or municipal committees)

Topic 7: Civic Participation and Employment

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Topic 8: Community Support and Health Services

Can you tell me about health and social services that allow older adults to live at home longer

What is your experience with services in the community that help older adults

Topic 8: Community Support and Health Services

What improvements can be made? What actions can you identify?

How would you prioritize these actions?

Are there any other issues or areas that you would like to discuss?

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Age Friendly Assessment & Report to Council
- Develop Draft Recommendations
 - You will have the opportunity to review and comment
- Prepare Age Friendly Action Plan & Report to Council
- Please be sure to complete the community survey (and encourage others to participate as well)
- Please fill out the evaluation form before you go

Thank you

K.A. Community Consulting
kim@kacommunityconsulting.ca
613-929-4237

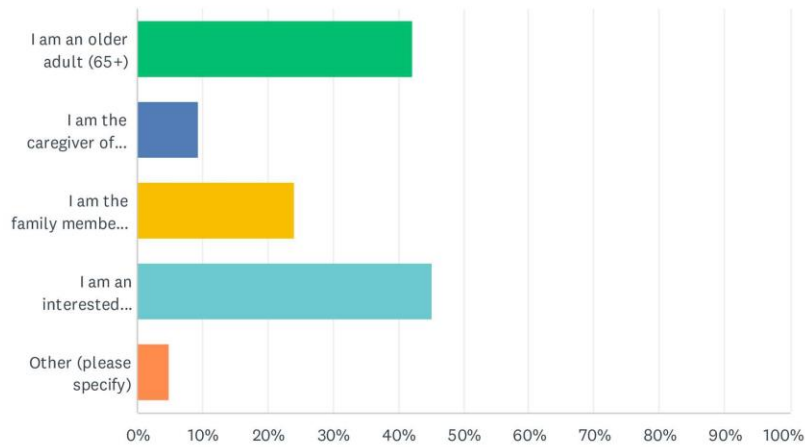
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Appendix 4: Community Survey Results

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q1 Please check the applicable box

Answered: 308 Skipped: 3

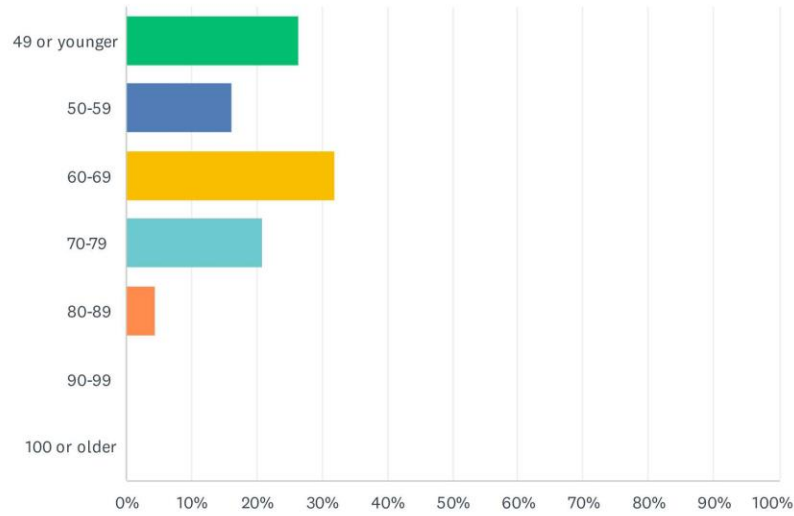


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am an older adult (65+)	42.21%	130
I am the caregiver of an older adult	9.42%	29
I am the family member of an older adult	24.03%	74
I am an interested citizen	45.13%	139
Other (please specify)	4.87%	15
Total Respondents: 308		

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q2 Which of the following describes your age group?

Answered: 310 Skipped: 1

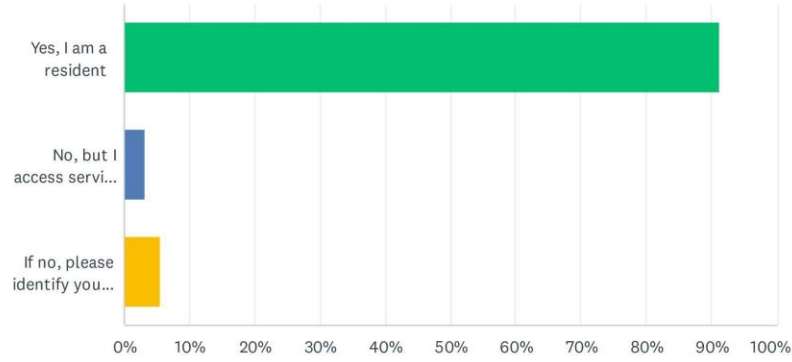


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
49 or younger	26.45%	82
50-59	16.13%	50
60-69	31.94%	99
70-79	20.97%	65
80-89	4.52%	14
90-99	0.00%	0
100 or older	0.00%	0
TOTAL		310

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q3 Do you live in Espanola?

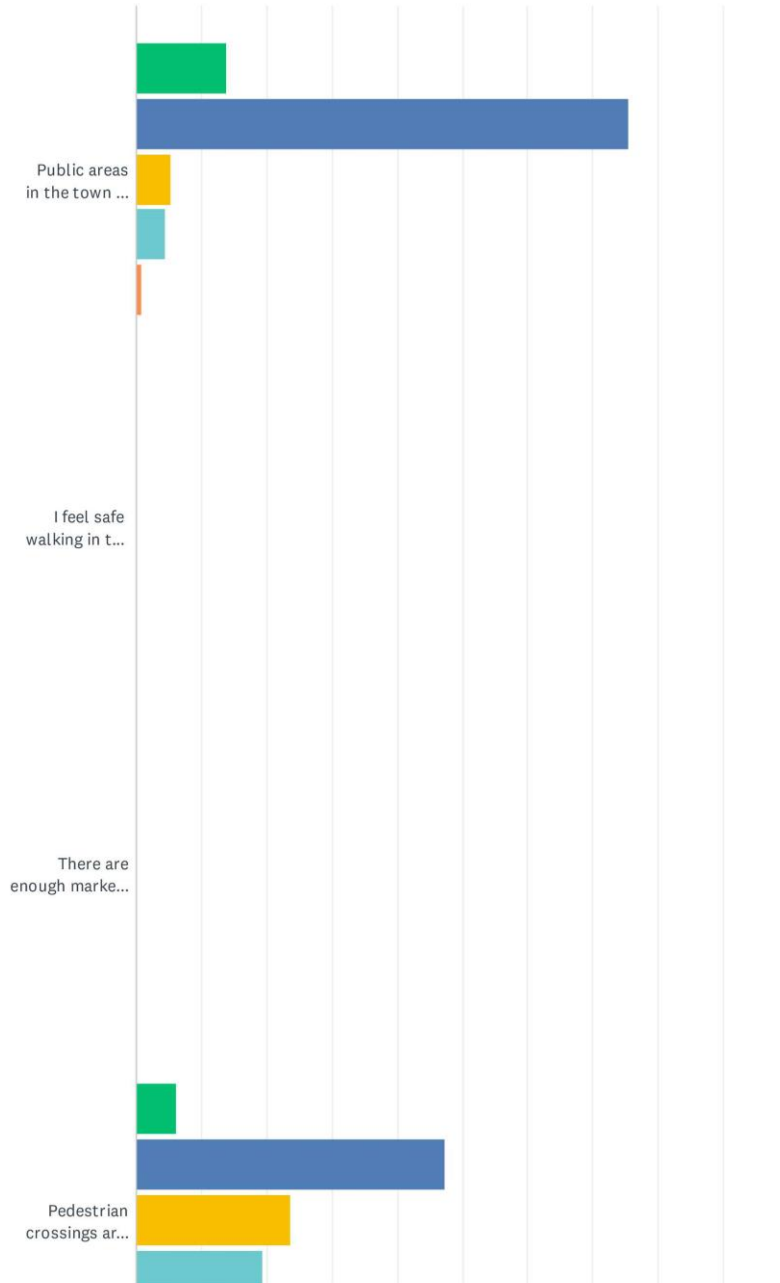
Answered: 308 Skipped: 3



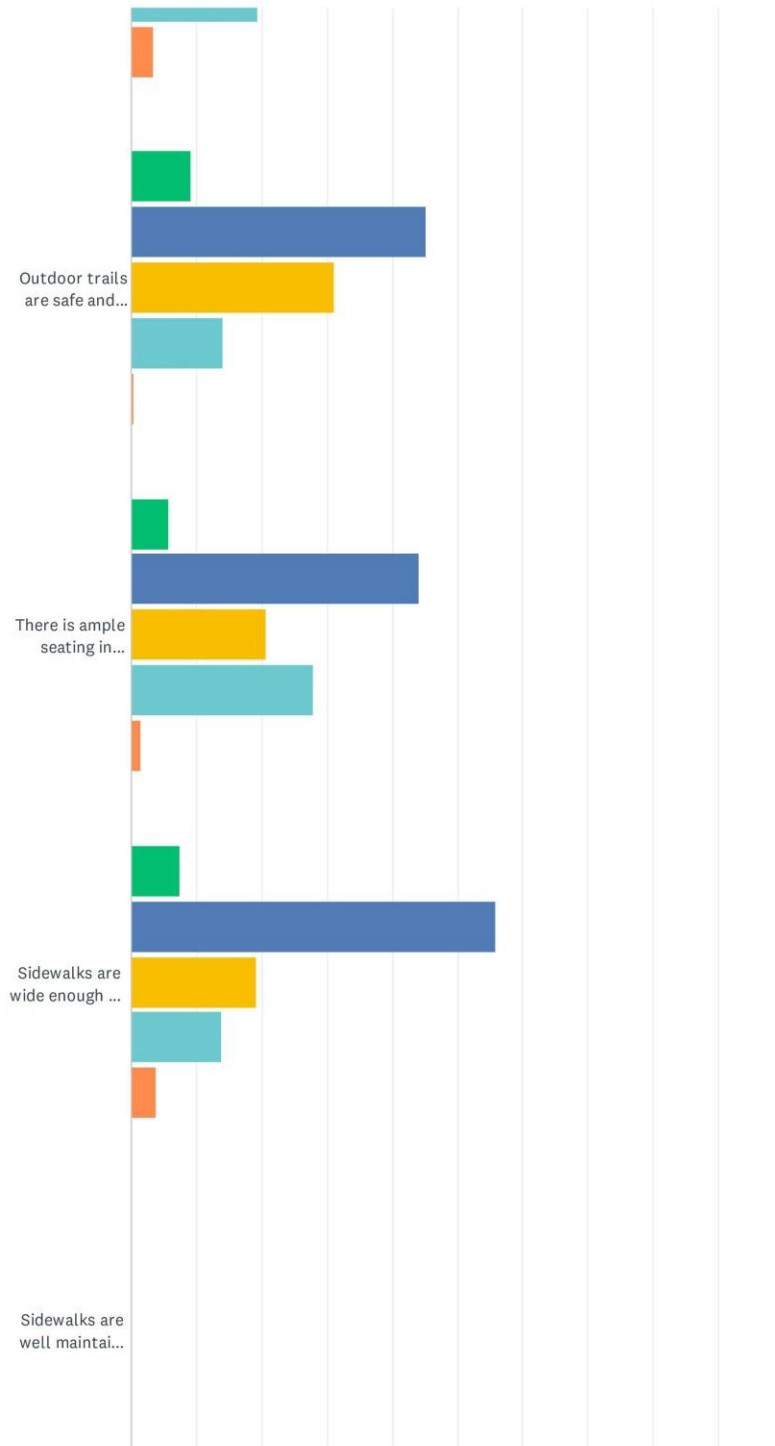
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I am a resident	91.23%	281
No, but I access services in Espanola	3.25%	10
If no, please identify your place of residency.	5.52%	17
TOTAL		308

Q4 Please provide your opinion about outdoor spaces

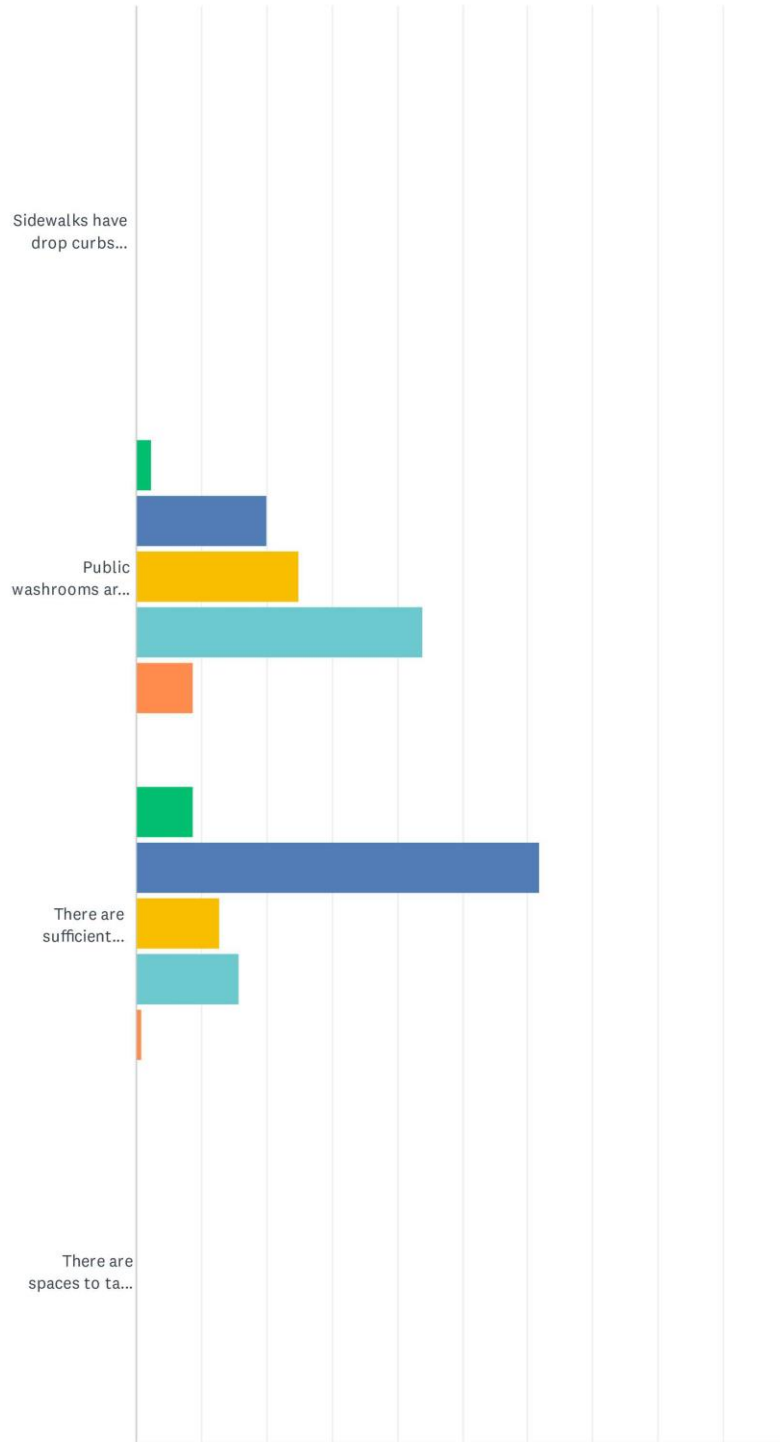
Answered: 267 Skipped: 44



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

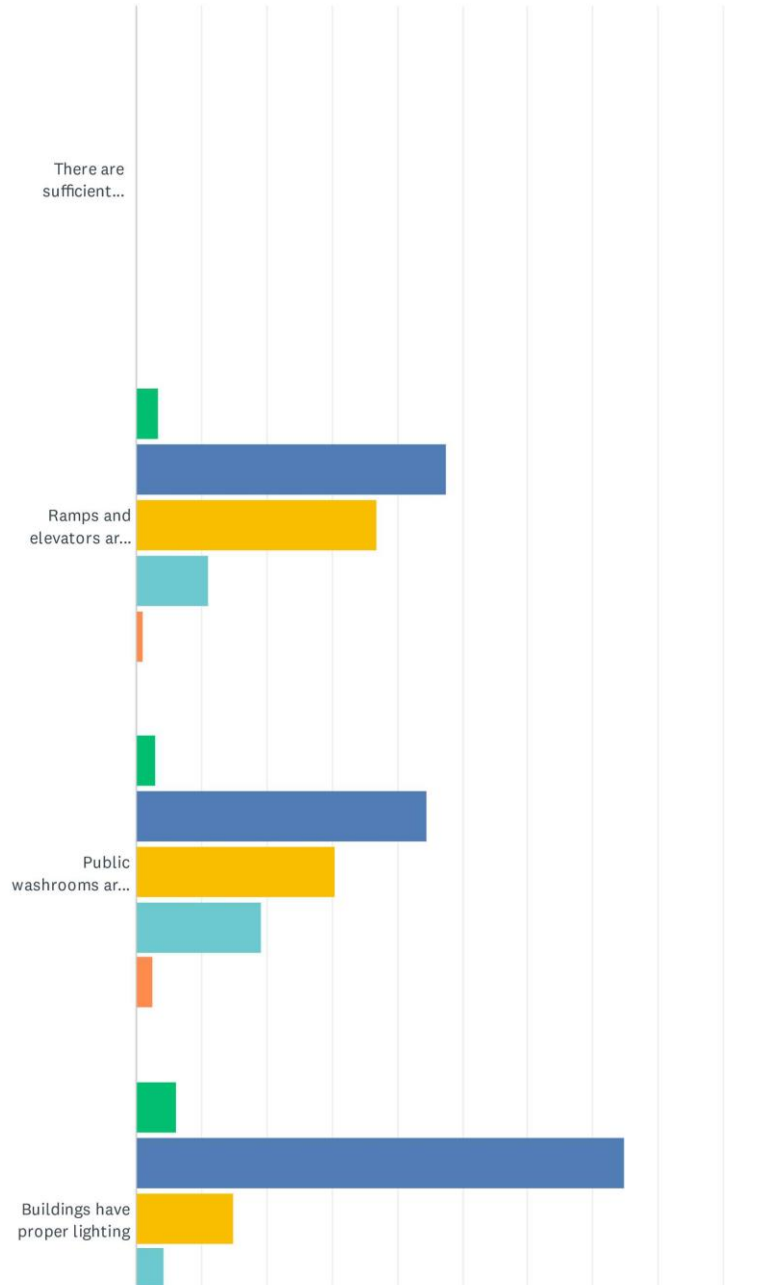
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly Ag...
 ■ Agree
 ■ Unsure
 ■ Disagree
■ Strongly Di...

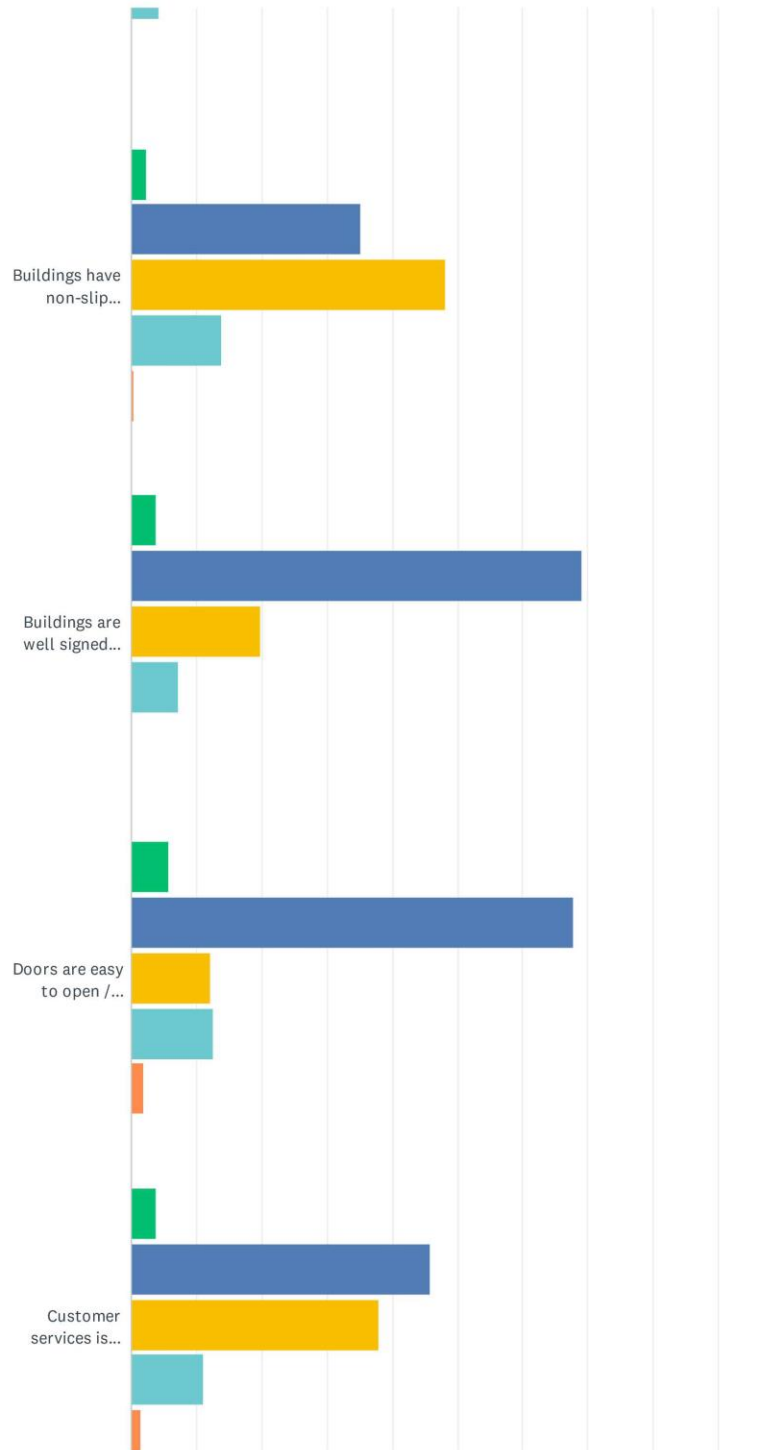
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Public areas in the town are clean and pleasant	13.96% 37	75.47% 200	5.28% 14	4.53% 12	0.75% 2	265	2.03
I feel safe walking in town at night	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
There are enough marked pedestrian crossings	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Pedestrian crossings are safe for people of varying ability (e.g. include audio and visual cues or adequate crossing times)	6.11% 16	47.33% 124	23.66% 62	19.47% 51	3.44% 9	262	2.67
Outdoor trails are safe and accessible	9.13% 24	45.25% 119	31.18% 82	14.07% 37	0.38% 1	263	2.51
There is ample seating in public spaces such as parks and green spaces	5.66% 15	44.15% 117	20.75% 55	27.92% 74	1.51% 4	265	2.75
Sidewalks are wide enough for wheelchairs and other mobility devices, and have dropped curbs	7.49% 20	55.81% 149	19.10% 51	13.86% 37	3.75% 10	267	2.51
Sidewalks are well maintained and free from obstructions (all seasons)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Sidewalks have drop curbs (curb cut outs)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Public washrooms are readily available	2.27% 6	20.08% 53	25.00% 66	43.94% 116	8.71% 23	264	3.37
There are sufficient parking spaces, particularly accessible parking spaces, near indoor facilities	8.68% 23	61.89% 164	12.83% 34	15.85% 42	0.75% 2	265	2.38
There are spaces to take shelter from the sun or rain if needed	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00

Q5 Please provide your opinion about indoor spaces in Espanola.

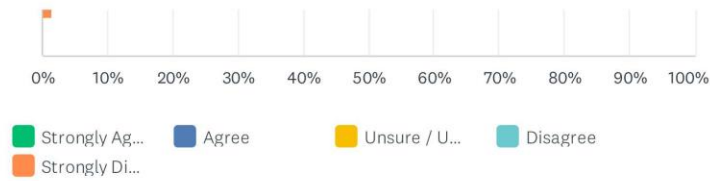
Answered: 265 Skipped: 46



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



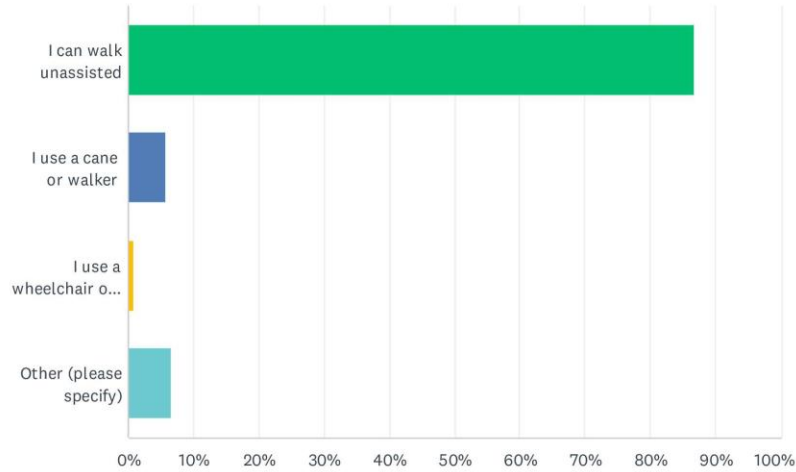
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
There are sufficient accessible parking spaces near indoor buildings	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Ramps and elevators are easily available	3.42% 9	47.53% 125	36.88% 97	11.03% 29	1.14% 3	263	2.59
Public washrooms are available and are well maintained	3.02% 8	44.53% 118	30.57% 81	19.25% 51	2.64% 7	265	2.74
Buildings have proper lighting	6.11% 16	74.81% 196	14.89% 39	4.20% 11	0.00% 0	262	2.17
Buildings have non-slip flooring	2.30% 6	35.25% 92	48.28% 126	13.79% 36	0.38% 1	261	2.75
Buildings are well signed inside and outside	3.82% 10	69.08% 181	19.85% 52	7.25% 19	0.00% 0	262	2.31
Doors are easy to open / automatic door openers are available	5.68% 15	67.80% 179	12.12% 32	12.50% 33	1.89% 5	264	2.37
Customer services is provided in a manner that suits your physical needs (e.g. dropped counters)	3.79% 10	45.83% 121	37.88% 100	10.98% 29	1.52% 4	264	2.61

Q6 Do you have any suggestions for improving outdoor spaces or buildings?

Answered: 82 Skipped: 229

Q7 Please indicate your level of mobility

Answered: 257 Skipped: 54

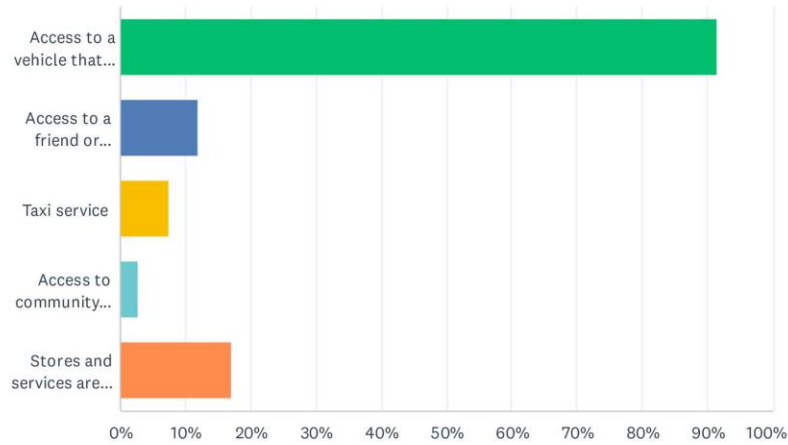


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I can walk unassisted	86.77%	223
I use a cane or walker	5.84%	15
I use a wheelchair or other similar device	0.78%	2
Other (please specify)	6.61%	17
TOTAL		257

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q8 How do you currently travel through Espanola? Please select all that apply.

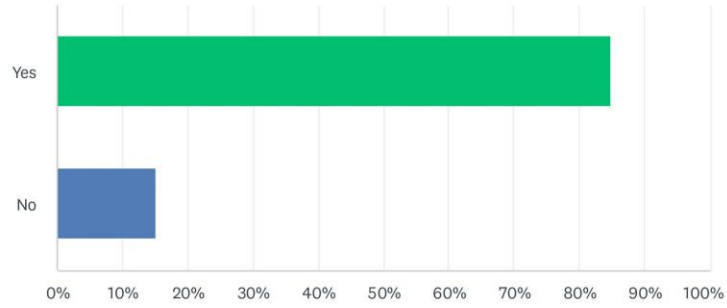
Answered: 258 Skipped: 53



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Access to a vehicle that you can drive	91.47%	236
Access to a friend or family member who can drive or assist	12.02%	31
Taxi service	7.36%	19
Access to community transportation services such as Care Van	2.71%	7
Stores and services are within walking distance	17.05%	44
Total Respondents: 258		

Q9 Are you aware of Care Van services?

Answered: 258 Skipped: 53

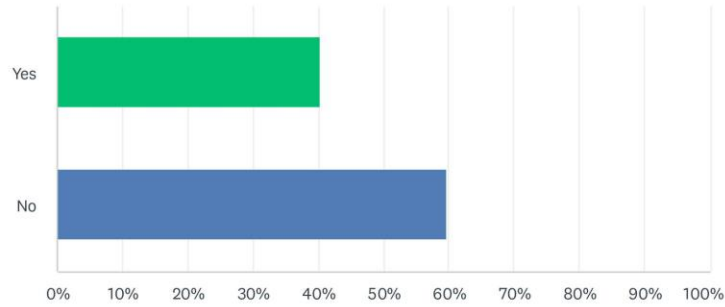


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	84.88%	219
No	15.12%	39
TOTAL		258

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q10 Are you aware of the new LaCloche Medical Transit services that was recently approved?

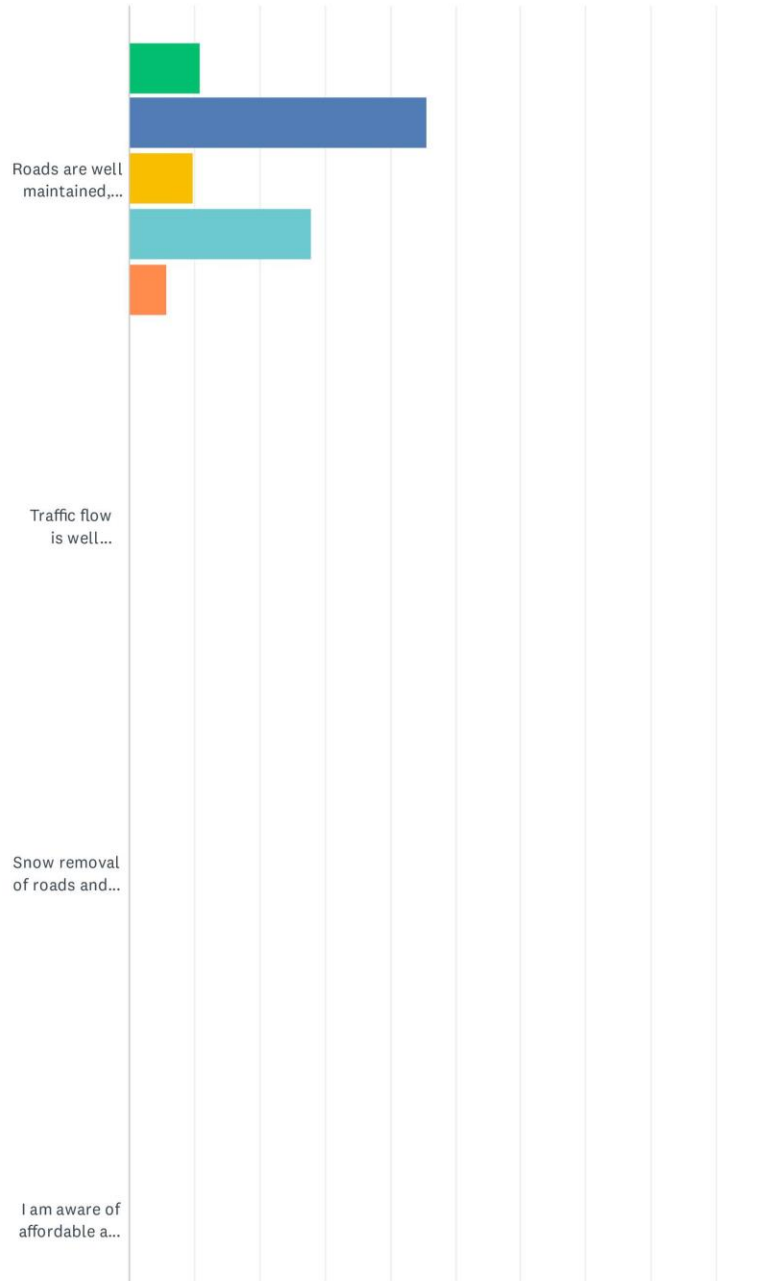
Answered: 258 Skipped: 53



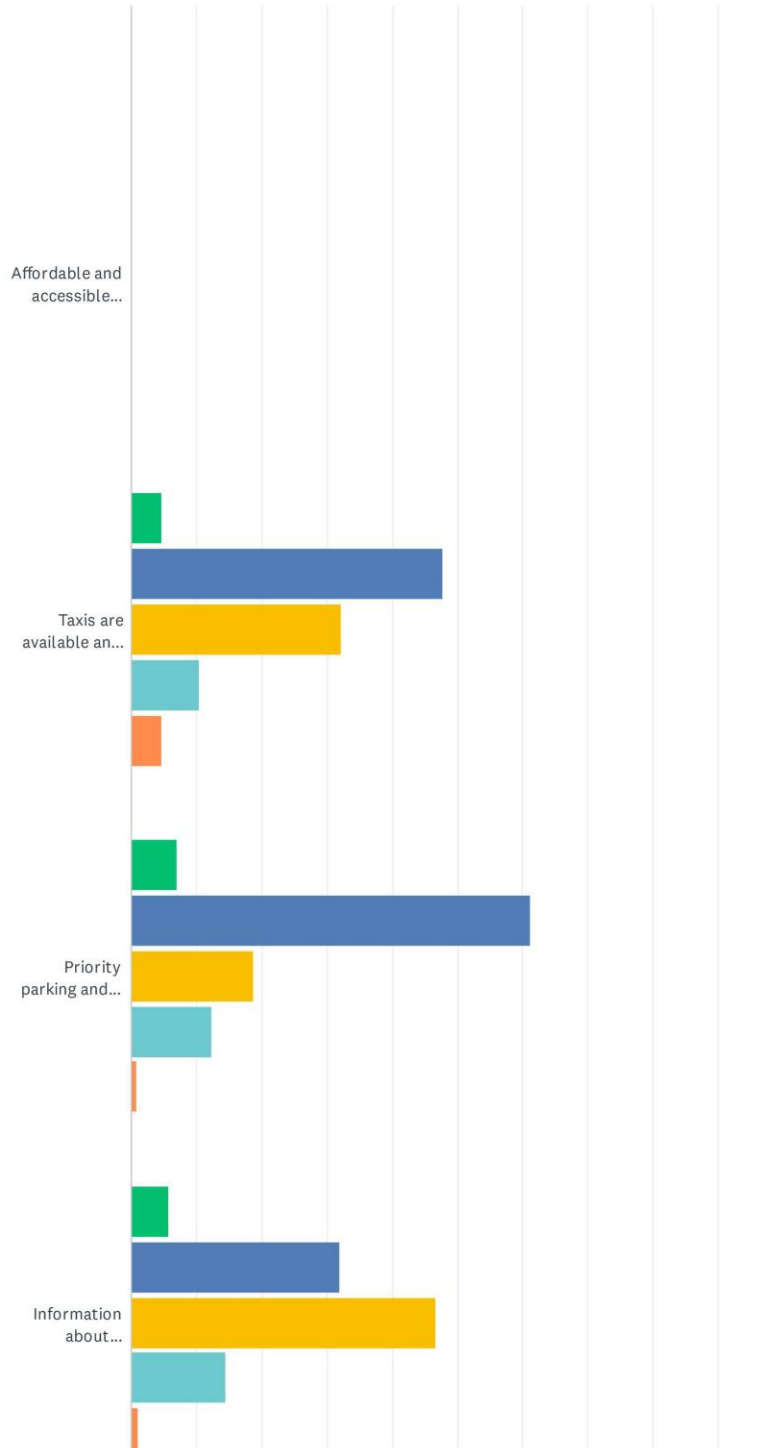
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.31%	104
No	59.69%	154
TOTAL		258

Q11 Please provide your opinion about the following.

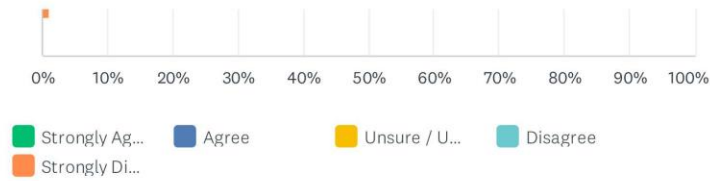
Answered: 259 Skipped: 52



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



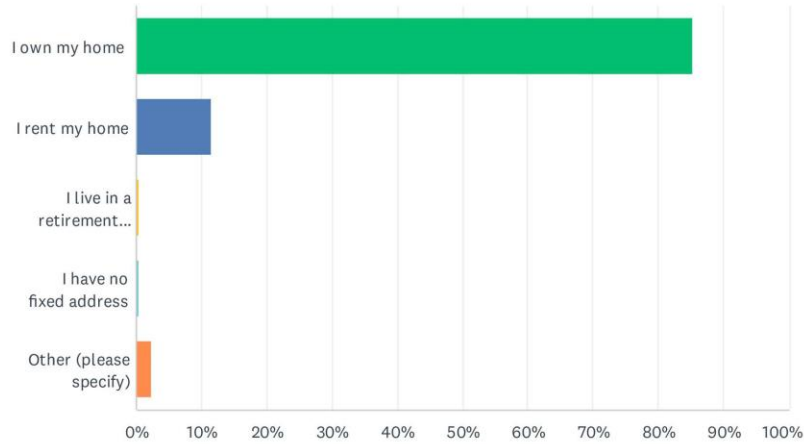
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Roads are well maintained, well lit, well signed; and, traffic lines are clear and visible	10.89% 28	45.53% 117	9.73% 25	28.02% 72	5.84% 15	257	2.72
Traffic flow is well regulated (especially in summer when seasonal traffic increases)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Snow removal of roads and parking lots is prompt	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
I am aware of affordable and accessible community transportation services are available to take seniors to events, shopping and field trips (e.g. Care Van)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Affordable and accessible transportation services are available to take seniors to and from health appointments (both in and outside of the community)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Taxis are available and accessible	4.67% 12	47.86% 123	32.30% 83	10.51% 27	4.67% 12	257	2.63
Priority parking and drop off spots are available and respected for those with special needs	7.00% 18	61.09% 157	18.68% 48	12.45% 32	0.78% 2	257	2.39
Information about transportation options for seniors is available to them, in various formats, and includes all necessary information	5.84% 15	31.91% 82	46.69% 120	14.40% 37	1.17% 3	257	2.73

Q12 Do you have any recommendations for improvement to transportation?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 239

Q13 Please describe your current housing situation

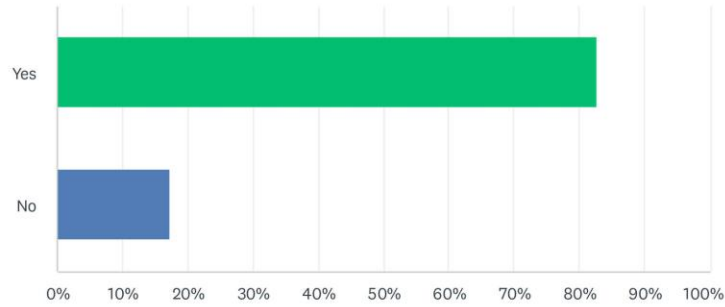
Answered: 252 Skipped: 59



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I own my home	85.32%	215
I rent my home	11.51%	29
I live in a retirement facility or long term care home	0.40%	1
I have no fixed address	0.40%	1
Other (please specify)	2.38%	6
TOTAL		252

Q14 Does your current living situation fit your needs (now and for the future)

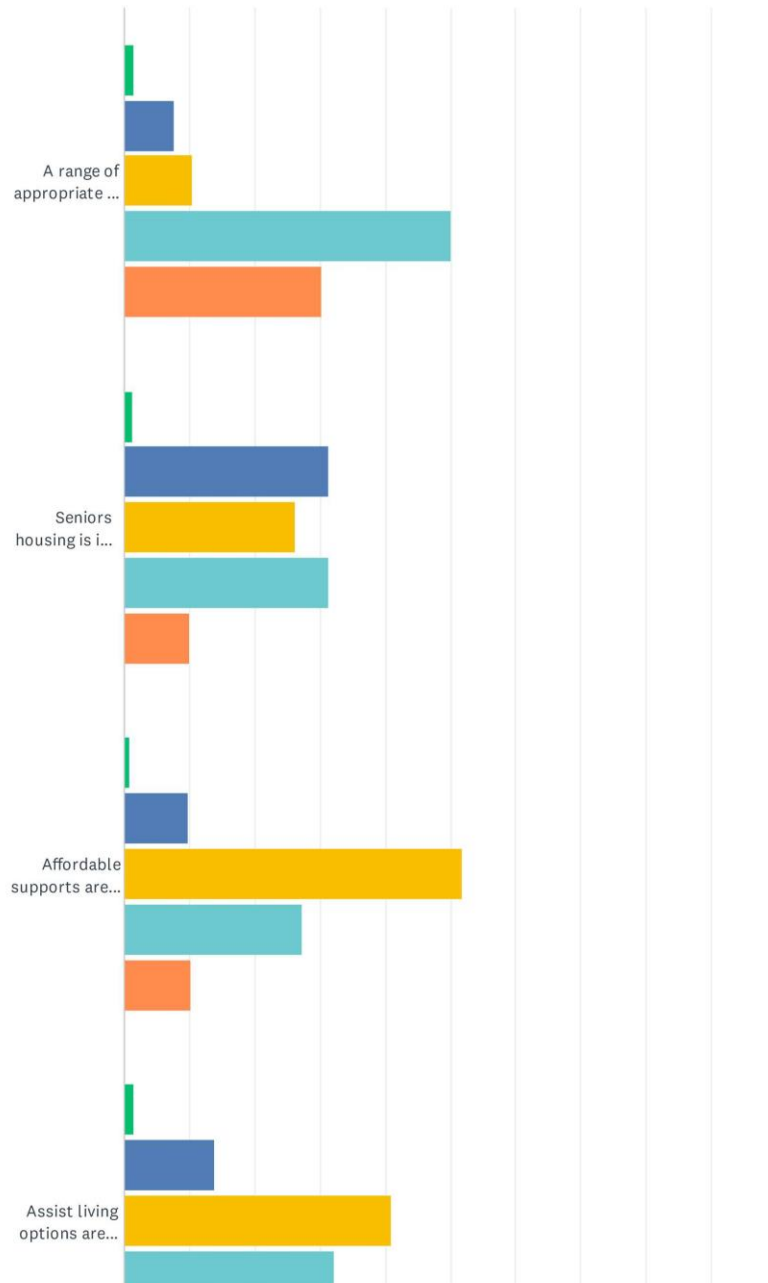
Answered: 250 Skipped: 61



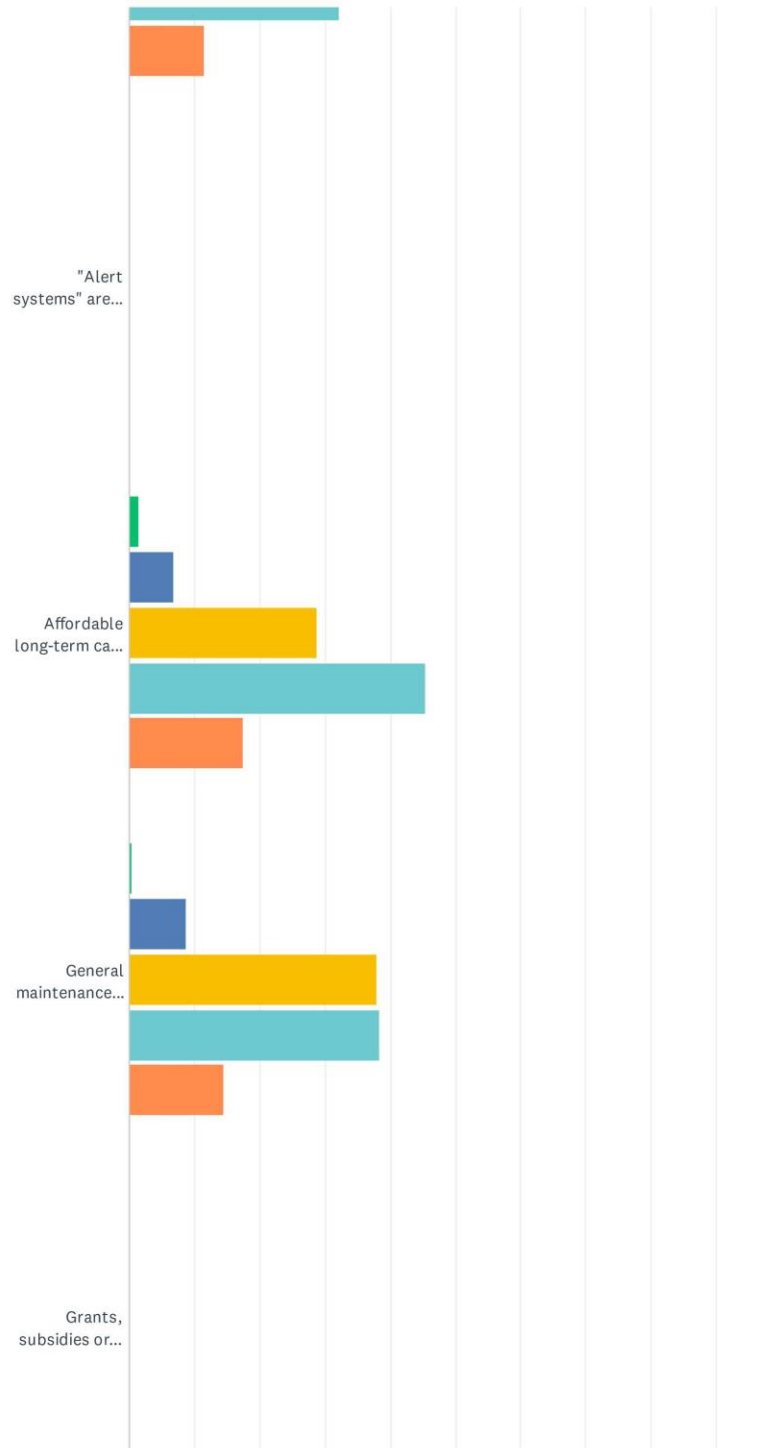
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	82.80%	207
No	17.20%	43
TOTAL		250

Q15 Please provide your opinion about the following.

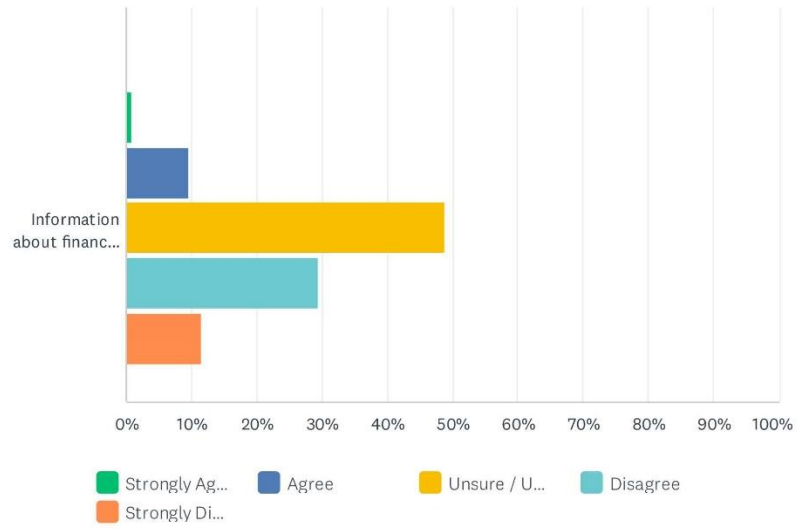
Answered: 253 Skipped: 58



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

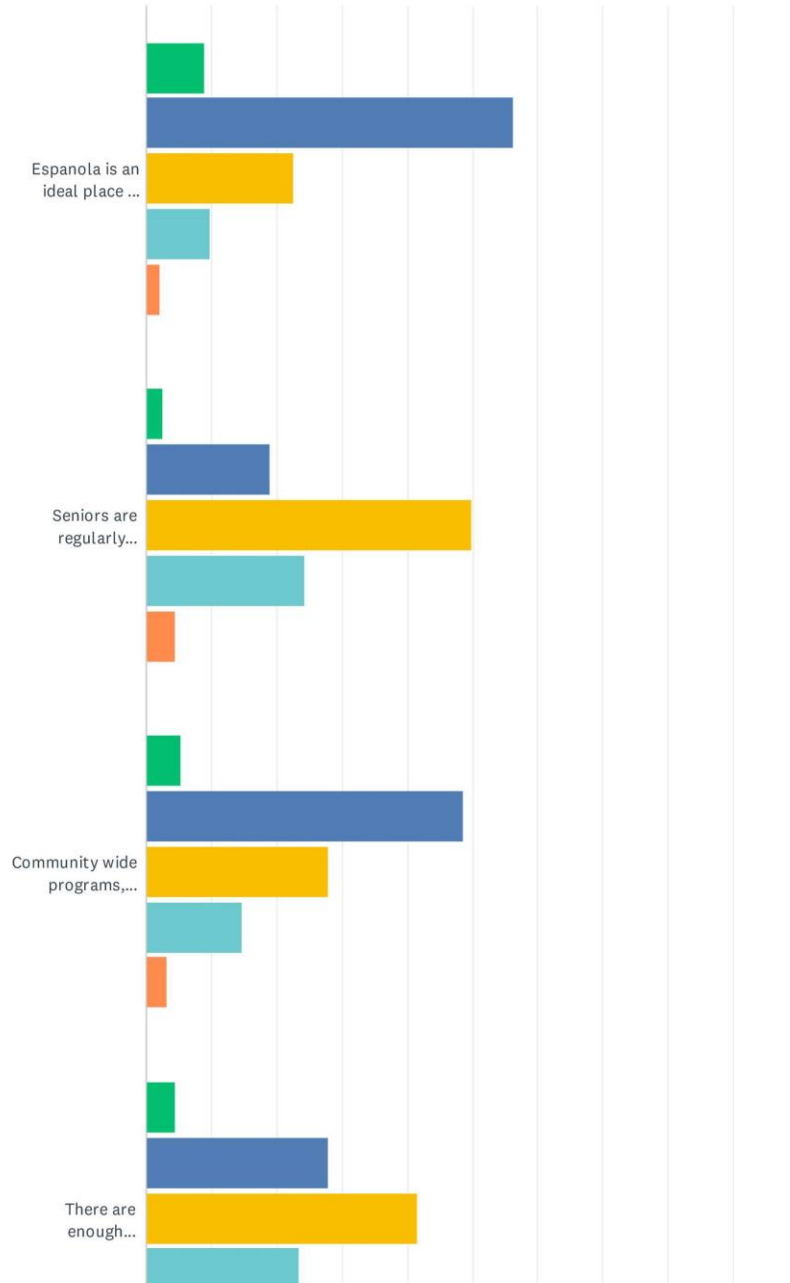
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
A range of appropriate and affordable housing options are available (for sale and for rent) including apartments, independent living, and homes	1.59% 4	7.57% 19	10.36% 26	50.20% 126	30.28% 76	251	4.00
Seniors housing is in close proximity to services	1.19% 3	31.35% 79	26.19% 66	31.35% 79	9.92% 25	252	3.17
Affordable supports are available to enable seniors to remain at home	0.79% 2	9.88% 25	51.78% 131	27.27% 69	10.28% 26	253	3.36
Assist living options are available to all	1.59% 4	13.89% 35	40.87% 103	32.14% 81	11.51% 29	252	3.38
"Alert systems" are available for seniors living alone (e.g. systems that notify someone when a senior needs help)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Affordable long-term care options are available that prevent the separation of families and the need to move out of the community	1.59% 4	6.77% 17	28.69% 72	45.42% 114	17.53% 44	251	3.71
General maintenance (home and yard) is affordable for seniors on a fixed income	0.40% 1	8.80% 22	38.00% 95	38.40% 96	14.40% 36	250	3.58
Grants, subsidies or other forms of financial assistance is available from the province, or other agencies for home modifications	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Information about financial assistance (e.g., provincial grants for accessibility improvements in the home) is readily available and easily accessible by seniors	0.79% 2	9.52% 24	48.81% 123	29.37% 74	11.51% 29	252	3.41

Q16 Do you have any recommendations for improvements to housing?

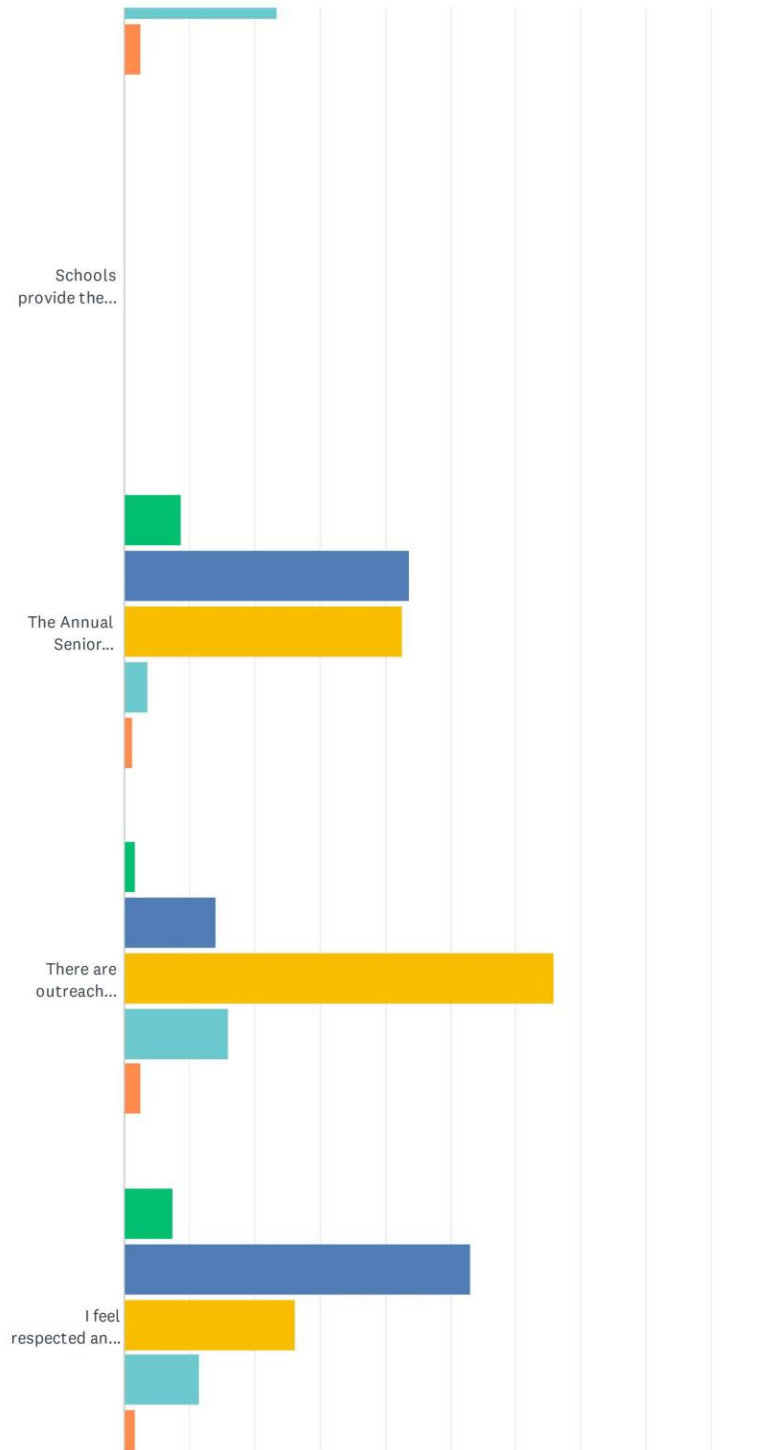
Answered: 79 Skipped: 232

Q17 Please provide your opinion about the following

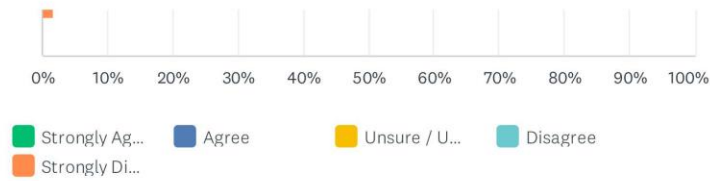
Answered: 243 Skipped: 68



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



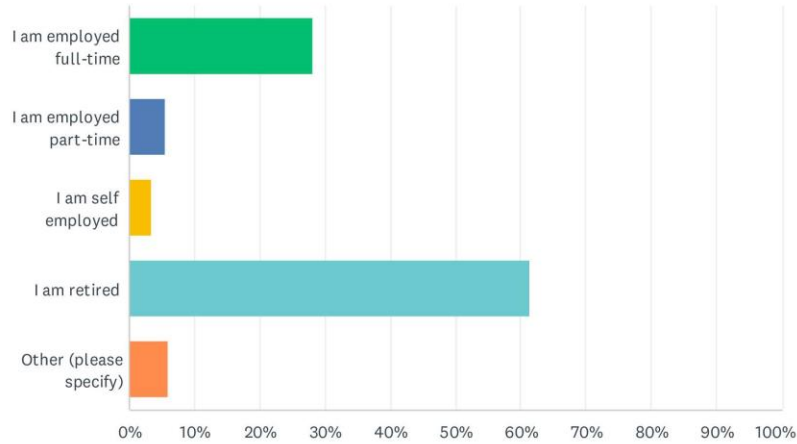
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Espanola is an ideal place for aging adults to live	9.05% 22	56.38% 137	22.63% 55	9.88% 24	2.06% 5	243	2.40
Seniors are regularly consulted by the public sector, volunteer organizations and commercial businesses regarding how to serve them better	2.47% 6	18.93% 46	49.79% 121	24.28% 59	4.53% 11	243	3.09
Community wide programs, events and activities take all generations into consideration	5.35% 13	48.56% 118	27.98% 68	14.81% 36	3.29% 8	243	2.62
There are enough programs, events, and activities specifically for the senior population	4.53% 11	27.98% 68	41.56% 101	23.46% 57	2.47% 6	243	2.91
Schools provide the opportunity to learn about aging and older people; and, include seniors in school activities such as reading or crafts	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
The Annual Senior Appreciation event held annually in June adequately recognizes and honours the contribution of seniors in the community	8.68% 21	43.80% 106	42.56% 103	3.72% 9	1.24% 3	242	2.45
There are outreach programs for seniors, especially for those at risk of social isolation	1.65% 4	13.99% 34	65.84% 160	16.05% 39	2.47% 6	243	3.04
I feel respected and valued as a member of my community	7.47% 18	53.11% 128	26.14% 63	11.62% 28	1.66% 4	241	2.47

Q18 Do you have any recommendations on how to improve respect and social inclusion for seniors in Espanola?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 259

Q19 Please indicate which of the following applies to you

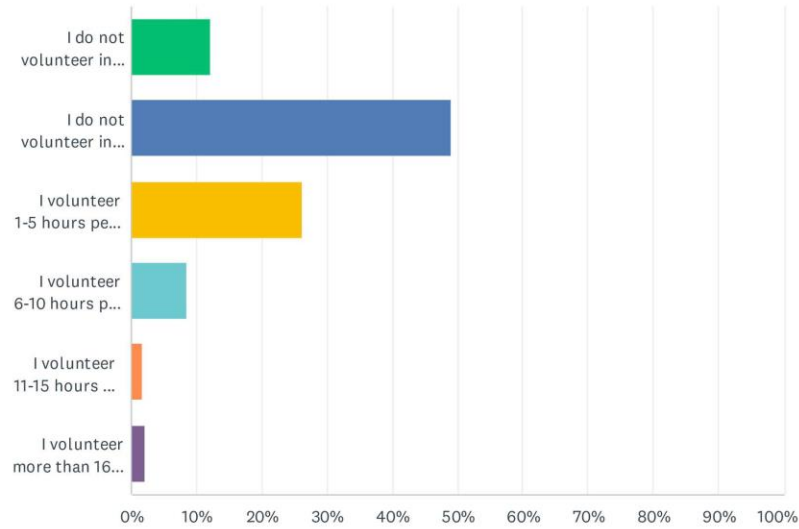
Answered: 238 Skipped: 73



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am employed full-time	28.15%	67
I am employed part-time	5.46%	13
I am self employed	3.36%	8
I am retired	61.34%	146
Other (please specify)	5.88%	14
Total Respondents: 238		

Q20 Please indicate which of the following applies in terms of volunteering and volunteerism

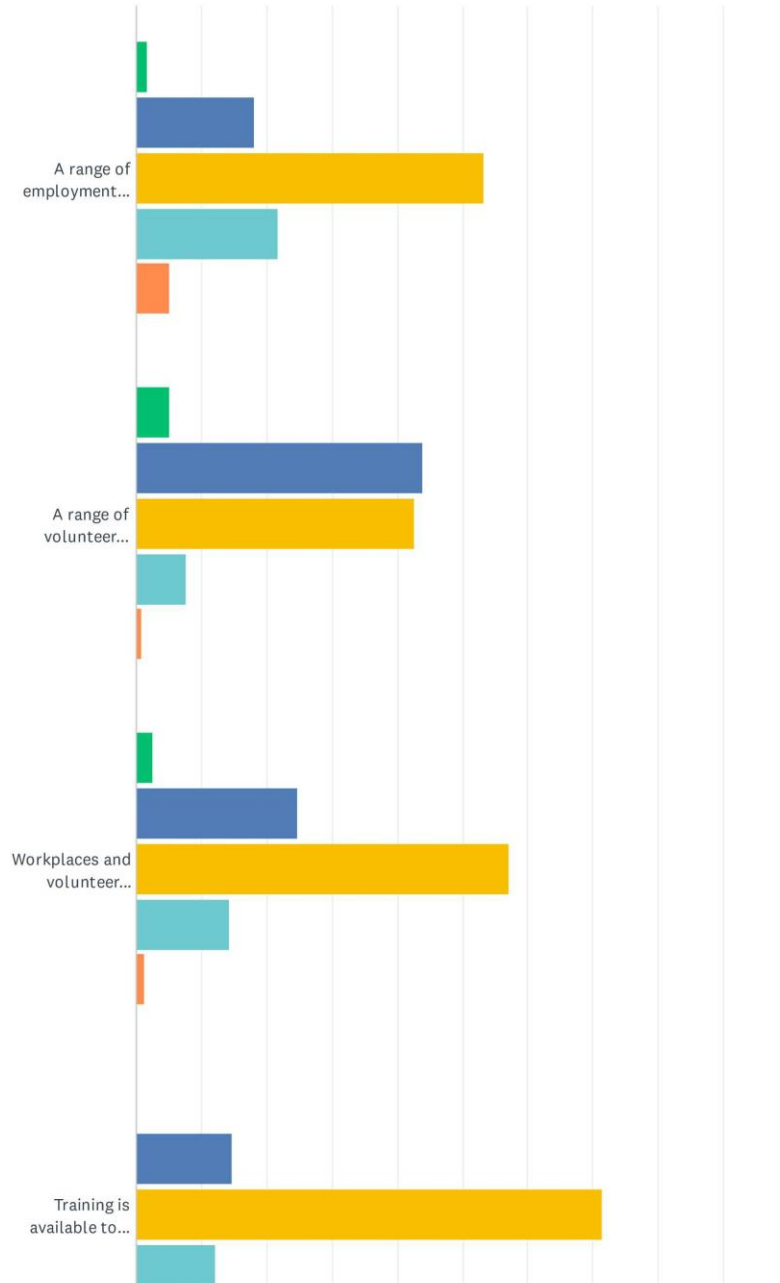
Answered: 232 Skipped: 79



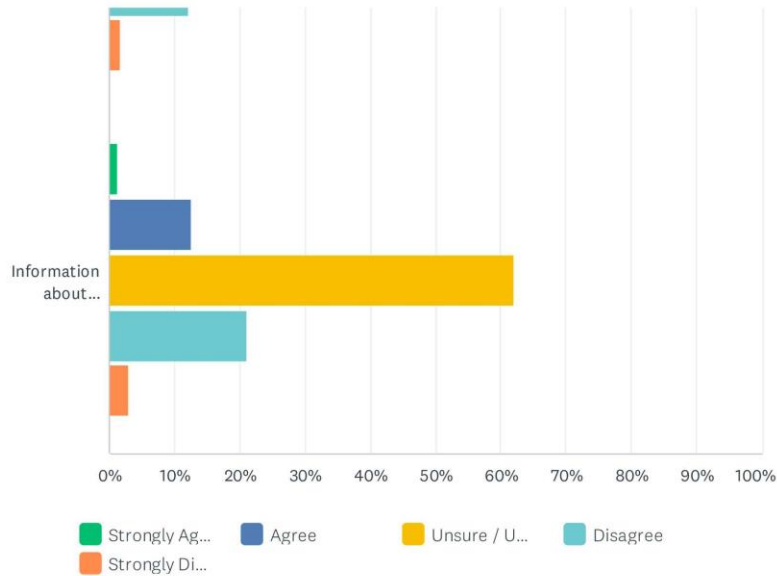
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not volunteer in the community, nor do I want to	12.07%	28
I do not volunteer in the community, but want to at some point in the future	49.14%	114
I volunteer 1-5 hours per week in the community	26.29%	61
I volunteer 6-10 hours per week in the community	8.62%	20
I volunteer 11-15 hours per week in the community	1.72%	4
I volunteer more than 16 hours per week in the community	2.16%	5
TOTAL		232

Q21 Please provide your opinion about the following:

Answered: 238 Skipped: 73



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
A range of employment opportunities exist for seniors in the community	1.68% 4	18.07% 43	53.36% 127	21.85% 52	5.04% 12	238	3.11
A range of volunteer opportunities are available that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of seniors	5.06% 12	43.88% 104	42.62% 101	7.59% 18	0.84% 2	237	2.55
Workplaces and volunteer organizations are adapted to support the needs of older citizens and the disabled	2.52% 6	24.79% 59	57.14% 136	14.29% 34	1.26% 3	238	2.87
Training is available to seniors to help them in their volunteer or employment efforts; especially as related to use of technology	0.00% 0	14.71% 35	71.43% 170	12.18% 29	1.68% 4	238	3.01
Information about employment and volunteer opportunities for seniors is easily available and accessible to seniors in the community	1.27% 3	12.66% 30	62.03% 147	21.10% 50	2.95% 7	237	3.12

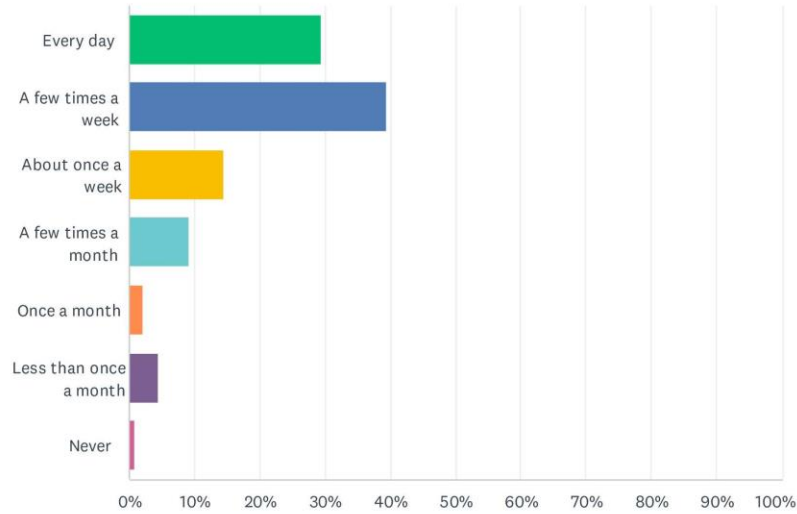
Q22 Do you have any recommendations on how to improve volunteerism and employment for seniors in Espanola?

Answered: 38 Skipped: 273

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q23 How often to you socialize with family, friends, or others?

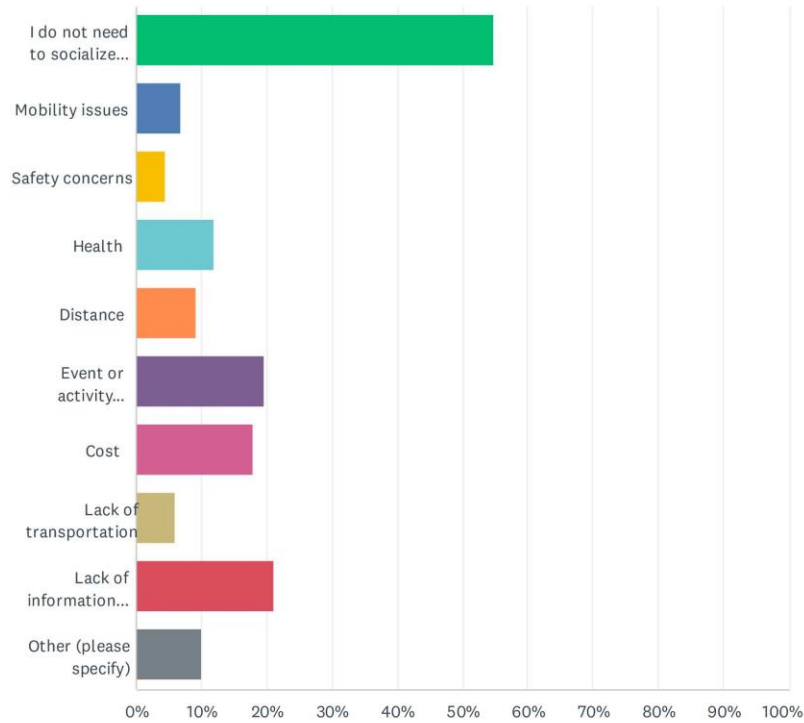
Answered: 228 Skipped: 83



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Every day	29.39%	67
A few times a week	39.47%	90
About once a week	14.47%	33
A few times a month	9.21%	21
Once a month	2.19%	5
Less than once a month	4.39%	10
Never	0.88%	2
TOTAL		228

Q24 If you would like to socialize more, what prevents you from doing so? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 219 Skipped: 92

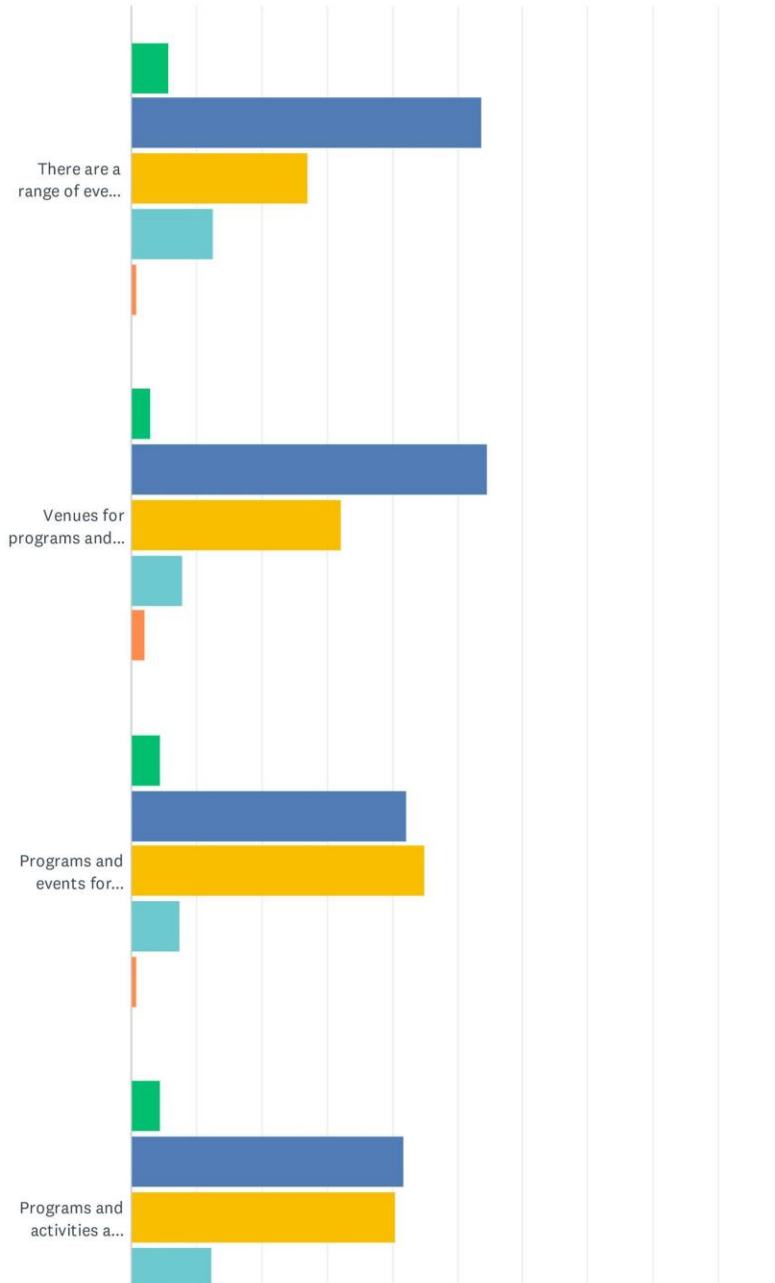


Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

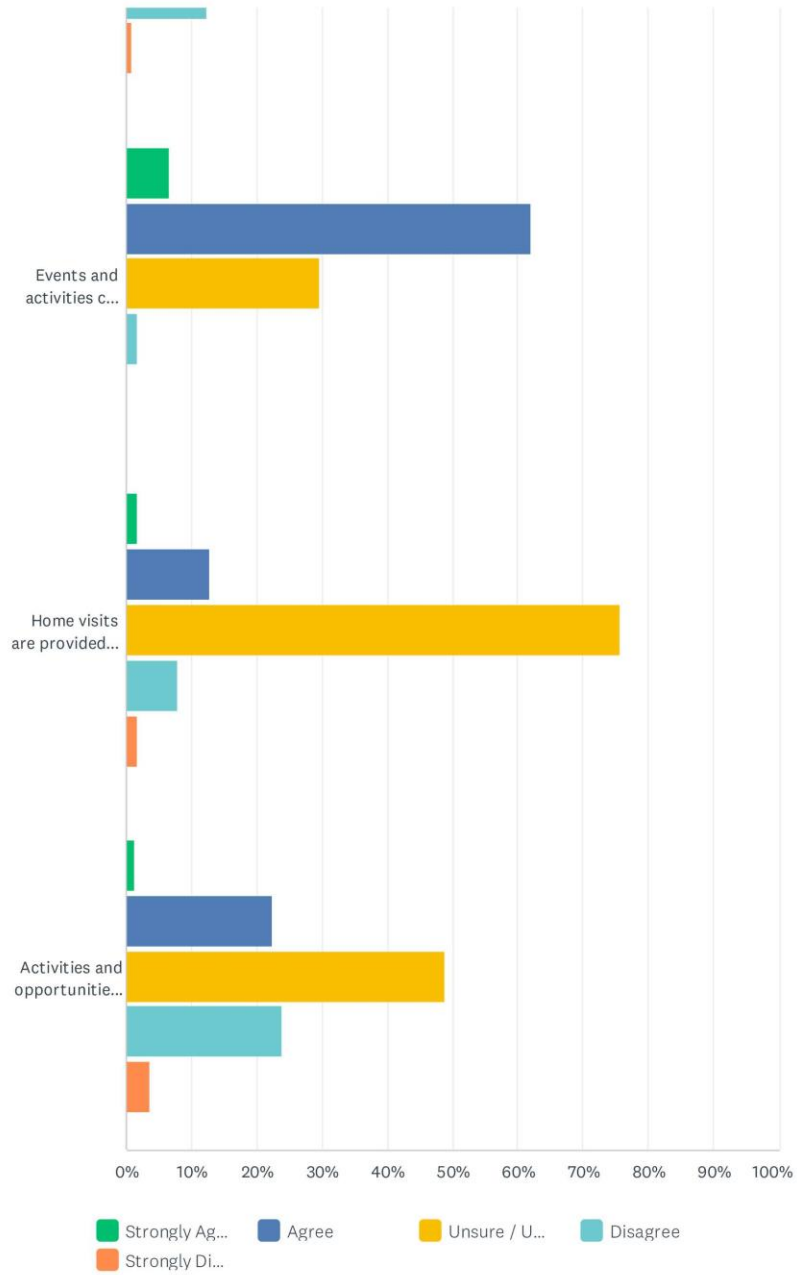
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not need to socialize more / I socialize enough	54.79%	120
Mobility issues	6.85%	15
Safety concerns	4.57%	10
Health	11.87%	26
Distance	9.13%	20
Event or activity scheduling	19.63%	43
Cost	17.81%	39
Lack of transportation	5.94%	13
Lack of information about social events	21.00%	46
Other (please specify)	10.05%	22
Total Respondents: 219		

Q25 Please provide your opinion about the following:

Answered: 229 Skipped: 82



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
There are a range of events and activities that allow me to socialize with others	5.68% 13	53.71% 123	27.07% 62	12.66% 29	0.87% 2	229	2.49
Venues for programs and events are conveniently located and accessible	3.08% 7	54.63% 124	32.16% 73	7.93% 18	2.20% 5	227	2.52
Programs and events for seniors are held at convenient times	4.41% 10	42.29% 96	44.93% 102	7.49% 17	0.88% 2	227	2.58
Programs and activities are affordable for seniors	4.41% 10	41.85% 95	40.53% 92	12.33% 28	0.88% 2	227	2.63
Events and activities can be attended alone, or with a companion	6.64% 15	61.95% 140	29.65% 67	1.77% 4	0.00% 0	226	2.27
Home visits are provided to those that do not, or cannot leave their homes	1.76% 4	12.78% 29	75.77% 172	7.93% 18	1.76% 4	227	2.95
Activities and opportunities for engagement are well advertised to seniors	1.32% 3	22.47% 51	48.90% 111	23.79% 54	3.52% 8	227	3.06

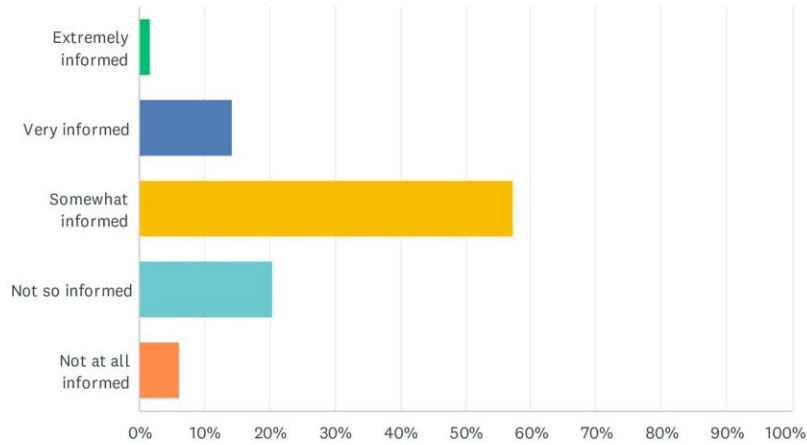
Q26 Do you have any recommendations on how to improve social engagement for seniors in Espanola?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 276

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q27 Do you feel well informed about the local area, specifically about programs and services for seniors?

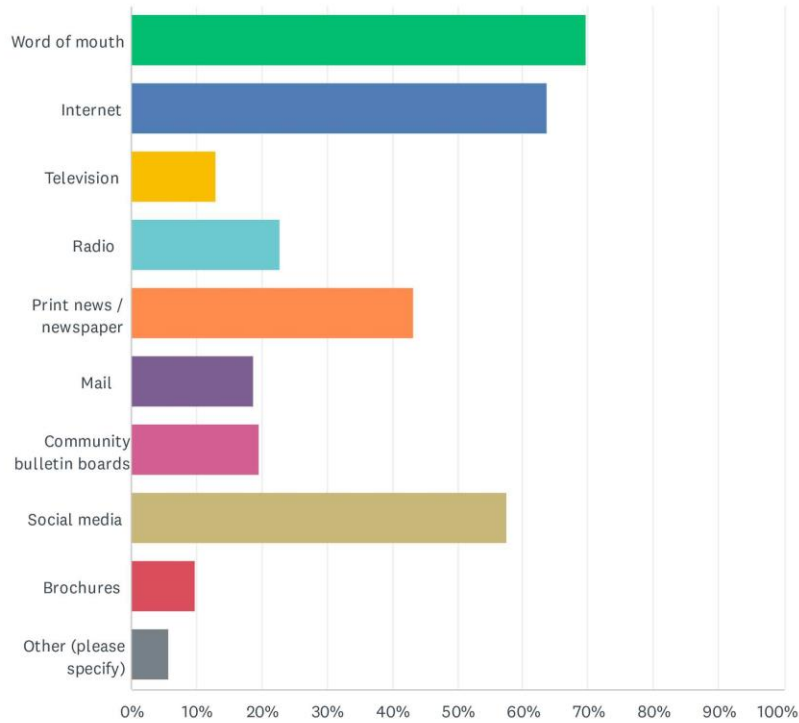
Answered: 225 Skipped: 86



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely informed	1.78%	4
Very informed	14.22%	32
Somewhat informed	57.33%	129
Not so informed	20.44%	46
Not at all informed	6.22%	14
TOTAL		225

Q28 Where do you currently get your information? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 224 Skipped: 87

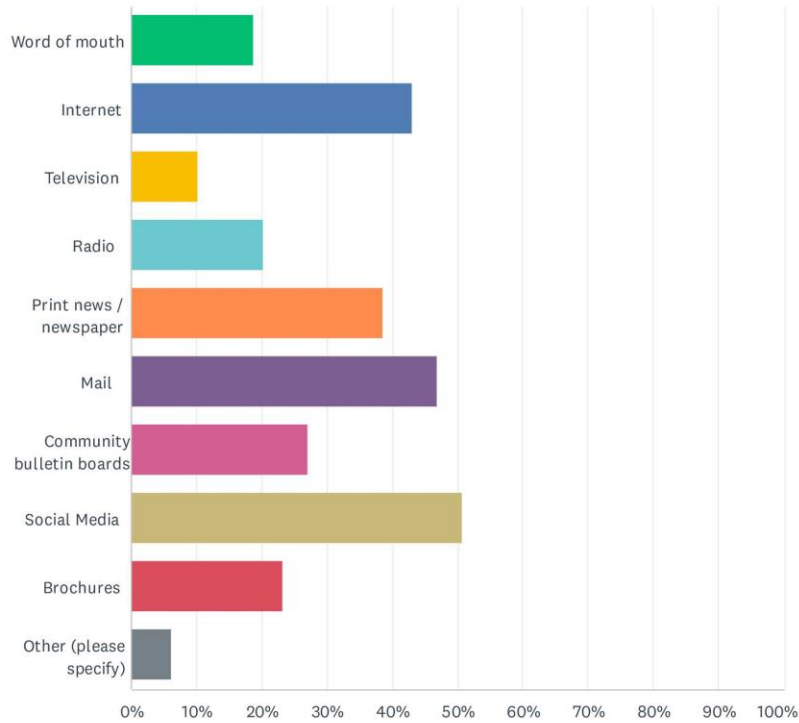


Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Word of mouth	69.64%	156
Internet	63.84%	143
Television	12.95%	29
Radio	22.77%	51
Print news / newspaper	43.30%	97
Mail	18.75%	42
Community bulletin boards	19.64%	44
Social media	57.59%	129
Brochures	9.82%	22
Other (please specify)	5.80%	13
Total Respondents: 224		

Q29 If you would like to be more informed about the area, what way would you like to get your information? Please select all that apply

Answered: 207 Skipped: 104

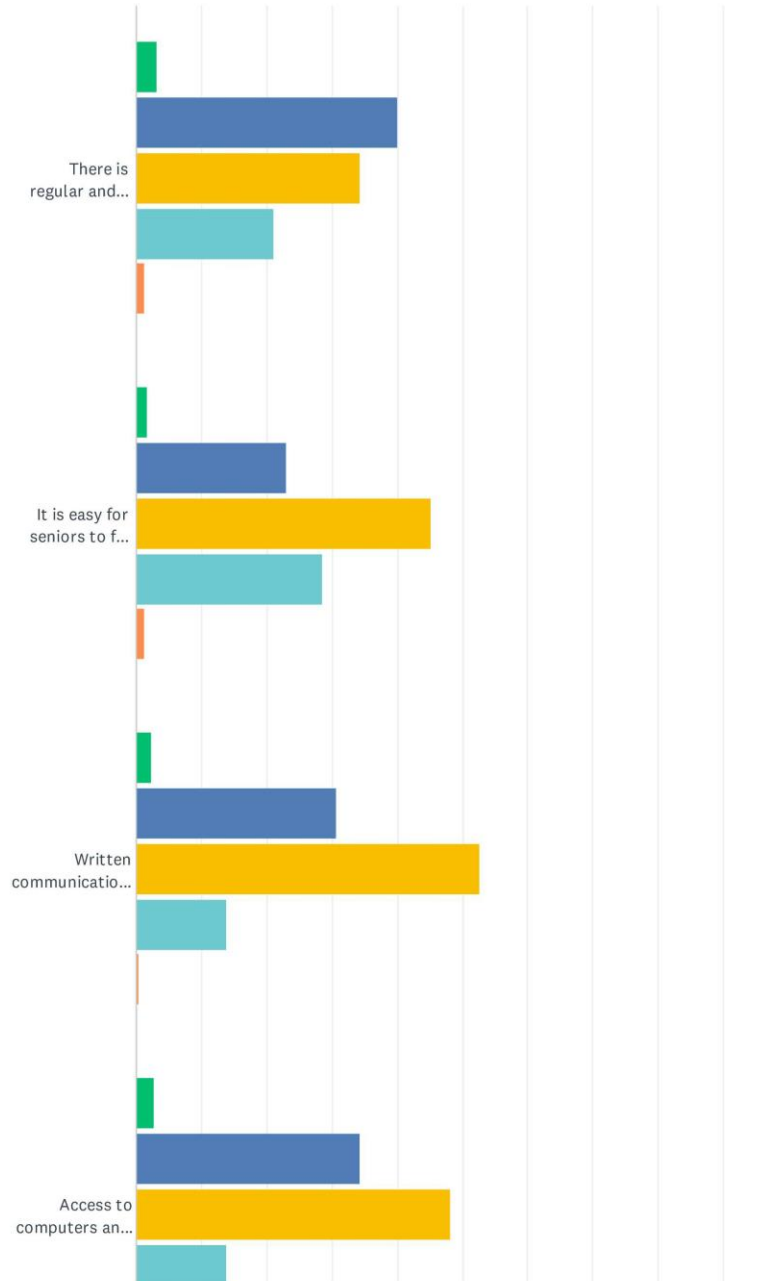


Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

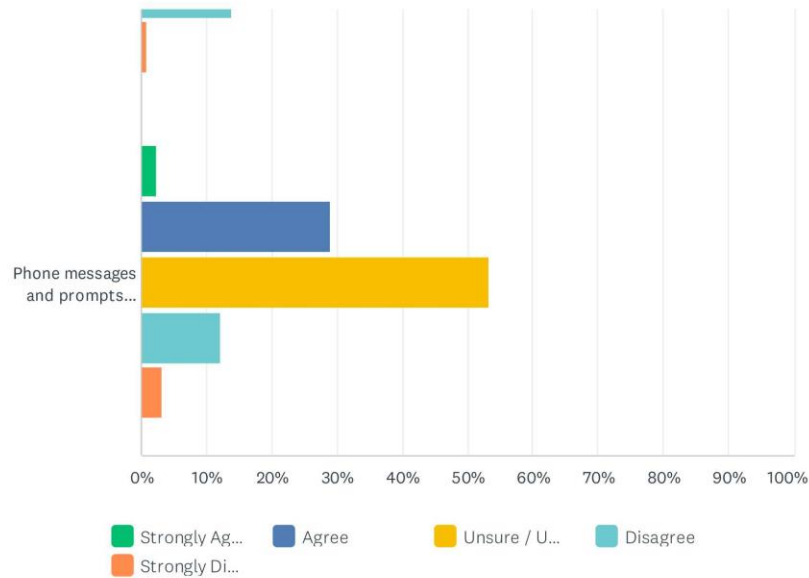
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Word of mouth	18.84%	39
Internet	43.00%	89
Television	10.14%	21
Radio	20.29%	42
Print news / newspaper	38.65%	80
Mail	46.86%	97
Community bulletin boards	27.05%	56
Social Media	50.72%	105
Brochures	23.19%	48
Other (please specify)	6.28%	13
Total Respondents: 207		

Q30 Please provide your opinion about the following:

Answered: 222 Skipped: 89



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



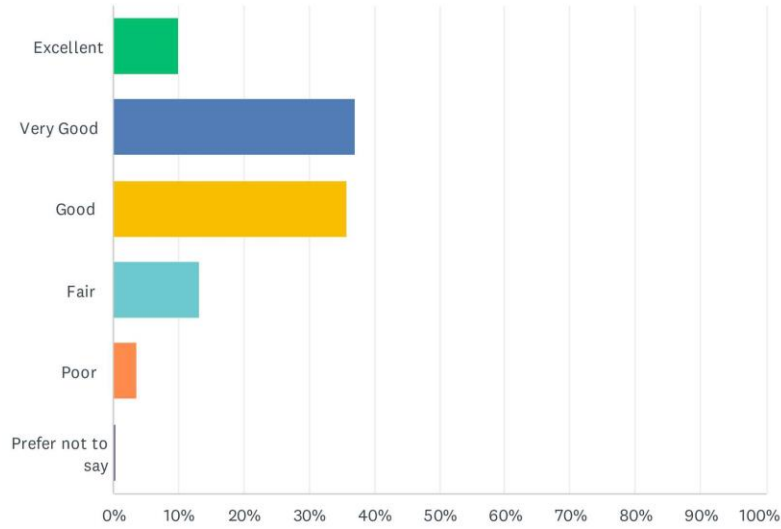
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
There is regular and reliable distribution of information about events and activities from the Town and various voluntary organizations	3.15% 7	40.09% 89	34.23% 76	21.17% 47	1.35% 3	222	2.77
It is easy for seniors to find the information they are looking for whether in print, or online	1.81% 4	23.08% 51	45.25% 100	28.51% 63	1.36% 3	221	3.05
Written communications are clearly printed using large letters and is easy to read with simple messaging	2.25% 5	30.63% 68	52.70% 117	13.96% 31	0.45% 1	222	2.80
Access to computers and internet is available to seniors looking to access online information	2.70% 6	34.23% 76	48.20% 107	13.96% 31	0.90% 2	222	2.76
Phone messages and prompts (e.g. phone answering services) use clear language, and speak at a pace that is easy to understand	2.26% 5	28.96% 64	53.39% 118	12.22% 27	3.17% 7	221	2.85

Q31 Do you have any recommendations on how to improve communications and access to information?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 282

Q32 How would you describe your overall health and wellness?

Answered: 221 Skipped: 90

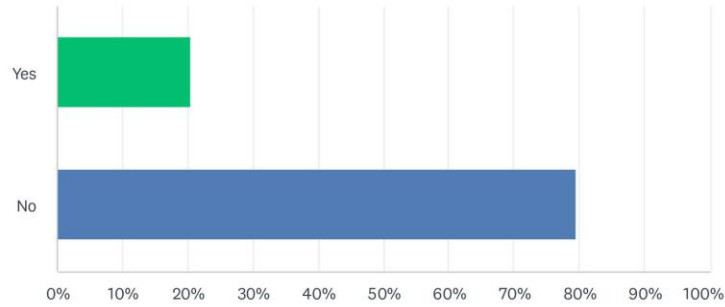


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	9.95%	22
Very Good	37.10%	82
Good	35.75%	79
Fair	13.12%	29
Poor	3.62%	8
Prefer not to say	0.45%	1
TOTAL		221

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q33 Are you aware that you can access video appointment services through the Espanola Public Library?

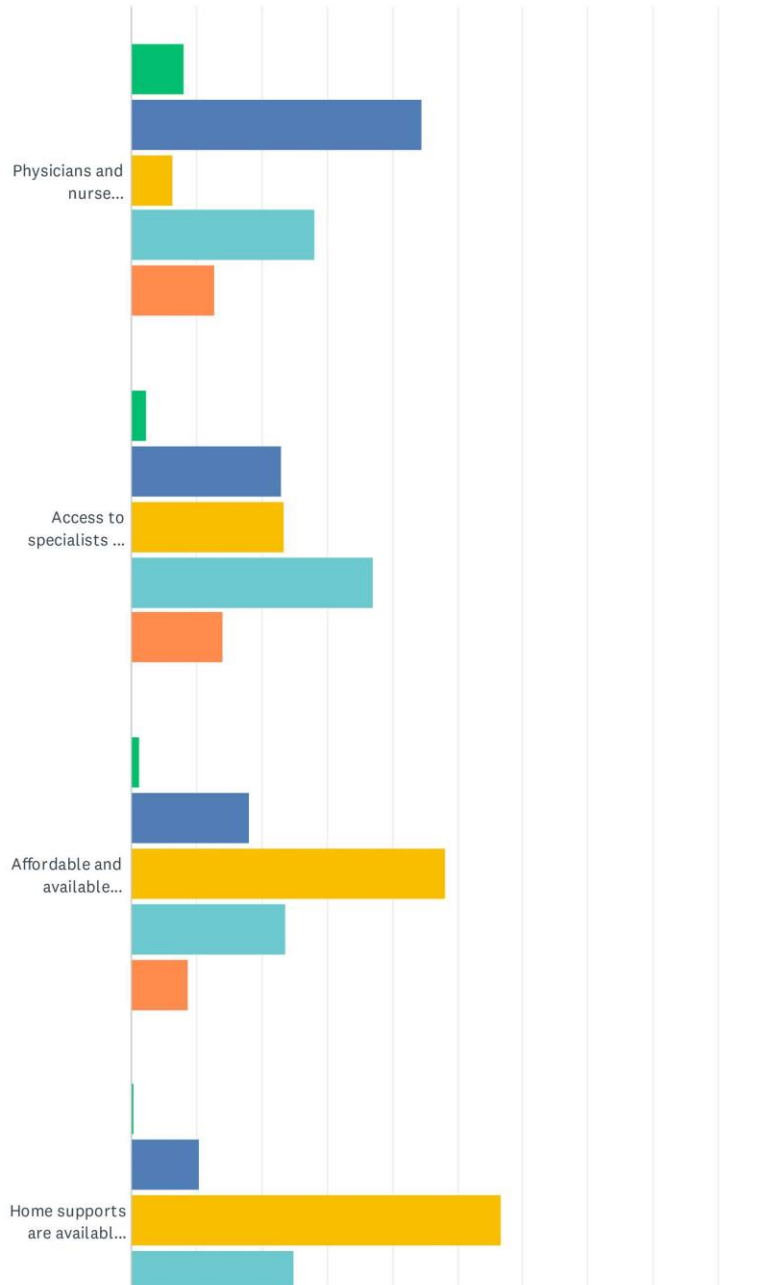
Answered: 220 Skipped: 91



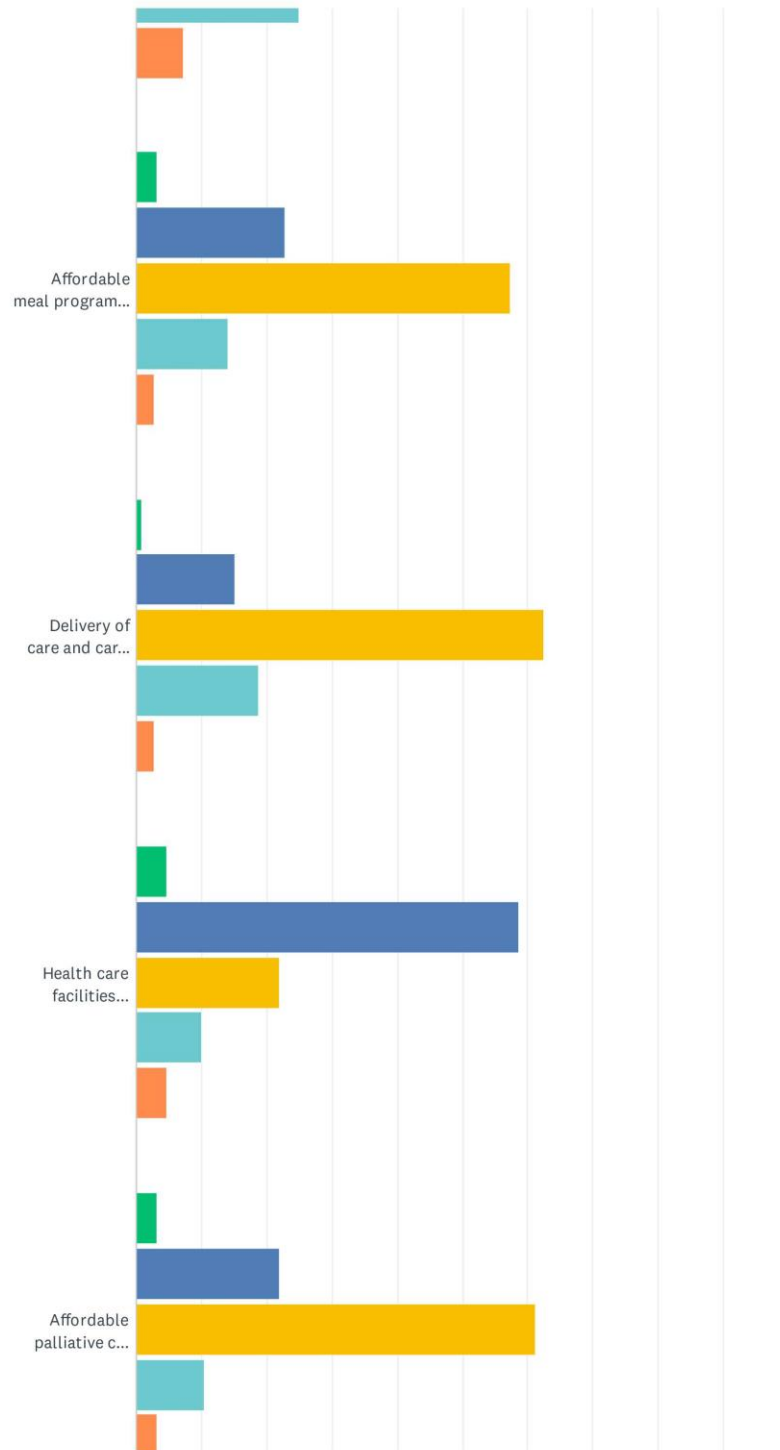
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20.45%	45
No	79.55%	175
TOTAL		220

Q34 Please provide your opinion about the following:

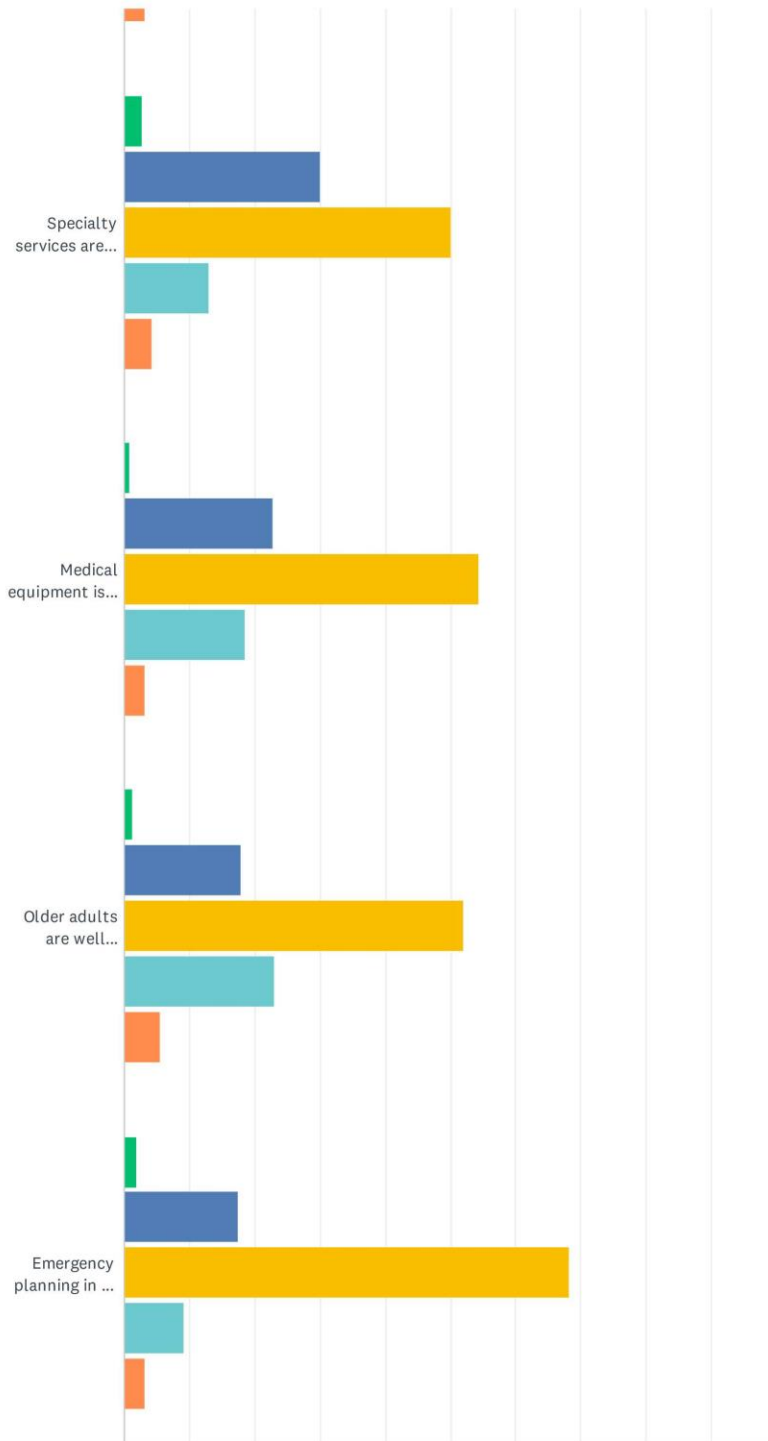
Answered: 221 Skipped: 90



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment



Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Strongly Ag...
 ■ Agree
 ■ Unsure / U...
 ■ Disagree
■ Strongly Di...

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNSURE / UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Physicians and nurse practitioners are available in the community	8.18% 18	44.55% 98	6.36% 14	28.18% 62	12.73% 28	220	2.93
Access to specialists is readily available	2.26% 5	23.08% 51	23.53% 52	37.10% 82	14.03% 31	221	3.38
Affordable and available health and home services are in place including health and personal care, housekeeping, etc.	1.36% 3	18.18% 40	48.18% 106	23.64% 52	8.64% 19	220	3.20
Home supports are available in a timely manner	0.45% 1	10.45% 23	56.82% 125	25.00% 55	7.27% 16	220	3.28
Affordable meal programs are available to all seniors in the community, regardless of their health	3.18% 7	22.73% 50	57.27% 126	14.09% 31	2.73% 6	220	2.90
Delivery of care and care services is well coordinated	0.91% 2	15.07% 33	62.56% 137	18.72% 41	2.74% 6	219	3.07
Health care facilities include clusters of services (e.g. doctors, therapists, pharmacists)	4.59% 10	58.72% 128	22.02% 48	10.09% 22	4.59% 10	218	2.51
Affordable palliative care is available in the community	3.20% 7	21.92% 48	61.19% 134	10.50% 23	3.20% 7	219	2.89
Specialty services are accessible and coordinated (e.g. cancer care outreach, diabetes clinics)	2.78% 6	30.09% 65	50.00% 108	12.96% 28	4.17% 9	216	2.86
Medical equipment is available, affordable, and accessible	0.93% 2	22.79% 49	54.42% 117	18.60% 40	3.26% 7	215	3.00
Older adults are well informed and have easy access to information about health care and community support services	1.38% 3	17.97% 39	52.07% 113	23.04% 50	5.53% 12	217	3.13
Emergency planning in the community takes into consideration the needs and vulnerabilities of the senior population	1.84% 4	17.51% 38	68.20% 148	9.22% 20	3.23% 7	217	2.94

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q35 Do you have any other comments or recommendations about health care and community services?

Answered: 47 Skipped: 264

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q36 Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share with us regarding seniors and senior services in the Town of Espanola?

Answered: 65 Skipped: 246

Espanola Age Friendly Community Assessment

Q37 If you would like to be entered into the draw, please provide your name and contact information. This information will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the draw.

Answered: 107 Skipped: 204

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	100.00%	107
Company	0.00%	0
Address	0.00%	0
Address 2	0.00%	0
City/Town	0.00%	0
State/Province	0.00%	0
ZIP/Postal Code	0.00%	0
Country	0.00%	0
Email Address	86.92%	93
Phone Number	96.26%	103

Appendix 5: Site Visits

Site visits were conducted on Thursday, January 25, 2024, with the support of John Maville, Espanola's Building Official.

- Espanola Townhall
- Recreation Complex
- Espanola Public Library

DRAFT

Townhall

100 Tudhope Street, Suite 2, Espanola

Observations

General

- The entrance is welcoming and accessible
- Interior accessibility is provided by an elevator
- The upper level is well-lit, with seating options
- Accessible parking was available
- Snow was removed in both the parking area and sidewalks
- Tactile floor in place where needed in most areas

Customer Service

- Staff were available at the front counter to greet people as they entered the office
- A dropped service counter is available in the main reception area
- Signage is lacking to identify the office door from the lobby of the building

Courtroom

- The space is generally accessible, with an appropriate turning radius for mobility devices and wheelchairs
- The room is well-signed, and the door is wide
- Adaptive seating is missing

Public Washroom

- A public washroom is available on the lower level and can be accessed via the elevator
- Included grab bars, lever faucets / door handles, with a low elongated toilet

Opportunities

Accessibility

- Install lever door handles where round handles exist (e.g. Courtroom)
- Remove one bench, or reduce in size to allow for a wheelchair or mobility device
- Install automatic lighting, and door opener in the public washroom
- Consider shift to Universal Washroom that includes emergency call button with audio and visual cues, and adult change table



- Confirm tactile flooring is in place where flooring levels change
- In general, ensure that there is no debris or items clutter the floor that might impede wheelchairs (e.g. witness stand in the courtroom)

Signage

- Confirm adequate exit signage (risk mitigation)
- Review signage (reception office door, lower-level public washroom, boardroom/Mayor's office); create consistent accessible signage throughout

Other

- Add / improve seating outside public washroom







Recreation Complex

175 Avery Drive, Espanola

Observations

General

- Courtesy parking available, accessible designated parking, dropped curb at front entrance
- While there is a large sign at the front (near the road) there is no signage on the building
- Door openers at all entrances / exits
- Elevator available for internal accessibility
- Stairs are marked with tactile floor change
- Lighting is good
- Good colour contrast to improve visibility



Lobby / Customer Service

- Dropped service counter

Washrooms / Changerooms

- Family changerroom has one barrier-free change space with shower; no such facility exists in the men's or women's changerroom

**note pool deck was closed, we were unable to visit – based on feedback the space meet community needs

Opportunities

Accessibility

- Door openers from changerroom into pool (but review against the ability to restrict access to pool deck)
- When undergoing other major renovations in the changerrooms, increase the number of barrier-free changerrooms, washrooms, showers
- Minor repairs required in washrooms (e.g., covering exposed pipes under the sinks)

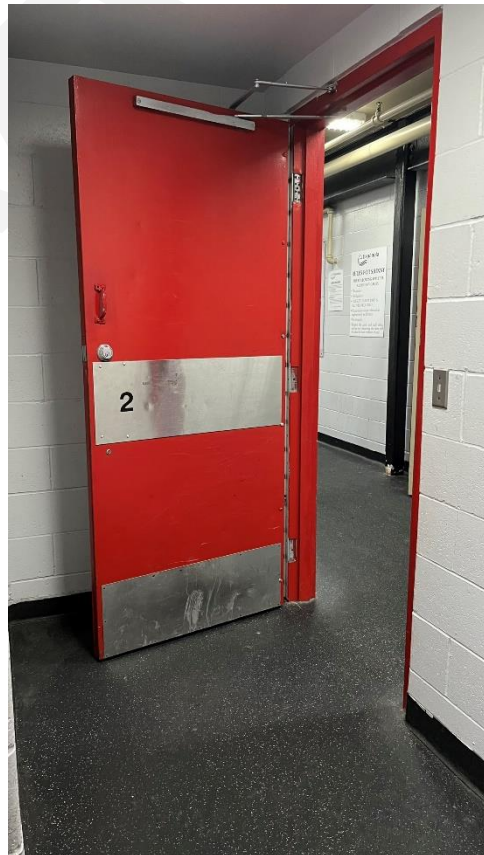
Signage

- Sign for universal changerroom
- Install a sign on outside of building visible from courtesy parking

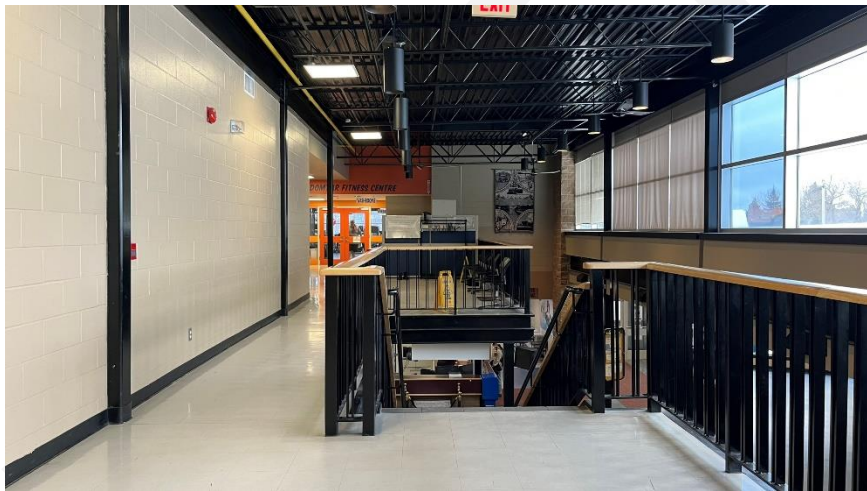
Ice Surface

- If/when undergoing more extensive renovations, include accessible (barrier-free) seating on the ice as it offers a more equitable experience (versus the only option being the auditorium)









Espanola Public Library

245 Avery Drive

Observations

- Entrance is warm and welcoming
- Building well signed both internally and externally
- Is secure from complex
- Has a dropped service counter
- Interior is well lit with lots of seating
- Good use of colour contrast
- Accessible parking available with courtesy drop-off
- Public washroom is accessible with grab bar, tilted mirror, pipes are covered under the sink
- Ample computer stations for patrons to access
- Meeting room (that is well used) and is accessible

Opportunities

Accessibility

- Add barrier-free video appointment booth in future
- Replace carpet
- When renovating the washroom (pending) consider an automatic door opener, and sensor light

Age-Friendly Indoor Facility Assessment Tool

Facility Name:

Date:

Description	Prompts	Comments
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walkability / proximity to other facilities• Warm, welcoming, appealing (overall aesthetic and perception of accessibility)	
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff available to greet patron• Counter height / customer service accessible to all	
Entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parking / Courtesy Parking• Pathways are clear• Ramps where needed• Appropriate levels of signage• Barrier free doors (free of clutter)• Door openers are easy to reach	

<p>Safety / Security</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility is well lit • Trip and fall hazards few and existing one are marked • Handrails are in place • Flooring type (non-slip surfaces) • Automatic lighting • Emergency exits well marked 	
<p>Washrooms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well signed • In convenient location • Door openers • Safety bars / grab bars • Universal washroom barrier free • Faucets, mirror, electric outlets 	
<p>Interior Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating in public areas / lobby – of various types to accommodate all types of need • Colour contrast is used to enhance visibility (for those with visual impairment) • General signage is in place; uses large print and high contrast • Access to public phone (if needed – not all sr have cell) • Elevator / interior accessibility • Ample room for maneuverability 	

Appendix 6: Project Communication Samples

- Media Release 1: Project Launch
- Media Release 2: Community Survey
- Social Media Posts (survey promotion)

Other project communications available at: <https://www.espanola.ca/town-government/age-friendly-assessment-and-action-plan>

Radio announcements aired mid-January to promote the survey

DRAFT

The Town of Espanola is Launching its Age Friendly Assessment and Action Plan Process

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – December 11, 2023

Espanola, ON – The Town of Espanola, in partnership with K.A. Community Consulting, is launching an Age Friendly Community initiative that will include a comprehensive community assessment and the creation of an Age Friendly Action Plan. The goal of this process is to help provide a safe and supportive environment for older residents both now and in the future.

Supporting its aging population responds to priorities in both the recently adopted Strategic Plan, Our Gateway to Growth (2023 – 2027), and the LaCloche Foothills Community Safety and Well-being Plan (2021 – 2025). The new Age Friendly Action Plan, to be presented to Council in late March 2024, will provide direction to the Town through to 2027, aligning with the horizon of the Strategic Plan.

“We recognize that the actions and recommendations that result from this process not only benefit our senior population but will have positive impact on our entire community.” stated Mayor Gervais. “There will be an opportunity for our residents to provide their feedback and input early in the new year. Please be sure to take the opportunity to share your feedback when the time comes.”

In developing an Age Friendly Community Plan, the Town of Espanola is demonstrating its commitment to look through an age-friendly lens and make informed decisions regarding all aspects of the community such as access to program and services or inclusive design of public spaces. This is especially significant considering that 2021 Census data shows that 25% of the Town’s population is 65+, as compared to the provincial average at 18.5%.

For more information, please contact Louisa Orford, Economic Development Officer at 705-583-6051 or Kim Goodman, K.A. Community Consulting at 613-929-4237.

-30-

MEDIA CONTACT:

Joseph Burke, Town Clerk / Manager of Planning
705-869-1540 ext 2113 / jburke@espanola.ca

Kim Goodman, K.A. Community Consulting
613-929-4237 / kim@kacommunityconsulting.ca

Age Friendly Assessment and Action Plan Community Survey is Open

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 11, 2024

Espanola, ON – The Town of Espanola is Planning for an Age-Friendly Future: Community Survey is Launched to Get Your Feedback.

The Town of Espanola has started the process of creating an Age Friendly Action Plan. As part of this work, a community assessment is being conducted. The project team will be evaluating eight different community dimensions as identified by the World Health Organization (WHO), and include areas such as: information and communications, outdoor spaces and buildings, and social participation, among others. This assessment allows the Town to understand how older adults in the community are currently being served; both positively and negatively.

A community survey will be open from January 11 through to February 2. The survey can be accessed online from the Town's website, and paper copies are available at the public library, recreation complex, and at Town Hall. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will ask for your feedback in a number of areas. Survey participants will be entered into a draw with a chance to win one of three prizes! If you need assistance accessing or completing the survey, please contact Louisa, Economic Development Officer at 705-583-6051.

"We are excited to be creating a plan that will allow us to better serve seniors in our community, and we want you to be a part of the process," stated Mayor Gervais. "We value your contribution, and we hope you can find a few minutes to complete the Community Survey. Tell us about your priorities, your experiences, and help shape the future for older adults in our community."

To learn more about the Age Friendly Planning process, visit the Town's [website](#).

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The Town of Espanola is completing an Age Friendly Assessment and Action Plan

This process relies heavily on the input from community to ensure that the final plan reflects local needs and priorities.

We want to hear from you!

The Community Survey is now open, and will be available through to February 2, 2024. You can access the survey by:

- visiting the Town's website
- scanning the QR code
- visiting the library, rec complex or Town Hall (paper copy available)

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and will ask for your feedback on housing, communications, public spaces and more!

Learn more about the Town's Age Friendly Plan by visiting www.espanola.ca





Age Friendly Community Planning

The Town of Espanola is preparing for its older adults, and planning for our future

Community Survey

Open January 10 until February 2.

We want to hear from you!

Online

Visit the Town website and access the survey; or follow the QR code

Print Version

Drop by the public library and other key locations to pick-up a paper copy of the survey



To learn more visit: www.espanola.ca



**WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!
TAKE THE AGE FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY PLANNING
SURVEY TODAY!**

**ONLINE@WWW.ESPANOLA.CA OR PICK UP A COPY
AT THE LIBRARY OR RECREATION COMPLEX**

