

Planning for the Growth of the Older Adult Population in Howard County

Appendix C: Community On-Line Survey Results

Creating an Age-Friendly Community

A Report from the Howard County
Department of Citizen Services
2015



Howard County, Maryland
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Appendix C:

Community On-Line Survey Results



This document reports the finding from an online quantitative survey conducted during May and June 2014 among residents of Howard County ages 45 and older.

+ Research Plan

Goal:

Collect input and perspective from a wide range of stakeholders in Howard County about potential services, programs and facilities that can support the needs and wants of older residents.

The information collected will inform the long-term Master Plan for Older Adults in Howard County.



This research, along with qualitative focus groups among additional segments of the Howard County older adult population, is being used to inform the overall Master Plan for services and resources in Howard County.

+ Research Plan

Target Audience:

- Older residents of Howard County – today and tomorrow.
- Defined as adults age 45+

Study Objectives:

Learn about mindsets, needs, expectations, behaviors, attitudes and perceptions found in older adults living in Howard County.



The survey required the respondents be current residents of Howard County, ages 45 and older, and – for now – plan on living in the county for the foreseeable future.

The overall goal of the Master Plan is to design services and build or make available resources to meet the needs of older adults in the future. Hence, this survey was designed to attempt to capture how older adults think, feel and use existing resources, and what their needs, expectations, attitudes and behaviors are now and how those might change over time.

+ Methodology

- This study used the “invited” survey methodology, instead of a random sample survey, in consideration of project costs .
- The survey was widely publicized
 - Announced at Master Plan community kick-off meetings
 - 5000 postcards distributed through Senior Centers, Rec & Parks facilities, Libraries, senior housing, other provider agencies
 - Pushed out through print & social media
 - Emails sent out by community partners such as Columbia Association and Mental Health Authority
- Over 1,200 adults age 45+ completed the survey.



This approach was used to be responsible with County resources. Acquiring a random sample of older adults (versus using the “invited” methodology) would have cost tens of thousands of dollars just to get 300-400 completed surveys. The approach we used resulted in 1,200 completed surveys.

Demographic groups or segments under-represented by the final sample were then identified and recruited to participate in community focus group discussions on these same topics. Nine such groups were conducted in September/October of 2014.

+ On Using the Findings

- Keep in mind the findings are among those older adults interested enough in the future of Howard County to complete a 20- to 25-minute survey.
 - Respondents do not represent all Howard County older adults, only those who are interested in older adult issues.
 - Those who are ambivalent did not participate.
 - Strong opinions are likely reflected here, not “middle of the road” opinions.
- In no way does that invalidate or diminish the information collected. With other 1,200 respondents, we certainly can determine different mindsets and assessments from different demographic and attitudinal segments of respondents.



Like all research, only interested people participate. Fortunately, many older Howard County residents plan to grow older in the county and were more than willing to participate in the survey.

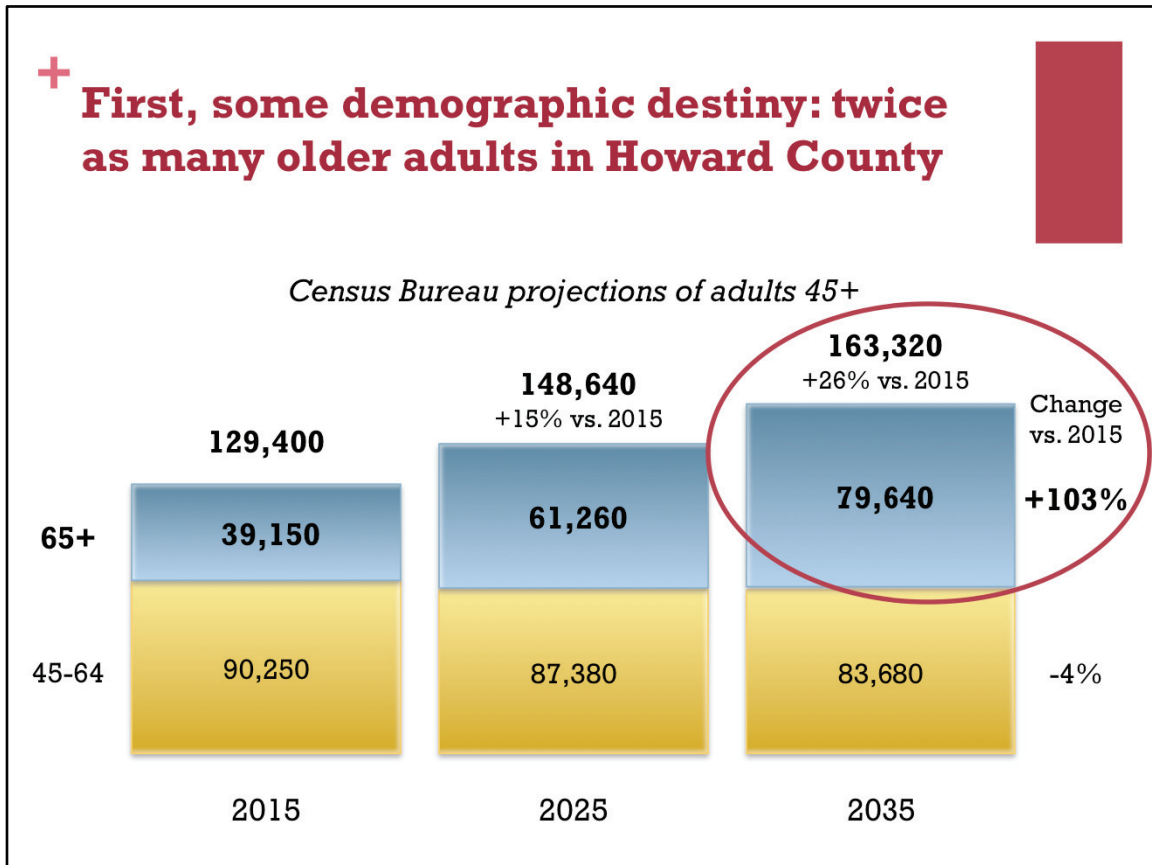
+ A Surprising Result

- Most surprising of all was that the respondents fall into two equal-sized segments: those who have been to a Howard County Senior Center, and those who are either unaware of Senior Centers, or are aware but have never been inside.
 - For purposes of this report, we will refer to the first group as “Been” and the second as “NANB,” for “Not Aware/Never Been.”
- Sorting responses into these two segments reveals stark differences in almost everything we ask in the survey.



A key aspect of the current services available to older adults in Howard County are the various Senior Centers. While not intentional in the survey design, our final respondent group is evenly split among those who have been to a Senior Center and those who have no knowledge or first-hand experience with a Senior Center.

Throughout the report, we will identify how these two different groups responded to certain questions, when their responses varied significantly.

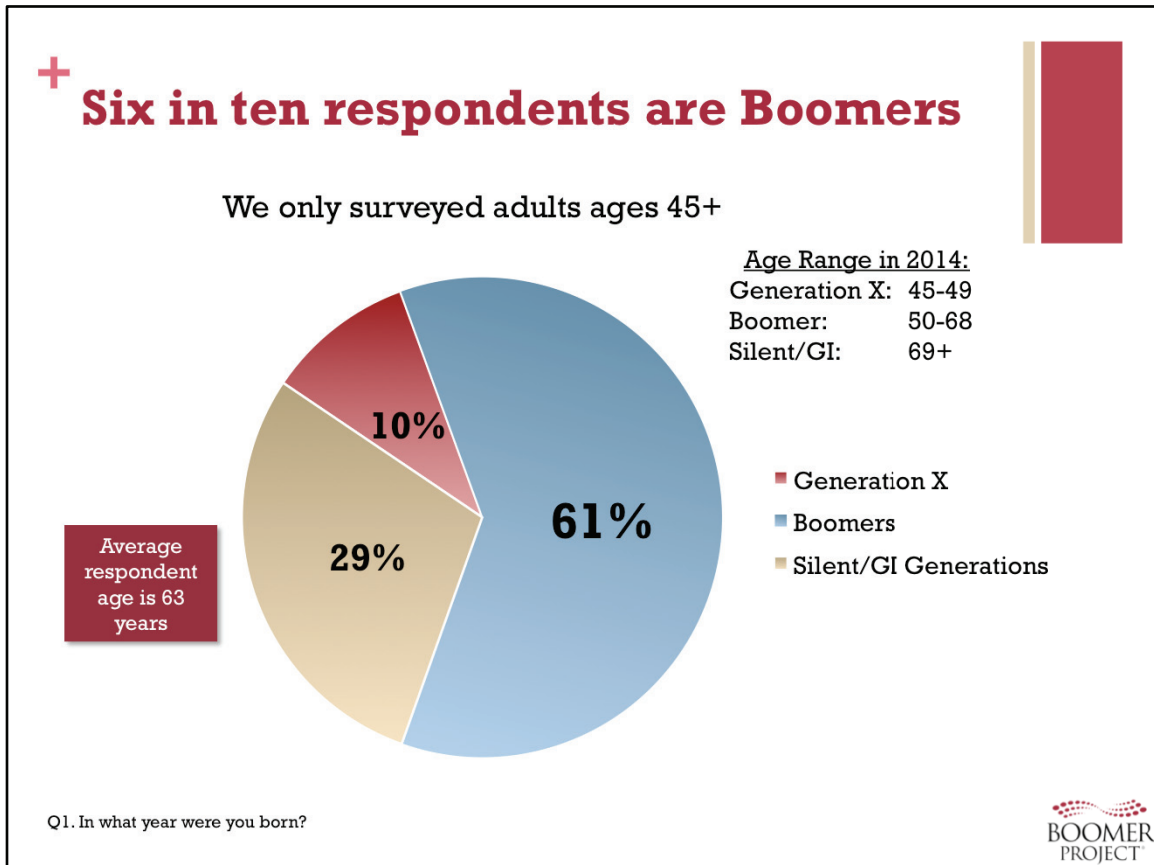


Demographics in Howard County

Across the United States, the continued aging of today’s Boomer generation will result in a significant increase in the number of adults ages 65 and older in the future. Howard County is projected to DOUBLE the number of residents ages 65+ between 2015 and 2035.

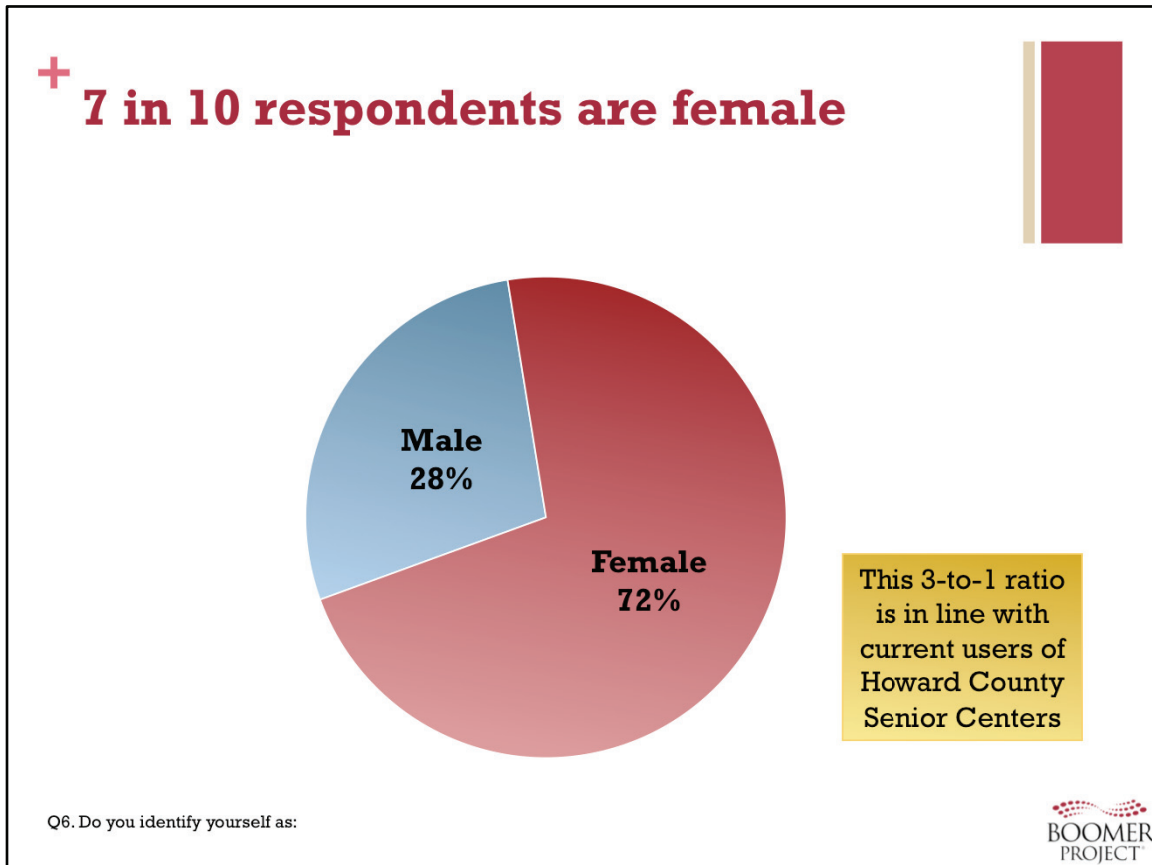
Almost 80,000 residents will be 65+ by 2035. In fact, the 65+ group will be almost as large as the 45-65 year old group in 2035. This new demographic composition will impact services and resources available to everyone at every age in Howard County.

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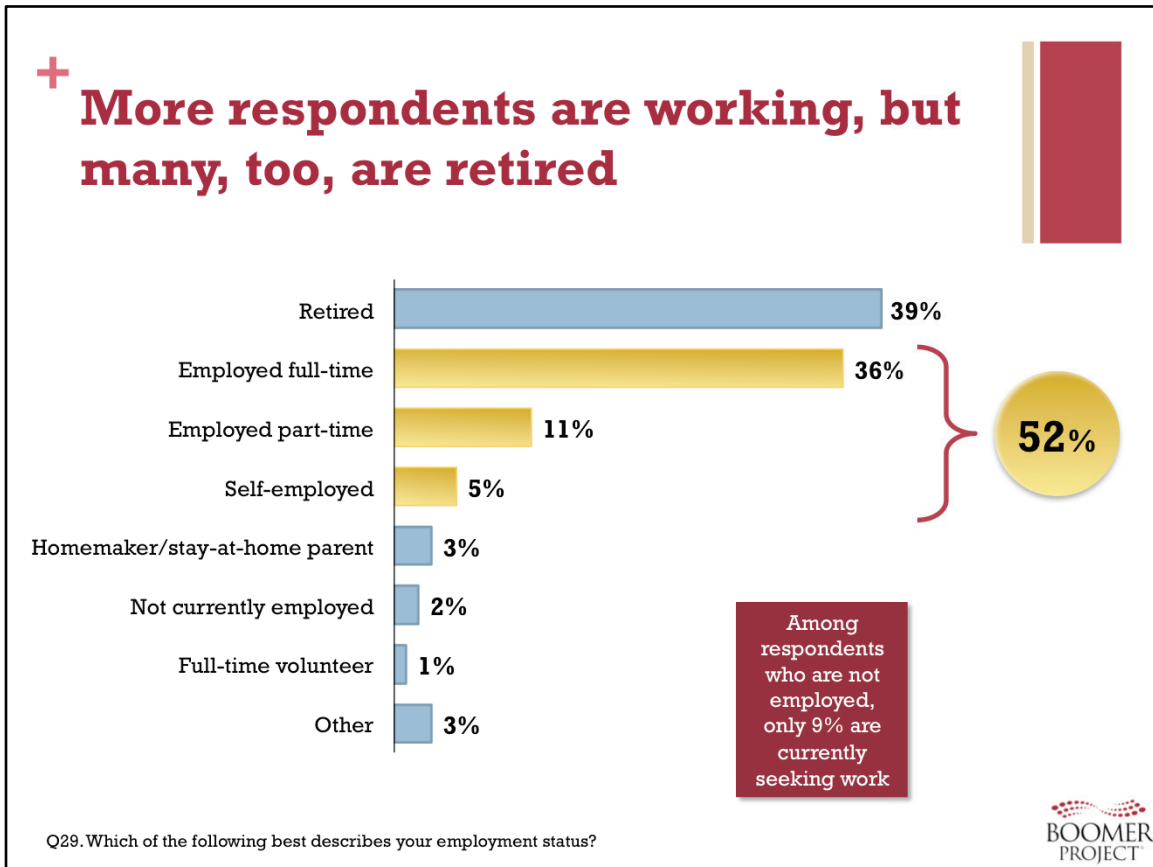
Demographics of Respondents

Keeping in mind that our survey required respondents to be ages 45+, six out of ten were members of the Boomer generation, born from 1946 through 1964.



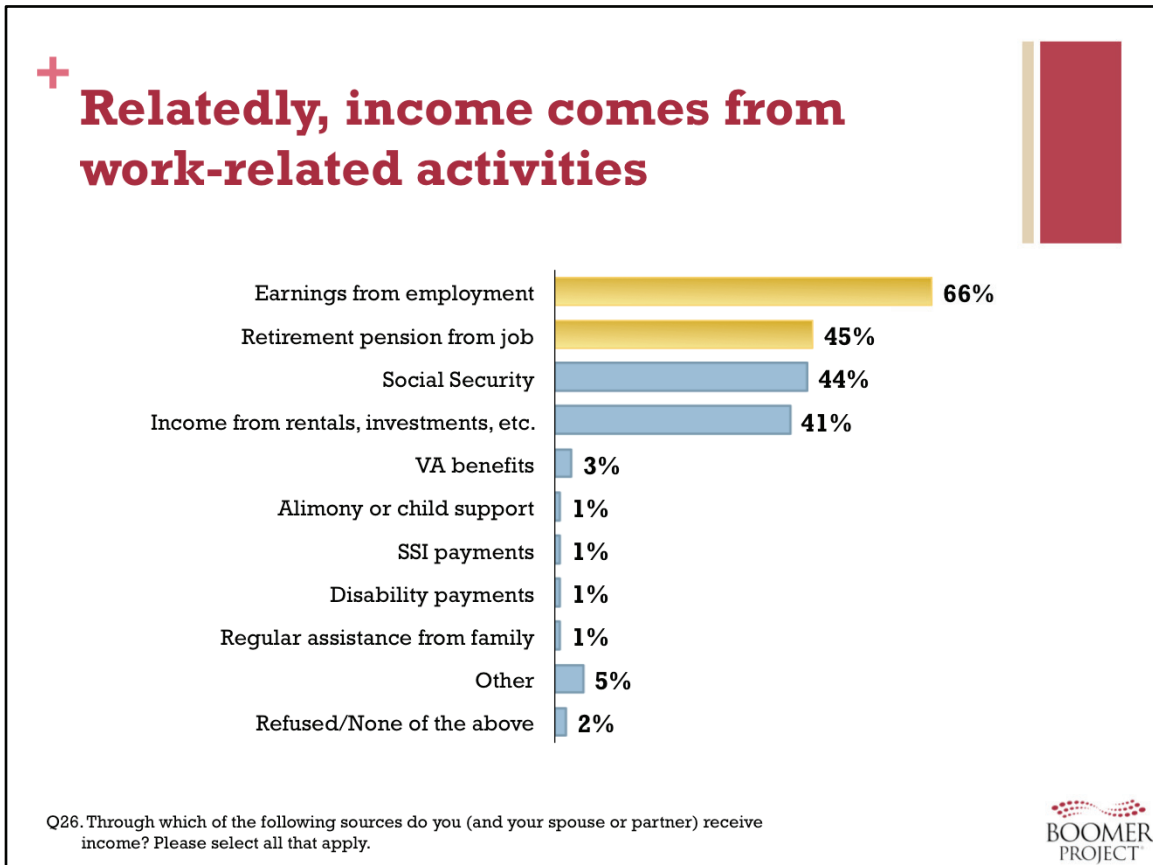
Demographics of Respondents

Our respondents skew more heavily female, but the 3-to-1 ratio mirrors that of current members/attendees at Howard County Senior Centers.



Demographics of Respondents

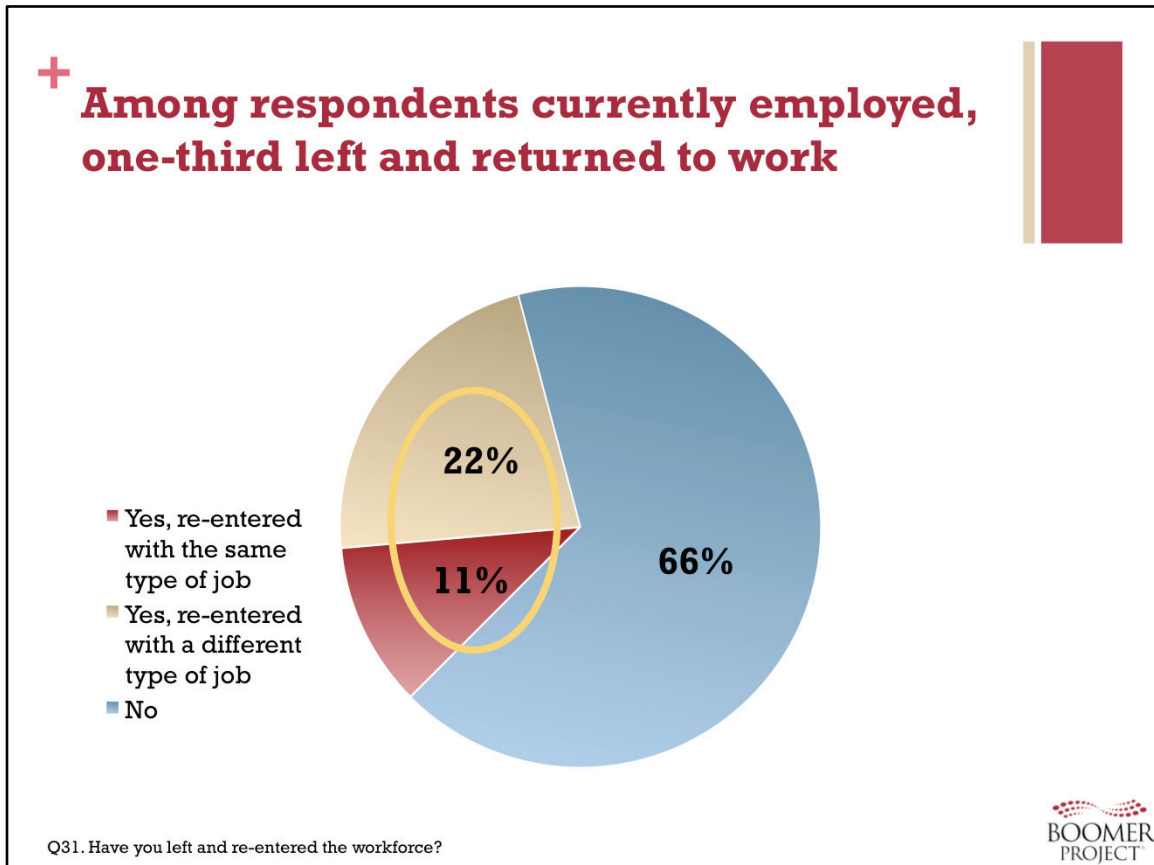
A little more than half of the respondents work in some capacity. Almost four in ten are retired.



Demographics of Respondents

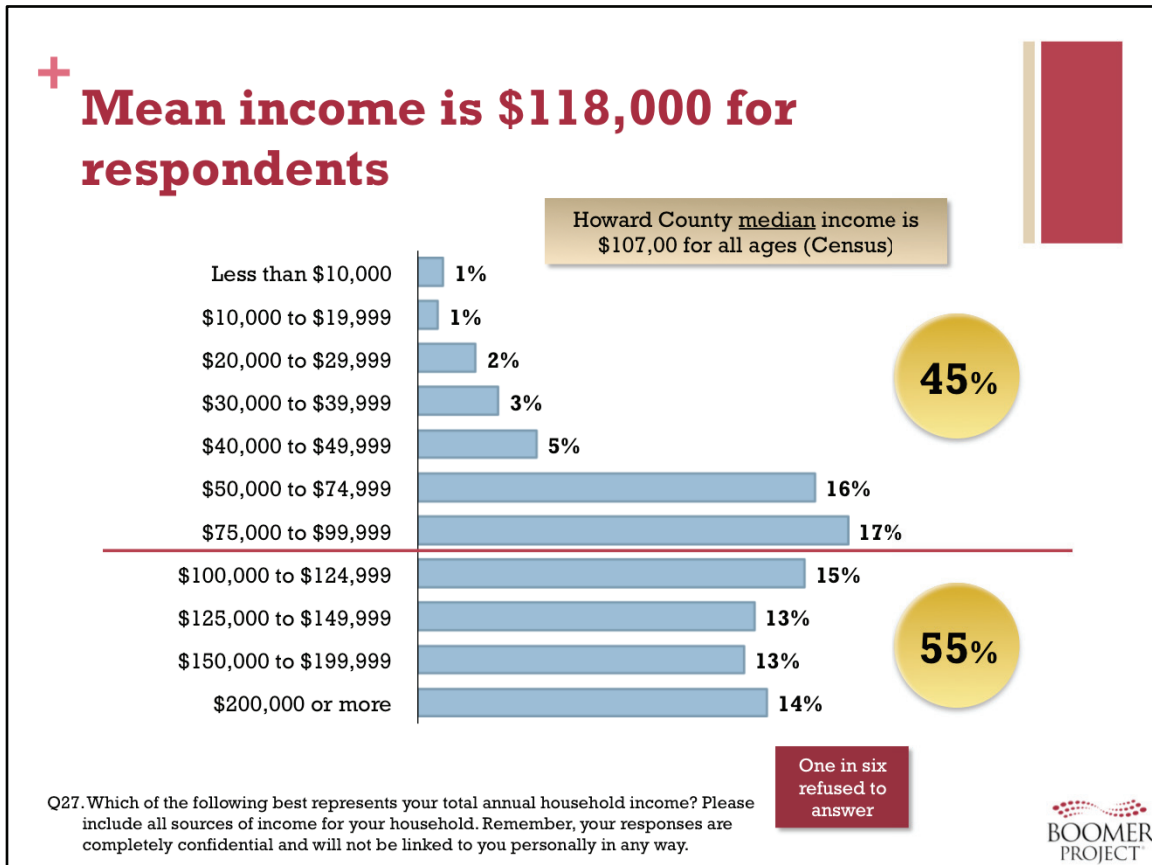
This is consistent with the fact that many still work.

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Demographics of Respondents

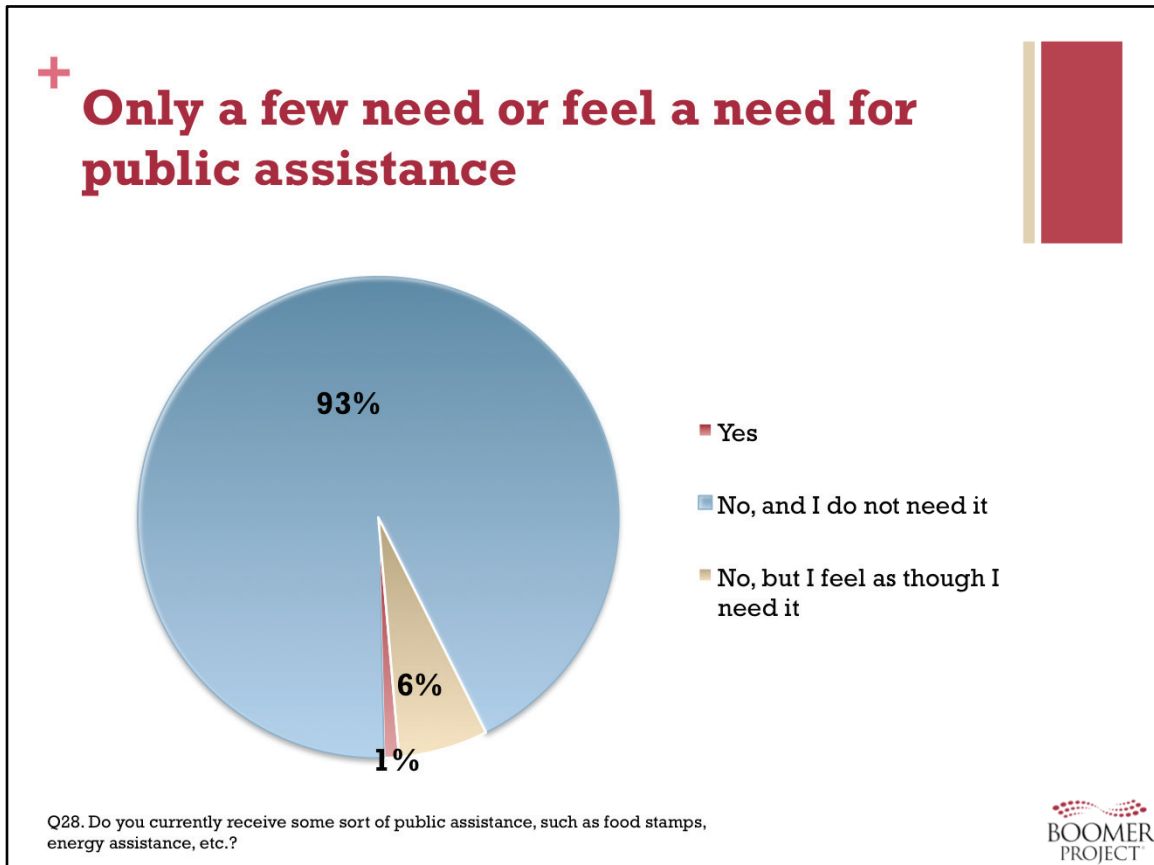
The reason we ask these questions is to help gauge the size of the older adult population in Howard County that may ultimately require assistance from resources in the area.



Demographics of Respondents

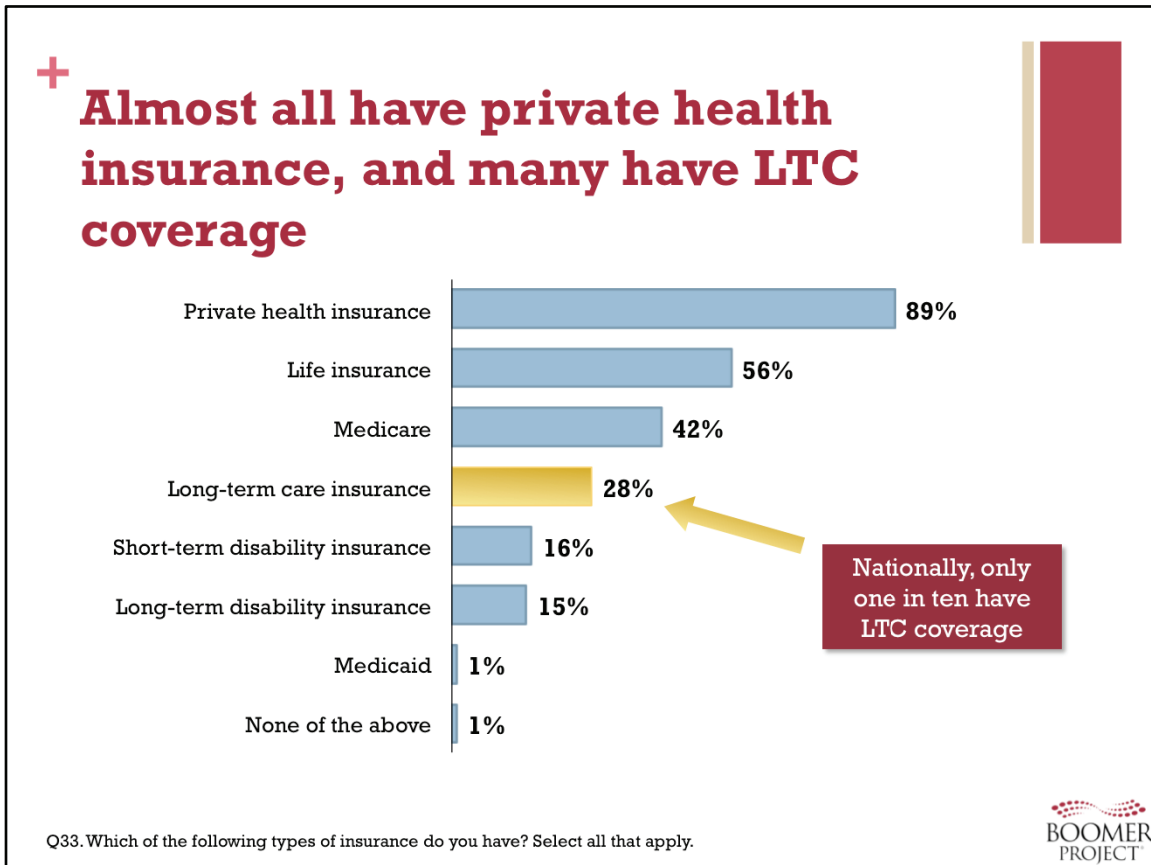
Consistent with general demographic data about the income/wealth of Howard County, our respondents are generally financially secure.

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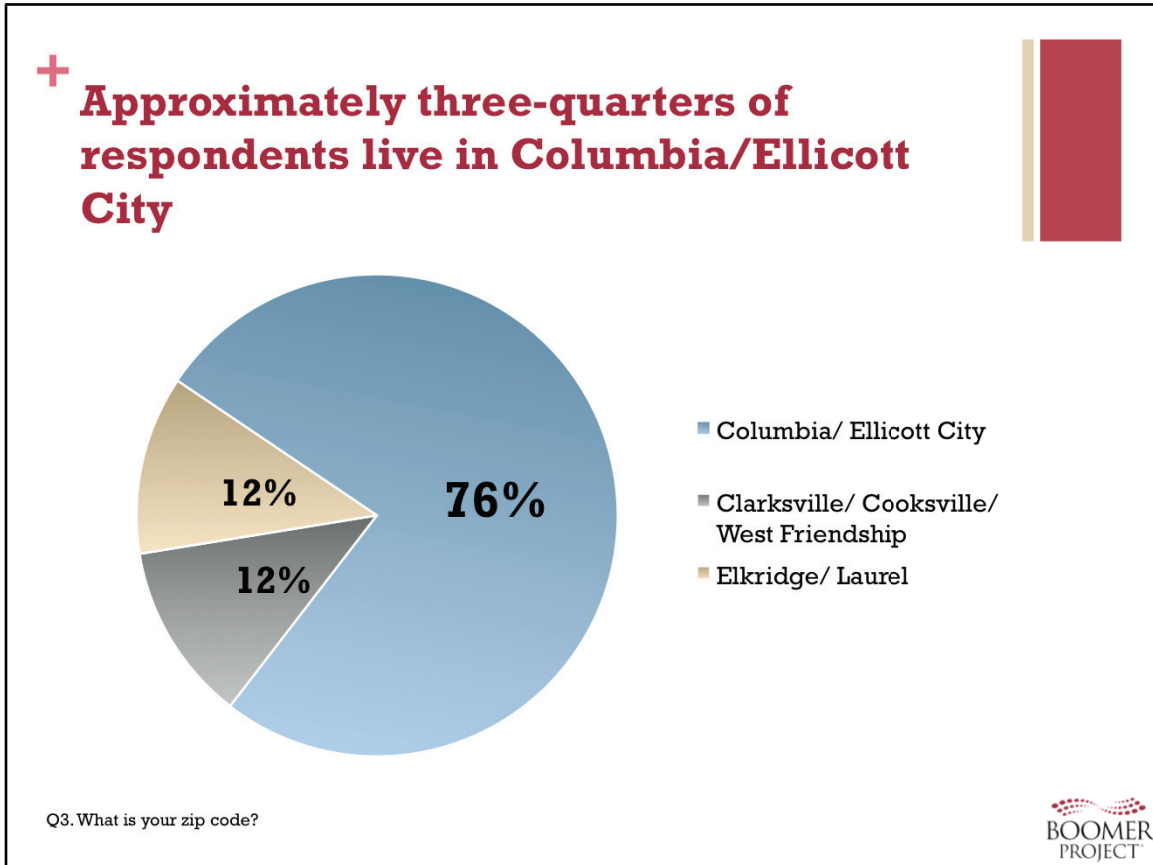
Demographics of Respondents

Again, this finding is consistent with what respondents told us about their income levels.



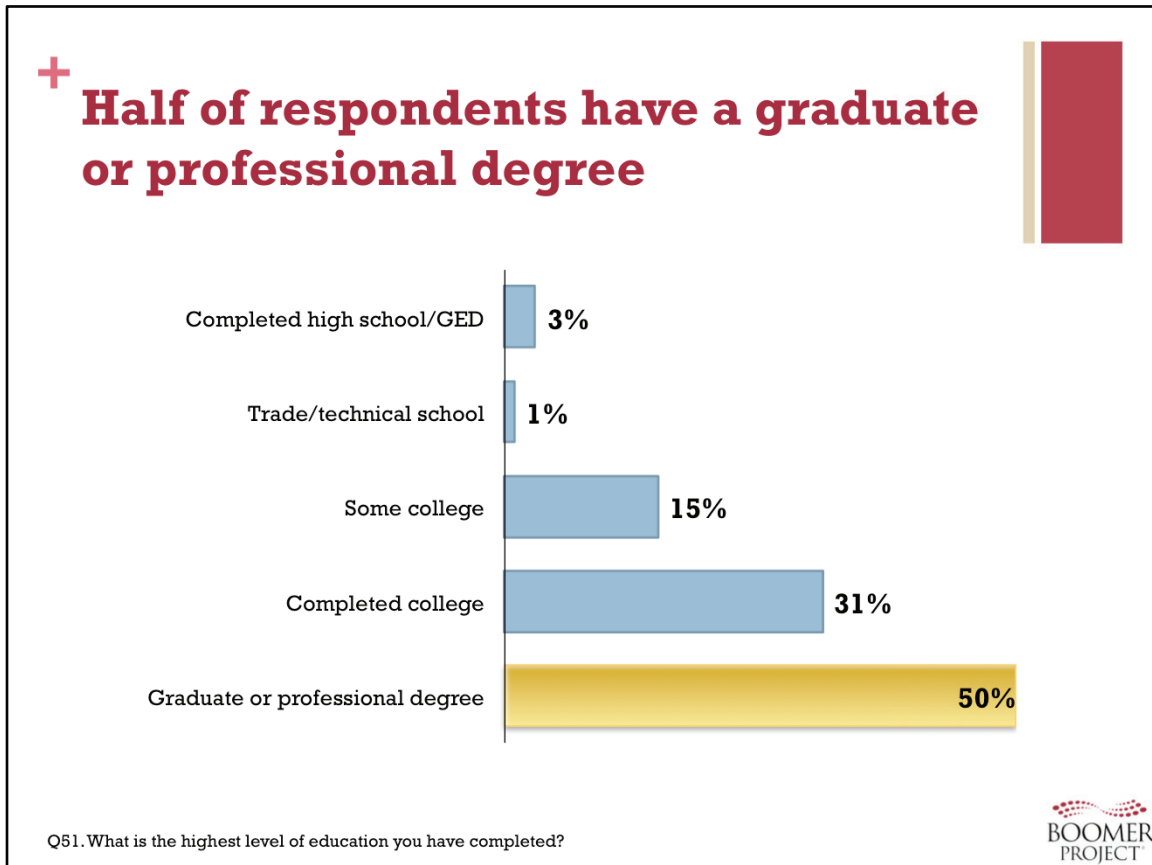
Demographics of Respondents

On the surface, this might bode well for the county, since more than one in four report they have “long-term care insurance.” However, we have discovered in other surveys that many respondents confuse this with “long-term disability insurance,” which is often provided as a free employee benefit. We suspect that while Howard County might have more older adults with long-term care insurance than the national average, the accurate figure is lower than 20 percent.

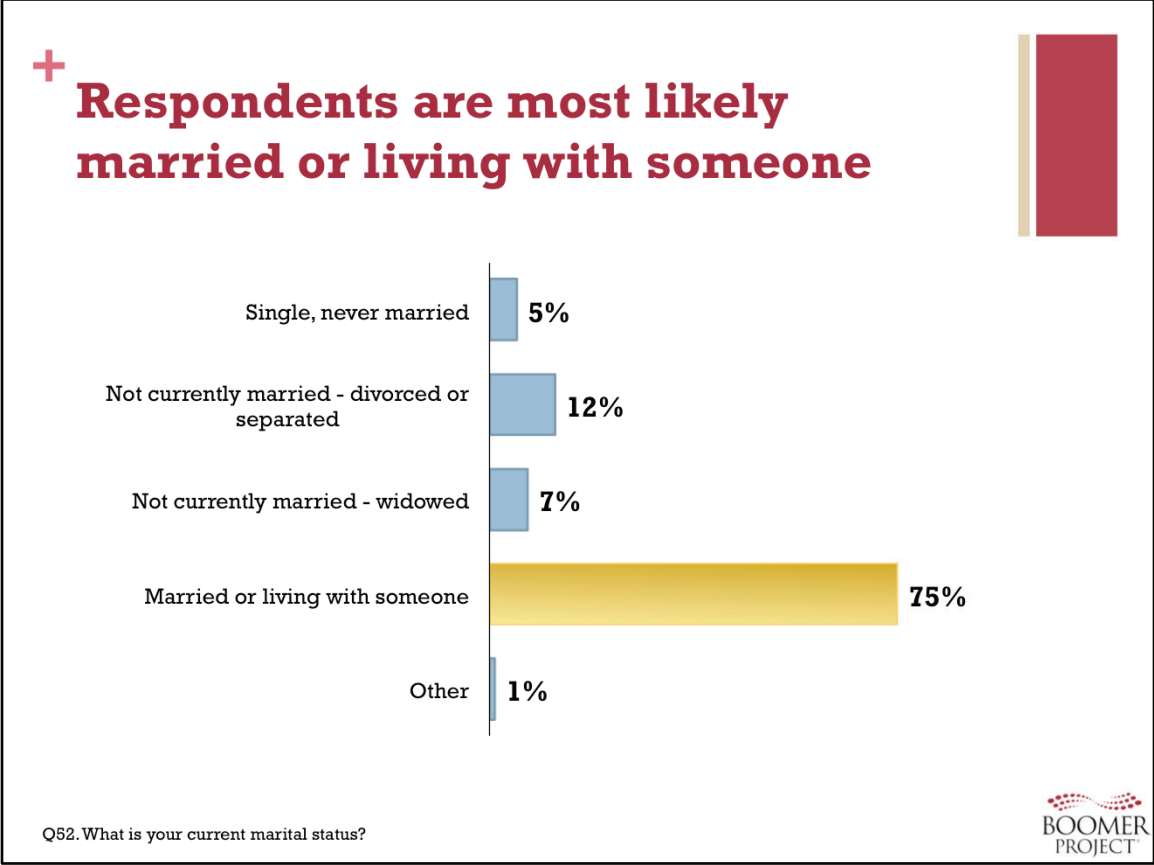


Demographics of Respondents

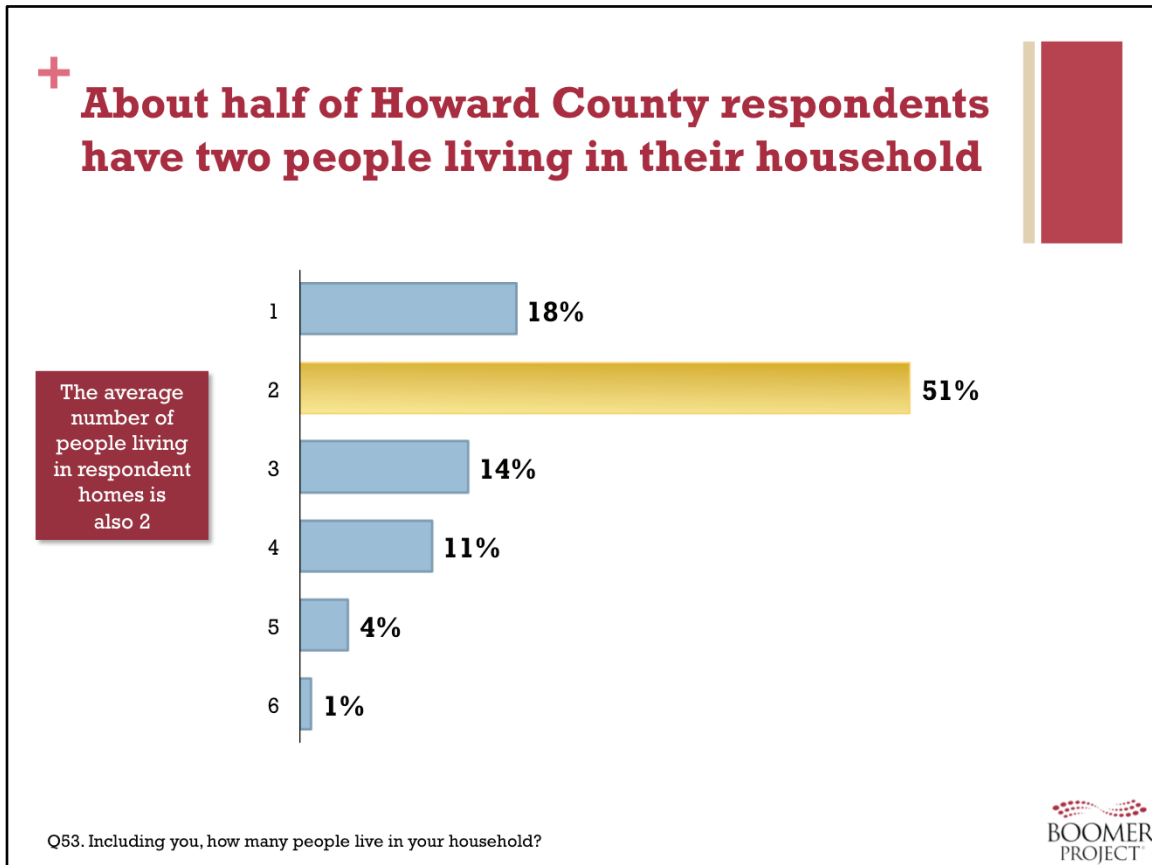
We attempted to reach residents across the county. Nonetheless, the population centers are Columbia and Ellicott City, so this concentration of respondents is not surprising.



This is consistent with U.S. Census data on Howard County.

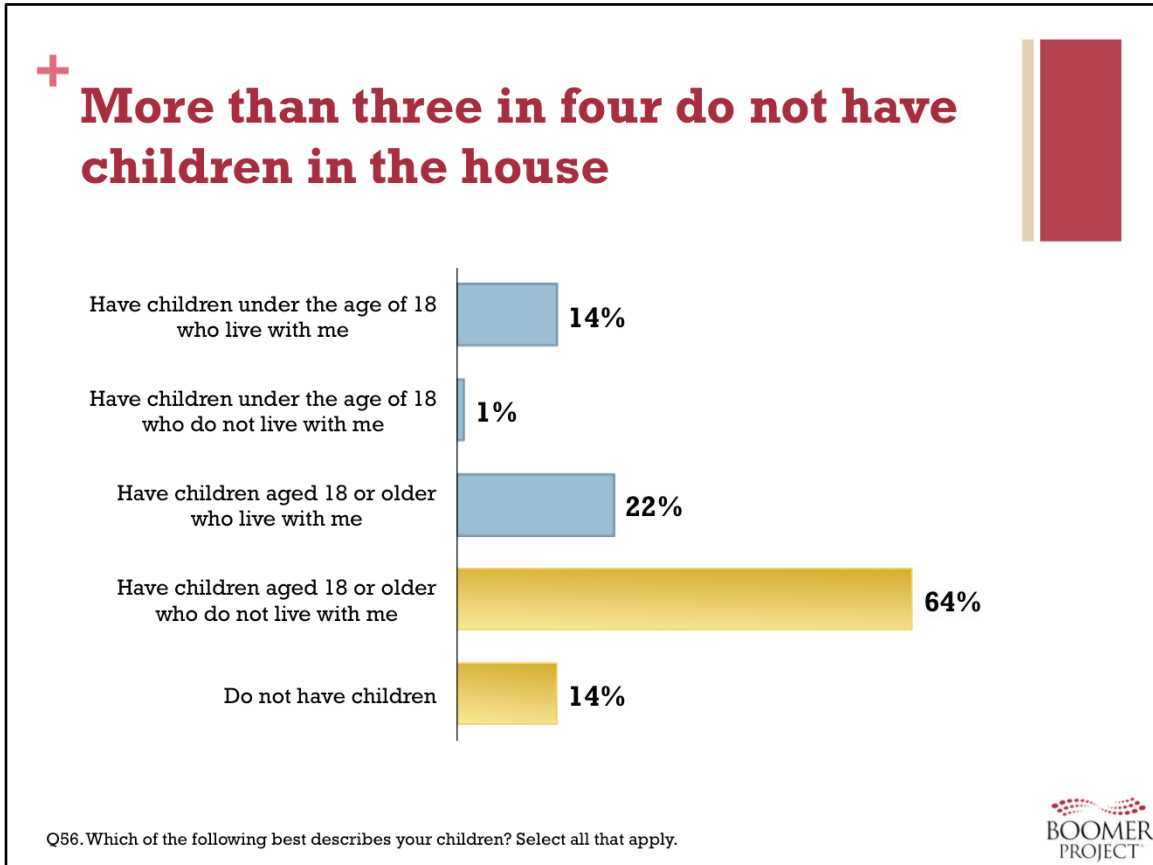


Given the age range of respondents, this is as expected, too.

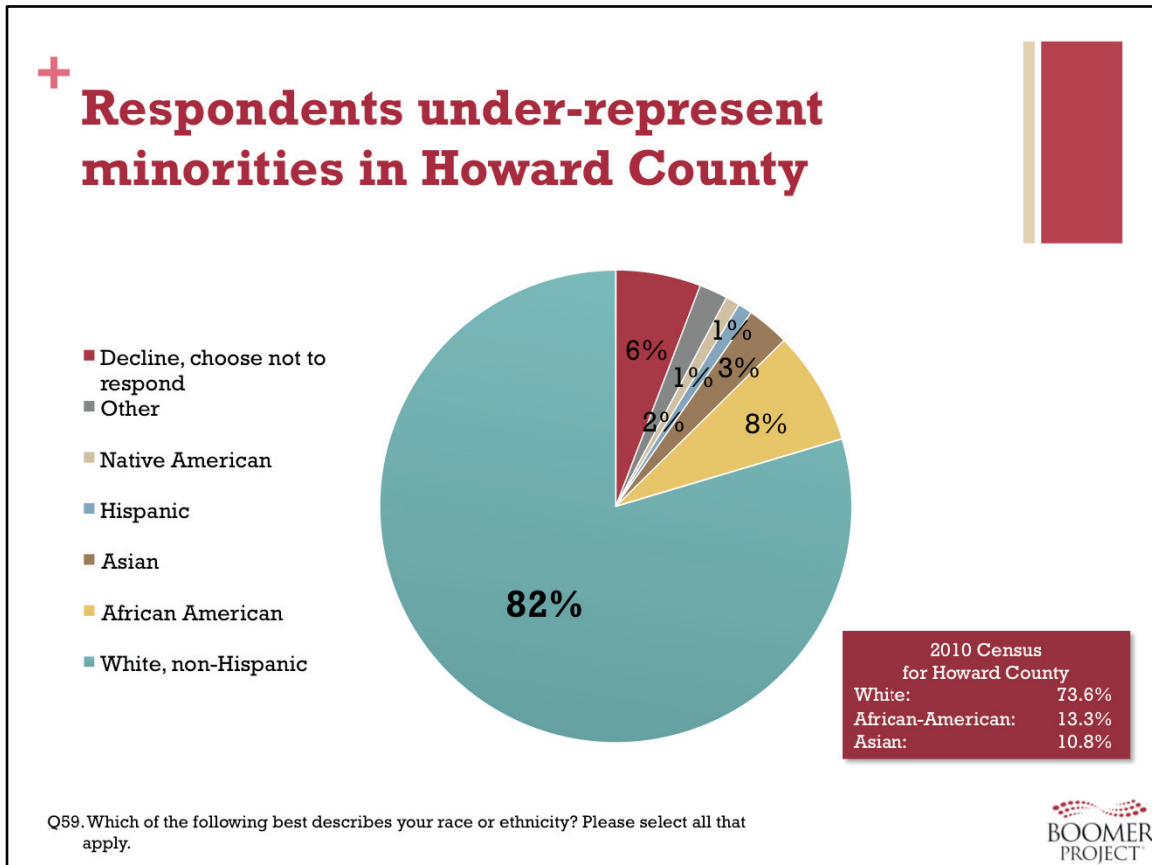


As expected.

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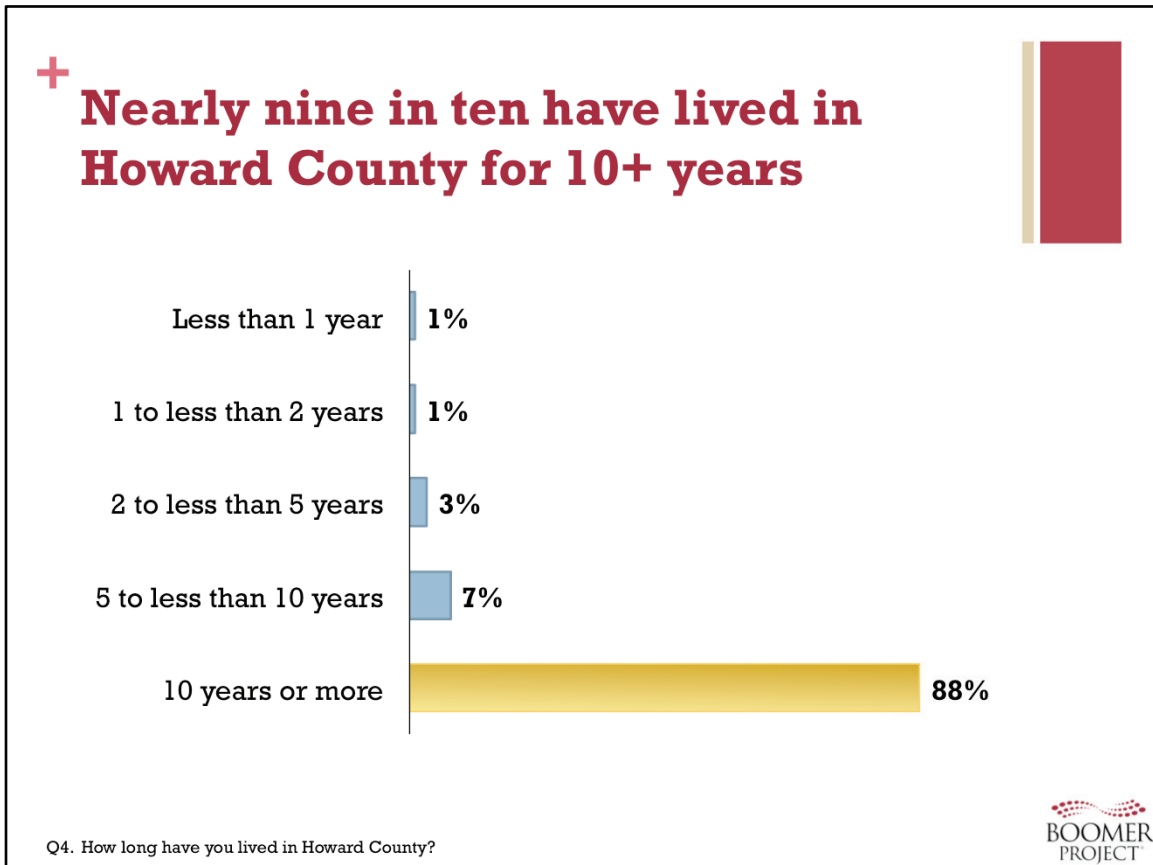


Yet, more than one in five have adult children still in the home.



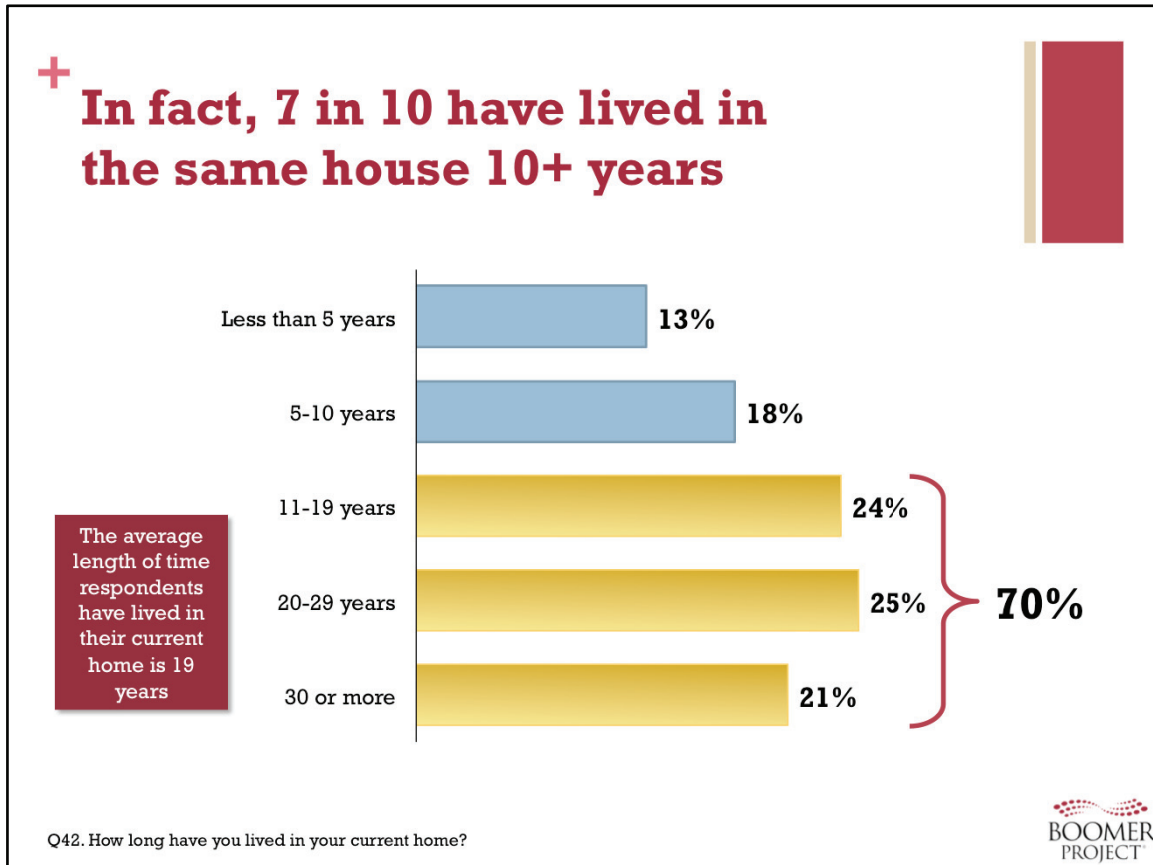
These results are why we have augmented this quantitative survey with qualitative research among the key under-represented races.

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Living in Howard County

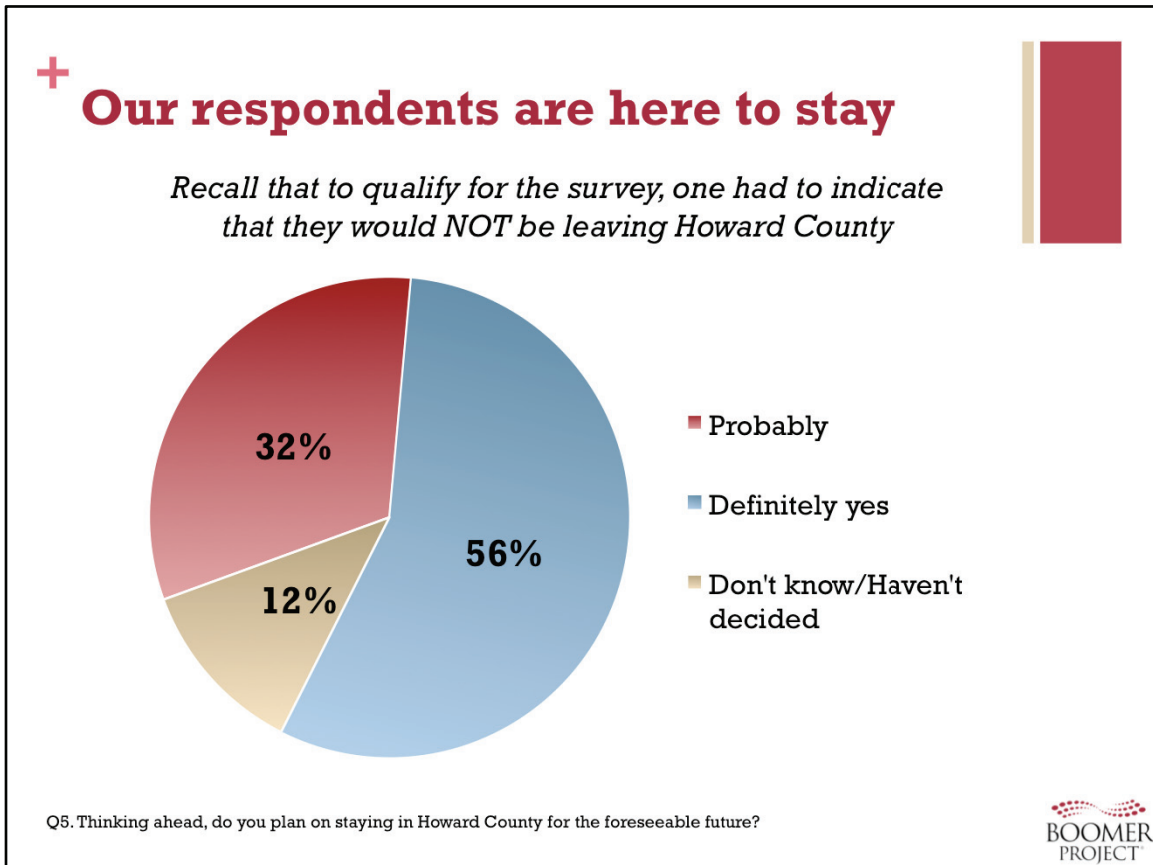
Our respondents are predominantly long-time residents of Howard County.



Living in Howard County

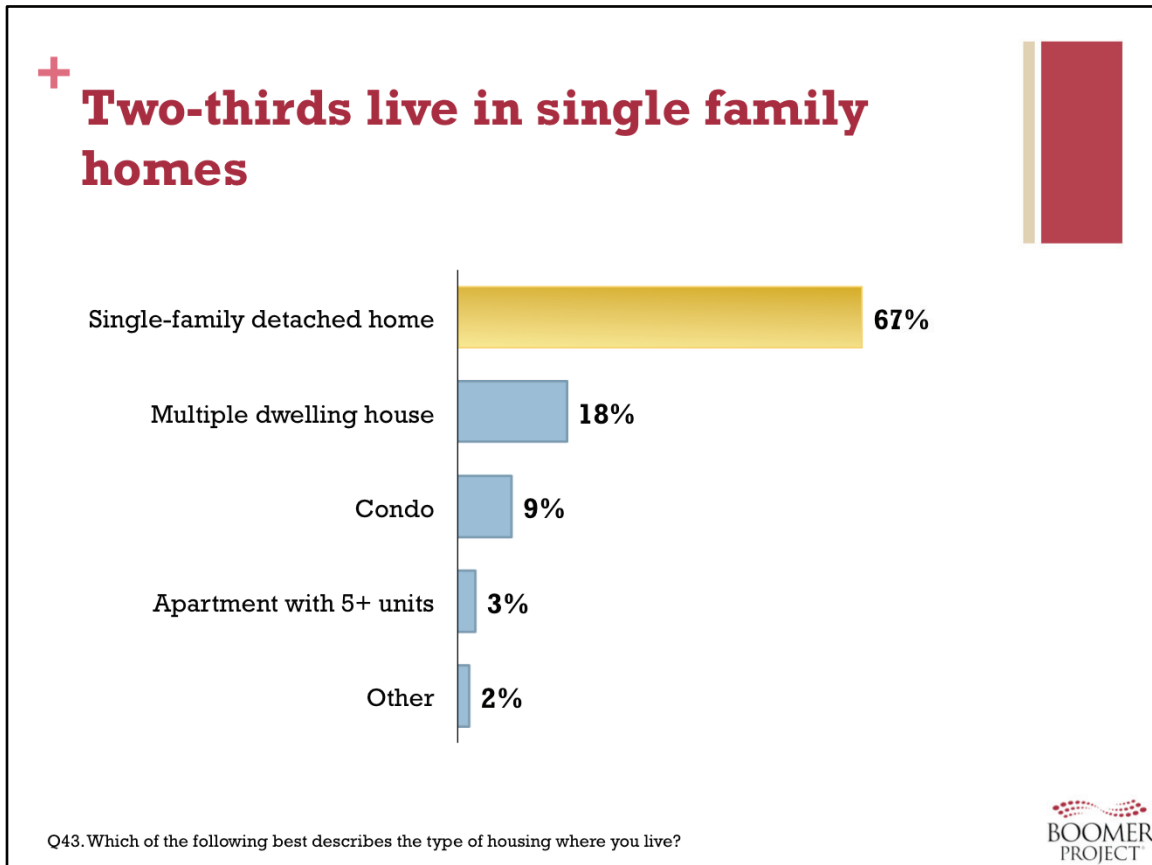
Most of whom live in the same house they have lived in for over 10+ years.

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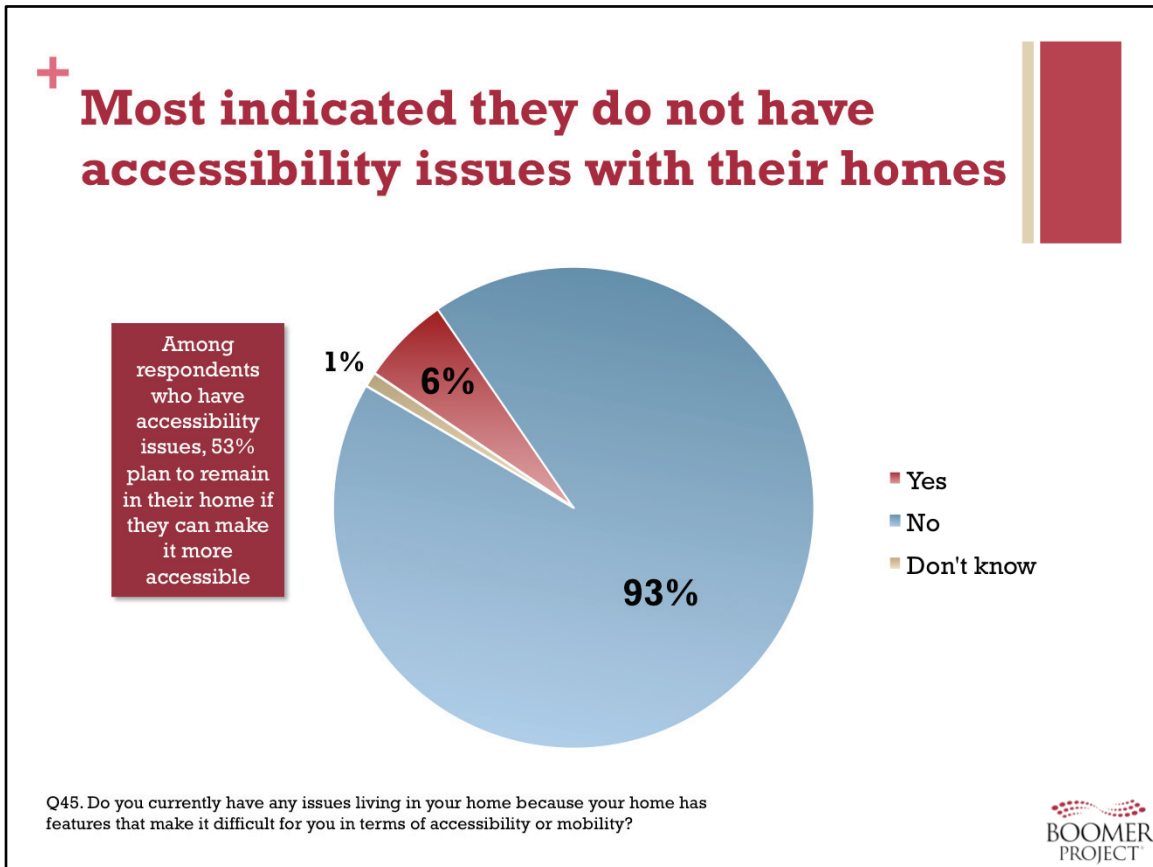
Living in Howard County

Residents who indicated they planned to move out of Howard County were eliminated from the survey since we wanted to learn from those who plan to be here 10-20 years in the future.



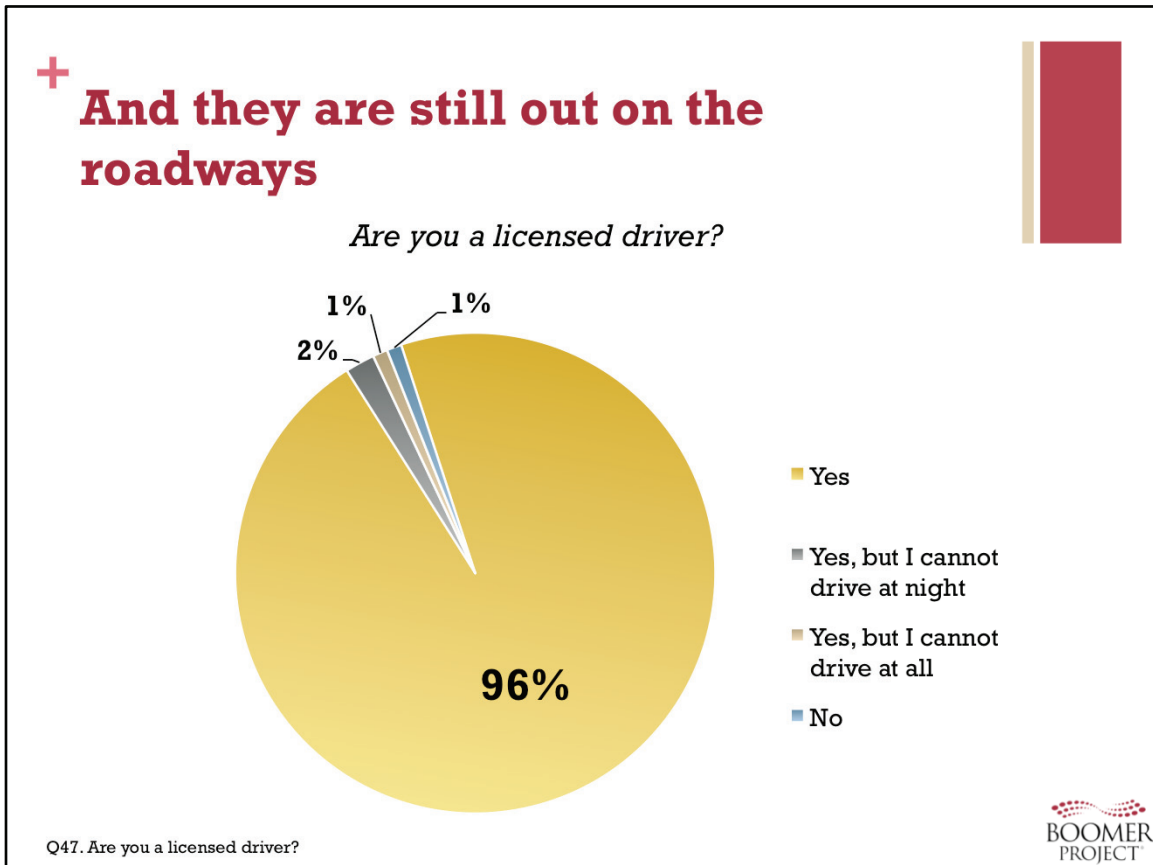
Living in Howard County

The current housing stock in the county is predominantly single-family detached homes, so this result is what was expected.



Living in Howard County

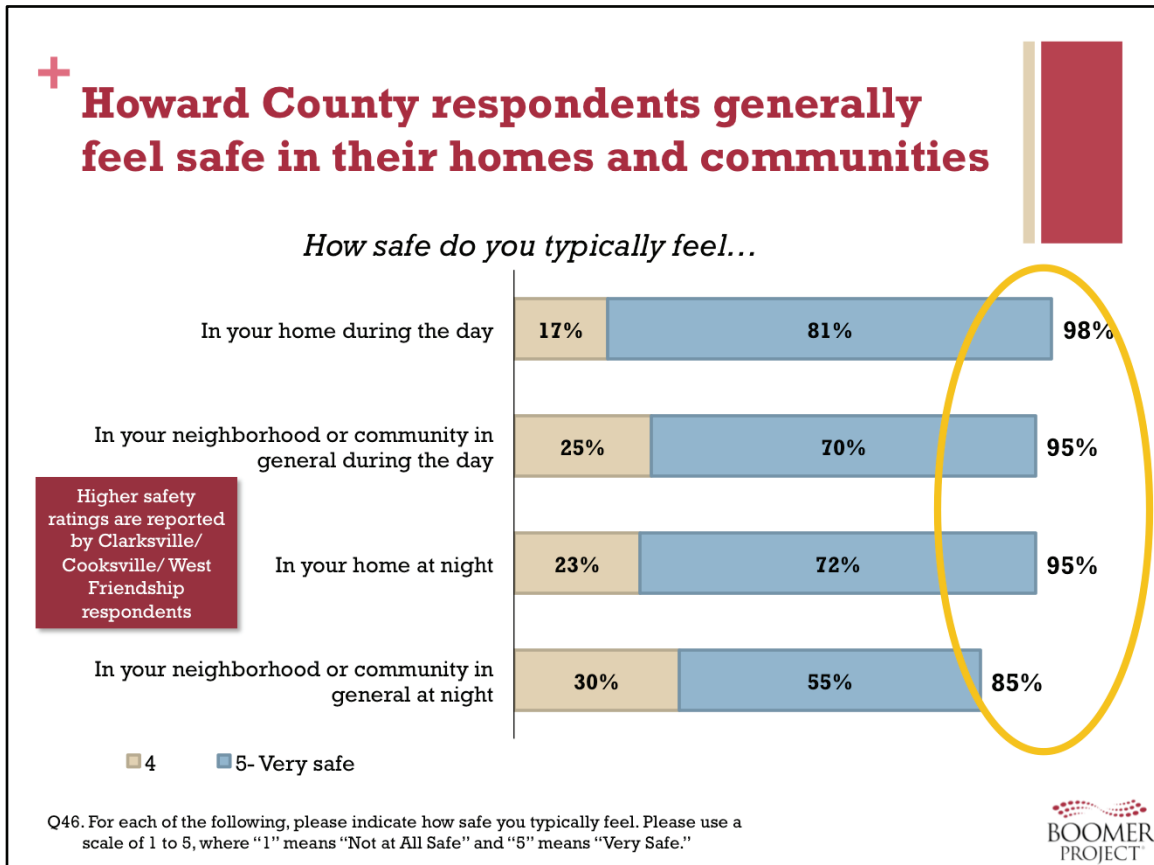
The goal of this question was to learn about their current home and whether or not it was meeting their needs in terms of accessibility.



Living in Howard County

Again, we were trying to take stock of the mobility options available for older adults in the county now. Later in the survey we ask about mobility concerns as they grow older.

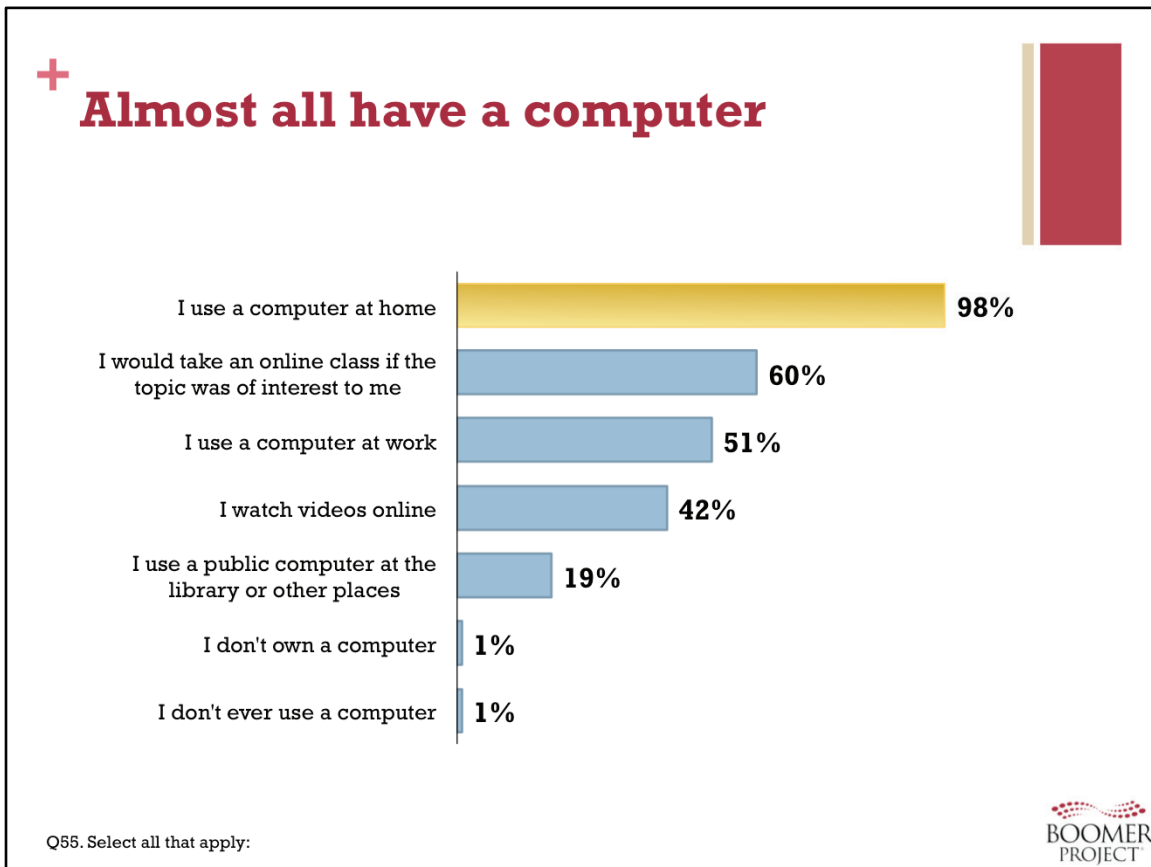
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Living in Howard County

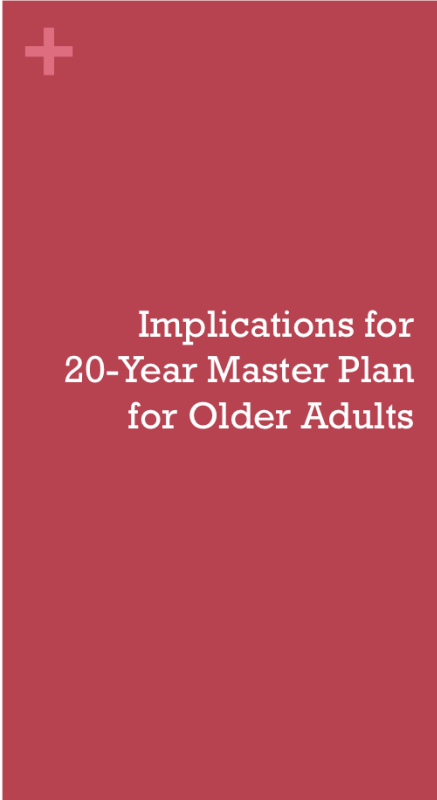
This question was asked using a five-point scale. The results shown are for the top two scores, those who answered "4" or "5" on the scale. When the "top two" scores are over 70 percent, that indicates strong agreement in the community on that issue/question.

These scores are extremely high, and indicate that older residents in Howard County indeed feel safe and secure.



Living in Howard County

Since the survey was available online, this result is not indicative of the overall percent of older residents in Howard County who have a computer in their home. However, nationally, more than 60 percent of adults over 60 have a computer in their home.



Implications for
20-Year Master Plan
for Older Adults

- Even though this survey has an over-representation of white, affluent older adults in Howard County, the rapid increase in the number of older adults could mean that in the future, the county will have more older adults without the means to support themselves adequately.
- The long-term plan should assume older adults will want to stay in their homes (impacting housing stock, design and zoning laws) and maintain their independence in terms of transportation (impacting resources allocated to county-wide transportation).
- The high percentage of respondents with long-term care insurance bodes well for the county.

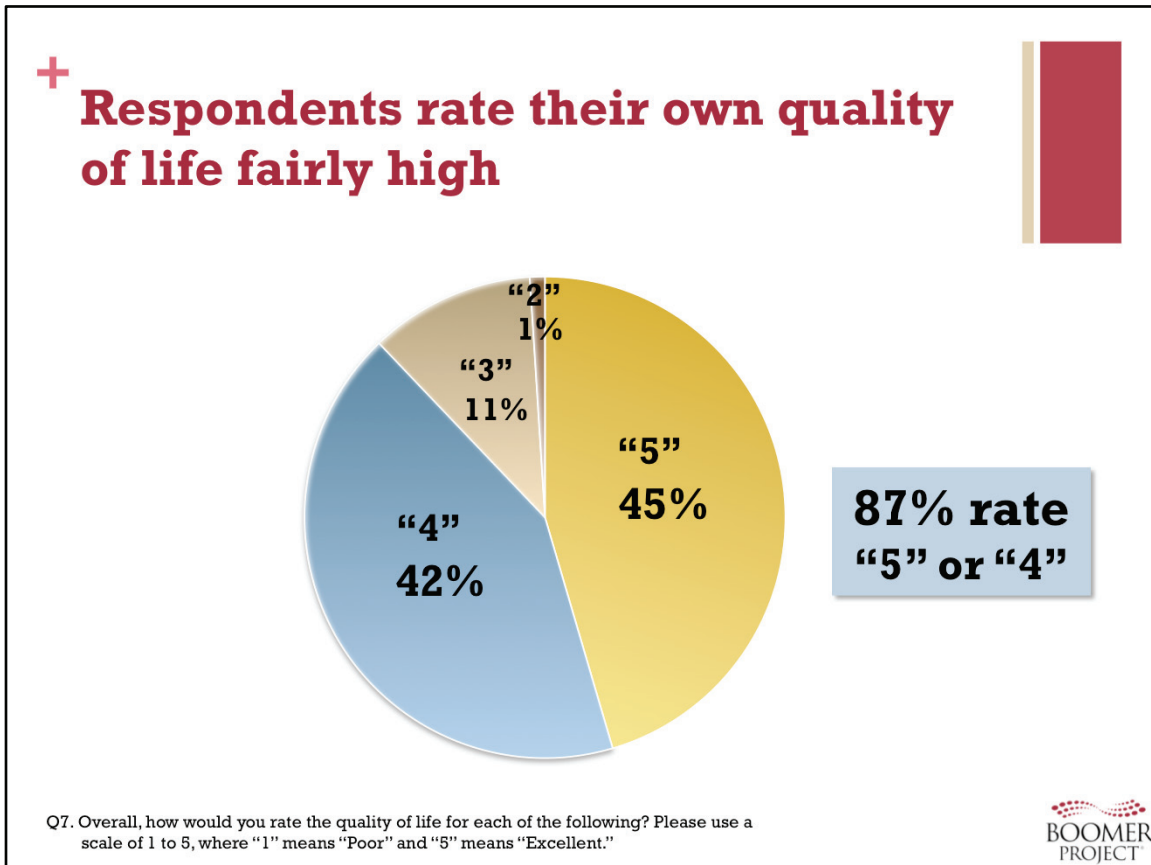
Living in Howard County – Implications

Throughout this report, we offer some observations and implications from the findings in the previous section.

In terms of the first implication above, what we are saying is that even if only 10 percent of older adults in Howard County cannot support themselves adequately today, and that percentage remains unchanged over the next 20 years, the raw number of older adults not able to support themselves will still double. The point is that the county can expect twice as many older adults in 20 years, and the demands on support systems, services and infrastructure will double as well.

Throughout the rest of the report, you'll see that remaining independent at home, and having access to transportation are recurring themes. These are top issues for older adults in the county.

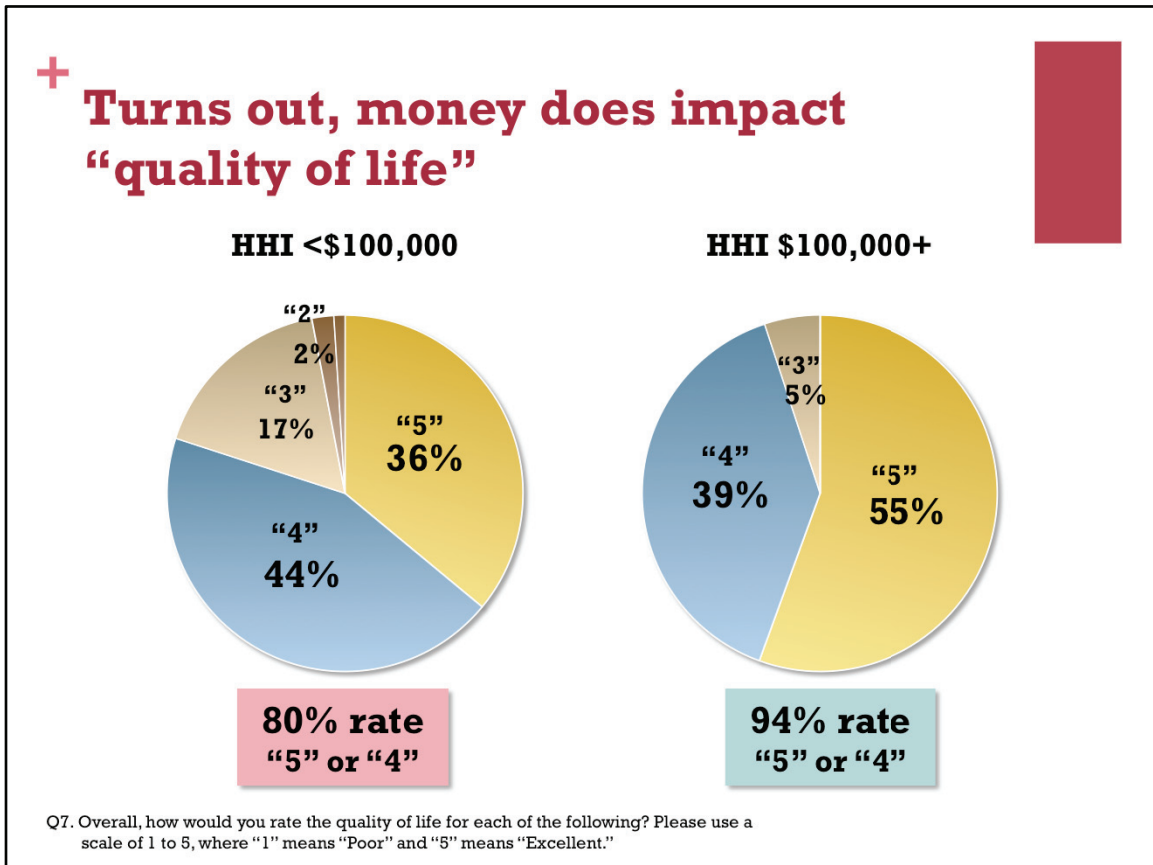
We remain optimistic but skeptical that as many older residents actually own long-term care insurance policies. We suspect they mistake long-term disability insurance with long-term care insurance.



Quality of Life in Howard County

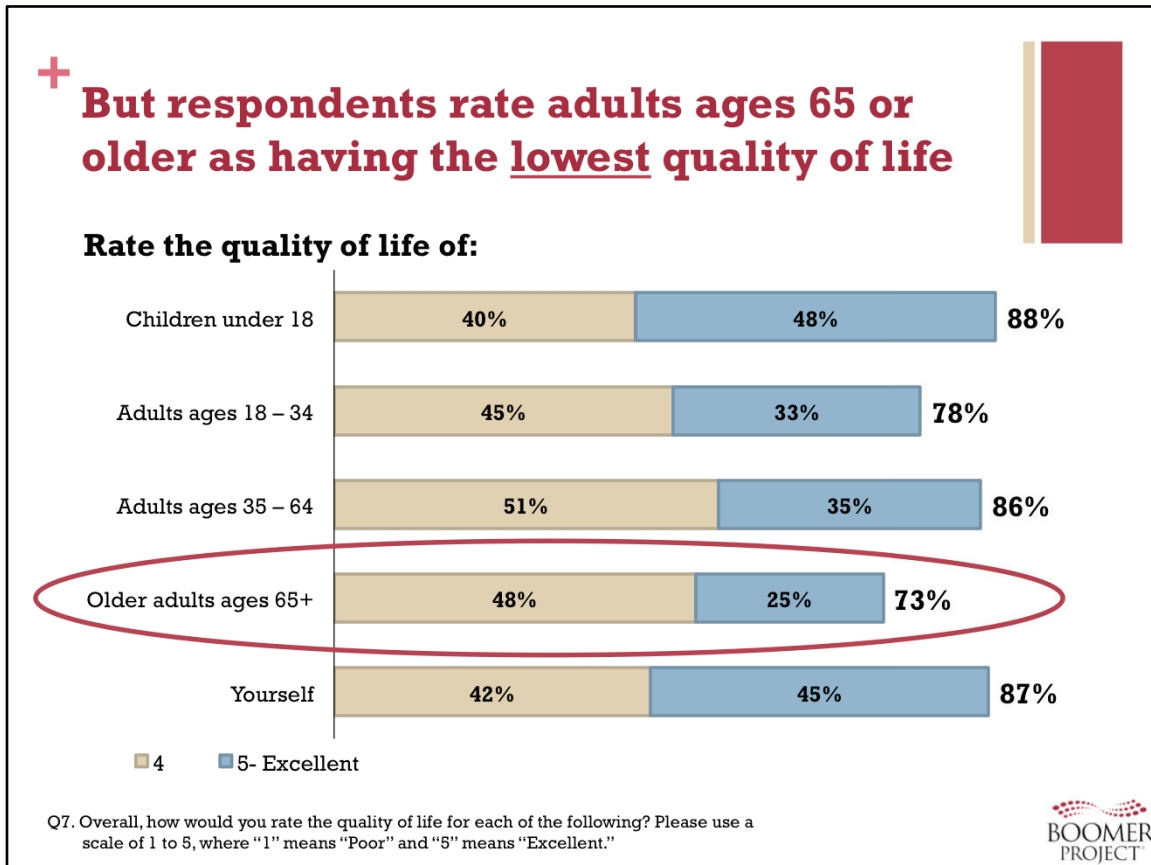
This question is part of a series of questions to determine how respondents view their own "quality of life" in Howard County, and that of residents older and younger than they are. This uses the same five-point scale and the top two scores total 87 percent, indicating that older adults living in Howard County feel they are enjoying a good/excellent quality of life.

As you'll see, they don't think everyone else is doing as well.



Quality of Life in Howard County

One’s income appears to influence how likely one rates their quality of life. Those in higher income brackets are much more likely to score their quality of life at the “excellent” level as compared to those at lower income levels.



Quality of Life in Howard County

When asked about the quality of life of older and younger residents, all older adults, no matter their own age, rate the quality of life of older adults in general lower than they rate their own quality of life.

In fact, only 25 percent think adults over age 65 have a quality of life that rates a “5” on the five-point scale, while almost half of our respondents rate their own quality of life that high.

This perception that older adults (other than themselves) have lower quality of life is not unusual. We have seen similar results in national surveys we have conducted for other clients, and in studies conducted in other regions of the country. Part of the reason could be that our respondents, based on the fact that they are doing well enough to participate in the study, remain aware that not everyone over the age of 65 retains good health and therefore is not experiencing a good quality of life.

+ These ratings are not unusual

- In other studies we have conducted in other states, as well as nationally, we typically see adults rating the quality of life for older adults at lower levels than their own, **even if they are over 65 themselves.**

Scores of "4" and "5"

Rating:	Silent/G.I.	Boomers/Younger
Your QOL:	88%	87%
QOL for adults 65+:	80%	70%

-8 points

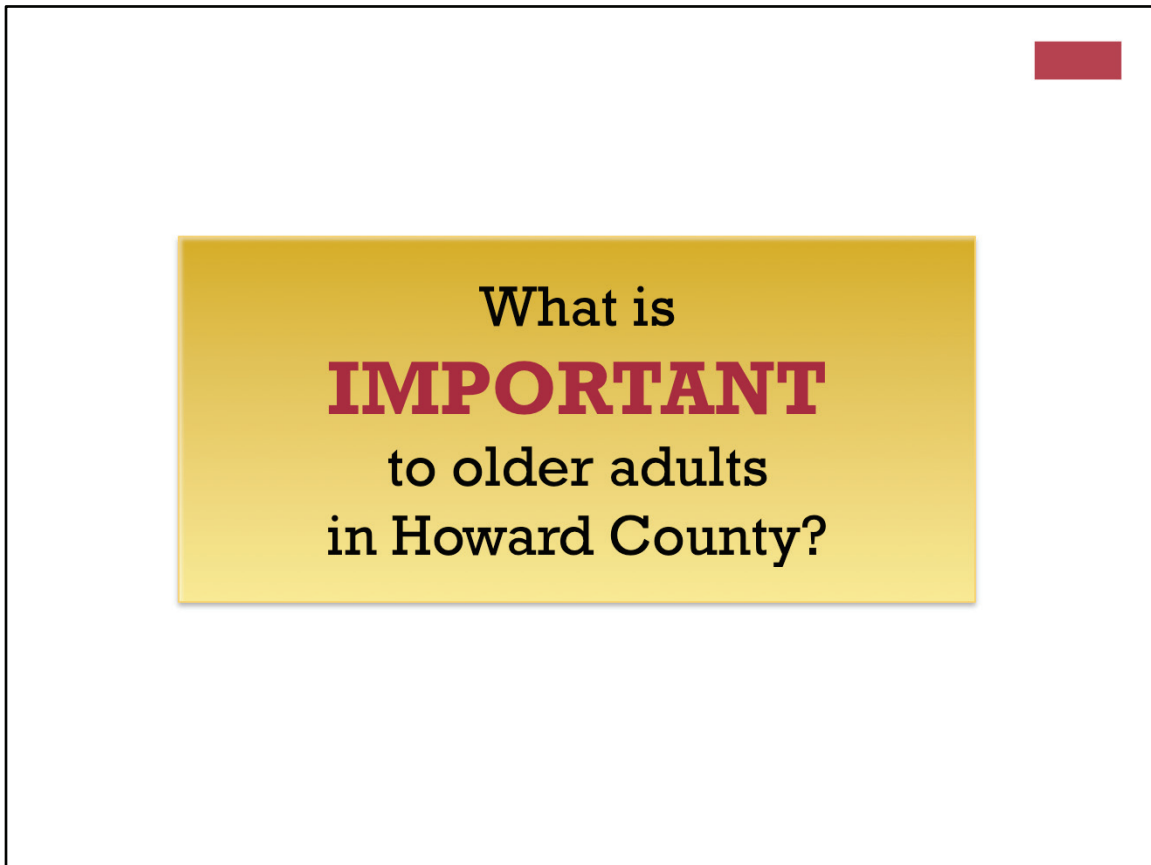
-17 points



Quality of Life in Howard County

When split by generation, those ages 68+ (Silent and G.I generation members) rate their own quality of life (QOL) about 8 points higher than they rate older adults in general. Boomers and Gen X respondents, ages 45-67 in 2014, rate the quality of life of older adults in general much lower, some 17 points lower than their self-ratings.

The perception that life after 65 delivers a lower quality of life clearly changes once one reaches that milestone and beyond.

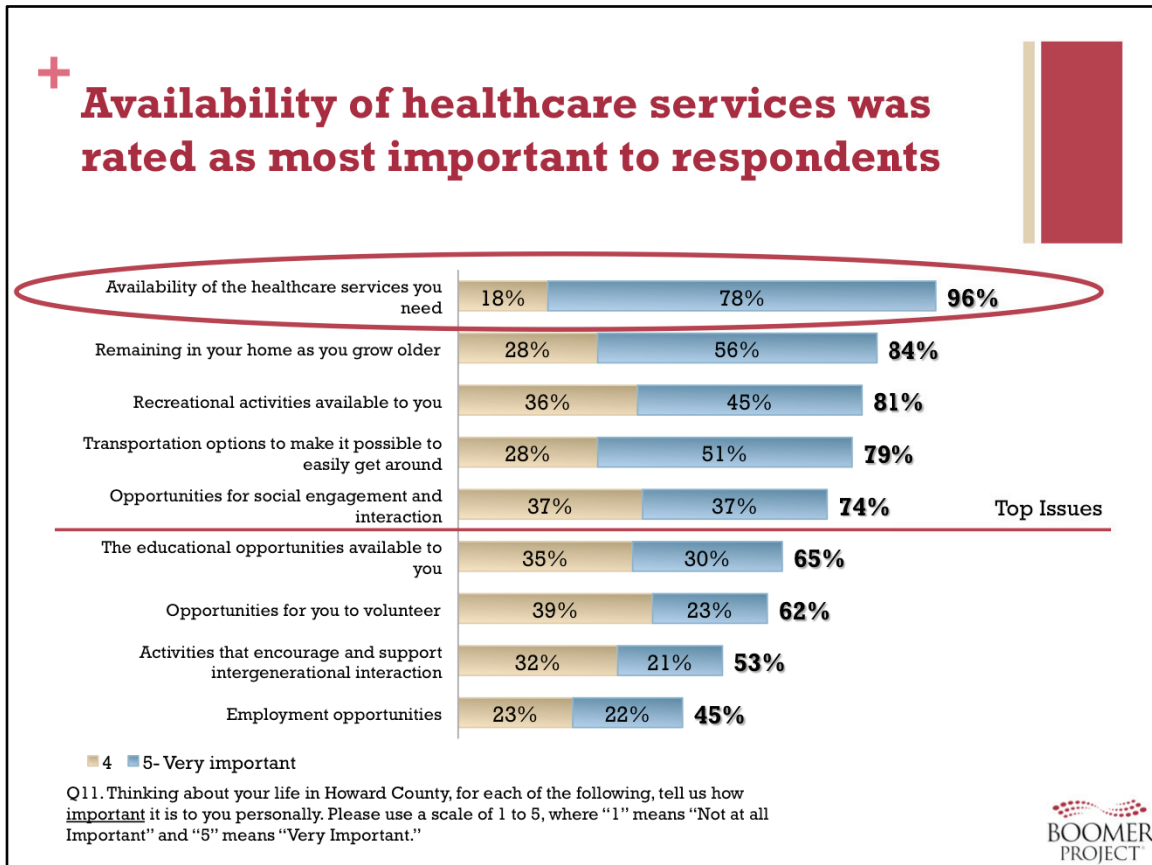


Importance and Performance

The survey was designed to learn how older residents think and feel about certain activities in Howard County. We started by asking respondents to think about living in Howard County and to then rate a list of various things in terms of importance to them personally.

Once we determine what is important, we then ask them to tell us how well organizations deliver, or perform, those activities or items in Howard County. Our goal was to identify any gaps that need to be addressed.

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Importance and Performance

By far, the most important aspect of life in Howard County for older residents is “availability of the healthcare services you need.” Almost all respondents rate that as a “4” or “5” on the five-point scale.

Also important are “remaining in your home as you grow older,” “recreational activities available to you,” “transportation options to make it possible to easily get around,” and “opportunities for social engagement and interaction.”



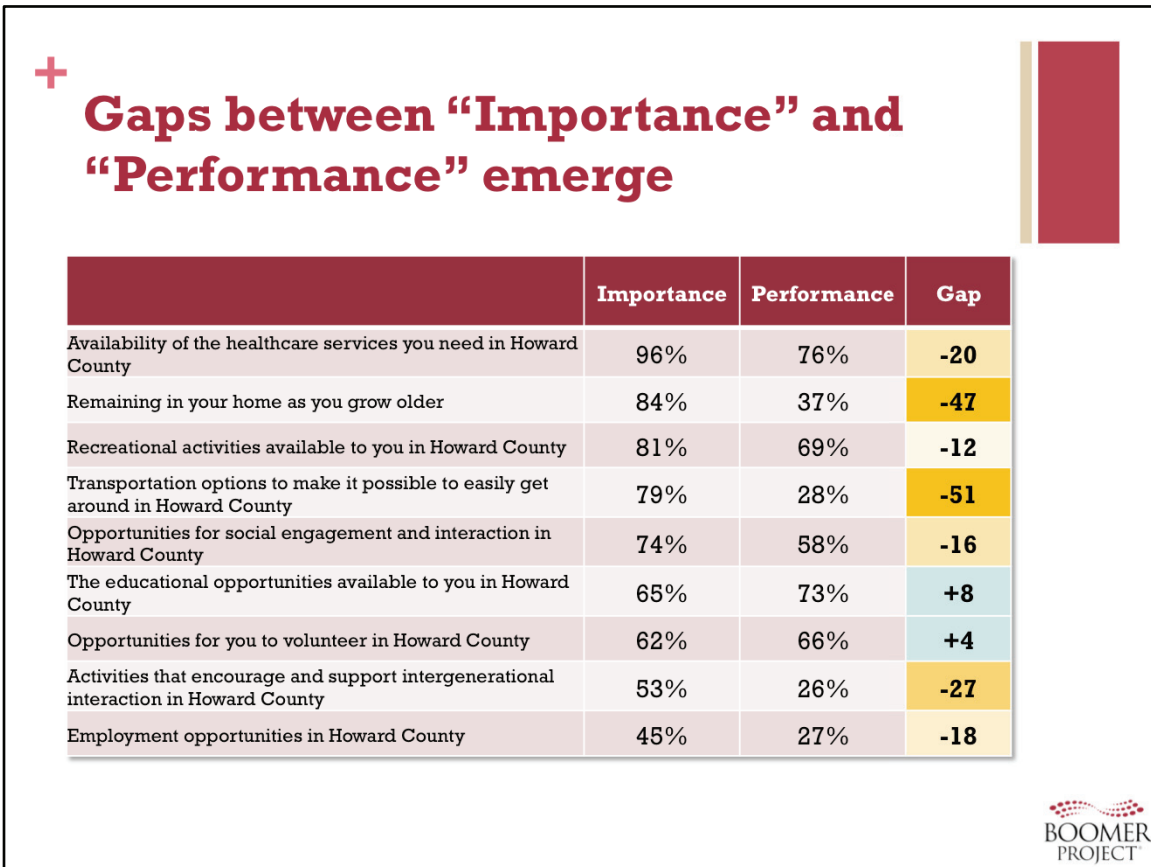
Importance and Performance

Using the same list, respondents were asked to rate delivery or performance of those activities in Howard County.

Only two earned scores of "4" and "5" that tope the 70 percent mark. And almost immediately, it became clear that some significant gaps exist between what respondents say is important and how well those activities are delivered or performed.

For example 84 percent rated "staying in your home as you grow older" a "4" or "5" on Importance, but only 37 percent gave scores of "4" or "5" when it comes to delivery or performance in Howard County. That is a 47 point gap.

Other gaps are significant, too.

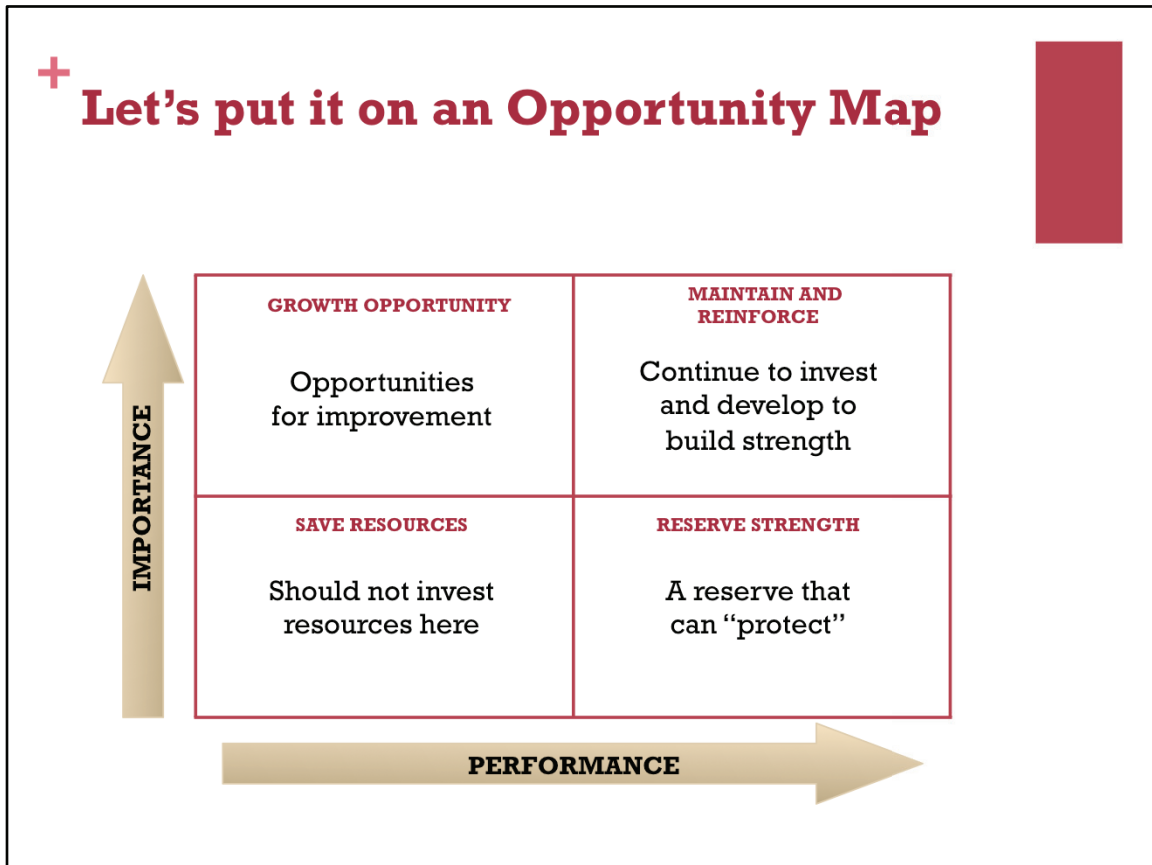


Importance and Performance

Charting the scores reveals three areas with large gaps: “Remaining in your home,” “Transportation options” and “Intergenerational interaction.”

While slightly less in overall importance, both “educational opportunities” and “volunteer opportunities” over-deliver in terms of performance in Howard County.

Ranking these by importance and performance on a grid helps reveal which items need attention going forward.

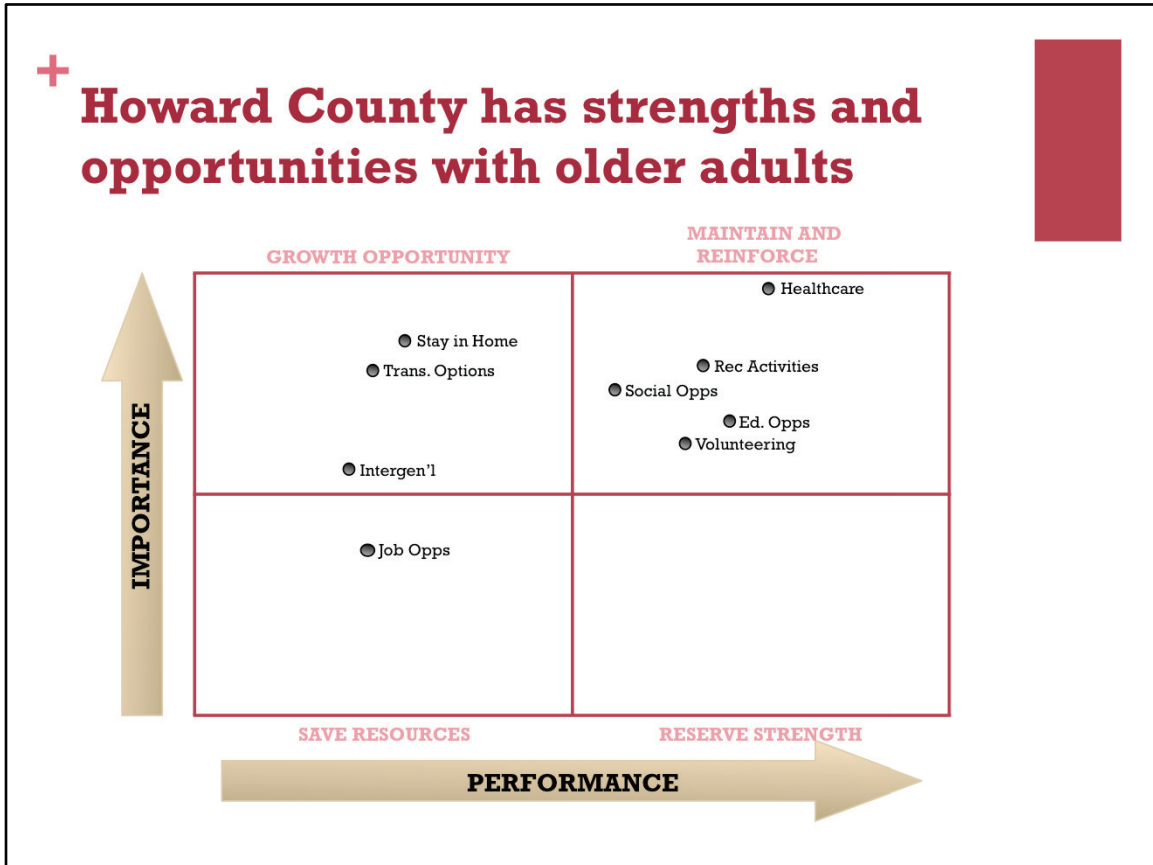


Importance and Performance

We use a standard 2 by 2 grid with Importance on the vertical axis and Performance along the horizontal access.

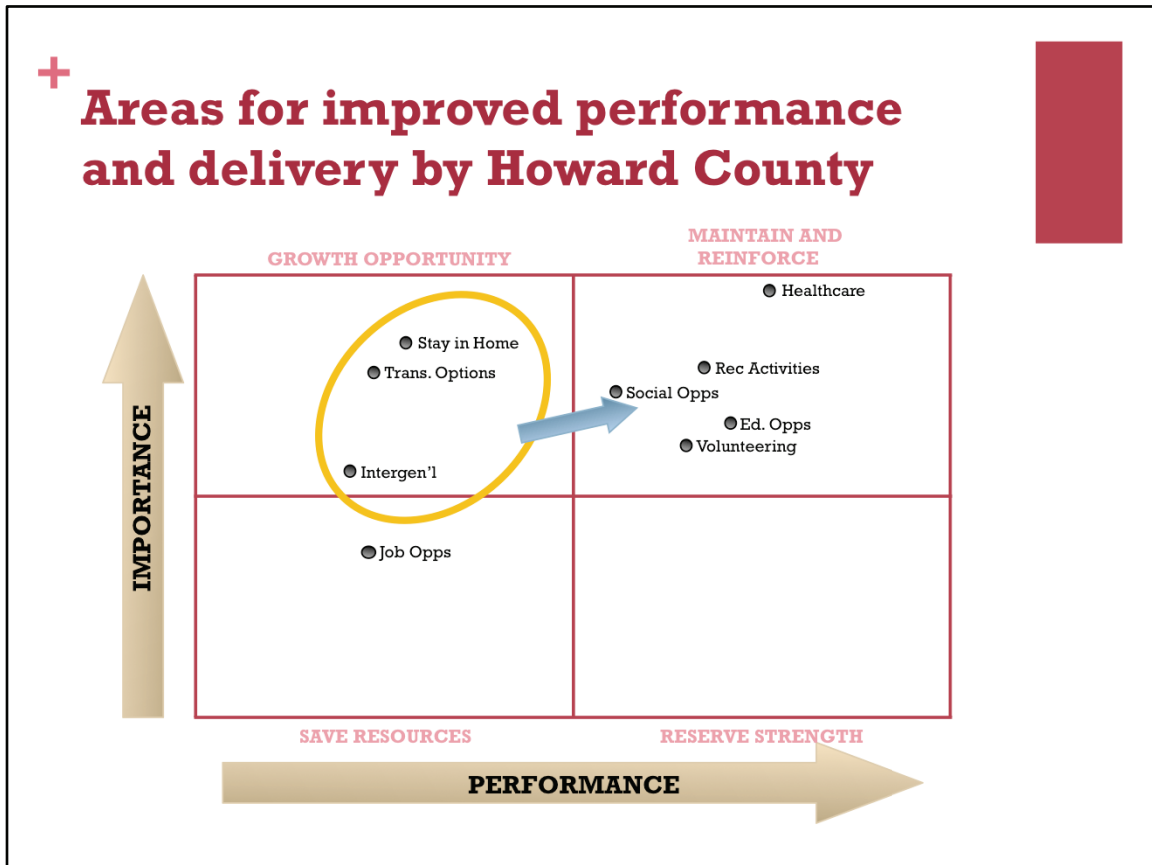
The goal is to perform well on items that are the most important – which means items appear in the upper right quadrant.

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Importance and Performance

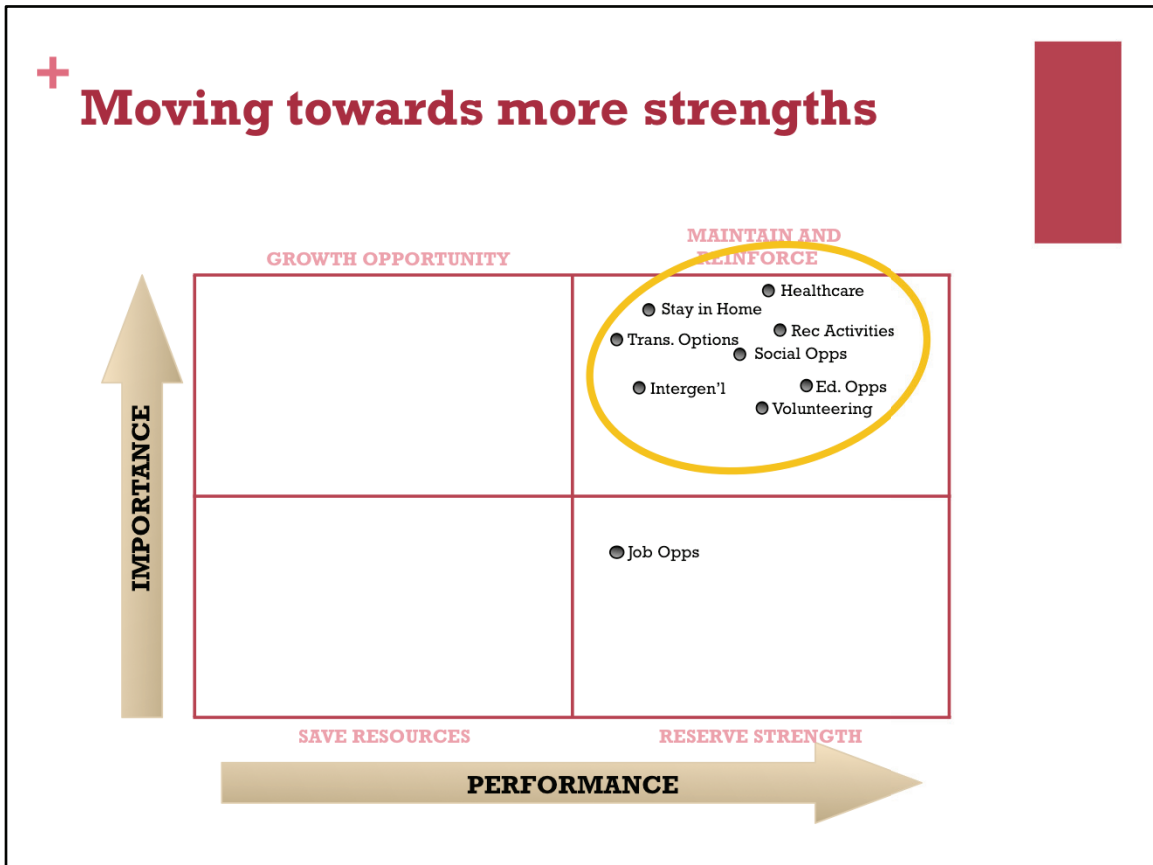
Here are Howard County's scores as determined by our older adult respondents.



Importance and Performance

The opportunity areas are the items in the upper left quadrant, which means they are important to older residents, but under-delivered or performed in Howard County. The goal is to shift those to the upper right quadrant.

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Importance and Performance

Similarly, the goal should also be to maintain and reinforce activities and items already in the upper right quadrant.

For Howard County's Master Plan, the focus should be on helping older residents stay in their homes, and provide more transportation options.

+ There is some uncertainty about transportation options

Options:	Howard County has it	Howard County does not have it	I don't know if Howard County has it
Taxi	91%	2%	7%
Bus	85%	5%	9%
Neighbor Ride program	72%	1%	26%
Rides from my family, friends and/or neighbors	69%	4%	27%
Special transportation for the disabled	60%	2%	38%
Special transportation for the elderly	51%	3%	45%
Local train	49%	28%	24%
Rides from my church group	22%	9%	69%

Q48. Which of the following forms of transportation are available to you? Please indicate if Howard County has it, if Howard County does not have it, or if you do not know if Howard County has it.



Importance and Performance

When asked to identify transportation options available in Howard County, there are several that are available that the majority of older adults remain unaware they even exist, much less if anyone in Howard County offers it or not.

This creates an opportunity to improve communication about existing transportation options in Howard County.

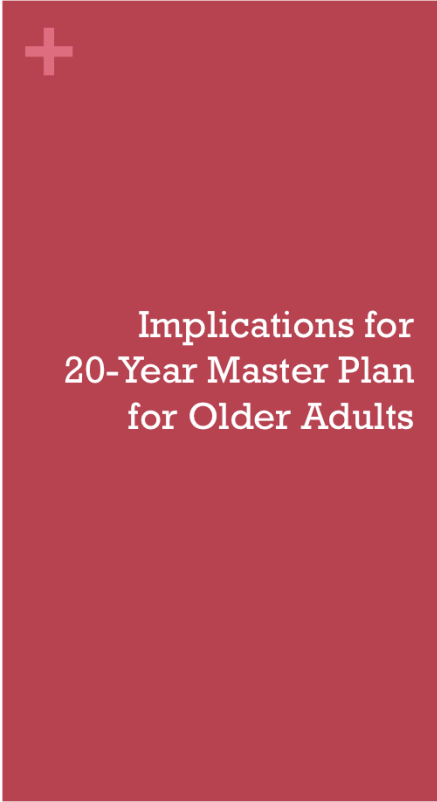
+ Some older adults report they need help with transportation

Segment	Component	Need Help	Don't Need	Don't Know
Overall		9%	84%	7%
Regional Planning Districts	Columbia/Ellicott City	8%	85%	7%
	Clarksville/Cooksville/W. Friendship	10%	86%	4%
	Elkridge/Laurel	12%	78%	10%
Gender	Male	7%	89%	3%
	Female	9%	82%	9%
Generation	Boomer/Generation X	7%	85%	8%
	Silent/CI	12%	81%	6%
Household Income	Under \$100,000	15%	77%	8%
	Over \$100,000	4%	90%	6%
Awareness & Usage Senior Centers	Not aware/aware but haven't used	6%	86%	9%
	Have used	12%	82%	6%

Q50. Do you feel you need transportation more often than it is available to you for appointments, visiting, social events, etc.?

Importance and Performance

Only about 1 in 9 older residents in certain demographic segments or geography indicate they need help when it comes to getting around Howard County.



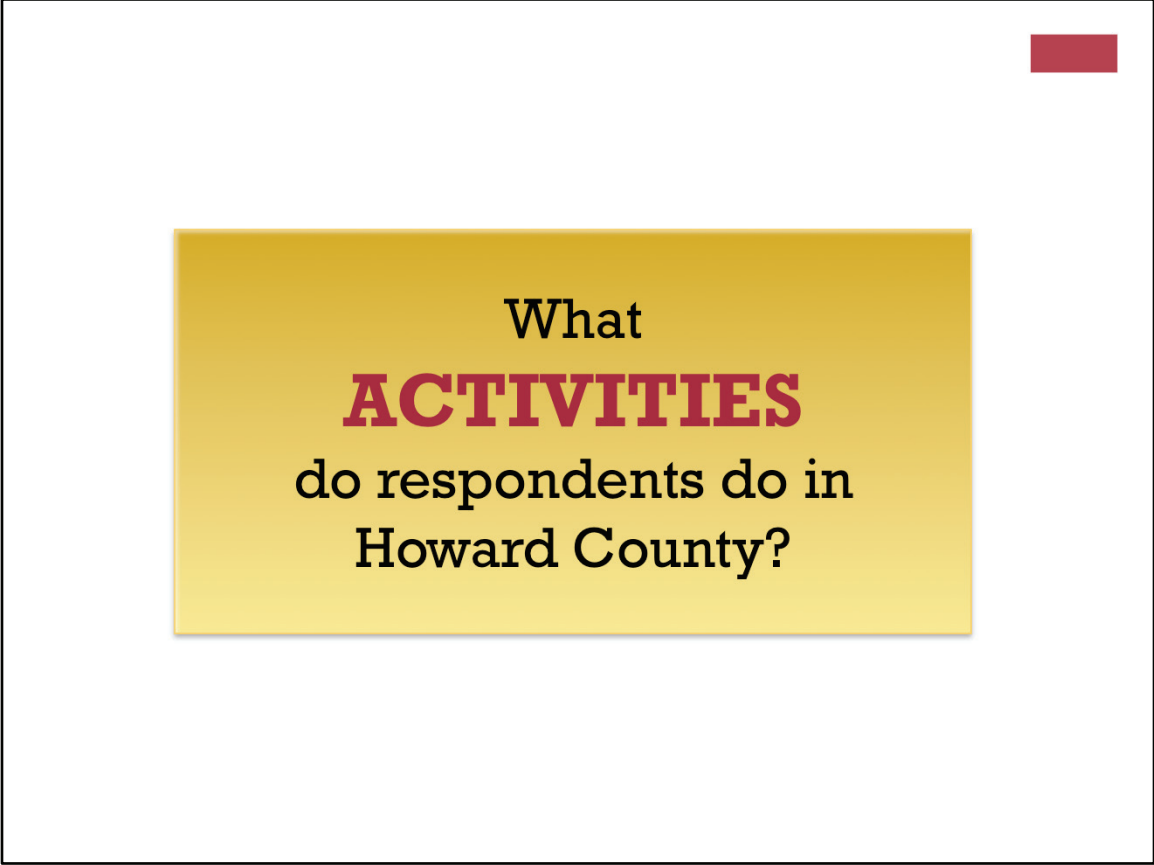
Implications for
20-Year Master Plan
for Older Adults

- The perception that older adults in general have a lower quality of life reflects the “problems of aging” mindset. It’s time to change to the “promise of living longer lives.”
- To strengthen ties to Howard County, focus on increasing or improving services for older adults centered on helping them stay in their homes as they grow older, providing more transportation options, and encouraging more intergenerational engagement.
- With the strong desire to stay in their own homes, Howard County needs to make sure land use and zoning laws support all of the housing options available to older adults, including “Granny Flats,” co-housing and multi-party ownership.

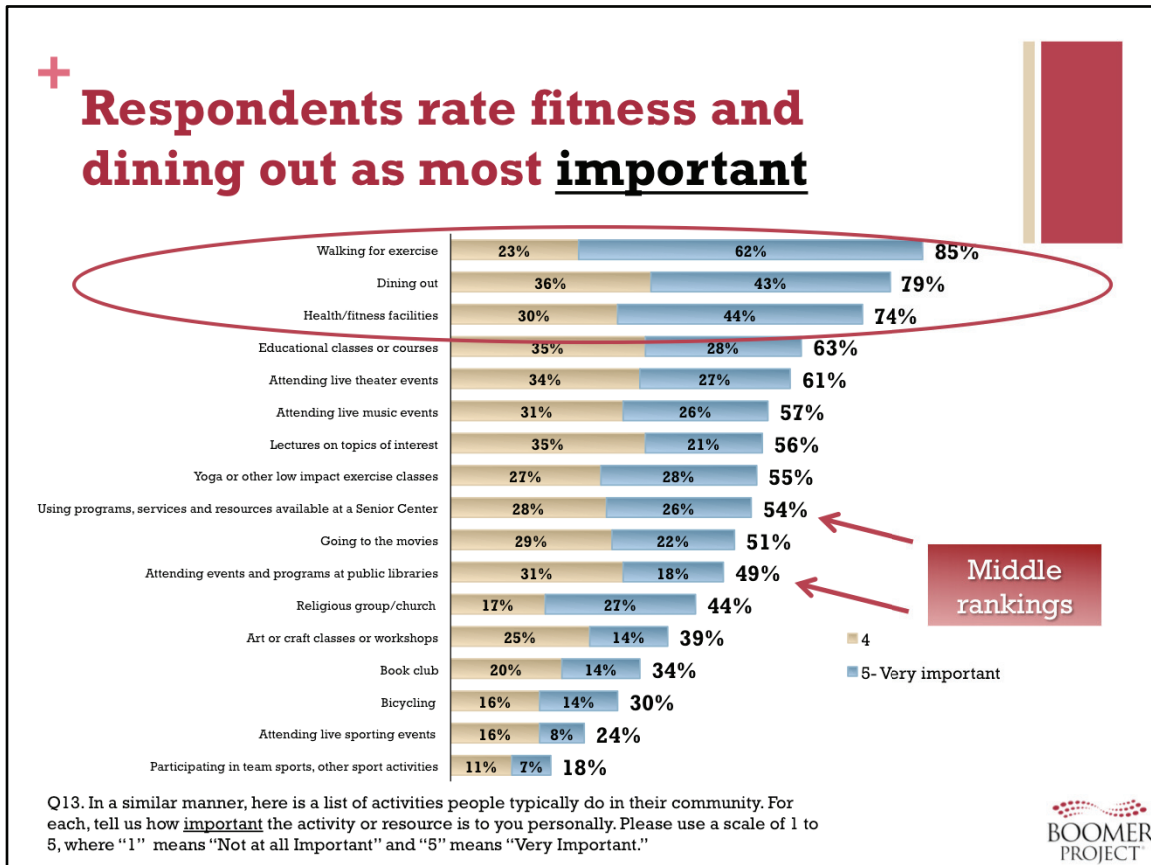
Importance and Performance – Implications

The next generation of older adults – the Boomers – have a different mindset about what’s ahead. Their optimistic world view means they reject the notion that society has to solve the “problems of aging.” That’s too negative and treats “aging” as a condition that requires a cure of some sorts. More accurate would be to engage Boomers in the “promise of longer lives,” and Howard County should foster an environment and make available resources that encourage Boomers to live more healthier, productive longer lives.

The results indicate the need to focus on transportation and housing as the key areas where the county government can plan an effective role. This can range from simply updating zoning laws to accommodate multi-adult households, to investigating new ways to provide transit options for people of all ages across Howard County.



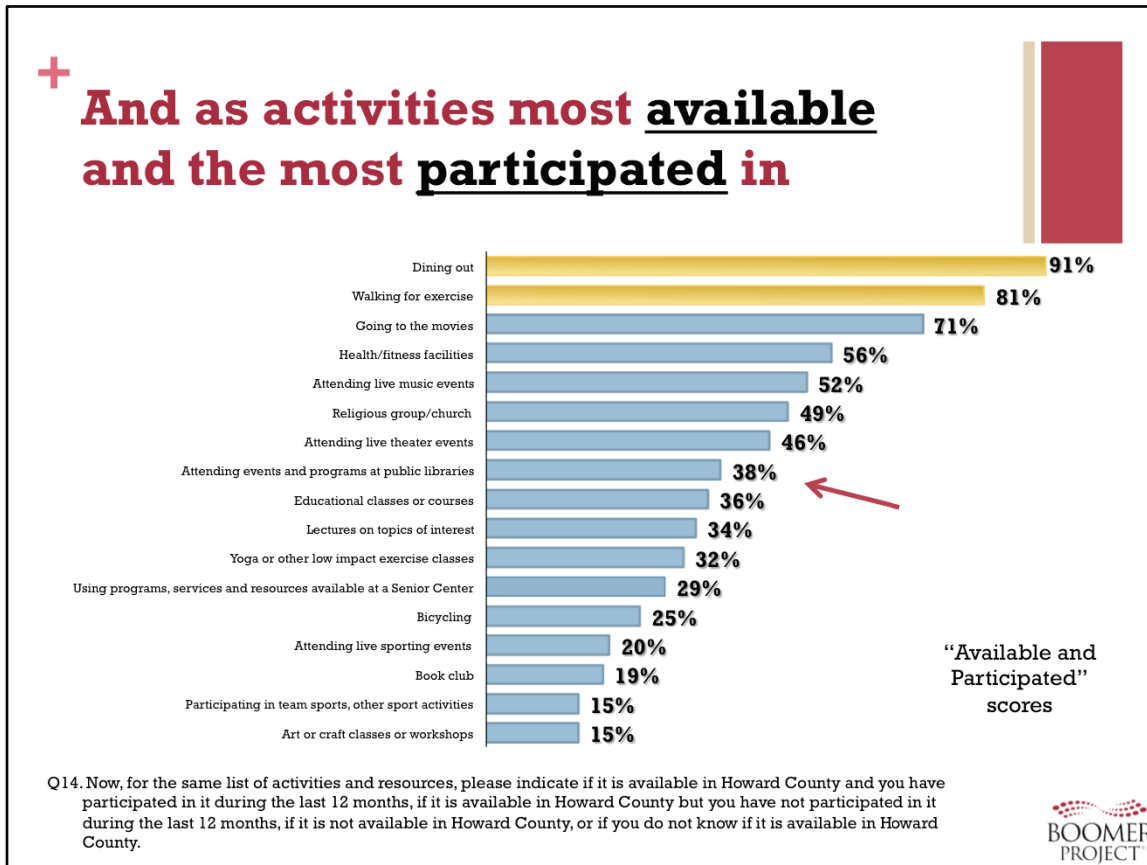
This next section explores the current, and future, activities of older adults in Howard County.



Activities in Howard County

Older residents told us important activities for them are to “walk for exercise,” “dine out” and participate in health/fitness activities.

Programs and classes offered through Howard County government resources like the public library or senior center were rated less important.



Activities in Howard County

Digging a bit deeper, we asked about activities in which they actually participate. “Dining out” and “walking for exercise” again topped the list, and “attending events and programs” at the public library or senior center earned lower scores.

+ Interest in activities changes when asked about the future

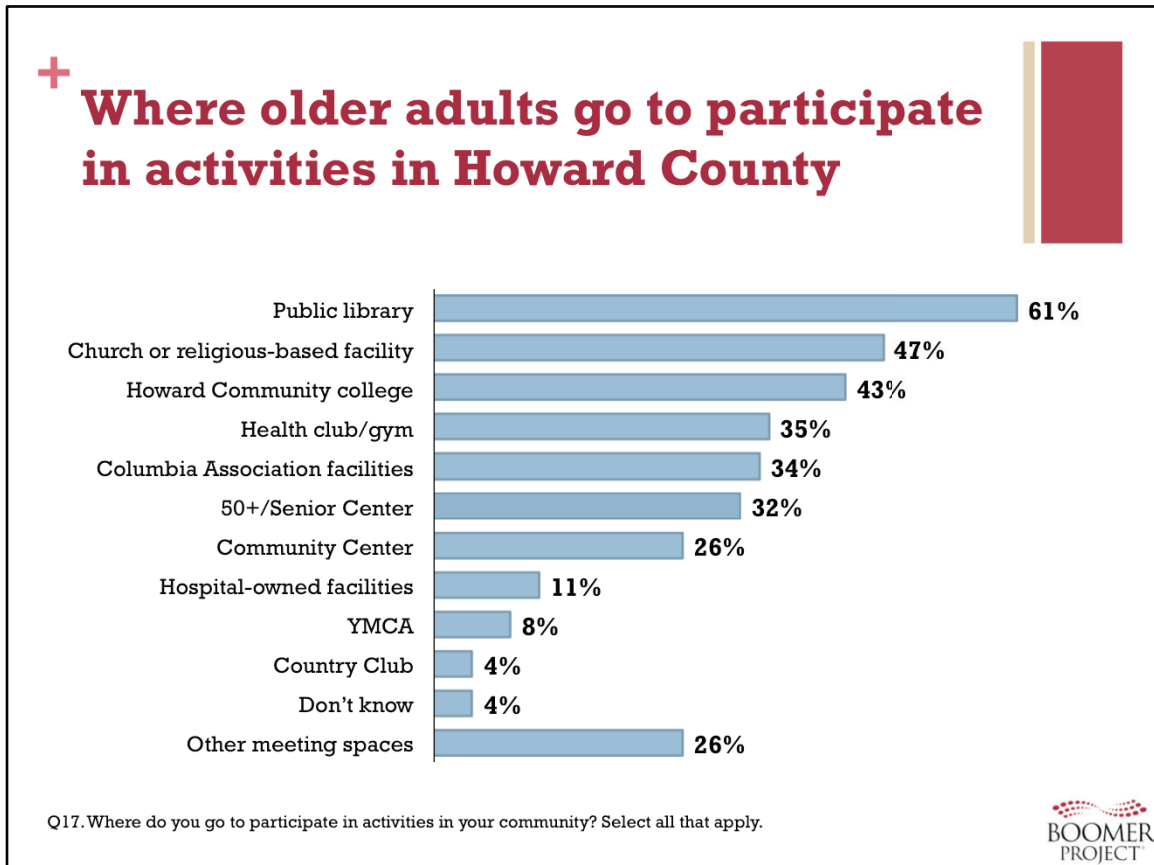
	Increase	Same	Decrease
Religious group/church	23%	68%	10%
Yoga or other low-impact exercise classes	44%	46%	10%
Attending live sporting events	10%	59%	31%
Attending live music events	28%	61%	11%
Attending live theater events	34%	58%	8%
Bicycling	18%	50%	32%
Dining out	32%	63%	5%
Going to the movies	27%	64%	10%
Walking for exercise	49%	48%	4%
Health/fitness facilities	39%	54%	7%
Book club	26%	63%	12%
Art or craft classes or workshops	35%	52%	13%
Attending events and programs at public libraries	43%	50%	7%
Using programs, services and resources available Senior Center	67%	29%	4%
Educational classes or courses	45%	46%	9%
Lectures on topics of interest	45%	50%	6%
Participating in team sports, other sport activities	5%	51%	44%

16. Thinking ahead ten or more years from now, do you think your interest in the following kinds of activities will decrease, increase or stay the same?



Activities in Howard County

When asked how their activities might evolve over the next ten or more years, most older residents said they would either participate at the same level, or increase participation. Those activities requiring more physical effort were the ones most likely to be identified as ones where their future activity level would decrease.



Activities in Howard County

Our intention with the next few questions was to better determine the places and spaces frequented by older adults in Howard County. While “public library” was selected by 61 percent of respondents, we did not ask about how often they participate in activities at these venues. For example, while 35 percent said they go to “health club/gym,” we did not capture whether that was daily, weekly, monthly or annually.

Future research will attempt to collect data about the usage levels at the various facilities.

+ Boomers and Silent Generations use different resources for activities

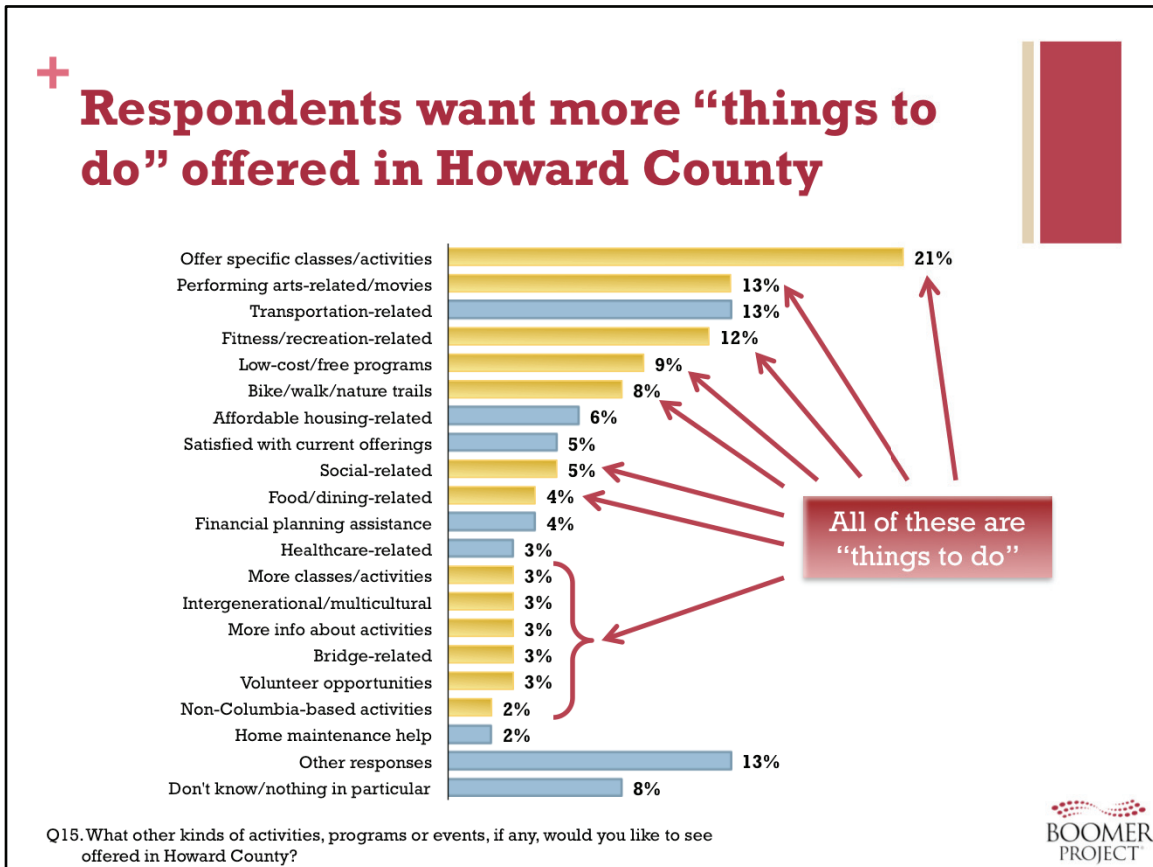
Resource Usage	Boomers	Silent
Libraries	60%	64%
Church	46%	48%
Howard Community College	41%	46%
Health club/gym	34%	36%
Columbia Association	33%	38%
Senior Center/50+ Center	23%	55%
Community center	24%	29%
Hospital facilities	9%	17%
YMCA	9%	6%
Country Club	4%	3%

Q17. Where do you go to participate in activities in your community? Select all that apply.



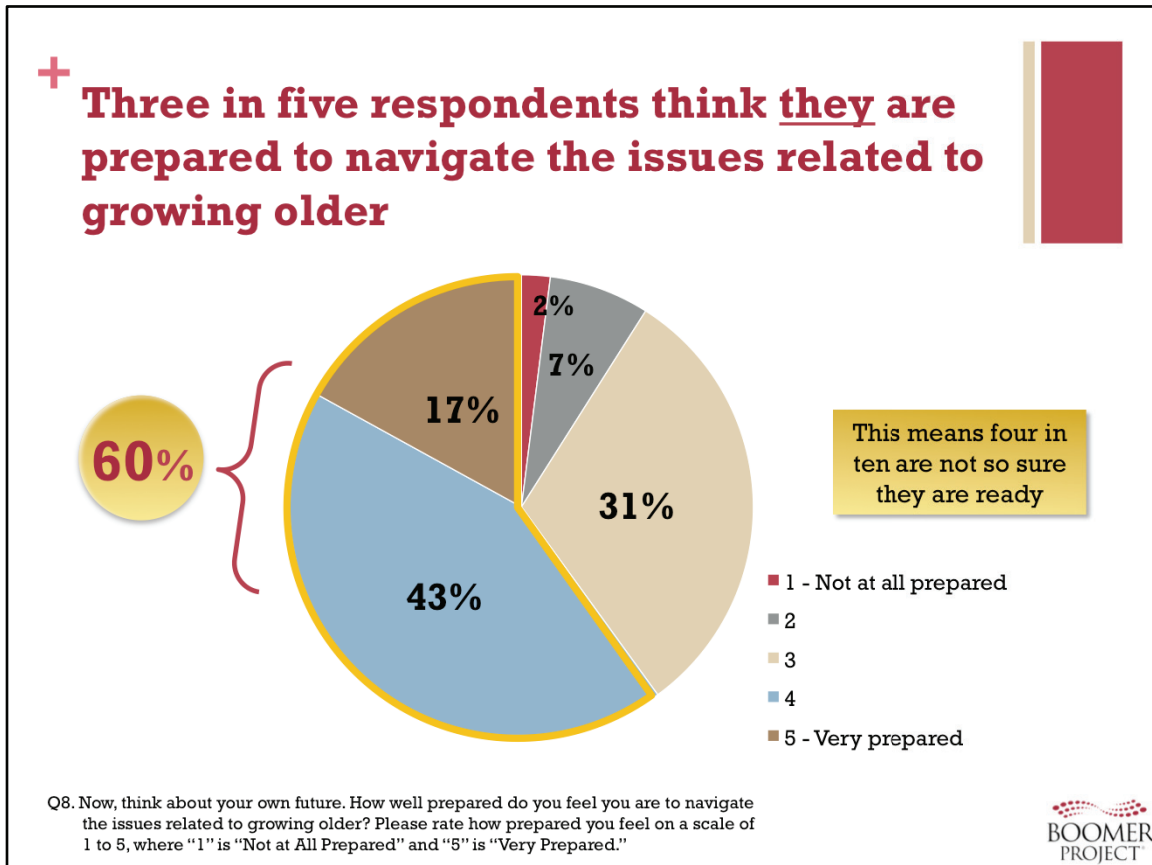
Activities in Howard County

The only generational distinction about places where older residents participate in activities is the mention of “senior center/50+ center.” More than twice as many members of the older generations use those resources than do Boomers.



Activities in Howard County

When asked to name “other activities,” the list was long and varied. Overall, though, most responses were around “things to do.”



What's Ahead for Older Adults?

This section includes questions focused on identifying how older adults in Howard County view their future and the county's future.

When asked about what's ahead, 60 percent say they feel "prepared" or "very prepared" to navigate the issues related to growing older.

Another 31 percent rate their level of preparedness a "3" on the five-point scale.

And only 9 percent feel unprepared.

+ Different segments feel more prepared than others, especially older men

Scores of "4/5"

Segment	Component	Feel Prepared
Regional Planning Districts	Columbia/Ellicott City	62%
	Clarksville/Cooksville/West Friendship	59%
	Elkridge/Laurel	53%
Gender	Male	72%
	Female	56%
Generation	Baby Boomer/Generation X	55%
	Silent/GI	75%
Household Income	Under \$100,000	58%
	Over \$100,000	61%
Awareness and Usage of Senior Centers	Not aware/aware but haven't used	51%
	Have used	69%

Q8. Now, think about your own future. How well prepared do you feel you are to navigate the issues related to growing older? Please rate how prepared you feel on a scale of 1 to 5, where "1" is "Not at All Prepared" and "5" is "Very Prepared."

Likely driven by reality of longer lives, as widows

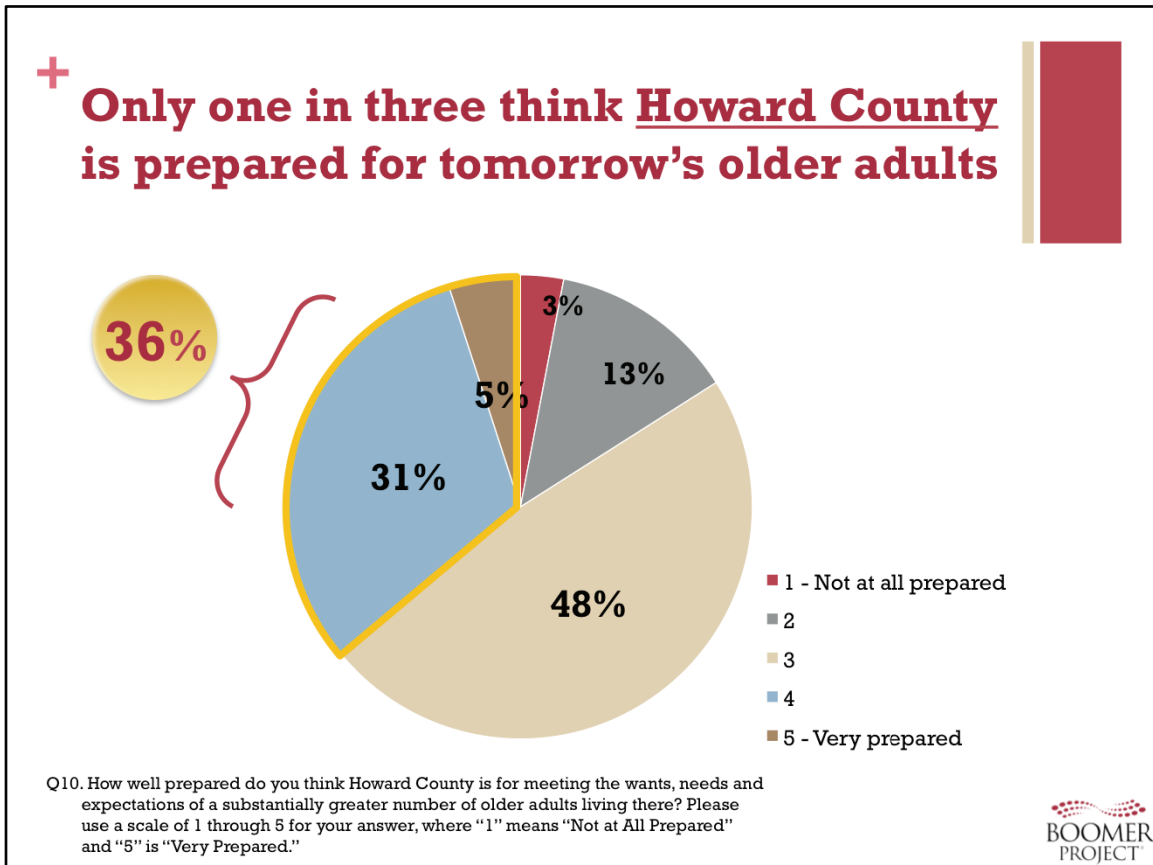


What's Ahead for Older Adults?

Interestingly, differences appear when we look at demographic segments. Men are far more likely to say they are prepared for growing older than are women. We attribute some of this to the knowledge older women have that they are likely to live longer than men expect to live, and will likely also outlive their spouses, if married.

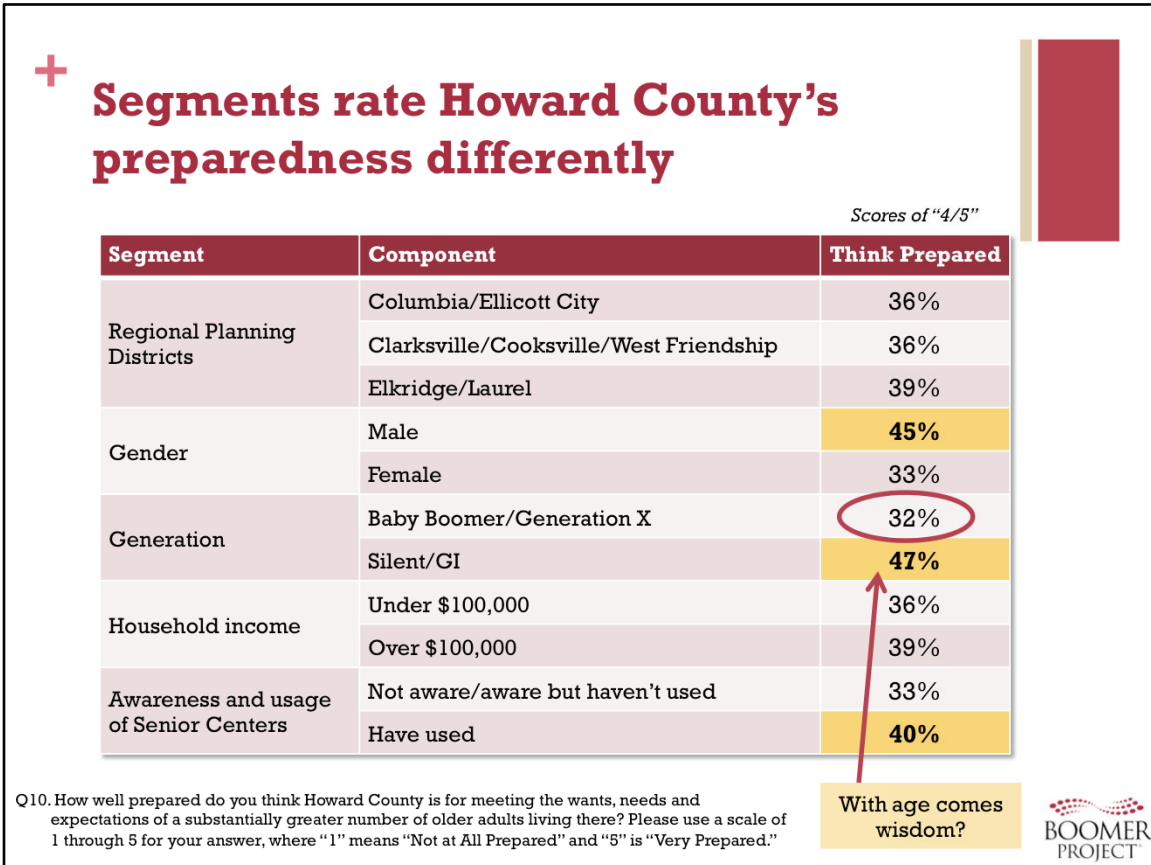
Similarly, older respondents, those from the Silent and G.I. generations, are more likely to say they are prepared than are younger Boomers.

And in a somewhat surprising finding, those who have been to a Senior Center are more likely to say they are prepared than those who are unaware or have never been to a Senior Center.



What's Ahead for Older Adults?

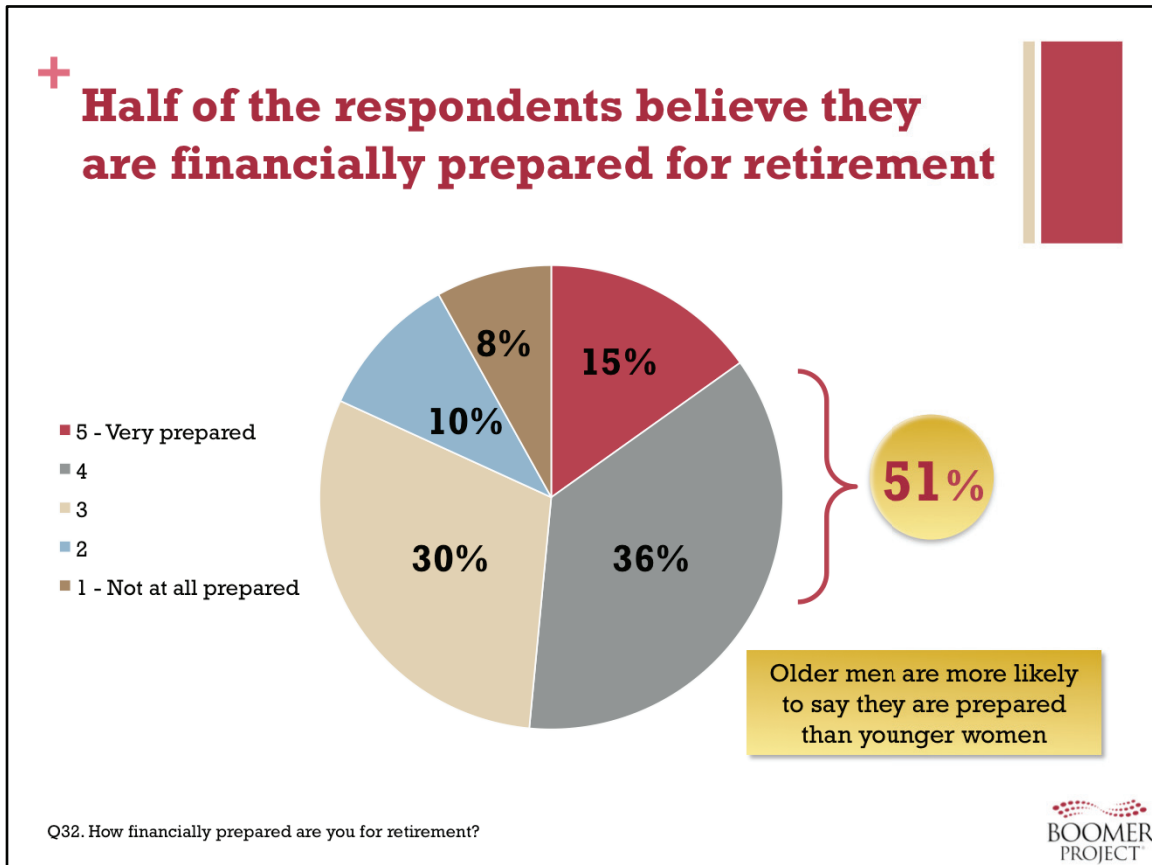
Older adults are much less likely to say that Howard County is prepared to meet the wants, needs and expectations of older adults in the future. Only slightly more than one in three rate the county's preparedness at a "4" or "5" on the five-point scale.



What's Ahead for Older Adults?

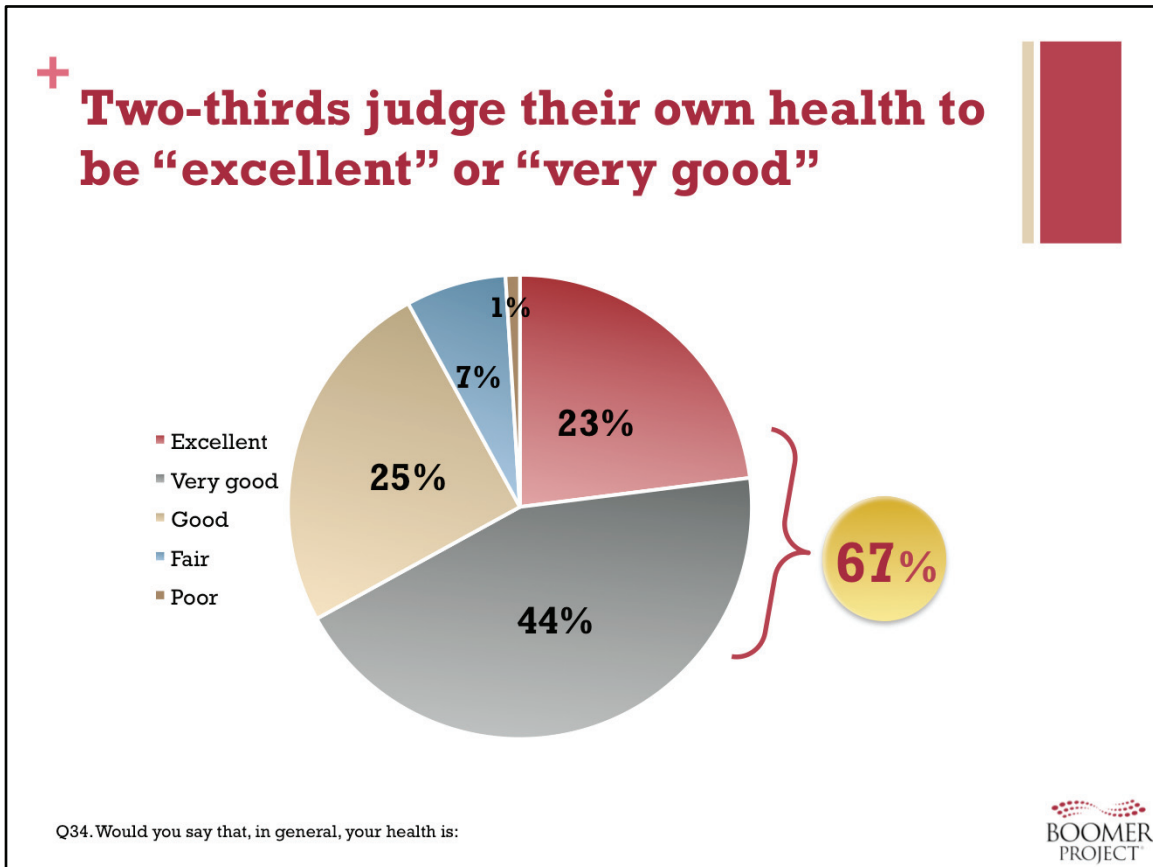
We see some segmentation occur in how residents answered this question, too. Men are more likely to think the county is prepared, but still less than half. Women are less sure.

Older generation members and those with first hand experience with Senior Centers also are more likely to say the county is prepared.



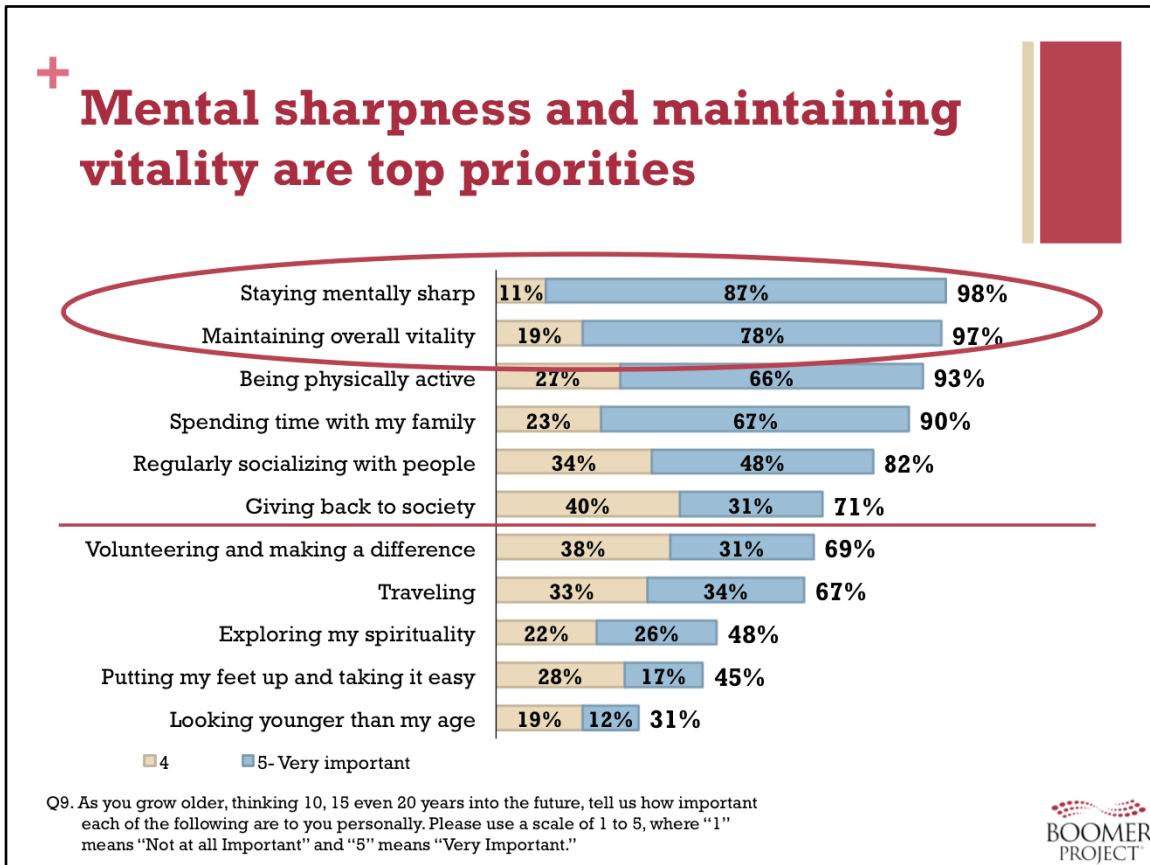
What's Ahead for Older Adults?

There are a plethora of studies about the strong link between financial well-being and health. Fortunately, about half of the respondents report they are “prepared” or “very prepared” financially for their future.



What’s Ahead for Older Adults?

Even better, two-thirds of respondents rate their health as “very good” or “excellent.”

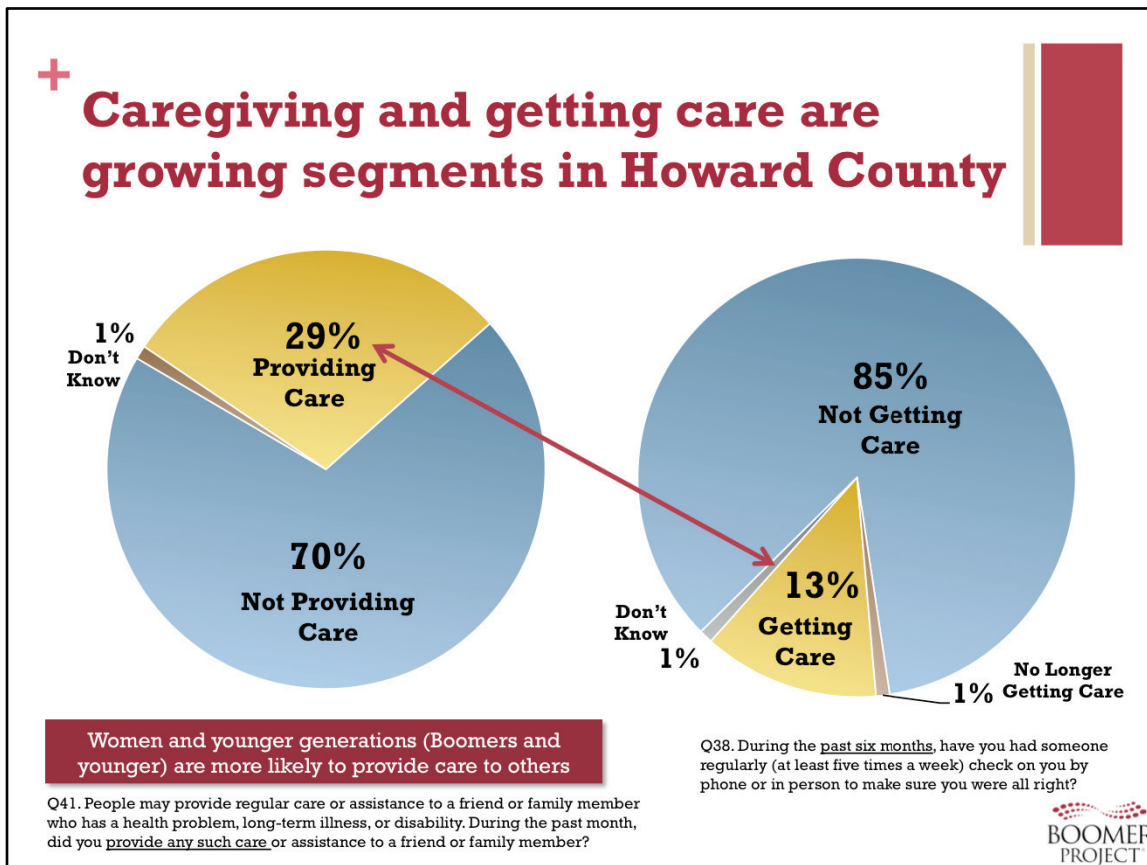


What’s Ahead for Older Adults?

Exploring the longer view, virtually every respondent indicated that “staying mentally sharp” and “maintaining overall vitality” are important/very important to them.

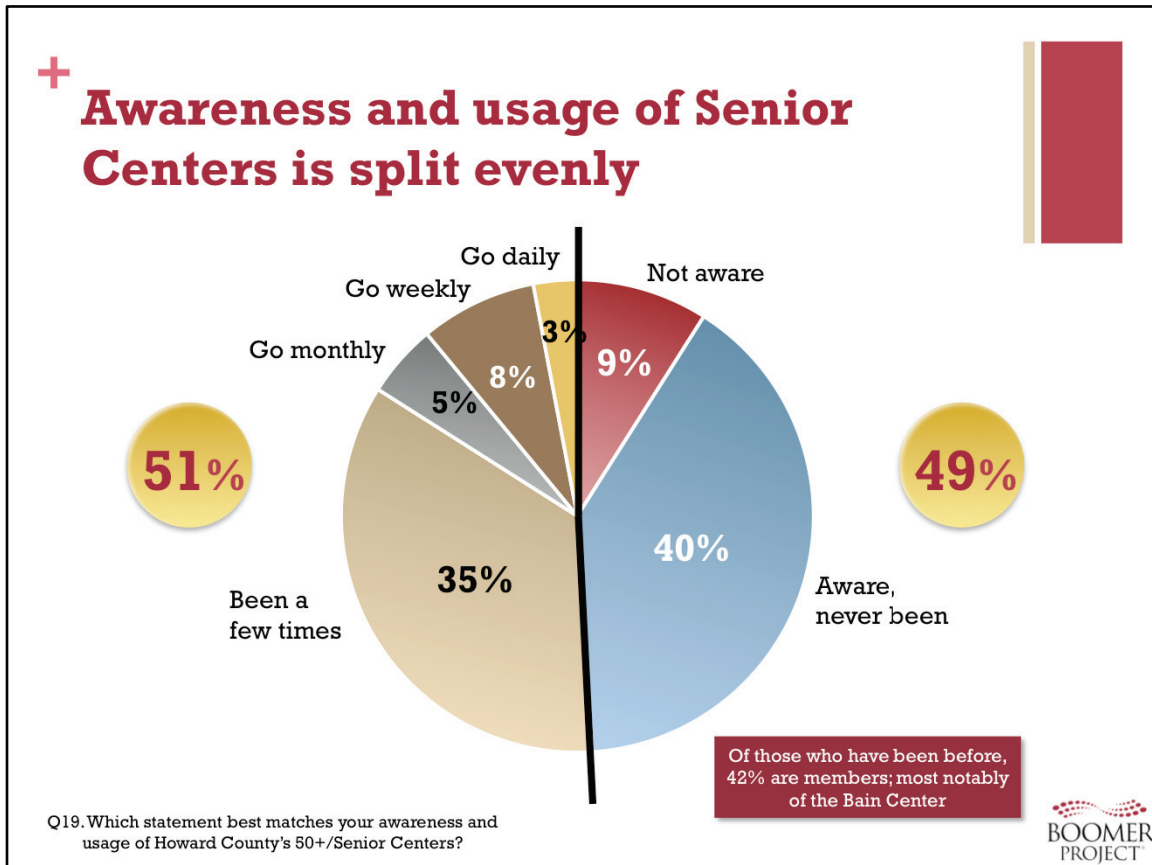
Conversely, only 31 percent said “looking younger than my age” was important.

These responses suggest the focus for programs and services available in Howard County.



What's Ahead for Older Adults?

A new life stage for many older adults is providing care for an older relative or friend. Almost three in ten respondents provided care in the last month, and one in eight are currently getting care themselves.



Respondents and Senior Centers

The sample split evenly between those with first-hand experience with Senior Centers in Howard County and those either unaware or are aware but have never been to one.

+ Segments value and use Senior Centers quite differently

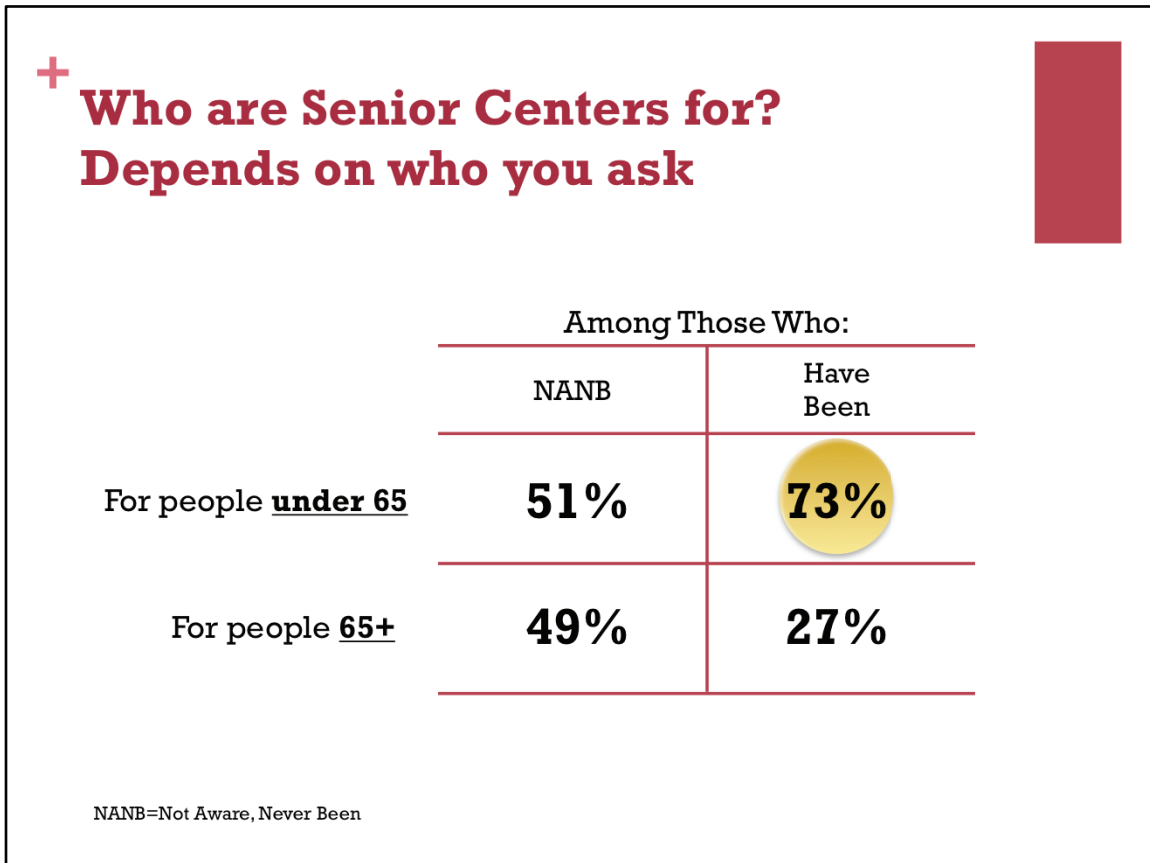
Segment	Component	Importance	Participate	Gap
Overall		54%	29%	-25
Regional Planning Districts	Columbia/Ellicott City	53%	29%	-24
	Clarksville/Cooksville/West Friendship	53%	31%	-22
	Elkridge/Laurel	62%	28%	-34
Gender	Male	43%	24%	-19
	Female	59%	31%	-28
Generation	Baby Boomer/Generation X	50%	21%	-29
	Silent/CI	64%	49%	-15
Household Income	Under \$100,000	62%	41%	-21
	Over \$100,000	45%	19%	-26
Awareness and Usage of Senior Centers	Not aware/aware but haven't used	42%	3%	-39
	Have used	66%	54%	-12

Respondents and Senior Centers

Overall, 54 percent of respondents say Senior Centers are important in Howard County, but only 29 percent say they participate in activities at Senior Centers.

The Importance/Participate percentages vary by demographic segment, with large gaps appearing by generation and income levels.

Howard County is aware that Senior Centers may not appeal or serve a need for all older adults in the county. This data helps identify those who value the centers and use them now.



Respondents and Senior Centers

We explored some topline perceptions of “Senior Centers,” starting with asking an open-ended question about “who are Senior Centers for?”

Those who are Not Aware or Never Been (NANB), the respondents are split and half think Senior Centers are for those over 65 and half say for those under 65.

Respondents who have been to a Senior Center predominantly say (73 percent) that the centers are for people under 65.

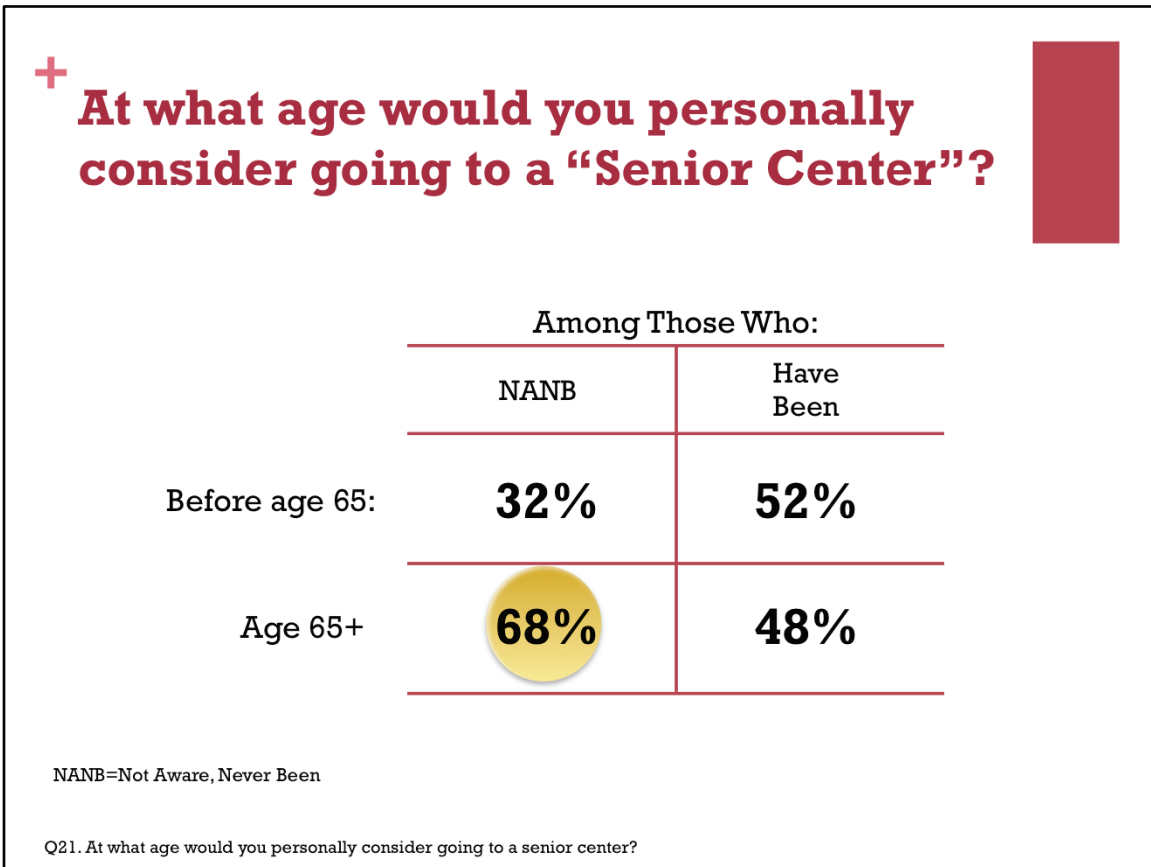
+ Why have you never been to a Senior Center?

Open Ended (multiple responses):

Top Reasons	Percent Saying
They're for people older than me	31%
Not interested, not for me	26%
I work	22%
Too busy	20%

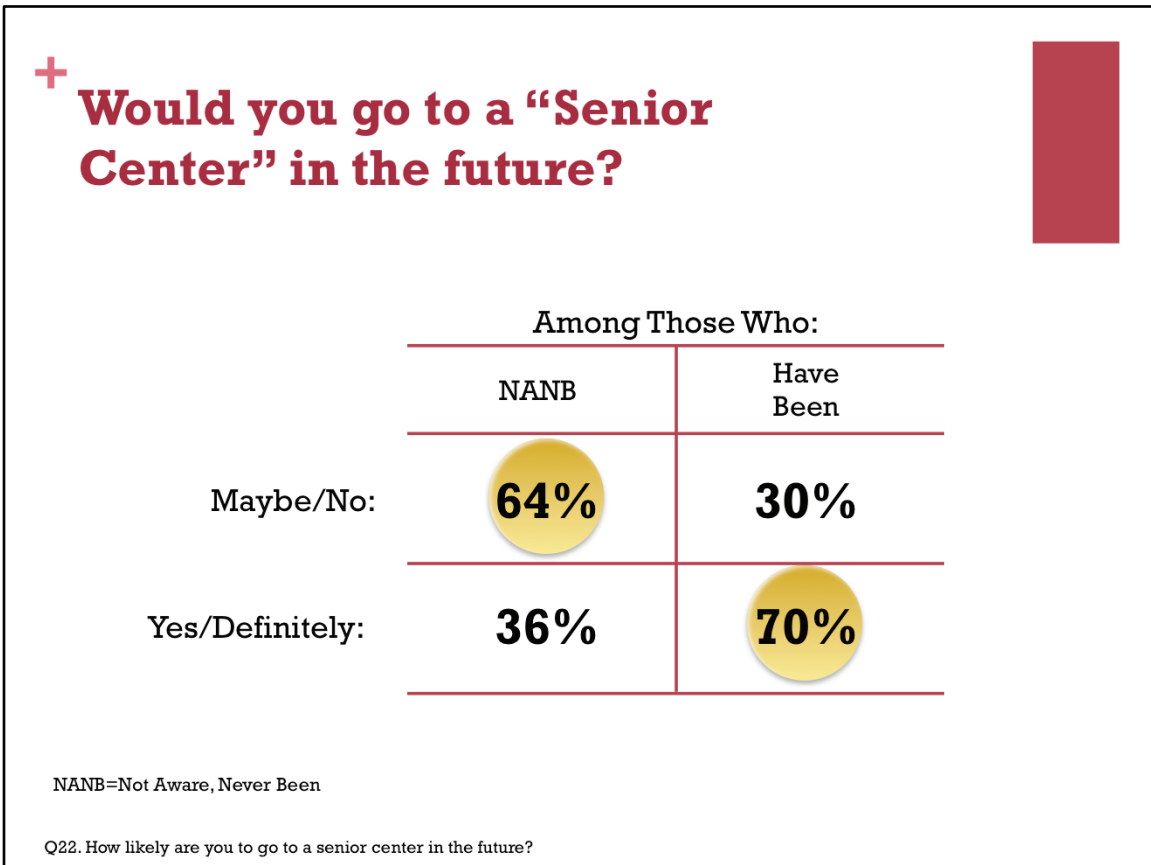
Respondents and Senior Centers

Reasons for not going to a Senior Center center around the centers are “not for me” or they don’t fit this time of life for the respondent (“I work” or “Too busy”).



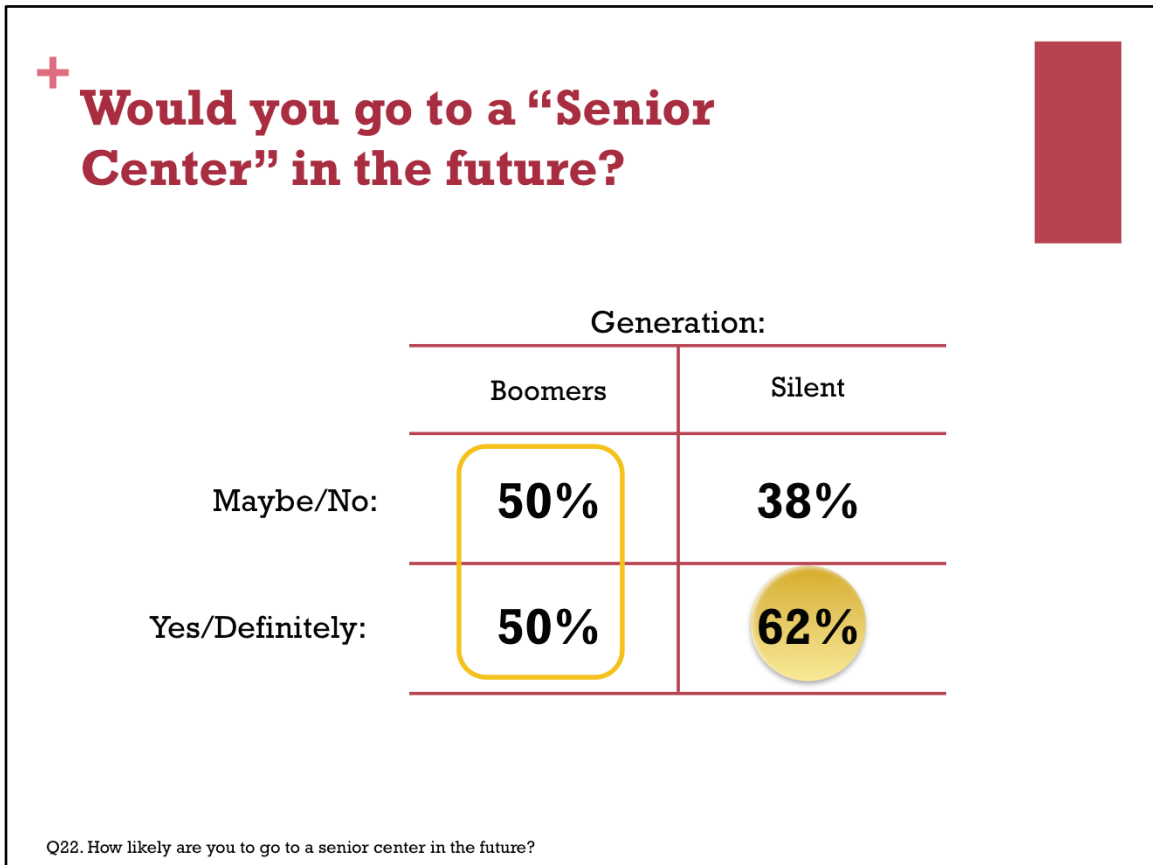
Respondents and Senior Centers

When asked about personally attending a Senior Center, younger respondents think they might go after age 65, while older respondents are more evenly split as to what age they would go.



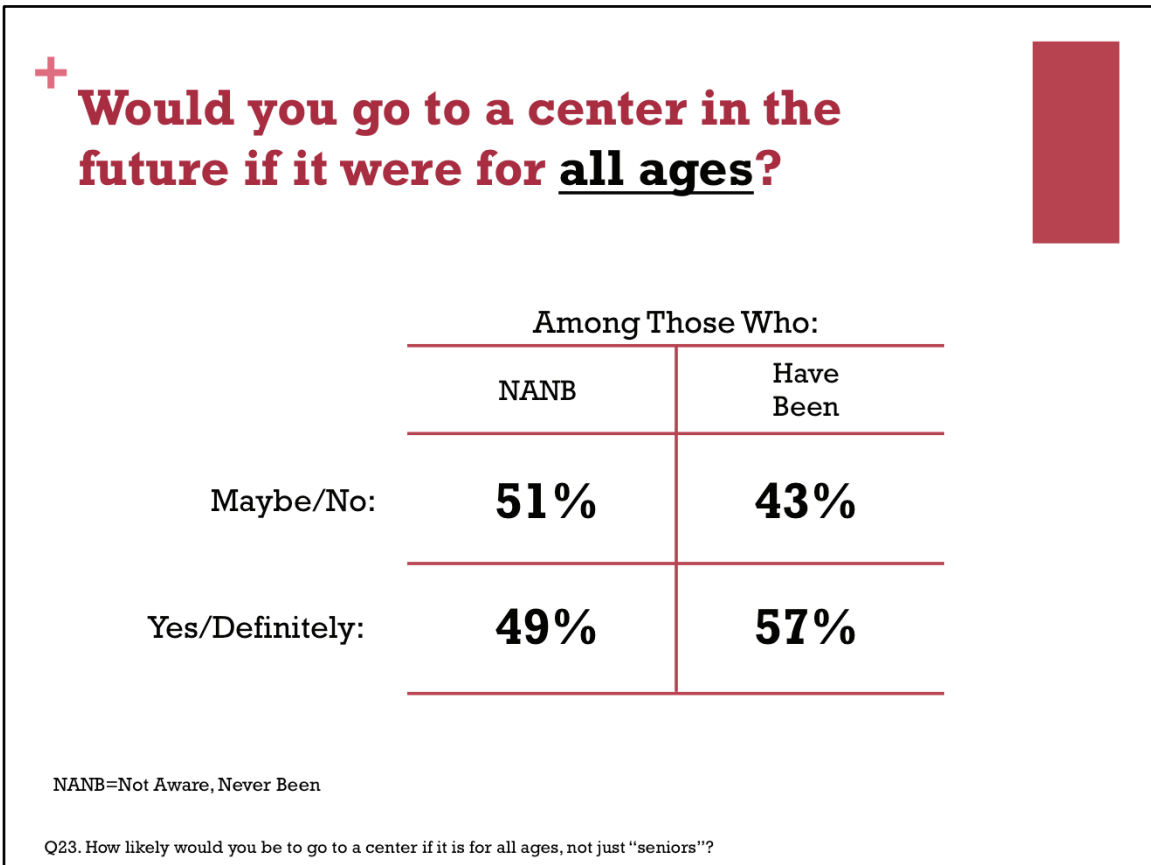
Respondents and Senior Centers

Thinking ahead, the potential of those who have not yet been to a Senior Center to go one in the future is much lower than to get returning visitors.



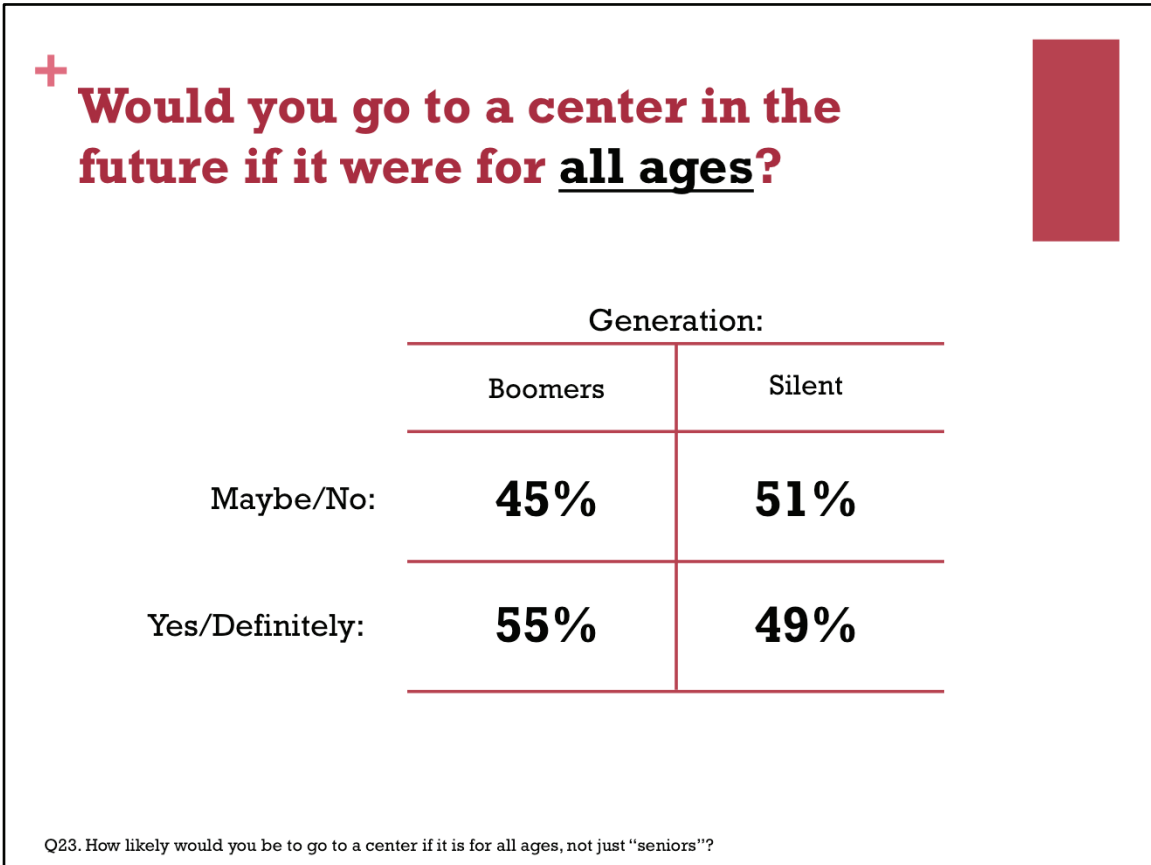
Respondents and Senior Centers

This lack of interest in going to a Senior Center in the future is stronger in Boomers.



Respondents and Senior Centers

The intent to visit in the future improves if the center was for all ages, not just seniors.



Respondents and Senior Centers

Even Boomers are slightly more interested if it is for all ages.

+ Comparing segments: the name is an obstacle to Boomers and Never-Beens

In the future, would you:

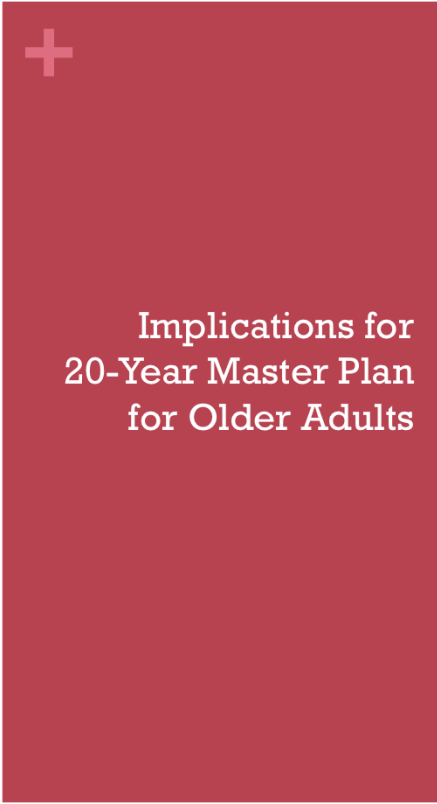
Yes/ Definitely	NANB	Been	Boomers	Silent
Go to Senior Center	36%	70%	50%	62%
Go to all-ages center	49%	57%	55%	49%
Difference	+13	-13	+5	-13

NANB=Not Aware, Never Been

Respondents and Senior Centers

Comparing segments, the name is keeping people away. On the surface, it appears, too, than making it for “all ages” instead of only for “seniors” would drive away current visitors and the older generations.

However, we believe the name should be broad enough to attract those who have never been or are younger, and the programming and services available do the job of communicating that this is for older adults in Howard County.



Implications for
20-Year Master Plan
for Older Adults

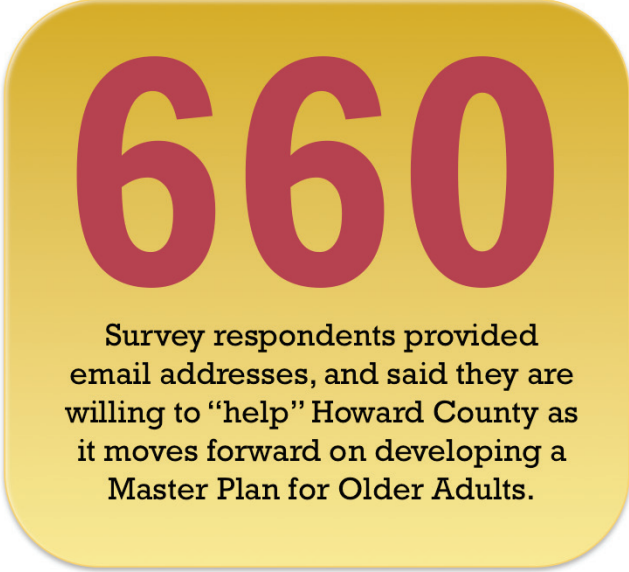
- Howard County needs to determine if Senior Centers need to serve all seniors in the county, or only those who “need” the services.
- It is possible to increase usage of Senior Centers through changing the name and services.
- But equally true, it is possible to limit usage to only those most in need by not changing the name and limiting the services.
- Taking “senior” out of the name will attract non-users and Boomers, and as long as programming is clearly for older adults, silent/current users will likely be attracted and/or stay, and those under 50 won’t be interested.

Respondents and Senior Centers

The overall purpose of this study was to gain insights on how current older adult residents of Howard County view their life, what and where they participate in activities and how different resources and facilities fit into their lives today and into the future.

We learned many things that have been applied to the Master Plan project, not the least of which is that Howard County has an engaged, educated and involved group of older adults that are ready to be “activated” to make Howard County an even better place to live, work, play and grow older at any age.

+ One last PHENOMENAL result:



660

Survey respondents provided email addresses, and said they are willing to “help” Howard County as it moves forward on developing a Master Plan for Older Adults.

That’s 360 who have been to a Senior Center, and 300 who have never been in one.

The Future

At the end of the survey respondents were asked if they would provide an email address so they could contribute in future surveys and conversations about the future of Howard County. Typically we see 20-30 percent accepting such an offer. The fact that over half of the 1,200 respondents agreed to stay involved speaks volumes to the level of engagement of older adults in Howard County.

