

# Summary Report of Findings from the Lyons Community Conversation January 25, 2016



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# Acknowledgements

The Boulder County Area Agency on Aging gratefully acknowledges the contribution of 54 Lyons area residents who participated in the Community Conversation. We rely on and appreciate their willingness to share their wisdom and their insights to guide us as we envision the future of aging well in Lyons. Our appreciation is also extended to the Lyons Planning Committee which planned and directed the successful event on January 25, 2016. The Team includes: Annie Mannering, Coco Gordon, Anne Berman, Ruth Wilson, Rebekah Van Sweden, and Keith Carr. Finally, we are grateful to the individuals and organizations that volunteered or donated food, space, funding, or entertainment for the event:

Lyons Community Church  
Andrea Marshall  
Cheri Hoffer  
Calista Morrill  
Debbie Tabor  
Jani and Zeke Little  
The Fork  
St. Vrain Market  
Lyons Community Foundation

## Methodology

In assessing the effectiveness and availability of human services, there's nothing more powerful than talking with and listening to those who are being served. This community conversation was based on similar conversations conducted across Boulder County in 2014, as part of the update of the Age Well Boulder County Strategic Plan ([www.AlleAgeWell.com](http://www.AlleAgeWell.com))

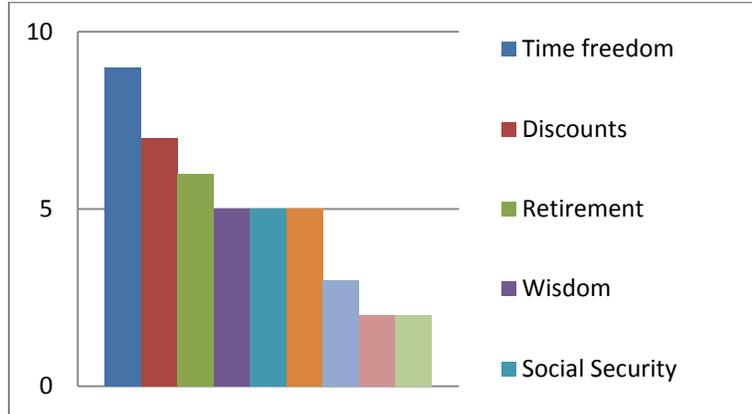
The discussion with Lyons area residents was carried out through a structured but comfortable and informal conversation. Participants were invited through personal invitations, flyers, newspaper articles, and word of mouth. In addition to the group discussion notes, each participant was asked to complete a written response form, allowing them to add to the session record with a greater degree of anonymity. It's important to note that the results to the discussion questions reflect the comments from 54 participants, while the results from the response forms reflect the 36 response forms that were submitted. Furthermore, approximately 10 participants did not reside in Boulder County.

## Reliability

It's important to understand that the qualitative research represented through this Community Conversation results does not represent the responses of a statistically valid random sample of Lyons' population of older adults. Nevertheless, the findings can be said to be a valid representation of those older adults who engaged in the discussions and whose interests, stories, and lives are reflected in the results. These discussions produce findings about attitudes and beliefs that are reliable and may be assumed to be held by the broader Lyons population.

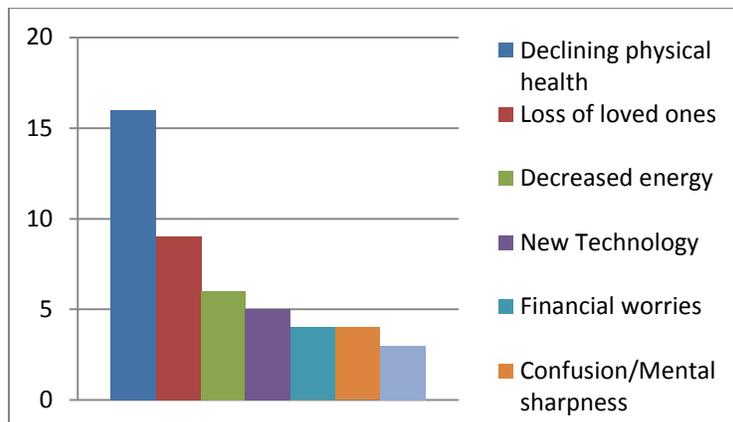
# Findings

## What's Better About Your Life as You Age?



The most frequently mentioned responses to the question about influences on aging well focused on finances and time freedom. Those responses spoke of having access to senior discounts, Social Security benefits and low-cost health care and of the joys the freedom that comes with retirement – having time to spend as they wish, less structure, and fewer responsibilities. Closely following were responses focused on having wisdom and experience gained through a long life and being able to connect with others.

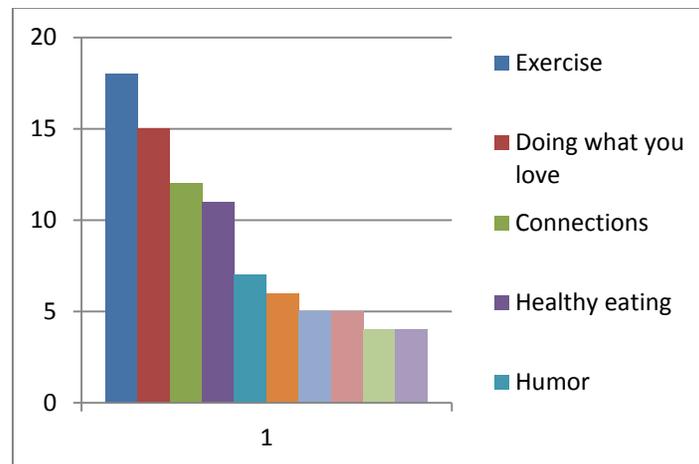
## What Makes Aging More Difficult?



By a large measure, participants in the Community Conversation reported the physical aspects of aging as the most difficult. It's apparent from the comments that most troubling for respondents is the loss of physical health and ability. Comments about health also dealt with items such as decreased energy and stamina and difficulties with balance.

The emotional impacts from loss of friends and loved ones generated the second-most number of mentions among participants. Additionally, participants reported struggling to keep up with technology and concerns about financial resources and maintaining mental sharpness.

## What Helps People Age Well?

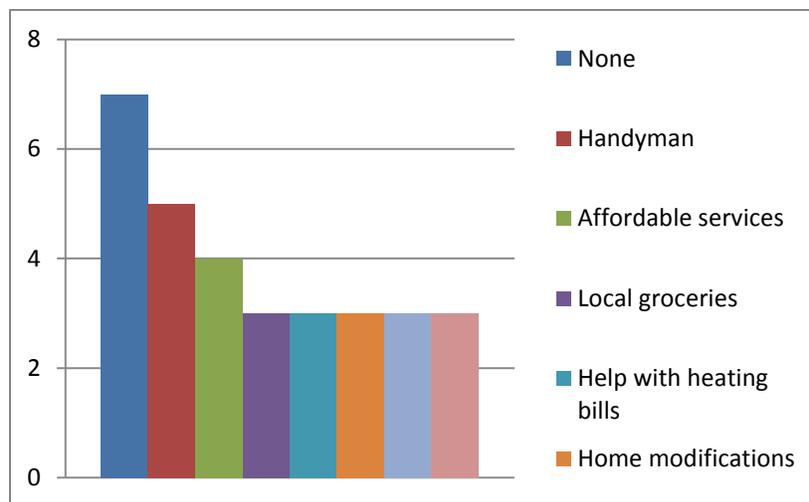


In considering the influences on aging well, the focus of participants' comments was on exercise. Half of participants commented on the importance of regular exercise to their ability to age well. 41% of participants noted that staying active doing activities of interest (music, travel, gardening, square dancing, singing, etc.) was also key to their ability to age well. Maintaining connections with friends and their community was also a key priority. Some indicated that they would like there to be an advisory body to make recommendations about senior issues to Town staff.

Many spoke about the need for nutritious, affordable food at a local grocery store while others mentioned that having a sense of humor was crucial.

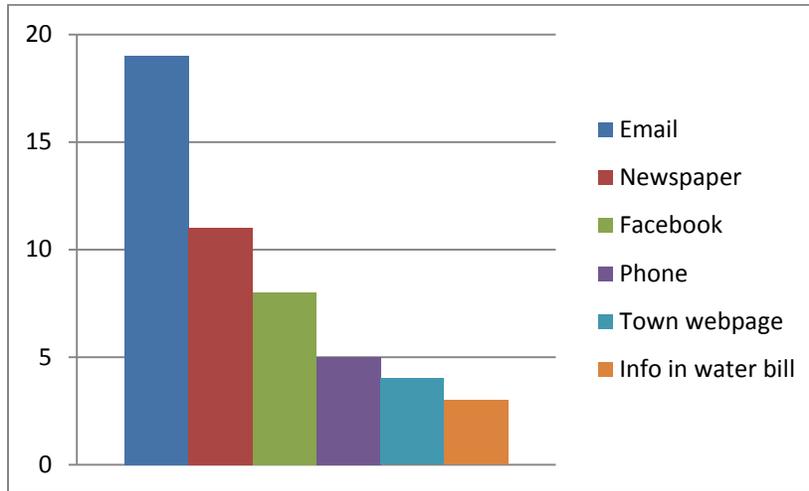
Others talked about services or support they don't currently have, but which they believe would help them age well, including a barter system to facilitate seniors supporting one another, consistent and frequent bus service, and in-home services such as handyman, snow removal, and yard work. And several noted that the Walt Self Center is currently under-utilized and could potentially become a vibrant venue for seniors to use for more than just meals.

## What Supports Are Needed to Stay at Home?



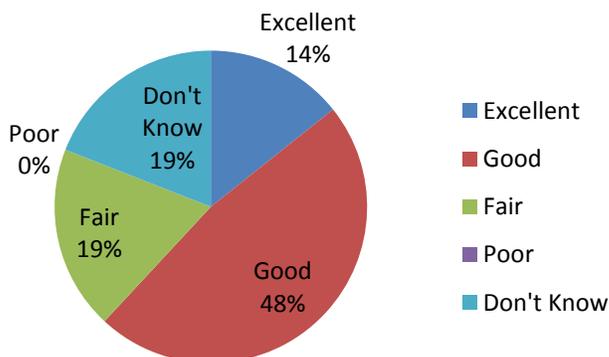
The majority of participants said they do not currently need any supports or services to stay at home, but nearly all recognized that that is likely to change as they get older. Many participants reported that they would like to have a list of reliable contractors and service providers who provide discounts to older adults, reporting needing help with home modifications, snow removal, medication management, and home health care. A group of others expressed concern paying for heating bills and generally having adequate finances to support a basic quality of life.

## What is the Best Way to Communicate Information?

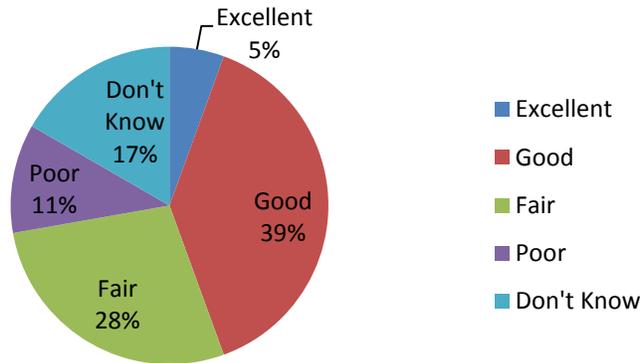


Overwhelmingly, participants reported that e-mail is their preferred method of communication. The various Lyons Facebook pages also have a loyal following of folks who learn about local happenings from posts. Also key to communicating information are the local newspapers and especially LaVerne Johnson’s column in the local paper. Others expressed the desire for telephone communication and information posted on the Town webpage.

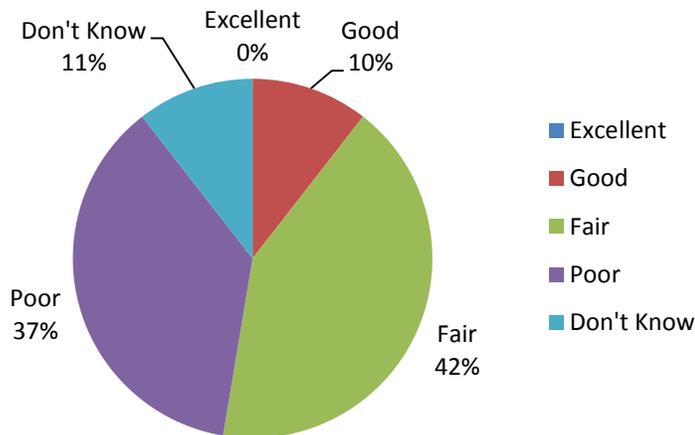
## Rating of availability of information about resources for older adults?



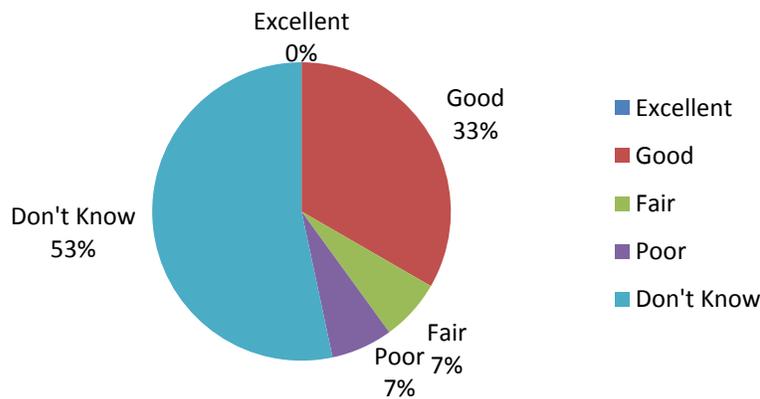
## Ease of getting to the places you/they usually have to visit?



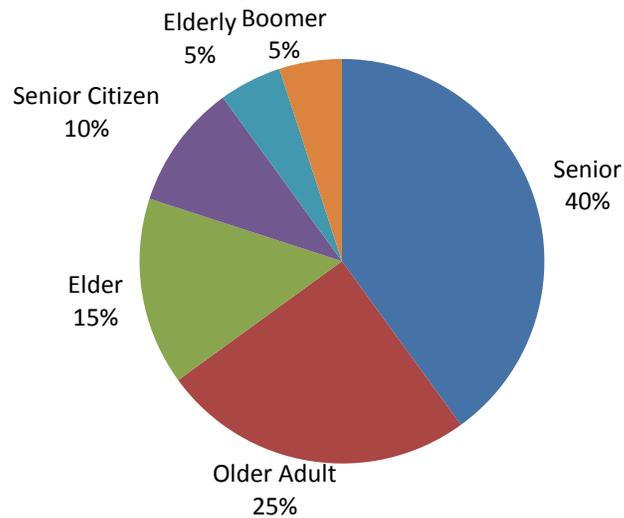
## Rating of advocacy for affordable/quality housing for older adults?



## Responsiveness to crimes against older adults?

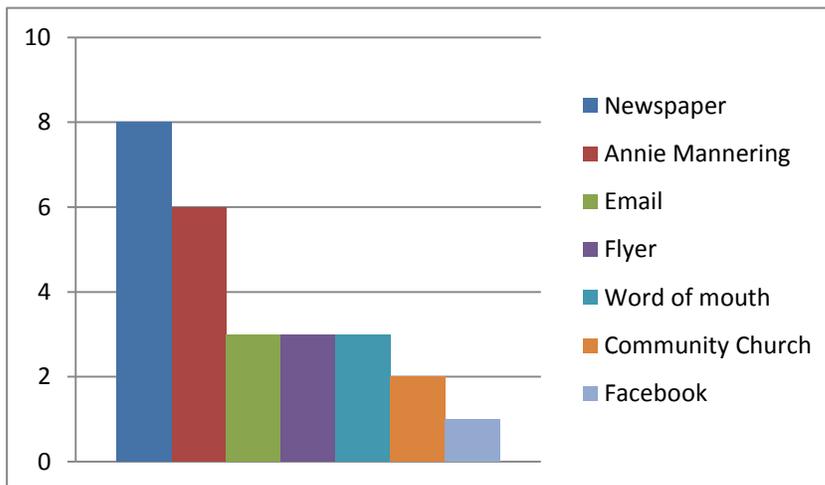


## What is Your Preferred Term for Older Adults?



Seniors! Overwhelmingly, participants preferred the term “seniors” over any other. A few other acceptable options are “older adults” and “elders”.

## How Did People Hear about the Event?



The majority of participants learned about the event through newspaper articles or from Annie Mannering. Still others received an email, saw a flyer around town, or heard about it from a friend.

## **Event Feedback:**

Great event!

Very informative.

Good meeting.

Good Job! Bigger venue next time with more outreach in outlying areas.

Great program – great people. Thank you so much for caring!

Good job.

Best publicized event ever!