



June 2024

# AGE-FRIENDLY CORTE MADERA COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT



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## AGE-FRIENDLY COMMITTEE

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## Mission and History of Age-Friendly Corte Madera

**Mission:** Age-Friendly Corte Madera (AFCM) is dedicated to creating physical and social environments that support and enhance healthy and active aging, and an optimal quality of life for our older residents.

**History:** AFCM began with an initial meeting on April 1, 2014, and is dedicated to making recommendations and fostering improvements to enhance livability for all ages. We then garnered seven volunteers, including the two Corte Madera representatives to the Marin County Commission on Aging. On July 15, 2014, the Town Council unanimously endorsed AFCM. AFCM was welcomed to the WHO Network on May 19, 2015, and joined the AARP Livable Cities in 2017. AFCM submitted a five-year program evaluation in 2020

### Age-Friendly Activities:

- The annual celebration of Nonagenarians and Centenarians
- Speaker Series
- 2018-2020 Age-Friendly Intergenerational Center
  - Offering watercolor painting, makerspace, chair yoga, easy aerobics, reading to preschoolers, and card games. (now offered by Age-Friendly Solutions)
  - Over 300 members.
- Senior Help Days with the Lions and Rotary Club
- Cycling Without Age, Walking Map Project
- Partner to Twin City Villages



# Survey Highlights

## Participant Demographics

- 44% of respondents were 75+ years
- 35% were 60 - 69 years
- 21% were 70 - 74 years
- 60% identified as female
- 28% are employed
- 93% of respondents own their residence
- 23% of respondents live alone
- 64% live with a partner or spouse
- 11% reported living with grown children and/or grandchildren

Significantly more....

women

%

Significantly more...

%

men

	women	%	%	men
live alone		32	12	
would consider shared housing and want to learn more about it		13	6	
have physical limitations preventing them from using public transit		10	5	
report they would move in with family if unable to care for themselves				would rely on friends/family to help them if unable to care for themselves
usually eat alone		30	13	
		31	45	rarely eat alone
take more recreation classes		40	20	
say it is very important to feel socially included in community				say it is not important to feel socially included in community
		76	84	are more sure that they will be able to afford their housing as they age
would participate in an emergency preparedness class				have not registered with Alert Marin

## **Key Findings From each Domain of Age-Friendly Livability**

*Housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages, and life stages.*

- 95% - Want to remain in their current home as they age
- 53% - Will need home modifications to have an accessible home
- Medical issues, home maintenance/yard work, and finances are the major priorities in determining where to live
- 82% - feel their neighborhood is safe

*Transportation such as safe sidewalks and safe crossable streets, dedicated bicycle lanes, and public transit closer to neighborhoods.*

- <1 % - use public transit and only "sometimes"
- 62% - currently need transportation assistance for medical appointments and grocery shopping
- 63% - plan to get rides from family or friends or on-demand companies in the future

*Community Health/Caregiving: Assisting those who need information on local resources, home health supports, and services for basic needs due to injury, surgery, illness, medical or mental limitations.*

- 34% - rate their physical health as poor, fair, or good
- 9% - have difficulty with everyday physical activities
- 25% - cognitive difficulties are beginning to impact their daily life
- 12% - are caregivers, 74% of caregivers have no respite help or support team
- 43% - intend on staying home with paid assistance if they can't care for themselves (We have a large caregiver shortage in Marin.)

*Emergency preparedness and response should be a community priority with older adults and people with disabilities who are at the highest risk of death.*

- 53% - feel only somewhat or not prepared
- 64% - would participate in a preparedness class for older adults
- 17% - don't know their NRG groups or leaders
- 27% - have not registered with Alert Marin

*Communication and Information as information needs to be shared in a variety of methods for accessibility.*

- 95% - use mobile phones so text or voicemail communications are a good method to reach the majority of residents
- 86% - use a computer
- 37% - would like technology support or training

*Respect, social inclusion, and available, affordable, fun social activities for all ages while building generational bridges.*

- 22% - not aware of available recreation department classes
- Many are still working to pay expenses and cannot make classes during the day. Consider night offerings.
- Some are caregiving and can't participate without relief at home or without a program for their mobile loved ones.
- Volunteer driver program could help those who need help getting to a congregant meal, grocery shopping, medical appointments or social activities.
- Classes are too costly for some residents' budgets. They need subsidies or some free classes.

## **General Background:**

in 2023, Marin County was declared one of the fastest-aging counties in the US.<sup>1</sup> Since 2014 the Marin County population 60 years and older has increased by 44 percent.<sup>2</sup> We expect an additional 30 percent increase in this demographic in the next 10 years.<sup>3</sup> As the longevity movement expands, more people are living to 100. Since 2000, Corte Madera had a 375 percent increase in the population of residents 85 years and older.<sup>4</sup> Since 2014 when Age-Friendly Corte Madera conducted the first survey, the town had a 35 percent increase in the portion of the population 60 years and older.<sup>4</sup>

The Age-Friendly Corte Madera initiative and the data in this report present a great opportunity for the town to plan and respond to the changes in a population that is living longer and healthier.

## **Assessment Methodology**

The data for this report was collected in a nonrandomized paper and online survey of the Corte Madera population 60 years and older. 2641 surveys with stamped return envelopes were mailed to residents giving two months to complete them. The surveys and promotion materials offered a link to an online version.

693 complete paper surveys were mailed back, and 113 surveys were completed online. 806 total surveys collected = a 31% return rate

*This survey has a 99% confidence level with a 4% margin of error. The ideal sample size for this was 745. The return rate was higher.*

**Note: This survey data is representative of the full population of residents 60 years and older.**

## Living Well and Aging in Corte Madera

Corte Madera's older adults place a high importance on aging in place.

92 percent said Corte Madera is a good place to live. 38 percent believe that medical issues and 30 percent said that finances

could prevent them from remaining in Corte Madera. 75 percent said that it is very important to be able to continue living in their present home. 53 percent of homes will need home modifications or alterations to be accessible and safe.



"This is the **finest** community with enlightened leaders and many amenities. I have lived in many."

"We like Corte Madera a lot; the flashing lights for street crossing has been a huge help. We know that Corte Madera has its heart in the right place."

"This is a **terrific** community in which I have ever lived.

"Keep up the good work."

"I truly appreciate the effort to provide what we need to continue with our best lives here."



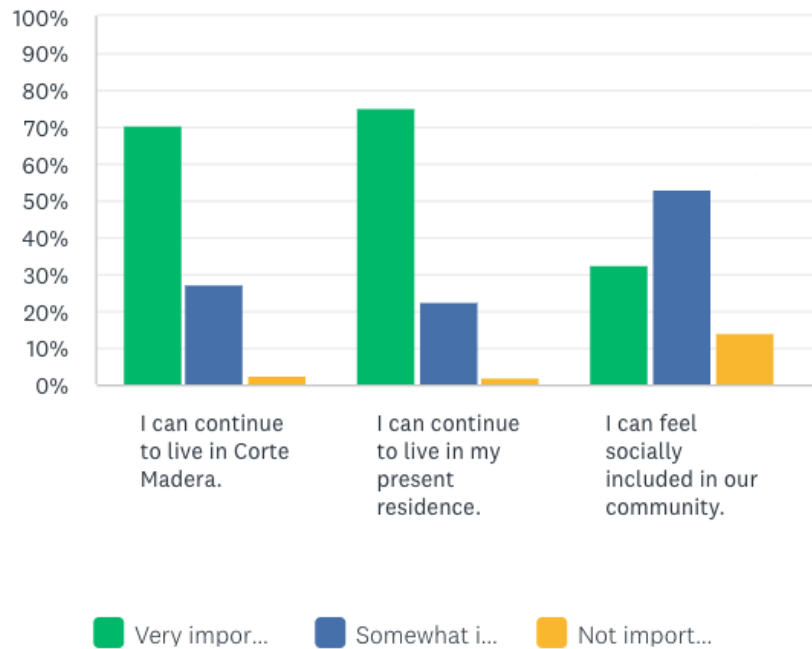


Concert at Menke Park

Photo Credit: Patti Stoliar

## How important are the following as you age?

How important are the following as you age?





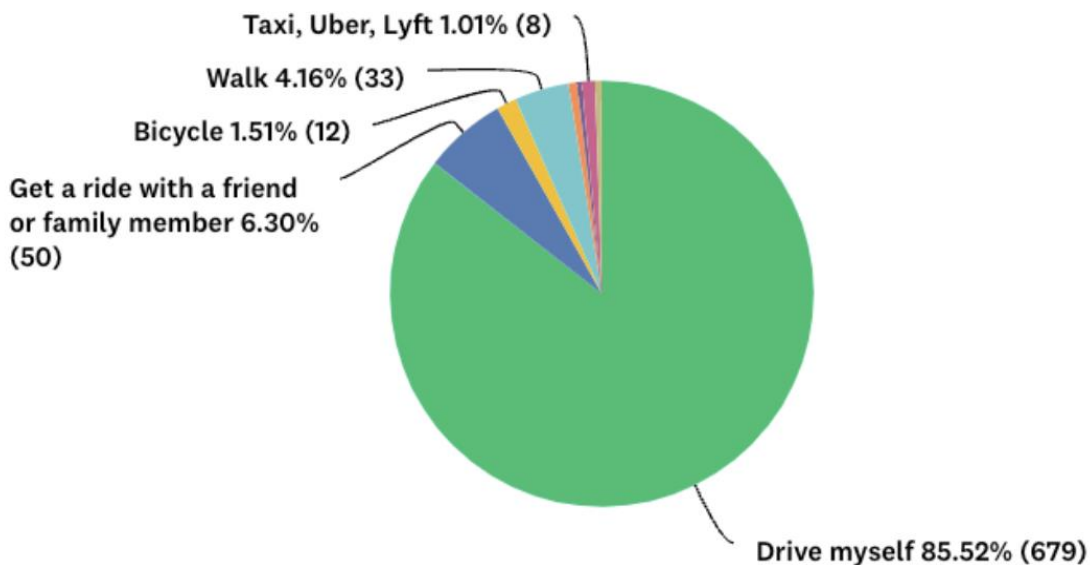
## Transportation and Mobility

*Access to transportation is necessary to age in place.*

*Depending on age, health, and mobility, travel needs will vary considerably among the older adult population. Some are interested and will be able to drive for many years beyond age 60, and others will need to rely on public transit or other community transport for much of their older years.*

### Driving and Public Transport

Many Corte Madera residents describe having an active lifestyle and most of them (86 percent) say driving is their main mode of transportation.



Once someone is 80 years or older they are more likely to get a ride with a friend or family member (11 percent more likely at 85 years and 52 percent more likely at 90 years). Few use public transportation (87 percent answered rarely or never) since it doesn't go to their destinations, has an inconvenient schedule, or is too far from their home. Home renters are more likely to use public transportation.

Meanwhile, 10 percent of 60+ residents say they need transportation assistance for medical appointments, shopping, errands, and social visits. Men and women report needing the most transit assistance with grocery shopping.

### Walking and Safety

*Walking is an ideal exercise for seniors. Safe and accessible sidewalks offer seniors an important way to stay healthy and connected to the community.*

Many Corte Madera residents walk for pleasure but even though 15 percent of the 60+ population don't drive, they don't feel safe on the sidewalks or at some crossings. 64 percent said that safe sidewalks would make the Town more accessible to them as would more outdoor public seating (31 percent). Also, handrails on steps are significant for those with mobility challenges, the elderly, or individuals recovering from injuries, as it helps them confidently navigate stairs. 39 percent would like to see more handrails in public spaces and businesses.

Walking, biking, and riding an electric scooter (e-scooter) are healthy, environmentally friendly transportation options, however, if residents don't feel safe walking, they will be reluctant to walk for exercise or errands. Fears about safety are prevalent. Many individuals commented about the e-bikes asking for regulation and pedestrian-bike path division. Public Works departments are increasingly considering pedestrians, cyclists, and scooter riders when making infrastructure improvements.

“E-bikes on bike paths and streets create a dangerous situation.”

“Regulate e-bikes...I frequently see 10-15 year olds riding fast and not obeying traffic laws. “



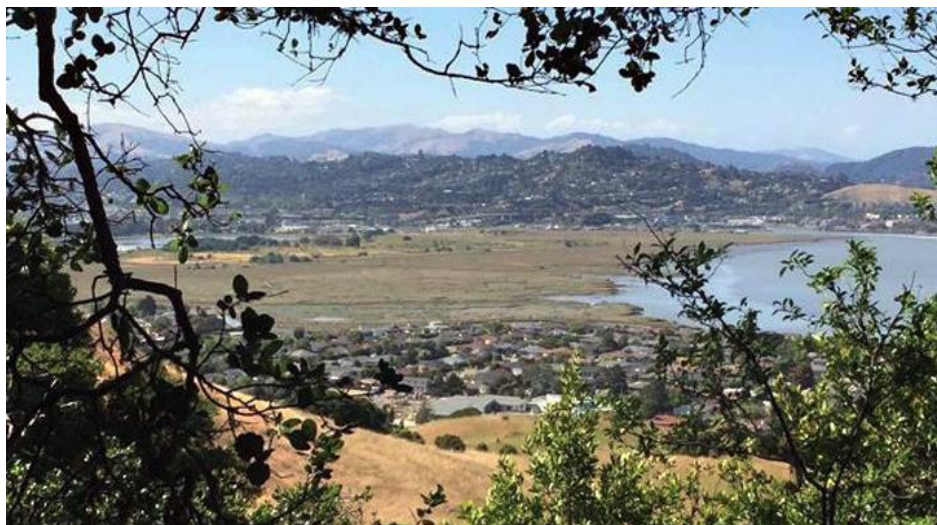
## Housing

*Older people have diverse housing preferences and needs, and an age-friendly city should have a spectrum of housing options available to meet the needs of older adults. Services and supports can help older adults age in place if they wish to do so.*

Most (95 percent) of Corte Madera’s residents want to remain in their homes as they age, but one-third are unsure whether they can afford it. Most feel that their neighborhood is safe. 77 percent live with 1- 4 other people in their homes.

### Home Maintenance and Repair

Looking ahead, one-third of residents aren’t sure they can continue to maintain their homes and yards. As many older adults realize that their pensions, social security, and other savings or income are stretched as utility and other costs of living rise, they find that maintenance can be too expensive. Deferred maintenance leads to accidents, unsafe



conditions, poor fire mitigation, and fewer home hardening activities.

Many need to be connected to the home modification

and hardening subsidy programs available in the County and through local service clubs.



## Community Health and Caregiving

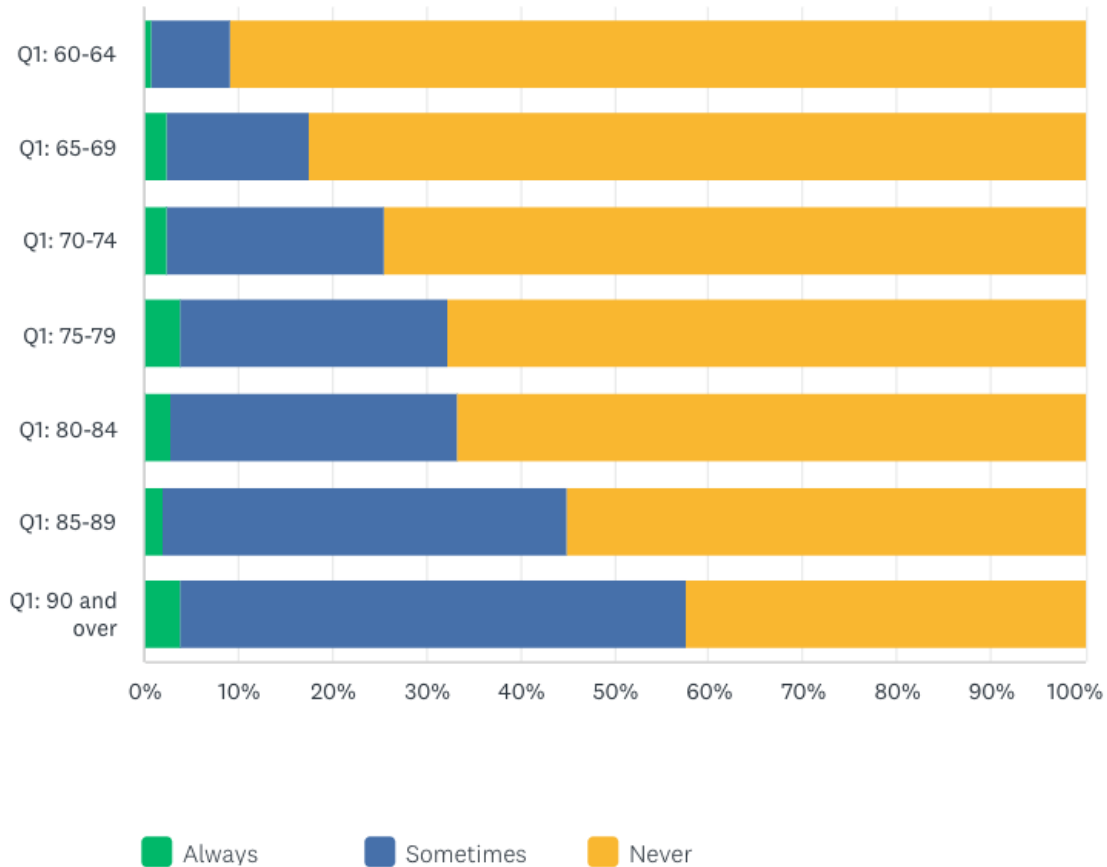
*Health is a key indicator that determines an individual's ability to stay independent and active in the community across the lifespan.*

Two-thirds of older adults rate their physical health as very good or excellent. Just 2 percent indicate that they are in poor health, and most are 90 years or older. 90 percent say they can mostly or completely carry out their everyday physical activities, but this declines significantly at age 75. Half of Marin residents over 85 are currently experiencing some form of dementia, and by 2020, the county is expected to see a



49% increase in residents with Alzheimer's disease—not including other related conditions. Most adults with memory loss are cared for by a family member. Corte Madera residents indicate that families may be facing the same challenges. 12 percent of residents are presently caregiving for another person in their home. This is the same as the national average per population. Three-fourths of people caregiving for a loved one do not have a support system or any form of respite.

Do you believe that your cognitive/mental abilities (concentration, memory, thinking, focus) are beginning to impact your daily life?

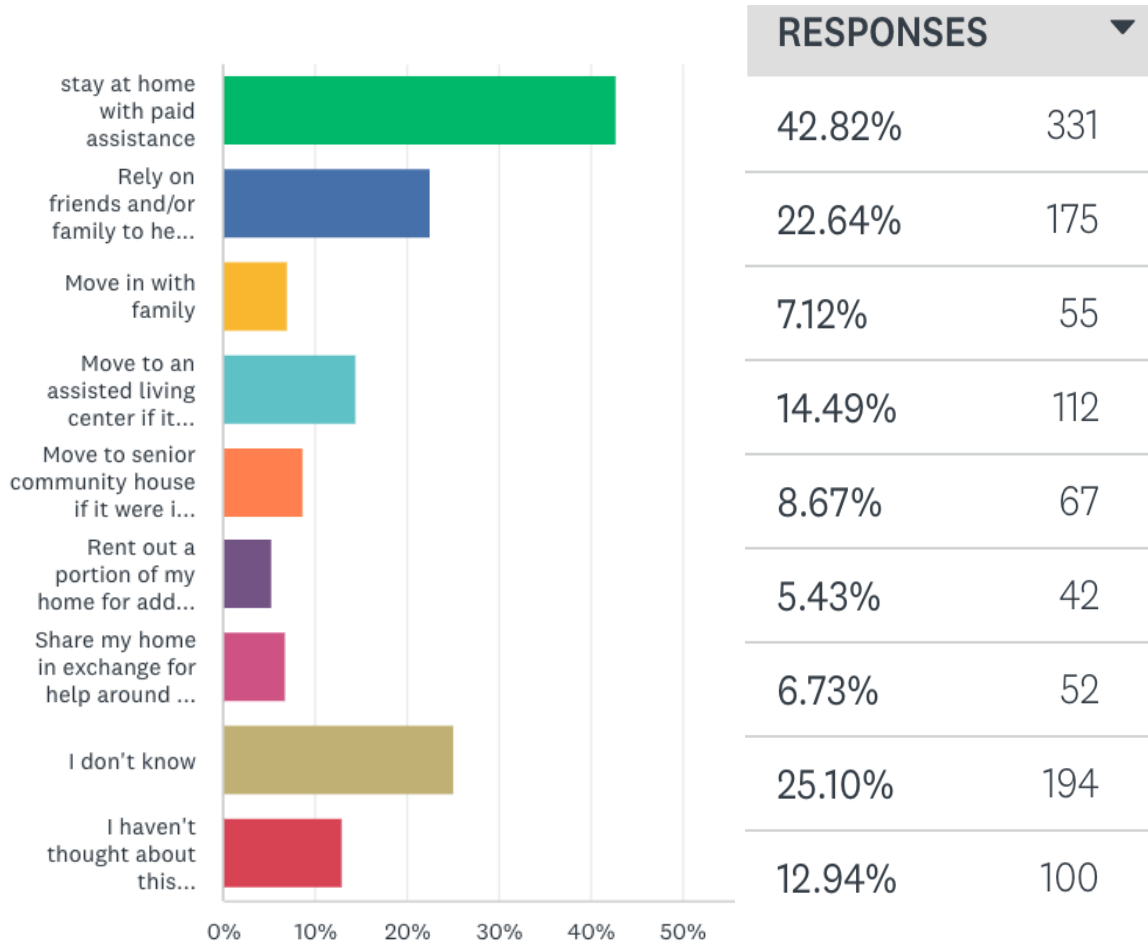


### Connection and Access to Community Supports

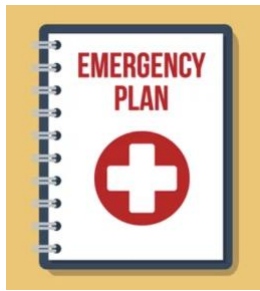
As most older adults want to stay in their homes as they age, the Town must find a way to increase resident and family awareness of resources and connect them to home providers, services, and long-term care opportunities before they have a crisis, or health and mobility issues. Some of the oldest residents reported not having access to healthy foods. They should be connected to meals-on-wheels. Not knowing where to go could contribute added stress to an already difficult situation.

## Long-term care planning

When asked what their plans were if they were unable to care for themselves:



Residents want to stay home, and for many, this means outside caregivers will need to be brought in, but Marin has a shortage of available caregivers due to the high cost of living here. Relying on friends and family doesn't always work if they live out of Marin or are facing their chronic conditions. Noting that 25 percent of residents don't know what they would do in a crisis, the town needs to offer education and guided conversations on long-term planning. People who are in crisis at home alone are at risk of losing their housing and are more susceptible to negative health outcomes.



## Emergency Planning

*Older adults need to equip themselves with the essential knowledge and steps to navigate emergencies confidently. Emergencies can be particularly challenging for those with hearing and vision impairment and health problems.*

*Preparedness is about understanding your unique needs and potential challenges and taking actionable steps.*

- 47 percent feel prepared for an emergency, 48 percent only feel somewhat prepared
- 53% feel somewhat or not prepared for an emergency
- Approximately 60 percent of each age group up to age 89 are interested in emergency preparedness classes.
- 80 years and over are less aware of their neighborhood response groups and leaders
- 80 years and over have significantly lower enrollment in Alert Marin
- 80 years and over want help putting together a preparedness kit



## Communication and Information

*For older adults to age in place and stay connected to their community, they need access to timely information about services and community events. Since communication is becoming increasingly electronic, age-friendly cities need to ensure that information is accessible in a variety of mediums that will reach older adults in their daily lives. Residents want to know what channels their towns use to share community information.*



While 94 percent of older adults have a smartphone and 86 percent have a computer, as people age many find using these devices more challenging and less responsive due to changes in their physical or cognitive abilities. E.g. Screens are not responsive to dry skin, vision impairments, and rapidly changing software. Computers can be more challenging to navigate.

- 9 percent of residents are uncomfortable using the internet or don't use it. Most of these residents are 75 years and older.
- Half of the residents 75 years and older are interested in technology support and training.
- Less than half of all age groups receive the Corte Madera Chronicles. Significantly more women than men use it as an information source. More women use email, text, and social media as an information source.
- Those 75 years and older use phone messages, television, and newspapers significantly more than the other age groups to receive information.

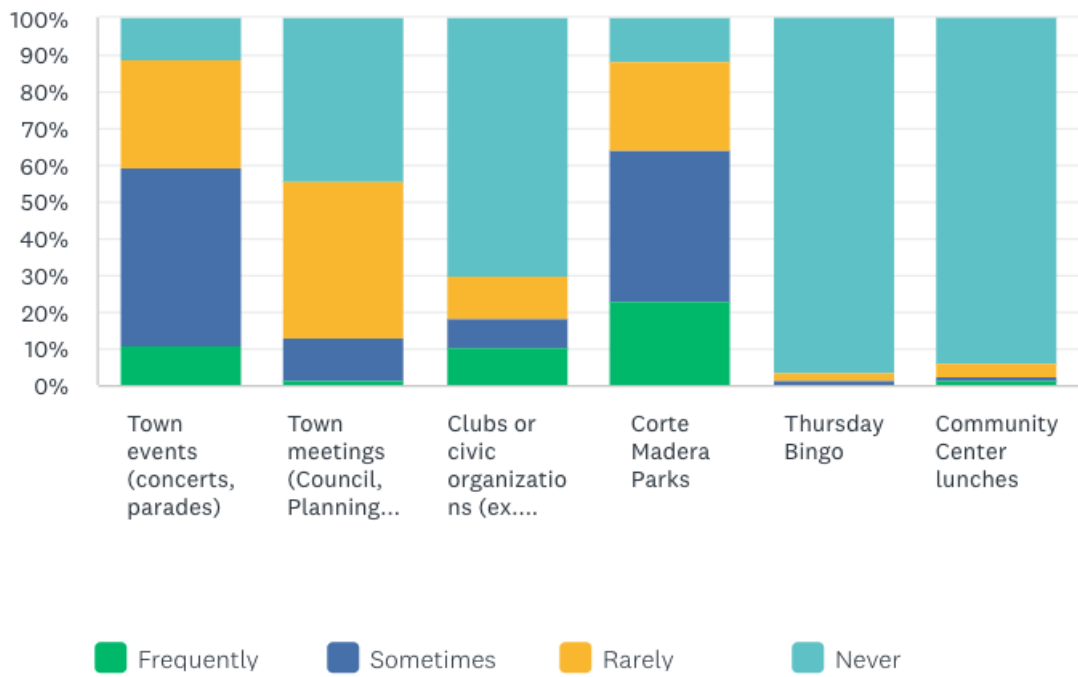


### Civic Participation and Employment

*Many older adults stay in the workforce, primarily for financial reasons. Volunteer opportunities, civic engagement, and employment are important activities that improve our overall quality of life as we age.*

- 28 percent of older adults are employed
- 39 percent are volunteers

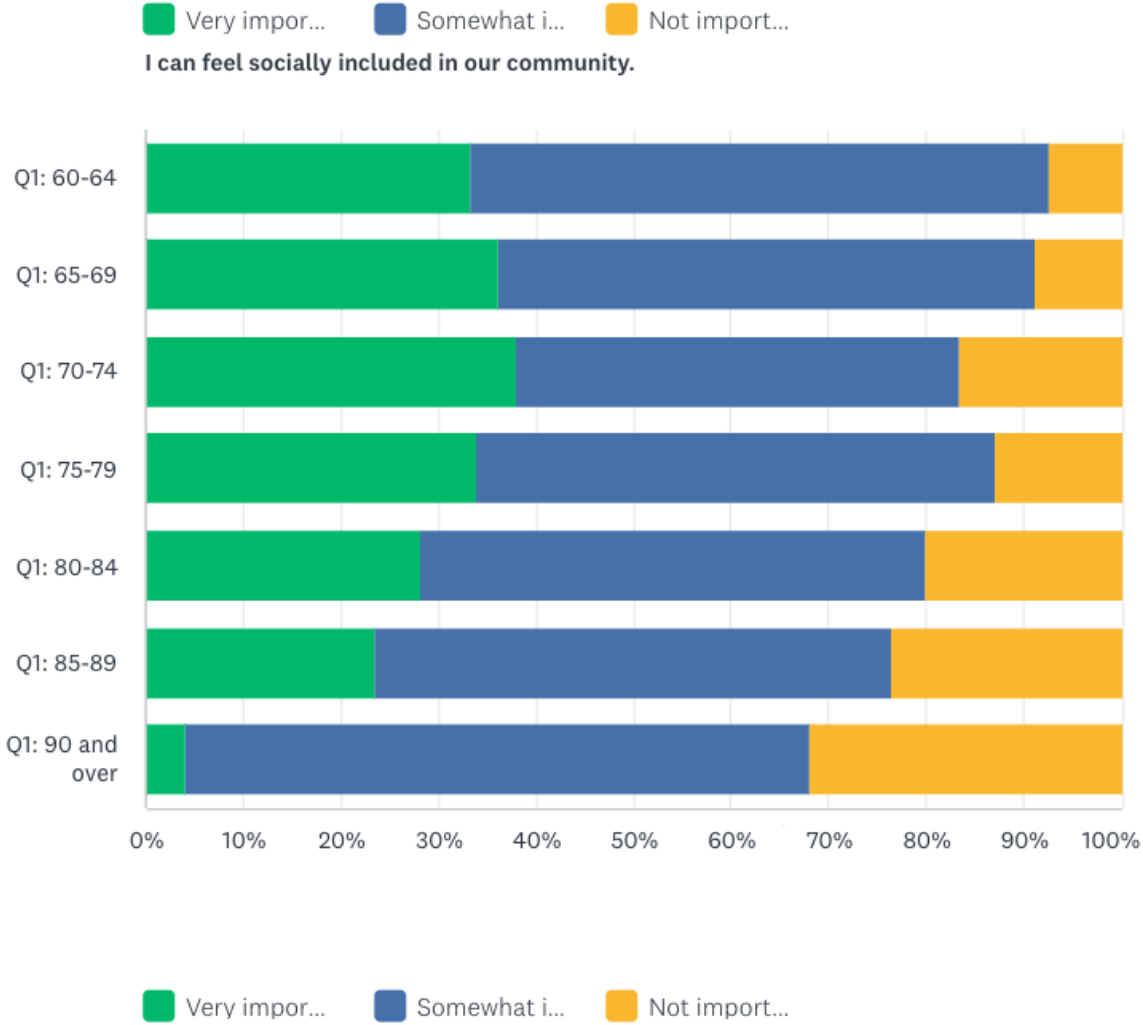
I attend, visit, or participate in...





## Social Participation and Intergenerational Connection

*Participating in cultural, social, spiritual, and leisure activities in the community or spending time with friends and family often becomes more difficult as people age, yet it is critical for an individual's health and well-being. Our connection to others enables us to survive and thrive. As we age, many of us are alone more often than when we were younger, leaving us vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness—and related health problems such as cognitive decline.*



## Replace with 2024 reader board photo



- 75 percent of older residents say they hardly ever feel isolated
- 24 percent are somewhat or often isolated
- 42 percent responded that they sometimes or usually ate meals alone
- 85-89-year-olds eat alone at a significantly higher frequency than those younger or older.

Eating alone can have negative effects on the health and well-being of older adults and is associated with poor nutrition, isolation, and depression. People who dine with others regularly eat healthier and report a better quality of life.<sup>5</sup>

- 25 percent responded that they sometimes or often feel isolated. Isolation is significantly higher with adults in the 85-89 range.



About one-fourth of Corte Madera older adults participate in local social or community events. 64% go to the Corte Madera Parks sometimes or frequently. Corte Madera adults participate in a variety of activities and have different levels of interest in certain activities.



# Ranking of activities that appeal to residents

## 1) Walking Groups



## 2) Game Play



## 3) Artistic Activities



## 4) Musical Activities



## Cooking Classes



## 5) Dramatic Play Readings



## Activities suggested in the comments

the larger text represents the most popular responses



### New Public Spaces

87% were interested in new public spaces

#### Intergenerational Center

Offering a new place for people of all ages to gather for various programs, events, and casual connection enables social connection, and bridge-building between the generations.

Residents will be able to stay active, be creative, learn new skills, and follow their interests. 66% were interested in a drop-in multi-purpose location.



“Corte Madera has a good age-friendly/senior program. Please continue to improve it.”

“We need a senior center!

“Miss room at C.M. Rec. Center for seniors, free classes for painting etc. crafts. All classes are too costly for us.”

“Day care center for elders by the hour, lunches available 3 x per week.”

### **Other Popular Respondent Space Ideas:**

Outdoor exercise equipment - 75 percent interested

Indoor exercise equipment - 73 percent interested

Bocce ball court - 54 percent interested

Indoor and additional pickleball courts - 34 comments for this

Outdoor Swimming Pool

Intergenerational Community Garden

Technology center for seniors (scan, print, tech assistance)

(Need a photo of park or the new building for center)



## More Activity Suggestions:

Hybrid classes	Creative writing
Balance Fitness	Travel Lectures
Needle skills	Community Science projects
Photography	Bus Trips to theater, sports
Floral Design	Medicare assistance
Over 70 soccer	A Corte Madera singing group
Seated cardio	Neighborhood clean-ups,
Card games	A website for "seniors helping seniors"

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*See the Age-Friendly Corte Madera Five-Year (2015-2020) Evaluation here*  
*(Need link)*