



AGE FRIENDLY
RIDGEWOOD

2019 Age Friendly Ridgewood Initiative

Age Friendly Ridgewood

The Age Friendly Ridgewood initiative promotes awareness of the needs of adults aged 55 years and over living in Ridgewood, NJ. In late 2015, Age Friendly Ridgewood conducted a needs assessment survey of residents aged 55 and older to identify areas of concern for this segment of the population. Findings were used to develop programs and services to address identified needs. In May-July 2019, Age Friendly Ridgewood conducted a follow-up survey with older adult residents to assess the perceived impact of their initiative as well as learn about what has improved and what needs remain in the community. Age Friendly Ridgewood received 384 responses to the 2019 survey. The Center for Research and Evaluation on Education and Human Services at Montclair State University was retained to analyze and summarize the survey data. This summary highlights the key findings of this survey.

Survey Respondents: Key Facts

75%

Ridgewood resident for 20 years or more

66%

Married

72%

Female

41%

Aged 65-74 years*

*Average age of respondents was 70 years old.

Key Findings: Perceived Overall Impacts

Overall, respondents in 2019 were familiar with the Age Friendly Ridgewood initiative and indicated that it had made the community better. They also felt their concerns were being addressed.

73%

Familiar with Age Friendly Ridgewood to some extent (i.e., "very little", "somewhat", "quite a bit", or "a great deal").

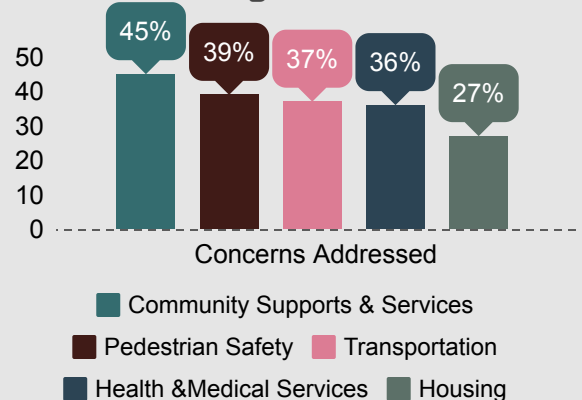
70%

Feel Age Friendly Ridgewood has made the community "better" or "much better".

45%

Feel that concerns about community supports and services were addressed.

Concerns Addressed by Age Friendly Ridgewood



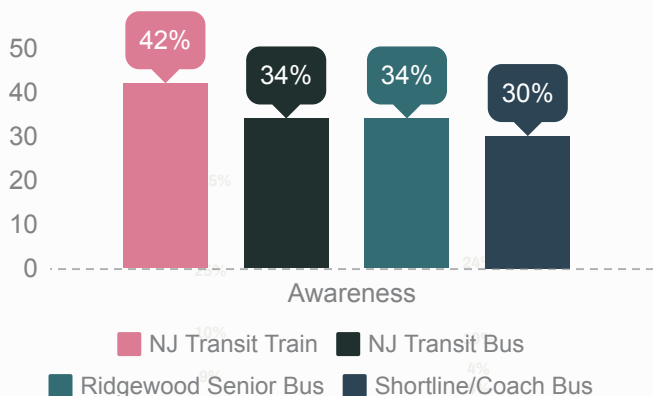
"I feel that the organization advocates for seniors and provides relevant information and entertainment for our subculture."

- Survey Respondent

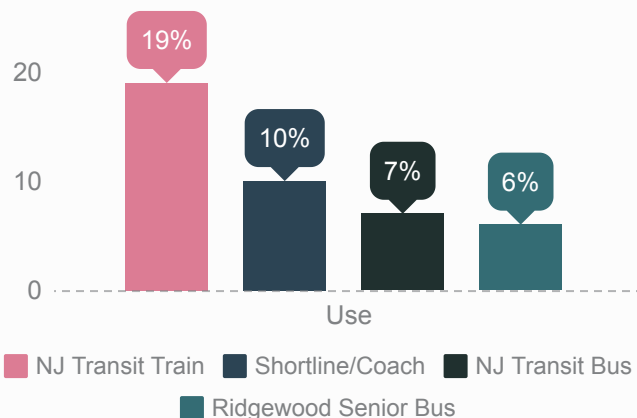
Key Findings: Transportation & Pedestrian Safety

As a whole, a need remains to increase awareness of public transportation options for seniors in Ridgewood. Many respondents had "very little" knowledge or "none at all" about the various transportation options available to seniors. For those who reported using public transportation, the NJ Transit train was the most frequently used mode of transportation.

Public Transportation: Awareness
("Quite a bit" or "A great deal")



Public Transportation: Use
("Quite a bit" or "A great deal")



45% of respondents perceived pedestrian safety in Ridgewood's Central Business District as "very unsafe" or "unsafe". It is worth noting that many respondents identified Franklin Avenue and Ridgewood Avenue as being particularly unsafe for pedestrians.



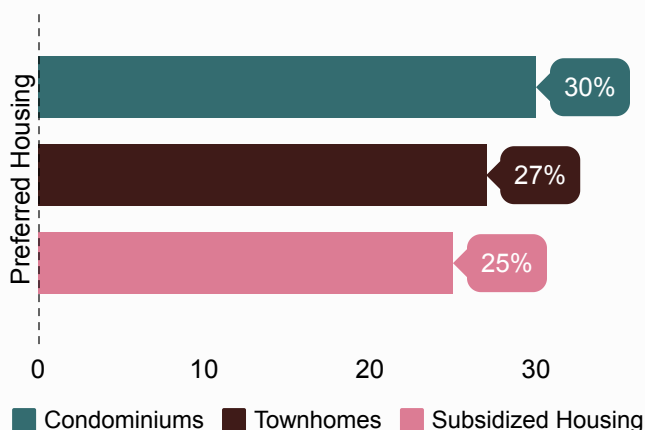
34% of respondents have never used ride share services. Of those who have never used ride shares, many reported that they simply did not have a need for the service. Other reasons noted for not using ride share services included no smartphone access, lack of awareness, safety concerns and not knowing how to use them.

"I am not very aware of these ride share programs. I would be very interested in learning more about them. I would be especially interested in evening/night because I try to avoid night driving."
- Survey Respondent

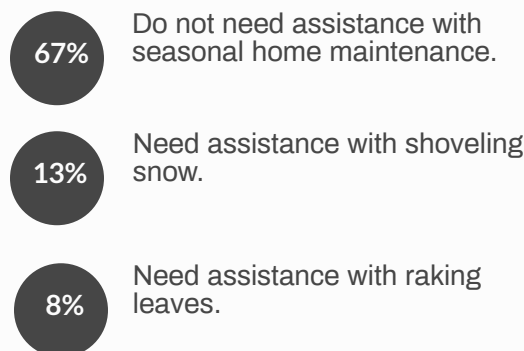
Key Findings: Housing

Respondents noted that availability of affordable housing options and high property taxes would influence their ability to remain in Ridgewood. In terms of housing preferences, respondents would prefer low maintenance housing such as condominiums and townhomes, and subsidized housing.

Most Frequently Preferred Housing Types



Home Maintenance Needs



"I feel that there should be a variety of choices so that residents of any wealth or lack thereof can find affordable housing." -Survey Respondent

Recommendations

From the data collected through the resident survey, the following recommendations emerged to help inform ongoing and future efforts of the Age Friendly Ridgewood initiative.

- 1 Communication:** Consider expanding the dissemination of information on resources and events to more widely reach members of the community. Senior residents would prefer to receive information from Age Friendly Ridgewood in the following ways: Age Friendly Ridgewood's monthly newsletter, Village e-notices, postings at the Ridgewood Public Library, Age Friendly Ridgewood's website, and the Village calendar.
- 2 Topics of Interest for Speaker Events:** Respondents indicated interest in a number of topics for future speaker events. The three most frequently mentioned were housing options (35%), wellness (34%), and technology (27%).
- 3 Pedestrian Safety:** To increase pedestrian safety in Ridgewood, respondents suggested enforcing existing laws; offering pedestrian and driver awareness education; increasing traffic control during rush hours and weekends; installing flashing streetlights at pedestrian crosswalks; adding and clarifying signage; increasing street and traffic lighting; and making infrastructure improvements (e.g., road conditions, sidewalks, crosswalks, speed bumps).
- 4 Age Friendly Ridgewood Initiative:** Consider focusing on increasing public awareness of Age Friendly Ridgewood initiatives. More than a quarter (27%) of survey respondents reported having no familiarity with Age Friendly Ridgewood at all. Respondents suggested increasing communication and publicity efforts. In addition, consider offering a more diverse range of activities and events to engage residents aged 55-70 years and more active seniors of the community.
- 5 Housing:** Affordable housing and high property taxes are issues of concern for older adults in Ridgewood. Respondents would like Age Friendly Ridgewood to focus on affordability initiatives that would increase housing options for this population.
- 6 Transportation:** Consider making information available to older Ridgewood residents about transportation options. This information may include routes, schedules, and costs, as well as how to purchase tickets. In addition, providing information on how to use ride share services and programs may also help increase use of these programs



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