



# AGING IN CITIES

## SURVEY *2017 REPORT*

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Commissioned by **welltower**<sup>™</sup>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**& KEY FINDINGS**



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**“The results of the 2017 Aging in Cities survey challenge preconceived ideas about aging and show that most contemporary city dwellers want to age in their communities. With the rapid growth of the aging of the population, these preferences are going to shape urban living for years to come. We must find ways to adapt city life to these new demands of residents of big cities, where current options are limited.”**

*- Thomas J. DeRosa*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

**Aging demographics and urbanization are two of the most important social trends facing the United States and the world’s developed countries. The 2017 Aging in Cities Survey was commissioned by Welltower, a leader in health care real estate infrastructure, to answer the question: What matters for adults of all ages living in large North American cities – and how do they see their living preferences changing for their 80+ year-old selves?**

People are living longer and healthier lives, and those in their 70s and 80s are the fastest growing segment of the population. The number of people age 65 and over will increase by 37 million or nearly 50 percent by 2040 in the U.S., and the number of 80-year-olds will represent 7 percent of the population compared to 4 percent in 2012, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

As cities grow, they are widely celebrated in our culture and media as economic engines, innovation clusters and public spaces and neighborhoods where a diverse mix of people come to live, work and play. The survey of 3,000 adults of all ages living in 10 large cities explores how these urbanites think about retirement and aging issues – both for themselves and for their own city. The results challenge pre-conceptions about aging and show the contemporary attitudes of city dwellers – identifying new demands and opportunities for people who want to age in cities, and how these attitudes will shape

urban living for the aging population in the years ahead.

Thomas J. DeRosa, CEO

### HOW THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED

*The research was commissioned by Welltower Inc. and conducted by APCO Insight, a global research group, from May 16th - June 1st, 2017. This survey was conducted online among an audience of 3,000 adult participants across 10 cities (300 each): Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Washington, D.C. The data was stratified by generation (Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers) in each city and weighted to key demographics representative of city residents.*

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We live in a vibrant urban area and have access to everything.

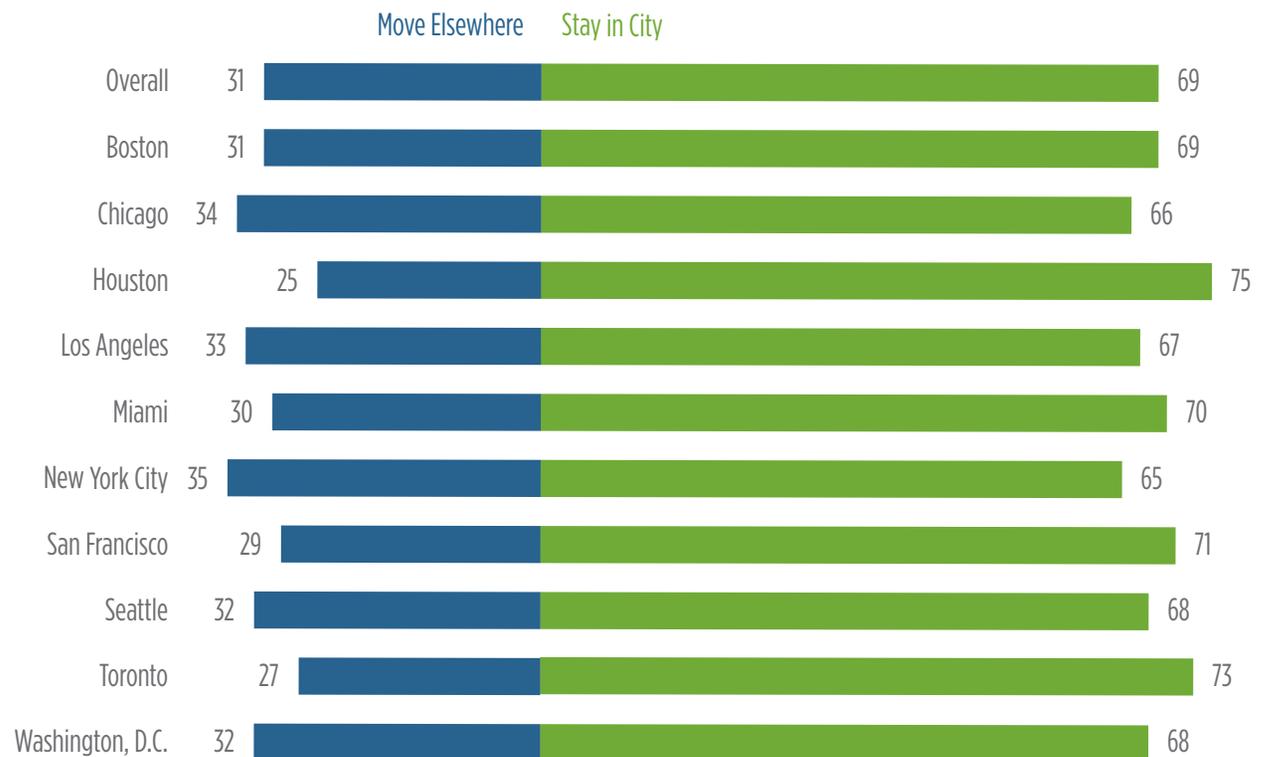
- Baby Boomer, San Francisco

”

## I. PEOPLE LIVING IN CITIES WANT TO AGE IN THEIR CITY

- Seven out of 10 city dwellers (and eight out of 10 Baby Boomers) want to live in their current city when they are 80+ years old
- City dwellers want the urban experience for their 80+ year-old selves – places to gather with friends, scenic areas, outdoor recreation and shopping, cultural experiences, farmers’ markets, etc.
- 84 percent want to be in a community with a diverse population, with “a mix of different age groups” as the top criterion
- 81 percent of city dwellers are open to living in an urban senior living community (first choice for one in five Baby Boomers)

### Most residents prefer to stay in their current city when they are 80+ years old



**Stay in city = combined:** Live in your current home, Move to another home in the neighborhood where you live now, Move to another neighborhood in/near the city where you live now.

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Health care is very important for elderly people [in the city] because they are the most likely to use it.

- Millennial, New York

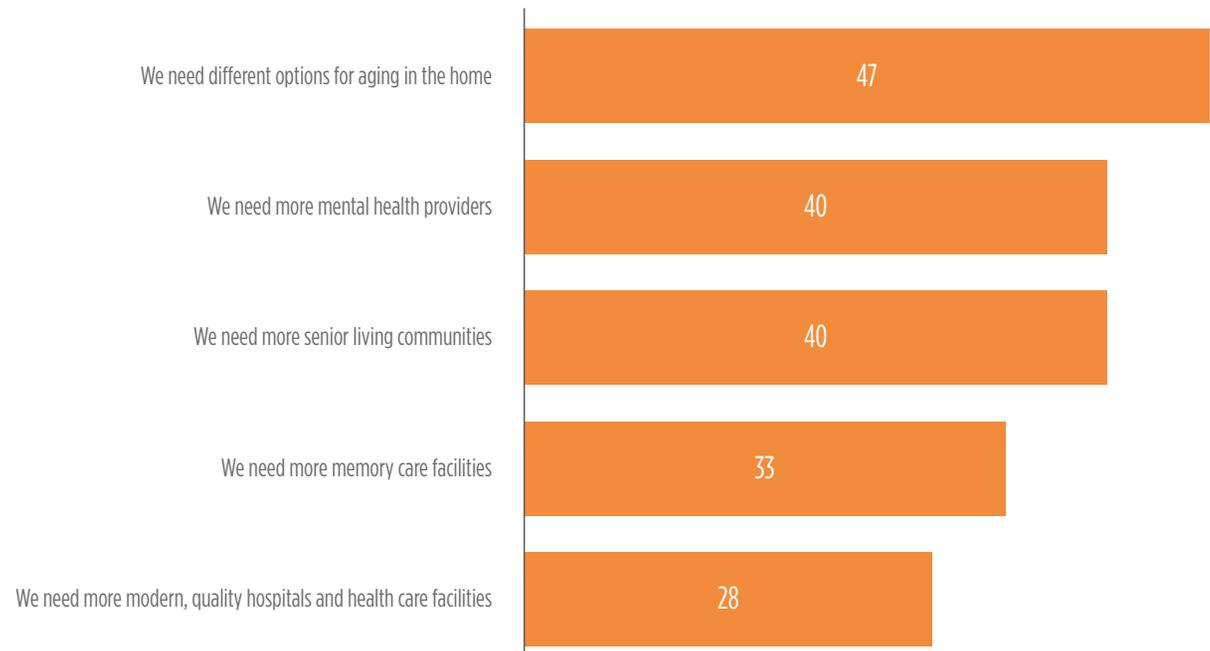
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## II. HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE IS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

- Access to high quality health care is **by far** the #1 priority when considering where they want to live at 80+
- Baby Boomers in cities rank high quality health care, public transportation, and proximity to family as their top three priorities right now
- City dwellers believe aging residents currently need more options for seniors housing, memory care and health care
- Mental health is a key concern, with two-thirds of survey respondents worried about having dementia when they are 80+
- City dwellers expect digital technologies to positively impact their 80+ year-old lives, but they will want to deal with health professionals primarily through in-person or at-home care

### City dwellers believe older residents in their city need more options

How do you feel about the options for aging residents where you currently live?





Being able to access friends and community is really important as you get older as well as shopping and health care, I think this would be much harder to do in a rural area.

- Generation X, Miami



### III. RELATIONSHIPS, MOBILITY AND PURPOSE

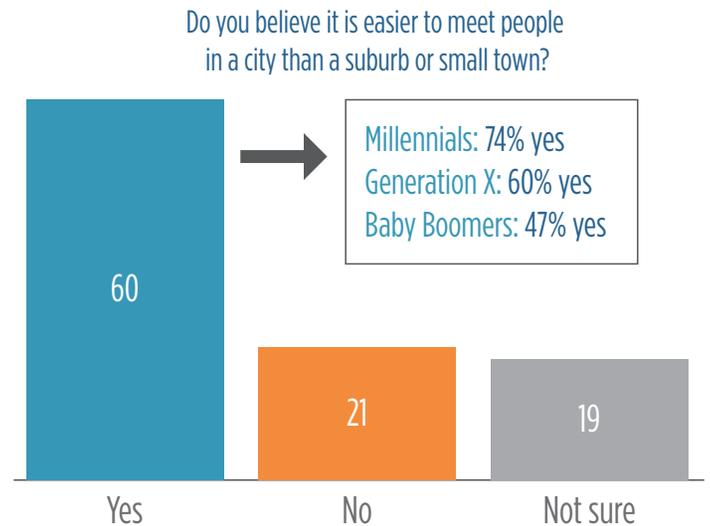
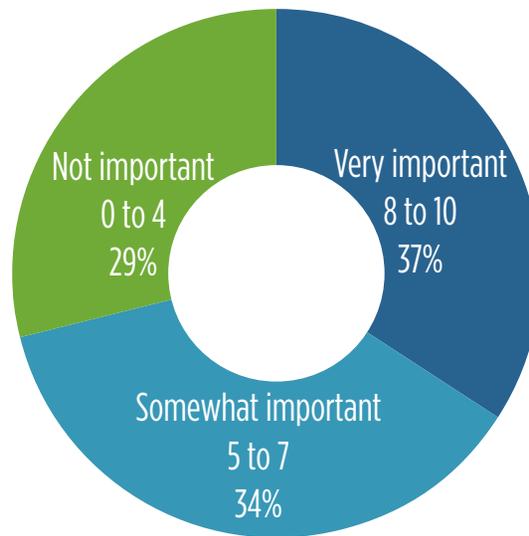
- Eight out of 10 city dwellers want to make new friends at age 80+, and nearly six in 10 want time for romance and to have an active sex life at that age
- Mobility is a huge issue for city dwellers - 84 percent list loss of mobility as a top concern for their 80+ years
- Social interaction is a huge opportunity for aging in cities - 60 percent of city dwellers

believe it's easier to meet people in a city, three times higher than other places

- 95 percent of city dwellers believe social media, video chatting, texting and other digital communications will bring them closer to people in their lives at age 80+
- One in five city dwellers expect to get purpose from full- or part-time work at age 80+

#### Meeting new people is important, and easier to do in a city than elsewhere

On a scale of 0-10, how big of a factor is meeting new people in your decision of where to live?





**Living in Washington, D.C., and participating in many public senior programs through DC Parks & Recreation, and all the other amenities, including great hospitals and doctors, I am not worried about access.**

*- Baby Boomer, Washington, D.C.*

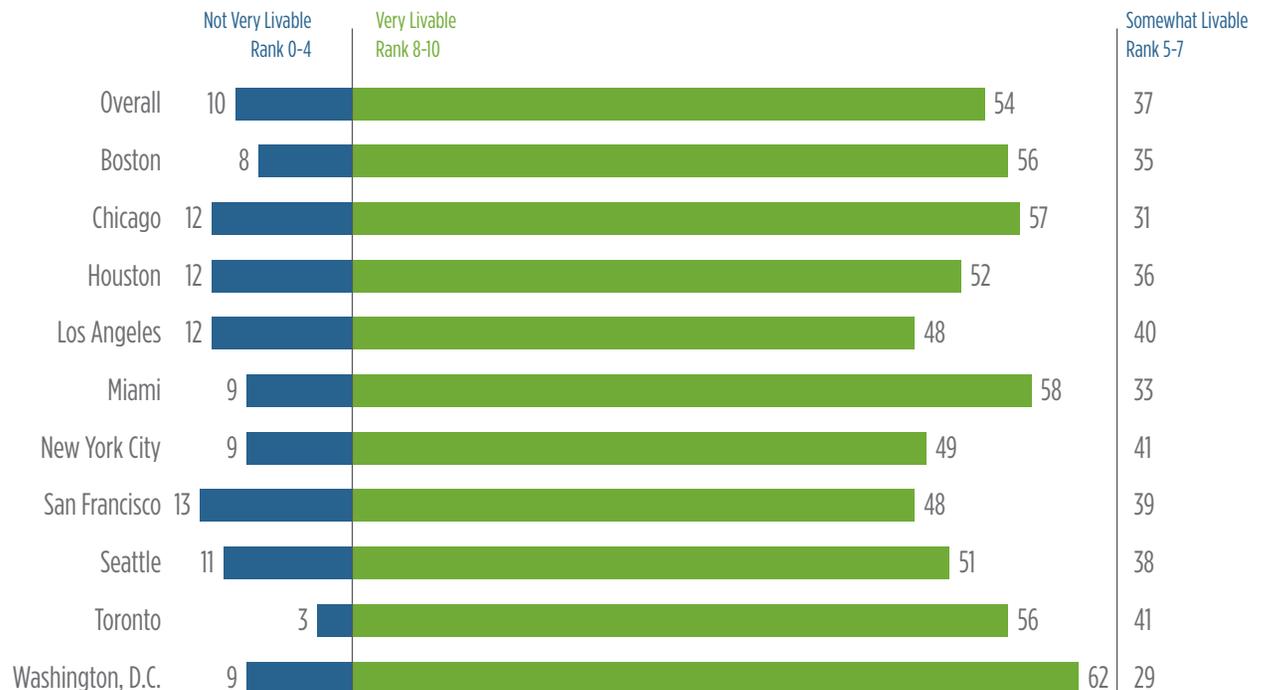


#### IV. LIVABILITY OF CITIES FOR AGING

- Strong majorities of city dwellers rate their cities as well-equipped for their 80+ selves, but cities do less well on specific factors
- Parks and public transportation rank highest, neighborhood safety ranks lowest – social programming and services are an area of opportunity to keep seniors engaged in the community
- City dwellers’ most important priorities for aging in cities are access to health care, places to gather with family, friends

- and grandchildren, and scenic walkways, waterfront or nature areas
- They also value mobility and their ability to get around in the city: transportation to events and activities is their number one priority for their 80+ years, followed by shopping within walking distance
- While 68 percent of city dwellers believe aging population growth will put pressure on cities, 60 percent agree it will create silver economy jobs and opportunities

#### Vast majority call their city livable for older residents



How livable is your city for people as they age? Please use a 0-10 scale where 0 means it is not livable at all, 5 it is average and 10 it is very livable for older residents.



CHAPTER 1:  
PEOPLE LIVING IN CITIES  

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WANT TO AGE IN THEIR CITY

The richness of city life appeals to all generations.



“

I really like everything about living in a big city.

– Millennial, Los Angeles

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## INTRODUCTION

People living in cities today love city life and see themselves living in their city for life. The Aging in Cities Survey challenges the notion of aging as a time to move to retirement communities in small towns and suburbs. This is true of all generations living in large cities, but especially of Baby Boomers, and a majority believe they will have the means to stay in their home or make other living arrangements in their city as they age.

The richness of city life – with its cultural, entertainment and outdoor recreation options, access to high quality health care, and opportunities to meet and interact with people of many different backgrounds – are attractions that will remain important for the vast majority of city dwellers as they envision their 80+ year-old selves.

### I. WHERE CITY DWELLERS SEE THEMSELVES AT AGE 80+

Most city dwellers living in the 10 largest cities say they want to stay in their city. The Aging in Cities Survey finds that seven out of 10 city dwellers (69%) want to stay in their current home or neighborhood, or move to a different neighborhood in the same city when they are 80+ years old. That is even more true of Baby Boomers – eight out of 10 Boomers (78%) are committed to staying in their current city.

In fact, 70 percent of people living in the 10 large cities today want to live in an urban area when they are 80+ years old, and 39 percent strongly agree. When asked more specifically about types of neighborhoods, 50 percent overall and 57 percent of Baby Boomers

(who are closer to or already in retirement) answered that they would want to live in an urban neighborhood or the heart of a large city at age 80+. By comparison, only 28 percent overall and only 22 percent of Boomers living in large cities today say they would want to live in a suburban community or rural area at that age.

Another 21 percent overall and the same number of Baby Boomers indicated a preference for towns with walkable downtowns, underscoring the appeals of neighborhood life.

From high quality health care, to proximity of friends and family, the city offers it all.

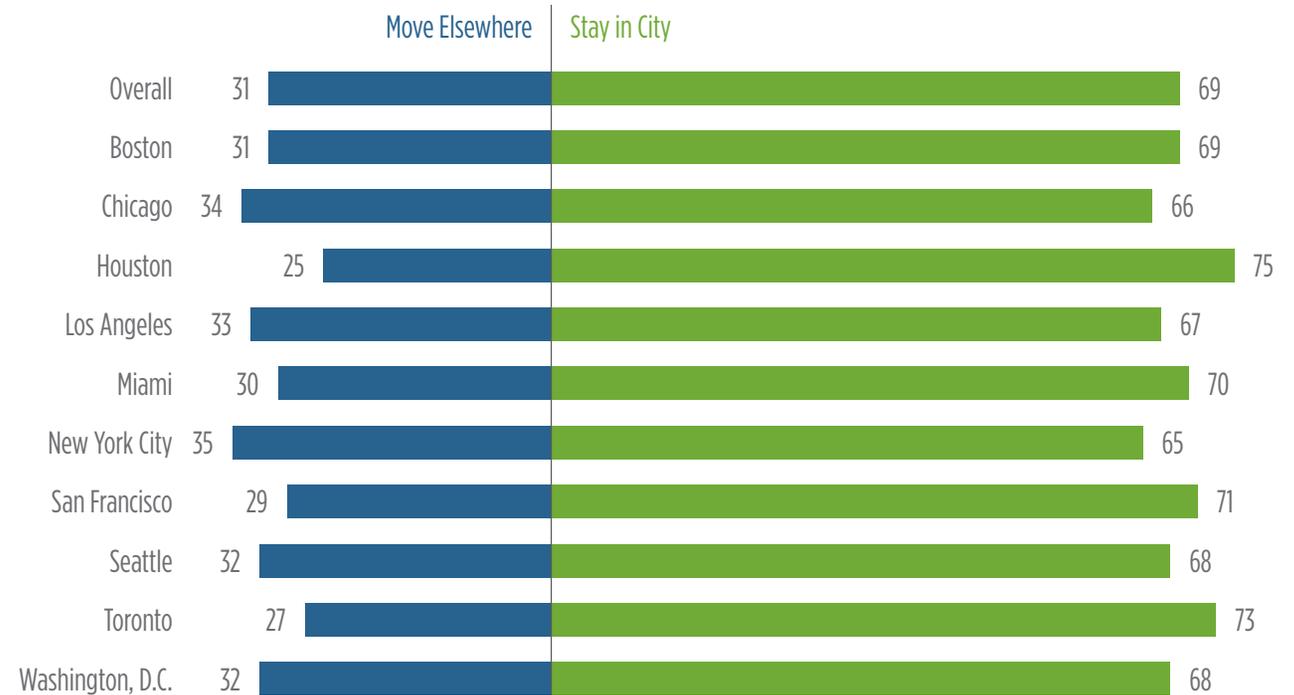


I am already aging in place and have found that working with people close to my age is something that comes naturally... It also allows for a lot of social interaction, which is quite healthy for anyone.

- Baby Boomer, Seattle

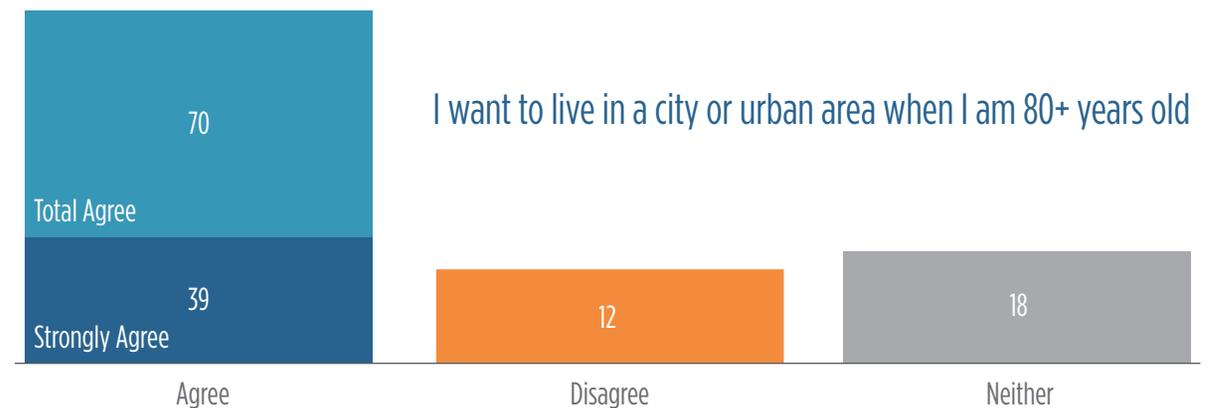


### Most residents prefer to stay in their current city when they are 80+ years old



**Stay in city = combined:** Live in your current home, Move to another home in the neighborhood where you live now, Move to another neighborhood in/near the city where you live now.

### City dwellers overwhelmingly want to stay in an urban area





[What gives me purpose is] visiting the grandkids, tending my garden, enjoying my slow pace of life with my wife of 45+ years.

- Baby Boomer, New York

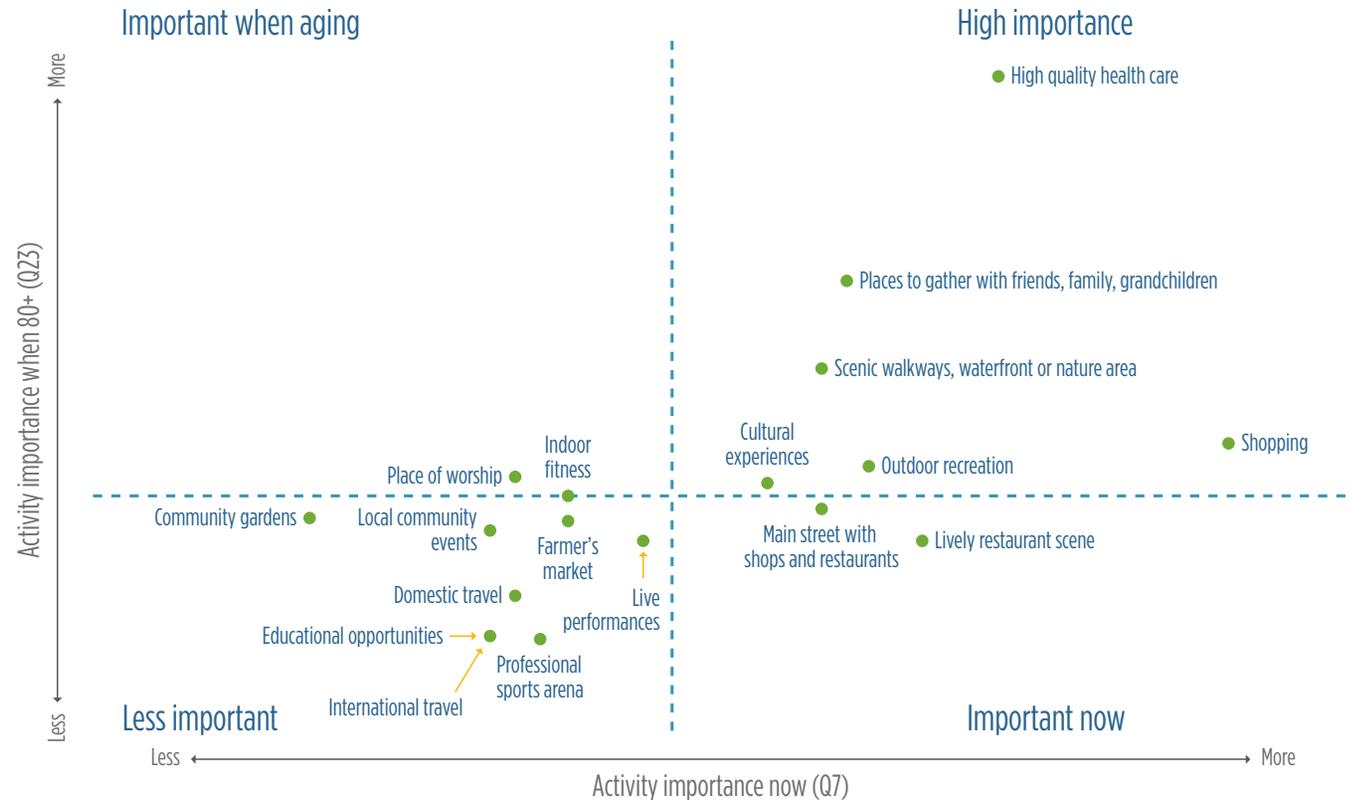


## II. CITY LIFE ATTRACTIONS FOR PEOPLE AS THEY AGE

What is it about the urban lifestyle that these residents find attractive – and what aspects do they most want to preserve for their 80+ year-old selves? First, people recognize they will need more health care as they age and prioritize high quality health care. Next comes relationships – they want to gather

with friends, family and grandchildren. And finally, it's the variety of urban scenic areas and walkways, other outdoor recreation, cultural experiences, shopping and restaurants that cities have to offer.

### Most important activities as one ages



**A mix of people of different age groups is key for diversity in cities.**

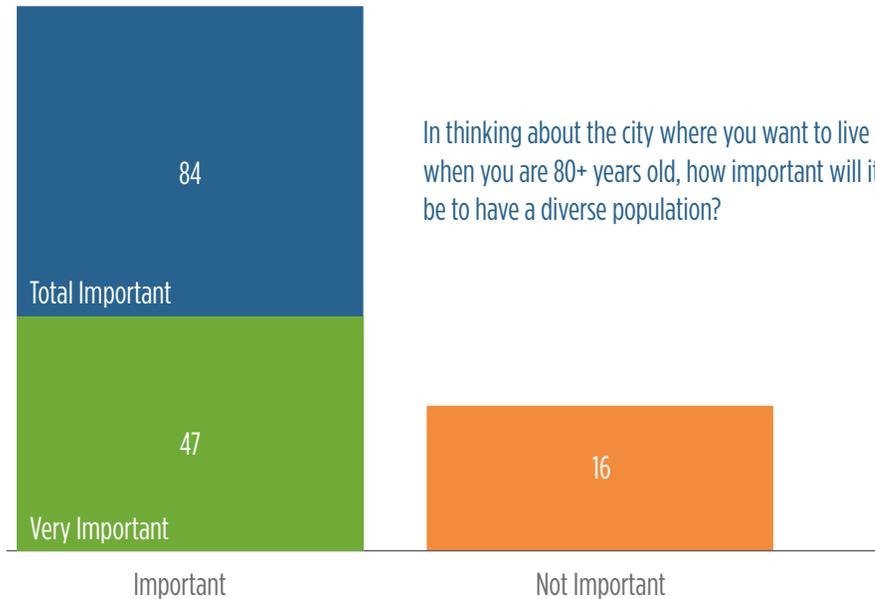
“

**I think it's the center of the city where the living is great for all ages.**

*- Millennial, Boston*

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### Strong majority calls having a diverse population important to where they will want to live



Having a diverse population is also of great importance for survey respondents. Eighty-four percent of city dwellers want to live in a diverse community with a mix of different age groups, ethnic, national and racial diversity when they reach 80+ – and nearly half (47%) say they feel very strongly about it.

Forty percent of respondents ranked having people of different age groups as most important for them, while 39 percent ranked ethnic, national and racial diversity highest, which was fairly consistent across all generations. A further 21 percent of survey respondents say being around young adults and children in the neighborhood would be most important to them at that age.

**Majority of respondents want to live in their current home at age 80+ but are also open to senior living communities.**

**Baby Boomers are the most intent on aging in cities.**

### III. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR AGING IN CITIES

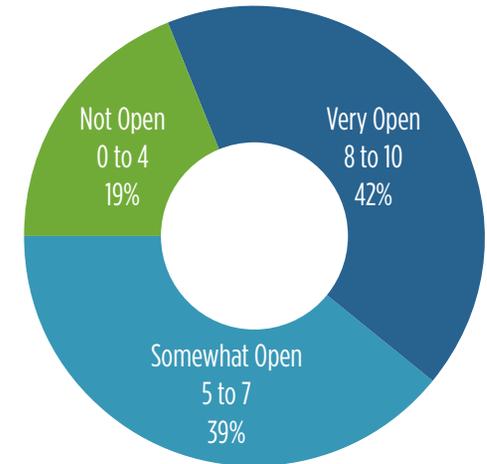
Seven out of 10 city dwellers (69%) want to remain in their home, neighborhood or city when they are 80+. Aging in place is a major priority. Thirty-six percent of city dwellers say their first choice would be to live in their current home at age 80+, but they also are willing to consider other living arrangements. Eighty-one percent of survey respondents are open to living in an urban senior living community when they are 80+ years old.

Baby Boomers are the most committed to staying in the city, with 8 out of 10 (78%) saying they want to stay in their current home, neighborhood or city at that age. This is meaningful considering that the oldest Baby Boomers recently turned 70 and are closer to having to make decisions about their 80+ years.

Looking at the data on Baby Boomer preferences for living arrangements, 44 percent say their first choice would be to stay in their own home (29%) and hire additional help if needed (15%). A further 17 percent would move into a smaller home or apartment

### Most city dwellers are open to a senior living community

On a 0-10 scale, when you are 80+ years old how open are you to living in a senior living community that may include additional services and care for people as they age?



with age-friendly features, while the first choice of nearly one in five Boomers (19%) would be a senior living community in an urban environment with full amenities and access to the city’s offerings. In addition, three-quarters of Baby Boomers say they are very (34%) or somewhat (42%) open to an urban senior living community for their 80+ years.

If money is not an obstacle when you are 80+ years old, where would you prefer to live?	Overall	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
I'd maintain my current living situation	21%	17%	18%	29%
I'd move into a smaller home or apartment with features to help me age in place	18%	18%	20%	17%
I'd move into a senior living community in an urban environment with full amenities and access to the city's offerings	17%	14%	18%	19%
I'd stay in my current home, but hire some help	15%	15%	17%	15%
I'd move into my own separate space in or next to family members	13%	16%	12%	10%
I'd move in with family members	8%	11%	9%	6%
I'd build an addition to a family member's home and live there	5%	8%	5%	2%

Most people believe they can afford city living as they age.

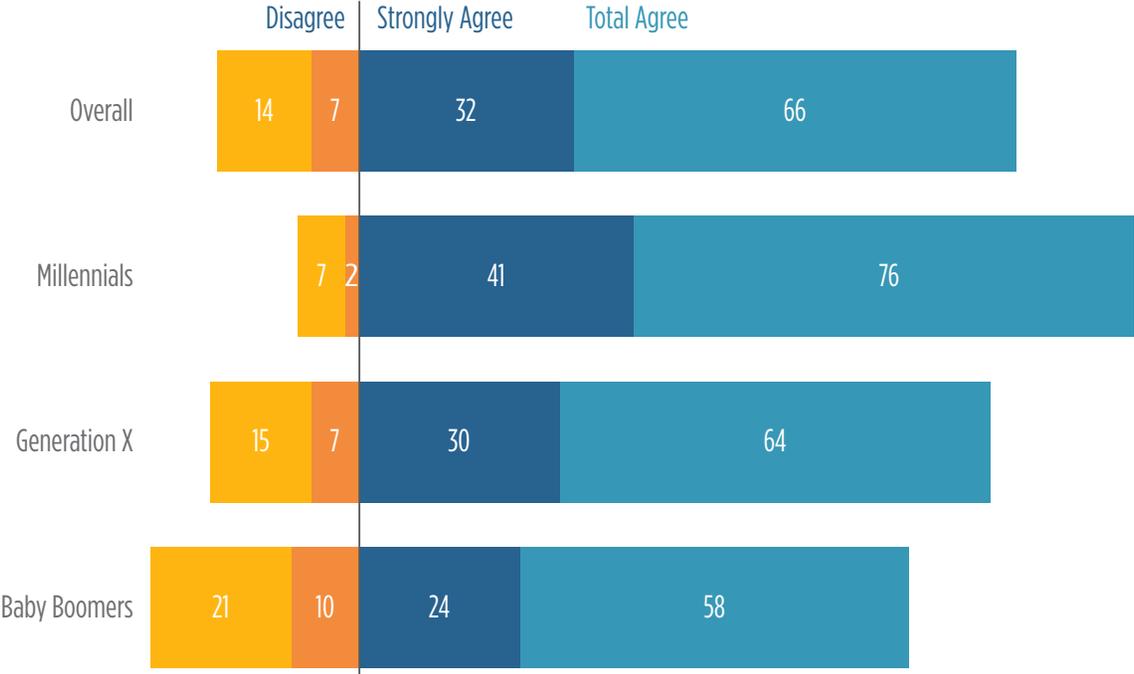
IV. COST OF LIVING AND FINANCIAL PRIORITIES

Affordability of city living is an issue, but two-thirds (66%) of residents in large cities responded that they believe they will have the financial means to live in the city at 80+. Three-quarters of Millennials (75%) and six out of 10 (58%) Baby Boomers (who are closer to or

already at retirement age for financial planning purposes) believe they will have enough money to live in the location and place of their choosing when they are 80+.

Most respondents hopeful they will have saved enough

With some planning for the future, I will have enough money to live in the location and place of my choosing when I am 80+ years old





Maintaining their current quality of life in the area they live now

Financial priorities, particularly cost of living versus quality of life, presented themselves differently in different cities and at different ages. For example, maintaining their current quality of life in the area they live now is the top financial priority for residents of Toronto, San Francisco, Houston, Boston and Seattle when asked to think about their 80+ year-old selves. Residents of New York, Los Angeles

and Chicago were most likely to cite lowering their cost of living and housing costs from what they pay now as their top priority for those retirement years. And people living in Washington, D.C., Houston and Miami were the most likely to want a good economy and jobs for seniors so they can work part-time when they are 80+.

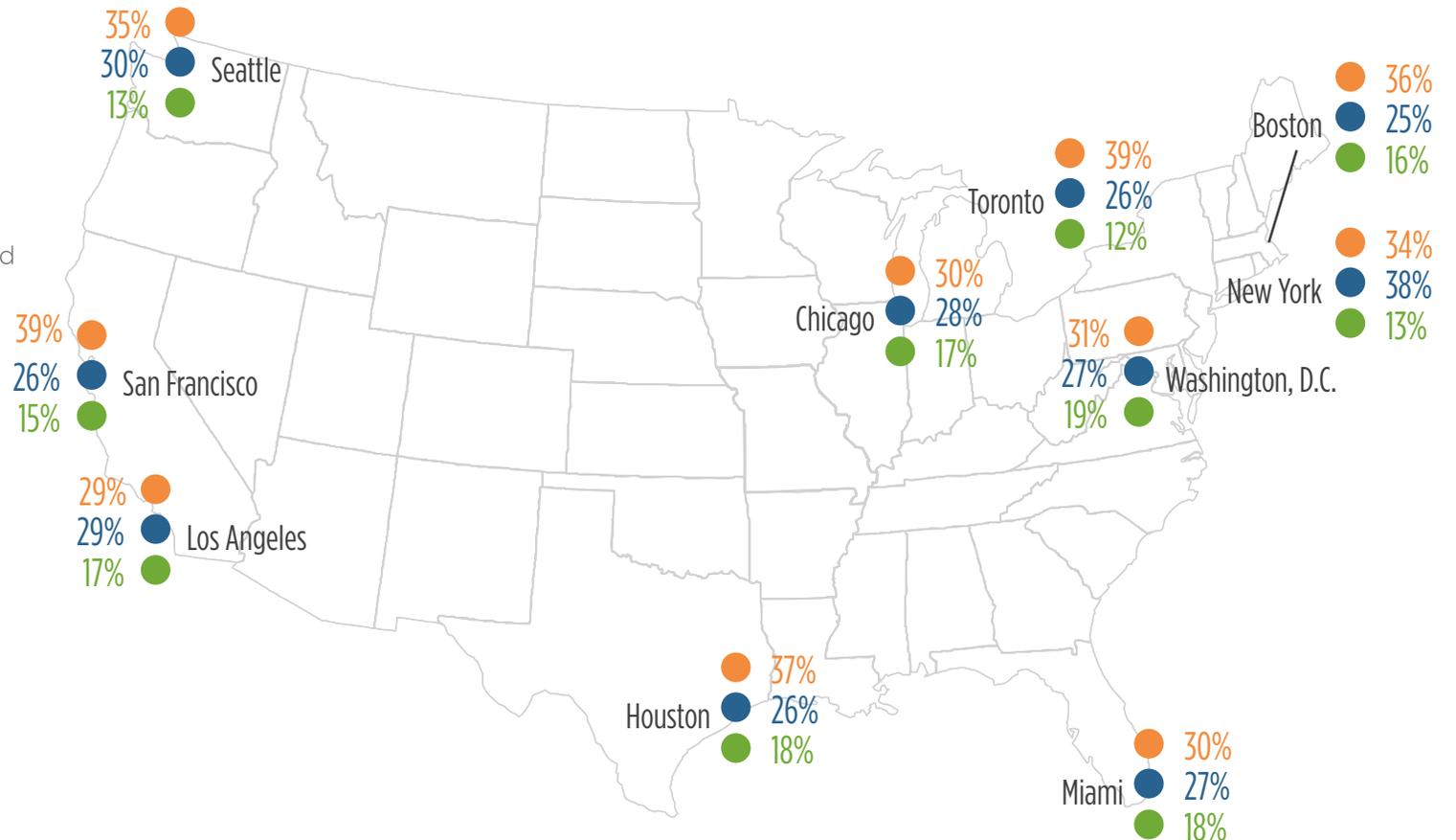
### Top priority for residents in each city



Lowering their cost of living and housing costs from what they pay now



Want a good economy and jobs for seniors



A photograph of three elderly men walking on a balcony or walkway in a city. The man on the left is using a cane and has his arm around the man in the middle. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The background shows a cityscape with buildings and a bridge. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

CHAPTER 2:  
HIGH QUALITY HEALTH CARE  

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IS THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

**37% of city dwellers are worried about not having access to quality health care at 80+.**



“

**I'm worried mainly about health care opportunities for me as I grow older.**

*- Millennial, Washington, D.C.*

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## INTRODUCTION

While young families tend to focus on good schools as a top factor for choosing where they want to live, access to high quality health care tops the list as people age. City dwellers are focused both on quality health care and senior care facilities as well as access to good doctors, in-home nursing and mental health providers. Technology is also seen as an enabler of health for aging in cities.

The focus on health and wellbeing is also evident through the types of activities city dwellers say they want to engage in more as they age - exercise, healthy eating, outdoor recreation, and activities to sharpen mental alertness such as brain games and reading. Mental health is a key concern, with two-thirds of survey respondents worried about having dementia when they are 80+.

### I. HEALTH CARE IS THE #1 PRIORITY

When asked to rank their top three factors for choosing where they want to live today, Millennials in cities listed public transportation, proximity to work and good schools, while Baby Boomers listed public transportation, high quality health care providers and proximity to family.

When considering where they want to live at age 80+, access to high quality health care is by far the number one priority for all generations of people living in the 10 large cities surveyed.

Six out of 10 city dwellers (61%) list access to high quality health care as their highest overall priority for their 80+ year-old selves - nearly 20 percentage points higher than any other factor.

# Having a good doctor is the highest health care priority for respondents.



I worry about the high cost of health care and a shortage of health care professionals.

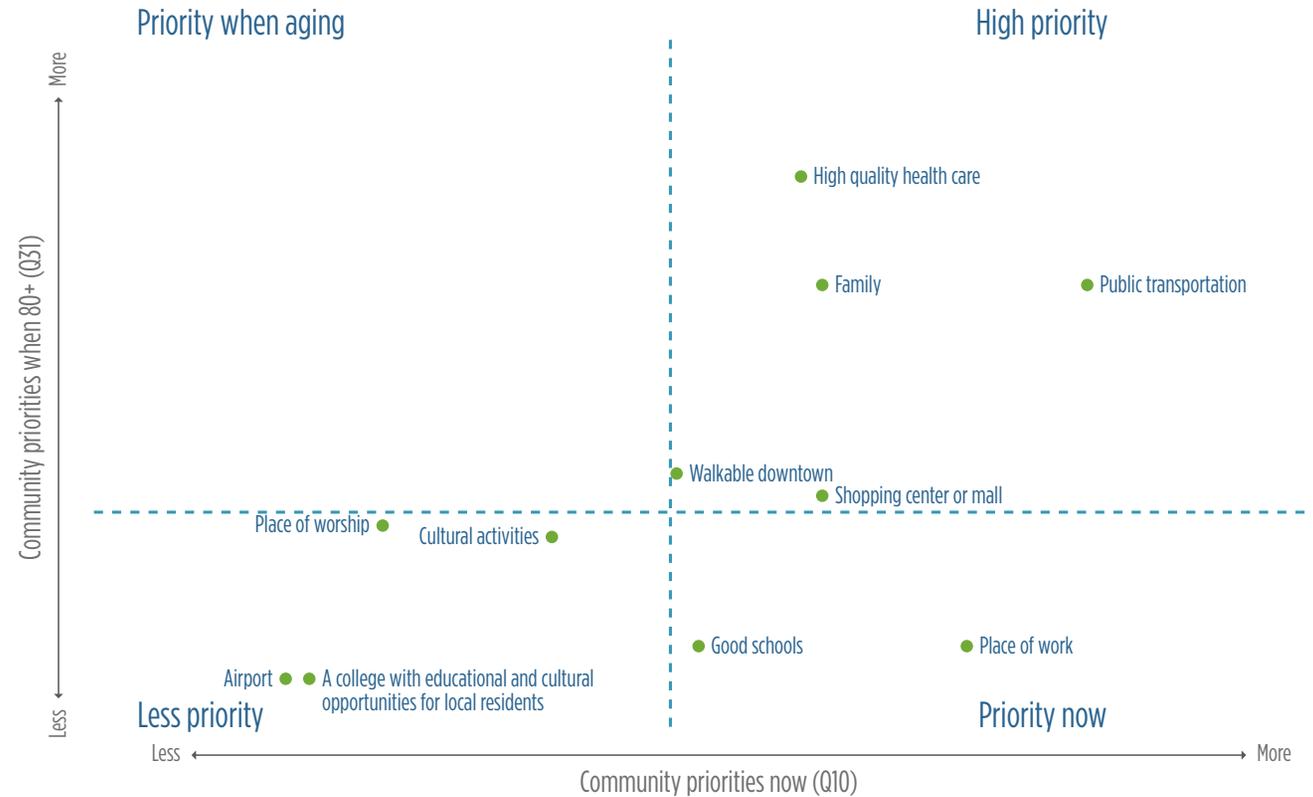
- Generation X, Toronto



Baby Boomers prioritized health care (64%), followed by public transportation (55%) and proximity to family (41%) for their choice of where to live at age 80+. Millennials rank health care and family close together (49 percent and

51 percent, respectively) followed by public transportation (35%) for their top three factors for choosing a location.

## Top priorities in choosing where to live





**I guess my community can just benefit from more senior friendly accommodations.**

*- Generation X, Chicago.*



## II. HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR AGING IN CITIES

Most city residents' definition of good health care starts with their physician. Six out of 10 (61%) city dwellers say that having a good doctor is their highest health care priority as they age, considerably more important than proximity to health care facilities (21%).

When asked to consider the needs of elderly residents living in their city today, survey respondents highlight the need for more health care infrastructure and services for seniors. Nearly half (47%) of city dwellers identified the need for different options for aging in the home, and 40 percent cited the need for more senior living communities within their cities. Baby Boomers are most focused on housing options for seniors, with 54 percent highlighting the need for options to help aging residents stay in their homes while 43

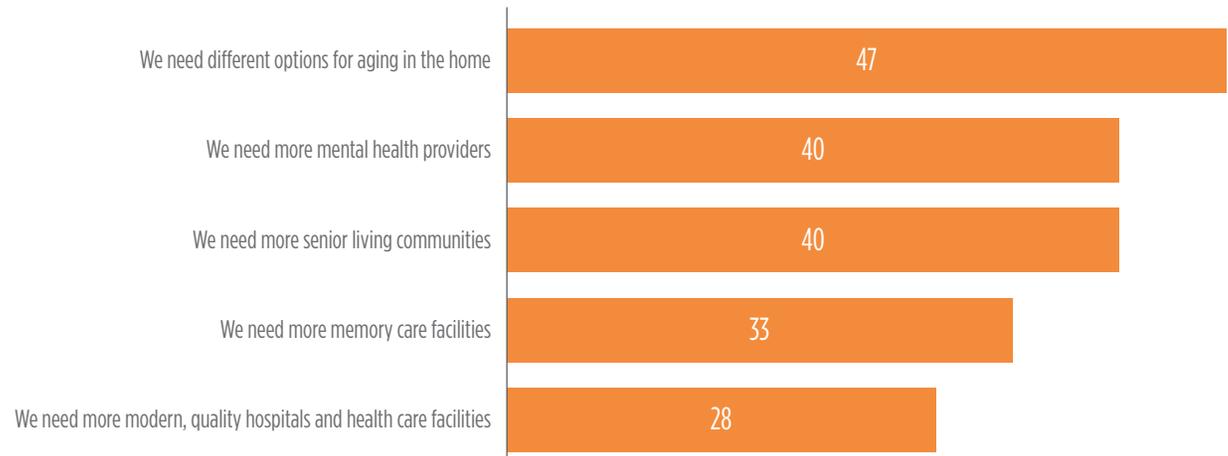
percent believe their cities need more senior living communities.

Dementia is a major concern for two-thirds (66%) of city dwellers and one-third (34%) say more options are needed for dementia care in their city. Forty percent of city dwellers say their city needs more mental health providers for elderly residents today, and 33 percent cite the need for more memory care facilities.

Overall, city residents are somewhat less concerned about the state of other health care infrastructure. Only 28 percent say their city needs more modern hospitals and other quality health care facilities, although considerably more Millennials (34%) than Baby Boomers (21%) see a need for more modern facilities. In addition, 32 percent of Millennials and 25 percent of Baby Boomers believe more doctors and health professionals are needed to cope with their city's elderly population.

### City dwellers believe older residents in their city need more options

How do you feel about the options for aging residents where you currently live?





Need more mental health providers

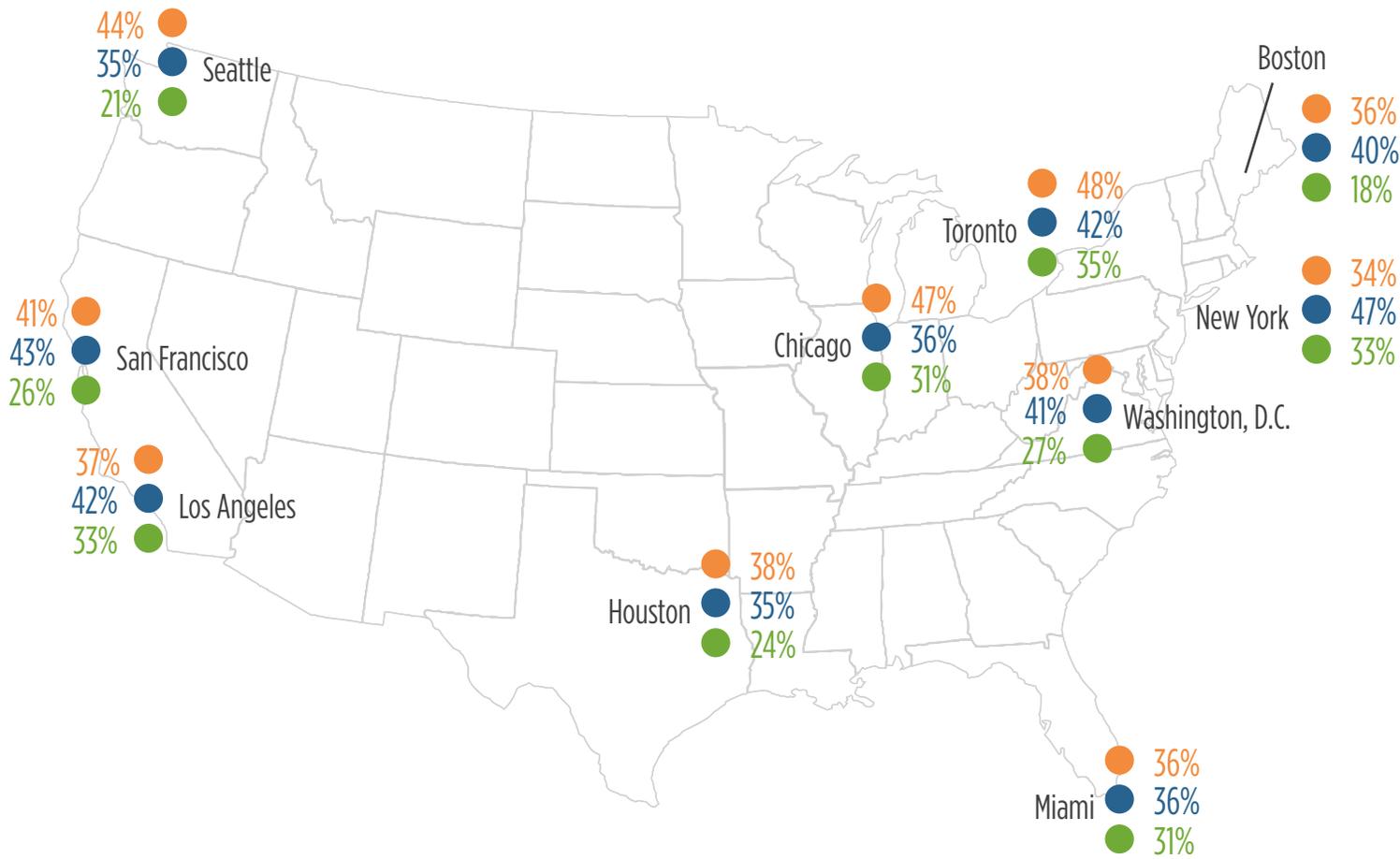
Opinions about the options for aging residents vary by city. Chicagoans focus on mental health providers and dementia care. New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco residents see more of a need for senior living communities and memory care facilities than the overall

average. New York and LA residents also highlight the need for more quality, modern health facilities. Toronto is an outlier on several of these factors compared to the large U.S. cities when residents are asked about options for elderly residents today.



Need more senior living communities

Top priority for residents in each city



Need more quality hospitals and health facilities

**From driverless cars to smart homes, new technology may enable healthy aging.**

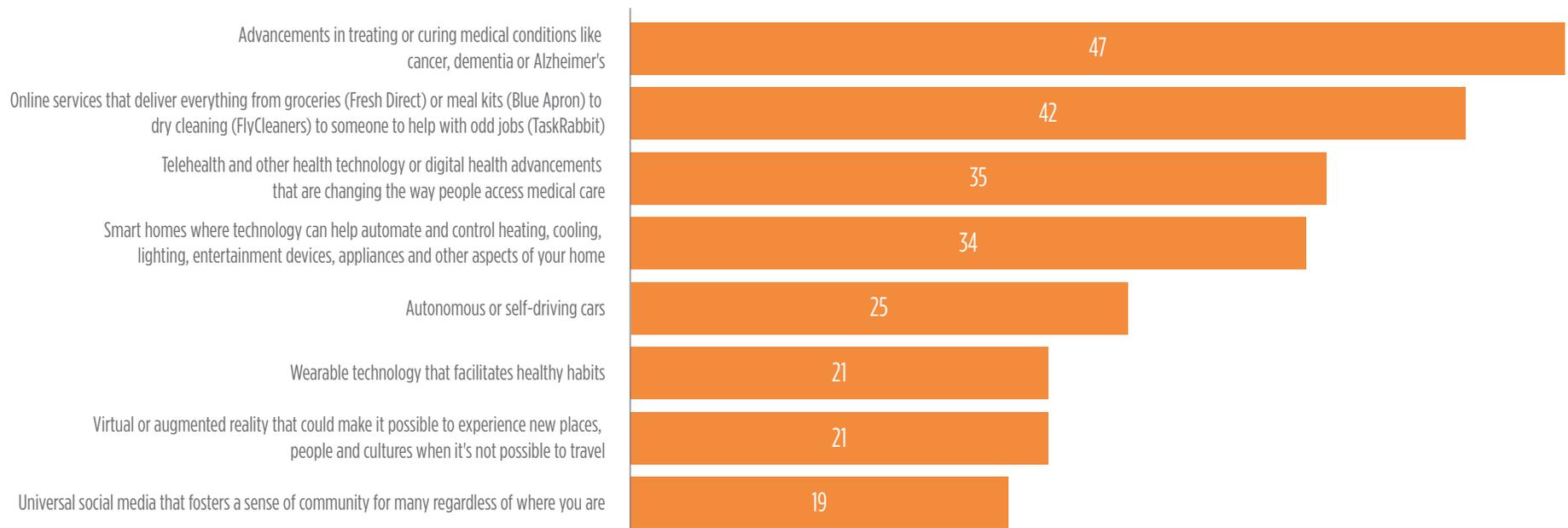
### III. INNOVATION IS AN ENABLER FOR HEALTHY AGING

City dwellers are hopeful that technological innovations and scientific breakthroughs will deliver important benefits for enabling them to live well as they age. This includes advancements in treating medical conditions like cancer, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease (47%) and digital and telemedicine innovations (35%). A further 42 percent view the availability of online services and conveniences as an enabler for aging in cities, while others emphasized technological innovations such as automated smart home features and wearable health devices.

Loss of mobility emerged as a key concern for aging in large cities. This is also an area where people believe innovation can help. One-quarter of respondents (25%) cited self-driving vehicles as a pending breakthrough that will impact their 80+ year-old selves, and one in five (21%) city dwellers cited the possibility of virtual reality travel to experience new places and cultures, particularly since inability to travel abroad was the second highest worry listed by city dwellers (right behind not having access to quality health care) when thinking about their 80+ year-old selves.

#### Breakthroughs seen as enabler for aging in cities

Which of these pending breakthroughs, if any, do you think will most profoundly impact your life at age 80?



## Generational comparisons reveal surprising differences on health care delivery.

### IV. THE HUMAN TOUCH STILL MATTERS IN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

When it comes to the actual delivery of health care, however, city dwellers believe strongly that in-person interactions with health care professionals are of critical importance. Two-thirds (65%) of survey respondents say that in-person appointments and in-home visits by doctors and nurses will be the primary method of interacting with health professionals as they age, with a further 15 percent citing talking and texting by phone. Only 10 percent anticipate video consultations and telemedicine as a primary channel, and 5 percent cited digital devices and online communications as the primary method of communication with health professionals.

Two-thirds of all generations focus on in-person care as the primary method of interacting with health professionals, but Millennials and Gen Xers are nearly twice as likely as Baby Boomers to see in-home visits and nursing services as primary. Twenty-three percent of Millennials expect in-home care will be the norm as they age, compared to only 12 percent of Baby Boomers. Moreover, Millennials are no more accepting than Baby Boomers of digital health devices that send your data to be analyzed, or online portals where you can access your medical records. Millennials are less accepting of video consultations than Baby Boomers and only slightly more of texting with health professionals.

#### Millennials and Generation Xers more likely to envision in-home care

Primary communication method to stay in touch with doctors and health professionals	Overall	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
In-person office appointments	46%	42%	42%	54%
In-home visits and nursing	19%	23%	21%	12%
Talking or texting by phone	15%	17%	14%	13%
Video consultations or telemedicine	10%	8%	12%	11%
Digital health devices that you send your data to be analyzed	5%	5%	5%	5%
Online portal where you can access your medical records	5%	4%	5%	5%

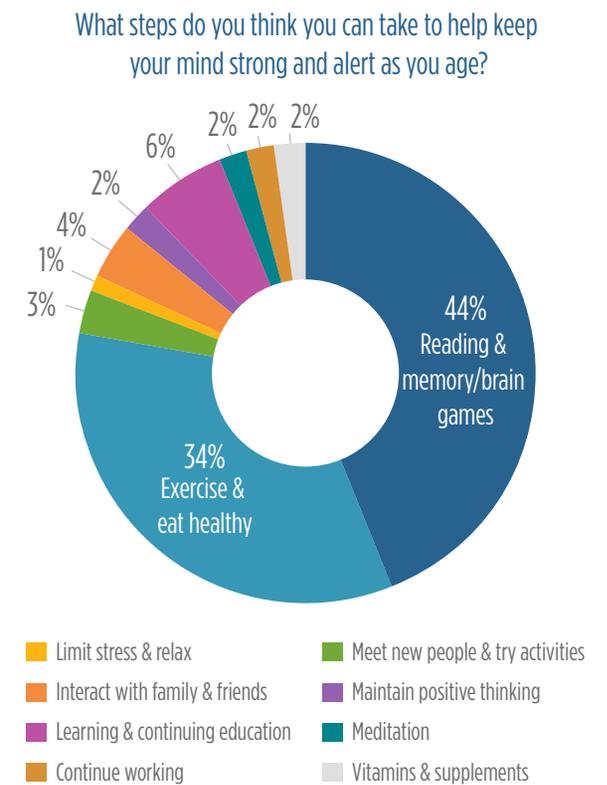
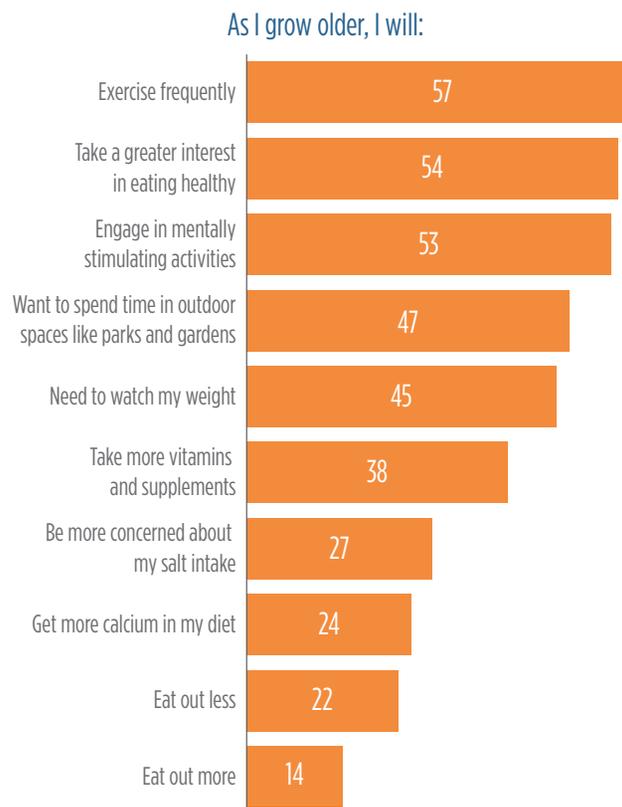
**Exercise, nutrition and mental alertness identified as key to healthy aging.**

**V. HEALTHY LIVING AND ALERTNESS**

Most city dwellers recognize the need to focus on activities that promote wellness as they age. Exercise, healthy eating and mentally stimulating activities were the top three activities city dwellers plan to engage in regularly in their 80+ years. The importance of exercise was further emphasized with the focus on walkable downtowns and scenic walkways, and access to outdoor recreation activities and indoor fitness facilities.

In line with the concern previously indicated around dementia, maintaining mental alertness is a top priority. When asked about steps they plan to take to keep their mind strong as they age, 44 percent of respondents mention brain games and reading, while one in three (34%) cite mental benefits of exercise and healthy eating. Other popular answers involve learning and educational opportunities, social interactions with friends and family, meeting new people and trying new activities.

Exercise, eating healthy, mentally stimulating activities top priorities



A photograph of two women sitting on a wooden park bench. The woman on the left is younger, with long dark hair, wearing a light-colored jacket and dark pants. The woman on the right is older, with short blonde hair, wearing a patterned jacket, a white scarf, and light-colored boots. A small dog is sitting on the ground between them. In the background, there is a large brick building with many windows and a tree. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

CHAPTER 3:  
RELATIONSHIPS, MOBILITY  

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AND PURPOSE

**Eight out of 10 city dwellers want to make new friends at age 80+.**



“

**I want my family close and they are the power for me to keep my mind strong and alert for my age.**

*- Baby Boomer, Los Angeles*

”

## INTRODUCTION

**Social interaction and relationships are a major opportunity for aging in cities. By a three to one margin, city dwellers believe it is easier to meet new people in cities than in suburban or rural areas. In addition to gatherings with friends and family, a majority say technology will be a primary means for them to keep in touch with loved ones. Social isolation is a concern, but surprisingly, it ranks relatively low on city dwellers' list of worries related to aging.**

**Loss of mobility is a top concern for eight out of 10 survey respondents. The ability to get around independently and be a part of what their city has to offer gives people purpose and seems to define the attraction of city life. The Aging in Cities Survey identifies a number of mobility challenges and opportunities for aging populations in large cities.**

### I. NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND TIME FOR ROMANCE

People living in large cities expect they will continue to have an active social life and opportunities to meet new people as they reach 80+ years. Eight out of 10 (78%) say it will be important for them to make new friends at that age, and one in three (35%) say it's very important. Having time for romance and starting new relationships is important for six out of 10 city dwellers when they contemplate their 80+ year-old selves, and more than half (55%) want an active sex life. A quarter of respondents (25%) even say having an active sex life at age 80+ will be very important to them.

Notably, 71 percent of survey respondents say the ability to meet new people is a key factor in their decision on where to live. And the vast majority – 60 percent of city dwellers – believe they will have more opportunities to meet new people in a city compared to only 21 percent who disagree.

## Cities are the place to meet new people.



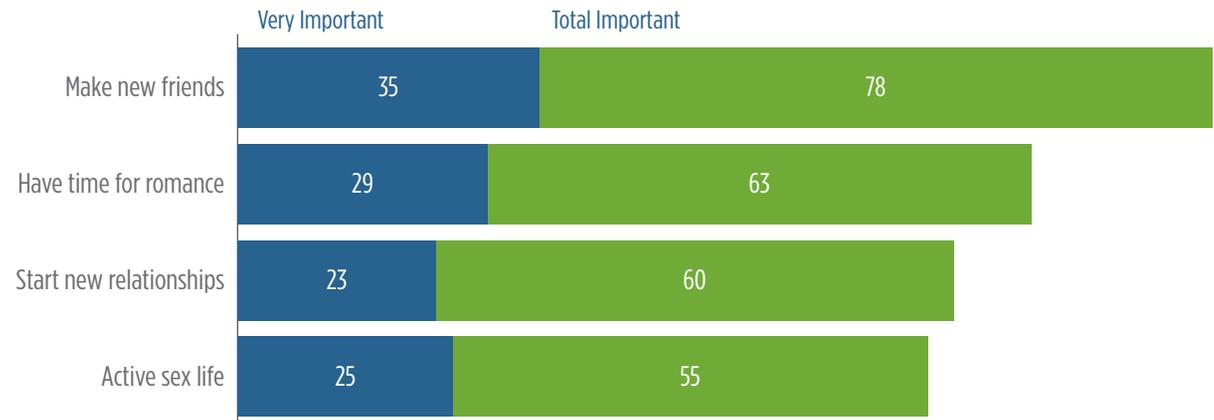
I think it would be important to be involved in many different activities, interact with a diverse group of individuals, continue being informed about the world, current events, pursue hobbies, travel and continue to learn about various cultures and the world in general.

- Generation X, Toronto



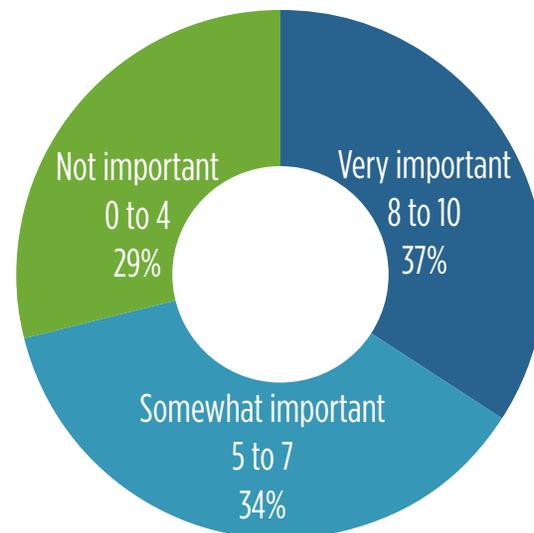
### Making new friends more important than sex, romance

When you are 80+ years old, how important will the following factors be in your life?

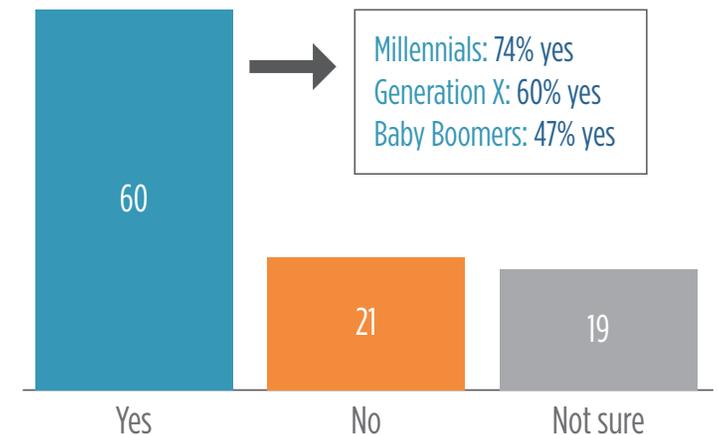


### Meeting new people is important, and easier to do in a city than elsewhere

On a scale of 0-10, how big of a factor is meeting new people in your decision of where to live?



Do you believe it is easier to meet people in a city than a suburb or small town?



# Technology will help stave away social isolation for city dwellers as they age.

“  
**Using the internet to stay connected socially even though I am homebound is critical to keeping a positive attitude and avoid feeling lonely or isolated.**  
 - Generation X, San Francisco  
 ”

## II. FRIENDS, FAMILY, ACTIVITIES AND TECHNOLOGY KEEP LONELINESS AWAY

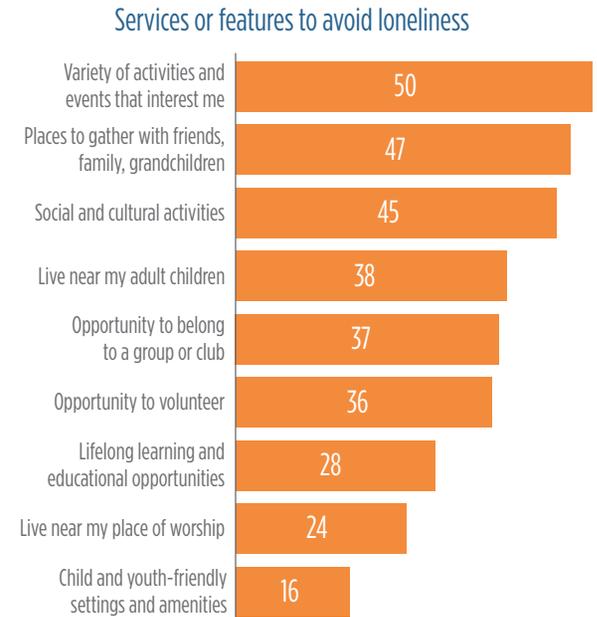
Living close to family and having places to gather with friends, family and grandchildren are among the top five considerations for city dwellers to avoid social isolation as they age. This comes through in a number of instances in the Aging in Cities Survey for respondents' decisions about where they want to live at age 80+. Variety of activities, events and groups that cities have to offer to keep life interesting and create opportunities for social interaction also come up frequently.

In addition, technology emerges as an important enabler of relationships. Overall, 95 percent of city dwellers believe social media, video chatting, texting and other digital communications will bring them closer to people in their lives at age 80+. In fact, 51 percent of all city dwellers (including 59 percent of Millennials and 40 percent of Boomers) say this will be a very important or even primary channel for keeping in touch at that age. A further 44 percent say they will still prefer in-person visits and phone calls but technology will also help.

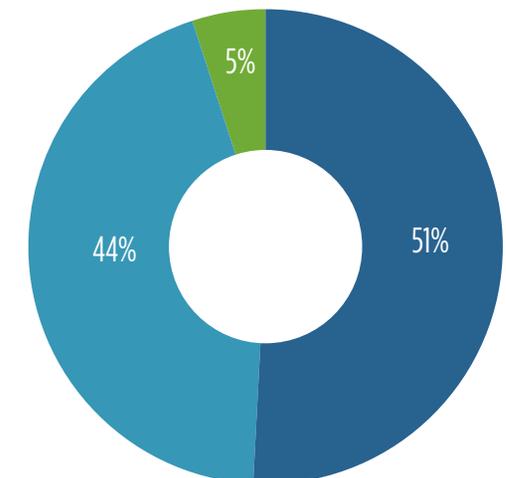
### Nine out of 10 say technology will help them keep in touch with loved ones

- I will be able to keep in touch with loved ones a great deal or primarily via technology (e.g., video-chat, FaceTime, text messages, Facebook updates, email, etc.)
- I want to keep in touch with loved ones primarily through in-person visits and phone calls, but new technology will also help bring me closer to them
- Technology is not a good way for me to keep in touch with loved ones

## Friends, family and activities are seen as the main antidotes to loneliness at 80+



When you are 80+ years old, which of the following statements reflects how you think technology (social media, video chatting, texting) will help bring you closer to the people in your life?







Concerned about crime

Other mobility related issues such as falling and hazardous streets and sidewalks were concerns for eight out of 10 city dwellers.

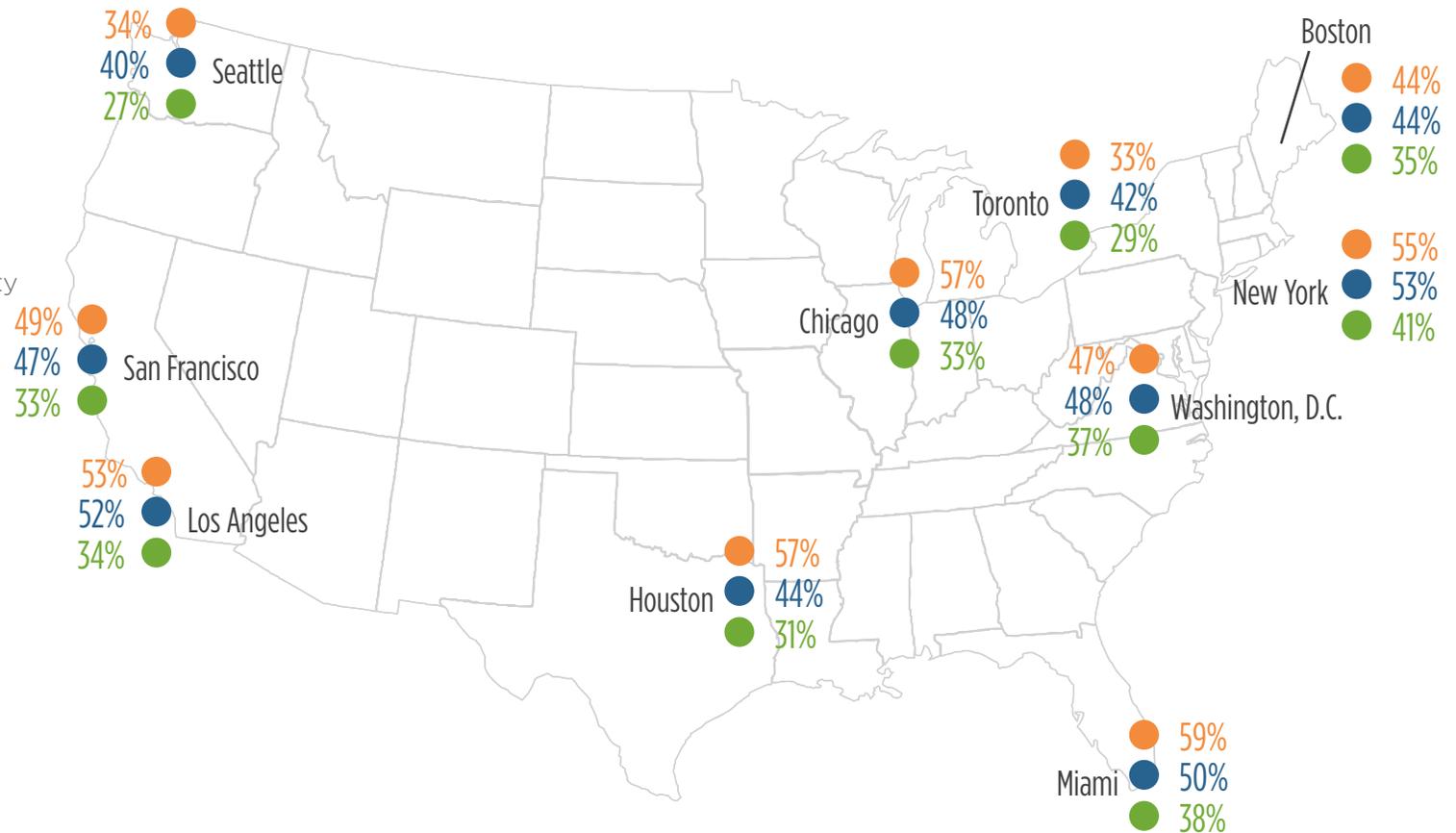
When evaluating concerns for the elderly in their own city, residents of Chicago, Houston, Miami and New York are most worried about crime. Residents of New York, Miami and LA

are most concerned about loss of mobility issues, with those in Miami and New York also concerned about social isolation for people as they age. Boston and San Francisco residents are somewhat less concerned about most of these factors compared to the average for the 10 large cities surveyed, while Washington, D.C. is more in line with the averages.

“Very concerned” about safety and mobility in each city



Concerned about lack of mobility



Concerned about social isolation

### What gives your life a sense of purpose?

“  
**Family, travel, volunteering, work, all of the things that give me purpose throughout my life.**  
 - Baby Boomer, Boston  
 ”



\*Working full-time or part-time in either their current profession or new career

“  
**My biggest purpose is raising my children. If my kids grow up to live happy, healthy, fulfilled adult lives and go on to have families of their own, then I’ve fulfilled my purpose.**  
 - Millennial, Houston  
 ”

### IV. PURPOSEFUL AGING IN CITIES

City dwellers are looking at aging as a time for renewed purpose, with relationships and mobility related factors being important enablers.

The top five activities they expect will give them purpose at that 80+ years of age are:

1. Pursuing a hobby
2. Volunteering
3. Exercise and group or individual sports

4. Caregiving to family and friends in need
5. Religion and place of worship

While not among the top interests, a surprising number of people expect to be working and learning at age 80+. One in five city dwellers (19%) believe that full or part-time work, either in their current occupation or a new field, will give them purpose at that age. Twenty-one percent also say they would like to pursue continuing education. Opportunities to travel and experience other cultures were also frequently mentioned.



**I would want my pictures of my life. It would make me feel at home being surrounded by them.**

*- Millennial, Houston*

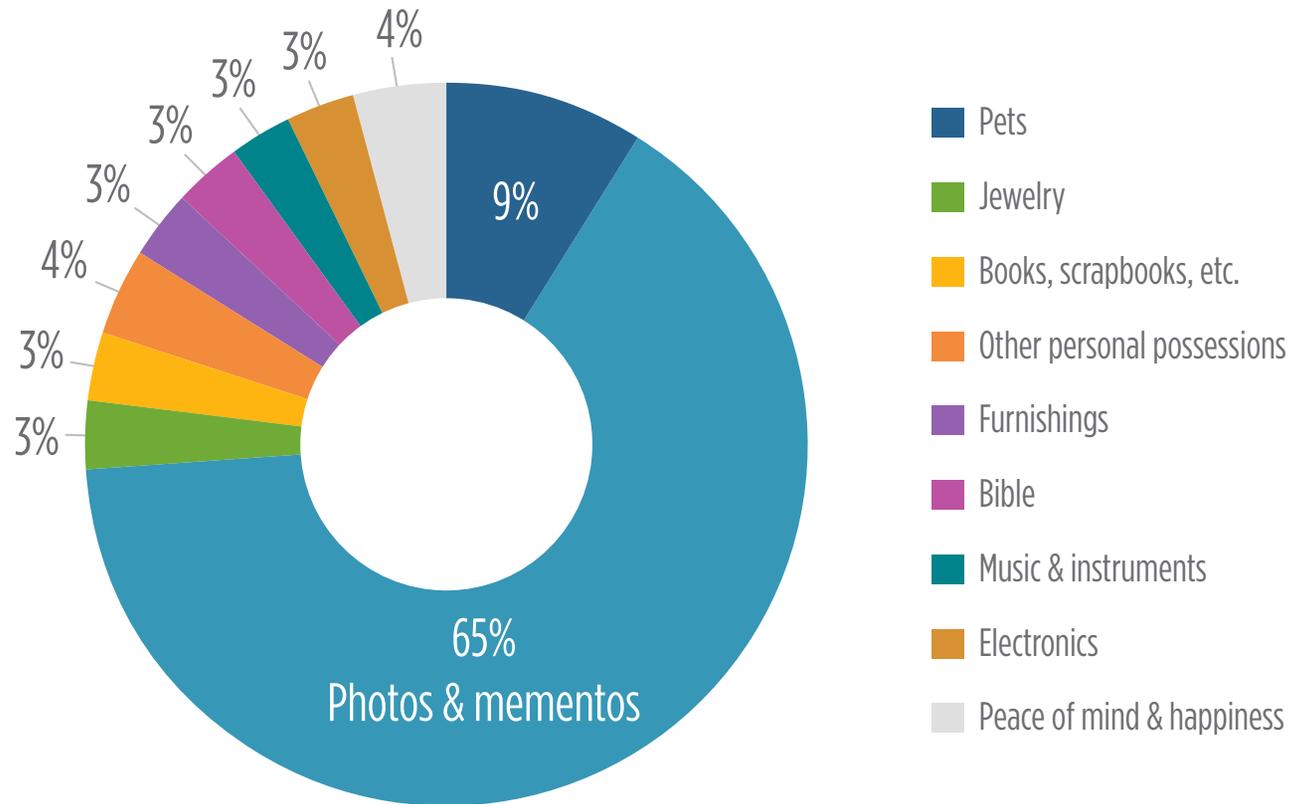


People want to preserve happy memories as they age. When asked what possession they would most want to bring with them wherever they live as they age, two-thirds (65%) of the answers related to photographs and other mementos.

Pets were the next highest answer (9%), with books, instruments, jewelry and bibles each getting a number of mentions.

**People want to carry their memories with them**

What sentimental possession will you bring with you no matter where you live as you age?



A photograph of three women jogging on a paved path lined with trees. The image is overlaid with a blue tint. The woman in the foreground is wearing a white t-shirt and light-colored pants, smiling. Two other women are jogging behind her. The path is bordered by a low wooden fence and dense foliage on the left.

CHAPTER 4:  
LIVABILITY OF CITIES FOR AGING:  

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**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**53 percent of respondents say seniors increase vibrancy of city neighborhoods.**



## INTRODUCTION

**The over-65 population will increase by nearly 50 percent within twenty-five years, according to U.S. Census estimates. And by 2040, those aged 80 and older will account for over 7 percent of the population, up from less than 4 percent in 2012. With Baby Boomers entering their retirement years, the evidence of the growth of the aging population is all around us today. City dwellers are realistic about the demographic challenges, but the Aging in Cities Survey finds they are largely positive about the benefits of an aging population on city life.**

The survey explores how city dwellers view the livability of their own city for people as they age. Livability has a number of dimensions: public infrastructure and services, social support in the community, economic costs and benefits, and living arrangements and features. The data offers some good news for cities, and identifies areas for improving their readiness for the aging urban population.

### I. GLASS HALF FULL

When asked about how they think aging population growth will impact cities over the coming decades, most city dwellers see the positives outweighing the negatives. Sixty percent overall (and 68 percent of Millennials) agree that the growth of the aging population will create “silver economy” jobs and opportunities aimed at seniors. In addition, 53 percent say it will increase the vibrancy of city neighborhoods due to senior consumer spending and activities, and 67 percent believe

it will create new senior living and housing options to keep people in cities as they age.

City dwellers are realistic about the challenges of aging demographics. Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents believe this will increase the economic and social pressures on cities due to the public resources needed for seniors. Forty-six percent of survey respondents believe this could reduce resources available for public services for children and the poor, and 39 percent believe that a higher number of senior residents will decrease the vibrancy of cities.

While this data is sobering, the overall picture is that the glass is half full rather than half empty when it comes to how city dwellers think about the impact of aging on cities.

## Majority of respondents rate their own city as very livable.

“

I feel that society in general will have the ability to keep up and integrate with different demographics.

– *Generation X, Chicago*

”

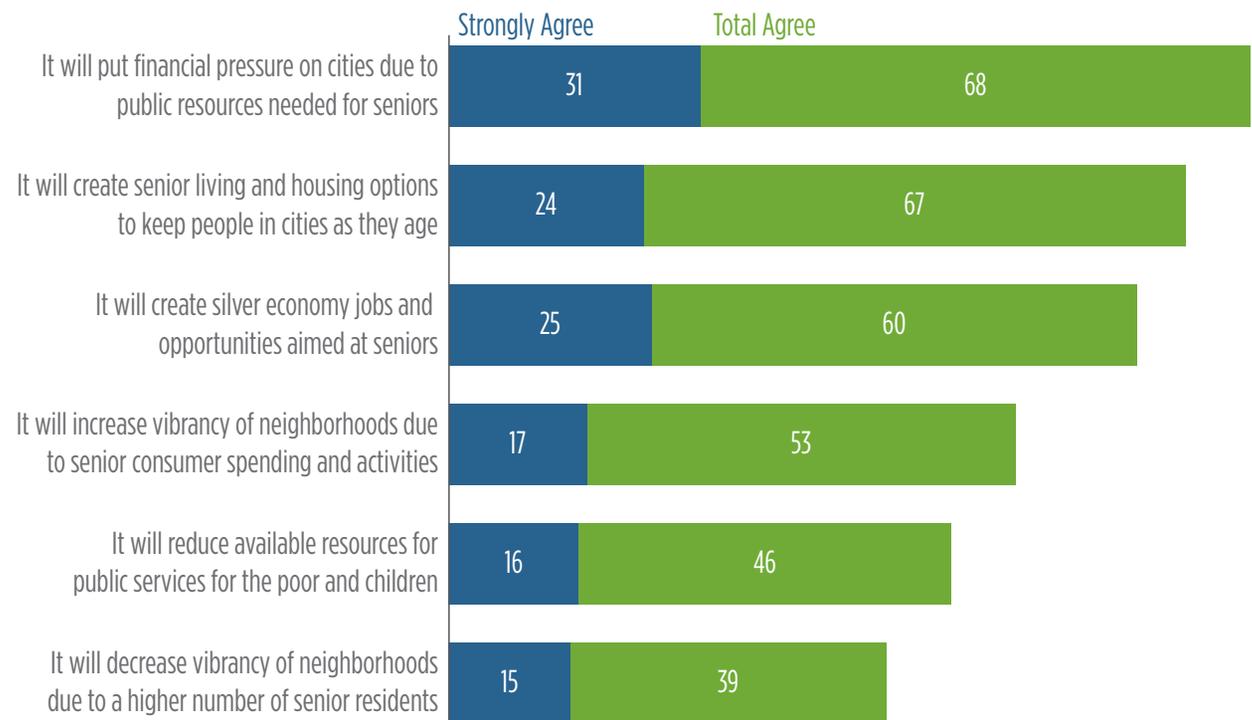
## II. CITIES GET HIGH MARKS FOR OVERALL LIVABILITY

When it comes to the general question of livability of large cities for older residents today, 54 percent of survey respondents rate their own city as very livable (a score of eight or higher on a 10-point scale). Only 10 percent of residents scored their city as not very livable (four or lower on a 10-point scale).

Washington, D.C. residents rate their city highest for overall livability with 62 percent saying it is very livable for older residents. Boston, Chicago, Miami and Toronto complete the top five for livability scores (and only three percent of Toronto residents rate their city as not livable for the elderly). LA, San Francisco and New York lag behind the average by a little, but nearly half of respondents still score their cities as very livable for older residents.

### Aging population seen as putting pressure on but bringing opportunities to cities

Statements on aging U.S. population growth





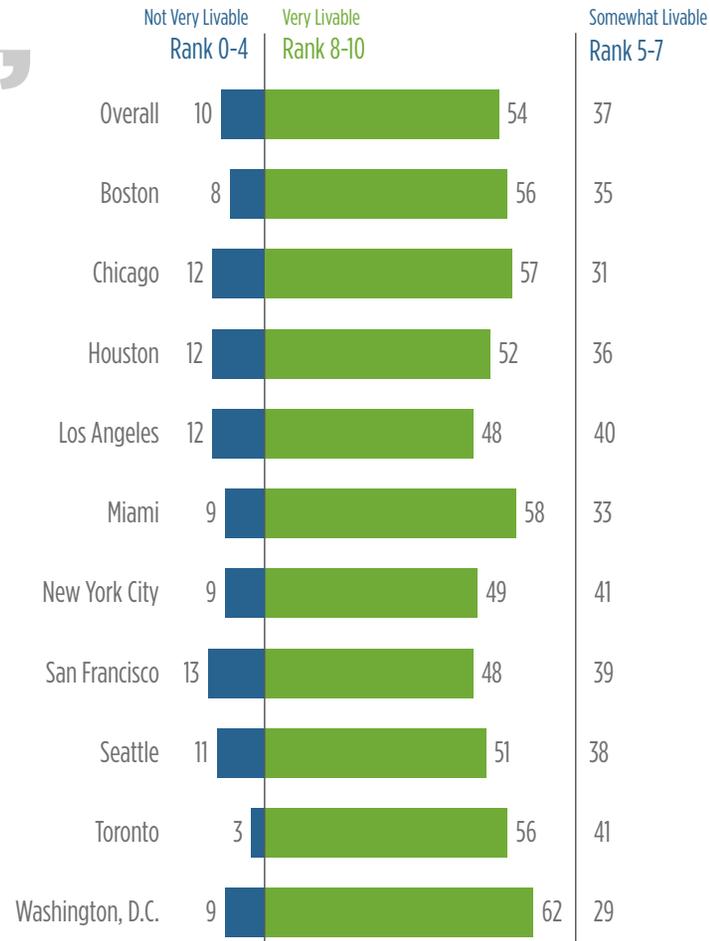
I live in urban Seattle, all of these items are currently available to our seniors, so hopefully that won't change.

- Generation X, Seattle



Moreover, when considering their own future selves at age 80+, 70 percent of city dwellers want to live in a city or urban area, and there

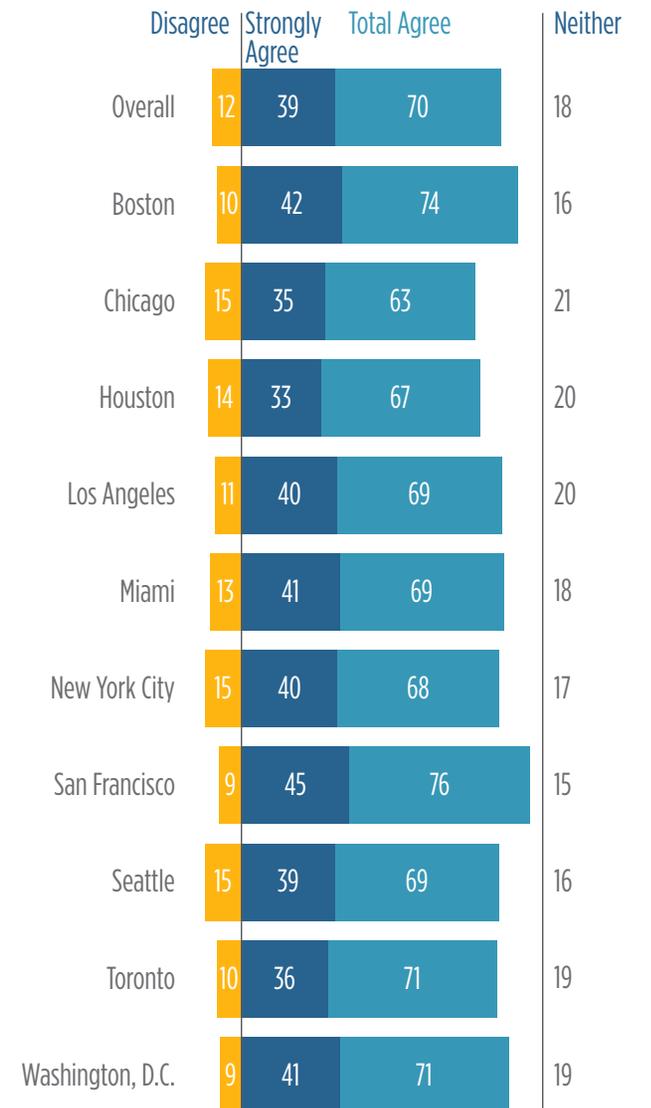
### A majority of respondents call their city livable for older residents



How livable is your city for people as they age? Please use a 0-10 scale where 0 means it is not livable at all, 5 is average and 10 it is very livable for older residents.

is very little variation in the answers across the 10 large cities overall. San Francisco residents gave the highest response with 76 percent.

### Desire to be in an urban area at age 80+ is consistent across cities



# Cities have it all – from public parks to festivals.

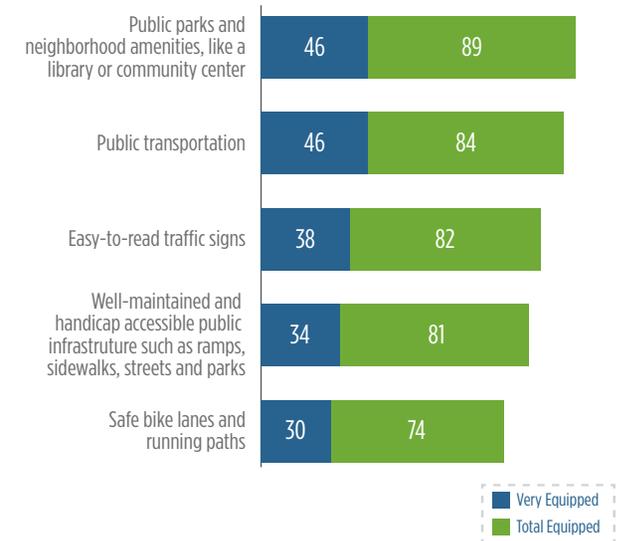
## III. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES FOR INCREASING LIVABILITY

City dwellers believe their city is well equipped for their elderly populations, but less than half say it's very well equipped when evaluating a number of livability measures. Public parks and neighborhood amenities such as libraries ranked highest, with nine in 10 (89%) saying their city is well equipped and 46 percent saying it's very well equipped. In addition, 84 percent say their city's transportation is well equipped for the elderly, of which 46 percent believe more intensely that their city is very well equipped for aging.

Eight out of 10 (81%) also agree their city has easy to read signs and well-maintained, handicap accessible public infrastructure such as ramps, sidewalks, streets, and parks, though only 34 percent gave their city very high marks in this area.

## Public transportation, parks more equipped for older city residents

Thinking about residents of your city or neighborhood who are currently 80+ years old, how well equipped do you think your city is with the following?



### Cities very well equipped

% Very well equipped	Overall	Boston	Chicago	Houston	LA	Miami	NYC	SF	Seattle	Toronto	Washington, D.C.
Public parks and neighborhood amenities	46%	59%	48%	44%	41%	46%	42%	43%	52%	40%	45%
Public transportation	46%	52%	54%	37%	40%	46%	49%	46%	44%	40%	50%
Easy-to-read traffic signs	38%	43%	45%	43%	34%	45%	36%	31%	32%	30%	44%
Well-maintained and handicap accessible public infrastructure such as ramps, sidewalks, streets and parks	34%	38%	43%	36%	29%	36%	28%	34%	29%	24%	39%
Safe bike lanes and running paths	30%	32%	34%	24%	27%	34%	29%	32%	36%	19%	34%

## Cities need to keep seniors actively engaged in their communities.



**There are very few programs for seniors to gather and socialize, maybe a lunch program or just a casual hang out spot.**

*- Millennial, Boston*



### IV. SOCIAL SERVICES, PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR SENIORS

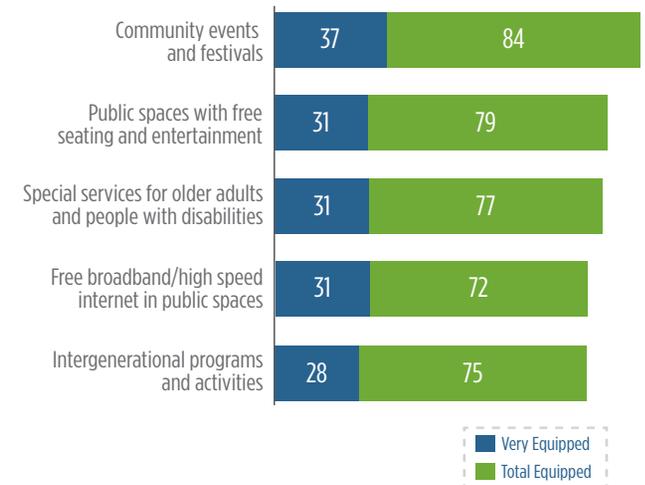
City dwellers rated their cities somewhat higher in terms of public infrastructure than on various social services, programs and activities for keeping elderly residents actively engaged in their communities.

Around one in three respondents believe their city does a very good job in offering age-friendly community events and festivals (37%), public spaces with free entertainment and seating (31%) and free internet in public spaces (31%) that make city life more interesting. Thirty-one percent rate their cities as very well equipped in terms of social services for older residents and people with disabilities, and 28 percent on opportunities for intergenerational programming such as bringing seniors and school children together. Given the

concerns about crime expressed earlier in this report, it is notable that only one quarter of respondents (27%) gave their city high marks on neighborhood safety programs.

### Cities viewed as at least somewhat well equipped to provide all services

Thinking about residents of your city or neighborhood who are currently 80+ years old, how well equipped do you think your city is with the following?



Social services and programs % very well equipped by city

% Very well equipped	Overall	Boston	Chicago	Houston	LA	Miami	NYC	SF	Seattle	Toronto	Washington, D.C.
Community events and festivals	37%	43%	44%	37%	30%	36%	39%	32%	40%	28%	38%
Free broadband/high speed internet in public spaces	31%	32%	38%	28%	28%	40%	34%	30%	26%	23%	33%
Special services for older adults and people with disabilities	31%	32%	39%	29%	29%	37%	32%	27%	27%	24%	33%
Public spaces with free seating and entertainment	31%	37%	36%	27%	27%	32%	33%	31%	29%	24%	30%
Intergenerational programs and activities (e.g., schools/seniors)	28%	34%	29%	26%	29%	36%	28%	26%	19%	17%	33%
Neighborhood safety programs	27%	29%	26%	24%	26%	36%	28%	23%	25%	19%	30%

**Public transportation helps make cities easier to navigate for seniors.**



**Not sure there will be adequate transportation and a welcoming atmosphere for older people who perhaps need more assistance to enjoy these activities.”**

*- Baby Boomer, Boston*



**V. MAKING LIFE EASIER AND GETTING AROUND TOWN**

City dwellers value mobility very highly and want services and features that help them get to activities and events so they can still enjoy the city. For example, living within walking distance of shopping and groceries, with delivery options for the home and access to cleaning and handy man services are a priority. Additionally, most respondents are unwilling to travel for more than 30 minutes to get to health appointments.

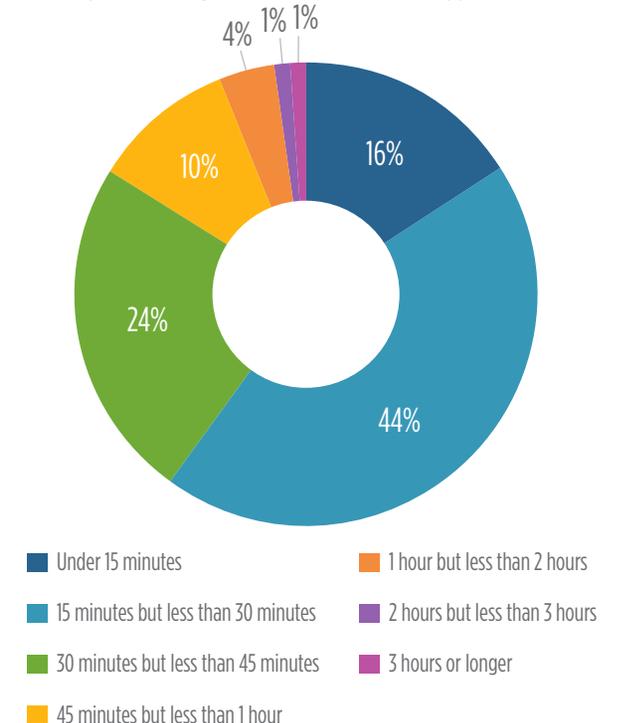
**Service/feature to make life easier at 80+ years old**



Public transportation is the most frequent way city dwellers expect to get around at 80+ years, aside from walking. Eighty-six percent of survey respondents say that accessible and convenient public transportation will be important to them when they are 80+ years old, of which 63 percent strongly agree. For example, 67 percent of Boomers expect to use public transportation and walk regularly at 80+ years old, compared to 55 percent driving themselves or with someone they know and 35 percent taking a taxi or ride hail service.

**Most will travel no longer than 30 minutes for health care appointments**

When you're 80+ years old, what is the longest amount of time you're willing to travel for health care appointments?



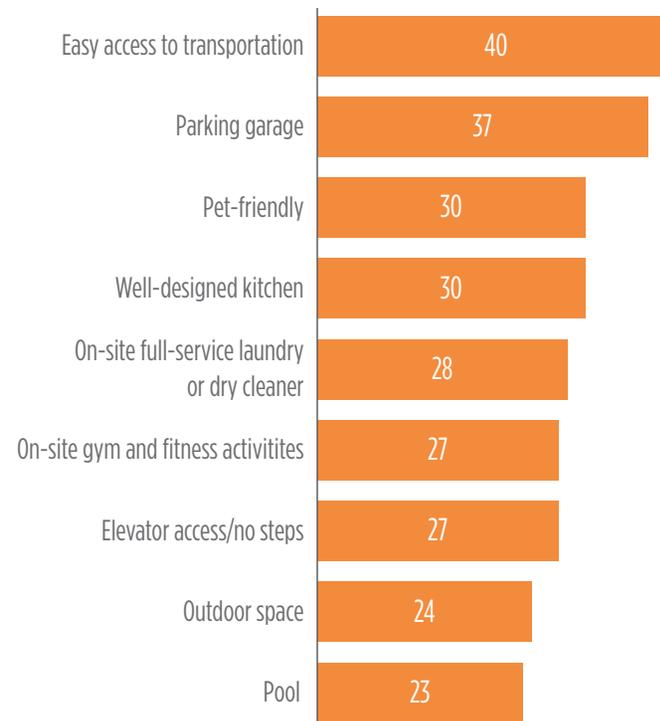
## Respondents' wish lists vary; from pets to parking garages to pools.

### VI. HOME FEATURES FOR AGING IN CITIES

City dwellers will look for a variety of home features to enjoy life in their 80+ years. Easy access to public transport rises to the top of the list, followed by access to a parking garage. They want a well-designed kitchen, laundry facilities and to be able to have pets. Elevator access/no steps, on-site fitness rooms and pools are somewhat important, but lower on the priority list.

Aging in place, in their current home, is the first choice of 36 percent of city dwellers, including

#### Most valued amenities in prospective residence

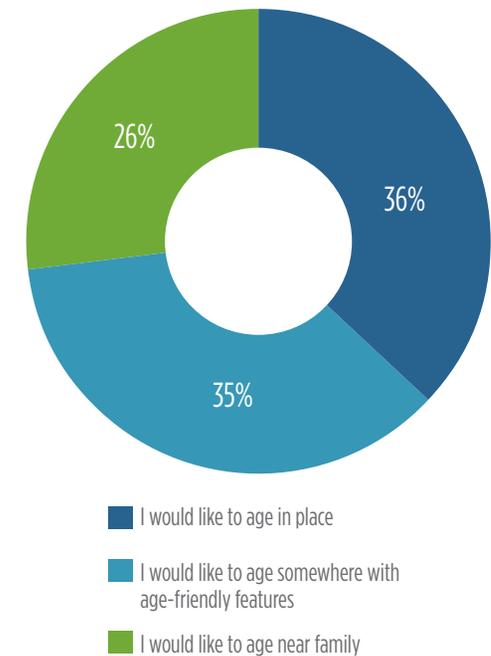


those who would hire help to stay in their current home. One-third of survey respondents in large cities say their preferred choice would be to move to an age-friendly home, either a smaller apartment designed with special features (18%) or a senior living community with full amenities and access to the city's offerings (17%).

And one-quarter will rely more closely on family, either moving into their own place near family members (13%), actually moving in with family members (8%) or into an addition to a family member's home (5%).

#### Aging in place, senior living or family members

If money is not an obstacle when you are 80+ years old, where would you prefer to live?





## AFTERWORD: HEALTHY AGING IN CITIES

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As the largest health care real estate investment trust, Welltower works with senior living communities, health systems and medical groups to create modern, efficient care delivery settings and help people live well as they age.

Urban centers with a high quality of life are experiencing double-digit growth of the aging population. According to New York City's Department for the Aging Changes in the Elderly Population of New York City Census, for example, the population over 60 in New York City increased by more than 12 percent from 2000 to 2010, or six times faster than the city's total population growth; in Manhattan, the growth rate of the city's 60+ population was 20 percent. Despite this, Manhattan is one of many vastly under-served locations when it comes to quality senior care: its availability of assisted living facilities is five times below the national average.

Our society will need to address multiple challenges of aging population growth in order to promote wellness and keep people engaged in their communities. Seniors are the most at-risk and costly population for the health care system to treat. According to the CDC, in the United States alone, more than a quarter of older Americans are burdened with multiple chronic diseases, more than 5 million people are living with Alzheimer's disease and

countless family members spend their days serving as unpaid caregivers.

I hope the Aging in Cities Survey 2017 report will spark new conversations to create positive change that benefits our senior population. By developing age-friendly options, innovative programming, personalized approaches and modern infrastructure, we can promote healthy aging in cities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mercedes Kerr".

Mercedes Kerr, Executive Vice President



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