Creating Places to Age in New Jersey

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New Jersey Future

Housing and Community Development Network of NJ Annual Conference & Membership Meeting

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New Jersey Future is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that brings together concerned citizens and leaders to promote responsible land-use policies. The organization employs original research, analysis and advocacy to build coalitions and drive land-use policies that help revitalize cities and towns, protect natural lands and farms, provide more transportation choices beyond cars, expand access to safe and affordable neighborhoods and fuel a prosperous economy.

CREATING PLACES TO AGE in NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Is Getting Older

FIGURE 1. PERCENT OF POPULATION AGED 55 OR OLDER, 2012 VS. 1990, FOR NEW JERSEY AND THE U.S.
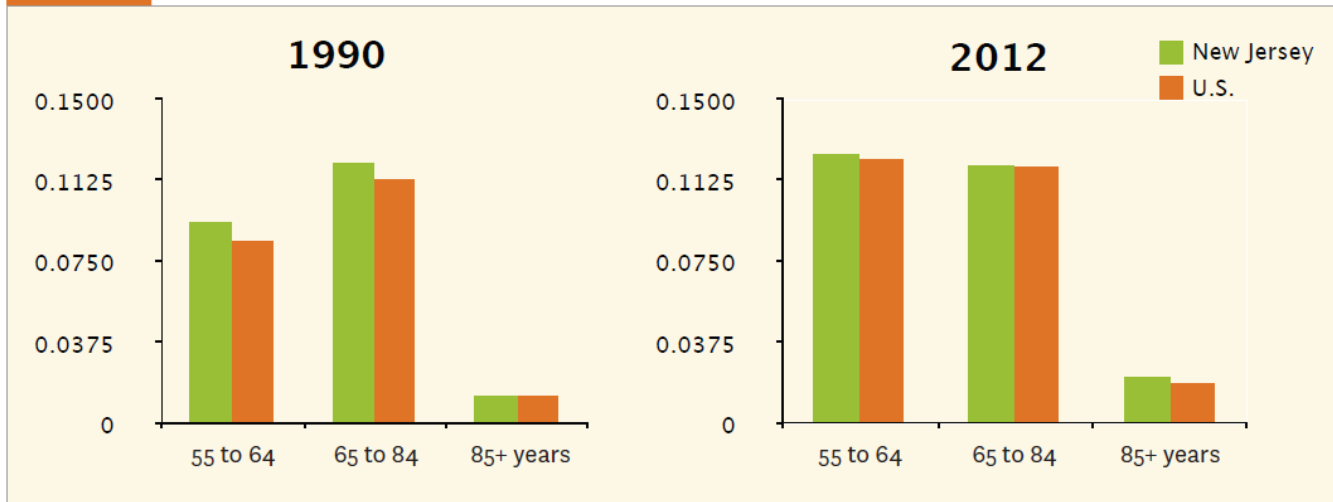
Both New Jersey and the United States have gotten older since 1990. Bureau of the Census (1990 Census; 2012 one-year American Community Survey)

As of 2012, more than 2.3 million New Jersey residents – 26.6 percent of the state's population – were at least 55 years old, with more than half of that total over the age of 65 and nearly 200,000 being 85 or older.

Aging and Land Use

From a land-use perspective, has New Jersey built the kinds of places – and built enough of them – that provide what older adults are likely to be seeking as they age?*

* and, specifically, as they no longer have the desire or ability to drive everywhere, or on certain types of roads, or at certain times of day

NEW JERSEY FUTURE

Aging-<u>Friendliness</u> and Land Use

1. Density – are destinations close together?

2. "Downtown" (mix of uses) – are different *kinds* of destinations close together?

3. Walkability – is the street network well-connected?

4. Access to public transportation – particularly local buses

Aging-**Friendliness** and Land Use

1. Density – are destinations close together?

Higher density is better for older people because it puts destinations closer together, an important consideration for people with constraints on their mobility.

as measured by **"net activity density"**
= (population + employment) / developed acres

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Aging-<u>Friendliness</u> and Land Use

2. "Downtown" (mix of uses) – are different *kinds* of destinations close together?

Town centers with homes, stores, offices, and civic buildings in close proximity allow those with limited mobility, or with limited desire to drive, to maximize their trip-making by minimizing the distances among different types of destinations. **A "town center" environment also increases opportunities to interact with other people!**

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Aging-<u>Friendliness</u> and Land Use

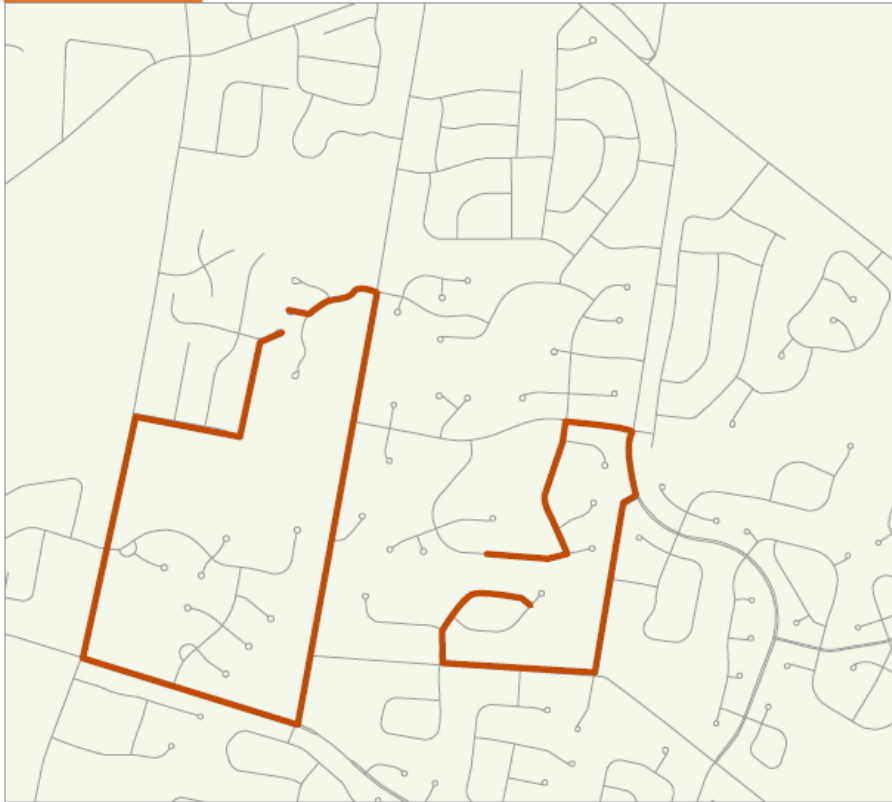3. Walkability – is the street network well-connected?

Without connectivity, high density and mixed use can end up meaning that you can see your destination out your window but have to walk or drive a mile to get to it.

as measured by **local road density**
= route-miles of local road / square mile

Street network connectivity

FIGURE 2. TYPICAL DISCONNECTED STREET NETWORK

So close, and yet so far: a lack of street network connectivity can mean a neighbor's house is a mile away by car – or on foot.

- Connectivity is an important measure of ped-friendliness
- Shore towns generally score well, despite having low year-round density
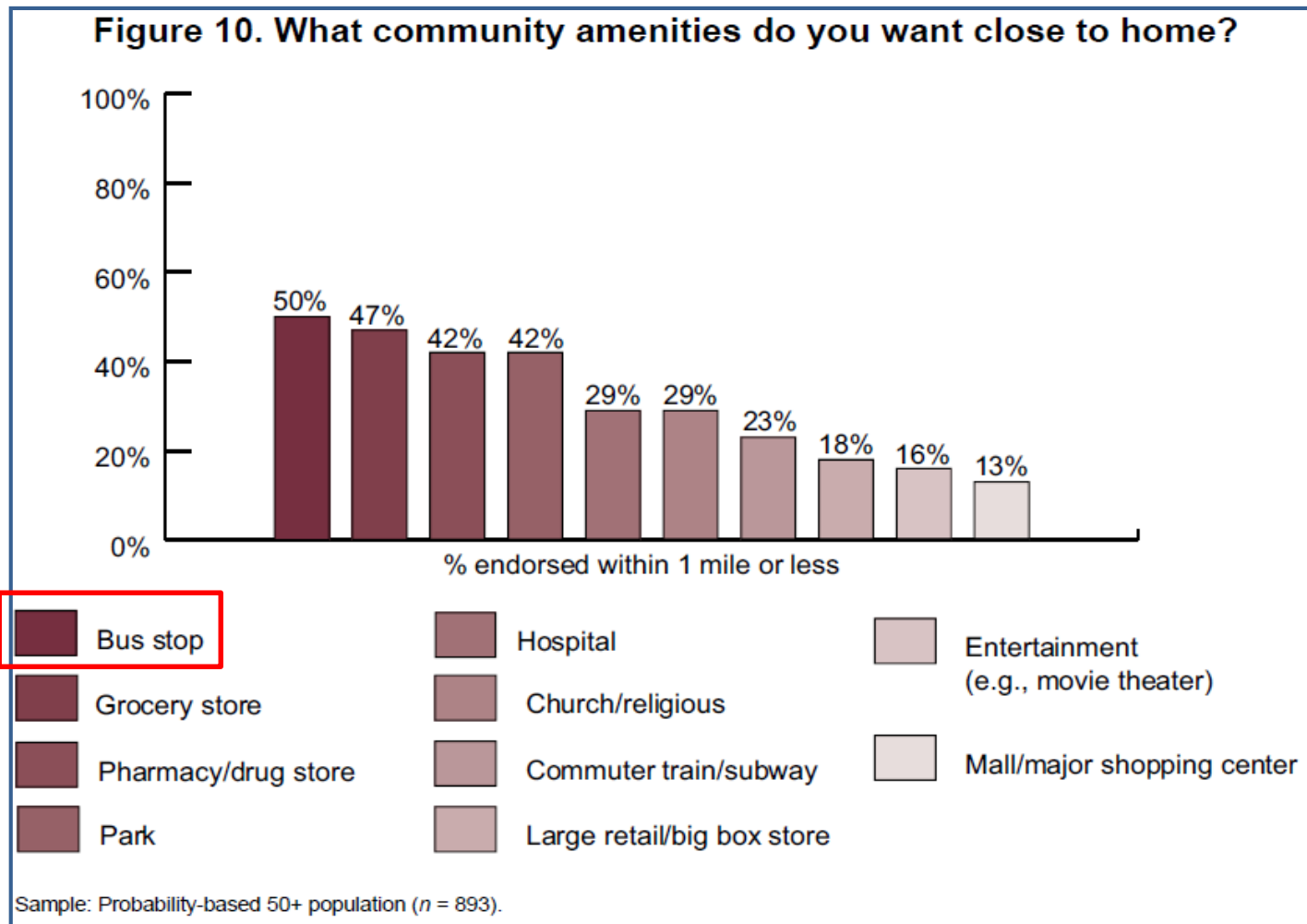
Aging-<u>Friendliness</u> and Land Use

4. Access to public transportation

Public transit access is presumed to be a plus for older people, because it offers them access to destinations to which they may not feel comfortable driving.

as measured by **local bus stops per square mile**

[bus more important for local trips, rail for regional trips]

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From AARP report *What Is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults*

Figure 10. What community amenities do you want close to home?

Sample: Probability-based 50+ population (*n* = 893).
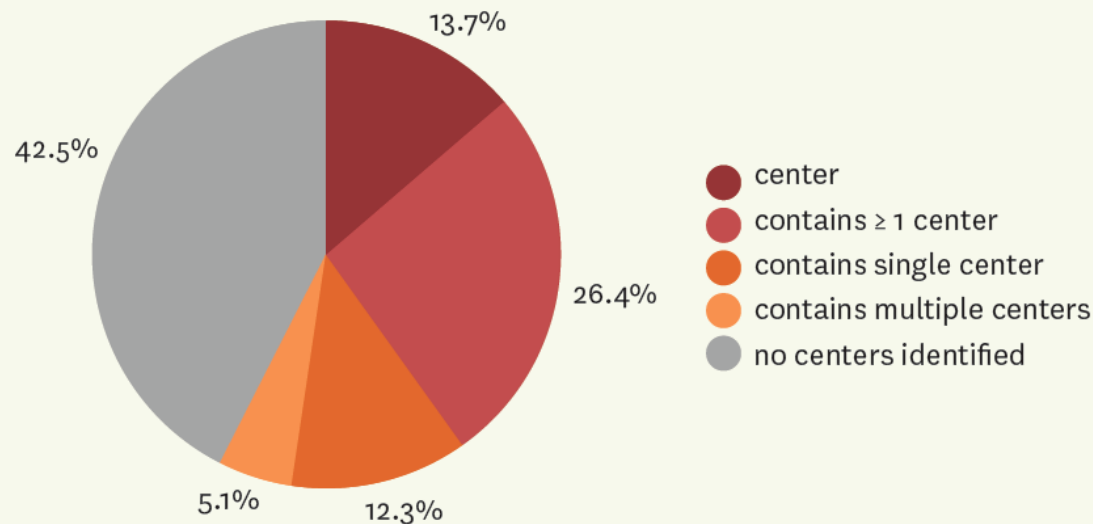
Aging-<u>Friendliness</u> and Land Use

1. Density – are destinations close together?

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The land-use characteristics that make a place good for older people are the same "smart-growth" features that make it easier for *everybody* to get around.

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Example: Distribution of 55+ Population vs. Presence of a "Downtown"

FIGURE 5. PERCENT OF 55+ POPULATION LIVING IN MUNICIPALITIES CLASSIFIED BY PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF A MIXED-USE CENTER

- 13.7% center
- 26.4% contains ≥ 1 center
- 12.3% contains single center
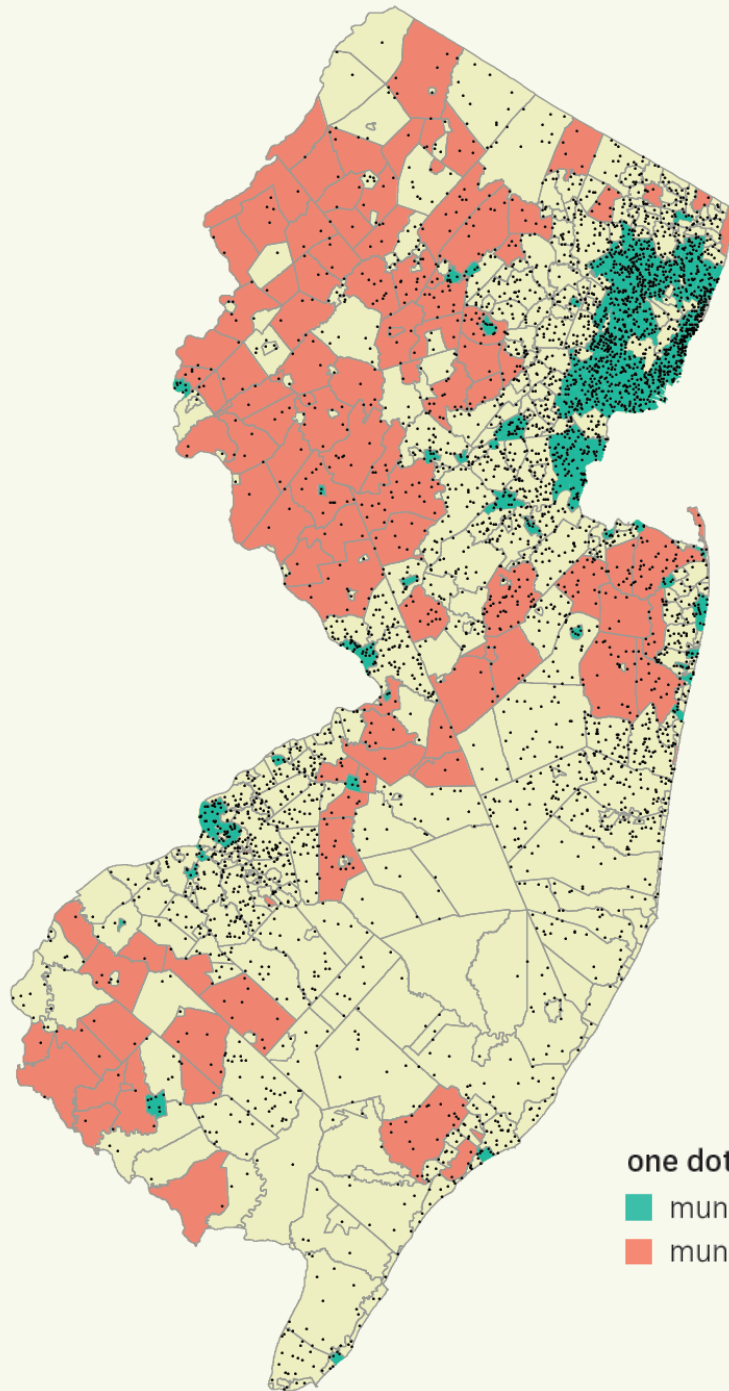- 5.1% contains multiple centers
- 42.5% no centers identified

More than 40 percent of New Jersey residents aged 55 or older live in places that do not have a "downtown" area where many kinds of destinations are located close together

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Aging-Friendliness and Land Use

Good news: 31.3 percent of all New Jersey residents aged 55 or older live in one of the 107 municipalities that score well on all four aging-friendliness development metrics.

Bad news: 13.1 percent – almost 300,000 people – live in one of the 109 municipalities that score poorly on all four.

one dot = 500 people aged 55+
- municipalities scoring well on all 4 metrics
- municipalities scoring poorly on all 4 metrics

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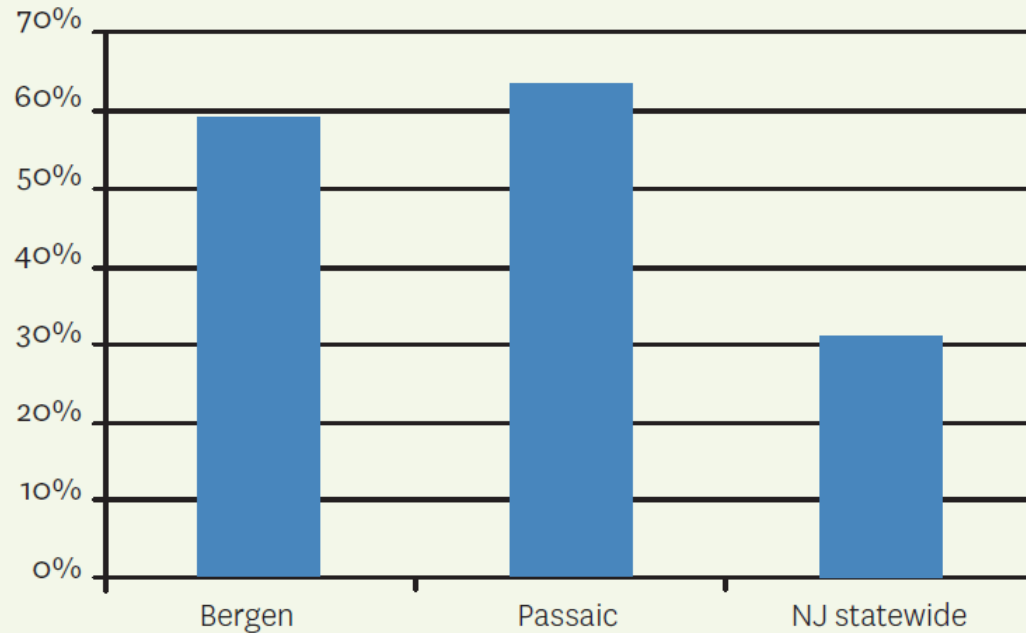# Aging-*friendly*, but…aging-*ready?*

More than just development patterns:

- Housing types

- Housing unit size

- **Housing affordability**

- Crime

- Pedestrian safety (sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic light timing, vehicle speeds….)

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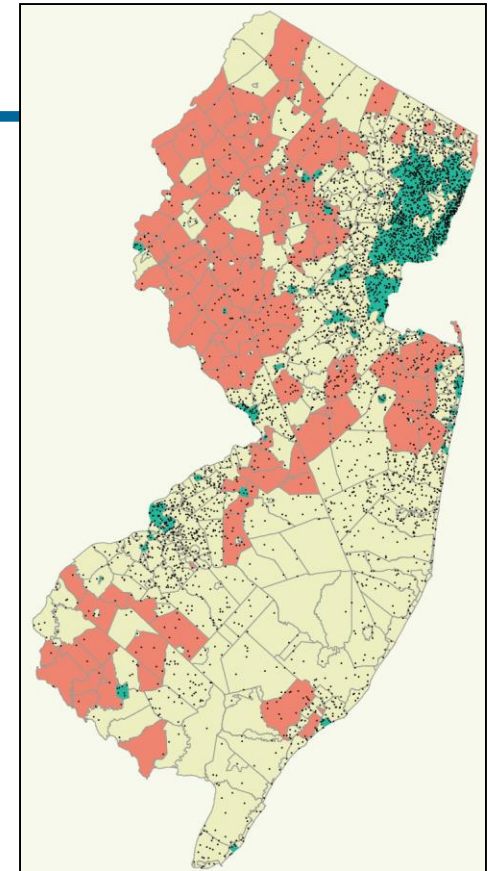# Aging-*friendly*, but…aging-*ready?*

FIGURE 6A. PERCENT OF THE 55+ POPULATION LIVING IN A MUNICIPALITY THAT SCORES WELL ON ALL FOUR SENIOR-FRIENDLY CRITERIA

Aging-Friendly But Not Affordable

county	% of 65+ HHs that are cost-burdened	rank (among 21 counties)	% of 65+ **owner** HHs that are cost-burdened	rank	% of 65+ **renter** HHs that are cost-burdened	rank	median gross rent for renter HHs w/ HHer 65+	rank
Essex	55.1%	1	50.3%	3	61.8%	6	780	16
Hudson	54.5%	2	52.2%	1	56.6%	17	738	18
Passaic	53.8%	3	50.9%	2	60.0%	9	873	11
Union	53.4%	4	49.3%	4	64.4%	1	910	10
Bergen	49.0%	5	46.2%	5	57.4%	14	1,105	3
New Jersey	47.5%		42.3%		59.4%			

Creating Places to Age

A Municipal Guide to Best Land-Use Practices

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Creating Places To Age

In places that already have "good bones":

- **Add to and diversify the housing stock**

- Address safety issues
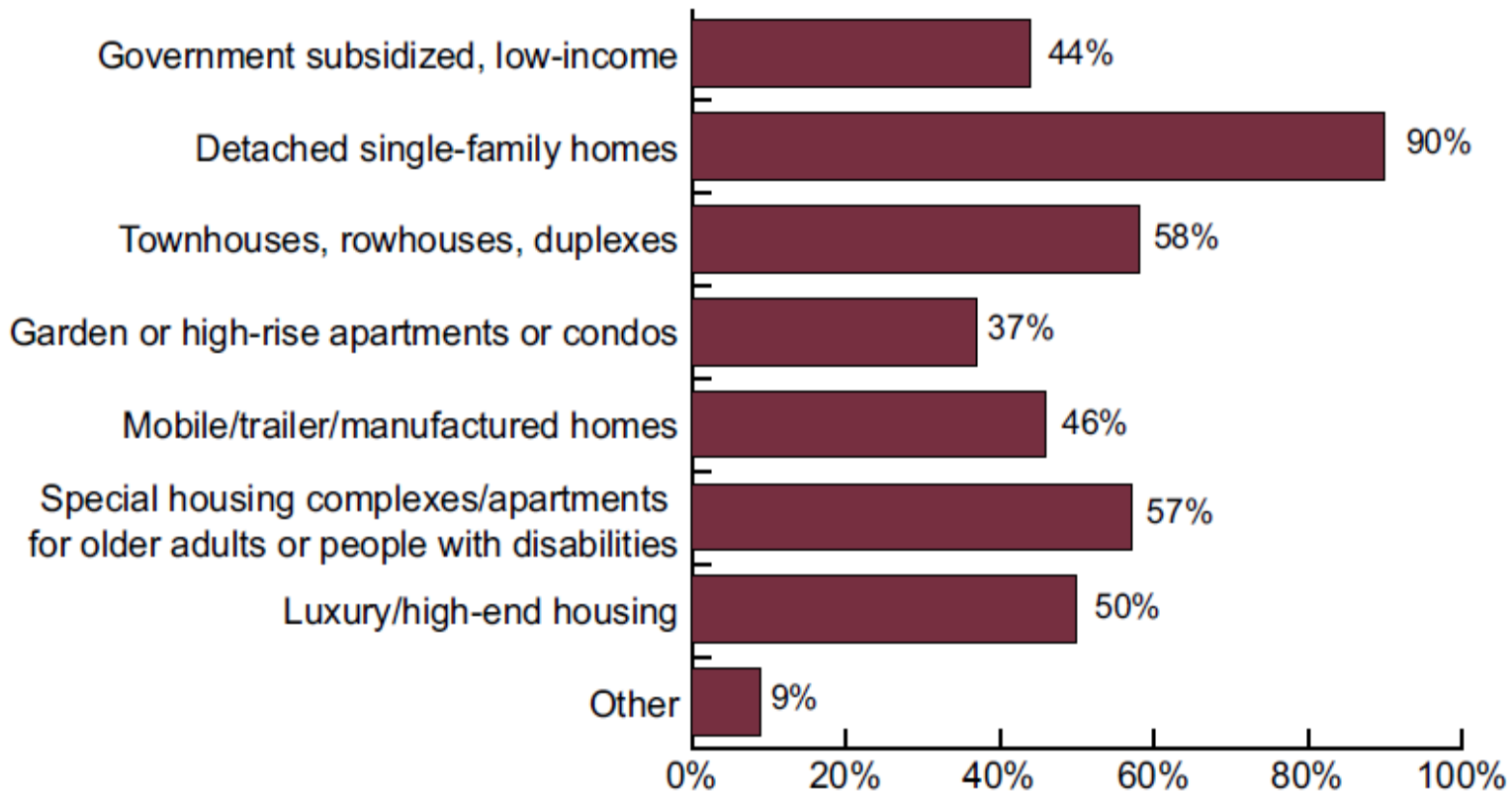
In places that score poorly:

- Create brand-new "downtowns" (e.g. Robbinsville Town Center, Plainsboro)

- Retrofit existing single-use development to make more mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly (e.g. Willingboro, Echelon Mall, Somerdale)

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Add to and diversify the housing stock:
Alternatives to Detached Single-Family Housing

- **Manageability**: Smaller homes, especially those in multi-unit buildings, are easier and less time-consuming to clean and maintain

- **Affordability**: Smaller homes are generally more affordable, both to purchase and to maintain.

- **Accessibility**: Single-level apartments are more easily accessible to people experiencing mobility impairments who have trouble climbing stairs.

- **Safety**: In multi-unit apartment buildings or in single-family attached housing (i.e. townhouses/rowhouses), neighbors live close enough that they can easily check in on one another.

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From AARP report *What Is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults*

Figure 9. What types of homes are available in your community?

Type of home	Percentage
Government subsidized, low-income	44%
Detached single-family homes	90%
Townhouses, rowhouses, duplexes	58%
Garden or high-rise apartments or condos	37%
Mobile/trailer/manufactured homes	46%
Special housing complexes/apartments for older adults or people with disabilities	57%
Luxury/high-end housing	50%
Other	9%

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Aging-ready?
Time to start thinking about it

From AARP report *What Is Livable? Community Preferences of Older Adults*:

Figure 1. Have you thought about being able to live in your community as you age?

Sample: Probability-based 50+ population (*n* = 893).
Note: Totals may not add to 100% because of rounding or because respondents did not provide an answer.
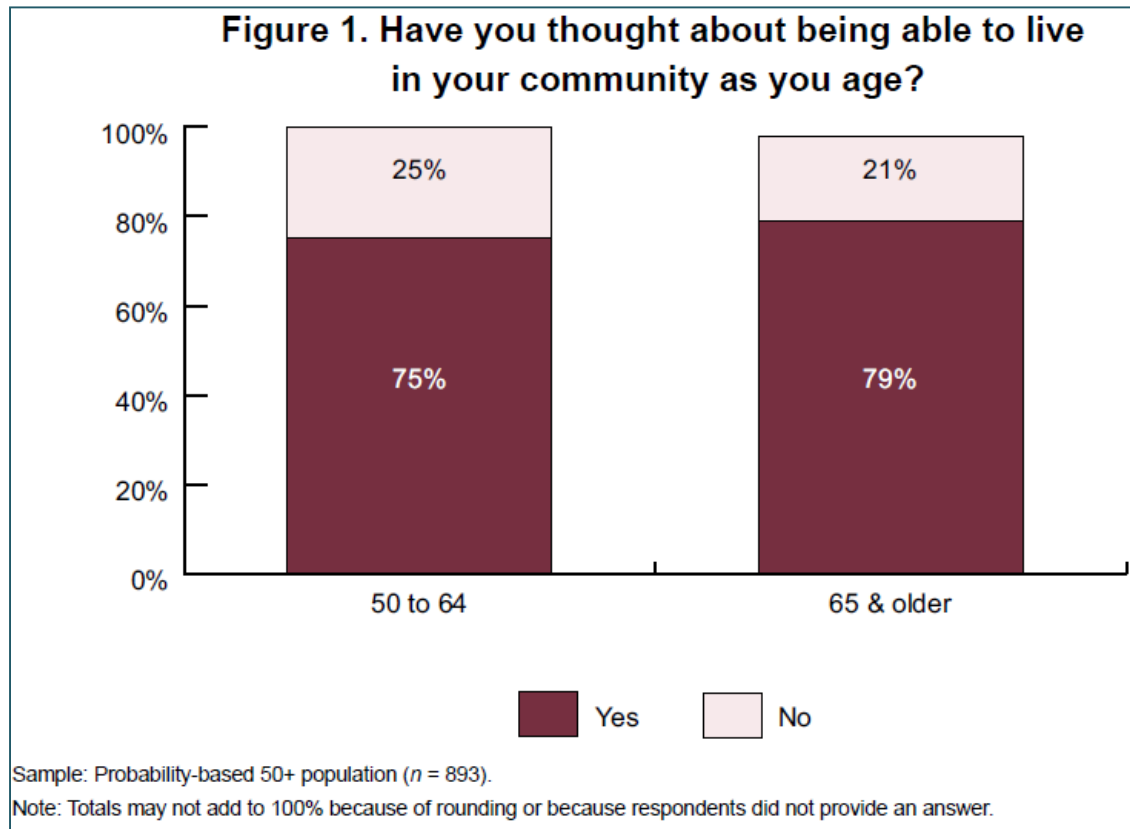
Thank you!

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