

Healthy Community Survey

A component of
Healthy Places by Design

Prepared, distributed, collected and analyzed through a partnership between:
The Town of South Kingstown
The South County YMCA
Rhode Island Department of Health



South Kingstown Community Survey Summary

The Town of South Kingstown, working with South County YMCA and the Rhode Island Department of Health, sought to understand residents' exercise and eating behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs through the administration of a ten-minute survey. The information collected through the survey will be used to develop policies that are supportive of healthy lifestyles as part of the Healthy Places by Design project. Information gathered from survey will be kept anonymous.

Survey Administration and Outreach

- The survey was open for responses from October 7 to October 28, 2011.
- 314 complete surveys were returned.
- The survey link was emailed, posted on the project and town websites and in the South Kingstown Patch. A postcard with the survey link was mailed to 500 addresses on the tax roll and 214 stakeholder groups. Hard copies were available in 9 locations across town. The Narragansett Times article with hard copy locations and survey link published. Please see the full report for further details.

Survey Results Summary

Civic Involvement and Community Beliefs

South Kingstown Detailed Survey Results

Survey Open: October 7-28, 2011

Total Responses: 314 (completes)

Survey Administration and Outreach

1. 714 postcards were mailed with the survey link to 500 randomly selected addresses on the tax roll and 214 stakeholder groups.
2. The survey link was emailed to approximately 400 stakeholders (Libraries, Land Trust, Fire Department, Civic Groups) and posted on Facebook, the Healthy Places by Design web site, the South Kingstown town web site, and the South Kingstown Patch
3. The Narragansett Times published an article with hard copy locations and the survey link.
4. Flyers with the link were distributed at grocery stores, area businesses, Main Street Merchants Association, Chamber of Commerce, project workshops, and the Community Healthy Living Index focus groups hosted by the YMCA.
5. Hard copy survey locations were set up in 9 locations throughout town: Town Hall, YMCA, Neighborhood Guild (Town recreation building), Senior Center, Jonnycake Center Food Pantry, Thundermist Health Center of South County, and 3 South Kingstown Libraries.

How to Read This Report

1. For each question, the number of respondents who answered the question is represented as “(N=#)”. For example, for the question on Neighborhoods, below, N=314, means that 314 people answered that specific question.
2. The number of responses for each answer is depicted as “n=#”. For example, in the question below, 140 respondents indicated that they lived in “Wakefield”, therefore n=140.
3. The percentage of respondents indicating a particular response is represented as (#), just after the response number. The percentage is determined as the proportion of answer responses “n=#”, out of the total question respondents “(N=#)”. For example, the percentage of respondents who indicated that they live in Wakefield in the below question is 44.6%, or 140 out of 314.
4. For the Demographic questions, the most frequent response is shown in **bold**.
5. Throughout the report, “Agreement” includes those who responded either “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” and “Disagreement” includes those who responded either “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” unless otherwise noted.
6. For this survey, neighborhood is defined as the area within a 10 minute walk (or half mile) from home.
7. For the results that refer to “low income” respondents, the definition is based on those people who answered the demographic question of having a yearly income of less than \$25,000.

Demographics of Survey Respondents:

Neighborhoods (N=314)

1. Wakefield	n=140	(44.6)
2. Peacedale	n=48	(15.3)
3. Kingston	n=32	(10.2)
4. In South Kingstown...	n=19	(6.0)
5. Matunuck	n=13	(4.1)
6. West Kingston	n=11	(3.5)
7. Perryville	n=9	(2.9)
8. East Matunuck	n=8	(2.6)
9. Green Hill	n=8	(2.6)
10. Indian Lake	n=6	(1.9)
11. Tuckertown	n=6	(1.9)
12. Snug Harbor	n=4	(1.3)
13. Middlebridge	n=3	(.96)
14. Usquepaugh	n=1	(.32)
*Ineligibles = I do not live in South Kingstown		n=6 (1.9)

Gender (N=305)

Female	n=246	(80.6)
Male	n=57	18.7)
Prefer not to answer	n=2	(.66)

Age (N=304)

18 – 30	n=17	(5.6)
31 – 45	n=85	(28.0)
46 – 64	n=124	(40.8)
65+	n=78	(25.7)

Race (N=297)

Non-Hispanic	n=289	(97.3)
Hispanic	n=8	(2.7)

Ethnicity (N=308)

American Indian/Alaskan Native	n=6	(1.9)
Asian	n=0	(0)
Black/African American	n=4	(1.3)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	n=2	(.65)
White	n=280	(90.9)
Other	n=8	(2.6)
Prefer not to answer	n=11	(3.6)

Education (N=306)

High School	n=26	(8.5)
Community College	n=10	(3.3)
Some college	n=33	(10.8)
Bachelor's degree	n=102	(33.3)
Graduate Degree	n=119	(38.9)

Other	n=14	(4.6)
Prefer not to answer	n=2	(.65)

Yearly income (N=304)

Less than \$25,000	n=29	(9.5)
\$25,000 - \$50,000	n=41	(13.5)
\$50,000 - \$75,000	n=49	(16.1)
\$75,000 - \$100,000	n=61	(20.1)
\$100,000 - \$150,000	n=54	(17.8)
\$150,000 or more	n=22	(7.2)
Prefer not to answer	n=48	(15.8)

Additional Demographics:

- Mean # children in household = .91
- Mean # adults in household = 1.99
- 99% English spoken most often at home
- 96% Registered voters
- 8.3% Food stamp recipients
- 1.6% WIC recipients

Limitations of this survey

Although attempts were made to distribute the survey as widely as possible (via mail, email, hard copy, etc.), the survey population was a convenience sample. This means that respondents were not randomly chosen (with the exception of the tax roll sample) and results may differ slightly from the behaviors and attitudes of the town in general. When we compared the survey population to the Census data, we found that the population taking this survey was more educated, had higher incomes, and was slightly older than the South Kingstown population as a whole. Also, more women than men took the survey. Finally, for data that related to “low-income” responses, the “n” was relatively small (n=29).

Survey Responses

Civic Involvement and Community Characteristics

- 75% of respondents get information about what is going on in the community from the newspaper, followed by “word of mouth” (69%) and “information from community organizations” (48%).
- 58% belong to any social, religious, neighborhood or community organization (such as block clubs or parent teacher associations).
- 206 respondents (66%) have participated in town meetings, and of those respondents, 123 (60%) participated in town meetings where the topic was community planning.
- 35% of respondents agreed¹ that sugar-sweetened beverages were advertised a lot in their neighborhood whereas only 11% agreed that tobacco products were. Low-income respondents² indicated higher agreement with the statements that sugar-sweetened beverages (62%) and tobacco products (21%) were advertised a lot in their neighborhood.
- 55% of respondents believe that policy makers and town officials are willing to make positive changes in my community. 30% answered “not sure”.
- 79% of respondents are willing to work with policy makers to make changes in the community.

Safety and Appearance of Neighborhoods

- 249 respondents (82%) agree with the statement that “Besides the streets, there are places to be physically active in my neighborhood.” This did not vary widely when comparing the “town centers” to other neighborhoods.³
- 198 respondents (65%) disagree⁴ with that there are sidewalks on most of the streets in their neighborhoods. Less respondents living in the “town center” disagreed (49%), however, 89% of respondents living in more rural neighborhoods disagreed.
- 45% of all respondents disagreed that sidewalks were well maintained (35% of respondents from more rural neighborhoods). 27% of respondents answered “not applicable” likely due to the absence of sidewalks in their respective neighborhoods.
- 93 (30%) of respondents strongly disagreed that there are places to walk to for services like dry cleaning, groceries, post office, or library. 67% of those respondents who live outside of the “town center” strongly disagreed. About half (47%) of all respondents agreed that there were services available to which to walk compared to those respondents who live inside the town center of whom 62% agreed.
- 87% of respondents agreed that in their neighborhoods there are attractive outdoor areas, bike trails are easy to get to (74%), parks, playgrounds, and trails are well maintained (80%), and neighborhoods are generally free from litter (80%). Respondents living outside of “town center” were less likely to agree that bike trails are easy to get to

¹ Agreement includes those who responded either “agree” or “strongly agree”.

² Low-income is defined as a yearly income of less than \$25,000.

³ Peacedale and Wakefield were consolidated to compare the “centers” with more rural neighborhoods.

⁴ Disagreement includes those who responded either “disagree” or “strongly disagree”.

(54%) and more likely to agree that parks, playgrounds, and trails are well maintained (88%).

- 79% of respondents feel safe in parks, playgrounds, and trails in my neighborhood, 88% free safe from *crime* when “walking or riding my bike”. However, only 47% of respondents feel safe from *traffic* when walking or bike riding. Respondents living in neighborhoods outside of “town center” are more likely to feel safe from both crime (92%) and traffic (52%)

Food Behaviors and Access

- On average, survey respondents are eating two or more servings of fruits 5 days per week (m=5.22) and three or more servings of vegetables 5 days per week (m=5.1).
- On average, survey respondents are eating fast food less than 1 day per week (m=.43) and drinking sugar-sweetened beverages 1 day a week (m=1.1). However, low-income respondents, have higher consumption patterns, eating fast food 1 day per week (m=1.07) and drinking sugar-sweetened beverages 2 days per week (m=2). 105 respondents are drinking sugar sweetened beverages at least once per week and drink an average of 1 drink per day (m=1.13) with low-income respondents drinking 2 per day (m=1.83).
- Over half of respondents garden at home (48%) or in a community garden (3%).
- 40% of respondents (67% of those living outside of town center) reported there being no store that sells groceries in their neighborhood.⁵ The most common places that sell groceries in respondents’ neighborhoods included farmers’ markets/stands (16%), supermarkets (12%), convenience stores (12%), and small markets (12%).
- 52% of respondents report that stores in their neighborhoods sell fruits and vegetables.
- 69% of respondents get groceries most often from a store outside of their neighborhood but not “too far away”. 18% get groceries in their neighborhood; however, only 2% of those living outside of “town center” get groceries in their neighborhood.
- 78% of all respondents go most often to a supermarket for groceries. The majority of respondents get to the store for groceries by driving (95%).
- 100% of respondents find fresh fruits and vegetables available to buy at the store they go to most often. Respondents find the price of these fruits and vegetables to be “moderate” (76%) and quality “moderate” or “high” (98%). However, low-income respondents were less likely to find the price “moderate” (59%).
- 66% of *all* respondents have no barriers to purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables in South Kingstown. However, when broken into low-income categories, only 41% of respondents with low-incomes had no barriers. Similarly, while 25% of *all* survey respondents find cost to be a barrier, 52% of *low-income* respondents indicate cost is a barrier. Additional barriers included: lack of availability in local stores (4%), lack of convenient farmers’ markets/stands (4%), low quality in local stores (2%), and dislike of fruits and vegetables themselves (2%) or for their families (2%).

Physical Activity Behaviors and Access

⁵ For this survey, neighborhood is defined as the area within a 10 minute walk (or half mile) from home.

- On average, survey respondents exercise for 30 minutes or more on 4 days per week (m=4.09).
- Survey respondents walk or bike for transportation (for example, to get to work, run errands, or go shopping) an average of 1 day per week (m=1.13). Low-income respondents are relying on walking or biking more, an average of 2 days per week (m=2.31).
- Public transportation is used on average less than one day per week (m=0.18).
- 71% of respondents can exercise *in their neighborhoods* on the sidewalks or roads. Respondents also exercise in their neighborhood on bike trails (61%), playgrounds or parks (42%), at a gym or recreation center⁶ (28%), the YMCA (24%), and other locations (19%)⁷. Only 4% of respondents feel they cannot exercise anywhere in their neighborhood.
- 38% of respondents exercise *in* their neighborhood compared to respondents who exercise outside of their neighborhood (33%) or at home (22%). Only 5% of respondents reported not exercising.
- Barriers to physical activity include: no sidewalks/sidewalks are poorly maintained in my neighborhood (22%), not having time (19%), not having parks or playgrounds in neighborhood (9%), and being too tired (10%). 9% of respondents state that “there are no places I want to walk to in my neighborhood.”
- 45% of respondents report no barriers to being physically active.

⁶ Includes the Guild, Riverbend, schools, and URI.

⁷ Includes beaches, hiking trails, and yoga.