

WESTFORD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

November 29th, 2023



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Westford Health
Department**

Today's Session

GOAL: Identify key priority areas that will be the focus points of a Westford-specific Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

10:00 - 10:15 am - Re-Cap: Adapting a Westford-Specific CHA/CHIP

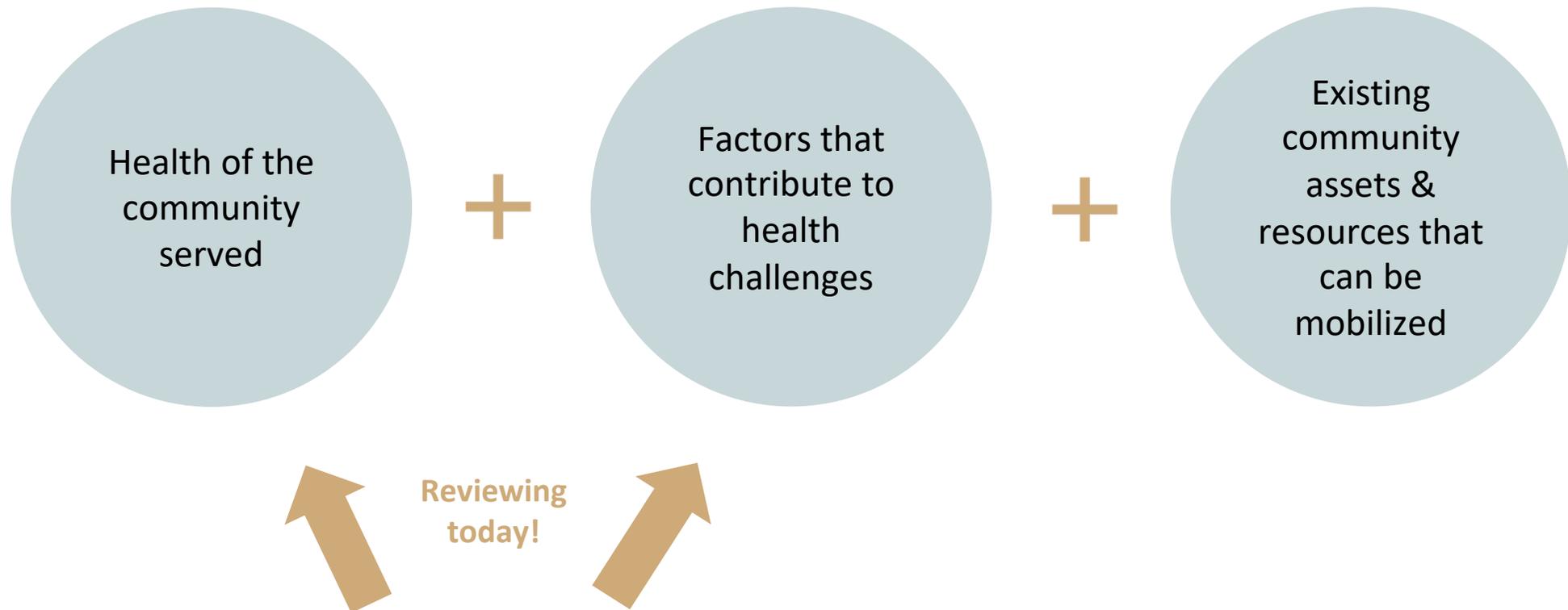
10:15 - 11:00 am - Westford-Specific Data Review

11:00 - 11:20 am - Prioritization Activity

11:20 - 11:30 am - Westford Stakeholder Survey Discussion

Re-Cap: Community Health Assessments (CHA)

A community health assessment (CHA) identifies and describes the...



Re-Cap: Community Health Improvement Plan

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) provides the basis for the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), a **long-term, systematic effort to address health and wellbeing needs in a community.**

The CHIP is a collective, community effort that...

Sets priorities and defines targeted actions for improving health and well-being

Strengthens partnerships and aligns the goals and strategies of community organizations

Addresses strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities in a community

Develops objectives and strategies for community health improvement actions

Re-Cap: GLHA Community Survey

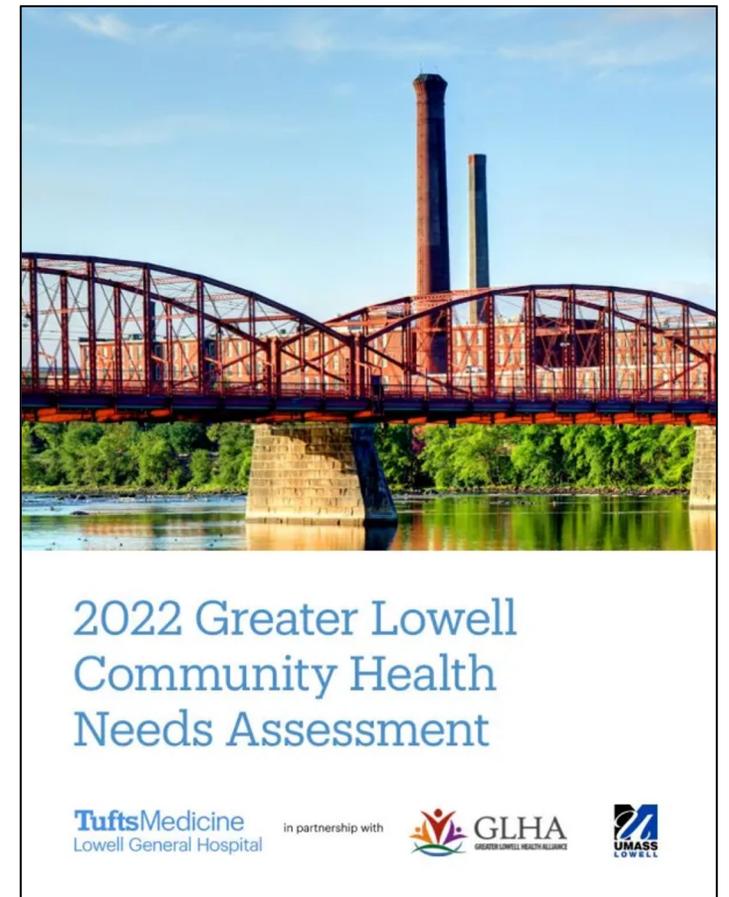
At our last meeting, we reviewed the top selected priorities by Westford residents as part of the 2022 Greater Lowell Health Alliance community survey.

This survey asked residents to select the three most important issues for each of the following categories:

Community Health Issues

Community Safety Issues

Community Resources



Top Westford Resident Responses

Community Health Issues

1. Mental Health
2. Heart Health
3. Environmental Health
4. COVID-19
5. Cancer

Community Safety Issues

1. Discrimination Based on Race
2. Domestic Violence
3. Sexual Assault
4. Unsafe Driving
5. Unsafe/Illegal Gun Ownership

Community Resources

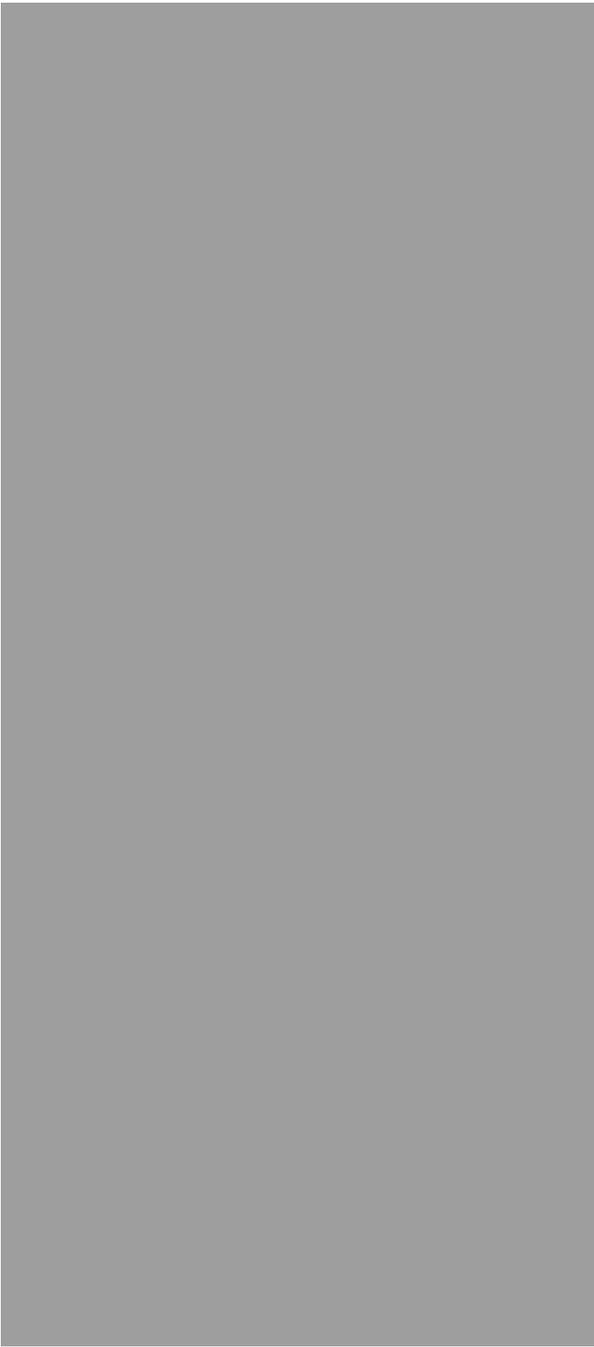
1. Access to Healthy Food
2. Access to Mental Health Services
3. Affordable Housing
4. Public Education
5. Emergency Health Services

The initial plan was to utilize the above responses to select key priority areas that would be the focus points of the Westford CHA and CHIP, but given the feedback and interest from the partnership in utilizing a broader data set to determine priorities, we will be reviewing available secondary data today to provide a basis for selecting priorities.

Adapting a Westford-Specific CHA & CHIP

CHA Lead	Greater Lowell Health Alliance Regional CHNA	Town of Westford CHA
Community Scope	Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Westford	Westford
Data Collection	Community Surveys Public Health Data Community Focus Groups Key Informant Interviews	GLHA Westford Community Survey Public Health Data Westford Stakeholder & School Counselor Survey
Outcome	Regional GLHA Community Health Improvement Plan	Westford Community Health Improvement Plan

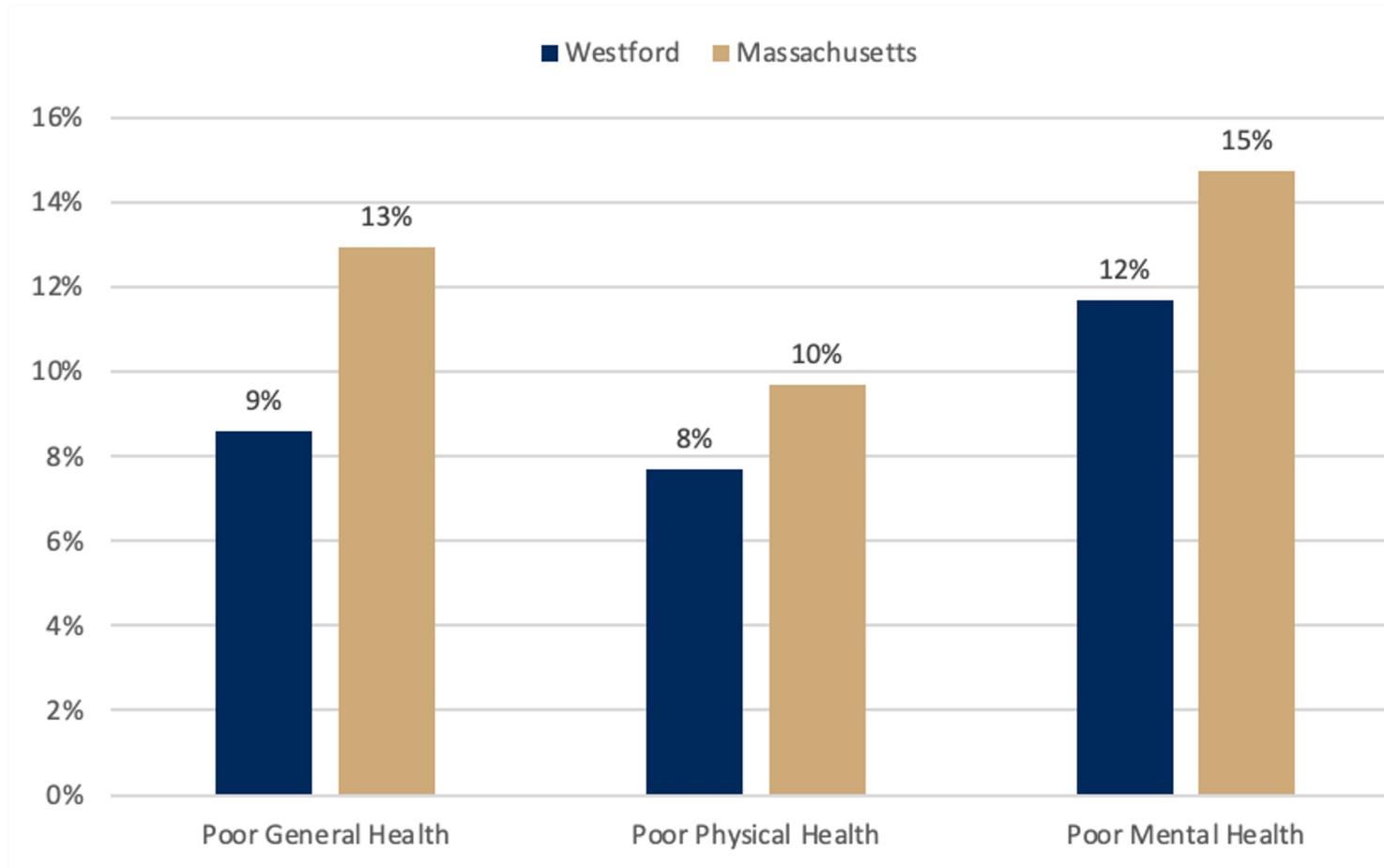
A subset of just Westford-specific data from the GLHA



HEALTH STATUS

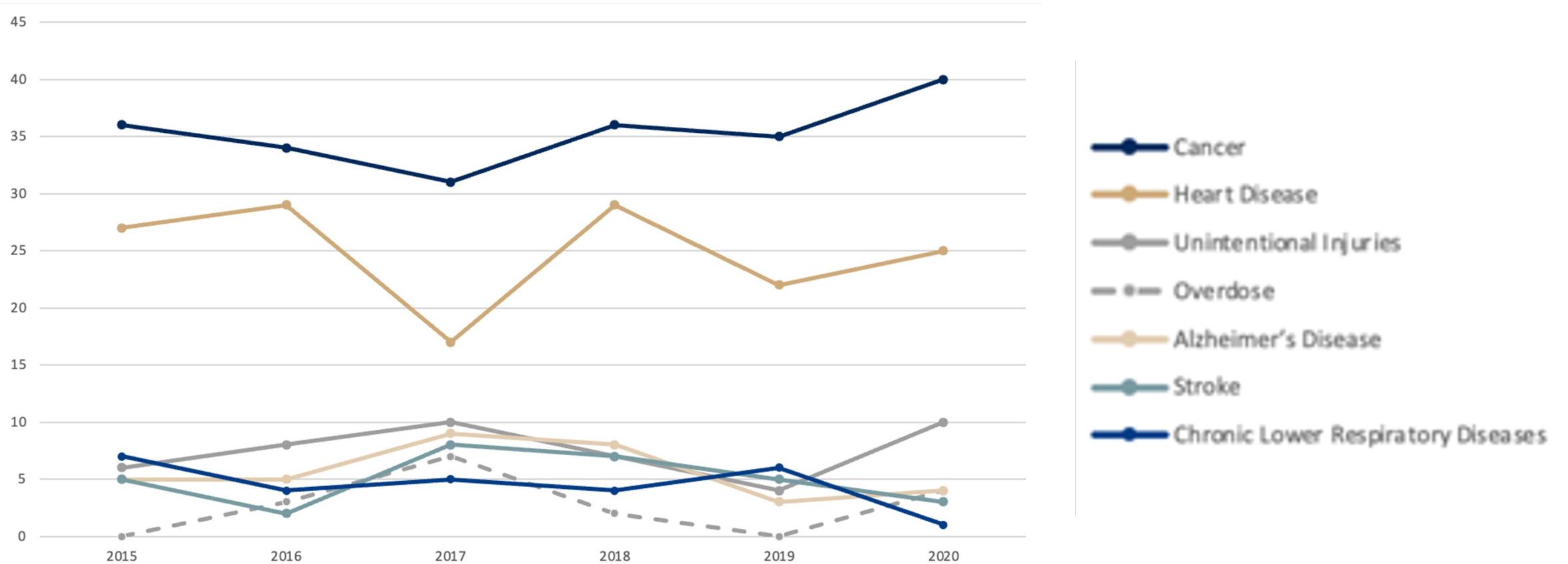
- General Health Status
- Leading Causes of Death
- Chronic Conditions
- Infectious Diseases
- Mental Health Experiences

General Health Status of Adults

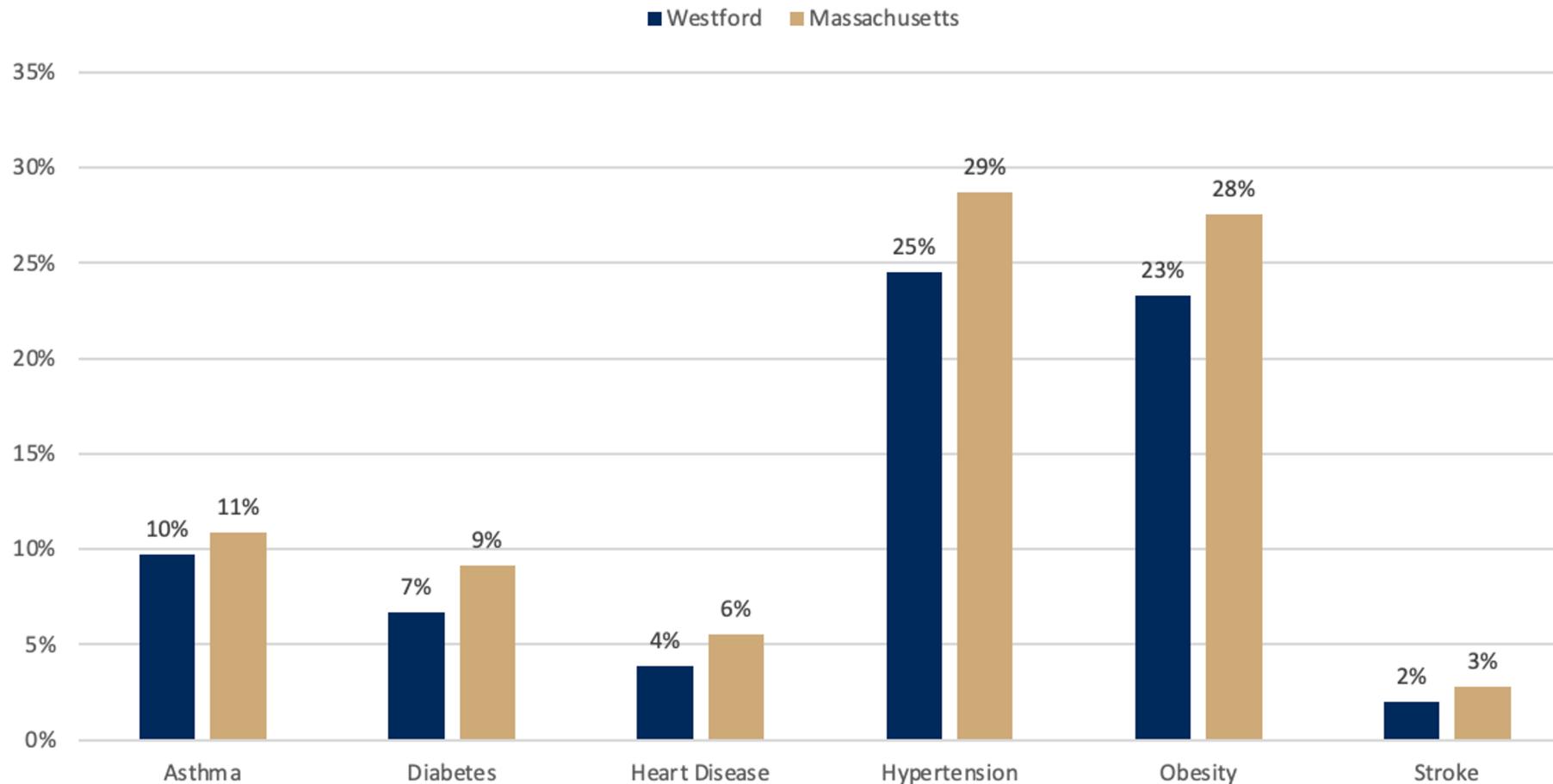


Leading Causes of Death in Westford

(# of deaths per year)



Prevalence of Chronic Conditions



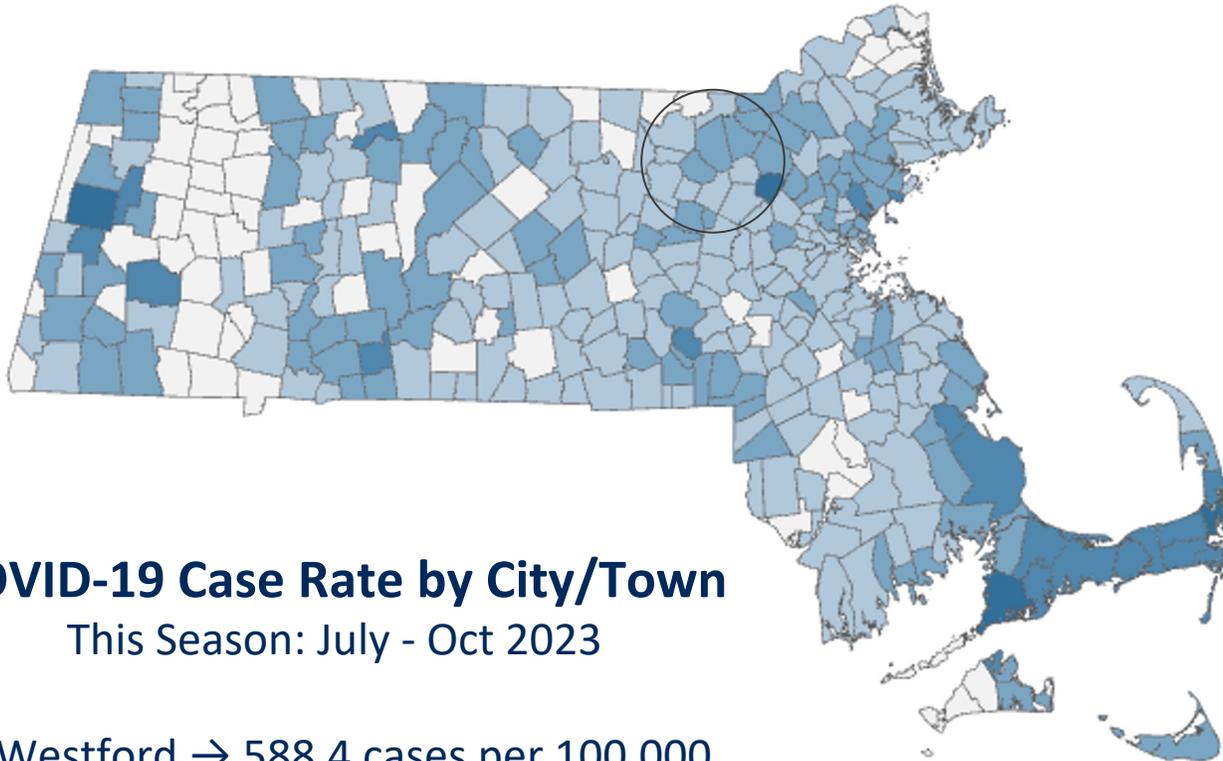
Overweight or Obese Children
Westford School District
Grades 1, 4, 5, 10

22.7%
of male students

18.0%
of female students

33%
of students statewide

Impact of COVID-19



COVID-19 Case Rate by City/Town

This Season: July - Oct 2023

Westford → 588.4 cases per 100,000

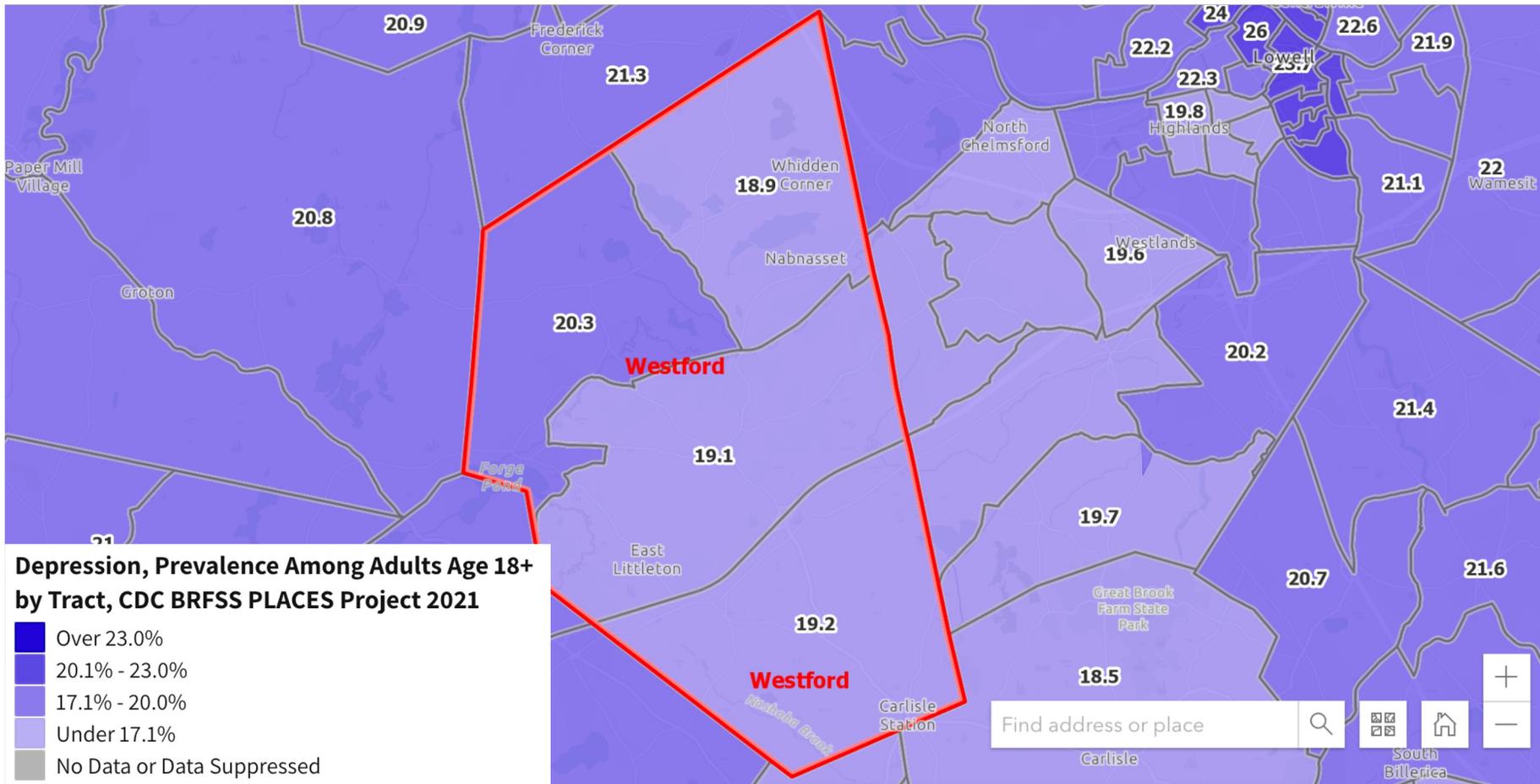
Massachusetts → 448.4 cases per 100,000

MA DPH COVID-19 Community Impact Survey

Fall 2020, 46 Westford Respondents

- 57% used alcohol in the past 30 days
- 54% reported 15+ poor mental health days in past 30 days
- 31% were worried about paying bills
- 24% had not gotten medical care that they needed
- 18% were worried about getting food/groceries
- 13% worried about getting medication

Depression Among Adults by Census Tract



19.3%
Westford Residents

20.9%
Massachusetts

19.5%
United States

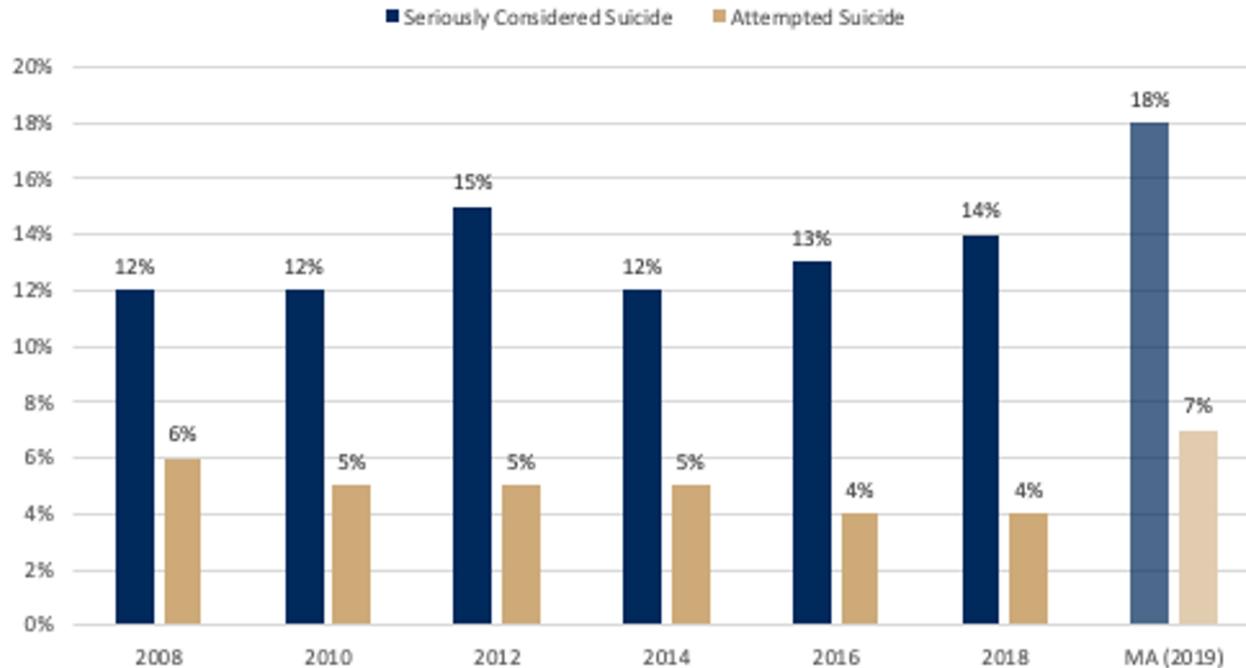
GLHA Community Survey:

184 Westford Respondents

33% report experiencing
mental health issues

Suicide / Suicidal Thoughts

Suicidal Ideation & Suicide Attempts Among Westford High School Students



Number of Deaths by Suicide per Year in Westford

2013	0
2014	1
2015	2
2016	5
2017	2
2018	2
2019	0
2020	2

GLHA Community Survey

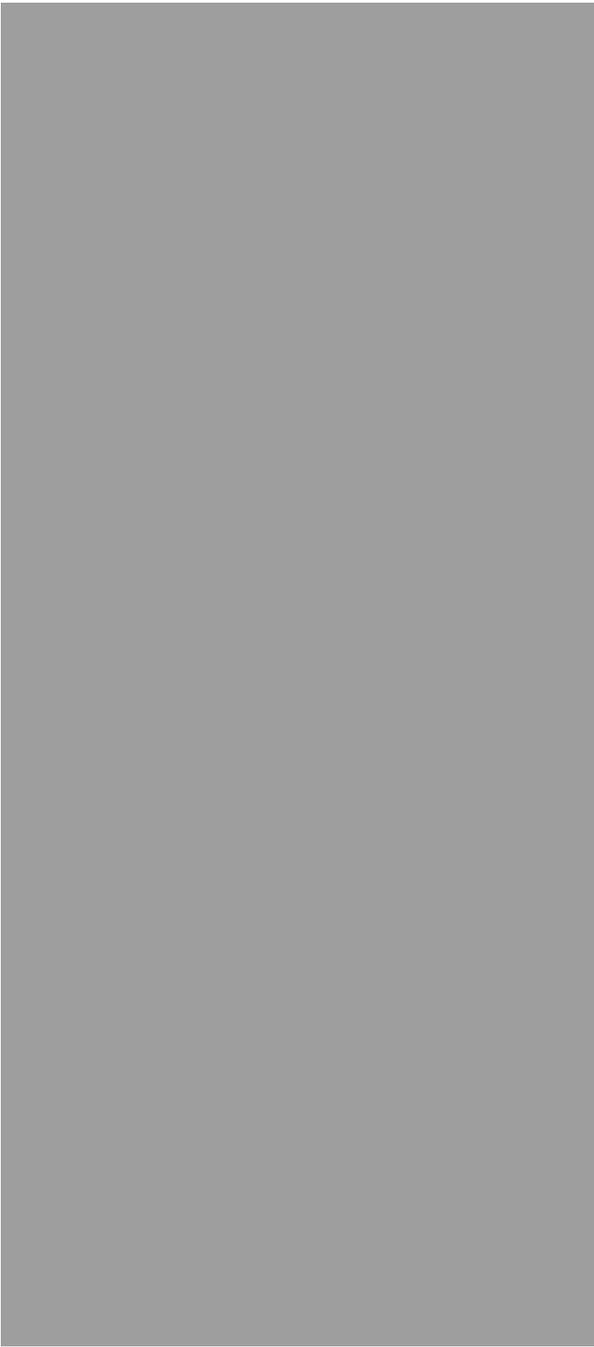
184 Westford Residents

13%

report that they experience suicidal thoughts

37%

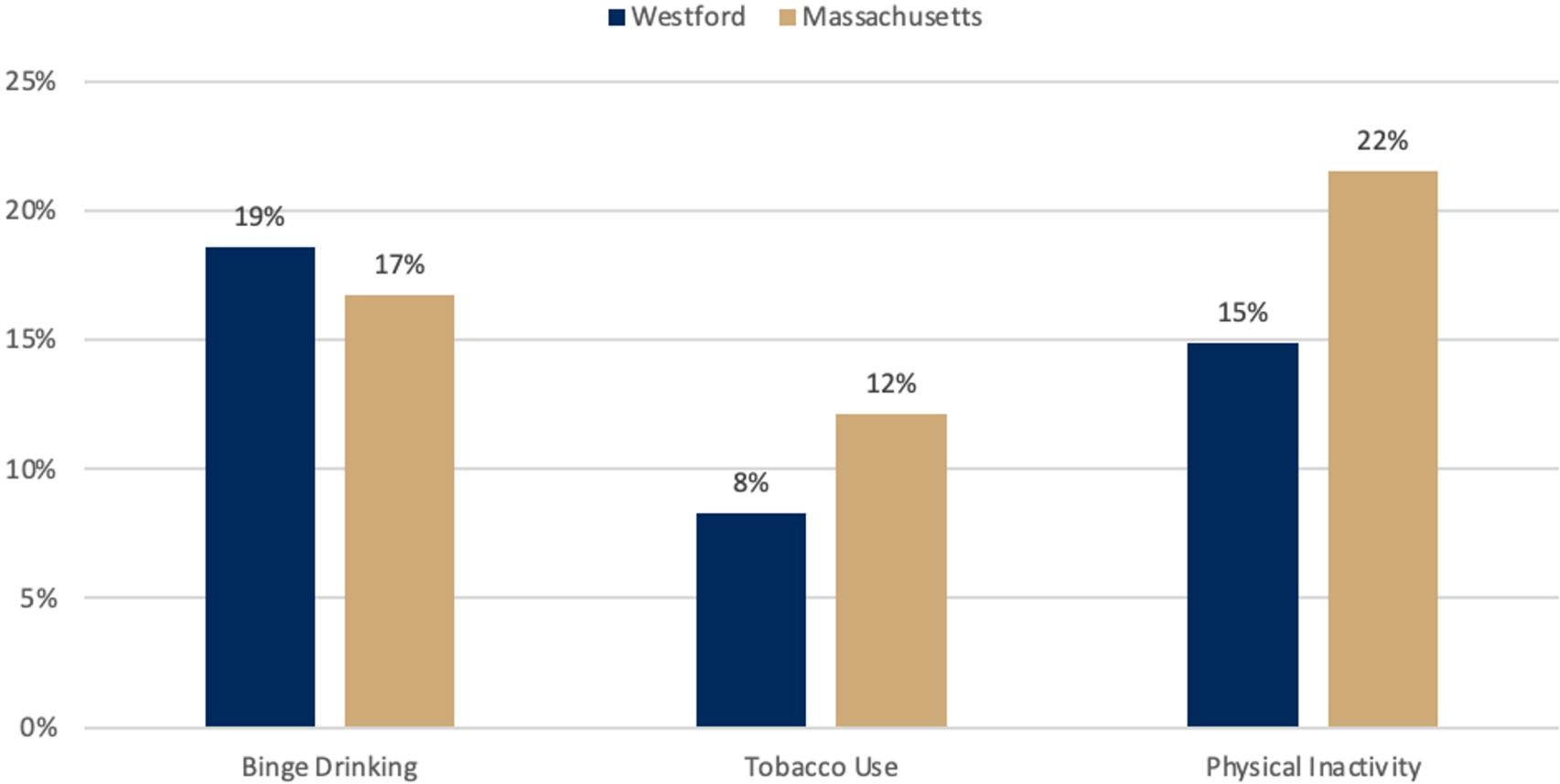
report that they know someone who experiences suicidal thoughts



HEALTH BEHAVIORS

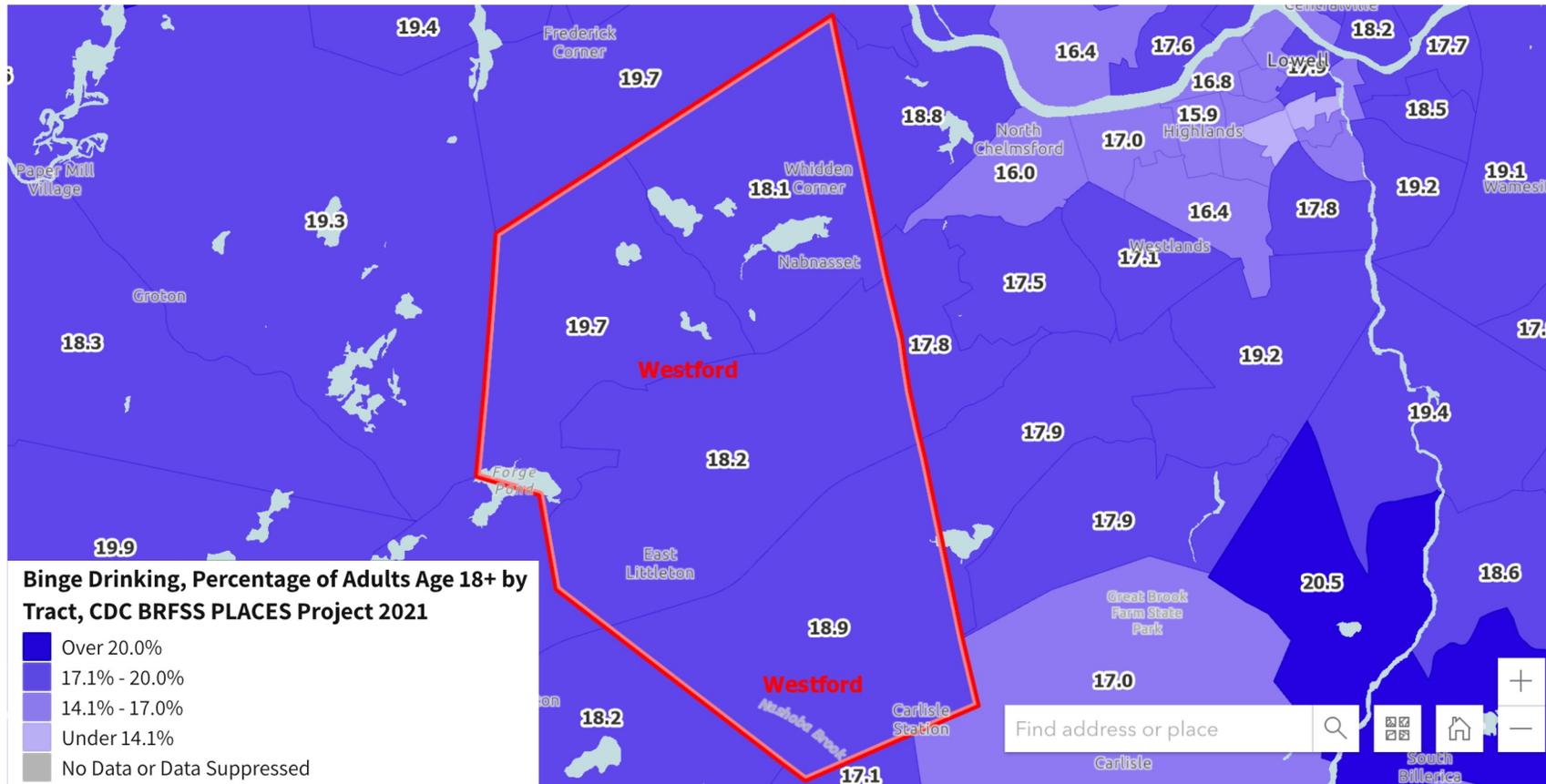
- Physical Inactivity
- Binge Drinking
- Tobacco Use
- Opioid Use

Health Risk Behaviors



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Accessed via the PLACES Data Portal. 2021 via PHIT

Binge Drinking



Age 60+ with Excessive Drinking

MA Healthy Aging Community Profile

15.9%

Westford

9.3%

Massachusetts

GLHA Community Survey

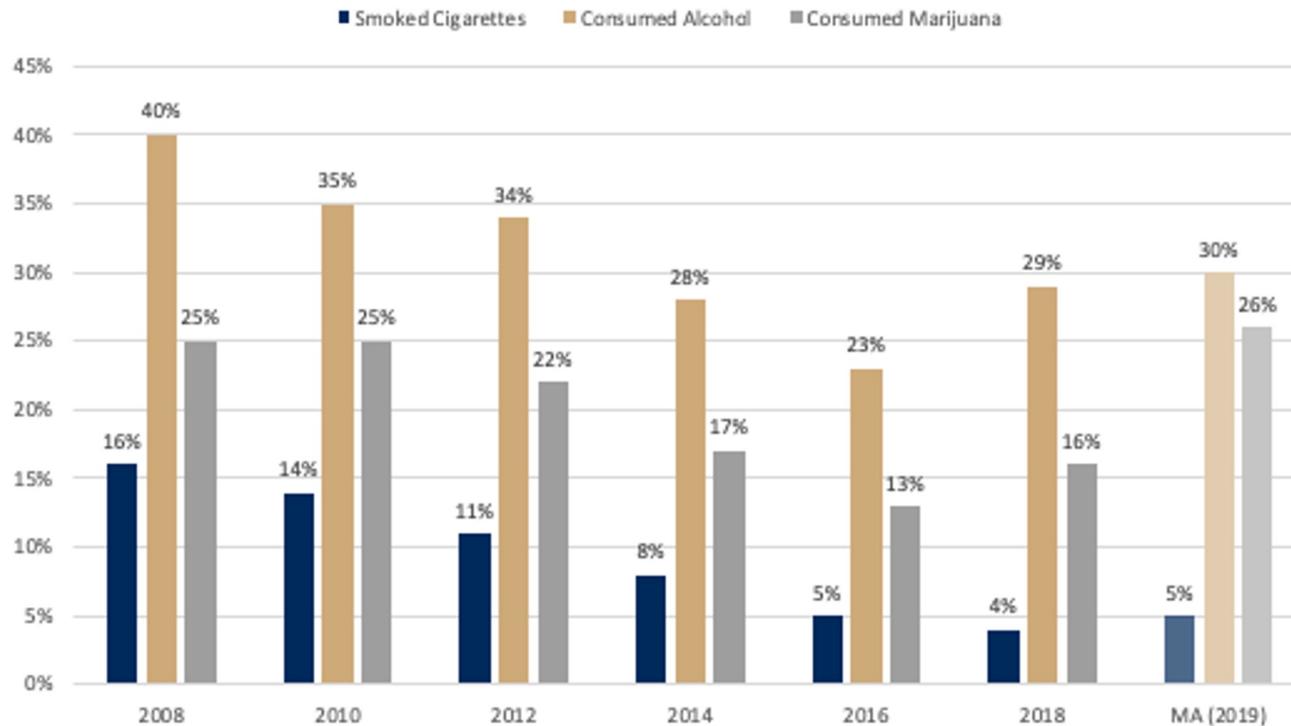
184 Westford Residents

8% responded that they have an issue with alcohol

45% said they know someone who has an issue with alcohol

Substance Use Among Adolescents

Substance Use in the Past 30 Days Among Westford High School Students

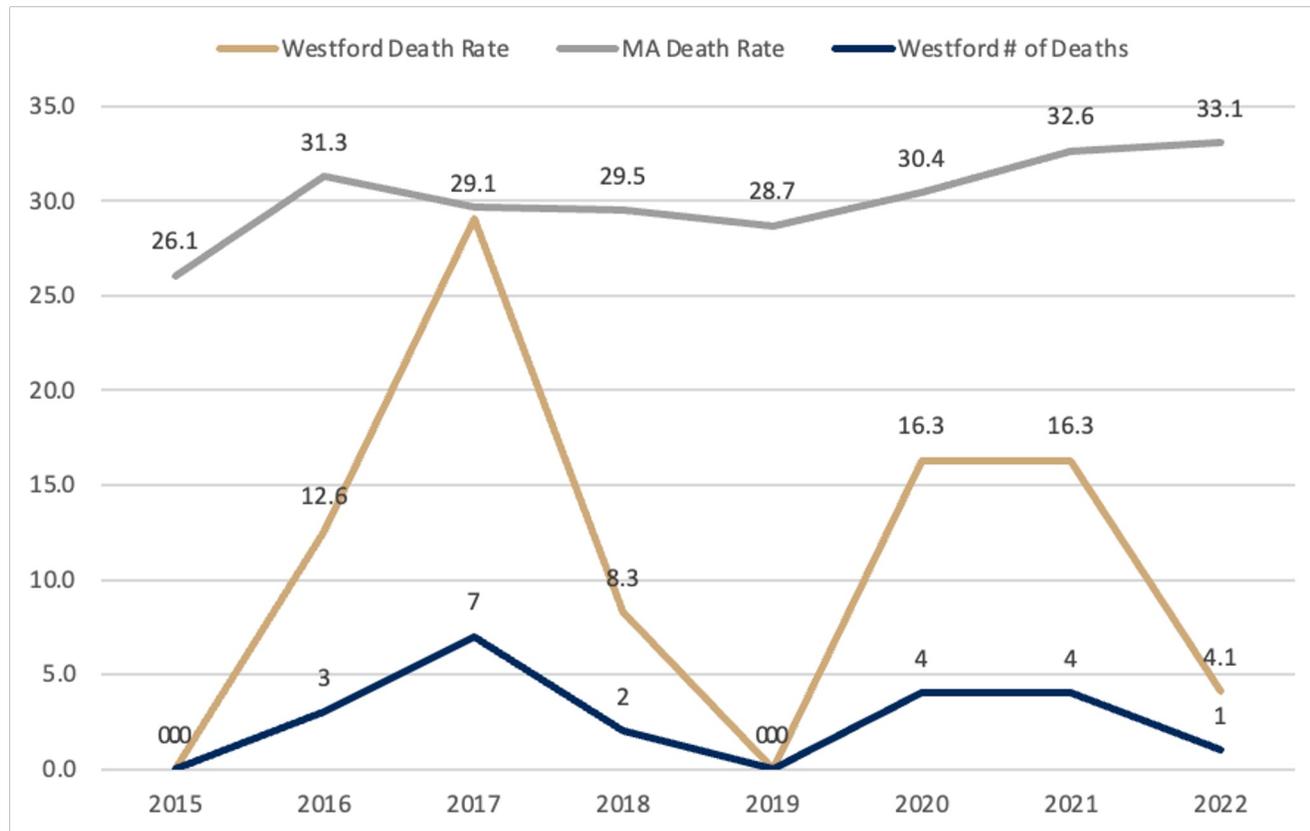


Vaping in the Past 30 Days Among Westford High School Students

Grade	2016 YRBS	2018 YRBS
6th	0%	1%
8th	3%	5%
9th	3%	24%
10th	9%	25%
11th	14%	34%
12th	18%	33%
<i>Total</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>21%</i>

Opioid Use and EMS Calls

Opioid-Related Overdose Deaths per 100,000 in Westford



EMS Opioid-Related Calls

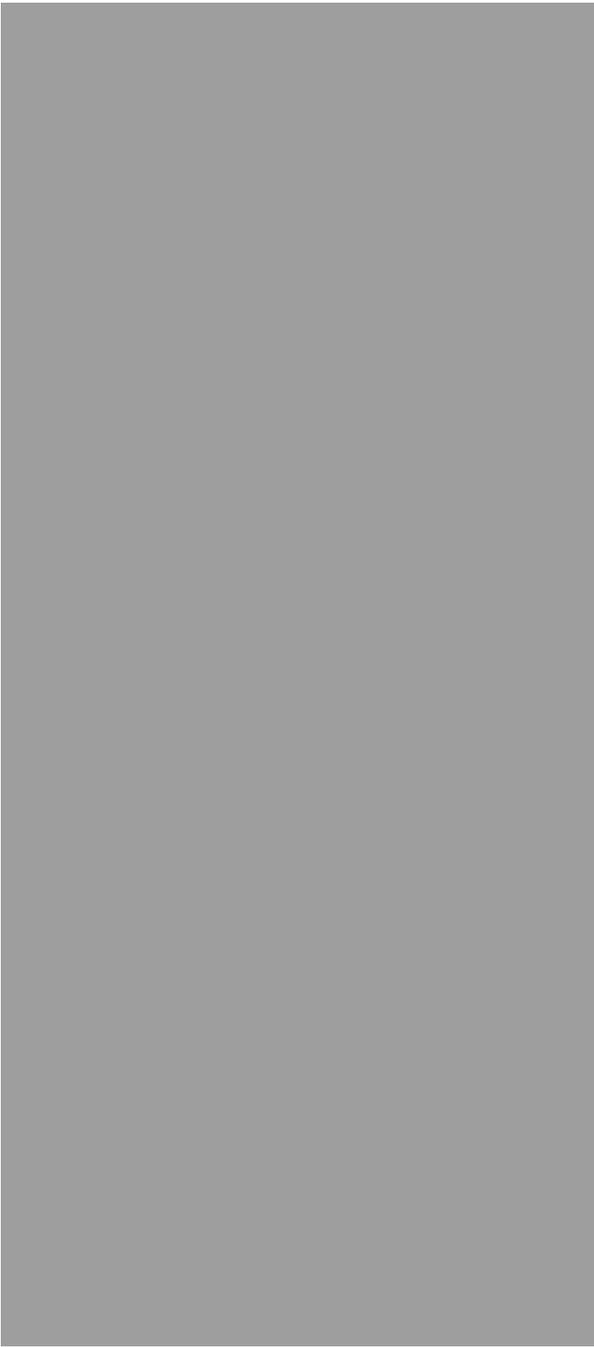
Year	# of Calls
2020	6
2021	21
2022	16

GLHA Community Survey:

184 Westford Respondents

3% report an issue with substances

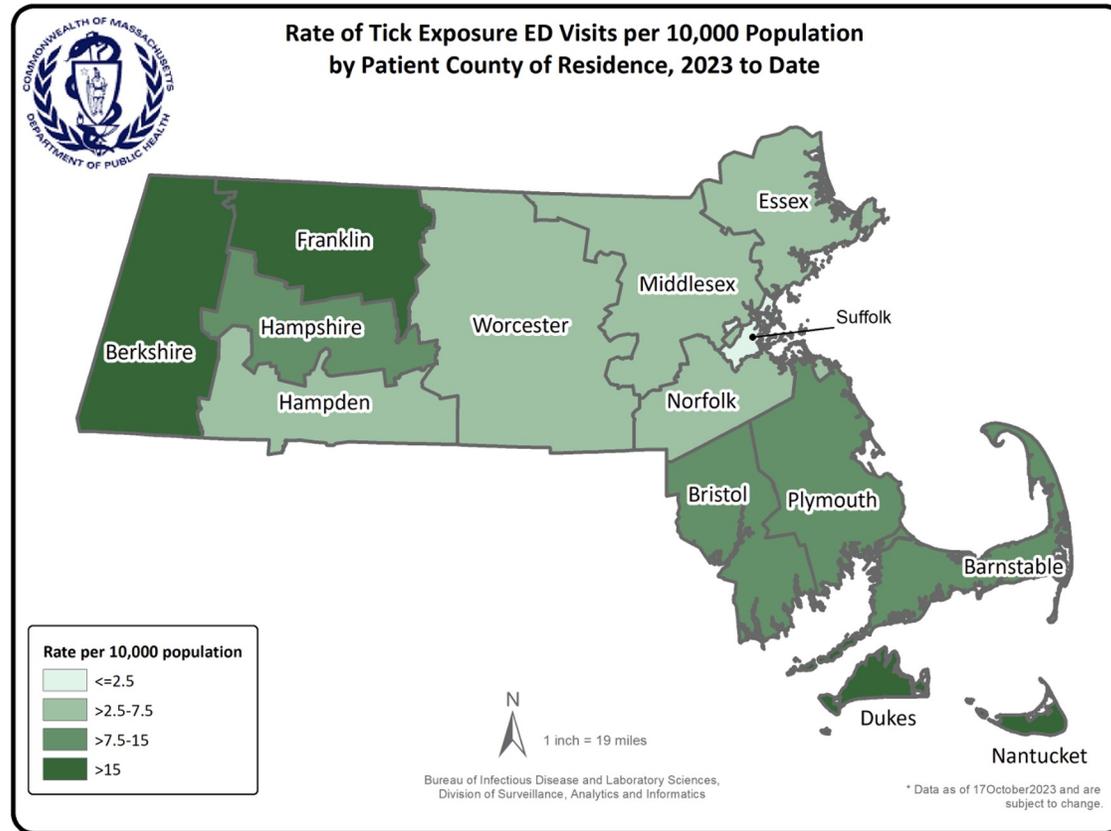
37% know someone with an issue with substances



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Tick/Insect Related Illness
- Age of Housing / Lead Poisoning
- Accessibility of Parks
- Air Quality
- Climate Projections

Tick/Insect Related Illness



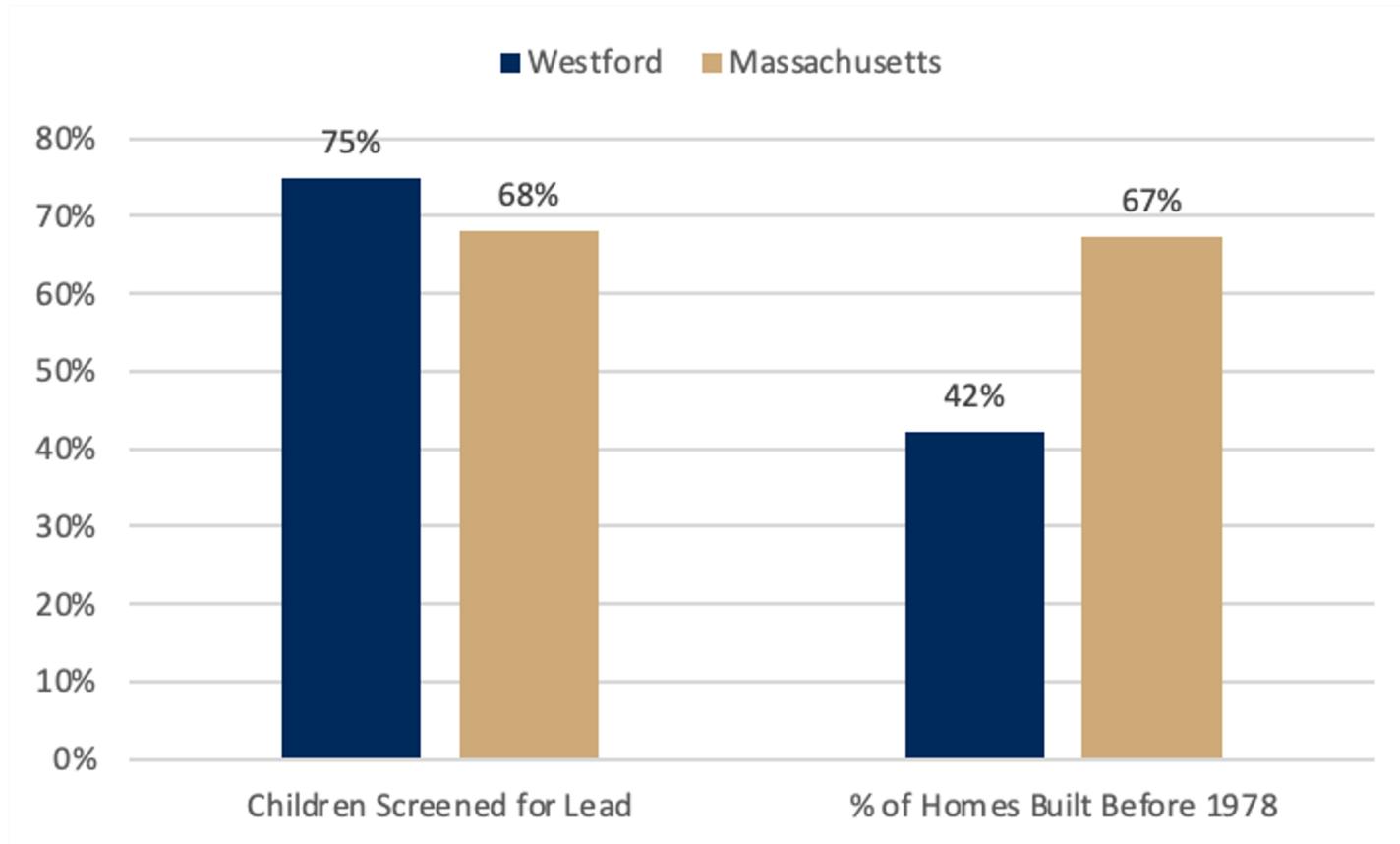
GLHA Community Survey 184 Westford Residents

14%
“I have a tick/insect illness”

47%
“I know someone in my community with this”

Westford Annual Report Year	Lyme Disease Cases
July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019	36
July 1, 2019 - June, 30 2020	44

Childhood Lead Poisoning & Housing



Prevalence of Blood Lead Levels > 5 ug/dl

(in need of intervention)

7.7 per 1000

Westford

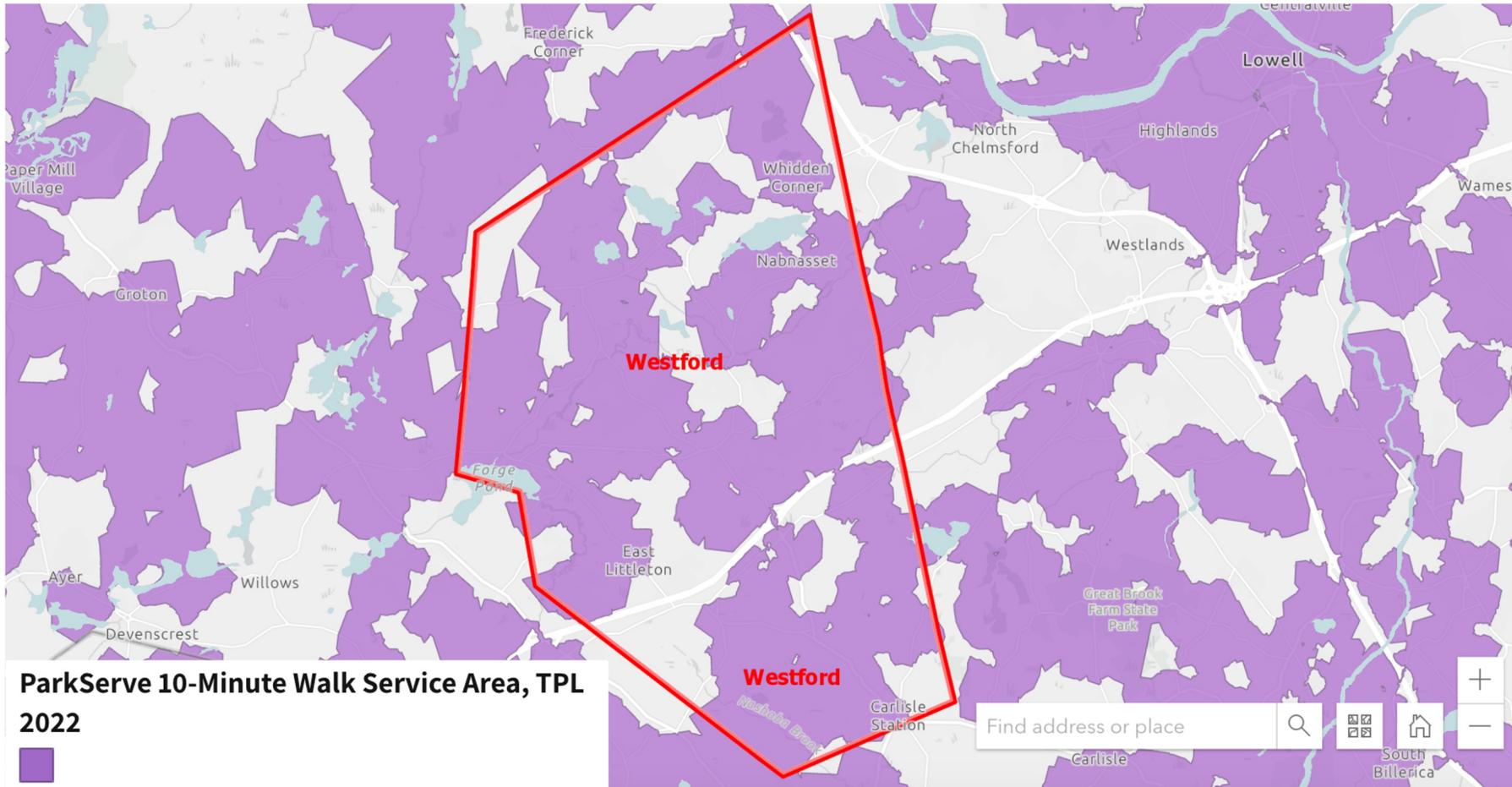
13.6 per 1000

Massachusetts

*5 -year average rate (2017-2021) for
children age 9-47 months*

Westford was not considered a
high-risk community for lead by
MA DPH as of 2021.

Population Within 10 min Walk to a Park



GLHA Community Survey

247 Westford Residents

88% responded that it is definitely accurate that there are safe, clean parks in the community.

Emerson Community Survey

343 Westford Residents

10% responded that they cannot be active/get exercise because of lack of sidewalks, parks, or bike trails

Air Quality

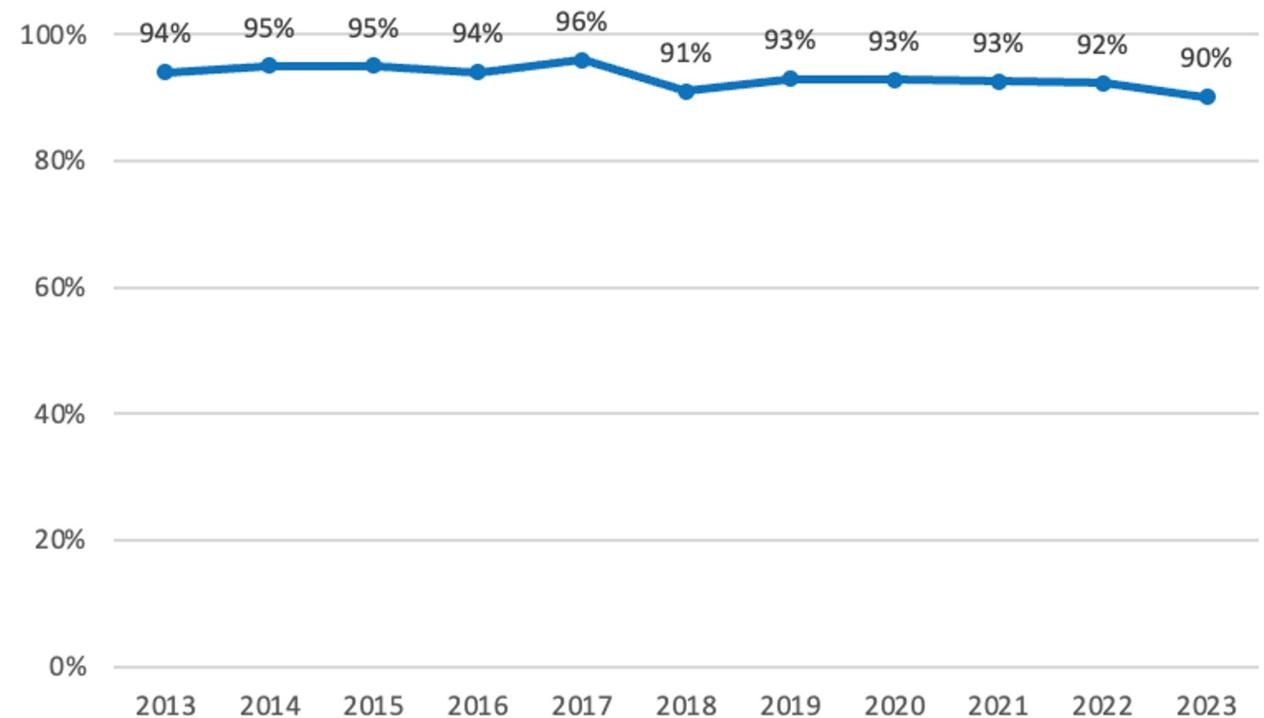
Good Air Quality Index Days 2022

(AQI 0-50)

County	% of Good Days
Barnstable County	95%
Dukes County	95%
Middlesex County	92%
Bristol County	91%
Norfolk County	89%
Berkshire County	89%
Essex County	88%
Hampshire County	88%
Plymouth County	86%
Franklin County	85%
Suffolk County	85%
Worcester County	85%
Hampden County	84%

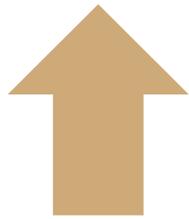
Good Air Quality Index Days in Middlesex County

(AQI 0-50)



Climate Outlook and Projections

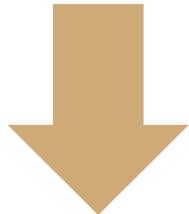
Climate Projections for Westford



**Average
Temperature
Increasing**



**Total Annual
Precipitation
Increasing**



**Days Below
32 Degrees F
Decreasing**



**Days Above
95 Degrees F
Increasing**

- Changes in temperature could increase incidence of West Nile Virus, Lyme disease, and other diseases.
- Fewer cold winter days could increase the likelihood that more of the ticks can survive through the winter months.

Regional Climate Outlook

Near Term (2030)

The summer mean temperature could increase by 3.6°F from the historical period (1950-2013), worsening stress on electric transmission and utility distribution infrastructure.

Mid-Late Century (2070)

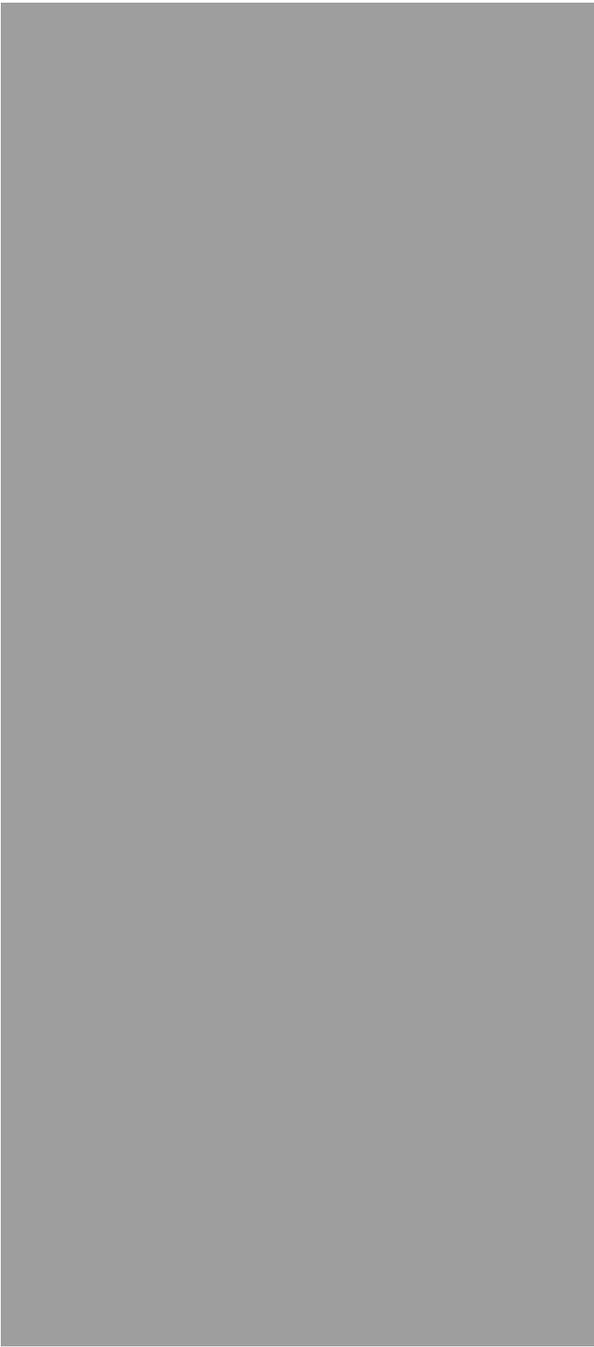
There could be 58 fewer days below freezing, increasing the chance of ticks overwintering and reducing winter recreation opportunities.

Mid-Century (2050)

The 1 percent annual chance river flood could be two times more likely to occur, increasing Merrimack River and other river flood risk.

End of Century (2090)

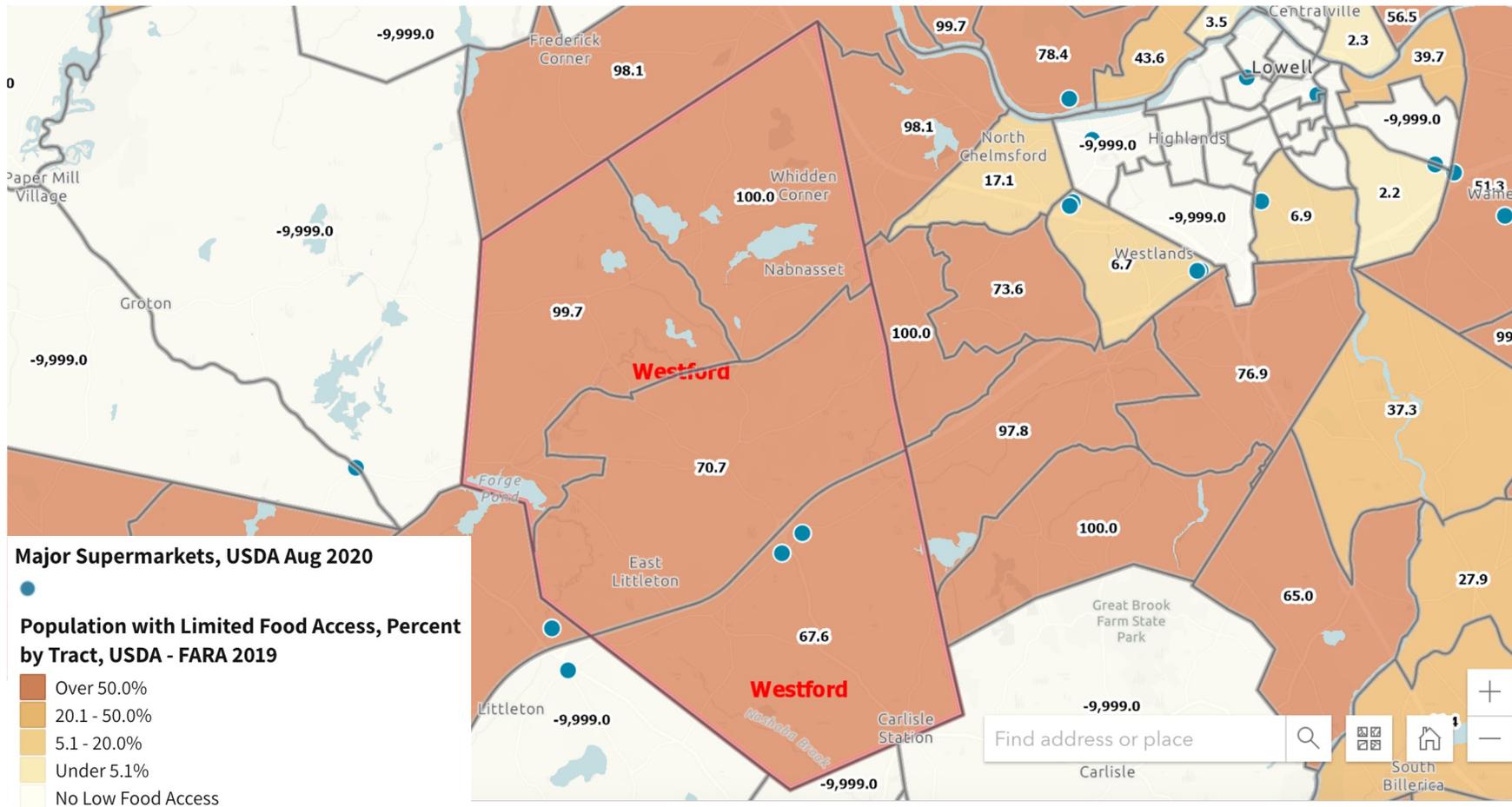
The historical 10 percent annual chance of rainfall event (2.8-4 inches) could occur four times more frequently.



COMMUNITY FACTORS

- Affordable Housing
- Internet Availability
- Food Access
- Transportation
- Access to Healthcare
- Violence / Crime / Discrimination

Low Food Access by Census Tract



84%
Westford Residents

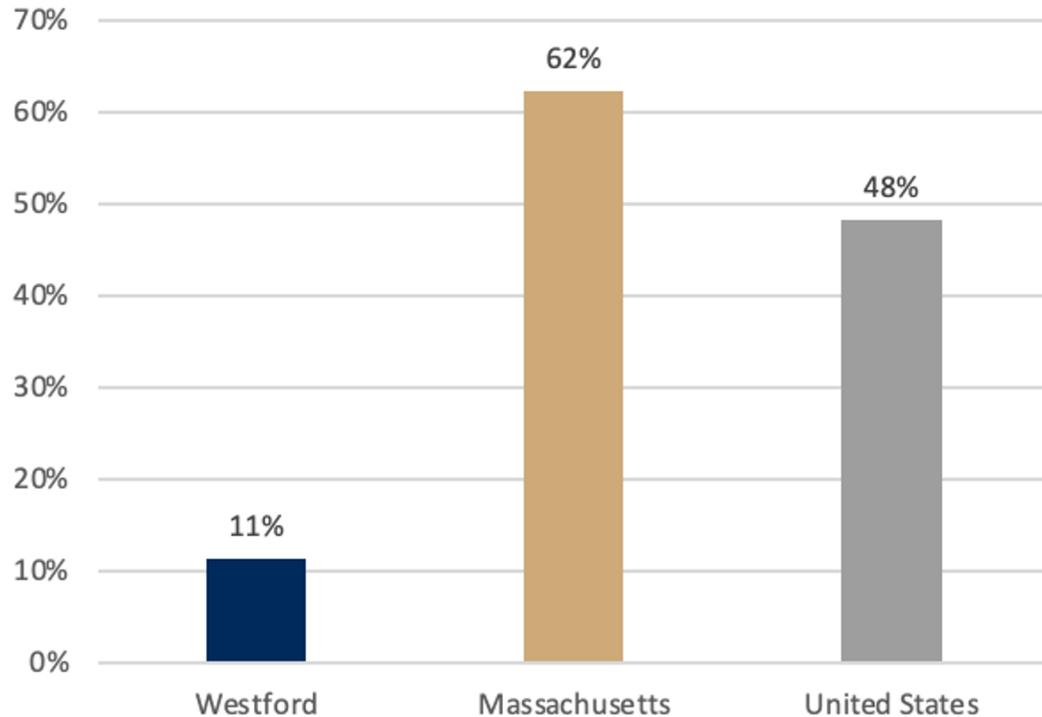
28%
Massachusetts

22%
United States

GLHA Community Survey:
247 Westford Respondents
97% agree that they have reliable access to nutritious food that they want to eat.

Availability of Public Transportation

Households within ½ Mile of Public Transportation



Barriers to Using Transit Services Among Westford Residents

Proximity to key destinations	43 (56%)
Access to stops/stations	37 (48%)
Frequency	31 (40%)
Schedule	30 (39%)
Reliability	23 (30%)
Don't know, I don't use transit	14 (18%)
Safety	12 (16%)
Affordability	11 (14%)
No barriers	1 (1%)
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>77</i>

Barriers to Healthcare Experienced by Residents

Uninsured Population

0.53%

Westford Residents

2.78%

Massachusetts

8.77%

United States

GLHA Community Survey

92 Respondents

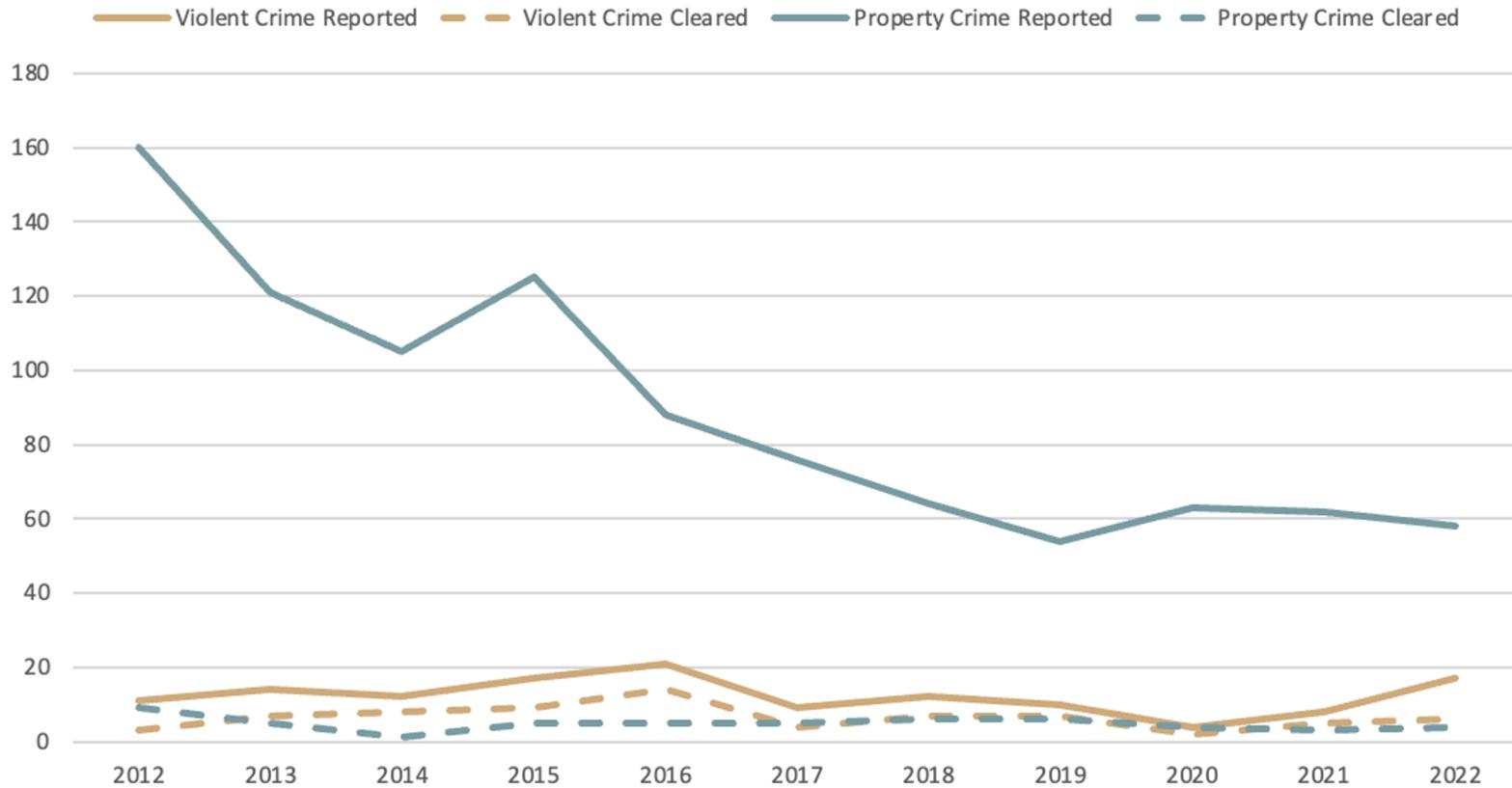
- **59%** report wait times for appointments are too long
- **51%** report health insurance is too expensive
- **29%** report it's difficult to understand/navigate the healthcare system
- **16%** report not feeling welcome or respected by doctor or staff
- **14%** report not being able to afford mental health services

Emerson Community Survey

224 Respondents

- **31%** report wait times for appointments are too long
- **22%** report lack of evening and weekend services/lack of convenient times and locations
- **21%** report insurance problems/lack of coverage/not enough coverage
- **18%** report cost of care/co-pays
- **12%** report lack of support to navigate health system

Violence and Crime



Top Safety Issues from Chief Chambers:

1. Traffic (accidents, speeding)
2. Property Crime
3. Mental Health Calls

GLHA Community Survey:

247 Westford Respondents

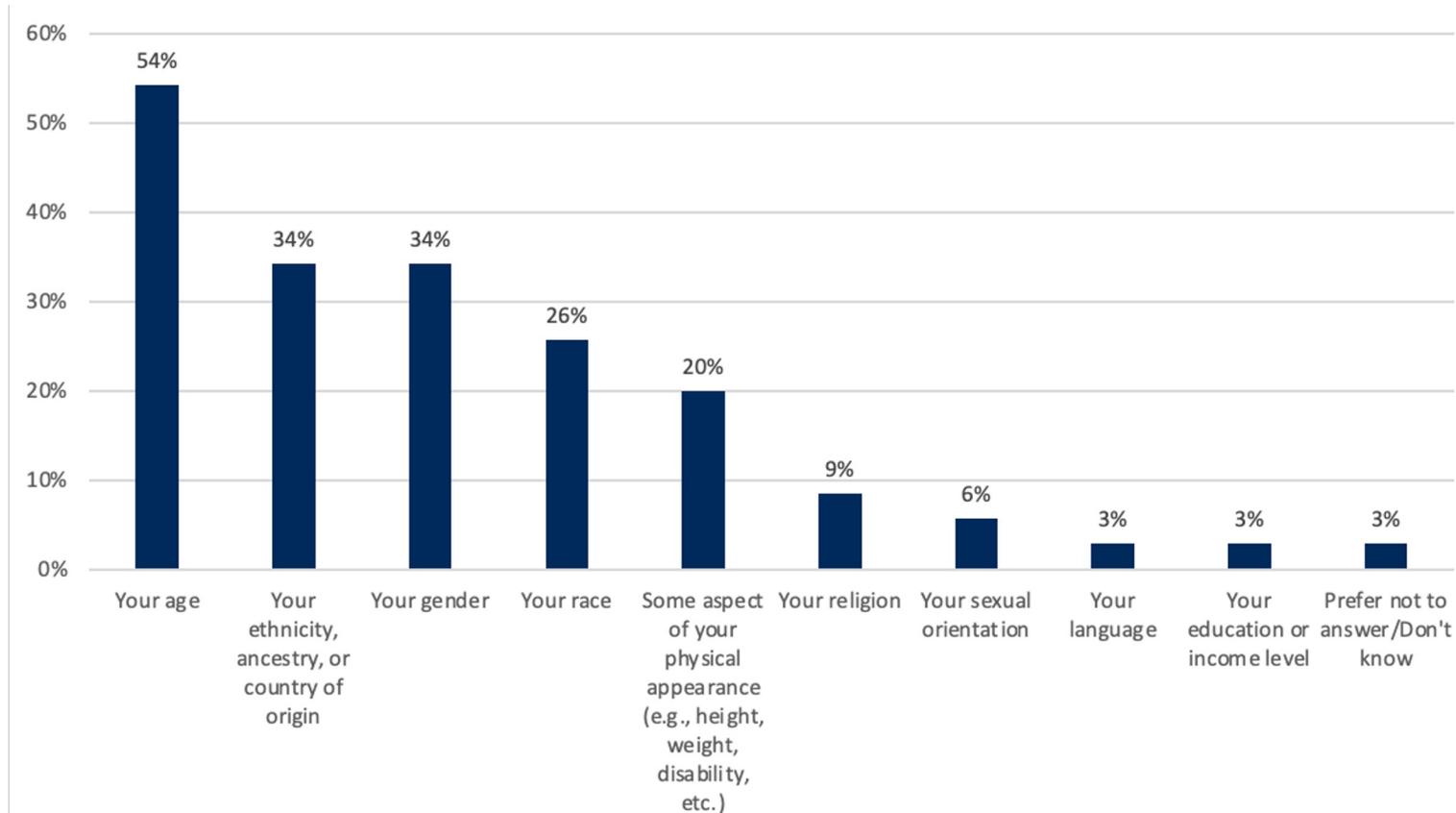
97% definitely agree that they feel safe in their neighborhood during the day.

93% definitely agree that they feel safe in their neighborhood during the night.

Discrimination Experiences Among Residents

Top Reasons Among Residents Experiencing Discrimination

Emerson Community Survey, 35 respondents



GLHA Community Survey:
247 Respondents

52% “definitely agree” that their community is accepting of diversity.

43% “somewhat agree” that their community is accepting of diversity.

General Takeaways

Areas in Which Westford Has Poorer Health Outcomes than Massachusetts:

- Binge Drinking (19% vs 17%)
- COVID-19 Case Rate (588 vs 448 per 100,000)

Areas That Impact a Higher Proportion of Westford Residents:

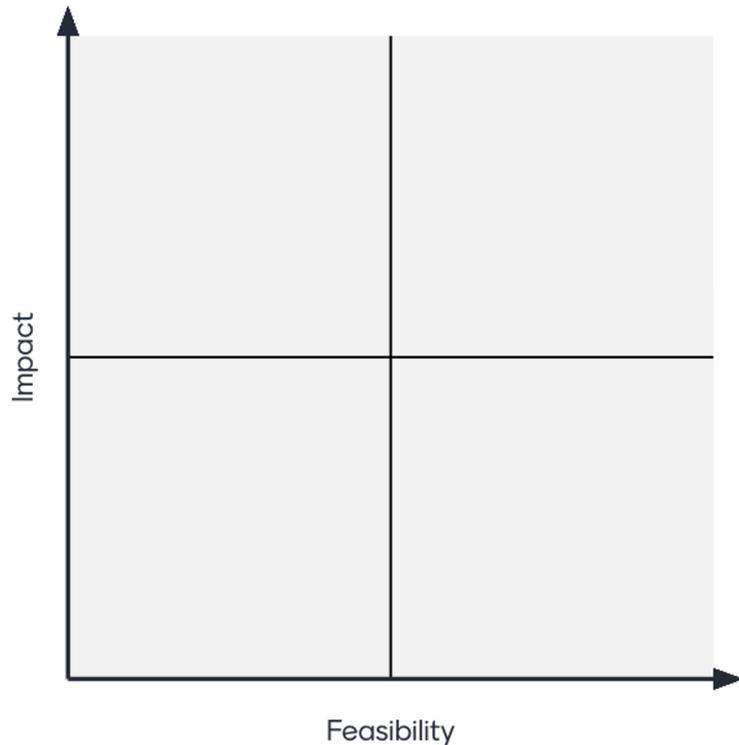
- Low-Food Access (84%)
- Cost-Burdened Households (26%)
- Hypertension (25%)
- Obesity (23%)
- Depression (19%)

Leading Causes of Death: Cancer & Heart Disease

Proposed Key Topics:

Mental Health
Chronic Disease / Wellness
Affordable Housing
Substance Use / Binge Drinking
COVID-19
Environmental Health?

Using Prioritization Grids



- **Impact:** Which areas have the greatest potential for improving the well-being of Westford residents?
- **Feasibility:** Are the resources and expertise needed available to implement strategies for this priority area?

Mentimeter Tool for Prioritization Activity

- **For those on Zoom:** Use the link in the chat to enter a response
- **For those in person:** Join on your phone by going to menti.com and entering the code or scanning the QR code



Stakeholder Survey Discussion

Within the selected priority areas....

- What gaps exist in current community knowledge?
- What specific information would be helpful to know?
- What types of questions would we want to ask stakeholders to help provide further insight?
- Are there any other community data sets already available that could be utilized?

Future Planning

September

Partnership Kick-Off Meeting

October

Identifying Community Priorities

November

Reviewing Westford-Specific Data

January

Adapting a Westford-Specific CHIP



*“If you want to go fast, go alone,
if you want to far, go together.”*

Thank you and we'll see you in January!

