Woonsocket HEZ Food Access Plan

HEZ ANNUAL MEETING

Woonsocket, RI

March 31, 2016

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good food is good business

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Founded in 1990, KK&P is the nation's leading problem-solver for food-related enterprises, programs and policies.

We don't just innovate food systems. We drive sustainable growth.

Good food is good business.

Food System Planning
- Business plans
- Mapping and data visualization
- Funding strategies

Supply Chain Strategies
- Strategic and sustainable sourcing
- Local food procurement
- Retooling retail and manufacturing

Business & Program Development
- Concept development
- Market assessment and feasibility studies
- Strategic planning

Recruiting & Performance Management
- Organizational assessment
- Full-service recruitment
- Performance Management and team development

Stakeholder Engagement
- Partner identification
- Network development
- Facilitation

Education & Events
- Convening design and execution
- Experiential learning
- Curriculum and educational program development

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Our Approach

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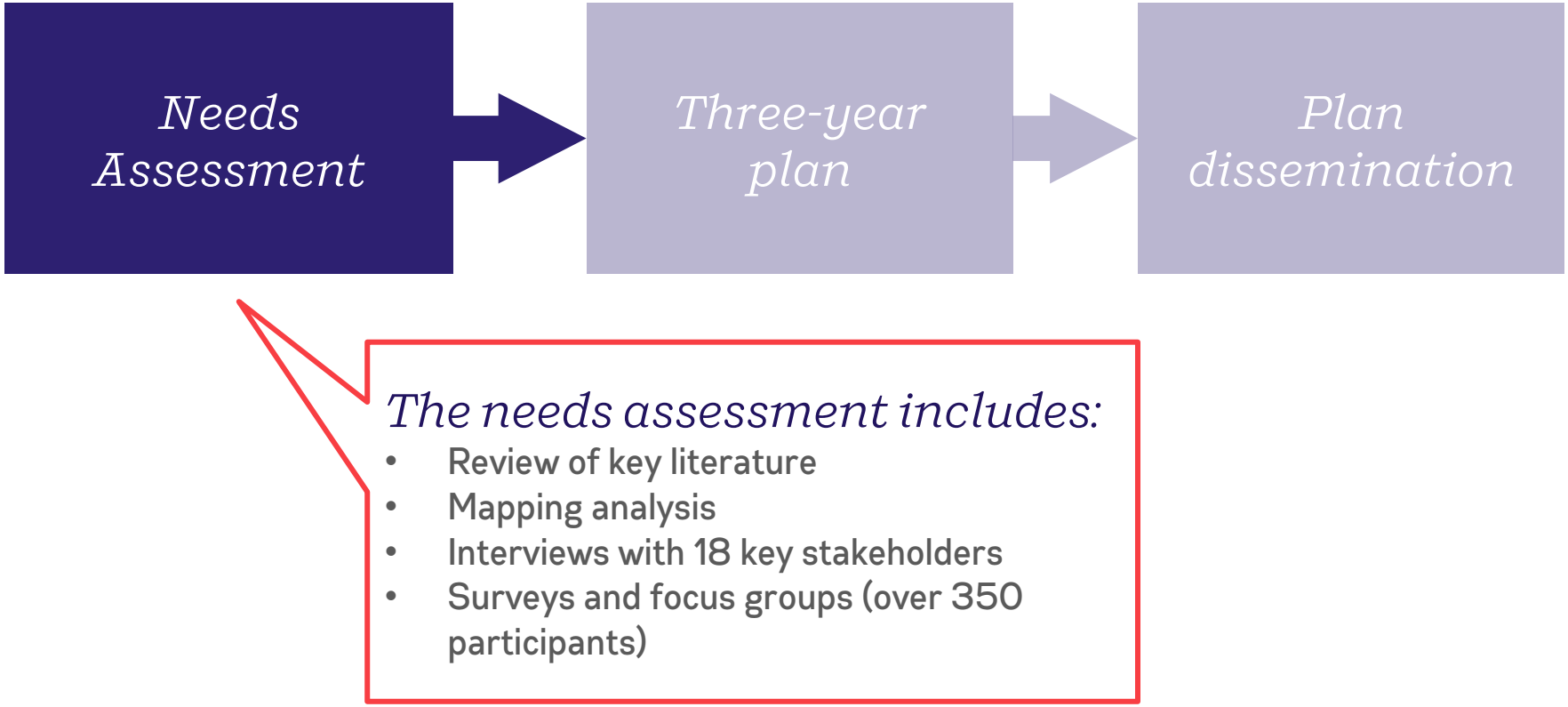

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Interview Themes

- The city is disproportionately home to a population that lives in, or at the edge of, poverty and that experiences disproportionate incidence of diet-related health problems.
- With few grocery stores in the inner city, fresh produce is hard to come by and is often perceived to be unaffordable.
- Improved coordination and marketing of resources and services, along with more formalized collaboration among organizations, would maximize the impact of their efforts.
- Interviewees see improving access to information and skills around healthy food as a key component to improving community health.
- Economic development related to food is seen as a significant opportunity for the city, in terms of entrepreneurship, small business growth, and workforce development.

Where people get food

98% of respondents do their primary grocery shopping at the major chain supermarkets in and around the city

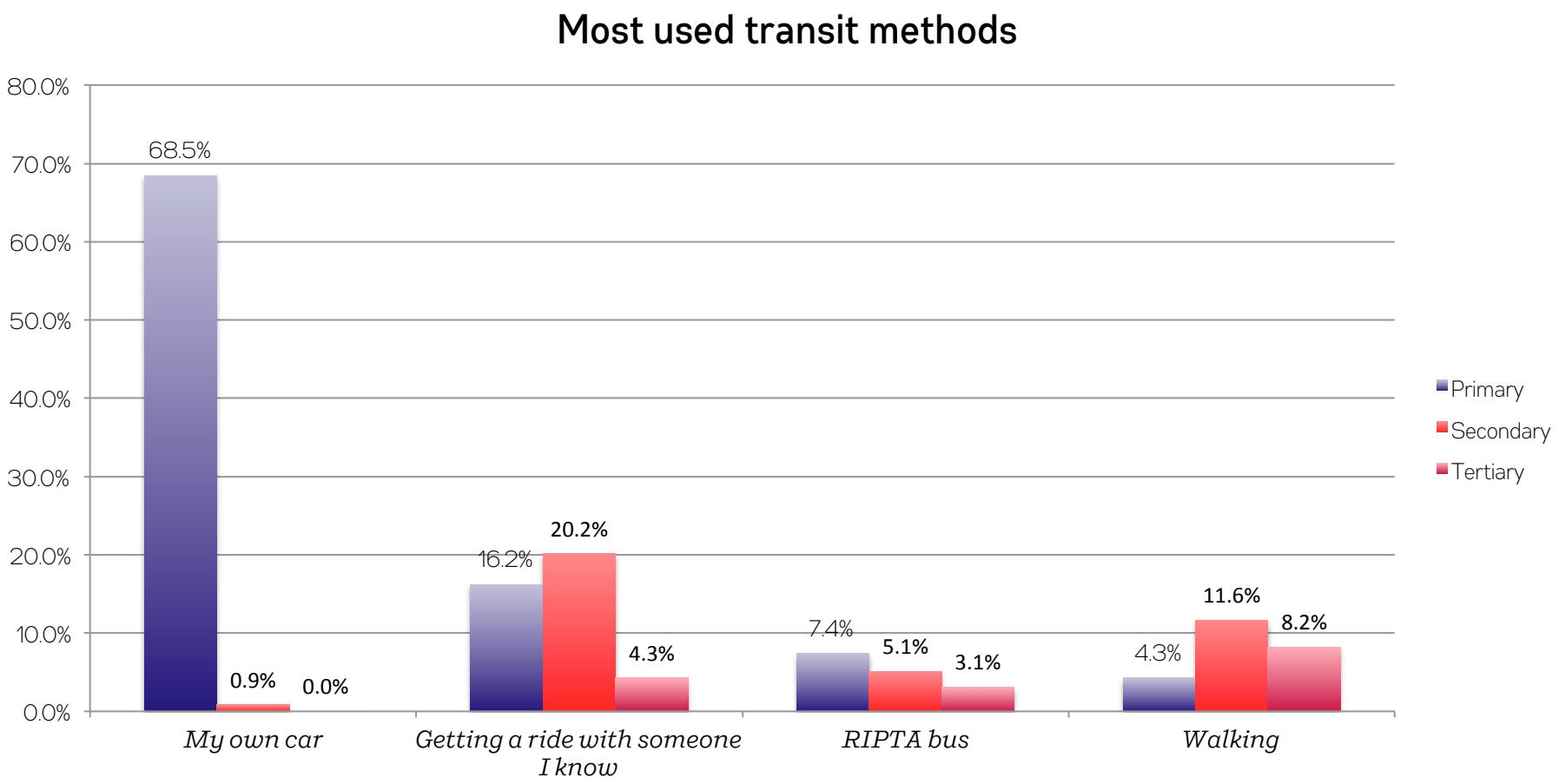
- *farmers' market, food pantries, and family and friends were the three most common alternate methods of food access.*

74.5% reported using some type of food assistance program

"I'd go to the food pantry before I'd go to the corner store [to buy food]."

FINDINGS

Transportation



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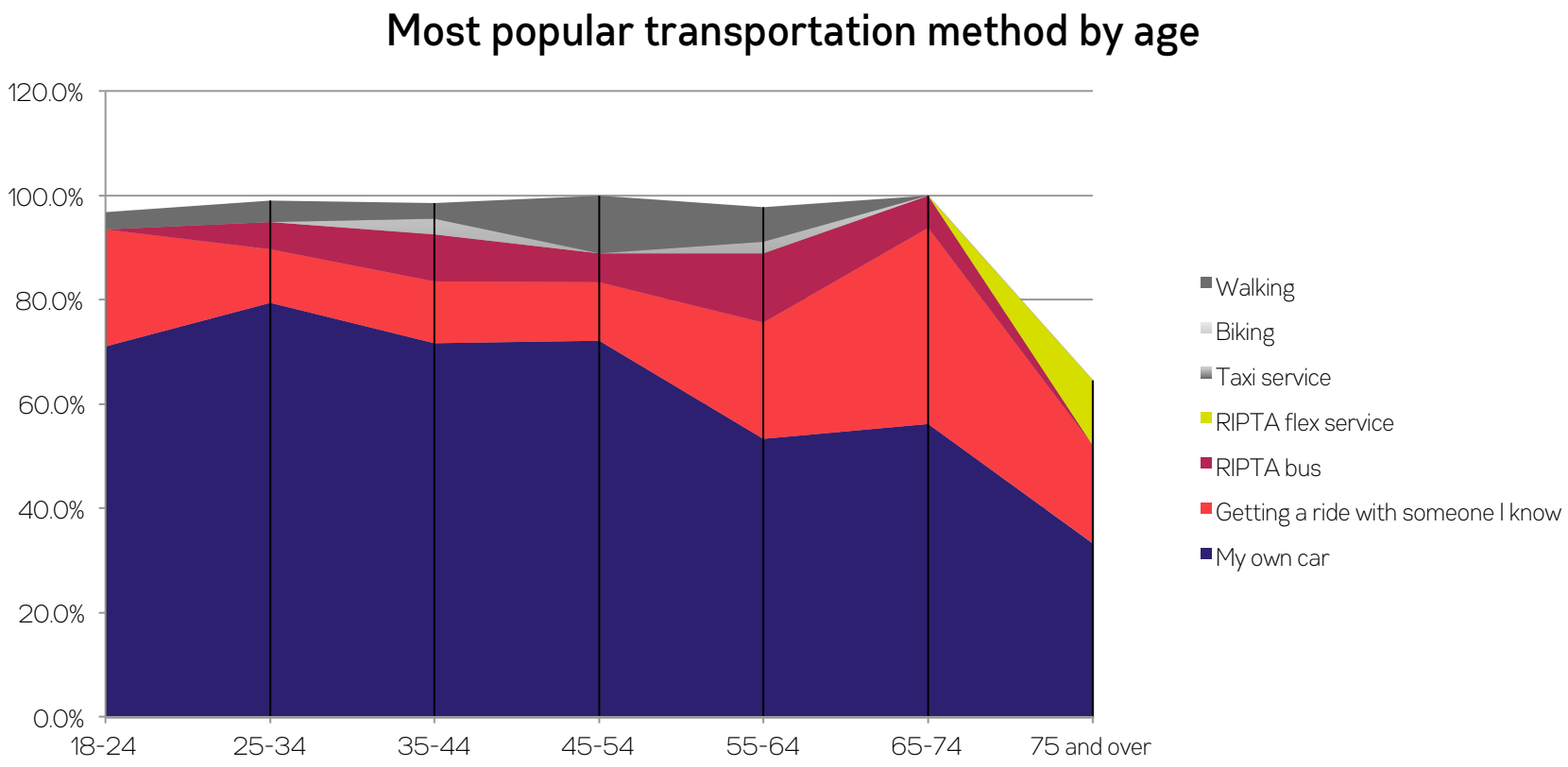

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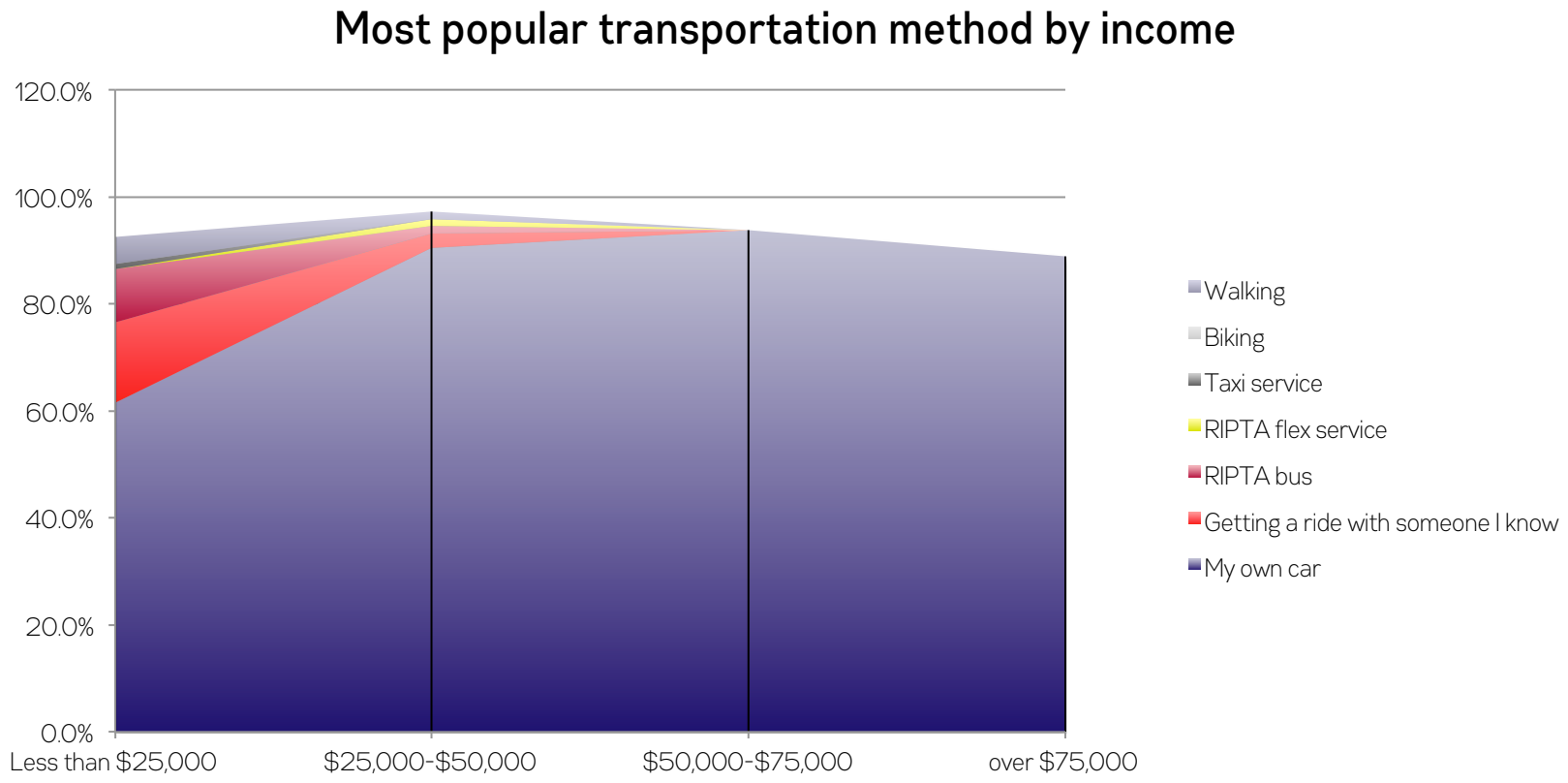

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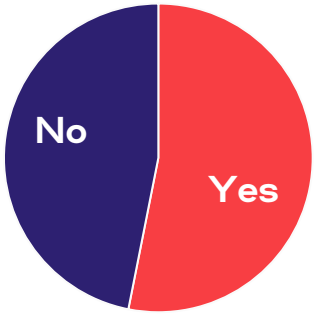
Food at home

75.6% reported that they, or someone in their household, cooks dinner at home every day.

Another ***15.1%*** reported that they or someone in their household cooks dinner at home a few times per week.

Food Insecurity



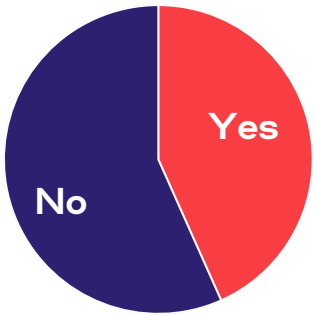
"Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more."

53% answered Yes

Of those that answered yes:

76% use SNAP

24% do not use SNAP



"Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."

43% answered Yes

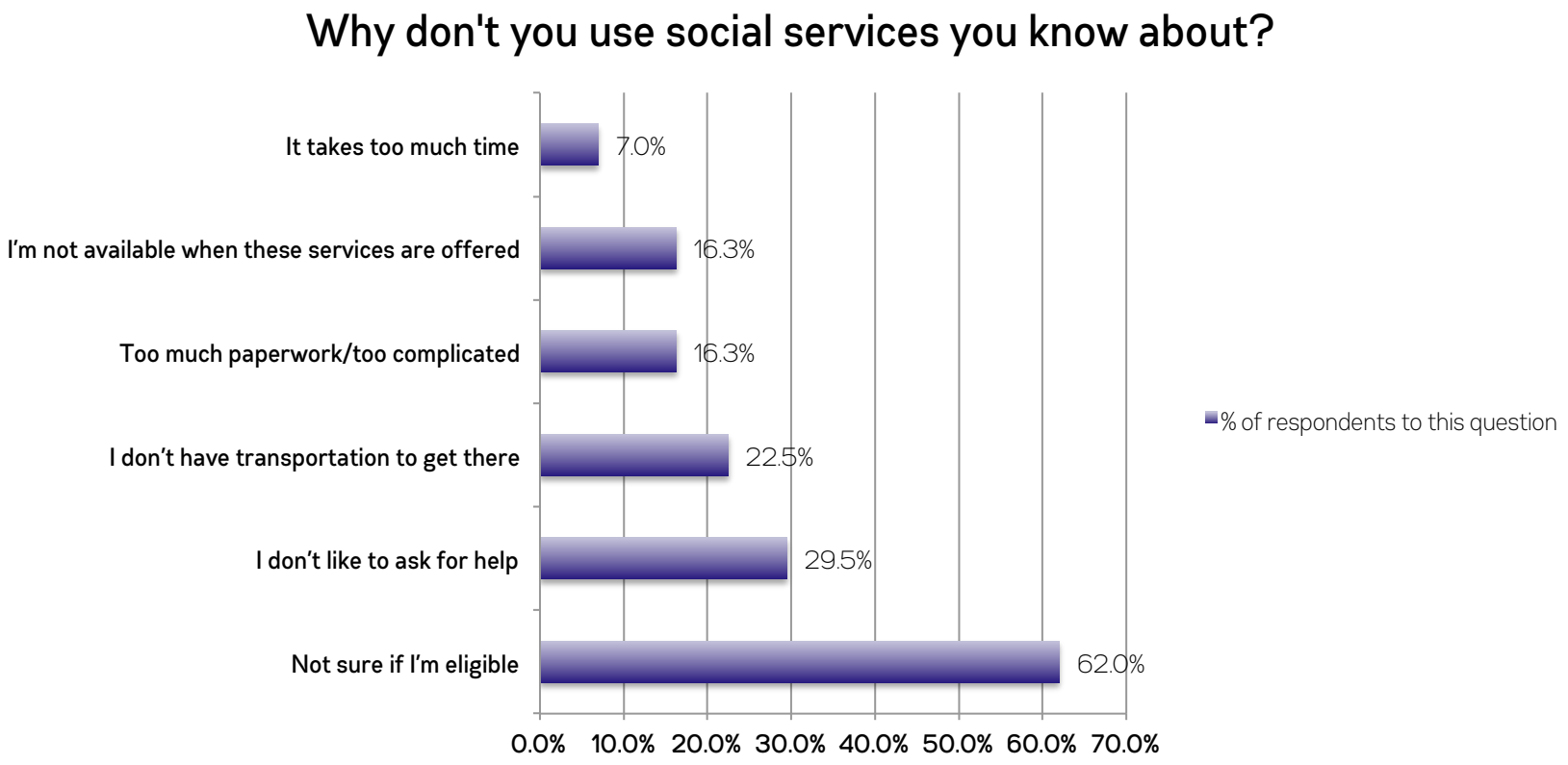
Of those that answered yes:

84% use SNAP

16% do not use SNAP

FINDINGS

Food Assistance



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Envisioning a Healthier Woonsocket

"What could change in Woonsocket that would make healthy foods easier to find, buy, and eat? This could be a new business, program, service, or something else. Think big and think creatively about what could make a healthier Woonsocket!"

28% of respondents want a **more convenient grocery store**

25% want more **affordable healthy food**

22% want more farm **fresh food**, farmers markets, or fresh food in corner stores

"I'm so disappointed in the fast food places, a sandwich is $1 and a salad is $4"

Focus Group Themes

- Food access as one piece of a larger issue: vibrancy, economic opportunity, and sense of community in Woonsocket
- A place to gather around food–activities for youth, general supportive counseling, food activities and healthy food available, satisfying ways to engage with a project or work (for people of all ages) and see it through
- The focus group participants have solid understandings of how to prepare nutritious food, as well as which foods make up a healthy diet based on their personal and medical needs
- Concern about family and friends not using effective budgeting for grocery shopping
- General confusion about how SNAP is allocated

The Woonsocket Food Access Plan

A LEADING THEME

- A lack of "good" workforce opportunities in Woonsocket

FRAMEWORKS GUIDING THE PLAN

- Supporting broader economic opportunity in Woonsocket through increased food access

- Increasing community inclusion to dismantle stigma around food assistance

FOCAL POINTS FOR THESE STRATEGIES

- Infrastructure
- "Place"
- Information
- Integration of services
- Geography of food access

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Strategy 1: **Bring food to people, and bring people to food**

- Contribute to city efforts to **bring a grocery store or supermarket** to central/downtown Woonsocket
- Research opportunities to **co-locate a grocery store with a community health center**
- Facilitate the creation of Woonsocket as a pilot site for **grocery delivery services for SNAP shoppers**
- **Innovate with farmers' market models** and programs that create market outlets for farmers while minimizing the time farmers have to spend at market

Strategy 2: **Increase integration and promotion of existing assets and services**

- **Food-related education and skill-building:** provide food, nutrition and budget skill-building opportunities that are customized and practical.
- **Culinary medicine**
- Incentivize **healthy food purchases**
- **Support independent retailers** interested in offering more healthy foods
- Build on network of emergency food providers to **increase alignment/coordination of emergency food services**

Strategy 3: **Create a community "headquarters" for food access, activities and information in central Woonsocket**

- **Community café,** potentially with regular but limited work day hours and/or "community meal" events
- **Kitchen and cold storage infrastructure** to serve not just food business entrepreneurs, but food pantry recipients
- **Youth programming**- a place to go
- Office space for **food-focused "anchor" organization** or program
- **Food transportation hub**

IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY:
Leverage NeighborWorks' downtown real estate