

**The Council  
on Aging  
of Ottawa**



**Le Conseil sur  
le vieillissement  
d'Ottawa**

*Age*  
**Friendly  
Ottawa**



*Ottawa*  
**ville - amie  
des aînés**

## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

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An Evaluation Framework to Measure the Age-Friendliness of Ottawa



March 2017

## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

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**For more information about the report:** Go to <http://www.coaottawa.ca/afo> or email [afo@coaottawa.ca](mailto:afo@coaottawa.ca).

**For more information about seniors services available in Ottawa:** Go to: [Ottawa 211](#), [Champlain Community Care Access Centre](#), or [Ottawa Community Support Coalition](#).

**Reference:** The Council on Aging of Ottawa. 2017. [How Age-Friendly is Ottawa? An Evaluation Framework to Measure the Age-Friendliness of Ottawa](#).



# How to Read this Report

For each of the age-friendly areas, we include information about:



our goals



what we know



What we want to know  
(data to be released or collected)

For the indicators, we used the following local, provincial, and national data sources. We list them in this report by the initials:

- Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS, 2012)
- Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS, 2012)
- Ontario Road Safety Annual Report (ORSAR, 2012)
- National Household Survey (NHS, 2011)
- Incident-Based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR, 2011, 2012)
- Canadian Community Health Survey – Annual component (CCHS, 2012)
- Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA, 2011)
- Area Coverage Data, City of Ottawa (ACD, 2011)

Since data only tells part of the story, for some age-friendly areas we have shared a quote from a senior or a community story. They are marked by:



Quote by a senior  
living in Ottawa



An Age-Friendly Community Story

In addition to indicators with data, three age-friendly areas had no data available now. However, the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA, 2011) will be releasing data soon. Other indicators were missing in the existing data sources. We have called these supplemental or “wish-list” indicators. Indicators from these three age-friendly areas are listed in the What We Want to Know section. We plan to include these indicators in future reports once the data are released or collected.

## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

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**How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?** is a first!; the first report on how Ottawa measures up as age-friendly. We are pleased to work with the City of Ottawa to make this happen for and with seniors who are a growing asset in our city.

This report shows us what makes Ottawa a great place to grow older. It looks at what we know about Ottawa as an age-friendly community.

We know most seniors are healthy, active, and happy with their lives.

Yet, there are gaps in our data and what we know about the experiences of seniors. We hope to gather more data in the future to give us a better picture of what makes Ottawa age-friendly.

Until then, we must do more for seniors in our community. Together, we are creating the physical, social, and service spaces for seniors to feel included in our community. In turn, seniors' health and well-being can be improved, as well as for other residents of Ottawa.

Governments, communities, and businesses offer services that help seniors, such as transportation, housing, community and health services, and recreation services. We plan to continue to talk with seniors about what makes Ottawa age-friendly. Look to future reports for more positive signs of our actions. Together, we can make

**It is my pleasure to congratulate Age Friendly Ottawa and its members on a first of its kind evaluation framework.** Whether you are an older adult, resident or community partner, I hope you find this report helpful in

understanding what it means to grow older in Ottawa.

We are on the edge of the biggest population shift in the history of our community. In 2015, seniors began outnumbering young people for the first time.

Over the next 20 years we expect the number of seniors in Ottawa to more than double. At that time, seniors should make up more than 20 per cent of the Ottawa population.

Like many large cities in Canada, the City of Ottawa is responding to these changes and taking steps to make Ottawa a more age-friendly city. In late 2015, the City adopted a second Older Adult Plan (2015-2018). The action plan focuses on improving policies, programs, and services for older adults.

The growing seniors' population will change the way our community responds to residents of all ages. Governments, community partners, and businesses must organize resources and efforts to meet the needs of seniors today and tomorrow. We all have a role in making Ottawa age-friendly.

Being able to measure our progress in this area is important. We are lucky to have a strong relationship with The Council on



Ottawa age-friendlier.

*John Johnson*

President, The Council on  
Aging of Ottawa



Aging. We are pleased to be working together on this undertaking.

*Jim Watson*

Mayor, City of Ottawa



## Executive Summary

**The goal of Age-Friendly Ottawa is to make Ottawa a city where the physical, social, and service spaces meet the needs of older adults so they can live healthy and active lives as they age.** Based on our research, we know more about the physical environments - outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, and housing – than the social environments. In fact, three of the social age-friendly areas, social participation, civic participation and volunteering, and communication and information, have no data available.

**We found that many seniors in Ottawa were active, happy, and healthy.**

- 91% felt they could access health care (excluding home care) when they needed it
- 89% were satisfied with life
- 79% found it easier to walk in their neighbourhood for leisure than running errands
- 70% had very good or excellent mental health
- 68% had a very strong or strong sense of belonging to Ottawa
- 47% walked 1 to 5 hours/week; another 22% walked six or more hours/week in their community

**We also found that some seniors were not doing as well in a few key areas.**

- 50% felt they had very good or excellent general health; lower than all Ottawans (62%)
- 31% walked less than 1 hour each week in their neighbourhoods
- Some found their neighbourhoods not as easy to get around for errands (40%) and exercise (21%)
- Only 23% used public transit to get around
- 21% fell in the past year; of those, 54% were injured enough to make it hard to do things
- 11% of people hurt in car crashes were seniors on foot
- Many low-income seniors live in neighbourhoods with less affordable housing
- Some seniors experience elder abuse

**There is more we can do to make sure seniors can stay active, healthy, and happy.** We will continue to work with the City of Ottawa and our community partners to plan, carry out, and evaluate age-friendly activities. We plan to release another report in three to five years to see what has changed.

**This is only the beginning.** We want to hear from you too. What do you think? How age-friendly is Ottawa?



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# Introduction

**The city of Ottawa's senior population is growing.** In fact, the 116,600 seniors living in Ottawa in 2011 will more than double over the next 20 years. This makes them the fastest growing group in our community. Seniors will go from 13% of the population in 2011 to over 20% of our city's population in 2031. In fact, 50% of Ottawa neighbourhoods now have over 20% of seniors who are over 60 years of age (ONS, 2012).

**While most seniors are happy, healthy, and active, some may face barriers because of their age, language, gender, health, income, or where they live.** These risk factors can lead to them being socially isolated or experiencing negative health outcomes. For seniors living in the community, we know:

- English is the most common first language (58%); for many, French (18%) or other languages (23%) are their first language
- Almost 35% were born in another country
- One in four need support to remain independent in their own homes
- 6% live on a low-income
- 27% live alone
- 73% live in urban areas, 18% in suburban areas, and another 9% in rural areas

**Seniors must be a priority for all cities.** Seniors are not only a growing part of our city's people; they are assets in our community. They give back to their families and our community. In Ottawa, about 60% of seniors care for family members and friends, 36% volunteer in their community, and 11% work (City of Ottawa, 2011).

**Age-friendly communities are cities that promote the health, safety, and active participation of seniors.** An age-friendly community is friendly for all ages. Ottawa is part of a global network of communities created by the World Health Organization (WHO) to support each other to become age-friendly. Municipalities, communities, and businesses focus on planning, starting, and following up on actions in eight areas suggested by the WHO (2007):

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| • Outdoor spaces and buildings | • Respect and social inclusion          |
| • Transportation               | • Civic participation and employment    |
| • Housing                      | • Communication and information         |
| • Social participation         | • Community support and health services |





## Age-Friendly in Ottawa

**Ottawa is one of many cities across Canada taking on age-friendly activities.** Since 2011, The Council on Aging of Ottawa and the City of Ottawa have been working closely to make sure the community benefits from these activities. Our actions are the results of a city-wide consultation with over 600 older adults about their experiences with the eight age-friendly areas in 2012.

**Age Friendly Ottawa (AFO) is an initiative led by The Council on Aging of Ottawa (COA).** The goal of AFO is to enhance and improve the age-friendliness of Ottawa. To support this goal, the COA formed the AFO Steering Committee with members including seniors and people from the City of Ottawa, United Way Centraide Ottawa, Alzheimer Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County, Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario, and University of Ottawa. Since 2012, over 40 partner organizations have reported on the [community action plans](#) with over 60 actions committed by partners.

**In October 2015, the City of Ottawa adopted a second Older Adult Plan for the 2015 to 2018 period.** The purpose of the Plan is to make Ottawa age-friendlier by improving government infrastructure, programs, and services for older adults. The Plan includes 51 actions that will be completed by the end of 2018.

**We wanted to find out if our actions are helping seniors.** In 2015, the AFO Steering Committee formed the Age Friendly Evaluation Working Group. Besides representatives from The Council on Aging of Ottawa and the City of Ottawa, the Evaluation Working Group has experts from the University of Ottawa and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The Evaluation Working Group developed an evaluation framework that would allow us to measure our progress in making Ottawa age-friendlier over time.

*Age*  
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Ottawa



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**des aînés**





“ In our cities, we need all kinds of diversity. ”

Jane Jacobs, American-Canadian urban activist

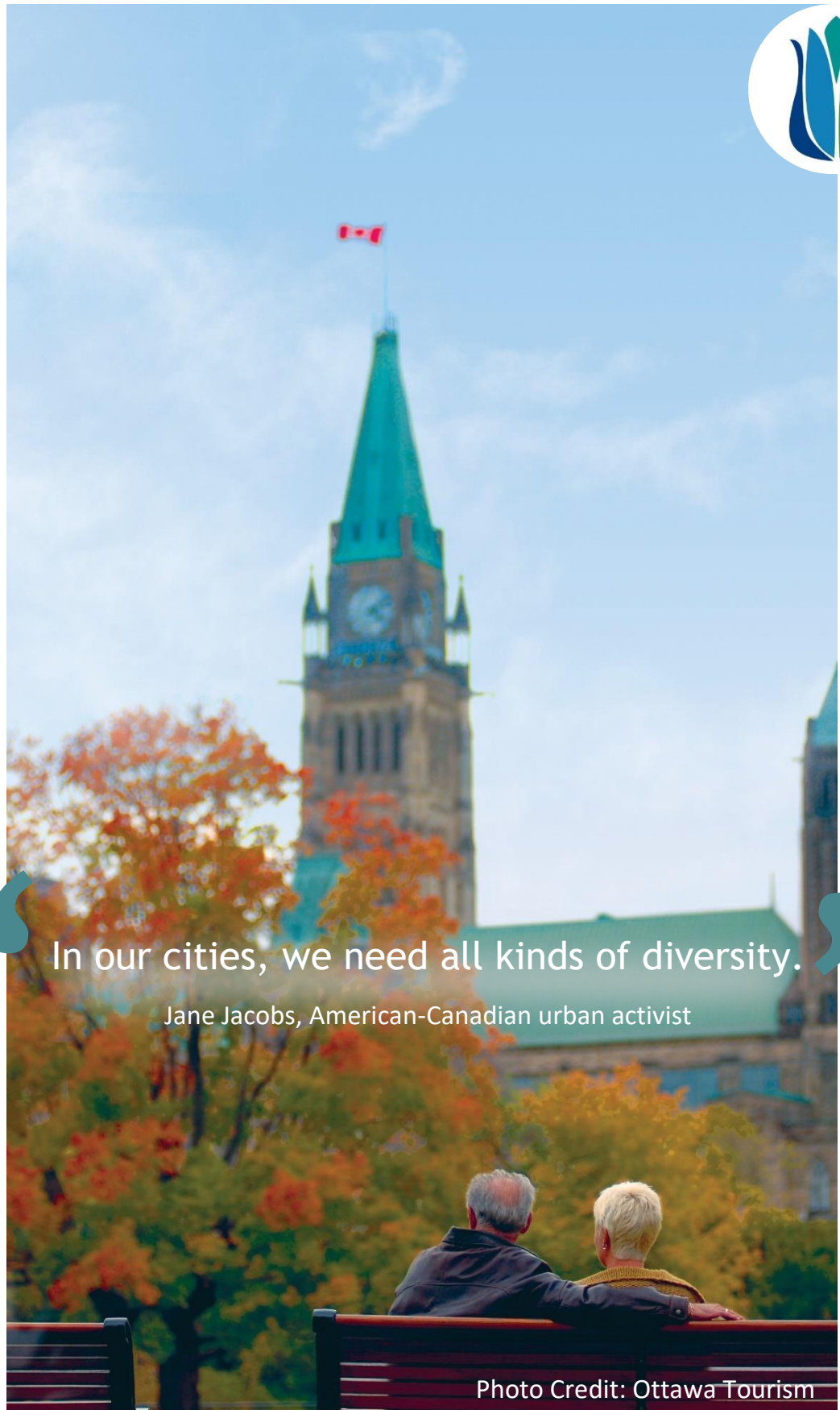


Photo Credit: Ottawa Tourism



# Age Friendly Evaluation Framework

**This report introduces the 66 indicators that we plan to watch over time, under each of the eight age-friendly domains.** We want to see if we are making progress. Findings for 20 of these indicators are presented in this report. They are a picture of where Ottawa stood on age-friendliness, when Age Friendly Ottawa began in 2012.

**This is our starting point.** We will use this information to help us focus and gain support for our future age-friendly initiatives.

Data sources with the identified indicators were selected, if they:

- included seniors over 65
- focused on one or more of the areas of age-friendliness
- collected data across time that was sensitive to change
- included equity indicators (age, gender, language, income, neighbourhood)
- had data from 2012 or as close as one year before or after

The other 36 indicators either had no data available now or was not collected in existing data sources. These indicators are listed under *What we want to know*. We will release another report in the next three to five years. It will include the missing data and the changes over time.

## Definitions

**Seniors:** people over the age of 65

**Older Adult:** a life stage rather than an age-based definition

**Evaluation Framework:** an overall plan showing how the actions in the Age Friendly Ottawa Community Plan and the Older Adult Plan ('inputs') are related to the expected changes over time in the city's age-friendliness ('outcomes') and on seniors' health and wellbeing ('impacts')

**Indicator:** a feature that can be measured by collecting statistical data and that tells some part of the city's age-friendliness

**Equity Indicators:** measures that show how alike or different groups of seniors are because of age, gender, language, income, and neighbourhood

**Data Sources:** questionnaires, surveys, and other sets of statistical information that are collected regularly to track changes on indicators



EQUITY (e.g. age, gender, language, income, neighbourhood characteristics)





# What we know



**Indicators with data are available for five of the eight age-friendly areas. The areas included are:**

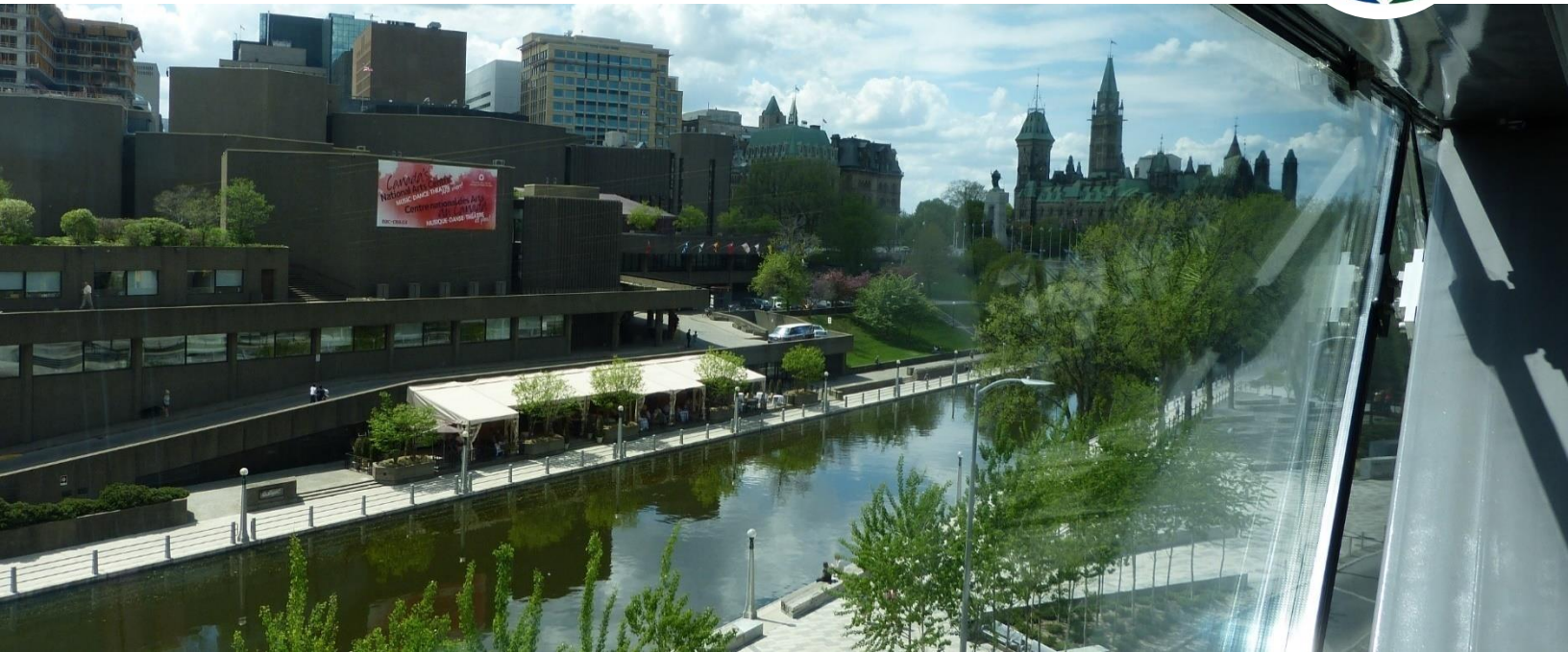
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Community Support and Health services
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Impact



Together, we are creating the physical, social, and service spaces for seniors to feel included in our community. In turn, seniors' health and well-being can be improved.

*John Johnson, President, The Council on Aging of Ottawa*

# Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



**The city of Ottawa is special.** It offers urban, suburban, and rural living with beautiful green space and city parks. With many seniors in neighbourhoods, residents of Ottawa can enjoy the outdoor spaces and buildings.

**Seniors who are active and walk in their neighbourhoods for both leisure (such as exercise or pleasure) and errands (such as shopping and getting to appointments) are healthier and happier.** Seniors should be physically active for at least 150 minutes per week (2.5 hours) (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2011).



## Goal

- Seniors use the natural and built spaces safely and with ease



## We know

- Over a week, most seniors walked between 1 and 5 hours in their neighbourhood
- Seniors found their neighbourhoods more walkable for exercise than running errands
- Neighbourhoods with high walkability scores had higher numbers of seniors and higher numbers of low-income seniors





## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

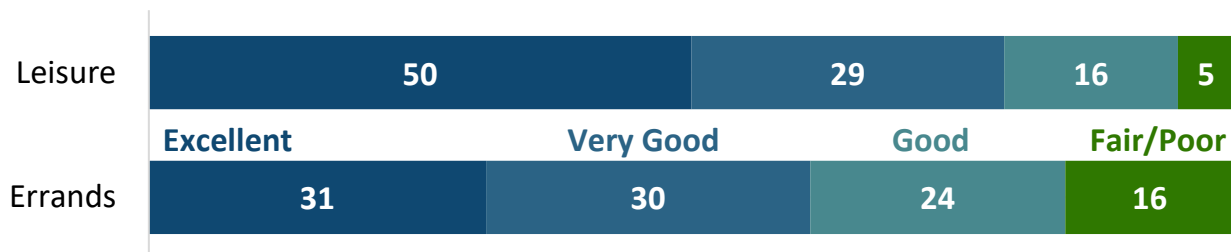
### In a typical week in 2012, most seniors walked between 1 and 5 hours in their neighbourhood

While most seniors are active, 31% walked less than one hour in their neighbourhoods. Women walked less than one hour and more than six hours when compared to men. Younger seniors walked over one hour when compared to older seniors.



### Most seniors found their neighbourhoods more walkable for leisure than for running errands

Four out of five seniors rated their neighbourhood as **excellent** or **very good** for walking for fun or exercise. Two out of three seniors rated their neighbourhood as **excellent** or **very good** for running errands, such as shopping and going to the library or post office.

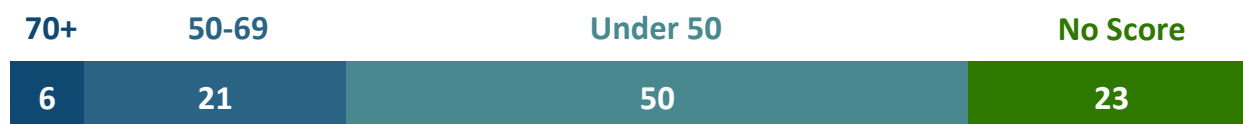


(Source: RRFSS, 2012)



**In 2012, 6% of neighbourhoods had a walkability score that was above 70; 21% had between 50-70; 50% had under 50; and 23% had no score**

Neighbourhoods with a **score of 70 and above** are easy to walk around. A score of 30 or below makes neighbourhoods harder to walk around. The majority had scores between 35 and 49; only 27% of neighbourhoods had walkability scores over 50.



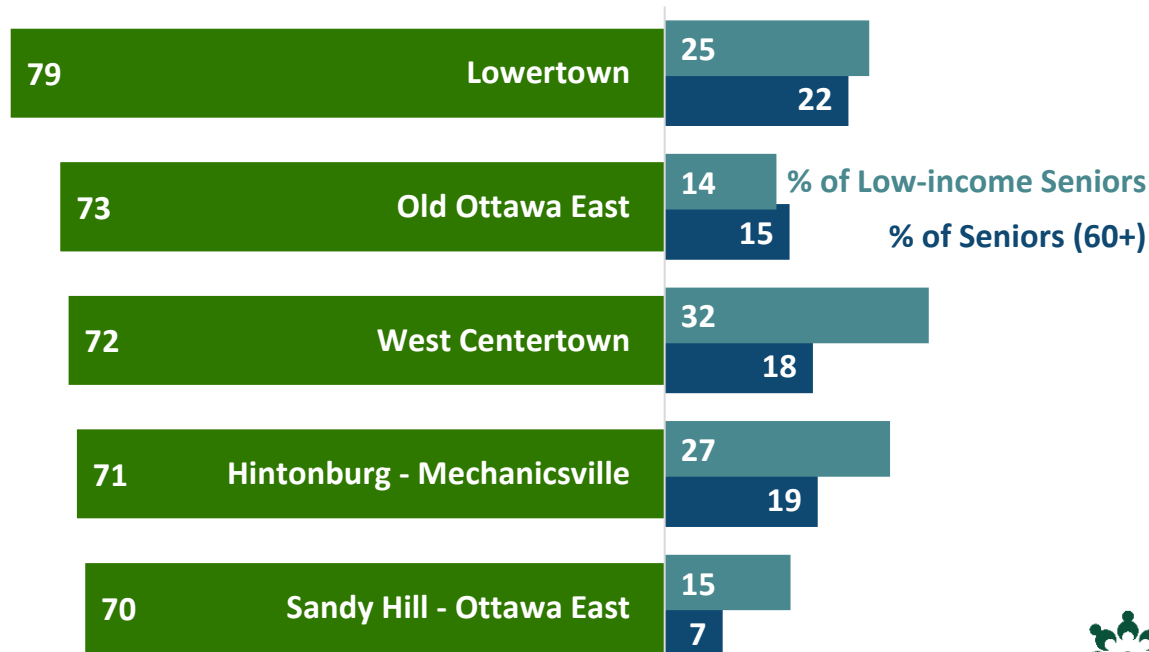
**In 2012, the average walkability score in Ottawa was 50 with a range 35 to 91**

Byward Market had the highest **walkability score** (91), while CentrepoinTE had the lowest (35). Both had lower numbers of **low-income seniors** (3%) and higher numbers of **seniors** (20 - 21%).



**In 2012, neighbourhoods with high walkability scores tended to have higher numbers of seniors and higher numbers of low-income seniors**

Four of the six neighbourhoods that had high **walkability scores** (70+) also had higher numbers of **low-income seniors** (14 - 32%) and/or higher numbers of **seniors** (7 -22%).



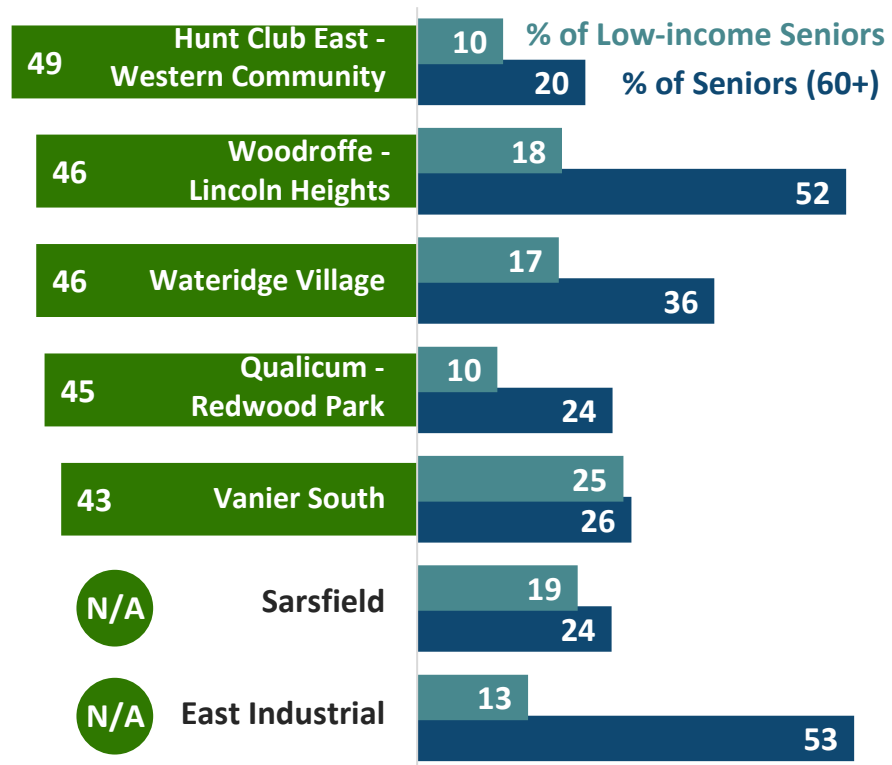
(Source: ONS, 2012)



## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

### In 2012, some neighbourhoods with low or without walkability scores tended to have higher numbers of seniors and higher numbers of low-income seniors

Of the 56 neighbourhoods with **walkability scores** under 50 or no scores, 34 had over 20% of their population who were over the age of 60, 16 had over 7% of low-income seniors, and six had over 30% of the population over 60. Five neighbourhoods had below average walkability scores and two others had no available scores with higher than average numbers of **seniors** (20 - 53%) and **low-income seniors** (10 - 25%).



(Source: ONS, 2012)



*My retiree group meets at [an inaccessible restaurant]. I've had to limit my attendance there. But, once in a while, they will meet up at [the mall close by]. I'm trying to talk them into meeting there permanently, because it's easier for me to get to.*

Ottawa retirement home resident



## We want to know

- How easy it is to use and how safe sidewalks/crosswalks are in our city
- How easy services are to use by seniors
- How seniors rate the winter walkability of neighbourhoods
- How many seniors did not feel safe walking in their neighbourhood
- Number of seniors who fell walking outside in the past 12 months
- Real and felt ease of use of city facilities



## An Age Friendly Community Story

The Pedestrian Safety Committee of The Council on Aging of Ottawa worked with Ecology Ottawa, the City of Ottawa staff, and three Ottawa communities to plan and carry out Age-Friendly Walkability Audits in 2014-16. An Age-Friendly Pedestrian Safety and Walkability Checklist was developed, asking questions about safety, accessibility, convenience and connectedness, and comfort and attractiveness. A Sidewalk Hazard Report Form was also used to report any dangerous conditions.

The audits were carried out in Hintonburg, Kanata (Beaverbrook), and the Glebe in fall, winter, and spring with participating community seniors' groups including those with mobility aids. City of Ottawa councillors and staff also took part. The report recommended the City of Ottawa and Age Friendly Ottawa:

- improve care of sidewalks, paths, and road crossings, especially during winter
- carry out strategies to reduce vehicle speed
- build more curb cuts to increase accessibility for pedestrians with disabilities
- equip intersections with audible pedestrian signals
- increase number of accessible public toilets, shelters, and benches
- adopt a 'Vision Zero' goal to reach no pedestrian and cyclist deaths by 2020
- encourage other communities to carry out walk audits in their neighbourhoods
- adopt a 'feet first' policy as an age-friendly approach

### An Age-Friendly Walkability Report Safe Streets for Seniors and Other Valuable People in Ottawa





# Transportation



Seniors have access to many choices to get around the city including driving, taking public and accessible transit, or walking. While most seniors use their own cars, they are also passengers in other people's cars, such as family, taxi/accompaniment services, or volunteer rides for medical appointments through community support agencies (Turcotte, 2012). To support transit choices for seniors, the City of Ottawa offers a seniors' discounted bus pass as well as free bus service for seniors every Wednesday.

**Senior pedestrians are at greater risk for injuries and death when involved in car crashes** (Toronto Public Health, 2015). In fact, between 2000 and 2008 in Canada, 63% of walkers killed at intersections were 65 or older (Transport Canada, 2011). In 2004-



## Goal

- Seniors can travel safely and with ease in Ottawa



## We know

- 23% of seniors used public transit
- 11% of people involved in car crashes were senior pedestrians

2005, 30% of people who went to hospital after being hit by a car while walking were aged 60 years and older. In addition, seniors stayed in hospital longer after being injured (16 days vs. 7 days for all age groups) and were more likely to die in hospital with 9% of older walkers in car crashes died in hospital (CIHI, 2007).

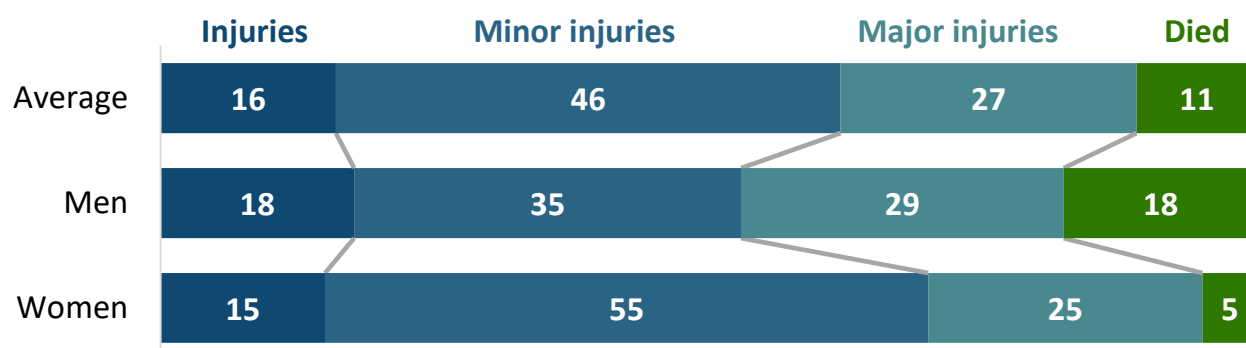
### **In 2013, less than a quarter of seniors (23%) used public transit despite being close to a bus stop**

Slightly more senior women (25%), francophone seniors (24%), and older seniors 75+ (24%) use public transit. Yet, 98% of households within bus service areas\* were within a 400-metre walk to a bus stop.

(Sources: RRFSS, 2013; Area Coverage Data, 2011)

### **In 2012, 11% of people involved in a car crash were senior pedestrians**

While senior women were more likely to be involved in a crash (20 women vs. 17 men), senior men were more likely to have died in the crash (one woman vs. three men).



(Source: ORSAR, 2012)



## **We want to know**

- How safe and easy it is to get to bus stops and shelters
- How often seniors use public transit in a month
- Number who feel lack of transportation stopped them from going to activities
- Number who fall outside in the past 12 months

\* Area where the City of Ottawa offers regular transit service. In this area, there is a levy on property taxes for the capital and operating costs of regular transit service.





# Housing



**Suitable housing can meet seniors' needs as they grow older.** In 2011, 92% of seniors lived in their own homes (CMHC, 2016b); of which 26% were renters (United Way Ottawa, 2016). While most seniors want to live in their own homes, sometimes their housing does not meet their needs. Suitable housing for seniors is affordable, in good repair, and able to meet changing needs (CMHC, 2016b).

**Affordable housing is less than 30% of your income.** Mortgage or rent, hydro, heating, water, property taxes, and fees are included in housing costs. In Ottawa, 20% of seniors spent more than 30% of their income on housing (UWO, 2016); higher than the national average (14%) (CMHC, 2016a). Senior renters are more likely to spend 30% or more of their income on housing (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015).



## Goal

- Seniors live in housing that best meets their needs and choices



## We know

- Low-income seniors are more likely to living in neighbourhoods with less affordable housing

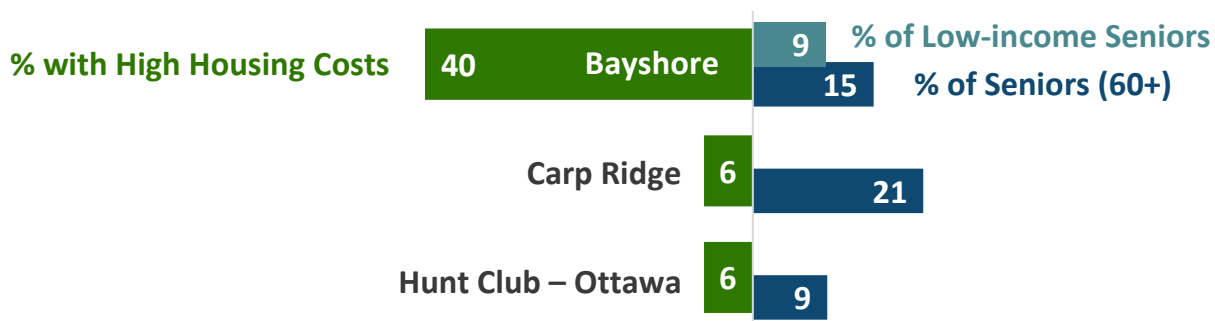


**In 2012, 49 neighbourhoods had below average housing costs (20% and under); 19 with average (21 - 25%); and 36 with above average costs (26% and above)**

Below Average	Average	Above Average
49	19	36

**In 2012, 20% of Ottawa seniors spent over 30% of their before tax household income on housing with a range of 6% to 40% depending on the neighbourhood**

On average, 20% of Ottawa seniors spent over 30% of their household income on housing. Some neighbourhoods were more affordable, such as Hunt Club - Ottawa Airport and Carp Ridge with only 6% of residents spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Both neighbourhoods had no low-income seniors. On the other hand, other neighbourhoods had high housing costs. In fact, 40% of Bayshore households spending more than 30% on housing and had average number of seniors and low-income seniors.



(Source: ONS, 2012)



## We want to know

- Level of satisfaction with current housing
- Number who can access housing programs and resources
- Number who feel they can continue living in their own home if they want to



## An Age-Friendly Community Story

An innovative partnership between the Carlington Community Health Centre (CCHC) and Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC) is underway in River Ward. The two organizations have teamed up to build a health and social services HUB with affordable housing for low income seniors. In late 2015, this partnership was the successful proposal receiving \$4.6M in capital funding. They received the funding under the City of Ottawa's Action Ottawa program and the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program for the construction of new affordable rental housing for older adults.



**Figure:** Conceptual view of the proposed HUB

The \$12.7M four-storey apartment building will have 42 one bed units and a medical clinic on the ground floor. The development will be visitable and include 12 barrier-free units. All units will be adaptable to accommodate residents aging in place.

The proposed building will be connected to the existing CCHC building at 900 Merivale Road. This integrated approach will offer primary medical care and social support services for seniors. In addition, the health housing hub is aligned with the Champlain Local Health Integrated Network (CLHIN) vision of integrating services to improve access to a range of services closer to home.

# Community Support & Health Services



**Access to community support and health services can help seniors age at home.** Most seniors want to receive health and community services closer to home. Seniors with more than one health condition are more likely to see their doctor and take more medication. In fact, 91% of Champlain residents have a family doctor (CIHI, 2012). In 2011, only 42% of area hospitals had senior friendly strategic plan commitments. As of 2015, 89% of hospitals have senior friendly strategies in place (Champlain Local Health Integration Network, 2015).



## Goal

- Seniors live at home safely with health and community support services to meet their needs



## We know

- Most seniors felt they could access health care when they needed it
- 21% of seniors fell in the past year; many were injured enough to make it hard to do things they normally do (54%)

## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

### Family caregivers also step in to care for aging and ailing family members and friends.

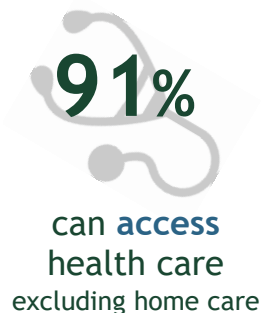
As many as 60% of seniors care for family members and friends (City of Ottawa, 2011). Home care and community support services can play a key role in meeting the growing care needs of seniors living in the community (CIHI, 2011).

**For seniors, falls most often happen in the home** (Ottawa Public Health, 2014). Seniors slip, trip, stumble or fall from beds, stairs, chairs, or other furniture. Snow and ice can lead to many weather-related falls among seniors, too. Many seniors do not recover from falls. Falls can affect a senior's health, independence, and sense of safety. In Canada, 20% of seniors living in the community fall each year, with seniors 80+ falling more often (27%) (PHAC, 2011).

### During 2011, most seniors (91%) felt they could access health care, other than home care services, when they needed it

However, older women (11% vs. 6% for older men) and seniors between 65-74 years of age (12% vs. 5% for seniors over 75) were more likely to have felt there was a time when they needed health care but did not receive it.

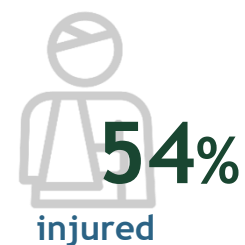
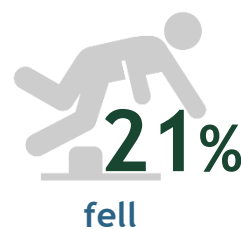
(Source: CCHS, 2012)



### In 2012, 21% of seniors had fallen in the past 12 months; of these seniors, 54% were injured enough to make it hard to do things they normally do

There is little difference between senior men and women (20% vs. 21%), younger and older seniors (20% vs. 21%), and English and French seniors (20% vs. 23%).

(Source: RRFSS, 2012)



## We want to know

- Number who had contact with their physician and dentist in the last 12 months
- Number who are happy with the available community support and home care
- Number who access and are happy with health promotion and low-cost food services



## An Age-Friendly Community Story

Since 2007, Ottawa West Community Support (OWCS) has led the [Aging in Place](#) program (AIP). Program partners include the Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), Ottawa Public Health, and Ottawa Community Housing. OWCS Outreach Coordinators and CCAC Case Coordinators work together in “store-front” offices in 11 Ottawa Community Housing buildings.



They coordinate services such as:

- Crisis Intervention
- Enhanced Case Management
- Nursing / Nurse Practitioner Visits
- Occupational and Physical Therapy
- Homemaking
- Foot Care
- Emergency Meals
- Transportation to urgent medical and other health appointments
- Health Promotion Sessions

The program goal is to reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations of residents. The program team offers outreach and intervention services to link residents to community resources. The goals for clients are to help them access health care, make healthier choices, and stay longer in their own homes.

The program is a growing success. In 2015, Aging in Place served over 2,000 clients offering 5,000 crisis interventions, 14,000 visits of in-home support, and over 4,000 emergency meals. The program continues to show its promise to low-income seniors who may experience barriers to accessing health care.







# Respect & Social Inclusion



**Respect for and inclusion of seniors is key to an age-friendly community.** A strong sense of belonging is linked to better health and well-being in seniors (Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, 2010). Yet, ageism is a common experience for seniors. As many as 65% of seniors feel judged because of their age (Revera, 2012). Ageism is a risk factor for social isolation. In turn, it can put seniors at risk for elder abuse.

**In 2015, 8% of seniors experienced mistreatment in Canada.** Mistreatment can include abuse and neglect. It is defined as “actions and/or behaviours, or lack of actions and/or behaviours that cause harm or risk of harm within a trusting relationship” (McDonald, 2015). Emotional abuse is the most common with 3% of



## Goal

- Seniors are respected and feel included in the community



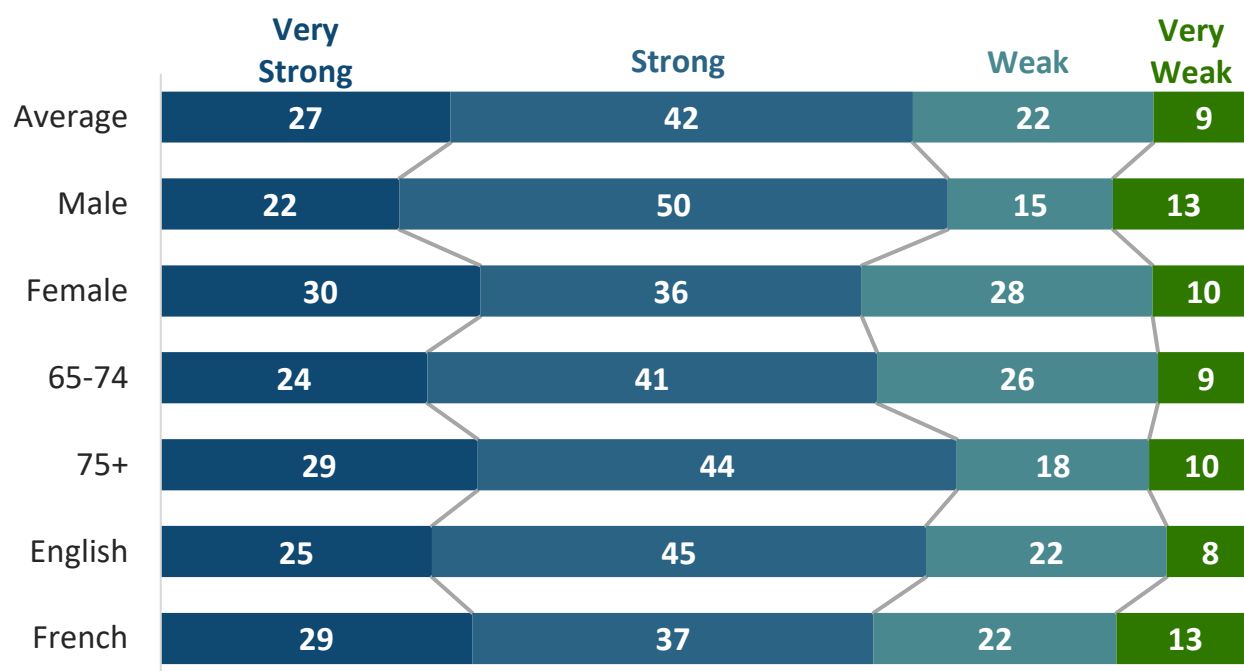
## We know

- Seniors had a strong sense of belonging
- Both older women and men experienced family violence, although older women were more likely to face elder abuse



seniors experiencing daily (McDonald, 2015). Seniors are more likely to be abused by family members and less likely to report it to police than other age groups (Gabor & Kiedrowski, 2009).

### In 2011, most seniors (69%) had a very strong or strong sense of belonging to their community



(Source: CCHS, 2012)

### Both older women and men experience family violence

In 2011, there were 32 senior victims of police-reported family violence of which 18 were women and 14 were men for a rate of 28 per 100,000 seniors in Ottawa.

In 2012, there were 191 reports of 'abuse – possible senior' to the Ottawa Police Services. Seventy-two percent (72%) of victims were women. Reports included fraud, theft, assault, disputes, and harassment.

(Source: UCR, 2011 and 2012)



### We want to know

- How seniors feel about where they stand in their community
- Number who experience mental, physical, and financial elder abuse
- Number who experience ageism



## An Age-Friendly Community Story

Keeping Ottawa Seniors Connected is a three-year project (2016-2019) bringing together seven Ottawa community partners who have received close to \$3 million in funding to address social isolation of seniors. Projects led by the community partners include:



Ottawa West Community Support, *Healthy Connections - Healthy Communities* project will give support to low-income seniors living in six Ottawa Community Housing low-income seniors' buildings.

The Catholic Centre for Immigrants-Ottawa, *Senior Centered ESL Program* will offer information, workshops and activities to people who are over the 55 years of age and who have poor English language skills.

Nepean Osgoode-Rideau Community Health Centre, *Elder Abuse Response and Referral Service* will use a collaborative approach to engage seniors, partners, essential service agencies, and other providers of senior services in Ottawa through education and awareness, training, intake, case management, and elder mediation.

South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre, *Strengthening Senior Neighbourhood Networks* will build on the principles of community development with the goal to help low-income seniors at the neighbourhood level by creating a cocktail of services and strategies and approaches aimed at finding and engaging isolated seniors.

Social Planning Council of Ottawa, *Creating Community for Isolated Ethno-cultural Seniors* is a collaborative project to reduce isolation for immigrant and ethno-cultural seniors, many of whom are also living on low income or with disabilities.

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, *Reducing Rural Isolation* project is an outreach program with wraparound services for rural and isolated older adults.

The Council on Aging of Ottawa will act as the backbone organization and will carry out the functions of administration, communication, and evaluation for this project.

# Impact



**Ottawa is a great city to age in place.** Over the last few years, we have focused our efforts on building an age-friendlier Ottawa. We know more must be done to meet the growing numbers of seniors and their needs in our community.

**We know most people living in Ottawa are satisfied with their lives and in good mental and physical health.** In Ottawa, 92% of residents of all ages are very satisfied or satisfied with their lives. Another 62% report being in excellent or very good general health. 72% report excellent and very good mental health (Ottawa Public Health, 2014).

**Over time, we want to measure the impact of the age-friendly initiatives in Ottawa on the health and well-being of seniors.** To this end, we focused on measuring the long-term life satisfaction, health and mental well-being, social support, and activity levels of seniors.

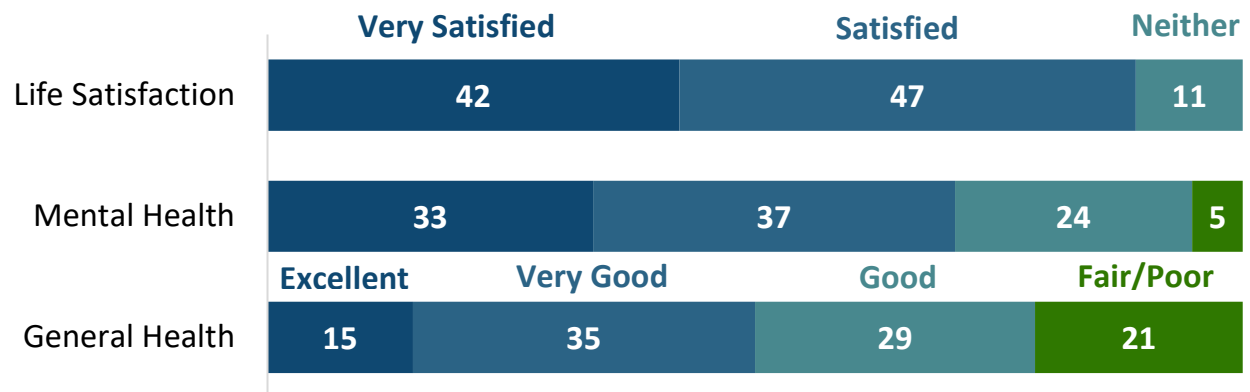


## We know

- 89% of seniors in Ottawa were satisfied with their lives, a little lower than the average for all residents (92%)
- Seniors were in better mental health (70%) than in general health (50%)

## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

In 2012, most seniors were **very satisfied or satisfied** with their lives (89%) and felt they had **excellent or very good** mental health (71%) and general health (50%)



**satisfied**  
with life



very good  
**mental health**



very good  
general **health**

(Source: CCHS, 2012)



### We want to know

- Seniors self-rated general health, mental health, and healthy aging
- Number of seniors who have the social support they need
- How physically active seniors are in their lives



*I think the fact that moving here to Ottawa and having my daughter and son-in-law here has given me a better quality of life.*

# What we want to know



**Indicators for three of the eight age-friendly areas had no data to report. The areas included are:**

- Civic Participation and Volunteering
- Social Participation
- Communication and Information

We will include this information in future reports.



*I no longer attend functions at certain places that I used to...*

*It's very difficult to get around ... So you slowly start to leave things out...And that's the fact of life.*

Ottawa retirement home resident





# Civic Participation & Volunteering



**Seniors are known to volunteer more hours and vote in elections more often than other age groups.** In Canada, more than one-third (38%) of seniors between 65 and 74 volunteered 231 hours each and 27% of seniors over the age of 74 volunteered 196 hours annually. While seniors volunteered less often, they volunteered more than 1 billion hours in 2010, more than half of the 1.98 billion volunteer hours (Turcotte, 2015).

**Volunteering can have a positive impact on seniors.** It offers them health benefits as well as improved



## Goal

- Seniors play an active role in their community



## We want to know

- How often seniors volunteer
- Number who have support to volunteer
- Number of seniors who take part in civic decision-making
- How satisfied they are with their level of participation



social support. We also know that some seniors may experience barriers to volunteering such as transportation, scheduling issues, and out-of-pocket expenses (Cook et al., 2013).

**Voting is a way for seniors to feel part of the political process.** In the 2011 federal election, 61% of Canadians voted. Voting among seniors has been historically high when compared to other age groups. In fact, 75% of seniors between 65 and 74, and 60% and seniors over the age of 75 voted in the 2011 federal election (Elections Canada, 2011).



## An Age Friendly Community Story

In early 2016, Junior Achievers (JA) Ottawa completed a one-year project, *Seniors Mentoring at Risk Teens (SMART)*. The purpose of the project was to enhance the lives of seniors by engaging them as volunteers in a program designed for vulnerable teens. Because of the project, senior mentors were highly engaged, enjoyed working with the at-risk youth, and reported a greater sense of contribution to their community in their post-program survey.



A total of 19 volunteers took part, of whom 16 were new volunteers with JA Ottawa and over the age of 65. Working in two teams, the senior mentors took part in a two-day lifeskills workshop which included a series of speakers on such topics as mental health, and opportunities to learn about technology from the youth. Two organizations were involved with this project: Youville Centre for young mothers and William E. Hay Centre supporting young men in custody. A total of 27 at-risk youth took part in the program, all under the age of 25.

This intergenerational program highlighted the positive exchange between youth and seniors as reported by the volunteers and participants. As stated by one volunteer, “It gave me tremendous appreciation for the opportunities I have. Moreover, it gave me insights on how tough it is to overcome a family situation that is less than supportive. Many of the guys had fathers or family members in similar institutions which speaks to the idea of role models being ever so important when they may not be ideal in the home.” Participants also shared what they learned about themselves after participating in the project, “the program really opened my eyes to how much I actually have to offer. I learned I have a lot of skills.”



# Social Participation



**Ottawa offers a wide range of social, recreational, and cultural activities for all ages.** As the nation's capital, Ottawa is home to many social activities, festivals, and other cultural events for seniors as well. Ottawa has over 30 Older Adult Centres. Yet, we have little information on seniors who take part in these activities in Ottawa (Novak et al., 2013).

**As with civic participation and volunteering, social participation can have positive benefits for seniors.**

About 80% of Canadian seniors regularly took part in at least one social activity. We also know that when the number of activities increases, so do the positive benefits such as self-rated health, loneliness, and life satisfaction. Yet, we also know 21% of senior men and 27% of senior women wanted to be more involved (Gilmour, 2012).



## Goal

- Seniors take part in social, recreational, and cultural groups



## We want to know

- Number of seniors who join, want to, or are prevented from social activities in the community
- How satisfied seniors are with the activities

# Communication & Information



**Staying in touch with family, friends, and the world around you are vital parts of active aging.** Access to information is the way for seniors to stay active, connected, and engaged in their community. Yet, seniors in Canada were found to have the lowest level of health literacy with 88% of seniors without the health literacy needed, compared to 60% of Canadians (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008).

**While seniors have lower literacy rates, they also have a harder time to find and use information to improve their health.** Health literacy is the “ability to find, read, understand, and use health information to make health decisions” (The



## Goal

- Seniors can find, read, know, and use information when they need it



## We want to know

- Number of seniors aware of housing programs and services
- How satisfied seniors are with information about the age-friendly areas

## How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?

Council on Aging of Ottawa, 2015). Low literacy rates were related to poorer health outcomes and not taking part in community activities (Rootman & Gordon-El-Biherty, 2008). Yet, daily reading can increase health literacy. Seniors who are daily readers have up to 52% higher health literacy scores than others in their age group (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008).

**Older adults access health information from multiple sources, word of mouth being the most common source.** Doctors are the first source Canadian seniors go to get their information, followed by family members and friends, media, and books (The Canadian Council on Learning, 2008). More seniors are using the internet, making them the fastest growing group of internet users in Canada (Veenhof & Timusk, 2009).



## An Age-Friendly Community Story

Older adults who took part in the 2011 consultations said they would like to know more about the City's programs and services for seniors. Many older adults also said that they would like to find this information in one place. They also said printed information was important since some older adults do not own or have access to computers. In 2013, the City of Ottawa created and printed a *Guide of Programs and Services for Older Adults*, which was translated in to French, Arabic, and Traditional Chinese. The Guide aims to make it easier for older adults to access City services. It includes information about:

- Getting around the city
- Help around the home
- Health and support services
- Housing
- Recreation and leisure
- Safety
- Volunteering



The Guide was recently updated. It is also being translated into Spanish. The new Guide will be available at City locations and through various community partners. Older adults can call 3-1-1 or email [olderadults@ottawa.ca](mailto:olderadults@ottawa.ca) to ask for copies. The Guide is another example of the City's commitment to meeting the information needs of older adults in our community.



*I don't have a problem getting information. I sit around drinking coffee with others. Around the table, and talk about things one way or the other. That's how I know things.* Ottawa retirement home resident





## Conclusion

**Our common goal is to make Ottawa a city where the physical, social, and service spaces meet the needs of older adults so they can live healthy and active lives as they age.** We are pleased to be able to report on some of the age-friendly indicators to meet this goal. We identified 66 key indicators that we plan to track over time. Through the Age Friendly Ottawa Evaluation Working Group, we have begun the process of evaluating our impact and shaping future activities based on the data.

**Based on our research, we know more about the physical environments** - outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, and housing – **than the social environments** –

community support and health services, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and volunteering, social participation, and communication and information. In fact, we could report on only 20 of the 66 indicators. Below is a summary of what we know now and what we want to know in future reports.

**We found that many seniors in Ottawa were active, happy, and healthy.**

- 91% felt they could access health care when they needed it
- 89% were satisfied with life
- 79% found it easier to walk in their neighbourhood for leisure than running errands
- 70% felt they had very good or excellent mental health
- 69% had a very strong or strong sense of belonging to Ottawa
- 22% walked six or more hours a week, another 47% between 1 and 5 hours a week



## Goals for Seniors

- Use outdoor and built spaces safely and with ease
- Travel safely and with ease in Ottawa
- Live in housing that best meets their needs and choices
- Find, read, know, and use information when they need it
- Take part in social, recreational, and cultural groups
- Play an active role in their community
- Live at home with community support and health services to meet their needs
- Are respected and included in the community

## *How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?*

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### **We also found that some seniors were not doing as well in a few key areas.**

- 50% felt they had very good or excellent general health
- While many seniors are active, 31% of seniors walked less than 1 hour each week in their neighbourhoods, well below the recommended time to exercise. In fact, 14% did not walk at all in their neighbourhoods
- Some seniors found their neighbourhoods not as easy to get around for exercise (21%) or errands (40%)
- 23% of seniors used public transit; a similar rate when compared to other Ottawans
- 21% of seniors fell in the past year, and of those seniors, 54% were injured enough to make it difficult to do things they normally do
- 11% of people involved in car crashes were seniors on foot
- Many low-income seniors live in neighbourhoods with less affordable housing
- Some seniors experience elder abuse

**There are also gaps in our data, leaving holes in our picture.** In fact, three of the eight age-friendly areas have no data available for the identified indicators, including social participation, civic participation and volunteering, and communication and information. We highlighted ‘what we want to know’ in each of the report sections. For a list of all the indicators, go to [Appendix A](#).

**The Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) will be an important source of data for measuring the age-friendliness of Ottawa in the future.** Most of the missing indicators are from the CLSA data source. For other data sources, several indicators were collected once, were not available at the Ottawa level (e.g., only available at the provincial level), or were not available for seniors only. Other indicators had too few results to be able to report on at this time. This made it hard to report results by equity indicators (i.e., gender, age, income, language, ethnic origin, neighbourhood). The difference between urban and rural neighbourhoods was not examined in this report due to the lack of data sources with such information. Other indicators did not exist in available data sources. We developed a list of supplemental or ‘wish list’ indicators to fill in the gaps. These indicators will need more planning and work to collect this information from seniors.

**So, how age-friendly is Ottawa?** While many seniors in Ottawa are active, healthy, and happy, there are some seniors that are not as well off. It also depends on your personal characteristics and behaviours. For example, where you live and how physically active

you are in your day are two factors. We also have a few gaps in our data, so our picture of Age Friendly Ottawa is not yet complete.

**There is more we can do to make sure seniors can stay active, healthy, and happy.** We are working with the City of Ottawa and our community partners to continue to plan, carry out, and evaluate age-friendly activities. We plan to fill in the gaps in our data by:

- Developing a questionnaire to collect information on the supplemental or 'wish list' indicators
- Applying for funding to access the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging data
- Publishing another evaluation report in three to five years to see where we improved and where we should focus more attention

**This is only the beginning.** We want to hear from you, too. Let us know what you think.

- An age-friendly Ottawa has...?
- What does age-friendly mean to you?
- In your opinion, how age-friendly is Ottawa?
- If you had to pick one age-friendly area to focus on, what would that be?
- Do you see organizations and/or community groups that are doing good things with and for seniors? Share your story with us at [afo@coaottawa.ca](mailto:afo@coaottawa.ca).





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## Appendix A: Indicators

You will find below the list of indicators developed by the Age-Friendly Ottawa Evaluation Working Group. The indicators in **bold** have findings in this report. Where indicators had no data sources, results will be reporting in future reports, if available. We will report on supplemental or 'wish-list' indicators when data are collected.

<b>1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings</b>
<b>1.1 Objective walkability</b>
<b>1.11 Walkability Score (ONS)</b>
<b>1.12 Proportion of seniors walking in neighbourhood (RRFSS)</b>
<b>1.13 Average number of times walking for exercise and average time spent walking on each occasion (CCHS)</b>
1.14 Accessibility and safety of sidewalks (ONS)
1.15 Accessibility of services and amenities (ONS)
1.16 Accessibility and safety of crosswalks (ONS)
1.17 Winter Walkability (ONS)
<b>1.2 Perceived walkability</b>
<b>1.21 Neighbourhood rating for walking for fun, exercise, or pleasure (RRFSS)</b>
<b>1.22 Neighbourhood rating for walking for reasons other than leisure (RRFSS)</b>
1.23 Number who do not feel safe walking in area surrounding their housing (CLSA)
<b>1.3 Supplemental indicators</b>
1.31 Accessibility of city facilities
1.32 Perceived accessibility of city facilities
1.33 Perceived safety of Ottawa neighbourhoods

<b>2. Transportation</b>
<b>2.1 Availability / accessibility of public transportation</b>
<b>2.11 Number who used public transit in last month (RRFSS)</b>
<b>2.12 Number of households in areas within standard access distance to the transit system (Area Coverage Data)</b>
2.13 How often seniors used public transit in the past month (CLSA)
2.14 Accessibility and safety of bus stops and shelters (ONS)
<b>2.2 Perceived accessibility of public transportation (CLSA)</b>
2.21 Number who feel that transportation is preventing them from going to activities
2.22 Number who do not use public transit for access to services in their area
2.23 Number who do not use accessible transit for access to services in their area
<b>2.3 Pedestrian safety</b>
<b>2.31 Number of walkers killed and injured in motor vehicle collisions (ORSAR)</b>
2.34 Proportion of seniors who fell in the past 12 months walking outside (CLSA)
2.35 Proportion of seniors injured seriously after a traffic accident as a walker (CLSA)
<b>3. Housing</b>
<b>3.1 Availability of affordable housing</b>
<b>3.11 Number who spend 30% or more of their before-tax household income on housing (ONS)</b>
<b>3.2 Satisfaction with housing situation</b>
<b>3.21 Proportion of seniors living in housing that does not meet their needs (NHS)</b>
3.22 Proportion of seniors satisfied with their current housing (CLSA)
<b>3.3 Falls</b>
<b>3.31 Number of falls in the past 12 months (RRFSS)</b>
<b>3.32 Number of falls reported as serious (RRFSS)</b>
<b>3.4 Supplemental indicators</b>
3.41 Accessibility of housing programs and resources
3.42 Number who are confident they can continue living in their own home if they want to

## *How Age-Friendly is Ottawa?*

<b>4. Community Support &amp; Health Services</b>
<b>4.1 Availability of health services</b>
<b>4.11 Number who felt they did not have access to health care when needed (CCHS)</b>
4.12 Number who had contact with doctor and dentist during past 12 months (CLSA)
<b>4.2 Availability of community support</b>
4.21 Number satisfied with area around their housing (CLSA)
<b>4.3 Supplemental indicators</b>
4.31 Access to health promotion activities
4.32 Satisfaction with health promotion activities
4.33 Access to low-cost food services
4.34 Satisfaction with low-cost food services
<b>5. Civic Participation and Volunteering</b>
<b>5.1 Availability of volunteering opportunities</b>
5.11 How often seniors take part in volunteer work (CLSA)
<b>5.2 Supplemental indicators</b>
5.21 Number who have access to support for volunteering (e.g. transportation, training, method of appreciation)
5.22 Number who take part in decision making
5.23 Satisfaction with their level of participation in decision making
<b>6. Social Participation</b>
<b>6.1 Availability of opportunities to engage in social activities (CLSA)</b>
6.11 Number who take part in social activities
6.12 Number who want to take part in social, recreational, or group activities
6.13 Factors that prevent seniors from taking part in these activities
<b>6.2 Supplemental indicators</b>
6.21 Level of satisfaction with leisure activities
<b>7. Respect &amp; Social Inclusion</b>
<b>7.1 Sense of belonging</b>
<b>7.11 Number feeling a sense of belonging to their community (CCHS)</b>
7.12 Perceived level of where seniors feel they stand in their community (CLSA)



<b>7.2 Elder Abuse</b>
7.21 Rate of psychological elder abuse (CLSA)
7.22 Rate of physical elder abuse (CLSA)
7.23 Rate of financial elder abuse (CLSA)
<b>7.24 Number and rate of senior victims of police-reported family violence (UCR)</b>
<b>7.25 Number of seniors who were victims of abuse and type of abuse (UCR)</b>
<b>7.3 Supplemental Indicators</b>
7.31 Number who experience ageism
<b>8. Communication &amp; Information</b>
<b>8.1 Supplemental Indicators</b>
8.11 Number who aware of housing programs and services
8.12 Satisfaction of seniors with access to information with age-friendly consideration
<b>Impact</b>
<b>General Health</b>
Self-rated general health (CLSA)
Self-rated mental health (CLSA)
Self-rated healthy aging (CLSA)
<b>Perceived health (CCHS)</b>
<b>Perceived mental health (CCHS)</b>
<b>Social Support</b>
Proportion of seniors who have access to support when needed (CLSA)
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>
Level of satisfaction with life (CLSA)
<b>Level of life satisfaction (CCHS)</b>
<b>Physical Activity</b>
Level of involvement in physical activity (CLSA)
<b>Psychological Distress</b>
Level of psychological distress (CLSA)
<b>Level of psychological distress (CCHS)</b>



## About Age Friendly Ottawa

**Vision:** Ottawa, a city where the physical, social and service environments are responsive to the needs of older adults.

**Mission:** To improve the age-friendliness of Ottawa for all seniors by working together to engage with the community to take action and to maximize healthy and active aging.

**Goals:**

1. To promote and advocate for an *Age Friendly Ottawa*; to act and be recognized as champions of an age-friendly Ottawa.
2. To engage with seniors to measure and improve of the age-friendliness of Ottawa
3. To build on prior initiatives to improve the lives of seniors of Ottawa such as the City of Ottawa's Seniors Agenda and the United Way/Centraide Successful Aging Ottawa.
4. To work collaboratively with the City of Ottawa's Older Adult Plan Team.
5. To complete an evaluation framework of the age-friendliness of Ottawa using the WHO framework.
6. Based on the consultation of Ottawa's age friendliness, prepare an age-friendly action plan to address problems and gaps identified.
7. To have the City of Ottawa join the Global Network of *Age Friendly Cities* and work on achieving the goals in the age-friendly action plan.
8. To publish an age-friendly report for Ottawa.
9. To work on issues/projects to improve the age-friendliness of Ottawa in priority areas shown by the report.

**AFO Values:** Aging successfully  
Active living  
Engagement and involvement of seniors  
Inclusion of all seniors  
Working collaboratively  
Building on prior success to improve the lives of seniors in Ottawa

For more information, check out The Council on Aging of Ottawa website at:

[www.coaottawa.ca/afo](http://www.coaottawa.ca/afo).

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*Age*  
**Friendly**  
Ottawa



*Ottawa*  
**ville-amie**  
**des aînés**

An initiative of / Une initiative de

**The Council**  
**on Aging**  
of Ottawa



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