

# Building an Age-Friendly Simcoe County

2016 Community Needs Assessment Report

## REPORT

Released Summer 2017  
Public Interest Strategy  
& Communications





---

## Acknowledgments

**The County of Simcoe wishes to acknowledge and thank the following:**

The Ontario Seniors' Secretariat for funding Simcoe County's Age-Friendly Community Planning Initiative.

Staff and students of the Georgian College Research Analyst Program for their outstanding work in developing the *2016 An Age-Friendly Simcoe County Community Survey* and compiling data results in Age-Friendly Community Posters for each municipality.

Members of the Age-Friendly Project Steering Committee, our public libraries and library co-operative, the Simcoe County Accessibility Group, our local municipalities and municipal leaders, and all other stakeholders who participated in our engagement strategies and supported this initiative with your energy, enthusiasm and invaluable input.

Kevin Beaulieu and his team from Public Interest Strategies Communications for expertly facilitating the community engagement process and compiling the *2016 Simcoe County Age-Friendly Community Needs Assessment Report* for the County of Simcoe.

We extend deep appreciation to the older adults who shared their time and insights with us. Your generous contributions are what has made this assessment so successful.

---

## How to read this report

This report provides a rich source of data and analysis about older adults in Simcoe County. Readers who are particularly interested in the priorities and future considerations identified by participants will find a consolidated checklist for handy reference in Appendix A, but they should be read in the context of the source data collected through the initiative.

The findings are organized according to the eight (8) dimensions of an age-friendly community as identified by the World Health Organization. Within each section, the reader will find a general summary of input, a summary of key barriers, gaps, and challenges, and the key priorities and future considerations.

In the interest of transparency, materials developed through the project, and lists of participants, are included in the appendices.

---

# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Executive Summary</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| What is an Age-Friendly Community?                                    | 9         |
| Age-Friendly Simcoe County  | 12        |
| Project Design  | 14        |
| Project Framework   | 14        |
| Steering Committee  | 14        |
| <b>Simcoe County considered<br/>a positive place for older adults</b> | <b>21</b> |
| <b>Four Predominant Themes</b>  | <b>22</b> |
| 1. Transportation   | 22        |
| 2. Communication and Information                                      | 23        |
| 3. Affordability  | 23        |
| 4. Accessibility  | 24        |
| <b>Engagement Findings<br/>and Future Considerations</b>              | <b>25</b> |
| <b>Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings</b>                            | <b>25</b> |
| Outdoor Spaces and Buildings in Simcoe County                         | 25        |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                             | 34        |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                                  | 36        |
| <b>Housing</b>  | <b>38</b> |
| Housing in Simcoe County  | 38        |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                             | 46        |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                                  | 47        |
| <b>Transportation</b>   | <b>48</b> |
| Transportation in Simcoe County                                       | 48        |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                             | 60        |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                                  | 62        |

---

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Communication and Information</b>                       | <b>63</b>  |
| Communication and Information in Simcoe County             | 63         |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                  | 70         |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                       | 71         |
| <b>Community Supports and Health Services</b>              | <b>72</b>  |
| Community Supports and Health Services<br>in Simcoe County | 72         |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                  | 81         |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                       | 83         |
| <b>Civic Participation and Employment</b>                  | <b>84</b>  |
| Civic Participation and Employment<br>in Simcoe County     | 84         |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                  | 88         |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                       | 90         |
| <b>Social Participation</b>                                | <b>90</b>  |
| Social Participation in Simcoe County                      | 91         |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                  | 97         |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                       | 98         |
| <b>Respect and Social Inclusion</b>                        | <b>99</b>  |
| Respect and Social Inclusion in Simcoe County              | 100        |
| Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges                  | 105        |
| Priorities and Future Considerations                       | 106        |
| <b>Next Steps</b>  | <b>107</b> |
| <b>Moving Forward</b>                                      | <b>108</b> |

---

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Appendix A:</b>  |            |
| <b>Consolidated Priorities and Future Considerations Checklist - Eight Dimensions</b> | <b>110</b> |
| <b>Appendix B:</b>  |            |
| <b>Steering Committee Members</b>   | <b>118</b> |
| <b>Appendix C:</b>  |            |
| <b>Age-Friendly Survey</b>  | <b>120</b> |
| <b>Appendix D:</b>  |            |
| <b>Survey Results</b>   | <b>140</b> |
| <b>Appendix E:</b>  |            |
| <b>Key Informant Interview Guide</b>  | <b>171</b> |
| <b>Appendix F:</b>  |            |
| <b>Focus Group Script</b>   | <b>175</b> |
| <b>Appendix G:</b>  |            |
| <b>Focus Group Consent Form</b>   | <b>180</b> |
| <b>Appendix H:</b>  |            |
| <b>Outreach list</b>  | <b>182</b> |
| <b>Appendix I:</b>  |            |
| <b>List of Engagement Meetings</b>  | <b>187</b> |
| <b>Appendix J:</b>  |            |
| <b>Survey Result Infographic Posters</b>  | <b>188</b> |

---

## Executive Summary

Communities around the world are in the midst of major demographic transformation, and the County of Simcoe (County) is no exception. Simcoe County residents are living longer, healthier lives. To prepare for this demographic change and to accommodate growth in the number of older residents, the County is preparing a positive aging strategy that includes a framework that will help community stakeholders identify, plan for, and address the needs and priorities of older adults. Making communities more age-friendly is necessary to help promote the well-being and contributions of aging residents.

Many issues affecting older adults are in fact issues that affect everyone, but they may be more pronounced or experienced differently by seniors. The benefits of planning age-friendly communities extend to everyone, regardless of their current age. People of all ages will benefit from “aging into” a more accessible and supportive environment, and may have family members who benefit in the meantime. Supporting older adults in their wish for independent living may also help reduce strain on health-care and hospital systems in the long term.

The Global Age-friendly Cities project was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2007 to help cities assess their age-friendliness. *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* outlines the framework for creating age-friendly communities (AFC).

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the opinions and lived experience of older adults in the local community, the County has applied the WHO framework in the implementation of a community engagement initiative. The work has been assisted by Public Interest Strategy and Communications under the guidance of a steering committee consisting of representatives from the County, municipal councillors, local health unit, Local Integrated Health Networks, agencies serving older adults, senior representatives, accessibility representative and other participants with local insights.



---

Our research was enhanced by also following the *Finding the Right Fit: Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide* issued by the Government of Ontario, which is based on the WHO eight (8) dimensions that are central to creating an Age-Friendly Community.

The research suggests Simcoe County is generally considered a supportive place to live, although priorities for improvement were identified. Most of the priorities were related to transportation and communication, affordability and accessibility.

Broadly speaking, transportation issues arise from the large geography of Simcoe County, with large rural areas and many population centres between which people need to travel to meet their living and health-care needs. Transportation issues can further be broken down by the need to support older adults with personal transportation such as cars, and mass transportation such as community buses.

Many of the concerns and priorities arise from a need to better communicate the availability of services and resources that are, in fact, already available, but are not widely known. Additionally, communication strategies could better support civic participation and inclusion. The findings in the report are intended only to convey the opinions and perceptions of the participants. Where facts differ from these perceptions, the County may consider it an opportunity to enhance communications and general awareness of existing services and supports.

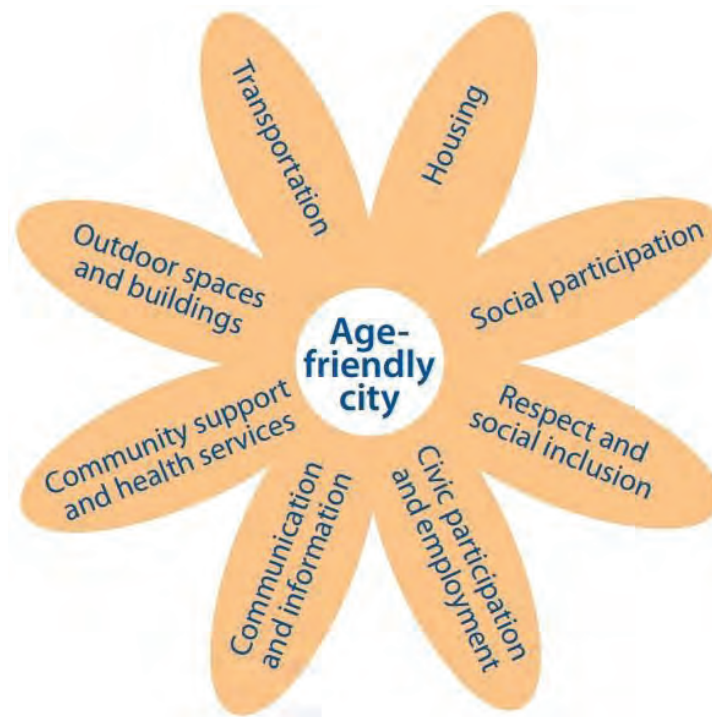
The future considerations for priorities in the document are intended to support the County as it develops its *Positive Aging Strategy: Older Adults Strengthening our Communities* including its Age-friendly planning framework, as well as the broader community in supporting older adults. Various departments, divisions, municipalities, agencies, and partner organizations are encouraged to develop more specific plans based on the wisdom gathered from the community and included in this report.

This report generally refers to “older adults.” The term was

---

used throughout the project without firm definition, allowing participants to self-identify. Some people consider the term “seniors” a stereotype and a form of social prejudice. Official definitions vary depending on the context. Although many define a “senior” as 65 and older, some programs define it as being 60, or even 55 and older. Some older adults object to being called a “senior” or “senior citizen” as they feel it implies more than just an age. Others embrace the term. While people of all ages benefit from age-friendly initiatives, the project is intended to focus on older adults; this is the term used in this report.

### What is an Age-Friendly Community?



---

Source: WHO (2007) Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide, Page 9

It is not news to Canadian and international communities that the population is aging. As baby boomers (born between roughly 1946 and 1964) age, and subsequent generations have generally smaller families, the proportion of the population made up by older adults is increasing. The World Health Organization (WHO) projects the proportion of the global population aged 60 will

---

double from 11% in 2006 to 22% by 2050. This shift has caused policy makers around the world to ask the question: how do we create communities that are more inclusive and accessible to people as they age?

The WHO recently conducted a large-scale study of 35 cities around the world and developed guidelines for communities to better meet the needs of aging populations. The guidelines consider every stage of aging and outline the necessary supports to help people age with dignity and grace. Through this extensive study, the WHO determined that there are eight (8) dimensions that are central to creating an Age-Friendly Community: outdoor spaces/buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect/social inclusion, civic participation/ employment, communication/information, and community support/health services,

These eight (8) dimensions illustrate a community's age-friendliness and identify priorities for individuals as they age to maintain their autonomy and create opportunities for active community participation.

An age-friendly city is a place that encourages "active aging" by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. It is a place that works to improve and support healthy active living of people of all ages.<sup>1</sup>

These cities enable people to truly participate in their community. They provide an environment where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age. Age-friendly cities recognize the wide range of resources and capacities among older people, and anticipate and respond to their needs and preferences.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, 2007

---

## The WHO project defined the eight dimensions of age-friendly cities as follows:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Outdoor spaces/<br/>buildings</b>         | Outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible.   |
| <b>Transportation</b>                        | Public transportation is accessible and affordable.  |
| <b>Housing</b>                               | Housing is affordable, accessible, appropriately located, well built and well designed.  |
| <b>Social participation</b>                  | Opportunities exist for social participation in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures. |
| <b>Respect and social inclusion</b>          | Older adults are treated with respect and are included in civic life.  |
| <b>Civic participation and employment</b>    | Opportunities for employment and volunteerism cater to older adults' interests and abilities.  |
| <b>Communication and information</b>         | Age-friendly communication and information is available and accessible.  |
| <b>Community support and health Services</b> | Community support and health services are tailored to older adults' needs.   |

## Age-friendly communities support and enable people to age actively by:

- recognizing the wide range of skills, abilities and capacities
- anticipating and responding flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences
- respecting the decisions and lifestyle choices
- protecting those who are most vulnerable
- promoting inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life.

---

## Age-Friendly Simcoe County

Simcoe County is experiencing rapid aging above national and provincial averages. In 2011, the proportion of adults aged 65 and over in Simcoe County was 15.7% of the population of 446,065 compared to 14.6% in Ontario and 14.8% in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Currently, 31% of Simcoe County's population is 55 and over. By 2041, that population is expected to increase to 41%.<sup>3</sup>

In 2012, in Simcoe County, 40% were seniors on social housing wait list and the average time on wait list for social housing is 3-6 years. The growth of racialized population in Simcoe County increased from 3.05% of the population in 2001 to 4.65% in 2011 or from 11,365 to 20,390.

## Rural vs. Urban Considerations

Simcoe County has a diverse geographical profile, with large urban centres, medium and small municipalities, and many residents in small centres and rural settings such as farming communities. The needs of older adults may be fairly consistent, but their access to resources and services may vary depending on their location. For example, whereas sidewalk-clearing may be a priority in urban centres, rural areas may not have sidewalks to clear, so electronic access, road clearing, or visits from service providers may be a higher priority.

These varying needs came up often through the discussions informing this report and should be given consideration in future planning. The County plays a central leadership role in supporting rural communities and local municipalities and should identify areas of shared opportunity. Seniors living in rural communities may be at higher risk of isolation and lack of social inclusion and participation. Close-to-home recreation, community support care, and health services are often much less available.

---

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population

<sup>3</sup> Simcoe Muskoka's Vital Signs (2016) – A Community of Support

---

**Social and environmental challenges identified through this process specific to rural communities include but are not limited to:**

- Lack of services/supports available
- Limited housing and transportation accessibility options
- Travel required for many health services
- Limited financial resources
- Social isolation

In 2015 the County received funding from the Government of Ontario's Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant Program to better support and bolster the active aging of its older population. The program helps governments and community organizations to develop local plans that will address aging demographics and enable people of all ages to fully participate in community life. Assessing the needs of the County's aging population is necessary to plan and implement change.

This report compiles and synthesizes the common themes from all project activities, reflecting Simcoe County's seniors' experiences through the WHO's identified eight (8) dimensions. The analysis of the collected data from the needs assessments highlights issues that require attention in order for the County to meet its objectives. The goal of the analysis and subsequent future considerations is to help the County create guiding principles in developing a seniors' strategy and age-friendly community framework. The seniors' strategy combined with the planning framework will be submitted for endorsement by County Council in Fall 2017 for consideration in future strategic planning. Participation from all stakeholders, including local residents, service users and providers, professionals, volunteers and community organizations are essential in ensuring the viability of any future plans.

The City of Barrie, Town of Wasaga Beach and Township of Oro-Medonte received separate funding from the Government of Ontario. We were pleased to collaborate with these municipalities and thank them for their support.



---

## **Project Design**

The Age-Friendly Community Project was carefully constructed to maximize older adults' input and perspectives. The County engaged Public Interest from April 2016 to March 2017 to conduct a thorough needs assessment, identify age-friendly priorities and develop strategic actions for future considerations in support of establishing Simcoe County as an Age-Friendly Community.

## **Project Framework**

In developing the project, there was recognition that participants may face several barriers to participation, for example transportation, language and accessibility needs. The project team worked together to minimize these barriers. Considerations such as hosting focus groups in accessible spaces, providing project materials in French, and leveraging community supports and various methods for survey distribution, ensured robust participation from the older adults communities in Simcoe County.

## **Steering Committee**

At the start of the project, a Steering Committee was established to provide guidance and community support. The Committee consisted of 31 community members who had diverse expertise and experience working and living in Simcoe County. Their backgrounds ranged from government, planning, health and social services, education, accessibility to senior-serving and disability-related organizations, local seniors and business representatives. (See Appendix B)

The Steering Committee had the opportunity for input on all components of the project, and supported project activities through their own community connections and increased public awareness. Members were kept informed of project updates through monthly meetings, newsletters, and invites to various project events.

---

The project was designed to allow committee members to play a pivotal role, and ensured a diversity of voices and local knowledge to shape project activities.

## **Project Activities**

**The needs assessment required four (4) main public engagement strategies. These activities included:**

1. A Comprehensive public survey
2. Key informant interviews
3. Focus groups
4. Public consultations

The activities were also constructed to inform the public via press releases, website and newsletters during each stage of the project. Data from the four (4) primary sources were analyzed to generate a baseline understanding of Simcoe County as a community.

The following is a summary of the key community engagement elements that helped set the foundation of this report.

## **Public Survey**

A survey was developed in partnership with Georgian College Research Analyst Program to collect information from residents 60 years of age and older, caregivers and service providers of older adults. (See Appendix C)

The survey was designed to gather future considerations and areas of concern for older adults across Simcoe County's 16 municipalities (three designated francophone areas), two separated cities and two First Nations. (See list on next page)



Town of Bradford  
West Gwillimbury  
Town of Collingwood  
Town of Innisfil  
Town of Midland  
Town of New Tecumseth  
Town of Penetanguishene\*  
Town of Wasaga Beach  
Township of Adjala-Tosorontio  
Township of Clearview  
Mnjikaning First Nation

Township of Essa\*  
Township of Oro-Medonte  
Township of Ramara  
Township of Severn  
Township of Springwater  
Township of Tay  
Township of Tiny\*  
City of Barrie  
City of Orillia  
Christian Island - Beausoleil

\* Designated Francophone area

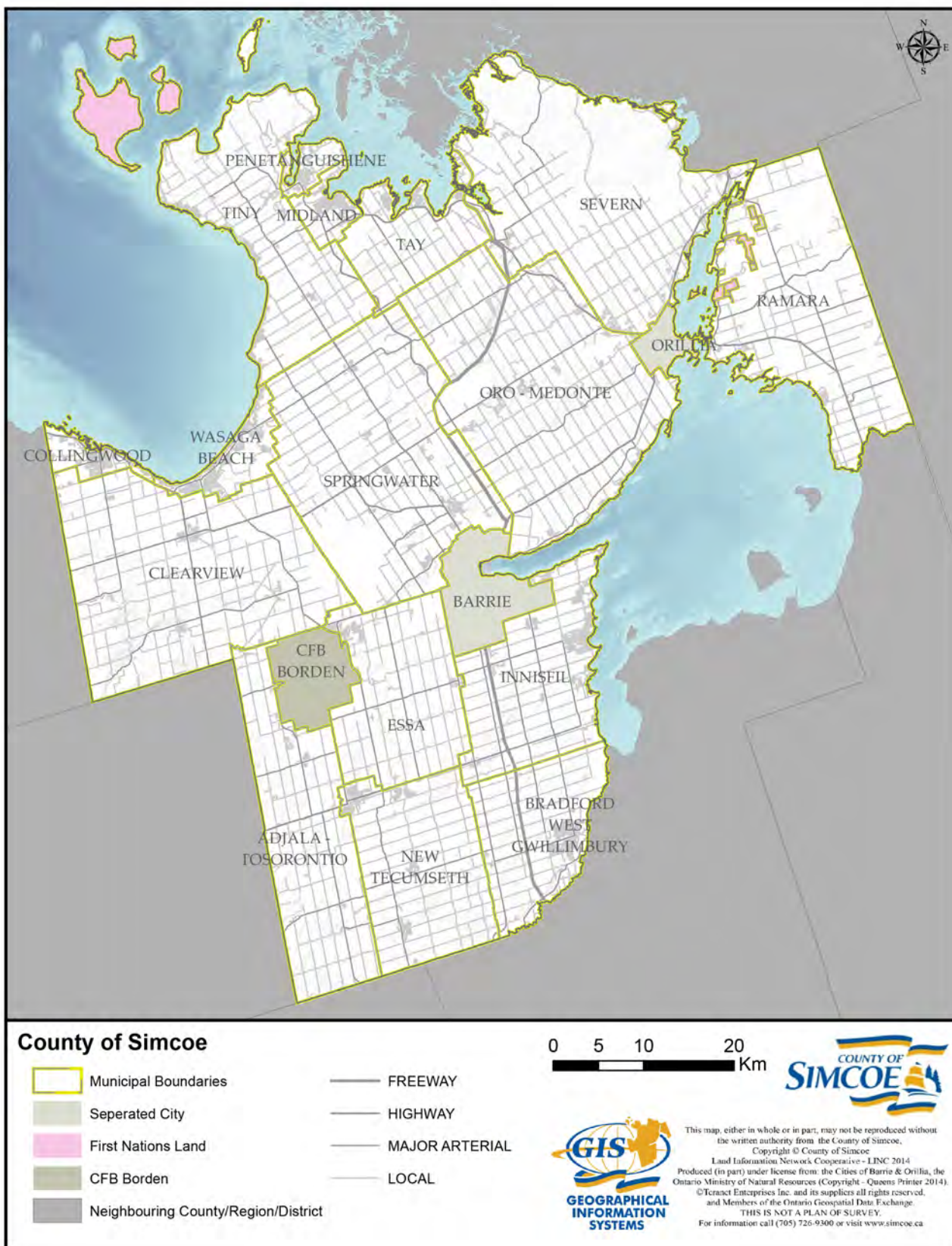
## The Rapid Aging of Simcoe County

### 5-year growth percentage in older adult population from 2006-2011 in Simcoe County

|                                  | % Growth    |             |             |                    | % Growth    |             |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                  | 55+         | 65+         | 85+         |                    | 55+         | 65+         | 85+         |
| <b>Bradford West Gwillimbury</b> | <b>33.8</b> | <b>35.3</b> | <b>46.8</b> | <b>Essa</b>        | <b>24.7</b> | <b>26.4</b> | <b>18.8</b> |
| Collingwood                      | 25.4        | 23.5        | 25.0        | Oro-Medonte        | 16.6        | 16.6        | 21.4        |
| <b>Innisfil</b>                  | <b>17.3</b> | <b>13.0</b> | <b>12.7</b> | <b>Ramara</b>      | <b>10.0</b> | <b>13.2</b> | <b>47.4</b> |
| Midland                          | 15.0        | 12.8        | 39.8        | Severn             | 14.5        | 11.0        | 17.2        |
| <b>New Tecumseth</b>             | <b>23.4</b> | <b>25.3</b> | <b>30.5</b> | <b>Springwater</b> | <b>17.3</b> | <b>10.8</b> | <b>29.0</b> |
| Penetanguishene                  | 18.2        | 14.6        | 45.0        | Tay                | 15.0        | 18.5        | 22.7        |
| <b>Wasaga Beach</b>              | <b>29.6</b> | <b>36.5</b> | <b>64.9</b> | <b>Tiny</b>        | <b>18.4</b> | <b>18.6</b> | <b>20.0</b> |
| Adjala-Tosorontio                | 15.6        | 21.2        | 23.1        | Barrie             | 21.0        | 17.6        | 33.9        |
| <b>Clearview</b>                 | <b>10.9</b> | <b>7.4</b>  | <b>3.6</b>  | <b>Orillia</b>     | <b>13.4</b> | <b>10.2</b> | <b>18.9</b> |
| Mnjikaning First Nation          | 32.0        | 10.0        | n/a         | Christian Island   | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         |
| <b>COUNTY OF SIMCOE</b>          | <b>19.7</b> | <b>18.3</b> | <b>29.6</b> |                    |             |             |             |

2006-2011 Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population

## Simcoe County Municipalities



---

The Steering committee distributed hard copies of the survey at locations throughout the County, including municipal offices, local library branches, local agencies, recreation centres, seniors' centres and social clubs, social housing buildings, retirement and seniors housing, service clubs, churches, businesses. A printable version and online survey were also available on the County website. Prizes were offered as an incentive to return completed surveys. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix C and the reviewed, themed, and analyzed survey results can be found online at [www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly) as noted on Appendix D.

**Through the support of the County, the survey was released in March 2016, and received an overwhelming response from residents. A total of 3,048 surveys were submitted, 2,077 (68%) of which were online. 2,407 surveys were considered valid and substantially completed**

The high response rate indicated a keen interest from older adults in both identifying and addressing the structural inequities that prevent them from living full lives. It also lent credibility to the accuracy of the responses.

**92% of respondents reported being over the age of 55, and 77% were over the age of 65. Nearly half of the participants (44%) were between 65 and 75 years old. Respondents reported a mix of income and housing types. Women were more likely to respond to the survey than men, as 69% of survey respondents were female and 31% were male. The reported annual household/family income of survey respondents had a median range of \$40,000 - \$49,999. Participants were distributed fairly evenly across the different townships, ensuring involvement from all of Simcoe County.**

---

## Key Informant Interviews

The survey results informed the development of key informant questions. The questions were developed by Public Interest and reviewed by the Steering Committee. (See Appendix E)

Key informants were chosen based on their caregiving experiences in both the public and private sectors. The interviews provided wider context and developed a more nuanced understanding. Telephone interviews were also conducted to gather information from harder-to-reach and isolated older adults in the County.

**A total of twelve (12) one-on-one interviews were conducted with community members who were knowledgeable about issues and priorities in the County during the months of April and May 2016. Interviews typically were an hour long. The information gathered from the interviews was summarized and analyzed.**

## Focus Groups

Analysis of both the survey results and key informant interviews aided the development of the Focus Group Script. (See Appendix F)

The focus groups hosted were small, round-table discussions to gain insight from participants' lived experiences. Having small discussion sessions fostered natural connections between participants, allowing an open environment where participants could safely share their experiences and build on each other's opinions.

**Sixteen (16) categorized focus groups were hosted throughout Simcoe County with participants from all 16 local municipalities.**

Specialized focus groups were hosted to ensure participation from the following populations: caregivers, service providers, Francophones, newcomers, indigenous communities living on- and off-reserve, and senior-living communities. All participants



---

consented to being in the focus groups. (See Appendix G)

Outreach methods for the focus groups included libraries, bulletin boards, word-of-mouth, community organizations and agencies, community and recreation, seniors' housing, and service clubs. Steering Committee members also supported outreach efforts through their community contacts and networks.

Flyers were also distributed electronically. The focus groups were about two (2) hours long and were voice recorded for accurate transcription purposes. Notes were also taken for reference. The transcriptions and notes were then reviewed and analyzed. In total, 125 participants participated in the focus groups held June and July 2016.

Throughout the engagement, participants were recruited by outreach to community (See Appendix H) organizations and agencies, as well as through the local networks of the Steering Committee. To ensure frank dialogue and an environment of trust, participants in the survey, key informant interviews, and focus groups (see Appendix I) were advised that their contributions would be anonymous and comments would not be attributable to any individual in the reporting.

## **Community Public Consultations**

The final phase of the engagement strategy was comprised of eight (8) public consultations held across Simcoe County throughout September 2016. The public consultation meeting notices were advertised through local newspapers, local radio stations, published on the County of Simcoe website, and promoted through municipal offices, agencies and individuals already involved in earlier project activities.

**More than 120 people attended the two-hour-long public consultations held in Alliston, Collingwood, Orillia and Penetanguishene. At each location, two (2) consultations were held per day, one in the afternoon and one in the evening.**

---

The purpose of the consultations was to give attendees information about the Age-Friendly Community initiative, present major findings, and encourage input. They also allowed community members to validate the identified gaps and priorities and provide additional input.

Public Interest and Steering Committee members facilitated discussion sessions, providing opportunities for attendees to discuss the gaps and priorities in their communities based on the eight (8) dimensions of age-friendliness. Participants passionately shared their concerns and hopes for the County. Comment cards were widely distributed and participants were encouraged to share their perspectives on the eight (8) dimensions. The comment cards were also made available on the County's website in order for more people to provide feedback and input.

## **Simcoe County considered a positive place for older adults**

The findings in the report are intended to accurately convey the opinions and perceptions of the participants to guide planning.

Simcoe County has several age-friendly features that enhance quality of life and allow greater independence for elder persons. Overall, the research indicates that older adults consider Simcoe County a positive place for aging adults to live. Respondents often describe the County as friendly, quiet, and a tight-knit community. Older adults enjoy the small-town environment; they value the sense of safety and social rapport that comes from living among people who share a common sense of community. A number of respondents indicated that they had either moved to the County to retire, or were originally from the area and had moved back. Other attributes they highlighted included local trails and the vast amount of green spaces.

In general, older adults feel respected, included, and that their

---

contributions are adequately recognized. A range of volunteer and intergenerational opportunities exist in the County, in addition to opportunities to participate in spiritual and community life.

Despite the general feedback that Simcoe County is a positive and supportive home for older adults, the research highlighted certain areas of improvement in reducing barriers to age-friendliness that significantly affect seniors' lives.

**Respondents expressed overwhelming appreciation for local libraries, seniors' clubs and recreation and community centres that provide a variety of activities and programs.**

## Four Predominant Themes

The eight dimensions simultaneously are independently important and interconnected. The main overarching themes highlighted as being particularly significant through the needs assessment process were:

- 1) Transportation
- 2) Communication/Information
- 3) Affordability
- 4) Accessibility

### 1. Transportation

As a key factor in maintaining independence and mobility, transportation has significant influence on seniors' quality of life. It is deeply interconnected with the other seven (7) dimensions. Older residents rely on different modes of transportation in all aspects of their lives; going to medical appointments, maintaining a robust social life, and participating in communities all require a degree of mobility. A majority of participants agreed Simcoe County could expand the reach and improve the efficiency of the public transportation throughout the region.

---

Transportation also impacts the seven (7) other dimensions of livability. Transportation was a dominant issue in most other themes discussed in our research. The majority of participants agree significant barriers exist to mobility, and that the County could do more when it comes to helping them be more mobile. There is a strong need for efficient public transportation both within the County and between Simcoe County and its neighbouring communities. Staying involved in the community also requires the means and ability to get out and about. When the option of driving is no longer physically or financially viable, alternative forms of transportation must be available.

## **2. Communication and Information**

In an age-friendly community, it is important to have up-to-date information readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources. Considering the communication needs and preferences of older adults is an important part of removing barriers to age-friendliness.

Throughout the assessment, participants named the lack of communication and information sharing of community services, events, and opportunities as a consistent impediment to their lives; they would like to know what is available for them in their communities and develop informed decisions on how they interact with their environment.

When older adults are informed and engaged in their communities, they feel included and connected. This sense of belonging has measurable impact on their physical and emotional health, and contributes to their internal capacity to connect with their peers. Many of the participants, reported that they did not feel well-informed and did not feel included or connected. As a result, older adults report feeling anxious, stressed and frustrated.

## **3. Affordability**

Affordability is a critical issue for older adults throughout the



---

eight (8) dimensions. Rent and home utility payments are generally among the highest monthly household expenses for many older adults who are living on reduced or fixed-incomes. Without adequate government financial support, in-home care supports and health-care services are expensive. In order to afford the increasing costs of housing-related expenses, many people are forced to cut back on other necessities such as transportation, medical care, food and social activities. Health-care expenses not supported by the government such as dental care, prescriptions, hearing aids and glasses, are also expensive. Lack of transportation, compounded by the costs associated with social and civic participation, socially isolates older adults.

While there is an increasing amount of information available on the Internet, seniors sometimes cannot access this information because they cannot afford to purchase a computer or cannot afford to purchase Internet service. For older adults who do not have adequate public transportation in their community, alternative means of transportation such as taxis or community transportation services can be extremely expensive and create isolation.

#### **4. Accessibility**

Older adults across the County need more accessible communities. In each of the eight (8) dimensions, accessibility greatly impacts older adults' ability to get around safely. Walkability and public access to transportation, with a particular focus on bus stops, sidewalk maintenance and snow removal, all pose as barriers to mobility if accessibility is not considered. Increasing accessible and affordable housing alternatives and raising awareness about accessibility in public buildings are crucial to ensuring older adults can remain in their communities longer. Considering accessibility for public events and other community activities encourages social and civic participation.

Without adapted washrooms, a ramp to enter the building, accessible seating and prior knowledge of an event, many

---

seniors and others requiring access are excluded from social events. Employers also need to consider older workers' needs; by providing training opportunities and considering accessibility, they can prolong employment for those in need of access, including older adults. Information should also be available in diverse formats, font size and medium, so older adults, regardless of ability, can access and understand it.

## Engagement Findings and Future Considerations

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process based on the eight (8) WHO dimensions of age-friendliness.

### Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

According to the WHO, outdoor spaces and public buildings in an age-friendly community are pleasant, clean, secure, and physically accessible.

The outside environment and public buildings can have a positive impact on aging residents' health and quality of life, by allowing all residents to move freely about the community, and enhancing social participation and community involvement. Increasing accessibility of public spaces and buildings involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for people with disabilities and older adults with age-related impairments to participate in social activities or to access health, social services, and businesses.

### Outdoor spaces and buildings in Simcoe County

**Outdoor spaces** – The County was described as a very clean, beautiful, and safe place to live. A large number of older adults

---

spoke with enthusiasm about the variety and quality of parks and trails available throughout Simcoe County and indicated their satisfaction and appreciation for the green spaces. Older adults enjoy sharing the environment with people of all ages and having the ability to both exercise and socialize outside.

**Outdoor spaces can be improved** – Where walking trails are available, participants identified a number of barriers to fully enjoying the public spaces:

- Access to some parks and trails is limited due to distance and transportation issues.
- Social participation could be made easier with fewer physical barriers in outdoor spaces and buildings.
- Parks and trails are not always paved, with dips making them inaccessible for older adults using mobility devices such as scooters, wheelchairs or walkers.
- Lighting, garbage cans and pet facilities in parks are inadequate and access to green spaces is seasonal, which limits usage during the winter.
- It was also mentioned that trail systems need to connect from one subdivision to another so people can travel between communities.
- At the same time, participants expressed the need for an increase in green spaces, walking trails, bike trails and dog parks in their communities.
- Many participants also conveyed the importance of promoting available outdoor spaces in the County.
- Numerous remarks from older adults were made about not knowing where to access the parks and trails, and lack of knowledge about resources in the community. This limits opportunity for physical activity and social interaction with other people.

---

**Accessible public washroom facilities** – The availability of basic amenities located in outdoor spaces and buildings, such as benches and public washrooms, are often cited as being important to older people. The lack of such amenities can deter some older people from going out. Walking as a form of both physical and social activity has become increasingly common for older adults and it is important to ensure paths, trails, and walking routes have sufficient and accessible washrooms.

By and large, older adults feel accessible public washroom facilities in the downtown core, parks, and along the trails are lacking. According to survey responses, only 29% of older adults are somewhat satisfied with the washrooms in public places. Public washrooms that are available and open year round are few in number. While public buildings and businesses provide washrooms, their use is restricted to operating hours.

It was suggested that accessible washrooms be located more centrally in order for older adults to access them. Simcoe County residents said they stay home because washrooms are lacking in public spaces. A lack of accessible public washrooms can lead to isolation.

**Respondents also expressed a need for automatic doors, grab bars in stalls, and frequent maintenance in all public restrooms.**

**Rest stops and seating** – Residents pointed out several factors that make carrying out fairly routine activities problematic:

**22% survey respondents somewhat satisfied with seating on streets**

**38% survey respondents somewhat satisfied with available seating in parks**

- 
- There was an identified need for more benches and rest areas in the surrounding communities. This is related to the difficulty in walking long distances due to health conditions associated with aging (such as shortness of breath), lack of stamina, or mobility issues. Having more benches would allow older adults to take breaks and encourage walking from one location to another.
  - Respondents also expressed that there is a lack of shady areas or covered spaces such as pavilions for older adults to stop and rest, especially on hot days, and lack of water fountains along the parks or trails.

**Sidewalk and road maintenance** – A key characteristic of an age-friendly community is that navigation is easy for a person who is driving, walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, or using other mobility devices. Well-maintained sidewalks, pathways, and roads are very important as it enables safe physical activity.

- The survey findings revealed many barriers to safe mobility in the community, which make it inaccessible or hinder outdoor activities.
- Participants were dissatisfied with the public spaces in their communities and agreed that outdoor spaces generally need more improvement to make them age-friendly.
- Participants indicated parts of their communities lack sidewalks and that stretches of sidewalks and paths around the County are not well maintained. Existing sidewalks are in need of dire repair and participants feel this is extremely dangerous for users.

**27% survey respondents stated Simcoe County needs more sidewalks**

- 
- Comments were made about the lack of continuous sidewalks, leaving people to walk or ride their scooters or wheelchairs on the road causing a hazard for themselves and drivers.
  - Missing sidewalks and sidewalks with high curbs are common barriers, making it difficult and dangerous for residents to walk between neighbouring residential areas. Path surfacing and closure of sidewalks during construction present significant safety challenges to older adults in getting around their communities.

**“Would be nice to have a paved road, sidewalks, safe crossings of major roads in area. The problem is that as soon as a small section of sidewalk is compromised because of the new construction throughout town those routes are rendered inaccessible. It is extremely important for them to remain accessible as someone in a wheelchair cannot go on grass or any unlevelled or softer surface for their safety.”**

**Poor lighting** – When it comes to lighting, participants generally agree the County must do more to make improvements. In the absence of sufficient street lighting in parts of the County, some older adults feel uncomfortable leaving their homes in the evening, or they make sure to get home before dark. Insufficient street lighting also deters some older people from walking to local shops, or accessing services and facilities.

- 33% somewhat agree that lighting in parks is sufficient**
- 49% somewhat agree that lighting on paths and streets is sufficient**
- 49% somewhat satisfied with lighting in and around buildings**
- 26% feel that lighting in Simcoe County should be improved**

---

### **Challenges getting out and about during the winter –**

Extreme weather conditions can be a burden for all residents, especially older adults. For some, snow and ice removal is not being done in a timely manner.

**41% are satisfied with snow removal on sidewalks**

**53% are satisfied with snow removal on streets**

Snow removal efforts must therefore be done with older adults in mind, especially those who have limited ability to perform additional removal, or those who are dependent on a mobility device. It was frequently mentioned that snow was often not removed for several days. Streets and sidewalks that are slippery or full of puddles or ice after a heavy snow or rain are barriers for older adults who wish to leave their homes.

### **Survey respondents were asked which areas of improvement would be of most benefit to them:**

**43% snow and ice clearing on sidewalks**

**37% snow and ice clearing on roads**

Since the majority of respondents use personal vehicles to get around, many recounted outings from a parked car, over the snow banks, to building entrances as being very dangerous. These obstacles make it particularly difficult for older people with low vision, poor balance, or who use wheelchairs or walkers to get around.

**“Our roads get a buildup of blowing snow and it’s dangerous as plowing is minimal and the surface is all potholes in winter and BIG dips in the rest of the year due to inferior road surfacing, out of line middle road paint, road service is atrocious considering we are seniors.”**



---

**“We have not been pleased or happy with the ice and snow removal both on the road and on the sidewalk. The two plow drivers cannot seem to be able to co-ordinate their efforts and work together successfully. The sidewalk man goes by and clears and then the road man comes along and clogs the walkway up again.”**

**“We do not have sidewalks, and our road no longer gets plowed in the winter until between noon and 2 p.m, quite late for someone trying to get to work.”**

**Parking spots** – Personal vehicles are the primary mode of transportation for the majority of participants in Simcoe County. Respondents cited a shortage of accessible parking spaces in some parking lots.

**Survey respondents were asked which areas of improvements they would benefit from:**

**26% identified more accessible parking spots**

The need for an adequate supply of parking spaces close to buildings and amenities was also discussed. When discussing outdoor spaces and buildings, the lack of drop-off areas in front of buildings and accessible ramps were frequently mentioned.

Pedestrian safety is a major concern – Older adults face some challenges when walking around the community. Pedestrian safety while crossing the street is an especially grave concern for many older adults.

**48% are satisfied with pedestrian crossings**

Many feel unsafe crossing roadways in their communities due to fast cars and drivers not giving way to pedestrians at intersections.



- 
- Many comments were received regarding the lack of visual and auditory cues at intersections.
  - Inadequate or unclear street crossings, lack of sidewalks or high curbs were also discussed as safety concerns.
  - Cyclists and people on scooters going too fast on sidewalks make it a hazard for older people; they can potentially lose their balance and get injured. Suggestions were made for people to sound their bells or to honk to alert pedestrians they are coming.

**“Need more pedestrian crossings. Streets need repairs. I can walk unassisted but my husband uses a cane or walker.”**

**“As an aging person with somewhat impaired hearing and no sidewalks, I would not feel safe trying to walk on such a busy street. Therefore eliminating a beneficial form of exercise for older people.”**

**Accessibility in public buildings** – Building codes need to be updated and the County needs to make sure all the new building in the area are modified.

As a result of policy changes over time, accessibility in public buildings is generally improving, particularly in libraries, health centres and community/recreation centres. With accessibility concerns on the minds of an aging population, residents agree that public spaces and buildings could be further improved. While many people reported visiting public areas with accommodations such as elevators, automatic doors, handrails, wide doorways and ramps, others reported difficulties accessing buildings.

**23% are somewhat or strongly satisfied with washrooms in public places**

**Accessibility in private buildings** – In contrast to public buildings, a lot of barriers were identified in private buildings: 35% are satisfied with the availability/accessibility of elevators, escalators, ramps, and washrooms

---

Architectural barriers in private buildings were commonly raised. Private buildings are viewed as less accessible, as older buildings can be very expensive and difficult to retrofit.

Inaccessible entrances to businesses and older public buildings were also a common concern heard from study participants. Some commercial spaces are located in older buildings do not have accessible front doors with ramp access, or may not be close to entrances.

A lack of elevators, issues with broken elevators or ramps, narrow doorway entries, heavy doors, lack of automatic door openers, lack of non-slip floors, inaccessible washrooms or toilet stalls and washrooms that are too small for wheelchairs to maneuver were mentioned repeatedly as barriers for older adults.

Although retailers have been proactive in efforts to make their businesses more welcoming to people of all abilities, further action is required to make them fully accessible. There is a general lack of awareness from businesses about peoples accessibility needs. People in wheelchairs or walkers having to either wait for assistance to enter, or enter through the rear of the building are examples of accessibility issues encountered by respondents.

**Churches were mostly cited as places older adults can no longer attend due to inaccessibility. Older churches generally have washrooms in the basement, creating problems for older adults with mobility challenges.**

Improvements to older buildings could include automatic door openers that open the correct way, even floor surfaces, installing ramps that are not too steep, hand rails and widening doorways.

Suggestions were made for businesses and their staff to participate in accessibility training and education courses to better meet access needs.

---

**Simcoe County is a safe place to live** – Overall, older adults in the County described feeling relatively safe and secure and reported little crime in their communities. Safety and security concerns tend to relate more to worrying about potential injuries, including the fear of falling, which can dramatically impact independence and mobility. The vast majority of participants insist that they would like to remain in their communities as long as they can.

**“Accessibility to some area services and businesses, while to code are still out of reach for people with disabilities.”**

**“But even in town, accessibility of shops is not great for wheelchairs etc. - steps into stores, difficult to navigate bumps etc.”**

## Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges

**In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues related to outdoor spaces and public buildings:**

- lack of pedestrian accessibility features, such as lighting, longer crossing times, curb cuts
- lack of public washroom facilities
- lack of benches
- unsafe path surfacing
- poor pedestrian safety, insufficient crosswalks
- lack of snow removal on sidewalks and roads
- inadequate signage
- parks and trails are difficult to get to

- 
- trail system is not connected
  - roads are not well maintained
  - lack of sidewalks
  - sidewalks need repair to eliminate broken blocks or uneven surfaces
  - buildings are not accessible (no ramps, automatic door openers, elevators, narrow doorway entries, heavy doors, washrooms, non-slip floors)
  - lack of accessible parking spaces
  - lack of parking spaces close to buildings and amenities.

Extended time crosswalk lights are needed to improve pedestrian safety and better accommodate those with mobility issues, such as those using walkers and wheelchairs allowing these individuals enough time to cross the road. More crosswalks with audible signals are required throughout the County to accommodate those with diminished sight. Icy sidewalks and sloped curb cuts full of snow are just a few of the hazards older people must navigate when going out in the winter, hence sidewalk maintenance, especially in winter, is another concern for pedestrians. These factors, combined with the lack of sidewalks and uneven surfaces, affect senior mobility and independence.

Older adults generally feel that Simcoe County has age-friendly public buildings however, public and private buildings, especially in older, downtown core are not easily accessible. Concerns focused on the lack of available washrooms and benches along the streets and in parks. Buildings without ramps, automatic door openers, elevators or escalators, narrow doorway entries, heavy doors and non-slip floors can create obstacles to access.

---

## Priorities and Future Considerations

The following is a list of priorities and future considerations for outdoor spaces and public buildings from all stakeholders:

### Priority – Improve overall accessibility of public and private buildings

- Develop accessibility materials for local businesses highlighting the importance of accessible front door access, width of isles, accessible washrooms, etc. to make it more accessible for community.
- Ensure ramps and automated doors are installed in all public buildings.
- Improve design of entrance to commercial/public buildings with no step entry to main entrance.
- Paint any walk ups/stairs a bright colour to ensure visibility.
- Encourage building and site design features that promote and support physical accessibility to social, cultural and recreational spaces, including community centres, libraries, museums, theatres and other public facilities.

### Priority – Improve sidewalk safety

- Make improvements to sidewalk maintenance (repave bumpy surface).
- Ensure snow removal efforts are done with the consideration of older adults, especially in front of buildings and reduce snow bank accumulation on sidewalk areas.
- Increase snow and ice removal in a timely manner.
- Educate residents and business on accessibility needs of seniors.
- Create barrier-free public walkways (i.e. widened sidewalks, improved maintenance and level surfaces).

- 
- Widen sidewalks to accommodate wheelchairs and other walking devices such as scooters and walkers.
  - Have dropped curbs to road level.
  - Improve street lighting.

### **Priority - Increase access to public washrooms in the community**

- Increase washroom facilities along walking routes within the core community area, including park areas and downtown core areas.
- Increase hours of public washroom facilities and encourage businesses to allow public access to washrooms.

### **Priority – Install more seating in the community to allow for greater social participation**

- Increase bench seating (with arm rests) along walking routes within the core community area, including park areas and downtown core areas.

### **Priority – Improve pedestrian safety**

- Extend crossing times, use of countdown signals, clearly mark crossings, and paint curbs a brighter colour for better visibility.

---

## Housing

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one where housing is affordable, accessible, appropriately located, well built and well designed.

### Housing in Simcoe County

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

**Aging in place** – The desire to age in place was a common theme. Central to prolonging the independence of older people, is enabling them to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Participants told us they appreciate living in close-knit communities and are eager to age in place with their family and friends in familiar surroundings.

The ability to live independently in one's own home depends greatly on a range of factors such as good health, having the financial resources and the availability of in-home care and support services. This can be a challenge over time however, as health conditions change. Participants also described that housing becomes difficult when dependents lose their spouse or their primary source of income.

**90% of survey respondents described their current living situation as fitting their needs. Aging homes require renovations, particularly with safety or accessibility features. Home repairs and modifications, general maintenance services and home support services will be needed.**

**88% of respondents were asked if they can afford their current housing and the majority said yes.**

The cost of home modifications however, was identified as a barrier to aging at home comfortably. Many participants are worried about the possibility of having to move out of their homes.

---

While several conceded there were “lots of products” available to retrofit homes, affordability is a central barrier for many.

**Home modifications are expensive** – Housing affordability is a significant concern for many people in Simcoe County. For older adults, affordability has significant implications as many are on reduced or fixed incomes.

- The biggest financial barriers frequently mentioned among many older adults are increasing property tax and rent and the high cost of utilities such as hydro and water.
- The financial burden of retrofitting homes is a barrier to many older adults who wish to age in place.

Relocating is inevitable when home modifications are no longer possible or when maintenance becomes unaffordable. Without the financial resources, many people are forced to consider relocating. It means moving outside of their communities and away from their family and friends. Moving into assisted living facilities is very expensive and is not an option for many.

**“I am now getting ready to put my two-bedroom house up for sale because it is too expensive for me to live here anymore. I am in debt putting new roofs, new furnaces, new appliances, and a new deck after the last one fell off the side of my house. I have had a depression/anxiety disorder for two years now and it partly because I know I have to move and can’t maintain this house on my income. It is an unknown future that awaits me.”**

**Need for home care support services** – Older adults spoke about the importance of having family supports, which enabled them to age in place.



---

**31% live alone**  
**67% live with other people**  
**Of those who live with other people**  
**90% live with a family member**  
**7% live in shared dwelling**  
**2% live with friends**

Some of the participants were providing care for aging parents at the same time as they were dealing with their own retirement and relocation concerns. Participants expressed the desire to continue living in the homes they have inhabited for years or decades. If in-home care and support services such as medical and personal care services were available and affordable, this would allow them to cope and age safely in their own homes.

**The availability of help with housework, gardening, snow removal or repairs were services most often expressed as essential for older adults to remain in their homes.**

- Some participants noted that volunteers help older adults with in-home supports either informally –family, friends, good neighbours – or a community volunteer service.
- Others suggest the need for health professional home-care services and for governments to provide subsidies for home-care supports.
- Inadequate communication about existing support services for independent living was also pointed out by many residents
- The majority of home care support services are not free and participants spoke about the high cost of these services. Many said there is a lack of financial assistance for people with lower incomes who cannot afford to pay for the services they require. Without these supports, it is extremely difficult to stay independent.

---

**“Due to poor health my husband and I have sold our home in a retirement community because we can no longer clear the snow on our personal walkway or afford to.”**

**Affordable housing options** – The availability, choice and cost of housing for older adults as they age is tremendously important. Participants said that in communities where there is currently a range of independent and assisted housing options, most experience shortages in some of these options. Throughout the consultation process, one of the biggest concerns raised was the critical need for more accessible/affordable housing options for older people.

Simcoe County, known for its many retirement communities, is seeing an immense demand for affordable and appropriate housing. Many of the participants understand that the current waiting list for affordable housing is extremely long, but they do not want to move outside of the community they have called home for many years. Some of the current housing options for older people are only available to those who can afford it.

Participants spoke about their financial difficulties, with the majority of finances spent on home utilities and rent, which does not leave a lot of money for food, medical expenses, transportation and social activities.

Many spoke about the need for more investment and new development of affordable housing units and seniors' facilities. Commonly discussed was the desire of older adults to remain in the community they are familiar with.

**Accessible Housing** – The current housing stock in the County was identified as mostly inaccessible to people with mobility issues. Respondents emphasized that housing for older people must have appropriate supports and be accessible so that residents can enjoy independence, safety and full-participation. Frequently discussed were comments about the design of

---

residential homes and apartment buildings, which is not suitable for older adults. Many homes and older apartments do not have ramps or elevators, hallways and doorways are not wide enough to accommodate walkers or wheelchairs, bathrooms cannot accommodate wheelchairs and don't have grab bars. At the same time, participants noted that new homes are not always accessible either, with steps leading up to the doorway.

People would like to see design in housing developments that takes into account the specific and evolving needs of older adults so they can age in place.

**Access to the Community** – In addition to physical accessibility, the proximity to services and amenities in the community was cited as crucial for older adults to participate in community life. In discussions, many participants expressed a desire to move closer to medical facilities, public transportation, grocery and coffee shops. A significant number of participants felt that facilities for older adults lacked crucial amenities such as bus stops, health and social services, drugstores, recreation centre and banks close by.

**"In my volunteer work I encounter so many people who lack affordable housing. This is one of our communities' greatest challenges."**

**"I have a real issue with the availability of RGI (rent-geared-to-income) units available to seniors. The wait list is so long that I will be dead before my name gets to the top of the list. My age is 70 and I have been told that the wait is 20 years. Surely a 20-year wait list is an obvious indicator that there is a problem with the system and many more units need to be made available."**

---

Many felt that housing is located too far from the downtown core, making it extremely inconvenient and difficult to access. Without access to a car and limited access to affordable public transportation, older adults are socially isolated. Older adults would like to have housing options located close to town to be able to remain integrated within their community.

**Lack of housing options** – In general, older adults are concerned about the lack of housing options in the County. People would like housing that is designed to adapt to the changing needs throughout the aging process. Many participants expressed that housing is not available for older adults who need to be relocated due to recent health or mobility changes. Participants stated that when it is time to move from their homes, they want a range of housing options. Those who can afford to purchase a new home would like to move into smaller homes, condos or apartment buildings.

**When survey respondents were asked which areas of improvement for housing they would benefit from:**

- 27%** single-family dwellings
- 25%** retirement homes
- 21%** apartments
- 13%** granny flats
- 11%** other
- 9%** townhouses
- 7%** nursing homes
- 4%** mobile homes
- 2%** duplex homes

Alternative housing options frequently mentioned by participants also include smaller sized apartments, rent-geared-to-income apartment units, seniors-only complexes and single-level homes. Shared or communal housing was also raised as an alternative to nursing homes. According to some participants, they moved into long-term care when there were not enough home supports for them to stay in their home.

---

Good quality, long-term care homes offering safety and affordability were also discussed as essential housing options. However, participants spoke about the lack of these facilities in the County. The need for new housing developments that take the aging population into account, with a range of sizes and home designs suitable for people with a range of mobility issues was frequently mentioned. Participants also commented on the lack of housing options available for in between health stages, from living in their own homes and going into a care facility.

**“Creemore is a great place to retire, but there is lack of housing once I cannot manage this rental house – I do not want to leave the community and there is only a LTC (long-term care) facility. We need different retirement housing!”**

**“Options like Solterra housing would help. Sharing skills and resources (housework, shopping, cars, travel companions, etc.) is an area worthy of exploration.”**

**Flexible housing options** – The increasing need for housing that keeps older adults connected to the community was a primary concern for many. Participants spoke about the need for available continuum of health-care services so that older adults are not required to continually move away as their health declines. Supportive housing, nursing homes, subsidized seniors’ housing and rent-geared-to-income housing have been identified as housing options that are currently lacking in the County.

**Lack of information** – Not only do participants think there are insufficient housing options, many also lack knowledge about what housing options are available to them in Simcoe County. The majority of respondents lives in private residences and expressed a lack of knowledge of housing options.

- Respondents indicated the need to develop a seniors’ housing directory that would be accessible to older adults and their families to identify housing information specific to

---

their unique housing needs. The information should also be distributed locally to reach as many people as possible.

- The most consistently expressed concern regarding housing is the lack of subsidized housing for low-income residents throughout the County.
- Extremely long wait times to get into subsidized housing, seniors' housing and long-term care facilities were frequently mentioned.
- Additionally, waiting lists for retirement housing can be restrictive and can result in a need to relocate to a different community or even outside of Simcoe County.

**Government grants** – As mobility needs change over time, older adults must make changes to their homes to accommodate reduced mobility if they want to remain in their homes. Home design problems were another frequently mentioned barrier to aging in place. While a number of participants are aware that government grants or subsidies are available, information about these federal or provincial programs does not appear to be known by many. In some situations, participants are frustrated with the limited amount of government grants available for homeowners as the majority of retrofit projects are extremely expensive.

**Participants spoke about the importance of promoting grant opportunities and making them available for all residents.**

---

## Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges

Housing issues are another critical concern for many, including the financial and physical challenges of maintaining a home, rising housing costs, taxes, as well as the tremendous costs associated with retrofitting homes. To remain at home, many seniors and their caregivers require medical and personal care services, housework, meal delivery, yard work and snow removal.

For seniors on fixed income, the lack of affordable and adequate housing options, along with lengthy wait times, is a considerable challenge. They reported that the County lacks sufficient access to other housing options such as single-family dwelling, smaller sized condominium or apartments, retirement homes, transitional housing, mixed accommodations, long-term care facilities, granny flats and townhouses. The current housing stock is inaccessible to people with changing mobility needs. It is difficult to find apartments with extra-wide hallways and doors, bathtub grab bars, wheelchair-accessible sinks and flashing smoke alarms for the hearing-impaired. Additionally, seniors who wish to remain in their community struggle to find information about available housing options, government grants and in-home care support services.

### **In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues related to housing:**

- lack of affordable housing
- long wait lists to affordable housing and senior homes
- not enough diverse housing options
- lack of affordable good quality long-term care facilities
- cost and effort of maintaining a home is a significant challenge
- lack of knowledge and information on housing alternatives
- lack of home-care supports
- home-care supports are expensive



- 
- retrofitting homes for accessibility and safety are expensive
  - lack of information about Government retrofit grants
  - insufficient retrofit grants by the Government and
  - facilities for seniors lack crucial amenities (bus stops, health/social services, drugstore, recreation)

## Priorities and Future Considerations

**Participants were clear that the top priorities/future considerations for housing age-friendly planning should be:**

### **Priority – Develop more affordable housing to address waitlists**

- Increase the inventory of affordable rental housing. Encourage the development of affordable housing by providing incentives to developers.

### **Priority – More diverse housing options**

- Build more diverse housing types that are suitable for older adults.

### **Priority – Improve awareness of housing options for older adults**

- Develop a seniors housing directory with information on available housing options in Simcoe County, available in a variety of formats such as brochure, internet.
- Distribute information to places older adults frequent such as seniors organizations, doctor offices, libraries and community centres.

### **Priority – More age-friendly housing developments with accessible amenities**

- Need for education with respect to barrier-free design for those involved in the design and construction of homes for older persons.

---

## Transportation

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one where public transportation is accessible and affordable.

As people age, there is a tendency to rely more on public transportation, due to a number of lifestyle changes. Providing affordable and accessible means of transportation is key to supporting the mobility, activity and civic participation of older adults. Reliable transportation allows older adults to access health and social services to maintain their independence, and stay in their homes and communities longer.

### Transportation in Simcoe county

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

**Getting around** – Mobility is critical to maintaining independence. The older adults who participated in the survey indicated the following in regard to mode of transportation and need for assistance:

- 79% car**
- 76% walk unassisted**
- 43% walk**
- 19% transportation is provided by family/friends**
- 14% cane or walker**
- 10% bicycle**
- 3% wheelchair or similar device**
- 3% public transit**
- 3% taxi**
- 3% community transportation services**
- 2% scooters**

Other modes of transportation include golf carts, tricycles, gators and tractors.

---

**Lack of public transportation** – Participants value the transportation options that are available in some areas of Simcoe County. However, the large geographic area without transit presents a significant challenge for sustainable transportation services.

Access to affordable, accessible and reliable transportation was highlighted as requiring substantial improvements. Almost all respondents to this assessment were unanimous about the need for more public transportation that is appropriate for their needs.

**Survey respondents were asked on the importance of accessing public transit to their ability to travel:**

**37% stated it was very important**

While many of the participants in this study drive, they either had or knew people who had taken public transportation.

In rural communities, public transportation is especially important for the older population who do not drive or may lose their ability to drive in the coming years. Many essential services and amenities such as health-care centres, seniors' centres, nursing homes, recreational centres and shopping areas, are difficult to reach without public transportation. Without adequate public transportation, older adults miss medical appointments, no longer participate in community events or pursue personal interests that require them to travel.

**“In rural areas, transportation is the biggest issue facing residents who do not or cannot drive.”**

**“Lack of transportation help, no Wheel-Trans, no way to transport a wheelchair, no regular buses either here.”**

**“I live in a retirement community with no available bus service except the one supplied by the**

---

**community. Totally inadequate for service into town or doctors' appointments."**

**"The unavailability of reasonable transportation from Penetang to Barrie from which the rest of the province and all major medical services can be accessed is a big concern."**

**"Desperately need access to public transit and taxis in this area. Otherwise, it will be necessary for us to move elsewhere, which we do not want to do."**

---

While public transportation is available in some larger municipalities and townships, many comments, from smaller populated municipalities, pointed to poor connectivity between townships, larger centres and towns, and limited travel between towns and townships within the County. For older adults who make frequent trips outside of their immediate community, transportation is an even bigger concern. Based on the remarks by older adults, it is exceptionally challenging to get around the County without a driver's license and access to a car. Without an affordable and accessible transportation system between communities, many residents are considering premature relocation closer to amenities.

**"It's about time that the rural communities get some transportation for the elderly that are not able to go to town and do the shopping meeting with old friends!"**

**"Routes need to be redesigned for better service connections with other routes. Bus system is not being utilized sufficiently since routes and connections are not co-ordinated"**

**"Direct public transportation several times a day to Barrie and Toronto from Midland and Penetanguishene, (the way it used to be when offered by PMCL) would make this area more accessible to people who are unable to drive or do not have their own vehicle."**

**First and last mile problem** – The dreaded "first and last mile problem", where older adults face extra time and hassle travelling from their home to a bus stop or station; then on their return trip, travelling from the station back to their home, was repeatedly brought up. Having to constantly find a family member, friend or neighbour to drop them off at a bus stop or station, prevented many older adults from participating in social activities or volunteering outside of their immediate neighbourhood.

---

### **Unreliability and inconvenience of public transportation –**

In communities where there is public transportation, respondents cited unreliability and services not always meeting the needs of older adults. Multiple issues of public transportation services were raised including poor scheduling, poor connectivity, impractical times, difficulty accessing the services and long delays. Public transportation, if it is available, may not be geared or scheduled to meet these needs. For example, older adults often have different travel patterns than those who use public transportation to go to work or school. Older adults tend to travel outside of peak hours and use it for going to medical appointments, visiting friends, participating in social activities, accessing services, volunteering and going shopping. Many people feel that, bus service during the day is sufficient and frequent, however, reduced schedules on evenings, weekends, and holidays present a significant barrier. Older adults suggest increasing the frequency of bus and GO Train service during the evenings, weekends, and on holidays.

Older adults with mobility challenges, often have difficulty using public transportation for a number of reasons, including the fact that the majority of buses cannot accommodate motorized scooters.

**“I truly wish there would be more of a push for more scheduled GO Train services. It would lighten traffic on the 400 and more seniors could travel to Toronto for functions. The current schedule is only beneficial for people that work.”**

**“I would like to see the Sunday bus to start earlier in order to attend the 8:30 a.m., 9 a.m. church services.”**

---

**“Have never tried using the bus as the scheduling is so confusing. Have tried to figure it out, but I cannot.”**

**Lack of information and not easy to understand**— Issues were also raised regarding the lack of information about transportation schedules and transportation options. Most of the information about transit routes, schedules and services, are primarily available on the internet which may not be accessible to all older adults. Comments were also made about bus schedules being difficult to understand.

**Benches, shelters and public washrooms** – Benches along bus routes were discussed often, as older adults said that many bus stops lack seating or shelters. Combined with delays and poor weather, the lack of seating can be especially tiring for older adults. The importance of washroom access and availability was also raised related to using public transit. If benches and shelters were available, this would make public transportation more usable for older adults.

**Winter presents many challenges** – Winter presents a greater challenge for older adults who do not drive, or do not have access to someone who can drive them to and from their destination. Particularly, the harsh weather conditions have a direct impact on those getting around by walking, cycling, using wheelchairs and scooters, and even public transportation. For many, the lack of prompt snow removal on sidewalks, roads, and in parking lots is a barrier to going out during the winter. Snow and ice create situations where buses are inaccessible due to mounds of snow at curb sides, or an icy patch that has not been properly salted. Furthermore, waiting for long periods of time without a bus shelter for protection from the elements, is unsafe and uncomfortable.



---

**Affordability** – The cost associated with travelling is a barrier for many older adults, whether it's public transportation, taxi or specialized transportation services. Taxi services were considered very important to 33% of survey respondents. Travelling outside of the community, mainly for medical appointments and to access health services, is a major issue for many people without a car.

**“We need more bus shelters – it's very cold standing and waiting in the winter or in pouring rain.”**

Not having affordable options leads to the inconvenience of trying to arrange a ride with family and friends, especially when appointments can last up to several hours. Many older adults with disabilities rely on government subsidies, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program, to travel in and around Simcoe County.

**Participants reported that once older adults reach the age of 65, the government subsidies for disabilities stop.**

**Drivers** – Personal vehicles are the primary mode of transportation for most survey participants. In fact, 79% of survey respondents stated that having access to a vehicle they can drive is very important. For drivers, the lack of public transportation or a convenient alternative, was identified by participants as one of the reasons for older adults continuing to drive, longer than it was safe for them to do so. Older adults expressed concerns about their future, and many feared the loss of independence that would come with giving up their licence. For many, the driving retest at age 80 is a looming concern. Losing a driver's license is seen as losing one's independence and autonomy, especially in areas with limited alternative means of transportation. Older adults shared concerns of having to possibly relocate from Simcoe County to more dense cities like Toronto, as there are more amenities and reliable transportation options.

---

**“Because we live on a farm in the country I do wonder how we are going to manage when neither of us can drive.”**

**“I am currently okay, but if I can no longer drive or live by myself there is almost no local housing or transportation in my area (Coldwater). I plan to move back to Toronto in order to access these needs.”**

**“I have concern that I would have to live elsewhere if I could no longer drive. It is very important to me to be able to continue to be among my friends.”**

**“I live in Creemore and if I could no longer drive it would be difficult to get to a medical specialist a hospital or other services in a larger centre. We need some form of public transit or a local taxi service.”**

**“I love living in my rural community but fear that I will not be able to stay here as I age. My community is not accessible if you are unable to drive your own car. There are a few elderly (>80) that are still in my community but it is not really safe for them. We look out for each other but as I age, it becomes more difficult.”**

---

### **Road and sidewalk maintenance –**

Traffic and road conditions impact the mobility of older adults. As many still drive their own vehicles, road maintenance and design are very important. Older adults indicated that many of the roads in their communities are unpaved or have uneven surfaces, with many potholes. They also lack street lighting or require brighter lighting, making it extremely dangerous and difficult to drive at night.

Residents also stated the importance of better and bigger signage, and wayfinding for drivers and pedestrians. Based on the survey, 61% of respondents are satisfied with signs on streets. Some older adults who drive gradually stop driving in the evening, in bad weather, or on highways altogether.

Getting around on foot is not always easy. Many participants reported that during winter, sidewalks were treacherous and that some streets lack sidewalks altogether. Older adults found winter conditions on sidewalks treacherous, and access to transit and other amenities extremely difficult. Better snow clearing of sidewalks and bus stops was frequently identified as essential. Without improved snow clearing, a significant number of residents as well as those with mobility challenges, will seldom go out and may experience isolation and depression.

**“Lighting is less than desirable in most areas making walking alone at night a safety issue.”**

**“Lights on my street have recently been changed and are not good. Not bright enough and is a safety hazard. I would walk from a friend’s house around the corner but not now.”**

---

**Transitioning from a driver to non-driver** – For older adults who have driven all of their lives, the transition from driving to finding alternative forms of transportation can be extremely difficult. Many residents will become dependent on family and friends for transportation if they no longer drive. However, those who don't have family are reluctant to ask neighbours or friends for rides, for fear of inconveniencing them.

**“Our communities – urban and rural – are designed around the car. Old people who no longer own a car, or who have lost their driving privileges, have to find someone to drive them, just at the time they start using a walker, and just as many shopping centres and service providers are moving out of the downtown core and away from bus routes.”**

**“Lack of public transit in the Township of Ramara has caused many of my friends to be forced to move out of the Township once they lose their ability to drive. They are forced to leave long-time friends and neighbours and move where they feel surrounded by strangers. This is a great upheaval in their lives at a vulnerable time in their lives. Very depressing.”**

**Alternative means of transportation** – Non-drivers have to deal with the lack of public transportation and must rely on alternative means of transportation.

Respondents spoke of the challenges of having to go into the larger municipalities for certain services such as medical appointments. Many respondents feel fortunate to live in a community in which they can ask neighbours, friends, or family for rides. 56% of survey respondents noted that having access to a friend/family member who can drive and/or assist them is very important. Yet again, older adults fear they will inconvenience their peers or family by relying too heavily for transportation. Relying on others also severely limits one's independence and does not allow for much flexibility.

---

With independence in mind, taxi services are viewed by many as vital. Unfortunately, the cost and the inaccessibility of taxi vehicles were cited as a barrier.

Older adults with mobility issues expressed that most taxis are not wheelchair accessible, and not easy to get in and out of. Several participants described the need for a shuttle service to take them to and from destinations.

**While community buses are currently available in some communities, participants worry that low ridership may lead to the reduction or cancellation of services.**

#### **Importance of community transportation services –**

As people age, the need for medical and other health-related appointments throughout Simcoe County and in larger cities like Toronto, Barrie and Orillia will increase. In the absence of public transportation, alternative community transportation services are vital to fully serve the needs of older residents in certain areas.

**34% of survey respondents reported that having access to community transportation services was very important, and impacting their ability to travel.**

**“What I need most right now is transportation to appointments as I do not drive. I can usually find a way if the timing is co-ordinated with what friends are doing on a given day.”**

**“We currently have a van that goes to the mall once a week but it is waning in occupants and we fear losing it for lack of use which will leave me with no transportation of my own. My husband is still driving but what will happen if he cannot drive anymore? This is my main worry.”**

---

Some participants identified approaches that currently work well in their communities, which were largely relying heavily on community and health organizations to provide transportation. Not only is transportation to and from the larger centres for health-related appointments available but it is also available for personal errands and social activities. The majority of vans or shuttles are operated voluntarily and/or with the assistance of government subsidies. Older adults are extremely grateful for these services, especially for getting to medical appointments. They not only connect people to essential services but they also provide a link to the community and enable people to foster social connections.

**Older adults who do not own a car are at particular risk for social isolation, and may experience difficulties in accessing essential community and medical services.**

The most often cited alternative to public transportation services include O.W.L.S., Helping Hands, Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), The Red Cross, The Canadian Cancer Society, Community and Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS), and Community Reach. Older adults greatly appreciate these supports. However, this service comes with a cost and requires advance booking.

The need to meet eligibility requirements, service availability and affordability were also cited of the aforementioned. For residents who qualify, the Community Transportation Program was also mentioned as a way of getting to medical appointments and buying groceries once a week. These services however, are not available across all communities. Such transportation programs are becoming increasingly necessary, to provide an alternative to older adults with limited or no access to other modes of transportation, or family and friends to drive them. The lack of co-ordination for these services is also a source of frustration for many older adults. The County could facilitate more collaboration amongst service providers.

---

## Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges

Participants reported that the County lacks an easily accessible public transportation system, which is a significant problem for Simcoe County's non-driving seniors. Many expressed concerns regarding the County's inadequate bus system.

Part of the issue is Simcoe County's large geographic area. The limited transportation offered is only to the larger cities and towns and bus schedules are neither reliable nor convenient for older adults. Additional accessibility concerns include a lack of bus shelters, benches and snow removal in the winter.

Without adequate transportation, commuting to medical appointments, shopping, accessing programs and services, attending events and recreational programs can be difficult or impossible to manage. Taxis and community transportation services are available but they can be expensive. Generally, the County's older people lack information about alternative transportation options available to them.

**"I think we really need a bus to take people with no transportation shopping, Drs.' appointments, and to Parsons Road for the Life Labs Clinic. I do have a transportation card for a taxi but that only lets me go shopping once a week. If there are specials at Sobeys, Zehrs, and Walmart in the same week I can only go to one. If I decide to go to Walmart I have to walk to Sobeys or Zehrs and back home again."**

**"When I had vision problems, the community transportation program was very helpful for getting me to local apt and grocery shopping."**



---

**In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues:**

- lack of public transportation
- public transportation is unreliable and inconvenient
- need more public transit to larger centres and towns and travel between towns and townships
- poor bus route connectivity
- the majority of taxis are wheelchair inaccessible
- lack of information
- bus schedule difficult to understand
- lack of awareness of alternative transportation services
- limited bus service on evenings, weekends and holidays
- lack of accessibility at some bus stops (benches, shelters and washrooms)
- inconvenient timing on routes
- cost of transportation
- community transportation services requires advance booking, meet eligibility requirements and service availability
- limited transportation options for seniors who cannot drive

---

## Priorities and Future Considerations

**The following priorities were identified by respondents regarding Age-Friendly transportation improvements:**

### **Priority – Improve public transportation options in and around Simcoe County**

- Ensure that public transit goes to key community and hubs.
- Provide shuttles to and from local towns.
- Provide affordable taxi service.
- Provide community bus to go on outings at a reasonable rate.

### **Priority – Increase reliability and frequency of public transportation**

- Regional transportation services should be offered on a more regular basis and offered in the evenings, weekends and holidays to allow for greater mobility for aging residents.
- Bi-weekly local shuttle service that could transport older adults for grocery, medical, and social outings.
- Ensure more routes and stops in key seniors' community.
- Increase capacity of voluntary transportation organizations to provide service.
- Promoting volunteer driving opportunities by organizations/agencies.

### **Priority – Improve accessibility to bus stops and taxis**

- All local bus stops should follow accessibility standards (i.e. benches, sheltered areas, washrooms).
- Offer education to local taxi companies on accessibility.

---

### **Priority – Make transportation schedules accessible and easy to understand**

- Ensure all transportation related information such as bus schedules are easily accessible either in print format or electronically and provides adequate details in large print.

### **Priority – Increase accessible parking spaces near buildings**

- Create more accessible parking spaces near buildings.
- Create more drop off zones in front of buildings.

## **Communication and Information**

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one where age-friendly communication and information is available and accessible.

Staying connected about events and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for healthy aging. Age-friendly communities make sure that information about community events or important services are both readily accessible and in formats that are appropriate for older adults. Moreover, an age-friendly community recognizes the diversity within the older adult population and promotes outreach initiatives to non-traditional families, ethno cultural minorities, newcomers and aboriginal communities.

## **Communication and Information in Simcoe County**

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

Methods of communication – Across the County, people told us the most effective and widely used methods of communication continue to be newspapers, internet, mail, television, radio, word of mouth and family/friends. Community bulletin boards, brochures, social media and mail are also ways that older adults

---

learn about what's going on in their area. Getting up-to-date news and general information and learning about community events in the County were considered extremely important.

**Survey respondents were asked if they would like to be more informed about their local area:**

64% yes  
21% no  
15% preferred not to say

**For those interested in getting more informed:**

37% newspaper  
30% internet  
24% mail  
20% television and brochures  
18% word of mouth and community/bulletin boards  
17% radio  
16% friends/family

Information distributed by social service organizations, churches, libraries, community recreation centres, and health-care providers were also discussed as ways to obtain information since the majority of people frequent these places. Residents consider these sources to be reliable and trustworthy.

- Free brochures and handbooks were also frequently mentioned as a good way to get information.
- People found the directories of activities and services provided by a variety of community organizations and local governments extremely useful. In particular, a calendar of events and key contacts including phone numbers were appreciated.
- People living in smaller townships appreciate the efforts of volunteers and organizations that put together free local newsletters, newspapers and brochures/handbooks.

Event listings are seen as vital in staying informed about

---

community affairs. These were either delivered directly to their doors, or made available for pick-up outside of grocery stores, post offices and libraries. Sadly, not all communities have local community papers so they rely on newspapers from the larger cities. Affordability is also a concern and suggestions were made for discounted subscription rates to local papers for seniors.

**2-1-1 telephone help line** – 2-1-1 is an information and referral service that connects people to a full range of non-emergency community and social services, government and health services. This service is free for users and available 24/7 in 150 languages via telephone interpretation service. It can also be accessed on the internet.

**According to survey results:**

**59% of respondents don't know about 2-1-1**

The 2-1-1 telephone help line drew praise from participants who knew about it or had used it in the past. Participants found 2-1-1 staff to be really knowledgeable and saw it as a good place to seek community information.

**Increasing public awareness of 2-1-1 was suggested as extremely important to help more people gain pertinent information about community and municipal services. Ways to increase awareness includes agencies catering to older adults is to having health-care organizations, doctors' offices and pharmacies, and other senior organizations hand out 2-1-1 information cards.**

**"I have been very happy with finding help (211), mental health providers, self-help programs, volunteering, church, etc."**

---

**Information portal** – Despite the variety and sources of information provided to the community, some older adults still experience gaps in their knowledge of local news, events and activities.

**Survey respondents were asked how informed are they on their local area:**

**48% slightly informed**

**46% very informed**

**4% not informed**

When asked, many participants had absolutely no idea where to start looking for information, particularly on important issues such as health-care services, social services and community events. Some attributed this to inadequate promotion, while others said there was not a centralized place or directory to get information.

A lack of reporting about local events and activities in the news, local newspaper and local radio stations were often discussed as being problematic.

Throughout the discussion of the eight (8) dimensions, older adults repeatedly expressed great frustration about the lack of co-ordinated information in the County.

Ways to better communicate with Simcoe County residents include the creation of a “one-stop shop” information portal. The publication of print materials such as quarterly brochures and pamphlets with relevant seniors’ information was also identified

**“We need a system that seniors know about that they can access by phone or if they have the Internet to obtain a trusted handyman, help to get to a grocery store, drives to appointments, etc.”**

**“INFORMATION is needed and access to the proper facilities (in place).”**

---

as a good way for older adults to obtain information. Other ideas include the creation of a resource centre where people can go in-person to ask questions, make phone calls or e-mail about general information and available services and programs in their community.

**Larger print public information** – Participants do not feel that printed information in newspapers, forms, documents and notices from the government, flyers, television captions, telephone books and advertising signage have large enough print.

**Timely information** – People also expressed the need for information to be published well in advance and delivered in a timely manner. Many were frustrated that not enough notice is given to attend community events or various social activities. Quite often, by the time the information is received, the events have already taken place.

**The internet** – A significant number of older adults are embracing new technology.

**Based on survey responses:**

- 80% regular access to the internet**
- 77% daily access to the internet on daily basis**
- 7% 2-4 times a week access the internet**
- 2% once a week**
- 2% less than once a month**

Participants describe the Internet as a useful resource and cite the ease in which information can be accessed and found readily online.

- Older adults who are not internet savvy spoke about the challenges and barriers they experience in finding information they need.

Barriers include computer illiteracy, the cost associated with owning a computer, limited access to an alternative or borrowed computer and paying for Internet services, and lack of availability



---

to high-speed Internet access, particularly for people living in rural areas.

- The importance of developing programming that will assist older adults in learning new technologies such as computer classes and e-mail access tutorials was frequently mentioned. It was recommended that free computer courses be offered at libraries and community centres and be taught by young people in order for more intergenerational interactions.
- Older adults also spoke about their frustration and concerns about being left behind as more and more information and documentation can only be found on the Internet.

**“High-speed Internet in Tiny has been talked about for years and we would like to have it available to all residents not just those in the areas currently serviced.”**

**“There is a widening gap of accessible services for seniors who do not have or have access to computers. One example of frustration is making lab appointments for medical issues when you don’t own a computer. Many seniors are unaware of surveys like this because they do not have a computer. Seniors are being left behind as technology advances and this is an issue the younger generation is much unaware of. Local television or radio could be helpful in getting out the information some seniors require.”**

---

This was particularly true for a large number of people who have no desire to learn how to use a computer. Relying solely on the Web to promote information excludes many people and limits the spread of important information.

In order to reach this population, it is vital that community information be advertised through multiple mediums. Suggestions include advertising in community newsletters, newspapers, local radio stations and through community organizations that work with the older population.

**Automated telephone system** – In addition to the Internet, another key source of irritation and frustration was automated telephone systems. Participants said many government telephone lines have adopted automated services, which is an obstacle to many older persons.

**Respondents most often complained about the automated telephone systems associated with calling government departments.**

As government related information is considered important, many feel that alternative ways of communicating with older adults should be considered. Widespread challenges include not being able to speak with a live person, long wait times, a confusing selection of options, options spoken way too quickly and often getting disconnected after waiting for a long time. It should be noted that after several attempts of calling automated telephone lines, participants hang up out of extreme frustration. Consequently, these automated telephone lines will discourage many older people from even seeking assistance in the future.

**Vulnerability to fraud** – Some participants raised the issue of older adults' vulnerability to fraud.

**Participants generally feel safe in their communities, although some are concerned about vulnerability to fraud. Examples of fraud included phone calls from scams and price gouges.**

---

## Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges

Older adults access information through a variety of media, including newspapers, the Internet, family/friends, “word of mouth”, and the radio.

Those who have access to digital communication find email, social media, and the internet extremely useful as well as a convenient way to share and obtain information. Others are not comfortable with these new modes of communication and/or they do not use a computer or have internet access.

Many respondents said automated phone systems are frustrating and confusing because they would prefer to receive information from a “real” person. The smaller print used in many publications is another barrier for older adults. Many people expressed concerns about not knowing where to get information in the community and highlighted the need for a “one-stop” communication portal.

### **Project participants identified the following key issues:**

- lack of accessibility of print and electronic information
- lack of newspapers in smaller townships
- newspaper subscription too expensive
- no “one stop” place to access and find community information and events
- difficult to access automated telephone services prefer a person to speak with rather than automated services
- font size on many communication resources too small
- majority of the information is available on the internet
- some do not have computer or Internet access or familiarity with technology
- computer and Internet is expensive
- 2-1-1 is not well known locally as an information resource

- 
- lack of advertisement of community events
  - lack of co-ordinated information
  - untimely distribution of information

## Priorities and Future Considerations

**Priorities and future considerations identified by participants to improve age-friendly information and communications are:**

### **Priority – Improve the communication of information regarding services, programs and events in the community**

- Use multiple formats to disseminate information, services and events such as local newspapers, radio, internet, bulletin boards and email.
- Promote the availability of 2-1-1 to access community information.
- Create a central information directory of services with information about how and where to access community services and supports for older adults (print).
- Use the County website to communicate information about health services, housing, transportation, employment and volunteer opportunities and programming.
- Develop a monthly newsletter section in the local newspapers that could act to inform local older adults on what is available to them.
- Release a recreation guide for each season in Simcoe County, with a calendar of events and contact information. Information should be available on the internet, hard copies in libraries, community and recreation centres, doctors' offices and seniors' apartment buildings.

---

### **Priority – Increase the co-ordination of information and services among service agencies**

- Develop a strategy to facilitate communication between agencies, organizations and community members in Simcoe County.

### **Priority – Increase access to computer literacy training**

- Provide free computer training in accessible locations such as libraries and community centres.
- Increase access and affordability to computer and technology.

## **Community Supports and Health Services**

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one where community support and health services are tailored to older adults' needs.

### **Community Supports and Health Services in Simcoe County**

An age-friendly community provides access to health and support services that support physical and mental well-being, and health promotion or awareness programs that encourage health-sustaining behaviors. Good quality accessible and affordable health and community support services are vital to maintaining the health and independence of older people in the community. This includes a wide network of services from hospitals to family support, home-care supports and community programs. Many concerns raised by respondents deal with the availability of sufficient, good quality, appropriate and accessible care.

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

**Health services and community supports** – As people age, they have different health-care needs and preferences. Residents

---

spoke positively about many aspects of the support and care that they could access in Simcoe County. Essential aspects of health care were identified in their communities including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, facilities and services. Existing services along the continuum of care for older people, such as preventive care, specialist clinics, hospitals, adult day care opportunities, respite care, rehabilitation, residential and nursing care, home care and palliative care, health education around fall prevention and home safety were applauded by many. At the same time, many participants are dissatisfied with the current health services in their community, citing challenges accessing health-care professionals such as family and geriatric physicians and senior specific health services in the County.

**Survey respondents were asked if they have a family doctor:**

- 88% reported having a doctor in Simcoe County**
- 9% have a family doctor outside Simcoe County**
- 3% do not have a family doctor**

Those who do not have a family doctor or for when the doctor is unavailable, walk-in clinics are a good alternative for people who need care fast. However, when these clinics are closed the emergency department becomes the only choice for urgent care.

- Participants spoke about the hassle and inconvenience of going to the emergency department to see a doctor for non-emergency related issues.
- Participants also raised the fact that they cannot change or choose their family doctor easily due to the roster system.

---

**When asked what services they are looking for:**

- 72% do not require any services**
- 8% other**
- 7% nurse practitioner**
- 6% prefer not to say**
- 4% personal support worker**
- 3% counsellor**

**Other participants expressed great concern about:**

- long wait times for surgeries, specialist appointments, tests, treatments, emergencies
- lack of palliative and rehabilitative care
- shortage of hospital beds
- clinic hours
- inaccessible facilities

**“We had a doctor in my town for years and now everyone in my community has to travel for medical care. Specialist appointments are sometimes in Barrie and you may be waiting as long as three months for an appointment. The local hospital is a great hospital with many wonderful doctors and services but does not always meet the needs of the community.”**

Note: The proposed reduction in services at a local hospital has many participants from the surrounding area extremely concerned and worried. Some participants believe this hospital may even close as a result of the review.

Older adults like the availability and security of health facilities close to home. With an aging community needing increasing care, travelling to large urban hospitals is not always possible or desirable.



---

**“Nursing staff are far too short to help us with everything we need and it’s not their fault.”**

**“By far the single most pressing priority for seniors in our area is to preserve the health-care services at our local hospital. If we lose these services, it will cause immeasurable stress. We will lose the support of family and friends if we have to travel away from home, plus there is the problem of transportation. How are we going to get another hospital? Especially in winter! It is a constant worry!”**

**“How do we get to these areas for appointments or care? What happens to us when our support people can’t get to where we are to supply their much needed support?”**

**Need transportation to access services** – Another concern identified by Simcoe County residents is the lack of affordable and accessible transportation to access health-care services and community support services. Many older adults we heard from are frustrated with the lack of public transportation to get to medical appointments.

**One of the biggest issues raised is the need to travel outside of the community to receive health-care services.**

Challenges include the inconvenient locations, distance and costs (many of the hospitals and specialists are located in Toronto, Barrie and Orillia) and having to arrange for transportation either with family, friends, neighbours or community agencies to provide transportation.

**In discussions, older adults reported the need to attract more family physicians to smaller communities.**

Many would like to have more walk-in and one-stop health

---

clinics with multiple services available such as medical doctors, x-ray and ultrasound, pharmacists, mental health services, physiotherapy and dentist. This would eliminate some of the transportation challenges of getting to cities for medical appointments. Other suggested more wellness services and day programs. Having more health services in Simcoe County would shorten trips for older adults, save money and travel time outside the community.

#### **Co-ordinated Services –**

Many older adults discussed the challenges of navigating the health-care system, social supports in the community and the lack of co-ordination of these services.

Regularly, comments were made about inadequate communication of information about health-care supports, community supports and in-home services. Many residents were unaware of the spectrum of services available to them. In the absence of information, people are missing critical opportunities to access available programs and services.

**“There is very little help for people requiring transportation while in a wheelchair for doctor and hospital appointments and if you do find a ride it can cost a fortune for example \$350-400 to Newmarket Southlake or \$175 for Alliston hospital to your home in Beeton. The joys of living in rural Simcoe County.”**

**“Transportation for seniors to medical appointments and services not available in the Midland and surrounding area is essential to the area supporting a retirement community. Failure to provide such service would result in the failure of the community as seniors are an essential factor to the economic health of the community.”**

---

The creation of a comprehensive resource guide was suggested to increase information about all available programs and services. The guide should be made available to keep residents informed of the services and programs that they may be entitled to and how they are accessed. Caregivers can also learn about the array of existing services available in the community. Information can be disseminated in a variety of ways such as advertisements in local newspaper, newsletters, radio, and posting on the County Website

**Home care supports** – The need for and reliance on health and home care supports becomes increasingly vital as older adults wish to age in place. Access to affordable, available and reliable support services such as housekeeping, meal programs, home maintenance services, yard work, snow removal, medical alert systems, doctor home visits, pharmaceutical and grocery delivery services, personal transportation and mental health counselling were seen as key requirements for older adults to remain living at home.

**Survey respondents were asked what services in the past twelve (12) months were needed:**

- 39% home repair and maintenance**
- 38% snow removal**
- 32% yard care**
- 15% personal transportation**
- 13% filling out forms**
- 11% grocery shopping**
- 9% delivery service**
- 8% accessing social services**

**Of these, the top three (3) tasks where older adults were not able to access the help they needed were:**

- Affording a sufficient amount of food**
- Accessing social services**
- Accessing health services**

---

Survey respondents were asked what services they think were needed in their area in order to maintain their health and independence:

- 40% need a service to help find/access physical health and supportive services**
- 35% home repair and maintenance**
- 33% health and wellness programs**
- 30% aging adult fitness**
- 29% yard work**
- 28% affordable home care**
- 27% house cleaning**

Participants identified a range of supports that assist living at home such family, helpful neighbours, local service agencies and organizations and supports groups. These supports are critical in helping older adults maintain their health and remain in their own homes and/or communities.

**Complaints were made about the wait times involved in arranging to have home care.**

Restrictive eligibility requirements and poor quality of care from the agencies and their staff were often mentioned as barriers. Numerous remarks were made that home care supports must be maintained and improved. As well, more home care options that cater to all stages of aging adults and levels of need are required.

Many people who use supports like the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) value the service. At the same time, there were concerns about the limited hours available to care for the individual, shortage of staff, lack of professionalism and poor quality of care from staff.

**Participants suggested the need for more agencies to provide in-home supports and the need for more staff and volunteers to be trained. Several participants were concerned about theft by support workers and home care staff.**

---

**“PSW system needs to be looked at. Quite often my PSW is a no-show or cancels.”**

**“Caregivers need to talk to seniors like adults not like babies. Caregivers need to put more CARE and less patronizing when dealing with older people. I have little confidence in the care workers I have had contact with.”**

**“It is very difficult to obtain help. I am a man looking after my wife who has Alzheimers, CCAC wants me to manage at home. With very little help if any, the cost of home supplies such as a toilet extension, etc. is expensive when you are surviving on CPP and Old Age Pension.”**

Concerns about caregiver stress and burnout were discussed, particularly by family members who have taken on primary caretaking duties. With shorter hospital stays and increased use of outpatient procedures, this has shifted the burden of responsibility toward unpaid caregivers resulting in financial and emotional strain.

**Participants indicated that more adult day programs and respite care were needed to better support caregivers, and to provide a break from their responsibilities. Many respondents were caregivers to their family member(s), and at the same time were older adults themselves.**

---

**“Before my parents’ deaths, I was their caregiver for many years. The biggest hurdles I had to overcome were in finding and qualifying for appropriate assistance and accessing sufficient respite care at an affordable cost to keep from going stark, staring mad...Everyone worries about the senior needing care. Nobody gives a damn about the caregivers.”**

**Health services and home supports are expensive** – While many older adults choose to age in place, they are often met with significant barriers to accessing essential health and home care services. Many older adults expressed that their greatest fear and concern is being forced to leave their home when the services they need are not available or affordable in their community.

Affordability was another major theme in the discussions on home care. Home care supports are only available if you have the money and if the government is able to subsidize these services. There is limited funding for and availability of affordable seniors-specific private medical support services, caregivers, home delivery of grocery and medical services. Participants frequently cited the lack of funding for home care services, leading to lack of home care support for those who desperately need it.

**Medical care that is not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) such as certain prescriptions, dental care, glasses and hearing aides were also considered to be a barrier to older adults.**

---

**“Each year the cost of living will go up at a higher rate than my income and government cutbacks on medical care will deteriorate my access to adequate health/prescription services.”**

**Lack of information** – As was mentioned in the section on communication and information, participants expressed concerns in terms of health-care information not getting to the older population in a timely and effective manner. A lot of participants mentioned they lack the knowledge or don’t have the information about services and supports in the community. A service is needed to help the older population and their caregivers to find and access health and supportive services.

## **Summary of barriers, Gaps, and Challenges**

Simcoe County offers a wide range of health services and community supports. Some older adults have difficulty accessing family and geriatric physicians and obtaining senior-specific health services. Consistently, respondents mentioned long wait times for surgeries, specialist appointments, tests, treatments and emergency services as major concerns. The lack of palliative care, rehabilitative care, and shortage of hospital beds, clinic hours and inaccessible facilities were noted as a problem.

In addition, the aforementioned issues means that health-care facilities outside Simcoe County are often inaccessible.

The financial cost and restrictive eligibility requirements of medical support services and home care supports are problematic for seniors who wish to remain living in their homes. Seniors indicated that they had little to no knowledge of what was available to them; and even if they did know, it was still difficult for them to navigate the health-care system. Simcoe County needs more home and community supports for seniors and their caregivers, including day programs and respite care.



---

**In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues related to community supports and health services:**

- lack of health-care professionals, including general practitioners and specialists
- insufficient seniors-specific in-home health and support services
- inadequate communication of information about health-care, community support services and in-home support services
- insufficient home care services
- lack of co-ordination of services and supports
- lack of accessible and affordable public transportation to health services and community supports
- lack of programs that support caregivers
- long wait times to medical services
- affordability of non-government funded health-care services or community supports
- no “one-stop” location to find information about services and supports
- growing number of informal caregivers of the elderly are older adults themselves
- services need to be better co-ordinated and
- home care supports are expensive.

---

## Priorities and Future Considerations

**The priority age-friendly community and health services action items identified during consultations are:**

### **Priority – Improve and expand the health-care services in Simcoe County**

- Explore ways to attract more doctors and geriatric specialists, especially in the smaller townships.
- Create wellness centres that includes a variety of services—physician, nurse, dentist, podiatrist, pharmacy, occupational therapy.
- Host travelling health clinics in townships where there is limited transportation.
- Provide Caregiver education.

### **Priority - Improve the communication of information about existing health services**

- Develop a comprehensive resource guide of all the available services and supports in the County.
- Promote the availability of 2-1-1 to access community information.

### **Priority – Health services and community supports need to be better co-ordinated**

- Develop and expand co-ordinated home support and maintenance services to assist older adults to age-in-place.
- The creation of a comprehensive resource guide to increase information about all available supports and services.

---

### **Priority – Enhance transportation services to get to medical appointments**

- Ensure availability of transportation to medical appointments within and outside of the community.
- Develop a strategy with community transportation strategies to co-ordinate services.

## **Civic Participation and Employment**

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one where opportunities for employment and volunteerism cater to older adults' interests and abilities.

Civic participation and employment focuses on the ways in which older adults can contribute to their communities in both paid and volunteer roles and in the political process. Age-friendly communities recognize the value of older adults, who can provide a wealth of experiences in volunteer and paid roles and act as mentors for the younger population. Their participation is linked not only to the economic prosperity and viability of their communities, but also to maintaining their own mental and physical health and social connectedness.

### **Civic Participation and Employment in Simcoe County**

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

**Civic Participation** – Residents revealed that they are very eager to be involved in the civic and political process in their communities. There are many opportunities to volunteer and participate in civic life throughout Simcoe County. Older adults are engaged and want to remain active in civic affairs, social activities and in the community. Despite their involvement in the community, only 21% of survey respondents are actively engaged in the community's political process. Several participants said

---

they are or were previously involved with their local community organizations, sitting on various committees and board positions. Some participants felt less valued in local governance given that many of the programs, services and policies are more youth focused. It was suggested that governments need to have a stronger focus on older adults.

**“Councils focus on programs for non-seniors mostly, understand your current demographics and what it will be over the near future.”**

**Volunteering** – A wide range of volunteering opportunities exists for older people in Simcoe County and participants spoke about the importance of voluntarism. They are very keen volunteers and make valuable contributions through countless volunteer hours. For many, volunteering plays a key role in their life. Participants describe volunteering as rewarding, providing opportunities to connect with diverse groups, feelings of productivity, learning new skills and contributing to the community.

Volunteering in church groups, hospitals, schools, libraries, community organizations and service clubs in the County were most often talked about. These places could not survive without the many volunteers who help them run their daily programs. Their volunteer work is also seen as vital to many non-profit organizations, agencies and services, which rely heavily on volunteers. Volunteers undertake a range of roles include driving residents to medical appointments, delivering meals, organizing community events such as community fairs and festivals.

**Volunteer burnout** – A high rate of volunteer burnout has also been identified, largely due to a lack of support and volunteers being spread too thinly. Participants spoke about being constantly recruited to provide volunteer services in the community, while others are concerned about over commitment, feeling worn down and burnt out. Community and social service organizations that solely depend on volunteers are also the ones to have the most volunteer burnout. Participants spoke about how organizations experience difficulties finding enough volunteers to fill the

---

roles needed to provide services to the community.

**Barriers to volunteering and civic participation** – It was also found that a number of barriers prevent many people from meaningful engagement in the County. Some of the challenges frequently mentioned to volunteering and civic participation include lack of transportation, the cost associated with participation, rigid schedules, the need for a long-term commitment that interferes with personal plans, family obligations and lack of accessibility. People said that with better supports such as transportation, compensation for costs (gas and parking) and honoraria, more time could be put into volunteer work.

**Having a shared database of volunteer information such as including police checks so volunteers don't have to keep repeating this process was suggested as a way to make volunteering in other community organizations easier in the future.**

**Not aware of volunteer opportunities** – In general, a lack of information about potential volunteer or civic opportunities in the community was frequently cited as a significant barrier. While many respondents feel that there are many volunteer opportunities in Simcoe County,

**"I used to be very active in volunteering in my community and sat on many ad hoc committees. But like many other volunteers I was overwhelmed with the workload because there are fewer and fewer volunteers."**

---

a number of participants feel that opportunities to contribute are limited. This may be because information about opportunities is not always accessible to.

- 25% of survey respondents revealed they are looking for volunteer opportunities within the community. Other participants suggested that better communication, specifically information about how to connect to meaningful volunteer opportunities, would enable people to be more engaged in the community.
- A centralized information hub or database was suggested by many participants as a valuable resource for people wishing to volunteer in the County.
- Additionally, better promotion and communication is needed to enable more people to get involved. As not all of the residents are technologically savvy or have access to the internet, information needs to be communicated in a variety of ways.

**Availability of employment** – Respondents agree that, although there are many opportunities for volunteer involvement in Simcoe County, there is a need for more paid opportunities for older workers. Many older adults in Simcoe County are retired but the survey revealed that 21% of respondents are currently in paid positions. For those who are currently employed, there are multiple reasons why they remain in the workforce. In some cases, this is because they enjoy the sense of purpose and fulfilment and desire to stay socially engaged. In other cases, it was based on their financial circumstances.

**Employment remains an important source of income for many older adults who need to continue working. According to the survey, 21% of participants were employed and 52% of those who work, do so out of necessity. Participants were concerned about rising living costs and inadequate pensions and limited savings.**

---

Older adults seeking employment expressed concerns about the workforce. Employment options for older adults are restricted and barriers include competing with younger workers, ageism and limited availability of high quality paid employment.

**The employment opportunities that exist for older adults in Simcoe County are restricted to the service industry with lower pay and part-time jobs. The type of employment that commonly employ older workers were jobs in retail shops or chain restaurants adults resorted to doing “gig” work to supplement their income, such as carpentry and cutting grass. At the same time, many report the lack of local employment and available professional jobs for skilled workers.**

**Other barriers to employment** - Many mentioned a need for employers to recognize and utilize the skills and experience older workers bring to the workforce. Participants also indicated that they are unaware of job opportunities in their community. It was also mentioned that job opportunities do not accommodate the changing needs of older adults such as flexible working hours, part-time jobs, and jobs that allow them to sit.

Another common frustration expressed by respondents was not knowing how to job search, given how many are only available on the Internet. Professional development and training opportunities were frequently identified as important for older adults to obtain new skills, especially with newer technologies. For those without a car, it was difficult to get to jobs due to lack of transportation or inconvenient bus schedules.

## Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges

In general, older adults feel that programs, services and policies should focus more on their age group. Many community organizations rely heavily on volunteers, who reportedly often burn out. At the same time, a number of older adults in the community are seeking volunteer opportunities. Better communication and advertisement, along with the provision of



---

transportation and flexible hours to accommodate volunteers are needed to increase civic participation.

In spite of an abundance of volunteer opportunities in Simcoe County, the community should also provide more good quality employment opportunities that reflect the skills and experience of older adults. Currently, older adults are working in part-time positions, mainly in retail or chain restaurants, or in casual labour such as carpentry and cutting grass. Seniors stated that employment opportunities should also allow for flexible hours and provide skills training. Older people who are confined to their homes often lack the knowledge and information about community programs and services and are largely excluded from civic engagement.

**In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues related to employment:**

- lack of information about volunteer and employment opportunities
- employment opportunities are very limited for older people
- lack of training opportunities
- over reliance of volunteers lead to burnout
- lack of co-ordination of volunteer opportunities and
- lack of transportation to get to work or volunteer opportunities.

---

## Priorities and Future Considerations

**Engaged community members identified priority action items related to volunteerism and employment identified as:**

**Priority – Improve access to information of where to look for employment and volunteer opportunities**

- Provide a centralized source for advertising employment and volunteer opportunities.

**Priority – Create awareness with local businesses about the value of hiring older workers**

- Pamphlets, online resources.

**Priority – Provide more opportunities for intergenerational interaction**

- Engage youth in activities with older adults by using their school volunteer hours.

## Social Participation

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one in which opportunities exist for social participation in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures.

Social participation is strongly connected to good health and well-being. Participation in leisure, social and cultural activities allows older adults to continue to exercise their competence, bolster self-esteem, and helps maintain supportive relationships. Social connectivity and active participation not only benefit the individual, but also addresses issues social isolation and social exclusion.

---

## Social Participation in Simcoe County

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

**Older adults are very busy** – Simcoe County is a wonderful place to live, with a many activities offered in the County. Overall, older adults reported being actively engaged in social life in their community, providing them with an abundance of opportunities to meet new people, stay fit and remain socially engaged.

**When asked how often they see their family and/or friends:**

**47% weekly**  
**40% daily**  
**10% monthly**

Older adults overwhelmingly appreciate the vast array of activities available in their communities.

**80% regularly go shopping**  
**75% go to appointments**  
**68% get together with their family and friends**  
**66% go to restaurants**

**“We live in an adult lifestyle community that provides many social activities.”**

There is also a wide range of activities held throughout most of the year, with many programs and activities offered during the summer. Many educational workshops and computer literacy programs, fitness options such as yoga, cultural and arts events, outdoor sports and church services are popular amongst older adults. Attending public events, going to the library, playing sports, going to religious/spiritual services and playing cards/ bingo are high on the list of things to do in the community.

Many participants go to service clubs or volunteer organizations for social opportunities. The friendships formed through common interests create a sense of community for many people. Participants praised seniors’ social clubs and church organizations

---

for providing opportunities for people to connect, with an array of social opportunities geared towards older adults. These places offer many programs and frequently feature guest speakers from health-care organizations speaking on topics of interest to seniors like fall prevention and fraud prevention.

While Simcoe County also offers many programs and services, some of these are lacking in smaller townships. Libraries and recreation centres offer educational programs and activities such as cribbage, computer classes and health related presentations. Others pointed out that many of the cultural activities and entertainment are limited or lacking in the smaller townships. Without a car, older adults rely on friends, neighbours or family members to drive them to enjoy social activities.

**Others pointed out that, in the absence of a local community or recreation centre, many participants travel outside of their community to participate in social activities. These facilities are quite far away and without adequate transportation not everyone is able to attend programs outside of their community. The availability of informal gathering and meeting spaces is also important for older adults to congregate and socialize.**

Having these gathering spaces is especially vital during the winter months when outdoor activities and social participation is significantly reduced.

**People want to see more activities run from schools or other community facilities to accommodate more programs and services.**

**Alternative activities** – Residents talked about wanting to have more passive and relaxed activities available in their communities such as book clubs, cards and walking groups. Participants have a strong preference for engaging socially with individuals of different ages. The sense of community did not appear to exclude younger generations. There was a desire to increase the opportunity for intergenerational learning and programming such

---

as computer training and storytelling.

- Participants also suggested enhancing access to social events in other communities outside their own and day trips offered once or twice a month, in addition to more arts and culture activities such as theatre and concerts. More pickle ball courts, gardening, shopping stores and restaurants or cafes are also some of the things older adults would like to have in their communities.
- Continuing education programs for older adults are lacking in the County.

Older adults are interested in enrolling in courses such as computers and accounting. However, these programs are not free. Community and recreation centres offer a range of affordable programs that are of interest to older adults, but most of the centres are difficult to access without a vehicle or public transportation. Another issue is that many of these programs are only offered in the evening and several participants reported that they are not comfortable driving at night. Comments were also made about very few opportunities provided by the school boards to include older adults in school programs. Participants also mentioned the need for more community pools.

**“Community colleges, for example, offer no lifelong learning opportunity for seniors, at affordable price.”**

**Activities not inclusive of everyone** – Despite the widespread availability of many activities across Simcoe County, respondents mentioned many barriers and challenges preventing them from full participation.

---

**The survey revealed that 54% of respondents would participate more if there were more social events in their area. Based on the survey, commonly mentioned deterrents to social participation include:**

- 37% not interested/happy with the level of socializing**
- 21% costs**
- 17% lack of information about events**
- 14% event scheduling**
- 12% distance**
- 11% lack of opportunities**
- 9% mobility issues and health**
- 8% lack of transportation**
- 3% safety concerns**

Other barriers mentioned were the accessibility of venues and facilities, lack of inclusiveness, inappropriate programs and services, inconvenient time and location of events and not feeling comfortable driving at night. Participants frequently stated issues with outdoor events like limited to no wheelchair accessible washroom facilities, inadequate seating and inaccessible walkways. Other reasons for not participating include not having the time due to care giving duties for a family member. Becoming a caregiver greatly modified their lifestyle and participation level in the community.

**Inappropriate programs and services** – Seniors' confidence to take part in social activities can be affected when physical abilities deteriorate. For many, health issues and reduced mobility were major inhibitors to social participation. Older adults spoke about the need to choose activities based on health status. Respondents also indicated the hours of programming are too restrictive. It was suggested that programs and services should be extended to address the needs of older adults who are also working.

---

**Too expensive!** – Affordability is a major concern for many older adults. There are social opportunities in the community, but costs and travel are required.

**Participants who do not have financial security were concerned about not being able to afford the programs they needed and wanted to participate in.**

Free and affordable events and activities provide opportunities for social interaction and participation. According to respondents, free local events in their communities consist of Canada Day activities, annual summer festivals, fall fairs and movie nights in the park. Respondents spoke about starting walking programs in local parks to create opportunities for socializing and offering discounted tickets to cultural events.

Although some of the fees for activities are considered low cost, some still find them prohibitive.

**The cost of programming presents a significant barrier to participating in social, recreational and organized activities. Participants were concerned about membership fees, transportation costs and the commitment of paying for a program ahead of time.**

**Isolated residents** – People who do not actively participate in the community and social activities are at risk of social isolation. Participants told many stories of isolated friends and neighbours known to be “shut ins” from the community. They perceived that isolation was based on either personal choice, comfort level, motivation or trust with the community.

**It was suggested that more outreach efforts must be done by community organizations. The importance of developing a buddy system where people check-in on one another when someone is living alone, has mental health or mobility issues were also frequently mentioned.**



---

**Lack of information** – Participants indicated that low participation is attributed to the lack of information about community activities and events. Frustration and resentment about not being aware of community events and often times not finding out about the event until after it had passed was discussed by many people. Reasons include information not getting out in a timely or efficient manner.

It was suggested that the promotion of activities and events could be better publicized so more people can attend. Information must be made available in a variety of mediums such as putting up flyers in the community, and advertising in local newspapers and newsletters. Participants also mentioned that many social activities in the community are only advertised on the internet and social media.

**A centralized information source for available exercise programs and other activities throughout Simcoe County would enable more people to participate.**

**“More affordable physical activities opportunities (beyond the YM/YWCA). Better advertising of what is available.”**

**Lack of transportation** – Older adults’ social participation is based on their ability to access programs and services in their communities and throughout Simcoe County. The lack of public transportation and high costs associated with travelling limits accessibility to events and activities. Many participants expressed their fortune in being able to drive and stated how they frequently assisted their less mobile friends to get to different programs and events. Respondents said it’s important to have accessible and affordable public transportation options so older adults can participate.

- Transportation options within the community are inadequate, infrequent, and expensive for older adults. It is extremely difficult for older adults who have to take two (2) or more buses, as bus schedules do not coincide. This makes older

---

**“It seems to me that this survey is concerned with social participation and for a senior like me (no car, no public transportation, requiring a cane to walk any distance) this is not viable. We have a taxi service that takes us grocery shopping once a week and to medical appointments. Any social participation in the community is NOT available – even the seniors’ community centre and club.”**

adults reluctant to travel far to attend desired programs and services.

- Transportation alternatives for those who do not have their own, transportation include organizers hosting events and activities close to where the residents live and having volunteer drivers.

## **Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges**

An abundance of social participation opportunities exist in Simcoe County. Some barriers to full participation of community members include enrolment costs to programs and event admission, lack of transportation, accessibility of facilities or amenities, event scheduling, distance, poor health, mobility issues. Older adults generally lack information about community events, which is another obstacle.

With limited intergenerational activities and gathering spaces in the community, older adults miss out on the opportunity to socialize with other members of the community. It is also a challenge to reach people who are socially isolated.

---

**In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues related to Social Participation:**

- costs of programs and events
- limited availability of wheelchair accessible washroom facilities
- accessibility of venues and facilities
- lack of information about services, programs, and community events
- event schedules inconvenient
- there are less programs and activities in smaller townships need to travel outside of community
- lack of transportation--too far to get to
- limited intergenerational activities
- lack information of the opportunities for social participation
- lack of recreation centre/community centre
- lack of inclusiveness
- inappropriate programs and services and
- difficulty reaching isolated seniors.

## **Priorities and Future Considerations**

**Participants identified the following priorities for Simcoe County to increase social participation for older adults:**

**Priority - Ensure spaces where programs and services are held are accessible**

- Host events and activities at either seniors' centre, community centre or recreation centre.

---

**Priority – Provide information about activities and events, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options**

- Use multiple formats to advertise social events such newspaper, radio, television, Internet, email, community bulletin boards.

**Priority - Find ways to encourage a variety of people to come out to social events and activities—including those on fixed incomes, less mobile and who live alone**

- Organize home visits by neighbours and other members of the community.
- Develop programs and services that meet the needs of isolated older adults and reduce barriers to participation.
- Expand availability of recreational and social activities for older adults across the community in multiple sites.
- Plan for transportation alternatives for those who do not have transportation to attend community and social events.
- Utilize AODA guide to hold accessible community events.

## **Respect and Social Inclusion**

According to the WHO, an age-friendly community is one where older adults are treated with respect and are included in civic life.

Age Friendly Communities are respectful to older adults and have measures in place to ensure that all older adults are included in community life. The extent to which older people participate in social, civic and economic life is closely linked to their experience of inclusion. Community attitudes, such as a general feeling of respect and recognizing the role that older adults play in our society, are critical factors for establishing an age-friendly community. Age-friendly communities foster positive images of aging and intergenerational understanding to challenge negative attitudes.

---

## Respect and Social Inclusion in Simcoe County

The following findings summarize the feedback and input received from community members during the engagement process.

**Respect for older adults** – In general, older adults in Simcoe County are treated with respect. Participants expressed appreciation for their neighbours, many whom are also older adults, noting that overall, people are helpful, courteous and kind. Examples most often spoken about include people holding doors and saying “hello”. Numerous participants experienced positive encounters with service and health-care providers. Participants feel that older adults are recognized in the community and that respect and appreciation for older adults are demonstrated through dinners at churches and at community events.

- Comments were also made about the need to find more ways to celebrate older adults in the community.
- Despite respondents feeling generally respected in the community, some reported ageism and those preconceptions of aging still exist.
- Frequently talked about was the need for changing the community’s attitudes towards aging and older adults.

Participants told stories of being treated as burdens and viewed as useless. Some described situations in which they were dismissed or turned away by retail staff or disrespected by younger people. Although these incidents tend to be isolated situations, participants feel that any acts of disrespect or ignorance surrounding aging must be addressed. Many feel the disrespect is due to the changing times and changing values, which are very different from how they were raised and taught at home and school.

**Social inclusion** – While some respondents feel like valued members of the community, others said more could be done to include seniors. Based on the survey, only 53% of respondents somewhat agree or strongly agree that decisions made in the community take into account the needs of aging adults.

---

Conversely, comments were made about the importance of including and consulting the older population on community issues that directly affect them.

There was also discussion that many programs and services in Simcoe County cater more towards youth than the older population. Older adults feel their knowledge and wisdom is not valued in the community and there are limited opportunities to share with others.

A large number of older adults in the County belong to different local seniors' organizations, service clubs and churches.

**72% somewhat agree or strongly agree that there are enough opportunities to participate in spiritual life**

**70% somewhat agree or strongly agree that there are enough opportunities to participate in community life**

These places are believed to foster respect and promote inclusion. Participants spoke highly of these places, as they provides many opportunities to socialize. Many of the programs that are offered are suited to older adults of a variety of abilities and capabilities, including cards, dances, Tai Chi and yoga. Pancake breakfasts, coffee and potlucks are also frequently held. Churches also make significant efforts to offer senior-related services such as arranging transportation to church and providing outreach programs to shut-ins.

**Volunteering is good for the community and good for older adults** – In general, older adults feel that they are highly respected and valued as volunteers. A strong volunteer ethic and involvement is evident as a majority of participants are very involved in volunteer work and some are volunteers in a number of different capacities. The recognition of and appreciation for the work of older volunteers are extremely valued by community members.

There is a positive link between volunteerism and mental and physical health. The general attitude of older adults is that

---

volunteering keeps them healthy and active. Factors that facilitate them engaging in volunteer work and civic opportunities include having available time and aligned interests, being physically capable of actively participating, knowing where to access these opportunities and transportation to get to and from the locations. Older adults appreciated flexibility of being able to volunteer at times that are convenient for them.

**Survey respondents were asked what they were most looking forward to in the future:**

- 54% enjoying hobbies and interests**
- 46% increased time with loved ones**
- 44% travelling**
- 35% volunteering**

**Inaccessibility prohibits participation** – Older adults repeatedly expressed their desire to participate in community events. However, inaccessibility greatly restricts their participation. Inaccessibility includes lack of information about community events, transportation, seating, washrooms and other facilities.

- With the majority of information being made available only on the Internet, older adults who do not use the computer or do not have computer access feel left behind.

To combat this issue it is important to make all community events and activities available, accessible and welcoming to older adults of a range of abilities and ages.

**Social exclusion and isolation** – Despite the opportunities described above, there is still a segment of individuals in Simcoe County who are experiencing social exclusion, especially those



---

who do not belong to local groups or organizations.

Older adults with poor health, mobility challenges, low-income and who live alone were highlighted by many respondents as likely to be socially isolated in the community.

**When asked what are they most worried about in the future, the top four responses were:**

- 60% declining physical health**
- 47% losing independence**
- 33% financial concerns**
- 32% difficulty getting around (transportation)**

Inaccessible outdoor spaces and buildings and lack of accessible and affordable public transit discourage many people from leaving their homes. Lack of information about community activities and events further hinders participation for many residents. It was suggested that extra effort is required by the County to reach out to older adults who have been isolated due to any of these factors. This can be done by either inviting residents to community events and activities with transportation services, or connecting individuals and organizations and providing community support.

**Intergenerational engagement opportunities** – Overall, respondents commented positively on the availability of numerous senior-focused programs in the County, but cited a lack of opportunities for older residents to interact with the youth.

Opportunities for intergenerational programming in Simcoe County such as reading buddies, community festivals and events and foster grandparents programs exist. However, residents welcome more opportunities for intergenerational involvement, raising the importance of bringing multiple generations together to foster mutual respect and understanding across age groups.

**Respondents noted that there has been a decline in interaction between generations in recent years, leading to possible misconceptions and misunderstandings about aging.**

---

Intergenerational initiatives and public education were identified as important ways to better educate and connect with the younger population in the County. However, respondents feel more needs to be done.

**It was also suggested that positive stories about families and communities helping each other needs to be told and highlighted. School programs were also named as a way to provide opportunities to learn about aging, teach respect and provide intergenerational activities.**

Programs could include teaching older residents computer literacy and students fulfilling their community volunteer hours by collaborating with older adults.

**Businesses in the community –** For the most part, participants felt respected by staff at businesses and found them to be fairly helpful. However, it was suggested that businesses could work to better support and accommodate older adults by reducing meal sizes and providing senior discounts especially for those on limited incomes.

**“High school kids getting their volunteer hours by reading and helping out the aging population how to get connected with social media! Just the interaction with old and young would be so wonderful! Older people are the most undervalued!”**

**“Maybe for volunteer hours a student could be partnered with a senior that would teach them how to knit, sew or some other skill that the senior has. Maybe a student could do a project about genealogy where they are partnered with a senior who tells them about what their life was about and the history of the area. Start a club for anything where the senior is encouraged to come to a group meeting once a week to read, sew, knit, or work on a project that is relevant to that person. Let the senior LIVE.”**

---

## Summary of Barriers, Gaps, and Challenges

In general, older adults are satisfied with the level of respect and social inclusion they experience in their communities. However, the inclusion and consultation of older adults when decisions are made about issues affecting their communities can be improved.

More programs that focus on the older population would be helpful. Older adults have experienced ageism and feel that negative perceptions about aging still exist.

Numerous people have expressed that their knowledge and wisdom are not valued and opportunities to interact and share their experiences with others are limited.

Others have experienced a lack of respect from youth. Education and intergenerational activities can combat misconceptions.

People with mobility challenges, low-income and who live alone have been identified as more likely to be socially isolated.

**In Simcoe County, project participants identified the following key issues related to respect and social inclusion:**

- need to include older adults in decision-making.
- need more programs for older adults.
- older adults are treated as a burden, dismissed or turned away need for more intergenerational connections.
- cost is a barrier to social inclusion.
- inaccessibility to information and venue limits participation.
- lack of transportation.

---

## Priorities and Future Considerations

**The following priorities were identified by community members to improve respect and social inclusion for older adults in Simcoe County:**

### **Priority – Increase the involvement of older adults in community consultation and decision-making process**

- Actively recruit and have a strategy to engage older adults in public decision-making.

### **Priority – Encourage and celebrate the inclusion of older adults in the community**

- Bring multiple generations together to foster mutual respect and understanding.
- Establish accessibility guidelines for community events.
- Establish events or activities such as Seniors month, Grandparents Day, Family Day.

### **Priority - Extend personal invitations to people who are socially isolated**

- Develop outreach systems where people check-in on one another when someone is living alone, has mental health or mobility issues.
- Collaborate with Local Health Integrated Network, Family Health Teams.
- Develop and implement a plan for stakeholders/community organizations to engage, locate and support isolated older adults in the community.
- Develop a check-in program or buddy system for people who live alone or are socially isolated.
- Promote the availability of subsidized recreation fees and programs that are low-cost or free for community members.

### **Priority – Increase intergenerational programming**

---

## Next Steps

Part of the age-friendly process is to incorporate multi-factorial recommendations in our Age-friendly plan that align with all core business areas of the County. Over the next few months, stakeholder meetings will be set up with key representatives to analyze the report findings and identify items that should be included in the County's seniors' strategy and planning framework.

Another aspect of the AFC process is to introduce indicators or measures that will help us identify progress in becoming more age-friendly and can be used to produce Profile/Progress reports and increase awareness about age-friendly activities undertaken within Simcoe County.

The Age-Friendly Project Steering Committee will evaluate the Committee's Terms of Reference to include the next steps of the County of Simcoe's Age Friendly Communities Initiative planning by remaining in place beyond the project term to oversee the initial roll out of the Simcoe County seniors' strategy and planning framework.

In addition, as recommended by the AFC Steering Committee a Communications Campaign has been developed to propagate awareness of the Simcoe County Age-Friendly Communities movement.

Finally, the *2016 Simcoe County Age-Friendly Community Needs Assessment Report* findings and any additional considerations from core business areas and stakeholders will be used to create the Simcoe County Positive Aging Strategy: *Older Adults Strengthening Our Communities*. This will include a detailed planning framework to support regional and municipal governments in building and strengthening age-friendly communities.

The full report entitled *2016 Simcoe County Age-Friendly Community Needs Assessment* can be found by visiting the age-friendly website at: [www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly)

---

## Moving Forward

The County of Simcoe commissioned this community needs assessment study to have a better understanding of seniors' priorities in Simcoe County to help anticipate needs and adopt as part of their future strategic planning.

The findings and recommendations summarized above and fully detailed in the "2016 Simcoe County Age-Friendly Community Needs Assessment Report" (full report) provide a strong and sound basis for the County to go forward in the development of the *Positive Aging Strategy: Older Adults Strengthening Our Communities* to be released in the Fall 2017.

While needs are increasing and becoming more complex, resources are diminishing and in many ways limits efficiency and effectiveness. This will require new and innovative ways to function and allocate resources, as well as foster collaboration for meeting these needs.

"An age-friendly community is one where policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environments are designed to support and enable older people to live in a secure environment, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in their communities." <sup>4</sup>

### **There is an opportunity for the County of Simcoe to play a more central leadership role in:**

- ◆ Providing information about the senior population and community services.
- ◆ Bringing together communities of interest and establishing collaborations among organizations.
- ◆ Submitting innovative ideas and stimulating others to share their ideas for all to consider.
- ◆ Putting in place an Age-Friendly Communication Campaign.

---

<sup>4</sup> Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 2007, World Health Organization

- 
- ◆ Incorporating AFC concepts in all core business areas of the County.
  - ◆ Enabling lower tier municipalities to adopt AFC options where possible.
  - ◆ Encouraging local businesses to become more age-friendly.



---

## Appendix A: Consolidated Priorities and Future Considerations checklist

### Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

---

#### 1. Improve overall accessibility of public and private buildings

---

- ☐ Develop accessibility materials for local businesses highlighting the importance of accessible front door access, width of isles, accessible washrooms, etc. to make it more accessible for every member in the community.
  - ☐ Ensure ramps and automated doors are installed in all public buildings.
  - ☐ Improve design of entrance to commercial/public buildings with no step entry to main entrance.
  - ☐ Paint any walk ups/stairs a bright colour to ensure visibility.
  - ☐ Encourage building and site design features that promote and support physical accessibility to social, cultural and recreational spaces, including community centres, libraries, museums, theatres and other public facilities.
- 

#### 2. Improve sidewalk safety

---

- ☐ Make improvements to sidewalk maintenance (repave bumpy surface).
  - ☐ Ensure snow removal efforts occur in consideration of older adults, especially in front of buildings to reduce snow bank accumulation on sidewalk areas.
  - ☐ Increase snow and ice removal in a timely manner.
  - ☐ Educate residents and business.
  - ☐ Create barrier-free public walkways (i.e. widened sidewalks, improved maintenance and level surfaces).
-

- 
- ☐ Widen sidewalks to accommodate wheelchairs and other walking devices such as scooters and walkers.
  - ☐ Have dropped curbs to road level.
  - ☐ Improve street lighting.

---

### **3. Increase access to public washrooms in the community**

- 
- ☐ Increase washroom facilities along walking routes within the core community area, including park areas and downtown core areas.
  - ☐ Increase hours of public washroom facilities and encourage businesses to allow public access to washrooms.

---

### **4. Install more seating in the community to allow for greater social participation**

- 
- ☐ Increase bench seating (with arm rests) along walking routes within the core community area, including park areas and downtown core areas.

---

### **5. Improve pedestrian safety**

- 
- ☐ Extend crossing times, the use of countdown signals, clearly marked crossings, and paint curbs a brighter colour for better visibility.

## **Housing**

---

### **1. Develop more affordable housing**

- 
- ☐ Increase the inventory of affordable rental housing.
  - ☐ Encourage the development of affordable housing by providing incentives to developers.

---

### **2. More housing options**

- 
- ☐ Build more diverse housing types that are suitable for older adults.

---

### **3. Improve awareness of housing options for older adults**

---

- ☐ Develop a seniors housing directory with information on available housing options in the County, available in a variety of formats such as brochure and on internet.
- ☐ Distribute information to places older adults frequent such as seniors' organizations, doctor offices, libraries and community centres.

---

### **4. Priority - More age-friendly housing developments**

---

- ☐ Barrier-free design education for those involved in design/ construction of homes.

## **Transportation**

---

### **1. Improve public transportation options in and around Simcoe County**

---

- ☐ Ensure that public transit goes to key community and hubs.
- ☐ Provide shuttles to and from local towns.
- ☐ Provide affordable taxi service.
- ☐ Provide community bus to go on outings at a reasonable rate.

---

### **2. Increase reliability and frequency of public transportation**

---

- ☐ Regional transportation services should be offered on a more regular basis and offered in the evenings, weekends and holidays to allow for greater mobility for aging residents.
- ☐ Bi-weekly local shuttle service that could transport older adults for grocery, medical, and social outings.
- ☐ Ensure more routes and stops in key seniors' community.

- 
- ☐ Increase capacity of voluntary transportation organizations to provide service.
  - ☐ Promoting volunteer driving opportunities by organizations/agencies.

---

### **3. Improve accessibility to bus stops and taxis**

---

- ☐ All local bus stops should follow accessibility standards (i.e. benches, sheltered areas, washrooms).
- ☐ Offer education to local taxi companies on accessibility.

---

### **4. Make transportation schedules accessible and easy to understand**

---

- ☐ Ensure all transportation-related information such as bus schedules are easily accessible in print or electronic format and provide adequate details in large print.

---

### **5. Increase accessible parking spaces near buildings**

---

- ☐ Create more accessible parking spaces near buildings.
- ☐ Create more drop off zones in front of buildings.

## **Communication and Information**

---

### **1. Improve the communication of information of services, programs and events in the community**

---

- ☐ Use multiple formats to disseminate information, services and events such as local newspapers, radio, Internet, bulletin boards and email.
- ☐ Promote the availability of 2-1-1 to access community information.
- ☐ Create a central information directory of services with information about how and where to access community services and supports for older adults.

- 
- ☐ Use the County website to communicate information about health services, housing, transportation, employment and volunteer opportunities and programming.
  - ☐ Develop a monthly newsletter section in the local newspapers that could act to inform local older adults on what is available to them.
  - ☐ Release a recreation guide for each season in Simcoe County, with a calendar of events and contact information. Information should be available on the Internet, hard copies in libraries, community and recreation centres, doctors' offices and seniors' apartment buildings.

---

## **2. Increase the co-ordination of information and services among service agencies**

---

- ☐ Develop a strategy to facilitate communication between agencies, organizations and community members in the County.

---

## **3. Increase access to computer literacy training**

---

- ☐ Provide free computer training in accessible locations such as libraries and community centres.

## **Community Supports and Health Services**

---

### **1. Improve and expand the health-care services in Simcoe County**

---

- ☐ Explore ways to attract more doctors and geriatric specialists, especially in the smaller townships
- ☐ Create wellness centres that includes a variety of services—physician, nurse, dentist, podiatrist, pharmacy, occupational therapy.
- ☐ Host travelling health clinics in townships where there is limited transportation.

---

## **2. Improve communication of information about existing health services**

---

- ☐ Develop a comprehensive resource guide of all the available services and supports in Simcoe County.
  - ☐ Promote the availability of 2-1-1 to access community information.
- 

## **3. Health services/community supports need to be better co-ordinated**

---

- ☐ Develop and expand co-ordinated home support and maintenance services to assist older adults to age-in-place.
  - ☐ The creation of a comprehensive resource guide to increase information about all available supports and services.
- 

## **4. Enhance transportation services to get to medical appointments**

---

- ☐ Ensure availability of transportation to medical appointments within and outside of the community.
  - ☐ Develop a strategy with community transportation strategies to co-ordinate services.
- 

## **Civic Participation and Employment**

---

### **1. Improve access to information of where to look for employment and volunteer opportunities**

---

- ☐ Provide a centralized source for advertising employment and volunteer opportunities.
- 

### **2. Create awareness with local businesses about the value of hiring older workers**

---

- ☐ Create Awareness with local businesses about the value of hiring older workers.
-

---

### **3. Provide more opportunities for intergenerational opportunities**

---

- ☐ Engage youth in activities with older adults by using their school volunteer hours.

## **Social Participation**

---

### **1. Ensure spaces where programs and services are held are accessible**

---

- ☐ Host accessible events/activities at either seniors', community or recreation centres.

### **2. When Providing information about activities/events include details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for seniors**

---

- ☐ Use multiple formats to advertise social events such as newspaper, radio, television, internet, email, community bulletin boards.

### **3. Find ways to encourage variety of people to come out to social events/ activities including those on fixed incomes, less mobile or who live alone**

---

- ☐ Organize home visits by neighbours and other members of the community.
- ☐ Develop programs/services that meet the needs of isolated older adults and reduce barriers to participation.
- ☐ Expand availability of recreational/social activities for older adults across the community in multiple sites.
- ☐ Plan transportation alternatives for those who do not have transportation to attend community and social events.



---

## Respect and Social Inclusion

---

### 1. Increase the involvement of older adults in community consultation and decision-making process

---

- ☐ Actively recruit and have a strategy to engage older adults in public decision-making.
- 

### 2. Encourage and celebrate the inclusion of older adults in the community

---

- ☐ Bring multiple generations together to foster mutual respect and understanding.
  - ☐ Establish accessibility guidelines for community events.
  - ☐ Establish events or activities such as Seniors' month, Grandparents Day, Family Day.
- 

### 3. Extend personal invitations to people who are socially isolated

---

- ☐ Develop and implement a plan for stakeholders/community organizations to engage, locate and support isolated older adults in the community.
  - ☐ Develop a check-in program or buddy system for people who live alone or are social isolated.
  - ☐ Promote the availability of subsidized recreation fees and programs that are low-cost or free for community members.
-

---

## Appendix B: Steering Committee Members

### Age-Friendly Project Steering Committee Membership

We would like to extend a special note of thanks and acknowledgement to the following individuals for their membership on the Simcoe County Age Friendly Community Steering Committee.

**Arfona Zwiers**

Director, Social Housing,  
County of Simcoe  
[Arfona.zwiers@simcoe.ca](mailto:Arfona.zwiers@simcoe.ca)

**Christina Strong**

Public Education Trainer,  
Independent Living Services Simcoe  
[cstrong@ilssimcoe.ca](mailto:cstrong@ilssimcoe.ca)

**Christy Tosh**

Age-Friendly Community Planning  
Project Lead, County of Simcoe  
[christy.tosh@simcoe.ca](mailto:christy.tosh@simcoe.ca)

**Connie Sheridan**

Administrator, Georgian Manor  
[connie.sheridan@simcoe.ca](mailto:connie.sheridan@simcoe.ca)

**David Parks**

Director of Planning, Development  
& Tourism, County of Simcoe  
[david.parks@simcoe.ca](mailto:david.parks@simcoe.ca)

**Denise Hayes**

General Manager, Southern Georgian  
Bay Chamber of Commerce  
[dhayes@sgbchamber.ca](mailto:dhayes@sgbchamber.ca)

**Gayle Hall**

Chief Librarian, County of Simcoe  
[gayle.hall@simcoe.ca](mailto:gayle.hall@simcoe.ca)

**Greg Bishop**

General Manager, Social &  
Community Services, County of  
Simcoe  
[greg.bishop@simcoe.ca](mailto:greg.bishop@simcoe.ca)

**Heather Hollingshead**, Regional  
Services Co-ordinator, Spinal Cord  
Injury Ontario  
[h.hollingshead@sciontario.org](mailto:h.hollingshead@sciontario.org)

**Rosslyn Junke**, United Way Greater  
Simcoe County  
[rjunke@unitedwaygsc.ca](mailto:rjunke@unitedwaygsc.ca)

**Jane Sinclair**

General Manager, Health &  
Emergency Services, County of  
Simcoe / Chair, AFC Project Steering  
Committee  
[jane.sinclair@simcoe.ca](mailto:jane.sinclair@simcoe.ca)

**Jim Gough**

Senior's Representative  
[jimgough@sympatico.ca](mailto:jimgough@sympatico.ca)

**Joanne Lane**

Accessibility Consultant,  
County of Simcoe  
[joanne.lane@simcoe.ca](mailto:joanne.lane@simcoe.ca)

---

**Karen Taillefer**

Vice President, Patient Services,  
NSM CCAC  
[karen.taillefer@nsm.ccac-ont.ca](mailto:karen.taillefer@nsm.ccac-ont.ca)

**Kelley Swift-Jones**, Museum  
Curator, County of Simcoe  
[Kelley.Swift-Jones@simcoe.ca](mailto:Kelley.Swift-Jones@simcoe.ca)

**Kevin Beaulieu**

Executive Director, Public Interest  
Strategy & Communications  
[kevin@publicinterest.ca](mailto:kevin@publicinterest.ca)

**Laura Lynn Bourassa**

Education Co-ordinator,  
Alzheimer's Society  
[LBourassa@alzheimersociety.ca](mailto:LBourassa@alzheimersociety.ca)

**Linda Flemington**

Chair, CARP, Georgian Bay  
[lindaflემington@gmail.com](mailto:lindaflემington@gmail.com)

**Margaret Adolphe**

Senior's Representative, Chair of  
Collingwood Accessibility Advisory  
Committee, CARP Board of  
Directors - Collingwood  
[madolphe@rogers.com](mailto:madolphe@rogers.com)

**Mary Small-Brett**

Councillor, County of Simcoe  
[mary.smallbrett@simcoe.ca](mailto:mary.smallbrett@simcoe.ca)

**Michelle Denne**

Administrative Assistant  
[Michelle.denne@simcoe.ca](mailto:Michelle.denne@simcoe.ca)

**Melissa Mei**

Advisor, Planning, Integration,  
Evaluation & Community  
Engagement, NSM LHIN

[Melissa.mei@lhins.on.ca](mailto:Melissa.mei@lhins.on.ca)

**Merideth Morrison**

Director, Performance,  
Quality and Development  
[merideth.morrison@simcoe.ca](mailto:merideth.morrison@simcoe.ca)

**Ron Coutts**

Senior's Representative  
[roheco@sympatico.ca](mailto:roheco@sympatico.ca)

**Sandra Robinson**

Real Estate Manager,  
County of Simcoe  
[sandra.robinson@simcoe.ca](mailto:sandra.robinson@simcoe.ca)

**Sarah Orr-Shaw,**

Public Health Nurse,  
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit  
[sarah.orr-shaw@smdhu.org](mailto:sarah.orr-shaw@smdhu.org)

**Scott Warnock**

Councillor, County of Simcoe  
[scott.warnock@simcoe.ca](mailto:scott.warnock@simcoe.ca)

**Susan Plewes**

Community Representative  
[susanplewes@rogers.com](mailto:susanplewes@rogers.com)

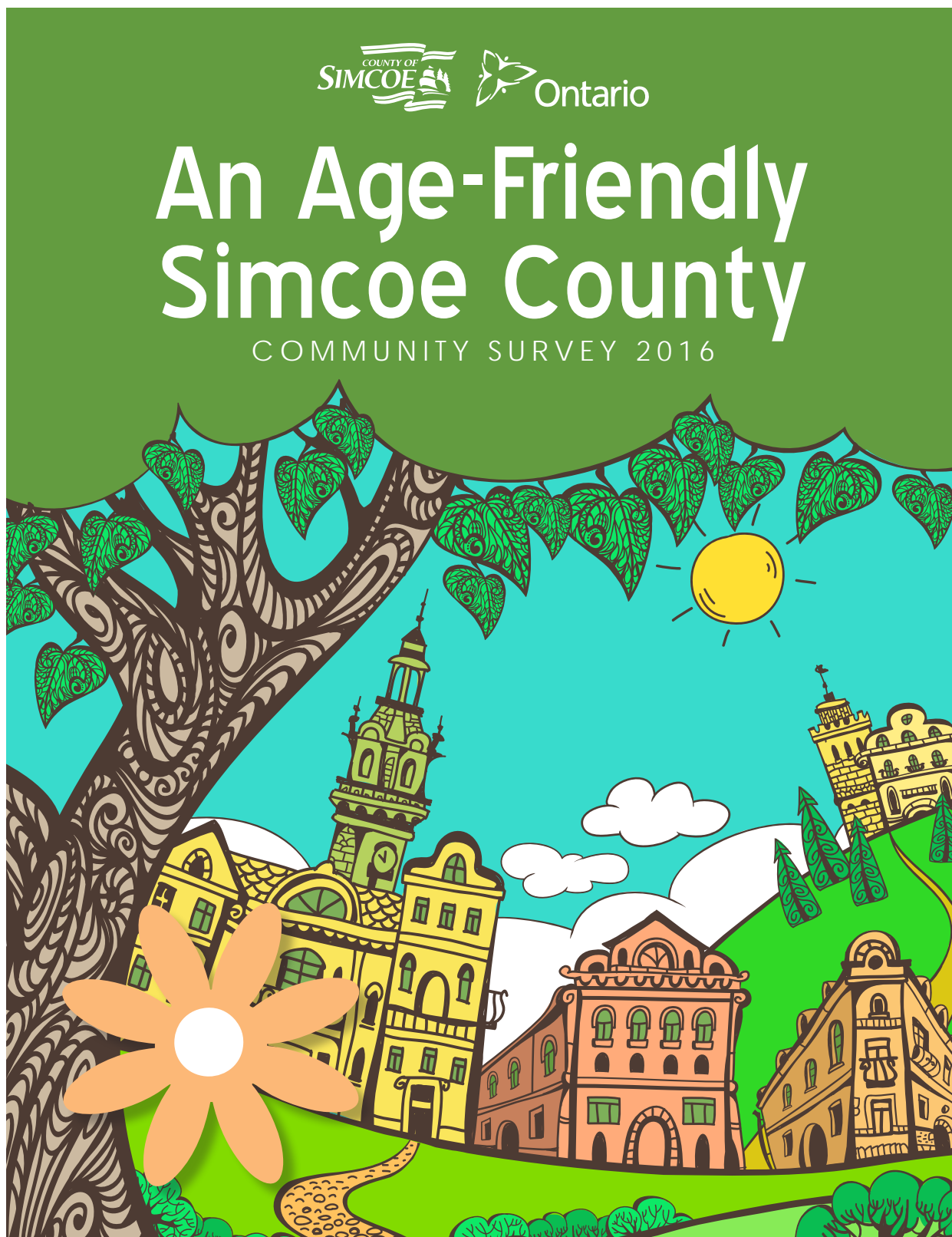
**Terri Soukup**

Director of Client Services,  
Helping Hands Orillia  
[terris@hhorillia.ca](mailto:terris@hhorillia.ca)

**Tom Johnston**

Branch Manager, Seniors for Seniors  
(Simcoe-Muskoka)  
[tom@srs4srs.ca](mailto:tom@srs4srs.ca)

## Appendix C: Age-Friendly Survey



**T**he County of Simcoe is committed to creating an age-friendly community that puts the needs of our older adults at the centre of future planning. Creating a community where older people are valued and can enjoy good health, happiness, and fulfillment is our priority.

The goal of this survey is to collect feedback from you to understand the most pressing age-friendly priorities in our communities. By defining these priorities, we can include age-friendliness into our planning processes to improve the overall health, well-being, and quality of life for older adults across this region. The results of this survey will be posted on our website: [simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://simcoe.ca/age-friendly) and presented at a community meeting in 2016.

To ensure we are successful in planning for age-friendly communities, we count on your voice being heard. Every voice counts! Please help improve your community by filling out this survey before **March 31, 2016**. The survey may take about 20-25 minutes to complete. All feedback will remain anonymous and will only be used for Age-Friendly Community Planning.

**Please be sure to hand in your completed survey to be eligible to win one of these great prizes:**

**1st Prize:** “Sunshine Getaway in Simcoe County” for two (\$350 value)

**2nd Prize:** a Dickey Bee Basket (\$100 value)

**3rd Prize:** a Dickey Bee Basket (\$50 value)

*You may withdraw from this study at anytime before the submission of your survey.  
After submission, the results from each participant will be made anonymous  
by the removal of personal identifiers*

---

**Please check the applicable box below**

- ☐ A senior citizen (65+)
- ☐ A caregiver on behalf of a senior citizen
- ☐ A family member on behalf of a senior
- ☐ An interested citizen on behalf of a senior
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**This document is available in alternate format or with communication support, upon request.**

**Please contact the Age Friendly Community project lead at 705-726-9300 ext. 1405  
or [agefriendly@simcoe.ca](mailto:agefriendly@simcoe.ca) if you require assistance or to make a request.**



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

## Respect and Social Inclusion

This section will ask about the level of respect you feel you have in your community and whether you feel included in community life. Some examples of social inclusion are activities, services, and products suitable for older people being offered by public and commercial organizations, regular contact with different age groups, and regular opportunities to participate in community activities.

### 1. Please tell us your opinion on the following statements:

|   | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | I Don't Know |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| My local area is an ideal place for aging adults to live                    |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Decisions made in the community take into account the needs of aging adults |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| There are enough opportunities to participate in community life             |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Aging adults are respected by the community and its citizens                |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Community values aging adults   |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| There are enough opportunities to participate in spiritual life             |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |

### 2. As you think about your future, what are you most looking forward to?

*(Please select top 3)*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increased time with loved ones | <input type="checkbox"/> Taking up new hobbies              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travelling                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying hobbies and interests | <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing life experiences/mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More free time in general      | <input type="checkbox"/> Social involvement                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical/Cultural activities   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-directed learning         | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing education/workshops |   |

### 3. As you think about your future, what are you most worried about?

(Please select top 3)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging alone                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Falling/getting injured   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declining physical health                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Declining mental health   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving into more suitable housing          | <input type="checkbox"/> Losing my independence    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial concerns                         | <input type="checkbox"/> No one to take care of me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting around (home)           | <input type="checkbox"/> End of Life Care          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty getting around (transportation) | <input type="checkbox"/> Death                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say         |

## Outdoor Space and Buildings

This section will ask your opinion of the outdoor spaces you frequently use in your area. Examples include parks, streets, and buildings. These spaces can play an important role on the mobility, independence, and quality of life for aging adults.

### 4. Please share your opinion on your satisfaction with public spaces in your area:

|                                   | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | I Don't Know |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Pedestrian crossings              |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Signs on streets                  |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Lighting on paths/streets         |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Safety walking on streets         |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Number of parks/trails            |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Quality of parks/trails           |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Pet facilities in parks           |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Washrooms in public places        |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Lighting in parks                 |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Maintenance of streets            |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Maintenance of parks              |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Available seating on streets      |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Available seating in parks        |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Available garbage cans in streets |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Available garbage cans in parks   |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Snow removal on streets           |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Snow removal on sidewalks         |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |



### 5. Please share your satisfaction with buildings in your community:

|  | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | I Don't Know |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Number of parking spaces                         |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Number of accessible parking spaces              |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Availability of elevators, escalators, and ramps |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Availability and accessibility of washrooms      |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Availability of accessible buildings; eg. ramps  |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Lighting   |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |
| Ease of opening doors                            |                |                |                           |                   |                   |              |

### 6. Which areas of improvement would benefit you the most?

*(Please select top 3)*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snow and ice clearing on sidewalks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow and ice clearing on roads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More accessible buildings and doors | <input type="checkbox"/> More sidewalks                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More access to nature and trails    | <input type="checkbox"/> More lighting                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More green spaces and parks         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More handicapped parking spots      | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing needs to be improved   |

## Transportation

In this section we will ask about your ability to move about both inside and outside of the county/township. The quality of transportation, including accessible and affordable public transit, can improve participation in community activities as well as access to health and community services.

### 7. Please describe your level of mobility

*(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ I can walk unassisted
 ☐ I use a cane or walker  
☐ I use a wheelchair or similar assistive device
 ☐ I prefer not to say  
☐ Does not apply

### 8. How do you get around in the area?

|                                   | Almost<br>always | Very often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | Not<br>available |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------|-----------|--------|-------|------------------|
| Personal vehicle                  |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Public transit                    |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Taxi                              |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Friends/ family drive             |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Scooter                           |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Bicycle                           |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Walking                           |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Community transportation services |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |
| Other: _____                      |                  |            |           |        |       |                  |



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

### 9. How important are the following factors to your ability to travel?

|   | Very important | Somewhat important | Not very important | Not important at all | Not available |
|---|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Access to a vehicle you can drive                     |                |                    |                    |                      |               |
| Access to a friend/family who can drive and/or assist |                |                    |                    |                      |               |
| Taxi services   |                |                    |                    |                      |               |
| Access to public transit                              |                |                    |                    |                      |               |
| Access to community transportation services           |                |                    |                    |                      |               |
| Services and stores within walking distance           |                |                    |                    |                      |               |

### 10. How often do you travel these distances?

|   | Almost daily | 2-4 times a week | About once a week | Less than once a week | Less than once/month |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Within walking distance of your home                              |              |                  |                   |                       |                      |
| In your local area (less than a 5-10 minute drive)                |              |                  |                   |                       |                      |
| To other areas within Simcoe County (more than a 15 minute drive) |              |                  |                   |                       |                      |
| Out of the area (more than a 40 minute drive)                     |              |                  |                   |                       |                      |

## Housing

In this section we will ask about your current housing and plans for housing in the future. Housing can be both a great support and a great stress in your life, and it is an important factor in allowing adults to age comfortably and safely within their community.

### 11. Do you live alone?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

### 12. If no, who do you live with?

- ☐ Family member      ☐ Friend(s)      ☐ Shared dwelling      ☐ Prefer not to say

### 13. Which areas of improvement would benefit you the most?

- |   |  |  |                                       |
|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single-family dwelling | <input type="checkbox"/> Duplex            | <input type="checkbox"/> Townhouse       | <input type="checkbox"/> Apartment    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile home            | <input type="checkbox"/> Granny flat       | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement home | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____           | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |  |                                       |

### 14. Your home is:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Owned by you        | <input type="checkbox"/> Rented by you    | <input type="checkbox"/> Owned or rented by family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subsidized          | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Living | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I prefer not to say |   |  |

### 15. Does your current living situation fit your needs?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

### 16. Are you currently homeless?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

**17. Have you ever been homeless?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**18. Can you afford your current housing?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**19. Have you considered adapting your home or making changes to meet your needs as you age?** *(Examples: grab bars in bathroom or walk-in bathtub)*

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**20. Are you able to find out information about making changes to your home?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**21. When considering a move, how important are the following factors?**

|  | Extremely important | Very important | Moderately important | Slightly important | Not at all important | Not applicable |
|--|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Be near friends or family                          |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Stay in the community I currently live in          |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Be near public transit                             |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Be near health/medical services                    |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Be near social activities                          |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Access to shopping (i.e. groceries, retail)        |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Ability to remain independent                      |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Have a home suitable to meet mobility/living needs |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Affordability of housing                           |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |
| Ease/convenience of moving                         |                     |                |                      |                    |                      |                |

**Civil Participation and Employment**

This section will ask about your current employment and volunteer activities. Aging adults are a significant resource to communities, and we want to make sure that there are enough opportunities and support for their participation in civic activities (such as local politics/campaigns/advocacy, or volunteering at places like hospitals, food banks and churches).

**22. Are you retired?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**23. If no, have you planned for your retirement?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

**24. Are you currently employed in a paid position?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**25. If yes, what is the reason for your employment?**

- ☐ By choice      ☐ Out of necessity      ☐ Prefer not to say

**26. Are you looking for volunteer opportunities within the community?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**27. On average, how many hours a week do you currently spend volunteering?**

- ☐ 1-5 hrs      ☐ 6-10 hrs      ☐ 11-15 hrs      ☐ 16-20 hrs  
☐ 21+ hrs      ☐ I do not volunteer      ☐ I prefer not to say

**28. Are you actively engaged in the community's political process?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

## Social Participation

In this section we will ask about your social participation within and outside of your community. Participation in social events has been proven to be strongly related to good health and well-being for people of all ages. We want to know whether there are enough social opportunities for aging adults to participate in and what prevents them from doing so.

**29. How often do you see family and/or friends?**

- ☐ Daily      ☐ Weekly      ☐ Monthly  
☐ Annually      ☐ Does not apply      ☐ Prefer not to say



**30. When you go out, what do you normally do?***(Check all that apply)*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go for walks                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports/recreation    | <input type="checkbox"/> Appointments       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go to religious/spiritual services | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit friends/family | <input type="checkbox"/> Do banking         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go to the library                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Go shopping          | <input type="checkbox"/> Play cards/bingo   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a class                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Go to a restaurant   | <input type="checkbox"/> Go for short drive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend public events               | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't go out       | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say  |

**31. Would you participate more if there were social events in your area?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**32. If you would like to socialize more, what prevents you from doing so?**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Distance         | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of transportation              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Event scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of opportunities               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health          | <input type="checkbox"/> Costs            | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information about events    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____    |   | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm happy with level of socializing |

## Communication and Information

In the following section we will ask about how you get in touch with others, and about how you get information on news and events important to you. Staying connected with people and informed on events can be important to aging adults being involved and participating in the community.

**33. How informed do you feel about the local area?**

- |   |  |                                       |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very informed                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Not informed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in being informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |                                       |



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

**34. How do you learn about what is going on in your local area?**

- |   |  |   |                                       |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth  | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Television     | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio          | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mail           | <input type="checkbox"/> Brochures    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/family | <input type="checkbox"/> Community/bulletin boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |  |   |                                       |

**35. Are you aware dialing 2-1-1 will connect you to finding the right community and social services in your area?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Neutral

**36. Would you like to be more informed about the local area?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Neutral

**37. If yes, how would you like to be informed about the local area?**

- |   |  |   |                                       |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth  | <input type="checkbox"/> Internet                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Television     | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radio          | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Mail           | <input type="checkbox"/> Brochures    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends/family | <input type="checkbox"/> Community/bulletin boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply |                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   |  |   |                                       |

**38. Do you access the internet on a regular basis?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Unavailable

**39. If yes, how often do you use the internet?**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily                 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 times a week       | <input type="checkbox"/> About once a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say     |   |  |

**40. Are you able to access information about what is going on in your area in your preferred language?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Don't know

## Community Support and Health Services

In the following section we will ask you questions about the kind of help that you might need and what is available in your community. The kinds of help we want to know about are physical and mental health services, social services, and services for daily living. These kinds of supports can be an important factor in helping aging adults keep their independence and age in the home, rather than in long-term facilities.

**41. Compared to people your age, would you say your physical health is**

- ☐ Excellent    ☐ Very Good    ☐ Good    ☐ Fair    ☐ Poor    ☐ Prefer not to say

**42. Compared to people your age, would you say your mental health is**

- ☐ Excellent    ☐ Very Good    ☐ Good    ☐ Fair    ☐ Poor    ☐ Prefer not to say

**43. Do you have a family doctor?**

- ☐ Yes, within the County of Simcoe      ☐ Yes, outside the County of Simcoe  
☐ No      ☐ I don't know      ☐ Prefer not to say

**44. What services are you looking for?**

- ☐ Nurse Practitioner      ☐ Personal Support Worker      ☐ Counsellor  
☐ Do not require      ☐ Prefer not to say      ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

**45. In the last 12 months have you needed help doing any of the following tasks?  
Were you able to access the help you needed? (Check all that apply)**

| Task   | Did you need help? |    | If yes, were you able to access the help you needed? |    |
|--|--------------------|----|--|----|
|  | Yes                | No | Yes  | No |
| Filling out forms                            |                    |    |  |    |
| House cleaning                               |                    |    |  |    |
| Income tax preparation                       |                    |    |  |    |
| Yard care                                    |                    |    |  |    |
| Grocery shopping                             |                    |    |  |    |
| Affording sufficient amount of food          |                    |    |  |    |
| Accessing health services                    |                    |    |  |    |
| Accessing social services                    |                    |    |  |    |
| Personal transportation                      |                    |    |  |    |
| Home repair and maintenance                  |                    |    |  |    |
| Preparing meals                              |                    |    |  |    |
| Snow removal                                 |                    |    |  |    |
| Delivery service                             |                    |    |  |    |
| Pet care                                     |                    |    |  |    |
| Garbage removal                              |                    |    |  |    |
| Collecting mail or parcels                   |                    |    |  |    |
| Banking                                      |                    |    |  |    |
| Taking medication                            |                    |    |  |    |
| Picking up medicine from the pharmacy        |                    |    |  |    |
| Language interpretation/translation services |                    |    |  |    |
| Please list language(s):<br>_____<br>_____   |                    |    |  |    |
| Other: _____                                 |                    |    |  |    |
| Other: _____                                 |                    |    |  |    |

**46. What services do you think are needed in your area in order for you to maintain your health and independence?** *(Check all that apply)*

- ☐ Health and wellness programs  
*Examples: nutrition, smoking cessation, weight control, flu shots, educational workshops, and health screenings*
- ☐ A service that helps aging adults find and access physical health and supportive services
- ☐ A service that helps aging adults find and access mental health and supportive services
- ☐ Easy to find information on local health and supportive services (dial 2-1-1)
- ☐ Yard work
- ☐ Home repair and maintenance
- ☐ House cleaning
- ☐ Delivery of services and goods
- ☐ Personal care
- ☐ Transportation to appointments
- ☐ Home care
- ☐ Affordable home care
- ☐ Help with shopping
- ☐ Help with meal preparation
- ☐ Nursing care
- ☐ Language and interpretation services
- ☐ Incontinence support
- ☐ Meals on Wheels
- ☐ Visiting
- ☐ Respite care
- ☐ Aging adult fitness
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Grief and bereavement
- ☐ Alcohol and substance abuse
- ☐ Help making ends meet
- ☐ Gambling addiction services
- ☐ Prefer not to say

**47. Would you be willing to pay for or contribute for these services?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**48. Are you a grandparent taking care of children or have been assigned custody?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

## Personal Information

In this final section you will be asked some questions about yourself. This information is important for better understanding how needs and priorities differ for certain groups in our community.

**49. What is your sex?**

- ☐ Male      ☐ Female      ☐ Prefer not to say

**50. What is your age?**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 55 or under | <input type="checkbox"/> 75- 84            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 56 – 64     | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 or above       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 65 – 74     | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |

**51. Where do you live in the County of Simcoe?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Essa        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Collingwood               | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Oro-Medonte |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Innisfil                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Ramara      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Midland                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Severn      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of New Tecumseth             | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Springwater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Penetanguishene           | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Tay         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Wasaga Beach              | <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Tiny        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Adjala-Tosorontio     | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Barrie          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Township of Clearview             | <input type="checkbox"/> City of Orillia         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mnjikaning First Nation           | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Island - Beausoleil     |  |

**52. What is your postal code?**

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Prefer not to say

**53. How would you describe yourself? (Check all that apply)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian or European                        | <input type="checkbox"/> South Asian                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African, Caribbean or Black community member | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino                           | <input type="checkbox"/> First Nations, Inuit or Métis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Immigrant/Refugee                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say             |

**54. What is your marital status?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single, never married | <input type="checkbox"/> Married or domestic partnership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced              | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Separated             | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say               |





**55. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No schooling completed         | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade/technical school     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary school (Grade 6)    | <input type="checkbox"/> Some university, no degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school, no diploma   | <input type="checkbox"/> College diploma            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma (or equal) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say              | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate degree       |

**56. What is your current total annual household / family income?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 - \$69,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 - \$79,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 - \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 - \$89,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 - \$39,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90,000 - \$99,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 - \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 +         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$59,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say   |

**57. Have you recently moved to Simcoe County?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No      ☐ Prefer not to say

**58. Do you live in?**

- ☐ Rural community      ☐ Urban city      ☐ Prefer not to say

**Are there other additional comments you would like to share?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Survey Drop-Off Locations**

- Your local library
- County of Simcoe Administration Centre, 1110 Highway 26, MIDHURST
- Town of Bradford-West Gwillimbury, 100 Dissette St., BRADFORD
- Town of Collingwood, 97 Hurontario Street, COLLINGWOOD
- Town of Innisfil, 2101 Innisfil Beach Road, INNISFIL
- Town of Midland, 575 Dominion Avenue, MIDLAND
- Town of New Tecumseth, 10 Wellington Street East, ALLISTON
- Town of Penetanguishene, 10 Robert Street West, PENETANGUISHENE
- Township of Adjala-Tosorontio, 7855 30th Side Road, RR#1, ALLISTON
- Township of Ramara, 2297 Highway 12, BRECHIN
- Township of Severn, 1024 Hurlwood Lane, ORILLIA
- Township of Springwater, 2231 Nursery Road, MINESING
- Township of Tay, 450 Park Street, VICTORIA HARBOUR
- Township of Tiny, 130 Balm Beach West, RR #1, PERKINSFIELD
- City of Orillia, 50 Andrew St. S., 3rd Floor Reception Desk, ORILLIA

**Mail the completed survey to:**

Age-Friendly Project Lead,  
County of Simcoe, 1110 Hwy 26, Midhurst Ontario L0L 1X0

**To complete this survey online, visit:**

[simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://simcoe.ca/age-friendly)



FUNDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

---

## Appendix D: Survey Results

Please visit our website for survey result data at:

[www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly](http://www.simcoe.ca/age-friendly)

### Respect and Social Inclusion

#### QUESTION 1

**Please tell us your opinion on the following statements:**

Respondents who  
'Strongly agree' or  
'Somewhat agree'

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| My local area is an ideal place for aging adults to live                    | 76% |
| There are enough opportunities to participate in spiritual life             | 72% |
| There are enough opportunities to participate in community life             | 70% |
| Aging adults are respected by the community and its citizens                | 68% |
| The community values aging adults   | 58% |
| Decisions made in the community take into account the needs of aging adults | 53% |

#### QUESTION 2

**As you think about your future, what are you most looking forward to?**

Percentage of  
respondents

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Enjoying hobbies and interests     | 54%  |
| Increased time with loved ones     | 46%  |
| Travelling                         | 44%  |
| Volunteering                       | 35%  |
| Physical/Cultural activities       | 33%  |
| Social involvement                 | 31%  |
| More free time in general          | 23%  |
| Taking up new hobbies              | 17%  |
| Self-directed learning             | 14%  |
| Continuing education/workshops     | 14%  |
| Sharing life experiences/mentoring | 10%  |
| Having good health                 | 1%   |
| Other:                             | 4%   |
| Staying in my home                 | 0.4% |
| Spending time in nature            | 0.4% |

### QUESTION 3

#### As you think about your future, what are you most worried about?

|  | Percentage of respondents |
|--|---------------------------|
| Declining physical health                  | 60%                       |
| Losing my independence                     | 47%                       |
| Financial concerns                         | 33%                       |
| Difficulty getting around (transportation) | 32%                       |
| Moving into more suitable housing          | 24%                       |
| Declining mental health                    | 24%                       |
| Aging alone                                | 23%                       |
| Falling/getting injured                    | 22%                       |
| End of life care                           | 13%                       |
| No one to take care of me                  | 12%                       |
| Difficulty getting around (home)           | 11%                       |
| Death                                      | 5%                        |
| Other                                      | 4%                        |

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

### QUESTION 4

#### Please share your opinion on your satisfaction with public spaces in your area:

|                                   | Respondents who 'Strongly agree' or 'Somewhat agree' |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Number of parks/trails            | 63%  |
| Quality of parks/trails           | 62%  |
| Signs on streets                  | 61%  |
| Maintenance of parks              | 54%  |
| Snow removal on streets           | 53%  |
| Lighting on paths/streets         | 49%  |
| Safety walking on streets         | 49%  |
| Pedestrian crossings              | 48%  |
| Maintenance of streets            | 43%  |
| Snow removal on sidewalks         | 41%  |
| Available garbage cans in parks   | 39%  |
| Available seating in parks        | 38%  |
| Lighting in parks                 | 33%  |
| Available garbage cans in streets | 31%  |
| Washrooms in public places        | 29%  |
| Pet facilities in parks           | 24%  |
| Available seating on streets      | 22%  |

## QUESTION 5

| Please share your satisfaction with buildings in your community | Respondents who 'Strongly agree' or 'Somewhat agree' |
|---|--|
| Number of parking spots   | 53%  |
| Lighting  | 49%  |
| Number of accessible parking spaces                             | 44%  |
| Ease of opening doors   | 43%  |
| Availability of elevators, escalators, and ramps                | 35%  |
| Availability and accessibility of washrooms                     | 35%  |
| Availability of accessible buildings; eg. ramps                 | 35%  |
| Washrooms in public places                                      | 23%  |

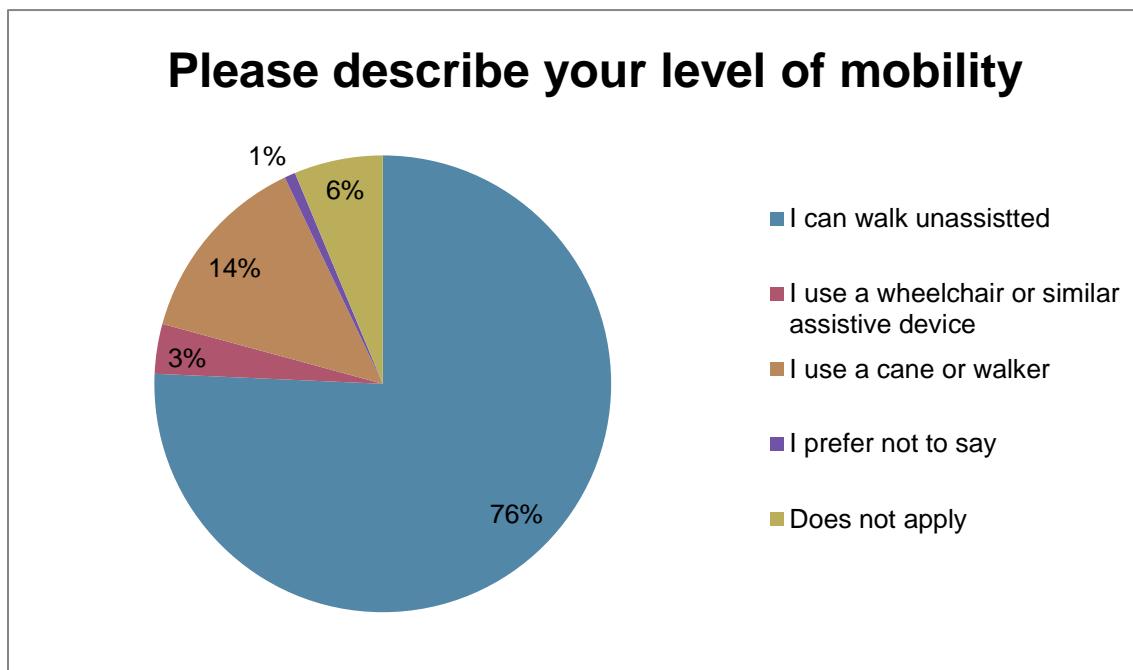
## QUESTION 6

| Which areas of improvement would benefit you the most? | Percentage of respondents |
|--|---------------------------|
| Snow and ice clearing on sidewalks                     | 43%                       |
| Snow and ice clearing on roads                         | 37%                       |
| More sidewalks   | 27%                       |
| More accessible parking spots                          | 26%                       |
| More lighting  | 26%                       |
| More access to nature and trails                       | 22%                       |
| More green spaces and parks                            | 21%                       |
| More accessible buildings and doors                    | 19%                       |
| Other  | 10%                       |
| Nothing needs to be improved                           | 7%                        |

---

# Transportation

## QUESTION 7



## QUESTION 8

| How do you get around in the area? |  | Respondents who said 'often' or 'almost always' |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Personal vehicle                   |  | 79%   |
| Walking                            |  | 43%   |
| Friends/family drive               |  | 19%   |
| Bicycle                            |  | 10%   |
| Public Transit                     |  | 3%  |
| Taxi                               |  | 3%  |
| Community transportation services  |  | 3%  |
| Scooter                            |  | 2%  |

## QUESTION 9

### How important are the following factors to your ability to travel?

Respondents who said  
'very important' or  
'somewhat important'

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Access to a vehicle you can drive                     | 79% |
| Services and stores within walking distance           | 59% |
| Access to a friend/family who can drive and/or assist | 56% |
| Access to public transit                              | 37% |
| Access to community transportation services           | 34% |
| Taxi services   | 33% |

## QUESTION 10

### How frequently do you travel these distances?

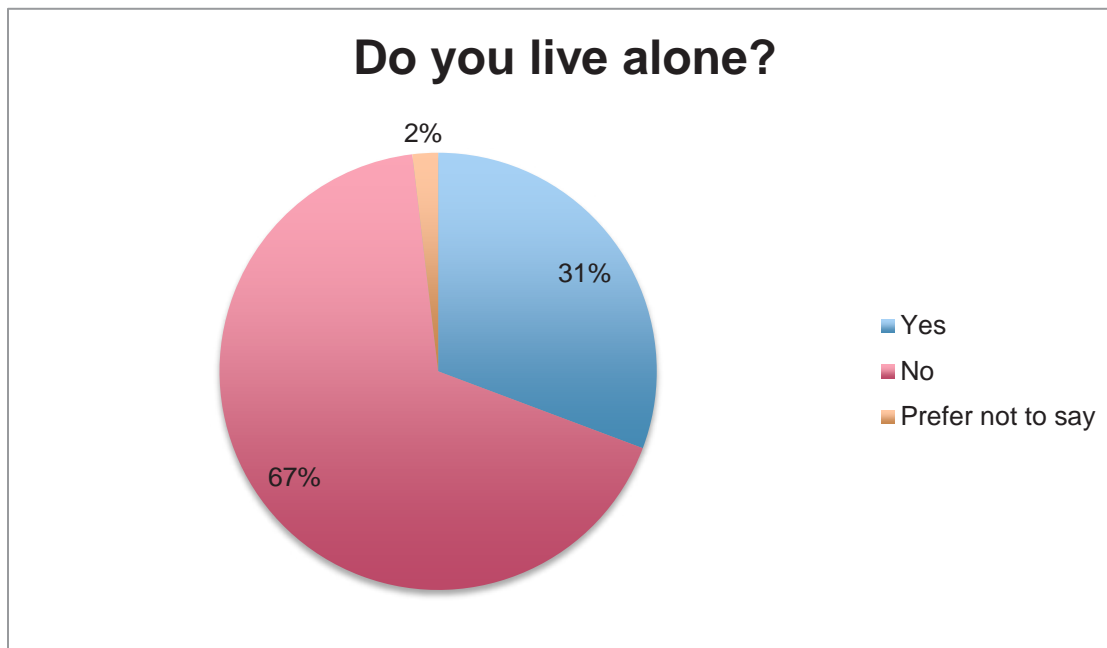
|   | Almost daily | 2-4 times a week | About once a week | Less than once a week | Less than once a month |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Within walking distance of your home                              | 37%          | 17%              | 10%               | 7%                    | 12%                    |
| In your local area (less than a 5-10 minute drive)                | 35%          | 32%              | 10%               | 5%                    | 4%                     |
| To other areas within Simcoe County (more than a 15 minute drive) | 12%          | 29%              | 23%               | 13%                   | 10%                    |
| Out of the area (more than a 40 minute drive)                     | 3%           | 7%               | 19%               | 27%                   | 31%                    |



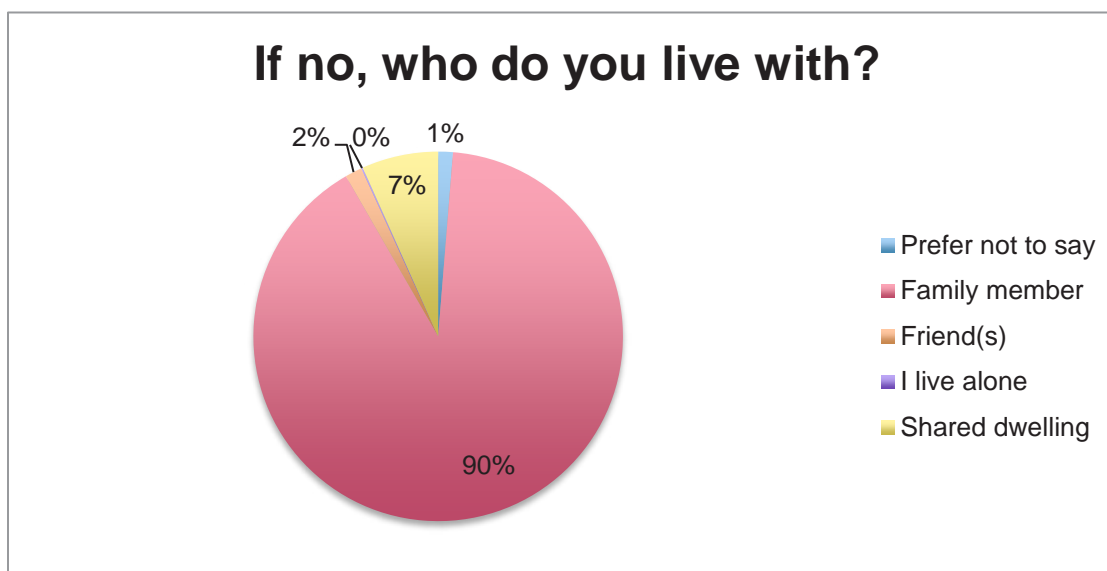
---

# Housing

## QUESTION 11



## QUESTION 12



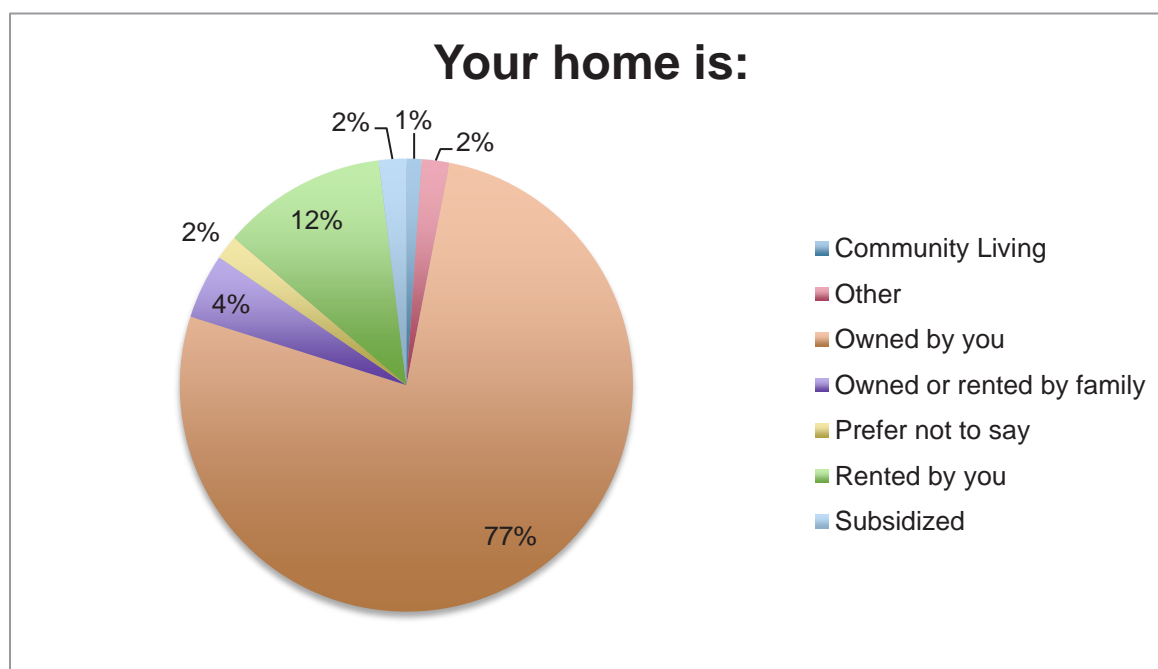
### QUESTION 13

**Which areas of improvement would you benefit from most?**

Percentage of respondents

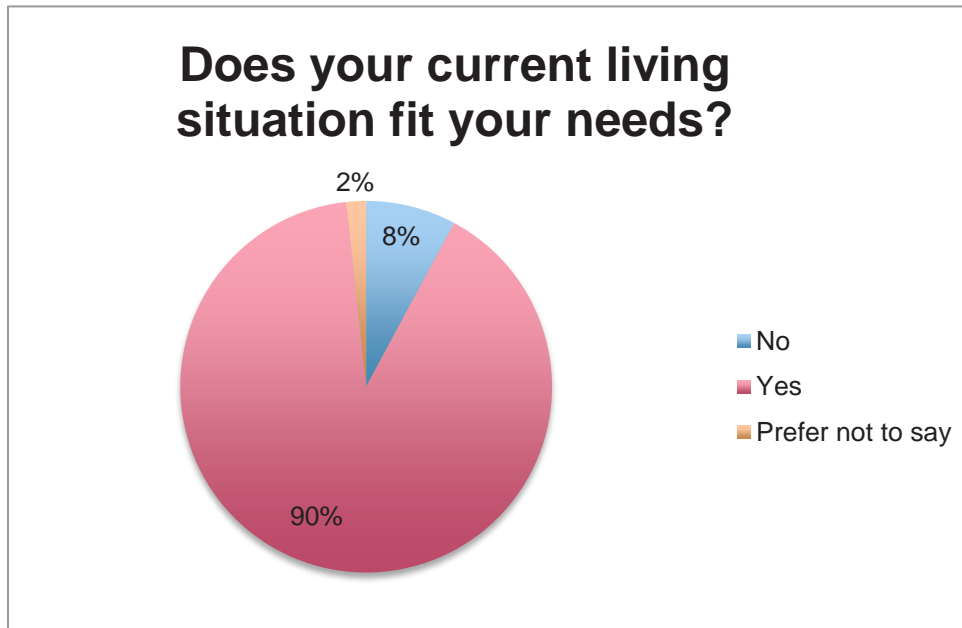
|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Single-family dwelling | 27% |
| Retirement home        | 25% |
| Apartment              | 21% |
| Granny flat            | 13% |
| Other                  | 11% |
| Townhouse              | 9%  |
| Nursing home           | 7%  |
| Mobile home            | 4%  |
| Duplex                 | 2%  |

### QUESTON 14



---

## QUESTION 15



## QUESTION 16

### Are you currently homeless?

|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Yes               | 9    |
| No                | 2185 |
| Prefer not to say | 9    |

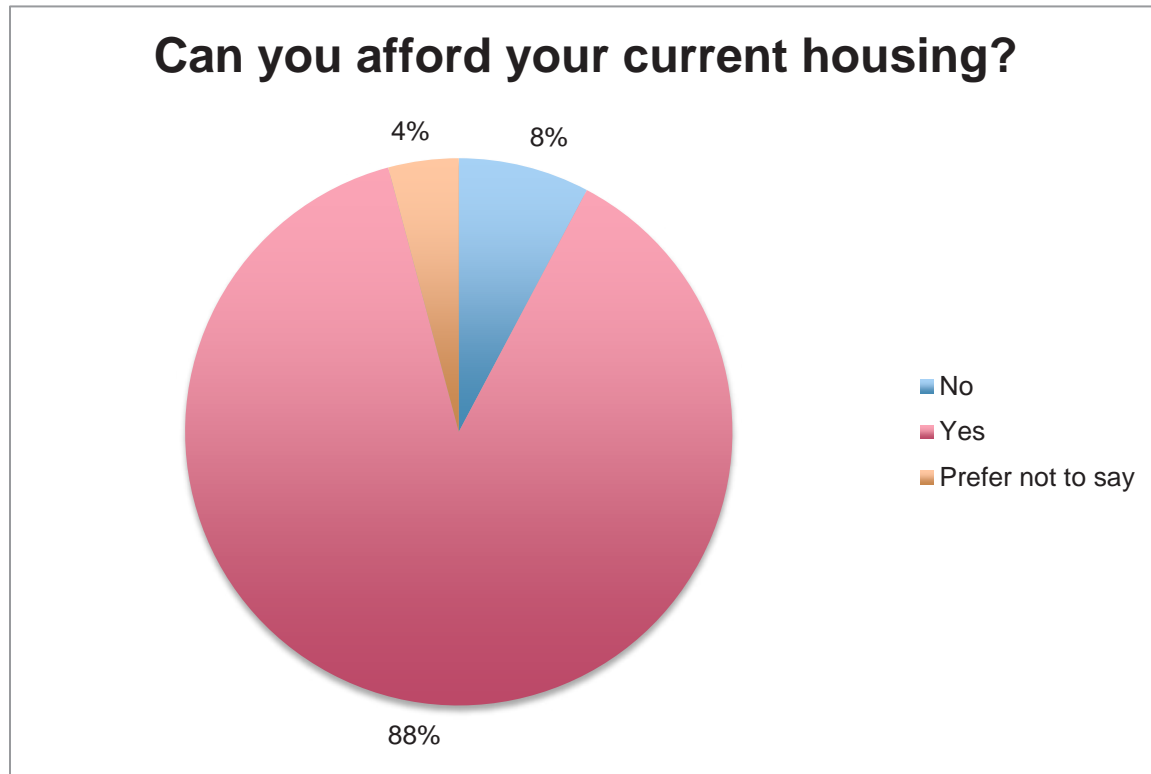
## QUESTION 17

### Have you ever been homeless?

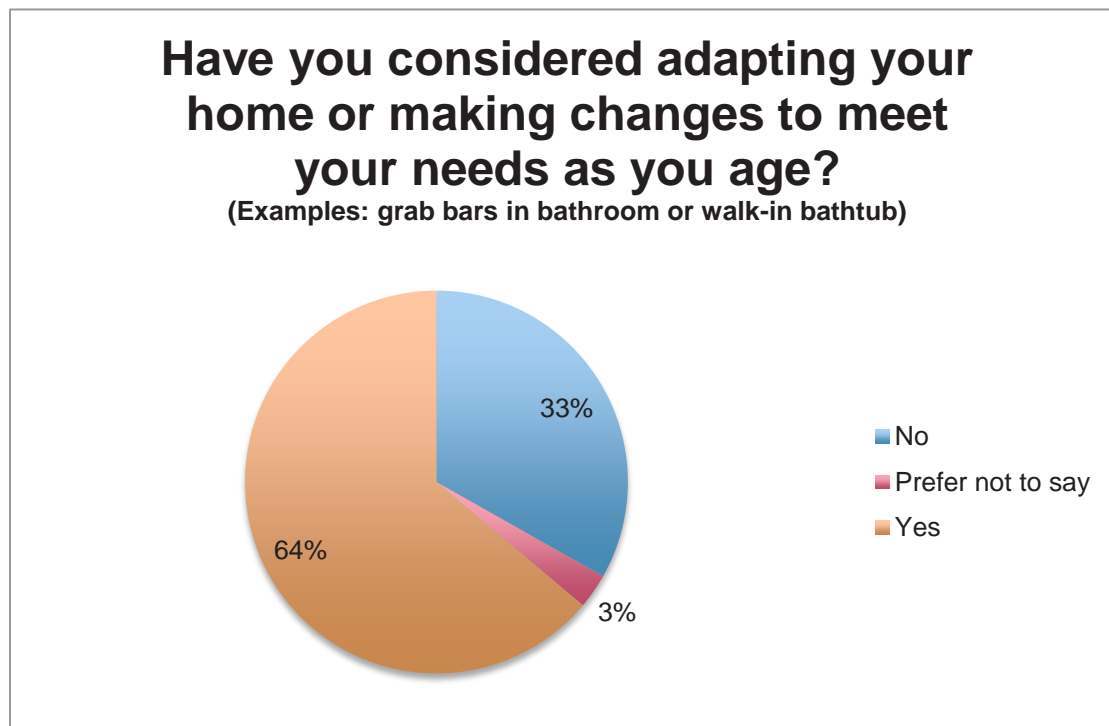
|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Yes               | 66   |
| No                | 2116 |
| Prefer not to say | 12   |

---

## QUESTION 18

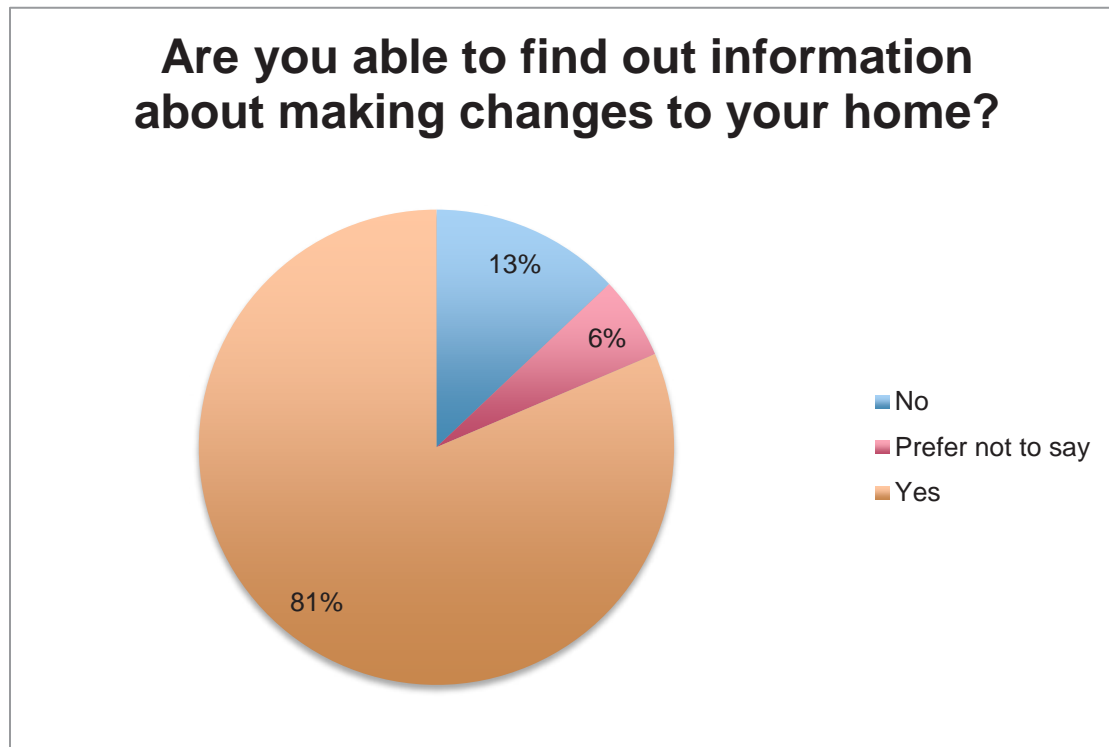


## QUESTION 19



---

## QUESTION 20



## QUESTION 21

**When considering a move, how important are the following factors?**

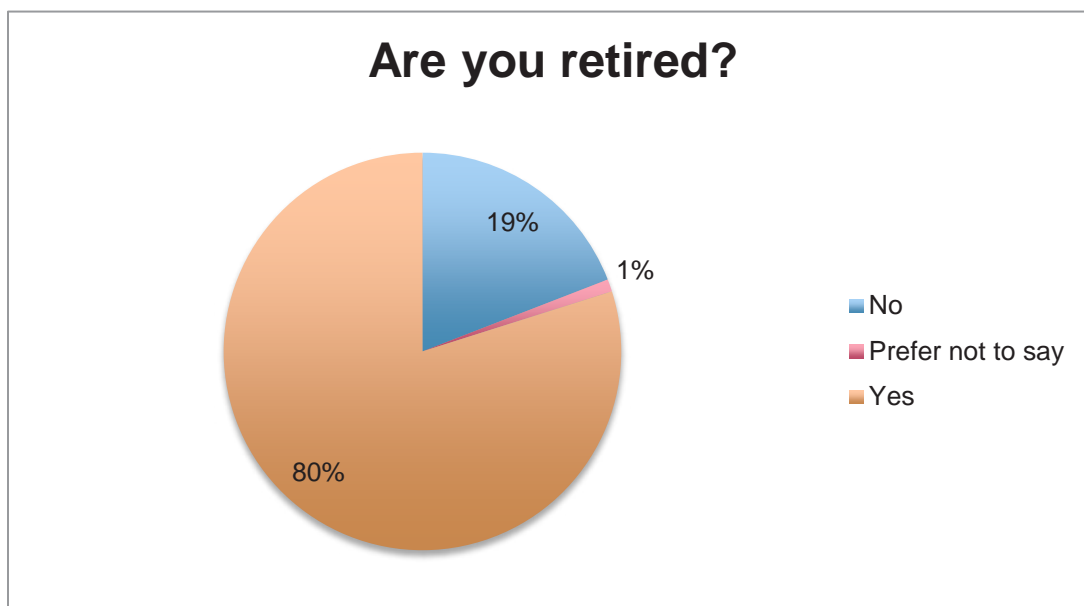
Respondents who answered 'very important' or 'extremely important'

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Be near friends or family                          | 69% |
| Stay in the community I currently live in          | 58% |
| Be near public transit                             | 43% |
| Be near health/medical services                    | 75% |
| Be near social activities                          | 58% |
| Access to shopping (i.e. groceries, retail)        | 75% |
| Ability to remain independent                      | 84% |
| Have a home suitable to meet mobility/living needs | 77% |
| Affordability of housing                           | 75% |
| Ease/convenience of moving                         | 60% |

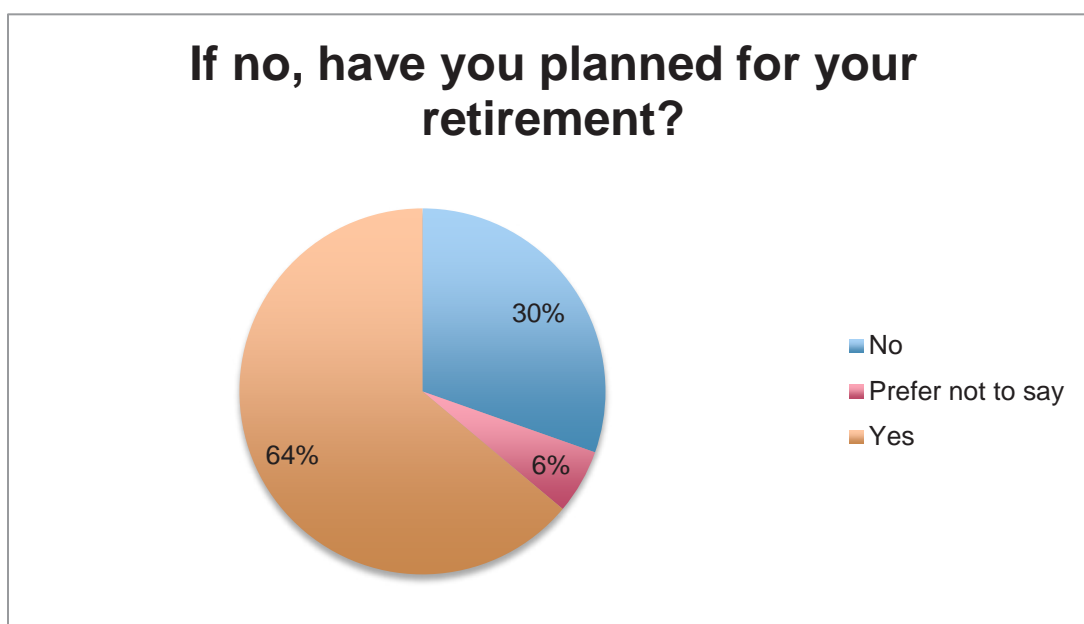
---

## Civic Participation and Employment

### QUESTION 22

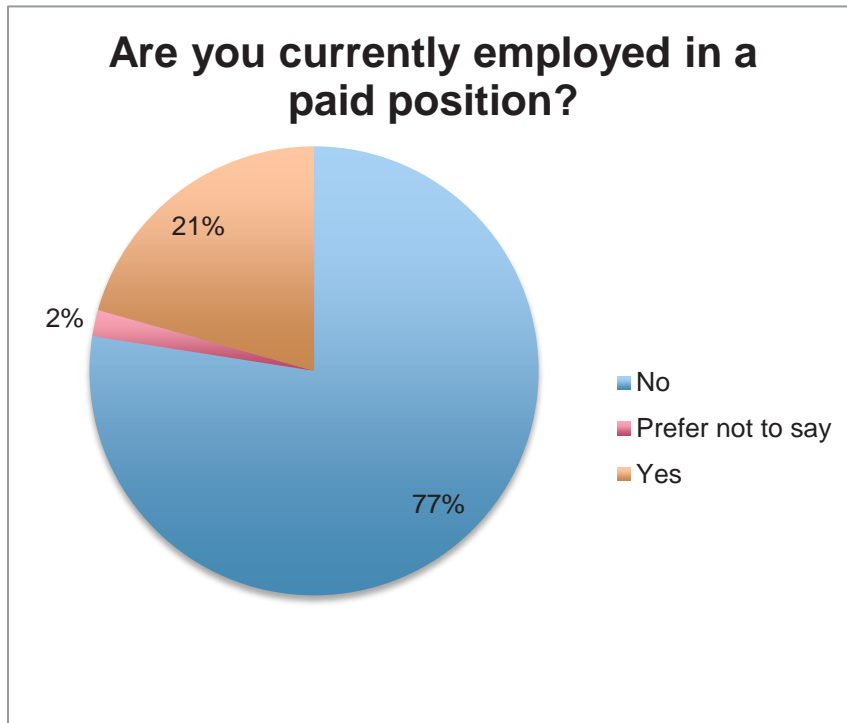


### QUESTION 23

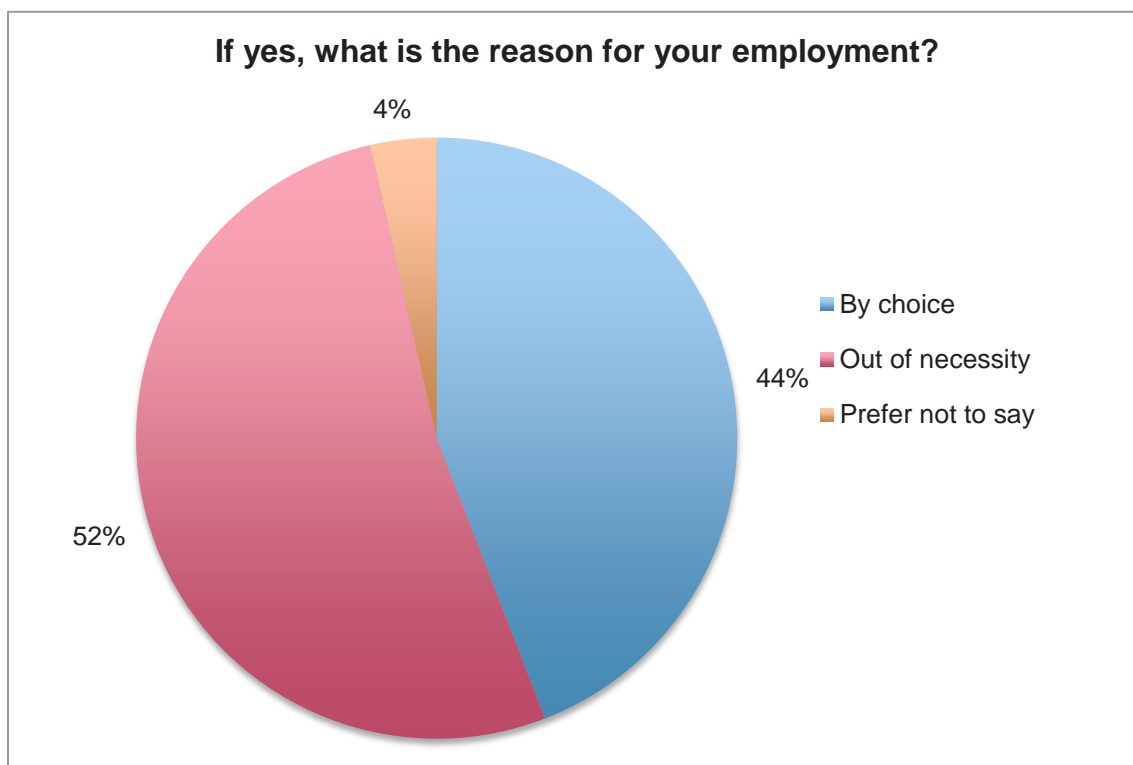


---

## QUESTION 24



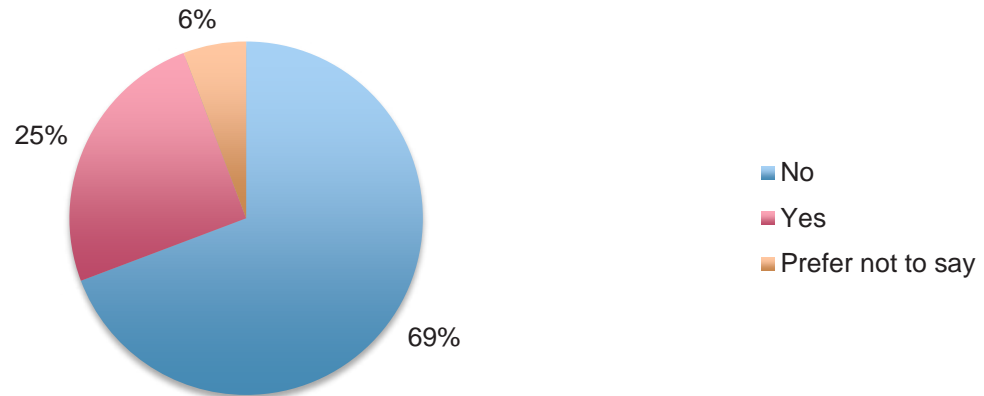
## QUESTION 25



---

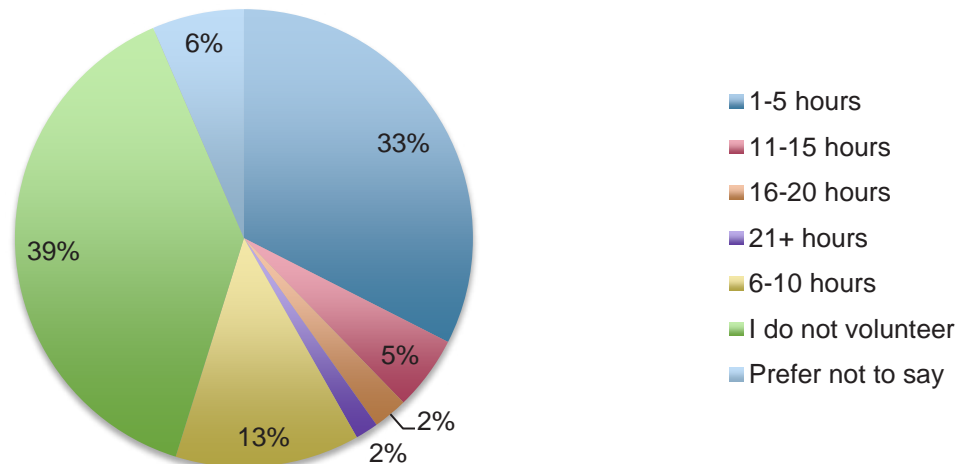
## QUESTION 26

**Are you looking for volunteer opportunities within the community?**



## QUESTION 27

**On average, how many hours a week do you currently spend volunteering?**

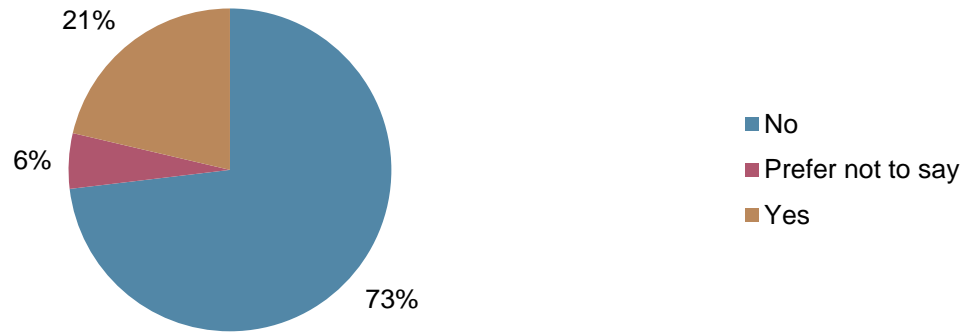




---

QUESTION 28

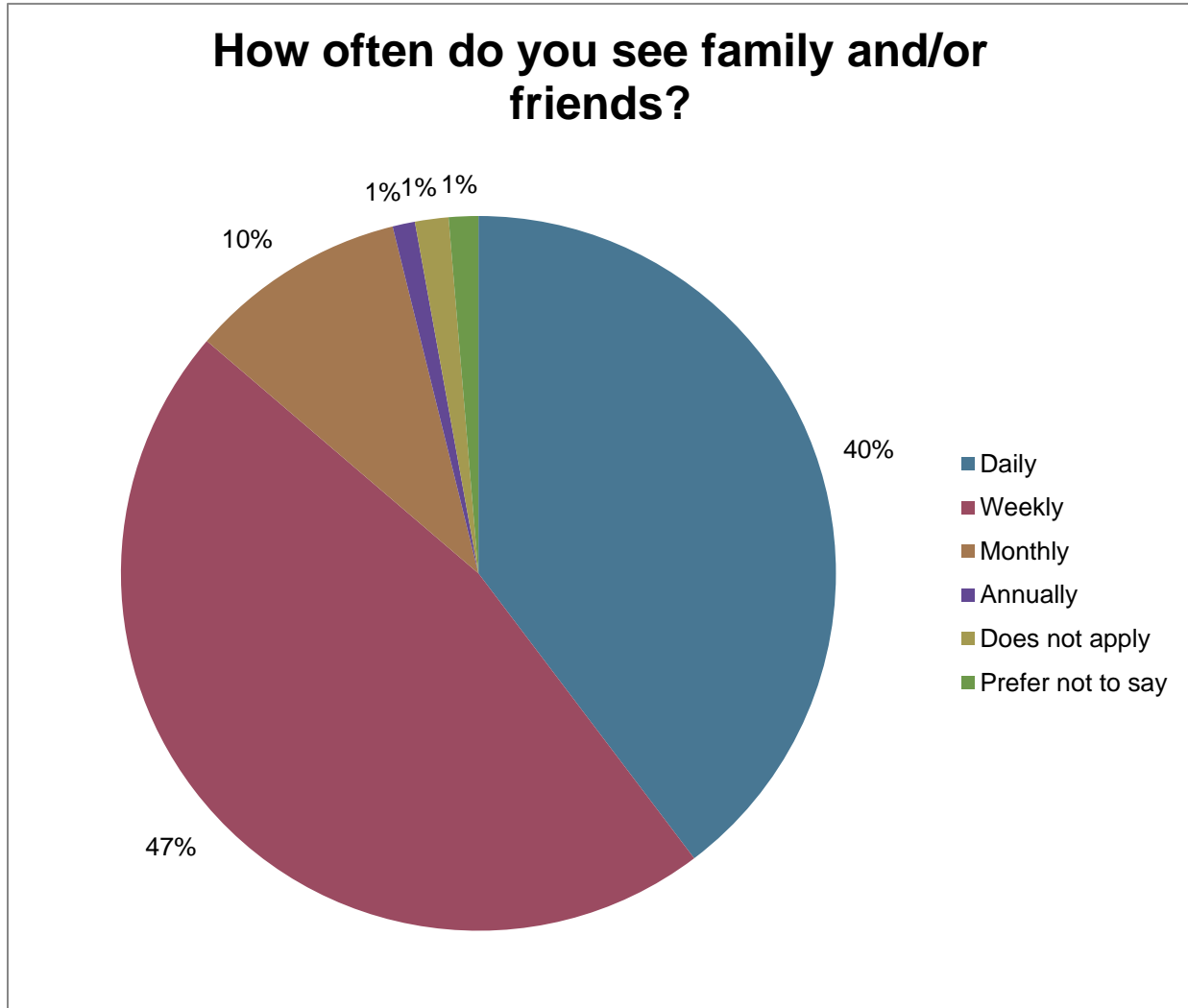
**Are you actively engaged in the community's political process?**



---

## Social Participation

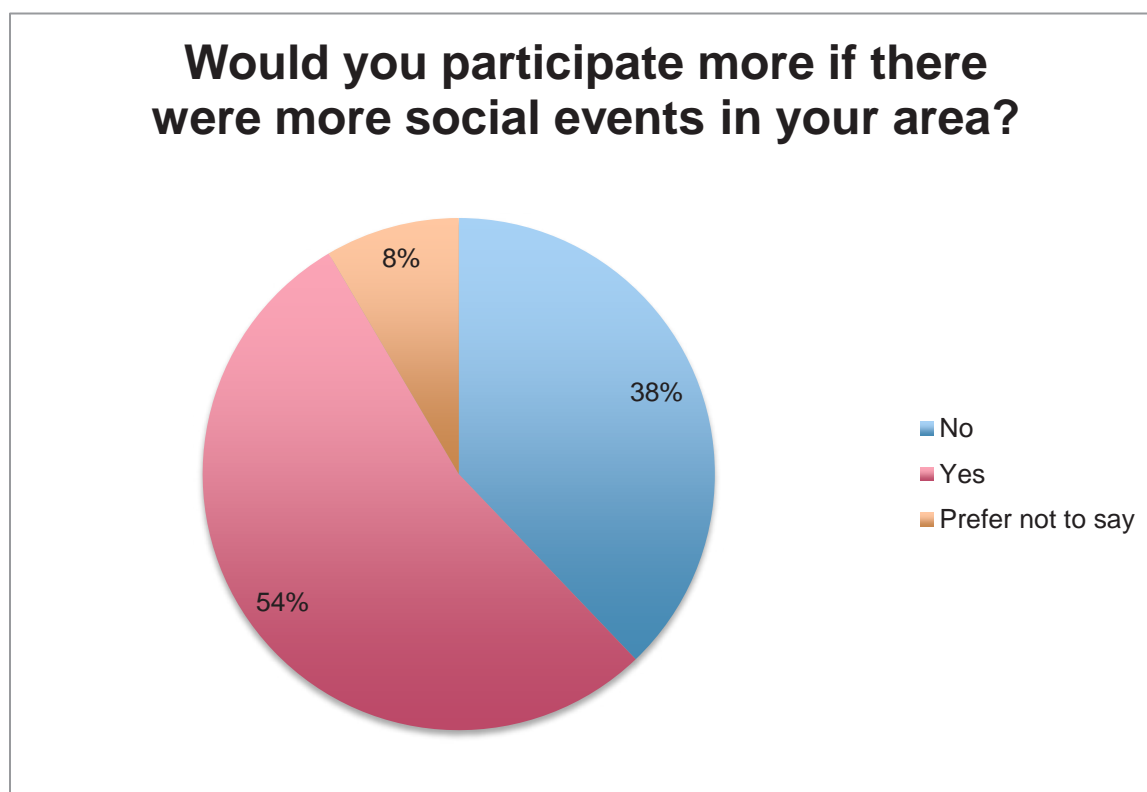
### QUESTION 29



### QUESTION 30

| When you go out, what do you normally do? | Percentage of respondents |
|---|---------------------------|
| Go shopping                               | 80%                       |
| Appointments                              | 75%                       |
| Visit friends/family                      | 68%                       |
| Go to a restaurant                        | 66%                       |
| Do banking                                | 61%                       |
| Go for walks                              | 61%                       |
| Go for short drive                        | 39%                       |
| Attend public events                      | 39%                       |
| Go to the library                         | 36%                       |
| Sports/recreation                         | 35%                       |
| Go to religious/spiritual services        | 29%                       |
| Play cards/bingo                          | 18%                       |
| Take a class                              | 18%                       |
| I don't go out                            | 0.4%                      |
| Prefer not to say                         | 0.3%                      |

### QUESTION 31



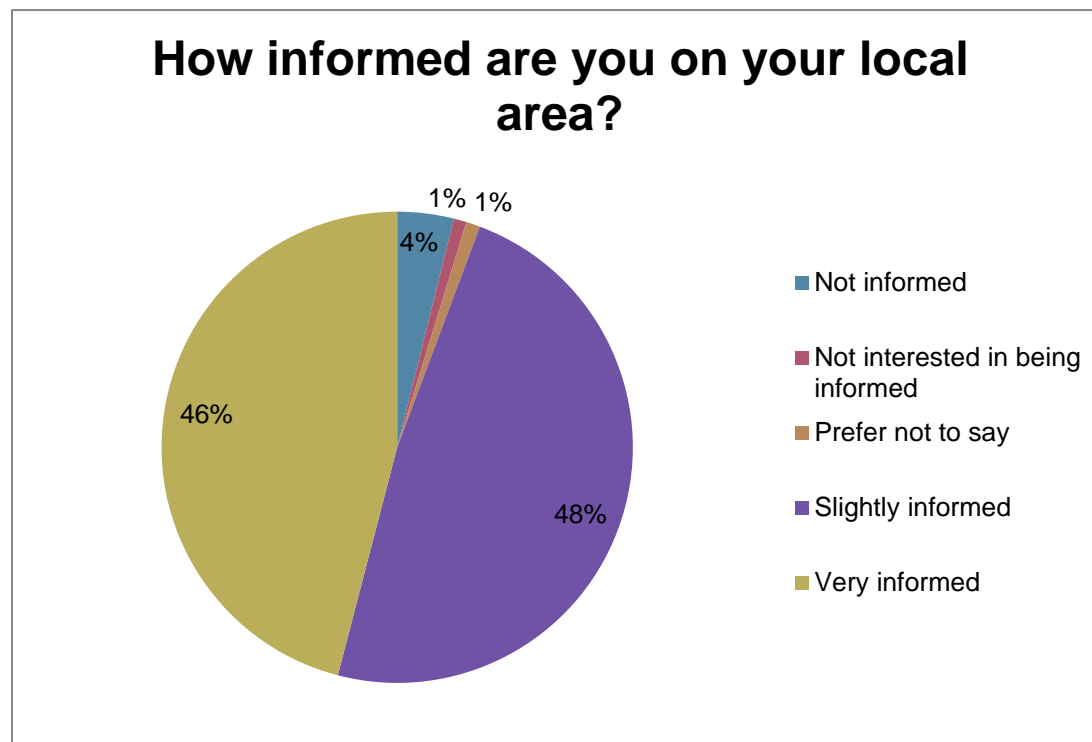
---

## QUESTION 32

| <b>If you would like to socialize more, what prevents you from doing so?</b> | <b>Percentage of respondents</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| I'm happy with level of socializing  | 37%                              |
| Costs  | 21%                              |
| Lack of information about events   | 17%                              |
| Event scheduling   | 14%                              |
| Distance   | 12%                              |
| Lack of opportunities  | 11%                              |
| Health   | 9%                               |
| Mobility issues  | 9%                               |
| Lack of transportation   | 8%                               |
| Other:   | 5%                               |
| Safety concerns  | 3%                               |

## Communication and Information

### QUESTION 33



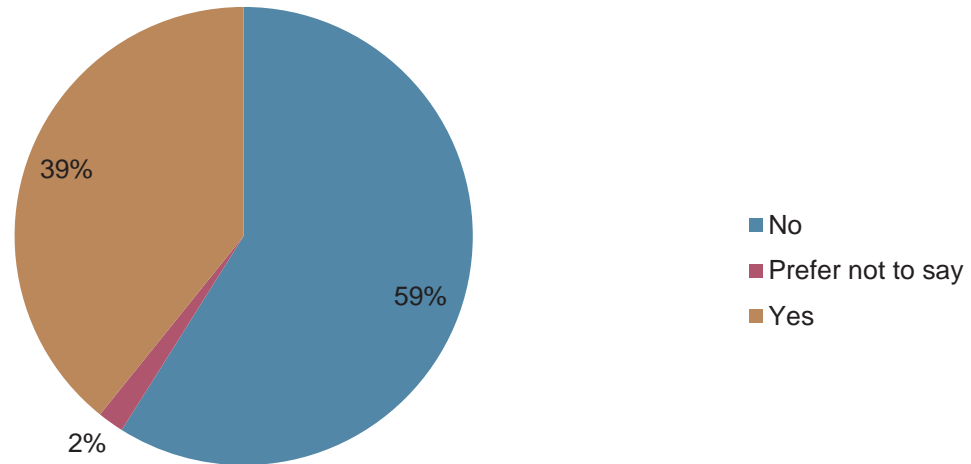
### QUESTION 34

| How do you learn about what is going on in your local area? | Percentage of respondents |
|---|---------------------------|
| Newspaper   | 68%                       |
| Word of mouth   | 67%                       |
| Friends/family  | 58%                       |
| Internet  | 42%                       |
| Television  | 39%                       |
| Radio   | 31%                       |
| Community/bulletin boards                                   | 27%                       |
| Brochures   | 25%                       |
| Social media  | 21%                       |
| Mail  | 20%                       |
| Other   | 3%                        |

---

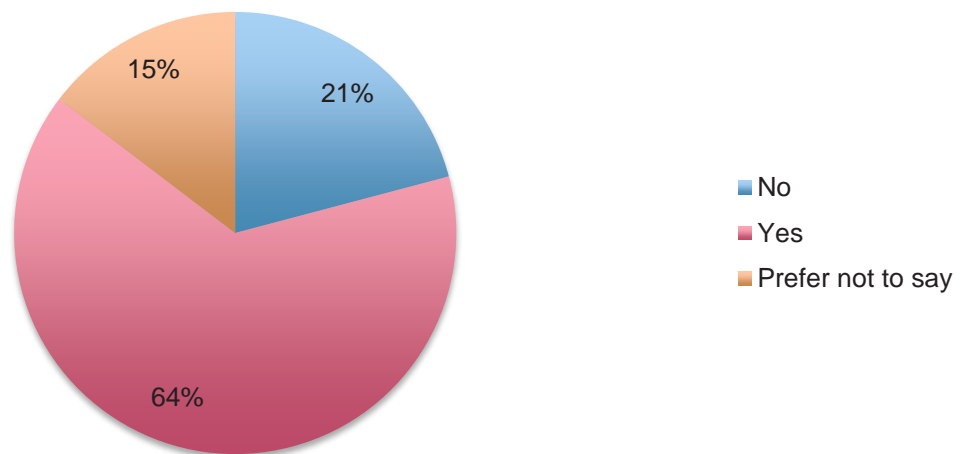
QUESTION 35

**Are you aware dialing 2-1-1 will connect you to finding the right community and social services in your area?**



QUESTION 36

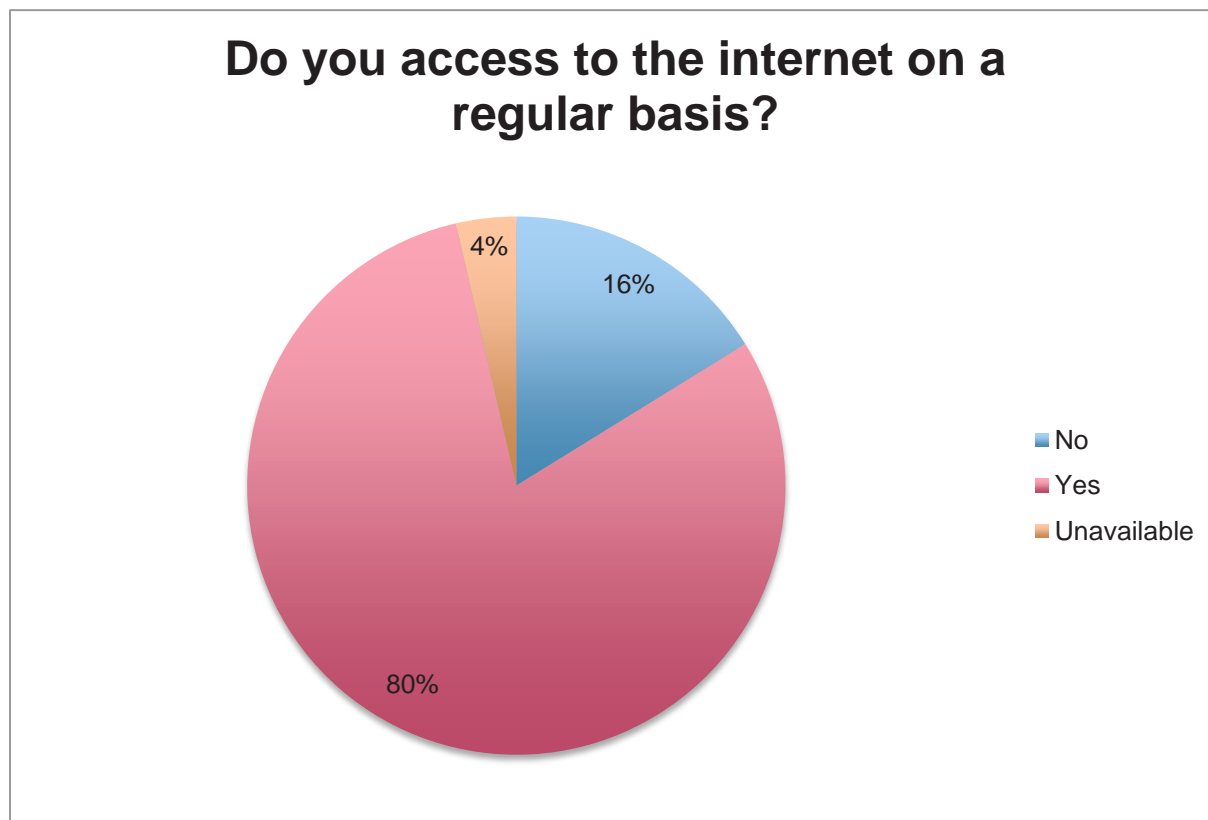
**Would you like to be more informed about your local area?**



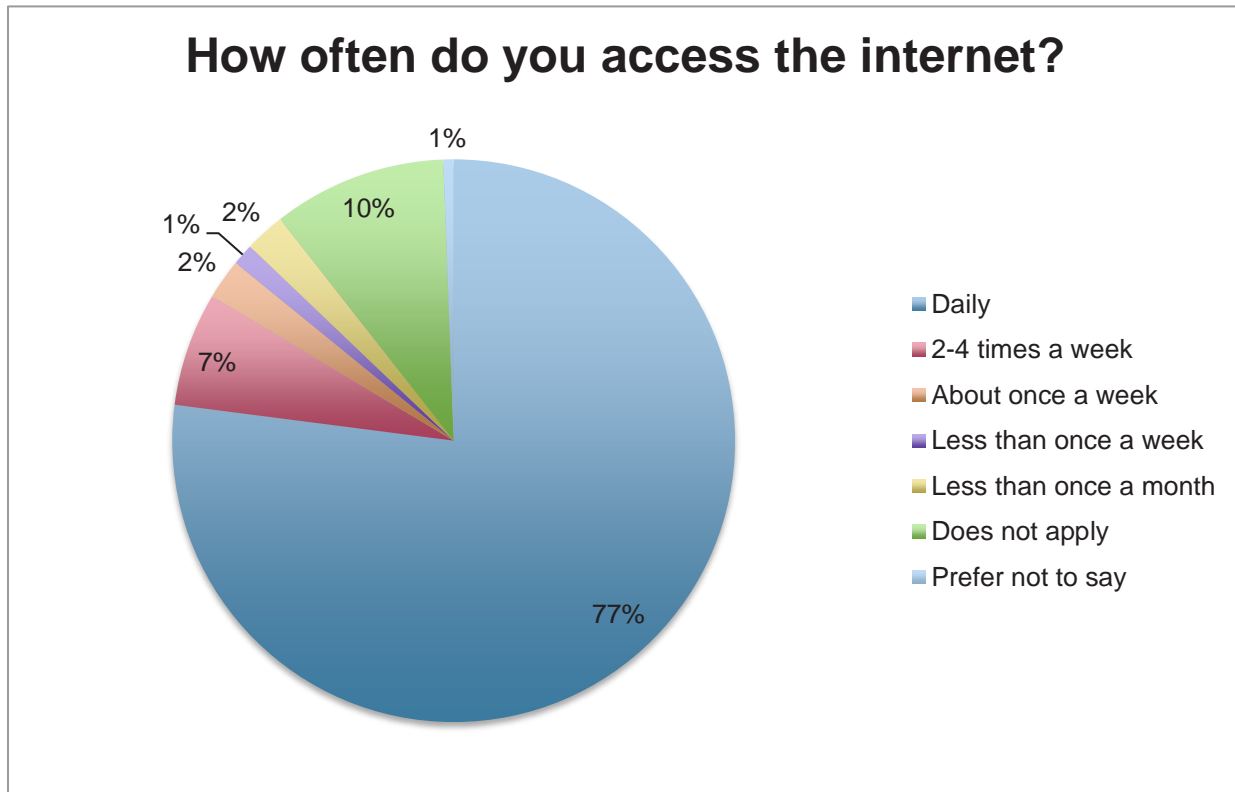
### QUESTION 37

| <b>If yes, how would you like to be informed about the local area?</b> | <b>Percentage of respondents</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Newspaper  | 37%                              |
| Internet   | 30%                              |
| Mail   | 24%                              |
| Brochures  | 20%                              |
| Television   | 20%                              |
| Word of Mouth  | 18%                              |
| Community/bulletin boards  | 18%                              |
| Radio  | 17%                              |
| Friends/family   | 16%                              |
| Social Media   | 14%                              |
| Other  | 2%                               |
| Does not apply   | 1%                               |

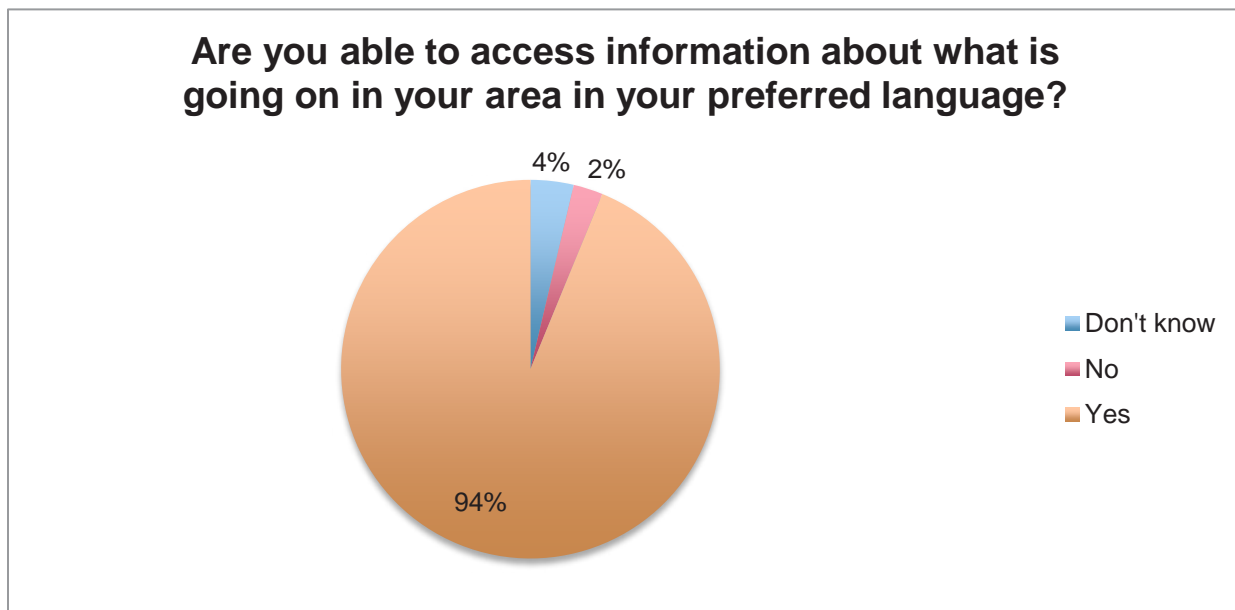
### QUESTION 38



### QUESTION 39



### QUESTION 40



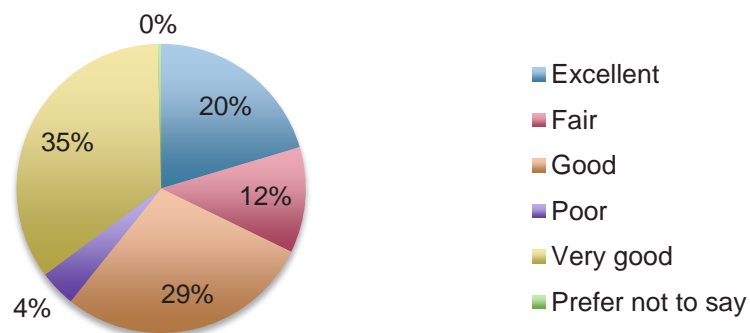


---

## Community and Health Services

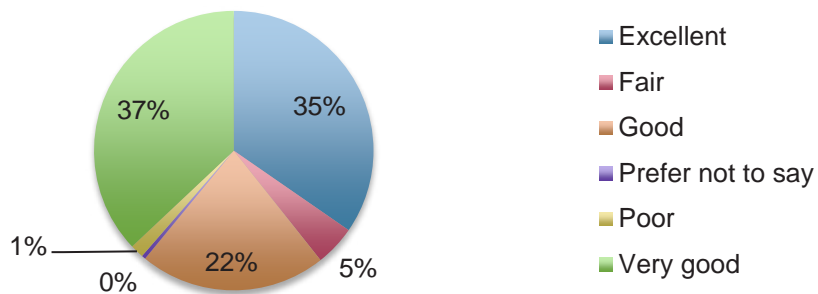
### QUESTION 41

**Compared to people your age, would you say your physical health is**



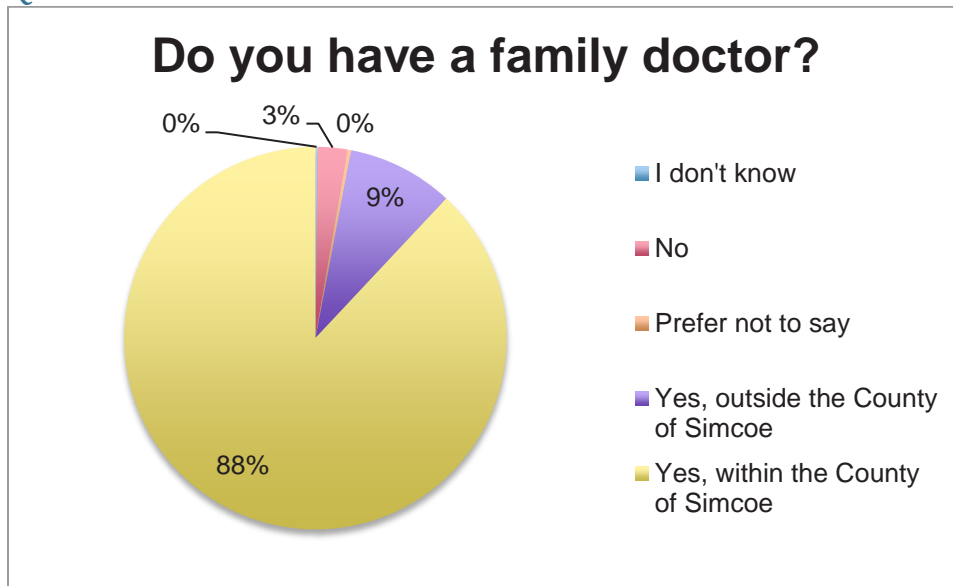
### QUESTION 42

**Compared to people your age, would you say your mental health is**

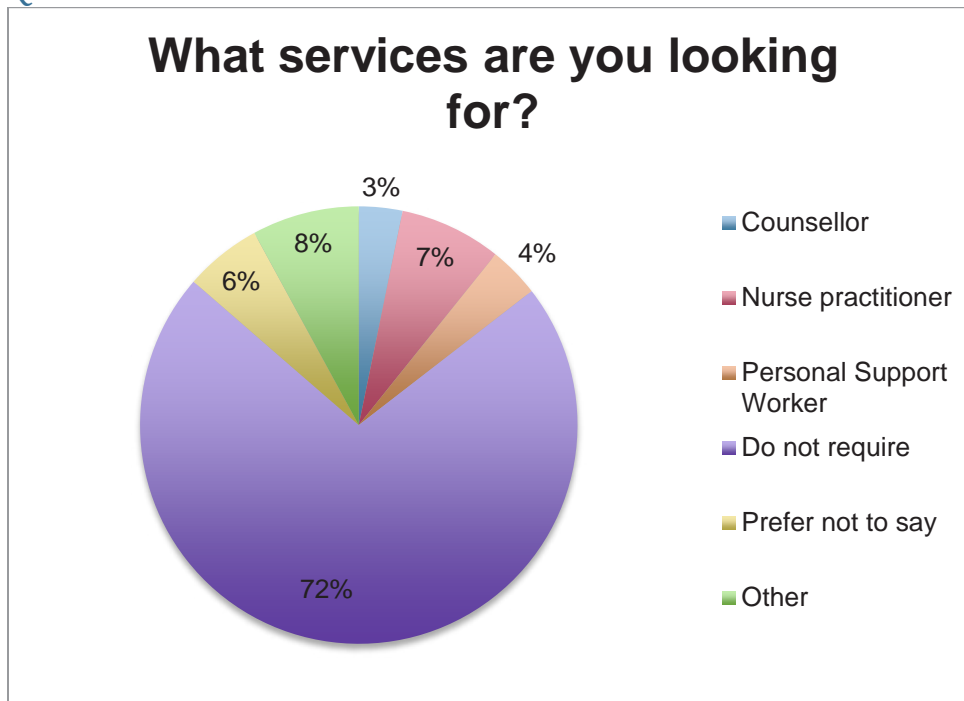


---

#### QUESTION 43



#### QUESTION 44



## QUESTION 45

In the last 12 months have you needed help doing any of the following tasks? Were you able to access the help you needed?

| Task   | Did you need help? |     |                 | If yes, were you able to access the help you needed? |     |                 |
|--|--------------------|-----|-----------------|--|-----|-----------------|
|  | Yes                | No  | Total responses | Yes  | No  | Total responses |
| Filling out forms                            | 13%                | 65% | 1877            | 93%  | 7%  | 270             |
| House cleaning                               | 25%                | 54% | 1897            | 87%  | 13% | 551             |
| Income tax preparation                       | 52%                | 31% | 1994            | 97%  | 3%  | 1127            |
| Yard care                                    | 32%                | 46% | 1874            | 88%  | 12% | 709             |
| Grocery Shopping                             | 11%                | 66% | 1845            | 90%  | 10% | 221             |
| Affording a sufficient amount of food        | 7%                 | 69% | 1819            | 67%  | 33% | 129             |
| Accessing health services                    | 16%                | 61% | 1854            | 84%  | 16% | 341             |
| Accessing social services                    | 8%                 | 66% | 1787            | 71%  | 29% | 163             |
| Personal transportation                      | 15%                | 61% | 1849            | 87%  | 13% | 313             |
| Home repair and maintenance                  | 39%                | 40% | 1902            | 89%  | 11% | 867             |
| Preparing meals                              | 8%                 | 67% | 1812            | 90%  | 10% | 166             |
| Snow removal                                 | 38%                | 42% | 1904            | 91%  | 9%  | 822             |
| Delivery service                             | 9%                 | 66% | 1786            | 90%  | 10% | 174             |
| Pet care                                     | 9%                 | 64% | 1755            | 94%  | 6%  | 193             |
| Garbage removal                              | 13%                | 63% | 1832            | 90%  | 10% | 274             |
| Collecting mail or parcels                   | 7%                 | 69% | 1826            | 91%  | 9%  | 152             |
| Banking                                      | 6%                 | 69% | 1819            | 95%  | 5%  | 129             |
| Taking medication                            | 5%                 | 70% | 1814            | 94%  | 6%  | 103             |
| Picking up medicine from the pharmacy        | 9%                 | 67% | 1833            | 95%  | 5%  | 196             |
| Language interpretation/translation services | 2%                 | 71% | 1758            | 84%  | 16% | 31              |

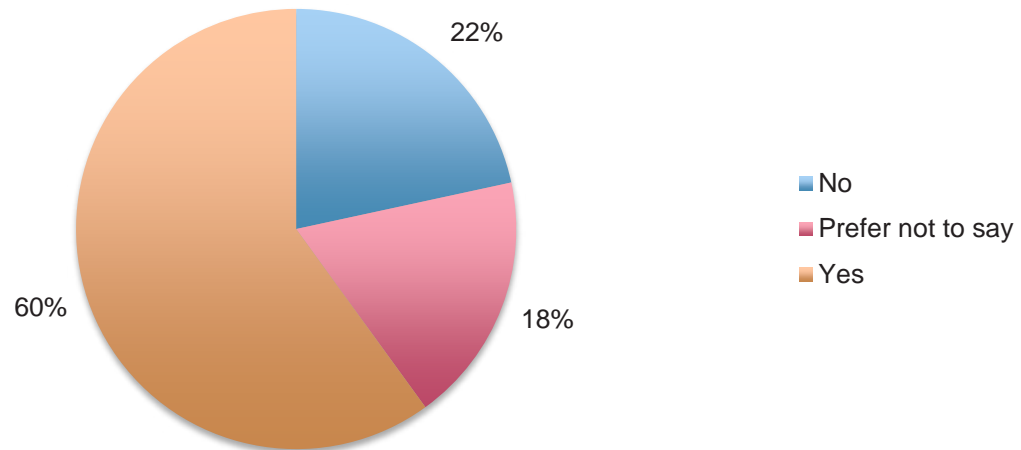
## QUESTION 46

| <b>What services do you think are needed in your area in order for you to maintain your health and independence?</b>                     | <b>Percentage of respondents</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|
| A service that helps aging adults find and access physical health and supportive services  | 40%                              |
| Home repair and maintenance  | 35%                              |
| Health and wellness programs; e.g. nutrition, smoking cessation, weight control, flu shots, educational workshops, and health screenings | 33%                              |
| Aging adult fitness  | 30%                              |
| Yard work  | 29%                              |
| Affordable home care   | 28%                              |
| House cleaning   | 27%                              |
| Transportation to appointments   | 24%                              |
| A service that helps aging adults find and access mental health  | 23%                              |
| Easy to find information on local health and supportive services (dial 2-1-1)  | 22%                              |
| Delivery of goods and services   | 17%                              |
| Home care  | 15%                              |
| Nursing care   | 14%                              |
| Depression   | 14%                              |
| Help making ends meet  | 14%                              |
| Personal care  | 13%                              |
| Help with shopping   | 13%                              |
| Meals on Wheels  | 12%                              |
| Respite care   | 10%                              |
| Visiting   | 9%                               |
| Help with meal preparation   | 9%                               |
| Grief and bereavement  | 9%                               |
| Incontinence support   | 7%                               |
| Prefer not to say  | 6%                               |
| Alcohol and substance use  | 5%                               |
| Language and interpretation services   | 3%                               |
| Gambling addiction services  | 3%                               |

---

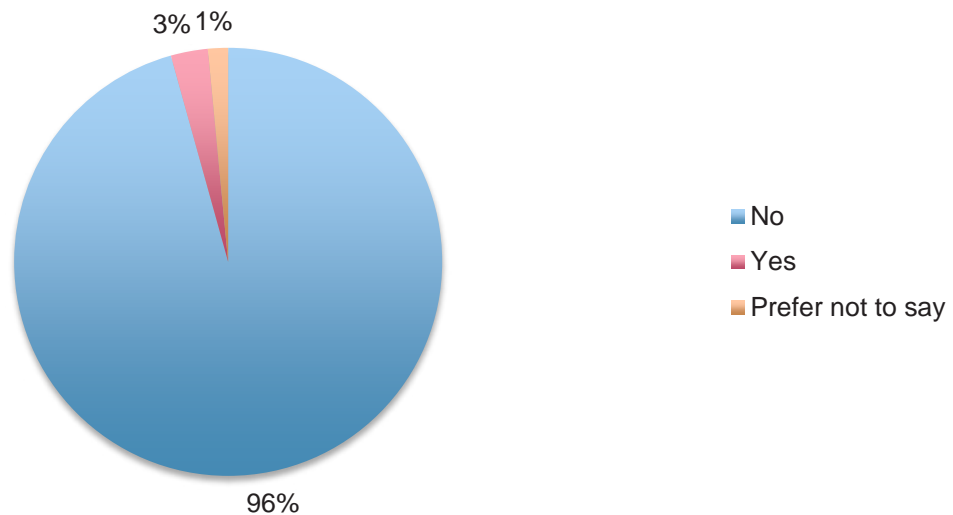
#### QUESTION 47

**Would you be willing to pay for or contribute for these services?**



#### QUESTION 48

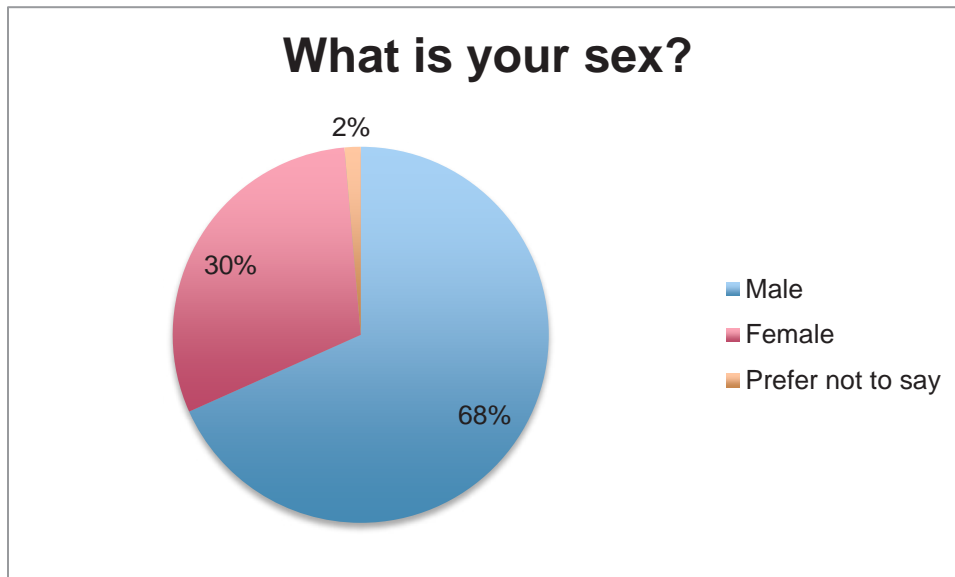
**Are you a grandparent taking care of children or have been assigned custody?**



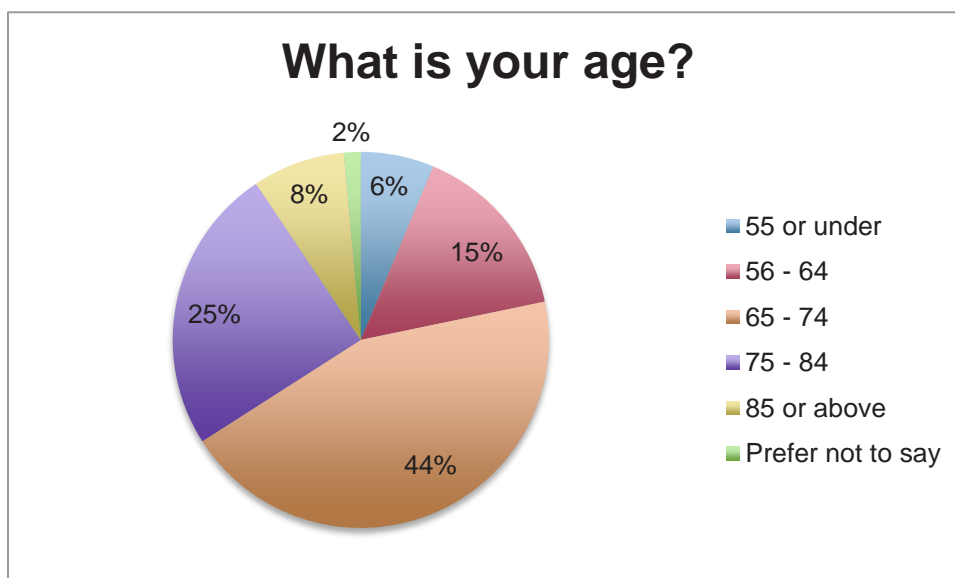
---

## Personal Information

### QUESTION 49



### QUESTION 50



---

## QUESTION 51

### Where do you live in the County of Simcoe?

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Christian Island - Beausoleil     | 5   |
| City of Barrie                    | 283 |
| City of Orillia                   | 167 |
| Mnjikaning First Nation           | 4   |
| Prefer not to say                 | 29  |
| Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury | 42  |
| Town of Collingwood               | 238 |
| Town of Innisfil                  | 226 |
| Town of Midland                   | 157 |
| Town of New Tecumseth             | 139 |
| Town of Penetanguishene           | 128 |
| Town of Wasaga Beach              | 72  |
| Township of Adjala-Tosorontio     | 23  |
| Township of Clearview             | 68  |
| Township of Essa                  | 42  |
| Township of Oro-Medonte           | 165 |
| Township of Ramara                | 104 |
| Township of Severn                | 34  |
| Township of Springwater           | 67  |
| Township of Tay                   | 67  |
| Township of Tiny                  | 95  |

## QUESTION 52

### What is your postal code?

*(Responses omitted from this document)*

---

## QUESTION 53

### How would you describe yourself?

|   | Number | per cent |
|---|--------|----------|
| Caucasian or European                         | 1899   | 78.89%   |
| African, Caribbean, or Black community member | 5      | 0.21%    |
| Hispanic or Latino                            | 7      | 0.29%    |
| Middle Eastern                                | 2      | 0.08%    |
| Recent Immigrant/ Refugee                     | 1      | 0.04%    |
| South Asian                                   | 2      | 0.08%    |
| Asian or Pacific Islander                     | 5      | 0.21%    |
| First Nations, Inuit, or Métis                | 75     | 3.12%    |
| Other   | 104    | 4.32%    |
| Prefer not to say                             | 47     | 1.95%    |

## QUESTION 54

### WHAT IS YOUR MARITAL STATUS?

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Divorced                        | 211  |
| Married or domestic partnership | 1267 |
| Prefer not to say               | 39   |
| Separated                       | 59   |
| Single, never married           | 117  |
| Widowed                         | 438  |



---

## QUESTION 55

### What is the highest level of education you have completed?

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Bachelor's degree              | 301 |
| College diploma                | 458 |
| Elementary school (Grade 6)    | 37  |
| High school diploma (or equal) | 436 |
| No schooling completed         | 9   |
| Post-graduate degree           | 235 |
| Prefer not to say              | 69  |
| Some high school, no diploma   | 213 |
| Some university, no degree     | 225 |
| Trade/technical school         | 129 |

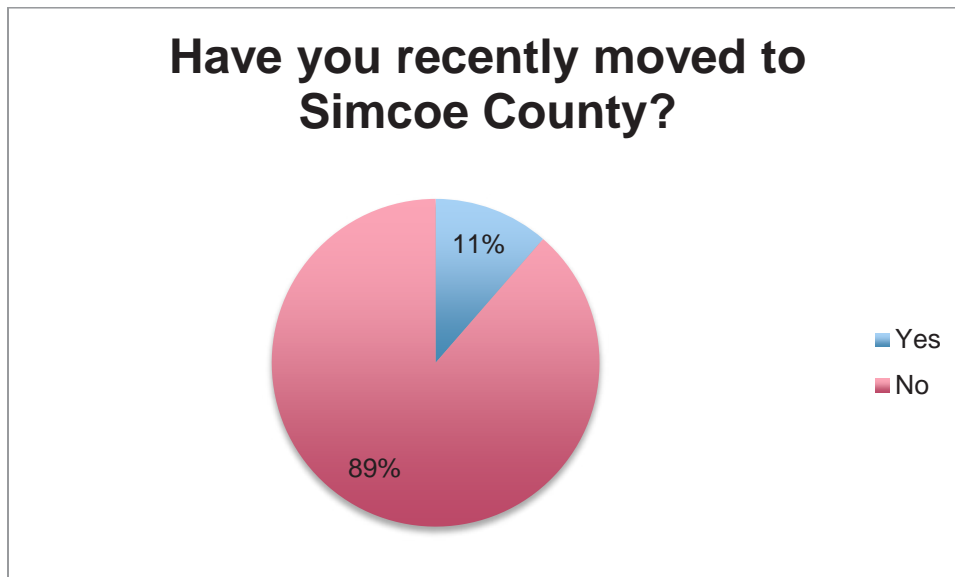
## QUESTION 56

### What is your current total annual household/family income?

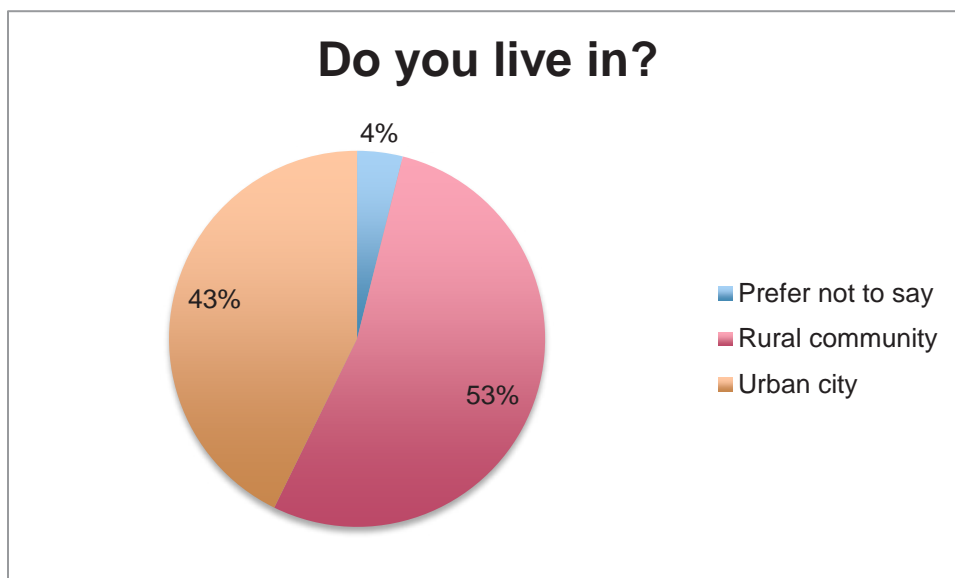
|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Less than \$10,000  | 29  |
| \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 178 |
| \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 209 |
| \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 184 |
| \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 167 |
| \$50,000 - \$59,999 | 153 |
| \$60,000 - \$69,999 | 133 |
| \$70,000 - \$79,999 | 109 |
| \$80,000 - \$89,999 | 62  |
| \$90,000 - \$99,999 | 59  |
| \$100,000 +         | 154 |
| Prefer not to say   | 652 |

---

## QUESTION 57



## QUESTION 58



---

## Appendix E: Key Informant Interview Guide

Overarching goals of Key Informant interviews

- Add qualitative insight into some issues in the community
- Prioritize what the main issues in the community are as a service provider/older adult
- Provide insight into next steps, and further areas to research

Hello \_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ working with Simcoe County on the Age-Friendly study. Firstly, I want to thank you so much for agreeing to chat with me today, I know you must be very busy, and I appreciate you taking the time.

If it's alright with you I'll give you a bit of a background on this project before I get into asking you some questions, does that sound alright?

As you probably know, the population of older adults has already increased in the past few years, and will continue to increase in the upcoming years. The County is doing research in the community to find out what the priorities, concerns and gaps for older adults are. The findings that we gather from the community will be analyzed by the research team, and will be summarized into a Framework for the community.

Everything you say will be kept confidential, when we report on findings from these interviews we do so in summaries and leave out any identifying information. If there is anything you would like to tell me off the record to help me better understand your perspective please let me know, and I would ask you to trust that I will not record or include those statements in any way.

---

## General

1. What aspects of your community do you think are very supportive of seniors currently? (What do you think are some of the good things about your area that support seniors?)
2. What do you think are some major things in your community that are barriers to seniors or affect older adults negatively?
3. What do you think is the greatest benefit seniors contribute to the community, or could contribute to the community in an ideal world?

## Outdoor spaces/accessibility

4. Are outdoor and green spaces generally accessible to older adults?
  - a. If yes, what makes them accessible? (Prompt for proximity, number of stairs, existence of railings, plenty of benches etc.)
  - b. If no, what could be done to make them accessible? What are the issues seniors face in accessing these spaces?
5. Are buildings in the community generally accessible to older adults?
  - a. Is there a type of building that is not accessible? (Prompt for Public vs. private, entertainment venues vs. places of business etc.)
  - b. What makes the buildings inaccessible?

## Social participation

6. What kind of social activities exist for older adults in the community? (Prompt for physical activity)
7. Are there opportunities for social participation that seniors don't have that maybe they should have, or you would like to see?

- 
8. What does it take to start a social group or how do they get started?

### **Respect and social inclusion**

9. Do you think that seniors/older adults are respected and recognized in the community as valuable?

How could respect for seniors increase in the community?

10. What kind of opportunities exist for older adults to connect and socialize with people of different age brackets? (i.e. children, youth, adults, middle-aged)
11. Who in the seniors population do you think is excluded from community life? How do you think those people could be included into community life?

### **Communication and Information**

12. How do older adults get information in the community? And which are the best ways you've found?
- a. If word of mouth – probe a little bit, how? Who spreads the word?
13. What are some barriers that older adults face in accessing information in the community?
14. Do older adults in the community miss out on community events, employment opportunities, etc. because the information is shared in a way that is not accessible to them?

### **Civic engagement and employment**

15. What are some of the barriers seniors face in getting employment or volunteer positions?
16. What are some of the current employment or volunteer opportunities seniors have in the community?
17. With respect to the political process, are seniors able to participate to the same degree as others?

---

## **Housing**

18. What are some of the issues seniors face in regards to housing in the community?
19. What are some of the current housing options or opportunities to overcoming those barriers?

## **Transportation**

20. What are the biggest transportation issues in the community? (Prompt for public transportation, retaining drivers' licenses etc.)
21. What are some opportunities for overcoming transportation barriers?

## **Health and social services**

22. What are some of the main issues or gaps with local service agencies?
23. What are some ways to overcome those issues?

## **Final**

24. If you spoke to elected officials about age-friendly strategies, what would you say was most urgent or important?

---

## Appendix F: Focus Group Script

### Opening

Thank you all for coming in to speak with us today. Before we get into the questions I wanted to take this opportunity to give you a bit of background information about the project. We're researching the age-friendliness of Simcoe County. What we mean by age-friendly is that important aspects of community life are accessible and inclusive of people as they age. This includes issues like housing, employment, transportation, health services and more.

We work for an organization called Public Interest. The County of Simcoe received funding from the government and are excited about their work to create age-friendly communities. We are here to conduct research about issues and barriers that older adults might face in the region. We are organizing sessions like these all across Simcoe County to hear about your experiences. We are also reaching out to community agencies, caregivers, and businesses to get a sense how they experience age-friendliness and what might create an age-friendly community.

During our discussion, you may be asked questions that relate to situations or experiences that may have been stressful for you. Please feel free to decline to answer a question or elaborate on something you've said if you are not comfortable doing so. If at any point you feel you need to leave the room or take a break, please feel free to do so. One of us can accompany you if you would prefer, and help you find someone to talk to if that is what you need.

I also want to assure you that everything said here will be kept confidential. No one will be mentioned by name in the notes or in the final report. Focus group participants will be referred to in general terms, as "participant," or as a group. No personally identifiable information will be included in the report. I also ask that out of respect for each other's privacy, that nothing said here today leaves this room.

---

We are taking notes and recording the audio of the discussion to make sure that we are capturing your thoughts and discussions accurately; however, these notes will only be viewed by the research team, which includes Public Interest staff and a small group of County of Simcoe staff. These files will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

The discussion today will take about 2 hours. For the sake of time, I may interrupt you or ask you to wrap up so that everyone has the opportunity to speak. And in order to hear all perspectives, I may ask people who haven't spoken to offer their ideas.

Before we start, I'd like to take some time to establish some ground rules. It is important to keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions we'll be asking today. Everyone's experiences and opinions will be different, and all those experiences and opinions are valuable to our research. So, it's important that we have the opportunity to hear from everyone here today.

I ask that everyone be respectful of other opinions and experiences, and allow each other to speak. I may ask if you would like the opportunity to speak if you haven't done so already, and I may skip over you if you have spoken often, but there are others who want to speak.

Does this sound okay to everyone? Did I miss anything?

Ok, let's get started!

---

## **Go-around**

Please introduce yourself, how long you've lived in the community, and name one reason why Simcoe County is a good place to live for older adults.

List of participants and responses:

## **Questions**

---

### **Outdoor spaces/buildings and accessibility**

25. Are outdoor and green spaces generally accessible to older adults?
  - a. If yes, what makes them accessible? (Prompt for proximity, number of stairs, existence of railings, plenty of benches etc.)



- 
- b. If no, what could be done to make them accessible?  
What are the issues seniors face in accessing these spaces?
26. Are buildings in the community generally accessible to older adults?
- a. What makes the buildings inaccessible?
- 

### **Social participation**

---

27. What kind of social activities exist for older adults in the community? (Prompt for physical activity)
28. Are there opportunities for social participation that seniors don't have that maybe they should have, or you would like to see?
- 

### **Respect and social inclusion**

---

29. Do you think that older adults are respected and recognized in the community as valuable?
- a. How could respect for seniors increase in the community?
30. Are there any opportunities for older adults to socialize with younger people (children, youth, etc.)?
31. Who in the seniors population do you think is excluded from community life?
- a. Prompt for people with mental health
  - b. Abuse and neglect
  - c. Prompt for people living below the poverty line
  - d. How do you think those people could be included into community life?

---

## **Communication and Information**

---

- 32. How do you get information in the community? And which are the best ways you've found?
- 33. What are some barriers that older adults face in accessing information in the community?

---

## **Civic engagement and employment**

---

- 34. Where do seniors in the community work?
  - a. Where do they volunteer? What are some of the barriers seniors face in getting employment or volunteer positions?
- 35. Do older adults face barriers or discrimination when seeking work?
  - a. If so, what are they?
- 36. Older adults were named as a huge asset to volunteering in the community (informal or formal), what are some ways we can better support volunteers who are older adults?
  - a. What's your experience with volunteer burnout?

---

## **Housing**

---

- 37. What are some of the issues seniors face in regards to housing in the community?
  - a. Are there enough housing options for people as they age?
- 38. What types of accessible housing do people have? (In their home or otherwise)
  - a. Prompt for affordability
  - b. Prompt for accessible for people with disabilities, and changes to the home/universal designs (designs that make homes accessible to people with disabilities.

---

## Transportation

---

- 39. How do people get around in your community?
- 40. What are the biggest transportation issues in the community? (*Prompt for public transportation, retaining drivers' licenses etc.*)

---

## Health and Social Services

---

- 41. What are some of the main issues with local service agencies, health or otherwise?
  - a. Does this differ between profit and not-for profit services?
- 42. What are some gaps in social services? Are there some programming that you wish there would be more of?
- 43. What are some safety and security issues that older adults face in the community?
  - a. What are some ways that you have come up with ensuring your own safety?

---

## Final

---

Are there any barriers or issues that older adults face that I did not ask about today?

- 44. If you spoke to elected officials about age-friendly strategies, what would you say was most urgent or important? (*This one should be answered by everyone in attendance in a go-around*)

---

## Appendix G: Focus Group Consent Form

### **AGE-FRIENDLY STUDY FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM**

#### **AGE-FRIENDLINESS IN SIMCOE COUNTY**

Age-friendliness includes all aspects of life for older adults as they age in their communities. This means understanding how aspects of life such as housing, employment, and social participation are inclusive and accessible to older adults. We have organized this focus group to talk about your experience of age-friendliness in your community.

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, this will not have any impact on programs and services you receive now or in the future from any organization. The focus group will be facilitated by staff from Public Interest: a facilitator and a note-taker. The focus group will last approximately 2 hours. The focus group will be recorded so that Public Interest and the County of Simcoe research team can review the discussion after its completion. We will also be taking detailed notes during the discussion to help us capture accurate information.

#### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

We do not expect that there will be any risks to you as a result of participating in this project. If you become uncomfortable answering the focus group discussions, you may choose not to answer any of the questions. You may also choose to leave the focus group at any time. The objective of the project is better understand the strengths and gaps of age-friendliness in Simcoe County.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The project materials (including notes from the focus group discussions and audio files of the discussions) will be kept confidential. All computer files will be kept on a secure network and will be password protected. Only members of the research team at Public Interest and the County of Simcoe will have access to these materials. The public will be provided with written summaries of the research with no personal identifiable information of anyone involved. We are asking that you respect the confidentiality of the other participants and refrain from discussing what was said during today's focus group.

---

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information above and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the focus group. Your signature also indicates that you agree to voluntarily participate in the focus group, and understand that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. I agree to participate in this Focus Group.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

Any Personal information being collected is pursuant to Section 28 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used only for the purpose outlined above. Questions regarding the collection of this information may be directed to the contact person outlined above.

---

## Appendix H: Outreach List

Throughout the engagement, participants were recruited by outreach to community organizations and agencies, as well as through the local networks of the Steering Committee. To ensure frank dialogue and an environment of trust, participants in the survey, key informant interviews, and focus groups were advised that their contributions would be anonymous and comments would not be attributable to any individual in the reporting.

The following, therefore is a list of organizations and agencies through which outreach was conducted or attempted for various components of the engagement, and is not necessarily exhaustive.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 50+ Social Club - Barrie                        | Bradford House, LOFT                                    |
| Aboriginal Long Term Care Program               | Bradford Immigrant and Community Services               |
| Active Leisure Lifestyles - Recreation Therapy  | Bradford Immigrant Community Services                   |
| Alternate Day Program                           | Brain Injury Services Muskoka Simcoe                    |
| B'saanibimaadsiwin Native Mental Health Service | Breannes for Seniors                                    |
| Barrie and District Raging Grannies             | Camphill Communities ON                                 |
| Barrie Lion's Club                              | Champlain Seniors Service Club                          |
| Barrie Native Friendship Centre                 | CHATS - Community & Home Assistance to Seniors          |
| Barrie Out of the Cold                          | Chippewas of Rama First Nation                          |
| Barrie Seniors Get Together Club                | Coleman Care Centre                                     |
| Bay Haven Senior Care Community                 | Collier St United Church                                |
| Bayshore Senior Citizens Association            | Collingwood Leisure Time Church                         |
| Baysville Autumn Leaves Seniors                 | Collingwood Nursing Home                                |
| Beausoleil First Nation                         | Collingwood Salvation Army                              |
| Bob Rumball Home for the Deaf                   | Community Connection - Home for Life South Georgian Bay |
| Bocce Ball and Shuffle Board                    | Community Living Huntsville                             |
| Bradford Campus - Learning Centres              |   |

---

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Covenant Christian Community Church. Penetanguishene. | IOOF Seniors Home   |
| Creedan Valley Care Community                         | Kiwanis Club Barrie   |
| Elmvale Adult Day Program                             | Kiwanis Club Orillia  |
| Elmvale Public Library                                | Le Club de L'Age d'Or de Lafontaine   |
| Emmanuel Baptist Church                               | Leacock Care Centre   |
| Enahtig Healing Lodge                                 | Leisureworld Caregiving Centre  |
| Essa Public Library (Angus Branch)                    | Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)   |
| Exercise to Energize for Women                        | Mariposians for Refugees/St. Paul's Centre                                      |
| Fairvern Nursing Home                                 | Midland Lions Club  |
| Georgian Bay friendship Centre                        | Midland Salvation Army  |
| Georgian Bay Metis Council                            | Midland Senior Citizens Club  |
| Georgian Bay Native Women's Association               | Mill Creek Care Centre - Long Term Care Facility                                |
| Georgian Shores Swinging Seniors Club                 | Muskoka Landing   |
| Georgian Sunset Seniors                               | Muskoka Shores Care Community   |
| Georgian Village                                      | Muskoka Stretchers  |
| Grace United Church                                   | Newcomer Welcome Centre   |
| Gravenhurst Senior Citizens                           | NSM Community Support Services Collaborative 211                                |
| Grove Park Home for Seniors                           | O.U.R Club  |
| Hawkestone Community Hall                             | Oak Terrace   |
| Helping Hands Orillia                                 | Ontario. Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Central Area. Midhurst Office |
| Hillcrest Village Care Centre                         | Orillia and District Raging Grannies  |
| Horticulture Club & Maple Syrup Festival              | Orillia Native Women's Group  |
| Huntsville Requiteers                                 | Orillia Salvation Army  |
| Huntsville Seniors Club 55                            | Owen Hill Care Community  |
| Intelligent Elders Club                               | Pines Long Term Care Home   |
| IOOF Barrie - Adult Day Program                       |   |

---

---

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Port McNicoll   | Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 516                   |
| Prime Time Club   | Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 80                    |
| Probus - Probus by the Bay Club                           | Royal Canadian Legion - Coldwater Branch 270         |
| Probus at the Beach                                       | Royal Canadian Legion - Collingwood Branch 63        |
| Probus Club of Collingwood                                | Royal Canadian Legion - Creemore Branch 397          |
| Probus Club of Collingwood Gateway                        | Royal Canadian Legion - Elmvale Branch 262           |
| Probus Club of Harbourslands                              | Royal Canadian Legion - Gravenhurst Branch 302       |
| Probus Club of Hume St and District                       | Royal Canadian Legion - Huntsville Branch 232        |
| Probus Club of Midland-Huron                              | Royal Canadian Legion - Lefroy/Bell Ewart Branch 547 |
| Probus Club of Severn Sound                               | Royal Canadian Legion - Mara-Brechin                 |
| Probus Club of Simcoe North                               | Royal Canadian Legion - Midland Branch 80            |
| Probus Club of Wasaga Beach                               | Royal Canadian Legion - New Lowell Branch 516        |
| Project Umbrella Burma.                                   | Royal Canadian Legion - Orillia Branch 34            |
| Rama Mnjikaning First Nations                             | Royal Canadian Legion - Orville Hand Branch 521      |
| Ramara Seniors Association                                | Royal Canadian Legion - Peninsula Branch 489         |
| Ranji Singh Foundation                                    | Royal Canadian Legion Warminster Branch 619          |
| Roberta Place   | Royal Canadian Legion-Everett Branch 508             |
| Royal Canadian Legion                                     | Royal Canadian Legion Penetanguishene Branch 68      |
| Royal Canadian Legion                                     |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Alliston Branch 171               |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Angus                             |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Angus Edward MacDonald Branch 499 |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Bracebridge Branch 161            |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 262                        |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 34                         |  |
| Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 488                        |  |

---



---

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Royal Canadian Legion-Port Carling Branch 529                        | Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative          |
| Royal Canadian Legion-Port McNicoll Branch 545                       | Springwater News   |
| Royal Canadian Legion-Port McNicoll Branch 545 - Ladies Auxiliary    | Stayner Senior Citizens Friendship Club                  |
| Royal Canadian Legion-Stayner Branch 457                             | Sunset Village and Manor                                 |
| Royal Canadian Legion-Tottenham Branch 329                           | Sunshine Club - The Elmvale and District Senior Citizens |
| Royal Canadian Legion-Victoria Harbour Branch 523                    | The Danube Seniors Leisure Centre                        |
| Royal Canadian Legion-Victoria Harbour Branch 523 - Ladies Auxiliary | The Portuguese Cultural Centre of Bradford Inc.          |
| Royal Canadian Legion, Beeton Branch, 421 Four Freedom               | Therapeutic Pilates Instruction                          |
| Royal Canadian Legion, Waubauskene Branch 316                        | Thursday Night Cards                                     |
| Royal Canadian Legion, Waubauskene Branch 316 - Ladies Auxiliary     | Time Together  |
| Royal Canadian Legion Elizabeth Watson                               | Tiny Trails Lions Club                                   |
| Royal Canadian Legion  | Township of Springwater                                  |
| Sara Vista Nursing Centre  | Trillium Manor   |
| Senior Encounter Adult Day Program                                   | Twin Lakes Probus Club                                   |
| Seniors for Seniors Barrie & Simcoe County                           | Utterson Live Wires Seniors                              |
| Seniors Maintaining Active Roles Together                            | Victoria Harbour Lions Club                              |
| Seniors Wish Foundation  | Victoria Village   |
| Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership.                         | Villa Care Centre  |
| Simcoe County Quilters Guild   | VON Canada - Orillia                                     |
|  | VON Canada - Simcoe County Site                          |
|  | Wahta Mohawk Territory                                   |
|  | Wasaga Beach New Waves                                   |
|  | Wasaga Beach Seniors Competitive Slo-Pitch Team          |
|  | Wasaga Sunbirds Probus Club                              |
|  | Washago Area Senior Citizens Club                        |

---

---

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Waubauskene Lion's Club                                   | Welcome Wagon. Angus, Borden Area       |
| Welcome Centre Immigrant Services. Alliston               | Welcome Wagon. Creemore Area            |
| Welcome Centre Immigrant Services. Collingwood.           | Welcome Wagon. Elmvale Area. Elmvale    |
| Welcome Centre Immigrant Services. Orillia.               | Wellness Initiative for Seniors Engaged |
| Welcome Centre Immigrant Services. Wasaga Beach.          | Wendat - Midland                        |
| Welcome Wagon Canada. Orillia                             | Women's Probus Club of Pretty River     |
| Welcome Wagon. Adjala-Tosorontio, Beeton & Tottenham Area | Woods Park Care Centre                  |
|   | World Probus                            |

---

## Appendix I: List of Engagement Meetings

### Focus Groups

| Date  | Location                         | Group                | Participants |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 10-May-16   | Sandy Cove Acres                 | Older adults         | 14           |
| 27-May-16   | Stayner                          | Older adults         | 5            |
| 24-Apr-16   | Chigamik Community Health Centre | Urban Aboriginal     | 8            |
| 1-Jun-16  | Victoria Harbor                  | Older adults         | 13           |
| 2-Jun-16  | Collingwood Library              | Caregivers           | 7            |
| 3-Jun-16  | Bayshore Village                 | Older adults         | 5            |
| 15-Jun-16   | Bradford                         | Newcomers (see note) | 1            |
| 28-Jun-16   | Elmvale                          | Older adults         | 2            |
| 7-Jul-16  | Angus, Essa Public Library       | Older adults         | 16           |
| 7-Jul-16  | Angus                            | Older adults         | 14           |
| 14-Jul-16   | Orillia                          | Older adults         | 11           |
| 15-Jul-16   | Coldwater                        | Older adults         | 1            |
| 21-Jul-16   | Coldwater                        | Older adults         | 1            |
| 27-May-17   | Penetanguishene                  | Francophone          | 11           |
| 14-Jun-17   | Adjala-Tosorontio                | Older adults         | 6            |
| 15-Jun-17   | Christian Island                 | On-reserve FNMI      | 15           |
| Note: Due to low turnout at the newcomers focus group, follow-up interviews were conducted one-on-one |                                  |                      |              |

### Community Consultation Meetings

#### Alliston

September 12, 2016  
2 – 4 p.m. and 6 – 8 p.m.  
Nottawasaga Inn  
6015 Highway 89, Alliston

#### Orillia

September 19, 2016  
2 – 4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.  
Orillia Legion – Vimy Lounge  
215 Mississaga St. E., Orillia

#### Collingwood

September 14, 2016  
2 – 4 p.m. and 6 – 8 p.m.  
Sunset Manor  
49 Raglan St., Collingwood

#### Penetanguishene

September 30, 2016  
2 – 4 p.m. and 6 – 8 p.m.  
Georgian Village  
101 Thompsons Rd.,  
Penetanguishene

---

## Appendix J: Survey Result

### Infographic Posters

Poster presentations are one vehicle researchers use to present their ideas to their colleagues and other interested parties. The Age-Friendly Community Project Lead reached out to Georgian College Research Analyst Program to consider using the results from the engagement process to produce specific municipal-level information. As a result, the students produced posters that incorporated some of the high level results of the Simcoe County Age-Friendly Community needs assessment process including a summary of relevant demographic characteristics, and other research insights pertaining to the community. On November 22, 2016, the students displayed their posters in the Atrium of the County of Simcoe Administration Building for viewing by Councillors and other stakeholders.

# An Age-Friendly City of Barrie: County of Simcoe Community Survey 2016

## Keeping Seniors Engaged, Active & Healthy

Kristi Mikula & Ceci Vasoff – Research Analyst Post-Graduate Program, Georgian College



### Background

The City of Barrie is centrally located in the County of Simcoe, along the western shore of Lake Simcoe in south central Ontario. (1) In 2011, the population of the City of Barrie was 135,711, making it the 16th largest city in Ontario. (2) The City of Barrie is politically distinct from the County of Simcoe, but partners with the County to provide services important to its resident senior population including health and emergency services, social services, and social housing.

### Methodology & Limitations

Completed surveys were collected from 282 respondents living in the City of Barrie: 222 online and 60 in paper format. Of the returned surveys, 68% were completed by seniors, the remaining 32% were completed by caregivers/family members/interested citizens on behalf of a senior. The survey was distributed by three methods: County of Simcoe mailed surveys to seniors, the City of Barrie mailed surveys to seniors, and the survey was distributed to seniors at community events. Survey results were analyzed to identify themes and to suggest recommendations for future research. 17,706 people, age 65 and over, resided in the Barrie in 2011. (3) 282 surveys were collected. Survey results may not be representative of the population as a whole. 75% of respondents were female.



### Housing

- 64% of respondents report owning their home, although home ownership declines sharply after age 75
- When considering a move, two important factors are the ability to remain independent (73%) and the affordability of housing (69%)
- Whether residing in a single family dwelling, apartment or retirement home, 86% of respondents state that their current living situation meets their needs
- "Currently live in apartment, but foresee need for retirement home and/or assisted living eventually."

### Contact

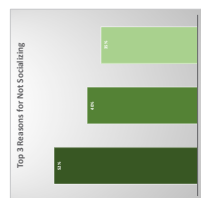
Kristi Mikula or Ceci Vasoff  
Students, Research Analyst Post-Graduate Program, Georgian College, Barrie, Ontario  
Email: [kristi.mikula@my.georgian.ca](mailto:kristi.mikula@my.georgian.ca) or [CeciVasoff@my.georgian.ca](mailto:CeciVasoff@my.georgian.ca)

### City Planning

- Majority of respondents walk or drive short distances almost daily: 75% of respondents get around by personal vehicle, while 15% walk.
- What matters most to respondents is that they have access to a vehicle (79%), stores and services within walking distance (47%), and there are friends/family who can drive/assist them (33%)
- Most cited areas for improvement: snow and ice clearing on sidewalks (56%) and roads (37%); more handicapped parking spots (37%)
- Respondents indicate high overall satisfaction with Barrie parks, and good overall satisfaction with Barrie's transportation services
- "Clear the snow where there are parking meters. Impossible for seniors to climb over 3 ft. snowbanks to find the meter."

### Employment & Civic Participation

- The majority of respondents (78%) are retired, while 25% report that they work in a paid position
- Of those that are in a paid position, over half (56%) report that they work out of necessity.
- 30% of respondents are looking for volunteer opportunities. 30% are not
- 21% of respondents report that they are actively engaged in the community's political process - and of those, 73% are retired
- "I am a year away from retirement age but will have to continue my self-employed job in order to live."



### Communication & Information

- 62% of seniors reported feeling "only slightly informed" and 2% "not at all" informed
- 67% of seniors were unaware of 211
- 73% of Barrie seniors would like more information about the local area
- Top three information sharing methods preferred by seniors: Newspapers (88%), Internet (55%) and "Mail" (49%)
- 84% of seniors reported having internet access, with 93% using it daily
- "You had you missed promoting 310-2222 - health services (in addition to the 211 social services)."



### Socialization

- 55% of seniors report wanting to socialize more.
- The top 3 deterrents noted are: costs (62% of respondents), lack of information (40%) and scheduling (35%).
- Seniors also noted other reasons for not participating such as fear and the health of a spouse for whom they provide care.
- "Lack of people known to me with same interests."

### Community & Healthcare: Support & Concerns

- Most reported need over 12 months was help around the house: home repair and maintenance (39%), snow removal (33%), yard care (28%) and house cleaning (24%). 14-18% of the time help was unavailable
- A small number of respondents noted needing social (19 respondents) and health services (16 respondents) and food (16 respondents) but 33-58% of these respondents could not find help
- Seniors themselves pinpointed these needs with 54% noting services for physical support and 47% home repair and maintenance services in their recommendations.
- "I know a lot of seniors that need affordable help (e.g., Handyman)."



### Conclusions

- Mobility is important to Barrie seniors
- Barrie seniors value independence and are satisfied with where they reside
- Barrie seniors appear to value structuring their own time
- Communication of information to seniors is identified as an area where improvement is needed
- Health and financial issues are top concerns. Outdoor maintenance (e.g. frequent need and at times, affordable help is difficult to find. Help accessing social assistance, healthcare and food is also a concern for those in need of these services
- Socializing more is important to most Barrie seniors. Cost, lack of information and scheduling issues are the most frequent reasons for not socializing. Other issues such as health of a spouse and feeling scared or out of place may also play a role

### Recommendations

- Increase communication and information sharing via internet and email channels especially to increase awareness of 211
- Create a service to help seniors with work around the home (partnership with high schools?)
- Further research on streamlining access to social services, healthcare and food for seniors in need
- Consider feasibility of scheduling some seniors activities after work hours
- For senior's mobility needs into planning city services and infrastructure design
- Support local, affordable housing options that continue to meet senior's desire to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible
- Demonstrate appreciation and respect for senior's time and commitment to community organizations and local initiatives

### References

1. Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2011, National Household Survey, 2011 Census, <https://www2.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/data-main/98-302-x01-eng.htm>, Accessed: October 13, 2016
2. Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2011, National Household Survey, 2011 Census, <https://www2.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/data-main/98-302-x01-eng.htm>, Accessed: October 13, 2016
3. Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2011, National Household Survey, 2011 Census, <https://www2.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/data-main/98-302-x01-eng.htm>, Accessed: October 13, 2016

## *Fine Aging: The Age Friendly Community Initiative for Bradford West Gwillimbury*

The Research Analyst Program of Georgian College – Barrie, Fall 2016  
Darshak Patel, Smriti Dodiya & Shannon Daley

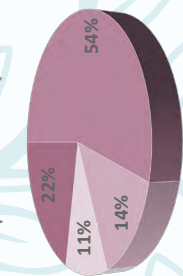
### Introduction

The south-central Ontario town is located by the 400 freeway, with little public transportation as most opt-in for private vehicles. The original town of Bradford since its inception has now amalgamated parts of its surrounding area (the townships of West Gwillimbury and Tecumseth) to become Bradford West Gwillimbury.

Bradford, according to Statistics Canada's 2011 Census, had a population of 28,077 in 2011. Of this number, 23,935 or 10% of the population consists of seniors with another 1,395 nearing the age of 65 (the official senior citizen age). So as of present, not accounting for deaths, population increase, moving and the like, the senior population has approximately increased by a factor of 1.5. There has also been a 16.8% increase in population size between 2006 and 2011.

### Methods & Limitations

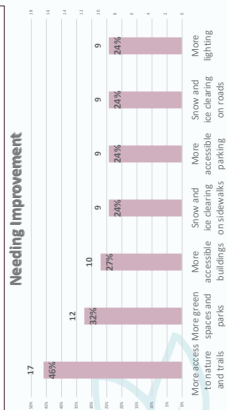
#### Respondent Distribution; n=37



The survey involved convenience sampling, in which the questionnaire was distributed by the municipality using websites, email, and in-person data collection. Due to this, some seniors may not have heard of the study, or had the opportunity to participate. Results thus may not be representative of the entire Bradford senior population as a whole, but may provide insight for further research and planning. Additionally, the analysis is based on aggregate data only. The researchers did not have access to individual responses, and as a result researchers are unable to examine the validity of responses.

### Wellness

Although most seniors (92% of respondents) believe their health is fair or greater compared to that of other seniors, it appears that there are concerns with future accessibility. This gives the sense that most seniors have some investment whether monetary or psychological in Bradford, and wish to remain in Bradford. This is further confirmed by the 57% of respondents that specifically state that they are worried about losing their physical independence. The seniors who are at least somewhat concerned about losing their independence are at 24%. It is interesting to see that features that are the most independent out their lives without reliance on vehicles are prioritized such as nature trails (46%) and green spaces (32%).



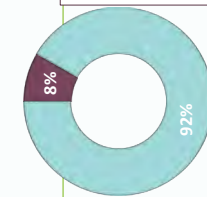
Many also require help with filling income tax (51%), in addition to concerns about a rising cost of living and the need for more affordable housing. Seniors also express a striking amount of respondents near the 50% mark when indicating that their concerns involve an aspect of physicality. These aspects include home repair and maintenance, fitness, yard work, and overall health and wellness programs. Other than physicality, an important area was believed to be affordable home care, which ranked at 53% of respondents indicating that it was an issue. In addition to this, 71% of respondents indicated that they were willing to pay or contribute for these services (Q47).

Many seniors have doctors within Simcoe County (70%, Q43), but there is no indication how close these doctors are to Bradford. Accounting for the fact that many citizens have mobility issues, and transportation, distance, and safety concerns when commuting (Q32), this may be an option for exploration.

### What's the 211?

#### Awareness of 211; n=37

■ Yes ■ No



Respondents may not be aware of all services available to them. Despite this, most respondents (75%) do not have an issue with lack of information regarding social events (Q32). Interestingly enough, 85% of respondents feel informed about their local area (Q33), yet they do not know about 211.

While respondents do believe they are generally independent because of their physical health, many do have concerns for the future. The concerns remain with being able to maintain their health and independence as paramount. Many are willing to support the initiative for their future, but they depend on the municipality to take action. It appears that many are interested in partaking in services, but they are unaware of the steps they have to take to introduce themselves to these services, like calling 211. While physical health is of significant importance to the senior population, there is still concern about mental well-being; it is thus important to find a balance in supporting these services.



### The Respectful & Ideal Home

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements. Of concern are two statements: "my local area is an ideal place for aging adults to live", and "decisions made in the community take into account the needs of aging adults" (Q1). These statements are of concern because the responses were roughly half in agreement and half in disagreement, which is a problem for a town with a 10% senior population.

It is suggested that this finding be further explored. A step should be taken to find out qualitative opinions on what an ideal place is for seniors, and how their needs can be met when making decisions for the town. An example is not making assumptions about what defines senior independence. For instance, question 46 noted that 53% of respondents want affordable housing. However, what type of housing do they deem affordable? 25% of respondents cannot afford their current housing (Q18), with 33% of respondents having to maintain paid employment out of necessity (Q25). As well, how can the municipality better housing? A respondent commented that mid-rise condo-style housing with assisted living would be of benefit. More detailed comments like this are required for the seniors to get ideal housing and feel that their voices are heard.

### Take-Away

Overall, the Age Friendly Community Initiative is making changes, but changes may not be realized as yet. Many feel that they are informed about services but a look into the marketing effectiveness of these services should be explored, as 211, a simple and easy resource is not known to many. 79% of respondents use the internet on a daily basis, so rather than informing seniors about calling 211, they could be informed of the 211 website. The initiative might also want to explore options for seniors to volunteer their opinion in a survey or through anonymous posts to a website or comments dropped in a box at a public institution.

In a future survey, a question on how they heard about the survey could be asked, so one can learn how the senior population gets their information. Seniors may prefer to be informed in certain ways (Q37), however, how they actually get notified and how they want to be notified are two different things. One may choose to read brochures every two weeks for instance, but in that time they may have missed the previous week's last minute social.

Seniors are not afraid to share their opinion, they just have to know that their opinion is welcomed and will be listened to. One might consider having senior representatives for assisted living communities for instance. Fine Aging, or being independent, respected and comfortable is the senior Bradford goal.

### References

1. Statistics Canada. (2011). Census of Canada, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-621-x/2011001/article/11781-eng.htm>
2. Statistics Canada. (2011). Census of Canada, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-621-x/2011001/article/11781-eng.htm>

### Contact

Shannon Daley  
Darshak Patel  
Smriti Dodiya



## Introduction

The Age-Friendly Communities Initiative seeks to help the Simcoe county by considering the needs of seniors in the development of programs, policies, and services. This initiative looks to build a better future for the growing population, which will also benefit the youth population down the road.

## Results for Clearview



## DISCUSSION

- 66 respondents were surveyed (68% aged 65+)
  - According to the survey, 47% of the respondents in Clearview think the most important services required for their health and independence service are physical health and supportive services. Following that are home repair and maintenance, yard work, and health and wellness programs.
  - The four most common ways that respondents learn about local happenings are by word of mouth, newspaper, friends and family, and the internet.
  - Two-third of the respondents in Clearview are aware about the 2-1-1 service which can help them find the appropriate community and social services in their area.
  - The most important areas of improvement were more sidewalks, more snow and ice clearing on the sidewalks as well on the roads, and more access to nature and trails.
- Recommendations**
- Many are happy with the level of available social activities in Clearview township, but there is still room for improvement in providing the services required to maintain their health and independence.


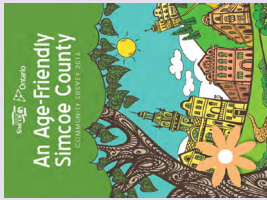
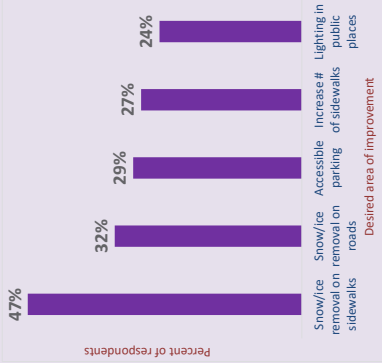
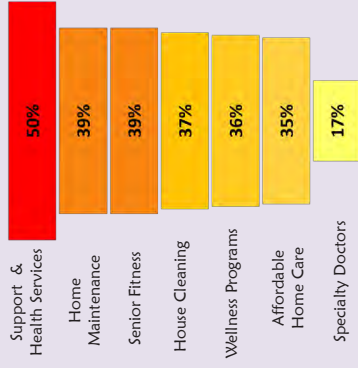
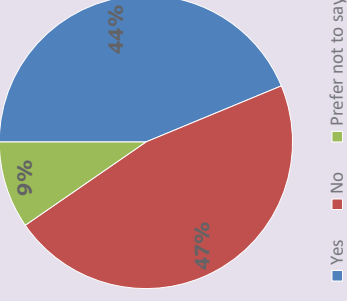



## Results for Adjala-Toronto



## DISCUSSION

- 22 respondents (55% aged 65+)
  - According to the survey, 44% of the respondents in Adjala-Toronto think the most important service required for their health and independence is home repair and maintenance. Following that are services for physical health and supportive services, yard work, and delivery of services and goods.
  - The four most common ways that respondents learn about local happenings in Adjala-Toronto is by newspaper, word of mouth, friends and family, and the internet.
  - Almost 60% of the respondents in Adjala-Toronto are aware about the 2-1-1 service which can help them find the appropriate community and social services in their area.
  - The most important areas of improvement were more lighting, more snow and ice clearing on the sidewalks as well on the roads, and more access to nature and trails.
- Recommendations**
- Many who know about it are happy with the level of available social activities, but there is still room for improvement in spreading awareness about the 2-1-1 service as it would really help the seniors in Adjala to socialize. There could also be some improvement in providing the services required to maintain their health and independence.



| <div> <div>  <div> <h1>Age Friendly Community in Collingwood</h1> <p>James Tennant, Alec Dare, Prathit Patel</p> <p>Georgian College: Research Analyst Program (RAPP)</p> </div> </div> </div>   |  |
|---|--|
| Age Friendly Communities  | Results  |
| <p>Started by the World Health Organization (WHO) the Age Friendly Community program is spreading into a global program and is more important than ever right now</p> <div>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Rapidly growing senior population: 25% of Canadians will be 65+ by 2041</li> <li>&gt; Many communities are not well adapted for senior living</li> </ul> </div> <p>This Age Friendly Initiative looks to build a better future for the growing population, which will also benefit the youth population down the road</p> | <div> <div> <h3>Transportation</h3> <h4>Mobility Concerns</h4>  <p>Percent of respondents</p> <p>Desired area of improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>69% prefer to drive their personal vehicle as the most common form of transportation</li> <li>24% prefer to walk as their most common form of transportation</li> </ul> </div> <div> <h3>Health Services</h3> <h4>Desired Services</h4>  <p>*65% of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay extra for these services</p> <p>The only non-physical challenge that seniors mentioned were filling out income tax forms</p> </div> <div> <h3>Social</h3> <h4>% Who Would Participate in More Social Events</h4>  <p>26% of respondents were from a rural community, so it is possible they make up the majority of the population who wish for more social events nearby</p> </div> </div> |
| Research Question   | Next Steps   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Given the feedback from the AFC survey, what can we do to make a better age friendly community in Collingwood?</li> <li>&gt; What further research can we suggest from the results of this survey?</li> </ul>   | <div> <div>  <p>Large desire for additional sidewalk and road snow removal</p> </div> <div>  <p>Many lacking necessary health services</p> </div> <div>  <p>Moderate demand for more social events</p> </div> </div>   |
| Methods   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 226 respondents (82% 65+) completed a questionnaire online and on paper. Respondents were primarily mid-high income and lived in an urban setting</li> <li>&gt; Results were analyzed and reports were created based on the most significant findings</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform qualitative interviews with respondents to determine which services can benefit the most seniors</li> <li>Reach out to churches and community centres in nearby areas and demonstrate this increased interest</li> </ul>  |



**Background**

The town of Innisfil, located in Simcoe County, covers 284 square kms on the western shore of Lake Simcoe. It is located directly south of Barrie and 80 km north of Toronto. The total population is roughly 33,000 as of the 2011 Canadian Census, a net increase of 6% over the past 5 years (Statistics Canada, 2011).

People over the age of 65 make up 14.5% of the population, totalling about 4,800, a 13% total growth since 2006. Innisfil is proportionally older than Ontario and Canada overall (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Innisfil is evidently an aging community that can benefit from taking steps towards becoming more age friendly.

The Age Friendly Communities project, developed by the World Health Organization, seeks to create a supportive environment in cities that enable residents to grow older while remaining active and healthy within the community (WHO, 2012). Innisfil's most prominent area of concern is social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment.

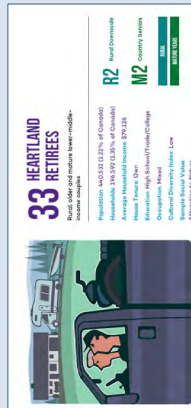


Figure 1.1 When cross-referencing the postal codes of survey respondents with the Enrichment PRIZMS database, the majority of respondents are Heartland Retirees. Heartland Retirees are primarily rural residents who are a mix of semi-retired individuals. A majority of them own their own home.

**Methodology**

• Survey of 218 Innisfil Seniors

• 132 Online, 86 Paper

• Online: email lists, which the county had access to, as well as a link posted to the county website and other relevant websites

• Convenience Sample

• Limitations: may not accurately reflect the population, may miss some of the vulnerable segments of the target population

• The community - attending events, signing up for email lists, and visiting local community centres, events, and websites.

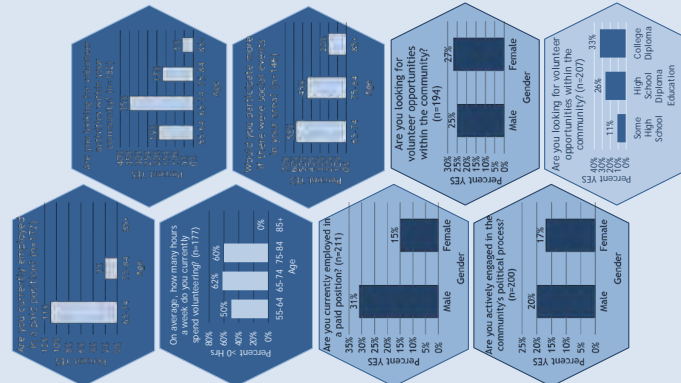


Figure 1.2 Innisfil Town Hall

**Discussion**

**Low Participation**

Despite over all satisfaction, the are not as active as they would like to be.

This was particularly true for the 65 and 74 years of age group.

**Gendered Difference**

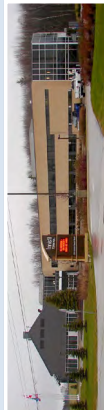
Females are less likely to participate than males overall in the community of Innisfil.

Despite both gender being active in the community, participation remains low.

**The Need for Education**

Those with less education are less interested in volunteer opportunities in the community.

Those with less education are less interested in volunteer opportunities in the community.



**Conclusions**

The findings from Innisfil's AFC survey indicate that the community maintains a high level of satisfaction in areas related to accessibility, housing, and transportation. The township is failing to meet three key aspects of the WHO's Age Friendly Community criteria, those being social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment.

In order to combat the deficit of civic and social participation by the respondents in Innisfil, it is important to make sure that everyone in the community is aware of the events being held and the importance of volunteering and participating. Numerous health benefits result from being active within a community. Future considerations include providing a large-print newsletter about town events, reaching out to isolated populations, and providing resources such as schools and community centres to keep costs low.

**Contact**

Nikolaus Lopez  
Georgian College  
Email: nikolaus.lopez@georgian.ca

Ashley Rakoff  
Georgian College  
Email: ashley.rakoff@georgian.ca

Read Bastardo  
Georgian College  
Email: read.bastardo@georgian.ca

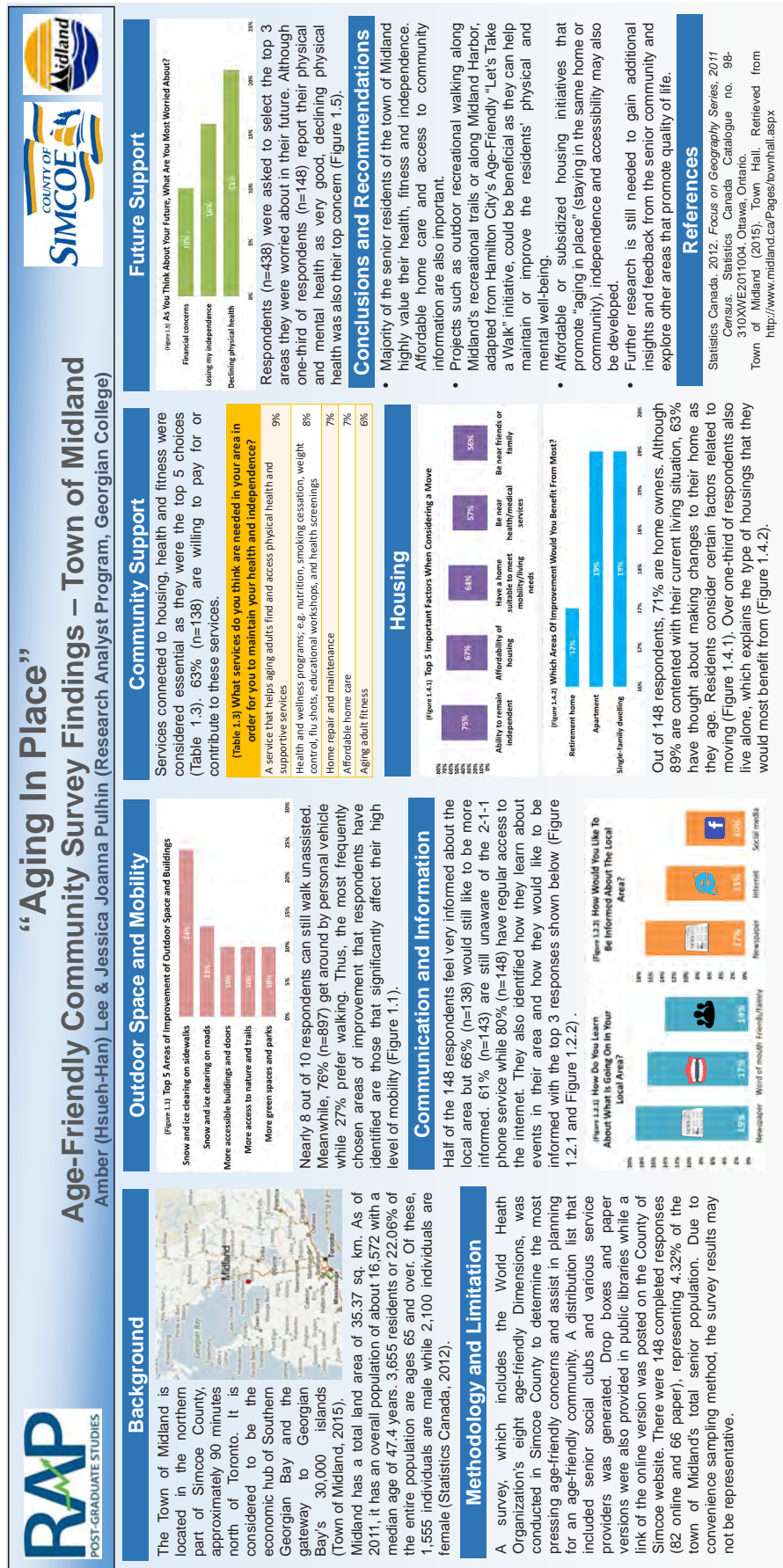
**References**

Figure 1.1 Retrieved from <http://www.environmentalcanada.ca/fr/m2>

Figure 1.2 Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Innisfil\\_ON.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Innisfil_ON.JPG)

enrichment.ca/PRIZMS/PRIZMS.aspx?PRIZMS=PRIZMS&PRIZMS=PRIZMS&PRIZMS=PRIZMS

WHO Age-Friendly Environments Programme. (2012, March 30). Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/agefriendlycities/en/programme/en/>



# New Tecumseth: Building an Accessible Age Friendly Community



## OBJECTIVE:

To gain valuable insights from the seniors of New Tecumseth in order to provide services and public improvements to the ageing community.

## INTRODUCTION:

Simcoe County consists of sixteen townships with a population of approximately 465,000 people. A new initiative, "Age-Friendly Communities (AFC)" has been created to support the ageing community. The AFC initiative intends to assist the creation and improvement of programs, services, and policies keeping in mind the needs of seniors.

Our research focuses on the township of New Tecumseth and the specific results of the survey in that community. New Tecumseth has a population of approximately 30,000 people with an area of 274 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated 30 minutes south-west of Barrie.

## METHODOLOGY:

In order to gather seniors' input, a local survey was conducted in partnership with Georgian College's Centre for Applied Research and Innovation (CARI). There were two surveys conducted, a paper and online version, with a total of 300 participants in the New Tecumseth community. The survey was designed with the WHO's eight age-friendly city topic areas in mind: housing, transportation, outdoor spaces, community support, health services, communication, civic participation, social inclusion, and social participation. The survey defined seniors as citizens over the age of 55.

Some limitations of the survey include a disproportionate number of female respondents versus males. The total number of participants is also low.

**References:**  
Global Age-Friendly Cities A Guide (2007). Geneva: World Health Organization.  
New Tecumseth Recreation Centre. (n.d.). Retrieved November 1, 2016, from <http://newtecumseth.ca/recreation/parks-recreation/community-centre/new-tecumseth-recreation-centre/>  
Statistics Canada. (2012). New Tecumseth, Ontario (Code 53.000) and Ontario (Code 35) (table). Census Profile, 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-304-XWE. Ottawa, Released October 14, 2012.

## RESULTS:



## CONCLUSION:

**Health & Wellness**

- The physical and mental health of senior residents should remain top priority as health and well-being needs in New Tecumseth will only increase as citizens continue ageing.

**Transportation & Independence**

- Keeping the roads lit and cleared from snow will improve the ability for seniors to drive. For those that cannot drive, public transportation must be maintained and improved in all aspects. Having access to transportation enables the independence of seniors.

**Accessibility**

- Walkways, seating, and snow clearance were an issue for many seniors in New Tecumseth. As improvements and additions are made to the community, accessibility should be prioritized.

**Well-Rounded Lives**

- Seniors exhibited enthusiasm for having well-rounded and diverse lives. From social events, volunteering, independence, traveling, and hobbies, the seniors in New Tecumseth have many contributions seniors can add to the community is invaluable and should be prioritized.

**Snow Clearing**

- We recommend reviewing the current snow removal practices and consider improvements to the current system because many residents were not satisfied with the current snow removal strategy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Start a ride-share program where fully licensed individuals can volunteer to be drivers or volunteer to assist a senior on public transportation. Because 71% of respondents said they use the internet daily, this program could be facilitated and scheduled online.
- Run senior only fitness programs in surrounding community centres.
- Overhaul current public washroom facilities to ensure they are clean, safe, lit, and accessible to all members of the community adding where necessary.
- Install more benches in parks and streets. We believe this is a cost effective way to improve upon current public spaces.
- Provide better snow/ice clearing on sidewalks and roads. In addition provide sand and salt at busy street corners, residential roads, and bus stops as this could be an option for other community members to lend a hand where they see fit.

### Contact:

Andrew Brown  
Georgian College  
Andrew.Brown4@mygeorgian.ca

Kristen Rodgers  
Georgian College  
Kristen.Rodgers@mygeorgian.ca

Carly Zubrickas  
Georgian College  
Carly.Zubrickas@mygeorgian.ca





"Mobility is often difficult due to poor snow removal shopping centre are outside of city, parking is prohibitive in town/cost and lots insufficient) council wants to turn waterfront access to boaters and high rise condos..."





# Age Friendly Community Survey Findings for Oro-Medonte

"It's not about how old you are, it's about how you are old" – Jules Renard



## The Township of Oro-Medonte

The Township of Oro-Medonte is a geographically large township of 586 square kilometres (3.5 times the size of Barrie) with a small population of about 20,075 residents. Adults aged 65 and older make up sixteen per cent of the total population.



## Methodology & Limitations

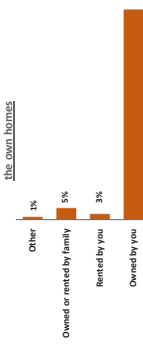
In order to develop age-friendly action plan an extensive survey was conducted addressing all eight WHO dimensions and included statistical questions such as age, gender and income. There were 158 completed responses which is 2.45% of the total senior population (6,450) of Oro Medonte. The survey was distributed widely through existing groups, clubs, and informal networks.

Limitations involved an effect of convenience sampling which may have excluded the affected population of seniors. We also suspect that individuals of higher socio-economic statuses were over-represented in our survey due to non-random sampling.

## Living Situation

A majority of respondents owned their own homes. This trend leads us to believe that the results may be an artifact of the survey sampling process focusing on individuals of higher socioeconomic statuses. Overall however, most respondents are well educated, own their homes and possess a decent income (>60K/year) at the time of the survey

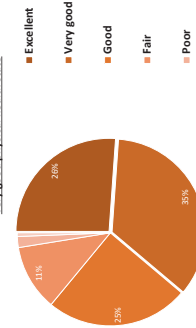
Figure 1.1 - A large majority of respondents owned and lived in this own homes



## Self-Reported Well Being

Most respondents self reported their perceived health to be in good condition with 61% self reporting to be having very good to excellent health. This is illustrated in figure 1.2 below.

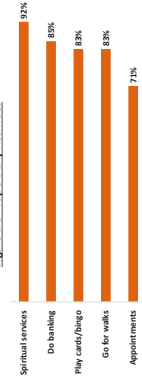
Figure 1.2 - Most respondents self perceive themselves to have very good physical health state



## Active Lifestyles

Most out-of-house activities involve daily errands such as going for appointments, church, and other social activities such as playing cards and bingo. Since going for walks and was one of the top leisure activities, we propose the organization of group activities such as bird watching that promote aerobic exercise.

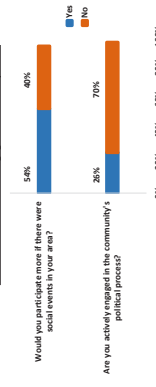
Figure 1.3 - Top 5 Daily Activities



## Mental Health

The significant proportion of respondents wanted to participate in social events, yet only a small group are involved in local politics. To promote mental well being & increased social interactions, we propose the engagement into local politics. This would increase social involvement and would promote greater community involvement.

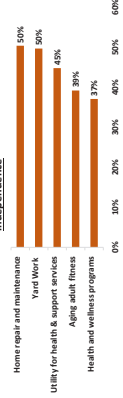
Figure 1.4 - Majority of the respondents are seeking to participate in the social and are not engaged in the local politics



## Services Required

Generally laborious work such as yard work & home maintenance in addition to health and wellness programs were among the top 5 requested services.

Figure 1.5 - Top 5 requested services in order to maintain independence



## Conclusions

- A majority of senior residents of Oro-Medonte own their own homes; possess common concerns associated with living in any rural areas, especially pertaining to transportation and infra structure; and possess a large concern with losing their independence in conducting their regular daily activities and getting around.
- Our top recommendation pertains to providing and maintaining easy access to nature paths and trails and organizing social gatherings to promote active lifestyles and social engagement.
- The residents of Oro-Medonte could greatly benefit from subsidized local services such as private snow removal and landscaping yard work. We propose the subsidization of these services in the form of a senior discount voucher/coupon.
- Taking part in the political process and being more active at the local communities could benefit the social and mental health of seniors. This may also lead to improved community engagement and enhance the quality of the overall community.
- Organizing the gathering of elderly groups for low-intensity aerobic exercises (such as bird watching/ nature trail walking) could contribute to overall physical health thereby prolong the biological aging process.
- Further research is required to seek additional insights into the various benefits and best tailored methods for extending health and well being for the elderly populous of Oro-Medonte.



Fatima Tul Zahra, Arash Askary, Lavesh Makhija  
RAPP 2016  
Georgian College



# Penetanguishene as an Age Friendly Community: Considering Community Services

Daniela Ide, Marcus Vahi, Claire Burgoyne



## Introduction

Penetanguishene is located in the southeastern tip of Georgian Bay, a part of the Simcoe-Muskoka region. Population as of 2011 was 9,111. There are 1,880 people 65 years of age or older, within this community. Total population has decreased from 2006 and 2011, by 3.0% (the elderly population raised between the same time range). 71.4% of the population are between 15 and 64 years old, 20.5% are the elderly above 65 years or more. This is represented by 20.6% (compared to ratio of 14.7% in Canada) of the total population<sup>1</sup>.

## Analysis

25 survey responses online, and 81 survey paper based with a total of 106 (5.6% of the senior population in Penetanguishene). Of the respondents, there were 75.5% are over 65. The other respondents are either just under 65 (not quite "seniors") or responding on behalf of a senior citizen.

## Limitations

The online survey was only distributed through emails known to the municipality (and those with access and proficiency to the internet). The paper based survey was distributed only at events, which means this is a convenience sample (not truly random). This was aggregate data only, with no access to individual responses. Not all respondents answered all questions, the results do not represent all of 106 participants in some cases. Using the sample size of 106 and an overall population of 9,111 the confidence interval is 9.46.

## Transportation Services: Results

A 6% of interviewees complain about the public transportation regarding socialization. 83% of the respondents believe it is important to have their own vehicles to be able to travel.

- 59% of the respondents think that is important to have access to public transportation
- Only 6% actually use the public transportation in a regular basis
- 16% of the respondents frequently using public transportation

## Health Services: Results

45% of respondents rate their physical health as "excellent" or "very good", and 67% rate their mental health as "excellent" or "very good".

Only one individual answered "no" to having a family doctor.

- 9% looking for a Personal Support Worker
- 26% were interested in other services such as a nurse practitioner, a counselor, or an occupational therapist
- 68% of respondents replied that they did not require other services

## Information Services: Results

Many felt very informed about their community, 44% felt only slightly informed.

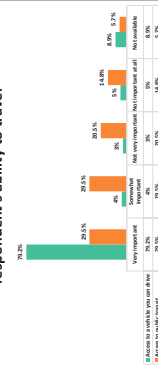
Respondents preferred to be more informed through mail and internet than they currently were.

Methods of being informed by family and word of mouth were not preferred by respondents (35% and 36% respectively).

- The ability to access information was a concern
- 7% believed that lack of information prevented socializing
- 32% do not have internet access
- 30% do not use the internet



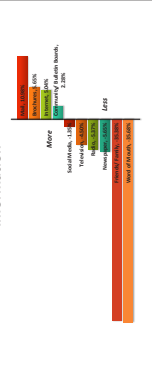
## Importance of the following factors to the respondent's ability to travel



## Satisfaction of Respondent's Physical and Mental Health



## Preference of Respondent's Method of Information



## Other Research and Discussion

- Transportation considerations:
  - In a couple of years many seniors will not be able to drive anymore
  - Private transportation services need to be developed to accommodate senior needs by providing an accessible, affordable, and safe system<sup>1</sup>

- Health considerations:
  - Better access to health and community support (via Red Cross)
  - Including a large range of local and affordable health services
  - Such as preventive care, geriatric clinics, hospitals, adult day centers, respite care, rehabilitation, and residential nursing home care<sup>2</sup>

- Accessible information considerations:
  - System of information distribution that seniors can access
  - Such as in community centers
  - Giving adapted computer training, so that seniors can be more confident in using technology
  - Other information should be placed in key locations such as community centers, libraries, and bulletin boards



## Conclusions

Prioritize transportation, health services, and information, as well as the social inclusion, and civic participation and employment, respect and social inclusion, and civic participation and employment.

- Consider becoming affiliated with the WHO Age Friendly network

There were few comments from the respondents regarding the quality of transportation in the town of Penetanguishene, however the research reveals a major tendency for private transportation use.

In health services, there is a gap of satisfaction with physical health, in comparison to mental health (as well, 35% of respondents are interested in more health services).

There are inconsistencies within the community of Penetanguishene in how seniors prefer to be informed, their desire to be more informed, and access to computers and services.

## References

1. Statistics Canada. (2012). Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-310-XWE2011004. Ottawa, Ontario: Analytical products, 2011 Census. Last updated October 24, 2012.
2. WHO. (2014). WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. Retrieved November 4, 2016, from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/2014/agefriendlycities/en/>
3. Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide. (2007). Retrieved November 4, 2016, from WHO Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.

## Contact

Daniela Ide, Marcus Vahi, Claire Burgoyne  
Research Analyst Graduate Certificate  
Georgian College  
Barrie, Ontario L4N 3Y9  
<http://www.georgiancollege.ca/calacademics/tul-time-program/research-analyst-certificate/>

“Aging is not lost youth, but a new stage of opportunity and strength.”

## Objective

This initiative aims to support the County of Simcoe in considering the needs of seniors in the Township of Ramara. The development of programs, policies and services that align with the Age – Friendly Community (AFC). A platform that seeks to help the seniors achieve the paradigm of active and healthy aging.



## Background

Over the last five years, the proportion of adults aged 65 and over has grown 18.3% in Canada. This major change affects every jurisdiction in Canada and in Ontario. From the World Health Organization (WHO) to local municipal government, there is a call for an Age-Friendly society. The County of Simcoe recognizes the Age-Friendly Community (AFC) concept as an initiative and has chosen to develop a framework for the communities that reside within geographical area.

The County of Simcoe is the largest county in the province of Ontario based on population. Ramara is a township municipality in Simcoe County formed in 1994. It is located along the north eastern shore of Lake Simcoe, and east shore of Lake Couchiching. Farming and tourism are the primary industries, and are supported by a wide variety of local enterprises.

The Township of Ramara has a decrease in population at the rate of 1.6% in 2011 compared to 9427 in 2006. Though the overall population has decreased there is a considerable rise in population of seniors.

## Methodology

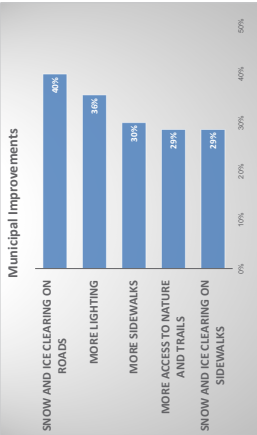
Age Friendly Simcoe County Community Survey 2016 was conducted in order to collect feedback from seniors to understand the most prevalent Age-Friendly priorities in the communities. The data was collected through the distribution channel of on-line, advertising in and around the community and additionally via a paper based survey encompassing the same themes and constructs.

There were 95 senior respondents in total, out of which 70 respondents participated in online survey whereas; 25 respondents completed the paper based survey. Qualitative and Quantitative methods were used to analyze concerning themes that were prevalent in survey data. Themes were extrapolated and the responses were quantified in order to determine what percentage of the senior population had issues and concerns about aging in their community.

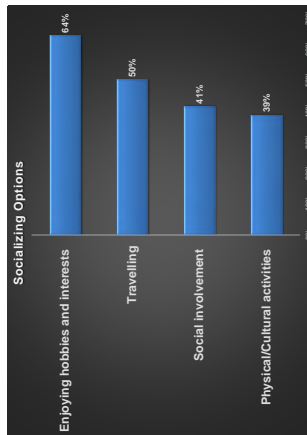
## Key Findings

- Overall, Respondents are content with lifestyle and the level of integrity they feel about aging in the Town of Ramara.
- Analysis revealed that 40% of the senior population have concerns with snow removal on main roads whereas 29% had concerns with snow removal on side walks.
- Additionally, 36% of the senior population have reported that the overall lighting in the community is a concern.
- 64% of the senior population reported the need for resources to support community involvement and leisure activities.
- The overall well-being of the senior population in Ramara is contingent upon safety and security therefore aligning with the Paradigm of Active and Healthy aging.
- 79% of the senior population reported their lack of knowledge about the “211” – the direct line to social services and resource guidance despite the fact that 90% of them use internet daily.

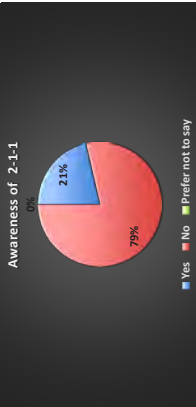
## Results



Graph 1 Municipal Issues pertaining to Ramara township



Graph 2 Things seniors want to do in order to spend their time.



Graph 3 Awareness about 2-1-1 Helpline

## Discussion & Recommendations

Overall 71% of senior population reported that the Township of Ramara is an ideal place to live. Addressing the issue of snow removal, the township has a snow removal policy that is already in place giving priority to main roads, followed by sidewalks.

Concerns with leisure activities and social connections for the senior population needs to be revised; in order to accommodate those seniors who are finding a lack of connectedness within their community. Seniors are hopeful that additional programs will be devised to fit their needs.

Immediate attention is needed for the awareness of 2-1-1, the direct line to social services and resource guidance for the seniors. Ironically, 90% of the senior population use the internet on a daily basis and information about the 2-1-1 services can be found on the main web page under the “Discover” tab. Yet, 79% report being unaware of 2-1-1 services. Therefore, potential avenues need to be explored to create alternate channels of information dispersion. Community Churches should be used with the coupling collaboration of its advisors to create a higher awareness of the 2-1-1 resource.

This message of heightened awareness can be implemented in the overall Church Agenda weekly.

## References:

- Global Age-Friendly cities: a Guide, New York, United Nations, 2007.  
([http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global\\_age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_guide\\_English.pdf](http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_guide_English.pdf))
- Finding the Right Fit Age-Friendly Community Planning, The Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat, the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, the University of Waterloo and McMaster University, 2013. ([http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/resprcsres/AFCP\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/resprcsres/AFCP_Eng.pdf))
- <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-rendement/2011dp-pd/prof/Ramara>

## Contact

Pratik Bhadra – [bhadra.pat@gmail.com](mailto:bhadra.pat@gmail.com)  
Sachi Persaud – [persauds@hotmail.com](mailto:persauds@hotmail.com)  
Snehal Meena – [snehalmeena1278@gmail.com](mailto:snehalmeena1278@gmail.com)  
Olim – [olim@georgiancollege.ca](mailto:olim@georgiancollege.ca)  
Program Coordinator  
Research Analyst Program, Georgian College, Barrie



## BACKGROUND

The Severn township has a population of 11,250, with 8% senior citizens among which 18% are living alone. The study focus on the better understanding of the senior's life, identify their requirements so that a proper planning can be done to provide seniors a better life.

## OUR RESPONDENTS



70% are married



63% are 65+



25% recently moved to Simcoe



19% have income between 60K-69K

n= 33



## GENERAL FEEDBACK

75% of respondents agree that their local area is an ideal place for aging adults to live

19% of respondents agree that aging adults are neither valued nor respected by the community

Almost all respondents are informed about local area and they mostly learn from newspaper, word of mouth or from friends/family about going in local area.



## HOUSING

88% of the respondents live in home owned by themselves and among them 93% live with their family members.

9% of the respondents cannot afford their current housing.

84% of respondents have internet access and 79% use it daily



## HEALTH

While 90% of respondents has family doctor within the Simcoe County, 69% of them are worried about their declining physical health and 15% are looking service for Nurse practitioner



## OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

Majority of the respondents are satisfied by the signs on the streets, number of parks/trails, and maintenance of parks but most of them are not satisfied by the available seating on streets followed by maintenance of streets and washrooms in public places.

When it comes to buildings, majority of respondent are satisfied by the lighting, availability of accessible buildings and number of parking spots but most of them are not satisfied by the availability and accessibility of washrooms and ease of opening the doors.



## TRANSPORTATION

Every respondent consider that access to a vehicle that they can drive is an important factor to their ability to travel and more than half of them consider that access to public transit or taxi services are not an important factor to their ability to travel.



## AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Most people needed help in income tax preparation, yard care and home repair, but many of them were not able to find one in yard care and home repair.

Most respondents have an opinion that they need services, that helps aging adults to find and access physical health and supportive services along with aging adult fitness, but 19% of them are not willing to pay for it.

Single family dwelling, retirement homes, and apartments would be the areas of improvements that most of the respondents benefited of.





# Age Friendly Community Survey Findings for Essa & Springwater

"We've put more effort into helping folks reach old age than into helping them enjoy it" - Frank A. Clark

## The Township of Essa

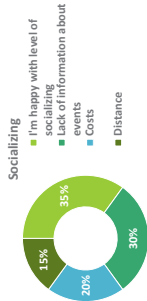
The township of Essa is located southwest of the city of Barrie. Essa township comprises of three major communities Angus, Baxter and Thornton. With a population of roughly 18,500, of which 1,630 are seniors, the township of Essa possesses beautiful landscapes, rivers and convenient access to bigger cities which attracts thousand of visitors across Ontario to its annual Salmon Festival and Canadian Forces Base Borden which is Canada's largest Canadian force training base.



## Respondent's Inputs

"More physical activities for seniors, a swimming pool for exercise, a place to walk indoors during cold or wet weather, health classes in your community"

"Additionally, rural communities without little infrastructure struggle to remain viable because the residents are forced to go into other communities to get their goods and services."

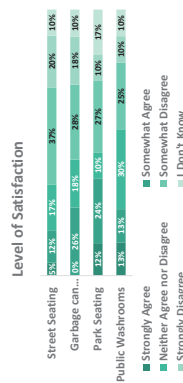


## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Majority of senior residents of Essa own their own homes and possess common concerns associated with living in any rural areas which revolve around gradually losing independence and a meaningful sense of autonomy
- 8 out of 10 seniors were not aware about 211 service, yet 30% of respondents reported not having information regarding social events
- Our top recommendation pertains to addition of washrooms in public spaces, seating arrangement and garbage cans in the streets and parks. We also propose increased accessibility to nature trails, and the addition of ramps and escalators in public buildings

## The Township of Springwater

The township of Springwater is in Simcoe county, almost 100 km north of Toronto between the city of Barrie and Missisauga. Being amalgamated in 1994 as a result of restructuring within the County of Simcoe, Springwater has the largest senior population in the County of Simcoe. Of the 18,220 residents, 2,295 are seniors. It is a beautiful municipality and the community of Elmville draws many visitors to its maple syrup festival each year.



## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Our conclusions and recommendations for the Township of Springwater are quite similar to those of Essa. Both communities face the challenges associated with living in rural area
- As most of the people are looking forward to spend their time with loved ones they could also benefit from retirement home/granny flats in future within the community
- In order to maintain their health and independence, the residents of Essa could benefit from healthy aging adult fitness programs provided by novel low-intensity aerobic classes in their local community center
- 8 out of 10 seniors were not aware about 211 service, yet 30% of respondents reported not having information regarding social events

## Methodology and Limitations

In order to develop age-friendly action plan an online and paper base survey was conducted. The survey was extensive, addressing all eight WHO dimensions and included statistical questions such as age, gender and income. There were 62 completed responses for Essa which is 2.44% of the total senior population (1,635) and 66 completed responses for Springwater which is 2.83% of the total senior population (2,300). The survey was distributed widely through existing groups, clubs, and informal networks. Limitations involved an effect of convenience sampling which may have excluded the affected population of seniors. Therefore, the results may be somewhat biased and contain artifacts of non-random sampling.



Fatima Tul Zahra, Arash Askary, Lavesh Makhija  
RAP 2016  
Georgian College





## Age Friendly Communities of Simcoe County Survey Results: Township of Tay



### Background

Tay Township has a population of 9,736, 17.4% of the population is aged 65 and over (Statistics Canada, 2011). A survey was conducted with 66 local seniors, caregivers, and family members to better understand the needs of senior citizens in Tay Township.

### Key Demographics

- ✓ 68% are aged 65+
- ✓ 68% Female, 30% Male
- ✓ 88% are retired
- ✓ 97% are long term residents of Simcoe County

### Community Support & Health Services

Respondents tend to have a family doctor; 89% doctor located in Simcoe County and 9% have a doctor outside of the County.

55% are not aware that they can call 2-1-1 to find out about social services in their area.



### Respect & Social Inclusion

56% believe the community values aging adults, while 34% believe it does not account for the needs of aging adults.



### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Seniors would benefit from: Snow and ice clearing on roads (43.75%) and sidewalks (32.81).

Respondents with limited mobility (wheelchair or cane) tended to indicate they would benefit from **improved accessibility** to buildings and doors and having more accessible parking spots



### Transportation

Access to a reliable vehicle is very important (95%) for respondents.

It is important to have **friend & family** who can drive and/or assist (74%) as well as having services and stores that are within **walking distance** (67%).



### Housing

94% of respondents own their homes and 92% feel their current situation fits their need. However, 72% have considered adapting their home to meet their needs as they age. Additionally, 43% said they would benefit from **improved access to retirement homes** and apartments. The top comment from Seniors is that they need **affordable housing**.



### Civic Participation & Employment

Only 29% of respondents are actively engaged in local politics

Seniors would like to be more informed about the local area (58%). Preferred methods of communication: **Internet, Newspaper, and Mail**

20% are employed However, most who are employed out of necessity are under 65 years old.

58% agree they would participate more if their were social events in the area.

*"We need an affordable well equipped retirement home here in our village"*

### Top 5 Services to Maintain Health & Independence

1. A service that helps aging adults access physical health and supportive services
2. Aging adult fitness
3. Health and wellness programs
4. Home repair and maintenance & yard work
5. Transportation to appointments & affordable home care

### Recommendations

- ✓ Increase awareness of 2-1-1
- ✓ Increase civil engagement and participation in local government amongst senior citizens
- ✓ Create affordable recreational activities and events
- ✓ Address issues around lack of affordable housing
- ✓ Improve accessibility of public buildings
- ✓ Promote services for seniors



# Age Friendly Community Survey Analysis For Township of Tiny

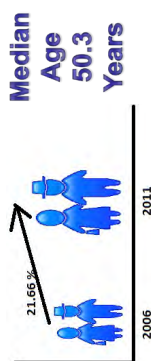
Darshak Patel, Smruti Dodiya, Shannon Daley  
Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology



## Introduction

### Background

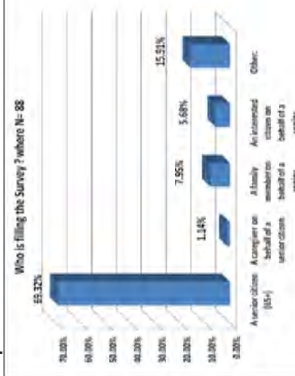
Township of Tiny is located on the peninsula that separates Severn Sound and Nottawasaga Bay at the south end of Georgian Bay, having a coastline of 70 kilometers, the 2011 population of Tiny was 11,232 (4.4% increase from 2006).



### Objectives

To evaluate the outcome of the survey and identify the senior citizen quality of life in the Township of Tiny.

### Population



### Limitation

The total number of respondents was 88 (3.62% of the total senior population) which is considered small sample number.

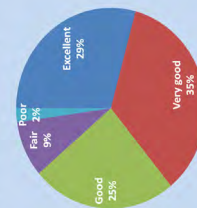
## Analysis

A community survey was designed and conducted by the County of Simcoe under the Age Friendly Community (AFC) Campaign to evaluate the satisfaction levels of senior citizens in accordance to the facilities available in the community.

The convenience sampling approach was used to determine potential respondents.

Approximately 90% of senior citizens feel more physically and mentally fit than other people of the same age. Seniors are however, concerned about losing the independence that comes from health.

### Physical and Mental health perception



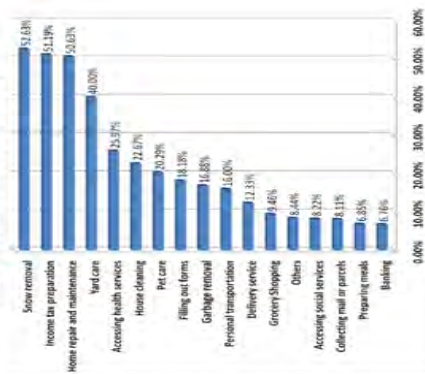
### More concerns about Losing Independence than Health, N=88



## Results

- 77.78% of senior citizens are able walk unassisted.
- 95% of senior citizens use a personal vehicle to get around in the area.
- 60% of senior citizens are considering making changes in their houses to meet possible future needs.

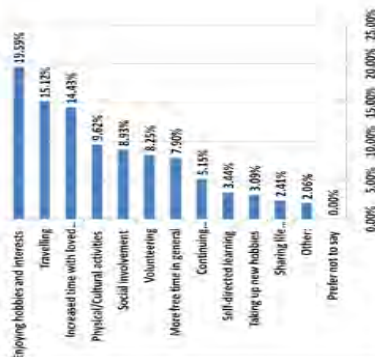
### Most people needs help in physical work



- 74% of seniors are able to find information about making changes in their home.
- 92% of senior citizens have a family doctor within the County of Simcoe.
- Almost 90% of senior citizens were able to access help they needed in past year.
- 65% of Senior citizens are not aware about 211 dialing process.

## Conclusions

Senior citizens are looking forward to do recreational activities and enjoy their hobbies



Most of senior citizens are satisfied with the services from the Township of Tiny, however they want to see improvement in snow and ice clearing, seating availability on streets, availability of washrooms, and the accessibility of buildings (ex. ramps).

Overall most senior citizens feel physically and mentally fit and can do their own work independently, currently. The future is their concern as they do not wish to lose independence.

More planning is required to spread awareness about 211 dialing and its benefits.



Printed by MegaPrint Inc. www.megaprint.com

## Wasaga Beach

The Town of  
**WASAGA BEACH**

# Wasaga Beach: The Profound Needs of an Aging Community

Shaina Haas, Daniela Pimi, David Herzog  
Affiliates of Georgian College and Simcoe County

### Age-Friendly Community Project Background

Wasaga Beach is one of 16 municipalities located in the Simcoe County region. Situated 132 km North of Toronto, Wasaga's population is comprised of 11,000 people. Of these residents, an estimated 10,000 have been espoused for 15 years or longer.

The town of Wasaga possesses a population density of 810.5 per square km. Encompassing 13.6 km of land, this township houses approximately 3,000 senior citizens aged 65 and above. Of this aging population, male residents account for half of the elderly community.

### The Beach is Just the Beginning

### Methods & Limitations

The Age-Friendly community project focuses on seniors in the Wasaga area. A county wide survey was conducted online and in person. Participants were recruited through municipality websites, personal emails, and at community events.

There were 52 senior respondents, representing 1.7% of the total senior population. There were 16 completed paper surveys and 36 completed online surveys. Remaining respondents comprise of: a caregiver or family member on behalf of a senior, an interested citizen on behalf of a senior, and an unspecified group.

Respondents only accounted for 1.7% of the desired demographic. This sample size is extremely small, and thus limits the significance of results. Responses collected were too small in scale, and not representative of the wider population. The survey was further exacerbated by invalid responses, representing 8% of all short answer responses.

### An Active Community is a Healthy Community

“...paved pathways for walking if possible and a paved track around the sports park about 1 kilometer for measured walking or running...”

“We need a park in our area with a playground and a community garden close by”

### Transportation

Having access to a form of transportation is necessary for the older population in Wasaga Beach to remain active and engaged within the community. The current transportation system in Wasaga Beach provides few options for the aging population, as the following results suggest:

- Walking is the primary medium of commuting
- Nearly all respondents (90%) rely on their personal vehicle for transportation
- Many seniors rely on friends and family members for transportation

### Analysis of Data

### Housing

Main concerns respondents have are about housing in Wasaga Beach. The need for affordable housing must accommodate their aging needs:

- 76% of respondents live with someone, many people have to live with family members in order to receive needed care
- The community would benefit most from single-family dwellings, apartments, and retirement residences
- 88% are concerned that their future living situation will not be affordable

### Discussion & Conclusion

The larger majority of respondents were mostly concerned with the town's infrastructure. Constructing more sidewalks is necessary in order to accommodate an alternative medium to public transit. Also, active public transportation routes should be more effective, wherein they should deviate through more residential roads. Affordable housing has influenced the increasing amount of retirees in Wasaga Beach, but public transportation has not kept up to speed in accommodating this growing senior demographic.

Overall, the seniors in Wasaga Beach show the desire to stay active while they can. They want to be as active as possible, and want to be the community by taking part in the decisions that will impact the area. The scenic beach areas offer many opportunities to explore and relax.

### Community Support and Health Services

The aging population in Wasaga Beach is concerned with maintaining their independence. There must be support for sufficient health care. These claims are based on the following:

- 60% are most concerned with their declining health
- Most are most concerned with losing their independence
- Most individuals will benefit from having help accessing health services

### Recommendations

Community officials of Wasaga must implement the following to establish a more viable, age-friendly community for seniors to thrive.

- Invest in affordable residence projects (condos)
- Make improvements towards local transport accessibility
- Improve the town's infrastructure
- Increase accessibility to communal services
- Establish youth intergenerational programming regimes
- Increase the amount of available public spaces for community engagement
- Restructure the town's operations (ex. sidewalks)

### Services Desired by Respondents

### References

Dahms, F. (1996). the greying of south georgian bay. *The Canadian Geographer*, 40(2), 148-163. doi:10.1111/j.1541-0064.1996.tb00442.x

## References

Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 2007, World Health Organization

Finding the Right Fit – Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide, 2015, Ontario Seniors' Secretariat (OSS)









[simcoe.ca/age-friendly](https://simcoe.ca/age-friendly)