



Action Plan

2017 – 2020





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Acknowledgements

This Age Friendly London Action Plan 2017 – 2020 represents the combined vision of older adult community members, service providers, organizations, working group chairs, City champions, and members. Their ideas, solutions, and contributions made the development of this plan possible, and will guide our work together to improve age friendliness in London.

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Letter From The Co-Chairs

In June 2016, the Age Friendly London Network celebrated the completion of our first community Action Plan. We learned a lot in our first three years and we are very proud of our accomplishments. We are also excited to see the Network creating opportunities for community collaboration and engagement.

The Network completed a comprehensive Impact Assessment on the work of our first Action Plan in October 2016. It was demonstrated that progress has been made in all areas and we also confirmed that there is more work to be done. Through the Impact Assessment and in the development of our new Action Plan, we asked Londoners what was working well and what changes they would like to see to make our city even more age friendly. The feedback we received was insightful, diverse, and reflected many different perspectives from older adults, caregivers, service providers, and others.

In our new Action Plan, you will see common themes running through the eight focus areas. The new Action Plan has an enhanced focus on engaging older adults from diverse backgrounds, improving communication and information-sharing, and making evidence-informed decisions. This Action Plan will push us forward as a community to strengthen the Network, support organizations working together, and engage and empower all older adults to participate in their neighbourhoods and age well.

Recent census data has shown that for the first time in Canadian history, the number of older adults age 65 and older is greater than the number of children under 15. This is an important turning point in our society and it demands a change in how we think about aging and older adults. The Age Friendly London Network is preparing for these changes and will continue to work at being a diverse, vibrant, caring, and healthy community, which empowers all individuals to age well and have opportunities to achieve their full potential.

Sincerely,

The Co-Chairs of the Age Friendly London Network

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Margery Sherritt
Bonnie Quesnel
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Katrine Barton Coward*

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Summary

Number of older adults, 65+ in London, Ontario

*Projection

2036*

103,000

2016

64,000

1996

40,500

Age Friendly London Network

245



Network Members

8



Working Groups



141
Working Group
Members

37



Organizations

The Development Of The Action Plan

500

community members provided feedback through the Impact Assessment

200+

community members were involved in building the Action Plan, including:

60

immigrant and newcomer older adults contributed to the development of the Action Plan through focus groups





Introduction

About Age Friendly Communities

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 the livelihood of people of all ages (World Health Organization, 2005).

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed the concept of an age friendly city. In 2005, the WHO established the Age Friendly Cities Project, a partnership between 35 cities around the world aimed to make communities better, healthier, and safer places for older adults to live and thrive. 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.

To date, hundreds of cities around the world, including the City of London, have focused on making their communities more age friendly.

About The Age Friendly London Network

In 2010, London became the first city in Canada to join the World Health Organization Global Network of Age Friendly Cities. Membership in the Network represents a city's commitment to improving its age friendliness and to engaging older adults in the process. Age Friendly London was also identified as a strategy in the City of London Strategic Plan 2015-2019 within the "strengthening our community" area of focus.

The Age Friendly London Network (the Network) is a community-based network with the vision of a *diverse, vibrant, caring, and healthy community, which empowers all individuals to age well and have opportunities to achieve their full potential.*

The Network membership is comprised of older adults, representatives from senior-serving organizations, and others who are interested in making London a more age friendly city. There are eight working groups, one for each of the eight focus areas of age friendliness. The City of London provides the backbone support to the Network although the community is the leader of change. The overall governing body responsible for implementation is the Network. The eight focus areas represent aspects of the physical and social environments that impact people's ability to age actively, maintain independence, and improve quality of life. For more information about the Network, please visit www.london.ca/agefriendly.

The Action Planning Process

To create the Age Friendly London Action Plan 2017 – 2020, the Age Friendly London Network facilitated multiple stages of community engagement and focused planning. The action planning process incorporated the following stages:

Stage #1

Community Conversation

- March 22, 2017
- Participants shared ideas, improvements, and solutions about each of the eight focus areas.

Stage #2

Action Planning Sessions

- March 27 & 28, 2017 and April 12 & 13, 2017
- Working group members participated in two separate working group sessions for each focus area.
- The 2016 Impact Assessment, input from the community consultation, and plans from City of London initiatives and other community plans were used to formulate the new Action Plan.
- Specific strategies and actions were developed for each focus area.

Stage #3

Community Validation

- April 26, 2017 to May 5, 2017
- Community members provided feedback on the Action Plan.
- Network staff intentionally and strategically connected with underrepresented and isolated older adults and seniors' groups.
- Working group members had the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Revisions were made to the strategies and actions based on input from the community.

Stage #4

Action Plan Finalization And Endorsement

- May 30, 2017
- The Action Plan was taken to the Network for endorsement.
- The membership endorsed the Age Friendly London Action Plan 2017 – 2020.

Network Strategies

The Age Friendly London Action Plan 2017 – 2020 includes five core network strategies.

- **Strengthen The Age Friendly London Network**
- **Engage And Empower ALL Older Adults**
- **Work Together To Improve Age Friendliness**
- **Use Research To Create Impact**
- **Capture Emergent Opportunities**

Most of the strategies developed through the action planning process aligned with a specific focus area of age friendliness, however, a number of ideas emerged that apply to the Network overall. These strategies reflect the principles that will strengthen and guide our work over the next three years.

Strengthen The Age Friendly London Network

Continuing our work to strengthen the Network is key to the implementation of the Action Plan. This will happen by sharing our plan, communicating our work, growing the Network, working to make sure it reflects the diversity of our community, and making it the place in London for community discussions with older adults. The following actions will assist us in strengthening our presence:

- 1 Share the Age Friendly London Action Plan 2017 – 2020 with the community.
- 2 Increase meaningful participation of older adults from diverse communities in the Network and working groups.
- 3 Engage every senior-serving organization in London to become a member of the Network and participate in a meaningful way to strengthen the quality of life of older adults.
- 4 Improve communication and sharing of information among working groups and within the Network overall.



Engage And Empower ALL Older Adults

Engaging and empowering older adults to be leaders in the community is key to the implementation of many of the strategies in this Action Plan. The Network actions to achieve this are:

1

Outreach to diverse and underrepresented older adults (newcomers and immigrants, visible minorities, indigenous, LGBTQ, persons living with low income, and persons with disabilities) to remove barriers and support their participation.

2

Encourage and empower older adults to connect and become leaders in the community and their neighbourhoods.

3

Engage older adults in local decision making and other community building activities.



Work Together To Improve Age Friendliness

This strategy is about changing the way organizations and agencies work to support older adults. Improvements can be realized both within organizations and the way organizations work together. Supporting organizations to make change will be key to implementing the Action Plan and will include the following actions:

1

Establish a commitment from member agencies and organizations to improve age friendliness both within their organizations and in the work they do.

2

Develop and apply an age friendly lens to the work of the Network, with special emphasis on how our work impacts diverse groups.

3

Encourage organizations, businesses, and government agencies to apply an age friendly lens to the work they do every day.

4

Report annually on the work being accomplished by community organizations and agencies to demonstrate how they are implementing age friendly strategies.



Use Research To Create Impact

Using best practices and research to inform the implementation of our plan will ensure we are making the best decisions as we move towards making our community more age friendly. We are committed to tracking our successes and challenges and regularly reporting on our impact. The Network will deliver on the following actions:

1 Use the best available research and data to make evidence-informed decisions about implementing strategies and actions.

2 Track outcomes and indicators to measure our progress.

3 Be accountable and report on the work of the Network on a yearly basis.



Capture Emergent Opportunities

It is important that the Network is able to react to opportunities that may emerge that were not anticipated when this Action Plan was developed. Capturing emergent opportunities can occur at any time throughout the three years of the Action Plan and will include the following actions:

- 1 Make collective decisions about the inclusion of additional strategies as new opportunities arise throughout the course of the Action Plan.
- 2 Account for new actions in an annual report.
- 3 Encourage discussions with the Network and its working groups for any emerging issues that impact older adults.



Eight Focus Areas

The World Health Organization defined these eight focus areas as being key elements of an age friendly city. The Age Friendly London Network has adopted these eight focus areas in addition to the overall Network Strategies.

- **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings**
- **Transportation**
- **Housing**
- **Social Participation**
- **Respect & Social Inclusion**
- **Employment & Volunteerism***
- **Communication & Information**
- **Community Support & Health Services**

Each focus area in this Action Plan includes a brief description of the domain of age friendliness, as defined by the World Health Organization, as well as specific working group strategies and corresponding actions.

The strategies are objectives that each focus area working group will work towards for the next three years. The actions are specific steps the groups will complete to achieve these strategies. While some actions are exclusive to one focus area, other actions provide the opportunity for collaboration across groups. The specific activities for each action will be detailed further through implementation plans developed by each focus area working group.

**Formerly Civic Participation & Employment (as named by the World Health Organization). The focus area was renamed by the Network to capture the new emphasis on employment and volunteerism. Strategies related to civic participation are now incorporated in the Network Strategies and opportunities for civic engagement will be identified moving forward in all eight of the focus areas.*



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Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence, and quality of life of older adults, and affect their ability to age in place. Physical accessibility of many outdoor spaces and buildings has improved and will continue to advance as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act standards are put into place.

Strategies

- 1 Influence neighbourhood design to support aging in place.
- 2 Increase the age friendliness of parks, pathways, and trails.

Actions

- A Engage the City of London to determine how to promote consideration of age friendly design in new developments.
 - B Promote the benefits of aging in place, including the benefits of compact, infill development, and multiple housing types within neighbourhoods.
 - C Create tools for builders, planners, and designers to educate them about the design needs of older adults that support aging in place.
 - D Support older adults to lead and participate in local neighbourhood safety audits.
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- A Review the Age Friendly Parks Checklist using a safety lens, and use it to identify, prioritize, and advocate for future upgrades of parks.
 - B Promote specific parks as age friendly and celebrate them.
 - C Develop signage in parks to highlight amenities, accessibility, and how to be a courteous pathway user to help older adults become more active.

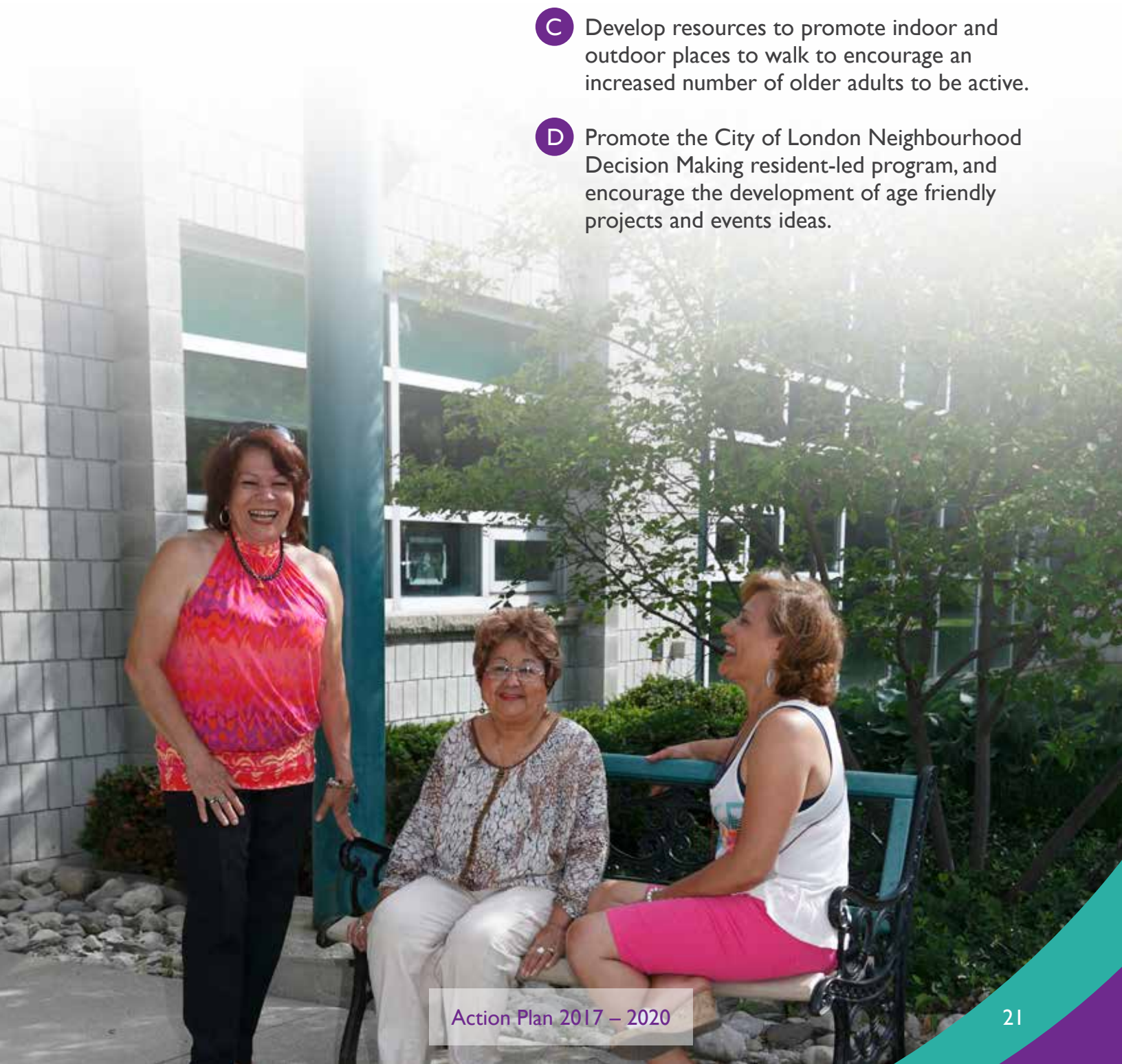
3 Promote existing age friendly programs and amenities.

A Advertise and promote age friendly amenities of neighbourhood gathering places such as community centres, libraries, and parks.

B Promote existing programs such as Clean & Green, Adopt-A-Park, TreeME Fund, and Community Gardens to engage older adults in their neighbourhoods.

C Develop resources to promote indoor and outdoor places to walk to encourage an increased number of older adults to be active.

D Promote the City of London Neighbourhood Decision Making resident-led program, and encourage the development of age friendly projects and events ideas.



Transportation

Transportation is a key factor influencing active aging. Transportation allows people to not only access amenities of daily life, but also to participate in activities, connect with family and friends, and contribute to their communities.

Strategies

- 1 Engage older adults in the planning and development of transportation initiatives.
- 2 Improve the accessibility of city roads and sidewalks.

Actions

- A Advocate for the London Transit Commission to better accommodate older adults' destinations in route planning.
 - B Create opportunities for older adults to participate in decision-making regarding transportation.
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- A Advocate for larger street name signs to ensure they are visible and easily read by older adults.
 - B Improve street crossing locations and times where there is demand from older adult pedestrians.
 - C Advocate for increased efforts to make sure sidewalks are well connected, safe, well maintained, and accessible to encourage walking.
 - D Advocate for improved snow and ice removal, noting the need for timely snow clearing in areas where older adults live and the places they visit.

3 Increase engagement of older adults within neighbourhoods to develop and promote active transportation initiatives.


- A Implement a "walk your city" signage initiative to encourage active transportation.
 - B Create a neighbourhood walking audit for older adults.
 - C Develop a guide to age friendly outdoor recreational trails in London.
 - D Pilot a cycling workshop for older adults.
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4 Improve accessibility of public transit.

- A Develop a tool for neighbourhood groups and residents to conduct audits of bus stops to ensure shelter and benches are available in safe and accessible locations.
 - B Advocate for more bus stops closer to locations where older adults live and to places where older adults visit and gather to improve social participation and access to necessities of daily life.
 - C Review transit travel information systems by improving and adding on-board visual aids and audio notifications and by enhancing displays at bus stops.
-

5 Improve transportation options for older adults across the city.

- A Research affordable transportation options to ensure older adults are able to travel to destinations across the city.
- B Advocate for a review of para-transit to increase the availability and reliability of options.
- C Increase the capacity of volunteer transportation organizations.



6 Enhance access to transportation information.

- A Review supports and programs available for older adults transitioning from being drivers to non-drivers.
- B Share information with family, friends, and healthcare providers to learn how and when to intervene when someone may no longer be a safe driver.
- C Promote existing age friendly transportation resources and make them available in multiple languages.
- D Host workshops and training sessions to assist older adults who would benefit from using transit services.
- E Provide customer service information in multiple languages to ensure all older adults can access information.

Housing

Housing is essential to health and quality of life. Where we live is more than just a roof – it’s a home, a place that is familiar and loved. Most older adults want to live in the residence of their choice, usually an existing home or within an existing neighbourhood, for as long as they are able, as they age. This is called “aging in place” and includes being able to access services or other supports as their needs change over time.

Strategies

- 1 Raise awareness of housing options available for older adults.
- 2 Support and empower older adults to age in place with dignity.

Actions

- A Promote the Seniors Housing Directory and Housing Options Guide to the broader community.
 - B Provide information to community groups about available housing options so they can support older adults.
 - C Identify and share updated information on housing services, specialized housing, home modification, social housing, and economic supports.
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- A Advocate for affordable and accessible housing options to allow individuals to stay in their neighbourhoods as they age.
 - B Research innovative home sharing initiatives such as intergenerational housing, flex housing, and co-housing to advocate for increased options for the community.
 - C Provide information on home adaptation and modification resources, including funding, how to choose a contractor, and Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation resources.

3 Educate housing providers about the need for increased appropriate housing stock for older adults.

- A Research and identify the gaps between appropriate housing stock and the demand. Map the areas of highest demand.
- B Develop a communication plan targeting housing providers to bring a greater awareness to the need for increased levels and types of housing stock for older adults.
- C Advocate to all levels of government for increased and greater variety of housing stock for older adults.
- D Collaborate with local developers to educate and explore options to meet the housing needs of the aging population.



Social Participation

Participating in recreation, leisure, social, cultural, and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with family, allows older adults to enjoy respect and esteem, and maintain and establish supportive relationships.

Strategies

- 1 Build strong partnerships among organizations to enhance social opportunities.
- 2 Reduce barriers to participation in recreation and social opportunities for older adults.

Actions

- A Work with service providers to improve access to program information on physical accessibility, audio and visual aids, and transportation options.
 - B Improve databases of information that include recreation and social opportunities for older adults and explore ways to improve access to this information.
 - C Create opportunities where organizations and neighbourhood associations can network and share information to enhance neighbourhood-based social participation.
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- A Expand opportunities for the lending of assistive devices to support older adults with disabilities to participate in recreation and informal social gatherings.
 - B Promote inclusive and accessible “social space” for people to gather informally in community centres and other gathering places.
 - C Research the implementation of an “age friendly buddy” program to engage marginalized and isolated older adults and reduce barriers to their participation.
 - D Explore why older adults are not attending or are dropping out of programs and support service providers to follow up with people who drop out and provide the needed resources and support.

3 Promote the benefits of older adults participating in meaningful activities.

A Plan and support community events that promote participation (e.g. REXPO, Leisure Fairs, Age Friendly Conference).

B Create a video series to promote recreation and leisure to older adults.

C Create a virtual tour of recreation facilities and programs to promote local programming.



Respect & Social Inclusion

Older adults report experiencing conflicting types of behavior and attitudes towards them, sometimes feeling respected and included, while other times experiencing a lack of consideration from others. The respect and inclusion people experience is tied to their quality of life and social participation.

Strategies

- **1** Reframe how older adults are portrayed and celebrate their contributions in our community.

- **2** Increase and promote quality intergenerational opportunities that are mutually beneficial.

Actions

- A** Engage diverse older adults to define what it means to be respected and included.
 - B** Implement a public awareness campaign, such as "every day hero" to share positive stories about older adults.
 - C** Partner with school boards, healthcare providers, and senior-serving organizations to implement and expand anti-ageism education and training.
 - D** Explore opportunities for older adults to share their talents, expertise, and knowledge with the community.
 - E** Advocate for an older adult category on the Mayor's Honour List.
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- A** Review existing intergenerational programs and identify the mutual benefits for participants.
 - B** Develop and distribute a best practices resource for implementing intergenerational programs.
 - C** Establish a coordinated and collaborative approach to engaging schools and youth-focused organizations in intergenerational activities.

3 Empower older adults to have a voice in their own advocacy.

A Conduct an environmental scan of current advocacy groups for older adults.

B Build partnerships with advocacy groups to promote a common agenda and mutually reinforcing activities.

C Encourage older adults to participate as decision makers within the healthcare field.

D Collaborate to raise awareness of elder abuse.



Employment & Volunteerism

Older adults do not stop contributing to their communities upon retirement. Many continue to provide paid, unpaid, and voluntary work. An age friendly community offers opportunities for older adults to continue to contribute to their communities through paid employment and volunteerism.

Strategies

- 1 Improve access to information about employment opportunities for older job seekers.
- 2 Increase meaningful volunteer opportunities for older adults.
- 3 Increase skill building opportunities for older adults.

Actions

- A Promote Experience Works 2 to agencies, employers, and older adult job seekers.
 - B Collaborate with existing employment service networks to improve access to information about employment opportunities.
 - C Provide older adults with information related to entrepreneurship and self-employment.
 - D Investigate new and innovative methods to reach older adults who want to work, and connect them with employment supports.
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- A Assist organizations through training, resources, and tools to provide clear, accessible, and meaningful volunteer opportunities.
 - B Assist employers, unions, and retiree groups to promote volunteer opportunities to retiring workers.
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- A Develop and promote skills training programs and opportunities.
 - B Provide assistance with résumé writing, completing application forms, and interview skills.
 - C Improve access to technology training and computer classes.

Communication & Information

Staying connected to people, activities and events, and the ability to access information, is vital for active aging. The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies means there are more and more ways to stay connected, but requires access for older adults to new technology.

Strategies

- 1 Communicate and promote the work and accomplishments of the Network.
- 2 Promote resources and tools that support our community to better serve older adults.

Actions

- A Define core age friendly messages for Network promotion and recruitment.
 - B Create and implement a communication plan and marketing strategy to raise awareness of the Network and our Action Plan within the community, including businesses and service agencies.
 - C Create a toolkit to support working groups to share their messages and resources and best reach target groups.
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- A Promote and distribute the Age Friendly Business Resource Guide.
 - B Research the implementation of an "age friendly connector" program to connect older adults with information and services.
 - C Build an inventory of neighbourhood organizations, gathering places, and community hubs where information can be effectively distributed.
 - D Continue to promote and share information about age friendly resources and supports through 211 and InformationLondon.ca.

Community Support & Health Services

Health and support services are essential to maintaining vitality and independence for older adults. This includes a wide network of services, including hospitals, healthcare providers, caregivers, family supports, home care, and community organizations.

Strategies

- **I** Reduce barriers that older adults experience with finding and using healthcare services and community supports.

Actions

- A** Engage with health planning organizations to better understand where the Network can have influence.
- B** Advocate for and promote multi-cultural and multi-lingual healthcare and social services for older adults.
- C** Support information sharing and collaboration to strengthen the referral process between community support agencies and health services.
- D** Recommend further age friendly improvements to information resources for health services and community supports to make them more user-friendly.
- E** Investigate programs that provide “check-ins” and emotional or social support in non-crisis situations.



- ▶ 2 Improve awareness of existing programs and services that support healthy aging.

- A Partner with educational institutions to share information with future healthcare workers on healthy aging programs and supports that are available in the community.
- B Engage private home care and other community support agencies to help with the promotion of community supports.
- C Ensure older adult volunteers are provided with the support and training to mentor their peers in health promotion.

- ▶ 3 Improve awareness and availability of services and supports for caregivers.

- A Identify existing organizations and resources available to support caregivers and identify gaps.
- B Create and implement an advocacy strategy to improve supports for caregivers.
- C Work with the Caregiver Exchange to improve awareness of available supports.
- D Explore ways to improve relief, respite, and support for informal and family caregivers.



Next Steps

The Age Friendly London Action Plan 2017 – 2020 will guide the work of the Network, the City of London, and senior-serving organizations in our collective efforts to increase age friendliness in London.

It is an exciting time to be an age friendly community. As our population continues to grow older, we are thankful for the commitment of individuals and organizations who serve and support older adults and are working collaboratively to improve age friendliness in London.

The Network is committed to deepening our impact and building on the work that has been accomplished in the past three years. Through our strategies and actions, as well as the over-arching network strategies, we will seek to make a difference in the lives of older adults in London and create change that will last well into the future.

We are encouraged to see renewed energy and focus around this new Action Plan with an emphasis on increasing meaningful participation of older adults from diverse communities in our city. As we move forward, how we work together to strengthen the Network and engage all older adults will be just as important as what work we complete.

Increasing Network membership, improving communication, and applying an age friendly lens will be essential to our work across the eight focus areas.

The eight working groups of the Network are responsible for carrying out this Action Plan. To ensure effective implementation, each working group will develop an implementation plan that identifies specific tasks, timelines, leads, and partners for each of the actions. Working groups have made a commitment to meet regularly to review progress. Results will be shared through annual reports to the community.

The Action Plan moves us closer to our vision of a *diverse, vibrant, caring, and healthy community, which empowers all individuals to age well and have opportunities to achieve their full potential.* The successful implementation of the Action Plan requires the energy, skills, and talents of many Londoners. We encourage you to join us and be part of the exciting future of the Age Friendly London Network.



Action Plan

2017 – 2020