

age friendly **LONDON**



A Three Year Action Plan

Developed by the
Age Friendly London Task Force

Fall 2012

500 Londoners
consulted

+

100 Task Force
members

+

50 community
conversations

=

1 vision

of an age friendly London

A Letter from the Task Force

Londoners are proud of their city and care deeply about its future development. This sense of mission has motivated more than one hundred citizens to participate in an extensive series of workshops and meetings over the past year. The Age Friendly Task Force speaks for seniors as well as many community stakeholders representing a great diversity of cultures, backgrounds and services.

The Age Friendly Task Force applauds Council for encouraging and supporting many community groups to participate in a broad process of consultation and the many citizens across the city who are participating in this process. Extensive consultation with the people who live here is indeed the best foundation for building the future of London.

Under the proficient and skillful facilitation of City of London staff, the Age Friendly Task Force has met formally for more than 30 hours over the past year as well as countless hours of study and conversation around the issues and challenges of fostering a more age friendly London.

The result has been the creation of many recommendations for action in eight distinct themes of enrichment of life and community experience in London. This document will provide Council with a 3 year road map to the future along with a toolkit of strategies and actions to transform plans to reality.

We are proud of our work. We do not see this report as the end of our task, but rather the beginning of the steps needed to succeed. Many of the recommendations are no-cost or low-cost and many involve the development of community partnerships. All are designed to increase the age friendly atmosphere of the City of London and to enhance the quality of life in London for all citizens.

With sincere anticipation,

The Age Friendly London Task Force
September 2012



OUR VISION OF AN

age friendly **LONDON**

A diverse, vibrant, caring and healthy community which empowers all individuals to age well and have opportunities to achieve their full potential.



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What is Age Friendly London?

In 2010, London became the first city in Canada to join the World Health Organization (WHO) 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.

In 2011, City Council established the Age Friendly London Task Force. The Task Force is a group of over 100 older adults, baby boomers, service providers, caregivers and other community members.

Over the past year, the Task Force has met on a monthly basis to develop a vision, strategies and action steps focused on improving the quality of life for older adults in London. The Task Force engaged a broader group of citizens and stakeholders throughout this process.

The Age Friendly London Action Plan is a road map for improving London's age friendliness over the next three years.

It builds upon the numerous initiatives already underway in London, and identifies that everyone in our community has a role to play in improving age friendliness.

did you know?
London's older adult
population is growing at twice
the rate of the overall
population.



eight focus areas

the WHO defined these eight areas as being key elements of an age friendly city



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



Transportation



Housing



Social Participation



Respect & Social Inclusion



Civic Participation & Employment



Communication & Information



Community Support & Health Services



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'.

"I love London for its trees!"

year1

Strategy #1:

Advocate City Council to advance timing of construction of multi-purpose recreation facilities.

Advocate City Council to advance the timing of construction of **multi-purpose recreation facilities**.

Strategy #2:

Improve cleanliness of parks, trails and pathways.

Continue implementation of the ongoing **Adopt-a-Park** program.

Improve the ongoing **Clean & Green** initiative where volunteers pick up litter in parks and along pathways.

Strategy #3:

Improve access to washrooms.

Increase number of **washrooms** that are open all year.

Increase number of **washrooms** in parks and along trails.

Strategy #4:

Ensure older adult needs are considered in the design and construction of new or repurposed community centres and parks.

Create opportunities for older adults to participate in the design of new and repurposed **community centres**.

Ensure **accessibility standards** are met or exceeded in new construction and repurpose/renewal projects at community centres (years 1-3, as projects occur).

Ensure older adult **program needs** are considered in the design of community centres, including the potential to cluster services (years 1-3, as projects occur).

year2

year3

Continue to advocate City Council to advance the timing of construction of **multi-purpose recreation facilities**.

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Continue implementation of the ongoing **Adopt-a-Park** program.

Continue to improve the **Clean & Green** initiative.

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Continue to improve the **Clean & Green** initiative.

Continue to increase number of **washrooms** open all year, and in parks and along trails.

Develop **signage at park entrances** that identifies locations of washrooms, including hours of operation.

Investigate **age friendly park design** as a way to create gathering places and community focal points in parks.

Continue to create opportunities for older adults to participate in the design of new and repurposed **community centres** as projects occur.

Ensure **accessibility standards** are met or exceeded in community centre projects.

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Outdoor Spaces & Buildings



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’.



“Recreation facilities are the heart and soul of a neighbourhood.”

Strategy #5:

Increase walkability and safety of sidewalks, trails and pathways.

Investigate potential to improve sharing of the **pathway and trail system** for pedestrians and others - speed limit enforcement, separated bike paths, and other ideas to improve safety.

Develop **rules for electric bikes** using pathways and trails.

Identify priority areas that need improved **connectivity of sidewalks, trails and pathways**.

Strategy #6:

Increase seating everywhere in the city.

Increase number of **benches** in parks and along pathways (years 1-3).

Strategy #7:

Improve age friendliness of signage across the city.

Improve the readability of **street signs** by changing the font size and style.

Strategy #8:

Improve age friendliness of businesses and increase support of local business.

Investigate **best practices** around Age Friendly Businesses.

Develop a plan for implementation of an **Age Friendly Business** designation program (years 1-2).

Continue the **Walk-to-Shop** initiative (years 1-3).

Strategy #9:

Increase the number of community gardens.

Increase number of **community gardens** in the city, especially in areas where older adults live.

year2

year3

Provide **distance markers** and **directional signage** along pathways to identify locations in case of emergency (years 2-3).

Investigate feasibility of increased **snow clearing** (years 2-3).

Investigate potential to improve seasonal **maintenance of sidewalks**.

Improve connectivity of sidewalks, trails and pathways within and between neighbourhoods (years 2-3).

Investigate feasibility of increased **snow clearing** of pathways.

Investigate creation of a **winter walking conditions bulletin**.

Increase **seating at businesses**, big box stores, etc (years 2-3).

Investigate partnering with schools or colleges to **engage students in building benches**.

Investigate possibility of developing **site plan standards** to require more benches in new, large commercial developments.

Encourage businesses and other service providers to improve visibility of **street numbers and signage**.

Continue to encourage businesses and other service providers to improve visibility of **street numbers and signage**.

Implement an **Age Friendly Business** program.

Continue implementation of an **Age Friendly Business** program.

Increase number of **community gardens** in the city, especially in areas where older adults live.

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Outdoor Spaces & Buildings (2)



Transportation

Transportation is a key factor influencing active aging. It is an area that impacts other focus areas such as civic participation and access to community and health services.

year1

Strategy #1:

Increase awareness of existing transportation supports.

Develop a comprehensive document to **raise awareness** of transportation supports available to older adults.

Encourage community partners to engage London Transit Commission through the **Get On Board** program to educate Londoners on how to use the bus system (years 1-3).

Strategy #2:

Improve participation of older adults in the transit planning process.

Work with London Transit Commission to hold annual **Town Hall meetings**.

Encourage older adult representation on the **Accessible Public Transit Advisory Committee** (years 1-3).

Strategy #3:

Improve amenities at bus stops.



“Transportation links us to each other!”

year2

year3

Improve London Transit Commission **communication strategies** to consider older adult and multi-language needs (route information, signage, web site, etc.).

Continue to improve London Transit Commission **communication strategies** to consider older adult and multi-language needs (route information, signage, web site, etc.).

Continue London Transit Commission annual **Town Hall meetings**.

Continue London Transit Commission annual **Town Hall meetings**.

Review existing system to improve **amenities at bus stops** (benches, shelters, information displays on schedules and rates, etc.).

Continue to review existing system to improve **amenities at bus stops** (benches, shelters, information displays on schedules and rates, etc.).



Transportation

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Strategy #4:

Address access to public transit for older adults and older adults with a disability.

Develop **education and training program** for all drivers (bus, taxi, etc.) on how to be sensitive to older adult needs and how to handle those with support needs (years 1-3).

Strategy #5:

Increase opportunities for safe and active transportation.

Improve pedestrian safety at crossings by **installing countdowns** and **longer crossing times** in areas where older adults live or access services (years 1-3).

Petition Province to change traffic laws to improve **pedestrian and cyclist safety** at roundabouts.

Increase, improve and maintain **bike lanes and paths** throughout the city (years 1-3).

Provide more **bicycle parking** with lockups downtown and in other areas.

Strategy #6:

Improve parking for older adults across the city.

Consider longer maximum times on **downtown parking meters**.

Advocate malls and hospitals to set aside spaces for **seniors only parking**.

year2

year3

Investigate and consider non-peak **free or nominal fares** for older adults.

Investigate ways to improve **affordability** of public transit for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Continue to investigate ways to improve **affordability** of public transit for older adults and persons with disabilities.

Investigate and implement a **bike sharing** program.

Investigate effectiveness of current **traffic calming** measures and identify specific sites for future traffic calming.

Investigate and implement a **car sharing** program.

Investigate and implement **priority parking** for seniors.

Improve **accessibility of parking** spaces in and around parks.

Transportation (2)



Housing

Housing is essential to safety and well being. Where we live is more than just a roof - it's a home. A place that is familiar and loved, and where most older adults want to stay as long as possible. Housing and community supports are a key part of quality of life and independence.

Strategy #1:

Ensure older adult participation in London's Community Housing Strategy.

Consult older adults in monitoring the implementation of the Community Housing Strategy, including the revision of local priority rules of **social housing waiting lists** and the creation of **more affordable housing** (years 1-2).

Strategy #2:

Investigate and improve awareness of housing options for older adults.

Update **Housing Directory** to include definitions.

Update **Housing Directory** to include accessible and subsidized housing.

Investigate potential housing models, options and **best practices** for older adults and assess the feasibility for implementation in London - including examining opportunities for co-housing or shared housing, creating secondary units, integrating support services and age friendly design, improving access to transportation, etc.



“There is no place like home!”

year2

year3

Ensure older adults participate in the 18-24 month **Community Housing Strategy review** and updates.

Continue to ensure older adults participate in the 18-24 month **Community Housing Strategy review** and updates.

Identify the emerging market for **housing choices** and advocate for them (years 2-3).

Develop a **communication strategy** to inform the community of the Housing Directory and housing options.

Implement **communication strategy** to inform the community of the Housing Directory and housing options.



“Housing nourishes pride.”



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.



“Social participation keeps me young!”

Strategy #1:
Improve access to and knowledge about facilities available for use by older adults.

Strategy #2:
Improve access to programming and socializing at the neighbourhood level.

Strategy #3:
Encourage older adults to participate by providing the programs and services they need.

Strategy #4:
Develop programs and services that meet the needs of isolated older adults and remove barriers to participation.

Strategy #5:
Create a network of neighbourhood hubs to access information about programs and services.

Inventory **available space** in neighbourhoods including churches, libraries, etc.

Foster partnerships to improve access to space for older adult programming.

Advertise **age friendly amenities** of facilities (years 1-2).

Investigate opportunities to continue support for **Senior Neighbourhood Advisory Councils** (SNACs).

Develop **matching program** for newcomer seniors.

Hold an annual **Age Friendly London conference**.

Develop more opportunities for older adults to learn about technology from other adults.

Expand the **Leisure Education Awareness Program** (LEAP) to train other groups to follow the approach to bring people into activities through transition approaches.

Encourage large building managers and **landlords** to have a greater connection to senior residents.

Identify which facilities or gathering places could serve as key places to go to find information and **get connected**.

year2

year3

Advertise **age friendly amenities** of facilities.

Develop a **'Doors Open' event** for older adults including facilities, services, retirement homes, etc.

Investigate opportunities to expand **SNACs** to other neighbourhoods.

Improve access to information on **subsidies** for program participation.

Dedicate a portion of time at all community centres and gathering places for free, drop-in **older adult socializing** (years 2-3).

Develop senior-led **cultural programming** by those who have skills to share (eg. cooking).

Continue annual **Age Friendly London conference**.

Determine the program and service needs and **barriers to participation** of isolated seniors through a survey or research.

Continue to investigate opportunities to expand **SNACs** to other neighbourhoods.

Continue annual **Age Friendly London conference**.

Investigate potential of a **mentoring program** for isolated seniors.

Social Participation



Respect & Social Inclusion

Older people report experiencing conflicting types of behavior and attitudes towards them. Sometimes they feel respected and included; other times they experience a lack of consideration from others. The amount of respect and inclusion people experience is tied to their quality of life and social participation.

year1

Strategy #1:
Increase the number of intergenerational programs.

Review success of current **intergenerational programs** particularly within the newcomer community, and review best practices.

Strategy #2:
Change the stereotype of seniors and stop ageism.

Create an **Advocacy Committee** of the Age Friendly Network that can coordinate this work.

Encourage seniors and their support networks to become educated and empowered to **stand up for themselves** (years 1-3).

Provide **family education** sessions on how to support aging family members (years 1-3).

Strategy #3:
Improve recognition and acknowledgement of older adults in the community.

Identify and inventory events that **recognize accomplishments** of seniors in the community.

year2

year3

Create and expand **intergenerational** programs.

Develop a **gardening program** to match older adults (landowners or those with skills to share) with students.

Identify key areas of focus for a campaign and **identify partners**.

Develop a campaign to **change the stereotype of aging/seniors** that is organization/industry specific.

Develop a strategy to deal with ageism in the **healthcare industry** and with healthcare professionals.

Increase the profile of events recognizing the **accomplishments** of seniors.

Advocate to have seniors category added to the **Mayor's honour list**.



“We can only truly be an age friendly city when we all respect one another.”



Civic Participation & Employment

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, volunteerism and civic participation.

year1

Strategy #1:

Increase quantity and quality of volunteer opportunities for older adults.

Inventory **volunteer** and **mentorship** opportunities specific to older adults.

Investigate **barriers to volunteering**, including affordability (years 1-2).

Strategy #2:

Improve access to employment opportunities for older adults (who wish to work).

Identify **training opportunities** that exist for older adults in London.

Improve linkages of older adults to **employment agencies**.

Strategy #3:

Encourage more older adults to participate in civic affairs.

Encourage **senior participation** by asking for their input and feedback (through meetings, surveys, etc.).

Increase opportunities on the **City of London website** for input into decision making.

Review best practices and investigate potential of developing a mechanism for older adults to **advise Council**.

Implement a mechanism for senior **input to Council**.



“An adequate income is key to health, housing and the ability to participate.”

year2

year3

Develop a **'how to volunteer' guide** that highlights London success stories.

Develop a **recognition program** for older adult volunteers in the community.

Develop a **resource kit for employers and employees** to learn about the value of older adults in the workplace.

Develop workshops for older adults to generate ideas on how to **turn a hobby into a business**, or to create training and mentorship opportunities.

Implement workshops for older adults to generate ideas on how to **turn a hobby into a business**, or to create training and mentorship opportunities.

Civic Participation & Employment



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 that there are more and more ways to stay connected, but requires access for older adults to new technologies.



“If there is no communication there is no action; and if there is no action things remain stagnant.”

Strategy #1:
Create a sustainable source for all information related to older adults.

Connect with Information London/[thehelpline.ca/Savvy Seniors/Seniors Helpline/2-1-1](http://thehelpline.ca/SavvySeniors/SeniorsHelpline/2-1-1) to determine the **scope of information available**.

Coordinate efforts around **access to information** across the community.

Identify what **information older adults are looking for** and how they prefer to access information.

Create a **Facebook page** for older adults to share information and ideas.

Strategy #2:
Improve access to older adult program information.

Investigate possibility of creating a **seniors only Spectrum** program.

Investigate possibility of **sorting Spectrum programs by neighbourhood**.

Strategy #3:
Develop an Age Friendly Accreditation program for agencies, organizations and service providers.

Strategy #4:
Provide networking opportunities for agencies and organizations that service older adults.

Provide agencies and organizations that provide programs and services to older adults with **networking opportunities**.

Strategy #5:
Engage media to communicate the age friendly message.

year2

year3

Identify the **'go-to' place** for information and build awareness of it.

Develop an **education program** for older adults on where to go for information, in multiple languages.

Increase use of existing infrastructure and space to **promote information** (libraries, community centres, bus stops, doctors' offices, etc.).

Work with other organizations in the community to **improve access** to their program information.

Investigate the development of an **Age Friendly Accreditation program** for agencies, organizations and service providers that demonstrate age friendly policies and actions.

Implement an Age Friendly Accreditation program, including offering a **'seal of approval'**.

Establish a **community of practice** for older adult service providers.

Engage **local television and radio** stations to devote time for older adult programming and advertising.

Engage **local newspapers** to provide advertising of age friendly activities.

Explore possibility of publishing a **Seniors Scene magazine** with local media.



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.

Strategy #1:
Improve caregiver supports.

Develop a broad definition of caregiver and **identify caregiver needs**.

Review comprehensiveness of information available on the **Caregiver Exchange**.

Investigate opportunities for **respite care** in London and raise awareness of these opportunities.

Amend **zoning bylaw** definition of 'daycares' to include adult caregiving.

Strategy #2:
Improve awareness of and access to home care supports so more people can age in place.

Investigate developing a phone or visitor **'check in' service** for isolated older adults.

Create comprehensive list of **home care supports** available.



"This ensures we are the best we can be."

year2

year3



Implement **'check in' service** for isolated older adults.

Advocate Provincial and Federal governments for **better home supports** for older adults.

Investigate the idea of **'time banks'** and **'seniors-helping-seniors'** initiatives to improve supports to age in place (years 2-3).

Continue to advocate Provincial and Federal governments for **better home supports** for older adults.

Community Support & Health Services



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.

Strategy #3:
Improve older adults' access to and experience with the healthcare system.

Strategy #4:
Raise awareness and access to prevention and education programs.

Provide better access to **home support information** to healthcare professionals (years 1-3).

Develop a volunteer program for **multi-lingual 'system navigators'** that will act as an advocate for seniors accessing health services (years 1-3).

Raise awareness of and monitor implementation of the **Senior Friendly Hospitals Framework**.

Investigate best practices and develop an education series on **self managed healthcare**.

Coordinate **prevention and education opportunities** related to health promotion through the Stepping Out Safely Partnership.

year2

year3

Advocate Provincial and Federal governments for **improved health supports** for older adults.

Develop a mechanism for greater **integration of older adult service providers**.

Develop **referral maps** for older adult service providers.

Continue to raise awareness of and monitor implementation of the **Senior Friendly Hospitals Framework**.

Implement and publicize **education series** on how to navigate the healthcare system.

Community Support & Health Services (2)

Our Next Steps

This Three Year Action Plan represents the next step in London's journey to become more age friendly. It builds upon the numerous initiatives already underway in London, and identifies that everyone in our community has a role to play in improving age friendliness.

There are many action steps identified in this plan that require the involvement of specific organizations, and a number that identify an "Age Friendly London Network" (AFL Network) as the lead.

The Task Force has recommended that, in addition to the endorsement of this Action Plan, that a community-wide AFL Network be established involving older adults, baby boomers, service providers, community organizations and other stakeholders.

The Network, supported by the City of London, would oversee the implementation of this plan over the next three years.

The Task Force has also recommended that the action items in this plan be considered by and integrated into other community planning processes such as the Official Plan Review, ReThink London.

Achieving our vision of a more age friendly London will require significant collaboration in our community, but by working together we will make London a city that is friendly for all ages.



**an age friendly city
is a people friendly city**



london.ca/agefriendly