

## 2. Age-Friendly Survey Results

▣ Elderly friendliness refers to “the degree to which the city has achieved age-friendliness in all areas suggested by the Guidelines for an Aging Society.” Suwon analyzed it in three main ways:

### 1) Age-friendliness through policies and infrastructure

▣ Suwon is currently a young city compared to other municipalities. However, the number of elderly people is expected to continue to increase. Since there are large regional disparities in each of the four districts, policies should be tailored to each.

▣ With regards to Suwon's external environment, the plentiful number of infrastructures such as traditional markets and mini gardens are a strength. However, transportation remains a weakness.

○ The presence of traditional markets and mini gardens means that there are areas with large numbers of people. However, the local environment is not elderly-friendly and needs to be improved.

○ Currently, Suwon City is continuously expanding the mini gardens pledged during the 8<sup>th</sup> popular elections and they are expected to increase accessibility to green environments.

○ In terms of ease of transportation, the number of bus stops is low compared to other local governments, and the number of accidents involving elderly drivers and pedestrians has increased over the past decade, indicating that improvements are needed in the transportation sector among the eight areas designated by the WHO.

– Although 38 protection zones for elders have been designated, many accidents still occurred in surrounding areas. Furthermore, the smart crosswalk system is only concentrated in Yeongtong-gu and child protection zones.

▣ According to the analysis of Suwon's social and cultural environment, Suwon has relatively more age-friendly infrastructure such as welfare centers for seniors compared to other local governments. While this is a local strength, low local accessibility remains a limitation.

○ Senior welfare centers are concentrated in the city center and are located in sharehouses for the elderly, resulting in a low match between demand (elderly) and supply (infrastructure).

○ Ease of access to public transportation is important because shuttle buses going to welfare centers for seniors were abolished during COVID-19. Certain routes are currently operating, but on different routes going and coming, which makes accessibility low.

The most accessible senior welfare center has four different distinguishing characteristics. Among the four districts, Gwonseon-gu has the most senior centers, Paldal-gu has more residential senior centers, and Yeongtong-gu has more apartment-centered senior centers.

▣ According to the analysis of the health and social services environment, Suwon's regional strength are its good access to medical care and plenty of health-related infrastructure. However, there is the need to expand infrastructure that reflects the needs of the elderly.

- Gyeonggi Medical Center’s location provides good access to public healthcare services. There are also many general hospitals and medical clinics in the region, providing diverse and high-quality healthcare services to local residents.
- Suwon is the first city in Korea to operate a mental health welfare center for the elderly, another a regional strength. Moreover, one counselor is assigned to each of the six senior welfare centers.
- Suwon has more swimming pools in social welfare facilities than other regions. The city also has many public sports facilities in the region.
  - Interviews done in the study revealed that older adults have experienced being denied access to bathhouses and swimming pools when using them alone.
- Suwon City has many parks compared to other local governments. However, despite the high use of parks by the elderly, the lack of health-related facilities and programs overall was raised as a limitation.
- Each welfare center for seniors has a gym, but there is a lack of senior-friendly exercise facilities.

〈Table 5〉 Analysis of Age-Friendliness by Area in Suwon (Summary)

Division	Weaknesses	Strengths
External environment and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CCTV installation status</li> <li>○ Safety emergency bell installation status</li> <li>○ Parks and public restrooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More green spaces through mini gardens</li> <li>○ Lots of parks</li> </ul>
Ease of transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bus stop construction status</li> <li>○ Traffic accidents</li> <li>○ Low level of designated protection zones for seniors</li> <li>○ Low installation rate of smart crosswalks (Large differences by area / Child protection zones prioritized)</li> </ul>	
Housing stability	Status of elderly residential welfare facilities	
Leisure and social activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Status of recreational welfare facilities for seniors</li> <li>○ Low accessibility to welfare facilities by seniors</li> <li>○ Differences exists among facilities for seniors by area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More senior welfare centers than other municipalities</li> </ul>
Respect and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Status of designated stores for seniors and free meal locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relatively large number of traditional markets</li> </ul>
Use of human resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employment rate for seniors is higher than other municipalities and continues to grow</li> </ul>
Community care and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diagnosis of health checkup coverage rate</li> <li>○ Medical welfare facilities</li> <li>○ Welfare facilities for seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Good access to medical facilities (Gyeonggi Medical Center, upper-level hospitals, etc.)</li> <li>○ Specialized mental health projects for seniors</li> <li>○ Many swimming pools in public and welfare facilities for seniors</li> </ul>

## 2) Age-friendliness survey

- ▣ A survey was held to identify the level of age-friendliness perceived by Suwon citizens.
  - The survey targets were men and women aged 55 and over living in Suwon. The survey was held for about a month from June 13 to July 15, 2024 with about 405

participants.

- The sample was allocated using a proportional stratified sampling method by autonomous district, gender, and age group. Frequency analysis and cross tabulation were done with a sampling error of  $\pm 4.9\%$ .
- The questionnaire was organized by referring to the checklists in the eight areas of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities and various other literature.

〈Table 6〉 Survey overview

Division	Contents
Survey population	Men and women aged 55 and older who live in Suwon
Sample size	405
Sample assignment	Allocated by using a proportional stratified sampling method by autonomous district, gender, and age group
Sampling error	Assuming random sampling, the maximum allowable sampling error at the 95% confidence level is $\pm 4.9$ percentage points.
Survey method	In-person interviews (PI)
Survey period	June 13, 2024 – July 15, 2024
Survey entity	Korea Research

- While both residents under 65 and over 65 expressed similar views, there were differences by age group regarding areas perceived to need improvement
- Residents under the age of 65 were more likely to have negative perceptions about areas related to outside activities and acquisition of information.
  - Residents were less satisfied with the external environment and facilities related to their perception of living in Suwon.
  - All questions related to the acquisition of information were found to be unsatisfactory, suggesting that it is difficult for younger seniors, those under 65, to access various information.
- Negative perceptions of civic, safety, health, leisure, and social engagement were high among those aged over 65.
  - Older seniors were dissatisfied with the ease of access to public transportation and have difficulty getting relevant information.
  - There is a strong demand for safety. Specifically, the availability of seats in rest areas during outings is perceived to be insufficient. Furthermore, the time allocated for pedestrian crossings is deemed insufficient.
  - The lack of safety equipment in restrooms, such as safety handles and door hooks, is a major concern, as is the risk of various accidents happening in public restrooms.
  - Seniors have an elevated need for information and education on how to plan for a second life after retirement.

### 3) Analyzing age friendliness through interviews

- We held interviews with senior citizens to identify needs that were not captured in the survey,

and the results were as follows

〈Table 7〉 Age-Friendliness by Sector Based on Interviews

Division	Policy Recommendation
Direction of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Age-Friendly City Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies that can be 'felt.' Policies that help people feel and recognize age-friendly cities</li> <li>• Proposed using promotional videos and ads on local broadcasting</li> </ul>
External environment and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use universal design in places frequented by seniors (parks, senior centers, etc.)</li> <li>• Install sun shades in parks and other places frequented by the elderly</li> <li>• Improve road conditions (uneven floors and slippery manhole covers and so on)</li> <li>• Strengthen coverage for seniors in the Suwon Citizens' Insurance Program</li> </ul>
Ease of transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandate installation of CCTVs in safe zones for seniors within welfare centers</li> <li>• Install additional bus stops and improving the environment at bus stops</li> <li>• Mandate the use of senior welfare facility names at bus stops</li> </ul>
Housing stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install safety bars in homes to prevent falls</li> </ul>
Communication and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand policies on accessibility to information (call centers, etc.)</li> </ul>
Community care and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand dementia screenings</li> <li>• Set-up health programs in parks during the day and improve walking paths</li> <li>• Assign nursing staff to prepare for possible safety accidents in welfare centers for seniors</li> <li>• Replace fitness facilities welfare centers for seniors and assign physiotherapists and sports curers</li> </ul>
Use of human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding opportunities for social engagement, including volunteering</li> </ul>
Respect and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise names of welfare centers and cafeterias for seniors</li> <li>• Reduce no-kids zone environments</li> </ul>
Leisure and social activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reorganize community centers for seniors</li> <li>• Expand opportunities for seniors to participate (e.g., Senior Day events)</li> <li>• Include seniors in the age-friendly city promotion system</li> </ul>