



**The Regional
Municipality of
Durham**

Office of the Regional
Chair

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John Henry
Regional Chair and
CEO

February 18, 2021

Alana Officer and Diane Wu
Department of Ageing and Life Course
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

**Re: Application to the World Health Organization's Global
Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities**

Dear Ms. Officer and Ms. Wu:

The Regional Municipality of Durham is pleased to submit this letter in expression of our interest and commitment in joining the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

The Region of Durham is experiencing a demographic shift, with roughly 28% of the population comprising of older adults aged 55+. We saw the need to respond to this change, which holds important implications for planning, designing, and prioritizing inclusive and accessible services to ensure the rights of residents across the lifespan are respected.

In 2015, we received a grant from the Province of Ontario to initiate an age-friendly community planning process. We formed the Age-Friendly Steering Group and Regional Staff Working Group who worked in tandem to facilitate extensive needs assessments and community engagement activities. Information collected from a Municipal Roundtable Discussion, Age-Friendly Community Forum, community focus groups, a community needs assessment survey, and interviews with key informants were analysed to determine key age-friendly priorities. This ensured that diverse experiences and inequalities of older adult residences were identified and addressed. As a result, the Region developed the [Age-Friendly Durham Strategy and Action Plan](#), outlining 67 recommendations based on the WHO eight age-friendly dimensions. Durham Regional Council endorsed the Strategy in 2017.

In collaboration with the Durham Council on Aging, the Age-Friendly Staff Working Group, community partners, and older adult residents, 49 action items are in progress or fully implemented, including the recent launch of The Beauty of Experience Anti-Ageism Campaign in December 2020, which acknowledges older adults' positive participation and contributions in our community. This demonstrates our strong organizational capacity and commitment to building a healthy, age-friendly community.

We acknowledge that becoming age-friendly is an ongoing process, and that membership with the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities exemplifies our continued commitment towards making our community more age friendly. We look forward to collaborating with global partners, brainstorming innovative solutions, and supporting the Network as we all work towards this common goal.

We commit to contribute to the development of knowledge by maintaining an online presence through regular updates of our profile page, sharing the progress of the Age-Friendly Durham Strategy and Action Plan and assessment of programs, sharing age-friendly best practices, tools, and opportunities for collaboration with global members.

Please accept this letter of support demonstrating our desire and commitment to join the membership of the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Sincerely,



John Henry
Regional Chair and CEO