

## An age-friendly baseline assessment of Suncheon city

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#### 4.4.1 Overview of age-friendliness diagnosis

- The purpose of this age-friendliness evaluation, as the preliminary stage for creating an age-friendly city, is to produce the basic data for the establishment of the basic plan, guidelines, and action plans for an age-friendly city by evaluating the age-friendliness of Suncheon City in 8 areas.
- The population of this study was 117,465 people of 50 years old or older (41.7% of the total population) residing in Suncheon City and 3 age groups were sampled – preliminary seniors (55-64 years old), early seniors (65-74 years old), and latter seniors (75 years old or older). For a multi-dimensional analysis of age-friendliness evaluation, 2 times of FGI (focus group interviews) were carried out in 3 different periods on population by each *Eup·Myeon and Dong* population-proportional quota sampling in consideration of gender ratio, and experts (Local Social Security Council Subcommittee, Suncheon City Senior Citizens Association, Village Heads Council, Citizens Promotion Committee, etc.)
- In addition, for the evaluation of the age-friendliness of Suncheon City, we revised and supplemented questions in consideration of the conditions of Suncheon City and urban environmental characteristics based on the examination questions in 8 major areas as suggested by the WHO GNAFCC and other various literature research.
- This study used frequency analysis, cross tab, descriptive analysis, and MANOVA analysis methods at a 95% confidence level and a sampling error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ .

#### 4.4.2 Examination Analysis Results of Suncheon's Age-Friendliness by 8 areas

- (External environment and facilities section, 10 questions) As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness by *Eup·Myeon and Dong* as answered by the elderly population living in Suncheon, *Dong* (3.02) had higher age-friendliness as to the external environment and facilities than *Eup·Myeon* (2.74). On the other hand, the older the age, the lower the age-friendliness was for the external environment and facilities, and there was a statistically significant difference

between *EupMyon* and *Dong* and among each age group ( $p < .05$ )

- As for parks or walking trails with easy access nearby house, the arrangement of benches and toilets on streets and walking trails and in parks, the danger or safety from crimes as evaluated by night lighting or police patrol, elevators within public buildings, the arrangements of resting chairs and convenience facilities, positive answers were found more in *Dong* than in *EupMyon*, and more in preliminary seniors group (55-64 years old) than in early seniors (65-74 years old) and late seniors (74 years old or older) age groups.
  
- (Residential environment stability section, 10 questions) As a result of the age-friendliness evaluation among the elderly population living in Suncheon City by *Eupmyon* and *Dong* the age-friendliness on the stability of the residential environment was higher in *Dong* (2.87) than in *EupMyon* (2.67), whereas the younger people perceived the stability of residential environment was better, and there was a statistically significant difference between *EupMyon* and *Dong* and among age groups ( $p < .05$ ).
  - As for the benefit of senior care services for the elderly living alone, the convenience and accessibility of public transportation, and the convenience of moving from residence to public institutions, medical institutions, and various convenience facilities, more positive answers were found in *Dong* than in *EupMyon*, and the preliminary seniors group (55-64 years old) showed the highest positive answers.
  
- (Transportation convenience section, 8 questions) As a result of evaluating age-friendliness felt by the elderly population living in Suncheon by *EupMyon* and *Dong*, the age-friendliness was higher regarding transportation convenience in *Dong* (2.85) than in *EupMyon* (2.77). On the other hand, the older the age, the lower the transportation convenience was perceived, and there was a statistically significant difference between *EupMyon* and *Dong* and among age groups ( $p < .05$ ).
  - The accuracy of public transportation dispatch intervals, the visibility of route layout and timetable of public transportation, the bus drivers' care for the safety of the elderly when starting and stopping, and getting on and off buses received more positive answers in *Dong* than in *EupMyon*, and in younger age groups (55-64 years old > 65-74 years old > 74 years old or older).
  
- (Leisure and social activities section, 8 questions) As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness felt by the elderly population living in Suncheon City by *Eupmyon* and *Dong*, the age-friendliness regarding leisure and social activities was higher in *Dong* (2.76) than in *EupMyon* (2.60). On the other hand, the age-friendliness regarding leisure and social activities was lowest among the early seniors group (65-74 years old), and there was a statistically significant difference between *EupMyon* and *Dong* and among age groups ( $p < .05$ )
  - In the case of the diversity of social activity spaces (welfare centers, schools, libraries,

etc.) where the elderly can participate, both *Eup/myon* and *Dong* showed similar levels of positive answers, and the most positive answers came from the preliminary seniors group (55-64 years old).

- (Social participation and job Section, 10 Questions) As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness felt by the elderly population living in Suncheon by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* the age-friendliness regarding social participation and job was higher in *Dong* (2.76) than in *Eup/Myon* (2.66). On the other hand, the higher the age, the lower age-friendliness was felt regarding the social participation and job, and there was a statistically significant difference between *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* and among age groups ( $p < .05$ ).
  - When it comes to the age-friendliness regarding social participation and job as felt by the elderly by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* as well as by the age groups, more positive answers were found in *Dong* than in *Eup/Myon*, and the awareness of social participation and job was lower as the age became older.
  
- (Social respect and integration section, 8 Questions) As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness felt by the elderly population living in Suncheon by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* the age-friendliness regarding social respect and integration was higher in *Dong* (2.69) than in *Eup/Myon* (2.63). On the other hand, the awareness of social respect and integration was lower as the age grew older, and there was a statistically significant difference among the age groups ( $p < .05$ ).
  - When it comes to the age-friendliness regarding social respect and integration of Suncheon City as felt by people living in *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* and also by age groups, more positive answers were found in *Dong* than in *Eup/Myon*, and the awareness of social participation and integration got lower as the age grew older.
  
- (Communication and information section, 8 questions) As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness as felt by the elderly population living in Suncheon by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* the age-friendliness regarding communication and information was higher in *Dong* (2.75) than in *Eup/Myon* (2.68). On the other hand, the awareness of communication and information was lowest in the preliminary seniors group (65-74 years old), and there was a statistically significant difference among the age groups ( $p < .05$ ).
  - When it comes to the age-friendliness regarding communication and information by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* as well as by age groups, more positive answers were found in *Dong* than in *Eup/Myon*, whereas the awareness of communication and information appeared low in the order of the early seniors (65-74), late seniors (74 years or older), and the preliminary seniors (55-64 years old).

- (Health and community care section, 8 questions) As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness felt by the elderly population living in Suncheon by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* the age-friendliness regarding health and community care was higher in *Dong* (2.83) than in *Eup/Myon* (2.68). On the other hand, the awareness of health and community care was lower as the age grew older, and there was a statistically significant difference between *Eup/Myon* and *Dong*, and among age groups ( $p < .05$ ).
  - When it comes to the age-friendliness regarding health and community care by *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* in Suncheon as well as by age groups, the age-friendliness regarding health and community care was higher in *Dong* than in *Eup/Myon* while the awareness of health and community care became lower as the age grew older (74 years and older).

#### **4.4.3 Average comparison of Age-friendliness Examination by Eup-Myeon and Dong in Suncheon city**

- As a result of comparing the average age-friendliness of Suncheon City in 8 areas suggested by WHO GNAFCC, the scores were higher in the order of the external environment and facility area (2.895), the convenience of transportation (2.813), of residential stability (2.780), and health and community care (2.759), and there were statistically significant differences by regions and ages ( $p < .05$ ).
- The *Dong* region tended to be more age-friendly than the *Eup/Myon* regions, and the preliminary seniors group was the most favorable to Suncheon City's 8 areas, and they showed more exclusive attitude as the age grew older.
  - The *Dong* region' average score of all 8 areas was 2.816, showed scores exceeding the average in 4 areas - external environment and facilities (3.017), residential stability (2.869), transportation convenience (2.853), and health and Community care (2.825) - in the given order.
  - The *Eup/Myon* region' average score of all 8 areas was 2.679, and the areas that exceeded the average were in the order of: 1st, external environment and facilities (2.739); 2nd, communication and information (2.683); 3rd, transportation convenience ( 2.7613).
  - When it comes to the average score of the age-friendliness of Suncheon in 8 major areas, the external environment and facilities section showed the highest age-friendliness in all age groups: the preliminary seniors (55-64 years old) (3.070), the early seniors (65-74 years old) (2.876), and the late seniors (74 years old or older) (2.694).

【Average comparative diagnosis by eight areas of Suncheon-si's elderly affinity】

(Unit: dot)

Region			Main contents	By age			
Dong	Eup-Myeon	Suncheon-si		Overall average	55-64 years old	65-74 years old	74 years or older
3.017	2.739	2.895	External environment and facilities	2.895	3.070	2.876	2.694
2.869	2.667	2.780	Stability of the residential environment	2.780	2.938	2.747	2.619
2.853	2.764	2.813	Convenience of transportation	2.813	2.968	2.767	2.675
2.758	2.603	2.689	Leisure and social activities	2.689	2.781	2.633	2.647
2.762	2.663	2.718	Social participation and jobs	2.718	2.865	2.663	2.602
2.691	2.635	2.666	Social respect and integration	2.666	2.795	2.614	2.570
2.755	2.683	2.723	Communication and information	2.723	2.868	2.641	2.648
2.825	2.675	2.759	Health and community care	2.759	2.892	2.707	2.656
2.816	2.679	2.755	Suncheon City's average of 8 areas	2.755	2.897	2.706	2.639
3.981			MEAN SQUARE	4.750			
20.383			F	25.188			
0.000			Sig.	0.000			

#### 4.4.4 Strengths and Obstacles of Suncheon's Being Age-friendly city

##### ■ Strengths of Suncheon's carrying out an Age-friendly city

- The characteristics of Suncheon City are: 1) Ecological Capital of Korea, 2) Suncheon Bay Tidal Flat, one of the world's 5 largest tidal flats (registered as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site), 3) Suncheon Bay National Garden, 4) Child-friendly city (certified by UNICEF Korea), 5) Women-friendly city (certified by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family), 6) WHO Healthy City, 7) Smart safe city (certified as one of the top three cities in Honam region), 8) The only city in Jeollanam-do with the expectation of continuous increase of population influx which raises the expectation of life quality upgrade through offering customized welfare for each life cycle.
- As the ecological capital of Korea and in preparation for an aging society with the expectancy of 100 years, Suncheon City has been implementing comprehensive age-friendly policies across the municipal administration and has been establishing relevant ordinances to improve citizen's life quality by building an age-friendly social and physical environment surrounding the elderly.
  - Enactment of the ordinance on building age-friendly Suncheon City (June 3, 2021)
  - Enactment of health voucher support ordinance for maintaining dignity of senior citizens (June 3, 2021) (Support expenses for hair cut and bath)
  - Creation of various jobs for a vibrant and healthy retirement life (Silver Cafe 4th store, 'Shelter Rest Cafe' open)
  - Relieve family burden by establishing a public day and night dementia care center (new public day and night dementia care facility is under construction to open in 2022)

- Providing customized care services for the elderly to strengthen preventive care (expansion of next-generation home equipment in connection with emergency safety and security services for the elderly living alone)
  - Expansion and environment improvement of comfortable and safe leisure and welfare facilities for the elderly (activation of convenience promotion projects for senior citizen centers)
- Suncheon City has a strong will to join the WHO GNAFCC in 2022, and is promoting a total of 165 policies in 8 areas related to the age-friendly city, the mid- to long-term development plan for Suncheon Healthy City 2030, and the Suncheon Smart City plan.
  - Following the 4<sup>th</sup> Local Social Security Plan with the purpose of 'Suncheon City, the More Warm-hearted Welfare City Where Citizens Are Happy', Suncheon City is promoting 34 detailed projects to achieve the 6 core promotion strategies such as 'promoting community-centered community care', 'guaranteeing a healthy and comfortable life for citizens', 'creating a comfortable environment for childbirth and childcare', 'supporting stable job creation', 'enhancing the life quality for the socially underprivileged', and 'realizing Suncheon-style inclusive welfare'.
  - Centering on the Suncheon Senior Club which exclusively dedicated to job placement for the elderly, Suncheon City is expanding the social participation activities for the elderly, creating a community-based leisure and cultural facilities for the elderly, supporting the customized lifelong learning, and also educating on the prevention of safety accidents and COVID-19 preventive measures at workplaces.
  - The Suncheon Senior Club is promoting a variety of professional and systematic jobs suitable for the abilities and aptitudes of the elderly, and is creating various quality jobs for the elderly to enable their happy aged life with sound body and soul in the era of life-expectancy of 100 years, and currently 3,312 senior citizens are participating in the employment project.

## ■ Obstacles of Suncheon's Being Age-friendly city

- There is a widening gap in the aging rate between urban and rural areas; society's overall awareness and preparation for aging are insufficient; and awareness and consideration for the elderly in various areas such as parks, public facilities and housing stability, transportation convenience, social participation, and jobs as well as awareness and communication for resolving inter-generational conflict are insufficient.
  - Problems with family and social integration occur such as social isolation of the elderly population and weakening of family support for the elderly.
  
- Worsening unbalance between *Eup/Myon* regions and *Dong* regions in SOC facilities deeply related to everyday living such as living space for old age, various convenience facilities for the elderly, basic living infrastructure and the likes as well as in the 8 major areas suggested by the WHO GNAFCC, and the weakening urban function of *Eup/myon* regions.
  - Insufficient society's overall awareness and preparation for aging due to rapid aging in *Dong* regions and confusion in countermeasures
  - Lack of education and welfare facilities and cultural and leisure facilities for the elderly, insufficient elderly care system in local community, lack of in-home elderly welfare facilities such as day care, and nursing facilities, etc.
  
- The share of living expenses of the elderly is concentrated on food and health/medical expenses, and as a means of preparing for old age, they mostly depend on the national pension, deposits, savings, and savings-type insurance rather than on salaries. Because of this, there occurs weakness in health and nursing function (increased burden of welfare budget due to entering an aging society) due to the weakness and lack of income security system such as public pension for the elderly, jobs for the elderly, and preventive measures for the frail elderly.
  
- Weakness in urban life condition and transportation access occurs due to inconvenience of walking and public transportation use (traffic congestion and lack of parking space), insufficient promotion of universal design in all areas of the city, and inconvenience of using public and commercial facilities, etc. Information access is also limited due to lack of information provision for the elderly, difficulties in understanding guide signs and acquiring public information, and insufficient adaptation to new media such as computers and smartphones. (possibility of urban problems and polarization conditions)

#### **4.4.5 Basic direction for making Suncheon city an Age-friendly city**

- As a result of evaluating the age-friendliness of each of the 8 major areas of Suncheon City, the gap between *Eup/Myon* and *Dong* regions and among age groups is very large. Therefore, considering the needs of the elderly population by region and age and also major policies, Suncheon City firstly set the basic direction to create an urban environment that can guarantee the quality of life of not just the elderly people but all vulnerable people who have difficulty in daily living due to diseases or disabilities, and then secondly set the ultimate direction to move forward to a city where all Suncheon citizens, regardless of their age, all generations are good to live in where they used to live without inconveniences.