

Age Friendly Mississauga



Age Friendly Mississauga Vision

We are a vibrant, inclusive, age-friendly city where residents and visitors can live, work, play and thrive.

Shifting demographics, changing population needs

The world is experiencing an unprecedented demographic shift characterized by an aging population. As baby boomers get older, Mississauga will see the number of people aged 55 or more increase from 20 percent of the total population to 38 percent. Approximately 300,000 Mississauga residents will be 65 and over in 2031.

This shift has also come with new trends among older adults. For example, older adults are choosing to stay in the workforce longer, have high purchasing power and choose physically active lifestyles. At the same time, older adults are living longer but not necessarily healthier and many require support and services to be able to age in a healthy and dignified manner.

Age Friendly Cities and Communities

The “Age-Friendly” framework has been proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is currently being used by cities across the world.

An age-friendly community has policies, services, programs and environments that support and enable older people to age actively. Active aging involves good health, safe environments that promote independent living, and the ability to fully participate in social and community life.

Even though all communities are different and will take different approaches to becoming age-friendly, there are some common values shared by all age-friendly communities:

- Recognizing the wide range of capacities and resources among older people

- Anticipating and responding flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences
- Respecting decisions and lifestyle choice of older adults
- Supporting the older adults who are most vulnerable
- Promoting the participation of older adults and encouraging their contributions to all aspects of community life.

The WHO identifies eight focus areas of an age-friendly community:



Communication and information: Access to relevant information is key to staying connected and learning about recreation and social opportunities. Information needs to be available in various formats and older adults should be supported to learn and adopt new information technologies.

Community support and health services: The availability of adequate health and support services is essential to maintaining good health and independence in the community.

Housing: Most older adults wish to age in place. A diverse range of housing options and support services, coupled with good neighbourhood design, allow older people to age comfortably and safely within their community.

Outdoor spaces and buildings: Clean, accessible and attractive parks, streets, public spaces and buildings are essential to everyone's quality of life, including older adults. This is also linked to an older adult's ability to age in place and stay active.

Respect and social inclusion: Feeling recognized, appreciated and taken into account by family, friends, and the society are essential to everyone's wellbeing, including older adults. The extent to which older adults participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion.

Social participation: Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older adults to continue to exercise their competence and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships.

Transportation: Affordable and adequate options to move around the city enable older adults to get involved in social and civic activities, stay active and access health and community services.

Civic Participation and employment: An age-friendly community provides options for older adults to continue to contribute to their communities through paid employment or voluntary work, and to be engaged in the political process.

Age Friendly Mississauga

The Age Friendly Mississauga project uses the World Health Organization's criteria of an "Age-Friendly Community" to meet the needs of the City's diverse and growing older adult population and ultimately make Mississauga a place where all residents belong and can thrive.

This project will focus on eight high-impact actions, which will be implemented between August 2015 and November 2017. At that point, the City will submit an application to join the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Becoming age-friendly requires a deliberate and coordinated effort by many stakeholders including the City, the Region, community organizations and service providers and the private sectors. As the project lead, the City serves as a "backbone organization" providing leadership for planning, project management, stakeholder engagement and evaluation.

The vision for the City's Older Adult Plan is that "older adults in Mississauga will lead purposeful and active lives, will live in their community with dignity, integrity and independence and will experience a diverse range of lifestyle opportunities to pursue their personal interests."

The City of Mississauga recognizes that being an "Age Friendly Community" is not a goal to be achieved but a way of life that requires ongoing effort to meet growing and changing needs of our citizens. A key outcome for this project is to establish the necessary structures and resources to sustain our commitment and maintain progress to ensure that all citizens, including older adults, belong and can thrive. Essential to this is for the City and other stakeholders to adopt an "age-friendly lens" to their day-to-day way of doing business.

An **age-friendly lens** does not involve a specific project or policy, but a way of doing business that takes into account the needs of older adults in the day-to-day operations of an organization.

Key Milestones of Age Friendly Mississauga Project

August 2015 – November 2017

- Self-assessment
- Identify age-friendly assets in Mississauga (both internal to the City and external)
- Generate awareness about the age-friendly framework
- Identify priorities per dimension and establish action teams
- Create three year age-friendly plan
- Submit AFC application to WHO
- Implement and complete the three year action plan

An age-friendly community is not only a place where older adults can thrive; it also supports the needs of the entire population including children, youth and persons with disabilities.

Age Friendly Mississauga Project Milestones

Description – (August 2015 – November 2017)

- **Self-assessment:**
 - Refresh Older Adult Plan
 - Consultation
 - Key policies/research pieces
- **Identify age-friendly assets in Mississauga (both internal and external to the City):** Many organizations, groups and divisions are already doing “age-friendly” work without necessarily calling it that. This exercise will promote awareness about the project and will allow the City to collect information about existing age-friendly practices.
- **Summary assessment and survey information identifying areas or initiatives to prioritize on action plan.**
- **Identify priorities per dimension and establish action teams:** The self-assessment is used to identify a theme and to establish priority actions per focus area. Action teams are made up of stakeholders from multiple sectors and work under the leadership of City staff. Person most responsible (PMR) will be selected as chair for each action team and teams are created to implement each dimension action item.
- **Create three year age-friendly plan:** Staff will compile all actions from dimension action teams and create a three year action plan that will be included in the application process.
- **Prepare and submit Age Friendly application for WHO:** Staff will prepare and submit the application in November 2017.
- **Roll out the three year action plan.**



How can you get involved in the AFM project?

- Identify your age-friendly assets: look at your organization, unit, business or department. Identify all your age-friendly practices and let us know about them by filling out our AFM Survey Mississauga.ca/agefriendly.
- Join one of the action task teams that are relevant to your passion or work.
- Take this information back to your workplace/community and think about starting age-friendly practices or process that are quick wins for your organizations. It doesn't have to be a big, overwhelming task. Maybe it is just a small shift in something you are already doing. Let us know about your initiative on our survey.
- Learn more about the age-friendly communities and how to apply an age-friendly lens to your every-day work/life.
- Spread the word about the project and stay tuned to future updates and opportunities to collaborate.

ooo

Contact information:

Lorena Smith, Community Development Coordinator,
Older Adult. lorena.smith@mississauga.ca

Jaleesa De Silva, Community Development Assistant,
Older Adult. jaleesa.desilva@mississauga.ca

Mississauga.ca/agefriendly

City of Mississauga acknowledges the funding provided by



Ontario Seniors' Secretariat for the
Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant