

## Age Friendly Communities

**An age-friendly community has policies, services, settings and structures that support and enable people to age actively by:**

- Recognizing the wide range of capacities and resources among older people
- Anticipating and responding flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences
- Respecting the decisions and lifestyle choices of older adults
- Protecting those older adults who are most vulnerable
- Promoting the inclusion of older adults in, and contribution to, all areas of community life

The eight age-friendly areas follow in the format of checklists that can be used by Manitoba Communities. The checklists are meant to help identify age-friendly features and highlight issues that could be incorporated into a plan with actions for change.

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Respect and social inclusion
- Social participation
- Communication and information
- Civic participation and employment
- Community support and health service

## What is needed to make outdoor spaces and buildings age-friendly?

### 1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

What is it like to step outside of your home - to go for a walk and enjoy the fresh air, to run errands or to visit?

#### Entrances

- Are accessible and free from obstructions
- Are well lit
- Have wheelchair sloped entry ramps
- Are non-slip with level wheelchair access
- Doors are easy to open by someone using a walker or in a wheelchair

#### Sidewalks, Pathways & Trails

- Are well-maintained
- Are continuous, wide, non-slip and have dropped curbs
- Have prompt snow removal and snow is removed or piled out of the way
- Have useable and spaced benches that are well maintained and safe

#### Parking

- Parking lots are safe to walk and ice free to prevent falls
- Available parking is well-maintained and located nearby for easy access
- Drop-off and pick-up areas are available, obstruction free, clearly marked, and conveniently located
- There are a sufficient number of handicap accessible parking spots

#### Streets and Pedestrian Crossings

- Are well-maintained
- Have good lighting
- Have safe pedestrian crossings with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times
- Pedestrians have the right of way at intersections and crossings

**What is it like to go into buildings such as public offices and stores?**

**Buildings**

- Entrance doors are easy to open by someone in a wheelchair or walker
- There are automatic doors with accessible buttons that are open long enough to allow people with wheelchairs and walkers to safely enter
- There are no or as few stairs as possible, inside and outside
- The flooring is non-slip
- Washrooms are located on the main floor
- Washrooms are large enough for wheelchairs, walkers and strollers
- Signs are easy to read outside and inside
- There is sufficient seating for patrons to rest or to use services
- Elevators and/or ramps are available
- Stairs are safe and have railings
- Services are grouped together, located in close proximity to where older people live, (grocery stores, churches, government buildings, community centres)

**Public and Rest Areas**

- Are clean and pleasant
- Are located in appropriate areas for use and are sufficient in number
- Are well-maintained and safe to use

**Safety**

- Police patrols and community education to support safety
- Neighbourhoods are well lit

## What is necessary for transportation to be made age-friendly?

### 2. Transportation

#### What is it like to drive in your community?

##### Roads

- Are well-maintained, well-lit and have visible easy to read signage
- Traffic lines on pavement are visible
- Roadways are clear of obstructions that block driver's vision
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-spaced
- Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers

##### Parking

- Parking lots and street parking is located close to amenities
- Parking regulations are enforced for emergency zones and disabled parking
- Drop-off and pick-up areas are available, clearly marked, conveniently located and sufficient in number
- There is a sufficient number of disabled parking spots

##### Snow Removal

- Roads and parking areas are promptly cleared of snow and ice

#### What is the public transportation system like in your community?

##### Community Transportation Services

- Community transport services are affordable and accessible
- There is shuttle services to transport seniors
- There is a volunteer and informal network of drivers available

##### Assisted Transportation

- Persons with disabilities are able to access reliable and affordable transportation

### Public Transportation

- Is convenient, accessible and affordable and allows seniors to reach various destinations to conduct daily activities
- Costs are consistent, displayed and affordable
- Is reliable and frequent, including nights, week-ends and holidays
- Provides complete and accessible information for users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities
- Non-applicable

### If your needs change, what are your choices for housing in the community?

#### Housing Options - are there:

- A range of appropriate and affordable housing options like independent living, assisted living, apartments, condos, and individual homes for seniors on fixed income
- Availability of subsidized housing
- Housing adapted for seniors and those with disabilities; e.g. wheelchair accessible

#### Information about Transportation

- About the range of transportation services (public and private) is available; how, where, timetables and cost
- Promotes public and alternative transportation in the community
- Non-applicable

### What improvements are necessary for housing to be age-friendly?

## 3. Housing

Is your housing conveniently located to meet your needs and what you want to do?

#### Aging in Place – are there:

- Housing located close to services
- Affordable supports available to enable seniors to remain at home
- Assisted living options available
- “Alert systems” for seniors living alone to call when help is needed

**Tell us about your home, is it comfortable and safe? Are there:**

- Interior spaces and level surfaces that allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways
- Public and commercial rental housing that are clean, well-maintained and safe
- Alarmed or secure entry

**Are you able to maintain and modify your home as needed? Are there:**

**Maintenance and Modifications**

- Affordable general maintenance of homes, especially for seniors on fixed incomes
- Affordable or free general maintenance available, e.g. yard work
- Affordable home insurance
- Readily available and easy to find information on financial assistance programs for home modifications
- Affordable and available home modification options and supplies
- Affordable providers of home maintenance and modifications that understand the needs of seniors

**Long-Term Care – are there:**

- Affordable long-term care options available that prevent the separation of families and the need to move out of the community

**How can we show respect and include seniors in social situations?**

**4. Respect and Social Inclusion**

**How does your community show, or not show, respect for you as a senior?**

**Respect, Kindness and Courtesy Shown**

- Seniors are treated respectfully by the whole community, including;
  - Addressed with appropriate titles
  - Asked for input on community issues
  - Provided accommodation of needs
- Service staff are courteous and helpful
- Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively without stereotyping

**Intergenerational Respect and Interaction**

- There are community activities that bring generations together, e.g. recreational, social, continued learning (computer), honorary grand-parenting.
- Children and youth learn how to respect and treat seniors
- Schools provide opportunities to learn about aging and older people, and involve older people in school activities

**In what ways does your community include, or not include you as an older person in activities and events?**

**Inclusive Communities**

- Seniors are asked to participate at council meetings and similar activities and are recognized for their contributions
- Seniors are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better
- Services and products are provided to suit varying needs and preferences by public and commercial services
- Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences
- Seniors who are less well-off have access to public, voluntary and private services

**Recognition Events or Awards**

- Contributions of seniors, past and current, are honoured in the community through events and/or awards**
- Seniors are “celebrated” through the media (e.g. stories documented and shared)**

## How can Social Participation be made more age-friendly?

### 5. Social Participation

How easily can you socialize in your community?

#### Events and Activities

- A range of events and activities for seniors of all ages is available, e.g.:
- Courses, crafts and hobbies
  - Physical / recreational
  - Spectator sporting events
  - Church and school related
  - Gatherings with food
  - Outdoor
  - Indoor
- All events and activities are affordable to all seniors

#### Preventing Isolation

- Home visits are provided for those who are home bound
- When appropriate a buddy system includes seniors not normally active
- The needs of seniors not interested in participating in community life are respected

**Tell us about your participation in other activities, like education, culture, recreation, or spiritual activities.**

#### Transportation

- Events and activities are held in locations served by affordable and accessible transportation

#### Family-Orientated

- Events and activities are intergenerational and designed to appeal to people of different ages and backgrounds

#### Promotion of Activities

- Are well-publicized to seniors
- Details of accessibility and transportation options are given

## How can communication and information be more age-friendly for seniors?

### 6. Communication and Information

What is your experience getting the information you need in your community, for example, about services or events?

This can be information you get by telephone, radio, TV, in print, or in person.

#### Types of Information

- A variety of information that is of interest to seniors is disseminated, such as local events, health and safety information and health and social services
- Seniors are visible in advertising and are depicted positively and without stereotyping

#### Widespread Communication

- Regular and reliable information about events and programs (including contact information) is widely disseminated through local government and /or voluntary organizations
- Local channels (TV and radio) advertise community events and news items of interest to seniors – for example, through “community access channels”
- There is a central directory where older adults can find information about what activities and services are available, and how to access them (including phone numbers)
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straight-forward sentences

#### Accessible Information

- Seniors can easily find information
- Printed information uses large lettering, clear headings and bold-face type on official forms, television captions, and text on visual displays
- Literacy programs are available
- Seniors are recruited as volunteers as: knowledgeable experts, disseminators of information, and trainers

### **New Technologies**

- Training courses on new technologies are available and accessible to seniors
- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the phone message at any time
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, have large buttons and big lettering
- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries

### **Interactive Contact (word of mouth)**

- Important information is disseminated in public forums (including public meetings and information sessions)
- An interactive speaker series is created that delivers important information (e.g., on health issues and protection against fraud)
- People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals

## **What kind of Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities exist for seniors ?**

### **7. Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities**

**Tell us about your participation in volunteer work.**

#### **Volunteering**

- Volunteers are supported in their volunteer work – for example, by providing them with transportation, reimbursing their costs and/or paying them an honorarium
- A range of volunteer opportunities is available that meets the interests of seniors
- Volunteering options allow for intergenerational involvement
- Opportunities for volunteering are flexible (e.g., short-term) to accommodate seniors who travel or have other commitments

**Tell us about your participation in paid work.**

**Employment**

- There is a range of paid employment opportunities for seniors
- Seniors are fairly compensated for their work
- Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people
- Self-employment options for seniors are promoted and supported

**Tell us about your participation in public community affairs, like community associations or municipal councils.**

**Accessibility**

- Seniors with disabilities are accommodated in volunteer, civic or paid work

**Encouragement to Participate**

- Seniors are encouraged to volunteer and remain engaged in the community by providing them with flexible and accessible opportunities
- Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of seniors

**Training Opportunities**

- Seniors expected to use newer technologies in paid, civic or volunteer work are provided with appropriate training

**Recognition and Appreciation**

- Seniors are acknowledged for their contributions in volunteer, civic and paid work

**Civic Participation**

- Seniors are well represented on councils, boards and committees

## What kinds of Community Support and Health Services are available for seniors?

### 8. Community Support and Health Services

What is your experience with the services in your community to help older persons?

#### Caring and Responsive Professionals

- Physicians are available within the community
- Public health nurses are available at health centres and to conduct home visits
- Specialists (including gerontologists) conduct assessments on a regular basis in the community and arrange follow-up with primary care physicians
- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people

#### Home, Health and Support Services

- Affordable and available health and home services are in place and include health, personal care and housekeeping
- Home supports are available in a timely manner
- Affordable meal programs are available to all seniors in the community, regardless of their health status
- Delivery services (groceries, medicines, etc.) or escorted shopping services are available to seniors
- Services are well-coordinated and administratively simple
- Health assessments are conducted during home visits
- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport

**Diversity of Health Services and Facilities**

- Health care facilities include clusters of services (e.g. doctors, podiatrists, occupational therapists, pharmacists) and provide “one stop” health or wellness services
- Affordable palliative care services are available in the community
- Specialty services are available in the community, including mental health services, health screening and specialty clinics, such as for diabetes and cancer care outreach
- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health
- Residential care facilities and designated senior housing is located close to services and the rest of the community
- Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of seniors

**Caregiver Support (including respite)**

- Caregivers are “given a break” from their responsibilities through programs such as home support and senior day programs
- Educational programs on elder care and similar available services are provided to families who are, or will be, caring for an older adult

**Availability of Equipment and Aids**

- Medical equipment (including medical alerts) is available through a loan program or at no cost to seniors

## Community Assessment Questions

*In each of the areas below, think about your positive as well as negative experiences, and think about improvements that could be made. Please click on the comment boxes to fill in the questionnaire.*

*If you are a caregiver representing an older adult, think about how these questions would pertain to that individual.*

### 1. General Question

What is it like to live in \_\_\_\_\_ as a senior?

### 2. Outdoor spaces and buildings

What is it like to step outside of your home to go for a walk to get fresh air, run errands or visit?

What is it like to go into buildings, such as public offices or stores?

### 3. Transportation

What is the public transportation system like in your community?

What is it like to drive in your community?

**4. Housing**

Tell me about the house or the apartment where you live.

If your needs change, what are your choices for housing in the community?

**5. Respect and Inclusion**

In what ways does your community show, or not show, respect for you as an older person?

In what ways does your community include, or not include you as an older person in activities and events?

**6. Social Participation**

How easily can you socialize in your community?

Tell me about your participation in other activities, like education, culture, recreation, or spiritual activities.

**7. Communication and Information**

What is your experience getting the information you need in your community, for example, about services or events? This can be information you get by telephone, radio, TV, in print, or in person.

**8. Civic Participation and Employment**

Tell me about your participation in volunteer work.

Tell me about your participation in paid work, if you are employed now or if you are looking for paid work.

Tell me about your participation in public community affairs, like community associations or municipal councils.

**9. Health and Social Services**

What is your experience with the services in the community to help older persons?