Why “Age-Friendly Communities”?

- World Health Organization (WHO) initiative
- Aging demographic
- Key indicators for planning (daisy petals)
Age-Friendly Communities

Definition:
Age-friendly communities enable older persons to live safely, age actively, maintain their health and participate fully in their community.

… WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide
Underlying Principles:

• Livability
• Accountability
• Access and inclusion for all
• Respect and support of all citizens
• Community engagement in decision-making

… Age-Friendly Communities Project – MAREP; University of Waterloo
Some Canadian Examples:

• Saanich, British Columbia

• London, Ontario

• Burlington, Ontario
Why A Halton Age-Friendly Communities Study?

- Provide advice to Halton Regional Council
- Capture seniors’ voices – aging in Halton
- Explore what is working and opportunities for improvement
- Build on ESAC’s previous work
  – e.g., “The Quality of Life for Seniors in Halton”

(Halton Region - 2007)
Data Collection

24 Focus Groups
- Oakville (5)
- Milton (4)
- Burlington (7)
- Halton Hills (4)
- Conversation Circles (4)

37 Interviews
- Acclaim Health (20)
- Links2Care (17)

= 233 people
What Did We Hear?
What Did We Hear?
Communications and Information

A range of tools are available

- 211 and 311 are still not widely used
- Seniors Directory is widely available; Not all have a copy
- COGECO is viewed; On-screen print is unclear
- Seniors rely on newspapers; Content, delivery, and cost are concerns

However
What Did We Hear?
Communications and Information
(continued)

- Election information
- Home support services
- Volunteer opportunities
- Computer use
- Housing options
- Transportation schedules & costs

IDENTIFIED GAPS
What Did We Hear?

Community support and health services

Environment

Transportation

Housing

Social Participation

Respect and social inclusion

Civic participation and employment

Communication and information

Outdoor spaces and built

Age-Friendly

Environment

Community support and health services
What Did We Hear?
Community Support/Health Services

Good health & community support services are available

- Overnight respite
- Day programs
- Supportive housing
- All season home maintenance services

More “aging at home” supports are needed
What Did We Hear?
Community Support/Health Services
(continued)

ONGOING BARRIERS

- Access to services
- Navigating the system
- Lack of LTC beds
- Caregiver stress & burnout
- Physicians’ availability
- Lack of supportive housing
What Did We Hear?
What Did We Hear?

Housing Choices

Housing transitions are difficult, especially moving from one’s own home

- Accepting the need for change
- Time & information about options are needed to plan
- Information & support with the physical move are needed
- Location, Location, Location
- Some seniors are leaving to find appropriate housing

Plan, Evaluate, Act
What Did We Hear?
Housing Choices
(continued)

KEY FACTORS

- Location & driving ability
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Availability of options
- Home support services
- Safety
What Did We Hear?

Outdoor spaces and buildings
What Did We Hear?
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Seniors value & appreciate outdoor spaces

Keys to remaining active & participating

- Parks & trails
- Accessible entrances
- Variety of outdoor activities
- Benches & seating
- Sidewalks are clear & in good repair
What Did We Hear?
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
(continued)

- Space sensitive to special needs
- Availability of public washrooms
- Safe sidewalks & crosswalks, traffic
- Well-placed benches all seasons
- Scooter & bicycle safety
- Accessible public buildings

CONCERNS
What Did We Hear?
Community Involvement

Seniors are engaged & want to remain active

- Friendly neighbourhoods
- Volunteer opportunities
- Voting & participating in civic matters
- Social activities in seniors’ residences & buildings
- Seniors centres
- Places of worship
- Agencies & business respect seniors

In civic affairs, social activities & community
What Did We Hear?
Community Involvement (continued)

KEY FACTORS

- Opportunities are limited by time
- Affordability
- Transportation & proximity of housing
- Transitions: - aging, health, mobility
- Respecting diversity
- Places to gather
What Did We Hear?

Transportation

Social Participation

Respect and social inclusion

Civic participation and employment

Communication and information

Community safety and health services

Outdoor spaces and parks

Live-Friendly Environment

House

Transportation
What Did We Hear?
Transportation (Non-drivers)

Issues for non-drivers

Specialized transit
- advance booking
- boundaries
- eligibility

Service availability
- routes/connections
- frequency (weekends)
- “back-up” support

Affordability
- bus, taxis
- special service needs
What Did We Hear?
Transportation (Drivers)

- Transition from driving
- Sensory acuity & driver testing
- Increasing traffic & speed
- Parking: spaces & cost
- Signage
- Health status

Issues for drivers
**What Did We Hear?**

**Highlights: Differences Across Halton**

- **Burlington:** transportation, communications & information
- **Halton Hills:** strong community/family ties, transportation
- **Milton:** active social participation, pace of growth/change
- **Oakville:** outdoor spaces & buildings, transportation
What Did We Hear?
Common Theme: Transitions

- Adjusting to new culture & environments
- Changing social circles
- Reduced independence (e.g., driving)
- Changing housing & accommodations
- Changing health, mobility & activity levels

Dealing with Transitions
Expectations for today

• Validate what we’ve heard from seniors

• Identify how our communities are already age-friendly

• Identify and share ideas for local action to become more age-friendly

• Provide input for reporting and future planning
Age-Friendly Communities Project: Next Steps

• Consolidate feedback from the Forum

• Prepare reports for Regional Council and New Horizons

• Feedback to inform ESAC’s workplan

• Encourage progress on creating age-friendly communities throughout Halton