



# TORONTO SENIORS STRATEGY 2.0



Call **3-1-1**





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2018

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Toronto would like to thank the more than 10,000 residents who participated in the extensive and inclusive community consultation sessions and survey to provide input and ideas into Version 2.0. Our gratitude and appreciation also go to the members of the Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table, whose contributions went beyond input and advice, to craft these new recommendations.

All members of the Seniors Strategy Accountability Table wish to express our deep appreciation to Dr. Samir K. Sinha for his committed leadership in making Toronto an age-friendly city and Seniors Advocate Councillor Josh Matlow for continuing to be a stalwart champion for seniors in the City of Toronto.

This document builds on the transparency and accountability established in Version 1.0 for measuring progress towards the successful implementation of the Strategy's recommendations.

As with recommendations in Version 1.0, of which 90 of the original 91 recommendations were acted upon, the City commits to providing annual public progress reports until all new Version 2.0 recommendations are addressed.

## PROJECT LEAD:

**Andrea Austen**, Manager  
Seniors Transition Office, City of Toronto

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# INTRODUCTION

**Toronto is getting older. For the first time in history, there are now more Torontonians over the age of 65 than children aged 15 and under. Looking ahead, the number of people in Toronto aged 65 and over is expected to almost double by 2041.**

The City of Toronto views the growth of the ageing population as a triumph rather than a “silver tsunami,” as it has often been dubbed. At the turn of the 20th century, life expectancy was 51 years; it is now 82 years and growing. All Torontonians benefit from the energy and lived experience seniors bring to the city’s diverse communities and neighbourhoods.

Seniors are a valuable asset and a key part of what makes this city great.

As Toronto’s population ages, important questions are coming into view: How might we better support seniors to lead active and independent lives in their neighbourhoods, communities and homes? Can we make city services for seniors easier to use and navigate? How can we ensure that low-

income seniors have equal opportunities to live a healthy life? What does an age-friendly city look like against the backdrop of a fast-moving, growing and technologically-charged metropolis?

The City believes that these and other important questions need to be asked, appreciating that answers to them can direct policy and services. And so on the heels of the successful Toronto Seniors Strategy Version 1.0, where 90 of the 91 recommendations were acted upon, the City involved over 10,000 residents, mostly seniors, to collaborate on Version 2.0. The inclusive approach to community engagement prioritized reaching marginalized and equity-seeking groups. These groups include black, racialized and LGBTQ2S seniors, low-income seniors, seniors whose

primary language is not English, those experiencing housing insecurity as well as older women experiencing homelessness, victimization and violence.

The result is the Toronto Seniors Strategy Version 2.0, which continues to uphold the principles that were articulated in Version 1.0: equity, respect, inclusion, and quality of life. It commits to ensuring all seniors having equitable access to City services and programs. It also continues to focus on actions that fall within the City's jurisdictional authority to plan, manage and deliver.

Version 2.0 includes 27 new recommendations, which were unanimously adopted by City Council on May 22, 2018. It begins with a bold promise to bring together a wide variety of seniors housing and services under one entity. It also undertakes a series of actions with more immediate benefits for seniors in the areas of health, housing, transportation, employment and income, and access to information.



# WHO IS A SENIOR IN TORONTO?

There is no single accepted definition of a senior in Toronto. Programs, services and initiatives for seniors within the City and other governments have different definitions reflecting different program requirements and target audiences. More importantly, a strict definition of when a person becomes a senior is viewed as stigmatizing and does not reflect the reality of what becoming an older adult means. The City of Toronto takes a life course approach to ageing, which recognizes that we all age differently, and that the experience of ageing varies from person to person

depending on one's access to social and economic opportunities and the social determinants of health. The challenges of ageing, therefore, intersect with and amplify vulnerabilities related to a number of factors such as gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, race, language, literacy, income, education, sexuality and citizenship status. People living with means and supports are likely to age very differently than those whose lived experience includes victimization, violence, homelessness, housing insecurity, poverty, systemic discrimination and social isolation.

***“There is no single accepted definition of a senior in Toronto.”***



# DEMOGRAPHICS

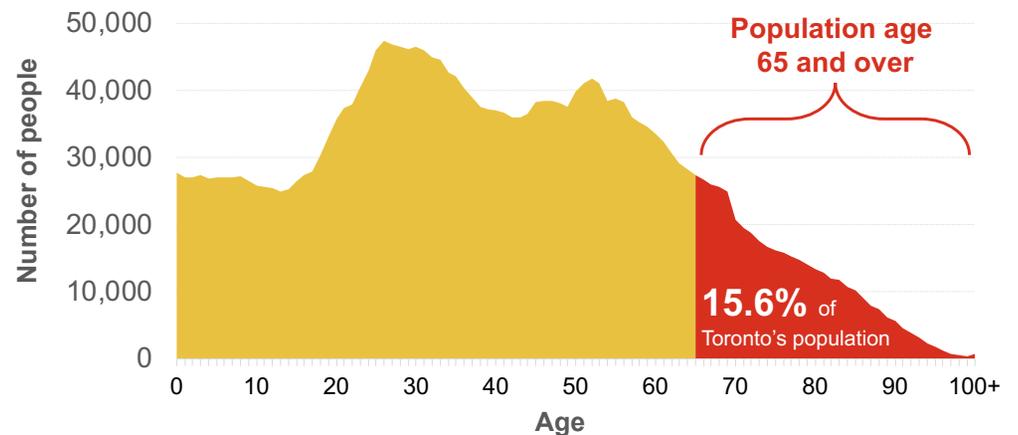
Toronto's seniors population continues to grow. Older adults age 65+ now comprise 15.6 percent of the population, which adds up to 426,945 people from a multitude of different backgrounds and ethnicities.

The fact that seniors now outnumber children aged 0 to 14 has significant, long-term implications for the City. The following figures and table illustrate some of the most significant trends in the ageing of Toronto's population.

**FIGURE 1:**

**People age 65+ make up 15.6% of Toronto's population.**

In the 2016 Census, seniors age 65+ outnumbered children under 15 in Toronto first time.

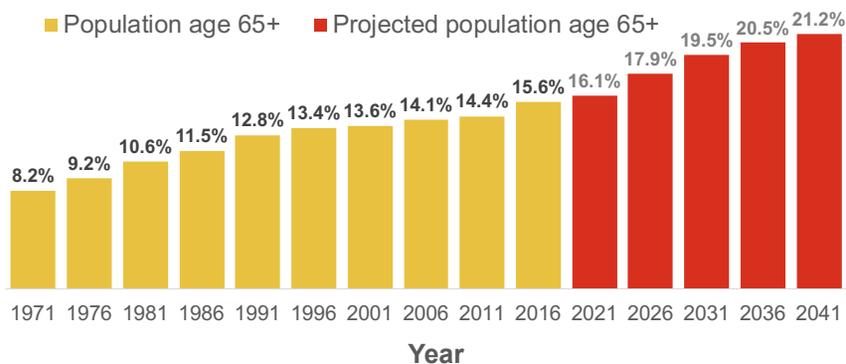


Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census of Population  
Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016005  
Toronto Census Division

## FIGURE 2:

**The proportion of Toronto’s population over age 65 is projected to grow to 21.2% in 2041.**

The proportion of Toronto’s population age 65 and over is projected to continue growing. By 2041, people age 65+ will make up 21.2% of Toronto’s population. While this proportional increase may not at first seem significant, the fact that the number of seniors in Toronto is expected to nearly double from 426,945 to 828,064 from 2016 to 2041 – puts the ageing of Toronto in perspective.

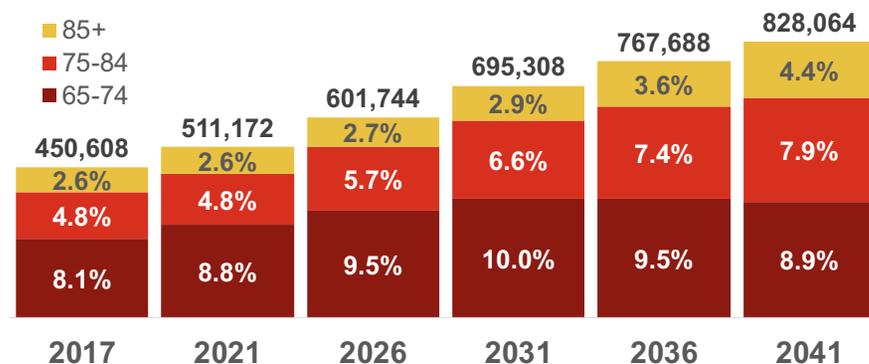


Source: Statistics Canada – Censuses of Population, 1971-2016  
 Census Profiles Toronto Census Division and Ontario Ministry of Finance, Ontario Populations Projections Update, Spring 2018  
 (Based on the 2011 Census) 2017-2041

## FIGURE 3:

**The City of Toronto’s population age 65+ is projected to increase by 84% by 2041.**

We also anticipate shifting demographics within the population age 65 and older. As the baby boom generation continues to age, we will see changes for different age ranges within the senior population, with an increasingly older seniors population. Indeed, the greatest growth expected is amongst populations 75-84 and 85+.

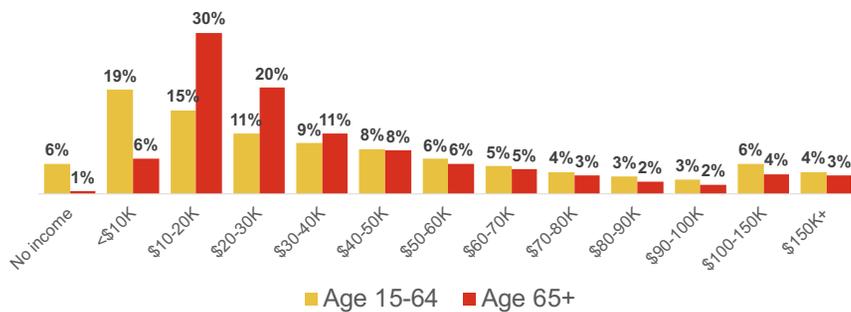


Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance  
 Ontario Populations Projections Update, Spring 2018  
 (Based on the 2011 Census) 2017-2041  
[fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/table10.html](http://fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/table10.html)

## FIGURE 4:

### Half of Toronto's seniors have individual incomes in the \$10K to \$30K range.

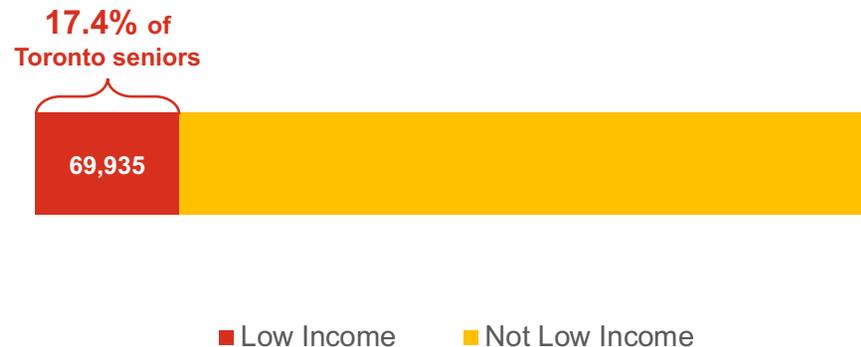
Many seniors subsist on incomes just above the low income cut-off line and so remain economically vulnerable, especially in the case of a significant health issue, loss of a partner, and continually rising costs of living.



Source: Statistics Canada. 2018. Target group profile of Age 65+, Target Group Profile. 2016 Census of Population (database). Community Data Program (distributor). Last updated April 14, 2018. Communitydata.ca (accessed May 20, 2018).

## FIGURE 5:

### Nearly 70,000 seniors in Toronto have low incomes. (Low Income Measure After-Tax)



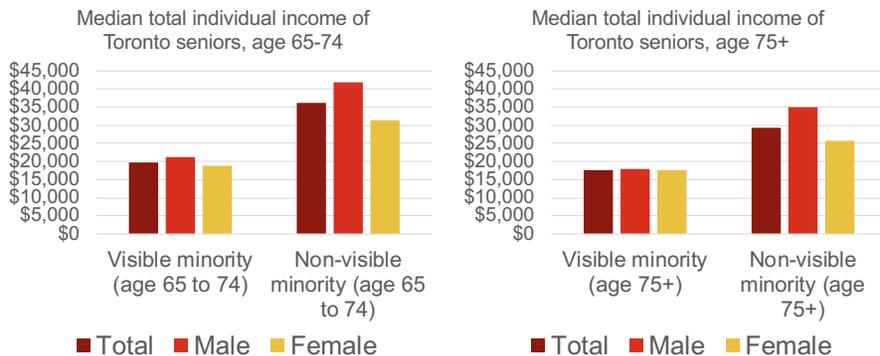
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population Catalogue Number 98-316-X2016001 Toronto Census Division

**FIGURE 6:**

**Gender and race are linked to income differences of seniors.**

Income levels among Toronto’s seniors show considerable disparity between men and women and especially between racialized and non-racialized seniors. Visible minority seniors have much lower median incomes than non-visible minority seniors.

Figure 5: There is great disparity among the individual incomes of seniors across sex and especially visible minority status.

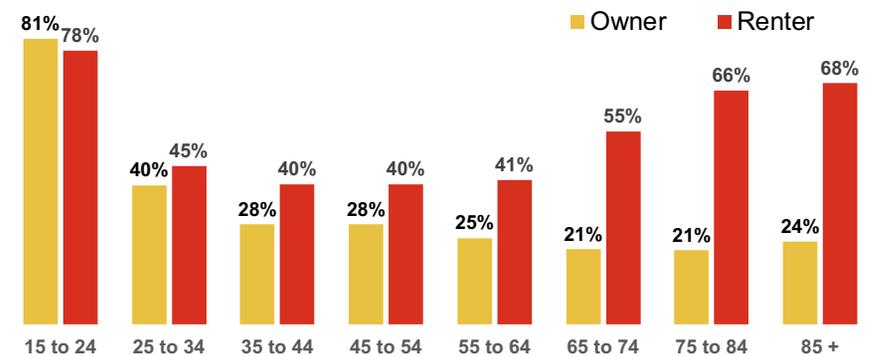


Source: Statistics Canada. 2018. Semi-custom table (Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016231 at Census Division level). 2016 Census of Population (database). Community Data Program (distributor). Last updated March 20, 2018. Communitydata.ca (accessed March 28, 2018).

**FIGURE 7:**

**Housing affordability is a serious issue for senior renters.**

Housing affordability is a serious concern for tenants aged 65 and older. Affordability worsens with age for tenants, and improves with age for homeowners until age 85.

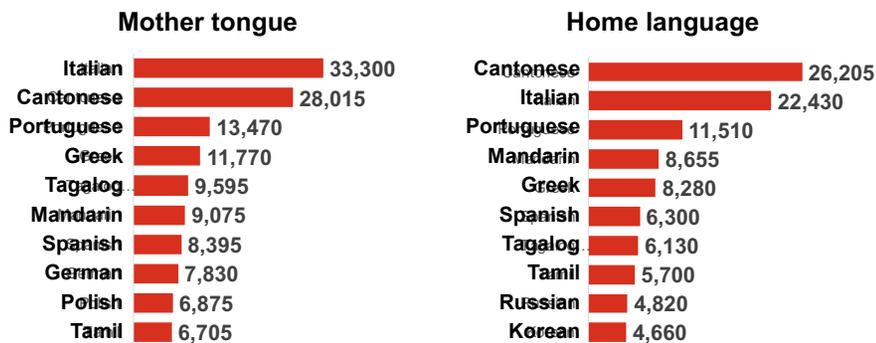


Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census of Population Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016231 Toronto Census Division

## FIGURE 8:

### Toronto's seniors speak many different languages.

The top ten non-English languages spoken by seniors in Toronto shows some of the linguistic diversity in the city.



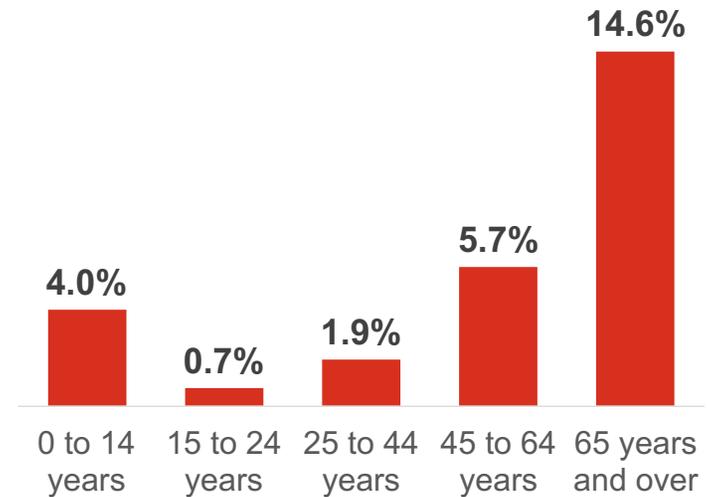
Statistics Canada. 2018. Target group profile of Age 65+, Target Group Profile. 2016 Census of Population (database). Community Data Program (distributor). Last updated April 14, 2018. Communitydata.ca (accessed May 20, 2018).

## FIGURE 9:

### Nearly 15% of Toronto seniors are unable to speak English.

Nearly 15% of senior Torontonians cannot speak English.

#### Torontonians with no knowledge of English, per cent by age group

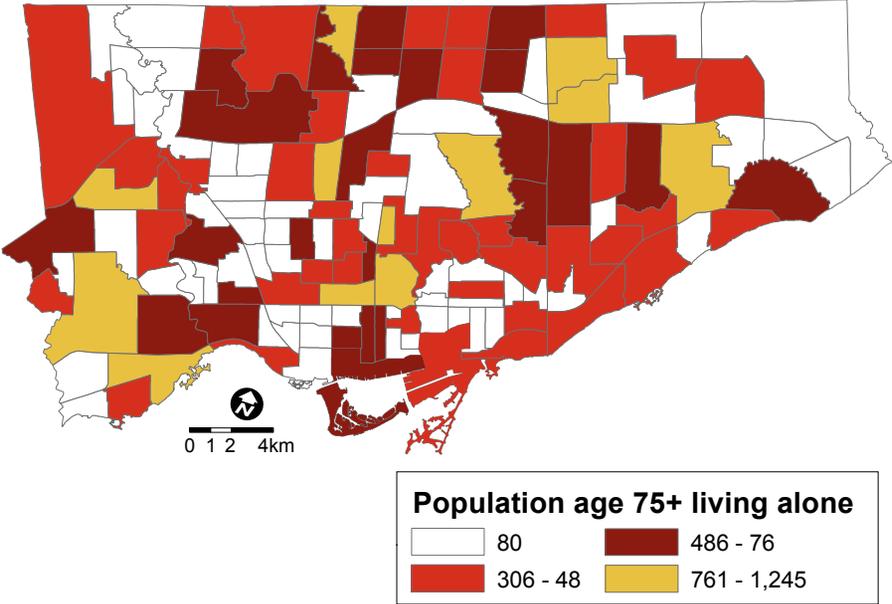


Statistics Canada - 2016 Census of Population Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016052  
Toronto Census Division

## FIGURE 10:

**People age 75 and older who live alone are concentrated in various areas across the city.**

This statistic suggests that the potential for isolation is pervasive throughout Toronto.



Source: Statistics Canada - 2016 Census of Population  
 Catalogue Number 98-400-X2016030  
 Toronto Census Tracts

## TABLE 1:

**A significant number of seniors are still working or looking for work.**

Many seniors are continuing to work past age 65. At the time of the 2016 Census, more than 62,000 Torontonians age 65 and over were either working or looking for work - a labour force participation rate of 15.6%. The unemployment rate for Toronto's seniors was 5.0% which was lower than the unemployment rate for Torontonians as a whole at 8.2%.

Toronto	Age 65+
Population (in private households)	402,045
In the labour force	62,875
Employed	59,705
Unemployed	3,175
Not in the labour force	339,170
Participation rate	15.6%
Employment rate	14.9%
Unemployment rate	5.0%

Source: Statistics Canada. 2018. Target group profile of Age 65+, Target Group Profile. 2016 Census of Population (database). Community Data Program (distributor). Last updated April 14, 2018. Communitydata.ca (accessed May 20, 2018).

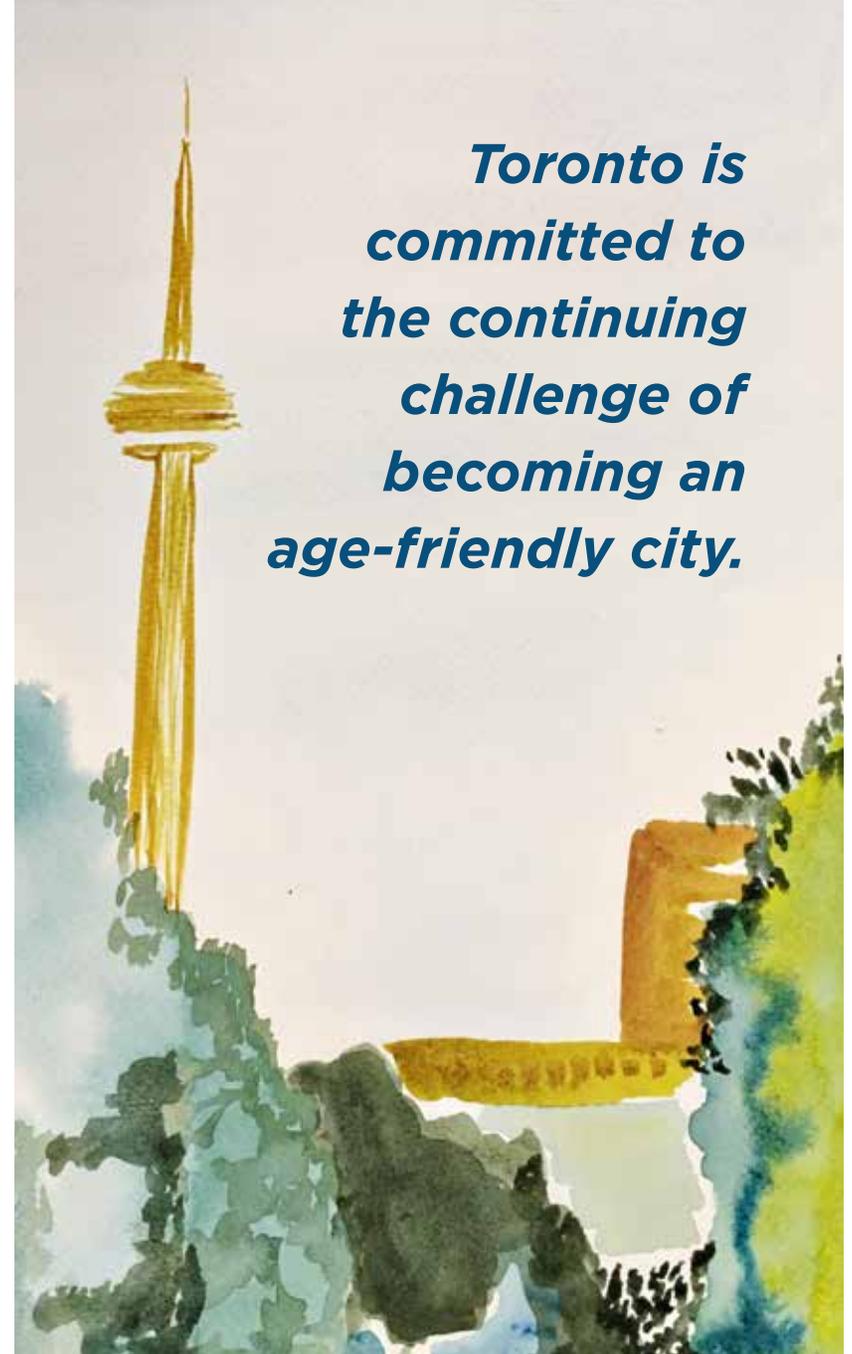


# THE JOURNEY TO **VERSION 2.0**

Toronto's commitment to become an age-friendly city was formalized in 2013 when City Council unanimously adopted the **Toronto Seniors Strategy: Towards an Age-Friendly City**, now known as **Version 1.0**. In 2016, Toronto was formally recognized by the **World Health Organization** as a member of the **Global Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Network**, and the **City's status was renewed in 2018**.

Version 1.0 set out 91 recommended actions for City divisions and agencies with a sharp focus on accountability and transparency. Annual progress reports clearly described what milestones were achieved in specified timeframes. Of the original 91 recommended actions, 67 were fully implemented, 23 were partially implemented and one was not completed.

*Toronto is committed to the continuing challenge of becoming an age-friendly city.*



*Art created by person living with dementia*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SURVEY RESULTS

## Version 2.0 of the Toronto Seniors Strategy set ambitious community engagement goals.

The Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table, City staff, Councillors and seniors organizations worked together to host over 90 consultation sessions in every ward across the city. Approximately 3,000 residents participated in these sessions and another 7,000 completed a survey.

Senior Torontonians are diverse and belong to many different communities. Considering the diverse and particular needs of seniors, and reaching out to those seniors whose voices would not otherwise be heard has been a priority in the development of Version 2.0. Consultations involved many seniors living on a low-income, LGBTQ2S and racialized seniors, those with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity and those who do not speak English. These senior voices were important to include since the challenges of ageing can intersect and amplify other

vulnerabilities related to gender, ability, sexuality, race, ethnicity, culture, income, language, geography, education and citizenship status.

This equity approach included working with community partners such as Woodgreen Community Services to reach non-English speaking seniors and run consultations in other languages. Specifically, 106 seniors and caregivers were engaged in consultations that took place in Greek, Bengali, Arabic, Farsi, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Mandarin and Cantonese. This is particularly important since newcomer seniors are less likely to speak English fluently and may not qualify for income security programs.

The results of engaging specifically with seniors from equity-seeking groups has informed the development of recommendations to address specific barriers and

needs of seniors from these groups. For example, seniors who are LGBTQ2S shared that as they age, they encounter barriers that are intensified by discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. It follows that seniors who are LGBTQ2S and racialized, Black or or Indigenous face barriers that are compounded by homophobia, transphobia, and systemic racism. The consultation work with the LGBTQ2S seniors community resulted in a specific recommendation in Version 2.0 to develop a public awareness and engagement campaign to address homophobia and transphobia affecting seniors.

### **THE MAIN CONCERNS EXPRESSED THROUGH THE CONSULTATION SESSIONS INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:**

- Frustration and difficulty navigating government-funded services
- Government could do more to enable seniors to live independently in their neighbourhoods, and avoid or delay the need for long-term care
- Pedestrian safety, including time to cross the street at intersections

- Sidewalk and road repair, including the need for the City to repair uneven sidewalks and improve snow removal
- Age-friendly street furniture and accessibility
- Feelings of loneliness, no one to call on for help if needed
- Need or want to work but cannot find suitable employment
- Concern about elder abuse – financial, physical, emotional
- The need for City documents about services, programs and initiatives to be available in languages other than English and additional translation to facilitate newcomer participation in City programs and consultations
- Great appreciation for City libraries and recreation centres and programs

A common concern was the difficulty of accessing the more than 40 services the City provides to seniors. There was a strong indication that there is a pressing need for the City to improve service coordination and access.

Also, the City provided surveys online as well as printed copies. The survey was promoted broadly through City Divisions, Agencies, the Accountability Table, Toronto Seniors Forum, councillor's offices, and 78 seniors organizations and community agencies serving seniors. Printed copies of the survey were made available at all the consultation sessions in English, French and the top 10 languages spoken by seniors in Toronto. Approximately 7,000 surveys were completed.

The results of the survey show that the top three concerns of seniors in Toronto continue to be health, housing and transportation. These same top three concerns were also identified in the Version 1.0 survey.

Highlights from the Version 2.0 survey include the following:

## HEALTH

- 63 per cent of respondents list health care and home care services as their top concern
- 62 per cent are not aware of exercise and falls prevention programs offered by Toronto Public Health and Local Health Integration Networks

- 46 per cent participate in physical activities like walking every day
- 12 per cent do not have people in their life to call on for help if needed

## HOUSING

- 38 per cent of respondents list housing affordability and availability as their top concern
- 18 per cent had difficulty paying rent, mortgage, Hydro bill or other housing costs in the last year
- 14 per cent had to delay home repairs or modifications because they were unaffordable

## TRANSPORTATION

*(note: respondents were able to select more than one option)*

- 58 per cent of respondents rely on the TTC to get around the city
- 49 per cent drive
- 48 per cent walk
- 8 per cent cycle

## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

- 68 per cent of respondents are retired
- 18 per cent had difficulty paying their rent, mortgage, hydro or other housing costs in the last year

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 75 per cent of respondents feel comfortable receiving services in English
- 71 per cent use the Internet everyday

- 63 per cent accessed the services of Toronto Public Library in the past year
- 56 per cent prefer the term seniors to ‘older adults’, ‘elders’ or other terms
- 50 per cent use search engines to find information about City programs and services; 37 per cent contact 311; 11 per cent contact 211; 18 per cent contact their Councillor
- 5 per cent do not understand, speak or read English



# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Version 2.0 of the Toronto Seniors Strategy is made up of 27 recommendations. Each recommendation identifies a specific City Division or Agency responsible and a timeline for implementation. Short-term recommendations are initiated within one year of Council adoption and medium-term recommendations will be initiated within two to four years of Council adoption.**

All of the recommendations below were generated from the community engagement process, analysis of the survey responses and co-creation with the Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table stakeholders, collaboration with federal and provincial partners and working closely with City Division and Agency staff.

***The top three concerns of seniors in Toronto continue to be health, housing and transportation***

Version 2.0 recommendations have been categorized across five theme areas consistent with the provision of City services for seniors:

1. Health
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Employment and income
5. Access to information

The sole exception to this categorization is the first recommendation which seeks to integrate municipal services related to all five themes. These five themes also align with the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly City domains.



# INTEGRATED CITY SENIORS HOUSING AND SERVICES ENTITY

## RECOMMENDATION 1:

The City of Toronto will initiate a process to develop a seniors housing and services entity at the City dedicated to taking a service system management approach to the needs of all seniors and integrating City services for seniors.

The overwhelming consensus at the Accountability Table resulting from the needs and concerns identified through the community engagement process is this: the way the City currently organizes its housing and services for seniors does not meet their needs now and this problem will be exacerbated over the next 10 to 15 years.

In consultation after consultation, Toronto seniors and caregivers spoke about the difficulty and frustration of navigating an increasingly complex and siloed government service system. This includes federal pension and income security programs, provincial primary healthcare, hospital and home and community care, municipal services and programs and those provided by the community-based not-for-profit

sector (or ‘for public benefit’ sector). The City needs an organizational approach that better meets the needs of seniors and caregivers. At the municipal level there are over 40 services, programs and initiatives for seniors delivered across 14 City Divisions and Agencies.

A single division or entity at the City dedicated to integrating seniors housing and services will provide, for the first time, an identifiable entity for Toronto to receive and leverage funds from provincial and federal governments. This recommendation recognizes that the status quo is not an effective administrative structure to meet the needs of our ageing population. A number of other WHO Age-Friendly cities have stand-alone seniors service departments. In January 2017, the province elevated the Ontario Seniors

Secretariat to a stand-alone Ministry of Seniors Affairs which became the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility after the provincial election in 2018.

A one-stop seniors entity at the City will foster stronger and closer relationships with the five Local Health Integration Networks that operate in Toronto. Additionally, proactively coordinating the City's services for seniors under one entity will support the work being done to improve services for seniors

living in Toronto Community Housing through the implementation of Tenants First. The creation of a seniors housing and services entity at the City will help Toronto seniors and caregivers by knitting together the complex terrain of municipal programs and services, provincial home and community care and other government-funded services for seniors in a similar way that the City has already done with the creation of its Children's Services Division.



## **RECOMMENDATION 2:**

Through Toronto Public Health, the City of Toronto will explore how to expand access to free dental health services for low-income seniors.

The current wait list for dental services for low-income seniors in Toronto Public Health clinics is up to two years. The lack of access to dental services for low-income seniors sets off a chain of negative outcomes such as pain, tooth loss and ill-fitting dentures, which can negatively impact self-esteem, the ability to eat,

laugh, speak, or smile and results in poorer overall health. It also exacerbates existing obstacles related to social connectedness, diminishes quality of life and negatively impacts functional, social and psychological well-being.

In addition, there is strong evidence that poor oral health, including gum disease, is intimately linked with other chronic diseases in particular cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Seniors who do not have access to dental care will be at higher risk of having these chronic diseases and or being able to stabilize

their health after onset of these diseases. This will negatively affect their overall health and wellbeing.

The new provincial government has made a commitment to help low-income seniors access dental care which should enable the implementation of this recommendation.

### **RECOMMENDATION 3:**

The City of Toronto in partnership with Toronto Community Housing will seek provincial funding for additional Seniors Active Living Centres in Toronto.

In the 2017 Ontario Budget, the government announced funding to create up to 40 new Seniors Active Living Centres (SALCs), formerly known as Elderly Persons Centres. This program provides operating funding of up to \$42,700 annually for initiatives that benefit seniors. It does not fund capital expenditures such as the purchase or building of facilities or renovations to existing buildings. Under the Seniors Active Living Centres Act, 2017, the province requires municipalities to provide a minimum

20 percent of the net annual cost of maintaining and operating individual SALC programs. These funds contribute to programs and services in existing facilities.

To date, eight of the new 40 SALCs that have been announced thus far are to be located with the City of Toronto and led by community-based organizations and agencies.

## RECOMMENDATION 4:

Toronto Public Library will support social connectedness by expanding digital literacy programs for seniors in libraries.

Libraries are welcoming public spaces, meeting places and de-facto community hubs. Digital literacy programs for seniors provide increased social interaction and engagement with library staff and other seniors as well as opportunities to stay connected with people and interests. Libraries are particularly important access points for low-income and newcomer seniors as well as seniors experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Public access to computers and free access to the internet are valuable resources at a time when increasingly it is the most reliable source of current information about programs and services. In this way, expanding digital literacy programs for seniors will increase their ability to access services more broadly.

In addition, Toronto Public Library will work with Toronto Community Housing to bring library programs for seniors into Toronto Community Housing seniors-designated buildings.

## RECOMMENDATION 5:

The City of Toronto will expand Community Paramedicine programming, which provides non-emergency community care and supports in order to better support seniors who are high-volume 911 callers.

As part of Version 1.0, Toronto Paramedic Services partnered with Toronto Community Housing, Sinai Health System and others to pilot a program called

CP@home that saw Community Paramedics visit the homes of seniors living in Toronto Community Housing buildings who were high-volume callers to

911. By visiting these particular seniors and connecting them to community services such as LHIN Home and Community Care Services, Meals on Wheels, Toronto Ride or the Alzheimer's Society of Toronto, this program helps avoid time-consuming and costly visits to the Emergency Department. Multiple studies have

shown that enabling paramedic referrals to home care and community supports has resulted in a significant decrease in calls and ED visits from frequent 911 users and contributes to improved health outcomes for these seniors.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6:**

The City of Toronto will work with the Province of Ontario and community partners to develop a Toronto Caregivers Strategy with an emphasis on the needs of senior caregivers.

According to the Change Foundation, family caregivers represent almost 30 per cent of Ontarians who provide unpaid care to those who need assistance due to a health condition, disability, or challenges related to aging (A Profile of Family Caregivers in Ontario, 2016). Many of these caregivers are working full-time and/or seniors. Caregiving is rewarding but it can also be emotionally, physically, and financially stressful. Many caregivers feel socially isolated and unsupported.

Consistent with Council direction to support caregivers [2017.CD17.9], the City and its partners can bring its resources to bear to better support these family caregivers with information, respite, transportation and financial supports, and improve access to other existing supports and services that may be available but unknown to caregivers. This will relieve caregiver stress, enhance caregiver resilience and expand social support and participation.

## RECOMMENDATION 7:

The City of Toronto will consider senior-friendly outdoor fitness equipment in the design and refurbishment of parks.

Cities around the world are responding to the changing needs and preferences of seniors and older adults by expanding the range of activities designed for them. The City of Toronto began installing public outdoor fitness equipment in parks several years ago with all ages in mind. Installing outdoor fitness equipment

has been recognized as a global best practice to promote active aging and improved health and wellbeing outcomes, and seniors and older adults have embraced these facilities in Toronto. New outdoor fitness equipment will be considered in the design and refurbishment of parks throughout Toronto.

## RECOMMENDATION 8:

The City of Toronto will work with Toronto Community Housing and FoodShare to establish healthy food access initiatives that are accessible to seniors living in social housing through Toronto Public Health.

The Mobile Good Food Market is a City partnership with FoodShare to bring fresh, healthy food to low-income communities or communities with low access to healthy food options. Some market stops serve primarily seniors populations. In addition, the Bulk Food Buying Club is an initiative in collaboration

with FoodReach that allows community members to purchase healthy, fresh food in bulk at good prices for local distribution. The Food Strategy is partnering with Toronto Community Housing to pilot this initiative to bring affordable, fresh healthy food to residents living in a mixed housing complex.

## RECOMMENDATION 9:

The City of Toronto will develop Housing Opportunities Toronto: Housing Action Plan (2020-2030) to account for the evolving demographics and needs of older Torontonians over the next decade, including those in informal retirement communities, including apartment buildings or housing developments that house a high concentration of seniors

Toronto's Housing Action Plan (2020-2030), co-led by the Affordable Housing Office (AHO) and Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA), guides the City's housing and homelessness initiatives, policies, and programs from 2020 to 2030. This plan will address the increasing need for affordable and accessible seniors housing across the City. It will consider the needs of the significant number of seniors living in older apartment buildings or housing developments that were not designed with seniors in mind and can perpetuate physical and social isolation. A one-stop seniors entity at the City will foster stronger and closer relationships with the five

Local Health Integration Networks that operate in Toronto. Additionally, proactively coordinating the City's services for seniors under one entity will support the work being done to improve services for seniors living in Toronto Community Housing through the implementation of Tenants First. The creation of a seniors housing and services entity at the City will help Toronto seniors and caregivers to knit together the complex terrain of municipal programs and services, provincial home and community care and other government-funded services for seniors in a similar way that the City has already done with the creation of its Children's Services Division.

## RECOMMENDATION 10:

The City of Toronto will address the specific and growing needs of older Torontonians by continuing to create new affordable housing and fund housing repairs and accessibility modifications for seniors by delivering federal-provincial-City funding and City incentives.

As of 2018, about one-third of households on the City's social housing waitlist are seniors. The City needs to scale up its efforts to create affordable housing for low-income seniors and provide some relief to the social housing waitlist. The Affordable Housing

Office will deliver and report on the impact of federal, provincial and City investments on the creation of new seniors rental homes and repairs/accessibility modifications for senior homeowners and renters.

## RECOMMENDATION 11:

The City of Toronto will seek provincial funding under the Seniors Community Grant Program to pilot a HomeShare program in Toronto to connect overhoused seniors with students and others.

Some Toronto seniors find themselves overhoused. Some assistance with light household tasks and companionship would help them to more successfully age in place.

It is estimated that a significant number of seniors are overhoused living in single family dwellings with three or more bedrooms in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton

Area (GTHA). Trends like these have led to the coining of terms like "empty bedrooms". This program would facilitate matches between interested seniors and University graduate students seeking affordable housing. Successful matches could help to promote social connectedness, intergenerational and linguistic connections as well as promote financial independence and personal autonomy for seniors.

## RECOMMENDATION 12:

The City of Toronto will develop a new homeless shelter that provides specialized services for seniors and older adults.

Seniors facing homelessness have unique needs, which include compromised health and a lack of options for obtaining gainful employment. The situation is exacerbated when individuals who have been homeless for many years have difficulty accessing appropriate housing with supports or long-term care. The new shelter located at 3306 Kingston Road will use a collaborative approach that builds on existing resources

to address critical gaps in services for homeless seniors, with the central principle of improving housing stability. The program will support vulnerable older adults including those who have a long history of homelessness and/or those new to homelessness who face age-related health conditions and/or mental illness, isolation, and barriers accessing social and community supports. The new shelter for seniors will open in the fall 2018.

## RECOMMENDATION 13:

The City of Toronto will implement the provincial Home for Good program funding to create and maintain housing with supports that meet the needs of formerly homeless persons including seniors.

Although there is considerable evidence suggesting that providing people experiencing homelessness with housing is a critical first step in helping them improve their circumstances, seniors who are homeless – whether they have recently become homeless or have been living on the streets for some time – can benefit from additional interventions to facilitate a

transition to housing stability. Through the provincial Home for Good program, the AHO and SSHA divisions will administer additional funding to create and maintain innovative housing with support programs in partnership with community based agencies that may provide specialized programming for formerly homeless persons including seniors.

## RECOMMENDATION 14:

The City of Toronto will amend the Official Plan to recognize the City's commitment to age-friendly principles.

The global age-friendly community movement, which was launched in Canada as a series of pilots just over a decade ago, has since been enthusiastically adopted in more than 850 communities across the country. Research by the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) in 2016 found that although the age-friendly concept is an effective tool to engage with seniors, municipal commitments to becoming age-friendly are not yet reflected in land use plans and policies as a way to influence the layout of neighbourhoods or the design of parks, streets and other essential elements of the public realm.

The City of Toronto has the opportunity to become the first major city in Ontario to take this step. Earlier this year, Council directed the Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning to make an explicit acknowledgement of Council's commitment to being an age-friendly city in its new Official Plan when the review process begins in 2018.



*Art created by person living with dementia*

## RECOMMENDATION 15:

The City of Toronto will negotiate the use of Section 37 benefits to develop new neighbourhood facilities, including those around apartment buildings or housing developments that house a high concentration of seniors, to meet the needs of seniors as appropriate.

As indicated in the recently updated Neighbourhood Profiles, the demographic and economic circumstances of neighbourhoods across the city vary considerably. Although every effort is made to ensure that affordable housing and civic resources such as schools, libraries and community centres are equitably distributed across the city, changing demand for City services tends to move faster than the process of creating or improving City facilities.

As the population of seniors continues to increase at different rates throughout Toronto, the use of Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act presents an opportunity to augment or improve municipal assets directed to the needs of seniors through the development approvals process. Section 37 allows the City to negotiate with private developers for pay for some kind of community benefit in exchange for exceeding density limits in the zoning bylaw. There are currently many clusters

of apartment buildings and housing developments that house a high concentration of seniors. Analyses will be undertaken to map high-density clusters against currently available municipal assets to identify geographic targets for Section 37 benefits.

***Changing demand for City services tends to move faster than the process of creating or improving City facilities***

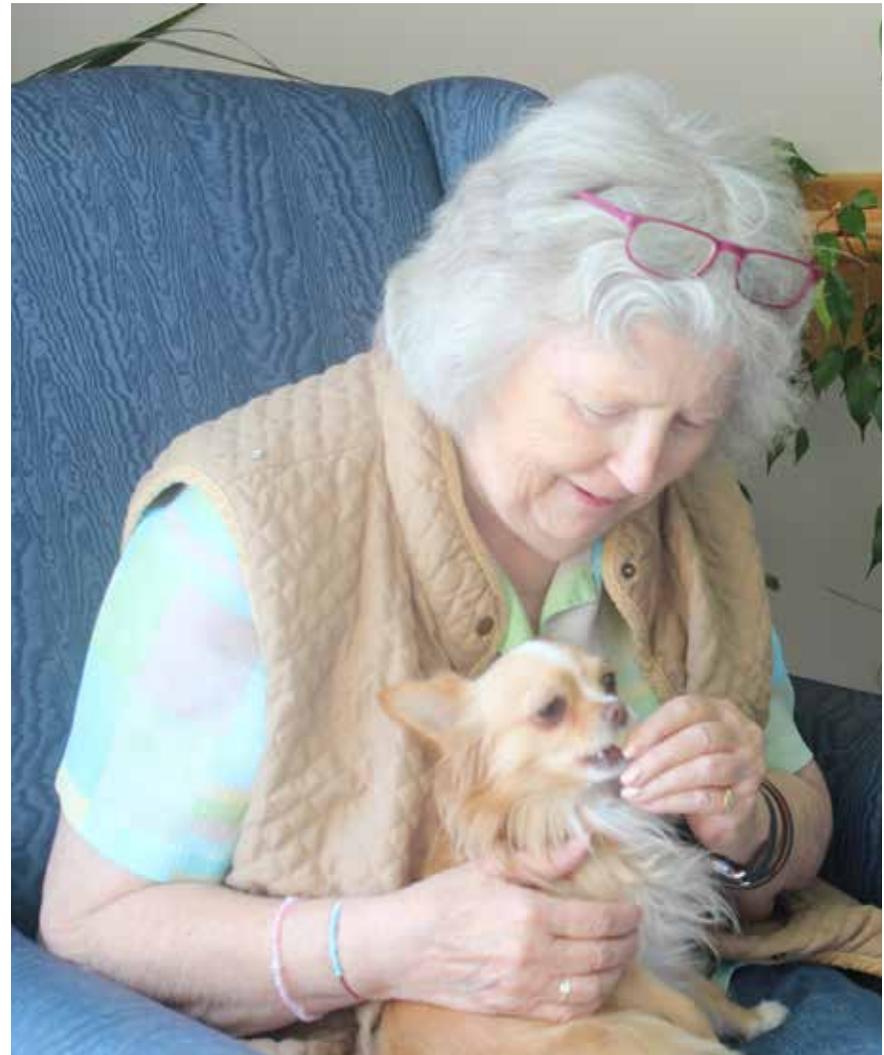
## RECOMMENDATION 16:

The City of Toronto will provide seniors with new and customized information and tools that will empower them to ensure that they and their neighbours are living in a fire safe environment.

Toronto Fire Services (TFS) will develop a resident-based Fire Safety Champion program beginning with TCHC seniors buildings. Senior residents identified as Fire Safety Champions will receive training from TFS to be able to engage peers in their community through the delivery of fire safety presentations, ongoing education, and materials.

TFS will use analytics and demographic data to develop customized education messages and educational tools and materials in appropriate languages and based on top identified ignition sources. Increased fire safety awareness of senior residents will improve fire safe behaviours with the goal of reducing the number of fires, fire-related deaths and injuries, and property loss.

Training will also be provided so that Fire Safety Champions have the knowledge to identify any potential fire safety risks and to notify TFS.





## TRANSPORTATION

### RECOMMENDATION 17:

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) will develop and launch a new public awareness campaign to advance a culture of respect and civility for the benefit of seniors and other riders.

As part of the implementation of Version 1.0 of the Toronto Seniors Strategy, the TTC changed the colour of priority seating on TTC vehicles to blue to clearly identify seating areas for persons with disabilities, the elderly and expectant mothers. Despite the fact



that failure to give up a seat can result in hefty fines, achieving high levels of compliance or even recognition of the need to pay attention to the needs of seniors and others remains a challenge.

Other major cities have had success with public awareness campaigns to educate and encourage transit riders to adopt attitudes of compassion and respect that go beyond giving up a seat to include holding doors open at station entrances, willingly making room for walkers or strollers, and taking care not to crowd slower-moving riders. Similar in approach to the TTC's anti-harassment campaign, which includes an app to encourage customers to report instances of harassment, a civility campaign designed to address issues faced by seniors and others would have benefits all-round.

## **RECOMMENDATION 18:**

As part Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, the City will identify and install additional Seniors Safety Zones to promote the safety of seniors on City streets.

Seniors Safety Zones are part of Toronto's Vision Zero Road. They include traffic safety measures designed to raise the visibility of seniors – as well as giving them extended crossing times – to safely get across the street. Further investigations will be conducted to determine the need and feasibility for installing mid-block signals and/or traffic calming measures.

Initially, the priority for identifying potential Seniors Safety Zones was on those crossings where pedestrian fatalities and collision rates involving older adults are unusually high. Recommendation 18 would involve installing Seniors Safety Zones in neighbourhoods with a disproportionate number of seniors and with wider rights of way that result in higher vehicular speeds.

## **RECOMMENDATION 19:**

*The City of Toronto will construct new sidewalks on roads where they are missing to improve walkability, mobility and accessibility of city streets.*

Constructing sidewalks where they are missing completes gaps in Toronto's walking network, and helps all residents and visitors connect to transit and neighbourhood and amenities. Sidewalks are the most basic form of infrastructure to ensure safe and comfortable walking conditions. Streets without

sidewalks are a barrier to accessibility. Safe walking opportunities can reduce inequality by enabling individuals without motor vehicles, such as older adults, children, and many low-income families, to more easily access goods and services.

## RECOMMENDATION 20:

The Toronto Transit Commission will develop a travel training program to support increased senior access to public transit.

Some seniors may no longer be driving or for other reasons do not have the experience or confidence to navigate the TTC. Consistent with the TTC's ongoing

commitment to enhance the customer experience, the TTC will develop a travel training program to encourage and support transit use among seniors.



## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

## RECOMMENDATION 21:

The City of Toronto will work with community partners under Toronto For All to develop a workplace anti-ageism campaign.

Increased longevity is a relatively new phenomenon that has seen the average lifespan of Canadians increase by ten years in only five decades. With people living longer, it is increasingly common for seniors to continue working or volunteering well past the traditional retirement age of 65. Regardless of whether the decision to stay in the workforce in

some capacity is a necessity or a life choice, societal attitudes in the form of ageism can end up conflicting with personal preferences. In addition to negatively impacting seniors, misconceptions, negative attitudes and assumptions about older people can be serious barriers that damage the City's reputation and undermine its potential.

## RECOMMENDATION 22:

The City of Toronto will work with The 519, Senior Pride Network and other community partners to develop a public awareness and education campaign addressing homophobia and transphobia affecting seniors.

The current generation of LGBTQ2S seniors have experienced a lifetime of discrimination due to their sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and they face very specific challenges as they age. LGBTQ2S seniors are less likely to seek health care when they need it; they often do not disclose their sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression to their care providers for fear of discrimination; they are at a higher risk for negative health outcomes later in life, including depression, suicide, substance abuse and smoking; and they report more feelings of isolation from their communities. This proposed education campaign is part of our drive to secure LGBTQ2S inclusive environments for Toronto seniors.

The historic grouping of transgender people with cisgender lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people within City of Toronto consultations, policy development, and service delivery has obscured the needs of transgender communities

in Toronto. Particularly the needs of transgender, non-binary racialized seniors and Two Spirit seniors who are marginalized by the compounding effects of transphobia, cissexism, and ageism. In Recommendation 19 and throughout implementation of the Seniors Strategy 2.0, alignment will occur with SDA's engagement of transgender, non-binary and Two Spirit seniors towards developing a service plan for transgender Torontonians that specifically considers the needs and recommendations of seniors.

***LGBTQ2S seniors are less likely to seek health care when they need it***

## **RECOMMENDATION 23:**

The City of Toronto will expand employment support services to further address the needs of older workers, focusing on those in receipt of Ontario Works.

Many low income older workers are seeking employment that matches their skills and experience, and need to meet basic living expenses. To address this need, Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) will leverage work-based learning, training and employment supports for older workers in receipt of

Ontario Works. This would include building on the successful Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE) model, which emphasizes active employer engagement and candidate employment preparation to increase employment outcomes and job retention.

## **RECOMMENDATION 24:**

The City of Toronto will enhance public awareness of property tax deferral and cancellation programs.

When market value assessment was introduced a decade ago, the impact on many homeowners in a high-value jurisdiction like Toronto was relatively minor as residents were protected to some degree by the very high assessed value of the city's commercial buildings. However, in recent years, however, the rapid increase in housing prices has been reflected on everyone's tax bills, putting a growing number of

retired homeowners in a difficult financial position. The value of their principal asset is increasing far more quickly than their incomes, particularly if they are dependent on pensions or financial assets affected by the 2008 recession. As this is a relatively new issue for many, the City's property tax deferral and cancellation programs are not widely known and therefore accessed less than might be expected.



## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

### RECOMMENDATION 25:

The City of Toronto will work with the Seniors Strategy Accountability Table and other community partners to update and circulate the new Services for Seniors in Toronto directory.

One of the notable successes of Version 1.0 of the Toronto Seniors Strategy was the creation of a service directory for seniors vulnerable in their housing that brought information related to housing, health, transportation, etc., into a single, easy to read document. While there is broad agreement that it

makes sense to reposition future iterations of the directory as a web-based product, it is also recognized that accessing information from the internet does not work for everyone. Opportunities to repurpose future iterations of the service directory as a printer-friendly web document will also be explored.

### RECOMMENDATION 26:

The City of Toronto will work with all ward councillors to hold Seniors Active Living Fairs to facilitate outreach and communication of the burgeoning range of diverse products and services available for seniors.

Although private- and publicly-funded entities focus extensively on millennials as a prime target market, the latest census results reveals that people over the age of 65 in aggregate represent an even larger market in terms of the development of products and services. Seniors Active Living Fairs present a unique opportunity to foster local economic development for

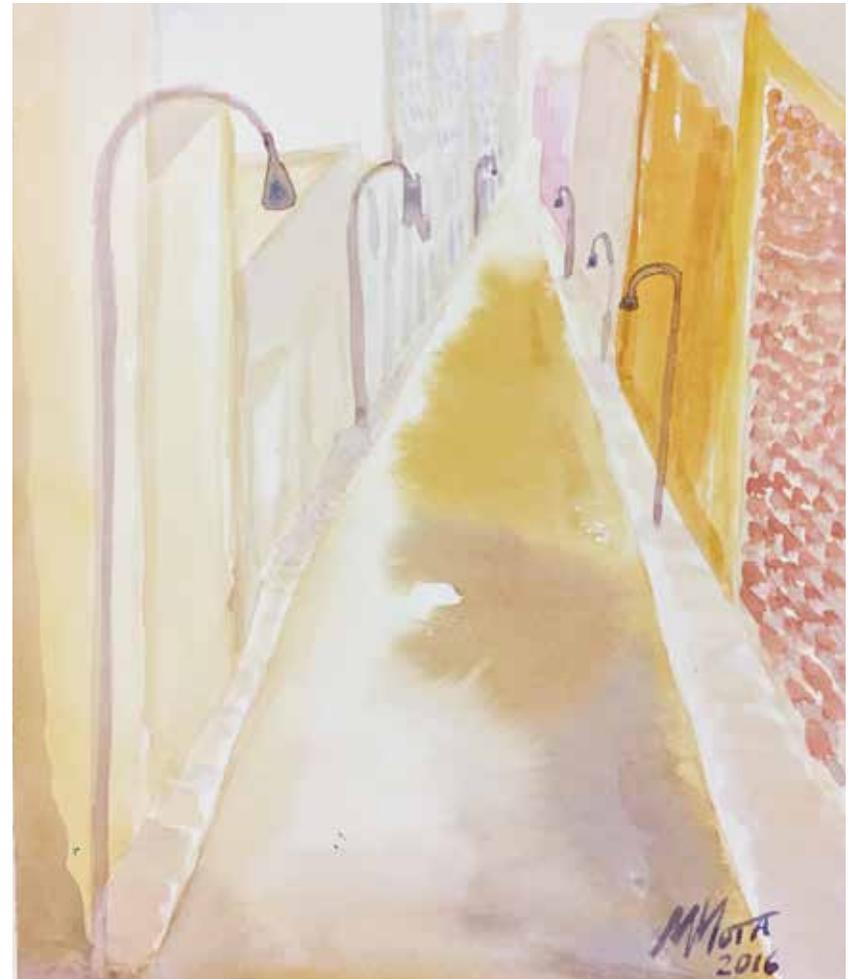
the mutual benefit of entrepreneurs and the seniors community.

This recommendation will be supported by Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA) - Community Resources Unit - in their capacity as staff support to the Toronto Seniors Forum.

## RECOMMENDATION 27:

Toronto Police Service, in collaboration with key partners, will create a seniors-inclusive training curriculum aimed at increasing officer awareness around ageing related issues and increasing officer capacity to connect seniors to appropriate community services.

The Toronto Police Service (TPS) has recognized seniors as a priority population and has made strides to increasingly collaborate in their approach to working constructively and effectively with the public and community partners such as seniors organizations. TPS has created a Seniors Community Consultative Committee and taken action on Version 1.0 recommendations to strengthen the quality, breadth and scope of interactions and engagement with older adults. With this in mind, the TPS has committed to work with partners to develop new officer training to advance awareness of seniors issues and enhance their ability to help seniors connect to services in the community as well as improving the scope and reach of their public education programs aimed at improving the safety and security of older Torontonians.



*Art created by person living with dementia*



# ACCOUNTABILITY

## AND MONITORING

**Version 1.0 of the Toronto Seniors Strategy set a high standard of accountability and transparency at City Hall by requiring detailed annual progress reports to Council that list each recommendation, which City Division or Agency responsible, and whether it is fully, partially or not implemented or why.**

Equally, Version 2.0 will be closely monitored and the City of Toronto commits to annual public progress reports until all Version 2.0 recommendations are actioned.





# CONCLUSION

**Torontonians are living longer than ever before, and over the next decades, there will be many more seniors living in the city.**

While significant gains were made by the previous Seniors Strategy from 2013 to make Toronto an age-friendly city, the thousands of seniors involved in the creation of this new strategy have urged the City to go further, a lot further. There remains many aspects of the City's programs and services for seniors that are fragmented and ill-suited to the realities of ageing in the year 2018, let alone over the next decades. Simply doing more of the same isn't the solution.

The Toronto Seniors Strategy, Version 2.0 begins with a bold promise to bring together the wide range of seniors housing and services currently operated by various entities under one entity. This single act

alone will set in motion a cascade of future actions that will make city programs work more seamlessly in the service of seniors. With the understanding that the establishment of this new entity is a long-term endeavour for the City, Version 2.0 also undertakes a series of actions with more immediate benefits for seniors in the areas health, housing, transportation, employment and income, and access to information.

This version of the Toronto Seniors Strategy builds directly on the previous version, and is by no means the last. With each successive step, Toronto continues to renew itself and earn its reputation among the world's leading age-friendly cities.

# APPENDIX A: MEMBERSHIP

## TORONTO SENIORS STRATEGY ACCOUNTABILITY TABLE

### CO-CHAIRS:

Dr. Samir K. Sinha – Director of Geriatrics, Sinai Health System and University Health Network and Seniors Physician Lead, Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network and Government Lead, Ontario’s Seniors Strategy  
Councillor Josh Matlow, Seniors Advocate

### SENIORS AND CAREGIVERS:

Juta Auksi  
Ron Beleno  
Barbara Carmichael  
Suzanne Schwenger  
Mae-Yu Tan  
Anna Zhang

### ADVOCACY, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS:

AdvantAGE Ontario – Lisa Levin  
Advocacy Centre for the Elderly – Graham Webb, Christine Morano  
Canadian Multi-Faith Federation – Dr. Abdul Hai Patel  
Care Watch Ontario – Michèle Harding  
CARP National – Marissa Semkiw, Laura Tamblyn Watts  
EGALE – Martin Krajcik  
Federation of Metro Tenants Association – Geordie Dent  
Older Women’s Network – Mary Hynes  
Ontario Long-Term Care Association – Candace Chartier  
Social Planning Toronto – Peter Clutterbuck

The 519 Community Centre – Kate Hazell  
The Seniors Advocates, Toronto Community Housing – Anita Dressler  
Toronto Council on Aging – Lilian Wells, Sarah Wu, Ruth McGarry  
Toronto Seniors Forum – Jane Rowan, Mark Smith, Mae Couzens, Pat Scarborough, John David Stewart, Frances Chapkin  
Walk Toronto – Maureen Coyle

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICE AGENCIES:

211 – Susan Wilkenson and Faed Hendry  
Alzheimer Society Toronto – Scott Russell, Romina Oliverio  
Canadian Mental Health Association, Toronto Branch – Terry Pariseau

Canadian Native Centre of Toronto – Adela Levi  
Canadian Red Cross – Tatjana Radovanovic, Dennis Fair  
Cota – Paul Bruce  
Cyril, Dorothy, Jack and Jill Reitman Centre, Sinai Health System - Dr. Joel Sadavoy, Dr. Rhonda Feldman  
Engagement to Reduce Social Isolation in Caregivers at Home and Enhance Seniors (ENRICHES) Initiative – Einat Danieli  
Haven Toronto (formerly The Good Neighbours Club) – Lauro Monteiro  
LOFT Community Services – Heather McDonald, Debra Walko, William Shin  
Older Adult Centres Association of Toronto – Sue Hesjedahl  
Regional Geriatric Program of Toronto – Ada Tsang, Wendy Zeh  
SPRINT Senior Care – Stacy Landau, Vonnie Barron, Samuel Leite  
The Neighbourhood Group – Veronica MacDonald, Rebekah Churchyard

## **UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES:**

AGE-WELL NCE Inc. – Dr. Alex Mihailidis, Dorina Simeonov  
Canadian Urban Institute – Glenn Miller  
Centre for Aging and Brain Health Innovation – Alisha Tharani  
National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) – Dr. Raza M. Mirza, Tonya Salomons, Laura Martinez  
National Institute on Ageing – Michael Nicin  
Ryerson University, Facilities Department – Molly Anthony  
University of Toronto – Dr. Sheila Neysmith  
University of Toronto, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, Institute for Life Course and Ageing: Erin Relyea, Jessica Hsieh  
Wellesley Institute – Dr. Seong-gee Um  
York University – Centre for Ageing Research and Education – Dr. Tamara Daly

## **PROVINCIAL PARTNERS INCLUDING HOSPITALS AND LONG-TERM CARE HOMES:**

Baycrest – Dr. Bill Reichman, Amanda McGoey  
Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility – Alan Ernst, Ellen Yachnin  
Ontario Securities Commission – Christine Allum, Tyler Fleming, Denise Morris  
Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences – Arlene Astell  
Toronto Central LHIN – Dr. Gillian Bone  
University Health Network – Frances Simone, Jen Recknagel (OpenLab)

## **FEDERAL PARTNERS:**

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation – Arlene Etchen

## **INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS:**

International Federation on Ageing – Greg Shaw

## **COMMUNITY FUNDERS:**

Rotary Club – Barbara Thomson  
United Way – Selam Araia

## **BUSINESSES:**

Barrier Free Real Estate – Jeffrey Kerr  
Collaborative Aging – Sue Lantz  
Elder Caring Inc. – Audrey Miller  
Health Innovations Group – Dr. Joe Bornstein  
Healthcare Navigators Inc. – Laurie Jenkins  
Nevvon: An Online Education Company for Caregivers – James Cohen  
SHS Consulting – Ed Starr

## **SCHOOL BOARDS:**

Toronto Catholic District School Board – Donald Reid  
Toronto District School Board – Norbert Costa, Belkis Romero

## **CITY OF TORONTO DIVISIONS AND AGENCIES:**

311 Office – Gary York, Guhad Hersi  
Affordable Housing Office – Sean Gadon, Erik Hunter, Mercedeh Madani  
City Planning – Gregg Lintern, Kerri Voumvakis, Sharon Hill  
Equity, Diversity and Human Rights – Omo Akintan, Deirdre Boyle  
Long-Term Care Homes & Services – Reg Paul, Vija Mallia, Erin Mulcahey-Abbott  
Office of Emergency Management – James Kilgour, Brad Eyre, Todd Stewart  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation – Janie Romoff, Petra Wolfbeiss, Geoffrey Gillard, Annia Vuthirong  
Revenue Services – Casey Brendon, Sara Jackson  
Shelter, Support and Housing Administration – Paul Raftis, Todd Orvitz, Sonia Zyvatkauskas  
Social Development, Finance and Administration – Chris Brillinger, Andrea Austen, Chris Phibbs, Jenn St. Louis, Heath Priston

Toronto Community Housing – Kathy Milsom, Joan White, Hugh Lawson  
Toronto Employment and Social Services – Patricia Walcott, Phil Eisler  
Toronto Fire Services – Matt Pegg, Marla Friebe  
Toronto Paramedic Services – Gord McEachen, Adam Thurston  
Toronto Police Service – Mark Saunders, Peter Yuen, David Rydzik, Bryan Campbell, Jason Peddle  
Toronto Public Health – Dr. Eileen de Villa, Kate Bassil, Sherry Biscope  
Toronto Public Library – Vickery Bowles, Pam Ryan, Laura Arrizza  
Toronto Transit Commission – Rick Leary, Matt Hagg  
Transportation Services – Barbara Gray, Leigh Sherkin, Roger Browne  
Wheel-Trans – Eve Wiggins, Aislin O’Hara

# APPENDIX B: SUMMARY

## VERSION 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### INTEGRATED CITY SENIORS HOUSING AND SERVICES ENTITY

#### RECOMMENDATION 1:

The City of Toronto will initiate a process to develop a seniors housing and services entity at the City dedicated to taking a service system management approach to the needs of all seniors and integrating City services for seniors.

### HEALTH

#### RECOMMENDATION 2:

Through Toronto Public Health, the City of Toronto will explore how to expand access to free dental health services for low-income seniors.

#### RECOMMENDATION 3:

The City of Toronto in partnership with Toronto Community Housing will seek provincial funding for

additional Seniors Active Living Centres in Toronto.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4:

Toronto Public Library will support social connectedness by expanding digital literacy programs for seniors in libraries.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5:

The City of Toronto will expand Community Paramedicine programming, which provides non-emergency community care and supports in order to better support seniors who are high-volume 911 callers.

#### RECOMMENDATION 6:

The City of Toronto will work with the Province of Ontario and

community partners to develop a Toronto Caregivers Strategy with an emphasis on the needs of senior caregivers.

#### RECOMMENDATION 7:

The City of Toronto will consider senior-friendly outdoor fitness equipment in the design and refurbishment of parks.

#### RECOMMENDATION 8:

The City of Toronto will work with Toronto Community Housing and FoodShare to establish healthy food access initiatives that are accessible to seniors living in social housing through Toronto Public Health.

## HOUSING

### RECOMMENDATION 9:

The City of Toronto will develop Housing Opportunities Toronto: Housing Action Plan (2020-2030) to account for the evolving demographics and needs of older Torontonians over the next decade, including those in informal retirement communities, including apartment buildings or housing developments that house a high concentration of seniors.

### RECOMMENDATION 10:

The City of Toronto will address the specific and growing needs of older Torontonians by continuing to create new affordable housing and fund housing repairs and accessibility modifications for seniors by delivering federal-provincial-City funding and City incentives.

### RECOMMENDATION 11:

The City of Toronto will seek

provincial funding under the Seniors Community Grant Program to pilot a HomeShare program in Toronto to connect overhoused seniors with students and others.

### RECOMMENDATION 12:

The City of Toronto will develop a new homeless shelter that provides specialized services for seniors and older adults.

### RECOMMENDATION 13:

The City of Toronto will implement the provincial Home for Good program funding to create and maintain housing with supports that meet the needs of formerly homeless persons including seniors.

### RECOMMENDATION 14:

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