

Challenges of Changing Demographics and becoming an Age Friendly Community in Nova Scotia – A Template for the Future

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ABSTRACT

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Canada is in the midst of demographic shift. Seniors, those aged 65 and over, now comprise the fastest growing age group in Canada. In the next twenty-fives the number of seniors is expected to double, increasing from 5 to 10 million. In Nova Scotia, the situation is even more dramatic. Already one of the oldest provinces in the country, it is expected that by 2033, nearly 30% of the population will be a senior. In addition to rapidly aging, population growth in the province has stagnated. This trend is particularly troubling for rural areas of the province. In recent months, two towns have applied to dissolve their status as a town and nearly a dozen others face the same fate. As towns continue to age, there will be greater need to accommodate their changing demographics. Understanding this need, The World Health Organization developed a guide to developing age friendly communities. The guide outlines eight specific areas that are key determinants of the age-friendliness of a community. This paper assesses the age-friendliness Truro, Nova Scotia in two of these eight areas - Outdoor Space and Buildings, and Transportation. Truro is well positioned to becoming an age-friendly community but still has work to do. Despite an abundance of recreational opportunities, the lack of public transportation will be a major impediment but would require considerable financial investment to implement. The paper recommends that further assessment be carried out in other areas of the WHO guide.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In February 2014, *The Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy* released its final report¹ on the state of the Nova Scotian economy and its recommendations to ensure future prosperity in the Province. The following statement summarizes the core message put forth by the commission:

‘Nova Scotia is today in the early stage of what may be a **prolonged period of accelerating population loss and economic decline.**’ - *Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy, February 2014*

This message is repeated throughout the report, highlighting the significance of these two factors on the future success of the Province and avoidance of an extended period of decline. Although the report is primarily focused on strategies to improve economic performance, the impact of provincial demographics cannot be underestimated, particularly that of our aging and shrinking population.

An aging population is not something unique to Nova Scotia. The entire country is in the midst of a demographic shift, and it’s expected that its affects will be felt for years to come. Seniors, those aged 65 and older, now comprise the fastest growing age group in Canada². There are nearly 5 million seniors in the country number; this number is expected to more than double in the next twenty-five years and will comprise a quarter of the total population².

¹ (The Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy, 2014)

² (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2014)

Many rural areas across the country are not only dealing with the reality of an aging population but they are also watching their population decline, with no signs that this trend will reverse. A lack of opportunities, or more lucrative employment elsewhere, has encouraged younger people to move away while seniors are relocating to more urban areas that offer a greater variety of services. Needs and expectations are changing; status quo will no longer suffice if a community wants to survive and grow. Not only do communities need to understand these evolving needs, they need find new ways to finance infrastructure and services. Housing requirements are changing, public transit is no longer a ‘want’, and recreational opportunities need to be more inclusive. Accepting that change is occurring and embracing this change will be critical to sustaining healthy growing communities.

All areas across the country, not just rural areas, will be required to re-evaluate the needs of their communities and the services that are delivered, or lacking. There will be a need to develop communities that not only appeal to the young and to new immigrants, but to the rapidly aging cohort that may have significantly different needs than those that are currently offered. Accommodating this growing sector of the population will have to be balanced with creating a welcoming environment that is attractive to a diverse group of people in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of our communities.

This paper will examine the demographic trends across the province and the impact aging populations will have on rural municipalities. An in depth look at Truro NS will focus on the current demographics in the community, demographic trends that will play a major role in community planning, and some of the challenges and opportunities that exist. In addition to

evaluating the current challenges facing municipalities, it will also examine how well positioned Truro is to become an age friendly community, an area that embraces this demographic shift, viewing it as an opportunity rather than a detriment.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Importance of Demographics to Municipalities

The term “demographics” is defined as the study of changes that occur in large groups of people over a period of time ³. More specifically, demographics involves monitoring changes in population, age distribution, sex, families and households, marital status, dwelling types, language, and income. Demographics, and in particular demographic trends, have a major influence on how municipalities plan for infrastructure investments and service delivery. Information concerning the structure and dynamics of local populations is critical to identifying and anticipating community needs, establishing short and long-range program goals, developing action plans, and identifying fiscal and human resource requirements.

Changing demographics can present a myriad of new challenges for communities, but the greatest issues arise when demographic trends are ignored and a reactionary position is assumed rather than a pro-active one. Following demographic trends offers insight into how a community will grow and develop in future years and how the accompanying needs will change. Business owners of all sizes have long recognized the importance of following and understanding demographic trends within the areas or regions they serve. Failure to know who their customers are, who is using their products and services, and how they might be changing is crucial in planning for future success. Although municipalities are not in the business of selling, they are essentially providing a product (infrastructure) and service to residents. Residents are paying for these services through their tax dollars and the better those services match their needs and improve their quality of life, the more likely they will be

³ (Merriam Webster, 2014)

happy and content in that community. Unfortunately, it's not a one size fits all scenario and over the years community demographics can, and will change. However, monitoring demographic trends can ease transitions and even create new opportunities for growth. This can be achieved by creating an environment that matches the changing needs of the population and makes the community a desirable area for new immigrants to settle. Different population compositions will have different needs; a younger population may increase the need for education expenditures or recreation services such as rinks and playgrounds. In contrast, aging populations may bring an entirely new set of needs ranging from affordable housing options to public transportation.

2.2 Municipal Finances

Recognizing changes before they occur will be the first hurdle municipalities will face. However, an even greater challenge will be managing the changes in demands for financial resources. In an era where financial resources are limited, adapting to demographic trends is increasingly important to ensure efficient allocation of resources. Opportunities for municipalities to generate revenue are limited, generally coming from property tax, sales of goods and services, and transfer from other levels of government⁴. Over the last 20 years, municipalities have seen expenditures increase at a faster rate than their revenues, due in most part to continual downloading of responsibilities for various services from Federal and Provincial governments which places further strain on already tight budgets. In fact, Municipalities collect just eight cents of every tax dollar paid in Canada despite building more than one-half of the country's core infrastructure and paying the salaries of two out of three police officers⁴. Municipalities need to know where they should be investing their

⁴ (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2012)

money in order to make sure they stretch their resources as far as possible and understanding their local demographics will help them to achieve this goal.

Municipal expenditures are wide ranging, but the majority of spending is in four key areas: Protection (fire and police), Environment (water and sewer infrastructure), Recreation, and Transportation. Combined, these four areas represent over 60% of total municipal government expenditures. Unlike municipal governments in the United States and many other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, Canadian municipalities have revenue-raising mechanisms to fund these expenditures⁵. In 2008, Municipalities in Canada received nearly 50% of their revenues directly from property taxation, compared to only 23% in the United States⁵. User fees generated an additional 21.7% while 21.5% came from Federal and Provincial government transfers⁴. Between 1988 and 2008, municipal government revenues increased by 1.5% (in constant 1988 dollars), just slightly more than the 1.4% in municipal expenditures⁴.

Although some municipalities have introduced new taxes such as vehicle registration taxes, sign taxes, parcel taxes, and hotel taxes, these “other taxes” represented only 1.4% of total revenues generated in 2008 and provide minimal opportunity for revenue growth in small communities⁴. In the end, municipalities are left relying on property taxes, a form of taxation many refer to as a regressive and fundamentally inequitable form of taxation. Given that many rural areas are facing shrinking population bases, the reliance on property tax means the remaining residents will be left feeling the burden. Couple this with increased financial

⁵ (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2013)

responsibilities that have been passed down from higher levels of government and it becomes ever clearer how important fiscal prudence and efficient use of resources is to municipalities.

2.3 Key Demographic Trends in Nova Scotia⁶

2.3.1 Population

Population can be considered a key indicator of health of a country, province, or community. Overall, the country is growing and at a steady rate. As shown in Table 1, Canada's population rose 5.9% between 2006 and 2011. However, the situation at the provincial level paints a much different picture. According to the 2011 Census, Nova Scotia had a total population of 921,462 making it the 7th largest province/territory in the country. However, between 2006 and 2011 growth in Nova Scotia was dismal; an increase of 0.9% was second only to the Northwest Territories for lowest growth during this period. Population growth is critical for long-term sustainability and a provincial growth rate that lags well behind all other provinces is not an indicator of future economic prosperity.

Table 1 - Population of Canadian Provinces and Territories, 2011 Census

Region	2011	2006	% change
Canada	33,476,688	31,612,897	5.9
1 Ontario	12,851,821	12,160,282	5.7
2 Quebec	7,903,001	7,546,131	4.7
3 British Columbia	4,400,057	4,113,487	7
4 Alberta	3,645,257	3,290,350	10.8
5 Manitoba	1,208,268	1,148,401	5.2
6 Saskatchewan	1,033,381	968,157	6.7
7 Nova Scotia	921,727	913,462	0.9
8 New Brunswick	751,171	729,997	2.9
9 Newfoundland and Labrador	514,536	505,469	1.8

⁶ All statistical data contained in this section is sourced from (Statistics Canada, 2102)

10	Prince Edward Island	140,204	135,851	3.2
11	Northwest Territories	41,462	41,464	0
12	Yukon	33,897	30,372	11.6
13	Nunavut	31,906	29,474	8.3

The 0.9% growth in population represents an increase of 8,265 residents for the province.

This is interesting to note considering the growth in the Halifax CMA⁷ alone was 17,470. At 4.7%, the growth in Halifax was well above that of the CA's⁸ as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 – Populations in Nova Scotia Metropolitan Areas

CMA or CA	Type	Population		% change
		2011	2006	
Halifax	CMA	390,328	372,858	4.7
Cape Breton	CA	101,619	105,928	-4.1
Truro	CA	45,888	45,077	1.8
New Glasgow	CA	35,809	36,288	-1.3
Kentville	CA	26,359	25,969	1.5

The percentage of the population living in CMA's or CA's in Nova Scotia increased from 64.2% to 65.1% between 2006 and 2011. Given the numbers shown in Table 2, it is clear that nearly all this growth is occurring in the Halifax region and that this region is driving what little growth was experienced in the province between 2006 and 2011. This information reinforces the fact that people are moving out of rural areas and into the larger population centers, thus placing further pressure on smaller communities to attract new residents.

⁷ CMA is a Census Metropolitan Area - population over 100,000 with more than 50,000 living in the core

⁸ CA is a Census Agglomeration - core population greater 10,000

2.3.2 Age Distribution

Canada is aging and has been steadily since the early 1960's as shown in Table 3. In the last 20 years Nova Scotia has begun to outpace the national rate of aging.

Table 3 - Median Age in Canada by Census Year

	Census year									
	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Canada	23.9	24.7	27	27.7	26.3	26.2	29.6	33.5	37.6	40.6
Nova Scotia	23.6	24.1	25.8	26.5	24.9	25.4	29.3	33.4	38.8	43.7

As of the 2011 census Nova Scotia had a median age of 43.7 years, compared to 40.6 years for the country as a whole. From Table 4, we see that along with New Brunswick, Nova Scotia is the second oldest province, just behind Newfoundland Labrador.

Table 4 - 2011 Median Age by Province/Territory

Province/Territory	Median Age
Newfoundland and Labrador	44
Nova Scotia	43.7
New Brunswick	43.7
Prince Edward Island	42.8
Quebec	41.9
British Columbia	41.9
Ontario	40.4
Yukon	39.1
Manitoba	38.4
Saskatchewan	38.2
Alberta	36.5
Northwest Territories	32.3
Nunavut	24.1

From an economic standpoint, an older population means fewer people are participating in the work force and as a result are contributing less to the economy. It also means there is less growth on the other end of the age spectrum with fewer people available to fill the place of the aging population. In 2011, seniors (65 and over) in Nova Scotia represented 16.6% of the population, compared to the national average of 14.8%. In total there were 153,375 people over the age of 65, up 11% over 2006. The largest portion of the population, 68.5%, fell between the ages of 15 and 64 years, which is to be expected given that the majority of the baby boomer generation still falls within this age group. The oldest of the baby boomers, those born between 1946 and 1965, are just turning 68, which means the majority of this generation has yet to become seniors. There are approximately 195,000 baby boomers in Nova Scotia, representing over 20% of the population. Given that most are not yet seniors, it is easy to see why we can expect the population in Nova Scotia, and across the country to age so rapidly. Due to their sheer numbers, the boomers have continually required our society to adjust to their needs and wants. We can only expect this trend will continue as they move in to their senior years and their needs continue to evolve and dictate trends.

With respect to younger generations, age 0 to 14, Nova Scotia experienced a considerably decline from 146,435 individuals in 2006 to 138,215 in 2011, a 5.6% decrease. This trend indicates that there is very little growth from a new birth perspective

There is no disputing that older citizens are important part of the equation and play a valuable role in success of our economies and communities but growth in this cohort must be balanced

with growth in the younger generations in order to achieve long-term sustainability across the province.

2.3.3 Household Size

Part of reason the provincial population is stagnating is that family size has been on a continued decline for over a half century. The portion of households with only one person has increased steadily from 8.6% in 1961 to nearly 28% in 2011. In comparison, larger households of 5 or more persons are becoming less and less common. In 1961, 35.8% of households had 5 or more persons. In 2011, this percentage has fallen considerably to 5.8%. Today, there are an average of 2.3 persons per household in Nova Scotia, compared to the national average of 2.5. Populations can grow in one of two ways, by immigration or by birth. Unfortunately, the birth rate in Nova Scotia is decreasing and does not appear to be increasing anytime soon. What this indicates is that future growth in the province will have to be driven by immigration both from other provinces and from other countries. This will require a significant change in mindsets on behalf of most rural areas in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy report highlighted the fact that most rural areas in Nova Scotia don't see immigration as an option for increasing populations¹. Contrary to this belief, attracting immigrants to Nova Scotia, especially to rural areas of the province, will be the driving force behind economic success in the near future.

2.3.4 Structural Type of Dwelling

In 2011, 66.7% of Nova Scotian dwellings were single-detached houses. This is substantially higher than the Canadian average of 55% but a slight decrease from the 2006 average of

67.3%. An additional 7.4% live in semi-detached houses or row houses. Although up from 4.0% in 2006, only 4.6% of the population lives in apartment buildings over 5 storeys whereas 9.3% of Canada lives in such buildings. Smaller apartment buildings, less than 5 storeys, are more the norm in Nova Scotia, and 14.5% of the populations live in such structures compared to the national average of 18%. As our population continues to age, there will be a move by many seniors to leave their single family homes and move into smaller apartments or condos that require less care and maintenance and offer better accessibility for those with decreased mobility. In larger provinces, growth in apartments/condos has typically been driven by space requirements. In rural areas, where space is not as much of a premium, it will be an aging population that will drive demand for smaller more manageable living spaces that are centrally located.

2.3.5 Citizenship and Mobility

Building on Section 2.3.4, immigration will play a key role in any future success the province can expect to have, however, general acceptance of immigration must improve in order for this to occur. The total number of immigrants in Nova Scotia increased from 45,195 in 2006 to 48,275 in 2011. Despite the increase, this total still only represents 5.3% of the total population (up slightly from 5.0% in 2006). In contrast, 20.6% of the total Canadian population is immigrants, indicating that Nova Scotia is lagging well behind the rest of the country and attracting far fewer immigrants. In other areas across the country, immigration is fueling population growth and helping economies to thrive. Immigration is something all Nova Scotians, not just the larger urban areas, must embrace and encourage.

Immigration is not just about people coming from a different country but also about people moving from province to province. In recent years we've continually heard about the mass exodus of young Atlantic Canadians moving west to find employment. In 2011, 33.2% of the population in Nova Scotia had moved within the last five years. This includes moves within a Municipality, Province, Canada, or outside the country. Although this was slightly below the percentage for the entire country (38.7%), a higher percentage of the moves were out of the province. Nearly 8% of those that moved in Nova Scotia, moved out of the province or country, compared to just 6.7% for the rest of the country. This is a trend that must be reversed. Atlantic Canada needs its best and brightest to stay here and we need to develop an environment that attracts people from all over the globe. We can't survive on status quo.

2.4 The Impact of a Demographic Shift in Rural Nova Scotia

In September 2010, the Town of Canso submitted a request to the Utility and Review Board (UARB) to dissolve the Town and become part of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough⁹. The application cited a deteriorating financial situation as the reason the Town was seeking dissolution¹⁰. The collapse of fishing stocks in the area and subsequent closure of largest fish plant in Atlantic Canada were the primary reasons the Town was in such a dire financial position. In addition the Town was dealing with a declining and aging population, a small tax base, few economic prospects, and nearly four millions dollars worth of aging infrastructure due to be replaced in the near future⁹. In the fall of 2010, the Town of only 900 people projected a deficit of over \$170,000¹¹. In 2009, the Canso water utility posted a \$117,000 deficit which required the doubling of water rates¹⁰. On July 1, 2012,

⁹ (The Casket, 2012)

¹⁰ (CBC News, 2010)

¹¹ (Beswick, 2012)

following approval of the UARB, the Town of Canso formally ceased to exist and was officially amalgamated with the Municipality of Guysborough¹¹.

At the time, the situation in Canso seemed to be a ‘one-off’, a small town undone by the recent collapse of major industry employer. However, in March 2014 it was announced that Springhill, NS had applied to the UARB to dissolve the town. Less than a month later, news spread that Bridgetown, NS had also passed a motion to apply to the UARB to dissolve their status as a town¹², citing financial woes as the reason for the decision. Shortly after the Springhill announcement, Nova Scotia Municipal Relations Minister Mark Furey acknowledge that as many as 10 municipalities in rural Nova Scotia are facing financial failure and will very likely suffer the same fate as Springhill and Bridgetown¹². Although these communities are unique in their own ways, they are all facing the familiar challenge of aging and decreasing populations which has put a significant strain on their finances, to the point where many can no longer cover their operational costs. In the end, the only alternative is dissolution and amalgamation with their respective counties.

2.4.1 Springhill, Nova Scotia

On March 4th, 2014, the town council of Springhill passed a motion to dissolve its status as a town¹³. Although a complete surprise to residents of the town of 4,000, the decision to dissolve was merely a matter of reality for municipal officials. For nearly a year and a half, officials tried in vain to find a means to increase revenues and reduce expenses without

¹² (CBC News, 2014)

¹³ (CBC News, 2014)

raising the property tax rate which was already the highest in the province¹⁴. Despite having enough to cover operations in the short-term, the long-term viability of the town was in serious jeopardy. As is the case with many rural municipalities, the combined effect of an older population, outmigration, and an already high debt load are making it nearly impossible to continue. The population in Springhill dropped 1.9% between 2006 and 2011 and has been on a steady decline since 1951. The median age of 44.7 years was also above the median age for the province¹⁵.

Unlike the Town of Canso, there were no consultant reports to determine alternative options for the town. The financial trend of the town was not one of long-term sustainability. The reality of changing demographics and the continuing decline of the town's infrastructure were too much for the small town to manage. Provided the application to the UARB is approved, as of April 1, 2015, the Town of Springhill will dissolve and become part of the Municipality of Cumberland¹⁴.

2.4.2 Bridgetown, Nova Scotia

Less than a month after Springhill filed its application with the UARB, Bridgetown also announced that it would be filing an application to dissolve its status as a town. After accepting input from residents, and careful evaluation of town finances, council made the difficult decision to apply to dissolve the town status¹² Unlike Springhill, where residents were shocked with the news, Bridgetown chose to hold two public information sessions prior

¹⁴ (Cole, 2014)

¹⁵ (City Data, 2014)

to making a final decision on dissolution¹⁶. The sessions served as an opportunity to enlighten residents about the difficult financial challenges the town was facing. Mayor Horace Hurlburt acknowledged a number of reasons that had contributed to the decision, including inflation, needed infrastructure spending, and a decline in property tax revenues¹⁶.

Although not cited directly by the Mayor, the demographics in the area are similar to so many other rural areas in Nova Scotia. Between 2006 and 2011 the population fell from 972 to 949. In 2001, the population was just over 1,000. At 50.7 years, the median age is well above the median age for the province of 43.7 years¹⁷. The number of young children is also in decline as evidenced by the drop in school enrollment. In 2011 there were 161 children enrolled in the elementary school. In 2012, that enrollment number dropped to 135 students¹⁸. To further compound problems, Bridgetown has also had to deal with the loss of two major employers in the last few decades. In the 1980's, the Acadian Distillery factory closed, taking with it over 200 jobs. In 2004 an elastics factory closed, removing 200 jobs from the community¹⁸.

Interestingly enough, the decision to apply to the UARB to dissolve was made internally without seeking input from outside consultants. This speaks to the magnitude of the financial difficulties these towns are facing and the significant impact their demographics have had in recent years.

¹⁶(Delaney, 2014)

¹⁷ (City Data, 2014)

¹⁸(Taber, 2012)

2.5 Age Friendly Communities

Of all the demographic changes that have occurred between the 2006 and 2011 censuses, both big and small, the ones that stand out the most are how quickly Nova Scotia is aging and how stagnant population growth has become. Similar to the rest of the country, and most developed nations, our population is aging and at a rapid rate. As mentioned earlier, this is a result of a number of factors. In Nova Scotia, the fertility rate (average number of children per woman) is third lowest in the country at 1.47 and below the national average of 1.61 children, as shown in Table 5¹⁹. As a result of this, the size of the population in Nova Scotia between 0-14 years of age has fallen considerably between 2006 and 2011⁶. Further compounding matters, the largest cohort of the population, the baby boomers, has already started to enter the seniors age group which will result in a much older population over the next couple of decades. Finally, low immigration rates have limited the number of younger individuals entering the provincial population. If these trends continue the total provincial population is expected to decline by near 5% between 2007 and 2033 and the number of seniors will be 257,874, which is nearly an 87% increase over 2007²⁰. The percentage of the population in the 55-64 age group is predicted to remain steady between 2007 and 2033, barely falling from 13.1% to 13%, respectively²⁰. However, the 0-54 age group, which represents the level of growth in the province, will decline significantly from 72.1% in 2007 to 58% of the population in 2033²⁰. What this means is that seniors will represent approximately 30% of the population by 2033.

¹⁹ (Statistics Canada, 2013)

²⁰ (Nova Scotia Government, 2009)

Table 5 - Fertility Rates by Province for 2011¹⁹

	Fertility Rate 2011
Canada	1.61
Nunavut	2.97
Saskatchewan	1.99
Northwest Territories	1.97
Manitoba	1.86
Alberta	1.81
Yukon	1.73
Quebec	1.69
Prince Edward Island	1.62
New Brunswick	1.54
Ontario	1.52
Nova Scotia	1.47
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.45
British Columbia	1.42

As the population ages, there is going to be increased demand for the infrastructure and services that are directed toward older generations. Many people living in rural areas will have to relocate to more urban areas in order to find the services they require to maintain an active and high quality life. In 2008, for the first time in history, a greater percentage of the world's population lived in cities than in rural areas and it estimated that 3 out every 5 people will live in an urban area by 2030²¹. This trend of aging populations and global urbanization has been well documented by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has led to the development of the Age Friendly Environments Programme, an international effort to address the environmental and social factors that contribute to active and healthy ageing. The WHO recognizes that making cities and communities age-friendly through local policy is one of the more effective ways to respond to demographic ageing²¹. The ability of people to remain healthy and independent as they age is highly dependent on the quality and

²¹ (World Health Organization, 2014)

composition of their physical and social environments. The overarching purpose of the programme is to:

‘help cities and communities become more supportive of older people by addressing their needs across eight dimensions: the built environment, transport, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication, and community support and health services.’²¹

The goal of age friendly community is to foster active ageing by improving and maximizing opportunities for health, participation and security in such a manner that the quality of one’s life is enhanced as they age²². Simply put, age friendly communities modify infrastructure and services to make them more accessible and inclusive of older people, regardless of their physical or mental capabilities.

In 2006, WHO enlisted 33 cities in 22 countries, both developed and developing, to assist with a project to help determine the most important elements of an urban environment that help to support active and healthy ageing²². The outcome of the project was *The Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide*. The comprehensive guide provides communities with information and framework to assess the age friendliness of a community.

The guide was developed based on feedback and input from focus groups comprised of people age 60 and older, from low and middle class areas in each of the 33 cities. A total of 158 focus groups and nearly 1500 participants were involved in the process²². WHO asked

²² (World Health Organization, 2007)

participants to identify and describe the advantages and barriers they encounter in eight areas of city living. The commentary from the focus groups was validated by evidence provided from other focus groups consisting of caregivers and service providers in the public, voluntary, and private sectors. The eight areas address were:

- 1. Outdoor spaces and buildings;**
- 2. Transportation;**
- 3. Housing;**
- 4. Social participation;**
- 5. Respect and inclusion;**
- 6. Civic participation and employment**
- 7. Communication and information;**
- 8. Community support and health services**

Each of the areas, although important individually, are very much overlapping and dependent on each other. The guide includes a checklist of core age-friendly features to be used as tool for communities to self-assess and where they currently stand and where they need to improve. Each of the eight areas addressed have their own comprehensive checklist (See Appendix A). The WHO has also produced a four-page document entitled the ‘Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities’²³. This document is companion to the guide and provides a condensed, more user friendly version of the checklists shown in the guide.

²³ (World Health Organization, 2007)

The intended users of the guide include individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly²². Some of these groups may include governments, voluntary organizations, the private sector, and citizen's groups. The following section will use the guide and checklist to assess the age-friendliness of Truro, Nova Scotia. As might be expected, making a community more age-friendly does not come without costs. Some of eight critical areas, particularly transportation, represent areas of large financial expenditure for many municipalities. Some of the areas may need small funding allocations or even just more government involvement.

3 CASE STUDY - TRURO, NOVA SCOTIA

3.1 Community Profile

Truro is a town located in central Nova Scotia, approximately 100 km north of Halifax. Home to just over 12,000 residents, the area is referred to the Hub of Nova Scotia due to its location within the provincial highway and national rail network²⁴. Truro is a major employment center for the Colchester area and is home to a number of large industrial/commercial employers including Stanfield's, Scotsburn Dairy, and Intertape Polymer Group. The Town is a service area to number of surrounding communities including Bible Hill, Salmon River, Millbrook, and Brookfield, a total area of approximately 25,000 people²⁴. Truro is often considered a transition area between the urban center of Halifax and the rural areas of Colchester County. Much of the services offered in the city can be found in Truro, but the community offers a much slower pace of life and more residential setting. A relatively low cost of living and proximity to the countryside make it an attractive place for many to live, particularly for older people.

Between 2006 and 2011 the population in Truro rose 2.5% from 11,765 to 12,059²⁴. The median age in Truro is 45.6 years (up from 44.7 in 2006), which is higher than the provincial median age of 43.7 and much higher still than the median Canadian age of 40.6²⁴. Similar to the rest of the province, the median age is expected to rise in coming years due to the familiar baby boomer generation.

²⁴ (Statistics Canada, 2012)

3.2 Age Friendly Community Assessment - Truro

The following sections assess how age friendly Truro currently is, where it excels, and where it lags. A direct comparison between Truro and the WHO Age-friendly checklist will be completed for the areas of Outdoor Spaces and buildings, and Transportation.

3.2.1 Truro – Role of Local Government

For many seniors, Truro is seen as an appealing community to live. At just 37 km² in total area, Truro is more densely developed than many other communities, and far less imposing than larger urban areas such as Halifax (300 km² Urban Core; 5200 km² All of HRM) and Sydney (2400 km² All of CBRM). With its quiet streets, minimal traffic, an abundance of amenities, its not surprising that many older people feel comfortable in the community. However, as with all places, there is always room for improvement and the WHO Age-friendly guide provides an opportunity see where that improvement is most needed. The guide presents 8 areas that are considered critical to creating a community that is age-friendly and that facilitates active ageing. Many of these areas are focused on creating an environment that is comfortable, welcoming, and inclusive of older people. Seniors require a community that allows them to participate in activities, voice their opinions, and to feel that they are equal and valuable members of the community. Areas such as Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, and Civic Participation and Employment, among others, are ones that require minimal financial input from the Town. Improvements in these areas are likely to stem from a change in attitudes toward seniors and a more thorough evaluation of service delivery on behalf of the Town, community, and local businesses. There will be some investment required but not significant financial commitments. Education will play a key

role; educating all people about the importance of seniors and how services can be improved to be more accommodating. Improvements in these areas will have to be a community wide initiative and not something money alone can fix. There will have to be a realization that status quo will no longer be acceptable and a large portion of the population will have entirely new needs that were not necessarily a priority in the past.

From an inclusion perspective, a greater effort will have to be put forth to find ways to make activities and events more appealing and accessible to older people. A new lens will be required, one that requires local government to view things from the perspective of their older citizens. Business owners that take the time and effort to evaluate the unique needs of older individuals and tailor their products or services have an opportunity to benefit immensely. In addition, new business opportunities will arise as the demand for certain niche services increases.

3.2.2 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Outdoor spaces and buildings are a major influence on the mobility, independence, and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”²². No one wants to feel confined to their place of residence. However, as we age our ability to get around, enjoy, and participate in our surroundings can become increasingly difficult. Accessibility becomes more and more of concern, especially with respect to recreation. Regular exercise and connecting with the environment is important for people of all ages but often becomes more difficult with age. The WHO checklist was used to determine how age friendly outdoor spaces and buildings are in Truro and Table 6 shows how the town compares to the checklist.

Table 6 - WHO Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Checklist for Truro, Nova Scotia

Checklist Item	Score (x/10)	Comments
Public areas are clean and pleasant.	8/10	
Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained and safe.	7/10	Require more seating in public areas.
Sidewalks are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.	7/10	Sidewalks in many older residential areas need repair to eliminate broken blocks or uneven surfaces.
Sidewalks are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level	9/10	
Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.	7/10	Visibility improvements could be made at some crosswalks. Audio cues could be more prevalent and some crossing times are considered too short.
Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.	3/10	Truro is a vehicle centric community and pedestrians can wait for several vehicles before someone stops.
Cycle paths are separate from sidewalks and other pedestrian walkways.	3/10	There are few biking trails through town and no on-street bike lanes. Narrow right-of-ways make it difficult to accommodate bikeways.
Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.	8/10	

Services are situated together and are accessible.	6/10	Most town services are located in Town Hall or within a few blocks. Access Nova Scotia has moved to the periphery of Town, as are the new recreation facility and hospital.
Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.	7/10	
Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating, toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings, and stairs, and non-slip floors.	7/10	Many older buildings in town have been retrofitted to improve accessibility.
Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well maintained and accessible.	4/10	There are a limited number of public toilets. Many are only operational during summer months.

For the most part, outdoor spaces and buildings in Truro are very age friendly. There is an abundance of well-maintained sidewalks and trails all through the town. In fact, the town has nearly 100 km of streets and 80 km of sidewalk within an area only slightly bigger than 37km². Very few areas within the town are not serviced with sidewalk, affording seniors ample opportunity to safely walk from their residence to shopping and service centers. The primary issue with the sidewalk network is maintenance. As the population ages, the tolerance for imperfections in the sidewalk network become lower and lower. Uneven sections of sidewalk blocks that are easily navigated by younger people, are consider a serious tripping hazard.

On average, the Town commits nearly \$1.5 million to street and sidewalk capital improvements and another \$700,000 and \$150,000 to street and sidewalk maintenance, respectively. As expectations increase, there will be a need to increase the amount of money spent on these services. Again, given the finite budget the town is generally dealing with, the ability to increase these budgets will be limited. Recent investments in a new regional civic centre, fire fighting equipment, and a new regional library will most certainly result in reduced operating and capital budgets elsewhere. It will be a challenge for the town to balance the on-going maintenance and capital construction needs with further investment in infrastructure, infrastructure that serves to enhance the appeal of the town to current residents as well as its ability to attract new residents to the area.

Recreational opportunities are in abundance in Truro. In recent years, the town has made significant strides in improving the recreational offerings available to people of all ages. In 2010, the former Douglas Street Elementary School was converted to a Town Recreation Centre which offers a number of programs catered to seniors, including Seniors' College Association of Nova Scotia's Truro Chapter, rug hooking classes, gardening classes, painting, Thai Chi, and daily indoor walking in the Centre's gymnasium²⁵. In 2012, the town contributed \$70,000 toward the construction of \$400,000 lawn bowls facility at the Recreation Centre. The town has also invested over \$4 million in a new regional recreation centre and will contribute over \$300,000 annually toward operating expenditures. In addition to these facilities, the town offers many other facilities including indoor and outdoor tennis courts, golf course, indoor and outdoor pools, and Victoria Park which contains over 400 acres of parkland and over 15km of marked trails all within the centre of town. The

²⁵ (Town of Truro , 2014)

recreational opportunities for seniors are immense and as this age-group grows, there will be increased demand for even more facilities. Recreation is such an integral part of staying and feeling young. The more opportunities that exist, and the more inclusive and accessible those opportunities are, the more it facilitates active ageing in the community.

Two areas that stand out as needing improvement are cycling paths and public restrooms.

Right-of-way constraints make it difficult to offer separate trails for bikes and designated bike-lanes on streets. Cycling is a low impact and easy way to navigate a community.

However, many people aren't comfortable cycling on the street, particularly in high traffic areas. Active transportation is becoming more and more a focus of the Town and designated committees are working toward finding solutions to this problem.

Lack of public restrooms is the second area where the town is lacking. There are very few public restrooms located within the downtown core and those that are available are sometimes only open seasonally. This is an area that needs improvement.

3.2.3 Transportation

Transportation, and more specifically public transportation, is considered a key element in active ageing. Accessible and affordable transportation ensures that seniors are able to get around their communities, access services, and have a continued sense of independence.

Many seniors chose to drive well into the 80's, however this is more the exception than the norm. Rather, many older seniors have long given up their personal vehicles for varied reasons and rely on other forms of transportation.

Affordable transportation options, particularly public transit, are crucial to active ageing. Similar to accessibility, affordable transportation is a recurring theme in all eight of the checklist items. Whether its transportation to community events or the ability to get from home to the grocery store, many seniors rely heavily on some form of public transit. Staying involved in the community requires the ability to get out and about. When the option of personal vehicle is no longer physically or financially viable, there must be alternative forms of transportation available.

The WHO Checklist was used to evaluate how age friendly Truro is with respect to transportation. The checklist comparison is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 – WHO Transportation Checklist for Truro, Nova Scotia

Checklist Item	Score (x/10)	Comments
Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.
Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.
All community areas are accessible by public transport, with goods and connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.
Vehicles are clean, well maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.

Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.	6/10	A privately run transportation company offers on demand transportation for disabled.
Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.
Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.
Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities.	0/10	No municipally operated public transit available within town.
A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.	4/10	Two private transportation companies operate an on-demand service.
Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.	7/10	There is only one company located in town.
Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.	7/10	A number of older residential areas with streets in poor repair – potholes, broken asphalt, uneven surfaces.
Traffic flow is well regulated.	7/10	High traffic volumes during the daytime hours. Most traffic signals require improved timings to enhance traffic flow.
Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.	9/10	

Traffic signs and intersection are visible and well-placed.	9/10	
Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.	3/10	There are a number of driver training companies in town but they do not actively promote education and refresher courses for older drivers.
Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.	6/10	Narrow right-of-ways and limited parking make it difficult to offer drop-off locations in some areas.
Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.	7/10	

As can be seen in the table above, Truro’s greatest deficiency with respect to transportation is that of public transportation, which is a major priority for seniors. Currently, the Town of Truro does not offer a public transportation system. There are three primary local transportation options for seniors, which include the following²⁶:

1. **Colchester Transit Cooperative Limited** – This non-profit company operates on a demand-responsive, subscription basis and is open to all residents. Service is offered between 7:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday. The company has three vehicles and employs 5 full-time and part-time people. It relies on a significant grant from the Provincial government for its annual operating and capital needs. Fares are based on

²⁶ (Prentice, 2011)

- distance with a minimum trip cost of \$4.00 to \$4.50 for up to 5 km. CTCL receives a grant from the Province under its Accessible Transit Assistance Program initiative.
2. **ABLE-Transit Wheel Chair Bus** - ABLE-Transit is a specialized transit service that operates in the Town and the immediate communities in the County surrounding the Town. It is described as a fully accessible, door-to-door transit service for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Service is provided by a fleet of one vehicle and operates on weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and no weekend service is provided. Similar to many specialized transit systems across the country, Able-Transit requires that users register before use and meet eligibility requirements. The service is supported by local bingo activities. There are no fares.
 3. **Taxis** - There is one taxi operator in the Town of Truro. None of the 21 vehicles are accessible. The current drop (initial) fare is \$2.95 with subsequent rates increasing by \$1.00 per kilometre. Nearly 70% of the customers using the taxis are seniors (Transit Study, 2011)

In 2011, IBI Group was contracted to conduct a transit feasibility analysis for Truro and Colchester County. The study identified the potential market to consist of students, youth, and seniors and that given the growing population of seniors in the area, the demand for a service can only be expected to grow. The study concluded that although a transit system is feasible for the area, it would represent a significant financial commitment on the part of the Town²⁶. It was estimated that the annual net operating cost for the first five years would be approximately \$225,000 - \$285,000, with annual capital cost of over \$50,000²⁶. This

expenditure would represent approximately 2.4% of the Town's residential tax rate of 1.76²⁶. At the time of the study, it was decided that a financial investment of this magnitude was not something the Town was willing to engage. However, as the senior population continues to grow in the area, there will be more and more pressure on the town to implement some form of public transit. To do so will likely result in the reduction of expenditures elsewhere within the town budget.

In other areas of the checklist, Truro fairs reasonably well. Roadways are generally well maintained, free of obstructions, and well signed. A person of average driving ability would have very little trouble navigating the community by vehicle or by foot. Some of the road surfaces in residential areas are in need of maintenance but would have minimal impact on mobility. Narrow right-of-ways in the town make it difficult to create drop-off zones in some areas of town, which can make access to certain buildings/services more difficult for some citizens.

3.2.4 Additional Areas for Improvement

In general, a greater level of thought will have to go in to planning on all levels. Whether its planning the delivery of services or planning future development in the community, the needs of older citizens will have to be given careful consideration in order to create an age-friendly community. The local government should become a leader of change going forward, looked upon by businesses and community groups as an example for creating a more age-friendly community. This change will likely be policy driven. Many communities, such as the City of Surrey, BC and Vancouver, BC have created Senior Advisory Committees that afford seniors the opportunity to advice city councils on how to improve municipal services and

infrastructure for seniors and families⁵. Establishing similar committees or advisory boards in Truro will ensure the voice of the seniors will be heard and that there will be constant communication with Town council and staff. Currently, no such venue exists for seniors to provide input on the future direction of the town. This is a low cost initiative that would pay huge dividends.

The issue of accessibility is one that is seemingly raised in all eight areas of the age-friendly guide. The City of Calgary, Alberta established an Active Advisory Committee on Accessibility, comprised of community members and city staff that provide input to city Council on accessibility issues related to municipal properties, information, and services offered by the city⁵. Again, a similar committee could be established in Truro or this could be component of the Seniors Advisory Committee.

Housing is another area that will be of great importance to an aging community. The town does not contribute directly to housing in the Truro area. However, efforts have been made on behalf of the Town to encourage development that is both affordable and appealing to residents. Council approves development that meets the requirements of its Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-Law. Policies R-14 and R-15 of the Municipal Planning Strategy address the need for adequate and affordable housing²⁷.

²⁷ (Town of Truro, 2010)

Policy R-14

It shall be a policy of Council to be aware of the shelter needs of citizens without adequate housing and to collaborate with concerned community groups to meet these needs as they arise.

Policy R-15

It shall be a policy of Council to encourage residential development in Truro that includes affordable housing units.

Source: Town of Truro Municipal Planning Strategy²⁷

In addition to encouraging a variety of housing choices and types, it is expected that affordable housing will represent a proportion of overall residential development. Although the Town does not offer financial incentives to encourage such developments, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services offers a series of incentives for developers and landlords in this regard.

In 2013, Truro was chosen as one of only a few places in Nova Scotia to become involved in a new provincially funded long-term housing strategy²⁸. The 10-year program will see \$500 million spend to support new and enhanced affordable housing projects and programs in the province²⁸. Some of the programs that may be offered include down-payment assistance, lease-to-own opportunities, and retrofit programs to help seniors stay in their homes longer²⁸.

Despite these efforts, there needs to be a greater contribution on behalf of the Town to assist senior in their housing needs. This may involve amendments to development by-laws that require larger scale developments to include a minimum number of affordable or accessible units. Grants or financial incentives could be offered to developers or builders that encourage

²⁸ (Sullivan, 2013)

development of affordable and accessible units within town. Housing will continue to become area of great needs as the population ages. Whether it's the need for more affordable housing to accommodate fixed income or finding ways to allow seniors to stay in their homes longer, the town will need to play a central role in these efforts.

4 DISCUSSION

The population in Truro and all across the country is aging, and at an extremely fast rate. The impact of this demographic shift will be far reaching and will necessitate a change in attitudes and way of thinking throughout the entire community. The World Health Organization has identified a need to create cities and communities that are welcoming and age-friendly; communities that allow seniors to actively-age and continue to contribute to society in meaningful ways. The intent of this paper was to determine how this demographic shift will impact communities and what contributions will be required of municipal governments in order to make their communities 'age friendly'. Does becoming age-friendly mean huge financial contributions from already cash strapped local governments or does it merely involve a new way of thinking and doing?

There is no disputing that the needs of seniors will be different than the rest of the population. As this segment of the population grows, municipal governments will be forced to pay greater attention to those needs. The situation in Truro is no different and perhaps more evident given it has a population that is already older than the rest of the province. In many ways, Truro is fairly well positioned to become an age-friendly community. However, there need to be more opportunities for seniors to have a voice and on a consistent basis. Ad-hoc community meetings will not suffice. The establishment of Seniors Advisory Committee would be a significant step forward in making sure seniors have an outlet to regularly voice concerns, raise issues, and give input on community matters that affect them the most. The town needs become a leader in social inclusion, one that business owners and others in the community can look to for guidance.

One of the biggest needs for seniors going forward will be with respect to accessibility and mobility within the Town. This is also an area that will require the greatest contribution from the local government. Seniors can only engage in their community, and contribute to the local economy, if they are able get around. At the moment, the availability of affordable transportation options is limited. Town Council will have to decide if the significant financial contribution required to fund a public transit system is in the best interest of the community. If this is a direction they choose to pursue, it will raise the question of where the funding will come. Municipal budgets are limited and funding a public transit system will most definitely result in cutting budgets elsewhere. This will require a strong council who are willing and able to make these difficult decisions.

Continued growth and prosperity in Truro will depend on a number of elements.

Development of new industries, retention of existing population, and attracting new immigrants will be critical to the future success of the community. However, the increasing cohort of seniors in the community will need be included in any growth strategy. They will be valuable contributors to the economic success of the community if given the right opportunities. A community is only as strong as people that live there and the more opportunities offered to the people, the stronger that community will be going forward.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended to provide guidance to municipal officials to help make Truro a more age-friendly community.

Recommendation #1: Town must become a leader in Social Inclusion

In order for Truro to become an age-friendly community, municipal officials will have to become leaders for change. Whether it's developing policies or just leading by example, people should look to the town for ideas, encouragement, and guidance in creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of older individuals.

Recommendation #2: Establish a Senior Advisory Committee

Seniors need a venue to voice their comments, concerns, and ideas. Similar committees have been successful in other communities and would give seniors comfort knowing they will be heard and that they have a part in shaping the future of the town. The establishment of Seniors Advisory Committee would be a significant step forward in making sure seniors have an outlet to regularly voice concerns, raise issues, and give input on community matters that affect them the most.

Recommendation #3: Reconsider public transportation

Availability of public transportation is critical to becoming a truly age-friendly community. Seniors rely heavily on public transportation for some many aspects of their lives. Failure to reconsider funding public transportation could be detrimental to ensuring active ageing will

be possible in Truro. It's a costly endeavor but has potential to pay huge dividends to the community.

Recommendation #4: Provide incentives for affordable housing

Access to affordable housing will be a major concern for many seniors. Currently, the town has little involvement in the development of affordable housing. Truro must follow the lead of other municipalities that and play a greater roll in housing. This may be a simple as requiring a minimum number of affordable or accessible units in large-scale developments, or offering financial incentives to developers to encourage development of these units throughout the town. Regardless of the methods, increasing affordable housing in the area should become a priority moving forward.

Recommendation #5: Complete WHO checklist for Truro

This paper evaluated how age-friendly Truro is with respect to Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, and Transportation. It is recommended that the evaluation be completed for the other six areas of the WHO Age-friendly checklist in order to develop a more thorough understanding of how age-friendly Truro really is and where it needs improvement.

APPENDIX A – WHO Age Friendly Community Checklist

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Outdoor spaces and public buildings are a major influence on the mobility, independence, and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place” (WHO Guide).

Key checklist elements of this area include:

<p>1. Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- City is Clean, with enforced regulations limiting noise levels and unpleasant or harmful odors in public spaces.	<p>6. Traffic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- There is strict enforcement of traffic rules and regulations, with drivers giving way to pedestrians.
<p>2. Green Spaces and Walkways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Well maintained and safe green spaces, with adequate shelter, toilet facilities and easily accessed seating- Pedestrian friendly walkways, free from obstructions, smooth surfaces, and public toilets easily accessed.	<p>7. Cycle Paths</p>
<p>3. Outdoor Seating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Outdoor Seating is available, transport stops and public spaces, and spaced at regular intervals; seating is well maintained and patrolled to ensure safe access by all.	<p>8. Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public safety in open spaces and buildings is a priority and is promoted by, for example, measures to reduce the risk from natural disasters, good street lighting, police patrols, enforcement of by-laws, and support for community and personal safety initiatives.
<p>4. Pavements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pavements are well-maintained, smooth, level, non-slip and wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs with low curbs that taper off to road.- Pavements are clear of any obstructions (e.g. street vendors, parked cars, trees, dog droppings, snow) and pedestrians have	<p>9. Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Services are clustered, located in close proximity to where older people live and can be easily accessed (e.g. are located on the ground floor of buildings).- There are special customer service arrangements for older people, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
	<p>10. Buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Buildings are accessible and have the following features:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Elevators

priority of use.

5. Roads

- Roads have adequate non-slip, regularly spaced pedestrian crossings ensuring that it is safe for pedestrians to cross the road.
- Roads have well-designed and appropriately place physical structures, such as traffic islands, overpasses or underpasses, to assist pedestrians to cross busy roads.

- o Ramps
- o Adequate signage
- o Railings on stairs
- o Stairs that are not too high or steep
- o Rest areas with comfortable chairs
- o Sufficient number of public toilets

11. Public Toilets

- Public toilets are clean, well maintained, easily accessible for people with vary abilities, well-signed and placed in convenient locations.

2. Transportation

Transportation, and more specifically public transportation, is considered a key element in active ageing. Accessible and affordable transportation ensures that seniors are able to get around their communities, to access services, and to have a continued sense of independence. Many seniors chose to drive well into the 80's, however this is more the exception than the norm. Others, however, have long given up their personal vehicles for varied reasons and rely on other forms of transportation.

The guide contains an extensive checklist for transportation, highlighting its importance to seniors and their ability feel productive and active in their communities.

1. Affordability

- Public transportation is affordable to all older people.
- Consistent and well-displayed

8. Safety and Comfort

- Public transport is safe from crime and is not overcrowded.

transportation rates are charged.

2. Reliability and Frequency

- Public transport is reliable and frequent (including services at night and at week-ends).

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3. Travel Destinations

- Public Transport is available for older people to reach key destinations such as hospitals, health centres, public parks, shopping centres, banks and seniors' centres.
- All areas are well serviced with adequate well-connected transport routes within the community and between neighboring communities.
- Transport routes are well connected between the various transport options.

4. Age-friendly Vehicles

- Vehicles are accessible, with floors that lower, low steps, and wide and high seats.
- Vehicles are clean and well maintained.
- Vehicles have clear signage indicating number and destination.

5. Specialized Services

- Sufficient specialized transport services are available for people with disabilities.

6. Priority Seating

7. Transport Drivers

- Courteous and helpful drivers.

9. Transport Stops and Stations

- Stops are located in close proximity to where older people live, are sheltered with adequate seating, and are clean and safe.
- Accessible with public toilets, and legible well-place signage.

10. Information

- Information is provided to older people on how to use public transport and the range of options that exist.
- Timetables are legible and easy to access

11. Community Transport

- Services exist to take older people to specific events and places

12. Taxis

- Affordable, comfortable and accessible

13. Roads

- Well maintained, wide, and well lit, have traffic calming devices, intersections clearly marked, have covered drains and have consistent, clearly visible and well-placed signage.
- Free of visual obstructions.
- Rules of road are strictly enforced and drivers are educated to follow the rules.

14. Parking

- Affordable parking is available.
- Priority parking bays are available for older and disable people.
- Drop-off and pick-up bays close to buildings and transport stops are provided for handicapped and older people.

3. Housing

WHO has cited housing as being essential to safety and well-being of seniors. The connection between appropriate housing and access to community and social services is a major influence on the independence and quality of life of older people. Seniors value adequate housing in its ability to allow them to age comfortably and safely in their communities.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Affordability2. Essential Services<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Essential services (e.g. water, sewer, etc.) are available and affordable.3. Design<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Well-constructed houses.- There is sufficient space to enable older people to move around freely.- Housing is equipped to meet seasonal heating and cooling requirements.- Housing adapted for older people – even surfaces, wheelchair accessible, appropriately designed bathrooms, toilets and kitchens.4. Modifications<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Housing modified for the needs of older people as needed.- Modifications are affordable.- Financial assistance is provided for modifications.5. Maintenance<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintenance services are affordable for older people.- Qualified and reliable service providers are available to perform maintenance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Ageing In Place<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Housing is located close to services and facilities.- Affordable services are provided to enable older people to remain at home, to “age in place”.- Older people are well informed of the services available.7. Housing Options<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A range of affordable and appropriate housing options is available for older people.- Older people are well informed of available housing options.- Sufficient and affordable housing dedicated to older people is provided in the local area.- There is a range of services, amenities, and activities available at housing facilities.8. Living Environment<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Housing not overcrowded.- Older people are comfortable in their housing environments.- Housing not located in areas prone to natural disasters.- Older people feel safe in the environment they live in.- Financial assistance is provided for housing security measures.
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- Public housing, rented accommodation, and common areas are well maintained.

4. Social Participation

Social Participation refers to the ability of seniors to becoming involved in leisure, social, cultural, and spiritual activities in the community. These social activities allow seniors to engage with colleagues and friend, share common interests, and maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. Elements of an age friendly community that supports social participation include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessibility of Events and Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locations of events are convenient for older people in their neighborhoods, with affordable flexible transportation. - Older people have option of participating with a friend or caregiver. - Timing of events is convenient for older people. - Admission to events doesn't require a membership and tickets are simple to access. 2. Affordability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events are affordable with no additional or hidden costs. 3. Range of Events and Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A wide variety of activities are available to a divers population of older people. - Community activities encourage participation of people of different ages and cultural | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Promotion and Awareness of Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities and events are well communicated to older people, including information about the activity, its accessibility and transportation options. 6. Addressing Isolation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When possible, personal invitations are sent out promote activities and encourage participation. - Events are easy to attend, requiring no special skills. - Organizations make and effort to engage isolated seniors through, for example, personal visits or telephone calls. 7. Fostering Community Integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community facilities promote shared and multi-purpose use by people of different ages and interests and foster interaction |
|---|--|

backgrounds.

4. Facilities and Settings

- Gatherings occur at a variety of locations including recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres, parks, and gardens.
- Facilities are accessible and able to accommodate people of all physical abilities.

among user groups.

- Local gathering places and activities promote familiarity and exchange among neighboring residents.

5. Respect and Social Inclusion

Older people are often the victims of the negative attitudes and attitudes from younger generations. A lack of understanding and compassion from younger people results in a failure to recognize the importance of older people and the many contributions they make to a community. Although many people respect, recognize, and include older people, many feel they are incapable of making meaning contributions to the community and require constant support with little to give in return. Regardless of whether this mindset is a generational or cultural issue, these beliefs must be changed if older people are ever going to feel a sense of respect and belonging within their communities. The age friendly checklist addresses a number of components that must be satisfied for older people to feel they are both respected and included.

1. Respectful and Inclusive Services

- Older people are consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on ways to serve them better.
- Public and commercial services provide services and products adapted to older people's needs and preferences.

4. Public Education

- Learning about ageing and older people is included in primary and secondary school curricula.
- Older people are actively and regularly involved in local school activities with children and teachers.
- Older people are provided

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services have helpful and courteous staff trained to respond to older people. 	<p>opportunities to share their knowledge's, history and expertise with other generations.</p>
<p>2. Public Image of Ageing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The media include older people in public imagery, depicting them positively and without stereotypes. 	<p>5. Community Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older people are included as full partners in community decision-making affecting them. - The community recognizes older people for their past as well as their present contributions.
<p>3. Intergenerational and Family Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-wide settings, activities and events attract people of all ages by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences. - Older people are specifically included in community activities for "families". - Activities that bring generations together for mutual enjoyment and enrichment are regularly held. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community action to strengthen neighborhood ties and support include older residents as key informants, advisers, actors and beneficiaries. <p>6. Economic Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economically disadvantage older people enjoy access to public, voluntary and private services and events.

6. Civic Participation and Employment

As mentioned previously, older people make invaluable contributions to their communities well beyond their working years. Some do so on a voluntary basis while other go back to work in order to supplement fixed incomes and maintain a minimum standard of living. Age-friendly communities are ones that have options for older people to play an active role in their community either through volunteer organizations, paid employment, or even politics. According to WHO focus groups, many older people feel there are often barriers to getting involved, both physical barriers and cultural stigmatization. The age-friendly checklist includes a wide range of areas to consider when trying to improve participation and employment opportunities.

1. Volunteering Options
 - There is a range of options for older volunteers to participate.
 - Volunteer organizations are well developed with infrastructure, training programs, and a workforce of volunteers.
 - The skills and interests of volunteers are matched to positions.
 - Volunteers are supported in their efforts.
2. Employment Options
 - Range of opportunities exist for older people to work.
 - Policy and legislation prevent discrimination on the basis of age.
 - Retirement is a choice, not mandatory.
 - There are flexible opportunities, with options for part-time or seasonal employment.
 - There are employment programmes and agencies for older workers.
 - Employee organizations support flexible options, such as part-time and voluntary work, to enable more participation by older workers.
 - Employees are encouraged to employ and retain older workers.
3. Training
 - Post-retirement training opportunities are available for older workers.
 - Volunteer organizations provide training for volunteers.
4. Accessibility
 - Opportunities for voluntary or
5. Civic Participation
 - Advisory councils, boards or organizations, etc. include older people.
 - Policies, programmes and plans for older people include contributions from older people.
 - Older people are encouraged to participate.
6. Valued Contributions
 - Older people are respected and acknowledged for their contributions
 - Employers and organizations are sensitive to the needs of older workers.
 - Benefits of employing older workers are promoted among employers.
7. Entrepreneurship
 - Support exists for older entrepreneurs and there are opportunities for self-employment.
 - Information designed to support small and home-base business is in a format suitable for older workers.
8. Pay
 - Workers receive fair remuneration for their work.
 - Volunteers are reimbursed for expenses they incur while working.
 - Older workers' earnings are not deducted from pensions and other forms of income support to which they are entitled.

paid work are known and promoted.

- Transportation to work is available.
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- No cost for workers in paid or voluntary positions.
- Support for organizations to recruit, train, and retain older workers.

7. Communication and Information

Communication and sharing information is something that is important to citizens regardless of their age. People feel a greater connection to their community if they are continually kept aware of the events and issues that are on-going in their community. This is no different for older-people and is a key element in keeping them connected to the day-to-day happenings that may influence their lives.

1. Information Offer

- Basis, universal communication system of written and broadcast media and telephone reaches every resident.
- Regular and reliable distribution of information is assured by government or voluntary organizations.
- Information disseminated to reach older people close to their homes and where they conduct their usual activities of daily life.
- Information dissemination is coordinated in an accessible community services that is well-publicized – a “one-stop” information centre.
- Regular information and

3. Plain Language

- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straight forward sentences.

4. Automated Communication and Equipment

- Telephone answering service gives instructions slowly and clearly.
- Option to speak to real person or have someone call back.
- Electronic equipment should have large buttons and big lettering.
- Display panels at service centres should be well illuminated and accessible in a variety of ways.

5. Computers and the Internet

programme broadcast of interest to older people are offered in both regular and targeted media.

2. Oral Communication

- Oral Communication accessible to older people is preferred.
- People at risk from social isolation get information from trusted individuals with whom they may interact, such as volunteer caller and visitors, home support workers, hairdressers, doormen, or caretakers.
- Individuals in public office provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.

- Wide public access to internet with little to no charge in public places.
- Tailored instructions and individual assistance for users readily available.

8. Community Support and Health Services

The availability of appropriate quality care is essential for active-ageing. Focus groups continually discussed the need for basic health care and income support. Affordable and accessible care is critical to continued health and wellness.

1. Service Accessibility

- Health and social services are well distributed throughout the community, are conveniently located, and can be reached easily.
- Retirement homes and nursing homes are located close to services and residential areas.
- Services facilities are fully accessible.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about the health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of individual services is coordinated and with minimal bureaucracy.

3. Volunteer Support

- Volunteers of all ages are encouraged and supported to assist older people in a wide range of health and community settings.

4. Emergency Planning and Care

- Emergency planning includes older people, taking into account their needs and capacities in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

- Administrative and service personnel treat older people with respect and sensitivity.
 - Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimal.
 - There is adequate access to designated burial sites.
2. Offer of Services
- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
 - Home care services are offered that include health services, personal care, and housekeeping.
 - Health and social services offered address the needs and concerns of older people.
 - Service professionals have appropriate skills and training to communicate with and effectively serve older people.

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