

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Age-Friendly Communities

There is a growing proportion of older adults in York Region. While aging is a fact of life, the increasing number of people entering later life is part of a global demographic trend. To ensure York Region is “age-friendly”, it’s important to anticipate and respond to a range of age-related needs. The World Health Organization says, age-friendly communities “adapt, create and put in place policies, services, settings and structures that support and enable people to age actively”.

Health is not just about lifestyle choices, it’s about where you live. Community design affects personal well being, physical and mental health, and social supports. Community design is even more important as people age. Good design can help delay or minimize the severity of chronic diseases or disabilities, including those injuries from falls.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

york.ca/healthybuiltenvironment

19-5254

DID YOU KNOW?

- York Region has one of the fastest growing populations of older adults among urban communities.
- Between 2011 and 2031, York Region will see an almost 150 percent increase in the population of adults 65 and older. This projected increase is tied to the large number of baby-boomers in York Region.
- Good community design supports healthy aging and independent living.
- Research indicates that older adults thrive, and remain independent longer when they live in a neighbourhood that supports physical activity and social interaction.
- Features that benefit older adults benefit other age groups. Communities that work for older adults, work for everyone.
- Older adults are a great community resource. The quality of life for all residents is improved by community elders who volunteer, share knowledge and invest time in their communities.

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white bird or wing shape above the text "York Region" in a white serif font.

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You make a difference when you . . .

- Share your ideas on issues important to your community (e.g., access to affordable transportation, mixed use housing, frequency of public transit and safe walking areas)
- Learn about plans for development and re-development in your municipality
- Speak to your neighbours about issues affecting your community and ways to address them
- Organize and participate in community activities (e.g., community centres, faith groups, charities and clubs)
- Use parks and community facilities/resources in your neighbourhood
- Learn more about your municipality's official plan and how it can be used to promote an age-friendly community

Municipalities show leadership when they . . .

- Focus on the needs of aging residents when making community decisions; features that benefit older adults, benefit other age groups
- Consult with older adults in community planning
- Respond to the needs of older residents when drafting zoning bylaws. Flexible bylaws allow for innovative housing solutions to better serve older adults and the community in general
- Identify and fix barriers to transportation (e.g., accessible bus stops and ramps)
- Promote barrier-free buildings and streets to better serve freedom of movement and overall independence for aging community members
- Plan and adapt infrastructure, programs and services for older adults. When community resources are more accessible and inclusive, people of all ages, abilities and needs are better served

BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER WHERE YOU LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY.
Participate in building healthy communities!