# Active Aging Plan









CITY OF Burlington

August 2017

This document is available in print and electronically as an accessible PDF. Additional alternative formats are available upon request.
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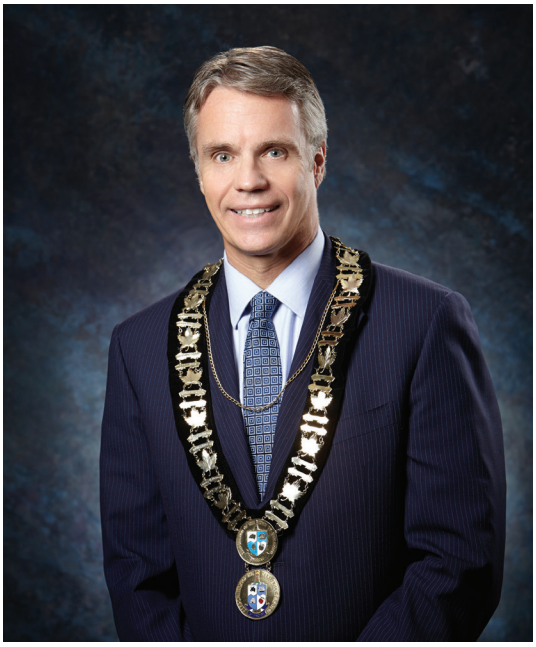
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# Message from Mayor Rick Goldring



The City of Burlington is proud to partner with our community stakeholders in the production of the first Burlington Active Aging Plan.

The initiatives outlined in this innovative document were created with the vision of keeping older adults and seniors healthy, active and engaged with their community. I want to thank everyone who contributed their time and talents to this important project.

This is a timely and much-needed plan. Burlington is experiencing a significant growth in our older adult and senior populations. As a municipality, we want to ensure we are providing the necessary services and programming to ensure our seniors experience the best possible quality of life.

Guided by Burlington's Strategic Plan 2015-2040, the Burlington Active Aging Plan focuses on five key directions we feel are essential to our older adult and senior population, including: outdoor spaces and buildings, social inclusion, civic participation, transportation and transit, and communications and information.

I am proud of this Burlington Active Aging Plan and the tremendous effort it took to create it.

Join us in fostering an age-friendly city where residents feel a sense of belonging and have access to opportunities and services that make their lives better.

**Mayor Rick Goldring**



## Acknowledgements

The experience and expertise of numerous individuals and organizations have informed the development of the Burlington Active Aging Plan. The plan has been prepared based on insights and perspectives of Burlington residents, city staff, elected officials, local and regional community partners and other stakeholders interested in older adult issues and the continual improvement of the quality of community life. For countless hours of consultation and sharing of lived experience and professional expertise, we would like to thank:

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- Burlington Age-Friendly Council
- Burlington Caribbean Connection
- Burlington Inclusivity Committee
- Burlington Senior Centre Volunteers
- Burlington Seniors Advisory Advocacy Sub-Committee
- Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee
- Canadian Association of Retired Persons - Halton Region
- Carole Ward, CDH Community Forum Volunteer
- Carpenter Hospice
- Community Development Halton
- Compassionate City Burlington
- Halton Age-Friendly Network
- Halton Region Health Department
- Halton Region Services for Seniors
- JBMH Cancer Clinic and Palliative Care Volunteers
- Karen Candy, Executive Director Carpenter Hospice
- McMaster Optimal Aging Portal
- Mohawk College Therapeutic Recreation Program
- Dr. Matthew Kwan, Dept. of Family Medicine McMaster
- University





## City of Burlington and the Region of Halton

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## Consultant

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## Plan Sponsor

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# Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) released a "Policy Framework on Active Aging" in 2002 to support communities in developing and strengthening health and social policies in today's aging world. This policy framework recognizes that older people can face increasing challenges due to sensory, physiological and other changes that result from aging.

The Global Age-Friendly Cities Project, under the direction of the WHO builds on the "Policy Framework on Active Aging" and aims to make large urban centres around the world better places to live for the aging population. This global project focuses on the environmental and social factors that contribute to healthy, active aging in urban settings.

As part of the project, select cities across the globe consulted with older persons, community leaders and gerontology experts to identify the major physical and social barriers that were universal to active aging. Eight dimensions were identified as essential to building an age-friendly community. The Burlington Active Aging Plan (BAAP) represents a response to the growing proportion of older adults in Burlington and concentrates on five of these dimensions based on Burlington's influence and jurisdiction: transportation and transit, outdoor spaces and buildings, social inclusion which includes respect and social participation, civic participation, and communication and information.

Funding for the development of the BAAP was provided by the Ministry of Seniors Affairs through the Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant. This funding was awarded to Burlington along with 55 other communities in Ontario to ensure that municipalities throughout the Province are prepared for the rapidly increasing demographic changes coming.

This grant was provided to the City of Burlington to:

- Develop a current community profile for older adults in Burlington
- Undertake an assessment of gaps and opportunities to make Burlington more age-friendly
- Create an age-friendly community plan that includes recommendations in areas over which the municipality has jurisdiction





The BAAP is intended to foster an accessible and equitable community, where programs and services are in place to support the values of inclusion, respect, dignity, independence and diversity for Burlington residents of all ages.

Keeping in step with the World Health Organization age-friendly initiatives and current respectful practices, the BAAP will use the terms "older adult" and "55+" interchangeably throughout the document as fact-based and not label-based identifiers to refer to the target audience of this initiative. Recognizing that the older adult population can include up to four distinct generations who may be living in various phases of life is another important factor considered throughout each step of the development of the BAAP.

The BAAP outlines over 50 'Call to Action' statements which will serve as a guide and a starting point with respect to municipal policies, service delivery, design, operational standards and community partnerships in an effort to promote a future which embraces active aging for all Burlington residents.

## What is an age-friendly community?

According to the Ministry of Seniors Affairs, age-friendly communities promote healthy active aging by delivering programs and services to help residents maintain their independence as they age. Age-friendly communities:

- Recognize the wide range of capacities and resources among older people
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences
- Respect decisions and lifestyle choice of older adults
- Support older adults who are most vulnerable
- Promote social participation of older adults and encourage their contributions to all aspects of community life

An age-friendly community benefits people of all ages. Neighbourhoods where residents feel connected and secure are safe for older adults. Families experience less worry when their older relatives have access to the services and community supports they need. Barrier free buildings and streets enhance the mobility and independence of all individuals including those with disabilities. The community as a whole benefits from the participation of older persons in volunteer or paid work and civic activities. For these reasons, creating age-friendly cities offers far reaching benefits while effectively responding to this demographic shift.





## City and Regional Plans

The BAAP is a direct outcome of the City of Burlington Strategic Plan 2015 – 2040, which recognizes the need for sufficient space to promote health, recreation, transportation and aging-in-place amongst older adults throughout the city. The Strategic Plan also clearly states that an age-friendly strategy to address the needs of older adults will be developed by the end of 2019. This strategy will make recommendations to meet the need for adequate activity space for older adults.

The BAAP also aligns with work that has already been completed by Halton Region to address the needs of adults 65 years of age and older throughout the region. Issues related to housing, community health and support services in Burlington, fall under the jurisdiction of Halton Region and other levels of government, and have been recognized as part of the Halton Region Older Adult Plan 2015 – 2018. These two plans address all eight dimensions identified by the World Health Organization for a city to become an age-friendly community.

In addition to these plans, the City's Official Plan (OP) review titled "Grow Bold" will guide the development of the city's physical and social environments. The OP will integrate key age-friendly principles into city policy and will provide direct connections to the BAAP.










## Project Methodology and Timeline

The three phases of the BAAP include: creating a comprehensive community profile, community engagement and the development of the plan. The project timeline and initiatives are below:

**Phase 1**
**Community Profile**
**Jan-May 2016**

**Phase 2**
**Community Engagement**
**May-Oct 2016**

**Phase 3**
**Plan Development**
**Nov-June 2017**





## Phase 1: Community Profile

In the first phase of the BAAP a comprehensive and current community profile was developed which built on findings from local, regional and provincial work already completed. This situational analysis identified population growth patterns, community planning initiatives, and reviewed existing services and infrastructure in Burlington.

## Phase 2: Community Engagement

From the outset of this process, community engagement and public input has shaped the prioritization of the plan. The BAAP is the result of almost a year of community engagement work that targeted adults 55+ and included input from local residents, businesses, community groups, city staff and leadership team, and council members. Over 1400 individual survey responses were submitted as one part of the engagement process.

## Phase two involved public engagement in five formats:

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Survey*** | • available in paper and on-line formats, promoted and open for public input for a period of two months<br>• reached community partners and groups who serve older adults<br>• delivered via peer ambassadors to multi-dwelling residences known to have higher populations of 55+ residents<br>• paper copies were available at all community centres and public libraries<br>• alternative formats and communication supports were made available upon request |
| ***Community Forums*** | • held at varying times and locations to maximize convenience and participation<br>• presentation provided information on the BAAP<br>• table discussions with peer and professional facilitators who gathered feedback on the key themes of the project |



| | |
|---|---|
| ***Community Working Group*** | • a community working group of eight citizens who reflect Burlington's community profile was assembled<br>• working group members represented seniors' organizations and included citizens at large who could speak to the "lived" experiences of older adults<br>• group participated in seven workshops throughout a year-long process and ensured that the project was transparent and guided by their insight |
| ***Council Input*** | • consultants began process by holding individual discussions with council members to document neighbourhood strengths and needs, and to highlight the interests and concerns of their older adult constituents |
| ***City Staff Working Group*** | • Staff Working Group includes staff members representing different departments and service areas within the city<br>• received and reviewed community profile and engagement findings<br>• workshops were held to discuss citizen key considerations and the barriers identified in each focus area<br>• city staff identified and prioritized new projects that will improve the city's strategies to becoming an age-friendly community |

A variety of other connections were also made that reached into the community as part of this phase of the project. The acknowledgements area highlights the depth of both internal and external engagement that has shaped the development of this document.

## Phase 3: Developing the Action Plan

With a current and comprehensive understanding of the community's profile and the community's considerations identified, city staff and the Community Working Group developed a solid framework to guide strategy recommendations. The BAAP lists current initiatives and future recommendations which will move us towards an age-friendly city.

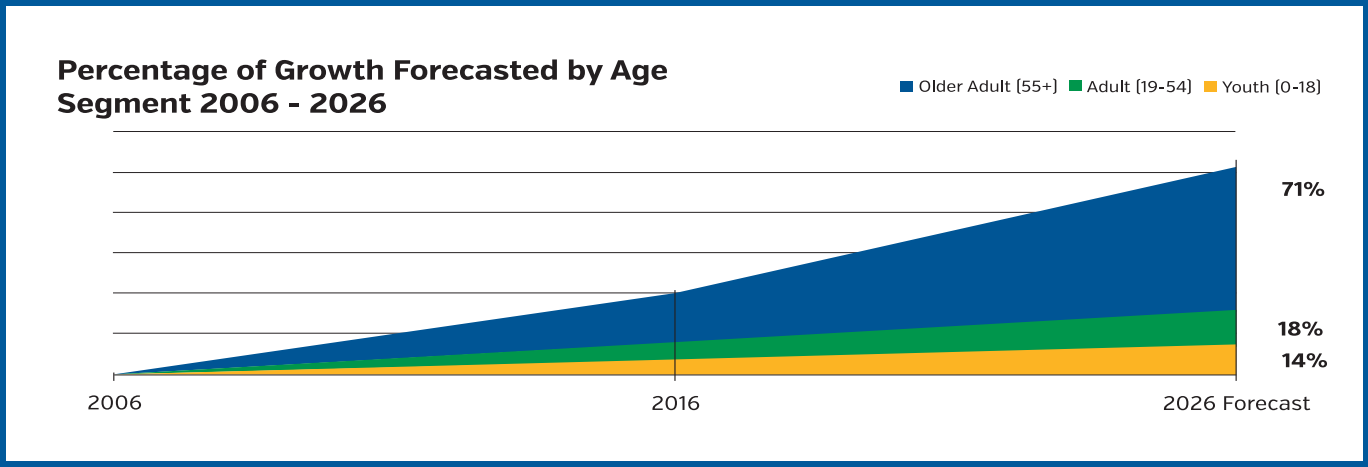




# Local and Societal Trends

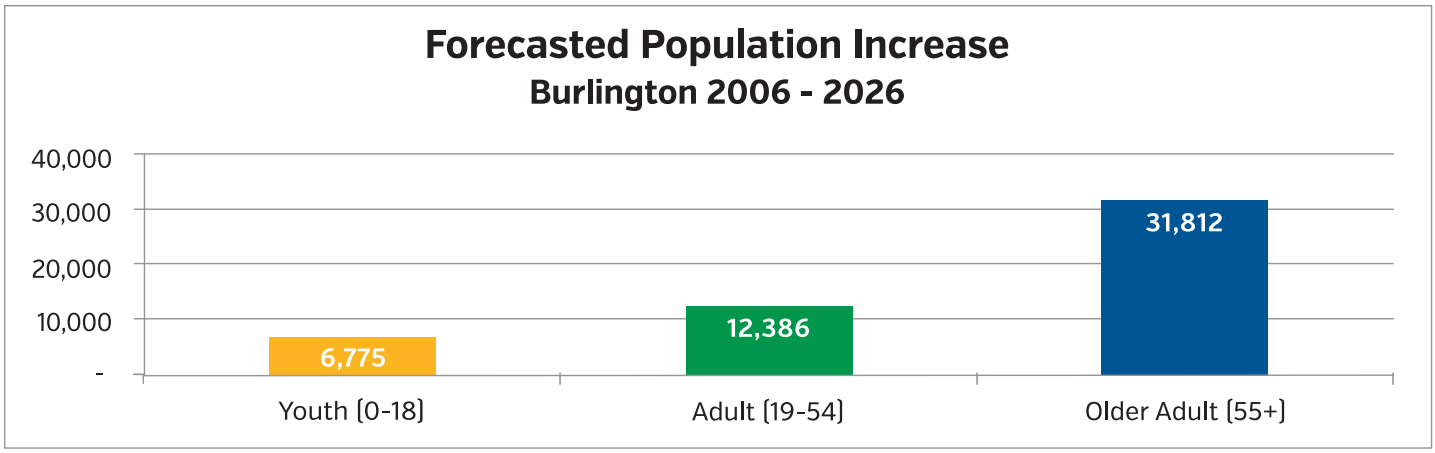
## Demographic Shift

The City of Burlington is in the midst of a considerable demographic shift marked by the growing proportion of adults 55+. Over the next decade, population growth amongst older adults is expected to continue to outpace that of youth and adults. The population of older adults in Burlington is projected to increase by approximately 71% between 2006 and 2026, whereas the youth and adult population segments are projected to increase by 14% and 18% respectively during this period. To date, we have experienced approximately half of this growth, with continued growth expected to climb as shown in the chart below over the next ten years.



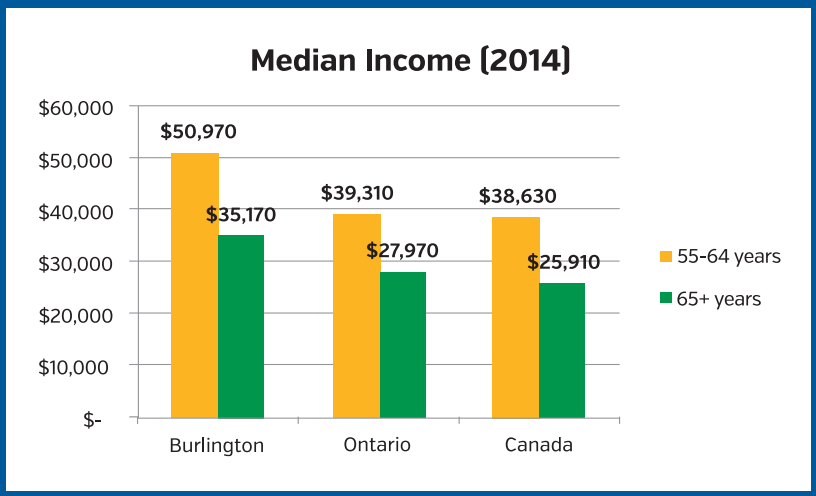

As of 2016, older adults represent 32% of the Burlington's population, which is 5% higher than the province's proportion of older adults who make up only 27% of the population. In 2026, according to Environics forecasts, the proportion of adults aged 55+ is projected to increase by another 3% and will account for over 76,000 persons in Burlington or 35% of the city's total population. The following chart demonstrates the added population growth in each age group expected by 2026. All three demographic segments are forecasted to show an increase, however the greatest growth will occur in the 55+ age category where it is anticipated to rise by almost 32,000 residents.






## Income and Financial Security

The following information compares the annual median income of Burlington residents who are 55+ and 65+ to both the Ontario and Canadian medians. As shown below, Burlington incomes are higher than that of provincial and national medians.




While average incomes remain higher in Burlington, factors influencing financial security impact this finding. Through the engagement process the community made it clear that financial security is a product of living expenses and income.





It is important to note that independent older adults may have reduced financial demands due to reduced expenses such as the end of mortgage payments and child-rearing, however they may also be facing a period in life when living expenses are the highest due to a need for assisted-living care.

The community made it clear that a constant and significant concern was knowing that longer life expectancies may mean that savings could run out earlier than planned as their age advances. A second significant concern resulted from unexpected changes in health and the high cost of related care and/or supported accommodation needs. These two fears influence how older adults approach spending and is a trend considered in the BAAP.

## Community Priorities

The public engagement process identified both community priorities and barriers to creating an age-friendly city. While older adults expressed a high satisfaction rating in their sense of belonging and involvement in the community, they also clearly identified two areas requiring improvement in order to better meet their needs:

- Improvement to mobility through the city, and
- Increased opportunities for social participation

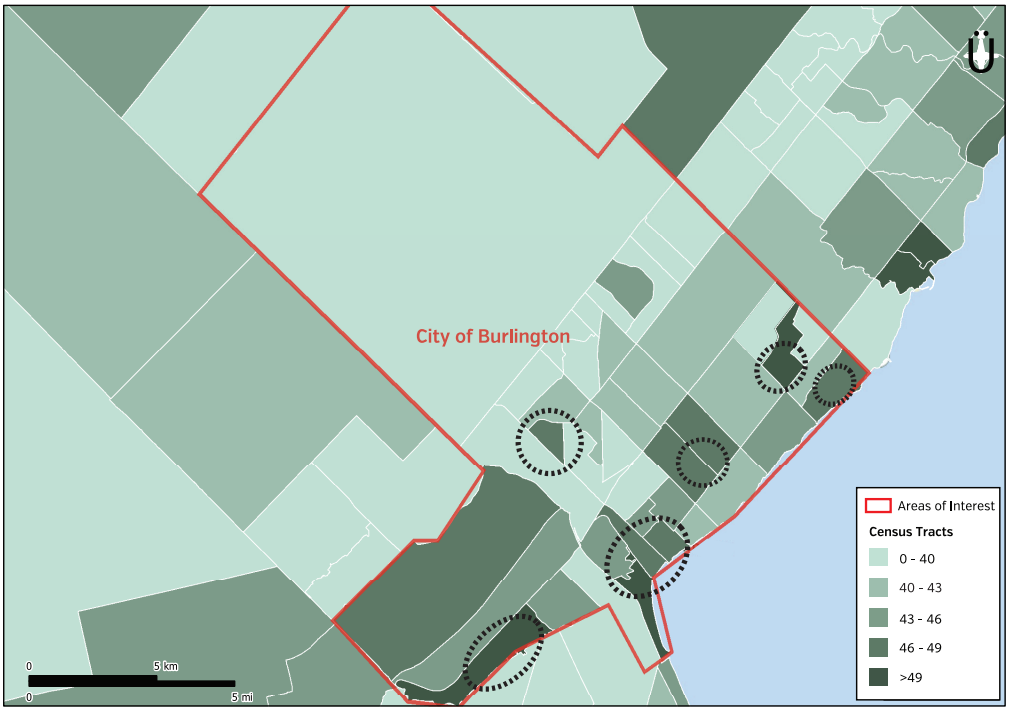
The community recognized that an inclusive, accessible and age-friendly approach to all municipal service delivery would benefit people of all ages. And finally the community emphasized the need for the city to continuously seek input from older adults and to ensure that they are included in the policy making process.

## Neighbourhood Hot Spots

As shown on the population graphs, an increase of the 55+ population is forecasted to grow across the city. The neighbourhoods identified in the map area below were shown to have higher concentrations of older adults based on the 2016 federal census. Meeting service needs in these older adult 'population hotspots' will remain an important consideration when planning for services in the future. However, it should also be noted that population growth will also mean that older adult populations will grow in all neighbourhoods throughout the city. When planning for the future, considering anticipated growth in both "hot spots" as well as all other neighbourhoods will be important.



**Average Age of Total Population**
City of Burlington (Relative)




## Support and Independence

While life spans are increasing and many older adults are maintaining their health longer, there still remains a large portion of this age-group who will require significant assistance as their age advances, though this may be occurring later in life than in previous generations. Though dependency needs may see later onset, three common factors continue to influence the level of support older adults may need: health, finances, and isolation.

- Health issues become increasingly more prevalent and impactful in the later years of older adulthood. More specifically, mental health issues are showing a pattern of affecting older adults much earlier in their life. Dementia related illness is significantly increasing according to Alzheimer Society of Canada and both this and other medical conditions can result in dependency needs occuring earlier in life and lasting longer.

- Financial security can also be impacted by one's inability to access pension income as is the case with many older adult women who were not part of the labour force. Financial resources can also become exhausted as older adults live longer and health conditions impact their finances.





- Both health and financial factors can be inter-related and can also create barriers to social interaction making isolation more likely. Lack of social participation and lack of strong personal ties to individuals, a neighborhood or a community are acknowledged as significantly influencing quality of life.

Emphasizing the importance of creating enabling environments, reducing financial barriers and ensuring that access to all services remain accommodating to personal needs, will reduce isolation and dependency factors as adults age. This integral link between today's longer life courses and efforts to maintain independence is critical.

## Retirement Patterns

With changes to mandatory retirement and increased opportunities due to technological advancements, the traditional Education-Employment-Retirement pattern is no longer the norm. Adults are now taking breaks from employment to return to education or to pursue other interests. This new pattern of short periods of retirement from employment spanning throughout life is a trend expected to continue.

Older adults are also working later in life and often reducing work loads in stages, or retiring from career jobs and working in 'bridging' jobs to explore interests or to supplement incomes for periods of time. Opportunities for paid employment, volunteer contribution and preparing for an older work force will be important considerations in creating an age-friendly community.

## Desire for Options and Flexibility

The end of traditional retirement means more older adults are seeking opportunities for social participation and recreation as well as employment and volunteer opportunities which reflect their skills, interests, and financial needs. Opportunities for programs and services that include diverse generational interests and that are offered in many geographical areas across the city will ease access to services.

Services will need to consider the differing needs of older adults including those who may be employed, retired, supported by a care partner in all that they do, living with declining health or illness, and those individuals residing in supported living arrangements. The 'one shoe fits all' approach to planning for the 55+ population will not address the growing need and desire for flexible services. The BAAP will recognize the older adult's personal schedules and availability during all seasons, weekdays, weekends, and during daytime and evening hours.



## Celebration of Diversity

As the City of Burlington grows so does the demographic profile of it's citizens. Burlington will continue to recognize this trend and the richness that diversity brings to neighbourhoods and community life.

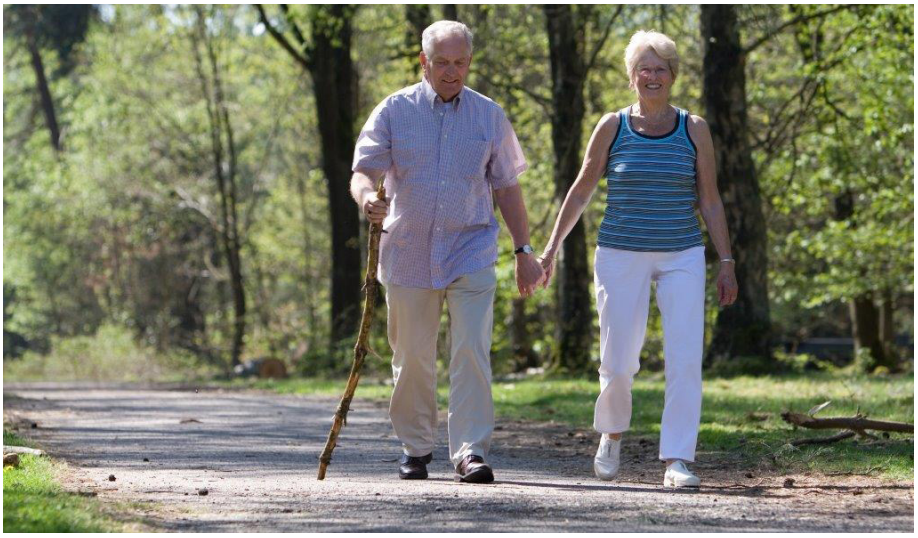
Through collaboration and partnership with the community, and by fostering welcoming environments which support individuals in settling into community life, Burlington will continue to work to create conditions of success where people of all backgrounds and lifestyles can participate fully. Embracing the diversity of interests and needs which newcomers bring to the community will be an important approach to serving the community as a whole.

While the development of a newcomer's strategy is highlighted in the City of Burlington Strategic Plan, the BAAP will look to support and align these future initiatives by improving inclusive practices which will further accommodate individual, cultural, and community needs.

## Enabling Environments

While it's widely recognized that independent living can be extended through a lifestyle that remains physically active, we now also better understand the importance of strong social connections. It is this feeling of 'belonging' that is known to have a direct benefit on maintaining mental wellness throughout life's course.

Creating environments which encourage citizens to pursue lifelong physical activity and remain socially active will directly influence the sense of well-being and fulfillment that older adults experience as they age. Strategies to create enabling environments, improve mobility through the city, and encourage social interactions will also be identified in the BAAP.







# Creating the Vision

The Community Working Group and City Staff worked together to develop a clear vision for Burlington as an age-friendly city. This vision intends to become Burlington's aspirational guide to truly creating an age-friendly city. Collectively, a clear goal emerged recognizing the City of Burlington as one of Canada's most desirable communities to live, work, play and age-well within. The Vision created is:

***"Burlington is a caring and age-friendly city where citizens enjoy healthy, active lives and feel safe, connected and valued as they reach their full potential."***

This vision statement will remain a constant measure of the community's success in creating and maintaining a community in which all citizens feel a sense of belonging and respect.

## Active Aging Principles of Practice

Throughout the entire engagement process, four important principles of practice were established to guide the recommended strategies in each of the five focus areas of the BAAP. These principles and practices will provide direction for the planning, management and delivery of services, initiatives, programs and policies for older adults in Burlington. The desired outcome to optimize opportunities for health, participation, and security to enhance the quality of life for all residents is captured below.

### *Equity*
**Provide fair access to programs and services and minimize barriers to participation**

### *Inclusion*
**Welcome and value differences to encourage diversity and richer community life**

### *Respect*
**Value the contributions of all residents and provide consideration for individual needs and perspectives to ensure that all citizens can live with dignity**

### *Quality of Life*
**Create enabling environments that support independence, personal choice and meaningful social connections**



## Collaborative Service Models

Burlington is a community rich in resources and services for older adults with over 87 community service providers offering programs, activities, and support. To meet evolving needs, the City of Burlington will continue to collaborate with many partners to enhance the diversity of opportunities to older adults, strengthen the local economy, and strengthen the capacity of these community organizations. Moving forward, there are a variety of ways in which services can be provided. Examples of various service delivery models are:

| | |
|---|---|
| **City Direct Delivered** | • City provides a range of services to older adults and works closely with citizen advisory committees on matters of accessibility, inclusivity, transportation and other issues. |
| **City-Supprted Service Delivery** | • The City provides facilities and other resources to enable community organizations to deliver activities and programs to older adults. |
| **Community Driven** | • Includes community organizations that operate independently from the City such as multi-cultural and faith groups, advocacy organizations, neighbourhood groups, special interest groups, and service clubs. |
| **Public Agencies** | • Includes services provided by other public agencies such as Halton Regional Public Health and Social Services, Royal Botanical Gardens, YMCA and School Boards. |
| **Private** | • Includes private retailers, service providers, sport and fitness clubs, developers and some retirement residences. |

The City of Burlington's commitment to community development and partnership will remain an important part of the city's growth and development in meeting the needs of its citizens. Identifying and supporting new opportunities to work with community partners in innovative ways will remain a vital consideration in future years.





# The Strategy Overview

## BAAP Focus Areas

The emphasis of the BAAP is on the following five focus areas:

***Transportation and Transit*** – Remove mobility and transportation barriers to ensure that movement through the City is accessible, affordable, convenient, safe and reliable. This will promote social connectedness for all citizens.

***Outdoor Spaces and Buildings*** – Recognize that our public spaces influence the relationship that citizens have with their community. Design welcoming, attractive, safe and accessible public spaces that enhance the beauty and enjoyment of City life for all residents.

***Social Inclusion*** – Ensure that citizens have access to social, recreational, cultural and spiritual activities that foster supportive relationships, community connections and enhance quality of life for citizens of all ages.

***Civic Participation*** – Enable access to rewarding volunteer and employment opportunities where citizens can continue to use their knowledge to remain engaged in civic life throughout the full life course.

***Communications and Information*** – Ensure citizens receive information about their community and services in formats that are easy to understand and easy to access.

In the next pages, each of the five focus areas shown above will be summarized in three sections:

- An Overview / Summary of the focus area including community identified considerations of high importance
- Projects and Initiatives currently underway which address the community's input and considerations of high importance.
- A Call to Action section highlighting new or enhanced services that the city can work towards in an effort to make Burlington an even more age-friendly community



# Transportation and Transit

**Remove mobility and transportation barriers to ensure that movement through the City is accessible, affordable, convenient, safe and reliable. This will promote social connectedness for all citizens.**

## What We Heard...

- "I would like to use transit more often but find the schedule difficult to understand and stops are not conveniently located."
- "More designated parking spots for people with limited mobility are needed."
- "Cyclists need education about traffic and pedestrian safety."
- "Uneven sidewalks, snow and steep ramps make it difficult to go far with my walker."

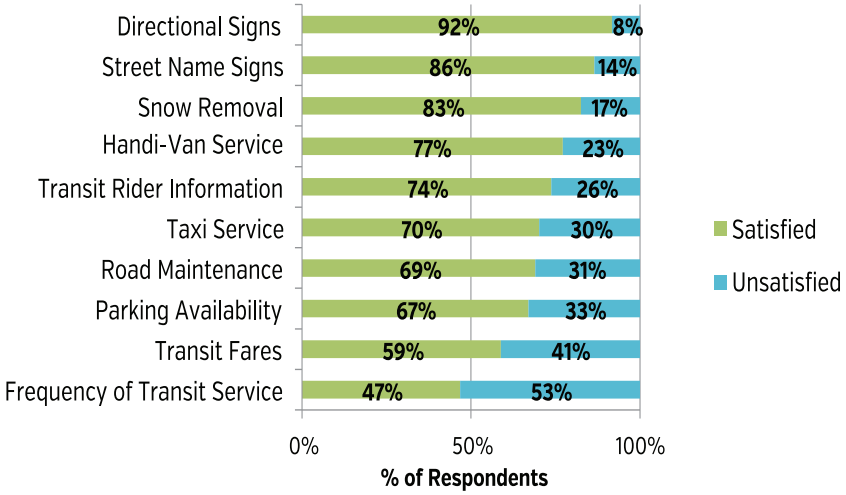
## Summary of Key Considerations

- Ensure transit services are affordable
- Enhance service coverage, scheduling and frequency of transit
- Improve communication and public awareness about transit
- Create comfortable and identifiable transit stops and rest areas
- Design accessible, safe and user-friendly parking areas and meters
- Enhance road maintenance

### Overall satisfaction with Transportation

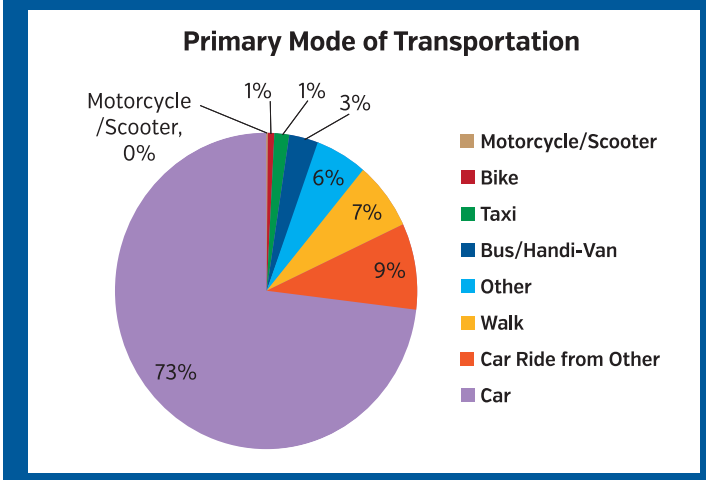
| Transit | Roads and Parking |
|---|---|
| **63%** | **79%** |
| Doing well... ✓ Street signs ✓ Snow removal ✓ Handi-van service | Could do better... ◉ Bus frequency ◉ Bus fares ◉ Parking ◉ Road maintenance |

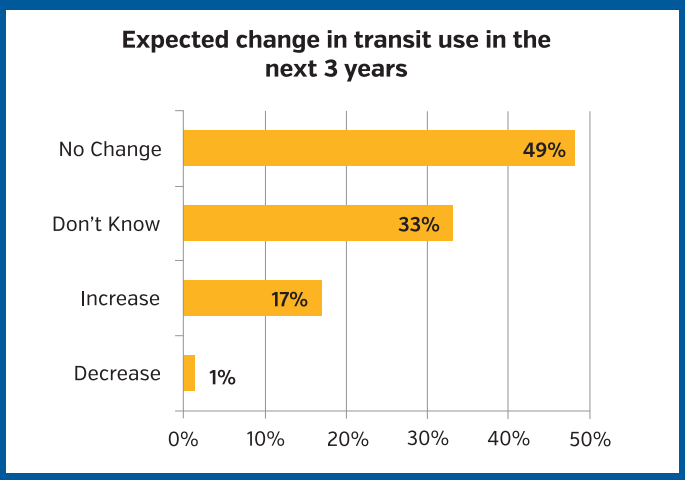
### Satisfaction with Transportation Features










## Currently Underway

### *Transportation*

- Burlington provides an extensive system of trails for recreational use or as an age-friendly means of travel. These trails use natural spaces, parks, streets and utility corridors that span the city from east to west.
- Sidewalk snow clearing is available. Snow clearing inside and around bus shelters is a priority to ease mobility during inclement weather.
- Parks and Recreation are working in collaboration with the Burlington Cycling Committee promoting active transportation and recreational cycling through social bike rides and safe cycling workshops and events for Adults 55+

### *Transit*

- Transit will continue to invite customer input using a variety of methods which accommodate differing communication needs to assist in the development of the Transit Strategy and route planning.
- Transit routes cover most areas of the City with higher frequency service available on key routes with strong connectivity to GO stations and mobility hubs.
- Transit communication is available in multiple formats. Voice annunciation is provided for bus stops as well.
- All Transit buses are accessible with the para-transit option available for those who require additional accommodation.
- Transit offers a discounted fare to riders ages 65 and older, and offers 'Presto' a reloadable pass that provides discounts from cash fares. In cooperation with the Region, the S.P.L.I.T (subsidized passes for low income transit) program available through Halton Region provides further assistance to those in financial need.



## Call to Action

### *Transportation*

- Review City policies and criteria for assessing the need for new sidewalks in road renewal projects. Improved pedestrian accessibility, safety and ease of travel within neighbourhoods will be considered an important determinant in designating new sidewalks.
- Incorporate the "complete street" concept in all major road design and construction projects to better support active transportation such as walking, cycling and transit and make travelling through the city safer, healthier, and more convenient.
- Continue the 2015 Trails Strategy enhancement to improve transportation links, north-south connections and connectivity to important community destinations and to enhance leisure experiences.
- Develop a trail rating system that informs users of the length and challenge of trails and identifies access to rest spots and comfort stations. This will enable older adults to select trails that match their abilities and interests.
- Consider improvements to public parking facilities that increase safety, accessibility and user friendliness including items such as parking metres, tight parking spaces and pedestrian movement. Provide priority locations for older adults with reduced mobility in addition to designated accessible parking.
- Review and consider enhancements to programs which are of specific interest to older adults such as the city's Windrow Program which provides snow removal to residents needing assistance.

### *Transit*

- Undertake a review of transit fares which balances affordability with quality of service and considers economic, social, and environmental benefits of public transit.
- Look to increase frequency and span of transit service to reduce wait times and improve convenience and connectivity.
- When designing transit improvements, adults 55+ will be engaged to support an understanding of mobility needs, amenity enhancements and comfort considerations of riders.
- Look to increase investment in para-transit to respond to the greater demands for accessible transportation options.
- Expand initiatives to educate and promote transit to current and potential new transit users. Offer in-person education at key locations and workshops to introduce and familiarize older adults with travel options so they can make informed, efficient and cost-effective choices.





# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

**Recognize that our public spaces influence the relationship that citizens have with their community. Design welcoming, attractive, safe and accessible public spaces that enhance the beauty and enjoyment of City life for all residents.**

## What We Heard...

- "When I walk with my husband, there is rarely a place to rest. This is important for those who have less stamina or endurance."
- "We need more washrooms open with extended hours that are available for use year-round in parks."
- "More rest areas and benches are needed at indoor and outdoor locations throughout the City."
- "Parks seem very well used during nice weather but we would enjoy more easy walking trails."

### Overall satisfaction with

| Outdoor Spaces | Buildings |
|---|---|
| **84%** | **93%** |

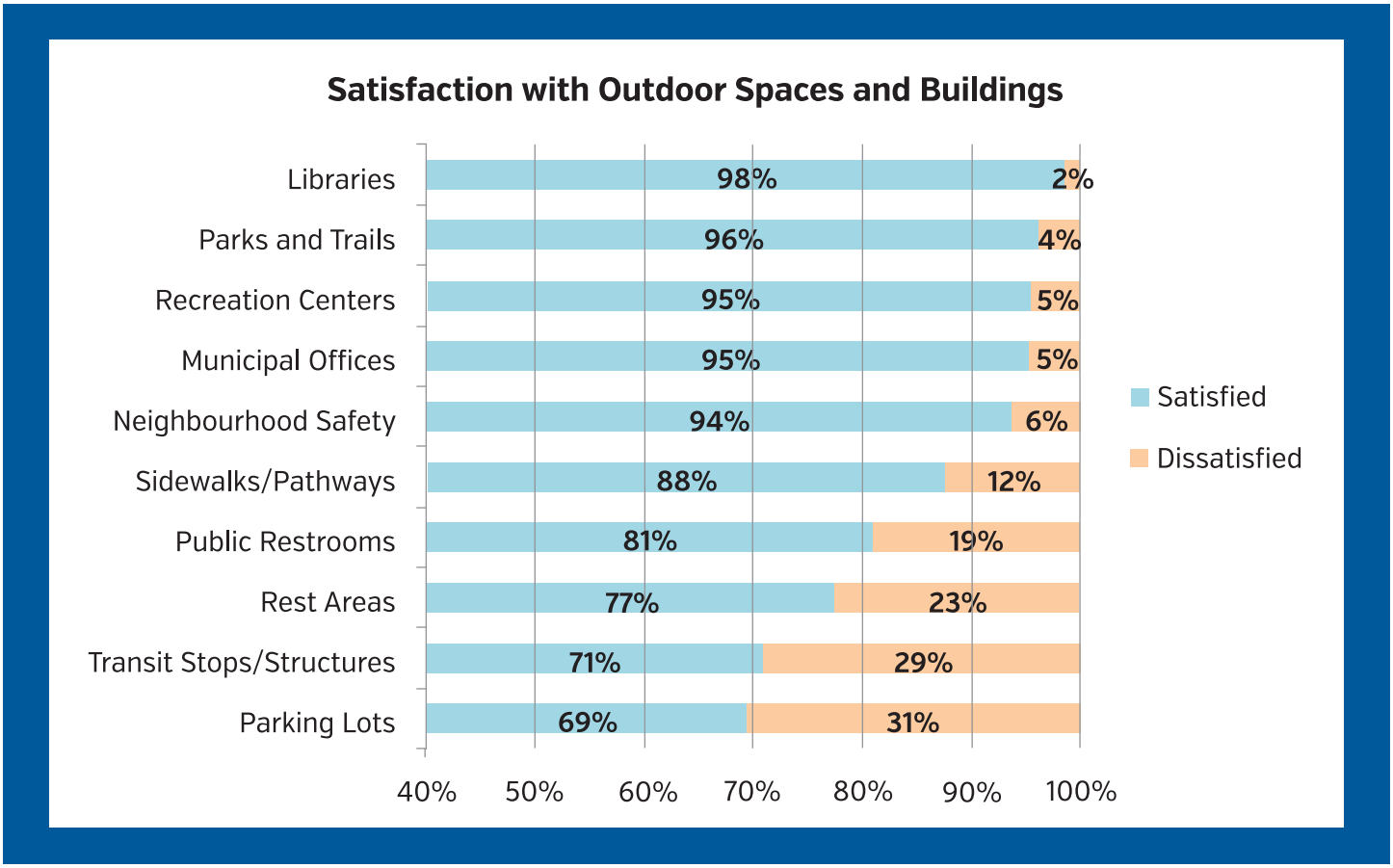
| Doing well... | Could do better... |
|---|---|
| ✓ Libraries | ◉ Parking Lots |
| ✓ Parks and Trails | ◉ Transit Stops |
| ✓ Recreation Centres | ◉ Rest Areas |
| ✓ Neighbourhood Safety | ◉ Public Restrooms |

## Summary of Key Considerations

- Remove barriers to accessibility
- Enhance public awareness about park services available
- Include age-friendly opportunities for park enjoyment in outdoor spaces
- Increase rest area availability and inclusive design features








## Currently Underway

- During new construction, renovation or renewal, all city public spaces and facilities are designed to meet the requirements of the 2016 City of Burlington Accessibility Design Standards (ADS). These standards meet or exceed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The use of universal design principles ensures more accessible amenities for older adults such as street benches with arms and back rests.
- The City will continue to work with citizens on the Burlington Accessibility Advisory Committee who review accessibility requirements for new building construction, renovations and renewal projects.
- Developing new trail head signage will meet all AODA requirements and a plan will be developed to improve existing signage to increase ease of reading.
- Descriptions of accessibility features in parks and recreation facilities are made available on the Burlington website.
- Improvements to be made to existing park washrooms are in progress and include new accessible and universal washrooms planned for high use park sites.
- Continue to include public art into the urban landscape in order to stimulate imagination, discovery and social interaction and enhance the cultural vibrancy of the City.





## Call to Action

- The city will identify community spaces that need more comfort amenities such as rest spots, water refill stations, and washrooms. Existing rest spots will be assessed for accessibility features and enhancements will be planned to create more age-friendly features.
- Burlington will demonstrate a commitment to age-friendly preparedness by allocating resources to handle increased building permit applications workloads associated with AODA compliance.
- As part of park redevelopment projects especially in areas with higher older adult populations, the City will incorporate features that appeal to older adults and will encourage activity and gathering in outdoor spaces. Park landscaping and walking trails which provide outdoor game tables, water features, specimen gardens and flat activity space will welcome creative use of the space by all ages.
- As part of major road projects Burlington will design pedestrian-friendly and esthetically pleasing outdoor streetscapes wherever possible. City planning will support high quality urban design principles that increase mobility between neighbourhoods, encourage convenient access to services and promote traffic-safe walkability.
- Community beautification projects that promote community identity and the vibrancy of distinct neighbourhoods will create unique places for citizens to socialize, remain active and conduct business. Encouraging neighbourhood projects such as community gardens will enrich neighbourhood life.
- As Burlington continues to grow, the city will ensure that parkland is secured as part of large developments and intensification projects. Balancing natural spaces with population concentration will create accessible, safe and welcoming outdoor spaces close to home.
- Enhance accessibility information about city buildings and parks and trails to assist citizens in assessing suitability of terrain, facility amenities, and mobility features.
- Investigate opportunities to expand the availability of automated external defibrillators (AED) at suitable outdoor settings where activity levels are moderate to high.





# Social Inclusion

**Ensure that citizens have access to social, recreational, cultural and spiritual activities that foster supportive relationships, community connections and enhance quality of life for citizens of all ages.**

## What We Heard...

- "More locations for older adult recreation programs are needed to keep us active and in touch with our friends."
- "The community centre here is wonderful. My husband enjoys walking the trails and we like all the places we can take our grandson for his enjoyment and ours."
- "A survey like this should be done every five years – great job!"
- "More outreach is needed in diverse communities to get feedback on programs residents want."

## Summary of Key Considerations

- Enhance in-person customer service to meet individual needs
- Promote culturally diverse services
- Increase options for closer-to-home and in-home services
- Reduce age related stigmas and labels
- Increase variety and schedule flexibility of recreation services
- Improve communication of recreation services

### Overall satisfaction with...

City Recreation Services

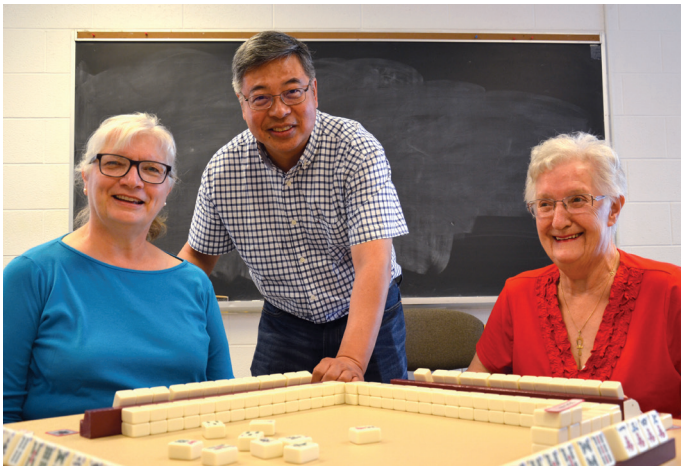
**91%**

Doing well...

- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Facilities
- ✓ Locations
- ✓ Range of Activities

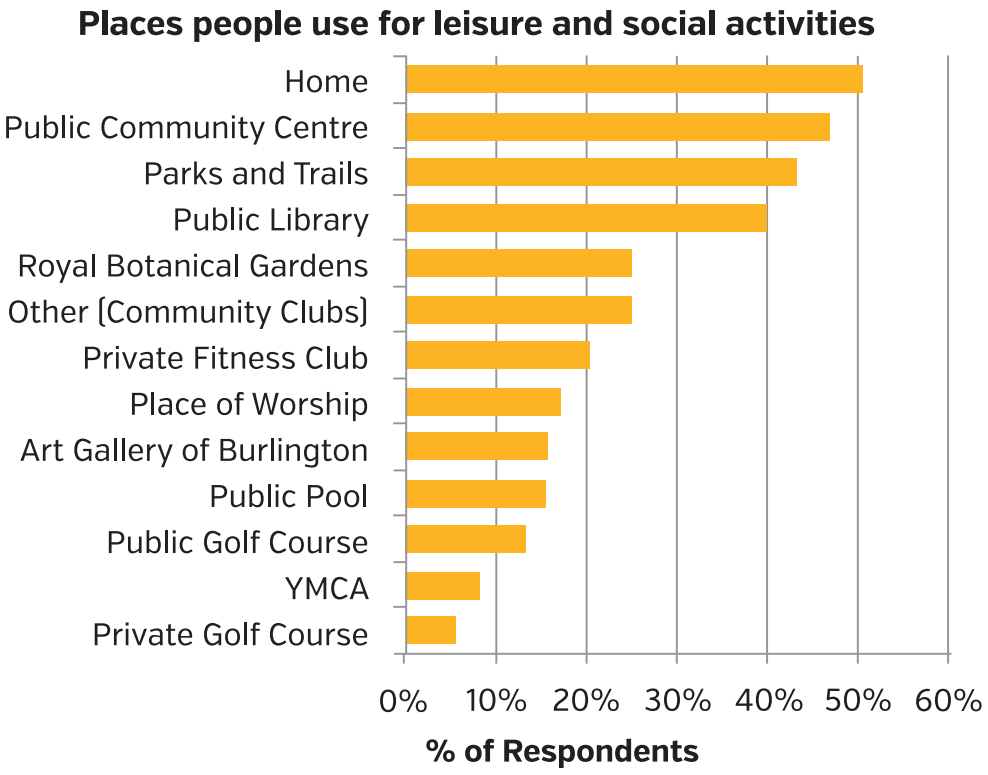
Could do better...

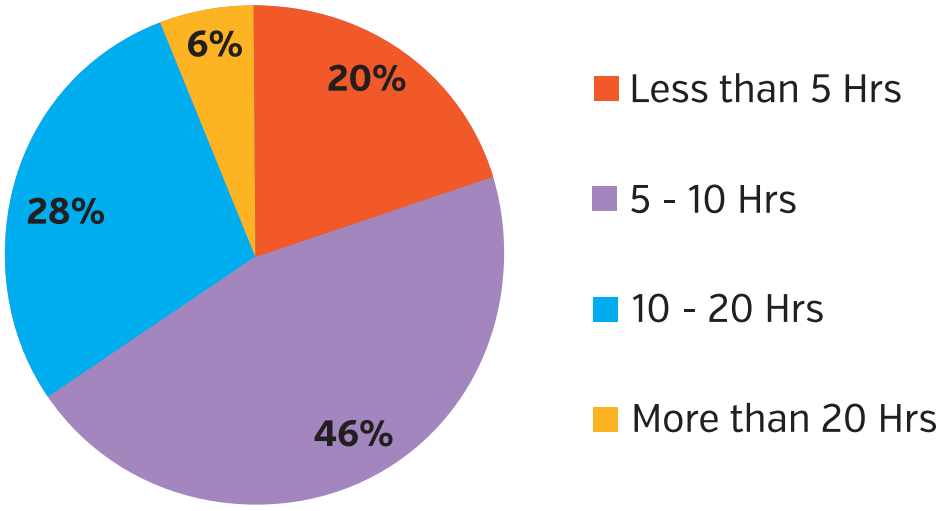
- ◉ Communications
- ◉ Schedule
- ◉ Cost
- ◉ Registration








Places people use for leisure and social activities
Home
Public Community Centre
Parks and Trails
Public Library
Royal Botanical Gardens
Other (Community Clubs)
Private Fitness Club
Place of Worship
Art Gallery of Burlington
Public Pool
Public Golf Course
YMCA
Private Golf Course
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
% of Respondents


Weekly Hours of Leisure Activity
6%
20%
28%
46%
Less than 5 Hrs
5 - 10 Hrs
10 - 20 Hrs
More than 20 Hrs



## Currently Underway

- Burlington provides a diverse range of recreation, culture and sport activities at a wide variety of locations that reflect generational interests and encourage personal development, learning and expression.
- Continue to increase opportunities for recreation participation by expanding services where possible into evening and weekend hours and balancing opportunities across the city and throughout the calendar year.
- Parks and Recreation will continue to offer a diversified program mix for older adults by working in collaboration with other community organizations and service providers.
- Burlington ensures access to recreation is supported by offering a spectrum of affordably priced services and offers fee assistance to those in need.
- Community life is enriched through festivals and events that draw together people of all ages, backgrounds and interests in an atmosphere of shared celebration. Continue supporting events that appeal to older adults such as Music in the Park.
- Parks and Recreation recognizes and encourages active and social participation by adults 90 years of age and over by offering honorary participation discounts to recreation programs.
- The city supports local service boards such as Burlington Performing Arts Centre, Art Gallery of Burlington, Museums and Burlington Public Library, as well as Joint Venture organizations such as community tennis, boating, lawn bowling, and curling clubs which provide services to older adults.
- Customer First service training for city staff and volunteers makes welcoming, responsive and professional service a quality standard and educates city staff on accessibility for all customers served in-person, by phone or through correspondence.
- Continual communication with the community invites input from older adults in a variety of ways. Biannual surveys and regular meetings with the residents of Burlington shape and improve the programs, outdoor and indoor recreation spaces, and the mix of recreation, sport and cultural services developed.
- Burlington brings neighbourhoods and those with like-minded interests together through community initiatives such as Love My Hood, the Neighbourhood Matching Fund, the Neighbourhood Rinks program and a variety of Community Gardens. These initiatives foster a sense of belonging, community pride, security and personal fulfillment.







## Call to Action

- Actively seek partnerships with schools to share expertise and resources such as technology, tools and room / gym space to develop inter-generational programs that deepen respectful interaction between students and older adults in shared spaces.
- Recreation opportunities will continue to expand throughout the city. Optimization of existing city facilities able to expand services such as Brant Hills Community Centre and Aldershot pool community room will occur immediately. Further growth will see extended operating hours in those facilities with capacity such as the city's various single pad arenas, auditoriums and park spaces.
- Continued partnership development with community based groups such as public libraries will increase participation options. Exploring possible opportunities for new partnerships and collaboration will continue with: private clubs, businesses and places of worship. When city facilities and partnership options have reached capacity the City will investigate the development of new recreation program spaces.
- In anticipation of societal trends and community needs, Parks and Recreation will expand service delivery either directly or in partnership into the following areas based on feedback received:

    - *Increase recreational sport opportunities for adults 55+ by expanding conditioning and instructional programs for trending activities like Pickleball and Shinny*
    - *Develop a program stream which focuses on restorative leisure pursuits specifically designed for older adults and their care partners interested in sustaining independence, physical and mental well-being*
    - *Develop a stream of outdoor leisure pursuits which promote direct connections with the natural world and exposure to the benefits of nature immersion through activities such as hiking groups, bird watching clubs, and landscape painting.*
    - *Enhance inclusive program options for older adult newcomers and their families by consulting and partnering with local cultural organizations to develop programs that consider cultural preferences, ethnic enclaves and language sensitivities. Promote leisure education workshops to assist in shared cultural and recreation understanding and increase access to community life.*

- Enhance the Parks and Recreation fee assistance program to actively target older adults who need financial support to participate in recreation activities. Focus efforts on targeting isolated older adults and those with financial need. Develop affordable recreation pass options which offer flexible program choices and encourage citizens of all ages to remain active.
- Continue to increase the convenience of the recreation registration process for Adult 55+ programs by reducing registration launches from four times each year to two times: Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer.



- Support Parks and Recreation Ontario's new provincial project to develop standard best practices for older adult recreation programs. The High Five Quality Assurance Framework for Older Adult Recreation will help identify programs which consider the needs of older adults in the design and leadership of activities.
- Develop an Age-friendly Service Assessment Tool which considers accessibility needs, safety and comfort of older adults in facility and program space design. Partnering with the Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee (BSAC) to develop an assessment process which provides feedback for optimizing age-friendly environments.
- Develop a customized Personal Leisure Assessment Tool to help participants make program choices which suit their skills and interests, increase safety and allow for greater accommodation of individual needs.
- Continue to partner with the community to offer older adult learning seminars about security and health such as: financial planning, nutrition, retirement, emergency preparedness, fraud and estate planning.









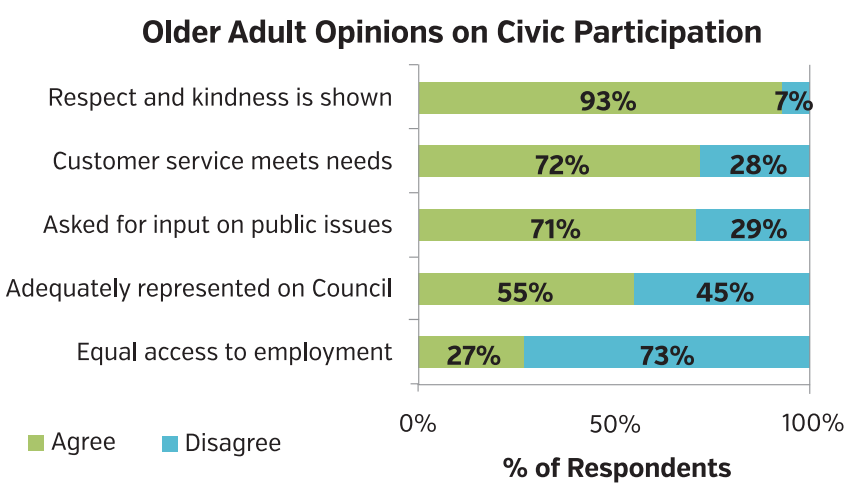


# Civic Participation=

**Ensure that citizens have access to rewarding volunteer and employment opportunities where they can continue to use their knowledge to remain engaged in civic life throughout the full life course.**

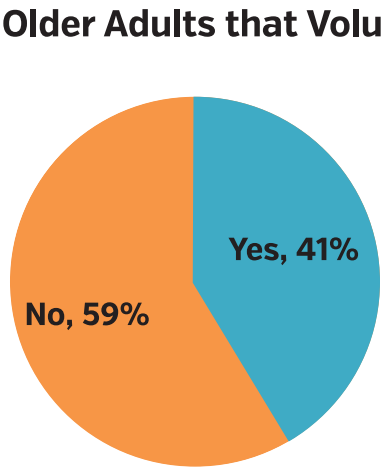
## What We Heard...

- "I volunteer 12 hours a week. I enjoy getting out, seeing friends and contributing to my church, city and community."
- "With aging can come isolation, I see many seniors sitting alone at coffee shops, not realizing what options are available to them."




## Summary of Key Considerations

- Increase awareness of volunteer opportunities
- Promote flexible employment opportunities
- Recognize and promote the assets older employees and volunteers offer
- Reflect the growing volunteer workforce in municipal policies and training





## Currently Underway

- The City Clerks Department supports all citizen advisory committees by guiding workplans, meeting procedures and connecting committees to relevant city staff and initiatives. Older adults are represented on all citizen advisory committees and provide a unique lens on various issues and opportunities.
- The municipal election process includes in-person and internet voting to increase convenience and participation in the electoral process.
- The City has adopted a Community Engagement Charter that represents a commitment to inform and involve citizens in issues that affect their lives. It ensures that all perspectives of the community are carefully considered in order to support local government decision making and action. A Charter Action Team (ChAT) made up of citizen and city staff representatives is in place to ensure community engagement is part of everyday practice at the city.
- Resources and support are available to assist citizens who wish to address City Council and its Standing Committees including registration forms, presentation tips, procedural guides and feedback surveys.
- The City regularly provides opportunities for convenient public feedback on city policies, services and capital projects through online surveys on the City's "Have Your Say" web page.
- Significant contributions of volunteers who make a difference in the community are honoured at "Burlington's Best Awards". This annual event includes a category specifically recognizing the contribution of an outstanding older adult.
- The City of Burlington and affiliates like the Burlington Performing Arts Centre provide a wide range of volunteer opportunities for older adults to share their skills and expertise. These volunteer positions assist with customer service, administrative support, skills instruction, peer mentoring, leadership, compassionate support, and running social activities.
- Accessibility services for individuals with mobility, hearing and sight disabilities are available at city meetings to encourage full participation. Clear and plain language is used to communicate, and alternative formats to printed material are provided as needed.
- The Region of Halton's Older Adult Advisory Committee provides a platform for residents of all Halton communities to provide their perspectives and input into Regional policies, services and initiatives that impact older adults. This committee continues to have a Burlington representative actively involved.







## Call to Action

- Develop education workshops and tours for older adults, newcomers and interested citizens to create a welcoming and open environment to learn about local government and how citizens can be involved in local issues and decision making.
- Ensure that community engagement opportunities are delivered in welcoming and accessible locations and at convenient times which encourage older adult participation.
- Parks and Recreation will look to develop a city wide volunteer management program which will enhance the recruitment, training and recognition of older adult volunteer roles. In addition, the city will increase the number of peer ambassadors who will offer personalized orientation to facilities and services where possible.
- Increase awareness of civic volunteer opportunities such as participation in citizen committees, community organizations and neighbourhood initiatives.
- Enhance language diversity support by continuing the registry of city bi-lingual staff able to assist customers facing language barriers and by providing common translation technology at customer service areas.
- Burlington will continue to track performance indicators related to city services, quality of life, sense of belonging and the age-friendliness' of Burlington. This will also include sharing progress on the BAAP.
- The City's citizen advisory committees will reflect the community profile with representation from adults 55+. Advisory committee members will participate in more in-depth orientations to better understand their roles, responsibility and connection to city processes and decision-making.
- The Mayor and Council will celebrate the lives and achievements of older adults reaching significant milestones such as their 100th birthday through formal recognition.
- Expand the on-line opinion polling and surveying program which gathers citizen input on various topics, to include a module for issues affecting adults 55+.
- Include alternate options for more isolated or less mobile individuals to address standing Committees of Council remotely through technology.
- Increase local business readiness for an older work force by promoting the Ministry of Seniors Affairs publications: Age-Friendly Workplace Self-Assessment Tool for Employers, Promoting Older Worker Participation, and the Age-Friendly Workplace Charter.





# Communications and Information

**Ensure citizens receive information about their community and services in formats which are easy to understand and easy to access.**

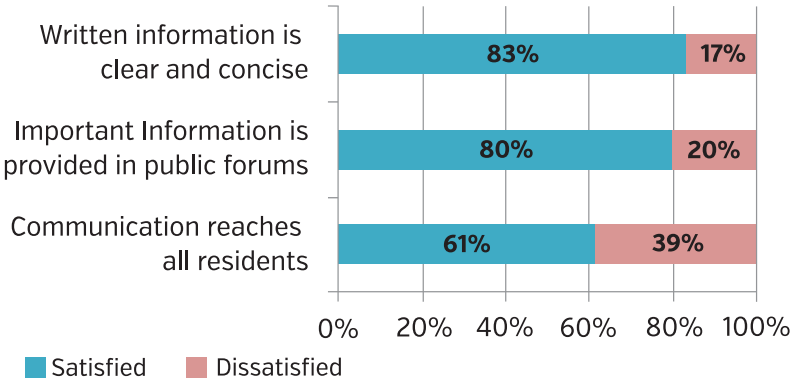
## What We Heard...

- "I think that the technology gap continues to be there, though most seniors do use email."
- "The City does a lot for all residents. Older adults however, need information to be written in a simple and clear way that is easily understood."
- "I need to search, with considerable effort to know which services are available."
- "There should be a direct helpline that provides information on all services available to older adults – whether provided by the City or not."

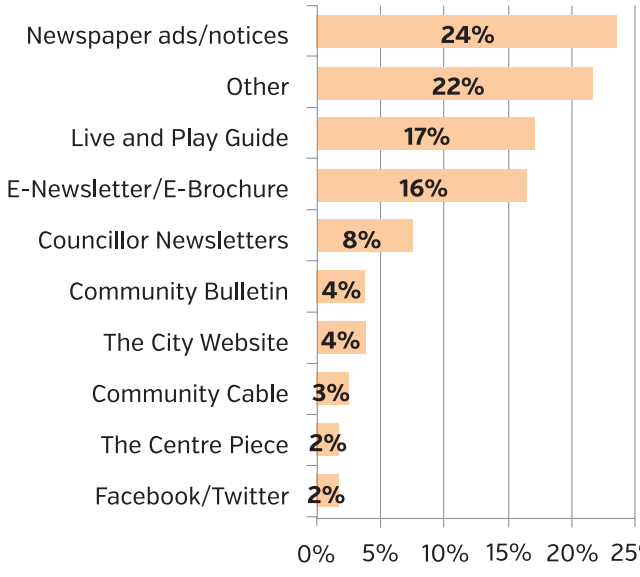
## Summary of Key Considerations

- Increased public awareness of existing programs and services
- Clear and understandable communications
- Equitable distribution of information using traditional publication and media formats
- Increase awareness of accessible communication formats

**Satisfaction with City Communications**




**Preferred City information sources**







## Currently Underway




- The city follows the plain language and inclusivity guidelines found in Burlington's Community Engagement Charter and uses a variety of methods to reach all residents, including adults 55+.
- Information about city services, projects, meetings and engagement opportunities is available electronically including through the city's accessible website at www.burlington.ca. Alerts and updates regarding city programs and services are available by subscribing to www.burlington.ca/enews.
- Information about city services, projects, meetings and engagement opportunities will continue to be made available in paper formats such as City Update, a weekly section in the Burlington Post, and City Talk, a city magazine delivered to all Burlington households.
- The city will continue to use paper means to reach people who do not use or prefer not to use, technology. Information is available through a number of channels including posters, postcards, displays and advertisements. Plain language and text size are considered in all publications
- The city frequently shares information with residents through video. All city videos are captioned for those needing auditory accommodation.
- Members of Council engage with the community in a variety of ways. As an example, the Mayor hosts Burlington Matters on Cogeco, discussing topics of interest to residents. Council members host a variety community events and meetings and are also active on social media.
- The city provides community outreach at local events throughout the year and at locations such as hardware supply stores to help people with building permit information.
- Parks and Recreation provides the Live and Play activity guide in paper copy with larger font sizes in Adult 55+ sections.
- City employees participate in citizen advisory committees of particular interest to older adults such as the Seniors Advisory Committee, Inclusivity Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the Integrated Transit Advisory Committee.
- Both Halton 2-1-1 and 3-1-1, are click or call services that provide information on social, community and government services. Assistance is offered to customers needing service in another language. Both 2-1-1 and 3-1-1 services are actively promoted through City of Burlington customer service representatives and the distribution of publications and directories.



## Call to Action

- Work with local cable television company to establish a weekly program dealing with topics of interest to older adults.
- Continue to print and distribute city publications such as City Talk to locations known to have a high number of older adult residents or visitors.
- Work with the Burlington Public Library to promote the Halton Services Data Base and the 1-2-1 Help Program that provides personal consultations to individuals looking for community information and services.
- Expand Customer First service training for city employees and volunteers to address the unique needs of older adults and ensure that all city employees are trained and applying standards consistently.
- Work collaboratively with Burlington Public Library branches to enhance the Adult 55+ electronic information literacy program that focuses on Internet awareness, safety and new information technologies.
- Parks and Recreation will create an easy-to-access web portal to provide links to Active Aging related issues, key program providers, community services and information that is most often requested.
- Provide self-help videos to assist older adults in navigating through city procedures or to orient citizens to city services in a more age-friendly format.







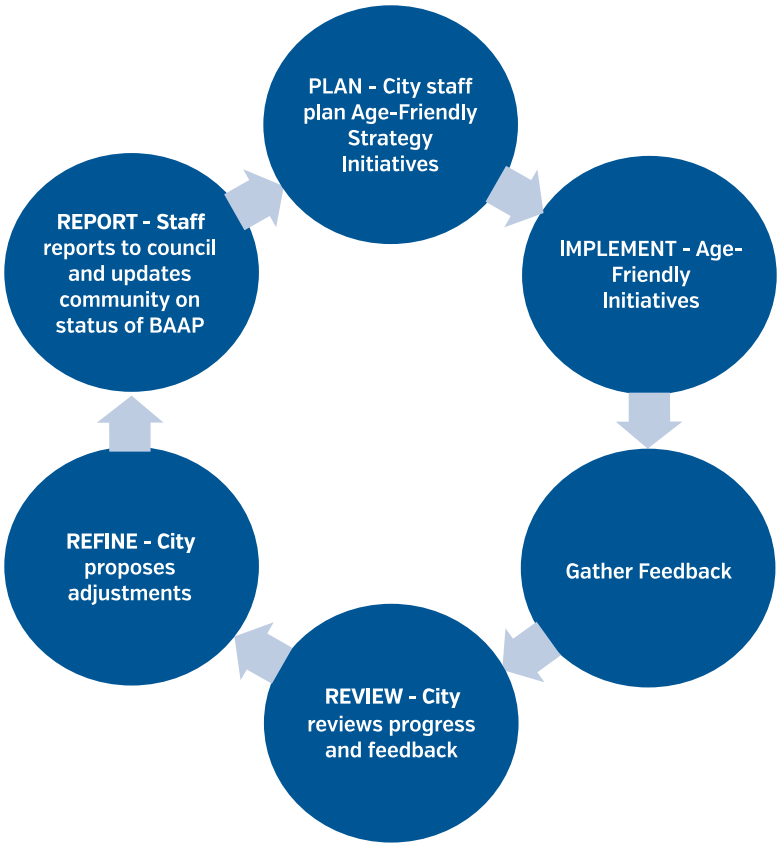


# Accountability and the Future of Active Aging

Through active participation and involvement in the BAAP, Burlington citizens made it clear that the Plan needs to become a living document that evolves with the growth of the city. Innovative improvements and proactive planning were established as cornerstones to the implementation of the strategy. Creative community partnerships and the support of the whole community are needed in order to become a city that embodies enabling environments, respectful attitudes, and values recognition through meaningful contribution. To ensure this plan becomes a living document, the following four strategies will be activated:

## 1. Monitoring, measuring and reporting on the progress of the initiatives

These elements are vital to a transparent process that ensures older citizens' interests, needs and recommendations are part of the on-going implementation of the plan. The following process will be adopted to review, refine and report on the progress of the BAAP.





## 2. Achieve Age-Friendly City Recognition

As implementation of the BAAP begins, the City of Burlington will strive to be recognized as an Age-Friendly city increasing its appeal as one of Canada's most desirable communities to age-well in. The city will seek this designation from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization.

In the province of Ontario, recognition as an age-friendly community is acknowledged when the city has demonstrated that it has met key community features. The BAAP's recommendations propel the City towards this status as the strategy is designed to demonstrate the following improvements:

- Pleasant, secure and physically accessible outdoor spaces and public buildings
- Well-maintained and accessible roads and walkways
- Affordable and accessible public transportation
- Secure neighbourhoods
- Respectful and valued contributions
- Opportunities to be socially active
- Opportunities to participate in meaningful volunteer roles, civic activities and employment positions
- Information is easy to access and provided in an easy to understand format

## 3. Ensure Meaningful Collaboration Continues

While the City works towards pursuing Age-Friendly status, Burlington will remain committed to initiatives which enhance the lives of older adults. By remaining aligned with the World Health Organization age-friendly initiative and an active participant in the Halton Age-Friendly Network and other like-minded committees, Burlington will continue movement towards building a community where aging in place is possible.

Other partnerships that will continue to support the BAAP include the partnership between the City of Burlington and the McMaster Optimal Aging Portal. This on-going relationship provides Burlington's older adults with access to research-supported, evidence-based health information to assist with aging well and to better manage health conditions.

The City will also continue to support Carpenter House in pursuing the designation of a Compassionate City. The Compassionate City Charter, like the BAAP recognizes that living with respect and dignity until the end of life's course is essential to families and individual's aging well.  This also acknowledges the significance of creating caring and compassionate communities which promote this understanding.





The city remains committed to actively supporting the Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee (BSAC) tasked with providing advice to Council on older adult issues. This advisory group comprised of older adults furthers the City's ability to remain informed and gain direct understanding of older adult interests, needs and priorities. The City will work collaboratively with BSAC to champion active-aging strategies through the committee's annual work plan which supports initiatives to improve the lives of older adults in Burlington.

## 4. Designate an Age-Friendly Champion in the City

The BAAP has been founded in extensive community engagement and solid involvement of city staff. This holistic approach has resulted in a clear vision for the future, the development of age-friendly principles to guide policy and decision making, and a commitment to initiatives that will make meaningful changes in the lives of Burlington citizens in each of the five focus areas. In order to bring the plan to life and keep the momentum going forward, the following actions will be undertaken:

- The Parks and Recreation Department will assume a corporate leadership role in championing the BAAP and encouraging action and co-operation across all levels of the corporation
- All City service areas will look to incorporate the recommendations of the BAAP into their business plans and subsequent work plans
- The BAAP will be used to help inform future city budgets and policy decisions
- The City will initiate dialogue with key community partners to determine how they may contribute to transforming Burlington into a more age-friendly community in ways that align with their respective interests
- A broad community awareness campaign will inform the community of the BAAP and seek potential partners and supporters
- A robust city web page will be produced to inform the public about the BAAP, its progress and the outcomes
- Parks and Recreation will stay connected with the Ontario Age-Friendly Network to continue dialogue with other municipalities and learn about best practices in other communities
- Ongoing research and evaluations will be undertaken to ensure that the BAAP is relevant and working toward desired community outcomes. This includes ongoing surveys and consultation with the community



# Resources

Under the framework of The World Health Organization, the Ministry of Seniors Affairs provided a toolkit and practical guide to assist communities in becoming age-friendly. This framework has guided the City of Burlington through the development of the BAAP and resulted in a roadmap to cultivate healthy active living, full community participation and opportunities to enrich each citizen's quality of life.

## *For more information:*

Public Health Agency of Canada
Ministry of Seniors Affairs
Age-Friendly Planning Guide-Finding the Right Fit
References available at www.burlington.ca/activeaging

## *For more information on the Burlington Active Aging Plan or to get involved in making active aging part of your life contact:*

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# Active Aging Plan





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