



SCOA
saskatoon council on aging

Positive Aging for All



Age-Friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations

Message from Mayor Atchison

I would like to congratulate the Saskatoon Council on Aging on the completion of Phase 2 and the creation of the *Age-Friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations* document.

Saskatoon is an exciting place to live, work and play, rich with economic activity, a multitude of green spaces, strong communities, and a high quality of life. People, young and old, are active and integral members of our neighbourhoods and the city. At the same time, we know that the city is growing and changing. There are more people, more immigrants, more students, and in particular, more older adults. Not only is the older adult population growing faster than ever before, they are culturally, economically, and socially diverse.



Like many other large municipalities in Canada and around the world, the City of Saskatoon is responding to this changing population. The City Council took the step of supporting the Saskatoon Council on Aging's **Age-Friendly Saskatoon Initiative** Phase 1 and Phase 2. Both were consistent with the Saskatoon Speaks visioning process looking at the qualities and values necessary to grow Saskatoon into the city of its future. Both express values and leadership commitments like sustainable economic prosperity, cultural diversity, high quality of life and environmental responsibility.

In keeping with the city's Strategic Plan 2012-2022, the Saskatoon Council on Aging *Age-Friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations* document represents a significant step towards enhancing the quality of life of older adults in our community. Based on extensive background research and open dialogue with the community, it provides advice and recommendations in key service areas of municipal responsibility: infrastructure, buildings and outdoor spaces, transportation, recreational activities, and support services.

Donald J. Atchison
Mayor, City of Saskatoon

Message from the Honourary Chair

Saskatoon strives to be an inclusive community with a goal of providing a desirable quality of life for all its citizens including an increasing population of older adults. It is estimated that by 2032 people over the age of 65 will make up about one-fifth of our city's rapidly growing population.

Planning is critical for a developing Saskatoon that values older adults. Aware of the need to plan, the Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) adopted the World Health Organization's age-friendly research protocol to consult with older adults, organizations and service agencies to identify programs and services needed to help seniors maintain their health, fitness and social well being.



The *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations* report identifies the steps needed to implement recommendations that emerged from this broad consultation. This foundational document will enable organizations, service providers, community groups and governments to better coordinate programs and services for older adults. We look forward to seeing progress on the implementation of the recommended actions arising out of this report.

The Saskatoon Council on Aging is grateful for the financial support and contributions from older adults and the community that enables it to pursue its vision of positive aging for all. It also appreciates the valuable hours of work contributed by its volunteers. You are helping us to be successful in achieving our goals of an inclusive community that is age-friendly for all.

I am proud to be a part of this important effort.

Vera Pezer, Ph.D.
Chancellor Emerita, University of Saskatchewan
Honourary Chair, Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon

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Acknowledgements

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Appreciation is extended to:

Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative Steering Committee:

- Honourary Chair: Dr. Vera Pezer, Chancellor Emerita, University of Saskatchewan
- Co-chairs: Candace Skrapek and Dr. Murray Scharf
- SCOA Representatives: Muriel Baxter, Mercedes Montgomery and Elliot PausJensen
- Community Champion: Dr. Hervé Langlois
- Saskatoon Regional Health Authority: Donna Bleakney, Director and David Gibson, former Director, Seniors' Health and Continuing Care
- City of Saskatoon: Lynne Lacroix, Director of Community Development, Community Services Department
- University of Saskatchewan: Dr. Donna Goodridge, Faculty, College of Nursing and Dr. Haizhen Mou, Faculty, School of Public Policy
- Saskatoon Housing Authority: Eleanor Cardoza, Board Member
- Saskatoon Public Library: Gwen Schmidt, Coordinator Outreach Services
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Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative Partner Organizations:

- City of Saskatoon
- University of Saskatchewan
- Saskatoon Health Region
- Saskatoon Public Library
- Saskatchewan Abilities Council
- Saskatchewan Seniors Fitness Association
- Services for Seniors
- Saskatoon Housing Authority
- Saskatoon Community Clinic Kokums Group

A photograph of two elderly individuals walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a park. The man on the left is wearing a white jacket, blue jeans, and a yellow cap. The woman on the right is wearing a blue jacket, light-colored pants, and a pink hat. To their right is a wooden bench. The background is filled with trees, some with green leaves and others with yellow and orange autumn foliage. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

The Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative Phase 2 was made possible through funding from the City of Saskatoon, United Way of Saskatoon and Area, the Saskatoon Health Region and the Saskatoon Council on Aging.

Community Consultations: Forum Participants

Affinity Credit Union
Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan
Avenue Community Centre for Sexual Diversity
Canadian Mental Health Association - Saskatoon
Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Catholic Family Service Saskatoon
City of Saskatoon – City Councillor
City of Saskatoon - Community Development
City of Saskatoon – Planning and Development
City of Saskatoon - Strategic and Business Planning
City of Saskatoon- Community Services
City of Saskatoon -Transportation
Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon
Inner City Inc.
Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation
Fairfield Seniors Centre
Families Advocating for Care of the Elderly
First Step Program (Field House/City of Saskatoon)
Government Relations
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Saskatchewan
La Fédération des Francophones de Saskatoon
LutherCare Communities
Martensville New Horizon's Centre
MD Ambulance
Member of Parliament - Government
Member of the Legislature – Government
Member of the Legislature - Opposition
Mendel Art Gallery
Mennonite Church of Saskatchewan
Ministry of Health
Ministry of the Economy, Apprenticeship and Workforce Skills Branch
North Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre
Parkinson Society of Saskatchewan
Parkridge Centre
Persephone Theatre
Prairie Hospice Society Inc.
READ Saskatoon
Saint Thomas More College
Saskatchewan Association for Community Living
Saskatchewan Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Saskatchewan Housing Initiative Partnership
Saskatchewan Population Health & Evaluation Research Unit
Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
Saskatchewan Society of Occupational Therapists
Saskatoon and Region Home Builders Association
Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition
Saskatoon Community Clinic
Saskatoon Community Foundation
Saskatoon Council on Aging
Saskatoon Cycles
Saskatoon Health Region - Community Health
Saskatoon Health Region - Geriatric Evaluation & Management
Saskatoon Health Region - In Motion
Saskatoon Health Region - Mental Health & Addiction Services
Saskatoon Health Region - Public Health Services – Older Adult Wellness
Saskatoon Health Region - Seniors' Health and Continuing Care
Saskatoon Health Region: Mental Health & Addictions Services
Saskatoon Hospice Foundation Inc.
Saskatoon Housing Authority
Saskatoon Open Door Society
Saskatoon Police Service
Saskatoon Public Library
Saskatoon Seniors Continued Learning Inc. Services for Seniors
Sherbrooke Community Centre
SIAST – Nursing Division
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
St. George's Seniors Citizen's Club
St. Paul's Hospital
St. Peter and St. Paul Senior Citizen Club
The Arthritis Society of Saskatchewan
The Saskatchewan Voice of People with Disabilities
Tourism Saskatoon
Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon
United Church
United of Way of Saskatoon and Area
University of Regina School of Social Work
University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing
Volunteer Saskatoon
Warman Seniors Service Drop-In Centre
YWCA

Executive Summary

Older adults are a vibrant and vital part of Saskatoon and surrounding communities. In the next 20 years this population is expected to almost double. A booming older population has much to offer the cultural and economic life of our city. A growing and increasingly urban older adult population will require innovative and proactive policies, strategies and programs to ensure an optimal quality of life for all.

The **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative**

has applied the research process set out by the World Health Organization Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide (WHO 2007). The Guide provides a roadmap for addressing the issues of population aging and increasing urbanization through local research and action.

In response to anticipated dramatic demographic changes, the Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) launched the **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative** in 2011. The project includes three phases:

- Phase 1: Background research and consultations with Saskatoon's older adults
- Phase 2: Asset mapping, gap analysis and development of recommended actions
- Phase 3: Implementation of recommended actions and development of a comprehensive system to monitor and evaluate progress

Work on Phase 1 was completed in February 2012 and the findings presented in the *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Findings report*. In a community assessment, participants identified age-friendly features of the community that supported quality of life and independence for older people, aspects of city living that needed improvement and ways to make Saskatoon and environs more age-friendly.

World Health Organization (WHO) eight dimensions shaping age-friendly city living include:

- outdoor spaces and buildings
- transportation
- housing
- social participation
- respect and social inclusion
- civic participation and employment
- communication and information
- community support and health

Using the WHO framework connects SCOA's work to well researched models, to the WHO global age-friendly network and other age-friendly communities



“An age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.”
WHO 2007

Phase 2 of the initiative involved community asset mapping, gap identification and formulation of recommended actions. The voices of older adults and community stakeholders captured through consultations provided the foundation for the recommended actions.

This Phase 2 report, *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations*, calls for new approaches to the way that our community responds to the issues of an aging population. Saskatoon’s older adults must be supported to age with dignity through changing attitudes, policies and practices and sustained by a strong community commitment. The report summarizes consultation findings and presents recommended actions that aim to:

- Prepare all stakeholders for the growing numbers and increasing urbanization of older adults
- Ensure older adults live with dignity and security, with full access to the supports they require within the WHO eight dimensions of an age-friendly city
- Promote aging in place and active, healthy aging
- Develop research on aging that informs policymaking

The *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations* report presents recommendations for community change intended to establish Saskatoon as an age-friendly city.

Introduction

What makes a community successful? One important measure is how well it meets the needs of its citizens in all stages of their lives. Is it safe? Affordable? Walkable? Healthy? Inclusive? Accessible? Is it a great place to grow up and grow old? In short, is it “age-friendly?”

The Saskatoon Council on Aging, through its **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative**, seeks to enhance and accelerate age-friendly development work in Saskatoon and surrounding communities. Launched in 2011, the project advances an important community dialogue about aging and helps to identify tangible steps to prepare for the huge demographic shift that an aging population presents. It is aimed at establishing Saskatoon as an age-friendly city where older adults can lead healthy independent lives and are active and engaged members of the Saskatoon community. It challenges us all to think differently about the older adult population.

Phase 1 activities focused on a community assessment involving over 500 older adults who shared their lived experience. The data collected provided the empirical research and baseline information that described the contexts, issues, needs and factors promoting or hindering positive aging in an age-friendly community of Saskatoon and surrounding metropolitan region. This phase, completed in 2012, culminated in the release of the summary report *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Findings*.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon





Phase 2 began with an age-friendly policy review and the development of a framework based on WHO policy outcomes. Phase 2 activities synthesized the data from Phase 1 and focused on assessing Saskatoon's assets and gaps through research, consultations and dialogue with over 100 Saskatoon and area service providers. The aim of Phase 2 was to develop a plan of concrete recommendations that address the needs of older adults now and in the future. These recommended actions are intended for inclusion in the strategic action plans of key community agencies.

The recommended actions are aimed at creating a community that supports older adults to be active and engaged. Phase 2 addresses the question: how do we create places that truly meet the needs and aspirations of all citizens? Older adults must be part of the processes that directly impact them and the community in which they live. As we prepare for the largest generation of older adults in history, making communities more age-friendly must be a central goal for all.

This report presents an innovative approach to addressing the specific and evolving needs of older adults of Saskatoon and area. It is the product of extensive background research and open dialogue with the community and represents a significant initiative designed to enhance the quality of life of older adults in our community. Above all, the recommendations reflect what we heard in conversations with Saskatoon's older adults and service providers.



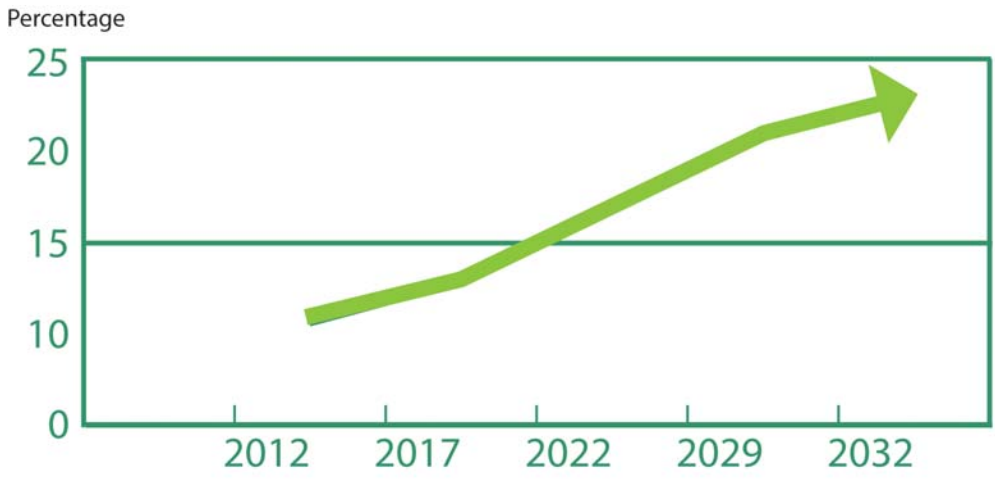
Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon

Community Profiles: Older Adults in Saskatoon

What's the urgency?

Saskatoon citizens are living longer and the proportion of older adults in the total population is increasing. The largest population increase in the next thirty years will occur in the over 65 age group. The long anticipated demographic impact of the boomer population, along with a steady rise in life expectancy accounts for the increase. At nearly 13 percent of the total population now, this age group is expected to increase to 20 percent by 2032 based on low growth projection. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Projected % of Older Adult Population in Total Population, City of Saskatoon, Low Growth Scenario

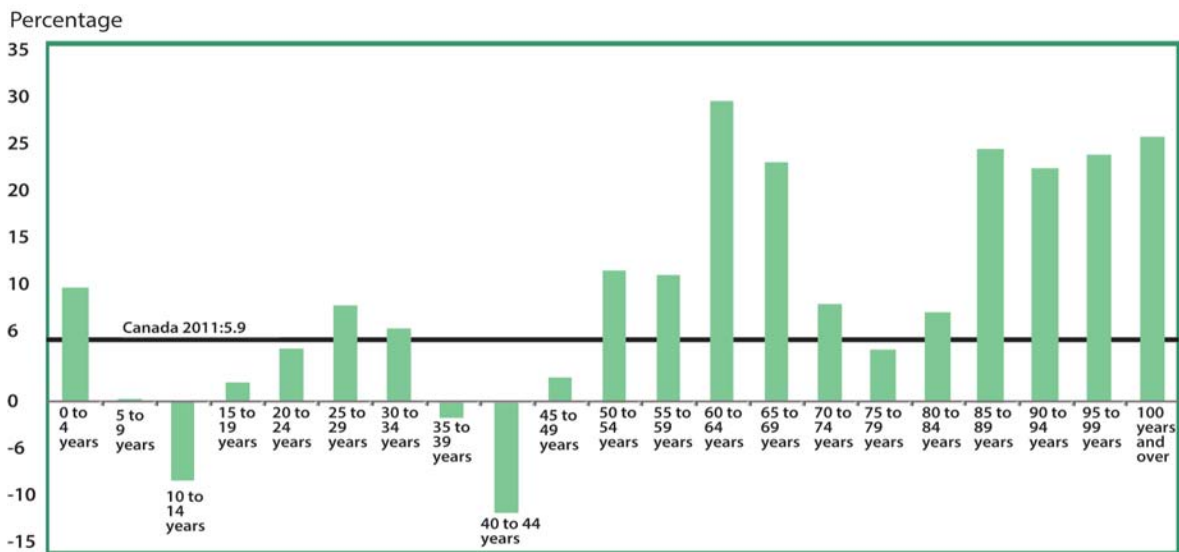


Source: City of Saskatoon and Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Area Population Projection 2012-2032, March 2013

Canada's getting older: the pattern of the future

According to the 2011 Canada Census, the highest growth rate between 2006 and 2011 occurred in the 85 to 100 and over age groups. These trends, along with the impact of the boomer population, will likely continue in the coming decades (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Growth rate(%) of age groups between 2006 and 2011, Canada



Source: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2006 and 2011

The fast growing 65 and over age group consists of multiple generations that have vastly differing expectations, needs, abilities, experiences, levels of education, health and wealth. This demographic is becoming more diverse due to a growing aboriginal population, increasing immigration and ongoing urbanization. Large numbers of older adults will have a profound and lasting economic and social impact on our community. Existing resources will not meet the needs of this population group.

These demographic trends create an urgency to focus public policy on positive aging strategies and to shift thinking from doing *for* to doing *with* by engaging older adults themselves in future planning.

“The societies that adapt to this changing demographic can reap a sizeable ‘longevity dividend,’ and will have a competitive advantage over those that do not.”

Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization

Community Engagement: The Process

The Saskatoon Council on Aging launched the **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative** in 2011 to address the absence of a provincial or municipal population aging strategy. Older adult voices have not been heard nor have they been directly engaged in the development of policies or programs to address their needs and concerns.

The **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative** began the process to implement the age-friendly cities model developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). The aims were to:

- Promote civic engagement and volunteerism among Saskatoon's older adults
- Gather baseline information to define and describe the contexts, issues, needs and factors promoting or hindering positive aging in an age-friendly community for Saskatoon and environs
- Provide a common foundational planning document for community-based organizations, seniors' groups, and governments to support the development and coordination of their policies, programs and services directed toward older adults

Research Process

The research process in all phases of the **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative** incorporates the research protocol of the WHO Age-friendly Cities Project Methodology: the Vancouver Protocol (2007) which involves both participatory and qualitative research. This research method provides a road map for addressing the issues of population aging and increasing urbanization through local research and action.

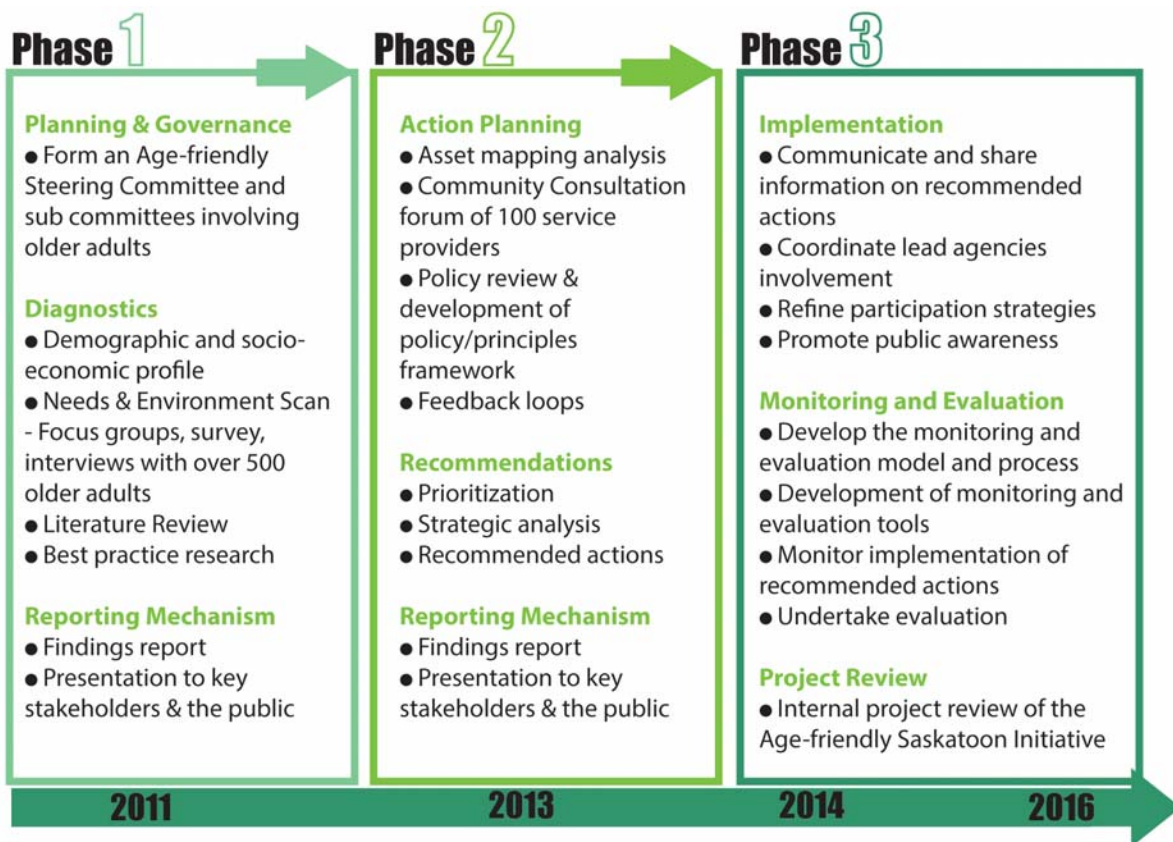
The Phases of the Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative

Phase 1 of this multi-phased initiative involved focus groups, surveys and interviews with more than 500 older adults, caregivers and service providers. The information and findings highlighted their experiences with respect to growing older in Saskatoon and their ideas and suggestions for making Saskatoon more age-friendly.

The Phase 1 Report *Age-Friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Findings* and its accompanying technical report highlighted many findings including that Saskatoon is a great place to live if you have family and community support, financial security, your own transportation, and are healthy and physically able; and winter presents particular challenges for older adults.

Phase 1 Participants

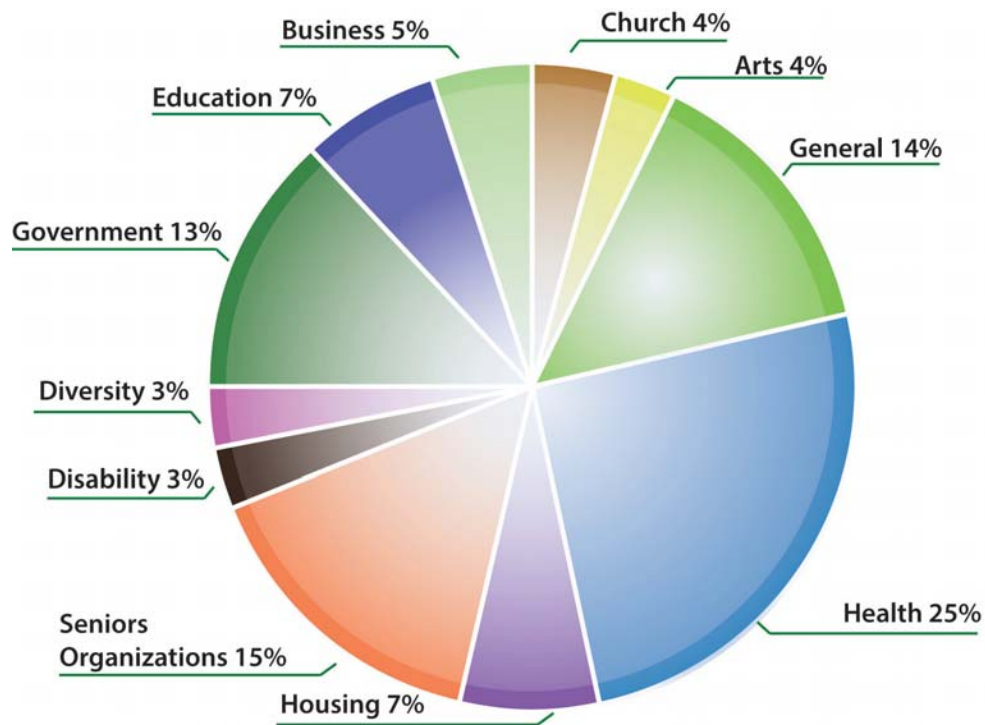
- Older adults in most neighbourhoods of Saskatoon and the surrounding rural areas
- Formal and informal caregivers
- Older adults with a variety of health and mobility challenges
- Various income levels in the population
- Aboriginal and immigrant communities
- Business community
- Community-based organizations and public agencies serving seniors



Phase 2 of the Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative began in January 2013. The key activities included:

1. Interviews with Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative partner organizations and other key community stakeholders providing service to older adults in Saskatoon to uncover the existing strengths and attributes already in existence.
2. A community consultation forum in April 2013 involving over 100 representatives of community organizations and further consultations with another 30 organizations.
3. Development of an inventory of community assets and gap identification.
4. Validation of findings from the community consultation forum participants.
5. Synthesis of data collected from Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultations.
6. Development of a planning document with recommendations for action to be provided to key stakeholders for inclusion in their strategic action plans.

Phase 2 Community Consultation Forum Participants



A broad range of stakeholders were included in the community consultation forum. An additional 30 organizations provided feedback and input during the subsequent validation of findings process.



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon



Key dimensions of an Age-Friendly City: Community Assessment and Recommendations

This section of the report is a summary description of the information gathered on each dimension through research and consultation with older adults in Phase 1 and with service providers in Phase 2.

- **What We Heard - Key Assets** – an inventory of the key community assets in Saskatoon as described to us by older adults and by service providers.
- **What We Heard – Gaps** – an account of the gaps and challenges that older adults and service providers identify as significant to them and that create barriers to Saskatoon being considered an age-friendly city.
- **Recommended Actions** – summarized recommended actions based on comments and ideas put forward by older adults and service providers.
- **Suggested Lead Agency** – an agency that could be responsible for implementation of the recommended action. This is not an inclusive list but rather serves as the starting point in the identification of ownership for a recommended action.

Full details of the information gathered in each dimension are provided in the *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations - Technical Report*.

#1 Outdoor Spaces And Buildings

Well planned, accessible and welcoming outdoor spaces and buildings encourage active aging and aging in place and allow participation of all ages in Saskatoon's community life. Pleasant, clean environments and green spaces contribute to the age-friendliness of the city. Adequate seating areas, age-friendly pavements, walkways and bicycle paths, safe pedestrian crossings, secure spaces, accessible buildings and public washrooms enable independence, community involvement, physical activity, socialization, environmental stimulation and an overall sense of a healthy, age-friendly community.

What We Heard - Key Assets

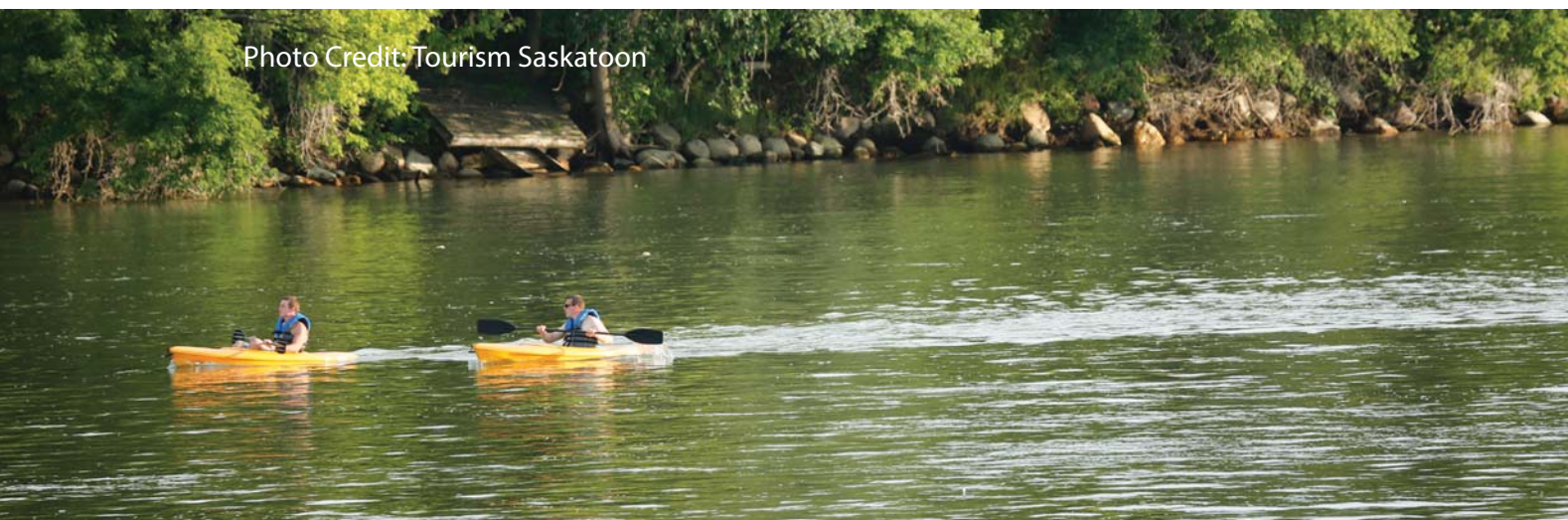
Participants identify Saskatoon as a green and clean city that generally offers a good quality of life. Character neighbourhoods and a well-developed park system including the Meewasin trail and many parks and community gardens exist. The City of Saskatoon is working to design and improve streets, sidewalks and outdoor areas, and to increase accessibility to public buildings. Safety and security is a priority for the Saskatoon Police Service and the Saskatoon Fire and Protective Service. Citizens have access to a range of events, summer and winter, and a strong helping community.

What We Heard - Gaps

Views on outdoor spaces and buildings are influenced by mobility, accessibility, location and weather. Older adults experience accessibility challenges in many outdoor spaces and buildings. These vary by season and area of the city. Winter, of course, presents many challenges for young and old alike. Many participants identify the need for agencies such as the City of Saskatoon, businesses and the Saskatoon Health Region to understand and adopt age-friendly planning and design principles.



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon



#1 Outdoor Spaces And Buildings

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Outdoor Spaces	<p>Assess needs and develop appropriate actions to ensure existing and planned outdoor spaces and buildings are age-friendly.</p> <p>Engage older adults in planning processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon
Public Safety	<p>Implement mandatory age-friendly education for police, firefighters and other emergency responders.</p> <p>Develop and deliver public awareness workshops for older adults about access to emergency services and emergency preparedness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon
Services in the Community	<p>Incorporate an age-friendly policy lens in the development and delivery of current and future community policies, programs and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Community Based Organizations • Business Groups • Saskatoon Health Region
Buildings	<p>Create initiatives for builders, planners and designers to educate them about the design needs of older adults that support aging in place.</p> <p>Implement a “universal design” standard to be applied to all new public and private buildings.</p> <p>Assess needs and develop appropriate actions to ensure existing buildings are age-friendly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Sask. Housing Corporation • Builders and Developers • Saskatoon Health Region
Other	<p>Promote and support creation of age-friendly initiatives in rural communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saskatchewan • SARM

#2 Transportation

Transportation, including walking, biking, driving and public and private transport, is a key factor influencing active aging. It is an aspect of community life that impacts many other areas. Ease of mobility enables independence and well being by allowing older adults to participate fully in day to day activities. The importance of available, affordable and accessible transportation options increases during winter months.

What We Heard - Key Assets

Saskatoon's transit system includes fixed route bus service, Access Transit and taxi services. The City of Saskatoon is actively managing its transit system to respond to the needs of a growing population and increasing numbers of older adults. A well developed network of walking paths, bike routes and roadways exists. The Saskatchewan Transportation Company (STC) provides a province wide bus service. Other groups such as supportive living facilities provide specialized transportation services.

What We Heard - Gaps

Views on public transportation are influenced by health, location and level of income. Participants identify challenges including affordability, safety, availability of bus service, ice and snow barriers, lack of age-friendly customer service and challenges in qualifying for and obtaining Access Transit. Others note a variety of parking issues and the poor condition of streets and sidewalks. Rural participants report increasing isolation due to diminishing bus routes. As well, they lack familiarity with city transit routes. Both urban and rural participants indicate that information on transportation options is hard to find.



“Transportation is so important to our well-being. I sometimes feel trapped at home because I have no way of getting to where I want to go.”

Focus Group Participant

#2 Transportation

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Public Transit	Assess needs and develop policies and actions to provide age-friendly public transportation services including: discount bus passes for seniors, free access for attendants, talking buses, electronic signage, buses with lifts, and snow and ice management at stops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Saskatoon
Specialized Transit	<p>Review service standards, current and future system demand, client needs and eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Increase funding for Access Transit expansion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Saskatoon
Other transportation	<p>Research new, innovative and cost-effective transportation options.</p> <p>Implement an active transportation plan for the City of Saskatoon.</p> <p>Implement best practices in taxi driver licensure to ensure appropriate age-friendly training and service standards.</p> <p>Develop innovative community-based transportation options such as shuttle services and volunteer drivers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Saskatoon Taxi Companies Community Based Orgs. Community Associations
Parking	<p>Identify parking options for older adults such as passes, handicap zones and age-friendly meters.</p> <p>Implement alternative parking options at health care facilities to reduce barriers to access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Saskatoon Saskatoon Health Region
Rural Transportation	Create an age-friendly transportation advisory committee for STC to examine rural bus services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saskatchewan Transportation Company
Other	<p>Expand programs and education to support older drivers</p> <p>Increase road safety reviews and maintenance to eliminate driving hazards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SGI City of Saskatoon

#3 Housing

Safe and affordable housing is essential to the health, security, independence and quality of life of older adults. Universal design of new buildings and the ability to modify and maintain existing homes are key approaches that promote aging in place and enable older adults to reside in an appropriate place for their circumstances. Innovative housing options, adequate levels of home support, and maintenance and repair programs are essential ways of supporting older adults to be independent for as long as possible.

What We Heard - Key Assets

Saskatoon has solid, well-built houses across the city. A variety of housing options and programs are available to older adults. For example, the Saskatoon Housing Authority has a large inventory of well-maintained social and affordable housing. The City of Saskatoon has implemented a housing business plan with the goal of increasing housing stock at all levels and the Government of Saskatchewan has implemented the Saskatchewan Housing Strategy. Public and private agencies provide services to older adults in their homes.

What We Heard - Gaps

Housing is an issue of great interest to Saskatoon's older adult community. The vast majority want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Many older adults are concerned about the affordability, accessibility and quality of service that may be required for ongoing home maintenance and possible home modifications to accommodate declining physical abilities. Fewer rental properties and escalating rent are reducing access to affordable and adequate housing. Saskatoon's oldest adults and those living on low income or with disabilities or without family support face additional barriers to securing adequate housing.

Older adults support more creative housing options and have significant interest in developing age-friendly personal and community living spaces. Therefore, innovative community planning must include a range of integrated housing alternatives, such as single-family dwellings, social and affordable housing, supportive living options, private care homes and long-term care facilities.

“When my circumstances changed, my house became inaccessible and I had no choice but to move.”

Focus Group Participant



#3 Housing

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Housing Options	<p>Work across sectors to develop universally accessible and economically sustainable housing options.</p> <p>Develop programs and services that enable older adults to age in place in order to remain in their own homes and their communities.</p> <p>Collaborate to support development of a sufficient supply of social and affordable housing options for those with highest need.</p> <p>Engage older adults in the planning and development of housing options.</p> <p>Ensure housing legislation and regulations safeguard older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Government of Saskatchewan • SHIP • Private Sector Developers and Builders • Saskatoon Health Region
Essential Services, Maintenance and Modification	<p>Review existing programs and establish and adequately fund new programs that enable older adults to age in place.</p> <p>Develop innovative volunteer or community based models to support independence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Government of Saskatchewan • Community Based Organizations
Design	<p>Build community understanding and support for universal design concepts and encourage planners, architects, developers and builders to adopt universal building practices.</p> <p>Increase use of age-friendly, barrier free building design.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Government of Saskatchewan • SHIP

#4 Social Participation

Social participation benefits people of all ages and is a key component of an age-friendly community. Activities such as volunteering, participating in sports, recreational and cultural activities are forms of social participation.

Engaging in social and community activities maintains older adults' connections to other people and the community, reduces isolation and improves quality of life. A positive and active approach to aging recognizes that older adults are valuable members of society who contribute a diversity of skills, knowledge and experience within families and communities. Individual, environmental, financial, health and social factors determine whether older adults engage socially.

What We Heard - Key Assets

Saskatoon is a hub of activity year round for every age. Major assets include well-developed civic and neighbourhood centres and networks, the Saskatoon public library system, numerous festivals and outdoor events, a large faith community and many ethnic and cultural groups. Volunteer opportunities are available for older adults. The City of Saskatoon is beginning to adopt age-friendly considerations in designing social and recreational activities.



What We Heard - Gaps

Social participation is influenced by event availability, awareness, affordability and accessibility. Events held at inconvenient times or locations present access barriers for older adults. The challenges include parking and transportation issues, especially in winter. Programs specifically for older adults are limited and often oversubscribed. Minority groups do not always feel included in existing programming. Older adult only facilities can hinder broader community social integration. Rural participants report feelings of isolation due to the limited range of programs and services and their ability to access activities in their communities.

“I am so busy now . . . events, volunteering, swimming.”
Focus Group Participant

#4 Social Participation

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Variety and Accessibility of Events/Activities	<p>Increase opportunities and accessibility for older adults to a wider variety of activities and events.</p> <p>Create a public discussion to determine demand and explore barriers to older adult participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Community Based Organizations
Promotion and awareness of activities	<p>Create and implement enhanced communication channels to address lack of accessible information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Council on Aging • City of Saskatoon • Media outlets • Saskatoon Public Library
Affordability	<p>Explore affordability options for low income older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Saskatoon Council on Aging
Addressing isolation	<p>Raise community awareness of older adult isolation.</p> <p>Create and support programs that reduce isolation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Community Based Organizations • Saskatoon Public Library
Fostering community integration	<p>Increase civic programs and services that focus on integration of older adults into the community.</p> <p>Support the recognition of older adults' contributions to the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Community Based Organizations
Other	<p>Undertake research to identify programs and services that increase social participation of older adults in rural areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Municipalities • Educational Institutions

#5 Respect and Social Inclusion

A commitment to respect and social inclusion of older adults is a measure of a society's support for the quality of life and social well being of all of its citizens. A society where older adults are accepted and valued, their differences respected and their involvement recognized, encourages full and meaningful participation. It enables people of all ages to make valuable contributions to their families, neighbourhoods and city.

What We Heard - Key Assets

Saskatoon is a diverse society bearing a wealth of experiences drawn from multi-generations, heritages and ethnic backgrounds. Overall, older adults are respected and celebrated. They are viewed in a positive light and their lives and histories are honoured. Organizations such as the Western Development Museum, the Saskatoon Council on Aging and the Saskatoon Public Library are working to share stories and to increase older adult inclusion in the community. Older adults are welcomed as volunteers and leaders in the community.

What We Heard - Gaps

Individual views on social inclusion and respect are affected largely by age and mobility. Age matters; younger, able older adults felt respected, while older, less able older adults experienced greater levels of stereotyping and discrimination. Ageism, identified by many older adults as the greatest barrier to social inclusion, is prevalent. Society values youth and youthfulness and devalues older adults and aging. Lack of respect is evident in many service areas, particularly health care and transportation services. The business community is slow to understand older adult consumers and their needs. Media representation reflects negative views of aging and older adults.



“It is easy to participate if you have the money, health and transportation.”

Focus Group Participant

#5 Respect and Social Inclusion

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Respect and inclusion	Implement campaigns and programs that counter ageist attitudes and beliefs, and raise awareness of the contributions that older adults make in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Government of Saskatchewan • Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission
Public Images of aging	Research best practices on including older adults in community life and to create a culture of inclusion and appreciation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Saskatoon Health Region
Public Education and Awareness	<p>Research and develop an education campaign delivered through a range of mechanisms promoting images of positive aging and intergenerational interactions.</p> <p>Curriculum development and training to counter ageism for health care and service providers.</p> <p>Inclusion of training on ageism in K-12 curriculums</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Government of Saskatchewan • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Educational Institutions
Economic Inclusion	Create better tools for lower income older adults to access information and the programs and services available to assist them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saskatchewan • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Saskatoon Public Library • City of Saskatoon
Other	Improve awareness of the challenges facing rural older adults, and programs, supports and projects that can increase their social inclusion both locally and in urban life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saskatchewan

#6 Civic Participation and Employment

Saskatchewan's older adults are living longer, healthier lives. They have various educational backgrounds and financial realities. An age-friendly community removes barriers and creates opportunities that support older adults to share their extensive range of skills and experience through better employment options and volunteer activities. The civic participation of older adults in community affairs needs to be encouraged and supported.

What We Heard - Key Assets

Saskatoon has a wealth of highly skilled, knowledgeable and capable older adults who have much to offer the community. United Way's Volunteer Saskatoon connects community based organizations with older adult volunteers. At the same time, in Saskatchewan's job rich economy there is a range of employment opportunities. The Government of Saskatchewan supports SaskJobs.ca, an extensive online job search tool. Mandatory retirement has been abolished in Saskatchewan and human rights legislation prevents discrimination on the basis of age. Many employers and employee organizations support flexible workplace options that enable participation by older workers.

What We Heard - Gaps

Many older adults feel they are not valued in both work or volunteer environments due to ageism and the emphasis on youth. This is particularly evident when older adults choose to remain in the workforce longer, seek new employment opportunities or volunteer for leadership positions in community organizations. Few programs focus on retraining older adults for reemployment or on assisting employers to retain older adults in the workplace.



“Many older adults could be great mentors for young people entering the work force.”

Focus Group Participant

#6 Civic Participation and Employment

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Volunteering	<p>Enhance existing programs/services that specifically connect older adults to volunteer opportunities. Encourage volunteer organizations to provide training to support older adults volunteering.</p> <p>Promote older adult volunteering through public education and awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Saskatoon • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Government of Saskatchewan • City of Saskatoon
Employment	<p>Help older adults (re) connect to the workforce through a strategic effort that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes/provides low cost (re) training and educational opportunities for older adult workers • Assists employers understand needs and the impact of workplace policies on older adult workers • Raises awareness of the benefits of hiring older adults • Assesses labour market needs to fully connect older adult workers • Reviews government policies that impact older adult workers remaining in the labor market or in reconnecting to the workforce • Supports older adult entrepreneurship <p>Develop resources that support a multigenerational workforce and age-friendly work environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saskatchewan • Business Associations • Educational Institutions • Saskatoon Health Region
Training	<p>Support lifelong learning through enhanced training and educational opportunities for older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saskatchewan • Community Based Orgs. • Educational Institutions • Business Associations

#7 Communication and Information

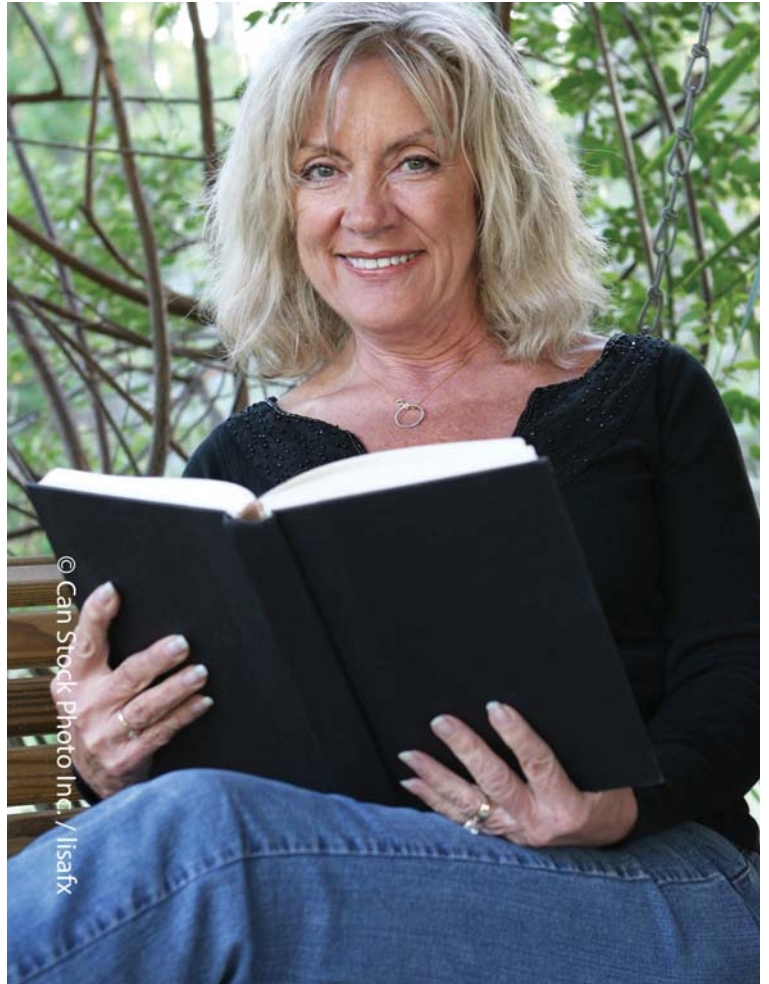
Relevant information and effective communication support older adults and enable them to stay connected to their community. Effective communication is accessible, timely and two-way. It incorporates best practice communication skills with individuals who have physical, cognitive and other communication needs. Accessing information is a key determinant of active aging and is critical to the overall health and well being of older adults.

What We Heard - Key Assets

A variety of information sources are presently available. The Saskatoon Council on Aging, for example, operates a Resource Centre that is accessible in person, by phone or online. The Saskatoon Council on Aging also produces an extensive Directory of Services for Older Adults. The City of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Public Library and the Saskatoon Health Region produce information in various accessible formats and languages. Other community based organizations provide an extensive range of supports to older adults in the community. Information can be obtained through a variety of media options.

What We Heard - Gaps

Access to information and communication is a theme that crosses all age-friendly dimensions. Participants noted there is no one-stop location that provides comprehensive and coordinated access to information on programs and services for older adults. Many feel that lack of information increases their sense of isolation, prevents access to services and affects their ability to live independently. Various methods of communication such as large print, user-friendly web pages and easy access to assistance are important for everyone. Many service providers fail to use age-friendly communication methods.



#7 Communication and Information

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Information	<p>Develop a well-coordinated and comprehensive information system relevant to older adults.</p> <p>Develop innovative strategies to disseminate information about programs and services for older adults.</p> <p>Ensure existing “211” and related services are age-friendly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Saskatchewan • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Media outlets • City of Saskatoon • United Way
Communication Methods	<p>Develop and adopt best practices and an age-friendly lens for communicating with a diverse older adult population.</p> <p>Promote age-friendly training to public and private sector organizations involved in providing information and communicating with older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Government of Saskatchewan • City of Saskatoon • Business Associations • Saskatoon Health Region • Saskatoon Council on Aging
Computers and the Internet	<p>Develop and facilitate the use of current and emerging technology to enhance access to information.</p> <p>Increase access to computers and internet services for older adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Public Library • Saskatoon Council on Aging

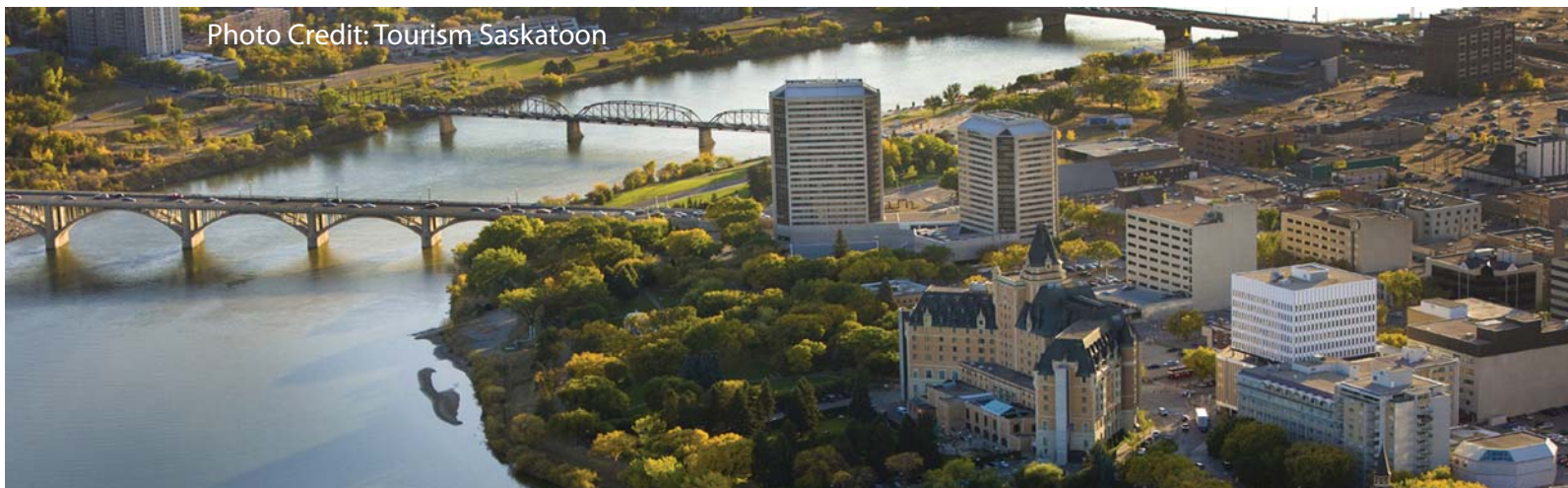


Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon

#8 Community Support and Health Services

Key to an age-friendly city is a strong network and a variety of good quality, affordable health programs and social services. Essential components include effective health promotion and disease prevention programs, acute care services, home care support, long term care and specialized care that enhance the health, well being and independence of older adults. Community supports include a wide range of public, private and community based groups that enhance an older adult's ability to stay independent and secure.

What We Heard - Key Assets

Saskatoon has a well developed health care delivery system and community support network, including programs and services specifically addressing the needs of older adults. Publicly funded, privately owned and community based agencies and organizations provide a diverse range of specialized community based services distributed throughout the city. A number of innovative community organizations, such as the Saskatoon Community Clinic, the Saskatoon Council on Aging Older Adult Abuse Task Force and Student Wellness Initiative Toward Community Health (SWITCH), are available.

What We Heard – Gaps

While older adults report being generally satisfied with the level and quality of the services available in Saskatoon, concerns are noted in three key areas:

- access to geriatric and mental health services
- access to long term care and home care
- access to information

Many identify the need to increase resources in each of these areas as a means to improving older adults' quality of life and independence. Necessary services not covered by the publicly funded health system create barriers to access. Older adults are looking to the Government of Saskatchewan to support aging in place as a key policy direction that provides for a wide-range of health, housing and other community based services.

“Older people provide care for children, grandchildren, sick people and other family members in the household.”

Focus Group participant



#8 Community Support and Health Services

	Recommended Actions	Suggested Lead Agency
Service Accessibility	<p>Expand the current mental health, geriatric, palliative care and hospice programs within the Saskatoon Health Region.</p> <p>Review and enhance housing options that support health, quality of life and aging in place.</p> <p>Utilize an age-friendly policy framework when reviewing and implementing health and community service delivery.</p> <p>Research, develop and implement innovative interdisciplinary strategies and collaborative partnerships with community based organizations for the provision of services for older adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Health Region • Government of Saskatchewan • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Educational Institutions • Saskatoon Health Region
Range of Services	<p>Implement educational opportunities for health professionals in specific therapies where there is an identified need.</p> <p>Include an age-friendly focus in health program curricula.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saskatoon Health Region • Government of Saskatchewan • Educational Institutions • Professional Associations
Volunteer Support	<p>Strengthen the capacity of community based organizations focused on meeting the needs of older adults.</p> <p>Build capacity of volunteer services to support older adults in the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way • Saskatoon Council on Aging • Saskatoon Health Region
Emergency Planning and Care	<p>Develop age-friendly Saskatoon police and fire and protective services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Saskatoon • Saskatoon Health Region

The Way Forward

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative** provided the basis for establishing the recommended actions, conditions and resources to support and enable the growing population of older adults in Saskatoon to age positively in an age-friendly community. Assets and gaps in community resources identified in Phase 2 have given rise to recommended actions that are directed to various stakeholder groups for implementation. Inclusion of the recommended actions within the strategic action plans of governments, business groups, health organizations and other community agencies serves as a road map for policy and program planning through an age-friendly lens.

“We want to be actively involved in the Saskatoon community”

Phase 3 begins with the suggested lead agencies implementing the recommended actions proposed in Phase 2. The Saskatoon Council on Aging (SCOA) will develop an accountability plan in consultation with community stakeholders. This is a monitoring and evaluation process designed to assess whether recommended actions are meeting the intended outcomes and are creating an age-friendly Saskatoon. Phase 3 continues to support a vision of enhanced quality of life for young and old alike in our community.

“We want to know what is going on and where to get help when we need it”

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon





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Phase 3 Activities:

1. Implementation

- Communicate and share information from *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations* report
- Coordinate lead agencies' involvement.
Where ownership does not rest solely in one agency, SCOA's role is to coordinate and facilitate discussions to develop and implement recommended actions
- Promote public awareness. SCOA will continue to build and strengthen community support and understanding of age-friendly concepts and recommended actions through linkages between community partners, the media and other education and awareness strategies

“We want to stay in our homes and neighbourhoods with the right supports to be able to do so.”

2. Monitoring and Evaluation

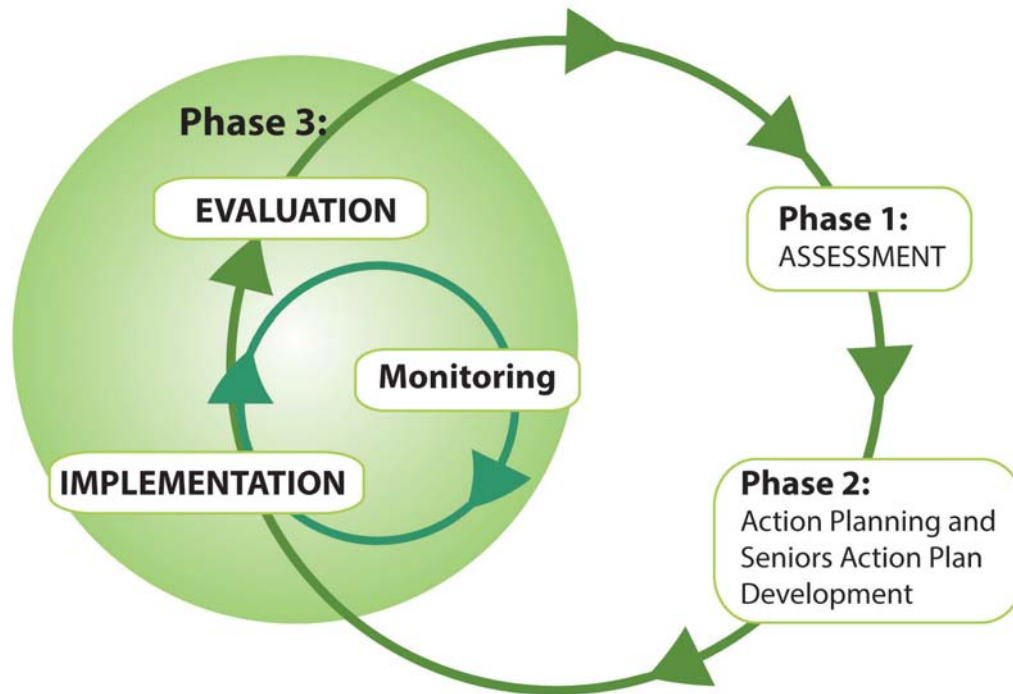
- In partnership with community stakeholders:
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation models, processes and tools
 - Monitor and evaluate implementation of Phase 2 recommended actions

“We want to be respected and recognized for our contributions”

3. Project Review

SCOA will engage in an internal project review/evaluation of the **Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative**.

Age-friendly Saskatoon: Development Cycle



The *Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations* report aims to raise awareness about the urgency of population aging and more specifically about the experience of growing old in Saskatoon. It recommends moving forward to incorporate recommended actions into lead agency strategic plans.

An age-friendly community responds to the opportunities and challenges of an aging population by creating physical and social environments that support independent and active living and enable older people to continue contributing to all aspects of community life. Aging well benefits the whole community by ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be active, engaged and healthy for as long as possible. Working toward age-friendly communities is a sound economic investment and good public policy.

In an age-friendly community, there is a culture of inclusion shared by persons of all ages and ability levels. Policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to “age actively”, that is to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.”

WHO 2007

Key References

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Glossary

Definitions have been taken from the World Health Organization Glossary and other reference documents. In some instances, glossary terms have been adapted to Saskatoon's experience.

Accessibility: Removal of the barriers to entering and receiving services or working within any health care setting.

Active Aging: the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

Affordable Housing: Housing of a reasonable quality that people on modest incomes can afford.

Ageism: The negative stereotyping or discrimination of people on the basis of age.

Age-friendly city:

- Recognizes the wide range of capacities and resources among older persons
- Anticipates and responds flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences of seniors
- Respects the decisions and lifestyle choices of older adults
- Supports older adults who are most vulnerable
- Promotes the participation of older adults, and encouraging their contributions community in his or her current home or an appropriate level of housing.

Aging in place: Meeting the desire and ability of people, through the provision of appropriate services and assistance, to remain living relatively independently in the community in his or her current home or an appropriate level of housing. Aging in place is designed to prevent or delay more traumatic moves to a dependent facility, such as a nursing home.

“Boomer” Population: A portion of the population that was born between 1947 and 1966.

(The) city: Pertains to the overall city, including municipal government, businesses, organizations, events etc.

City of Saskatoon: The municipal government of Saskatoon.



Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon

Glossary

Community: Includes where you live, work, play (may be broader than a geographical neighbourhood).

Intergenerational: A program, initiative, or activity in which older adults and children and/or youth explore their commonalities and differences, creating mutual understanding and strengthening community.

Positive aging: An approach which recognizes that growing older is a part of living; recognizes the interdependence of generations; recognizes that everyone has a responsibility to be fair in their demands on other generations; fosters a positive attitude throughout life to growing older; eliminates age as a reason to exclude any person from participating fully in community life; promotes a commitment to activities which enhance well being and health, choice and independence, and quality of life for all ages; encourages communities to value and listen to older people and to cater for the diverse preferences, motivations, characteristics and circumstances of older persons in a variety of ways.

Housing stock: The total number of dwelling units in an area and in some cases, information on type, size and age of properties whether they are rented or owned.

Independent living: Living at home without the need for continuous help and with a degree of self determination or control over one's activities.

Lead Agency: The organization that plays an initiating/facilitating role in guiding the process to pursue the goal/action.

Older adult: Refers to people aged 55 years and beyond.

Stakeholder: Any individual or organization that has an interest in the delivery of services to older adults.

Universal design: An orientation to any design process that starts with a responsibility to the experience of the user. It is a framework for the design of places, things, information, communication, and policy to be usable by the widest range of people operating in the widest range of situations without special or separate design.



Age-friendly Saskatoon Initiative: Recommendations

A full technical report is available on the **SCOA web site**.
www.scoa.ca

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