

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

DRAFT

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

Draft for Public Review

[www.middlesexcentre.on.ca/articles/
age-friendly-community-action-plan](http://www.middlesexcentre.on.ca/articles/age-friendly-community-action-plan)





Municipality of Middlesex Centre
Age-Friendly Community Action Plan

DRAFT – February 11, 2022

Project funded by:

Ontario



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Message from the Mayor	iii
A. Introduction.....	1
B. Local Context.....	2
C. Public and Stakeholder Input.....	7
D. An Age-Friendly Middlesex Centre.....	11
E. Domain #1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.....	13
F. Domain #2: Transportation	15
G. Domain #3: Housing	18
H. Domain #4: Social Participation	20
I. Domain #5: Respect and Inclusion.....	23
J. Domain #6: Civic Participation and Employment.....	25
K. Domain #7: Communication and Information.....	27
L. Domain #8: Community Support and Health Services.....	29
M. Implementation	31
Appendix I: Community Profile.....	I-1
Appendix II: Policy Scan	II-1
Appendix III: Community Survey Results	III-1
Appendix IV: Input from Stakeholder and Public Sessions.....	IV-1
Appendix V: WHO Age-Friendly Checklist.....	V-1

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We would like to thank the many Middlesex Centre residents and community stakeholders that contributed to the development of the Municipality's Age-Friendly Community Action Plan. This plan is a product of this input and the leadership provided by the Project Task Force. The Municipality is fortunate to have a wide range of local services and providers that collectively work together to make Middlesex Centre an Age-Friendly Community.

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If you require this document in a different format, please contact the Municipality of Middlesex Centre at 519-666-0190 or customerservice@middlesexcentre.ca

Message from the Mayor

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre values the wellbeing of its residents and wants to ensure that everyone can participate fully in community life. This first municipal Age-Friendly Community Action Plan is a step towards achieving that goal.

Our municipality is growing, as is the number of older adults calling Middlesex Centre home. It is vital that we plan for the opportunities and challenges this will present, and identify approaches that will allow community members to be engaged, active, and feel valued and supported by others.

You will see in this plan a range of strategies focused on improving physical activity, mobility, social participation, volunteerism, mental health, awareness of services, and more. By placing an emphasis on inclusive physical and social environments and personal wellbeing, it is our hope that Middlesex Centre will continue to be a community of choice for people of all ages and abilities.

We thank the many individuals and organizations that participated in the consultation process around this plan, providing feedback on our challenges and offering solutions for overcoming them. We recognize that working towards the goal of “participation at all ages” will be an ongoing process. Fortunately, a clear direction – based on this plan and municipal practices and policies that are already in place – exists to guide this journey.

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is committed to working with residents, businesses and other partners to shape a bright future that is safe and welcoming for people of all ages and abilities!

Sincerely,

Aina DeViet Mayor of Middlesex Centre



A. Introduction

Project Context

Middlesex Centre is proud of the high quality of life that is available to its residents, businesses, and visitors. Recognizing that its citizens are what make Middlesex Centre a thriving, progressive and welcoming community, the Municipality has initiated a process to become an Age-Friendly Community.

Age-Friendly Communities are resilient to the opportunities and challenges of an aging population by establishing accessible environments – both social and physical – that are supportive of independent and active living. These environments are fundamental in allowing older adults, seniors and people with disabilities the opportunity to continue contributing in all aspects of community life, in addition to experiencing a higher quality of life.

There are over 6,600 residents aged 55 years and over in Middlesex Centre, representing one-third (33%) of the population.

By 2046, the number of older adults and seniors will nearly double, accounting for 37% of the population.

In the London area, 26.8% of people aged 15 years and over lives with a disability.

Source: See Appendix A (Community Profile)



As a growing rural municipality with smaller “village” communities, some population groups in Middlesex Centre face challenges that those in larger communities may not. This includes access to affordable housing, transportation options, home and health care supports, and broadband Internet, among others. Taken together, these barriers can lead to economic distress, social isolation and poor health outcomes. An Age-Friendly Community Action Plan is a tool that allows the Municipality and community to work together to mitigate these challenges and to lead by example.

Through policy development and strategic directions, this project will help create more accessible environments for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, including the growing number of older adults and people with disabilities.

The Municipality recently updated its Strategic Plan and the revised Community Services Master Plan is set to be completed this year. This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan aims to align with both of these plans, ensuring that the needs of all residents are considered. Specifically, this Action Plan meets the priorities identified in the Municipality's Strategic Plan 2021-2026, including being “an engaged community” and a “responsive municipal government”.

What is Age-Friendly Planning?

Age-friendly planning considers the physical, social, and political environments and how they support people of all ages in achieving their everyday needs. Accessible infrastructure, housing, transportation, programming, policies, and services allow older adults, seniors, and people with disabilities the ability to enjoy an independent life. Furthermore, age-friendly planning encourages a high-quality of life, comfort, security and meaningful community engagement and partnerships by encompassing the physical, mental, economic and social changes an individual experiences throughout their lifetime.

“Local governments have a responsibility to their citizens to create and support environments that provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of residents. Aging is a universal experience and age-friendly communities benefit people of all generations, therefore investment in age-friendly community is an investment that will help attract, support, and retain residents at all stages of their lives.”¹

¹ Kristin Agnello. Zero to 100. Planning for an Aging Population: A Toolkit for Planners and Designers. 2018.

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies eight domains of community life that intertwine with one another and influence a person's quality of life and their independent and active living in physical and social environments. This Age-Friendly Community Action Plans reflects on each of these eight domains:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



2. Transportation



3. Housing



4. Social Participation



5. Respect and Inclusion



6. Civic Participation and Employment



7. Communication and Information



8. Community Support and Health Services



It is important to note that although this Plan is geared towards individuals aged 55 years and older and people with disabilities, age-friendly planning enhances the overall quality of life for residents of all ages and abilities. For example, safe accessible active transportation infrastructure such as separated bike lanes and accessible sidewalks provides a sense of safety to individuals using the sidewalk and/or the bike lanes since they no longer have to share the roadway with automobiles. Senior services and health care services provide families with caregiving support for elderly family members while also providing other younger family members with appropriate care – ultimately benefitting all individuals.

Project Objectives

This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan is a strategy that guides Middlesex Centre through the process of becoming age-friendly. The Action Plan is intended to supplement existing policies that may be included in other local plans and initiatives. It is the intention that this Age-Friendly Community Action Plan will help the Municipality position itself as being “program-ready” to quickly deliver inclusive services to its older adult residents and older adults with disabilities particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following objectives have been established to guide this project:

1. To assess the ‘age-friendliness’ of Middlesex Centre and its smaller communities based on WHO’s eight domains.
2. To develop a community profile of the current municipal and community initiatives and opportunities and to identify existing gaps for active, positive aging.
3. To evaluate the needs of the older adult, senior and people with disabilities populations in Middlesex Centre.
4. To engage and consult with a variety of older adults, seniors and people with disabilities, as well as community stakeholders, to build an understanding about and to shape support for an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.
5. To increase awareness about the importance of older adults, seniors and people with disabilities remaining active, healthy and engaged in the community.
6. To foster the support of local organizations to ensure that the strategies identified within the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan are implemented.

This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan follows the planning and evaluation framework created by WHO that has been adopted worldwide² and also regard to recently updated provincial guidelines³. This approach nurtures local partnerships, permits local needs assessment and action planning, and engages older adults, seniors and people with disabilities in its processes.

Our Planning Process

In early 2021, the Municipality of Middlesex Centre received funding for this project from the Province's Inclusive Community Grants program. The program helps communities to become age-friendly by ensuring that the needs of Ontarians of all ages and abilities are considered at every stage of community planning and development. The Municipality retained Monteith Brown Planning Consultants to lead this project.

This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan project began in Spring 2021. A Project Task Force was formed to assist in the development of the plan, including providing strategic direction and serving as project ambassadors. To provide a collaborative and well-round perspective, the Task Force consisted of 16-persons representing the Municipality, County, community and business interests, and citizens at large. Input and guidance were also sought from the public as well as key stakeholders at important points throughout the process.

Development of the Age-Friendly Plan was divided into two phases.

- **Phase 1 (Research and Consultation)** encompasses background research and analysis, the development of a community profile to paint a clear picture on the demographics of the community, an analysis of existing age-friendliness, and public consultation relating to each of the eight WHO domains.
- **Phase 2 (Action Plan Development)** includes a needs and gap analysis, identification of strategies and priorities for the community, action plan development, an evaluation and implementation strategy, and plan finalization.

² World Health Organization. *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*. 2007.

https://www.who.int/aging/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

³ Province of Ontario. Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. *Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations*. 2021. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/creating-more-inclusive-ontario-age-friendly-community-planning-guide-municipalities-and-community>

Key Steps in the Planning Process for the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan

- 1** Establish an Age-Friendly Task Force to guide the process, support community engagement activities, review deliverables and serve as champions in increasing awareness.
- 2** Create a community profile of current municipal and community initiatives and opportunities and gaps for active, positive aging.
- 3** Engage residents and stakeholders to identify gaps, opportunities and priorities.
- 4** Conduct a needs assessment of age-friendly priorities in Middlesex Centre.
- 5** Establish a tangible action plan that prioritizes policies, programs, services and supports that can begin to be implemented in 2022 and beyond.



B. Local Context

Community Profile

Understanding Middlesex Centre’s demographic profile and how it is anticipated to change is essential to addressing the Municipality’s age-friendly planning needs and to provide direction on age-friendly growth moving forward. Key demographic data is summarized below. A full breakdown of the Community Profile of Middlesex Centre can be found in **Appendix I**.

Middlesex Centre offers opportunities for “small-town” living with access to shopping and urban amenities, arts and culture, recreation and the rural countryside. The community has a rich history of agriculture, which is one of the most significant economic and community assets. The municipality is comprised of several villages and settlement areas, such as Ilderton, Komoka-Kilworth, Delaware, Arva, Coldstream/Poplar Hill, Denfield, Bryanston, and more. The area benefits from its proximity to the City of London, which offers the full range of services common in larger urban areas, most notably employment opportunities, health care services, post-secondary institutions, and arts and entertainment options.

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre is a lower-tier municipality located in Middlesex County. Both levels of government have responsibility for services that fall within the scope of this plan, sometimes on a shared basis (e.g., roads, planning, economic development, emergency services, tourism, etc.). Middlesex Centre is the lead administrator of community services (parks and recreation), localized land use planning and building approvals, municipal servicing, fire services, and more. The County is an upper-tier municipality that has responsibility for services such as (but not limited to) social services, accessibility, libraries, long term care, and county roads. To our knowledge, this is the first Age-Friendly Plan undertaken in Middlesex County.

Until about 2016, Middlesex Centre’s population had been growing slowly but steadily. More recently, population growth has accelerated and is forecasted to continue to rise into the future.

Middlesex Centre’s 2021 population is estimated at 20,080, with forecasts of 26,670 by 2031 (33% growth from 2021) and 35,490 by 2046 (77% growth from 2021).

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. [Middlesex County Housing Allocations Letter Report](#). 2021

Similar to trends seen across Canada, the local population is aging – the median age in Middlesex Centre has risen from 41.2 years in 2006 to 43.5 years in 2016. Further, Middlesex Centre’s population is older than the rest of the County and Ontario (with median ages of 40.3 years and 41.3 years respectively). There are currently over 6,600 residents aged 55 years and over in Middlesex Centre, representing one-third (33%) of the population.

Looking forward, the number of residents aged 55 years and older is forecasted to increase by 98% from 2021 to 2046 – an increase of 6,500 residents.

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. [Middlesex County Housing Allocations Letter Report](#), 2021

By 2046, the number of older adults and seniors will nearly double, accounting for 37% of the population. Residents aged 75 years and older are forecasted to nearly triple in number during this 25-year timeframe.

As of 2016, 27% of the population in the London Census Metropolitan Area (aged 15 years and over) consist of people living with disabilities.

Source: Statistics Canada. 2017. Persons with and without disabilities aged 15 years and over, census metropolitan areas.

Overall, Middlesex Centre residents have higher incomes and employment participation rates compared to the County and Province (the median income for local households was \$108,971 in 2015). This suggests that more residents have above average access to resources when compared to many other jurisdictions.

English is the most prominent language in the community; in 2016, 98% of residents spoke it most often at home. There is a sense that cultural diversity is increasing in Middlesex Centre; in 2016, 11% of residents identified as immigrants, although only 1.5% arrived in Canada within the past fifteen years.





Given the Municipality’s large size and rural/urban landscape, 96% of the workforce takes a private vehicle to work.





Key Services and Service Providers

There are many existing services in Middlesex Centre that contribute to age-friendliness. These services are delivered by a wide range of sectors and providers, sometimes on a regional basis. Services may change over time and many have been impacted or reduced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The listing below provides a sample of current opportunities; it is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory.

Table 1: Examples of Age-Friendly Services and Service Providers in Middlesex Centre

Domain Icon	Category	Example Services and Service Providers
	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal parks, trails, community centres and arenas • YMCA (Komoka Wellness Centre) • Conservation areas • Middlesex County Library
	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation services (VON) • Private transportation / Ride-sharing • Active transportation routes (cycling, off-road trails) • Voyago Transit Inter-Community Bus
	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Housing Program (VON) • Long-term Care (Middlesex Terrace) • Adult Lifestyle Housing (e.g., Vintage Green) • Social Housing (e.g., Crest Centre) • Oriole Park
	Social Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational activities for seniors (VON, 55+ seniors' groups, etc.) • Middlesex County Library programs • Community events (e.g., Ilderton Fair) • Service clubs • Faith-based groups

Domain Icon	Category	Example Services and Service Providers
	Respect and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee • Training and volunteer supports • SARI Therapeutic Riding
	Civic Participation and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Advisory Committees • Volunteer boards and committees • Community Futures Middlesex • London and Area Association for Volunteer Administration (LAVA) • High Schools (volunteer hours)
	Communication and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal website • Ontario 211 Services • Traditional media (e.g., Middlesex Banner) • Social media (public and private) • Mail / Bill inserts • Community bulletin boards • e-newsletters • Word of mouth
	Community Support and Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlesex-London Health Unit • Middlesex Family Connections • Southwest Health Line • Alzheimer's Society • VON • Food Bank • Local health care providers

Policy Scan

The Municipality has prepared many studies that directly and indirectly influence the age-friendliness of the community – it is important to tie these together to ensure a cohesive approach.

This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan has regard for other municipal plans, studies, reports and policies so that it fully captures the relevant policy context within the Municipality. This includes the Municipality’s 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, which established the following strategic framework that provides a basis for future planning:

VISION: A thriving, progressive and welcoming community that honours our rural roots and embraces our natural spaces.

MISSION: To deliver the highest standard in municipal services in a sustainable, professional and innovative manner.

VALUES: Respect, Cooperation, Innovation, Integrity

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: Engaged Community, Balanced Growth, Vibrant Local Economy, Sustainable Infrastructure and Services, Responsive Municipal Government

A list of documents relevant to creating an age-friendly Middlesex Centre are identified below. These reports were reviewed with a focus on the eight age-friendly domains. A full breakdown of each document and how it pertains to age-friendly planning can be found in **Appendix II**.

- Middlesex Centre:
 - Strategic Plan (2021 – 2026)
 - Official Plan Review Background Report (2020)
 - Community Services Master Plan Update (2022)
 - Accessibility Policy (2017)
 - Urban Design Guidelines
 - Infrastructure Design Standards (revised 2018)
 - Trails Master Plan (2014)
 - Ilderton Indoor Recreation Facility Needs Study (2017)
- Middlesex County:
 - Joint Multi-year Accessibility Plan (2016 – 2021)
 - Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan (2019)
 - Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (2021)
 - County Cycling Strategy (2018)

C. Public and Stakeholder Input

This project gathered input from a wide range of community stakeholders to create an understanding of current experiences and future opportunities for establishing Middlesex Centre as an age-friendly community. Engaged stakeholders included residents, service clubs, community organizations, businesses, municipal officials and staff, and more.

As the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan project was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic, community engagement focused largely on digital and remote opportunities for the public to provide feedback. This created new opportunities for the public and stakeholders to become involved in the planning process.

Engagement tactics for this project included:

- Project webpage and email for written submissions;
- Stakeholder focus groups (3);
- Public input sessions (Phase 1 – October 2021; Phase 2 – February 2022);
- Community survey;
- Regular meetings with the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan Task Force; and
- Presentation to Council (Phase 2).



In addition, relevant input from other recent municipal initiatives, such as the Community Services Master Plan, has also been considered within this Action Plan.

A profile of the primary public engagement tactics is provided below. The key findings from the survey and public sessions are summarized in the relevant sections of this report (see eight domains). A full record of public input is provided in **Appendix III** (survey) and **Appendix IV** (public input sessions and stakeholder focus groups).

Community Survey

To support the development of this Action Plan, the Municipality hosted an online community survey that was available over a period of four weeks in September and October 2021. The purpose of the community survey was to elicit information on the age-friendliness of Middlesex Centre. Specifically, the survey gathered information on each of the eight domains of age-friendly communities.

A total of **96 unique responses** were received. Being a voluntary, self-directed survey, response rates varied by question. The survey was promoted through the Municipality’s website, social media, e-newsletters, posters, and local newspaper.

96
unique survey
responses were
received.



The following is a brief profile of respondents:

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) are aged 55 years and older, with the majority being between the age of 60 and 74 years.
- One-out-of-seven (15%) reported being a person living with a disability.
- One-half (52%) reside in the Kilworth/Komoka area and one-fifth (21%) in the Ilderton area.

To get a sense of what is most important to Middlesex Centre residents, respondents were asked to prioritize the eight age-friendly domains. The top three domains of interest include “community support and health services” (75%), “communication and information” (62%), and “respect and social participation” (53%).

Table 2: Priority Levels for the 8 WHO Domains, Community Survey (n=72)

Domains	High Priority
Community Support and Health Services	75%
Communication and Information	62%
Respect and Social Inclusion	53%
Transportation	47%
Social Participation	47%
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	43%
Housing	43%
Civic Participation and Employment	13%

Don't know responses have been removed.

The key findings from the survey are summarized in the relevant sections of this report (see eight domains). Full results have been provided in **Appendix III**.

Stakeholder Focus Groups and Public Input Sessions

Three stakeholder focus groups with a total attendance of approximately **20 agencies and service providers** were held in September 2021, each focusing on two to three of the eight WHO age-friendly domains. These sessions were by invitation and included a variety of groups such as the Middlesex County Library, Middlesex County, VON, Alzheimer's Society, the Middlesex-London Health Unit, municipal staff, and others.

In addition, a virtual **public input session** was hosted on October 4, 2021 to solicit public input on ways to make Middlesex Centre a more welcoming and inclusive community for older residents and people with disabilities. Approximately **15 residents** participated in the meeting. This session was promoted through the Municipality's website, social media, e-newsletters, posters, and local newspaper.





Age Friendly Community Action Plan - Public Open House

Join us for an in-depth discussion about how we can make Middlesex Centre a community that is welcoming and inclusive for people of all ages.

October 4, 2021 - 6:00pm - Online

Register for the open house at middlesexcentre.on.ca/age-friendly

Participants felt that an age-friendly community is defined by the following:

- Full participation of older adults, seniors and people with disabilities in all services and decision-making;
- Recreation for all ages;
- Appropriate signage that is inclusive to older adults, seniors, persons with visual disabilities;
- Having accessible spaces throughout the community;
- Being able to “age in place” (e.g., the built environment and amenities are able to support people throughout the aging process – beginning at 55 years old);
- Closing the gaps between older adults/seniors and younger adults, youth and children;
- An environment that promotes efficient mobility, is supportive, and has easily accessible services;
- Consideration is given to people of all ages, backgrounds and races, and equality; and
- An improved overall quality of life for all residents.

The key findings from the sessions are summarized in the relevant sections of this report (see eight domains). Full results have been provided in **Appendix IV**.



D. An Age-Friendly Middlesex Centre

Vision

A 'vision' is an inspiring statement describing an ideal future state. Setting a vision for the Municipality to guide its journey on becoming an age-friendly community is the initial step in setting a strategic path forward. A vision statement depicts how the Municipality wants to be viewed in the future and compels Council, staff, community stakeholders, and residents to work together to achieve the vision over time.

Based on supporting documents and input, the following vision statement has been established to guide the development and implementation of the Middlesex Centre Age-Friendly Community Action Plan:

We are an inclusive, age-friendly community that supports healthy aging, empowers independence, and promotes full participation in community life.



Principles

The development and implementation of this Age-Friendly Community Action Plan are also guided by a series of principles that reflect the values and aspirations of the Municipality and community at large. Together with the vision, the principles articulate the core directions that the Municipality and aligned service providers should strive to achieve over time.

Input from the project Task Force and community provided a starting point for creating a strategic framework for Middlesex Centre. This input was examined and found to be consistent with the guiding principles suggested by the University of Waterloo Age Friendly Communities program⁴. Value statements for each principle have been developed specifically to respond to the local Middlesex Centre context.

The principles for the Middlesex Centre Age-Friendly Community Action Plan include:

1. Respect and support for all citizens

We will value all members of the community, treat them with respect and dignity, and work to build awareness and understanding of age-friendly considerations.

2. Access and inclusion for all citizens

We will ensure fair access to resources, supports, and spaces for all by strengthening relationships, collaborating with others and applying an “age-friendly” lens to all that we do.

3. Community engagement in decision-making

We will involve older adults in decision-making and program development, provide meaningful opportunities for engagement, and communicate effectively.

4. Livability

We will enhance personal and community health and wellbeing through responsive and integrated community design, vibrant public spaces, and activities that support social inclusion.

5. Accountability

We will actively implement this Age-Friendly Community Action Plan by showing leadership, fostering coordination among stakeholders, and embracing dynamic approaches to meeting age-friendly needs.

⁴ University of Waterloo. Age Friendly Communities Guiding Principles. <https://uwaterloo.ca/age-friendly-communities/guiding-principles>

E. Domain #1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Outdoor spaces and buildings focus on the natural and built environments and whether they support the access and active involvement of older adults, seniors and those with mobility challenges. Well-designed environments can enhance physical wellbeing, promote independence, foster social interaction, and provide opportunities for intergenerational learning.



When people view a neighbourhood as safe and accessible, it encourages them to participate in outdoor activities and engage with the community. Accessibility involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for people with disabilities, including older adults and seniors with age-related limitations and/or disabilities. This domain applies to all public outdoor spaces and buildings, but does not include privately-owned residential lands.

“The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to ‘age in place’.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of outdoor spaces and buildings in Middlesex Centre.

- “Make more provision for greenspace when planning new developments and ensure pathways are wide and smooth surfaced. As well, ensure every street has sidewalk on at least one side.”
- “Benches for rest breaks when walking and better pavement on sidewalks and paths. Benches should be located under shade.”
- “Take a page out of Foodland’s book and have low sensory hours... no music, lowered lights, etc.”

What we're Doing Well

Middlesex Centre has already taken many steps to ensure that residents are engaged and connected to community life. This is evident in the high-quality public realm, such as the municipality's parks and outdoor spaces, community centres, and libraries.

While not a complete list, the analysis has identified the following strengths relating to this age-friendly domain.

- The public has access to a variety of recreational amenities, such as arenas, halls, and a growing network of parks and trails.
- 87% of survey respondents indicated that public areas both indoors and outdoors are clean and pleasant.
- 61% of respondents agreed pavements and sidewalks are mostly in good condition and free of obstructions.
- The majority of respondents agreed that most municipal community centres and libraries appear to be accessible and built to today's design standards. Staff within these facilities are welcoming and helpful.
- Forward-looking planning (Community Services Master Plan, Urban Design Guidelines) is being done to ensure that the design and provision of public spaces continue to respond community needs.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- There are requests for additional green spaces, accessible outdoor seating options, and lighting in parks and along paths and sidewalks.
- Additional drop-in spaces are needed for the older adult community. There has been desire expressed for coffee house spaces where individuals can drop-in and socialize with one another.
- Access points to public spaces are not always located in logical areas for people with mobility issues.
- As the community grows, expectations will increase for the provision of higher order parks, recreation and community facilities.
- There is growing demand to incorporate dementia-friendly outdoor spaces throughout the Municipality.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation**.

F. Domain #2: Transportation

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Transportation is one of the primary factors that determine the extent to which older adults can engage with their community. Those living in rural communities and those who do not drive are particularly at risk of social isolation and may become increasingly dependent on caregivers for basic errands and appointments.



This domain focuses on the condition and design of transportation-related infrastructure, such as signage, traffic lights and sidewalks that affect personal mobility and whether they support older adults, seniors and people with disabilities. The transportation dimension applies to all road, path, trail and sidewalk networks. Access to reliable and affordable transportation options becomes increasingly important when driving becomes stressful, challenging or is no longer available as an option.

“Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active aging. In particular, being able to move about the city determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

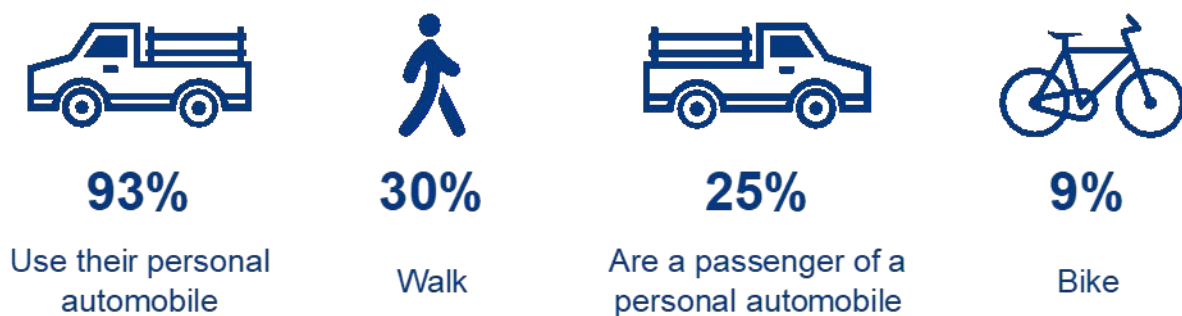
The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of transportation in Middlesex Centre.

- “More needs to be done for pedestrians crossing main arteries. Living in Delaware I am having to run across the Springer/Victoria and Longwoods daily as cars speeding up the hill is ridiculous. This is happening in most communities.”
- “As the Municipality develops, there should be better active transportation options. Best example is Komoka, where there is currently no easy, safe way to

walk or cycle to the Wellness Centre or Foodland without a car. Also, paved shoulders on roads, even if only 1m wide, would be great as roads are rebuilt/repaved, to allow for safer cycling between communities.”

- “People with disabilities or elderly people who require affordable transportation in our area only have VON volunteer drivers (not always and minimally available) or taxi as an option for transportation. I would like to see a public transportation option given the growth for this area.”

Middlesex Centre is a mixed urban/rural community that relies on the use of vehicular travel – the majority of which is residents using their own personal vehicle. Transportation becomes more challenging with age, especially for those living in rural areas (where many of Middlesex Centre’s seniors live). The following graphic illustrates that the modal split that exists within the Municipality is quite heavily weighted towards automotive use; however, residents have expressed interest in more active transportation options.



Source: Middlesex Centre, *Age-Friendly Community Action Plan Survey*, 2021.

What we’re Doing Well

The points below highlight some of the positive, age-friendly transportation practices that are currently in place.

- 89% of survey respondents agreed that traffic signs throughout the community are largely easy to read and understand.
- 74% of respondents indicated that parking and drop-off areas at municipal facilities are conveniently located.
- Parking is generally available within the community.
- Snow removal on roads and ongoing road maintenance is effective and efficient.
- Volunteer transport options exist and are highly subscribed services.

- The Municipality is implementing Vision Zero practices throughout the community, such as community safety zones, centre-line markers and providing residents with 'respect the limit' lawn signs.
- Forward-looking planning (Trails Master Plan, County Cycling Strategy, Official Plan) is being done to ensure that transportation services continue to meet community needs.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- There is a desire for more accessible public transportation, taxi or ride-sharing services in Middlesex Centre. 61% of survey respondents indicated that there are not enough options for volunteer, shuttle or pooled driving. 59% of survey respondents indicated there are not enough affordable and accessible transportation options available for people with disabilities.
- Conditions for walking and cycling are not safe as they could or should be and there are gaps in the network. Many road shoulders are unpaved, creating unsafe active transportation conditions within the road network.
- Traffic calming opportunities are desired throughout the community to assist in reducing speeds on local roads.
- It is difficult for older adults, seniors and people with disabilities to get around Middlesex Centre using active transportation. There are insufficient lanes for bicycles and scooters.
- Maintenance of sidewalks was raised as a concern, although the Municipality meets or exceeds provincial guidelines for snow clearing.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**

G. Domain #3: Housing

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Housing focuses on housing options that are affordable, supportive and incorporate flexibility through adaptive features, style and location choices. The availability and design of homes and communities can either amplify or minimize one's ability to "age in place". Furthermore, housing (rental and ownership) is becoming increasingly more expensive in southwestern Ontario, directly impacting how and where older adults choose to live.



“There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people. It is clear that housing and support that allow older people to age comfortably and safely within the community to which they belong are universally valued.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of housing in Middlesex Centre.

- “We need more affordable senior housing and opportunities to have a choice of housing options.”
- “Consider greater affordable housing complexes and retirement homes. These should have all available amenities and be in proximity to local shopping areas.”
- “I would like the opportunity to build a home and/or build a granny flat on my parent’s rural property where I know I will have independence but the necessary support nearby.”
- “Create a local job bank for simple things like chores or fix it.”

What we're Doing Well

The points below highlight some of the positive, age-friendly housing practices that are currently in place.

- Private houses (e.g., singles, semis, townhouses) are the most common dwelling types in Middlesex Centre and residents have largely indicated that their current residences are meeting their needs.
- Due to the increasing growth of the municipality, developers are beginning to explore different tenure options (e.g., rentals versus ownership).
- The Strategic Plan and Official Plan Review support the need for new development to include attainable housing, including secondary suites.
- The Strategic Plan identifies the need for housing to be designed with the specific needs of seniors in mind.
- Community services are available to support seniors to “age-in-place”. The large majority are comfortable in their housing environment.
- Forward-looking planning (Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan, Official Plan) is being done to ensure that more diverse housing options are encouraged.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- 76% of survey respondents felt there is a need for more housing appropriate for older adults, seniors and people with disabilities. The growing seniors' population will generate demand for more assisted living, retirement homes and long-term care facilities. To achieve this, greater diversity of housing options is required (e.g., lifestyle housing, apartments, assisted living, etc.). 65% of survey respondents indicated there is an insufficient amount of subsidized (rent geared to income) and affordable housing accommodation.
- There is a strong desire for independent living and seniors remaining in their homes. 74% of survey respondents identified that more supports may be needed to keep older adults and seniors in their homes (e.g., meals, housekeeping, personal care, home accessibility and modification, enhanced home support, community-based home visiting nursing, home sharing/co-housing models, etc.).
- 57% of survey respondents agreed there may also be a growing need for more affordable home maintenance and renovations services available within the community (or widespread information on available options).

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**

H. Domain #4: Social Participation

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Age-friendly communities support not only physical access, but also facilitate the social interactions and interpersonal relationships that are critical to the wellbeing of an individual, regardless of age. Municipalities have a significant role to play in supporting the ability of residents to actively define and participate in the social character of their communities. Social participation involves the level of interaction that older adults, seniors, and people with disabilities have with other members of their community and the extent that the community makes this interaction and inclusion possible.



“Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of social participation in Middlesex Centre.

- “Make it easier to find activities – a central registry for municipal and non-municipal activities.”
- “Local hiking or walking groups for 60 plus age.”
- “Initiate more opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities to come together with other community members.”

A wide variety of activities are available throughout Middlesex Centre. Participation is crucial for residents as it provides a number of positive individual and community

wellness outcomes. The five most participated activities for Middlesex Centre residents (pre-COVID-19) identified through the community survey are noted below:



Source: Middlesex Centre, *Age-Friendly Community Action Plan Survey*, 2021.

What we're Doing Well

The points below highlight some of the positive, age-friendly social participation practices that are currently in place.

- There are a variety of recreational and social programs that exist within the community that strive to decrease social isolation and increase independence (e.g., VON, YMCA, Middlesex County Library, 55+ Group, etc.).
- Volunteer organizations are supported by the public and private sectors to keep the costs of activities affordable for older adults and seniors.
- Informal networks and technology are more commonly being used to bring people together, although in-person participation has been partially restricted during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Forward-looking planning (Community Services Master Plan) is being done to identify gaps in public programming. As Middlesex Centre grows, the Municipality may play a larger role in program facilitation.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- 80% of survey respondents requested improved communication about new and upcoming leisure programs and to ensure that it reaches more residents.
- Some residents have expressed concern about the affordability of activities and programs.

- Community facilities are unable to offer the full range of programs and services requested by some older adults and seniors (e.g., aquatics).
- More educational opportunities for older adults and seniors have been requested.
- While most residents are satisfied with available programming, nearly two-fifths of survey respondents identified program schedules, registration processes, and the variety of activities for older adults and seniors as areas that could be further improved.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**



I. Domain #5: Respect and Inclusion

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Residents who are active and involved in their communities enjoy better health, are happier, and are less likely to experience social isolation. Respect and social inclusion focus on how critical community attitudes – such as a general feeling of respect and recognition of the role that older adults, seniors and people with disabilities play in our society – are for establishing an inclusive and age-friendly community.



“The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of respect and inclusion in Middlesex Centre.

- “Promote multicultural activities so that everyone will be educated in this fact.”
- “As the community is growing, the values of life long members are being lost. Often seniors or older citizens are looked upon as not willing to change, or their thoughts, ideas, suggestions are put on the back burner. Change is good, but maintaining the community core values are also important.”
- “Middlesex Centre population is gradually becoming more diverse ethnically and I have not seen or heard of any negative reaction or racial prejudice.”

What we're Doing Well

The points below highlight some of the positive, age-friendly practices that are currently in place relating to this domain.

- The community survey found that most Middlesex Centre residents feel they have a sense of community belonging.
- The majority of survey respondents agreed that respect, kindness and courtesy is typically shown to older adults and seniors within the municipality.
- There are many longstanding community events that serve to bring generations together for mutual enjoyment and participation.
- Financial assistance programs are in place to ensure that economically disadvantaged persons are able to participate in leisure programs.
- Providers like the public library provide programs and services that encourage inclusion and interaction amongst people of different ages and abilities is also exploring dementia-free spaces and offering cognitive care kits.
- Education, awareness and training for working with people with disabilities is available.
- Public sector agencies regularly assess and respond to barriers to accessibility and work to ensure that policies, practices and procedures address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunities for people with disabilities.
- The County Accessibility Advisory Committee is regularly consulted on municipal matters and initiatives.
- The Municipality prepared a Corporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan in 2022.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- Attitudinal barriers (ageism, segmentation, etc.) still exist for some older adults, seniors and people with disabilities. For example, contributions by older adults and seniors are not recognized or valued as much as they should be within the community.
- Opportunities for inter-generational activities that value learning and knowledge-sharing are available, but more are desired.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**

J. Domain #6: Civic Participation and Employment

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Older adults can offer a wide breadth of local knowledge, specialized skills, and life experience to community initiatives. Civic participation and employment include the desire to be involved in aspects of community life that extend beyond day-to-day activities, such as volunteering, becoming politically active, voting and working on committees. The ability to continue working or find new employment provides economic security for older adults and people of all ages and abilities. An age-friendly community recognizes the diversity of its population and promotes initiatives to reach as many people as possible.



“An age-friendly community provides options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities, through paid employment or voluntary work if they so choose, and to be engaged in the political process.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of civic participation and employment in Middlesex Centre.

- “There are many opportunities to volunteer if you know how to find them. The problem for me is that those I know about aren’t appropriate for my disability.”
- “The face of an older person should be part of all boards and committees. Older people are big contributors to society but are often not included in decision-making.”
- “Increase communication as to volunteer opportunities in a community magazine.”

What we're Doing Well

The strengths of civic participation and employment that currently exist within Middlesex Centre are summarized below.

- There is a strong reliance on volunteers throughout Middlesex Centre, with a range of opportunities for older adults to stay involved in various capacities.
- There is a regional volunteer collective that several organizations use to share volunteer and professional development resources.
- The County Library offers some employment support services to individuals.
- The County's Joint Multi-year Accessibility Plan encourages barrier-free recruitment processes and the regular review of training programs for volunteers and municipal employees.
- The County's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan prioritizes quality of life by focussing on employment, education and skills development.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- There is concern that volunteerism rates are in decline, which has been impacting the availability of necessary services to older adults, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- There are a number of programs that could be volunteer led, however some require work beyond the scope of volunteers.
- 57% of survey respondents indicated that they are currently unaware of where to go to find out about the volunteer opportunities that exist within the community.
- Half of survey respondents identified a need for equal access to employment opportunities for older adults and seniors that fit with their expectations.
- Communication, training and matching of volunteer opportunities and skills could be improved. Many older adults are retiring from full-time work, but remain very interested in contributing to their communities.
- Representation on boards and committees should reflect the community composition, such as age, ability, etc.
- It is important that older adults, seniors and people with disabilities continue to always be consulted on issues that affect them.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**

K. Domain #7: Communication and Information

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Communication and information include the access to, and awareness of, mental and physical health programs and services that contribute to the overall quality of life and age-friendliness. Effective communication is critical to a resident's participation in, and understanding of, their community.

Residents are increasingly receiving information on community programs and services through the use of technology (e.g., email, social media, websites, e-newsletters, etc.). However, traditional methods of communication (e.g., newsletters, word of mouth, newspapers, etc.) remain very important for populations such as older adults.



“Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of communication and information in Middlesex Centre.

- “Newsletter should include more social activities, events, what’s happening calendar.”
- “More information concerning activities, etc. on the website, whether directly from the Municipality or as a link to non-municipal sites.”
- “Post information for those not using social media in areas where they might get information (e.g., post office, grocery store, library, etc.).”

What we're Doing Well

The need for effective promotion and information sharing means that communication and information underpins many of the other age-friendly domains. Strengths of communication and information within Middlesex Centre are summarized below.

- The majority of survey respondents indicated that written information from the Municipality is typically clear and concise.
- Municipal contact information is readily available and residents are given the opportunity to receive person-to-person service in a variety of formats.
- There are several trusted sources of information within the municipality and community connection programs (e.g., online services) are emerging to help to bridge the information divide.
- Since the pandemic, Middlesex Centre and residents of all ages have made significant strides in terms of communication, especially using technology.
- Public sector agencies are increasingly providing information in alternate formats for people with disabilities.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- Traditional media sources serve a regional market. Receiving local information in a timely manner can be challenge across all parts of Middlesex Centre.
- There is a reliance on informal information networks, which can sometimes leave people out, including trusted sources and community connectors.
- 62% of survey respondents indicated that communication from the Municipality does not always reach all residents.
- 37% of survey respondents agreed that important information is not always circulated and/or received in a timely and effective manner.
- Although internet connectivity is strong throughout most of Middlesex Centre, financial and knowledge barriers may keep some from using this service.
- Service providers should continue to expand the range of photos and imagery so that they portray realistic ideas of aging and the full range of abilities.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**

L. Domain #8: Community Support and Health Services

Relevance to Middlesex Centre

Community support and health services focus on the ability to provide information about accessible and affordable community events/supports and/or important health services in formats that are appropriate for older adults, seniors and people with disabilities. The majority of Middlesex Centre survey respondents indicate that they have average to good physical and mental health; however, the need for community support and health services increases with age.



“Health and support services are vital to maintaining health and independence in the community. Many of the concerns raised by older people, caregivers and service providers deal with the availability of sufficient good quality, appropriate and accessible care.”

(WHO, 2007)

Sample of Public Comments

The following is a sample of public comments representing common themes for improving age-friendliness of communication and information in Middlesex Centre.

- “It’s great we have an optometry, physiotherapy, dental and chiropractic clinic in our area now. Would appreciate a medical clinic and lab here as well.”
- “Advertised services and services recommended by health professionals are often too busy to help when you call, or have a very long waiting list, so issues don’t get addressed when needed.”
- “Medical and social services for seniors should be located in proximity to where seniors live.”

What we're Doing Well

The points below highlight some of the positive, age-friendly practices that are currently in place relating to this domain.

- There is a wide range of community supports available to Middlesex Centre residents, many of which are volunteer-supported. For example, the VON offers meals on wheels, telephone reassurance calls, smart exercise programs, transportation services, etc.
- 46% of survey respondents agree that most health care providers are aware and sensitive to the unique needs of older adults, seniors and people with disabilities.
- Many residents (though not all) live in proximity and have access to specialized health care services within the city of London.
- A regional food bank (located in Ailsa Craig) provides services to Middlesex Centre residents.

What we Could do Better

Through local research and consultation, the following challenges have been identified for this age-friendly domain.

- The range of local health services is growing, but gaps remain.
- Many of the more specialized health services are located in London. These services are not generally easy to access or convenient for everyone.
- 31% of survey respondents indicated that financial barriers exist for some when accessing community support and health services.
- The demand for volunteer-supported community supports is growing; however, volunteer resources are limited.
- There are information gaps relating to health promotion.
- Several communities (e.g., Ilderton, Delaware, Coldstream etc.) lack a grocery store.

Recommended action plans and strategies are contained in **Section M: Implementation.**

M. Implementation

Action Plans and Strategies

The following tables outline overarching action plans and specific strategies for each domain. The strategies have been founded on local research and consultation, as summarized in Sections E to L of this report. Consideration has also been given to the age-friendly features and practices identified by the World Health Organization contained in **Appendix V**⁵.

Recommended timing and responsibilities are also provided for each of the plan's strategies. Where applicable, Departments (Divisions) within the Municipality of Middlesex Centre have been identified as the implementation lead. The primary and supporting responsibilities serve as a guideline only and may change based on what is best for plan implementation.

For actions that are beyond the Municipality's service mandate, external agencies or partners (such as Middlesex County, Middlesex-London Health Unit, Middlesex County Library, Province of Ontario, local businesses, community organizations, etc.) will be required to take the lead. In these cases, the Municipality is encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to promote awareness of this Age-Friendly Plan and, where feasible, support community efforts in its implementation. Timelines have not been identified for actions that are to be led by agencies other than the Municipality or County.

Timeframes are defined as follows:

- **In progress:** Action on this item is already underway
- **Ongoing:** Best practice that requires continual action
- **Short-term:** Target of 1-2 years
- **Long-term:** Target of 3-5 years

⁵ https://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age_friendly_cities_checklist.pdf

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Action 1.1: Consider the needs of older adults and people with disabilities when designing and developing parks and trails.

Table 3: Strategies for Action 1.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Continue to identify opportunities to expand the network of park pathways and trails. Ensure the accessibility of these spaces through the appropriate use of wayfinding signage, lighting (where appropriate), and firm and stable surfacing.	Ongoing	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Trails Master Plan, Infrastructure Design Standards, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard
b) Identify areas to increase year-round seating options (e.g., benches, ledges, etc.) along main walking and trail routes and within parks. Consider launching a commemorative bench program.	Ongoing	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Community Services Master Plan, Infrastructure Design Standards, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard, Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee
c) Increase the number of accessible barrier-free universal public washrooms (permanent and portable) at high use locations through renovation or new builds.	Ongoing	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Community Services Master Plan, Ontario Building Code
d) Ensure that parks are located within reasonable walking distance of residential areas, in visible and accessible locations.	Ongoing	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Community Services Master Plan, Official Plan
e) Design parks and trails to support informal and formal activities and features for persons of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.	Ongoing	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Trails Master Plan, Community Services Master Plan, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard, Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
f) Continue to advertise opportunities for community organizations to sponsor regular trail and park clean-up days (e.g., Clean and Green), park beautification (e.g., sensory gardens), adopt-a-trail, etc.	Ongoing	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Community-led organizations
g) Encourage safe winter walking and park usage through an educational campaign and revisiting the service standard for winter park maintenance.	Short-term	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Corporate Services (Communications)
h) Periodically engage local police services to undertake a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audit of existing and new parks and trails to enhance safety measures.	Long-term	Community Services (Parks & Open Space)	Ontario Provincial Police



Action 1.2: Design public buildings and outdoor spaces as accessible multi-service hubs.

Table 4: Strategies for Action 1.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Meet or exceed the Design of Public Spaces regulation within municipally-owned buildings and public spaces. Regularly audit spaces with reference to the IASR and Ontario Building Code and develop timelines to address needed improvements.	Ongoing	Community Services	Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee, Joint Multi-year Accessibility Plan
b) Seek input from seniors and people with disabilities in the design of public spaces and municipal recreation programs.	Ongoing	Community Services	Community Services Advisory Committee, Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard
c) Ensure that new or renovated recreation centres and libraries have sufficient space (e.g., lounges, etc.) to support casual drop-in activities.	Ongoing	Community Services	Middlesex County Library, Community Services Master Plan, Ontario Building Code
d) Ensure that public facilities have convenient, well-lit, accessible off-street parking areas (where appropriate).	Ongoing	Community Services (Facility Services)	IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard
e) Support the development of multi-service community hubs (e.g., recreation centres, libraries, schools, etc.). Pursue the long-term development of a new multi-use recreation facility in Ilderton.	Long-term	Community Services	Community Services Master Plan, Middlesex Accessibility Advisory Committee, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard, Ontario Building Code

2. Transportation

Action 2.1: Create safe options for active transportation (pedestrians and cyclists) and motorized scooters.

Table 5: Strategies for Action 2.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Continue to expand the sidewalk network, ensuring that it is safe and accessible.	Ongoing	Public Works & Engineering (Transportation)	Official Plan, Trails Master Plan, Master Servicing Plan, Strategic Plan, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard
b) Establish additional bike lanes, paved shoulders and cycling infrastructure, where appropriate and feasible.	Ongoing	Public Works & Engineering (Transportation)	Master Servicing Plan, Middlesex County Cycling Strategy
c) Revisit the service standard for trail and pathway maintenance to promote accessibility in the winter. Continue to communicate snow clearing standards to residents.	Short-term	Community Services	Public Works & Engineering (Transportation)
d) Take steps toward becoming a “bicycle-friendly” community by supporting events designed to encourage people to cycle and educating motorists and cyclists.	Long-term	Middlesex County, External (community organizations)	Community Services, Public Works & Engineering, Middlesex County Cycling Strategy
e) Promote a driveway/sidewalk snow shoveling assistance program using community volunteers (“snow angels”).	Long-term	External (Community volunteers)	Community Services, Corporate Services (Communications)

Action 2.2: Increase the range of public and private transportation options for residents.

Table 6: Strategies for Action 2.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Encourage event organizers to consider transportation at early stages of planning (e.g., shuttles, accessible parking, etc.).	Ongoing	Community Services (Facility Booking)	Event Organizers

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
b) Work with the County to explore the viability of expanding the “Middlesex County Connect” program to expand public transit opportunities within the Municipality, County and London.	Short-term	Corporate Services (Economic Development)	Middlesex County (Transportation), IASR Transportation Standard
c) Support the expansion of third-party accessible and/or pooled transportation services by promoting volunteer and fundraising opportunities when they arise.	Short-term	Corporate Services (Economic Development)	Middlesex County (Economic Development)
d) Continue to foster awareness of non-profit, government, and private transportation services for older adults.	Short-term	Corporate Services (Economic Development)	Service providers, Ontario 211, Service Ontario
e) Encourage home delivery by local businesses (e.g., groceries, medicine, etc.).	n/a	External (local businesses)	n/a

Action 2.3: Improve safety for all road users.

Table 7: Strategies for Action 2.3

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Identify criteria for the installation of traffic calming measures. Explore ways to address safety in the transition zones between rural areas and settlement areas.	Ongoing	Middlesex County, Public Works & Engineering (Transportation)	Vision Zero Program
b) Expand the street tree program to improve the pedestrian experience, serve as a buffer from traffic, and provide a traffic calming effect.	Ongoing	Public Works & Engineering (Transportation)	Community organizations
c) Identify and improve key road crossings for seniors and those with mobility challenges, including consideration of accessible pedestrian signals.	Short-term	Public Works & Engineering (Transportation)	Middlesex County, Ontario Traffic Manual Book 15, IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard

3. Housing

Action 3.1: Support affordable and accessible housing in close proximity to services (complete communities).

Table 8: Strategies for Action 3.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Establish land use policies and advocate for programs that incentivize the development of affordable housing, accessible housing, and assisted living units.	Short-term	Planning Services	Middlesex County, Official Plan, Senior government agencies
b) Identify and promote senior government energy retrofit and accessibility audit programs for residential properties.	Short-term	Building Services	Senior government agencies

Action 3.2: Expand the variety of housing types and forms.

Table 9: Strategies for Action 3.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Encourage common areas in all seniors' housing developments.	Ongoing	Building Services	Planning Services
b) Establish land use policies and programs to encourage additional seniors' housing options throughout the community (e.g., apartments, co-housing, retirement homes, long-term care, etc.).	Short-term	Planning Services	Official Plan
c) Develop policies to support a wider variety of housing forms throughout Middlesex Centre, including additional dwelling units ("granny flats").	Short-term	Planning Services	Official Plan, Developers
d) Develop educational resources pertaining to options, processes, and government supports for building additional dwelling units and smaller housing forms.	Short-term	Planning Services	Middlesex County

Action 3.3: Encourage strategies to help seniors age in place.
Table 10: Strategies for Action 3.3

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Prepare an age-friendly checklist to inform development applications about accessibility features (e.g., wider doorways, no step entries, accessible main floor washrooms, flexible floor plans, low maintenance materials, etc.).	Short-term	Building Services	Planning Services, Public Works and Engineering (Development), IASR Design of Public Spaces Standard, Ontario Building Code
b) Work with the Health Unit and the Fall Prevention Collaborative to provide practical tips to improve home safety and reduce fall injuries.	Short-term	Community Services	Health Unit, Fall Prevention Collaborative
c) Identify and promote grant opportunities that support accessibility retrofits for private homes (e.g., ramps, etc.) to assist residents to remain in their homes.	Long-term	Building Services	Senior government and non-profit agencies
d) Identify and promote services and supports that assist seniors with aging in place (e.g., home maintenance, housekeeping, etc.), including housing programs for seniors made available through the City of London Service Manager.	n/a	External (local businesses, community organizations)	Building Services, Employment and Social Development Canada
e) Encourage volunteer home maintenance programs (e.g., snow removal, grass cutting, etc.). Coordinate with schools to engage students.	n/a	External (local schools and organizations)	Community Services



4. Social Participation

Action 4.1: Increase the number and range of opportunities for participation in recreational, cultural and social activities.

Table 11: Strategies for Action 4.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Continue to take meaningful steps to ensure that every resident can participate fully in municipal programs and services.	In Progress	Community Services (Recreation)	Strategic Plan, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, Community Services Master Plan
b) Review older adult programming to identify gaps, duplication, and areas of growing need. Continue to modify programming to address priority needs and coordinate with involved agencies and providers.	Ongoing	Community Services (Recreation)	YMCA, Middlesex County Library, Service providers, Community Services Master Plan
c) Support the formation of volunteer clubs (e.g., seniors clubs, walking or hiking groups) and community programs and events to increase participation.	Ongoing	Community Services (Recreation)	Community Services Master Plan
d) Explore opportunities for virtual (or hybrid) programming to accommodate isolated individuals and residents that cannot participate in-person.	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Community Services Master Plan, IASR Information and Communications Standard
e) Explore partnerships with groups such as the Alzheimer's Society to help engage individuals with dementia.	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Alzheimer's Society
f) Adopt quality assurance standards for older adult recreation, including HIGH FIVE for Older Adults through Principles of Healthy Aging.	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Community Services Master Plan
g) Evaluate pricing of leisure services. Consider subsidies and cost-free trials to raise participation.	Long-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Community Services Master Plan

Action 4.2: Enhance awareness of leisure programs, community activities and special events.

Table 12: Strategies for Action 4.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Coordinate outreach to newcomers when they move into the community. Continue to provide and expand on information on available services and service providers (New Resident Welcome Guide).	Ongoing	Corporate Services (Communications)	Community Services, Ontario Government Newcomer Programs
b) Evaluate uptake and promotion of the County's "Play it Forward" financial assistance program.	Short-term	Community Services	Middlesex County
c) Foster the development of a coordinated system to identify and promote community events and programs (e.g., "I Love Thorndale" website).	Long-term	Corporate Services (Communications)	Community Services (Facility Booking), Community organizations
d) Maintain and share a list of service providers in nearby communities for those recreation and cultural services that are not available in Middlesex Centre (e.g., swimming, arts centre, etc.).	n/a	External (Area municipalities)	Community Services



5. Respect and Inclusion

Action 5.1: Encourage and celebrate the inclusion of older adults, seniors and people with disabilities within civic initiatives.

Table 13: Strategies for Action 5.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Encourage governance boards and councils to have representation that mirrors the composition of the community (e.g., age, ethnicity, ability, etc.), where appropriate.	Ongoing	Community Services (Community Engagement)	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan
b) Ensure that communications positively depict seniors and people with disabilities.	Ongoing	Corporate Services (Communications)	All Departments
c) Examine existing policies for language that limits age-friendliness or creates barriers for seniors and people with disabilities.	Short-term	All Departments	All Municipal Policies and Procedures
d) Ensure that staff receive customer service training specific to people with disabilities and seniors.	Short-term	All Departments	IASR Customer Service Standard

Action 5.2: Increase inter-generational opportunities in the community.

Table 14: Strategies for Action 5.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Offer additional activities for inter-generational participation and learning (e.g., pickleball, arts, technology, outdoor fitness, meals/cooking, etc.).	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Middlesex County Library, service clubs, youth/older adult centres
b) Partner with schools and other organizations to develop more social inclusion and inter-generational programs.	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Schools, Middlesex County Library
c) Engage with local agencies, groups and churches to explore ways of better engaging and supporting seniors and people with disabilities in the community.	Short-term	Community Services (Community Engagement)	Community organizations

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
d) Establish and promote events and initiatives that accommodate and celebrate older adults, seniors and people with disabilities within the community (e.g., Ontario Seniors' Month).	Long-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Community organizations, Middlesex County

Action 5.3: Support and promote community education initiatives that address ageism and foster mutual respect and understanding.

Table 15: Strategies for Action 5.3

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Continue to support eligible businesses that wish to retrofit entrances through implementation of the Middlesex Centre Community Improvement Plan.	Ongoing	Corporate Services	Community Improvement Plan
b) Demonstrate a corporate commitment to making Middlesex Centre an age-friendly community. Consider applying for the Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Recognition Program.	Short-term	All Departments	Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program
c) Develop age-friendly information for local businesses to support them in accommodating older adults, seniors and people with disabilities.	Long-term	Corporate Services (Economic Development)	Local businesses, AODA, IASR, Ontario Building Code, Accessible Canada Act
d) Consider establishing a recognition program for local businesses, organizations and service providers that implement age-friendly actions.	Long-term	Corporate Services (Economic Development)	Local businesses

6. Civic Participation and Employment

Action 6.1: Utilize the knowledge and experience of older adults and seniors.

Table 16: Strategies for Action 6.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Continue to regularly seek input from older adults and seniors through surveys, program evaluations, and public consultations.	Ongoing	Community Services (Community Engagement)	Community Services Master Plan, Age-Friendly reporting, IASR Information and Communications Standard
b) Establish programs where older adults and seniors mentor youth using their lived experience.	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Community Services Advisory Committee, Youth Advisory Committee

Action 6.2: Promote volunteerism amongst older adults and seniors.

Table 17: Strategies for Action 6.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Identify training opportunities for older adults and seniors seeking to volunteer.	Ongoing	Community Services (Recreation)	Middlesex County Library
b) Work with schools to identify opportunities for students to assist seniors as part of their required community service hours.	Ongoing	Community Services (Recreation)	Schools
c) Research and implement strategies to replace volunteers that have aged out of positions.	Long-term	Community Services (Community Engagement)	Community Services Advisory Committee, Youth Advisory Committee, Service Clubs
d) Raise the profile and recognition of our volunteer community through additional awards, events and supports.	Long-term	Community Services	Local volunteers

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
e) Advocate for the development of a volunteer management system that connects volunteers to meaningful opportunities, including identifying the specific requirements for volunteer positions (e.g., scheduling, intensity, location, etc.).	n/a	External (community organizations)	Community Services, Middlesex County Library

Action 6.3: Improve access to and promotion of employment opportunities for older adults and seniors.

Table 18: Strategies for Action 6.3

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Develop skill-building workshops that support employment for older adults and seniors transitioning toward a second career or retirement (e.g., resume writing, interviewing practice, computer skills, etc.).	Short-term	Middlesex County Library, Middlesex County (Social Services)	Community organizations, Government agencies
b) Encourage local businesses to offer a range of employment opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities.	n/a	External (local businesses)	Government agencies



7. Communication and Information

Action 7.1: Support equitable communication strategies that increase engagement of older adults and seniors.

Table 19: Strategies for Action 7.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Advocate for reliable and widespread internet connectivity across the municipality.	In Progress	Council	Strategic Plan, Third-party internet providers
b) Promote the value of public libraries as a resource for community information. Ensure that important civic information is available at libraries.	Ongoing	Middlesex County Library	Corporate Services (Communications)
c) Establish a comprehensive plan to reach older adults and seniors using variety of media tactics and channels.	Short-term	Corporate Services (Communications)	Community Services
d) Develop an “Age-Friendly” section on the Municipal website to provide important and coordinated information.	Short-term	Corporate Services (Communications)	Community Services (Recreation), Service providers
e) Provide accessibility information for municipal parks, facilities and programs on the Middlesex Centre website.	Short-term	Community Services	Corporate Services (Communications), AODA, IASR Information and Communications Standard
f) Facilitate community forums to encourage networking and information sharing amongst residents and the Municipality.	Short-term	Community Services (Community Engagement)	Community organizations
g) Offer tours and open houses to introduce new residents to local parks, trails, facilities, and points of interest.	Short-term	Community Services	Strategic Plan
h) Pilot a program that connects trained senior volunteers with other seniors seeking information from trusted sources.	n/a	External (Community organizations)	Community Services, Middlesex County Library

Action 7.2: Ensure that information is provided in formats that are accessible to all residents.

Table 20: Strategies for Action 7.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Establish public realm signage standards and guidelines for a variety of applications (e.g., road network, public buildings, etc.).	Ongoing	Public Works & Engineering	Community Services, Ontario Building Code
b) Enhance dialogue and coordination amongst agencies that support local seniors and people with disabilities. Use this network to provide important information to isolated individuals.	Short-term	Community Services	Community organizations (e.g., Middlesex Family Connections, familyinfo.ca, etc.), IASR
c) Consider the use of MagnusCards (a free life-skill app for people with cognitive disabilities) to provide step-by-step “how to” guides for accessing Municipal services.	Long-term	Corporate Services (Communications)	Community Services
d) Distribute important information to places seniors frequent, such as recreation centres, libraries, post offices, banks, churches, doctors’ offices, etc.	n/a	External (community organizations, etc.)	Community Services, IASR Information and Communications Standard

8. Community Support and Health Services

Action 8.1: Promote healthy lifestyles and wellness for older adults and seniors.

Table 21: Strategies for Action 8.1

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Research and distribute educational material (websites, guides, pamphlets, etc.) outlining ways to integrate physical activity and mental wellness into daily life.	Short-term	Community Services (Recreation)	Pathways to Wellbeing Framework for Recreation, Canadian Centre for Activity and Aging
b) Coordinate with agencies to promote public health programs and services, including healthy aging, falls prevention, immunization, etc.	n/a	External (Health Unit, Community providers)	Community Services

Action 8.2: Support expanded access to community health services for Middlesex Centre residents.

Table 22: Strategies for Action 8.2

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Advocate for improved local access to primary, community and home health care services in Middlesex Centre. Create policies that support neighbourhood-based health care services at appropriate community locations.	Ongoing	Middlesex County (Social Services)	Community health providers, Official Plan
b) Develop partnerships to increase access to and awareness of mental health services and supports, including substance use and addiction services.	Ongoing	Middlesex County (Social Services)	Middlesex Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan
c) Encourage programs that help to connect residents to specialized health care services in London and region.	Ongoing	Middlesex County (Social Services)	Community providers
d) Support local and provincial “Dementia Friendly” initiatives.	Short-term	Community Services	Alzheimer’s Society, etc.
e) Explore recruitment of mobile health service providers or those willing to periodically work out of municipal facilities.	Long-term	Middlesex County (Social Services)	Community Services (Facility Booking)

Action 8.3: Increase awareness of community health services and supports.

Table 23: Strategies for Action 8.3

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
a) Advocate for strategies and partnerships to improve resident access to information about existing health care services and accommodations.	Short-term	Middlesex County (Social Services)	AODA, Human Rights Code – Duty to Accommodate
b) Promote awareness of virtual health and telemedicine services (e.g., southwesthealthline.ca).	n/a	External (Community providers)	Government agencies

Strategies	Timeframe	Lead	Resources
c) Identify strategies and partnerships to support high-risk and isolated residents (e.g., phone check-ins, free webinars/forums, etc.).	n/a	External (Community providers)	Government agencies
d) Support partnerships to enhance food security. Some examples include food bank delivery programs, expanded local grocery/food options, food education and meal preparation programs for seniors, etc.	n/a	External (Community providers)	Community Services



Implementation and Evaluation

Implementing and evaluating the actions identified for each of the domains in a logical sequence is the next step in the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan process. It is anticipated that the Municipality's Community Services Department will be the primary coordinating body. In this role, the Department should work with the Community Services Advisory Committee and Municipal Council to:

- regularly discuss the contents and priorities of the plan, and ensure that actions are being carried out appropriately;
- identify potential funding opportunities in order to support the implementation of actions; and
- coordinate with the community and partners to foster awareness of the plan and participate in the ongoing implementation of actions, where appropriate.

It is important that the Municipality monitor and report on the success to the community in adopting the “age-friendly” practices recommended in this plan. Implementing the plan will also require local champions to assist in promoting and supporting the identified actions through a variety of means.



Appendix I: Community Profile

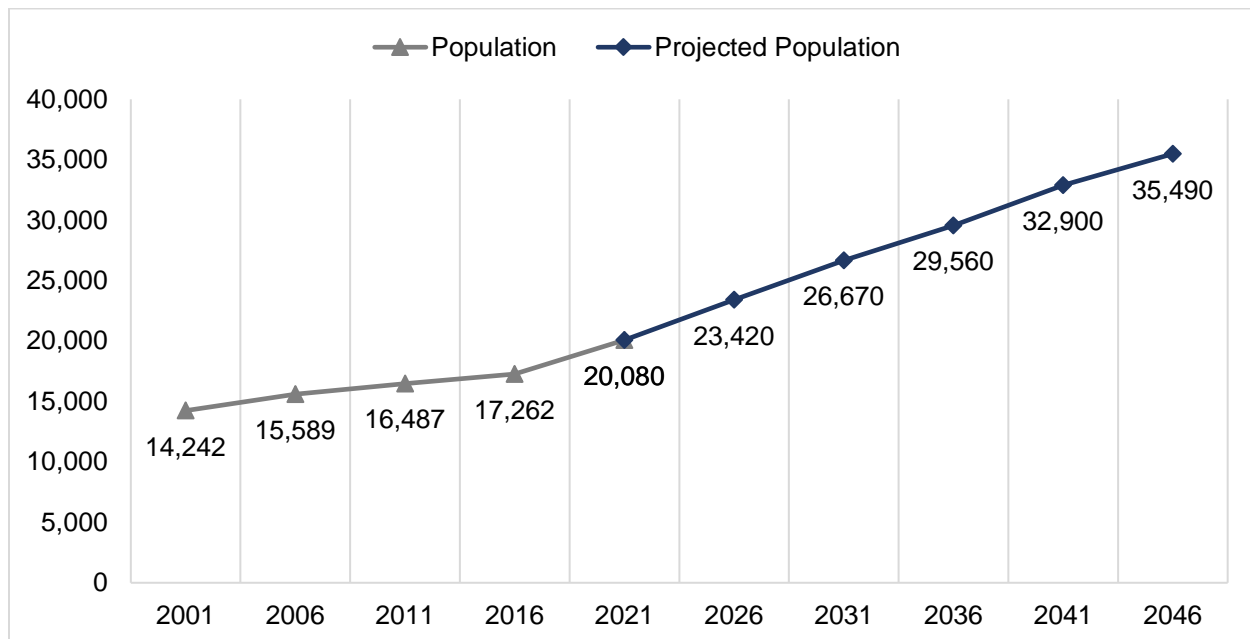
The information presented herein is largely based on the 2016 Statistics Canada Census. Data release dates for the 2021 Census are staggered, beginning in February 2022.

Historical and Projected Population Growth

The 2021 Census reported a population of 18,928 for the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, growing slowly but steadily over the previous 20 years. As Census figures are traditionally undercounted, the Municipality estimates its 2021 population to be 20,080⁶.

The Municipality's population forecast suggests that Middlesex Centre's growth rate will increase, with the population estimated to reach 26,670 by 2031 (33% growth from 2021) and 35,490 by 2046 (77% growth from 2021).

Figure 1: Historical and Projected Population, Municipality of Middlesex Centre (2001 – 2046)



Source: Statistics Canada Census Data 2006, 2011, & 2016 (excluding undercount) and, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., Middlesex County – Housing Allocations Letter Report, 2021.

⁶ Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. [Middlesex County Housing Allocations Letter Report](#). 2021

Age Composition

Overall, the Canadian population is aging as the baby boom generation enters their senior years. This trend is evident in the Municipality of Middlesex Centre as the median age of residents (43.5 years) was higher than Middlesex County (40.3 years) and the Province (41.3 years) in 2016.

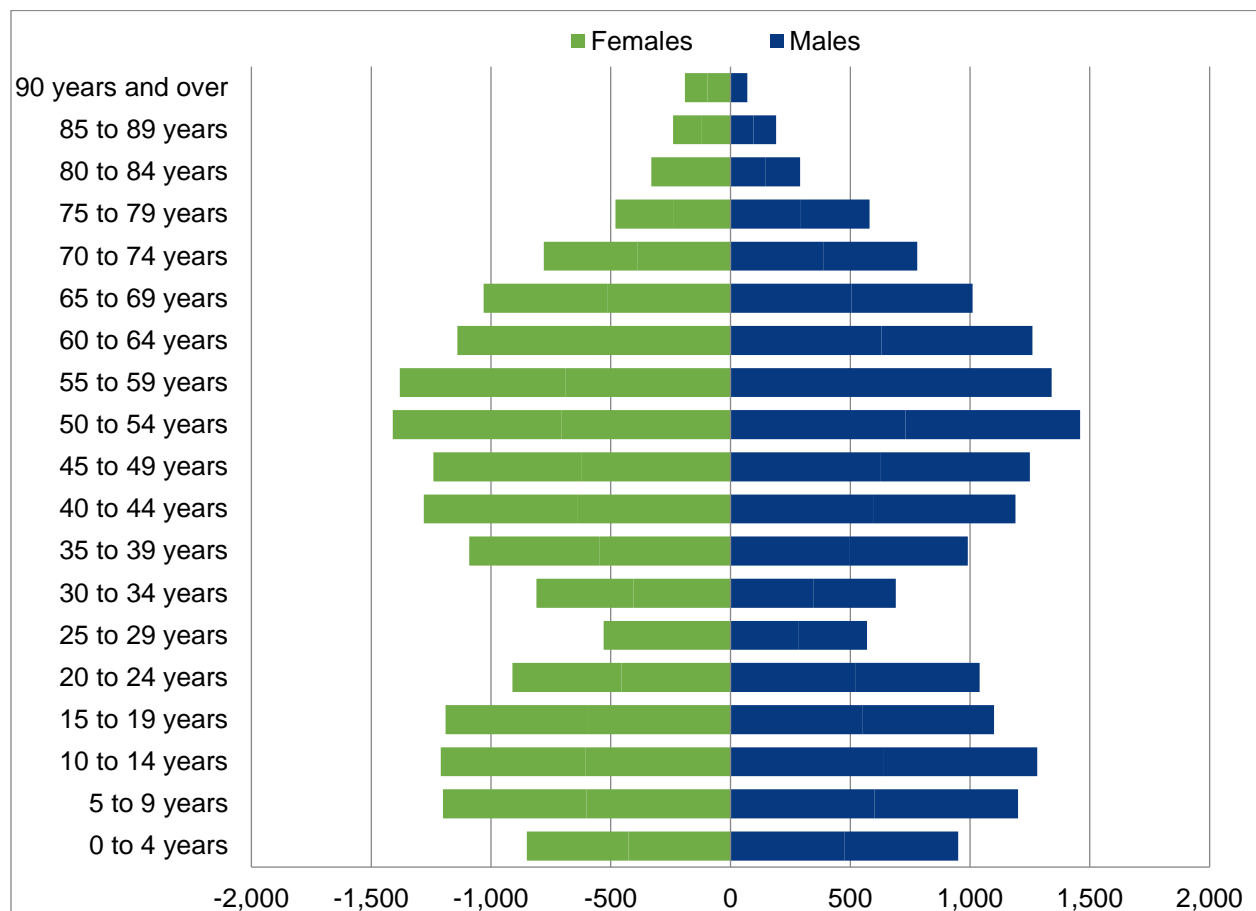
Table 24: Median Age (years), Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2006 - 2016)

Location	2006	2011	2016
Middlesex Centre	41.2	42.4	43.5
Middlesex County	38.5	39.8	40.3
Ontario	39.0	40.4	41.3

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data, 2006, 2011, & 2016.

Furthermore, this trend can be seen through a closer examination of the age group breakdown of residents within Middlesex Centre.

Figure 2: Middlesex Centre Population Pyramid (2016)



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Table 25: Population by Age, Municipality of Middlesex Centre (2006 – 2016)

Population by Age	2006	2016	Change (2006 – 2016)	Proportion of 2016 Population
Children (0 – 9)	1,890	2,105	11.4%	12.2%
Youth (10 – 19)	2,445	2,390	-2.2%	13.9%
Young Adults (20 – 34)	2,075	2,270	9.4%	13.2%
Mature Adults (35 – 54)	5,030	4,945	-1.7%	28.7%
Older Adults (55 – 69)	2,670	3,575	33.9%	20.7%
Seniors (70+)	1,485	1,965	32.3%	11.4%
Total	15,595	17,250	10.6%	100%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

As the national aging trends suggest, Middlesex Centre's demographic profile is expected to continue to age. With an increasing proportion of older adults, the Municipality can expect a greater demand for age-friendly services and opportunities oriented towards this age group.

Middlesex County as a whole is projected to continue to see an aging of the population according to its latest projections. Although specific projections by each age cohort are not available for the Municipality, applying the County-wide percentages to the Municipality's population results in the following estimates that illustrate increases across all age groups, most notably seniors. **The number of residents aged 55 years or older is forecasted to increase by 98% from 2021 to 2046 – an increase of 6,500 residents.**

Table 26: Population Forecast for the Municipality of Middlesex Centre (High Growth Scenario), Adapted

Age Cohort	2021 Population	2046 Population	# Change	% Change
0-19 years	4,819	8,163	3,344	69%
20-34 years	3,213	4,614	1,401	44%
35-44 years	2,410	3,904	1,494	62%
45-54 years	3,012	5,678	2,666	89%
55-74 years	5,020	8,518	3,498	70%
75+ years	1,606	4,614	3,007	187%
Total	20,080	35,490	15,410	77%

Source: Figure 1, Appendix A: Middlesex County Population and Household Forecast by Watson & Associates

Note: Age cohort forecasts for County applied to population forecasts for Middlesex Centre (High Growth Scenario)

People with Disabilities

Statistics Canada indicates that the prevalence of disabilities (whether it be physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health-related) among Canadians is more common than one may realize. Nearly 6.2 million Canadians aged 15 years and over – or 22% – reported one or more disabilities in 2017. This figure is greater in the London Census Metropolitan Area, with 26.8% of the population aged 15 years and over (over 102,000 people) living with a disability.⁷

Additional Canada-wide reporting from Statistics Canada includes:

- Across the nation, 2.7 million Canadians 15 years and over (9.6%) live with some degree of a mobility disability.⁸
- Approximately 17% of individuals with disabilities are housebound due to lack of access to transportation that does not meet their needs.⁹
- Two-fifths (40%) of persons with a physical disability require some type of aid or accessible component within their home in order to be mobile.¹⁰
- One-fifth (20%) of persons with a disability do not use the Internet.¹¹
- Employees that require substantial supports at work are less likely to receive them than employees that require more miniscule supports – specifically, 75% of employees that needed one workplace support were accommodated. However, employees that required three or more workplace supports were only accommodated 36% of the time.¹²
- The likelihood of living with a disability increases from 13% (15 to 24 years old) to 47% (75+ years old). Furthermore, women are 4% more likely to have or develop a disability than men (24% and 20% respectively).¹³
- Individuals with a disability are 21% less likely to be employed. The more severe the disability, the less likely the person is to be employed (76% of persons with mild disabilities are employed, versus 31% of persons with severe disabilities).¹⁴

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2017. Table 13-10-0750-01. Persons with and without disabilities aged 15 years and over, census metropolitan areas. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310075001>

⁸ Statistics Canada. 2020. Canadians with a Mobility Disability. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020085-eng.htm>

⁹ Statistics Canada. 2021. The accessibility experiences of Canadians with disabilities, 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/211027/dq211027d-eng.htm>

¹⁰ Statistics Canada. 2019. Workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities in Canada, 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2019001-eng.htm>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Statistics Canada. 2018. A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. 2018. A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>

Income, Employment and Education

According to the 2016 Census, the median income for individuals over the age of 15 in Middlesex Centre was \$45,800 in 2015, which is substantially higher than both the County median (\$33,533) and the Provincial median (\$33,539). The median income for households during the same period was \$108,971.

Table 27: Median Income of Individuals, Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2005 – 2015)

Location	2005	2015
Middlesex Centre	\$34,695	\$45,800
Middlesex County	\$27,611	\$33,533
Ontario	\$27,258	\$33,539

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006, & 2016 Census (excluding undercount).

Table 28: Median Income of Households, Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2005 – 2015)

Location	2005	2015
Middlesex Centre	\$84,043	\$108,971
Middlesex County	\$55,435	\$64,797
Ontario	\$60,455	\$74,287

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006, & 2016 Census (excluding undercount).

The percentage of households in the Municipality of Middlesex Centre that fall into the Low-Income Median After Tax (LIM-AT) (5.3%) is significantly lower than the County (17.2%), as well as the Province (14.4%).

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre had a higher employment participation rate in 2016 than Middlesex County and the Province, as well as a lower unemployment rate. Since 2006, labour force participation in Middlesex Centre has declined, and unemployment has increased.

Table 29: Labour Force Participation and Unemployment, Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2006 – 2016)

Employment	2006 Middlesex Centre	2006 Middlesex County	2006 Ontario	2016 Middlesex Centre	2016 Middlesex County	2016 Ontario
Participation Rate	74.8%	67.5%	67.1%	71.5%	64.1%	64.7%
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	6.1%	6.4%	4.4%	7.4%	7.4%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006, & 2016 Census (excluding undercount).

Education is strongly correlated with employment and income. Compared to Middlesex County and the Province in 2016 (16.8% and 17.5%) Middlesex Centre has a lower

percentage of residents with no certificate, diploma, or degree (13.1%). Conversely, Middlesex Centre has a higher percentage of residents with a post-secondary education (61.9%) compared to Middlesex County (55.3%) and Ontario (55.1%).

Table 30: Educational Attainment, Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2006 – 2016)

Education	2006 Middlesex Centre	2006 Middlesex County	2006 Ontario	2016 Middlesex Centre	2016 Middlesex County	2016 Ontario
No certificate, diploma, or degree	17.9%	21.3%	22.2%	13.1%	16.8%	17.5%
High school diploma, or equivalent	25.6%	28%	26.8%	25%	27.9%	27.4%
Post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree	56.5%	50.7%	51%	61.9%	55.3%	55.1%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006, & 2016 Census (excluding undercount).

Immigration and Ethnicity

As of 2016, 10.7% of Middlesex Centre residents were born in a country other than Canada, and the majority of these residents immigrated decades ago. Immigration has been increasing across the Province, and immigration trends suggest that this trend could be seen in communities such as Middlesex Centre over time.

Table 31: Immigration, Municipality of Middlesex Centre (2006 – 2016)

Immigration	2006	%	2011	%	2016	%
Non-immigrant	13,340	87.4%	14,335	88.8%	15,020	88.9%
Immigrant	1,850	12.1%	1,775	11%	1,805	10.7%
Non-permanent	70	0.5%	30	0.2%	65	0.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount), & National Household Survey 2011.

Language has also become less diverse within the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. In 2016, 90.7% of residents identified their mother tongue as English; 0.9% French; and 8.4% Other (1.9% Dutch; 0.9% German; and 0.9% Polish). The percentage of “other” mother tongue languages in Middlesex Centre is less than half that of the County (19.0%) and less than one-third that of the Province (27.4%).

Table 32: Mother Tongue, Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2006 – 2016)

Mother Tongue	2006 Middlesex Centre	2006 Middlesex County	2006 Ontario	2016 Middlesex Centre	2016 Middlesex County	2016 Ontario
English	89.3%	79.8%	68.6%	90.7%	79.8%	68.8%
French	0.9%	1.4%	4.1%	0.9%	1.2%	3.8%
Other	9.8%	18.9%	27.3%	8.4%	19%	27.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

Transportation

The Municipality of Middlesex Centre historically has a large modal split based on a review of Census data pertaining to travel to work. As of 2016, 95.9% of the workforce drove their own private vehicle to work or as a passenger in another private vehicle to work (an increase of 1.4% from 2006). Only 2.4% of the population walks or bikes to work; 0.7% take public transit; and 1.1% indicated that they use other methods of transportation.

Table 33: Transportation Modes, Municipality of Middlesex Centre, Middlesex County, & Ontario (2006 – 2016)

Transportation Mode	2006 Middlesex Centre	2006 Middlesex County	2006 Ontario	2016 Middlesex Centre	2016 Middlesex County	2016 Ontario
Private Vehicle	94.5%	84.2%	79.2%	95.9%	84.6%	77.9%
Public Transit	0.7%	7.2%	12.9%	0.7%	7.8%	14.6%
Walked / Biked	4.1%	7.6%	6.8%	2.4%	6.7%	6.5%
Other	0.7%	0.9%	1%	1.1%	0.9%	1%

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2006, & 2016 (excluding undercount).

The Municipality's 2021 Growth Management Strategy indicates that 72% of Middlesex Centre residents work in the City of London. Less than 10% commute outside Middlesex County (including London) for work.

Appendix II: Policy Scan

This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan has regard for other municipal plans, studies, reports and policies so that it fully captures the relevant policy context within the Municipality. This summary has been constructed to focus specifically on those items that may influence the creation of an Age-friendly Community in Middlesex Centre. Where appropriate, we have referenced the applicable domain in red.

Middlesex Centre Strategic Plan (2021 – 2026)

The Middlesex Centre Strategic Plan outlines a five-year framework that addresses priorities, issues and opportunities identified through community consultation.

VISION: A thriving, progressive and welcoming community that honours our rural roots and embraces our natural spaces.

MISSION: To deliver the highest standard in municipal services in a sustainable, professional and innovative manner.

VALUES: Respect, Cooperation, Innovation, Integrity

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: Engaged Community
Balanced Growth
Vibrant Local Economy
Sustainable Infrastructure and Services
Responsive Municipal Government

The following points outline Strategic Plan initiatives or directions that may have relevance to the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:

- Promote walkability and holistic street design
 - Require new development to include elements that promote walkability and holistic street design appropriate for residential areas, in accordance with Complete Street Design principles

Transportation:

- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services strategic priority
 - Improve safety for road uses by expanding the network of trails and bike lanes

- Expand the network of bicycle lanes and off-road trails; and
- Publish a map of walking and cycling trail routes
- Addressing road safety challenges
 - Implement the existing traffic calming policy on Middlesex Centre roads, provide education to all types of road users on road safety and further build on the principles of Vision Zero to provide a more resilient and safer road network

Housing:

- Balanced Growth strategic priority
 - Through the Official Plan Review and other means, influence new development to include attainably priced housing
 - By encouraging innovative and medium-density forms of housing and housing designed with seniors in mind
 - Allows for “granny flats” and infill housing, subject to appropriate regulations
 - Is designed with the specific needs of seniors in mind

Social Participation:

- A value of the community the Strategic Plan highlights and strives towards is that Middlesex Centre ensures that every resident can participate in the community and engage with the municipal government
- A strategic priority of Middlesex Centre is an Engaged Community

Civic Participation and Employment:

- A value of the community the Strategic Plan highlights and strives towards is that Middlesex Centre is an open, courteous and inclusive workplace that values and celebrates the varied backgrounds and experiences of the community
- Engaged Community strategic priority
 - Support community organizations and opportunities for volunteer involvement in the community

Communication and Information:

- Engaged Community strategic priority
 - Offer tours and open houses to introduce residents to Middlesex Centre’s major parks, trails, facilities, cultural assets and other points of interest
 - Host an annual community organization forum to facilitate networking, exchanging of priorities and sharing plans and concerns with each other and with the municipality
 - Complete a guide for organizations hosting or conducting special events and other volunteer led activities in municipal facilities
- Responsive Municipal Government strategic priority
 - Expand opportunities for digital and online service
 - Continue to enhance and promote the Municipality’s website as the one-stop source of information about services and activities

Middlesex Centre Official Plan Review – various documents (2020/21)

The Official Plan Review Background Report (2020) identifies the key issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Official Plan Review. The following points summarize the relevant objectives/directions/principles to creating an Age-Friendly Middlesex Centre.

Growth Management:

- Increase and promote a mix and range of housing types (Housing)
- Continue to plan for all age groups, particularly seniors since there is a large number within Middlesex Centre (the first of the baby boomers turned 70 in 2016).

Infrastructure:

- To support a transportation network that links communities throughout the County together and to the major centres (Transportation)
- To consider opportunities for public transit among major centres within and throughout the region (Transportation)
- To support widespread internet connectivity across the Municipality; (Communication and Information)
- To provide year-round opportunities of recreation and leisure for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities (Social Participation; Respect and Inclusion)

Specific policy directions and recommendations can also be found within the Draft Official Plan Review (2021). Of relevancy to age-friendly planning are the following proposed recommendations of policy change.

Draft Official Plan Section 1.7 – Municipal General Principles: Traditional Town and Country Planning in Middlesex Centre

- k) To provide a full range and diversity of housing types and tenures for residents at all stages of life, including rentals, affordable housing and seniors housing throughout the municipality. (Housing)
- l) To provide adequate educational, social, community and cultural services to serve Municipal residents, in co-ordination with existing or proposed services and facilities provided within adjacent municipalities. (Social Participation; Respect and Inclusion)
- m) To revitalize the Municipality's Village Centres as the centres of commercial activity and community services, and as primary gathering places for community social interaction. (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Social Participation)
- n) New neighbourhood development is encouraged to maintain and continue traditional settlement area patterns, and provide a high level of street and pedestrian connectivity within settlements to facilitate walkability and a highly connected village pattern. (Transportation)
- o) To enhance or revitalize existing civic or Municipal public spaces where appropriate through design and programming of use. To create new neighbourhood civic spaces of a variety of scales, from Municipal parks to neighbourhood village greens, in the context of the Municipality's overall parks and recreation system. (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)
- u) To provide an efficient and safe transportation network facilitating all forms of movement through and within the Municipality, including pedestrian and cycling movement within and between settlement areas. (Transportation)
- x) To facilitate the expansion of high-speed internet... (Respect and Inclusion; Communication and Information)
- y) To encourage open and constructive communication and consultation with the community on all planning matters within the Municipality. (Communication and Information)

Official Plan Section 5.2 – Residential Areas (Housing)

- To meet the 15% intensification target, ensure policies related to intensification allow for a full range and mix of housing options throughout the Municipality.
- References to the housing affordability benchmark will need to be updated to reflect the current benchmark.

Official Plan Section 6.4 – Design Policies – Streetscapes and Public or Semi-Public Realm (Transportation; Respect and Inclusion)

The following changes are recommended to the design policies for streetscapes and the public/semi-public realm:

- Section 6.4 a) should require accessible sidewalks and encourage opportunities to minimize the impacts of climate change, such as low impact development.
- Consideration can be had towards the introduction of sidewalks in new residential neighbourhoods, which support planned levels of activity, as well as the construction of infill sidewalks to connect the active mobility network.
- Section 6.4 f) and g) should encourage connectivity to municipal trails.

Official Plan Section 8.1 – General Parks and Recreation Goals (Respect and Inclusion)

- Introduce goals to promote equitable access to recreational experiences for all residents.

Official Plan Section 9.4 – Transportation and Utilities Policies (Transportation)

The transportation policies may be updated to provide a greater emphasis on the provision of active transportation infrastructure such as the provision of paved shoulders, sidewalks, bicycle parking and rails to trails projects.

Official Plan Section 9.6 – Secondary Units (Housing)

The Official Plan Review recommends that a new sub-section be added to address recent amendments to the Planning Act regarding additional dwelling units.

Official Plan Section 9.7 – Garden Suites (Housing)

The Municipality may want to consider permitting Garden Suites as a temporary use to provide an affordable housing option.

Middlesex Centre Community Services Master Plan Update (ongoing)

The Community Services Master Plan is currently in development. Once completed, it will provide strategic direction across the Municipality's community services department over a five-year period.

Throughout the initial public consultation phase, a number of discussions took place are relevant to key age-friendly domains.

- “Is there anything in the Master Plan to add a paved trail around the exterior of Poplar Hill Park to join with the existing trails. I've heard this request from quite a number of residents.” (Transportation)
- “As it appears cycling is very popular and active in MC. Are there plans to enhance safety, e.g., wider roads, dedicated bike lanes, paved trails, etc.?” (Transportation)
- “Are you able to include more benches for senior along walkways, ideally with some shade as well?” (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)
- “Mitchell, Ontario used to have a great Youth Centre, not sure if it is still operating, but could be a model worth exploring with the Youth Advisory. I know at one time there was a program for youth to get their high school volunteer hours by teaching seniors how to use Google.” (Civic Participation and Employment)

A survey was undertaken to support the Community Services Master Plan in which 841 total responses were received. The following points provide a high-level summary of the survey findings that are of relevance to age-friendly planning.

- The three most participated in activities pre-COVID-19 were walking or hiking for leisure (86% of respondents participated in this), then swimming (51%) and cycling or mountain biking (50%). (Social Participation)
- 60% of respondents were able to participate as often as they would like, conversely 33% did not. (Social Participation)
- 63% indicated that the biggest barrier to participation was the program or facility not being offered/available. (Social Participation)
- 31% of residents had “most” of their household's parks and recreation needs met within the Municipality. (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)
- 53% of respondents indicated that participating in formal recreational programs was important to their quality of life. Which is further emphasized by 58% of respondents participating once a week or more. Additionally, 77% of respondents

with children indicated that their children or child participates in recreational programming once a week or more. **(Social Participation)**

- 90% of respondents indicated that the Municipality should expand the network of walking trails. **(Transportation)**
- 77% indicated the Municipality should offer more recreational programs. **(Social Participation)**
- 43% believe the more facilities and programs for pickleball should be offered. **(Social Participation)**
- 22% of respondents are satisfied with recreational opportunities in Middlesex Centre for children (aged 0 to 12), 10% for teens (aged 13 to 18), 15% for adults (aged 19 to 54) and 16% for older adults and seniors (aged 55+). **(Social Participation)**
- 52% of respondents are satisfied with outdoor recreation facilities in the Municipality, 38% are satisfied with passive parks and open space, 32% with indoor recreation facilities and 32% with trails and pathways. **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**
- 87% of respondents agree that parks and recreation services should be a high priority for Municipal Council. **(Social Participation)**
- 59% of respondents agree that the amount of time it takes for travel to recreational activities is reasonable. **(Transportation)**
- 59% agree that they are generally aware of parks and recreation activities that are available in their area. **(Communication and Information)**
- 49% agree there are sufficient parks and open spaces in their area that meets their needs. **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**
- 43% agree that municipal staff provide excellent customer service. **(Respect and Social Inclusion)**

Middlesex Centre Accessibility Policy (2017)

Middlesex Centre is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and employees. The Municipality has implemented a multi-year Accessibility Plan that outlines how Middlesex Centre will prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. The plan will be posted on the municipal website and be available in an accessible format. The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated in consultation with people with disabilities and the Accessibility Advisory Committee. An annual status report will be prepared outlining the progress taken to implement the strategy of the Plan.

(Communication and Information)

In order to fulfil this, the Municipality's Accessibility Policy states that it will:

- Ensure policies, practices and procedures address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunities for people with disabilities **(Respect and Inclusion)**
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Municipality **(Respect and Inclusion)**
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's goods, services, programs and facilities **(Respect and Inclusion)**
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that accounts for the person's disability **(Respect and Inclusion; Communication and Information)**
- Provide alternate formats of information and communications that are produced by, or in direct control of the municipality. **(Communication and Information)**
- Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person in all municipally-owned and operated public facilities. **(Respect and Inclusion; Community Support and Health Services)**
- Ensure that an individual accompanied by a service animal is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep with the individual, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. **(Respect and Inclusion; Community Support and Health Services)**
- Provide accessibility training to all employees, volunteers, people participating in developing municipal policies, and people who provide goods, services and facilities on behalf of the Municipality. **(Civic Participation and Employment and Respect and Inclusion)**
- Include accessibility design, criteria and features when purchasing or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so (which will be explained upon request). **(Respect and Inclusion)**

Middlesex Centre Urban Design Guidelines

The following urban design guidelines are relevant to age-friendly community planning:

Design guidelines for new residential neighbourhoods: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- a) Design of safe, attractive, and energy-efficient neighbourhoods;
- d) Introduction of an integrated system of pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and open space trails that encourage physical activity and alternatives to the car for local travel;

- e) Design of safe, quiet tree-lined streets that provide visual variety and de-emphasize the presence of cars and garages as a dominant element in the streetscape.

Design guidelines for Local Streets: **(Transportation)**

- d) Sidewalks will be provided on both sides of local streets and will connect to adjacent roads to create continuous pedestrian routes through neighbourhoods while linking them together.

Design guidelines for community mailboxes: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- a) It is important to site these facilities so as to not conflict with the use and enjoyment of adjacent residential facilities. Community mail boxes should be located in areas providing on-street parking and adequate street lighting to promote safe use;
- b) Mail box areas will be positioned at convenient locations and enhanced in attractive, multi-functional kiosks, incorporating litter bins, benches and newspaper receptacles;
- c) The immediate area surrounding community mail boxes should include paved hard surfaces. Surfaces other than asphalt are preferred.

Design guidelines for stormwater management ponds: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- c) Where appropriate, walkways or boardwalks will be constructed to allow users to observe the marsh areas.

Design guidelines for multiple dwellings – common area landscaping: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- a) Formal landscaped pedestrian walkways must be provided from the street to the front doors of apartment buildings;

Design guidelines for Settlement Commercial development: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Transportation)**

- c) Provide both efficient vehicular circulation as well as a safe and attractive pedestrian environment that supports safe alternatives other than the car in settlement areas.

Design guidelines for pedestrian and vehicular circulation in Settlement Commercial developments: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- a) A clearly marked pedestrian walkway shall be provided from the public sidewalk on the fronting street to the principal building entrance;

- b) In general, the design of a safe and attractive pedestrian environment is encouraged;

Design guidelines for Employment Areas: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- b) To create open space and, where feasible, pedestrian connections.

Design guidelines for pedestrian and vehicular circulation in Employment Areas: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Transportation)**

- a) Design shall provide for ease and continuity of pedestrian movement between sites and within them. Provisions for barrier-free environments shall be taken into account;
- b) Distinctive paving patterns and materials are encouraged in key locations to promote pedestrian safety and assist in orientation;
- c) To encourage pedestrian movement, building should be sited to maximize the proximity to bike and walking routes.

Design guidelines for Institutional developments: **(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)**

- b) Design shall reinforce the continuity of the open space network within the community. Links to pedestrian routes within primary streetscapes and to park areas and natural open space will ensure this continuity.

Middlesex Centre Infrastructure Design Standards (revised 2018)

Road design: **(Transportation)**

- Maximum design speed for local urban roads shall be 60 km/hr with a posted speed of no more than 50 km/hr.
- Maximum design speed for local rural roads shall be 90 km/hr with a posted speed of no more than 80 km/hr.

Sidewalks: **(Transportation)**

- At minimum, sidewalks are to be provided as follows:
 - Local street – on one side (the municipality may require additional sidewalks to provide linkages to parks, schools or any areas where it is anticipated that there will be an increase in pedestrian activity);
 - Collector/arterial streets – on both sides; and

- Cul-de-sacs – subject to municipal review.
- Standard residential sidewalks are to be 1.5m wide; 100 mm concrete; and 100 mm granular base.
- All sidewalks terminating at a municipal right-of-way (ROW) should have cast iron tactile plates installed on them to meet the needs of AODA.

Bicycle Lanes: (Transportation)

- 1.5m wide on-street bicycle lanes are to be incorporated into the road network.
- The on-street bicycle lanes are to be as per the required pavement structure for the class of road on which the lane is being constructed.

Pedestrian Walkways: (Transportation)

- Are to be designed and constructed in accordance with Middlesex Centre's Standard Pedestrian Walkway.
- When designing a standard 3, or 4.6m width walkway, ensure that the full width of the walkway is sidewalk and not grass.
- Walkway sidewalks are to have a crossfall of 20mm/m or alternative swales.
- Pedestrian handrails are to be constructed on one side of the walkway where the walkway grades exceed 8%>
- Stairs with footings are to be constructed where walkway grades exceed 10%.
- Intermediate landings (no less than 1.5m) are to be provided where the total change in grade exceeds 1.8m.
- Driveway locations are to be located as far from the walkway as possible.
- A barricade and/or warning sign is required at the limit of a dead-end street and/or end of a proposed sidewalk on an existing ROW where the sidewalk terminates.
- A temporary sidewalk shall be constructed from the end of a proposed sidewalk to the adjacent road edge, at the curb and gutter and/or gravel shoulder.

Traffic Calming: (Transportation)

- Traffic calming measures are applied on primary and secondary collectors in residential areas and occasionally on local roads. If traffic calming measures are deemed necessary, based on an engineering report, they will only be applied after the completion of a comprehensive Traffic Calming Plan which will address

all matters relating to traffic calming within a designated area and after extensive public consultation.

- Shall be considered warranted on all roads in urban areas.
- At isolated rural intersections with non-continuous lighting on the intersecting roads, street lighting shall be considered warranted if the roadway meets or exceeds the requirements of the warrant provided in the Transportation Association of Canada Illumination of Isolated Rural Intersections guide.
- Reconstruction of a substandard, isolated rural intersection should be considered before illumination. Street lighting may also be installed at isolated rural intersections at the direction of the Director, Public Works and Engineering. Situations when this is warranted may include severe collisions, an inability to maintain adequate hazard markings for raised channelizing islands or the presence of an unusual number of long combination vehicles with reduced accelerating and braking abilities.

Middlesex Centre Trails Master Plan (2014)

(Outdoor Spaces and Buildings; Transportation)

The overall goal of the trail network plan is to continue to build-out, both physically and through policy, the active transportation network within Middlesex Centre (e.g., trails, sidewalks and cycling networks) to better connect the Municipality, and to promote active transportation amongst residents while ensuring that any action taken is done so while encompassing all ages of residents and abilities.

Key constraints of the trail network (relevant to age-friendly planning) identified through the formation of this Plan include:

- Lack of trail amenities such as signage, seating, washrooms and waste receptacles at the appropriate locations may discourage potential users, particularly young families and older adults
- Lack of knowledge of trails within the Municipality can often deter potential users from local leisure activities or active transportation choices
- Given that the Municipality is largely rural, settlement communities are spread out over large distances, creating difficulties in developing an active transportation network
- Crossing uncontrolled county roads such as Ilderton Road, Hyde Park Road, Komoka Road and Glendon Drive
- Highway traffic along major cycling routes

The Trails Master Plan includes a Trail Development Toolkit, which includes design standards and guidelines and other aspects (policy development tools, trail and risk management strategies and opportunities for trail education and promotion). Guidelines are provided for trail surfaces (based off AODA guidelines), trail widths, vertical heights, separation zones/buffers, clearance width, trail cross and running slopes, trails along railway corridors, boardwalks, ramps, trailheads, signage (support amenities (e.g., washrooms and benches/seating), lighting and landscaping – in which similar design elements are considered for sidewalks as well).

Official Plan Amendment #39 was approved by Council in 2017. This amendment introduces policies into the Official Plan related to the establishment, protection and enhancement of trail opportunities in the Municipality.

Middlesex Centre Ilderton Indoor Recreation Facility Needs Study (2017)

Outlined in this report are guiding principles for indoor recreation facility provision. Of note and relevancy to this Age-Friendly Plan:

- Ensure Accessibility (principle #2)
 - Emphasis should be placed on establishing indoor recreation facilities in visible and geographically accessible locations to function as destination hubs for people to gather. (**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Respect and Inclusion**)
- Ilderton is growing and the Municipality needs to bring the facilities up to contemporary building standards (e.g., accessibility). Further investment will be required to provide amenities that users desire. (**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and Respect and Inclusion**)

Middlesex County Joint Multi-year Accessibility Plan (2016 – 2021)

The County of Middlesex Joint Multi-year Accessibility Plan outlines the following outcomes:

- People with disabilities will have access to accessible services (**Community Support and Health Services**)
- People with disabilities will have access to alternate formats and communication supports for any information that the County produces (**Communication and Information**)

- A barrier-free recruitment process (Civic Participation and Employment)
- Greater accessibility in County-owned facilities (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings)
- County staff able to identify barriers to accessibility and actively seek solutions to prevent and remove barriers (Respect and Inclusion)

Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan (2019)

The Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan identifies strategies and actions related to housing issues over a five-year time period. The Plan identifies a number of strategies to inform the work of homeless prevention and housing. The following points summarize strategies and actions relevant to age-friendliness with specific focus on WHO's Housing dimension. (Housing)

- At the time of the Plan, there were 1,648 individuals and families experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness in Middlesex County
- The population is growing, resulting in increasing demand for housing
- Many households in Middlesex County are spending too much on housing; 45% of renters in Middlesex County are spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs
- Some households in Middlesex County are not able to cover basic costs such as rent and food; approximately 10% of Middlesex residents live in low-income households and struggle to pay bills and put food on the table
- Finding affordable housing in Middlesex County is difficult; the vacancy rate at the time of this Plan was 1.5%, equating to no available housing
- The average rent is not affordable to many residents; the average cost of rent for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$901 per month (2019). For an individual who earns minimum wage working in retail or the service industry, "affordable" is \$765 per month.
- Home ownership is not affordable to many residents; the average sale price of a home in Middlesex County is \$482,569 (2019 – this figure has likely increased since then). A household would need a minimum of \$100,00 a year to secure mortgage. In comparison, the median household income in Middlesex County is \$86,870 (2019)

The following points encompass age-friendly relevant discussions that were heard throughout public consultation for this Plan:

The top 5 most pressing housing issues in Middlesex County:

1. Lack of affordable housing;
2. Lack of rental housing;
3. Long wait lists for mental health and/or addiction support services;
4. Lack of emergency housing; and
5. Lack of income

Top 10 things needed to help people find and maintain safe, adequate, affordable housing:

1. More affordable housing;
2. More rent subsidies;
3. Increase in rental housing supply;
4. Emergency shelter and transitional housing;
5. More housing supports to maintain housing;
6. Coordinated access to services;
7. More education and awareness of current programs and supports;
8. Support services;
9. More housing linked to support services;
10. Greater system integration and collaboration

When asked to identify one priority action for the Plan, 60% of respondents indicated to 'Expand Affordable Housing'. Other strategies include:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing;
2. Provide immediate solutions to address homelessness;
3. Offer emergency financial supports;
4. Provide education and awareness about housing and homelessness; and
5. Implement coordination and collaboration across the service system

The Plan identifies 4 strategic priorities: affordability; range of housing options; housing supports; and service coordination. Within each strategic priority are a variety of strategic initiatives that were identified as steps to achieve the strategic priorities.

The strategic initiatives for Affordability include:

- Explore use of publicly owned, available lands for additional affordable housing units;
- Promote opportunities for redevelopment;
- Highlight the opportunities that exist in the County to fast-track development approvals;
- Make stakeholders aware of external funding opportunities (e.g., Federal, Provincial);

- Encourage local municipalities to promote affordable housing; and
- Identify and share best practices in affordability.

The strategic initiatives identified for a Range of Housing Options include:

- Review inventory of housing stock in the County;
- Encourage local municipalities to promote a range of housing options; and
- Provide local municipalities with educational material about housing options and affordability.

The strategic initiatives for Housing Supports include:

- Explore supportive and specializes housing opportunities;
- Leverage current units as transitional housing units;
- Advocate for additional support services across the County; and
- Explore the use of innovative programs to encourage inclusive access to housing.

Finally, the initiatives for Service Coordination include:

- Advocate for County access to funding to meet service goals;
- Identify and leverage partnership opportunities with all stakeholders; and
- Coordinate activities between stakeholders.

Middlesex (County) Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (2021)

The Ontario Community Safety and Well-Being Planning framework is used as a guide in developing Middlesex County's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. The framework emphasizes the following four areas in which communities can be made safer and healthier:

1. Social development;
2. Prevention;
3. Risk Intervention; and
4. Incident Response.

To ensure the plan is achievable and strategic in focus, priority areas have been identified and are as follows:

- Health – looking at physical and mental health and substance use and addiction (Community Support and Health Services)
- Housing and Homelessness – looking at housing and homelessness (Housing)

- Quality of Life – looking at employment, education and skills development, food security, transportation and municipal infrastructure (**Civic Participation and Employment**)
- Public Safety – looking at crime and mobility safety

Specific goals related to the aforementioned priority areas are outlined below:

Physical Health: (**Community Support and Health Services**)

1. Increase equitable access to culturally sensitive and safe care;
2. Promote and provide affordable services that encourage a healthy and active lifestyle; and
3. Address the impact of COVID-19.

Mental Health: (**Community Support and Health Services**)

1. Create a holistic approach to mental health;
2. Increase access to mental health services and supports in Middlesex County; and
3. Increase awareness about mental health challenges.

Substance Use and Addiction: (**Community Support and Health Services**)

1. Increase access to substance use and addiction services and supports;
2. Reduce the stigma associated with substance use and addiction; and
3. Enhance relationships and collaboration among service providers to holistically support individuals with addiction and substance use issues.

Housing and Homelessness: (**Housing**)

1. Increase affordable, quality and mixed housing options; and
2. Decrease homelessness or the potential of homelessness.

Employment, Education and Skills Development: (**Civic Participation and Employment**)

1. Increase engagement in the workforce; and
2. Increase educational success.

Food Security: (**Community Support and Health Services**)

1. Increase access to food;
2. Increase awareness about healthy eating; and
3. Maintain a sustainable food source for Middlesex.

Transportation: (Transportation)

1. Make cycling more convenient, safe and enjoyable for residents and visitors;
2. Ensure access to affordable and reliable community transportation;
3. Road infrastructure is safe and well-maintained;
4. Advocate for the presence of inter-provincial/national transportation systems; and
5. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by modelling through municipal governance.

Public Safety: (Community Support and Health Services)

1. Increase public safety; and
2. Increase the capacity of police officers to respond to public safety issues.

Middlesex County Cycling Strategy (2018)

The overall goal of the Cycling Strategy is to guide planning, design, implementation and operation of cycling infrastructure and programming in order to make the County a cycling friendly destination.

The Strategy identifies four objectives:

1. Create a plan for a connected and continuous system of cycling routes;
2. Establish a network that makes cycling more convenient and enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities;
3. Enhance Middlesex as a destination for cycling while creating healthy and sustainable communities; and
4. Provide the County and Municipal staff with tools to help with decision-making related to cycling.

There are several different benefits of cycling in terms of age-friendly planning, they are as follows:

- Physical and active lifestyle habits are formed; (Community Support and Health Services)
- Cardiovascular health and mental health improve, stress decreases; (Community Support and Health Services)
- Provides a transportation option for employment; (Transportation; Civic Participation and Employment)
- It promotes independence, mobility and health for aging populations; and (Transportation; Community Support and Health Services)
- It reduces transportation costs. (Transportation)

The Strategy encompasses the following vision, which identifies seven goals to prioritize: connectivity, accessibility, maintenance, awareness, tools, plans and policies and partnerships.

“Middlesex County to be made up of communities and destinations that are connected by a continuous system of cycling routes and facilities, which provide opportunities for people to bicycle for transportation, fitness, fun, or as part of a longer bicycle tour. Cycling is encouraged County-wide and is supported by the local area municipalities making it attractive to both residents and visitors.”

The Strategy reviews the existing cycling infrastructure and identifies areas to be improved as well as strengths, while accounting for cycling volumes on existing infrastructure. The Strategy identifies new routes as well as facilities that can be used for cycling throughout the County and that will help the County achieve its goal of becoming a cycling destination that embodies a continuous and connected network.

Specifically pertaining to Middlesex Centre, the Strategy identifies two areas where priority should be placed in improving or developing cycling infrastructure.

1. Glendon Drive – a connection between London, Komoka and Kilworth is proposed; and
2. Komoka Road – a second connection from Komoka to Poplar Hill is proposed.

Appendix III: Community Survey Results

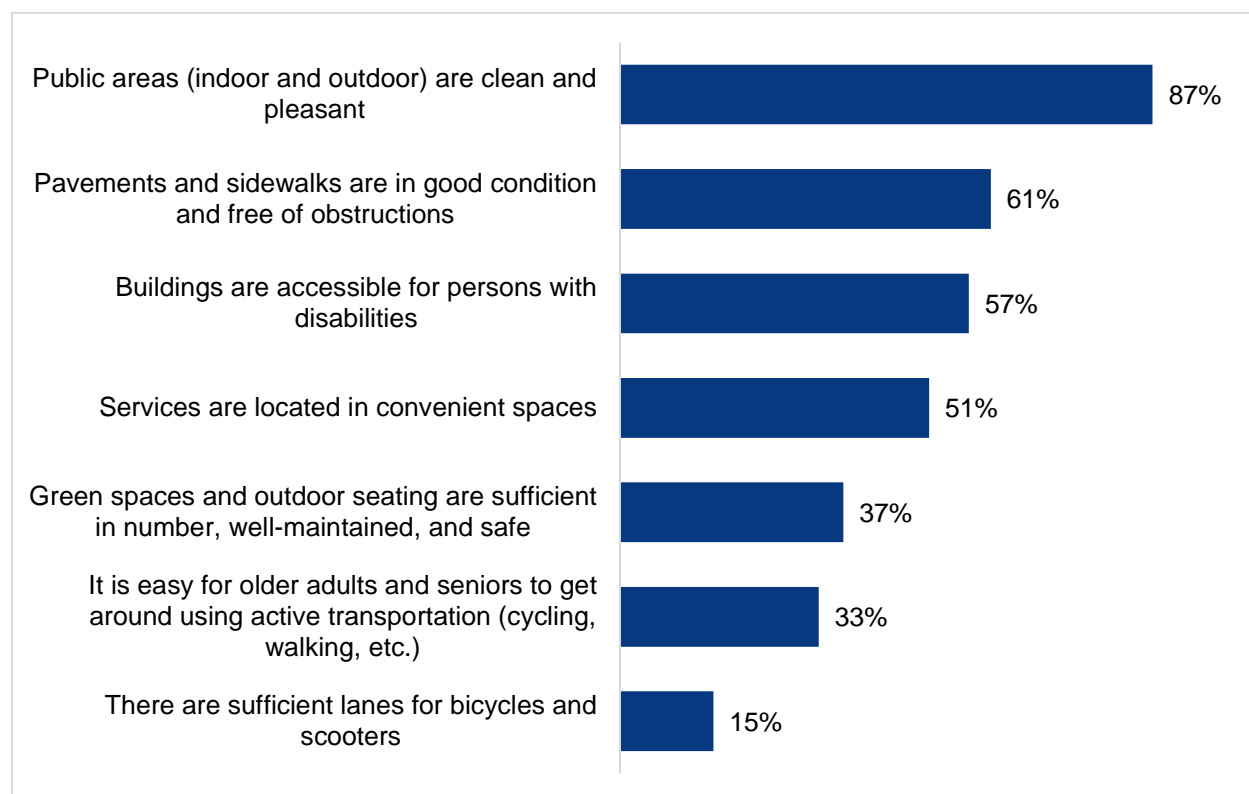
The following is a summary of community input received from the 96 responses to the Age-Friendly community survey. Being a voluntary, self-directed survey, response rates varied by question. Input has been summarized according to the eight age-friendly domains.

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

89% elected to provide input on outdoor spaces and buildings, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

The series began with having respondents indicate their level of agreement with a number of statements.

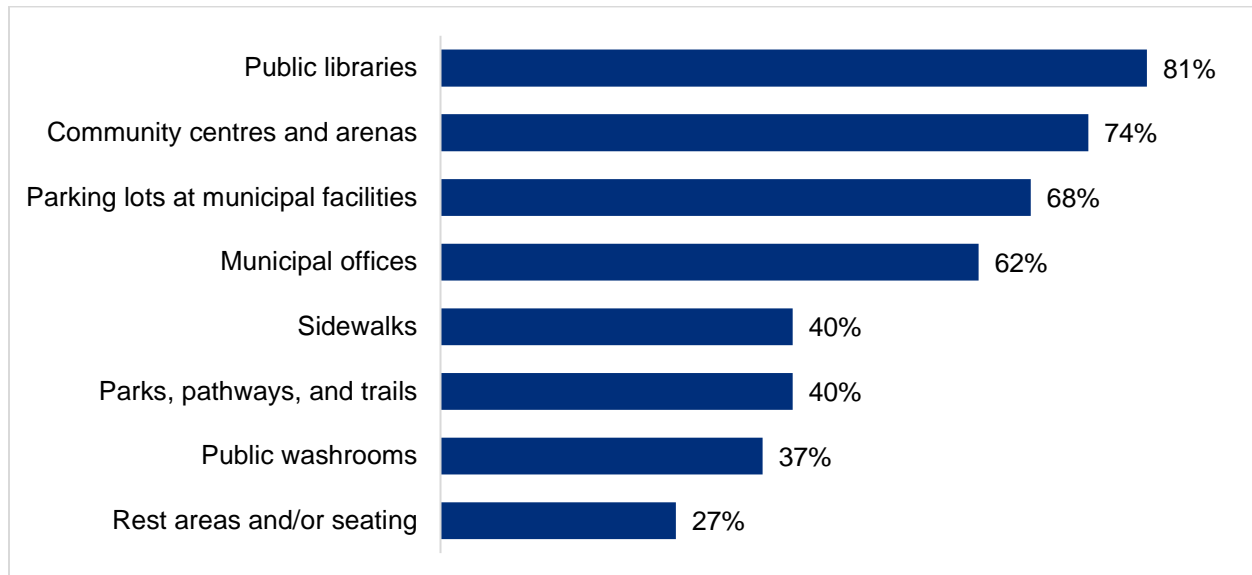
Figure 3: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Outdoor Spaces in Middlesex Centre (n=82 – 86)



It can be seen that respondents agreed most with indoor and outdoor public areas being clean and pleasant (87%), followed by pavements and sidewalks being in good condition and obstruction-free (61%). Respondents agreed the least with there being sufficient lanes for bicycles and scooters (15%).

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the accessibility of a number of amenities for older adults, seniors and people with disabilities. It can be seen that respondents were most satisfied with the accessibility of public libraries (81%), followed by community centres and arenas (74%). Respondents were least satisfied with the accessibility of rest areas and/or seating throughout the community (27%), followed by public washrooms (37%).

Figure 4: Satisfaction with Accessibility for Older Adults, Seniors and People with Disabilities in Middlesex Centre (n=76 – 81)



The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents' open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

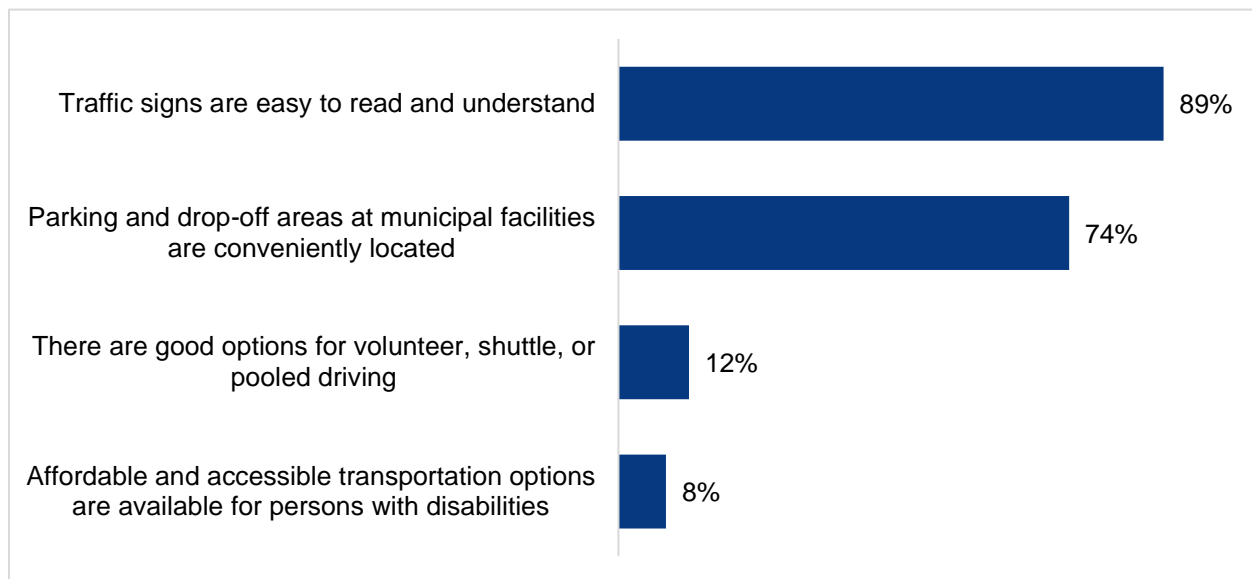
- 11 respondents indicated they would like additional support amenities (e.g., seating, shade areas, etc.) throughout Middlesex Centre;
- 10 individuals would like to see additional paths/trails throughout the municipality;
- 9 persons indicated they would like to see sidewalks added throughout the community;
- 2 respondents would like to see improved maintenance of outdoor spaces and public buildings; and
- 2 people would like to see a better effort to preserve greenspaces.

2. Transportation

82% elected to provide input on transportation, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

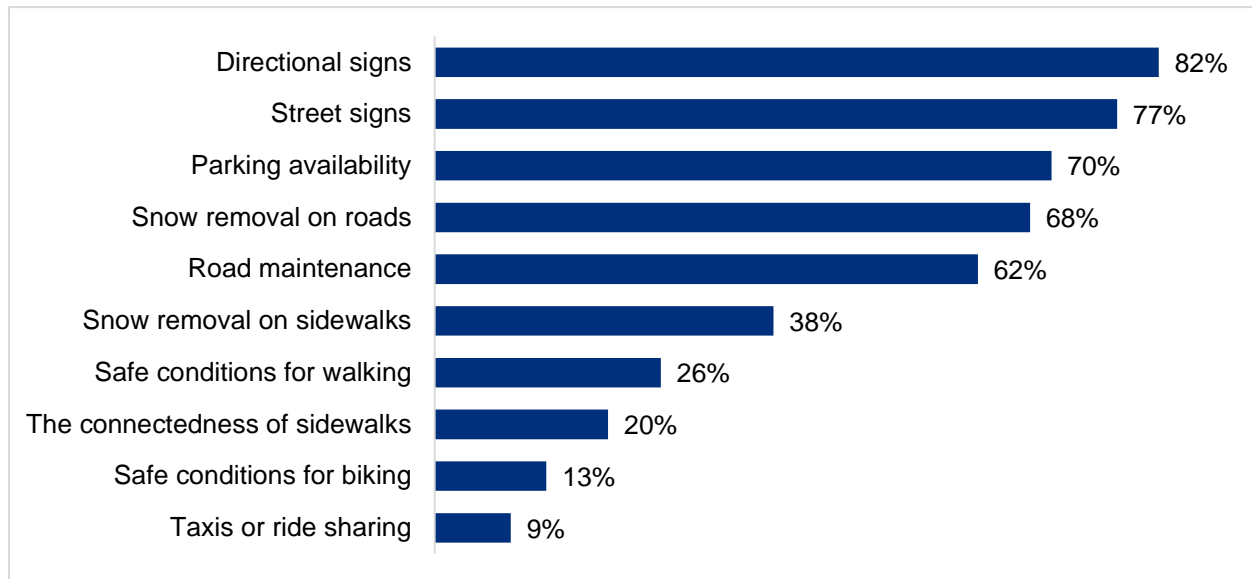
Figure 5: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Transportation in Middlesex Centre (n=64 – 76)



When travelling throughout Middlesex Centre, the large majority (93%) drive in their own personal automobile. A smaller percentage (30%) walk. Multiple responses were permitted:

- 93% drive their own car, truck or van;
- 30% walk;
- 25% are a passenger in a car, truck or van; and
- 9% ride a bicycle or an e-bike.

The next question asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with transportation and mobility in Middlesex Centre. It can be seen that respondents were most satisfied with the directional signs throughout the road network (82%), followed by street signs (78%) and parking availability (70%). Respondents were least satisfied with taxis or ride-sharing opportunities (9%).

Figure 6: Satisfaction with Transportation and Mobility in Middlesex Centre (n=58 – 74)

The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents' open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

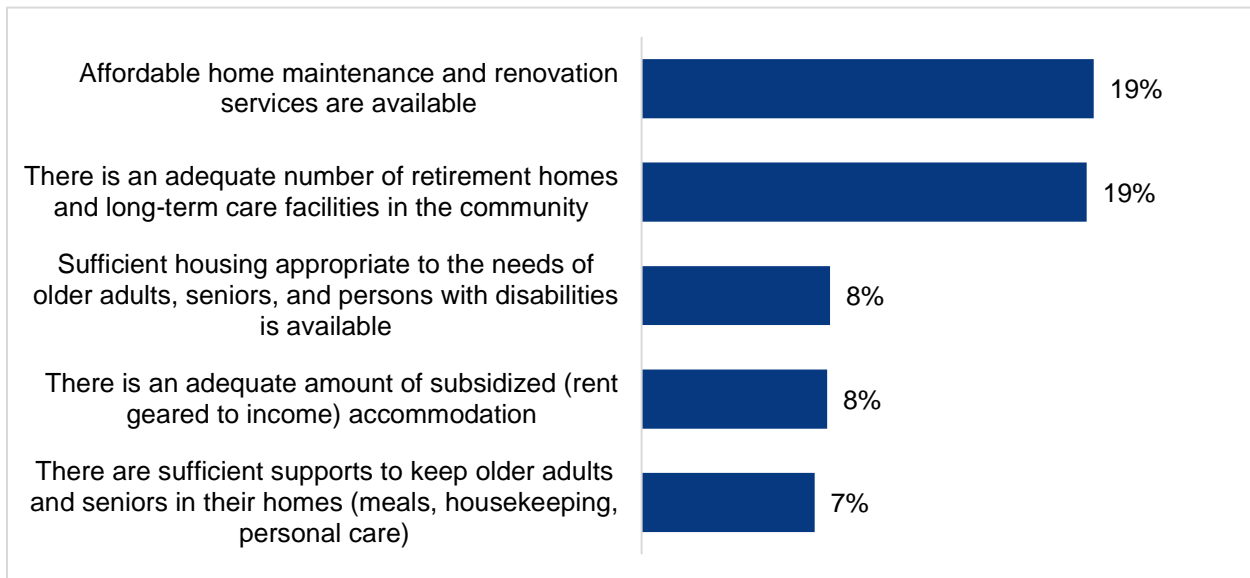
- 14 people indicated they would like to see additional sidewalks throughout Middlesex Centre;
- 7 people would like to see additional cycling lanes added throughout Middlesex Centre;
- 7 indicated they would like to see safer intersections, specifically for pedestrian crossings;
- 5 respondents would like wider roads and shoulders;
- 4 would like to see the existing sidewalks improved;
- 4 people indicated they would like a shuttle service, along with 4 people indicating they would like a taxi service;
- 3 respondents would like more public transportation offerings;
- 3 would like additional streetlighting throughout the community; and
- 2 would like more paved roads.

3. Housing

73% elected to provide input on housing, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

Figure 7: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Housing in Middlesex Centre (n=54 – 63)



Nearly all (97%) of respondents indicated they live in a private house (e.g., single, semi, townhouse). Furthermore, 90% of respondents indicated that their current residence adequately meets their needs.

The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents' open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

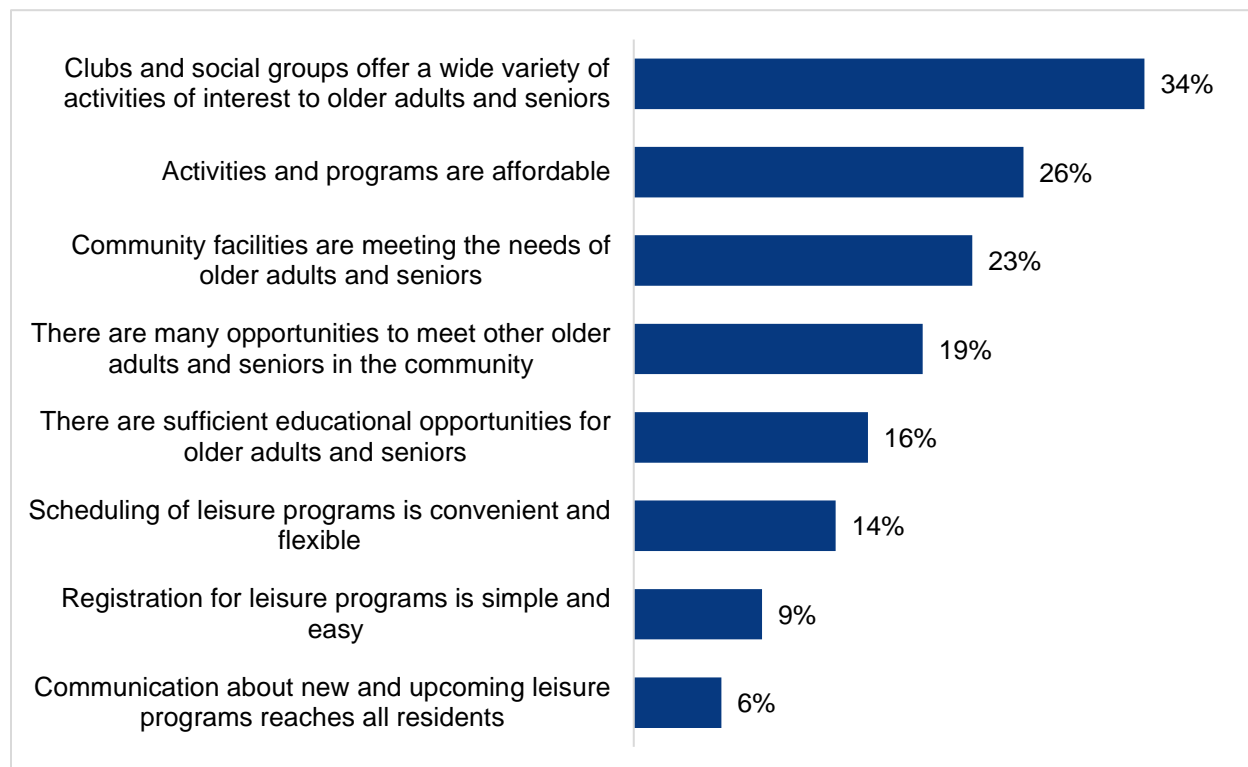
- 9 people would like to see more affordable housing options for all ages;
- 5 respondents would like to see additional senior housing opportunities throughout the community;
- 4 people would like to see more of a variety of housing types;

4. Social Participation

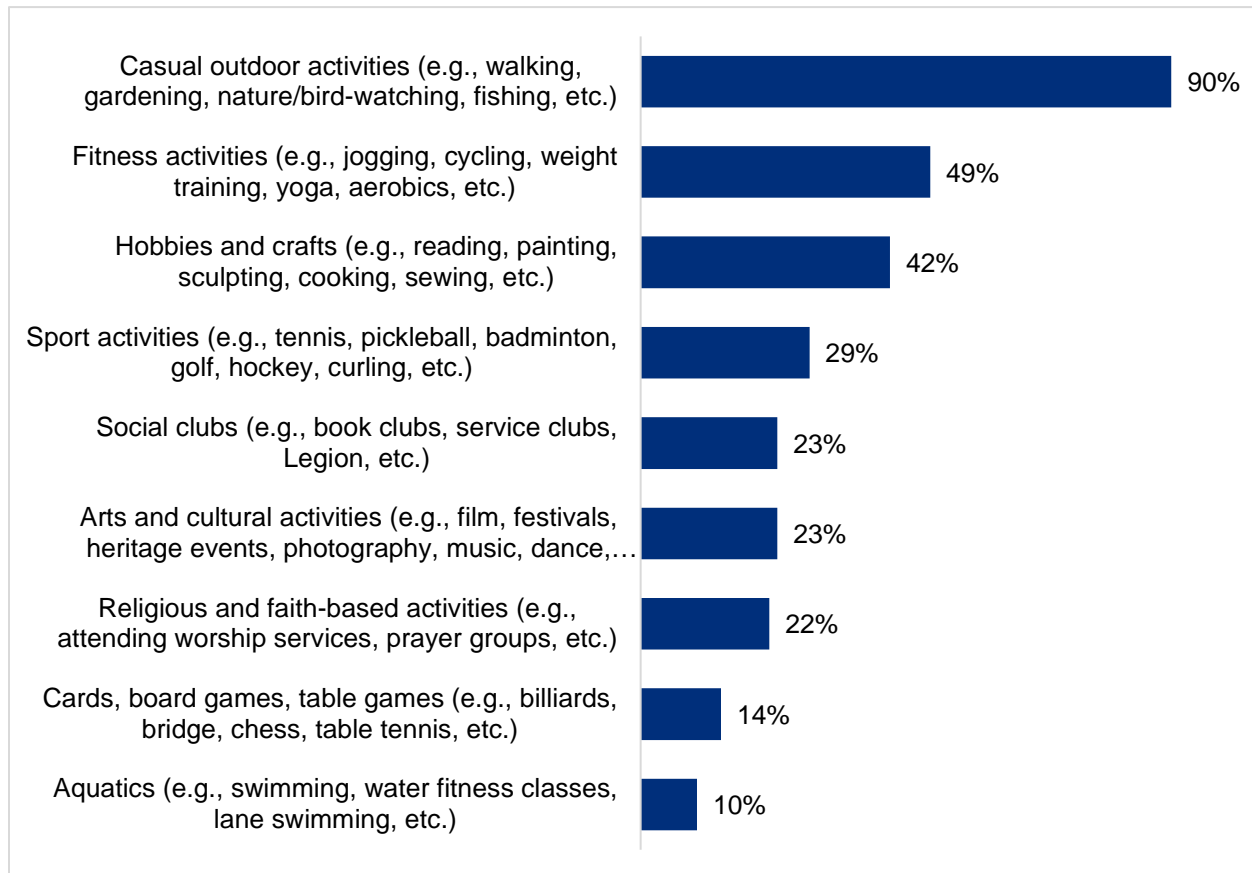
84% elected to provide input on social participation, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

Figure 8: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Social Participation in Middlesex Centre (n=58 – 70)



Respondents then indicated which types of leisure, social, cultural, and spiritual activities they participated prior to COVID-19. It can be seen that nearly all respondents (90%) participated in casual outdoor activities (e.g., walking, gardening, nature/bird-watching, fishing, etc.), followed by fitness activities (49%). The least popular activity was aquatics (10%).

Figure 9: Activities Participated in Prior to COVID-19 (n=73)

The survey then asked respondents how they expect their social and leisure participation to change in the next five years.

- 44% indicated they expect their participation to increase;
- 42% believe their participation will remain the same;
- 7% anticipate their participation to decrease; and
- 7% of respondents were unsure.

The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents' open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

- 12 respondents indicated that social participation could be improved if there was better advertising of social opportunities;
- 3 persons indicated they would like an indoor pool;
- 2 individuals would like more special events;

- 2 respondents identified walking/hiking groups as a good opportunity to improve social participation; and
- 2 people indicated that a curling club could improve participation.

5. Respect and Social Inclusion

69% elected to provide input on respect and social inclusion, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

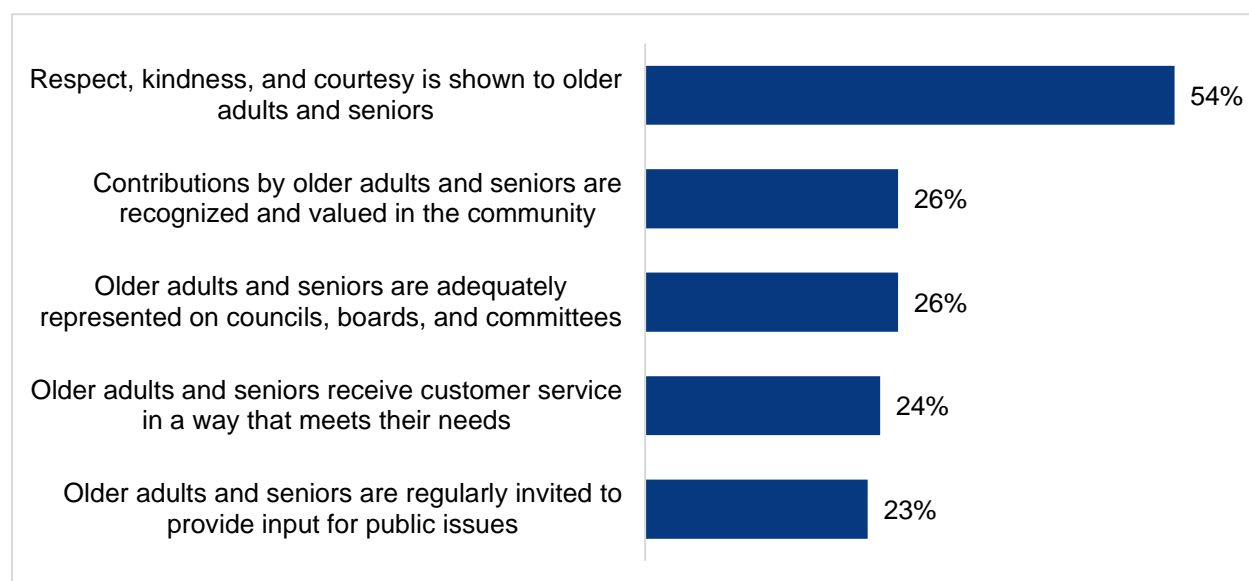
Respondents were asked to indicate their own personal sense of community belonging:

- 14% of respondents indicated a very strong sense of community belonging;
- 31% indicated a strong sense;
- 32% a fair sense;
- 12% a weak sense; and
- 12% a very weak sense of community belonging.

Nearly two-fifths (37%) of respondents feel that their opinions are valued amongst other members of the community. A similar percentage (36%) did not feel as though their opinion was valued. The balance (27%) were unsure of their stance on the matter.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

Figure 10: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Respect and Social Inclusion in Middlesex Centre (n=54 – 59)



The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents’ open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

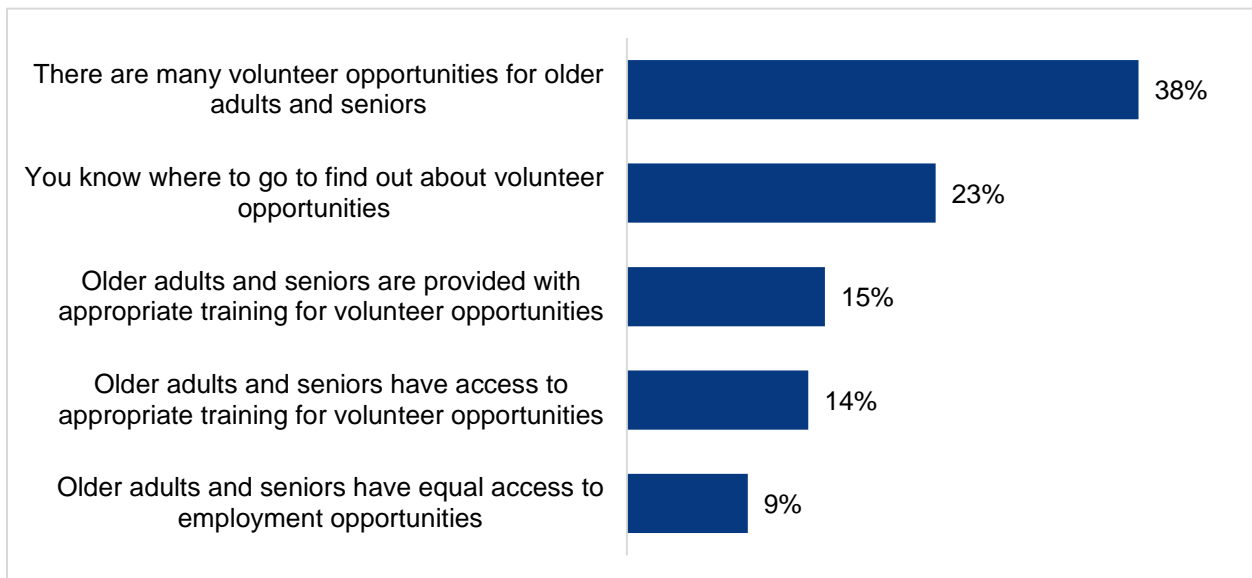
- 4 respondents indicated that older adults and seniors need to be included in decision-making;
- 1 person suggested offering additional multi-cultural activities to broaden awareness and education;
- 1 person suggested offering additional older adult and senior opportunities in this area; and
- 1 person suggested having virtual council meetings that everyone can attend.

6. Civic Participation and Employment

69% elected to provide input on civic participation and employment, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

Figure 11: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Civic Participation and Employment in Middlesex Centre (n=44 – 56)



The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents’ open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

- 5 respondents indicated that the advertisement and communication of volunteer opportunities could be increased; and

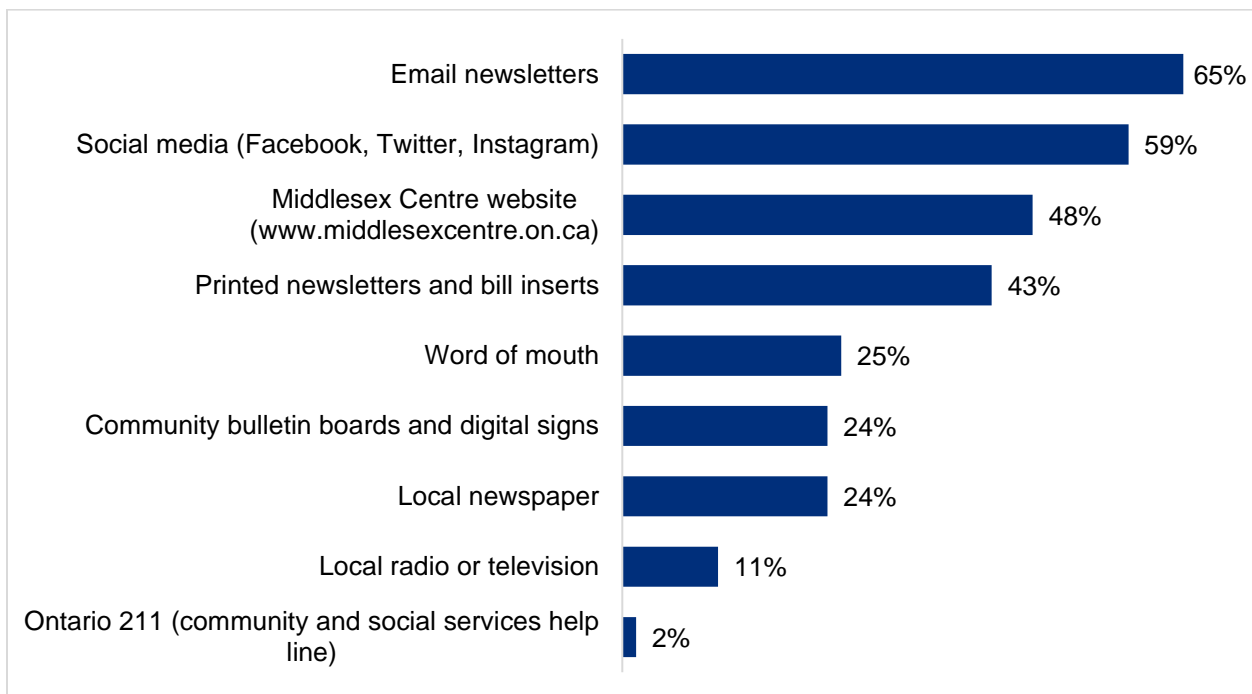
- 1 person suggested creating a local job bank in Middlesex Centre.

7. Communication and Information

77% elected to provide input on communication and information, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

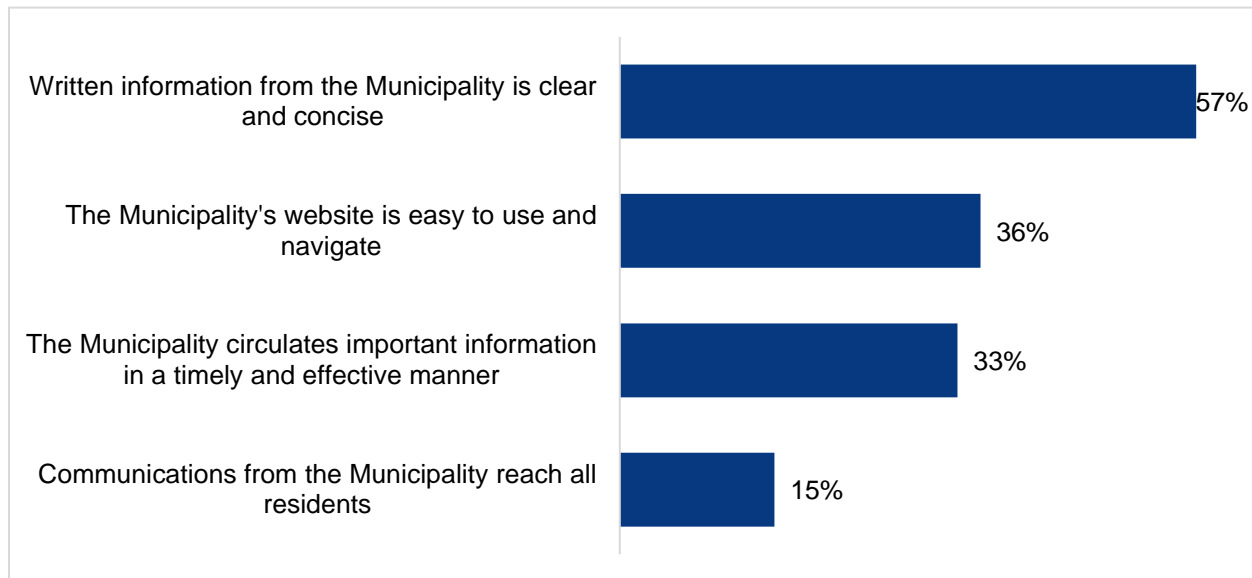
Respondents were asked what their preferred method of staying informed about programs and services in Middlesex Centre. It can be seen that most respondents prefer to be informed through email newsletters (65%) through social media sites (59%) and through the Middlesex Centre website (48%). The preference for the Ontario 211 service is quite low (2%).

Figure 12: Preferred Methods of Staying Informed About Programs and Services in Middlesex Centre (n=63)



Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

Figure 13: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Communication and Information in Middlesex Centre (n=58 – 60)



The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents' open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

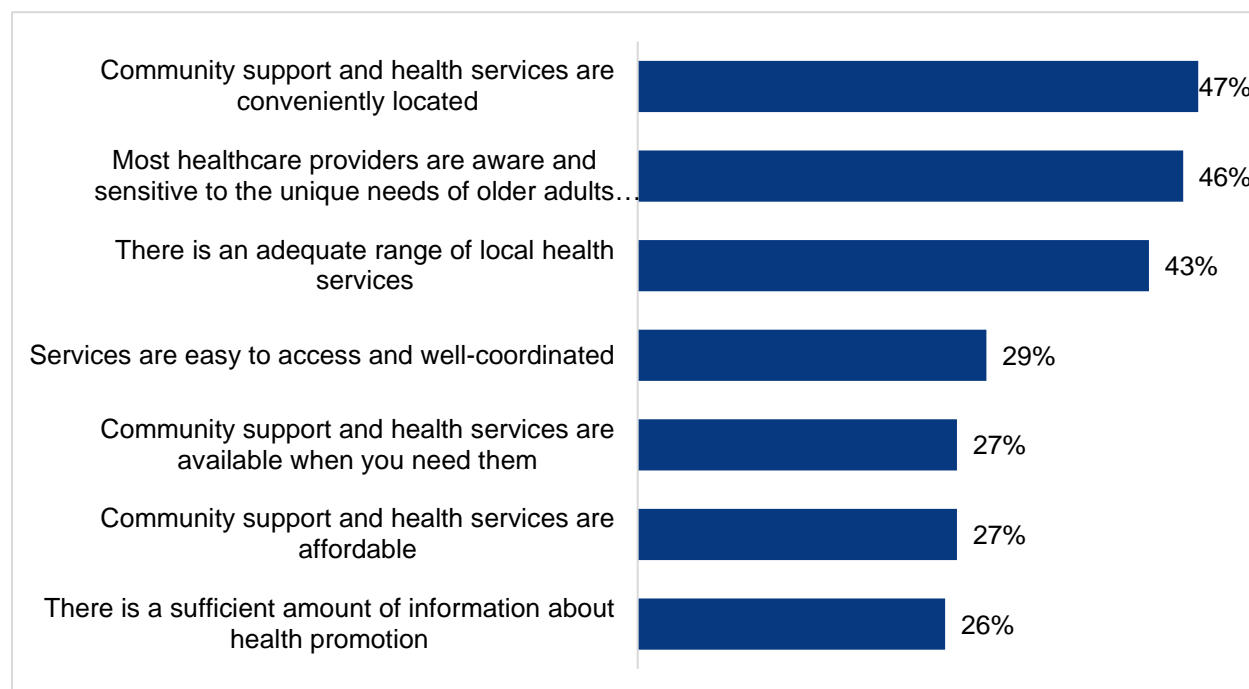
- 4 respondents indicated that additional physical advertising at locations could improve communication and information;
- 2 respondents indicated that all activities should be advertised;
- 1 person suggested French advertising as well;
- 1 person suggested monthly bulletins; and
- 1 person explained that the municipality's website could be improved so that it is more user-friendly.

8. Community Support and Health Services

74% elected to provide input on community support and health services, including level of agreement and satisfaction levels.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a number of statements.

Figure 14: Respondents Agreement with Statements Pertaining to Community Support and Health Services in Middlesex Centre (n=50 – 58)



Respondents described their current physical health as follows:

- 23% very good;
- 48% good;
- 26% fair;
- 3% poor; and
- 0% very poor.

Respondents described their mental health and well-being as follows:

- 28% very good;
- 48% good;
- 18% fair;
- 5% poor; and
- 2% very poor.

The following points summarize key themes derived from respondents' open-ended input on this age-friendly domain:

- 5 respondents suggested additional doctor offices/medical clinics within the community;
- 2 respondents indicated that additional services may help;
- 2 people suggested adding a lab to the community; and
- 1 person indicated that improving the advertising of health services would be beneficial.

Priorities

Respondents prioritized the eight age-friendly domains based on those that are most important to them. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) believe that community support and health services should have the highest priority. This is followed by communication and information (62%) and respect and social participation (53%). Of note, civic participation and employment was a significantly lower priority (13%) than the other domains.

Table 34: Priority Levels of the 8 WHO Domains (n=75 – 78)

Domains	Low Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority
Community Support and Health Services	1%	22%	75%
Communication and Information	3%	29%	62%
Respect and Social Inclusion	1%	40%	53%
Transportation	8%	44%	47%
Social Participation	7%	45%	47%
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	1%	53%	43%
Housing	8%	46%	43%
Civic Participation and Employment	16%	61%	13%

Don't know responses have been removed.

Profile of Survey Respondents

To inform the analysis and to understand the representativeness of the sample, basic demographic information was collected from respondents.

All respondents (100%) that elected to answer indicated that they are residents of Middlesex Centre are residents of the community.

The age distribution of respondents and their household members is shown in the following table, with a comparison to the 2016 Census. The average household size of survey respondents was 2.4 persons.

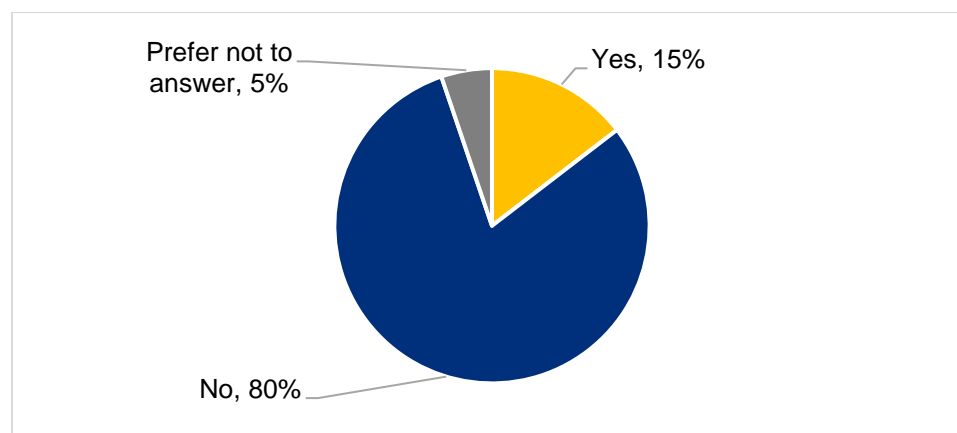
Table 35: Age Composition of Households (n=96)

Age	Survey Sample	2016 Census
Under 40 years	9%	45%
40 to 44 years	4%	7%
45 to 49 years	5%	7%
50 to 54 years	9%	8%
55 to 59 years	8%	8%
60 to 64 years	23%	7%
65 to 69 years	19%	6%
70 to 74 years	11%	5%
75 to 79 years	8%	3%
80 to 84 years	1%	2%
85 to 89 years	1%	1%

Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada.

One out of seven respondents (15%) identify as a person living with a disability. This was defined as having a long-term physical, mental, emotional/psychiatric or learning disability that may result in a person experiencing disadvantage or encountering barriers to employment, public appointment or other opportunities for full participation in society.

Figure 15: Respondents Identifying as a Person Living with a Disability (n=96)



Respondent area of residence is shown below (closest settlement area):

- 52% Kilworth/Komoka;
- 21% Ilderton;
- 10% Coldstream/Poplar Hill;
- 8% Delaware;

- 4% Bryanston;
- 3% Arva; and
- 3% Lobo.

Household composition is shown in the following table – the majority were a couple with no children living at home (“empty nesters”).

Table 36: Household Composition of Respondents (n=78)

Household Composition	%
Couple with no children living at home	54%
Couple with children living at home	22%
Adult living alone	10%
Extended family	4%
Single parent with children	1%
Prefer not to answer	6%

Appendix IV: Input from Stakeholder and Public Sessions

The following is a summary of input from the three stakeholder focus groups held in September 2021 and the public input session hosted on October 4, 2021. Input has been summarized according to the eight age-friendly domains. The following organizations were represented and participated in the discussions.

- Alzheimer's Society
- Middlesex Centre Building Department
- Middlesex Centre Community Services Department
- Middlesex Centre Community Services Advisory Committee
- Middlesex Centre Municipal Council
- Middlesex Centre Public Works and Engineering
- Middlesex Community Futures
- Middlesex County Accessibility Coordinator
- Middlesex County Library
- Middlesex County Planning Department
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- VON
- YMCA

What Does an “Age-Friendly Middlesex Centre” Mean?

- Full participation of older adults, seniors and people with disabilities in all services and decision-making;
- Recreation for all ages;
- Appropriate signage that is inclusive to older adults, seniors, persons with visual and other disabilities;
- Having accessible spaces throughout the community;
- Being able to “age in place” (e.g., the built environment and amenities are able to support people throughout the aging process – beginning at 55 years old);
- Closing the gaps between older adults/seniors and younger adults, youth and children;
- An environment that promotes efficient mobility, is supportive, and has easily accessible services;

- Consideration is given to people of all ages, backgrounds and races and equality; and
- An improved overall quality of life for all residents.

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Tell us about your experiences using outdoor spaces and buildings in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- Most municipal community centres and libraries appear to be accessible; many are newer and built to today's design standards. These are valued spaces that serve as a "third place" within the community. Staff are welcoming and helpful.
- Some stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to find spaces that are truly accessible where everyone can participate. The example that was given was Coldstream Conservation Area, which is not wheelchair or stroller friendly.
- Access points to public spaces were identified as being potentially problematic. Access points need to be located in logical areas so that individuals with mobility issues are not exhausted by the time they get to the access point.
- Many older adults, seniors and people with disabilities are seeking controlled environments (e.g., a flat ground space in which individuals do not fear a fall or any other events).
- Some communities have their own unique barriers such as the hill in Delaware, the busy main road in Coldstream and the lack of support amenities – specifically benches – throughout Ilderton.
- Many older adults and seniors have expressed interest in a public indoor pool. Access to the indoor walking track in Komoka is only for YMCA members.

How can we make outdoor spaces and buildings more "age-friendly" in Middlesex Centre?

- Prioritize safe and accessible outdoor spaces. Spaces do not need to be entirely paved, but they should be accessible in certain locations. Provide this information online.
- Provide additional support amenities throughout the community. Specifically additional seating options in public spaces as well as additional public washrooms and bike racks.
- Have community spaces where older adults, seniors and people with disabilities can gather. The spaces should be accessible, safe and welcoming.
- Prioritize improving parks by incorporating accessible pathways/walkways throughout, particularly spaces where pathways dead-end at parks. This is

important as there are many older adults that go to parks with grandchildren that could benefit from having more accessible paths.

- Improve the existing sidewalk network by adding additional sidewalks throughout the community.
- Look at spaces and buildings that can be used for inter-generational opportunities and promote them.
- Add signage through the trail systems every few hundred metres that identifies location on the trail (through a number system); this would be beneficial in cases of emergency.
- Add interactive areas that individuals can stop at and perform some sort of fitness exercise or something for children.
- Ensure that parks and trails are equitably distributed to promote access and activity for all.
- Incorporate Dementia-friendly outdoor spaces throughout the Municipality.

2. Transportation

Tell us about your experiences using transportation and getting around in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- Middlesex Centre is very car-oriented. In order to get somewhere or access services you need to drive everywhere. There is a lack of diverse transportation options in Middlesex Centre, both public and private.
- Winter driving can be a barrier for many seniors.
- Service providers (VON) currently have only two transportation vehicles that are accessible and affordable. However, as a result the availability for people that need the vehicles is limited – greater access and resources is desired.
- More funding for transportation services was suggested.

How can we make transportation more “Age-Friendly” in Middlesex Centre?

- Add additional public transportation stops. Locations such as community centres or recreational/community spaces could be considered.
- Establish criteria to determine areas where traffic calming is warranted. This may also reduce design widths of local roads to slow traffic.
- Add cycling lanes along various roads while tying in with the County’s Cycling Strategy.

- Explore ride-sharing options.
- Build out the existing sidewalk network.
- Provide a scaled-down fair option for older adults/seniors/people with disabilities.
- Establish a daily transportation route that could go to older adults and seniors' buildings and bring them into London or other areas for more than just medical appointments (e.g., activities such as visiting family and friends, shopping, etc.).
- Look at successful models elsewhere, such as the City of Woodstock, which uses an online booking system. Another suggestion was to look into "MagnusCards" (similar to London Transit), which provides digital life skills guides that break tasks down into easier steps using general language.

3. Housing

Tell us about your experiences with housing in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- People are moving to Middlesex Centre from outside the community to have a big house and yard, however the growing population is causing the Municipality to shift its focus to promote a variety of housing mixes and developments such as low-rise apartments, condominiums, semis, etc.
- Affordability is a growing issue. Developers are beginning to explore different tenure options (e.g., rentals vs. ownership) and the focus may be slowly shifting to more seniors' housing.
- Assisted living buildings are always in high demand (there are none in Middlesex Centre), such as the Ailsa Craig Craigwiell apartments (connected to Craigwiell Care Home) in North Middlesex.
- Some housing complexes do not want higher needs clientele in their buildings, they want independent living. There is still a NIMBY factor in some cases.
- While there is a desire to "age in place", as people age, the size of their house and property can become an issue.

How can we make housing more "Age-Friendly" in Middlesex Centre?

- Provide incentives to require developers to build a certain number of fully accessible units and assisted-living residences.
- Work with developers to ensure that there is an affordable housing component within developments. This can be directed by Official Plan policies.

- Expand planning policies and zoning allowances to allow secondary dwelling units “granny suites” within existing dwellings and as a separate detached dwelling.
- Create housing that people feel physically safe in. Encourage age-friendly building designs.
- Explore grant opportunities for accessibility audits and the installation of accessible retrofits such as ramps to front doors. Share information about available resources.
- Encourage schools to promote opportunities for students to volunteer by assisting seniors with lawn care, snow shovelling and other requirements of independent living.
- Explore a variety of programs such as property tax deferral, home accessibility and modification, enhanced home support, community-based home visiting nursing, community paramedicine and reablement programs; naturally occurring retirement and dementia-friendly communities; independent transportation networks; and home sharing/co-housing and life lease housing models.¹⁵

4. Social Participation

Tell us about your experiences with social participation in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- There are some programs within the community that strive to decrease social isolation and increase independence (this has been a greater challenge during the pandemic). Programs such as those offered by the VON and seniors’ groups have been designed to try to promote recreational activities for seniors.
- The Middlesex County Library is trying to fill technological gaps where there are deficiencies (e.g., an older adult or senior that needs help working an iPad or needs access to a computer). Previous experiences have found “lunch and learn” education sessions to be effective. The Library has also set-up a phone line that people are able to call and talk to someone if they need social interaction.
- Social programs and supports for widows or people recently widowed are available. It is important that participation options such as this exist because sometimes individuals become more isolated without them.
- YMCA programs for active aging are well attended – these include both a physical activity component and social time.

¹⁵ National Institute of Aging. 2019. [Enabling the Future Provision of Long-Term Care in Canada](#).

How can we improve opportunities for social participation in Middlesex Centre?

- Connect people in the community early on, before they retire and start to require these services. Start building habits that will later translate into healthy aging.
- Explore partnerships with other municipalities (e.g., Ailsa Craig Arts Centre in North Middlesex).
- Have signs in each community that shows when events are scheduled to take place and where.
- Establish one location, virtual or physical, where individuals can connect – seniors helping seniors. Communication and information can often be a barrier.
- Establish a seniors' club in the municipality's larger settlement areas.
- More multi-generational program and sharing options.
- Offer more virtual programming options. Seniors are increasingly tech savvy, recognizing that those that are not will require more traditional delivery methods (in-person is always preferred). Some challenges remain with rural broadband connectivity.
- Focus on engagement for rural residents, as well as those in developed communities.

5. Respect and Social Inclusion

Tell us about your experiences with respect and social inclusion in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- The County Accessibility Advisory Committee is regularly consulted on municipal matters. This and other networks are important for information sharing.
- The Middlesex County Library is also exploring dementia-free spaces and offering cognitive care kits.
- There is increasing education, awareness and training for working with people with disabilities, although often times people do not have a full understanding of the entire spectrum of disabilities. Attitudinal barriers are also a challenge – de-stigmatization is a goal that is constantly being worked towards.
- There is a challenge for older adults and seniors around agism and segmentation. Sometimes older adults and seniors exclude one another for a variety of reasons.

How can we improve respect and social inclusion in Middlesex Centre?

- Provide a space and activities that everyone can support and participate in. This would make it easier to include people rather than just groups meeting together to socialize.
- Create inter-generational groups and mentorship programs that promote sharing of experiences. For example, the Ilderton Agricultural Society requires some board members to be under the age of 30.
- Continued training and education to help front-line workers and volunteers support people with disabilities.
- Encourage consultation with people with disabilities around key issues, community design, service delivery, etc.

6. Civic Participation and Employment

Tell us about your experiences with civic participation and employment in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- The Middlesex County Library offers some employment support services to individuals. They offer many online courses and platforms for people of all ages.
- The number of volunteers appears to be declining as many senior-age volunteers have aged out of their positions and have not been replaced. There is concern that younger generations are not as committed to volunteering.
- There is a volunteer collective (LAVA – London and Area Association for Volunteer Administration) that several organizations to share volunteer and professional development resources.
- Often times workplaces do not have a good sense of accommodating people as they age. This can result in some people feeling “forced out” of work.
- Many older adults are retiring from full-time work, but remain very interested in contributing to their communities. Websites such as ‘Boomers Plus’ can help to connect qualified individuals with employers.

How can we improve civic participation and employment in Middlesex Centre?

- Require that members on committees and boards be representative of the municipality’s population (including age spectrum, people with disabilities, etc.).
- Establish a seniors’ club that offers volunteer opportunities and keeps people engaged (as members and volunteers).

- Work to attract and retain volunteers that are not yet retired (including newcomers to Middlesex Centre) so they can create stronger connections with the community that carry through into their senior years. Consider programs like “Walk in the Park” in Toronto, which trains older adults and seniors to create and lead walking clubs through parks in their own neighbourhood.¹⁶
- Provide “welcome packages” to newcomers so they know more about potential volunteer opportunities.
- Establish a program to recognize volunteer efforts and provide additional supports.
- Encourage employers to offer part-time opportunities for those nearing retirement.

7. Communication and Information

Tell us about your experiences with communication and information in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- Since the pandemic, Middlesex Centre and residents of all ages have made significant strides in terms of communication, especially using technology.
- Service providers like the Middlesex County Library are trusted sources.
- There can sometimes be a disconnect between “connectors” (e.g., library, childcare, schools, etc.). The hope is that an online portal shared between connectors will bridge the disconnection gap. For example, Middlesex Familyinfo.ca (administered by Family Centres and EarlyON) was a project that was implemented as a result of families moving into the community, seeking family services information, but the County not knowing where to direct people.
- Most media is from London. The local newspaper is weekly and covers a large geographic area. Different Middlesex Centre communities have different media connections.

How can we make communication and information more “age-friendly” in Middlesex Centre?

- Continue to build awareness of how people can get involved, what each community in Middlesex Centre has to offer, and available service options.
- Promote services across the entirety of Middlesex Centre (not just within each community), highlighting which communities offer which services.

¹⁶ Lastman, J. *Seniors walk together to enhance health and build connection to nature, and each other.* 2019. <https://parkpeople.ca/2019/04/29/seniors-walking-together-creates-health-social-connection-and-access-to-nature/>

- Provide accessibility information for parks on the Middlesex Centre website.
- Explore opportunities for an online community calendar.
- Explore opportunities for information sharing amongst agencies and service providers – “Connector Conferences”.
- Use multiple communication tactics and mediums. Many seniors often prefer using the telephone, so it is important that contact names and numbers be provided.
- Continue to expand online registration options.
- Explore a free library that displays real photos of older people to provide a more realistic idea/image of aging rather than the stereotypical idea of aging (e.g., mobility devices, glasses, dentures, wrinkles, etc.)¹⁷

8. Community Support and Health Services

Tell us about your experiences with community support and health services in Middlesex Centre. What is working and what is not?

- Many of the more sophisticated health services are located in London. Residents have to drive or rely on community transportation.
- VON offers a variety of local support services such as meals on wheels, telephone reassurance calls, smart exercise programs, transportation services and grocery services. The demand for almost all services is growing; however, volunteer resources are limited.
- There is no grocery store in Ilderton, Coldstream or Delaware, in addition to there being no public transportation in these communities.
- Emergency food services are very limited – nearest food bank is in Ailsa Craig.

How can we make health and social services more “age-friendly” in Middlesex Centre?

- Bring older adults, seniors and people with disabilities together around cooking programs, food security programs, food literacy and education, etc.
- Encourage sharing of information about health care and accommodations, such as barrier-free accessibility, prescription dispensing fees, patient rights, etc.
- Expand transportation options for access to health services in London.

¹⁷ Centre for Aging Better. 2021. [Age-positive image library launched to tackle negative stereotypes of later life](https://aging-better.org.uk/news/age-positive-image-library-launched). <https://aging-better.org.uk/news/age-positive-image-library-launched>

Appendix V: WHO Age-Friendly Checklist

See following pages.



Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities

This checklist of essential age-friendly city features is based on the results of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project consultation in 33 cities in 22 countries. The checklist is a tool for a city's self-assessment and a map for charting progress. More detailed checklists of age-friendly city features are to be found in the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide.

This checklist is intended to be used by individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly. For the checklist to be effective, older people must be involved as full partners. In assessing a city's strengths and deficiencies, older people will describe how the checklist of features matches their own experience of the city's positive characteristics and barriers. They should play a role in suggesting changes and in implementing and monitoring improvements.

Outdoor spaces and buildings

- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.

- Services are situated together and are accessible.
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

Transportation

- Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.
- Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
- All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.

- Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.
- Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.
- Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.
- Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.
- Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities.
- A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.
- Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.
- Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.
- Traffic flow is well-regulated.
- Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.
- Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.
- Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.
- Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.

Housing

- Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
- Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
- Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.
- Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
- Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
- Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.
- Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

Social participation

- Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.
- Events are held at times convenient for older people.
- Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.
- Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.

- Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people.
- A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
- Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks.
- There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.

Respect and social inclusion

- Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.
- Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.
- Service staff are courteous and helpful.
- Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.
- Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
- Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”.
- Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.

- Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.
- Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.

Civic participation and employment

- A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.
- The qualities of older employees are well-promoted.
- A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.
- Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.
- Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.
- Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.

Communication and information

- A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.
- Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.

- Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
- Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
- People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.
- Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.
- Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.
- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.

Community and health services

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.
- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.
- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
- Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.
- Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.
- Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.