



Older Adult Plan 2025–2030



City of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario



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Land acknowledgement

Ottawa is built on un-ceded Anishinabe Algonquin territory.

The peoples of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation have lived on this territory for millennia. Their culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land.

The City of Ottawa honours the peoples and land of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.

The City of Ottawa honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.



Messages

From the Mayor

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts and experiences during the consultations for the Older Adult Plan 2025–2030. Your voices have shaped this plan and your input has been invaluable in helping us better understand the priorities, challenges and needs of Ottawa’s older adults.

Ottawa’s older adults contribute so much to our city—through their wisdom, their experience and their commitment to community life.

This plan is about making sure our city continues to be a place where people can age well, with access to the programs, services and opportunities they need to stay healthy, engaged and supported.

I am grateful for your input. Thank you for being part of this important plan. Together, we’re building a more inclusive, supportive and age-friendly Ottawa.

Mark Sutcliffe
Mayor,
City of Ottawa

From Council Co-Liaisons for older adults

We are excited to share the Older Adult Plan 2025–2030. The lived experiences and ideas of older adults across Ottawa were heard. As your Council Co-Liaisons, we’ve had the privilege of listening, learning and working alongside residents and community partners who care deeply about making our city a great place to age.

This plan is about more than services, it’s about connections, opportunities and overall well-being. It reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that older adults in Ottawa can live with confidence, comfort and a strong sense of belonging. Whether it’s through improved access, inclusive programs or stronger neighbourhood networks, we’re focused on making a real difference.

We’re proud of what this plan represents and even more excited about what it will help us achieve together.

Council Co-Liaisons for Older Adults

Theresa Kavanagh,
Councillor,
City of Ottawa

Allan Hubley
Councillor,
City of Ottawa



From the Chair of the Community Services Committee, Councillor Laura Dudas

The Older Adult Plan 2025–2030 represents the fourth iteration of the City’s commitment to supporting older adults in Ottawa. Each version builds on the previous one, incorporating lessons learned and adapting to the changing needs of the aging population. Informed by community input, this plan reflects our shared vision for a city where people can age well, with dignity, connection and opportunity. It reaffirms our dedication to fostering an inclusive and responsive city where older adults can thrive at every stage of life.

This latest plan is especially meaningful as it marks a new chapter of collaboration. We are proud to be working more closely than ever with community partners and organizations to advance our shared vision of an age-friendly Ottawa. These strengthened partnerships will help us achieve greater collective impact and better support the well-being of older adults across the city.

Investing in services that support residents, particularly those who face barriers, is a key priority for the Community and Social Services Department. The Older Adult Plan aligns with the City’s broader commitment to building a community that is inclusive, resilient and responsive to the needs of its aging population.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, expertise and lived experience to this plan. Your input has helped develop a thoughtful strategy that will guide our work in the years ahead.

Laura Dudas
Councillor,
City of Ottawa

Age-friendly communities



Communities all over the world are experiencing rapid demographic changes due to an aging population. To respond to the demographic trend, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed an Age-friendly Cities framework to help cities become more age-friendly. Other levels of government have also adapted the WHO's age-friendly framework and developed their own resources and tools to reflect local needs and contexts.

As defined by the WHO, an age-friendly community “adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities”, consequently improving the quality of life for people as they age.

“ Seniors with low fluency in English and French face many more barriers.”

“ I plan to stay at home as long as I can.”

WHO domains of community life

The age-friendly framework served as a foundational guide that shaped the engagement process which informed the development of the Older Adult Plan (OAP). This framework provided a comprehensive approach to promote integrated planning, coordinated actions across sectors and inclusive engagement with the community.

The WHO identifies eight key areas (domains) of community life that influence an individual's well-being, independence and ability to live actively within their social and physical environments. The eight domains helped structure conversations, surface local priorities and ensure that the plan reflects the lived experiences of older adults in the community.

The domains intersect with each other to create an environment where aging is supported across all aspects of daily life:



Personal well-being

Communication and information – Age-friendly communities provide clear and accessible information, in appropriate formats, to help older adults stay informed and connected.

Community support and health services – Age-friendly communities provide access to community support services, as well as mental and physical health programs to help older adults stay healthy and live independently for longer.



Social environment

Social participation – Age-friendly communities provide opportunities for older adults to participate in community events, clubs and activities to remain engaged and to reduce loneliness.

Respect and social inclusion – Age-friendly communities provide opportunities for older adults to stay involved and included in community life. The community respects and recognizes the role older adults play in our society.

Civic participation and employment – Age-friendly communities provide opportunities for older adults to volunteer, work and share their skills to continue contributing to the community.



Physical environment

Outdoor spaces and public buildings – Age-friendly communities provide safe, clean and accessible outdoor spaces, sidewalks and public buildings to help older adults stay active and connected to the community.

Transportation – Age-friendly communities provide reliable and affordable transportation options to help older adults get to appointments, run errands and stay social.

Housing – Age-friendly communities provide housing options that are affordable, safe and accessible, in various locations, to help older adults stay independent as they age.

Defining “older adult”

The City of Ottawa defines older adults as people aged 50 and over. Seniors generally refer to individuals aged 65 and over. We know that being an older adult does not mean the same thing for everyone. Life at 50 is different from life at 60, 70, 80, or 90.

The age of 50 was chosen to align with Ottawa community partners, including 50+ centres, which offer programs and services tailored to older adults. This approach promotes consistency and inclusivity in service planning and delivery across the community.

Aging is not defined by a number alone. People’s experiences of aging are shaped by many factors like gender, health, ability status, culture, race, income, education, sexual orientation and whether they have support from family or community. That’s why “older adults” are not defined as one group. Instead, aging is understood as a journey shaped by a lifetime of experiences, changes and transitions.

Ottawa’s age-friendly commitment

Ottawa has been adapting to an aging population by developing an age-friendly community strategy. In Ottawa, this strategy is known as the Older Adult Plan (OAP), which was first launched in 2012.

Since then, the City has implemented three versions of the OAP, each building on the original vision and long-term goals. The plans focused on making City services, programs and facilities more accessible and responsive to the needs of older adults. The actions were shaped by community input and aligned with what the City could achieve.

In 2023, to evaluate the impact of the OAP, City staff conducted a review that looked at what worked well, what could be improved and how the City has integrated an older adult perspective into its planning and services. The results, including key accomplishments in infrastructure, programs, accessibility, communication and relevant supports, are detailed in the [2023 Evaluation Report](#), available on [Ottawa.ca](#).





In addition to the OAP, the City of Ottawa demonstrates its age-friendly commitment through a range of programs and services, such as:

Long-term care services

The City of Ottawa operates four municipal long-term care homes that provide 24-hour nursing and personal care, with access to medical professionals and services. These homes also offer food services, laundry and housekeeping. In addition, the home's recreation team coordinates daily activities and special events, all with a strong focus on improving the quality of life for residents. For additional information visit [Long-term care | City of Ottawa](#).



Home support services

The City-led services through partnerships, provides help with light housekeeping to eligible low-income older adults who have a medical need and who have little or no supports in the community. Light housekeeping may include floors, bathrooms, laundry, kitchen and light dusting. For additional information visit [Home Support Services | City of Ottawa](#).



Essential Health Support Services (EHSS)

The City program helps Ottawa older adults who cannot afford to pay for items or services needed to maintain their housing and for health items that are not available through other programs. For additional information visit [Essential Health and Social Supports \(EHSS\) | City of Ottawa](#).



Snow Go

This City-funded program provides help clearing residents' driveway and/or walkway during the winter. The **Snow Go program** provides a matching service for older adults and people with disabilities to hire an individual or contractor to clear snow from private driveways and walkways at an affordable rate. The **Snow Go Assist program** provides financial assistance to eligible low-income older adults or persons with disabilities to help with their snow removal costs. For additional information visit [Get help clearing snow | City of Ottawa](#).

More programs and services are available at [Older adults | City of Ottawa](#) or by calling 3-1-1.

Together, these efforts reflect the City of Ottawa's ongoing commitment to supporting older adults and moving towards a more age-friendly Ottawa.

Understanding the local context



The demographics of older adults in Ottawa continue to evolve. As the population grows and becomes more diverse, it's essential that the City's approach reflects these demographic changes. This version of the OAP is informed by the most current local data to understand who Ottawa's older adults are today and what they need to age well.

A snapshot analysis of Ottawa's older adult population

According to the 2021 census, there are 1,017,449 residents in the city of Ottawa—which is a population percentage increase of 8.9 per cent from 2016 (934,243) and it has a population density of 364.9 per square kilometer¹. Of this, seniors (aged 65 years and above) make up close to one-fifth (16.9 per cent; n= 172,150) of the total Ottawa population—this is close to the provincial value of 18.9 per cent². Additionally, there are now more seniors than children under 15.

Between 2016 and 2021, the population percentage increase for older adults was 19.5 per cent, the highest compared to other age groups. It is projected that by 2031, seniors (65 years and above) will account for over 20 per cent of Ottawa's population and in the rural Ottawa areas, there is an expected 183 per cent increase in seniors between 2011–2031³. In addition, one in five people aged 15–64 are close to retirement—this implies that as the population ages and the working population decreases, the number of close family members who could act as caregivers to older adults would decrease by 30 per cent by 2050⁴.

1 Statistics Canada. (2023). (table). [Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population](#). Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023.

2 Statistics Canada. (2025). [Demographic estimates by age and gender, provinces and territories: Interactive dashboard](#).

3 Neighbourhood Equity Index: [Seniors in Rural Ottawa](#)

4 The Council on Aging of Ottawa. (2023). [City-Wide Priorities for Advancing the Wellbeing of Ottawa's Older Adults: Opportunities and Challenges](#).

These trends indicate that Ottawa’s population (in general) and its older adult population (specifically) are growing and changing at a fast pace and therefore identifying and supporting their diverse needs should remain a priority.

Strategic alignment with city priorities

The OAP 2025–2030 was developed with an understanding of the broader strategies and plans that guide how the City of Ottawa supports its diverse communities. It aligns with several key City strategies that share common goals such as accessibility, equity, inclusion, safety and well-being.

While the OAP focuses specifically on older adults, many of their needs are also addressed in other City strategies. In these cases, it is more effective to collaborate with the departments that are already leading this work and have the expertise and resources to deliver meaningful results. The OAP complements and is strengthened by the following City strategies:

- [10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#)
- [Anti-Racism Strategy](#)
- [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#)
- [Municipal Accessibility Plan](#)
- [Women and Gender Equity Strategy](#)
- [Official Plan](#)
- [Ottawa Public Health’s Strategic Plan](#)
- [Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan](#)

“Assistance in the home is scarce unless it can be paid for. Finding out what’s available can be difficult especially if there is no access to a computer.”

- [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)
- [Reconciliation Action Plan](#)
- [Road Safety Action Plan](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Transit Services Five-Year Roadmap](#)



Renewal of the OAP



The needs of Ottawa’s older adults have also changed significantly since 2012. It was important for the renewed plan to reflect the current needs. City staff consulted with older adults and community agencies to ensure the new OAP responds to new and emerging needs of older adults. The OAP was informed by findings from the evaluation of previous plans, recent demographic data and input gathered through community consultations. Together, these elements guided the development of a renewed plan.

“As we move forward in technology, seniors can be left behind. Many don’t have or can’t afford cell phones. Seniors like to talk to someone when they need help understanding what services are available.”

How it started

The consultation period started in June 2024 and continued until the end of September. To shape a plan that is responsive to the needs of all of Ottawa’s older adults, it was important to achieve an equitable reach and ensure a good representation of all older adult populations. We worked with community partners on the consultation strategy, which offered various methods of providing input.

The consultations included:



Seven in-person consultations – **258** participated (English, French and Mandarin).



Engage Ottawa survey – **898** completed the survey (English and French).



Partner toolkit – distributed **50+** community partners (Simplified Chinese, Swahili, Spanish, Arabic and Somali).



Paper surveys – distributed by Ottawa Public Library through their Homebound Program.



Other – some input was received over the telephone or by email.

1,300 individuals participated in the consultations. The relevant findings from the City's Rural Summit consultations were also included in the OAP information collected. 7,000 inputs in the form of ideas, suggestions and comments were collected.

A summary of the findings from the consultations is available in the [What We Learned](#) Report on [Ottawa.ca](#).

Why a collective impact approach

The OAP 2025–2030 follows a collective impact approach. Collective impact is a form of collaboration that involves different actors from different sectors working together to solve a specific social problem at scale. Collective impact is based on a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone support. This approach also emphasizes the importance of advancing equity by learning from and with the community, aligning and integrating actions and changing systems and policies.

This collaborative approach allows for greater impact by aligning our efforts and creating meaningful and lasting change. Together, we will build a more inclusive, supportive and accessible community for older adults. In Ottawa, many agencies in service of older adults are actively advancing the work of making the community more age friendly. By working together, the City and community agencies strengthen coordination across sectors and identify opportunities to fill service gaps.

The City plays a key role through its municipal mandate by providing services, funding, planning and convening. Programs and services such as Long-Term Care Services, Essential Health and Social Supports and Snow Go demonstrate the City's commitment to supporting older adults. In addition, the City will contribute to broader planning, coordination, backbone administration, data and evaluation efforts that support the implementation of the OAP.

Community partners bring lived experience, service delivery knowledge and sector-specific insight and will share responsibility with the City for implementing actions.

How the plan was designed

To support the new collaborative approach, we formed the OAP Guidance Committee. The new committee was comprised of representatives from community agencies in service of older adults and reflected the diversity of Ottawa's older adult population.

To ensure the planning process reflected a broad range of voices and lived experiences, 11 agencies joined the committee. The membership included representatives from the following agencies:

- Age Friendly Housing – Council on Aging of Ottawa
- Centre Pauline-Charron
- Gloucester 50+ Centre
- Montfort Renaissance – Centre de services Guigues
- Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
- Ottawa Community Housing
- Ottawa Senior Pride Network
- Ottawa West Community Support
- Rural Ottawa South Support Services
- The Council on Aging of Ottawa
- The Good Companions



Through a series of collaborative working sessions, the OAP Guidance Committee:

- Reviewed the findings from the community consultations
- Shared their knowledge and experience
- Worked together to co-create the Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Priorities and Goals for the OAP 2025–2030

The committee’s work was grounded in shared leadership. Everyone had a voice and decisions were made together. This approach helped build a strong foundation for a plan that truly reflects the needs and priorities of older adults in Ottawa.



The Older Adult Plan 2025–2030



The actions of the plan will be organized under each priority area and detailed in separate action plans. This approach will allow the plan to stay flexible and responsive, to adapt to new needs and opportunities as they arise.



Vision

A supportive community where everyone can age with choice and dignity.



Mission

Together, we work to advance the well-being of older adults through equitable and inclusive access to sustainable programs, services and information.

“I personally make use of City recreation programs such as fitness classes and indoor pools, but I also know that many people are completely unaware of what is offered.”



Guiding principles

The OAP Guidance Committee created the guiding principles to shape the development and guide the implementation of the OAP 2025–2030.

The principles are:

- **Affordability:** We commit to applying an affordability lens to all initiatives. We work towards programs and services that are accessible and affordable for older adults.
- **City-wide approach:** We commit to a city-wide approach that recognizes the unique needs and opportunities of Ottawa’s urban, suburban and rural communities.
- **Collaboration and leadership:** We are committed to fostering teamwork and leverage the expertise of older adults, community members, partners and governments.
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion:** We promote fairness and inclusivity. We work towards providing older adults equitable opportunities to thrive, independently of their life experience, background, preferred language and level of education.
- **Positive impact:** We strive to create meaningful changes that enhance the well-being and quality of life for all older adults.
- **Sustainability:** We believe in implementing initiatives that are sustainable and have a positive impact on future generations.

It is important for the OAP Guidance Committee to maintain transparency and accountability in all actions and decisions. They aim to set achievable goals that are within their scope and available resources. By working together, City and community agencies resources can be used strategically and efficiently to maximize positive impact on the community.



Priorities, outcome and goals

This section outlines the direction of the OAP 2025–2030. As the needs of older adults continue to grow and change, it’s important to focus on the areas where the City and community partners can make the most meaningful impact. The plan identifies four key priority areas, shaped by the voices of older adults in Ottawa through community consultations and the experience of community agencies in service of older adults.

Each priority area includes an outcome and a set of goals. These elements work together to provide a clear framework for planning and decision-making.

Definitions:

- **Priority area:** A key focus of the OAP that reflects an important need or opportunity for older adults in Ottawa.
- **Outcome:** The change or improvement in the community as a result of focusing on the priority area.
- **Goals:** General directions that support progress toward the outcome and help shape future planning and collaboration.



Priority area: Effective communication and access to information

Outcome: Older adults, caregivers and service providers have access to the information they are seeking, in formats that meet their needs.

Goals:

- **Improve access:** Enhance access to information that is easy to find, understand and use.
- **Strengthen outreach:** Share information more broadly and effectively.



Priority area: Access and availability to programs and services

Outcome: Older adults experience enhanced well-being and have choices. They have more access to programs and services.

Goals:

- **Increase access:** Improve and expand access to the programs and services that meet the needs of older adults.
- **Support living with choice:** Enhance resources and services to enable older adults to live where they choose and have their needs met.
- **Promote well-being:** Enhance access to programs and services for older adults that focus on physical and mental well-being.

“ Seniors want to be self-sufficient as long as they can. They don’t want to be housed in a room. They want their own place as long as they can manage.”



Priority area: Foster an inclusive and respectful community

Outcome: Older adults feel valued, respected and connected through participation and the celebration of aging.

Goals:

- **Promote participation:** Encourage older adults to participate in civic, social, cultural and recreational activities.
- **Celebrate aging:** Raise awareness about the positive aspects of aging and reduce age-based discrimination.
- **Support diverse communities:** Connect older adults to inclusive and culturally relevant activities that meet the needs of diverse populations.



Priority area: Integration of age-friendly community features

Outcome: The daily lives of older adults are enhanced by using age-friendly community features in planning, service delivery and evaluation.

Goals:

- **Increase awareness:** Improve awareness of the age-friendly community features and the composition of Ottawa’s older adult population for planning purposes.
- **Promote integration:** Include the older adult perspective in programs, services and in planning.
- **Enhance collaboration:** Create relationships between older adults, City departments and community partners.

“ The longer older adults stay active and integrated, the less they will need care from others.”

Next steps



Collaborative governance and implementation structure

To support a collaborative implementation of the OAP 2025–2030, a new governance structure will be established. The Older Adult Plan Roundtable (OAPR) will provide overall leadership, coordination and oversight of the implementation. The OAPR will include representatives from several City departments, community agencies and older adults. The Roundtable will be co-chaired by staff from the Community and Social Services Department and the Council on Aging of Ottawa, with participation of the Council Co-Liaisons for Older Adults.

The OAPR will be supported by Task Teams that will be established to develop and implement the action plans. They will bring together City staff and community partners to identify needs, co-create solutions and track progress. This approach will allow the plan to stay flexible, responsive and adapt to new needs and opportunities as they arise.

The Task Teams will report regularly to the Roundtable and ensure that older adult perspectives are embedded in all actions and that actions are monitored, evaluated and reported on.

The Community and Social Services Department will act as the OAPR's Secretariat and provide backbone support to the OAPR and the Task Teams.

This structure ensures that the plan remains responsive, inclusive and informed by community expertise. It also allows for shared responsibility and stronger alignment across City and community efforts to make Ottawa a more age-friendly city.

Funding and resource allocation

The OAP is supported through the Community Social Services Department operating budget, designed to fund initiatives that advance the plan's priorities. Funding is available to both City departments and community agencies through the City's Community Funding Framework. An allocation committee will oversee the funding process to ensure transparency, equity and alignment with the OAP's goals. This approach ensures that resources are available to support collaborative efforts that respond to the evolving needs of older adults in Ottawa.



Evaluation and reporting

To ensure successful implementation and continuous improvement of the OAP, a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed following the finalization of the full action plans. This framework will be created in collaboration with Community and Social Services' Social Policy, Research & Analytics team and will:

- Support evidence-informed decision-making by identifying key areas for tracking progress.
- Include performance indicators aligned with the OAP's priority areas and goals.
- Facilitate collaboration with community partners to gather insights and assess impact.
- Allow for adaptability, ensuring the plan remains responsive to emerging needs and opportunities.

This approach will enable the City and its partners to track progress, recognize achievements and make informed adjustments to improve outcomes for older adults in Ottawa. It will include clear evaluation measures to assess how effectively actions are being implemented and whether they are making a meaningful impact in the lives of older adults.

For more information on the advancement of the Older Adult Plan 2025–2030, please visit [Older Adult Plan | City of Ottawa](#) or email olderadults@ottawa.ca.



Acknowledgement

We sincerely thank the partners who participated in the OAP Guidance Committee for their thoughtful input and support in shaping the OAP 2025–2030. Their contributions were vital in ensuring the plan reflects the voices and needs of older adults across the city.

Valerie Wright	Age Friendly Housing committee – Council on Aging
Denise Lemire	Centre Pauline-Charron
Sharon Oatway	Gloucester 50+ Centre
Monique Thibodeau Laflamme	Montfort Renaissance – Centre de services Guigues
Marilyn Wanling Ma	Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
Francine Vachon	Ottawa Community Housing Corporation
George Hartsgrove	Ottawa Senior Pride Network
Jennifer Lalonde	Ottawa West Community Support
Kelly Dumas	Rural Ottawa South Support Services
Bonnie Schroeder	The Council on Aging of Ottawa (COA)
Matthew Ottaviani	The Good Companions

We are grateful to the municipalities who took the time to share their experiences with us. Their insights offered valuable perspective and helped inform the approach:

- [Age-friendly Peterborough](#)
- [Age-friendly Hamilton](#)

Resources consulted

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