

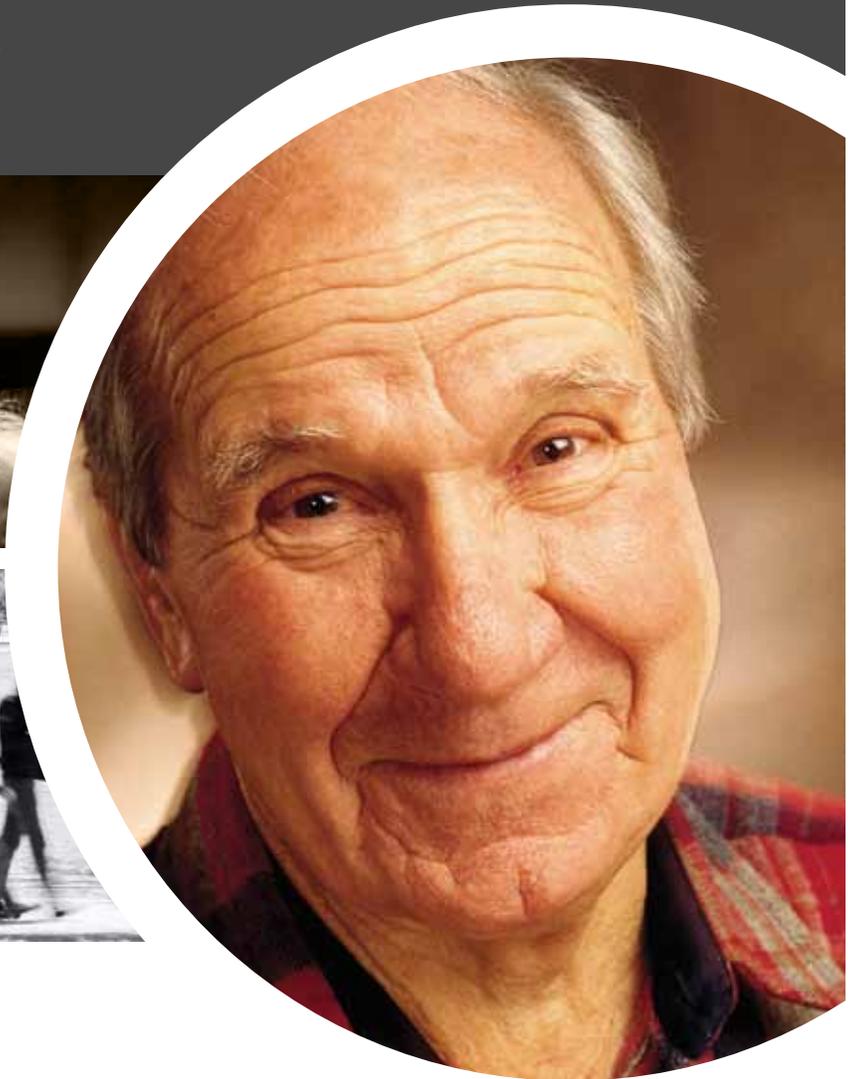


FEDERATION  
OF CANADIAN  
MUNICIPALITIES

FÉDÉRATION  
CANADIENNE DES  
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# CANADA'S AGING POPULATION

The municipal  
role in Canada's  
demographic shift



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**Quality of Life  
Reporting System**

**For more information**

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Canada's Aging Population:  
The municipal role in Canada's demographic shift  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The biggest demographic wave since the post-war baby boom is about to break over Canada, and municipal governments are on the front line. Seniors are already the fastest growing age group in Canada. The 2011 Census counted nearly five million people aged 65 and over, a 27 per cent increase since 2001.

That's just the beginning. During the next 25 years, our population of people 65 and over will double to 10.4 million, making seniors roughly one quarter of the population in 2036.

This growing population of seniors has begun to reshape our communities in ways that affect citizens of all ages.

Providing services such as low-floor buses and paying more attention to icy sidewalks in winter are important for many seniors. Others look forward to a downtown condo where they can walk to concerts and restaurants. Seniors in rural communities may be looking for more social opportunities and transit alternatives to driving.

Adapting our housing, transit, recreation and our buildings and public spaces will help a vibrant and engaged senior population to safely age in place and continue contributing to society. At the same time, cities and communities must provide the services and quality of life that will attract and retain the new immigrants and younger workforce needed to replace a labour force that is shrinking as our population ages.

Canada's aging population is raising pressing new policy questions that must be answered. Is this demographic shift forcing Canada's decision-makers in two separate directions? How can governments work together to address these seemingly competing needs?

FCM's report, *Canada's Aging Population: The Municipal Role in Canada's Demographic Shift*, examines the emerging municipal response to this coming wave. It examines the plans, strategies, programs and services municipal governments are developing to accommodate seniors' desire to live active, healthy and engaged lives, and the growing awareness of the labour force gap ahead.

Municipalities are front and center when it comes to many of the services that benefit older Canadians, including affordable housing, transportation, recreation, physical infrastructure and community health.

But municipal governments cannot do it alone. The challenges of accommodating an aging population while securing future economic growth are areas where local and federal government concerns meet. It is time for all orders of government — municipal, federal and provincial/territorial — to pool their expertise and coordinate their resources to meet the range of impacts of the coming demographic wave.

*Kan Lebrua*

# INTRODUCTION



**F**OSTERING COMMUNITIES THAT ENABLE THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ASPIRATIONS OF ITS CITIZENS IS A CENTRAL ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ONE THAT THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES HELPS ITS MEMBERS TO MEET THROUGH ITS QUALITY OF LIFE REPORTING SYSTEM (QOLRS).

*The QOLRS defines **seniors** as individuals aged 65 years and over. This is consistent with the Government of Canada's age of eligibility for the Old Age Security Pension as of 2012<sup>i</sup>, and coincides with Statistics Canada's standard age categories from both the Census of Population and Canadian Community Health Survey. **Older seniors** are defined as individuals aged 85 years and over. This is the highest standard age category from the aforementioned surveys and the only one that exceeds the life expectancy of both female and male citizens from all provinces and territories<sup>ii</sup> as of 2002.*

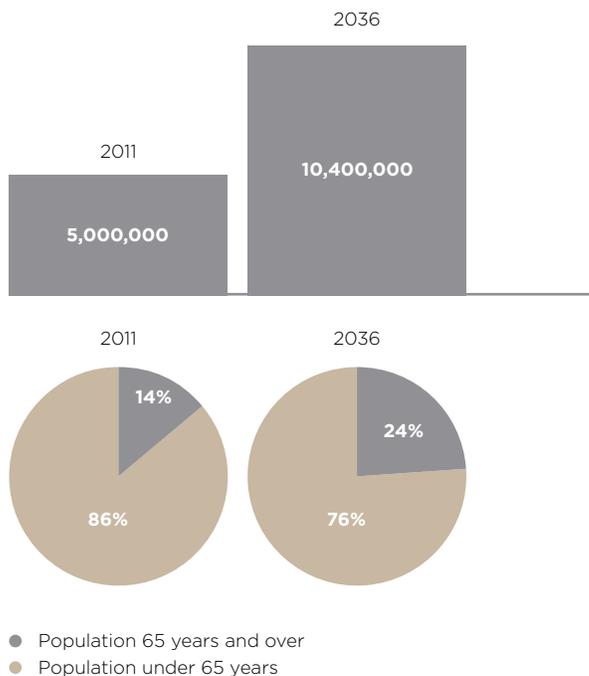
Municipalities of all sizes and in rural, urban and remote settings will have increasing populations of senior citizens in the years ahead. This reality has many implications for municipal policy and decision makers. This FCM QOLRS report highlights demographic trends associated with an aging population, and presents innovative municipal practices addressing them.

## The rapid aging of Canada

2011 marked the first year that **Baby Boomers** — the population cohort born between 1946 and 1964 — reached the age of 65. Statistics Canada estimates that the proportion of Canadians aged 65 and over will grow from one in seven Canadians in 2011, to roughly one in four by 2036 (Figure 1). In absolute terms, the number of **seniors** is projected to double from today's five million to 10.4 million by 2036.<sup>iii</sup>

While the day-to-day needs of an aging population are undergoing a vast transformation, Canada's seniors are also changing the way citizens contribute to the social and economic life of their communities.

**Figure 1**  
**Projected growth in the number and proportion of Canadians aged 65 years and over based on a medium growth scenario**



## The big picture: Municipalities and an aging population

From international, national and local perspectives, municipal governments are widely acknowledged as central actors in anticipating the challenges and opportunities associated with **an aging population**. Through housing, transportation, recreational services, social engagement, physical infrastructure, and community health, municipalities are the frontline providers of many services required to support older Canadians. Many municipalities are also preparing for an aging workforce whose ranks are no longer being replenished by a younger generation of citizens.

**ACTIVE AGING** IS THE PROCESS OF OPTIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH, PARTICIPATION AND SECURITY IN ORDER TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE AS PEOPLE AGE. IT APPLIES TO BOTH INDIVIDUALS AND POPULATION GROUPS.<sup>iv</sup>

Internationally, the World Health Organization (WHO) points to municipalities as key contributors to creating age-friendly cities.<sup>v</sup> The WHO Age-Friendly Cities project identifies eight priorities for municipalities to meet the needs of an aging population:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Outdoor spaces & buildings
- Community support & health services
- Communication & information
- Civic participation & employment
- Respect & social inclusion
- Social participation

The *Canada's Aging Population* series links to *The QOLRS online data collection and reporting tool: **Municipaldata.ca***. This tool provides an interactive component to view all QOLRS data and to better share information about actions being taken by Canadian municipalities. Visit <http://www.municipaldata-donnees municipales.ca/> to learn more.

**AGE-FRIENDLY** CITIES ARE COMMUNITIES THAT ENABLE RESIDENTS TO AGE ACTIVELY THROUGH SUPPORTIVE POLICIES, SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Canada's Special Senate Committee on Aging reported in 2009 that Canadian municipal governments will bear the brunt of demand for infrastructure and services resulting from rapid demographic shifts. The Senate called on the Federal Government to provide municipal governments with the policy tools and financial assistance required to create age-friendly cities.<sup>vi</sup>

**AGING IN PLACE** REFERS TO THE ABILITY TO REMAIN AT HOME SAFELY, COMFORTABLY, AND INDEPENDENTLY, LATER IN LIFE. IN SOME CASES, COMMUNITY IS USED INSTEAD OF HOME.

Canadian municipalities recognize the opportunities and challenges ahead and are working to remove social and physical barriers and are adapting local economies to a rapidly aging society. Indeed, this report showcases emerging and innovative, age-friendly plans, strategies, programs and services being implemented in municipalities across the country.

Still, municipal governments cannot do it alone. All orders of government benefit from communities where Canada's five-million strong population of seniors can continue to lead healthy, engaged and productive lives. By understanding the scope of the demographic shift governments can begin to plan for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

## Canada's Aging Population

This is the first of a series of reports to be published by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities highlighting trends associated with aging and quality of life. These trends focus on the 26 municipalities and urban regions that make up the **Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS)**. Together, these communities account for more than half of Canada's total population.

This series is driven by the following objectives:

1. To identify strategic issues and challenges facing large and medium-sized municipalities across Canada;
2. To illustrate these issues in terms of statistical trends;
3. To report on credible data from reliable sources; and
4. To describe actions being taken by Canadian municipal governments in response to these issues.

THE **QUALITY OF LIFE REPORTING SYSTEM (QOLRS)** MEASURES, MONITORS AND REPORTS ON SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRENDS IN CANADA'S LARGEST CITIES AND COMMUNITIES. IT HELPS TO ENSURE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS ARE A STRONG PARTNER IN FORMULATING CANADIAN PUBLIC POLICY. THIS QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT LINKS TO THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES' ONLINE MUNICIPAL DATA PLATFORM ([MUNICIPALDATA.CA](http://MUNICIPALDATA.CA)).

Building upon these broad objectives, the purpose of the Canada's Aging Population series is threefold.

1. To provide a demographic portrait of aging in Canadian municipalities;
2. To showcase municipal initiatives underway in QOLRS communities that address challenges and enable opportunities associated with an aging population; and
3. To strengthen understanding of how sustained investment in municipal infrastructure, programs and services is critical to meeting the changing needs of Canada's aging population.

This first report in the series offers a preliminary review of demographic trends affecting Canadian communities, and highlights examples of municipal responses to an aging population.

This report is organised into three sections.

1. Demographic trends associated with an aging population: the growing number and proportion of seniors in Canada's largest municipalities, a shrinking labour force participation ratio, and the increasingly important role of immigration in filling the gap to address the needs of local economic growth.
2. Statistical profile of active aging in municipalities using data available to the QOLRS, notably from the Census of Population and Canadian Community Health Survey.
3. Community Snapshots: a compendium of initiatives being undertaken by 17 communities across the country to plan for and respond to an aging population.

Subsequent reports in the Series will be based on Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) and other data sources will focus on housing, transportation, and recreation in order to explore the impact of an aging population on municipal infrastructure, programs and services. These future reports will continue to demonstrate the practical ways in which municipal governments are responding to the changing needs of Canada's population.



# 1. OUR AGING POPULATION: CANADA'S DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

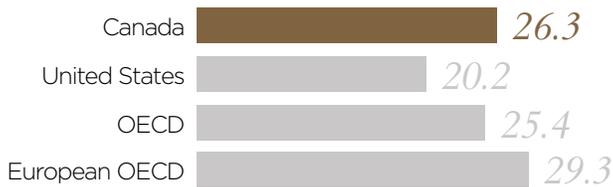


THE 2011 CANADIAN CENSUS CONFIRMS THAT SENIORS NOW MAKE UP THE FASTEST GROWING AGE GROUP IN THE COUNTRY. IN 2011, THERE WERE NEARLY 5 MILLION ADULTS AGED 65 AND OVER IN CANADA, A 27 PER CENT INCREASE SINCE 2001. THIS TREND WILL CONTINUE: STATISTICS CANADA PROJECTS THE NUMBER OF SENIORS WILL DOUBLE OVER THE NEXT 25 YEARS TO MORE THAN 10 MILLION BY 2036.<sup>vii</sup>

Number of seniors in 2011 <b>4,945,065</b>	Per cent increase 2001-2011 <b>27</b>	Per cent increase in population under 65 years of age over the same 10-year period <b>9</b>
Number of seniors in 2001 <b>3,888,550</b>	Projected per cent increase in population under 65 years of age over the same 25-year period <b>17</b>	Projected per cent increase 2011-2036 <b>110</b>
Projected number of seniors in 2036 <b>10,379,600</b>		

The Organization of for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) expects the number of seniors in Canada to reach 26.3 per cent of the population by 2050. This projection is higher than the OECD average of 25.4 per cent, and far greater than that of the United States (20.2 per cent), but lower than the projected average for European OECD countries (29.3 per cent).<sup>viii</sup>

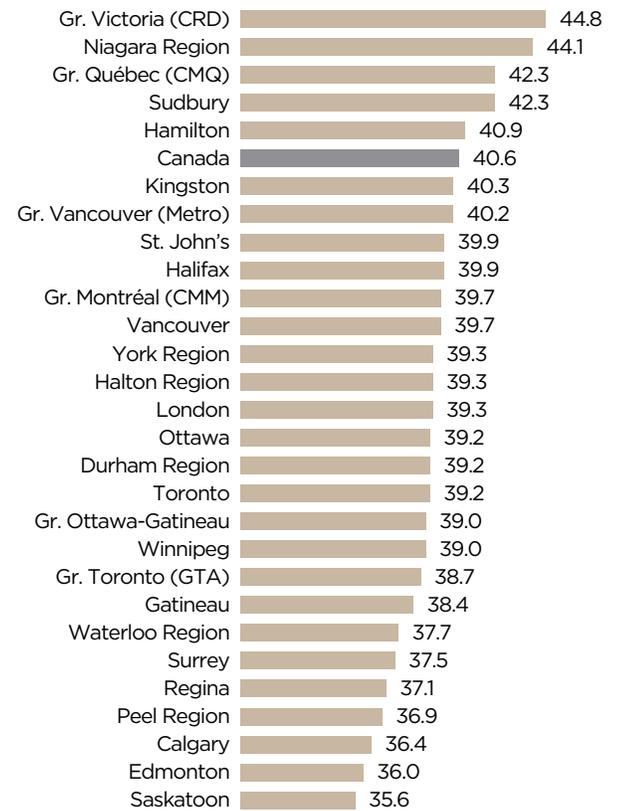
**Figure 2**  
**Proportion of the population aged 65 and over in 2050 (OECD projections)**



While Canada's population as a whole is aging, the impact of this demographic change is not evenly distributed across the country. Figure 3 presents the **median age** of QOLRS communities in 2011.

**THE MEDIAN AGE** INDICATES THE AGE AT WHICH PRECISELY ONE HALF OF A COMMUNITY'S RESIDENTS ARE YOUNGER, AND THE REMAINING HALF ARE OLDER. IT SHEDS LIGHT ON THE GENERAL AGE OF A COMMUNITY'S POPULATION.

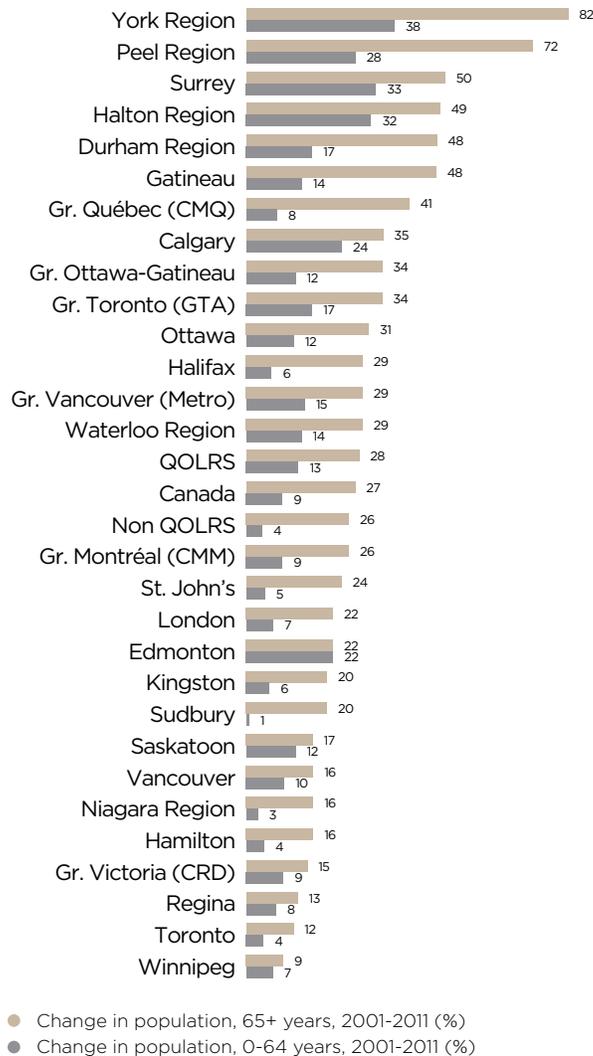
**Figure 3**  
**Median age of population, by QOLRS community, 2011**



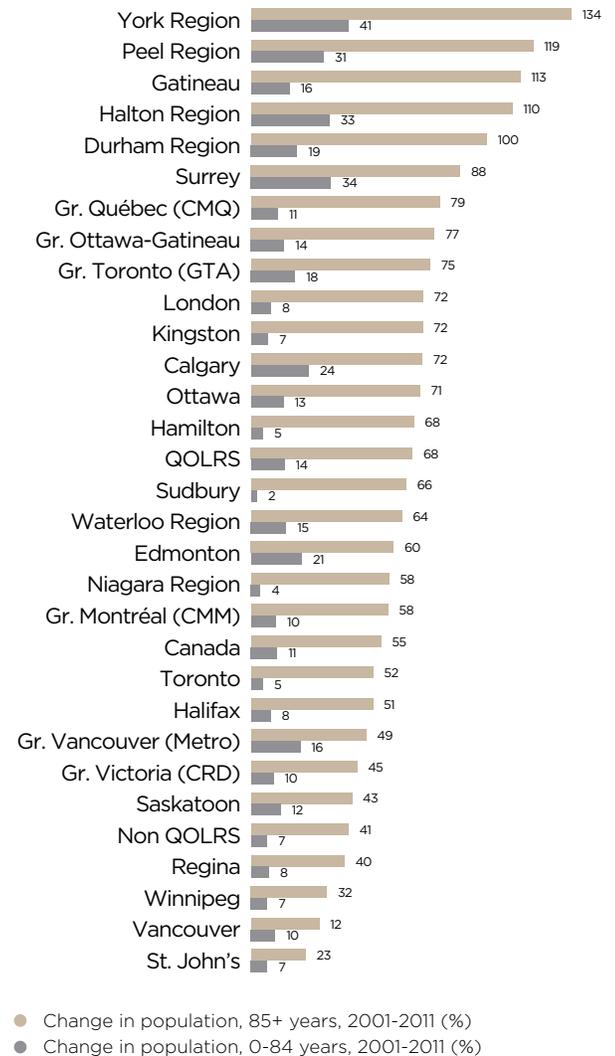
## 1.1 Population growth among seniors and older seniors

Without exception, all QOLRS communities report increasing numbers of seniors, both in number and as a proportion of the total population. As of 2011, more than one in seven (14.8 per cent) Canadians were 65 years of age or older. Figure 4 presents the per cent change in population of adults aged 65 and over, compared to that of the population under 65 years of age between 2001 and 2011.

**Figure 4**  
**Change in population between 2001 and 2011, Population aged 65 years and Population aged 0-64, by QOLRS community**



**Figure 5**  
**Change in population between 2001 and 2011, Population aged 85 years and over and Population aged 0-84, by QOLRS community**



For all QOLRS communities, the growth in the population of seniors was 28 per cent, compared to 27 per cent for Canada as a whole. Population growth for those aged 0 to 64 years was significantly lower compared to growth among seniors. For QOLRS communities, population growth for those under 65 was 13 per cent between 2001 and 2011. In non-QOLRS communities, that number dropped to 4 per cent (vs. 9 per cent for Canada as a whole).

As increasing numbers of Canadians reach age 85, this group has grown from 1.4 per cent of the national population in 2001 to 1.9 per cent in 2011. Figure 5 presents the ten-year growth rate of older seniors (aged 85 years and over) compared to the population under 85 years of age, by QOLRS community, between 2001 and 2011.

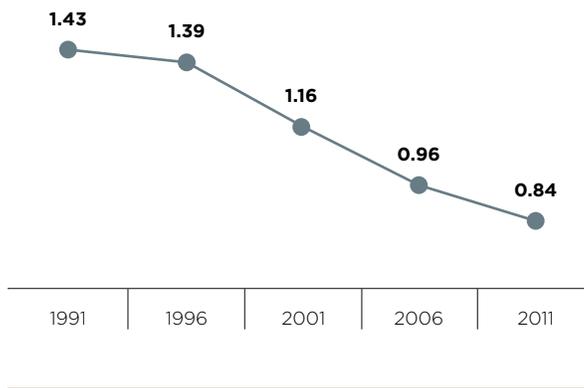
Growth in the population of older seniors has exploded in QOLRS areas. Five communities saw their population in this age category more than

double over the ten-year period, while average growth for QOLRS communities hovered at 68 per cent. By comparison, the growth in the QOLRS community population under 85 years of age grew by 14 per cent over the same period.

## 1.2 Changes in the labour force

The **Labour Force Replacement Ratio (LFRR)** serves as an indicator of the likelihood that the youth population will replace the workforce nearing retirement. A LFRR of 1.0 indicates that the number of youth expected to enter the workforce matches the number of workers expected to retire. The LFRR for Canada has been in decline for more than twenty years and will continue to decline for the foreseeable future.<sup>ix</sup> Between 2001 and 2011, the LFR for QOLRS communities dropped by 28 per cent from 1.16 to 0.84 (Figure 6).

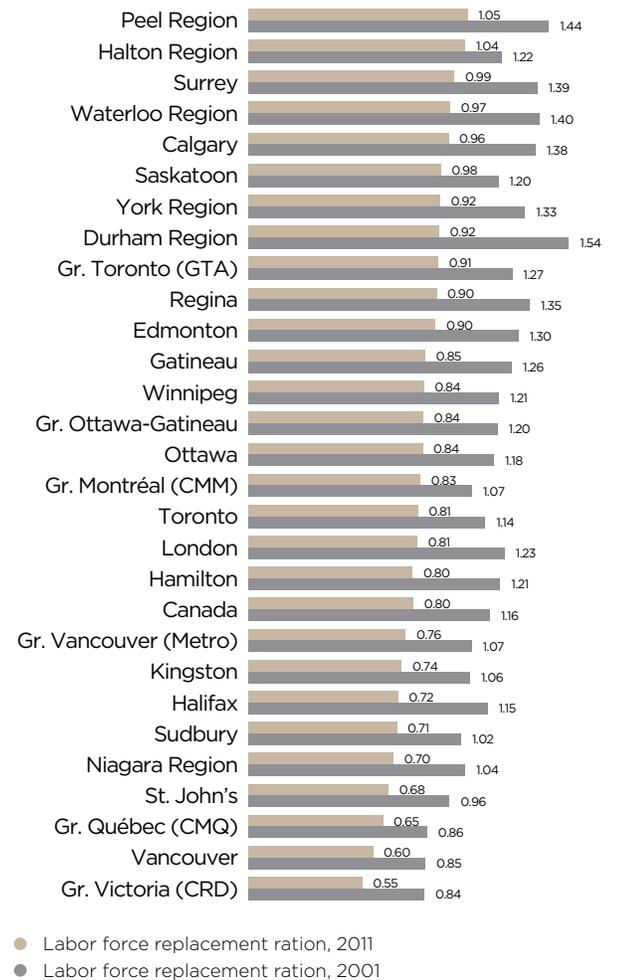
**Figure 6**  
**Population-weighted mean Labour Force Replacement Ratio, all QOLRS communities, 1991-2011**



The **Labour Force Replacement Ratio (LFRR)** estimates the likelihood that the youth population will replace those nearing retirement. The QOLRS calculates the LFRR by dividing the population cohort aged 0 to 14 years by those aged 50 to 64 years (Table 2). A LFRR of 1 indicates that there are precisely enough youth to replace those workers who are expected to retire within the next fifteen years. A ratio below 1 indicates a shortfall of incoming labour, whereas a ratio above 1 indicates a surplus.

Figure 7 presents the LFRR, by QOLRS community, for 2001 and 2011. Without exception, every QOLRS community saw its LFRR drop over the last decade. Only Halton and Peel Regions saw their LFRR remain above 1.0 in 2011, but their ratios are poised to drop below 1.0 within the next five years.

**Figure 7**  
**Labour force replacement ratio, by QOLRS community, 2001-2011**



Municipal governments have taken steps to address the shrinking workforce. **York Region**, for example, has the fastest growing senior population of all QOLRS communities. In order to cope with potential labour shortages in coming years, the regional municipality has developed a guide for employers called ***Beyond the Boomers: An Employer's Guide to the Labour Force Shortage*** (see Box 1.1).

**Box 1.1: Adapting to a shrinking labour force in York Region, Ont.**

*In anticipation of the potential labour shortage, York Region undertook an Aging Workforce Study to assess the local economic impact of an aging workforce. The study identified workforce gaps, trends in retirement, second career plans of older workers, and employer workforce planning practices. Beyond the Boomers: A York Region Employer's Guide to the Labour Force Shortage, helps employers to sustain a quality workforce, maintain industry competitiveness and provide opportunities for older adults to remain engaged.*

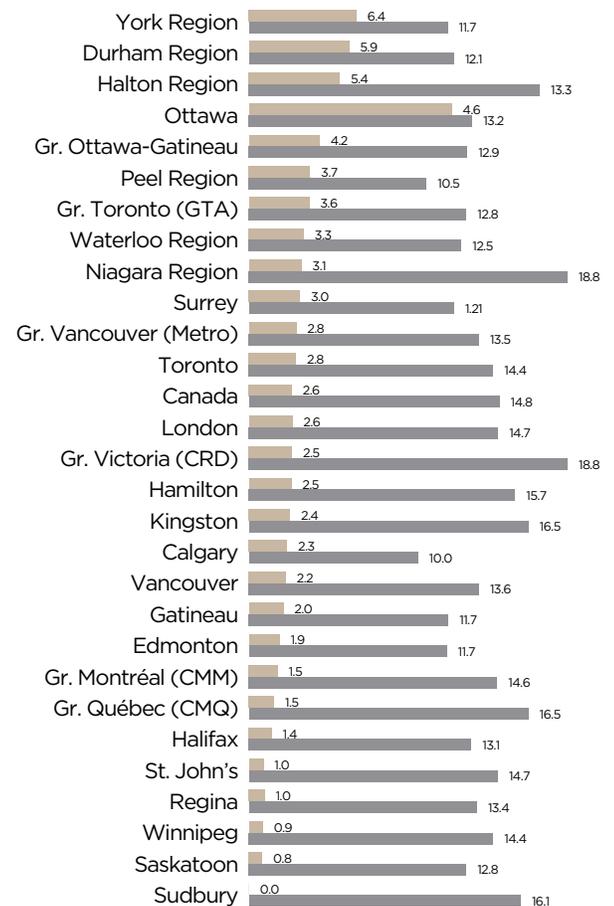
### 1.3 Immigration

With the Canadian natural birth rate remaining at historical lows, immigration has helped to counteract declining population growth.<sup>x</sup>

Figure 8 compares the proportion of new permanent residents that are seniors with the proportion of Canadians that are seniors, by QOLRS community. For example, in 2010, only 6.4 per cent of new permanent residents destined to York Region were at least 65 years old. By comparison, 11.7 per cent of all York Region residents were over 65 in 2011 (the closest available year for comparison).

Figure 8 also shows that in 2010, only 2.6 per cent of all newly arrived permanent residents were age 65 or older. By contrast, in 2011, the proportion of the overall population aged 65 years and older was 14.8 per cent.

**Figure 8**  
**Per cent of new permanent residents aged 65 years and over, 2010, and per cent of total population aged 65 years and over, 2011**



- New permanent residents aged 65 years and over as a proportion of total new permanent residents, 2010 (%)
- Population aged 65 years and over as a proportion of total population, 2011 (%)

The effect of immigration is to inject a relatively young cohort into the overall population. While not reversing demographic trends, sustained immigration mitigates shrinking birth rates and the expected impact of baby boomers reaching the age of retirement.

From a community perspective, municipalities that can successfully attract and integrate immigrants will be better positioned to adapt to an aging population.

Communities with a relatively high proportion of older immigrants are taking steps to accommodate them. The **City of Calgary**, for example, has developed resources designed specifically for older new immigrants (see Box 1.2).

## Box 1.2: Supporting older recent immigrants in the City of Calgary, Alta.

*Calgary is home to a significant number of new Canadians over the age of 65 and its resources include a website for new immigrants over 55, programs such as Grandparenting Across Cultures, participating in advocacy work through committees, and coordinating research projects with immigration service providers to identify the needs of immigrant and refugee seniors.*



## 2. ACTIVE AGING IN QOLRS COMMUNITIES



**T**HIS SECTION INTRODUCES TWO BROAD COMPONENTS OF ACTIVE AGING. *SUPPORTING SENIORS IN THE COMMUNITY* ADDRESSES HOUSING, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS. *SUPPORTING SENIORS ON THE MOVE* ADDRESSES TRANSPORTATION AND ACTIVE RECREATION.

*As used here, the word “active” refers not simply to physical activity, but to full civic engagement, taking the form of participation in social, economic, cultural, and spiritual affairs.*

The analysis in this section is based on data from the 2011 Census of Population and 2011 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) for the 26 communities included in the Quality of Life Reporting System.

These subjects will also be addressed more thoroughly in subsequent reports in the *Canada’s Aging Population* series, as new data becomes available from the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), and other datasets.

### 2.1 Supporting seniors in the community: housing and civic engagement

Access to a range of **acceptable housing choices**, including safe, adequate and affordable housing, is a critical component of active aging. Seniors overwhelmingly prefer to age in place, and often do not seriously consider alternative dwelling arrangements until circumstances force them to do so.<sup>xi</sup>

ACCORDING TO THE CMHC, **ACCEPTABLE HOUSING** MUST BE ADEQUATE IN CONDITION, SUITABLE IN SIZE, AND AFFORDABLE. A DWELLING IS ADEQUATE IF IT DOES NOT

REQUIRE MAJOR REPAIRS. A DWELLING WITH A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF BEDROOMS COMPARED TO HOUSEHOLD SIZE IS SEEN AS SUITABLE. A DWELLING IS AFFORDABLE IF IT COSTS LESS THAN 30 PER CENT OF BEFORE-TAX HOUSEHOLD INCOME.

According to the WHO's 2002 publication **Active Ageing: A Policy Framework**,<sup>xii</sup> housing choice reduces the likelihood of being uprooted from established friendships, and other familiar social ties. Acceptable housing located within well-planned communities enables seniors to live in close proximity to health and social and services and recreational amenities. Finally, well-conceived building codes take the health and safety needs of an aging population into consideration and contribute to better designed and safer housing.

INDIVIDUALS ARE IN **CORE HOUSING NEED** WHEN THEIR HOUSING DOES NOT FIT ONE OR MORE OF THE CRITERIA NECESSARY FOR HOUSING TO BE ACCEPTABLE ACCORDING TO THE CMHC.

Using data from the 2006 Census of Population, a 2010 publication by the Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) described a number of trends characterizing Canada's seniors' housing.<sup>xiii</sup>

- Seniors are much more likely than non-seniors to live in collective dwellings (nursing homes, health care facilities, or similar facilities). Seniors made up 61 per cent of the population living in collective dwellings in 2006 although persons aged 65 and over accounted for only 13.7 per cent of the total population.
- A majority of seniors' households own a home, increasingly a condominium. Senior-led households are more likely to own a home than non-seniors households. In 2006, 72 per cent of all seniors' households owned a home, compared to 67 per cent of non-seniors households. Senior-led households are more likely to own condominiums than other households.

- Seniors' households are more likely than non-seniors households to be in core housing need. In 2006, the proportion of households in core housing need was 14.4 per cent among seniors and 12.2 per cent among non-seniors.<sup>xiv</sup>
- Seniors' households spend, on average, less on housing than non-seniors households.

In addition to affordability, the design of housing to include amenities appropriate to the needs of older adults, or adaptable to people of different ages, is an important consideration in creating age-friendly cities.<sup>xv</sup>

## Box 2.1: Housing that adapts to aging in the City of North Vancouver, B.C.

*The City of North Vancouver supports seniors through housing and age-friendly communities' initiatives. In the 1990s, the city developed the Adaptable Design policy which creates apartment units that can be renovated inexpensively or grab bars can be safely installed. The city now has over 2,500 adaptable units, found in newer apartment buildings.*

## Seniors and housing choice

The 2009 QOLRS report discussed the role of municipal governments in enabling the delivery of publicly-funded rental housing as an "affordable solution to households in core housing need." The report explained that "social housing managed by municipal, para-municipal and private not-for-profit agencies remains an essential element of the overall rental housing stock in larger cities and urban regions across Canada."<sup>xvi</sup>

The 2012 QOLRS report reviewed trends in rental housing and homeownership in municipalities across Canada, and found that "rental housing is an often overlooked yet important component of Canada's housing system. One-third of Canadians are renters. This includes older Canadians,

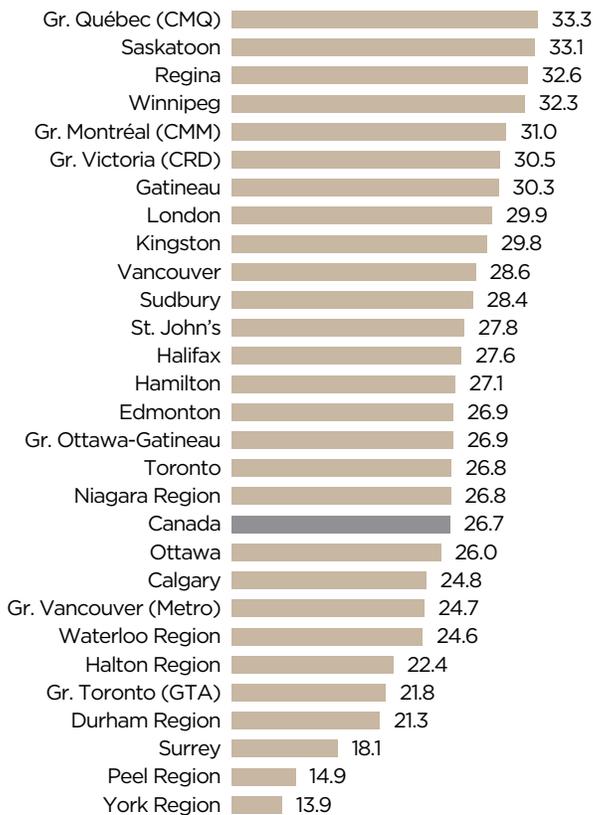
seeking apartment living when they no longer need or want to maintain larger family homes.”<sup>xvii</sup> The report profiled initiatives from 11 municipalities in support of affordable and adequate rental housing.

Detailed data on housing choice and housing affordability will be available by late-2013 with the full release of the 2011 National Household Survey, as well as forthcoming data from the CMHC. Subsequent reports in the Canada’s Aging Population series will explore these data in greater detail.

Figure 9 presents the per cent of seniors living alone by QOLRS community. In 2011, more than one in four (26.7 per cent) of Canadian seniors (65+) reported living alone. Out of 26 QOLRS communities, 17 exceeded the national average. Figure 9 also reveals that, as more baby boomers reach retirement age, local governments will need to dedicate more resources for acceptable housing and social services designed with older adults in mind.

In cities with a high proportion of seniors living alone, QOLRS communities are implementing programs and policies to enable greater housing choices and more affordable housing for seniors. The City of North Vancouver, for example, adopted a policy encouraging adaptable suites in new developments (see Box 2.1). These types of units are designed to facilitate age-friendly renovations as needed in the future. Already over 2,500 such units have been built. The City of Gatineau has allowed the development of secondary suites on single family dwellings, with a view to permit seniors to live close to their families later in life (see Box 2.2).

**Figure 9**  
**Per cent of population aged 65 years and over living alone, by QOLRS community, 2006-2011**



## Box 2.2: Incentives for age-friendly modifications to existing housing in the City of Gatineau, Que.

*Through the Programme of Adapted Housing for Seniors’ Independence, the City of Gatineau offers financial assistance of up to \$3,500 to low income seniors aged 65+ in need of minor modifications to their permanent home. The program is designed to allow seniors to continue to live in their home independently and with a greater sense of security. Finally, the City of Gatineau has authorized the development of secondary suites on lots containing single family dwellings. This decision was taken to permit seniors to continue to live with their families.*

## Seniors and social connections

The impact of a high proportion of seniors living alone on quality of life extends to measures of civic engagement and social connectedness. While the ability to live alone represents an indicator of independence, seniors living alone are at a greater risk of experiencing a sense of social isolation, which in turn increases the risk of depression.<sup>xviii</sup> Social isolation can, in turn, result in higher incidences of malnutrition, as seniors living alone may not enjoy eating meals alone, make good food choices, feel like cooking, or know how to cook.<sup>xix</sup>

One measure of civic engagement is the level of volunteerism. In fact, Canada's seniors tend to volunteer more hours on average than other age groups. According to the 2010 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, adults aged 65 to 75 years of age volunteered 235 hours per year, compared with 156 hours per year for all Canadians.<sup>xx</sup> This volunteerism contributes to the social and economic well-being of seniors' communities. Deeper analysis of the level of volunteerism and other measures of civic engagement will be possible as data are released by Statistics Canada by late-2013.

Several municipalities have initiated programs that encourage seniors to remain engaged and socially connected. Vancouver funds community centres and neighbourhood houses for seniors groups (Box 2.3). London, Ontario provides social and recreational opportunities at Seniors' Centres (Box 2.4). Similarly, Richmond, British Columbia makes it easier for seniors to stay socially connected by making relevant volunteer opportunities available (Box 2.5).

### Box 2.3: Community Centres and Neighbourhood Houses in the City of Vancouver, B.C.

*Vancouver funds 23 community centres, one of which houses a dedicated seniors' centre. The centres are run via a partnership between the City Parks Board and local non-profit community organizations, and provide older adults with opportunities for both recreation and community development. The city's Community Services Grants program also funds Neighbourhood Houses, which focus on community development and offer older adult programming. The city also runs an Arts and Health Project that provides workshops for seniors with professional artists including visual artists, writers and digital storytellers.*

### Box 2.4: Social engagement at Seniors' Centres in the City of London, Ont.

*London promotes the mental health of seniors by financially supporting Seniors' Centres. A key resource for seniors' social engagement, the Centers offer a variety of recreation and social events for all Londoners' 55 years and older.*

## Box 2.5: Encouraging volunteering among seniors in the City of Richmond, B.C.

*Richmond is promoting a healthy and engaged aging population through programs that encourage civic and social participation. These include providing meaningful volunteer opportunities for adults aged 55 and over, and Wellness Connections, an outreach program targeting seniors experiencing social isolation.*

## 2.2 Supporting seniors on the move: transportation and active recreation

This portion of the report addresses transportation accessibility and recreation as important components of active aging. Data measuring transportation modes and commuting patterns will become available during 2013 with the release of the 2011 National Household Survey. Rates of moderate physical activity among seniors, however, are available from the 2011 Canadian Community Health Survey.

IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSPORTATION, **ACCESSIBILITY** REFERS TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES NECESSARY FOR USERS TO MOVE ABOUT; AS WELL AS THE PROXIMITY OF DESTINATIONS.

Improved and sustained access to active transportation and recreation amenities create opportunities for greater physical activity. From a public health perspective, physical inactivity is a well-established and strong predictor of a variety of medical conditions including hypertension,

heart disease, depression, and cancer.<sup>xxi, xxii</sup> In Canada, costs associated with physical inactivity were estimated to be \$5.3 billion (2.6 percent of health care costs) in 2001.<sup>xxiii</sup>

**ACTIVE RECREATION** IS A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY VOLUNTARILY UNDERTAKEN DURING LEISURE TIME.

Physical inactivity among seniors is particularly problematic. The Chief Public Health Officer notes in the 2010 Report on the Health of Canadians that physical activity levels tend to decline with age.<sup>xxiv</sup> It is not surprising that both infrastructure for active transportation and facilities for active recreation are cited by researchers as important components of age-friendly communities.<sup>xxv</sup>

Figure 10 compares the proportion of seniors who reported being physically active with the proportion of adults aged 12 to 64 who report being physically active, by QOLRS community. On average, seniors in QOLRS communities are less likely than the rest of the population to engage in regular physical activity (43.9 per cent of seniors, 55.5 per cent of the general population).

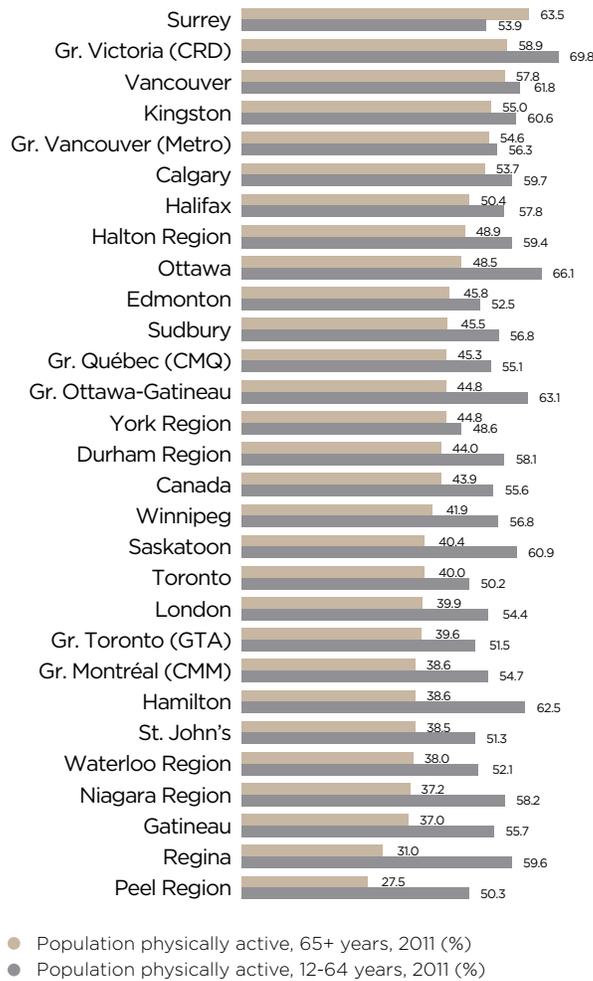
**ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION** REFERS TO ANY FORM OF HUMAN-POWERED TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WALKING AND CYCLING.

The measures shown above bear particular importance for local governments, who need to invest in age-friendly infrastructure and services to ensure that seniors remain physically active. Municipal governments across Canada play a vital role in influencing the level of physical activity of all residents, including seniors, with corresponding impacts on health and well-being.

As a starting point, the integration of land uses and physical infrastructure for walking and cycling have a significant impact on rates

of active transportation.<sup>xxvi</sup> With public transit, accommodations for seniors include investment in accessible transit vehicles, the design of bus shelters and the location of bus stops. Even walking to and from transit stops has been shown to contribute significantly to daily physical activity.<sup>xxvii</sup> In addition to their transportation-related benefits, facilities for walking and cycling contribute to overall physical activity.<sup>xxviii</sup> The availability of amenities for recreation — many of them the same as those required for active transportation — has a similarly important impact on active recreation.<sup>xxix</sup>

**Figure 10**  
**Per cent of population who report being physically active, by age category and QOLRS community, 2011**



**MODERATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** REFERS TO AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL DAILY ENERGY EXPENDITURES OF AT LEAST 1.5 KCAL/KG/DAY OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS. THIS ROUGHLY CORRESPONDS TO ONE HALF-HOUR TO HOUR-LONG WALK PER DAY.

Community Snapshots presented in section 4 highlight several practical ways in which Canadian municipalities are enabling greater physical activity by seniors through both active transportation infrastructure, and active recreation amenities. For example, **Toronto** has developed strategies to make walking more convenient for seniors (Box 2.6). Similarly, **Durham Region** is implementing policies to ensure that new age-friendly housing is located near recreational services in order to encourage physical activity (Box 2.7).

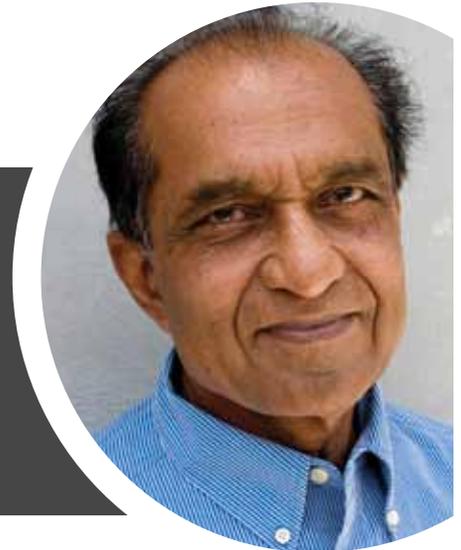
**Box 2.6: Making walking convenient for seniors in the City of Toronto, Ont.**

*Toronto is making the urban environment more walkable by designing larger and more readable street signs, increasing the number of curb ramps, and introducing additional street furniture.*

**Box 2.7: Housing near recreational facilities in Durham Region, Ont.**

*Durham Region is implementing policies to ensure that age-friendly housing is located close to social, recreational and support services.*

# 3. CONCLUSION



THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION FACING MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN CANADA'S LARGEST CITIES AND COMMUNITIES ARE FAR-REACHING AND PROFOUND. THIS FIRST REPORT IN THE QOLRS SERIES ON CANADA'S AGING POPULATION BEGINS TO DESCRIBE THIS TRANSFORMATION, AND ILLUSTRATES THE EXTENT TO WHICH CANADA'S MUNICIPALITIES ARE RESPONDING TO RAPIDLY EMERGING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, ENGAGING DIRECTLY WITH SENIORS AND SETTING THE STAGE FOR CHANGES TO BE MADE TO LOCAL POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The changes occurring within Canadian cities and communities touch on areas as diverse as transportation, land use planning, local economic development, recreation, and affordable housing. Subsequent reports in this QOLRS series on aging in Canadian cities and communities will address housing, transportation and recreation more closely, using forthcoming data from the National Household Survey and other relevant data sources.

Given that Statistics Canada projects seniors aged 65 and over to grow from 14 per cent of Canada's population today to roughly 25 per cent by 2036, municipalities will need substantial resources to make their communities more age-friendly. Small towns and rural communities, where 23 per cent of Canadian seniors live, will face unique social and environmental challenges that can have an impact on quality of life different from those facing larger urban populations. Seniors who wish to age in place in rural communities face greater barriers

to remain in their homes, stay active, and remain engaged with their communities.

Much of the adaptive work is needed at the municipal level; public transit, municipally owned buildings, sidewalks, recreation centres, local parks and other municipal infrastructure. Many local governments have already taken steps to respond to seniors' needs.

As the pace of demographic transformation of Canada's cities and communities increases into the future, these and other age-specific interventions will have to be sustained and expanded. Municipal governments have already demonstrated their leadership. However, Canada's municipal governments need support from all orders of government, who benefit equally from age-friendly communities where seniors continue to lead healthy and productive lives.

# 4. COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS: MUNICIPAL INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF AN AGING POPULATION

Municipal governments across Canada have already begun to anticipate the impact of an aging population through policies, programs, and partnerships. This section presents aging-related initiatives undertaken by 17 QOLRS communities. They capture a wide range of initiatives led by municipal governments, including land use planning, transportation, affordable housing, local economic development, recreation and community engagement.



# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 1

City of Vancouver, British Columbia



VANCOUVER PROVIDES ITS SENIOR POPULATION WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO REMAIN HEALTHY AND ENGAGED. OLDER ADULTS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE SENIORS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WHICH ADVISES COUNCIL ON HOW TO IMPROVE MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Vancouver's Housing Department has been highly responsive to the needs of seniors, including facilitating the development of low-cost housing for older residents and seeking to increase the amount of seniors' housing constructed in proximity to neighbourhood centres and shopping areas. Accessibility building code standards are now applied to all new buildings and during the renovation of older structures.

Operating and capital funds are provided by the city to 23 community centres, one of which houses a dedicated seniors' centre. These are run via a partnership between the City Parks Board and local non-profit community organizations and provide older adults with opportunities for both recreation and community development. Vancouver's Community Services Grants program also provides operating and capital funds to Neighbourhood Houses, which focus on community development and offers older-adult programming. The city also runs an Arts and Health Project that provides workshops for seniors with professional artists including visual artists, writers and digital storytellers.

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*Sources: City of Vancouver <http://www.vancouver.ca>; Programs and support for Vancouver's seniors; Seniors Backgrounder; Seniors Advisory Committee*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 2

## City of Richmond, British Columbia



LOCATED IN METRO VANCOUVER, THE RICHMOND AND ITS PARTNERS ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO PROMOTE A HEALTHY AND ENGAGED AGING POPULATION. EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE POPULATION AGED 55 YEARS AND OLDER INCLUDE:

**Diversity:** Translation - Provision of key marketing documents targeting Chinese and Punjabi speaking people as well as engaging seniors as translators at workshops and events.

**Partnerships:** Continuing Health Services Integration Council to ensure the coordination of seamless care and integrated health care delivery; Falls Prevention Network to reduce the risk of falls for older adults in the community; and participation in research and education with local universities.

**Programs:** Continuum of Physical Activity - Provision of adaptive exercise programming in response to demand for more options for older adults with physical limitations; Vial of Life - Contains written medical information that assists emergency personnel in finding important medical facts about household members during a crisis at home; Volunteers - Provision of meaningful volunteer opportunities; Wellness Connections - An outreach program targeting seniors experiencing social isolation.

**Services:** Included are a combination of Health and Wellness Workshops, Support Groups; and Wellness Clinics.

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*Sources: City of Richmond <http://www.richmond.ca>; About 55+/Seniors Services; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Older Adults Service Plan. Active and Healthy Living in Richmond 2008-2012*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 3

City of North Vancouver,  
British Columbia



**A**NOTHER METRO VANCOUVER MUNICIPALITY, NORTH VANCOUVER, SUPPORTS SENIORS THROUGH HOUSING AND AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES RELATED POLICIES AND INITIATIVES. IN THE 1990S, COUNCIL ENDORSED SEVERAL SENIORS-RELATED HOUSING POLICIES, INCLUDING STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SENIORS HOUSING; SITES SUITABLE FOR SENIORS HOUSING. IT WAS ALSO IN THE LATE 1990S THAT NORTH VANCOUVER DEVELOPED THE ADAPTABLE DESIGN POLICY WHICH CREATES APARTMENT UNITS DESIGNED SO THAT MANY FEATURES OF THE UNIT CAN BE RENOVATED INEXPENSIVELY OR GRAB BARS CAN BE SAFELY INSTALLED. THE CITY NOW HAS OVER 2,500 ADAPTABLE UNITS, FOUND IN NEWER APARTMENT BUILDINGS.

North Vancouver's 2002 Official Community Plan (OCP) addresses social sustainability, and incorporates ideas for supporting seniors. Updates to the OCP will include an objective for Age-Friendly Communities.

In 2011 North Vancouver sponsored a project led by a coalition of North Shore community agencies and organizations and funded by a provincial grant called who Seniors Taking Action which was developed by seniors from the results of the Seniors Today Survey.

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*Sources: City of North Vancouver <http://www.cnv.org>; North Vancouver's Age-Friendly Communities concept and approach*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 4

City of Surrey, British Columbia



**S**URREY IS ONE OF 22 MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN METRO VANCOUVER. SURREY ENGAGES ITS DIVERSE SENIOR POPULATION TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF ELDER ABUSE AND NEGLECT. VISIBLE MINORITY SENIORS COMPRISE 25.9 PER CENT METRO VANCOUVER'S TOTAL SENIOR POPULATION, A FIGURE MORE THAN THREE TIMES GREATER THAN THE CANADIAN AVERAGE. VANCOUVER SENIORS ALSO REPRESENT A WIDE RANGE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS, WITH A HIGH CONCENTRATION OF LOW-INCOME SENIORS LIVING IN THE LOWER MAINLAND.

Surrey's Seniors Advisory and Accessibility Committee has hosted numerous Focus on Seniors forums, some of which were conducted in Punjabi, Korean, Urdu and Mandarin. Forums have drawn at least 150 seniors and caregivers and are now so popular that the Surrey has a waiting list to participate.

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*Sources: City of Surrey <http://www.surrey.ca>; City of Surrey Seniors Advisory & Accessibility Committee; City of Surrey Seniors Programs and Services*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 5

City of Calgary, Alberta



**T**HOUGH CALGARY HAS ONE OF THE YOUNGEST POPULATIONS IN THE QOLRS WITH A MEDIAN AGE OF 36.4 YEARS, ITS SENIOR POPULATION IS INCREASING AT AN UNPRECEDENTED PACE.

Seniors currently comprise 10 per cent of the population and the City estimates this will increase to nearly 15 per cent over the next decade. With a significant boomer population, projections show that by 2036 almost one in five Calgarians will be seniors.

Calgary is in the early stages of developing a strategy to align current and future initiatives for its aging population, with the objective of being age-friendly by the year 2020. To support its aging population, the City has been active on housing, immigration and transportation.

To meeting the housing needs of its growing senior population Calgary initiated the Older Adult Housing Research Project to better understand how the aging population may impact housing supply, and to work with stakeholders to raise awareness and identify options. Recognizing that many people choose to remain at home after retirement, the city offers support to low-income seniors through the Property Tax Assistance Program, which provides financial assistance to low income seniors facing property tax increases, and with a home maintenance program that assists seniors with minor home repairs, snow removal and yard-work.

Calgary's support for seniors includes a website for new immigrants over 55, programs such as Grandparenting Across Cultures, participating in advocacy work through committees, coordinating research projects with immigration service providers to identify the needs of immigrant and refugee seniors.

Calgary also has an active Advisory Committee on Accessibility. Composed of representatives from the community, as well as appointed City administration staff, the Committee advises City Council on accessibility issues related to municipal properties, information and services.

Finally, the City ensures all seniors have access to affordable public transportation by offering unlimited access to Calgary Transit services for all seniors 65 years of age and over for a cost of \$95.00 per year. Low-income seniors are eligible to receive Calgary Transit's Senior Citizen's Transit Pass for a reduced fare of \$15.00 per year.

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*Sources: City of Calgary <http://www.calgary.ca>; Calgary's Aging Population Overview; City of Calgary Seniors Programs and Services; Transit Pass Website*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 6

City of Edmonton, Alberta



**W**HILE IT IS AMONG THE YOUNGER CITIES IN THE QOLRS, EDMONTON IS PREPARING FOR A SHARP INCREASE IN ITS OLDER POPULATION. THE MUNICIPALITY ESTIMATES THAT WITHIN THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS THE NUMBER OF SENIORS OVER THE AGE OF 80 MAY INCREASE BY AS MUCH AS 266 PER CENT. THE PRE-RETIREMENT COHORT, THOSE AGED 55-64, IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY AS MUCH AS 104 PER CENT.

Edmonton is committed to meeting the needs of its older population. In June 2010, City Council launched the Edmonton Seniors Declaration and was subsequently accepted as a member of the World Health Organization's Global Age-Friendly Cities Network. In June 2011, Edmonton released a 'Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton,' a five-year Action Plan that identifies goals, service gaps and key objectives. The City continues to work with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and other stakeholders to continually improve service.

The city holds an annual Seniors Housing Project and recently completed two community demonstration projects to support seniors to remain in their homes longer. Other priorities include creativity and aging, transportation, support for immigrant seniors, elder abuse prevention, resource information dissemination, strategic planning of seniors' services, seniors' centres and Age-Friendly cities resources/supports.

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*Sources: City of Edmonton <http://www.edmonton.ca>; Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait, Seniors Declaration: City of Edmonton; Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council; 'Vision for an Age-friendly Edmonton Action Plan'*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 7

## City of Regina, Saskatchewan



**R**EGINA IS IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING A NEW OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN TO MAP OUT HOW REGINA WILL GROW PHYSICALLY, PROVIDE SERVICES, MANAGE IMPACTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT, AND ENHANCE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OVER THE NEXT 25 YEARS.

Community priorities include supporting a variety of housing choices to ensure people from all walks and stages of life are welcomed to live in Regina, and making it easier for people of all abilities to travel by investing in public transit in appropriate locations and planning for all active forms of transportation. Alongside the Official Community Plan process, a Transportation Master Plan and a Comprehensive Housing Strategy are also being prepared. Both plans will shape how Regina's residents, including seniors, experience and live in our city.

An important input to this planning process is the Regina City Priority Population Study on Seniors. This background study was commissioned to help inform the development of the Official Community Plan, stemming from the recognition that seniors are an important and growing population group in Regina. The study highlights the social and economic characteristics of Regina seniors, projects the number of seniors who will be living in Regina in the future, and reviews literature regarding active aging and aging in place. The city solicited comments and feedback from seniors to identify other issues of importance. Seniors will continue to be consulted and invited to participate as Regina continues the development of its community plan.

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Sources: City of Regina <http://www.regina.ca>; Regina City Priority Population Study on Seniors

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 8

## City of London, Ontario



IN 2010, LONDON BECAME THE FIRST CANADIAN MUNICIPALITY TO JOIN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES. THOUGH THE MEDIAN POPULATION AGE IN LONDON IS SLIGHTLY BELOW THE CANADIAN AVERAGE AT 39.3, THE CITY HAS BEEN A LEADER IN IMPLEMENTING THE WHO GUIDELINES WHILE STRIVING FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT BY SOLICITING FEEDBACK FROM THE SENIOR POPULATION.

In 2005, London's Department of Community Services worked with seniors, community groups and service providers to develop the London Community Action Plan for Seniors. One of the first in the country, the Plan provided background information on the senior population, summarized focus group outcomes, identified priorities and made recommendations for next steps. In 2009, London's Age-Friendly City Working Group hosted an Age-Friendly conference to gather feedback from residents on what is working well and areas for improvement.

The Working Group learned that the majority of older adults find London a supportive community for retirees, with 9 out of 10 assessing their current housing as both comfortable and affordable. The majority of concerns regarded access to family doctors and affordable home care. While municipalities do not have a health care mandate, London promotes the mental health of seniors by financially supporting Seniors' Centres. A key resource for seniors' social engagement, the Centers offer a variety of recreation and social events for all Londoners' 55 years and older.

The Age Friendly London Network was established in June 2013 to implement London's Three Year Action Plan which identifies 37 strategies and 133 actions for the eight key focus areas of age friendliness as defined by the World Health Organization.

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*Sources: City of London <http://www.london.ca>; Working Together to Support London's Seniors: Community Action Plan (2005); Age-Friendly London: Report to the Community (2010)*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 9

## Waterloo Region, Ontario



IN JANUARY 2012, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION DESIGNATED THE CITY OF WATERLOO AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY, MAKING IT THE EIGHTH CANADIAN CITY TO RECEIVE THE HONOUR. THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO'S SENIOR POPULATION HAS STEADILY INCREASED OVER THE PAST DECADE, FROM 11.2 PER CENT OF TOTAL POPULATION IN 2001 TO 12.5 PER CENT IN 2011. THE REGION IS COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH ITS COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO DEVELOP AN AGING PLAN TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SENIORS.

Waterloo Region is currently working with a Seniors Advisory Committee to develop an age-friendly strategy scheduled for completion in 2014 that incorporates information from consultations with all the Seniors Committees in Waterloo Region. Currently, Waterloo Region supports housing for seniors within a wide spectrum of independence. Available facilities include Sunnyside Home, a not-for-profit long-term care home with over 250 residents. The Sunnyside campus also features convalescent care, respite care and subsidized assisted-living units. Further support from the Region is available through community programs such as an Alzheimer day program, evening and overnight stay programs.

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Sources: Region of Waterloo <http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca>; The Record; Social Services Department website

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 10

Halton Region, Ontario



**H**ALTON REGION IS PLANNING A COMPREHENSIVE SENIOR'S STRATEGY. IN 2010, HALTON REGION'S ELDER SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD FOCUS GROUPS WITH HALTON SENIORS TO GET INPUT ON TOPICS RELATED TO AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES SUCH AS DRIVING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING CHOICES, OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEERING, COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR SENIORS, RECREATION AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, AND WHERE AND HOW SENIORS GET INFORMATION.

In June, 2011, the Elder Services Advisory Committee hosted a community forum to share the information collected from the seniors' focus groups and gained feedback from Halton seniors and community stakeholders. A common theme heard from seniors was the challenge associated with dealing with transitions. These transitions included adjusting to new culture and environments; changing housing and accommodations; changing health, mobility and activity levels; changing social circles; and reduced independence (e.g., driving).

In working towards a comprehensive plan, Halton's Age-Friendly Communities Study will provide advice to Halton Regional Council, capture seniors' voices and explore what is working and opportunities for improvement.

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Sources: Halton Region <http://www.halton.ca>; Halton's Age-Friendly Communities Project

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 11

Peel Region, Ontario



**T**HE REGION MUNICIPALITY OF PEEL, THROUGH ITS STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS HAS IDENTIFIED 24 PRIORITIES FOR THE CURRENT TERM OF COUNCIL (2010-2014). FIVE OF THESE TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES, SUMMARISED BELOW, FOCUS ON PLANNING FOR AND SUPPORTING THE NEEDS OF THE AGING POPULATION IN PEEL REGION.

1. Assess the impacts of the aging population on health and human services delivered in order to determine the appropriate mix and level of Regional services to respond to community needs. Research and analysis being conducted by the Region and engagement with health system partners will inform Regional decision-making and advocacy.
2. Explore the feasibility of community paramedicine partnerships and strategies in order to reduce non-essential transport to local hospitals. Peel is reviewing community paramedicine programs in other jurisdictions and assessing the current and future needs of the Peel community. A community paramedicine program or business process change project will be piloted to test the effectiveness of reducing non-essential transports.
3. Increase supply of appropriate housing options to address the housing needs of Peel's residents. Peel Region is committed to continuing to integrate the needs of older adults into future program planning and services delivery. As a requirement of the Province's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the Region is developing a local Homelessness and Housing Plan which will include older adults' housing needs as a critical component. Other key initiatives include the Region of Peel Housing Strategy (2010) and Housing Investment Plan (2011-2031).
4. Increase capacity (trips) available through accessible transportation services. Accessible Transportation develops and implements a variety of responsive, community supported, person-centred programs and support that alleviate transportation difficulties for Peel residents, including the growing aging population. Service updates and new initiatives are planned or underway to ensure that the Region's accessible transportation services continue to meet the needs of the population. These include a one-stop service window for clients; an update to the Accessible Transportation Master Plan; technology improvements; and a new cross-border travel policy.
5. Build Community Capacity through supporting the work of community-based agencies and groups. Several seniors-specific groups, agencies and programs are supported by the Region of Peel, including the Peel Seniors Portal, Project Lifesaver Peel, the Peel Elder Abuse Prevention Network and the Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrant Seniors.

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Sources: Region of Peel <http://www.peelregion.ca>; Peel Region Term of Council Priorities, 2011-2014

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 12

City of Toronto, Ontario



**O**N JUNE 14, 2011, TORONTO CITY COUNCIL DIRECTED STAFF TO DEVELOP A SENIORS STRATEGY THAT BUILDS ON THE EXISTING WORK OF THE CITY AND ITS PARTNERS, AS WELL AS CURRENT RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES. A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY HAS BEEN COMPLETED TO HELP IDENTIFY THE CURRENT ISSUES FACING TORONTO SENIORS.

The Seniors Strategy will be reported to Toronto City Council in the spring of 2013. In addition to the Seniors Strategy, the Toronto is supporting several key initiatives:

- an increasing amount of senior-specific programs developed by Toronto EMS to mitigate hospital stays and promote earlier discharge home;
- an action plan to make the city more walkable, to design larger and more readable street signs, and to increase the number of curb ramps and street benches;
- free, friendly visiting and security checks for vulnerable seniors, free evening and weekend transportation, low-cost grocery delivery, snow shovelling and lawn maintenance;
- developing a guide to services for seniors in Toronto that will provide information about housing and housing assistance programs (including eviction prevention), health services (meals, assistive devices, mental health and addictions), recreational activities, and legal and financial assistance, to be released in 2013 in hard copy and online;
- replacing the aging fleet of inaccessible streetcars with new low-floor design, beginning in 2014 with complete replacement by 2019;
- a range of age-friendly materials are available from public libraries, including large print, audio books and e-books; seniors that are unable to visit a Library for three or more months can have library materials delivered to their homes free-of-charge;

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 12

City of Toronto, Ontario



- accessibility and aging in place design guidelines to be used by housing providers when they plan new developments to better accommodate tenants who are or will become seniors needing modifications to be able to live independently;
- the application of a seniors lens checklist in place since 2009, applied to all policies, programs and procedures at Toronto Community Housing;
- a five-year Recreation Service Plan will be submitted for Council consideration by early-2013; the service plan will guide planning, prioritizing and decision-making for the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division, with reference to priority populations including seniors; and,
- the expansion of the City's Homemakers and Nurses Services Program to assist seniors to live in their own home in the community and the Behavioural Supports Program, which helps families and caregivers coping with dementia, mental illness, substance use disorders and other neurological conditions, whether at home, in long-term care or elsewhere.

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*Sources: City of Toronto <http://www.toronto.ca>; Council direction related to the development of a Seniors Strategy; Toronto Seniors Strategy.*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 13

York Region, Ontario



**T**HE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK HAS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING OLDER ADULT POPULATIONS AMONG URBAN MUNICIPALITIES IN ONTARIO. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ANTICIPATES THAT WITHIN THE NEXT TWO DECADES THE NUMBERS OF SENIORS WILL MORE THAN DOUBLE IN SIZE. MOREOVER, WITHIN THE NEXT TEN YEARS BETWEEN 100,000 TO 150,000 OF THOSE CURRENTLY ACTIVE IN THE REGION'S WORKFORCE WILL REACH THE AGE OF RETIREMENT.

In anticipation of the potential labour shortage, York Region undertook an Aging Workforce Study which used custom research to assess the unique economic impact of the aging workforce on the local economy. The study provided information to identify workforce gaps, forecast trends in retirement, second career plans of older workers, and survey employer workforce planning practices. Report findings are collected in *Beyond the Boomers: A York Region Employer's Guide to the Labour Force Shortage*, which includes tools and resources for employers to effectively sustain a quality workforce, maintain industry competitiveness and provide opportunities for older adults to remain engaged.

The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region is another initiative for seniors. This document provides principles for developing and delivering public health programs that serve adults aged 55 and over. The Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults uses a population health approach aimed at improving wellbeing across the age spectrum, reducing health inequities and fostering resiliency. Key strategies include aging in place and delaying and minimizing chronic disease, disability and the risk of falls through healthy active lifestyles.

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Sources: York Region <http://www.york.ca>; Healthy Aging Strategy for Older Adults in York Region; *Beyond the Boomers: A York Region Employer's Guide to the Labour Force Shortage*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 14

Durham Region, Ontario



**O**VER THE PAST DECADE THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF DURHAM HAS CONTINUED TO UPDATE ITS OFFICIAL PLAN WITH THE AIM OF SUPPORTING HEALTHIER, COMPLETE AND MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES THAT ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS, INCLUDING SENIORS.

Among other areas, Durham has been a leader in the provision of accessible public transportation. Durham Region Transit (DRT) is an integrated transit system offering conventional and/or community bus service in all local municipalities. The DRT Specialized Service provides door-to-door service to eligible residents with disabilities, including seniors with mobility issues. DRT carries approximately 375,000 seniors and 450,000 ODSP clients annually, making up almost 10 per cent of its ridership in addition to 165,000 annual Specialized Services riders.

Durham Region is also actively seeking to meet the housing needs of current and future seniors. The Region recently completed a review housing affordability and special housing needs and found that while pre-retirement adults have adequate housing, there is increasing demand for smaller, more affordable rental units. The regional government is implementing policies to ensure these services are located close to social, recreational and support services. In addition to building new units, improving access to services and funds for adapting homes to allow residents to age-in-place continues to be a key objective.

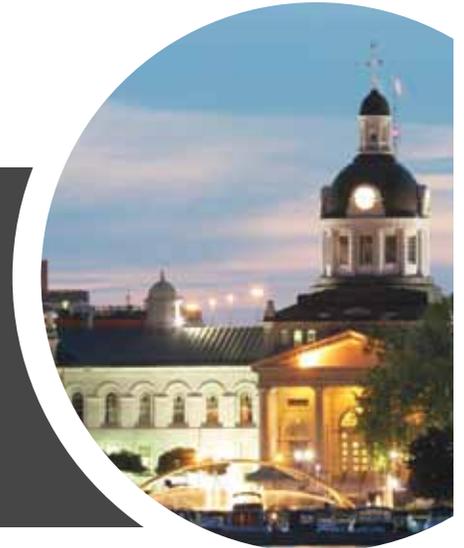
Durham Region is responsible for 93 projects accommodating 6,374 social housing units. These projects are operated by the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation, three municipal non-project housing providers, 28 private non-profit housing corporations, and 13 co-operative non-profit housing corporations. Most of the social housing stock in Durham is targeted to either seniors or families, requiring a two-bedroom unit or larger. Additional funding has been committed to construct a new seniors' complex consisting of 139 units in Whitby. The site will offer barrier-free living to both seniors and people with physical disabilities at rents that are at or below 80 per cent of the CMHC average market rent.

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*Sources: Region of Durham <http://www.durham.ca>; Growing Together. Durham Region Strategic Plan 2009-2014; Durham Region Housing Review*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 15

City of Kingston, Ontario



**K**INGSTON CITY COUNCIL APPOINTED A SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE IN LATE-2011 WITH A MANDATE TO DEVELOP AN AGE-FRIENDLY PLAN FOR THE CITY IN KEEPING WITH THE THEME AND DIRECTION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES PROGRAMME. KINGSTON BECAME PART OF THE WHO GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES IN 2012.

City staff prepared a Profile of Older Adults, providing socio-demographic information about older adults in Kingston. Factoring in the 45-65 year age group, the reality is approximately 44 per cent of the population of Kingston is already in or will be entering into the older adult classification in the next decade.

In preparing its report, the Seniors Advisory Committee followed the WHO protocol which adopts a locally-driven and "bottom-up" approach. Four of the themes identified during this process include:

- "We want to stay in our homes"
- "We want to be actively involved in the Kingston community"
- "We want to know what is going on and where to get help when we need it"
- "We want to be respected"

The Advisory Committee's report offers a total of fifty-seven recommendations to address the eight WHO Age-Friendly City domains. The recommendations focus on municipal programs, services and infrastructure as well as suggested partnerships with business and community organizations. The city's next steps include developing a three year action plan to be approved by Council and submitted to the WHO for their review and endorsement.

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*Sources: City of Kingston <http://www.cityofkingston.ca>; Kingston's Strategic Plan 2011-2014; Senior's Advisory Committee*

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 16

City of Ottawa, Ontario



**T**HE CITY OF OTTAWA RECENTLY BECAME A MEMBER OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S GLOBAL NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES. SENIORS ARE ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING COMMUNITIES IN OTTAWA; BY 2031, MORE THAN 20 PER CENT OF RESIDENTS WILL BE OVER THE AGE OF 65, COMPARED TO 13 PER CENT IN 2011.

In 2009, City Council directed the development of an Older Adult Plan to guide City programs, services, and facilities to be more accessible and responsive to the specific needs of older adults. The Older Adult Plan project is informed by the WHO's Age-Friendly Cities framework and is aligned with the work of the Age-Friendly Ottawa initiative (Council on Aging).

In October, 2012, Ottawa City Council approved the Older Adult Plan, which outlines 74 concrete actions to be completed by the end of 2014. The actions contained in the Plan are organized under each of the eight WHO age-friendly domains. Initiatives in the Older Adult Plan include:

- Enhance access to health, dental and social supports for vulnerable, low income, older adults;
- Train individuals in the community to identify and refer older adults who appear to be isolated to appropriate services;
- Provide dental screening and education to low income older adults;
- Enhance health promotion and education activities and initiatives;
- Print a targeted guide of social, recreational, and cultural programs;
- Install additional pedestrian signals at selected intersections;
- Develop and implement a computer literacy and internet safety curriculum for older adults;
- Implement a CPR training program specifically designed for older adults;
- Install additional accessible features in city facilities.
- Install additional benches in City parks, on roads, and pathways.

The City of Ottawa and Age Friendly Ottawa (Council on Aging) will submit a joint community action plan to the World Health Organization in the fall 2013, as a requirement for continued membership into the Global Network of Age Friendly Cities. This community plan will include both the municipal Older Adult Plan actions and other community-wide actions that were developed from the consultation feedback.

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 17

City of Gatineau, Québec



**S**ENIORS ACCOUNTED FOR CLOSE TO 12 PER CENT OF GATINEAU'S POPULATION IN 2011, WITH RESIDENTS AGED 65 AND OVER EXPERIENCING AMONGST THE FASTEST GROWTH ACROSS ALL QOLRS COMMUNITIES OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS. GATINEAU HAS RESPONDED TO THIS LARGE AND GROWING SHARE OF ITS POPULATION THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIONS DESIGNED TO ENABLE SENIORS TO AGE IN PLACE WITHIN THE CITY.

The following actions derive from official municipal policies dealing with Families (2005), Housing (2006) and Social Development (2010). Gatineau's distinctive approach is multi-sect7789oral and consultative, prioritizing the role of the family, including seniors, within the broader community in order to enhance quality of life across the socio-economic spectrum.

Since the fall of 2009, Gatineau has been working towards the goal of becoming an Age-Friendly City as defined by the World Health Organization. Focusing on residents aged 50 and older, Gatineau undertook a general diagnostic survey in 2011, including an inventory of services available to seniors and a needs analysis. Next steps will comprise dissemination of information and preparation of a three-year plan of action.

The Families and Seniors Program emanating from the municipal Families Policy is a testament to the importance accorded to senior citizens by the Gatineau. The city's Commission on Seniors has recommended municipal council address two significant challenges: increasing the participation of senior citizens in civic activities and combating discrimination based on age.

# COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT 17

## City of Gatineau, Québec



The Peer Programme is a customized service of automated calls that connects seniors to ensure they are in good health. Participants receive pre-scheduled phone calls. An alert is issued if the participant does not answer the call at the predetermined time. Program coordinators then initiate a procedure to verify that the participant is not in distress. The Program is available at no cost to the user.

The Programme of Adapted Housing for Seniors' Independence offers financial assistance of up to \$3,500 to low income seniors aged 65+ in need of minor modifications to their permanent home. The program is designed to allow seniors to continue to live in their home independently and with a greater sense of security.

Affordable Housing for Seniors, offered through the AccèsLogis Québec program, enables housing cooperatives, public sector housing agencies and non-profit housing organizations to develop housing intended for low and modest income households and for persons with special housing needs. Since 2002, City statistics indicate that 24 per cent of housing developed within the AccèsLogis program in Gatineau has benefitted seniors.

Finally, Gatineau has authorized the development of secondary suites on lots containing single family dwellings. This decision was taken to permit seniors to continue to live with their families.

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*Sources: City of Gatineau <http://www.gatineau.ca>; Family Policy (2005); Housing Policy (2006); Social Development Policy (2010)*

# SUMMARY



This first in a series of reports on the Canada's Aging Population highlights the transformational demographic trends associated with Canada's aging population, and shows how Canada's municipalities are responding to the challenges and opportunities of these trends through a wide array of interventions. The Canada's Aging Population series places municipalities at the centre of a demographic transformation occurring across the country, and highlights the pro-active role being played by Canada's municipal governments in anticipating and responding to this demographic shift.

The demographic trends presented in section 1 of this report demonstrate how Canada's population is aging rapidly, with this trend set to accelerate as baby boomers reach the age of retirement. Over the last decade, the growth in seniors has been higher in QOLRS communities than in Canada as a whole. Other ongoing demographic trends associated with an aging population include:

- the growth in seniors is disproportionately evident in larger urban areas that make up the Quality of Life Reporting System;
- The Labour Force Replacement Ratio has dropped significantly over the past decade for all QOLRS communities; and
- Immigration plays a positive role in cushioning the falling Labour Force Replacement Ratio.

Relying on available data from the 2011 Census and 2011 Canadian Community Health Survey, the indicators and analysis presented in section two of

this report offer a glimpse into themes of housing, transportation and recreation. Not surprisingly, seniors living in the QOLRS communities are far more likely than the rest of the population to live alone and to live in collective dwellings such as seniors residences. At the same time, while seniors are more likely to own their own home and spend less on housing, they also tend to be in greater core housing need. Data presented in this section also suggests that the older population living in QOLRS communities is, on average, less physically active than their working-age peers. These themes are to be developed in greater detail in subsequent reports of the Canada's Aging Population series, with the benefit of data from the 2011 National Household Survey, to be fully released by Statistics Canada by August 2013, as well as data provided by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The final section of this report demonstrates the varied and creative ways in which Canada's municipal governments are investing in age-friendly cities and communities. Municipal policies, programs, and services are enabling seniors to remain in their communities of choice, maintain an active lifestyle, and prevent social isolation. Municipal actions are making housing more affordable and better designed to accommodate the needs of seniors. Municipal investments supporting active transportation, access to public transit, and active recreation are all intended to have positive effects on the well-being of seniors and sustain vibrant local economies.

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- ii <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/health26-eng.htm>
- iii According to M1 medium growth scenario, from: Statistics Canada. (2010). Population projections: Canada, the provinces and territories. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100526/dq100526b-eng.htm>.
- iv Source: [http://www.who.int/ageing/active\\_ageing/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/ageing/active_ageing/en/index.html)
- v Sources: The Public Health Agency of Canada Age-Friendly Communities, available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/publications/public/index-eng.php#afc> ; World Health Organization Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide (2007)
- vi Carstairs, S., & Keon, W. J. (2009). Canada's aging population: Seizing the opportunity. Special Senate Committee on Aging. Retrieved from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/402/agei/rep/AgingFinalReport-e.pdf>
- vii Statistics Canada, The Daily: Population Projections: The Provinces and Territories. (May 26, 2010)
- viii Published in <http://www.oecd.org/els/healthpoliciesanddata/47884543.pdf> see Figure 2.2.
- ix Canadian Economic Observer, 'Projected trends to 2031 for the Canadian Labour Force, Section 3.' August 2011
- x See Canadian Priorities Agenda, 'Population Aging,' September 2008. Pages 2-3.
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- xv [http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global\\_age\\_friendly\\_cities\\_Guide\\_English.pdf](http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf), Section 7, p. 30.
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