Malvern Family Resource Centre

Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Envisioning a Vibrant & Healthy Community For All Ages

Amaal Darr

2015
Executive Summary

Beginning in August 2014, Malvern Family Resource Centre embarked on the Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative (MAFCI). Funded by the City of Toronto, this initiative’s aim is to combat ageism and promote an accessible community by:

- Facilitating community discussions and conducting surveys with local seniors
- Completing community audits with local businesses and organizations
- Developing a report communicating the results
- Launching an ‘age-friendly community’ positive space campaign

The initiative outreached to hundreds of older adults in Malvern, informing them of the campaign and its objectives at local community centres and libraries, Malvern Family Resource Centre programs, as well as local places of worship. Over a 4 month period, MAFCI completed 4 community consultations and 6 focus groups, engaging approximately 120 older adults in discussions. The discussions covered topics identified by the World Health Organization as central to an age-friendly community including accessible outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services, safety and security, and independence.

In addition to the community consultations, an in depth survey was designed and distributed to older adults in the Malvern community who did not have the opportunity to attend the consultations or focus groups. In total, 64 older adults completed the MAFCI survey.

Volunteers working with MAFCI completed a total of 89 community business audits, identifying specific areas of improvement including:

- Ensuring convenient and sheltered drop-off/pick-up areas near businesses
- Having accessible automatic doors
- Having hooks for canes at service counters
- Ensuring wheelchair sloped entry ramps are in place and clearly marked to allow for walkers, wheelchairs, strollers and easier access
- Displaying promotional material with descriptions and images of older people
- Providing telephones with large print buttons and amplification capabilities
- Providing translation services or translated signage

A total of 24 recommendations were made under the 5 priority topics identified by participants who participated in consultations and surveys. As an age-friendly community requires the involvement of multiple sectors, actors, and stakeholders, Malvern Family Resource Centre is committed to working with community partners towards the achievement these recommendations for the long-term development of our community. It is also hoped that this research contributes to the development of other local initiatives as well as to a growing body of research on this topic, especially with the projected growth in the Scarborough-area older adult population over coming years.
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Introduction

Malvern Family Resource Centre (MFRC) has been an active proponent of social development in the Malvern community for over 30 years. Its many programs, serving the very young to older adults, have had a lasting impact on residents in the community. Its history supporting older adults has been exemplary, with efforts to serve Malvern’s diverse senior community represented in its many health and social programs for people aged 55 and older. Last year, MFRC received funding from the City of Toronto to embark on yet another project that will attempt to improve the quality of life of local older adults, making their lives more fulfilling, secure, comfortable, and healthy.

This project was launched as the Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative (MAFCI) in August of 2014. MAFCI’s roots stem from senior participants’ experiences and service provider observations of accessibility and social barriers that have been communicated throughout the years in Malvern. For example, many Malvern seniors who attend MFRC programming have reported that they had difficulties accessing businesses and housing, as well as physically moving throughout the community.

To address this, the Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative was created to conduct in depth research with local seniors in order to identify major issues within the senior community in Malvern as well as to educate and engage key stakeholders and decision makers of these issues.

The work that has been done in this community is an extension of a global social movement to combat ageism and support healthy aging. The World Health Organization, in 2005, began their Global Age-Friendly Cities Project, where they visited 33 cities in 22 countries across the world to research what issues seniors face globally and what constitutes an age-friendly city. The Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and the City of Toronto have all conducted their own research on age-friendly communities/cities, and have produced Guides and Strategy Reports (please see Appendix A for links to these reports). The Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative is following the example of these global and local efforts to adapt and change structures, policies, and services to be more accessible and inclusive of older adults. This is and will continue to be important if, as a community, we continue to recognize and appreciate the contributions of older adults to our families, communities, and economies.

What is an Age-Friendly Community and who is an Older Adult?

**Age-Friendly Communities**

Age-friendly communities are places where older adults can enjoy a social, healthy, safe, and active life. This is possible when local policies and services ensure that the physical environment, like sidewalks and buildings, as well as the social environment, how people in a community interact with one another, are accessible and inclusive of older adults. Therefore, if your community makes an effort to provide seniors with accessible transportation, easy to access buildings/businesses as well as events and programs designed for older adults, it is making progress to become, or may already be, an age-friendly community.

The World Health Organization has done extensive research on what constitutes an age-friendly community and has outlined four key aspects:

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1. Recognizes the great diversity among older persons
2. Promotes their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life
3. Respects their decisions and lifestyle choices, and
4. Anticipates and responds flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences

Ultimately, a community that is accessible to seniors is also an accessible and inclusive community for members of other age groups, life stages, and abilities. For example, families with children, expectant mothers, as well as people with disabilities can all benefit from changes such as installing automatic doors in buildings, having resting chairs/areas in businesses, and making sure the community is safe and secure. Hence, the initiative is not called “senior-friendly,” rather it is called “age-friendly”. When we look at the world through the perspective of an older adult, we are in fact making the world more accessible and inclusive for people of all ages.

Older Adults
This report considers anyone aged 55 and older an “older adult” or “senior”. Malvern Family Resource Centre, a designated Provincial Elderly Persons Centre and currently the only community and family centre within Malvern with an established seniors’ department, uses this age as a qualifier for its senior programming and events. This is not to say that being 55 or older is the only accepted definition of a senior citizen. As the Toronto Seniors’ Strategy states,

“There is no single definition of who is an older adult. Programs and services within the City and from other governments have different definitions reflecting different operational requirements...Older adulthood can easily include people in their fifties, while the eldest of Toronto’s residents may be far more active and independent than many may commonly perceive.”2

Therefore, although we have used age 55 as a practical guideline which was quite inclusive of older residents in the Malvern community, the definition is flexible.

Our Aging City and Community
Canada, Ontario, the City of Toronto and the World
MAFCI is essentially a response to a large demographic shift that is occurring globally, nationally and locally. This shift has been termed the “silver tsunami” by many and describes the immense and rapid growth of the older adult population. According to the World Health Organization, the proportion of people aged 60 and older in the world will double from 11% in 2006 to 22% by 2050.3 This same trend can be seen nationally, in Ontario, and in Toronto where seniors will make up about a quarter of the total population at all regional levels.

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Canada\textsuperscript{4}  

Population 65 years and over, Canada, Historical (1971-2011) and Projected (2012-2061) (percent)  

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\hline
1971 & 9.3 & 9.6 & 11.5 & 12.6 & 14.4 & 15.5 & 17.0 & 20.0 & 20.0 & 24.7 & 25.5 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Ontario\textsuperscript{5}  

\textbf{Ontario’s Population Aged 65+ as a Share of Total Population, 1978 to 2058}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ontario_population_65plus.png}
\end{center}

Toronto\textsuperscript{6}  

\textbf{Forecasted Percent of Total Population}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{toronto_population_forecast.png}
\end{center}

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
The fastest growing age group in Canada, Ontario, and the City of Toronto currently falls within the senior age range and will continue to do so for about the next 20 years. Canada’s senior population (65 and older) in 2011 was approximately 5 million and is expected to double in the next 25 years to just over 10 million in 2036. In Ontario, it is projected that the senior population (age 65 and over) will more than double from 2.1 million people in 2013 to over 4.5 million by 2041. Lastly in Toronto, the senior population (age 55 and older) was 680,945 in 2011 and will close to double to 1.2 million in 2041. With other age brackets growing much slower or even having negative growth, it is imperative that we start looking at our services and policies through the perspective of older adults.

A Closer look at Malvern’s Aging Population

It is fitting that the community of Malvern start thinking about becoming age-friendly as it too is experiencing similar trends mentioned above. However, not only does the community need to look at local policies and services from the lens of an older adult, it needs to look at them from the lens of an older adult who lives in a unique community. Located in the suburbs of north-east Toronto, Malvern is not a dense urban area but can be described as an inner-suburban community with a culturally and economically diverse population.

Older Adult Population in Malvern

According to the 2011 census, the age groups in Ward 42 Scarborough Rouge River which experienced the largest population growth between 2006 and 2011 were 60-64 and 65-69, with growth rates of 40% and 29.4% respectively. In comparison, other age groups have been growing at a much lower rate or decreasing (age brackets between less than 5 years old to 59 years old have growth rates that range between -11.8% and 14.1%). Seniors in Malvern come from a range of different cultural backgrounds. The top 5 ethnic groups in Ward 42 include East Indian, Sri Lankan, Chinese, Filipino and Jamaican. They also come from various economic backgrounds. According to the chart below with data from the 2011 National Household Survey, household income ranges widely in Ward 42. Malvern is a mixed income community where some residents may enjoy a comfortable life while others may struggle with income and housing issues. Therefore, the recommendations developed with the data collected from this initiative

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will attempt to address major issues that were identified while keeping in mind the diversity of Malvern’s senior population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income - 2010</th>
<th>Ward 42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $5,000</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 to $9,999</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>1,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>2,320</td>
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<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>$60,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>3,525</td>
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<tr>
<td>$80,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>2,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $124,999</td>
<td>2,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$125,000 to $149,999</td>
<td>1,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 and over</td>
<td>1,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of private households</strong></td>
<td>21,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average household income</strong></td>
<td>$74,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median household income</strong></td>
<td>$62,965</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*City of Toronto: Household Income – 2010  
http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Planning/Wards/Files/pdf/W/Ward%2042%20NHS%20Profile%202011.pdf

**Purpose of this Report**
This report aims to present the major findings from the public consultations, focus groups, surveys, and community audits that have taken place over the past 10 months as well as provide practical recommendations that consider the unique needs of Malvern’s diverse senior population. It will also identify major challenges and learning opportunities in order to inform any further work surrounding age-friendly initiatives in Malvern. It is anticipated that this report will be consulted by MFRC staff for future event and program planning initiatives as well as shared with local and regional government representatives with the hope that issues outside MFRC’s decision making jurisdiction can be considered at the municipal and provincial level.

**Action Plan and Timeline**
The Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative established an action plan in order to set forth a clear path toward making Malvern age-friendly. The action plan consists of 7 key steps listed below:

1. Create an Age-Friendly Community Steering Committee and Age-Friendly Educational Brochure
2. Conduct surveys, community consultations and focus groups with local seniors to identify priorities, values, concerns, and possible solutions to these concerns
3. Audit local businesses/organizations in order to determine the age-friendliness of private and public spaces often frequented by community members to determine what improvements can be made
4. Analyze findings from our consultations and audits to inform recommendations to be shared at a community conference
5. Develop a toolkit and concept video for local businesses, organizations, and the general public to educate them on the importance of the initiative, what was accomplished, and how to become more age-friendly

6. Identify and promote businesses and organizations that are age-friendly through a positive space sticker campaign

7. Determine next steps to continue with age-friendly planning once the project ends

The Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative hit the ground running when it was launched in August 2014 and immediately organized a steering committee comprised of local senior residents, caregivers, service providers, and academic researchers. The committee met once a month and acted as a source of input for project direction as well as an accountability measure to ensure the campaign was consistently keeping focus on the priorities of older adults.

After preliminary research, a campaign brochure was developed to help inform the general public about the initiative (see Appendix B for the brochure). Local seniors were engaged through a wide range of seniors groups, programs, and community meeting places including local churches, recreation and community centres, seniors programs, libraries and the local mall (see Appendix A for a full list of outreach methods and locations).

A series of community consultations and focus groups were conducted over a period of 4 months, with surveys distributed to those who could not attend. Concurrently, volunteers from the local seniors community were recruited and trained to perform community audits with local businesses and organizations in order to identify age-friendly spaces in the community and educate the broader public about this initiative. A film crew documented each stage of this project and prepared a concept video that captured the feelings of seniors, their thoughts about the project, as well as what this initiative will mean for the Malvern community as a whole. Lastly, toolkits and age-friendly space stickers have been prepared to distribute to local businesses and organizations to educate them on how they can become more accessible to older adults and to identify age-friendly spaces in the community. A timeline of the major stages of this initiative is provided below.

**Campaign Timeline**

|---|---|
Public Consultations
Methodology and Execution

Public consultations are commonly used by governments and organizations as a tool to get public input on important issues. This method of information gathering is seen as beneficial because it encourages community engagement in major decision making processes that affect the public as well as increases organizational transparency.

Public consultations with residents of Malvern aged 55 and older were held between the end of November of 2014 to mid-January 2015. These consultations were open to any seniors residing in Malvern (Ward 42) who were aged 55 or older. In total 56 people attended the community consultations. At the public consultations, participants were encouraged to think and talk about the following 10 topics, 8 of which have been researched and identified by the World Health Organization as playing a large role in the lives of older adults. The two topics that were added by MFRC were done so in order to get a better understanding of these issues. They are identified with an asterisk:

- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- *Independence
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Housing
- *Safety and Security
- Community Support and Health Services
- Communication and Information
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Social Participation

Participants were seated at tables equipped with a discussion facilitator and note taker. They were asked to identify the topics which were most important to them to begin the discussion. The topics that were not chosen were left to the end to discuss if they had time. At the consultations, most tables were able to get through all ten topics within the approximately 80 minutes allocated to discussion time. Participants were asked to express their experiences, good and bad, relating to each topic. Specific questions were asked for each topic to encourage discussion and these questions were largely taken from the City of Calgary’s Age-Friendly City project (please see Appendix C for a list of the questions asked).  

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Priority Topics
After the discussion, participants took part in a “Dotmocracy” exercise. The aim of this activity was to identify which discussion topics were most important to the participants. The Dotmocracy exercise also acted as a transmitter of information between different consultation groups, as future groups were able to see the priorities of past groups.
For this exercise, participants were given two stickers and were asked to place the stickers under whichever two topics that were most important to them. They could place both stickers under one topic if there was only one topic that was important to them. Below is a pie chart that shows the percentages that correlate with the stickers on the board.
The four highest priorities to participants were:

- Safety and Security (20%)
- Community Support and Health Services (17%)
- Transportation (14%)
- Communication and Information (14%)

**Major Themes**

Major themes within each topic from the community consultations are presented below. In order to identify major themes from the consultations, a coding system was employed. All the comments recorded from the consultations were assigned a code that correlates with a theme. For example, the comment “sidewalks are icy” would be coded “1.1” which is themed “icy sidewalks.” Comments were grouped by table and themes that came up at 4 or more tables for each topic were considered a major theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Major Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Spaces and Buildings</td>
<td>• Sidewalks – Icy sidewalks, Sidewalk Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Better and Timely Snow Removal Needed (Roads, Driveways, and Sidewalks)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More benches are wanted in Malvern</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Safety and Street Lights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>• TTC – Cost, WheelTrans, Bus Shelters and Benches, Frequency of Service,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Accessibility, Driver Patience, Attitude, Service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Seniors Only or Other Transportation Options for Seniors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Driving – Difficulties in Malvern and Signage along Roads</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>• Security – Break-ins and Fraud</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accessibility – Moving Around in the Home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Affordable Housing – Waitlist, Availability, Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cost of Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Participation</td>
<td>• Quality of Opportunities – Volunteers, Participation, Cultural Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accessibility – Timing, Amount of Programming Offered</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Barriers to Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Currently Involved In and Requested New Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of Communication and Information of Programs and Events</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Respect and Social Inclusion
- Getting Respect and Feelings of Inclusion
- Youth and Respect
- Educating Youth and the Community

### Civic Participation and Employment
- Suggestions for Volunteer Opportunities
- Reasons for Volunteering
- Interest/Non-interest in Paid Employment

### Communication and Information (C&I)
- Need for Better Communication and Information of Events, Programs & Services
- Printed Materials – Flyers, Mail, Brochures, Guides
- C&I through Community Centres (including libraries, malls)
- C&I Through Telephone
- C&I Through Newspapers

### Community Support and Health Services
- Services That Are Used Currently
- Wait Times
- Cost of Services
- Access to Services and Barriers to Access
- Requested Services

### Safety and Security
- Improved Safety and Security
- Don’t Feel Safe, Less Safety and Security
- Malvern’s Negative Safety Stigma
- Requests for Security Cameras
- Youth and Security
- More Police Presence and Better Police Response

### Independence
- Feeling of Independence
- Want Better Communication and Information of Services/Programs

### Summary of Major Themes

**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**
A lot of participants at the consultations felt that Malvern was generally an accessible place to live. However, there were a few major issues that did come to light during the discussions. Many participants revealed that they find it very difficult and dangerous in the winter to leave their house and walk outside due to icy sidewalks. Some explained that they have been injured by falls and slips on icy sidewalks. Participants said that sidewalks were not well maintained either, with bumps and dips making it difficult to walk when outside at any time of year. Snow removal was a major issue as well. Comments indicated that snow removal is often late and removal is not done adequately, making it difficult to leave the house and navigate the sidewalks and roads. The last major theme was the lack of benches in the Malvern area. Older adults in the area would like places to rest when they are walking outside and right now, they find that there are not enough places to rest and would like to see more.
Although just falling short as a major theme as calculated by our methods, the topics of safety and street lights should be mentioned because they did come up throughout the consultations, however, under different topics. Many participants expressed that they feel unsafe going out during the night or when it’s dark outside. People expressed that when it’s dark, they try to stay home and don’t go outside if they don’t have to go out. Participants also said that they would like more street lights in the neighborhood. It was revealed that stretches of roads, including Morningside Avenue, are left dark, without light making it unsafe and difficult to go out at night.

**Transportation**

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) was by far the most talked about theme under this topic and issues included cost, bus shelters and benches, WheelTrans, frequency of service, accessibility, and driver patience and attitude. A large amount of people expressed that it is very difficult for seniors to afford the TTC fare, especially on a fixed income. It was suggested numerous times that the TTC consider further discounts to seniors, adjust fares so they coincide with income, or to have free transportation for older adults. Also, although falling short of a major theme, it is notable that participants said that taxis, a common alternative to taking the TTC, are very costly as well. Most participants, when talking about TTC bus shelters and benches, said that there were not enough shelters at the bus stops and they needed more benches at the stops to sit down. Needing more warmth in the shelter also came up as the new shelters are not effective in protecting people from the elements.

WheelTrans was another big issue amongst participants. Participants commented that it is difficult to access WheelTrans, both in terms of contacting the service by phone and in terms of accessing the service itself. It was said that the wait times are too long, they are often booked to capacity, and that the assessment criteria is too restrictive.

While some participants felt that the TTC service and access were satisfactory in the Malvern area, other participants felt that it was difficult to access the bus and subway. Comments were made about how far stops are from their houses, how it takes multiple buses to get to community centres, and how difficult it is to travel across the city to the airport. Also, people said that the frequency of buses were inconsistent, with there being big gaps in service on lines like the 131, 133, and 134 or that there is frequent service at certain times and not during others.

The last theme relating to the TTC involves the TTC drivers’ patience, attitude, and service. Many older adults who attended the consultations said that bus drivers do not wait for people to cross the street or wait for slower people to get onto the bus, they sometimes don’t lower the steps for older passengers, and start driving away before they are seated. It should be noted, however that some participants said that some bus drivers are very courteous and accommodate older people.

Alternative forms of transportation for seniors came up as a major theme. The older adults who were consulted were interested in seeing transportation services that were specialized for seniors and the disabled, or community transportation services that could help transport seniors to appointments or grocery shopping.
A number of seniors who attended the consultations drove on a regular basis. They talked about some of the problems of driving in Malvern, including driving alongside bad drivers as well as some of their own concerns such as driving at night and in certain areas. Street signs are not visible enough to many, as the signs themselves and the print are too small and they lack reflectors. They would like to see better positioning of the signs to allow for better view and even multilingual signage.

**Housing**

Some participants expressed satisfaction with their current living arrangements; however, some major issues did arise. Security in relation to housing was a major theme as people commented about affordable housing security issues, fears of and actual break-ins in their homes (and possible ways to deter them), as well as solicitors who are fraudulent sales people. Participants frequently mentioned housing accessibility saying that they have troubles going up and down stairs in their homes. Some expressed a desire to downgrade to bungalow style homes while others prefer to stay in the houses they live in now. Some affordable housing issues arose relating to the very long wait times to get affordable housing as well as affordable housing standards, the desire to have seniors-only affordable housing, and the need for more co-op housing. Lastly the cost of housing was brought up at many tables. Many said that housing (including houses, rentals, condominiums, and retirement homes) is too expensive to afford because prices are going up, taxes are increasing, and many live on limited income.

**Social Participation**

Social participation was a topic that participants had much to talk about at the consultations. Many participants indicated that they were very satisfied with the current opportunities for seniors in Malvern to socialize. They feel that social programs/events are inclusive of different cultures and older adults and are good places to meet other seniors. There was concern that some participants in programs tend to from their own social groups (“cliques”). Some people provided suggestions for improvements for specific programs at MFRC in order to increase participant engagement.

Comments on accessibility came up with people providing suggestions on improving program timing and frequency. Participants would like to see more seniors programs and events in Malvern, a variety of programs, and more programs each week. Some said that program times conflict between different organizations which is not ideal.

Another prominent theme under social participation was barriers that prevent older adults from participating in social programs and events in Malvern. People said that they would like to see affordable programs in Malvern. Some mentioned that isolation is a major barrier and efforts should be made to get isolated individuals out of their homes to attend programming and events. Others felt that it is very difficult to talk to people in the community, as it is intimidating or that people are not friendly. It was said that although there is much cultural diversity in programming, there needs to be more intercultural programming, rather than each cultural group socializing amongst themselves. There was mention of language barriers preventing participation. Also, some mentioned that they would like to volunteer more in their community but are deterred by the excessive paperwork that is involved while others said that they are not taken seriously as older adults when applying for volunteer work at some community organizations.
Many of the conversations centered on what programs seniors are currently involved with and what programs they would like to see in the community. Exercise and yoga programs were very popular among participants. Some participants said that they attend neighborhood church events. Others mentioned book clubs and just gathering socially for a coffee with friends. Requested programs included more exercise and yoga programs, aqua-fit programs, games and movies, excursions, cooking programs, craft and art programs, writing programs, skills-building programs, computer classes, and gardening/farming programs. Participants also requested that there be more programs for men, more variety of programs, and peer-led programs.

Respect and Social Inclusion
When asked about respect and social inclusion for seniors in Malvern, many participants said that they feel respected and included in Malvern as seniors. A few others said that they have not experienced respect from members of the community. Youth came up quite a bit as a segment of the population that seniors felt had difficulties showing respect. Generational gaps were mentioned, etiquette in public and on buses were other issues linked to youth. There were suggestions that there should be some education for the youth and the community as a whole about seniors and respecting seniors in the community.

Civic Participation and Employment
Those who attended the consultations suggested a number of volunteer jobs in which they would be interested. These suggestions included:

- Teaching (about life or specific skill or topic)
- Hospital help
- Seniors helping other seniors with shopping/friendly visits
- Reading to children

They said that volunteering in the community is important because it helps keep older adults active, increases social inclusion with others, and it is intrinsically good to give back to the community. Participants talked about whether they were interested or not in paid employment. From the data collected, it seems that opinion was split between wanting to go back to work and not. Those who did want to go back to work said that they would like to have fewer hours that were flexible, and worked with their schedule. Most of those who attended said that they are not very involved with local politics with some saying they are aware of local politicians or only get involved if they are interested in a specific issue.

Communication and Information
A theme that had run across almost all the topics was better communication and information about programs, events, and services. The participants said that they would like to attend programs and events, as well as access services but do not always know what is offered in the community. They would like the different organizations in the community to communicate with each other “so that everyone can benefit”.

The participants talked a lot about preferred methods of communication for them. These included:
Other notable themes that just fell short of qualifying as a major theme included the need for translated material, need for more announcements at MFRC, and using the internet and email to inform seniors.

**Community Support and Health Services**

Opinions were mixed about the level of community support and health services in Malvern. Local community supports and services that are currently being used include the local community centres (TAIBU, MFRC), the local hospitals, and walk-in clinics. Participants mentioned that they have access to both mental health and physical supports through community services. However, they also mentioned several barriers to accessing community support and health services. Wait times was a major issue that was brought up with many people saying that this is a common problem and deterrent to accessing medical services in the area. Some said that doctors do not spend adequate amounts of time with them, and as patients they feel mistreated as a result.

Participants indicated that they are looking for affordable medical and housing services. Coverage for medical services is not always available for seniors. Parking costs and cancellation fees for when they visit a specialist or the hospital are barriers to access as well.

Some people commented that there are not enough services and supports available in Malvern and that they have to travel outside the area to access the services they need. It was suggested that service providers try to bring services to the seniors at community centres, for example, or have accessible services like prescription refills over the phone. Services should be provided equitably to all community members, not just the ones who are familiar with the services or regular clients.

Finally, there were a number of suggestions about what type of services they would like to see in Malvern. These services included: a bridge program between the local hospitals/medical centres and seniors in the community (in-home visits), dental services, informational services on specific health topics, generally more community health services, snow shoveling services and lawn maintenance services.

**Safety and Security**

Opinions again were mixed regarding safety and security in Malvern. While some believe that safety has significantly improved in the neighbourhood over the last few years, others believe that there are still safety and security issues. It was stated several times that Malvern is suffering from the stigma of formerly being an unsafe area when it is not the case anymore and efforts (education) should be made to stop the stigma. Those that think there are still safety issues mentioned theft, break-ins, fraud, assault, and general fear of the neighbourhood. The comment, “I don’t go out at night” was a theme that crossed over many topics, highlighting the opinion that seniors do not feel safe outdoors at night in the community.
Many thought that there should be more security cameras in public places, as well as intersections, to help deter and protect from trouble (crime and red light runners). Also, it was widely felt that more police presence and better police response time is required to keep the community safe. Concerns over youth and security were prevalent with people suggesting that the current justice system is ineffective and more education, programming and employment for youth is the best way to keep them out of trouble.

**Independence**

When discussing independence, many participants reiterated points from other topics that highlighted a need or service that could improve independence. For example, improved communication and information about programs, events, and community services was mentioned quite a few times. It should be noted that a number of participants said that they are happy with their level of independence at this point of their lives.

**Focus Groups**

**Methodology and Execution**

Focus groups, like community consultations, are used to get public input for major decision making. However, by design, focus groups are kept small and are used to gather information from specific subsets of the community. All the groups below were chosen based on either their established roots in the community or the absence or low turnout at community consultations. Therefore, because the public consultations were largely attended by participants from the Caribbean community, MAFCI did not conduct a focus group with this cultural group. Ensuring that a wide range of seniors were consulted for this research, MFRC talked to several seniors groups that represented different sub-populations in the community. Groups from local cultural, religious and community groups were consulted. These groups included:

- Seniors from the local Tamil community
- Seniors from a local Church
- Seniors from the Chinese community
- A local seniors men’s group
- Seniors from a local co-operative housing community
In addition to these seniors groups, a focus group of service providers from local service agencies and community centres was consulted to collect their feedback and suggestions.

It was required that none of the participants in the focus group meetings should have attended the community consultations so data duplication was minimized. In total, 63 seniors were consulted in the focus group meetings. The same questions asked at the community consultations were asked at the focus groups (see Appendix C for questions). A note taker and facilitator (sometimes one person acting as both) was present at each focus group and guided the discussion.

Focus group comments were reviewed and coded to determine if similar themes arose under each topic or unique patterns of themes appeared for specific focus groups.

**Group Specific Highlights**

The major themes that were identified at the community consultations (see chart and summaries above) were also discussed heavily at the focus groups. The need for longer crossing times at intersections did not qualify as a major theme for the community consultations but was mentioned frequently in the focus groups. Many of those who participated in the focus groups also liked to know more about the grants available to make their houses more physically accessible. Below is a chart showing some unique points or trends in comments for each focus group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Unique Comments/Group Highlights</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Tamil Seniors     | • Would like to see more flowers/plants in outdoor spaces (alongside roads etc.) and would like more community gardens  
                      • Would like to see more receptacle bins and less garbage around outdoor spaces |
- Would like more direct service buses from mall to community centre
- Displays in the middle of bus that show stops
- Concern about safety is high, would like to see more security measures (security cameras etc.) in apartments and outside
- Would like recreation hub (a recreation centre close to a retail centre) close to home
- Would like to attend tailoring classes
- Interpretation and transportation services wanted (right now depend on children)

**Seniors Church Group**
- Would like to see more parkettes
- Would like to see more bungalows built in Malvern
- Would like to see special interest programs offered in Malvern
- Would like to see seniors more included with planning and consultations in Malvern

**Chinese Community Seniors**
- Looking for affordable transportation services (either through TTC or community transportation service)
- Would like assistance with shopping
- Would like adaptations made to living spaces (handles, accessible showers)
- Would like activities closer to home, and more Chinese cultural activities
- Language barriers are a major issue
- Need affordable cultural television services for seniors to improve communication and information

**Seniors Men’s Group**
- Concern over road maintenance
- Need for more and free parking near medical centres and parks
- Need for more seating at parks, especially if there is an event
- Satisfied with current housing but concern over high cost
- Very involved with volunteerism at local religious, social and cultural organizations
- Interested in paid work on own schedule but need link to these opportunities
- Very independent but would like affordable snow removal and yard maintenance services

**Seniors from Co-operative Housing**
- Would like to see electronic schedules at bus stops as well as heated shelters
- Would like to see more personalized but affordable transportation for seniors
Service Provider Focus Group
Service providers echoed the same issues that were raised at the community consultations and focus groups but also highlighted a few other issues that they observed were important for the seniors in Malvern. For the topic of transportation, service providers commented that TTC buses do not always respect the request to stop program which is problematic, not only for safety but for accessibility reasons. Also, it was revealed that WheelTrans does not manage their drop-off times very well, with seniors arriving sometimes an hour early for a program, instead of 15 minutes early, and having to wait a long time before their program/event begins. In addition, service providers stated that the wait time for another ride after being late for a pick-up is excessive. Aside from timing, many drivers are also not aware of the correct entrances where their clients should be dropped off, making it very difficult for some to enter the building. Service providers said that although there are community transportation services available to the community, such as the Scarborough RIDE program that are low in cost, these services tend to be narrow in scope (e.g. transportation limited to medical appointments).

During the conversation on housing, service providers noted several times that there is a gap in information and education for residents. Due to limited access to community housing workers or unresponsive building managers/landlords, people often do not know who to talk to, what their tenant rights are, and how to address problems they have with housing.

Service providers agreed that there is not necessarily a gap in services but there is a need for more services offered in Malvern in order to serve the senior population sufficiently. However, it was also suggested that there be more geriatric mental health services available, and older adult caregivers for adults with special needs services in the community. Also echoing the seniors who were consulted, service providers stated that there needs to be better ways to communicate to seniors about programs and services provided but also between agencies/organizations in order to improve the coordination of resources and the inter-referral of clients. In addition, they said that although it’s known that reaching out to media outlets is an effective way to get information out, it is often the case that agencies/organizations do not have the budget to afford this method. When media outlets offer free advertisements, it is often the case that the media outlets do not show up.

The language barriers some seniors face contribute to situations where they feel disrespected by community members according to service providers. For instance, it was revealed that businesses and some service providers become impatient with seniors who don’t speak much English, some having an attitude of “what’s the point of explaining?” Service providers noticed the request for more men’s programming from senior men who may feel excluded from certain programming, however, it was noted that targeted funding for men is very hard to come by.
Lastly, service providers reported the same issues consultation and focus group participants identified concerning safety and security in Malvern. However, it was said that elder abuse in the community is an issue that is prevalent and also hidden. Service providers believe this is an issue that needs to be addressed with more education.

**Survey**

**Design and Distribution**

With the goal of trying to consult as many seniors in the Malvern community as possible, MAFCI decided to design and distribute surveys that included the same topics and similar questions to the consultations. The Ontario Seniors Secretariat’s Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide was consulted not only for the community consultations and focus groups, but for the design of the survey. Most questions were drawn from the needs assessment instruments included on the University of Waterloo website (http://www.uwaterloo.ca/env/finding-the-right-fit) which was referenced in the Planning Guide. The instruments used included:

- Hamilton AFC
- AFC – CASOA
- AFC – AARP
- WHO – QOL
- Vital Communities

Because the survey was not in the original work plan, MAFCI had limited resources to allocate to the design and distribution of the survey. Therefore, MAFCI could not use simple random sampling or other best practice survey distribution design which would ensure low bias. Instead, MAFCI used a convenient sampling method, which meant we distributed the surveys to people who frequent MFRC programs as well as to community organizations, including churches, libraries, recreation centres, cultural social groups and a long term care facility, where many Malvern seniors congregate or live.

In total, 64 seniors participated in the surveys. Those who were not able to attend the consultations or focus groups and who were 55 and older were eligible to complete the survey. Below are the findings from the survey.
Who completed the Survey

Sex

Age

Ethnicity
Type of Housing

Tenant vs. Homeowner vs. Living with Others

Living with others (not paying rent)

A tenant (paying rent)

Homeowner
Priority Topics

Just as was done through the Dotmocracy exercise at the public consultations, people who completed the survey were asked what two topics included in the survey were most important to them. The same topics incorporated in the public consultations were included in the survey. Below are the results of this question for survey respondents:

The highest priorities included:

- Safety and Security (27%)
- Transportation (13%)
- Housing (13%)
- Community Support and Health Services (12%)
As with the community consultations, safety and security came up as the highest priority to survey respondents. Transportation and community support and health services were also high priorities for those who completed the survey. However, the survey data shows that housing was a top priority as well.

**Major Findings Across the Domains**

### Percentage Responding Positively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Major Areas for Improvement (1/3 or more responding negatively to related questions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Life &amp; Independence</strong></td>
<td>Related questions did not meet 1/3 threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</strong></td>
<td>• Not enough benches and rest spots in malls and public facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No separate queues (lines) or service counters are provided for older adults in public buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Elevators in public buildings are not equipped with handrails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inadequate snow removal on sidewalks, residential roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and Security</strong></td>
<td>• Do not feel safe walking during the night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation</strong></td>
<td>• Bus fares are not affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Taxi fares are not affordable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Highlights

Quality of Life & Independence
As with the public consultations, survey respondents felt that they are fairly independent and have a good quality of life. Almost 40% of respondents said that someone provides assistance to them almost every day (at least 3 times a week). Shoveling snow came up as one of the biggest issues relating to quality of life and independence with over a quarter respondents indicating that this was a moderate or major problem. A quarter of respondents also said finding productive or meaningful activities was a moderate or major problem.

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
It is not surprising to find that 75% of survey respondents said they would like to see more snow and ice clearing in the community, as this was a major theme at the consultations and focus groups as well. In addition to the questions with poor responses in the chart above for this topic, 1/3 or more survey respondents also said they would like to see more disabled parking spots, ramps, and handrails in the community.

Safety and Security
Although comments from the community consultations and focus groups indicated that street lighting was an issue in the community, approximately 72% of survey respondents felt that streets in their neighbourhood had adequate street lighting. This observation may be explained by how the question was phrased as those who expressed discontent with street lighting often mentioned specific public areas and major streets such as Morningside Avenue as opposed to specific neighbourhoods. The majority of respondents (80%-87.5%) said being a victim of crime, being a victim of fraud or a scam, or being physically or emotionally abused, was not a problem or was a minor problem.

Transportation
When asked to check off all the modes of transportation used to travel around the community, 62.5% of the survey respondents checked “personal car” as one method of transportation they usually use. Approximately 55% and 47% indicated that they use “public transportation” and “walking” as a form of transportation, respectively. Approximately 1/3 responded that they use rides from family and friends to get around. When asked if interested in local organizations
offering van/community bus services to meal sites, doctor’s appointments, community programs or special recreational excursions, 51.6% responded “Yes”.

**Housing**
Most respondents were fairly satisfied with their current housing quality as is seen in the bar graph above. When asked “Is your housing affordable to you, based on your income?” approximately 72% responded “Yes”. When asked “Do you know enough information about housing and housing supports in Malvern?” approximately 83% of respondents said “No”. A couple of respondents commented on the long waiting lists for housing, with one writing “I applied for a house 7 years ago. Still on the waiting list. I don't know whether I get one before I leave this good world.”

**Social Participation**
Generally, respondents were satisfied with social participation in Malvern. People did suggest that some activities were needed in Malvern including, Zumba, line dancing, tai chi, self-defense programs, social dances, board games, table talks, needlecraft (knitting, sewing, crochet, embroidery), fitness programs, swimming programs, basketball for people with disabilities, as well as more programming for men. It was also mentioned that “most programs are scattered around Malvern, it would be nice to be at one building.”

**Respect and Social Inclusion**
“Seniors should be respected and helped at all levels and all places considering their age and well-being.” – Survey Respondent

When asked who the behaviour came from if they have ever been treated in a rude or disrespectful way due to their age, a majority of the answers included youth, adults, and businesses/shop staff. 53% said that being disrespected due to their age has never happened to them.

**Civic Participation and Employment**
Approximately 72% of survey respondents checked “No” when asked if they were looking for employment opportunities. Answers were quite varied when asked about volunteering in the community. There is a mix of older adults who would like to volunteer as much as they can, those who want to volunteer only for something they really enjoy, those who are not interested, those who are not interested because they are volunteering already, and those who are undecided.

**Communication and Information**
The three highest responses to how you would like to be informed about community events were: the local paper, a notice in the mail, and word of mouth. The lowest response was “find it online”. Approximately 58% of respondents said that they use a computer and 69% said that they have access to the internet. Therefore, it seems although many older adults have access to email, they prefer receiving hard copies of information where they live.

**Community Support and Health Services**
A summary of this topic was not included in the chart above because scaled response questions that would allow for a summary of positive or negative comments, were not included in this section. Instead, specific questions were asked in order to identify services that could be
provided to older adults in Malvern. A list of tasks was listed in the survey and people were asked if they needed help doing each task. The top four tasks that people needed assistance with were: income tax preparation, home repair and maintenance, snow removal at home, and yard care/maintenance. When asked if they were able to access the help they needed (paid or unpaid), 48% responded “Yes” or “Sometimes”. When asked to list any services you would like to have access to in order to support your daily life, responses included the following:

- Yard care and/or gardening
- Snow removal
- Home repair and maintenance
- Companionship for daily activities (e.g. shopping, recreation)
- Filling out forms
- Income tax preparation
- Delivery service
- Assistance for taking medication

Community Audits
Methodology and Execution
An important goal of this initiative is informing local businesses and service providers of the growing needs of the older adult population in Malvern. Underlying this goal is the message that not only is accommodating older adults good for the community, it is good for business. To help determine the current state of accessibility, both physical and social, of local businesses and organizations in Malvern, community audits were completed. These audits looked at the physical space outside and inside the business/organization and well as customer service and training aspects through the perspective of an older adult. With the results of the audit, an age-friendly score was assigned to the business/organization giving a general indication whether the space is accessible to older adults.

Similar audits have been conducted in different jurisdictions in Canada including British Columbia, Alberta, Yukon, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, and Edmonton. The MAFCI community audits were conducted mostly by seniors who live in the Malvern community and these volunteers received training on how to approach businesses and educate them about the audit and the age-friendly project, how to complete the audit accurately, and on conflict de-escalation.

What made these audits unique from others is that the design required the volunteers to engage with a business or organization representative, as opposed to conducting the checklist on their own, solely from their own observations. This allowed the representative to learn about the initiative and to be involved in the audit process. Also, it gave the business or organization an opportunity to explain how they accommodate older adults or people with accessibility issues if they did not strictly meet a requirement on the checklist. For most of the businesses/organizations, this was the first time they had heard of age-friendly initiatives and it was the first time they have been asked to take part in a community initiative. The audit volunteers, therefore, have essentially broken new ground by conducting these audits and engaging local businesses and organizations in this trailblazing project.

When designing the audit, several existing audit checklists were used to inform the content of MAFCI’s checklist (see Appendix D for list of referenced checklists and the MAFCI checklist). The checklist consists of 3 sections: (1) Outside the Business, (2) Inside the Business, (3) and Customer Service, Respect and Inclusion. In the Outside the Business section, points about parking, sidewalks and
entrances were included. For example, “Adequate accessible and seniors parking spaces available and enforced” and “Pavements are smooth, without cracks, dips or bumps” are listed under this section. Under Inside the Business, points on safety and accessibility, as well as comfort, visibility, and hearing were incorporated. Examples of these points include: “Floors are non-slip and non-shiny” and “Premises are well lit”. For the Customer Service, Respect, and Inclusion section, points like “Staff members are friendly, patient, and greet customers when they enter the business” and “In a non-emergency situation, staff are willing to assist persons who may be disoriented, need to sit down and/or use the phone” were included.

In total, 89 audits were completed. This number just fell short of the 100 audit target. A number of businesses who were approached declined to take part in the audit, often redirecting volunteers to contact their head offices. In most cases, when head offices were contacted, there was no reply. Volunteers noticed that these businesses as well as others were hesitant to take part and felt this was the case because they were fearful of what would happen if they received a low score or what would happen with the information collected. Volunteers, when approaching the businesses, did stress that the information received would remain anonymous and that there are no repercussions if a low score is received. It is anticipated that this report as well as the word of mouth from those who did participate will encourage those who did not take part to begin to think about how their business can become more accessible to older adults.

**Major Findings**

- 4.5% of businesses/orgs received an Age-Friendly Score of 100%
- 20% of businesses/orgs received an Age-Friendly Score of 95% and over
- 65% of businesses/orgs received an Age-Friendly Score of 85% and over
- 89% of businesses/orgs received an Age-Friendly Score of 75% and over
25% or more of the businesses and organizations audited need to improve on the following points:

Section 1: Outside the Business

| Adequate, accessible and senior parking spaces available and enforced |
| Drop-off/pick-up areas are convenient, clearly marked and sheltered |
| Wheelchair slopped entry ramps are in place and clearly marked to allow for walkers, wheelchairs, strollers and easier access |
| Entrance doors open automatically or have access buttons and have delayed closing times |

Section 2: Inside the Business

| Service counters have a place to hook a cane so that it does not fall |
| Promotional material includes descriptions and images of older people |
| Telephone has large print buttons and amplification capabilities for the hearing impaired |

Section 3: Customer Service, Respect and Inclusion

| Translation services are available or translation is provided on signage in business |

Other Findings
Many of the volunteers found that issues relating to physical aspects of the space, including automatic doors as well as parking are often under the control of building managers from whom the businesses/organization rents space. As a result, it was often said that there was nothing they could do directly to upgrade an inaccessible door or to add an accessible parking space. It is anticipated that through these audits and after receiving the toolkit mentioned below, the businesses/organizations will communicate these issues to building managers who can make the required changes.

It was also observed by audit volunteers that in many cases, although businesses/organizations did have accessible bathrooms, translation services, or welcomed service animals in their establishments, they did not have any signage that indicated this. The Age-Friendly Positive Space Sticker mentioned below may help communicate age-friendly spaces to clients but it is also encouraged that these businesses identify specific accommodations that they provide to clients as well.

Toolkits, Age-Friendly Positive Space Sticker, and Training Session
In order to further support and educate those who participated in the audits, MAFCI has designed Age-Friendly Toolkits. These toolkits contain resources that speak to some of the issues found by the volunteers who administered the audits. It can be referenced by businesses and organizations when
seeking information on accessible customer service practices and how to access low-cost solutions to accessibility problems. For example, information pertaining to the government of Ontario’s Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) regulations and standards are included. Please see Appendix E for some of the resources that have been included in the toolkit.

Also included in the toolkit is the Malvern Age-Friendly Community Age-Friendly Sticker. This sticker is a main component of the positive space campaign and will help older adults in Malvern identify spaces that are knowledgeable about their needs and can accommodate them. The sticker identifies businesses that have taken part in the audit and received a minimum score of 75%.

A training session was also organized for businesses and organizations who indicated that they would be interested in additional training after completing the audit. This training session was led by a representative from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario who informed participants about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the implications of this act for small and large businesses and organizations, as well as low-cost tips on how to comply with customer service and physical space regulations. It was explained to participants that AODA compliance not only has a large impact to people with disabilities, but also on the older adult population and their families. The slide presentation was included in the toolkits for those businesses and organizations who could not attend the session.
Recommendations
Many areas of concern have been identified by the older adults of the Malvern community. In order to make meaningful and achievable recommendations, this report has focused on the priority areas identified by participants. Below, you will find a list of the priority topics and the recommendations for community stakeholders under each.

Safety and Security

Issue: Malvern’s Safety and Security Stigma, Youth and Safety, Frauds and Scams

1. Malvern Family Resource Centre should become a champion of the Malvern community, showcasing the community’s achievements and progress at every opportunity.

2. Community stakeholders such as local agencies and older adult advisory groups should organize an intergenerational town hall or workshop series, inviting youth, adults, and older adults, to discuss the security stigma in Malvern and how to overcome it. The town hall/workshop series should highlight the achievements and progress made in Malvern over the last 20 years. It should also highlight the safety issues identified in this report by seniors in relation to youth and provide a forum for discussion on how to work together to address them.

3. Community agencies should facilitate workshops on Fraud and Safety, inviting community officers from 42 Division to raise awareness about senior-targeted scams and frauds and how to protect one-self from them.

4. Community agencies in collaboration with local public schools, should create educational workshops that visit schools and inform children and youth about older adults, the issues of ageism, the importance of respect and inclusion of older adults, the issues older adults may face (mental health, mobility, lack of respect) and the roles children and youth play in an age-friendly community.

Issue: Not feeling safe going out at night

5. Community service providers should assist interested members of the local older adult community to organize monthly senior group “night walks”. These walks would provide an opportunity for seniors in the community to come together and walk the streets in large numbers on a planned route during the night hours (for example: 8 p.m.-9 p.m.). It is anticipated that as time goes on, this group’s network will grow significantly and will become an independent body which will have the option to continue this nightly walk on a more frequent basis. Also, it is expected that as this program progresses, it will decrease the apprehensions many older adults in the area have about going out at night as well as change local perceptions about who can go out at night in Malvern.

Issue: Not enough street lights

6. It is recommended that local older adult advisory and advocacy groups write a letter to Toronto Hydro and local government representatives identifying the streets and areas in Malvern where more street lights are needed and monitor their response.

7. Local social service agencies should regularly remind their older adult participants, at informational events or community events, to contact 311 if they have issues with city lights or other City-related issues.
Issue: **Security cameras**

8. It is recommended that the community share the data from this report concerning the request for more security cameras in public spaces to local government representatives and follow up on the response.

Issue: **Request for more police presence and better response**

9. It is recommended that local older adult advisory/advocacy groups present the data and recommendations from this report to a representative from 42 Division Toronto Police Services as well as local government representatives and begin advocating for more police presence/patrolling within the Malvern community.

**Transportation**

Issue: **TTC**

10. Because there were numerous issues identified related to public transportation and the TTC, local community centres should organize a seniors town hall session headed by older adult advisory and/or advocacy groups identifying all of the concerns in this report and allowing a TTC representative to address them. In addition or alternatively, the these groups can write a letter to a representative from the TTC and local city councilors identifying the issues listed in this report and monitor the response.

Issue: **Alternative transportation option**

11. It is recommended that local social service agencies, in their grant application processes, identify possible opportunities (if any) to apply for a community bus that can assist seniors with transportation to and from local recreation, medical, and retail centres.

12. It is recommended that local social service agencies identify and effectively communicate (see methods suggested above under Communication and Information) alternative forms of transportation available to seniors apart from TTC and taxis that may be more affordable to older adults, including the Scarborough RIDE program.

13. Local social service agencies should assist seniors in organizing their own carpooling system by providing them with the resources (a meeting place, community bulletin board) to identify potential volunteers and advising on a system of communication. The agencies should not be liable for carpooling groups, which would be independent of agencies.

Issue: **Signage for drivers**

14. It is recommended that local senior advocacy and advisory groups contact the City of Toronto Transportation Services – Scarborough District as well as local government representatives, and share the information gathered for this report regarding road signage in the Malvern area. They should monitor and follow up on any response.

**Community Support and Health Services**

Issue: **Access**

15. It is recommended that local social service agencies hold regular (quarterly or semi-annually) health and community service fairs at their centres to allow service providers to share information directly with older adults about their services and programs. At these fairs, it is
recommended that service providers set up stations where they can perform some of their services (for example, blood pressure testing, eye exams, etc.) to give those who have trouble accessing these services an opportunity to access them in a central location.

16. It is recommended that community stakeholders in Malvern should organize a Scarborough-wide committee of local senior-centred service providers that can coordinate services and share grant and programming information with respective clients.

**Issue: Icy sidewalks/snow removal services, yard maintenance**

17. Local youth, women’s and resident engagement groups in Malvern should collaborate to create a volunteer or social enterprise project comprised of interested youth whose mission is to help older adults with residential snow removal/ sidewalk and driveway salting in winter as well as yard maintenance during the rest of the year.

18. Social service agencies in Malvern should create “Safe Walking in Winter” programs, teaching older adults how to walk safely on snow and ice, and the tools they can use to help mobility in winter weather like walking poles and winter shoe covers.

**Issue: Form filling and income tax**

19. The Malvern Family Resource Centre and other Malvern social service agencies should improve communication of its existing form filling and income tax services to the local seniors by:

- Increased and strategic distribution of printed materials (flyers, mail, brochures, guides)
- Sharing information with other community centres (community recreation centres, malls, libraries)
- Personalized telephone calls
- Advertisements in local newspapers (including cultural eg. Tamil language, Indo Caribbean)

**Housing**

**Issue: Cost and wait times**

20. It is recommended that local older adult advocacy and resident advisory groups share the information in this report related to housing with Toronto Community Housing as well as local city and provincial government representatives and follow up with responses.

21. It is also recommended that these groups advocate for a pilot project for those on the TCHC waitlist which will subsidize rent or other housing costs for people who are on a wait list for a specific period of time.

**Issue: Lack of Information**

22. It is recommended that the Scarborough Housing Stabilization Providers Network create a pamphlet for older adults listing local housing support services in Scarborough including low income housing units in Scarborough, local food banks, and utility assistance programs for homeowners. This pamphlet should be available and distributed at MFRC, the local libraries, community centres, and the mall to maximize access.
Communication and Information

Issue: Preferred methods of communication

23. It is recommended that the Malvern Family Resource Centre continue to focus their communication of programming, services, and events with older adults through printed material and phone calls and engaging other social service agencies and community organizations to assist with information dissemination. MFRC can try to expand their outreach targets (tabling, door to door flyer distribution) yearly to improve reach. Other social service agencies in the community should also try to use the preferred methods of communication indicated in this report when outreaching to the older adult population.

24. It is recommended that the MFRC Seniors Department and other agencies who serve the older adult population perform regular evaluations (quarterly) with older adult participants to gauge their concerns and provide an avenue for seniors to voice their opinions.
A Special Thank You

Funder
Malvern Family Resource Centre would like to thank the City of Toronto for funding this initiative through their Access, Equity and Human Rights division.

Partners
Malvern Family Resource Centre would like to thank the Toronto Council on Aging for their support of MAFCI consultations and focus groups. It is with high hopes that the data collected from the Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative will help the Toronto Council on Aging’s efforts of making Toronto an Age-Friendly City.

Steering Committee
Malvern Family Resource Centre would like to acknowledge commitment and contributions of the volunteers who met monthly to help guide and plan the work for this initiative. We would like to thank all the MAFCI steering committee members for their hard work and dedication.

Jane Allen    Esther O’Neile
Tayyeba Darr    Michelle Pascal
Kesh Kumar    Pat Persaud
Sandra Hanthorn

Community Audit Volunteers
Malvern Family Resource Centre would like to thank all of the volunteers who conducted the audits with local businesses and organizations. These individuals are trailblazers because they are among the first volunteers in Malvern to engage with local businesses about a social issue and helped build a bridge between the private and non-profit sector in this community.

Roselin Bedeau    Susan Lee
Bev Dixon    Sylvia Misola
Sandra Hanthorn    Janet Myers
Saudia Khan    Seetha Subramaniam

Research Assistant Volunteers
Malvern Family Resource Centre would like to thank all of the volunteers who assisted with data entry and analysis for this project.

Vanessa Bonsu    Shimiao Wang
Key Cortes    Hao Wu
Tayyeba Darr    Terry Yang
**Placement Students & Support Volunteers**  
Malvern Family Resource Centre would like to thank the following individuals who helped with outreach and the planning and execution (facilitation, note-taking, photography, registration etc.) of the community consultations and focus groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amanda Appiah</th>
<th>Lilian Mohamed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cara Benjamin</td>
<td>Cindy Ou</td>
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<td>Alexandra Berlin</td>
<td>Pammitha</td>
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<td>Lesa Brown</td>
<td>Faryal Rizvi</td>
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<td>Brandon Craggs</td>
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<td>Anna Edward</td>
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<td>Tara Farahani</td>
<td>Vijay Sharma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyacinth Haughton</td>
<td>Laima Subhani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudia Khan</td>
<td>Estella Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rijuta Menon</td>
<td>Olisa Adekayode</td>
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Appendix A

Government Age-Friendly Reports


City of Toronto: The Toronto Seniors Strategy: Towards An Age-Friendly City
http://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/Social%20Development,%20Finance%20&%20Administration/Shared%20Content/Seniors/PDFs/seniors-strategy-fullreport.pdf

List of Outreach Locations and Methods

Religious Organizations
Islamic Foundation of Toronto  441 Nugget Avenue, Scarborough, ON, M1S 5E1
Lakshmi Narayan Mandir  1 Morningview Trail, Scarborough, ON, M1B 5A8
Church of the Nativity  10 Sewells Road, Scarborough, ON, M1B 3G5

Community Centres, Social Service Agencies, and Libraries
Burrows Hall Community Centre  1081 Progress Ave, Scarborough, ON, M1B 5Z6
Toronto Public Library – Malvern Branch  30 Sewells Road, Toronto, ON, M1B 3G5
TAIBU Community Health Centre  27 Tapscott Road, Unit 1, Scarborough, ON, M1B 4Y7
Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto  5183, Sheppard Avenue East, Scarborough, ON, M1B 5Z5
Muslim Welfare Centre  100 McLevin Ave, Scarborough, ON, M1B 5K1

Other Public Spaces
Malvern Medical Centre  1333 Neilson Road, Scarborough, ON, M1B 4Y9
Malvern Town Centre  31 Tapscott Road, Scarborough, ON, M1B 4Y7
Malvern Family Resource Centre: All Seniors Programs and Events  90 Littles Road, Scarborough, ON, M1B & 1321 Neilson Road, Scarborough, ON, Canada M1B 3C2

Methods
In-person presentations
Malvern Action for Neighbourhood Change e-Newsletter to residents and community leaders/stakeholders
Emails to local religious organizations with faith-based community leaders
Emails to local co-operative housing organization representatives and property managers
Action plan

By launching this campaign, the Malvern Family Resource Centre wants to enable all members of the community to engage with each other in order to identify concerns, discuss solutions as well as implement change in the community.

Our approach will ensure that our vision is tailored to our unique community needs.

In the course of this campaign, we will:

- Create an Age-Friendly Community Steering Committee.
- Conduct surveys as well as community and focus group consultations to identify priorities, values/vision, concerns and potential solutions.
- Audit local organizations, businesses and service providers in order to determine the age-friendliness of the community we live in and how to make improvements.
- Analyze findings and develop a toolkit including educational materials and a concept video for the campaign to be presented to stakeholders and other communities.
- Educate and train local stakeholders on becoming age-friendly.
- Identify & promote businesses and organizations that are age-friendly.
- Implement plans to continue with age-friendly planning once the project ends.

Contact Us

For more information about the Malvern Age-Friendly Community Initiative or if you would like to participate, please contact:

Amael Darr
Age-Friendly Communities
Campaign Coordinator
Tel: (416) 284-4184 ext. 235
Email: adarr@mfrc.org

Malvern Family Resource Centre
90 Littles Road
Scarborough, Ontario
M1B 5E2
www.mfrc.org

Additional information can also be found on the Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat website: www.seniors.gov.on.ca
What is an Age-Friendly Community?

Age-Friendly Communities are communities that, “are supportive physical and social environments that enable older people to live active, safe and meaningful lives that continue to contribute in all areas of community life.”

The World Health Organization identifies 8 factors of community life that directly affect older adults.

1. Accessible and safe outdoor spaces and public buildings.
2. Accessible and affordable transportation.
3. Affordable, well designed, secure, appropriately located housing.
4. Social participation of older adults in leisure, cultural and spiritual activities in the community.
5. Respect and social inclusion of older adults in the community, local businesses, and families.
6. Civic participation and employment opportunities for older adults.
7. The availability of age-friendly communication & information.
8. The availability of good quality, senior-appropriate, accessible community support and health services.

Why Are Age-Friendly Communities Important?

The City of Toronto’s population is shifting toward more older adults:

- Between 2006 and 2011, the two fastest growing age groups were 60-64 (28.8%) and 65+ years (27.5%).
- The overall growth rate of those age 65+ was larger than projected (18% vs. 12.3%) and is expected to increase significantly in coming years.
- The same trend can be found in Ward 42 (Scarborough Rouge-River).

Age-Friendly Communities allow seniors to experience a direct improvement in their quality of life. When seniors thrive, other segments of the population benefit as well.

- Businesses benefit from increased patronage from seniors and their families.
- Accessible volunteer and work opportunities increases inter-generational interaction, resulting in a transfer of skills and knowledge that have an immeasurable positive impact on younger people and the larger community.
- Age-Friendly Communities prevent social isolation and also benefit those with chronic health problems, disabilities, expectant mothers, and families of all types.

Get Involved

Seniors, business representatives, and other relevant stakeholders are welcome to participate in our focus groups, public consultations and community audits.

Contact the Age-Friendly Communities Campaign Coordinator to see how you can get involved today.

Malvern Family Resource Centre is committed to fostering an environment that eliminates inequality and promotes independence, diversity, and overall quality of life for older adults. Like many other Canadian cities and communities, we are working to make Malvern an age friendly community that will cater to our diverse population.

Malvern Family Resource Centre has served the diverse needs of the Malvern community for over 30 years. We are committed to strengthening families and individuals, through inclusive and effective programs and services for children, youth, women, seniors and families in the Rouge River Parkway.
Appendix C

List of Consultation and Focus Group Questions

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
1. What is it like to step outside of your home:
   a. to go for a walk to get fresh air
   b. to run errands
   c. to visit a friend/relative
2. How accessible do you find buildings and outdoor spaces to be?

Transportation
1. How would you describe the availability of transportation in our community?
2. What have your experiences been like when you try to get around and from place to place?
3. In what ways would you like to see improvements?

Housing
1. Tell me about the housing you live in (for example: single-family homes, multifamily homes, assisted living facilities, retirement communities, nursing homes, affordable housing).
2. Does your housing meet your needs at this stage of your life? Why or Why not?
3. How do you think your housing needs will change in the future?

Social Participation
1. How easily can you socialize in your community? Tell me about your participation in educational, recreational, cultural, and volunteer opportunities.
2. Are there enough social activities that appeal to seniors and citizens of different backgrounds?
3. How can things be improved to better meet your needs and interests?

Respect and Social Inclusion
1. In what ways does your community show, or not show, respect for you as an older person?
2. Do you think our community does enough to include people of different ages, backgrounds and circumstances? How could it be better?

Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities
1. Tell me about your participation in volunteer work?
2. Tell me about your participation in paid work, if you are employed now or if you are looking for paid work? Do you think there are accessible employment opportunities for seniors and persons with disabilities?
3. Tell me about your participation in public community affairs, like community associations or municipal councils (local city government or politics)?

Communication and Information
1. What is your experience getting the information you need in Malvern, for example about services and events?
2. Are you able to access information about what’s happening in your community?
3. Is information readable and understandable?
4. How could governments, businesses and organizations communicate better with you and other community residents?
Community Support and Health Services
1. What is your experience with the services in the community to help older persons?
2. What kind of community services would you like to have better access to?

Safety and Security
1. What has been your experience with safety and security in Malvern?
2. What improvements can be made to make this community safe and secure?

Independence
1. How would you describe your level of independence living in Malvern?
2. To what extent do you have difficulty in performing your routine activities?
3. What would you recommend the community or levels of government do to improve your independence?

The Question Booklet in its entirety is available upon request at www.mfcc.org.
Appendix D

List of Referenced Checklists

Age-Friendly British Columbia:

Age-Friendly Edmonton:

Age-Friendly Ottawa:
## SECTION 1: Outside the Business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Y</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Parking</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adequate accessible and seniors parking spaces available and enforced</td>
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<td>Parking areas are level and well maintained</td>
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<td>Parking areas are well lit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parking signage uses large print</td>
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<td>Drop-off/pick-up areas are convenient, clearly marked and sheltered</td>
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<td>Parking area is promptly cleared of snow, ice, wet leaves, garbage and other hazards</td>
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<tr>
<th>Y</th>
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<th>N/A</th>
<th>Sidewalks and Entrances</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Bus stops are close by and accessible from the main entranceway</td>
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<td>Construction areas are marked and can be seen clearly during both the day and night</td>
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<td>Sidewalk access from transit stop and parking areas is maintained with curb cuts as needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sidewalks/entranceways are promptly cleared of snow, ice and other hazards</td>
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<td>Sidewalks/entranceways have sufficient lighting</td>
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<td>Pavement is smooth, without cracks, dips or bumps</td>
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<td>Wheelchair sloped entry ramps are in place and clearly marked to allow for walkers, wheelchairs, strollers and easier access</td>
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<td>Entrance doors open automatically or have access buttons and have delayed closing times</td>
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<td></td>
<td>At least one entrance is at grade level</td>
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<td>All entrances are kept clear of obstructions (i.e. piled snow, garbage, tied up dogs)</td>
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### Sidewalks and Entrances Continued

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>N/A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Entrance doors are wide enough for wheelchairs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>No loitering policy in front and around the business that is effectively enforced</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Space available near entrance to park scooters</strong></td>
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### SECTION 1 TOTAL

- Total # of YES: _______ / 19
- Total # of NO: _______ / 19
- Total # of N/A: _______ / 19

### SECTION 1 COMMENTS

(Strengths, Areas for Improvement, Suggested Resources)

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### SECTION 2: Inside the Business

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>N/A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Safety and Accessibility</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Stairs have sturdy handrails</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Stairs are wide and edges are clearly marked</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Flooring is non-slip and non-shiny</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mats are placed where necessary and are well secured</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Obstacles or hazards are clearly marked (e.g. step up/down, automatic door, wet floor, etc.)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Aisles are not cluttered by displays or objects and allow access for a wheelchair or walker</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Customer washrooms are found on all service floors and at least one accessible toilet cubicle and hand wash area should be available</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Elevators are available to access other floors and/or there are ramps for changes of level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Sturdy and regular-height seating is available in waiting and line-up areas</strong></td>
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<td><strong>At least one customer service area is accessible for persons in wheelchairs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Service counters have a place to hook a cane so that it does not fall</strong></td>
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### SECTION 2: Continued

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<tr>
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<th>Comfort, Visibility and Hearing</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Premises are well lit</td>
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<td>Sound or speaker systems for public announcements are clear and not over-used</td>
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<td>Background music is absent or low enough in volume so that customers can hear</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Popular items are shelved at medium height</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Building signage has large, legible font and is of good contrast (e.g. black letters on white)</td>
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<td>Promotional material includes descriptions and images of older people</td>
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<td>Printed or written materials (e.g. package labels, cash receipts, restaurant bills) have good contrast and readable font size</td>
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<td>Telephone has large print buttons and amplification capabilities for the hearing impaired</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Location of elevators, washrooms, customer service and other amenities and services are</td>
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<td>Temperature is held at a comfortable level</td>
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<td>Service animals are welcome</td>
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### SECTION 2 TOTAL

Total # of YES: ______ / 22  
Total # of NO: ______ / 22  
Total # of N/A: ______ / 22

### SECTION 2 COMMENTS (Strengths, Areas for Improvement, Suggested Resources)

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### SECTION 3: Customer Service, Respect and Inclusion

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Customer Service, Respect and Inclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff members are friendly, patient and greet customers when they enter the business</td>
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<td>Staff members speak clearly and at an appropriate speed while looking at the customer</td>
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<td>Translation services are available or translation is provided on signage in business</td>
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<td>Errors and customer concerns are addressed promptly and courteously</td>
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<td>Staff members are sensitive to customers with varying circumstances and avoid stereotyping or condescending behaviours (e.g. speaking too loudly, speaking to familiarly - as in calling someone “dear” or showing visible impatience)</td>
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<td>Staff members are willing to assist customers who have vision or hearing challenges (e.g. reading labels and locating items)</td>
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<td>A quiet space is provided for discussing private business matters, such as medications or finances, and staff members are trained to move to those areas when necessary</td>
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<td>Enough staff are on site to provide assistance whenever needed. These staff members are knowledgeable with the products and know where to find them.</td>
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<td>It is policy OR staff are known to offer assistance when customer are carrying heavy items</td>
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<td>Online or phone ordering/delivery is available (as appropriate)</td>
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<td>Business website has a clear font, is informative, and easy to use and navigate</td>
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<td>Staff can identify if a person is experiencing a medical emergency, are aware of resources</td>
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<td>In a non-emergency situation, staff are willing to assist persons who may be disoriented, need to sit down and/or use the phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SECTION 3 TOTAL

Total # of YES: _____ / 13  Total # of NO: _____ / 13  Total # of N/A: _____ / 13

### SECTION 3 COMMENTS (Strengths, Areas for Improvement, Suggested Resources)

________________________________________________________________________

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# OVERALL ASSESSMENT

## FINAL OVERALL TOTAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Total for YES</th>
<th>Total for N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 2</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>_____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL YES = _____**

**TOTAL N/A = _____**

**Actual Total Questions = 54 - Total N/A = _____**

## Age Friendly Score

\[
\frac{\text{Total Yes}}{\text{Actual Total Q}} \times 100 = \_\_\_\_\% \\
\]

## FINAL COMMENTS

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Appendix E

Toolkit Material
Government of Ontario AODA compliance guides:

StopGap Flyer

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StopGap Ramps on Request Program

Let us build a custom ramp for your retail, residential, institutional, or commercial location!

We design and build ramps to suit many different stepped entrances including single and multi-stepped entryways. From simple single step deployable ramps to permanent building code compliant ramps, our Ramps on Request program is here to help solve even the most difficult stepped locations!

For deployable ramps for multi-stepped entryways and permanent building code compliant ramps please send a wide-angle photo showing the entire entryway to luke@stopgap.ca, this will help get the ball rolling!

---

If you are interested in a deployable ramp for a single stepped entry please send the following information to luke@stopgap.ca, with this information we will be able to give an accurate quotation:

1. A wide angled picture showing the entire entryway.

2. A close-up picture showing a tape measure in front of the left and right side of the step so that we can determine the exact step height and the proper measurement for the ramp design, ensure that the photo is taken looking straight on and not at an angle.

3. Your choice of colour from our standard vibrant red, green, yellow, or blue.

STOPGAP.CA
MCIS LANGUAGE SERVICES offers over 300+ languages, including ASL/LSQ & Aboriginal languages.

MCIS offers clients the highest quality, most responsive and cost effective solutions to meet all of your language needs (English & French to/from over 300+ languages, including ASL/LSQ & Aboriginal languages). We provide 24/7 interpretation, Translation & Transcription services.

- ORAL INTERPRETATION
  - Immediate Phone
  - Video
  - Face to Face

- WRITTEN TRANSLATION
- AUDIO/VIDEO TRANSCRIPTION
- ACCESSIBILITY LANGUAGES
  (Sign languages / ASL / LSQ / Braille / CART / Note-taking)

For more information please contact Frozan Raufi at 416 467 3097 Ext. 727 or via email at frozan@mcis.on.ca

789 Don Mills Road - Suite 1010 | North York, ON - M3C 1T5 | www.mcislanguages.com