

Halton Region Older Adult Plan 2015-2018



Vibrant, aging-friendly and inclusive communities



Aging Well in Halton

Halton is a great place to live and our residents are being more active and leading healthier lives. In fact, residents 65 years old and older are now the fastest growing age group in Halton. Their wisdom, experience and interests, not only add vibrancy to our community, but older adults contribute to our economy as consumers, employees and business owners. The *Halton Region Older Adult Plan* (HOAP) responds to this growing aging population by identifying priorities and objectives that are aging-friendly, inclusive, and also promote accessibility, engagement and well-being.

Today, Halton Region provides a number of direct services to older adults through health programs that promote healthy, active living as well as the provision of long-term care, adult day programs, assisted living programs, financial assistance for low income residents, and affordable and assisted housing in Halton. However, I know building a community for tomorrow where older adult residents can age well requires the participation and commitment of many different stakeholders. Continued investment

from other levels of government will ensure the right supports are in place as our population ages in Halton.

The work for this plan was identified and began with the *Halton Region's Citizens' Priorities Action Plan 2011-2014* and is aligned with *Halton Region's Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018*. HOAP was informed by what we learned through consultation and working with our community partners. The Region will continue to build on our strengths and develop new opportunities within the organization to make Halton a great place to live for older adults.

I would like to thank Regional staff, Halton Region's Older Adult Advisory Committee (previously known as Elder Services Advisory Committee) and our community partners for their contributions to this plan. Working together, we make Halton a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire.

Gary Carr
Regional Chair



As our community continues to grow, age and change, Halton Region is committed to supporting programs, policies, services and environments that recognize older adults.

Highlights

Halton Region Older Adult Plan:

- Is a corporate-wide plan developed in collaboration with all departments at Halton Region.
 - Focuses on priorities, objectives and actions that are within Halton Region's authority to plan, manage and deliver.
 - Aligns with other Regional plans and strategies including Halton Region's *Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018*, *Halton's Regional Official Plan* and the *Comprehensive Housing Strategy Update 2014-2024*.
 - Applies to all Regional policies, programs, services and environments.
 - Aligns with the Region's commitment to provide high quality service that is responsive to the changing needs of the Halton community.
 - Is supported by detailed operational work plans that identify specific timing, outcomes and measures for the actions that will achieve the priorities and objectives over the next four years.
- Strives to ensure equitable access to Regional programs, services and information for older adults in Halton.
 - Recognizes that older adults in the community are unique in terms of socio-economic status, physical and sensory mobility, education, literacy, generational attitudes, marital status, employment, cultural norms, sexual orientation etc.
 - Contains strategies to build partnerships that will enhance innovation, service coordination and integrated service delivery with community partners.
 - Supports the health and well-being of older adults in Halton.
 - Seeks to enhance quality of life for older adults in Halton through meaningful engagement, strengthened community partnerships and client-centred integrated service delivery that applies an older adult perspective to all that we do at Halton Region.



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Introduction

Halton is a growing and changing community. According to Halton Region's current best planning estimates forecast to 2031 as approved by Regional Council in July 2011, the number of older adults (65+) in Halton will nearly double to 127,000 by 2031¹. Today, Halton Region is preparing for this shift and the impact it will have on service delivery and the type of programs we offer.

As people live longer, their circumstances continue to evolve and change. Everyone experiences this change differently. Like all Halton residents, older adults are diverse in terms of socio-economic status, physical and sensory abilities, education, literacy levels, generational attitudes, marital status, being a newcomer to Canada, sexual orientation, gender identity as well as cultural backgrounds and identities.

The *Halton Region Older Adult Plan* identifies how the Region works to support this growing and unique age group in Halton. The plan highlights the Region's commitment to Regional policies, programs, services and environments that support older adults to stay healthy as they age. Healthy aging is most successful in communities that are inclusive, sustainable, healthy, accessible, interdependent and engaging.

HOAP highlights our commitment to older adults and acknowledges that investments at every age support us all to age well in Halton.

HOAP priorities and objectives focus on actions that are within Halton Region's authority to plan, manage and deliver.

The term "aging-friendly" is used throughout this plan as it broadly applies to supporting all Halton residents including older adults to stay healthy as they age.

The term "Age-Friendly" is often used by Local Municipalities in their plans to improve life for older adults and work towards the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities designation. Halton Region is not eligible to apply for this designation.

The development and implementation of HOAP is a corporate initiative that involves all Regional departments. In the development stage, the need to review our policies, programs and services with an understanding of what is important to older adults and how quality of life may be affected was identified. Halton Region wants to continue to provide quality, accessible service that is professional, consistent, informative and friendly to older adults.

Aligned with *Halton Region's Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018*, HOAP priorities and objectives focus on actions that are within Halton Region's authority to plan, manage and deliver. Through collaboration and sharing of expertise, HOAP will not only guide activities and initiatives across all departments, but continue to evolve as the needs of our community change.

Definitions

Aging-friendly acknowledges that aging happens throughout one's lifetime and happens best in communities that are inclusive, sustainable, healthy, accessible, interdependent and engaging.

Aging well means staying healthy as we get older.

An older adult perspective is a shared understanding of concerns and factors that can influence an older adult's quality of life and is based on the values and priorities that older adults have identified as important to them.

HOAP defines residents 65 years and older as older adults.



Regional Programs and Services

Programs and services for older adults including but not limited to:

- Three accredited long-term care homes (Allendale in Milton, Creek Way Village in Burlington, Post Inn Village in Oakville)
- Four assisted living programs that provide home-based care and supports in Burlington, Milton and Oakville
- Three adult day programs which deliver therapeutic, social and recreational programming as well as assistance with personal, mealtime and mobility needs (Friends' Landing and Milton Place in Milton, Silver Creek Place in Georgetown)
- Recreational outreach programs at the John R. Rhodes Seniors Residence
- Public health programs that promote wellness and healthy aging for older adults in Halton
- Halton Housing Help, a service that connects residents to housing support including older adults and caregivers who need information about housing options that include rental housing, retirement homes, assisted living supports and long-term care
- Assisted housing (rent-geared-to-income) for older adults at 12 communities managed by the Halton Community Housing Corporation
- Financial assistance for dental treatment
- Funding for the tax rebate for low income seniors offered by the City of Burlington, Town of Halton Hills and Town of Oakville as well as a Regional tax deferral program

Halton Region provides a number of programs and services in partnership with other levels of government, as well as the non-profit and private sectors.



Regional Programs and Services (continued)

Halton Region offers cost-effective, quality programs and services to all Halton residents including but not limited to:

- Economic Development
- Emergency Planning
- Halton Region Museum
- Regional Planning and Growth Management
- Waste Collection, Disposal, Organics and Recycling
- Regional Roads, Bridges and Transportation
- Sewage (Wastewater) Collection Systems and Treatment Plants
- Water Purification Plants and Distribution Systems
- Assisted Housing
- Children's Services
- Ontario Works (Social Services)
- Services for Seniors including Long-Term Care Homes
- Paramedic Services
- Public Health Programs and Services



Developing a Plan for Our Aging Population

Halton Region's commitment to older adults is to support vibrant, aging-friendly, and inclusive communities that promote well-being, engagement and accessibility.

Halton Region envisions a community for older adults that:

- Respects, values and engages older adults with opportunities and choices for meaningful activities, employment, social connections, and healthy lifestyles
- Enables access to information, required services and amenities
- Enhances aging-friendly Regional environments
- Supports older adults to be independent and make choices that help them to achieve a high quality of life
- Ensures safety and security in home and community



Halton Region Older Adult Plan is informed by:

- Provincial documents including *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care (2015)*², *Independence, Activity and Good Health: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors (2013)*³, *Living Longer, Living Well: Highlights and Key Recommendations from Dr. Samir K. Sinha (2013)*⁴ and *Finding the Right Fit – Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide (2013)*⁵
- Publications created by Halton Region's Older Adult Advisory Committee including *Quality of Life for Seniors in Halton (2007)*⁶ and *Age-Friendly Communities Project (2011)*⁷
- Older adult strategies from other municipalities (Niagara, Peel, Toronto, Waterloo, York)
- Local data and perspectives compiled by Halton-based age-friendly initiatives

Consultation included:

- Interviews with community stakeholders and service partners
- Meetings with Halton Region's Older Adult Advisory Committee
- Extensive cross-departmental consultations

At a Glance: Older Adults in Halton

Understanding our community today

Halton is home to approximately 67,000 older adults aged 65 years and over.⁸ Older adults are Halton's fastest growing population, increasing nearly 50 per cent from 2001 - 2011, compared to a growth of 42 per cent among those under 65.^{8,9}

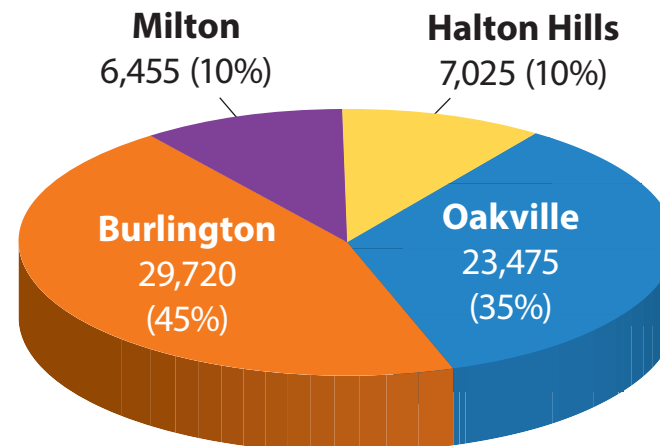
Between 2001 and 2011 the number of adults in the 85 and over age group has grown the most quickly, with a 34 per cent increase, followed by the 65-69 year old age group with a 31 per cent increase.^{8,9} The 60-64 year old age group increased by 30 per cent in the same time period.^{8,9}

All municipalities in Halton experienced increases in the number of older adults living in their communities between 2001 and 2011.^{10,11}

During this time, the greatest increases were seen in Milton with a 95 per cent increase, followed by Halton Hills with a 57 per cent increase, Oakville with a 49 per cent increase, and Burlington with a 40 per cent increase.^{10,11} Figure 1 identifies the breakdown of Halton's total population of older adults in each municipality.

Figure 1

Older adults 65+ in Halton Region by Municipality



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census

This plan recognizes that older adulthood can be a time of many changes.

Older adults vary in their income, education, physical and sensory abilities, literacy levels, generational attitudes, marital status, being a newcomer to Canada, sexual orientation, gender identity, and cultural backgrounds and identities.

At a Glance: Older Adults in Halton (continued)

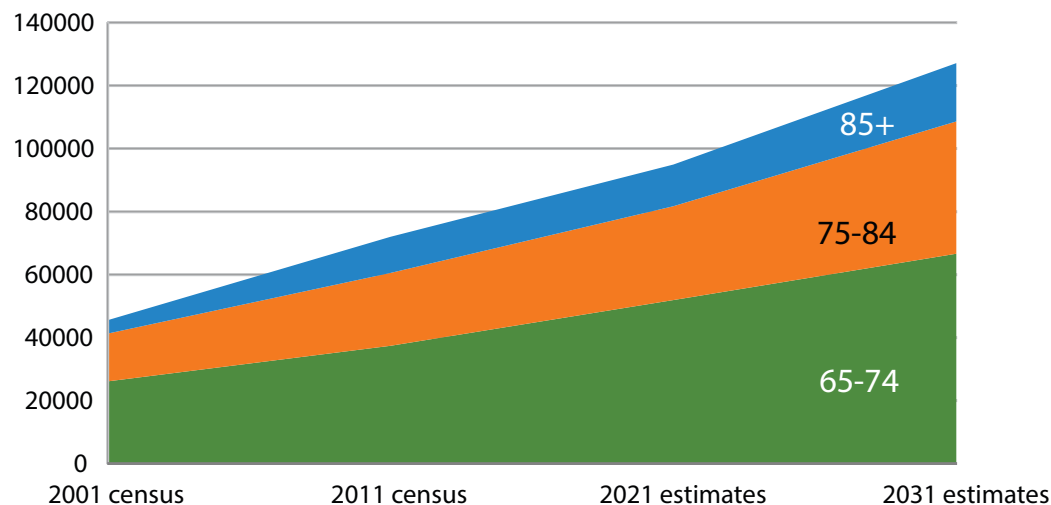
Understanding our community tomorrow

In the Provincial Places to Grow Plan, Halton Region's population is mandated to grow to 780,000 (a 55 per cent increase) by 2031. The number of Halton residents aged 65 and older will increase by 90 per cent (from 67,000 in 2011 to 127,000 in 2031), while those under age 65 will increase by 50 per cent^{12, 13}. The number of residents aged 85 and older will increase by almost 120 per cent from 8,500 in 2011⁸ to 18,500 in 2031.¹³ It is projected that by 2031, one in six Halton residents will be over the age of 65.^{12, 13}

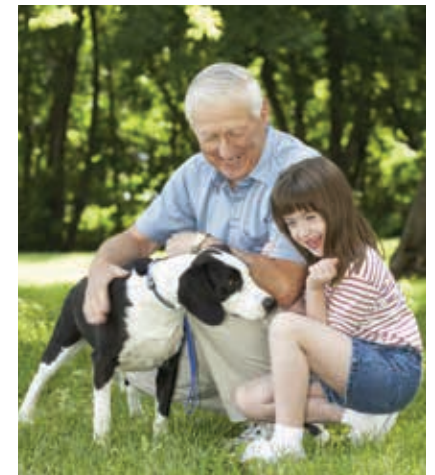
"By 2017, for the first time, Ontario will be home to more people over 65 than children under 15."¹⁴

Source: Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors, 2013.

Older Adult Population Growth in Halton



Source: Halton Region's Best Planning Estimates 2011



Halton Region Vision

Halton Region's vision is to preserve for the current and future generations a landscape that is rich, diverse, balanced, productive and sustainable and a society that is economically strong, equitable and caring. The Region must plan for communities where urban sprawl is minimized, where infrastructure is maximized, where natural heritage is protected and natural spaces and farmland are preserved. The overall goal is to enhance the quality of life for all people of Halton, today and into the future.



Priorities and Objectives

Six strategic priorities along with more detailed objectives and actions have been identified to provide a coherent framework for the HOAP.

RESIDENT FOCUSED To ensure older adults are included and engaged.		WELL PLANNED To promote aging-friendly environments and vibrant communities.		SAFE AND HEALTHY To support healthy, active aging for residents at all stages of life.	
<p>Priority 1 Consider older adults in the development of policies and delivery of programs</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply an older adult perspective to Regional policies, programs and services. • Promote quality customer service that is responsive to older adults. 	<p>Priority 2 Optimize the engagement of older adults with Halton Region</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage older adults to participate in the development of Regional policies, programs and services that affect them. • Ensure that information produced or distributed by the Region is accessible and applicable for older adults. 	<p>Priority 3 Support the enhancement of aging-friendly Regional environments</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and optimize the use of Regional facilities by older adults. • Implement Regional plans and strategies that promote aging-friendly Regional places and spaces. • Develop and maintain a Regional transportation network that is aging-friendly and supports all modes of transportation. 	<p>Priority 4 Support opportunities for older adults and Halton communities to prosper</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness about the impact of the aging population on Halton businesses and workplaces. • Optimize the participation of an aging Regional workforce. • Support older adults to work. 	<p>Priority 5 Support older adults to be active, connected and to age well</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate community mobilization to support Halton residents to age well. • Enhance access to Regional services. 	<p>Priority 6 Support older adults to maintain their independence</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community partners to support service innovation and enhance coordination. • Identify Regional policies, programs and services required to complement the system of support for older adults.

Priority 1

Consider older adults in the development of policies and delivery of programs and services.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Halton residents including older adults are diverse in many ways

Socio-economic status, physical and sensory abilities, education, literacy levels, generational attitudes, marital status, being a newcomer to Canada, sexual orientation, gender identity as well as cultural backgrounds and identities are examples of ways that the older adult population is diverse.

All perspectives need to be heard

Older adults need to be more engaged in civic discussion. Consultation practices need to consider the diverse needs of older adults so that perspectives are heard.

Ageism hurts us all

Ageism is considered the most tolerated form of social discrimination. The Revera Report on Ageism indicates “89 per cent of Canadians associate aging with something negative like not being able to get around easily, losing independence or being alone.”¹⁵

* Check glossary

Income makes a difference

In 2011, five per cent of Halton’s older adults (or 3,250 individuals) lived in low income¹⁶. Low income is defined as living below the Low Income Measure – After Tax¹⁷ threshold, which for a single person living alone is \$16,456 per year. Older adults living alone are more vulnerable than those living in a family with a spouse and/or their child(ren). “Between 2006 and 2011, the prevalence of low income older adults living in non-family households* in Halton almost doubled from 4.3 per cent to 7.5 per cent.”¹⁶

The number of newcomers to Canada age 65 and older is increasing

Five per cent of Ontario’s seniors arrived in Canada in the last 20 years. This proportion will increase over time. One in five (19.7 per cent) immigrants are aged 65 years and over.¹⁸



Priority 1: Consider older adults in the development of policies and delivery of programs and services.

Objective Apply an older adult perspective to Regional policies, programs and services.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Research and develop resources to support staff to apply an older adult perspective.	Profiles of Halton’s older adult population are created using demographic, behavioural, organizational and market analysis information in order to provide a better understanding of Halton’s older adult population.
Using an older adult perspective, define the specific needs and preferences of older adults.	Input from older adults guides the development of the Regional polices, programs and services that affect them.
Apply an older adult perspective to inform the planning, development and delivery of Regional policies, programs, and services.	Corporate training increases awareness about the diversity of older adults such as socio-economic status, physical and sensory abilities, education, literacy levels, generational attitudes, marital status, being a newcomer to Canada, sexual orientation, gender identity, as well as cultural backgrounds and identities. Resources are created to support staff to apply an older adult perspective when developing policies, programs and services. This includes public engagement guidelines to ensure older adults are appropriately engaged in public consultation.
Review Regionally funded programs that provide financial supports to older adults using the older adult perspective and continuous process improvements to ensure effectiveness and integration.	Programs including but not limited to social assistance, SPLIT pass, dental assistance and housing subsidies are examined using continuous process improvements and an older adult perspective to identify opportunities to improve service delivery to older adults.

Priority 1: Consider older adults in the development of policies and delivery of programs and services.

Objective Promote quality customer service that is responsive to older adults.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Review and update customer service standards to reflect an older adult perspective.	As part of the corporate customer service approach, service standards are reviewed using an older adult perspective. New standards that accommodate the diversity of older adults in the community (e.g., socio-economic status, physical/sensory abilities, generational attitudes) are introduced to enhance service delivery to older adults in Halton. When engaging with older adults or providing service to them, staff accommodates their needs and preferences and provides service that is inclusive.
Update customer service training to reflect the revised standards.	The Corporate training curriculum is enhanced to include a training session specific to service delivery to older adults.
Develop a consistent process across the corporation for obtaining customer feedback including age to ensure older adult needs are met.	New standards and directives are implemented as part of the corporate customer service approach to ensure customer service feedback mechanisms are older adult-friendly. Customer service feedback collects demographic information about older adults to ensure an understanding of their experience and inform future planning.
Review budgets annually to ensure flexibility to respond to customer aging-related requests.	Resources are available to accommodate the aging-related requests of an aging population (e.g., American Sign Language interpreters, adjustable workstations to accommodate mobility devices, large print resources).

Priority 2

Optimize the engagement of older adults with Halton Region.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Sense of community belonging enhances well-being

About three-quarters of Halton's older adults report a strong sense of community belonging which can positively affect participation and well-being.¹⁹

Engagement creates positive outcomes

Engagement and consultation with older adults ensures policies, programs and solutions are informed, effective and responsive to their diverse and changing needs.

Community involvement benefits all

Through volunteering, civic involvement and sharing their expertise, older adults play a critical role in making communities stronger and more resilient places to live.

Use of technology continues to evolve

The number of older adults accessing information and services online is increasing so it is important to ensure that services are accessible and easy to use. Approximately 50 per cent of older adults are accessing online information²⁰. However, to accommodate those not accessing information online it is also important to continue to provide information in alternate formats including print.



Priority 2: Optimize the engagement of older adults with Halton Region.

Objective

Engage older adults to participate in the development of Regional policies, programs and services that affect them.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Integrate strategies and tools for engaging older adults into Regional guidelines for public engagement.	A public consultation checklist which reflects the needs of older adults is used when the Region engages the public (e.g., timing, presentation materials).
Develop a process to ensure a diverse representation of older adults is engaged.	All staff involved in public consultation receive training to ensure they are taking appropriate steps to engage older adults.
Consult with appropriate advisory committees for advice on Regional activities.	A list of committees representing older adults or their families is compiled and included in the toolkit that supports staff to apply an older adult perspective to any Regional activity.
Identify and act on opportunities to profile the contributions of older adults in Halton.	The contributions of older adults are recognized (e.g., public acknowledgement, thank you cards, awards).
Develop and promote opportunities to use the expertise of older adults through volunteering, mentoring, inter-generational programs etc.	The expertise of older adults is utilized.

Priority 2: Optimize the engagement of older adults with Halton Region.

Objective

Ensure that information produced or distributed by the Region is accessible and applicable for older adults.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Identify and implement best practices to inform guidelines for communication with older adults.	<p>Policies are developed to reflect industry standards for aging-friendly communication.</p> <p>Best practices to reflect positive aging and positive images of older adults are identified and used in the Region's Visual Identity Guidelines.</p>
Review information products to ensure they reflect communication guidelines.	<p>Print materials are available in alternative formats upon request (e.g., large print, braille).</p> <p>Online information is accessible for older adults (e.g., screen colours and font sizes can be easily adapted).</p>
Continue to promote programs and services to older adults and community partners.	<p>Older adults in the community are aware of the Regional programs and services that are available to them.</p>

Priority 3

Support the enhancement of aging-friendly Regional environments.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Transportation can be a challenge for older adults

Cost, accessibility, pedestrian safety and the increase and speed of traffic creates challenges for older adults.

Accessibility supports inclusion

Universal, barrier-free access in Regional buildings and public spaces supports safe physical mobility for all ages including older adults.

Housing is fundamental to quality of life

Housing is an important determinant of an individual's physical, mental and emotional well-being.²¹ Location of housing can enhance or limit an older adult's access to transportation, shopping, health care, activities and opportunities to interact with others.²²



Priority 3: Support the enhancement of aging-friendly Regional environments.

Objective

Promote and optimize the use of Regional facilities by older adults.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Review and update Asset Management plans with an older adult perspective to identify opportunities to optimize Regional facilities.	Older adults with differing abilities are engaged to provide input into how Regional facilities are designed or renovated.
Integrate aging-friendly design standards for universal, barrier-free access.	Aging-friendly design standards are integrated into existing standards to meet the needs of older adults. Adherence to <i>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)</i> and integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation Guidelines within Regional buildings and public spaces.
Review Regional furniture and space standards through an older adult perspective.	Regional furniture and space standards meet the needs of an aging workforce and visitors to Regional spaces.
Update assisted housing design standards using an older adult perspective.	Social Housing design standards are amended to reflect an older adult perspective. Regional design standards are shared with community providers of social housing.

Priority 3: Support the enhancement of aging-friendly Regional environments.

Objective

Implement Regional plans and strategies that promote aging-friendly places and spaces.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Implement Halton's Regional Official Plan land use principles and policies pertaining to program /service co-locations and to universal, barrier-free access for all ages including older adults on Regional property.	Ongoing implementation of the Official Plan policies pertaining to co-location of services and universal, barrier-free access on Regional properties.
Implement the Comprehensive Housing Strategy which identifies opportunities to create a mix and variety of housing that meets the needs of all residents at all stages of their lives.	A range of housing and services are provided for older adults to support them to age in place.

Priority 3: Support the enhancement of aging-friendly Regional environments.

Objective

Develop and maintain a Regional transportation network that is aging-friendly and supports all modes of transportation.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Consider all road users as the Region plans and implements active transportation facilities.	The Active Transportation Master Plan accommodates all road users including older adults.
Older adults have the opportunity to participate in planning for the Regional transportation network to support alternative modes of transportation.	Older adults are actively engaged to provide input into how the Regional transportation network supports alternative modes of transportation.

Priority 4

Support opportunities for older adults and Halton communities to prosper.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Older adults are working longer

The participation rate of Canadians aged 65 years and older in the labour force has nearly doubled over the past decade from 6.7 per cent in 2002 to 12.6 per cent in 2012.²³

In Halton 44.2% of Halton adults aged 55+ are employed, many in second careers.²⁴

The demographic shift in the next 10 years will significantly impact the labour force

More older adults will be leaving the workforce than younger people are entering it.

Aging-friendly business is good business

Businesses are being encouraged to make their services aging-friendly because it is good for business.

Baby Boomers are changing

As residents 65 and older are the fastest growing age group in Halton, the demand for more informal and cultural activities will gain momentum.



Priority 4: Support opportunities for older adults and Halton communities to prosper.

Objective

Improve awareness about the impact of an aging population on Halton businesses and workplaces.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Adapt existing business surveys to determine what Halton employers are doing to meet the needs of older workers.	Surveys are completed and findings are used to inform policy and programs.
Develop and implement a process to determine the needs of older workers in Halton.	Processes are developed and results are used to inform policies and programs. Information is developed and disseminated to Halton workplaces.
Include the older adult perspective in the development and implementation of tourism plans such as the Agri-tourism plan and Heritage initiatives.	Older adult perspective is included in the development of tourism and heritage plans.

Priority 4: Support opportunities for older adults and Halton communities to prosper.

Objective

Optimize the participation of a Regional workforce.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Review and update all Regional Human Resources policies using an older adult perspective.	Policies and programs align with the needs of older workers.
Based on results from the first action, develop work arrangements to support Regional employees where gaps exist.	Gaps in Human Resources policies are addressed.
Develop a mentorship program that supports knowledge transfer and succession planning to build staff capacity.	A mentorship program is implemented so that knowledge is transferred as older workers retire from the Region.
Identify training opportunities that will enhance staff skills when working with older adults.	Corporate training curriculum is enhanced to include opportunities for staff to build skills related to engaging and providing service to older adults.

Priority 4: Support opportunities for older adults and Halton communities to prosper.

Objective

Support older adults to work.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Support older adults exploring second careers.	Older adults are provided employment services through employment resource centres and on-site staff support.
Promote entrepreneurship or self-employment as a viable option for older adults.	Older adults are considered a key audience in the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment.
Support older adults to start, grow or buy a small business.	Strategies are implemented to support older adults who own small businesses.

Priority 5

Support older adults to be active, connected and to age well.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

There are many factors that influence an individual's ability to be active, connected and age well. The list below provides a few examples.

Living arrangements affect health

Seniors living alone often experience more isolation, neglect, elder abuse and poorer health. Almost 14,000 Halton seniors live alone.²⁵ Over 10,000 of these seniors are women.²⁶

Safety for older adults is a priority

Injuries due to falls threaten health and independence among seniors and can lead to premature institutionalization and even death.

Housing options matter

One in six adults in Ontario is planning on moving to a smaller home in the next five to 10 years, increasing demand for smaller units in "walkable" neighbourhoods.²⁷

Literacy affects abilities

Large differences in average literacy are seen within Canadian older adults. This can profoundly affect a range of social, educational and economic outcomes. An estimated 88 per cent of adults over age 65 have less than adequate health literacy skills.²⁸ Language, cultural norms, attitudes about dependency and self-sufficiency can reduce access to information, services and care.



Priority 5: Support older adults to be active, connected and to age well.

Objective

Facilitate community mobilization to support Halton residents to age well.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Engage stakeholders in the development of community approaches to healthy, active aging.	Community stakeholders are engaged in the development of community approaches to healthy, active aging.
Identify trends and emerging issues impacting the well-being of older adults to inform Regional programs, policies and services.	Regional programs, policies and services are informed by trends and issues impacting the well-being of older adults.
Identify opportunities to foster greater social connections in the ways Regional programs and services are delivered.	Regional staff support older adults to be connected in the community (e.g., connecting older adults to seniors' programs in the community). Regional staff facilitate community connections for older adults. Older adults receive client-centred care and services from Regional services. Facilitate internal/external partnerships to identify the attributes that will enhance social connectedness among older adults.

Priority 5: Support older adults to be active, connected and to age well.

Objective

Enhance access to Regional services

ACTIONS	Outcomes
Connect older adults and caregivers with information and supports to age well.	<p>Community agencies have updated information on Regional services to support older adults to age well.</p> <p>Regional staff have up-to-date information on community resources that support older adults to age well.</p> <p>Older adults receive Regional service in a way that is accessible and acceptable to them.</p>
Promote health literacy among older adults.	<p>A standard for information provision is developed, promoted and used among residents and community agencies (e.g., promote Health on the Net certification).</p> <p>Through partnerships, older adults and their caregivers obtain, understand, discern, and use information to make informed decisions to maintain or improve health.</p>
Explore the potential for coordinated service delivery with community partners.	<p>Opportunities are explored to enhance the coordination of services for older adults.</p>

Priority 6

Support older adults to maintain their independence.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Caregivers need support

Informal caregivers provide about 80 per cent of all home care to seniors living at home and up to 30 per cent of services to seniors living in institutions.²⁹ Many caregivers report higher levels of stress when trying to balance work and family obligations.

Essentials for full, healthy lives

All older adults should have the opportunity to make choices that allow them to live a long, healthy life, regardless of income, education, sexual orientation or cultural backgrounds, chronic or aging-related illnesses. More people are entering long-term care with palliative needs.

Older adults are at risk of abuse and neglect

Older women are at greater risk of abuse due to increased social isolation, cultural norms, familial status, disadvantage or disability. Abuse and neglect of older adults can occur at home, in the community, or in institutional settings.³⁰

Mental illness strikes hard

Rates of mental illness for adults between the ages of 70 and 89, including dementia, are projected to be higher than for any other age group by 2041.³¹



Priority 6: Support older adults to maintain their independence.

Objective

Work with community partners to support service innovation and enhance coordination.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Participate in a dialogue with the LHINs Health Links to advance service innovation to meet the needs of vulnerable older adults.	Halton Region endorses the four Health Links to support innovation, integration and coordination of services for vulnerable older adults.
Ensure the integration of strategies to respond to dementia, mental illness and addictions into the planning and delivery of Regional services.	Regional staff have skills and up-to-date information to support older adults with dementia, mental illness and/or addictions.
Promote equity for older adults by ensuring social determinants of health are addressed in how Regional programs and services are delivered.	All older adults, including those who are vulnerable or marginalized, will have access to Regional programs and services that are planned and delivered to meet their needs.

Priority 6: Support older adults to maintain their independence.

Objective

Identify Regional programs and services required to complement the system of support for older adults.

ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
Review Halton Region’s operational business in long-term care.	A review of Halton Region’s operational business in long-term care homes is conducted.
Identify and communicate funding required to respond to emerging trends and issues.	<p>An understanding of the funding required to support an aging population informs the overall advocacy plan for Halton Region.</p> <p>The funding from other levels of government required to provide Regional programs and services to support an aging population is available.</p> <p>Long-term sustainable funding is in place to ensure programs and services can meet future resource requirements.</p>
Attract appropriate health care professionals including physicians to address the needs of an aging population.	<p>There are a sufficient number of physicians in Halton with the required expertise to provide timely and appropriate service and care to older adults.</p> <p>The Region supports educational institutions by providing student placements resulting in an increase in the availability of trained health care professionals with the expertise to care for older adults in Halton.</p>

Next Steps

The *Halton Region Older Adult Plan 2015–2018* is the roadmap for how Halton Region is enhancing service delivery to be responsive to the growing, aging population. We are taking action now to ensure Halton Region is prepared for the impact that an older population will have on our programs and services. Statistics and trends will be monitored to continually update this plan as the needs of older adults in Halton change. This is all part of our commitment to being resident-focused, well planned and safe and healthy.



Halton Region is committed to reporting back to the community on our progress with the *Halton Region Older Adult Plan*.

Activities of HOAP will be reflected as part of the annual update on Halton Region's *Strategic Action Plan 2015-2018*.

Community Partnerships

The success of HOAP is contingent on the application of older adult perspectives to all we do at Halton Region as well as the continued support of community partners and other levels of government.

One of our community's greatest assets is the innovative way that organizations work together to achieve common goals. While this plan is focused on Halton Region's policies, programs, services and environments, continued collaboration with our community partners will be required in order to achieve the priorities and objectives set out in the plan.

We would like to thank Halton Region's Older Adult Advisory Committee and the following community partners for participating in consultations for this plan:

Alzheimer Society of Hamilton Halton

Canadian Association of Retired Persons – Halton Chapter

City of Burlington

Community Development Halton

Community Foundation of Burlington

Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Community Care Access Centre

Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network

Mississauga Halton Community Care Access Centres

Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network

Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning – Sheridan Centre for Elder Research

Town of Halton Hills

Town of Milton

Town of Oakville

United Way of Burlington/Hamilton

United Way of Milton

United Way of Oakville

Glossary of Terms

Affordable housing is housing with market price or rent that is affordable to households of low and moderate income, spending 30 per cent of their gross household income without government subsidies, with sufficient income remaining to meet other daily living needs.

Age-Friendly is based on World Health Organization guidance to better adapt community structures and services to the needs of older people.

Ageing-friendly acknowledges that aging happens throughout one's lifetime and happens best in communities that are inclusive, sustainable, healthy, accessible, interdependent and engaging.

Ageing in place is the ability to remain at home safely, comfortably, and independently, later in life. In some cases, community is used instead of home.

Ageing well means staying healthy as you get older.

Assisted housing is housing that is available to low and moderate income households for rent or purchase where part of the housing cost is subsidized through a government program.

Engagement includes a range of ways that groups of people are asked for input, discussion or to make decisions together.

The **social determinants of health** are living conditions— income, education, jobs, housing, social support—that shape our opportunities and affect our health.

Health inequities are the differences in health between groups of people that are caused by our living conditions (jobs, housing, neighbourhoods etc.). They are health differences that are seen as unnecessary, avoidable and unfair.

Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to make choices that allow them to live a long healthy life, regardless of their income, education, ethnic background, or any other socially determined circumstances.

Health literacy is an ability to obtain, understand, discern and use information to maintain or improve health.

Non-family household refers to either one person living alone in a private dwelling or to a group of two or more people who share a private dwelling, but do not constitute a census family.

An **older adult perspective** is a shared understanding of concerns and factors that can influence an older adult's quality of life, and is based on the values and priorities that older adults have identified as important to them.

Social connections are the relationships that provide people with the resources, information and opportunities they need for well-being. These connections can mean family and close friends, or education, employment and community life (e.g. volunteering, clubs, etc.) or involvement in decision-making about how community resources are managed or distributed.

Endnotes

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For more information about the *Halton Region Older Adult Plan* visit:
halton.ca/HOAP



Visit halton.ca/OAAC to access the Halton Seniors Directory which contains important information about services provided to seniors in Halton by various levels of government, service clubs, non-profit and community-based agencies.

