

# Township of Tay

## Age-Friendly Community Plan Framework

December 2020





# Acknowledgements

The Tay Age-Friendly Community Plan was undertaken on behalf of the Township of Tay. The Plan was created with the support and direction of the Township Staff and the Tay Seniors Advisory Committee. A special thanks and appreciation also to the community residents and organizations who shared their personal experiences and insights to inform this Plan. The experiences of all contributors have provided guidance in developing a vision and path that will lead the Township in becoming a more age-friendly community for all.

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THANK-YOU.

The Township of Tay Age-Friendly Community Plan was facilitated by Jodi Ball, J Consulting Group



With support provided by



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# Age Friendly Communities

As Canada’s senior population continues to grow, it is more important than ever to support the health and wellbeing of older Canadians. That is why the Township of Tay is taking steps to become a more age-friendly community, where all residents can be active and engaged members of the community at every stage of life.

An age-friendly community is designed to help people live safely, enjoy good health, and stay involved. As part of its [Global Age-friendly Cities Project, the World Health Organization](#) (WHO) identifies eight key areas (foundations) of community life that can become more age-friendly:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Respect and social inclusion
5. Civic participation and employment
6. Communication and information
7. Community support and health services
8. Social participation



## Community Planning Process

The age-friendly community plan process involved completing a background review of existing policies and strategies, preparing an age-friendly profile, and engaging residents in age-friendly community planning.

Phase 1: Background Research (April - May 2020)	Phase 2: Community Engagement (June – September 2020)	Phase 3: Age Friendly Plan (October – December 2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Project</li> <li>• Review of background documents and data</li> <li>• Prepare community age-friendly profile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated webpage</li> <li>• Online community survey</li> <li>• Age friendly focus groups</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare draft plan</li> <li>• Share plan</li> <li>• Finalize Age Friendly Community Plan</li> </ul>



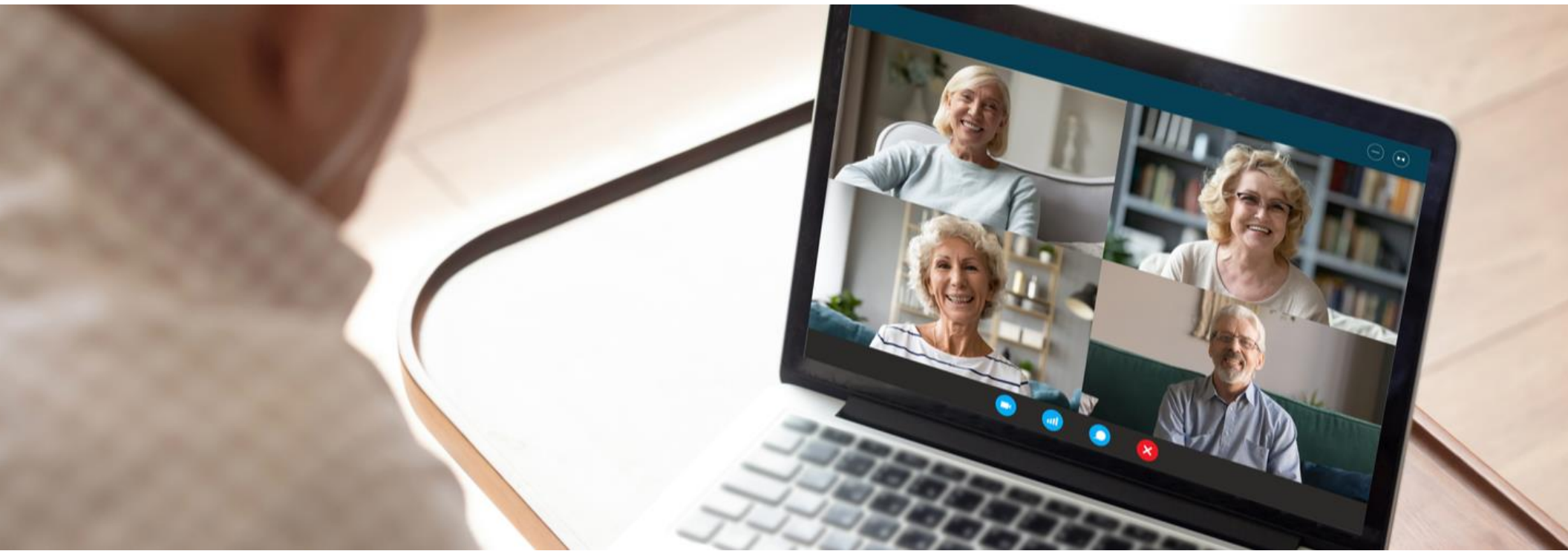
## Engagement Overview

Engagement with the community was conducted to gather feedback on priorities, issues and opportunities related to age friendliness, and the eight key foundations of an age friendly community as defined by WHO. Community engagement occurred from June 24 through to September 11, 2020.

Opportunities to provide feedback included an online community survey and workbook for residents, focus groups with key stakeholders, interviews with community partners and local residents, and meetings with the Seniors Advisory Committee.

Project promotion and engagement opportunities were advertised and shared through the following methods:

- Project website
- Emails to stakeholders
- Advertising in Midland Today
- Social media posts including Twitter and Facebook

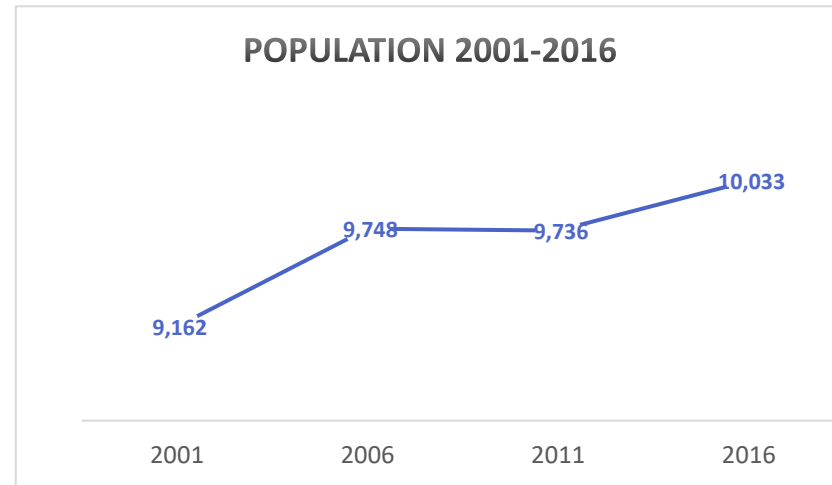


# Community Profile

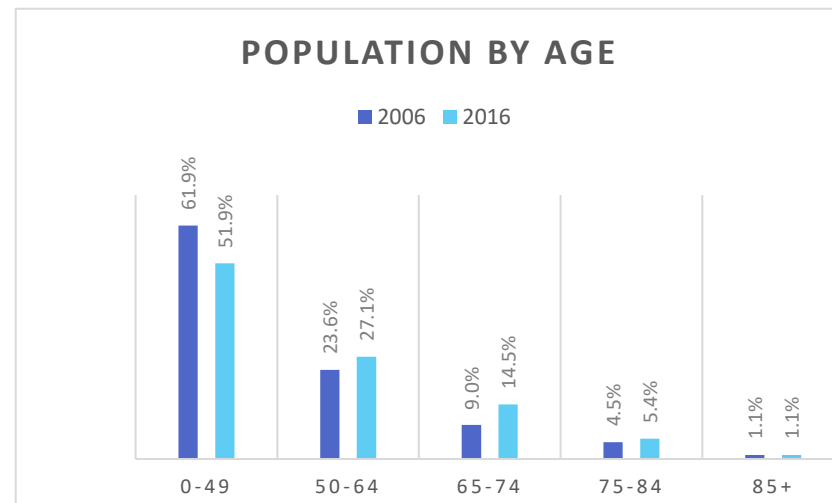
Several key demographic indicators help provide further context in planning for a more age-friendly community.

## Population Growth

Between 2001 and 2016, the Township of Tay's population grew by 871 persons (9.5%), from 9,162 to 10,033 (Statistics Canada, Census, 2001-2016). Its population growth has been slower than other municipalities in the County of Simcoe, which saw an overall population growth of 27.2% between 2001 and 2016. Tay's growth has also been slower than the province of Ontario as a whole, which saw a 17.9% growth over the period.



Three quarters (75.0%) of Tay's population has European origins (Statistics Canada, Census, 2016)<sup>1</sup>. Many also have North American origins (42.4%). Of note, Tay has a significantly larger proportion of its population with Indigenous origins than Ontario, at 14.5% for Tay compared to only 3.9% for Ontario.



Most of Tay's older adults were born in Canada. Just 7.5% of its population age 55 to 64 and 20.0% of its population age 65 and over were immigrants (Statistics Canada, Census, 2016). Most immigrants had been in Canada for some time. Only 0.8% of older adults age 55 and over had migrated to Canada in the past 10 years.

<sup>1</sup> Note: People may report more than one ethnic origin.

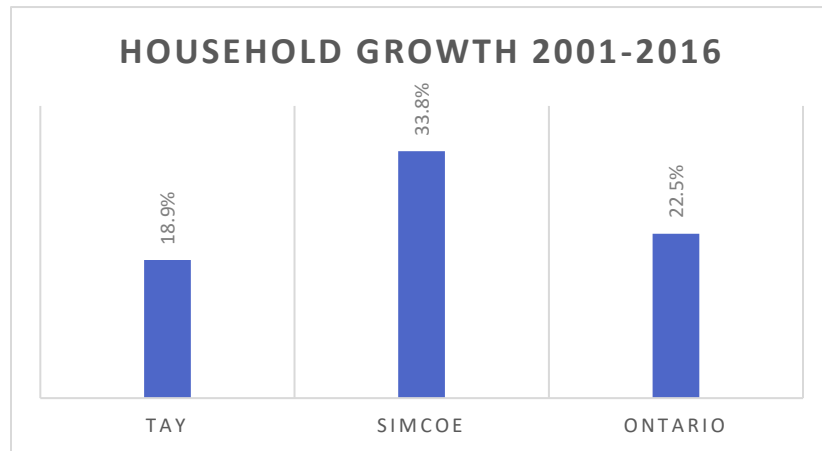


Almost half (48.1%) of Tay’s population is age 50 and over (4,830 people) (Statistics Canada, Census, 2016). Some 21.1% are age 65 and over, while 6.5% are age 75 and over and 1.1% are age 85 and over. With the aging of the Baby Boom generation, the number of adults age 50 and over increased by 1,115 between 2006 and 2016.

Tay has an older population than both Simcoe County and Ontario. Adults age 50 and over accounted for 38.2% of Ontario’s population and 40.7% of Simcoe County’s population in 2016.

### Household Growth

With decreasing household sizes, Tay’s household growth rate was well above its population growth rate between 2001 and 2016, and closer to the provincial average. Tay had a household growth rate of 18.9% (Statistics Canada, Census, 2001-2016). This compares to Ontario at 22.5%. Simcoe County still saw a higher growth rate, at 33.8%.



In general, the number of older adults living alone rises with age. In Tay, 65 to 74-year-olds are not much more likely to live alone than their younger counterparts. The proportion of 75 to 84-year-old household maintainers living alone increases, with one third (33.3%) of household maintainers in this age group living alone. For adults 85 years old and over, the proportion of household maintainers living alone rises sharply to 70.0%.

### Prevalence of Low Income

Prevalence of low income, based on Statistics Canada’s measure of Low Income Status, is relatively consistent among various subgroups by age up to age 64, but drops for those age 65 and over to 9.1% (Statistics Canada, Census, 2016). Some 13.5% of Tay residents between the ages of 18 and 64 have low incomes.



# Community Need

Through the age-friendly community planning process, residents, stakeholders, and staff explored in detail each of the eight WHO foundations of an age-friendly community. The results of these conversations and shared insights, as well as findings from the review of documents and community profile data, are presented in the following sections.

Descriptions of the WHO Age-Friendly Dimensions, shared below, are from the [Ontario Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide](#).



## Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

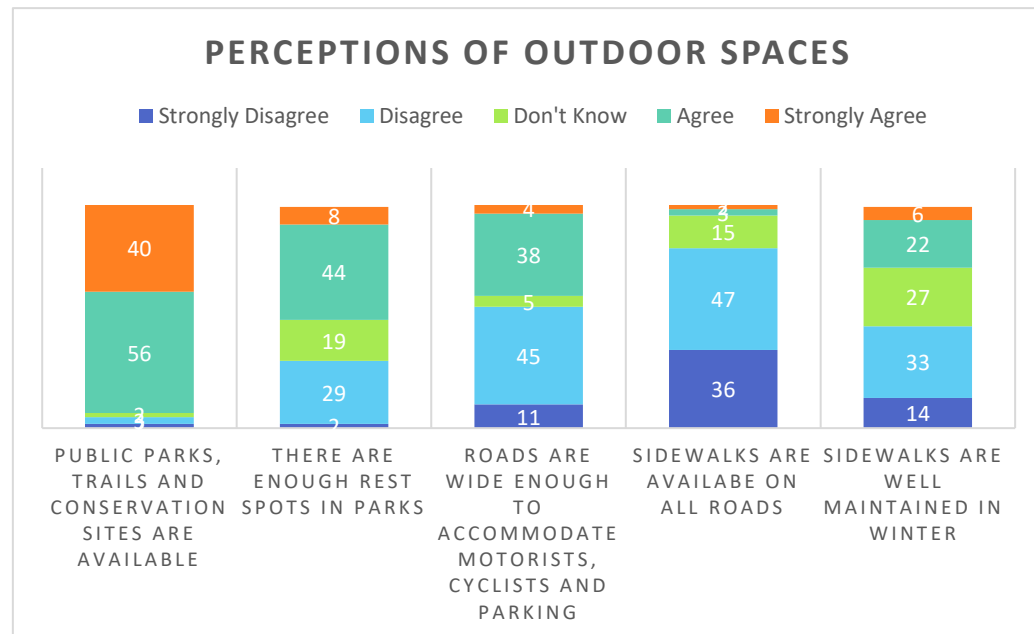
When people view a neighbourhood as safe and accessible it encourages outdoor activities or engagement with the community. Accessibility involves removing barriers that limit opportunities for people with disabilities, including older adults with age-related impairments, and allowing older adults to participate in social activities or to access important health and social services and businesses.

### Current Context

The Strategic Plan for 2019 – 2022 is an update to the previous 2015 – 2019 plan. The current plan was adopted by Council in 2019. The Plan is divided into four primary focus areas: *Tay Resilient*, *Tay Active*, *Tay Proud* and *Tay Open*. Both “Tay Active” and “Tay Open” address the needs of the senior population. The Plan outlines the opportunity to pursue Tay as a ‘retirement destination community’, and to provide supports for ageing-in-place.

### Community Insights

- Residents express a high regard and connection to parks, beach, and outdoor spaces
- Feedback highlights a need to improve accessibility of outdoor spaces
- Stakeholders also express a gap in active transportation and need to improve trails
- Survey respondents outline need for more rest spaces along streets, enhanced lighting along rural roads, more public washrooms, and more sidewalks and crosswalks along roads
- Improved maintenance of sidewalks during winter months was also a concern raised by many survey respondents
- Residents also express need for more services in Waubaushene



## Transportation

The condition and design of transportation-related infrastructure such as signage, traffic lights and sidewalks affect personal mobility. Access to reliable, affordable public transit becomes increasingly important when driving becomes stressful or challenging.

### Current Context

The Township of Tay does not currently have public transportation. Specialized transportation services are provided through Community Reach for individuals requiring assistance. The Township is pursuing options for transportation through the County of Simcoe LINX, with proposed routes stopping in Waubaushene and Victoria Harbour.

The Township's Strategic Plan does outline the need to be more accommodating to seniors in terms of transportation, including developing long-term strategies for aging-in-place (housing, transportation, and recreational services).

### Community Insights

- Survey results highlight that most (90%) people drive to get to the places they need to get to
- A top priority for residents and stakeholders, when considering aging-in-place is the lack of transportation, in particular in rural areas
- Residents and stakeholders express concern over potential isolation for people living alone who do not drive and who may not have family in the area
- Accessible transportation is also a concern

**“I am lucky to have a car, a lot of people do not drive and need a friend or taxi to get them to appointments. There are a lot of low-income people in this area who need assistance to get to services.”  
– Survey participant**



## Housing

For many older adults, aging in place is desirable. The availability of appropriate, affordable housing with a choice of styles and locations and that incorporates flexibility through adaptive features is essential for age-friendly communities.

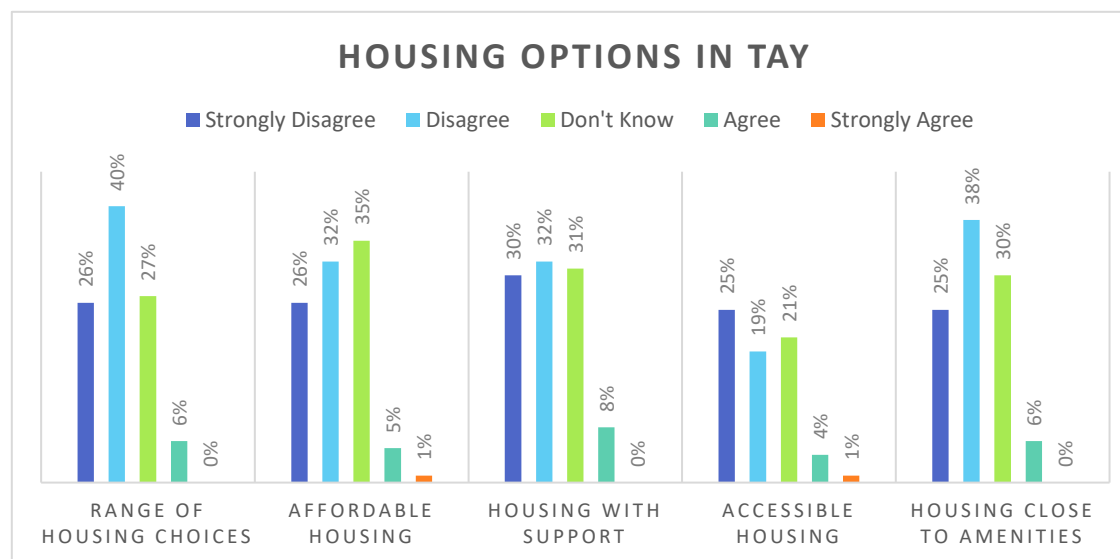
### Current Context

The Township’s Strategic Plan does identify the need to be accommodating of seniors in terms of affordable housing and providing supports for people to age-in-place. Simcoe County’s *Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy (2014-2024)* emphasizes the need for creative solutions for increasing affordable housing for all residents in Simcoe County.

Data from the 2016 Census highlights that many Township of Tay older adults, age 55 and over, have unmet housing needs. This is mainly a result of affordability with nearly one-third of adults age 55 and overspending more than 30% of their income on rent. In addition, some 9.3% are living in housing in need of major repairs. There are also limited assisted and supportive housing options for seniors in Tay, and long waiting lists for long-term care homes in the area.

### Community Insights

- A lack of housing options for seniors, in particular affordable options and accessible housing, stakeholders point to:
  - Gap in supported and assisted housing
  - Lack of affordable housing for Indigenous seniors
  - Seniors who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness
  - Long-waiting lists for low-income housing
  - Need for more support services in home

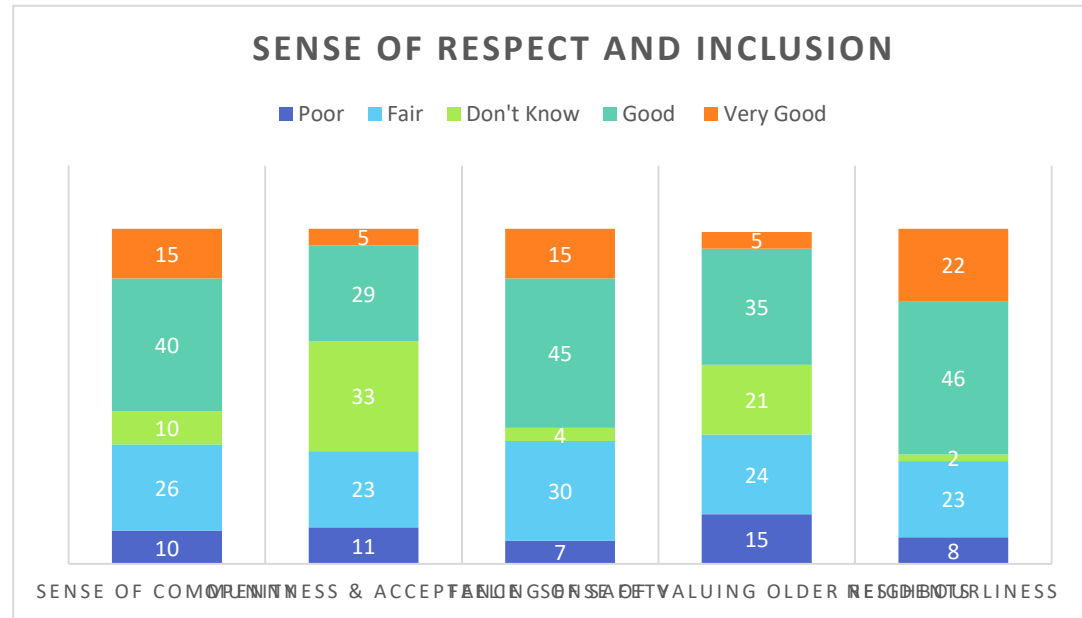


## Respect & Social Inclusion

Community attitudes, such as a general feeling of respect and recognizing the role that older adults play in our society, are critical factors for establishing an age-friendly community. Age-friendly communities foster positive images of aging and intergenerational understanding to challenge negative attitudes.

### Current Context

Simcoe Muskoka Health Stats provide data on several health and well-being indicators, including sense of belonging. Sense of belonging to the local community is higher among adults age 65 and over in Simcoe Muskoka compared to Ontario. In Simcoe Muskoka, 88.3% reported a sense of belonging to the local community that was somewhat strong or very strong (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113-01). Some 79.3% reported a strong or very strong sense of belonging across Ontario.



### Community Insights

- Residents and stakeholders expressed concern over seniors who have no family in the area, in particular in rural areas and in winter months
- Some survey participants raised concern for LGBTQ seniors
- Concern was also raised over lack of access to internet in rural areas
- Just over half of survey respondents believe Tay has a sense of community; two thirds feel there is a good or very good level of friendliness
- Desire by residents and stakeholders for more multi-generational programs, senior/youth initiatives

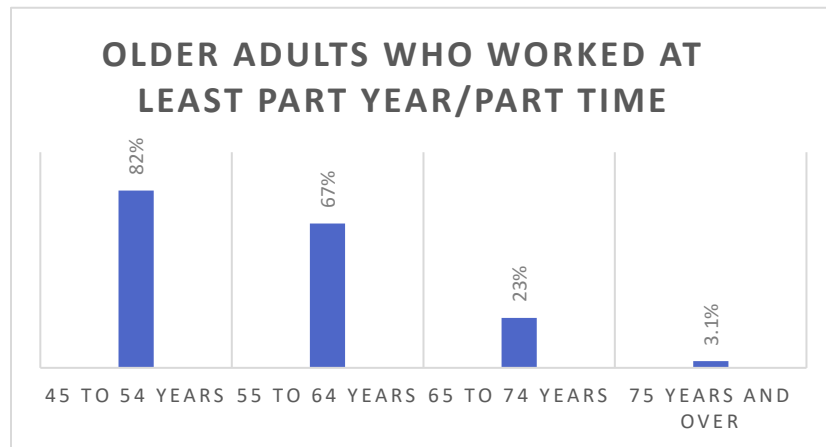
**“Sometimes you just feel really alone” – Interview participant**

## Civic Participation & Employment

Civic engagement includes older adults' desire to be involved in aspects of community life that extend beyond their day-to-day activities, such as volunteering, becoming politically active, voting, or working on committees. Economic security is important for many older adults, particularly those with low and fixed incomes. The ability of an older adult to remain employed or find new employment provides economic security, and it benefits employers who recognize the experience and commitment that older employees bring to the workplace.

### Current Context

Adults generally start to exit the labour force after age 54. Some 82.3% of Tay's adults age 45 to 54 worked at least part of the year, either part time or full time (Statistics Canada, Census, 2016). Among adults age 55 to 64, about two-thirds (67.0%) worked at least part of the year. Still 23.1% of adults age 65 to 74 and 3.1% of adults age 75 and over worked at least part of the year.



Data on rates of volunteering were only available at the county level. Based on Statistics Canada's General Social Survey in 2010, volunteerism among older adults age 65 and over in Simcoe County is well above the provincial average. Some 44.8% of Simcoe County's adults age 65 and over reported having volunteered in the past 12 months compared to 35% of the province's older adults.

### Community Insights

- A key concern raised by stakeholders including local organizations was that the volunteer sector is aging
- Most survey respondents feel there are opportunities to volunteer, yet a general sense of a lack of employment opportunities in Tay
- Survey respondents expressed desire for more engagement opportunities in local initiatives

**“More public meetings should be held to listen openly to the citizens, and transportation provided. During the pandemic that is especially difficult of course.” – Survey participant**

## Communication & Information

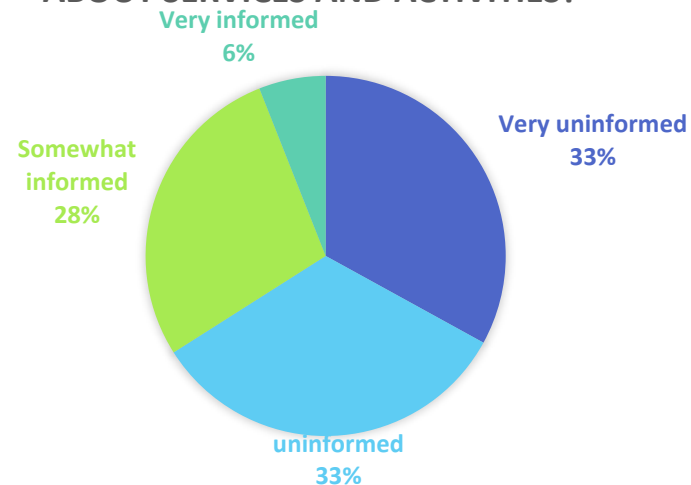
Age-friendly communities make sure that information about community events or important services is both readily accessible and in formats that are appropriate for older adults. Moreover, an age-friendly community recognizes the diversity within the older adult population and promotes outreach initiatives to non-traditional families, ethnocultural minorities, newcomers, and aboriginal communities.

### Current Context

Residents get information on community services and resources from a variety of sources including social media, newspaper, municipal website and community postings, and local services providers.

The Township's Strategic Plan identifies several goals regarding communication and information including increasing the quality, quantity, and timeliness of communications regarding decision-making that affects the community; increasing opportunities for citizen engagement; and expediting the use of digital solutions to improve customer service.

### HOW INFORMED OR UNINFORMED DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES?



### Community Insights

- Need for greater awareness of current activities, events, programs
- Desire among survey respondents for more communication using newspaper and email
- Access to internet in rural areas is a concern
- Interest among residents for more education programs

**“Start an online monthly newsletter What’s New in Tay Today. Include info about events, farmers markets, parades, fundraisers, senior activities, shop local list of businesses in Tay.” – Survey participant**



## Community Support & Health Services

Good mental and physical health contributes to quality of life and age-friendliness. When evaluating age-friendliness, consider access to community-related services that support physical or mental well-being and the availability of health promotion or awareness services that promote and support healthy behaviours and life choices.

### Current Context

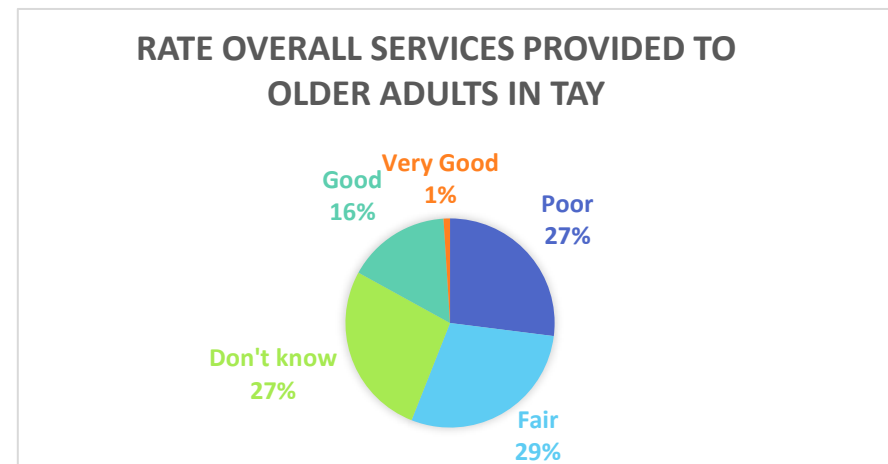
In the area covered by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, which includes Tay, more than half (52.4%) of adults age 65 and over perceive their health to be very good or excellent, while 22.9% reported fair or poor health (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113--01). This compares to the province where 46.8% reported very good or excellent health and 19.8% reported fair or poor health. Perceived mental health was somewhat better than physical health, with 73.5% who reported their perceived mental health to be very good or excellent (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113-01).

In Simcoe Muskoka, 12.3% of adults age 65 and over reported that most days they had quite a bit or extremely stressful life stress (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113-01). This is similar to the province, where 12.0% reported quite a bit or extremely stressful life stress most days.

Some 97.6% of adults age 65 and over in Simcoe Muskoka reported that they had a regular healthcare provider (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113-01). This compared to 95.9% in Ontario.

### Community Insights

- Stakeholders and residents would like to see a community hub (physical and virtual)
- Overall sense that there is a lack of community and health supports: lack of doctors, no clinic, lack of personal support workers, and lack of mental health services
- Access to services outside the community was also noted as a barrier for some
- Some survey respondents identified food security as a concern in Tay





## Social Participation

Interacting with family and friends is an important part of positive mental health and community awareness. Social participation involves the level of interaction that older adults have with other members of their community and the extent that the community itself makes this interaction possible.

### Current Context

Under the goal “Tay Active”, the Township’s Strategic Plan identifies the need to support seniors’ community wellness by providing programming to ensure their recreational needs are met. The Plan also identifies the need to explore the potential for community partnerships to provide programming and services.

Simcoe Muskoka adults age 65 and over reported similar rates of physical activity as their counterparts across the province (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113-01). In Simcoe Muskoka 38.7% reported that they were physically active for at least 150 minutes per week, compared to 38.0% for Ontario.

In terms of life satisfaction, 90.6% of Simcoe Muskoka adults age 65 and over reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied (Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0113-01). This was similar to the provincial rate (90.5%).

### Community Insights

- Several stakeholders pointed to gaps in recreation activities in rural areas
- Lack of seniors’ centre in Tay is a concern
- Most survey respondents indicate either poor or fair opportunities available in Tay to participate in recreation and cultural activities
- Survey participants were also asked to share their level of engagement with various Township activities and facilities.
  - 55% of survey respondents attend a recreation centre at least once in a typical month
  - 82% of respondents attend a public library at least once in a typical month
  - 58% respondents attend a cultural event in Tay at least once in a typical month
  - 52% of respondents reported that they never attend a Township of Tay public meeting
  - 90% of respondents reported visiting a Township of Tay Park at least once in a typical month
  - 91% respondents reported connecting with a family or friend at least once in a typical month including 88% respondents who reported connecting at least 3 times, and 51% who reported connecting at least 8 times

# Community Action

## Vision

We are a community that values, respects, and supports healthy aging and the well-being of all residents

## Principles

The following four principles steered the development of the Age-Friendly Community Plan and will guide ongoing efforts in development and implementation.



**INCLUSIVE:** we are committed to establishing an accessible system of supports to meet the diverse needs of all residents.



**COLLABORATIVE:** we are a collaboration of committed partners with a shared responsibility to support and enhance the well-being of community members.



**RESPECTFUL:** we are a community that recognizes and values all individuals.



**ACCOUNTABLE:** we are committed to report back to the community and our partners on initiatives and updates.

# Actions

## Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

1. Complete an assessment of all public buildings and parks for AODA compliance, and comfort and safety concerns.
2. Initiate and develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan
  - Include youth, older adults, and members of the Accessibility Committee within a Recreation Committee
  - Develop criteria for age friendly park design including elements such as benches, washrooms, lighting, wayfinding signage, accessible pathways
  - Develop an inventory of strengths and gaps of existing infrastructure
3. As part of Parks and Recreation Planning, consider development of a Trails Plan
  - Plan should allow for fully accessible areas, most notably along the waterfront area, and comfort/rest areas. Plan should ensure that design standards can accommodate multi-use needs
  - Consider opportunities to engage and partner with community organizations
4. Evaluate and enhance current sidewalk winter maintenance program
5. Explore and develop a community-led seniors "Friendly-Angels" program to support seniors and residents with disabilities to remain in their own home and age-in-place
  - This type of program includes developing a list of seniors in need, so that when there is a need (i.e. snow fall or raking in the fall) volunteers go out and ensure that walkways/driveways are clear. Volunteers could also check on residents if/as needed

## Transportation

1. Identify opportunities, and support efforts, to increase current community transportation service capacity (i.e. Community Reach)
2. Advocate for transit service in areas that are currently underserved and work with Simcoe County and LINX to identify priority areas for enhanced transportation
  - o Ensure safe transit stops
3. Explore alternative transportation opportunities such as volunteer driver programs, community shuttles, ride share program, and subsidized taxi fares for low-income seniors



## Housing

1. Adopt municipal housing policies and zoning regulations that encourage a mix of housing types, tenures including affordable housing options
  - a. Consider housing targets for affordable, accessible, and supportive housing forms
2. Promote secondary suites, granny flats, and tiny homes as an opportunity to increase affordable housing options
3. With community partners and Township staff, identify potential opportunities to expand availability of affordable housing
4. Seek out senior government and non-government funding programs and initiatives to increase affordable and supportive housing options
5. Support community efforts to increase in-home supports for seniors and people with disabilities
  - a. Consider supports for housekeeping, and home and yard maintenance
  - b. Consider youth volunteer program (i.e. as part of high school curriculum)
6. Encourage County to look at older adult accommodation study to examine opportunities for increasing assisted housing, supportive housing, and long-term care housing for seniors
7. Support County of Simcoe to advocate for increases to housing subsidies, and affordable housing in Tay
8. Engage community to explore opportunity of establishing a local home share program
9. With community partners and Township staff, explore opportunities for funding support for home retrofits and assist homeowners to access these funds to support aging in place

## Respect & Social Inclusion

1. In partnership with community agencies such as Canadian Red Cross, seek out opportunities to expand friendly visiting/calling programs and connect isolated older adults with community supports
2. Expand education and awareness of needs of LBGTQ2S older adults, and work with community partners to expand programs and support services
3. Explore opportunities to create more intergenerational activities within the Township
4. Acknowledge and celebrate achievements and contributions of seniors and youth in the community
5. Develop educational material to encourage respectful behaviour, combat ageism, and prevent elder abuse
6. With community partners, identify opportunities for virtual programming opportunities



## Civic Engagement & Employment

1. Create more awareness on where and how to apply for volunteering opportunities
  - Incorporate into Township website, promotional and outreach material
2. Increase awareness and opportunities of employment opportunities
3. Continue to celebrate contributions of local volunteers
  - Continue to host volunteer awareness week and appreciation day
  - Communicate recognitions in local media

## Communication & Information

1. Develop dedicated age-friendly page on the Township website that provides a central source of information
  - a. Incorporate inventory of current services and resources
  - b. Provide information on events and activities being held by Township as well as local organizations, clubs, and groups
  - c. Consider feedback mechanism and option to provide notifications and updates to residents
  - d. Provide link to volunteer and employment information
  - e. Provide information and link to age-friendly funding opportunities
2. Continue to promote local activities using a range of platforms including online, newspaper, and throughout the community in public places, such as community boards, churches, clubs, apartment buildings and libraries
3. Consider development of a regular newsletter (hard copy and online) as a way of promoting existing services, events, and age-friendly initiatives
4. Identify opportunities to further promote 211 and Seniors Directory
5. Share information on various funding opportunities with local service providers, housing providers, and clubs
6. Develop annual community report card to report on the Tay Age-Friendly Community Plan
7. Identify internet gaps in community and seek out opportunities to enhance internet in rural areas
  - a. Consider various funding opportunities (i.e. Federal Broadband Fund)
8. In partnership with local libraries, identify opportunities to provide technical support programming to older adults and residents

## Community Supports & Health Services

1. Develop resources that create awareness and promote available community and health services for seniors
  - Consider options to assist adults over the age of 65 to navigate existing support and health services
2. With community health partners, establish a network of services and supports for keeping seniors in their homes longer – including snow removal, grass cutting, minor maintenance, home safety, laundry, yard work, heavy house cleaning, shopping, transportation to appointments, and socialization
3. Support the creation of a community hub serving seniors by facilitating discussions with possible partners, including discussions about using library facilities and community centres to support access to multiple services in one location
  - Priority should be placed on establishing community hub in Waubaushene
  - Hubs may include library services, meeting space, space for health care and service providers, community kitchen, community garden, exercise space, and access to transit
4. Continue to develop working relationships with the former LHIN, CCAC, Family Health Teams, hospitals and other health and community services to ensure that services residents need are in place
5. Advocate to the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, and Children, Community and Social Community Services for adequate funding for community services that enable people to remain in their homes
6. Engage with the County of Simcoe as it develops its strategic plan for Community Paramedicine to express need and explore opportunities to expand community paramedicine in the Township



## Social Participation

1. As part of Parks and Recreation Planning, identify recreational and social programming needs of residents across Township
  - a. Engage partners in delivery of wider range of programming
2. Enhance promotion of current events and activities in Midland Today, Township of Tay website and social media accounts, and community boards and newsletters
3. Expand educational talks and workshops
4. Engage with older adults in designing, planning, and implementing of age-friendly activities and initiatives
5. Host annual age-friendly forum
  - a. Bring together service providers, speakers, local clubs
  - b. Consider reaching out to agencies and organizations to co-sponsor event
6. Support efforts to ensure low-income residents have access to social programs and services



# Moving Forward

Realizing the age-friendly vision for the Township of Tay requires the collective efforts of a broad range of stakeholders to come together to implement the recommended actions and ultimately become a more age-friendly community to all residents.

Further to the actions identified in the above Community Plan, the following recommendations are being put forward for consideration as initial steps in moving forward.

1. Identify Age-Friendly Coordinator role or position
  - a. The Age-Friendly co-ordinator may be established as a new, part-time position, or as part of an existing municipal role
  - b. The Age-Friendly Coordinator's role may include:
    - Attend, and support as needed, Senior Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings
    - With support of SAC, prepare an Implementation Plan for the Age-Friendly Community Plan
      - Implementation Plan should include timelines, priorities, lead, partners, and resources/costs
      - Develop work program to support and integrate work of SAC
    - Monitor progress on Age-Friendly Plan monthly, and prepare annual Report Card
    - Assist in developing content for local age-friendly communications
    - Seek out and initiate funding opportunities to achieve actions within Age-Friendly Plan
    - Assist in promotion and outreach for local activities and events
    - Plan and facilitate community an Age-Friendly Call to Action (see below)
2. Plan and facilitate community Age-Friendly Call to Action
  - a. This Call to Action is intended to bring stakeholders together to share the recommendations within the Age-Friendly Plan, identify shared priorities, and seek out champions to move forward on action items

The Age-Friendly Coordinator and Community Call to Action will be instrumental to the overall success of the Community Plan and ultimately making the Township of Tay a more age-friendly community for current and future residents and visitors.

All actions will consider the current evolving COVID-19 pandemic environment and put safety of residents at the forefront of planning.

# Be Involved!

For more information please contact:

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Visit [Tay Township Age-Friendly Community Plan](#)

