

Age-Friendly Initiatives in Ottawa

Age-Friendly Ottawa is a project of [The Council on Aging of Ottawa](#), (a non-profit charity) done in collaboration with the City of Ottawa and many community partners. As Chair of CARP Ottawa, I was invited to join the steering committee with other community stakeholders such as the City of Ottawa, United Way, Community Resource Centres, Social and Cultural Groups, Advocacy groups for disadvantaged groups.

Age Friendly Ottawa is a three-year community project working with and for the growing population of seniors, with the ultimate goal of transforming Ottawa into a city that is more responsive to the needs of older adults. Funding for the full time director is via various grants such as Trillium and United Way.

There are eight focus areas: (1) Outdoor spaces and buildings, (2) Transportation, (3) Housing, (4) Social Participation, (5) Respect and social inclusion, (6) Civic participation and employment, (7) Communication and information, (8) Community support and health services. These 8 areas have been identified by the World Health Organization as indicators for an Age-Friendly Community.

The Age-Friendly Ottawa initiative receives the guidance from a Steering Committee that has diverse representation from service providers, municipal government, and seniors. They provide a strong foundation of knowledge and experience, along with students and volunteers whom also provide invaluable support.

The City of Ottawa has developed an **Older Adult Plan** that focuses on areas that fall under City jurisdiction, such as sidewalks, streets, parks, and public transportation. The Older Adult Plan was approved by City Council in Oct 2012 and demonstrates the City's ongoing commitment to this strategy.

The first step on the road to an age-friendly Ottawa is learning about Ottawa's strengths and weaknesses. Age Friendly Ottawa and the City of Ottawa consulted with over 600 seniors, service providers, caregivers, and business people in the Fall of 2011. They gave their views and made suggestions in all focus areas. Results show that while Ottawa has many age-friendly aspects, there are still improvements to be made. An Age Friendly Action Plan has been designed and indicators of progress will be identified.

Together, the City of Ottawa and its responsibilities within its jurisdiction, and with the community projects put forward by Age Friendly Ottawa will create a more age-friendly city for all its citizens (close to one million).

Janet Grey
CARP Chair of the Ottawa Chapter

Read [CARP's brief on Age-Friendly Cities](#).

