

CARP Age-Friendly Cities Report

January 11 2013

KEY FINDINGS

Many members identify transportation-related issues as significant accessibility barriers in their towns, including lack of transit and taxies, a need for reserved seniors' parking to alleviate congestion and free shuttle services.

Another major concern is public health access, with a need for nearby clinics, and house calls and home care.

The third focus in age-friendly cities is seniors' outreach, through programming at community centres and social media.

Most members get out at least once a day and have a wide circle of friends. A minority rarely go out and have few friends.

Fire and EMS are the most important services towns provide, and the majority of members see older Canadians as a significant force in national politics, though less so in local politics.

One third of members have homes they can age in, and those who don't identify stairs as the biggest barrier. Stair-lifts and walk-in baths and showers are the most common adaptations members would make to their homes, although more would move than retrofit.

One half have talked about their end-of-life plans to somebody, half have not (but plan to). In most cases this decision-maker is a spouse or a child (rarely a doctor), and the expectation is that they will see the members wishes followed, regardless of what they are.

Members prefer Canada Retirement Benefit as the alternative name for OAS if an alternative is needed, otherwise they don't care.

The Conservatives lead in voter preference among members, and the Liberals and NDP are tied for second place, about halfway back.

Detailed Findings - OAS

When asked which new name is preferred for OAS, most (40%) say they don't care, while about half this proportion favour Canada Retirement Benefit (17%) and half again prefer Canada Pension Supplement (10%).

In the last poll, we asked for alternate suggestions for names to call OAS. Here is the list of the best 10. Which of these do you favour?

OAS/I don't care as long as I get it	40%
Canada Retirement Benefit	17%
Canada Pension Supplement	10%
Canada Age Benefit	8%
Retirement Security	8%
Senior's Security	6%
Senior Supplement	4%
Canada Pension Allowance	3%
Social Security	3%
Retirement Supplement Fund	2%

Age-Friendly Towns

Lack of transit and taxis is the most commonly mentioned urban accessibility barrier (11%), followed by little parking (8%). Two thirds have no urban accessibility problems (62%).

What, if anything, prevents you from getting around your town (or the town closest to you) as easily as you'd like to?

Lack of transit/taxis	11%
Little parking	8%
Wide streets, short crossing lights	4%
No bike lanes	3%
Little pedestrian infrastructure/sidewalks	3%
Inadequate signage	2%
Terrain/hilly	1%
Confusing/one way streets	1%
OTHER	5%
FIND IT EASY TO GET AROUND	62%

Close to half say seniors are offered various services in their towns (45%).

Some towns offer services such as free snow removal, public health clinics and free shuttles for seniors. Are any of these services offered in your town?

YES	45%
Some of them	41%
All of them	4%
No	32%
DON'T KNOW	23%

Few take advantage of these services (8%).

Do you personally use these services?

Yes	8%
No	68%
NOT AVAILABLE	24%

Urban mobility would be most aided by parking reserved for seniors (26%), followed by more washrooms (12%), better road signage (11%), outreach to seniors (10%) and longer pedestrian lights (10%).

Which ONE of the following initiatives do you think would make it easier for you personally to get around in your town?

Parking reserved for seniors	26%
More safe, clean public washrooms	12%
Increased visibility of signs and road markings	11%
Outreach to involve seniors in activities	10%
Longer pedestrian crossing lights	10%
More safe, clean public seating	6%
Volunteer companion services	4%
OTHER	22%

More than half our members get out once a day or more (56%), while about a quarter get out every few days (27%). Fewer get out a few times a week (11%), once a week (5%) or less often than that (2%). On average, members get out 4 or 5 days a week.

How often do you get out and get around in your town?

Once a day or more often	56%
Once every few days	27%
Couple of times a week	11%
Once a week or so	5%
Less often than once a week	2%
AVG. # TIMES/WK	4.5

Equal proportions get out once a day and have a wide circle of friends (29%), or get out once every few days and have many friends (27%). An equal proportion gets out once a week and has a small circle of friends (27%) while about half this many get out once a week and have few friends (12%).

How would you describe your social behaviour outside your own household?

Get out/make contact once a day/wide circle of friends	29%
Get out/make contact every few days/many friends	27%
Get out/make contact once week/small circle of friends	27%
Get out/make contact less often/few friends	12%
OTHER	6%

Local shuttles (14%) and nearby community centres (13%) would make it easier to get out and interact.

What would make it easier for you to get out of the house or to interact with people outside your own household?

Local shuttle service	14%
Community centre nearby	13%
Public health clinic with information sessions	3%
Volunteer companion services	3%
Neighbourhood garden plots	2%
Social media or Skype group meetings	2%
Mobile library	1%
OTHER	20%
DON'T KNOW	42%

Three quarters don't think their towns need to be better designed for older Canadians (72%) to allow them to get out.

Would you get out more if your town were better-designed for older Canadians?

YES	28%
Much more	7%
Somewhat more	21%
NO	72%
Not much more	27%
Wouldn't make any difference	45%

Home care and house calls are the most age-friendly service a town can offer (32%), followed by reserved seniors' parking (13%).

What is the most important thing your town could do to make it as age-friendly for you as possible?

Home care/house calls	32%
Reserved parking for seniors	13%
Local shuttle service	9%
Pedestrian infrastructure	9%
Community centres with seniors' programming	6%
Seniors' Ombudsman	6%
Seniors' Advisory Council	5%
Respite centres for caregivers	5%
Public health clinics	4%
OTHER	12%

Fire/EMS is a town's most important service (37%), followed by police (18%), roads and infrastructure (15%) and public health (10%).

What do you think is the most important services a municipality provides?

Fire/EMS	37%
Police	18%
Roads/infrastructure	15%
Public health	10%
Garbage/recycling	6%
Transit	5%
Libraries	2%
Parks/recreation	2%
OTHER	3%
NONE	2%

Older Canadians are seen to be a more significant force in national politics (82%) than they are in municipal or local politics (68%).

How significant a political force do you think older Canadians are in this country/in their municipal and local politics?

	Canada	Locally
SIGNIFICANT	82%	68%
Extremely significant	15%	8%
Very significant	36%	24%
Significant	31%	36%
NOT SIGNIFICANT	17%	32%
Not very significant	15%	28%
Not at all significant	2%	4%
DON'T KNOW	1%	2%

Age-Friendly Homes

About one third of members' homes are adapted for easy aging (37%).

Is your home adapted for easy aging?

YES	37%
Adapted	34%
Recently renovated	3%
NO	61%
Not really	46%
Not at all	15%
DON'T KNOW	2%
LIVE IN RETIREMENT HOME	1%

Stairs (46%) are by far and away the greatest aging barrier in existing homes. One quarter say their homes are well-adapted already (24%).

What is the main issue that makes your home ill-adapted for aging?

Stairs	46%
Grounds/too much acreage	8%
No grab bars/hand holds	7%
Bathrooms difficult for seniors to use	7%
Too large	3%
Narrow corridors	1%
Slippery floors	*
OTHER	4%
HOME WELL-ADAPTED FOR AGING	24%
LIVE IN RETIREMENT HOME	1%

One third know someone who has fallen in an ill-adapted home, and one twentieth are the member themselves (31% and 5%).

Have you or has anyone you know fallen or injured themselves in their home because it was poorly designed or ill-adapted for seniors?

YES	31%
Me	5%
Someone I know	26%
No	69%

More would retrofit (40%), if necessary, than move (27%).

If necessary, would you be able to retrofit your existing home for easy aging, or would you have to move to a new residence?

Would retrofit	40%
Would move	27%
DON'T KNOW	13%
HOME WELL-ADAPTED FOR AGING	19%
LIVE IN RETIREMENT HOME	2%

Demonstrating the ads on cable news shows know their audience, a stair lift is the most popular accessibility aid (27%), followed by a walk-in bath or shower (16%), an emergency monitoring system (12%) or bathroom grab bars (11%).

Which of the following aids, if installed in your home, would make the most difference in allowing you to age at home?

Stair lift	27%
Walk-in bath/shower	16%
Emergency monitor/alert device	12%
Bathroom grab bars	11%
Bedroom on ground floor	4%
Wider halls/doorways	2%
Handrails in halls	1%
Bed/chair riser	1%
OTHER	8%
DON'T KNOW	17%

Equal proportions hope retrofitting their homes will allow them to age there or find it too expensive (21% each), followed by those think they will have to move (15%), who want to move (10%) and those who don't think they'll need retrofitting (11%).

What are your main considerations in thinking about retrofitting your home, now or in the future?

Hope it will allow us to age at home	21%
Too expensive	21%
Will need to move eventually anyway	15%
Don't think I'll need it	11%
Would rather move/too much trouble	10%
Already retrofitted/adapted	6%
Don't want to hurt resale value	4%
Don't know where to start	4%
Unattractive	1%
OTHER	7%

House calls (18%) and a nearby public health clinic (12%) are seen to be the best health maintenance aids.

What would make it easier for you to look after your health on a day to day basis?

House calls by public health nurses	18%
Public health clinic nearby	12%
Regular community health information sessions	5%
Pharmacists offering drop-in clinics	5%
Regular health bulletins online	5%
Telephone health information line	4%
Medication reminder service	3%
Regular health pamphlets by mail	1%
OTHER	14%
DON'T KNOW	35%

Advanced Directives

Half have discussed end-of-life issues (50%), mostly with a spouse (17%) or children (13%). The other half have not had this discussion (50%) although most say they will (45%).

Have you talked to family or your doctor about your expectations for your care at the end of your life?

YES	50%
Talked to spouse	17%
Talked to children	13%
Talked to more than one person	13%
Talked to doctor	2%
OTHER	5%
NO	50%
Not yet	45%
Will not discuss it	3%
Will discuss it soon	2%

The vast majority have designated an end-of-life decision maker (81%), either a spouse (36%) or a child (27%).

Have you designated someone to make final decisions about your care?

YES	81%
Spouse	36%
Children	27%
Doctor	*
More than one person	12%
OTHER	6%
NO	19%

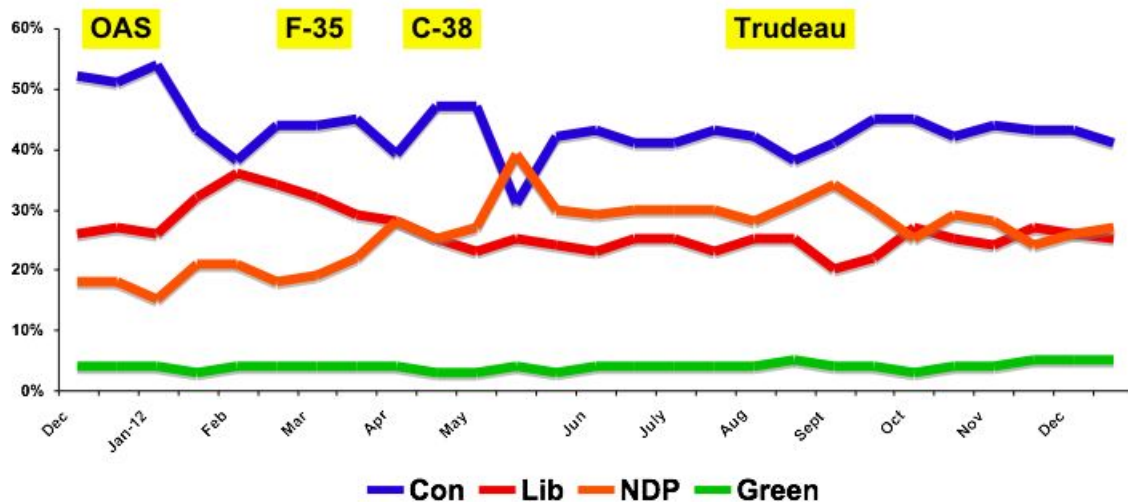
The vast majority expect their designated decision-maker to follow their final wishes (85%).

Is it your expectation that your nominated decision-maker will instruct physicians to follow your final wishes, regardless of what those wishes are?

Yes	85%
No	2%
DON'T KNOW	13%

Electoral Preference

The NDP (27%) and the Liberals (25%) are tied for second place, while the Conservatives have lost a few points (41%).



More than 1500 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between December 21 and 24, 2012. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 3%, 19 times out of 20