GREY COUNTY AGE FRIENDLY PLANNING

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Grey County
Colour It Your Way

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As graduate students of the University of Guelph in the Rural Planning and Development program, we undertook the Grey County Age-Friendly Planning project as part of our Advanced Planning Practice course. Information received from the community survey and key informants cannot be representative of the entire population of Grey County; however, the findings do provide insight into the issues and opportunities for further research in this area. We would like to acknowledge all the individuals and organizations that contributed time, energy, and resources to this project. Contribution from the following deserve special acknowledgement:

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is informed by our review of relevant literature and a community survey. Literature was drawn from government documents, regional and international case studies. The literature outlines various strategies and indicators for age friendly communities. The literature review provided insight into common age friendly issues. Relevant issues include transportation, healthcare provision, access to public space, suitable housing options, and communication strategies.

Information garnered from community outreach mimicked the findings from the literature. The survey was completed by 150 individuals, and was complimented by input from key informants from the community. Survey respondents value the natural environment of Grey County and the recreation opportunities it supplies. Conversely there is a desire to improve transportation options, employment opportunities, and housing variety in the region. Working towards improving these facets of county life will increase the age friendliness of Grey County. Based on the community input, with consideration of the literature, the research team has generated policy recommendations to be considered in the County's Official Plan review.

2 AGE FRIENDLY PLANNING IN GREY COUNTY

2.1 Introduction and Terms of Reference

Grey County is mainly rural with a few smaller urban settlements. Over the past decade the County has experienced modest growth, with limited population growth and a small decline in employment opportunities (Hemson, 2015). The County's population is continuing to age, which conforms with the trend occurring across rural Ontario (Public Health Ontario, 2015). If Grey-Bruce were a village of 100, 21 people would be over the age of 65 (Community Foundation Grey Bruce, 2016). Grey's ageing demographic is anticipated to continue as increasing numbers of retirees are choosing to relocate to the County for lifestyle purposes. Simultaneously, the County is experiencing a large out-migration of people in their 20's and 30's due to education and employment purposes. When combined, the ageing population and out-migration of youth, along with the loss of local employment opportunities, is affecting the County's long-term economic health (Hemson, 2015). However, the migration of older adults to the area creates opportunities for growth in Grey's recreation and retirement-oriented sectors (Hemson, 2015).

Grey County has recently initiated a 5-year review of the County Official Plan. As a part of the early feedback on the plan review, residents have expressed that the County's policies need to better support both seniors and youth. Moving forward, the County should employ the 8 to 80 rule, meaning planning for the demographic under 8 and over 80 will service the entire community. The County has identified age-friendly planning as a means to create policies that address issues that affect its older adults, such as transportation and support services, while also fostering innovative ideas to retain or attract the 20 to 30 age demographics. By generating age-friendly planning policies, Grey County can stimulate the growth of walkable and liveable communities in the County to accommodate its residents regardless of their age or ability.

The purpose of this study is to provide policy recommendations for updates to the County Official Plan which supports both the ageing population and youth. The study has obtained primary information from Grey County residents through a survey and key informants recommended by the County. The information collected helped to determine the needs identified by Grey County residents. Provided this information, best practices from other age-friendly communities that can address Grey-specific circumstances were investigated.

This study was conducted as a part of the academic requirements for Advanced Planning Practice, a course in the Rural Planning and Development Masters program at the University of Guelph.

2.2 Methodology

To address the issues of age-friendly planning for Grey County, this study drew upon both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data was collected through the creation of a survey that was made available online and was also distributed to a group of students and a seniors group. A list of crucial key informants was provided by the County. These informants were contacted via email and they provided further information that complimented the survey's findings.

The literature review consisted of four case study investigations of age-friendly communities in Ontario, as well as a thorough review of international and national guidelines. The survey results coupled with the key informant recommendations and a review of the literature informed the selection

of the case studies. The Grey County Official Plan was also reviewed in detail, paying specific attention to the relevant sections that relate to age-friendly planning.

Provided the information generated from the survey and the key informants represent a small portion of Grey County's residents, the information cannot be said to be statistically significant of the entire population of Grey County. However, the findings do provide insight into the issues that the County faces, and the opportunities that are present with regards to planning for its seniors and youth.

2.3 Grey County's Age Friendly Planning Policies

The Grey County Official Plan provides general guidance for it's nine lower-tier municipalities and has been developed with the intent that the municipalities create more detailed policies catered to their specific needs. The County Official Plan is currently under its five-year review, and will be updated to reflect Bill 140, which provides policy direction for the creation of various forms of housing, including secondary dwelling units (Grey County, 2016b). Relevant to age-friendly planning in Grey County, the goals of the corporate strategic plan are to: 1- *grow the Grey County economy*; 2- *support healthy, connected communities;* and 3- *deliver excellence in governance and service* (Grey County, 2016b). Pertinent to age-friendly planning, one of the goals of the Official Plan, as outlined in Section 1.5.8, is to "strengthen the role of Grey County as a desirable place to work, live, and visit by encouraging the provision of affordable, diverse and accessible housing and by promoting the provision of adequate social, recreational, cultural, health and educational services." The broad objectives of the existing Official Plan can be applied to age-friendly planning initiatives such as active transportation, walkable communities, youth employment strategies, recreation and tourism development, and diversified, attainable housing strategies. Provided the changing demographics of Grey County, the following relevant sections of the Official Plan will require special attention during this review: *Section 1.8: Housing*; *Section 2.6: Settlement Areas*; and *Section 5: Transportation.*

2.3.1 Housing

According to the committee report on the Grey County housing study, 26.4% of the population consists of one-person households. The report demonstrated that if these population trends continue, there will be an increasing demand for available housing for smaller households in the County going forward (Grey County, 2016a). Section 1.8 of the Official Plan indicates that the County supports the development of a variety of housing types to meet their present and future population. This is significant as new forms of housing, such as 'tiny homes' are becoming popular with younger generations, as well, there is an emerging global trend of mixed generational housing units. Section 6.17 of the Official Plan outlines the County's support for the development of accessory apartments in all settlement areas within the County as a means of providing affordable housing options. However, the Official Plan does stipulate that the municipalities will have jurisdiction over limiting the number of permitted accessory apartments per housing unit. Section 1.8 (b) of the housing policy addresses the impending need for seniors housing by encouraging "alternative forms of housing for special needs groups". The Official plan also encourages the development of affordable housing options, which can suit both seniors' and young professionals. The County urges local municipalities and developers to employ inventive, flexible, mixed housing designs to meet the changing demographics of the County.

2.3.2 Settlement Areas

Section 2.6.2 (2) of the Official Plan provides general development guidance stating:

> "local official plans, secondary plans, plans of subdivision and condominium plans shall ensure a proper and orderly street pattern facilitating safe motor vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian travel, efficient use of services, and a variety of housing and development opportunities within designated settlement area designations".

Section 6.12 (1) of the Official Plan regarding plans of subdivision and condominium further address several age-friendly planning matters. New plans of subdivision or condominium must consider the proposed developments relation to existing public transportation facilities and trail networks. This is necessary to foster an active and accessible community through walkable and cyclable connections to the surrounding area. New plans of subdivision or condominium must also promote a variety of affordable housing options to suit an ageing demographic. Complying with the Provincial Policy Statement, development in the County is directed to existing settlement areas. Within primary settlement areas, the Official Plan outlines the intensification strategies which includes, but is not limited to, the development of apartments in residential units and the creation of residential units over retail spaces. Given that rural areas are geographically expansive and are therefore typically automotive dependent, the intensification guidance provided by the province coincides with the creation of age-friendly communities. Section 2.6.7 of the Official Plan provides guidance with respect to the recreational resort areas of the County. Developments that occur in these areas must encourage the creation of new recreation and tourism opportunities that serve the greater public interest. Grey County's recreation and tourism amenities provide seasonal employment and are a draw to the older adult population moving to the area. Guidance from the County regarding future development of these areas is crucial for meeting the needs of its residents.

2.3.3 Transportation

Section 5 of the County's Official Plan regarding transportation and utilities mainly provides guidance with respect to the construction of transportation and utility corridors, and outlines policies regarding the County roads and provincial highways. However, section 5.2.2 (5) of the Official Plan provides guidance with respect to the widening of County roads, which could be utilized for the construction of future bike lanes. The Official Plan lacks guidance with respect to specific active transportation policies. Relevant guidance for walkable and cyclable transit opportunities for the County are briefly mentioned in the housing and settlement area policies of the Official Plan.

3 LITERATURE AND CASE STUDY REVIEW

3.1 International

3.1.1 Global Age Friendly Cities

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed the Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide to engage cities to become more active by implementing age-friendly strategies and responding to the needs of older adults in the community. According to the Guide "an age-friendly city encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age" (WHO, 2007, p.1). As people age, they require different services that respond to their growing needs to ensure the continuation of an active lifestyle. The WHO worked with 33 regions to set up focus groups to engage older adults who are 60 years of age and over to participate and identify the advantages and limitations regarding the eight different areas of city living. Figure 1 depicts the cities that participated in the study. The age-friendly city topic areas in the guideline include transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services, outdoor spaces and buildings.

Figure 1: *Age Friendly Partner Cities*

Source: *World Health Organization*

In terms of outdoor spaces and buildings, the main concerns raised were access, safety and quality of life with an emphasis on green spaces, space to rest, safety of pedestrians, walkable and cyclable paths as well as age-friendly building design. The main factors that influence active ageing regarding the use of transportation is affordable and accessible public transit, which provides specialized services for older adults with priority seating. Information regarding different transportation options is also essential to help older adults locate these services. Housing infrastructure was another priority identified by the participants in the study. Moreover, affordable housing with appropriate design, modification, and maintenance that is integrated in the community is important. The social participation checklist in the report reinforces the importance of affordability, support, and the range of activities and facilities that allow older adults to interact with members of their community. The respect and social inclusion checklist reiterates the importance of: public education with regards to positively depicting ageing; importance of intergenerational interaction to understanding age specific needs; and community and economic inclusion of older adults. Moreover, civic participation and employment encourages cities to provide a range of volunteering and employment opportunities to older adults. The communication aspect focuses on using a range of mediums to connect with older adults and allow them to have the means to seek information. Lastly, the age-friendly community and health services checklist reflects the prominence of service accessibility, offering social and health services, increasing voluntary support and considering older adults' capacities when planning for emergencies.

3.1.2 Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC)

Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORC) are communities that now accommodate a growing proportion of an older demographic, one in which it has not been specifically designed for (United Hospital Fund, 2015). As Canada's population continues to age, many rural areas across the country are becoming NORC's. These types of communities are not planned, rather they evolve (United Hospital Fund, 2015). They are defined by 3 key factors:

1) *Age in Place*

A community that comprises of residents who wish to continue living in their homes well into their senior years.

2) *Move into the Community*

More typical of urban areas, older adults tend to move to communities where there is greater access to services and activities.

3) *Move out of the Community*

Out migration of youth, which is typical of rural areas, leaves communities with larger populations of older adults.

Emerging NORC's are taking advantage of the skills and experiences of the senior population to create strategies to support ageing in place (United Hospital Fund, 2015). Bigonnesse & Chaudhury (2016) conducted a study of older adults in cohousing communities in British Columbia to determine what influence physical and social environments have on ageing in place. Through collaboration and multidisciplinary partnerships, a successful NORC program can be created to foster connections between service providers and proactively maximize the health of the community (United Hospital Fund, 2015). A NORC program is created through asset based community engagement. The programs are tailored to the specific needs of the community as identified by its residents. Common challenges include transportation issues, gaps in health and social services, and lack of social cohesiveness (United Hospital Fund, 2015). To address the growing needs of their communities, NORC programs nurture connections among residents through community engagement, while also empowering them to take an active role in shaping their community.

3.1.3 Case Study: Deventer, Netherlands

In 2015, the average monthly rent for students in the Netherlands was €366 (roughly $529 CAD). Student housing in the Netherlands is also overcrowded due to its limited availability (Jansen, 2015). In 2012, the Dutch government stopped providing continuing care funding for citizens over 80 years of age that did not demonstrate critical need, which directly impacted many seniors who were left without continued care housing (Jansen, 2015). To address the growing demand for housing for both cohorts, a Dutch nursing home has established a programme which provides free housing to university students, who in return are required to spend 30 hours a month interacting with the senior residents (Harris, 2016). Research indicates that strengthening the linkage between youth and seniors can reduce loneliness and social isolation for both groups, which positively impacts their overall health and life expectancy (Harris, 2016). Research also suggests that early interaction between the cohorts is likely to positively influence the future volunteer habits of the youth (Harris, 2016). Cohabitation is a meaningful strategy to empower residents while also fostering meaningful interaction between the two very different cohorts. It also creates an environment of reciprocal skills sharing where students can develop valuable life skills from their interactions with the senior residents, while the senior residents benefit by

learning about new technologies and sharing their knowledge (Jansen, 2015). This cohabitation model is gaining popularity. Since it's inception, two more similar housing programs have been developed in the Netherlands and one in France. Given the program's success, this is one strategy that could be applicable to age-friendly planning in Canada.

3.2 Provincial Guidance

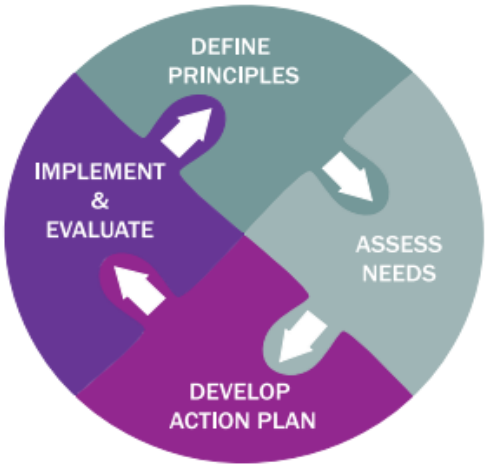
3.2.1 Finding the Right Fit

As Ontario's senior population is expected to reach 8.2 million by the year 2036, there is a general consensus that priority should be given to the creation of age-friendly communities (AFC) (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). The Ministry of Seniors Affairs released *Finding the Right Fit,* in 2013 which provides a framework to assist in the creation of age-friendly communities in Ontario. Key issues that must be addressed in the creation of an AFC are: providing adequate accessibility to health and social services; affordable housing options; employment opportunities; and community support. Based on the guidelines stipulated in the World Health Organization's report on global age-friendly cities, figure 2 below outlines the four-step process for the creation of age-friendly communities in Ontario. Each of the steps in the AFC creation process have been summarized below.

1) *Defining Local Principles*

It is important to be aware of the most relevant AFC dimensions of your community before conducting any AFC initiatives. Identifying local principles is the foundation for rural community development. During this process, both public and private stakeholders should be encouraged to participate as their input can shape the outcome of their communities AFC initiative (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). Key tasks included in this step are: forming a steering committee; creating guiding principles; and creating an age-friendly community profile (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013).

Figure 2: *The Four Steps of the AFC Process*



Source: *Ontario Ministry of Seniors Affairs*

2) *Custom Needs Assessment*

After local principles have been identified, the steering committee can provide feedback that can inform the community action plan. The custom needs assessment complements the goals set by the plan to ensure that significant, long-term benefits are achieved. The assessment is informed by the eight age-friendly guidelines stipulated by the WHO (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). Key tasks in this step are: choosing appropriate tools to gather information and determining suitable questions to conduct the assessment (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013).

3) *Developing an Action Plan*

The specific local needs of the community should inform the creation of the action plan. Employing the eight age-friendly guidelines created by the WHO, realistic goals should be set and practical strategies to achieve these goals should be followed (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). Key tasks in this step are:

analyzing data from your needs assessment, developing specific strategies based on the gaps identified by the assessment, and conducting an action plan with clear goals and specific objectives.

4) Implementation and Evaluation

Effective implementation and evaluation of an action plan is key in the creation of an age-friendly community. Ongoing evaluation of the plan will ensure that the needs of the community are continuing to be met. This report recommends the use of Patton's Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework, which argues that evaluations should be judged on their usefulness to its intended users (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). Key tasks in this step are: creating a guideline for program monitoring and evaluation, choosing appropriate methodology, improving existing plans and developing further plans based on the findings of the evaluation (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013).

3.2.2 Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities

In 2006, Federal/ Provincial/ Territorial Minsters Responsible for Seniors (F/P/TMRS) Forum endorsed the Age Friendly Rural/Remote Communities Initiative (AFRRCI). The two main objectives of the initiative are:

1) Identify indicators of a successful age-friendly community that allow older adults to live an inclusive, healthy and active life (F/P/TMRS, 2006).
2) Aid in the development of age-friendly communities in Canada via a practical guide (F/P/TMRS, 2006).

The guide provides insights on age-friendly communities, compiling information from local and provincial governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and older adults. The guide contains relevant information on common barriers, weaknesses, assets, and challenges along the path to becoming an age-friendly community.

Canada's AFRRCI was developed to mimic the framework set out by *Global Age Friendly Cities* (F/P/TMRS, 2006). The development process was informed by focus groups conducted in 10 communities spanning 8 provinces (F/P/TMRS, 2006). The report includes various themes of relevance to Grey County, as illustrated in the following sections.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The physical and mental health of resident can be affected by the physical environment that surrounds them (F/P/TMRS, 2006). For a community to be successful in becoming an age-friendly location the built environment must be conducive to an active and healthy life for older adults. Factors to consider when designing spaces for an age-friendly community include:

"walkable sidewalks, pathways and trails; good accessibility to and within public buildings (e.g., few stairs, wheelchair ramps that are not too steep, accessible washrooms); along footpaths, accessible washrooms (e.g., wide push-button doors, rails) and rest areas, including benches that are an appropriate height; adjustments and adaptations that help seniors feel safe and secure in the community; provision of services within walking distance of where many seniors live." (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.12).

Transportation

Effective transportation provides older adults with opportunities to be involved in their community, through recreation, volunteerism or the work force (F/P/TMRS, 2006). Older adult drivers require "good roads, light traffic flow, prompt snow removal and adequate parking" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.16). Similarly older adults who do not drive benefit from certain conditions such as;

"volunteer drivers and/or informal networks that provide transportation services, vans or shuttles available for seniors, health transportation services (including to larger centres), assisted transportation available (with wheelchair lifts), and affordable and accessible taxis" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.16).

Housing

If older adults are in good health, financially sound and part of a support network they will often choose not to move from a home they have inhabited for years. The adequacy of housing plays a large role in the independence of older adults (F/P/TMRS, 2006). Many features of age-friendly housing have been identified and include:

"availability of affordable apartments and independent living options; availability of affordable (including subsidized) housing; availability of supports so people can remain at home; availability of assisted living options; availability of condos and smaller homes for sale; availability of long-term care options; close proximity to services" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.20)

Respect and Social Inclusion

Older adults remain eager to contribute to community life, rather than simply living in place. Meaningful inclusion can reduce feelings of isolation and foster a strong connection to place and community (F/P/TMRS, 2006). Conversely, exclusion and lack of respect can have negative health impacts for older adults (Hall, Haven & Sylvestre, 2003). The keys to age-friendly inclusion are reported as "respect, kindness and courtesy—including across generations; accommodation including outreach; Feel included, consulted and part of the community; events or awards that recognize seniors" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.23).

Social participation

Older adults rely on social networks and participation to maintain physical and mental health (F/P/TMRS, 2006). Of paramount importance for age-friendly social inclusion are;

"opportunities for physical recreation or sports, including spectator sports; activities for seniors offered in places of worship or schools; food-related activities-including coffee/tea get-togethers; cultural events-including those that feature music and theatre; non-physical recreation (indoor activities) such as bingo, cards, darts, etc.; courses on crafts or hobbies; locating all activities in areas that are convenient and accessible (including by public transportation) to seniors; providing activities that are affordable to everyone; offering intergenerational and family (multigenerational) oriented activities." (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.25).

Communication and Information

It has been recognized that in order to enhance the connection between seniors and their communities it is essential to keep them informed about local events and broader community happenings (F/P/TMRS, 2006). Relevant strategies to ensure adequate dissemination of information include:

"posting information about events on bulletin boards, in areas frequented by seniors; communication by telephone or word of mouth, as well as through newspapers and church bulletins; publicizing events and information important to seniors in local newspapers and through cable or community access channels; providing seniors with access to computers, including access to training on how to use computers and the internet; creation and maintenance of a seniors and/or volunteer resource centre; information on events in the community disseminated through the radio; making information on websites easy for seniors to find; creating a community services directory for older persons that contains information and key contacts for programs of potential interest to seniors" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.29).

Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities

Older adults and youth alike require adequate employment opportunities to showcase their skills, knowledge, and creativity and to contribute to the community. Theses opportunities are valuable to promote individual health and social linkages (F/P/TMRS, 2006). High quality civic participation and employment opportunities can be typified by:

"recognition and appreciation for the work of older volunteers; opportunities for paid employment; opportunities for young and older people to provide volunteer services to other older people; volunteer activities and opportunities that are accessible to and accommodate the needs of older volunteers-and that offer them personal fulfillment; opportunities for seniors to be politically active, including openness to their participation on local council and similar organizations; general opportunities for seniors to make a contribution to community life; asking older adults to volunteer-especially in areas that make good use of their skills; opportunities for intergenerational contact in civic and volunteer activities" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.32).

Community support and health service

The ability to age in place is highly dependent on the available, and accessible health care services. Imperative to high functioning health services for older adults is:

"caring and responsive professionals (doctors, nurses, pharmacists and specialists); provision of home health care support; access to affordable meal programs; diverse health services and facilities in the community-including palliative care; availability of housekeeping and home maintenance services; availability of delivery services (e.g., groceries, medicines) and/or escorted shopping services for essential items; one-stop health or wellness service that includes a variety of services-physician, nurse, dentist, podiatrist, pharmacy, occupational therapy; availability of equipment and aids-including medical alert; programs that support caregivers-including respite services" (F/P/TMRS, 2006, p.34).

3.3 The Municipalities Role

3.3.1 Planning for Age-Friendly Communities in Ontario

In Ontario, both the municipal government and the provincial government often take the leading role in developing age-friendly community strategies and plans. Provincial government plays a major role in providing funding and resources to municipalities, which support adequate infrastructure, health and recreational services, community development and long-term care programs. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) provides updates on the role of municipalities in providing services and support to seniors and facilitates the development of age-friendly communities. According to the report, AMO has a growing interest in recent years to collaborate with the provincial government to provide those services, especially long-term care (AMO, 2016). Some of the key issues covered in the latest report encompass "developing plans, providing community services including transportation and housing, providing long-term care, and ensuring services are culturally-appropriate and relevant in northern and rural communities" (AMO, 2016, p.3). Municipal governments can provide services and care for seniors at the local level by filling in the gaps when the provincial government is unable to accommodate multiple priorities and allocate sufficient resources. Moreover, the municipal government understands local context and people's needs.

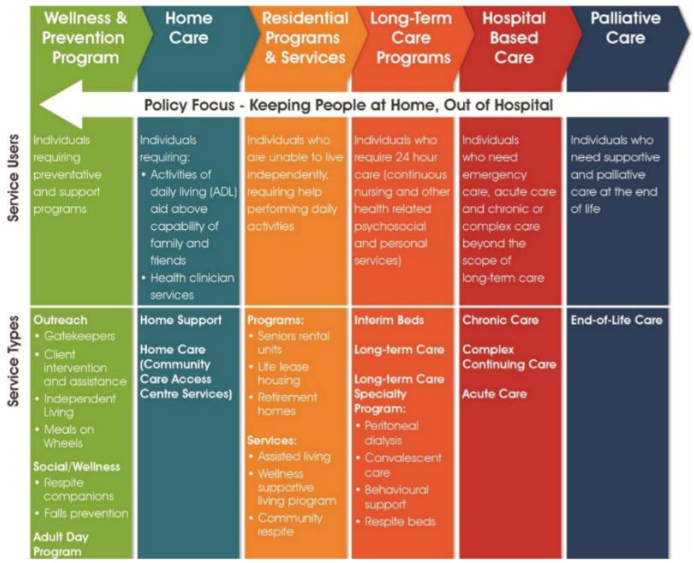
Municipal Role

The ageing population is a growing concern, which impacts municipalities differently across the province. In particular, rural communities tend to experience an increase in elderly populations while also a decrease in the youth population. The 2006 census indicated "rural areas had a much higher proportion of people aged 65 and over (16.1%) than metropolitan areas (13.2%)" (AMO, 2016). To address this concern, municipalities can use the continuum of care shown in figure 3 ranging from palliative care to wellness and prevention programs. Health and wellness should be the priorities that municipalities consider when developing strategies and plans. Moreover, municipal governments are responsible for providing affordable housing units that serve as long-term care homes (AMO, 2016). Municipalities are the best at understanding the local context and they should have appropriate strategies to serve the interests of residents.

Challenges

There are challenges that exist in developing age-friendly community guidelines and plans in Ontario. Funding and human resources are often limited to address all factors related to age-friendliness, as municipalities aim to fairly allocate funds. It is also challenging to provide long-term funding for these services and infrastructure when elderly populations continue to grow, especially in rural communities. Another gap that exists is the disintegration of municipal plans and other related health and social services. The key objective is to connect different services and integrate them into the plan to ensure older adults can access them without barriers. As mentioned in

Figure 3: *Continuum of Care*



Source: *Association of Municipalities, 2016*

the AMO report (2016), there are issues with inconsistent and insufficient provincial support in terms of funding for community services and housing. As the population of seniors increases, the demands for social housing will likely rise. This will require more rental and affordable housing units to support the elderly population. Moreover, there are issues of service accessibility in rural and remote communities. Rural communities face a greater challenge in comparison to major urban areas because the province tends to provide more funding to areas that attract youth and experience economic growth.

Best Practices

Best practices can be borrowed from regions that have already implemented age-friendly community plans. Regions that have already developed plans include, the City of Ottawa, Simcoe County and the Region of Peel. The not-for-profit organization Glebe Centre in Ottawa provides elderly people with long-term care facilities and reaches out to those who are on the waiting list (AMO, 2016). The Centre also supports seniors who live at home. Simcoe County established a new approach referred to as the 'adult lifestyle community', which serves as a campus with long-term care facilities, recreational services, greenhouse, public library, pharmacy as well as onsite public transit (AMO, 2016). This community hub is convenient and efficient for seniors who wish to be involved in a variety of activities while interacting with others to build their social network. Knowingly, the County is able to secure funding from the province since they identify clear priorities regarding seniors housing and services that suit the needs of local people. The Region of Peel in cooperation with five long-term care homes has succeeded in implementing an adult day program as well as other community support services (AMO, 2016). Similarly, seniors in Peel Region may attend the adult day program and visit onsite health professionals while also accessing the services they require. These three examples demonstrate innovative and practical strategies to help municipalities move toward becoming an age-friendly community.

3.4 Case Studies

In an attempt to better understand age-friendly planning for a Grey County context, a variety of case studies of Ontario communities that have incorporated a variety of age-friendly planning initiatives were examined.

3.4.1 Town of Hanover

The median age of residents in the Town of Hanover is 46.7 years with 38% of it's population 55 years of age or older (Town of Hanover, 2016b). Awarded a provincial grant in 2015, the Town of Hanover carried out a community needs assessment with special regard to the existing infrastructure, social programs and services available to the residents of the community (Town of Hanover, 2016a). The purpose of the assessment was to identify Hanover's community assets and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these assets to inform the development of an age-friendly action plan (Town of Hanover, 2016a). Conveniently, the Town of Hanover had conducted community engagement sessions through it's parks, recreation and culture committee in 2012 for a similar purpose. In 2012, a total of 5 community engagement sessions termed "Conversation Cafés" were held with an overall attendance of 52 residents (Town of Hanover, 2013). The goal of the "Conversation Cafés" was to inform the healthy community strategic plan that was created to "enhance essential community and social services and support initiatives that contribute to healthier residents, more active and rewarding lifestyles and

> *"A society for all ages is multi-generational. It is not fragmented with youths, adults and older persons going their separate ways. Rather, it is age-inclusive, with different generations recognizing and acting upon their commonality of interest."*
>
> -Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General, United Nations

safer more sustainable environments" (Town of Hanover, 2013, p.3). Several recommendations regarding coordination of activities, communication, transportation, and accessibility were produced from the input generated in these engagement sessions. In 2015 and 2016, the Town of Hanover held community focus groups to gather updated information on the town's community assets. The feedback from these engagement sessions can be summarized into four major themes: 1- public space accessibility; 2- social support; 3-specialized services; and 4-information and communication (Town of Hanover, 2016a). Similar issues were identified in both the 2012 and 2015/2016 community engagement sessions.

Key Areas for Improvement

1) Public Space

Regarding Hanover's public spaces, the recent engagement sessions determined that overall they are well maintained and accessible, however to promote healthy living habits and utilization of active transportation, it was proposed that more benches and longer crosswalk times be introduced (Town of Hanover, 2016a). The development of scooter lanes (which can also serve as bike lanes) was an additional recommendation made by residents.

2) Social Support Systems

It was also identified that inter-generational interaction could be improved to create social support systems for both older adults and youth. Older adults identified a lack of educational opportunities and that keeping up with new technologies is a challenge. This provides an opportunity for youth and older adult interaction, where younger generations can teach older adults how to utilize new technology while older adults can share their life experiences in return.

3) Communication

Information and communication regarding community programming was another area identified as needing improvement in both 2012 and 2015/2016. It was recommended that the various service providers collaborate and coordinate to provide and inform residents of the various events occurring in the town. The creation of a central activity space and means for communicating events (i.e. events newsletter and improved utilization of local media) was also recommended.

4) Transportation

The engagement sessions determined that Hanover's residents support the town's continued partnership with Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit to provide public transportation, but that more could be done to improve and expand these services.

5) Housing

It is recommended that the Town continues to work with provincial and federal agencies in the creation of long term care beds in Hanover. It was also identified that development of more diversified, affordable housing is needed within the town to accommodate the needs of the changing demographic of residents.

Overall, it was recommended that the Town of Hanover develop an age-friendly action plan, with an advisory committee to address these recommendations and for the ongoing development of an age-friendly Hanover (Town of Hanover, 2016a).

3.4.2 City of London

Since 2011, the City of London's Age-Friendly Task Force worked alongside the Age-Friendly London Network to develop and implement a three-year action plan focused on age-friendly communities. The purpose of this plan is to help improve the quality of life for the senior population and builds on current initiatives that already promote age-friendliness by engaging the community and a broad range of stakeholders (Age Friendly London Task Force, 2012). Collaboration is an essential part of the development of this plan. The City of London adopted the focus areas that are the fundamental elements of an age-friendly city, as established by the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities, for their community plan. The eight focus areas include outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services. In particular, the design of an age-friendly community aims to "help seniors age actively, live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved" (Geller, 2015, p. 25). Moreover, the action plan also incorporates 37 strategies corresponding to the eight focus areas and tracks progress over three years.

Key focus areas and strategies

1) *Outdoor Spaces & Buildings*

The strategies include the construction of multi-purpose recreation amenities, cleanliness of public parks and trails, and improved access to public washrooms. The design of community centers should consider accessibility, walkability, age-friendly signage and community gardens.

2) *Transportation*

Transportation is a key factor that influences active ageing within a community. The City developed the following strategies: raising awareness of the existing transportation services; allowing older adults to participate in the transit planning process; improving features at bus stops; improving accessibility for older adults and those with disabilities; encouraging active transportation and pedestrian safety; and allocating more accessible parking spaces for older adults.

3) *Housing*

Adequate and affordable housing directly impacts the quality of life of older adults. The City of London has emphasized the participation of older adults in developing the community housing strategy. They have also emphasized the creation of more affordable housing in addition to providing information regarding the range of housing options.

4) *Social Participation*

Participation in various recreational activities, community events, and programs are essential to support active ageing. Key strategies under this category include improving access to diverse programs, encouraging older adults to participate, providing programs to support those in isolation and designing community hubs to encourage social interaction.

5) *Respect & Social Inclusion*

Education, intergenerational programs, and recognizing the accomplishments of older adults can mitigate the negative impacts of ageism in the community.

6) Civic Participation & Employment

It is essential to consider older adults when engaging the public on civic matters and promoting volunteer and employment opportunities.

7) Communication & Information

It is essential to compile all information aimed at older adults in a central and appropriate location at the neighbourhood level. Invite organizations to provide networking opportunities for older adults and provide a platform to disseminate information regarding available programs.

8) Community Support and Health Services

It is integral to provide support to caregivers and older adults that may be isolated to improve their experience with the healthcare system. This has the potential to increase awareness of "self-managed healthcare."

3.4.3 Region of Waterloo

Recent census data has confirmed what many have seen in everyday life, the population is ageing. According to the 2011 census, 12.5% of the population in Canada is over the age of 65. This demographic is only expected to grow as an additional 11.5% of the population is in the 55-64 years of age cohort, playfully named "seniors in training" (Canadian Urban Institute, 2014). In an effort to remain ahead of the curve Waterloo hosted a discussion on ageing in 2009 leading to the creation of an advisory committee in 2010 (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). The advisory committee was tasked with conducting a needs assessment to determine the current level of age friendliness in Waterloo Region (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). One major finding of the advisory committee was that while many improvements are needed it is equally important to focus on the strengths that already exist in the community (Ministry of Seniors Affairs, 2013). In 2012, Waterloo partnered with the WHO to continue their efforts to create an age-friendly community through the design of an age-friendly community action plan. While Waterloo is a major urban center in Ontario, and does not have many comparisons to Grey County, their journey through the age-friendly community action plan process can inform future initiatives.

Highlights

1) *Indicators*

The Waterloo region generated indicators of an age-friendly community that are different from those suggested by the WHO. Waterloo decided to use indicators determined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation including, walkability, transportation options, access to services, housing choice, safety and community engagement (CUI, 2014). It was imperative to use indicators that were relevant and meaningful to the local situation.

2) The five A's for age-friendly transportation

The following criteria were used by Waterloo to determine the quality of age-friendly transportation options.

Availability

Older adults have different needs than commuters who use transit. Older adults often require the use of transit during off peak times, and travel to destinations that may not be popular for the greater population.

Accessibility

Transit stops need to be accessible to older adults. This includes appropriate stop location and infrastructure.

Acceptability

The experience of the whole journey must be safe, comfortable, and enjoyable. The attitude and professionalism of transit staff, as well as the surrounding environment contribute to the overall acceptability of transit.

Affordability

Transit needs to be affordable for older adults. One useful strategy is time dependent pricing, allowing more affordable ridership in off-peak times.

Adaptability

Low-floor buses facilitate an easier experience for older adults with mobility concerns (CUI, 2014).

3.4.4 Town of Gravenhurst

The Town of Gravenhurst received a $25,000 Provincial Friendly Communities Grant to initially investigate the needs of the town's changing population and to create a strategic plan to promote age-friendly active transportation. As of February 2017, town council has adopted the age-friendly active transportation plan which was generated after extensive community engagement sessions. The community participated by attending 'Idea bombing' open houses and through an online survey. The plan was created through an asset mapping exercise where the community identified its existing assets and built upon them to address the specific age-friendly active transportation needs of the community. An age-friendly transportation task force comprising of residents, local businesses and government officials has been created to ensure that the plan is successful in achieving its goals. The plan has set immediate, near-term, mid-term and long-term action items that will address the specific age-friendly active transportation needs of Gravenhurst. The plan addresses six themes that the community identified: 1- age-friendly community; 2-community building; 3-neighbourhood scale improvements; 4-walkability and cyclability; 5-human-centered design; and 6-practicality of implementation (Town of Gravenhurst, 2017).

The Town of Gravenhurst recognizes that active transportation is a key element in the creation of liveable communities. Creating conditions that support active transportation are particularly beneficial for individuals who are economically, socially and physically disadvantaged, as it is those populations that are especially deprived of opportunities in rural areas due to lack of transportation options (Town of Gravenhurst, 2017). Rural areas, like the Town of Gravenhurst, face greater challenges when planning for active transportation than their urban counterparts. Geography, low population densities, lack of capital and infrastructure investments are barriers that the Town of Gravenhurst had to consider when developing their active transportation plan. Therefore, the strategic plan has identified

a series of interrelated projects that will cumulatively continue to improve the age-friendly active transportation options for the residents of the Town of Gravenhurst. A few of these key action items are described below.

Key Action Items

1) *Immediate Action (100 days)*

To promote age-friendly transportation the town has implemented a "Walk Your Town" signage program that promotes the 'walkability' of Gravenhurst through a series of signs that inform residents of key features of the community and the time it takes to walk to the various destinations. The Town is also implementing a "Neighbourhood Pace-Car" program that encourages drivers to drive the speed limit by providing bumper stickers to residents who are willing to participate. To encourage the 'cyclability' of Gravenhurst, four bike repair stations and bike corrals have also been installed in various locations around the town.

2) *Near-Term (1 year)*

To increase accessibility to the Town's waterfront, a series of special mats will be installed at the beach to encourage inclusivity for the various recreational opportunities that the Town provides. A bike share program is also proposed to be developed to increase the availability of biking options for all residents. The town also hopes to foster continued community engagement through the organization of open-street celebrations and festivals.

3) *Mid-Term (2-3 years)*

The town hopes to create established bicycle routes around the town and into the surrounding recreational lands. Crosswalk improvements is another proposed project to aid in increasing the walkability of Gravenhurst.

4) *Long-Term (5+ years)*

Building off the established projects, the town hopes to continue to improve and maintain the bike routes, ensuring they are comfortable for all ages.

4 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach was undertaken in two phases in order to connect with community members. The goal of the community outreach was to generate an image of the current state of life in Grey County for residents, including older adults and youth. In addition to taking stock of the current landscape of Grey County it was also imperative to inform the future of age-friendly policy and initiatives in Grey County. The first phase consisted of a survey comprised of both open and closed questions broken into five broad sections in order to generate a picture of the current state of Grey County. The second phase of outreach was email contact with key informants. The culmination of both phases of outreach can inform future initiatives in Grey County.

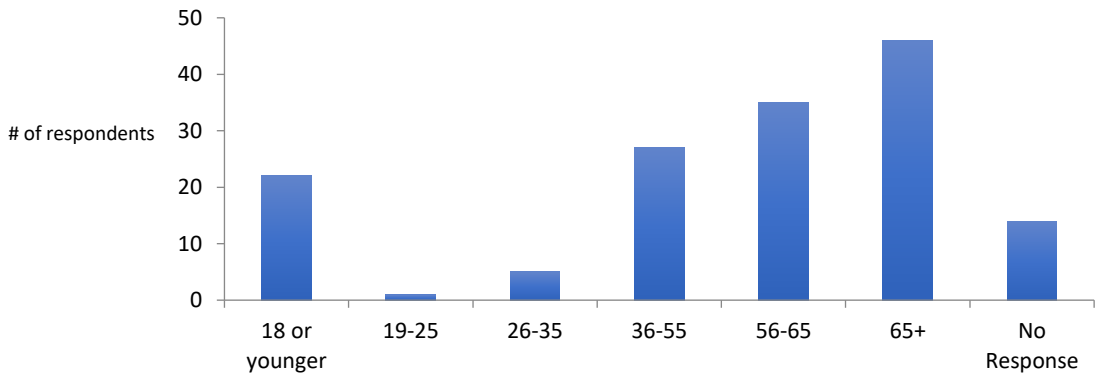
4.1 Grey County Age-Friendly Survey

4.1.1 Overview

The survey was generated to reflect many other surveys conducted in communities across Ontario in various age-friendly initiatives. The survey consisted of 19 closed questions, three open questions, and an unguided comment section. The closed questions took two forms. The first 18 were statements which respondents were asked to record their level of agreement. The statements were designed in such away that agreement was a positive reflection, while disagreement was a negative reflection on the current situation in Grey County. The available responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements were designed to inform on five themes integral to the age appropriateness of a community. The sections were transportation, housing, participation, information and health services. The transportation section inquired about ease of movement in Grey County as well as satisfaction with transportation options. Housing was designed to inform on both the quality and quantity of housing options in the community. The third theme, participation, relates to an individuals' ability to be involved in their community, ranging from recreation to employment opportunities. The information theme relates to the availability and dissemination of information regarding public and private events. The final theme outlines the state of health care access, and information for residents of Grey County. The final closed question inquired about the age of the respondent, allowing the research team to explore the responses from the community in addition to specific age groups.

The survey was completed both in paper form and online through Survey Monkey. Advertising for the survey was done by reaching out to key informants, in addition to advertising on affiliated websites. The survey was well received with 150 individuals completing the survey. The respondents varied in age, and captured both older adults and youth in addition to others. Figure 4 depicts the age makeup of the respondents to the survey.

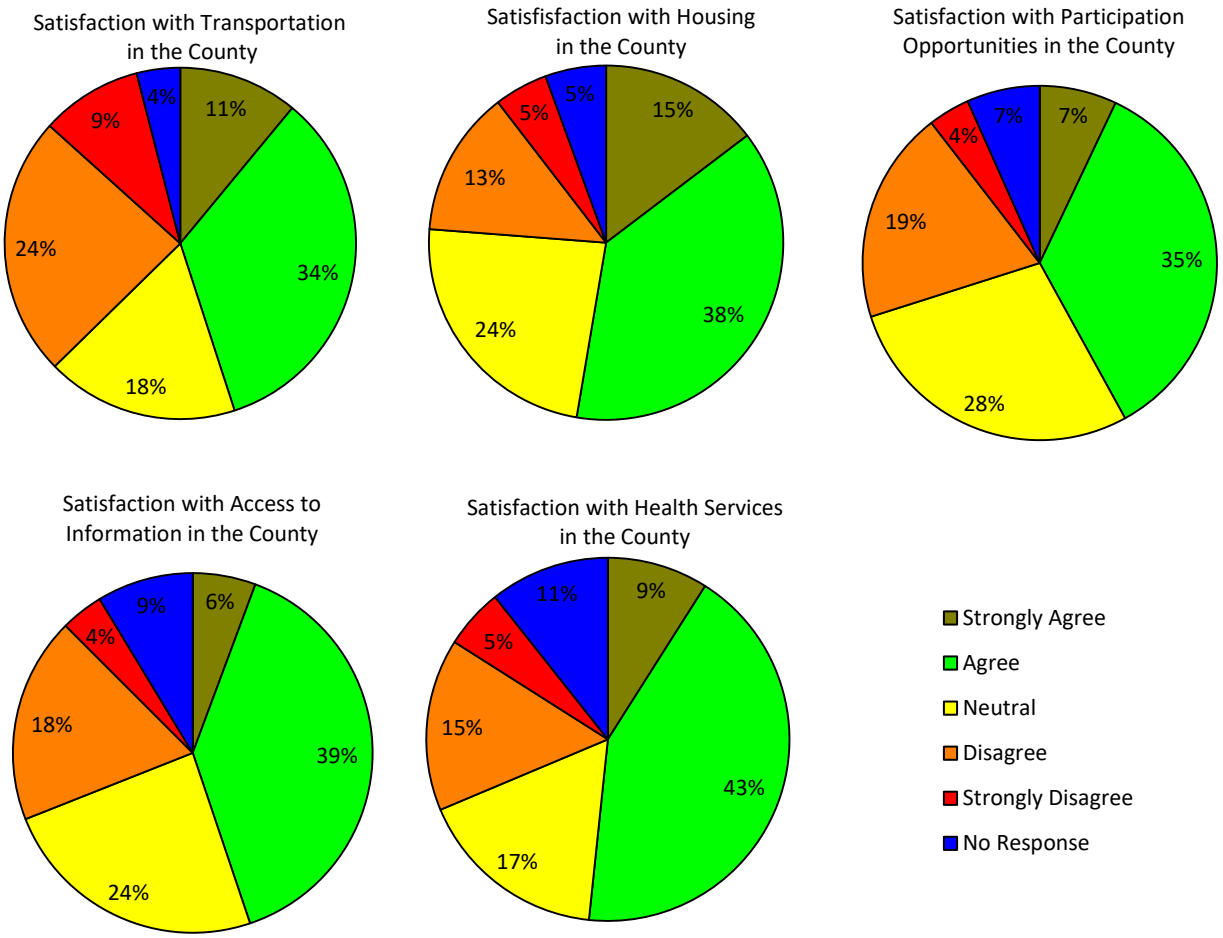
Figure 4: *Age of Respondents*



4.1.2 Results

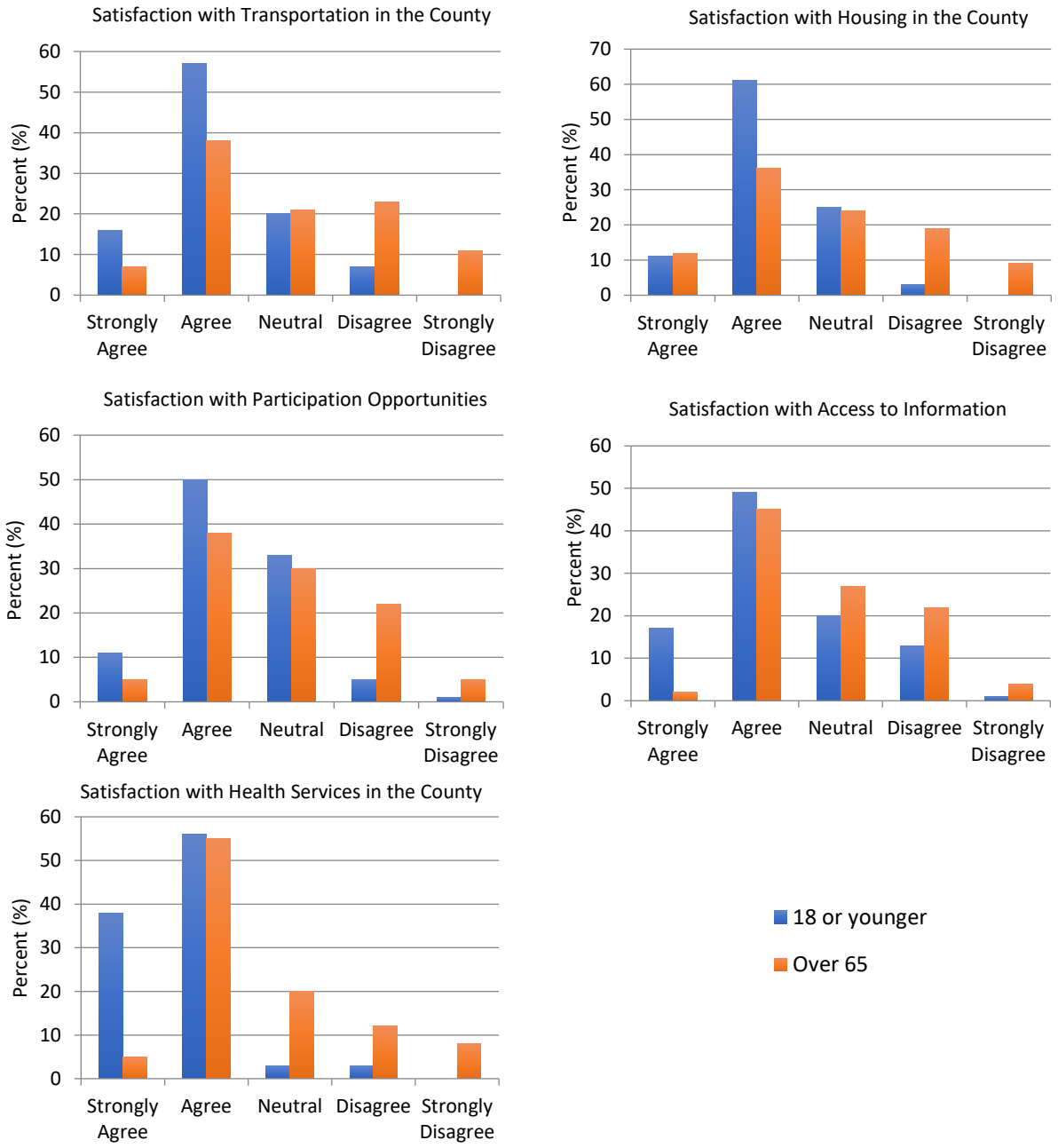
The initial results from the survey are an aggregation of all responses from the community in each of the 5 themes. These results begin to outline the state of Grey County in the eyes of community members, ranging from under 18 to over 65 years of age. Figure 5, below, visually outlines the break down of responses received under each of the five themes.

***Figure 5**: Aggregated survey responses by theme.*



The responses in each theme outline an interesting story. Of particular interest to this investigation is how both older adults, and youth responded to the statements. Figure 6 illustrates the breakdown of response variation in the under 18 and over 65 age categories. These comparisons demonstrate the youths' positive responses in relation to the older adult population.

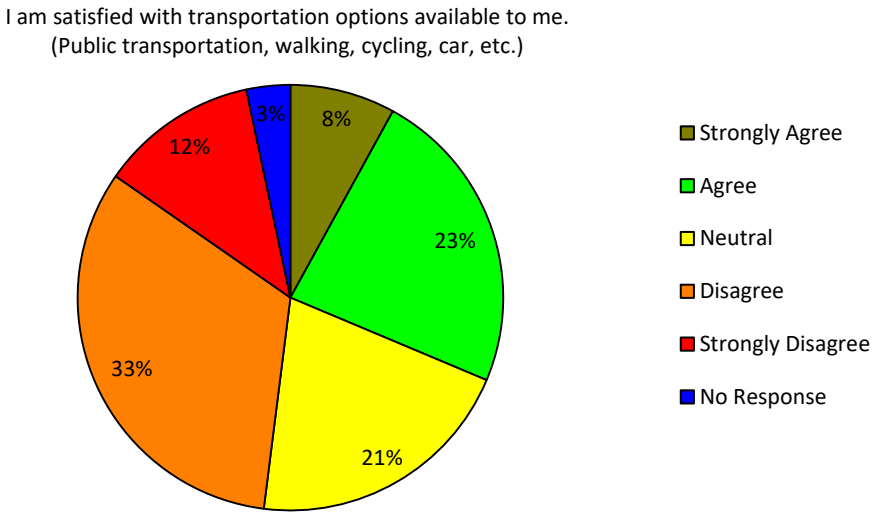
Figure 6: *Comparing Responses of Older Adults and Youth*



There are a great number of interesting trends and relationships that can be discerned from looking at the aggregated data, however it misses some of the finer details. While the themes often garnered positive results, certain statements show a different image.

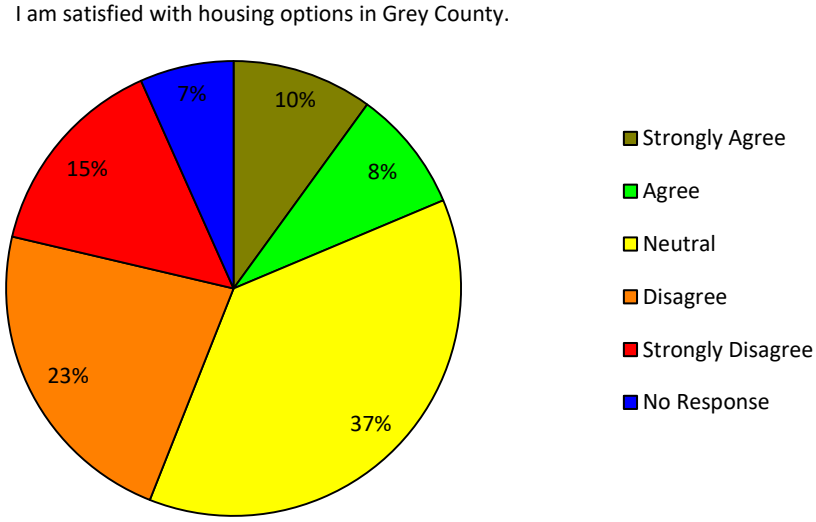
While the theme of transportation produced many positive responses, when inquiring about the variety of available options the outcome was much more negative. Figure 7 shows that while 31% of all responses were positive, 45% of responses were negative. While the variety of transportation options is seen as a needing improvement, the survey did reveal that many people are satisfied with their ability to reach destinations in Grey County.

Figure 7: *Satisfaction with Transportation Options*



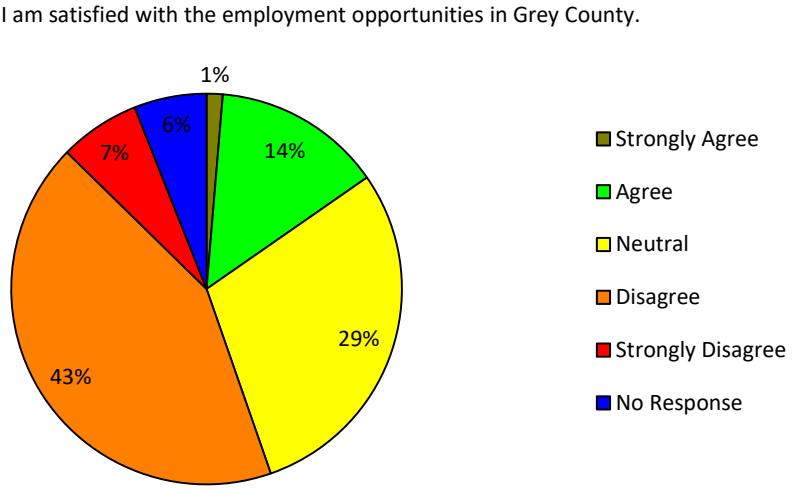
In a similar trend while housing in Grey County was considered to be affordable and safe, it is limited by the available options. Figure 8 illustrates the responses when prompted to reflect on the housing options in Grey County. While many people were neutral and did not take a stance, a greater percentage of people disagreed with the statement than agreed.

Figure 8: *Satisfaction with Housing Options*



The theme of participation followed the same trend as the previous two themes. When aggregated, the results were positive. The survey revealed that respondents felt they were able to participate in the community and be engaged. In particular, recreation and volunteer opportunities were heralded as strong. However, the same was not true when prompted about employment opportunities. As can be seen in figure 9 below, 50% of respondents were not satisfied with employment opportunities in Grey County, compared to a mere 15% that were.

Figure 9: *Satisfaction with Employment Opportunities*



The results from individual statements indicate that particular areas in Grey County are lagging behind. When aggregated by theme the data reflects a positive experience living, ageing and growing up in Grey County. However, there are certain facets such as variety of transportation options, housing options and employment opportunities that do not garner public support. It is also important to remember that older adults responded negatively more often than other age groups, in particular the youth.

The open-ended questions gave respondents the opportunity to share their own ideas and opinions more freely. The first open ended question asked about the best part about living in Grey County, while the second asked what areas were lacking. The third question asked respondents if there was anything new they would like to see in Grey County. Each of these questions were individually coded to reveal common themes and trends in the responses.

The responses to the best part of living in Grey County can be sorted into three major themes. The first theme is the natural environment and the recreation opportunities it provides. Respondents commented on the fresh air, clean water and beautiful surroundings. While not always, many also included activities such as hiking, skiing, swimming or kayaking which took place in this natural environment.

"We have 4 seasons and luckily do get enough snow for part of the winter to enjoy the winter activities. Nature is all around us and there are good walking, ski trails, conservation parks with waterfalls, great people!" – Anonymous, age 65+

"The nature, the places to walk, have picnics and hike." – Anonymous, age 18 and under

The second theme to reveal itself is an attachment to the local people, friends and families. Respondent had a strong attachment to the local community and the individuals who make up those communities.

"My family have enjoyed being part of my church, community in Grey County for all our lives." – Anonymous, age 65+

The third theme to reveal itself was the rurality of the area. Many respondents expressed an appreciation for not living in a big city, having connection with the food production system and the affordability of living outside of major cities.

"Quiet safe communities, affordable rents in rural isolated areas…" – Anonymous, age 65+

"The opportunity to live in a rural setting where people know each other, there is fresh water and air and space to breathe away from the city and you can get involved with community and know your neighbours." – Anonymous, age 36-55

Based on the comments received, the natural environment, recreation opportunities, the people and the rural nature of the County, are considered the best parts of living in Grey. While preserving some of these features may prove challenging, attempting to create a more accessible age-friendly community is possible given the assets of the area.

While there are many positive facets of life in Grey County, it also lags behind in certain elements. When prompted to reflect on what areas were lacking in Grey County, responses fit into two major themes. Many responses showed evidence that there was an appetite for improved transportation, particularly less reliance on personal vehicles.

"There is no public transit. When I'm too old to drive I'll have to move." – Anonymous, age 65+

"Public transportation. We need busses to nearby mid size towns, such as Collingwood, Owen Sound, Hanover, and Orangeville, and city such as Toronto." – Anonymous, age 65+

The second theme is employment. Many of the comments related in some way to employment as not being sufficient or available. In particular, it was suggested that lack of employment opportunities was the cause of youth outmigration and difficulty attracting new residents to the County.

"Jobs to keep our youth here or come back to." – Anonymous, age 65+

"Income opportunities. Cost of living is cheap here but nobody has any money to spend so it is still unaffordable." – Anonymous, age 36-55

While transportation and employment were major themes, other issues were also mentioned. Some respondents were seeking higher quality internet connections, preservation of the natural environment and greater access to a family physician. These reported deficiencies outline many concerns and areas for improvement in Grey County.

With many problems brought to light, it is important to know what new features residents would like to see in Grey County. When asked what initiatives should be brought to Grey County, many of the responses echoed previously discussed themes. With an awareness that transportation is not easy for some there was desire to see services and amenities move around the County or be improved in particular areas.

"Move the council meetings geographically around the county so that more people could have access to the meetings. That way residents could become more informed and also more involved in the decisions that are made at the County level." – Anonymous, age 65+

"Walkable, accessible communities with wider housing choices in the rural areas, not just in urban. Need for those in rural setting able to have rural housing with more care access available, not uprooting them from community to be put into urban settings. Not everyone wants to live in urban area." – Anonymous, age 65+

"A County Ombudsman. A travelling ombudsman for Seniors & Youth, if there is agreement as to need. An ombudsman who goes to each Township in the County for maybe 2 days consecutively to meet with individuals or groups to discuss problems…" - Anonymous, age 65+

The survey results display a diverse set of needs and wants as well as shining a light on the success stories of Grey County. Of particular interest are strengths that lie in the natural landscape and the recreation opportunities in that landscape. Areas to improve are focused around transportation, employment and accessibility. In striving to become an age-friendly community, Grey County has many strengths but also areas in need of improvement.

4.2 Key Informants

In addition to the survey responses the research team reached out to key informants from various stakeholders in the community. The aim was to inform the development and breadth of our survey as well as to include information from individuals with knowledge in the community. The outreach was met with mixed results, yet was able to glean some new information.

4.2.1 Overview

A comprehensive list of key informants was generated and provided to the research team by our contacts at the Grey County planning office. The key informants ranged from educational professionals, healthcare professionals and representatives of minority groups in the community. Each key informant was contacted via email, and was asked to provide input on the survey as well as any other relevant information or contacts that the research team had not yet been made aware of.

4.2.2 Results

The responses from key informants were sparse, however some did have constructive and informative input. The results ranged from new input regarding the survey design to information pertaining to specific desires.

Through key informant input the research team became aware of a group of older adults, who do not fit the traditional style of ageing and caring for ageing populations. This population who are self described as “odd-ball seniors” have particular interests and needs that set them apart from many others. There is little desire to fit in, or even to live as long as possible. Instead the lifestyle focused on living on their own terms, pursuing activities they enjoyed and being left alone to pursue their endeavors. It was noted that older adults who self identify in this realm come from many backgrounds and span many different lifestyles. What unifies them is the desire to be “the captain of their own ship” and to function outside what the social norms may dictate. Moving forward it is important to be mindful that all individuals are not that same, and just because the majority is requesting a service it should not be forced on those who choose not to be involved. It is important to remember the individual and be respectful of the needs and desires of each person.

Key informants were also willing to provide input on the survey design. Feedback included positive comments as well as some concerns. Chief among the concerns was that the questions were high level, and at times vague. There was a desire to generate a more rigorous survey to truly explore the nuances in Grey County. The decision to keep the survey succinct and brief was intentional. Due to time and personnel constraints this investigation is a starting point, and designed to set out a general course of action. The community will need to be involved in future actions as Grey County works towards becoming an age-friendly community.

The final finding from the key informants was a desire for a location to host large conventions in Grey County. There was a desire to host a retired teachers conference in the area, yet a lack of facility meant it was not possible. Attempting to attract a facility capable of hosting a conference could benefit the community. Investment in a small to medium sized conference facility in the County would also fill the gaps for smaller conferences which can't otherwise be sited at Blue Mountain Resorts. A well-integrated and connected community is integral to creating a good location for conferences, as well as for age-friendly communities.

The results of the key informant outreach were able to provide interesting and unique points of view. These viewpoints while held by minorities are important and merit inclusion. The combination of survey and key informant input generated an abundance of primary data to inform the state of Grey County in relation to being an age-friendly community.

5 PLANNING AHEAD

5.1 General Reflections

In addressing the ageing population and outmigration of youth the literature contains various suggestions and courses of action. While the literature is from a diverse range of locations some reoccurring themes emerge. These themes include transportation, public spaces, communication, housing and social support. The literature describes age-friendly transportation as affordable, accessible, and safe while providing users with various options. People's participation in the transit planning process can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of policies and plans. Public spaces that are walkable and accessible promote and support a healthy lifestyle for users of all ages. Provision of social services and support for people of all ages is integral in the pursuit of becoming an age-friendly community. Providing opportunities to network, participate in community events, providing homecare and encouraging intergenerational relationships are all relevant strategies to ensure high levels of support and social services. Housing is a demanding area, case studies suggest the need to provide a range of housing options that are affordable and accessible. Presenting information regarding housing options is essential and requires the use of multiple mediums to ensure it can be accessed by various demographics. Like housing, information on all events, programs and services needs to be spread in a planned and deliberate manner to ensure it is reaching the appropriate audiences.

The literature has a wealth of knowledge that can be drawn upon to inform decisions, however like all communities Grey County is unique and it is vital to understand the features and dynamics of life in the County. The local residents are equipped with first-hand experiences and given an appropriate outlet can share their own perceptions and expectations of what is required to become an age-friendly community. A survey was conducted in attempt to tap into this first-hand knowledge, and to ensure that any recommendations are congruent with the desires of Grey County residents. The survey was designed to determine the state of transportation, housing, participation, information, and healthcare in Grey County, and provide an outlet for feedback and ideas from citizens. The results of the engagement outlined various areas of strength including the natural environment, recreation opportunities and a strong sense of community. It was also revealed that improvements could be made to transportation, housing and employment in order to create a better place to live, grow and age. In addition to the survey, key informants from the community were contacted and were able to provide unique perspectives that may not have been represented in the survey data.

The literature and the community outreach data have many similarities. Moving forward it is important to recognize the desires of the local people and be mindful of what makes Grey County different, as those unique characteristics may be the most important assets. While great differences exist it is important to look to successes in other regions as an inspiration, and great source of information while trying to create an age-friendly community. Many initiatives and ideas can be adapted to fit the Grey County context and it is imperative to learn from these examples. By bringing together the voice of the community and existing research it is possible to turn Grey County into an age-friendly community that is accessible, and enjoyable for all ages.

5.2 Policy Recommendations

5.2.1 Transportation Options

- Improve community participation in the transit planning process
    - applying the 8 to 80 rule
- Investigate options to increase transportation opportunities in the County
    - further examining the viability of improvements to community-based volunteer transit programs
    - Pursue potential collaboration opportunities with local school boards to utilize non-traditional transportation options
- Address active transportation planning in the Official Plan
- Encourage further development and enhancement of pedestrian trails throughout the County, including multiple use trails
- Support trail routes created by a linked system between community facilities, major parks and open space areas
- Support community based active transportation planning at the municipal level
- To support ageing in place, investigate in creating mobile services, to provide opportunities to those who are not mobile

5.2.2 Employment Opportunities

- Continued investment in internet infrastructure to attract new employment opportunities
- Increase community involvement and asset-based planning in the economic development process within the County
- Utilize existing training centres and schools to engage the County's youth

5.2.3 Housing Variety

- Continue to support a large diversity of housing options in the County as outlined in the current official plan
- Increase efforts to attract diversified housing development

5.2.4 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Invest in physical infrastructure for open spaces (benches, age-friendly signage, community gardens)
- Invest in existing infrastructure to create a variety of multi-purpose recreation facilities
- Generate guidelines to ensure that accessibility standards are being utilized in all county facilities.

APPENDIX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE

UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
School of Environmental Design and Rural Development
Capacity Development and Extension • Landscape Architecture • Rural Planning and Development

Terms of Reference
Grey County Age Friendly Community Policies

THE ISSUE

Grey is a rural/small urban county, with an increasing number of retirees choosing to locate here for lifestyle purposes, and a large amount of youth out-migrating for school and employment purposes. Grey County has recently initiated a 5-year review of the County Official Plan. As part of the early feedback on the Plan Review, we have heard that our policies need to better support our seniors and our youth.

As a result, Grey County requires options for addressing these issues. The purpose of this project would be to provide policy recommendations for updates to the County Official Plan which supports both the ageing population and youth. The project will initially draw upon small scale community engagement sessions with both demographics to determine the needs identified by Grey County residents. Upon summarizing the results from the community engagement sessions, policies from other age-friendly communities that can apply to Grey-specific circumstances, will be sought and reviewed.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

These Terms of Reference outline the collaborative relationship between a study group of graduate students from the RPD*6280 (Advanced Planning Practice) class at the University of Guelph and the County of Grey. It is understood that the graduate class will work collectively with the County of Grey during the months of January through April 2017, in order to achieve the following goals:

1. Provide a set of recommendations to inform policy making at the municipal and county levels which may be used to promote the vitality of age friendly community policies.
2. Meet the educational objectives of the graduate class.

DELIVERABLES

In order to meet the above goals, the following deliverables are required:

1- A finished report which includes the following:
   a. A 'snapshot' of the current status of age friendly community strategies, including existing and emerging issues faced by residents
   b. Existing strengths, opportunities and gaps present in Grey County
      i. Including summaries from community engagement sessions
   c. A collection of policy recommendations
2- A presentation of findings to The County of Grey Council on April 13th, 2017.

METHODOLGY

The study group will engage in a variety of methods to achieve the goals of the project:

1- Community engagement through:
   a. Youth and Senior outreach through County libraries and community organizations
2- Secondary research including:
   a. Scan of the grey literature for existing best practices utilized by jurisdictions facing similar obstacles in planning for age friendly communities
   b. Baseline and historical background data on the issue of planning for age friendly communities in Ontario, Nationally and Globally

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Based on the described methodology, this project is guided by the following principles:

- This project will be undertaken in an open and transparent process, reflecting a shared vision of community economic and social vitality.
- This project will endeavor to maintain the integrity of the communities and their knowledge and experiences.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

University of Guelph Students:

- To engage in community level and secondary research
- To produce a final report
- To present the report findings to the Municipal Council of the County of Grey

County of Grey:

- Support the research by assisting with technical resources, such as: official and strategic plans or other documents and resources
- Provide communication support with relevant contacts
- Provide general project guidance from time to time

TIMELINE

Community Consultation: **February-March 2017**
Review of existing best management practices and policies: **February-March 2017**
Submission of Draft Report to County: **April 2017**
Submission of Final Report: **April 2017**
Presentation to Council: **April 2017**

University of Guelph Project Team Members Commitment:

Date: January 27, 2017

Commitment by Client:

Date: January 27, 2017

APPENDIX II. GREY COUNTY AGE FRIENDLY SURVEY

GREY COUNTY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLANNING

Grey County has recently initiated a 5-year review of the County Official Plan known as Recolour Grey. We want your feedback about how our policies can better reflect and support youth and older adults.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Transportation					
I am able to easily reach destinations in Grey County.					
I am satisfied with transportation options available to me. (Public transportation, walking, cycling, car, etc.)					
Housing					
I am satisfied with housing options in Grey County.					
Grey County is a safe place to live.					
Grey County is an affordable place to live.					
Participation					
Grey County has sufficient recreation activities.					
I am satisfied with the diversity of recreation activities available to me.					
I have adequate access to recreation activities.					
I am satisfied with opportunities for skill building.					
I am satisfied with the employment opportunities in Grey County.					
I am satisfied with the volunteer opportunities in Grey County.					
I feel my opinion is heard and valued in my community.					
Information					
I feel adequately informed about events and opportunities in Grey County.					
I feel adequately informed about public programs in Grey County.					
I have access to relevant healthy living information.					
I know what is happening in my community.					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Health Services					
I have adequate access to healthcare professionals.					
I feel adequately informed about health services available to me.					
1. The best part about living in Grey County is:					
2. The areas where Grey County is lacking are:					
3. Something new I would like to see in Grey County is:					
Additional Comments:					

Please tell us a little about yourself.

Age Range:
____ 18 or younger
____ 19-25
____ 26-35
____ 36-55
____ 56-65
____ 65+

Please leave your email address or mailing address if you wish to receive a copy of this study once it is complete.

_____ E-mail Address

_____ Mailing Address

_____

_____

More information on Recolour Grey can be found at:

www.grey.ca/planning-development/recolour-grey

APPENDIX III. PROJECT INFORMATION LETTER

February 6, 2017

To Grey County Residents,

Grey County has recently initiated a five-year review of the County Official Plan known as Recolour Grey. Early feedback from Recolour Grey suggests that county policies need to better reflect and support youth and older adults.

A group of University of Guelph Rural Planning and Development Master's students have been contracted to investigate these issues and provide policy recommendations for updates to the County Official Plan. The students will hold small scale community engagement sessions with both youth and seniors to determine the needs identified by Grey County residents.

Community engagement sessions and surveys will be made available through Grey County's website www.grey.ca/planning-development/recolour-grey and through some libraries in the County. There will be additional outreach with community groups and organizations.

Once results from the community engagement sessions and surveys are summarized the students will review policies from other age-friendly communities that are similar to Grey County. Recommendations will be given to inform policy that promotes the vitality of age friendly communities within Grey County.

We appreciate your participation and support. For more information, please feel free to contact Katherine Howes at khowes@uoguelph.ca or Scott Taylor at scott.taylor@grey.ca or call 519-372-0219 extension 1238.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

University of Guelph Research Team

Grey County

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