

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2021-2026

# HAMILTON'S PLAN FOR AN AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



Hamilton

**HCoA**  
Hamilton Council On Aging

“Consistent with our commitment to social inclusion, we are pleased to be one of the first cities globally to specifically integrate a dementia-friendly approach into our age-friendly plan”

Dementia Friendly Communities treat people living with dementia with **LUVE**



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# BACKGROUND

Hamilton was the first city in Ontario to begin work on its Age-Friendly Plan and our work continues to be informed and guided by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-Friendly Communities initiative. The WHO framework identifies eight age-friendly domains that include:

- I. housing;
- II. outdoor spaces and buildings;
- III. transportation;
- IV. community support and health services;
- V. social participation;
- VI. respect and social inclusion;
- VII. communication and information; and,
- VIII. civic participation and engagement.

Hamilton's 2021-2026 Age-Friendly Plan aligns with and builds on the success of the 2014-2019 Age-Friendly Plan. In developing the earlier plan, the Hamilton Council on Aging partnered with the City of Hamilton and their Seniors Advisory Committee to create Hamilton's plan for an Age-Friendly City. The 2014-2019 plan focused on improving Hamilton's age friendliness across 7 goals, 25 objectives and 101 actions. By the end of March 2019, 81 actions were either completed or were being implemented.

The 2021-2026 plan has been written through an equity and inclusion lens that recognizes and celebrates diversity in its many forms including age, race, ethnicity, gender, ability and sexual orientation. Consistent with a commitment to social inclusion, Hamilton is one of the first cities globally to specifically integrate a dementia-friendly approach into our age-friendly plan.

There are many sectors that will be able to draw on recommendations from the plan to assist them in supporting both current and emerging needs and interests of older adults and their families. This includes not only municipal decision-makers and community organizations but the corporate sector as well.

It would be remiss not to recognize that the plan was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic. While social and economic disruptions bring hardship, periods of societal upheaval also present opportunities for innovation and positive change. Hamilton is in a strong position to come together to identify these opportunities and to collaboratively work on them to ensure that the strategic vision that Hamilton City Council adopted in 2014—to be the best place to raise a child and to age successfully – is realized.

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

There were three main stages to preparing the 2021-2026 plan:

- I. background research and data collection;
- II. broad consultation and community engagement; and,
- III. data analysis and developing the plan.

The overall objective was to gain insight about the experiences, interests, needs and priorities of as many older adults as possible who live in Hamilton to inform the recommendations included in the plan. A concentrated effort was made to ensure that what we heard represented the diversity of Hamilton’s older adult population. For purposes of this report, ‘older adult’ is used to represent adults 55+. Community consultations took place in all City of Hamilton wards and focused outreach was provided to vulnerable and ethno-cultural communities with translation and interpretation services provided upon request.

A total of 4,100 individuals provided feedback about their experiences, challenges and proposed solutions related to aging in Hamilton. The Age-Friendly Hamilton Collaborative Governance Committee also hosted two events to gain additional feedback, one for community-based stakeholders and one for City of Hamilton staff and leaders.



# VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The foundation of the 2021-2026 plan includes a vision and eight guiding principles that shape the plan and can be operationalized in both the development of policy and service delivery across different sectors. Principle #4, that speaks to building a dementia-friendly community, is new in the 2021-2026 plan and reflects the importance of integrating a dementia-friendly approach into the age-friendly plan.

## Vision

All residents of Hamilton are respected in community life regardless of age, ethnicity, race, gender, ability and background. Policy and planning engages residents, reflects diversity, fosters social connectivity and provides the opportunity for active living and aging in place. Social connectivity links people to each other, places and services thus advancing health and well-being, while increasing the City's social capital.

## Principles

- 1. Creating supportive and enabling environments** where hospitality is practiced, and accessibility is the norm.
- 2. Optimizing opportunities for health, participation, security and life-long learning** across the life cycle. Health refers to physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.
- 3. Equity, inclusion and respect;** recognizing the diversity of older adults including their wide range of interests, cultural practices, capacities and resources while reducing barriers to social connectivity that result from differences.
- 4. Building a dementia-friendly community** in which dementia-friendly environments, opportunities and supports for individuals living with dementia and their care partners are understood and fully integrated into the overall age-friendly plan.
- 5. An informed community that practices accountability and transparency** while facilitating personal, social and system **connectivity**.
- 6. Community and neighbourhood** capacity building.
- 7. Effective public service,** delivered with integrity, that is adaptive, dynamic and uses an equity and inclusion lens and that is responsive to individual and collective needs as well as emerging opportunities while delivering value for money spent.
- 8. Community engagement,** where people have meaningful opportunities to have a say in designing services and influencing decisions that affect them.

# GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2021-2026 plan is organized into seven strategic goals, 21 objectives and 61 recommendations. The 21 objectives are included in this Executive Summary; the 61 detailed recommendations can be found in the full plan which is available on the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Council on Aging websites:

- [www.hamilton.ca/agefriendly](http://www.hamilton.ca/agefriendly)
- [www.coahamilton.ca](http://www.coahamilton.ca)



## Seven strategic goals



While not identified as one of the strategic goals, the pervasiveness of technology in our society and its impact – from telehealth and telemedicine, online banking and shopping, the use of iPads, cellphones, voice enabled Smart Homes and Artificial Intelligence to wearable technology such as personal alarm systems and fitness trackers – cannot be underestimated and is acknowledged in the plan.

## GOAL 1

## Housing



Safe and affordable housing is fundamental to our health and well-being and represents basic needs upon which other needs are addressed and met. Increasingly, older adults want a broader range of housing options available when making decisions about where they want to live as they age. Most older adults want to age-in-place in their own homes and familiar neighbourhoods.

### OBJECTIVES

1

Ensure affordable, accessible and safe housing options for older adults.

2

Increase supports to facilitate aging-in-place.

## GOAL 2

## Transportation



Transportation is important for active aging, from enabling us to participate in social activities to being able to access health and other core services. The City's transportation system in both rural and urban areas enables older adults to be involved in their communities.

### OBJECTIVES

1

Provide driver training and other supports to enable older adults to continue to drive safely.

2

Create a public transportation system that is affordable and accessible to everyone living within Hamilton's geographic boundaries.

3

Implement measures to increase pedestrian safety.

## GOAL 3

## Information and Communication



Accurate and reliable information must be available, accessible and easy to find. Community information systems must be available in multiple formats to meet the diverse needs of older adults who may access information in print, online, via telephone, and on local television and radio stations. In addition, community information must be accessible by individuals who may be living with a cognitive impairment, vision and/or hearing challenges or who may have low literacy skills.

### OBJECTIVES

1

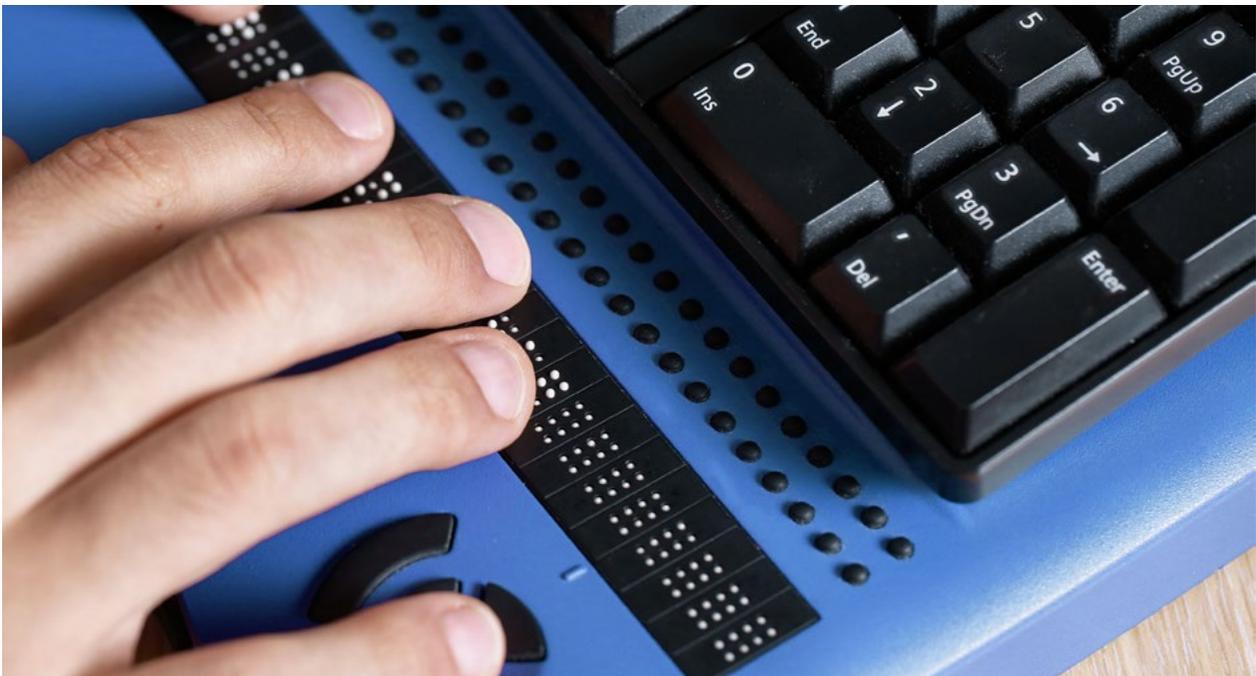
Increase and improve access to information for all older adults.

2

Review City of Hamilton website to make sure that it is user friendly, easy to access and navigate.

3

Provide training to staff in the public, not-for-profit, profit and private sectors to ensure they have up-to-date information about services designed for isolated and/or vulnerable older adults in Hamilton.



## GOAL 4

## Health and Community Services



Older adults should have access to a wide range of supports and services that allow them to remain in their homes and communities with supports that enable aging-in-place. Optimal health and access to community services is fundamental to our overall well being, the goal being to maintain good health and functional ability for as long as possible.

### OBJECTIVES

1

Ensure accessibility to services that addresses the diversity of needs of older adults while reducing barriers such as language, culture, affordability and transportation.

2

Increase awareness of available health and community programs and services.



## GOAL 5

## Social Participation



Opportunities for social participation and connecting with others are critical for our physical, mental and emotional well-being. Whether participating in social and recreational activities in person or through a virtual platform, opportunities should be accessible and reflect the diverse interests and needs of older adults in our community.

### OBJECTIVES

1

Maximize use of available resources and spaces to increase program opportunities.

2

Improve access to recreation and leisure activities that are inclusive and accessible for all.

3

Develop partnerships with a variety of transportation services to increase access to programs.

4

Increase awareness about available programs with both older adults and service providers.

5

Offer programs that are affordable for all older adults.

6

Recognizing that not all social participation involves a formal program, ensure there is a strong emphasis on developing social networks within neighbourhoods.

## GOAL 6

# Civic Engagement, Volunteerism and Employment



Good health, social connections and financial security all impact our overall quality of life. Civic engagement, volunteering and paid employment provide meaningful roles for older adults as community leaders, employees, employers, mentors and volunteers.

### OBJECTIVES

1

Reduce ageism in both employment and in volunteerism.

2

Create a framework, guidelines and training to ensure age-friendly and inclusive workplaces.

3

Create communication strategies to more effectively educate and market volunteer opportunities to both community organizations and older adults.

## GOAL 7

# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



Outdoor and green spaces should be welcoming and well-maintained in our communities. Spaces include sufficient seating and are accessible for people of all ages and abilities. They are designed with pedestrian safety, cycling and walkability in mind.

### OBJECTIVES

1

Provide safe trails and sidewalks for walkers and cyclists of all ages and abilities.

2

Ensure that the buildings located in public spaces are safe, inclusive, accessible and well maintained.

## NEXT STEPS

- Create a comprehensive implementation plan that includes tracking and monitoring tools
- Develop a cross sectoral approach for engaging organizations in the not-for-profit, private and public sectors as well as individual citizens
- Plan for a mid-way review of the plan
- Provide regular updates to all key stakeholders as well as the broader community



For additional information about Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly Community, please contact

[agefriendly@hamiltoncoa.com](mailto:agefriendly@hamiltoncoa.com)  
or visit [www.coahamilton.ca](http://www.coahamilton.ca)  
or [www.hamilton.ca/agefriendly](http://www.hamilton.ca/agefriendly)





[www.coahamilton.ca](http://www.coahamilton.ca)

“An authentic age-friendly vision can only be generated and sustained by the widest possible ownership of it”

*Dr. Alex Kalache, President, ILC-Brazil*



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