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**Our population is aging; something that will shape our city, province and country over the next decade and beyond. We need to address public policy issues related to this matter now to ensure that we become a more age-friendly community.”**

- Coun. Eric Megarity, Chair, City of Fredericton Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee

## **Age-friendly Fredericton Baseline Community Assessment**

# **AGE-FRIENDLY SURVEY RESULTS**

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**June 2018**

# Acknowledgements

*We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their contribution and commitment to the development, implementation and assessment of the Age-Friendly Survey. In addition, we would like to thank the 855 respondents who took the time to complete the questionnaire.*

**The work summarized in this report is the result of a collaboration between:**

- + City of Fredericton Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee
- + The Wellness Movement, Wellness Branch, Department of Social Development
- + The Capital Region Senior Goodwill Ambassadors
- + Greater Fredericton Social Innovation
- + l'Association des aînés de la région de la Capitale (AARC)
- + l'Unité du troisième âge pour l'apprentissage de la Capitale (UTAAC)
- + Village of New Maryland
- + New Brunswick Institute of Research, Data, Training
- + St. Thomas University's Department of Social Work

**With contributions by:**

- + Meals on Wheels
- + Stepping Stone Senior Centre Inc.
- + The pre-survey team, which included representatives from: St. Mary's First Nations, people with lived experiences of homelessness, and people living in affordable housing.
- + Civic Tech Fredericton

# Executive Summary

*Fredericton is taking part in a large-scale movement, the “World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities” (and inclusion in the New Brunswick Age-Friendly Recognition Program), which is informed by the WHO’s approach to active aging. As population aging and urbanization are two global trends, it is important to consider the quality of life of older adults by ensuring that this trend does not exclude members this community.*

*In response to this global initiative, the New Brunswick Wellness Movement is engaging communities across the province to gain a better understanding of how our aging population perceives their communities.*

## Survey

Membership in the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities requires that communities conduct a baseline assessment of age-friendliness. As a result of the collaboration between various community stakeholders, a community-wide survey was developed and conducted from February 13, 2018 - April 13, 2018. The Age-friendly survey is based on eight domains identified by the WHO. The purpose of the survey is to gain an understanding of the strengths and opportunities for growth as an age-friendly city. The Capital Region Wellness Network contends that

***“When the social and physical environments around us are supportive of our wellness, we are more likely to be healthy and resilient and enjoy a great quality of life!”***

having a consistent baseline assessment tool will enable smaller communities across the province to implement benchmark surveys that assess the age-friendliness of communities at a manageable cost. The data from this survey will be shared on an open data portal; therefore, it is not owned by anyone and it will be accessible to everyone in the community. Community stakeholders may find this particularly useful because the data may be used as empirical evidence to support funding applications, to inform policy and to implement focused programs. In addition, when data is shared openly between communities, it can be used to analyze larger trends within the community.



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# Introduction

## Purpose and Scope for the Report

Out of a total population of 58, 220 people in the city of Fredericton, there are 17, 800 individuals aged 55 and up (Statistics Canada, 2018). The purpose of this report is to gain an understanding of the strengths and opportunities for growth as an age-friendly City in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The aging population in Canada is growing, which is why it is important to support the health and well-being of older adults. An age-friendly community is recognized as one that is “set up to help seniors live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved.” (Government of Canada, 2016) The WHO developed the Global Age-friendly Cities Project in 2006, which supports healthy aging. Cities from around the world gathered information from older adults, senior-care providers and other groups and individuals with an interest in better serving the aging population. This information helped to identify eight fundamental domains of community life in which communities can become more age-friendly. The domains are:



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



Respect and Social Inclusion



Transportation



Civic Participation and Employment



Housing



Communication and Information



Social Participation



Community Support and Health Services

## Becoming an Age-friendly Community

New Brunswick is working to promote age-friendly community initiatives. To date, twenty-two communities across the province are working towards becoming recognized as age-friendly communities. In order to receive this designation, communities must complete four milestones that promote community engagement and taking sustainable action.

**The four milestones are:**

1. Secure official commitment to the Age-friendly Community approach.
2. Establish an Age-friendly Steering Committee and engage the community.
3. Conduct an age-friendly assessment.
4. Establish a comprehensive action plan.

Each province has its own certifying body for age-friendly status. A committee of Fredericton City Council, which comprised of a cross-section of individual seniors, representatives of seniors' groups, a city councilor, and relevant agency representatives was established. With the help of the Public Health Agency of Canada's "Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide", and the WHO's "Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide", the City of Fredericton Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee implemented this survey in order to assess the age-friendliness of the Fredericton community. It is our intention to follow up with the development and implementation of an action plan.

# Survey Methods

## Age-friendly Survey Methodology



**The Survey team would like to thank the volunteers and community partners for their contributions and especially the 855 people who took the time to complete the survey.”**

*The objective of using a survey was to capture a representative sample of older adults in Fredericton, as well as assess the age-friendliness of the Fredericton community. Anyone aged 55 or older and residing in Fredericton, NB was welcome to complete the survey in either official language. Those aged 55 to 64 were intentionally included so that the insight of those entering into older adulthood within the next ten years were captured.*

A pre-survey team was established to launch sample in-person surveys with 60 individuals in community. The team received training and was made up of retired health care professionals, representatives of faith-based communities, community representatives from St. Mary's First Nation and individuals with lived experiences of homelessness. Based on feedback from respondents and members of the pre-survey team, amendments were made to the survey prior to its launch on February 13, 2018. Surveys were housed on the City of Fredericton website and the links to the surveys were posted online through social media, email distribution lists, non-profit and partner newsletters. The survey was also promoted on the radio and in the newspaper. Community organizations that are in contact with older adults on a regular basis also promoted and assisted with the completion of the survey. In-person and telephone interviews were also conducted upon request.

855 seniors from all walks-of-life were surveyed on a variety of topics related to life in Fredericton, NB. Trends have been identified from the survey results within each of the eight domains. Survey results are discussed in the context of focusing on strengths and opportunities for growth rather than problems.

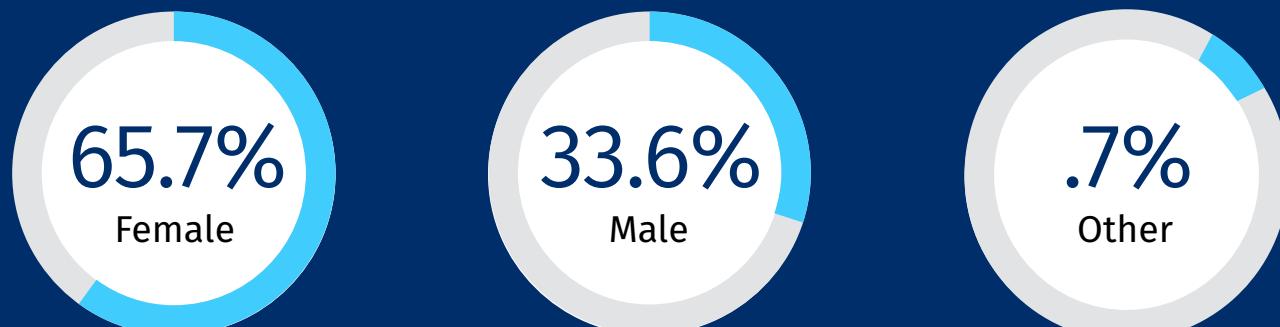


## Age-friendly Survey Results

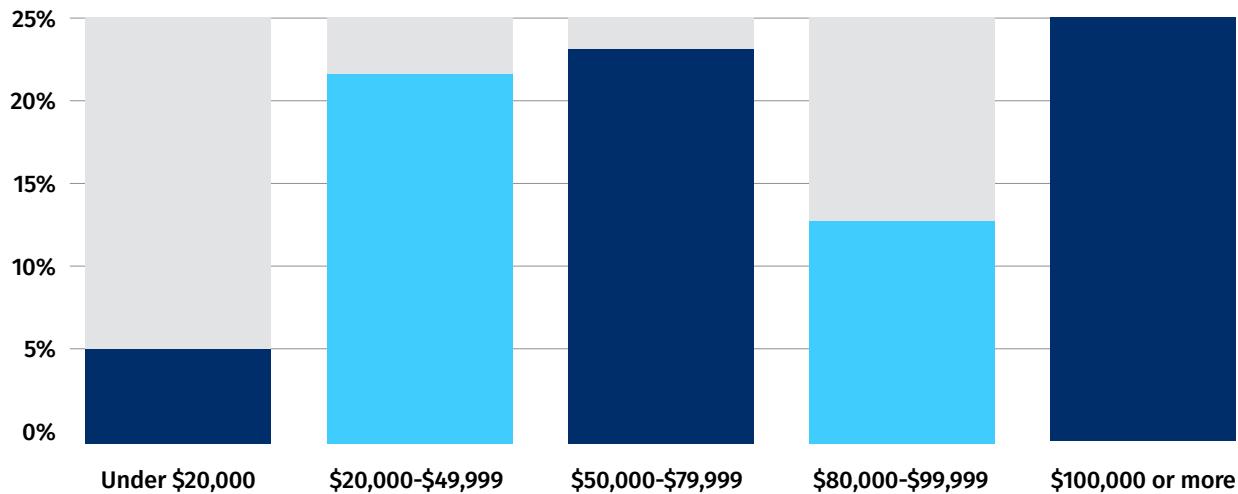
### Who Completed the Survey?

The majority of respondents are aged 55 - 84 years old and identify as female. Respondents are educated with a university degree, college or trades education and over half of the respondents are retired. With the exception of 5% of respondents who earn less than \$20,000 yearly, there is a fairly even representation of respondents who earn \$20,000 - \$79, 000 and \$80, 000 - \$100, 000 or more. There are 18 spoken languages among respondents, which indicates a level of diversity.

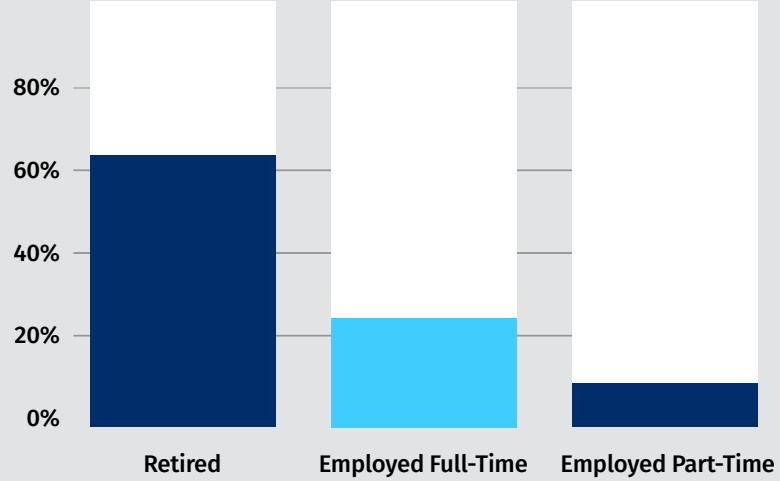
### Gender



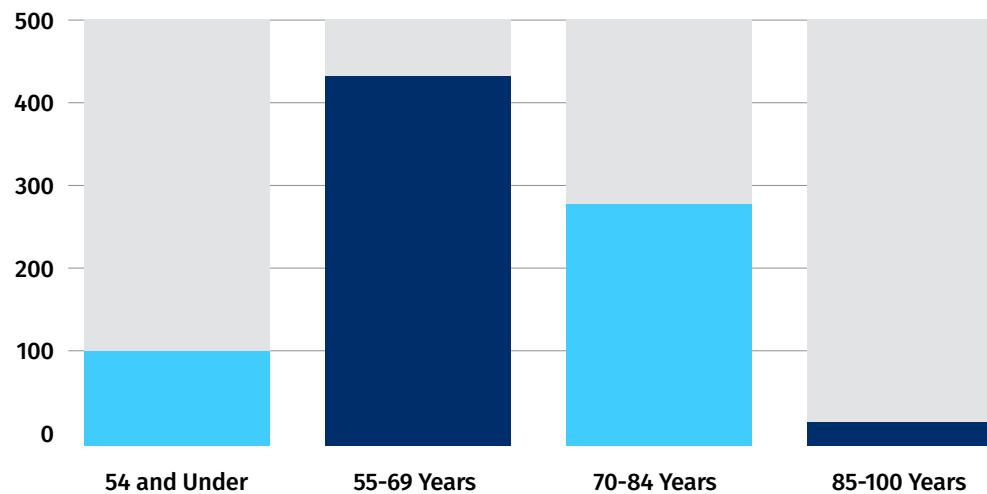
## Income



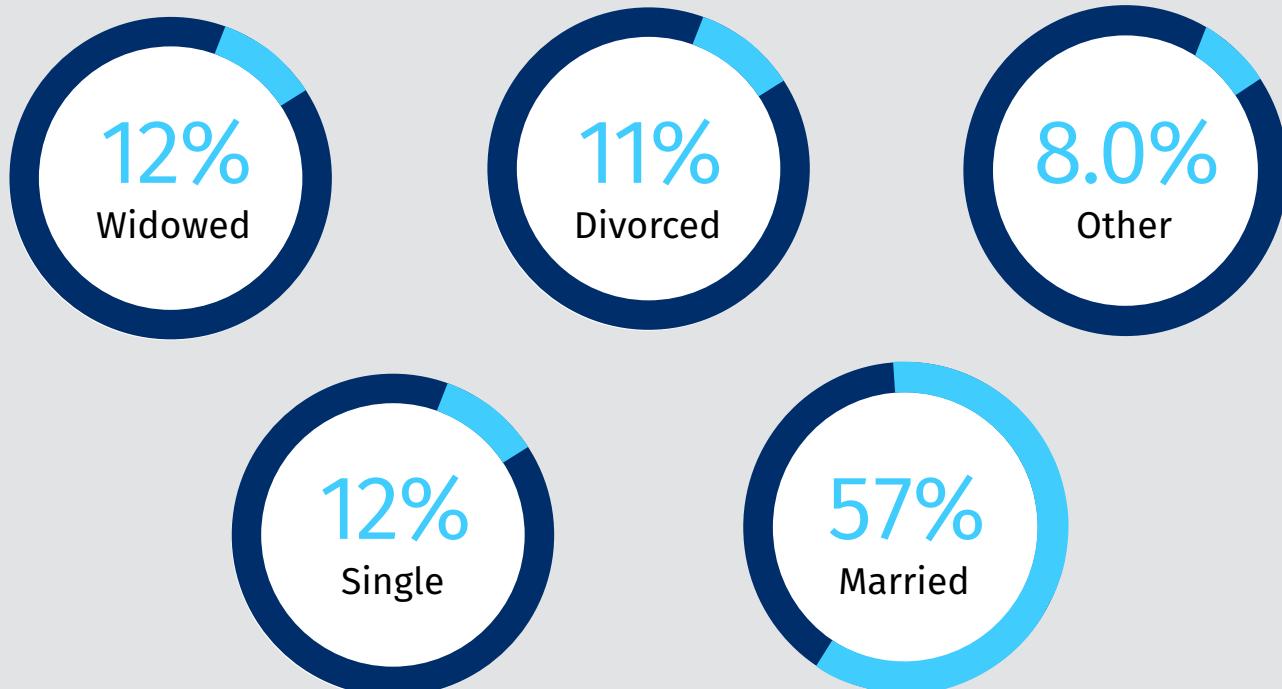
## Employment Status



## Age



## Marital Status



# Overview of Findings for each Domain



## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- The majority of respondents feel safe in their neighborhood, in the downtown, in parks and on the trails. However, data reflects some concerns around abuse, vandalism and crime in Fredericton neighborhoods.
- Poor lighting on trails, lack of public washrooms in the downtown and in parks and trails were identified as concerns. Furthermore, respondents expressed a need for more public benches and seating.
- Difficulties getting parking has kept some people from using public buildings in their community.

“ ”

**A lot of buildings downtown aren't accessible and the ones that are have such an angle to enter I still can't get in without help.”**



## Transportation

- 70% of respondents use their own vehicle as their main mode of transportation. The majority of respondents identified a lack of parking, snow removal and poor road conditions as barriers to driving.
- 17% of respondents identified walking as their main mode of transportation. The majority of respondents feel safe on the streets, sidewalks and trails; however, some respondents identified a need for improvement in this area, specifically on public trails and sidewalks.
- Respondents are well-informed of cost savings for public transit. Those who want to use public transportation identify a lack of bus routes, schedule information, shelters and poor connections as areas of improvement.
- Wheelchair accessible busses and shuttles were identified as having long wait times; however, respondents stated that they feel safe when using these services.

*“Although I am a very active senior, I have worries about parking and walking on the ice.”*



A blue circular icon containing a black house outline.

# Housing

- + 81% of respondents live in their own home and 88% of respondents stated that living independently as they age is very important to them. Most stated that they will need renovations in order to remain in their own homes as they age.
  - + Only 4% of respondents were aware of programs to help offset costs of rent, property taxes, power bills and upkeep.
  - + In addition, the majority of respondents do not believe it is financially viable to age in their home due to property and home upkeep, lower income, taxes and monthly expenses.
  - + The data suggests that the majority of respondents who wish to downsize their living accommodations would like to stay in the same neighborhood.

**I am personally very interested in alternative housing”**





## Social Participation

- More than half of the sample size are attending social activities. However, high costs, poor timing, poor location and no one to go with were identified as barriers to attending events.
- Overall, the sample appears to be well-informed about activities including fitness programs, creative hobbies, learning opportunities, recreation and community events. Respondents who identified as having a disability did, however, identify a lack of knowledge about technology training, recreation and fitness for people with disabilities.

“

I believe that Fredericton is a lovely place for a senior to live.”



## Respect and Social Inclusion

- Respondents identified that they feel welcomed, valued, and connected in their community. In addition, the majority of respondents identified that there are activities that welcome people of all ages and cultures.
- 18% of respondents stated that they do not share the same feeling of being welcomed, valued and connected in the community, indicating room for improvement.

***"I get frustrated by the emphasis on NB's rapidly aging population. We ALL age one year at a time."***





## Civic Participation and Employment

- + 75% of respondents would volunteer for something that they enjoy. Barriers that keep them from volunteering are: inconvenient scheduled times and a lack of accessible information about volunteering opportunities.
- + 47% of respondents identified that they are considering delaying their retirement for financial reasons. In addition, 61% of respondents are not aware of a range of jobs that are suited to the needs of older adults, like flex or part time shifts or accommodations for people with disabilities. Furthermore, 67% of respondents identified a need for more training opportunities to learn new job skills and training for new fields of work.



“

**89 years old and I lost my wife 6 months ago. I am very healthy and have no problems. I help many other seniors as a volunteer.”**



## Communication and Information

- + Respondents identified the internet (76%), newspaper (40%) and the radio (39%) as their preferred methods of accessing community information.
- + Overall, respondents have difficulty finding information from public (municipal) staff about many of the programs and services for seniors.

“

**A focus group to further discuss these topics would be very interesting and provide more in-depth information”**



## Community Support and Health Services

“

**I'm most worried about health care as I age.”**

- + Citizens are well informed about home support services and end-of-life care. However, better communication is needed to help older adults gain access to healthcare, and help with home emergencies like floods and ice storms.
- + 18% of respondents identified that they cannot afford healthy food after paying their bills.
- + The most utilized food services are church suppers and seniors' day discounts at grocery stores.
- + The majority of the sample size were able to access the support required to complete various activities. The activities where help was most commonly sought were doing taxes, home repair and upkeep and shoveling snow.
- + 74% of respondents are satisfied with their life: physical/mental health, spiritual life, family life and social relationships.
- + Respondents identify as being most worried about losing their health, losing their independence and having trouble getting around physically as they age.

# Moving Forward



**This is one of the final steps in Fredericton becoming recognized as an age-friendly community under the provincial government's Age-friendly Community Recognition Program. The goal of the effort is to enable seniors to live in secure, healthy environments, because their opinions and contributions are so important to our community.”**

- Dennis Taylor, Chair of the Survey Sub-Committee for Fredericton's Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee

*Moving forward with a more age-friendly community means listening to and valuing the voices of older adults in the Fredericton community, as well as putting the voices of our citizens into action. Action is currently taking place in the form of development and implementation of an action plan, further community analysis and open data sharing.*

New Brunswick's Age-friendly Recognition Program recognizes those municipalities and communities who have completed the first four steps based on the World Health Organization's framework to become age-friendly:

1. Secure official commitment to the Age-friendly Community approach.
2. Establish an Age-friendly Steering Committee and engage the community.
3. Conduct an age-friendly assessment.
4. Establish a comprehensive action plan.

The City of Fredericton Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee has plans to develop and implement an action plan based on the findings of this survey, community conversations and forums. The Age-friendly Action Plan is the final step to achieving an age-friendly designation.

## Future Community Analysis

The Fredericton Age-friendly Survey was created with significant professional input in order to provide a template for future analysis in the Capital Region and in other communities across the province. This makes it possible for smaller municipalities to implement the age-friendly baseline assessment survey at a fraction of the cost while effectively engaging seniors to share their concerns. We want our aging population to feel that their voice is valued, so that they too may live in an age-friendly community.

## Open Data Sharing

The raw data from this survey, in its entirety, will be accessible through an open-data portal on the City of Fredericton and Service NB websites. This allows for linkages to other open data sources that enable government and non-profit organizations to make evidence-based decisions that meet the needs of our community and generate programs and policy for positive change.

The survey will support long term decision-making, on the part of elected officials, city staff and non-profit organizations which continuously work to make Fredericton a great place to live, work and play. In addition, this survey provides a basis for ongoing public discussion in the form of community conversations and forums. This will ensure that the voices of older adults are being recognized while an Age-friendly Action Plan is created.





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# Fredericton



For more information please visit:  
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