

Focus Group Engagement Results

Background

In 2014 February and March, focus groups were conducted as part of the public engagement for the development of the Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy for The City of Calgary. Administration followed the World Health Organization's (WHO) *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*¹ as well as WHO's *Age-friendly Cities Project Methodology: Vancouver Protocol*² on engaging older adults. Questions were based on the eight focus areas of the Age-friendly Cities framework:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social participation
5. Respect and social inclusion
6. Civic participation and employment
7. Communication and information
8. Community support and health services

Sample

A total of 137 people participated in the focus group sessions with an average of 13 people participating in each session. In order to get a representation of the older adult population in Calgary, focus groups were specific to the following groups: mainstream older adults, caregivers, older adults who are immigrants, and Aboriginal elders. The majority of the participants were women (77 per cent). The age range of participants was 26 to 89 years old with the average age being 69 years old.

The majority of the participants (84 individuals) were retired. However, some participants currently work full-time (7) and others work part-time (9). Forty-nine (49) of the participants reported being in good health; 26 reported their health is in excellent condition; 21 reported their health is fair and three participants reported their health being poor. The majority of participants (68 per cent) own their own home. The average number of people living in the home is two people per household.

Overall Ranking and Votes

At the end of each focus group discussion, participants were asked to rank their top three areas of priority in relation to the eight focus areas. Table 1: Focus Group Results by Topic Area, shows the overall ranking of each topic area, as well as the raw count of votes received for each.

¹ World Health Organization [WHO], 2007, *Global Age-friendly Cities: A guide*.

² World Health Organization [WHO], 2007, *WHO Age-friendly Cities Project Methodology: Vancouver Protocol*.

Table 1: Focus Group Results by Topic Area

Overall Ranking	Topic Area	Most Frequent Issues Identified by Focus Group Participants	Count of Votes
1	Community support and health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait times for health care • Language barriers : health system access and navigation • Availability of homecare and home maintenance services 	78
2	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Availability of housing options, including accessible housing • Housing that accommodates other family members for care giving support • Affordable personal care, housekeeping, and yard care to support aging in place • Access to amenities • Affordability of care facilities and social inclusion of residents in the broader community 	76
3	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of disabled parking • Affordability of parking • Reliability and frequency of public transit service, especially in suburban areas • Proximity of transit stops and stations • Snow removal at transit stops and shelters • Availability and reliability of accessible transportation • Personal safety • Recent increase to the cost of transit passes for seniors 	36
4	Communication and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of how to access information and services • Variety of communication formats 	28
5	Respect and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for intergenerational interaction • Perception and role of older people in society • Recognition that many older adults provide care for grandchildren and other family members • Respect for people of all ages and generations • Instances of elder abuse 	20
6	Social participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to participating in social activities, including mobility, transportation, winter conditions, language • Affordability of activities • Barriers to connecting with more vulnerable or socially isolated older adults 	19
7	Outdoor spaces and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow and ice on roads, pathways, sidewalks, parks, and cycle paths • Accessibility of, and way finding features within public buildings and businesses • Timing of pedestrian signals at intersections • Availability and accessibility of public washrooms 	17
8	Civic participation and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to finding employment and volunteer opportunities • Flexible workplaces to accommodate older workers and volunteers 	13