

HEALTHY AGING

City of Brantford Age-Friendly Strategy
2025-2027

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Greetings from The Mayor



Ensuring people of all ages and abilities have opportunities to thrive in our community is a key priority for the City of Brantford. As an internationally recognized Age-Friendly Community by the World Health Organization (WHO), Brantford prides itself on supporting our aging population through social participation, civic pride, and overall mental and physical well-being.

The Healthy Aging Strategy represents the City's commitment to our ongoing efforts of collaborating with community partners to deliver high quality age-friendly programming and events.

On behalf of City Council, I want to sincerely thank our community partners and City staff for their continual support of older adults in the City of Brantford.

With Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Kevin Davis,
Mayor of Brantford



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Background of Age-Friendly Planning in the City of Brantford



In 2018, the City of Brantford launched the first Healthy Aging: The City of Brantford's Age-Friendly Strategy. This strategy was developed with specific actions to be implemented over three years. The Healthy Aging Strategy was built on foundational research including an internal audit of the City's Age-Friendly policies and programs, as well as best practices identified within Age-Friendly networks, including the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities, the Southern Ontario Age-Friendly Network, and the Seniors Health Knowledge Network (Age-Friendly Communities Network).

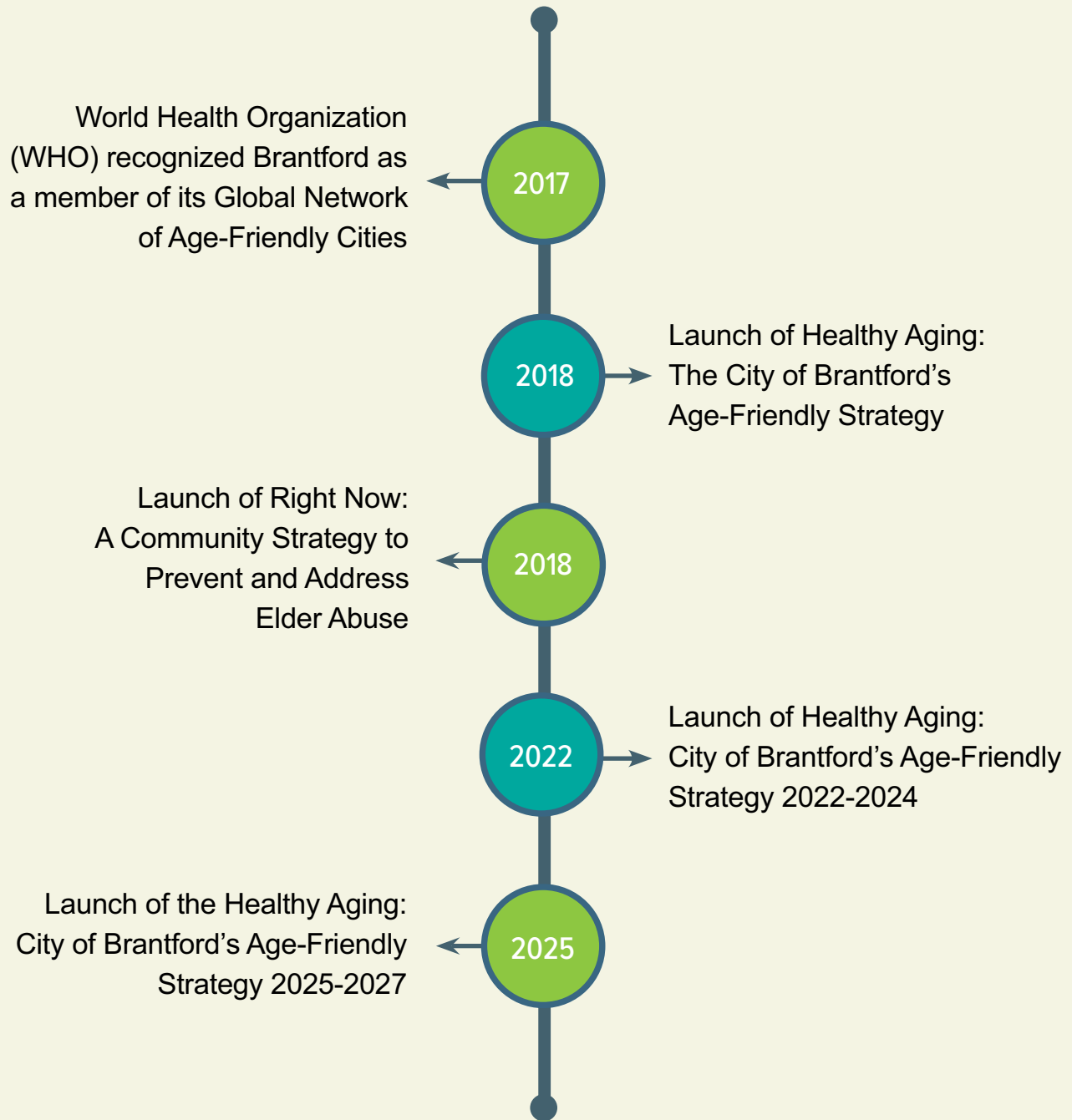
The Healthy Aging Strategy was also informed by extensive community engagement, and in 2017, the City worked in partnership with the Grand River Council on Aging who led the Community Summit Series, which consisted of eight forums for each of the WHO's domains of an Age-Friendly Community.

Brantford is a Leader in Age-Friendly Planning

As a result of the Age-Friendly planning process and the significant milestones our community has achieved, the City of Brantford was internationally recognized by the World Health Organization as an Age-Friendly community and was officially welcomed to the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in July 2017. Membership in the Global Network reflects the City's dedication to achieving an Age-Friendly community. As a member of the Global Network, the City of Brantford will have the opportunity to connect with a global network of aging experts, stay informed on Age-Friendly initiatives across the globe and gain inspiration by what others have achieved, and share the City's progress to support other communities.

In addition to global recognition, the City's efforts have been highlighted by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Seniors Affairs, the Retired Teachers Association of Ontario and the International Federation on Aging. Moreover, the innovative projects, initiatives, events and resources developed for seniors in Brantford throughout its Age-Friendly journey have been adopted by other municipalities as a model for their own communities.

Timeline of Age-Friendly Planning in Brantford



Understanding Brantford's Aging Community through Data and Research



Seniors are the fastest growing cohort in Canada. In a 2024 Statistics Canada report, population projections of persons aged 65 and older within the total population would increase from 18.9% in 2023 to between 21.9%-32.3% by 2073. In addition to this staggering increase of older adults, it was also reported that Ontario is projected to be one of two provinces that will house the largest share of these seniors.

In Brantford, 18.9% of the population are adults currently aged 65+, with 2.9% of these individuals 85 years of age or older. Moving forward, Brantford could see between 22% and 27% of their population being seniors by 2046 (Statistic's Canada, 2022). This rapid growth in the senior population demographic requires all levels of government to engage in coordinated and meaningful age-friendly planning

The City partnered with the GRCOA to engage older adults in a consultation process that captured perspectives of residents, caregivers and services providers, and informed various actions and updates to the Healthy Aging Strategy. The City also consulted with various sector partners and senior serving agencies to capture their perspectives and recommendations. In addition, the City conducted an age-friendly community survey, that gathered feedback from over 300 older adults, caregivers and service providers in the Brantford Community.

The City also worked with the Laurier Hub for Community Solutions (LHCS) to conduct a jurisdictional review of Ontario cities, focused on Age-Friendly Community (AFC) strategies and social inclusion of older adults, particularly those from marginalized and equity-seeking groups. The team undertook the jurisdictional review to identify strategies used in similar Ontario cities for planning, funding, and managing AFC initiatives. The study underscores the importance of adopting inclusive and comprehensive approaches in planning, implementing, and evaluating Age-Friendly programs. Findings of this study indicated that Brantford can further enhance the quality of life for its aging population by fostering environments that promote active participation, respect, and social inclusion.



Healthy Aging: City of Brantford's Age-friendly Strategy 2025-2027

Healthy Aging: City of Brantford's Age-friendly Strategy 2025-2027 outlines the City of Brantford's ongoing commitment to age-friendly planning. The updated Healthy Aging Strategy builds on the successes from 2022 - 2024 and provides an opportunity to address new actions over the next three years.

Continued Community Engagement

In addition to the extensive engagement of the 2017 Age-friendly Community Summit Series, the City of Brantford and community partners have continued to identify older adults and age-friendly planning in various Corporate strategies, community strategies, and consultations over the last three years, including:

- Mayors' Housing Partnership Task Force Action Plan
- Brantford-Brant 10-year Housing Stability Plan
- Brantford Downtown Master Plan
- Brantford Accessibility Plan
- Brantford Customer Experience Strategy
- Active Transportation Master Plan
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- Community Safety and Well-being Plan
- Community Climate Change Action Plan
- Inclusive Communities Plan
- Municipal Culture Plan
- City of Brantford Grants Program
- Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy
- Right Now: A Community Strategy to Prevent and Address Elder Abuse
- Brantford Immigration Partnership Action Plan
- Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy Action Plan
- Brantford Police Service Strategic Plan
- Brant Community Healthcare System Strategic Plan
- Corporate Climate Change Action Plan
- Brantford Public Library Strategic Plan
- City of Brantford Official Plan

Healthy Aging ACTION PLAN



The City of Brantford's Healthy Aging Strategy is centered on the 8 key domains established by the WHO, which include:

Healthy Aging ACTION PLAN

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 and Health Services



Figure 2.
WHO Age-Friendly
Dimensions



1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



Outdoor spaces and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence, and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to age in place. Age-Friendly outdoor spaces and buildings encompass green spaces, outdoor seating, pavements, public washrooms, and accessible buildings.

Priority 1 Improve the walkability of municipal sidewalks, trails and parks

- Install additional pedestrian crossing signals, curb cuts, and tactile warning indicators.
- Improve light levels and energy efficiency of street lighting.
- Replace damaged brick paved sidewalks in downtown core.
- Expand and promote network of paved trails.
- Provide additional benches in busy areas.
- Provide more directional signage in parks and on trails.
- Explore features including shaded seating, washrooms and water fountains in public spaces.

Priority 2 Ensure buildings are accessible, inclusive and safe

- Ongoing implementation of Brantford's Accessibility Plan.
- Ensure public washrooms are accessible, clean and well-lit.
- Provide additional gender-neutral washrooms within facilities.
- Continue to recognize organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to providing excellent accessibility.

2. Transportation



Being able to travel within a community has a significant impact on social participation and access to community and health services. The World Health Organization defines Age-Friendly transportation as accessible and affordable public transit and taxis; well-maintained roads and parking lots; and competent drivers.

Priority 3 Improve access to public transit

- Expand opportunities to educate riders on navigating the transit system, such as an instructional video.
- Increase street furniture at bus stops.
- Review accessibility of current ticketing system.
- Implement recommendations of the Comprehensive Transit Review.

Priority 4 Improve accessibility of city roads and municipal parking

- Increase size of street signs.
- Implement signal phasing and equipment enhancements to improve vulnerable road user safety at busy intersections.
- Implement physical infrastructure improvements with a focus on vulnerable road user safety at busy intersections.

Priority 5 Support initiatives that promote active and connected transportation systems

- Expand cycling network.
- Collaborate with community agencies to enhance additional transportation options.



3. Housing



Housing is essential to safety and well-being. Adequate housing enables older adults to comfortably age in place and remain connected to their community. Age-Friendly housing relates to affordability, design, options and aging-in-place.

Priority 6 Increase affordable options for older adults

- Expand affordable housing units available for older adults as outlined in Mayors' Housing Partnership Taskforce Affordable Housing Action Plan.
- Host additional social housing education workshops to inform residents on the waitlist times, associated costs and policies.

Priority 7 Increase accessibility of affordable housing

- Continue to support accessibility needs of older adults within affordable housing units.
- Continue to expand social, recreational, digital and health-related programming at senior affordable housing sites.
- Supply affordable housing in local neighborhoods to foster continued community connection and family relations.

Priority 8 Continue to support older adults to age in place

- Continue to promote information regarding home maintenance and support services.
- Promote grants and programs that support older adults to age in place.
- Create and promote other community resources and information to support seniors, families, and caregivers (seniors toolkit, tax clinics, finance planning, wills and power of attorney information).
- Develop affordable housing within walkable communities that are near amenities and community supports.
- Incorporate community supports into future seniors affordable housing developments.

4. Social Participation



Participating in leisure, social, cultural, and spiritual activities in the community enables older adults to maintain strong connections, experience joy and stay informed. One's ability to participate in social activities relates to the availability, cost, location, awareness and range of opportunities, as well as the health and preference of the individual.

Priority 9 Enhanced access to affordable and inclusive recreation activities

- Deliver free or low-cost senior-focused recreational activities and events.
- Implement best practices for in-person and virtual programs to reduce social isolation among older adults, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations (older adults with disabilities, Indigenous, Newcomers, and 2SLGBTQ+).
- Continue to support seniors' groups and community organizations in accessing grant opportunities to develop free programming.
- Develop events and programs that celebrate inclusion and diversity, while creating a sense of belonging.

Priority 10 Prioritize place-based community programming

- Expand recreation at community centers and opportunities to engage in programming in outdoor spaces.
- Use geographical data to focus on offering programs in Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS) to increase place-based programming.

Priority 11 Continue to respond to emerging interests and opportunities to support older adults

- Continue to prioritize digital inclusion of older adults through skills training, access to technology and technology-focused programming.
- Create and promote workshops that reflect the ongoing interests of older adults (health and wellness, recreation, nutrition, long-life learning, volunteerism, etc).
- Explore opportunities to create unique experiences to celebrate older adults and their contribution to our community.



5. Respect and Social Inclusion



While many older adults feel respected, recognized and included in their communities, others report experiences of disrespect and exclusion. Age-Friendly communities prioritize public education and build relationships between generations.

Priority 12 Continue to support and provide opportunities for corporate Age-Friendly training

- Ensure staff have training opportunities related to accessibility and inclusivity.
- Provide department-focused opportunities for City staff to participate in Age-Friendly training that supports their work (Dementia-awareness training, Age-Friendly Customer Service Training, Ageism Prevention Training etc.).
- Prioritize the development of further Age-Friendly training modules that are accessible to all City staff through the Learning Management System (LMS).

Priority 13 Prioritize elder abuse awareness and ageism prevention strategies across the community

- Work in partnership with the Brant Elder Abuse Awareness Committee to review and update recommendations identified in Right Now: A Community Strategy to Prevent and Address Elder Abuse.
- Support community partners in developing or updating resources, such as the Seniors Toolkit, that inform seniors and caregivers of supports available in the community.
- Reduce ageism in both the employment and volunteer sector by developing a communications campaign that informs on ageist hiring practices and support older workers with job seeking strategies.

Priority 14 Work with community organizations to support intergenerational engagement

- Continue to seek out grant opportunities that support the development of intergenerational projects and initiatives.
- Support community organizations who offer opportunities for older adults and youth alike, to connect and bridge the gap among generations.

6. Civic Participation and Employment



Older adults continue to contribute to their communities as they age. Many older adults become self-employed, seek new employment opportunities, volunteer in their communities and provide voluntary work for their families.

Priority 15 Engage and seek input from older adults to support long-term community planning

- Encourage feedback from older adults to aid in the development of the City of Brantford's future operational and strategic plans.
- Continue to seek input from older adults on project's, initiatives, and programs that affect or impact the aging population through multiple avenues such as online, paper, and/or in person options.
- Maintain our commitment to creating an inclusive community by engaging seniors in celebrating, promoting and supporting cultural values and diversity.
- Work in partnership with community partners and stakeholder groups to review current and future age-friendly initiatives.

Priority 16 Support older adults in accessing meaningful volunteer and employment opportunities in the community

- Continue to highlight the supports available for job applicants through Human Resources within the City of Brantford's online recruitment process.
- Provide opportunities for entrepreneurship programs to assist and support older adults through ongoing initiatives with community partners.
- Support community partners to provide opportunities for learning and skills development (digital skills, social media, computer basics, iPad Basics, cyber safety).
- Research and explore strategies that reduce barriers to volunteering within the community from an aging lens.



7. Communication and Information



Older adults continue to contribute to their communities as they age. Many older adults become self-employed, seek new employment opportunities, volunteer in their communities and provide voluntary work for their families.

Priority 17 Improve access to municipal information

- Ensure municipal websites and communication materials are optimized for accessibility for older adults.
- Create age-friendly social media content to help older adults stay informed about city services and programs. Ensure Let's Talk Brantford engagement tools are accessible for older adults.
- Conduct regular audits of municipal communication platforms to ensure they meet accessibility standards for seniors, including hearing and vision impairments.
- Distribute printed guides with key municipal information, service updates, and emergency contacts to community centres, library and senior living facilities.

Priority 18 Utilize creative methods to communicate with older adults

- Continue to share the Seniors' Toolkit resource booklet throughout the community.
- Work with community partners to improve how socially isolated older adults' access information and to ensure information is updated in newsletters and community calendars.
- Encourage community volunteers, neighbourhood associations, and "Age-Friendly champions" to spread the word on Age-Friendly services and programs in the City of Brantford.
- Explore other platforms for sharing information, such as using radio, utility bill inserts or direct mail postcards.

8. Community and Health Services



Health and support services are critical for older adults and caregivers to maintain independence in the community. Municipalities can collaborate with agencies to address community health challenges and support programs that foster healthy and active living.

Priority 19 Promote healthy aging behaviours through community programs focused on healthy and active living

- Develop and host additional neighbourhood programs focused on healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, exercise, smoking cessation and falls prevention programs.
- Collaborate with community partners to provide older adults with increased access to physical health education programming.
- Support community partners that provide older adults with opportunities to access to mental health resources and information.
- Support the continued goals of the Ontario Health Team and other community partners as they relate to the health and well-being of older adults.

Priority 20 Respond to emerging interests and needs related to accessing information on available community resources for older adults

- Explore the development of a seniors resource fair that brings together community organizations who offer various resources and levels of support for seniors in Brantford.
- Explore opportunities to enhance knowledge and access to available resources for caregivers to support themselves and others.



Measuring Success



An internal audit of the City’s policies, programs, and services identified tangible Age-Friendly targets that would help to further measure the success of the City’s Age-Friendly Plan. Each metric outlines a specific item that the City is tracking to measure improvements. The “Baseline” outlines the starting point to which the City is building from as of 2025, and the “target” is the goal we aim to reach by the end of the strategy in 2027.

1. Outdoor Buildings and Spaces	Current State (2025)	Target (2027)
Accessibility modification Metric: % of required capital projects consulted on from the Accessibility Advisory Committee	New Initiative	100%
2. Transportation	Current State (2025)	Target (2027)
Accessible transit fleet Metric: % of fully accessible public transit buses	100%	100%
Transit Furniture Metric: % of transit stops with street furniture	39%	45%
3. Housing	Current State (2025)	Target (2030)
Affordable housing units Metric: # of affordable housing units created	117 (160 in progress)	506 (2030)



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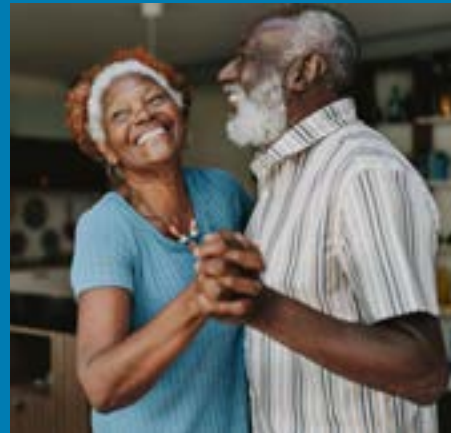
4 . Social Participation	Baseline (2025)	Target (2027)
Participation in recreation Metric: # of older adults (50+) participating in seniors community programming	6,316	12,632
Access to learning opportunities Metric: # of programs that support life-long learning	New initiative	15
5 . Respect and Social Inclusion	Baseline (2025)	Target (2027)
Train all new staff in Age-Friendly customer service Metric: % of new staff who receive training in Age-Friendly customer service	100%	100%
Age-Friendly Training Metric: # of age-friendly related workshops available to all City staff	10	25
6 . Civic Participation and Employment	Baseline (2025)	Target (2027)
Participation in skills training opportunities Metric: # of adults in community workshops and programs	1,005	1,200

Measuring Success



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7 . Communication and Information	Baseline (2025)	Target (2027)
Social Media Participation Metric: # of Facebook followers	27,111	35,000
High traffic on municipal website Metric: # of brantford.ca website yearly page views	5,032,584	6,000,000
8 . Community and Health Services	Baseline (2025)	Target (2027)
Access to Physical Health Education Metric: # of programs that focus on physical health promotion information and awareness	36	66
Access to Mental Health Education Metric: # of programs that focus on mental health information and awareness	New initiative	10



For more information and resources visit
[Brantford.ca/HealthyLiving](https://brantford.ca/HealthyLiving)

