What We Heard to Date

Key Themes

1. Communication, Information Access, and Civic Engagement

Participants emphasized the importance of accessible, low-barrier communication methods to ensure older adults are fully informed and able to participate in civic processes.

What we heard:

- Participants strongly prefer **printed materials delivered directly to residences or buildings**
- Newsletters were identified as a preferred format, particularly if they include opportunities for feedback or surveys
- Multiple communication channels are necessary, including email for those who use digital tools, but not as the sole method
- Information must be **consistently accessible in public spaces within buildings**
- There is a desire for **more frequent in-person engagement opportunities**
- Participants emphasized equitable outreach across neighbourhoods, particularly in underserved areas

A key sentiment across discussions was that communication should not rely solely on digital access and must meet people where they are.

2. Transit, Mobility, and Accessibility

Transit was identified as one of the most significant and urgent concerns raised during the consultation.

What we heard:

- Recent bus route changes have made travel significantly more difficult for long-time transit users
- Participants reported confusion and reduced ability to access key destinations, including major shopping areas and services
- System redesign was widely viewed as not reflecting the lived travel patterns of current users, particularly older adults and low-income residents
- Increased walking distances between stops and transfers present major barriers
- Winter conditions, including poor sidewalk maintenance and snow clearing, significantly impact safe transit access
- Handi-Transit was repeatedly identified as difficult to access, with concerns about eligibility, renewal timelines, and administrative burden
- Some participants expressed frustration that system planning did not include meaningful consultation with actual transit users

There was strong agreement that transit is an essential service and a key equity issue for older adults, particularly those without access to private vehicles.

3. Housing Affordability and Availability

Housing emerged as a major concern, particularly regarding affordability and suitability for older adults.

What we heard (synthesized):

- Many seniors are struggling to find housing within fixed or limited incomes
- Participants identified a lack of affordable and mid-range housing options for older adults
- Concerns were raised about rent increases and whether sufficient oversight exists in approval processes

- Existing seniors' housing options were described as expensive and, in some cases, restrictive in terms of amenities and independence
- Participants expressed concern about vacant and poorly maintained housing and accountability of landlords

Overall, participants emphasized that housing affordability and quality are closely linked to safety, dignity, and independence in aging.

4. Accessibility, Infrastructure, and Built Environment

Physical accessibility was identified as a foundational issue affecting mobility, safety, and independence.

What we heard (synthesized):

- Sidewalks, curbs, and ramps were consistently identified as barriers, particularly for those using mobility aids
- Winter maintenance, including snow and ice removal, was described as inconsistent and unsafe
- Participants highlighted increased risk of falls and mobility restrictions due to poor infrastructure maintenance
- Parking availability and accessibility near community spaces was also raised as a concern
- Participants emphasized the importance of consistent maintenance standards across neighbourhoods.

5. Inclusion, Respect, and Age-Friendly Values

Participants reflected on broader principles of inclusion, respect, and how older adults are viewed within the community.

What we heard:

- Age-friendly communities were described as those that prioritize safety and accessibility for all ages, particularly the youngest and oldest residents

- Participants emphasized the importance of intergenerational respect and inclusion
- Some expressed frustration with age-related assumptions and stereotypes about older adults' abilities and engagement
- There was a strong desire for systems and services that recognize the ongoing contributions and independence of older adults

Key Takeaways

Across all themes, participants consistently identified:

- Transit accessibility and reliability as a critical barrier to independence
- Housing affordability as a growing and urgent concern
- Infrastructure maintenance (especially winter conditions) as a safety issue
- The need for accessible, non-digital-first communication strategies
- A desire for meaningful consultation and follow-through on community feedback

What's Next- **Upcoming Engagements:**

- **May 7, 2026:** Consultation with older adults from the Muslim community at the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI). (Invite Only)
- **May 8, 2026:** South Winnipeg Age-Friendly Consultation with Councillor Janice Lukes and Councillor Markus Chambers. (Invite Only)
- **May 13, 2026:** Presentation by Dr. Michelle Porter, Director of the Centre on Aging. (Invite Only)
- **June 2026 (TBD):** High-level presentation in partnership with A & O: Support Services for Older Adults. (Invite Only)

Additional consultation dates are currently being confirmed.