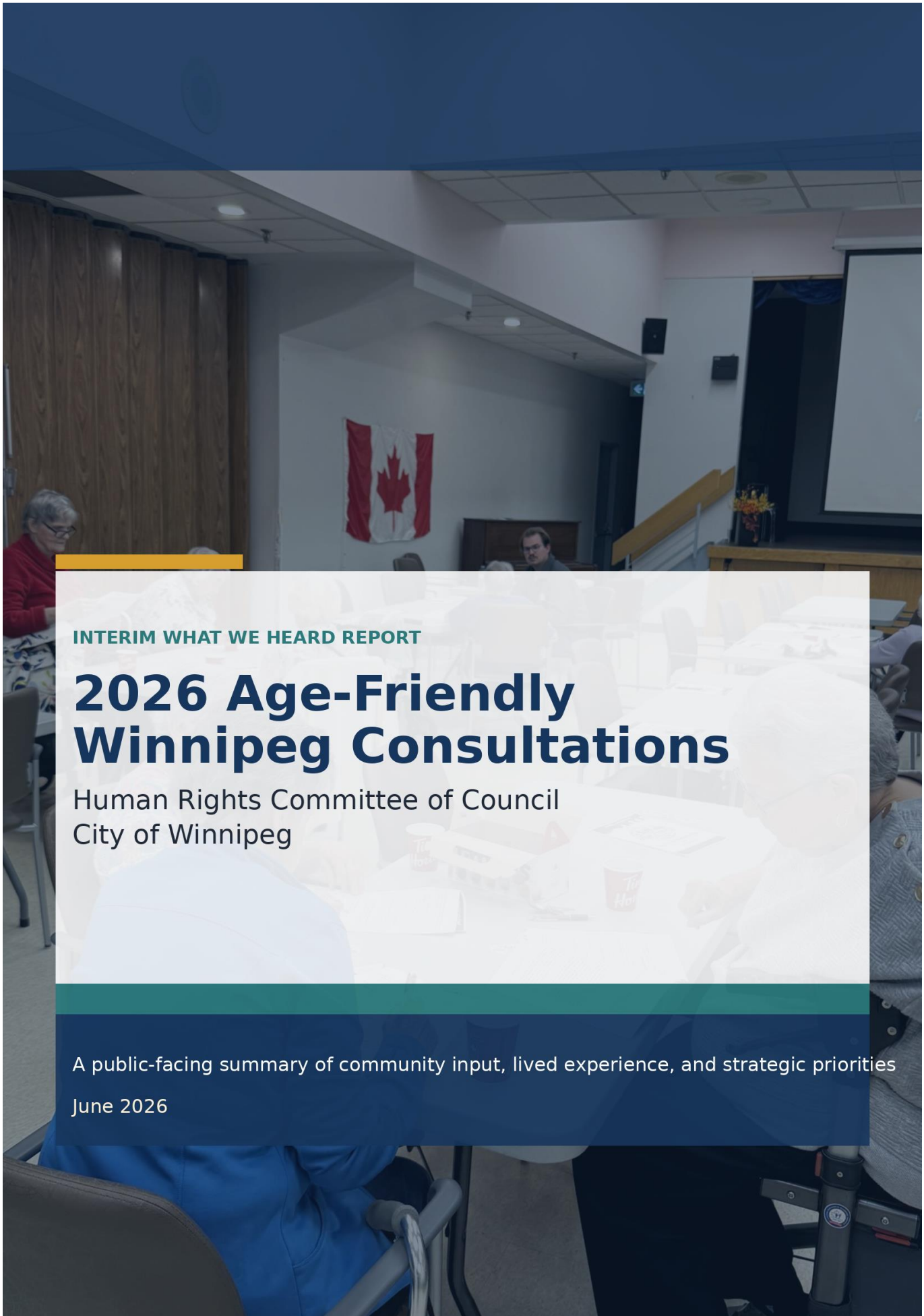


INTERIM WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

2026 Age-Friendly Winnipeg Consultations

Human Rights Committee of Council
City of Winnipeg

A public-facing summary of community input, lived experience, and strategic priorities

June 2026

AT A GLANCE

Executive Snapshot

The report captures early consultation findings for an age-friendly Winnipeg.

120	69%	58%	5
baseline respondents in the Age-Friendly Survey	core sample aged 65–84	Seniors reporting housing concerns	strategic priorities for Q3–Q4 2026

Note of Thanks

Thank you to the alumni of the Human Rights Committee of Council and all of those who workshopped the original Age-Friendly workshop materials.

CONTENTS

Introductory Leadership Message ……3

Project Overview & Progress to Date……4

Consultation Schedule & Methodology……6

Preliminary Findings ……7

Voices from the Community……13

Next Steps.....14

INTRODUCTORY LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Letter from the Chair, Human Rights Committee of Council

Dear Age-Friendly Winnipeggers,

On behalf of Winnipeg's Human Rights Committee of Council, I am pleased to introduce this "What We Heard" report, a vital milestone in our 2026 Age-Friendly consultations. These sessions are designed to ensure that the voices of older Winnipeggers are heard, respected, and meaningfully included in shaping the future of our city.

The engagement process has invited residents to share their lived experiences and ideas to ensure Winnipeg evolves in alignment with international human rights standards. To this end, the strategic approach is firmly guided by the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991)—independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment, and dignity. As well as the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Framework, which identifies eight critical domains of urban inclusion.

The preliminary contributions summarized in this report will do more than inform our planning; they represent an essential component of the City's ongoing human rights and inclusion dialogue. Following this process, we will be submitting this "What We Heard" document along with a formal briefing note to Council and a motion on the official record.

I am deeply grateful to the volunteers, community groups, and 55-plus residences who continue to participate. With your participation, Winnipeg is taking significant steps closer to becoming a "Human Rights City" where residents of all ages can thrive with dignity and belonging.

— Councillor Sherri Rollins, Chair, Human Rights Committee of Council

"Voices of older Winnipeggers must be heard, respected, and meaningfully included in shaping the future of our city."

Project Overview & Progress to Date

The Human Rights Committee of Council (HRCC) has formally incorporated the Age-Friendly Initiative into its multi-year workplan. This alignment fulfills Council's direction to institutionalize the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities Framework and the United Nations Decade for Healthy Aging within Winnipeg's municipal strategies.



Consultation at Portage Commons.

Core Objectives

To implement an inclusive, safe, and accessible consultation framework; to capture both quantitative metrics and qualitative feedback from older adults across Winnipeg; and to produce reports on "What We Heard" to confirm with participants and report to Council through the Human Rights Committee of Council.

Milestone Progress (2025–2026)

TARGETED PRE-ENGAGEMENT

Early collaboration to refine materials were developed with input from several seniors councils and the Centre on Aging, A & O: Support Services for Older Adults.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE OUTREACH

Tailored engagements have been launched with ethnocultural organizations, including Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, Muslim-led organizations, Sudanese community leadership, among others supported directly by the Accessibility and Inclusion Subcommittee.

MATERIAL ADAPTATION

Print materials have been converted into large-print formats and plain-language structures to limit barriers. Translation initiatives are currently underway for upcoming sessions.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

In parallel, the Public Service (Community Development) has delivered formal administrative update with Age-Friendly Manitoba resources consolidated as key baseline report from an interdepartmental working group.

Consultation Schedule & Methodology

The 2026 engagement schedule balances broad public forums with more private groups to build diverse representation across Winnipeg.

Accessible consultation means meeting residents where they are—not requiring every resident to meet the City online.

Emphasis on workshop design and approach drawn from the engagement input of residents.

Date	Session / Initiative Title	Type / Status
May 7, 2026	Canadian Muslim Women's Institute (CMWI) Consultation	Completed (Invite Only)
May 8, 2026	South Winnipeg Consultation (with Lukes and Chambers)	Completed (Invite Only)
May 13, 2026	Strategic Presentation by Dr. Michelle Porter (Director, Centre on Aging)	Completed (Strategic Review)
June 23, 2026	Portage Commons Public Forum	Completed (Public)
Upcoming	Deaf Seniors Association Age-Friendly Consultation	In Planning Focus Group
Upcoming	Multi-Ward Targeted Stakeholder Focus Groups	In Planning Focus Group
Upcoming	City-Wide Constituency Survey Drop-Off & Outreach Initiative	Active Field Deployment

Age Friendly Methodology Highlight

Constituency Survey Drop-Off Strategy

To bypass the digital divide and ensure equitable baseline data collection, the Age Friendly consultation is rolling out a physical survey mechanism across the City of Winnipeg. This protocol involves deploying hard-copy, large-print survey bundles directly into localized centers, including Winnipeg Public Library branches, 55-Plus Active Living Centres, Legion halls, and senior housing complexes. Dedicated returns will be managed at each location. By establishing localized frameworks the methodology secures data from highly isolated or low-mobility seniors.

> **"The survey drop-off strategy is designed to bypass the digital divide and reach isolated or low-mobility seniors."**
> *Age Friendly Methodology highlight*

Preliminary Findings

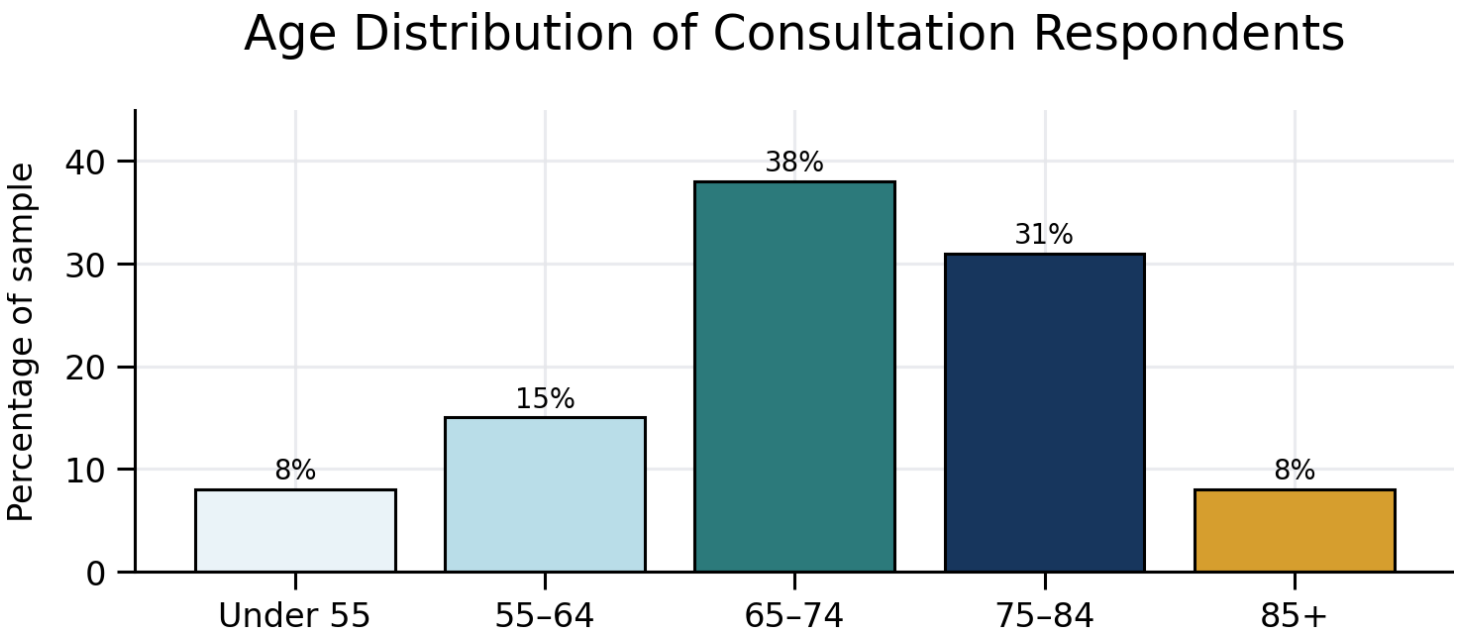
Participant Profile Data Analysis

Quantitative analytics have been synthesized from an initial pool of 120 respondents tracked via the Age-Friendly Survey Vertical Tracker.

Geographies span Fort Richmond, St. Vital, Maples, West Broadway, Fort Rouge, Fort Garry, Sage Creek, South Point, and Windsor Park.

4.1 Age Distribution Matrix

38%	31%	8%
Age 65–74 — high core segment	Age 75–84 — high core segment	Age 85 or older



Age distribution from the baseline respondent sample.

"There are more & more respondents each month and more engagements that are planned than can be scheduled. Council should extend the consultation until 2027."

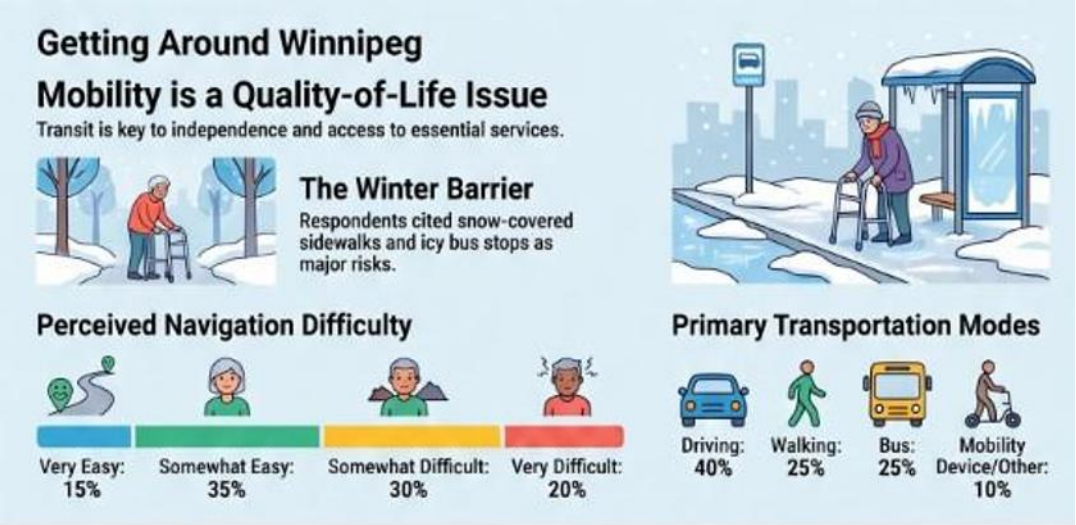
Core interim recommendation

Navigation & Mobility

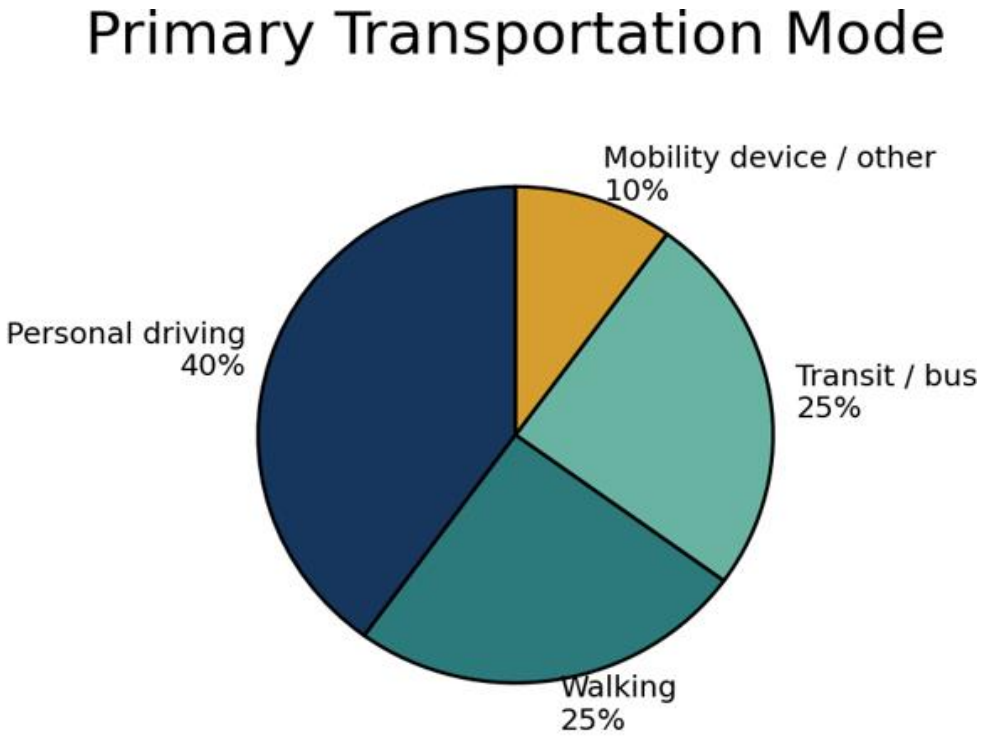
"Mobility directly dictates quality of life."

Preliminary finding

Respondents graded the absolute ease of moving around Winnipeg's public spaces, transit options, and sidewalk corridors.



Modal Split Analysis (Primary Transport)



Primary transportation mode reported by respondents.

PERSONAL DRIVING
40% remains high, though concerns exist regarding long-term affordability and medical license maintenance.

PEDESTRIAN/WALKING
25% highly prioritized during optimal summer conditions; limited significantly by infrastructure gaps.

TRANSIT/BUS
25% identified as a critical lifeline for non-drivers, but under functional stress due to route redesigns.

MOBILITY DEVICE / OTHER
10% includes reliance on motorized wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and specialized medical transit frameworks.

Mobility & Urban Infrastructure as Determinants of Health

Consultation focus groups conclusively showed that mobility directly dictates quality of life.

Participants emphasized the following structural issues:

THE WINTER BARRIER
Inconsistent or delayed clearing of neighborhood sidewalks and regional bus stops creates profound physical risks, trapping seniors inside for months and inducing extreme social isolation.

TRANSIT MODIFICATION FRICTION
Recent modifications to city transit routing were criticized as confusing and unintuitive. Increased walking parameters between transfer stops create significant barriers for individuals managing chronic pain or balance issues.

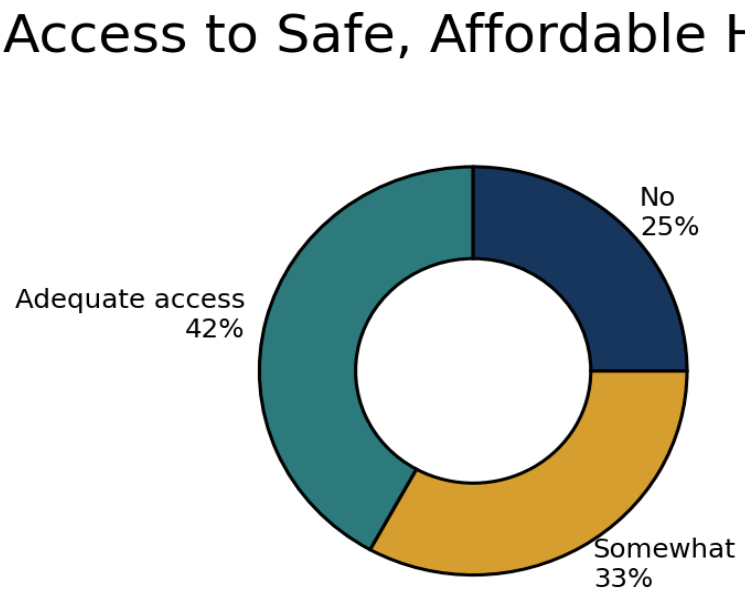
HANDI-TRANSIT ACCESS
Broad dissatisfaction was documented regarding rigid eligibility requirements, complex renewal cycles, and strict operational constraints.

The Housing Gap & Universal Design

Respondents graded housing adequacy and access



Tracker data shows that while 42% of respondents feel they have adequate access to safe, affordable housing, a substantial combined segment of 58% rate they have no access (25%) or only somewhat have access to housing (33%).



Housing access reported by respondents.

Participants emphasized the following structural issues:

FIXED-INCOME VULNERABILITY

Escalating rent parameters, escalating property taxes, and deferred home-maintenance expenses outstripping fixed senior pensions, driving a shortage of mid-range, accessible housing.

AGING IN PLACE INFRASTRUCTURE

Residents highlighted that simple, standardized access upgrades, such as bathroom grab bars, higher-profile toilets, standard building elevators, and widened entry frames, must be formalized in building codes to allow seniors to maintain independence.

"Accessible housing is not only about affordability; it is about preserving independence, dignity, and the ability to age in place."

Preliminary Finding

Inclusive Communication & The Digital Divide

While the City of Winnipeg's website compliance with WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards represents technical progress, participants expressed an overarching concern regarding a growing digital exclusion gap. Reliance on purely digital notifications, web portals, and online scheduling leaves a vast demographic disconnected. Overwhelming preference was demonstrated for hard-copy pamphlets, physical brochures, regional newspapers, community radio, and trusted word-of-mouth networks.

"Communication must include non-digital options. Reliance on technology alone leaves many feeling isolated and uninformed."

Preliminary feedback

Social Participation & Community Hubs

Winnipeg Public Library branches were widely celebrated as essential lifelines.

Beyond traditional print collections, their provision of accessible meeting spaces, large-print volumes, and specialized DAISY players allows continuous civic participation.

Programs like the Homebound Library Service bring vital materials to home-restricted individuals.

Universal Park modifications, such as senior fitness installations at John Forsyth Park, showcase how physical design can spark organic, multi-generational connection.

"Libraries, parks, and community spaces are civic infrastructure for belonging."
Preliminary Finding

Voices from the Community (Direct Testimonials)

"I feel like I no longer have access to my community. I want more of these type of events and engagements with my friends."

"More accessible and inclusive options for us to engage and volunteer."

"Communication must include non-digital options. Reliance on technology alone leaves many feeling isolated and uninformed."

"Transit is about independence, connection, and access to daily life. Recent transit changes have created new barriers for those with mobility challenges."

"An age-friendly city is a better city for all generations."



Age Friendly Consultation

Next Steps

The findings gathered throughout this interim window will be compiled into a briefing note for City Council. By transitioning qualitative metrics into real budget and policy amendments, the City of Winnipeg moves steadily closer to a framework of true human rights inclusion, ensuring all residents can live out their lives with the dignity and belonging they deserve.

"The expectation of participants in the Age-Friendly Consultation are identifiable action, budget and policy amendments. In this way they view Winnipeg moving closer to true Age Friendly and human rights inclusion."