



Age-friendly Nova Scotia

COMMUNITY PLANNING IS COMING OF AGE

Picture this:

Your community is thriving. Older adults remain active, live in security, enjoy good health, and continue to participate fully in society. People of all ages work together to make the community a vibrant, welcoming, and safe place for everyone.

Age-friendly community planning can help make the vision a reality.

Discover how to assess and improve the age-friendliness of your community or organization.

Age-friendly Nova Scotia is part of a global movement, grounded in research led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and promoted by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The initiative is supported in Nova Scotia by the Department of Seniors. Our partners include the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, and many others.

Supporting communities to become age-friendly is one way the province is working to ensure that Nova Scotians continue to thrive in changing times.

This brochure describes highlights from Nova Scotia's Age-friendly Community Planning website. For details, visit novascotia.ca/agefriendly.

The Department of Seniors supports age-friendly community planning in the following ways:

- **advice and guidance for local age-friendly initiatives**
- **knowledge sharing, including policy development, and research**
- **funding for community planning and age-friendly projects**
- **community recognition, linked to national and international recognition programs**
- **provincial leadership that encourages Nova Scotians to work together across sectors and at all levels.**

Guiding principles

- **Recognize** the strengths and resources that older adults bring to the community.
- **Anticipate** and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.
- **Respect** decisions and lifestyle choices.
- **Support** the safety and well-being of those who are most vulnerable.
- **Engage** older adults and encourage them to contribute in all areas of community life.

When local governments and community organizations put these principles into practice, they are applying an age-friendly lens to their work.

Features

- **Outdoor spaces and public buildings** are pleasant, safe, and accessible.
- **Housing** is affordable, secure, suitably located, and well designed for older adults.
- **Transportation** is accessible and affordable.
- **Community life** includes recreational, social, cultural, and spiritual activities suitable for people of all ages and cultures.
- **Civic engagement** is meaningful, respectful, and inclusive. Older adults are consulted and involved in the local government and public organizations.
- **Paid and volunteer work** is available for older adults and is suited to their interests and abilities.
- **Information** is easy to find and easy to understand.
- **Community support and health services** are well coordinated to meet the needs of older adults and vulnerable people.

These features are sometimes called *key areas* or *domains* for community planning.



Process

Age-friendly planning is a community-led process. Older adults are actively involved. Stakeholders collaborate. The process aims to be accessible, inclusive, and mutually supportive.

The process might begin as a new initiative, or it might be combined with community planning that is already underway. Your community might start small, focusing on one or two key areas. Or you may choose a comprehensive approach, leading to formal recognition as an age-friendly community.

The longer-term goal is to incorporate age-friendly principles into all planning and decision making; into policies, programs, and services; and in the design of the built environment.

Plan

- Establish an advisory group
- Build commitment
- Assess needs
- Set priorities
- Publish an action plan

Implement

Complete projects identified in the action plan

Evaluate

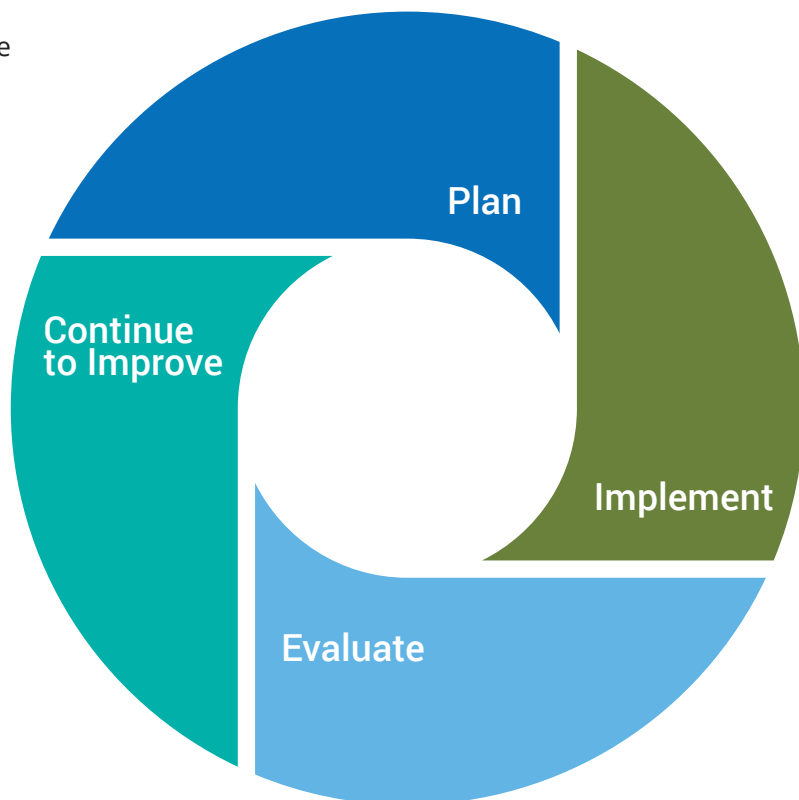
Measure activities, review outcomes, and report publicly

Continue to Improve

Continue to assess, prioritize, and take action to become more age-friendly

Timing

Becoming age friendly is an ongoing commitment to your community. You set the pace, together with older adults and other community partners. Typically, it takes one to two years to complete the planning phase and publish an action plan. Most action plans have a timeframe of three to five years, with short-term, medium-term, and long-term outcomes. Evaluation happens throughout the process and includes periodic reporting to the community.



The guiding principles, features, and process described here are adapted from several sources, including the World Health Organization and the Public Health Agency of Canada.



Why Age-Friendly?

Age-friendly community planning is a proven way to help communities meet changing needs. The benefits are far-reaching.

For people of all ages

An age-friendly community supports aging in place. Older adults are able to live actively, enjoy good health, and remain independent and involved in their community. When people have the supports they need, they are better able to support their families, friends, and neighbours. As well, people of all ages and abilities benefit from safer, barrier-free buildings and streets, better access to local businesses and facilities, and shared green spaces.

For local government

Local governments that engage older adults and take steps to meet changing needs are helping to ensure that Nova Scotia's communities continue to thrive. The Department of Seniors gathers and shares information about successful age-friendly projects and promising practices—helping communities to learn from each other.

For service providers

Service providers—in health care, community support, policing, and other sectors—benefit from a community planning process that encourages more engagement of older adults, more collaboration across sectors, and better communication throughout the community. Better information and stronger partnerships can lead to service efficiencies and local innovations.

For businesses

Seniors are the fastest growing segment of Nova Scotia's population. Their needs, interests, and spending power have a key impact on our economy. In age-friendly communities, local businesses benefit from the stable support of older customers. Businesses can also benefit from new market opportunities as people get older and their needs change. Employers benefit from the skills of older workers who bring experience, diversity, and community connections to the workplace.

For all Nova Scotians

Age-friendly community development supports the can-do spirit of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy (the Ivany Commission, 2014) and the oneNS Coalition (onens.ca). It brings us together to shape the future.

Discover how your community can leverage small, focused efforts to achieve big results that strengthen and sustain your community over time.

Thrive for a lifetime in Age-friendly Nova Scotia

Find out more at novascotia.ca/agefriendly