

CARP Age Friendly Cities Poll Report June 27, 2014

Key Findings - Age-Friendly Environments

The plurality of CARP members live in medium sized cities, and the vast majority find them age-friendly (although most just say “somewhat” age-friendly). Items that would improve the age-friendliness of their environments include housing, both accessible and affordable, more political inclusion and better transit.

The minority has encountered barriers to social engagement based on ageism, and most think it easier to stay engaged in small towns or rural areas, rather than in cities. The lack of more age-friendly policies is blamed on political shortsightedness and other priorities on cities’ agendas.

Convenient health facilities, grocery shopping and seniors’ centres are seen as the most important elements of an age-friendly community, but most say they wouldn’t be more socially engaged than they are now if their environment were more age-friendly. Half say their local governments are aware of the need to include seniors in planning, but few say they are “very aware”.

The wide majority would take the age-friendliness of an environment into consideration if they moved, and most see this age-friendliness being influenced and motivated by national standards for infrastructure, targeted funding for government projects and including age in all environmental assessments. Given all this however, most see the services in their communities as “somewhat accessible”. Reinforcing this, most say their quality of life is not affected by the age-friendliness of their environment, because they make their own environments.

Assisted Death

The wide majority agrees with the Quebec legislation allowing assisted death, and this is entirely consistent with all our past polling on assisted suicide.

Ontario Election

Half of Ontario CARP members watched the leaders debate, most thought Tim Hudak was the winner but most said they would (and did) vote Liberal, and our members effectively predicted the election outcome better than most of the professional pollsters.

Detailed Findings - Age Friendly Environments

The plurality of CARP members live in medium sized cities (39%), while the balance are evenly distributed between large metropolitan areas (21%), towns (18%) and rural areas (21%).

Do you live in an urban or rural environment?

Major metropolis (1 mil+)	21%
City (50K to 1 mil)	39%
Town (10K to 50K)	18%
Small town/rural (less than 10K)	21%

The vast majority see their own environments as age-friendly (93%), but most use the least emphatic descriptor (“somewhat” - 52%).

How would you rate your environment for being age-friendly?

AGE-FRIENDLY	93%
Extremely - amenities, resources, infrastructure	9%
Very - affordable housing, few obstacles	32%
Somewhat - some resources, seniors live here	52%
NOT AGE-FRIENDLY	6%
Not very - few resources, seniors, hard to get around	4%
Not at all - no transit, seniors, resources, amenities	2%
DON'T KNOW/OTHER	2%

Housing, both affordable and accessible (20% each) forms the basis for action needed by governments in creating age-friendly environments, along with more inclusion (18%), more transit (17%) and a better pedestrian environment (12%).

Which one aspect of your environment requires the most urgent action by local/provincial/federal governments to become more age friendly?

More accessible, age-friendly housing	20%
More affordable housing	20%
More political/social inclusion, seniors ignored	18%
More transit/better mobility	17%
Better pedestrian environment	12%
OTHER	5%
DON'T KNOW	8%

The minority, about one quarter, say they have encountered barriers to inclusion caused by ageism (27%), but few say it happens frequently (6%).

Have you experienced barriers to your social engagement or inclusion in your environment due to ageism and disregard for the needs of seniors?

YES	27%
Frequently, community ignores seniors' needs	6%
Sometimes, not optimized for seniors	21%
NO	71%
Rarely, environment is age-friendly	33%
Don't encounter age barriers	38%
DON'T KNOW/OTHER	2%

More than half think social inclusion is more likely in small towns and rural areas than in cities (53%), and few opt for cities (13%). One fifth says it makes no difference where you live (20%).

Do you think it's easier to stay socially engaged in a large city or in a small town or rural area?

Large city	13%
Small town/rural area	53%
Equally easy in both	20%
DON'T KNOW	14%

Most blame political short-sightedness for the lack of action on age-friendly policies (41%), while some think cities have other priorities (13%) or that seniors are not heard (10%).

If age friendly policies make cities and towns more inviting for everyone, why do you think governments have not made these policies a priority?

Politicians can't think beyond next election	41%
Cities have more urgent priorities, poverty, housing	13%
Seniors don't speak out	10%
Cities have become too reliant on cars	9%
Hard to coordinate governments/private sector	8%
Not top-of-mind	7%
Costs too high/cities have limited budgets	7%
OTHER	1%
DON'T KNOW	3%

The three most important amenities in an age-friendly community are seen to be convenient health facilities (40%), convenient grocery shopping (18%) and community centres or seniors' centres (16%).

What are the most important community resources for seniors that should be available in all neighbourhoods?

Convenient health facilities	40%
Convenient grocery shopping	18%
Community/seniors' centres	16%
Walkable high street with street furniture	8%
Ample parking	3%
General merchandise/department store	2%
Convenient pharmacy	1%
OTHER	6%
DON'T KNOW	5%

The minority, about one quarter, say they would be more socially engaged if their environments were more age-friendly (27%), and very few say they would be much more engaged (5%).

Would you be more socially engaged if your civic environment were more age friendly?

YES	27%
Much more	5%
More	22%
NO	69%
Not much more	22%
Wouldn't change my social life	47%
DON'T KNOW/OTHER	5%

One half say their local governments are aware of the need for including seniors' needs in planning (50%), but few say their local governments are "very aware" (7%).

How aware is your local government of the need for taking seniors into consideration when planning?

AWARE	50%
Very aware - have seniors advising planning	7%
Somewhat aware - some efforts to involve seniors	43%
NOT AWARE	40%
Not very aware - planning focus is on families, youth	34%
Not at all aware - seniors not involved at all	6%
DON'T KNOW/OTHER	10%

The wide majority will consider how age friendly an environment is before moving (83%), and many of these find it "very important" (38%).

How important would the age friendly aspect of a civic environment be in choosing where to live if you were moving?

IMPORTANT	83%
Very	38%
Somewhat	45%
NOT IMPORTANT	9%
Not very	7%
Not at all	2%
WON'T MOVE AGAIN	7%
DON'T KNOW/OTHER	1%

National standards, age-friendly environmental assessments and targeted funding in government projects are all seen to be useful ways the government can contribute to age-friendly environments (28%, 25% and 21%, respectively). Age friendly building codes are also mentioned (12%).

How can the federal and provincial governments assist municipalities in ensuring age friendly environments in both urban and rural settings?

National/provincial infrastructure standards	28%
Age-friendly environmental assessments	25%
Targeted funding in all government projects	21%
Age-friendly building codes	12%
Appoint Royal Commission on age-friendliness	3%
OTHER	3%
DON'T KNOW	7%

The wide majority see their local services as accessible (79%), although most say they are “somewhat” accessible (65%).

Age friendly environments, communities and services are arguably good for the economic and physical wellbeing of business and citizens. How accessible are the businesses and services where you live?

ACCESSIBLE	79%
Very - suited to all ages/abilities	14%
Somewhat - suitable for most peoples needs	65%
NOT ACCESSIBLE	19%
Not very - little for seniors, children, disabled	17%
Not at all - no planning for access	2%
DON'T KNOW/OTHER	3%

Two thirds say they make their own environments and are not affected by age-friendliness (69%), while just fewer than a tenth wish for more (7%).

How is your quality of life affected by the extent to which your environment is designed to be age friendly?

Positive - environment is age-friendly/meets needs	22%
Neutral - make my own environment	69%
Negative - prefer more age-friendly environment	7%
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	2%

Assisted Death

Seven-in-ten members agree with the Quebec decision on assisted death (73%) and this is exactly consistent with all our past polling on assisted suicide.

The Quebec National Assembly just passed a right to medical assistance in dying bill with overwhelming support. Do you agree or disagree other provinces should follow Quebec's lead?

Agree	73%
Disagree	14%
DON'T KNOW	13%

Ontario Election

More than half of Ontario members watched the debate (56%).

(ONTARIO) Did you watch or listen to the leaders' debate on Tuesday, June 3, 2014?

Yes	56%
No	44%

Most Ontario members who tuned in think Tim Hudak won the debate (41%), while a quarter think no one won (26%).

(ONTARIO) Who do you think won the debate?

Tim Hudak	41%
Kathleen Wynne	15%
Andrea Horwath	8%
NONE OF THEM	26%

The vast majority who saw it said the debate would not change their minds about their vote (90%).

(ONTARIO) Did the debate change the way you plan to vote in the election on June 12?

Yes	6%
No	90%
DON'T KNOW	4%

Three quarters say the debate didn't change their thinking (72%), while those who changed were most likely to move to Tim Hudak's PCs (13%)

(ONTARIO) How did the debate change your vote?

More likely to vote PC	13%
More likely to vote Liberal	8%
More likely to vote NDP	4%
DEBATE DIDN'T CHANGE MY MIND	72%

CARP members effectively predicted the outcome of the election, by giving the Liberals a majority-inducing vote share (42%), while the PCs trail just slightly (36%).

(ONTARIO- DECIDED VOTERS ONLY) Which party will you vote for in the Ontario provincial election June 12?

	CARP Poll™	Election
Liberal	42%	39%
PC	36%	31%
NDP	13%	24%
Green	6%	5%

Electoral Preference

The Conservatives (36%) have increased their vote share at the expense of the Liberals (45%).

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are needed to see this picture.

More than 2100 CARP Poll™ online panel members responded to this poll between June 6 and 10, 2014. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20