



What does Aging in Place mean to Yukoners? What do Yukoners need to help them age well?

A brief summary of the public engagement conducted by
the Department of Health and Social Services

WHAT DOES AGING IN PLACE MEAN?

Here's what you told us:

Aging in place means **Planning for the Future** while maintaining autonomy and independence. Seniors want their future communities to be more inclusive and respectful of elders. Planning for the future also refers to educating yourself and exploring options for housing and health care, while understanding that financial issues and limitations are big parts of this planning process. As people age, they question the role of government in their lives and provide advice to city planners and developers to make shared spaces more age-friendly. To thrive in place, seniors are requesting initiatives that will support them to stay at home, including an increase in the types of health care services, enhanced home-care services and supported housing options.

Accessing Local Services and Programs is an important component of aging in place. People want to know what is available and how to access the things they want and need. Many participants suggested the creation of central hubs, where seniors can access everything in one place and have professionals to assist them with navigating systems and services. Yukoners want access to a wide range of services, including: allied health, financial, social, medical, housing, home care, and transportation. Expanding and improving access to these services would enhance the lives of many seniors in Yukon.

The desire to **Stay at Home Longer** emerges regularly in the data. Seniors understand that there are risks involved with staying in their homes as they age. They also realize that social programs, medical supports, assistive devices, mobility aids, financial assistance and other services will need to be available and accessible to help them remain at home. The main question becomes how to best support Yukon seniors to stay at home longer with dignity, necessary care, and access to the broader community.

Aging in Place means **Maintaining Relationships and Connections**. This means having a sense of belonging in the community, keeping familial connections strong and supported, and acknowledging the importance of relationships with pets. Seniors want to engage in meaningful social connections with the broader community, particularly in mutually beneficial intergenerational connections. They also request the creation of more gathering places to support meaningful connections in their communities.

Ultimately, seniors want to feel **Comfortable and Safe** in the places they live. Taking safety measures in the community, such as clearing sidewalks and providing seniors' parking, are important, as safety is often linked to accessibility and mobility in one's home and community. Having supportive, caring and well-trained staff and creating home-like atmospheres also help people to feel comfortable and safe in long-term care settings. Wherever they live, seniors want to know the people around them care about them and show concern for their comfort and safety through words and actions. They also wish to be informed of ways to reduce their risks of abuse and fraud as they age.

Right now, **Housing** is a huge issue in the North. Seniors want to see a continuum of affordable housing options: private homes; granny suites; supported living; assisted living; 24-hour care; and hospice, respite and palliative care options. Seniors desire quality housing and care options that will change along with them as they age. There are many alternative housing options that are proving successful in other parts of the world, and Yukoners encourage their government to look at these options before it considers large-scale institutions.

Aging in Place does not simply mean becoming older, it means **Living a Full and Meaningful Life**. For seniors, living fully means being themselves, doing the things they love, and having access to assistance to do those things if needed. Living fully includes having an active and vibrant life within the community. Participants identified many ways to help them achieve this goal: intergenerational connections; physical activity; educational opportunities; entertainment; social and cultural gatherings; hobbies; spirituality; pets and animals; and volunteer and employment opportunities. Each person has individual likes, pursuits, experiences, and pastimes. Aging in place means asking yourself, how do you plan to live a full, vibrant life as a senior in the North?

Information gathered from this project will be used to help Yukoners plan for their futures, access services and programs, stay at home longer, maintain relationships and connections, feel comfortable and safe, choose from a variety of housing options and live full and vibrant lives.

WHAT DO YUKONERS NEED TO HELP THEM AGE WELL?

Participants shared many ideas with us about ways to address aging in place issues and challenges throughout the territory. Here is a brief summary of those ideas:

Planning for the Future

- Show respect for seniors through language, behaviour, community planning and delivery of programs and services.
- Respect seniors' rights to make decisions about their own futures, and support them in those decisions.
- Encourage Yukoners to begin planning for their future earlier in life, by exploring financial, health, and housing options.
- Build and design spaces and programs that are age-friendly and accessible.
- Develop a holistic view of aging in place, and long-term policies and programs to support people as they age.
- Increase the number of health care practitioners and enhance home care services throughout the territory.

Accessing Local Services and Programs

- Create seniors' hubs throughout the territory, where seniors can access programs, services and information.
- Hire advocates for seniors throughout the territory, to help them navigate the system and its services.
- Improve communication with and for seniors programming, issues, and events – provide a multi-pronged approach to communication.
- Make communication tools and strategies more age-friendly (i.e. larger print formats).

Staying at Home Longer

- Enhance transportation options, expand public transportation, handi-bus services, senior specific transportation options (i.e. community vans) and volunteer driver programs throughout the territory.
- Increase home care and household chores services.
- Provide day programs, expand respite services, and offer home-based palliative care and medically assisted-dying options.

Maintaining Relationships and Connections

- Support seniors to meaningfully engage with their communities.
- Develop housing options that keep families and connections together, including couples housing, options for parents and adult children to live together, and pet-friendly housing.
- Create gathering places for social interaction for seniors within the broader community.

Feeling Comfortable and Safe

- Show seniors that you care for them, take time to listen to their concerns, and pay attention to safety issues that impact accessibility and mobility.
- Develop programs and services that assist with snow shoveling, house maintenance and public accessibility.
- Ensure supportive and caring staff and create home-like environments in long-term care settings.
- Provide education to all government and health care employees about the history and cultures of Yukon First Nations.

Accessing A Variety of Housing Options

- Explore alternative housing solutions, included supported independent living.
- Increase the number of suites available in the community, and amend zoning by-laws to allow for multiple dwellings on a single property.
- Provide tax benefits or breaks to intergenerational families and primary caregivers of seniors.
- Offer smaller-scale, assisted, and affordable housing options.

Living a Full and Meaningful Life

- Support seniors to continue to do what they love to do.
- Transportation, assisted devices, and volunteers enable seniors to continue to live full and meaningful lives.
- Provide a rich and diverse range of programs for seniors, and adapt programming for a wide variety of abilities.

NOTE: This document is a summary of comments made by the many Yukoners who participated in the public engagement on Aging in Place. Its content does not represent the views or opinions of the Government of Yukon or its employees.

