

# MARKHAM AGE FRIENDLY DESIGN GUIDELINES



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT

MARCH 2022





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 ABOUT THIS REPORT	5
2.2 ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	6
2.3 ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE	7
<b>3.0 ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 PHASE 2: PRE-ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	10
3.2 PHASE 3: ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	13
<b>4.0 WHAT WE HEARD</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 PHASE 2: WHAT WE HEARD	18
4.2 PHASE 3: WHAT WE HEARD	20
4.3 CONCLUSION	38

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**1.0**

**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

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# 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Markham is working towards becoming a global leader in age-friendly design - ensuring that homes, buildings and communities are safe, flexible, and accessible for residents of all ages and abilities.

In order to make this a reality, the City of Markham is developing a set of Age-Friendly Design Guidelines to help make Markham an age-friendly city.

During the development of these guidelines, the City engaged with staff, council, stakeholders and members of the community to get a better understanding of the following: current City standards, processes and policies, the daily needs of residents, and current barriers and opportunities for age-friendly design in the community.

People from across Markham have been introduced to the process and asked to share ideas for how Markham could better incorporate age-friendly design at the unit, building and neighbourhood scales.

Over 638 stakeholders and members

of the public were reached/engaged during phase 2 and 3 of the process through interviews, workshops, meetings, public events and online engagement tools hosted on the City's 'YourVoiceMarkham' engagement platform.

**322**

**YourVoiceMarkham Visitors**

**149**

**Surveys Submitted (online + paper)**

**137**

**Open house, Workshop and 1-on-1 Interview Participants**

**30**

**Ideas Submitted (0-99 Challenge)**

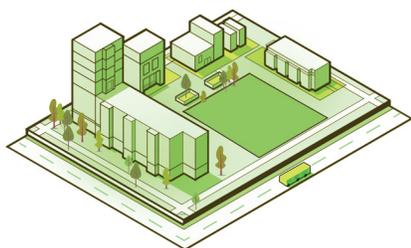
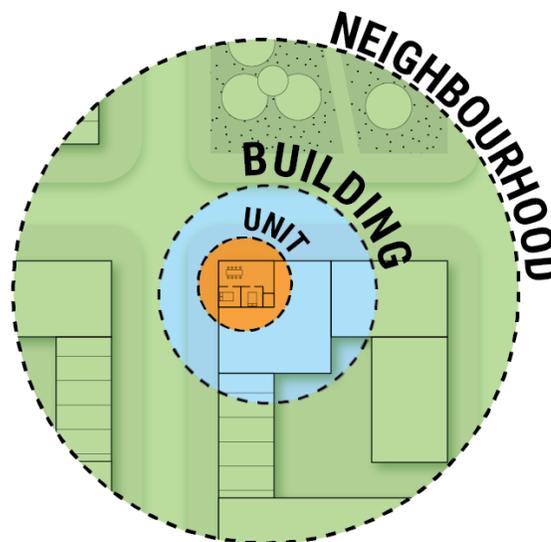
**Figure 1.** Engagement numbers by opportunity type

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## **2.0 | INTRODUCTION**

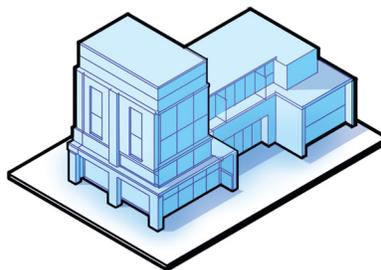
## 2.0 ABOUT THIS PROJECT

The Markham Age-Friendly Design Guidelines (MAFDG) are built form design guidelines intended to direct how new development in Markham can better function to serve all residents, from zero to 99 years of age. The guidelines will provide design direction for the built environment in both new and redeveloping communities - including privately-owned low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise residential and mixed use buildings and neighbourhoods, focusing on three scales:



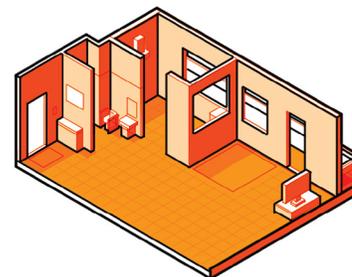
### NEIGHBOURHOOD

Exploring how neighbourhood design encourages connectivity, mobility, safety and livability - incorporating services and amenities that meet the need of users of all age groups over time.



### BUILDING

Exploring how the design of residential buildings can ensure they meet the changing needs of all residents, of all ages, over time, including places to socialize, play, work and learn.



### UNIT

Exploring how the design of individual units can meet the needs of a variety of users of all ages over time, including the needs of different family sizes, types and configurations.

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## 2.1 About This Report

This Phase 2 and 3 Engagement Summary Report summarizes key feedback and core themes generated between September 2021 and February 2022 as part of the Markham Age Friendly Design Guidelines process.

The engagement methodology undertaken by the Urban Strategies team to deliver the Markham Age-friendly Design Guidelines reflects the evidence-based and consultative/collaborative approach necessary for a project of this nature.

What follows is a summary of the engagement timeline, the engagement opportunities and the key findings and themes that have surfaced throughout the process — gathered through multiple engagement channels including: public events, stakeholder workshops, and online engagement tools.

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## 2.2 Engagement Objectives for the Markham Age-Friendly Design Guidelines

Our overall project objectives are to:

- Reach a broad public audience including older adults, families, children and youth to better understand what contributes to age-friendly design.
- Determine what matters the most to older adults, families, children and youth living in Markham to ensure the Markham Age-Friendly Design Guidelines accurately chart directions forward.
- Develop and maintain relationships with key participants to gather input, and activate networks related to consultation activities and other opportunities to participate during the process.
- Establish the importance of the study findings with Markham residents, staff, developers and project partners - and the user-friendly planning resources that flow from it.

Our broader engagement objectives are to:

- Remove barriers to participation - ensuring accessibility in messaging and engagement design.
- Generate timely and meaningful input from a wide range of stakeholders and members of the general public (with a focus on target audiences).
- Effectively and demonstrably weave the technical input with staff direction and input generated from stakeholders and members of the general public into the final guidelines package.
- Ensure strong inter-team/project collaboration to maximize efficiencies and to set realistic and actionable goals for the implementation of the final guidelines.

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## 2.3 Engagement Timeline

The process underway to develop the Markham Age-Friendly Design Guidelines consists of 5 phases:

**August -September  
2021**

**Phase 1  
Project  
Kick-off**

Phase 1 set up the project parameters and goals for the design guidelines.

### Phase 2 + 3 Engagement

**October  
2021**

**Phase 2  
Background Review  
and Analysis**

Phase 2 involved the following activities which are covered in Section 3 of this report:

- Multi-Jurisdictional Policy Review
- Global Best Practice / Case Study Review
- Gap Analysis
- Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement

Preliminary stakeholder engagement was conducted in order to help socialize the project with key constituents, gather high-level information on additional engagement approaches, audiences and methods, and to gather input from industry and community experts on the topic of age-friendly design and living. Findings from Phase 2 will inform the development of the draft Guidelines document.

**November 2021 -  
February 2022**



**Phase 3  
Public  
Engagement**

Phase 3 involved public engagement through various methods which are covered in Section 4 of this report:

- One-on one interviews and small group workshops with subject matter and community experts
- Online Open House
- Project Website Launch
- Paper Surveys in English, Tamil and Simplified Chinese
- Online Survey and Ideas Challenge

Phase 3 engagement activities looked to include both those with lived-experience – in particular families, youth and older adults – and professionals and practitioners from both public and private sectors with common interest in improving the built environment – representatives of the City and relevant agencies; and the design and development communities.

**March - May  
2022**



**Phase 4  
Draft  
Guidelines**

**May - June  
2022**



**Phase 5  
Final  
Guidelines**

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**3.0**

**ENGAGEMENT  
OPPORTUNITIES**

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## 3.0 ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### 3.1 Phase 2: Pre-Engagement Opportunities

#### 3.1.1 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) were held in order to better understand and align City priorities in both the development and implementation of the Age-Friendly Design Guidelines. This cross-departmental group with members from Development Planning, Zoning and Special Projects, Plans Review and Building Standards, Operations, Policy, Parks and Open Space Development, and Recreation Services provided insight into related processes, priorities and potential challenges the guidelines may need to overcome.

During this pre-engagement phase, members of the TAC provided feedback on the best practice review, identified implementation challenges and suggested actionable interventions to improve age-friendliness in Markham, including increasing awareness and offering educational opportunities for members of the design and the development communities.

#### 3.1.2 SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND COMMITTEE FOR AN AGE FRIENDLY MARKHAM

During the pre-engagement phase our team met with the City of Markham Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) and Committee for an Age Friendly Markham (AFC) to introduce the project, learn more about their concerns related to age-friendly design in Markham, and to gather input on how to best engage older adults in Markham during the project process.

During follow-up presentations, members of the SAC/AFC were invited to identify opportunities and challenges of the built environment, and to share their visions and aspirations on an age-friendly Markham. They also provided input on the approach to community engagement and outreach.

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### 3.1.3 MARKHAM MAYOR'S YOUTH COUNCIL

During the pre-engagement phase our team met with the City of Markham Mayor's Youth Council to introduce the project, hear about their ideas related to age-friendly design in Markham and to gather input on how to best engage children and youth in Markham during the process.

An interactive online workshop was held with the group, where we asked for ideas on: how to capture the youth voice in Markham; to identify any age-friendly spaces in Markham; and one big idea to make Markham a more age-friendly city.

### 3.1.4 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In order to better understand some of the key industry trends, drivers, opportunities and challenges facing Markham in its quest to become a more age-friendly city, we held a series of one-on-one stakeholder interviews with key stakeholders from around the region.

The interviewees included:

- Christine Lolley, Principal, Solares Architecture
- Linda Kafka, Director, Living in Place Network
- Jeanhy Shim, President, Housing Lab Toronto
- Nicole Reiss, Housing Planner, York Region



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### 3.1.5 DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

An interactive workshop was held with invited members of Markham's housing development community to share information about the Age-Friendly Design Guidelines process, get a better understanding about current and future projects in Markham; market trends and the demand for age-friendly housing; and any barriers (both experienced or anticipated) in the provision of age-friendly housing in Markham and around the Greater Toronto Area.



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## 3.2 Phase 3: Engagement Opportunities

### 3.2.1 YOUR VOICE MARKHAM

A project home page was set up on the *YourVoiceMarkham* online engagement platform. This landing page was home to key project information, including: project timeline; key project documents (background reports, presentations); a project news feed; links to public event registration and multimedia; online engagement tools; and project contact information.



**Figure 2.** YourVoiceMarkham logo

### 3.2.2 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

An online public open house was held to publicly launch the Markham Age-Friendly Design Guidelines process. This interactive event was designed to generate excitement and to introduce the project to the public by sharing some early thinking and best practices (both global and local), related to age-friendly design. The interactive portion of the event included small breakout room discussions held to gather ideas and input from participants on how age-friendly design impacts how they currently live, work and play in Markham.



**Figure 3.** Screenshot of the Public Open House Zoom meeting

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### 3.2.3 ONLINE SURVEY

A comprehensive online survey was developed and deployed using the *YourVoiceMarkham* online engagement platform. The survey was designed to capture feedback and ideas from Markham residents about age-friendly design at the unit, building and neighbourhood scale.

#### Prefer a hard copy survey?

Paper survey copies are available by visiting a Markham Public Library branch. For a list of library locations and operating hours, visit: <https://markhampubliclibrary.ca/serviceupdates/>.

Survey starts

Finish

All fields marked with an asterisk (\*) are required.

#### Tell us about your household...

These questions help us understand the make-up of your household. This will help us better understand your answers later on in the survey.

1. What type of housing do you live in?

- single-family house / semi-detached / duplex
- townhouse
- carriage house / in-law suite / basement suite

**Figure 4.** Screenshot of the Online Survey

### 3.2.4 0-99 IDEAS CHALLENGE

This interactive online ideas challenge was posted on the *YourVoiceMarkham* online engagement platform and was used to solicit ideas and examples of age-friendly design from Markham residents. The platform allowed for respondents to post ideas and photos to the project website, and provided an opportunity for other page visitors to read, comment and vote on their favourite ideas.

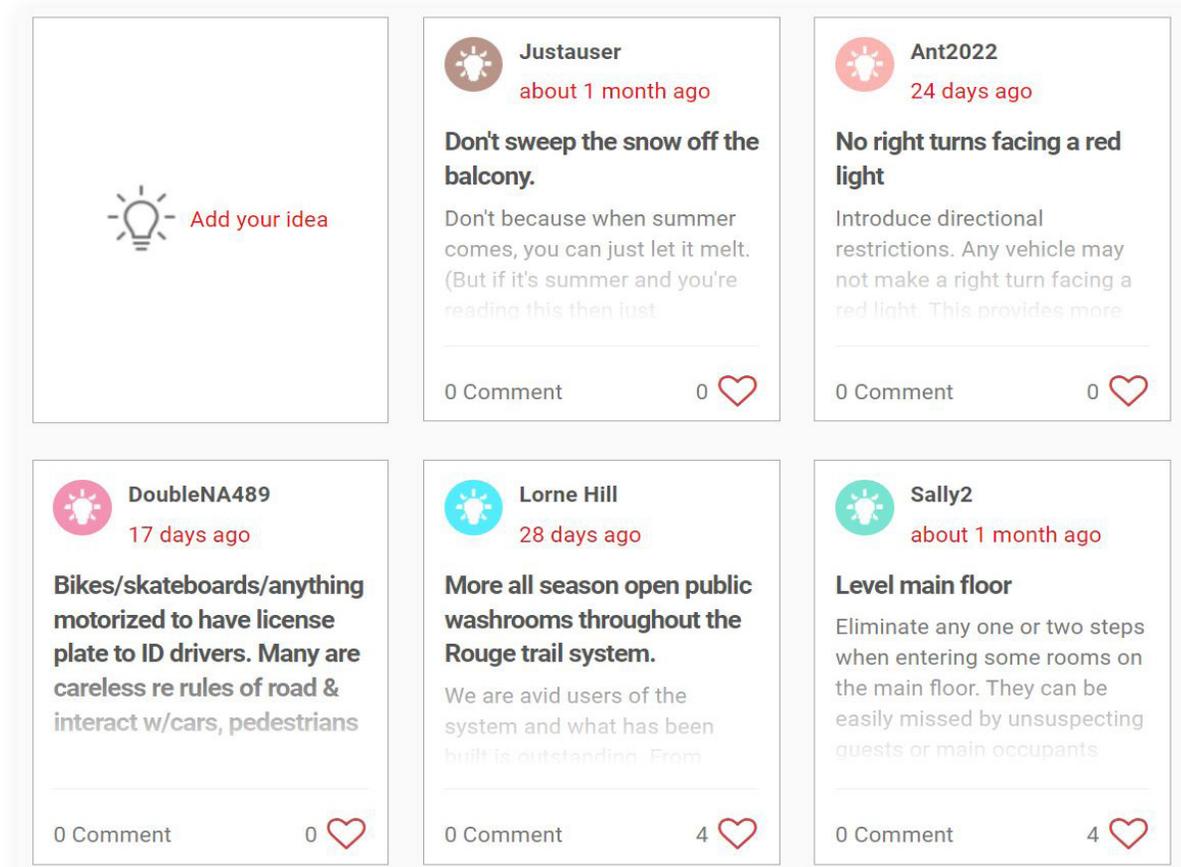


Figure 5. Screenshot of the 0-99 Ideas Challenge

### 3.2.5 LIBRARY OUTREACH

Print versions of the survey were made available to Markham residents at kiosks set up in Markham Public Library branches. These surveys, available in English, Tamil and Simplified Chinese were designed to be shorter and more graphic in nature than the online survey. This approach was devised to provide an alternative for respondents that may prefer physical print materials over digital platforms - and for those facing language barriers. This approach also ensured different engagement options were provided to the public.



**Figure 6.** Age-Friendly Design Guidelines Kiosk at the Thornhill Branch of the Markham Public Library.

### 3.2.6 DIGITAL OUTREACH

City of Markham Social Media accounts on Facebook and Twitter were used to drive traffic to the YourVoiceMarkham website in order to generate interest in and feedback on the project. In addition, ads and event notices were posted and direct links were shared from the City of Markham homepage over the course of Phase 3. A QR code was developed to direct online traffic to the project webpage - this was shared on all project print materials including: posters, display panels, flyers and bookmarks.



**Figure 7.** Screenshot of a City of Markham Twitter post about the project.

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**4.0**

**WHAT WE  
HEARD**

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## 4.1 Phase 2: What We Heard

Input gathered during Phase 2 was focused on two key topics:

1. The best way to engage with key audiences including older adults, children, youth and families, and the local development community; and
2. Gaining a better understanding of the high-level trends, drivers, opportunities and challenges to achieving age-friendly design in Markham.

This is what we heard:

### 4.1.1 ADVICE ON HOW TO ENGAGE

Members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC), Committee for an Age Friendly Markham (AFC), and Markham Mayor's Youth Council (MMYC) shared some valuable advice on how to engage key audiences in this work. These suggestions included:

- Going to where the seniors are - including attending seniors groups run through the City of Markham Recreation Department.
- Working in collaboration with the York Region School Board to do youth outreach in schools.
- Engaging youth in age-friendly design beyond this process through design competitions and curriculum tie-ins for Tech Design classes.
- Attending the Markham City Builders Forum to engage members of the local development community.

### 4.1.2 TRENDS, DRIVERS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

During our sessions with the TAC, SAC, MMYC and during our one-on-one key stakeholder interviews the following themes surfaced across all conversations:

- The **need for educational outreach and knowledge-sharing on the topic of age-friendly design** for city staff, the general public and the local development and trades community in order to build awareness about the importance and positive implications of age-friendly design.
- The **need for proactive planning for age-friendly design at all scales** - *before* it is needed (i.e. before an injury or age-related illness makes it difficult for an older adult to live independently). It is often something people don't think about or ignore until it is too late.

- 
- The **importance of intergenerational opportunities for social connectivity** - bringing older adults and children together in public spaces.
  - The **need to include short-medium- and long-term age-friendly-design interventions** into the guidelines document. There should be some 'quick wins' that city staff and members of the development community can implement in the near term to demonstrate the practicality of the guidelines.
  - That **removing a barrier for one group, removes a barrier for all**. Age-friendly design interventions focused on older adults are also beneficial for people with young children and people with disabilities and other mobility challenges. (E.g. a barrier-free bathroom on the main floor).
  - The need to **focus on culturally appropriate and culturally supportive housing types**, including multi-generational housing, homes with secondary suites, and inter-generational multi-unit buildings.
  - **Parks and public open spaces need to be designed to be comfortable and accessible all-year**. This includes the provision of year-round, accessible washroom facilities, weather protected seating and winter walkway maintenance.
  - **Public realm and street design needs to focus on the safety and comfort of the most vulnerable users**, including children and older adults. This is particularly important around schools, community facilities and in residential and shopping areas.

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## 4.2 Phase 3: What We Heard

Input gathered during Phase 3 was focused on getting a better understanding of how Markham residents experience their homes, buildings and neighbourhoods on a daily basis, and finding out what age-friendly design interventions would improve their daily lives, and why. This is what we heard:

### 4.2.1 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

The public open house was held on January 20th 2022. Over 50 members of the public attended in person. A recording of the event was posted on the YourVoiceMarkham platform after the event, where it has been viewed 11 times.

The open house was held on Zoom, with Miro used as an interactive way to gather feedback during the breakout sessions. During the breakout sessions the following themes were surfaced, by scale:

#### UNIT

- Every part of your daily 'journey' is an opportunity for age-friendly design: from traveling home (either driving or walking), crossing the threshold of your home (are there stairs?), using the bathroom (is it barrier free?), cooking, and getting to bed.
- The importance of having all of your daily needs available on one floor - sleeping, cooking, bathing - reduces the need to traverse stairs.

- An aging population will increase the number of residents who will require care in their homes, or will join family in their homes - we need to explore more ways to live multi-generationally.

#### BUILDING

- Location is key for walkability - accessing local shops and services and outdoor spaces greatly improves livability and sociability for all ages.
- Shared outdoor spaces are important for quality of life in multi-unit residential buildings.
- The provision of community serving amenities (medical, childcare, community facilities) would be beneficial on the main level of multi-unit residential buildings.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD

- Walkways and pathways should be level, accessible and offer places to rest for older adults, young children and people with mobility devices. Winter snow and ice removal is integral for year-round outdoor enjoyment and safety.

- Parks and open spaces should be designed for year-round use with weather protection (heat, sun, rain, snow, ice and wind), accessible washrooms, and amenities for all-ages including: accessible pathways, seating and play spaces, and areas for year-round gathering and events (markets, festivals etc.).
- Age-friendly street design should consider the needs of older adults and young children. Crossings should be designed safely, offering enough time to cross wide roadways, and traffic should be calmed in areas around schools, parks, community facilities, residential and shopping areas.

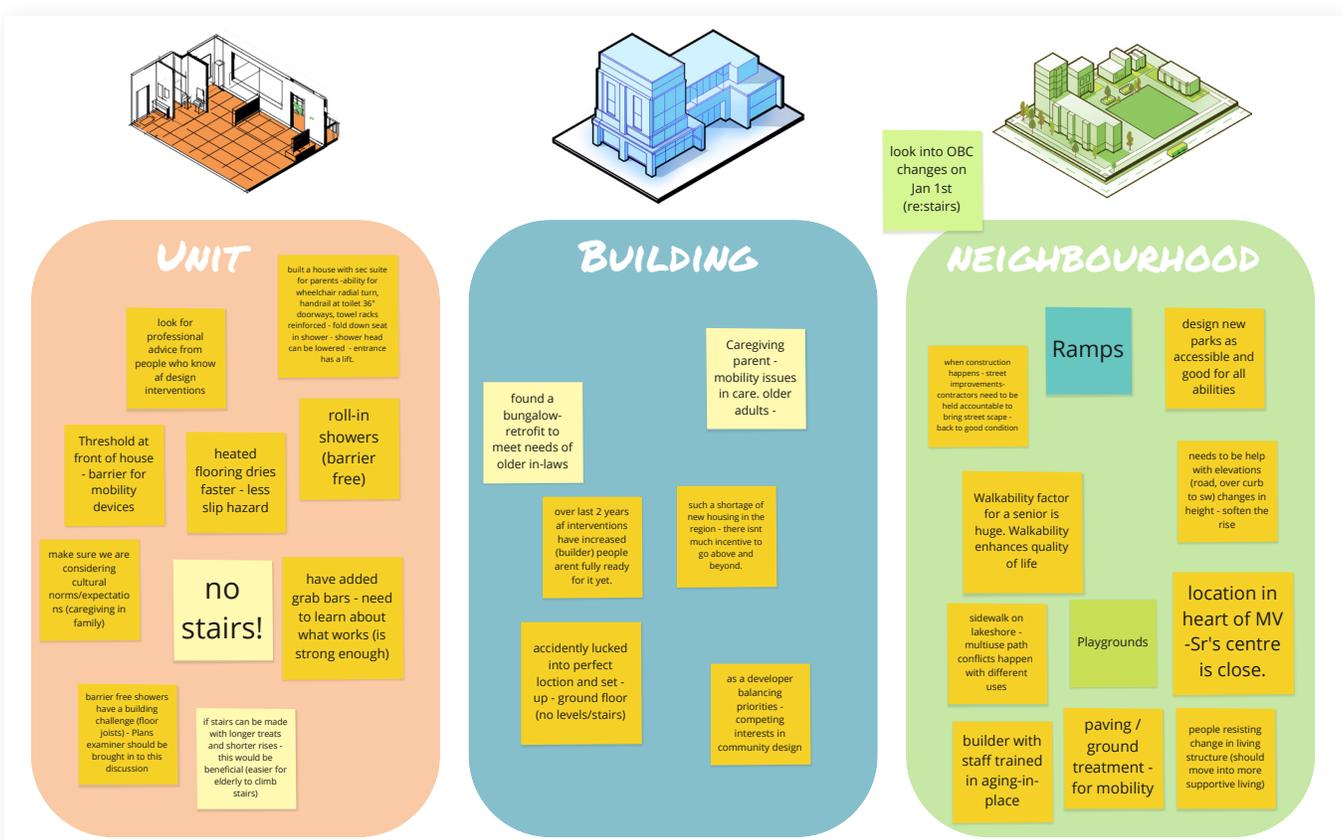


Figure 8. Screenshot of a breakout room Miro board from the Public Open House event Group 1.

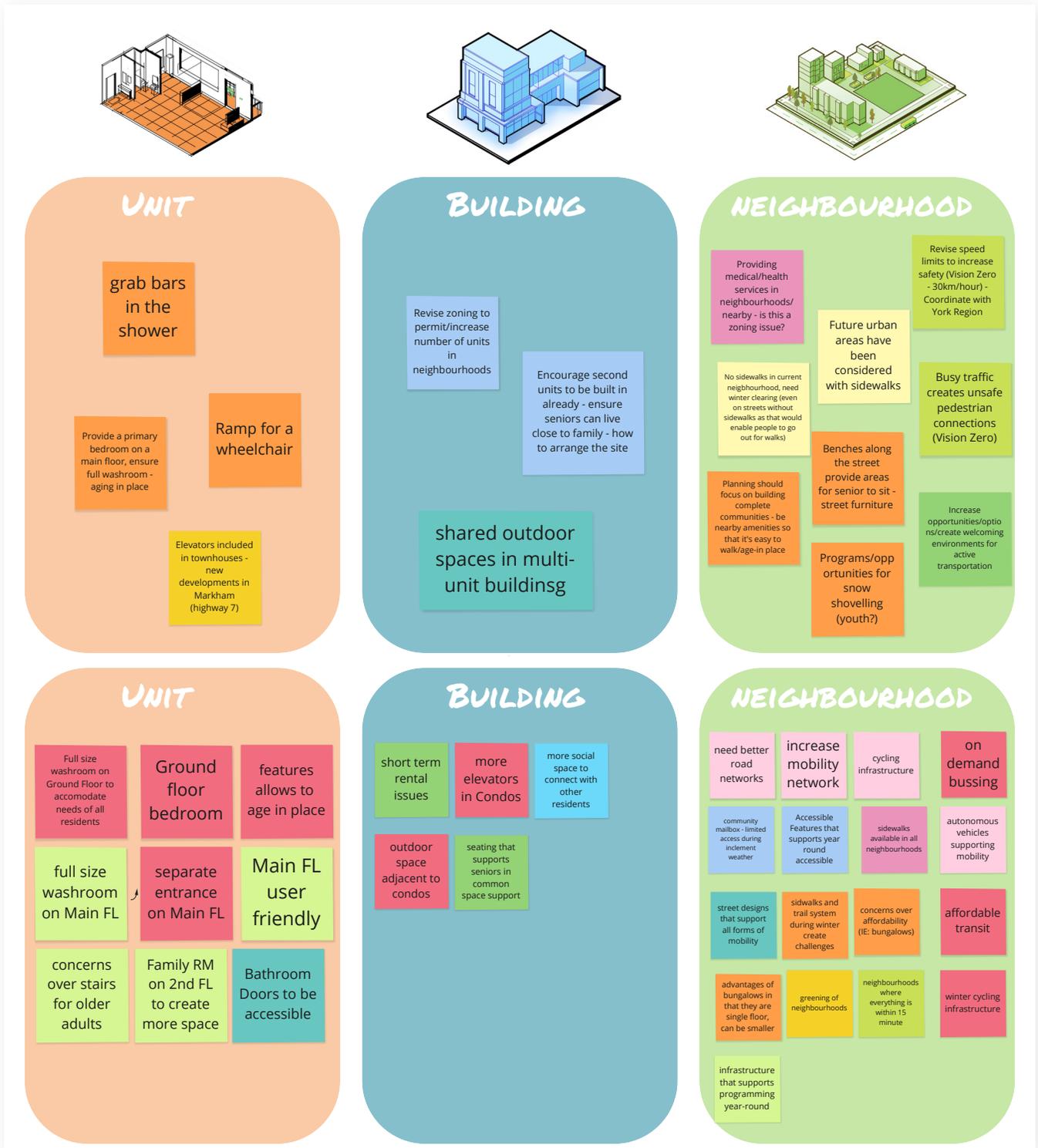


Figure 9. Screenshot of a breakout room Miro board from the Public Open House event Group 2 & 3.

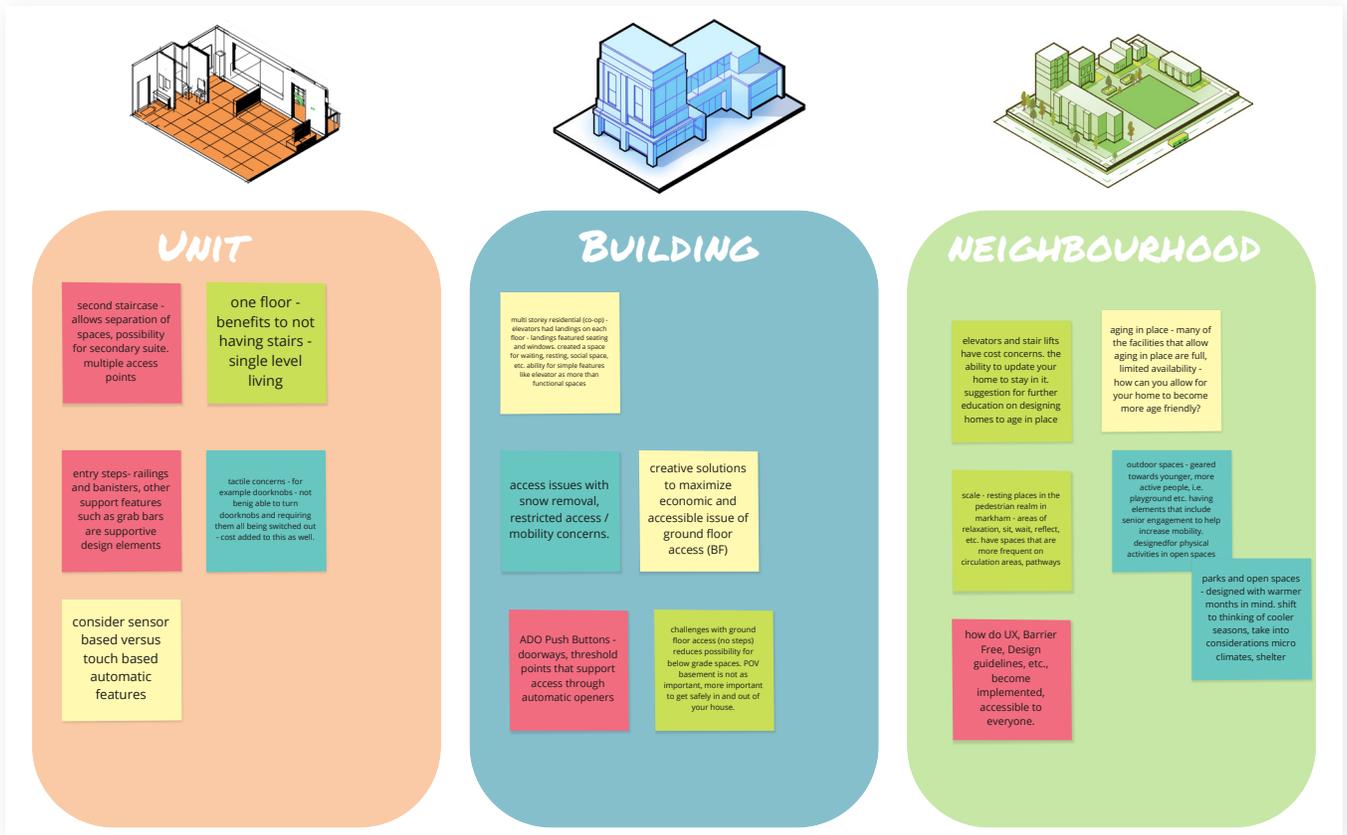


Figure 10. Screenshot of a breakout room Miro board from the Public Open House event Group 4.

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## 4.2.2 ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was available on YourVoiceMarkham to gather feedback on Age-friendly design in the City of Markham. The survey was offered in English and was able to be translated in the platform using the Google Translate feature. 130 surveys were submitted.

The survey offered a brief introduction to the project, and a 'choose your own adventure' style approach based on the housing typology you live in and the demographics of those represented in your household.

The following is a breakdown of key information gleaned from the survey. Note: All open ended survey questions results were coded by theme or category.

## HOUSEHOLD TYPE, TENURE AND SIZE

When asked what type of housing they live in, over 75% of respondents stated that they live in single family, semi-detached or duplex housing, with 12% living in townhomes, 6% in high-rise buildings (9+ storeys), 4% in mid-rise buildings (up to 8 storeys), and less than 1% in each of seniors housing, long-term care facilities, carriage houses, or low-rise buildings (up to 3 storeys).\*

85% of respondents own their home, with 9.3% renting and 6.2% selected 'other'- with most stating they are living with parents or other family members.

12% of respondents come from a 1-person household, 35% from a 2-person household, 18% from a 3-person household; 18% from a 4-person household and 15% from a 5-or-more-person household.\*

*\*These percentages are statistically representative of City of Markham housing statistics based on data from the 2016 census.*



## CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

### **32% of respondents stated that they had children or youth under the age of 18 in their household.**

When asked what the most important features were in their home for raising children/families, the number of bedrooms and bathrooms were identified as the most important feature, with access to a yard, balcony or other outdoor space and proximity to child and family serving amenities were second and third respectively.

Of those living in multi-unit buildings, 73% of respondents said there were no play areas for children in or around the building with 24% saying they had at least one play area available.

When asked what would make their neighbourhood more supportive for raising children, over 50% of respondents stated that addressing unsafe traffic and road conditions (including: speeding, dangerous intersections/crosswalks, lack of sidewalks, etc.) would be

the number one support that would improve their quality of life in their community. Traffic was followed by increased youth programs and services, improved amenities (play areas, schools, community facilities) for youth, and better access to reliable and affordable public transit.

The majority of parents or guardians are comfortable letting their children travel alone in the community once they turn 12, with many comfortable with letting children travel alone at 10 years of age.

The majority of parents or guardians of children or youth under 18 feel it is very likely or likely that their children will encounter unstructured opportunities to play with other youth and find places that feel safe or welcome to gather with their peers. An overwhelming majority also feel that it is very likely or likely that their child would find a safe adult willing to help them if needed, and feel that it is very unlikely or unlikely that their children will encounter unsafe social situations (including drugs, alcohol or violence) in the community.

More than two-thirds of parents or guardians also feel it is very likely or likely that their children will encounter unsafe traffic (high-speed traffic, busy roads and/or unsafe crossings) when they are out alone in the community.

All parents or guardians feel that is unlikely or very unlikely that their child may get lost or disoriented in the community.



## OLDER ADULTS

### ***56% of respondents stated that there was an older adult over the age of 55 in their household.***

When asked what the most important features were in their home for aging-in-place, the number and location of stairs were identified as the most important consideration, with the proximity to services and amenities serving older adults, and access to a yard, balcony or other outdoor space following close behind. Other important features included: the availability of accessibility features (grab bars, wider doorways, etc.) and accessible parking.

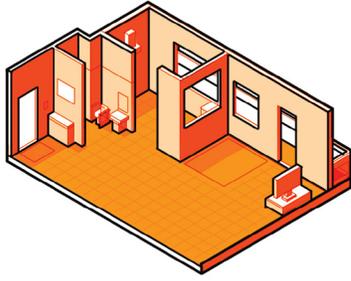
Those living in multi-unit buildings identified a desire for more accessible entrances with fewer stairs or more gentle ramps, more elevators, and increased access to outdoor space as ways their building could allow them to comfortably age-in-place.

When asked what would make their neighbourhood more supportive for

aging-in-place, like those with children, over 50% of respondents stated that addressing unsafe traffic and road conditions (including: speeding, dangerous intersections/crosswalks, lack of sidewalks, etc.) would be the number one support that would improve their quality of life in their community. Traffic concerns were followed by the need to improve safety, with inadequate lighting in parks and public spaces, dangerous encounters with wildlife (coyotes and foxes), and poorly maintained sidewalks and pathways identified as significant concerns. Better accessibility, with a desire for improved public transit, better wayfinding and increased connectivity to services and amenities serving older adults.

The majority of older adults feel it is very likely or likely that they would encounter places that feel safe or welcome to gather with their peers, but feel that it is unlikely or very unlikely that they would find shops and services that are targeted to the needs of seniors or older adults. A significant majority feel that they are very likely or likely to encounter unsafe traffic, but a similar majority feel that they will encounter easily accessible buildings, sidewalks and public spaces as they travel through their communities.

A vast majority of respondents feel that is unlikely or very unlikely that they may get lost or disoriented in the community.



## UNIT SCALE

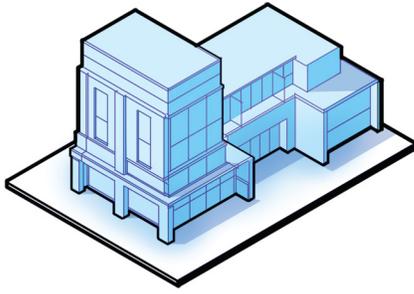
When asked about changes to their current home to make it more supportive of their daily needs, better for raising a family and/or better for aging in place, respondents shared the following ideas (in order of frequency):

- Reducing the number of stairs or finding an alternative to stairs, making it more accessible to move in to and through the unit;
  - Adding uses to the main floor to consolidate the living space to one level (including main bedroom, full-size bathroom);
  - Renovating the space to make it more accessible, including: barrier-free bathrooms, improving kitchen layouts, changing outlet locations, adding accessibility features such as stair lifts, grab bars and closet elevators;
  - Adding an additional suite, apartment and/or dedicated work/office area;
  - Adding additional space to current dwelling, including increasing the size and configuration of kitchen and adding additional parking;
- Improving access to or improving the quality of outdoor spaces / backyard;
  - Changing the location to make it more accessible to everyday needs (shopping, appointments, social opportunities); and
  - Improving energy efficiency to keep costs down.

*"If I had to do it over, I would have purchased a bungalow to have a better chance at aging in place for a longer time. I expect stairs will be problematic as I age."*

*"I would convert the dining room to a main floor bedroom in case I can't do stairs someday. Also, I would add a shower to the main floor so that the main floor is fully livable. This would also help if my aging parents moved in some day as I am now close to retirement and could care for them."*

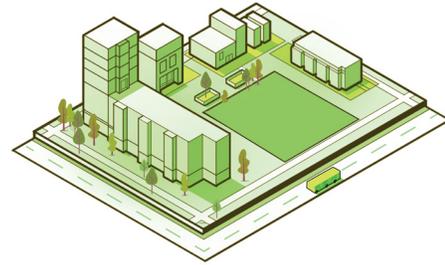
**Figure 11.** Sample Survey Quotes



## BUILDING SCALE

When asked what the single most important thing respondents would change about their building to make it a more supportive place for raising a family and/or aging-in-place - they provided the following ideas (in order of frequency):

- Improved building amenities, including: play areas for children, shared outdoor green spaces, spaces for pets, composting and recycling facilities;
- Improved accessibility features, including: more elevators, more accessible entrances at street level, safer ramps;
- Improved concierge and/or building management services;
- Stable, affordable rents; and
- Better access to community amenities - particularly health and wellness services.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE

When asked what the single most important thing respondents would change about their neighbourhood to make it a more supportive place for raising a family and/or aging-in-place - they provided the following ideas (in order of frequency):

- Addressing unsafe traffic and road conditions, including: speeding cars, unsafe crossings, lack of sidewalks and busy roads next to parks, schools and shopping areas.
- Winter maintenance of sidewalks and other public spaces. Snow and ice making sidewalks, crossings and park pathways unsafe and unpassable for pedestrians during the winter months.
- Improved park and open space amenities, including: play/exercise equipment for all ages, year-round washrooms, benches/seating, and accessible walking paths and trails.

- Better mobility and connectivity, including: improved maintenance of sidewalks, bike lanes, paths and trails to ensure accessibility for all users; safe walking paths away from busy roads that connect neighbourhoods to parks, community facilities and shopping areas; and adding sidewalks and bike lanes where none exist.
- Increased opportunities for social gathering and connection, including: new and/or improved community facilities; safe spaces for youth to gather; low/no-cost social programs for older adults; community celebrations; and having a system to check up on one another to prevent social isolation.
- Better access to regular and affordable public transit, including: more transit routes, more bus stops with seating and lower fares for youth and older adults.
- The walkability of the neighbourhood - access to shops, services and amenities within walking distance to home;
- The diverse people and neighbours that make up their communities, including other families, children and older adults; neighbours who will lend a hand when needed; and welcoming neighbours who look out for each other; and
- Faith, Social and Community groups, including: mosques, churches, sports teams and social clubs.
- That it is safe, quiet and has good air-quality.

*"There is a community centre within the neighbourhood and the hospital is close by."*

*"As you age, a 15 minute walk doesn't equal a 5 minute drive!"*

When asked what the most age-friendly thing about their neighbourhood was, respondents provided the following answers (in order of frequency):

- Proximity to parks, trails and community facilities, including: libraries, schools, community centres, sports fields and seniors centres;

**Figure 12.** Sample Survey Quotes

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When asked what would make visiting local parks and playgrounds more accessible, respondents provided the following answers (in order of frequency):

- Better routes or connections to the park or playground, including: safe and accessible routes (paved, even surfaces) away from busy roads; separated multi-use pathways; improved wayfinding, signage or maps showing the locations of local parks and playgrounds; and well lit paths to and through parks.
- Accessibility features in the parks, including: wheelchair accessible areas (ramps, curb cuts and seating areas); better paving and sidewalk maintenance (including snow removal); and accessible playground equipment and features for all ages.
- Improved maintenance, including: greenspace and landscape maintenance, winter snow/ice removal; garbage and dog waste removal; and cleaner and more modern washroom facilities; and
- Improved park and playground amenities, including: new playground equipment and surfaces; washroom facilities; benches and other seating options; and more things to do for visitors of all ages;

When asked what would make visiting local shops and services more accessible, respondents provided the following answers (in order of frequency):

- More shops and services within walking or cycling distance to homes.
- A better variety of local shops and services to choose from, including: independent cafes; bookstores; grocery stores (with a focus on local food); butcher stores and health and wellness services.
- Improved accessibility to local shopping areas, including: wider sidewalks, better, safer crossings; more bike lanes and cycling infrastructure (racks); and
- Improved transit service within neighbourhoods to local serving shopping areas.

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### 4.2.3 PAPER SURVEY

A paper survey was available in Markham Public Library branches to gather feedback on Age-friendly design in the City of Markham. The survey was offered in English, Tamil and Simplified Chinese. This approach provided an alternative for respondents that may prefer physical print materials over digital platforms or who may face language barriers to participation. Nineteen paper surveys were submitted.

The survey offered a brief introduction to the project, some open ended questions about their homes, and a 'highly-graphic, visual preference based approach, using images of age-friendly design interventions at the neighbourhood scale.

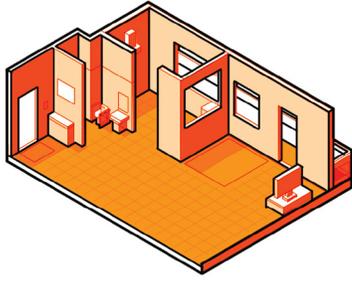
The following is a breakdown of key information gleaned from the survey. Note: All open ended survey questions results were coded by theme or category.

### HOUSEHOLD TYPE, TENURE AND SIZE

When asked what type of housing they live in, over 78% of respondents stated that they live in single family, semi-detached or duplex housing, with 10% in high-rise buildings (9+ storeys), 5% in a coach house, in-law suite or basement suite.

6% of respondents come from a 1-person household, 31% from a 2-person household, 19% from a 3-person household; 25% from a 4-person household and 19% from a 5-or-more-person household.

And 31% of respondents reported living in a multi-generational home.



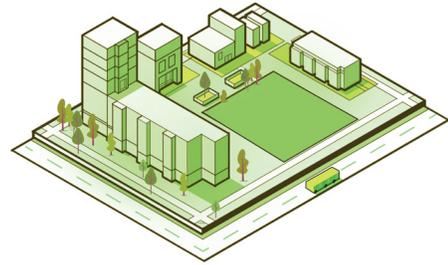
## UNIT SCALE

When asked what the favourite thing about their current home is, respondents gave the following answers (in order of frequency):

- Access to outdoor spaces including: backyards, gardens, and shared greenspaces.
- Location and proximity to services and amenities.
- Size of home and property.

When asked what they would change about their current home to make it more supportive of their daily needs, respondents gave the following answers (in order of frequency):

- More space, including a bigger kitchen, higher ceilings, new bathroom and more gym space.
- Better access to frequent and reliable public transit, including living closer to a bus stop.
- Accessible features including handrails and an elevator.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE

When asked what would make visiting local parks, open spaces or playgrounds more accessible. Respondents gave the following answers (in order of frequency):

- Improved park amenities including washrooms, seating, wayfinding, places to eat and buy food, and refreshed equipment and facilities (tennis courts, water parks).
- Better accessibility to and in the park, including improved transit opportunities, better cycling infrastructure (bike lanes and bike parking), more wheelchair ramps, increased park maintenance (winter snow clearance), and more parking.
- More large parks and greenspace within closer proximity to more people. Many people have access to smaller, pocket parks, but larger destination parks should be more prevalent in the community.

Respondents were offered an array of images of age-friendly design interventions in parks and open spaces from around the world. They were then asked to identify their top 3 - based on the following question:

“What age-friendly features would make you more likely to visit parks, open spaces or playgrounds in your neighbourhood?”

These are the top three interventions as identified by the respondents:

### 1. Year-round Accessible Washrooms



### 2. Multi-Generational Playground Equipment



### 3. Accessible Trails and Pathways



When asked what would make visiting local shops and services easier or more accessible, respondents gave the following answers (in order of frequency):

- If the trip to the shopping areas were safer and more enjoyable, including: more reliable and affordable public transit, safer crossings, more bike paths and bike parking, and more well lit walkways.
- Improved streetscape and public realm in shopping areas, including: more trees, wider sidewalks, better separation from speeding traffic, and more places to sit and rest.
- An increased variety of appropriate shops and services in close proximity to residential areas, including health, pharmacy and grocery services near seniors oriented housing.
- Better awareness or promotion of available local shops and services in the community.

*“Drivers cutting through corner malls is dangerous, they try to avoid the traffic lights making it unsafe for pedestrians, kids, and seniors...”*

**Figure 13.** Sample Survey Quote

Respondents were offered an array of images of age-friendly design interventions in local neighbourhood centres from around the world. They were then asked to identify their top 3 - based on the following question:

“What features would make you more likely to visit local shops or services in your neighbourhood?”

These are the top three interventions as identified by the respondents:

### 1. Improved Streetscape Lighting



### 2. Places to Sit and Gather



### 3. Outdoor Patios



*“Markham needs more places to hang out with kids, like indoor playgrounds, more kid friendly facilities...”*

*“Concerned when stores/services close and then I have to drive further, especially larger grocery stores...”*

**Figure 14.** Sample Survey Quotes

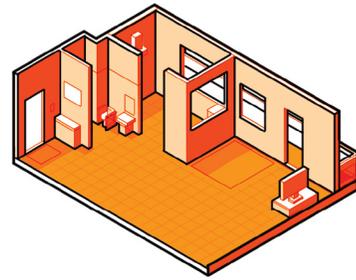
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## 4.2.4 0-99 IDEAS CHALLENGE

An online idea wall was available on *YourVoiceMarkham* to generate ideas for age-friendly design in Markham. Participants were asked to post an image and/or write a comment telling us how they would make Markham a more age-friendly place - in your home, in your building or in your neighbourhood. There were 30 ideas and 5 images submitted.

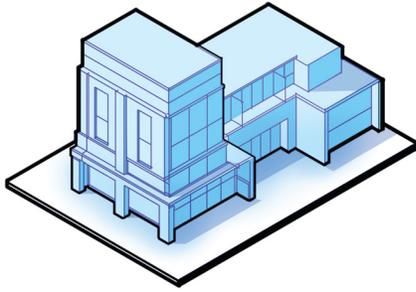
The idea wall allowed participants to share an idea or image, upvote other ideas, or comment on an idea or image shared on the wall.

The following is a summary of the ideas shared by scale. These responses will help our team develop a set of innovative and implementable age-friendly design guidelines for the City of Markham.



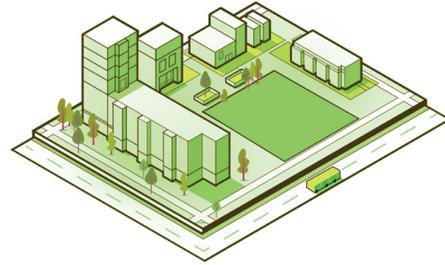
### UNIT SCALE

- Changing the traditional layout of homes by putting primary bedroom and a normal sized bathroom on the main floor, so people don't need to go up and down stairs.
- Eliminating steps between rooms on the main floor to improve accessibility
- Providing a handrail on both sides of a home staircase.
- Ensure all residential staircases have power access at top & bottom, and are wide enough for chair lifts to be installed at any time.
- Bringing in a new bylaw ensuring that ALL newly built showers, baths & toilets have reinforced plywood behind the wall board to allow resident to add grab bars.



## BUILDING SCALE

- Encouraging triplex building types - allowing for a main floor unit with three bedrooms, an upper rental unit with the same layout, and an adequately sized basement unit. all with a shared backyard. This allows for mortgage assistance, multi-generational living and affordable housing for multiple families,
- Offering a place to safely store strollers (like a bike room) in multi-unit buildings. There's often no space in entry hallways and keeping it on the balcony isn't great in the winter.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE

- Clearing snow from paths in Markham parks. We need to go for walk in Winter too in order to stay healthy!
- Modifications to public stairways so people can rest as they are going up/down.
- Ensuring there are sidewalks on both sides of the street in all areas, regardless of age of neighbourhood or its "character."
- Sidewalks next to larger streets and roads need to be wider and more separated from traffic. Especially around schools and shopping areas.
- Higher park benches. As people age, they sometimes have difficulty getting to a standing position after sitting, higher park benches would offer a more comfortable alternative for older adults.
- Urban green spaces with benches and flowers. Seniors love to be out and about, and need safe, welcoming spaces that allow them to do so.

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- Outdoor exercise gym equipment - ropes/ chains/ pull-up bars in parks and public places for all to exercise any time of year/ day.
  - More all season open public washrooms throughout the Rouge trail system. There are new high tech, easy to use and service, trailer systems that are available. These systems are portable which means that can be used by the city for different events.
  - Help with clearing snow banks along the road (especially those that block sewer drains) are difficult and physically intensive to clear especially if residents are getting older.
  - Heated sidewalks in the winter would be very helpful for older adults. Geothermal heated sidewalks are common in Iceland. Oslo, Helsinki and northern cities in Japan have electric elements in their sidewalks to melt the snow and ice.
  - On major streets traffic should be broken up by a centre median that is populated by trees. This breaks the traffic and naturally reduces speeds. It also helps pedestrians to more safely cross the streets where individuals cannot adequately cross the street in the given time.
  - “Feed the community” garden projects: Each community should have local areas around parks or unused lands to allow local residents to plant fruit trees, bushes and veggies. The area would be a joint venture between the City and local volunteers wanting to get their hands dirty to plant food for community shelters or folks wanting a little locally grown food.
  - More active mobility options (bike lanes, multi-use paths) to facilitate ease of access to the entire city regardless of age/mode.

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## 4.3 Conclusion

While there were specific areas of focus and concern for respondents of different ages (families with children vs. older adults), there were also many similarities. The details at the unit scale differed between the groups - but at the building and neighbourhood scales, the experiences and desires of all respondents started to come together.

At the unit scale, families with children were most concerned with the number of bedrooms and bathrooms in order to meet their family's needs over time. This was followed by a strong desire for access to outdoor spaces including backyards, patios and balconies. Older adults were most concerned about the number and location of stairs and other barriers to mobility in their homes. This was followed by the desire to have all necessary uses (bathroom with shower, primary bedroom, and kitchen) on the main floor, limiting the need to traverse stairs to meet daily needs.

At the building scale, both groups expressed a strong desire for improved building amenities, including access to outdoor spaces, both private and shared and improved accessibility features such as ramps, elevators and more accessible entrances at street level.

At the neighbourhood scale, both groups were most concerned about walkability as it related to safety. This included significant input related to feeling unsafe due to speeding traffic, unsafe crossings and intersections, lack of sidewalks and poor maintenance of sidewalks, pathways and walking trails. Other issues related to walkability include; lack of seating and other street furniture limiting mobility of older adults and the desire for better access and improved proximity to locally serving amenities, including schools, parks, community facilities, shopping areas and medical uses.

All groups also expressed a need for improved park and open space amenities including year-round, accessible washrooms, benches and seating options, age-friendly play/exercise equipment, and improved wayfinding and maintenance on pathways and trails (particularly in the winter months).

