

Planning for
Older Adult Clusters
in Mississauga



Workshop in Planning Practice 2007

Clients

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Executive summary

This report was prepared for the City of Mississauga to explore the concept of an older-adult cluster and to guide the City on developing this notion based on Mississauga's spatial and social contexts. The approach to this project was to create a vision for clusters, to identify potential site locations and policies for cluster development, and to recommend actions for various City departments and private entities to undertake in order to create successful older-adult clusters.

The concept of an older adult cluster has been defined as a concentration of facilities and services in a limited geographical area that is accessible by car and transit and within which walking is feasible. It is recommended that clusters be located at nodes, focused on community centres and malls, and respond to the diversity of the cluster's community. Furthermore, it is recommended that certain aspects of clusters be developed along corridors, that clusters should be transit hubs, and that residential development in and adjacent to clusters be medium- and high-density and appropriate for older adults.

Based on older adult issues, Mississauga's social and spatial context, and the City's current planning goals, it is recommended that older-adult clusters be developed in the following planning districts: Erin Mills, Malton, Mississauga Valley, Applewood, Rathwood, Cooksville, and Hurontario.

Recommendations for specific city departments to support the development and implementation of the older-adult clusters are targeted to Community Services, including Parks and Recreation; Corporate Services, including Communications and Organization Wellness & Business Services; Planning and Building; and Transportation and Works, including Engineering and Works and Mississauga Transit. The specific recommendations are as follows:

Community Services

- Focus future green space development on pocket parks;
- Schedule older-adult activities at times convenient for both working and retired older-adults.

Corporate Services

- Implement a certification scheme to encourage infrastructure best practices in shopping centres;
- Offer publications geared to seniors in large print, in multiple languages, and by mail;
- Establish information kiosks throughout each cluster;
- Brand clusters as older-adult destinations;

- Create a directory of social activities and disseminate it within clusters;
- Maintain a database of part-time volunteer and paid opportunities for older adults;
- Work with community organizations to establish a training program for older adults in the process of retirement.

Planning and Building

- Incorporate provisions for additional built-form items into section 3.13 of the Mississauga Plan;
- Broaden the “Community/Cultural” zoning definition to provide for a mix of uses;
- Ensure that the Mississauga Plan provides for medium and high-density housing in clusters and along corridors;
- Offer Section 37 benefits in exchange for amenities targeted at older adults;
- Coordinate with Peel Living to make clusters priority locations for new affordable housing development.

Transportation and Works

- Encourage streetscape amenities, and other pedestrian-oriented provisions, that are more accommodating to older-adults;
- Orient Mississauga Transit service around destination hubs, and provide regular frequency during off-peak hours;
- Initiate a pilot study of community transit serving clusters and surrounding residential areas.

Furthermore, to enable a smooth implementation process, it is recommended that Community Services strike and lead an inter-departmental committee responsible for coordinating the development of clusters. This committee should conduct detailed site analyses of the targeted nodes to determine site-specific priorities and timelines. Furthermore, the committee should consider which aspects of cluster development might be applied throughout the City.

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Introduction

The City of Mississauga is aging: over the next 20 years, its older-adult population will double (City of Mississauga, 2007c). Three hundred thousand Mississauga residents aged 55 or older, from a wide range of socio-economic and ethno-cultural backgrounds, will be relying on the City and its public- and private-sector partners for an equally wide range of facilities and services. In response to this challenge, the City has undertaken a 10-year planning study called the Older Adult Project (OAP). The vision statement guiding OAP reads:

As an Age-Friendly City, older adults in Mississauga will lead purposeful and active lives, will live in their community with dignity, integrity and independence, and will experience a diverse range of lifestyle opportunities to pursue their personal interests. (City of Mississauga, 2007b: 63)

Realizing this vision will be difficult; among other things it requires that older adults have convenient and dependable access to vital services—including “medical practitioners, pharmacies, groceries, community organizations, libraries, and leisure programs and services” (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 7). But Mississauga’s generally low-density urban environment makes it infeasible for these services to be consistently located in close proximity to residential areas. The OAP thus identifies the clustering of older-adult-oriented services in accessible “nodes or pockets” as a project goal (see Table 1), although it does not elaborate on the idea. The objective of this report is to explore the ‘cluster’ concept as it could apply to Mississauga, and, in particular:

- To develop a vision of what an older adult cluster should be, on the basis of best practices from municipalities around the world;

Table 1: Excerpt from the Older Adult Project

Principle #4: Complete Neighborhoods Benefit Older Adults

Goal 4.1	Vital services will be concentrated in nodes or pockets across the City. The definition of vital services will include: medical practitioners, pharmacies, groceries, community organizations, libraries, and leisure programs and services.
Goal 4.2	The City will encourage the clustering of older adult vital services on established transit routes and in accessible locations.
Goal 4.3	Isolated, standalone residences, services and facilities will be discouraged.

Source: City of Mississauga (2007b: 7)

- To identify existing areas in Mississauga with high concentrations of older adults – individuals aged 55 and over – and evaluate the viability of them serving as clusters;
- To analyze the current policy framework and recommending steps for the City to take to develop older adult clusters in Mississauga

While the questions considered here might be relevant to municipalities across the province or country, the recommendations are targeted specifically at Mississauga, with the aim of building on the OAP to ensure that “services, facilities, and programs are more accessible and responsive to the specific needs of older persons” (City of Mississauga, 2007b: 63).

Figure 1: Older adults congregating at the Westwood Mall



Turning best practices into common practice

The City of Mississauga has a particular spatial and social context that strongly influences the way facilities and services for older adults should be provided, but there is extensive research and policy from around the world that the City can draw on in establishing its own vision. Best practices supply both a basic framework for policy development and specific examples of policies in action.

The World Health Organization's 'age-friendly' city

The strongest high-level exploration of how municipalities can best serve their aging populations comes from the World Health Organization (WHO), which has developed a detailed vision of the global 'age-friendly' city. Building on its policy framework on active ageing (WHO, 2002), the WHO (2007) conducted research in 35 cities worldwide, and identified eight topic areas (given in Table 2) for municipal attention, along with a checklist (given in the Appendix) of essential features for properly accommodating older adults.

Both the topic areas and the checklist are useful starting points for articulating a Mississauga-specific vision of facilities and services for older adults, but their global nature means they must remain only starting points. In particular, it is important to distinguish between physical and service components—what can be termed 'hardware' and 'software', respectively. *Hardware* here refers to improvements to the physical environment that enhance active ageing, and correspond broadly to the outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, and housing topics. The feasibility of these interventions is likely to be highly dependent on existing urban form, and thus recommendations appropriate to Mississauga will be quite different from those appropriate to Milan. *Software* improvements are services and outreach efforts that make cities more inclusive of older adults, and correspond to the other five topics. The appropriateness of software recommendations will largely hinge on the social context of a municipality—and particularly issues of socio-economic and ethno-cultural diversity. Moreover, the WHO's checklist does not address issues of *implementation*; the manner in which hardware and software recommendations can be implemented will depend to a certain extent on the political-economic environment of the municipality in question.

Table 2: Key topic areas from the WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities project

Outdoor spaces and buildings	Transportation
Housing	Social participation
Respect and social inclusion	Civic participation employment
Communication and information	Community support and health services

North American best practices

The following are examples of innovative approaches to hardware, software, and implementation interventions to improve the quality of life of older adults. They do not all describe actions taken by municipal governments, but all have lessons that can be applied to Mississauga.

Hardware best practices

Recognizing the importance to older adults of rest areas in parks and at bus stops, the Parks and Recreation department of the District of Saanich, British Columbia has implemented a *bench dedication program* to ensure that street furniture is provided in high-foot-traffic areas. The District is currently expanding the Bench Dedication Program in conjunction with new development to target major neighbourhood centres and public right of ways, integrating benches and street furniture into the existing landscaping. The approach is low-cost but relatively high-impact, as it targets specific areas of high pedestrian use with a modest but important physical intervention (District of Saanich, 2007).

A second hardware best practice is the Toronto Transit Commission's *community bus service*. Begun in 1990, the service "link[s] buildings where seniors with mobility challenges live to local medical and shopping malls" (Transit Toronto, 2007). Developed as a means of overcoming some of the shortcomings of wheel-trans service (notably the need to book a ride ahead of time and the high cost of fares), the community buses provide reliable (although not frequent) service integrated with the rest of the Toronto transit system, but tailored to the particular needs of mobility-challenged seniors in a given community. This program demonstrates a strong degree of spatial targeting—the buses follow idiosyncratic routes chosen to maximize the connection between important facilities and nearby residences, and are only provided in particular neighbourhoods where they are cost-effective.

Software best practices

In Portland, Oregon, a private non-profit named Elders in Action has established the *Elder Friendly Business Certification program*. Trained older-adult volunteers survey businesses using guidelines established by Elders in Action to evaluate their ability to serve an older-adult clientele. The volunteers discuss the evaluation results with the store manager, and present recommendations for making the business more old-age friendly. When the store passes the evaluation form, it receives an Elder Friendly Certificate and window sticker for its door to advertise its commitment to older adults. Under the program, Elders in Action have prompted businesses to make improvements to store layout, lighting, seating arrangements, font sizes on menus, age-awareness training for employers, and more (Elders in Action, 2007; National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 2007).

The *Wellness Connection*, a non-profit health service in Dayton and Miami Valleys, Ohio, provides a second software best practice. The Wellness Connection combines a facility that concentrates a range of older-adult-specific health consulting services with a mobile bus that serves as an outreach unit. The agency uses the bus, which is equipped for mammograms and other health assessments, to conduct seminars at locations throughout the region. It offers a range of services, such as health screenings, heart and cancer prevention and management, nutritional counselling, cardiac rehabilitation, client advocacy, pharmaceutical support, and classes such as yoga and reflexology (Wellness Connection, 2007; National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 2004a).

A final example is the *Senior Peer Counselling Program* provided by the Northwest Senior & Disability Services in Salem, Oregon. The Senior Peer Counselling Program trains older adults to become counselors and mentors to other older adults. Before the volunteers begin work as counselors, they complete training sessions on the psychology of aging, coping with chronic illness, the prevalence of elder abuse, and other relevant topics. The counselors are not professional psychologists, though; their help is limited to 'life growth' issues. In home visits of an hour a week, they share their own experiences with their peers and help them adjust to the life changes that aging brings (Northwest Senior & Disability Services, 2007; National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 2004b).

Implementation best practices

Providing excellent facilities and services for older adults requires excellent implementation strategies. The City of Ottawa's *Seniors Advisory Committee* is such strategy. The committee—composed of seven seniors-at-large and representatives from various seniors' councils and organizations—acts as liaison between the public, private, and third sectors. It aims to improve the livelihood of seniors by identifying barriers they face, forming partnerships within the community, and acting as a public venue for discussing older adult issues. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in their mandate, the Seniors Advisory Committee provides advice to the City on making existing programs, policies, and services more age-friendly (City of Ottawa, 2007).

These best practices are all innovative approaches to providing facilities and services to older adults. Many of them are also innovative *spatially*: they target specific areas to maximize efficiency, or they decentralize service delivery to cover as large an area as possible. A municipality's specific context will determine whether a given program is best supplied in a targeted or dispersed fashion, but clearly the two are not mutually incompatible. Targeted provision of, e.g., community transit can easily coexist with peer-counselling home visits. This report will shortly make recommendations for how Mississauga should spatially arrange its older-adult facilities and services, but first will consider the specific context of the City that forms the basis for these recommendations.

Older adult clusters in Mississauga

The Older Adult Project recommends that facilities and services for older adults be “concentrated in nodes or pockets across the City” (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 7). This recommendation is a pragmatic response to the current spatial reality of Mississauga; the urban form is too dispersed to support a uniform provisioning of services on a walkable scale, as would be present in the WHO’s ideal ‘age-friendly’ city. In fact, in a suburban municipality, the clustering of services is likely to be the most effective response to the challenge of the ‘age-friendly’ city, since it allows the numerous important details of hardware and software to be deployed on a smaller, more manageable scale.

This section develops a Mississauga-specific vision of an older adult cluster: a concentration of senior-oriented facilities and services in a limited geographical area that is accessible by car and transit and within which walking is feasible. Clusters should be located at nodes—zones designated for intensification under the Mississauga Plan—and the nodes of seven planning districts are particularly suited for cluster development on the basis of demographic characteristics. The section considers spatial and social characteristics of these sites, and then presents a detailed description of the cluster concept as it applies to them.

Clustering at nodes

The Mississauga Plan (City of Mississauga, 2007: s. 3.13.1.2) designates certain areas of the City as nodes: as specific targets for development and intensification, which are to “accommodate a greater variety and concentration of uses than their surrounding areas”. Figure 2 shows the location of residential and employment nodes throughout the City. The node designation is essential for co-locating the facilities and services that should be present in older adult clusters; particularly, it already includes provision for higher-level transit, mixed-use development, and increased density.

In addition, the Mississauga Plan designates certain corridors connecting nodes as secondary targets for development and intensification. These corridors, and other major roads extending outward from nodes, are also good candidates for cluster development. While it will not be feasible to develop large-scale infrastructure such as community centres along these corridors, more modest interventions such as improved streetscaping can be implemented. With increased transit service planned in these areas, retail, service, and recreational micro-destinations along the corridors will be more appealing to older adults if the City puts the appropriate amenities in place.

Site selection

Older adults are not located uniformly throughout Mississauga. Figure 3 shows the percentage of residents who are 55 years of age or older by planning district (using 2001 Census data). Figure 4 shows the gross density of older adults. These maps, along with Table 3, demonstrate that the majority of the older adult population resides south of Highway 403, with the exception of Malton in the north-east and Hurontario just north of the City Centre. Based on this demographic data and additional information from the OAP, seven communities emerge as the best candidates for the development of older adult clusters:

- Erin Mills
- Mississauga Valley
- Rathwood

Figure 2: Residential and employment nodes

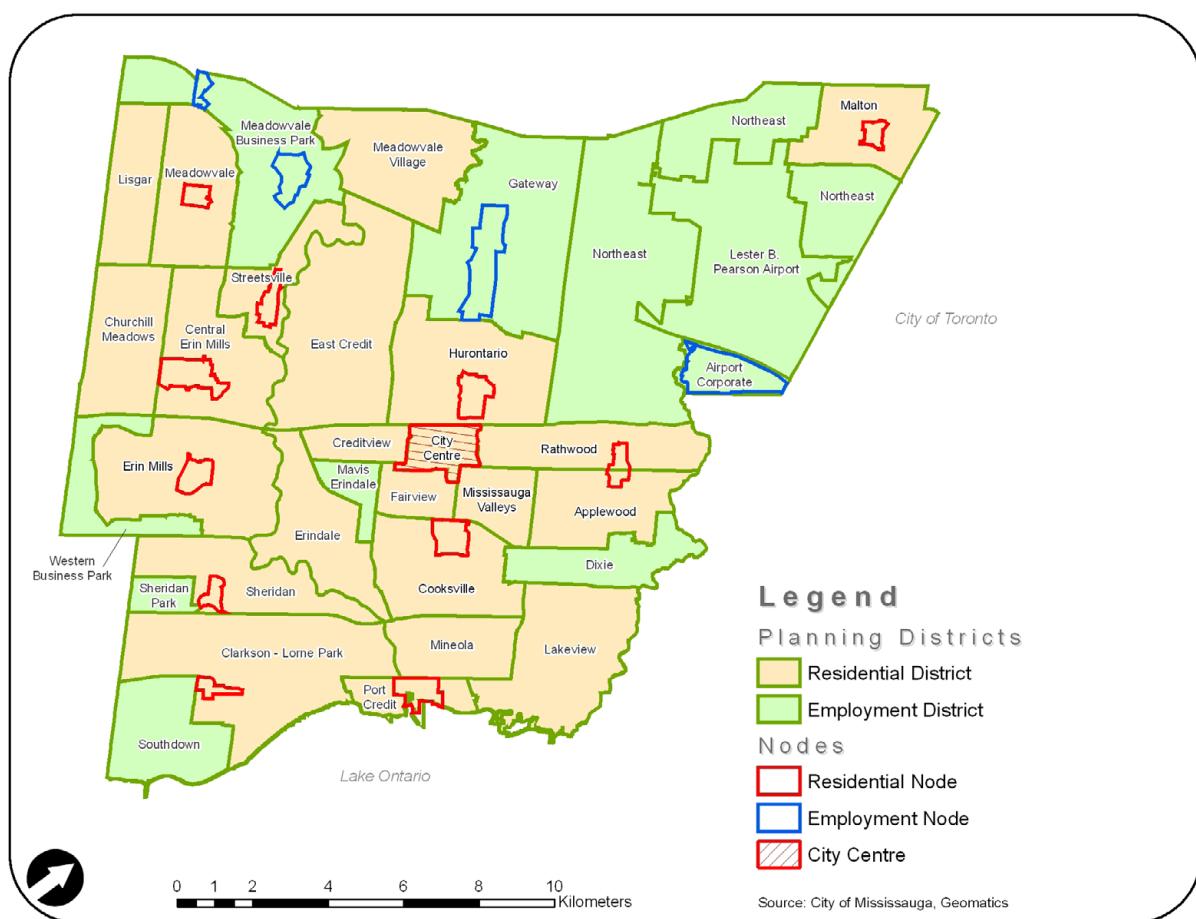
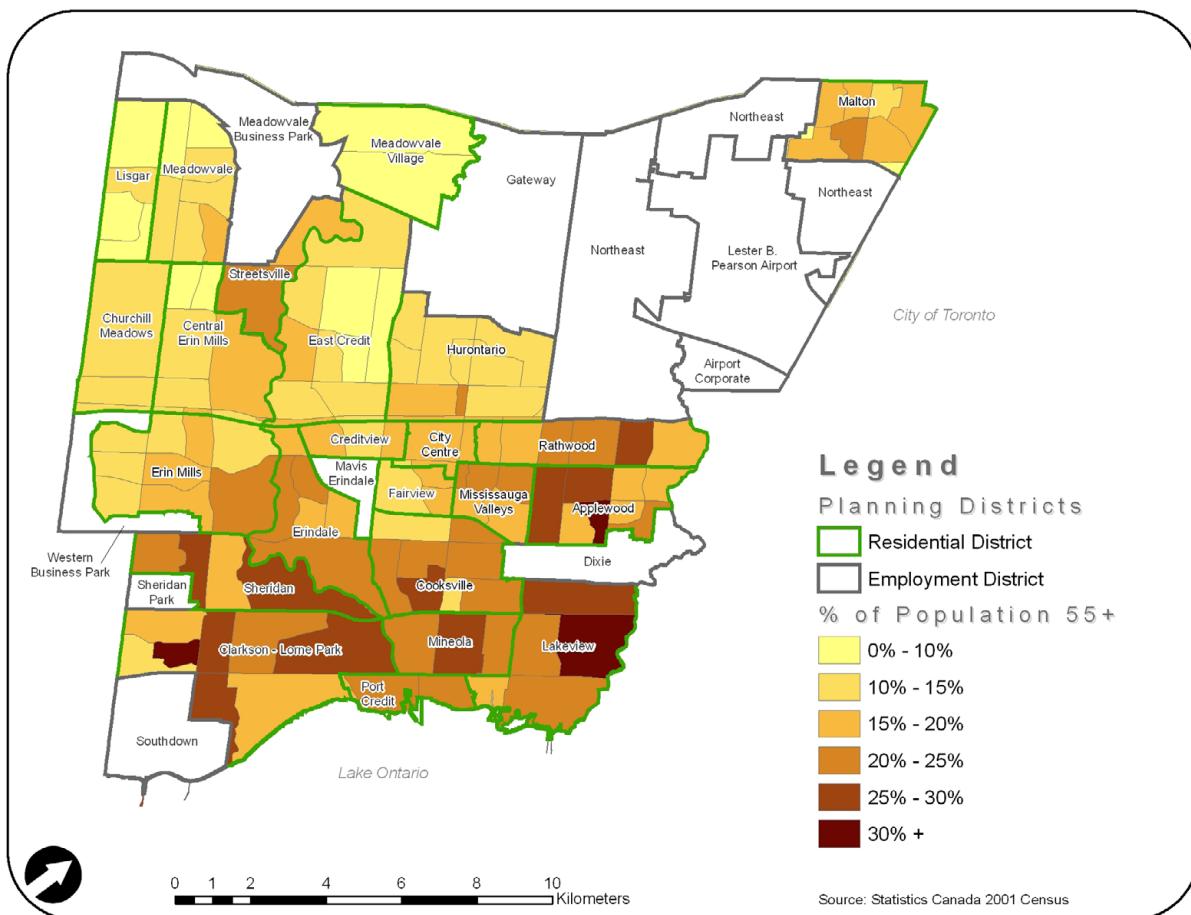


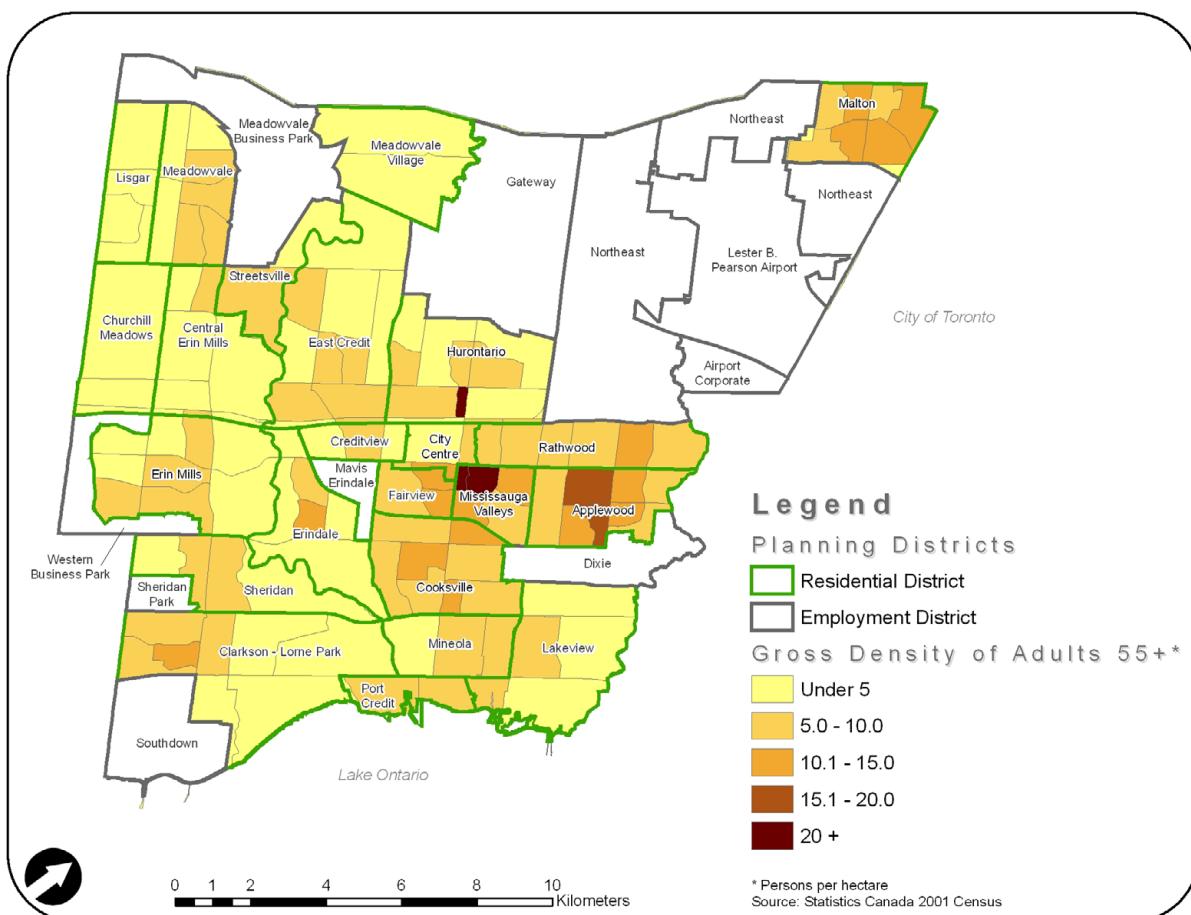
Figure 3: Percentage of residents 55 years of age or older by census district



- Applewood
- Cooksville
- Malton
- Hurontario

These seven communities (out of 23) are among the most populous in the City, and account for 47 per cent of Mississauga's older adult population. Figure 5 shows these communities and their nodes. One of the communities (Mississauga Valley) does not have a node within its boundaries, but it lies within the urban growth corridor and is adjacent to City Centre, which has many of the same characteristics as the nodes in terms of development and intensification.

Figure 4: Gross density of older adults by census district



Spatial context

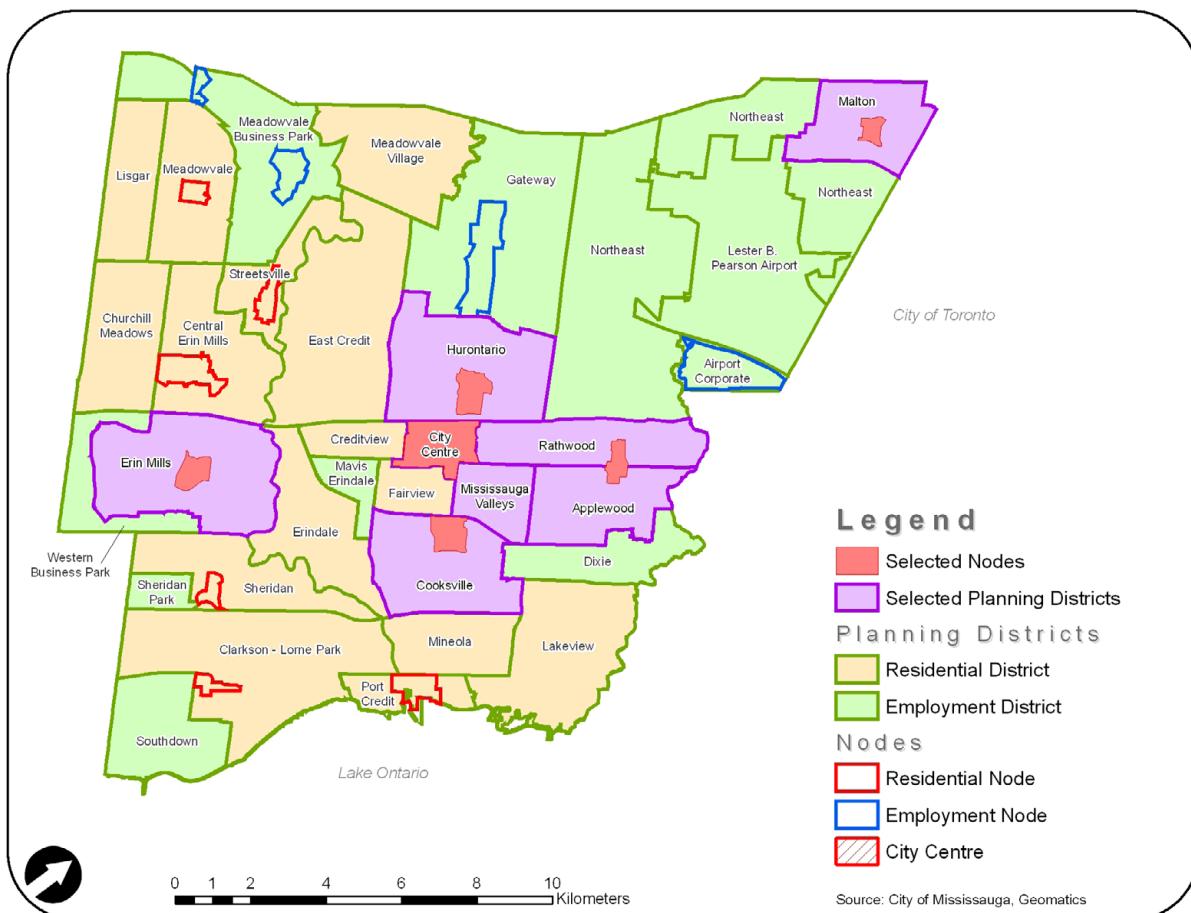
The seven selected communities vary substantially in the ease with which they will support the development of an older adult cluster. Site analysis of existing infrastructure and built form has identified Erin Mills as the neighbourhood with the most potential for a robust cluster, with Mississauga Valley and Malton also strong candidates. The other four communities are at a disadvantage, either because they lack important infrastructure or because their built form is particularly dispersed and automobile-oriented. Still, the sites share a number of characteristics in common, and these characteristics typify the challenges and opportunities Mississauga will face as it cultivates older adult clusters.

Nearly all the neighbourhoods have community centres and shopping centres within their nodes (Cooksville only has a public library, not a community centre). But there is significant variance in how easily they can be navigated between. Erin Mills is best positioned in this respect: its

Table 4: Quantities and concentrations of older adults in Mississauga

Community	Pop. 55+	Total pop.	% 50-59	% 55+	% 60+
Applewood	9,400	37,600	12%	25%	19%
Central Erin Mills	5,400	31,765	13%	17%	11%
Churchill Meadows	3,000	27,273	9%	11%	7%
City Centre	3,100	14,762	13%	21%	15%
Clarkson Lorne Park	9,400	39,167	14%	24%	17%
Cooksville	9,900	45,000	12%	22%	17%
Creditview	1,300	6,190	17%	21%	13%
East Credit	9,600	64,000	12%	15%	10%
Erin Mills	10,400	47,273	16%	22%	15%
Fairview	3,000	15,789	13%	19%	13%
Hurontario	10,500	55,263	14%	19%	13%
Lakeview	6,000	21,429	15%	28%	21%
Lisgar	3,300	30,000	10%	11%	7%
Malton	7,500	37,500	11%	20%	15%
Mavis-Erindale	5,200	22,609	14%	23%	17%
Meadowvale	6,600	41,250	14%	16%	10%
Meadowvale Village	3,200	26,667	9%	12%	8%
Mineola	2,500	9,259	15%	27%	20%
Mississauga Valley	6,200	25,833	13%	24%	18%
Port Credit	2,800	10,370	15%	27%	20%
Rathwood	8,600	31,852	16%	27%	19%
Sheridan	3,600	14,400	13%	25%	19%
Streetsville	3,000	12,000	15%	25%	18%
TOTAL	133,500	667,251	13%	20%	14%

Figure 5: Selected neighbourhoods and nodes



community centre and mall (the South Common Mall) are nearly adjacent to each other, and walking from the one to the other does not require crossing a major street. Walking from the community centre to the mall in Malton is possible, although the distance would be prohibitive to many older adults, especially in the winter. The other locations have poor connections between community centres and retail, with the former typically surrounded by parking lots and green spaces, and thus only readily accessible by car even from nearby residence or retail.

Another similarity is that the neighbourhoods tend to have high- or medium-density residential developments in or around the nodes, but that these buildings are not well integrated with other uses nearby. Mississauga Valley's collection of high-rise towers is typical in this regard: thousands of seniors live in relatively close quarters to one another, but isolated from the nearby community centre and retail. Again Erin Mills is a positive example: there is mid-rise residential development within convenient walking distance of the mall and community centre, and indeed a number of older adults were observed walking home to these buildings after shopping (see Figure 6).

The nodes in the seven districts are all easily accessed by automobile, with generous parking at malls, community centres, and other destinations. They are also generally well served by transit, especially in comparison with neighbouring residential areas. City Centre and Erin Mills are particularly busy transit hubs, and receive feeder buses from throughout the surrounding areas; the Applewood/Rathwood node, on the other hand, is little more than an intersection from a transit perspective. Bus routes cross at Dixie Rd. and Burnhamthorpe Rd., but the corner is far from a hub. Malton has a small hub at the edge of the Westwood Mall's parking lot, which would be substantially more useful for older adults if it were moved closer to the mall itself.

The nodes' streetscapes are almost uniformly pedestrian-unfriendly, especially for older adults. Sidewalks lack benches, building setbacks are large, and crosswalks are intimidating. In the OAP's large study of stakeholder opinions, the safety of roadways saw the largest gap between importance and satisfaction of a range of community attributes asked about (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 17). In most cases, the prospects for significant short-term streetscape improvement are dim, since the width of roads and the prevalence of street-fronting parking lots are large barriers. On the other hand, the importance to residents of indoor, heated shopping centres presents a way around this dilemma, since these are generally pedestrian-friendly and already represent a concentration of facilities and services. In many cases, malls will be the most appropriate targets for clustering older-adult services.

Figure 6: Older adults walking home from the South Common Mall



Social context

Mississauga is an increasingly diverse city, and the seven neighbourhoods even more so. Figures 7 and 8 show the average household income and the percentage of visibility minorities in residential areas of the City. With the exception of Erin Mills, all seven neighbourhoods have average household incomes lower than the City mean, with Cooksville and Malton particularly low. The percentage of visible minorities varies widely between the seven neighbourhoods, with Malton home to the highest concentration in Mississauga, and Erin Mills relatively few. Both of these factors will impact how the City should orient facilities and services to older adults; the cost of participating in municipal programming, identified City-wide as one of the three most important areas for improvement in service-delivery, is likely to be an even more significant issue in the lower-income neighbourhoods (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 8). Moreover, communities with higher proportions of vis-

Figure 7: Average household income by census district

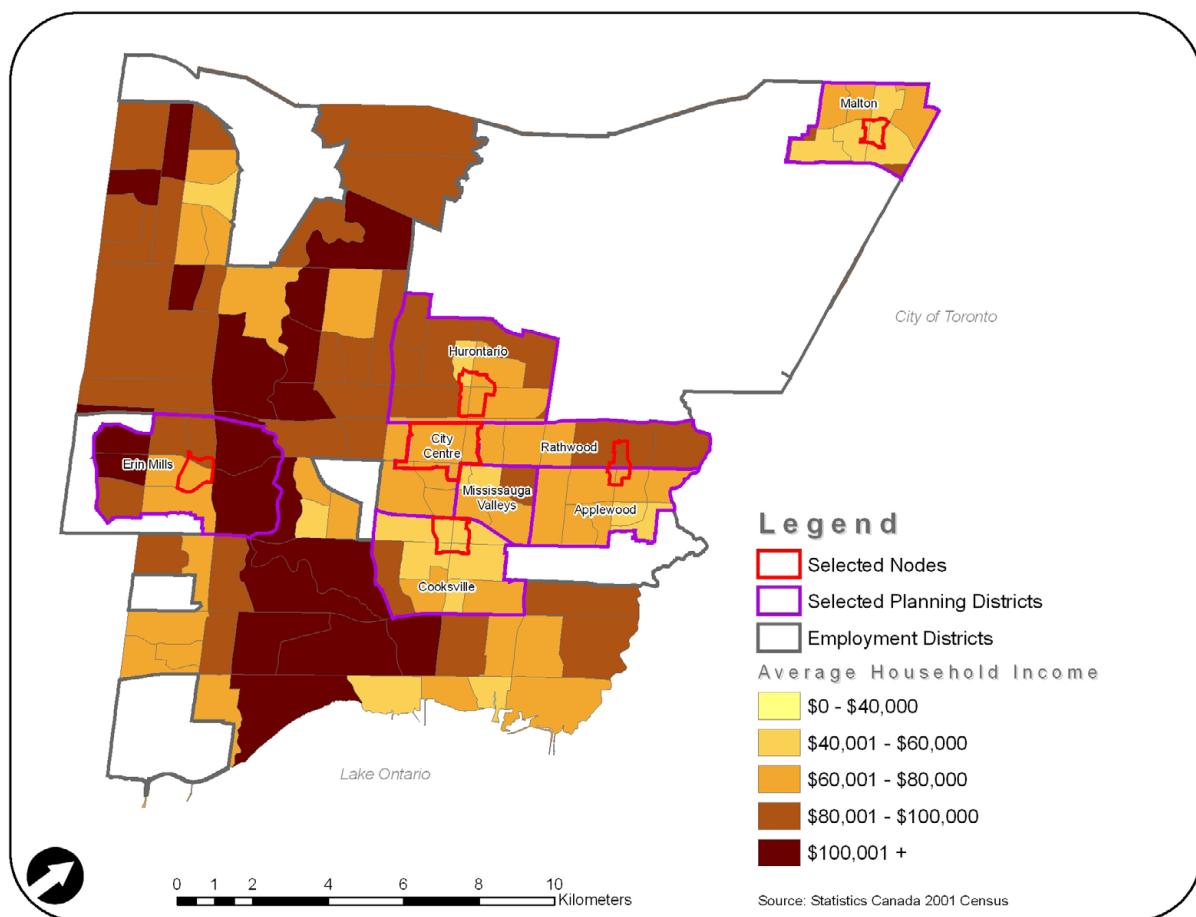
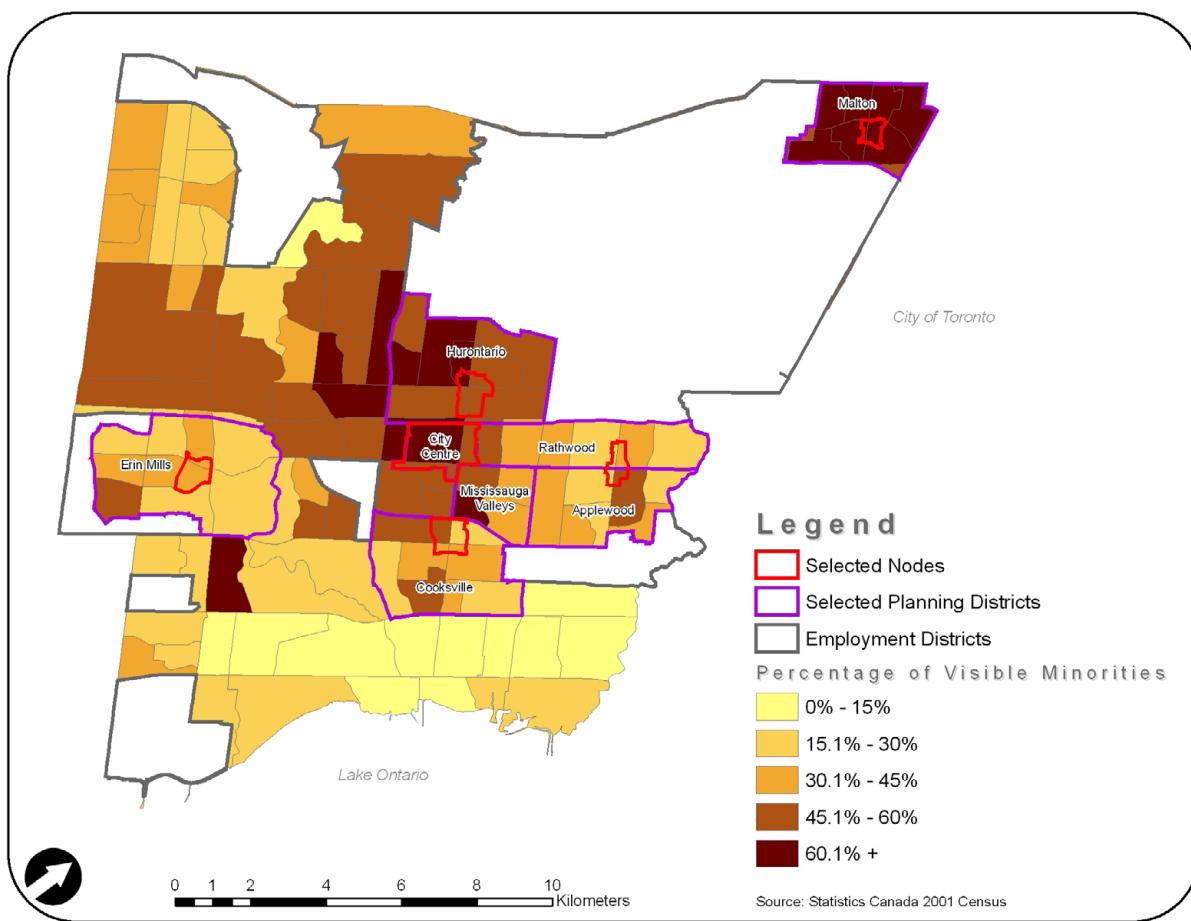


Figure 8: Percentage of visibility minorities by census district



ible minorities are likely to require services in multiple languages. City literature on older adult services in Mississauga is currently only distributed in English. This issue has been addressed at the provincial level: literature available from the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat is produced in English, French, Portuguese, and Punjabi, among other languages. Additionally, older adults from immigrant backgrounds say that they would be more likely to participate in community activities if the services were offered in a more culturally sensitive manner and if the services and service delivery were available in languages other than English (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 13).

Another aspect of diversity is the range of activity levels among older adults. In this regard, the OAP has identified four categories: pre-retirement older adults, active older adults, passive older adults, and elders (City of Mississauga, 2007b). *Pre-retirement older adults* are 55 years of age or older but are still in the workforce, either because they require additional income or because of the relaxation of mandatory retirement rules. Because of their jobs, their need for daytime interaction is limited; however, these time commitments make it

difficult for them to integrate into an older-adult community. A particular challenge with regard to pre-retirement older adults is creating available programming outside of traditional business hours.

Active older adults are retired but retain decent mobility and wide-reaching social networks. They travel, live actively, and seek more involved pastimes such as volunteer work. Preventative care through active lifestyle programming and preventative medicine can be targeted at this population. *Passive older adults* are those that largely retain their health but have less mobility, and are therefore unlikely to participate in vigorous activities. Their strongest networks are found with people of similar age. *Elders*, like passive older adults, have limited mobility but may also be in poor health. Their mobility is the largest barrier to social interaction, and they will benefit from the home delivery of some social services, including healthcare. Older adult clusters will necessarily perform different functions for these different groups, and the City must recognize this aspect of diversity just as much as it does socio-economic status and ethnicity.

Clusters, in brief

The basic concept of an older adult cluster developed here is a concentration of facilities and services in a limited geographical area that is accessible by car and transit and within which walking is feasible. In Mississauga, this implies the following:

- **Clusters should be located at nodes.** The Mississauga Plan's 'node' designation already includes provision for higher-level transit, mixed-use development, and increased density, all of which are essential for developing older adult clusters.
- **Certain aspects of clusters should be developed along corridors.** The major roads leading out of and connecting nodes are ideal secondary targets for development and intensification. While it will not be feasible to develop full-scale clusters along these corridors, certain cluster features such as improved streetscaping should be implemented to encourage vibrant secondary uses.
- **Cluster development should focus on community centres and malls.** The existing streetscape is sufficiently car-oriented in most nodes that, in the short term, the only feasible way to develop pedestrian-friendly spaces is to do so indoors. Community centres and malls are major destinations already, and this strength should be further leveraged through cluster development.
- **Clusters should be transit hubs.** Although most older adults access their destinations by car, transit is growing in modal share. Mississauga's low-density residential development makes a comprehensive grid transit layout difficult to deploy, but service oriented around destination hubs can bring older adults into clusters from surrounding areas.

- **Residential development in and adjacent to clusters should be medium- and high-density, and appropriate for older adults.** Given the existing built form of Mississauga and the stated desire of many older adults to ‘age in place’, clusters will inevitably serve broad geographical regions. Nevertheless, where there is new residential development in and around clusters, it should be at the scale necessary to support pedestrian-oriented retail and institutional services.
- **Services should respond to community diversity.** Different neighbourhoods have different social and cultural characteristics, and these should be reflected in cluster service provision. In some cases this will mean offering information in languages other than English; in other cases, greater emphasis on evening programming.

Recommendations

The following recommendations combine best practices from the WHO and municipalities across North America with analysis of Mississauga's specific context. They come in two forms: first, a set of checklists for hardware and software features that should be present in an older adult cluster, along with the feature's priority, timing, and responsibility; second, policy recommendations for implementing items on the checklist, and developing older adult clusters more generally.

Hardware checklist

Outdoor infrastructure

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Public areas, including green spaces and outdoor seating, are sufficient in number, well-maintained, and pleasant, with sufficient garbage bins.	Short	Community Services (Recreation and Parks, Planning and Administration)
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Pavements and pedestrian crossings are non-slip, wheelchair accessible, and provide adequate signals and crossing times for those with visual and mobility impairments.	Medium	Transportation and Works (Transportation and Infrastructure Planning, Engineering & Works)
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Stops in between destination points are frequent, and have adequate seating and shelter.	Short	Community Services (Recreation and Parks), Corporate Services (Facilities and Property Management)
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting.	Short	Transportation and Works (Engineering & Works)

Indoor infrastructure

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings, both private and public, are well signed outside and inside; include accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs; include non-slip floors; and are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.	Medium	Community Services (Planning and Admin.), Private Sector
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.	Medium	Community Services (Library Services), private sector (sponsors)

Service facilities

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Services and facilities are situated in walking distance from each other and are accessible. They should meet the varying needs and preferences of the community and include the following: pharmacy, grocery store, post office, bank, community centre, and educational institution.	Long	Community Services (Planning and Admin.), Private Sector, Planning & Building (Policy Planning, Development & Design)
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.	Long	Community Services (Planning and Admin.)
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential care facilities are located close to services.	Long	Community Services (Planning and Admin.)
Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.	Short	Corporate Services (Organizational Wellness and Business Services)

Housing

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Sufficient affordable housing is available in areas that are close to services.	Medium	Planning and Building (Policy Planning, Development & Design), Private Sector Developers
High	<input type="checkbox"/> A large proportion of housing located near services is high- or medium-density.	Long	Planning and Building (Policy Planning, Development & Design)

Transportation

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Transit is oriented around destination hubs, and has relatively high service frequency during off-peak hours.	Medium	Transportation and Works (Mississauga Transit)
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Transport stops and stations, as well as parking and drop-off areas, are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.	Short	Transportation and Works (Transportation and Infrastructure Planning, Engineering & Works)
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential care facilities are located close to services.	Long	Community Services (Planning and Admin.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.	Short	Transportation and Works (Enforcement)
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.	Short	Transportation and Works (Engineering & Works)
Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Community transit services are provided to link services and facilities to nearby residential areas.	Medium	Transportation and Works (Mississauga Transit)

Software checklist

Information distribution and communication

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete and accessible information on municipal facilities is provided to users in large print and in multiple languages.	Short	Corporate Services (Communications, Facilities and Property Management), community organizations, private business
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Distribution of information is coordinated to provide centralized access.	Medium	Corporate Services (Communications)
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Older adults are targeted to participate in public consultations, as well as voluntary and commercial service development.	Medium	Corporate Services (Communications), Community Organizations
Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Community services and events are advertised through broadcasts of interest to older adults.	Short	Corporate Services (Communications), Community Organizations, Private Business

Social activities

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.	Short	Community Organizations, Local Cultural Groups
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs and events are offered at a variety of times of day.	Short	Community Services (Recreation and Parks), Community Organizations, Local Cultural Groups, School Boards, Religious Organizations

Training, support, and volunteer programs

Priority	Hardware	Timing	Responsibility
High	<input type="checkbox"/> An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining, and restoring health.	Medium	Corporate Services (Organizational Wellness and Business Services, Facilities and Property Management), community organizations
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.	Medium	Corporate Services (Organizational Wellness and Business Services), community organizations
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.	Short	Planning and Building (Policy Planning), Community Services (Planning & Administration, Fire & Emergency Services)
Low	<input type="checkbox"/> A database or weekly mailing of volunteer and appropriately paid part-time positions tailored to older adults is available.	Medium	Community Services (Recreation and Parks, Library Services, Planning and Administration), local cultural groups, private business

Hardware recommendations

Outdoor Infrastructure

- **Recommendation 1:** Planning and Building should incorporate provisions for additional built-form items into section 3.13 of the Mississauga Plan.
- **Recommendation 2:** Recreation and Parks should focus future green-space development on pocket parks.
- **Recommendation 3:** Engineering and Works should encourage streetscape amenities and other provisions in nodes and corridors that lack large-scale infrastructure to make them more accommodating for older adults for secondary uses such as retail.

The Mississauga plan (s. 3.13) designates nodes as areas for development and intensification, as well as for a higher standard of pedestrian-oriented urban design. The Plan should men-

Figure 9: Streetscape lacking rest-points



tion specific built-form items—such as benches, shelter, and lighting—that in many cases are insufficient. An example is the perimeters of many of the clusters, which are currently composed of long sidewalks with little to no street furniture or shelter (see Figure 9). This is problematic for older adults and other residents with mobility issues, who cannot walk for several hundred meters without a break. The city should therefore install street furniture throughout the cluster to improve walkability for older adults. Like in Saanich, British Columbia, this could be done with the assistance of private businesses. Priority for deploying outdoor infrastructure should be guided by the presence of shopping centres, which attract the most routine use from surrounding areas. This should also be true in clusters or corridors that cannot support other large-scale infrastructure such as community centres; in these cases Engineering and Works should ensure the provision of streetscape amenities and other provisions to make them more desirable for secondary uses such as retail.

Many of the nodes have large expanses of open green spaces (see Figure 10), which are generally appreciated by residents but all ill-suited to areas targeted for intensification and development. Moreover, large open spaces may be intimidating to older adults because of

Figure 10: Green space in the Erin Mills node



safety concerns and their sheer scale. Mississauga does not lack for green space; Recreation and Parks should therefore consider transforming some of the nodes' large parks into pocket parks, which are more appealing to older adults and would additionally free up more land for intensification in the cluster.

Indoor Infrastructure

- **Recommendation 1:** Business Services should implement a certification scheme to encourage infrastructure best practices in shopping centres, including physical amenities and training programs.

It has already been noted that shopping centres play a key role in anchoring services within clusters, since they are ubiquitous, often centrally located, and pedestrian-friendly in the hottest or coldest temperatures. To help make current facilities even more accommodating to older adults, the City should institute a certification program modelled after Portland,

Oregon's Elder Friendly Business Certification. Businesses, in exchange for undergoing a store appraisal and adopting identified best practices, would be able to market themselves as older-adult-friendly and would be identified as such in City publications and service directories. Such a program would be a public-private win-win situation.

Service Facilities

- **Recommendation 1:** Planning and Building should broaden the “Community/Cultural” zoning definition to allow community centres to deliver social, recreation, commercial, cultural, and health services vital to older adults.

Health services are already well concentrated in Mississauga’s nodes (see Figure 11), but they are frequently distant from other important services. Facilities should be easily accessible and situated in walking distance from each other; they should cover a wide range of services, including health centre, pharmacy, grocery store, post office, bank, community centre, and educational institution. Concentrating these services further requires leveraging existing facilities, which in most cases will be the community centre. This concentration cannot be implemented without provision for locations zoned for both municipal and private uses.

Figure 11: Health services clustered in the Erin Mills



Housing

- **Recommendation 1:** Planning and Building should ensure that the Mississauga Plan provides for medium- and high-density housing in clusters and along corridors.
- **Recommendation 2:** The City should offer Section 37 benefits in exchange for amenities targeted at older adults.
- **Recommendation 3:** The City should coordinate with Peel Living to make clusters priority locations for new affordable housing development.

Given the existing distribution of housing in Mississauga, the majority of older adults will have to travel by car or transit to access clusters, regardless of the amount of intensification that occurs. Nevertheless, to the extent that residential redevelopment and intensification occurs in and around clusters, it should take advantage of the proximity of facilities and services. This means, first of all, building at higher densities. The mid-rise apartments adjacent to the community centre in Erin Mills (see Figure 12) are an excellent example of this type

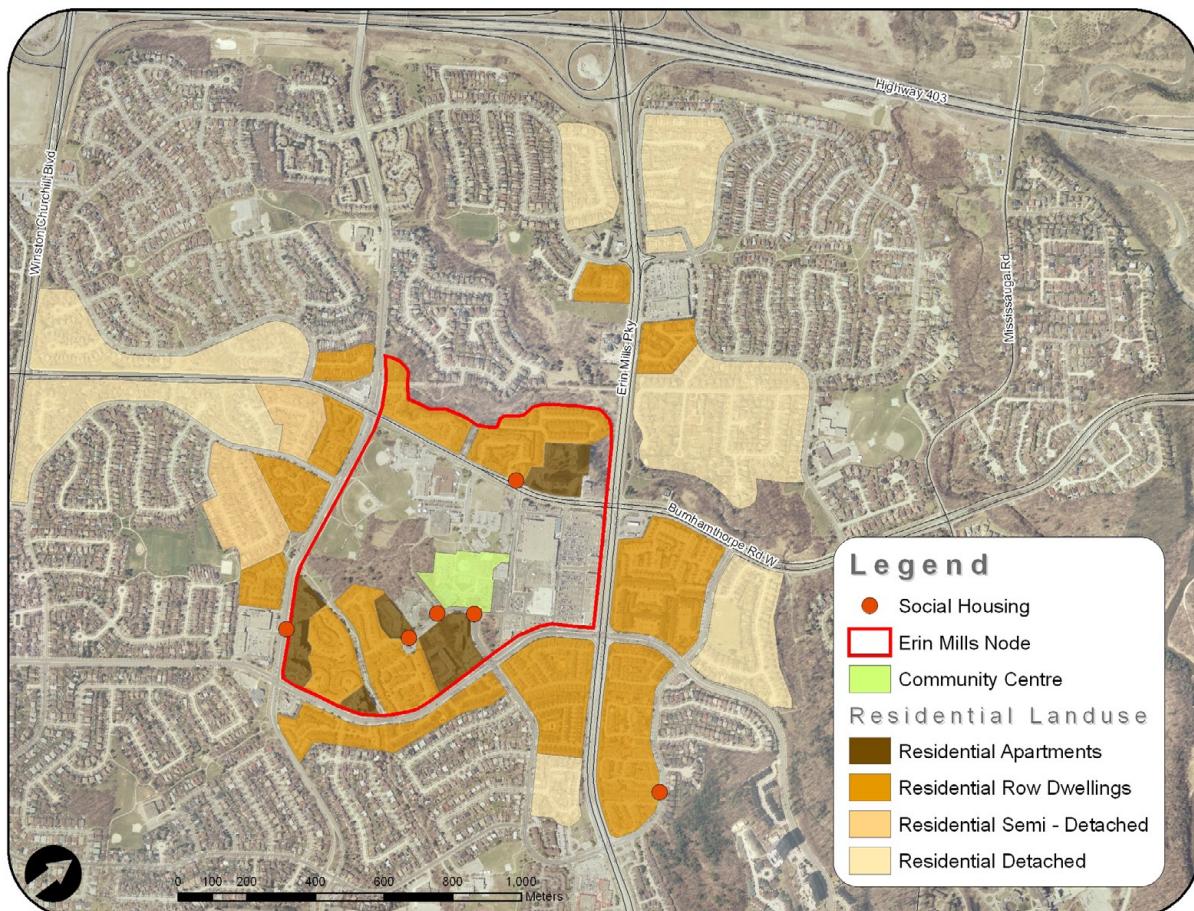
Figure 12: Mid-rise development in the Erin Mills node



of development—older adults are able to walk to a variety of services directly from their front doors. But it is important that housing not just be dense but be well-connected to the nearby facilities. Mississauga Valleys, for example, has a number of high-rise apartments that are too isolated from nearby community and retail uses to be accessible on foot. Locating residential development in the actual nodes and along corridors where transit service is relatively good is one way to accomplish this connection.

One means for the City to encourage residential development that is suited for older adults is to offer Section 37 benefits in exchange for older-adult-oriented amenities such as handrails in hallways and extra maneuverability room at doorways. The Mississauga Plan (s. 5.3.3.2) lists one of the potential amenities eligible for Section 37 as “provision of a wide range of housing types, including affordable, assisted, and special needs housing” (emphasis removed)—housing for older adults would easily qualify here.

Figure 13: Mid-rise, high-rise, and affordable housing in the Erin Mills node



The older adults who are likely to have the least ability to travel distances conveniently, and thus the least ability to access clusters, are those of lower-income. For this reason it is important that sufficient affordable housing be provided in and around clusters. The City will need to partner with Peel Living to give priority to affordable housing development in these areas (see Figure 13).

Transportation

- **Recommendation 1:** Mississauga Transit should orient service around destination hubs, and maintain relatively high service frequency during off-peak hours.
- **Recommendation 2:** Mississauga Transit should initiate a pilot study of community transit serving clusters and surrounding residential areas.

Transportation plays an essential role in developing clusters by allowing access the facilities and services, and the OAP stakeholder consultations (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 22) have identified it as a key barrier for older adults. Over 95 per cent of older adults report using either cars or public transit as their primary means of transportation, with almost eight in ten driving themselves, so these two modes in particular must be accommodated in planning clusters. Given the combination in older adults of a high degree of reliance on automobiles and decreased mobility, providing priority parking and drop-off spots at facilities is vital, but this is generally already well done in Mississauga, particularly in mall and community centre parking lots.

Currently one in ten older adults use public transit as their primary means of transportation, and this proportion is only likely to rise. From the perspective of encouraging the development of clusters, the most important transit features are routes oriented around destination hubs and relatively high off-peak service. The latter is the most-cited area for improvement among older adults (City of Mississauga, 2007c: 25). To an extent, these features are already in place in City Centre and the Erin Mills node (although there is room for improvement in service standards: see Figure 14), both of which are also slated for substantial improvements in the next five years (Mississauga Transit, 2007). The service in and around, e.g. the Applewood/Rathwood node is notably poorer. In areas such as this one, a more feasible approach to providing quality transit service to older adults trying to access cluster facilities may be to institute a community transit service such as the one developed by the Toronto Transit Commission. Figure 15 shows how such a service might operate in the Applewood/Rathwood area: the route is idiosyncratic, and designed to connect residents of high- and medium-density housing with important cluster facilities. Such a service could be operated hourly with smaller-than-normal buses to reduce capital costs, and would provide especially mobility-challenged older adults with a more flexible alternative to wheel-trans services.

Figure 14: Service degradation between AM peak and Sunday in the Erin Mills node

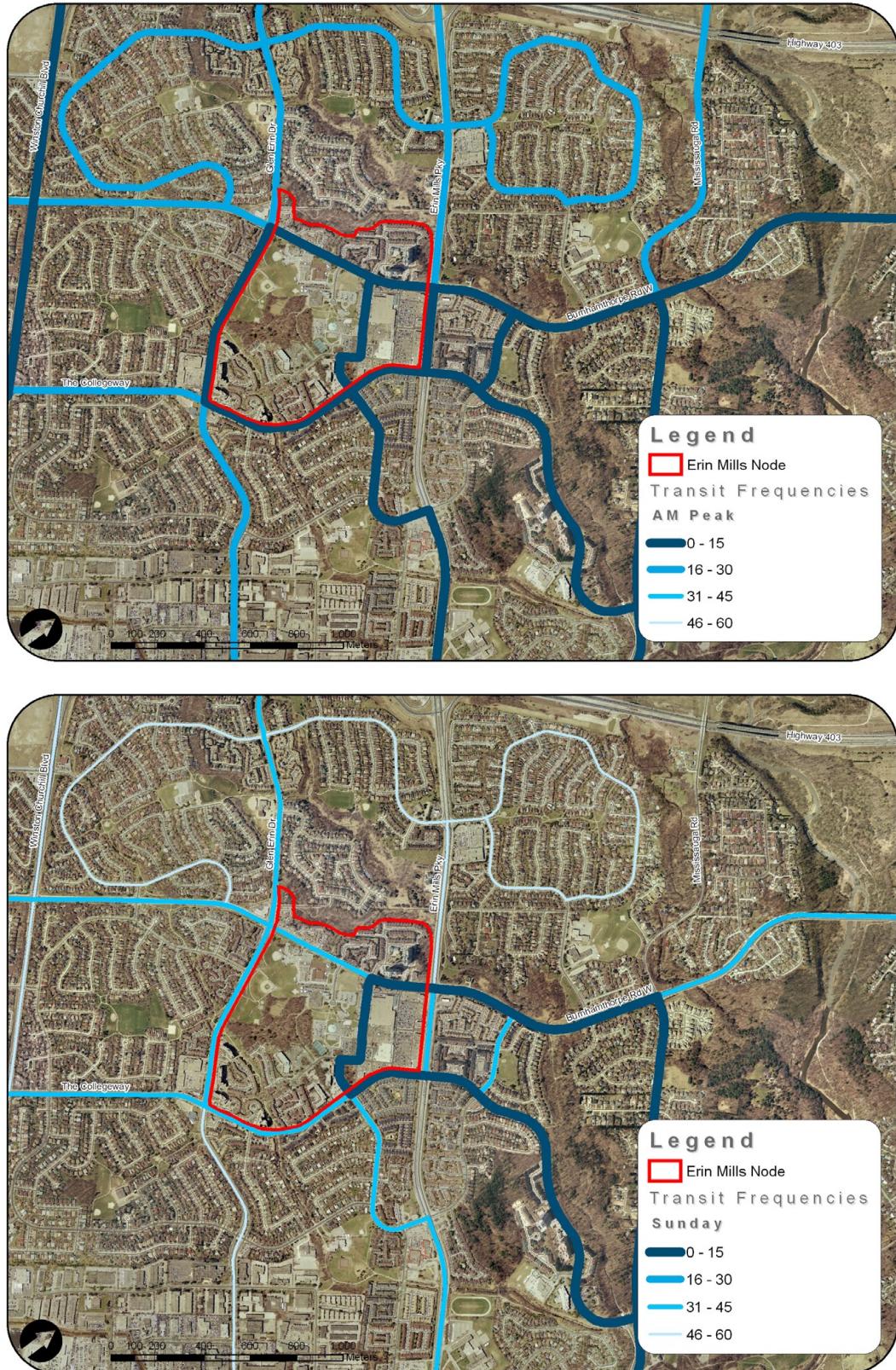
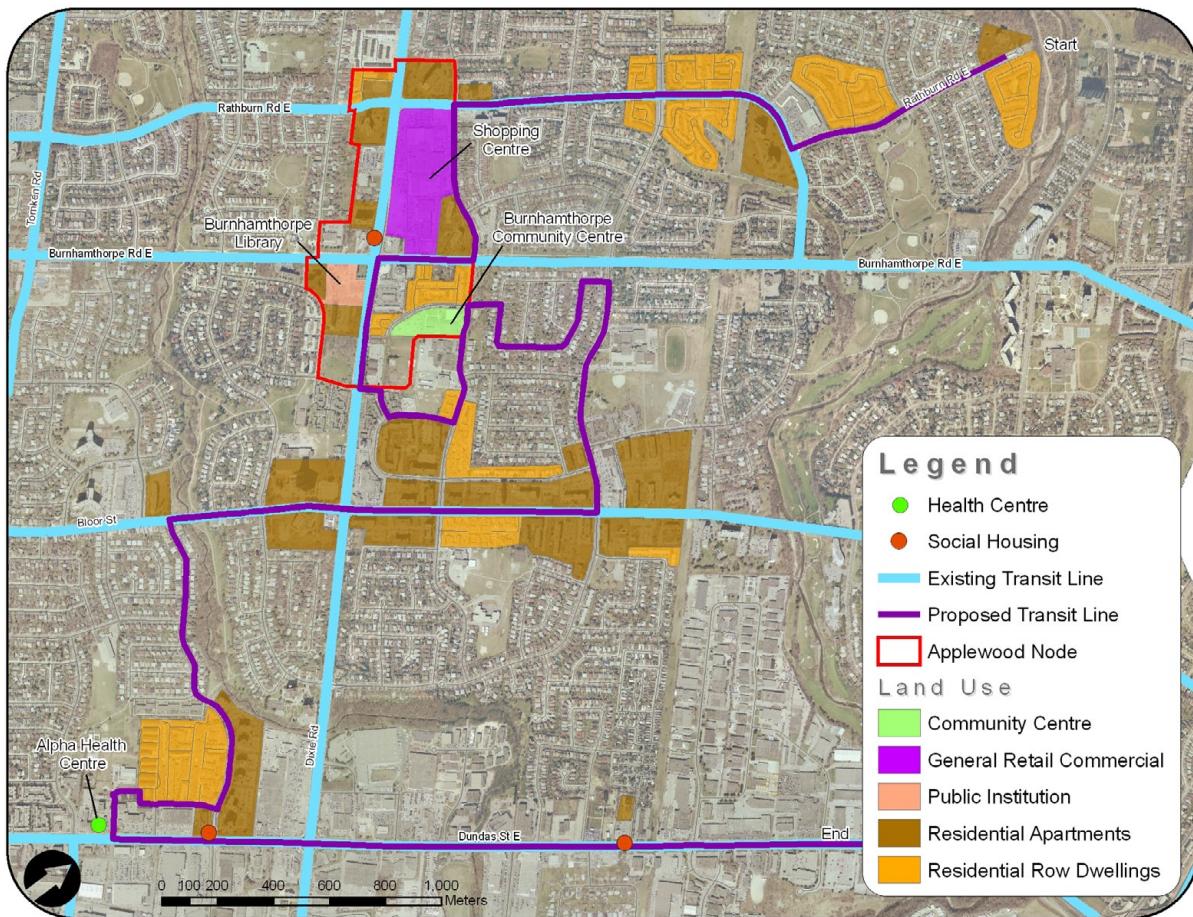


Figure 15: Potential route for a community bus service in the Applewood/Rathwood node



Software recommendations

Information Distribution and Communication

- Recommendation 1:** The City should brand clusters as older-adult destinations, and group information by cluster in service directories and similar publications.
- Recommendation 2:** The City should offer “Active Mississauga” and associated publications in large print, in multiple languages, and by mail.
- Recommendation 3:** The Communications Office should establish information kiosks throughout each cluster that highlight municipal services.

Information distribution and communication programs will be vital to the success of older adult clusters, as they will be the primary means by which older adults aging in place can

be connected to cluster facilities and services. The first task of cluster communications, then, is communicating the clusters: the Communications department should establish a branding program that promotes the clusters as integrated destinations for older adults. The City should use this branding in publications, communications, and service directories. For example, Recreation and Parks' Active Mississauga directory could group its older-adult listings by cluster.

The City should take steps to make Active Mississauga and other publications more accessible to older adults in other ways. Documents for older adults should be printed in large type (this is currently done for Active Mississauga, but for many other publications it is not), and should be made available in multiple languages (depending on the demographic characteristics of the particular neighbourhood). Currently there are comprehensive listings for older adults at community centres and online through the Recreation and Parks website; it is crucial to make the document available as a mailing, so that older adults who do not have access to these resources can learn about available services and become more active within their community.

Some of these concepts have been implemented in the neighbourhood of Malton. At the Westwood Mall, an information kiosk run by Malton Neighbourhood Services, a United Way Agency, supplies printed documents in various languages, including Punjabi, Spanish, and Italian, to cater to the neighbourhood's top spoken languages (see Figure 16). The City should consider opening similar kiosks in cluster malls. By making information and literature widely available to older adults from different backgrounds and with different levels of sightedness and mobility, the City will increase the likelihood of a diverse population of older adults taking advantage of facilities and services.

Social Activities

- **Recommendation 1:** The City's Communications Office should create a directory of social activities available within clusters and disseminate it on a regular basis.
- **Recommendation 2:** Recreation and Parks should schedule events for older adults during the evening – in addition to the late morning and early afternoon – to appeal to working seniors.

Ensuring that older adults can readily participate in social activities is one of the most important steps the City can take to combat social exclusion. One aspect of this is providing outreach to at-risk older adults, such as those with limited mobility, by publishing directories of social activities and delivering them to homes. The timing of social activities is also important. Much of the current programming is conducted during the late morning and early afternoon; to reach working older adults activities also need to be scheduled in the evening.

Figure 16: Community service information kiosk in Malton



Training, Support, and Volunteer Services

- **Recommendation 1:** Corporate Services and community organizations should work together to establish a training program for older adults in the process of retirement.
- **Recommendation 2:** Corporate Services should maintain a database of part-time volunteer and paid opportunities for older adults, and distribute it at kiosks and through targeted mailings.

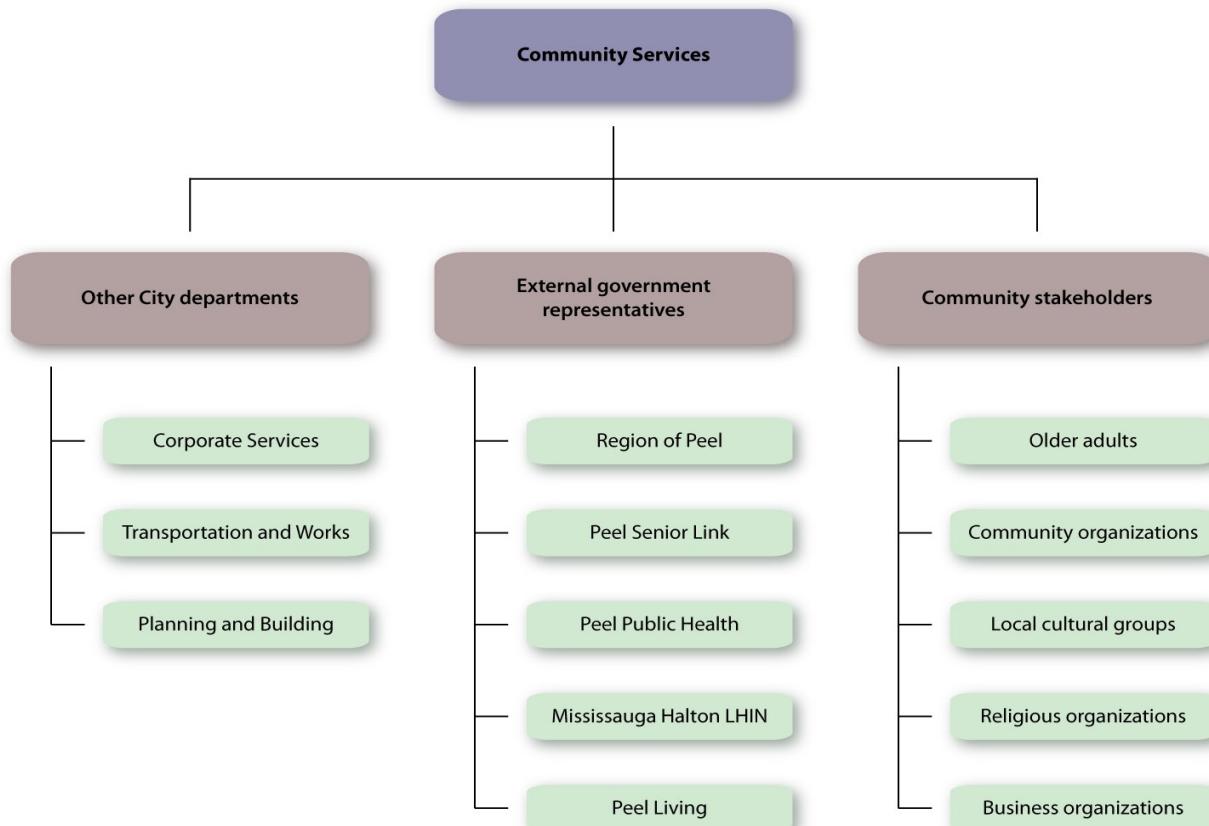
Many retired adults want to enjoy a structured and active lifestyle; the City can aid them by providing post-retirement support and training. One way for the City to do this is to maintain a centralized database or mailing of volunteer and paid opportunities targeted towards older adults. Malton Neighborhood Services administers a program to help newly-retired seniors fill out necessary paperwork and respond to other issues that retired residents face; in partnership with community organizations, the City should expand this approach to all the older adult clusters.

Implementation recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Community Services should strike and lead a coordinating committee responsible for overseeing the development of clusters.
- **Recommendation 2:** The committee should conduct detailed site analysis of the targeted nodes to determine site-specific priorities and timelines.
- **Recommendation 3:** The committee should consider which aspects of cluster development should be applied throughout the City.

The City will need some kind of decision-making structure to implement the hardware and software recommendations outlined above. To this end, Community Services should create a coordinating committee (see Figure 17) to facilitate collaboration between different City departments, between the City and other levels of government (particularly the Region of

Figure 17: Proposed composition of the older adult coordinating committee



Peel), and between government and community and business stakeholders. Representatives from Peel Senior Link, Peel Public Health, and the Mississauga-Halton Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) should be on the committee to ensure that proper health services and facilities are located in older adult clusters. Peel Living should also be represented, along with developers, in order to ensure that a proper range of housing development occurs in and around clusters. Moreover, the committee should be in dialogue with community and business stakeholders (older adults representatives, community organizations, local cultural groups, school boards, religions organizations, and private business organizations) to address the diverse needs of older adults in Mississauga.

Each node where an older adult cluster could be developed has a unique set of strengths and weaknesses, and for each one the coordinating committee should develop a set of cluster-development targets along with a timeline. The result would be a set of context-specific mini-implementation plans for each node. In addition to focusing in on the nodes, the committee should also broaden its perspective and consider initiatives such as improved streetscape amenities (e.g. benches, signage, and lighting) that could be incorporated into corridors. With increased transit service planned in these areas, retail, service, and recreational micro-destinations along the corridors can be made more accessible and appealing to older adults. In this manner Mississauga can begin to achieve its vision of becoming an 'age-friendly' city.

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Appendix

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities (WHO, 2007)

Outdoor spaces and buildings

- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with non-slip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.
- Services are situated together and are accessible.
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

Transportation

- Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.
- Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
- All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.
- Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.
- Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.
- Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.
- Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.
- Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and

special needs facilities.

- A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.
- Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.
- Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.
- Traffic flow is well-regulated.
- Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.
- Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.
- Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.
- Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.

Housing

- Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
- Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
- Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.
- Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
- Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
- Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.
- Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

Social Participation

- Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.
- Events are held at times convenient for older people.
- Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.
- Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.
- Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people.
- A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
- Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks.
- There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.

Respect and social inclusion

- Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.
- Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.
- Service staffs are courteous and helpful.
- Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.
- Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
- Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”.
- Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.
- Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.
- Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.

Civic participation and employment

- A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.
- The qualities of older employees are well promoted.
- A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.
- Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.
- Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.
- Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.

Communication and information

- A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.
- Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.
- Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
- Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
- People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.

- Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.
- Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.
- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.

Community and health services

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.
- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.
- All staff is respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
- Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.
- Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.
- Community emergency planning that takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.