



Staying Safe and Connected in York Region

Introduction

- In order for seniors to stay connected and age in place, the communities in which they live should be age-friendly, safe and accessible, as well as have easy access to public transit, community services and amenities.

Feeling connected and having a sense of belonging impacts the health of seniors

- Seniors with a strong sense of community belonging have higher odds of having good health, even when socio-demographic factors, behavioural risk factors, chronic conditions and stress are taken into account.¹
- In 2010, 63.6 per cent of people who reported a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to their local community also reported very good or excellent health, compared with 55.6 per cent of those who felt weaker ties to their local community.²
- As Canadians age they tend to report a stronger sense of community belonging. It is suggested that the reason for this is that older Canadians have more time to participate in community life.³

The proportion of seniors in York Region who felt a somewhat strong or very strong sense of community belonging has remained stable between 2005 and 2014

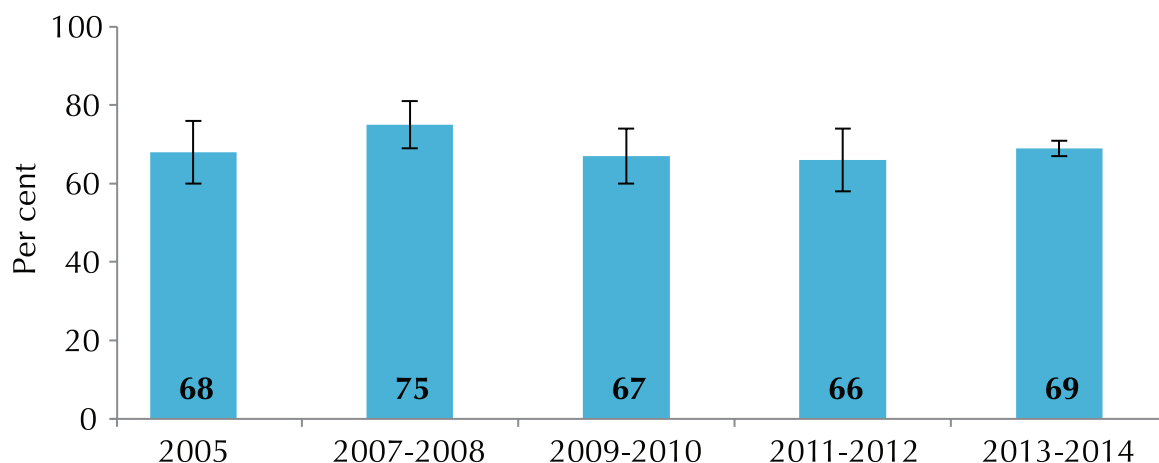
- According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, in 2013-2014 approximately 69 per cent of York Region seniors (65+) felt a somewhat strong or very strong sense of community belonging. (see Graph 1)

¹ statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-229-x/2009001/envir/cob-eng.htm

² statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-625-x/2011001/article/11465-eng.htm

³ statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-229-x/2009001/envir/cob-eng.htm

Graph 1: Proportion Of Seniors (65+ Years) Who Feel A Somewhat Strong Or Very Strong Sense Of Community Belonging, York Region, 2005-2014



⁴ Data Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2005-2014, Statistics Canada, Ontario Share File, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Transportation and mobility are key components of staying safe and connected

- According to the 2015 survey by Environics Research⁵ transportation continues to be the most important local issue identified by York Region residents.
 - » In 2015, 52 per cent of respondents identified transportation as the most important local issue, followed by development and Infrastructure at 10 per cent and Housing at 8 per cent. Furthermore, the number of residents who identify transportation as the most important issue has been increasing since 2011, when 31 per cent of respondents identified it as the most important local issue.

Part of staying connected for seniors, especially those that do not drive, is walkability and accessibility

- About half of York Region boomers and seniors live within five minutes walking distance to public transit.
- When looking at Transit Service Coverage in York Region, there are service guidelines that define the maximum walking distance to a bus stop for both urban and rural areas⁶.
 - » In Urban areas, 90 per cent of residents are within a maximum walking distance of 500 metres to a bus stop.
 - » In Rural areas, 90 per cent of residents are within a maximum walking distance of 1,000 metres to a bus stop where transit is provided. The implementation of transit service in rural areas depends on other standards for route performance and establishing new service.

⁴ Limitations: The data used for this indicator are self-reported and may be subject to errors in recall, over or under-reporting due to social desirability, and errors from proxy reporting. Also, data in 2005 is a full sample of data but the naming convention was different prior to 2007-2008.

⁵ The Environics Survey is an annual online GTA-wide survey conducted by Environics Research, which focuses on the most important local issues. The most recent survey was done in November 2015 and included 412 York Region residents.

⁶ The Regional Municipality of York, *Moving to 2020: YRT/VIVA 2016-2020 Strategic Plan*, Retrieved from: yorkregiontransit.com/en/aboutus/resources/YRT_5YSP_2016-2020-web.pdf

Staying safe and connected is about more than transportation, it is also about the physical/built environment

- According to the 2015 Survey by Environics Research, the things respondents enjoyed most about the quality of life in York Region are the parks and green spaces, and being close to amenities and work.
 - » In 2015, 12 per cent of respondents identified parks and green spaces, and another 12 per cent identified being close to amenities and work as the things they enjoy most about the quality of life in York Region.
 - » The majority of respondents (65 per cent) believe their community is a good place for seniors to live, and another 9 per cent indicated it is a great place for seniors to live.
- Other relevant findings from the 2015 Environics Research Survey include the following:
 - » “Support services to remain in their home” was identified by respondents as the most important service or support required by seniors, with 26 per cent of overall respondents identifying it as the most important service or support, followed by transportation services at 17 per cent and income support at 16 per cent.
- When asked whether they would support allocating or paying more tax to support the building of public transit infrastructure, 35 per cent of respondents indicated “yes” (down from 43 per cent in 2014), and 43 per cent of respondents indicated “no” (up from 30 per cent in 2014).

All YRT/Viva services are accessible, which is important for keeping seniors mobile and connected

- All YRT/Viva services are accessible, meaning all buses on these routes are low-floor accessible and/or equipped with a ramp.
- Additionally over 80 per cent of all YRT/VIVA stops are accessible meaning that it is safe for those using a mobility device to access YRT/Viva services at that stop. These stops are marked with an accessible symbol on the bus stop sign.
- Where a bus stop is not accessible, the bus operator will allow those using a mobility device to get on or off at the nearest location that is safe and acceptable to both the operator and customer.
- All YRT/Viva vehicles are equipped with on-board and exterior audio equipment to announce each stop and have designated accessible and priority seating available near the front of every vehicle.

For individuals with physical or functional disabilities that prevent them from taking conventional transit there is Mobility Plus

- Approximately 70 per cent of Mobility Plus riders are seniors (65+).
- Mobility Plus is part of YRT services providing rides to those with physical or functional disabilities that prevent them from taking conventional transit. It provides door-to-door service, but will use a combination of Mobility Plus and conventional service where possible.

The top two reasons for Mobility Plus trips for seniors in 2015 was travel to/from day centres and medical appointments (see Table 1)

Table 1: Detailed Breakdown of Mobility Plus Trips for 2015 for seniors aged 65 and over

Trip Purpose	Total Number of Trips
Day Centres	39,960
Medical Appointments	27,756
Other Specified Purposes	27,175
Dialysis	23,647
Recreation	12,249
Shopping	10,920
Religious	5,449
Blank (not specified)	4,188
Transfer/Connections*	2,858
Work	954
School	150
Student Work Program	4
Unspecified Purpose	16,187
Total Trips	171,497

**Transfer/Connections refer to when a customer is transferred to another region's or municipality's transit services using Mobility Plus.*

Seniors currently get a discount if using tickets or monthly pass

- If paying by cash on the bus, the price is the same regardless of age
- The price of a senior monthly pass is 58 per cent lower than an adult pass
- See Table 2 for a comparison between the York Region Transit senior fare and the senior fares offered by other municipalities and regions in 2015 (Note: Seniors are defined as 65+ for the municipalities and regions referenced in this table.)

Table 2: Comparisons to Other Municipalities and Regions: 2016 GTHA Senior Fares

Agency	Senior Cash Fare (\$)		Adult Cash Fare (\$)	Senior Ticket (\$)	Adult Ticket (\$)	Senior Presto (\$)	Senior Monthly Pass (\$)
	Resident	Non-resident					
Brampton	1.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	2.90	1.55	52.00
DRT	2.25	2.25	3.75	2.00	3.05	2.00	46.00
TTC	2.00	2.00	3.25	1.95	2.90	1.95	112.00
Mississauga	1.00	1.00	3.50	1.90	3.00	1.90	61.00
Oakville	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	2.85	1.80	50.00
Hamilton	2.75	2.75	3.00	2.15	2.30	1.80	26.50
Burlington	3.50	3.50	3.50	1.90	2.75	1.85	59.25
YRT	4.00	4.00	4.00	2.10	3.50	2.10	59.00
Average	2.50	3.11	3.53	1.97	2.91	1.87	58.22

Source: York Region Transit, "GTA Fare Comparisons Data Sheet", April 28, 2016, [3.basecamp.com/3108499/buckets/522140/uploads/125803096/download/2016 Fare Comparisons with 2016 Fare Increase](http://3.basecamp.com/3108499/buckets/522140/uploads/125803096/download/2016%20Fare%20Comparisons%20with%202016%20Fare%20Increase)

Fare parity is required between conventional and specialized transportation services

- The Integrated Accessibility Standards under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* mandates fare parity. These legislative requirements are found in subsections 66 (3)(5)(6), and state the following:
 - » Where a transportation service provider provides both conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services, the transportation service provider shall ensure that:
 - There is fare parity between conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services
 - The same fare structure is applied to conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services
 - The same fare payment options are available for all transportation services, but alternative options shall be made available to persons with disabilities who cannot because of their disability use a fare payment option
 - » In this section, "fare structure" means the fare price determined by fare media, such as cash, tickets, passes and bulk quantity discounts and by fare category, such as adults, seniors and students, but does not include promotional fares that a transportation service provider may employ from time to time.

Table 3: York Region Transit Ridership Statistics 2015

Ridership Age Groups	Conventional and Community Bus Services Ridership	Mobility Plus Revenue Ridership
65+	Revenue Riders*: 1,239,719 5.6 per cent of total ridership	Total Registered Riders**: 7,911 (65-99) 55 (100+, ride for free) Revenue Ridership: 171,000 (approx.)
Child	Revenue Riders: 166,723 0.8 per cent of total ridership	Total Registered Riders: 40
Student (excluding Post-Secondary)	Revenue Riders: 3,310,453 14.9 per cent of total ridership	Total Registered Riders: 114 Revenue Ridership: 1,667
Adult	Revenue Riders: 14,407,070 78.7 per cent of total ridership	Total Registered Riders: 2,358 Revenue Ridership: 146,312
<p>* Revenue ridership refers to those who have paid a fare for their trip. This distinction must be made, as those using Mobility Plus do not need to pay a fare for any attendants travelling with them.</p> <p>** Total registered riders refers to those who have been approved to use Mobility Plus services.</p>		