



Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities

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Questions addressed in this webinar

1. What does age-friendliness mean in the context of rural and remote communities?
2. What factors help or hinder rural and remote communities in becoming more age-friendly?



What is rural and remote?

“The term 'urban' is widely used and one that people intuitively understand – a concentration of population at a high density. It is the opposite of 'rural', where population is not concentrated but dispersed at a low density.”
(Statistics Canada, 2016)



What is rural and remote?

- No one definition
- What is left after “urban” is defined

Degree of urbanization		
	Name	Alternative name
Rural areas	Thinly populated	Rural areas
Urban areas	Intermediate density	Town and suburbs
	Densely populated	Cities



http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/work/2014_01_new_urban.pdf





Photo: Globe & Mail



Photo: Stock photo



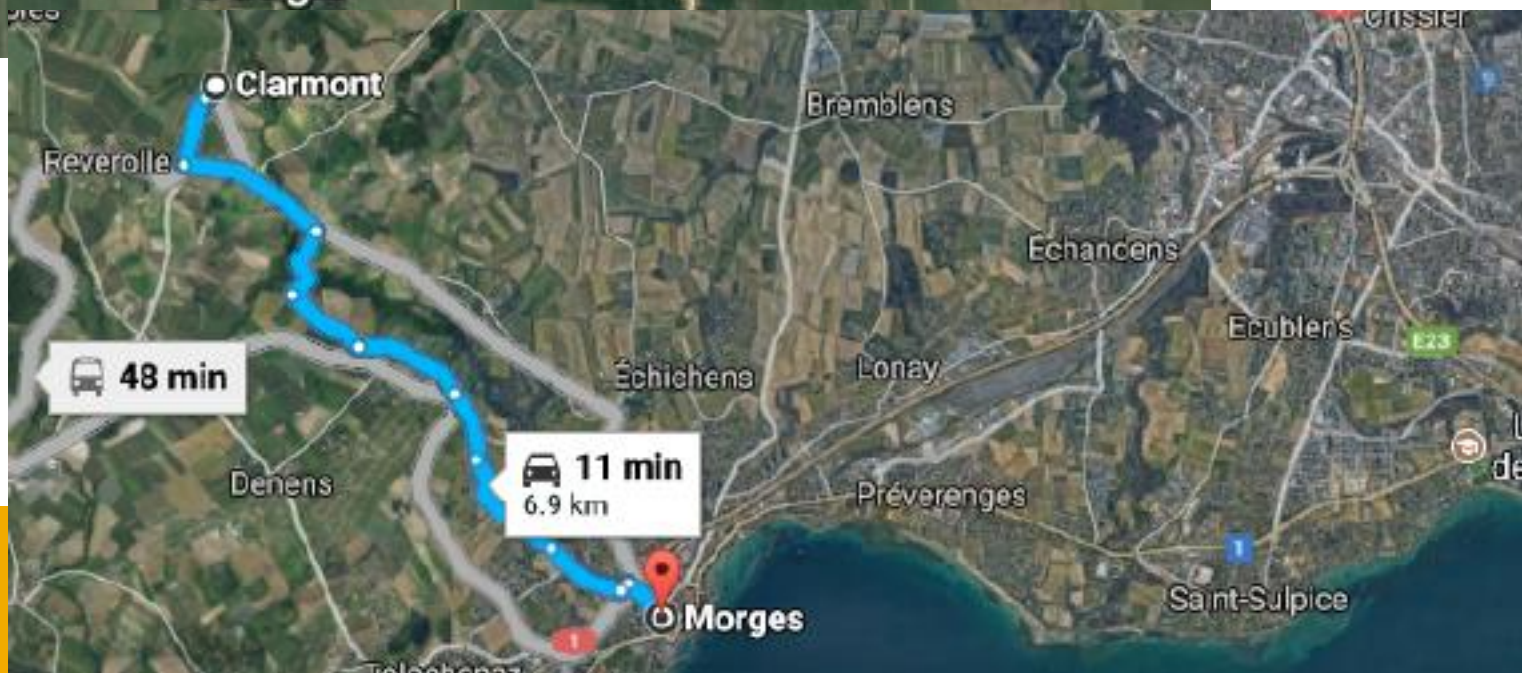
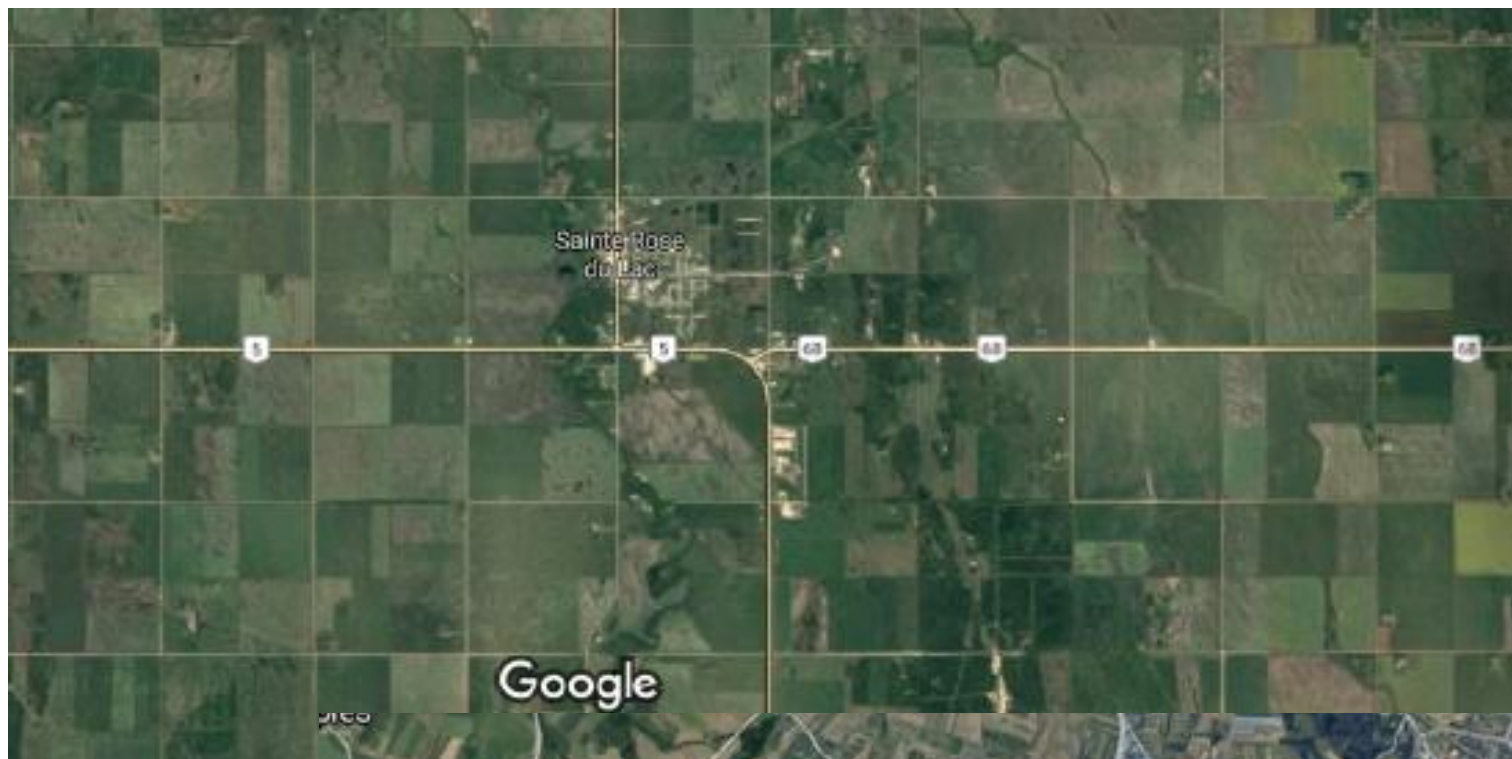
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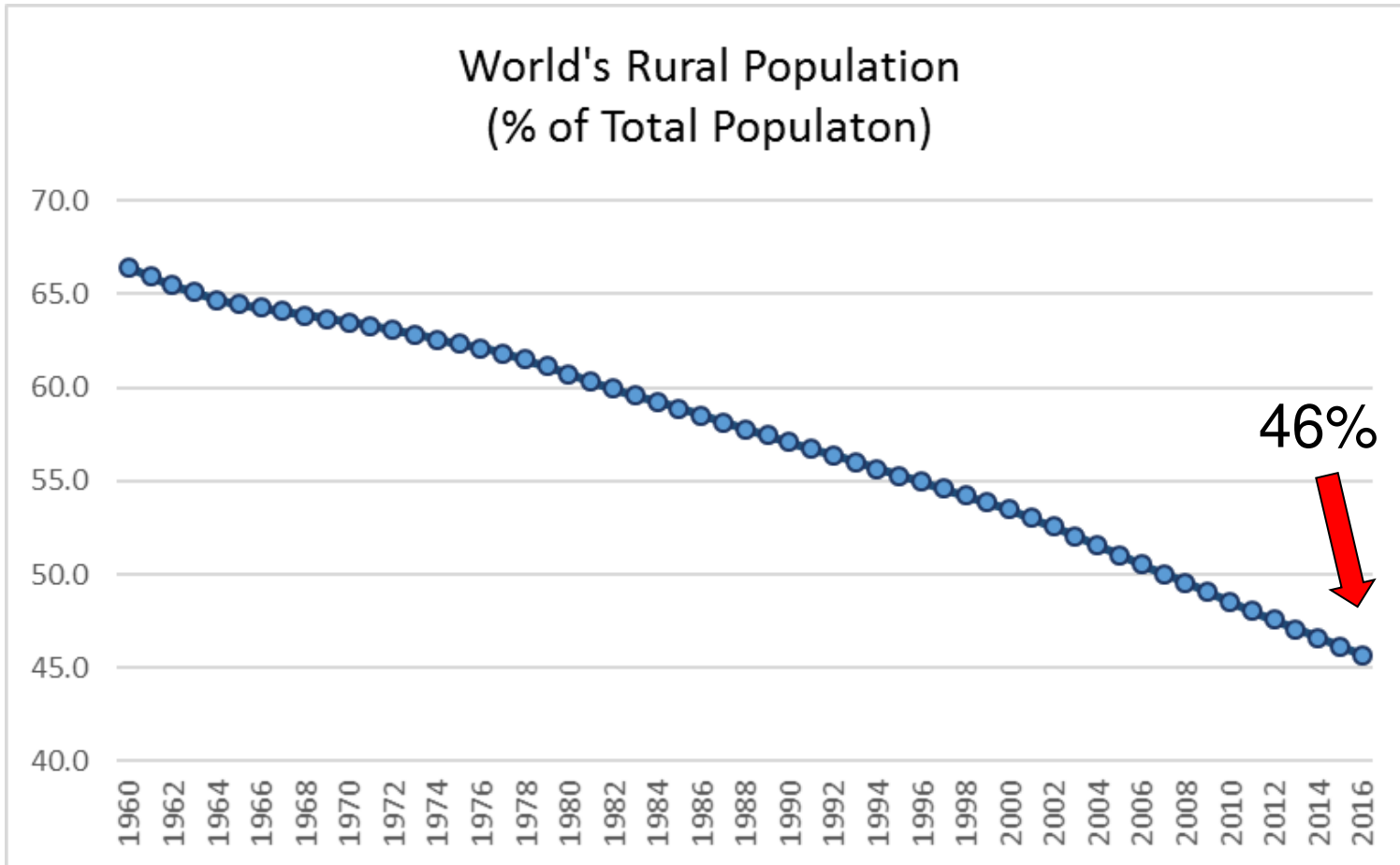
Photo: V. Menec



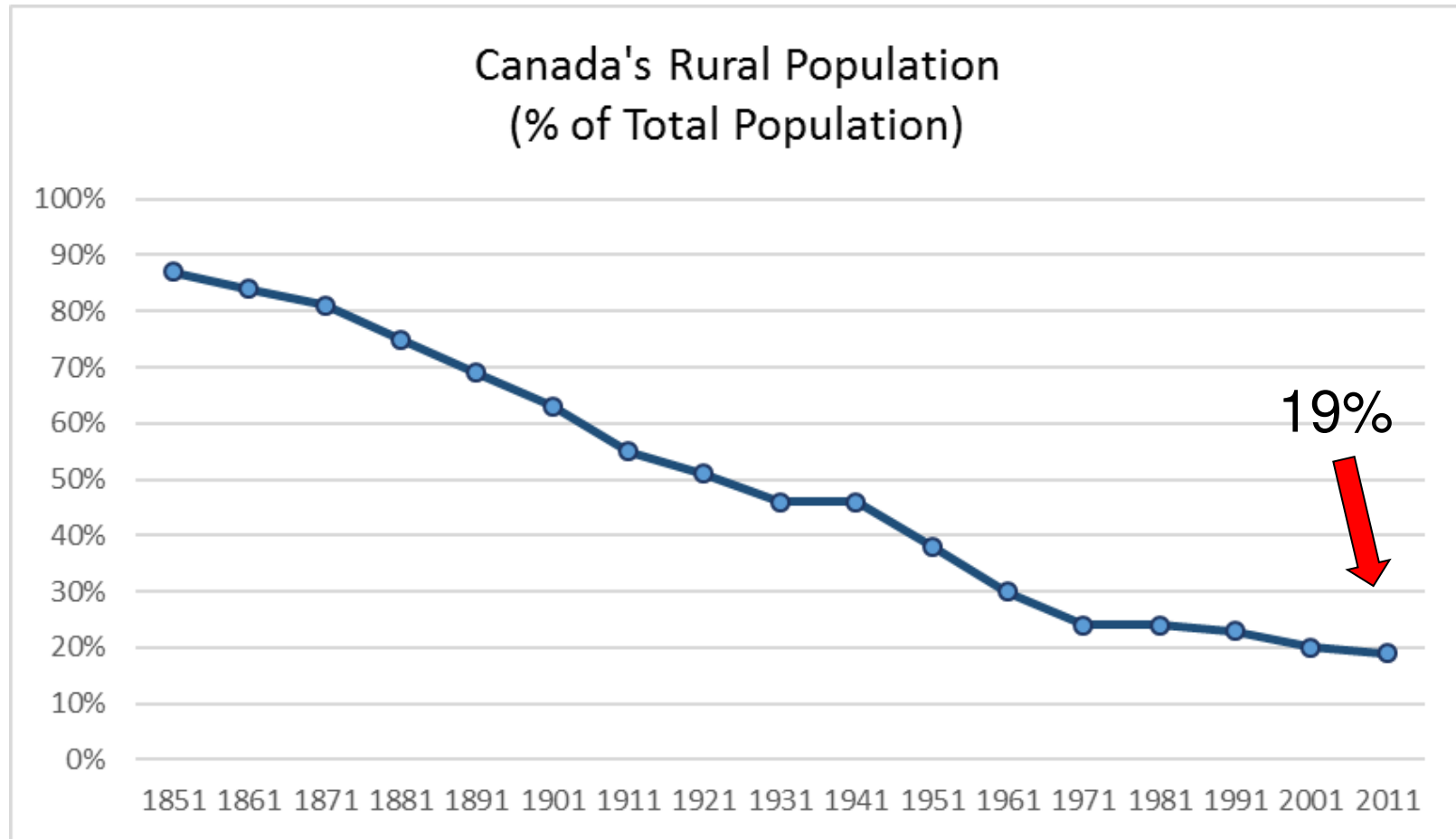
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Increasing urbanization



Increasing urbanization



http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/98-310-x/2011003/fig/fig3_2-1-eng.cfm



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Why should we care about rural and remote communities?

- Many older people live in rural areas (world-wide 42% of 60+ year olds live in rural areas¹)
- Older people should be able to age in place in their community
- Older people contribute to the sustainability of rural and remote communities
- Urban centres need rural communities and vice versa



¹ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/urban/urbanAndRuralPopulationByAgeAndSex.shtml>

What is an age-friendly city?

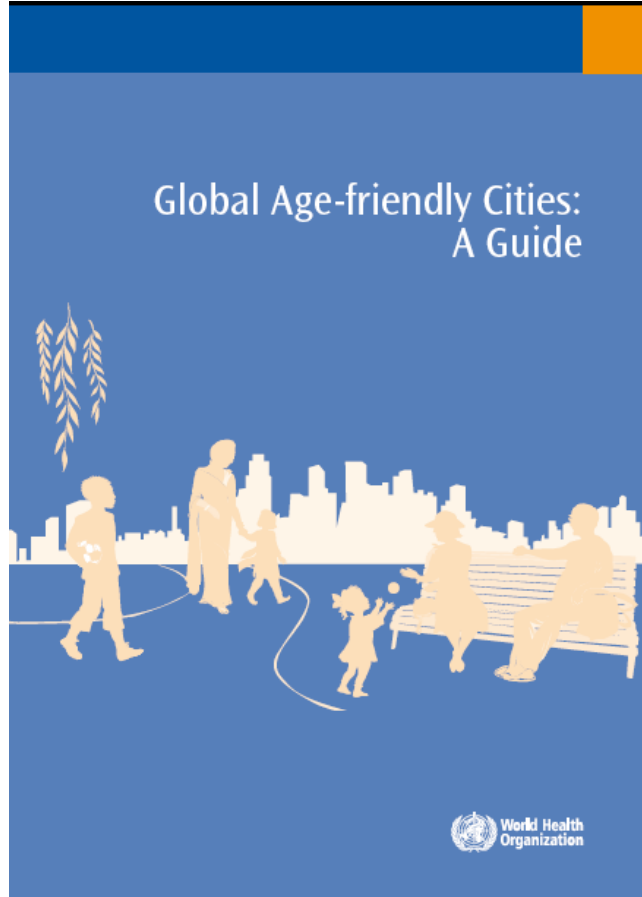
In an age-friendly city, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support older people and enable them to stay healthy, feel safe, and participate in society (WHO, 2007).

8 Age-Friendly Domains

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Social Participation
- Communication and Information
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Community Support and Health Services



Age-friendly cities

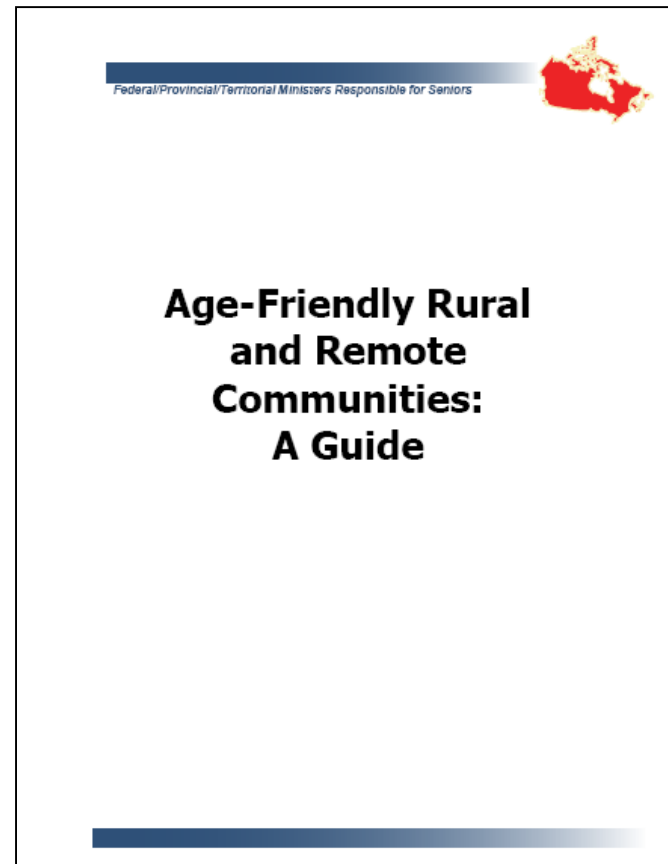
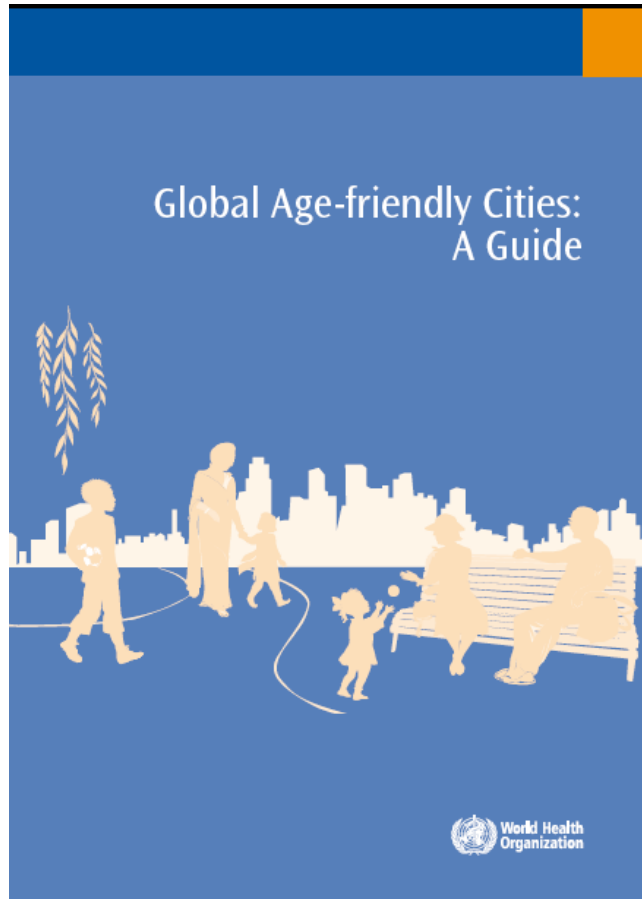


http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf



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Age-friendly cities and rural and remote communities



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https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/migration/phac-aspc/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age_friendly_rural/AFRRRC_en.pdf



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Outdoor spaces and buildings



Housing



Respect and social inclusion

WHO Age-Friendly Domains



Transportation



Social participation



Communication and information



Civic participation and employment



Community support and health services



Outdoor spaces and buildings



Housing



Respect and social inclusion



Transportation

WHO Age-Friendly Domains



Social participation



Communication and information



Civic participation and employment



Community support and health services

Unique challenges in rural and remote communities

- Inadequate infrastructure
- Geographic distances
- Limited availability of services
- Lack of specialized expertise and leadership skills
- Small budgets
- Difficulties attracting resources
- Conflicts (“small town politics”)
- Lack of political will



Challenges are magnified in rural and remote areas

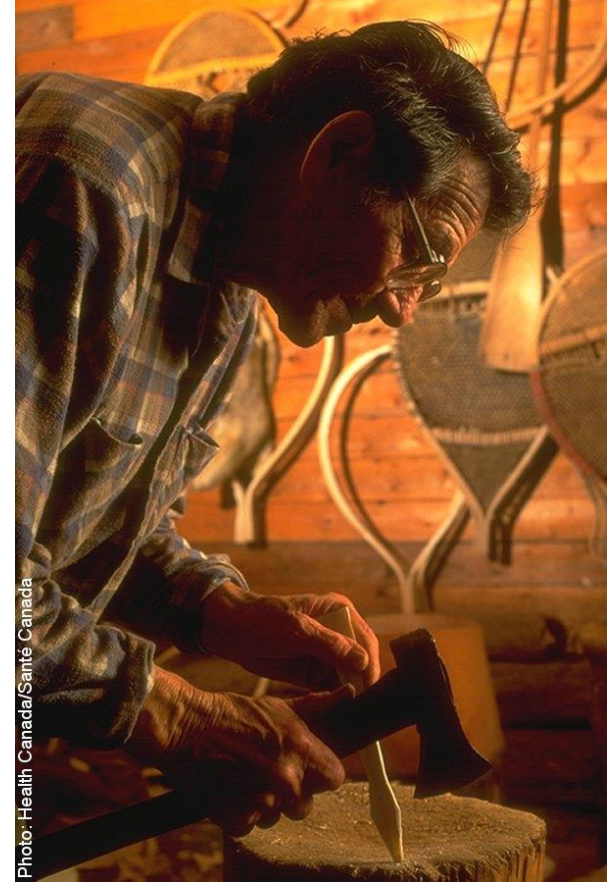


“Seniors on a limited income use this mode of transportation, the trip is 9 hours and it’s very uncomfortable”
[Quote from research participant]



Unique strengths and opportunities

- Strong social ties
- Strong sense of place
- Local leaders are accessible
- Easier to engage residents
- Self-reliant (DIY attitude)
- Existing collaborations and partnerships
- Economic development opportunities



Factors that help communities become more age-friendly

- Strong leadership
 - Age-Friendly steering/advisory committee
 - Champion
- Community consultation to identify needs
- Integrating age-friendliness with other initiatives or strategies
- On-going promotion and awareness raising of age-friendliness
- Inter-sectoral partnerships

Challenges in becoming age-friendly

- Capacity
 - Volunteer burnout
 - Lack of leadership and direction
- Lack of funding
 - dealing with larger projects (e.g., housing, transportation) is particularly challenging
- Competing priorities
 - competing demands for funds and human resources
 - older people not a priority
- Offloading of responsibilities onto local governments

Rural and remote communities are diverse

- Size
- Location
- Regional competitiveness based on location, natural amenities and services
- Demographic composition and how it impacts priorities and funding
- History
- Social capital



Photo: Churchill

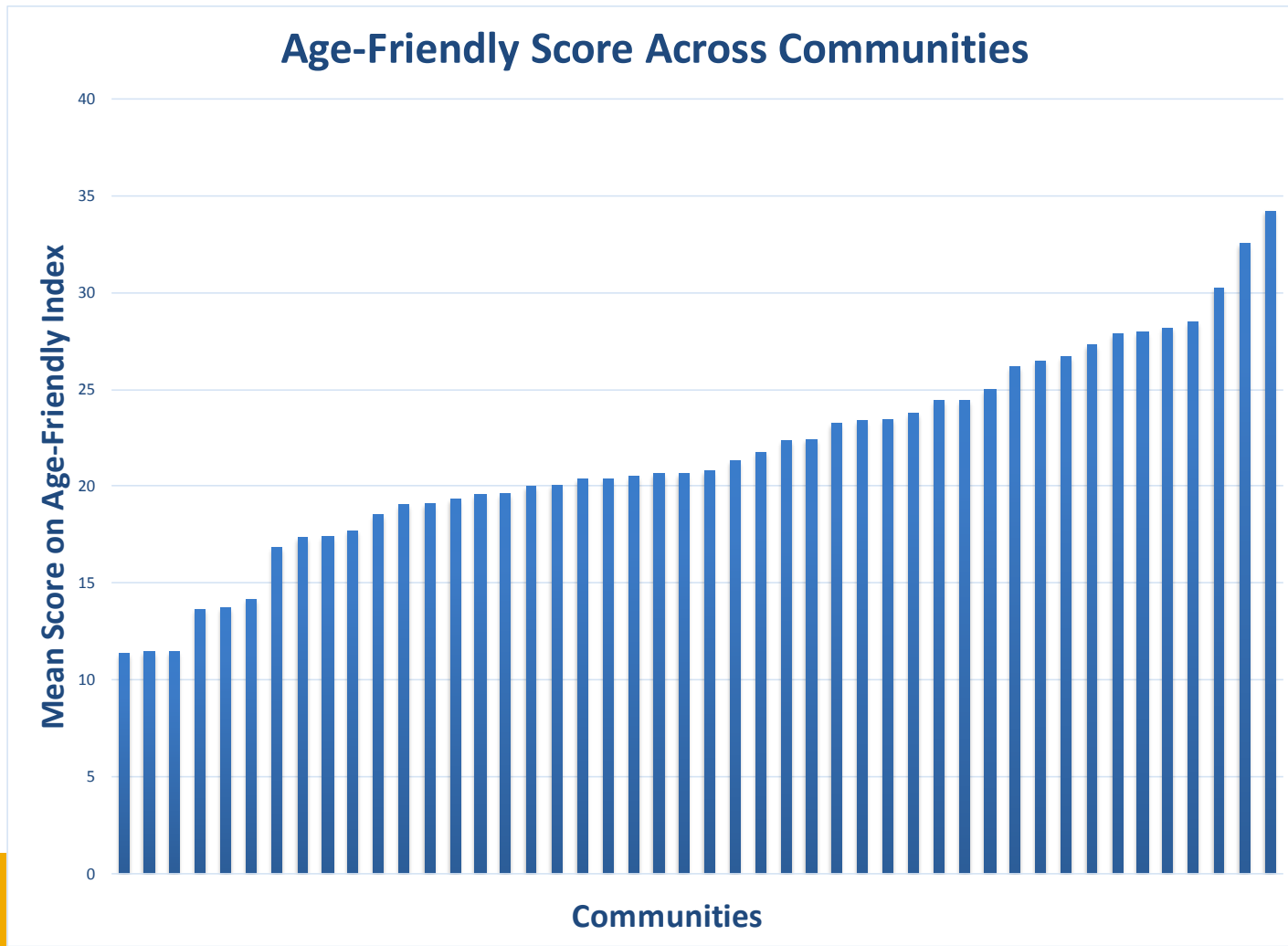


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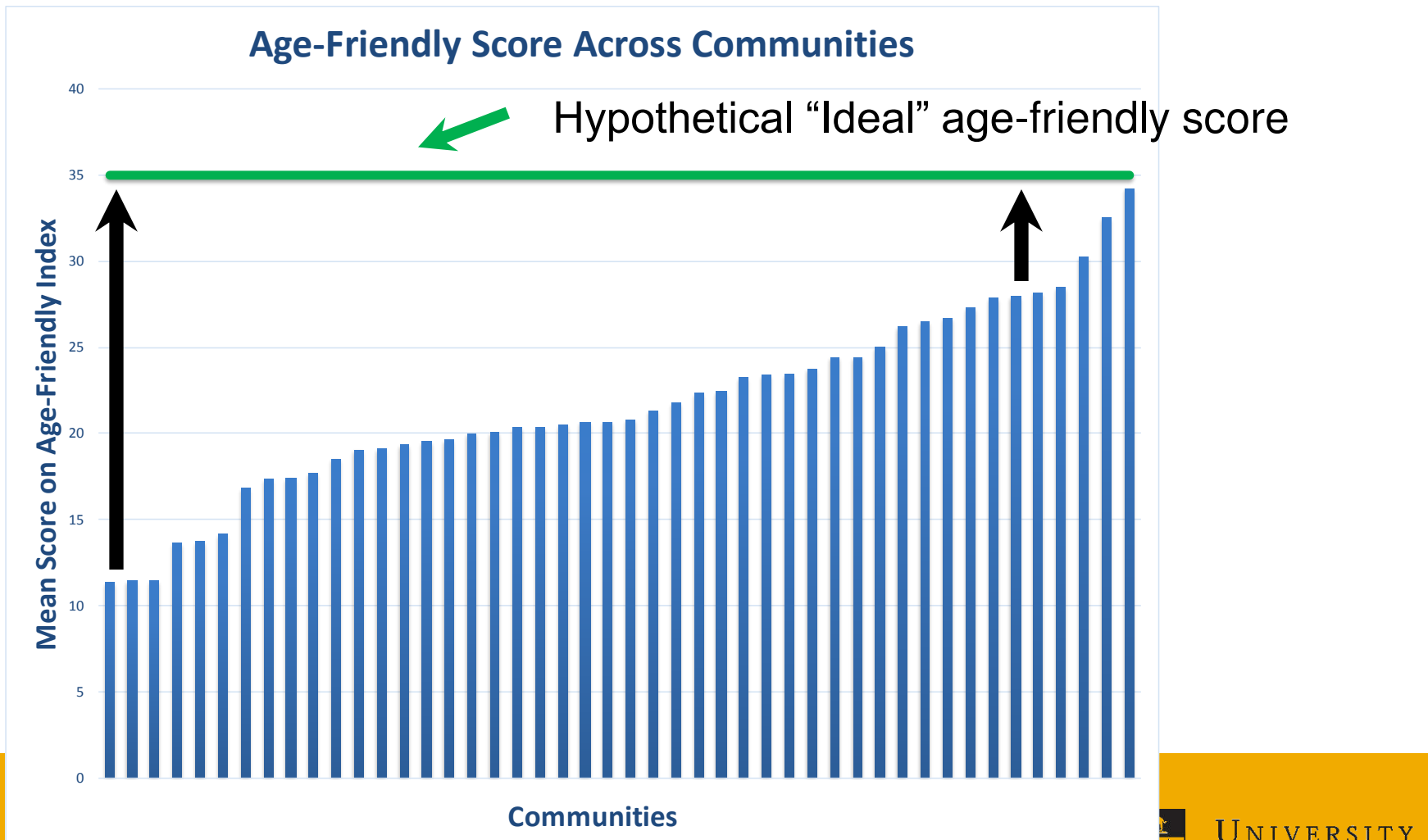
- Menec VH, Hutton L, Newall N, Nowicki S, Spina J, Veselyuk D. How “age-friendly” are rural communities and what community characteristics are related to age-friendliness? The case of rural Manitoba, Canada. *Ageing & Society*, 2015, 35(1), 203-223. First published online: 18 September 2013.
- Spina J, Menec VH. What community characteristics help or hinder rural communities in becoming age-friendly? Perspectives from a Canadian prairie province. *J Applied Gerontol*, 2015, 34(4), 444-464. First published online; 9 September 2013.



Rural and remote communities are diverse



Rural and remote communities are diverse



Conclusions

- Rural and remote communities are unique and deserve policy and research attention
- Older people living in rural and remote communities face unique issues
- Age-friendly domains are inter-related and can't be looked at in isolation



Conclusions

- The importance of a bottom-up (community) top-down (government/policy) approach
- The importance of collaboration and partnerships
 - Common vision
 - Equitable partnerships
- Going beyond the local
 - Regional partnerships
 - Broader policy changes
 - Broader age-friendly coalitions (local, national, international)





Photo: Globe & Mail

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Many of the photos of rural Canada were published in the Globe & Mail

<https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/multimedia/camera-club/your-best-photos-of-rural-canada/article632369/>

Others are stock photos from various websites, HelpAge International newsletters <http://www.helpage.org/>

or V. Menec



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