Planning for active aging in medium-size cities: An overview

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Layout

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2. Aging in different environments
3. Methodological aspects
4. 3 cases:
   - St-Eustache
   - Shawinigan
   - Gatineau
5. Concluding remarks
Age-friendly environments?

Key elements:

- **Spatial accessibility to retail and services** (Horner et al. 2015) and health services (Paez et al. 2010).
- **Proximity to food stores and parks** (Cao et al. 2010)
- Public transportation (Engels and Liu, 2011)
- Sense of security (Stahl et al. 2008)

Positive experience of aging

Skills + Accessibility + Projects = Mobility

Source: Negron et al. (2014: 4)
Variations in aging contexts

- Strong differences between regions
- Rural environments, Medium-size cities, Metropolis
- Variations in metropolitan environments
  - Central neighborhoods
  - Suburban neighborhoods

Main objective

- How different urban environments can facilitate a positive experience of aging according to different lifestyles?
The process

- Construction of a housing classification in the analyzed regions
- Identification of sectors (DA) with important concentrations of seniors (>30%)
- Location of potential destinations (banks, shopping mall, medical clinic, food store, drugstore)
- Application of a walkability audit (MAPPA-WATS)
- Focus groups with seniors living in these environments: aging in place, everyday mobility, inclusion, sense of home
St-Eustache, Focus Group

- **Accessibility** to stores is possible only with a car (family, friends)
- **Public transportation** doesn’t meet seniors needs (location, frequency, difficult to bring mobility aids)

- The city of St-Eustache makes visible efforts to improve quality of life

- Seniors feel they are part of the community, they feel respected
  - *It’s like a village… like the country*
  - *The (seniors) residence it’s almost like home, I’m good here*

- People move to the residence manly because of health problems. Those still living in their own house *apprehend* that moment
  - *I am informed. It’s impossible for me to move here [to the residence] it’s too expensive*
  - *I like to walk; I used to take long walks, but I lost my sense of equilibrium,… Instead I just sit outside [in the garden]*
Shawinigan case

- Bank
- Food store
- Medical clinic
- Shopping mall
- Drugstore
- Retirement residences
- Application MAPPA

Proportion 65+ Shawinigan: 24.1%
- 30% - 37%
- 38% - 45%
- 47% - 56%
- 57% - 69%
- 70% - 94%

Confort evaluation (even-odd addresses)
- Good
- Average
- Low
- Mediocre

Attractiveness evaluation (even-odd addresses)
Shawinigan, Focus Group

- Seniors **enjoy living** in Shawinigan
  - *The big advantage is the cost of living is lower than outside*
  - Strong feeling of **belonging**
    - *At the residence everything is alright... you have friends automatically*
    - *As long as I am able to have autonomy, I’ll continue to live in my own home*

- **Accessibility** issues
  - The **mall** offers a transit service once a week
  - Need of a **regional** accessibility
  - More **flexible** service
  - Stores go to the residence

- Impact of the **economic situation**
  - Housing stock
  - New population
  - *We also pay taxes!*

- For seniors **walking** is very important:
  - **walking club**, inside the residence, inside the mall (winter)
  - People **drive to places** where they can walk (park, mall, etc.)
Gatineau, Focus Group

- **Seniors want to live at Gatineau**
  - They are close to family and friends, services

- **Seniors like to walk, but it is not easy**
  - It is very interesting to walk, but when there is a distance like the one to the grocery store, it’s pretty far .... And there are no benches to sit on.

- Walking inside the residence, their apartment, the mall

- **Accessibility issues**
  - Transportation service in the residence to do the groceries,
  - Difficult to get medical services (payment in the residence)
  - Several attractive destinations, but no easily accessible: *We need fresh air!*

- They appreciate living in the residence
  - It is good but I think it is expensive for what you got
  - I think I will not have enough if I live 100 years!
Concluding remarks

- Pedestrian accessibility is important in these environments, but not sufficient.
- Living in a residence has several benefits, but they are not accessible for all seniors.
- Seniors want to be part of the community: more recognition.

Thanks for your questions!

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