



Social Planning Council Oxford
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Just the Facts: Age Friendly Housing

Norwich Township

The Social Planning Council strives to improve the well-being of all residents of Oxford County through research, community development, community mobilization, and advocacy.

Population

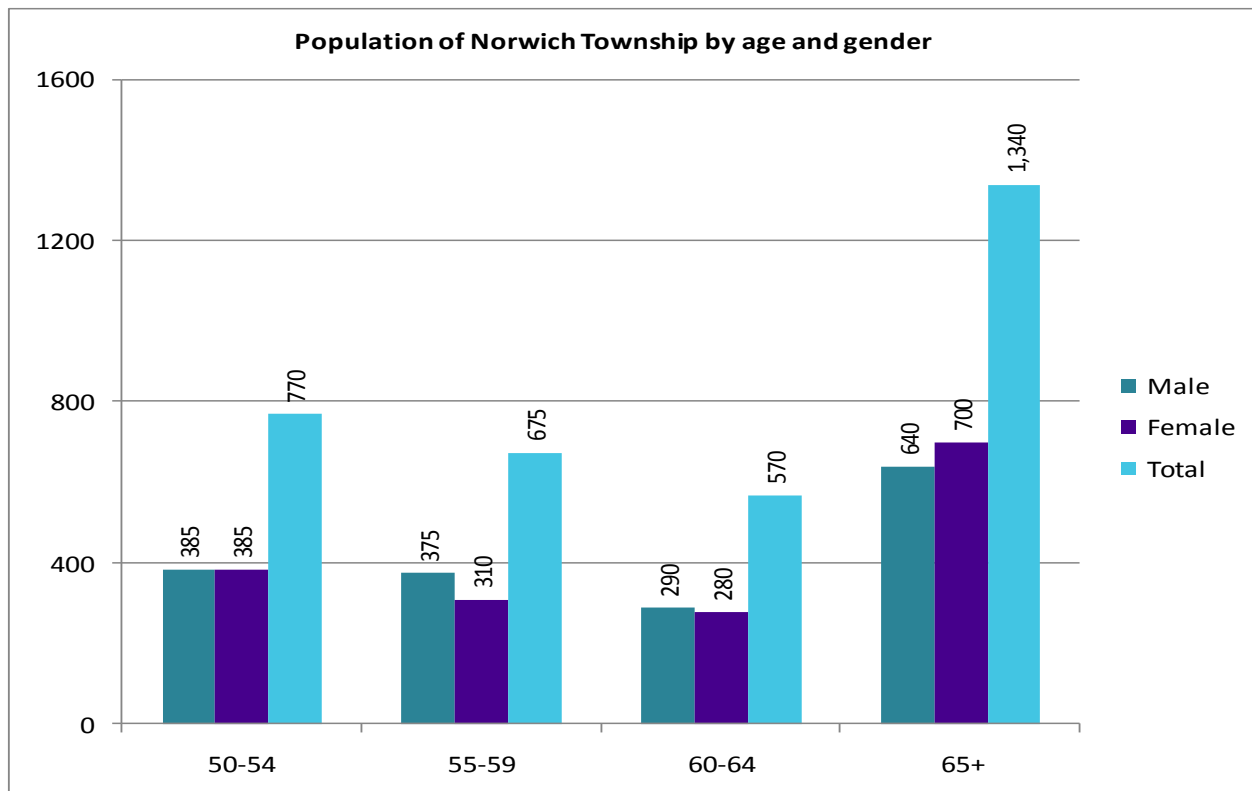
The township saw a population growth of 2.3% from 2006 to 2011¹. In 2011 the total population was estimated to be 10, 721 compared to 10, 481 in 2006¹.

| Location | Percent (%) of population aged 50-64 years | Percent (%) of population aged 65 years or older |
|------------------|--|--|
| Norwich Township | 18.8 | 12.5 |
| Oxford County | 20.5 | 16.6 |
| Ontario | 20.5 | 14.6 |
| Canada | 21.1 | 14.8 |

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population^{1,2}

The fastest growing age group in Norwich Township is the 60-64 year-old cohort, adding 95 residents (39%) from 2006-2011^{1,3}.

The following chart illustrates the population of older adults by age and gender in Norwich Township.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population¹

Age Friendly Housing Options in Norwich Township

Inside of Norwich Township there are currently two private retirement homes, Trillium Retirement Home and Walnut Grove Retirement Living. The average monthly cost of each is \$1850, however, Walnut Grove Retirement Living has indicated that their rates will likely be moving to \$2000 in the near future. Both of these residences are located in the town of Norwich.

Trillium has 23 beds, and Walnut Grove has 5 beds and 2 apartments. Each residence is currently full. It was reported that although they are full, they do not often have a wait list, as people tend to need services immediately and seek them outside of the township.

There are no nursing home beds within the township⁴. In the late 1990s, the only 40 nursing home beds that existed were moved outside of Norwich Township.

In May 2012, the Township of Norwich Health Visioning Committee in partnership with the Woodstock & Area Community Health Centre completed a healthy survey report⁴. A total of 200 surveys were completed, and 55 individuals participated in an 'Evening of Input' summary.

Of those who filled out a survey:

- 14.8% feel there is *adequate* housing for seniors⁴
- 5.9% feel there is *enough* housing for seniors⁴

And yet,

- 66.7% of respondents hope to spend their senior years living in the township⁴

The report identified the top two community health care priorities as **senior housing** and **senior support programs**⁴. These priorities reflect the findings of The Oxford Master Aging Plan⁵ that reported the need for:

- Appropriate, affordable, accessible, and well-located housing options
- House maintenance and renovation supports
- More retirement homes especially in rural communities
- Additional long-term care spaces and reduced wait lists for long-term care
- Accommodation facilities with a continuum of supports to facilitate aging in place

"This is my home. This is where my family is. This is where my memories are. I want to stay here as long as I can" Community member



Age Friendly Housing Needs in Norwich Township

Two-thirds of the health survey respondents indicated they would like to remain in Norwich Township as they age⁴. This will not be possible at the current capacity. As the population of Norwich Township ages, this gap between demand and services will only increase. In order to meet the needs of older adults in Norwich Township, the number and diversity of age friendly housing options must grow.

The World Health Organization (WHO)⁶, the Provincial Government (Aging at Home Strategy)⁷, and the Oxford Master Aging Plan⁵ have prioritized aging in place. Aging in place allows older adults to maintain their connection with their community. Remaining in a familiar neighbourhood that is close to local services, grocery stores, health centres, places of worship, social and recreational activities, volunteer opportunities, friends, and family members allows older adults to maintain independence and quality of life⁶.



The WHO reports that successful aging in place occurs when housing is located close to services and facilities, affordable services are provided to enable people to remain at home, and older people are well-informed of the services available to help them age in place⁶.

Currently, there are limited age friendly housing options in Norwich Township. In order to meet the needs of older adults in this area, a range of housing options are needed. The Township of Norwich Health Visioning Committee reported the need for:

- Seniors' townhouses in Otterville, Norwich, and Burgessville⁴
- Handicapped accessible housing⁴
- Small apartments (independent accommodations with assistance)⁴
- Shared care accommodations (group apartments)⁴

In a community with no nursing home beds, and limited age friendly housing options, home-based care is a feasible option. The Norwich Township health survey revealed that 23% of respondents currently provide care for someone so they can remain in their own home⁴. This number is likely to increase as the population continues to age. Providing resources to support home-based care will not only provide the benefits that come with aging in place, but is also a cost-effective care option. Home-based care can be less costly than residential care among individuals with similar care needs, even when informal care time is valued at replacement wage⁸.

Maintaining the status quo of available age friendly housing and supports is not a viable option for the future as the older adult population increases. Investing in affordable housing options and supports now will prevent reactive and expensive housing alternatives in the future.



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