



*La Corporation de la Municipalité de / The Corporation of the Municipality of  
ST. CHARLES*

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April 1, 2019

World Health Organization  
Avenue Appia 20  
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland

**RE: WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly, Cities and Communities Membership Application**

Dear Sir, Madam,

As Mayor of the Municipality of St.-Charles, Ontario, Canada, it gives me great pleasure to write this letter of commitment for our age-friendly community to join the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly, Cities and Communities. Without hesitation, I can assure that we are strongly committed to the process of initiating, continually assessing and improving the age-friendliness in St.-Charles. An Age-Friendly community is one that ensures aging residents at all levels of ability are supported, respected and encouraged to participate in community life.

The village of St.-Charles is a beautiful, rural, touristic and agricultural northern community with a total population of 1300 people. It is home to approximately 550 adults age 50 and older, accounting for 43 % of the population. As these residents continue to age, their needs in areas such as transportation, housing, accessibility, employment, health care, and service provision will change. However, many will wish to remain within the community and maintain their deep community ties and independence.

At the September 2016 visioning workshop for an age-friendly community, we founded our vision, "St.-Charles is an age-friendly, caring community that values the diverse needs of all ages while supporting independence and respecting dignity." In addition, we prioritized our guiding principles listed in order from higher to lower priority.

1. Effective communication and community engagement;
2. Education /Awareness;
3. Empowerment of residents
4. Stronger partnerships between services and with neighboring communities;
5. Accessibility of buildings, programs and services;
6. Promotion of healthy lifestyles;
7. Recognition of volunteers.

Funded by the Government of Ontario under the Ontario Seniors Secretariat, the Municipality of St.-Charles, together with an Age-Friendly committee and other community partners, developed an Age-Friendly community action plan to better meet the needs of an aging population. The action plan is modelled on the World Health Organizations' age-friendly cities guide (2007) and its eight dimensions of age-friendly communities. The process involved four steps in the Age-Friendly community Planning Process.

Step 1: Define local principles; October 2016



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Step 2: Assess Needs; December 2016

Step 3: Develop an Action Plan: February 2017

Step 4: Implement and Evaluate: March 2017

A community Audit was undertaken in September 2016 to assess and document age-friendly features in the Municipality of St. Charles

A community bilingual survey was available online and mailed to every resident in the municipality, in October and November 2016 and an age-friendly Expo held in January 2017.

During the Municipality needs assessment, residents identified a wide range of existing age-friendly assets, but also numerous opportunities for improvement. A total of 206 surveys were completed in which 117 of the respondents were age 60 or over.

On March 15, 2017, this action plan was endorsed by the St.-Charles Municipal Council and accessible through the municipal website at the following link:

<http://www.stcharlesontario.ca/upload/documents/final-st-charles-action-plan-mar-13-2017.pdf>.

On November 15, 2017, the Municipal Council endorsed the terms of reference for the new St. Charles Age-Friendly Advisory Committee. Members includes representation from health services, senior support organization, senior social club services, municipal council and staff, and public at large. Additionally, on November 15, 2017, the Municipal Council authorized the Mayor and Chief Administrative Officer to submit all required documentation for the WHO membership application.

On March 26, 2018, we were the proud recipient of the 2018 Ontario Age-Friendly Community (AFC) Recognition Award. The official recognition award letter highlighted the benefit of being pre-approved to join the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities as part of the Pan-Canadian Age-Friendly Community Initiative.

On December 19, 2018, the Municipal Council re-appointed members of the St.-Charles Age-Friendly Advisory Committee for the new term of Council (2018-2022).

Thanking you in advance, for your consideration of membership for the Municipality of St.-Charles to the World Health Organization's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

Yours sincerely,

  
Paul Schoppmann  
Mayor, Municipality of St.-Charles