

FREDERICTON AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Fredericton

TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE FOR FREDERICTON: IDENTIFIED ACTION STEPS

Based on the Synthesis of Public Input Gathered at the September 11, 2014
Congress Towards an Age-Friendly Future for Fredericton



Fredericton - A Community for All Ages

IDENTIFIED ACTION STEPS

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RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Guiding Principles of the Age-Friendly Fredericton Committee

- Promote informal dialogue at the neighbourhood level
- Mobilize seniors' skills, knowledge, experience, ideas, and energy (Stepping Stone, Third Age Centre, KABOOMERS, Golden Club, and many others)
- Work collectively to promote more positive images of aging (profiles of actively engaged seniors, senior-run initiatives and activities, etc.)
- Bring some community champions on board to give greater visibility and greater momentum to the age-friendly communities social movement
- Effort should be made to ensure that at least some of its consultation sessions be held in the daytime
- Consultations should be held in facilities where seniors normally congregate (such as Shannex, Ste Anne's Court, the Stepping Stone Centre, the Johnson Avenue Seniors' Centre, the Third Age Centre, etc.)
- Arrange a series of informal discussions on their own turf with some of the harder-to-reach populations (including, but not limited to, low-income seniors, residents of outlying rural areas, multicultural communities, First Nations communities, shelter population, people with dementia and their families, clients of mental health services, clients of addictions services, the un(der) employed, the socially isolated, people with speech impairments, people with mobility challenges, etc.)
- Facilitate better communication and coordination among service providers (federal, provincial, municipal, and not-for-profit) to break down silos, reduce duplication, encourage partnerships, and address gaps
- Encourage an asset-based approach to development of services for seniors (i.e build on strengths rather than focusing on problems)



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- Promote public awareness of the skills and experience that seniors have to offer (in possible collaboration with groups like the Third Age Centre, the Atlantic Institute on Aging, Stepping Stone)
- After priorities have been established for presentation to City Council, arrange for some photographs to support the key points (perhaps through Photo Fredericton, photography students at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design)
- Maintain communication with the Congress participants and others who come forward with suggestions and proposals. Keep the process open, inclusive, welcoming and action-oriented.
- Recruit an occupational therapist to be part of the Fredericton Age-Friendly Communities Committee (completed)

Items to discuss with the Fredericton Public Library:

- Try to provide more comprehensive services for seniors through the public library (research support, health alerts, workshops on job search skills, computer training, etc.)
- Encourage public library to provide bookmobile services for seniors

Follow up with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF) on their New Horizons project:

- Explore and respond to the needs of immigrant and refugee seniors (consider language of program and service delivery, seek out interpreters, etc.)

Address with the business community:

- Encourage more businesses to provide free or low-cost home delivery to seniors

Address with Canada Post:

- Work with Canada Post to ensure home delivery to those with mobility impairments
- Work with Canada Post to ensure that parcels that can't be delivered to individual's homes

are made available at postal outlets with ample parking and access to shopping carts (Superstore rather than Shoppers Drug Mart in Kings Place, for instance)

- Work with Canada Post to ensure that any community mailboxes are placed in accessible locations and kept free of snow and ice
- Canada Post should be encouraged to publicize all local stamp vending locations
- Consider putting information boards beside community mailboxes, and keeping their postings current

In process by City Council:

- Encourage City Councillors to hold well-publicized periodic ward and neighbourhood meetings, and to hold them in accessible facilities with ample parking and easily reached by public transit

This action step might be appropriate when this report has been finalized and translated:

- Consider information/education sessions for City Council, City staff and local businesses to acquaint them with age-friendly rationale, principles, and practices and to share input gathered from seniors

SAFETY

Many of these items are best discussed at the neighbourhood level and tailored to the needs and sensibilities of that particular neighbourhood and the comfort level of neighbours (encompassed under Being a Good Neighbour initiative):

- Encourage more active volunteer outreach to seniors living alone
- Help community groups to develop a support system for seniors modeled after Big Brothers, Big Sisters

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- Encourage phone trees to keep isolated seniors in the loop, and to ensure their safety and well-being
- Promote informal systems of home checks by neighbours, particularly during power outages and extreme weather conditions (In some neighbourhoods, this could be as simple as checking on whether window blinds or curtains are open or closed, whether lights are on, or whether in cold weather there is chimney smoke)
- Encourage volunteers to help seniors with leaf raking and bagging, yard clean-up, and weekly garbage and recycling pickup
- Establish database of volunteers with snow blowers and a roster of volunteers to clear out the end of seniors' driveways after the snow plow has filled them in (Snow Angels Program)
- Promote informal friendly home visits to break down social isolation

City police:

- Keep seniors well informed about scams that may target them
- Promote greater public awareness of mental, financial, and physical abuse of seniors and how to address it
- Encourage Traffic enforcement – parking, bicycle lanes, handicap parking, etc.

Police, fire, and emergency measures services:

- Find ways to expand and sustain Neighbourhood Watch to include looking out for isolated seniors (especially during inclement weather, power outages, fire, flooding, etc.)
- Find ways to expand Block Parents concept to seniors who might find themselves in difficulty while out in public (Note: This may in fact already be covered by Block Parents but not sufficiently promoted.)

- Promote basic home safety measures: keeping the garage door closed, not leaving purses or other values in view, ensuring easy access to a phone on all levels of a house, getting rid of scatter mats, installing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, installing peep holes in doors, handrails on all stairs, step-in baths or showers, elevated toilet seats, etc.
- Take a careful and thorough look at emergency preparedness at a city-wide level
- Help seniors to plan for emergency preparedness in their own living environments
- Develop a registry of vulnerable seniors who would be in need of assistance in an emergency
- Continue the voluntary roll out of the new mobility impairment placards to apartment buildings and condos.

Mayor's Committee on University Relations:

- Revisit the College Hill area (absentee landlords, students creating unsightly premises, noise issues, safety concerns, vandalism, etc.)
- Encourage students to offer their services to rake leaves, shovel snow, take out garbage for seniors in their neighbourhood (in exchange for modest payment or a home-cooked meal or a batch of cookies)

Trail patrol, trail coalition, parks and trees department:

- Consider implementing some safety rules on trail system to keep it safe for everyone

Grassroots photography project:

- Invite grassroots citizens to take photographs of some of the safety issues faced by seniors (For a more complete understanding of how this would work, see:

<http://blog.efpsa.org/2013/05/15/a-change-of-view-using-visual-methods-to-explore-experience-in-qualitative-research/>)

IDENTIFIED ACTION STEPS

OUTDOOR SPACES

Ensure input from an occupational therapist and disability groups in developing guidelines

City's Urban Design Manager

- Work closely with the City Senior Planner to ensure that the City Centre Plan is developed with attention to the needs of seniors in mind
- Consider how best to mix housing with downtown businesses

Wilmot on the Move Committee

- Explore with the Wilmot on the Move Committee how this downtown church might be adapted as a multi-purpose venue

Partnerships with downtown businesses and shopping malls:

- Improve access to downtown parking (snow clearance around parking meters)
- Ensure that disabled parking spaces are kept free of ice and snow
- During winter, keep downtown sidewalks and street corners well cleared
- During winter, keep parking meters dug out, with footpaths shoveled out from street to parking meter to sidewalk
- Ensure that disabled parking spaces have easy access to shopping cart corrals (since many mobility-challenged seniors may be using shopping carts as assistive devices to help them get around the parking lot and the store)
- Ensure sidewalks are level and made of materials that are easy to walk on and not prone to becoming slippery in inclement weather
- Consider wider sidewalks in areas of high pedestrian traffic

Part of the downtown core plan; should be promoted in other areas of the city as well:

- Provide more benches, other spaces or facilities throughout the city, in places where seniors may find themselves having to wait for protracted periods, and where they may need to stop and rest

BUILDINGS

Ensure input from an occupational therapist and disability groups in developing guidelines

Work with downtown businesses and public services:

- Encourage more senior-friendly stores and public buildings (scale, ease of finding one's way around, signage, customer service, shopping carts, seniors' discounts)
- Encourage stores to provide tethered magnifying glasses to help customers read the tiny print on products and/or pictures or graphics.
- Encourage stores and public spaces to produce their signage in larger type fonts on low-glare surfaces
- Expand hours of operation to enable access by seniors who are dependent on family and friends for transportation and assistance

Food establishments:

- Encourage restaurants to keep a stash of e-readers, backlit, with adjustable font size, to make their menus more legible
- Encourage more waterfront restaurants with terraces/patios

Review the building code and its enforcement:

- Require uninterrupted handrails on all stairs
- Encourage sturdy handrails in places where seniors may have to wait in line

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- Provide more seating throughout the city, in places where seniors may find themselves having to wait for protracted periods, and where they may need to stop and rest
- Ensure that all new buildings have generators for use in power outages
- Ensure that all new buildings have entrance cameras to safeguard building access
- Ensure that all public buildings & parking areas are fully accessible (entrances, hallways, elevators, washrooms, height/types of fixtures, door width, removal or highlighting of lips on doorways, sturdy continuous double handrails at appropriate height, signage, etc.)
- Support appropriate retrofitting for seniors housing, businesses, and community spaces, including sprinkler systems and backup generators for elevators
- Reinstate the summer student Transit Advisors program (with a particular focus on seniors and the multicultural community)
- Ensure that bus routes provide access to all of Fredericton's green spaces and Community Gardens
- Ensure that bus routes serve all seniors' centres (Stepping Stone and Johnson Avenue) and major seniors' housing complexes
- Ensure that seniors' bus passes can be purchased at other locations than City Hall
- Investigate the potential priority snowplowing for identified individuals requiring assistance in terms of both the bus route and sidewalks
- As buses are replaced ensure new buses are low riser (low step or kneeling) and have tie-downs for wheelchairs.

TRANSPORTATION

Ensure input from an occupational therapist and disability groups in developing guidelines

Transit services:

- Expand accessibility and safety features on public transportation for the mobility-impaired and their helpers
- Promote public transit through large-print materials (passes, navigators, bus stop signage)
- Ensure adequate seating at bus stops, at an appropriate height, with suitable back support, and with arms to help those who may have difficulty getting to their feet
- Introduce priority seating on buses for seniors and the disabled
- Ensure that bus schedules and fares are posted visibly and not obscured by other signage (such as notices about holidays when buses will be out of service)

Active transportation/City engineering, planning department:

- Add more curb cuts, please
- Create more pedestrian-friendly crosswalks (bring back scrambled crosswalks in downtown core) and improve the timing of crosswalks i.e. length of time to cross safely
- Provide nearby free parking to facilitate walking trail use
- Increase promotion of Fredericton's heritage walks
- Consider boat rentals on the Saint John River
- Consider Segway rentals with City GPS
- Consider a greater range of parking options in the downtown
- Partner with the Capital Region Bicycle Committee to promote safer integration of pedestrians, bicycles & motor vehicle traffic

Shopping malls, medical clinics, and other public buildings:

- Make it easier for family members and/or support workers to take disabled seniors to the mall and other public places by providing easier access to wheelchairs and other assistance near the doors

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Volunteer sector:

- Explore the possibility of establishing a program of volunteer drivers to help seniors get where they need to go (investigate insurance and liability issues, competition with taxis and bus service, etc.) Similar to Dial-a-Ride or programs operating in Harvey or Charlotte County.

HOUSING

Ensure input from an occupational therapist and disability groups in developing guidelines

Discuss with Wellness Branch, Dept. of Healthy and Inclusive Communities:

- Review the Home First program to ensure that it doesn't encourage social isolation
- Encourage more efficient management of the current waiting list (ensure that wheelchair accessible units are reserved for clients who need them).

City to explore with trade unions:

- Develop a roster of people willing to help with home repairs and maintenance

Ask Healthy and Inclusive Communities and Social Development to compile a list of pet-friendly seniors' housing:

- Encourage seniors' housing to allow pets

City Planning Dept.:

- Simplify the process of building permits to retrofit seniors' houses
- Encourage Universal Design in subdivision planning.

City Planning Dept. and the Municipal Plan to encourage these measures:

- Ensure green spaces and gardens in new and existing seniors' housing developments

- Involve developers and industry associations in development of new building codes for seniors' housing (senior-friendly entrances, apartment layouts, appliances, etc.) – get input from an occupational therapist and disability groups. Promote the use of Universal Design.
- Ensure sufficient affordable and accessible housing for the growing population of lower-income seniors
- Work to ensure that all housing for seniors is accessible and includes nearby and well-maintained disabled parking
- Explore possibilities for expansion of Stepping Stone's facilities, and create other gathering places for seniors
- Create more senior friendly outdoor recreational spaces (playgrounds, bathrooms, seating)
- Support/encourage appropriate retrofitting for seniors' housing, businesses, and community buildings, including sprinkler systems and backup generators for elevators
- Find positive ways to integrate rental residents and home owners
- Revisit bylaw about granny suites to ensure that they can be kept for that specific purpose.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Age-Friendly Directory Subcommittee:

- Look at information services from seniors' and users' perspective (plain language, easily searchable, legible, user-friendly, and with a human touch where possible). Some beta testing with seniors might be a good idea (time permitting).
- Provide a large-print directory of services to seniors
- Seek clearance through Steve Moore to include in the resource directory the very good (federal government-initiated) checklist developed for emergency preparedness

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- Work towards WHO Age-Friendly City designation.

City's IT Department:

- Promote a senior-friendly and more easily searchable Website that lists all activities happening in the City and is updated in a timely manner

Cultivate supportive contacts in the local media:

- Ensure more lead time and repeat notices about upcoming events of interest to seniors
- Share good news stories about age-friendly initiatives that are meeting with success (including those initiated informally from within the community)
- Invite local photographers and journalists to help promote some of age-friendly Fredericton's success stories (Photo Fredericton, and the photography students at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design, and local media)

Work with the City's receptionist at the main City number (460-2020) and with the Chimo helpline:

- Ensure easy communication with the City by shortening response times, ensuring staff know where best to direct inquiries, and treating all callers with respect and patience

Find out status of discussions about a 311 service for the City:

- Consult with the City to include a single access point (a 311 phone number) to field seniors' information inquiries; provide trained staff to help answer questions and to guide people to other service providers as needed

Work with the City's emergency planning group and communications working group:

- Ensure that timely emergency communication extends beyond social media to more senior-friendly communication channels, and includes backup plans that will work during power outages

- Create a registry of isolated and vulnerable seniors that can be accessed easily and quickly during emergencies (storms, power outages, flooding, fires, etc.)

- Consider development of a Silver Alert system for seniors who go missing

- Get permission to disseminate the (federal government-initiated) 72-hour checklist developed for emergency preparedness; look for a variety of creative ways to get this information out to the public

- Piggyback mailings and electronic messages to seniors with monthly water, electric, and phone bills

- Print weekly safety tips in the local newspaper

- Look into more effective ways of communicating with seniors about emergency preparedness, falls prevention, fraud, elder abuse, etc.

- Encourage public and essential services that all communications continue to be offered in both official languages.

- Flag the Multicultural Association of Fredericton as a multi-lingual resource.

Approach Rogers and Bell Aliant:

- Use local cable TV channel and other local media to disseminate information to seniors (bearing in mind that not everyone has computer access)

Letter being sent to Bell Aliant: (Completed)

- Encourage Bell Aliant to produce a phone book with larger print

Promote availability to seniors of free computers and free computer training:

- Help low-income seniors tap into services provided by the Fredericton Area Network (www.fredfree.net), the Fredericton Public Library, Stepping Stone, etc.

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SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Fredericton Age-Friendly Communities Committee awareness building (which might be initiated by having representatives of target organizations come and present to us and open up dialogue):

- Identify and remove barriers to social participation
- Encourage more active volunteer outreach to seniors living alone
- Promote more intergenerational and intercultural activities (through service clubs, churches, schools, universities, and others)
Note: The Multicultural Association of Fredericton has received New Horizons funding for a project to address the needs of senior immigrants and refugees.
- Promote more active involvement of seniors in reading programs in schools (ELF, for instance)
- Encourage volunteers to read to seniors
- Promote being a good neighbour

City Parks and Recreation

- Create more senior friendly outdoor recreational spaces (playgrounds, bathrooms, seating)
- Expand recreational programming directed towards seniors

Raise awareness with local restaurants:

- Encourage more seniors' menu items and seniors' portion sizes at local restaurants

Approach the Charlotte Street Arts Centre re: outreach to seniors:

- Partner with groups who can bring the arts to seniors with limited incomes

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lobby the Dept. of Social Development and the Dept. of Healthy and Inclusive Communities:

- Advocate for a living wage

Work with the Emergency Shelters, Affordable Housing Communities, Community Planning Group on Homelessness:

- Explore the needs of our homeless and near-homeless population
- Explore the needs of the working poor, and of people living in subsidized housing

Local businesses:

- Encourage businesses to provide employment to seniors who are interested in working (part-time or full-time) either on-site or from home
- Promote public awareness of the skills and experience that seniors have to offer



IDENTIFIED ACTION STEPS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Greener Village, nutrition column in Daily Gleaner, Karin Pinchin (CBC & Public Library):

- Promote Community Food Smart program and healthy eating and food security

Wellness Branch, Healthy and Inclusive Communities, and City Recreation Dept:

- Promote and support physical activity

Horizon Health:

- Promote use of Lifeline and other home safety monitoring systems for seniors living alone (promote in pharmacies and physicians' waiting rooms)
- Provide more seating near hospital and clinic entrances.
- Promote more flexible hospital appointment times for seniors with a view to bus schedules and the time constraints of family and volunteer drivers

Whiteboard:

- Promote use of the Fredericton Police Force Household Emergency Information whiteboard (and consider punching a hole in the top of the whiteboard for those who don't have a magnetic surface to which it can be affixed)
- Encourage seniors to have a readily available list of all their medications and emergency contact names and numbers

Promote awareness of free parking passes made available through hospital social workers for family members of patients in hospital for extended stays:

- Provide discounted hospital parking rates for seniors and their family members

Alzheimer's Society:

- Facilitate earlier diagnosis of dementia
- Promote awareness of the Memory Clinic.

Insurance providers:

- Clarify any insurance liability for those helping seniors (driving them, taking them for walks, providing meals, etc.)

Provincial Departments of Health, Social Development, Healthy and Inclusive Communities:

- Support the development of quality home care services, with decent wages and training
- Encourage more integration and coordination among senior-serving agencies and departments
- Explore respite care for families looking after seniors
- Encourage the formation of family practice clusters with doctors working staggered shifts in order to expand the hours that they can be open to serve patients
- Improve the range and scope of support services available to seniors living independently (Home First)
- Develop more adult day care programs
- Encourage better 3rd party inspection standards for homecare facilities. 'Ombudsman'

Horizon Health

- Work with all the walk-in medical clinics in the city to design and implement a more equitable and orderly service system [for example, an orderly take-a-number-when-you-arrive system (more like the blood work check-in at the DECH)]

IDENTIFIED ACTION STEPS

FACILITATING DIALOGUE

Groups with whom the Forum Subcommittee recommends that the Fredericton Age-Friendly Committee hold exploratory meetings for purposes of interactive dialogue (in proposed order of priority):

- City EMO Officer: See pages 3, 8 & 10
- Police: See pages 4 & 10
- Fire: See pages 4 & 10
- Canada Post: See page 3
- Horizon Health: See pages 6 & 10
- Provincial Seniors Consultant: See pages 7, 9 & 10
- Urban Design Manager: See page 5 & 7
- Transit Services: See page 6
- Wilmot on the Move Committee: See page 5
- Affordable Housing and Community Planning Group on Homelessness: See page 9
- Multicultural Association of Fredericton: See pages 3 & 9
- City Engineering and Planning Dept.: See page 6
- Downtown Fredericton: See page 5
- Shopping Mall Managers: See pages 3, 5 & 6
- Mayor's Committee on University Relations: See page 4
- Rogers and Bell Aliant: See page 8
- Fredericton Public Library: See pages 3 & 8
- Local Media: See page 3 & 8
- City Parks and Recreation: See pages 4, 9 & 10
- Charlotte Street Arts Centre : See page 9
- Departments of Social Development and Healthy and Inclusive Communities: See pages 7 & 10

