

COMMITTEE REPORT



TO **Community and Social Services Committee**

SERVICE AREA Community and Social Services Department
Community Engagement and Social Services

DATE November 13, 2012

SUBJECT Older Adult Strategy

REPORT NUMBER CSS-CESS-1228

SUMMARY

Purpose of Report: To provide Council with the final report of the Older Adult Strategy which will assist the City of Guelph proactively prepare for the impact of the increased aging population on the City's services and programs.

Committee Action: That Council approve the Vision, Guiding Values and Principles of the Older Adult Strategy in planning and decision making within the city; and that Council direct staff to create a cross-departmental staff team responsible for the development of a corporate action plan based on the Older Adult Strategy to ensure Guelph is age-ready and age-friendly.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the Vision, Guiding Values and Principles of the Older Adult Strategy;

AND THAT Council direct staff to create a cross-departmental staff team responsible for the development of a corporate action plan based on the Older Adult Strategy to ensure Guelph is age-ready and age-friendly;

AND THAT staff be directed to report back on the plan, timelines and resource requirements.

BACKGROUND

By 2031 the population of the City of Guelph is projected to be 175,000 with the greatest proportional increase in the 55+ age category, or 33% of all Guelph residents (Revised Official Plan, Local Growth Management Strategy, 2009/*The Growth Outlook for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Hemson Consulting Ltd.*,

January 2005). The impact of this demographic shift on the design and delivery of municipal services will present opportunities and challenges.

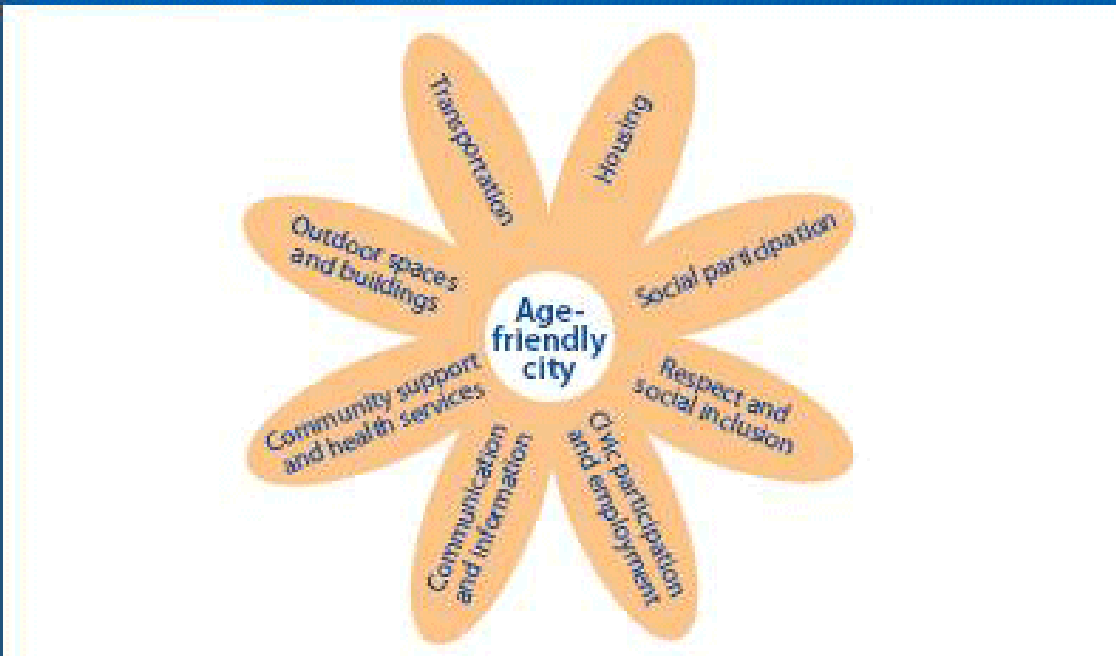
In the spring of 2012, Community and Social Services launched an initiative to develop an Older Adult Strategy. The purpose of the plan is to create an age-friendly community that supports older adults to live in security, maintain their health and participate fully in society. In response, the City will adapt its structure and services to be accessible and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.

The Older Adult Strategy has utilized a framework that is consistent with the World Health Organization Dimensions of Age-Friendliness: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health supports. Cities around the world are applying this framework, using a set of standard guidelines and tools to become age-ready and age-friendly. This work was also guided and informed by a Steering Committee of ten members, comprised of both community members and City staff.

A comprehensive and innovative Older Adult Strategy is intended to provide a planning framework and implementation plan to ensure that the city is age-ready and age-friendly. To ensure that the City is age-ready, staff have identified the following steps:

- Identify assets and challenges affecting the City with a growing population of older adults;
- Set goals for the corporation to ensure a healthy community for an aging population;
- Provide direction to ensure policies serve individuals with changing needs due to aging;
- Build staff capacity to serve an older adult population;
- Recognize and value the expertise, wisdom, and contribution that older adults provide to a community; and
- Encourage other sectors of the community to collaborate to provide innovative ways to meet challenges of the aging population.

Figure 6. Age-friendly city topic areas



<http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca/en/afc/index.php>

REPORT

In preparation for the opportunities and challenges that this demographic shift will pose to the City, the Older Adult Strategy is intended to guide the planning and allocation of resources and services to ensure that the City of Guelph becomes an age-friendly city in which residents of all ages choose to live and grow old.

Project Methodology as follows:

A review of documents and materials was conducted to inform this work. Resources came from the City, from three comparator municipalities, as well as from a number of jurisdictions across North America that has developed older adult strategies (Appendix 1, page 79).

The development of the Strategy included a series of engagement opportunities:

- 5 community forums including 1 with caregivers to older adults, engaging a total of 110 community members
- 3 focus groups with community agencies and service providers, engaging a total of 36 individuals
- Interviews with 8 community agencies identified as stakeholders, engaging a total of 10 staff
- Interviews with 35 City staff and presentation to 25 staff of the direct report leadership team, as well as follow up presentation to 20 staff
- PowerPoint presentation distributed to Council and the Executive Team, individual interviews with the Mayor and 2 Councillors
- See Appendix 1, page 82.

An online survey reached 128 additional community members and allowed them to contribute their thoughts and ideas. In the interests of transparency and accountability, the community was engaged a second time to provide a follow-up on the progress of the project and a summary of findings from the consultation phase. Three feedback sessions were held; one each for the public, service providers, and City staff.

Summary of Consultations and Feedback

Many people talked about the City as being a great place to live, with many opportunities to be actively involved. Some of the positive examples of services that are appreciated by seniors of Guelph are:

- Parks, trails, and recreation opportunities
- Snow Angels program
- Affordable bus pass
- Bike paths
- Volunteer culture
- Evergreen Seniors' Centre and the partnering community support services
- City staff are generally considered to be responsive
- Many good partnerships
- Older Adults Generally feel included and engaged

Some of the challenges and barriers faced by seniors are:

- Changing diversity of the community represents a corresponding need for greater awareness of cultural, language and functional challenges facing seniors
- Service inequities that are geographically driven
- Income inequity and low income challenges
- Transit and mobility – service inequity in neighbourhoods, challenges with distances required to walk to access transit, lack of public benches at bus stops
- Built environment, right of way, and navigation challenges
- Shortage of affordable housing
- Lack of community support services within neighbourhoods
- Caregiver stress
- Social isolation
- Community and personal safety
- Easily accessible communication mechanisms from municipal government
- Lack of sufficient health support services to help people continue to reside in their own home

Not all of the gaps identified represent services provided by the City; some are clearly the purview of the province (e.g., health care), and some are services provided in the community, or in partnership with the County of Wellington.

Vision , Guiding Values and Principles

As part of community engagement, community members were asked to articulate their vision for the City as it relates to older adults. The result of this engagement feedback was the creation of the following:

- GOAL: Guelph is a great place to live and age well.
- VISION: Guelph is an age-friendly community that:
 - values and supports older adults
 - optimizes opportunity for choice, independence, and quality of life
 - celebrates diversity
 - is inclusive of all, reducing inequities (is fair and just)
- GUIDING PRINCIPLES: The City of Guelph will ensure that all services, policies and programs are designed, delivered and resourced, where feasible, using the following guiding values and principles:
 - participation and inclusion of all citizens
 - respect and dignity
 - active engagement in communication and decision making
 - access to a safe living environment
 - fairness and equity
 - self determination and choice

Outcomes

The Older Adult Strategy report prepared by the consultants recommends undertaking a broad set of actions over a number of years to become an age-friendly jurisdiction. The recommendations range from six (6) broad, overarching recommendations to more detailed, specific plans related to the eight (8) dimensions of an age-friendly city in the World Health Organization (WHO) framework.

The Strategy was developed with some knowledge of the City's upcoming Community Well-being Initiative, and efforts have been made to ensure consistency and alignment between the two initiatives. The Strategy also includes some guidance for implementation including proposed timelines and Lead role for each recommendation. This is a multi-year strategy, which will involve all City departments as well as community and provincial partners.

The report recommends that a standing cross departmental Older Adult Strategy Action Team must be created. This team will be mandated to assess the recommendations of the Older Adult Strategy and prioritize and oversee the implementation of the recommendations. The City will be a leader and a partner in the development of plans to address the emerging needs of its residents. Regardless of which level of government is responsible, it is important to consider the needs of older adults in a whole systems approach. In this way, a more thoughtful strategy can be developed that considers the role of the City, the role of partners, opportunities to improve coordination and integration, and to leverage the mandates and activities of a wide range of stakeholders.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN

Organizational Excellence

- 1.2 Develop collaborative work teams and apply whole systems thinking to deliver creative solutions

Innovation in Local Government

- 2.1 Build an adaptive environment for government innovation to ensure fiscal and service sustainability

City Building

- 3.1 Ensure a well designed, safe, inclusive, appealing and sustainable City

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Immediate work can begin on implementing the Older Adult Strategy without any impact to the 2012/13 operating budget. It is recognized that a cross departmental Older Adult Strategy Action Team will assess the recommendations, and prioritize and oversee implementation. Some action items will have budget impacts over the longer term. These will be determined by each department, and brought forward to Council for approval.

DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION

A Project Steering Committee guided the development of the Older Adult Strategy, with the Manager of Senior Services serving as the Project Manager and Manager of Partnerships and Inclusion chairing the Steering Committee. The committee was comprised of staff from Community and Social Services, Human Resources, as well as representation from the Guelph Wellington Seniors Association, and community members. See Appendix 1, page 79 for listing of Project Steering Committee members.

All Departments, through the Executive Team, received communication regarding the development of the strategy and were provided an opportunity for input.

COMMUNICATIONS

Key community stakeholders were advised of the Older Adult Strategy Development and invited to have input into developing this strategy. An online survey on www.guelph.ca/seniors was hosted for the month of June. Community consultations were held during the month of June.

Consultations were held with community organizations: Wellington Senior Services Network 20 leaders from community organizations providing advocacy for the improvement of community support, social care/services, and health and long term care services for older adults in Wellington County. There is representation from long term care, mental health, health care, hospitals, community support, social

services, housing services, and education, and Guelph Trans-disciplinary team (17 clinicians from across the sectors in health care and mental health who review of high risk case situations with representation from hospital, day programs, specialized geriatric service, Homewood, CCAC, intensive geriatric service program, primary care consultant, seniors at risk program, Alzheimer Society).

Follow up consultations were held in August. See Appendix 1, page 82 for a listing of agencies interviewed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Older Adult Strategy for The City of Guelph, Report prepared by The Osborne Group

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