

Community Age-Friendly Priorities

RM of Springfield, Manitoba

Age-Friendly Springfield Advisory
Committee Community Meeting Summary
April 15, 2009

Community consultations are being held with seniors and community members in a number of communities in Manitoba as part of a larger AgeFriendly Initiative. The goal of these community consultations is to assist communities to prioritize issues that will help them form action plans to make the community as age-friendly as possible. In April of 2009, eleven individuals from the RM of Springfield, Manitoba came together to talk about age-friendly priorities and issues within their community. Participants also had the opportunity to complete a survey of the age-friendliness of their community. The following is a summary of the age-friendly priorities identified at the meeting, as well as a summary of results from the survey.



Summary of Group Discussion

Priority **Expand housing options for seniors**

Potential Actions:

- Expand options for seniors' housing in the RM of Springfield
 - Develop new accommodations in the community
 - Both independent living (elderly persons housing) and assisted living/supportive housing options are needed
 - Ensure that housing is affordable
 - Long term goal: Build a housing complex that offers a range of services to accommodate seniors' changing needs
- Improve services to assist seniors living in their own homes (e.g., yard work, repairs, snow removal)
 - Increase awareness of existing support services (e.g., available through Springfield Services to Seniors)
 - Ensure these services are affordable to all seniors
- In conjunction with Seniors Resource Coordinator, increase awareness of available grants and funding opportunities to make housing more accessible



Priority **Focus on social activities for all ages**

Potential Actions:

- Offer more social events that integrate community members of various ages
 - Consider the possibility of developing a "place" (e.g., an Active Living Centre) to disseminate information, etc. that is available to all age groups
 - Explore ways to encourage isolated seniors and others that do not currently participate in activities to become more socially active:
 - Increase awareness of available opportunities
 - Because social interaction often occurs informally near individuals' homes and with neighbours, target those whose surroundings no longer meet their needs
 - Look at ways to expand transportation options so seniors can more easily participate in social activities



Priority **Promote more intergenerational activities and opportunities for people of all ages to interact**

Potential Actions:

- Expand intergenerational activities. For example:
 - Develop intergenerational programs and regular interaction among seniors and children in local daycares and schools
- Encourage interaction among High School students and seniors:
 - Contact the High School regarding credits available for volunteering with older adults
 - Work closely with schools and support teachers and others to encourage students to volunteer
- Increase awareness and advertising of available programs and opportunities to work with seniors



Priority **Encourage seniors to participate on committees and to volunteer**

Potential Actions:

- Determine which particular committees or councils lack representation by older adults and ask seniors to participate
- Encourage seniors and others to volunteer by appropriately matching volunteers with available opportunities and providing volunteers with specific tasks

Priority **Expand and widely publicize transportation options for seniors in the RM of Springfield**

Potential Actions:

- Assess whether available transportation options (e.g., handi-transit, volunteer drivers, taxi) meet the needs and demands of seniors and, if not, consider options to expand seniors' transportation services
- Explore what transportation options are available to seniors that require rides on the days when the handi-van is being used for the Adult Day Program (Monday, Wednesday, Friday)
- Increase ways to share information about handi-transit and transportation options:
 - Who to phone for specific information
 - Days and times available
 - Who is eligible for handi-transit
 - What is offered by Services to Seniors



Priority **Increase safety on streets and trails**

Potential Actions:

- Improve sign visibility to reduce speeding
 - Oakbank – re-arrange signs on the streets for clear visibility
 - Oakbank – enforce speed limit on Main Street (50 km/h)
- Review crosswalk use and visibility in Dugald, Oakbank and Anola
 - Increase time for pedestrians to cross at crosswalks
 - Review need for crosswalks – evaluate, remove and add as required
 - Remove some parking spaces so crosswalks are more visible
- Contact Springfield Safety Officer to discuss how safety can be improved and maintained
- Make sidewalks in Oakbank accessible for wheelchairs, walkers and strollers
 - Consider cement sidewalks or cover bricks with asphalt
 - Clear snow on a timely basis from Main Street to the school
- Construct a walking and biking pathway from Dugald to Oakbank and from Oakbank to Birds Hill Park
 - Include rest areas with benches

Priority **Increase accessibility of existing public buildings and plan for increased accessibility of new buildings**

Potential Actions:

- Improve ramp accessibility at all public buildings
- Ensure automatic doors are usable to enter and exit
- Ensure public use washrooms are accessible and have enough space to turn wheelchairs
- Raise accessibility and safety awareness through assessments
 - Contact Citizens on Patrol
 - Contact Age and Opportunity regarding safety aids and assessments

Priority **Improve communication and increase awareness**

Potential Actions:

- Increase awareness and educate seniors and others about available programs, services, and activities
- Use multiple methods of communication to spread information.
For example:
 - The Clipper
 - The Springfield Times
 - Community calendars
 - Community website
- Informal communication networks are effective in making information known (e.g., word of mouth)
- Encourage communication and referrals among professionals working with seniors
- Ensure that communication efforts are ongoing



Priority **Increase access to health equipment and community information**

Note: It was recognized that home care services and services to seniors are available and well used in the RM of Springfield.

Potential Actions:

- Increase access to chest x-ray and EKG use within the RM of Springfield
- Place defibrillators in public places such as recreation centres, libraries, and medical offices
- Include a place for people to meet, to learn, and to share information in the new Wellness/ Recreation Centre and the Library

Summary of Survey Findings

As part of the community consultation, individuals were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community. A total of 11 questionnaires were completed; all individuals were from the RM of Springfield. At least one individual from the communities of Oakbank, Anola, Cook's Creek, and Hazelridge completed the questionnaire. This report summarizes the findings from the 11 individuals who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 45% identified themselves as a senior.

Overall, participants felt that the community offers sufficient volunteer opportunities for seniors and that recreational programs, such as exercise, are generally affordable for seniors. Respondents indicated that snow clearing in the community is done in a timely manner. Nearly all participants also agreed that seniors feel safe when walking alone during the day in the community. Most responded favourably when asked whether information about community events and services/programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors. Also noted was the vast number of participants that agreed that seniors in this community are generally treated with respect.

Increasing housing options for seniors in the RM of Springfield was identified as an important issue. Many felt that the community would benefit by expanding public transportation to shopping and events for seniors and by increasing intergenerational programs that bring seniors and children together. Also noted was the lack of public washrooms and the need to expand meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes.

Findings

Thoughts/Opinions About Transportation

Transportation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to shopping, senior centres, religious events, cultural events, and so forth is sufficient in my community.	9.1	81.8	9.1
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient in my community.	27.3	54.5	18.2
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient in my community.	27.3	54.5	18.2
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	36.4	27.3	36.4

Thoughts/Opinions About Infrastructure

Infrastructure	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs in my community are adapted to needs of older drivers (e.g., large signs).	36.4	36.4	27.3
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	36.4	54.5	9.1
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (paved, even and not a lot of cracks).	27.3	45.5	27.3
Snow clearing in my community is done in a timely manner.	100.0	0.0	0.0
There are enough street crosswalks in <i>business areas</i> in my community.	45.5	45.5	9.1
There are enough street crosswalks in <i>residential and/or recreation</i> areas in my community.	27.3	72.7	0.0
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	18.2	63.6	18.2
Most or all businesses in my community are readily accessible to seniors (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	27.3	54.5	18.2

Thoughts/Opinions About Safety

Safety	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Crime and vandalism are a problem in my community.	36.4	54.5	9.1
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> in my community.	90.9	0.0	9.1
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> in my community.	36.4	27.3	36.4

Thoughts/Opinions About Housing

Housing	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There is enough housing for seniors in my community.	9.1	81.8	9.1
Housing for seniors is affordable in my community.	27.3	18.2	54.5
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors in my community.	10.0	70.0	20.0
The waiting times to get into senior housing, such as assisted living, are reasonable in my community.	0.0	100.0	0.0
There is enough housing for younger people in my community.	40.0	50.0	10.0

Thoughts/Opinions About Health and Community Services

Health and Community Services	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't know
The home care services for seniors are sufficient in my community.	63.6	18.2	18.2
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient in my community.	36.4	9.1	54.5
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at recreation or senior centre) are sufficient in my community.	63.6	0.0	36.4
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient in my community.	9.1	36.4	54.5
The health care services that are provided in my community meet needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians).	54.5	27.3	18.2
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	20.0	50.0	30.0
Access to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is generally convenient (e.g., services not too far away, appointment times are convenient).	27.3	54.5	18.2

Thoughts/Opinions About Community/Work Force Participation

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors in my community.	80.0	0.0	20.0
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer in my community (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	50.0	30.0	20.0
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors in my community.	20.0	40.0	40.0
The job opportunities in my community accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	27.3	36.4	36.4

Thoughts/Opinions About Social Participation/Recreation

Social Participation/Recreation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Local parks or walking trails in my community are accessible to seniors.	27.3	45.5	27.3
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors in my community.	36.4	18.2	45.5
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors in my community (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	45.5	18.2	36.4
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors in my community (e.g., computer courses).	27.3	36.4	36.4
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children going to nursing homes).	18.2	45.5	36.4
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	72.7	0.0	27.3

Thoughts/Opinions About Information/Advocacy

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors in my community.	81.8	0.0	18.2
Information about services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors in my community.	72.7	0.0	27.3
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., large print).	36.4	18.2	45.5
Public telephone answering services in my community are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given slowly enough).	9.1	45.5	45.5
There is enough assistance available in my community for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out income tax forms).	63.6	9.1	27.3
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available in my community (e.g., ombudsman).	18.2	36.4	45.5

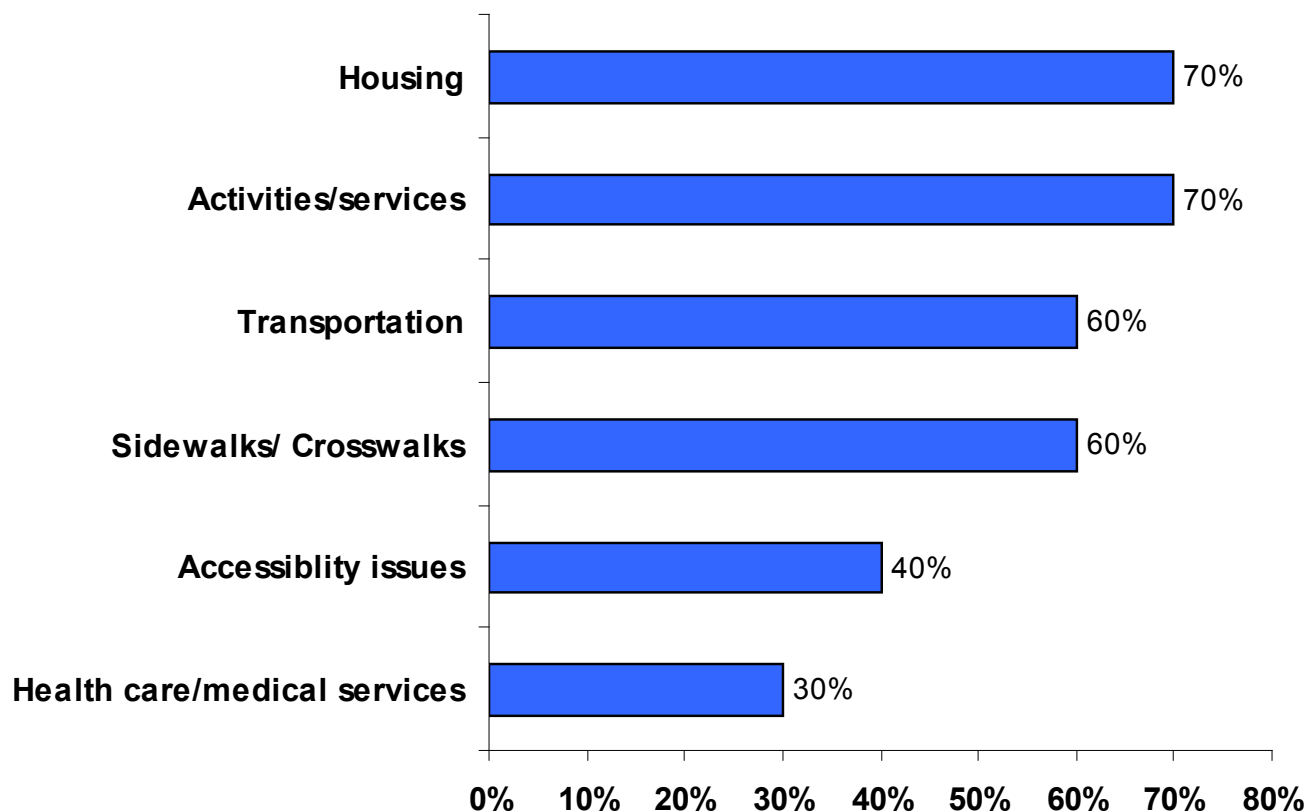
Thoughts/Opinions About Respect and Social Inclusion

Respect and Social Isolation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors in my community are generally treated with respect.	100.0	0.0	0.0
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government in my community (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	18.2	54.5	27.3
Community consultations in my community specifically include seniors.	45.5	9.1	45.5
Planning processes in my community specifically consider needs of seniors.	45.5	9.1	45.5

Priority Areas

Individuals were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Ten participants (90.9%) identified at least one priority area. These written comments were grouped into the priority areas as shown in Figure 1: **housing** (e.g., housing, more supportive housing, adequate affordable housing for retirees and seniors, senior housing opportunities); **activities/services** (e.g., services for seniors, increase recreational/social activities, intergenerational activities, recreation/fitness centre for all ages); **transportation** (e.g., transportation, affordable transportation, more access to handi-van services); **sidewalks/streets** (e.g., sidewalks, sidewalks not cleared of snow in winter, crosswalks by Kin Place often ignored by drivers, people drive down Main Street like they are still on the highway); **accessibility issues** (e.g., accessibility to stores, etc., Bird's Hill park not accessible to a large number of people unless you drive, library being moved to a place where access is by vehicle only); and, **health care/medical services** (e.g., home care, external defibrillators in public buildings, EKG access in community).

Figure 1: Priority Areas Identified by Participants



% of Participants Who Identified Area as a Priority

This summary was prepared by the Age-Friendly Community-University Research Alliance (CURA).

The CURA is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Team Leader: Dr. Verena Menec, Director, Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba

Contact: Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba

Phone: (204) 474-8754

Fax: (204) 474-7576

E-mail: aging@umanitoba.ca

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/centres/aging>

