

Community Age-Friendly Priorities

The Pas, Manitoba

Age-Friendly The Pas Advisory
Committee Community Meeting Summary
December, 2008

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 December of 2008, eighteen individuals in The Pas, 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 **Assess the need for increased housing options**

Potential Actions:

- Examine waiting lists at local housing facilities
- Expand options for seniors' housing in The Pas
 - Develop new accommodations in the community (both independent living and assisted living residences)
 - Ensure that housing is affordable for all seniors



Priority **Assess needed services to support independent living**

Potential Actions:

- Increase services to support independent living (e.g., meal preparation and delivery, housekeeping help, overnight stays)
- Share activities and use of equipment among seniors' residences

Priority **Increase safety on sidewalks and roads**

Potential Actions:

- Clear snow banks from sidewalks and boulevards in front of businesses and public buildings for safe access
- Through Chamber of Commerce and other business contacts, relay the message that assistance from businesses in clearing snow banks is helpful and valued
- Paint lines on the road and add crosswalk lights to the main pedestrian intersections (e.g., Fischer and 7th, Fischer and 2nd, and Edward and 1st)
- Remove old parking meter stubs from sidewalks to lessen the risk of tripping
- Level sidewalk paving stones
- Sand the main walking routes and road intersections promptly in the winter

Priority **Increase building accessibility**

Potential Actions:



- When possible, replace existing heavy doors of public buildings with automatic doors
 - Explore available grant and funding opportunities
- Clear snow from ramps so they are accessible for those using wheelchairs and scooters
- Ensure public washrooms are accessible for families and people with mobility challenges
- Add a driveway and parking for access to the handicap entrance at the pool

Priority **Increase available, accessible parking**

Potential Actions:

- Monitor handicap parking spots so they remain available for those who need them
- Increase downtown parking availability

Priority **Increase seniors' transportation options**

Potential Actions:

- Seniors in The Pas need more access to transportation options. For example:
 - Look at whether the handi-van can be used during the evenings and weekends
 - Consider ways to bring the previous handi-van back into use (e.g., as a "senior shuttle")
 - Explore more affordable transportation options for getting to the airport (e.g., airport shuttle)
 - Assess the possibility of public transportation options within the Pas for shopping, events and appointments (e.g., from senior housing)



Priority **Provide community information through various formats**

Potential Actions:

- Provide senior service and activity information to seniors in various ways (e.g., newspaper, local radio, notices)
- Provide seniors with information on discounted college courses (e.g., University College of the North) and free-of-charge activities (e.g., sports games)
 - Increase font size of information read by seniors (e.g., phone books, newsletters, local TV channel)
 - Explore ways to increase communication and partnerships among the RM of Kelsey, The Pas, and the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN)
 - Encourage local media stations to provide music relevant to seniors and information on community events to local residents
 - Inform The Pas residents of planned community improvements (e.g., replacement of Post Office steps)



Priority **Explore ways to increase access to health professionals and information**

Potential Actions:

- Recruit doctors and nurses to fill vacant positions at the personal care home
- Increase the use of technology (e.g., telehealth)

Priority

Increase learning and intergenerational opportunities for seniors

Potential Actions:

- Offer introductory computer training to seniors and increase awareness of places with public computer access
- Increase intergenerational activities within the community
- Promote intergenerational programs in schools so children and seniors can interact



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 13 questionnaires were completed; all individuals identified The Pas as their community of residence. This section summarizes the findings from the 13 individuals who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 69% identified themselves as a senior.

Most felt that the cost of recreational activities and the handi-van is affordable for seniors living in The Pas. Residents spoke positively about the large street signs that are easy to read and the availability of benches around town. Some also commented favourably on the availability of sidewalks linking residences and essential services in many areas of the community. Also noted was the fact that seniors in this community generally seem to be treated with respect.

The ongoing maintenance of sidewalks and the clearing of snow in front of businesses were identified as important issues. Access to buildings could be improved by the addition of ramps and automatic opening doors. Many noted the lack of public washrooms and the need for these to be accessible for people with mobility challenges. The need for more affordable seniors' housing was recognized, as well as the need for more public transportation to take seniors shopping, to events/activities, and to access health care services outside the community. Addressing safety issues, such as crime and vandalism, so all residents feel safe is important. Offering intergenerational programs that bring seniors and children together is a final area that can improve the town's age-friendliness.

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.	16.7	75.0	8.3
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient in my community.	50.0	41.7	8.3
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient in my community.	25.0	41.7	33.3
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	63.6	18.2	18.2

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).	61.5	23.1	15.4
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	61.5	38.5	0.0
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (paved, even and not a lot of cracks).	15.4	84.6	0.0
Snow clearing in my community is done in a timely manner.	30.8	53.8	15.4
There are enough street crosswalks in <i>business areas</i> in my community.	30.8	69.2	0.0
There are enough street crosswalks in <i>residential and/or recreation</i> areas in my community.	18.2	72.7	9.1
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	0.0	100.0	0.0
Most or all businesses in my community are readily accessible to seniors (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	0.0	92.3	7.7

Thoughts/Opinions About Safety

Safety	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Crime and vandalism are a problem in my community.	76.9	7.7	15.4
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> in my community.	46.2	53.8	0.0
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> in my community.	7.7	84.6	7.7

Thoughts/Opinions About Housing

Housing	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There is enough housing for seniors in my community.	8.3	91.7	0.0
Housing for seniors is affordable in my community.	18.2	63.6	18.2
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors in my community.	8.3	75.0	16.7
The waiting times to get into senior housing, such as assisted living, are reasonable in my community.	8.3	83.3	8.3
There is enough housing for younger people in my community.	33.3	25.0	41.7

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.	30.8	30.8	38.5
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient in my community.	16.7	50.0	33.3
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at recreation or senior centre) are sufficient in my community.	30.8	38.5	30.8
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient in my community.	46.2	38.5	15.4
The health care services that are provided in my community meet needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians).	38.5	46.2	15.4
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	7.7	76.9	15.4
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).	7.7	84.6	7.7

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.	46.2	15.4	38.5
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer in my community (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	41.7	33.3	25.0
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors in my community.	7.7	38.5	53.8
The job opportunities in my community accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	16.7	16.7	66.7

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.	46.2	46.2	7.7
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors in my community.	46.2	46.2	7.7
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors in my community (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	53.8	30.8	15.4
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors in my community (e.g., computer courses).	30.8	53.8	15.4
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children going to nursing homes).	0.0	76.9	23.1
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	61.5	15.4	23.1

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.	50.0	25.0	25.0
Information about services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors in my community.	50.0	33.3	16.7
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., large print).	15.4	61.5	23.1
Public telephone answering services in my community are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given slowly enough).	15.4	61.5	23.1
There is enough assistance available in my community for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out income tax forms).	53.8	23.1	23.1
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available in my community (e.g., ombudsman).	23.1	30.8	46.2

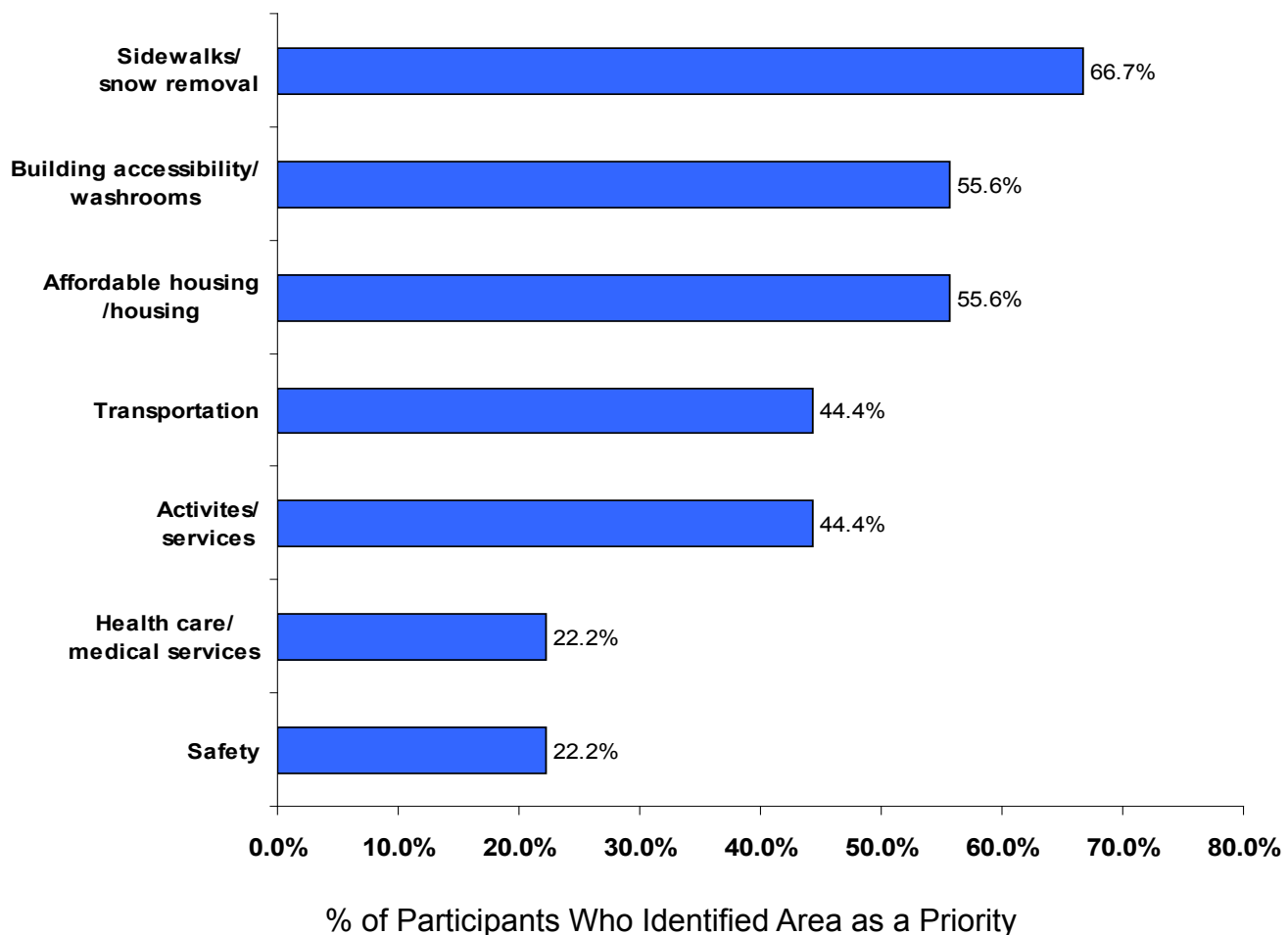
Thoughts/Opinions About Respect and Social Inclusion

Respect and Social Isolation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors in my community are generally treated with respect.	69.2	23.1	7.7
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government in my community (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	15.4	53.8	30.8
Community consultations in my community specifically include seniors.	53.8	30.8	15.4
Planning processes in my community specifically consider needs of seniors.	46.2	38.5	15.4

Priority Areas

Individuals were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Nine participants (69.2%) identified at least one priority area. These written comments were grouped into the priority areas as shown in Figure 1: sidewalks/snow removal (e.g., better sidewalks, sidewalks without tripping hazards, snow clearing off streets and sanding to prevent falling, removal of snow banks in front of businesses); housing (e.g., affordable housing, housing, more senior housing units); building accessibility/washrooms (e.g., electronic door openers, town office hard to get in to-doors too heavy, public washrooms to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs, more wheelchair access); transportation (e.g., transportation, transportation to airport too expensive, lack of clean, safe transportation); activities/services (e.g., organized activities, recreation, congregate meal program, more information); health care/medical services (e.g., health services, lack of doctors/nurses/care workers); and safety (e.g., safety, safety on streets).

Figure 1: Priority Areas Identified by Participants



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

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