



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 24, 2014
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Older Adult Plan (CES14012) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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Council Direction:

That staff work with key community stakeholders and the Seniors Advisory committee to develop a Hamilton Seniors Strategy.

Information:

This report is intended to provide an update of the work that is underway towards the development of an older adult plan for Hamilton.

Terminology

There is no one single definition of who is an older adult. For the purposes of this report the term “older adult” will be used to refer to a stage of life rather than a specific age. This stage of life would typically include individuals who are 50 or older. The term “senior” is generally used when referring to individuals 65 and older.

Introduction and Background

Hamilton’s population of seniors is increasing dramatically, a trend that will continue over the next twenty years. Seniors in Hamilton (age 65+) currently account for 15.7% of our total population and as baby boomers age over the coming decades this trend will increase more dramatically. While the overall population is expected to grow by approximately 20% between 2011 and 2036, Hamilton’s population of older adults and seniors is expected to almost double. In addition, it is important to note seniors are not located in one specific area of this community but are distributed relatively evenly throughout the city as shown in Appendix A to Report CES14012).

Preparing for an aging population is a significant challenge that all governments are now recognizing. Older adults are as diverse as any other segment of our population and as such have a variety of interests, abilities, wants and needs.

An older adult plan can serve as a long term planning framework to assist the City of Hamilton and community stakeholders in responding to the current and future needs of the older adult population. Creating such a plan for Hamilton addresses the first Strategic Priority of Hamilton's Corporate Strategic Plan which is to develop "a prosperous and healthy community". To achieve this priority, Strategic Action viii) calls for the development of an 'age friendly initiative for Hamilton'¹. Specifically, the action identifies the need "*to work with the Seniors Advisory Committee, Hamilton Council on Aging and other community partners to develop an Age Friendly Initiative for Hamilton*".

Process

Best practices in the areas of developing age friendly cities and human services planning indicate that it is important to involve key stakeholders in development of human services plans and that authentic community engagement starts at the beginning of the process.

The Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division (NCI) has partnered with the Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA)² and their Age Friendly Hamilton collaborative to convene a project steering group. The steering group is comprised of older adults, community service providers, and experts in the fields of research and gerontology, and will guide and support the development of the plan, as well as support and facilitate consultation and community engagement. Administrative and logistical support will be provided through the HCoA. The project is being co-lead through the HCoA and a staff from the Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division.

In many ways, the development of an Older Adult Plan for Hamilton will build on work that has already taken place or is currently under way. Examples include the City's work on Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA), the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, the Pedestrian Mobility Plan, and the various Neighbourhood Action Plans, amongst others. The Older Adult Plan will be developed with input, guidance, and direction from the Project Steering Group, the Seniors Advisory Committee, service providers and other community stakeholders, as well as broad consultation with diverse older adults and caregivers. The plan will also be informed by a review of other municipal plans for older adults, a demographic analysis of Hamilton's older adult population, an internal scan of City of Hamilton programs and services for older adults, and interviews with City staff from all departments.

¹ Strategic Action viii) falls under Strategic Objective 1.5 – "support[ing] the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents"

² The HCoA is a senior-driven initiative dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all seniors in Hamilton. Their current work relates to age-friendly cities and communities, improving access for seniors, prevention of elder abuse, and addressing poverty among seniors

Community Engagement

Successful planning for an aging population can be best accomplished through a collaborative approach, in part because aging does and will affect everyone, and also because of the scope of a senior strategy will likely touch on almost every aspect of community life, from housing to transit, from healthcare to recreation. A collaborative approach also creates a shared sense of ownership and responsibility. By shaping a community to be more responsive to the needs of its seniors population it becomes more inclusive to all of its residents.

Initial focus group conversations took place in the summer/fall 2013 to assist in the scoping of a strategy as well as identifying challenges and opportunities. Broader community engagement will take place through a consultation process in the early spring 2014 and will include a series of 6 to 8 focus groups at various locations throughout the City. An individual and small group discussion guide will also be developed. This guide will be distributed through formal and informal channels. Older adults will be encouraged to complete the discussion guide and return it with their feedback and advice. Participants will be asked to identify and confirm local priorities, gaps and opportunities, as well as provide feedback on various components of the older adult plan. We will be consulting with a wide range of older adults including: francophones, Aboriginals, newcomers, those of low-income, rural residents, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ residents and isolated older adults.

Conclusion

Staff will present the Older Adult Plan to the Emergency and Community Services Committee at their September 2014 meeting. While recommendations and actions contained in the Plan will focus on Hamilton's older population, the benefits will be felt by all members of the community.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A to Report CES14012: Population Density in the Urban Area of Seniors