



CITIZEN COMMITTEE REPORT

To:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services
From:	Ron D. Smithson, Chair Seniors Advisory Committee (to be signed by the Chair)
Date:	September 22, 2014
Re:	Seniors Advisory Committee – 4-Year Report (Report Number 14-007)

This report represents the actions/recommendations and accomplishments of the Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC) during the present term of Council. SAC has been very diligent in putting forth the concerns of Hamilton's seniors to Council through its Emergency and Community Services Committee to ensure the accommodation of seniors' issues.

SAC's current structure is 19 members and meets the first Friday of each month (with the exception of July and August). During this 4-year term, the following four sub-committees were created to assist the Committee to be more productive: Housing, Senior Recreation, Transportation and Age Friendly City. The Age Friendly City sub-committee has teamed up with the Council on Aging. In 2013, three of our members were presented with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

SAC representatives also are/have been members of the following Committees: Community Heat Response, Gore Park, Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) Transportation Sub-committee, Walk Ability, Senior of the Year Event, Light Rail Transit (LRT), Hamilton Strategic Road Safety Program and Hamilton Health Sciences AODA. SAC representatives report back to meetings and the matters are debated by the Committee, if necessary.

The accomplishments and recommendations of the Committee are many and below are some of the highlights.

SAC was concerned with adequate staffing to facilitate an emergency evacuation and the need for sprinkler systems in Long Term Care facilities. A letter dated April 2, 2013 was sent to The Honourable Deb Matthews (Provincial Health Minister) and Mr. Michael Shea (LHIN) under the signature of Mayor Bratina and the SAC Chair. A response dated May 10, 2013 from LHIN advised that the request had been forwarded to the Provincial Compliance Improvement Branch. The letter also stated that the Ministry encourages Long Term Care Homes to obtain professional, technical advice and consult with their local fire officials for recommended measures to improve fire safety in Long Term Care Homes.

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SAC requested that elevator maintenance be included in the Vital Service By-law for the safety of people with special needs so that they are not put at risk. SAC also recommended that the City make it mandatory that landlords, especially those with vulnerable tenants, maintain an emergency generator to meet the needs where hydro is required for respirators, dialysis and suction.

SAC was concerned with the bed bug situation in seniors' residences. Staff made a presentation stating that bed bugs are not a health issue but if a senior is bitten many times, this may become a health issue. SAC recommended that more be done to eradicate bed bugs.

With the forecast of an increase in the senior population, more senior recreation programs will be needed. SAC expressed their concerns with a recommendation requesting the Recreation Division broaden its scope of programs and activities for seniors. This should also include programs for ethno-cultural seniors by offering diverse, culturally-sensitive and appropriate activities.

Letters were sent to the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) on the following issues: request for additional Park N Ride locations in the east and west end locations of the City (to help alleviate automobile traffic in the centre of the City); request that the \$6 fee for a first time buyer of a senior pass be waived; and request for a bus shelter on Rymal Road to connect with the TransCab Terminal to Binbrook and that the stop for the TransCab be on the visible and audible announcement of the bus. Further, SAC was successful in having Council create an HSR senior monthly pass in addition to the yearly senior pass. This allows low income seniors to balance their budget.

SAC members toured the MacNab Street Terminal and made some minor recommendations regarding signage and the location of handicap buttons.

SAC was supportive in extending the Golden Age Pass to Accessible Transportation Services (ATS) passengers. All seniors, regardless of their ability, should be treated equally. In addition, SAC suggested that at the age of 80, the Golden Age Pass be a lifetime pass. After SAC met with staff, it was suggested that a PRESTO Card be issued with a picture ID.

SAC was not agreeable to the request of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) for 100% accessible taxis because the accessible taxis will accommodate wheelchairs but are not safe for people with walkers. SAC supports accessible taxis be available on demand for those who need them.

SAC recommended that busy main roads that are one-way streets remain one way. For seniors, one-way streets are easier to cross than two-way streets because there is always a gap in the traffic with the one-way streets.

With the shared bike program beginning, SAC suggested that a course be given by the Recreation Division for seniors.

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Snow clearing is a recurring problem for seniors. Plows clear the road and, in doing so, pile the snow at the edge of the road making it difficult for seniors to cross the road safely. SAC realizes that the cost is prohibitive to remove the snow. However, SAC recommends that the corners be cleared so seniors can safely cross the street at an intersection.

SAC urged Council to create the Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC). It also recommends that a member of SAC be on that committee. They further recommend that the by-laws be reviewed regarding mobility devices on the sidewalks.

Councillors Jackson and Morelli asked SAC to review 10 recommendations made by KPMG to provide insight from a senior's perspective regarding the Service Delivery Review Opportunities.

SAC is committed to an Age Friendly City. All of the actions of this term have been towards an Age Friendly City. It is recommended that it be continued in the next term.

The following delegations were received by the Committee for interest or to obtain feedback: suggestions for fire plans; air quality health index; accessible taxi request for proposal; senior strategy; special supports for seniors provided by the City of Hamilton; PRESTO card as it relates to seniors' fares; seniors housing; housing and homelessness in Hamilton; a City for all ages; taxi study; accessible taxis and driving training; and Golden Age pass.

We would like to thank the staff who attended our meetings. They were a great asset in helping us make decisions on various items. We would especially like to thank Councillors Morelli and Jackson as they were great advocates for seniors. It was a great loss when Councillor Morelli passed away but Councillor Jackson filled the gap.