

NIAGARA AGING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Discussion Paper

A Request for Stakeholder Input

The Ontario Trillium Foundation has approved funding of the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Network's project to develop an Aging Strategy and Action Plan for Niagara. Work commenced last spring and will be complete in early 2015. The project is being led by a Steering Committee representing a broad range of individuals and community organizations across Niagara.

It will produce a comprehensive aging strategy and action plan, toolkits to enable the implementation of the plan and a sustainability plan to ensure ongoing implementation across Niagara. The plan builds on and extends the excellent work already done in Niagara such the Aging Well in Niagara study completed by Niagara Region and the Age Friendly Community Initiative.

The Process to Date

- In April 2014 the Steering Committee recruited a project coordinator to support the project and established three separate Planning Teams of seniors and service providers to focus on different segments of the aging population - well and fit seniors, seniors requiring some assistance with daily living and seniors requiring 24-hour assistance.
- Each Planning Team met twice to review data collected by the project coordinator and make recommendations for addressing the needs of seniors in their target group.
- Fourteen community focus groups were held in June and August at different locations across Niagara to gather information about the views and experiences of seniors. Over 200 participants, mostly seniors, provided invaluable information concerning the range of services available to older adults in Niagara.
- A needs assessment survey was distributed on-line in June and completed by 53 service providers. The findings from the provider survey were very similar to the needs identified by seniors attending the focus groups, revealing good convergence of views among stakeholders. Survey findings are available on request.
- Interviews were also conducted with a range of "key informants" including political officials, specialists in the field, senior service providers and other community leaders. Fifteen interviews have now been completed and interviewing will continue for the duration of the project.
- On September 11, 2014 a full day forum was held in Welland to review information gathered and provide input to emerging directions. The session was attended by over 200 seniors and service providers, including many members of the Steering Committee and planning teams. The session report is available on request.

What Happens Next?

The next step of the consultation process begins with this discussion paper, which reflects the thinking of the participants in the planning process so far. This is "work in progress" that will evolve as we hear more from our various stakeholders. Please read it carefully and consider the questions posed.

Individuals, groups or organizations may complete the attached response form and mail their comments directly to the project coordinator. You can also respond on-line by going to www.surveymonkey.com/s/NASAP2014 and following the instructions. Focus questions have been provided to guide discussion and feedback. **You do not need to reply to all the questions - just answer the ones that are of interest to you.**

Regardless of which method you choose to reply, your responses need to be received by Friday, November 28, 2014.

A comprehensive plan will be developed based on input received. Work on the implementation plan and sustainability strategy will commence in December. The final strategy and action plan will be released to the community in March 2015.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Senior's Needs

Seniors' needs identified by the survey respondents, focus group participants and Planning Team members are summarized below. The needs are mapped against the three target groups - well and fit seniors (WF), seniors requiring some assistance with daily living (ADL) and seniors requiring 24-hour assistance (24/7).

	Needs	WF	ADL	24/7
Transportation	Transportation between communities	X	X	-
	More special transit	-	X	X
	Expanded public transit	X	X	-
	Sidewalk and lane improvements	-	X	X
	Scooter accessibility	-	X	X
	Volunteer, shuttle and pooled driving options	-	X	-
	Improved parking	X	X	-
	Cost relief	X	X	X
Housing	Affordable retirement homes, RGI units	X	X	-
	Appropriate housing – type, size, etc.	X	X	-
	Home renovation and maintenance supports	X	X	-
	Facilities with continuum of supports	X	X	X
	More LTC facilities close to home	-	-	X
	More supportive housing	-	X	X
	Transition supports	X	X	-

Social, Recreational, Cultural and Educational	More, expanded recreation centres	X	X	-
	Youth engagement	X	X	X
	Home visiting/outreach	-	X	-
	Increased information and awareness	X	X	X
Health Care	More home care and in-home support	-	X	-
	Transportation to specialized services	X	X	X
	Cost relief for dental, vision, hearing	X	X	X
	Information, ease of navigation	X	X	-
	Dementia care	-	X	X
	Mental health supports	X	X	X
	Individual advocacy	-	X	X
Community	More retail in some areas	X	X	-
	Increased involvement of business	X	X	-
	Increased youth engagement	X	X	X
	Mitigation of development	X	-	-
	Financial support/cost reduction	X	X	X

Focus Question: 1. Are there any other seniors' needs in any of these categories that should be addressed?

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

System “SWOT” Analysis

Planning Team members and participants at the September community forum engaged in exercises to identify the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats pertaining to the overall system of services and supports for seniors in Niagara:

Strengths:

- Age Friendly community initiatives already underway
- Diverse range of innovative activities, programs and services
- Excellent recreation and wellness centres
- Committed and dedicated service providers
- Strong volunteer base
- Engagement of post-secondary institutions
- Long-term care homes well distributed through region
- Large numbers of engaged seniors
- Strong and welcoming communities
- Natural beauty of Niagara landscape

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System “SWOT” Analysis (Cont’d)

Weaknesses:

- Multiple municipalities with different goals
- Uneven/inequitable distribution of services across Niagara
- Transportation challenges
- Collaboration/coordination between service providers
- Funding and resource shortfalls for some programs
- Diverse and isolated groups underserved
- Knowledge and awareness of existing services
- Wait lists for housing and other services
- Lack of specialists
- Poverty issues

Opportunities:

- Growing seniors population
- Increased awareness of needs and issues
- Expanded health promotion
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Utilizing technology and social media
- Leveraging the role of families
- Exploring new and creative service models
- Building on existing seniors leadership

Threats:

- Stability of funding
- Cost pressures
- Demographic imbalance
- Rising numbers of people requiring service
- Increased complexity of health issues
- Seniors isolation, depression and decline
- Caregiver and service provider burnout
- Financial circumstances of seniors
- Increasing mental health issues
- Stigma and ageism

Focus Question: 2. Have any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats been missed?

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

VISION

A vision statement describes the "preferred future state" of a community and its stakeholders. Planning Team members and forum participants engaged in several visioning exercises to develop elements of a future vision for seniors in Niagara and affirmed the original vision developed through the Niagara Age Friendly Community (AFC) Initiative.

A caring community that optimizes opportunities for overall well being to enhance quality of life as people age (Niagara Age Friendly Community Initiative)

The Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan will advance the AFC vision by pursuing five key priorities related to older adults in Niagara identified through the consultation process:

1. **Leadership and Engagement**
2. **Lifestyle**
3. **Health and Wellness**
4. **Access and Inclusion**
5. **Supportive Infrastructure**

Focus Questions: *3a. Have any vision priorities been overlooked?*
3b. Feel free to comment on any aspects of the vision.

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

EMERGING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following draft goals and strategies have emerged from the process and address the five priorities flowing from the vision.

Priority 1 – Leadership and Engagement

- 1.1 Provide system leadership and advocacy on seniors' issues
 - Establish an advocacy strategy based on improved needs data and outcome monitoring
 - Expand seniors engagement with local municipalities
 - Provide self-advocacy/empowerment training and supports for seniors
 - Continually celebrate advances and successes
- 1.2 Increase engagement of seniors in all aspects of community life
 - Expand opportunities for intergenerational programs and activities
 - Establish and maintain a talent inventory of seniors expertise
 - Expand seniors networking across groups
 - Increase voter turnout at municipal, provincial and federal elections

1.3 Foster positive attitudes towards older adults and aging

- Provide input to educational curriculum
- Offer front-line provider training on seniors issues
- Continue and expand Age-Friendly initiatives
- Develop a marketing template for use by individual communities

Many assets already exist to support the implementation of the leadership and engagement goals. These include active seniors groups across Niagara, numerous community leaders and advocates, Age Friendly Community accomplishments, existing research and knowledge exchange initiatives and a range of local groups and organizations.

Focus Questions: 4a. Have any goals related to leadership been overlooked?

4b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

4c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the leadership and engagement goals.

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

Priority 2 – Lifestyle

2.1 Maintain and grow recreational opportunities

- Ensure continued stable funding and support for existing facilities
- Advocate for new programs and facilities to meet identified community needs
- Increase coordination between recreational programs
- Increase awareness and uptake of available recreational opportunities across Niagara

2.2 Expand educational opportunities

- Increase educational programming specific to seniors interests
- Engage seniors directly in delivering educational events
- Increase awareness and uptake of existing opportunities available through Niagara College, Brock University, school boards and municipalities
- Provide skills training for seniors in the work force

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2.3 Leverage technology as a lifestyle enabler

- Inventory existing seniors technology applications in use in Niagara and provincially
- Launch pilot projects to explore new applications
- Provide technology training for seniors
- Conduct ongoing research and monitoring of trends and developments in technology for seniors

Assets in place to support the implementation of the lifestyle goals include excellent existing recreation and wellness centres, the natural landscape of the region, educational programming from several institutions and existing technology applications across agencies.

Focus Questions: 5a. Have any goals related to lifestyle been overlooked?

5b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

5c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the lifestyle goals.

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

Priority 3 – Health and Wellness

3.1 Increase mental health services and supports

- Increase prevention and health promotion initiatives
- Increase front-line provider training and supports
- Establish dementia care pathways
- Support the development of a national dementia strategy

3.2 Increase in-home supports

- Increase family and informal caregiver supports, financial assistance, respite and training
- Provide more home care hours with increased flexibility and broader criteria
- Increase accessible seniors day programs appropriate to different ability levels

3.3 Ensure effective primary care

- Improve the acute/community interface by establishing care paths across the continuum
- Attract specialized expertise to the region
- Leverage the role of pharmacists
- Continue ongoing evaluation and quality assurance

3.4 Increase palliative care

- Develop a palliative care strategy
- Increase counselling and hospice support

Existing assets related to health and wellness include a wide range of health and community services agencies, family physicians, family health teams, pharmacies, CCAC services, the Mental Health and Addictions Charter, municipal physician recruitment initiatives and LHIN working groups.

Focus Questions: 6a. Have any goals related to health and wellness been overlooked?

6b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

6c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the health and wellness goals.

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

Priority 4 – Access and Inclusion

4.1 Reach out to isolated areas

- Leverage and support existing groups and organizations that reach isolated seniors including faith groups, community support agencies, pharmacies and delivery personnel
- Create a coordinated volunteer service for home visiting
- Establish peer networks to reduce isolation

4.2 Reach out to diverse groups

- Work with established groups to launch outreach/engagement strategies for First Nations, francophones, LBGT, newcomers, people with disabilities, ethnic and cultural groups, low income groups
- Offer business and provider training and support tools
- Rethink existing community events to include a stronger diversity component

4.3 Provide resource relief for seniors in need

- Offer financial literacy training
- Examine cost reduction options relief for dental, vision
- Increase subsidies for housing and transportation
- Communicate available subsidies, discounts and financial support programs

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4.4 Increase provider coordination and collaboration

- Continually seek and formalize opportunities for service consolidation and collaboration through partnership agreements, resource sharing and articulation protocols
- Increase cross referrals and client information sharing while respecting individual privacy
- Improve system navigation

Assets related to access and inclusion include existing community support services, legislation, Health Links, the Niagara Prosperity Initiative, the Poverty Reduction Table, electronic health records and LHIN strategic directions.

Focus Questions: 7a. Have any goals related to access and inclusion been overlooked?

7b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

7c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the access and inclusion goals.

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

Priority 5 – Supportive Infrastructure

5.1 Increase transportation options within and between municipalities

- Establish a transportation template for every community that includes transit and active transportation master plans
- Formalize the inter municipal transportation pilot
- Increase affordable special and regular transit
- Establish volunteer, shuttle and pooled driver options

5.2 Provide affordable, accessible and appropriate housing with necessary supports

- Support public private partnerships
- Repurpose existing community facilities
- Increase the number of rent geared to income (RGI) units
- Review bylaws to ensure support of seniors housing options
- Increase available of home renovation and maintenance supports

5.3 Expand long-term care options ensuring home renovation and maintenance supports

- Promote facilities with a continuum of supports
- Establish seniors campuses with long-term care, specialized units, affordable housing, assisted living and community outreach programs using the hub model

5.4 Ensure all neighbourhoods meet World Health Organization criteria for active transportation infrastructure

- Ensure appropriate municipal bylaws, policies and funding re: signage, lighting, bike paths, scooter paths, walking, benches, etc.

Assets related to infrastructure include existing local and inter-municipal transit, housing stocks across Niagara, municipal housing policies and Age Friendly Community initiatives.

Focus Questions: 8a. Have any goals related to infrastructure been overlooked?

8b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

8c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the infrastructure goals.

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

Focus Question: 9. Feel free to offer any other suggestions or comments pertaining to the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan

Detach and use the response form on Page 11

Your name/organization (optional) _____

Are you: ☐ A senior ☐ A family member ☐ Community group or organization ☐ Government ☐ Other (please state) _____

CHECK ALL THE APPLY

***Use the attached response form to record your responses.
Remember the deadline is November 28, 2014.***

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT

STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE FORM

***It is not necessary to respond to all the questions.
Just answer the ones that are of interest to you.***

You can also respond on-line by going to www.surveymonkey.com/s/NASAP2014

Senior's Needs (Pages 2-3)

1. From your perspective, have any needs been overlooked?

System "SWOT" Analysis (Pages 3-4)

2. Have any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats been missed?

Vision (Page 5)

3a. Have any vision priorities been overlooked?

3b. Feel free to comment on any aspects of the vision

Leadership and Engagement Goals *(Pages 5-6)*

4a. Have any goals related to leadership been overlooked?

4b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

4c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the leadership and engagement goals.

Lifestyle Goals *(Pages 6-7)*

5a. Have any goals related to lifestyle been overlooked?

5b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

5c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the lifestyle goals.

Health and Wellness Goals *(Pages 7-8)*

6a. Have any goals related to health and wellness been overlooked?

6b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

6c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the health and wellness goals.

Access and Inclusion Goals *(Pages 8-9)*

7a. Have any goals related to access and inclusion been overlooked?

7b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

7c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the access and inclusion goals.

Infrastructure Goals *(Pages 9-10)*

8a. Have any goals related to infrastructure been overlooked?

8b. Feel free to suggest specific projects, activities or initiatives that would help meet these goals.

8c. Identify any groups, individuals, organizations or programs that should be involved with the infrastructure goals.

General

9. Feel free to make any other suggestions or comments pertaining to the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan.

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Background Information

Name of Individual/Organization (Optional):

Are you:

- ☐ A senior CHECK ALL THAT APPLY
☐ A family member
☐ A service provider
☐ Community group or organization
☐ Government
☐ Other (state): _____

Your input is greatly appreciated. You may record your comments on this form and send it directly to the project coordinator at the address below:

David Sheridan
SHERCON ASSOCIATES INC.
100 Bronte Road, Unit 2
Oakville, Ontario L6L 6L5

Remember, you can also reply on line by going to
www.surveymonkey.com/s/NASAP2014