mehak, kelly & associates inc.

Age-Friendly Community Needs Assessment And Action Plan

County of Perth and Member Municipalities

Produced by Liem Strategic Integration Inc. /

Mehak Kelly & Associates Inc.

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Introduction

Perth County is one of 540 communities across Canada that have taken steps towards creating an Age-Friendly Community (AFC) - one that is accessible and inclusive to the physical and social needs of older adults. In the fall of 2015, the County of Perth was awarded an Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant by the Government of Ontario, to develop a plan that will make Perth County more supportive to its senior residents as they age. The funding is for projects that result in planning, implementing and evaluating initiatives that contribute to the creation and ongoing development of age-friendly communities, based on the World Health Organizations' (WHO) eight Age-Friendly Community Dimensions.

This report presents an Age-Friendly Action Plan (or road map) for stakeholders throughout Perth County, including the County, the Municipality of North Perth, the Township of Perth East, the Municipality of West Perth, the Township of Perth South, and service providers. The Plan will guide municipal and community service providers to work together towards the development and delivery of age-friendly infrastructure, services, and programs.

What is an Age-Friendly Community?

The Age-Friendly Cities initiative was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006 to enhance the health, participation and security of older adults. The WHO established eight dimensions related to creating age-friendly communities:

- Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Respect & Social Inclusion
- Social Participation
- Civic Engagement and Employment
- Community Support and Health Services
- Communication and Information

The County of Perth's Age-Friendly Plan development process is based on the WHO's eight age-friendly community dimensions and utilized checklists developed by the WHO.

Plan Development Process

The County of Perth Age-Friendly Communities Action Plan was developed over a period of 12 months, in close coordination with the Perth County Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) Steering Committee comprising County and municipal councillors and staff, and agency service providers. The plan development process included a custom needs assessment that identified the gaps and opportunities for improving age-friendliness in Perth County's Member Municipalities.

While an Age-Friendly Plan will address the priorities of all adults 55 years of age and over, the plan development process recognized that the needs and interests of seniors are diverse. Such diversity is not simply reflective of age but of the level of personal independence and living circumstances.

Principles, strategies, and actions were developed in consultation with residents and services providers and were mindful of the diverse needs of older adults who are fully independent, and those who are vulnerable and require additional supports. Of equal importance to Perth County was the importance of recognizing the needs and priorities of seniors living in both rural areas and urban communities.

As such, a collaborative approach was undertaken that involved the County, the AFC Steering Committee, local municipalities, community stakeholders, and other service providers to strengthen their capacity to respond better to the needs of older adults. The Plan was also mindful of balancing the specific needs of older adults so that it does not equate to segregating seniors from other population groups. Service delivery to meet the needs of the older adult population should not preclude the need also to serve children, youth, and families and may, in fact, offer opportunities for intergenerational programming.

The plan development process is outlined in Table 1, which is guided by Finding the Right Fit: Age-Friendly Community Planning developed by the Ontario Seniors Secretariat.[i]

Components of the Plan Development Process

Custom Needs Assessment and Resident/Agency Consultation

The first step of the process included a review of municipal and service provider reports to document existing municipal and/or agency-run facilities, infrastructure, programs, and supports in relation to WHO's eight dimensions of an age-friendly community. The document review identified preliminary gaps and opportunities for improving age-friendliness, which were further investigated during community and agency consultation activities.

Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement was undertaken with residents, service providers, and church leaders through workshops, surveys, and telephone interviews. Of particular importance was in understanding the needs of older adults using community support and health services. The engagement was undertaken by proxy with providers of program and social services users to determine if and how their clients can be better served. Over 300 individuals were engaged through the following approaches:

- six resident focus groups throughout Perth County;
- one service provider focus group;
- meetings and focus groups with church leaders (including representative leaders of Anabaptist communities);
- telephone interviews with representatives of social and health services, voluntary, non-profit, housing, and transportation sectors; and
- survey of residents available online and at municipal offices, libraries.

Over 300 individuals participated in the stakeholder engagement process.

Draft Strategy and Action Plan Development

The results of the consultation activities were analyzed to identify local principles, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities analysis, directions and actions. Directions

and actions included County-wide perspectives, supplemented by municipal-specific directions and actions to address local issues.

Engagement was undertaken to review the draft actions and included:

- Presentation to the AFC Steering Committee.
- Presentation to County councillors.
- Resident and service providers telephone interviews to receive feedback.

Draft strategies and actions were also made available for public review and comment online and at local libraries over a six-week period.

Final Strategy and Action Plan

The final strategy and action plan is presented in this document and will be used to guide implementation.

Profile of Perth County

Perth County is located in southwestern Ontario. The County includes the Municipality of North Perth, the Townships of Perth East and Perth South, and the Municipality of West Perth. The City of Stratford and the Town of St. Marys are geographically located within the County, but are separated from the County's jurisdiction.

Table 1: Population in Perth County 2011

Member Municipality	2011 Population
North Perth	12,631
Perth East	12, 028
Perth South	3,993
West Perth	8,919

The County had a population of 28,652 (excluding the separated municipalities of Stratford and St. Marys) as reported in the 2011 Census.[ii] Population density varies across the Member Municipalities. Perth South has the lowest population density of 10 people per km^2, followed by West Perth (15 people per km^2), and Perth East (16 people per km^2). North Perth has the highest population density of 25 people per km

The ethno-cultural composition of Perth County's population is generally homogenous, with the Anabaptist community comprising the largest cultural community, which includes Amish and Mennonite groups. This community represents approximately 4% of the County's population (Perth District Health Unit 2011).[iii]

Median ages vary across the Member Municipalities. The median age of Perth East (36 years of age), North Perth (39 years of age), and West Perth (39 years of age) residents is lower than the median age in Canada at 40.6 years.[iv] The median age in Perth South is higher, at 42 years of age than the Canadian average.[v]

Perth County's age composition predominantly includes children and youth under the age of 20 years of age, which make up 44% of the population (12,645 individuals).[vi]

Adults between the ages of 20 and 44 years of age represent the second largest demographic age group at 36% (10,375 individuals).[vii]

Older adults, age 55 and over, represent 35% of the population (10,050 individuals). However, the number of older adults has increased since 2006 across Perth County, and is projected to continue to increase, due to naturalization and in-migration. For example, between 2006 and 2011, in-migration of older adults to Perth County (excluding Stratford) was the highest among all age groups, with 1,232 new seniors (Social Research Planning Council 2014).

Affordability is a concern for older adults living on fixed incomes, which also affects a person's ability to access resources and programs. A report prepared by the Perth District Health Unit (PDHU) identified that there are a greater number of older adults age 65 and over living with low income compared to those under the age of 65 (PDHU 2012). According to the 2011 Census, there were 1,170 older adults ages 65 and over living alone, many of whom reside in North Perth (485), West Perth (340), Perth East (265), and Perth South (80).[viii]

Age Friendly Principles for Perth County

Guiding principles were developed during the plan development process to help direct decisions and practices that will assist Perth County in becoming an increasingly age-friendly community. These guiding principles were established to inform age-friendly decisions and actions. The principles also provide an anchor for making decisions to address the needs of older adults.

- Support the creation of safe, accessible, and welcoming environments that are inclusive to the needs of older adults and persons with dementia.
- Provide quality services and programs that address the needs of older adults, but do not compromise other aspirations to support children, youth, or adults.
- Recognize the outstanding efforts and capacities of service providers who serve our communities and support an integrated, inter-sectoral, cross-agency approach to addressing key issues.
- Enhance and celebrate our community's assets, and utilize the assets, resources, and opportunities available to make it easier to implement collective action.
- Ensure older adults are directly engaged in the design, development and delivery of policies, programs and services
- Be responsive to the needs of older adults. Monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken to measure program and policy effectiveness in addressing emerging needs and issues.

The County, it's Member Municipalities, community agencies, faith-based organizations, and the private sector will work collaboratively to address the needs of older adults. Existing partnerships will be leveraged, where possible and appropriate, including service providers located in Stratford and St. Marys.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The design, construction, and maintenance of public and private buildings and outdoor spaces, such as parks, pathways, sidewalks, and parking areas can influence a person's ability to access and/or use these spaces. Buildings and spaces that are inaccessible, unsafe, and/or poorly maintained can make it difficult and uninviting for older adults and disabled people - including age-related impairments - to use them. This limits the opportunities for older adults to be engaged in physical and social activities. Built environment considerations presented in this section are reflective of the World Health Organization dimensions of an age-friendly community

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- ✓ Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- ✓ Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- ✓ Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- ✓ Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- ✓ Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- ✓ Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- ✓ Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols, and community education.

- ✓ Services are situated together and are accessible.
- ✓ Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- ✓ Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- ✓ Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.
- ✓ Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- ✓ Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- ✓ Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- ✓ Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible
- ✓ Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities in Perth County

County-wide efforts are underway to improve accessibility, safety, and comfort for residents of all ages and abilities. Built environment improvements to increase accessibility and safety of public spaces and community infrastructure are addressed at both the County level and at the Member Municipality level. For example, during the development review process, site plan reviews are undertaken by local municipalities in accordance with the Site Plan Design Guidelines and reviewed by the Perth County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee. Other important achievements are noted below by Member Municipality.

North Perth

Capital projects underway throughout North Perth are undertaken in accordance with accessibility standards. This includes sidewalk extension and rehabilitation, trails development, park rehabilitation and upgrades (such as Memorial Park), and the design of a roundabout at Line 86 and Highway 23.

The Listowel Official Plan, which applies to lands within the Listowel Ward, supports initiatives that provide accessibility to persons with disabilities, in accordance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The municipality is encouraged to take into consideration accessibility issues when dealing with new private and public sector development. Development applications such as plans of subdivisions/condominiums and site plan agreements are considered during the review/approval processes to ensure that appropriate provisions are made for accessibility by disabled people.

North Perth Development Standards were revised to incorporate accessibility standards. The municipality's Site Plan Design Guidelines address the provision of pedestrian scale to improve security and include accessible design considerations including barrier-free exterior paths, curb ramps, depressed curbs, and tactile surface indicators along pedestrian crossings. The municipality's Site Plan review process addresses pedestrian access, lighting facilities, and landscaping.

Statutory plans, such as the 2012 Community Improvement Plan for the Downtown Areas of North Perth include recommendations to improve the physical and visual aesthetic of public and private properties and buildings and improve conditions for walking, cycling and accessibility. The 2011 Streetscape Design Recommendations Report and the 2014 Downtown Streetscape Master Plan (for downtown areas in Listowel, Monkton, and Atwood) recommended improved signage and streetscape improvements for increased pedestrian safety and comfort (including seating areas and shade provision).

Installation of new street and wayfinding signage has also begun and will be completed in 2018, as part of the Signage Revitalization Project. Clear and consistent wayfinding signage and community branding will support current and future growth and

development in North Perth. The new signage will be installed in Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton and across other areas in North Perth over three years.

Perth South

The Township of Perth South has been undertaking capital improvements to increase accessibility. Sidewalk construction is conducted by the Township, based on the municipal capital budget to address major deficiencies in the road system. Sidewalk replacement has been completed in Sebringville on Huron Road, including an upgrade from 1.2 m to 1.5 m to accommodate accessibility. Accessible ramps were developed at Station Road. Pedestrian walkways (1.5 m) replaced sidewalks in Kirkton and Woodham. Sidewalk replacement will continue to be undertaken where needed. In addition, curb cuts have been completed at intersections in Sebringville, Kirkton, and Woodham. Further curb cuts will continue to be undertaken. Other accessibility projects include the installation of a stone dust pathway for wheelchairs, walkers, etc. around Optimist Park, St. Pauls, and to provide connection to soccer fields. The widening of a concrete pad was undertaken at washrooms at Downie Recreation booth to accommodate wheelchair access to public washrooms. The Township of Perth South Public Works Department invites residents to submit concerns and desired outcomes regarding traffic control.

Perth East

Perth East has over 20 km of sidewalks, with most in good to excellent condition (Public Sector Digest, 2014). Retrofits have been undertaken at various facilities to improve accessibility (i.e., eliminating curb obstacles; new sidewalk construction; new asphalt painting, markings and signage showing accessible parking areas; wheelchair accessible ramps). Accessible washrooms and automatic doors were installed at the new Public Works building. A new sidewalk has been constructed in Shakespeare between Stevenson Street and Highway 34, and sidewalk replacement projects will be constructed at 1.5 m widths. Replacement sidewalks are planned for Sebringville. A new walking trail in Milverton has been developed to include an accessible surface to accommodate wheelchairs.

West Perth

The West Perth Corporate Strategic Plan identified objectives for streetscape and community improvements to increase community use and create aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian-friendly spaces, both downtown and in other community areas. There is municipal direction to prioritize the downtown and adjacent trails and natural areas by improving signage to and along the trails, creating a trails map, and posting other promotional pieces around herons, birding, and other natural features. West Perth has over 29 km of sidewalks. Sidewalk and pedestrian intersection improvements were undertaken in Mitchell Downtown as part of the Streetscape Project (2015). Improvements included curb cuts, removal of physical barriers for almost all downtown businesses, and measures to improve pedestrian safety. Signage and pavement markings were installed on publicly designated accessible parking spots. Accessible ramps and sidewalks were constructed to connect to playgrounds in Dublin, Brodhagen and Kinette's Park in Mitchell.

West Perth is well regarded as a clean and well-maintained community. During the development of the 2012 West Perth Corporate Strategic Plan, residents regarded their recreation and sports facilities as high quality, and they enjoy the natural greenspaces in the community. The Municipality has established a direction in Mitchell to source funding for streetscape improvements, such as sidewalk upgrading, landscaped planter boxes, and bike racks. The Corporate Strategic Plan identified the need to support planning decisions that encourage pedestrian use and allow local restaurants to extend their patios onto the sidewalks. Streetscape improvements that would meet the needs of older adults include the provision of benches to provide rest areas.

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

Efforts are underway within each of the municipalities to improve accessibility in the built environment and outdoor spaces as per AODA requirements. The central issue for outdoor spaces and buildings is to sustain on-going retrofits and infrastructure development that support the development of an age-friendly and dementia-friendly community.

Residents across the County expressed concerns regarding sidewalk connectivity, which creates mobility challenges for older adults who walk along local and County

roads. Interest in improving pedestrian safety by identifying ‘seniors crossing’ areas was also expressed. In addition, better signage is needed to identify community designations and landmarks in each of the Perth Member Municipalities to improve accessibility for persons with dementia. There was also strong community interest to improve access to washrooms (public and at businesses) for older adults and their caregivers.

In addition to the above-noted concerns, North Perth residents suggested specific corridors for pedestrian crossing improvements, including Wallace Avenue, Elizabeth Street, and MacDonald Street in Listowel. West Perth residents also noted confusion and concern regarding recently installed pedestrian crossovers, pedestrian crosswalks, and courtesy crossings in downtown Mitchell.

Community and stakeholder consultation did not identify specific concerns regarding the built environment, outdoor spaces, and buildings in Perth South and Perth East. A document review undertaken in Phase 1 of this study identified a range of assets, achievements, and on-going infrastructure improvements in Perth South to address requirements in roads and pedestrian infrastructure. As noted above, Perth South Public Works Department has a community feedback reporting process to investigate identified areas for improvement. Other improvements to support accessibility of outdoor spaces and facilities have been completed, and/or are on-going. County-wide actions noted above are recommended for Perth South. Additional actions for the Township of Perth South can complement existing efforts and initiatives to improve the quality of outdoor spaces and buildings, as follows:

Directions and Actions

Within the ongoing implementation of the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standard, consider the potential for additional built environment supports for older adults.

- Continue to support and facilitate the installation of accessible pedestrian crossing signals as per Ministry standards in each Member Municipality.

- Continue to undertake built environment improvements, to improve safety and physical accessibility of buildings, sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, public

spaces, etc., particularly in urban areas and in older neighbourhoods in each Member Municipality, consistent with AODA public space standards.[ix]

- Incorporate "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED)[x] methods to exceed the minimum requirements of AODA, as standard practice, as part of the County's site plan review.

Subsequent sections of this document (Housing, and Communication and Information) refer to Universal Design Principles, which are also applicable to planning and developing outdoor spaces and buildings, and should be considered from the outset of the design process in their potential to accommodate the widest range of users.

Improve public access to strategically located family friendly washrooms for older adults and their caregivers, where feasible, through awareness campaigns and retrofit projects.

- Publicize existing locations of publicly accessible washrooms (municipally owned/operated) using prominent signage with appropriately sized and styled font. Consult with seniors to identify appropriate locations for wayfinding signage in each Member Municipality. Consult with publications that provide directions on accessible graphics.[xi]

- Develop signage to identify washroom operating hours in each Member Municipality.

- Identify other strategic locations in high use areas for barrier-free, gender neutral family washrooms (West Perth, North Perth, and Perth East).

- Engage the private sector to provide public access to washrooms on premises (West Perth, North Perth, and Perth East).

Develop applicable by-laws and standards, and install large-font wayfinding/street signage for cognitive support and to improve accessibility to community destinations, shops, and services.

- Develop standards for providing wayfinding signage employing international and universal symbols, as well as tactile signs, to community landmarks such as parks, community centres, hospitals, medical centres, long-term care facilities and retirement homes, and service agencies (West Perth, North Perth, Perth East).

- Install road and traffic signage that is visible and well-placed in each Member Municipality.

Develop education and awareness programs, such as a "Crosswalk Awareness" event, to help residents understand the use of provincially standardized pedestrian safety features.

- Explore a partnership with OPP to undertake a "Crosswalk Awareness" event, which can be held bi-annually or annually through a coordinated approach addressing engineering and enforcement (West Perth).

- Establish pedestrian improvement reporting program in Perth East that enables the public to report needed improvements to sidewalks, curbs, pedestrian pathways, crosswalks, and other pedestrian information. Pedestrian improvement reporting program should be publicized on the Township's website and communicated in community newsletters (see Communication and Information table for actions to improve information dissemination). A corresponding feedback-monitoring program will be needed to establish municipal protocol regarding responses to community issues and suggestions.

Develop a program that enables residents to report potential locations for benches and outdoor seating.

- Establish a program that enables the public to report potential locations for benches in outdoor spaces in each Member Municipality.

Housing

Access to affordable, quality housing options and a person's ability to age at home influence older adults' quality of life. High quality, affordable and well-designed housing in good neighbourhoods is important to personal well-being. A continuum of an appropriate supply of suitable housing types is needed to meet the needs of older adults. This can include retrofits to existing housing stock to accommodate disabilities, new housing construction that includes universal design principles, and social housing supports. It can also include the construction of intergenerational housing.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
- ✓ Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
- ✓ Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.
- ✓ Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
- ✓ Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
- ✓ Public and commercial rental housing are clean, well-maintained and safe.
- ✓ Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

The County of Perth Official Plan includes policies to address the provision of affordable housing. A policy permits second dwelling units as a means of providing affordable housing.

Listowel's Official Plan encourages and promotes the provision of new housing developments and the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock to meet the current and future needs of the residents of North Perth; encourages and promotes a wide range of housing types, styles, and choices which respond to the varying needs of the North Perth community; promotes housing for senior citizens, those with special needs, and low-income households that are unable to find adequate housing through the private market; and establishes minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate-income households. The Official Plan establishes that a minimum of 20 percent of all housing units to be provided within the Listowel Ward will be in the affordability range established for this area by the Province.

West Perth Council is looking for more opportunities to increase the supply of seniors housing. In the fall of 2015, Council publicly encouraged developers to consider seniors oriented opportunities in Mitchell. The public discussions included ideas such as the possibility of offering incentives for seniors-geared development and eventually two proposals were submitted which may include as many as 61 new seniors-geared units.

Long-Term Care Facilities and Retirement Residences in Perth County

- Caressant Care (Listowel)
- Country-Rose Retirement Home (Listowel)
- Countryview Retirement Residence (Listowel)
- Maitland Terrace (Listowel)
- Perth Meadows (Listowel)
- Hamilton Place Assisted Living (Listowel)
- Livingstone Manor Retirement Home (Listowel)
- Knollcrest Lodge (Milverton)
- Country Meadows Retirement Residence (Brunner)
- Ritz Lutheran Villa, Ritz Manor, Mitchell Nursing Home, Thames River Place (Mitchell)
- Hillside Manor (Sebringville)

Long-Term Care Facilities and Retirement Residences in Stratford and St. Marys

- Cedarcroft Place Retirement Residence (Stratford)
- Chartwell Anne Hathaway Residence (Stratford)
- Greenwood Court Retirement Residences (Stratford)
- Kingsway Lodge, Fairhill Residence (St. Marys)
- McCarthy Place (Stratford)
- Spruce Lodge Home for the Aged (Stratford)
- Wildwood Care Centre (St. Marys)
- Woodland Towers (Stratford)

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

- A Healthcare Human Resources Study for Huron and Perth (2011) identified that many long-term care and retirement homes in Perth and Huron Counties are at

or near capacity (90%+). As the population ages, demand for long-term care facilities and retirement homes will continue to outpace supply. The average long-term care wait time in Huron and Perth Counties is 148 days, as of September 14th, 2016.[xii]

- Older adults living in Rent Geared to Income (RGI) housing, that includes a mix of demographics and ages, are concerned about their safety and security. This is an issue that is also identified in the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County.

- Market housing (i.e., single detached, semi-detached, townhouses, and apartments), while meeting Ontario Building Code requirements, are inadequate to meet the needs of older adults for features such as small units, physical accessibility, easy mobility, and cognitive support. Older adults will move to adjacent communities in search of adaptive housing.

- There is a strong interest among older adults in Perth County to safely age in place. However, this will require a growing supply of home maintenance and support services in Perth County.

- There is a lack of knowledge among older adults about the continuum of care available to them in Perth County. Some older adults have expressed fear of long-term care facilities and/or assisted living, which reduces their willingness to ask for support and care until they are experiencing a sudden, acute condition or emergency.

Directions and Actions

There are limitations to the role of the County and Member Municipalities in determining the supply of social housing for older adults, due to provincial funding parameters. Recommendations focus on the County and Member Municipality mandates and capacities with respect to social housing.

- Engage senior levels of government to identify partnerships that will provide more financial support and funding opportunities to develop long-term care facilities and social housing, including that for older adults.

- Support the expansion of existing and prospective long-term care and retirement homes in Perth County.

- Support and undertake advocacy efforts to amend the Ontario Building Code to better integrate accessibility and universal design features in housing.

- Create an environment to make it attractive for private developers to provide adaptive housing that meets the needs of older adults, such as smaller units, multi-unit rentals, and condos in each Member Municipality.

Provide support to enable older adult residents with the option to remain in their homes in their community.

- Work with local businesses (e.g., hardware stores, commercial suppliers) and service providers to develop and promote adaptive home renovations, and provide discounted materials and services to make it easier for older adults to age in place.

- Explore the development of programs to help older adults install home safety features. The United Way Elgin Grab Bar program, for example, works with a local pharmacy to provide grab bars to older adults to install in their homes.

- Adapt an existing toolkit developed by other Age-Friendly Communities to help homeowners retrofit existing housing to enable them to age in place (e.g., Safer Home Society in B.C). An adapted toolkit could also provide guidance to address

older adult housing needs such as those used in some Anabaptist communities (such as dotty houses).

Perth County and its Member Municipalities should support private sector housing developers to provide small-scale "infill" projects (in settlement areas) that could meet the needs of various market segments, including older adults. Provide appropriately scaled housing to accommodate a range of needs over the course of a person's life.

- Continue to support a tax amendment to improve the provision of apartment buildings, and remove of disincentives to absorb (rent or sell) multi-unit housing.

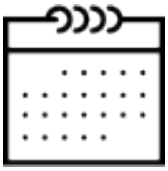
- Undertake targeted marketing to attract desired diversity in future residents, in partnership with other local communities. (e.g., Stratford is marketed as one of the 'top places to retire in Canada'[xiii]). Marketing can encourage private housing developers to provide small-scale infill projects that address a range of lifecycle needs, including demand generated by older adults.

- Explore the possibility of providing a Secondary Suites Municipal Fee Rebate[xiv] program that provides funding assistance to homeowners to create secondary suites with affordable rents. Grants may cover application fees or the costs of upgrades to meet building and fire codes.

Improve safety of older adults residing in mixed social housing.

- Undertake on-going communication and engagement with housing providers and law enforcement to improve the safety of older adults living in Rent Geared to Income housing.

- Create and implement an awareness campaign that reduces stigma among older adults who ask for assistance and increase understanding of the availability of interim measures to maintain independence and support health and well-being.



Social Participation

Social participation, whether through formal programs or informal gatherings with friends and neighbours, is important to ensure that older adults are able to maintain personal relationships and connections with their community. This dimension considers opportunities for seniors to engage in structured and unstructured physical, cultural, and social activities. Ensuring easy access to opportunities to be active and connected to others reduces the risk of social isolation while contributing to physical and mental well-being. This dimension considers access to places and programs to support participation in leisure and recreation pursuits.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.
- ✓ Events are held at times convenient for older people.
- ✓ Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.
- ✓ Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.
- ✓ Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people
- ✓ A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
- ✓ Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks.
- ✓ There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

Venues are located in each of Perth County's Member Municipalities to facilitate social participation, including community and recreation centres, libraries, and churches. Programs include card games, fitness, seminars, and dances. In small, rural communities, all community gathering spaces are valuable, regardless of whether they are municipally or non-municipally owned and operated.

North Perth

Community gathering spaces offering programs and services are predominantly located in Listowel. Facilities in Listowel include Parkview Gardens, the Steve Kerr Recreation Complex (currently under construction), the Elma Memorial Community Centre, which has recently undergone an expansion, the Elma Logan Arena and Community Centre (which is shared between West Perth and North Perth), the Listowel Kinsmen Pool, and the Atwood Lions Pool, and the Listowel Main Library. The Atwood Branch Library and Monkton Branch Library provide programming space in Atwood and Monkton and are important community hubs. The Atwood Branch Library is currently under review for potential relocation to a larger space.

Perth South

Community facilities that enable older adults to gather include Kirkton-Woodham Park, Kirkton-Woodham Community Centre, and Downie Optimist Community Centre. The township's Corporate Strategic Plan encourages local groups to collaborate and create rural events or festivals that engage the community and attract visitors. Artisan and craft development, and activities at local schools, present opportunities for seniors programming.

Perth East

Community gathering places within Perth East include Rostock Hall, Shakespeare & District Optimist Hall, Kinkora Community Hall, and the arena, and community centre and swimming pool at the Perth East Recreation Complex.

West Perth

Community gathering spaces in West Perth include Mitchell Arena/Community Centre, Mitchell Lions Pool, Brodhagen Community Centre, Dublin Pavilion, and Elma Logan Arena and Community Centre (which is shared between West Perth and North Perth).

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

- The central issue for social participation is a limited range of accessible opportunities to accommodate all older adult age groups with a wide variety of interests and abilities, which is exacerbated by the lack of awareness of available opportunities. Older adults are not aware of the programs and activities offered in their communities. This affects perceptions regarding opportunities to participate now.

- There is a need to ensure a comprehensive range of accessible options to engage with others in various pursuits (e.g., active, passive, sport, cultural, arts, education, entertainment, volunteer, hobby, nature, artisanal, etc.) at various levels of ability and affordability - including those with physical and cognitive challenges that require variable program/service design. Existing programs tend to focus on passive leisure activities, and interest was expressed for more, varied opportunities for active older adults (e.g., walking clubs, running, etc.), and in more programs/activities for older adults with dementia.

- Isolation is a concern for older adults, and particularly women residing in rural areas. This issue is especially a concern for older adults without access to transportation, or who are no longer able to drive, which directly impacts their ability to engage in programs and services.

- Social activities are unaffordable to some older adults (across each of the Perth Member Municipalities), which discourages or prevents them from participating in recreation and/or leisure programs and activities.

- In North Perth, the Atwood Branch Public Library is an important community gathering space. There is a need to replace this library with a new branch that meets current library guidelines and is fully accessible. The current facility provides 16 hours of service per week. A 2015 consultants' report recommended that service is maintained, with future expansion required by the level of use (Allan Avis Architects Inc., and Beth Ross and Associates 2015). The report investigated the relocation of the Atwood Branch through an expansion of the Elma Memorial Community Centre. Since the completion of the report, the municipality is exploring an alternate site to accommodate a new library.

- The pending closure of Rostock Hall in Perth East is of significant concern to community residents, who participate in wellness programs, social gatherings, and dance classes at this facility. Discussions with participants indicated that many older adults who frequent the hall live nearby and regularly walk to participate in programs. Closure of the hall would negatively impact nearby residents who depend on the building for their social needs. Relocating programs to another facility, such as in Milverton, would make it difficult for residents to access them.

Directions and Actions

Ensure affordable access to recreation and leisure pursuits, ensuring a balance of no/low-cost programs/activities, in view of the full cost of participation.

- Review distribution of programs/services for older adults by the full cost for the user to identify areas where currently offered no/low-cost services require additional promotion, and where differentiated seniors' rates could be instituted to provide and promote affordable and accessible recreation and leisure activities for older adults.

- Develop and promote messages that convey the importance of social participation to the health and well-being of all older adults, emphasizing that it need not be complex or involved (e.g., going for a walk with a friend, meeting for coffee, etc.). This can be communicated through a municipal newsletter, in partnership with service providers and community organizations, such as public health, primary care services, and church bulletins.

Build a program/activity supply that includes structured and unstructured opportunities to participate, and comprises variety along with a continuum that ranges in emphasis from 'recreation-health' to 'health-recreation' programs[xv], in keeping with needs, interests, and abilities of older adults.

- Work with older adults to develop and deliver a variety of recreation, leisure, and educational opportunities through both structured and unstructured participation.

- Remove participation barriers and provide an inclusive environment for older adults with dementia through initiatives such as the Blue Umbrella program.

- Investigate approaches to increasing spaces in Adult Day Programs that meet the needs of older adults, particularly those with Alzheimer's and/or dementia. Adult Day Programs are administered by the VON in Listowel, Stratford, and St. Marys. There is also a need for increased capacity for overnight respite care. Collaboration should be undertaken with the South West LHIN to guide when on-site respite services and Adult Day Programs are to be provided or expanded.

- Support the local introduction or expansion of programs for those living with dementia and their care partners (e.g., iPod music program, Minds in Motion, Dementia Friendly Communities).

- Develop options to rotate programs across facilities within each municipality or in partnership across the County.

Protect the long-term viability of community gathering spaces.

- Protect community gathering spaces such as Rostock Hall in Perth East, and Atwood Branch Library in North Perth, to continue supporting programs and services for nearby residents. The potential closure of any community gathering space should consider if there are other facilities accessible to existing users to which programming can be relocated either permanently or until such time as a new space is available.

Transportation

Personal mobility and access to affordable and accessible transportation is important to enabling older adults to maintain independence and to access shops, and community and health services. Transportation considers the design of quality and safe infrastructure to support personal mobility such as walking, cycling, and driving. In addition, having access to affordable public or agency-provided transport is important to helping older adults maintain independence and connect to the world around them on a regular basis, thus reducing the potential for social isolation. Improving transportation should aspire to year-round, barrier-free, affordable mobility, and address both psychological and physical barriers to older adults' mobility.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.
- ✓ Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
- ✓ All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.
- ✓ Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.
- ✓ Specialized transportation is available for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.
- ✓ Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.

- ✓ Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules, and special needs facilities.
- ✓ A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.
- ✓ Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.
- ✓ Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.
- ✓ Traffic flow is well-regulated.
- ✓ Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
- ✓ Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.
- ✓ Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.
- ✓ Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.
- ✓ Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

Municipal efforts to improve mobility for residents are being addressed through County Site Plan Design Guidelines, which include design considerations to minimize physical barriers and address the needs of people with disabilities.

There are no conventional public transportation services servicing Perth County's Member Municipalities. However, fee-based agency transportation is available for residents to get to medical appointments, grocery shopping, errands, etc. Agency transportation services are listed below. All of the services listed charge a fee.

Perth County is also part of the Regional Rideshare Program[xvi], a carpooling program for drivers in Southwestern Ontario. This service is open to interested drivers and riders, and costs are agreed upon by carpoolers.

Transportation Providers in Perth County[xvii]

- Canadian Cancer Society (provides transportation to cancer-related appointments)
- Knollcrest Lodge- Community Outreach Services (serves Perth East)
- ONE CARE Easy Ride Transportation
- Ritz Lutheran Villa - Mitchell and Area Mobility Bus (serves West Perth)
- Regional Ride Share (London)
- Victorian Order of Nurses Perth-Huron (North Perth)

Community consultation also identified that healthy, active older adults in each of the Member Municipalities are well-coordinated and arrange volunteer transportation among their friends and neighbours for medical appointments, running errands, and attending programs.

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

- As in other small urban-rural or rural communities, older adults in Perth County who do not have access to private transportation and live in rural/remote areas have difficulty accessing services and are at risk of isolation, particularly during the winter.

- While some agency transportation services have set fees, affordability is a concern for some older adults in each of Perth County's Member Municipalities in using these services. Fee structures established by transportation service providers, however, are established to cover operating expenses. Changes to transportation fees would require a review of user fees.

- Friends and family currently provide transportation for those unable to drive. However, this practice is unsustainable if peers and older family members are providing transportation, as they are also aging.

- Older adults in North Perth and West Perth have expressed concerns regarding snow clearance and pedestrian mobility in the winter, which affects the convenient and safe use of sidewalks, pathways, and curbsides.

- “Door through door” transportation services are needed for older adults with cognitive or physical mobility challenges and who require further assistance and/or supervision beyond “curb to curb” transportation service. This service involves assisting older adults from inside their home into the vehicle and then accompanying them to their program or appointment destination.

Directions and Actions

Work to optimize the use of available fleets of vehicles belonging to not-for-profit agencies and groups to transport older adults to a variety of destinations.

- Provide education and awareness to potential customers regarding fee structures of agency transportation services.

- Improve customer access to agency transportation services throughout Perth County to optimize the use of available fleets of vehicles belonging to not-for-profit agencies and groups to transport older adults to a variety of destinations (e.g., medical, retail, recreation/social participation, entertainment, etc.).

Support the development of a coordinated volunteer community ride-sharing program, as recommended in The Road Ahead (March 2012) by the Social Research and Planning Council.

- Review and build on relevant actions that have emerged from previous initiatives (e.g., The Road Ahead: A study of transportation needs across Huron and Perth Counties, March 2012; Huron-Perth Transportation Task Force).

- Initiate a ‘call for volunteers’ to transport older adults and develop a corresponding list of people who need transportation, to match drivers to those in need of rides.

- Explore the provision of tax incentives for taxi service providers to improve the provision of accessible taxi service.

- Explore Council and community support for a tax levy to fund coordinated transportation services that provide travel between communities, such as Mitchell, Listowel, Milverton and Sebringville to Kitchener, Waterloo, and Stratford.

Provide safe mobility for vulnerable older adults using transport services (i.e., agency transportation, taxi, volunteer driver, etc.).

- Work with relevant agencies (e.g., Alzheimer Society) to undertake sensitivity training for drivers to understand the specific needs of, and supports for older adults.

- Explore options for improving safety upon arrival, through the services of an on-site attendant who can accompany transported individuals at destination points (e.g., medical facility, community centre) from the door to their appointment, program, event, etc.

- Provide general education about the mobility and travel courtesies to consider in relation to older adults.

Support safe mobility for older adults who drive themselves and others.

- Support safe driving for older adults through age-appropriate education and refresher programs (currently offered in St. Marys). Explore program provision at local libraries in North Perth, Perth East, and West Perth.

- Engage the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) and the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists to deliver a Carfit Program[xviii] across Perth County to improve driver safety awareness.

Improve snow clearance within settlement areas using a whole-trip lens.

- Establish a minimum standard of constructing sidewalks on one side of the street to support pedestrian mobility in existing and new developments. Updated policies for sidewalk rationalization standards to support the construction of sidewalks on both sides of the street, where warranted and feasible, will be further explored by each of the Member Municipalities.

- Improve snow clearance, particularly in downtown areas, and near shops and services, to provide a safe walking environment in winter months. This involves liaising with individual business owners or BIAs to ensure that snow clearance includes parking areas/spaces and access to destinations from these points (North Perth, West Perth, Perth East).

- Review snow removal operational standards, as per Ontario Ministry of Transportation requirements to provide safe access to businesses, senior-frequented facilities and seniors housing (North Perth, West Perth, Perth East).

Respect and Social Inclusion

Community attitudes, such as a general feeling of respect, and recognizing the positive role that older adults play in our society, are critical factors for establishing an age-friendly community. Age-friendly communities foster positive images of aging and intergenerational understanding to challenge negative attitudes.

This dimension considers the social attitudes to aging and opportunities for meaningful contributions to community life. WHO considerations supporting respect and social inclusion overlaps with ‘civic participation and employment’, ‘social participation’, and ‘communication and information’, which are addressed under the corresponding dimensions.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ Older people are regularly consulted by the public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.
- ✓ Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.
- ✓ Service staff is courteous and helpful.
- ✓ Older people are visible in the media and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.
- ✓ Community-wide settings, activities, and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
- ✓ Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”.
- ✓ Schools provide opportunities to learn about aging and older people and involve older people in school activities.

- ✓ Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.
- ✓ Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

In 2015, the Government of Ontario initiated an Advisory Group supporting the development of community hubs: “a central access point for a range of needed health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life.” A community hub can be virtual or physical public spaces such as a school, neighbourhood centre, library, seniors centre, or a place of worship. Community hubs can include service for all age groups or specific demographics. The Langs Hub in Cambridge, for example, co-locates the organization’s Community Health Centre with a municipal seniors centre.

Seniors Active Living Centres (formerly referred to as Ontario’s Elderly Persons Centres), are a form of community hub serving seniors. Programs in Seniors Active Living Centres address the specific social, cultural, educational, and recreation needs of seniors in the community, which could include fitness programs, computer lessons, arts and cooking classes, and drop-in programming. All centres are focused on promoting seniors’ health, well-being, and involvement in the community. Seniors Active Living Centres that are accessible to Perth County residents include the North Perth Seniors Centre in Listowel, the Friendship Centre for St. Marys and Area Seniors in St. Marys, Spruce Lodge, and the Stratford Kiwanis Community Centre (both located in Stratford).

The government has introduced legislation that if passed, would give Seniors Active Living Centres more flexibility to be responsive to the needs of local seniors. Bill 209: the *Seniors Active Living Centres Act*[xix] was introduced on June 1, 2016, to modernize the program and to help ensure seniors continue to have ready access to centres and programs in their communities that promote healthy, active aging and wellness. If the Act is passed, the Seniors Active Living Centres Program will be established and will reflect the new requirements under the Act.

The proposed legislation would also help profile and encourage the role of Seniors Active Living Centres in serving as community hubs that provide a central access point for a range of health, social, and cultural services for seniors. It would also reaffirm the valuable partnerships that Seniors Active Living Centres currently have with local municipalities and the development of future partnerships with other local community organizations and Indigenous communities.

Other community hubs are in early stages of development in Perth County, although they are not intended to serve older adults exclusively. Community hubs are in the early stages of planning in North Perth and in Perth East. The United Way Perth-Huron is exploring a community hub in North Perth, to address social service delivery needs for people of all ages. Potential programs will accommodate all of the stages of life, including the older adult years. Perth District Health Unit is in the early stages of planning a community hub in Perth East to address health care service delivery needs.

Other community gathering spaces include the Steve Kerr Memorial Complex (North Perth), for which construction commenced in the spring of 2016. This multi-use recreation complex in Listowel will serve as a community hub, providing a valuable gathering space for people of all ages.

Knollcrest Lodge in Milverton, while not designated a Seniors Active Living Centre, provides health and wellness programs for older adults, including Meals on Wheels, falls prevention, exercise, hearing clinics, diabetic clinics, congregate dining, and intergenerational programming.

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

Many Perth County residents and stakeholders involved in the plan's development process expressed a positive sense of social inclusion. Residents who participated in developing the Plan expressed great pride in their communities, citing a positive sense of belonging and strong bonds among neighbours. Residents who are part of a faith-based organization expressed a strong sense of inclusion in their congregation and looked to their church to provide supportive programming and services. A 2014 Quality of Life report developed by the Social Planning and Research Council echoed the findings of the age-friendly plan and identified a strong sense of belonging among 74% of residents in Perth County.[xx]

However, consultations during the development of the age-friendly plan identified concerns among some West Perth residents regarding the need to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for existing and new residents. Concerns were expressed regarding community or citizen-led recreation and leisure programs that are not openly accessible to the broader public.

Directions and Actions

Enhance perceptions of social cohesion and sense of belonging among all residents in the community.

- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for existing and new residents in Perth County through neighbourhood-scale activities, community events, and coordinated programming that includes the municipality, community groups, and faith-based organizations.

- Support the continued development of community hubs, Seniors Active Living Centres, and other community gathering places, to provide inter-generational learning, recreation and leisure programs, community and health services, and educational opportunities.

- Work with local realtors and organizations such as the Multicultural Association Perth-Huron to welcome newcomers to Perth County.

- Explore the development of age-inclusive playgrounds to support inter-generational activities for people of all ages.

Community Support and Health Services

Good mental and physical health contributes to the quality of life and age-friendliness. When evaluating age-friendliness, consider access to community-related services that support physical and/or mental well-being and the availability of health promotion or awareness services that promote and support healthy behaviours and life choices.

This dimension considers the availability and range of local services that can be accessed in a timely fashion. While community support and health services are important for all age groups, an aging population requires access to an appropriate supply of a wide range of services - including in-home provision. Ensuring these are available in smaller communities can be a particular challenge requiring innovative approaches.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- ✓ Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.
- ✓ Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- ✓ Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- ✓ Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.
- ✓ Clear and accessible information are provided about health and social services for older people.

- ✓ Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.
- ✓ All staff is respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
- ✓ Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.
- ✓ Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- ✓ There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.
- ✓ Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

In Perth County, about 81% of residents 65 years of age and older perceived their health to be good to excellent, which is higher than the Ontario proportion at 74% (PDHU 2012). With regards to mental health, 66% of residents aged 65 years and over perceived their mental health as being very good to excellent, which is lower than the provincial figure (70%). Findings regarding stress identified 9% of residents aged 65 years and older perceived their life as stressful. This is lower than the Ontario proportion of 11.5% (PDHU 2012).

There is a range of community support and health service providers located in Perth County, and in Stratford and St. Marys, that are accessible to residents in the Member Municipalities. Programs and community services address a range of health and social services needs. There are organizations available to help seniors living independently. The Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), Meals on Wheels, Family Services Perth-Huron, and the South West Community Care Access Centre provide supports and services to seniors and their caregivers. The Alzheimer Society of Perth County provides support and education for family members of those with Alzheimer's and dementia. Community Support Service Agencies (CSSAs) provide programs throughout Perth County to seniors such as meals on wheels, congregate dining, friendly visiting, volunteer hospice services, transportation, adult day programs, etc. CSSA services are managed and by

several organizations throughout Perth County such as VON, One Care, St, Marys and Area Support Services, Ritz Lutheran Villa and Knollcrest.

In addition, there are established, coordinated networks in Perth County to address community support and health services. A ‘Situation Table’ is currently being piloted in Huron-Perth to address the needs of vulnerable individuals and families struggling with addictions and mental health issues.

Huron-Perth Health Link is a local partnership of health care providers and social service organizatons that work together to coordinate patient-centred care planning. This includes primary care providers, hospitals, community care access centres, mental health agencies, community support agencies, public health, and long-term care facilities.[xxi]

ONE CARE recently introduced a coordinated health and support services delivery model in the summer of 2016. The coordinated services model provides a “one call” intake process for partner agencies that links recipients to services provided by other local agencies. This model provides a coordination of care for assessment, care planning, service delivery and crisis management.

Community Paramedicine is a field of paramedic practice that works to address calls from people with non-emergency needs, many of whom are older adults. Perth County Paramedic Services’ Community Paramedicine Program has implemented a Tier 1 community referral program. Patients in need of additional support are referred by Perth County Paramedic Services to the Southwest Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) for assistance. In 2014, Huron, Perth, and Bruce County EMS implemented a tri-county initiative to develop a Community Paramedicine Program. This program includes training for paramedics for a referral to the CCAC and a pilot project to collaborate with local providers for wellness clinics to older adults.

Perth County Elder Abuse Committee provides elder abuse information and education, undertakes advocacy for vulnerable seniors. It comprises a group of agencies that work together including Alzheimer Society, Long Term Care and Retirement Homes, Primary Health Care, Seniors Mental Health, Police and Community Support Services. Their services include a senior’s safety information line.

Primary care has evolved to include Family Health Teams (FHT) that include a team of family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, dieticians, and other professionals who work together to provide health care for the community. FHTs provide a range of health care options, for patients connected to the specific FHT. Family Health Teams ensure that people receive the care they need in their communities, as each team is set up based on local health and community needs. They focus on chronic disease management, disease prevention, health promotion, and they work with other health care organizations, such as public health units and Community Care Access Centres. There is one Family Health Team (FHT) located in Listowel (North Perth FHT), with other FHTs located in St. Marys (Happy Valley FHT), and Stratford (STAR FHT, Stratford FHT). In addition, Mitchell Family Doctors and doctors in individual family practices provide medical care for older adults in the County.

There are multiple Falls Prevention programs offered in Perth County. Stepping Out Safely Huron Perth works in collaboration with South West LHIN Falls Prevention Collaborative (this program is offered in Stratford). This falls committee provides falls prevention education, program planning, and policy development.[xxii]

Health Services and Community Support Services in Perth County

- Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), Adult Day Programs
- ONE CARE Home and Community Support Services
- ParaMed Home Health Care
- Family Services Perth Huron
- North Perth Community Hospice
- Seniors for Seniors
- We Care Home Health Services
- Milverton Community Outreach
- LifeLabs

- Mitchell and Area Community Outreach
- Community Living Perth County
- Seniors Mental Health Program and 24 hour Crisis Line
- Community Services Coordination Network
- Listowel Legion Loan Cupboard (medical equipment)
- Ontario March of Dimes Assistive Devices Program & Home and Vehicle Modifications Program
- Perth District Health Unit
- South West Ontario Regional Elder Abuse Network
- Alzheimer Society of Perth County
- South West Community Care Access Centre (CCAC)
- Knollcrest Lodge Community Outreach Services, Falls Prevention
- Ritz Lutheran Villa - Mitchell and Area Community Outreach, Falls Prevention
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance (St. Marys Memorial Hospital, Stratford General Hospital, Clinton Public Hospital, Seaforth Community Hospital)
- Southwest Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
- Arthritis Society
- Huron Perth Community Stroke Program

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

- Older adults expressed a strong interest in aging at home and maintaining quality of life. The demand for affordable and accessible home maintenance and personal care services will continue to increase as the aging population grows. The central issue for community support and health services is the need for accessible and affordable services to enable older adults to live independently in their homes. This requires a range of services from home maintenance to housekeeping, meal preparation, meal delivery, hairdressing, dentistry, personal support, etc.

- There is a vast range of community supports and health services that exist to serve the residents of Perth County, however many of these services are located within specific urban areas such as Stratford, Listowel, and Mitchell. Rural residents face greater challenges than those living in or near urban settlement areas. Demand for home/mobile services will continue to grow to address the needs of older adults residing in rural areas, and those who are unable to leave their homes. Enhancing access and service delivery therefore, should focus on improving communication with older adults to ensure they understand the services available to them and to improve their confidence in accessing/obtaining the services they need.

- Literacy and cognitive barriers among older, vulnerable adults impede their ability to understand the information being provided to them by service providers and medical professionals (i.e., medical diagnostics, follow-up care, and associated services, etc.). South West Self-Management Program offers Health Literacy courses for residents/patients and health care professionals at no charge. Professionals should be encouraged to have their staff attend the workshops. Residents/patients should be encouraged to take the workshops.

- Availability of personal support workers (PSW) is variable across the County. Residents in Perth County's rural areas face challenges in accessing PSWs to serve older adults. However, agencies may be challenged by a lack of funding that limits their ability to expand current PSW services. These challenges are exacerbated by the recent introduction of a PSW certification requirement, which may affect recruitment and retention of these workers.

- There is a need for more services for seniors with addiction and mental health concerns in Perth. This need will continue to grow as the population ages and as the county experiences in-migration from other communities (SPRC 2012). There is a shortage of professionals who can diagnose, treat, and support seniors with mental illness in the County. There is also a shortage of psychiatric nurses and psychiatrists (SPRC 2008).

- Older adult women who experience domestic violence face challenges in accessing supports and services in Perth. Similarly, service providers experience barriers in reaching women who are isolated. A report produced by the Social Planning & Research Council (SRPC) identified the need to encourage more people to report abuse. This would also improve service provision for women and children who need it as well. This increased knowledge and awareness may help reduce access barriers that currently exist between service providers and the identified populations.

Directions and Actions

Raise awareness and directly address the needs, issues, and challenges facing older adults in Perth County who face mental health concerns and addictions, and barriers to medical and dental resources.

- Identify existing organizations at the Situation Table (21 currently) that can provide a voice for older adults.

- Work with Situation Table service providers to raise awareness of the issues and challenges facing older adults in Perth County.

Work with medical/health professionals and other service providers to provide information to older adults using plain language.

- Support collaboration among agencies to work with Anabaptist communities in providing culturally safe information about where and how to access mobility assistive devices.

- Pursue opportunities for municipalities and other service providers to collaborate on initiatives to reduce fear among older adults in requesting or accepting help.

- Promote participation in South West Self-Management Health Literacy Course.

Work with businesses, community service providers and secondary schools to develop mobile services and volunteer opportunities for in-home personal and home maintenance services, such as housekeeping, meal preparation, hot meal delivery, grocery delivery, and hair care.

- Perth Member Municipalities should develop, or continue to develop, a list of local businesses and services that can provide home maintenance services and personal services. This information should be listed on municipal websites and promoted by health and social service providers (including pharmacists), and community support organizations.

- The County should engage with local businesses that offer, or have an interest in offering, mobile services. Addressing needs for home support services also creates economic development opportunities for the County to encourage and support entrepreneurship in seniors' services. Different forms of service models and pay-for-service strategies that incorporate subsidies should be explored (e.g., two-tiered YMCA fee model)

Initiate collaboration among service providers and local colleges to increase the availability of personal support workers across Perth County.

- The County should engage the LHIN, CCAC, Conestoga College, and Fanshawe College to support and to attract new graduates to Perth County.

Explore opportunities for increasing the capacity to address service needs and particularly future needs.

- Develop additional spaces for adult day programs and respite care to support caregivers.

Communication and Information

Age-friendly communities ensure that information about community events or important services is both readily accessible and in formats that are appropriate for older adults. Moreover, an age-friendly community recognizes diversity within the older adult population and promotes appropriate outreach initiatives to make it easier for older adults to access needed programs and services.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.
- ✓ Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured, and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.
- ✓ Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
- ✓ Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
- ✓ People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.
- ✓ Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.
- ✓ Printed information - including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays - has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type
- ✓ Print and spoken communication use simple, familiar words, in short, straightforward sentences.

- ✓ Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- ✓ Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- ✓ There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

Across Perth County, a Communications Plan & Policy was adopted by each of its Member Municipalities in 2014, which outlines guiding principles, goals, and an implementation schedule for improving the quality of internal and external communications. Customer service standards and guidelines were also developed to help municipal staff communicate with persons with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, speech or language impairments, and hearing loss or deafness. Universal design principles and best practices were used by the County to develop, implement, and maintain information and communication strategies. This includes websites, communication materials, telephone communications, and face-to-face interactions. Other municipal practices being undertaken by the County and its Member Municipalities include communications for emergency response such as the issuance of Notices of Service Disruption in local newspapers, on local radio stations, and through Bell Relay service for people who use TTY.

In addition, there is a range of communications resources both online and in print that provides information about community, social, health and government services. 211 Services Huron Perth County, for example, offers information in different languages and is available 24 hours a day seven days a week. Live operators respond to the needs of each caller and offer information about services and programs in the area. South West CCAC provides information and referral services and “live answer” from 8:00 am-8:00 pm, seven days/week.

Communications/Information Resources in Perth County

- 211 Services Huron Perth County
- Infoperthcounty.ca
- Our Perth.ca
- thehealthline.ca (http://www.southwesthealthline.ca)
- Listowel Banner (North Perth)
- Community Connection Newsletter (North Perth)
- Milverton Shopportunities
- Stratford Beacon Herald
- Stratford Gazette
- Mitchell Advocate
- St. Marys Journal Argus
- Township of Perth East Newsletter (PEN)
- Knollcrest Lodge (quarterly mailout to subscribers)
- South West CCAC
- Libraries

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

- The central issue for communication and information is where/how to source needed information. As noted above, this contributes to a lack of awareness among residents across Perth County about available programs and services. Lack of awareness affects older adult participation in social activities and access to health services and supports. Municipal newsletters are issued by North Perth, through the Community Connection Newsletter, and Perth East, through the Township of Perth East Newsletter (PEN). Municipal newsletters, which appear to be important vehicles for communication in these two communities, are not issued in West Perth and Perth South.

- Some older adults in Perth County use rotary phones and cannot use the automated systems/voicemail systems utilized by service agencies.

- Community service providers expressed the need to improve communications and outreach to Anabaptist communities about the services and programs offered by their agencies.

- Community orientation events are needed to communicate with older adults about municipal and agency-provided programs, services, and amenities available to them. Interest in such events emerged across Perth County, and in particular, in events that improve awareness among new residents, as well as older adults residing in rural areas who may be at risk of social isolation.

- Interest was raised by Anabaptist communities for culturally safe information to better understand disease processes and effects of aging (i.e., dementia). For example, Community Outreach in Milverton provides communication and information sessions on dementia and aging, as well as resources. However, awareness is inconsistent among Anabaptist communities.

Directions and Actions

Promote the distribution of information at the neighbourhood level to communicate information about local events, programs, and raise awareness of local issues.

- Member Municipalities should engage with local library boards (North Perth Public Library Board, West Perth Public Library, Perth East Public Library[xxiii]) to communicate programs, services, events, and seminars on dedicated information boards.

- Develop an "older adult" focused municipal newsletter/newsletter section to publicize information about current events, services, and raise awareness about local matters and interests, etc. Special Editions may be integrated as part of a regular newsletter in the Community Connection Newsletter (North Perth) and the Township of Perth East Newsletter (PEN). Quarterly newsletters will need to be initiated in West Perth and Perth South.

- Strengthen ties with administrators of faith-based communities and churches as key communicators with/connections to their congregations

Encourage and facilitate collaboration among health and community service providers across Perth County to improve how information is communicated to residents.

- Host a 'Community Information Open House' with representation from the public sector and not-for-profit services for older adults (e.g., recreation, health, housing, income support, police, etc.), and invitations to private sector services for older adults (e.g., pharmacies, mobility aids, home renovation products, etc.) as part of 'one-window/no number is the wrong number' model to facilitate access to information and services. Consider dedicating a standalone Community Open House day or plan to do something in conjunction with existing municipal events and festivals.

- Support the coordination of a Central Intake, "one window" support service number, which enables residents to access services provided by all community

support agencies. This initiative is currently under development. The South West CCAC also provides coordinated access to information and referral to other health and social service programs and provides in-home services and eligibility for long-term care homes, adult day programs and assisted living services.

Develop a coordinated outreach strategy to connect with older adults who are isolated, or are at risk of isolation.

- Connect with isolated older adults through, for example, established networks, health and social service agencies, and health service providers (e.g., doctors, pharmacies). Front-line staff (community outreach) are valuable links to the community and can improve access to information among more vulnerable older adults. Communication about older adult programs, services, and awareness programs can be disseminated by Member Municipalities to community outreach agencies for distribution to front-line workers.

Develop appropriate information for Perth County's various cultural communities about aging, disease prevention, and local resources and supports.

- Disseminate information about programs and services to Anabaptist communities, as appropriate.

Improve print, online, social media, telephone, and in-person communication materials and protocols about current events, services, programs, and local interests to incorporate an age-friendly approach.

- Enhance and contribute to information provided in Southwest Healthline about older adult events, services and supports. Provide on-going information to Southwest Healthline to publicize local events and services.

- Redesign the County website to include easy- to-find information about older adult services, supports, and resources, by age-friendly dimension. The County website will be undergoing a redesign in 2017.

Civic Participation and Employment

Civic engagement includes older adults' desire to be involved in aspects of community life that extend beyond their day-to-day activities, such as volunteering, becoming politically active, voting or working on committees. Economic security is important for many older adults, particularly those with low and fixed incomes. The ability of an older adult to remain employed or find new employment provides economic security, and it benefits employers who recognize the experience and commitment that older employees bring to the workplace.

World Health Organization Criteria

- ✓ A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.
- ✓ The qualities of older employees are well promoted.
- ✓ A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.
- ✓ Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.
- ✓ Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- ✓ Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.
- ✓ Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.
- ✓ Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.

Assets, Achievements, and Opportunities

There are resources offered in Perth County that address education, entrepreneurship, equal opportunity employment practices, civic engagement and skills development. While these resources are concentrated in Stratford, they are available for use by Perth County residents.

There is a strong volunteer sector in Perth County. Many of the volunteers in Perth County are older adults who provide leadership and capacity to organize and/or run activities, events and sit on committees for community organizations, churches, service clubs, and health/social service providers. In 2013, volunteers across Perth County contributed more than five million volunteer hours or the equivalent of 2,500 jobs (SRPC 2013). Information about volunteer opportunities in Perth County is provided directly by agencies and service providers or through coordinated networks such as Volunteers in Perth. In addition, there is a strong base of informal, peer-based volunteerism being undertaken among friends and neighbours to run errands, provide transportation to medical appointments, conduct home maintenance tasks, and provide domestic help.

Volunteer and Employment Resources in Perth County

- Volunteers in Perth
- I Volunteer Perth-Huron
- VolunteerConnection.ca
- Second Career Program (Conestoga College)
- Partners in Employment (offices in Listowel, St. Marys, Stratford)
- Senior Peer Helper Training (Family Services Perth-Huron)

WHO interests with respect to age discrimination, are addressed by policy and legislation preventing discrimination, and by human resource policies of private sector businesses and service providers on equal opportunity employment.

Gaps, Barriers, and Challenges

- In Perth County, the average age of volunteers is 55 years and older. While there is a wide range of volunteer opportunities in Perth County, sustaining a supply of volunteers will be challenging as the population ages, unless younger people become active in this area.

- The supply of volunteers is not consistent throughout the year. Service providers experience volunteer shortages in the winter when older adults travel south. This particularly affects peer support ('seniors helping seniors') programs.

- Consultation with service providers identified challenges among organizations to attract, train and retain volunteers. Moreover, few organizations have a dedicated volunteer coordinator who is responsible for recruitment, providing formal training and ensuring that volunteers feel valued. Addressing civic engagement in Perth County should focus on opportunities to strengthen the communities' volunteer base through structured and informal volunteer recruitment approaches for seniors.

- Consultation with residents identified the need for easily accessible information about local volunteer opportunities. While volunteer opportunities may be provided online, interest was expressed among older adults to learn about local volunteer opportunities through churches, municipal offices, and local papers.

- Volunteer recognition programs are established among agencies and service providers, however residents identified a gap in community-wide volunteer recognition programs.

- There is a lack of awareness among residents about programs and services being offered in Perth County to support retirement planning, skills development, and financial assistance. Interest was expressed by residents to host speakers and information sessions at local libraries and churches - particularly in communities where it may be difficult for residents to access existing programs located in Stratford and Listowel.

Directions and Recommended Actions

Support existing volunteer information networks in Perth County.

- Provide information about volunteer opportunities and training opportunities through a coordinated volunteer centre, such as “I Volunteer Perth Huron”.

- Develop volunteer recognition programs through established networks (e.g., Volunteers in Perth, I Volunteer Perth Huron) and with Perth area municipalities (community-wide volunteer recognition event).

Sustain informal volunteerism at the neighbourhood-level, through peer and inter-generational volunteer opportunities.

- Seek collaboration with local secondary schools to encourage volunteerism among youth and to secure youth volunteers to provide assistance to older adults, such as computer skills development and home maintenance services.

- Expand advertising for volunteer opportunities that might be of interest to older adults via local media, church administrators, municipal newsletters, etc.

Improve resident awareness of programs for older adults offered by Partners in Employment and Conestoga College.

- Establish partnership involving County Economic Development, Conestoga College, and Partners in Employment to promote their services and bring in session speakers to churches, libraries, and other community gathering spaces.

Summary of Actions

The preceding analysis reveals that the County, its Member Municipalities, community organizations, and service agencies are already providing programs and undertaking infrastructure and built environment improvements that address the WHO's age-friendly interests.

Recommendations focus on a continuation of infrastructure improvements and retrofits that are consistent with the WHO's checklist for age-friendly cities. Recommendations concerning municipal and community initiatives and programs continue to support existing program delivery and focus on improving resident awareness of existing resources. Recommendations for new initiatives or programs leverage existing efforts to address any deficiencies or gaps. For each action, timeframes are suggested. The following chart defines the proposed timeframes for short, medium and long-term implementation. The actions contained in the following tables are preliminary and require confirmation to establish timeframes and the commitment of proposed internal and external stakeholders.

Short Term: 2017-2018

Medium Term: 2019-2020

Long-Term: 2021+

There are numerous potential actors who should (or could) be involved in implementing the actions listed. Those noted in the tables are not meant to represent exhaustive lists but only the actors involved to date that should - at least at the outset - comprise the key implementers. Additional partners should be sought and engaged, as appropriate, to contribute to each initiative. While a lead agency is always indicated, this does not necessarily imply that this agency should assume the lead role indefinitely. While it may be appropriate to do so, it is essential that an organization be designated as the lead in getting the initiative 'off the ground', i.e., making initial contact with potential partners, organizing a time and place to meet, prepare an agenda and background information to be discussion and planning, etc. Once started, another agency or organization could take the lead role from that point.

For the sake of brevity, we have also not always named every organization where many should be collaborating in implementing the same action. We have limited those listed to key participants with core mandates in the action area. Similarly, where (for example), the lead agency is listed as County Planning and the named partners are the four Member Municipalities, it is assumed that their respective Building and Zoning Departments are also primary partners to the initiative.

It is important to note that infrastructure development, replacement, and/or improvements are an ongoing process in municipalities that takes some time to implement; and once the infrastructure is in place, it is there for a relatively long time. For this reason, all relevant actions in the table have been assigned a short-term timeframe to ensure these considerations begin to be incorporated as soon as possible in the planning, design and construction process.

Finally, in an ideal world, all of the recommended actions could be undertaken immediately and in an integrated manner - as they are all needed now. Understanding that this may not be possible, we have assigned one of the three time frames to each action. This does not mean, however, that action needs to wait until the specific period. If the opportunity arises sooner to take action on an initiative that is indicated for the medium or long-term, it should be pursued. In a continually shifting political and funding landscape, it will be important to seize upon opportunities as they emerge.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Continue to support and facilitate the installation of accessible pedestrian crossing signals as per Ministry standards in each Member Municipality.	Member Municipalities	Accessibility Coordinator Accessibility Advisory Committee	Short
Continue to undertake built environment improvements, to improve safety and physical accessibility of buildings, sidewalks, pedestrian pathways, public spaces, etc., particularly in urban areas and in older neighbourhoods in each Member Municipality, consistent with AODA public space standards.	Member Municipalities	Accessibility Coordinator Accessibility Advisory Committee	Short
Continue to implement infrastructure improvements to improve the safety and physical accessibility of buildings and public spaces throughout Perth County for older adults and persons with dementia.	Member Municipalities	Accessibility Coordinator Accessibility Advisory Committee Alzheimer Society	Short
Incorporate “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design” (CPTED) methods to exceed the minimum requirements of AODA, as standard practice, as part of the County’s site plan review.	County Planning & Development Department Member Municipalities	Accessibility Coordinator Accessibility Advisory Committee	Short
Publicize existing locations of publicly accessible washrooms (municipally owned/operated) using prominent signage with appropriately sized and styled	Accessibility Coordinator Accessibility Advisory	Member Municipalities County Planning & Development Department	Medium

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
font. Consult with seniors to identify appropriate locations for wayfinding signage in each Member Municipality. Consult with publications that provide directions on accessible graphics.	Committee	Alzheimer Society	
Identify other strategic locations in high use areas for barrier-free, gender neutral family washrooms (West Perth, North Perth, and Perth East).	Accessibility Advisory Committee	North Perth West Perth Perth East	Short
Engage the private sector to provide public access to washrooms on premises (West Perth, North Perth, and Perth East).	County Economic Development	Businesses along primary retail streets Member Municipalities	Medium
Develop standards for providing wayfinding signage employing international and universal symbols, as well as tactile signs, to community landmarks such as parks, community centres, hospitals, medical centres, long-term care facilities and retirement homes, and service agencies (West Perth, North Perth, and Perth East).	Accessibility Advisory Committee	North Perth West Perth Perth East	Short
Install road and traffic signage that is visible and well-placed in each Member Municipality.	Member Municipalities	Accessibility Coordinator Accessibility Advisory Committee	Long

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Explore a partnership with OPP to undertake a "Crosswalk Awareness" event, which can be held bi-annually or annually through a coordinated approach addressing engineering and enforcement (West Perth).	West Perth	OPP	Medium
Establish pedestrian improvement reporting program in Perth East that enables the public to report needed improvements to sidewalks, curbs, pedestrian pathways, crosswalks, and other pedestrian information. Pedestrian improvement reporting program should be publicized on the Township's website and communicated in community newsletters (see Communication and Information table for actions to improve information dissemination). A corresponding feedback-monitoring program will be needed to establish municipal protocol regarding responses to community issues and suggestions.	Perth East	NA	Short
Establish a program that enables the public to report potential locations for benches in outdoor spaces in each Member Municipality.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Member Municipalities Accessibility Advisory Committee	Short

Respect and Social Inclusion

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for existing and new residents in Perth County through neighbourhood-scale activities, community events, and coordinated programming that includes the municipality, community groups, and faith-based organizations.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All municipal departments are responsible for community programming. Community-based groups.	Short
Support the continued development of community hubs, Seniors Active Living Centres, and other community gathering places, to provide inter-generational learning, recreation and leisure programs, community and health services, and educational opportunities.	Member Municipalities Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Community agencies and service organizations developing community hubs.	Short
Work with local realtors and community groups to welcome newcomers to Perth County.	County Economic Development	Local realtors. Community groups.	Short
Explore the development of age-inclusive playgrounds to	Age-Friendly Implementation	All municipal departments	Short

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
support inter-generational activities for people of all ages.	Committee	responsible for parks infrastructure. Accessibility Coordinator.	

Housing

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Engage senior levels of government to identify partnerships that will provide more financial support and funding opportunities to develop long-term care facilities and social housing, including that for older adults.	Accessibility Coordinator Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Ritz Lutheran Villa Perth Meadows	Short
Support the expansion of existing and prospective long-term care and retirement homes in Perth County.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Member Municipalities	Short
Support and undertake advocacy efforts to amend the Ontario Building Code to better integrate accessibility and universal design features in housing.	Accessibility Coordinator	Member Municipalities	Medium

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
	Accessibility Advisory Committee		
Create an environment to make it attractive for private developers to provide adaptive housing that meets the needs of older adults, such as smaller units, multi-unit rentals, and condos in each Member Municipality.	County Economic Development	County North Perth West Perth Perth East Housing developers (including faith organizations)	Medium
Work with local businesses (e.g., hardware stores, commercial suppliers) and service providers to develop and promote adaptive home renovations, and provide discounted materials and services to make it easier for older adults to age in place.	County Economic Development	County Member Municipalities Home Builders Association	Medium
Explore the development of programs to help older adults install home safety features. The United Way Elgin Grab Bar program, for example, works with a local pharmacy to provide grab bars to older adults to install in their homes.	County Economic Development	Commercial suppliers of home safety equipment Social service	Short

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
		agencies	
Adapt an existing toolkit developed by other Age-Friendly Communities to help homeowners retrofit existing housing to enable them to age in place (e.g., Safer Home Society in B.C). An adapted toolkit could also provide guidance to address older adult housing needs such as those used in some Anabaptist communities (such as dotty houses).	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee County of Perth	County Building Superintendents OPP Perth District Health Unit	
Continue to support a tax amendment to improve the provision of apartment buildings, and remove disincentives to absorb (rent or sell) multi-unit housing.	County of Perth	Member Municipalities	Short
Undertake targeted marketing to attract desired diversity in future residents, in partnership with other local communities. (e.g., Stratford is identified as one of the top places to retire in Canada). Marketing can encourage private housing developers to provide small-scale infill projects that address a range of lifecycle needs, including demand generated by older adults.	County of Perth	Member Municipalities Stratford St. Marys	Medium
Explore the possibility of providing a Secondary Suites Municipal Fee Rebate program that provides funding assistance to homeowners to create secondary suites with	County of Perth	Member Municipalities	Long

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
affordable rents. Grants may cover application fees or the costs of upgrades to meet building and fire codes.			
Undertake on-going communication and engagement with housing providers and law enforcement to improve the safety of older adults living in Rent Geared to Income housing.	County of Perth	OPP Social housing providers	Short
Create and implement an awareness campaign that reduces stigma among older adults who ask for assistance and increase understanding of the availability of interim measures to maintain independence and support health and well-being.	South West CCAC	Long-Term Care Providers	Short

Social Participation

Action Items	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Review distribution of programs/services for older adults by the full cost to the user to identify areas where currently offered no/low-cost services require additional promotion and where differentiated seniors' rates could be instituted to provide and promote affordable and accessible recreation and leisure activities for older adults.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All municipal departments are responsible for community programming and pricing. Accessibility Advisory Committee. Accessibility Coordinator.	Medium
Develop and promote messages that convey the importance of social participation to the health and well-being of all older adults, emphasizing that it need not be complex or involved (e.g., going for a walk with a friend, meeting for coffee, etc.). This can be communicated through a municipal newsletter, in partnership with service providers and community organizations, such as public	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Perth District Health Unit Member Municipalities	Short

Action Items	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
health, primary care services, and church bulletins.			
Work with older adults to develop and deliver a variety of recreation, leisure, and educational opportunities through both structured and unstructured participation.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Member Municipalities	Medium
Remove participation barriers and provide an inclusive environment for older adults with dementia through initiatives such as the Blue Umbrella program.	Alzheimer Society	Member Municipalities	Short
Investigate approaches to increasing spaces in Adult Day Programs that meet the needs of older adults, particularly those with and/or dementia. Adult Day Programs are administered by the VON in Listowel, Stratford, and St. Marys. There is also a need for increased capacity for overnight respite care. Collaboration should be undertaken with the South West LHIN to guide when on-site respite services and Adult Day Programs are to be provided or expanded.	Alzheimer Society	Member Municipalities	Short
Support the local introduction or expansion of programs for those living with dementia and their care partners (e.g., iPod music program, Minds in Motion, Dementia Friendly Communities).	Alzheimer Society	All Member Municipalities	Short

Action Items	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Develop options to rotate programs across facilities within each Member Municipality or in partnership across the County.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All municipal departments responsible for community-based programming	Medium
Protect community gathering spaces such as Rostock Hall in Perth East, and Atwood Branch Library in North Perth, to continue supporting programs and services for nearby residents. The potential closure of any community gathering space should consider if there are other facilities accessible to existing users to which programming can be relocated either permanently or until such time as a new space is available.	North Perth Perth East	NA	Short

Transportation

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Provide education and awareness to potential customers regarding fee structures of agency transportation services.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Transportation service providers Member Municipalities Housing providers Social service providers	Short
Improve customer access to agency transportation services throughout Perth County to optimize the use of available fleets of vehicles belonging to not-for-profit agencies and groups to transport older adults to a variety of destinations (e.g., medical, retail, recreation/social participation, entertainment, etc.).	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Transportation service providers	Medium
Review and build on relevant actions that have emerged from previous initiatives (e.g., The Road Ahead: A study of transportation needs across Huron and Perth Counties, March 2012; Huron-Perth Transportation Task Force).	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Agency proponents and implementers of relevant actions	Short

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Initiate a 'call for volunteers' to transport older adults and develop a corresponding list of people who need transportation, to match drivers to those in need of rides.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Health, housing, social, and transportation service providers	Short
Explore the provision of tax incentives for taxi service providers to improve the provision of accessible taxi service.	County of Perth	All municipalities	Medium
Explore Council and community support for a tax levy to fund coordinated transportation services that provide travel between, e.g., Mitchell, Listowel, Milverton and Sebringville to Kitchener, Waterloo and Stratford.	County of Perth	All municipalities Transportation service providers	Long
Work with relevant agencies (e.g., Alzheimer Society) to undertake sensitivity training for drivers to understand the specific needs of, and supports for, older adults.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Transportation services (commercial and not-for-profit) Alzheimer Society VON Transportation service providers	Short

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Explore options for improving safety upon arrival, through the services of an on-site attendant who can accompany transported individuals at destination points (e.g., medical facility, community centre) from the door to their appointment, program, event, etc.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Relevant community centre, medical facility, etc. owners and operators Transportation service providers	Medium
Provide general education about the mobility and travel courtesies to consider in relation to older adults.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All municipalities Transportation service providers Perth District Health Unit	Short
Support safe driving for older adults through age-appropriate education and refresher programs (currently offered in St. Marys). Explore program provision at local libraries in North Perth, Perth East, and West Perth.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Perth District Health Unit North Perth Public Library Board West Perth Public Library Perth East Public Library CAA	Short

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Engage the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) and the Canadian Association Occupational Therapists (CAOT) to deliver a Carfit Program across Perth County to improve driver safety awareness.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	CAA CAOT	Short
Establish a minimum standard of constructing sidewalks on one side of the street to support pedestrian mobility in existing and new developments. Updated policies for sidewalk rationalization standards to support the construction of sidewalks on both sides of the street, where warranted and feasible, will be further explored by each of the Member Municipalities.	North Perth West Perth Perth East Perth South	NA	Short
Improve snow clearance, particularly in downtown areas, and near shops and services, to provide a safe walking environment in winter months. This involves liaison with individual business owners or BIAs to ensure snow clearance includes parking areas/spaces and access to destinations from these points.	North Perth West Perth Perth East	NA	Short
Review snow removal operational standards, as per Ontario Ministry of Transportation requirements to provide safe access to businesses, senior-frequented facilities and seniors housing.	North Perth West Perth Perth East	NA	Short

Community Support and Health Services

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Identify existing organizations at the Situation Table (21 currently) that can provide a voice for older adults.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All those at Situation Table dealing with older adults.	Short
Work with Situation Table service providers to raise awareness of the issues and challenges facing older adults in Perth County.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All those at Situation Table dealing with older adults.	Short
Support collaboration among agencies that work with Anabaptist communities to provide information about where and how to access mobility-assistive devices.	Perth District Health Unit	Community support and health service agencies that provide mobility assistive devices.	Medium
Pursue opportunities for municipalities and other service providers to collaborate on initiatives to reduce fear among older adults to request or accept help.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	All municipalities Community support and health service agencies dealing with older adults.	Medium
Develop, or continue to develop, a list of local businesses	County Economic	Local business that	Medium

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
and services that can provide home maintenance services and personal services. This information should be listed on municipal websites and promoted by health and social service providers (including pharmacists), and community support organizations.	Development	offers relevant services. Local organizations, agencies, and businesses that will disseminate information.	
Engage with local businesses that offer, or have an interest in offering mobile services. Different forms of service models and pay-for-service strategies that incorporate subsidies should be explored (e.g., two-tiered YMCA fee model)	County Economic Development	Interested local businesses.	Medium
Engage the LHIN, CCAC, Conestoga College, and Fanshawe College to support and to attract new graduates to Perth County.	County Economic Development	LHIN CCAC Conestoga College Fanshawe College	Medium
Develop additional spaces for adult day programs and respite care to support care partners.			Short

Communication and Information

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
Engage with local library boards to communicate programs, services, events, and seminars on dedicated information boards.	North Perth West Perth Perth East Perth South	North Perth Public Library Board West Perth Public Library Perth East Public Library	Short
Develop an “older adult” focused municipal newsletter/newsletter section to publicize information about current events, services, and raise awareness about local matters and interests, etc. Special Editions may be integrated as part of a regular newsletter in the Community Connection Newsletter (North Perth) and the Township of Perth East Newsletter (PEN). Quarterly newsletters will need to be initiated in West Perth and Perth South.	West Perth Perth South	NA	Short
Strengthen ties with administrators of faith-based communities and churches as key communicators with/connections to their congregations.	Age Friendly Implementation Committee	Church leaders	Short
Host a ‘Community Information Open House’ with representation from public sector and not-for-profit services for older adults (e.g., recreation, health, housing, income support, police, etc.) and invitations to	Age Friendly Implementation Committee	Health, housing and social service agencies OPP	Medium

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
private sector services for older adults (e.g., pharmacies, mobility aids, home renovation products, etc.) as part of 'one-window/no number is the wrong number' model to facilitate access to information and services. Consider dedicating a standalone Community Open House day or in conjunction with municipal events and festivals.		Member Municipalities Government income support programs CCAC Interested area businesses	
Support the coordination of a Central Intake, "one window" support service number, which enables residents to access services provided by all community support agencies.	Age Friendly Implementation Committee	All community support agencies	Currently being developed
Connect with isolated older adults through, for example, established networks, health and social service agencies, and health service providers (e.g., doctors, pharmacies). Communication about older adult programs, services, and awareness programs can be disseminated by Member Municipalities to community outreach agencies for distribution to front-line workers.	Age Friendly Implementation Committee	All public, not-for-profit and commercial organizations with front-line staff who connect with/are aware of isolated older adults	Short
Disseminate information about programs and services to Anabaptist communities, as appropriate.	Perth District Health Unit	Health and social services sectors in	Medium

Action Item	Lead Agency	Partners	Timeframe
		Perth County	
Enhance, and contribute to information provided in Southwest Healthline about older adult events, services and supports. Provide on-going information to Southwest Healthline to publicize local events and services.	Age Friendly Implementation Committee	Southwest Healthline	Short
Redesign the County website to include easy to find information about older adult services, supports, and resources, by age-friendly dimension.	County of Perth	Southwest Healthline	Short

Civic Participation and Employment

Action Item	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Timeframe
Provide information about volunteer opportunities and training opportunities through a coordinated volunteer centre, such as “I Volunteer Perth-Huron”.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	I Volunteer Perth-Huron Volunteers in Perth	Underway
Develop volunteer recognition programs through established networks (e.g., Volunteers in Perth, I Volunteer Perth-Huron) and with Perth area municipalities (community-wide volunteer recognition event).		I Volunteer Perth-Huron Volunteers in Perth	Short
Seek collaboration with local secondary schools to encourage volunteerism among youth and to secure youth volunteers to provide assistance to older adults, such as computer skills development and home maintenance services.	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	Avon Maitland District School Board Huron Perth Catholic District School Board	Medium
Expand advertising for volunteer opportunities that might be of interest to older adults via local media, church administrators, municipal newsletters, etc.	I Volunteer Perth Huron	Faith-based organizations	Short
Establish partnership involving County Economic Development, Conestoga College, and Partners in	County Economic	Conestoga College Partners in Employment	Medium

Action Item	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Timeframe
Employment to promote their services and bring in session speakers to churches, libraries, and other community gathering spaces.	Development	Age-Friendly Implementation Committee	

Implementation Framework and County and Municipal Decision-Making

Governance

This Plan represents a roadmap for the County and its Member Municipalities to undertake decision-making that addresses the needs of older adults in Perth County. Implementing the actions presented in this Plan however, does not rest solely with the County or its Member Municipalities, but requires the continued involvement and support of Perth County's dedicated service providers, faith organizations, and businesses. This section presents various approaches to guide implementation and municipal decision-making to address age-friendly considerations. Governance approaches and decision-making frameworks to guide age-friendly planning vary in municipalities across Ontario. Many municipalities do not yet have an internal decision-making framework to guide the development of future plans, projects, and initiatives. The City of Windsor however, requires its departments to evaluate new policies, programs, and projects through an age-friendly lens. Training was undertaken to raise awareness among municipal staff about age-friendly considerations using the WHO's dimensions. Departmental leads and a municipal representative were appointed to serve as a champion for their respective business units to work with the Windsor Age-Friendly Network to move forward on actions.

Other communities have taken different approaches to implementing age-friendly action plans. Some municipalities have developed older adult coalitions, alliances, and steering committees that include external agencies and residents. These coalitions and alliances serve as a central decision-making body and provide input to municipal Council. In Ottawa and Kingston, external older adult advisory committees (i.e., Ottawa Seniors Roundtable, Kingston Age-Friendly Community Alliance) were established to provide feedback to staff during the implementation of their older adult plans. These committees also provide a secondary role for City staff to seek input regarding issues that affect older adults on corporate programs, services and infrastructure, and to share older adult issues related to City services and budget decisions.

Municipalities may also draw upon internal resources (e.g., through an accessibility coordinator) to coordinate the implementation of municipal age-friendly decisions, while at the same time drawing upon an external age-friendly committee to inform decision-making. In Kingston, for example, new policies and projects are vetted through the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee due to the crossover between accessible and age-friendly considerations. In the Regional Municipality of Niagara, an internal

accessibility coordinator and community services staff work together to address age-friendly decision making, in collaboration with an external older adult working group.

Funding

Large, urban municipalities often have dedicated annual funding as part of their operational budget to implement departmental initiatives identified in their age-friendly plans to support transportation and public infrastructure improvements, such as the installation of street signage, expanding sidewalks, pathway paving, and installing benches.

Municipalities with ‘councils on aging’ also provide financial support. For example, the Windsor Age-Friendly Network receives $4,000 in annual funding to work with the City in coordinating the implementation of age-friendly projects. The Windsor Age-Friendly Network provides input to the Windsor Seniors Advisory Committee for advising on the City's selection of priority projects in the 5-year capital budget. In addition, the Windsor Age-Friendly Network works directly, as needed, with municipal Councillors to identify neighbourhood level improvements, and works with local Councillors to access ward funds.

As in other Ontario municipalities, many of the actions recommended for Perth County have minimal or limited cost implications. This Plan anticipates that many of the age-friendly actions can be achieved with the existing staff complement, operating budget, and/or capital budget. Many age-friendly actions are part of existing municipal service lines, such as parks and recreation, transportation, public works, and corporate services. Their successful implementation however, relies on deliberately and consistently incorporating age-friendly considerations in all service decisions.

Dependence on municipal finance alone is not recommended to sustainably fund age-friendly initiatives. Collaboration in the form of an external network or committee is advantageous also to secure in-kind contrbutions from external service providers, and/or funding that would otherwise not be available to the County and its municipalities. Moreover, it simply makes sense for various agencies with the same goals to work as partners in achieving them, and collectively bringing more resources to bear on implementing responses to issues. Funding grants available to support age-friendly initiatives include:

- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (Elderly Persons Centre grant)[xxiv]
- Ontario Trillium Foundation[xxv]
- New Horizon for Seniors Program[xxvi]

Recommendations for Perth County

Many age-friendly considerations in relation to the built environment, outdoor spaces, and transportation infrastructure overlap with AODA accessibility requirements. This will influence how the County and Member Municipalities coordinate accessibility and age-friendly considerations. The following recommendations are proposed to help the County and its Member Municipalities implement the County of Perth Age-Friendly Plan:

- Establishing a Perth County Age-Friendly Implementation Committee as a Committee of Council, with the active endorsement and commitment of County Council. This committee should comprise staff and councillors from Perth County Member Municipalities, service providers representing the eight WHO dimensions, and community residents from each Member Municipality. A composition that includes municipal staff, Councillors, service providers, and residents is critical to ensuring the long-term success of any age-friendly program and strengthens accountability.

- Appoint one municipal representative from the Perth County Age-Friendly Implementation Committee to liaise with their respective municipal departments to review the Perth County Age-Friendly Plan and integrate age-friendly actions into their respective department plans and budgets.

- Utilize the Perth County Age-Friendly Implementation Committee during annual municipal budget reviews to inform the selection of projects that advance age-friendly considerations.

- Communicate the principles and actions in the Perth County Age-Friendly Plan to external agencies and organizations to help integrate age-friendly objectives with those of other groups in the community. Actions that involve advocacy, including lobbying provincial or federal levels of government, raising awareness and participation among local businesses and/or the general public, and leveraging of existing collaborative networks, are best directed to service providers.

Organizing for Implementation

The plan contains seventy-nine actions, the implementation of which may appear to be an overwhelming endeavour. Although identified as discrete actions within distinct dimensions, many of the recommendations are really interdependent parts of a larger whole. In the above table, we have tried to assign similar initiatives to the same time frame with the expectation that combining or piggybacking actions is both logical and may increase the speed/efficiency with which they are implemented.

The Age-Friendly Implementation Committee, however, needs to work with all the recommended actions to 1) confirm their relative positions in the short, medium, and long-term, and 2) work to implement short-term actions. As these are implemented, medium terms actions will then move up and become short-term actions, to which the criteria shown below can be reapplied. The following outlines a process for organizing the plan's implementation.

All Actions

- Group all short, medium and long-term actions across the eight domains together.

- Group similar actions together within each timeframe.

- Determine which actions are sequential and need to be ordered as such (e.g., standards need to be developed before they can be applied to infrastructure improvements).

- Determine which actions can be dealt with by an existing body (e.g., Situation Table can address personal safety in social housing if appropriate actors are already represented at the Table).

- Review and consider the logic of reordering/rearranging actions based on above exercise.

- Confirm and document any changes in a 'revised' plan.

Criteria for Ordering Short-term Actions

The following lists criteria that can be applied to help determine the order for implementing short-term actions. It is not an exhaustive list and should be further developed to the extent required by the Age-Friendly Implementation Committee. Actions can be ordered in terms of the number of criteria they meet, which can provide insight into preparing an implementation schedule.

- Which actions can be implemented by individual municipalities or the County, without involving external partners? (e.g., redesigning County website).

- Which actions can be combined under a single initiative? (e.g., develop a list of local businesses that sell a range of products enabling older adults to retrofit their home).

- Which actions build upon existing initiatives? (e.g., developing volunteer programs through current recruitment/training networks).

- Which actions offer the greatest opportunity to reduce or eliminate duplication of services? (e.g., ONE CARE can minimize the need for various referral channels).

- Which actions have local examples that can be copied, built upon? (e.g., municipal newsletters in North Perth and Perth East can be used as templates for those in West Perth and Perth South).

- Which actions meet more than one objective? (e.g., expanding a service in a rural area AND offering it at an affordable cost).

- Which actions are the most likely to be publicly supported? (residents, businesses, etc.).

- Which actions are most likely to benefit the largest proportion of older adults? (e.g., regional transportation programs, policies to addressing housing needs).

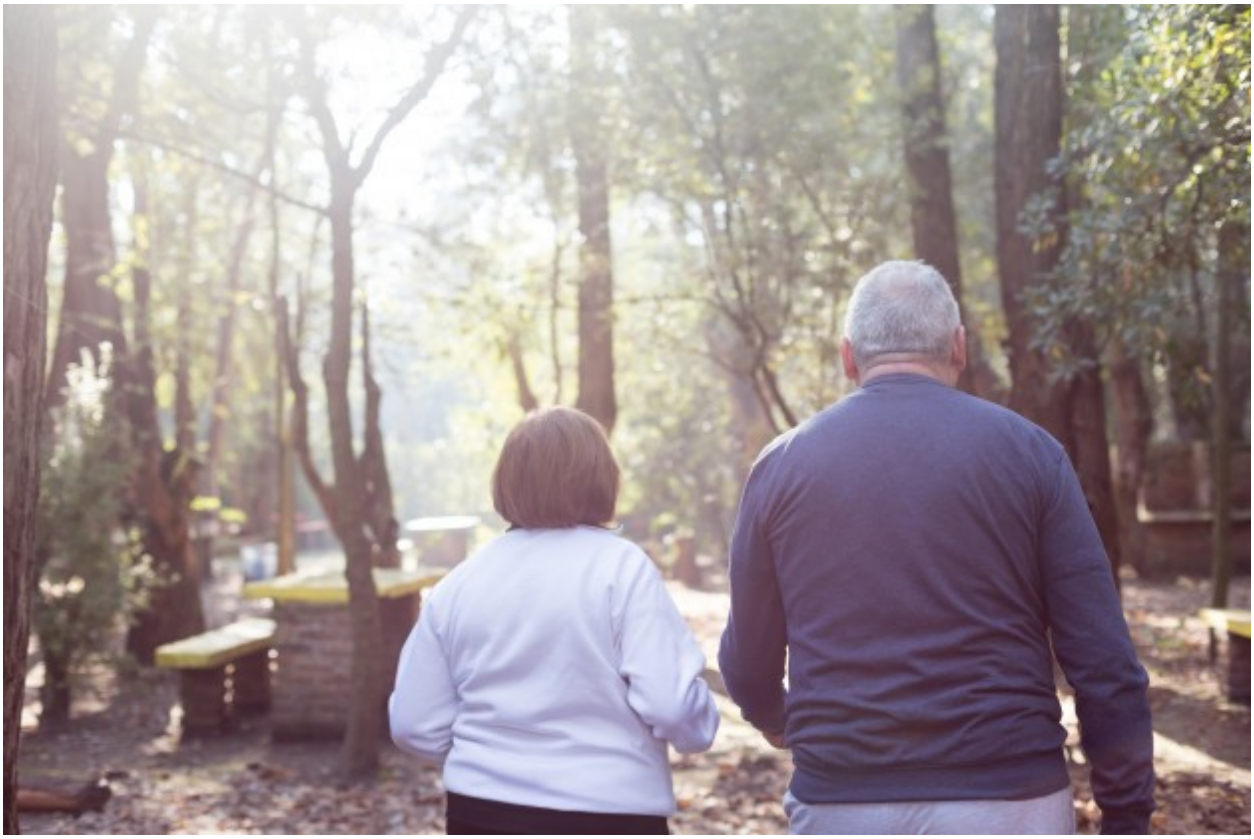
- Which actions have the least financial implications? (e.g., communications and awareness building).

Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating the Plan

Developing measurable targets is something the County will have to do before it can start monitoring and evaluating progress toward specific ends. Establishing qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure progress may be an option for the County and its Member Municipalities to consider. A rigorous evaluation matrix is recommended should the County be interested in applying to be an Age-Friendly designated community under the WHO. A list of indicators has been developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2015), which includes 43 indicators to measure and evaluate community age-friendly initiatives.

While major plan updates typically only occur every five to ten years, updates to the action plan and progress towards objectives should be regularly documented in the intervening periods – as noted in the previous section.

The Action Plan represents a snapshot in time that captured the needs, interests, and opportunities to support age-friendly planning. As age-friendly actions are implemented, and as the needs of residents evolve, directions and actions may change accordingly. As part of its communications efforts, the County and Member Municipalities could consider producing an annual report card on progress in age-friendly initiatives. Future needs assessments and community consultations should apply the principles established in this Plan to inform and guide age-friendly decisions and actions.



Promotion and Communications

Integrating age-friendly initiatives with other service initiatives will garner support from other groups in the community at-large that will also benefit from the outcomes of policies and infrastructure development intended for older adults. For example, the City of Sault Ste. Marie faced public challenges during the initial phases of developing their age-friendly initiative due to the plan's perceived purpose of serving "just older adults".

Consequently, a media strategy will be communicated to implement the plan that will improve the quality of life for all residents, regardless of age. In Ottawa, recommended actions specify target groups that will benefit from the improvement and identify whether each is intended to address the needs of older adults in general, those who have disabilities, and/or those living on low income.

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Appendix: Best Practices for Small/Rural Communities

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Identify new crosswalk locations.
- Improve crosswalk safety through resident feedback portal.
- Extend crossing times at intersections where there are higher concentrations of older adults. Install visual and auditory aids at crosswalks.
- Establish sidewalk and curb improvement programs are emphasizing crosswalks and curb cuts.
- Establish sidewalk hazard report program.
- Establish streetscape improvement to improve safety/visibility, including reduced road widths, the addition of bike lanes, improved parking, medians, pedestrian crossings, and pedestrian countdown timers.
- Construct trail corridors to connect to commercial and recreation centres.
- Update sidewalk standards for wider sidewalks to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters. Retrofit existing sidewalks/construct new sidewalks to wider standards.
- Construct accessible washrooms adjacent to, or in, parks and trail areas. Alternately, install accessible portable toilets in high-use parks.
- Installation of automatic door openers, grab bars and accessible garbage bins.
- Develop, promote, and install pathway/trail etiquette signage.

- Establish memorial bench dedication program to provide seating in parks, neighbourhood centres.
- Provide wheelchair and scooter access at public facilities (e.g., ramps, at-grade entrances).
- Develop indoor walking space with associated programming (through existing facilities, e.g., schools, community halls, gyms).
- Enforce parking by-laws for accessible spaces to restrict use to those with a valid, accessible parking permit.
- Establish by-laws to permit electric mobility aids on pathways and trails.
- Develop Snow Angel Program is recognizing citizens who help their neighbours with snow clearing.
- Establish pedestrian safety communications campaign.
- Develop age-friendly parks to include charging stations for electric wheelchairs, wifi and park equipment.
- Develop campaign to report areas of low lighting and road maintenance.
- Develop prominent signage to identify the location of public washrooms. This may involve a partnership with local businesses that allow the use of public washrooms to non-patrons.
- Provide more defibrillators at municipal spaces and facilities and ensure they are visible.
- Create falls prevention program to educate businesses on how hazards can be minimized.
- Develop urban tree plan in commercial areas to increase shade coverage (could be in partnership with horticultural societies or local businesses).

- Develop and promote education and awareness on proper crosswalk use and driver awareness.
- Increase separation of roadways, pedestrian walkways, and sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety.

Transportation

- Develop parking guide for seniors.
- Develop mature drivers education program (a partnership led by OPP).
- Provide covered cycle and scooter parking at recreation facilities.
- Improved signage at major intersections with LED signs.
- Establish volunteer driver program.
- Prohibit parking in close proximity to crossings to ensure pedestrian visibility.
- Initiate Taxi Coupon Program.
- Develop customer service module to educate private taxi services to enhance customer services to older adults.

Housing

- Zoning By-Law to facilitate independent living.
- Zoning by-law to support multi-family zones permitting diverse housing types.
- Incorporate seniors housing in mixed use housing developments.
- Development of a Secondary Suites Municipal Fee Rebate program that provides funding assistance to homeowners to create secondary suites with affordable

rents. Grant may cover application fees or the costs of upgrades to building and fire codes.

- Develop a registry of home maintenance services, such as ‘senior move’ management specialists for older adults (to help them relocate and/or downsize).

Social Participation

- Establish seniors’ rates for recreation programming.
- Volunteer opportunities at parks and recreation facilities.
- Host annual seniors’ festival.
- Initiate a “Human Library” event that creates an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to act as living books that are made available for loan to readers for conversation.
- Work with 211 to make it more user-friendly for an aging demographic.
- Develop a program involving grocery shopping for seniors by students.
- Develop older adults’ program/activity directory.
- Computer literacy and Internet safety project through the library. Laptops and desktops installed at seniors centres and community centres.
- Promote age-friendly, caregiver-friendly and accessibility features at festivals and events.
- Create a community resource that promotes age-friendly features and attractions for residents and tourists.

Respect and Social Inclusion

- Establish intergenerational recreation and social programs.

- Develop committees and municipal task forces to include older adults.
- Seniors Friendly Business Decal program recognizing local businesses for efforts to support age-friendly environments.
- Daytime recreation programs are focusing on older adults.
- Older adult volunteers at reception desk and/or kiosk at municipal facilities.
- Seniors Award programs.
- Amendment to Zoning Bylaw definition of daycares to include adult caregiving.
- Older adult awareness day with municipal staff to raise awareness of older adult service issues, to improve client satisfaction.
- Develop pre-retirement training module.
- Provision of specialized services and dedicated spaces in community centres, such as intergenerational programming.

Civic Participation and Employment

- Develop mobile polling stations at senior's residences.
- Develop Age-Friendly customer service guidelines, in consultation with local businesses and older adult serving organizations.
- Municipal human resources policies to support non-discrimination.
- Host volunteer fair to promote opportunities for older adults.
- Development of Age-Friendly Professional Development Course for stakeholders.

- The Volunteer Centres of Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph-Wellington, and Cambridge-North Dumfries, for example, have partnered to present a regional training service that includes recruitment and referral of volunteers, as well as professional development opportunities for volunteer leaders. They are part of the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network, which consists of 24 centres across the province serving 313 communities.

Communication and Information

- Provide audio system in Council chambers.
- Deliver education workshops to reduce barriers to participation among seniors.
- Host open house seniors days at municipal facilities and recreation centres to create awareness between municipality and citizens.
- Provide large-print documents.
- Establish information phone line for seniors to address concerns and inquiries through a staff person.
- Provide teletypewriter hearing impaired telephone service.
- Develop newsletters about municipal programs, services, and events for older adults.

Community and Health Services

- Develop older-adult specific education programs on fire safety to maintain fire safety in their homes.
- Establish neighbourhood emergency preparedness programs.
- Training by police regarding scams and frauds affecting seniors.

- Expand coordinated home support and maintenance services to help seniors age in place.

- Establish dedicated subsidy for home making services to help older adults live independently in their homes.

- Develop Home Maintenance Services program for seniors age 65+ living on low income, unable to do basic house or yard work and without family or community assistance. The program provides basic yard work and snow removal, painting, and minor house repairs and housecleaning.

- Low Income Home Safety Assessment.

- Develop Caregiver Resource Guide and e-learning module for caregivers.

- Provide CPR Training Program for older adults.

- Encourage use of a central 311 telephone service to report municipal concerns (over municipal number).

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