



Meeting Date: April 28, 2021

Submitted by: Scott Mairs, Director of Community Services

Report No: CMS-07-2021

Subject: Age Friendly Community Action Plan

Recommendation:

THAT Report CMS-07-2021 re: Age Friendly Community Action Plan project be received;

AND THAT the Province of Ontario's Age Friendly Community Planning Guide appended to Report CMS-07-2021 be received as information.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an update on the Age Friendly Community Action Plan project recently approved through the Inclusive Community Grant program.

Background:

In December 2020, the Province of Ontario opened the Inclusive Community Grants program that looked to offer up to \$2 million to assist communities to become age - friendly by ensuring that the needs of Ontarians of all ages and abilities are considered at every stage of community planning and development.

As noted in the Application Guidelines for this project, inclusive communities create more accessible environments for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Inclusive communities respond to both the opportunities and challenges of an aging population by creating physical and social environments that support independent and active living and enable older adults and people with disabilities to continue contributing to all aspects of community life.

Community leaders and residents in inclusive communities work together to ensure that local policies, programs and services support the social and physical environments that enable all Ontarians to live safe, active and meaningful lives.

Inclusive communities align with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility's [Advancing Accessibility in Ontario framework](#) which aims to make the province more inclusive and accessible for everyone by focusing on four key areas:

1. Breaking down barriers in the built environment
2. Government leading by example
3. Increasing participation in the economy for people with disabilities
4. Improving understanding and awareness about accessibility

Inclusive communities are also Age-Friendly Communities (AFC)-a World Health Organization endorsed planning and evaluation framework that has been adopted internationally and in Canada. The AFC approach fosters local partnerships, allows for local needs assessment and action planning, and engages older adults as well as people with disabilities in its processes.

The World Health Organization identified **eight domains of community life** that overlap and intersect to affect an individual's personal well-being and their independent and active living in physical and social environments:

1. Outdoor spaces and buildings;
2. Transportation;
3. Housing;
4. Respect and inclusion;
5. Social participation;
6. Civic participation and employment;
7. Communication and information; and,
8. Community support and health services.

Analysis:

Staff put forward an application that looked to develop a 3-5 year 'Age Friendly Community Action Plan' to help guide the municipality in becoming a community that supports active, healthy, and engaged living for people through all life stages and abilities, and fosters civic, economic, and social participation. The project will focus on residents over the age of 55 and those with disabilities.

The Middlesex Centre Age Friendly Community Action Plan Project will assess the social and physical environment using the eight World Health Organization (WHO) dimensions of community life affecting older adults who are 55 or older and those with disabilities and will identify priority areas to support the development of an age-friendly Middlesex Centre. The goal of the project is to engage with the community to develop a long-term plan that lays out age-friendly priorities for the municipality to create a healthy and sustainable environment for older adults and those with disabilities today and into the future.

The project objectives are as followed:

1. To assess the 'age-friendliness' of the Municipality of Middlesex Centre and its smaller communities based on the World Health Organization's eight age-friendly community domains.

2. To create a community profile of current Municipal and community initiatives and opportunities and gaps for active, positive aging.
3. Evaluate the needs of the older Adult population in Middlesex Centre
4. To engage and consult with a wide range of seniors and community stakeholder to gain understanding about and to garner support for an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.
5. To increase awareness about the importance of seniors remaining active, healthy and engaged in the community.

The project will see two key outputs:

1. A local needs assessment that identifies opportunities and gaps in services and supports for seniors.
2. An Age Friendly Community Action Plan for Middlesex Centre with prioritized supports and services for seniors which can begin to be implemented in the 2022 budget year.

Ancillary, the project will:

1. Raise awareness about the importance of seniors remaining active, healthy and engaged in the community; and
2. Garner the support of local organizations to ensure the tangible actions in the plan implemented.

The specific outputs will be identified through the need's assessment and action plan development processes. It is expected that the output indicators identified in the plan would be the policies, services and programs to be implemented to create an Age Friendly Community, all of which can be measured by monitoring participation levels.

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings - Design and provide safe pathways, way finding, benches, recreational programming through a barrier free & universal design scope.
2. Transportation - Improve or make available accessible transportation, seek alternative transportation options. Measure the increased percentage of those using alternative transportation.
3. Housing - Promote tools that encourage planners and developers for age friendly housing. Measured by increased number of accessible housing/units.
4. Social Participation - Create a directory of age friendly activities such as cultural, health related programs and increased social engagement and activities.
5. Respect and Social Inclusion - Develop best practices for improving social inclusion for seniors and those with disabilities and other marginalized population.
6. Civic Participation and Employment - Promote Middlesex Centre as a destination for those with disabilities and older adults.
7. Community Information – Provide information about community events or important services that is both readily accessible and in formats that re appropriate for older adults and people with disabilities.

8. Community Support and Health Service - Create age friendly hubs, work with other community services providers to bridge gaps in services.

The CAO will act as the Project Sponsor and the Director of Community Services will be the Project Manager overseeing the project. Monteith-Brown Planning Consultants has been retained to undertake this work on behalf of the Municipality.

Financial Implications:

The Municipality has received grant funding and been approved for \$43,000 to complete this project.

Strategic Plan:

This matter aligns with following strategic priorities:

- Engaged Community
- Responsive Municipal Government
- Sustainable Infrastructure and Services

Attachments:

Appendix – Province of Ontario's Age Friendly Community Planning Guide