



Adults 55+

Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy 2018-2022

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Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy

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Purpose of the Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy

The Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy is intended to provide guidance to the Town of Richmond Hill over the next five years with respect to the planning and delivery of recreation programs and services to residents who are 55 years of age and older. The need for creating this strategy is reflective of the changing demographics related to an aging population. Richmond Hill, like all other communities, is experiencing growth in the number of residents within this age category, and will continue to see growth in this particular demographic over the next few years.

The primary objectives of this strategy are to:

- Work closely with the public, local service providers, current Adult 55+ members, staff and volunteers to better understand the recreation needs of current and future older adult residents
- Assess demand for new and enhanced services through a combination of community engagement opportunities and a review of trends related to the delivery of recreation for this age group.
- Examine existing provision of services and identify gaps
- Provide recommendations centred around the type of programs and services to offer and the method in which to deliver them

Background

History

The McConaghy Seniors Centre officially opened in 1985. The facility was previously an elementary school comprised primarily of class room spaces and office areas. The McConaghy Centre was dedicated to adults who are 55 years of age and older, and was the only municipal facility used at the time to provide a variety of recreation programs and activities to its members. Programs and activities were planned based on a membership model, whereby a nominal annual fee was paid in order to participate in the programs and services that were designed specifically for this age group. Upon opening the facility in 1985, membership numbers were just over 500.

In 1997, the centre underwent a major renovation which included the addition of a large open-concept foyer, dining room, kitchen, multi-purpose room, central reception area, and elevator. It re-opened in 1998 with more programming space available and therefore, more programs and services being offered. The membership increased to just over 700.

Current Operation

Since 1998, population growth and increased demand have resulted in Adults 55+ programming being expanded not only within the McConaghy Centre and but also into other municipal facilities, referred to as satellite locations. Expansion into satellite locations started in 2012, with the opening of the Oak Ridges Community Centre. Since then, additional satellite locations have been added to the membership-based Adults 55+ program schedule, including Langstaff Community Centre, Bayview Hill Community Centre and Rouge Woods Community Centre. The satellite programming concept is a model that allows for programming to be tailored to the specific needs of each community and supports equitable distribution of

services to older adults throughout the Town. Within many GTA communities, there is a growing desire for a more localized model for service delivery, which reinforces the need for a neighborhood-based approach. This enhancement to the program delivery model has proven to be very successful, as demonstrated by the participation statistics noted in Appendix A.

McConaghy Members Council

The McConaghy Members Council is an elected group of volunteers who work with Richmond Hill staff on recreation matters related to the McConaghy Centre, which is considered the hub of 55+ membership based services. This governing body has been in existence since the opening of the McConaghy Centre in 1985.

The purpose of the McConaghy Members Council is to encourage and support opportunities that enable each member of the McConaghy Centre to develop or improve his or her mental, social, cultural and physical wellbeing, and to promote friendship, fellowship and mutual understanding. The Council acts in an advisory capacity to the Older Adult Program Coordinator in regards to financial support, volunteer support, programming and outreach to the community. It consists of an elected Executive and Committee Chair positions, with each member serving a two-year term. This Council has been very valuable in providing advice to staff, promoting activities throughout the community, and in helping to organize and run the various drop-in activities that are offered each week.

Membership Based Adults 55+ Activities

Recreation programs and services offered specifically for residents 55+ years of age are still membership based. By purchasing an Adults 55+ membership residents can participate in registered and drop-in activities, events and special activities, workshops, and outtrips. An annual membership fee is charged and most activities have an additional user fee, with many activities offered free of charge. Current membership numbers exceed 2,400. Residents who are 55 years of age and older who do not wish to purchase a membership have the option to participate in non-member programs and services offered through the Adult programming section.

The current cost of a Richmond Hill Adults 55+ membership is \$24.29 for residents and \$43.72 for non-residents, plus HST. Below is a comparison of Seniors Membership Fees (residents) within York Region. It is noted that seniors services across the region are operated, organized and funded very differently within each municipality and it is difficult to compare fees due to these complexities.

Municipality	Annual Membership Fee – Residents (pre-HST)
Aurora	\$22.12
Markham	\$30.97 - \$70.79 (depending on location)
Newmarket	\$35.00
Vaughan	No membership required for registered programs \$16.00 membership for 55+ drop-in activities (OR pay \$3.50 per drop-in activity)

By purchasing an Adults 55+ membership, Richmond Hill residents receive the following benefits:

- Opportunity to participate in all Adults 55+ programs (approximately 80 classes to choose from each session)
- Opportunity to attend more than 90 weekly drop-in activities at various Richmond Hill community centres
- Reduced fees for dances, outtrips, workshops and special activities
- Opportunity to hold office on the McConaghy Members Council
- Voting privileges at the McConaghy Members Council Annual General Meeting
- Access to the McConaghy Centre lounge and dining area
- Discover a new hobby / skill / talent
- Access to free events and clinics

The Adults 55+ section delivers programs and services either as registered programs or as drop-in program opportunities. Staff design, develop and execute programs based on resident interests and new trends. A registered program is a supervised course whereby residents pre-register for the programs and commit to attend the workshops or series of classes. Most often there is learning and skill development involved in a structured environment and many of the programs are standardized so the same program can be offered in multiple locations. In addition to registered programs, flexible drop-in activities are offered. Drop-in programs offer the ability to participate in a range of recreation activities without having to register beforehand. This provides an element of flexibility for residents' busy schedules. The following chart summarizes the number of opportunities available to adults 55+ members and can be used as a benchmark against future program sessions.

SPRING 2018	Total # Offered	# Offered Weekday, Daytime (M-F, up to 5 p.m.)	# Offered Weekday, Evening (M-F, 5 p.m. +)	# Offered Weekends
Registered Program Opportunities	85	79	5	1
Weekly Drop-in Opportunities	93	64	11	18
Events	13	12	0	1
Daytrips/Outtrips	2	2	0	0
Workshops	17	15	0	2

In addition to being able to participate in town-run activities, members also have the opportunity to participate in activities offered by the Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association. The Town of Richmond Hill entered into a multi-year partnership with Carefirst Seniors a number of years ago and continues to partner with this organization to bring more recreation opportunities to the older adults of Richmond Hill. Through the partnership, Carefirst Seniors are allotted facility space at the Bayview Hill Community Centre for a nominal fee and in turn, they offer a number of recreation programs to anyone who has an Adults 55+ membership. All responsibilities associated with operating the programs are taken care of by Carefirst. Although the programs are available to anyone with a membership, the majority of participants are from the Chinese and Mandarin community. This partnership has been beneficial to both the Town and Carefirst, and to the residents of Richmond Hill as it provides more recreational options to them.

Non-Membership Based Adults 55+ Activities

There are many recreation and social opportunities for all older adult residents to participate in, whether they choose to belong to the Town's Adults 55+ membership or not. Indoor Lawn Bowling and Bocce, designated Older Adult swims, and discounted Fitness Memberships/Swim Admissions/Swim Pass/Theatre

activities (for 65+) are all options. Through other programming sections of the Recreation and Culture Division, there are several adult programs and activities in the fields of sports, arts, fitness, learning and language, dance, skating, aquatics, and theatre. Activities are offered in the form of registered and drop-in programs, workshops, tournaments, and leagues. Residents who are 65 years of age and older receive a 30% discount on most registered program fees.

In addition to opportunities organized and provided directly by the Town, there are a number of local not-for-profit senior's social clubs that operate in Richmond Hill. These clubs also provide opportunities for older adults to participate in various social activities. The Town supports these seniors groups by providing facility space to host their meetings and activities at a 50% subsidy on regular permitting fees. The current list of known seniors social clubs include: Bayview Hill Seniors; Club Unity; Elgin West Italian Seniors Association; Richvale Italian Seniors Club; Oak Ridges Italian Seniors Club; Red Maple Chinese Seniors; Richmond Hill Chinese Seniors Association; Richmond Hill Italian Social & Bocce Club; York Region Indian Seniors Group; York Region Seniors Tamil Centre.

Demographic Profile

Population

Over the past 30 years, Richmond Hill has evolved from a community with rural roots to a thriving economic centre in York Region. The 2016 Census recorded a population of 195,000 in Richmond Hill, with projections suggesting that the population will increase to 242,000 by the year 2031.

Age

In terms of the age profile of Richmond Hill, it is no surprise to learn that, according to 2016 Census information reported on RichmondHill.ca, Richmond Hill's population is aging. The proportion of residents in the 0-14 years and the 15-64 years age groups has been declining since 2006, while the proportion of residents in the 65 years and over age group has increased. In 2011, 11.3% of Richmond Hill's population was 65 years of age or older. In 2016, that population figure has increased to 14.6%. The median age has increased from 37.8 years in 2006, to 39.8 years in 2011, and 40.4 years in 2016. The average age has also increased, from 38.3 years in 2011 to 40.4 years in 2016. (*2016 Census Profile on the Town of Richmond Hill, Release #2*)

The 'Baby Boomer' demographic (currently between the ages of 47 and 65) will be responsible for a significant portion of older adult services over the next twenty or more years. Baby boomers are currently the main component of the 'Pre-retirement Older Adult' category, but this will shift to the 'Active Older Adult' category over the longer-term.

When developing the Adults 55+ strategy, it was important to consider the age profile of Richmond Hill when deciding how to move forward with services for this age group. Per the 2016 Census, approximately 28% of Richmond Hill's population is 55 years of age or older. In addition, over the next five to ten years, there will be approximately 17.5 per cent of people aged 45 -54 who will be turning 55 and eligible for participation in Richmond Hill's 55+ Adult membership, services and programs (*RichmondHill.ca; Demographics and Census*). The "greying" of the population is leading to increased service demands for

older adults, as well as a shift in programming opportunities as the current generation of older adults tends to be more active and have recreation preferences that are different than previous generations of older adults and seniors (*Town of Richmond Hill Recreation Plan, September 2013*)

Income

Income can influence participation in recreational activities whereby higher incomes tend to correlate with higher levels of participation. The correlation is derived from the fact that households having a greater ability to pay for the cost of activities and related costs, such as equipment and travel, are more likely to participate in recreation whereas households with less disposable income may have to seek other alternatives or choose activities that they can reasonably afford (*Town of Richmond Hill Recreation Plan, September 2013*).

The 2016 Census reported that the median income in Richmond Hill was \$88,353. Approximately 43.8% of households in Richmond Hill have incomes greater than \$100,000, and 13.4% of households have incomes greater than \$200,000. On the opposite side, 22.5% of households earn less than \$40,000, and 8.6% earn less than \$20,000 per year. Persons who do not live in an economic family, i.e. those living alone, have a median income of \$32,453. Per the 2016 Census report, a Richmond Hill household is considered low income if its income is below \$44,177.00. Over 30,000 Richmond Hill residents are classified as being low income, which corresponds to 15.9% of the overall population. The proportion of low income residents, which has risen from 12.4% in 2005 to 15.9% in 2016, is higher in two more vulnerable groups: children (ages 0-17) and seniors (ages 65+). (*2016 Census Profile on the Town of Richmond Hill, Release #4*)

Although these income statistics cannot tell us directly how residents 55 years of age and older fit into these categories, the information is valuable to consider as future recreation plans are made.

Ethnicity

The cultural makeup of Richmond Hill is a very diverse one, with 60% of the population identifying as visible minorities, Chinese being the most prominent visible minority population. More than half of Richmond Hill's population are first generation immigrants at 59.5% of the total population, which is a much higher proportion compared to other jurisdictions. First generation immigrants are those who were born in another country and moved to Canada. The most common countries for Richmond Hill immigrants to be from are China (21.6%), Iran (15.6%) and Hong Kong (11.7). (*2016 Census Profile on the Town of Richmond Hill, Release #5*).

Richmond Hill is home to a considerable number of immigrants and newcomers to Canada and is working to effectively plan and operate programs and services in a manner that responds to different cultural backgrounds. This high level of diversification will strongly influence demand for non-traditional programs, services and activities. (*Town of Richmond Hill Recreation Plan, September 2013*).

Recreation Trends - Adults 55+ Population

There are a number of key trends identified through background research that impact older adults' lifestyles and preferences towards recreation. For this report, the following sources of information were utilized to gain a thorough understanding of trends that staff need to be aware of in order to provide the most appropriate and desired opportunities for the 55+ population:

- Research, Trends, and Community Engagement Summary Report, Richmond Hill Parks and Recreation Plans, 2012
- Richmond Hill Recreation Plan, 2013
- Richmond Hill Recreation and Culture Service Delivery Plan, 2013
- Whitby Seniors Strategy, 2014-2018
- Town of Ajax, Seniors and Older Adults Recreational Services Strategy, 2017
- City of Vaughan Older Adult Strategy, 2016

The following trends are applicable to Richmond Hill and have been used in determining the final implementation plan for this report.

1) Increasing ethno-cultural diversity in Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill has a large proportion of visible minorities, the largest group is represented by Chinese descent. Based on trends observed through the GTA, it is anticipated that Richmond Hill will continue to diversify given that visible minorities are often attracted to established ethnic communities and social ties. This high level of diversification will strongly influence demand for non-traditional programs, services and activities. As a result, flexibility in the provision of recreation services in multiple languages should be a key consideration moving forward.

2) Seniors (and especially baby boomers) are the fastest growing demographic in most municipalities.

Similar to communities in the GTA, Richmond Hill is aging as a whole and it is anticipated that this trend will continue. The "greying" of the population will lead to increased service demands for older adults.

3) Seniors are becoming more active and interested in a wider range of activities.

This may indicate less growth in demand for passive activities such as playing cards, although opportunities for socializing are important.

4) There is a wide range of financial means among seniors (some are still working/making good money, while others are on pensions or fixed incomes).

Per the York Region Seniors Strategy (2016), discounts and subsidies based solely on reaching a "senior" age, such as 60 or 65, are left over from a time when a very large share of seniors did

need financial help. York Region seniors, and the boomers who will shortly become seniors, are relatively wealthy compared to others of the same age across Canada. Their affluence will likely continue to grow, because more people plan to work into their 70s and the equity in their homes will increase as prices rise.

Staff believe that these statements can also be applied to Richmond Hill seniors. Past practices of the Richmond Hill Adults 55+ section have been to price programs for older adults at a small subsidy compared to a comparable adult program. However, all local municipal recreation departments, including Richmond Hill, are re-thinking the seniors subsidy approach and considering a change whereby financial support or subsidized programming is provided to residents based on need, and not on age. This will need to be examined closely over the next few years in terms of how to price Adults 55+ recreation programs and services.

5) Volunteerism is changing.

People 55+ are working longer and are using their skills to take on part time paid positions. Many have volunteered in their younger years and when they retire, want to focus more on self-fulfilling opportunities such as learning, health pursuits and travel. Older adults contribute the largest amount of volunteer hours.

There are indications that as baby boomers seek to remain productive in their retirement years they may turn to volunteering and civic engagement although there is concern that as they reach retirement, this group as a whole may not volunteer to the same extent or in the same manner as past generations, and may have different volunteer interests. Today's older adult baby boomer volunteers are more goal-oriented, autonomous, tech-savvy and mobile than previous generations. The challenge will be to offer volunteer work that gives them new experiences, the opportunity to work independently, of having a sense of ownership and responsibility, and many choices. As a result there is significant research directed to formulating strategies to specifically target, promote and retain baby boomers aged 55 and older as volunteers. There is a significant desire among the baby boomers to be engaged in community and social activities and activities that build, promote and support a strong sense of community and social connection. For both baby boomers and seniors, contributing to the community is the primary motivation for volunteering. Almost all baby boomer and senior volunteers report "making a contribution to the community" as their reason for volunteering.

6) "One Size Does Not Fit All" Recreation Programming

Planning for a group of people that range in age between 55 and 99 years old can be challenging as there are significant variations in interests, values and behaviours between the different ages. Those just entering this age range are more interested in maintaining an active lifestyle and are not necessarily interested in joining a senior centre. The "younger" older adults (i.e. the 55 to 65 year old residents) population has begun to have more leisure time on their hands due to early retirement and they are looking for active and stimulating recreational/learning activities to fill their time.

A study done recently by the City of Vaughan suggests that it is common practice in the field of population studies to examine groupings, such as generations, to assist in analysis and research. The report suggests considering approaching municipal recreation development by distinguishing between the baby boomer generation and those in the older age groups, often referred to as the "traditional" seniors.

While there is still a need for the traditional older adult programs in community centres, older adults are registering for adult programs and participating in mainstream fitness classes, fitness centres and using parks for active and passive pursuits. There will be a large increase in the number of older adults, particularly those currently in the baby boom generation and there will be differing needs for the different age segments of the older adult population. It is unlikely that the younger older adults will pursue many of the activities of the traditional senior (e.g. playing cards, shuffleboard), rather they will demand more active opportunities (e.g. yoga, old-timers hockey leagues, hiking, fitness, etc.) as advances in medical technology increase longevity of the human body. Nonetheless, there will be a time when the older adult requires more traditional seniors' activities when their bodies are physically unable to keep up with the rigours of active recreation. Effective older adult recreational programming will need to include a range of programs and activities at various skill levels that not only reflect physical ability but also the great range and variety of interests. This means that there must be variety and flexibility in planning and delivering recreation services, programs and activities to this age group in the future.

- 7) The baby boom generation is participating in active pursuits (particularly exercise and fitness and outdoor sports) longer into their older years than did the previous generation of seniors.

With more age appropriate service offerings and fitness classes geared toward this age group, such as water aerobics, yoga, pilates, low impact exercise and sport, meditation, relaxation and wellness classes, it is anticipated that a greater number of baby boomers will participate in fitness activities as older adults than previous generations.

- 8) Emerging Program Interests

Novelty and Adventure Based Programs

Many baby boomers have a greater desire for novelty, escape, and authentic experiences than previous cohorts of older adults and as such are willing participants in new and adventurous forms of leisure and are opting for more physically challenging experiences.

Increased desire for continuous education and learning opportunities.

Many baby boomers have attained higher levels of formal education (as well as income levels) than previous cohort groups, and now have the time to enrich their lives through the gaining of knowledge to satisfy their needs for self-expression, creativity, and internal growth. This is expected to result in an increase in participation in cultural, educational and learning activities. Cultural and education programs and activities such as attending theatre, museums, art galleries, historic sites, art and artistic programs, language classes, instructional (acting, painting, sculpture, photography, etc.) and educational classes (architecture, heritage, art, history, politics, etc.) are expected to be popular leisure activities for this age group in the future.

Technology

Older adults from among the baby boom generation want to understand more about emerging technology. Entry level and progressive instruction around these technologies is of interest to this group of older adults. Canadian baby boomers are nearly twice as likely to use the internet compared to seniors.

Environmental Activities

There is heightened interest in environmental activities and learning, including an interest in learning about local flora and fauna particularly among the population 55 years of age and older. Activities that are increasingly popular among this age group include environmental and outdoor experiences such as birding, hiking, scenic walks, nature trails, nature appreciation and interpretation, and environmental learning. Older adults are also investing more in their individual environments as gardening and home landscaping grow in popularity.

9) Evening and Weekend Programming

Demand among the older adult age group for program and facility use during typical prime time hours (on evenings and weekends) will increase. Baby boomers tend to work into their late sixties (or beyond), and indicate a desire for programming after work (weekday evenings), or on weekend days.

10) Drop-in and unstructured activities

It is expected that older adults will increasingly prefer a drop-in approach to participation in activities. Drop-in activities are generally more convenient and flexible, and have become more appealing to people of all ages. The increased desire for drop-in opportunities will result in a programming shift away from traditional registered, scheduled recreation activities towards programs based on a shorter duration and activities that are more informal, casual and self-scheduled. The demand for self-scheduled leisure time for this age group has increased significantly over the past few years in Richmond Hill, as demonstrated in Appendix A.

11) Being mindful of removing barriers to participation in recreational activities

Across the province, certain under-represented and vulnerable groups (such as seniors), and persons with disabilities have historically faced difficulties in accessing programs and/or facilities. Service providers need to be mindful of reducing or eliminating barriers to participation in recreation. Barriers to access include:

- Physical access to a facility.
This barrier may exist for persons of all ages, but is something to especially be considered in the 55+ portfolio due to mobility issues associated with an aging population. Many older adults will acquire disabilities as they age (e.g. mobility, dementia, etc.) that will need to be accommodated through accessible transportation and program sites;
- Financial
Baby boomers are more prepared for retirement from a financial perspective than many previous generations. Some municipalities are moving away from discounts for older adults to

fairly pricing their programs and services along with offering subsidies for those who have an inability to pay due to lower income levels.

- Awareness of services (language barriers, maximize the role of technology)
- Social stigmas
- Transportation and ease of access

In addition to the trends mentioned, there are themes of service delivery that staff need to be cognizant of when planning future programs. During the community engagement process undertaken in 2012 for the creation of the Richmond Hill Parks and Recreation Master Plans, a number of common themes emerged from the various stakeholders when they were asked about what they would like to see in future parks and recreation facilities. It should be noted that the stakeholders who provided feedback resulting in the formation of the following themes were from all age groups and not just from those 55 years of age and older. However, the themes identified below have been taken into consideration when determining how to improve overall service delivery to older adults.

1) Fostering inclusivity

More inclusive and non-traditional opportunities are being sought because of diversifying age, ethnic and income structures. As a result, Richmond Hill should continue to be open to new ideas for spaces and programs in parks and recreation facilities, while designing programs to reduce social and physical barriers.

2) Improving awareness and communication

Through the community engagement processes of the Parks and Recreation Master Plans, many of those consulted indicated that a lack of awareness exists with respect to existing programs, therefore developing or improving on an overall communication strategy should be considered.

3) Community engagement

Building on the theme of improved communication, continued engagement of stakeholders in the planning of recreation services is believed to benefit all involved in any specific project to ensure success.

4) Creative partnerships

Collaborating with community partners and other organizations/agencies to build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones for the purpose of reducing overlap, eliminating gaps, and maximizing limited resources should be considered through all phases of service delivery planning.

Community Engagement Process

In order to develop this strategy, staff undertook a community engagement process providing a variety of opportunities for adults 50 years of age and older to provide their feedback on current and future recreation services and activities. Staff chose to invite people who were not yet 55 years of age as they wanted to hear what the up-and-coming older adults had to say about recreational services. Any resident of that age group was invited to engage with staff through one or more of the following opportunities:

- 1) Two (2) public meetings/discussions
- 2) Survey - for 55+ Members
- 3) Survey – for age 50+ residents, non members
- 4) Three (3) focus group discussions with the following groups of people:
 - a. Other local Seniors Service Providers
 - b. Richmond Hill Seniors Clubs and the McConaghy Members Council
 - c. Adults 55+ Volunteers

A total of 806 people participated in the community engagement opportunities, with 79 people participating in the various public meetings and focus group discussions and 727 people completing the surveys. The following information provides further details about each process and the results obtained.

Public Meetings (36 participants)

Two public meetings were held, with a total of 36 people attending. Residents 50 years of age or older were invited to attend. The public meetings involved a SWOT analysis so staff could get a better understanding of the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the adult 55+ programming section.

Participants shared their thoughts on the following:

- What they felt the Town's strengths were as a recreation provider;
- Barriers to participating in Town recreation programs, as well as gaps in recreation service delivery;
- Opportunities for the Town to improve in service delivery for Adults 55+ (e.g. what are their individual recreation interests? What are other service providers offering that they would like to see the Town offer?); and
- What are the perceived threats that may prevent a) staff from providing the desired services and b) participants from partaking in the programs and services offered.

What We Heard at the Public Meetings:

Strengths of the Adults 55+ Recreation Section (What is done well?)

- Good variety of programs and services offered at a variety of locations
- Staff communicate well and are welcoming/Good customer service

- Fees are affordable
- Satisfying volunteer experiences
- Welcome Ambassador program is great
- Good communication through email blasts
- Dedicated facility for adults 55+
- Good opportunities for socialization/intergenerational socialization as well (i.e. 60 year olds and 90 year olds)/young seniors helping older seniors
- Community bus comes to the McConaghy Centre
- Provision of facility space for other seniors groups
- Inclusive

Weaknesses of the Adults 55+ Recreation Section (Gaps in Service / Barriers to Participating / Areas Needing Improvement)

- Promotion of programs and services/benefits of joining the membership to the general public (especially those 50 – 55 years of age)
- Transportation to some facilities (e.g. Oak Ridges CC, Rouge Woods CC, Bayview Hill CC). Seniors Service Providers indicated this is an issue throughout York Region.
- Volunteer database not user friendly for this age group
- Volunteer opportunities not promoted well enough
- Need more evening and weekend activities
- Need more technology programs; technical frustrations with online services
- More pickleball opportunities, including outdoor play and intergenerational/family play
- Floor surface in McConaghy MPR needs upgrading for sports
- Town website not user friendly for this age group
- Facility rental rates are high for seniors clubs
- Some accessibility concerns (e.g. not enough accessible parking spots at McConaghy)
- More outreach needed to newcomer seniors
- Not enough younger seniors volunteering, for the Town or the seniors clubs
- Some programs difficult to cater to all ages between 55 and 90 (e.g. fitness classes)
- Some seniors clubs lose their facility rental space over the summer months
- Language barriers/Newcomers needs

Opportunities for the Adults 55+ Recreation Section (What changes can be made? What are the Trends?)

- Connect 50 – 55 year olds with the seniors through volunteering
- Improve promotion: emails, Facebook, blogs, OnRichmondHill, signage, through other seniors groups
- Recruit junior seniors to assist senior seniors
- Collaborate with other service providers to find solutions to issues
- Expand programs to other non-Town facilities (e.g. churches, libraries)
- Assist local seniors clubs with promotion/membership recruitment/lower facility rental rates
- Expand programming to evenings and weekends
- Facilitate better connections between seniors clubs, seniors service providers and residents

Threats for the Adults 55+ Recreation Section (Challenges and Issues):

- Increasing membership numbers may result in problems with staffing resources, facility space availability/suitability, overcrowding
- Funding availability to implement recommendations
- Personal finances available to residents to pay for services (increased cost of living)
- Inappropriate facility spaces (not always the best fit for the activity)
- Competition (e.g. churches offer free programs; competition amongst seniors clubs)
- Balancing the need of the younger senior vs. the older senior
- Decrease in people wanting to volunteer
- Availability of qualified instructors to lead programs for the age range

Surveys

Two surveys were made available to older adults in the community. One was developed for Adults 55+ members and the other was developed for non-members. All questions were identical, with the member survey containing an additional section of questions related to satisfaction levels of current services. The surveys were available on-line, as well as in paper format. The answers and feedback received through the paper copies were input electronically by staff and volunteers so that all results were compiled electronically. The final electronic results were able to be tabulated according to the age of the respondents, using the following age categories:

- 50 – 54 years of age
- 55 – 59 years of age
- 60 – 64 years of age
- 70 - 79 years of age
- 50 – 55 years of age
- 80 years of age and older

A copy of the 55+ Membership survey can be found in Appendix B and a copy of the Non-Member survey can be found in Appendix C

Survey - for 55+ Members (518 completed)

What We Heard about the Satisfaction Level of Current Services – Member Survey

The survey for members included a section about how satisfied they are with current levels of service including satisfaction with location of programs, program quality and variety, facility hours/cleanliness/locations, affordability of services, and approachability and knowledge of staff and volunteers. The vast majority of respondents across all age groups indicated a rating of “very satisfied” and “satisfied” for all questions. Upon reviewing various comments made by survey respondents, the following areas of dissatisfaction will be considered by staff. However, it is important to note that each comment

listed below was made by no more than 5 people, demonstrating the current service levels are meeting the needs of participants.

Points of dissatisfaction were related to:

- lack of programs during evenings and weekends
- pricing of outtrips, workshops, drop-in activities and exercise programs (these comments were more prominent in the 60+ age categories)
- cleanliness of facility (particularly floors during exercise classes)
- inconsistent service at the front desk of the various program locations
- meeting the needs of various age groups in an exercise class
- limited parking at some sites (i.e. McConaghy Centre on busy days)

Survey – for age 50+ residents, non members (209 completed)

General Highlights of What We Heard from Non Members:

The following are some highlights of responses provided by non-members.

- Still working full time so can't attend daytime programs
- Across all age groups, the majority of respondents said they have not participated in any Richmond Hill programs in the last year. This can indicate a couple of things: this survey reached people not currently in our registration system (a good thing); there is potential to tap into a number of people who have not participated with us
- When asked why they are not participating in recreation programs with Richmond Hill, the majority of responses were as follows: they are not aware of the programs offered; they don't have time, or they participate in recreation programs with other organizations. 33% of respondents between the age of 65 to 69 indicated that price of programs was a reason for not participating and 50% of respondents 80 years of age or older said they cannot get to the program locations
- When asked when they prefer to participate in recreation programs, the majority of respondents age 50 – 59 want weekday evenings or weekend day time programs. Respondents age 60 – 64 just slightly prefer weekday daytime activities over weekday evening or weekend programming. Respondents from 65 years of age and older primarily prefer weekday daytime programming.

Summary of Survey Responses From Both Members and Non-Members

General comments / themes determined from findings from ALL age groups, from both surveys

- Need to focus on programming in the south end of Richmond Hill
- More evening and weekend programming is required to accommodate members or potential members who are still working or not retired fully
- Need for computer programs
- Need for more brain games to keep their mind active
- Different outtrips (dinner theatre)

- More events (comedy shows)
- Older adults want to learn how to get started in a sport for example: Pickleball / Volleyball / Badminton (want to learn a new skill)
- Need for photography programs
- Need to look at how we advertise Fitness programs. Descriptions need to be evaluated to ensure it is clear as to what will be achieved in each program
- Need more engaging/social programs (afternoon teas highly recommended)
- Very happy with the customer service received
- Very happy with the programs that are offered

Summary of Survey Responses From Both Members and Non-Members Per Age Category

General comments / themes determined from findings, specific to each age category

54 years or younger (51 respondents)

Interested in

- Arts programs (e.g. creative writing, stain glass)
- Team sports
- Balance exercise programs
- Aging brain activities
- Workshops related to personal health (e.g. healing with herbs, probiotics and digestive care)
- Workshops related to gardening and floral workshops

Preferred communication/marketing venues, in order of preference:

- Adults 55+ Newsletter
- Flyers and Pamphlets
- Community Recreation Guide

Reason they participate in recreation programs

- To socialize with people
- To keep my mind active
- To make fulfilling friendships
- To develop a healthy lifestyle

55 – 59 years (122 respondents)

Interested in:

- Lecture series, workshops, speakers, conversation café

- Higher energy programs
- Learning a new skill
- Photography programs
- Better out trips (willing to pay for it)
- Meditation
- Staying physically fit
-

Preferred communication/marketing venues, in order of preference:

- Community Recreation Guide
- Adults 55+ Newsletter
- Town Website

Reason they participate in recreation programs:

- To stay physically fit
- To develop a healthy lifestyle
- To keep mind active
- To learn a new skill

60-64 years (145 respondents)

Interested in:

- Fitness programs with definitive goals
- Learning a new skill such as music, arts, and language

Preferred communication/marketing venues, in order of preference:

- Community Recreation Guide
- Adults 55+ Newsletter
- Flyers and Pamphlets

Reason they participate in recreation programs:

- To develop a healthy lifestyle
- To stay physically active
- To socialize with people
- To keep mind active

65-69 years (139 respondents)

Interested in:

- Educational programs
- Becoming involved in social programs (e.g. discussion groups)
- Theatre out trips
- Meditation and Pilates

Preferred communication/marketing venues, in order of preference:

- Community Recreation Guide
- Adults 55+ Newsletter
- Town Website

Reason they participate in recreation programs:

- To develop a healthy lifestyle
- To stay physically fit
- To socialize with people

70-79 years (154 respondents)

Interested in:

- Staying physically active and involved in social opportunities
- Keeping their mind engaged by attending speaker series and workshops
- More programs focused on brain health, balance and heart health
- Craft programs

Preferred communication/marketing venues, in order of preference:

- Community Recreation Guide
- Adults 55+ Newsletter
- Flyers and Pamphlets

Reason they participate in recreation programs

- To socialize with people
- To stay physically fit

- To keep mind active
- To develop a healthy lifestyle

80 years or older (58 respondents)

Interested in:

- The social aspects of the McConaghy Centre
- Playing games
- Physically active programs and programs on balance
- Workshops (e.g. crafts, computers)
- Digital Photography
- Meditation

Preferred communication/marketing venues, in order of preference:

- Community Recreation Guide
- Adults 55+ Newsletter
- Flyers and Pamphlets

Reason they participate in recreation programs:

- To socialize with people
- To stay physically fit
- To keep mind active
- To accomplish something worthwhile

Focus Group Discussions (39 participants)

Three specific focus group discussions were held with individuals and organizations that staff felt were key stakeholders in the development of the Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy. The three groups of people that were invited to meet with staff were:

- Other Local Seniors Service Providers
- Richmond Hill Seniors Clubs and the McConaghy Members Council
- Adult 55+ Volunteers

During these focus group discussions, staff led the participants through a SWOT analysis to get each groups perspective on what the Town does well in providing recreation services to older adults and what could be improved upon.

What We Heard from the Other Local Seniors Service Providers

In trying to determine future plans that should be considered when developing and implementing recreation services for older adults, staff felt it was important to meet with other service providers who work with or have contact with Richmond Hill residents from this age group. Service providers that had expertise in the health and wellbeing of seniors were invited to come together and discuss what they felt were the barriers and gaps for adults 55+ years of age to access and participate in Richmond Hill's recreation programs and services.

Staff focused on inviting nonprofit organizations for this session. Twenty-two organizations were invited, with the following six service providers represented at this discussion: Spectrum Healthcare; Living Assistance Services; Better Living Health and Community Services; CHATS (Community Home Assistance to Seniors); York Region Police; and the Richmond Hill Library. During the meeting, participants ran through a SWOT analysis, evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for seniors wishing to access recreation activities, or other seniors' services, in Richmond Hill. The following information was revealed:

Strengths (What works well?)

- Richmond Hill is a welcoming community
- The Town is proactive and reaches out to the community on a regular basis
- Good variety of recreation opportunities offered by the Town, with both registered and drop-in options
- Adults 55+ fees are affordable
- Cultural diversity of the community

Weaknesses (Gaps in Service / Barriers to Participating / Areas Needing Improvement)

- Transportation is a barrier, particularly accessible transportation (this was identified as a region wide problem)
- Limited evening and weekend programming for those not retired yet and/or for those who are providing respite care or babysitting of grandchildren during the day
- Language can be a barrier to getting started in a program
- Adult day programs are needed for people with dementia
- Seniors groups lose daytime Town facility space over the summer months
- Not reaching seniors who are newcomers, or are on a low or fixed income, or have mobility/health issues

Opportunities (What changes can be made?)

- Agencies should team up together to provide transportation (shared busses?)
- Establish stronger connections between the Town and Service Providers in order to a) learn from each other, b) refer clients to each other's services, and c) work together on lobbying governments for increased funding

- Offer more evening and weekend program opportunities
- Work with other groups to provide coordinated programs and services

Threats (Challenges and Issues):

- Facility space availability to expand into evening and weekend programming
- Communicating to a language-diverse community (resulting in residents staying within their own cultural group)
- Ability to pay for programs and services

What We Heard from the McConaghy Members Council and local Seniors Clubs

A focus group discussion was also held with local Richmond Hill Seniors Social Clubs and the McConaghy Members Council. Representatives from 14 clubs/groups were invited to participate, with 7 groups actually being represented at the meeting. As was the case with the other focus group meetings, participants were guided through a SWOT analysis and were asked to provide feedback as a provider of service to Richmond Hill seniors. The SWOT analysis for this group was focused on assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats these social clubs face in providing opportunities that meet the social, physical and/or mental well-being needs of seniors.

The following are some highlights of what was discussed:

Strengths (What are your clubs strengths in providing social, physical and/or mental well- being opportunities for Richmond Hill seniors? What is Richmond Hill doing well to support seniors and/or support the services you provide?)

- Seniors social clubs are providing social opportunities / opportunities to develop friendships/relationships; opportunities to be involved and increase self confidence
- Volunteers within clubs are helping to drive other members to meetings/socials
- Facility space is being made available to seniors clubs
- Town offers a good variety of programs and outtrips
- Public transit bus comes into the McConaghy Centre
- Membership fees for Club 35 and McConaghy are reasonable
- All clubs and the Town provide volunteer opportunities to keep seniors engaged with the community
- Town allows for opportunity to discuss issues and provides good staff support in the community centres

Weaknesses (Gaps in Service / Barriers to Participating / Areas Needing Improvement)

- More program opportunities are needed at satellite locations
- Need evening and weekend programming

- Better promotion needed to the general public (promotion that provides reasons as to why this age group should participate; promotion that we are not just a seniors centre)
- Need better communication about volunteer opportunities; connect younger seniors with older seniors
- Language is a barrier to understanding what the Town offers and to getting started in programs/following program instructions
- Older seniors have difficulty using technology to access online information
- Facility rental rates are high for senior community groups
- Parking is an issue at the McConaghy Centre (not enough accessible parking; spaces are reduced with snow pile up)
- Public transportation – difficult to get to satellite facilities

Opportunities (*What changes can be made?*)

- Partner with community groups or service providers to provide programs and services
- Use other community centres and churches
- Offer evening and weekend programs; share program space with adult programs
- Promote 55+ programs and services to adults (for themselves in the future, and also so they can promote them to their parents, whom they may be caring for)
- Consider a separate publication for 55+ programs (Community Recreation Guide is too big)
- Identify different marketing strategies for younger seniors and older seniors
- Town could facilitate connections between social clubs
- Recruit volunteers who speak different languages
- Establish lower facility rental rates for seniors clubs
- Encourage ride sharing to reduce parking spots needed
- Connect seniors and volunteer drivers via appropriate service providers

Threats (*i.e. challenges and issues that your club has in delivering your services or that residents have in participating in your clubs or Town programs?*)

- Current programming is near or at capacity
- Limited availability of facility space for program expansion
- Younger seniors don't see themselves fitting in with a seniors program
- Lack of face to face engagement and recruitment of 55+ volunteers
- Language barriers will keep people in isolation or unaware of what is offered
- Public transit is not fulfilling all needs
- Funding issues for seniors clubs (staying sustainable). Grants are challenging to complete as they have many restrictions
- Competition amongst seniors social clubs (competing for members, facility space, etc.)
- Competition with other groups (e.g. churches offer free programs)

What We Heard from the Adults 55+ Volunteers

The Adults 55+ portfolio currently has approximately 80 active volunteers assist with the delivery of various recreation programs and services. Volunteers help with convening drop-in programs, providing new members with an orientation, delivering a lunch program, and assisting with various events throughout the year. These volunteers range in age from 55 to 90 years old. Twenty-six volunteers participated in the discussion.

The following information are some highlights of what the current volunteers told staff about their volunteer experiences and the Town's volunteer program :

Strengths (What is done well?):

- Volunteer information is accessible and listed online and in the Community Recreation Guide
- The Town seeks feedback from its volunteers
- Welcome Ambassadors feel that their volunteerism is worthwhile and satisfying because they are assisting new members.
- Flexibility of hours
- Roles are not rigidly defined; roles can be flexible in order to accommodate volunteers
- Seniors working for seniors

Weaknesses (Gaps in Services, Barriers to Participating & Areas Needing Improvement):

- Language barriers between volunteers and participants
- Volunteers are needed after regular business hours
- More training and /or tool kits needed to better empower the volunteers
- Lack of follow up with lead volunteers who have requested more volunteers for their teams
- Online processes related to the volunteer program are difficult to manage if volunteer does not have a computer
- Summer time slow down (not as many volunteer opportunities available)

Opportunities (What changes can be made?)

- Current volunteers are saying they can take on more responsibility – use their skills and talents
- Volunteers want more training, specifically in the following areas: integrating new participants into programs and other services offered; steps volunteers should take if an emergency occurs in their program; how to support participants who have special needs or whose first language is not English
- Offer some registered programs (e.g. line dancing) as a drop-in option, led by volunteers. This will provide more programming options and more volunteer options
- Evening/Weekend programming led by volunteers
- Ask volunteers for their ideas regarding programming and other services, and where volunteers can help out

- Inform volunteers of other volunteer opportunities associated with the Town, and volunteer opportunities with other organizations
- Enhance the drop-in program schedule, using volunteers

Threats (Challenges and Issues):

- Health of the population: not enough 55+ volunteers for programs as this age demographic increases in number
- Staffing resources: not enough time to oversee and manage more volunteers (potential solution: volunteers manage volunteers)
- Facility space availability to enhance program opportunities

In the membership survey, members were asked to tell us how satisfied they were with volunteers, specifically in the following areas: approachability and friendliness; assistance in meeting the members' needs; and knowledge about services and activities. More than 95% of respondents indicated they were very satisfied or satisfied in all of these areas. Based on additional comments received, one area that could be improved upon is equipping volunteers with more knowledge about the various programs and services offered by Richmond Hill. This is also an area of improvement the volunteers themselves identified. Overall, it appears that members are very pleased with the volunteers and find them to be very friendly and helpful.

Recommendations

A number of key areas of focus emerged throughout the planning process undertaken to develop the Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy. The following eight Service Delivery Focus Areas are reflective of community input provided through the process, as well as the research undertaken in terms of demographics and trends, and provide the framework for the development of the Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan can be found in Appendix D, with the following text providing more detailed analysis of each focus area.

Service Delivery Focus Areas

1. Program Delivery
2. Community Partnerships
3. Communications and Promotion
4. Volunteer Development
5. Membership Structure
6. Fees
7. Inclusion
8. Responsible Management

Program Delivery

The majority of recommendations arising from the community engagement process related to various aspects of program options and program delivery. This section provides highlights of some of the most common themes identified when reviewing the material gathered through the community engagement processes and research.

Generally speaking, there is an identified need for more evening and weekend activities. This was clearly identified by the younger Older Adults as many of them are still working in either a full time or part time capacity. Creating more opportunities during these time periods could also potentially result in further growth of membership numbers, as the membership would become more appealing to those between the age of 55 and 65. Change is currently being made in this regard, and further enhancements to offering evening and weekend programming will continue to be a program delivery strategy for staff.

Several new program ideas were expressed through the survey and staff will explore all of the suggested options and implement where possible. There was a clear desire, however, for more programs and activities related to learning how to use current technology. Respondents want to be better educated on how to use mobile devices, how to connect with their family and friends through social media, how to take photos on their phones and upload/download/edit them, how to make online reservations, etc.

A good variety of fitness programs is still desired by many respondents. Suggestions were made related to offering a wide range of fitness or active living programs but also being aware of varying fitness level needs and abilities of the participants (i.e. participants between the age of 55 and, for example, 85). Staff will work towards offering activities that will meet the different needs of this broad age group, and will work on revising program descriptions to ensure more clarity for the participant about the fitness level they can expect in the program they register in.

Other common themes in terms of programing suggestions were:

- Providing activities that help keep minds active and engaged. This can be accomplished by introducing participants to various "brain games" and by continuing to offer learning and development-type workshops.
- Delivering more programs in the south end of Richmond Hill
- Offering programs that focus on learning a new sport
- Offering new art and creative-type programs (particularly photography, gardening, and floral workshops)
- Offering more social programs that allow participants to be engaged with each other
- Provide a wide range of different types of activities, for varying skill levels

Community Partnerships

The service providers that participated in the focus group discussion planned specifically for them felt it was a good use of time to get like-minded people together and get a better understanding of the services each provide and the challenges they feel seniors face in the community. Per the 2013 Service Delivery Plan, past and current partnerships within the Recreation and Culture Division have demonstrated an ability to increase opportunities for residents, with little burden to the taxpayer. Adults 55+ staff will continue to build on the community partnership model by performing more thorough research about other local seniors-serving organizations and how other municipalities are partnering with similar organizations to bring more recreation and health and wellness opportunities to this age group. Working with such organizations will help to ensure a more efficient delivery system of recreation services, and services that contribute to the overall well-being of Richmond Hill Adults 55+.

Continued partnering with Carefirst Seniors will also remain a priority as this existing partnership has proven to be very successful over the last several years, especially in meeting the recreation needs of Richmond Hill's largest proportion of visible minorities (i.e. those of Chinese descent).

Communications and Promotions

When participants were asked how they would like to find out about recreation and leisure programs offered by Richmond Hill, the top three responses were the Community Recreation Guide, the Richmond Hill website, and the Adult 55+ Newsletter. Staff will continue to utilize these three promotional tools, but will also continue to produce flyers and posters, and post items to social media. Twenty-five percent of non-member respondents said they'd like to see promotion on Facebook, whereas Facebook was only chosen by 14% of members as a desired means of communication. Social media venues that are permitted to be used per corporate standards will be utilized as they may attract more non-members to our services. Asking community partners to distribute promotional materials to their clients will continue to be a focus as well, as those organizations may be coming in contact with people that are not aware of what the Town has to offer.

Based on community input, the following service level areas need to have better promotion and/or clearer communication.

Fee Assistance Program

The Community Services Department offers a fee assistance program to residents who may not be able to participate in recreation due to financial circumstances. One of the survey questions asked was in regards to current pricing of adult 55+ programs. The vast majority of member respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the affordability of adult 55+ programs, outtrips, and events. Less than 3% of members indicated they were very dissatisfied. Twenty-two percent of non-member respondents said they do not participate in Richmond Hill's recreation programs because of the price of programs. Overall, the respondents indicated that affordability of current programs and services is not a major concern however,

staff recognizes the value of implementing a better communication system whereby the public, and this age group in particular, becomes more aware of the availability of the Fee Assistance Program.

Program Descriptions

Based on comments received, staff will consider further revising program descriptions to either make it more clear to the participant about what they can expect in a program (e.g. various Fitness and Active living program descriptions) or how the program may benefit them (e.g. “keep your mind active while enjoying new brain games”).

Volunteer Development

Some very positive feedback was received from 55+ members about the current volunteers and positive feedback was also received from the volunteers about the experiences they are having by volunteering their time in the Adults 55+ section. Generally speaking, the volunteer program is working well within this section however, there is always room for improvement. Current volunteers are looking for more training to better empower them in assisting staff, better communication systems between themselves and staff, continuous volunteer opportunities in all seasons, and less complicated online processes.

Based on the trends research, staff will also need to give some serious thought in terms of how to retain existing volunteers who are aging, and how to recruit younger volunteers who may not be as readily available and who may be looking for a different type of experience than current volunteers. Per the research reports compiled for the Parks and Recreation Master Plans, volunteerism is on the decline. This is a concern as volunteers will continue to play an essential role in the 55+ section as program and activity options continue to grow and Richmond Hill tries to keep user costs reasonable.

Adults 55+ staff and Volunteer Development staff will need to work together on these issues and develop plans of action that will result in a strong volunteer force for the 55+ section.

Membership Structure

Since opening the McConaghy Centre in 1985, participation in the activities offered to older adults has always been dependent on having a membership. Thirty-plus years later, a membership model still exists, with more than 2400 current members.

Although membership structure was not specifically addressed through the engagement processes undertaken in 2017, staff is currently reviewing the Adults 55+ membership model that has been in existence for several years. As described previously, the majority of Adults 55+ programs and activities that are planned are only available to those people who have an Adults 55+ membership. Several factors have contributed to re-thinking this model including, lower participation rates in the adult programming section, different needs of an aging population and in particular the baby boomer generation, and more emphasis on investigating ways to maximize staff and financial resources that are currently available to programming

staff. As part of the work plan developed for this Adults 55+ Strategy, a thorough review of the current membership model will be undertaken to ensure we are moving forward in a way that will meet the varying and diverse needs of the community.

Fees

As mentioned previously, the vast majority of Adults 55+ member respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the affordability of adult 55+ programs, outtrips, and events, with 22% of non-member respondents indicating they do not participate in Richmond Hill's recreation programs because of the price of programs. Although affordability of current programs and services does not appear to be a major barrier, staff consistently benchmark fees with other local municipalities. To date, Richmond Hill's fees appear to be very reasonable in comparison. However, people within the age range of 55 to 99 will obviously be living in various financial situations and therefore, consideration needs to be given as to how to best accommodate those varying situations.

The 2016 User Fee and Subsidy Policy for the Recreation and Culture Division recommends that the division implement a pricing approach of all recreation and culture programs and services that is based on levels or categories of service. The two recommended categories that primarily affect the programs and services offered to the older adult population are set in accordance with the following principles:

- Category 1 - Programs or services that provide or support basic recreation opportunities for which the broadest range of residents should have access as a means of facilitating essential motor skill development, technical and creative abilities should warrant the greater subsidy. Examples of these types of programs are basic introductory programs for older adults and facility rentals by community older adult groups.
- Category 2 - Not all programs provided are considered "basic" services for which the municipality has a primary responsibility. These types of programs should be priced at full cost recovery. Examples of these types of programs, as they relate to this strategy, are intermediate and advanced programs for older adults.

Staff will take these recommendations into consideration as they continue to establish user fees for the various services offered. Staff will also consider the feasibility of offering different pricing structures for different age categories and will also be more intentional about promoting low cost and no cost recreation options to the 55+ population. A more intentional approach will also be taken to promote the existing Fee Assistance Program, as mentioned previously. These measures will all be taken with the purpose of ensuring that all residents, regardless of financial circumstances, have quality recreation options available to them.

Inclusion

The Town has a strong belief that recreation facilities, programs and services need to be designed to include all residents. There are many reasons why an older adult may feel excluded from participating in the programs and services offered including, but not limited to: a disability; low income; ethnicity; social isolation; and gender identity. These are all potential barriers to participation, for any resident of any age.

Based on the research conducted and the results of the community engagement processes, the areas of inclusion that staff will primarily address through the implementation plan are related to language barriers, lack of handicapped parking spaces at program facilities, and barriers (perceived or real) associated with physical abilities. Feedback received about affordability of programs and services will be addressed under the service delivery focus area of fees. By focusing some attention on aspects of inclusion, the Adults 55+ program and service delivery framework will be strengthened.

Responsible Management

In order to ensure that the Town is delivering quality opportunities for the older adult population, both now and in the near future when this population will continue to grow in numbers, there are two very important tasks that need to be undertaken. The first task is one that will need to be done on a continuous and regular basis and that is continuing to conduct needs assessments. The exercises undertaken for the writing of this strategy need to be repeated over the next several years. It is imperative to continually ask older adults what their recreation needs and wants are, as those will change as each member of that population continues to age. This strategy is meant to cover a five-year period of time and should be updated in 2023 to ensure that staff are heading in the right direction. Within the next five-year period though, staff will continue to benchmark services and stay abreast of current trends, as well as provide more informal opportunities for residents to provide input and feedback on what they would like to see offered.

In addition to regularly asking for feedback from the community, a responsible act of management is to continually assess the staffing resources needed in order to effectively meet the needs of older adults. This assessment should be done on an annual basis along with each year's operating budget submission. The responsibilities of existing staff may need to be adjusted each year or so as demands within this programming portfolio change – or, the staffing complement may need to increase as the residents of Richmond Hill continue to age and the demands on the current staffing structure multiply. Ensuring that Richmond Hill is properly equipped to meet the anticipated increased recreation needs of this population will contribute to a model of responsible management and wise use of resources.

Conclusion

Richmond Hill is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all of its residents. Through the Adults 55+ section of the Recreation and Culture division, staff is committed to fulfilling this obligation and per the results of the satisfaction level questions asked in the Adults 55+ membership survey, it appears that staff is doing a very good job of this.

Through the community engagement processes, staff brought people together to help build the community that exists within the Adults 55+ recreation programs. By listening to what Richmond Hill's older adult population currently likes and dislikes about the recreation services, and what they want to see offered in

the future in order to keep them engaged and connected to the community, staff have created a road map of the tasks that need to be done in order to keep this segment of the population active and healthy. This road map will serve the residents well as staff continues to work towards creating better choice and a more vibrant Richmond Hill for our more senior residents.

Appendix A

Participation Statistics – Adults 55+ Program Portfolio

Participation Statistics – Adults 55+ Program Portfolio

	2012	2014	2016	2017
Membership #'s	1, 463	1, 758	2, 012	2, 012
Registered Program /Activity Participation (includes workshops)	2, 316	2,926	4,260	4,262
Drop-in Program Participation	29,279	31,781	36,763	38, 274
# of drop-in activities offered (per week)	48	68	80	82
# of special events offered	15	14	24	24
Attendance #'s at special events	1, 847	1, 872	2, 012	2, 322

The above statistics are related to the programs and services offered specifically through the Adults 55+ programming section of the Recreation and Culture Division and do not include participation numbers in any of the other 55+ services offered through other sections of the division.

Appendix B

55+ Membership survey

Appendix C

55+ Non-Member survey

Appendix D

Adults 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services Strategy Implementation Plan.

