



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: June 10, 2020

Report Number: SRCS.20.20

Department: Community Services

Division: Administration

Subject: Age Friendly Communities

Purpose:

This report provides Council information on the Age Friendly Community Planning Provincial initiative.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That this report be received for information purposes.

Contact Person:

Darlene Joslin, Commissioner of Community Services (Acting), extension 2423

Patrick Lee, Director Policy Planning, extension 2420

Meeta Gandhi, Director Strategy, Innovation & Engagement, extension 6311

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Darlene Joslin, Commissioner of Community Services (Acting)

Approved by: Mary-Anne Dempster, Interim City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

At the June 25, 2019 meeting, Council approved a motion, directing staff to look into the feasibility of developing the Age Friendly Community Strategy in Richmond Hill and report back to Council with the steps necessary to establish a Seniors Advisory Committee. The Committee would include the active engagement of older adults, an overview of the services already provided by Richmond Hill to seniors and an overview of any complaints received related to the provision of services to seniors.

Age Friendly Communities

The oldest members of the baby boomer generation in North America and Europe turned 65 in 2011. By the year 2036, our province's older adult population will more than double to 4.1 million. This major change affects every jurisdiction in Canada and in Ontario.

Ontarians are living longer, healthier lives than ever before. As they age, older Ontarians are also seeking opportunities to stay active in their communities and in the economy. They are committed, long-term residents of their communities, contributing their time, energy and wealth of experience to local projects and organizations. Older adults 65+ have the same needs as people of all ages. Accessibility to health care and social services, public transportation, housing, safety and strong social networks all become more central to our lives as we age.

According to the 2016 Census, seniors represented 14.6 per cent (161,925) of York Regions population in 2016, as compared to 11.7 per cent (120,935) in 2011. Between 2011 and 2016 the number of seniors (65 years and older) grew by 33.9 per cent, making this the fastest growing population group in York Region. This rate of growth was higher than that of children aged 14 years and under. According to York Region planning projections, by 2026, it is expected that the number of seniors will be higher than the number of children in York Region for the first time. The 2016 Census data shows that shift has already taken place in Ontario, which had 2,207,907 children (0-14 years) and 2,251,655 seniors (65 years and older) in 2016. Nation-wide, there were 5,839,565 children and 5,935,630 seniors in 2016.

History of the Age-Friendly Communities Initiative

In 2002, the World Health Organization (WHO) released the *Policy Framework on Active Ageing*, a document designed to help support and enhance the quality of life for older adults in communities around the world by encouraging locally rooted policy changes that promote healthy lifestyles and active civic participation.

Building on this framework, the WHO formally launched the *Global Age Friendly Cities Project* in 2006. Since that time, communities of all sizes around the world have taken up the challenge to realign, and in some cases, redesign their decision-making efforts to better support the needs of all residents, including older adults.

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The age friendly movement was initiated with a clear recognition that when communities provide the appropriate policies, programs, services and infrastructure for older adults, all residents directly benefit – regardless of age.

All age friendly communities support active ageing as follows:

- Recognizing the wide range of capabilities and resources among older adults
- Anticipating and responding flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences
- Respecting the decisions and lifestyle choices of older adults
- Protecting older adults who are most vulnerable
- Promoting the inclusion and contribution of older adults in all areas of community life

In an age-friendly community:

- Outdoor areas and public buildings are pleasant, safe and accessible
- Housing is affordable, safe and well designed for seniors
- Roads and walkways are accessible and keep in good shape
- Public transportation is affordable and accessible
- Neighbourhoods are safe
- Relationships are respectful
- Health and community support services are available
- Opportunities for seniors to be socially active exist
- Seniors can take part in volunteer, political and employment positions
- Information is easy to find and easy to understand

According to the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, age-friendly communities promote healthy active ageing by delivering policies, programs, services and spaces that help residents maintain their independence as they age. Age-friendly communities share the following principles for addressing the needs of older adult residents (Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, 2015):

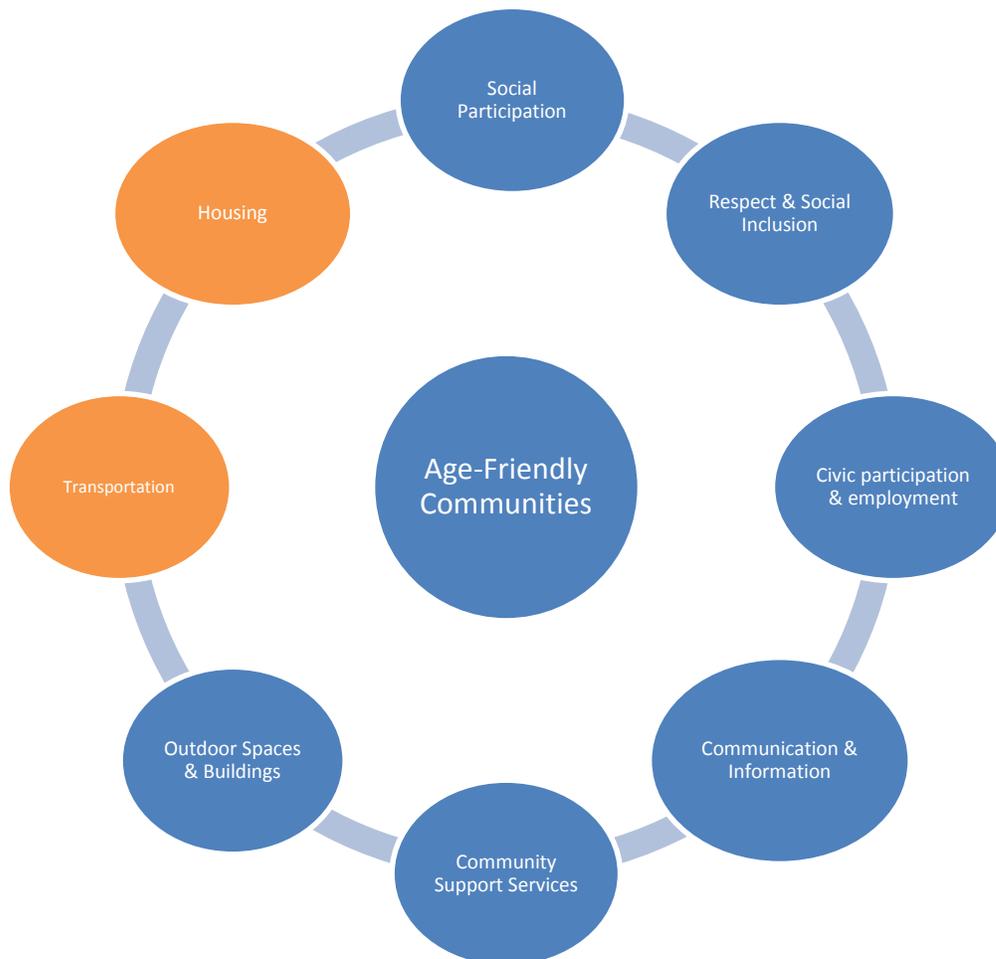
- “Recognize the wide range of capacities and resources among older people”
- “Anticipate and responds flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences”
- “Promote the participation of older adults and encourage their contributions to all aspects of community life”
- “Respect decisions and lifestyle choices of older adults”
- “Support the older adults who are most vulnerable”

According to the WHO, there are eight generally accepted dimensions, meant to assist communities in creating and enhancing livable environments for residents of all ages and abilities. The Framework encourages municipalities to examine their community

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with an age-friendly lens to uncover areas of opportunity and potential improvements. The framework highlights community dimensions that influence active ageing. As illustrated in Figure 2-1, these dimensions generally relates to the programs and services delivered by local (i.e. City of Richmond Hill) or regional (i.e. York Region) government partners. York Region administers housing and transportation services in Richmond Hill. The City of Richmond Hill would primarily focus on the remaining six age-friendly dimensions. The WHO checklist, attached as appendix A is intended to be used by groups interested in making their city more age-friendly.

Figure 2-1 – Eight Dimensions of Age-Friendly Communities



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Figure 2-2 – Summary of Age-Friendly Community Dimensions

Age Friendly Domains	Initiative Indicators
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	The condition, quality and design of the physical environment including parks, sidewalks and buildings, have a significant influence on the mobility, independence and quality of life of all residents.
Transportation	As people age, there is a tendency to drive less and to rely more on alternative modes of transportation such as transit, for-hire rides and, in the future, autonomous vehicles. The availability of accessible transportation options and different fare structures for different demographics aids in the ability of residents to participate in the community and increases access to community and health services.
Housing	Appropriate housing structure, location, design and a wide variety of available housing choices can have a significant impact on the independence of residents, including youth and seniors. Appropriate housing can allow people to age in place comfortably within the community.
Social Participation	The ability and opportunity to actively participate in social, cultural and recreational pursuits has a positive influence on the physical and mental well-being of all residents.
Respect and Social Inclusion	Aging residents should continue to be respected for their roles and contributions to the community. The provision of outreach to aging residents and opportunities to participate in community life can help to mitigate isolation.
Civic Participation and Employment	Aging residents offer a variety of skills, knowledge and experiences that can provide benefits to the community. Residents, regardless of age, should be able to contribute to their communities through paid and unpaid employment for as long as they would like to or are able to do so.
Communication and Information	Access to and the wide distribution of clear, relevant information is essential for aging residents to be able to maintain strong social ties and community connections.
Community Support and Health Services	In order to age in place, the community should offer sufficient good quality and accessible healthcare and community programs and services. Doing this will allow residents in the community to receive appropriate care.

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Municipal Benchmarking

Individuals and organizations in communities across Ontario are working together to create age-friendly communities (AFCs). Accessible, inclusive, age-friendly social and physical environments, services and programs are making a difference in the everyday lives of older adults. When contemplating or implementing Age-Friendly Community Designation, Municipalities are developing community profiles, gathering information about existing services and programs in communities, establishing advisory committees and consulting with older adults. They are also incorporating age-friendly principles into planning, setting local priorities and developing age-friendly action plans.

Currently eighty-one (81) municipalities have completed Age-Friendly plans in their community. In York Region, two (2) municipalities have highlighted the age friendly model as a priority.

The City of Markham Council endorsed the age-friendly community project in 2014 and approved a budget of 76,000 for the retention of a consultant to work with Council, staff and the community on implementing a plan and action items. The City's approach was to develop an Older Adult Strategy that was completed in 2017. An Age-Friendly Steering Committee was created that consisted of members of council, senior organizations, not-for profit organizations, the Region of York Community Services and a diverse range of residents of various ages, gender, culture and background.

The City of Vaughan has begun the process of working toward the age-friendly designation. In the 2020 Capital budget process, Council passed a motion to support moving forward with Vaughan as an age-friendly community and approved a capital budget of \$150,000 for the retention of a consultant to work with the community on developing the plan. An Older Adult Task Force was created that consists of two (2) members of council, five (5) community members appointed by council and City staff resources. Vaughan has also established an internal working group that is representative of each Department.

Markham and Vaughan retained the services of a third party consultant with expertise in master planning, policy development, community outreach/facilitation and strategic planning in the area of seniors and aging communities.

The cities implemented an age friendly community steering committee of interested stakeholders to guide and oversee the development of the plan and work with the consultant and staff to:

- Complete an inventory and review existing senior's related policies, services and programs;
- Develop and implement a custom needs assessment based on extensive public consultation methods such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, charrettes, etc.;
- Compile results and identify gaps/successes

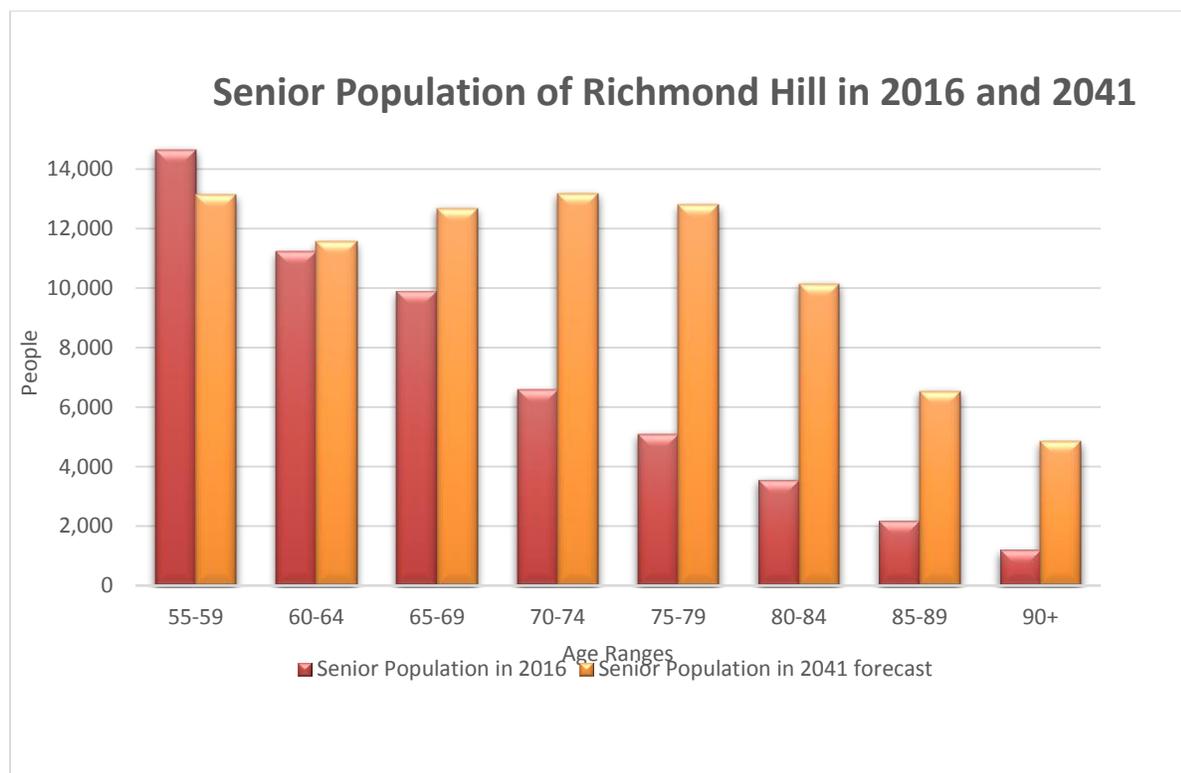
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- Develop a five-year comprehensive action plan with timelines, responsible persons/agencies, and estimated costs to address deficiencies or further improve on our strengths.

The age friendly steering committees typically are established by and report to Council and consist of a member of council, organizations or service providers serving seniors in the community and a number of individual seniors of varying ages, gender, culture and background. The committee is supported by City staff from across the Corporation who provide particular areas of expertise and administrative support required. The overall mandate of the committee is to provide advice and recommendations concerning opportunities to make the community age-friendly and to develop a work plan with specific actions to address the checklist developed by WHO.

Richmond Hill Context

Older adults (aged 55+) are a growing segment of the population within Richmond Hill. This trend will continue over the next decade as population growth amongst older adults continues to outpace that of youth and adults. Based on the 2016 census data, the population of 55+ in Richmond Hill was 54,330. This represents approximately 28% of the total population of Richmond Hill. Going forward, significant population growth is projected for older adults in Richmond Hill. By **2041**, the size of the 55+ population is projected to reach approximately **84,817**, or approximately **27.0%** of the total population. Figure 1-1 illustrates the senior population of Richmond Hill in 2016 and 2041.



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	2041			RH in 2041 forecast		
	Total	Male	Female	Senior Population in 2041 forecast	Male	Female
Total	482,600	216,530	265,460	84,817	38,055	46,654
55-59	74,690	35,580	39,110	13,127	6,253	6,874
60-64	65,770	28,800	36,970	11,559	5,062	6,497
65-69	72,150	32,230	39,320	12,680	5,664	6,910
70-74	74,960	33,720	41,240	13,174	5,926	7,248
75-79	72,730	33,350	39,380	12,782	5,861	6,921
80-84	57,640	25,800	31,840	10,130	4,534	5,596
85-89	37,110	15,920	21,180	6,522	2,798	3,722
90+	27,550	11,130	16,420	4,842	1,956	2,886

Population, Census 2016

York Region	1,109,650	
Richmond Hill	195,020	
% of YR	0.18	27.0%
Total all ages 2041	1,790,190	27.9%

Richmond Hill Current Inventory of Programs and Services

Department	Program or Service	Eligibility	Subsidies
Community Services	Recreation & Culture	55+	Access to a variety of programs, events and services at reduced rates with the purchase of an annual membership.
		65	30% discount on adult registered program fees
		65+	30% discount on public swim and skates
		65+	10% discount on Richmond Hill presents shows at RHCPA
		55+	50% discount on recreation facility rentals for affiliated community groups
		55+	Seniors' Fair offered at the RHCPA annually

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		All Ages	Variety of activities in celebration of Seniors' Month offered annually in June free Fee assistance policy is in place to assist with recreation program fees. Each individual is eligible up to \$200 per year
	Community Standards	65+	50% discount on all pet licenses
	Public Works	All Ages	Free windrow snow clearing Large appliance pick up
	Natural Environment	55+	35% discount on community garden plot rental fees
	Fire Services	65+	Free home inspection including smoke alarm and CO alarm check Public education programs geared towards seniors (Remembering When) Participate in BASSIC Committee (Bringing an Awareness of Senior Safety Issues to the Community) Annual inspection and annual fire drill at retirement homes and long term care facilities
Corporate & Financial Services	Property Tax	65+	Seniors Tax Assistance Grant Program. \$404 subsidy for those who meet the program criteria

Older Adult 55+ Program Strategy

The Recreation & Culture Division has an Older Adult Programming Framework was approved in 2012 and updated in 2018. This Five (5) year plan provides guidance to staff with respect to the planning and delivery of recreation & culture programs and services for older adults 55+. The Strategy document is attached

The primary objectives of this strategy are to:

Work closely with the public, local service providers, 55+ members, staff and volunteers to better understand the recreation needs of current and future older adult residents;

Assess demand for new and enhances 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; and,

Provide recommendations centered on the type of program and services to be offered and the method in which to deliver them.

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Next Steps

The Government of Ontario developed the Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide to assist local communities with anticipating this ageing trend and its corresponding future demand for service. The purpose of this guide is support the establishments of local action plans that will support physical and social environments that enable older adults to live active, safe and meaningful lives. To implement an age-friendly community action plan in Richmond Hill, the following steps are required:

1. Receive a direction from Council to implement the steps necessary to become an Age-Friendly Community.
2. Prepare a business case for the appropriate operating budget process for council approval.
3. Retain a consultant and establish an internal City staff committee.
4. Submit application to Age Friendly Community Planning Grant.
5. Establish a Seniors Advisory Committee that includes the active engagement of older adults.
6. Develop terms of reference and retain a consultant
7. Undertake a comprehensive inventory of the current programs and services provided to seniors by the City and by service providers within the community at-large.
8. Undertake comprehensive community engagement as a way to hear from older adults about how livable our city is and to capture their suggestions about developing an age-friendly community.
9. Establish a robust and concrete plan of actions that responds to the needs identified by older adults in the community.
10. Demonstrate commitment to action by publically posting the action plan.
11. Commit to measuring activities, reviewing action plan outcomes and reporting on them publically.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan

Undertaking an Age Friendly Community Plan is in keeping with Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan, “Stronger Connections in Richmond Hill”, specifically by “planning for a connected community, providing opportunities for people to connect and get involved” and strengthening physical connections in the community.

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Conclusion:

The Age Friendly Community Plan will be a Council approved document that will guide future City decisions on seniors policies, practices, services, programs and amenities to optimally support older adults and their caregivers and streamline information and coordination among relevant service providers. It will enhance the City's capacity to better provide, design, plan, facilitate and deliver age friendly features within the community, at present and into the future.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – WHO. checklist of essential features of age-friendly cities
Attachment 2 – City of Richmond Hill Adult 55+ Recreation and Leisure Services
Strategy 2018 - 2022

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.20.20 Age Friendly Communities.docx
Attachments:	- SRCS.20.20 Attachment 1 World Health Organization Check List.pdf - SRCS.20.20 Attachment 2 Adult 55+ Programming Startegy.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Jun 1, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Darlene Joslin - Jun 1, 2020 - 11:49 AM

MaryAnne Dempster - Jun 1, 2020 - 2:49 PM