

August 6, 2013

CL 10-2013, August 1, 2013

ICPC 11-2013, July 24, 2013

Report ICP 75-2013

LOCAL AREA MUNICIPALITIES

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

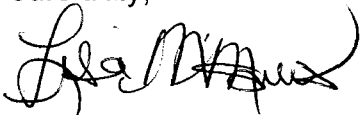
Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative
ICP 75-2013

Regional Council, at its meeting of August 1, 2013, approved the following recommendations of its Integrated Community Planning Committee:

That Report ICP 75-2013, July 24, 2013, respecting Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative **BE RECEIVED** and a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to local municipalities.

A copy of Report ICP 75-2013 is enclosed for your information.

Yours truly,



for | Janet Pilon
Regional Clerk
:nld

cc: Clerks of the Local Area Municipalities of Niagara Region
P. Robson, Commissioner, Integrated Community Planning
S. Murphy, Accessibility Advisory Coordinator
K. Weaver, Director, Community & Corporate Planning
C. Heaslip, Administrative Assistant, Community & Corporate Planning
S. McPetrie, Administrative Assistant, Integrated Community Planning



REPORT TO: Integrated Community Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative

RECOMMENDATION

That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information and **BE CIRCULATED** to local municipalities.

PURPOSE

To provide information about the "Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative" goals and activities and to recommend this report be shared with local area municipalities. This report shall also serve as an invitation for municipalities to become involved in the local Age-Friendly Network. The Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative Network provides opportunities for groups and individuals to share resources focused on the promotion of Age-Friendly communities and the benefits to citizens of all ages.

BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report. This initiative has been funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the past three years, ending June 30, 2013. An application for further funding has been submitted. Any consideration provided by Niagara Region shall be in-kind contributions. This report links with Council Business Plan's Theme 2, Healthy Community.

REPORT

The Niagara Region was part of a collaborative that included the City of Welland, City of Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Rose City Seniors' Foundation and Niagara Connects. The goal is to create safe and secure environments that foster community participation, personal health, and well-being. This initiative is being carried out in coordination with the Niagara Seniors' Aging Well strategy as well as the Provincial aging strategy. The focus on Age-friendly principles is important given Niagara's current and projected demographics. Seniors (65 and older) make up 18.8% of Niagara's population (2011 census data), higher than the Ontario average of 14.6%. This proportion is expected to grow to about 24% by 2031 (Growth Management Strategy).

Age-friendly communities take into consideration the needs of all residents in the following areas:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Housing
- Respect and social inclusion
- Communication and information
- Transportation
- Social participation
- Civic participation and employment
- Community health and support services

Since the inception of the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative, (NAFCI), a number of activities have taken place:

- A NAFCI Community Coordinator position was established to create tool kits, communications products and resources to engage citizens, and to assist with the formation of local age-friendly action committees across Niagara.
- A Project Management Committee and a Vision Committee created a Niagara-wide framework for applying age-friendly principles.
- The Welland Age-Friendly Local Action Committee's work resulted in municipal actions such as increasing the number of park benches in areas with the highest volumes of senior pedestrian traffic, a commitment for larger text on new street signs going forward, and the first municipality in Niagara to include Age-Friendly policies in their Official Plan.
- A regular column of age-friendly topics, guest-written by various NAFCI volunteers, was launched in partnership with the Niagara This Week newspaper.
- Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative partners hosted a work shop in April 2013 with speakers from various parts of the province. Over 100 participants from around the Region were in attendance to share resources and learn about a variety of Age-Friendly projects.
- A NAFCI web presence was created on the Niagara Region website at: <http://www.niagararegion.ca/living/seniors/agefriendly/default.aspx>
- Three main themes emerged for applying an age-friendly lens to community planning:
 - (1) Better communication practices;
 - (2) Improved accessibility for all; and
 - (3) A community culture valuing older adults.

Age-friendly round-table focus group conversations were held across Niagara between November 2011 and April 2012 in each of the local municipalities, gathering the opinions and ideas of over 100 citizens. They provided insight into ways to help older adults live healthy, active lives and how to improve age-friendliness in their part of Niagara. Common themes for action emerged from the focus group discussions, aligning with findings from the Welland pilot phase.

In March of 2013, Niagara Connects sent an invitation to complete an online survey to members of the NAFCI Project Management and Vision Committees, with a response rate of 54%. In April of 2013, an invitation to complete a similar online survey was sent to volunteers active in leading age-friendly action in their particular local area of Niagara. The response rate was 60%.

Both groups were asked to rank the overall effectiveness of NAFCI, in terms of:

- raising awareness among the Niagara-wide community about Age-Friendly principles; and,
- engaging local citizens to lead Age-Friendly action in Niagara's local municipalities.

Both groups' responses indicated the majority believed NAFCI was about "fifty per cent of the way there" in terms of raising Niagara-wide awareness about Age-Friendly, and about "forty per cent of the way there" in terms of engaging local citizens in age-friendly actions.

Respondents were asked a series of questions: what project actions made the biggest difference toward raising awareness about Age-Friendly; what things about the project they believe would have benefited from receiving more attention or emphasis; and what they would do if they had unlimited resources to promote Age-Friendly? The following three overall themes emerged from their responses.

1. Continue to build Age-Friendly momentum across Niagara – Acknowledge that community development initiatives and broad social change take time. Continue to work together to build momentum leading to Niagara-wide acceptance of Age-Friendly principles for improved quality of life in Niagara. Track levels of Age-Friendly activity in local areas across Niagara, and support connectedness amongst local Age-Friendly leaders with tools such as information resources, knowledge-sharing opportunities, and connections to emerging Age-Friendly intelligence from around the globe.
2. Position Age-Friendly principles as a Best Practice lens for planning – Profile testimonials and concrete examples to raise awareness about the 'return on investment' from applying Age-Friendly principles in Niagara's communities. Age-Friendly practices, at their root, are about "helping each other", and connecting citizens for a strengthened community. Strategies for business and/or organizational success, seniors aging at home, efficient deployment of health care dollars, and integrated person-centered health and human service delivery are strengthened by viewing them through an Age-Friendly lens.
3. Lead a culture of practical goal-setting for local Age-Friendly action – Attract community volunteers to be active in promoting Age-Friendly actions, and local municipal leaders to support Age-Friendly initiatives in their part of Niagara by focusing on tangible local issues of common interest.

Next Steps

The Age-Friendly Coordinator contract, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, expired on June 30, 2013. A second grant application has been prepared and submitted. If successful the community based initiative will move into the next phase and to further the efforts of the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative by developing a Community Seniors Strategy and Action Plan.

The current goal of the Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative is to offer support and assistance to those local area communities wishing to achieve a more age-friendly environment, thereby creating more opportunities for citizens of all ages to participate in the activities their communities have to offer. Meetings with various community organizations within the area municipalities are underway to gauge the level of interest.

REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

COM 16-2013 (June 11, 2013): Aging Well in Niagara – Community Input

COM 02-2013 (January 29, 2013): Living Longer, Living Well – Seniors Care Strategy for Ontario

ICP-C 109-2009 (December 9, 2009): Age-Friendly Communities - Trillium Application

COM 31- 2009/ICP 25-2009 (May 19/20, 2009): Age-Friendly Communities Initiative

Submitted by:



Patrick Robson

for Commissioner
Integrated Community Planning

Approved by:



Patrick Robson

Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared by Steve Murphy, Accessibility Advisory Coordinator, and reviewed by Kirk Weaver, Director, Community and Corporate Planning.