

St. Catharines  
*A City For All Ages*



Older Adult Plan  
2014 – 2018

## **PREFACE**

**Virginia Stewart, Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults member facilitated the preparation of this document.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Catharines takes pride in being a great place to live for all ages young and old, families and individuals. We have a lot to offer, parks and trails, a great lake waterfront, facilities and an abundance of recreation, arts and leisure activities, all of which contribute and enhance healthy active aging. But, the aging landscape is shifting and diversifying. There is an unprecedented growth of Older Adults. By 2031, the numbers of Older Adults living in St. Catharines will more than double making up over 50% of our community's population.

January 2011, City Council directed the development and implementation of an Older Adult Plan for the City of St. Catharines by the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults, as one of its roles and responsibilities<sup>1</sup>. Following on the path of many other municipalities in Canada and around the world, City Council and staff supported an age-friendly process in partnership with the Ontario Trillium Funded Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative (NAFCI) 2010 – 2013 and the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly Community Membership Network.

The Older Adult Plan extends from the NAFCI Community Report, a separate background document, which provides a baseline grounded in the WHO Age-Friendly principles and dimensions. The Report is based on open dialogue and extensive research with the community. As with the NAFCI Report the Older Adult Plan follows on the same trajectory of working **with** older people not **for** them.

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<sup>1</sup> Terms of Reference, 2.0 Roles & Responsibilities 2.4 Develop and implement an older adult plan for the City of St. Catharines

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Improving the quality of life of Older Adults improves the quality of life for everyone. Older Adults very strongly advocated for inclusivity regardless of language, cultural identity, sexual orientation, disabilities or where they live. They also promoted the importance of responding to Older Adults as St. Catharines citizens first and foremost.

From the NAFCI Report the Mayor's Advisory Committee reviewed over 80 challenges faced by Older Adults and selected six key priority challenges to address for 2014 – 2018. These issues are organized into an action plan, which will be the agenda for the Older Adults Committee for the next term of Council. The action plan also includes addressing elements of the administration success of the Plan to be addressed in 2014.

Not of less importance, other challenges that may require significant new resources are listed in the Appendix. It is the intent that the Older Adult Plan is a living document to be reviewed regularly with the aim of being relevant, responsible and responsive to the ever evolving, diverse and growing population of Older Adults.

Examples of Older Adult Plans shared by the WHO and the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat (OSS) document **Finding the Right Fit: Age-Friendly Community Planning** guided and directed our Plan. The best and most appropriate content and format was gleaned for a made for St. Catharines Older Adult Plan. With great pride we can say we initiated this achievement with minimal cost to the City.

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## **St Catharines: A City for All Ages Older Adult Plan 2014 – 2018**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

*A City for All Ages* values healthy aging. It is a community, where people of all ages thrive and grow. A place that celebrates diversity, supports the contributions of Older Adults, refutes ageism and reduces inequities. It creates opportunities to enhance independence and quality of life.

The Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Older Adults describes an age-friendly community as: “a caring community, accounts for an older me, open-minded, forward thinking – a step ahead, proactive versus reactive, multifaceted, and supported by all sectors including government, business and non-profits.”

When asked what they felt the benefits of being an age-friendly community were, the following words came to mind: “everybody, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, businesses, services, and governments: all levels.” In addition, age-friendly planning can be invaluable to securing funding and partnerships.

Planning for an Age-Friendly Community includes everyone.

A society for *all ages* is multigenerational. It is not fragmented, with youths, adults and older persons going their separate ways. Rather, it is age-inclusive, with different generations recognizing — and acting upon — their commonality of interest.

Kofi Annan

Secretary General of the UN

Improving the quality of life of Older Adults improves the quality life for everyone.

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### **Definitions & Terminology**

Deciding on the right definitions and terminology is challenging. We live in a changing society, where the chronological age for some has become meaningless (turning 65 is the new 45), the retirement age is no longer set at 65 and others claim 65 is the age at which one gains the respect of being called a senior citizen.

Older Adults is the term accepted by City Council and the prominent term used in this Plan. It is an overarching term used for those 50 and over, taking into account the changing societal considerations along with age, gender, cultures and abilities. The term senior is used when referring to people 65 years and older. From time to time the terms may be used interchangeably.

### **What is the Older Adult Plan?**

The Older Adult Plan is a coherent collection of actions aimed at improving the quality of life of St. Catharines residents. It is purposefully inclusive, forward-looking and multifaceted addressing the opportunities and challenges of an unprecedented growth of Older Adults. The Plan begins to address this demographic shift.

Taking an age-friendly approach to finding the right fit to address the specific and evolving needs of older residents the Plan extends from the NAFCI Community Report 2010 – 2013. The NAFCI project was based on the WHO Age-Friendly principles and dimensions: Belonging; Building, Parks and Outdoor Spaces (Built Environment); Civic Participation: Employment and Volunteering; Communication and Information; Health and Wellness; Housing and Shelter; Safety and Security; Lifelong Learning and Enrichment: Recreation, Education, Arts and Culture; and, Transportation. The development process of the Plan unfolded over a number of years.

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Developed **with** older people not **for** them the Plan values, empowers and supports Older Adults' quality of life. Embracing the lived experiences of Older Adults, the Plan also considers the perspectives of caregivers and service providers who were very engaged in the development of the NAFCI project.

### **How was the Plan Developed?**

The process for creating St. Catharines' Older Adult Plan specifically began in 2011 with the appointment of citizens to the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults. Within its terms of responsibility the Committee was tasked with developing an Older Adult Plan. In 2012 City Council and Staff supported becoming an age-friendly community and to work in partnership with the NAFCI, a project driven by the WHO age-friendly process: community engagement.

NAFCI engaged the community, applying a wide selection of mechanisms: deployed local champions to help build momentum (e.g., Active Transportation Niagara Network, Aids Niagara, Brock University, Niagara North Community Legal Assistance, Niagara Region Housing, Quest Community Health Centre, St. Catharines Mayor's Advisory Committee on Accessibility, St. Catharines Older Adult Centres, St. Catharines Public Library, Start Me Up Niagara); conducted interviews and surveys with Older Adults; lead consultations attended by community stakeholders, caregivers, service providers and Older Adults to identify age-friendly barriers; facilitated sessions with Older Adults, care givers and service providers to review and clarify the collected information as a means forward; and, identified community assets.

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The most vigorous community engagement was a series of roundtable conversations held in St. Catharines and across Niagara. These focus groups were facilitated applying an adapted version of the age-friendly WHO Vancouver Protocol. Karen Cudmore, MAc and Dr. H. Kilty prepared summations of the resulting narratives for the Niagara Research and Planning Council (NAFCI Partner). The aim was to provide municipalities with a community profile and local assessment of age-friendly. The report available at Niagara Connects, [www.nrapc.com](http://www.nrapc.com) was publicly launched November 2012 with invitations extended to municipalities Niagara wide. (See St. Catharines' community profile on page 21.)

The NAFCI Community Report 2010 – 2013 is an all-encompassing report that aims to serve as an age-friendly tool kit for stakeholders interested in creating age-friendly communities. It provides an overview of the NAFCI process and development work as a comprehensive backgrounder and is formatted to assist local initiatives to develop their own actions plan within the guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities.

In 2014 the Mayor's Committee reviewed the NAFCI Community Report. From the over 80 challenges (barriers) identified facing Older Adults, the Committee selected the challenges and the recommended actions they felt were achievable appreciating the limited municipal resources available to this Committee. These key priority issues frame the core strategy for action of the 2014 – 2018 Older Adult Plan. Each is linked to an age-friendly community dimension adapted from the WHO Age-Friendly initiative. Additionally, the Committee reviewed issues potentially blocking the successful accomplishment of the Plan (see Table A SWOT Analysis).

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Other challenges/issues (see Appendix) identified in the NAFCI Community Report for consideration are not of any less significance; however, the Committee felt that more significant resources might be required to effectively address them. Laid out next are all the elements important to the development of the action plan.

## **2. VISION, MISSION & VALUES**

Statements of our Vision, Mission and Values underscore what inspires us. Our vision frames the Older Adult Plan. It takes us to 2031 when the aging population – the grey tsunami – begins to calm. A time when all the baby boomers will have crossed the imaginary line of 65.

By 2031, and since 2025, individuals of all ages and abilities will be leading purposeful and active lives in St. Catharines regardless whether at work, at home, at play, or on the way. The Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults has been the champion on the age-friendly journey towards a community where all ages are safe and respected 24 hours a day seven days a week; a community where all ages thrive and grow. Taking an active role with and for seniors the Committee will have supported the creation of opportunities to enhance independence and quality of life for all ages.

By 2031 St. Catharines will have shifted from a City **of** all ages to a City **for** all ages. It is the Committee's vision that St. Catharines is a vibrant City, a caring and responsive City to the diverse needs and choices of Older Adults. A City that values the contributions of Older Adults and offers a broad range of opportunities in a shared agenda for active living, together with spiritual and psychological well-being. St. Catharines is a City where we can all engage.

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Our vision – **St. Catharines: A City for All Ages.**

Our mission – **Through leadership, knowledge and action improve the lives for all as we age.**

Our core values<sup>2</sup> –

- **Respect and Support of All Citizens.** We value all ages as vital members of the community who have the right to make lifestyle choices, and are deserving of respect and dignity.
- **Access and Inclusion of All.** We value fair access to resources, supports, and spaces for all as we age.
- **Community Engagement in Decision-Making.** We value the participation of Older Adults in deciding priorities, shaping actions and bringing about change.
- **Livability.** We value Older Adults’ preference to age-in-place in “livable communities” that encourage meaningful engagement and social inclusion.
- **Accountability.** We value programs, services, and planning that are delivered in a manner that respects the five principles; and, decision-makers that are held accountable for facilitating meaningful engagement and listening; as well as responding to the needs and interests of all citizens including Older Adults.

### **3. THINGS THAT MIGHT GET IN THE WAY**

The Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Older Adults took the time to identify the things that could get in the way of implementing the Older Adult Plan. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis helps describe the opportunities to implement the Plan and the issues that might get in the way. To present the findings a SWOT analysis of the factors was done (see

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<sup>2</sup> The Murray Alzheimer’s Research and Education Program (MAREP) age-friendly principles inform the core values.

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TABLE A SWOT ANALYSIS). Identified weaknesses and threats are paraphrased as actions to improve the Mayor’s Advisory Committee’s ability to achieve the Older Adult Plan (see Table C ACTION PLAN. Together these actions with the actions to address the key priority challenges discussed next, will make up the action plan.

#### **4. KEY PRIORITY CHALLENGES**

From the list of what Older Adults expressed as challenges captured in the NAFCI Community Report 2010 – 13, the Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Older Adults selected six priority challenges to address. The Committee felt it was not realistic to address all the challenges; the challenges identified were ones that have the potential of being accomplished without significant resources. Following are the six key priority challenges framed within in five age-friendly goals.

##### **Goal 1: Communication and Information**

All ages have access to current and relevant information to meet their changing needs and preferences.

##### *Key Priority Challenge 1*

Accessibility. Hearing and understanding, sight and readability are significant Older Adult issues<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Seniors many not see this information as relevant until it happens to them. (1 in 3 seniors will develop a disability, physical, mental or health condition.)

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## Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults

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TABLE A SWOT ANALYSIS

	Helpful to Achieving the Plan	Actions Important to Achieving the Plan
<b>Internal Attributes (Committee)</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leveraging our strengths mitigates risk of not achieving our goals</li> <li>2. A Mayor's Advisory Committee provides support and a municipal process for addressing Older Adults' issues</li> <li>3. Committee members have an excellent working knowledge of Older Adults and their life experiences, as well as a network of a broad range of Older Adult agencies and contacts</li> <li>4. The Advisory Committee is the only City Committee that solely focuses on Older Adults residents' issues</li> <li>5. Working with people who understand age-friendly work helps focus planning for Older Adults</li> <li>6. The Committee values low and no cost solutions</li> <li>7. City staff liaison helps with administration and leveraging actions</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Actions to Mitigate Weaknesses</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. During the embryonic stages of work plan development it is important to have a consistency of staff to better understand age-friendly and the development process</li> <li>2. Develop a standard process and established procedures for record keeping of meetings to help track past accomplishments and challenges</li> <li>3. Review the Plan with other municipal committees and staff for their input, guidance and direction</li> <li>4. Renew the Committee's term to ensure a continuance of effort</li> </ol>

**External  
Attributes  
to the  
Committee  
& City**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Actions Important to Mitigate Threats</b></p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information sharing of best practices would help eliminate any misunderstanding of ageism attitudes</li> <li>2. There are good funding opportunities to support actions, e.g., New Horizons, Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, Ontario Trillium Foundation</li> <li>3. A heightened awareness of the trending demographic shift and age-friendly work as a means to address this trend has been identified by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO)</li> <li>4. There are potential opportunities to address policy actions with the pending City of St. Catharines Active Transportation Committee and other municipal committees</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase the awareness of the City's efforts to provide a better quality of life for Older Adults e.g., providing a presence on City website</li> <li>2. Refute ageism as a growing and misunderstood issue by supporting a Plan developed by Older Adults</li> <li>3. Following the age-friendly movement speaks positively to a responsive government, recognizing municipal recreation departments are leaders in other communities (e.g., Mississauga, Port Colborne, Welland, Windsor)</li> <li>4. As the demographic shift grows there will be more and more baby boomer seniors who are challenging best practices; it is better to be ahead of the curve meeting the issues of today's Older Adults WITH Older Adults for a better tomorrow</li> <li>5. Addressing the future of the Mayor's Advisory Committee strengthens the perception of politicians and staffers wanting to address the quality of life for Older Adults</li> </ol>

## Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults

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### **Goal 2: Health and Wellness**

All citizens have access to good health and wellness.

Communication and Information, in addition to Transportation, impact on access to health and wellness, as does having a fixed address.

#### *Key Priority Challenge 2*

Frail Adults. Need for affordable timely, competent home care for at risk seniors to manage daily activities.

### **Goal 3: Housing and Shelter**

All citizens have access to affordable and accessible housing and shelter.

#### *Key Priority Challenge 3*

Housing Options. There are gaps in the availability of housing choices within neighbourhoods; there is a limited number of suitable apartments, housing developments for seniors.

### **Goal 4: Safety and Security**

All ages live in safe and secure communities.

#### *Key Priority Challenge 4*

Sidewalk Safety. Older pedestrians find it unsafe to walk when they have to share the sidewalk with cyclists.

### **Goal 5: Transportation**

All persons should have access to safe, convenient and affordable transportation options to the places they need and want to go.

Having access to transportation is critical to staying connected whether it is for employment and volunteering, health and wellness or lifelong learning and enrichment including the arts and

recreation activities; accessible communication and information is a key determinant of transportation success.

*Key Priority Challenge 5*

Street Sign Readability. Older Adults find many street signs are difficult to read.

*Key Priority Challenge 6*

Parking Time. A number of people find that the imposed time for parking is too limited “if you have an appointment that takes longer than expected, you get a ticket!” (Older Adult 2012).

It is the intent that the Older Adult Plan is a living document to be reviewed regularly, e.g., annually, with the aim of being relevant, responsible and responsive to the ever evolving, diverse and growing population of Older Adults. A second series of challenges/actions is listed in the appendix should opportunities for other City Departments and community agencies be available to address them or funding becomes available. The NAFCI Community Report provides a complete list of the challenges.

## **5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)**

As the Committee’s work progresses towards the City becoming more age-friendly it is important to be results-oriented. How better off are Older Adults in St. Catharines? The Older Adult Plan summarizes the recommended actions and provides general results (outcomes) and indicators. An indicator can be a quantifiable achievement of a result, i.e., how we recognize the result.

Comparing age-friendly standards with other municipalities is under development. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in partnership with the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG),

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Canada's major resources for age-friendly community projects, is providing the leadership and support in the development of comparable KPIs. Important to KPIs is defining the target population.

## **6. TARGET POPULATION**

St. Catharines strives to advance the quality of life of all citizens regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or class. Because the older population is changing, diversifying and growing in numbers at unprecedented rates the target population for the Plan is Older Adults. This is the most heterogeneous group in society, according to the OSS: a population segment spanning a long time.

The target population for the Older Adult Plan is 50 and over, which in 2011 made-up 40% of St. Catharines population. OSS makes one suggestion for segmenting the population young-old 55 – 74, middle-old 75 – 84 and oldest-old 85 and older. Age-Friendly planning is about finding the right fit; it is responding to the challenges. For example for health and wellness, according to a Statistics Canada report released July 17, 2014, the decline of functional health tends to accelerate at 65, with more severe disability happening on average at 77.

Following is demographic data that highlights what we know about St. Catharines Older Adults and the interconnected trends. In some cases more general information is provided, as it is difficult to source good data for smaller geographical areas. Moreover, in some instances more concluding evidence may be required to establish a baseline or and/or best practices from which to measure the effect of actions.

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## **DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS**

From the Statistics Canada Census for St. Catharines a number of trends drive the Older Adult Plan. Our proportion of seniors is above average. In 2011, the percentage of the population aged 65 and over was 19.3% compared with a national percentage of 14.8%. In Niagara, St. Catharines may have the fifth largest percentage of seniors; however, we have the largest number of seniors in Niagara: 25,405. Collectively Niagara, in 2006, had the fourth largest senior population in Canada and second in Ontario.

The landscape of St. Catharines' population has been shifting and continues to shift. There are more Older Adults than children and youth 14 and under, as shown in Table B ST. CATHARINES AGE DISTRIBUTION. Citizens aged 65 is growing, an increase of 6.6% from 2006 to 2011. It is then expected to double by 2031 before leveling off. The median age has also shifted from 41.7 to 43.5 years old, in comparison to Ontario, which was 40.4 years.

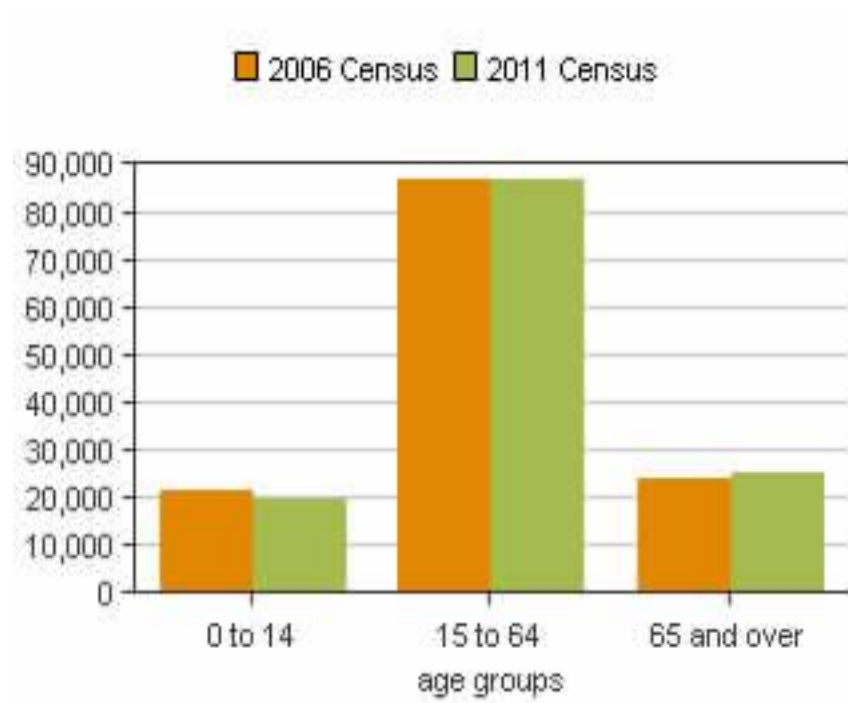
Between 2011 and 2031 seniors will account for 60% of the population growth in Niagara.<sup>4</sup> St. Catharines' overall general population growth is only expected to grow 5%. However, unless other neighbouring municipalities address their proportion of growth of seniors St. Catharines related services may experience an impact.

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<sup>4</sup> Niagara Social Services. (2014). Niagara's Demographics, <http://www.niagararegion.ca/social-services/technical-report/demographics-report.aspx>

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TABLE B ST. CATHARINES AGE DISTRIBUTION (Statistics Canada, 2012)



The distribution of seniors varies dramatically across the City. The neighbourhoods<sup>5</sup> of Glenridge (30%) and Grantham West (27%) have the largest proportion of seniors 65 and over. It is not surprising that the newer housing development neighbourhood of New Western Hill (10%) had the lowest. However, an older neighbourhood does not necessarily mean significantly more seniors, e.g., Western Hill (11%) and Merritton (13%). Downtown St. Catharines (16%) and the adjacent Queenston Street neighbourhood (15%) across Geneva Street sustain a growing number of seniors. Within 20 years each of the neighbourhoods will support twice as many seniors.

<sup>5</sup> Community Services. (2014). The neighbourhood mapping tool provides a breakdown by locally identified neighbourhoods of the Senior population based on the 2006 Statistics Canada Census.

The following evidence provides an insight into the complexity of transportation trends that impacts on seniors' safety, as well as their decision-making related to aging-in-place and participation in recreational activities.

- The most common mode of transportation used by seniors is a motor vehicle followed by being a passenger. This habit can be attributable to the fact that more Older Adults live in highly car-dependent neighbourhoods.<sup>6</sup>
- For the relatively few seniors who use public transit their use declines from 65 – 74 to 85 and over as they go out less frequently.<sup>7</sup>
- Older Adults, especially women, 85 and over are more likely to use accessible transit and taxis, if available, as their preferred means of transportation.<sup>8</sup>
- Aging-in-place, the preferred option for Older Adults and promoted by health agencies is difficult when a senior's inability to get around on one's own day-to-day is challenged. In 2009, 14% of women aged 65 and over reported that they needed help getting to places to which they could not walk.<sup>9</sup>
- Transportation is the second reason next to health problems voiced by seniors as the reason for not participating in recreation and other activities.<sup>10</sup>
- Walking and bicycling, a more flexible means of travel is more popular among seniors than public transit.<sup>11</sup> However, senior pedestrians experience more fatal injuries than other age

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<sup>6</sup> Turcotte, M. (2012). Profile of seniors' transportation habits , <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2012001/article/11619-eng.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

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groups.<sup>12</sup> They want to be safe and they need safe walking spaces<sup>13</sup>; moreover, pedestrians, of all ages, are the most vulnerable road users, who in 2008 made up 13% of all road fatalities in Canada.<sup>14</sup> According to the Ontario Coroner, a pedestrian is “Any person not riding in or on a vehicle.” Additionally, a pedestrian can be a person in a non-motorized wheelchair or one that cannot travel at over 10 kilometers per hour; or a person pushing a bicycle.” A few more facts cited in the 2012 Coroner’s Report:

- Pedestrians over 65 years of age account for a strikingly disproportionate share of fatalities based on their representation in the population. They make-up 13.2% of the population, but 36% of the fatalities.
- 3% of pedestrians killed at intersections were 65 or older
- 33% of fatally injured pedestrians acted in a manner which caused or contributed to the crash
- Older pedestrians 75 years and older accounted for 21.2% of all fatalities

The Coroner’s Report provides a number of recommendations for both the municipality and province to consider when improving the safety of Older Adult pedestrians.

There are other trends related to Older Adults for consideration when addressing the challenges laid out in the Plan.

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<sup>12</sup> Transport Canada. (2010). A quick look at fatally injured vulnerable road users. Road Safety and Motor Vehicle Regulation Directorate. Fact Sheet TP 2436E

<sup>13</sup> Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario. (2012). Pedestrian review. <http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/stellent/groups/public/@mcscs/@www/@com/documents/webasset/ec161058.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

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- Older Adults have increased their use of the Internet. In 2010, 60% aged 65 – 74 had used the Internet whereas, only 29% of those 75 and older had.<sup>15</sup>
- Many seniors are working past the age of 65 and the numbers are increasing. Some may continue to work by choice, but many continue out of necessity.<sup>16</sup>
- While seniors (36%) may not volunteer at the same rate as youth 15 – 24 (58%), they are contributing more hours. For example, seniors helping others informally with everyday activities (housework, home maintenance, shopping, driving to the store/appointment or paper work) at a rate of 76% (65 –74) and 64% (75+) is still a significant community contribution. When asked why they discontinue volunteering it is because of illness or poor health. Seniors with a university education and higher income are more likely to volunteer.<sup>17</sup>
- The housing landscape shifts as we age. The majority of families including seniors live in a single-family home, which proportionally shifts to less car-dependent neighbourhoods at 65 – 74 years of age, then 75 – 84 and 85 and over.<sup>18</sup>

This data begins to provide a community profile for St. Catharines that will be further developed as the Action Plan progresses. Specific actions may require a more in depth review drawing upon existing policy and strategic documents recommended in the OSS Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide, e.g., Official Plan, Community Improvement Plan, Secondary Plans, Growth

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15 Stats Canada. (2013). Study: Consumption of culture by older Canadians on the Internet, 2010.

16 Uppal, S. (2010). Labour market activity among seniors. Statistics Canada

17 Vezina, M., & Crompton, S. (2012). Volunteering in Canada. Statistics Canada.

18 Turcotte, M. (2012). Profile of seniors' transportation habits , <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-008-x/2012001/article/11619-eng.pdf>

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Management Strategy, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, Accessibility Plan and so forth.

## **7. COMPETITIVE INITIATIVES & ADVANTAGES**

Three overarching initiatives age-friendly, accessibility and active transportation may seem competitive; however, each uniquely addresses community issues from different perspectives. Age-Friendly development is a grassroots engaging approach to getting to know a community through the lens of Older Adults and their experiences with it. The development process recognizes the importance of including Older Adults and working with them to address the challenges they face. Local governments are key players that can enhance Older Adults' reach by utilizing their wide range of skills and abilities to achieve age-friendly goals.

In Niagara it is not uncommon for municipalities to have both an Accessibility Committee<sup>19</sup> and an Active Transportation Committee. The focus of the Accessibility Committee work is guided by five standards (policies): information and communications, transportation, design of public spaces (accessibility for the built environment), customer service and employment, which overlap with five of the nine age-friendly dimensions. The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (AODA) worked together with the OSS to develop the Age-Friendly Community Planning guide: Finding the Right Fit.

As the population ages, persons with a disability will double. Adopting an age-friendly approach increases the opportunities to improve current situations. For instance, the Older Adults Committee assisted the St. Catharines Accessibility Advisory

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<sup>19</sup> Accessibility Committees are mandated by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

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Committee and the City with the project to improve the accessibility component to the participation and inclusion of Older Adults at the City's Older Adults Centres.

Addressing the importance of citizens to share the road from an active transportation perspective intersects with three age-friendly dimensions: safety and security; building, parks and outdoor spaces; and, transportation. Active Transportation's primary focus is the general population. Age-Friendly work helps others to understand the complexity of a diverse and growing population of seniors, the most heterogeneous group in society, who actively integrate active transportation into their lives. The Older Adults Committee looks forward to a similar working relationship with the St. Catharines Active Transportation Committee as we do with the Accessibility Committee.

These three initiatives age-friendly, accessibility and active transportation share a common agenda on some fronts. However, because of the unprecedented growth of Older Adults in St. Catharines, it is important to be proactive in addressing the issues experienced by them. Strategic partnerships allow initiatives the opportunity to grow ideas, improve upon them and strengthen the prospects.

## **8. PARTNERS IN A COMMON AGENDA**

Partnerships begin on the ground floor. In 2011 the City announced the reinstatement of the Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults to partner with local citizens to advance their quality of life. Appointments represent the community at large as Older Adults and professionals, in addition to residents as represented by the established St. Catharines Seniors Associations.

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In 2012 the City of St. Catharines Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Older Adults agreed to embark on the WHO age-friendly journey with the NAFCI<sup>20</sup> “an international effort to address the environmental and social factors that contribute to active and healthy ageing.” On the ground the NAFCI facilitated the open dialogue and research with the community to identify the challenges and opportunities for action. From the NAFCI Community Report key issues were selected to work on as an agenda for the Older Adult Committee.

One of the most important elements to moving age-friendly actions forward in the community is to get the appropriate stakeholders involved and engaged as partners. The key stakeholders who influence the key priority challenges include, but not limited to, the City planner, libraries, City AODA staff, City transportation engineer, customer services, health promoters, police services, community support services, builders and developers and private housing.

The City of St. Catharines is one of 12 lower-tier municipalities within the Regional Municipality of Niagara. There is the opportunity to address mutual needs and strategies identified in the Older Adult Plan with other lower-tier municipalities, such as, finding best practices to increase signage readability, i.e., font size, an issue not covered by the AODA. Additionally, there is an enhanced opportunity to collaborate with the upper-tier government, e.g., to better understand how the housing issue for seniors is being addressed in St. Catharines as part of the 2013 Niagara’s Housing and Homeless Action Plan. Next steps of

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<sup>20</sup> The NAFCI 2010 – 2013 was an Ontario Trillium Foundation project to raise awareness about age-friendly and sustain the importance of improving citizens’ quality of life now through the Niagara Age-Friendly Network.

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putting the Plan into action will require community members, in some cases all levels of government along with other stakeholders working together.

## **9. NEXT STEPS**

Following acceptance by City Council of the Older Adult Plan, the 2014 – 2018 appointed Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Older Adults will serve as the backbone organization to implement the Action Plan described in the next section. The Committee is an Advisory Committee guided by Council’s Terms of Reference of which the Older Adult Plan is one aspect. Each term City Council, with the input of staff, solicit and appoint the Committee. Designated staff provide an orientation for members.

An underlying principle of the implementation of the Plan is the engagement of Older Adults together with those who have a professional or social interest in the quality of life of Older Adults. It is the intent that the Committee will continue on this trajectory working with others. Moreover, building background knowledge and understanding how each action influences the age-friendliness of a community is important to making St. Catharines a better place for people of all ages.

To accomplish the complexities of each of the actions in the Older Adult Plan, discussed next, are the preferred means to guide our efforts.

- Older Adult Plan actions will be a regular item of the agenda to allow members to keep abreast of actions, policies and other related developments (within the City and out) as they emerge; the Plan will be updated accordingly. Minutes are critical to track accomplishments and challenges.
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- When applicable separate meetings will be convened with organizations, departments and others to explain the proposed action items and brainstorm potential strategies for improved success. The core agenda would include to ascertain the target audience, confirm collaborations, and identify others that should be involved; in addition to clarifying strategies, discuss funding opportunities and establish meaningful indicators of success.
- Support and encouragement will be given to Committee Members and staff to reach out to other age-friendly initiatives for learning opportunities and potential collaborative efforts.

Essential to the successful implementation of the Plan will be how each action is addressed.

## **10. ACTION PLAN**

The Older Adult Plan pulls together a set of priority actions to advance St. Catharines as an age-friendly community, shown in TABLE C. Implementation takes a two-prong approach. First, the Committee for Older Adults will provide the leadership and serve as the backbone organization to continue to provide new knowledge and better understanding of the issues (A-B). Second, the priority actions (1-5) the Committee felt doable with limited resources.

The action plan laid out in TABLE C is formatted into an implementation matrix to begin forthwith and continue to 2018. The Plan will evolve with more knowledge and a better understanding of the issues (Section 9 Next Steps provides a process); accordingly the Plan will be updated at significant milestones, e.g., year-end.

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**Actions:** The actions are not prioritized except that the administration related requirements (A-B) are listed first. A coordinate reference is provided to link the action to the NAFCI Community Plan 2010 – 2013 provided as a separate document.

**Target:** Identifies a group with unique needs that will derive a particular benefit from the administration and age-friendly action.

**Timing:** Indicates the proposed time frame within which the action will be implemented.

**Lead/Assist:** Identifies which group/department is responsible in the development of the implementation of the action. For the age-friendly actions the lead is initially the Mayor’s Advisory Committee for Older Adults; however, through knowledge and better understanding of the issues it is hoped that the action items will encourage others to take the lead/assist role in contributing to St. Catharines’ age-friendliness, i.e., it may shift to other committees, groups or organizations.

**Partners:** One of the most important parts of the strategy is to get the appropriate stakeholders involved and engaged as partners in the action process together with citizens. Here potential partners are listed to help start the process.

**Funding:** Identifies if the action will be funded within existing department budgets or if funding may be required in the future.

Funding within departmental operating budget

★ Funding required to implement action

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**KPIs:** The general outcome is bolded first, followed by other progress measures.

**Short Forms:**

+	Beyond, i.e., 2015+ and beyond
AF	Age-Friendly
AFC	Age-Friendly Community
COA	Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults
EXEC	COA Executive (staff, Chair & Vice Chair) or Designate by EXEC
GP	General Public
NRP	Niagara Regional Police
OA	Older Adults
OAC	Older Adult Centre
OAP	Older Adult Plan
OSS	Ontario Seniors' Secretariat
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada

## Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults

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TABLE C ACTION PLAN

Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
A	GOAL: The COA is an effective committee of council							
A.1	During the embryonic stages of the work plan development it is important to have a consistency of staff who understand age-friendly and the planning process (SWOT)	COA	2014	Exec	Staff	n/a	n/a	Staff awareness/ familiarity of AFC process
A.2	Develop a standard process and established procedures for record keeping of meetings to help track past accomplishments and challenges (SWOT)	COA	2014	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	Standard Procedures adopted for record keeping -Prior to each meeting an agenda and minutes are circulated at least 5 working days before the meeting
A.3	Review the Plan with other municipal committees and staff for information inviting their input, guidance and direction (SWOT)	COA	2014	Exec	Staff	n/a	n/a	-Circulate Older Adult Plan to department heads to forward to staff as a first step following Council's approval -# Meetings to present the Pan for discussion
A.4	Renew the Committee's term to ensure a continuance of effort (SWOT)	COA	2014	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	-COA is a standing committee for 2015-2018 term of council
Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
B.0	GOAL: The reach of COA efforts is extended to Council and the Public							
B.1	Increase the awareness of the City's efforts to provide a better quality of life for Older Adults, e.g., providing a web presence similar to other standing committees (SWOT)	GP	2014	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	-COA is listed as a committee of council in appropriate places, e.g., City Website (govern) -COA terms of reference, agendas and minutes are posted, e.g., City Website (govern)

B.2	Refute ageism as a growing and misunderstood issue by supporting a Plan developed by Older Adults (SWOT)	GP	2014	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	-Council is updated on the progress of the Plan, e.g., # reports and # delegations to council
B.3	Following the age-friendly movement speaks positively to a responsive government, recognizing municipal recreation departments are leaders in other communities (e.g., Mississauga, Port Colborne, Welland, Windsor) (SWOT)	GP	2014	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	-COA participate and learn about other initiatives where appropriate at all levels of government, e.g., PHAC's development of indicators, OSS's age-friendly planning tool
B.4	As the demographic shift grows there will be more and more baby boomer seniors who are challenging best practices; it is better to be ahead of the curve meeting the issues of today's Older Adults WITH Older Adults for a better tomorrow (SWOT)	GP	2014	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	-# Reach outs to other age-friendly initiatives for learning opportunities and potential collaborative efforts, e.g., invitation to speak to COA and possibly OAC membership, as well as GP
B.5	Addressing the future of the Mayor's Advisory Committee strengthens the perception of politicians and staffers wanting to address the quality of life for OAs (SWOT)	GP	2014 2018	Staff	Exec	n/a	n/a	-End of term "annual" staff report to council outlining COA achievements

Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
1.0	GOAL: Communication and Information. All ages have access to current and relevant information to meet their changing needs and preferences							
1.1	Promote the PHAC AF Communication Guide as an enhancement to the AODA Communication Standard as a tool to assist establishments, internally and externally, to the City; understand how to communicate with OAs <sup>21</sup> (AFC4-A1)	GP	2015+	COA	Staff	Front-line providers  Media  Library	n/a	<b>Improved accessibility of information</b> -Distribution strategy identified to email PHAC AF -Tool is promoted on City page insert -Tax bills and water bills are age-friendly -PDF of the AFC Guide is posted on the City website
Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
2.0	GOAL: Health and Wellness. All citizens have access to good health and wellness. Communication and Information, in addition to Transportation impact on access to health and wellness, as does having a fixed address.							
2.1	Provide information, education and support services <sup>22</sup> for family and friends as caregivers (AFC5-B1)	Frail seniors	2015+	COA	Staff	OAC  Internet & telecommunication providers  Library  Media	n/a	<b>Improved access to support</b> -Innovative strategy (including print & internet) developed to address the dissemination about key municipal & regional services identified for Older Adults -Strategy to promote Information Niagara 211 as a resource is developed -Potential funding assistance identified to assist with the dissemination of printed information, e.g., via Canada Post -Share with GP community best practices identified for reaching out, e.g., St.

<sup>22</sup> Support services inclusive of garbage pick up, yard maintenance, mail/newspaper pickup



Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
								George’s phone and visit program, Heatherwood good neighbours, neighbourhood watch, <a href="http://whatisacaregiver.org">whatisacaregiver.org</a>
3.0	GOAL: Housing and Shelter. All citizens have access to affordable and accessible housing and shelter							
3.1	Conduct an environmental scan of housing choices by neighbourhood to assist determine the potential demand (AFC6-A1)	65+	2015+	COA	Staff	Planners	n/a	<b>Awareness of housing choices close to friends and family</b> -Reviewed Niagara Community Services neighbourhood mapping project as a baseline of present senior housing -Identify assessment strategy to provide ample choices
3.2	Promote alternative choices so there is a good understanding by OA how housing can be modified to meet their needs (AFC6-A1)	65+	2015+	COA	Staff	Builders & Developers Housing Agencies	n/a	<b>Awareness of housing options promoting ageing-in-place</b> -Identified resources that promote home modifications (lifelong designs) including other living type arrangements, e.g., intergenerational housing, as well as emergent assistive technologies
3.3	Organize local house tours of the different options (AFC6-A1)	65+	2015	COA	Staff	Housing with Services Long Term Care Homes Private	n/a	<b>Awareness of housing choices</b> -Options identified and packaged as a tour -Develop a strategy to implement and promote tours

						Housing Retirement Homes		
3.4	Consider subsidized cooperative housing (AFC6-A1)	65+		COA	Staff	Housing Agencies		<b>Awareness of housing choices</b> -The option of cooperative housing is reviewed to meet the needs of Older Adults who want to live close to friends and family
Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
4.0	GOAL: Safety and Security. All ages live in safe and secure communities							
4.1	Support a cyclist and pedestrian safety education program (AFC8-A3)	50+	2015+	COA	Staff	Police	n/a	<b>Improved safety services</b> -Reviewed bicycle related bylaws and legislation to better understand how to reduce sidewalk cycling -Identified speaking series/workshops to promote best practices to Older Adults
4.2	Develop a media awareness campaign focused on no cycling on sidewalks to encourage safe cycling behaviour (AFC8-A3)	50+	2015+	COA	Staff	Police	n/a	<b>Improved safety &amp; security services</b> -Identified best practice strategy
4.3	Support the delivery of cycling safety workshops on how to share the road (AFC8-A3)	50+	2015+	COA	Staff	Police	n/a	<b>Improved safety &amp; security services</b> -Identified best practice to encourage safe cycling on the road for Older Adults, e.g., wearing helmets

Ref	Action	Target	Timing	Lead	Assist	Partners	Funding	Key Performance Indicators
5.0	GOAL: Transportation. All persons should have access to safe, convenient and affordable transportation options to the places they need and want to go. Having access to transportation is critical to staying connected whether it is for employment and volunteering, health and wellness or lifelong learning and enrichment including the arts and recreation activities; accessible communication and information is a key determinant of transportation success.							
5.1	Meet with local municipal/regional staff to discuss solutions to increasing street signage readability, i.e., font size, colour contrast (AFC9-A3)	-50+	2015+	COA	Staff	Planner  Public Works	n/a	<b>Improved general transportation</b> -Reviewed best practice options for improving readability (e.g., Facility Accessibility Design Standards [FADS]) -# Meetings held with appropriate staff to discuss policy for improving readability
5.2	Increase parking allocation time for seniors up to 2 hours for appointments, e.g., doctors, specialists and new downtown facilities, i.e., when volunteering at arena, arts centre (AFC9-A7)	-75+	2015	COA	TBD	TBD	n/a	<b>Improved general transportation</b> -Identified best practices -Reviewed present parking strategies, provide input and make recommendations

### **11. WILL AGE-FRIENDLY COST MONEY?**

While money is important, it is less powerful than the combined energy of the people and community assets. The age-friendly approach is to encourage decision-makers to make better decisions applying an age-friendly lens, i.e., paying attention to the demographic shift and an aging population. It may mean shifting existing tax dollars and resources to better meet the needs of citizens over the lifespan.

There are funding programs that support age-friendly initiatives. A listing is available from the OSS guide – Finding the Right Fit: Age-Friendly Community Planning. Following are examples cited by OSS of Cities that have achieved funding support.

- City of Ottawa received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, New Horizons for Seniors Program and the local Community Foundation; in addition, City Council approved \$500 in annual operations for the implementation of the Older Adult Plan (2010)
- Haliburton received \$25,000 funding from the New Horizons for Seniors Program (2009)
- Brantford received Ontario Trillium Foundation funding to develop a master aging plan and funding to oversee the implementation of recommendations (2009 -13)
- Thunder Bay has received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for age-friendly business toolkit, intergeneration education modules and a public awareness campaign

### **12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & RESOURCES**

#### **Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults**

- Barbara Legg (Vice-Chair)
- Dawn Dodge (Councillor)
- Fred Stevens (Chair)

- Janet Fraser
- Jennifer Douglas (Staff)
- Jennifer Stevens (Councillor)
- Koby Vanyo (Staff)
- Mary Stanko
- Matt Harris (Councillor)
- Representative Dunlop Older Adult Centre
- Representative Port Dalhousie Older Adult Centre
- Representative West St. Catharines Older Adult Centre
- Ruth Hay
- Virginia Stewart

### **Committee Acknowledgements**

The Mayor's Advisory Committee for Older Adults would like to recognize the individuals and organizations who contributed to the success of the development of the Older Adult Plan including the:

- Niagara Age-Friendly Network
- Older Adult Centres who participated in the NAFCI project 2010 – 2013 along with other City of St. Catharines Older Adults, caregivers and service providers
- Ontario Trillium Foundation Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative 2010-2013

### **Resources**

Following are links to research, programs and services in support of age-friendly:

- Age-Friendly Communities Canada Hub, <http://afc-hub.ca>
  - Association for Older Adult Centres, <http://www.oacao.org>
  - Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, <http://www.seniors.gov.on.ca>
  - Ontario Trillium Foundation Research  
<http://www.otf.ca/en/knowledgeSharingCentre/research.asp>
-

- Niagara Age-Friendly Community Initiative 2009 – 2013 Report is available as a separate document

### **13. APPENDIX**

There are always those challenges facing Older Adults we would like to address; however, they require more resources. A reference code (e.g., AFC1 – A7) links the challenge background information to the NAFCI Community Report, which provides the complete list of challenges and recommended actions.

#### **1. Belonging**

Goal: All persons are respected and socially included.

##### *Challenges*

1.1 Intergenerational Interactions. Not enough projects and activities that engage different generations, e.g., youth teaching seniors how to use computers, Older Adults sharing knowledge and expertise within the school systems, students visiting seniors (AFC1 – A3)

1.2 Isolation. “Sometimes people died in their apartments and it is days before anyone finds them” (Older Adult, 2012) (AFC1 – A4)

1.3 Ageism and Ignorance. Lack of appreciation of lived experiences of Older Adults; “value our input, our history and knowledge and experience, “(Older Adult, 2012); “there is a disconnect between innovation and age” (Older Adult Service Provider, 2012), all ages have the imagination to innovation (AFC1 – B1)

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## **2. Building, Parks and Other Outdoor Spaces: Built Environment**

Goal: The built environment supports active aging across the lifespan.

### *Challenges*

2.1 Benches. Availability of benches improves walkability and enjoyment, they provide somewhere to rest, “you get tired” (Older Adult, 2012); it is important to regularly inspect benches for repair and replacement (AFC 2 – A1)

2.2 Sidewalks. Winter is an important cause of isolation for Older Adults; it is “hard to walk to destinations when pathways not shoveled in winter” (Older Adult, 2012) (AFC2 – A2)

2.3 Connectivity. Seniors enjoy walking to destinations “I walk to Giant Tiger”; “I take my scooter for a ‘scooter walk’ to different destinations”; however, often their destinations are not reachable, e.g., swimming pool, library (Older Adult, 2012); Older Adults also expressed a need for bicycle lanes. (AFC2—A4)

## **3. Civic Participation: Employment and Volunteering**

Goal: All establishments recognize the continued and valued contribution of Older Adults to civic life.

### *Challenges*

3.1 Volunteering. No perceived evidence of volunteer opportunities for Older Adults or how to connect Older Adults with opportunities; “Volunteering is a generous blessing, you need to match volunteers needs, we require a community volunteer coordinated focused on Older Adults needs”; “I know it is hard for some agencies to get volunteers” (Older Adult, 2011) (AFC3 – C1)

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3.2 Options. Recognize that some seniors are holding down two jobs into their 70s just to make ends meet; limited variety of meaningful paid employment and opportunities for Older Adults; however, “I applaud Wal-Mart for employing older persons” (Older Adult, 2012) (AFC3 – B2)

#### **4. Communication and Information**

Goal: All ages have access to current and relevant information to meet their changing needs and preferences.

##### *Challenges*

4.1 Access to Information. Not knowing where to get information, the lack of consistency of information and dissemination of it (computer or/and print) (AFC4 – B1)

4.2 Automation. “Automated telephone answering is terrible...it is confusing...you can never find the person you are looking for!” (Older Adult, 2012). “Everyone assumes you have on-line access for banking, paying bills, etc.” (Older Adult, 2012) (AFC4 – B6)

#### **5. Health and Wellness**

Goal: All citizens have access to good health and wellness (“Wellness can be “reaching the floor to clean it when you have health issues [arthritis]. It can be very depressing if I am not able to do my cleaning” [Older Adult, 2012]).

##### *Challenges*

5.1 Physicians. A need for local doctors for all ages and “good” physicians and specialists that respect Older Adults; Often physicians cannot manage the complexity of a senior’s increased needs, ‘5 minute appointments with one issue per visit does not meet the needs of seniors with complex issues”

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(Service Provider, 2012); “Many seniors cannot understand or comprehend what doctor’s orders are” (Caregiver, 2012). (AFC5 – B2)

5.2 Food Security. More nourishing and healthy food available to individuals at home and those living in senior residences. (AFC5 – C4)

## **6. Housing and Shelter**

Goal: All citizens have access to affordable and accessible housing and shelter.

### *Challenge*

6.1 Diversity. Limited availability of supportive housing for people with mental challenges. (AFC6 – A2)

## **7. Lifelong Learning and Enrichment: Recreation, Education, Arts and Culture**

Goal: All ages live in safe and secure communities.

### *Challenges*

7.1 New and more programming/services for Older Adults. Need for a broader range of programming to keep and attract new audiences and provide more opportunities for seniors to meet; sometimes people are apprehensive to be engaged, i.e., they do not want to go alone. (AFC7 – A3)

7.2 Isolation. Too many older persons living with loneliness and lack of social connection; too few services for those living in isolation. (AFC7 – B3)

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## **8. Safety and Security**

Goal: All ages live in safe and secure communities.

### *Challenge*

8.1 Crime. Fraud and other related types of crimes involving seniors is often not reported “less confident in yourself as you age – feel helpless and let people help you that don’t always have the best intentions” (Older Adult, 2012)

## **9. Transportation**

Goal: All persons should have access to safe, convenient and affordable transportation options to the places they need and want to go.

### *Challenge*

9.1 Travel Patterns are Changing. Older Adults who rely on their car for independence are shifting their transportation options to public transit, walking and taxi service because of health reasons or losing a friend to drive them; transitioning to taking public transit from driving can be stressful for many. (AFC9 – A6)

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