

Community Age-Friendly Priorities

Gilbert Plains, Manitoba

Age-Friendly Gilbert Plains Community Consultation Summary

November 16, 2009

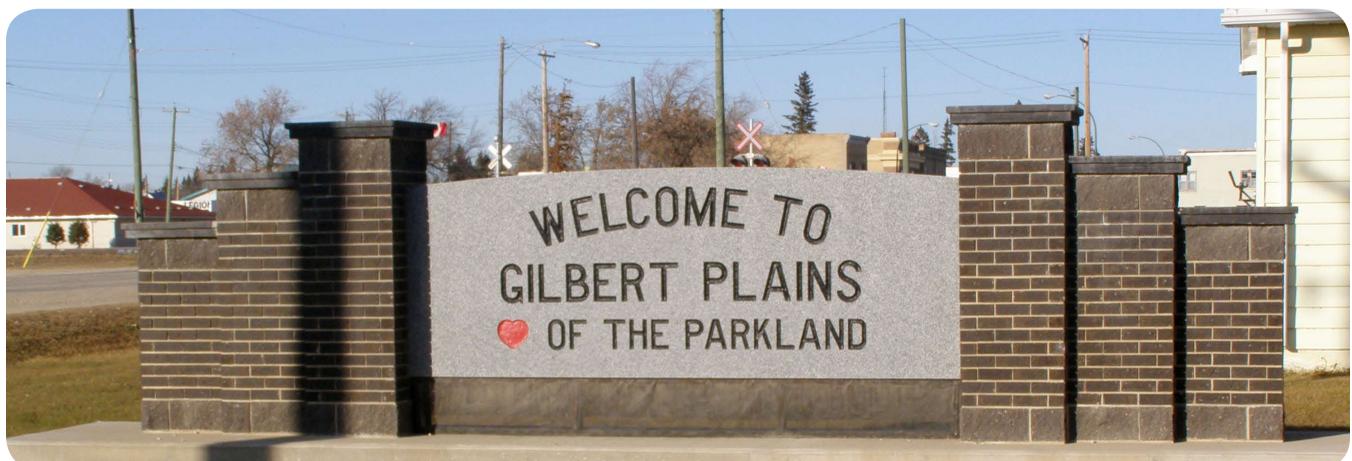
Community consultations are being held with seniors and community members in a number of communities in Manitoba as part of a larger Age-Friendly Initiative. The goal of these community consultations is to assist communities to prioritize issues that will help them form action plans to make their community as age-friendly as possible. On November 16, 2009, 20 individuals from the Town of Gilbert Plains, Manitoba came together to talk about age-friendly priorities and issues within their community. Participants also had the opportunity to complete a survey of the age-friendliness of their community. The following is a summary of the age-friendly priorities identified at the meeting and survey results.



Summary of Group Discussion

Age-Friendly Gilbert Plains Benefits:

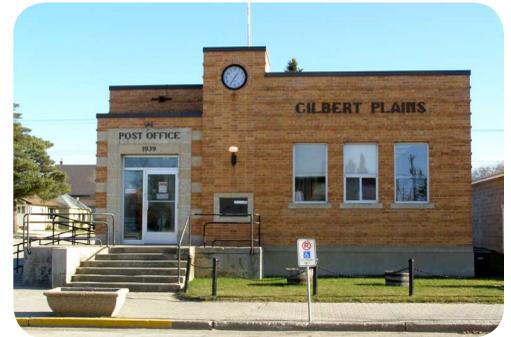
- Citizens on Patrol (COP) are active in keeping streets safe
- Snow is removed quickly from Main Street
- Town by-law states that snow must be removed by 10:00 p.m. day of snowfall
- Town workers clear snow on main roads
- Variety of recreation opportunities available: hockey, baseball, skateboard park, bowling alley
- Access to two handi-vans in Gilbert Plains and Grandview; seats 10–15 people
- Bowling alley and gym are owned cooperatively
- G.P. Place has automatic doors installed in the garage
- School children visit residents in the nursing care home
- Social activities are available for all ages
- Volunteer opportunities are available for all ages
- Information is communicated through community brochures, newspaper, bulletin boards
- Newcomer welcome packages are available from both the Town and the R.M. offices
- Gilbert Plains Medical Clinic is also accessed by many people outside of the community; A good variety of health care workers offers clinic services, including physicians from the Dauphin Medical Group
- Post office has a good ramp with grips to prevent sliding



Priority: Enhance Accessibility of Public Buildings

Potential Actions:

- Research available grants that allow small towns to increase building accessibility, e.g., increase contact with Provincial and Federal Governments
- Determine which grants to apply for assistance to purchase and install automatic doors, e.g., Sunset Lodge, post office, Gilbert Plains Pharmacy, and Dauphin Plains Credit Union
- Explore how buildings can be accessible for wheelchairs and walkers, e.g., library, bank
- Add signage to public washrooms, e.g., Emergency Building
- Place benches on Main Street
- Increase the width of the post office ramp to allow people with mobility problems to enter the building
- Adjust the post office door to open more easily



Priority: Increase Street and Community Safety

Potential Actions:

- Install more lighting on residential streets, e.g., Gordon Street
- Increase the number of handi-cap parking spots
- Place signs indicating crosswalks
- Expand RCMP presence



Priority: Add Senior Housing Options

Potential Actions:

- Create affordable housing choices for seniors: 55+ residences that have two bedroom units (need space for visiting family members)
- Offer assisted living for older persons
- Build more houses and condominiums for people retiring and coming to work in Gilbert Plains



Priority: Inform Community Residents of Services and Programs

Potential Actions:

- Provide a central directory of services and programs
- Continue providing updates of the emergency plan in the community newsletter



Summary of Survey Responses

As part of a community consultation held in Gilbert Plains on November 9, 2009, individuals were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community. A total of 20 questionnaires were completed by individuals attending the consultation. This report summarizes the findings from the 20 individuals who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 75% identified themselves as a senior.

Most Age-Friendly Areas

Gilbert Plains residents identified a number of age-friendly areas through their survey responses. The majority of residents feel there are enough sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of the community and that snow clearing is done in a timely manner. They also feel that sidewalks are well maintained.

Overall, residents feel the transportation available in the community for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient and affordable for seniors. Through the survey, seniors also identified they are generally treated with respect and feel safe when walking alone during the day.

Within the community, information on events is readily available and communicated by various organizations to seniors. There are also enough recreation programs specifically for seniors. Based on their responses, seniors feel there are enough volunteer opportunities as well as official recognition for seniors who volunteer.

Least Age-Friendly Areas

Based on the survey responses from Gilbert Plains residents, a number of important areas were identified. Many residents feel that more subsidized housing for low-income seniors is needed and the waiting times to get into assisted senior housing is not reasonable. Safety is also a concern, as many Gilbert Plains residents do not feel safe when walking alone during the night.

To increase the town's age-friendliness, more businesses and public buildings should be made more accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors). Many residents feel that there are not enough public washrooms in key areas of the community nor are there enough public washrooms accommodating people with wheelchairs.

Seniors would also like to see more lifelong learning programs, paid job opportunities, and public telephone answering services that are adapted to meet seniors' needs.

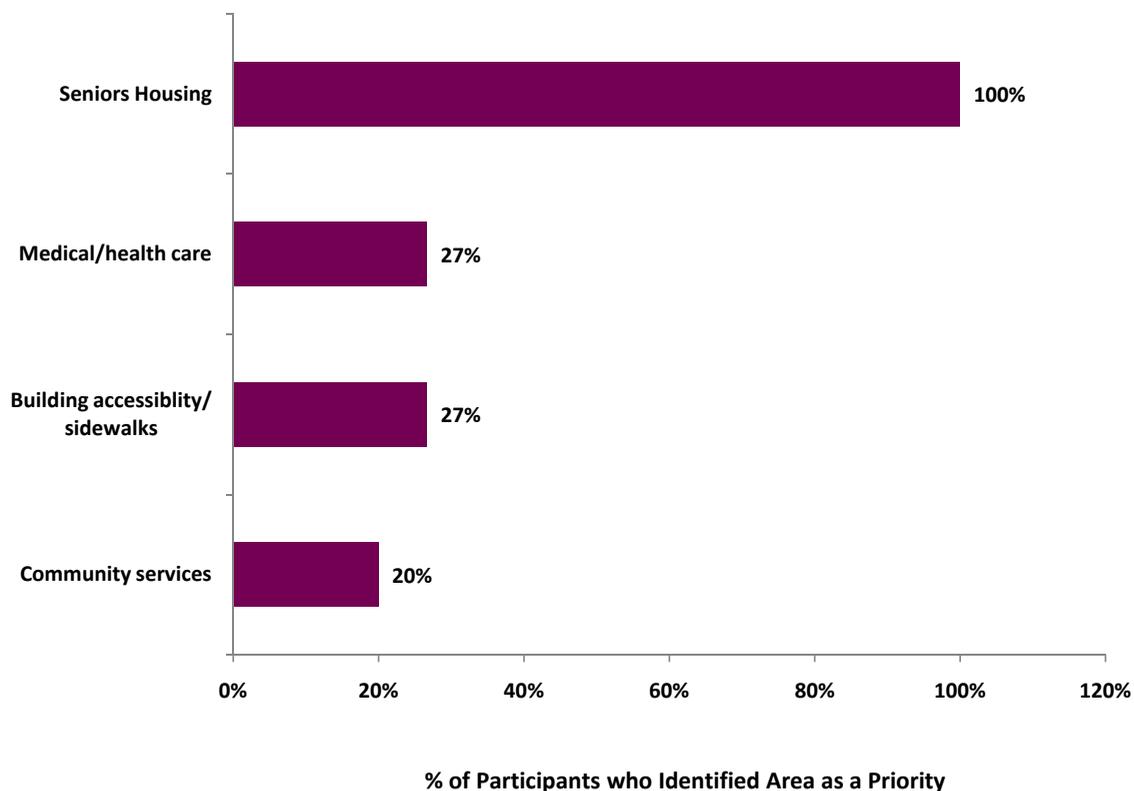
Priority Areas

Individuals were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Fifteen out of 20 individuals (75%) identified at least one priority area.

These written comments were grouped into the priority areas as shown in Figure 1:

- seniors housing (e.g., housing for seniors, more seniors housing, senior apartments-over 55, housing/condos-55 plus);
- medical/health care (e.g., maintain health services, a doctor exclusively for Gilbert Plains, medical services in town);
- building accessibility/sidewalks (e.g., automatic doors, sidewalks, better accessibility to buildings); and
- community services (e.g., groups that clean snow for individuals living in their own homes, more tradesmen to help elderly in their own homes, support at the Senior Centre).

Figure 1: Priority Areas Identified by Participants



Age-Friendly Survey Responses

Housing	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There is enough housing that meets the needs of seniors.	5.0	85.0	10.0
Housing for seniors is affordable.	55.0	5.0	40.0
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors.	20.0	35.0	45.0
The waiting times are reasonable to get into senior housing that provides supports to seniors (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes).	10.0	60.0	30.0
There is enough housing for younger people.	45.0	40.0	15.0

Transportation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to shopping, senior centres, religious events, cultural events, and so forth is sufficient.	40.0	35.0	25.0
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient.	65.0	15.0	20.0
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient.	90.0	0.0	10.0
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	90.0	0.0	10.0
There are volunteer drivers or an informal network of drivers available for seniors who need transportation.	40.0	20.0	40.0
There are enough parking spaces close to services and stores.	85.0	5.0	10.0
There are enough "handicap" parking spaces close to services and stores.	40.0	30.0	30.0

Respect and Social Inclusion	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors are generally treated with respect.	90.0	0.0	10.0
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	47.4	21.1	31.6
Community consultations specifically include seniors.	36.8	10.5	52.6
Planning processes specifically consider the needs of seniors (e.g., planning for housing or transportation).	30.0	15.0	55.0

Safety	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Crime and vandalism are a problem.	45.0	45.0	10.0
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> .	90.0	0.0	10.0
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> .	20.0	50.0	30.0

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.	80.0	5.0	15.0
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	95.0	0.0	5.0
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (even surfaces or paved, not a lot of cracks).	90.0	10.0	0.0
Snow clearing is done in a timely manner so walking and driving is safe.	95.0	0.0	5.0
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>business</i> areas.	90.0	5.0	5.0
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>residential</i> and/or <i>recreation</i> areas.	68.4	15.8	15.8
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	10.0	70.0	20.0
Public washrooms accommodate people with wheelchairs.	10.0	60.0	30.0
Most or all businesses and public buildings are easily accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	10.5	63.2	26.3

Social Participation/Recreation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
My community has enough pleasant places for walking (e.g., walking trails, parks, well-treed streets).	94.7	5.3	0.0
Local parks or walking trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors (e.g., paths with even surfaces).	84.2	10.5	5.3
There are enough resting areas with benches along paths or trails.	68.4	15.8	15.8
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors.	36.8	10.5	52.6
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	73.7	10.5	15.8
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., learning new things such as the use of computers).	10.5	42.1	47.4
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children spending time with seniors).	21.1	36.8	42.1
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	68.4	0.0	31.6
Isolated seniors (e.g., those who don't have anybody) are contacted, visited or taken to activities.	26.3	5.3	68.4

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.	75.0	5.0	20.0
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	73.7	0.0	26.3
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors.	15.0	20.0	65.0
The job opportunities in my neighbourhood accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	25.0	10.0	65.0

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	75.0	0.0	25.0
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.	70.0	5.0	25.0
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	55.0	5.0	40.0
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	20.0	5.0	75.0
There is enough assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	40.0	10.0	50.0
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	25.0	25.0	50.0

Health and Community Services	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The home care services that support seniors in their own home (e.g., meal preparation, nursing care) are sufficient.	70.0	5.0	25.0
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient.	33.3	16.7	50.0
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at a recreation or senior centre) are sufficient.	65.0	0.0	35.0
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient.	90.0	0.0	10.0
The health care services that are provided in my community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians, eye care).	57.9	26.3	15.8
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	55.0	15.0	30.0
Access to health care that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is generally convenient (e.g., services not too far away, appointment times are convenient).	63.2	10.5	26.3

The views expressed herein reflect the opinions of the participants and do not necessarily represent the views of the Age-Friendly Communities Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) or the Centre on Aging.

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