

Age-Friendly Minitonas Community Consultation Summary

Minitonas, Manitoba

October 19, 2010

Community consultations are being held with seniors and community members across Manitoba as part of a larger Age-Friendly Initiative. The goal of these community consultations is to assist communities with prioritizing issues that will help them form action plans to make their communities age-friendly. On October 19, 2010, 24 residents from the Town of Minitonas, 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 the survey results.



Summary of Group Discussion

Age-Friendly Benefits of Minitonas

- Nice, well kept parks
- Reliable handi-van service
- Some events that bring generations together, e.g., family picnics, “muffin program” for children
- Good communication of services and community events
- Friendly, safe place to live
- High quality drinking water
- Affordable housing
- Active churches
- Outdoor recreational opportunities
- Minitonas has excellent maintenance services, e.g., lighting, street snow clearing
- New Library



Priority: Increase Walkability on Residential Sidewalks

Potential Actions:

- Clean snow on a regular and timely basis
- Build awareness about trimming tree branches over sidewalks
- Reduce hazards by repairing uneven sidewalks



Priority: Increase Safety for Residents

Potential Actions

- Increase surveillance during night hours to decrease vandalism
- Monitor and discourage snowmobile use on town streets
- Raise awareness about responsible pet ownership
- Distribute a concise emergency reference guide to residents



Priority: Improve Accessibility to Public Buildings

Potential Actions

- Improve entrance to Town Hall and level threshold
- Redesign ramp and entrance to Post Office
- Add handrails on steps
- Locate handi-cap parking spaces in front of Town Hall, Post Office, and Library



Priority: Assess the Need and Feasibility of Adding More Seniors' Housing in Minitonas

Potential Actions

- Increase the number of independent living units with one and two bedroom suites, ample parking, visitor parking and a common room for social gatherings
- Remodel some of the existing bachelor suites in the Manitoba Housing Chalet into one bedroom suites



Priority: Consider Available Space to Hold a Senior Drop-In Program up to Five Days per Week, e.g. Town Hall

Potential Actions

- Coordinate social programs, e.g., physical exercise, cards
- Provide information on programs and opportunities to socialize
- Approach the RHA regarding the possibility of hiring a Senior Resource Coordinator



Priority: Improve Coordination of Public Information and the Town Newsletter

Potential Actions

- Post upcoming events on the town sign to increase awareness
- Encourage people to share information
- Post the handi-van contact number in obvious and easily referenced places
- Provide a regularly scheduled newsletter to residents



Priority: Improve Access to Health and Community Services in Swan River and Minitonas

Potential Actions

- Centralize physician and health services in Swan River's medical clinic
- Increase needed health services to reduce travel to Yorkton, Brandon and Winnipeg
- Offer Meals on Wheels in Minitonas as needed



Priority: Create Trails in and Around Town for Recreational Purposes

Potential Action

- Research and discuss options with residents



Summary of Survey Responses

As part of a community consultation held in Minitonas on October 19, 2010, residents were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community. Twenty four residents living in Minitonas completed questionnaires. This report summarizes the findings from the 24 residents who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 75% identified themselves as a senior.

Most Age-Friendly Areas

All residents that completed the survey agreed that road signs in the community are easy to read and large enough for older drivers. The majority felt that there are enough parking spaces close to services and stores, and that seniors in the community are generally treated with respect. In addition, most participants agreed that public transportation, including the handi-van, is sufficient and affordable.

Least Age-Friendly Areas

Access to health care services that meet seniors' needs, such as physicians and eye care, was identified as an important issue in this community. Few participants felt that local parks and walking trails are accessible and easy for seniors to use. Residents also indicated that seniors' advocacy services in the community are insufficient; and very few agreed that seniors have the opportunity to advise local government through a seniors' council.

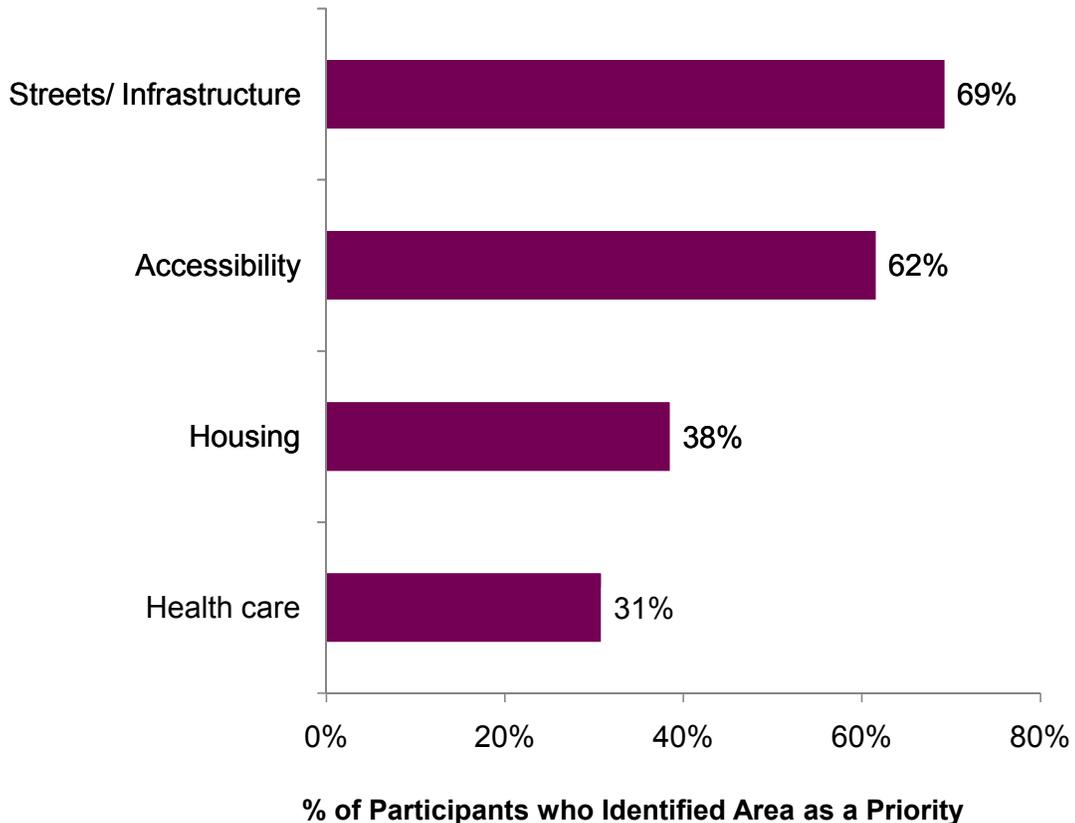
Priority Areas

Residents were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Thirteen out of the 24 residents (54.16%) identified at least one priority area.

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

- Streets/infrastructure (e.g., better sidewalks, more automatic doors, walking pathways and walking trails, automatic entrance doors to businesses);
- Accessibility (e.g., handicap parking, public washrooms. Ramps and railings, wheelchair access);
- Housing (e.g., low rental bedroom apartments, housing for seniors with low income, larger suites) and
- Health care (e.g., medical services, health care issues assistance for seniors requiring medical appointment and travel outside health region).

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.	54.2	29.2	16.7
Housing for seniors is affordable.	79.2	4.2	16.7
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors.	45.5	31.8	22.7
The waiting times are reasonable to get into senior housing that provides supports to seniors (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes).	54.5	18.2	27.3
There is enough housing for younger people.	30.4	39.1	30.4

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.	79.2	12.5	8.3
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient.	69.6	17.4	13.0
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient.	87.5	4.2	8.3
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	82.6	0.0	17.4
There are volunteer drivers or an informal network of drivers available for seniors who need transportation.	30.4	17.4	52.2
There are enough parking spaces close to services and stores.	95.8	0.0	4.2
There are enough "handicap" parking spaces close to services and stores.	62.5	20.8	16.7

Respect and Social Inclusion	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors are generally treated with respect.	95.7	0.0	4.3
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	9.1	59.1	31.8
Community consultations specifically include seniors.	22.7	18.2	59.1
Planning processes specifically consider the needs of seniors (e.g., planning for housing or transportation).	34.8	17.4	47.8

Safety	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Crime and vandalism are a problem.	45.5	36.4	18.2
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> .	77.3	4.5	18.2
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> .	18.2	50.0	31.8

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.	100.0	0.0	0.0
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	71.4	28.6	0.0
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (even surfaces or paved, not a lot of cracks).	21.7	73.9	4.3
Snow clearing is done in a timely manner so walking and driving is safe.	54.2	37.5	8.3
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>business</i> areas.	68.2	22.7	9.1
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>residential</i> and/or <i>recreation</i> areas.	57.1	19.0	23.8
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	63.6	22.7	13.6
Public washrooms accommodate people with wheelchairs.	31.8	36.4	31.8
Most or all businesses and public buildings are easily accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	28.6	57.1	14.3

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).	42.9	47.6	9.5
Local parks or walking trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors (e.g., paths with even surfaces).	10.0	50.0	40.0
There are enough resting areas with benches along paths or trails.	56.5	21.7	21.7
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors.	36.4	22.7	40.9
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	40.9	27.3	31.8
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., learning new things such as the use of computers).	4.3	56.5	39.1
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children spending time with seniors).	29.2	25.0	45.8
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	43.5	8.7	47.8
Isolated seniors (e.g., those who don't have anybody) are contacted, visited or taken to activities.	26.1	21.7	52.2

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.	31.8	13.6	54.5
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	27.3	31.8	40.9
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors.	17.4	26.1	56.5
The job opportunities in my neighbourhood accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	14.3	23.8	61.9

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	65.2	17.4	17.4
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.	43.5	13.0	43.5
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	43.5	17.4	39.1
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	18.2	31.8	50.0
There is enough assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	4.5	45.5	50.0
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	4.3	47.8	47.8

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.	68.2	13.6	18.2
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient.	27.3	27.3	45.5
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at a recreation or senior centre) are sufficient.	61.9	9.5	28.6
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient.	13.6	31.8	54.5
The health care services that are provided in my community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians, eye care).	9.5	76.2	14.3
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	27.3	40.9	31.8
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).	22.7	59.1	18.2

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.

This summary was prepared by the Age-Friendly Communities CURA. The Age-Friendly Communities CURA is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Published: December 8, 2010