

Age-Friendly Rural Municipality of Strathcona Community Consultation Summary

**Belmont,
Manitoba**

May 16, 2011



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 May 16, 2011, 33 residents from the Rural Municipality of Strathcona, 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 the Rural Municipality of Strathcona

- Safe, affordable community
- Snow is promptly cleared from the streets
- A van transports people from Belmont to the Baldur Trading General Store
- Baldur high school students gain credits by volunteering in Belmont
- People readily assist others as needed
- Scenic area with lakes close-by



Priority: Improve outdoor walking safety in Belmont

Potential Actions:

- Clear snow from sidewalks on a regular basis
- Improve the lighting on side streets or prune trees so they do not block the lights
- Repair older sidewalks so they are level and smooth and gradually meet the street
- Encourage residents to trim trees and hedges that overgrow sidewalks
- Replace the rocks of the abandoned rail line with a smoother, safer surface so people could use it as a walking trail
- Increase the signage for the walking trail



Priority: Improve accessibility of public buildings

Potential Actions:

- Improve the access to public buildings (e.g., by adding ramps)
- Identify the location of public washrooms with new signs
- Add a baby change table in the Belmont Community Hall



Priority: Identify alternate transportation options for medical appointments and social activities

Potential Actions:

- Investigate how a Handi-van could be accessed by residents in the RM of Strathcona (e.g., connect with the Resource Coordinator at Seniors Independent Services)
- Create and publish a list of volunteer drivers with an updated list on file at the RM office
- Identify an ongoing central source to provide contact information for the Handi-van and volunteer drivers to all residents



Priority: Assess housing choices so seniors can remain in their community

Potential Actions:

- Improve the space at Belcrest Manor by converting bachelor suites into one or two bedroom suites



Priority: Provide activities in Belmont that attract the participation of residents

Potential Actions:

- Increase community events with meals
- Consult residents for appropriate and desired activities for increased participation



Priority: Increase health and community services

Potential Actions:

- Offer more home services to assist residents who live in their houses
- Develop a volunteer “call” system to contact people living alone in the area



Priority: Develop a way to frequently share information about activities and events

Potential Actions:

- Ensure complete information is included, such as location of event so newcomers can easily identify the place
- Invite newcomers to morning coffee and community activities
- Consistently place information in The Gazette
- Place and update posters at the post office
- Update and maintain the RM website for an increased source of information
- Improve the library (either at its current location in the beauty salon or relocate to the drop-in centre)
- Ask the Westoba Credit Union if they could provide updates to their annual calendar with a more frequent community newsletter
- Distribute the “Citizens Quick Emergency Guide” pamphlet that has been developed to all residences



Summary of Survey Responses

As part of a community consultation held in the Rural Municipality (R.M.) of Strathcona on May 16, 2011, residents were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community. Twenty-eight residents living in the R.M. of Strathcona completed questionnaires. This report summarizes the findings from the 28 residents who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 67.9% identified themselves as a senior.

Most Age-Friendly Areas

The majority of participants who completed a survey felt that seniors in the community are generally treated with respect. Most agreed that housing for seniors is affordable in the community and that there are enough parking spaces close to services and public washrooms in key areas of the community. Many respondents also agreed that seniors feel safe when walking alone during the day and that there are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors in the community.

Least Age-Friendly Areas

Few participants agreed that the health care services provided in the community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, eye care) and that meal delivery services to seniors' homes are sufficient. Accessibility and public transportation were identified as important areas. For instance, few respondents felt that public buildings are readily accessible to everybody, and most felt that public transportation to medical appointments and health care services is not sufficient. Most also indicated that there are not enough programs that bring seniors and children together in the community, such as school reading programs.

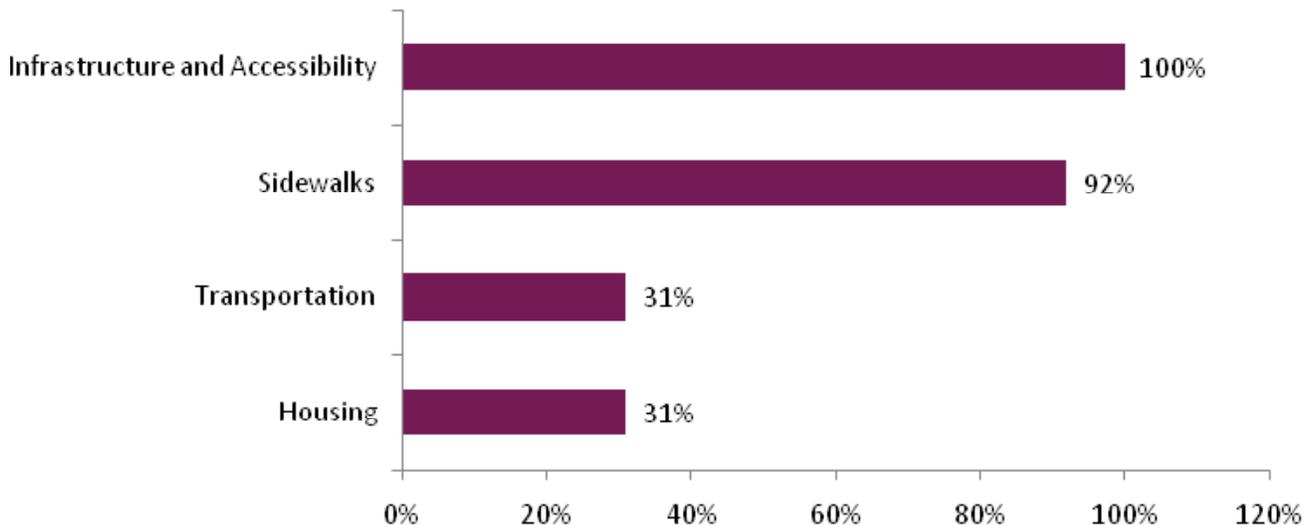
Priority Areas

Individuals 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 28 individuals (46.4%) identified at least one priority area.

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

- **Infrastructure and accessibility** (more businesses, washroom, need wheelchair accessible bathrooms, need ramps to banks/stores/etc.);
- **Sidewalks** (e.g., improve sidewalks, sidewalks need to be repaired, pave streets);
- **Transportation** (e.g., transportation to doctor/hospital, more volunteer drivers to take seniors to social events/church, transportation for health), and
- **Housing** (e.g., senior housing).

Figure 1: Priority Areas Identified by Participants



Percent of Participants Who Identified Area as a Priority

Age-Friendly Survey Responses

Housing	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There is enough housing that meets the needs of seniors.	28.0	40.0	32.0
Housing for seniors is affordable.	76.9	3.8	19.2
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors.	19.2	46.2	34.6
The waiting times are reasonable to get into senior housing that provides supports to seniors (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes).	30.8	30.8	38.5
There is enough housing for younger people.	57.7	26.9	15.4

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.	26.9	57.7	15.4
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient.	11.5	53.8	34.6
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient.	26.9	53.8	19.2
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	42.3	11.5	46.2
There are volunteer drivers or an informal network of drivers available for seniors who need transportation.	34.6	23.1	42.3
There are enough parking spaces close to services and stores.	92.0	0.0	8.0
There are enough "handicap" parking spaces close to services and stores.	44.0	32.0	24.0

Respect and Social Inclusion	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors are generally treated with respect.	96.4	0.0	3.6
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	14.8	48.1	37.0
Community consultations specifically include seniors.	37.0	25.9	37.0
Planning processes specifically consider the needs of seniors (e.g., planning for housing or transportation).	14.3	25.0	60.7

Safety	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Crime and vandalism are a problem.	3.7	85.2	11.1
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> .	74.1	7.4	18.5
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> .	51.9	22.2	25.9

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.	85.2	11.1	3.7
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	60.7	32.1	7.1
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (even surfaces or paved, not a lot of cracks).	15.4	80.8	3.8
Snow clearing is done in a timely manner so walking and driving is safe.	59.3	33.3	7.4
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>business</i> areas.	50.0	28.6	21.4
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>residential</i> and/or <i>recreation</i> areas.	50.0	26.9	23.1
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	74.1	22.2	3.7
Public washrooms accommodate people with wheelchairs.	28.6	60.7	10.7
Most or all businesses and public buildings are easily accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	15.4	69.2	15.4

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).	63.0	33.3	3.7
Local parks or walking trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors (e.g., paths with even surfaces).	33.3	48.1	18.5
There are enough resting areas with benches along paths or trails.	10.7	67.9	21.4
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors.	28.6	57.1	14.3
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	70.4	18.5	11.1
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., learning new things such as the use of computers).	25.9	51.9	22.2
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children spending time with seniors).	3.7	70.4	25.9
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	66.7	0.0	33.3
Isolated seniors (e.g., those who don't have anybody) are contacted, visited or taken to activities.	39.3	10.7	50.0

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.	71.4	10.7	17.9
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	28.6	42.9	28.6
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors.	14.3	60.7	25.0
The job opportunities in my neighbourhood accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	10.7	57.1	32.1

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	71.4	7.1	21.4
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.	57.1	14.3	28.6
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	63.0	11.1	25.9
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	11.1	25.9	63.0
There is enough assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	21.4	32.1	46.4
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	10.7	28.6	60.7

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.	37.0	14.8	48.1
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient.	44.4	22.2	33.3
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at a recreation or senior centre) are sufficient.	29.6	25.9	44.4
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient.	7.4	40.7	51.9
The health care services that are provided in my community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians, eye care).	3.7	70.4	25.9
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	11.1	51.9	37.0
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).	26.9	42.3	30.8

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: May 31, 2011