

Age-Friendly Russell Community Consultation Summary

Russell, Manitoba

April 23, 2012



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 April 23, 2012, 19 residents from the Town of Russell, 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 Russell Benefits

- Varying topography, beautiful scenery
- Lots of recreational opportunities including fishing, skiing and golfing
- Medical, dental and professional health services available
- Investments being made in housing
- Business community works well together
- Good partnership between Town Council and Chamber of Commerce



Priority: Improve the Accessibility of Sidewalks And Trails

Potential Actions:

- When replacing sidewalks, use smooth surfaces for easier wheelchair access (e.g., rubber sidewalk material or concrete)
- Add lighting to the Trans Canada Trail in town

Priority: Increase Building Accessibility and Use

Potential Actions:

- Use signage to identify accessible washrooms available for public use
- Highlight the age-friendly benefits for businesses by encouraging accessible, safe, even surfaced entrances (e.g., steps and ramps)
- Encourage the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council to find solutions for safe, independent access to businesses and public buildings



Priority: Review Current and Upcoming Housing Needs

Potential Actions:

- Engage service clubs and private investors to discuss and coordinate upcoming housing needs (e.g., rental units, affordable/low rental units, life lease, 55 plus, assisted living, and supportive living)
- Contact the RHA regarding the expected need for personal care home beds (e.g., next 10 years)



Priority: Increase Safety for Pedestrians and Drivers

Potential Actions:

- Build awareness for safe walking and biking (e.g., wear reflective or light clothing at night)
- Encourage businesses on Main Street to add clearly visible address numbers
- Add handicapped parking spaces (e.g., at Fields)
- Change curbs to curb cuts at handi-cap parking spaces and loading zones
- Allow enough space for those with wheelchairs to move from vehicles to sidewalks
- Place a Welcome to Russell sign, with lighting for visibility, on north Highway 83 for clear direction to Russell



Priority: Increase and Promote Volunteer and Youth Opportunities

Potential Actions:

- Promote benefits of a volunteer driver program to assist those needing transportation to events during evenings and weekends
- Develop a volunteer program that reimburses volunteers for vehicle gas expenses
- Plan a volunteer/citizen event that shows appreciation for volunteer contributions
- Coordinate volunteer needs with the high school to allow student opportunities for community service course credits (e.g., Service to Seniors Coordinator meets with high school representatives to review needs and opportunities and recruit and train volunteers)
- Coordinate and encourage cooperation between the local school and the senior drop-in centre and services so students and seniors can share learning needs (e.g., students provide assistance and instruction with computer use, digital picture downloading and use, etc.)
- Explore funded youth employment positions as a community resource to assist seniors (e.g., computer instruction)



Priority: Increase Community Communication Possibilities

Potential Actions:

- Survey seniors to determine the best way to convey program, event and community information
- Ask seniors about written notices (e.g., font size, where they look for information and what they most often read or use to gain information)
- Ask seniors what types of programs and events are of interest and what they would commit to attending
- Develop a program that contacts isolated seniors in and around Russell (e.g., “You are Not Alone” program)
- Ensure public notice boards are in a location that can be easily accessed and read
- Add communication options that will catch people’s attention (e.g., electronic reader signs) and place them in strategic locations (e.g., near post office, civic offices, schools)
- Contact local newspapers and discuss their assistance to meet the challenge of providing stories and information that more residents will read
- Promote town and school websites as a reliable source for local news and upcoming activities and events



Summary of Survey Responses

As part of a community consultation held in Russell on April 23, 2012, residents were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community. A total of 17 questionnaires were completed by residents attending the consultation. This report summarizes the findings from the 17 residents who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 41.2% identified themselves as a senior.

Most Age-Friendly Areas

All residents who completed a survey agreed that seniors feel safe when walking alone during the day in the community and that seniors in the community are generally treated with respect. The majority also felt that the community has enough pleasant places for walking (e.g., walking trails, parks) and that local walking paths and trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors. In addition, 88% of those completing the survey agreed that snow clearing is done in a timely manner, the community’s public transportation is affordable for seniors, and that the community has enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.

Least Age-Friendly Areas

Housing was identified as an important area; very few residents who completed a survey felt there is enough housing that meets the needs of seniors in the community, especially subsidized housing for low-income seniors. Many residents indicated that wait times to get into senior housing that provides supports (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes) are not reasonable. In addition, few residents agreed that services to help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care) are sufficient in the community and that the community has enough public washrooms.

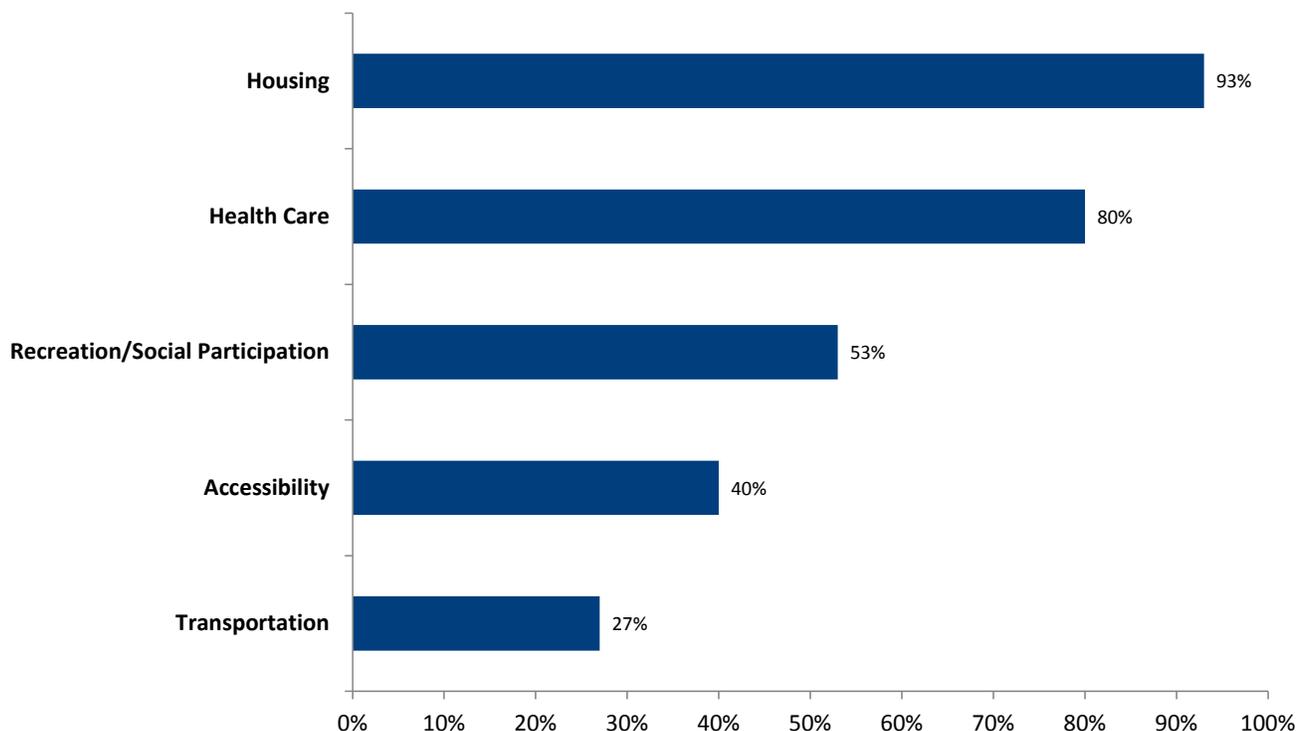
Priority Areas

Residents were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Fifteen out of the 17 residents (88.2%) identified at least one priority area.

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

- Housing (e.g., affordable housing, assisted living, more senior housing);
- Health care (e.g., improved hospital services, quicker access to health specialists, more medical services, more home care beds, more home care staff, expanded/updated PCH);
- Recreation/social participation (e.g., recreation for seniors, social activities for seniors and all ages, affordable recreation for seniors-walking track/gym in new arena);
- Accessibility (e.g., accessibility on main street-businesses, etc., access to buildings for walkers and wheelchairs, access to public washrooms); and
- Transportation (e.g., public transportation, transportation to major cities for medical appointments, need for a second handi-van and longer hours of operation).

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.	5.9	88.2	5.9
Housing for seniors is affordable.	18.8	68.8	12.5
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors.	0.0	88.2	11.8
The waiting times are reasonable to get into senior housing that provides supports to seniors (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes).	5.9	82.4	11.8
There is enough housing for younger people.	29.4	70.6	0.0

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.	25.0	43.8	31.3
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient.	40.0	33.3	26.7
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient.	62.5	18.8	18.8
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	88.2	5.9	5.9
There are volunteer drivers or an informal network of drivers available for seniors who need transportation.	52.9	29.4	17.6
There are enough parking spaces close to services and stores.	80.0	13.3	6.7
There are enough "handicap" parking spaces close to services and stores.	52.9	35.3	11.8

Respect and Social Inclusion	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors are generally treated with respect.	100.0	0.0	0.0
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	11.8	64.7	23.5
Community consultations specifically include seniors.	29.4	35.3	35.3
Planning processes specifically consider the needs of seniors (e.g., planning for housing or transportation).	47.1	35.3	17.6

Safety	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Crime and vandalism are a problem.	20.0	80.0	0.0
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> .	100.0	0.0	0.0
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> .	56.3	12.5	31.3

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.	64.7	29.4	5.9
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	47.1	47.1	5.9
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (even surfaces or paved, not a lot of cracks).	56.3	43.8	0.0
Snow clearing is done in a timely manner so walking and driving is safe.	88.2	5.9	5.9
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>business</i> areas.	76.5	23.5	0.0
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>residential</i> and/or <i>recreation</i> areas.	62.5	37.5	0.0
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	11.8	88.2	0.0
Public washrooms accommodate people with wheelchairs.	23.5	35.3	41.2
Most or all businesses and public buildings are easily accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	17.6	76.5	5.9

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).	88.2	11.8	0.0
Local parks or walking trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors (e.g., paths with even surfaces).	82.4	17.6	0.0
There are enough resting areas with benches along paths or trails.	17.6	70.6	11.8
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors.	23.5	41.2	35.3
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	41.2	23.5	35.3
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., learning new things such as the use of computers).	23.5	41.2	35.3
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children spending time with seniors).	23.5	58.8	17.6
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	52.9	29.4	17.6
Isolated seniors (e.g., those who don't have anybody) are contacted, visited or taken to activities.	13.3	33.3	53.3

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.	88.2	0.0	11.8
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	41.2	41.2	17.6
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors.	23.5	29.4	47.1
The job opportunities in my neighbourhood accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	35.3	23.5	41.2

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	76.5	11.8	11.8
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.	70.6	11.8	17.6
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	52.9	17.6	29.4
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	5.9	29.4	64.7
There is enough assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	43.8	37.5	18.8
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	23.5	41.2	35.3

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.	31.3	31.3	37.5
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient.	11.8	64.7	23.5
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at a recreation or senior centre) are sufficient.	35.3	41.2	23.5
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient.	47.1	35.3	17.6
The health care services that are provided in my community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians, eye care).	70.6	23.5	5.9
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	17.6	52.9	29.4
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).	5.9	82.4	11.8

The views expressed herein reflect the opinions of the participants and do not necessarily represent the views of the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba, or the Manitoba Association of Senior Centres.

This summary was prepared by the Age-Friendly Manitoba Resource Team.

The Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative acknowledges the Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba for its assistance in the survey analysis and document design of this report.

For more information contact:

Age-Friendly Resource Team
 Phone: 1-800-665-6565
 E-Mail: resourceteam@agefriendlymanitoba.ca
 Website: www.agefriendlymanitoba.ca

Published: June 1, 2012