

Age-Friendly Emerson Community Consultation Summary

Emerson, Manitoba

May 15, 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 May 15, 2012, 15 residents from the Town of Emerson, 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 Emerson benefits

- Beautiful location on the Canada-USA border
- Nice place to retire; golf course and other outdoor activities available
- Various housing options are available
- A new daycare opened
- Excellent snow removal
- Dedicated emergency response



Priority: Increase and improve outdoor space to walk and bike

Potential actions:

- Trim tree and hedge branches that overhang sidewalks and benches
- Repair deterioration on sidewalks and level surfaces to prevent tripping
- Create curb cuts to allow for easy and safe bike riding and wheelchair use
- Develop a trail system through and around the historical area of town, to the park and camping area
- Add benches along the trail
- Develop a rest area with benches in the business section
- Construct trails for all-season use
- Repaint crosswalks
- Add signs to warn drivers of upcoming crosswalks
- Determine lighting needs and discuss improvements with Manitoba Hydro (e.g., constant flickering lights and dimness)



Priority: Determine what health and community services will most benefit the people of Emerson

Potential actions:

- Continue to pursue improved ambulance service (e.g., meet with the Regional Health Authority to review statistical information such as response times, distance travelled to hospital, outcomes, and patient satisfaction)
- Increase healthy living opportunities (e.g., programs and education about smoking cessation and living with chronic diseases)



Priority: Increase tourism, promoting the historical interest

Potential actions:

- Add a **Welcome to Emerson** sign on Highway 75 so southbound traffic can easily see the sign and locate Emerson
- Prepare historical information and sites that will attract visitors
- Promote Emerson's historical interest and visitor amenities on the Town of Emerson website
- Promote a walking tour highlighting the historical importance of Emerson to the early development of Manitoba
- Apply for grants to train young people as tourist guides
- Apply for grants to engage the services of graphic designers for pamphlets that promote Emerson's history, attractions and amenities
- Apply for grants to engage the services of a webmaster to promote Emerson's tourist attractions
- Assess the feasibility of the historical Court House and Town Hall building becoming a tourist attraction



Priority: Improve communication opportunities, especially on the Town of Emerson's website

Potential actions:

- Improve the Emerson website to include town events and information so it becomes a "go-to" site for updates
- Add the Council minutes; and Age-Friendly Emerson information and updates to the website
- Promote the Town of Emerson website to area residents
- Promote volunteer opportunities for youth and adults, e.g., at personal care home and schools



Priority: Determine whether transportation is needed for travel to Winnipeg

Potential action:

- Determine whether people need transportation for personal trips or medical appointments to Winnipeg, either individually or as a group



Priority: Improve accessibility to buildings, especially historical buildings

Potential actions:

- Look at options to improve the accessibility of the Court House and Town Hall building as a historical landmark to attract visitors
- Review how the ramp and doors to the Post Office could become more accessible to those using walkers, wheelchairs or strollers, e.g., automatic doors
- Assess the current location of the Library as to increasing its accessibility and use



Priority: Increase social opportunities for all age groups

Potential actions:

- Invite seniors from Emerson and other communities to participate in curling and stick curling
- Consider social programming that includes younger people at the New Horizon Club
- Contact the Emerson School and the Dominion City High School principals to determine if intergenerational programming or volunteering for school credits is feasible
- Encourage adults to participate in recreational programming, e.g., fitness, arts, dancing



Priority: Recognize volunteer contributions in various ways (e.g., appreciation, economic contribution, social connections, sharing of skills)

Summary of Survey Responses

As part of a community consultation held in Emerson on May 15, 2012, residents were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community. Fifteen residents living in Emerson completed questionnaires. This report summarizes the findings from the 15 residents who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 73.3% 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 the community has sufficient meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes. The vast majority also felt that seniors in the community are treated with respect, snow clearing is done in a timely manner, and information about events is readily available to seniors. Over three-quarters agreed that the community has sufficient transportation for individuals

with disabilities (e.g., handivan) and enough parking spaces close to services and stores.

Least Age-Friendly Areas

Social participation and recreation were identified as important areas. None of those who completed the survey agreed that the community has enough exercise classes for seniors; and very few residents felt there are enough lifelong learning programs for seniors (e.g., computer usage) or enough programs that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs). In terms of recreation, most felt that the community does not have enough resting areas with benches along paths/trails and that local paths/walking trails need to be made more accessible and easier to use (e.g., even surfaces). In addition, 80% of respondents indicated there are not enough public washrooms, and few felt that the community has enough paid job opportunities for seniors.

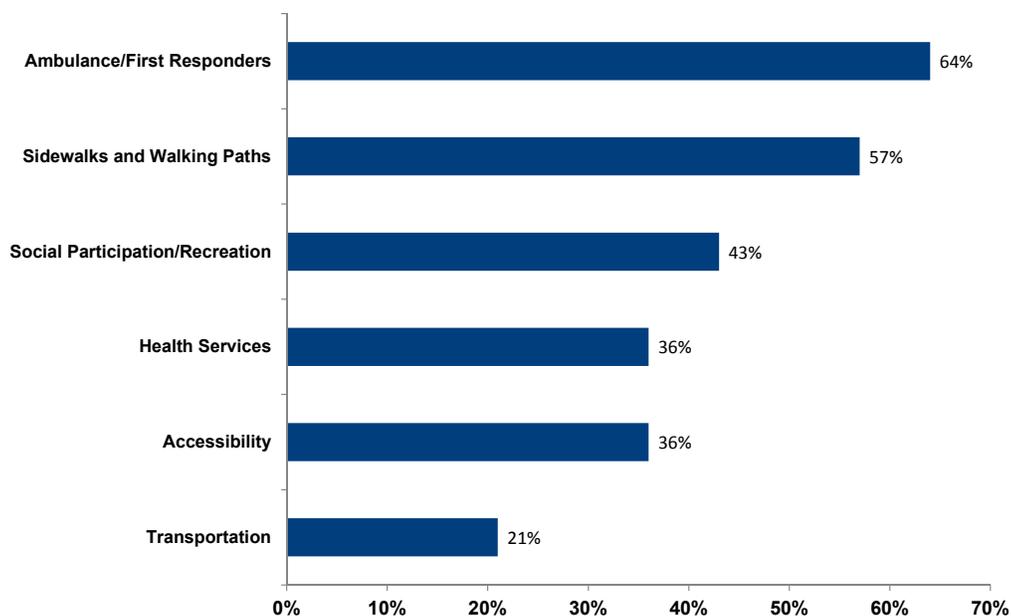
Priority Areas

Residents were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Fourteen out of the 15 residents (93.3%) identified at least one priority area.

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

- Ambulance/first responders (e.g., ambulance services, first responders—medical);
- Sidewalks and walking paths (e.g., better sidewalks, sidewalks are in poor condition—people must walk on streets; paved walking trails, walking paths,);
- Social participation/recreation (e.g., limited social activities, more exercise programs, there is nothing to do—not many social groups; golf course to attract retirees);
- Health services (e.g., hospital/clinic care, more care home beds, aging care home—no assisted living);
- Accessibility (e.g., wheelchair or elevator access to every municipal building—town hall, ramped streets in front of buildings); and
- Transportation (e.g., public transportation, more volunteers for handivan).

Figure 1: Priority Areas Identified by Residents



Age-Friendly Survey Responses

Housing	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There is enough housing that meets the needs of seniors.	57.1	21.4	21.4
Housing for seniors is affordable.	69.2	7.7	23.1
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors.	50.0	35.7	14.3
The waiting times are reasonable to get into senior housing that provides supports to seniors (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes).	35.7	35.7	28.6
There is enough housing for younger people.	41.7	25.0	33.3

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.	42.9	35.7	21.4
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient.	35.7	42.9	21.4
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient.	78.6	7.1	14.3
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	71.4	14.3	14.3
There are volunteer drivers or an informal network of drivers available for seniors who need transportation.	71.4	7.1	21.4
There are enough parking spaces close to services and stores.	76.9	15.4	7.7
There are enough "handicap" parking spaces close to services and stores.	71.4	21.4	7.1

Safety	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Crime and vandalism are a problem.	0.0	73.3	26.7
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> .	57.1	14.3	28.6

Respect and Social Inclusion	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors are generally treated with respect.	93.3	0.0	6.7
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	0.0	73.3	26.7
Community consultations specifically include seniors.	26.7	33.3	40.0
Planning processes specifically consider the needs of seniors (e.g., planning for housing or transportation).	20.0	33.3	46.7

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.	73.3	20.0	6.7
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	60.0	33.3	6.7
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (even surfaces or paved, not a lot of cracks).	26.7	73.3	0.0
Snow clearing is done in a timely manner so walking and driving is safe.	93.3	6.7	0.0
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>business</i> areas.	54.5	36.4	9.1
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>residential</i> and/or <i>recreation</i> areas.	45.5	45.5	9.1
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	13.3	80.0	6.7
Public washrooms accommodate people with wheelchairs.	33.3	60.0	6.7
Most or all businesses and public buildings are easily accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	40.0	60.0	0.0

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).	40.0	46.7	13.3
Local parks or walking trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors (e.g., paths with even surfaces).	20.0	66.7	13.3
There are enough resting areas with benches along paths or trails.	13.3	80.0	6.7
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors.	0.0	64.3	35.7
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	60.0	26.7	13.3
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., learning new things such as the use of computers).	6.7	60.0	33.3
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children spending time with seniors).	13.3	40.0	46.7
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	40.0	20.0	40.0
Isolated seniors (e.g., those who don't have anybody) are contacted, visited or taken to activities.	21.4	28.6	50.0

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.	57.1	21.4	21.4
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	20.0	53.3	26.7
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors.	13.3	66.7	20.0
The job opportunities in my neighbourhood accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	20.0	60.0	20.0

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	86.7	6.7	6.7
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.	50.0	14.3	35.7
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	35.7	21.4	42.9
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	0.0	20.0	80.0
There is enough assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	0.0	20.0	80.0
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	13.3	40.0	46.7

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.	66.7	6.7	26.7
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient.	46.7	26.7	26.7
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at a recreation or senior centre) are sufficient.	40.0	33.3	26.7
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient.	100.0	0.0	0.0
The health care services that are provided in my community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians, eye care).	23.1	61.5	15.4
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	33.3	40.0	26.7
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).	30.8	38.5	30.8

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.

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