

Community Age-Friendly Priorities

**Rural Municipality (R.M.) of Victoria,
Manitoba**

Age-Friendly R.M. of Victoria Community Consultation Summary

October 15, 2009 and November 10, 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 October 15, 2009, 22 individuals from the Town of Holland, and on November 10, 2009, 23 individuals from the Town of Cypress River, 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 Benefits in Holland

- Upgraded and increased lighting on streets has increased safety
- Ramps added to public buildings is complete
- Community support and services are good
- Home care services allow residents to live at home longer
- Information is communicated best through word-of-mouth
- Snow clearing is done in a timely manner during the winter



Age-Friendly Benefits in Cypress River

- Sidewalks are good and kept in good repair
- Roads have good pavement
- Roads are cleared of snow quickly
- Many people ride bicycles
- Canada Trail area, access across Provincial Highway 2, has seasonal public washrooms, interpretive areas, benches, fire pit
- Cypress River Lodge is accessible
- List of available volunteers is published in the newspaper
- Annual informational day provided through the M.I.L.E.S. program, which has been established for 20 years



Priority: Increase personal safety on sidewalks and roads

Potential actions

- Add salt or sand to roads after snow clearing in winter so residents avoid slipping and falling
- Keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice
- Raise awareness with residents to regularly trim overhanging trees and hedges on sidewalks restrict pedestrian traffic
- Clear sand from sidewalks after snow melts in Holland
- Identify ways to increase awareness of traffic rules with residents and encourage courteous driving, e.g. full stops at stop signs
- Explore how to increase the visibility at street corners to increase personal safety for pedestrians and drivers in Holland, e.g. moving parking spots in front of the rural municipality office to increase visibility
- Improve drainage to prevent flooding and ice in some driveway entrances, e.g. residences, Cypress River Lodge driveway, farmer market entrance in Cypress River
- Add crossing signs on Main Street at the playground, senior centre, and for school bus loading in Cypress River
- Clear snow in front of the Cypress River Information Centre at the post office so notices can safely be accessed and read
- Decide on angle or parallel parking and inform residents in Cypress River
- Move accumulated ploughed snow from driveway entrances in Cypress River



Priority: Improve access to health care services in the community and surrounding areas

Potential actions

- Explore options to increase availability of physicians and health care services for residents

Priority: Encourage accessibility in and around public buildings

Potential actions:

- Explore ways for buildings to become more user friendly e.g., add automatic doors to the medical clinic, post office and community centre in Holland
- Research potential options so outer doors are easier to open (e.g. are less heavy doors) for those with wheelchairs, walkers, or scooters, e.g. at the Holland community centre, Cypress River post office, store and credit union
- Seek possible solutions so the Cypress River churches have accessible entrances and washrooms
- Determine if public washrooms need to be available
- Relocate and resize Cypress River community billboard by post office so it is accessible and easier to view in all seasons



Priority: Promote more opportunities for intergenerational activities

Potential actions

- Increase use of the Holland Friendship Centre by including activities with young people and intergenerational activities
- Provide residents with options to socialize within the community more often
- Encourage neighbouring communities to bring school choirs and events to the Cypress River communities
- Offer transportation options to residents who would like to travel outside the community to watch students in school choirs, festivals, activities
- Contact the agricultural board to bring students to the agricultural fair in Cypress River



Priority: Promote community services more widely

Potential actions

- Promote available services to residents in various ways and increase the impact of paper notices
- Identify staff within the municipal office in Holland who can advise residents or visitors where and how to access information
- Update the Holland community web-site more often and promote the web-site to residents
- Distribute information to new residents through the “Welcome Wagon” packages
- Promote the resource guide more widely
- Encourage the offering and using of a community pick-up service in Cypress River for large items, e.g. old appliances and furniture
- Increase options for home care services, e.g. encourage young people to assist or visit



Priority: Ensure residents are aware of the town's emergency plan

Potential Actions:

- Once the plan is finalized, the Holland council members can communicate the essential information of the plan to the schools, businesses, public places and residents
- Communicate emergency plans in Cypress River, e.g., Shelter and Place

Priority: Make locations of publicly available washrooms more known in Holland

Potential action

- Create awareness of washroom locations in the downtown area

Priority: Assess the need for middle range housing in Holland

Potential actions:

- Offer housing alternatives for seniors to meet the needs of assisted living and personal care
- Explore affordable housing that offers 'condominium style living', e.g. reasonable rent rather than life leases



Priority: Explore options for housing development in Cypress River

Potential Actions:

- Expand smaller units in the Cypress River Lodge
- Increase availability of lot sizes in town by using municipal incentives to remove old houses not being used
- Convert elementary school into housing units with larger suites, with a wellness centre available, to make use of existing facilities
- Explore ways to attract businesses to town



Priority: Increase public transportation options in Cypress River

Potential Actions:

- Communicate the availability of volunteer drivers and the handi-van in the M.I.L.E.S. newsletter
- Add handicap parking spots with signage at the Cypress River Lodge, store, post office, hall, and senior centre
- Inform residents of intended use of handi-van parking spots
- Consider a wheelchair accessible van for public transportation



Priority: Provide benches near the rink, tennis courts, and at the post office info centre in Cypress River

Summary of Survey Responses

Two community consultations were held in the R.M. of Victoria; one in Holland on October 15, 2009 and one in Cypress River on November 10, 2009. Individuals attending the consultations were asked to complete a brief questionnaire designed to collect information on the age-friendliness of their community.

Residents from the R.M. of Victoria, who attended the consultations (Holland–22; Cypress River–23), completed 45 questionnaires. Another eight surveys were completed by residents living in Holland who did not attend the community consultation. This report summarizes the findings from the 53 residents in the R.M. of Victoria who completed the Age-Friendly Communities Survey; 60.4% identified themselves as a senior.

Most Age-Friendly Areas

Most of the residents, who completed the survey, feel that seniors are generally treated with respect and feel safe when walking alone during the day, congregate meal programs and meal delivery services available are sufficient.

The home care services that support seniors in their own home are sufficient, as identified by many residents as well as having road signs that are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.

Residents in the R.M. of Victoria also feel there are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors as well as recreation programs specifically for seniors.

Least Age-Friendly Areas

A number of important areas were identified through the survey as being least age-friendly. Residents feel there are not enough public washrooms in key areas or resting areas with benches along paths or trails.

Residents feel more intergenerational programs are needed to bring seniors and children together. Also needed are seniors' advocacy services, lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors, and more seniors to serve in advisory roles in municipal government, such as a seniors' council.

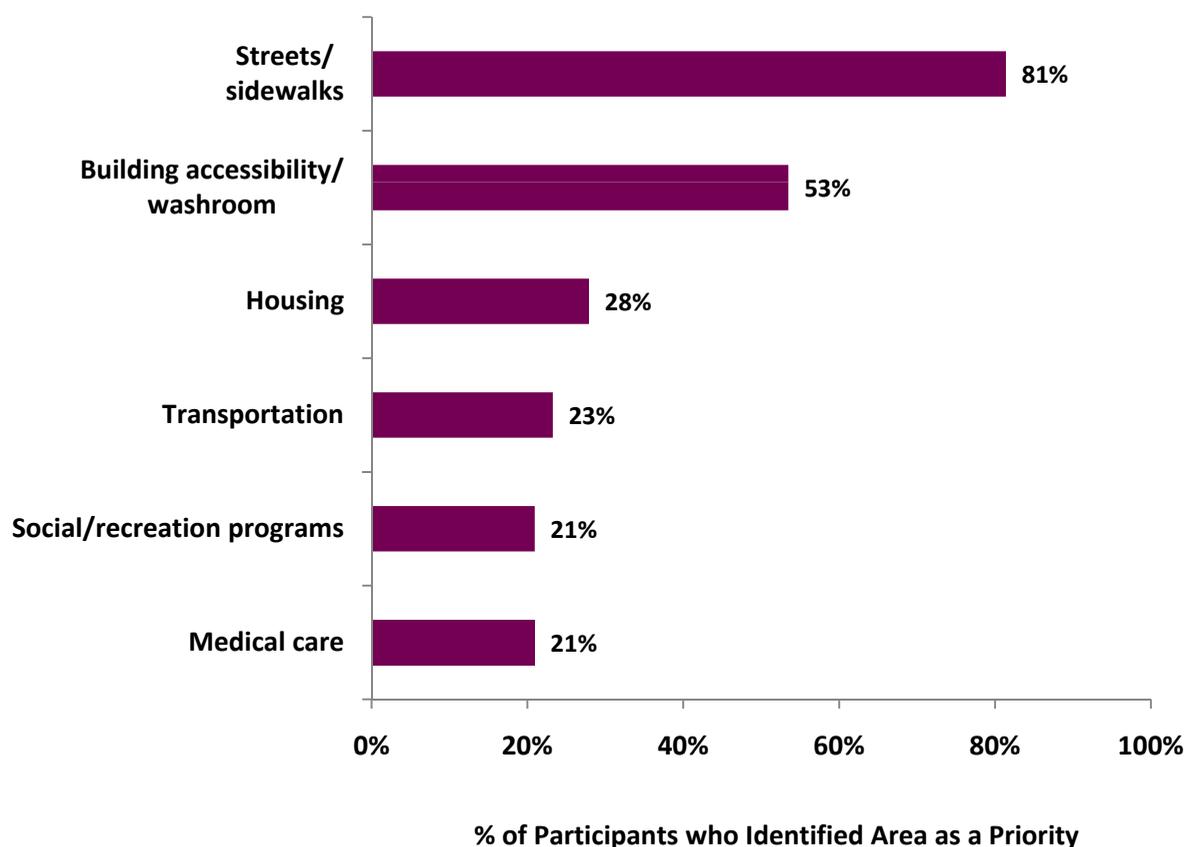
Priority Areas

Individuals were also asked to write down the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Forty-three of the 53 individuals (81.1%) identified at least one priority area.

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

- street/sidewalks (e.g., more even sidewalks, snow clearing from sidewalks and main street, snow removal near hotel and store for walking, motel parking lot is not cane or walker friendly, sidewalks need improving);
- building accessibility/washroom (e.g., easier access to more of the public buildings, automatic door credit union and post office, public washrooms, public washroom in downtown area, wheelchair accessible washrooms, senior centre access, automatic doors on businesses);
- housing (e.g., housing, more affordable senior housing, medium priced housing for seniors, 55 plus housing at reasonable rate);
- transportation (e.g., transportation for seniors, transportation to medical, a regular handi-van, more drivers to take seniors to appointments);
- social/recreation programs (e.g., physical activities/learning opportunities, more courses for computers, recreation programs, exercise programs on site in Manor or Lodge); and
- medical care (e.g., full time doctor, keep a doctor in our clinic, longer clinic hours where doctor is available all day rather than part of a day, hospital available 24/7).

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.	55.8	36.5	7.7
Housing for seniors is affordable.	76.9	5.8	17.3
There is enough subsidized housing for low-income seniors.	27.5	31.4	41.2
The waiting times are reasonable to get into senior housing that provides supports to seniors (e.g., assisted living, nursing homes).	37.3	43.1	19.6
There is enough housing for younger people.	75.0	13.5	11.5

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.	29.4	43.1	27.5
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to and from medical appointments is sufficient.	30.0	40.0	30.0
The transportation that is available for individuals with disabilities (e.g., Handi-Van) is sufficient.	43.4	35.8	20.8
The public transportation (not provided by family or friends), including Handi-Van that is available in my community is affordable for seniors.	56.6	11.3	32.1
There are volunteer drivers or an informal network of drivers available for seniors who need transportation.	71.7	7.5	20.8
There are enough parking spaces close to services and stores.	94.3	1.9	3.8
There are enough "handicap" parking spaces close to services and stores.	51.9	42.3	5.8

Respect and Social Inclusion	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Seniors are generally treated with respect.	98.1	1.9	0.0
Seniors serve in an advisory role to municipal government (e.g., there is a seniors' council).	3.8	48.1	48.1
Community consultations specifically include seniors.	32.7	19.2	48.1
Planning processes specifically consider the needs of seniors (e.g., planning for housing or transportation).	37.7	18.9	43.4

Safety	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Crime and vandalism are a problem.	9.6	73.1	17.3
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>day</i> .	96.2	1.9	1.9
Seniors feel safe when walking alone during the <i>night</i> .	53.8	11.5	34.6

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
The road signs are easy to read and large enough for older drivers.	88.2	5.9	5.9
There are sidewalks linking residences and essential services in most or all areas of my community.	63.5	34.6	1.9
Sidewalks in most or all areas of my community are well maintained (even surfaces or paved, not a lot of cracks).	42.3	53.8	3.8
Snow clearing is done in a timely manner so walking and driving is safe.	44.2	51.9	3.8
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>business</i> areas.	56.0	38.0	6.0
There are enough street crosswalks in busy <i>residential</i> and/or <i>recreation</i> areas.	43.8	47.9	8.3
There are enough public washrooms in key areas of my community (e.g., business and recreation areas).	17.3	78.8	3.8
Public washrooms accommodate people with wheelchairs.	26.9	57.7	15.4
Most or all businesses and public buildings are easily accessible to everybody (e.g., have wheelchair ramps, automatic doors).	57.7	42.3	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).	80.4	19.6	0.0
Local parks or walking trails are accessible and easy to use for seniors (e.g., paths with even surfaces).	36.0	48.0	16.0
There are enough resting areas with benches along paths or trails.	12.0	70.0	18.0
There are enough exercise classes specifically for seniors.	24.0	52.0	24.0
There are enough recreation programs specifically for seniors (e.g., card games, arts, crafts).	43.6	18.9	7.5
There are enough lifelong learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., learning new things such as the use of computers).	7.5	69.8	22.6
There are enough programs in my community that bring seniors and children together (e.g., school reading programs, children spending time with seniors).	9.6	63.5	26.9
Recreational activities, such as exercise and other recreational programs, are generally affordable for seniors.	60.4	5.7	34.0
Isolated seniors (e.g., those who don't have anybody) are contacted, visited or taken to activities.	37.7	15.1	47.2

Community/Work Force Participation	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
There are enough volunteer opportunities for seniors.	79.2	11.3	9.4
There is enough official recognition for seniors who volunteer (e.g., an appreciation banquet or volunteer awards).	30.2	47.2	22.6
There are enough paid job opportunities for seniors.	11.5	55.8	32.7
The job opportunities in my neighbourhood accommodate the needs of seniors (e.g., part-time work is available).	23.5	39.2	37.3

Information/Advocacy	Percent Responding		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	75.5	9.4	15.1
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.	65.4	13.5	21.2
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	54.7	15.1	30.2
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	20.4	34.7	44.9
There is enough assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	32.7	17.3	50.0
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	7.8	31.4	60.8

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.	84.3	7.8	7.8
The services that help seniors around the home (e.g., snow removal, lawn care, garbage brought to the street) are sufficient.	48.1	30.8	21.2
The congregate meal programs available (e.g., lunch at a recreation or senior centre) are sufficient.	98.1	0.0	1.9
The meal delivery services that bring meals to seniors' homes are sufficient.	92.2	3.9	3.9
The health care services that are provided in my community meet the needs of seniors (e.g., hospital, physicians, eye care).	34.6	53.8	11.5
Public transportation (not provided by family or friends) to health care services that are <i>not</i> provided in my community is sufficient.	36.5	44.2	19.2
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).	35.3	39.2	25.5

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.

Summary authors: Louise Hutton and Rachel Ines

Team leader: Dr. Verena Menec, Canada Research Chair in Healthy Aging, Director, Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba

For more information contact:

Centre on Aging, University of Manitoba
338 Isbister Building
Winnipeg MB R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-8754
Fax: (204) 474-7576
Email: aging@umanitoba.ca
Web site: www.umanitoba.ca/centres/aging

Published: November 26, 2009