



A Community for All Ages

Summary of Age-Friendly Community Needs Assessment Research completed in Municipalities across Niagara as of December, 2020

Who We Are:

- The Age-Friendly Niagara Network is a group of local citizens, volunteers, community partners and municipal leaders who have joined together to learn about, take action on and champion age-friendly community principles to make Niagara a 'community for all ages'.
- The Age-Friendly Niagara Network (AFNN) comprises over 350 people who have an interest in an age-friendly Niagara.
- The AFNN is coordinated by the Network Leadership Council, made up of volunteers, many of whom are older adults active in their community, and others representing government, not-for-profit organizations and businesses.
- AFNN is not associated with the Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region); it is a separate and autonomous entity working together to forward age-friendly initiatives.

Purpose of this document:

- To draw a Niagara-wide picture of Age-Friendly Community needs assessment research done in various Niagara municipalities
- To highlight common themes arising across municipalities
- To contribute to the reliable pool of evidence that the Age-Friendly Niagara Network (AFNN) has established, in partnership with Niagara Connects and INCommunities, to inform the work of Age-Friendly groups across Niagara and beyond
- To raise awareness of the growing Age-Friendly Community Planning movement across Niagara
- To draw attention to the impact being achieved by the AFNN Collaborative of Local Municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly Advisory Committees



Background Information:

- A Niagara wide assessment of needs related to older adults in Niagara was completed between 2010-2013
- The Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan (NASAP) was released in 2015 – a full evaluation of the project to begin NASAP Implementation was completed in October 2019
 - The NASAP is dedicated to advancing the vision of a “caring community that optimizes opportunities for overall wellbeing to enhance quality of life as people age.” The NASAP is a ‘living document’ that serves as a template for planning by service agencies, different levels of government, businesses and the community at large.
<https://www.agefriendlyniagara.com/niagara-aging-strategy-and-action-plan/>
- The Age-Friendly Niagara Network is a partner of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Age-Friendly Communities (<https://www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/>)
 - An aspect of this membership includes completing a Needs Assessment of Age-Friendly practices across the Region
<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/afp/community-needs-assessment/>
 - According to the WHO, a comprehensive assessment serves several purposes for action towards advancing an age-friendly community
 1. It evaluates the community in its current state and provides data-drive feedback
 2. It identifies assets, areas for improvement, and gaps
 3. It helps establish standards for a community and evaluate progress
 4. It motivates performance and helps to develop a game plan for the future
 - For more information regarding the WHO Needs Assessment, see Appendix B

Local Municipal Seniors and Age-Friendly Advisory Committees across Niagara:

- Fort Erie – Fort Erie Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
- Grimsby – *in development*
- Lincoln – Lincoln Age-Friendly Committee
- Niagara Falls – Niagara Falls Seniors Advisory Committee
- Niagara-on-the-Lake – Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Wellness Committee
- Pelham – Pelham Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
- Port Colborne – Port Colborne Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
- St. Catharines – St. Catharines Advisory Committee on Older Adults
- Thorold – Thorold Age-Friendly Advisory Committee
- Wainfleet – Wainfleet Age-Friendly Advisory Committee
- Welland – Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee
- West Lincoln – West Lincoln Age-Friendly Committee

Age-Friendly Niagara Network

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Age-Friendly Analysis

- **Emerging Issues:** Improving virtual connections/technology related skills, especially in relation to social isolation and protecting mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Broadly, the AFNN priority issues for advocacy highlighted in the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan (NASAP) remain as high-priority and are identified by many of the municipalities engaged in Age-Friendly work.
 - Health benefits of social inclusion
 - Access to services (e.g. transportation, technology)
 - Access to a range of suitable housing options for people of all income levels
 - Access to opportunities to benefit from physical activity, recreation, and learning activities
- Consistent themes across many of these documents that discuss important areas of concern in Age-Friendly work, include:
 - Housing: ensuring access to supportive care is available as required, and affordable options (e.g. subsidized and accessible housing; retirement, long-term care, and assisted living options) are available for older adults
 - Transportation: improved access and affordability of public transportation that moves between municipalities across the region; improved accessibility of seating and shelters at stop locations
 - Public Spaces and Buildings: increased accessibility upgrades; improved walkways and crossing areas; increased outdoor seating and washroom facilities
 - Health Services, Civic Participation and Community Support: increased availability of doctors and local urgent care facilities; improved volunteer opportunities and social connections; increased availability of activities and community events to promote social inclusion, community belonging, and lifelong physical activity
 - Intergenerational Design – working to create programs and services that promote lifelong learning and integrate different age groups in an intentional way (e.g. locating daycare services in long-term care homes or senior residences)
- COVID-19 has had a significant impact on older adults, not only in terms of vulnerability to the virus, but also challenges related to decreased services and programming, social isolation, and increased strains on mental health and overall wellness. Community leaders have continued to adapt and develop virtual and remote options for older adults to access while close physical proximity is impossible.

Suggested next steps:

- Continued focus on NASAP Suggested Action Steps:
 - Evolve AFNN to act as a Council on Aging equivalent, with an intergenerational focus

- Engage youth in AFNN planning and action
- Strengthen the AFNN Niagara-wide collaborative of local municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly advisory committees
- Continue to engage decision-makers in seeing the benefits of investing in the AFNN
- Ask leaders of municipal seniors/age-friendly advisory committees what their top 3 examples of successes/impact are for each municipality, and how their collective voice led to positive change in their municipality.
 - Examples include:
 - Welland
 - City of Welland, requiring larger font on street signage
 - Welland, 'Let's Chat' benches
 - Thorold
 - Thorold, Housing Forums to help inform municipal planning
 - Niagara-wide
 - AFNN-hosted forums to inform the Niagara Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 10-Year Update

Working Together to Build a Caring Community as People Age

Working together to create an Age-Friendly community that "encourages active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age" (WHO, Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide, 2007)



NIAGARA AGING STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT, 2017-2019

This graphic was developed as part of the 2-page Evaluation Summary of the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan (NASAP) Implementation Project, 2017-2019, and outlines the various work occurring across Niagara related to Age-Friendly.

The Age Friendly Niagara Network (AFNN) includes 450 people with an interest in creating the conditions for everyone, regardless of age, ability, need or capacity, to be included in all aspects of community life. AFNN priorities reflect the 100+ actions identified by 500 people who engaged in building the NASAP.

Retrieved from: https://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/12/2019-11-30_NASAP-Evaluation_Full-Report_FINAL_web.pdf

The following chart outlines Age-Friendly related work occurring across the Niagara region, through different research/reports that have been published.

Municipality & Affiliated Group	Report	Who Wrote Report	Themes
Niagara region, Age-Friendly Network Niagara	AFNN Special Online Meeting to Identify Impacts of Covid-19 on Older Adults in Niagara, May 1, 2020	Age-Friendly Network Niagara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This 2-page document summarizes comments, discussion and ideas shared at a special online Age-Friendly Niagara Network (AFNN) meeting held on May 01, 2020. The virtual meeting included leaders with Local Municipal Age-Friendly and Seniors Advisory Committees in all 12 local areas of Niagara. Participants shared their thinking about COVID-19 related impacts on older adults in our community and learned from each other's experiences. • Themes arising include: Mental Health, Physical Fitness; Food Insecurity; Social Isolation and Loneliness; Issues related to Long Term Care/Congregate Care Settings; Seniors Month (June 2020) Celebrations during COVID-19. • Emerging Themes include: Improving Virtual Connections; and Transportation to Essential Appointments. <p>Retrieved from: http://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/05/May-01-2020_Summary-Themes_AFNN_COVID-19-Special-Meeting_May-01-2020_FINAL2.pdf</p>
Niagara region, Age-Friendly Network Niagara	Age-Friendly Niagara network Bulletin October, 2020: Addressing COVID-19 Impacts on Niagara's Older Adults	Age-Friendly Network Niagara	<p>AFNN Leaders identified impacts of COVID-19 on older adults across Niagara, and provided a call to action to address challenges and implement best practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Well: Mental Health, Physical Fitness; and Social Isolation and Loneliness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize wellness promotion, suicide prevention, promote physical activity at home ○ Share leading practices for reopening older adult centers and providing virtual programs ○ Identify those who may need help/support older adults to safely maintain social connection (including virtual and telephone-based opportunities)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Safe: Food Security; and Long Term Care (LTC) Homes and Retirement Homes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with food security programs, and support the work of Niagara's Meals on Wheels organizations ○ Provide Niagara focused input to the Ontario LTC COVID-19 Commission • Staying Connected: Local Municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly/Wellness Advisory Committees in Niagara; Improved Virtual Connections; and Transportation/Access to Services and Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritize safely rebuilding momentum of Local Municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly Advisory Committees ○ Focus on building older adults' capacity/access to technology and internet connection ○ Support older adults having safe access to transportation, services and programs. <p>Retrieved from: https://www.agefriendlyniagara.com/wp-content/uploads/Age-Friendly-Niagara-Bulletin-October-2020_FINAL.pdf</p>
Niagara region, Age-Friendly Network Niagara	Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan and Implementation Project, 2017-2019, Evaluation Summary (October, 2019)	Age-Friendly Network Niagara	<p>Successes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 integrated action groups advancing the 5 NASAP goals <i>see Appendix A</i> • Network mapping to identify likely new partners to help strengthen AFNN impact • Engagement of elected leaders in all 12 areas of Niagara • A Niagara-wide Collaborative of local municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly Advisory Committees, to share ideas, learn from each other's efforts, and collectively advocate on common issues of concern across our rural-urban mix community • Investment in skilled, neutral, locally-focused Backbone Support for the Network <p>Suggested Action Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage AFNN membership in the newly-formed Ontario Association of Councils on Aging • Evolve AFNN to act as a Council on Aging equivalent, with an intergenerational focus

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage youth in AFNN planning and action • Strengthen the AFNN Niagara-wide Collaborative of local municipal Seniors/Age-Friendly advisory committees • Advance AFNN advocacy on priority issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health benefits of social inclusion ○ Access to services (e.g. transportation, technology) ○ Access to a range of suitable housing options for people of all income levels ○ Access to opportunities to benefit from physical activity, recreation, and learning activities • Expand AFNN’s demonstrated success as a nimble framework for decision-makers to connect with what local older people are thinking; and for hosting Niagara-wide learning forums on timely topics • Continue to engage decision-makers in seeing the benefits of investing in the AFNN <p>Retrieved from: https://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/12/2019-11-30_NASAP-Evaluation_Full-Report_FINAL_web.pdf</p>
Niagara region, Age-Friendly Network Niagara	Age-Friendly Niagara Network: Visualizing Connectivity – Spring 2018	Age-Friendly Network Niagara	<p>In Spring of 2018, Niagara Connects engaged a core group of Age-Friendly planning leaders to build Network Maps to illustrate connectivity among people and organizations involved with Age-Friendly work in Niagara and beyond. Twenty-five people completed an online survey to help build the maps.</p> <p>The Network Maps illustrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 136 people who are involved with the Age-Friendly Niagara Network or were identified as Age-Friendly planning connections by the 25 survey respondents • 84 organizations, committees or groups that those 136 people are associated with in their Age-Friendly work • 2 individuals whose connections are the core of the map • 7 emerging leaders have a notably high degree of connectedness • Organizations that strongly emerged in the map include: post-secondary institutions, libraries, local municipal advisory committees, and private sector businesses

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% of individuals identified as age-friendly connections are within Niagara, signaling a strong local base • Majority of survey respondents identified as volunteers, managers and senior staff (combined 68%) and most work within non-profit/community organizations (56%) • 60% of respondents identified that they live in either St. Catharines or Welland. <p>Appendix 3 (pgs. 23-25), Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan Implementation Project, 2017-2019: Evaluation Summary.</p> <p>Retrieved from: https://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/12/2019-11-30_NASAP-Evaluation_Full-Report_FINAL_web.pdf</p> <p>Find report below in Appendix C of this document.</p>
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Wellness Committee	Public Forum (9/26/19) Feedback Summary	City Staff	<p>Information presented in bullet form, as a reflection of the opinions and comments stated by the participants – not edited, analyzed, or validated.</p> <p>Retrieved from: https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/9290/widgets/42853/documents/19491/download</p>
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Wellness Committee	Community Wellness Committee, Report of Recommendations, January 20, 2020	City Staff	<p>Nine Categories of Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Environment • Pedestrian and Bicycle safety • Housing options • Transportation services • Lifelong learning • Lifelong physical activity • Social connectedness

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health services <p>Recommendations related to age-friendly practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Options: ensure access to supportive care is available as required (i.e. assisted living, home care services); Adopt 'Age in Place' as strategic proposition for the Town • Transportation: Continue to support the Regional transportation model and request expansion of the current NOTL Transit routes to 7 days/week to provide transportation to key destinations; Request the Region ensure optimal integration with GO and Regional transit schedules/timelines to ensure maximum connectivity between systems; Request the Region to expand/reinstate the use of Specialized Accessible Transit Services; Ensure NOTL is key participant in Regional pilot project for on-demand solution for 'point to point' transportation options • Lifelong Learning: Programs and services to integrate day care services and senior residences/long-term care homes; Provision of programs supporting life-long learning (Third Age Learning) for all residents in partnership with Niagara College/Brock University • Lifelong Physical Activity: Increase in access to recreational facilities within all villages of NOTL; Increase efforts to promote and support health, physical and sports activity programs organized within the Town • Social Connectedness: Promote the NOTL Safety Committee's 'Know Your Neighbour' initiative; Develop and implement additional inter-generational events within the community • Health Services: Reaffirm commitment to a new medical centre for provision of integrated primary care; Expand hours of the after-hours clinic to cover evenings <p>Presentation Retrieved from: https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/9290/widgets/42853/documents/22886/download</p> <p>Report Retrieved from: https://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/9290/widgets/42853/documents/22885/download</p>
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<p>Port Colborne, City of Port Colborne Age-Friendly Needs Assessment</p>	<p>City of Port Colborne Age-Friendly Needs Assessment</p>	<p>City Staff (Age-Friendly Needs Assessment Coordinator)</p>	<p>Top 4 dimensions of concerns in descending order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Spaces and Buildings: Support accessibility upgrades; make all walkways safe; increase outdoor seating/eating and washroom facilities; increase safety at crossing areas (e.g. stop lights and longer crossing times); improved crossing areas in high use areas; prevent scooters on pedestrian walkways • Health Services and Community Supports: Need for local urgent care/walk-in facilities that are accessible for all community members; increase availability of doctors; improved volunteer outreach and check-in programs (suggestion they should be municipally run) • Transportation: improve convenience and affordability of public transportation (i.e. increased routes, stops, frequency), more seating and shelters at bus stop locations; create municipal bus/shuttling system • Housing: increase housing options for seniors and affordability through geared-to-income, subsidized programs and lower taxes so seniors can stay in their homes; repurpose older buildings and municipally owned properties to build accessible seniors dwellings; model successful seniors housing projects in other communities <p>• Study identified affordability as the overarching concern that links all eight age-friendly domains – affordability factor of services and products that enable people to remain healthy, independent, mobile and informed with access to local supports, services and amenities.</p> <p>Community named the needs of Pt Colborne to support all residents of varying ages and capacities as grounded in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Care Services & Community Support systems that are easily accessed and are affordable so they can age actively, remain in their homes and participate in society • Housing that is affordable, safe and suitable to all according to individual needs so they can age actively and remain in their homes • Transportation that allows people to maintain the same quality of life as those who can still drive • Communication and information that is readily accessible, up-to-date, available in a variety of ways and presented instead of being sought out
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic participation and employment opportunities that enable people, regardless of their age, to be engaged, validated and contribute in their community with continued access to paying jobs and the ability to live with quality of life <p>Retrieved from: http://portcolborne.ca/fileBin/library/Report%202016-158%20-%20Age-Friendly%20Needs%20Assessment_1610.pdf</p>
St. Catharines, Advisory Committee on Older Adults	St. Catharines, Advisory Committee on Older Adults		<p>Note: Advisory Committee on Older Adults does not report directly to City Council, but rather it serves in an advisory capacity to the Social Sustainability Committee</p> <p>Retrieved from: https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/governin/older-adult-committee.asp#</p>
St. Catharines, Brock University initiative	Through Their Eyes: An Intergenerational project examining age-friendliness in the Niagara Region	Brock University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational project, Through Their Eyes, was dedicated to examining the age-friendliness of the local St. Catharines community. • 45 students, largely third and fourth years from the College of Applied Health Sciences, were paired with 20 seniors in the Niagara region to better understand what makes an age-friendly community. <p>Retrieved from: https://niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/resources-publications/through-their-eyes-an-intergenerational-project-examining-age-friendliness-in-the-niagara-region/</p>
St. Catharines, City of St. Catharines	St. Catharines, Report from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Administration, Strategic Plan Quarterly	City Staff	<p>In 2015, St. Catharines City Council approved the City's 10-year Strategic Plan. The Plan is organized with 11 goals and more than 40 action item within the four pillars of sustainability: economic, social, environmental, and cultural.</p> <p>Social Sustainability Pillar</p> <p>1. GOAL: Strive for the highest quality of life for all citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of St. Catharines is compliant with regulations set forth in Ontario's Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

	<p>Progress Report – Social Pillar, September 24, 2018</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, the City received an award from the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat for being an Age Friendly Community. In collaboration with the Mayor's office, Parks, Recreation and Culture Services (PRCS) staff have helped to host annual Older Adult Forums. The forums are instrumental in engaging the city's older adult population in order for staff to offer relevant and accessible programs. • Implement the objectives of A City for All Ages (the City's older adult plan) and continue to host youth and older adult forums to build age-friendly community programs and services. <p>Retrieved from: https://stcatharines.civicweb.net/document/61952/CAO-231-2018_Social%20Pillar%20Report%20.pdf?handle=148C4395E5C84F6CB6076CAC88AEB7A8</p>
<p>St. Catharines, City of St. Catharines</p>	<p>Living in Niagara Spotlight on St. Catharines, 2017</p>	<p>Niagara Connects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Compassionate City initiative emphasizes dignity, respect and opportunity for all people. It includes a call for individuals to commit to making a difference in several ways, including ensuring that seniors get the support they need to live a robust and active life. <p>Noteworthy work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2015, a November Older Adults Forum has attracted hundreds of participants to share ideas about improving programs and services. • The 2013 St. Catharines Age-Friendly plan – A City for All Ages – laid the groundwork for St. Catharines to be one of 40 municipalities that recently won an Ontario Ministry of Seniors Affairs Age-Friendly Community Recognition Award. • The city is an active participant in the Age-Friendly Niagara Network, focusing on World Health Organization principles to create safe and secure environments that foster community participation, personal health and well-being. <p>Retrieved from: https://www.stcatharines.ca/en/governin/resources/Living-in-Niagara-Spotlight-On-St-Catharines-2018.pdf</p>

Thorold, Thorold Age-Friendly Action Committee	Age-Friendly Needs Assessment Surveys Report, City of Thorold, Fall 2016	Brock University Nursing students, supervised by City Clerk	<p>Priority areas to be addressed, from highest to lowest priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing: increased affordable, subsidized and accessible senior housing; increase retirement home and assisted living options; concerns over student housing • Health services and community support: increased health services in municipality (e.g. medical clinics); increased business and retail opportunities (e.g. grocery, LCBO, banks) • Transportation: increased accessible parking; improved public transit; improved road maintenance • Communication and information: increased tech training (e.g. internet use, social media, and/or computer classes); improved availability of City information in print and online • Social and civic participation/recreation: availability of activities at Senior Centre; more community events; establish recreation/community centre for all ages • Public and outdoor spaces/buildings: sidewalk availability and maintenance; snow removal; better lighting <p>Retrieved from: https://www.thorold.ca/en/city-hall/resources/Age-Friendly-Community---City-of-Thorold.pdf</p>
Town of Lincoln, Age-Friendly Citizen Advisory Committee	Terms of Reference	Age-Friendly Citizen Advisory Committee , Town of Lincoln	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor spaces and buildings • Transportation • Housing • Social participation • Respect and social inclusion • Civic participation • Communication and information • Community support and health services <p><i>Note: Committee has completed an online citizen survey that closed on January 18, 2020. The Committee is currently analyzing the results to inform their work plan and identify Lincoln's short and long-term priorities.</i></p>

			Appendix C: Age-Friendly Committee Terms of Reference, Draft Work Plan 2019 Retrieved from: https://lincoln.civicweb.net/document/110237
Welland, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee	Age-Friendly Forum, Winter 2019/2020	Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee	Work completed by Welland Senior Citizens Advisory Committee since 2010: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiled information relevant to older adults and all citizens of Welland for distribution in the <i>Age-Friendly Forum</i> Newsletter • Created an Age-Friendly Business Guide for local businesses to follow day-to-day activities of citizens in Welland • Hosts Annual Seniors' Day celebration at the Welland Community Wellness Complex • Hosts annual Alzheimer's Coffee Breaks fundraiser at the wellness Complex Retrieved from: https://www.welland.ca/Committees/pdf/SCAC-Newsletter.pdf

Appendix A: NASAP Goals & Action Groups

Age-Friendly
Niagara Network
(AFNN)

**2018
Impact**

Vision: A caring community
that optimizes opportunities
for overall well being to enhance
quality of life as people age.



A Community for All Ages

Implementing the Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan (NASAP)

Goal #1	Goal #2	Goal #3	Goal #4	Goal #5
Elevate the profile, level of leadership and engagement of older people in the community	Facilitate an active and positive lifestyle for all older people	Optimize the health and wellness of older people	Improve access and utilization of services and supports	Improve and maintain a supportive infrastructure
Action Group 1 Community Engagement and Communications	Action Group 2 Recreation, Learning and Leisure	Action Group 3 Improved Services, Systems and Infrastructure		

Retrieved from: https://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/02/Age-Friendly-Niagara-Network-Impact-2018_placemat-Feb-2019_webv.pdf

Appendix B:

WHO, Age-Friendly World: Community Needs Assessment Summary

Developing a comprehensive assessment serves several purposes for action towards advancing an age-friendly community.

First, it evaluates the community in its current state and provides data-driven feedback.

Second, it identifies assets, areas for improvement, and gaps.

Third, it helps establish standards for a community and evaluate progress.

Fourth, it motivates performance and helps to develop a game plan for the future.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF AN ASSESSMENT?

A strong assessment will include both internal and external components. The internal piece of the assessment will include a review of the municipal programs, services, and amenities currently offered to older adults. Understanding what you already offer to older adults will help you plan for future programs and services that either expand upon successes or fill in gaps for service delivery. The external piece of the assessment evaluates all of the components that contribute to an age-friendly community, but are not directly delivered by your municipality.

HOW CAN THE ASSESSMENT BE USED?

After you have completed your assessment, it should result in a set of recommendations. These recommendations can be used to help guide future policy and programming as it relates to building your age-friendly community. You will also use your assessment to share information about the community with residents and stakeholders. Your assessment will be a data rich resource for understanding some of the age-friendly strengths and weaknesses of your community.

ASK

- What does the community identify as priorities for becoming an age-friendly community? *
- What issues in your community do you think are most important or relevant for age-friendliness?
- Do your policies reflect the needs of a diverse older adult population?
- Do your programs reflect the needs of a diverse older adult population?

RESEARCH

- Create a demographic profile of your older adults:
 - Population
 - Gender
 - Race
 - Household composition
 - Income
- Create a profile of the housing stock in your community
 - Homeownership
 - Housing affordability
 - Residential living facilities
- Create a profile of the social services available within your community:
 - Social and Recreational Programs
 - Housing Programs
 - Police-Citizen Programs
 - Volunteerism
 - Emergency Preparedness
 - Facilities (Recreational & Community Centers, Libraries, Designated Senior Centers, Health care, Transit stops/lines)

EVALUATE

- Are there gaps municipal services could fill for older residents in the landscape of service?
- Are services for residents that other agencies are providing that municipal services duplicate?
- Are there any municipal services provided that are underutilized or not needed?

Retrieved from: <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/afp/community-needs-assessment/#prettyPhoto>

APPENDIX C:

Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan (October 2019 Summary): Appendix 3: Age-Friendly Niagara Network: Visualizing Connectivity – Spring 2018

In the Spring of 2018, Niagara Connects engaged a core group of Age-Friendly planning leaders to build Network Maps to illustrate connectivity among people and organizations involved with Age-Friendly work in Niagara and beyond. Twenty-five (25) people completed an online survey to help build the maps.

The Spring 2018 Age-Friendly Niagara Network Maps illustrate:

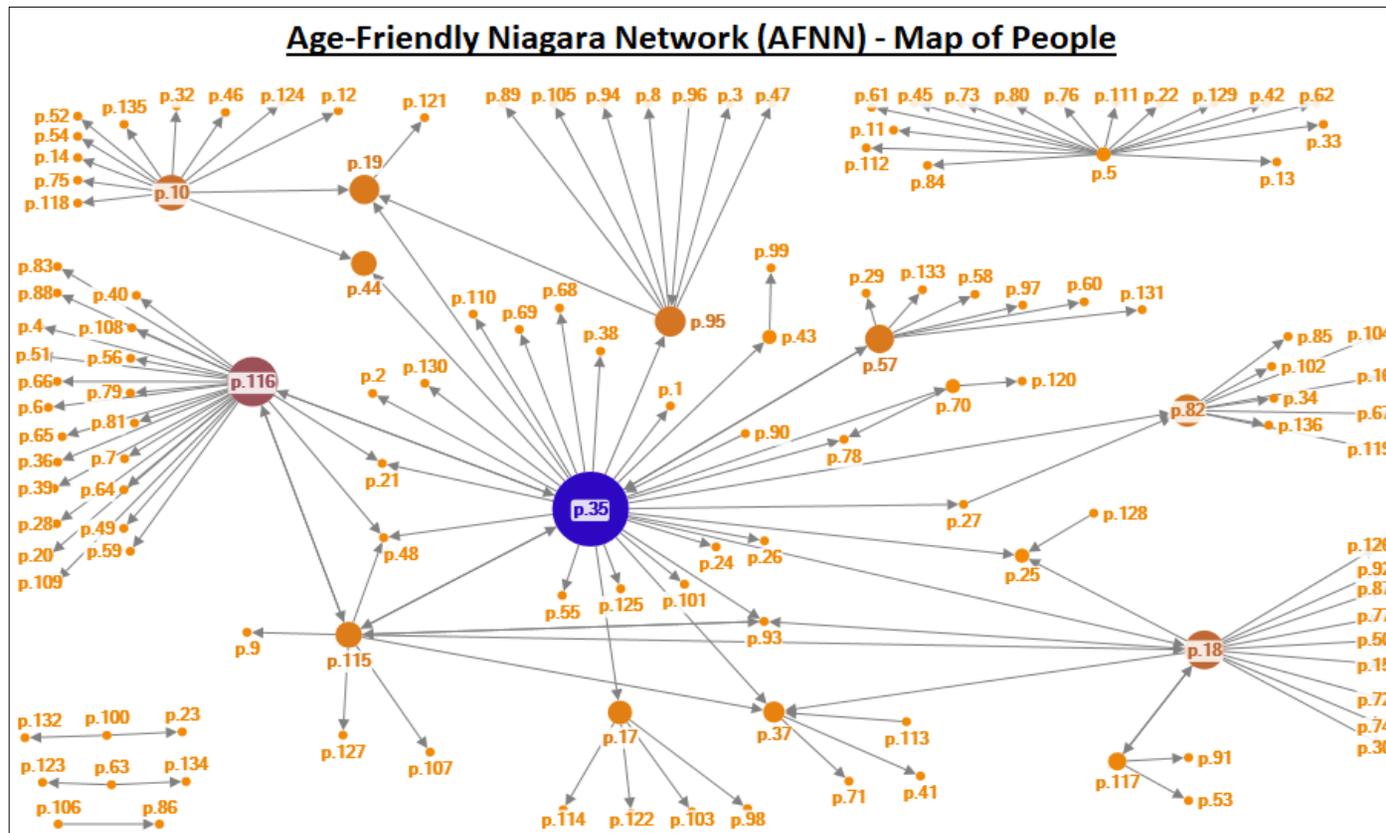
- 136 people who are involved with the Age-Friendly Niagara Network or were identified as Age-Friendly planning connections by the 25 survey respondents.
- 84 organizations, committees or groups that those 136 people are associated with in their Age-Friendly work.
- 2 individuals whose connections are the core of the map.
- 7 emerging leaders have a notably high degree of connectedness.

What is a Network Map?

A network map represents people or organizations that form networks (intentional or unintentional). Network mapping is a systematic way of identifying people and organizations on the periphery of the network who could be invited to the table. The maps also help to identify new and emerging leaders who can contribute to network sustainability.

We are using Network Maps to describe the Age-Friendly landscape in Niagara, to:

- Gauge the breadth and depth of work being done in Age-Friendly planning in Niagara.
- Show possible conduits for communications and flow of data and information.
- Collapse the amount of time required to identify a critical mass of stakeholders/participants that could be engaged in strengthening the work at hand.



AFNN Spring, 2018 Network Maps: Analysis and Suggested Action Steps:

1. The network maps illustrate that, as of early 2018, the connectivity of the Age-Friendly Niagara Network is largely dependent upon three core individuals. It is notable that the network has been built up by a small group of volunteers. The engagement of emerging leaders to expand this core group will be an important step in creating network sustainability. Continuing to facilitate in-person networking and information-sharing events will strengthen the overall level of connectivity (density) of the network.

2. Organizations that emerge strongly in the map include post-secondary institutions, libraries, local municipal advisory committees, and private sector businesses. Targeted engagement of these organizations will contribute to network sustainability.
3. Three-quarters (74%) of individuals identified as age-friendly connections are within Niagara. This signals that there is a strong local base, with external connections also being made. External connections help to bring new ideas and perspectives into Niagara.
4. The majority of survey respondents identified as volunteers, managers and senior staff (combined 68%) and most work within non-profit/community organizations (56%). An opportunity exists to diversify network membership and explore new ideas provided by those with different perspectives, by engaging business owners, students, educators, and frontline workers.
5. Sixty per cent (60%) of respondents identified that they live in either St. Catharines or Welland. Efforts already underway to broaden and deepen advancement of age-friendly planning principles throughout the Niagara region could be strengthened by intentionally seeking targeted opportunities for engagement. Significant opportunities exist to enrich the network by including diverse perspectives of people, organizations, municipalities and businesses located in parts of Niagara where momentum of the age-friendly movement is beginning to emerge.

Reference: Niagara Connects Network Mapping Tool methodology adapted from Valdis Krebs & June Holley, *Building Smart Communities through Network Weaving*, 2002

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