

2021-2026 HAMILTON'S PLAN FOR AN **AGE** FRIENDLY COMMUNITY



2021 COMMUNITY PROGRESS REPORT



"An authentic age-friendly vision can only be generated and sustained by the widest possible ownership of it."

- Dr. Alex Kalache, President, ILC-Brazil



2021 COMMUNITY PROGRESS REPORT

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
BACKGROUND	4
Implementation Strategy	5
Results	6
Infographic (TBD)	7
GOALS AND PROGRESS	8
1. Housing	8
2. Transportation	9
3. Information and Communication	10
4. Health and Community Services	11
5. Social Participation: Recreation, Learning, Arts and Culture	13
6. Civic Engagement, Volunteerism and Employment	20
7. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	20
LESSONS LEARNED: MOVING FORWARD	21
APPENDICES	23
Appendix A: 2021 Age-Friendly Collaborative Committee Members	23
Appendix B: List of Collaborating Organizations and Funders Involved in 2021 Age-Friendly Practices	24

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS, AGE-FRIENDLY COLLABORATIVE COMMITTEE

Hamilton's 2021-2026 Plan for an Age-Friendly Community was completed and launched early in 2021, in the midst of the Covid-19 global pandemic. At that time, we were aware of the economic and social disruptions resulting from the pandemic and we experienced the impact on our community. What we couldn't have foreseen is that, one year later, the pandemic would continue to affect our lives in many different ways.

Despite disruptions resulting from the pandemic, we heard countless stories about resilience, innovative shifts in the way services and programs are offered, and a continued commitment to ensure that Hamilton remains 'the best place to raise a child and to age successfully'.

By leveraging the power of technology and, through creatively adapting our processes, the Age-Friendly Collaborative Committee (AFCC) has successfully navigated year one of implementing Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly Community. We are excited to present our 2021 Community Progress Report to you!


In this report, you will read about age-friendly practices introduced in 2021 both by organizations whose primary role is serving older adults, as well as organizations who serve a broader audience. In keeping with our commitment to integrate a dementia-friendly approach into the age-friendly plan, we are encouraged that many of the age-friendly practices shared with us include opportunities for older adults living with dementia.

While we pause to celebrate our successes, we acknowledge that there is still much work to be done in the Hamilton community. We continue to expand our inclusion lens as we seek more opportunities for celebrating diversity, whether that be age, race, ethnicity, gender and/or sexual orientation.


We want to thank everyone who contributed stories about their age-friendly practices for the progress report. Our strength as a community is contingent on sharing resources, ideas and collaborating with partners and community stakeholders. This is how we will continue to build a community in which every person is included and has opportunities to both give and receive support.

We would also like to thank the members of the AFCC, and our partners at the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Council on Aging and the Seniors Advisory Committee, an advisory committee of Hamilton City Council, for their continued support.

With our best wishes,



Lori Letts
Co-Chair, Age-Friendly Hamilton
Collaborative Governance Committee



Julie Richardson
Co-Chair, Age-Friendly Hamilton
Collaborative Governance Committee

BACKGROUND

During the spring of 2021, Hamilton's 2021-2026 Plan for an Age-Friendly Community¹ was launched. The plan includes 7 strategic goals, 21 objectives, 61 recommendations and provides a valuable roadmap to guide our ongoing age-friendly initiatives.

The following 8 principles² established a solid base for developing the plan and offer a lens through which to evaluate Hamilton's age-friendly practices³.

Principles

- 1. Creating supportive and enabling environments** where hospitality is practiced, and accessibility is the norm.
- 2. Optimizing opportunities for health, participation, security and life-long learning** across the life cycle. Health refers to physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being.
- 3. Equity, inclusion and respect;** recognizing the diversity of older adults including their wide range of interests, cultural practices, capacities and resources while reducing barriers to social connectivity that result from differences.
- 4. Building a dementia-friendly community** in which dementia-friendly environments, opportunities and supports for individuals living with dementia and their care partners are understood and fully integrated into the overall age-friendly plan.
- 5. An informed community that practices accountability and transparency** while facilitating personal, social and system **connectivity**.
- 6. Community and neighbourhood** capacity building.
- 7. Effective public service**, delivered with integrity, that is adaptive, dynamic and uses an equity and inclusion lens and that is responsive to individual and collective needs as well as emerging opportunities while delivering value for money spent.
- 8. Community engagement**, where people have meaningful opportunities to have a say in designing services and influencing decisions that affect them.

¹ You can access the plan at hamiltoncoa.com

² The 8 principles and 7 strategic goals are included in the 2021 progress report to provide context for readers who may not have seen the 2021-2026 plan.

³ Age-Friendly practices are ones that 'recognize the wide range of capacities and resources among older people; anticipate and respond flexibly to age-related needs and preferences; respect older people's decisions and lifestyle choices; reduce inequities; protect those who are most vulnerable and promote older people's inclusion in and contributions to all areas of community life'. Source: World Health Organization

In addition to the foundational principles, 7 strategic goals guided the development of the plan and the resulting objectives and recommendations. The goals included the following:

Seven strategic goals



With the overall age-friendly plan launched and the 8 principles and 7 goals as a guide, the Age-Friendly Collaborative Committee (AFCC) shifted their focus to implementation.

In preparing the 2021-2026 plan, the AFCC recognized that many organizations and stakeholders in the not-for-profit, private and public sectors, as well as individual citizens, would have much to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations. Cross sector outreach was a key consideration in the committee's outreach efforts to learn about Hamilton's age-friendly practices.

The results of year one, 2021, are the focus of the current community progress report.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The City of Hamilton, Hamilton Council on Aging and the City of Hamilton's Seniors Advisory Committee are core partners for Hamilton's Age-Friendly Plan. In 2021, the Hamilton Council on Aging secured a one-year Ontario Inclusive Communities Grant to develop an implementation strategy. Following a governance review, the committee transitioned to a new organizational structure that enables and supports the implementation of the plan. This included the organizing of the Age-Friendly Collaborative Committee (AFCC) with 14 goal champions, two for each strategic goal. Eleven new AFCC members were recruited and oriented to the committee from various City of Hamilton departments and community organizations. We participated in the Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Outreach Program's

Pilot Workshop Series on Evaluation for Age-Friendly Community Initiatives. Additionally, an age-friendly action planning toolkit was designed in partnership with the Hamilton Social Planning and Research Council. By the end of 2021, six action and evaluation plans that aim to address key recommendations in the plan were created, with implementation activities commencing in 2022.

Ongoing engagement and shared learning opportunities are central to the implementation of Hamilton's Age-Friendly Plan. This is achieved through broader participation in committees such as the Ontario Association of Councils on Aging, the Southern Ontario Age-Friendly Network, and the Ontario Age-Friendly Communities Network Exchange.

Locally, the AFCC strives to engage non-profit/voluntary, public and private sector organizations that are contributing to making Hamilton the best place to age well and to develop an annual report that reflects progress. In December 2021, an online **Age-Friendly Community Progress Questionnaire** was launched to link local age-friendly practices to the 7 strategic goals within the plan and to highlight them within this report.

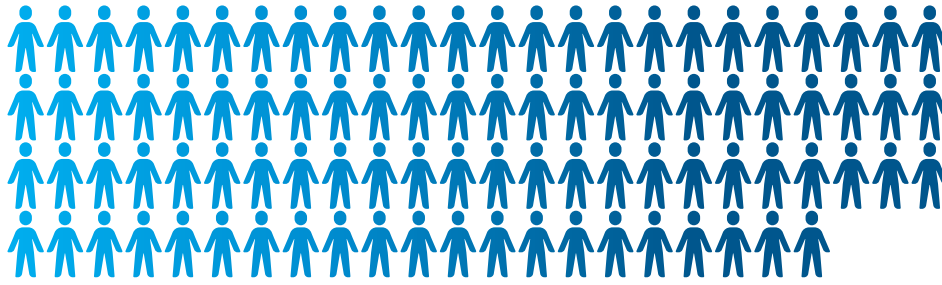
RESULTS

The results for 2021 represent promising progress in Hamilton with a number of age-friendly practices in progress and some completed and evaluated. This progress demonstrates that, despite the pandemic, organizations, groups and individuals are committed to advancing age-friendly practices in Hamilton and are prepared to make the adaptations necessary to ensure that we continue to make progress.

We begin this section by presenting quantitative information from the questionnaire responses in an infographic. It is encouraging to note the process of involving older adults in various ways in age-friendly practices.

This is followed by brief descriptions of age-friendly practices that organizations shared when completing the questionnaire as well as goal-specific activities that are being led by the AFCC goal champions. We encourage you to use the contact information provided to follow up on additional information about their age-friendly practices. Age-friendly practice descriptions are organized by the plan's 7 strategic goals.

AGE-FRIENDLY ENGAGEMENT



**9360
PEOPLE
POSITIVELY
IMPACTED**

**Each person
represents 100 people.*

AGE-FRIENDLY PRACTICES



20 IN PROGRESS



15 EVALUATED



2 COMPLETED

OLDER PERSONS' INVOLVEMENT IN AGE-FRIENDLY PRACTICE¹

**50%
OLDER PEOPLE
WERE INVOLVED IN
THE AF PRACTICE
AT ALL OR
MULTIPLE STAGES**



14%

Older people were
not involved

18%

Older people were consulted
during the planning process

18%

Older people helped to
implement the AF practice

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

TOTAL VALUE INVESTED: \$2,988,122

\$207,500

External Funding
Contributions

\$2,651,122

Internal Funding
Contributions

\$129,500

In-Kind
Contributions

¹ 'Older persons' was self-defined by questionnaire respondents

Infographic data was collected from completed 2021 Hamilton Age-Friendly Community Progress Questionnaire submissions.



GOAL 1: Housing

INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF HOUSING

☒ IN PROGRESS

To create awareness and educate Housing Services Staff and Indwell about Hamilton's Age Friendly Plan.

AFCC Goal Champions:

Marcée Lane, mgroen@indwell.ca

Kamba Ankunda, Kamba.Ankunda@hamilton.ca

HOME MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

☒ IN PROGRESS

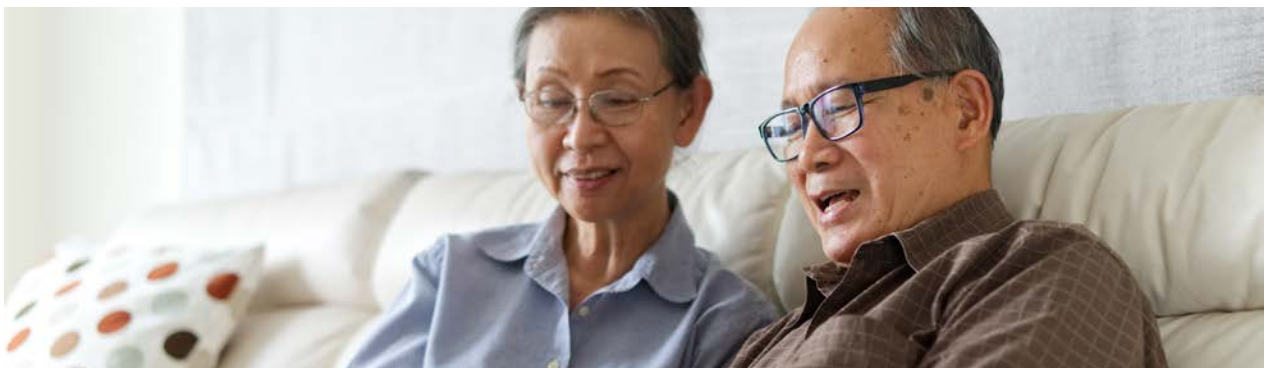
City of Hamilton Home Management Workers provide 1:1 support for clients in an age-friendly manner, including providing advocacy, service navigation, and remote supports around home management needs like cleaning, budgeting, organization.

City of Hamilton Website:

www.hamilton.ca/social-services/support-programs/home-management-program

Email: homemanagement@hamilton.ca

Phone: 905-546-4804





GOAL 2 Transportation

LET'S GET DRIVING WORKSHOPS

☒ IN PROGRESS

To give information on a variety of topics related to driving and to allow participants to assess their driving skills.

AFCC Goal Champions:

Jeanne Mayo, agefriendly@hamiltoncoa.com

Jay Adams, jay.adams@hamilton.ca

Hamilton Council on Aging Website: www.coahamilton.ca

LET'S GET WALKING WORKSHOPS

☒ IN PROGRESS

To increase older adult's knowledge about how to walk safely.

AFCC Goal Champions:

Jeanne Mayo, agefriendly@hamiltoncoa.com

Jay Adams, jay.adams@hamilton.ca

Hamilton Council on Aging Website: www.coahamilton.ca

LET'S TAKE THE BUS WORKSHOPS

☒ IN PROGRESS

Design and testing of a workshop to introduce older adults to Hamilton's transit system including transit safety, route finding, fares, fees and payments, trip planning, boarding and riding the bus, using trans-cab and HSR myRide and accessible transportation.

Hamilton Council on Aging Website: www.coahamilton.ca



GOAL 3 Information and Communication

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY EDUCATION - PUBLIC SERVICE SECTOR

☒ IN PROGRESS

Increase awareness of dementia in public facing staff of the City of Hamilton and provide relevant tools and resources.

AFCC Goal Champions:

Karen Robins, educationhamilton@alzhh.ca

Chris D'Agostino, cdagosti@hpl.ca

WEBSITE/BLOGS/EVENTS

☒ IN PROGRESS

☒ EVALUATED

The goal is to provide website, regular blogs and virtual events on Resilient Aging in Community of interest to older adults living in the Hamilton area.

A sample of activities includes regular blogs by various authors, an intergenerational memoir project, technology teaching for older adults and an expansion of website information related to seniors' services in Hamilton and housing alternatives for older adults.

Hamilton Aging in Community Website: www.hamiltonagingtogether.ca

An attendee at the 'A Place to Thrive' panel commented: "I was completely engaged in all aspects of the material...delivered so thoroughly. [The] insights are inspiring and [the] presentation style was motivating".

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

☒ IN PROGRESS

The Empowering Dementia-Friendly Communities project is a collaborative initiative, led by the Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA) and funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The Dementia-Friendly Education Workshop was designed in partnership with people living with dementia. It is available to all sectors and community groups seeking more information about how to create dementia inclusive social and physical environments.

Hamilton Council on Aging Website:

www.coahamilton.ca/our-priorities/dementia-friendly-communities/



GOAL 4 Health and Community Services

INCREASE AWARENESS & ACCESS OF HAMILTON'S AGE-FRIENDLY PLAN

☒ IN PROGRESS

To increase system partner awareness of Hamilton's Age-Friendly Plan.

AFCC Goal Champions:

Holly Odoardi, Holly.Odoardi@hamilton.ca

Renee Guder, rguder@thrivegroup.ca

ENGAGING THE VOICE OF PERSONS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

☒ IN PROGRESS

One of our organization's strategic directions is to raise awareness about dementia. We teach community providers (e.g. banks, lawyers, paramedics) how to recognize and support persons who are living with dementia. We have strengthened the inclusion of older adults living with dementia to ensure their voices help share new initiatives (e.g. new website, co-design).

Alzheimer Society of Brant, Haldimand Norfolk Hamilton Halton Website:
www.alzda.ca

DESIGNING NEW PROGRAMS USING CO-DESIGN

☒ IN PROGRESS

We have developed many new programs and services over the years after receiving feedback from those we serve. This time, we decided to engage persons with lived experience in the design of new initiatives. Two projects have been developed as a result: a tool for persons who are newly diagnosed with dementia (basically, a "what I wish I had known" type of guide) as well as a peer-led support group for those in the early stages of dementia. The guide will be shared with geriatricians across Hamilton and the Niagara Peninsula as a tool for both their own knowledge and to share with their clients. The peer-led support group has trained its facilitators and started in early January 2022.

Alzheimer Society of Brant, Haldimand Norfolk Hamilton Halton Website:
www.alzda.ca





GOAL 5

Social Participation: Recreation, Learning, Arts and Culture

INTRODUCTION OF VIDEO PROGRAMS

☒ IN PROGRESS

This City of Hamilton recreation piloted art and fitness video programs during pandemic closures. Video programs offered a good alternative for older adults who felt uncomfortable participating in person. The project included an evaluation to assess need and long-term sustainability.

City of Hamilton's Recreation Division Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation

Feedback has been positive with accessible technology. Patrons also enjoyed being able to purchase a program with supplies they could pick up (such as art supplies) or pick the option of having their own supplies already.

FACES OF DEMENTIA AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

☒ IN PROGRESS

A campaign is being developed to raise awareness and promote dementia inclusive social and physical environments. The campaign was informed by persons living with dementia and features stories of people living with dementia, what they want people living with dementia and others to know, as well as information about what people can do to promote dementia-friendly communities. The campaign will target private and public sectors as well as the broader community.

Hamilton Council on Aging Website:
www.coahamilton.ca/our-priorities/dementia-friendly-communities

SENIORS CONNECT

☒ IN PROGRESS

Seniors Connect is an umbrella term that describes all forms of wellness programming offered by CityHousing. One example of Seniors Connect is Channel 399, a CCTV program that brings the outside world in for older residents. Given that most residents grew up with TV, it serves as an accessible mode of communication. CityHousing partnered with TV Tours – a company that specializes in adapting content to CCTV in older adult contexts.

City Housing implemented Seniors Connect as a pilot project in First Place, CityHousing's largest building. CityHousing installed TV screens in public spaces where Channel 399 serves as a site where both crucial information and wellness programming.

CityHousing Hamilton Website: www.hamilton.ca/cityhousing-hamilton

Residents express the immense sense of connection and engagement brought about by the videos and programming: some suggest, for example, that the travel programming brought back nice memories from when they traveled when they were younger.

SENIORS ISOLATION PROGRAM THROUGH WORKSHOPS AND CASE MANAGEMENT FOR ADULTS 55+

☒ IN PROGRESS

Goals include an increased sense of community as well as stronger relationships with family, friends and engagement with community members. Clients are able to access services and supports within their community with greater confidence and ease. Increased feelings of social inclusion and health and wellness through access to cultural and physical activities that support a high quality of life.

Wesley Urban Ministries - Seniors Isolation Program Website:

www.wesley.ca/services/newcomer-community/supports-for-seniors-and-older-adults

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE (CWA)

☒ IN PROGRESS

Cycling Without Age is a global initiative that provides older adults and others who cannot cycle an opportunity to enjoy a complimentary, safe ride through their neighbourhood on a trishaw (three wheeled electric bike) piloted by a trained volunteer. 2001 was the first year of operation for this Ontario CWA chapter. From August to October 2021, 19 Welcome Inn seniors enjoyed many rides along the Waterfront Trail. The CWA Hamilton program received great reviews from both older adults and the community. During the late fall, an outdoor information session was held with approximately 45 potential volunteer pilots and several suggested ideas for next season.

Website: www.cyclingwithoutage.ca/hamilton-burlington

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HBCyclingWithoutAge

Twitter: www.twitter.com/CwaHamilton

"I've lived in Hamilton for more than 50 years and I've never gone to those places," says 93-year-old Angus Martin, a retired high school teacher who's travelled the world.

INCREASED PICKLEBALL OUTDOOR COURTS

☒ COMPLETED

New pickleball assets/amenities were developed at the Ancaster Senior Achievement Centre with an alternative program model to support outdoor pickleball programming and access. Older adults were able to play pickleball to stay healthy and active while indoor amenities were closed due to COVID restrictions.

City of Hamilton's Recreation Division Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation

The asset was well utilized and offered many more program opportunities for pickleball.

DUNDAS 55+ GROUP

☒ IN PROGRESS

Programs are offered for older adults to participate in exercise and to socialize with others with the objective of reducing social isolation. Adults 55+ in the Dundas community are encouraged to participate in, and contribute to, programs that promote healthy lifestyles.

Dundas 55+ Group Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation

"I love to dance and I no longer have a partner so line dancing is ideal for me: fun and exercise!"

SENIORS CENTRE WITHOUT WALLS (SCWW)

☒ IN PROGRESS

The goal of the program was to engage the community in programs which would have been offered pre-Covid and in house. It is an over the phone program and includes newsletters for seniors who are 50+ and Indigenous. Food security and wellness supports are offered through this program.

Hamilton Regional Indian Centre Website: www.hric.ca

SENIORS CENTRE WITHOUT WALLS - PATH TO INDEPENDENT PARTICIPATION

☒ IN PROGRESS

☒ EVALUATED

The City of Hamilton's Senior Centre Without Walls (SCWW) program model is supported by the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) and is a free interactive telephone-based group activity program that connects seniors and older adults 50+ and adults with physical disabilities who find it difficult to leave their home. SCWW programs offer an inclusive, safe, inviting space to listen, learn and be heard which increases social connectedness and well-being for participants.

City of Hamilton's Recreation Division Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation

ARTFUL MOMENTS: ARTS-EXPERIENCES FOR SPECIALIZED AUDIENCES

☒ IN PROGRESS

☒ EVALUATED

The Art Gallery of Hamilton's (AGH) Artful Moments program is specially designed to support persons with dementia and their care partners in a gallery-based and virtual program of conversations about art and hands on art-making. In the past two years this program has also expanded to present customized programs for persons on the autism spectrum, those living with mental illness and other chronic conditions. The main goals are to provide meaningful engagement, validation of personhood and social connections, especially in a time of isolation. Before covid, these programs were presented in-person at the AGH, but have been offered virtually via zoom or phone-based experiences. Evaluations gathered from all programs indicate success in fostering social connections among participants, and in bringing new experiences into their daily lives at a time where in-person experiences were not possible.

Art Gallery of Hamilton Website: www.artgalleryofhamilton.com

LIFE LONG CARE

☒ IN PROGRESS

Provides community support services to urban Indigenous clients, regardless of age, who are disabled, chronically ill, frail, elderly or require acute/chronic continuum of care. Supports range from culture/inclusion to support with medical appointments. We reach out to our clients two times a week to provide conference calls to seniors who don't have Internet. We also connect elders and youth to carry on and share story telling and teachings. Among other services, we provide home visits, crisis support and hospital visits to all clients. We assist and advocate for clients that need medical assistive devices and support clients with food security and medical transportation.

Hamilton Regional Indian Centre Website: www.hric.ca

"I feel supported and I know you're there when I need someone."



HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

☒ IN PROGRESS

☒ EVALUATED

YWCA Hamilton pivoted to provide online and telephone-based health and wellness programming for older adults that includes physical movement, social interaction, friendly calls, meditation and education programs. We strive to keep community members engaged and involved in programming to ensure their physical and cognitive health remain optimal. The impacts of first connecting with individuals on the phone, then by Internet live-stream programs resulted with individuals feeling less stressed, increased feelings of happiness and confidence, and improved/maintained physical fitness levels. Many individuals had opportunities to access new programming due to the convenience of reduced program costs, reduced transportation costs/considerations and feeling safe in their homes.

YWCA Hamilton, Seniors Active Living Centres 55+ Website: www.ywcahamilton.org

OFFERED 55+ OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ABSENCE OF BOARD-RUN PROGRAMS

☒ IN PROGRESS

In the absence of the Dundas Senior Citizen club due to the pandemic, the Dundas Recreation Centre offered targeted programs to adults 55+. This practice increased social participation and access to recreation. The target initiative was a drop-in fitness program offered at a small cost where patrons could drop in on a week-to-week basis. The goal was to fill a gap in service in a way that offered little commitment should patrons begin to again feel uncomfortable with the pandemic restrictions.

City of Hamilton, Dundas Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation

UPDATE TO RECREATION REGISTRATION

☒ COMPLETED

The City of Hamilton's website for the Recreation Division was redesigned along with the registration process. Previously done in person on paper sheets, COVID restrictions resulted in registration being moved online.

Recreation offered workshops and facilitated opportunities for older adults to learn how to access programs, set up an account and to register. These technical skills will help older adults in future online registration apart from recreation.

City of Hamilton's Recreation Division Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation

Email: scww@hamilton.ca

Phone: 905-526-4084

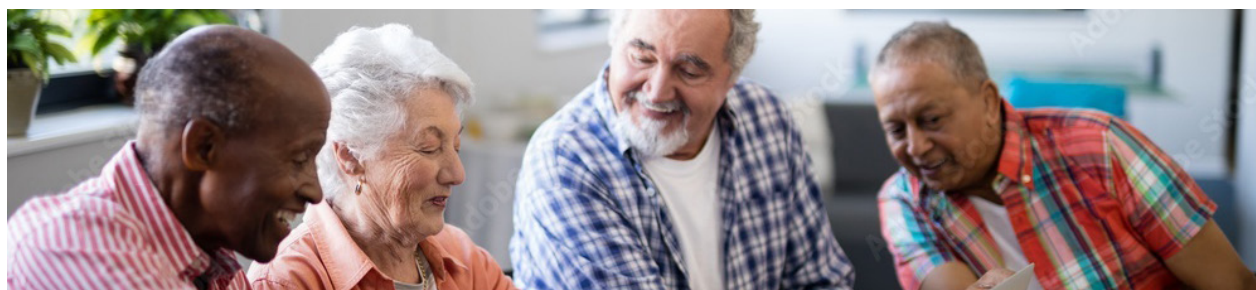
INTRODUCTION TO TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

☒ IN PROGRESS

The City of Hamilton in partnership with Warden Seniors Club who received a New Horizons grant in 2020 for "Promoting Computer Literacy and Staying Connected during the COVID-19 Pandemic".

In addition to the lending program, the Club also worked with the City of Hamilton's Recreation Division to develop iPad workshops. The beginner iPad series took place over nine weeks and included topics such as navigating the home screen, turning on/off, using a touch screen, settings, and applications. The intermediate iPad series took place over four weeks and included using video conferencing programs (e.g. Zoom), navigation apps, translation apps, and movie making. Plan to finalize in 2022 with roll out as a workshop option.

City of Hamilton's Recreation Division Website: www.hamilton.ca/recreation





GOAL 6 Civic Engagement, Volunteerism and Employment

THE FLAMBOROUGH SENIOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

☒ **IN PROGRESS**

In partnership, Flamborough Connects and PATH Employment Services initiated a project that will educate seniors on job search strategies and techniques to find meaningful employment post pandemic. The project will also educate local employers on the advantages of hiring older workers. This project will both bring awareness to businesses on the benefits, experience and skills older workers bring to the workforce, and also support older workers in finding opportunities that meet their individual and financial goals.

AFCC Goal Champions:

Amelia Steinbring, Flamborough Connects, amelia@flamboroughconnects.ca

Catherine Johnston, PATH Employment, Catherine.johnston@pathemployment.com



GOAL 7 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

WINTER WASHROOM PILOT PROJECT

☒ **IN PROGRESS**

This two-year pilot project was initiated by City Council, the feedback they received from their constituents, as well as an increase in the number of residents who were homeless.

This pilot project started in November 2021 with 16 locations (4 have portable toilets) where washrooms are kept open for the public until April. In 2022, 11 more locations will be available to the public once updates take place. Locations were determined based on high traffic areas and are available throughout Hamilton. A community survey to assess impact has been targeted for spring 2022.

City of Hamilton Website:

www.hamilton.ca/parks-recreation/parks-trails-and-beaches/park-washrooms



LESSONS LEARNED: MOVING FORWARD

The impact of the pandemic has been pervasive and far-reaching. In Hamilton, as in other communities, city staff, healthcare workers and others have been redeployed to assist with the pandemic response. Recreational facilities, schools, gyms and many small businesses have experienced unsettling periods of closing and opening, only to have to close again. Everyone, to varying degrees and in different ways, has been confronted with the uncertainty of these times. It can be argued that those individuals with access to technology may have fared better than those without. Providing affordable technology, reliable and affordable Internet access and ongoing technological support for older adults has become a rallying cry as digital inequities are exposed.

In spite of the challenges resulting from the pandemic, it has been encouraging to witness the resilience of many older adults and the resolve of groups and organizations to shift to new ways of offering services and programs, often through online platforms such as Zoom.

The following are some of the lessons we learned during 2021 and plans for addressing them to move forward.

1. More intentionally **reaching out to and including the private sector** (e.g., business) was an important aspiration of Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly Community. While there were no responses to the community questionnaire from the private sector this time around, it remains a goal as implementation plans evolve. The lack of response may have been influenced by the pandemic. However, the AFCC will evaluate outreach strategies to determine the most effective ways to engage the private sector.
2. The pandemic presented a **challenge to offering in person programs**. Many organizations responded by shifting to online programs for older adults. Moving forward, in order to swiftly respond to external limitations, it may be wise to design both in-person and virtual versions of programs. Not all older adults will be comfortable attending programs in-person when restrictions ease. Having the option of online participation may continue to be a preferred choice for some individuals and may also address barriers that many older adults face going out in inclement weather.

'NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!'

Include older adults
when planning
programs and services.

3. The importance of **involving older adults in planning programs and services** was reinforced in comments submitted by respondents to the 2021 community questionnaire. As seen in Chart #1, older adults were quite involved in the age-friendly practices that were reported in the questionnaire. Moving forward, we will continue to encourage the inclusion of older adults in planning programs and services that impact them. They know their wants, needs and what works for them. 'Nothing about us without us!'
4. Really listening to the population you serve and finding a way to meet their needs will allow for higher quality service delivery. **Listening to your clients** was a recurring theme among questionnaire respondents.
5. Not all older adults are familiar with or have access to technology. While it may be tempting to convert everything to online, we learned that **it is still important to offer print copies of registration guides, brochures**, etc. to be sure that we leave no one behind.
6. **Give programs time to gain traction and grow.** One of our respondents worded this so well, *'If patrons don't attend (your program) yet, give the program some time and consistency to gain a following and take feedback from patrons'*. We are often in a hurry for immediate results so this is something important to keep in mind as we move forward and try new things. Relatedly, another respondent wrote about *'patience and flexibility to deal with hiccups'*.

For additional information about Hamilton's Plan for an
Age-Friendly Community, please contact

agefriendly@hamiltoncoa.com
or visit www.coahamilton.ca
or www.hamilton.ca/agefriendly

APPENDICES

Appendix A: 2021 Age-Friendly Collaborative Committee (AFCC) Members

Lori Letts, Co-Chair, Hamilton Council on Aging
Julie Richardson, Co-Chair, Hamilton Council on Aging
Penelope Petrie, Seniors' Advisory Committee
Ann Elliott, Seniors' Advisory Committee
Holly Odoardi, City of Hamilton
Eleanor Morton, City of Hamilton
Kristy Tadeson, City of Hamilton
Margaret Denton, Hamilton Council on Aging
Cheryll Sullivan, Hamilton Council on Aging
Lisa Maychak, City of Hamilton
Tracy Gibbs, Hamilton Council on Aging
Kim Martin, Social Planning and Research Council
Deirdre Pike, Social Planning and Research Council
Megan Blair, Social Planning and Research Council (Student)
Madeline Chow, Social Planning and Research Council (Student)

2021 Age Friendly Goal Champions

GOAL 1 – HOUSING

Kamba Ankunda, City of Hamilton
Marcée Groen, Indwell

GOAL 2 – TRANSPORTATION

Jeanne Mayo, Community Member
Jay Adams, City of Hamilton

GOAL 3 – INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Chris D'Agostino, Hamilton Public Library
Karen Robins,
Alzheimer Society ASBHNHH

GOAL 4 – HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Renee Guder, Thrive Group
Holly Odoardi, City of Hamilton

GOAL 5 – SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Eleanor Morton/Laura Kerr,
City of Hamilton
Genevieve Hladysh, The YMCA of
Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford

GOAL 6 – CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/ VOLUNTEERISM/EMPLOYMENT

Amelia Steinbring,
Flamborough Connects
Catherine Johnston,
PATH Employment Services

GOAL 7 – OUTDOOR SPACES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Kasey Livingston, City of Hamilton
Melissa McGinnis, City of Hamilton

Appendix B: List of collaborating organizations and funders involved in 2021 Age-Friendly Practices⁵

Aboriginal Health Unit	Home and Community Care – Local
Alzheimer Society of Brant, Haldimand Norfolk, Hamilton Halton	Integrated Health Network
Ancaster Computer Products	Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle
Art Gallery of Hamilton	Indwell
Ancaster Seniors Achievement Centre Board	Local Health Integrated Network
Autism Ontario	Long Term Care-CARES
Bruce Park Neighbourhood Association	Long Term Care Collaborative
Buchanan Park Softball Organization	McMaster Children's Hospital
Cancer Screening Bus	McMaster Gilbrea Centre
Children's Aid Society	McMaster Institute for Research on Aging
City Enrichment Fund - City of Hamilton	McMaster University
City of Hamilton, Dundas	Ministry of Transportation
City Housing Hamilton	New Horizons
City of Hamilton Home Management	Ontario Arts Council
City of Hamilton Recreation Department	Ontario Community Services for Seniors
City of Hamilton Seniors Advisory Committee	Ontario Trillium Foundation
City of Hamilton Transit Division	PATH Employment
City of Hamilton Technology	Province of Ontario
Cycling Without Age – Hamilton & Burlington	Public Health Agency of Canada
Dundas 55+ Group	Public Works (Environmental Services, Parks & Cemeteries)
Dundas Community Centre	Public Works (Energy Fleet & Facilities Management)
Family Health Team	Regional Geriatric Program central
First Unitarian Church	Seniors without Walls
Flamborough Chamber of Commerce	Social Planning and Research Council
Flamborough Connects	St. Mathews House
GERAS Centre for Aging Research	Thrive Group
Government of Canada	Toronto Dominion Bank
Greater Hamilton Health Network	Trinity Lutheran Church
Hamilton Aging in Community	Warden Seniors Club
Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA)	Waterdown YMCA Employment Services
Hamilton Council on Aging	Waterdown Business Improvement Area (BIA)
Hamilton Health Sciences	Welcome Inn (Seniors Program)
Hamilton Jewish Family Services	Wesley Urban Ministries
Hamilton Public Library	YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford
Hamilton Regional Indian Centre	YWCA Hamilton
Hamilton Strategic Road Safety Committee	

¹ Collaborating organizations and funders were identified by 2021 Hamilton Age-Friendly Progress questionnaire respondents and Age-Friendly Collaborative Committee Goal Champions.