

To: **COUNCIL**

Meeting Date: **10/19/21**

Subject: **World Health Organization Age Friendly Designation**

Submitted By: **Lesley Head, Director of Recreation and Culture**

Prepared By: **Nicole Cichello, Supervisor of Recreation, Older Adult Services**

Report No.: **21-210(CD)**

File No.: **C1101**

Recommendations

THAT Report 21-210(CD) - World Health Organization Age Friendly Designation - be received;

AND THAT Council support the submission of an application to the World Health Organization for the City of Cambridge to become recognized as an Age Friendly Community;

AND THAT the addition of a staffing resource be included for consideration as part of the 2022 budget deliberations;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to provide a detailed plan on Age Friendly Initiatives pending application outcome.

Executive Summary

Purpose

- This report seeks Council endorsement for submission of an application for the City of Cambridge to become recognized as an Age Friendly Community (AFC) with the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Council directed staff to report back with any actions related to designating Cambridge as an AFC, as defined by the WHO, and that Council be presented with information on any policies or resourcing required to meet this designation.

Key Findings

- An age-friendly community allows people of all ages to participate in activities that keep the community healthy and encourage economic stability.
- An age-friendly community is a place where older persons can easily stay connected with others and remain independent.
- In an age-friendly community, the policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to help seniors age actively.
- In an age-friendly community, the environment is set up to remove barriers that reduce the ability for seniors to live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved.

Financial Implications

- There is no membership fee to join the WHO Age Friendly Network.
- Participation in the Network does require an investment in staff resources to help develop an age-friendly environment in Cambridge.
- For the City of Cambridge to join the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (AFC) the corporation will need to add a PT Recreation Coordinator at a cost of \$57,269 annually to support this work. This would be part of the salary plan for the Recreation & Culture Division annual operating budget. Pending report approval, the addition of a staffing resource will be included for consideration as part of the 2022 budget deliberations.
- The development of an annual plan to support AFC would be prepared in correlation with the operating and capital budget deliberations.

Background

The majority of older adults have the potential to age well. AFC improve the ability of older adults to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society.

The physical and social environments in our cities and communities are powerful influences on how people experience ageing, and they have great impact on an aging person's everyday patterns of life.

Baby Boomers are a large cohort of people born between 1946-1964, they are the largest contributing factor to Waterloo Regions steadily aging population. As this cohort continues to grow older, the number of seniors will increase. By 2029, all the baby boomers will be 65 or older. *Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2011 and 2016 by Census Division.*

Why an Age-Friendly Community?

- AFC can help create more accessible environments for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- AFC respond to both the opportunities and challenges of an aging population by creating physical and social environments that support independent and active living and enable older adults and people with disabilities to continue contributing to all aspects of community life.
- In AFC community leaders and residents work together to ensure that local policies, programs and services are inclusive and support the social and physical environments that enable Ontarians to live safe, active and meaningful lives.
- AFC align with the governments Advancing Accessibility in Ontario Framework which aims to make the province more inclusive and accessible for everyone.
- AFC help create more accessible environments for people of all ages and abilities across diverse communities in our province.

Eight Domains of an Age-Friendly Community

The WHO has identified eight domains of community life that overlap and intersect to affect an individual's personal well-being and their independent and active living in physical and social environments. These eight domains are:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect and Social Inclusion
6. Civic Participation and Employment
7. Communication and Information
8. Community Support and Health Services

Benefits of Having an Age-Friendly Community

- Improved accessibility, walkability, and safety;
- Reduced isolation, improved inclusion and intergenerational connections;
- Stimulated economy;
- Improved quality of life; and,
- Improved access and awareness of health and community services.

In 2010, the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries (SPCCND), with funding from New Horizons, undertook a participatory-action needs assessment to identify areas of concern for seniors in the community. Based on the findings of the need's assessment the SPCCND has facilitated a community-based initiative to transform Cambridge into an age friendly community.

The Age Friendly Cambridge project came to an end in the fall of 2013 and the participants were interested in continuing to work together. The concept of a Council on

Aging was proposed by seniors volunteering on the Age Friendly Initiative as a vehicle for them to continue working together. In their discussions with other communities involved with age friendly initiatives they became aware of active Councils on Aging throughout Ontario that were raising awareness and advocating for change in their communities.

The Cambridge Council on Aging (CCOA) is now a forum for seniors and community members to mobilize and work together to make Cambridge an age friendly community through the Ontario AFC Initiative.

In 2013 the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries brought an “Age Friendly Action Plan for Cambridge” to Council for review. At that time Council did not endorse the plan. The request for additional resources to complete this work was not available at the time of the request.

In 2018 the Cambridge Council on Aging (CCOA) nominated the City of Cambridge as their partner in the developing an Age Friendly City. In March of 2018 the City Accepted the Ontario Age-Friendly Community Award- Category 1 at the Ontario Age Friendly Communities Symposium this award was received based in very large part to the work of the CCOA.

Analysis

Strategic Alignment

PEOPLE To actively engage, inform and create opportunities for people to participate in community building – making Cambridge a better place to live, work, play and learn for all.

Goal #1 - Community Wellbeing

Objective 1.1 Work with partners to create a safe, inclusive and accessible city.

The City of Cambridge is entering into an Older Adult Strategy. Older Adults today are highly diverse in terms of needs, abilities, income, cultural backgrounds, and interests. As the city and the older adult population changes, the City must be positioned to respond to these changes and to ensure it meets the needs of older adults today and into the future.

If we know now that the City is becoming an Age-Friendly Community through the WHO we can include this in the Older Adult Strategy. Specific questions will be asked as we consult with community leaders and stakeholders about how to support older adults in our community today and in the years to come.

Comments

The Cambridge Council on Aging has recommended that the City of Cambridge join the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The network was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities and organizations worldwide with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. As a response to an aging global population and rapid urbanization, it focuses on action at the local level that fosters the full participation of older people in community life and promotes healthy and active aging.

The mission of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities around the world to become increasingly age-friendly. The Network seeks to do this by:

- Inspiring change by showing what can be done and how it can be done;
- Connecting cities and communities worldwide to facilitate the exchange of information, knowledge and experience; and,
- Supporting cities and communities to find appropriate innovative and evidence-based solutions.

Membership to the Network is not an accreditation for age-friendliness. Rather, it reflects cities' commitment to listen to the needs of their ageing population, assess and monitor their age-friendliness and work collaboratively with older people and across sectors to create age-friendly physical and social environments. Membership is also a commitment to share experience, achievements and lessons learnt with other cities and communities

Any local or sub-national level of government, in WHO states that they are committed to becoming more age-friendly and has the decision-making power to do so.

Cities or communities are *not required* to have achieved age-friendliness at the time of joining the Network. However, they must commit to working towards it.

Cities and communities can join the Network with the commitment by the political leadership to engage in this process and they are welcome to remain in the Network for as long as they stay engaged and share their experience with fellow members.

Membership of the Global Network indicates that a city or community has embarked on the process to become more age-friendly and is not recognition by the WHO of their age-friendly status.

Advantages of membership include:

- Access to information sharing with a global community;
- Support from a global network of affiliates, practitioners, researchers, experts and advocates committed to fostering age-friendly environments;
- Recognition and visibility in the Network's activities and WHO's dedicated website - Age-friendly World - on which Members can present their activities, achievements and link back to their own website and resources; and
- Opportunities for collaboration such as international research projects, joint

publications, networking and sharing amongst each other, etc.

It is important to note that many surrounding municipalities have joined the WHO network. Knowing these municipalities are committed to this work is helpful as some of the domains identified by the WHO are topics of Regional importance (Housing and Transportation) and will take collaboration, consensus, and a commitment to see gains.

- London (2010)
- Waterloo (2011)
- Guelph (2014)
- Hamilton (2015)
- Brantford (2017)
- County of Brant (2018)

There is no membership fee but participation in the Network requires a commitment of time and resources to develop age-friendly environments, and to share learnings and achievements with fellow Network members.

There are four components of the Ontario AFC Initiative:

1. Finding the Right Fit: Provincial AFC Planning and Implementation Guide is a provincial framework to guide community-level AFC planning, implementation and evaluation.
2. Provincial Investment in AFC Grants. Between 2015-2017, Ontario invested 1.5 million to support innovative local planning initiatives across the province. 56 communities across Ontario benefited from funding grants to support planning and implementation of AFC work in 2015-2017.
3. Ontario launched the AFC Outreach Program in 2015, which is administered by the University of Waterloo, Queen's University and Huntington/Laurentian University. The goals of the AFC Outreach Programs are to:
 - Increase awareness and understanding about AFCs;
 - Increase connectivity and sharing amongst communities across the province; and,
 - Evaluate AFC implementation and outcomes, and make recommendations.
4. The Ontario AFC Recognition Awards were launched in 2018. The program celebrates Ontario communities' leadership in becoming age-friendly

In 2013, the CCOA launched an age-friendly action plan thanks to recommendations made by the community, and they are working to implement the plan's initiatives. This involves promoting change by increasing the civic involvement of seniors and raising the awareness on the concerns of older adults throughout the community. Some of the

goals of the age-friendly plan include improvements to housing, transportation, health supports, social inclusion and better access to information for older adults.

If Council chooses not to move forward with becoming an age-friendly recognized community, work and involvement will remain status quo with the CCOA and Cambridge would not be recognized specifically through the WHO.

Existing Policy/By-Law

There is no existing policy/by-law.

Financial Impact

- Participation in the Network does require an investment in staff resources to help develop an age-friendly environment in Cambridge.
- For the City of Cambridge to join the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities the corporation will need to add a PT Recreation Coordinator at a cost of \$57,269 annually to support this work. This would be part of the salary plan for the Recreation & Culture Division annual operating budget. Pending report approval, the addition of a staffing resource will be included for consideration as part of the 2022 budget deliberations.
- There is no membership fee to join the WHO Age Friendly Network.
- The development of an annual plan to support AFC would be prepared in correlation with the operating and capital budget deliberations.
- The cost saving benefits to being an Age Friendly Community are often realized in the health care and social service sectors.

Public Input

In 2010, the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries (SPCCND), with funding from New Horizons, undertook a participatory-action needs assessment to identify areas of concern for seniors in the community.

The two-year project consisted of intensive community consultations by five priority-specific committees led by representatives from the Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre, the Self-Help Food Bank, Community Support Connections, City of Cambridge, and Saint Luke's Place and made up of over 60 engaged community members in order to develop key recommendations for various levels of government and service providers. The majority of the committee chairs and project volunteers were seniors.

Internal/External Consultation

- Cambridge Council on Aging
- Regional Age Friendly Committee
- Age Friendly Committee of South-Western Ontario
- Ontario Association of Councils on Aging

Conclusion

Age-friendly environments foster healthy and active aging. They enable older people to: age safely in a place that is right for them; be free from poverty; continue to develop personally; and to contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy, health and dignity. Because older people know best what they need, they are at the centre of any effort to create a more age-friendly world.

Cities and communities around the world are already taking steps towards becoming more age-friendly. An age-friendly world is possible and will be built by all of us - community by community, city by city, and region by region.

It is staff's recommendation that the City of Cambridge join the WHO Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities and that we work with the Cambridge Council on Aging, the Regional Age Friendly Committee, the Age Friendly Committee of South-Western Ontario and other community organizations in taking steps towards becoming more age-friendly community.

Signature

Division Approval



Name: Lesley Head

Title: Director of Recreation & Culture

Reviewed by the CFO

Reviewed by Legal Services

Departmental Approval



Name: Hardy Bromberg

Title: Deputy City Manager - Community Development

City Manager Approval

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Calder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Name: David Calder

Title: City Manager

Attachments

- N/A