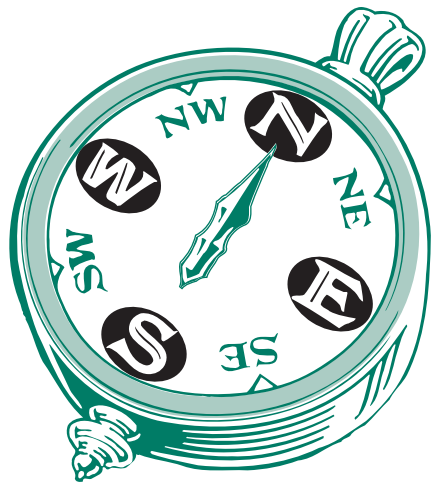


Toronto Seniors' Task Force



NEWS

NEWS NEWS

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September 1999

Seniors' Task Force

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Seniors' Task Force - June 1999

Dear Friends

This is the final issue of the Toronto Seniors' Task Force newsletter. As many of you will recall, members of the Task Force and staff held public consultations with seniors all over the new city in October and November of last year. Those who attended participated fully in the identification of issues and priorities for seniors in the City. We promised to put out a newsletter with the recommendations addressing priority areas identified by seniors. The following are the recommendations the Task Force members propose to forward to City Council.

Next Steps:

- ◆ October 7, 1999 - Final Report to Community Services Committee
- ◆ October 26, 27 and 28, 1999 - Final Report to City Council

If you wish to write or address the Community Services Committee regarding this report, please contact the Community Services Committee administrator at **392-8018** or by fax at **392-2983**.

If you have questions about the recommendations, please phone the Seniors' Task Force answer line in the Healthy City Office at **392-0129**.

Although the Seniors' Task Force will disband when the report is adopted by City Council, it will be the beginning of the work outlined in the recommendations. I look forward to keeping seniors' issues front and centre. Thanks to all of you who attended, wrote or phoned your concerns and ideas to the Task Force. As a follow-up to the report, we will be holding a Seniors' Summit on November 2 at Metro Hall. You will be hearing more about this in the weeks to come.

Anne Johnston

Councillor Anne Johnston, Chair
Seniors' Task Force

Please feel free to photocopy this newsletter and share it.

SENIORS' TASK FORCE REPORT

Recommendations



Chair Anne Johnston, Mayor Lastman, Task Force member Rosa Chan. September 1998.

Access to Information

The Seniors' Task Force recommends that:

1. The Information and Communication Division, through Access Toronto, consolidate information on all seniors-specific programs or services operated by the City and, in partnership with Community Information Toronto and local community information centres, assess existing information for seniors and collaboratively seek ways to address gaps and identify promotional models to inform seniors of these services.
2. Access Toronto, Toronto Social Housing Connections and Community Information Toronto develop strong linkages with the Community Care Access Centres to share information and eliminate duplication. This linkage should be communicated to the local information access points for seniors in the community.
3. All information delivery to seniors be based on best practices so the communication is:
 - ◆ In clear language
 - ◆ Linguistically accessible
 - ◆ Clear in font, layout, print size and colour
 - ◆ Given by "real" people answering main information lines
 - ◆ Culturally appropriate
 - ◆ Disseminated through the community newspapers, community centres and libraries
 - ◆ Available to seniors with low literacy skills
 - ◆ Usage of public service announcements on radio and cable TV which can be made available at no cost.
4. Training and Development conduct training sessions for City staff in both oral and written communication with seniors to develop effective skills in delivering "senior-friendly" information.
5. The City recognize resources for technical upgrades at local community information centres has not kept up with the need, and that community grants criteria recognize this as an important funding need in information provision.
6. The Province establish and fund a health information clearinghouse for seniors.

Health care

The Seniors' Task Force recommends that:

7. The provincial government reinvest funding into the health care sector to ensure the principles of access and high quality care are not compromised; and that the funding be significantly enhanced for nursing services, Community Care Access Centres (to expand community long term care services), and mental health services for seniors.
8. The Province ensure the criteria for funding health care services include access to services to meet the needs of the diverse populations in the City of Toronto and specifically address the barriers to accessing health care services for ethno-cultural and linguistic seniors.
9. The Province eliminate co-payment charges for seniors for prescription drugs and expand the benefit coverage to include supplies required for the administration of prescription drugs such as insulin.

Public Health

The Seniors' Task Force recommends that:

10. Council continue to support and fund local public healthy programs and services for seniors, including chronic disease and injury prevention, substance abuse prevention, communicable disease control, elder abuse prevention, informal/caregiver support initiatives and dental programs.
11. Toronto Public Health work with Community Care Access Centres and other agencies to address the needs of the 'at risk' frail elderly.
12. Toronto Public Health continue to work with community agencies and groups to advocate for policies and practices which ensure equal access to health care and an equitable distribution of resources and services for seniors.

Housing

The Seniors' Task Force Recommends that:

13. The City urge the Province of Ontario to amend the Tenant Protection Act to restore rent control.
14. The City, as part of its affordable housing strategy, encourage a fair share of affordable housing units be developed within the City to target seniors.
15. The City urge the provincial and federal governments to ensure the housing needs of seniors are included in any new housing developments, recognizing that a solution to the affordable housing crisis in Toronto must involve all levels of government.
16. The City of Toronto approach the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association to facilitate discussions on accessible housing needs in Toronto, through its local Toronto network. The Toronto Housing Company, Co-op Housing Federation of Toronto and the Metro Toronto Housing Authority should participate in these discussions so that a mutual exchange of learning and experiences occurs between City-operated and community-based housing providers.
17. The City continues to negotiate with Canada Mortgage and Housing Company to expand the City's administration of the federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program across the new City of Toronto.

- 18.** The City of Toronto conduct public information sessions for the seniors in the community explaining the details of the new Property Tax System, how to read the new bill, where the money is going and how the assessment works.

Public Transportation

The Seniors' Task Force recommends that:

- 19.** The Toronto Transit Commission continue discounted seniors fare.
- 20.** The TTC develop mechanisms which allow for reduced rates for seniors during off-peak times. One of these should be the development of a Seniors' day pass which is valid during off peak times and available for purchase at stations and community outlets.
- 21.** The TTC recognize that low-income seniors have difficulty having enough money to pay for transit fares, even at a discounted rates. It is recommended that appropriate City staff explore the possibility of a transit subsidy for seniors receiving the Provincial GAINS (Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement) and that staff approach the provincial government with a proposal.
- 22.** The TTC change the current "courtesy seating" system to "designated seating" with the additional phrase "Be prepared to give up your seat." The current "elderly and disabled" signage can still be used. The program should be supported by the driver and a marketing program utilizing the International Year of Older Persons theme and logo.
- 23.** Signage throughout the system be improved and include signs, brochures and schedules in larger print, information in languages other than English as well as international graphic signage. Information on improvements should be communicated to seniors' organizations, particularly ethno-racial groups, and to seniors' centres.
- 24.** Training for TTC staff on seniors' special needs be introduced to enhance sensitivity and improve customer service. An effective course would facilitate staff understanding about what it is like for seniors to use the regular system and what they can expect to encounter.
- 25.** Notification be posted in subway stations to advise passengers that escalators and/or elevators are out of service. If seniors can only exit that station using these services, they need to know before they exit to avoid paying an additional fare to travel to a station which they can exit.
- 26.** The sound system be upgraded to make it useful for seniors and others.
- 27.** The TTC and the Works Department install more benches at bus stops and shelters. Locations should be identified with the assistance of the Seniors' Assembly.
- 28.** The TTC develop an accessibility map which would plot out trips between stations that are accessible and link them with accessible bus routes.
- 29.** A geriatrician be added to the Wheel Trans review panel to assess the needs of aging seniors who do not need mobility devices except for canes.
- 30.** The ability to challenge the decision of the Wheel Trans review panel be addressed. Many seniors are unclear about the criteria and their rights. They have a fear about speaking out and many do not speak English easily. The review panel should offer community locations, perhaps

at seniors' centres, community or recreation centres. The panel should be prepared to provide services in languages other than English, with notices that reflect that service.

- 31.** Community bus routes be expanded and the TTC staff work with the community to develop, support and promote these routes.
- 32.** The City champion the Community Transportation Action Program that is vital to the transportation needs of a number of sectors, and promote efficient use of community agency vehicles.

City Services and Supports

The Seniors' Task Force recommends that:

- 33.** All public and community meetings sponsored by the City provide for seniors full participation by including:
- ◆ Information that can be read easily: e.g. adequate font size, clear language
 - ◆ A public address system to ensure all can hear the speakers
 - ◆ Accessible buildings

Parks and Recreation

- 34.** Parks and Recreation services and programs which value seniors be supported and developed to meet the needs of the growing seniors' population. Programs for seniors create a balanced program in each community centre.
- 35.** Parks and Recreation continue to evaluate the impact of user fees on access and participation in seniors' programs.
- 36.** Parks and Recreation staff develop a broad range of recreation and leisure opportunities that accommodate variances in interest, culture and level of ability to participate, and that seniors are involved and consulted in this process.

Sidewalk and Traffic Safety

- 37.** Works and Emergency Services continue to make regular formal inspection of sidewalks and curbs and that repairs to hazardous conditions be a priority.
- 38.** Works and Emergency Services develop a well-publicized reporting system that enables members of the public to report hazardous sidewalk or curb conditions.
- 39.** All sidewalk snow and ice clearing bylaws be rigorously enforced.
- 40.** The Seniors' Assembly work with the Committee on Community Safety, City Cycling Committee and the Pedestrian Committee on safer sidewalk strategies.
- 41.** The Seniors' Assembly work with the Committee on Community Safety, the Pedestrian Committee and Transportation Services on appropriate timing for multilaned intersection pedestrian crossings.

Fire Safety

- 42.** The Fire Department promote the "Older and Wiser" program through public service announcements.
- 43.** The Fire Department promote a program to "train the trainer" through a wide range of seniors' organizations, especially groups in the ethno-racial community, so that awareness can be promoted in languages other than English.

Personal Safety

- 44.** The Seniors' Assembly work with members of the Committee on Community Safety on common issues and that any brochures, campaigns or advertisements includes seniors issues.
- 45.** The membership of the Committee on Community Safety include seniors.
- 46.** City Council recognize the importance of Anti-Fraud community initiatives such as The East York Community Task Force to Combat Fraud Against Seniors and the ABC's of Fraud program.
- 47.** Public Service Announcements be routinely developed on the latest fraud/scam, with encouragement to report incidents to police along with a list of community agency programs to contact. These should be announced by the Mayor and/or the Chief of Police and carried on television, radio and in community and city wide newspapers.

Education

- 48.** City Council support affordable access to life long learning.
- 49.** Information on literacy programs for seniors at the Toronto Public Library be distributed to community and seniors' organizations.

Community Grants

- 50.** The City of Toronto's Community Service Program Grants staff re-examine supports to community based seniors' services and targets appropriate funding to vulnerable, at risk groups within seniors' communities.
- 51.** That prevention and awareness of elder abuse be an important criteria in awarding the Breaking the Cycle of Violence grants.

Burial Ground

- 52.** Staff from the Aboriginal Office, Access and Equity meet with appropriate members of the Aboriginal community to develop a process to acquire a site for an Aboriginal burial ground, and that the appropriate City staff be requested to provide any necessary expertise.

International Year of Older Persons



towards a society for all ages
International Year of Older Persons 1999

The Seniors' Task Force recommends:

- 53.** City Council continue its support and funds the improved street signage program, and that funding is allocated each year until completion.
- 54.** City Council encourage property owners to put well lit numerical addresses on buildings, offices and homes on their property. In the development of the improved street signage program, it was noted that many buildings do not display their numerical address.

Seniors' Assembly

The Seniors' Task Force recommends:

- 55.** City Council adopt the model described as the "Seniors' Assembly" and appoint a Seniors' Advocate for the City.

索取本通訊所載建議之中文本，請致電 338-0338。

Pour obtenir un exemplaire en français des recommandations contenues dans ce bulletin, appelez le (416) 338-0338.

Para obter uma cópia, em português, das recomendações contidas neste Boletim, ligar para o 338-0338.

Per ricevere una copia delle raccomandazioni contenute in questo bollettino informativo, in italiano, siete pregati di chiamare il 338-0338.

Para recibir una copia en español de las recomendaciones en este boletín, por favor llame al 338-0338.

Για αντίγραφο στην ελληνική των προτάσεων που περιέχονται στο παρόν ειδησεογραφικό δελτίο, τηλεφωνήστε στο 338-0338.

Muốn có bản văn về những đề nghị nói trong tài liệu này bằng tiếng Việt, xin gọi số 338-0338.

இச்செய்திப் பத்திரிகையில் உள்ள பரிந்துரைகளின் பிரதி ஒன்றை தமிழில் பெறுவதற்கு நீங்கள் விரும்பினால், தயவுசெய்து 338-0338 ஐ அழையுங்கள்.

Si aad u heshid nuqul talooyinka lagu soo jeediyay wargeyskaan oo Soomaali ah, fadalan soo wac taleefoon lambar 338-0338

이 뉴스레터에 게재된 레코메테이션 내용을 한국어로 받아보기를 원하시면, 전화, 338-0338로 문의 하십시오.

Aby w bieżącym biuletynie uzyskać kopię zaleceń w języku polskim prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 338-0338.

Toronto Seniors' Task Force News

Copies of this newsletter are available at your local library, parks and recreation centres, seniors' centres, and on the internet at www.city.toronto.on.ca/healthycity.

Please feel free to photocopy and share this newsletter.

Editorial team: Reg Herman - editor; Jean Houston - reporter

NEWS is produced by Seniors' Task Force members with staff support.

The Seniors' Task Force is an initiative of Toronto City Council whose mandate is to identify issues, priorities and citizen input models so that seniors voices are reflected in the new City.

The Healthy City Office provides the staff lead for this task force. For information, please leave a message at:

(416) 392-0129 Fax: (416) 392-0089



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