

The Toronto Seniors Strategy

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To:	Community Development and Recreation Committee
From:	Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration
Wards:	All
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SUMMARY

The shifting demographics of an aging population present challenges to governments all over the world. Toronto is no different in this respect and requires a coordinated and effective strategy to address how it will serve the needs of a population with a significantly higher proportion of older, diverse adults. The Toronto Seniors Strategy lays out a strategic plan for City Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Divisions to support older Torontonians to remain active, healthy, engaged, and independent, in their own homes and living in communities of their own choosing.

Building on existing City work, available research, community consultations and proven best practices, the Toronto Seniors Strategy recommends actions that are concrete and able to be implemented. The Strategy also includes a plan to ensure implementation and staff accountability. Each recommended action includes a time line, a lead City program area responsible for implementation, and a measure by which to monitor the progress of implementation going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration Division recommends that:

1. City Council endorse the vision, service plan, guiding principles, and accountability and monitoring framework contained in the Toronto Seniors Strategy (Attachment 2);
2. City Council endorse the implementation of all short-term recommended actions, scheduled to begin in 2013;

3. City Council refer all medium-term recommended actions to the respective program areas for consideration and potential inclusion in the 2014 operating and capital budgets and future-year processes;
4. City Council refer all long-term recommended actions to the respective program areas for preparation of a business case to assess the financial resources required for and anticipated benefits of implementation; and
5. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Toronto Seniors Strategy and provide a progress report to the Community Development and Recreation Committee in 2015.

Financial Impact

There is no 2013 financial impact associated with this report.

The implementation of all short-term recommended actions, beginning in 2013 will not require resources beyond those included in the 2013 Approved Operating Budget.

Medium-term actions will be referred back to the respective program areas for consideration as part of the 2014 and future year budget processes.

Long-term actions that impact service delivery in the 3-5 year term (or beyond) will be referred to the respective program areas for consideration as part of the future year budget processes.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

Equity Impact Statement

The Toronto Seniors Strategy seeks to improve services, social inclusion and quality of life for older adults in Toronto, including equity seeking groups such as women, LGBT communities, persons with disabilities, individuals with mental health issues, those who are homeless and other potentially vulnerable groups in the City of Toronto.

A Consultation Workbook was developed as a self-directed guide to be used by groups and individuals to: (a) learn about roles and responsibilities of municipal government related to the provision of services and programs for older Torontonians; (2) identify specific service priorities for City investment to improve Toronto's age-friendliness; and (3) provide input and innovative ideas about how the City can improve services for older residents. It was translated into the top ten languages spoken in Toronto and French. Seventeen per cent (17%) of Workbook responses were submitted in either Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Tagalog and Tamil.

The workbooks were made available in hard copy format at Toronto libraries, community recreation facilities, seniors' centres, community health centres, Toronto Public Health offices and Councillors' offices. They were also available electronically on-line.

Community and stakeholder consultations were designed to encourage participation from residents who may not normally participate in municipal civic engagement exercises. The consultations aimed to reduce barriers and make appropriate accommodations for participants so that the development of the Strategy would be informed by a range of different perspectives and life experiences.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 12, 2011, Council directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for seniors in consultation with other levels of government, school boards, relevant community organizations and individuals, businesses and academia that is adequately funded, financially feasible and able to be implemented. City Council also requested that the strategy include helping seniors remain in their own homes longer.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.CD2.4>)

On May 12, 2011, Community Development and Recreation Committee received for information a staff report on the development progress and engagement plan that would be used to develop the Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.CD4.2>)

On December 12, 2011, the Seniors Strategy Subcommittee of the Community Development and Recreation Committee received a staff presentation titled "Aging in a Liveable City" that included a work plan, time line and consultation plan for the Seniors Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.SS1.2>)

On May 17, 2012, the Seniors Strategy Subcommittee of the Community Development and Recreation Committee received a staff presentation titled "Status Update on the Development of a Strategy for Toronto Seniors."

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.SS2.1>)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Cities across Canada and around the world are undergoing a significant change in their demographic make-up: an increasing proportion of their populations are made up of older adults (over age 55). The oldest members of the baby boom generation have now reached age 65 and people are living longer than ever before. Not only are populations aging, but people are aging differently than in the past. These trends pose significant challenges for governments that must balance the shifting service needs of an aging population with potential changes in revenue generation. Municipal governments face specific challenges given their more limited revenue generation capabilities and their significant role in direct service provision to older residents.

Toronto is also experiencing a rapid growth in the number of older adults living in the city. Over the next twenty years, Toronto's older adult population could increase by up to

60 per cent. Forecasts estimate that by 2031, over 20% of Toronto's population will be 65 years of age or older, compared to 14% in 2011.

Toronto is also a very diverse city whose older adult population is as varied as any other age group. The growing number of aging new immigrants residing in Toronto may face barriers in accessing supports and services, compared to those who have lived in Toronto for many years. A Seniors Strategy for a city like Toronto must take into account these different experiences of aging.

In developing a strategy, partnerships with community organizations and other orders of government are an important consideration. All orders of government provide programs intended to serve the needs of older adults. However, the City's experience with previous initiatives has shown that the recommendations most likely to be implemented are those upon which the City has direct jurisdictional authority to act.

By developing a strategy with a focus on practical, implementable actions and with a sense of clarity about its role, the City can better define how and where it needs to partner with community organizations and other orders of government. This approach will also ensure that the City of Toronto is well aligned with a growing global social movement to combat ageism, encourage respect for older adults and build age-friendly communities for all.

COMMENTS

An Age-friendly Framework

The Strategy should also be considered within the context of what actions other jurisdictions, particularly other municipalities, are taking to address the demographic shift to an older population. A global movement is under way towards preparing for population aging by developing age-friendly environments. This helps integrate older adult issues into the work of governments by acknowledging that communities that work well for their oldest members work well for all.

The Toronto Seniors Strategy has been developed to align with The World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-friendly Cities and Communities Initiative. Canada has played a significant role in developing the framework, and most Canadian cities developing older adult plans have organized their strategies along the WHO's eight (8) themes or domains of age-friendliness: respect and social inclusion; civic engagement and volunteering; social participation; community support and health services; housing; transportation; outdoor spaces and buildings; and communications and information. Toronto's Strategy adopts these themes, which will allow for easy comparison with other cities, across Ontario and internationally.

Service Planning Principles

The goal of the Toronto Seniors Strategy is to create a sustainable process for ensuring that Toronto becomes age-friendly. The Strategy articulates four (4) key principles for service planning which emerged from the consultation process: equity, respect, inclusion and quality of life. These service principles are embedded in the Strategy throughout the

recommendations. They will guide future decisions regarding funding priorities and service improvements and provide direction for the planning, management and delivery of services, initiatives, programs and investments for older Torontonians.

This approach is in keeping with other key initiatives within the City, such as the Recreation Service Plan, the Parks Plan, the Guide to Good Practice and the Toronto Newcomer Strategy. A principle-driven approach has been endorsed by the Age-friendly Communities initiative at the University of Waterloo.

Staff Teams

The development of the Toronto Seniors Strategy was performed by two staff teams: a Staff Technical Working Group which coordinated the work and a Senior Management Steering Committee which provided strategic direction. These teams were comprised of members from 17 City of Toronto program areas Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Corporations, and Divisions: 311 Toronto, Affordable Housing Office, City Planning, Emergency Medical Services, Long-Term Care Homes and Services, Office of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Revenue Services, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Social Development, Finance & Administration, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Public Library, Toronto Transit Commission, Transportation Services and WheelTrans. Toronto Employment and Social Services also assisted in the development of the strategy and contributed a recommended action.

Public Consultations

The Toronto Seniors Strategy was informed by the findings of a multi-lingual consultation process that included 524 completed surveys and numerous public and stakeholder sessions. Seventeen (17%) per cent of the Consultation Workbooks were completed in a language other than English.

The survey took the form of a Consultation Workbook, which explained the City's role in providing services for older Torontonians. This was important because of the decision to focus on recommendations addressed at and implemented by the City. For this reason, the consultation also needed to promote awareness amongst Toronto residents generally about the kinds of services the City provides for older adults as distinguished from those provided by provincial or federal governments or their agencies. Provincial or federal governments provide many of the services with the most relevance and impact on older residents such as hospitals, healthcare, home care, Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security.

The Consultation Workbook was structured around seven themes identified from previous City reports on seniors' issues (for a list of prior City reports see Attachment 1). The consultations revealed three priority issues for older Torontonians: health, housing and transportation. This was also in keeping with the priorities identified in consultations conducted in the development of the recently released Ontario's Seniors Strategy.

Expert Panel and Toronto Seniors' Forum

In addition to consultations with the public and key stakeholders, a Seniors Expert Panel comprised of 33 leaders from community, academia, medical and seniors' advocacy organizations as well as members of the Toronto Seniors' Forum was established to guide the development of the Strategy. The Toronto Seniors' Forum is the City's civic engagement group that consults with older adults across the city on City services, promoting open dialogue between organizations serving seniors and local government.

During three (3) roundtable meetings the Seniors Expert Panel provided input, advice and guidance to the development of the Strategy. The feedback strongly reinforced the concerns and priorities heard throughout the public consultation process and contained vital strategic advice. Members of the Expert Panel were briefed on the initial framing of the strategy and proposed work plan, the key findings from the consultation process and on the overall draft plan. Every effort was made to incorporate their advice and expertise and much of the Strategy's content comes directly from their input. For example, Expert Panel members wanted a report with clear, concrete, implementable recommendations directed to the right program area. Some prior City report recommendations were not implemented in part because they were vague or directed the City to act beyond its direct jurisdiction and control.

Members of the Expert Panel and Toronto Seniors' Forum emphasized the need for strong leadership from both City Council and senior City officials to ensure accountability and follow through in the implementation of the Strategy. The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration is the City lead on monitoring the progress of implementation and will work closely with the Seniors Expert Panel and Toronto Seniors' Forum to ensure the recommendations are acted upon.

Other suggestions made by the Expert Panel included: (1) ensuring the Strategy would be a living document; (2) developing a Seniors Charter for the City; (3) focusing on more vulnerable seniors in the city such as low-income and homeless seniors; (4) ensuring planning activities incorporate an age-friendly lens in zoning and in the built environment, through transportation improvements, as well as health and social services; (5) linking volunteering to employment opportunities; (6) ensuring mental health supports are addressed in the medium- rather than longer-term goal setting; (7) strengthening inter-governmental relations to ensure alignment of activities across the three orders of government; (8) developing intergenerational programming; and, (9) working with the non-profit and for-profit sectors on integrated approaches to seniors issues.

The broad range of issues identified by the Seniors Expert Panel will be considered as part of the implementation of the Toronto Seniors Strategy.

Alignment with Provincial and Federal Seniors Strategies

While the Strategy has focused on areas over which the City has direct jurisdictional control, partnerships with other orders of government and community organizations will be key to ensuring the ongoing success of the Strategy. The Toronto Seniors Strategy was developed while Dr. Samir K. Sinha prepared his recommendations in the *Living Longer*,

Living Well report for the Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

The Ontario Strategy focuses on wellness and prevention to keep more people healthy and at home longer. It focuses on how to provide better-coordinated care for those with complex health and social care issues. It has broad applications to municipalities in that the Ontario's Seniors Strategy starts from the basis that building elder friendly communities requires the Province of Ontario to work with municipalities and the Federal Government to meet the needs of an aging population. By strengthening its investment in home care and community services as well as supportive, assisted and affordable housing, the Province will allow more people to remain independent and age in the place of their choice rather than facilitate more costly and less desirable entry into long-term care.

Led by the Minister of State for Seniors, the Federal Seniors Strategy outlines how the Government of Canada supports the seniors' community at large. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is responsible for the administration of the benefits and programs that support seniors financially in the latter stages of their life. These include the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the New Horizons for Seniors program.

In addition to coordinating closely with and developing this Strategy in alignment with federal and provincial seniors' strategies, other opportunities to develop partnerships continue to be explored. A newly convened roundtable of City Divisions and the five Toronto-serving Local Health Integration Networks is one such example, and several recommended actions within the Strategy identify areas for intergovernmental partnership development.

Accountability and Monitoring

An initial step in the creation of the Strategy was the review of recommendations from previous City reports on seniors' issues since Toronto's amalgamation in 1998. Attachment 1 provides a list of the seven (7) prior reports and the themes they addressed. Overall, the analysis revealed that recommendations directed at the City and falling within its direct jurisdictional authority to implement produced the highest level of implementation. For this reason, the current Strategy was developed with a primary focus on issues that fall within the City's authority to control, plan, manage and deliver.

In reviewing past City efforts, and considering best practices of age-friendly plans in other communities, it is clear that building accountability directly into the Strategy is necessary to ensure successful implementation. The recommendations for the Strategy were developed to embed accountability directly in its structure. For each of the eight themes of age-friendliness, the Strategy: (1) provides an overarching statement expressing why it is important to Torontonians and how the service planning principles are reflected; (2) provides key examples what the City currently does in this area; (3) identifies the key issues which emerged in the consultation process linked to a broad recommendation to address each issue; (4) specifies one or more specific actions to be undertaken within a specific timeline; (5) identifies the lead City agency, board,

commission or division responsible for implementing the action(s); and (6) the progress measure by which implementation of each action will be monitored.

Each action is classed into one of three timelines. Those classified as short-term (which comprise over 70% of the 91 recommended actions) are actions which can be quickly implemented, and can be implemented with existing resources as currently budgeted. Those classified as medium-term are actions which can be implemented with current resources, but which may require additional consideration for budget planning in 2014. Those classified as long-term are actions which may require additional investment.

The Strategy's accountability and monitoring framework commits to working closely with the Toronto Seniors' Forum and Seniors Expert Panel to monitor the implementation of the Strategy and report to City Council regularly on progress. The first progress report will occur in 2015. This process will be guided by the staff lead on the Seniors Strategy, the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance & Administration.

The Toronto Seniors Strategy is attached (see Attachment 2). A shorter document reflecting key highlights from the Strategy is also attached (see Attachment 3).

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: List of prior City reports on seniors' issues since amalgamation
Attachment 2: The Toronto Seniors Strategy
Attachment 3: The Toronto Seniors Strategy: Highlights

Attachment 1: List of prior City reports on seniors' issues since amalgamation

	Year	Title of Report	Report Author	Themes
1.	1999	Building A City for All Ages	Toronto Seniors' Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - financial assistance - health - housing - recreation and community programs - safety and security - transportation
2.	2002	Rebuilding Respect	Toronto Seniors' Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - health - housing - recreation and community programs - safety and security
3.	2005	Senior's Recreation Strategy	Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation – Community Recreation Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - financial assistance - recreation and community programs - transportation
4.	2006	Housing Toronto Seniors	Toronto Roundtable on Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - financial assistance - health - housing - safety and security
5.	2008	Seniors Implementation Framework	Toronto Community Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - health - safety and security
6.	2008	Priorities	Toronto Seniors' Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - financial assistance - health - safety and security - transportation
7.	2010	Housing Opportunities Toronto: Affordable Housing Action Plan 2010-2020	Affordable Housing Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accessibility - civic engagement - financial assistance - housing

Attachment 2: The Toronto Seniors Strategy