



REPORT FOR ACTION

Planning an Age-Friendly Toronto - Alignment of Official Plan Policies and City Planning Initiatives

Date: August 4, 2017

To: Planning and Growth Management Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to City Council's direction requesting that City Planning report on ways for the Official Plan to reflect policies that support and complement a commitment to age-friendly principles.

This report highlights the importance of age-friendly planning and urban design principles and summarizes the current and future city-building initiatives that will apply to these principles, including:

- Incorporating age-friendly policies and guidelines as outcomes of city planning initiatives including secondary plan studies.
- Engaging seniors through established networks of stakeholders such as the Seniors' Roundtable.
- Undertaking an environmental scan of age-friendly policies in municipalities across Canada and other cities recognized as a global age-friendly by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Incorporating policy language in the Official Plan through the next legislative review to ensure that development responds to the needs of users of all ages and abilities, including seniors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division recommends that:

1. The Planning and Growth Management Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

On July 4, 2017, City Council requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to include an item directly related to the Seniors Strategy in the division's work program that will be reported to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on September 7, 2017, focussing on ways for the City's Official Plan to reflect policies that support and complement our commitment to age-friendly principles consistent with Toronto's international recognition as a World Health Organization global age-friendly City when the next Official Plan process to review and renew begins. The decision item can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PG21.17>

On May 7, 2013, City Council unanimously adopted the Toronto Seniors Strategy, a comprehensive strategic plan for seniors prepared in consultation with other levels of government, school boards, relevant community organizations and individuals, businesses and academia. Through the adoption of the plan, Council directed 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. The decision item can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.CD20.1>

COMMENTS

Background

The age structure of Toronto's population has continued to shift, reflecting an aging population. The 2016 Census identified 426,945 people over the age of 65 living in Toronto and 398,135 people aged 0-14 – a difference of 28,810 – marking the first time that there have been more seniors than children in Toronto. The proportion of seniors in Toronto has been increasing steadily over the past 15 years, from 13.6% in 2001 to 15.6% in 2016. The proportion of people over the age of 85 has seen the greatest increase, from 1.5% of the population in 2001 to 2.4% in 2016.

In 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the concept of an "age-friendly" city, which is one that "encourages active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities."

The City's commitment to age-friendly policies responds to the demographic trend occurring in Toronto and other global cities. Toronto is currently recognized as a global age-friendly city by WHO, following City Council's unanimous decision to adopt the Toronto Seniors Strategy in 2013. Since that time, the Seniors Strategy has guided City Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Corporations and Divisions in the implementation of age-friendly policies so that older Torontonians remain active, healthy, engaged in civic decision-making, included in the life of their communities and living with independence and dignity.

By 2015, 86 of the 91 recommended actions in the strategy were fully or partially implemented in support of Toronto's seniors. To build on that success, multiple City Divisions, agencies and community partners are currently engaged in a Council directed collaborative process to prepare the next version of the City's Senior Strategy.

Current City Planning Initiatives in Support of Age-Friendly Communities

The outcomes of age-friendly communities are strongly aligned with those of complete communities which offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to access most of the necessities for daily living. This includes an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores and services, a full range of housing and public service facilities. In other words, planning for seniors is planning for all ages.

Accordingly, City Planning has or is currently considering age-friendly principles to inform Official Plan updates, such as the Five-Year Review and Downtown Plan (TOcore), and secondary plan studies including Don Mills Crossing. The age-friendly priorities identified in each of these studies are outlined below.

Official Plan

The Official Plan contains policies and objectives that seek an urban environment, built form and infrastructure that is built for users of all ages and abilities.

Policies include the protection and encouragement of:

- Public realm improvements in areas travelled frequently by vulnerable users, including seniors (Policy 2.4.14.e);
- An inclusive transportation and transit system that accommodates the needs of people with disabilities and seniors (Policy 2.4.15);
- A Complete Streets approach for new streets that ensure safety of vulnerable groups such as women, children, seniors and people with disabilities by implementing the Toronto Safer City Guidelines (Policy 3.1.1.5.a.iii);
- A healthy rental housing supply and availability to meet the housing requirements for vulnerable populations, including seniors, persons with special needs, or students. (Policy 3.2.1.6.c.iii); and
- Local institutions in *Neighbourhoods*, including seniors and nursing homes and long-term care facilities (Policy 4.1.1).

The Downtown Plan (TOcore)

- Provide functional space for targeted populations including youth and seniors based on need and community profile.

- Develop emergency plans to address the risks to vulnerable populations, such as seniors and residents with mobility issues, in Downtown during emergencies such as extreme weather and power outages.
- Address service and recreation gaps for youth and seniors.

Don Mills Crossing

- Secure affordable and multipurpose space for youth and seniors' use in the Study Area.
- Support program improvements for children and seniors.
- Support connectivity to local facilities for users of all ages and abilities.

Mid-Town in Focus

- Address Midtown's diverse population including growth in the seniors and youth populations.
- Support the area's role as a destination for those seeking school programs, seniors' services, health services and more.
- Provide creative solutions to the development of new community services and facilities.

Future City Planning Initiatives in Support of Age-Friendly Communities

As part of the next legislated Official Plan Review, City Planning staff will:

- Engage seniors through established networks of stakeholders such as the Seniors' Roundtable.
- Undertake an environmental scan of age-friendly policies in municipalities across Canada and other cities recognized as a global age-friendly by the World Health Organization (WHO). The scan will focus on municipalities that have made a commitment to implementing age-friendly planning principles and will include a review of their Official Plans, related policy documents, and seniors' strategies.

Conclusion

City Planning staff recognize the importance of incorporating policies into the Official Plan that will clearly provide direction on ensuring development is responsive to the needs of users of all ages and abilities, including seniors. Current studies and the next legislative review of the Official Plan will help build on the success of the Toronto Seniors Strategy and ensure that age-friendly principles continue to inform the City's planning policy framework.

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SIGNATURE

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