

Age Friendly Cities

Date	April 14, 2021
To	Community Wellness Committee
From	City Planning & Community Development
Service Area	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Item No.	CWC21-7

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Wellness Committee recommends that City Council:

1. Endorse the request of the Age Friendly Regina committee for the City of Regina to become an age friendly community by participating, supporting, promoting, and working to assess and improve inclusion and accessibility for individuals of all ages.
2. Remove item MN20-20 from the List of Outstanding Items for City Council.
3. Approve these recommendations at its meeting on April 28, 2021.

ISSUE

In September 2020, City Council brought forward a motion on Age Friendly Cities (MN20-20, Appendix A), directing Administration to return to Council in Q1 of 2021 with a report that discusses how the City of Regina would partner with the Age Friendly Regina Committee (AFR) to define approaches to becoming an age friendly city.

MN20-20 outlines the need for these approaches in Regina, as seniors and older adults are quickly becoming the fastest growing population in Canada. Inclusive and accessible opportunities to fully participate in civic life are required for individuals of all ages in Regina.

This report outlines the history and progression of AFR, and a proposed approach for Administration to work collaboratively with AFR in supporting its goals.

IMPACTS

Accessibility Impacts

Accessibility and inclusion are vital to age friendly communities. These values are at the forefront of the proposed approach to ensure City services meet Regina residents' diverse ages and needs.

Making commitments to accessibility and inclusion is key in addressing the goals of age friendly communities, and ensures decision-makers are rethinking how people of all stages of life can access and be included in public spaces, programs and services.

Financial Impacts

There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, meeting age friendly objectives will require consideration of accessibility during business and project planning processes, including establishing new structures, programs, and City services. In addition, staff time will be provided to support the partnership with AFR. Financial impacts associated with new projects will be considered in future budget cycles.

If AFR wishes to explore funding or grant options, Administration will provide support in navigating the formalities of:

- Community Investment Grant Program
- Saskatchewan Lotteries Program
- Government of Canada, New Horizons Seniors Program
- Government of Canada, Enabling Accessibility Fund
- Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation
- Community Initiatives Fund
- South Saskatchewan Communtiy Foundation

Policy Impacts

Design Regina: The Official Community Plan Bylaw No 2013-48 (OCP) recognizes that the social and economic gap between residents and communities has widened over time, creating social challenges and issues relating to inequality. Partnering with AFR to address Age Friendly Cities goals will have strategic outcomes relating to section D11 - Social Development of the OCP, including social sustainability, community safety and security, vulnerable and marginalized populations including seniors and older adults, and overall social inclusion.

OTHER OPTIONS

1. Status Quo:
Under this option, Administration would continue sitting at the AFR committee, supporting relevant action items, assisting with capacity building and promoting future projects, but would not pursue the establishment of an age friendly checklist.
2. Development of an Accessibility Plan
Under this option, Administration would return to City Council with a proposed approach and financial implications to develop an accessibility plan for the City of Regina. Age Friendly priorities are aligned with goals that cities need to consider in enhancing meaningful accessibility. Accessibility plans are created to establish steps

for municipalities to prevent and address barriers to accessibility and include considerations on the built environment, transportation, inclusive programming and customer service, accessible communication, and accessible employment opportunities, to name a few.

This option would be an extensive undertaking for Administration and would require additional capacity, resources, and budget to coordinate the work. Similar to the development of the Culture Plan, Recreation Master Plans, and the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, accessibility plans require comprehensive planning, consultation and engagement. Accessibility plans require endorsement from multiple sectors, as well as commitment from all City departments. Currently, City leadership from various departments continue to engage with the Accessibility Advisory Committee on ensuring city planning and projects are prioritizing accessibility and inclusion.

While the development of an accessibility plan represents a robust and inclusive approach to addressing all areas of accessibility, including barriers faced by older adults, the Government of Saskatchewan is currently undertaking consultations to implement new accessibility legislation for Saskatchewan which may provide more direction for municipalities in this regard. As such, this option is not recommended at this time; instead, it is recommended this option be considered within future business planning and budget cycles to ensure alignment once the provincial accessibility priorities have been finalized. In the meantime, Administration will continue to prioritize accessibility improvements as a part of regular business planning processes.

COMMUNICATIONS

There are no specific communications requirements for this report.

Administration recognized the need to ensure that engagement is accessible broadly and for specific demographics, including seniors and older adults.

DISCUSSION

Defining Age Friendly Communities

What is the Age Friendly Communities concept?

With the senior and older adult population quickly growing across Canada, an age friendly approach ensures programs, services, structures, and policies are inclusive and accessible as residents progress through their lifespan. In an age friendly community, individuals can 'age actively', as the community is set up to support health, well-being, and meaningful engagement.

There are eight domains/priority areas which communities must focus on to become more age friendly:

- Outdoor spaces & buildings

- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services

Becoming an age friendly community takes a collaborative approach, including municipalities, provincial governments, health sectors, local businesses, and community-based organizations. Age friendly movements are rooted in principles of inclusion and accessibility.

Age Friendly Regina

The City of Regina is one of fifteen communities across Saskatchewan that has coordinated an age friendly committee and has begun the journey to becoming age friendly. Under the guidance of Age Friendly Saskatchewan, with support from Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, each community that undertakes the goal of becoming age friendly is required to follow a set of milestones. Regina's progress on the Age-Friendly Milestones is as follows:

Establish an Age Friendly Committee

AFR was established in 2018, with membership including the Regina Senior Citizen Centre, Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, Regina Immigrant Women Centre, Eden Care Communities, as well as representatives from City of Regina Administration and City Council, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Regina Police Service, University of Regina's Centre on Aging and Health, and community members from the senior & older adult population. AFR recently established a summary document to further assist with promotion and understanding of their role in our city (Appendix B).

Assessing the Community

To undertake the needs assessment of Regina, AFR developed the Age Friendly Communities Survey (Appendix C) and worked with partners to have it distributed to other networks, community collaboratives, community associations, and organizations that serve and support seniors and older adults.

After the first round of survey distribution, just under 400 responses were gathered. Results highlighted snow removal, access to accessible transportation, access to community services, and community safety as priority needs for the older adult population in Regina.

In December, AFR distributed the survey again with a desire to hear from a more diverse segment of the community. To assist, Administration distributed the survey to the community well-being table, a City-led committee of over 80 service providers from the social development sector. Further, Administration collaborated with the Regina and Region Local Immigration Partnership to have the survey distributed through their network with the goal of reaching seniors and older adults from the newcomer population. The response level to the second round of survey distribution

was just under 300 completed surveys. Administration is committed to working with AFR to identify alternative methods of data collection to continue to understand the priorities of older adults.

Establishment of Age Friendly Work Plan

AFR has developed the Age Well Regina Tool (Appendix D), a document that highlights programs and services in Regina in relation to supported housing and care options, mental health services, and crime prevention and safety.

Administration is committed to supporting the distribution and promotion of the Age Well Tool, which includes a plan to utilize City social media platforms and distribution to community associations and other older adult-serving organizations. The Age Well Regina Tool is now on Regina.ca.

At a recent facilitated session with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism, AFR set four short-term goals for 2021:

1. Add Older Adult/Age-Friendly Lens to City of Regina operations, with an immediate focus on:
 - a. Improving access to information of City of Regina programs and services.
 - b. Improving conditions of sidewalks in winter months.
 - c. Improving conditions around bus stops in winter months.
 - d. Improving consultation and engagement opportunities for older adults.
2. Prepare to present to the City of Regina Council Meeting on the AFR goals and Age Well Tool
3. Have a reliable and valid data set based on 1000 responses of the Age Friendly Regina Community Survey.
4. Implement changes to the AFR Committee structure to increase community representation

Partnership with Age Friendly Regina

Administration is committed to continuing to work with AFR as a partner in ensuring Regina achieves the vision of Age Friendly communities and continues to make meaningful progress in ensuring the accessibility of programs, services and infrastructure. In addition to supporting AFR with the development of resources and a work plan, Administration has developed a draft of an Age Friendly Checklist (Appendix E). The Checklist combines existing provincial and federal age friendly tools, and focuses on areas relevant to the age friendly domains. Administration will use this tool to guide work areas to establish new policy, programs, structures, or services. Administration will continue to work with AFR to finalize the checklist and the process to apply it to City policies and planning.

In addressing the specific priorities identified by Age Friendly Regina, as listed above, the following initiatives are underway:

Improved Engagement & Access to Information

Public Engagement Strategy

Administration is committed to continuous improvement and plans to do further market and audience research, which, among other topics, will explore preferred

ways of communication. In 2022, Administration will be revising the Public Engagement Framework into a more comprehensive Public Engagement Strategy. This will include the latest leading practices for both broad public and stakeholder-specific engagement, including online tools, open houses and idea fairs, the use of panels, and much more.

Strengthened Communications

The City of Regina has a wide variety of communication strategies aimed to reach all residents of Regina, as well as strategies targeted to particular audiences, including seniors and older adults. Administration takes an approach to communicate messages in a wide variety of ways, from printed brochures and bill inserts to paid radio and billboard ads to social media and online advertising. Additionally, the Administration sends hundreds of public service announcements to the media, which results in information being shared in news coverage across print, radio and television.

Winter Sidewalks & Bus Stops

Snow Angels

The Snow Angels program works with community-based organizations and volunteers to clear residential sidewalks for people who require additional assistance. Snow Angels has been in the pilot phase for two seasons, working with Eden Care Communities, Al Ritchie Community Association, and Cathedral Community Association. An evaluation will be completed in Q2 of 2021 and findings will inform the permanent program.

Winter Maintenance Policy & Snow Clearing Bylaw

A report is in development for Q3 of 2021 that reviews the Winter Maintenance Policy and Sidewalk Snow Clearing Bylaw. Within this report, options relating to the implementation of a sidewalk snow clearing bylaw will be considered. Clearing sidewalks adjacent to transit stops has recently been approved by City Council and will be implemented in the 2021/2022 season.

Survey Distribution

Another goal of AFR is to continue the distribution of the age friendly survey. AFR recognizes that although strong efforts have been made to engage seniors and older adults in Regina, this should remain a priority moving forward. Administration will continue to support the distribution, sharing with community partners, non-profit organizations, community associations, and other community collaboratives and networks. To enhance access, Administration can distribute paper copies to a range of community spaces, including neighbourhood centres. Further communication approaches can also be explored alongside the Citizen Experience team, which could include utilizing other public platforms such as social media. Survey data will continue to advise on future goal setting for AFR, and will be valuable to future planning and priority setting for Administration. Survey data will also support the further development of the Age Friendly Checklist, ensuring local priorities are reflected within the document.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 30, 2020, City Council directed Administration to work with the Regina Age-Friendly Steering Committee on an Age-Friendly partnership proposal to present to City Council in Q1 of 2021 (MN20-20).

Respectfully submitted,



Laurie Shalley, Director, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

Respectfully submitted,



Diana Hawryluk, Executive Director, City Planning & Community Dev.

Prepared by Dave Slater, Manager, City Projects

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A - Age Friendly Motion
- Appendix B - Age Friendly Summary
- Appendix C - AFR Survey
- Appendix D - Age Well Tool
- Appendix E - Age Friendly Checklist