

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Mayor Kogon and Amherst Town Council

**From:** Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation

**Date:** January 21, 2019

**Subject:** **2018 Strategic Priority - Aging Population / Senior's Needs**

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The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on one of Council's 2018 Strategic Priorities "Aging Population / Senior's Needs". The defining question related to this priority is; *how do we identify and program for services aimed at our senior population? The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies eight key areas of a rural age friendly community.*

1. *Outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean secure and physically accessible.*
2. *Public Transportation is accessible and affordable*
3. *Housing is affordable, appropriately located, well built, well designed and secure*
4. *Opportunities exist for social participation in leisure social cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures*
5. *Older people are treated with respect and included in city life*
6. *Opportunities for employment and volunteerism cater to older persons interests and abilities*
7. *Age-friendly communication and information is available*
8. *Community support and health services are tailored to older persons needs*

To address this priority, it was agreed that the 2013 draft Senior's Strategy would be reviewed and updated or rewritten. The following actions and target dates were established to achieve this:

1. Establish stakeholder steering committee - Sept
2. Stakeholder meeting – Oct
3. Current strategy review & create ToR to review - Nov
4. Implement ToR – Dec
5. Determine strategies to address needs – Jan 2019
6. Complete draft strategy – Feb 2019
7. Council direction – Feb 2019

Earlier in 2018 a committee was formed but subsequently disbanded due to health and scheduling issues of individual members. A new committee chair was identified and started committee recruitment, but unfortunately has since left the community. Alternatively, staff have sought to engage the senior community and related stakeholders through the Seniors Safety Coordinator, within Community Health planning, and the 55+ Club. Also, a community input initiative related to activity and health was conducted in late 2018, which included an online survey and a senior focus group sessions. The results of this initiative are expected by the first of March with a plan to brief Council in April. In the meantime a number of initiatives, activities and events have been offered including: upgrades to Town Trails, addition of a walking track at Lions Park, addition of benches and seating, increased indoor skating and walking hours, senior softball, increased use of social media regarding activity schedules, pickleball, walkability signage, active transportation plan, 55+ games, municipal poverty forum, and a seniors walking club.

Given the challenges with the volunteer seniors committee, staff have looked for alternative ways to identify and program services aimed at seniors. As such, the revised action plan this priority is as follows:

1. Stakeholder Consultations – 2/3 completed – 3/3 – Mar.
2. Walking Program –~~Started~~
3. Community Health Plan – Complete – April
4. Stakeholder Consultation report & Gap analysis – May
5. Update or renew existing Strategy– June
6. Report to Council - June