



## *Creating a Community for a Lifetime*

### **COMMUNITY RESULTS - MASTER AGING PLAN FOR BRANTFORD AND BRANT COUNTY**

**As of October 8, 2013**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

With the granting of an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant, the Master Aging Plan (MAP) was produced “by the Community for the Community” and was published **September 16, 2008**. It is a strategic plan for the development of an “age-friendly community” and **consists of 5 Goals, broken down into 21 objectives and accompanied by 99 strategies.**

Recommendations were then provided for:

- City and County Council
- Community Agencies
- Provincial and Federal Governments
- Community at Large with the particular note that further consultation take place with representatives of the aboriginal community living in Brantford
- Individuals

The Steering Committee then determined that further analysis would benefit implementation of the recommendations. Therefore, with the assistance of a second Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant, community agencies conducted inventories of the work that had been accomplished, currently being worked on and what needed to happen in their future.

The result was the production of the **October 26, 2009 Implementation Recommendations**. **There were three main recommendations** and the report on them follows this introduction.

The Grand River Council on Aging was incorporated as a non-profit organization in order to have a dedicated infrastructure as described in the “Moving Forward” section of the Implementation Recommendations. The Grand River Council on Aging is a planning body with a mission “to promote the voice of seniors” to the Community and encourage dialogue across all sectors.

A third Ontario Trillium Foundation grant facilitated the Grand River Council on Aging to encourage collaboration among community agencies and seniors, commence implementation of community awareness programs, and develop a process (COMPASS) for gathering changing data and publishing an updated “Strategic Plan for an Age-Friendly Community” as now defined by the World Health Organization. Of interest is that the WHO definitions were not available at the time that our community commenced its planning.

Sustainability is a necessity for the ongoing support of the Grand River Council on Aging. The ongoing updating of the needs of seniors will benefit all aspects of community life. Applications are being made for project funding for the development of the new COMPASS process. However, the Grand River Council on Aging will also be applying for grants to support its infrastructure. Presently, the GRCOA is dependent upon in-kind support and volunteers. To ensure continuing effectiveness, an Executive Director is required in order to enhance the Council’s opportunities to move forward with community and council goals and objectives.

**COMMUNITY RESULTS – MASTER AGING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**As of October 8, 2013**

**Recommendation One –Implementation Objective - Published October 26, 2009**

**Acknowledge, communicate and reinforce EXISTING community initiatives that support the goals, objectives and strategies of the Master Aging Plan.**

**OUTCOMES**

- City of Brantford
  - Stoplight timers indicated when 15 seconds remain for crossing at some locations
  - Audible Beeps for Crosswalks for pedestrians
  - Crime Prevention and Safety Task Force
  - City Staff members on Community Committees
  
- Grand River Community Health Centre
  - “In Kind” support to Grand River Council on Aging (space, operating costs and staff)
  - Confirmed outreach to seniors and provision of appropriate health care services
  - Staff members on Community Committees
  
- Brant Community Healthcare System
  - Staff members on Community Committees
  - “Senior Friendly” Hospital and appropriate committees
  
- Operation Lift
  - Staff on Community Committees
  
- Community Care Access Centre
  - Staff on Community Committees

**Recommendation Two – Implementation Objective – Published October 26, 2009**

**Encourage implementation of designated strategies for identified priorities.**

**OUTCOMES**

The following Goals, their objectives and their strategies were identified as having a higher priority. The report indicates the activities that have taken place since the recommendations were published.

**Infrastructure – Housing – increase appropriate, accessible and reasonably/affordable options**

- GRCOA Housing Committee encouraged participation of individuals representing all aspects of housing and has now turned over the planning to the City of Brantford and those agencies able to plan and implement the required strategies.
- The City of Brantford is responsible for developing further affordable housing options and is including seniors in its planning.
- For the past three years, the City and CMHC have hosted a housing forum
- A Community Committee, chaired by the City of Brantford Director of Housing, developed a “hub” proposal for supportive housing in a Seniors Apartment Building.
- Inclusion of seniors on housing committees (Municipal) and Advisory Committees (Private)

## MAP IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS CONTINUED

### Infrastructure –Housing Continued

- City of Brantford is developing a Housing 10 year strategic plan
- Private Sector Housing Options are being explored, e.g.”shared” housing
- Programs have been developed to assist seniors to “age at home” and are being explored in our community

### • Infrastructure – Transportation – develop an integrated county-wide system

- GRCOA Transportation Committee comprised members representing all aspects of transportation, public and private. This committee has ceased functioning. Please see the “difficulties/barriers” section.
- GRCOA Conducted two community Transportation Forums
- Operation Lift hosted a community Transportation Forum to address the needs of persons with disabilities handicapped and outlined options for seniors

### • Programs and Services – support an active lifestyle by increasing the availability and accessibility of social and recreational opportunities

- Seniors Resource Centre implemented a Community Garden on site
- Beckett Building has added several new activities and encourages participation
- City of Brantford included GRCOA in Walkability/Safety Task Force
- 2011 and 2012 Grants of \$10,000 to Grand River Council on Aging
- Several community agencies have introduced or enhanced “care giver” programs
- Brantford Public Library has added several programs for older adults
- Brant County Library is offering services for seniors

### • Health and Wellness – ensure adequate primary health care and in-home when necessary

- GRCOA took part in Health Care Forums conducted by the Grand River Community Health Centre and the Brant Community Healthcare System.
- GRCOA supported and took part in the design of a proposal for researching the transitions made by seniors with chronic conditions.
- GRCOA is participant in the development of options for health care in home i.e. the supportive housing “hub” and the ancillary workshops such as foot care, safety, etc.
- Brant County Health Unit developed and is disseminating “Fall Prevention” resource materials to Nursing Homes and Retirement residences
- With the assistance of the GRCOA, the Brant County Health Unit developed the “Hayhurst Project” and is now delivering it to “Wellness” Fairs throughout Brantford and the County
- Grand River Community Health Centre hosted a Community Health Care Program
- Grand River Community Health Centre facilitated development of PATH proposal to the Change Foundation for research on the transitions experienced by seniors with chronic conditions. **NOTE:** Although this community was not successful, the proposal involved all the health care delivery and community planning services impacting seniors and will lead the way to changes in the future
- Brant Community Healthcare System held a hospital-wide departmental planning forum for servicing seniors and included GRCOA and volunteers
- BCHS is now designated as a “senior-friendly” hospital
- Brant Community Healthcare System is continuing its planning for seniors activities and including the GRCOA

## **MAP IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS CONTINUED**

- **Support Systems – establish a single access point for information and support... and.. educate and provide transition planning support to seniors and their families**
  - GRCOA is supportive of initiatives that provide single point access for seniors information i.e. Seniors Resource Centres (only one currently available in Brantford), 211 Provincial Phone Number, GRCOA Web Site and relevant links
  - The GRCOA Web Site has been launched and will be used to promote outreach services for both urban and rural seniors. Links to social and recreational activities will be highlighted
  - GRCOA is supportive of all organizations that recruit and train staff to be sensitive to the needs of seniors.
  - Implementation of MAP recommendations set as a priority within the City’s strategic plan
  - The Alzheimer Society offers bi-weekly information sessions that cover all aspects of aging
  - The County of Brant has introduced a limited number of programs for seniors that can get to them
  - The Brantford Chapter of the Canadian Association for Retired Persons (CARP) is now offering an Annual Information Fair for Seniors

### **Profile –reconstituted MAP Steering Committee to develop critical strategies for raising public awareness of seniors issues**

- Grand River Council on Aging incorporated as a non-profit organization in November 2010
- GRCOA Provided a “Community Update” – May 2011
- GRCOA introduced bi-weekly Brantford Expositor articles – “Shifting Sands” – the stories of lives “well lived”. This series is temporarily on hold
- GRCOA Speaking engagements
- GRCOA promoted First community celebration of National Seniors Day October 1, 2012 at the Lynden Park Mall and within local organizations
- GRCOA successfully carried out a “Workshop on a Bus” as part of National Seniors Day activities, October 1, 2013

**Although significant work related to the priority objectives is already underway in the community, some GAPS in goals and strategies that were recommended in the September 2008 Master Aging Plan were identified and these are listed below:**

- 1.1 Increase appropriate accessible and reasonably priced housing options for seniors living in the community – This constitutes a very all-encompassing and long term development of many private and public options. The GRCOA encourages and supports all initiatives underway and will arrange for seniors input when requested.

It is interesting to note that, in 2010, the GRCOA did strike a Housing Committee made up of representatives from all aspects of housing options. As a result, one of the members, Jamie Stephens from the City of Brantford Housing Department, was commissioned to write a report on Housing in Brantford and Brant County which included many recommendations brought forth by the Committee. The report was accepted and approved by City Council and is separate from the 10 year Strategy for Homelessness and was considered quite significant in terms of having a report on current housing and the needs for housing.

## **MAP IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS CONTINUED**

### **Identified GAPS s in goals and strategies continued.....**

- 1.2 Develop an integrated county-wide transportation system – a pilot project had been recommended for Operation Lift, Brantford Transit, Brant County and the private sector.

**Note:** in the mid 1990's, an integrated City and County-wide transportation pilot, which had provincial funding, was successful. However, when the provincial funding was cancelled, the pilot had to be cancelled and the MAP process identified it would be worthwhile to investigate it again.

Operation Lift is now scheduled to be absorbed by Brantford Transit. The County of Brant has made arrangements for private transport of people with disabilities.

The GRCOA will encourage collaboration between organizations that can develop alternative transportation services for seniors and persons with disabilities to ensure access for all.

- 1.3 Increase appropriate accessible and affordable housing options for seniors requiring Long-Term Care accommodation – The GRCOA will continue to contribute to collaboration to support/expand initiatives under way whenever requested
- 2.1 Support an active lifestyle for seniors by increasing the availability and accessibility of social and recreational opportunities – The GRCOA will continue to promote programs it becomes aware of. However, the challenge is to provide supports to seniors living in rural areas.
- 3.1 Ensure adequate primary health care for seniors, available in-home when necessary. This particular goal has a strategy to explore methods of outreach to individuals reluctant to accept assistance. Therefore, the GRCOA will arrange for seniors input when requested.
- 4.1 Educate and provide transition planning support to seniors and their families. This Goal has a strategy for Long Term Care Homes to support/sustain social worker positions. It remains a recommendation for an age-friendly community but is the responsibility of the private sector.
- 4.2 Establish single point access for seniors information and support in their community – In addition to the established 211 and the Seniors Resource Centre, it is recommended that another Seniors Resource Centre be established in the north part of the City and perhaps in the south.
- 4.4 Recruit, retain and nurture health care staff and promote positive morale – This is the responsibility of each of the Health care provider organizations.

### **Recommendation Three –Implementation Objective – Published October 26, 2009**

#### **Increase community engagement in the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of the Master Aging Plan.**

##### **OUTCOMES**

- The original Steering Committee determined that an organization that undertakes strategic planning for seniors should be an independent organization that is not a department of the local government or part of an agency's infrastructure. Many seniors' issues such as providing an integrated, county wide transportation system needs to involve the cooperation of public, private, and government agencies and organizations

## **MAP IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS CONTINUED**

- Therefore, an independent non-profit organization, the Grand River Council on Aging, was incorporated. The GRCOA can bring together diverse groups who normally don't communicate with each other to help create innovative solutions to these complex problems.
- The GRCOA is a planning body that will continue to monitor the ongoing development and implementation of the Master Aging Plan.
- It is the intent of the GRCOA to engage the community in the publication of an updated strategic plan for age-friendly community.
- A volunteer recruitment and a sustainability marketing plan are currently in the developmental stage by the GRCOA

## **MOVING FORWARD**

As mentioned in the introduction, it is worth repeating that sustainability is a necessity for continuation of the Grand River Council on Aging. The ongoing updating of the needs of seniors will benefit all aspects of community life.

Applications are being made for project funding for the development of the new COMPASS process. However, the Grand River Council on Aging will also be applying for grants to support its infrastructure.

Presently, the GRCOA is dependent upon in-kind support and volunteers. To ensure continuing effectiveness, an Executive Director is required in order to enhance the Council's opportunities to move forward with community and Council goals and objectives.

## **SUMMARY COMMENT**

Because the GRCOA is a planning body, its prime functions are to listen, clarify, analyze, empower, report, recommend, educate and facilitate collaboration. In our opinion, to date, these activities have resulted in enhanced services and facilities offered by many agencies, organizations and businesses for the communities of Brantford and County of Brant.

It should be noted that the Council does not offer services and can only comment on what it has been told or learned about through public sharing.

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