Global Age-friendly Cities: How does Peterborough compare?

“There is no reason to fear the future but there is clearly cause to start planning.”

(Participant at the forum “Boom Bust Echo: Planning for Social, Health, Economic & Cultural Readiness for the Community of Peterborough County & City”, Thursday, June 5, 2008, sponsored by the Peterborough Social Planning Council and the Peterborough County City Health Unit)

Prepared by the Peterborough Social Planning Council

A United Way Agency

2012
Background:

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a checklist of essential age-friendly city features. The checklist is based on the results of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project consultation in 33 cities in 22 countries. It provides a tool for a community’s self-assessment and a map for charting progress.

The Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) has a mandate to undertake community research and support community development. The City of Peterborough has committed resources to building an age-friendly community. In 2009, it held the first Senior’s Summit, the intent of which was to commence the dialogue about the aging population and the impact on service delivery and community development. A second summit was held in 2011.

In 2011, CARP identified Peterborough as being age-friendly and recognized it as a community which is attractive to seniors – whether they have lived here all their lives or choose to move here due to its amenities.

The PSPC undertook a survey to find out what citizens think we need to do to make Peterborough City and County, even more age friendly. The results also identify what needs to happen to successfully plan for the aging cohort. The survey was carried out at the Senior’s Summit held on June 2, 2011. The PSPC then circulated it to a broad range of agencies and individuals. Over 400 people took part in the survey. Participants included individuals as well as representatives of agencies and organizations. People of all ages were invited to take part in the survey because everyone has a role to play in building an age-friendly community. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were residents of the City of Peterborough, with the remaining 24% residing in the County.

Key Messages Derived From the Survey:

- A community-based strategy to further strengthen our age-friendly community is in our best interest and requires a continued commitment from our municipal, provincial and federal partners.
- The opportunity to develop innovative service/community hubs is strong in Peterborough. We must build on the successes of the service hubs for children and explore development of intergenerational service/community hubs.
- Peterborough will continue to benefit from the wisdom and commitment of our older citizens – this social capital must be harnessed and used for the successful planning of an inclusive community.

“Peterborough is a "pocket" sized city with a variety of amenities, and entertainment options.”, Respondent.
The Findings Based on the WHO’s Checklist:

Outdoor spaces and buildings:
Close to 45% of the respondents rated public areas as clean and pleasant. One third felt that the greenspaces and outdoor seating was sufficient. Three quarters of those taking part in the survey replied that lighting needs to be improved to support outdoor safety.

People want more support for alternatives to cars. Less than a fifth of the respondents felt that cycle paths are sufficiently separated from the other traffic and more planning is needed to make cycling safe. Less than 20% replied that there are sufficient pedestrian crossings and 81% showed concern that drivers do not give way to pedestrians at intersections.

Forty-seven percent want buildings to be better signage outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.

“Consider the issues they have to deal with before the general population as we will all eventually be in the “older” population statistic...” Respondent.

Transportation
With an aging population, the need for alternatives to car transportation will continue to increase. Less than a fifth of the respondents agreed that “Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable ”. Fifty-six percent reported that public transportation is not reliable and frequent (including at night and on weekends and holidays).

Half of those participating stated that improvements are required in the transportation system before all city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles. A further 31% answered that the system was average.

Thirty-seven percent rated the transit system for the disabled as good to excellent. Forty-two percent felt that drivers (of public transit) stop and wait until people are seated before driving off. Close to three quarters of the respondents answered that there should be increased “Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available”.

“I think that the public transportation should be more frequent. I want to use it but when I have to spend 40 min to go someplace and then again 40 min or more to get back home doesn’t really help, so it makes me look at driving myself as the other option.” Respondent.

Housing
Seventy percent of those responding to the section on housing, stated that there is a need for more affordable housing in areas that are safe and close to services. Forty percent rated the ability to find accessible housing as poor. Three quarters of those taking time to complete this survey stated that there is not sufficient and affordable housing with supports for frail and disabled citizens.
More supports to help keep people in their own home are needed. Sixty-five percent did not feel that there is sufficient affordable home maintenance and support services. Two thirds of people taking part in the survey were concerned that this community needs more support for seniors to find good home modification options/services.

Sixty five percent of survey participants rated public and commercial rental housing as poor or requiring improvement in cleanliness, maintenance and safety.

“Economic equality among the older adult population. The Elite (wealthy) have the Choice to remain in their private homes, (for the majority) or can retire to a comfortable supportive environment as their economic status allows. Poor seniors have little/ no choice as to where they will live and in what type of conditions. This municipality has both the best AND the worst of these conditions within its borders!” Respondent.

Social Participation
According to WHO, key to being an age-friendly community is the ability for seniors to fully participate in the community. Thirty-five percent of the respondents stated that venues for events/activities were conveniently located, and could be reached by public transportation. A further 35% rated the times that events were scheduled to be good or excellent.

Almost 45% responded that activities and attractions in our community are affordable. A third of those participating in this survey felt that there was good information and promotion of activities including how to access them.

Sixty percent were concerned that there was not enough outreach to people at risk of social isolation.

“I love the small town feel with big city resources and shopping. Vibrant downtown that is not present in many cities in the GTA. The presence of a university and college add a cultural aspect not present in small towns”, Respondent.

Civic Participation & Employment
With the potential changes to the Old Age pension system, more seniors will have to continue to work in the labour force. Sixty-four percent of those responding commented on the range of paid opportunities for older people to work. Sixty-one percent felt that training in post-retirement options provided to older workers need to be improved. Only one third stated that there is a good range of options for volunteering.

“Peterborough has a small town feel with the benefits of a community. There is rapidly growing cultural diversity, strong post secondary institutions and a beautiful environment landscape...”, Respondent.

Community & Health Services
Health and social support services are critical to seniors if they are to remain in the community. Over a third (38.7%) were concerned that the range of health and community support services offered for
promoting, maintaining and restoring health is inadequate. An additional third categorized the system as being average.

Eighty-two percent evaluated home care services (including health and personal care and housekeeping) as being in need of improvement.

Three quarters of those taking part in the survey evaluated both local and regional health and social services as not being conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.

Less than a quarter of the participants agreed that residential care facilities and designated older people’s housing are located close to services and the rest of the community, thus increasing the chance of social isolation.

Slightly more than half of the respondents were concerned that economic barriers impede access to health and community support services.

“We must improve access of all elderly to community care supports. Many of the lowest income elderly here have to cope with economic barriers that do indeed impede aspects of community support services in particular. For example, help with housekeeping requires the ability to pay and so do virtually all of community care services plus special meals at senior centres, etc.” Respondent.

Respect & Social Inclusion
We need to include people of all ages in decision making. Eighty-five percent were concerned that older people are not consulted as to how they could be better served. Eighty percent did not feel that services and products took into consideration the needs of the older population.

Over a quarter of the respondents stated that community-wide events accommodate age-related needs.

Peterborough does things right – we celebrate successes. Forty percent stated that there is good to excellent recognition of older people for their past and present contributions to community.

Two thirds of those participating in this survey thought that older people of limited means do not have good access to services and programs.

“It has everything a big city has to offer (in terms of most shopping, arts and culture) but in a small city setting. It has a real community feeling. I also love its natural setting, a city surrounded by charming small towns as well as countless forests, trails, bodies of water...”, Respondent.

“...My family came to Peterborough in 1848 so my roots are here. I live in my grandparents home. I love the variety of activities and events for seniors. We have a vibrant downtown, heritage buildings, excellent reuse of buildings for housing.” Respondent.
What people said they will need in order to stay in the community as they age:

Respondents identified that Peterborough will need a continuum of services ranging from affordable housing options with supports. They reflected on the increasing need of transportation options as more and more seniors will not be able to drive. However, they also envisioned a community that is walkable and built on neighbourhood hubs where services can be accessed. These services include: grocery stores, libraries and health and wellness supports.

“Tomorrow’s seniors aren’t the same as today’s. Boomers won’t want “seniors” programs. They will want a vibrant, active, exciting community that has participation from all ages.”, Respondent.
**Recommendations**

For many of the proposed initiatives, there will need to be continued dialogue amongst organizations designed and committed to community change. Development of this innovative community will require continued dialogue and policy realignment.

Based on the input of participants in the survey, discussions with the Aging Workforce Committee of the Workforce Development Board and the collaborative wisdom of members of the Seniors Network Planning Table, the following recommendations are provided as direction for our community’s decision makers at the local, provincial and federal levels. Specifics of the timeframe and responsibilities for moving the recommendations forward will be championed by members of the Seniors Network Planning Table and community agencies/partners (including but not limited to the faith community, educational community, business community) already invested in planning for an age-friendly community:

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<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
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<th>Local Partners to move this forward</th>
<th>Regional/Provincial Partners to move this forward</th>
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| Community & health services                | Develop an enhanced continuum of health and social services thus negating the need for wait lists.  
**This will require:** Community consultations, policy change and funding enhancement. | • Supportive Housing Network  
• Supply Committee of Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC)  
• Local Dementia Network  
• Local Acquired Brain Injury Network  
• Abuse Prevention of Older Adults Network (APOAN) | • Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)  
• Partners in Aging  
• Central East Dementia Network  
• Regional Central East Acquired Brain Injury Network |
| Social participation Housing Community & health services | Plan new neighbourhoods and retrofit existing ones to incorporate the development of service hubs (which should include but not be limited to: health and social service offices, specifically Family Health Teams, cultural centres for meetings, library services and social events, food/small retail stores.)  
This will require: a redesign of | • City and County Councils and their planning departments  
• Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network  
• Municipal transportation departments  
• Local business community | • Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)  
• Provincial ministries as appropriate |
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| Transportation | communities, an innovative approach from developers, a realignment of existing funding/resources, and a commitment from community decision makers to this new vision of community. | • Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation  
• Primary Health Care Services of Peterborough |  |
| Social participation | Undertake an Asset Mapping process to plan these proposed service hubs re mapping location of seniors centres, existing housing projects.  
This will require: a continuation of the existing Asset Mapping process and the funding commitment/resources allocated. | • City and County planning departments and Social Services department  
• Peterborough Social Planning Council (PSPC) |  |
| Housing Community & health services | Develop planning guidelines, principles and formula that support the development of neighbourhood hubs and promotes the age-friendly community.  
This will require: a redesign of communities, an innovative approach from developers, a realignment of existing funding/resources, and a commitment from community decision makers to this new vision of community. | • City and county planning departments  
• Supply committee of AHAC  
• Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network | • Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) |
| Social participation | Support the ‘Assisted Living Policy for High Risk Seniors’ which encourages the development of the hub model of service delivery  
Supportive Housing Network  
Supply Committee of Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC)  
Abuse Prevention of Older Adults Network (APOAN) |  | • Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) |
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<td>Respect &amp; social inclusion</td>
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<td>Increase the funding for the hub model of service delivery in Peterborough City and County</td>
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<td>• Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network</td>
<td>• Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)</td>
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<td>This will require: funding and resources</td>
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<td>• Supply Committee of Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC)</td>
<td>• Ministry of Health &amp; Long-term care</td>
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>Explore the role of the private sector in the development of an enhanced service system of housing and support services</td>
<td>• Supportive Housing Network</td>
<td>• Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)</td>
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<td>Community &amp; health services</td>
<td>This will require: community development and literacy training around responding to emerging local trends and demands.</td>
<td>• Supply Committee of Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC)</td>
<td>• Partners in Aging</td>
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<td>Respect &amp; social inclusion</td>
<td>Increase the marketing of existing services and events.</td>
<td>• City of Peterborough's website</td>
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<td>This will require: literacy training around how to better access and use services</td>
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<td>• Seniors Network Planning Table</td>
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<td>Social participation</td>
<td>Continue to educate and inform the local member of parliament, the LHIN and the provincial ministries of the increasing service needs of an aging Peterborough and the uniqueness of this rural/urban community.</td>
<td>• City and County of Peterborough and the Seniors Planning Table</td>
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| Social participation Respect & social inclusion Community & health services | Advocate for the need for more community services to help people ‘age in place’, thus supporting the community-based model rather than the facility model of care. This will require: a realignment of funding models and commitment for change | • Supportive Housing Network  
• Supply Committee of Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC)  
• Partners in Aging  
• Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network  
• Supply Committee of Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC)  
• Abuse Prevention of Older Adults Network (APOAN) | • Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) |
| Social participation Respect & social inclusion Community & health services | Explore the use of schools (where there is low enrolment) to develop intergenerational service hubs. This will require: community development and commitment for change | • Boards of Education  
• City and County of Peterborough and the Seniors Planning Table  
• Peterborough Social Planning Council  
• Children’s Planning Tables – including Best Start Network | • Boards of Education  
• Appropriate ministries |
| Social participation Respect & social inclusion Community & health services | Share the results of this study/survey with the boards of education and children’s planning tables and event planning groups to promote the need for age-friendly community initiatives. This will require: community development and commitment for change | • Peterborough Social Planning Council  
• City of Peterborough’s Recreation Department |  |
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<td>Housing</td>
<td>Support the directions of the ‘Access to Sustainable Services Report and Recommendations’ to increase funding for supportive housing initiatives. This will require: funding</td>
<td>• City and County of Peterborough and the Seniors Planning Table</td>
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<td>• Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and its Housing Supply committee</td>
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<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Include transportation services as part of any adult-day program. This will require: funding</td>
<td>• Council for Persons With Disabilities</td>
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<td>• Local transportation committees</td>
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<td>Social participation</td>
<td>Increase social capital by promoting intergenerational living in our community. This will require: Community development and literacy training</td>
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| Housing Community & health services | Explore the conversion of under-utilized malls for seniors’ apartments built on a service hub model. This will require: policy change and a commitment to this new vision of housing and service delivery | • City planning departments  
• Private sector partnerships |                                                 |
| Social participation Respect & social inclusion | Promote the requirement for an accessible community which includes both public and private buildings and areas  
This will require: policy change and adherence to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) | • Council for Persons with Disabilities  
• City and County planning and building departments  
• Downtown Business improvement Associations (DBIA) and the Chamber of Commerce  
• Council for Persons With Disabilities | • Provincial ministries |
| Social participation Respect & social inclusion | Increase the number of outdoor benches in communities.  
Promote/market the concept of ‘age-friendly businesses’ with messaging on these benches.  
This will require: literacy training, funding/resources | • City and County of Peterborough as well as lower tier municipalities  
• Trent Centre for Community Based Education & Fleming College |                                                 |
| Social participation Respect & social inclusion | Develop a program and marketing strategy to award businesses that are ‘age-friendly’  
Flaunt your Seniority approach and positive branding of seniors.  
(potential tag lines could be” | • Downtown Business improvement Associations (DBIA)  
• the Chamber of Commerce |                                                 |
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<td>Civic participation and employment for an older population</td>
<td>Flaulty your Seniority”, “in the fall of your life”) This will require: literacy training, innovative partnerships with post-secondary institutions in our community. <strong>Trent Centre for Community Based Education &amp; Fleming College</strong>  <strong>Council for Persons With Disabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation (GPAEDC)</strong>  <strong>Work Force Development Board</strong>  <strong>Chamber of Commerce</strong>  <strong>COIN</strong>  <strong>Community Futures</strong>  <strong>Northern Lights</strong></td>
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<td>Civic participation and employment for an older population</td>
<td>Increase entrepreneurial opportunities by providing loans and increased awareness about what is available, Develop a discussion series to promote entrepreneurial opportunities. Hold the discussions in the workplace. Develop an entrepreneurial culture and effective programs to promote entrepreneurism. This will require: funding</td>
<td><strong>Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation (GPAEDC)</strong>  <strong>Work Force Development Board</strong>  <strong>Chamber of Commerce</strong>  <strong>COIN</strong>  <strong>Community Futures</strong>  <strong>Northern Lights</strong></td>
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“We need a community-based, four-pillar (i.e. social, environmental, cultural and economic) regional strategy that is accessibly and effectively monitored and adapted...”, Respondent.

“Wow, makes me anxious to get to 65 when I’ll have all kinds of activities to do. Hope that society enables me to actually reach 65 by providing adequate medical facilities and practitioners in the City”, Respondent.