

2018 York Region Seniors Strategy Performance Update

Purpose

This attachment provides an update on the implementation of the York Region Seniors Strategy.

Background

The York Region Seniors Strategy guides planning for meeting seniors' needs

To respond to the growth in York Region's senior' population, Regional Council approved the York Region Seniors Strategy in [November 2016](#). This strategy sets the course for action to best support the aging population over the next 10 to 20 years.

The Strategy identifies actions and areas for advocacy across four result areas to support seniors to age in place:

1. **Balancing the needs of seniors with all residents:** The Region strives for fair access for people in all age groups to programs and services by using assets and income to determine eligibility, rather than age, to target subsidies to those that need it the most.
2. **Keeping seniors healthier, longer:** Programs and services are putting a greater focus on prevention and education, to provide seniors with programs and information to help them make healthy choices and offset some of the risks associated with aging.
3. **Supporting age friendly, complete communities:** With a focus on built form, age friendly complete communities are places where everyone, regardless of age can thrive. Areas to address include affordable housing options, a variety of transportation options and access to better integrated services such as hubs.
4. **Connect seniors and caregivers to the right programs and services at the right time:** Seniors and their caregivers need to know what supports are available, where and how to access information and who to ask for help – reducing potentially avoidable, non-emergency calls to 911. This will help seniors and caregivers navigate the system to find the services they need more easily.

York Region's seniors are living longer and placing increased demands on limited resources

Seniors today, can expect to live well beyond the normal retirement age, creating a cohort comprised of both older and younger seniors. The diversity in age contributes to the complexity of planning for seniors. Seniors under the age of 75 are generally healthier and wealthier than older seniors and may be engaged in a caregiving role. Older seniors (75 years +) are more

likely to experience health and mobility issues that affect their ability to manage activities of daily living, are at an increased risk of falling, and more likely to require supports. As the number of older seniors continues to grow, the implications for programs and services will increase without the right actions. Growth in the number of seniors aged 75 and beyond will lead to more demand for Regional programs and services such as Paramedic Services, Long-Term Care and Housing Services.

Seniors, caregivers and staff have identified system navigation as a top issue

Seniors routinely express difficulty and frustration in navigating an increasingly complex and siloed federal, provincial and municipal government service system. Programs and services for seniors are delivered across branches and departments that have historically worked as separate areas. Innovative solutions and new ways of delivering services are necessary to support the changing needs of seniors.

Description of Current Program

Project oversight is provided by the Seniors Strategy Staff Team, led by Co-Chairs from Transportation Services and Community and Health Services.

Collaboration is fundamental to finding the right solutions to support seniors

To successfully advance the four result areas set out in the Seniors Strategy, contributions are required from across the corporation. Priorities related to supporting seniors have been built into a number of corporate plans including:

- 2019 to 2023 Corporate Strategic Plan
- Municipal Comprehensive Review
- Updated, York Region Housing and Homelessness Plan
- Community and Health Services, Integrated Human Services Plan

The Region in partnership with other stakeholders, leverages opportunities to advocate for supports to seniors

York Region is one of many players within the complex system of programs that serve seniors. Involvement of both internal and external expertise including all levels of government and community organizations have a role to play in developing solutions that will respond to seniors needs.

The Region continues to leverage opportunities to participate in community roundtables about seniors, share information about the Seniors Strategy with local MPs and MPPs, and provided a submission which highlighted key directions in the Seniors Strategy to the Province in response to their consultation survey on an Ontario Senior's Strategy.

Annual Progress Update

Implementation is well underway across the four result areas

Implementation actions were assigned to one of two phases:

- Phase 1: 2017-2019 – identified actions that build on the work already underway or planned
- Phase 2: 2020-2022 – identified actions that are more complex that require more time or build on the completion of Phase 1 actions

Integrated project teams are making progress in each of the four result areas of the Seniors Strategy. 81% of the actions slated for Phase 1 have been completed with the remaining well underway. Through a collaborative funding application to the province, the Region received \$95,000 from the provincial Seniors Community Grant for four initiatives to keep seniors healthier longer. Accomplishments achieved with this funding and other initiatives completed in Phase 1 are identified in Table 1. These achievements are a result of collaborative efforts across the organization and with local municipal and community partners.

**Table 1
Actions Implemented and Completed in Phase 1**

Initiative	Results
Result Area 1: Balancing the needs of seniors with all residents	
<p>Income and Asset Limits Established for Subsidized Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to eligibility criteria for subsidized housing implemented by introducing income and asset limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the Region’s limited supply of affordable rental housing is accessible to those most in need • Restricts households with high incomes and/or assets from qualifying for subsidized. 440 new and existing applicants have been removed from the list to date
Result Area 2: Keeping seniors healthier, longer	
<p>Made in York Region Senior Profiles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded through provincial Seniors Community Grant • Data used from Regional programs and Environics Analytics to group seniors in York 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The profiles capture 94% of 185,000 York Region seniors • Seven profiles provide a better understanding of York Region seniors and their unique needs. Each profile is likely to have similar needs for programs and

Initiative	Results
<p>Region by common features or characteristics including vulnerabilities such as– social isolation, financial vulnerabilities, mental health, chronic disease, physical limitations and digital literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A co-design process included engaging more than 50 subject matter experts from across the corporation, local municipalities, funders and organizations serving seniors who were consulted to inform development of profiles 	<p>services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide insights into neighbourhoods and lifestyles of seniors who are doing well and seniors who may need more support • Provide a holistic picture of similar characteristics. The combination of characteristics associated with each profile provides insights to plan services better. For example, seniors who are financially vulnerable are more likely to have mental health and physical limitations • Insights assist with matching and connecting seniors to the right programs (prevention, education, intervention) i.e. making sure those seniors who are doing well are connected to recreation to keep them healthy • The profiles support public education with insights on how to reach seniors for outreach, marketing and message formation • Sharing the profiles with community organizations that serve seniors, local municipalities and Ontario Health Teams to support community based planning for seniors
<p>Top Programs and Services for Seniors to Age in Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded through provincial Seniors Community Grant • Conducted a needs assessment with seniors and organizations that serve seniors to understand the top ten programs and services required by seniors to age in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight engagement sessions with 174 attendees including; seniors, York Region staff, local municipal staff and organizations serving seniors (CHATS, Carefirst) • Top programs and services seniors identified include; fitness classes, sports programs, personal care, affordable housing, medical care (foot care, physio, vision, hearing, dental) snow removal, general transportation, housekeeping, social and cultural clubs, computer/technology support • Knowledge will be shared through our networks within the corporation as well as with the broader community including organizations that serve seniors, local

Initiative	Results
	<p>municipalities, Ontario Health Teams to help ensure the top programs and services are available in York Region, listed in call centre inventories (i.e. Findhelp/211) and that referrals are made to them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further research will identify gaps related to the availability of the programs and services in York Region and the capacity within the system to deliver those programs and services (i.e., location, program locations, waitlists)
<p>Nature's Classroom for Seniors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded through provincial Seniors Community Grant • Develop programming geared specifically for seniors to the York Region Forestry Nature's Classroom program started in 2001 • Collaborated with subject matter experts from Public Health, Housing Services, Paramedic and Seniors Services and York Region Transit to contribute to the development of the program including cross promotion of messages about the importance of daily exercise to reduce fall risks and increase knowledge on physical activity and nutrition • The program also includes a presentation on York Region's door-to-door, shared ride, accessible public transit service for people with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held seven pilot Nature's Classroom programs with 121 senior participants. 66% of the respondents said it was their first time visiting the York Regional Forest • Increased seniors' physical activity by walking in nature and awareness of the benefits of nature • Additional benefits include: social networking opportunities, awareness of other York Region programs and services for seniors and connections to local accessible trails. 82% of seniors surveyed agreed they were more informed as to the resources and assistance available for seniors. • Seniors indicated improved knowledge about healthy eating and benefits of being in nature. Feedback surveys indicated a 9% increase in level of knowledge on making healthy eating choices. In addition 77% of the feedback surveys indicated they would apply what was learned to their daily routine. • Program highlighted by the Province AODA Tool Box as an example of how various municipalities have provided inclusive programs and activities
<p>Connecting Caregivers Workshop in a Box</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded through provincial Seniors Community Grant • Toolkit of resources developed to expand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to caregivers reduces social isolation, helps caregivers feel connected and helps caregivers to access resources they may not otherwise have opportunity

Initiative	Results
<p>outreach to caregivers and seniors in the community. Toolkit includes key presentations from workshop, facilitator guide, advertisement materials, supplementary resources, and presentation evaluation survey</p>	<p>to access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten presentations held in partnership with organizations serving seniors for example; Alzheimer Society York Region, Unionville Home Society, Aurora Seniors Centre, Lakeside Housing reaching an additional 228 York Region seniors/caregivers an additional 78 kits were distributed to community agencies and individuals on request • Kits continue to be promoted
<p>Result Area 3: Supporting age friendly, complete communities</p>	
<p>Unionville Seniors Hub Needs Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unionville Seniors Hub project is a key activity in 2019-2023 Corporate Strategic Plan, and is being led by a cross-departmental working group • Initial needs assessment identified potential programs and services to be offered in the future Unionville Seniors Hub • Engaged seniors and caregivers, York Region staff, local municipal staff, funders and community organizations serving seniors for their input 	<p>Obtained recommendations for potential programs and services and operational considerations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging 456 participants through online and paper survey, partner panels, pop up sessions at community centres, focus groups, and visioning session on service needs. Residents told us they would like to see a range of medical services and recreational services as well as guidance to navigate the complicated system • Conducting best practice review of hub models across the Province <p>Recommendations include adopting a Hub model that includes both health and wellness as well as recreational programs supported by a strong network of community linkages</p>
<p>Shaping the Future: Building Complete Communities in York Region and education document on senior-friendly housing options</p> <p>Collaboratively with Long Range Planning, Public Health and Strategies and Partnerships developed Shaping the Future: Building Complete Communities in York Region and an education document on options for built form adaptations to create more senior friendly housing as part of the Municipal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultations and engagement is an important part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review process to inform the update of the Regional Official Plan policies • In addition to thinking about Complete Communities, the education document reviews types of senior- friendly housing options to raise awareness that both the type of community and type of home will have a significant impact on quality of life

Initiative	Results
Comprehensive Review process	especially as you age
Result Area 4: Connecting seniors and caregivers to the right programs and services at the right times	
<p>Findhelp Information Services Data Inventory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 2019 Regional Council approved working with Findhelp Information Services – one of the regional service providers for 211 – to make navigating programs and services in York Region easier and provide access to accurate program and service information to anyone in the community Finalized an agreement between the Region and Findhelp to collect and maintain the Region’s human services data. The agreement will also provide the Region with access to data to create tools for target audiences such as seniors Work with others – service providers, funders and information referrers – to input their program and service information in Findhelp to develop one reliable, comprehensive source of information for seniors and caregivers, and staff to find the programs and services they need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findhelp database now includes the Region’s human service program and service data Access York and municipal contact centres can access the Findhelp database to enhance the referral process by providing referrals to other programs and services beyond their own Customized reports are available from Findhelp about the types of calls for services received. This helps to identify community needs to inform service planning Community agencies funded by Community Investment Fund and United Way are required to submit information on their programs and services to Findhelp database. This contributes to improving “completeness” of database
<p>Personal Medical Information Kits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funded through provincial Seniors Community Grant Developed the Personal Medical Information Kit based on a pilot in 2016. The kit helps seniors and caregivers to organize their healthcare information and then post it on the refrigerator in case of a medical emergency Kits were launched at Connecting Caregivers Workshop in June 2018, and then distributed to local municipalities and various senior organizations. Kits are also available through Access York and continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors/caregivers are better prepared for medical emergencies, with over 10,000 Personal Medical Information Kits distributed Frontline paramedics provide onsite care and assessment during medical emergencies. 911 calls can be assisted through a streamlined approach when a patient’s personal medical information is organized. 81% of paramedics surveyed reported that they believe the personal medical information kits are a benefit to their patient care and interactions

Initiative	Results
<p>to be distributed to seniors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education sessions held with frontline paramedic staff 	

The number of seniors in York Region is growing and they are living longer, placing more demands on the Region’s programs and services

Continued implementation of the Seniors Strategy is critical to maintain their sustainability. In April 2019, the York Region Seniors Strategy team was transitioned from the Strategies and Partnerships Branch to the Paramedics and Seniors Services Branch, joining the Seniors Services Division. By working in closer alignment with other Seniors Services program areas, the York Region Seniors Strategy is better positioned to enable collaboration, engagement and synergies between and among the many program areas across the corporation that deliver programs and services to seniors.

Financial Considerations

Implementation of the York Region Seniors Strategy is funded through existing departmental budgets.

In addition, the Region successfully applied for a \$95,000 provincial Seniors Community Grant in 2018, which was used to implement some of the projects identified in Table 1.

The Region will continue to seek opportunities and leverage needed investments through advocacy efforts both provincially and federally to support the Strategy’s directions. In June 2019 a collaborative application was submitted to the 2019 call by the provincial Seniors Community Grant program, the results will be released in the fall.

Conclusion

The Seniors Strategy provides a coordinated, collaborative corporate response to address the needs of seniors. It identifies where the Region will take strategic actions and where to advocate for others to take action.

The work under the Seniors Strategy has focused on making the right connections with staff and organizations that serve seniors to identify alignments, work together to improve the system and sharing what has been learned. Significant progress has been made with the implementation of Phase 1 actions, working collaboratively with seniors/caregivers, local municipalities, community organizations that serve seniors and funders resulting in many new partnerships. York Region continues to collaborate with and engage the local municipalities and others who serve seniors

to ensure their expertise is reflected in the actions underway. The Region is well positioned to continue to advocate with other levels of government to either partner with the Region or to make their own investments in programs and services required by York Region seniors to age in place and help them stay healthier for longer.

A review of the Seniors Strategy is planned for 2020 to evaluate existing work, leverage new partnerships that have been built and make any necessary adjustments to ensure the direction is still current. Many changes are underway in the provincial health care system. Ontario Health Team applications have identified seniors as a year one target population and the current advocacy areas identified in the Seniors Strategy are consistent with the new directions from the province.

Staff will keep Council informed as more information becomes available from the province regarding additional opportunities that align with what is underway or planned for the York Region Seniors Strategy.

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