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## **Preliminary Age Friendly Community Summit Report**

### **Gathering #1 – Outdoor Spaces And Buildings**

**May 29, 2015 – Brant Sports Complex**

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- Canadian Federation of University Women  
Brantford Advocacy Standing Committee Report 7,8



**PRELIMINARY AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SUMMIT REPORT  
GATHERING #1 – OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS  
May 29, 2015 – Brant Sports Complex**

**PARTICIPANTS**

**City of Brantford**

**Organizations** (Participants live in City)

- Brant County Health Unit
- Alzheimer Society
- Seasons Retirement Home
- City Parks and Recreation
- Seniors Resource Centre
- CARP Chapter
- Eastward Community Hub

**Retirees 21**

**Why they Attended**

- Bicycling concerns
- Walkability suggestions
- Integration of seniors into neighbourhood hubs
- Signage Recommendations
- Electric scooters concerns/suggestions
- Rest spots in shade in city parks

**Other** – Ontario Seniors Secretariat

**County of Brant**

**Organizations** (Participants live in County)

- Brant County Health Unit
- County of Brant – 3 staff
- John Noble Home
- Grand River Community Health Centre
- Business - Homeinstead
- County Councillor

**Retirees – 14** (Paris, St. George, Mt. Pleasant)

**Why They Attended**

- Safe Environment Priorities
- Curbs
- Accessible doors/entrances
- Sidewalks
- Roadways/walkways
- Health/Fitness

**Other** – 1 from Ohsweken

**SUMMARY**

Participants sat at tables indicative of where they lived. There were four City and three County tables. Discussion was facilitated by Core Planning Committee Members and **focused on identifying opportunities to maximize “age-friendly” planning into opportunities for enhancing the effective use of Outdoor Spaces and Buildings by all ages.** Participants were encouraged to think “outside of the box”.

The following concerns, together with their suggestions and/or recommendations, were reported for consideration by the municipalities and/or community organizations. Of interest is that many of the suggestions can apply to all of the various aspects of outdoor spaces and buildings. *Continued.....*

**GREEN SPACES**

**ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY**

**BENEFITS**

**Community Gardens**

- Facilitate Intergenerational Programmng
- Use of extra land in parks/municipal grounds
- Provide Food to gardeners and to community
- Offer food preparation workshops

- Older adults teaching younger generations
- Provides social opportunities for isolated persons
- Ensures healthy food for many
- Ensures safe cooking and storage

**Walkability**

- Sidewalks should be standardized
- Remove all cobblestone sidewalks
- Accessible walking spaces
- Rural areas to consider pedestrian/bicycle needs
- Provide Pedestrian Crossings where appropriate
- Provide Lighting on Trails
- Provide plastic bag dispenser/garbage cans for animal waste
- Tree Trimming to be maintained over paths, streets
- Promote Paved sections of trails

- To prevent falls
- To ensure safety and prevent falls/twisted ankles
- Promotes healthy living through exercise
- To ensure safe options for other than drivers
- To reduce risk of injury
- To reduce misuse and promote safety
- To promote cleanliness on trails/streets
- To prevent head/facial injuries
- To increase usage

**Municipal Parks**

- Paved walkable paths
- Shady Rest Spots
- Activity Spaces – Playgrounds for Children
  - Examples: - Chess/Checkers Play area
  - Tai Chi Area
  - Picnic Area
  - Water Availability
- Public Washrooms – Open and Accessible
- Well placed shelters
- Clear Directional Signage/Information
- Partner with Community Organizations
- Post rules for bicycles/scooters

- To ensure safe walking-attract walking groups
- To encourage all ages to visit – can rest while there
- Something for everyone
  
- Available during park hours/visits
- To protect against weather
- Offers and promotes choices
- Share the Cost of enhancements
- Ensure safety for all

- If higher elevations, provide safe steps/ramps and railings
- Provide bicycle lanes and stands
- Implement accessibility standards

## Gathering #1 Preliminary Report

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- To provide safe access for all ages
- To encourage usage by cyclists
- To encourage social participation

### ROADS/STREETS/SIDEWALKS

#### ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY

#### Sidewalks (also see Green Spaces)

- Sidewalks should be standardized in width and surface
- Remove all cobblestone sidewalks
- Accessible walking spaces
- Rural areas to consider pedestrian/bicycle needs
- Provide Pedestrian Crossings where appropriate
- Tree Trimming to be maintained over streets
- Provide benches in busy areas
- Review snow and ice removal policies
- Provide sidewalks in all residential areas

#### Traffic

- County to move gravel pit entrances
- More advanced left turn green arrows at busy intersections
- Allow minimum of 15 seconds for Pedestrian cross lights
- Left and right turn lanes at busy intersections
- License Scooter Drivers
- Develop like rules of the road for scooters/bicycles
- Ensure active transportation routes in new developments
- Enforce speed limits
- Install pedestrian cross walk light at Beckett Building

#### Parking

- Offer alternate sizes of handicap parking spaces
  - wide for unloading assistive devices or strollers
  - normal for other mobility issues
- Correct short elevated handicap parking at Brant Sports Complex
- Do away with angular parking
- Implement Provincial Legislation along with AODA legislation
- Use of Transponder to access handicap spaces

#### Roads/Streets

#### BENEFITS

- To prevent falls
- To ensure safety and prevent falls/twisted ankles
- Promotes healthy living through exercise
- To ensure safe options for other than drivers
- To reduce risk of injury
- To prevent head/facial injuries
- To provide rest stops
- To promote accessibility and prevent falls
- To reduce risk of injury

- To reduce dust and improve residential air quality
- To promote accident prevention
- To promote safe crossing at lights
- To facilitate traffic flow
- To ensure safety rules for all drivers
- To prevent accidents and promote safety
- To facilitate traffic flow to amenities
- To promote safety and prevent accidents
- To ensure safe crossing

- To facilitate access to streets, buildings, etc.

- To remove dangerous angle for unloading devices
- To eliminate backing out into traffic
- Eliminate confusion re different municipal by-laws
- Ensures access to those who need it

- Incorporate bicycle/scooter lanes on all roads/streets
- Install appropriate lighting in all residential areas
- Bigger, more visible street signs at intersections

**Gathering #1 Preliminary Report**

**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

- To take off sidewalks and promote safety on roads
- For safe walking at night
- To enhance readability without stopping traffic

**ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY**

**PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

**BENEFITS**

**Accessibility**

- Standardize** National Building Codes – all buildings, all provinces  
i.e. entrances, ramps, doors, stairs, railings, elevators,  
washrooms -to accommodate wheelchairs AND scooters
- Public Service Buildings close to transit options
- All doors to be wide, have automatic option and lever handles
- Well placed external and internal lighting
- Arenas, etc. – railings for aisles in order to access seats
- Ramp option to entrances and parking lots with a step or steps
- Entrances with two doors should both open in the same direction
- One button for automatic opening of two sets of doors with time  
to access both doors before they close
- Place directional signage at level for all to view (youth,  
wheel chairs, normal height)
- Encourage architects, engineers, builders to involve users in  
design processes
- Place parking identifiers on posts in municipal parking lots
- First aid station with defibulator and proper signage
- Appropriate Garbage collection and building maintenance
- Provide rest areas in buildings and malls

- Efficiency for architects, builders, etc.
- Reduced costs
- Comfort for all ages
- Accessible to non-drivers
- Provides ease of access for all ages
- To facilitate safe access
- To prevent falls
- Accessible to all
- To prevent isolation between the doors
- Provides safe entrance
- Assists in reaching the right location
- To gain knowledge from experience and incorporate  
it into the design
- To help locate vehicles
- In case of emergency
- Maintain cleanliness and prevent illness
- To encourage participation and shopping

**Public Washrooms** (in buildings, parks and downtown)

- Open to Public
- Maintained cleanliness
- Well lit
- Different Height toilets/sinks
- Minimum of one Handicap Stall to handle scooter/chair
- Lever Door Handles with push locks on easy open doors
- Emergency Call Button
- Automated flush toilets
- Grab bars in all stalls

- Accessible when needed
- Prevent illness
- To accommodate children and older adults
- To provide safety and privacy
- For easy opening and confidence in safety
- In case of emergency
- Ensures flushing
- Provides a safety option

-Institute a "co-gender" option separate from the other stalls

-To assist family members i.e.children/spouse

## Gathering #1 Preliminary Report

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

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### ISSUE/OPPORTUNITY

### SERVICES

### BENEFITS

#### Health and Social Services

- Most not available in County and requires transportation to City
  - Suggestion was made re working with School Boards to utilize school buses when not in use
- All health care professionals should have "age-friendly" access
- Support services to assist people to "age" in their homes
  
- Mobile health services to County locations

- Would provide option to those without cars or subsidies for disabilities
  
- Equity in patient service
- Reduction in health service cost and development of self-confidence in personal living needs
- Could address some of the transportation problems

#### Miscellaneous

- Recruit Youth as volunteers for organizations serving seniors
- Teach youth to volunteer every year.....not just in Grade 9
- Customer Service Sensitivity Training re dealing with aging adults
- Orientation to hearing, sight, language differences
  
- Involve youth in planning intergenerational services
  
- Signage re available pay phone
- Public services and businesses should have a work station assigned to people in wheel chairs
- Education systems should include communication skills re the language most effective in dealing with older adults
- Encourage Secondary school system to direct youth to community volunteer hours with seniors
- Arm chairs in waiting rooms, lounges, etc.
- Address Numbers on Buildings need to be more visible
- Increase Police presence in public areas
- Provide Plugs to recharge scooters in public spaces
- Provide shelters in outdoor public spaces
- Develop "panic button" alarm system for public spaces
- Outdoor/indoor rest areas in all public spaces

- Promotes awareness and effective communication
- Provides life experience as they mature
- Respect and courtesy results in the same in return
- Improves communication and facilitates problem solving
- Creates awareness of all ages and positively impacts the results of future planning
- For those without cell phone
- Provides confidence and comfort to clients
  
- Prepares youth for the workplace and community life
- Practical experience heightens awareness in preparation for their future
- So clients can "push" themselves out of them
- To assist in locating them
- To ensure safety
- To encourage use by persons with scooters
- To protect against, sun, snow, wind, rain
- Timely response from police, fire, security, etc.
- Encourages use and provides for social participation

-Provide bicycle stands in public areas

-Encourages social participation

**SOME SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE WITH THE REQUEST THAT THEY BE INCLUDED IN THE PRELIMINARY -- PLEASE SEE THE FOLLOWING**

**Gathering #1 Preliminary Report**

**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

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**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS BY TABLE PARTICIPANTS**

- 1) Develop a Handbook for Scooter Drivers and distribute it to scooter sales representatives, doctors' offices, etc.  
(i.e.) Where Should I Drive?  
When is it OK to be on the road? Sidewalk?  
Where should I park?  
How do I signal?
- 2) Offer Scooter safety classes – similar to bicycle classes
- 3) Encourage operators of large parking lots to create more drive/through space (i.e. single rows)
- 4) Encourage operators of large parking lots to use more visible identifiers on lamp posts
- 5) Implement a provincial graduated driver's license (i.e. a reduction in privileges with age as no driving on 400 series highways, no driving after dark, etc. There are different levels for new drivers.....perhaps it would be helpful to have different levels as people age.
- 6) Provide optional selection of chairs for different heights of patrons – and some with arms
- 7) Provide a ramp at entrances where a step is required to enter

**INDEPENDENT REPORT  
CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN  
BRANTFORD ADVOCACY STANDING COMMITTEE**

Several members of the Brantford Chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women were in attendance. Two members of the Brantford Advocacy Standing Committee prepared a report summarizing their understanding of the results. The following is a summary of the recommendations they heard:

**BRANTFORD CFUW BRANTFORD ADVOCACY STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT****1) Green Spaces and Walkways:**

- a) Work with Parks and Recreation (P&R) to identify sections of the 69-km trail and local parks that can be made accessible to people with disabilities, including accommodating mobility, vision, and hearing disabilities; and to develop an implementation plan with dates and financial commitments
    - i) plan to include:
      - (1) easy access to the designated park/trail from parking areas
      - (2) communication process for publishing information about the level of accessibility for the designated trails/parks on public signage, brochures, website, and other methods of communicating to the public
      - (3) places to “revitalize”. (Some considerations for these revitalization areas include shade such as trees and pergolas; water fountains, garbage cans, and benches. It would be appropriate to consider a ‘first aid kit’ station that could include defibrillator, bandages; and alarm buttons along the trail.)
      - (4) consideration for larger and more frequent signage that is visible and in keeping with a natural environment.
    - ii) Should budget become an issue, the municipalities should explore partnering with service clubs to raise funds for public washrooms, benches, garbage cans, increased lighting, and larger signage in these designated areas
- Work with the municipalities to create community gardens that provide opportunities for elders who no longer own property to create gardens. Encourage a buddy system that integrates elders with youth and young families for the purpose of transferring knowledge, support with workload, and opportunities for connection and social interaction.

**2) Streets and Walkways:** Each municipality to:

- a) identify the key cross-walks in the city for people with disabilities and make accommodations to increase the time to get across the street
- b) set standardized steps at 4" and ramps at current GOC standard incline to accommodate mobility issues; and flat, ground-level entrances to buildings
- c) enhance the automatic doors so they open both sets of doors, and make the buttons easier to access
- d) have a process for citizens to report sidewalks and brickwork that are uneven or have heaved that augments their continual monitoring system; and implement a triage process to ensure access is available to key medical and governmental buildings
- e) implement a process for developing larger print on signs and larger numbers on buildings that enhance the look of our city and townships
- f) ensure that public washrooms are open and available to the public
- g) identify key places for defibrillators, set them up and maintain them, and advertise these to the public



h) investigate the feasibility of a two tiered wheelchair parking system (e.g., blue for larger parking spaces to accommodate wheelchairs and lifts, and regular-sized parking spaces for people using walkers and accommodations that do not require additional space). It is also recommended that a transponder system be implemented for both tiers of wheelchair parking spaces so that a signal goes off if a car without accommodation parks illegally in one of these spots

**CFUW Brantford Advocacy Committee Report Continued**

i) implement a standard size for shoulders on the roadways and put signs up if a road does not yet comply in order to help people who are navigating these roads.

**3) Public Buildings:**

**a)** Each municipality to develop a plan and implement improvements in:

**i)** lighting, elevations of ramps and steps that are proactive in addressing accommodation

**ii)** green spaces/shade in parking lots and large paved areas (the example is the trees boulevards in the middle of parking lots in parts of the Europe and the USA)

**iii)** public buildings, banks, and other businesses to create a separate queuing system for people with disabilities that expedite serving people who require accommodation (lighting, seating, audio) or seniors who require more help so as not to delay people who are in a rush.

b) Municipalities to look at the Deaf-Blind Resource Centre in Paris, and integrate their excellent accommodations into new buildings and renovations. Some of the best ideas do not incur additional cost, e.g., to accommodate people with disabilities (including visual, spacial perceptions, and dementia), their floors have a border of a different color close to the wall, different colours of walls and floors - and different textures on hand rails to differentiate various hallways and sections and help people find their way. They have used floors that look like they are hardwood, so the effect is classy as well as being helpful.

**4) Services:**

a) Improve queue lines in public locations to accommodate GO-Go, Slow Go, and No Go customers. Accommodation could include distinct queues, or places for people to sit while waiting, and enhanced signage.

b) Actively engage with other organizations that operate in our communities, e.g., extending school bus service to people with disabilities.

c) Include 'walkability' into all new developments and retrofit wherever possible into existing communities. Groceries, dentists, medical centres, parks, coffee shops, community arenas, should be a hub for neighborhoods

d) Integrate seniors - align youth with community service goals in the high schools to help seniors with yard work or chores around the home

e) Increase alarm buttons, garbage cans, washrooms around the city

- f) license scooters and set standards for scooters, bikes, pedestrians, strollers, wheelchairs use sidewalks vs roads, and educate the population about who has access to what

With all the recommendations above, it is strongly urged that the MPP and MP work with governments to implement these processes across the provinces/territories and throughout Canada.