



# Age-Friendly Municipalities: Seizing the Opportunity in the Town of Fort Erie

By: Niagara Age-Friendly Community  
Network

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# Age-Friendly Fort Erie

## Overview of Presentation

1. Dawn of a “new age”
2. Seizing the “new age” opportunity for social and economic development
3. Being guided by the *Niagara Aging Strategy*
4. Possible Next Steps for an age-friendly Fort Erie

# Dawn of a “ New Age”

**Today’s “older adults” are different than  
yesteryear’s “seniors”**

Most of today’s older adults are increasingly

- well and active, living longer and healthier
- contributing to your community with expertise, life experience, and volunteer time
- providing valued support to their families
- consumers in the local economy
- donors to worthy causes

# Compelling Demographics

## **There are more older adults than ever before**

- Niagara has 18.8% of adults over 65 compared to Ontario with 14.2% \*
- Fort Erie has 19.9% of adults over 65

\*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2011

- The proportion of the Niagara Region population aged 55 years and older is forecast to increase from 27% in 2006 to 36% in 2031\*\*

\*\*Source: NIAGARA REGION AGE-SPECIFIC POPULATION FORECASTS BY AREA MUNICIPALITY  
December 2012, by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd.

# Niagara Demographics\*: 65+

NOTL – 25.6%

Port Colborne -21.9%

Pelham – 20.8%

**Fort Erie – 19.9%**

St. Catharines – 19.3%

Lincoln – 19.2%

**Niagara Region 18.8%**

Welland – 18.4 %

Niagara Falls – 17.9%

Grimsby – 16.8%

Wainfleet – 16.0%

Thorold – 15.3%

West Lincoln – 12.0%

\*Source: Statistics Canada Census of Population 2011

# Compelling Demographics (cont'd)

The largest percentage population increase in the 55+ category is expected to come from

1. the Region's 55-64 age group, driven by the aging of the Niagara's "**baby boom**" **population base (born between 1946 and 1964)** combined with
2. **positive net migration** to Niagara Region in this age group\*\*

\*\*Source: NIAGARA REGION AGE-SPECIFIC POPULATION FORECASTS BY AREA MUNICIPALITY December 2012, by Watson and Associates Economists Ltd.

# Compelling Local Actions

- “The biggest demographic wave since the postwar baby boom is about to break over Canada, and municipal governments are on the front line” (Canadian Federation of Municipalities)
- “Making cities and communities age-friendly is one of the most effective local policy approaches for responding to demographic aging” (World Health Organization (WHO))

# “Age-friendly”: Economic Opportunity

- Economically, younger generations no longer represent the biggest growth market
- Rather, baby boomers will be numerically superior over the coming decades and will also control the bulk of wealth and spending
- Boomer households (i.e. ages 50 to 69) spend 66% more on goods and services than millennial households (i.e. ages 15 to 34)\*

\*Environics Analytics



# “Age-friendly”: Economic Opportunity

- “For private businesses, the benefits of marketing and providing goods and services to this growing market are clear” (**Ontario Seniors Secretariat** )
- “Having one of the oldest populations in Niagara, combined with data that shows seniors have been picking up their spending levels in the past decade, creating an age-friendly business environment makes good business sense” (**Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce**)

# Seizing the Opportunity

**Accordingly, consider.....**

**Learning more about being age-friendly....**

- e.g. learn about the *Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan* and about the related social and economic opportunities

**Engaging and seeking input from older adults.....**

- e.g. Enhancing your Seniors Advisory Committee (7 other local municipalities now have an equivalent committee)

# *Niagara's Aging Strategy/Action Plan*

## **Backstory**

- 2 Ontario Trillium Foundation grants (\$290,000) to volunteer-led group 2009-2015
- Raised AFC awareness and fostered local action groups across Niagara
- Resultant Niagara AFC Network sustained the initiative and developed *Niagara Aging Strategy and Action Plan*

# Niagara Age-Friendly Network

## Partners

- Welland Rose City Seniors Foundation
- Welland Seniors Citizens Advisory Committee
- City of Welland Recreation and Culture
- Niagara Connects
- Niagara Region
- Niagara College
- Brock University



# Age-Friendly Community: Vision for Niagara

A caring community  
that optimizes opportunities for overall well being  
to enhance quality of life as people age



“A community for all ages”

# World Health Organization's 8 Age-Friendly Community Domains



# *Niagara Aging Strategy: What is it?*

**Four documents:** input from over 500 older adults and stakeholders from across Niagara. on needs, strategies and actions (e.g. recreation, housing, employment, transportation, health care etc.) for older adults who are:

- *'well & fit'* or
- *'need some help'* or
- *'need 24/7 care'*

# *Aging Strategy: Community's Goals*

1. Elevate the profile, level of **leadership and engagement** of seniors in the community
2. Facilitate an **active and positive lifestyle** for all seniors
3. Optimize the **health and wellness** of seniors
4. Improve access and utilization of **services and supports**
5. Improve and maintain a **supportive infrastructure**





# Fort Erie Focus Group

## **Selected ideas:**

- Preferred to “age at home” within Fort Erie, but need supports
- More accessible and affordable seniors housing
- Better transit –in town and inter-municipal, including access to hospitals

# Fort Erie Focus Group (Cont'd)

- More health services in the Town (e.g. doctors' clinics and specialists) to reduce out-of-town travel
- Make better use of closed schools (e.g. medical clinics, housing, multi-use centres, recreation, retail)
- Financial incentives to renovate homes to enable seniors to stay in own homes

# Seizing the “New Age” Opportunity

## **Consider these possible next steps....**

- Raising awareness of Age-Friendly Community (AFC) principles among management and staff
- Investing in easy-to-achieve items for all ages (e.g. larger font on road signs, more curb cuts, walking paths with park benches)
- Assigning a staff member as AFC champion to oversee your AFC strategy (e.g. beginning with researching what other municipalities are doing)

# Seizing the “New Age” Opportunity

(cont'd)

## **Consider these possible next steps ....**

- Developing a strategy for capitalizing on the social and economic capital of older adults
- Joining the WHO’s Age-Friendly Cities Network
- Enhancing your Seniors Advisory Committee to regularly provide an “age-friendly” lens for your municipality and community
- Requesting a staff report to Council on possible next steps for an age-friendly Fort Erie, including opportunities for provincial AFC grants



# Questions/Comments?

**For information and support:  
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