Methology

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Age Friendly to look at new and different ways to consult with older adults, community members, caregivers, and service providers. The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility’s Inclusive Community Grants funding helped to create an updated Community Action Plan with recommendations aimed at improving the lives of older adults in Thunder Bay.

Newspaper columns and articles in the Age Friendly Thunder Bay newsletter raised awareness of the work that was being initiated. Subsequent columns invited readers to participate in an online survey. The online survey was shared with Steering Committee members and community coalitions.

Presentations were made during several community coalition meetings, Steering Committee meetings and Executive Committee meetings. Interviews were held with key service providers as well.

Eventually in person consultation was possible towards the end of the project allowing older adults and caregivers to cast their vote on the recommendations they supported. The 2022 Health and Wellness Fair for Older Adults was held at the 55+ Centre and attended by over 450 people.

The Community Action Plan is investigating ways to adapt to virtual activities in a pandemic environment. It became quickly obvious that most Community Action Plan activities were suitable by virtual delivery. This lead to the development a strategy that includes providing access to digital devices, internet, and the digital literacy skills to create more opportunities for older adults to participate or access services virtually.