

Working Groups

The current Age Friendly working groups were developed in response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) framework for Age Friendly cities and the feedback from the 2017 Age Friendly Thunder Bay Community Action Plan. The WHO framework proposes eight interconnected domains that can help to identify and address barriers to the well-being and participation of older people.

These domains overlap and interact with each other. For example, respect is reflected in the accessibility of public buildings and spaces and in the range of opportunities that the city offers to older people for social participation, entertainment, volunteering or employment.

The lack of affordable public transport for example isolates older people who no longer drive in their homes and make participation in community life difficult, increasing the risk of isolation and loneliness. When transport is available and adapted to the needs of seniors, both in terms of scheduling and destinations, it enhances mobility and facilitates social participation and a sense of belonging in one's community.

It is equally important that older people continue to have a good reason to go out and participate. Cultural offers and entertainment that cater to the interests of older people, opportunities for volunteering or civic engagement contribute to a fulfilling and enjoyable older age.

The working groups facilitate a collaborative process among community members, community leaders and other key stakeholders to develop strategic directions for issues specifically surrounding aging at home, isolated adults and transportation.

Transportation Working Group

Action Plan Goal

- Provide the community with a regularly updated transportation guidebook for older adults Advocate for lower and/or free transit fares Advocate for walkability in the community
- Inform older adults of the Northern Travel Grant application process and support

How is the working group meeting these goals?

- Create a transportation guidebook and update with COVID information each year
- Work collectively with both the City and Thunder Bay Transit to create lower/free fares for seniors
- Create infographic for seniors re: How to Use Thunder Bay Transit
- Create an infographic for older adults: how to use Lift Work with the TBDHU and their walkability committee Work with City and Transit to create better walkability around and to and from bus stops
- Ensure and advocate for enough bus shelters and prioritize areas that have a high senior population
- Create an infographic of outdoor safety after snowfall Advocate for lights on bus shelters, sitting space at busstops, and accessible washrooms around the city
- Create an infographic to inform older adults about driving tests and other driving issues affecting older adults

What are the expected outcomes?

Better access to on-demand transportation could help older adults miss fewer medical appointments as well as reduce their social isolation to improve their overall health. While older adults can be willing, even enthusiastic novel technology adopters who are motivated to overcome barriers disrupting their own health, they needed education and support to be successful.

Isolated Adults Working Group

Workplan Goals

- Ensure older adults have access to snow removal during the winter months
- Ensure older adults have access to information
- Update the Age Friendly Thunder Bay website regularly
- Create a tablet loan program for older adults and provide internet access, so they are connected to community
- Create and disseminate quarterly newsletter for older adults
- Create a Tea Talks Program for older adults to gather in person
- Create alternate ways to disseminate information

How are these goals being met?

- Snow Angels program
- Age Friendly SHAW tv show
- Advocacy for 211 Ontario North
- Continue to update the website adding in information for isolated seniors
- Creation of tablet loan programs
- Continue to create a quarterly newsletter in print format to be delivered to isolated seniors
- Create tea talks modeled after the ones created by the GIANTS program
- Handouts
- Infographics

What are the expected outcomes?

Many interventions have been developed to combat loneliness and social isolation among older people. The individuality of the experience of loneliness and isolation means there should be a variety of interventions, resources, services and supports for older adults. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing loneliness or social isolation, and hence the need to tailor interventions to suit the needs of individuals, specific groups or the degree of loneliness experienced.

Aging at Home Working Group

Workplan Goals

The Aging at Home working group works towards making aging at home safe for older adults, by focusing on the following topics:

- Safety
- Information
- Household chores
- Food Security and Nutrition
- Money management
- Health care
- Activities and friends
- Housing
- Help during the day

How are these goals being met?

- Collaborate with the Community Safety Well Being (CSWB) Committee
- Create an up to Senior's guidebook as a reference tool for older adults to gain information
- Volunteers to offer snow shoveling, plowing and removal – creating pathways for older adults who are unable to shovel that would accommodate a stretcher/walker/wheelchair
- Create a nutrition checklist for Older Adults in Thunder Bay in conjunction with the TBDHU to help older adults plan, shop for and cook meals and snacks for themselves.
- Support the gleaning program, the Good Food Box program, and community gardens
- Ensure Older Adults are connected to 211 and services that will enable them to have more financial security – income tax clinic, OESP, GIS, etc.
- Create a Trusteeship program with TBDSSAB to advocate for issues important to older adults in Thunder Bay

Aging at Home Working Group continued

How are these goals being met?

- Ensure organizations are providing outreach and support to Older Adults remaining in their own homes
- Take part in the monthly meetings for the Thunder Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition Advisory Board to connect with groups, organizations, agencies and governments regarding housing and issues surrounding housing and homelessness
- Ensure that the housing list is circulated to older adults wanting to remain in their own homes as well as to organizations and agencies serving Older Adults
- Create a list for older adults that coordinated housing access table will utilize, ensuring that all needs can be met in housing situation
- Support the Tiny Homes Thunder Bay Committee initiatives
- Support programs like the GIANTS tea talks and annual event

What are the expected outcomes?

Older adults who age in place enjoy a sense of independence and comfort that only home can provide. They also enjoy better health outcomes on average, despite lower care costs. Older adults that age at home can also maintain a greater degree of personal independence. They are able to live their lives as they see fit, and they enjoy a sense of dignity unavailable to many elderly adults. Aging at home tends to improve older adults' quality of life, which improves their physical health. It also insulates them from the bacterial and viral risks found in older adult living facilities, reducing their chance of contracting a serious illness.