

HCoA

Hamilton Council
on Aging

*Educating.
Advocating.
Improving life
for older adults.*

Becoming Age-Friendly Hamilton

Building awareness, buy-in and action in “fits and starts”

What is it?

“Age-friendly communities establish policies, programs, services and infrastructure that support physical and social environments designed to enable older people to live in safety, enjoyment, good health and well-being while continuing to participate in society in meaningful ways.”

But who’s “responsible” for this?

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA)

- HCoA is a new organization (2006) created to provide an independent voice that advocates and educates for an improved aging experience for older people.
- First Trillium grant in 2008 - 2010
- Had to establish credibility, carve out its niche, establish relationships and build its reputation

2008: a new concept

Phase One

- Building awareness and relationships
- Following the Vancouver Protocol to do a community assessment
- Efforts to establish buy-in and responsibility among decision-makers

Hamilton: A City for ALL Ages



Age-Friendly Hamilton

**First Report
to our Community**
January 2010

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA)

Now what? *Implementation...*

- 2010: a year without Trillium funding
- Task was to convince those with authority to take the recommendations and the challenges of an aging population seriously and do-able.
- Efforts to establish a working group of leaders to take up the recommendations and work within their sphere of influence

Second OTF grant period: 2011- 2012

- On-going efforts and developing credibility of the HCOA
 - + increased attention paid in public conversation about the aging demographic = decision-makers' attention
- A table was established to move forward
- A follow up report created and very well received. Cemented HCoA reputation as capable policy people

Hamilton: A City for ALL Ages

Three Years On

A Status Report on Actions Taken to Improve the Aging Experience of Hamilton's Older Adults



April 2013

Hamilton Council on Aging (HCoA)

Meanwhile...

- Projects that assessed age-friendliness were conducted (walkability, businesses, travel train) and findings disseminated
- Workshops hosted on transportation and mobility (e.g. “Let’s Take a Bus”)
- Workshops and tools developed to assess and promote age-friendly organizations and environments
- HCoA resurrected and hosted Elder Abuse Network
- Smaller projects addressed poverty and access

Finally...

- In 2012, City Council allocated funds for the City of Hamilton to develop an Older Adult Plan
- A recommendation is going to Council to ask that they initiate the process of joining the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities
- City has identified the need to create a planning table to coordinate the development and implementation of a community plan
- HCoA is hoping for funding to continue its work...

Lessons learned: AFC

- That built and social environments affect the aging experience is new to most people
- We have let the “market” or developers make a lot of decisions for us that affect how our cities are built or even renovated
- This is a complex undertaking where power and authority are “dispersed” or “decentralized” so no one is “in charge”
- Municipalities must play a significant leadership role to play if their community is to move forward, *but they cannot do it alone.*

Lessons Learned: sustaining momentum

- For a *community* plan to develop and be kept alive over time, it helps to have an arm's length body play a convening role
- Core funding is critical and this type of project meets few funders' criteria
- The convening agency must prove themselves, have the ability to listen, have credibility and strong relationships across sectors

Thank you!

Please check out our website and look at our resources and others.

www.coahamilton.ca

Contact me, Denise O'Connor at

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