



# Staff Report to Council - for Information

**Title:** Age Friendly Community Strategy Update

**From:** Emily Kussmann, Director of Long Term Care and Senior Services

**Date:** February 12, 2026

**Report Number:** LTC-2026-003

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## Report Purpose:

This report is for information.

## Report Summary:

This report provides Council with an update on Bruce County's Age-Friendly Community Strategy and plan for 2026.

## Background/Analysis:

Bruce County has committed to advancing an Age-Friendly Community Strategy to support residents to age safely, actively, and with dignity in our communities. Age-friendly planning is a best-practice approach that considers how community policies, programs, services, and physical environments can better respond to the needs of older adults while benefiting residents of all ages.

This work aligns with provincial guidance provided through the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. The Province's Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide outlines a four-step framework for age-friendly planning:

1. Define local principles
2. Assess community needs
3. Develop an action plan
4. Implement and evaluate

Bruce County has completed foundational work associated with Steps 1 and 2, including establishing guiding principles and undertaking community engagement and needs assessment activities in 2025.

In recognition of this progress, Bruce County has been formally recognized by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, as an Age-Friendly Community. This recognition acknowledges the County's commitment to inclusive planning and alignment with provincial age-friendly principles.

Based on this progress, Bruce County is now positioned in Step 3: Development of an Age-Friendly Action Plan.

## **Bruce County's Role in Age-Friendly Planning**

Bruce County's role in age-friendly planning is to provide leadership, coordination, and enabling supports rather than duplicating services delivered by municipalities, non-profit organizations, or businesses.

The County's role includes:

- Supporting the marshalling and alignment of existing assets across municipalities, community organizations, service providers, and businesses.
- Encouraging coordination of efforts to reduce duplication and strengthen collective impact.
- Developing tools, frameworks, and guidance to support partners in integrating age-friendly principles into their own strategic and operational planning processes.
- Monitoring progress over time through shared indicators and performance mechanisms.

The intent of the Age-Friendly Community Strategy is to enable municipalities, non-profit organizations, and businesses to use their existing planning processes to improve services, programs, and environments for older adults, consistent with local priorities and mandates.

### **Current Stage and Planning Approach**

Bruce County is currently in Step 3 of the provincial age-friendly planning framework, which focuses on the development of an action plan informed by community needs and stakeholder input.

The work undertaken in 2026 will result in a Bruce County Age-Friendly Community Action Plan for the period of 2027-2031. This Action Plan will provide a coordinated framework for implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement over the five-year period.

### **2026 Objectives**

The primary focus for 2026 is the development, validation, and finalization of the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan for implementation beginning in 2027. To support this, an RFP has been issued to engage a qualified consultant with expertise in age-friendly planning.

#### **Q1- Foundation and Project Initiation**

- Consultant onboarding and project initiation
- Review and synthesis of community needs assessment data
- Confirmation of age-friendly priorities
- Establishment of governance and decision-making structure

#### **Q2- Draft Action Plan Development**

- Development of draft goals, actions, and outcomes for 2027-2031
- Targeted engagement with municipalities, non-profit organizations, and community partners
- Validation of priorities and proposed actions
- Identification of enabling tools and coordination mechanisms

### **Q3- Alignment and Refinement**

- Refinement of the draft 2027-2031 Action Plan
- Internal alignment across County departments
- Clarification of roles, timelines, and resource considerations
- Development of a monitoring and reporting framework

### **Q4- Finalization and Approval**

- Finalization of the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan (2027-2031)
- Presentation of the Action Plan to Council
- Development of communications and partner engagement materials
- Preparation for implementation beginning in 2027

### **Next Steps**

- Advancing consultant-led action plan development activities
- Continued engagement with municipalities and community partners
- Refinement of proposed tools, coordination mechanisms, and monitoring approach
- Providing Council with additional updates as key milestones are achieved

Subsequent reports will be brought forward quarterly to provide Council with additional updates on progress, and to outline the proposed Age-Friendly Community Action Plan in greater detail.

### **Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

Costs associated with the development of the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan, including consultant services, are being managed within approved budgets or will be addressed through the annual budget process, as required. Future resource considerations related to implementation will be informed by the finalized 2027-2031 Action Plan and brought forward to Council consideration as appropriate.

### **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

None.

### **Link to Strategic Goals and Objectives:**

Community and Partnerships - Build a strong and inclusive community

Community and Partnerships - Enhance and grow partnerships

### **Link to Departmental Plan Goals and Objectives, if any:**

N/A

**Departmental Approval:**

Emily Kussmann, Director Long-Term Care & Senior Services

**Approved for Submission:**

Christine MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer

**Attachments:**

None