

BSAC Delegation June 26th 2017

BURLINGTON ACTIVE AGING PLAN

MADAM CHAIR , Committee Members and City Staff,

Good evening:

Thank you for the opportunity to represent the Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee. To facilitate my remarks I will refer to Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee as “BSAC”. As I reviewed the draft Active Aging Plan, my first thoughts were a concern for you, the Council Members, and the role you play. Would it be necessary for the majority of you to exempt yourselves from voting on this issue because it appears to me there is a clear conflict of interest. By voting “YES”, the majority of you will achieve a personal benefit **BECAUSE OF YOUR AGE!!!!!!**

When BSAC first reviewed the “Strategic Plan for Burlington 2015 – 2040” we were concerned that there was little reference to senior issues. Now you have our full attention. The statement “An Age-Friendly Strategy for Seniors will be developed by the end of 2019” has become this 40+-page document you are considering here this evening. Needless to say, we are elated and offer our full support for the advancement of the Plan. Our thanks to those who created an environment that made it possible to bring forward this visionary Active Aging Plan. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of City and Regional Staff, elected officials, local and regional community partners, members of the Community Working Group, other stakeholders interested in older adult issues, and the Province of Ontario for contributing funds.

The Vision, developed by the Community Working Group and City staff, “Burlington is a Caring and Age-friendly City where citizens enjoy healthy, active lives and feel safe, connected, and valued as they reach their full potential” is most noteworthy as it describes how we see the City today and how we want to view it in the future. The Plan to expand the collaborative service models already in place will strengthen the capacity for all to continue working towards this Vision.

Of the five focus areas outlined in the Strategy overview of this Plan, BSAC has expended many hours advising City staff and Council on ways to improve Transportation and Transit. Bus size, frequency, and transit fares rank highly in BSAC’s work plan. Having improved pedestrian accessibility and safer travel throughout Burlington is another priority for us. We look forward to continuing our relationship with the City on these issues.

On the Social Inclusion focus area we at BSAC, along with all the other Citizens’ Advisory Committees, are prime examples of what has, and can be achieved. Our Seniors Centre and growing satellite locations are socially inclusive and highly rated. We just need more of them!! The Plan outlines many opportunities; we are especially drawn to the idea of partnering with schools to share expertise and resources and to develop inter-generational programs. The Social and Civic Participation Sub-committee of BSAC has agreed to assist in developing an assessment process which provides feedback for optimizing Age-Friendly environments.

We were surprised when the surveys showed that 60% of our older adults do not volunteer in the community. Civic participation is an area where there is need to

greatly expand the opportunities and recruitment for volunteers. Can BSAC help address this weakness?

We all realize that considerable emphasis needs to be placed on the Communication and Information area. We encourage the action plan to collaborate with Burlington Public Library. BSAC's Communication Subcommittee will continue its outreach program to bring information regarding services and programs to seniors across the City.

To have an action plan is exciting, but if there is no follow-up or monitoring, the results could be suspect. We are pleased that there is a program included in this Plan directed towards achievement, and ultimately, Burlington being recognized as an Age-Friendly City by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization.

Burlington's new Active Aging Plan has captured the heart and soul of the members of BSAC. We are confident that it will reflect the sentiments of all Burlington's older adults. Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee stands ready to champion active-aging strategies and to keep the City informed of older adults' interests, needs and priorities. PLEASE vote to accept this Plan.

Jim Thurston, Chair

Burlington Seniors' Advisory Committee