

The Burlington Seniors Advisory Subcommittee believes in Burlington's Active Aging principles of:

- Equity – provide fair access to programs and services and minimize barriers to participation
- Inclusion – welcome and value differences to encourage diversity and richer community life

As part of our work plan for 2018, the Advocacy Subcommittee decided to do an external and internal site review of 5 community centres, for accessibility and comfort choices through general observation and our personal experience method. Note: this is not a scientific or exact measurement review.

The tools the Burlington Employee Staff and the Burlington Accessibly Advisory Committee use are based on assessing the physical environments. We wanted to capture some of the experience as a senior/older adult from both a physical and social/emotional perspective. As there wasn't a specific review tool available for us, we decided to create our own site review form trying to capture both the physical and social experience through the eyes of any aging adult/senior.

Definition of Accessibility:

- The means or opportunity to approach or enter a place.
- The right or opportunity to use or benefit from something.
- The right or opportunity to approach or see someone. (2018 Oxford University Press)

BSAC- Advocacy Subcommittee
 Four Community Centre Review and Summary
 From Site Visits Completed Summer 2018
 January 2019

Date	Facility	Members of Burlington Seniors Advocacy Subcommittee Present
January 2019	<p>Summary of site visit reviews for four facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burlington Seniors Centre • Brant Hills Community Centre • Haber Recreation Centre • Tansley Woods Community Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheila Burton • Jim Thurston • Jim Young • Jan Hill • Ken Dunn • Thomas Jones

Section	Element	Description/Considerations	Findings and Comments
A	External Elements		
A1	Public Transportation/Bus Transportation Site to Community Hub	<p>Is there one</p> <p>What is the walking path like from bus to front door and what would that be like if using assistive devices such as a walker</p>	<p>Haber Centre- Path is good but distance from bus stop is an issue in poor weather. For seniors with limited mobility or assistive devices this distance from main facility entry is a challenge.</p> <p>Brant Hills - Path is paved but indirect. Path is not lit and is not signposted for facility. In good weather access from bus stop is reasonable but not ideal. For seniors with limited mobility or assistive devices this would not be a good access. Path is maintained and cleared by RPF and <u>not by Facility Staff.</u> Access in bad weather would be unacceptable. This issue was previously raised with M.L. Tanner.</p>

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			<p>After a review City Staff decided not to change the present access.</p> <p>Burlington Seniors Advocacy and Advisory Committee continue to recommend overall improvements to Burlington Public Transportation System with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known and reliable schedule • Ways to easily connect to all areas of the City. • Expanded hours for transportation to and from Burlington Community Centres. • Increased handicapped bus service to the Centres.
A2	Parking	Approximate ratio of designated wheelchair parking to able body parking	<p>Haber - Handivan access and turning appears reasonable but may not be as close as some seniors' handivan users may require.</p> <p>Overall-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that is the correct number of Accessible Parking spots as per legislation and they are in an easy accessible area to the entrance way - Create Limited Mobility Parking spots in all Community Centres and ensure there are sufficient spots
A3	Pathway and Ramps	<p>Accessible, width and grade of route</p> <p>Curbs, stairs</p> <p>What if senior has limited visibility</p>	<p>Overall ramps and grades are good.</p> <p>Physical areas are on one level as much as possible.</p>
A4	Benches	<p>Is there any</p> <p>Do you see a need for any</p>	Haber- No benches observed at entryway.

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			<p>Overall – Continue to promote and supply Universal Design Benches (such as with arms) in specific areas as much as possible.</p> <p>Look to create seating areas that provide sun and wind protection but allow seniors to sit outside.</p>
A5	Signage	Is it easy to find the entrance way	<p>Tansley Woods- Some of the signage is in braille – YES! There is a map or overview of the layout in the atrium- recently, the centre has changed some of the names of the rooms to be more generic.</p> <p>Recommend all signage and map be reviewed for consistency of designated names to areas.</p> <p>Overall- Encourage as many signs as possible in all buildings to have braille.</p> <p>Signs are to be at eye level and be readable for those using wheelchairs.</p> <p>Ensure consistency of signage and use of generic names for the signs throughout centres. For example, the names of rooms on a distribution map needs to be the same at the entrance of the room.</p> <p>Use multipurpose designations for the names of rooms (for example Activity Room A rather than Knitting Room)</p>
Section	Element	Description/Considerations	Findings and Comments
B	Entrance/Vestibule Elements		Overall- Easy to find
B1	Front doors and entrance doors	Power doors Was it easy to get over the floor track re the front door	<p>Overall- These four centres have automatic open and close power doors.</p> <p>Door tracks are not any issue at all.</p>
B2	Welcoming Environment	What is the feeling The sociability	Overall- Professional, courteous and helpful.

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		Did any one greet or speak to you	
B3	Signage	Ease of knowing or figuring out where to go Eye level of printed information	Overall- Encourage as many signs as possible in all buildings to have braille. Signs are to be at eye level and be readable for those using wheelchairs. Ensure consistency of signage and use of generic names for the signs throughout centres. For example, the names of rooms on a distribution map needs to be the same at the entrance of the room. Use multipurpose designations for the names of rooms (for example Activity Room A rather than Knitting Room)
B4	Reception Area	Easy to see person regardless of senior's height, if using wheelchair	Burlington Seniors Centre does not have a low area for computer service for example for registration. Haber - A lowered access area for wheelchair access for form filing or service requests would be a welcome addition. Overall – the high and low reception areas are very useful. Need high and low areas at all reception stations so individuals using wheelchairs are able to “see” the staff.
B5	Pathway and Ramps	Stairs Ramps Is there width and room for wheelchair access and wheelchair turning What if senior has limited visibility Are there non-slip surfaces	Overall – pretty good. Encourage continuation of access for all.

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B6	Different Levels	If more than first floor or one level, are the other levels accessible to all Is there an elevator or escalator	Haber – only centre not on one level. Overall – good
B7	Sitting Area Benches	Is there any Do you see a need for any	Haber- Seating is limited and could be improved with couches and benches in hallways/public areas. Seating areas are one of the important spaces where socialization and sense of belonging happen. These are important spaces to bring that feeling of “homeness” takes place rather than an institutional feel. Overall – continue to encourage seating in specific need areas for rest and also socialization. Seating areas need to have a variety of seats to meet the needs of seniors with side tables, room for books, charge stations for cellphones and I-pads and plants or foliage.
B8	Lighting	Is there colour contrasts to surroundings	Overall- Bright lighting seems to be well done in all centres. Now we need lighting that can be adjusted depending on the time of day and the activity. For example, the ability to dim the lights for Pilates or Yogi. Or dimmer lighting and coloured lighting for evening activities such as a celebration dinner.
B9	Acoustics	Is it noisy Is there a PA system And if so, could you hear the PA system	Haber - There are good PA systems in each room/gym but no central PA. Overall- Need for centralized PA system is necessary in case of emergencies.

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Section	Element	Description/Considerations	Findings and Comments
C	Entrance/Vestibule Elements		
C1	Washroom Facilities	On accessible route Ease of entry High rise toilets Urinals with no step-in front of fixture Hand washing accessible and dryers – height Hand rails	Brant Hills- No reduced height washbasins for Wheelchair access. Overall – Need automatic soap and tap dispensers in all areas. This could be done at the time of transitioning or updating washroom facilities. Need for washrooms to be SPA like and pleasant. For example, the use of real plants adds a nice touch in a washroom.
C2	Drinking fountains	Is there any Are they accessible if using a wheelchair	Overall- Two-tiered drinking fountains found.

Burlington Seniors Centre

Notes:

- Love the Bistro – the food is delicious and great price points. This is a significant area that adds greatly to the socialization element of the centre. Very clean, staff and volunteers are wonderful!
- Public Health Certification for Bistro in good location for everyone to see, right beside order/payment desk.
- Love the Library Centre – this also added to a Seniors experience and keeping engaged with and through books.
- Like the phone for seniors to be able to place a 5-minute call that is located in an information nook just outside the Bistro (this is handy for those who don't have a cell phone or are out of power).
- Bike rentals and racks just outside of north door – very nice.
- Coat hanger space is as good as can be and staff are aware of the changing needs of this depending on the weather.
- Tables and chairs in Bistro and meeting rooms are stable.
- Storage areas were well organized and clean.
- Chemicals and cleaning products are well stored and staff are aware of safety needs.

Areas for Consideration:

- Community Information (pamphlets etc.) are kept in an information nook just before the entrance to Bistro
Question: is there a process for keeping information current
- Fire Safety Plan Binder is posted just across from Reception on wall outside one of the activity rooms
There were drill logs with names of attendance etc. in back of binder-
Question: do these need to be filed in a secure area as proof of what, who and when drills and education is done
At some time, they may need to be submitted to legal authorities as proof of proactive safety measures.
- Registration Forms for Seniors to Provide Information for signing up for membership and renewal of membership.
Still asks for gender identification.
Question: Is this something that needs to be considered for future ie elimination of this or to have three category choices
- Pickle ball courts are undersized – walls are too close to the court – is there a safety danger here (we do know this is a very in- demand program

Brant Hills

- a) What would be the top three improvement priorities for this community centre?
 - The Absence of sidewalks on the access ways from both Brant Street and Duncaster Drive have been highlighted by BSAC previously. Senior City Facility Managers are aware and have reported that they do not consider it an issue of great priority.
 - While washrooms are recently refurbished and are generally accessible in most respects, a lowered wash-handbasin to help wheelchair users in each of the washrooms would be advantageous.
 - While handicap parking no doubt meets all codes and standards, if seniors' programs are to migrate successfully, the number of these might be increased beyond "Standard".
- b) Any suggestions for how to improve or change?
 - Perhaps the issue of sidewalks on the access ways from both Brant Street and Duncaster Drive should be revisited by BSAC. New "Complete Streets" philosophies, adopted by City Staff as policy and being implemented elsewhere in the city, specifically suggest both improved transit access and the introduction of sidewalks in older residential areas for safety reasons. It is surely not unreasonable for BSAC to advise the adoption of these standards to improve safety and access at city facilities for both seniors and other family activities and programs.

Haber –

- a) What would be the top three improvement priorities for this community centre?
 - While handicap parking no doubt meets all codes and standards, if seniors' programs are to migrate successfully, the number of these might be increased beyond "Standard". Parking seems far from entryway to main community facility.
 - The layout of the parking lot limits access by Handivan to a position further from the door than may be comfortable for some handicapped seniors. It may not be a huge undertaking to extend the approach to the Community Centre front door access to accommodate Handivan Service more closely.
 - Given that the building houses a High School as well as A Community Centre, might there be opportunities for Senior/Student Mentoring, Homework Support types of activity. Coordination with Education Boards would be required but is it worth pursuing?

b) Any suggestions for how to improve or change?

- It may be ambitious but one of the great features of the senior's centre is The Bistro. The Haber Recreation Centre has a full-service snack and kitchen facility that is currently not in use. Might this be staffed and run by seniors' volunteers similarly to The Bistro? This might provide a useful facility for school pupils, seniors and other facility users while raising funds for the use of the community centre.

Tansley Woods

a) What would be the top three improvement priorities for this community centre?

- All sinks be automatically operated (not tap operated)
- All doors have push button openers

b) Any suggestions for how to improve or change?

- Recommend all signage and map be reviewed for consistency of designated names to areas.

Overall Summary and Future Considerations

- Maintaining socialization areas and atmosphere in all community centres (where people can come together and connect)
- Implement seating area pods that support socialization and sense of belonging (Universal Design Chairs, side tables, books, charging areas, plants)
- Implement Bistro areas in all centres to promote socialization and sense of belonging to the greater community
- Strive for consistency of program in all centres while also meeting specific community needs
- Increase efficiency of turn over or around of activity areas or rooms from one class or session to the next with the clean up and readiness of rooms and equipment (this is a staffing need and also a need for storage of equipment specific to programs)
- Signs are to be at eye level and be readable for those using wheelchairs.
- Ensure consistency of signage and use of generic names for the signs throughout centres. For example, the names of rooms on a distribution map needs to be the same at the entrance of the room.
- Use multipurpose designations for the names of rooms (for example Activity Room A rather than Knitting Room)

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- Recommend having a site review from seniors with visual challenges and/or sight impairment
- Recommend evaluation and input from seniors for needs for programs and what kinds of program in evenings and weekends.
- Is there a need or desire for intergenerational programming on weekends such as grandparents and grandchildren playing pickle ball or other activities together in a pick-up type of programming?
- What about an indoor walking/running track?

Our wish list would include:

- Another Seniors Centre in North Burlington
- Another YMCA in North Burlington