![Kingston logo]

City of Kingston
Information Report to Council
Report Number 15-397

To:	**Mayor and Members of Council**
From:	**Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services**
Resource Staff:	**Cheryl Hitchen, Manager, Social Policy & Strategic Community Development**
Date of Meeting:	**October 20, 2015**
Subject:	**Age-Friendly Kingston Community Alliance Initiatives**

Executive Summary:

In August of 2014, City Council approved the Age-Friendly Kingston Stage Two Report – Action Plan which contained twenty action items for 2015 and 2016. Staff will provide Council with a status report on all of the action items in late 2015. The purpose of this report is to provide information about two initiatives that will be happening within the next month in Kingston – the launch of the first ramps of the Stop Gap Kingston initiative and a community survey of older adults in Kingston being carried out by Nanos Research.

Recommendation:

This report is for information purposes only.

Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER
Lanie Hurdle, Commissioner, Community Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Cynthia Beach, Corporate & Strategic Initiatives	Not required
Denis Leger, Transportation, Facilities & Emergency Services	Not required
Jim Keech, President and CEO, Utilities Kingston	
Desiree Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	Not required

Options/Discussion:

Background
The City of Kingston became designated as an Age-Friendly City by the World Health Organization in 2012. Staff have presented Council with several reports relating to the age-friendly planning process carried out from 2012-2014 with the most recent being the "Age-Friendly Kingston Stage Two Report – Action Plan" August 2014 (AFC-14-002). This report contained twenty action items for 2015 and 2016. A status report on the age-friendly initiative will be provided to Council later in 2015 with detailed background on the planning process that has occurred to date and the current status of all twenty action items.

The Age-Friendly Kingston Community Alliance is undertaking a couple activities within the next month that the Alliance wanted to ensure Council was made aware of.

Age-Friendly Kingston Community Alliance (AFKCA)
One of the Stage Two actions was the creation of a community based age-friendly committee to broaden the focus of age-friendly initiatives. A new preliminary committee was formed in the spring of 2015 called the Age-Friendly Kingston Community Alliance (AFKCA). The initial membership of this group includes representation from the Seniors Association of Kingston, the City of Kingston's Community Services Group, the United Way, Kingston Police, Alzheimer's Society, the provincial Seniors Secretariat and Public Health. The Providence Care Centre's Centre for Aging and Health Care plays a resource role to the AFKCA. It is anticipated that the membership of the AFKCA will broaden in 2016 based on the results of the community survey, the identified priorities and the subsequent work plan.

The work of the AFKCA compliments the continuing work of the municipality which is focused on ensuring municipal programs, services and facilities are age-friendly. For 2015, they have two focused activities they are implementing.

Age-Friendly Kingston Research Initiative - Community Survey
The AFKCA reviewed the documents and work done previously by the City's Age-Friendly Committees and determined that although the focus groups held by the City and the research documents provided a lot of information, they would like to begin their planning work with more data collection through a broader based survey of older adults in Kingston. A summary of the purpose of this research is attached as Exhibit A.

Through the contributions of the AFKCA member organizations, Nanos Research has been hired by the AFKCA to carry out a telephone survey of 600 older adults in the community to find out more about their lives and their perspectives on the age-friendliness of Kingston. Nanos Research is one of the leading research and strategy firms in North America and has carried out similar surveys in other age-friendly communities in Ontario. This survey will be conducted in late 2015 with a report back on the findings in early 2016. City staff will assist the AFKCA with the promotion of this survey so that members of the public are aware of this research and the reason they may be receiving contact from Nanos.

Stop Gap Kingston Community Ramp Project
Another action from the Stage Two report was the implementation of a Stop Gap ramp project in the City of Kingston.

This program has now been successfully implemented in communities across Canada. It involves the construction and provision of plywood removable ramps to businesses to decrease the physical barrier in accessing the building and to increase accessibility awareness. More information about the Stop Gap Foundation and the Community Ramp Project is available at www.stopgap.ca. An excerpt from their website is attached as Exhibit B.

While this project was included in the Age-Friendly action items, it was also raised by the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC) as an idea and by members of the community contacting the municipality requesting that Stop Gap be brought to Kingston.

A working group, "Stop Gap Kingston", was formed with representatives from Downtown Kingston, City staff, MAAC, community members and the AFKCA. This group began meeting in the summer of 2015. This group set a target of having an initial ten ramps in the downtown core before the end of 2015.

Discussions occurred with City staff from Engineering and By-Law to ensure that the parameters of the Stop Gap initiative were in compliance with municipal by-laws. Support was sought from community business to provide building materials for the ramp project. Downtown businesses were informed about the project and an initial ten sites that met the criteria were selected to receive the first ramps. Ramps are being constructed by volunteers at the Seniors Centre following the Stop Gap ramp design guidelines.

The ramps will be deployed upon request. Signage in the businesses will notify the public of the availability of the ramp. The ramps are constructed in a way that makes them portable and easy to deploy when needed. Usage and feedback on the first ten ramps will be used to adjust the program as necessary before the building of future ramps.

The first of these ramps will be put into place with a launch event on Friday October 23rd at 10 a.m. (location to be announced). A Stop Gap Kingston website will also be developed.

Existing Policy/By-Law:

The City of Kingston has By-Law Number 2004-104 "A By-Law to Protect The City's Highways From Unauthorized Encroachments" to assist in ensuring the public right of way is properly managed for construction activities (dumpsters and scaffolding), permanent features such as historic markers and signage as well as other items that may be placed in the right of way on a temporary or permanent bases. The Stop Gap program is outside the requirements contained within the by-law as the ramp is a very short duration encroachment and it is only encroaching when in use and is removed immediately. The ramps are also placed in such a way as to not obstruct pedestrian traffic or movement in accordance with By-Law Number 2004-190 "A By-Law to Regulate the Use of City Streets."

Notice Provisions:

Not applicable

Accessibility Considerations:

An age-friendly community is also an accessible community and therefore the actions of the AFKCA will work in partnership with the City's Accessibility Advisory Group to make the community more accessible.

Financial Considerations:

The City contributes staff time to the AFKCA to ensure a smooth transition from being a municipal committee to a community committee. The City is contributing approximately $14,000 toward the cost of the community survey, $14,000 from the United Way, $3,000 from Public Health and $3,000 from Kingston Police. The Stop Gap initiative is funded entirely from donations and volunteer time.

Contacts:

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Kim Brown, Manager, Infrastructure and Development, Engineering Department

Kim Leonard, Manager, Licensing & Enforcement, Planning, Building & Licensing Services

Exhibits Attached:

Exhibit A   Age-Friendly Kingston Research Initiative – Community Survey

Exhibit B   Stop Gap Foundation

Exhibit A

Age-Friendly Kingston Research Initiative

(Age-Friendly Kingston Community Alliance)

Debate about the aging population is typically conducted in terms of the problems and costs of supporting growing numbers of older people. However, the Age-Friendly Kingston Alliance takes a more balanced view of the aging population in Kingston. Recognizing that older adults in Kingston are financially more stable than any other age cohort and have more time post-retirement to contribute to the community; older adults should be viewed as a community asset which can be leveraged to develop effective solutions to a range of community issues rather than a resource burden.

A study in England concluded that older adults will be net contributors in society and stated "The baby boomer generation is the best educated, healthiest and fittest group of younger older people…. How are we going to make sure that they use their skills in their communities?" (WRVS, 2011)

The previous work done by the City of Kingston in its age-friendly planning indicated four themes emerging from older adult focus group participants: "we want to stay in our homes"; "we want to be actively involved in the Kingston community"; "we want to know what is going on and where to get help if needed"; and "we want to be respected".

While the City of Kingston's planning cycle focused on addressing these themes from the municipal perspective; the Age-Friendly Kingston Alliance is undertaking a new community based planning cycle that begins with a community survey of older adults to assist with articulating how these themes could be addressed by the community at large.

Through a phone survey conducted by Nanos Research with a sample size large enough to be statistically reliable, information will be gathered to provide more specific inputs in these areas. Sample areas of enquiry will be: How are older adults currently contributing in the community and what are the barriers to contributing further? What are the best methods of providing them with information? What activities are they currently participating in and what would they like to do? What are the supports they require to remain in their home longer?

The data provided through this survey will help many community organizations that serve or want to serve older adults with their short and long term planning to meet their needs as well as helping other organizations with understanding how they could leverage the time, talents and skills of older adults toward making Kingston a stronger community.

How do we maximize the volunteer potential of older adults to provide them with meaningful opportunities? How do we adjust our communications strategies to meet the needs of current older adults and the baby boomers moving into this group? What programs, services and supports could community agencies provide that would be the most meaningful to older adults? Are the strategies unique for different age groups within the older adult age cohort? Are there geographical differences in the responses that indicate a need for new or different service delivery depending on the neighbourhood?

Through using available socio-demographic statistical data; the analysis of responses to the survey that will provide older adults perspective on growing older in the City of Kingston; and a commitment on the part of community stakeholders to work together, Kingston will be a better place for both old and young!

Exhibit B

The Stop Gap Foundation

(Excerpt from the Stop Gap Foundation website: www.stopgap.ca)

The Stop Gap Foundation was registered as a charitable organization in October 2013 but its roots date back to the fall of 2011. Building ramps for single-step storefronts began as an initiative to raise awareness about barriers in our built environment.

Stop Gap's first project to increase awareness was the launch of the first Community Ramp Project in Toronto's Junction neighbourhood. Through material donated by local hardware stores and volunteer labour, the Community Ramp Project provided a deployable ramp at no cost to 12 businesses in the area.

Stop Gap's lightweight plywood ramps were painted in bright colours to attract attention. StopGap.ca was stenciled on each to drive people to learn about the project. It became clear from the incredibly positive outcome of the first Community Ramp Project that similar projects could be launched in different communities across the GTA. It also proved to have huge potential in raising awareness about accessibility on a national scale.

The Stop Gap Foundation hopes that through these kinds of community initiatives we can create our own informal legislation instead of waiting until 2025 – the projected due date outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The Luke Anderson Story

Luke Anderson was a gifted athlete; he was passionate about seeking adventure in the great outdoors and loved working with his hands. He graduated from university with an engineering degree, was following his dream living in the mountains with like-minded outdoor enthusiasts and was working as a home builder. He had the world at his fingertips.

In the fall of 2002, Luke and his good friend Johnny were riding down a tricky trail they had heard other mountain bikers raving about. They came upon a 25 foot gap which Johnny cleared without a problem. Luke was determined to give it a try as well. He made sure he was in the right gear, gripped the handlebars tightly, pushed down hard on the pedals, left the takeoff platform and his life as he knew it.

In that moment Luke went from being a physically independent person to someone who must now depend on others for help. In that instant he entered a world that was no longer completely accessible to him. This frustration is what led to the Stop Gap Foundation. The main focus of the foundation is the Ramp Project, a volunteer-run campaign that creates awareness about barriers in the built environment.