

**MUSKOKA MASTER AGING PLAN  
Community Forum**

Thursday, September 8, 2016  
Bracebridge Rotary Centre for Youth

SESSION REPORT

Agenda  
Work Plan  
SWOT Analysis  
Visioning Exercise  
Suggested Initiatives  
Breakout Group Reports  
Participant Feedback

(Project Working Paper)

SHERCON ASSOCIATES INC.  
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September 12, 2016

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**Purpose** Review information gathered to date and provide input to emerging goals

**Agenda**

9:00 a.m. **Arrival and Coffee**

9:15 a.m. **Session Overview**

- Welcoming remarks
- Project progress report from the consultants

9:30 a.m. **Environmental Scan**

- Findings: Community Survey  
Survey of Service Providers  
Community Focus Groups  
Key Informant Interviews
- “SWOT” analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)

10:15 a.m. **Break**

10:30 a.m. **Future Directions**

- Visioning exercise – “Muskoka in 2020”
- Idea generation activity
- Identification of themes and categories

11:15 a.m. **Moving Forward**

- Assignment to breakout groups
- Groups develop high-level goals and strategies

12:00 p.m. **Working Lunch**

12:15 p.m. **Group Reports**

- Presentations with discussion and feedback

12:45 p.m. **Closing**

- Next steps in the project
- Participant feedback

Session concludes by 1:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Deb Ballak and David Sheridan  
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Attached: Project Work Plan

## MUSKOKA MASTER AGING PLAN Project Schedule

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### Project Launch

1.1	RFP closing date	June 6
1.2	Approval to proceed	June 10
1.3	Start-up teleconference	June 16
1.4*	Steering Committee meeting	June 28
1.5	Finalized work plan	July 4

### Needs Assessment

2.1	Information review (ongoing)	July 8
2.2	Notification of key informants/working groups	July 12
2.3	Provider survey developed/distributed	July 21
2.4*	Inaugural Working Group meetings (n=3)	July 26/27
2.5	Community survey developed/distributed	August 2
2.6	Key informant interviews complete (n=12)	August 8
2.7	Provider survey deadline	August 12
2.8*	Seniors focus groups (n=7)	Aug. 22-26
2.9	Community survey deadline	August 31
2.10	Compilation/summary of findings	September 2
2.11	Steering Committee teleconference	September 6

### Action Planning

3.1*	Community stakeholder forum	September 8 morning
3.2*	Working Group meetings	September 8 afternoon
3.3	Draft goals and action plans	September 14
3.4	Input received from Working Groups	September 21
3.5	Wrap-up teleconference with Working Groups	late September
3.6	Draft strategy report and implementation plan	October 11
3.7	Steering Committee review/revisions	October 17
3.8*	Wrap-up Steering Committee meeting	TBD October

### Reporting and Sustainability

4.1	Final report	October 28
4.2	On-call support/advice	Six months

\* Consultant(s) on site



Project funding provided by the Province of Ontario

## **SWOT ANALYSIS**

*Rotating flip chart activity*

### **Strengths**

Strength in numbers  
 Volunteers  
 Recognize importance of seniors  
 Existing services  
 Buy-in of municipal government to District-wide plan  
 Support of local businesses  
 Social and recreational opportunities (less so in rural areas)  
 Active seniors groups, service clubs, interests groups, nature clubs  
 Health hubs, nurse practitioners, hospice, 211  
 Caring culture, good neighbours  
 Engaged emergency services  
 Inclusive community  
 Knowledge, wisdom and life experience of seniors  
 Lots of land space

### **Weaknesses**

Need for funding  
 Information available, no one-stop information from governments  
 Lack of knowledge of services  
 Geography – distances  
 Topography – accessibility  
 Transportation  
 Affordable and accessible senior-specific housing  
 Assumption of internet usage by seniors  
 Availability of mental health services  
 Seasonal population variability  
 Wait lists  
 System navigation  
 Outside perception/illusion that Muskoka is wealthy  
 Urban rural split  
 Overlapping boundaries – Simcoe and Parry Sound  
 Need for more trained staff  
 Availability of services varies between communities  
 Limited family supports  
 Lack of psychogeriatric specialists  
 Weather challenges  
 Cost-effective supportive housing  
 Need for proper supports for aging in place  
 Low income levels  
 Too much bureaucracy

*... Cont'd*

## SWOT ANALYSIS (Cont'd)

### Opportunities

- Lifestyle and wellness activity
- Social/recreation/physical programs
- Green space
- Increasing services in home
- Volunteering
- Financial breaks for seniors
- Focus shift to rural – helping aging in place in rural areas
- Communication and information sharing
- Influx of money into Muskoka
- Increased collaboration such as this process
- Collaboration with younger generations – through schools
- Import of experience/skills with people retiring to Muskoka
- Collaboration between levels of care to create programs
- Age-friendly is holistic – good for whole community
- Wheel chair/gait aid/strollers transportation

### Threats

- Increasing numbers of seniors
- Tight budgets across organizations
- Travel – rural to urban towns
- Rising cost of living
- Political infighting amongst communities
- Reduction of resources
- Lack of safe, affordable, accessible housing
- Few recreation activities for outlying areas
- Ability to live in own home
- Provincial planning not reflective of local dynamics
- Rising insurance costs
- Not part of Northern Ontario
- Aging infrastructure and new infrastructure requirements
- Geographic distances, especially for emergency services
- Changing provincial government requirements and regulations
- Economic decline and impact on tax bases

## VISIONING EXERCISE

*Based on a visioning exercise where participants wrote desirable headlines to appear in local media on September 8, 2020*

### **Expanded Services and Supports ...**

#### Transportation

Bracebridge Transit System is Further Expanded  
 Muskoka has District-wide Bus Service  
 Transportation for Small Communities Now Completed  
 Corridor Bus now Free from Huntsville to Barrie  
 Via Rail Transit Between Muskoka and Other Areas  
 Public Bus Service for all of Muskoka  
 Muskoka Has Accessible Transportation Network for Seniors  
 Innovative Transportation Connects all of Muskoka  
 Muskoka Leads the Way in Active Transportation

#### Housing

New Accessible Housing Complex Opens in MacTier  
 All Seniors Homes Have Residential Fire Sprinklers Installed  
 No Wait List for Affordable Housing for Seniors in Muskoka  
 New Housing Centred on Communal Living Available  
 Seniors Housing Available in Every Community in Muskoka  
 LTC Wait Lists Reduced to Under Six Months  
 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for new Seniors Residence in Gravenhurst  
 Muskoka Dementia Village a Success  
 Community Hours Offered for Seniors Snow Removal  
 More Funding for Retirement Residences  
 Muskoka Launches Tiny Home Pilot Project across Region  
 Open House for New Link Bungalow Housing for Seniors  
 New Co-housing Available  
 Fire Departments and Seniors Partner for Fire Safety  
 Vacancies in Seniors Housing in Muskoka

#### Health

New Psychogeriatric Interprofessional Team and MAHC  
 New MOH Funding to Expand FHTs, Nursing Stations, NPs and Clinics  
 Extended Home Supports for Seniors Recovering from Illness  
 Doctors Make House Calls  
 Eye Clinics Open in Muskoka  
 Eye Surgery Available When and Where you Need it  
 No Wait Times for Patients at Hospital  
 Ontario Government Increases Funding for Home Care  
 Government Recognizes Higher Cost of Medical Services in Small Communities  
 Groundbreaking Success in Alzheimer Supports in Muskoka  
 Local Doctors Looking for Patients

*... Cont'd*

## **VISIONING EXERCISE (Cont'd)**

### Social and Recreation

Nipissing Muskoka Campus Re-opens and Offers Program in Seniors Studies  
 MacTier Swim/Recreation Centre Opens Today  
 New Seniors Arena Complex Announced  
 New Trail Opened Between Port Carling and MacTier  
 Cycling and Walking Infrastructure in and Between Muskoka Communities  
 Fourth Annual Employment Fair Features Senior Interns  
 Dating Introduction Service Established in Muskoka to Introduce Single Seniors  
 Muskoka Completely Walkable – Safe and Accessible for All  
 Volunteer Opportunities for Muskoka Seniors on the Rise  
 Seniors Participating in Rural Programming has Increased  
 Seniors and Youth Share Experience and Skills with Each Other – Win/Win  
 100% of Seniors Wired through Technology  
 Muskoka has Outdoor Walking Park for People with Dementia  
 Seniors Setting the Stage for Sharing Life Experience/Knowledge  
 Community Involvement Explodes Across District

### **Successful Outcomes ...**

Seniors Living at Home Longer with Better Resources  
 Muskoka Seniors Thrive  
 Muskoka Overcomes Poverty – 100% Residents Enjoy Life with No Barriers  
 Muskoka Senior Nominated for Major Award  
 93 Year Old Women Elected District Chair  
 Planning for Seniors Positive for Young Families Too  
 ER Visits Decreased due to Health Hubs  
 Seniors Celebrate Participants in Seniors Summer Games  
 Beach Front Active with Senior Power  
 Low Medical Costs in Muskoka Due to Proactive Health Care and Recreation  
 Need for Food Bank Decreasing  
 Seniors in Muskoka Healthy, Active and Having Fun!  
 Third Annual Seniors Triathlon in Gravenhurst  
 Seniors Stay Healthier in Muskoka  
 Seniors Thriving in Rural Muskoka

### **Muskoka a Seniors Destination ...**

Muskoka Seniors Rated Highest in Province on Happiness Scale  
 Muskoka the Best Place to Live for Seniors  
 Rural Muskoka a Natural for Seniors  
 More Seniors than Ever Before Moving to Muskoka  
 Muskoka Will be the new Elliot Lake  
 Seniors Rock and Roll with Life in Muskoka  
 Muskoka Quality Life for all Ages  
 Muskoka is a Seniors Paradise

### SUGGESTED INITIATIVES

*Structured brainstorming activity where ideas were generated on a free-response basis. Participants then allocated “votes” to priority items*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Services/ Supports</b>	<b>Facilities/ Infrastructure</b>	<b>Policies/ Processes</b>
Get Muskoka to Northern Ontario status	26			x
Provide affordable home maintenance services	19	x		
More jobs to maintain youth in area	17	x		
Transportation for seniors to services/appointments	17			x
Maintain two hospitals for Muskoka’s future	17		x	
One Muskoka – eliminate townships	16			x
Muskoka communication network	13	x		
Federal Government to redefine Muskoka’s classification	12			x
Grants for seniors to stay in homes	12			x
Use libraries as information infrastructure	12		x	
Enhanced economic development	11			x
Expand number, scope and practice of NPs, Health Hubs, FHTS, community care, paramedics	10	x		
Subsidies for retirement homes/assisted living	10			x
Convert empty buildings to seniors housing	8		x	
Mobile medical services	7	x		
Volunteers for house/yard work, appointments	7	x		
Increase volunteer drivers including able senior volunteers	7	x		
More funding for libraries for seniors	7		x	
Tax breaks for seniors buildings/housing developers	7			
Ensure all sidewalks and paths are accessible and dementia friendly	7		x	
Transportation system for rural areas	6		x	
More shared/multi-use facilities and spaces	6		x	
In-home dental, hearing, hair, foot care	6	x		
Shared housing	6		x	
Support seniors to be actively involved in community	5			x
Develop seniors specific housing	5		x	
Urban and rural recreation work together	5			x
No cost for volunteer activities and events	5	x		
Seniors visiting seniors	5	x		... Cont’d



Item	Score	Services/ Supports	Facilities/ Infrastructure	Policies/ Processes
Home for Life program	5	x		
Build smaller homes	5		x	
Involve seniors in design of buildings and services	5			x
Co-housing	4		x	
More provincial/federal grants and incentives	4			x
Seniors community homes beyond the towns	4		x	
Additional LTC homes/beds	3		x	
Hire seniors' navigators for the District and communities	3	x		
Coordinate student community hours to help seniors	3			x
WiFi access throughout District	3		x	
Seek district wide solutions	3			x
CCAC use local health care providers	3			x
Creative use of schools as community hubs	3		x	
Paramedic float planes	3		x	
Recognize the strength of seniors groups	2			x
Seniors skills exchange with students	2	x		
Share best practices among towns/townships	2			x
Provider network to communicate with seniors	2	x		
District to cut tax levy down	2			x
Required number of senior friendly housing for new developers	2		x	
Mobile legal services	2	x		
Increase accessibility of buildings and businesses			x	
Continuing "seniors week" promotion of seniors services	2	x		
Pet therapy and music	2	x		
Eliminate boundary issues	2			x
Wellness centres in all communities	1	x		
Hospice for every community	1	x		
Central spot for information	1	x		
Train service to Toronto	1		x	
Senior mom celebration	1	x		
Increased philanthropy	1			x
Retired persons inventory review	1	x		
Walkable community design	1		x	
More interaction/education re: emergency services	-	x		... Cont'd

Item	Score	Services/ Supports	Facilities/ Infrastructure	Policies/ Processes
Free bike borrowing	-	x		
Educate seniors on scams	-	x		
Bike paths throughout District	-		x	
Wellness bus with NP to all of Muskoka	-	x		
Day away programs	-	x		
Resource guide	-	x		
Single seniors club	-	x		
Dancing for seniors	-	x		
Senior housing plan for district	-			x
Access for seniors to volunteer activities	-	x		
More benches/rest spots throughout District	-		x	
Lunch programs/social day	-	x		
Specialized assistive devices for independence	-	x		
Teach Muskoka history to youth	-			x

## BREAKOUT GROUP REPORTS

*Self-assigned groups reviewed the SWOT, vision, and list of ideas and were asked to present about five high-level directions related to their theme*

### Housing Group

- Develop private/government partnerships to build “campus of care” model with various levels of housing options including some geared to income
- Change zoning bylaws to include smaller homes, co-housing, etc.
- Increase long term care beds with specialized treatment areas e.g. dementia and behavioural
- Increase home care visits to keep able seniors in their homes longer

### Health Group

- Improve home care and rehabilitation services
- Increase scope of practice for allied health professionals and others such as EMS, Fire and pharmacists
- Collaborate re: system navigation
- Health information sharing through E-health solutions
- Community activism and engagement with shared responsibility – e.g. grocery delivery, friendly visiting, philanthropy
- Further develop alternatives to hospital for ED diversion such as telehealth, mobile clinics, etc.

## **BREAKOUT GROUP REPORTS (Cont'd)**

### **Outdoor Spaces Group**

- Increase awareness through libraries, town websites, churches and newspaper inserts – i.e. a multi-modal approach
- Provide transportation from front door to destination
- Ensure active transportation/accessibility including curbs, snow and ice, snow banks
- Develop more outdoor spaces

### **Transportation Group**

- Enhance transportation support for out-of-town medicals
- Provide affordable subsidized district transportation
- Bring back train service
- Expand local transit lines
- Develop data base of volunteer drivers (volunteer “Uber”) accessed through apps/211

### **Information, Collaboration and Coordination Groups**

- Adopt an integrated service planning approach
- Create a Seniors Collaborative Initiative led by District
- Develop communication process for all seniors to include radio, internet, newspapers, TV and support services
- Build on existing hubs such as libraries, programs, 211, CCAC, etc.

### **Community Life Group**

- Utilize, strengthen and create a community information hub with public libraries
- Seek funding to expand and support programs for seniors
- Establish a networking system for single seniors
- Fund and maintain existing community centres without depending on volunteers
- Create a caring atmosphere that extends beyond family ties

### **Social/Recreational Group**

- Increase communication to seniors utilizing all clubs, associations and community groups to get the word out to seniors
- Share community calendar of events through libraries, post offices, newspapers, website
- Networking with fellow seniors
- Intergenerational networking to help younger generation learn and be inspired to maintain socialization
- Increase collaboration between people, skills, facilities, knowledge and activities
- Provide funding to house social activities and recreation
- Increase outdoor/active living by expanding access and availability of trails
- Increase township buy-in on seniors activities

## BREAKOUT GROUP REPORTS (Cont'd)

### Other Topics Group

- Develop mobile/accessible/free legal services for seniors – visiting bus with legal staffing same day every month – wills, POA, etc. – could collaborate with other services
- Economic development for seniors – education; skills training/upgrading; business consultation/mentoring; start-up help; skill trading with high school/college students
- Develop liaison with other groups to further goal achievement for seniors – especially cross-cultural with First Nations and new Canadians – identify partnerships and “birthing” opportunities
- Develop and implement AFC funding plan – apply for Northern Ontario status; explore grant opportunities; explore “free resources”; debunk Muskoka as only wealthy people
- Develop and implement education/public awareness for AFC – specific, focused multi-sector, multi-age education; ensure AFC part of all planning requirements; incorporate into school curriculum; evaluation system re: AFC status
- Cross reference to ensure compatibility with Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Research and update needed infrastructure to ensure that AFC concepts are included
- Political alignment for better collaboration between levels of government so working with one goal to better serve Ontario/Muskoka seniors
- Have political involvement in Muskoka AFC to ensure needs, requirements, funding and resource allocation line up

### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

*Anonymous comment cards completed at end of session (N=51)*

**OVERALL RATING: 4.6 out of 5**

#### Liked

- Well organized and covered a lot in a short amount of time
- Great engagement
- Information on what is happening to assist seniors in Muskoka
- Great opportunities for feedback from group
- Good attendance, especially seniors
- Found we were being listened to. Very positive.
- Good participation
- Consideration of many topics
- Organized, good flow
- Openness to ideas
- Wide variety of participants
- Group work
- Great facilitation, accomplished a lot

*... Cont'd*

### **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK (Cont'd)**

- Inspiring
- Flowed well, kept on track, not stagnant
- Networking and information sharing
- The enormous list of great ideas – excellent networking
- Like how quickly this process is rolling out
- Collaboration
- High level of group participation without singling people out who are shy to participate
- Liked the lunch
- Moved along well from facts to suggestions for action initiatives
- Liked being involved in the process
- Perfectly diverse group, lots of group dialogue
- Good mixing of groups
- The meeting kept moving at a great pace
- Variety of activities
- I really liked the dot charts – interesting to see where everyone's thoughts were
- Inclusiveness
- Good flip chart presentations
- Compact, no wandering or going off-topic
- Great chance to brainstorm and share ideas on seniors
- Excellent – consistent with other sessions
- Well run, smooth transitions
- Well organized and controlled

#### **Disliked**

- No real downside
- Worried that all this gets shelved
- SWOT not clear for participants
- Not enough opportunity for introductions; networking
- Room set-up was awkward
- Large groups - more time could have been allowed for more detailed discussions
- SWOT seems to be very overused – any different ways to get at this issue?
- Need more seniors, people at risk and doctors to attend
- Noise level during breakout groups – difficult to hear and concentrate
- Air conditioning too cold for seniors
- More preparedness and awareness would help
- Too much internet resources for information and not enough hard copy information

*... Cont'd*

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK (Cont'd)

### Comments and Suggestions

- Can't wait to see the printed outcome
- Follow-up session for update in one year
- Smaller groups, difficult for everyone to contribute
- Keep people at the tables – difficult at the walls
- Please do this every year, information is so important
- Hopefully suggestions will lead to success
- Push for implementation of some of these ideas. Control the politicians somehow.
- Do yearly seniors forum with similar discussion to keep up to date
- Exchange of participants' names and contact would have been good
- More time allocated for "SWOT" thoughts
- More reach out to municipal and library providers
- More time
- Follow-up communication is important
- Keep participants involved/updated in the process
- Follow up to see what was actually implemented
- Need to keep focused and clear direction
- More participation of hospital administrators or local health members
- Housing developers not present
- Hold annually and rotate location – i.e. Port Carling next year
- More advertising – heard that some people didn't know about this until last minute
- Would have liked the PowerPoint presentation ahead of time
- Service groups literature provided so we can information share
- Large amount of work to be done. Hope it doesn't take too long. Some of us don't have a lot of time left.
- Request how we want information to be shared once report completed
- Invite OPP
- Need a place where community agencies can put their flyers so others can get more information
- Would have liked to have had more verbal input from district on what they will do to implement our suggestions
- Wish I had known about this initiative from the beginning. Please contact local Probus Clubs (7 of them) where many of us are active. Churches as well.
- More media information resources – i.e. newsletter
- More recreation and social gathering in outlying areas that are affordable
- Results of seminar – where to get hard copy
- Keep going

Compiled by:

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