

“AGE FRIENDL Y”

Turning this iconic phrase into a reality for our Town

Pre COVID-19 presentation





***What does “Age Friendly” really mean?
Oh
And where did it come from?***

This iconic phrase appears to have gained its popularity during the turn of the 21st century

What is the history of the **Age-Friendly** Communities Initiative? In 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the Global **Age-Friendly** Cities Project.

“An **age-friendly** world enables people of all **ages** to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their **age**.”

This BROAD statement sounds **great**, but in reality, numerous communities used this statement to build more facilities for every age **EXCEPT** their elders. Dollars spent on the elderly was less than half that spent on other ages. That, and the recent controversies surrounding WHO, has led many elder advocates to adopt the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) interpretation

The **AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities** helps participating **communities** become great places for all ages by adopting such features as safe, walkable streets; better housing and transportation options; access to key services; and opportunities for residents to participate in **community** activities



So how are we doing as a community and provincially

1. Safe, walkable streets?

Are our streets in Merritt safe and walkable? Some work has indeed been done to make our streets safer, and others like eliminating the parking in front of our Post Office against the petitions and presentation from our Elders were ignored. Are our streets and walkways cleaned and cleared year round? Are Elder facilities and residence driveways and walkways cleared for elders who can not do it themselves?

Do elders feel safe walking our streets, or are they rather frightened that they might be physically assaulted? Are they Safe in their own homes? Our Provincial Highway system has seen a slow but steady decay in its safety standards and its convenience stops which Elders require to be able to travel. So as we can see there is much to be done just to make our streets safer for our valued elders.





2. Better housing options

How do we in Merritt measure up on Seniors housing? Unfortunately about the same as a lot of other communities. We associate “Low Cost” housing to be the answer for all person with a low income. So we pack Grandma into a building that has people with drug problems, or those just released from prison, or single parents with young children. There she sits afraid to even walk the halls of her own building.

Their other option is “**Subsidized**” housing in elder specific housing of which there are few vacancies and one can wait for over a year to get a spot. Plus you have to go through a credit check and screening process, that both embarrass and confuse many seniors. We have to remember our elders have all their lives been able to take care of themselves, and it is embarrassing for them to not be able to do this in their elder years.

The best and least expensive solution for Elder housing is to keep our seniors in their own homes for as long as possible. Unfortunately we here in Merritt are lacking many of the support mechanisms for this to occur. The City could also help in this by lowering city taxes/fees for seniors in their homes, after all elders consume less of all the services the City provides.



Transportation options

Transportation(BC Transit, Ebus, Handydart) once again noble efforts that falls sorely short of what is needed by the elderly. Side walks not cleaned, drive ways plugged by snow removal, sporadic bus services, highways and roads not cleared, poor signal light timing, unsafe traffic patterns, poor parking options(Post Office)

We as a community need to be much more proactive with our elderly, as they are the **biggest growing** segment of our community. Suggest that a walk and drive ability survey be done for Merritt Elders in all four seasons



COVID-19

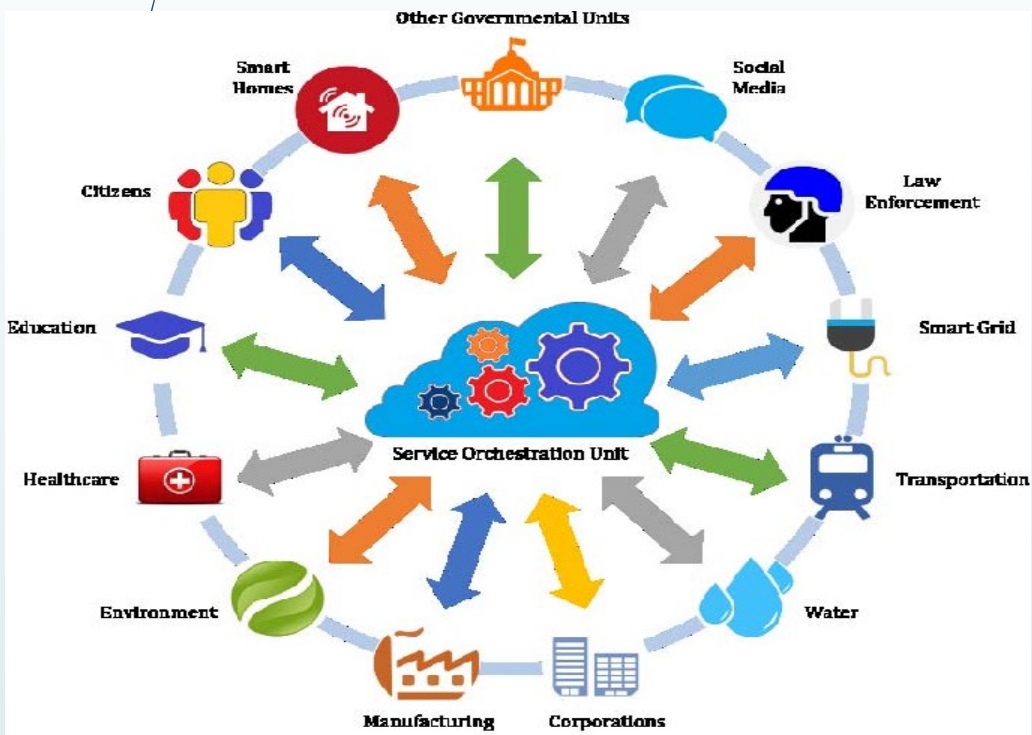
INFO


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peterborough.ca/covid19


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ALL SERVICES



URGENT HELP




BIG QUESTIONS



EVENTS



ABOUT





Access to key services

Do Elders in our community have full access to all Federal, Provincial, City key services?

Federal Offices have been closing, and replaced by computerized kiosks over the past decades. Try reaching CRA or any other federal agency on their publicly listed phone number which is what most elders feel comfortable with!! It used to be that you could walk into a federal building in every small town and speak to a federal employee about your concerns, Heck most towns had a federal employee come to your house five times a week. It was called Postal Service.

Provincial Offices have copied Big Brother for the most part. Just take a look at our provincial Highways and their lack of up keep.

The link between the everyday senior and their government has been shrinking yearly for the past five decades. This separation of citizens from their respective governments is leading to the chaos we are seeing in our large centers. Take locally: the City chose to eliminate the parking in front of our Post Office, counter to our elders requests.....So what is happening: the everyday citizens are ignoring this and parking there anyway. We need more discussions and openness with our residents young or old. Council needs to remember their bosses are the cities citizens, sometimes that has been lost



Merritt Newcomer Strategy

Helping Newcomers Thrive and Prosper

