



VILLAGE OF NEW MARYLAND
AGE-FRIENDLY AD HOC COMMITTEE

**COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT &
RECOMMENDATIONS**

FEBRUARY 2018



INDEX

Introduction	1
Community Demographics	2
Process	5
Areas for Action	7
• Housing	7
• Transportation	8
• Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	10
• Social Participation	12
• Respect and Social Inclusion	13
• Civic Participation and Employment	15
• Communication and Information	17
• Community Support and Health Services	18
Next Steps	20
Acknowledgements	21

INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the changing demographics of its community, Council for the Village of New Maryland (the Village), like other communities in New Brunswick and across Canada, has identified the need to initiate actions to support its aging population consistent with the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of an age-friendly community as a place that has an inclusive and accessible environment that retains its population by promoting healthy active aging.

To meet this goal, Village Council established the “Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee” in December 2016 with the following mandate:

- To engage with the residents of the Village to identify means by which Village seniors can be assisted in living safe, healthy lives and participating fully in society;
- To conduct an age-friendly assessment of the community which include a statistical profile of the Village, a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of Village support mechanisms for seniors living in the community, identification of issues and opportunities by which the Village may improve the quality of life for seniors living in the community and a summary of the assessment; and
- To provide recommendations to Council on how the Village may improve upon services and offerings to community seniors to make their lives more safe, healthy and involved/participatory while focusing on the feasibility of applying such measures through implementation of an action plan.

The Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee held its first meeting in February of 2017.

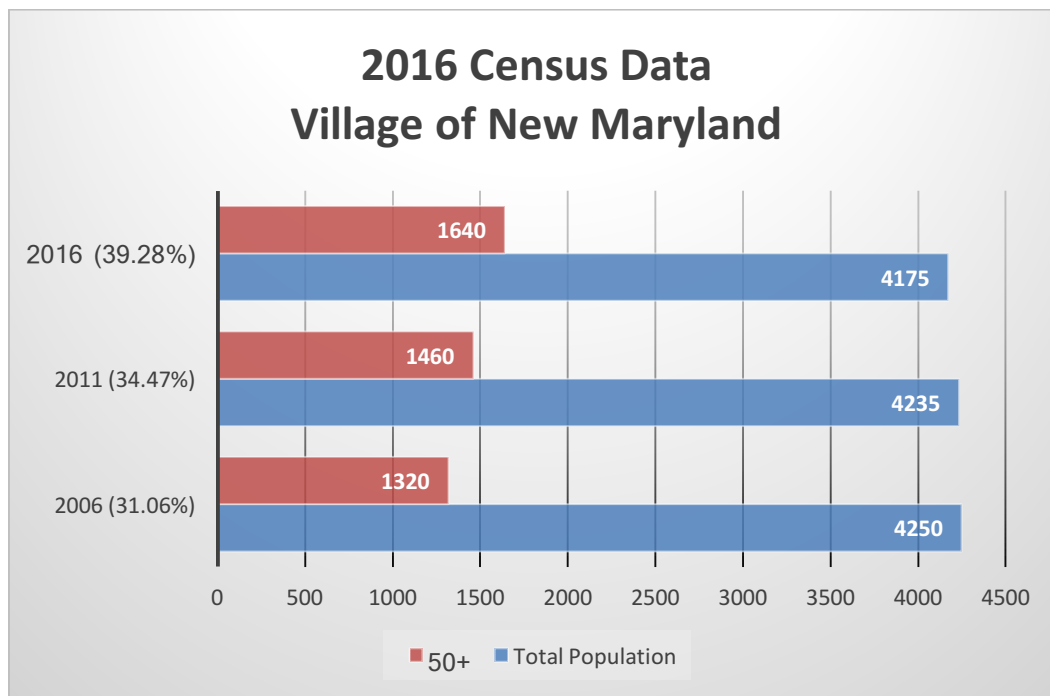


COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

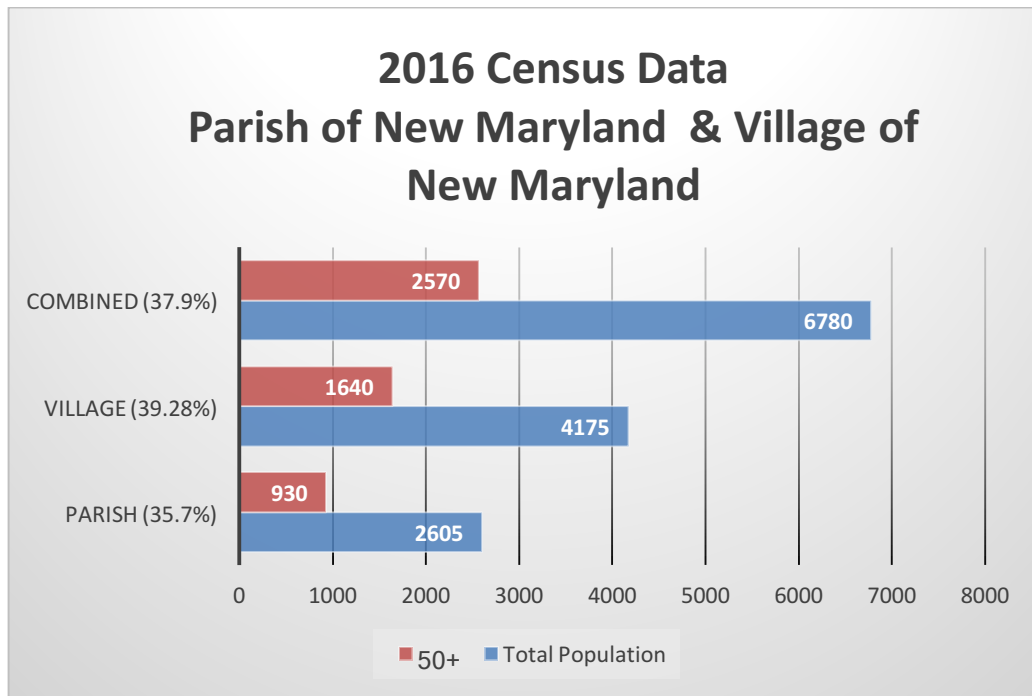
Statistics Canada's 2016 census data clearly indicated that the Village of New Maryland, like many other communities in New Brunswick, is seeing a change in its demographics.

According to the 2016 Census data, the Village has a population of 4,175 of which **39.28%** is currently over the age of 50.

The following chart indicates that although the Village population is slightly less in 2016 than it was in 2006, the percentage of the population over the age of 50 has increased by **8.22%**.



As indicated in the following chart, when the data from the Village is combined with that of the Parish of New Maryland, the percentage of people over the age of 50 decreases to 35.7%. The 2016 numbers also show that over the past 10 years there was a decrease in overall population for both communities of 2.7%.



The following points should also be noted:

- The data shows that from 2006 to 2016 the number of individuals living in New Maryland who are 60 years and older has been climbing from 12.8% of the total population to 23.83%.
- The data for New Brunswick over the same period shows a similar trend line with the number of individuals living in the province who are 60 years and older climbing from 20.3% of the total population to 27.68%.
- The median age for the Village of New Maryland population has increased from 38.6 in 2006 to 43 in 2016.

PROCESS

In order to meet its mandate, the Committee undertook a series of consultations which included a one-day forum, three focus groups meetings, and community inventory assessments which included both an inventory of services, programs and policies and a business inventory. Both inventories assessed the current level of services available to the community which would allow the committee to better determine the needs, priorities and wants of the community.



The community participated actively in all the sessions where participants were well informed and provided valuable input and information to the Committee. Overall, the population is satisfied with the quality of life and services that are provided in the Village. However, two recurring themes and priorities emerged at all the sessions: ***the need for alternative housing options for seniors*** and ***common/public transportation options for seniors***.

It became obvious during consultations and discussions with residents that they want to maintain the high quality of life currently enjoyed in the Village as they feel part of the community and appreciate the lifestyle and values of the Village. Unfortunately, many felt that for them to continue living in the Village in the future, Council will need to address shortcomings in housing options and transportation.

As a last step towards gathering more pertinent information, the Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee also conducted a detailed community survey in

November/December, 2017. This 20-minute survey was completed by 296 residents age 50 years and over. The findings provide further and similar insight into the issues already discussed and addressed in this report.

The findings of the consultations and assessments helped form the basis of the recommendations contained in this report. The Committee also recognizes that this is the first report that will provide recommendations to Village Council and will require on-going revisions to reflect future survey results and consultations and the changing needs of the community.

The recommendations made in this report are grouped according to the eight domains identified by the World Health Organization which influence the health and quality of life of older people.



Although the Committee recognizes that the recommendations in each of the domains are of equal importance, the Committee listed the Housing and Transportation domains as the first two areas to reflect their priority levels as identified during the consultation process.

AREAS FOR ACTION

HOUSING

Purpose

Ensure that housing is affordable, safe and well-designed for seniors.

Findings

Appropriate affordable housing for seniors is consistently the number one priority for Village seniors.

The forum, focus groups and surveys noted a critical lack of appropriate housing options for seniors in the Village. Long term residents have expressed significant frustration that the only option they had when considering downsizing or need for support was to leave the Village and move to other communities that offered such options.

A variety of different dwelling options need to be available – this could include apartment units in an older adult building, row housing, town homes, garden homes, smaller homes and condominiums targeted at seniors.

It is important to note that many residents would like to stay in their current homes but will or may require a range of support services from simple repairs and yard maintenance to some form of assisted living in order to do so.

Recommendations

- Initiate dialogue with developers and contractors to identify impediments and improve relationships that may have caused a lack of interest in developing suitable housing options.
- Undertake research to determine what types of housing best suits New Maryland's situation and provide developers in the community with that information to encourage their development of age-friendly housing options.
- Utilize Village owned property to entice developers to build age-friendly housing options.
- Review current zoning bylaws and Village policies in order to integrate different types of housing in the Village and support universal design for housing.
- Promote the need for more home repair, lawn mowing and snow removal services with service providers.

TRANSPORTATION

Purpose

Ensure that there are accessible and affordable transportation options for seniors.

Findings

For seniors, one of the main determinants of independence is mobility. Therefore, having transportation options available that are safe, accessible and affordable are important components of an age-friendly community. Those factors were rated as being “extremely important” to participants in focus groups and surveys.

Several options for transportation are already available for Village seniors ranging from resident owned motorized vehicles and active transportation (walking, running, bicycling) to taxi/shuttle services. However, the lack of affordable public transportation (bussing) was noted as a major concern. Cost, convenience and a lack of sufficient ridership have historically been noted as limiting factors on why public transportation is not yet available in the community.

Focus groups and survey respondents noted that park benches and public washroom availability is also an area of concern for active transportation participants in the community.

Recommendations

- Discuss bussing options with the City of Fredericton.
- Promote available taxi service and work with taxi companies on an awareness campaign, including current accessibility options that are available through at least one local taxi company.
- Approach the taxi companies and seek to increase the number of companies that offer senior's discounts.
- Expand existing sidewalk network and walking trails within the Village.
- Look to develop a walking / biking route between The Village and Fredericton to connect those trails between communities.
- Create bike lanes on community streets.



- Support the development of car-pooling / ride share / Dial-A-Ride programs to assist seniors who are not able to travel with their own vehicle and / or cannot afford the cost.
- Keep sidewalks in good repair and condition (including snow and ice removal) to avoid safety issues.
- Provide more park benches and public washrooms for active transportation participants.
- Approach RCMP to ensure stricter enforcement of traffic bylaws to address safety issues.

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Purpose

Ensure that outdoor spaces and public buildings are safe and well designed for seniors.

Findings

Individuals attending sessions and completing surveys felt that overall the buildings and outdoor spaces in the Village were age-friendly.



Although it was noted that businesses and the Village maintain their parking lots in good and safe conditions through the year, there is room for improvement.

One of the issues that surfaced at all meetings related to sidewalks. It was felt that sidewalks are generally considered to be in good condition and that the snow and ice clearance on sidewalks for the most part is not noted as a major concern.

Since sidewalks provide safety and health benefits for pedestrians, efforts should be made over the next several years to expand the sidewalk network throughout the Village.

Residents were grateful that new benches have been placed in the Village but noted that more could be added.

Some would very much like to see a walking and/or biking trail that connects the Village to Fredericton.

Recommendations

- Improve lighting on streets, sidewalks and highway.
- Improve lighting around the Village office.
- Expand the existing sidewalk network throughout the community.
- Pave the Victoria Hall parking area.



- Expand network of benches at parks.
- Introduce senior friendly park equipment.
- Ensure that audible crosswalk signals and extended time to cross are available at crosswalks.
- Introduce reflective signage and stakes for public office entrances / neighbourhoods and encourage businesses to do the same.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Purpose

Ensure that opportunities are available for seniors to be socially active.

Findings

Many seniors want to remain socially and physically active. They are pleased to attend various social events and organized activities in the Village. They would support more activities of this nature.



Some seniors would also like to be able to go out to meet and chat with old and new friends in a welcoming place over a cup of coffee.

Many seniors would be interested in contributing more of their time and expertise in volunteer work if it was more structured however, many noted a lack of easy to find information on volunteering had kept them from doing so.

Seniors also want their voice to be heard and are willing to play an active role in municipal affairs.

Recommendations

- Ensure Village sponsored events consider a senior's component / focus (ex. New Maryland Days).
- Consider accessibility limitations (including scheduling) of seniors in the design / participation of community programs and events (communication / promotion and transportation).
- Explore the possibility of expanding the use of the Church gyms during the day.
- Encourage local businesses to offer a meeting place for seniors and younger persons in a senior-friendly atmosphere.
- Encourage the development of more programs targeted to seniors.



RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Purpose

Ensure that relationships in the community are respectful and inclusive.

Findings

Respect not only encompasses the use of appropriate and courteous language, but goes further as a domain for age-friendly communities by seeking assurance that learning about ageing is included in training initiatives for Village staff and the community at large.

Senior participants throughout the consultation process expressed that they generally felt treated with respect within the community, however they repeatedly noted that the experiences and knowledge they have to offer should be viewed as a more valuable community asset.

Drawing on such wisdom is largely related to the extent to which seniors participate in the social, civic and economic life of the community. There is also a place for celebration of the achievements and contributions of seniors. One of the best ways in which to promote respect and social inclusion is to consider an approach that focuses on intergenerational programming, as opposed to senior-focused initiatives.

Areas for improvements in this domain can be challenging for community participants to put their finger on, thus the most critical action for the future is to ensure that direct effort is placed on ensuring all voices are heard and considered when informing decision-making. Respect and social inclusion is best demonstrated across the approach to all domains.

Francophone seniors appreciated that there have been improvements in providing services in French, however it was noted that there is room to increase services, acknowledgment and engagement.

Recommendations

- Review all Village materials to ensure inclusive language and images.
- Review what age-friendly training is incorporated into the orientation process for Village employees. Offer the training materials to local businesses to expand understanding of age-friendly rationale, principles, and practices.
- Establish generational advisory committees to Council (youth, seniors) to inform decision-making.
- Ensure public consultations are held during day time hours at locations frequented/accessible by seniors. Offer free/coordinated transportation.

- Implement a Senior Recognition Program through a spotlight series within the existing Village Newsletter. Highlight key achievements and volunteer contributions of Village residents within and outside the community.
- Promote the development of intergenerational programming with community partners such as the New Maryland Elementary School, local daycares, church youth networks and the PNM Zoomers.
- For Francophone residents of the Village, promote community events and activities at Centre Communautaire Sainte-Anne.
- Increase Village officials' attendance at age-friendly events and activities in the Francophone community.



CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Purpose

Ensure seniors can take part in volunteer, political and employment positions.

Findings

The Village has an abundance of qualified and able seniors who provide community volunteer, political and business organizations with great service and many have



indicated an interest in doing more volunteer work if there was easy to find information on such activities. The PNM Zoomers, the New Maryland Lion's Club and the New Maryland Community Support Group are excellent examples of such organizations that benefit immensely from the contributions of local seniors. Organizations outside the community (particularly business or employment organizations) could also benefit from the skills and experiences of local seniors however, community members often do

not hear about such opportunities because they are not promoted within the community.

The level of political participation or civic engagement is sometimes used to assess how healthy a democracy is. Council for the Village has senior representation however, there are no committees struck to regularly advise Council on matters impacting this segment of the population nor to gain their input on important community matters such as housing, transportation, recreation, planning, community safety, or taxation.

Recommendations

- Facilitate a job fair, training and employment postings in the greater community in order to support the employment of senior residents.
- Encourage volunteer organizations outside the community to promote their organizations to seniors within the Village (Meals on Wheels is an excellent example).
- Explore ways to structure volunteer opportunities within the Village and more effectively promote those activities on Village social media and other communication vehicles.
- Establish a Village seniors' advisory committee as a permanent committee of Council that meets regularly to discuss community matters that may impact their

lives so that Council may be more aware of such matters when making decisions.

- Establish generational advisory committees to Council (youth, seniors) to better inform decision-making.
- Work more closely with Provincial Senior Goodwill Ambassadors to help promote programs / support available to seniors in the Village.



COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Purpose

Ensure information is easy to find and easy to understand for seniors.

Findings

Seniors want to know what activities and resources are available to them to satisfy their regular and special needs. They have indicated that their preferred information sources are internet (email, website and social media), mail and community bulletin board.



Although communication is generally good (Facebook page, community bulletin board), the Village website is not very easy to navigate and not up to date at all times.

On a few occasions, the Village provided bilingual signs and information. This was greatly appreciated by the Francophone residents who would like to see more.

Recommendations

- Increase the level of communication by using multiple modes such as:
 - Internet (email, websites, social media)
 - Mail
 - Flyers
 - Newsletter
 - Community calendar/bulletin board
 - SMS text messaging of significant events and or needs (roaming bears, car broken into, events, residents needing something to borrow, to buy, transportation needs).
- Improve the level of bilingual communication to residents.
- Ensure Village written communication is available in large font / format.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Purpose

Ensure that appropriate health and support services are available to seniors.

Findings

Largely, the desire of seniors is to reside in a community that fosters and supports their independence. Community support and health services are vital to maintaining well-being and independence.

Participants in forums, focus groups and surveys, and review of asset mapping, indicated that the provision of an after-hours clinic is a well-used and well-needed resource in the Village. It was suggested that services could be expanded to include a wellness clinic, dentistry or gerontology supports.

There are also many community-based or provincial programs that support residents including the Extra Mural Program, the Red Cross, and Meals on Wheels. These programs should continue to be promoted widely.

The need for other programs that foster interdependence and independence were noted including supports for household chores, home care and long-term care options. When considering the viability for residents to remain in the community of their choosing, it is important not only to consider their health needs, but also that of their caregivers.

Concern was also noted about the lack of healthy and affordable food options within the Village.

Recommendations

- Explore expansion of the After-Hours Clinic to include a day-time Wellness Clinic which could provide regular blood pressure monitoring, weight monitoring and offer in-services on topics like fall-risk prevention, diabetes, dementia and caregiver supports.
- Promote community-based or provincial programs that support residents including the New Brunswick Extra Mural Program, the Red Cross, and Meals on Wheels. These programs should continue to be promoted widely.
- Attract a dentist to establish a practice in the Village.
- Create a directory of household support and care navigation services (including maintenance, housekeeping, snow removal, pet care, cooking, private home care) provided through volunteers or businesses.

- Link the promotion of existing (and developing) recreation programs with transportation supports (e.g. community garden, walking club, PNM Zoomers Club, open gym).
- Promote the desire for affordable healthy food options with Village convenience stores and restaurants and other sources.

NEXT STEPS

The residents of the Village responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to provide input into this process and expressed the hope that their recommendations and observations will not be ignored. It was noted that many of the issues raised in this process are not new and there is a hope that concrete actions will be undertaken by the Village.

The Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee feels that many of the recommendations contained in this initial report are achievable within the next year while others will require a more long-term and strategic approach that will likely have financial impacts on the Village.

To ensure the continuation of the work undertaken by the Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee over the past several months, the Committee recommends the following:

- That an advisory steering committee be immediately established to seamlessly continue the work of the Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee and to develop an action plan that would assist in the implementation of recommendations found in this initial report and any subsequent report(s) that may be prepared.
- The steering committee include representatives from Village Council, a representative from Village staff and residents of the community.
- The mandate of the Steering Committee would be:
 - To ensure follow up of the recommendations.
 - To develop an action plan. In particular, the Committee emphasized the need to create a short-term action plan on the attraction and development of senior housing options within the community.
 - To link with partners that have been identified in the recommendations.
 - To update recommendations based on future findings and needs of the community.
 - To ensure ongoing communications with residents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Committee wishes to acknowledge and recognize the following people and organizations that have provided direction, guidance and support in the preparation of this report:

We would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Government of New Brunswick which has developed an “*Aging Strategy for New Brunswick*” document with resources and guides to assist and encourage communities in the Province to build environments where seniors can age actively, live in security and enjoy good health. The materials and direction provided were instrumental in organizing our efforts to ensure all aspects of an age-friendly community were recognized and addressed.

We’d also like to thank the City of Fredericton’s Age-Friendly Community Committee for their assistance in pointing us in the right direction. This committee’s experience and knowledge were very helpful to our committee’s efforts.

Several businesses and organizations also donated their time and resources to making the consultation efforts a success including:

- Tony Spares, Wealth Management, Scotia McLeod
- Samimi’s Convenience Store, Esso Mall
- PNM Zoomers
- Joe Valentino, New Maryland Pharmacy
- Elliot McCrea Hill, Barristers and Solicitors
- Animal Attraction, Esso Mall
- A.L.L. Accounting Services, New Maryland
- CUT - N - RUN & ESTHETICS, New Maryland
- Judy Wilson-Shee, Explore Your World Daycare
- Fidelity
- Covey Basics
- Sobey’s Prospect Store
- MLA Jeff Carr
- Greater Fredericton Social Innovation
- Atlantic Institute on Aging
- St. Thomas University

We would like to thank the Mayor and Council for providing the opportunity to the citizens of the Village to participate in this initiative. Their support in this endeavour ensured its success.

Finally, the work summarized in this report could not have been done without the tremendous efforts of the members of the Age-Friendly Ad hoc Committee who graciously and generously volunteered their time and efforts to make this report possible.

A special thank you to all the members of the community who participated in the consultation process and provided valuable information and insight.



Age-Friendly Community Ad hoc Committee