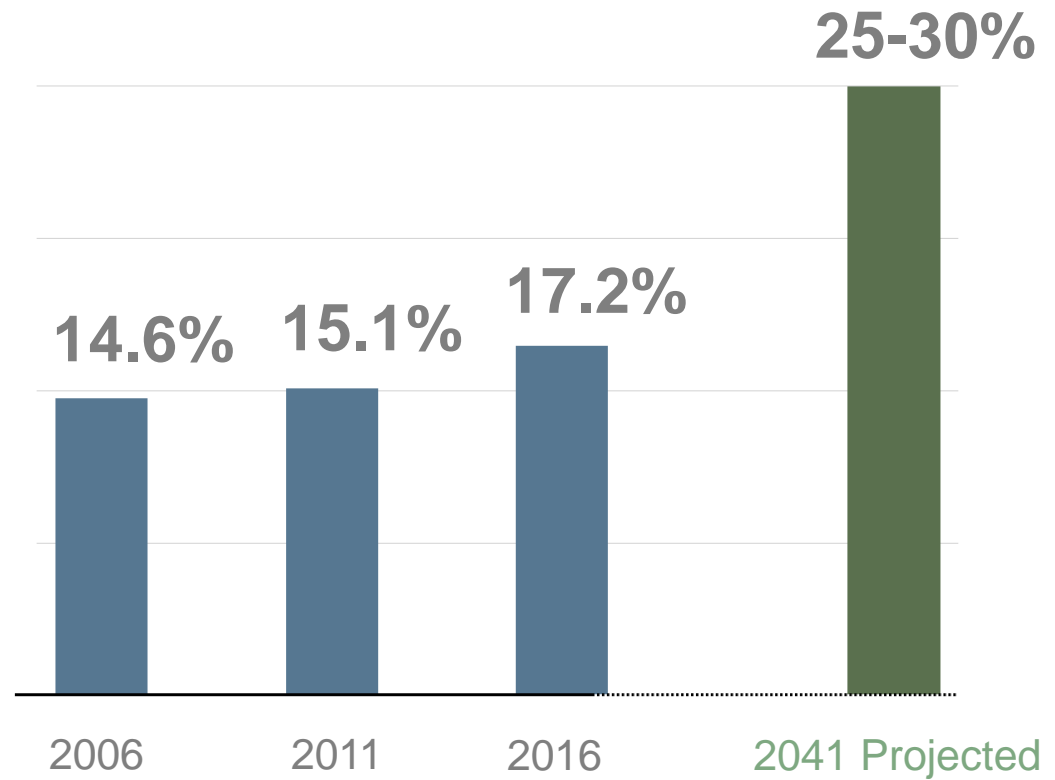


***Healthy At Home:*** Addressing senior's mental health and reducing social isolation during the COVID-19 Pandemic



# Aging in Brantford


By 2041, it is projected that **one in four** Brantford residents will be 65 or older.




# Creating an Age-Friendly Plan

**HEALTHY AGING**


City of Brantford Age-Friendly Strategy 2020



Accessible formats and communication supports available upon request.  
For more information, please contact the City of Brantford Municipal Accessibility Coordinator by telephone at (519) 759-4150 or by e-mail at [accessibility@brantford.ca](mailto:accessibility@brantford.ca).



## 2. Transportation



Being able to travel within a community has a significant impact on social participation and access to community and health services. The World Health Organization defines Age-Friendly transportation as accessible and affordable public transit and taxis; well-maintained roads and parking lots; and competent drivers.

Dashboard	Current State	Target
<b>Accessible transit fleet</b> Metric: % of fully accessible public transit buses	100% (2017)	100% (2020)
<b>Transit shelters</b> Metrics: % of transit stops with shelters	14% (2017)	30% (2021)
<b>Transit access</b> Metric: % of residences within 400m of transit stop	94% (2017)	95% (2021)
<b>Cycle network</b> Metric: km of dedicated bike lanes	17.2 km (2017)	25 km (2020)

**Strategy 2.1** Improve access to public transit.

- Action A. Expand opportunities to educate riders on navigating the transit system.
- Action B. Increase number of bus shelters at bus stops.
- Action C. Continue improvements of downtown transit terminal.
- Action D. Review accessibility of current ticketing system.
- Action E. Implement recommendations of the Comprehensive Transit Review.

**Strategy 2.2** Improve accessibility of city roads and municipal parking.

- Action A. Increase size of street signs.
- Action B. Increase number of advance green lights at busy intersections.
- Action C. Increase left and right turn lanes at busy intersections.
- Action D. Prioritize parallel on-street parking over perpendicular or angled parking.

**Strategy 2.3** Support initiatives that promote active and connected transportation systems.

- Action A. Expand cycling network.
- Action B. Collaborate with community agencies to enhance additional transportation options.
- Action C. Advocate for transportation options in neighbouring communities to ensure surrounding residents are able to access health, recreational, commercial, and social services in the City of Brantford.

# Healthy Aging and Wellness Reserve

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**Funding:** \$100,000 annually from Casino Legacy Funds for three years

**Use:** one-time costs to support the implementation of the Age-Friendly plan

**Reporting:** Annual Reports to Council



# What is Social Isolation?

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- Low quantity and quality of contact with others
- Involves few social contacts and few social roles
- Absence of mutually rewarding relationships



Social isolation can lead to poor health, loneliness, emotional distress and other negative effects.

Social isolation of seniors - Volume 1: Understanding the issue and finding solutions





# Seniors and Social Isolation

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- Research shows that an estimated 30% of Canadian seniors are at risk of becoming socially isolated
- According to the International Federation on Aging, “the number one emerging issue facing seniors in Canada is keeping older adults socially connected and active”



Social isolation of seniors - Volume 1: Understanding the issue and finding solutions



# Brantford's Response

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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Brantford developed programs to reduce social isolation and minimize the mental health effects of physical distancing.

These initiatives connected residents to virtual programming, opportunities for social interaction, and community resources.



# Seniors Outreach Calls

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- **March 19, 2020** - City of Brantford declares state of emergency
- **Our Response:**
  - Phone-based check ins with seniors' affordable housing site tenants
  - Distribute or provide connections to community resources
  - Help address specific concerns raised
- **Total Connections: 924 tenants**





# Seniors Outreach Calls

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- **Trends:**

- Limited access to food and other necessities
- Mental health concerns related to isolation
- Inability to access virtual services
- Confusion about physical distancing measures
- Concerns about staying physically active while at home



# Activity

## Instructions:

- Imagine you are part of a small phone-based outreach team connecting with seniors in the early stages of COVID-19
- We will go through each scenario and brainstorm ideas to support these seniors
- We will explain how the City of Brantford and its partners responded to these scenarios at the end



# Brantford's Response

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- **Scenario 1:** Emergency Food Hamper Delivery Program
- **Scenario 2:** Wellness Chats Program
- **Scenario 3:** Information & Resources Packages
- **Scenario 4:** Wellness Checks



# Phone-in Line

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The City of Brantford partnered with the community organization, SKIP to launch "Buzz Me". This would provide seniors with the opportunity to connect with trained volunteers to share resources and engage in friendly conversations over the phone.

**SKIP**



**buzz me**





# Counselling Service

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In response to seniors' mental health concerns, the City partnered with the Family Counselling Centre of Brant to offer free mental health counseling to adults 50+





# Information Packages

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Every tenant in seniors social housing received a resource package that included information about:

1. Accessing groceries
2. Mental health resources
3. Free phone-based activities
4. How to remain connected to the community.

Staff also developed an activity guide and all residents received a free exercise band to exercise safely from home.



# Phone in Recreation Program

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- Many senior tenants shared feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- Healthy Aging Without Walls was created so adults 50+ could participate in fun, educational programs within their community



# On-Site Ambassadors

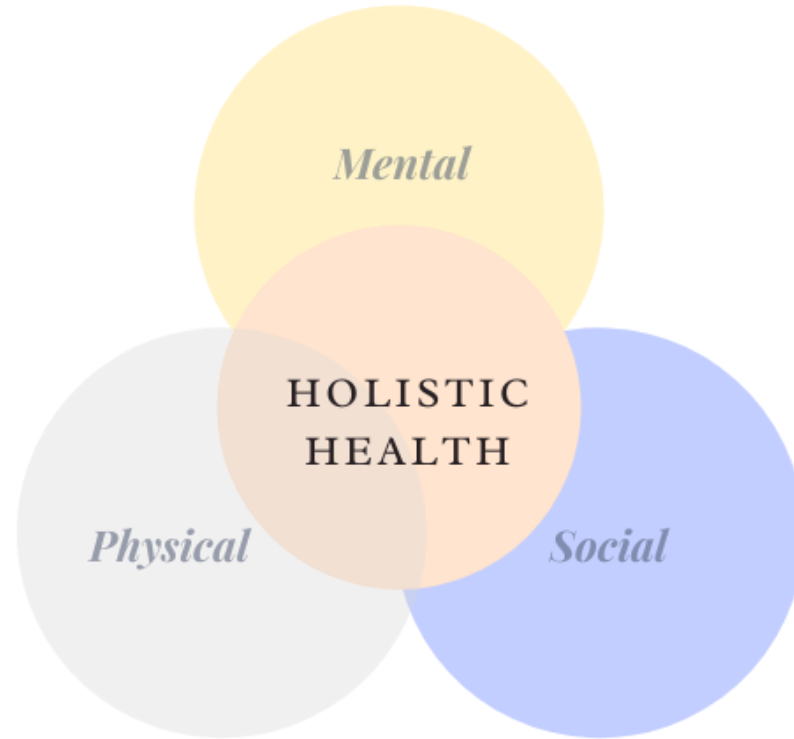
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- A team from Parks and Recreation became on-site greeters at senior residences
- In addition to screening visitors, these ambassadors provided recreational activities that residents could do from their homes while maintaining necessary physical distancing measures



# Holistic Health

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# Activity #2

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- What does Holistic Health Mean to you?
- What aspects of health contribute to your overall well-being?

1. List at least one thing you have done to support your physical well-being?

2. Identify at least one thing you have done to support your mental / emotional well-being?

3. Name something that you have done to support your social well-being?

