



3. Municipality of **HAMIOTA**

INTRODUCTION

Hamiota is a municipality in southern Manitoba, about 285 kilometres from Winnipeg [Figure 3-1]. The community offers a variety of services facilitated by their Age-Friendly Committee designed to help residents age in place.



Figure 3-1. Aerial View of Hamiota.

The goal of our report is to provide an analysis of the current conditions of Hamiota with regards to age-friendliness. For this process, we used four categories from the World Health Organization’s guide for Global Age-Friendly Cities to build a framework for our analysis: housing, open spaces, transportation, and social participation.

During the research and coordination process we determined that placemaking would be an appropriate overarching concept around which each intervention could be developed. Hamiota has a proud history and many amenities and attractions that would benefit from more exposure and accessibility. Placemaking involves highlighting points of interest and gathering spaces in the interest of emphasizing community identity.

Our meetings with the Age-Friendly Committee as well as

their participation on an interactive Social Pinpoint map and our own research informs our work.

BACKGROUND

History

In the late 19th Century, Europeans were encouraged by settlers in western Canada to move to Canada. During this time, a family bearing the surname Hamilton settled in the area that would become Hamiota and opened a post office. The name of the town became Hamilton, named after the family, but this caused confusion due to the town in southern Ontario by the same name (The History of Hamiota, 1949).

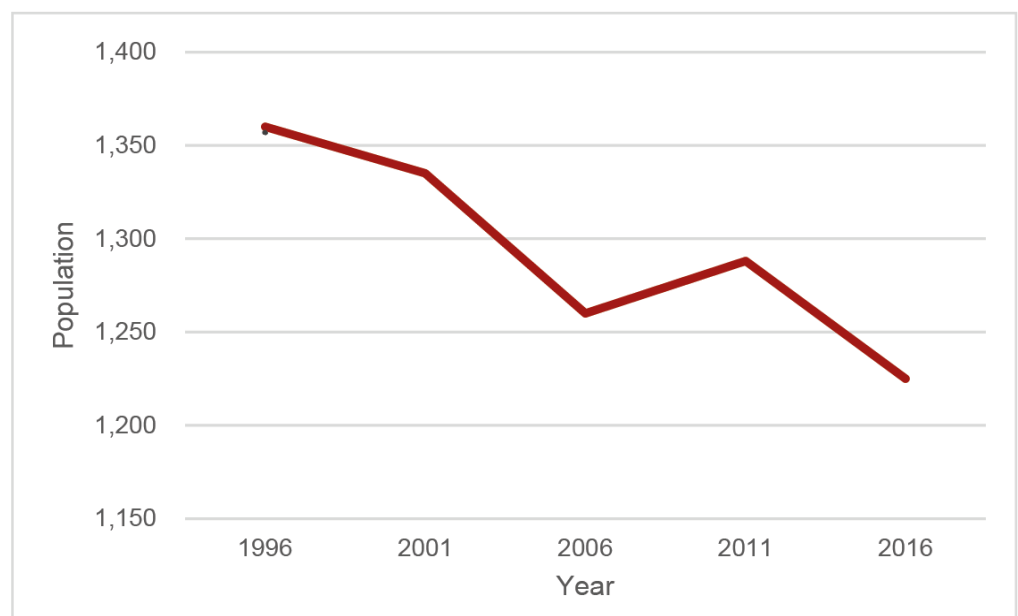
The name was changed Hamiota, using the first syllable of Hamilton, combined with an Indigenous word, “Iota,” which means “plenty.”

Not long after, a railway station was built in the settlement, and the first passenger train came through in 1891 (The History of Hamiota, 1949).

Growth

Hamiota has a population of 1,225 people, which has been declining at a rate of 0.98% per year from 2011 to 2016 [Chart 3-1] (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Chart 3-1: Population Growth.

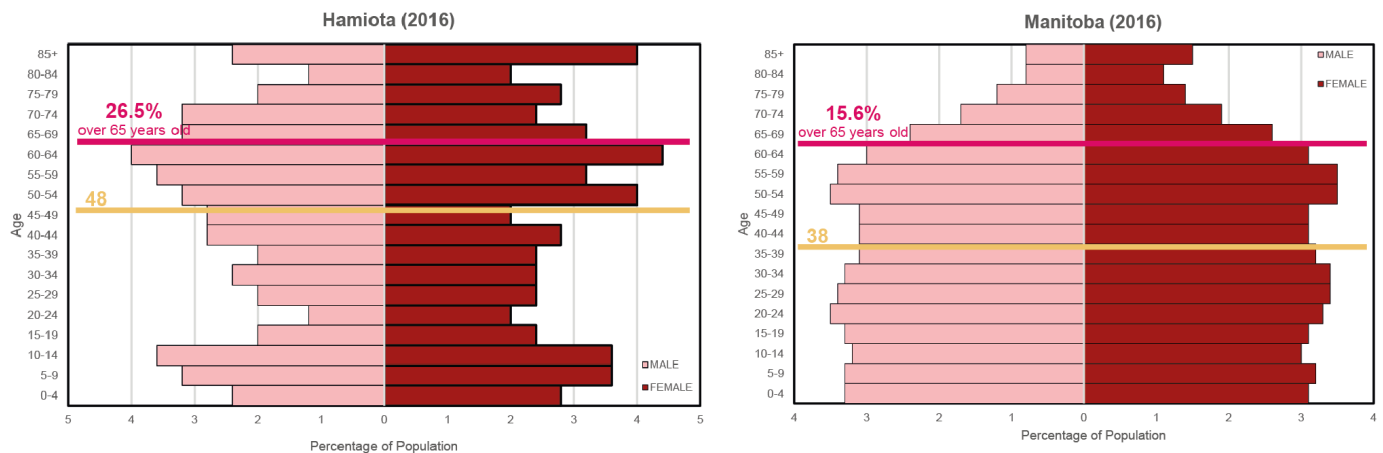


Income and demographics

The median annual household income in Hamiota is \$60,928 per year, which is lower than the national household median income in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The largest population of Hamiota is the group between 60 and 64 years old, comprising 8% of the population. The least populated group is between 20 and 24 years old. The median age is 48 years old [Chart 3-2] (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Chart 3-2: Population pyramids for Hamiota and Manitoba.



HOUSING

What we learned

Municipal leadership and the Age-Friendly committee are committed to finding and developing housing solutions for its aging population. They work closely with seniors and their families to identify and reduce the barriers to ageing in their community, and overall, feel that Hamiota is an accessible community for its seniors to age in place. The following are some of things that we heard during our consultation with community members from Hamiota:

- Seniors do not generally need to leave due to lack of housing

PLACEMAKING

“Reimagining and reinventing public spaces as the heart of every community...paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution” (Project for Public Spaces)

- Homes can be retrofitted with accessibility features (ramps)
- One building (Lilac Residence) has fully accessible suites (2 units)
- Potential need for new housing (somewhere in-between independent living and personal care home), close to town center, that allow seniors to move out of 2+ storey homes into more accessible housing
- Co-housing was well received – interested in looking at long term solutions for this option
- Some AF housing concepts have been discussed but have never gotten off the ground

What we propose

Based off the community engagement session, the following conditions were revealed to us. The development of new housing options for seniors is not a major priority, as the community has options available to seniors. Hamiota could benefit from options for seniors that want to downsize or move into a rental apartment in town that are more accessible and closer to town amenities. Additionally, for the seniors looking to maintain their independence, there are no transitional housing options available to them.

Lastly, seniors need community-oriented housing that prevents social isolation and ensures that they are supported for as long as they need. The following are our recommendations for addressing the issues raised from the community of HP:

Affordable housing - 3-Plex universal housing

According to Global Age-Friendly Cities, affordable housing should be available to all older adults. Figure 3-2 shows a precedent from Baldur, MB. This is a 3-plex AF life-lease housing complex. Affordability was increased by a dramatic reduction of project construction cost due to the donation of land owned by the RM. The development of this type of housing is needed close to the center of the municipality so that seniors have easy access to amenities.



Figure 3-2. Baldur 3-Plex Seniors' Housing.

Transitional housing - Secondary Suites

Secondary suites or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) give aging individuals the opportunity to maintain a sense of independence while eliminating the burden of yard care and home maintenance [Figure 3-3]. These also allow seniors to settle in family/friend groups that encourage socialization and community building while avoiding seniors' home if unwanted.

Figure 3-3. Accessory Dwelling Units or Granny Flats.



Cohousing

Seniors Cohousing is a “neighbourhood focused on aging well in community” (Canadian Cohousing Network, 2021). Cohousing provides an option for seniors to group together or live in an intergenerational environment encouraging social and neighbourly community building. This type of housing is designed for social and financial accessibility through density, reduced energy demand and communal design. Individually owned housing units surrounded by shared amenities, preserve privacy while maintaining a sense of community [Figure 3-4].

Figure 3-4. Cohousing Community in Roberts Creek, British Columbia.





TRANSPORTATION

What we learned

We gathered valuable information regarding local transportation during our series of meetings with Hamiota's Age-Friendly Committee, which we were able to apply to our research into what strategies and implementations would best suit the municipality. The following list encompasses the points of significance raised during the meetings regarding transportation in Hamiota.

- The town is small, so transportation within the town is not normally an issue.
- Hamiota has a lot of walkers and good access to trails that accommodate walkers, cyclists and skiers in the winter.
- Vacant crop fields become the Snoman trail in the winter months for snowmobiles.
- Small trails link town areas and often keep people away from the roads.
- Sidewalks and paved pathways are well maintained, and snow is removed from some sidewalks.
- Drivers are respectful and careful within the community.
- The Handi-Van service and volunteer drivers help those who don't drive, but other than these there are few options.
- A driving school has visited the town in previous years to assist senior drivers – this has been well received.
- Many local stores offer delivery to eliminate the need for travel.

What we propose

There has been some excellent work done in Hamiota already to facilitate movement throughout the municipality. In our final meeting with the Age-Friendly Committee, we outlined some possible areas of improvement and strategies with which to approach them. We then received feedback on our suggestions from the committee during the discussion sessions. This is where the expertise of those living in the municipality was most important, as they were able to provide their insight on how our suggestions relate to the specific dynamics of Hamiota.

The following is the finalized list of implementations for the municipality to consider, created based on our research into Hamiota, precedents, WHO guidelines and feedback from the AF Committee. As with all the sections, these implementations are structured within the placemaking framework. The processes for achieving these goals will vary in time and resources required to complete them, which is indicated alongside each implementation.

Connect the trails to the town and vice versa to establish placemaking

- Establishing Maple Avenue as part of the trail system encourages the understanding that the trails are a staple feature of the municipality [Figure 3-5].

Figure 3-5. View of Maple Avenue. (Before and After)





- Having a street as part of a trail can bring new meaning to the streetscape as trail users are led into the town center as part of the placemaking efforts

**Seek legalization for golf cart and possibly utility task vehicle (UTV) use on municipal streets.
[Figure 3-6]**

- Small personal vehicles can be an enjoyable and safe alternative to car use and ownership for those who cannot or do not want to drive [Figure 3-7].

Figure 3-6. Golf Cart in Golf Cart Lane.



Figure 3-7. Left: Golf Cart and Bike Lanes in Surprise, Arizona.

Figure 3-8. Right: Golf Cart on Trail in Lyons, Colorado.



- Other small towns in North America have adopted golf cart use on municipal roads to much success [Figure 3-8].
- UTVs help overcome the barriers of winter, with four-wheel-drive and heated cabins [Figure 3-9].

Figure 3-9. Left: Polaris Ranger UTV.

Figure 3-10. Right: Senior on Electric Assist Bike.



Introduce a bike share program, including electric assist bikes, three-wheel tandem bikes and wheelchair bikes [Figure 3-10].

- Like the small personal vehicles, bicycles available for rent or lend are an excellent alternative to cars during months warmer weather [Figure 3-11].
- Bicycles encourage physical activity and outdoor exposure. [Figure 3-12].



Figure 3-11. Left:
Tandem E-Bike.



Figure 3-12. Right:
Wheelchair Bike.

Create multimodal trails and pathways to increase transportation convenience and accessibility [Figure 3-13].

- Diversifying trail usage can increase usership and accessibility.



Figure 3-13. Multimodal
Trail in Peach Tree City, Georgia.



BUILDING AND OPEN SPACES

What we learned

Hamiota has two main destinations that characterize the town and attract visitors from other parts of the region. These landmarks are the Hamiota Health Centre [Figure 3-14] and the Sports Complex [Figure 3-15]. Most of the main destinations are located within a walking distance [Figure 3-16]. However, streets and sidewalks could be improved to be more walkable and safer for seniors [Figure 3-17].



Figure 3-14. Left:
*Hamiota Health Centre
Aerial View.*

Figure 3-15. Right:
Sports Complex Aerial View.

Figure 3-16. Walking Distances Map.

The commercial area is concentrated on Maple, including local shops, restaurants, a hotel, a post-office, a co-op market, and a pharmacy [Figure 3-18]. Residents in the municipality have access to most of the services they need.

Institutional and recreational buildings provide good opportunities for socialization within the municipality. The community centre, the elementary school, and the churches

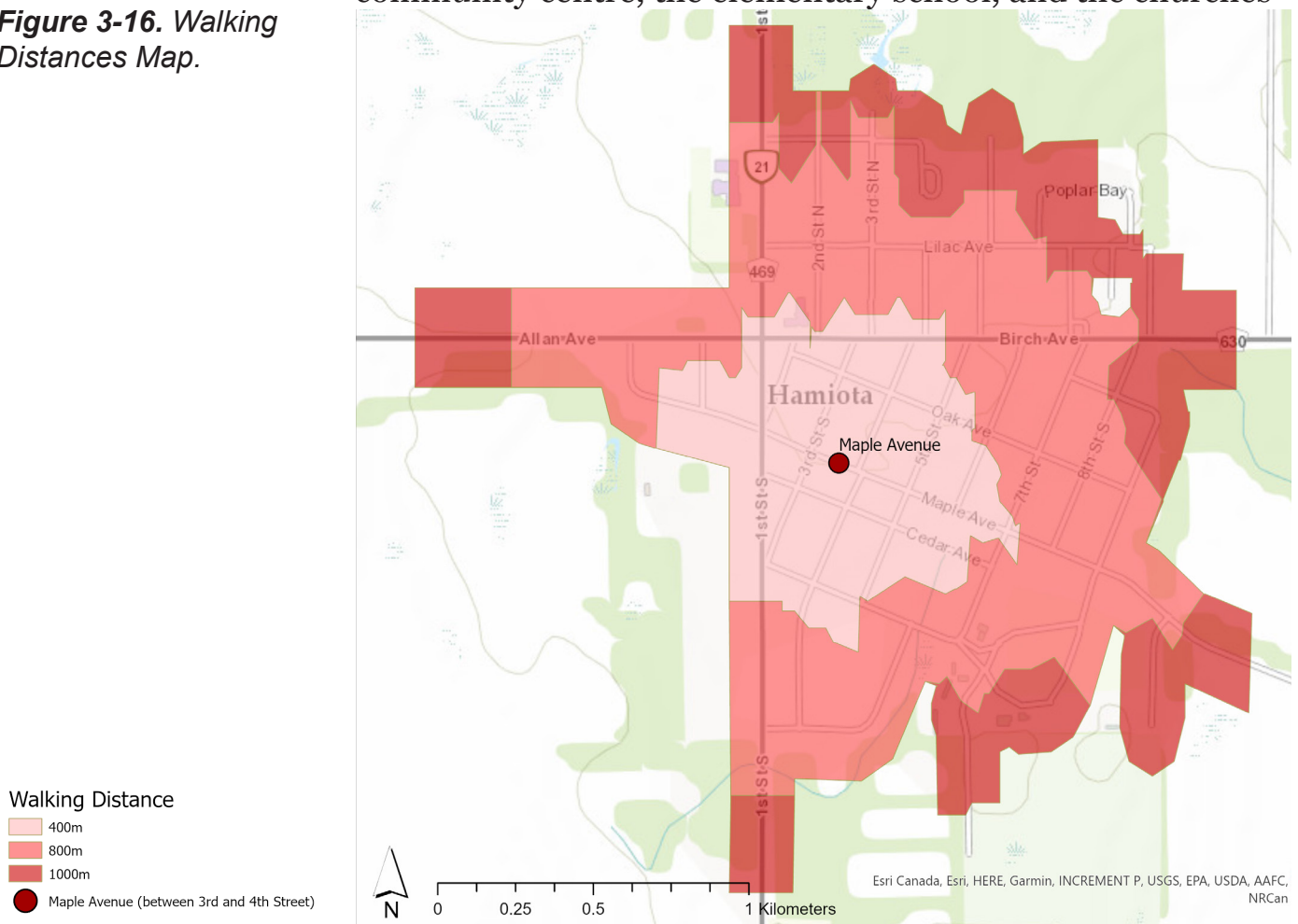


Figure 3-17. Map of Buildings and Open Spaces in Hamiota.



are some of the most popular seniors' gathering places in this town [Figure 3-19].

Hamiota also offers a variety of open spaces. Sporting and recreational activities play a strong role in the community. Open spaces promoting intergenerational activities include parks, a memorial, an aquatic centre, a sports complex, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, and a golf course [Figure



Figure 3-18. Left: Co-Op Store.



Figure 3-19. Right: Community Centre.

3-20]. There are two popular trails located along the former railway line, the Pitlochry Trail to the east, and the Chumah Trail to the west.

What we propose

Figure 3-20. *Millenium Park.*



Main street revitalization (Long-Term)

Objective: Boost tourism and obtain better spaces that will benefit seniors by using placemaking strategies on the main street of the town.

Development: Focus on commercial clusters on the main street. Most businesses are located within a walking distance from each another, customers can go to several places within one automobile trip.

- Provide a guide with accessibility standards for new developments and to adapt existing public buildings. (Short-Term)
- Reinforce landmarks within the village through wayfinding elements, improve signage and express the essence of the town. (Short-Term)
- Implement streetscaping elements following a design guide that reflects the identity of Hamiota. Special attention on street façade cohesion (elements and

materials), paving, lighting, vegetation, public art, benches, and bike racks. (Short and Medium-Term)

Precedent: Main Street Revitalization Movement in Crystal Lake, Illinois [Figure 3-21].

Area of Intervention: Maple Avenue [Figure 3-22].

Benefits for Seniors: Tourism will encourage investment and new development, improving housing opportunities and access to better services. Improving walkability conditions in the commercial hub will provide seniors the opportunity to walk and rest when making short trips to access basic services and goods.

Barriers: Limited budget, Provincial regulations.



Figure 3-21. Main Street Revitalization Movement in Crystal Lake, Illinois.

Figure 3-22. Map of proposed interventions in Hamiota.



Gathering spots enhancement and connection (Medium-Term)

Objective: Embrace outdoor gathering spots and connect them as part of the Main Street Revitalization strategy.

Development: Vacant lots and remanent spaces around main destinations can be transformed into temporal or permanent pocket plazas to rest and socialize. Seasonal programs to launch public events and leisurely activities to make some of these spots more engaging. These outdoor spaces will complement indoor gathering spaces such as the Community Centre and the Sports Complex. The purpose is to create intergenerational experiences all year round.

Pocket parks and plazas are a placemaking strategy for filling open spaces. These installations focus on providing comfort and making ordinary spaces a place with purpose. Their features can be as simple as benches and shade or as complex as paved paths, water fountains, and play

structures. Pocket parks and plazas create continuity along the frontage of a street and are flexible enough to adapt to the immediate needs of the area. They can scale to fit any size and budget and get use out of otherwise unoccupied land. Installations can be temporary to showcase an area for future development, or permanently built to stand for generations.

Precedents: Pocket Plaza in Stevens Creek [Figure 3-23].

Area of Intervention: Spaces adjacent to main destinations such as the co-op store, churches, restaurants, or the post office. Current open green spaces, such as parks, can also be improved and integrated into this network [Figure 3-24].

Benefits for Seniors: Provide opportunities to rest and socialize, make walking trips more comfortable and enjoyable.

Barriers: Private properties, Limited budget.



Figure 3-23. Pocket Plaza in Stevens Creek.



Figure 3-24. View of proposed Pocket Plaza on Maple Avenue.

Trail accessibility and connection (Medium-Term)

Objective: Improve trails’ accessibility for seniors and integrate both systems to the Main Street Revitalization program. Trails will play a central role in strengthening the town’s sense of place.

Development: Improve trails’ access points by including amenities such as seating areas, shading structures, public washrooms, and bike racks. Implement wayfinding elements and signage in access points to indicate trail sections that have been adapted to be accessible to seniors. Connect both trails to the Main Street program and add bike on strategic points to promote multi-modal use.

Precedents: [Figure 3-25] and Trail Town Program throughout Western Pennsylvania [Figure 3-26].

Area of Intervention: Access points of Chumah Trail [Figure

Figure 3-25. Left: Trail Restroom in Austin, Tx.

Figure 3-26. Right: Trail Town Program throughout Western Pennsylvania.



3-27] and Pitlochry Trail [Figure 3-28].

Benefits for Seniors: Amenities in access points provide spaces for seniors to rest and continue their walk. Promoting the use of trails as open spaces allows seniors to improve their health, integrate to popular recreational activities, and socialize with the community.

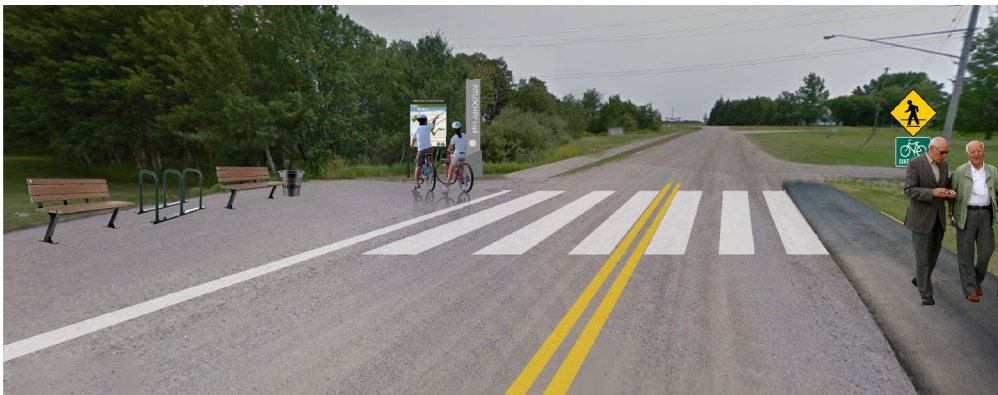
Barriers: Private properties, Limited budget, Provincial regulations.



Figure 3-27. Proposed intervention in the Chumash Trail Access Point.



Figure 3-28. Increasing Connectivity to the Pitlochry Trail. (Before and After).



HAMIOTA AGE-FRIENDLY COMMITTEE:

“Everyone knows everyone, and that makes us feel safe in our community.”



SOCIAL

What we learned

Hamiota has a strong sense of community. When asked about their favourite part of living there, residents replied the people. Citizens feel there is a lot to do around town, with community members getting involved in a broad spectrum of initiatives and activities. Hamiotans of all ages volunteer in cultural activities like sports and the arts, while social clubs like yoga and quilting drive intergenerational bonding. Recommendations in the realm of socialization are built off this strong foundation of community spirit. Strategies are organized under three common areas of intervention.

What we propose

Enhancing existing social spaces

Social life happens all over town at any opportunity, be it the grocery store, the post office, or a paper route. Capitalizing on areas of informal socialization by enhancing these locations results in more comfortable and inviting spaces.

- Protection from the elements can come in the form of canopies fixed to buildings above doorways or from umbrellas placed along sidewalks and open spaces [Figure 29]. They provide relief from sun and rain, making it more comfortable to remain outdoors.
- Combining this feature with moveable furniture in the



Figure 3-29. Proposed intervention at the library's entrance. (Before and After).



form of tables and chairs makes the space adaptable, comfortable, and inclusive for those with difficulty standing for extended periods.

- Spaces may be further enhanced by increasing visual appeal through plantings and murals. Adding greenery to storefronts and sidewalk makes a space more interesting to look at, and murals provide an opportunity to showcase the talent of local artists [Figure 3-30].

Targeting interventions to spaces where people already gather encourages longer stays and changes the perception of what places have to offer.



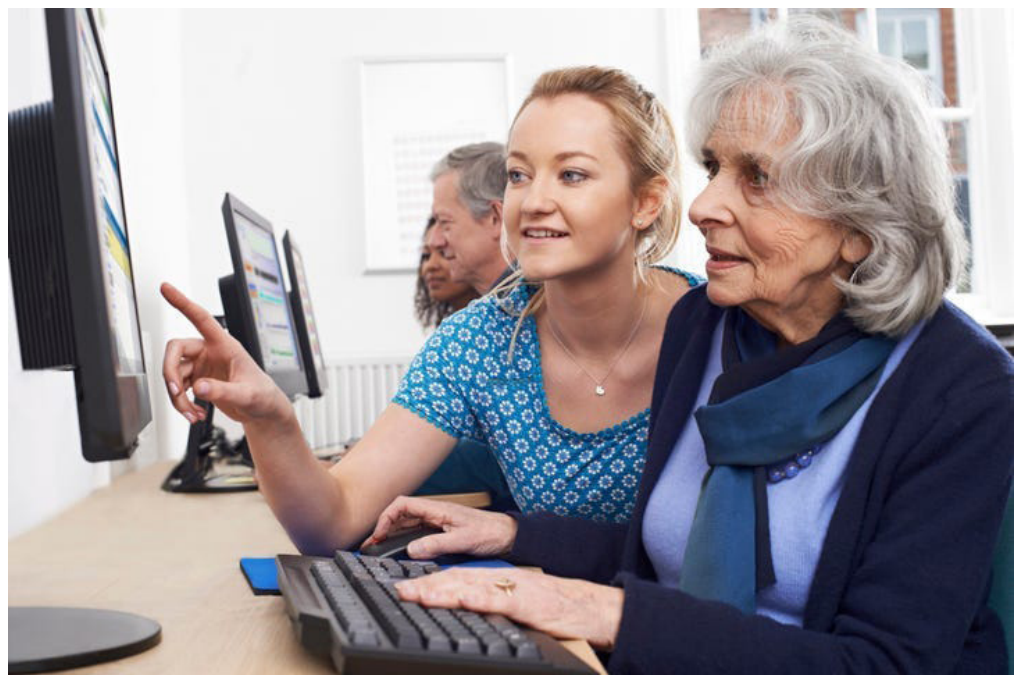
Figure 3-30. *Proposed artistic intervention. (Before and After).*

Strengthening intergenerational ties

The people of Hamiota are its greatest resource. Interventions in this area are made possible by Hamiota's culture of volunteerism and seek to share the wealth of knowledge available from residents.

- Run a series of learning circles to share skills on a variety of topics. Sessions are led by community members of all ages and abilities with something to share [Figure 3-31].
- Work with students from Hamiota Collegiate to lead technology learning sessions for seniors. Student can log these hours for a volunteer credit toward graduating high school.
- Seniors and other adults can teach life skills like job

Figure 3-31. *Social activities.*



interview prep, cooking, or any talent they would like to share with others.

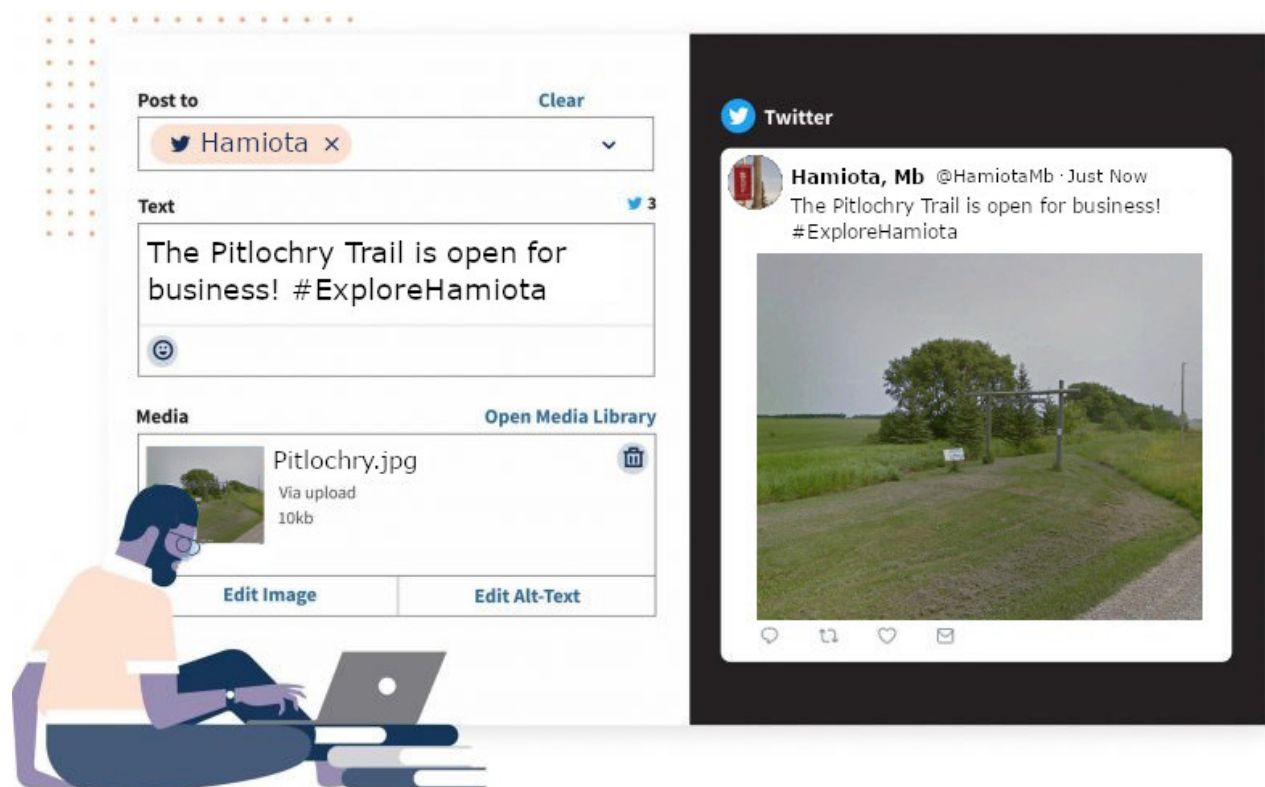
When people learn from each other, they gain a sense of respect and understanding for one another. Learning circles bring people of all ages together and strengthen the social fabric.

Improving social media presence

The COVID-19 Pandemic has made people more reliant on the internet and social media for sharing news, information, and keeping in touch. Hamiota has a strong web presence, with a municipal website that incorporates feeds from Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Interventions in this area seek to get more out of these platforms.

- Free software like Later or subscription software like Hootsuite [Figure 3-32] can manage social media postings across multiple platforms. Uniform postings maintain consistency and ensures all information reaches its audience regardless of their chosen platform.
- Social media is an opportunity to showcase community

Figure 3-32. Platform for social media management.



events. Designating a photographer or inviting photo submissions from residents to be shared on social media platforms raises awareness of events.

- Images should be shared with hashtags for organizational purposes. #ExploreMB is the provincial tourism hashtag, but #ExploreHamiota could be used in tandem. Sharing photos of Hamiota sights and events using these tags can promote the town to outsiders and attract tourists.

Social media has the potential to bring people of all ages together to connect despite distance and to battle feelings of isolation. Increasing the municipal use of these services can pay dividends to the community.

CONCLUSION

Interventions for the Municipality of Hamiota were developed through community consultation with the Age-Friendly Committee and precedent research. These opportunities for improvement were informed by placemaking strategies and organized under four categories from the World Health Organization's guide for Global Age-Friendly Cities.

Transitional and downsizing options were identified as the premier need for housing, and approaches in this category were centered around alternative housing arrangements. Since Hamiota already has a functional network for driving, cycling and walking, transportation proposals featured new options for getting around town. Interventions in open spaces highlighted opportunities to enhance this network with new connections. As socialisation was previously identified as a strength of Hamiota, interventions in this area built on this success by suggesting ways to enhance existing spaces and improve communication in the digital age.

The successful implementation of these Possible strategies will contribute to increasing the age-friendliness of Hamiota for both present and future generations of seniors.

TEAM



Chris Hampson-Curtis

First year planning student from Hamilton, Ontario, with a background in english and media studies.



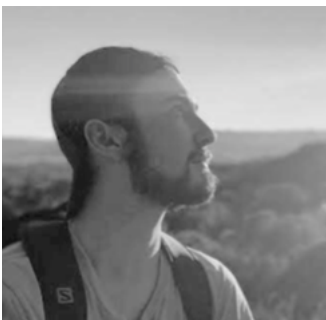
Carolina Herrera

First year, international student from Monterrey, Mexico with a background in architecture.



Chad Rempel

First year planning student from Winnipeg, with a background in Landscape Architecture and Urbanism.



Steve Nuttall

First year planning student from Winnipeg, with a background in geography and psychology.

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