



4. Municipality of **HARRISON PARK**



INTRODUCTION

Harrison Park is a municipality in southern Manitoba, about 260 kilometres from Winnipeg. Within the municipality are the three villages of Newdale (Figure 4-1), Onanole (see Figure 4-2), and Sandy Lake (Figure 4-3). In 2015, coinciding with amalgamation, came the Harrison Park Age-Friendly Committee.



Figure 4-2. Top Left: Aerial of Newdale.

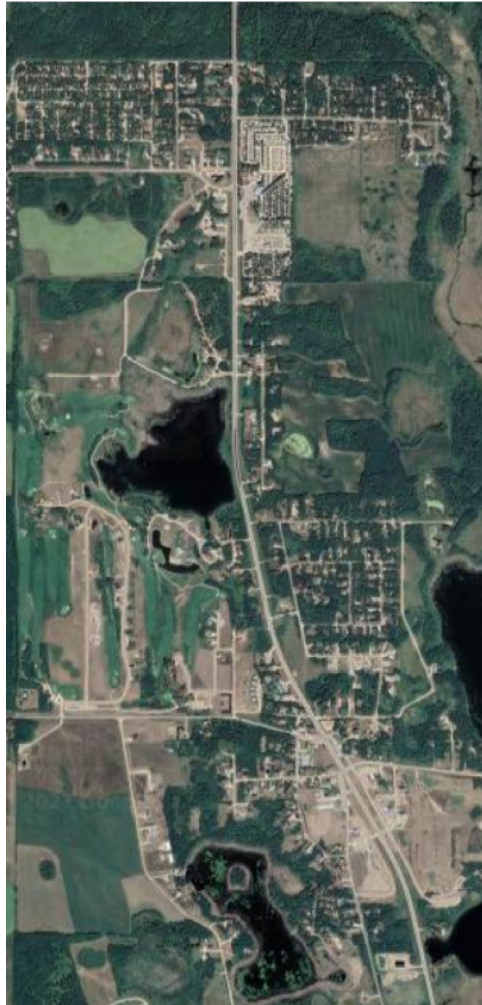


Figure 4-3. Right: Aerial of Onanole.

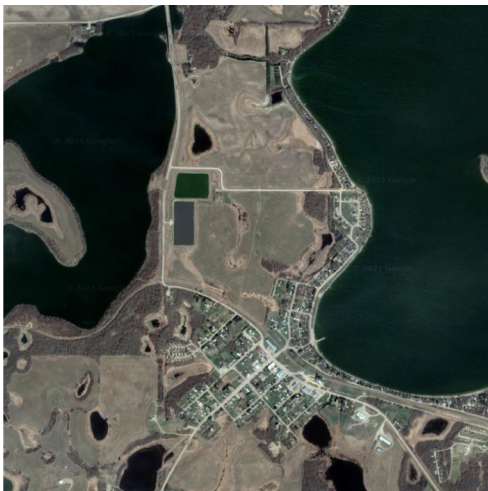


Figure 4-4. Bottom Left: Aerial of Snady Lake.

The goal of our report is to provide an analysis of the current conditions of Harrison Park 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.

During the research and coordination process we determined that placemaking would be an appropriate overarching concept around which each intervention could be developed. Harrison Park has a proud history and many amenities and attractions across its three villages 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

The Municipality of Harrison became a municipality in 1884, with its first council meeting held on January 8 of that year. Newdale and Sandy Lake were the two districts in the Municipality of Harrison (Newdale Community Historical Society, 2000).

The Municipality of Park was settled slowly. Originally it did not have a large enough population to be a municipal jurisdiction and was referred to as the Local Government District of Park. This meant municipal services were administered by the province. It was not incorporated as an official Municipality until January 1, 1997. The Hamlet of Onanole was the principal settlement in the LGD of Park, and later Municipality of Park (Onanole and District History Committee, 2003).

On January 1, 2015, the Municipalities of Harrison and Park amalgamated to form the Municipalities of Harrison Park, housing the three communities of Onanole, Newdale and Sandy Lake in one Municipality (Manitoba Historical Society, 2019).

Growth

In 2016, Harrison Park had a population of 1,622 people, which had declined at a rate of 1.96% per year over the previous 5 years from 2011 to 2016 (see Chart 4-1) (Statistics Canada, 2016).

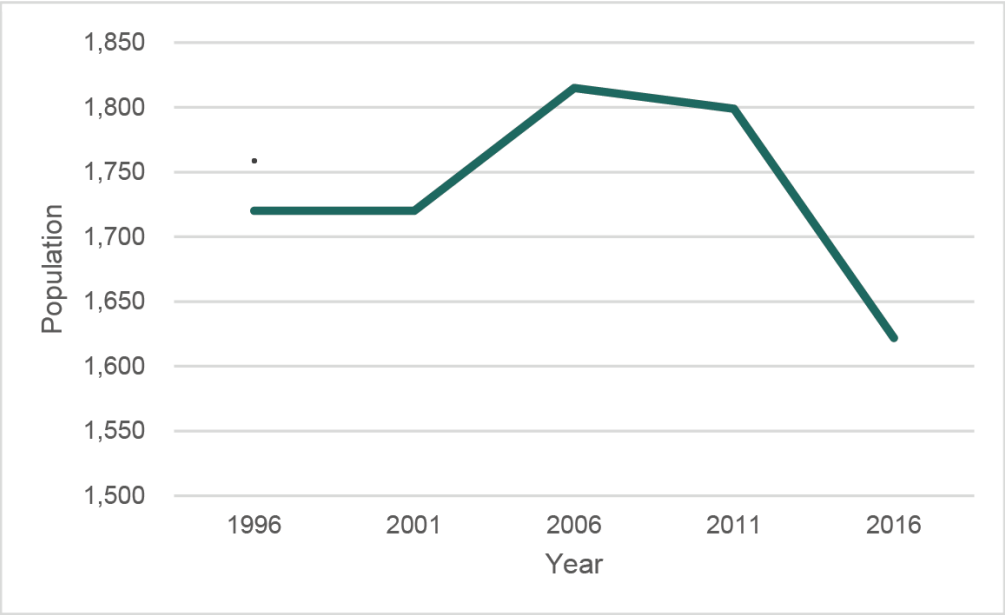


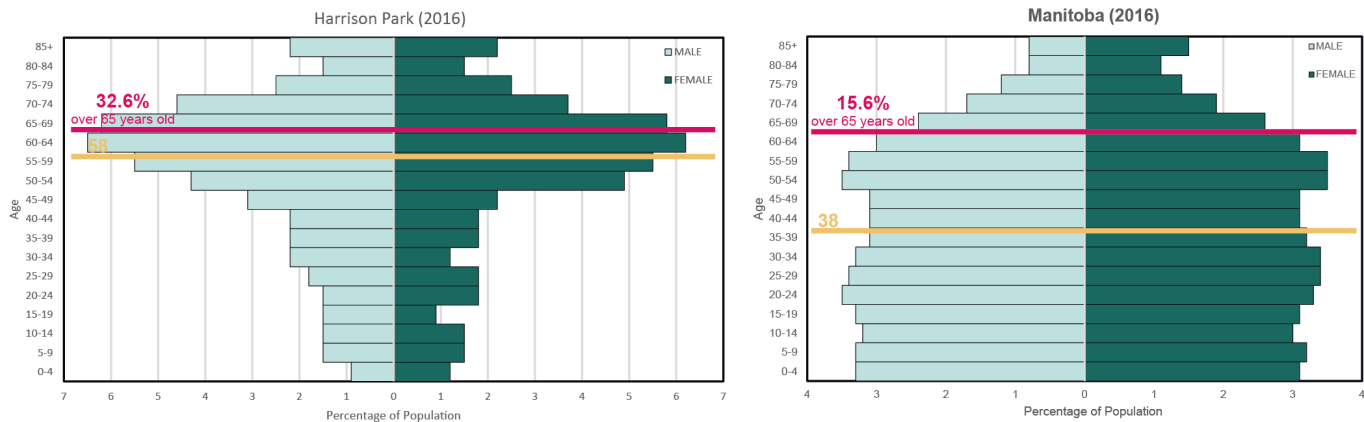
Chart 4-1: Population Growth - Harrison Park.

Income & Demographics

The median annual household income in Harrison Park is \$62,080 per year in 2016, which was lower than the national household median income in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

The largest population cohort in Harrison Park was between 60 and 64 years old in 2016, comprising 13% of the population. The least populated age group was between 20 and 24 years old. The municipality had a median age of 58 years old (see Chart 4-2) (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Chart 4-2: Population Pyramid - Harrison Park vs. Manitoba.



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)



HOUSING

What we learned

Harrison Park and the AF committee is 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.

The lack of housing variety means that only option for many of HP's seniors are to age in their single-family, detached homes for as long as possible. The AF committee tries to make this as easy as possible for its residents by assisting with ridesharing for seniors, providing neighbourly help and in home care, and creating youth volunteer efforts to assist the elderly with their yard care and other household chores and maintenance.

The AF committee and municipal office still recognize that more needs to be done to make ageing in place better and more seamless in Harrison Park. The following are some of the needs that we identified from our community consultation with the AF committee and municipal leadership in HP:

- The main reason elderly leave HP is housing
- Need for intermediate housing (somewhere in-between independent living and personal care home);
- Need for affordable, Age-Friendly apartment and condominium options in all communities;
- No subsidized housing in HP;
- Universal design – not just for seniors but for anyone who needs or wants to rent/own an apartment;
- Co-housing was well received – interested in looking at long term solutions for this option;
- Difficulty getting developers to commit to building AF housing – some AF housing concepts have been discussed but have never gotten off the ground; and
- Reliability issues with Manitoba Housing (Sandy Lake).

What we propose

From the community engagement session, the following conditions were revealed to us. The development of new housing options for seniors is a high priority, but the community is having difficulty getting the necessary backing from developers and financial institutions. The Municipality is short on options for seniors that want to downsize or move into a rental apartment. 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:

Housing needs survey

Engage the community to determine its exact needs down to number of bedrooms, location and price points/affordability. This will help to create community support for housing projects and a clear understanding of housing needs. Better equipping Municipal leaders and AF Committee with real, tangible community data will help to secure developer interest and get potential lenders to “buy into” and back housing projects.

Affordable housing - 3-plex universal housing

According to Global Age-Friendly Cities, affordable housing should be available to all older adults. Figure 4-4 shows an affordable seniors housing precedent from Baldur, MB. It 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. Need and financial backing for the project was determined via a survey (see above). The development of this type of housing is needed primarily in Sandy Lake and Onanole and should be implemented close to the centre of the village so that seniors have easy access to village amenities.

Figure 4-4. Baldur
3-Plex Seniors Housing.



Transitional housing - Secondary Suites

Secondary suites or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) give aging individuals the opportunity to maintain that sense of independence while eliminating the burden of yard care and home maintenance. These also allow seniors to settle in family/friend groups that encourage socialization and community building (see Figure 4-5).



Figure 4-5. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) or Granny Flats.

Cohousing

Seniors Cohousing is about planning “neighbourhoods focused on aging well in community” (Canadian Cohousing Network, 2021) (see Figure 4-6). 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 4-6. *River Song Cohousing concept - Oregon, USA.*



TRANSPORTATION

What we learned

We gathered valuable information regarding local transportation during our series of meetings with Harrison Park'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 Harrison Park:

- The entire municipality has a great public works department that cleans sidewalks regularly;
- Sandy Lake has good sidewalks, but Onanole and Newdale could use more. When sidewalks are lacking, pedestrians walk on roads;
- Cyclists use the streets;
- Sandy Lake is proud to have the Trans Canada Trail (Great Trail) run through the village. Onanole has an extensive trail network as well, connecting to Riding Mountain National Park;
- Driving is easy for those who do it. Drivers in the municipality are respectful and careful.

The handi-van service and volunteer drivers help those who do not drive, but the handi-van is limited in travel distance and serviceable range. There are few other transportation options, with the exception of a private taxicab service that runs during the summer months in Onanole.

What we propose

There has been some excellent work done in Harrison Park already to facilitate movement throughout and between the three villages. 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 Harrison Park.

The following is the finalized list of implementations for the municipality to consider, created based on our research into Harrison Park, 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 villages and vice versa to establish placemaking

- Having the Great Trails and other trails run through the nearby villages encourages the understanding that the trails are a staple feature of the municipality.
- Having a street as part of a trail can bring new meaning to the streetscape as trail users are led into the town centre as part of the placemaking efforts.

- Connect the Onanole Trail with the Elk Link Trail in Onanole with new paths (see Figure 4-7) and create safer crossings that link East Onanole to the Onanole Trail (see Figure 4-8).

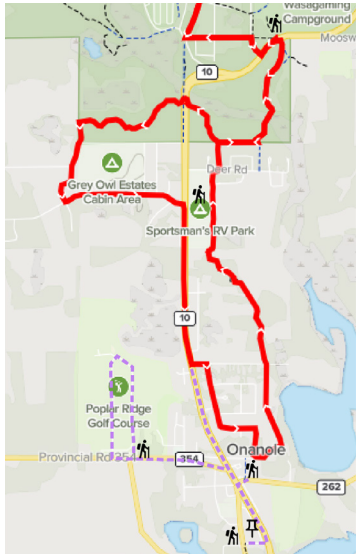
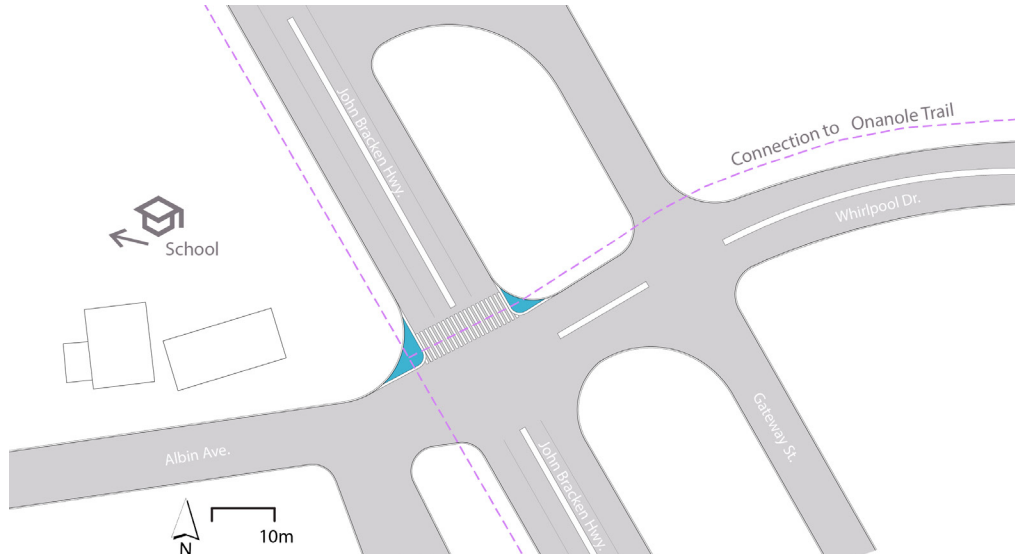


Figure 4-7. Left: Map of proposed trail extension in Onanole.

Figure 4-8. Right: Illustration of possible trail crossing infrastructure on highway 10 (John Bracken) in Onanole.



Seek legalization for golf cart and possibly utility task vehicle (UTV) use on municipal streets (see Figure 4-9)

- 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 (see Figure 4-10).
- Other small towns in North America have adopted golf cart use on municipal roads to much success. [Figure 11]
- Small vehicle pathways could be implemented beside provincial highways. A golf cart and UTV pathway following Highway 10 would be instrumental in bridging the northern and southern sections of Onanole by means other than cars.
- UTVs help overcome the barriers of winter, with four-wheel-drive and heated cabins.



Figure 4-9. Golf Cart in Golf Cart Lane.



Figure 4-10. Left: Golf Cart and Bike Lanes in Surprise, Arizona.



Figure 4-11. Right: Golf Cart on Trail in Lyons, Colorado.

Introduce a bike share program, including electric assist bike, three-wheel tandem bikes and wheelchair bike (see Figure 4-12)

- Like the small personal vehicles, bicycles available for rent or lend are an excellent alternative to cars during months warmer weather (see Figure 4-13).
- Bicycles encourage physical activity and outdoor exposure (see Figure 4-14).

Figure 4-13. Left: Polaris Ranger UTV.



Figure 4-15. Left: Tandem E-Bike



Figure 4-16. Right: Wheelchair Bike



- A bike share program can be touted as a feature for an area that experiences tourism, such as Sandy Lake (see Figure 4-15)

Create multimodal trails and pathways to increase transportation convenience and accessibility (see Figure 4-16)

Figure 4-12. Multimodal Trail in Peach Tree City, Georgia.

- Diversifying trail usage can increase usership and accessibility.





BUILDING AND OPEN SPACES

What we learned

The Municipality of Harrison Park has created an Age Friendly Initiative Committee that encourages businesses and organizations to improve their building's accessibility (see Figure 4-17). Accessibility features have already been implemented in some buildings, such as ramps, automatic doors, and wheelchair accessible restrooms (see Figure 4-18).



Figure 4-17. Left: Accessibility sticker for buildings. Age-Friendly Committee.

Figure 4-18. Right: Restaurant in Onanole with an accessibility feature.

Most of the main destinations are located within a walking distance (see Figures 4-19 to 4-21). However, streets and sidewalks could be improved to be more walkable and safer for seniors (see Figures 4-22 to 4-24).

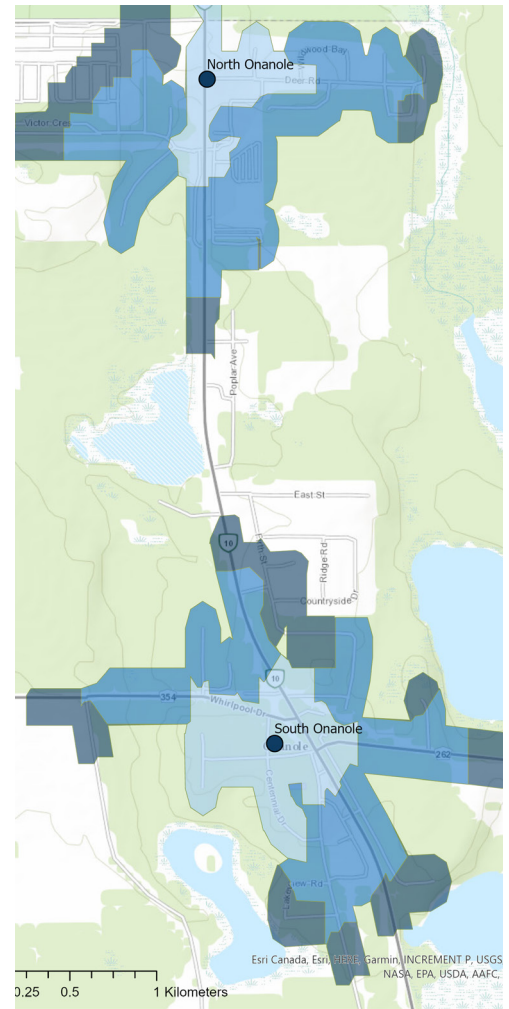
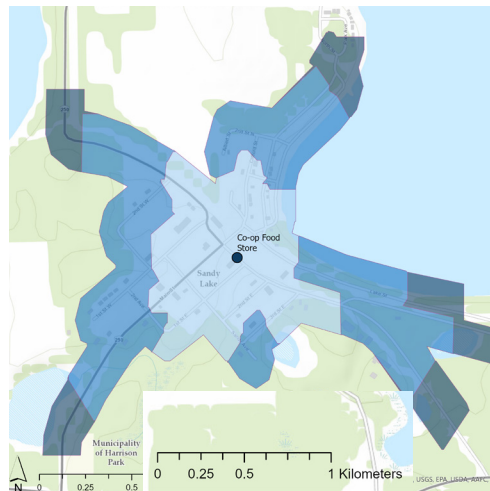
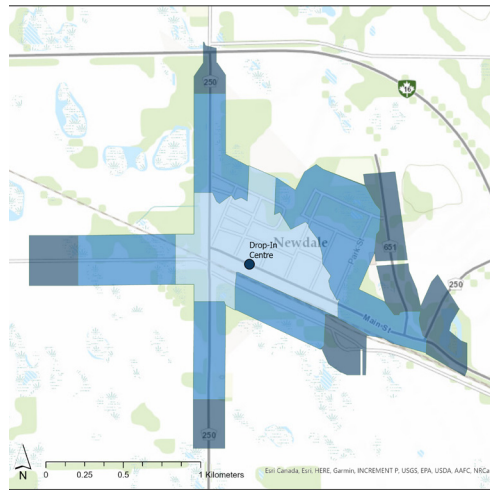
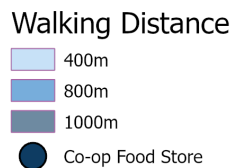
Each village has a commercial hub concentrated along its main street, including local shops, restaurants, a hotel, a post-office, and a co-op market (see Figure 4-25). Overall, residents in the municipality have access to most of the services they need. However, some facilities in Sandy Lake and Onanole only open during the influx of summertime tourists, decreasing the availability of goods and services all year round.

Institutional and recreational buildings provide good opportunities for socialization within the municipality. Drop-in Centres, Community Halls, Rec-Centres, and churches are

Figure 4-19. Top Left:
Newdale Walking
Distance Map.

Figure 4-20. Right:
Onanole Walking
Distance Map.

Figure 4-21. BottomLeft:
Sandy Lake Walking
Distance Map.



some of the most popular seniors' gathering places in these villages (see Figure 4-26).

Open spaces also offer opportunities for intergenerational recreation, such as parks, memory gardens, children's playgrounds, campgrounds, golf courses, and trails (see Figure 4-27). Trail systems in Sandy Lake and Onanole form part of the Trans Canada Trail (TCT), improving the connectivity of these villages throughout the region and attracting tourism. The Elk Links Trail has been recently developed to connect the TCT to Onanole as the main gate to the Riding Mountain National Park. On the other hand, Sandy Lake is also one of the main destination points within the Babushka Trail, housing three Ukrainian heritage sites.

Figure 4-22. Map of buildings and open spaces in Newdale.



Figure 4-23. Map of buildings and open spaces in Onanole.



- Water
- Green Space
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional/Civic
- Recreational
- Residential
- Seniors' Housing
- Existing Sidewalks
- Highways
- Trails
- Railroads
- Landmarks
- Benches
- Public Washrooms
- Trail Access Point

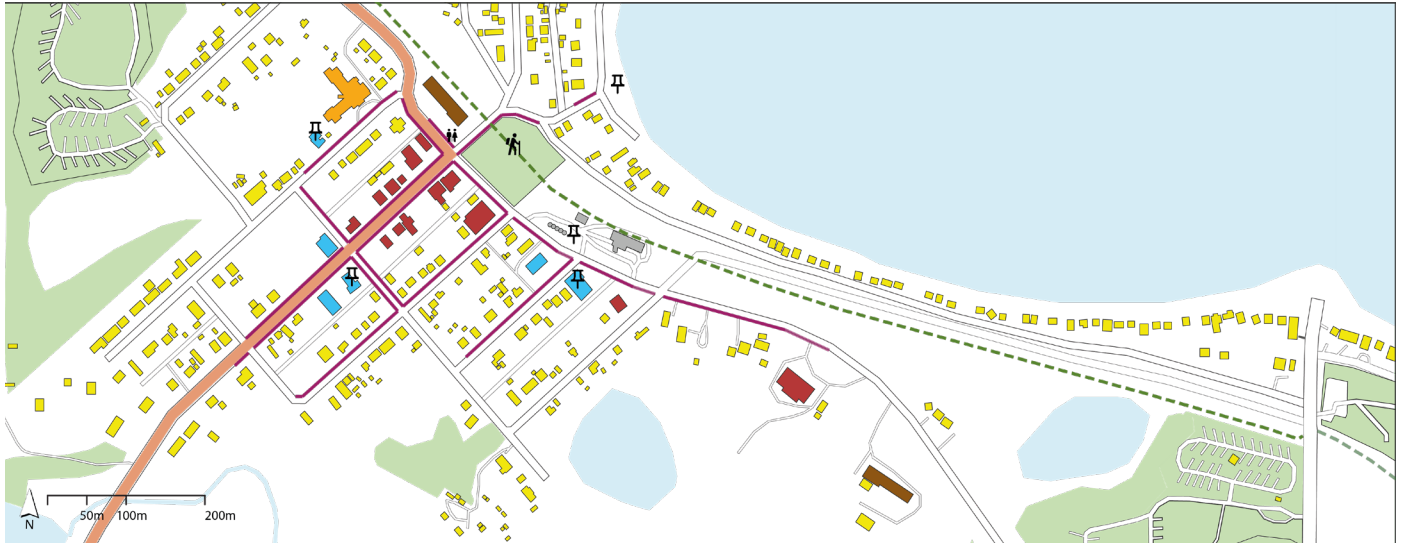


Figure 4-24. Map of buildings and open spaces in Sandy Lake.

Figure 4-25. Left: Co-Op Market in Sandy Lake.



Figure 4-26. Right: Community Hall in Sandy Lake.



Figure 4-27. Bottom Memory Garden in Newdale.



What we propose

Main street revitalization (Long-Term)

Villages: Newdale, Sandy Lake, and Onanole.

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

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.
- Reinforce landmarks within the village through wayfinding elements, improve signage and express the essence of each village. (Short-Term)
- Implement streetscaping elements following a design guide that reflects the identity of Harrison Park. Special attention on street façade cohesion (elements and materials), paving, lighting, vegetation, public art, benches, and bike racks. (Short and Medium-Term)

Precedents: Revitalizing your Traditional Downtown program of National Trust for Canada (see Figure 4-28) and Revitalizing Rural Communities from Project for Public Spaces (see Figure 4-29).



Figure 4-28. Left: Revitalizing Traditional Downtown in Ontario, program of National Trust for Canada.

Figure 4-29. Right: Revitalizing Rural Communities from Project for Public Spaces.

Areas of Intervention: Main St. in Newdale (see Figure 4-30), John Bracken Hwy. in Onanole (see Figure 4-31), and Provincial Rd. 250 in Sandy Lake (see Figure 4-32).

Figure 4-30. Map interventions for consideration in Newdale.



Figure 4-31. Map of interventions for consideration in Onanole..

- Water
- Green Space
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional/Civic
- Recreational
- Residential
- Seniors' Housing
- Existing Sidewalks
- Highways
- Trails
- Railroads
- Landmarks
- Benches
- Public Washrooms
- Trail Access Point





Benefits for Seniors: Tourism will encourage investment and new development, improving housing opportunities and access to better services (grocery stores, health facilities, public transportation). 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.

Gathering spots enhancement and connection (Medium-Term)

Villages: Newdale, Onanole, and Sandy Lake

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 Rec-centres and Community Halls. 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

- Water
- Green Space
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Institutional/Civic
- Recreational
- Residential
- Seniors' Housing
- Existing Sidewalks
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- Trails
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- Landmarks
- Benches
- Public Washrooms
- Trail Access Point

Figure 4-32. Map of interventions for consideration in Sandy Lake.

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 (see Figure 4-33) and Multi-purpose plaza in Winchester Boulevard Urban Village (see Figure 4-34).

Figure 4-33. Left: Pocket Plaza in Stevens Creek.



Figure 4-34. Right: Multi-purpose plaza in Winchester Boulevard Urban Village.



Area of Intervention: Spaces adjacent to main destinations such as grocery stores, churches, restaurants, and post offices. Current open green spaces such as parks, memory gardens, and children's playgrounds can also be improved and integrated into this network (see Figure 4-35].

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

Barriers: Private properties, Limited budget.



Figure 4-35. View of proposed pocket plaza in Newdale.

Trail Accessibility and Connection (Medium-Term)

Villages: Sandy Lake and Onanole

Objective: Improve trails' accessibility for seniors and integrate the system to the Main St. Revitalization program. The Trans Canada Trail will play a central role in strengthening the sense of place of each village.

Development: Improve or add access points to the trail system. Access points that intersect with main destinations are good opportunities to implement 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.

Precedents: Access Point in Buffalo Valley Rail Trail (see Figure 4-36) and Trail Restroom in Austin, Tx. (see Figure 4- 37).

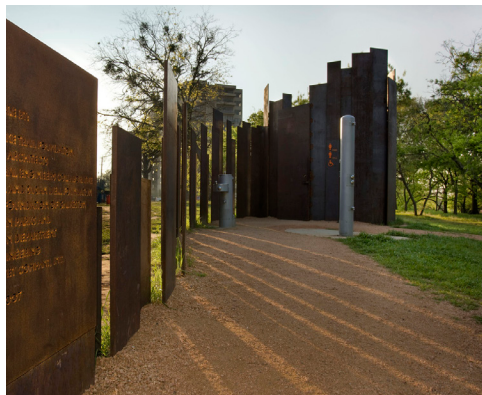


Figure 4-36. Left: Access point in Buffalo Valley Rail Trail.

Figure 4-37. Right: Trail Restroom in Austin, Texas.

Area of Intervention: Area surrounding the municipality park in Sandy Lake and commercial hub in Onanole (see Figure 4-38).

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 4-38. View of pedestrian crossing to trail access point in Sandy Lake.





SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

What we learned

Opportunities to socialize are abundant throughout the villages of Harrison Park. Social time happens at drop in-centres, during school events, or anywhere food is offered. The population fluctuates seasonally as cottagers take up summer residence and tourists flock to the nearby Riding Mountain National Park. This unique context allows Harrison Park to offer different activities to meet the desires of multiple audiences. Recommendations in the realm of socialization are built off this strong foundation of active social living. Strategies are organized under three common areas of intervention.

What we propose

Enhancing existing social spaces

The desire to socialize means completing everyday tasks offers opportunities to stop and chat. Be it at the grocery store or the post-office, casual socialising is vital to a healthy community. 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

HARRISON PARK AGE-FRIENDLY COMMITTEE:

“This is a very supportive community where friends and neighbours are willing to step up and help one another.”

Figure 4-39. *Enhancing social spaces at the Onanole Post Office*



39]. They provide relief from sun and rain, making it more comfortable to remain outdoors.

- Combining this feature with moveable furniture in the 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 40].

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

Bolstering community event communication



Figure 4-40. Example of a building mural - Sandy Lake Co-op



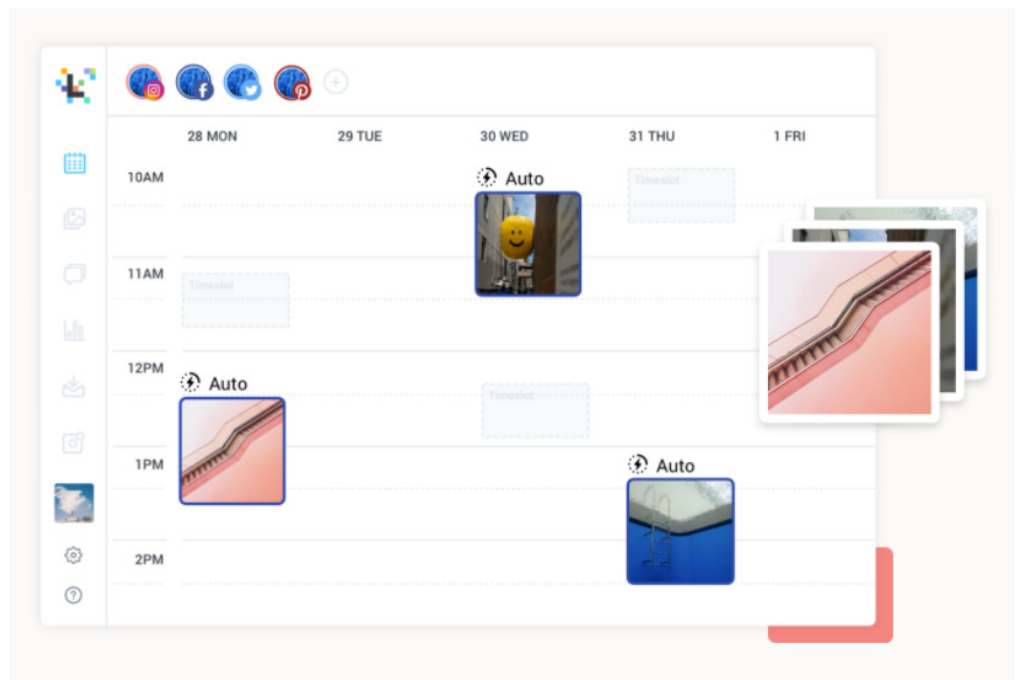
Harrison Park makes use of notice boards, a municipal website, and a Facebook page to communicate information. With the COVID-19 pandemic increasing use of social media, this web presence could be expanded to additional platforms like Twitter and Instagram.

- Free software like Later [Figure 41] or subscription software like Hootsuite 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 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 #ExploreHarrisonPark could be used in tandem. Sharing photos of Harrison Park sights and events using these tags can promote the municipality to outsiders and further 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.

Figure 4-41. Example of Later software used for managing social media posting



Strengthening intergenerational ties

The residents of Harrison Park are no strangers to intergenerational bonding. Interventions in this area reflect this reality and build on success.

- 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.
- Work with high school students to lead technology literacy learning sessions for seniors. Student can log these hours for a volunteer credit toward graduating high

school (see Figure 4-42).

- Seniors and other adults can teach life skills like job interview prep, cooking, or any talent they would like to share with others.
- Create hybrid virtual and in-person events so no one is left out by bad weather, lack of transportation, or health issues.

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.



Figure 4-42. Opportunities for intergenerational learning

CONCLUSION

Interventions for the Municipality of Harrison Park 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.

Affordability and a diversity of options were identified as the

premier need for housing, and approaches in this category were centered around viable housing solutions. Alternatives to automobiles were the biggest need in the realm of transportation, and several were proposed that increase personal mobility at a lower cost than cars. Open spaces generally had vital infrastructure but improving linkages and access points was a major area of intervention. Socialisation was identified as the biggest strength of Harrison Park, and so recommendations built on this foundation to enhance the social experience for all residents.

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

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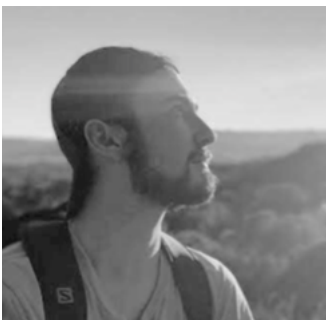
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LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter Cover Image: Aerial view of Grain Elevators at Sandy Lake (1980's). Image sourced from Manitoba Pool Fonds, S. J. McKee Archive, Brandon University. <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/sandylakeelevator.shtml>

Figure 4-1: Aerial of Newdale captured on Google Earth. earth.google.com

Figure 4-2: Aerial of Onanole captured on Google Earth. earth.google.com

Figure 4-3: Aerial of Sandy Lake captured on Google Earth. earth.google.com

Figure 4-4: Baldur 3-Plex Seniors Housing. Source: Baldur Manitoba. (2021). Live in Baldur. Town of Baldur, MB website. Retrieved from https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/5247606ce4bob4dd6e242e69/1499872290628-DVXKXBV9EM8L9E5BBDKT/ke17ZwdGBToddI8pDm48kPld63_RYnHMcuz04gzfy_97gQa3H78H3Yotxjaiv_ofDoOvxcdMmMKkDsyUqMSsMWxHk725yiiHCCLfrh8O1z4YTzHvnKhyp6Da-NYroOW3ZGjoBKy3azqku8oC789loqCSqOyuz_

Figure 4-5: Accessory Dwelling Units or Granny Flats. Author unknown. (Date unknown). Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Found in “What’s Old is New Again: Accessory Dwelling Units”, posted February 23, 2017. Filed under Built Assets & Housing on UNC School of Government website. Retrieved from <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/whats-old-is-new-again-accessory-dwelling-units-adus/>

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