Service to Older Adults
A Plan for Halifax Public Libraries
2007-2008

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Meeting the Challenge:
A New Direction for Halifax Public Libraries

“In [we] grow older, we do not become less interested in the world around us. Older people are still alive, still growing, and still learning. For many of us, libraries are the place where everything began....It was a place where all was possible. The library is still a place we go to learn, to dream and to imagine...And now, with computers and the Internet, the opportunities and potential for older adults are limitless....I hope libraries will meet the challenge.”

77-year-old Harold Ott - participant in the 1995 pre-conference to the White House Conference on Aging

In 2005, Halifax Public Libraries identified Older Adults as a new priority for service development. The new Regional Manager for Services to Older Adults was directed to lead a team that would develop a service plan to:

1) Clearly state our commitment to providing the best possible service to Older Adults;
2) Define our ongoing strategic directions and goals; and
3) Provide a framework for specific actions through yearly objectives.

This service plan is presented here, prefaced by some key findings from the team’s research that indicate the broader social context within which our plan fits and which we have endeavored to reflect in our proposed strategic directions. Key documents which have also informed our plan are noted as well.

The fact that Halifax Public Libraries chose to highlight Older Adults was not a random choice. Libraries and communities everywhere are actively looking for effective responses to the challenges and opportunities that are on our doorstep with a steadily aging population and in particular with the large cohort of Baby Boomers poised to begin retirement in the next few years.

New concepts such as “positive aging”, “aging in place” and “redefining retirement” all underscore the need for community organizations and governments to work together
now to ensure the best possible aging experience for both current and future generations of older adults. Libraries, through their long-established commitments to universal access, lifelong learning and connecting to communities, are well positioned to become a key resource for the expanding older adult community, working with them and other organizations serving them to develop innovative programs and services that meet their needs and enrich their lives. In turn, the older adults we connect with can enrich us, through contributing their skills, experience and support to libraries in many different ways.

The growing body of research and discussion on this topic throughout our profession and beyond clearly indicates that the time is right for Halifax Public Libraries to step up and reach out to this growing and increasingly influential segment of our community.
Library Service to Older Adults: -
The Demographic Imperative

“We are in the midst of the most extraordinary evolutionary event of all time: the mass aging of our society. (Ken Dychtwald, Age Wave) Today’s older adults form a population that demands attention. Their sheer numbers and their ability to influence the driving forces around them, cannot be ignored.”

It has been known for some time that society as a whole is aging. Falling birth rates, advances in health care and increased life expectancies and perhaps most significantly, the large cohort of “baby boomers” (those born between 1946 and 64) who are now approaching retirement all mean simply that there will be more older people (65+) in society. This in turn will naturally bring new service needs and demands for libraries.

Just how large a social force Older Adults are poised to become becomes clear when one looks at the compelling demographic evidence, globally, nationally and locally.

On a global scale “by the year 2050, demographers estimate the world as a whole will contain more people aged sixty and older than children under the age of fifteen, and that will be one of the most dramatic shifts in history.” The United Nations’ 2006 World Population Prospects contains many more specific global demographic projections that underscore the scope of this change.

- In a dozen nations, including Japan, Bulgaria, Macao, Hong Kong, Italy, Poland and Spain, 4 in 10 citizens will be 60 or older by 2050.
- By 2050, Europe will have two older people for every child.
- Life expectancy is expected to increase by more than 8 years over the next four decades
- The number of people over 60 worldwide is projected to triple to two billion by 2050, with over 400 million people being 80 or more

On February 27, 2007, Statistics Canada released “A Portrait of Seniors in Canada”, an extensive report which provides a clear picture of the significant aging taking place on a national scale.
Some highlights from the report:

• Between 1981 and 2005, the number of seniors in Canada increased from 2.4 to 4.2 million, and their share of the total population increased from 9.6% to 13.1%.

• The number of seniors in Canada is projected to increase from 4.2 million to 9.8 million between 2005 and 2036, and their share of the population is expected to almost double, increasing from 13.2% to 24.5%.

• Population aging will continue between 2036 and 2056, but at a slower pace. Over this period, the number of seniors is projected to increase from 9.8 million to 11.5 million, and their share of the total population is projected to rise from 24.5% to 27.2%.

• In 2005, the number of Canadians 65-74 was 2.2 million. By 2031, this will increase to 4.8 million as the baby boomers enter this age group.

• Between 1981 and 2005, the number of Canadians aged 75 to 84 more than doubled, increasing from 695,000 to 1.5 million. With the aging of the baby boomers, this group is expected to reach 3.9 million by 2041.

• The number of seniors aged 85 or older has grown rapidly over last two decades. Between 1981 and 2005 this group increased from 196,000 to 492,000, and they are projected to increase to 800,000 by 2021. As the baby boomers enter this group, its share of the population is expected to triple by 2056, rising to 5.8% and 2.5 million people.

Demographic projections for Nova Scotia and HRM certainly reflect these national trends.

**Projected Population of Nova Scotia by Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>0-54 Years</th>
<th>55-64 Years</th>
<th>65-74 Years</th>
<th>75+ Years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>704,000</td>
<td>113,200</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>62,600</td>
<td>949,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>679,600</td>
<td>132,700</td>
<td>80,400</td>
<td>66,300</td>
<td>959,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>649,800</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>101,800</td>
<td>71,100</td>
<td>967,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>618,100</td>
<td>154,500</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>81,200</td>
<td>973,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>593,500</td>
<td>142,200</td>
<td>134,900</td>
<td>104,000</td>
<td>974,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Growth</td>
<td>-16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Strategy for Positive Aging In Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Seniors Secretariat, 2005. (Also source for statistics noted below)
• Nova Scotia has the oldest population in Atlantic Canada and the third oldest in Canada. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population, with 8100 Nova Scotians celebrating their 65th birthday in 2005. Each month, 700 Nova Scotians turn 65.

• Although the total population of Nova Scotia is expected to grow by only 3% between 2005 and 2026, the senior population will grow by 80%, with seniors comprising 25% of the Nova Scotia population by 2026.

• Over the next 25 years, the 75+ age group will increase by 66% - a significant development in terms of potential clients for Home Delivery Services, as they are the predominant age group using this service.

• The life expectancy of Nova Scotians has been steadily increasing since 1920. Residents born in 1920 could expect to live 58 years, compared to 79 years for someone born in 2005.

• Declining birth rates and low immigration are also factors contributing to the aging Nova Scotia population.

### Projected Senior Population of HRM by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>65-69</th>
<th>70-74</th>
<th>75-79</th>
<th>80-84</th>
<th>85+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>13,205</td>
<td>11,030</td>
<td>8485</td>
<td>6530</td>
<td>5695</td>
<td>44,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17,250</td>
<td>12,330</td>
<td>9660</td>
<td>6915</td>
<td>7105</td>
<td>53,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>23,660</td>
<td>16,095</td>
<td>10,840</td>
<td>7890</td>
<td>8070</td>
<td>66,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>26,215</td>
<td>22,065</td>
<td>14,155</td>
<td>8890</td>
<td>9240</td>
<td>80,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>29,860</td>
<td>24,520</td>
<td>19,475</td>
<td>11,670</td>
<td>10,590</td>
<td>96,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% growth: 126% 122% 129% 78% 85% 113%

The B-Factor -
A Brief Profile of the Baby Boomers

The demographic data presented above clearly indicates a significant increase in all age ranges of the senior population in the coming years. This will naturally result in an increased demand for “traditional” seniors services such as Home Delivery as the Baby Boomers age and swell the ranks of the elderly.

However, it is not just growing numbers that are driving libraries and other organizations to develop new programs and services for their 50+ customers. Rather, it is the unique characteristics of the “boomers” themselves that is the prime factor causing not just libraries, but entire industries such as travel and financial services to retool their way of thinking about serving “older adults”. These “new” seniors are not their parents - their perceptions of, and expectations for, their retirement years are vastly different, and the “illness” model of aging no longer applies.

“Earlier approaches to “senior services” have assumed that older people are infirm, isolated and dependent, emphasizing large-print collections, activity kits and delivery of reading materials to nursing homes and senior centres. While these services are crucial, especially as the frail elderly constitute a growing segment of our community, they reflect a view of later life as a time of decline that is increasingly at odds with reality.⁷

So who are the “boomers”, what makes them so different from previous generations of seniors, and what are their needs and expectations that we must take into account to serve them effectively?

Well this photo, taken from a Jan. 31/07 Globe and Mail article on Boomers and their impact on the travel industry⁷ pretty much sums up what many of the Boomers are all about: “they’re better off, they’re more active, they’re engaged, they have a more positive attitude, they expect to live longer.....as opposed to the old stereotype “we’re near the end, we’re old, we’re helpless and where’s that pension cheque because otherwise we’re in trouble”⁸
The brief profile below expands this general vision of the Boomers with some key characteristics that will provide both opportunities and challenges, but which cannot be ignored if libraries are to have value for them.

**Boomers**

- Are more racially and ethnically diverse than previous generations.
- Tend to be concentrated in metropolitan areas.
- Tend to be married (70% of US Boomers), but are also more likely than those older than themselves to be divorced or separated.
- See work as playing a role in their retirement years.
- Have a great range in income: 25% of US Boomers have an annual household income greater than $95,000, but on the other end of the scale, 25% earn less than $35,000.
- Are the generation given the most opportunity for success.
- Have approximately 2 Trillion dollars in spending power in the US alone.
- Are redefining retirement as a time to begin a new chapter in life and undertake new experiences.
- Are looking for the right mix of lifelong learning, leisure, personal and spiritual fulfillment.
- Are often part of the “sandwich” generation - caring for grandchildren as well as helping parents and grandparents.
- Have a selfish tendency when it comes to donating their time, which has serious implications for programs dependent on an aging volunteer base.
- Dislike the language of aging, do not think of themselves as “senior” or “elderly”.
- Generally have a higher level of education and are healthier than previous generations.
- Are “tech savvy”:
  - are buying, connecting and looking for information online;
• 45% are regular Internet users;
• expect accessibility everywhere;
• want to connect to friends and family; and
• want to learn PC skills for specific needs.

• In summary, are healthy, affluent, active, curious and launched for take off!
Meeting Needs:
The Boomers, Volunteerism and Civic Engagement

There is a tremendous opportunity on the horizon to tap the time, energy, skills and experience of millions of boomers to strengthen community life. However considerable work lies ahead if this opportunity is to be realized.\(^{(10)}\)

It is true that the Baby Boomers, as new retirees, have the potential to make significant contributions as volunteers or paid workers to community organizations such as libraries. However it is equally true that barriers to this also exist, due to both the nature of the Boomers themselves and the capacity of organizations to adapt to this new opportunity. An understanding of the issues surrounding Boomers and volunteerism/civic engagement is essential in planning programs and services for this group, and a brief overview is presented below. Much of the data is from “Reinventing Aging: Baby Boomers and Civic Engagement”, an extensive report discussing the nature of the boomers and their impact on the workplace, retirement and volunteerism, prepared by the Harvard School of Public Health. As our service plan develops over time, Halifax Public Libraries will need to build its own capacity to connect with and engage the boomer community, and ultimately to reap the rewards that this can bring.

What is Civic Engagement?

Volunteerism is one of the primary ways in which civic engagement is practiced and it has been defined in many ways. The following definition from the Pew Charitable Trusts has been used in several discussions of the topic and gives a good sense of the variety of activities that civic engagement can encompass.

Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of
representative democracy. Civic engagement encompasses a range of activities such as working in a soup kitchen, serving on a neighbourhood association, writing a letter to an elected official or voting.\(^{(11)}\)

**The Changing Face of Civic Engagement**

Civic Engagement is not a new concept, but the idea of “community” within which this engagement is practiced has often changed/narrowed between the Boomer generation and that of their parents. The sense of “community” was much wider and more cohesive in the post-war years with many communities primarily middle-class, white and sharing many common values.

Today our towns and cities are much more ethnically, culturally and economically diverse, and one response has been for special, smaller communities to develop solely for those with common interests or characteristics such as “gated” retirement communities. No longer just a feature of the American sun belt, developers are seeing potential for the Canadian Boomer market as well. The new Reagan Shores “adult lifestyles” community being developed in Hubbards for “empty nesters and retirees” (Reagan Shores brochure) promotes “controlled access” as a primary selling point. Civic engagement is certainly practiced within these communities, but it is often quite not the ideal model.

...gated communities seek to preserve the quality of life of those inside by erecting physical barriers to uninvited outsiders... Interestingly, some planned communities do seem to have generated a kind of community spirit... but they sometimes do not seem to care very much about those who live just beyond their community’s boundaries. Volunteerism may be up, but what people volunteer for are neighbourhood patrols to enforce the community’s rules and keep out undesirables.\(^{(12)}\)

The challenge will be to convince the boomers of the value, both to them as individuals and to the world beyond their “gates” of working to create a broader social legacy.

**Volunteer Burnout and the Boomer Promise**

Many essential and long-standing community programs that are key components in the quality of life for so many citizens depend on volunteers for service delivery. Public Library examples include Home Delivery, Adult ESL and Literacy programs and Children’s Reading Support.
At Halifax Public Libraries, these essential programs and others are delivered by over 180 volunteers contributing approximately 18,000 hours per year.

Nova Scotia has the highest rate of volunteerism in Canada, estimated to be the equivalent of 83,000 jobs. However there are serious issues arising around volunteer recruitment and retention/burnout that underscore an urgent need to bring “new blood” back into the voluntary sector. Between 1997 and 2000, the number of volunteers in Nova Scotia declined by 10.7% or 30,000 volunteers. At the same time, the annual per capita hours devoted to volunteer work rose from 42.3 to 50.1, indicating that “a growing responsibility and burden rests on ever fewer shoulders. A smaller number of dedicated volunteers is being spread increasingly thin, and the danger of volunteer burnout is real.”

Some of the primary reasons given for this loss of volunteer power are:

• Increasing times of stress among women, who constitute the majority of volunteers
• University graduates sacrificing volunteer activities as workplace pressures increased (this group previously had the highest rate of volunteerism.
• People with lower education levels and lower incomes stepping into volunteering but then having to step out due to difficulty in meeting the “out of pocket” expenses often associated with volunteering

However, the great hope that this problem will soon be solved rests with the prospect of the newly retired boomers stepping up in record numbers to swell the volunteer ranks:

All the ingredients are in place for a renaissance in the world of volunteering and Canada’s aging population will be a vital element of that rebirth....as more and more baby boomers retire from the workforce, a true Canadian natural resource will become available for the voluntary sector.

Their numbers are so large that recruiting even a small percentage of boomers for meaningful volunteer service in their later years could have a profoundly beneficial influence on local communities and on society as a whole.

This group of capable, active and highly skilled new retirees are just the type of volunteers that will be needed most - but will they step up and deliver? There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the boomers may indeed not rush to embrace volunteerism with the enthusiasm many have assumed would be there - sheer numbers and available time may not automatically translate into engagement. The following section is a brief outline of some of the major factors
that may stand between boomers and the organizations such as libraries that may desperately need them.

**The Boomer “Volunteer Wave” - an Unkept Promise?**

*Although close to one-third of boomers say they expect to participate in community service after retirement, there is a difference between intentions and actions, and boomers may need a push.*

- Compared to their parents’ generation, the Boomers have scored lower on every measure of civic engagement, including rates of voting and joining community groups.

- The commonly held belief that retirement is “prime time” for volunteering is only partially true. Volunteering actually peaks in mid-life (when most volunteering activities are extensions of parenting) and gradually declines in the later years as people are less likely to be asked to volunteer.

- The assumption that boomers will be retiring en masse in their late 50’s or early 60’s and thus be looking for activities such as volunteering to fill their free time may not be realistic. For various reasons, many boomers will be remaining in the workplace longer with much less free time and means to volunteer than we may have anticipated.

- Will the boomers come to value the social connectedness that comes from volunteering or will they (as one observer put it) prefer to “bowl alone”.?

- Traditionally, women have been much more active as volunteers than men. However as more “boomer” women stay in the workforce longer, this may have a negative impact on the available pool of volunteers.

- As more people survive into advanced old age, the younger boomers, even if retired and interested in volunteering may have caregiving demands that prevent this.

- The positive approach with which many boomers face retirement ie. as a time for relaxation and self-indulgence works against their potential to have a strong orientation toward volunteering. They are much less likely than their parents to volunteer out of a sense of duty, obligation or religious commitment. “Those who embrace retirement as an escape from such obligations may not respond to calls to action that imply the need to accept a new set of constraints and commitments.”
• Not all boomers meet the “active senior” stereotype, and many are not looking forward to retirement due to health and/or financial concerns.

• Older volunteers tend to have volunteered throughout their life, rather than having begun volunteering as they age.

Boomer Attitudes Toward Volunteerism

The above projections of the Boomers’ reluctance to volunteer need not make us despair that we will soon face a critical and permanent volunteer shortage. The Boomers can be attracted to volunteer opportunities, if they are carefully designed with their values and interests in mind. What follows is a brief overview of the boomers’ key attitudes toward volunteering that need to be understood by any organization wishing to attract them.

• “Baby Boomers are less interested in having their contribution recognized and more interested in knowing how they are making a difference.”(22)

• Baby Boomers will want to combine activities - spending time with family, supporting a cause, improving their community and having opportunities for social interaction.

• Successful appeals for Boomer volunteers will stress self-development, self-interest, be time-efficient, community based and familiar.

• Maintaining the involvement of current Boomer volunteers is essential.

• Boomer volunteers do not want to be “envelope stuffers”. Many of them grew up during the growth of activism in the 1960’s and will respond to high-impact volunteer activities that will make a difference to their neighbourhoods, communities and the world. Providing amusement or diversion will not be enough!

• Boomers are looking for a diverse “menu” of volunteer options, those which are professionally managed and which give them a chance to regain meaningful identity and relationships.

• Boomer volunteers must feel that they are a valued and integral part of the organization and not a group apart.
What Must Organizations Do To Attract and Retain Boomer Volunteers?

Creating the infrastructure that will support and sustain the kind of vision that has been described may require creating new institutions, transforming existing ones and rethinking traditional concepts of work / volunteerism.....Voluntary organizations, as currently constituted may not be equal to the challenge of engaging large numbers of older adults in meaningful service. Volunteer work is often under-valued, under-managed and offered on inflexible terms that suit the organizations rather than the volunteers themselves.\textsuperscript{23}

Attracting the Boomer volunteer with their unique needs and expectations as outlined in the previous section will require a commitment to change on the part of many organizations to ensure that they have the infrastructure to support appropriate volunteer opportunities. To be successful in meeting this new opportunity, organizations must:

• Invest the time and resources in creating complex and sustained volunteer opportunities that contribute to both social and personal growth, rather than just simple tasks requiring minimal planning and supervision.

• Look beyond the traditional “noblesse oblige” concept of volunteering to a full range of possibilities both paid and unpaid for providing community service. The term “volunteer” does not resonate well with certain cultural Boomer groups, suggesting paternalism and charity. Also, there are many Boomers who would want to serve their community but who lack the time or financial resources to do this for free.

• Urge Federal and local governments, foundations and corporations to direct significant resources to developing programs and initiatives that support the civic engagement of older adults.

• Expand and adapt current successful seniors’ service programs to engage retiring boomers.

• Work with third parties, where necessary, to handle recruitment, training and referral of Boomers.

• Take the lead, if a national organization, to help local affiliates identify and develop volunteer opportunities.

• Develop a wide range of volunteer options, from one-time, episodic opportunities to sustained, intensive commitments.
• Develop inter-generational, community-based volunteer initiatives designed to tackle a community’s pressing problems.

• Make volunteer opportunities known to employees to enable them to try out public service roles while they are still working

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*Until the hype around the civic potential of older adults is translated into model programs, training, effective practices and funding, the mature volunteer workforce will continue to walk away frustrated by an inadequate response from the non-profit sector.*

(24)
A key document that helped to inform the development of our strategic directions and goals is the Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia. Published by the Nova Scotia Seniors’ Secretariat Task Force on Aging in December 2005, this document is the result of an extensive public consultation process that has produced a framework for action to help all sectors (government, business, not-for-profit organizations and community groups) create “senior friendly communities”, recognizing the challenges and opportunities that will come from our aging society. The Vision of the Strategy is a simple, yet powerful one:

*Nova Scotia is an inclusive society of caring communities that supports the well-being of seniors and values their contributions.*

Within the Strategy’s goals and suggested Societal Actions that accompany each goal are several that relate directly to the role that libraries are playing (or can play) in creating an environment of “positive aging” within our communities. We have tried to reflect these where appropriate in our initial Service Plan and will continue to look for other links to this important initiative. The specific goals and suggested actions from the Strategy that we have identified as having relevance for library services are listed below:

### Goal - Supportive Communities

Seniors have opportunities for personal growth, lifelong learning, and community participation in safe and supportive environments.

**Suggested Societal Actions**

**Older Adult Education**

- Expand community-based opportunities for growth, creativity and lifelong learning.
- Provide community-based learning opportunities that reach out to seniors with low literacy skills.
- Ensure seniors can access programs to help them use modern technologies.
Leisure Activities

- Encourage and facilitate participation in leisure, active living, social and cultural events for seniors by identifying opportunities for community-based partnerships and maximizing the use of public facilities.
- Support the continuation, expansion and development of formal and informal social networks for seniors.

Goal - Employment and Life Transitions

Workplaces support and encourage the participation, health, lifelong learning and volunteer activities of older workers.

Suggested Societal Actions

Age Friendly Workplaces

- Recognize the skills, reliability and experience of older workers.
- Foster and promote useful community service opportunities.
- Meet community needs through the involvement of older workers.
- Encourage post-secondary learning institutions to identify and respond to the learning needs of seniors.

Goal - Celebrating Seniors

Nova Scotia values seniors and celebrates their lifelong contributions.

Suggested Societal Actions

Eliminating Ageism

- Promote equity by ensuring that age is included in diversity initiatives.
- Educate all sectors about the unique and diverse needs of seniors.
- Promote and support inter-generational programs, thereby building strong inter-generational bonds, better understanding of historical topics, social issues and cultural perspectives.
- Improve communication and resource sharing between programs that currently serve seniors and programs that serve youth.

Seniors’ Contribution to Society

- Increase opportunities for seniors to be part of government decision making.
- Engage seniors in developing strategies and initiatives.
Goal - Respecting Diversity

Nova Scotians recognize, respect and respond positively to seniors in all their diversity

Suggested Societal Actions

Cultural Diversity, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
- Encourage and support activities and programs that enable seniors to learn about cultural differences from seniors of other cultures.

Diversity in Information and Services
- Ensure that information and services are available to seniors in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner.
CLA Guidelines for Services to Older Adults

The benchmarks and suggestions outlined in the CLA Guidelines for Services to Older Adults are excellent planning tools that should be the first stop for any library considering implementing services to this group. These guidelines are reflected throughout our proposed service plan and we have already made progress in several of their action areas. We will continue to check our plans against these guidelines as our service plan develops.

The main guidelines are listed below, and the full document is included as an appendix.

1. Acquire current data about the older population and incorporate it into planning and budgeting.
2. Ensure that the special needs and interests of older people in your community are reflected in the library’s collections, programs and services.
3. Make the library’s physical facilities safe, comfortable and inviting for older people.
4. Make the library a focal point for seniors’ information.
5. Target the older population in library programming
6. Reach out to older adults in the community who are unable to get to the library.
7. Train the library’s staff to serve older adults with politeness and respect.
Our Service Plan

The Service Plan presented below is our response to the essential issues and trends reflected in the key documents and research which have been presented by way of introduction. We feel it presents a solid framework in alignment with Halifax Public Libraries’ Mission and Strategic Directions to move forward in developing services for older adults. In turn, the Service Plan’s own mission and strategic directions are achieved by a set of goals and annually updated objectives.

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**Halifax Public Libraries Mission Statement**

*Halifax Public Libraries is the life-long learning centre of the Community and the place people turn to for the discovery of ideas, the joy of reading and the power of information.*

**Strategic Goal**

*Superior customer value and service equity that is responsive and barrier free.*

**2007-08 Operational Goal**

*To provide equitable access to service throughout HRM focusing on Family Literacy, Readers Services, Persons with Disabilities, Diverse Communities and Older Adults.*

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**Service Plan Mission Statement**

To create an environment within Halifax Public Libraries that promotes positive aging, meets the needs, and enriches the lives, of older adults in our community

**Guiding Principles for Services to Older Adults**

Halifax Public Libraries:

- Values and respects older adults, appreciating and responding to their needs and interests with administrative support, staffing, collections, electronic resources, services, programs and facilities

- Recognizes and respects the diversity of the older adult population
• Supports positive aging by relationship building, and by creating opportunities for older adults to learn and contribute.

• Provides opportunities to older adults for community engagement, through involvement in meaningful activities and library service development for the older adult community

• Supports lifelong learning for older adults

• Enables older adults to connect with each other and with the community at large

• Connects with other organizations serving older adults to help build and strengthen community resources for this group

• Maximizes accessibility to all library services by creating barrier-free environments

• Measures the success of initiatives re older adults with evidence of how they have made a positive impact on the lives of these individuals, the library and the community

Definition of “Older Adults” for Halifax Public Libraries

For the purposes of our Service Plan we have adopted the definition of “Older Adults” as used by the Canadian Library Association in their “Guidelines on Library and Information Services for Older Adults - persons aged 60 or older. The rationale for this is as follows:

• This is the approximate age when persons are either choosing retirement or beginning to plan for retirement.

• Although the “senior” or “older adult” title has been applied, depending on the jurisdiction, to persons anywhere from 50 upwards, we felt that there would be more of a community of interest among those 60+, since those in their 50’s could still have children at home, be working full time etc. as opposed to planning for and beginning retirement.
Draft Strategic Directions, Goals and Objectives
April 2007

Strategic Direction #1

Provide public library services for all older adults in Halifax Regional Municipality that maximize opportunities for personal development, enrichment of leisure time, lifelong learning and civic engagement.

Goals

• Ensure that the library environment presented to older adults is safe, supportive and barrier-free
• Ensure equitable access to library resources for all older adults in the library’s community
• Plan and deliver relevant library programming that meets the leisure and learning needs of older adults
• Develop responsive collections that meet the informational and recreational needs of older adults and their caregivers.
• Involve the older adult community in the planning and development of library services on an ongoing basis

Strategic Direction #2

Position the library as a key component in the new community-based model for services to older adults outlined in the Nova Scotia Strategy on Positive Aging.

Goals

• Establish and maintain relationships with appropriate community partners that will enable the library to build capacity and develop innovative services for older adults.
• Improve awareness throughout the older adult community of current library services and programs of benefit to older adult customers.
Strategic Direction #3

Halifax Public Libraries supports and values the contributions of older adults, both to the workplace and the community.

Goals

- Develop a library culture that respects, values and celebrates the contributions that older adults make to our community.

Objectives for 2007-2008

Goal: Ensure that the library environment presented to older adults is safe, supportive and barrier-free

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze Customer Survey and branch scans to identify priority issues re branch environment. Communicate results with short and long-term recommendations to appropriate Managers/Teams.</td>
<td>Team to do analysis and develop recommendations, Team Leader to communicate as required</td>
<td>Analysis to be completed by June 15 and results communicated by Sept. 1.</td>
<td>Customer survey to be completed by May 11, analysis to begin immediately afterward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a basic checklist for branches re physical and other aspects of branch environment as it applies to Older Adults (based on Best Practices research)</td>
<td>Team to develop checklist, team leader to roll out to BSDT</td>
<td>Checklist to be developed by Sept. 1, to coincide with roll-out of results from Objective #1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Goal:** Ensure equitable access to library resources for all older adults in the library’s community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given that the recommendations of the <strong>Home Delivery Services Review</strong> do not include provision for HDS in rural areas (and Books by Mail is not universally feasible in these areas due to factors such as mailbox size etc.), determine the demand for HDS in currently unserved rural areas and define a response.</td>
<td>Team will undertake research, team leader will communicate results to SDT.</td>
<td>Research to be completed by December 31.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research best practices in the provision of online resources for Older Adults and make recommendations to appropriate managers -eg. E-Learning and Readers’ Services</td>
<td>Team to undertake research, Team leader to communicate as appropriate</td>
<td>Research to be completed by August 31, Recommendations to be ready by Sept. 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze results of Customer Survey re e-branch use and develop recommendations based on identified gaps and issues.</td>
<td>Team to do analysis, Team leader to communicate results to Web Site team</td>
<td>Gaps and issues to be identified by June 15 and report submitted to Website team by July 15.</td>
<td>Customer Survey to end May 11, analysis to begin immediately afterward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Goal:** Plan and deliver relevant library programming that meets the leisure and learning needs of older adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop 1-2 modules for pilot programs for Fall 07 based on priorities coming from Customer Survey results.</td>
<td>Team to identify priorities, Team leader to draft modules and submit to Branch Services Director for approval</td>
<td>Priorities to be identified by June 15. and draft modules complete by July 30. Target of Sept 1 for rollout to Branches</td>
<td>Customer survey to be completed by May 11, analysis to begin immediately afterward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Develop responsive collections that meet the informational and recreational needs of older adults and their caregivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigate with Planning and Development the possibility of linking B-type with I-type circ. Stats to evaluate use patterns of Older Adults.</td>
<td>Team Leader to make data request</td>
<td>Request to be submitted by April 30.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze results of Customer Survey re collections use and work with Collection Development Manager to address identified gaps.</td>
<td>Team to do analysis and Team leader to communicate with Acquisitions manager</td>
<td>Gaps to be identified by May 30.</td>
<td>Customer survey to be completed by May 11, analysis to begin immediately afterward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Goal:** Involve the older adult community in the planning and development of library services on an ongoing basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the results of the Customer Survey and Branch scans re service gaps, identify priorities and begin to develop plans for 08-09 for approved priorities</td>
<td>Team to carry out analysis and prepare report for submission to SDT</td>
<td>Report submitted to SDT by October 30</td>
<td>Customer survey to be completed by May 11, analysis to begin immediately afterward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Establish and maintain relationships with appropriate community partners that will enable the library to build capacity and develop innovative services for older adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain and develop partnership with Dartmouth Heritage Museum re the “Reminiscence Kits” pilot project</td>
<td>Team Leader</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Museum is in beginning stages of kit development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on the results of the Customer Survey and Branch Scans, identify at least 2 new potential partners for service development in 08-09. (Includes programming partners)</td>
<td>Team to carry out analysis.</td>
<td>New potential partners identified by Sept. 30</td>
<td>Customer survey to be completed by May 11, analysis to begin immediately afterward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in Nova Scotia Provincial Library Working Group on Services to Older Adults</td>
<td>Team Leader is co-chair of Working Group</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Objective

| Make connections as appropriate with other local/regional organizations serving Older Adults for information sharing and possible partnership opportunities. | Team Leader | Ongoing | Team leader has joined “Community Links” - a provincial senior’s community development org - in order to get their newsletter etc. Team leader attended Gerontology Association of Nova Scotia conference on April 27. |

**Goal:** Improve awareness throughout the older adult community of current library services and programs of benefit to older adult customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a regional plan for promotion of Seniors Week (June 2007) through displays, posters, program ideas etc.</td>
<td>Team to devise plan, Team leader to contact Seniors Secretariat for posters etc.</td>
<td>Plan to be ready to go to branches by April 30</td>
<td>Seniors’ Week resource list is in May-June Library Guide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goal:** Develop a library culture that respects, values and celebrates the contributions that older adults make to our community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work on this goal deferred for 07-08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for Older Adults

Prepared by the Canadian Library Association Interest Group on Services for Older People and approved by CLA Executive Council, November 24, 2000.

Introduction

Older adults are not a homogenous population that can be easily categorized. Like any identifiable group within our society, such as people with disabilities or members of ethnic communities, the information needs and interests of older people range widely and mirror the adult community as a whole. Also, within the broad category of "older adults" lie several generations with different life experiences and different sets of expectations. The first principle, then, of serving an older population is to recognize this great diversity and to be ever conscious of the dangers of stereotyping in planning collections, programs and services.

At the same time, as the existence of the study of gerontology clearly indicates, there are special circumstances that most older people share, and that service providers must take into account. These include the experience of retirement which brings both increased leisure and the need to re-structure one’s daily life. While the great majority of older persons in Canada enjoy good health, the onset of physical problems increases with age and may dictate a change of lifestyle and activity. There are new circumstances that often have an impact on the information older people need, and how they are able to or wish to access it.

With the aging of our society we can expect that one out of every four or five Canadians will be 65 years or older within the next 30 years. At this time people in this age category are under represented among library users. If this situation continues we can expect a serious impact on our libraries, and how the public views the importance of the library.

This set of guidelines, proposed by the Canadian Library Association’s Interest Group on Services for Older People, is intended to provide a checklist for libraries to use in planning services that are inclusive of older adults, and that will encourage a greater use of libraries by this growing population.
A Definition of "Older Adults"

For the purposes of these guidelines, older people generally means persons aged 60 or older. This is the approximate age when one either chooses retirement, or begins to plan for mandatory retirement at age 65.

Guidelines

1. Acquire current data about the older population and incorporate it into planning and budgeting.
   1.1 Conduct focus groups and user studies among the community’s older population on a regular basis in order to gauge how services, collections and programs might be made more appropriate and relevant to this age group. Communities are dynamic, and each generation of senior citizens brings with it a different set of experiences, interests, and expectations.
   1.2 Collect data on the special information needs of older people from minority cultures.
   1.3 Ensure that any services that target the older population are an integral and ongoing part of the library’s operations and budget. This might include, for instance, a seniors’ information centre, a regular series of programs that target older adults, or the operation of a vehicle to serve seniors’ residences.
   1.4 Involve older adults in the community in the library’s planning process, either by establishing a seniors’ advisory committee, or through regular liaison with seniors’ organizations and seniors’ centres. Older adults who are library volunteers, members of the library’s Friends organization, or are library board members might also be consulted.

2. Ensure that the special needs and interests of older people in your community are reflected in the library’s collections, programs, and services.
   2.1 Appoint a librarian, perhaps as part of the Adult Services team, to act as coordinator of seniors’ services, or as seniors’ liaison, ensuring that there is at least one designated staff member monitoring and developing the library’s collections and services with older adults in mind.
2.2 Since older adults are generally under represented among library users, consider how the library can be made more visible, more welcoming, and more relevant for this potential user group.

2.2.1 Advertise the library’s services in local seniors’ newspapers, magazines, radio or television programs, in seniors’ centres, and seniors’ residential housing.

2.2.2 Offer to speak to seniors’ organizations about the library’s services on a regular basis.

2.2.3 Establish an ongoing liaison with seniors’ centres, seniors’ organizations, and agencies serving older adults, to explore cooperative programming, to recruit volunteers or friends of the library, and to seek suggestions for programs or services that would encourage library use.

3. Make the library’s physical facilities safe, comfortable and inviting for older people.

All public buildings must follow prescribed building codes, but these alone do not ensure a level of safety and comfort that older adults may need. Most of the basic requirements for access by people with disabilities are included in these codes, in human rights legislation and local by-laws and regulations. Older adults comprise a sizeable percentage of Canadians with disabilities, therefore the Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities (CLA 1997) should be consulted and used in conjunction with these guidelines for serving older people.

3.1 In addition to consulting the Guidelines for People With Disabilities, evaluate your library’s physical access by making use of the checklists, The Accessible Canadian Library II, and the Canadian Standards Association’s Barrier-Free Design.

3.2 Provide at least one wheelchair in the library for public use.

3.3 Place chairs or stools near stack areas, by information desks, check-out areas, and computer terminals.

3.4 Avoid placing materials on shelves that will be difficult to reach with comfort. This is especially important in areas of the collection that older adults may frequent more.

3.5 Place paperback racks, clearly labeled and well spaced, in areas of the library that are especially well lit, accommodating the many older patrons who prefer paperbacks over heavier and more cumbersome hardback books.
3.6 Ensure that signage is clear, in larger type, and readily visible. Library brochures should also be in at least 12-point font type.

3.7 Provide at least one computer terminal with large font size or voice recognition system in all service outlets, and label visibly.

3.8 Make services and collections easily accessible for patrons with hearing disabilities, by providing TTY access, closed-captioned videotapes, and equipment to facilitate access such as TV decoders. Ensure that programs in the library are also accessible for deaf adults.

4. Make the library a focal point for seniors' information.

4.1 The library can provide an invaluable service to older adults in its community by organizing and consolidating information that they need about government and community programs and services for seniors. In communities where such an information centre is managed by a community agency, the library should work in cooperation with the agency by advertising this service and making the information more readily accessible.

4.2 Develop a library Web site for seniors, that selectively provides links to the sites of seniors’ organizations, government departments and agencies serving older people, full-text seniors’ newspapers, and other Web sites whose focus is older adults.

4.3 Ensure that the library’s collection includes materials that are pertinent for caregivers of older people, for their children or other family members, and for professional caregivers in the community. Collect and display pamphlet and other community information, and consider developing a library Web site for this audience.

5. Target the older population in library programming.

5.1 Include in program planning each year programs that specifically target older adults. Advertising at least some programs in this way can heighten the library’s visibility among the older population.

5.2 Select themes for seniors’ programs that deal with specific interests identified in the library’s user surveys or focus groups, in circulation statistics reflecting borrowing patterns by seniors, or from liaison with seniors themselves, through their organizations or a seniors’ library advisory council.
5.3 Plan programs for specific age groups or generations within the older population, being aware that interests and information needs do vary greatly.

5.4 Include inter-generational programs and participate in inter-generational projects, possibly in cooperation with the library’s youth services, with local schools, daycare facilities or community organizations.

5.5 Pursue other opportunities for cooperative programming for seniors in the community, through community and seniors’ centres, community agencies, educational institutions offering continuing educational programs for older adults. Cooperative efforts might involve active participation in planning and delivering programs, assistance in advertising programs, or providing book displays and booklists in conjunction with programs.

5.6 Consider developing computer and internet courses specifically for older adults. This accommodates a slower pace of instruction, time to develop "mousing skills," and to account for the probability that some participants will have visual or hearing problems. Include individual tutoring if possible.

5.7 Take the library to older people in the community. Provide programming for seniors outside the library, in seniors’ or community centres, and in nursing homes and seniors’ housing units. Consider offering computer and internet training in these locations.

5.8 Use library displays to combat ageism or the stereotypes in our society about older people.

6. Reach out to older adults in the community who are unable to get to the library.

6.1 Plan to adjust library budgets and practices to accommodate an increased need for homebound delivery service. The fastest growing age group in Canada is the very old, those aged 75 and older, and we can therefore expect to see more demand everywhere for services to older people confined to their homes. Only by closely monitoring community demographics, population forecasts, and housing trends can libraries effectively plan for these adjustments.

6.2 Offer the library’s homebound service to all nursing homes and seniors’ residential or care homes in the community. Also include older people who are confined to private residences, or who are unable to carry library materials home.
6.3 Advertise homebound library service through local media, seniors’ organizations and centres, public health agencies, and other community agencies working with older people.

6.4 Eliminate waiting lists for homebound service, through innovative approaches to delivery of materials, a redistribution of personnel, or establishment of a volunteer delivery system.

7. Train the library’s staff to serve older adults with politeness and respect.

7.1 Provide sensitivity training to staff at all levels to make them aware of difficulties older people may have in using the library, and how to make the library a more welcoming and comfortable place for older adults.

7.2 Train staff to recognize the stereotypes about older people, and to avoid condescending service.

7.3 Ensure that all staff are aware of any special services the library offers that may be of interest to older patrons, such as home delivery service, a talking books collection, a service to retrieve materials from the stacks, reading aids, or waiving of fines or fees.

Guidelines written by members of the CLA Interest Group on Services to Older People, 1999.
### Appendix B

**Number of Senior Borrowers by Branch Catchment Area**

- as of May 1, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>60-64 Yrs.</th>
<th>65-69 Yrs.</th>
<th>70-74 Yrs</th>
<th>75+ Yrs</th>
<th>65+ Yrs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>471</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDS</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGR</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>1,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>3691</td>
<td>3163</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>2108</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>12,753</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

- The category of 65+ refers to customers who identified themselves as senior but did not indicate a specific age range.
### Senior Borrowers as a Percentage of Total Branch Borrowers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Total # of Branch Borrowers</th>
<th>Total Borrowers 60+</th>
<th>60+ Borrowers as a percentage of total borrowers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>13,162</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>7,813</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>14,862</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWS</td>
<td>10,967</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DN</td>
<td>2,982</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HN</td>
<td>4,338</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG</td>
<td>24,965</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>1,938</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>11,926</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>17,341</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDS</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGR</td>
<td>24,784</td>
<td>1,958</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SH</td>
<td>1,466</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>10,082</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>10,601</td>
<td>1,291</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>159,117</td>
<td>12,753</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
Summary Results of Branch Internal Scan

In January 2007, all Branch Managers were asked to complete a brief survey to capture information about our current level of services to older adults and to identify issues and gaps. What follows is a summary of the responses to each question, which will be used in conjunction with the results of a customer survey in spring 2007 to identify priority actions coming out of our objectives for 2007-2008.

Please list any programs at your branch that are targeted specifically for older adults.

- Seniors Drop In
- Tax Clinics, IT Skills, African Heritage Month Information program
- Woman’s Group IT Classes
- Service to Homebound
- KG holds some afternoon programs specifically for older adults. Topics are often chosen that will attract those who are retired and who may not like coming to the branch at night.
- IT classes: Since we know that most of our IT programs are filled with older adults we focus our training methods towards that age group.
- One-on-one IT programmes
- Nov. - Seniors Computer Drop In - may try again, tried Falls Prevention - no attendance
- None targeted specifically for older adults although both the IT programs and the Bookclub are held at times that are convenient for older adults and they are both well attended by older adults.
- In the past Woodlawn has held a Seniors appreciation day. Otherwise, programs have not been specific for older adults but we realize our attendance at some programs such as IT
training, income tax, attract almost entirely seniors. As well the median age for most Woodlawn adult program attendees would be in the 55-65 age range.

Looking at your regular adult programs, which have been successful in attracting older adults?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax Clinics</td>
<td>100% **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT classes</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Readings</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Clubs</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Programs</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Programs</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How-To” programs</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Courses</td>
<td>25% *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only 3 branches are offering these programs, but they are heavily attended by customers 50+*

** Refers to percentage of branches responding that noted these programs as successful in attracting older adults

Which of the following features does your branch offer to make it more “friendly” to older adults?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Baskets</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair Accessible Washrooms</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Doors</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Circulation Desks</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Information Desks</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive PC Technology</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnifiers</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Seating</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair Ramps ( if needed )</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDD</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Print Signage</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Lighting</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looped program rooms for hearing aids</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When are older adults using your branch most often?

- Weekday mornings: 83.3%
- Weekday afternoons: 66.7%
- Saturday mornings: 41.7%
- Sunday afternoons: 33.3%
- Weekday evenings: 16.7%
- Saturday afternoons: 16.7%

Indicate the activity level by older adults in your branch for the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending Programs</td>
<td>8% (1)</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
<td>58% (7)</td>
<td>0%  (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picking up holds</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>17% (2)</td>
<td>75% (9)</td>
<td>8%  (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using PUCs</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>67% (8)</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
<td>0%  (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading in-house</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>50% (6)</td>
<td>50% (6)</td>
<td>0%  (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsing the collection</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
<td>75% (9)</td>
<td>0%  (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the catalog</td>
<td>8% (1)</td>
<td>58% (7)</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
<td>8%  (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing materials</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>8% (1)</td>
<td>92% (11)</td>
<td>0%  (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information seeking</td>
<td>8% (1)</td>
<td>67% (8)</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
<td>0%  (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
<td>42% (5)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>33% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending literacy or ESL programs</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
<td>0% (0)</td>
<td>45% (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What subjects and/or format gaps have been identified in your branch in terms of serving older adults?

- LP magazines have been requested but for the most part are not available. Our LP collection is not large but with the rotation it keeps it fresh for the most part.

- I would like to see our branch work closer with the local Seniors Centre. We do not have any identified collection gaps for seniors.
• Books on tape/cd.

• Could use more books on CD.

• Possibly computer books geared specifically for seniors. We should note that our Large Print (and Talking Book) circ has been steadily declining for the past few years.

• In the past most older adults wanted only to attend our IT programs and afternoon performance programming. Lately, however, our large print collection finally started to increase in circulation - but this may be due to the number of holds on regular print items. Most older adults are using our regular services. We really need a wheelchair and wheeled carts to pick up books for those who are very old.

• Currently, we subscribe to one copy of the two major local papers. One of the major activities which older adults seem to enjoy here is reading the paper. We may order more copies of each local title. Will need more large print and a better location for the collection. CHP has a ramp and automatic door but the library does not. Cole Harbour Place has programmes for adults and an open skate on Mondays (especially Monday mornings). Need for Monday openings - it is when they are in the building! Public transportation is terrible. The bus comes along 1 x per hour and it has a limited route.

• We have a good large print and audio book collection as well as a good general collection. No huge gaps.

• No large gaps but it is our goal to increase the # of large print best sellers for this group.

• No talking books and limited audio books. Customers would like more large print or more frequent exchanges.

• None identified as space to shelve more materials an issue. Would like to have more space for displays and for brochures, handouts of interest to seniors and others.

Please list any active community partnerships that facilitate the provision of services / programs used by older adults in your branch. Note: these can be programs / services that older adults use, not just those specifically targeted to them.

• RCMP partnership for the Seniors Drop in - we are not getting large numbers of seniors to date but it might be a slow build Women’s CED Network provides some one-on-one IT training for senior women only.
• Sackville C@P Association We would like to work more closely with the Sackville Seniors Advisory Council / Silver and Gold Drop-in Centre.

• Women’s Group - we often hold programs for the group that we open up to the general public, they love author visits, local history topics, etc.

• Tax people Mainland South Heritage Society
• SMU, JazzEast, Symphony Nova Scotia, WFNS, CRA, Parks Canada, Asian Heritage Month Committee.

• 1. Partnerships with performance programmers like Dalhousie music department. 2. MISA and other immigrant organizations 3. MSVU for the university courses (older adults love this). 4. Chebucto Community Health Board 5. Tax clinics 6. Senior’s organizations 7. Organizations that provide high interest programs like travel, etc.

• C@P has had programmes which are attractive to older adults. CHP has a lot of programmes on topics such as back health, arthritis, injury prevention and such so it’s not really practical to offer them in the library. I think the niche of the library has to be in providing IT programmes (also depends on what the C@P Site does upstairs) and providing reading and information materials.

• Dartmouth Seniors Centre - we participated in their Expo, Dartmouth Community Health board, Dartmouth Heritage Museum (future pilot project with their Reminiscence Kits).

• We have a partnership with Fort Sackville Foundation/Scott Manor House where we work together to provide materials and programs on local history which has been identified as a priority subject for older adults in this community.

• C@P Quilting Club (meet in the branch) Rug Hooking Club (meet in the branch).

• Income tax clinics; Berkeley Center; Dartmouth Seniors Center (in AG catchment, but serves W too) various Kiwanis, Red Hats, local volunteer orgs; Woodlawn United Church.

What gaps in services for older adults have been identified in your branch? Think broadly - programs, collections, services etc.

• Transportation is a big problem in the rural areas. Some elderly folk are making use of the HDS with personal volunteers while they are still in their own homes but eventually because of no public transportation, they have to move into the city to Seniors homes.
• Programs in the morning or early afternoon. Seniors are "turned off" of our branch after 3pm and on weekends due to the large numbers of Teens in the branch.

• Programs: author readings

• Could use more assistive technology also, fresher LP collection (fiction mostly)

• *Branch layout and accessibility is poor *Poor signage *Lack of patron chairs at information desks *Lack of parking *Elevator is hidden and small *Majority of Find It stations do not have chairs (except in YS and 1 in REF) *In general we do not have lots of seating (REF may be the exception) *Program room chairs (metal) are uncomfortable *While older adults constitute the majority of our audience at most of our programs (and especially our daytime programs), we have not done programs specifically targeting this age group.

• Older adults attend almost all of our adult programs and bring their children and grandchildren to the children's programs so there are few gaps there. We could always use more money for collection due to the high circulation here but it would not be specifically for large print since they use all of the collection. More IT programs. More soft seating, a few wheel chairs and more newspaper titles might be helpful.

• More Large Print. Tailored services. We currently have several older adult patrons who like a very tailored kind of customer service. Ie., one man loves fantasy. Darcy often compiles lists of new materials for him. Another patron is involved in painting watercolours as a hobby. He talks with us daily about his needs. We don't necessarily need the "time" to do this, but, the staff who enjoy social interaction and establishing relationships.

• Need more adaptive technology.

• There are facility issues such as signage, furniture, space that need improvement for better service to older adults.

• Volunteer opportunities branch hours facilities issues (ramp is not to code, no automatic doors etc) Homebound service carts for books instead of baskets (too heavy to carry) inter-generational opportunities.

• Main issue at Woodlawn is poor physical layout; material shelved too high, too low, on spinners that can cause neck pain. Lack of proper signage really poor lighting; cramped space with little room for walkers, canes. No comfortable seating; no quiet space away from bustle of programs, children and staff. No home delivery service at this branch. Staff for proper research and outreach. Woodlawn is really maxed out with current programming levels and outreach is very time intensive. If we did increase interest, we have small ability to handle extra workload.
What other trends / issues regarding services to older adults at your branch would you like to note?

- We don't have a large older adult population in our catchment area but many active seniors who are just retired and using our branch on a regular basis.
- Sackville has many early seniors (those who moved to Sackville in the early 70s and raised families) that are now "empty-nesters". Perhaps a survey of what this young senior group wants from the library would be the best way to start. Many of these seniors are also not using the seniors centre because they do not consider themselves "old enough" to use the centre.
- There is an ongoing issue at CWS related to the friction between youth and older adults. Given our current service to youth priority for the branch, I predict this friction will become more of an issue.
- *Crime/violence in downtown area (especially Pizza Corner) and panhandling close to branch probably deters some older adults *Older adults (mainly those in the 'senior' age category) do not tend to come to evening programs *We notice many of our "regular" older adults that come to programs do not use the rest of the branch at all and do not borrow material *Our daytime adult programming (IT Programs, SMU lectures, musical and other cultural programs) is attended mainly by older adults (perhaps 90%+ so we are doing a good job of attracting this age group to our branch for daytime programs. That said, there could still be a need to pilot programs specifically targeting older adults, which will be one of our programming objectives. Perhaps we'll get a new group of users! *Reference notes that older adults have an interest in these topics: collectibles, local history & genealogy, book reviews *Older adults often use information desk staff as intermediaries to the Internet
- It is very noisy at KG and I think that this is disturbing to older adults. We wish that we could do something about that. The older adults are attending all different types of programs, local history, wineries in NS, travel, etc. I believe that we should focus more so on all these interests rather than spending a great deal of money on a lot more assistive technology or large print. Many older adults come here with children and we have had good success with Family Literacy programs and large special events like Multicultural Day celebrations.
- My observation has been that the "young" families which moved here in the past 20 years are "growing up." The children are leaving, but, parents are staying in their homes - some are bringing their aging parents into the home as well. So, the number of active older adults is increasing. Because of the building restrictions in the community, there are relatively few new homes being built. So, rather than an increase in population, we have an increase in the older adult population and a decrease in the younger persons population. We see more
older and active adults in the branch reading the papers, picking up fiction and hobby-type non-fiction - especially during the day when programmes for older adults are happening in the facility. The moratorium on building is lessening its grip so we may see more new homes being built in the area towards Cow Bay -- this may change the demographic. But, for now, the community is made up of single dwelling homes (very few condos and apts) with families who have been living in the area for a long time.

- Older adults rarely use the library or attend programs during the evening hours in this community. If we plan programs specifically for this group it has to be during daytime hours. Many of the services and collections which appeal to older adults are also popular with adults in general (eg. audio books) and do not need to be advertised specifically for older adults but they do need appropriate signage (eg. in large print).

- Customers complain about items shelved on bottom shelves (even in the LP collection) but space is an issue. There are no quiet spaces in the branch if we’re busy. Transportation for older adults can be a problem (no bus or taxi service available) Better promotions and more outreach are required if we want to better serve this group.

- Adult programs do very well at Woodlawn, due, I think, to the large population of older adults 55-65 in this area. Adults with time to attend programs as children are grown up, but still young enough that transportation is not an issue. Their interests are broad, not age specific. Transportation is a big issue for the elderly, especially for women, many of whom become widows without ever having learned to drive
Notes


2. Ibid., p. 7.


12. Harvard, p. 18


14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., p. 139


19. Ibid., p. 4

20. Ibid., p. 16

21. Ibid., p. 35

22. Strategy for Positive Aging, p. 140

23. Harvard, p. 29

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