

MUNICIPAL FAMILY AND SENIORS POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

2017-2020

Age-friendly municipality



Adopted May 1, 2017



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FORWARD



WORD FROM THE MAYOR

We are very pleased to offer all Sutton families the continuity of a revised Family and Seniors Policy. In a clearly evolving social, economic and demographic context, it is vital that we take special steps so that our families, young and not so young, are able to flourish.

The council of the Town of Sutton is committed to making this happen by offering the best possible conditions to all its citizens. In every community, it is the family that forms the basis of our society. We should never lose sight of such an important way of looking at life.

With this in mind, the municipal council has initiated very concrete measures to keep and to attract families of all ages, and we will continue to put families and seniors at the very heart of our preoccupations. A town must balance the growth of its population, the protection of its environment, and the provision of services to all its citizens.

Louis Dandenault, Mayor



WORD FROM THE COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBLE FOR QUESTIONS RELATING TO FAMILIES AND SENIORS

It is a pleasure to communicate to you the updated Family and Seniors Policy and the “age-friendly” municipal designation of the Town of Sutton.

The committee responsible for this policy has enthusiastically devoted its attention to producing the new version, thanks to input from the family and seniors subcommittees as well as consultation with the population at large. As a result, it will be possible to achieve the objectives laid out in the policy, keeping in mind the vision adopted by the Town of Sutton during its most recent strategic planning process.

This policy has confirmed how important it is for the municipal council to make quality of life for our families and seniors in Sutton a priority. All municipal sectors are affected, and all personnel are called upon to perform within the

context of this action plan. In addition, an oversight committee will track the objectives as they are developed and followed up on over the next three years.

Finally, I would like to thank all who participated, whether close at hand or from far away. They have shown great devotion and generosity throughout the process, motivated by a common goal - the wellbeing and quality of life of our families and our seniors in Sutton.

Veerle Beljaars, Councillor

BACKGROUND



DEFINITION OF FAMILY

The family is made up of individuals who have multiple and varied roles in supporting family parenting. Together, they sustain each other emotionally, morally, and materially throughout a lifetime and across generations, while **showing mutual respect** and passing on **values, traditions and knowledge**, thus promoting individual and global development.

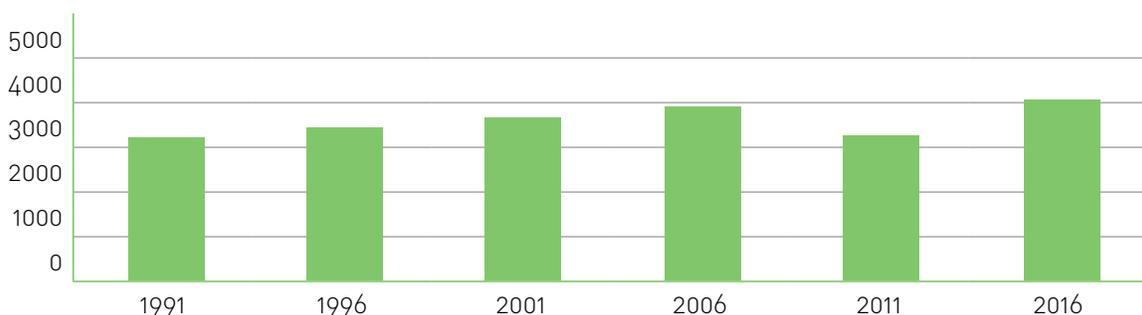
Though it spans all ages, the policy targets seniors for whom aging represents a personal challenge and significant issues for the family and the community.

PORTRAIT¹ OF THE TOWN OF SUTTON

Population

The town of Sutton is located in the Brome-Missisquoi MRC, the Quebec regional county municipality in the administrative region of Montérégie-Est and the tourist region of the Eastern Townships. In 2016, the population of Sutton was 4,012.

Evolution of the population of the town of Sutton 1991-2016



The town of Sutton has seen significant growth in its population over the past 25 years, going from 3,084 in 1991 to 4,012 in 2016, an increase of 30%. This growth is almost double that of all of Quebec for the same period of time.

Distribution of population by age group

The average age of its inhabitants was 54.8 years in 2011, which is significantly higher than the average age for the Brome-Missisquoi MRC (46.5 years) or for all of Quebec (41.4 years). In fact, those aged 65 years and over accounted for more than 26% of the total population of the town of Sutton in 2011.

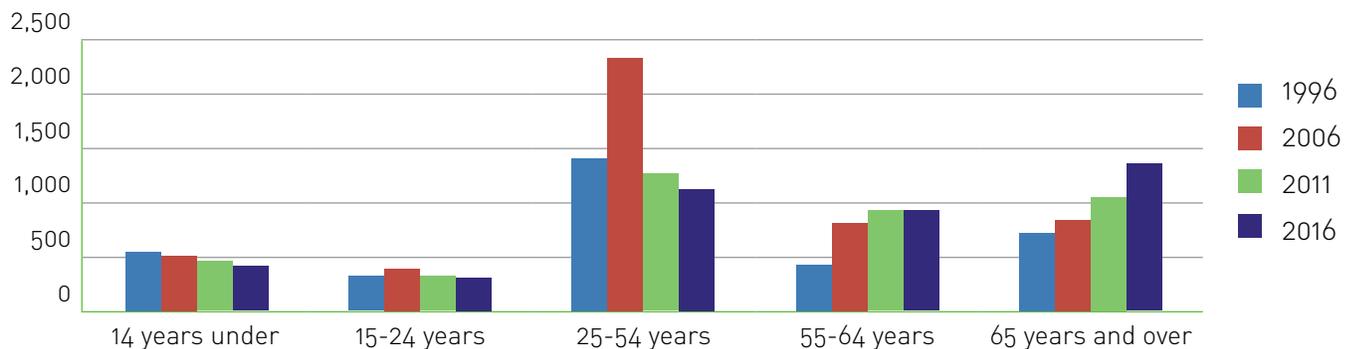
0 - 4 years: 110	20 - 29 years: 225	60 - 69 years: 995
5 - 9 years: 120	30 - 39 years: 275	70 - 79 years: 575
10 - 14 years: 160	40 - 49 years: 420	80 years and over: 285
15 - 19 years: 165	50 - 59 years: 680	



1. All figures are taken from Statistics Canada 2008, 2011 census and 2016 census.



Changes in the population between 1996 and 2016



This population is composed of 1,050 families (couples with or without children) and 135 single-parent families. The majority (70%) of the households identified by census are families without children. Thus, young people aged 0 to 14 years represent only 11% of the population, which is below the Canadian average (16%). The average personal income of the residents of Sutton was \$36,428 in 2011. The percentage of population active during the week² was 57.3%, which is lower than the overall rate for Québec (64.6%).

Housing

In 2011, single-family houses accounted for the majority (74%) of private homes in the town of Sutton. More than three-quarters (76%) of all houses were purchased, while 24% were occupied by tenants. In total, 1,875 private homes were occupied by residents and the average value of these was \$ 250,779, which is higher than the average value in Quebec of \$ 214,537. This difference affects renter households who spend 30% or more of their total household income on housing costs, which is 42.5% for Sutton compared to 36.8% for Quebec.

In terms of housing for seniors, in 2011 there was a total of 49 units, plus 71 units in Long-Term Care (CHSLD). Ten low-cost housing units are also available for people aged 50 years and over.

Transportation

The majority of Sutton's labour force works outside of Sutton, mostly in Cowansville, Lac-Brome, and Montreal. Since 2011, the towns of Sutton and Cowansville can count on a shuttle bus service, a regional public transportation offering two-round trips daily during the week. An inter-city bus service, with two departures daily, make round-trips between Sutton and Montreal. Finally, with 24 hours' notice, the Brome-Missisquoi MRC also provided an adapted transportation service. A taxi service is available.

Furthermore, the population density and the number of businesses located in Sutton's core create a safety issue for pedestrians and cyclists. Sharing the road remains a challenge among the diverse users: motorists, motorcyclists, recreational cyclists, those who use bicycles just to get around, and pedestrians.

2. As defined by Statistics Canada, 2008.



Infrastructures and activities

Sutton residents have several recreational facilities at their disposal (tennis courts, swimming pool, soccer field, outdoor skating rink, etc.). Swimming and aerobic classes are offered (including a seniors component), and citizens can join softball, soccer and dek-hockey leagues. Several other sporting activities are also provided by various organizations. Additionally, Sutton residents can take advantage of a resident rate to use Cowansville's facilities through an intermunicipal agreement. Two libraries are located in Sutton's territory as well as five municipal parks (green spaces).

A number of outdoor activities are equally available for residents or tourists. Examples of these include the PENS (*Parc d'environnement naturel*), Mont Sutton, Au Diable vert and Plein Air Sutton/MTB. Events such as Family Day, Tour des Arts, outdoor movies, the Christmas Market and the Mont Sutton Autumn Festival are also organized every year.

Health

The citizens of Sutton have access to a family medical clinic located in the territory. Several resources centralized in Cowansville are further available to new parents, teenagers, families in difficulty and people with reduced mobility. The town is also served by the CIUSSS-CHUS Estrie (*Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Estrie – Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke*).

Education

Only one primary school is present in Sutton and includes both a French and an English-language sector. They are governed, respectively, by the Val-des-cerfs and the Eastern Township school boards.

VISION OF THE TOWN OF SUTTON FOR ITS FAMILIES AND SENIORS

Sutton is a bilingual town offering warm hospitality and mutual support as well as promoting the well-being of young families and seniors. Its natural and cultural environment promotes active lifestyles and intergenerational activities. Its municipal administration is proactive and receptive to citizen initiatives, and communication with citizens is central to its administration.

VALUES³

- **Respect:** Feeling of esteem for a person which involves manifesting and treating the person with a particular high regard.
- **Solidarity:** Fellowship arising from common interests as between members of a group or between classes, peoples, etc.
- **Mutual assistance:** The act of helping one another—mutual help.
- **Teamwork:** A group of people working together to get a task done.
- **Health:** State of the body's well-being.
- **Education:** Training of someone in a particular field of activity; intellectual, cultural, ethical knowledge acquired by someone, by a group.
- **Environment:** A set of elements (biotic or abiotic) that surround an individual or a species and some of which contribute directly to their needs.

3. Definitions adapted from the Larousse dictionary, 2017.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The Town wishes to intervene mainly in five areas which can also be considered as broad guidelines to which objectives and actions relate.

AREA 1

Mobility and transportation

AREA 2

Health, social and community services

AREA 3

Housing and urban planning services

AREA 4

Recreational activities, sports and culture



AREA 5

Communication and municipal organization

KEY



Actions for families



Actions for seniors



Actions included in the strategic plan adopted in 2017

AREA 1 - MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

Issue 1: Active modes of transportation (on foot and by bicycle) difficult in the village core

In the village core, because the bicycle path is not long enough, cyclists and motorists find it difficult to share the road. This creates safety issues for walking and cycling and also influences the number of people traveling on foot.

Issue 2: Modes of travel within and outside Sutton

The municipality's territory is extensive and some areas are far from the centre of the village, which means that people with only one car can find it difficult to have access to services in Sutton and surrounding municipalities. Furthermore, many jobs and services are located outside of Sutton, forcing people to move to neighbouring towns such as Cowansville, which can have an impact on the seniors and families remaining in Sutton.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 - Facilitate active transportation in the village

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>1.1.1 Maintain and optimize infrastructures for active modes of travel</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicate that the priority is given to pedestrians in the village. Apply the recommendations from the "Vélo Sympathique" certification. Apply the recommendations of "Ma Municipalité, à pied, à vélo", and propose new actions to be taken (ex. sidewalks on Western). 	<p>Public Works Department</p> <p>MTQ</p> <p>CIUSSS</p> <p>Brome-Missisquoi MRC</p> <p>Vélo Québec</p>	<p>Continuous action</p>

OBJECTIVE 1.2 - Develop intra-Sutton travel modes and inter-municipal travel options

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>1.2.1 Consolidate the existing intra and extra transportation services (not managed by the Town) and make them known to the public</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide financial or training support for volunteers. Make information available regarding existing long-distance carpooling services. Make information available about Limocar. 	<p>Brome-Missisquoi MRC</p> <p>Carpooling Group Facebook</p> <p>Taxis</p> <p>Sutton Volunteer Centre</p> <p>Private enterprises</p>	<p>2019</p>
<p>1.2.2 Analyze the feasibility of creating partnerships with different services to improve what is available</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze opportunities for partnership development with the Mont Sutton shuttle bus service and / or the Cowansville Taxibus. 	<p>Mont Sutton</p> <p>Town of Cowansville</p> <p>Brome-Missisquoi MRC</p>	<p>2018</p>

AREA 2 - HEALTH, SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Issue 1: Maintaining health services

The town has several health services, but there is a possibility that some of them will move away. Sutton is particularly fortunate compared to neighbouring municipalities, because it has benefited from the decentralization of services by having its own points of service. Furthermore, in the past year, several services for children (eg social pediatric clinic) have been set up and help to make Sutton a warm and welcoming place for young families. However, these achievements still remain vulnerable, and it is important that the Town and its citizens continue to be proactive with the CIUSSS of the Estrie-CHUS.

Issue 2: Promoting a healthy lifestyle

In Sutton, many activities allow people of all ages to move about and stay in shape. However, some leisure activities may not be available to certain age groups. We are referring to children under five years of age, teenagers and seniors. The committee also found that there was little space available for free indoor recreational activities which would promote an active lifestyle even during the winter.

Issue 3: Support for community, recreational and cultural organizations

The Town has put in place a policy of recognition and financial support for community, recreational and cultural organizations. Apart from this support, which is already a clear commitment by the Town to recognize the importance of the services offered by these community organizations, the Town is looking at ways to make sure that the services currently offered do not disappear, and that they are offered more frequently to meet all needs. The sustainability of these services is an issue, as several organizations lack funding to accomplish their basic mission.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 - Maintain health services

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>2.1.1 Designate a municipal councillor and a municipal employee to answer health questions</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit on regional committees. Ensure the maintenance and development of home care and other local services. 	Municipal council	2017
<p>2.1.2 Analyze the need for local health services</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the feasibility of setting up a health cooperative. Analyze the possibility of setting up a committee of self-employed workers. 	Self-employed workers CDR <i>Corporation de développement économique (CDES)</i> Chamber of commerce	2020



OBJECTIVE 2.2 - Promote a physically-healthy lifestyle

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>2.2.1 Develop a pedestrian lifestyle and adapted infrastructure</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implement “Vélo sympathique” recommendations issued from their action plan and the recommendations from “<i>Ma municipalité à pied, à vélo.</i> » ■ Optimize and improve the link between the mountain and the village. ■ Identify and communicate information regarding pedestrian paths in the village (active corridors). ■ Publicize and make the most of adult physical training modules and paths located at the Goyette-Hill Park. ■ Create and develop pedestrian paths in the village core. 	<p>Public Works Department CIUSSS Brome-Missisquoi MRC MTQ Vélo Québec</p>	Continuous action
<p>2.2.2 Increase and promote accessibility to sports infrastructure and programs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promote access to young families for skiing activities. ■ Offer a bike-share service. ■ Establish a program to offer vacant spaces for activities. ■ Raise awareness among organizations. 	<p>Recreation organizations <i>Loisirs et sports Montérégie</i> Boulangier-Bédard Foundation</p>	2018

OBJECTIVE 2.3 - Continue to support community, recreational and cultural organizations

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>2.3.1 Complete an inventory of the needs of all the organizations</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep an up-to-date file on organizations and make them known. ■ Respond to the priorities formulated by organizations according to their needs 	<p>Government of Canada Provincial government Volunteer Action Centre Townshippers’ Association</p>	2020
<p>2.3.2 Improve accommodation for organizations (John Sleeth Community Centre)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Renovate Room 1 at the John Sleeth Centre ■ Improve the exterior area at the John Sleeth Centre ■ Renovate or build an adequate community centre 	<p>Sutton organizations</p>	2017

AREA 3 - HOUSING AND URBAN PLANNING

Issue 1: Access to property for young families

Access to property is more difficult for young families, as the cost of acquiring a home is expensive and there are few rental units in the village. Although a tax credit has been put in place by the Town for new buildings (above a certain amount), the investment required by families remains substantial.

Issue 2: The availability of housing for seniors

There is a significant supply of private homes for seniors who are autonomous. A private project is also underway for the construction of housing for semi-autonomous seniors (intermediate care). The arrival of new residents will likely require adapting surrounding infrastructures to facilitate their mobility and to allow them to enjoy outdoor living facilities (ex. sidewalks). There is also a CHSLD (long-term care facility) in Sutton, which allows people who need to use this service to do so in their own living environment.

Furthermore, a private project of new homes (about 110) could allow several generations to live side by side and have access to a multitude of different types of housing (for sale, not rented). In short, many projects that will allow the addition of more housing units are underway, and the Town is working with private developers to complete these projects.

Issue 3: Keeping seniors in their community

How to keep seniors in their community is an issue facing all municipalities, and the provincial government wants to encourage seniors to stay at home for as long as possible. It is a known fact that access to health care and services in the vicinity contributes to maintaining the elderly in their community. There is also a way to help seniors adapt their homes to meet their needs through various existing financial assistance programs. Seniors are not always aware of these programs, or have difficulty completing the necessary forms. As part of the "Age-friendly municipality" initiative, municipalities are offering this support service. Furthermore, the working committee has noticed that some seniors live in isolated circumstances and consider it would be better to analyze their specific needs to ensure that they are aging actively.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 - Facilitating access to property for young families

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>3.1.1 Bring young families together to discuss their housing needs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Survey families to gather information on their housing needs. ■ Analyze the possibility of extending the tax credit to houses already built. 	Urban and Land-Use Planning Dept. Finance Dept. Town Clerk's Office	2018
<p>3.1.2 Explain the municipal by-laws and evaluate the need to modify them (in order to favour density)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support the construction of housing units for semi-autonomous persons. 	Urban and Land-Use Planning Dept.	2018

OBJECTIVE 3.2 - Encourage available housing for seniors

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>3.2.1 Bring seniors together to discuss housing needs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey seniors to gather information on their housing needs. Inform the population about regulations regarding the development of multi-generational housing. 	<p>Urban and Land-Use Planning Dept.</p> <p>Private developers</p>	2018
<p>3.2.2 Encourage construction and affordable housing projects (for rental and for sale)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the construction of housing units for semi-autonomous persons. 	<p>Urban and Land-Use Planning Dept.</p> <p>Private developers</p>	Continuous action

AREA 4 - RECREATION, SPORTS AND CULTURE

Issue 1 : Lack of Intergenerational recreational activities

Sutton is renowned for offering a great many leisure and sports activities. Several private partners also provide recreational activities (skiing, hiking paths in nature, etc.). The citizens of Sutton have access to many and varied recreational options.

However, the Family and Seniors committee found that there were few intergenerational activities available that would allow children and adults of all ages to interact and enjoy being together. First of all, intergenerational activities allow for a very interesting exchange of knowledge. Second, they can also encourage adults, especially seniors, to become less isolated and to get involved in a different way in the community.

Issue 2: The lack of a safe gathering place for organizations

Currently, several organizations use the John Sleeth Centre as a place to carry out their activities. Some organizations also have permanent space. Such a shared gathering place allows a whole community to meet and to exchange ideas. These places are social in nature and tend to bring people together so that they are not always alone.

However, a number of issues have been raised regarding this centre. Among these, safety is the one that has arisen most often, particularly safety outside the building as affected by the street nearby. Child safety was also mentioned. Universal accessibility — in other words, access for everyone, even those with reduced mobility (having to use a stroller, walker or wheelchair) — is a concern, given that the building is not adapted to the latest standards (such as automatic doors, elevators, adequate space).



OBJECTIVE 4.1 - Facilitating intergenerational recreational activities for toddlers, teenagers and seniors

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>4.1.1 Put in place an intergenerational recreation pilot project</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how existing activities can be added to an intergenerational project. Take charge and organize an intergenerational recreational pilot project. 	Recreation and Community Life Dept. Arts and Culture Dept <i>Corporation de développement économique (CDES)</i> Sutton School CIUSSS (community organization) Sutton organizations	2019
<p>4.1.2 Complete an inventory of available space, keep it up to date and make the information known</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include on the website under the recreational activities program the space available for use, and the rental policy for these premises. 	Sutton organizations CDES Arts and Culture Dept	2018

AREA 5 - COMMUNICATION AND MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATIONS

Issue 1: Collaboration among organizations

Many activities are planned by various groups and organizations in the territory of Sutton. Indeed, the place is known for being dynamic, thanks to the fact that its citizens participate in the community and social life of the town. However, collaboration is rare when projects are being developed. This often means events are scheduled on the same date, thus reducing citizen and volunteer participation. By working more closely, organizations could ensure that no two events are held simultaneously.

Issue 2 : Communication between citizens and the municipal council

Many citizens are engaged in collective initiatives relating to health care or housing projects. These citizens care about what the issues entail and actively participate in the democratic life of the town, especially during municipal council meetings. Citizens would like to be better informed by municipal council regarding future projects and decision-making. Improvements to the municipal bulletin (paper format) and to the Town's website would allow for better information-sharing. Moreover, if the municipal council wishes to make access to information a priority, it must take account of schedules or physical limitations that can make it difficult, if not impossible, for citizens to participate in municipal council meetings.

OBJECTIVE 5.1 - Encourage consultation and collaboration among organizations

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
<p>5.1.1 Hire a communications employee for the municipality</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate communications between different groups and projects so they can work better together. 	Town Clerk's Office	2020

OBJECTIVE 5.2 - Ensure communication occurs between citizens and the municipal council

Action	Means	Partners	Deadline
5.2.1 Optimize existing communication tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out the municipal bulletin more frequently. Establish an effective community calendar and keep it up-to-date. Regroup and announce all existing community activities (inter-generational, cultural and recreational) on the Town's website. 	Town Clerk's Office <i>Corporation de développement économique (CDES)</i> Volunteer Action Centre	2018
5.2.2 Announce the dates of council meetings using new means of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and select a communications strategy 	Town Clerk's Office	2019
5.2.3 Facilitate access to the Town's internet communication tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer a self-service computer at the tourist office. Train key people so they can provide appropriate direction, depending on what's required 	Tourist Office	2019

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