



City of Colwood
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

2016



Page Intentionally Blank

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The City of Colwood is a growing community that values its history, its beautiful natural environment and its people. One way we are building toward a bright future is by ensuring our city is safe and welcoming for people of all ages and levels of mobility. A place where people can be active and connected throughout their lives and access housing and supports that meet their changing needs throughout their lives.

We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations who responded to surveys, took part in workshops and offered feedback to help identify barriers and share ideas about how we can overcome them.

This Age-friendly Community Plan will work with our Transportation Master Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Official Community Plan to bring our vision of a welcoming community to life. We are committed to continuing to work with partners and community members on ongoing improvements that will benefit everyone in our community.

Carol Hamilton
Mayor, City of Colwood

Page Intentionally Blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	Introduction	7
B	An Age-friendly Colwood	15
C.	Implementation	35
	Acknowledgements	41

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Context Research

Appendix B: Summary of Survey Results

Appendix C: Summary of Workshop Results



Page Intentionally Blank

A INTRODUCTION

1 Project Context

2 Age-friendly Planning Process

3 Community Input

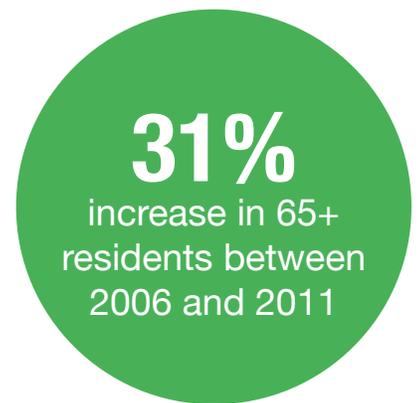
1. PROJECT CONTEXT



In early 2015, the City of Colwood received an Age-friendly Community Planning grant from the BC Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative. The City then set out to create a plan that would build on the existing strengths of the community and provide a road map for the future.

The City engaged Barefoot Planning, a local community planning consultancy, to lead this community-driven process – which involved local context research, a public survey, and community and stakeholder workshops. The outcome of this process was the development of a series of recommendations that would act as a catalyst for action in the coming years.

This plan is the result of this process and is intended to provide an overview of the process and public input, as well as – primarily – present a relevant and actionable list of strategies for the City to pursue, both alone and in collaboration with community partners.



THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

In 2006, the World Health Organization launched the Age-friendly Community Initiative, with the goal of adapting structures and services to be more inclusive to the needs and abilities of people from all age groups. Through the subsequent Global Age-friendly Cities Project, the WHO established eight pillars for assessing and developing strategies to create age-friendly communities.

These eight pillars provide a framework from which this project was carried out and this plan was structured.

THE 8 PILLARS

- + Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
- + Transportation
- + Housing
- + Respect & Social Inclusion
- + Social Participation
- + Communication & Information
- + Civic Participation & Employment
- + Community Support & Health Services



WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

In an age-friendly community, the physical, social, and political environments support people of all ages in meeting their daily needs. Accessible infrastructure, housing, transportation, programming, policies, and services enable independence in seniors and people with disabilities – determining their ability to enjoy autonomy in their lives. Moreover, age-friendly communities promote a high quality of life, comfort and security, and meaningful participation by accommodating the physical, behavioural, economic, and social changes a person experiences over time.

While this project focuses on adults over the age of 55, an age-friendly community benefits residents of all ages. For example, safe, accessible pedestrian infrastructure provides security and comfort to children, parents pushing strollers, and those with mobility challenges. Senior services relieve families of caregiving stress and provide a higher quality of life for older adults. And, intergenerational programs build mutual respect, strengthen community bonds, and provide learning opportunities for all ages.

THE COLWOOD CONTEXT

While relatively young, with a median age of 40 (compared to 45 for the region), the City is aging and growing. Between 2006 and 2011, the percentage of residents over 65 increased by 31%, from 1,590 to 2,080 people. Signs suggest that this demographic continues to grow. Additionally, the population saw a 9.6% growth between 2006 and 2011 (compared to 7% provincially), only outpaced by Langford in the region.

As a key growth area, the *Regional Growth Strategy* targets Colwood for 17,000 new residents by 2028 – with an abundance of new housing already in some stage of approval. Yet, like most edge cities, the community is characterized by auto-oriented, single use neighbourhoods, in which walking and transit are largely inconvenient. Transportation issues and an increasing lack of affordability are two key concerns that affect local seniors, their quality of life, and their ability to age in place.

That said, the Colwood community is already age-friendly in a number of ways: The Juan de Fuca 55 Plus Activity Centre (JDF 55+) provides amenities and programming; Colwood Lodge is a strong example of seniors-oriented housing; and, West Shore Seniors' Services and Better at Home are examples of volunteer agencies that provide support to seniors in the area.

2. AGE-FRIENDLY PLANNING PROCESS



The process for this age-friendly community plan consisted of three primary phases: Context Research, Public Engagement, and Plan Development.

Context Research – Policy Assessment & Best Practices

Initially, using the 8 Pillars as a framework, the Barefoot Planning team conducted an in-depth assessment of the local policy context, reviewing relevant policy documents, including the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*, *Land Use Bylaw*, and *Subdivision and Development Bylaw*.

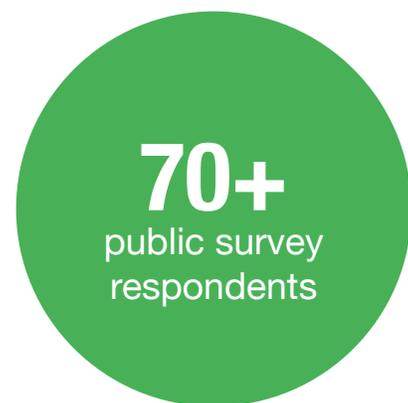
This research was supplemented by a review of best practices from other relevant communities, in which relevant initiatives were identified to inform the development of this plan.

Public Engagement – Community Assessment & Next Steps

Next, an extensive public engagement phase was implemented, consisting of a public survey and stakeholder consultation sessions.

The public survey was developed to engage community members of all ages to produce a snapshot of the community, through the eyes of older adults, as well as identify key issues in the community.

The focus of the project then shifted from identifying issues to generating potential next steps. Two stakeholder consultation sessions were held to tap into the expertise of residents, service providers, and City staff.



The sessions were based on the World Cafe format, in which rounds of dialogue build on each other, addressing key themes in order to generate solutions and connect ideas. This, in turn, leads to the identification of those next steps that are most relevant, meaningful, and actionable in the community.

The sessions engaged key stakeholders, including the Mayor, City staff, members of Council, West Shore Parks and Recreation (WSPR), JDF library, JDF 55+, Royal Roads University, BC Transit, caregivers, service providers, and residents.

Plan Development – Putting It All Together

Based on the stakeholder input, and informed by the Context Research and public survey, a draft list of recommended next steps was developed –.

An iterative process was then employed to further refine these recommendations into a series of Objectives and Recommended Strategies, which form the core of this plan.

PROJECT OVERVIEW & TIMELINE

Jul 2015	Assessment of local policy and on-going initiatives.
Aug 2015	Review and identification of relevant best practices.
Sep 2015	Public survey to assess community and identify key issues.
Sep-Oct 2015	Stakeholder workshops to generate potential next steps.
Nov 2015	Iterative development of draft Age-friendly Community Plan
Feb 2016	Submission of final plan

3. AN AGE-FRIENDLY CULTURE



In becoming an age-friendly community, the City of Colwood, local stakeholders, and residents need to develop a culture of age-friendliness. In other words, these partners need to collectively foster a community where residents can age in place, feel respected, be independent, and achieve a high quality of life.

Internally, the City can catalyze this evolution by making a commitment to an age-friendly future and reinforcing a corporate culture that will take Colwood there.

To successfully implement the strategies recommended in this plan and move this initiative forward, the City will need to:

- + Take an age-friendly perspective to all community issues;
- + Ensure an integrated, inter-departmental, cross-agency approach to key issues;
- + Build civic advocacy and advisory capacity;
- + Strengthen internal and external connections; and,
- + Engage on-going support from provincial and federal agencies.

To be successful, the City will need to ensure an integrated, inter-departmental, cross-agency approach to key age-friendly issues.



THE CITY'S ROLE

A local champion is key to success of the plan – as an advocate and someone to carry initiatives forward.



Moreover, the City must play a key role in the implementation of this plan, including but not limited to:

- + Being (or identifying) a local champion to advocate for and carry initiatives forward;
- + Communicating information and raising community awareness about planning initiatives;
- + Leading or providing support services on key initiatives;
- + Providing space and funding where appropriate;
- + Planning and policy development;
- + Initiating and developing partnerships with service providers, businesses, community organizations, and public agencies;
- + Supporting or leading communication efforts and supporting the provision of information; and,
- + Initiating action planning on an annual basis and monitoring its progress.

Page Intentionally Blank

B AN AGE-FRIENDLY COLWOOD

- The 8 Pillars – A Framework
- 1 Outdoor Spaces & Buildings 
- 2 Transportation 
- 3 Housing 
- 4 Respect & Social Inclusion 
- 5 Social Participation 
- 6 Communication & Information 
- 7 Civic Participation & Employment 
- 8 Community Support & Health Services 

THE 8 PILLARS – A FRAMEWORK



Throughout the process of this plan, the WHO's 8 Pillars of age-friendly communities acted as a guiding framework – for research, survey development, workshop format, and the content of this report. While very broad in scope, these pillars necessarily guide us to reflect on all aspects of community that affect older adults and those with mobility challenges.

This section (B. An Age-friendly Colwood) is essentially the core of the Age-friendly Community Plan. For each pillar, a complete synthesis of the project findings has been provided:

- + **Common Barriers** are community issues identified in the research, public survey, and workshops.
- + **Key Voices** are notable findings from the survey along with quotes from residents via the public survey and workshops.
- + **Current Practices** indicate initiatives and assets that presently benefit older adults in Colwood.
- + **Next Steps** are local age-friendly objectives and the recommended strategies to begin achieving those objectives.

The Implementation section further refines these detailed recommendations into a short list of strategies for the community to initially consider and undertake.

SUMMARY OF THE 8 PILLARS



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

The natural and built environments support the access and active involvement of seniors and those with mobility challenges in the community.



Transportation

Older adults are able to move around their community conveniently and safely using public, private, and active forms of transportation.



Housing

Older adults have access to safe, accessible, affordable housing that is well-located and allows them to age in place.



Respect & Social Inclusion

The community is respectful of and dignifies older adults, and welcomes their active involvement in all aspects of society.



Social Participation

Older adults have opportunities to build meaningful social connections and participate in leisure and cultural activities.



Communication & Information

Older adults are aware of the programming and services available to them and have ready access to relevant, up-to-date community information.



Civic Participation & Employment

Older adults have the opportunity to participate in civic decision-making and have sufficient opportunity to contribute to the community via paid or unpaid work.



Community Support & Health Services

Older adults have access to the support and services they need to remain healthy and independent.

1. OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS



Identified Barriers

- + Insufficient sidewalk quality and a lack of contiguous, accessible routes.
- + Unsafe path surfacing, including reconstituted asphalt recently laid in Royal Bay.
- + Lack of pedestrian accessibility features, such as lighting, longer crossing times, curb cuts, and wide, unobstructed sidewalks.
- + Maintenance of trails during winter rains and snow.
- + Lack of public washroom facilities and seating in town and in key park locations.
- + *Subdivision and Development By-law* (1995) requires updating to meet objectives of the *OCP* and *Transportation Master Plan*.

Key Voices

- + “Our public parks are great, but we need more washrooms...”
- + “If 3 meters of sidewalk is missing, a senior with mobility issues cannot get from point A to point B.”
- + 54% of 55+ residents disagreed that Colwood sidewalks and walkways were maintained, unobstructed, and accessible.

Current Practices

- + *OCP* policy envisions centres and corridors that are welcoming and inclusive for all ages.
- + The *Transportation Master Plan* includes many improved objectives and provisions for a more pedestrian-friendly built environment.
- + *OCP* policy calls for accessibility and universal design in buildings, public spaces, and multifamily housing.
- + *User-Friendly Trails* and *Walk West Shore* provide a practical resource for accessible trails in Colwood and surrounding communities.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Increase the amount of accessible and contiguous sidewalks.

Recommended Strategies

- + Support and advocate for the active transportation strategies and priorities set forth in the *Transportation Master Plan*.
- + Explore economical, novel, and short-term ways of improving key sidewalks (e.g., Sooke Rd.) and pedestrian routes.
- + Consider multiple sidewalk standards to address the increased use of wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

Objective #2: Identify and improve key crossings for seniors and those with mobility challenges.

Recommended Strategies

- + Identify wider intersections used by seniors and those with mobility challenges and consider extending crossing times, the use of countdown signals, and a pedestrian refuge.
- + Key intersections include: Island Highway at Wale Rd. and Sooke Rd. at Goldstream Ave..
- + Consider installing pedestrian-activated lights for mid-block crossings, particularly near transit stops; e.g., on Sooke Rd.

Objective #3: Improve the accessibility of pathways and trails.

Recommended Strategies

- + Conduct an accessibility assessment of parks and trails.
- + Develop a set of standards for neighbourhood access trails and pathways, with a particular focus on surfacing.
- + Consider a level of service standard for trail maintenance to ensure accessibility to seniors in the winter months.
- + Explore ways to improve access to Esquimalt Lagoon.

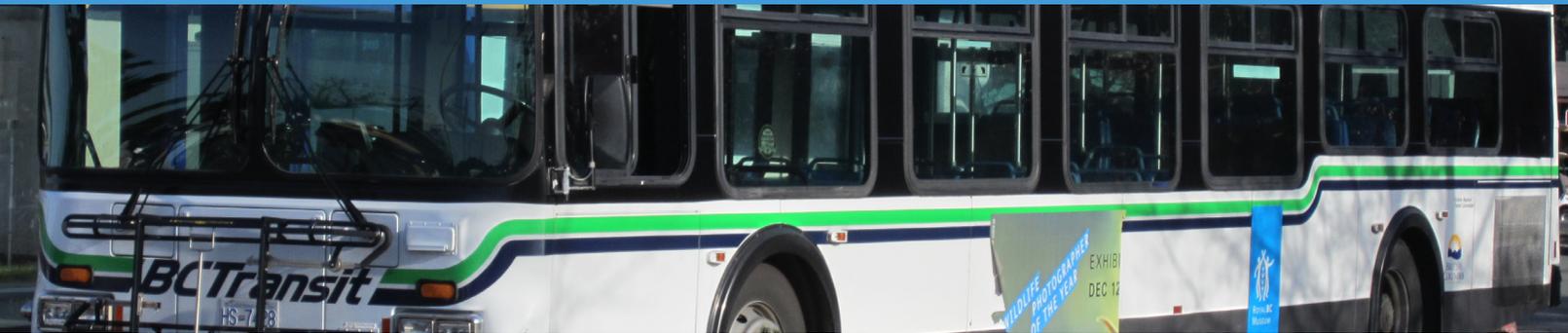
Objective #4: Increase the number of accessible public washrooms in the community.

Recommended Strategy

- + Consider offering developers incentives to include public washrooms in new development plans



2. TRANSPORTATION



Identified Barriers

- + Public transit to appointments across the region is considered inconvenient and inefficient.
- + Need for a more expansive, more frequent transit routes with better regional connections.
- + handyDART service is considered inconvenient and details are not well known in the community.
- + Lack of information and awareness about alternative transportation services available for seniors.
- + Need to connect volunteer drivers with organizations and to connect organizations with seniors in need.
- + Some bus stops and crosswalks need safety and accessibility upgrades.

Key Voices

- + “Medical specialists are located far from the West Shore communities and it is a challenge to figure out bus routes and transfers... it is very time consuming and exhausting.”
- + “Bus stops are poor and lack meaningful rest or waiting areas for the public.”
- + Only 37% of 55+ survey respondents agreed that affordable and accessible transportation services are available for seniors and those with mobility issues.
- + Only 24% of survey respondents agreed that services were available to transport seniors to medical appointments.

Current Practices

- + OCP policy supports the creation of walkable neighbourhoods connected by multimodal corridors, and the creation of transit-supportive centres.
- + *Land Use Bylaw* includes provisions for accessible parking.
- + handyDART, Medi-Van, and Taxi Saver vouchers available for those with mobility challenges.
- + The *Transportation Master Plan* supports the needs of all ages and abilities, including wheelchair accessibility of sidewalks.
- + Volunteer driver programs are currently being offered by agencies such as Better at Home.
- + The City has approached BC Transit about additional transit stop on Island Highway.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Increase the accessibility and affordability of public transit in Colwood.

Recommended Strategies

- + Engage with BC Transit to explore the opportunity to extend the eligibility of the Student U-Pass to local seniors.
- + Work with BC Transit to identify and improve the safety and comfort of transit stops in Colwood.
- + Work with BC Transit to offer age-friendly transit stops that include weather protection, seating, lighting, and textured curb cuts.
- + Advocate for improvements along primary and secondary routes.
- + Better communicate and provide information regarding handyDart services to seniors.
 - + Explore ways to improve and expand handyDart to be more convenient for seniors in need.

Objective #2: Support the development of a coordinated and supported volunteer driver program.

Recommended Strategies

- + Work with Better at Home and other existing agencies to establish a single service for both medical and non-medical volunteer transportation.
- + Integrate and coordinate these services via a Seniors Resource Centre (see 6. Communication & Information).
- + Support communication to both attract volunteers and inform seniors about available services.



3. HOUSING



Identified Barriers

- + Increasing lack of affordability.
- + Insufficient housing options in the community – including accessible rental units and assisted living.
- + Lack of knowledge by community members about housing options.
- + Demand for additional in-home services that allow residents to age safely in their own homes.
- + Inadequate communication about existing support for independent living.
- + *BC Building Code* only requires a minimum level of accessibility for multi-family buildings.

Key Voices

- + “ We are hoping there will be more housing options in the future, as we would like to stay in Colwood once we no longer wish to have a single family home.”
- + 35% of 55+ survey respondents felt that Colwood is failing to offer a range of appropriate and affordable housing for seniors.

Current Practices

- + *OCP* policy supports the creation of affordable, adaptable, and diverse housing, and supports the pursuit of Aging in Place and accessibility strategies for housing.
- + *Land Use Bylaw* includes provisions for diverse housing types, including seniors housing zones: Senior Citizens Apartment Zone (RM4) and Towncentre Seniors Residential (RTS-2).
- + Provincial Government offers financial assistance for low-income seniors making renovations to help meet their daily needs.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Support the development and maintenance of a seniors housing directory.

Recommended Strategies

- + Develop a seniors housing directory that allows seniors to access and share housing information specific to their unique housing needs.
 - + Create an online platform and printed editions to be distributed at doctor and dentists offices, JDF 55+, etc.
 - + Include both senior-oriented apartments as well as diverse housing types that are suitable for seniors.
 - + Integrate with a Seniors Resource Centre (see 6. Communication & Information).

Objective #2: Encourage more seniors housing options and long-term care in Colwood.

Recommended Strategies

- + Undertake a housing study that seeks to identify the future housing needs of Colwood's aging population and explores ways to meet those needs.
- + Work with local partners (e.g., Royal Roads University) to study the demand for alternative and affordable housing options – with an emphasis on cohousing.
 - + If demand exists, then explore ways to better facilitate the development of cohousing in Colwood.
- + Consider building on the Attainable Housing Policy to include provisions for lower income seniors.
- + Consider increasing the allowable density and reducing the required parking in the *Land Use Bylaw* for the RM4 and RTS-2 zones.

Objective #3: Improve the accessibility of housing in Colwood.

Recommended Strategy

- + Advocate for the development of adaptable housing standards and/or guidelines to direct development.



4. RESPECT & SOCIAL INCLUSION



Identified Barriers

- + Some seniors feel a lack of respect from the community.
- + Older residents would like to be more actively involved in civic decision-making.
- + Desire for more intergenerational programming and social events which engage youth, seniors, and those with disabilities.
- + Some seniors feel that their knowledge and wisdom is not valued in the community and that there are limited opportunities to share with others.
- + Perceived lack of support from services providers, volunteer agencies, churches, etc..

Key Voices

- + “I don’t believe we do enough to reach out to the seniors in Colwood. Many are isolated in their own homes, still driving themselves to appointments.”
- + “I see a need for more opportunities to connect seniors with high school students... and opportunities for elders to mentor others.”
- + Only 48% of 55+ survey respondents felt that the community provides an environment where seniors can stay connected to friends, family, and community.

Current Practices

- + West Shore Parks and Recreation (WSPR) and JDF 55+ provide a number of inclusive services and programs to seniors.
- + WSPR offers discounted senior rates.
- + Local volunteer agencies (e.g., Better at Home) reach out to seniors in a variety of ways (e.g., driving, friendly visits).
- + Colwood’s Grants in Aid program supports projects that provide services to seniors.
- + Metchosin’s Geeks and Geezers program allows seniors to learn about technology from local youth.
- + The West Shore Seniors Fall Wellness Fair celebrates and provides information to seniors on the West Shore.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Welcome, encourage, and celebrate the inclusion of seniors at community events.

Recommended Strategies

- + Advocate for and support senior-friendly community events in Colwood.
- + Support community initiatives that bring multiple generations together to foster mutual respect and understanding.
- + Establish simple but meaningful accessibility guidelines for community events, with consideration given to communicating with seniors as well as provision of accessible transportation, seating, washrooms, and other facilities.

Objective #2: Find more ways to celebrate older adults in the community.

Recommended Strategies

- + Establish events, programs, or activities associated with Seniors Week, International Day of Older Persons, Grandparents Day, Family Day, or other similar occasions.
- + Build on the Legacy Gifts Policy to acquire new street furniture with development projects in major neighbourhood centres and adjacent public right of ways.
- + Expand the Pay it Forward program with an emphasis on seniors.

Objective #3: Help local community groups and businesses become more aware of the needs and interests of older adults.

Recommended Strategies

- + Engage with local agencies and churches to explore ways of better engaging and supporting seniors in the community.
- + Consider developing an age-friendly business certification process that assesses and recognizes local business that embrace age-friendly practices.
- + Develop a brochure of age-friendly guidelines and tips for local businesses and organizations.



5. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION



Identified Barriers

- + Lack of community events, initiatives, and activities.
- + Community events and activities are not always accommodating or inclusive of seniors' participation.
- + Some seniors feel that Colwood lacks an informal gathering space to meet and socialize (i.e., not an activity or wellness centre).
- + Some residents feel that Colwood lacks a sense of community.
- + Existing services that engage seniors are not fully utilized or supported.
- + Some feel that JDF 55+ does not sufficiently engage the younger seniors demographic (55 - 75).

Key Voices

- + **“Colwood does not offer many social events for any age... we need better communication to the community about what and where they can access services and events”**
- + **“Eats & Beats was a terrific community event. We would love to see more!”**
- + **60% of 55+ survey respondents agreed that Colwood offers a variety of events and activities for seniors to participate in.**

Current Practices

- + *OCP* encourages the creation of a Social Planning Council and a Social Development Strategy.
- + *OCP* objective to meet recreational needs of residents and ensure lifelong learning opportunities.
- + The City's Eats & Beats event was a success for all ages. Colwood Christmas Light Up is another popular all-ages community event.
- + The City's Block Party Kit encourages informal community celebrations for all ages.
- + Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative, encourages the active participation of seniors..
- + Royal Bay Secondary School has a new Neighbourhood Learning Centre where WSPR will be offering programming.
- + JDF 55+ and WSPR facilitate seniors participation through programming and activities.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Establish one or more additional, informal community gathering spaces that serve all ages, with a focus on seniors.

Recommended Strategies

- + Explore the possibility of using the building at the park at the end of Goldfinch Road as a community hub, cafe, or other use that creates a sense of place and senior-friendly social space.
- + Identify formal and informal gathering spaces in Colwood's facilities, public spaces, and private developments.

Objective #2: Increase the opportunity for intergenerational learning and participation in Colwood.

Recommended Strategies

- + Work with local partners to create intergenerational learning opportunities for both seniors and youth.
 - + Start by addressing the demand for digital literacy in seniors. Metchosin's Geeks & Geezers is a strong starting point as a case study.
 - + Explore ways to utilize the new Neighbourhood Learning Centre at Royal Bay Secondary School.
 - + Assess the need for additional seniors and youth facilities and consider opportunities for co-location.

Objective #3: Find more ways to foster and celebrate Colwood's community identity.

Recommended Strategy

- + Advocate for a new initiative to develop a stronger community brand and identity, helping Colwood move beyond its reputation as a drive-through community.

Objective #4: Expand programs to address the needs and interests of – and growing demand from – older adults in Colwood.

Recommended Strategy

- + Work with WSPR to better identify and meet the needs of the seniors population, and work with JDF 55+ to better engage the younger seniors demographic.



6. COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION



Identified Barriers

- + Lack of coordinated and easily-accessible information about the services, programs and support available within the community.
- + Lack of computer access and digital literacy are barriers for some seniors.
- + Need for a service to welcome new residents and inform them about programming, services, and community involvement.
- + Need for a well-known resource for current and updated seniors information.
- + Communication with isolated seniors, who may not want to interact, can be difficult.
- + Need to improve coordination and communication between community partners.

Key Voices

- + “If you don’t know about it, it doesn’t exist.”
- + “There is a missing link between those who need services and those who provide them.”
- + 29% of 55+ survey respondents find it difficult to access information about the services they need in Colwood.
- + 39% of 55+ survey respondents agreed that it is easy for seniors to access the internet for community information in Colwood.

Current Practices

- + OCP policy promotes improved access and availability of information regarding community services and volunteer information.
- + Colwood residents utilize the Metchosin Seniors Information Resource Centre to access information and ask about transportation and services.
- + The Juan de Fuca library offers computers for public use.
- + HealthLink BC’s 811 telephone service provides health care information to seniors and caregivers.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Improve the communication of information regarding seniors services, programming, and activities in the community.

Recommended Strategies

- + Encourage the creation of a Seniors Resource Centre.
 - + A resource portal for seniors information, volunteerism, community involvement, informal support services, and housing.
- + Identify one or more locations in public spaces and buildings to create a senior-specific bulletin board for news and resources. Ensure materials are regularly updated.
- + Support the creation of an online seniors portal. Consider hosting on the Colwood website.
- + Consider developing a Colwood-specific Seniors Fair to explore the demand for services, programming, and activities.
- + Encourage the creation of print material (e.g., monthly brochures, annual guide) that supports a consolidated resource of seniors information and contact information.
 - + Ensure important seniors information is available at places seniors frequent, such as the library, 55+ Activity Centre, pharmacy, doctors' offices, banks, etc..
- + Communicate information through media channels that will reach seniors, such as newspaper, radio, and activity guides.

Objective #3: Enhance the level of dialogue and coordination among agencies that support seniors in Colwood.

Recommended Strategies

- + Explore the feasibility of establishing a Seniors Stakeholders Forum that meets quarterly to improve integration and coordination of seniors services in Colwood.
- + Use the Seniors Resource Centre (mentioned above) to facilitate communication and build connections between agencies, organizations, and residents.



7. CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT



Identified Barriers

- + Seniors are not aware of the full range of volunteer opportunities available to them.
- + Organizations find it difficult to recruit the volunteers needed to meet demand and to provide the necessary skills or experience.
- + The Intermunicipal Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (IACDI) provides the opportunity for involvement in civic decision-making and support the needs of those living with mobility challenges.
- + Many seniors want to contribute to and feel connected to their community.

Key Voices

- + “I don’t want full-time work, but I could contribute significantly by helping seniors with odd jobs.”
- + “It would be nice to be involved in the community and feel that my voice is being heard.”
- + 50% of 55+ survey respondents feel that there are sufficient opportunities for seniors to be involved in civic decision-making and public processes in Colwood.

Current Practices

- + A few community organizations seek out and provide opportunities for local volunteers.
- + Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medals recognize citizens making an outstanding contribution.
- + West Shore Arts Council offers volunteer opportunities in the arts.
- + Opportunities for older adults to participate on Advisory Councils or be elected on Council.
- + Volunteer Fire Department offers opportunities for eligible older adults.
- + Pay It Forward program has an opportunity to expand to include older adults.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Increase the civic participation and active engagement of older adults in Colwood.

Recommended Strategies

- + Advocate for the establishment of solutions-oriented and proactive neighbourhood or residents associations in Colwood.
 - + Foster a collaborative relationship between the City, Council, and this newly established body.
 - + Explore the inclusion of an Elders Council in support of this body.
- + Help develop more recognition programs that award and celebrate the contributions and achievements of seniors (and others) in the community.
- + Further identify effective ways of targeting older adults in community consultations, utilizing media channels most used by seniors.
- + Consider ways to increase the City's social planning capacity to prepare for its growing population of older adults.

Objective #2: Make a civic and corporate commitment to making Colwood an age-friendly community.

Recommended Strategies

- + Pass a Council resolution that demonstrates a commitment to age-friendliness.
- + Promote and reinforce a corporate culture of age-friendliness at the City.
- + Apply for community recognition from Age-friendly BC.



8. COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES



Identified Barriers

- + Inadequate supply of both general practitioners and specialists.
- + Insufficient seniors-specific in-home health and support services.
- + Seniors specific health services in Colwood are insufficient.
- + Inadequate communication of information about community and in-home support services, including health care and more general support services.
- + Challenges with transportation to health services in other municipalities.

Key Voices

- + “Home care is neither reliable, affordable or available.”
- + “Like other communities, we need to encourage family practitioners, small clinics, and specialists in new development areas.”
- + “I feel that, once I need support, I won’t know where to start, how much it would cost, or whether it’s available to me at all.”
- + 42% of 55+ survey respondents disagreed that health services provided in Colwood are meeting the needs of seniors.
- + 74% of 55+ survey respondents feel that there are sufficient community services available to promote, maintain, and restore health and social connections of seniors.

Current Practices

- + JDF 55+ has two walking groups that encourage social and physical health.
- + WSPR has programming for all ages to encourage health promotion.
- + Better at Home and other community agencies provide support services.
- + RCMP Keep In Touch program contacts local seniors on a daily basis to check on their welfare.
- + The City, CRD, and adjacent municipalities provide extensive trails and parks to support physical activity, as well as user-friendly trail guides.

NEXT STEPS: OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Objective #1: Improve the health care services available to seniors in Colwood.

Recommended Strategies

- + Explore ways to attract more doctors and geriatric specialists to Colwood.
 - + An Island Health geriatric specialist will likely be located at a proposed primary care hub on the Westshore.
- + Actively explore bringing additional nurse practitioners to reduce the need for more doctors.
- + Investigate innovative models of community health care, such as a hybrid between a wellness centre and walk-in clinic.
 - + Colwood would need to provide a building, but Island Health could be a partner. Funding would be needed.
 - + See Oceanside in Parksville, as an example.
 - + Explore partnerships with neighbouring communities in order to get more for less.
- + Work with Island Health and service providers to establish and promote more respite programs.

Objective #2: Build on existing illness prevention and health promotion initiatives in the community.

Recommended Strategy

- + Work with JDF 55+ and WSPR to encourage active living, healthy eating, and more educational and recreational opportunities.

Objective #3: Improve the communication and understanding about existing health services and the health care system.

Recommended Strategies

- + Work with Island Health, community service providers, a new Seniors Resource Centre, and other partners to establish a navigation guide – or phone line, coordinator, etc. – to assist older adults and families to gain awareness of and access to relevant services.
- + Consider a campaign to educate older adults about the multiple health benefits of participation in recreational activities.



Page Intentionally Blank

C Implementation

1 Implementation Priorities

2 Making it Happen

1. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



This community-driven plan is founded on the meaningful involvement of the residents and organizations that make up the Colwood community. Multiple, key stakeholders – including Juan de Fuca 55+ Activity Centre, the Juan de Fuca Library, West Shore Parks and Recreation, West Shore Seniors Services, Better at Home, BC Transit, Royal Roads University – and many older adults contributed through survey feedback and workshop participation.

Through solution-oriented workshops, the Barefoot Planning team was able to work with the City and stakeholders to not only generate potential strategies, but also identify those next steps that are most meaningful to the community, relevant to the Colwood context, and actionable in the coming years.

The action list on page 37 is a refined set of 14 recommended strategies for the City to consider in an initial phase of implementation.

14
prioritized next
steps identified for
implementation

Several key objectives emerged that reflect the common barriers in the community and the unique local context for this age friendly plan.

Common Objectives

- + Communication of information for older adults;
- + Coordination of resources, including volunteerism and support services;
- + Meaningful social and recreational participation for seniors of all ages;
- + Responsive planning, engineering, and development design;
- + Identification of small changes that may make a big difference;
- + Strengthening partnerships and relationships; and,
- + Fostering social connectedness and enhancing social spaces;

#	Action Name	Recommended Strategy	Lead
1	Seniors Resource Centre (SRC)	Encourage the creation of a community-driven Seniors Resource Centre (SRC) in Colwood.	City of Colwood WSPR Stakeholders
2	Communicate Information	Use the City website to communicate information about seniors health services, housing, transportation, volunteering, and programming.	Seniors Resource Centre (SRC)
3	Civic Commitment	Pass a Council resolution that demonstrates a civic and corporate commitment toward Colwood becoming an age-friendly community.	City Council City of Colwood
4	Expand Health Services	Actively explore bringing more nurse practitioners and innovative care models to Colwood.	SRC Island Health
5	Seniors Forum	Convene community stakeholders for a bi-annual forum to discuss seniors issues and further community partnerships.	SRC City of Colwood
6	Sidewalks	Explore options to improve sidewalk accessibility and continuity.	City of Colwood
7	Key Crossings	Identify key crossing for those with mobility challenges and evaluate the use of longer crossing times and countdown crossing signals.	City of Colwood
8	Strengthen Connections	Strengthen bonds with and between WSPR and JDF 55+ to better meet the programming and activity needs of seniors.	City of Colwood WSPR JDF 55+
9	Washrooms	Evaluate the need and feasibility of providing incentives to developers for including public washrooms in their plans.	City of Colwood
10	Bus Shelters	Work with BC Transit to improve seating and weather protection at bus stops around the community.	City of Colwood BC Transit
11	Community Gathering Places	Facilitate the creation of new, informal community hubs that seniors frequent.	City of Colwood
12	Neighbourhood Association	Support the creation of a Community Association with a collaborative link to the City and strong representation from seniors.	City of Colwood Residents
13	Trails/Paths Guidelines	Assess the existing surfacing and maintenance for trails and pathways and develop guidelines for improved accessibility standards.	City of Colwood
14	Affordable Transportation	Work with BC Transit to evaluate alternative transportation options, including a community-wide U-Pass and an expanded Taxi Saver program.	City of Colwood BC Transit

2. NEXT STEPS – MAKING IT HAPPEN



Beyond the specific actions recommended on page 37, there are several overarching, strategic “next steps” to help make this plan ‘happen’.

Annual Action Planning

To make real progress, this Age-friendly Community Plan must be a living document that is annually revisited to review completed or on-going actions, evaluate outcomes, assess current conditions and opportunities, and re-establish a prioritized list of actions for the following year.

This action planning process could be employed in conjunction with a Seniors Forum that bring together relevant stakeholders on a biannual or, at least, an annual basis.

Strengthen Partnerships

A clear need that emerged from this planning process was strengthened connections and better coordination between community partners – the City, JDF 55+, WSPR, local service providers, and others.

Age-friendly Culture

As already addressed in Section 1 of this report, to truly become age-friendly, the Colwood community must embrace a culture of age-friendliness. This means business are inclusive of all ages and abilities; local service providers build partnerships to achieve age-friendly objectives; and public agencies understand and work to meet the different needs of all residents.

The City of Colwood can take the first – and perhaps most important – step in ‘making it happen’ by committing to a age-friendly corporate culture.

The City needs to find ways to initiative and catalyze such improved partnerships. Doing so will broaden the ownership of this plan and so improve the likelihood of its on-the-ground implementation.

There are three key ways that the City can do this:

- + As noted previously, develop a Seniors Forum that brings stakeholders together to discuss seniors issues in Colwood and engages them in an annual action planning process;
- + Engage local partners to take ownership of recommended strategies in which their organization is the lead; and,
- + Engage local partners to make a commitment to supporting the objectives and strategies of this plan and to helping raise awareness about on-going age-friendly initiatives and issues.

Seek Funding and Explore Sub-Strategies

Provincial grants, federal grants, partnerships, and other funding options should be pursued as a means to support or jump-start priority strategies in years to come.

- + The Province's Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative provides Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grants (which funded this plan); and,
- + Employment and Social Development Canada funds a New Horizons for Seniors Program, which funds seniors initiatives across the country.

Moreover, as funding programs and partnerships are identified, the City should be opportunistic in seeking smaller scale sub-strategies that complement those strategies identified in this plan.

Monitor and Adapt

Two levels of monitoring could be used to strengthen the implementation of this plan.

- + Strategies undertaken could be monitored and evaluated over time. This would inform decision-making, allow initiatives to be adapted and improved, and provide transparency regarding implementation success. A special emphasis should be placed on funded projects.
- + The City could monitor age-friendly indicators (like those in the public survey) over time, in order to identify trends and track progress in the community as a whole. This monitoring would help inform annual action planning and could be used to raise awareness and build enthusiasm for age-friendly initiatives.

Page Intentionally Blank

Acknowledgements

The City would like to recognize the important contributions made by the following groups and individuals in developing this plan.

From the City of Colwood...

Helen Lockhart	Mayor Carol Hamilton
Sandra Russell	Councillor Cynthia Day
Michael Baxter	Councillor Rob Martin
Iain Bourhill	

Local services providers...

Nicole Donaldson – Open Hearts Companion Services
Dori Bodman – Pacific Centre Family Services Association
Colleen Brownlee – Metchosin Seniors Information & Resource Centre
Marguerite Thompson – Greater Victoria Public Library
James Wadsworth – BC Transit
Nancy Wilkin – Royal Roads
Bobbi Neal – Westshore Parks & Recreation
Leslie Barker – Island Health

Colwood residents...

Cheri Houston	Rita Perren
Andrea Brown	Rob Brown
Judith Klein	Joyce Nault
Beth Mitchell	Betty Smith

Consultant team...

Evan Peterson – Barefoot Planning
Ciara Glen – Barefoot Planning
Elaine Gallagher – Gerotech Research Associates

barefoot
barefootplanning.com







City of Colwood
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

Appendix A. Context Research

Background & Best Practices Review

2016





City of Colwood
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

Appendix C. Workshop Results

World Cafe Feedback & Outcomes

2016





City of Colwood
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

Appendix B. Survey Results

Findings from the Public Survey

2016

