

# **TECHNICAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Summerland Age-Friendly Assessment & Action Planning Project – Phase 1 December 31, 2019

(Revised January 15, 2020)

Investing in community: age-friendly approaches to creating a vibrant Summerland





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# **Territorial Recognition**

We recognize and give thanks for being able to live and work on the unceded territory of the Syilx people, of the Okanagan Nation. We are committed to creating a 'right relationship' between First Nation and non-First Nation people, and working to implement the 94 calls-to-action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

# With Appreciation

We would like to thank the volunteers who served on the Community Advisory Committee, and the District of Summerland and Interior Health staff, who contributed their knowledge, time and energy to this initiative. We appreciated the thoughtful comments and advice provided by everyone throughout the project. We would also like to thank the many community members who completed the survey and contributed to focus group discussions. And finally, we would like to thank Jacquelyn Belanger, graduate student and valuable research assistant.

The perspectives and opinions shared in the report are the authors' and may not represent those of the District of Summerland.

Lesley Dyck and Heather Cooke December 2019

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# **Executive Summary**

#### 1. What Does Age-Friendly Mean?

An age-friendly community is not just 'elderly-friendly', but is one that ensures equity, accessibility and inclusion for the benefit of everyone. This age-friendly assessment and planning project (phase 1) has helped to identify many age-friendly features that are already in place in Summerland. However, the findings also identify a number of opportunities where an age-friendly approach could strengthen aspects of the community for all ages, including in the areas of housing, transportation, healthy built environments, sustainable environmental and economic development, and social inclusion.

The eight key features of an age-friendly community include:

- 1. Outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible.
- 2. Public transportation is accessible and affordable.
- 3. **Housing** is affordable, appropriately located, well built, well designed/accessible and secure.
- 4. Opportunities exist for **social participation** in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures.
- 5. Older people are treated with respect and are **included in civic life**.
- 6. Opportunities for **employment and volunteerism** cater to older persons' interests and abilities.
- 7. Age-friendly **communication and information** is available.
- 8. Community **support and health services** are tailored to older persons' needs.

Adapted from: *Becoming an Age-friendly Community: Local Government Guide*, BC Ministry of Health, updated 2014.

The District of Summerland is committed to supporting the development of a vibrant and inclusive community. Accessing funds from the Age-Friendly Community Grant program of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) has allowed Summerland to do the work of developing an assessment and action plan as the first phase of becoming an 'designated' age-friendly community in BC. This is the first step to being eligible to apply for additional resources to support ongoing community development work.

#### 2. Project Scope and Activities

The project was guided by a *Community Advisory Committee* made up of 8 community members. The committee met six times, between June and December 2019 to provide input into the design of activities, make recommendations on implementation, share key community resources, assist with interpreting findings, and identity gaps and opportunities.

Several data collection tools were used to undertake the community assessment:

- a) Environmental Scan was undertaken to find and review age-friendly assessments and plans from across Canada, with attention to communities of a similar size and context to Summerland. Findings showed those communities that involved intersectoral leadership (e.g. local service organizations, not-for-profits, businesses and local government staff) were more likely to create a sustainable plan based on partnership and multiple funding sources. A key drawback, however, is that most of the plans lacked clear evaluation measures.
- b) *Review of Summerland Planning Documents* key supports for healthy aging and age-friendly communities are touched on in the plans guiding municipal activities in Summerland. Areas of

strength included a focus on regional growth and sustainable economic diversification, affordable housing, and attention to accessibility in parks and recreation planning. Areas of weakness were related to gaps in regional planning around the need for an inter-regional approach to accessible transportation, and the need for coordinated social health action. Opportunities to strengthen planning in Summerland include the development of a new Transportation Master Plan, and linking age-friendly principles to the six current strategic priorities for Council.

- c) *Review of Services and Resources* was undertaken with a focus on older adults. Several accessibility issues were identified:
  - The ever-changing nature of services available, which would benefit from a coordinated and centrally accessed information hub
  - The challenge of internet access and technical literacy, which would benefit from having support and training specifically for older adults
  - It is also recommended that the inventory of services and resources include all available health and social supports and not be limited by age.
- d) *Focus Groups* were held with four priority stakeholder groups to obtain input about key questions to include in the assessment survey: formal care providers; not-for-profit organizations; businesses and arts organizations; older adults living independently.
- e) Age-Friendly Survey was administered using electronic and paper data collection tools (October 1-15, 2019). The survey was open to all community members, but an extra effort was made to recruit older adults in order to ensure feedback was collected from as many Summerland residents age 55 and older as possible. The survey received a total of 224 completed responses, of which 190 responses were from those age 55 and older. The response rate for those age 65 and older was 3.8% of the Summerland population.

## 3. Survey Results

The majority of survey respondents **of all ages** agree or strongly agree that Summerland is an agefriendly community (~60%), but the number of 'neutral' and 'disagree' responses suggest that there is room for improvement (~40%).

The survey results are reported for respondents age 55 and older for each of the six sections of the survey:

- Housing
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Community supports and health services
- Communication and information
- Social participation, inclusion and respect

The older adults who responded to the survey (age 55 and older) told us that Summerland is generally age-friendly, that they feel like they belong, and that Summerland is a great place to live. At the same time, respondents identified areas where Summerland could improve as a community to become even more accessible and inclusive of all community members, from the youngest to the oldest.

#### 4. Action Planning Framework

Stakeholder collaboration is essential for achieving the objective of becoming a vibrant and age-friendly community. It means working in partnership to ensure an empowered public and transformative change; local government cannot do it alone.

Five 'action areas' are proposed as a starting point for **community conversations** in the next phase of the project:

- 1. Accessible Environments
- 2. Intergenerational Citizenship and Learning
- 3. Health for All
- 4. The Business of Community
- 5. Regional Action and Policy

The 'community action tables' provide the structure for a variety of inter-sectoral partners/stakeholders to come together and build on the work they may already be doing together. These action areas and community conversations are guided by **principles of equity, accessibility and inclusion**.



The establishment of *Age-Friendly Community Action Tables* needs to be based on a **community strategic plan** that describes the priorities and commitment of the range of stakeholders, including the District of Summerland. Based on this, the action tables will be able to lead community conversations, identify opportunities, and undertake projects to ensure Summerland is a 'community for all ages'.

#### 5. Recommendations

The recommendation for the next phase (phase 2) of the project is to create an *Age-Friendly Community Action Plan* that supports existing plans and priorities by filling knowledge gaps and engaging both citizens and organizational stakeholders. Everyone has a role in setting priorities for an age-friendly strategic plan that is aligned with community values and principles. This will include bringing together stakeholders to:

- review proposed action areas for community action tables;
- identify priority projects for quick wins related to each action area; and
- select outcomes and indictors that will drive community collaboration.

The plan needs to avoid duplication and integrate age-friendly approaches into existing planning processes, while supporting leadership by both the District and stakeholder organizations. Shared ownership of the resulting plan is essential for effective implementation as local government cannot create an age-friendly community on its own.

Recommended actions for the development of an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan include:

#	Item	Timeline		
Planning				
1-1	Map age-friendly outcomes, stakeholders and priority action areas against	March		
	District plans and upcoming planning processes to identify areas of overlap and			
	explore opportunities to integrate strategies and activities.			
1-2	Establish an age-friendly stakeholder <b>working group</b> with representation across	April -		
	ages and sectors (e.g. nonprofit, health and social care, business, local	December		
	government)			
	Community Engagement			
2-1	Focus groups – host 2-3 focus groups with older adult populations under-	April		
	represented in the assessment survey			
2-2	Community Café – host a full day event with citizens and representatives from	May		
	stakeholder organizations to identify opportunities for partnership, set priorities,			
	and identify potential leaders/champions for priority action areas.			
	Action Plan			
3-1	Develop a <b>community action plan</b> with priority action areas, intended outcomes,	June -		
	and leadership commitments from the District and stakeholder organizations.	September		
3-2	Develop an <b>evaluation framework</b> based on intended outcomes with appropriate	October		
	indicators and recommendations for developing a data collection strategy.			
3-3	Host a wrap-up event to share the Summerland Community Age-Friendly Action	November		
	Plan.			

Implementation of these recommendations will lay the foundation for a sustainable approach to creating an age-friendly community that ensures Summerland is accessible and inclusive of all ages and abilities. By creating space for community conversation and intersectoral collaboration, the District will be able to leverage local resources and commitment for quick-wins, and focus District funding in the areas that can be most impactful.

# 1. What does age-friendly mean?

An age-friendly city is not just 'elderly-friendly.' Barrier-free buildings and streets enhance the mobility and independence of people with disabilities, young as well as old. Secure neighborhoods allow children, younger women and older people to venture outside in confidence to participate in physically active leisure and in social activities. Families experience less stress when their older members have the community support and health services they need. The whole community benefits from the participation of older people in volunteer or paid work. Finally, the local economy profits from the patronage of older adult consumers. The operative word in age-friendly social and physical urban settings is **enablement**.

- World Health Organization (2007). Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

## Guiding framework and best practices

The numbers and proportions of older people in cities, towns and rural communities across Canada are increasing. In 2013, just over 16% of British Columbia's (BC) population was 65 or older and by 2036 this proportion is projected to be over 24%. Older people contribute significantly to their communities, their families, the economy and society in general.

The BC Age-Friendly Initiative was created to make it easier for older people to age actively, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to fully participate in society. Local governments that plan and take action to accommodate the changing needs of older residents ensure that their communities remain attractive places to live with features that not only benefit older adults, but support the health, safety and participation of residents of all ages. Being age-friendly means supporting a healthy and inclusive community for all ages, from families with young children, to youth and young adults, to older adults (including the young-old age 55-64, and seniors aged 65 and older).

Supporting communities to become age-friendly is one of the ways the Province is working to ensure BC communities are healthy, thriving places for families to live, work, learn and play. In an age-friendly community, policies, services, settings and structures enable older people to age actively by:

- recognizing the wide range of capacities and resources among older persons;
- anticipating and responding flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences;
- respecting decisions and lifestyle choices;
- protecting those who are most vulnerable; and
- promoting inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life.

The eight key features of an age-friendly community were developed by the BC Ministry of Health and are based on the framework developed by the World Health Organization (see the checklist in *Appendix A*):

- 1. Outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible.
- 2. Public transportation is accessible and affordable.
- 3. Housing is affordable, appropriately located, well built, well designed/accessible and secure.
- 4. Opportunities exist for **social participation** in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures.
- 5. Older people are treated with respect and are **included in civic life**.
- 6. Opportunities for **employment and volunteerism** cater to older persons' interests and abilities.
- 7. Age-friendly communication and information is available.

8. Community **support and health services** are tailored to older persons' needs.

Adapted from: *Becoming an Age-friendly Community: Local Government Guide*, BC Ministry of Health, updated 2014

## The local context

The District of Summerland is committed to supporting the development of vibrant and inclusive community. Accessing funds from the Age-Friendly Community Grant program of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) has allowed Summerland to do the work of developing an assessment and action plan as the first phase of becoming an 'designated' age-friendly community in BC. This is the first step to being eligible to apply for additional resources to support ongoing community development work.

There are five recommended steps for creating an effective planning and implementation process in the development of an age-friendly community (see Figure 1). This report is the first phase of developing a 'plan of action' (step 3). The <u>Recommendations</u> section provides a summary of proposed actions for the second phase.



*Figure 1: Key steps for communities on the road to becoming age-friendly (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015, pg. 8).* 

#### Okanagan Similkameen Region

Provincial support for the development of age-friendly community plans launched in 2007 and since that time several communities in the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) have received grants to undertake age-friendly initiatives. The following communities have undertaken assessments and have been designated age-friendly by the Province of BC:

Keremeos

Action Plan: <u>https://keremeos.civicweb.net/document/2107 /</u> Website: <u>http://www.keremeos.ca/parks-and-public-amenities</u>

- Osoyoos
  - Action Plan: <u>https://osoyoos.civicweb.net/document/86071</u> Committee: <u>https://www.osoyoos.ca/content/accessibility-and-age-friendly-advisory-</u> <u>committee-aafac</u>
- Naramata
- Okanagan Falls

In addition to these communities, stakeholder organizations in Penticton and Oliver have been exploring how best to implement an age-friendly planning process in their areas. There is a significant level of interest and excitement to ensure the region supports active and healthy aging for all.



#### Summerland

According to census data from 2016, Summerland's population is around 11,600 people, with just over 30% over the age of 65. This is comparable to Penticton (29%) and the Okanagan Similkameen Regional District (31.1%).

	Female	Male	Total	%	
<b>Total Population</b>	6,170	5,450	11,615		
Age 65+	1,910	1,615	3,520 30.3		
Age 55-64	1,190	1,050	2,240	19.3	

Table 1: Summerland population, by age and gender

(Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2016)

The health profile for the Summerland Local Health Area (which includes the District of Summerland) indicates that the health of people living in Summerland is good in comparison to BC, with life expectancy slightly higher than the BC average (83.8 years compared to 82.6 years for BC). The incidence of most chronic diseases are below provincial rates, as are the severity of falls (measured as 'potential years of life lost'). Although Summerland has fewer specialists and supplementary health practitioners than the BC average, there are more physicians per person. (BC Community Health Profile – Summerland, 2019).

The average household income in Summerland is slightly lower than the BC average (\$84,231 compared to \$90,354). Levels of poverty for older adults (age 65 and over) in Summerland are slightly higher (14.5%) than the adult population age 18-64 in Summerland (12.8%). The poverty rate for women over age 65 is higher than for men, mirroring the provincial picture. However, as noted in Figure 2, the percentage of older adults who are low income in Summerland (14.5%) is similar to the provincial average for low income older adults (14.9%).



Figure 2: Percent low income, age 65 and older (Statistic Canada, 2016).

Summerland has some challenges with affordability, as can be seen in employment and housing data. The unemployment rate is 7.9% compared to the BC average of 6.7%. Summerland housing data shows

that the percentage of home owners who spend more than 30% of their income on shelter is lower than the provincial average (16.3% compared to 20.7%). However, a higher proportion of renters are spending more than 30% of income on shelter (49.7% compared to 43.3%).

What is most important to keep in mind is that the majority of factors that keep us well, regardless of age, are related to health behaviours and social and environmental conditions. These are all things that an engaged and caring community can put in place to ensure everyone is able to flourish.



*Figure 3: Factors that impact health and well-being (Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, 2019, pg. 4).* 

# 2. Project scope and activities

#### Community advisory committee

An advisory committee made up of 8 community members was established to guide the project. The purpose of the committee was to provide advice to the District and the consultants hired to design and implement the assessment and create the plan.

The committee met six times, between June and December 2019, in order to:

- Provide input into the design of the project activities and help set priorities
- Make recommendations on stakeholders to be included in interviews, focus groups and surveys
- Make the project team aware of key community resources, documents, and organizations relevant to the project
- Assist with interpretation of findings
- Identify gaps and opportunities throughout the project for strengthening the engagement process and final plan

See Appendix B for the Committee's terms of reference and list of participants.

#### Environmental scan – local, provincial, national

The project plan included an environmental scan to find and review age-friendly assessments and plans from across Canada, with attention to communities of a similar size and context to Summerland.

The scan was based on an electronic Internet search, with a focus on provinces with age-friendly community development initiatives (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia). Links to reports, resources and case studies were collected where available.

Thirty-three (33) communities from across Canada were identified as having undertaken an assessment and/or developed age-friendly plans of relevance to Summerland. Each document was reviewed for information on priorities and approaches in each community, including a) committee structures, b) focus areas, c) funding sources, d) engagement strategies and e) implementation activities.

Most communities had undertaken some type of data collection to assess supports for older adults in relation to each of the eight pillars identified by the World Health Organization to support healthy aging. Most had also engaged older adults from the local community to provide advice and support the development of a plan.

The most significant difference between communities noted in our review was related to **intersectoral leadership**. Those communities that involved local service organizations, not-for-profits, businesses and local government staff were more likely to create a plan based on partnership and multiple funding sources. This is likely to enhance the long-term sustainability of any community-based initiative.

On the negative side, we noted that most of the plans lacked clear **evaluation measures**. A few communities did provide updates to report on the status of their initiatives over time, but the general lack of evaluation frameworks was an element of weakness across all the plans.

For more information, see *Appendix C* – Environmental Scan Summary.

# Review of District of Summerland plans

An age-friendly community includes all aspects of the built environment and community life. As a result, it is important that every aspect of community planning consider issues of accessibility, equity and inclusion in the development of all programs and services in order to support healthy aging.

The following plans were reviewed and assessed against the eight pillars of an age-friendly community (World Health Organization, 2007):

- 1. General plans
  - District of Summerland Official Community Plan (OCP): Updated in 2018, includes reference to the RDOS South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy 2010, Summerland Urban Growth Strategy 2013, and the Community Climate Action Plan 2011
  - District of Summerland Strategic Plan 2012-2019
  - District of Summerland Annual Report 2018
- 2. Parks and recreation plans
  - District of Summerland Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2018
  - Related plans, including: Giants Head Mountain Trail Redevelopment Plan 2018, and the Sidewalk / Cycling / Trails Master Plans 2019
- 3. Other sector-specific plans
  - Affordable Housing Framework Report 2017
  - Cultural Plan 2016
  - Transportation Master Plan 2007

In general, key supports for healthy aging and age-friendly communities are touched on in the plans guiding municipal activities in Summerland. Areas of strength include a focus on regional growth and sustainable economic diversification (e.g. applying principles of SMART growth), affordable housing, and attention to accessibility in parks and recreation planning.

The RDOS South Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy emphasizes the need for improved regional collaboration to promote inclusive and accountable governance. The development of a regional age-friendly strategy could help achieve this objective. The Regional Growth Strategy also identifies two areas of weakness that are particularly important to regional age-friendly planning: the need for an inter-regional approach to accessible transportation, and the need for coordinated social health action (OCP, pg. 2-5). A 'social health strategy' would include monitoring and the regular collection of social indicators that report data by gender and age. These are things on which the next phase of the Age-Friendly Summerland initiative should focus.

The Summerland OCP does address accessibility, but primarily from the perspective of drivers and not those who have mobility challenges. In addition, the Transportation Master Plan is over 10 years old. An age-friendly lens could be used to develop plans to improve infrastructure (roads, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, curbs, washrooms) and transportation services (buses, taxis, driving programs) for all.

Social well-being and cultural vitality have been strategic priorities in Summerland over the past four years. There is an opportunity to bring these two areas together by applying an inter-generational and equity lens, through the use of an age-friendly perspective, to develop a vibrant and inclusive community

The municipality has <u>six strategic priorities</u> to guide decision making over the next few years (2019-2022):

- 1. Infrastructure Investment
- 2. Good Governance
- 3. Community Resilience
- 4. Alternate Energy
- 5. Active Lifestyles
- 6. Downtown Vibrancy

An Age-Friendly Community plan will provide an equity lens that can be applied across all strategic priorities and plans, ensuring improved accessibility and social inclusion for everyone regardless of age or ability.



## Review of services and resources

The search to identify services and resources in Summerland for older adults was based on an Internet search, as well as the review of two (2) key directory services that already exist:

- NeighbourLink (Summerland) <u>https://neighbourlinksummerland.org/</u>
- South Okanagan Seniors Wellness Society Seniors Services Directory <u>http://www.seniorswellnesssociety.com/501.html</u>

Services were found in the following areas:

- Supportive housing (8)
- Support phone lines (7)
- Transportation (6)
- Health care services (4)
- Support, information and groups (4)
- Information services (online) (3)
- Neighbourhood home services (3)
- Food and meal services (3)
- Social supports (3)
- Sports and recreation (3)
- Foot care (3)

- Drop-in centres (2)
- Clothing repairs (2)
- Counselling (for a fee) (2)
- Health care planning (2)
- Library (1)
- Hair care (1)
- Household help (1)
- Moving (1)
- Food shopping services (1)

The supports and services for older adults identified to date were located across the spectrum. However, two important accessibility issues were identified:

- Ever-changing nature of services available both the Seniors Wellness Society and NeighbourLink in Summerland noted that it is not possible to maintain a completely up to date listing of programs and services that support older adults. Contact information and availability are always changing, so volunteers rely on their networks to keep up to date. Having information coordinated and accessed centrally is a valuable resource for everyone in the community.
- 2. Internet access and technical literacy there are more and more highquality resources available online all the time. As well, a lot of local information that used to be available in paper directories or at local facilities is now only available online. To be able to access these resources the user needs to be comfortable using computers and knowledgeable about how to find what they need. This is a challenge for



older adults who have not grown up using this kind of technology, resulting in a lack of access to information and making older adults vulnerable to Internet scams. Having support and training for older adults to use communication technology would be valuable.

Although the focus of the search was on services for older adults, most of the identified resources do not have age restrictions but are available based on need and funding. It is recommended that the next phase of the project expand the inventory to include all available health and social supports available in the community and explore local collaboration opportunities to improve access to information for everyone.

"We have an intergenerational program where we have grade six students coming in and a few of them have been teaching them how to use iPads. It would be nice to see more types of these programs" (Care Provider Focus Group Participant)

See Appendix D – Inventory of Services and Resources for the complete listing of services and resources identified in the scan.

## Focus groups with stakeholders

Focus groups were held with four priority stakeholder groups to obtain input about key questions to include in the assessment survey:

- a) Formal care providers (7 participants, representing 6 stakeholder organizations)
- b) Not-for-profit organizations (5 participants, representing 6 stakeholder organizations)
- c) Businesses and arts organizations (8 participants, representing 5 stakeholder organizations)
- d) Older adults living independently (9 participants, 6 men and 3 women)

Participants were asked about the assets and barriers in Summerland for supporting healthy aging. Each group discussed the eight pillars of an age-friendly community and stakeholder were asked about what they think their role is in making Summerland a more age-friendly community. Participants were asked what they are curious about and what kinds of questions they would like to see in the planned survey.

Several themes emerged from the responses:

1. All eight pillars of an age-friendly community are important, especially issues of safety, social isolation and social justice

"Isolation is what chips away a community." (Not-for-Profit Focus Group Participant)

"I think there is a vast difference between seniors like myself that are basically self-sufficient and those who are living on the fringes. The contrast there is huge, and I think we need to focus on this [latter] group a heck of a lot more than we do." (Not-for-Profit Focus Group Participant)

2. An age-friendly strategy needs to be inclusive of all ages and include intergenerational engagement; consider 'fair' allocation of resources; promote stronger collaboration between partners

"We need to find solutions that make a vibrant community connect everything together." (Business and Arts Focus Group participant)

3. The survey needs to help us learn more about the details of housing/living situations, transportation, communication, use of technology, and activity spaces in our community; The stakeholder organizations suggested that the main question for the survey should be: 'What would help you be more independent?'

"Not cobbled streets, not slanted paths where the wheelchairs tip as you push them to cross the road. The way your walker is going to wobble up and down and you're likely to have a fall. Safety is physical safety and also mental safety. You need to be confident, I think, that if you walk into a business and you're going to be helped, they're going to patient. You can walk around without knocking things over. Safety gives you confidence." (Formal Care Provider Focus Group participant)

4. It is important that the survey look at opportunities related to services for older adults, transition support, involvement of younger people, building a culture of voluntarism, and investing in our own community

"I think it's a conversation about how you have a healthy community; not necessarily a healthy community for seniors. I think what is good for seniors like a multicultural engagement kind of place where people can socialize across the generations is very healthy for children as well." (Not-for-Profit Focus Group Participant)

The scope of the assessment phase of this project did not allow for multiple focus groups with each type of stakeholder, or to include a wider range of stakeholders (e.g. faith community, disability community, youth, and cultural groups). It is recommended that the next phase consider how to engage the wider community in developing an inclusive implementation plan.

See Appendix E – Focus Groups Summary for more information on participants and themes.

# Age-friendly survey

An electronic version of the survey was made available to Summerland residents via an online link on the District website, and in the District of Summerland Newsletter, distributed to all Summerland households. For those without online access, paper copies of the survey were placed at strategic locations around the community (e.g., the library, City Hall, the recreation centre). Respondents had a two-week window (October 1-15, 2019) to complete the survey. The design of the survey was based the key indicators described in the *Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide* (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015), and included additional questions based on feedback from stakeholder focus groups and health questions for comparison with national self-reported health measures. See *Appendix F* for a summary of the survey questions and results.

The survey was open to all community members, but an extra effort was made to recruit older adults in order to ensure feedback was collected from as many Summerland residents age 55 and older as possible. The survey received a total of 224 completed responses from all ages, for an overall response rate of almost 2% (1.9%). Thirty-four (34) surveys were returned by respondents age 54 and younger. These were reviewed but not analyzed separately due to the small number.

One-hundred and ninety (190) respondents age 55 and older completed the survey, of which 184 reported their age group (see Figure 4). One-hundred and thirty-two (132) surveys were completed by residents age 65 and older. Based on the most recent Statistics Canada data (see Table 1), this suggests a response rate of approximately 3.8% for this age group.



Figure 4: Age distribution of survey respondents age 55 and older.

Interpretation of the survey results is limited by several data constraints. There was a disproportionate number of responses from women (72%) compared to men (28%). There was also very limited diversity based on responses to questions related to culture/ethnicity. For example, only 2 survey respondents age 55 and older indicated Indigenous/Métis heritage (less than 1% of responses). Census data for the overall population indicates 5.5% of Summerland residents have an Indigenous background.

Statistics Canada does not report Census data on household income by age group for Summerland. As a result, it is not possible to compare the household income reported by survey respondents directly to Census data. As well, a significant proportion (36%) of respondents age 55 and older did not provide their income.

However, we can compare household income (before tax) in our survey for those age 55 and older who did report, to the household income (before tax) of all Summerland residents. Based on this we can see that middle-income households were likely over represented in our survey responses, and higher income (over \$80,000/year) and lower income (under \$15,000/year) were likely under represented. The likelihood that our survey responses under report the perspective of lower income older adults is reinforced by Statistics Canada data that reports poverty rates of older adults (age 65 and older) are higher than for the general population.

Given the age distribution of survey respondents over the age of 55 (Figure 4), it is not surprising that 82% of respondents were fully retired. A small number of survey respondents age 55 and older are still working full-time (6%), or working part time (5%), and only 1% report being unemployed and looking for work.

The survey respondents over 55 years of age were diverse in the number of years they have lived in Summerland, with over 23% having lived in the community under 5 years, to over 44% who have been residents for over 20 years (see Figure 5).

While the survey response rate of 3.8% from Summerland residents aged 65 and older was disappointing, the survey did receive responses from all target age groups 55 and older, and all income groups.

It is recommended that future data

collection focus on improving the representation of the diversity of the



Figure 5: Length of time living in Summerland

Summerland population based on age (to include more youth and young families), gender (to include more men), income (to focus on low income), and ethnicity (to focus on Indigenous and South-Asian residents, as per the largest minority groups reported in Statistics Canada Census data for Summerland).

#### Health and well-being

Although the majority of survey respondents age 55 and older (over 80%) reported having good health or better, levels of fair or poor health exceeded those reported by older adults in data from the Okanagan Health Service Delivery (OHSD) area (see Table 2). The reported sense of strong belonging for older adults in Summerland is comparable to levels reported for the OHSD area, but levels of satisfaction with life are somewhat lower.

Percent of respondents reporting	Statistic Canada		Summerland survey	
	OHSD area, 2017/18 (%)		October 2019 (%)	
	65 plus	50-64	55 plus	
Perceived health, very good or excellent	56.4	61.0	37.1	
Perceived health, fair or poor	17.8	11.2*	19.3	
Sense of belonging to local community, somewhat	75.8	74.0	76.0	
strong or very strong				
Life satisfaction, satisfied or very satisfied	92.8	92.1	82.1	

Table 2: Perceived health of older adults in the Okanagan and Summerland

\*Use with caution

The survey asked those age 55 or older whether they require mobility assistance. Just over 15% of respondents reported 'yes', with the majority using a walker or a cane. When asked about any assistance received to complete the survey, almost 7% reported assistance, with one reporting visual impairment. As well, over 6% of respondents over 55 years of age reported providing care to someone aged 55 or older, and 5% report living with a dependent child or dependent adult (who may also be a spouse). This suggests that caregiving is an important element impacting quality of life for older adults in Summerland.

# 3. Survey Results

# Age-Friendly Summerland

The majority of survey respondents **of all ages** agree or strongly agree that Summerland is an agefriendly community (~60%), but the number of 'neutral' and 'disagree' responses suggest that there is room for improvement (see Figure 6). The responses within each element of the age-friendly community framework provide some insight into where there are opportunities to strengthen supports for healthy aging in Summerland.



*Figure 6: Level of agreement that Summerland is age-friendly* 

The survey results are reported for respondents age 55 and older for each of the six sections of the survey. As noted above, responses from those age 54 and younger are not included due to the small number of surveys returned. Since respondents could choose not to answer specific questions, reported percentages are based on the number of responses to each question and not the total number of survey respondents.

## 1. Housing

Good quality and affordable housing are important elements in supporting healthy aging and a sense of community for all. Stakeholders told us in the focus groups that they wanted to know about the level of satisfaction older adults in Summerland have with their current housing and what type/location of housing they anticipate looking for as they continue age.

Over 88% of survey respondents aged 55 and older agreed or strongly agreed that their housing met their needs. Eighty-two percent (82%) reported owning their own home, and over 72% reported that they either did not plan to move in the future, or not for another 10 or more years.

Those survey respondents over 55 reporting that they live in age-restricted housing (e.g. gated community, seniors housing) were more likely to be renting (~58%) compared to owning (~29%) their home. Overall, 34% of survey respondents over 55 reported living in age-restricted housing.

Single-detached housing made up the majority of housing reported by survey respondents over 55 (~70%), followed by apartment (~10%). The remainder (~20%) included duplex, townhouse and other (Figure 7). Most survey respondents over 55 reported living in the downtown area (48%). Under 5% of respondents reported living in Trout Creek.

Very few of the survey respondents age 55 and older reported living in a supportive housing situation (~4%) or nursing home (1%). The majority report living independently with someone else (74%) or on their own (21%). Of those who live with





someone else, over 88% live with a spouse and less than 2% report living with a roommate. Approximately 5% report living with a dependent child or dependent adult.

The survey asked about what things currently support older adults to live in their current homes, and what the barriers are for them staying there. Physical accessibility (single level, few stairs, close to town) are important, as is the ability to have a pet. Assistance with maintenance, housekeeping, garbage, and snow removal are also important. Family support was noted many times, and the availability of online banking and shopping as being helpful was mentioned. A few people mentioned the delivery of meals, as well as being able to access subsidies.

Physical restrictions and lack of income (e.g. for rent, assistance) were both identified as significant barriers. Some people mentioned the lack of affordable housing prevents them from selling their current home and downsizing, and that they are concerned about being able to continue to pay property taxes. Neighbourhood safety and a lack of good quality seniors' care homes came up several times.

"We live in a gated, adult community however the gardening requirements are getting beyond our abilities as is the upkeep of the house. We do have snow removal on the streets in our community but still must shovel our own driveways and sidewalks. It is difficult to find people willing to do the jobs required for us to stay in our home as we age."

The need for zoning and manageable development costs that allow building creative housing options (e.g. infill housing, rental suites) was identified as important for the future.

*"Creative ideas in order to share housing is something that needs to be accepted and encouraged."* 

"More (500) small housing units for self-supporting seniors ... not for sale but for rent. Seniors are good tenants!"

Many respondents noted the importance of their health and ability to drive as being important in relation to staying in their homes. Survey respondents suggested that this could be supported by adequate public transit and driving help, in addition to good quality sidewalks.

"If we could find reasonable, good help with house repairs and gardening, we would be fine to stay in our own home. My husband's mobility is becoming a problem so improved sidewalks in Summerland (especially the downtown core) would make things much easier for us. Better transportation options between here and the Penticton hospital would make things much easier as well. Basically, mobility and driving skills are diminishing and we will need help in those departments soon. So many of our needs are met in Penticton rather than Summerland."

# 2. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Being able to easily get around in the community is essential for maintaining quality of life, regardless of age or ability. Accessible spaces and buildings allow people to shop for daily essentials and meet with friends and neighbours, strengthening the sense of community and supporting local activities and businesses.

The survey asked about elements of the built environment, everything from curbs and crosswalks, to seating and washrooms, to building accessibility and personal sense of security. Survey respondents had the option of rating each element as 'very poor', 'poor', 'good' or 'excellent'. The option to choose 'doesn't apply to me' or 'don't know' was also available.

The elements that were rated highly (good or excellent) by those age 55 and older included:

- Accessibility of public parks and beaches (e.g., walkways, picnic areas, trails)
- Availability of resting spaces (e.g., benches, low walls) for pedestrians along sidewalks
- Lighting in public spaces (e.g. streets, parks)

- Design and maintenance of street intersections (e.g., traffic lights, traffic circles)
- Clear signage for pedestrians
- Accessibility of public buildings (e.g. recreation facilities and government buildings with automatic or lightweight, power assist doors, ramps, elevators)

At the same time, there is room for improvement among these elements. A number of respondents indicated problem areas, or reported that they were unsure about how to rate. There seems to be a high level of lack of awareness about accessibility, with over 20% of respondents age 55 or older reported that accessibility of public buildings either doesn't apply to them or that they don't know how accessible they are.

Examples of comments from the surveys include:

"Nice to have a concentrated downtown and main street. The park areas are well maintained both in terms of appearance and resources."

"The library is a great space in Summerland. It is easy to access, bright, clean and spacious."

"[There is] no access to the water for seniors who might still like to swim in Okanagan Lake. People who can barely walk can still enjoy a float!"

The elements that raised the most concern for older adults surveyed were related to washrooms and security:

- Availability of public washrooms that accommodate a range of abilities (e.g., wide doors, hand rails)
- Location and quality of public washrooms (well-signposted, cleanliness)
- Security (e.g., crime prevention strategies, safety training for older adults)



Figure 8: Assessment of washrooms and security

Around half of survey respondents aged 55 and older rated public washrooms as poor. Availability was rated as 'very poor' or 'poor' (~46%), and location and quality as 'very poor' or 'poor' (~53%) (see Figure 8). It is important to note that at the same time a significant number of respondents reported that the availability and quality of public washrooms either didn't apply to them or that they could not assess. It

is not clear whether the high level of uncertainty about public washrooms is because many older adults have not yet needed access, or if they need the service but their uncertainty prevents them from going out in case they cannot access. More work is needed to explore this question.

# "Year-round public washrooms are vital to allowing everyone to enjoy outdoor spaces and buildings in Summerland!"

The survey question about security also received a significant 'don't know' response from survey respondents age 55 and older (37%), which is about the same as the number of 'very poor' and 'poor' responses combined (37.6%). This also needs to be examined more closely in future.

"Summerland used to, and now again has, a supply of helpers [of all ages] to hold a door or help a person who is struggling. Thankfully, not everyone walks by with his/her head bent forward, staring at the phone, oblivious to the world."

Finally, four elements related to pedestrians and businesses had mixed results among older adults:

- Presence of sidewalks with low curbs that can accommodate wheelchairs, scooters and walkers
- Maintenance of sidewalks, paths and curbs
- Clearly marked, well-lit crosswalks
- Accessibility of shops and businesses (e.g., automatic or lightweight, power assist doors, ramps, elevators)



Figure 9: Assessment of curbs, sidewalks, crosswalks, and shops

Ratings tended to be quite good, but there were still a significant number of responses indicating that the curbs, sidewalks and shops are either poor or not considered relevant to the respondents (see Figure 9). This suggests that there is a spectrum of needs in the Summerland community, ranging from those who require the support that good 'universal design' provides, and those who still have good mobility and limited awareness of gaps in accessibility in the community.

"I personally have no issues but when I watch people with limited mobility it is still difficult to access many places."

"Many buildings on Main and Victoria do not have smooth entry into the building. Virtually none have sensors on the doors to open automatically. Why not!?"

"Many streets lack proper sidewalks and have narrow uneven pavement walkways without adequate separation from vehicular traffic e.g. Victoria Road north of Quinpool & Solly Road"

# 3. Transportation

The survey asked respondents "Are you able to get transportation to the places you need to go?". Surprisingly, almost 92% of older adults (age 55 and older) who responded to the survey felt that they could get needed transportation. This may be because of the fact that almost all respondents reported driving to get around both in Summerland (~84%) and to neighbouring communities (~85%) (see Figure 10).



Figure 10: Type of transportation to get around

The survey also asked about types of transportation used to get around in and outside Summerland. The type of transportation varied, with walking and cycling being important transportation vehicles for getting around in Summerland.

"Limited bike lanes, sidewalks and pathways connecting communities together. If there were designated walkways or bike paths my transportation mode would change from a vehicle to a bike. It feels very unsafe riding on the roads in Summerland, especially around Giants Head and to Crescent Beach."

"I would like to bike more, but I find the traffic circles a little scary for riding a bike."

Survey questions asked about affordability and convenience of various transportation options, as well as the accessibility and quality of public transit, signage, and parking.

#### Affordability and convenience

On the question of affordability and convenience, the survey asked about:

- Affordability, accessibility, and convenience of public transit
- Affordability, accessibility, and availability of taxi services
- Affordability, accessibility, and availability of driving services (e.g., HandyDart, volunteer driving services)



Figure 11: Transportation affordability, accessibility and convenience.

Responses from people aged 55 and older were divided, with about half being able to rate the services and half reporting that the services were not relevant to them or that they didn't know (see Figure 11).

Driving services and taxi services tended to be rated more positively by respondents age 55 and older, compared to public transit. However, there were still a significant number of survey responses for all services indicating that many consider them to be poor or very poor.

"Doing this survey makes me realize I must start using other alternatives than my car to assess the possibility of not having the services I need to support aging in place. I know there is a bus service to Penticton, there are no bus stops near my home in West Prairie Valley."

#### **Public transit**

Detailed questions were asked about the accessibility and quality of public transit:

- Accessible options for transit (e.g., easy to use, adapted for people with disabilities)
- Quality of transit options (e.g., frequency, on-time, good routes)
- Accessibility of bus stops (e.g., offer seats and shelter from weather)
- Convenient and clearly marked bus stops
- Accessibility and availability of information for bus routes/schedules

As noted above, many of the survey respondents age 55 and older reported that the public transit questions did not apply to them or that they did not know enough to assess. In general, survey respondents age 55 and older rated these elements as poor (or very poor in the case of 'quality of transit options'). The exception was bus stops which received a moderate number of 'good' ratings (between 26% and 34%).

"I am disabled and totally unable to use public transit. Fortunately, I can still drive my car. When I am unable to drive, I will most likely have to move away from Summerland as I will have no way of getting around to doctors etc."

#### Signage

The quality of signs and traffic signals were specifically assessed:

- Clear signs to help me find my way around the community
- Visible, easy to read street signs
- Visible, easy to understand traffic signals

Although there were some ratings of poor/very poor, most ratings by respondents age 55 and older were good/excellent (59% to 85%). Wayfinding signs were rated the lowest with 25% of respondents rating them poor or very poor, compared to street signs (18% rating as poor or very poor) and traffic signals (8% rating as poor or very poor).

#### Parking

Questions focused on assessing parking focused on the following elements:

- Sufficient parking that is near to shops and businesses
- Sufficient and clearly marked drop-off and pick-up areas outside shops and businesses
- Sufficient and clearly marked parking for persons with disabilities

The majority of survey respondents age 55 and older report that parking in general (72%) and disabled parking (~60%) is good or very good (see Figure 12). The main area for improvement is related to pick up areas, which received a significant number of poor or very poor ratings (~36%).

Finally, the survey also asked about snow and ice clearing in parking lots and public/business areas. Over half of respondents 55 and older rated snow clearing as good or excellent (57%), while 31% rated is as poor or



#### Figure 12: Parking and pick up areas

very poor. There appears to be a divide between those who can manage winter conditions and those who are very dependent on having good snow clearing to support their access to the community.

"In the winter I can be almost shut in because of the snow. I don't like driving in a lot of it and the roads take some time to plow where it is flat, so it gets really icy and dangerous."

## 4. Community supports and health services

Programs and services that support quality of life across the lifespan include a variety of resources that help citizen when they need it. The survey asked about resources that have been identified as important for supporting older adults to access information and services:

- Availability of a 'live' person to answer phone calls for public services
- Availability of help for older adults to fill out government/municipal forms
- Availability of health promotion programs for older adults
- Availability of end-of-life support programs for older adults

For each question, a significant number of respondents indicated that they were not aware of the service being asked about, or felt that the service did not apply to them. In some cases, this was the response of the majority of those who responded. For example, in response to questions about help with forms and end of life care, the majority of respondents reported not being aware of the services. As a result, percentages reported below exclude those who selected 'not applicable' or 'don't know'.

Those who rated the questions about 'help with forms' and 'end of life care supports' were roughly evenly divided between rating them as poor or very poor (52% and 46%), and rating them as good or excellent (48% and 54%).

"Being able to make appointments for myself and drive to them. I'm still able to fill out forms for myself but know of semi-literate people who have difficulty."

Knowledge about availability of people to help navigate public services locally was rated highly (rated as good or excellent by 97% of those who rated). Availability of health promotion programs was also rated fairly high (rated as good or excellent by 76% of those who rated). Both were higher than for help with forms and end of life care.

Specific questions were also asked about programs to assist older adults in their homes:

- Availability of low-cost food programs (e.g., Meals on Wheels)
- Availability of assistance for older adults with daily activities (e.g. snow removal, shopping, yard work)
- Availability of resources to help with home maintenance for older adults and/or to make homes accessible (e.g. funding programs, maintenance services)

A vast majority of people reported that these programs and services are not relevant for them or that they are not able to assess them. This is a good reminder that the experience of aging in Summerland can be very different across levels of income and disability.



Figure 13: In-home assistance supports

Those who did assess these programs rated food programs as generally good or excellent, but programs for assisting with daily activities or to make a home more accessible were more likely to be rated as poor or very poor (see Figure 13). When older adults do not have access to quality in-home assistance they have to turn to family and rely on the goodwill of friends and neighbours, as a number of survey respondents reported:

"In 2017 I had major spinal surgery and spent one month in hospital. I was told I would need help at home 24/7 for the first month on returning home. I have no family here [and] Interior Health could provide no one. I couldn't even find paid assistance. In the end the girl who does my floors helped me shower etc. and she drove me to appointments, but I simply had to survive without any help even though I couldn't walk. This is really not good enough."

"No family support ... I rely on friends."

Recreation and learning programs have been identified as important for supporting the health and wellbeing of older adults. The survey asked about:

- Availability of recreation programs for older adults
- Affordability of recreation programs for older adults
- Availability of learning programs for older adults
- Affordability of learning programs for older adults

As for questions about -in-home programs and services, a large number of survey respondents age 55 and older reported not being aware of learning programs and unable to assess them. Those that did rate the availability and affordability of recreation programs ranked them generally high (good or excellent). However, only affordability was rated highly for learning programs, with the rating of availability being fairly evenly divided between very poor or poor (~46%) and good or excellent (~54%) (see Figure 14).



Figure 14: Recreation and learning supports

"I don't believe that most citizens are aware of the range of services available. It requires diligence and an ability to use digital resources and social media."

"We find that the gym membership is quite expensive and not available on weekends. It should also be a separate fee for the gym, we do not use the pool. Gym quite small for number of seniors in Summerland."

# 5. Communication and information

Communication and information are essential aspects of supporting community members to engage with available programs and services, and to feel socially connected. The survey asked about the following elements that have been identified as important for older adults:

- Accessibility of information about community events, programs, and services (e.g., timely, easy to read and understand)
- Accessibility of information from the District of Summerland (e.g., easy to read and understand)
- Access to computer and the Internet
- Help for using computers and the Internet

As for questions related to community supports and health services, a significant number of respondents indicated that they could not assess questions about communication and information, or felt that the questions did not apply to them. As a result, percentages reported below exclude those who selected 'not applicable' or 'don't know'.

Survey respondents age 55 and older were quite positive about communication and information supports, especially related to community event information and District of Summerland information. Computer access was rated lower, particularly in regard to the availability of help for using computers and the Internet, which was fairly evenly divided between poor/very poor (~53%) and good/excellent (~47%) (see Figure 15). A large proportion of survey respondents indicated that the question about access to the computer and Internet did not apply to them or that they could not assess (30%), and the proportion was even higher for the question about help for using computers (67%). It is not clear if this is because the respondents are not using computers or Internet-connected devices, or if they feel comfortable and do not need assistance. Further exploration of this question would be helpful.



Figure 15: Communication and information

Many of the respondents shared some of the things that they do to stay informed and made suggestions about what could be improved:

"Being proactive, belonging to a number of organizations and subscribing to their newsletters; reading Arts Palette weekly; the District website."

"[I] talk to people that I don't know and that I do know. My neighbours and I try to pass on anything to whomever is interested in certain information."

"So much is now only accessible by computer. I have my son to help me navigate that, but many don't."

"[I] have been to concerts at Center Stage and find that almost no one in my acquaintance heard that the concert was being held; posters on boards here and there just don't get the word out."

"The [District] Newsletter is great. It is also very easy to walk in and talk directly to someone in the office."

"Not having a community calendar or electronic billboard (like mynaramata.com) [is a barrier]."

"Too many different organisations are putting out their events on different websites. It would be better if they were all accessible on one website i.e. Summerland.ca. We are missing out on events because you only find them on social media, which we don't use."

## 6. Social participation, inclusion, and respect

To assess levels of social participation, inclusion and respect the survey asked respondents to rate the extent they agree with the following statements:

- Older adults are treated with respect in Summerland.
- Older adults are welcomed and included in community activities and programs.



Figure 16: Respect and inclusion

Although the response was very positive, there were still around 20% of respondents reporting 'neutral' or 'disagree/strongly disagree' (see Figure 16). This aligns with responses to survey questions about social isolation answered by those age 55 and older. Between 28% and 36% report that they lack companionship, feel left out or isolated often or some of the time (see Figure 17).

Survey respondents reported a number of things that help support a sense of inclusion, such as clubs, employees in local



#### Figure 17: Social isolation

stores, and the many festivals and fairs that support intergenerational contact. There were also comments about ways that Summerland could be more inclusive, such as improving accessibility for those with mobility restrictions, and finding ways to improve information sharing.

#### In Summary

The older adults who responded to the survey (age 55 and older) told us that Summerland is generally age-friendly, that they feel like they belong, and that Summerland is a great place to live. At the same time, respondents identified areas where Summerland could improve as a community to become even more accessible and inclusive of all community members, from the youngest to the oldest.

Current housing is meeting the needs of most of the survey respondents, although there is room to improve. Increasing the availability of affordable and accessible rental housing based on 'universal design' principles, and providing better transition support as people age into supportive housing and care facilities were recommended as important improvements.

Survey respondents appreciated the friendly, compact, and accessible downtown area of Summerland for shopping and socializing. However, those with mobility challenges described challenges with sidewalks and curbs. Respondents also noted the lack of public washrooms and businesses without power assist doors and ramps. The lack of these amenities is a barrier to independence for older adults, but also for young families with strollers and others with mobility challenges. Several survey respondents worried that they would have to leave Summerland as they age in order to access these features.

Because most survey respondents were drivers, there was a significant lack of awareness about public transit and the barriers that those with financial and mobility restrictions experience. Those that did rate public transit options generally described them as poor. All ages would benefit from a 'complete street' approach that supports active transportation, and from regional transportation that is high quality, affordable and accessible.

The experience of community supports seems to vary by income and ability. Many survey respondents age 55 and older reported being unaware of what kind of in-home supports are available. Those who are accessing health and social service supports rated them as poor, except for food programs. While many survey respondents are accessing recreation programs, there is a lack of availability of learning programs oriented to older adults.

While most respondents report having the information they need about events and opportunities for social engagement, they report a lack of support for using computers and accessing the Internet. Summerland citizens age 55 and older also report slightly lower health and life satisfaction levels compared to others the same age in the wider Okanagan Health Service Delivery area. This suggests that there is an important opportunity for Summerland to strengthen engagement in support of a vibrant intergenerational community.

There were a number of gaps in the data that would benefit from further investigation. The number of respondents age 54 and under was very low, suggesting that 'age-friendly' may not be a term that resonates with them. There was also a limited response from older adults who are low-income, from those in minority groups, and from men. Other data collection methods may be more effective with these groups (e.g. interviews and focus groups). And finally, there were a large number of responses related to 'don't know' or 'not applicable to me', particularly on issues such as public washrooms, inhome services and computer supports. It would be helpful to better understand these responses in order to know what kind of information might be beneficial to support community engagement around issues of accessibility.

The overall sense of the survey is that Summerland is a community that supports healthy aging across the lifespan. Survey respondents recognize that to be a truly age-friendly community, Summerland needs to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all social and cultural backgrounds, abilities, and ages.

"The addition of the skate park in Summerland is enjoyed by those using it and those of us that enjoy watching the young people enjoy. Locating as many of our facilities/activities close to town where they are visible to others helps us enjoy and appreciate each other's interests"

# 4. Action planning framework

## Roles for the municipality, citizens, businesses, and community-based organizations

"Investment in age-friendly community infrastructure has wide-reaching implications, helping to offset social and healthcare costs in other areas while creating an environment that is safer, more welcoming, and more desirable for residents of all ages. The impact of age-friendly community design on the daily lives of individuals, and on society as a whole, makes investment in age-friendly communities imperative to the sustainability and accessibility of a community. But local governments cannot do it alone ...." (Agnello, 2017, pg. 20.)

In the *Environmental Scan* it was noted that those communities able to develop and implement sustainable age-friendly action plans tended to rely on strong and collaborative leadership across sectors. These communities integrated their age-friendly initiative with other community development strategies and benefited from partnerships and multiple funding sources.

Each partner engaged in creating an age-friendly community has a role. Regulations are a critical tool for **local government**, largely through municipal zoning bylaws. Age-friendly features that can be addressed through zoning include: walkability, land use/mixed land use, travel distances to public transportation, location of building entrances, adaptable and affordable housing requirements, density, type and scale of residential developments, parking requirements, permitting small neighbourhood retail or healthcare amenities to link disconnected residential communities, location of parks and open spaces, and privacy in residential developments (Agnello, 2017).

**Citizens** play an important role as the main users of public and residential space. The choices that community members make have the power to shape the character of a neighbourhood over time. It is important that all citizens are well represented in consultation events, advisory boards and commissions. Community members are the ones who can build, modify or renovated individual properties to meet accessibility standards, can contribute to the creation and maintenance of a socially connected community through organizing and participating in block parties and volunteer opportunities. The public can also encourage local and other levels of government to prioritize age-friendly community planning and design, and demand accessible, inclusive and equitable development.

The **business sector**, including developers, are important partners in creating inclusive and accessible built environments, retail and other services in the community. Investing in accessibility can be a business advantage, and businesses have a role to play in advocating for mixed-use communities that are well serviced by public transportation. A vibrant and diverse community ensures local business has

the workers and customers that are needed for both the business and community to thrive (Ministry of Health, 2011).

**Non-profit organizations** have a significant leadership role to play in supporting a sustainable engagement process and strategic partnerships at the local community level. Community organizations are already engaged in bringing people together to work collaboratively to solve problems and build a healthy and vibrant community for all.

Stakeholder collaboration is essential for achieving the objective of becoming a vibrant and age-friendly community. It means working in partnership to ensure an empowered public and transformative change.

#### Action areas

The proposed action planning framework is designed to bring together stakeholder organizations at all levels (as described above) to prioritize action areas and build commitment for a community strategic plan to take collaborative action. **Five action areas** are prioritized within the framework to provide the focal point for partnership and collaboration, including:

- 1. Accessible Environments
- 2. Intergenerational Citizenship and Learning
- 3. Health for All
- 4. The Business of Community
- 5. Regional Action and Policy

These recommended action areas are informed by the needs identified in the survey, priorities gathered from key stakeholder groups, and guidance from the *Community Advisory Committee*. They also cut across/integrate the eight pillars (or topics) of the *Age-Friendly Community* framework (see Figure 18).

## Strategies

It is not enough to identify and prioritize issues for collaboration. It is important to



Figure 18: Age-friendly city topic areas (WHO, 2007, pg. 9)

ensure that key stakeholders and the public are brought to the table and supported to take action from a variety of perspectives simultaneously. This is where the five building blocks of the *Healthy Communities* approach can be helpful. These building blocks are key strategies for ensuring the success of any healthy community initiative (see Figure 19):

- 1. Community/citizen engagement;
- 2. Multi-sectoral collaboration;

- 3. Political commitment;
- 4. Healthy public policy; and
- 5. Asset-based community development.

Communities using this 'Healthy Communities' approach have found that it facilitates innovative and creative solutions to community issues and supports collaborative initiatives that address wide ranging community health challenges (The Healthy Communities Approach, 2011).



Figure 19: The Healthy Communities Approach (2011, pg. 3)

# Community Action Tables

Central to the proposed action framework are 'community action tables' (see Figure 21). These tables, or working groups, are built around action areas and are intended as a starting point for a **community conversation** to set priorities and commit to collaborative action. They provide the structure needed for a variety of inter-sectoral partners/stakeholders to come together to identify new solutions and build on the work they may already be doing together.

There are a number of approaches that communities use to bring together citizens and stakeholders to engage in the prioritization of issues and selection of measures to address problems. Local governments
and large public institutions often apply the IAP2 framework to public engagement (see Figure 20) (International Association of Public Participation, n/d).

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with bal- anced and objec- tive information to assist them in understanding the problem, alter- natives, oppor- tunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on anal- ysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public con- cerns and aspira- tions are consis- tently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identifi- cation of the pre- ferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and rec- ommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will imple- ment what you decide.

Figure 20: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

This approach can be very important for consulting the community in areas where the institution has clear responsibility for implementation. However, the pillars of an age-friendly community (and a

Healthy Communities approach) require an inter-sectoral and collaborative approach that drives investment from across the community including from public, private, not-for-profit and citizen stakeholders. Local government cannot do it alone.

An example of an approach that goes beyond public engagement, is the <u>Collective Impact</u> approach. This way of working has been used effectively to bring organizations together to 'move the needle' on complex social change issues. There are five conditions that increase the success of this type of collaborative approach





Figure 21: The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact

(see Figure 21) (Tamarack Institute, 2018, pg. 1), and there are a number of examples where local government has played an important role in implementing a collective impact approach. For example, the <u>City of Medicine Hat</u> applied a collective impact approach to develop their plan to end homelessness, and the <u>City of Prince George</u> used it as part of developing their age-friendly action plan.

## Framework

The proposed framework is built around action areas in order to support an integrated and cross-sector approach to key issues that span multiple topics. The community tables integrate social and structural priorities so that issues can be tackled from a variety of perspectives simultaneously and take advantage of opportunities as they emerge. Each community table is designed to allow leadership to emerge from different sectors. The table benefits from having a variety of stakeholders, but stakeholders need to choose where and how they are able to participate based on capacity. Not every stakeholder can be, or needs to be, at every table. The action areas may shift and change over time, but by ensuring strong citizen participation and a diversity of stakeholder groups at each table it is likely that work will align with community priorities and result in meaningful action.

The work of each community action table is guided by the **principles of equity, accessibility and inclusion**.



Figure 22: Framework for 'Age-Friendly' Community Action Tables

## Next Steps

The establishment of *Age-Friendly Community Action Tables* needs to be based on a **community strategic plan** that describes the priorities and commitment of the range of stakeholders, including the District of Summerland. Based on this, the action tables will be able to lead community conversations, identify opportunities, and undertake projects to ensure Summerland is a 'community for all ages'.

In developing local project, Summerland can learn from initiatives that have been undertaken in other jurisdictions. The following strategies and activities were identified in the *Environmental Scan* or suggested by the *Community Advisory Committee* and could provide a starting point for generating ideas at each community action table.

Proposed Action Areas	Examples of possible strategies and activities	
1. Accessible Environments	Community assessment exercise/treasure hunt     Walkability assessment	
	<ul><li>Walkability assessment</li><li>Age-friendly route maps</li></ul>	
	Cycling without Age project	
	<ul> <li>Accessible-home renovation grants</li> </ul>	
2. Intergenerational	'Borrow a Senior' – library program	
Citizenship and Learning	<ul> <li>Healthy aging web-space/newsletter</li> </ul>	
	• Fix-it shop/ <u>Men's shed</u>	
	<ul> <li>Participatory Democracy Project – District, older adults and</li> </ul>	
	high school students	
	Summer Camp' for grandparents	
3. Health for All	Support the <u>PRIME 'first responder' project</u>	
	Dementia-Friendly Planning	
	<u>Active transportation plan</u>	
4. The Business of Community	<ul> <li>Seniors customer appreciation day (community wide)</li> </ul>	
	Business accessibility improvements	
	<u>Age-friendly business checklist</u> and staff training program	
5. Regional Action and Policy	Age-friendly community planning checklist and evaluation plan	
	(priority indicators, data collection support)	
	Local government inter-departmental training to build	
	capacity for applying an age-friendly checklist	
	Development of an affordable housing plan	
	Implementation of a transit subsidy	

## Table 3: Examples of possible strategies and activities for each action area

# 5. Recommendations

The District of Summerland is guided by long-term planning documents and shorter-term strategic priorities to focus efforts and investments in all aspects of community life. These plans and priorities both contribute to, and would benefit from, the application an age-friendly approach. This includes upcoming planning processes scheduled for 2020-2021:

- Developing a new 'health and wellness centre'
- Undertaking a planning process focused on the downtown area, including issues of accessibility and housing
- Hosting an affordable housing forum
- Engaging businesses through a survey in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce

The recommendation for the next phase (phase 2) of the project is to create an *Age-Friendly Community Action Plan* that supports these plans and priorities by filling existing knowledge gaps and engaging both citizens and organizational stakeholders. Everyone has a role in setting priorities for an age-friendly strategic plan that is aligned with community values and principles. This will include bringing together stakeholders to:

- review proposed action areas for community action tables;
- identify priority projects for quick wins related to each action area; and
- select outcomes and indictors that will drive community collaboration.

The plan needs to avoid duplication and integrate age-friendly approaches into existing planning processes, while supporting leadership by both the District and stakeholder organizations. Shared ownership of the resulting plan is essential for effective implementation as local government cannot create an age-friendly community on its own.

- 1. Working Group It is recommended that a working group be formed to guide phase 2 with representation from all ages (e.g., youth, young adults, older adults) and sectors (e.g., nonprofit, health and social care, business). The terms of reference would describe the role of members related to:
  - a) Outreach to the older adult populations under-represented in the data collection to date
  - b) Design and delivery of a 'Community Café' event get feedback on action areas, priority projects, and outcomes for the strategic plan
  - c) Identification of potential leaders/champions to support the implementation of 'community action tables'
- 2. **Community Engagement Process** It is recommended that the results of the assessment phase (phase 1) be shared with community members using an interactive approach to help interpret existing data, collect additional information to fill data gaps, and to establish priorities for the development of the five action areas. The engagement process should include:
  - a) **Focus groups** host 2-3 focus groups with older adult populations under-represented in the assessment survey (low-income, ethnic minorities, older men)
  - b) **Community Café** host a full day event with citizens of all ages and representatives from stakeholder organizations to share the findings from this report and explore the framework for 'community action tables'. Activities would include identifying

opportunities for partnership, setting priorities, and identifying potential leaders/champions for priority action areas.

- c) **Wrap-up event** be hosted at the end of the second phase of the project to share the *Summerland Community Age-Friendly Action Plan* (Strategic Plan and Evaluation Plan)
- 3. Action Plan & Evaluation Framework It is recommended that the priorities established through the Community Café event and the deliberations of the Working Group be used as the foundation for a *Community Age-Friendly Action Plan* for Summerland. The plan would include priority action areas with intended outcomes and leadership commitments from the District and stakeholder organizations. This document should be designed to support intersectoral planning in the District, including links to other District and stakeholder organization plans as appropriate. The evaluation framework should include appropriate outcome indicators and recommendations for data collection.

Following the completion of the *Community Age-Friendly Action Plan*, the District will be ready to develop an implementation work plan (phase 3) to implement the following:

- 4. **Community Action Tables** It is recommended that 3-5 action areas from the *Strategic Plan* be prioritized for the development of intersectoral 'community action tables' or working groups. Each working group would select a stakeholder organization to 'champion' the action area and work collaboratively with other members to prioritize a limited number of 'doable' activities for implementation. Each group would be supported by District staff/consultant during the start-up phase in order to develop terms of reference to guide their work, develop a work plan and evaluation plan, and apply for additional external resources as appropriate. This would also be an opportunity to apply a *Collective Impact* approach.
- 5. **Age-Friendly Advisory Committee** It is recommended that the District of Summerland establish an on-going committee made up of representatives from the Community Action Tables to bring their work together and advise District staff and Council on priorities and approaches for achieving age-friendly objectives.

Implementation of these recommendations will lay the foundation for a sustainable approach to creating an age-friendly community that ensures Summerland is accessible and inclusive of all ages and abilities. By creating space for community conversation and intersectoral collaboration, the District will be able to leverage local resources and commitment for quick-wins, and focus District funding in the areas that can be most impactful.

In summary, recommended actions for Phase 2 (development of an *Age-Friendly Community Action Plan*) include:

#	Item	Timeline			
Planning					
1-1	Map age-friendly outcomes, stakeholders and priority action areas against District plans and upcoming planning processes <b>to identify</b> <b>areas of overlap and explore opportunities</b> to integrate strategies and activities.	March			

#	Item	Timeline			
1-2	Establish an age-friendly stakeholder working group with	April - December			
	representation across ages and sectors (e.g. nonprofit, health and				
	social care, business, local government)				
Community Engagement					
2-1	Focus groups – host 2-3 focus groups with older adult populations	April			
	under-represented in the assessment survey				
2-2	Community Café – host a full day event with citizens and	May			
	representatives from stakeholder organizations to identify				
	opportunities for partnership, set priorities, and identify potential				
	leaders/champions for priority action areas.				
Action Plan					
3-1	Develop a <b>community action plan</b> with priority action areas,	June - September			
	intended outcomes, and leadership commitments from the District				
	and stakeholder organizations.				
3-2	Develop an <b>evaluation framework</b> based on intended outcomes	October			
	with appropriate indicators and recommendations for developing a				
	data collection strategy.				
3-3	Host a wrap-up event to share the Summerland Community Age-	November			
	Friendly Action Plan.				

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## Appendices

World Health Organization

Appendix A - WHO Age-Friendly Community Checklist (2007)



This checklist of essential age-friendly city features is based on the results of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project consultation in 33 cities in 22 countries. The checklist is a tool for a city's self-assessment and a map for charting progress. More detailed checklists of age-friendly city features are to be found in the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide.

This checklist is intended to be used by individuals and groups interested in making their city more age-friendly. For the checklist to be effective, older people must be involved as full partners. In assessing a city's strengths and deficiencies, older people will describe how the checklist of features matches their own experience of the city's positive characteristics and barriers. They should play a role in suggesting changes and in implementing and monitoring improvements.

#### Outdoor spaces and buildings

- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.

- Services are situated together and are accessible.
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

#### Transportation

- Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.
- Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
- All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles.

- Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected.
- Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.
- Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.
- Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, welllit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.
- Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities.
- A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.
- Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.
- Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting.
- Traffic flow is well-regulated.
- Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
- Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed.
- Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.
- Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.
- Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected.

#### Housing

- Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
- Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
- Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.
- Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
- Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
- Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.
- Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

#### Social participation

- Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport.
- Events are held at times convenient for older people.
- Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.
- Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.

- Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people.
- A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
- Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks.
- There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation.

#### Respect and social inclusion

- Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better.
- Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services.
- Service staff are courteous and helpful.
- Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.
- Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
- Older people are specifically included in community activities for "families".
- Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.

- Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions.
- Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services.

#### Civic participation and employment

- A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.
- The qualities of older employees are wellpromoted.
- A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.
- Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.
- Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.
- Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers.
- Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people.

#### Communication and information

- A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.
- Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.

- Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
- Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
- People at risk of social isolation get one-toone information from trusted individuals.
- Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.
- Printed information including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.
- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.

#### Community and health services

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.
- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.
- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
- Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.
- Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.
- Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.

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## Appendix B - Community Advisory Committee (CAC) - Terms of Reference and members

## Background

The District of Summerland (the "District") is undertaking a project to produce an *Age-Friendly Assessment and Plan*, with a focus on supporting the older adult population of Summerland to age well. This has been identified as a priority by the District, and based on the plan, Summerland will be able to apply for a provincial <u>age-friendly designation</u>. This will ensure a continuing focus on building and sustaining an age-friendly community and will help attract additional resources for this purpose.

The work of the committee is to explore the essential features of an age-friendly community, starting from the framework developed by the World Health Organization which includes the following key elements:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation

- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community and health services

## Purpose, duties and responsibilities

The purpose of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is to provide advice to the District and the consultants hired to design and implement the assessment and create the plan. The CAC will:

- Provide input into the design of the project activities and help to set priorities
- Make recommendations on stakeholders to be included in interviews, focus groups and surveys
- Make the project team aware of key community resources, documents, and organizations relevant to the project
- Assist with interpretation of findings
- Identify gaps and opportunities throughout the project for strengthening the engagement process and final plan

### Membership

The Community Advisory Committee is made up of 6-8 volunteers from the community who have a personal commitment, interest and/or demonstrated experience related to building age-friendly and inclusive communities.

The members include:

- 1. Bill Atkinson
- 2. Marj Ericson
- 3. Debi Johnson
- 4. Tanya Osborne (Interior Health)
- 5. Henry Sielmann
- 6. Florida Town
- 7. Dustine Tucker
- 8. June Waddell

## Term

The term for the Community Advisory Committee is June to December 2019.

Members are asked to be available for monthly meetings (except August), and to let the project facilitators know in advance if they are not able to attend.

### **Decision-Making**

The District has final responsibility for decisions around project implementation and the final plan. However, the District is responsible to ensure an inclusive and respectful process and consideration of all advice provided by the CAC.

### **Meeting Procedures**

Meetings will be held one day a month (6 meetings, June-December) and include food/refreshments as appropriate. Each meeting will be 1.5-2 hours in length.

Meetings will be facilitated by the consultant (Lesley Dyck) with support from the Community Development Coordinator (Angelique Wood).

Committee members may also be asked to participate in additional meetings and/or events based on their interest and availability throughout the project.

Appendix C - Environmental Scan Summary – *separate document* 

Appendix D - Inventory of Services and Resources – *separate document* 

Appendix E - Focus groups summary – *separate document* 

Appendix F - Survey results summary – *separate document*