

TOWN OF OSOYOOS AGE FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Written and Prepared by: Kate Milne, MSc, MHS, CEP

Cardea Health Consulting Inc.



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These include:

- The Town of Osoyoos
- The Osoyoos Seniors Centre
- The Interior Health Authority
- Mariposa Gardens
- Better at Home
- The Community Paramedicine Program
- SPARC Report (Social Planning and Research Council of BC)
- Destination Osoyoos
- White Sands Complex – Michael Ryan
- Osoyoos Lawn Bowling Club
- Osoyoos International Curling Club
- Pickle Ball Club
- Paddle Masters
- The many other community members who provided their input during the community consultation

Executive Summary

An age-friendly community is one that is safe, accessible, and allows older adults to live healthy and productive lives. When a community has a good “person-environment fit” (i.e., the association between a person’s physical and mental abilities and the demands of their environment), older residents can better maintain independence, have improved health outcomes and experience better social connectivity.¹ Person-environment fit is part of age-friendly planning. If a municipality assesses the environment with an age-friendly lens, conditions tend to improve for all; when municipalities are planned for the needs of those who are aging, they also support the needs of young families and those with differing abilities.

The World Health Organization (WHO) started the age-friendly movement after publishing the *Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide* in 2007.² The WHO approach allows municipalities to assess and plan their communities based on eight dimension areas that examine the features related to physical environments, transportation, housing, communication, civic engagement, social connectedness, and health and community services. These dimensions are typically used by communities to establish a baseline during the planning process for an age-friendly future.

This report is based on the results of a needs assessment of the Town of Osoyoos. The assessment included both desk research and community engagement. The community provided feedback via focus groups, one-to-one interviews, and an online and paper survey.

¹ Menec, V. H., Means, R., Keating, N., Parkhurst, G., & Eales, J. (2011). Conceptualizing age-friendly communities. *Canadian Journal of Aging*, 30(3), 479–493.

² Global Age-friendly cities: A guide. (2007). *France: World Health Organisation*, pp.1-76.

The data was collected and grouped according to the Public Health Agency of Canada's age-friendly evaluation indicators. The assessment results were used to develop a plan of action.

Community consultations confirmed that there are many existing age-friendly features in Osoyoos. Age-friendly challenges were also identified, along with ideas for reduction or elimination of those challenges. Community members provided valuable information for recommendations going forward. These recommendations are outlined with timelines, actions, intended outcomes, and potential partners. The last section of the report offers suggestions for implementation of the action plan.

1. Introduction

Canada's population is aging, and the rate of aging is most rapid in rural communities. Planners across the country are anticipating a need for additional services to meet the changing requirements of their older citizens. Amidst the discussion of the impending "Silver Tsunami", many are suggesting that this change should be viewed as an opportunity to recognize the contributions and strengths of an older population, rather than as a burden to be managed. One of the first steps in this process is to ensure that the community supports a safe and inclusive environment for older people to "age-in-place".

In 2007, the World Health Organization introduced the concept of an age-friendly community. Age-friendly communities are those that support older adults to lead active, healthy, and socially connected lives. Eight key dimension areas that support this type of aging were identified in the development of the age-friendly concept. These are: safe and accessible outdoor spaces and public buildings; reliable transportation; affordable housing; opportunities for social participation and recreation; community respect and inclusion; opportunities for civic engagement and employment; good quality information and methods of communication; and accessible health services.

Research has consistently shown that when older adults are involved in the decision-making process regarding the services in their communities, age-friendly features are more often adopted and retained. This includes their involvement in assessing the status of the

community's age-friendly features along with identifying potential barriers. Along with this involvement of older citizens, leadership by municipal government plays a key role.³

This report reflects the results of a needs assessment, which was used to develop a plan for action. This process was completed following the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) model of a five-step approach to becoming age-friendly.⁴ Although the report is based on a standardized process, recommendations in this report are based on the voices of Osoyoos seniors, caregivers, and service providers.

³ Neville, S., Napier, S., Adams, J., Wham, C., & Jackson, D. (2016). An integrative review of the factors related to building age-friendly rural communities. *Journal Of Clinical Nursing*, 25(17-18), 2402-2412. doi:10.1111/jocn.13299

⁴ Population estimates, Canada, 2015 Statistics Canada

2. Community Profile

The Town of Osoyoos is located in the southern Okanagan-Similkameen region of British Columbia, in the traditional territory of the Okanagan First Nations people. Osoyoos' vision is to excel as a “smart growth community”, which meets current and future population needs in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner.

Population

Osoyoos is a community of almost 5100 people. This number can fluctuate significantly throughout the year because of high tourist traffic and a large “snowbird” population (those who live in Osoyoos seasonally). Osoyoos experienced a 5% population growth between 2011 and 2016, according to the most recent census results. Six percent of Osoyoos' population consists of new immigrants and visible minorities, with a further 2% of the population identifying as aboriginal. Osoyoos also has one of the largest aging populations in BC; forty-three percent of permanent residents are over the age of 65 and 62% are over the age of 55.⁵

⁵ 2016 Statistical Profile of Osoyoos. Statistics Canada.

Income

The average family income in Osoyoos is below the provincial average (\$63,000 per year in comparison to \$78,500 provincially). The number of low income residents in Osoyoos is slightly lower than the provincial average at 13%.

Housing

The majority of Osoyoos residents live in single detached homes and low-rise apartment complexes. Although local home owners have more affordable housing than the provincial average, 54% of renters in Osoyoos spend more than 30% of their income on housing. An affordable housing strategy was designed for the Town in 2009 (updated in 2010).⁶

Healthcare

Statistics on healthcare are only available at a local health area level - Osoyoos is included in the Southern Okanagan Health Area. This area has a high level of available physicians per capita, but the statistics may not accurately reflect the reality in Osoyoos; the Local Health Area includes Oliver, which has a small hospital. Chronic disease rates are only slightly higher than the provincial average, and overall life expectancy is similar to the rest of the province at 81 years old.⁷

⁶ Affordable Housing Strategy (November 2009, Updated to June 2010). CitySpaces.

⁷ BC Community Health Profile: Osoyoos (2014). Provincial Health Services Authority.

3. Assessment Methodology

It is important to establish a baseline in age-friendly planning. Baseline measurements allow for retention, planning, and evaluation of age friendly features and services. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) *Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide* provided the baseline indicators for data collection in the Osoyoos age-friendly project.⁸ These indicators were developed from the work of the World Health Organization but have been modified to be applied to a Canadian context. The indicators were designed for communities to analytically plan, implement and evaluate age-friendly initiatives; using indicators to assess a community also allows for seamless evaluations in the future.

The age-friendly assessment of the Town of Osoyoos included desk research; a survey for community members, caregivers and service providers (n=51); focus groups (n=30), and one-to-one interviews (n=12). The community consultation provided both qualitative data and feedback for the recommendations listed in each domain. The assessment was carried out in May and June of 2018. The following section provides more detailed information

⁸ Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide: Using Indicators to Measure Progress (2015). *Public Health Agency of Canada*.

about the assessment process. Tools that were used in data collection are outlined in Appendix A.

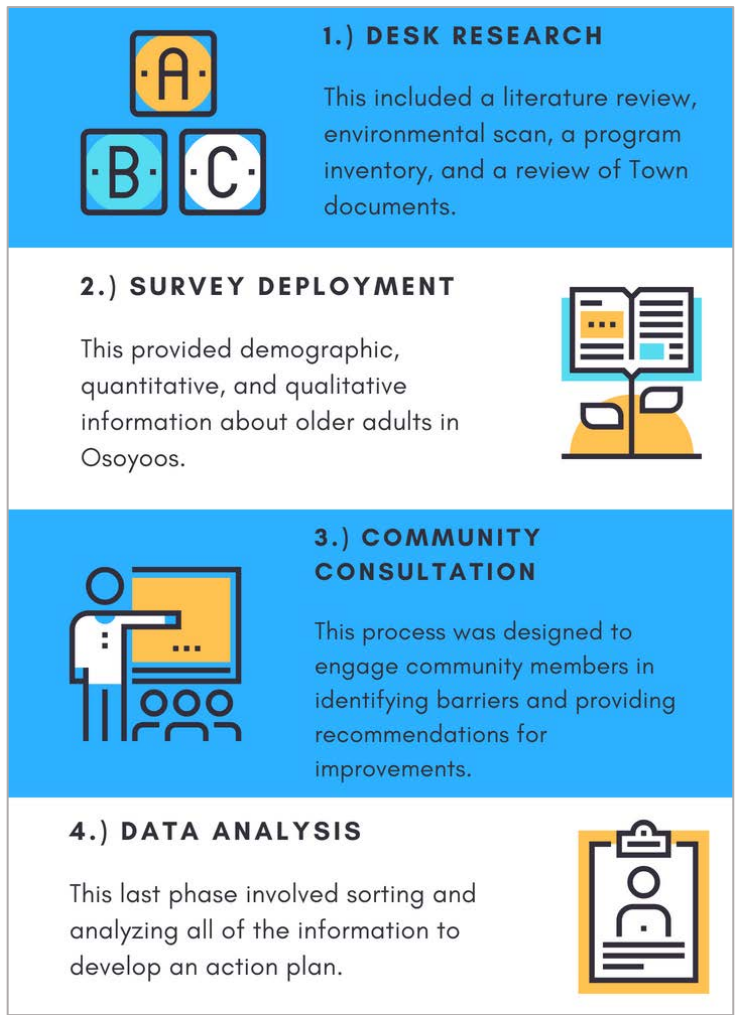
Desk research

The project began with a review of the literature related to age-friendly dimensions in rural and remote communities. This was followed by an environmental scan, a program inventory, and a review of Town documents. An accessibility audit report submitted by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) was identified as a key document and has been referenced throughout this report.⁹ The desk research provided both an evidence-base and framework to assess age-friendly features in Osoyoos. It also provided a means to match recommendations with Town planning efforts.

Survey

An online and paper survey provided quantitative information for the needs assessment. There is currently no standardized survey tool to assess age-friendliness in smaller communities. The survey for this project was developed using a combination of demographic questions already in use by the Canadian Community Health Survey, along with the indicators identified in the PHAC evaluation guide. The questions from the Canadian Community Health Survey allow for demographic comparisons to other communities, as well as for comparisons to national statistics. The same survey tool has been used recently for an age-friendly assessment of the City of Quesnel, which is slightly larger rural community in northern BC.

⁹ The Social Planning and Research Council of BC (2013). Town of Osoyoos Accessibility Audit: Final Report.



The survey was designed for those aged 55 plus, who were further asked to self-identify by age group (e.g., 60-64). Convenience-sampling was used in the survey deployment. The survey provided baseline data to understand the current age-friendly features in each domain, as well as basic demographic data of the survey respondents. Survey respondents were asked to assess each indicator as “excellent”, “good”, “fair”, “poor”, or “don’t know”. Responses with a combined score of good and excellent lower than 50% were flagged as areas for improvement.

Although most communities plan for the needs of those over the age of 65, it is also helpful to understand the

profile of the upcoming group of older adults (those between the ages of 55 and 64). The sections below provide a comparison from the survey of Osoyoos residents age 55-64, and those over the age of 65. Table 1.0 also provides a comparison of age-friendly survey respondents in Osoyoos to those in the greater Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area. The percentages listed reflect the number of survey participants who responded to select questions with a rating of either “good” or “excellent”. The data in the Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area was collected in the yearly Canadian National Household Survey and aggregated in the Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management System (CANSIM). A comparison can be made with the same questions used in the Osoyoos age-friendly survey.

Table 1: Comparison of survey respondents with Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area CANSIM responses¹⁰

	Survey respondents 55-64	Okanagan Health Service Delivery area (50-64)	Survey respondents 65 and older	Okanagan Health Service Delivery area (65 and older)
Osoyoos as a place to live	93%	n/a	87%	n/a
Osoyoos as a place to retire	93%	n/a	94%	n/a
Sense of belonging to local community (somewhat strong and very strong)	84%	65 %	75%	77%
Perceived health	84%	50%	56%	50%
Life satisfaction above 50%	100%	90%	81%	88%

Profile of survey respondents aged 55-64

Most community members in this age category strongly endorsed Osoyoos as a good or excellent place to live and retire. They also reported strong life satisfaction, sense of

¹⁰ Canadian health characteristics, two-year period estimates (2017). Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310011301&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.103&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.6&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.1&pickMembers%5B3%5D=5.4>

belonging to their community, and most indicated that their perceived health was good or excellent. Ninety four percent of respondents in this age group reported an annual household income of \$35,000 or more. Sixty percent live in single family housing while the remainder indicated that they reside in mobile homes, duplexes, townhouses and “other”.

Profile of survey respondents 65 and older

Most respondents over the age of 65 also reported that Osoyoos was a “good” or “excellent” place to live and retire. Their reported life satisfaction and sense of belonging to the community was also positive. Although respondents in this age category indicated lower levels of perceived good health than their younger counterparts, their score was higher overall than the provincial (45.5%) and the local health service delivery area averages. Eighty-six percent of respondents in this age category reported an annual household income above \$45,000. Eighty two percent indicated that they live in single-family homes, with the remainder living in townhouses or duplexes.

Focus groups and interviews

Participants in focus groups and interviews were asked open-ended questions about their experiences with aging in Osoyoos, as well as topics that they felt could be improved for seniors. The results were grouped by theme and frequency with the most often identified challenges and recommendations presented in section five of this report. Of note, community consultation with First Nations and/or aboriginal groups was not achieved during this assessment.

The summation of the assessment results makes up the remainder of this report. The report details the findings and recommendations as outlined by the eight WHO age friendly dimension areas. Each dimension has a description of the topic, a list of currently age-friendly features in Osoyoos, challenges identified by the community consultation, and recommendations for increasing age-friendliness in Osoyoos going forward.

4. Findings and Recommendations

A Plan for Action

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings



Having outdoor spaces that are accessible and barrier-free can make a significant difference in the lives of many older adults. As people age, “utility walking” (i.e., walking that is central to another task, such as buying groceries) becomes increasingly important. For many older adults, walking replaces driving, and serves as a principal form of daily physical activity.

When excellent quality pedestrian environments are created (e.g., regular seating, safe crosswalks, accessible buildings), people tend to travel further, and more often, on foot. Older adults who live in neighbourhoods that have fewer

barriers are more likely to maintain independence, have reductions in isolation, and have better overall quality of life.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

Osoyoos has many age-friendly features in place or in progress related to outdoor spaces and public buildings. These include:

- Eight Town parks, six local trails/walkways, and seven public facilities that offer wheelchair accessible access. Wheelchair access also provides a safer environment for those using other mobility aids, or with differing physical needs.
- The Town’s leadership and commitment to improving accessibility throughout public spaces (e.g., at the new dog park, at the Splash Park, and at the new Marina).
- The improvements at the Sonora Community Centre to accessibility, by way of having accessible ramps, washrooms, elevators, and door lever handles.
- The accessibility in the Sunbowl Arena (including an accessible viewing area), power assist doors and automatic flushers and taps.
- Good accessibility of the Town library.
- The planned addition of an elevator at the Desert Park bleachers.
- The Downtown Improvement Project, which will work with businesses to address accessibility issues.
- Free city parking.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit

Survey Results

Percent of survey respondents who answered with “good” or “excellent”	
Safe sidewalks, trails and walkways	61%
Public buildings have adequate access	56%
Number of rest places and distance between rest places	45%
Crosswalks are safe	47%
Number of accessible washrooms	27%

Outdoor spaces

Although most of survey respondents indicated that they felt sidewalks and trails were safe, participants in community consultations cited the following specific concerns about outdoor accessibility in their neighbourhoods:

1. Some paving stone paths sidewalks have uneven sections.
2. There is no beeper/sound cue on Main Street (Number 3/Crowsnest Highway) and Spartan Drive crosswalk.
3. Public washrooms in parks are locked in the winter.
4. Overall accessibility issues:
 - a. Missing curb cuts on some city sidewalks.
 - b. The lack of automatic door openers in many businesses.
 - c. Mobility safety issues (e.g., discontinuous sidewalks, missing sidewalks, poles placed within a sidewalk, seniors crossing mid-street because of distance to the nearest crosswalk).
 - d. A very low number of rest places/benches on the Main Street shopping area.

Buildings

Building accessibility was a recurrent theme in community consultations. The following issues were the most often cited as age-friendly challenges in Osoyoos:

1. The inaccessibility of many Osoyoos businesses.
2. The lack of hand railings in the rear weight room area of the Sonora Community Centre. This has been previously identified and will be completed this summer, but no action has been taken at this time.
3. The lack of accessible washrooms in local businesses.

Examples of Safety Concerns



Respondents in the community consultation reported that overall, the walkways and paths in Osoyoos are quite accessible. However, there were some issues reported regarding sidewalk safety. These pictures provide examples of sidewalks that are in disrepair or that end abruptly. Some of primary areas of concern were regarding accessibility for wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility aids. Many people were concerned about the state of repair on the paving stone paths, some of which have sunken or broken stones. These areas pose a risk for falls and injury, especially to those who have visual or mobility impairments.

Moving ahead

Recommendations

The following table provides recommendations to improve age-friendly features in Osoyoos. Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Walkability				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Sidewalks, trails and walkways exist and are in safe condition	Repairing the paving stone sidewalks on the Town walkways and trails	Increase in the number of older adults who are able to use Town walkways	Public Works Department	Short-term
Crosswalks are safe	Install an audible walk indicator on the corner of Hwy 3 and Spartan Drive	Safety improvements for those with decreased mobility or visual impairment	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure	Medium-term
Number of rest places and distance between rest places.	Increase the number of benches on Main street	Increase in the number of older adults who visit Main Street	Community Services Department	Medium-term
n/a	Plan to winterize existing washrooms to keep them open throughout the year (and to winterize new	Increase in the number of older adults who access the community walkways and downtown	Public Works Department	Medium-term

	washrooms as they are built).	businesses year-round		
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Key theme: Actual and Perceived Accessibility

PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Public buildings have adequate access and manoeuvrability around buildings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review progress of recommendations from 2012 SPARC accessibility audit 2. Have new Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee devise a plan for prioritization and implementation of recommendations 	Increase in the number of people with mobility differences who are able to fully use public facilities	Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee, Rick Hansen Foundation, Community Services Department	Short-term
Public buildings have adequate access and manoeuvrability around buildings	Install a railing at the rear entry to the Sonora Centre	Increase the number of users with mobility differences who are able to access the weight room from the rear accessible parking area	Community Services	Short-term

n/a	Survey local businesses regarding interest in joining an age-friendly business program. Devise a plan for development of program.	Implement public/private partnership to increase the number of accessible businesses in Osoyoos	South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce, Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee, Community Services Department	Medium-term
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Transportation



Difficulties with transportation has been identified as one of the main barriers by seniors, to living independently. As seniors' transition into retirement, their transportation needs typically change; trips to and from shopping, medical appointments, and leisure activities become more common than daily commuting. Many seniors are also unable to continue driving. In a review of 29 transportation studies, researchers found that a third of seniors had unmet travel needs.¹¹ Without a car, seniors can become very reliant on public transit and fee-based transportation (e.g., taxis). Having safe,

accessible, and reliable transportation can ensure that older adults maintain important connections in their communities.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

¹¹ Carlo L, Tight M, Burrow M, et al. [The unmet travel needs of the older population: A review of the literature](#) Journal of Transport Reviews. 2017; 37(4), 488-506.

There are currently several age-friendly transportation strategies that help Osoyoos seniors to age-in place. These include:

- The local taxi service, which provides flexible transportation services for those taking shorter trips.
- The BC Transit bus that travels between neighbouring communities. The bus service travels to Penticton, Oliver, and Kelowna at varying times during the week depending on destination (i.e., trips to Kelowna run once a week, while trips to Penticton and Oliver are more frequent). Passengers can be picked up at several locations throughout the Town and transit vehicles are accessible. Passengers with higher needs are required to bring an attendant. The bus service is administered by BC Transit but is run by a local organization. As of July 1, 2018, the bus service is being taken over by Berry and Smith, a trucking and transportation company located in Penticton.
- The Better at Home program that provides transportation services, which allows those with additional needs to have safe access to transportation.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit results

As with most small communities, transportation for seniors in Osoyoos can pose challenges. Transportation was identified as a key topic in the assessment process.

Survey Results

Although the majority of survey participants indicated that street signage and snow and ice clearance were “good” or “excellent”, accessible and affordable transportation options were identified as a concern.

Percent of survey respondents who answered with “good” or “excellent”	
Clear street signs	56%
Snow and ice clearance in public areas	67%

Accessible buses	4%
Availability of a range of affordable options	4%

Community Consultation

The topic of transportation also generated a great deal of discussion during community meetings and interviews. Respondents reported the following transportation features that could be improved:

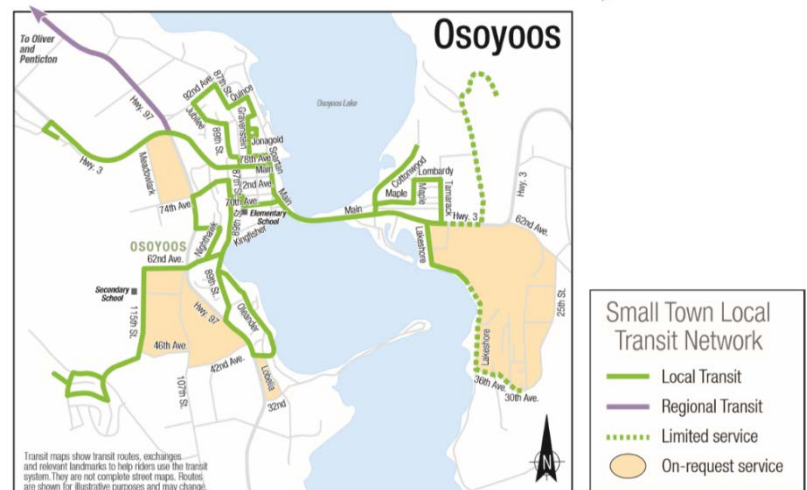
1. There is no in-town bus service.
2. There are no wheelchair accessible taxis.
3. There are no priority parking drop-off areas for those with limited mobility.
4. The handyDART service (handyDART is an accessible, door-to-door shared transit service for people with permanent or temporary disabilities) is limited. HandyDART services are currently offered through the “door-to-door” bus programs that travels to Penticton, Kelowna and Oliver. There are currently no within-town trips.

Moving ahead

Recommendations

BC Transit released a “Transit Future Plan” in 2015 that outlines a plan for increasing transit services to-and-from, and within, Osoyoos over the next 25 years. The map of the Network Vision outlines the plan for

Osoyoos: 25 year Network Vision



future services.¹² Although the expanded service will alleviate some transportation issues, the large and rapidly growing senior population may need increased transit service more immediately.

The following chart provides a list of recommendations in this dimension. Recommendation number one includes the use of the existing Town bus, to pilot a regularly scheduled pick-up and drop off service (e.g., twice a day) within the downtown core. Since the town bus is used sporadically for non-profit groups, special events and public use, a schedule would have to be developed so that the service would be maintained at current levels. This type of service would cover a significant transportation gap and would provide much-needed transportation for those with mobility issues. The service could be designed to be available to people of all ages with a focus on those with the highest mobility needs. A partnership could be formed with local service or faith-based organizations to provide the service as a pilot project.

As many Osoyoos seniors reported increased use of taxis, the second recommendation is to explore the possibility of BC transit supporting a taxi-supplement program for registered users of HandyDART. Although HandyDART does not offer local service, it is listed as part of the Osoyoos “door-to-door” service for those travelling to neighbouring centres.

Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Transportation Options and Public Transit

¹² Transit Future Plan: Okanagan Similkameen (2015). Executive Summary. *BC Transit*.

PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of a range of affordable options for transportation (e.g., public/private partnerships, volunteer driving program, park and go, shuttles)	Pilot a local, accessible transportation project using the existing town bus. This could be accomplished by designing an inner-Town loop with a twice-daily pick-up and drop off service.	Increase the number of isolated seniors who are able to access Town services	Local service or faith-based organizations (i.e., those who could provide volunteer driver services and/or program administration), Community Services Department	Medium-term
Proportion of people age 65+ who have access to and use public transportation	Explore a taxi-saver (or similar) program for seniors who would be normally be eligible for handyDART service	Increase the perceived independence of Osoyoos seniors	BC Transit	Medium-term
Availability of a range of affordable options for transportation (e.g., public/private partnerships, volunteer driving program, park and go, shuttles)	Work in collaboration with the Better at Home program to provide additional transportation services to seniors in need. Provide additional funding and/or resources to expand services. Consider	Increase the number of isolated seniors who are able to access a range of services	Better at Home, the United Way Resources: Raising the Profile Project	Medium-term

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	expanding services to those under the age of 65.			
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Key theme: Age-friendly Streets and Parking

PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Streets have clear and appropriate signage and lane markers	Pilot designated drop-off areas for those with limited mobility. This could be tested at high-use locations throughout the Town (e.g., at the central shopping area on Main street)	Increase the number of people who can be transported by volunteer-run transportation organizations (e.g., Better at Home)	Better at Home, local businesses, South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce, Public Works Department	Medium-term

Housing



Good quality, affordable housing is important for people of all ages. In rural communities, the challenge of providing suitable housing for an aging population can be substantial. For many older adults who remain in their homes, repair and maintenance costs in rural areas can also be high.¹³

When seniors can no longer manage in their own homes, many look for

supportive housing. Supportive housing can include light housekeeping, meals, and 24-hour emergency response. Those with higher need may require housing in Assisted Living or residential care. A mix of good local housing options can keep more seniors in their communities as they age.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

Access to affordable housing is an issue for many British Columbians. Osoyoos provides age-friendly housing options by way of:

- Being a more affordable option for those coming from larger urban centres in the province.
- Offering supportive housing, Assisted Living, and residential care options for Osoyoos seniors (e.g., Mariposa, Sunshine Ridge).
- Offering affordable housing options (e.g., Elks Golden Villa).

¹³¹³ Bacsu, J. R., Jeffery, B., Johnson, S., Martz, D., Novik, N., & Abonyi, S. (2012). Healthy Aging in Place: Supporting Rural Seniors' Health Needs. *Online Journal Of Rural Nursing & Health Care*, 12(2), 77-87.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit results

Survey Results

The survey results indicated that issues regarding affordable housing are important to Osoyoos seniors.

Percent of survey respondents who answered with “good” or “excellent”	
Availability of affordable housing	15%
Wait times for affordable housing	6%
Availability of a resource listing age-friendly home maintenance	15%
Availability of programs for increasing accessibility and safety	6%
Awareness of rent subsidy or other programs	0%

Community Consultation

Participants in the community consultation reported that housing issues in Osoyoos were not unique to seniors. Many respondents felt that affordable housing is also a key issue in retaining young families. Residents reported that the main barriers related to housing are:

1. The lack of affordable housing for all age groups.
2. The waitlist to access subsidized housing and assisted living.
3. The low levels of rental stock and the high cost of rental housing.

Moving ahead

Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to increase access to affordable, accessible housing for seniors in Osoyoos. Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines

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are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Housing Availability				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of affordable multi-purpose and aging in place housing options	Inventory progress on the seniors housing recommendations (i.e., advocating to the provincial government, capacity building, supporting partnerships and developing an inventory) as outlined in the Osoyoos Affordable Housing Strategy (2009)	Increase housing stock for seniors needing supportive/and or affordable housing options	BC Housing, Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee	Medium-term

Key theme: Housing Programs and Resources				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of programs for increasing accessibility, safety and adaptability of housing	Add information regarding home safety, maintenance, and assistance programs in the Age-friendly directory (see Communication and Information section for	Increase time that Osoyoos seniors can remain in their own homes	Province of British Columbia programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Adaptations for Independence • BC Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit • Residential Rehabilitation Assistance 	Medium-term

	details on this initiative)		Program On-Reserve	
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Key theme: Housing Support and Awareness				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Awareness of rent subsidy or other programs among seniors	Add information regarding housing subsidy programs for seniors in the Age-friendly directory (see Communication and Information section for details on this initiative)	Increase time that Osoyoos seniors can remain in their own homes	Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER), Property Tax Deferment program	Medium-term

Social Participation and Recreation



Seniors who have supportive social networks have better overall health, stay longer in their homes, and have longer life-spans.^{14,15} Community resources and programs are one of the key ways to increase social networks and address social isolation.¹⁶

As Osoyoos has such a large population of adults over the age of 65, providing access to social and recreational activities is important not only as good community programming, but could also provide a vital public health intervention; socially engaged seniors tend to be healthier seniors.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

¹⁴ Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Medicine*, 7, e1000316. [10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316)

¹⁵ Uchino, B. N., Kent de Grey, R. G., & Cronan, S. (2016). The quality of social networks predicts age-related changes in cardiovascular reactivity to stress. *Psychology and Aging*, 31(4), 321-326. [doi:10.1037/pag0000092](https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000092)

¹⁶ Nicholson, N. (2012). A Review of Social Isolation: An Important but Underassessed Condition in Older Adults. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 33(2/3), 137-152. [doi:10.1007/s10935-012-0271-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-012-0271-2)

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There are many excellent social and recreational opportunities in Osoyoos for seniors. These include:

- A very well attended Seniors Centre.
- Public concerts and other music events that are open to all ages.
- Many recreational clubs (e.g., lawn bowling, carpet bowling, golfing).
- A wellness clinic at the Cactus Centre specifically for seniors.
- Active seniors can attend organized groups such as pickle-ball, dragon boating, and slo-pitch baseball.
- Some intergenerational program such as the Seniors and Tots skate.
- Seniors fitness classes at the Sonora Community Centre.
- A Town hosted province-wide bridge tournament attended mainly by seniors.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit results

Survey Results

Respondents to the survey questions regarding social participation and recreation indicated that the most significant issue in this dimension is having fewer opportunities for social participation with all age groups.

Percent of survey respondents who answered with “good” or “excellent”	
Affordability of seniors' recreation programs.	55%
Availability of recreation and learning programs specifically for seniors	49%
Availability of opportunities for social participation with people of all ages	35%

Community Consultation

Osoyoos residents reported that the age-friendly challenges related to social participation and recreation are:

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1. The lack of challenging fitness classes at the Sonora Community Centre.
2. Fewer male-oriented recreation classes (e.g., woodworking, metals, glass, ceramics).
3. Difficulties accessing some recreational areas (e.g., the Osoyoos Canal Trail access that is closest to Mariposa Assisted Living is inaccessible with a mobility device).
4. No local learning opportunities specific to seniors.
5. Difficulties with transportation - this can pose a barrier to social and recreational participation for seniors who don't have easy access to affordable transportation.
6. The lack of an aquatic centre. This was reported as a barrier to seniors' fitness as well as a barrier to retaining young families in the community.

Moving ahead

Recommendations

The table below provides recommendations to increase access to opportunities for social participation and recreation for Osoyoos seniors. Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Opportunities for Participation				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of recreation and learning programs specifically for seniors	Consider the development of “elder college” courses to be offered locally. Enlist subject matter experts/instructor	Increase the number of seniors who feel engaged with local learning opportunities	Okanagan College	Medium-term

	s from local retired community			
Availability of opportunities for social participation in leisure, cultural, and spiritual activities with people of all ages	Work with the local hotels to explore the possibility of using hotel pool time for community programs	Increase the number of citizens that have access to aquatic activities	Local hotels, South Okanagan Chamber of Commerce, Osoyoos Hotel Motel Association, Community Services Department	Medium-term

Key theme: Engagement in Social Activities				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Proportion of people age 65+who engage in social activities at least once a week	Review and design additional programming for seniors at the Sonora Community Centre	Increase the number of recreational programs available for seniors	n/a	Short-term
Proportion of people age 65+who engage in social activities at least once a week	Add male-specific programming to seniors' offering at Sonora Centre. Consider developing a "men's shed"	Increase the number of recreational programs available for men	Resource: Men's Sheds http://menssheds.ca/the-toolkit/	Short-term

Key theme: Accessibility of Participation Opportunities

PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Public venues for community-based activities are accessible	Design and offer programming aimed at socially isolated seniors. Match with Town bus transportation pilot program	Increase in the number of seniors who are able to access community programming	Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee, Community Services	Medium-term
Public venues for community-based activities are accessible	Provide accessible entry to Canal Trail at opening nearest to Mariposa.	Increase in the number of community members who are able to access the community trail	Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee	Medium-term

Respect and Social Inclusion



Respect and social inclusion are two important aspects of community life for seniors. Communities show respect for their older citizens by empowering them in decision-making, including them in intergenerational activities, and celebrating their contributions. This domain in age-friendly planning is intended to encompass the inclusivity of

communities and the perceptions of respect that older adults feel from other age-groups. Being inclusive of seniors ultimately reduces the risk for social isolation and loneliness in the older population.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

The consultation and survey results revealed that Osoyoos seniors are overwhelmingly happy with the level of respect and social inclusion that they experience in their community. Almost 75% of survey respondents reported that they had a “somewhat strong” or “very strong” sense of belonging to their community. The following two points were the major themes identified by community members:

- Seniors in Osoyoos feel respected by their community.
- Seniors in Osoyoos feel valued by their community.

Moving ahead

Recommendations

There were no barriers to respect and social inclusion identified in the community consultation or survey. As such, there are no recommendations for changes in this area.

Civic Participation and Employment



Civic participation and/or employment keeps older adults engaged with community life. Older people have experience and knowledge to share with their communities and can act as mentors in employment or volunteer roles.

Municipalities can focus on becoming more age-friendly in this dimension by

engaging employers, employment service organizations, and volunteer groups to consider the unique contributions of older adults.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

This assessment of civic participation and employment was derived from labour market information (Statistics Canada) and community consultation. Survey respondents were asked about their current employment status; of those 55-64 years old, 46% were employed full or part-time for pay, while of those over 65 years old, 94% were fully retired.

Community consultation participants indicated that the following features regarding civic engagement and employment in Osoyoos as age-friendly:

- The jobs available for older workers (especially with the local wineries and restaurants).
- The many volunteer opportunities for older adults.
- That older adults are welcomed on Town Council.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit results

The main challenge that Osoyoos residents reported regarding civic engagement and employment, was the large base of volunteers over the age of 55. Respondents reported concern about needing to develop a succession plan for the time when many older people can no longer volunteer.

Moving ahead

Recommendations

The recommendations below outline ways in which Osoyoos can improve age-friendly civic participation and employment efforts. Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Training and Support				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of support for volunteers	Develop and lead a volunteer recruitment, retention, and succession plan	Instate a volunteer management plan	Local service organizations, Osoyoos Seniors Centre	Medium-term

Key theme: Accessibility

PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Municipal buildings/meetings are accessible	Provide a hearing induction loop in Council Chambers as identified in the SPARC report	Increase involvement of those with hearing impairment in Town Council activities and events		Medium-term

Communication and Information



As people age, they can experience changes to their vision, hearing, and can sometimes experience challenges related to literacy. These changes mean that getting access to information can become increasingly difficult. Modern communication methods delivered electronically can also pose a barrier for those with limited computer skills.

Planning communication specific to a senior audience can allow older adults to stay involved with their communities.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

Osoyoos has many age-friendly communication initiatives. These include:

- The Town online e-news.
- The “In the Loop” Facebook page - a good resource for those who use social media.
- The Easy Rock local radio station for information about current local events. The Town uses the radio station service once a week for announcements about upcoming programs, new community services, and alerts about upcoming special events.
- The “Osoyoos Now” online edition.
- The “Osoyoos This Week” magazine which includes local information, weather and advertising.
- A regular Leisure Guide produced by the Town.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit results

Two survey questions included a rating of experiences with communication and information. Both questions had a low response to those rating communication efforts as “good” or “excellent”. The results are as follows:

Percent of survey respondents who answered with “good” or “excellent”	
Availability of assistance to seniors for filling out forms	9%
Availability of a "live person" option on telephone calls.	26%

Community consultation participants were also asked about their experiences with communication and information-sharing. Respondents reported that the less than age-friendly features in this domain were:

1. There is a good local paper, but not everyone can afford to buy it.
2. There is no central guide or listing for seniors-specific programs and resources.

Moving ahead

Recommendations for an Age-friendly Osoyoos

The following chart provides a list of recommendations to improve communication and information sharing with older adults in Osoyoos. Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Usability of information materials				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
n/a	Develop a senior-specific directory with information about housing, social programs, recreation, safety, health services, accessibility programs, and opportunities for civic involvement. Ensure that materials have large print, plain language, and are produced with any other specific age-friendly considerations	Increased awareness of seniors' programs and services for older adults and caregivers	Community Services	Medium-term
n/a	Explore partnership with the Osoyoos Times to provide a free, twice-yearly printed supplement specific to seniors' listings and resources	Increased awareness of community programs and services for older adults and caregivers	Community Services, Osoyoos Times	Medium-term

Key theme: Assistance Availability				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline

<p>Availability of assistance for seniors for filling out forms and “live person” option on telephone calls</p>	<p>Assess current Town communication strategy related to phone information and extra assistance for older citizens</p>	<p>Increased satisfaction of older adults engaging in interactions with Town staff</p>	<p>Community Services Resources: Age-Friendly Communication: Facts, Tips and Ideas – Public Health Agency of Canada</p>	<p>Short-term</p>
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Community and Health Services



Community and health services are vital to supporting older adults to lead active, long, and healthy lives. A shift away from institutional care to more home and community-based services is especially important in smaller communities with limited resources. Community-centred care has also been the recent focus of collaborations between healthcare and non-medical community-based services in

BC.¹⁷ Municipalities that focus on the promotion of good quality community services also provide further supports for older residents to age-in-place.

Current age friendly features

Age friendly initiatives in place or in progress

There are many age-friendly community and health services already in place in Osoyoos.

These include:

- Good local family doctors.

¹⁷ Cohen, M., Spinder, C. (2017). Raising the Profile Project. Findings and Recommendations from the Community Consultations.

- The local Better at Home program, which provides non-medical support.
- Local eye care, dental care, and physiotherapy.
- The new community paramedic program. Community paramedicine can offer outreach and awareness programs, health promotion services, wellness clinics, and wellness checks for isolated seniors.
- Two local pharmacies and a health food store.
- The Osoyoos Health Centre. The health centre offers many services related to seniors including adult day services, caregiver support, community nursing services, home support services, community nutrition programs, and social work services.

Challenges

Identified by older adult residents, service providers, program inventory, or audit results

Results of the survey questions in the domain suggest that there is some room for improvement for community programs and health services for older adults in Osoyoos:

Percent of survey respondents who answered with “good” or “excellent”	
Availability of prevention programs	19%
Availability of end-of-life support	26%
Availability of low-cost food programs	17%
Availability of assistance for activities of daily living	8%

Osoyoos residents further reported that the less than age-friendly features in this domain are:

1. There are no local specialist physicians.
2. There is no walk-in clinic.
3. There is no nurse practitioner service.
4. There is additional pressure on the medical system in the winter because of the large “snow-bird” population.

- Service providers report that many clients are not prepared for some of the realities of aging; many seek services when they have been in need for some time.

Moving ahead

Recommendations for an Age-friendly Osoyoos

The following chart provides a list of recommendations to improve community support and health services for older adults in Osoyoos. Each recommendation includes the associated Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) indicator, a strategy for improvement, the intended outcomes, possible partners and resources, and a timeline for implementation. Timelines are listed as activities that could realistically be accomplished in the short-term (0-6 months), medium-term (6 months to a year), or long term (multi-year).

Key theme: Community Services				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of prevention programs related to health issues of high relevance to seniors	Work with Interior Health Authority to include information on seniors' health services in proposed Town seniors' services directory	Increased awareness of senior-specific health services	Interior Health Authority, Community Services Department,	Short-term
n/a	Invite a representative from Interior Health Authority, as well as the Community Paramedic, to join the Accessibility and Age	Increased representation of healthcare and community service groups within the committee	BC Ambulance, Interior Health Authority, Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee	Short-term

	Friendly Advisory Committee			
n/a	Work with Interior Health Authority to explore the possibility of opening a walk-in clinic in the current Osoyoos Health Centre	Increased access to primary care services for Osoyoos seniors	Interior Health Authority, Planning and Development Services	Long-term

Key theme: Supportive Health Services				
PHAC Indicator	Strategy	Outcome	Partners/Resources	Timeline
Availability of prevention programs related to health issues of high relevance to seniors	Form a senior's wellness committee with Interior Health Authority, the Community Paramedic and the Better at Home program. Work to develop a resource and outreach information for at-risk, isolated or vulnerable seniors.	Reduction in the number of seniors seeking assistance when medical or living situation has already become unstable	Interior Health Authority, Community Paramedic, Better at Home, Community Services, community members, caregivers, seniors service providers	Short-term

5. Looking forward

The recommendations outlined in section four of this report (i.e., the action plan) can be used as a tool for Osoyoos to work towards becoming an age-friendly community. To be successful in implementation efforts, the Town should consider the following recommended steps:

1. Post the Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan publicly.
2. Use the Action Plan to seek formal recognition as an Age-friendly British Columbia community.

3. Have the new Accessibility and Age Friendly Advisory Committee prioritize actions from this report.
4. Link age-friendly priorities to other community initiatives (e.g., the development of walking paths).
5. Advocate for strong leadership and commitment from Town Council on implementation efforts.
6. Ensure that there is adequate and appropriate funding for any proposed age-friendly changes.
7. Consider applying for grant funding to assist with implementation efforts.
8. Recruit older people to join town committees in all areas of governance. In research involving older adults' engagement, those who had skills such as management, marketing and leadership were considered essential to sustainability of age-friendly efforts.¹⁸
9. Plan for monitoring and evaluation of any age-friendly initiatives.

Appendix A: Data Collection Tools

This table details the tools used to collect data in each WHO age-friendly domain, based on the Public Health Agency of Canada evaluation indicators.

Age friendly domains	Public Health Agency of Canada Evaluation Indicators	Data collection tools
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¹⁸ Neville, S., Napier, S., Adams, J., Wham, C., & Jackson, D. (2016). An integrative review of the factors related to building age-friendly rural communities. *Journal Of Clinical Nursing*, 25(17-18), 2402-2412. doi:10.1111/jocn.13299

<p>Outdoor spaces and public buildings</p>	<p>Walkability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of rest places and distance between rest places. 2. Number of accessible washrooms. 3. Crosswalks are safe (e.g., with appropriate crossing times, mid-block crosswalks on long streets, median rest stops, good visibility). 4. Sidewalks, trails and walkways exist and are in safe condition (e.g., have smooth surfaces, curb cuts, separate bike lanes, are wide, well lit, clear of ice and snow). <p>Actual and Perceived Accessibility</p> <p>Public buildings have adequate access and maneuverability around buildings (e.g., access at ground level, level entry, wheelchair ramps, automatic doors, wide aisles to accommodate scooters and wheelchairs).</p> <p>Crime Prevention</p> <p>Availability of crime prevention strategies, courses and programs for seniors (including focus on fraud and elder abuse).</p>	<p>Seniors Walking Environmental Assessment Tool - Revised (SWEATR-2)</p> <p>Survey questions</p> <p>-SPARC Accessibility report</p> <p>-Survey questions</p> <p>-Program audit</p> <p>-Survey questions</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Transportation Options and Public Transit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of a range of affordable options for transportation (e.g., public/private partnerships, volunteer driving program, park and go, shuttles). 2. Proportion (or number) of buses that are accessible, clean, and with destination and number clearly displayed. 	<p>-Program inventory (Municipal and BC Transit)</p> <p>-Phone inquiry with HandyDART program</p> <p>-Survey questions</p>

	<p>3. Bus stops/shelters are safe and accessible (e.g., with seating, well lit, covered, snow removed, close to seniors' residences).</p> <p>4. Proportion of people age 65+ who have access to and use public transportation.</p> <p>Age-Friendly Streets and Parking</p>	<p>-SPARC accessibility report</p> <p>-Survey questions</p>
Housing	<p>Housing Availability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of affordable housing that is appropriately located, well built, well designed, secure, and for which waiting times are short. 2. Availability of affordable multi-purpose and aging in place housing options. <p>Housing Programs and Resources</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of programs for increasing accessibility, safety and adaptability of housing (e.g., hand rails, ramps, smoke detectors). 2. Availability of a resource listing age-friendly home maintenance, support and care-giving services. <p>Ability to Age in Place</p> <p>Proportion of people age 65+ who want to remain in their current residence and are confident they will be able to afford to do so.</p> <p>Housing Support Awareness</p>	<p>-Canadian Mortgage and Housing data</p> <p>-Survey questions</p> <p>-Census Profile (Stats Can)</p> <p>-Program inventory</p> <p>-Survey questions</p> <p>Focus groups and interviews</p> <p>Survey questions</p>

	Awareness of rent subsidy or other programs (e.g., home loans) among seniors.	
Social participation and recreation	<p>Engagement in Social Activities</p> <p>Proportion of people age 65+ who engage in social activities at least once a week (e.g., meet with friends/neighbours; take part in civic, spiritual or cultural activities; volunteer or work).</p> <p>Opportunities for Participation</p> <p>Availability of recreation and learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., computer courses, community gardens, crafts, games, exercise classes).</p> <p>Availability of intergenerational recreation and social programs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of opportunities for social participation in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages. 2. Affordability of seniors' recreation programs. <p>Accessibility of Participation Opportunities</p> <p>Public venues for community-based activities are accessible (e.g., adapted washrooms, a ramp to enter the building, better lighting, temperature control).</p>	<p>Stats Can: Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management System (CASIM)</p> <p>Survey questions</p> <p>Survey questions</p> <p>SPARC Accessibility Report</p>
Respect and Social inclusion	<p>Availability of Intergenerational Activities</p> <p>Availability of intergenerational family activities.</p> <p>Sense of Belonging</p> <p>Level of sense of belonging in the community.</p>	<p>-Program inventory</p> <p>-Focus group and interviews</p> <p>-Survey</p> <p>Stats Can: Canadian Socio-Economic Information</p>

		Management System (CASIM)
Civic participation and employment	<p>Unemployment and Employment</p> <p>Level of unemployment and employment among seniors.</p> <p>Training and Support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of support for volunteers (e.g., training, transportation, reimbursement of expenses, method of appreciation). 2. Availability of training opportunities related to the accommodation of seniors' needs in the workplace. <p>Accessibility</p> <p>Municipal buildings/meetings are accessible</p>	<p>Stats Can: Labour Force survey</p> <p>Program inventory</p> <p>Accessibility audit</p> <p>Survey questions</p>
Community and health services	<p>Primary Care Physician</p> <p>Proportion of seniors who have a primary care physician.</p> <p>Supportive Health Services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of prevention programs related to health issues of high relevance to seniors. 2. Availability of end-of-life support for seniors, their families and caregivers. <p>Community Services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Availability of low-cost food programs (e.g., meals on wheels, wheels to meals, food bank). 2. Availability of assistance for activities of daily living (e.g., yard work, shopping, snow removal, garbage collection). 	Program inventory
Other considerations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Level of health-related quality of life 	Stats Can: Canadian Socio-

outside of the WHO domains	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Level of satisfaction with life in general 3. Loneliness 4. Level of satisfaction with social relationships 	Economic Information Management System (CASIM)
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