City of Courtenay

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

Author's note: This document served as a background study and set of policy and action options to consider in the review of the Courtenay Official Community Plan.

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CITY OF
COURTENAY

APRIL 2021

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The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledges that we are located within the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation.

Additional Acknowledgments

"A society for all ages is multi-generational. It is not fragmented with youths, adults, and older persons going their separate ways. Rather, it is age inclusive, with different generations recognizing - and acting upon - their commonality of interest'.

- Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, the City of Courtenay as part of the Official Community Plan process, undertook an the development of an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan. The impetus for the plan was simple; as part of its vision for the future of Courtenay, the Community also seeks to be vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming for all ages and at all stages of life.

This Age-Friendly Community Action Plan builds upon the World Health Organization's Eight Domains of Age Friendliness, and seeks to identify specific priorities, partners, and actions for the City. The plan was developed over an eight month journey and included outreach interviews, and stakeholder focus groups. A situational and needs assessment identified high level gaps and opportunities within the framework of the eight domains.

These were distilled into ten overarching themes specific to the City of Courtenay. The themes have been used to develop policy recommendations and actions that will take the Courtenay of today and advance it into the Courtenay of tomorrow; a City rich in diversity and quality of life for all residents.

This plan is envisioned as a living document that falls under the umbrella of its parent plan, the new Official Community Plan. Progress check-ins will monitor the completion of action items and will assess further opportunity to explore partnerships, enrich programs and policies, and support the social, financial, and physical wellbeing of seniors in Courtenay.

PART 1: VISION & PLAN PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

What is an Age-Friendly City?

Aging is a natural process which we all hope to experience. Aging however also comes with changing needs related to mobility, perception, health and services. Too often, cities are designed without deeper consideration for children and seniors which can make it difficult to grow a family and age-in-place.

By considering people's changing needs throughout their lifetime, people of all ages will be given the opportunity to remain active, healthy and connected to their community.

The World Health Organization defines an 'age friendly' city as one where service providers, public officials, community and faith leaders, business people and citizens:

- Recognize the great diversity amongst older individuals;
- Promotes their inclusion and contribution to all aspects of community life;
- Respect their decisions and lifestyle choices; and,
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.

In an age-friendly city, policies, programs, and partnerships are set up to enable citizens to actively age throughout their lifetimes. Active aging depends on many factors that impact communities on the individual, family, and city scale; and, include social and cultural influences. Age friendliness seeks to recognize and support aging as a universal process, and provide tools and techniques to improve the quality of life for all residents, throughout their lifetimes.

"The City of Courtenay's population is expected to continue aging, with substantial growth among the 75+ age group. The city has a current average age of 45.8 which is slightly higher than the provincial average of 42.3, as of the 2016 Statistics Canada Census. Although the entire province is expected to age during the projection period, it is expected that Courtenay will continue to have a slightly older average age when compared to larger urban centres on Vancouver Island."

-City of Courtenay Official Community Plan Phase 1 Background Research Report, June 2020

Why Age-Friendly?

Courtenay, like many Canadian cities, seeks to build and maintain a vibrant, healthy, diverse and sustainable community. This is in the context of a rapidly aging Canadian and Global populations, rapid and continued urbanization, ongoing climate change, and increasing public health considerations and crises, like the current COVID-19 pandemic. Courtenay is unique from other cities in that its climate, community, and culture make it a popular destination for retirees seeks a welcoming community and optimal retirement lifestyle. This context places increasing pressure on the City to provide the services and supports necessary to provide a high quality of life for Courtenay residents through all stages and ages of life, including later years.

Plan Objectives

The objectives and actions outlined in this plan evolved from a public discourse on the future of Courtenay in the context of a new Official Community Plan (OCP), a review of community needs for an aging population, and a best practices precedent study.

From this process, a series of actions have been recommended for implementation through policy statements or partnerships with community and / or government stakeholders. Many of the recommendations cross several theme areas and relate to different policy areas of the official community plan.

The objective of the Plan is to provide concise actions for the City and its partners, as a preventative and proactive approach to meeting the unique needs of an aging Courtenay population. The plan uses principles for the creating of Age-Friendly cities, as outlined in the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide.

Funding and Community Support

With the Official Community Plan (OCP) update already underway, this is the optimal opportunity to integrate age-friendly assessment, policy and actions into long-range City plans.

The City of Courtenay worked together with community organizations to apply for a UBCM's 2020 Age-friendly Communities grant application to undergo an age-friendly needs assessment and action planning process. The City was successfully awarded this grant. Together with the organizations who supported the grant application as well as the OCP Advisory Committee, the City initiated the engagement and planning process to identify an age-friendly vision, goals and actions, as well as guidelines to be included as Development Permit Area Guidelines in the OCP. The process culminated in this report and Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.

Process Overview

The Age-Friendly Community Action Plan process included three phases of work and a community engagement process. The engagement process was designed to align with the Provincial health and safety measures that were in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Phase 1, stakeholder engagement in the form of phone interviews provided insights into what is working well and what needs works in Courtenay from an age-friendly

perspective. This informed the creation of a draft vision and draft policy. In Phase 2, the draft vision and policy were shared with stakeholders. In Phase 3 the policy was updated based on what was heard, and a set of age-friendly guidelines was created for inclusion in the OCP.

Engagement Outcomes

Each policy section in *Part 2: Outcomes and Actions* includes a summary of the needs-assessment and engagement outcomes. These outcomes directly informed the creation of age friendly policy and *Design Guidelines* in Part 3.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND PLAN CONTEXT

Courtenay has an estimated population of 25,595 (2016), projected to grow by 27% to reach a total of 32,502 by2051, with interim populations of 30,085 in 2031, and 31,696 in 2041.

The population is expected to continue aging, with substantial growth among the 75 age group. Conversely, the population of residents aged 25 and under is expected to decrease during this period.

As presented on the opposing page, the city has a current average age of 45.8 which is

slightly higher than the provincial average of 42.3, as of the 2016 Statistics Canada Census. Although the entire province is expected to age during the projection period, it is expected that Courtenay will continue to have a slightly older average age when compared to larger urban centres on Vancouver Island such as Victoria, which consistently attracts a younger demographic due to more employment and education opportunities. The aging population is also correlated with an average household size of 2.1, lower than the provincial average of 2.4.

The average household income within the city is currently $69,468. The average total income of one-person households is $39,728, whereas the average total income of two or more person households is $84,204. These figures are lower than respective provincial averages of $90,354, $46,696, and $108,010. The city has a relatively even distribution of incomes, with 41% of households earning between $20,000 and $60,000 per year.

Based on the demographic and market analysis completed for the Official Community Plan, the City of Courtenay is one of the faster growing communities in the Comox Valley Regional District. This growth is characterized by demographic cohorts aging out of the work force, and significant emigration (inward movement) of retirees and young families. The population demographics are also indicative of shifting household sizes (tending towards smaller), and increasing median wages and education levels, suggesting an influx of older adults with longer participation in the workforce, and thus higher net worth.

What defines 'a senior'?

The term senior carries significant stigma, and is at times hard to define. According to the Oxford Canadian Dictionary, a senior citizen is "an elderly person, especially a person over 65". For practical purposes, seniors can be broken into two cohorts based on age, young seniors aged 65 - 84, and elderly seniors aged 85+. Relevant to this situational analysis is the baby boomer cohort, adults 55+ who are rapidly aging out of the work force and retiring.

It is important, however, in the context of this plan that and age-friendly Courtenay is not just about planning for seniors. An age-friend city is one that supports diversity and inclusion, and supports vitality and vibrancy; community goals that benefit all ages and life stages.

Numbers and Proportions of Older Persons in Courtenay (2016)				
Total Population				
Age	**Percentage**	**Total Persons**	**Male**	**Female**
45 - 65	27.8%	7135	3215	3920
65 - 84	22.6%	5795	2705	3090
85+	3.4%	880	355	525

Data Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile

What defines a Courtenay Senior?

In 2016, Courtney was a growing community with a population increase of 1,383 people. The largest population cohort is young seniors, those between 65 and 69 years old, and the smallest cohort is elderly seniors, 85 years and older.

Data Analysis Summary

This data depicts a community with many newly retired adults, largely expected to be in good health and financially stable. The quality of life, climate, and community amenities are clearly attracting supporting those early in their retirement years. In the immediate term, this presents opportunity to engage young seniors in activities, volunteerism, and other pursuits, while planning for policies and programs to support their ability to age-in-place. In the longer term, this data could suggest increased demand on health, housing, and transportation supports.

The census data all demonstrates that the majority of housing in Courtenay is owned, with only 30% of housing rented. This correlates with an increasing median income, suggesting many seniors are financially secure. As the majority of the senior population is relatively young and financially stable, the tendency may be to overlook those at higher risk of income insecurity. It will be important for the City to continue to address the needs of high risk seniors, as well as the larger population base.

The demographic profile for Courtenay also profiles an aging population, with the median age increasing from 46.5 in 2011 to 48.6 in 2016. This is accompanied by a decrease in employment fro 51.8% of the population in 2011 to 51% in 2016. This could be tied to both a period of economic slow down, but because the unemployment rate was also decreasing over the same period, it more likely indicates a higher rate of exodus from the workforce.

City of Courtenay Needs Assessment

From the needs assessment presented on the opposing page, it becomes evident that Housing is, in particular, an important issue. The lack of diversity in housing types, and the trend of increasing costs, both rental and owned could place many seniors at risk.

Other needs that arose from the needs assessment include the opportunity to diversify personal transportation away from the personal vehicle and towards multi-modal forms including public transportation and cycling. Equity was also a primary topic that was raised during the stakeholder engagement. As Courtenay's population of seniors is predominantly younger and more financially stable, this does place more vulnerable seniors at risk of becoming overlooked. The data also suggest that a large proportion of seniors live alone, indicating there is a higher risk of social isolation and mental health issues requiring consideration and action.

City of Courtenay Needs Assessment

Based on the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement and demographic analysis completed the following needs were identified as pertinent to the City of Courtenay:

WHO Age Friendly Domain	What we heard	What the data shows
The Built Environment	• More public realm spaces wanted with amenities like washrooms and benches • Accessibility audit to understand current context	
Transportation	• Public transit could be more seniors friendly • Promote multi-modal transportation • Seniors priority parking for events / destinations • Most seniors drive a personal vehicle	• Walking or biking are the next most common form of personal transport[1] • Public transit is not a popular form of personal transport[1]
Housing	• Diversity of housing types is needed • Low income / special needs housing lacking • incentivize diversity for developers • More ability to age in place	• Vacancy rates are falling, average rent is increasing[2] • home prices are also increasing[2] • majority of the community owns a home[2]
Social Participation	• Support the development of more intergenerational programming • Reconciliation lens for Indigenous Elders	
Respect and Inclusion	• Inclusivity is important for the Courtenay Community • How can the community come together to care for the most vulnerable? • Social isolation is a common fear	• Single individual households make up the second largest group after dual individual households[2]
Civic Participation	• Language barriers may exist for Indigenous Elders • Need to create space for marginalized people at the table • Clubs are organizations are popular and well used in Courtenay	• The largest ethnic origin is European. Other North American origins, North American Aboriginal origins, and Asian origins are the next largest groups. There are also people with Caribbean, Latin, Central and South American, African, and Oceania origins.[3]
Communication	• Not all seniors are technologically literate so paper communication is still important	• The majority of the population (91,39%) speaks English, however other languages are still present and spoken in Courtenay[3]
Community Support and Health Services	• How can the City strengthen the relationship with Island Health? • Can health services be co located with other seniors' destinations? • Mental wellbeing is equally important • Food security could be an issue of increasing importance for seniors.	• Courtenay is generally healthier in terms of chronic disease than the provincial average[4] • Courtenay has a slighter shorter life expectancy than the provincial average[4] • Courtenay has a lower average household income than the BC average, which is linked to other indicators of health and wellness.[4] • Only 3% of residents live within a 5 min walk of a grocery store[5]

Sources:
1. City of Courtenay Transportation Master Plan, 2019.
2. City of Courtenay Housing Needs Report Data Results, May 2020.
3. 2016 Census.
4. BC Community Health profile, Provincial Health Services Authority, 2021.
5. City of Courtenay Official Community Plan Phase 1 Background Report, 2020.

PLAN STRUCTURE

In 2006 the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the Global Age Friendly Cities Project which identified a framework for planning for age-friendly cities. This framework provided the basis for this project; it was used to undergo a needs assessment to evaluate what is working and what needs work in Courtenay. The goals and actions in this plan were developed based on the needs assessment, background review and best practices. They are structured according to the WHO eight domains of age-friendly cities: Buildings and Outdoor Spaces; Housing; Transportation; Social Participation; Community Support and Health Services; Communication and Information; Civic Participation and Employment; and, Respect and Social Inclusion.
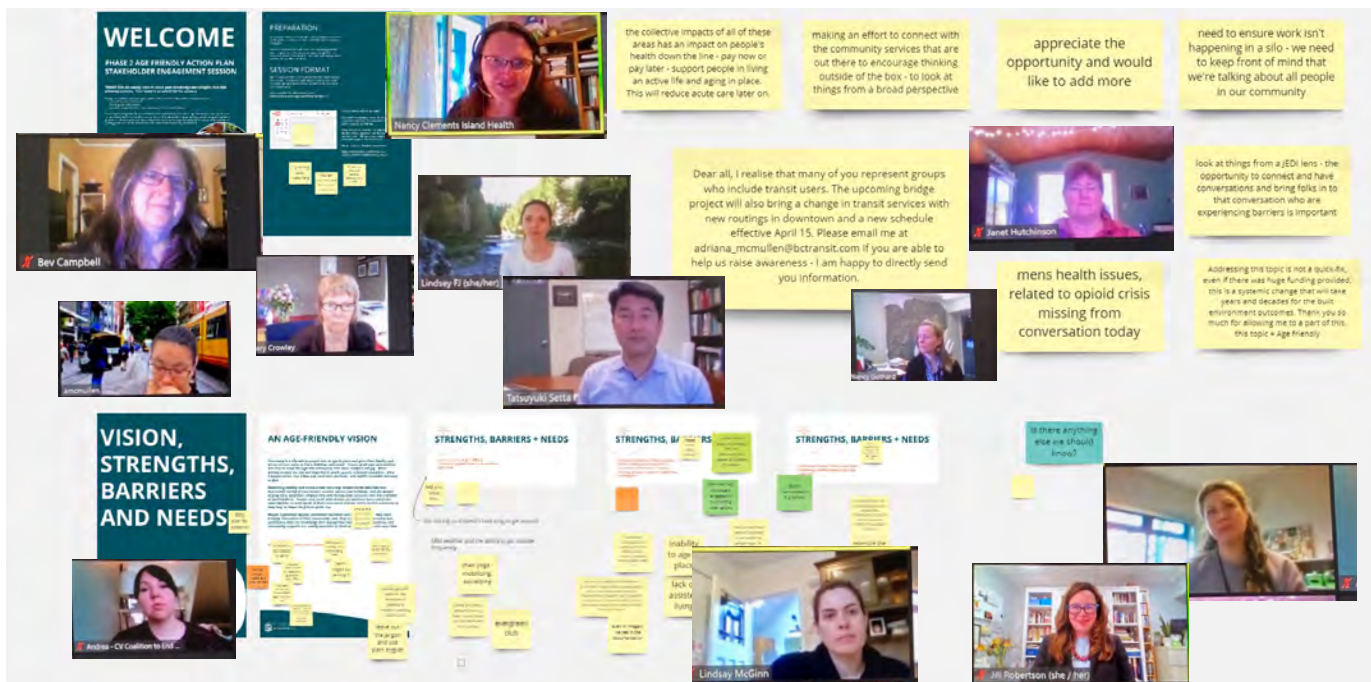
Phase 2 Stakeholder Session - Draft Vision and Policy Review

VISION

Courtenay is a city where people love to age-in-place; and, children and youth thrive. People of all ages and abilities are able to move through the community with ease, comfort and joy. When getting around the city and lingering in public spaces, essential amenities - from transportation, rest areas and washroom facilities - are readily available and easy to find.

Remaining healthy and active comes naturally, thanks to the beautiful and welcoming setting of Courtenay's' outdoor spaces and buildings; and the wealth of programs, volunteer, employment and recreational activities that are available to participate in. Seniors and youth with diverse perspectives know about the opportunities to participate in their community and are active in civic processes as they help to shape the future of the city.

People experience respect, emotional resilience and independence. They have friendly encounters in their community; and, they enjoy a sense of security and confidence, with the knowledge that appropriate housing, medical services, and community supports are readily available to them as their needs evolve over time.

Photo Credits: iStock

TEN STRATEGIC THEMES

to Achieve an Age-Friendly Courtenay

The Ten Strategic Themes summarize the City's role in age-friendly planning, as well as key actions that the City will take to achieve an age-friendly future.

1 Aging-in-Place

2 Ease of Movement

3 Food Security

4 Access to Health Services

5 Strong Community Networks

6 Welcoming and Amenity Rich Places

7 Ease of Access to Nature

8 Employment and Volunteerism

9 Civic Engagement

10 Enhanced Accessibility

1. Aging-in-Place

Supporting aging-in-place means:

- enhancing housing options and housing flexibility in all neighbourhoods;
- providing services and amenities close to home; and,
- enhancing community supports.

2. Ease of Movement

Supporting ease of movement means:

- increasing accessibility and desirability of alternative mobility options;
- auditing and improvements the built environment that exists today.

3. Food Security

Increasing food security means:

- providing fresh food markets and fresh food vendors within close proximity to homes; and,
- providing access to areas for urban agriculture.

4. Access to Health Services

Improving Health Services means:

- Allowing for the distribution and integration of services in each neighbourhood; and,
- providing better access to information.

5. Strong Community Networks

Enhancing community networks means:

- expanding inclusivity of programs;
- fostering the growth of service providers and community organization networks;
- providing unconscious bias training to civic staff.

6. Welcoming and Amenity Rich Places

Creating a welcoming and amenity rich atmosphere means:

- increasing access to washrooms;
- developing streetscape standards with an age-friendly lens;
- providing more place for seating and lingering;
- increasing tree canopy.

7. Ease of Access to Nature

Providing ease of access to nature means:

- undergoing accessibility audits of parks and open spaces and making improvements; and,
- expanding on parks programming.

8. Employment and Volunteerism

Supporting employment and volunteerism means:

- providing accessible and up to date communication and information.

9. Civic Engagement

Fostering age-friendly civic engagement means:

- establishing a diverse planning advisory council; and,
- ensuring diverse input into public planning processes.

10. Enhanced Accessibility

Improving accessibility means:

- auditing public building and making improvements;
- setting accessibility standards for public buildings;
- requiring adaptable building design; and,
- providing educational materials on best practices.

PART 2: OUTCOMES & ACTIONS

Photo Credits: City of Courtenay

GENERAL

Overview

The World Health Organization provides a strong framework for evaluating projects through an age-friendly lens.

Action

1. Use the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Checklist to evaluate city projects on an ongoing basis. This checklist is provided in the appendix and touches on all topic areas.

World Health Organization

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities

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

☐ Services are situated together and are accessible.

☐ Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.

OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Overview

The design of buildings and outdoor spaces greatly impacts the ability of people to participate in their community and perform daily activities with ease.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that many outdoor spaces and civic, community, and retail buildings are working well. However, a number of barriers were also identified, such as feelings of safety and limited programing.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The actions in the following pages are intended to enhance Buildings and Outdoor spaces in Courtenay by:
- improving accessibility, wayfinding and opportunities to linger;
- expanding programming opportunities.

> **"***Parks are one of the best parts of our city.***"**
>
> -OCP Youth Advisory Committee Member

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?
- Civic, community and retail buildings: Florence Filberg Centre, Courtenay Legion, Sid Williams Theatre, Evergreen Club, Courtenay Library, and shopping in Downtown and malls.
- Outdoor spaces: Parks and trails overall, as well as the marina, Lewis Park, Air Park and Riverwalk Trail.

What's Not Working?
- Sense of comfort/safety on bike routes.
- Limited park programming.
- Limited opportunities to linger while shopping in Downtown and the malls.
- Lack of confidence to visit outdoor destinations alone.
- Walking at nighttime.
- Speed of bikes on shared trails.
- Natural areas need protection as Courtenay grows.

Actions

ACCESSIBILITY, WAYFINDING AND LINGERING

1. Undergo an audit of all existing public buildings, parks and trails to evaluate:
   - accessibility
   - wayfinding
   - access to amenities (washrooms, drinking fountains, seating and rest areas)

2. Identify a catalyst project for UBCM Stream Two Grant; consider Rick Hansen Foundation Certification for a project identified during the accessibility audit.

3. Provide incentives through Zoning Bylaw or Community Amenity Contribution credits for new developments to:
   - achieve the Rick Hansen Accessibility Foundation certification
   - create more public washrooms, seating areas and drinking fountains where gaps have been identified

4. Set Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Certification as the standard for all new public buildings and renovations.

5. Showcase and celebrate accessibility achievements of public and private developments through signage and through recognition at public events.

6. Establish a wayfinding strategy and guidelines for neighbourhood centres.

7. Educate staff on how to evaluate if designs are meeting accessibility design guideline requirements.

8. Develop educational materials on best practices to inspire high quality design of single detached homes. Consider using guidelines outlined by the Safer Homes Society.

EXPANDING PROGRAMMING

9. Identify opportunities for outdoor programming (parks, fields, community school grounds, church grounds). Evaluate amenity gaps (washrooms, storage etc.). Consider covered and open-air spaces for both formal uses (i.e. drop-in fitness) and informal uses (i.e. birthday parties).

Photo Credit: iStock

HOUSING

Overview

Housing greatly impacts peoples sense of security, well-being and quality of life. Housing comes in many different forms and tenure types and an individuals housing needs change over time; therefore, there are many dimensions to consider when planning for housing.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that seniors who own their own homes have a sense of housing security. There are, however, many challenges related to other types and tenures of housing (refer to: Needs Assessment, What's Not Working?).

Courtenay Tomorrow

The actions in the following pages are intended to:
- provide more housing options (secondary suites, coach houses, duplexes, family apartment units; a spectrum of affordable housing; and, more long-term care homes);
- future-proof housing to make it easy to adapt to changing accessibility needs;
- contribute to walkable neighbourhoods, with transit oriented urban design; and,
- make multi-unit housing desirable for people of all ages and abilities.

Stakeholder Input
What's Working?
- Seniors who own their own homes have a sense of housing security.

What's Not Working?

- Lack of affordable rentals.
- Lack of multi-generational housing.
- Need for more care homes.
- Lack of resources and shelter for people experiencing homelessness.
- Seniors who rent are on a fixed income and are concerned about rising costs of rent as well as what options they would have if their lease came to an end.
- Lack of opportunities for seniors to downsize.
- Many seniors are over-housed.
- Lack of housing with multiple bedrooms for families.
- There are limited pet friendly housing options.
- Affordability and options for future generations.

Actions

LONG-TERM CARE

1. Work with Island Health to understand how the City can help to provide additional long-term care homes to increase access to supportive care services.

HOMELESSNESS

2. Expand on services and facilities to serve people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.
3. Increase the supportive housing supply; and, work with other governments to support a harmonized response to homelessness through the regional Homelessness Supports Service.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

4. Engage residents of affordable homes in planning processes that impact the future of housing in Courtenay.
5. Track demographic information of participants in engagement activities and ensure that diverse voices are included.
6. Follow the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Strategy to increase the supply of below market rentals and rent geared to income units.
7. Follow OCP policy and locate affordable rentals in transit nodes.

MULTIFAMILY HOUSING

8. Update the Building Bylaw to require that all new multifamily residential buildings achieve the Adaptable Housing Standards in the BC Building Code on accessible floors (townhouses with levels that are only accessible by stairs would be exempt).
9. Require a mix of unit sizes, including some with two or more bedrooms to support multi-generational living and families with children.
10. Update land use and development policies to provide a variety of housing options in established neighbourhoods so that seniors looking to downsize have opportunities to remain in their neighbourhood and community.

Photo Credit: City of Courtenay

11. Provide FSR exclusions or other incentives for the provision of common area storage space for mobility devices (bicycles, tricycles, scooters, wheelchairs, strollers, trailers, carts etc.) on each floor.
12. Provide FSR exclusions or other incentives for the provision of bulk storage within units.
13. Update the Zoning Bylaw to allow lock-off suites which could be used as mortgage helpers, as in-law suites, or for older children.
14. Provide FSR exclusions for additional space in common hallways and lobbies that is dedicated to socialization and play in order to foster multi-generational socialization among neighbours. Require that these spaces have access to natural light.
15. Require minimum outdoor amenity spaces with dedicated play area and amenities for caregivers. Enhance the acoustic requirements of flooring in family oriented units, and encourage unit layouts that locate children's bedrooms away from the central living space.

SINGLE DETACHED HOUSING

16. Update the Zoning Bylaw to permit:
- duplexes, coach and laneway houses; basement and secondary suites; and lock-off suites in single detached housing zones.
- Reduced parking standards in single detached housing zones.
17. Develop educational materials on best practices to inspire accessible design of single detached homes. Consider using guidelines outlined by the Safer Homes Society.
18. Develop educational material to help people navigate the renovation approvals process for accessibility improvements.

TRANSPORTATION

Overview

Transportation options influence health and active aging as well as ones ability to participate in the social and cultural life around them. As people age their transportation needs and abilities change over time; it is important to ensure that these changes do not become a barrier to civic participation and access to health care and services. Good transportation facilitates independence, which is important for mental health.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that a lot of things are working when it comes to transportation in Courtenay. This includes the clustering of destinations which reduces the amount of travel that is needed, to aligning programs with transit schedules, and a variety of modes to get around. There are, however, also a significant number of barriers that people face when it comes to moving around Courtenay.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The actions in the following pages are intended to help seniors and families with young children in Courtenay enjoy ease of mobility to remain active in their life and community. They do this by:
- improving accessibility, safety and comfort
- creating complete and walkable neighbourhoods; and,
- increasing transportation literacy.

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?

- Seniors who drive are able to get around with ease.
- Some seniors also walk, bike and take the bus.
- Evergreen Club aligns program times with the bus schedule as much as possible (however, it is not possible to fully manage this across all programs and times).
- Many programs and facilities are co-located downtown, which means less travel between activities.

What's Not Working?

- Many people don't feel comfortable biking due to a lack of dedicated space for biking.
- Seniors who don't or won't access transit.
- There is currently no access to ride hailing services.
- The transit bus schedule doesn't always align with school schedule.
- There is limited space for parking mobility devices in destinations where programs are taking place (i.e. scooter, bike, stroller parking space).
- It is uncommon for people to begin using transit later in life if they haven't already started or tried.
- The transit system does not accommodate people who depend on mobility devices well.
- Many people depend on HandyDart however they face challenges related to access and timing.
- High school students find that their bike routes to school are unsafe with blind corners and busy streets (such as Ryan Road).
- Carpooling has many benefits, however people need to self-organize, community organizations can't act as organizers for liability and insurance reasons.

Actions

GENERAL

1. Undergo an infrastructure audit to identify:
- Pedestrian facilities that need improved accessibility.
- Pedestrian crossing timer clearance intervals.
- Bicycle facilities that need improved safety.
- Proximity of transit stops to seniors and family destinations, identifying where stops are further than 400m away.

WALKING AND ROLLING

2. Establish streetscape standards to be implemented as a part of redevelopment. Standards to include:
- areas to rest and socialize;
- street tree canopy and planted boulevards between busy streets and sidewalks;
- elements to support biodiversity; and,
- elements to encourage play.
3. Continue to implement the pedestrian network plan as outlined in the Master Transportation Plan and align with the efforts of the Comox Valley Regional District's Active Transportation Project.
4. Amend the subdivision and development servicing bylaw to increase sidewalk widths for strollers and mobility devices (i.e. min. 1.5 m.)
5. Provide countdown timers for lighted crosswalks.
6. Develop age-friendly lighting and signage standards.

Photo Credit: iStock

BIKING

7. Continue to implement the current cycling plan; and, prioritize bike trails that provide off-arterial routes (such as an alternate to Ryan Road).
8. Deliver community cycling education.

TRANSIT

9. Promote the provision of amenities such as seating shelters, route maps and electronic schedule signs at all bus stops.
10. Follow the land use policies that are set out in the OCP with the objective of achieving 10-minute neighbourhoods and distribution of amenities.
11. Work with TransLink to identify the City's role in providing transit workshops for people who are making the shift from driving to transit.

RIDE HAILING

12. Identify training information and resources; deliver information and educational sessions for seniors.

DRIVING

13. Provide seniors driver re-refresh training courses.
14. Identify locations for temporary accessible and seniors only parking at seasonal events.

Photo Credit: City of Courtenay

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Overview

Social participation contributes to well-being and good health. Being socially active means maintaining and expanding supportive and caring relationships over time, it means taking part in cultural traditions, and it helps people maintain their self-confidence.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that there are many opportunities for seniors to take part in their community. Some of the barriers that people face are the result of language barriers, multi-cultural barriers, discrimination, cost, discrimination, and feelings of exclusion. A lack of space for hosting programs during peak demand times is also a barrier.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The following actions are intended to help people in Courtenay thrive by:
- building and maintaining their social and cultural network through recreational activities; and,
- making intergenerational connections.

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?
- Places with seniors programming, such as: Evergreen, The Legion, church groups, cafes.
- Small town friendly feeling
- Newcomers group is very popular
- The variety of programs, venues and clubs.
- Cultural opportunities.
- Outdoor and indoor recreational options.

What's Not Working?
- Newcomers groups limit an individuals participation to two years.
- Language / multi-cultural barriers.
- People on a fixed income or facing other financial barriers have limited access to programs and activities.
- It can be difficult for individuals to feel comfortable joining established groups.
- People facing homelessness experience discrimination.
- There is limited space for hosting programs, particularly during peak demand times.

Actions

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL NETWORKS

1. Establish indoor and outdoor walking clubs.
2. Identify seniors priority times for pools, libraries and recreation centres.
3. Create a Seniors Ambassadors Program to connect seniors to programs and services that are available to them.

BUILDING INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

4. Deliver a Safe Routes to School program.
5. Encourage schools, daycares, and seniors facilities and programs to co-locate to foster intergenerational networking.

> *Yes, I feel connected. The City offers good shopping. Evergreen has lots of programs and various venues and clubs offer social and fundraising opportunities.*
>
> -Survey Participant

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Overview

Good community support and health services allows people to remaining healthy and independent. While many health services are funding and coordinated at the provincial level, they are delivered within the city; and, local community groups have an important role in delivering support and care.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that the social networks of individuals are very important and work well. Things that are not working for everyone, however, are: availability of home care; proximity of services and ease of access to them, particularly by transit. There is also a lack of services after hours.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The following actions are intended to:

- support better access to home care;
- influence land use so that services are clustered and easy to access, and available in all neighbourhoods; and,
- foster food security and better access to healthy food.

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?
- **Social support from families and social networks**

What's Not Working?
- **Lack of home care and home visits**
- **Access to the Food Bank by transit is limited**
- **Connectivity and accessibility of health and wellness services.**
- **Many people don't ask for help when they need it.**
- **There are no support options for children/youth after hours outside of the RCMP.**
- **There are limited supports for people after hours in general.**

Actions

SUPPORT ACCESS TO HOME CARE

1. Meet with Provincial Health Authorities to understand how the City can help the province provide better access to home care and home visits.

CLUSTER SERVICES IN NEIGHBOURHOODS

2. In alignment with the OCP land use strategy:
*   Concentrate age-supportive services in downtown and neighbourhood centres.
*   Co-locate these health and social services with other community services and civic, institutional and recreation facilities.

FOSTER FOOD SECURITY

3. Encourage the creation of community kitchens in multi-residential buildings. Identify where these would be most valuable, and consider counting shared community kitchens towards Community Amenity Contributions.

4. Identify how the City can assist in creating a food pantries program to provide access to food services in convenient destinations in neighbourhoods.

5. Update zoning to allow for fresh food markets/farmers markets or fresh food vendors in neighbourhoods to provide ease of access to fresh, local food

6. Encourage the allocation of community gardens in multifamily buildings. When sites are vacant and waiting for development, encourage the temporary use of these as community gardens

7. Create a 'Backyard Sharing' program to connect people who do not have access

Photo Credit: iStock

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Overview

Being "*in-the-know*" about community events and programs and civic processes helps people to remain engaged and connected with their community and remain active as they age.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that there are a number of areas where information sharing and communication could improve. It was noted that some of the most powerful ways to improve would be to have a centralized place for accessing information, and to have coordination among organizations and service providers.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The actions in this section are intended to help people remain engaged and active in their community by:
- Coordinating efforts;
- supporting the creation of a centralized resource centre and neighbourhood outreach; and,
- finding ways to connect with people who are experiencing homelessness.

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?
- The Evergreen message board.
- Word-of-Mouth (with limitations)

What's Not Working?
- Physical / logistical access to technology.
- Literacy and language barriers (ESL)
- There is no centralized place to access information.
- Word-of-mouth requires strong social and community networks.
- Information tends to be shared in print form. It is often outdated. Being able to speak directly with someone would be much more effective.
- There is no centralized organization who coordinates and connects community organizations and service providers - the network could be strengthened.
- People who are experiencing homelessness have difficulty gaining access to information.

Actions

COORDINATING EFFORTS

1. Work with community partners to identify the City's role in a coordinating mapping efforts for print materials.

2. Work with community partners to understand how the City can help community organizations to strengthen their network.

SUPPORT A RESOURCE CENTRE

3. Identify the space that would be needed for a centralized Resource Centre. Then, identify a location that is clustered nearby other service and is easy to access by walking, rolling and transit. Realize the delivery of this space either through private development in the form of a Community Amenity Contribution, by incorporating it into a new public facility, or by retrofitting an existing public building.

4. Identify the type of space that would be needed for the Resource Centre to provide neighbourhood outreach. Realize the delivery of this space through private development in the form of Community Amenity Contribution, by incorporating it into a new public facility or open space, or by retrofitting an existing public building.

CONNECT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

5. Find effective ways to share information about services, engagement activities, programs and resources with people who are experiencing homelessness.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Overview

Seniors who continue to take part in civic processes and work or volunteer past retirement contribute greatly to the benefit of society. In return, by contributing they maintain a sense of purpose, value and esteem. Youth who participate in civic processes help to shape the future of the city that they will inherit, and build a sense of personal agency.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that there is good volunteer culture in Courtenay. It was also noted that access to information about opportunities is limited, and that some people experience barriers as a result of identity factors.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The goals and actions in this section are intended to help people remain civically active throughout their lifetime by engaging diverse audiences.

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?
- Volunteer culture and plenty of opportunities to volunteer.

What's Not Working?
- Lack of knowledge about opportunities
- People experience discrimination related to ageism, race, ethnicity, gender, income, and other factors.
- Limited access to information makes it difficult for people experiencing homelessness to take part in civic processes (see Actions in Communication and Information topic).

Actions

ENGAGING DIVERSE AUDIENCES

1. Work with community partners to make sure that information about opportunities to engage in City processes and to find employment or volunteer with the City is shared broadly and reaches diverse communities

2. Track the demographics of people who participate in public engagement activities as a part of City planning processes and aim to achieve input that is representative of the population.

3. Establish a diverse Advisory Committees to represent age-specific considerations on City planning projects. Ensure seniors and youth participation

4. Host City planning engagement activities in a variety of locations (from schools and public buildings, schools and parks to grocery stores and pharmacies); and, at different times of day and the week.

5. Engage with people who are experiencing homelessness in planning processes.

RESPECT AND
SOCIAL INCLUSION

Overview

Individuals who are respected and included in the community have more opportunities to participate in social, civic and economic activities; participating in these activities in turn helps people to thrive physically, socially, mentally and emotionally.

Courtenay Today

The Needs Assessment revealed that some people are excluded as a result of factors that influence their intersectionality.

Courtenay Tomorrow

The goals and actions in this section are intended to help people experience respect and social inclusion, by:
• Educating City staff on unconscious biases
• Helping people to build social networks; and,
• Creating opportunities to recognize people in the community.

Stakeholder Input

What's Working?
• Friendliness
• Multi-generational activities

What's Not Working?
• Gender inequities increase poverty to older women, reducing agency and independence, quality of life, and health issues.
• Women have longer life expectancies and isolation is a serious issue for seniors overall. The longer life expectancy of women means greater risk for social isolation.
• People experience discrimination related to ageism, race, ethnicity, gender, income, and other factors.
• Loss of mobility can lead to social isolation and loss of community connections.
• Many older adults have pets, however dog parks and places to memorialize them are not available.

Actions

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Provide civic staff with unconscious bias / inclusivity training.
2. City staff complete Gender Based Analysis Plus training: https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html

RECOGNITION

3. Work with community organizations to provide volunteer recognition opportunities (consider parks, plazas, at bus stops, public buildings or events).

BUILDING SOCIAL NETWORKS

4. Create Ambassador Programs and social and recreational programs for diverse people.
5. Incorporate dog areas in parks with seating for resting and socializing. Consider opportunities for pet memorialization in parks.
6. Support the establishment of a caregivers program that would allow primary caregivers of seniors or children connect with other caregivers. Work with partners to identify the types of space(s) that would be needed.
7. Realize the deliver of this space either through private development in the form

PART 3:
IMPLEMENTATION

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
GENERAL				
Use the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Checklist to evaluate city projects on an ongoing basis. This checklist is provided in the appendix and touches on all topic areas.	Ongoing	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services, Development Services		
OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS				
ACCESSIBILITY, WAYFINDING AND LINGERING				
* Undergo an audit of all existing public buildings, parks and trails to evaluate: • accessibility • wayfinding • access to amenities (washrooms, drinking fountains, seating and rest areas)	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services, Development Services	Comox Valley Community Health Network; Rick Hansen Foundation	
* Identify a catalyst project for UBCM Stream Two Grant; consider Rick Hansen Foundation Certification for a project identified during the accessibility audit.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Provide incentives through Zoning Bylaw or Community Amenity Contribution credits for new developments to: • achieve the Rick Hansen Accessibility Foundation certification • create more public washrooms, seating areas and drinking fountains where gaps have been identified	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services	Rick Hansen Foundation; Development Community	

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
Set Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Certification as the standard for all new public buildings and renovations.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Development Services	Rick Hansen Foundation	
*Showcase and celebrate accessibility achievements of public and private developments through signage and through recognition at public events.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Development Services, Development Services		
Establish a wayfinding strategy and guidelines for neighbourhood centres.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Development Services		
Educate staff on how to evaluate if designs are meeting accessibility design guideline requirements.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
*Develop educational materials on best practices to inspire high quality design of single detached homes. Consider using guidelines outlined by the Safer Homes Society.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Development Services		
EXPANDING PROGRAMMING				
Identify opportunities for outdoor programming (parks, fields, community school grounds, church grounds). Evaluate amenity gaps (washrooms, storage etc.). Consider covered and open-air spaces for both formal uses (i.e. drop-in fitness) and informal uses (i.e. birthday parties).	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	Community Schools, Religious Organizations	

*   Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
HOUSING				
LONG-TERM CARE				
Meet with Island Health to understand how the City can help to provide additional long-term care homes to increase access to supportive care services.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services	Island Health and community partners	
HOMELESSNESS				
Expand on services and facilities to serve people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness. Increase the supportive housing supply; and, work with other governments to support a harmonized response to homelessness through the regional Homelessness Supports Service	Ongoing	Development Services	Island Health; Community Partners; The Province; First Nations; and, Other Municipal Government.	
AFFORDABLE HOUSING				
Engage residents of affordable homes in planning processes that impact the future of housing in Courtenay. Track demographic information of participants in engagement activities and ensure that diverse voices are included.	Ongoing	Development Services	Community partners	
Follow the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Strategy to increase the supply of below market rentals and rent geared to income units.	Ongoing	Development Services		

* Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
Follow OCP policy and locate affordable rentals in transit nodes.	Ongoing	Development Services		
MULTIFAMILY HOUSING				
Update the Building Bylaw to require that all new multifamily residential buildings achieve the Adaptable Housing Standards in the BC Building Code on accessible floors (townhouses with levels that are only accessible by stairs would be exempt).	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Require a mix of unit sizes including some with two or more bedrooms to support multi-generational living and families with children.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Update land use and development policies to provide a variety of housing options in established neighbourhoods so that seniors looking to downsize have opportunities to remain in their neighbourhood and community.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Provide FSR exclusions or other incentives for the provision of common area storage space for mobility devices (bicycles, tricycles, scooters, wheelchairs, strollers, trailers, carts etc.) on each floor. Provide FSR exclusions for the provision of bulk storage within units.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
Update the Zoning Bylaw to allow lock-off suites which could be used as mortgage helpers, as in-law suites, or for older children.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Provide FSR exclusions or other incentives for additional space in common hallways and lobbies that is dedicated to socialization and play in order to foster multi-generational socialization among neighbours. Require that these spaces have access to natural light.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Enhance the acoustic requirements of flooring in family oriented units, and encourage unit layouts that locate children's bedrooms away from the central living space.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		

*   Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
SINGLE DETACHED HOUSING				
Update the Zoning Bylaw to permit: • duplexes, coach and laneway houses; basement and secondary suites; and lock-ff suites in single detached housing zones. • Reduced parking standards in single detached housing zones.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
* Develop educational materials on best practices to inspire accessible design of single detached homes. Consider using guidelines outlined by the Safer Homes Society.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Development Services		
* Develop educational material to help people navigate the renovation approvals process for accessibility improvements.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Development Services		

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
TRANSPORTATION				
GENERAL				
*Undergo an infrastructure audit to identify: • Pedestrian facilities that need improved accessibility. • Pedestrian crossing timer clearance intervals. • Bicycle facilities that need improved safety. • Proximity of transit stops to seniors and family destinations, identifying where stops are further than 400m away.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Engineering Services, Development Services	BC Transit; Comox Valley Regional District	
WALKING AND ROLLING				
Establish streetscape standards to be implemented as a part of redevelopment. Standards to include: • areas to rest and socialize; • street tree canopy and planted boulevards between busy streets and sidewalks; • elements to support biodiversity; and, • elements to encourage play.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Development Services		
Continue to implement the pedestrian network plan as outlined in the Master Transportation Plan and align with the efforts of the Comox Valley Regional District's Active Transportation Project.	Longterm (5-10 years)	Engineering Services, Development Services		

* Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
Amend the subdivision and development servicing bylaw to increase sidewalk widths for strollers and mobility devices (i.e. min. 1.5 m.)	Short-term (1-2 years)	Engineering Services, Development Services		
Provide countdown timers for lighted crosswalks.	Longterm (5-10 years)	Engineering Services		
Develop age-friendly lighting and signage standards.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
BIKING				
Continue to implement the current cycling plan; and, prioritize bike trails that provide off-arterial routes (such as an alternate to Ryan Road).	Longterm (5-10 years)	Engineering Services, Development Services		
Deliver community cycling education.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	CV Cycling Coalition	
TRANSIT				
Promote the provision of amenities such as seating shelters, route maps and electronic schedule signs at all bus stops.	Medium to long-term (3-10 years)	Engineering Services, Development Services	BC Transit and Comox Valley Regional District	
Follow the land use policies that are set out in the OCP with the objective of achieving 10-minute neighbourhoods and distribution of amenities.	Ongoing	Development Services		
Identify the City's role in providing transit workshops for people who are making the shift from driving to transit.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services, Development Services	TransLink	

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
RIDE-HAILING				
Identify training information and resources; deliver information and educational sessions for seniors.	When ride-hailing is available	Recreation and Cultural Services, Development Services	New mobility providers; community organizations	
DRIVING				
Provide seniors driver re-refresh training courses.	Short-term and ongoing	Recreation and Cultural Services	Senior government agency	
Identify locations for temporary accessible and seniors only parking at seasonal events.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Engineering Services, Development Services	Organizers of seasonal events	

*   Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES				
SUPPORT ACCESS TO HOME CARE				
Meet with Provincial Health Authorities to understand how the City can help the province provide better access to home care and home visits.	Short-term (1-2 years) and ongoing	Development Services	Provincial Health Authorities	
CLUSTER SERVICES IN NEIGHBOURHOODS				
In alignment with the OCP land use strategy: • Concentrate age-supportive services in downtown and neighbourhood centres. • Co-locate these health and social services with other community services and civic, institutional and recreation facilities.	Ongoing	Development Services	Provincial Health Authorities	
FOSTER FOOD SECURITY				
Encourage the creation of community kitchens in multi-residential buildings. Identify where these would be most valuable, and consider counting shared community kitchens towards Community Amenity Contributions.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Development Services	Development Community	
Identify how the City can assist in creating a food pantries program to provide access to food services in convenient destinations in neighbourhoods.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services	Local Food Bank	

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
Update zoning to allow for fresh food markets/farmers markets or fresh food vendors in neighbourhoods to provide ease of access to fresh, local food.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services		
Encourage the allocation of community gardens in multifamily buildings. When sites are vacant and waiting for development, encourage the temporary use of these as community gardens.	Ongoing	Development Services	Development Community	
Create a 'Backyard Sharing' program to connect people who do not have access to private open space with people who would like to share their private yard. This sharing relationship can mutually benefit seniors who are experiencing difficulty maintaining a yard and people who have limited access to open space and would like to garden or grow food.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services	Community Organizations	

*   Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
SOCIAL PARTICIPATION				
BUILDING AND MAINTAINING SOCIAL NETWORKS				
Establish indoor and outdoor walking clubs.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	Community Organizations	
Identify seniors priority times for pools, libraries and recreation centres.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	Evergreen Club	
Create a Seniors Ambassadors Program to connect seniors to programs and services that are activities to them.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	Evergreen Club	
BUILDING INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS				
Deliver a Safe Routes to School program.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	School District 71, Community Schools; Block Parent Program	
Encourage schools, daycares, and seniors facilities and programs to co-locate to foster intergenerational networking.	Ongoing	Development Services	School District 71; Community Schools	

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION				
COORDINATING EFFORTS				
Work with community partners to identify the City's role in a coordinating mapping efforts for print materials.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services	Project Watershed, CV Cycling Coalition, Comox Valley Regional District recreation services	
Work with community partners to understand how the City can help community organizations to strengthen their network.	Ongoing	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services	Community Organizations	
SUPPORT A RESOURCE CENTRE				
Identify the space that would be needed for a centralized resource centre. Identify a location that is clustered nearby other service and is easy to access by walking, rolling and transit. Realize the delivery of this space either through private development in the form of a Community Amenity Contribution, by incorporating it into a new public facility, or by retrofitting an existing public building.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services		

* Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT				
ENGAGING DIVERSE AUDIENCES				
Work with community partners to make sure that information about opportunities to engage in City processes and to find employment or volunteer with the City is shared broadly and reaches diverse communities.	Ongoing	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services	Community Schools, Churches, Community Organizations	
Track the demographics of people who participate in public engagement activities as a part of City planning processes and aim to achieve input that is representative of the population.	Ongoing	Development Services		
Establish a diverse Advisory Committees to represent age-specific considerations on City planning projects. Ensure seniors and youth participation.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Development Services	Community Schools; Community Organizations	
Host City planning engagement activities in a variety of locations (from schools and public buildings, schools and parks to grocery stores and pharmacies); and, at different times of day and the week.	Ongoing	Development Services	Community Schools, Churches, Community Organizations, Businesses	
Engage with people who are experiencing homelessness in planning processes.	Ongoing	Development Services	Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness	

* Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION				
EDUCATION AND TRAINING				
* Provide civic staff with unconscious bias / inclusivity training.	Short-term (1-2 years)	All Departments		
* City staff complete Gender Based Analysis Plus training: https://women-gender-equality. canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus.html	Short-term (1-2 years)	All Departments		
RECOGNITION				
Work with community organizations to provide volunteer recognition opportunities (consider parks, plazas, at bus stops, public buildings or events).	Ongoing	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services, Engineering Services		
BUILDING SOCIAL NETWORKS				
Create Ambassador Programs and social and recreational programs for diverse people.	Short-term (1-2 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	Community Organizations	
Incorporate dog areas in parks with seating for resting and socializing. Consider opportunities for pet memorialization in parks.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services		

Actions and Recommendations	Time-frame	City Involvement / Role	Partners or Potential for External Lead	Progress
Support the establishment of a caregivers program that would allow primary caregivers of seniors or children connect with other caregivers. Work with partners to identify the types of space(s) that would be needed. Realize the deliver of this space either through private development in the form of a Community Amenity Contribution, by incorporating it into a new public facility, or by retrofitting an existing public building.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Recreation and Cultural Services	Evergreen Club; other community organizations and service providers	
Work with community partners to identify the spatial needs for a creative drop in space. Realize the deliver of this space either through private development in the form of a Community Amenity Contribution, by incorporating it into a new public facility, or by retrofitting an existing public building.	Medium-term (3-5 years)	Development Services, Recreation and Cultural Services	Evergreen Club; Community Schools.	

* Potential Catalyst or Stream Two Grant Project

PART 4: AGE-FRIENDLY DESIGN GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines were developed to support the age-friendly policies in this plan. These guidelines help to shape the built environment so that it is inclusive to diverse people, and so that people in all stages of life are able to thrive.

Local governments have the authority to designate development permit areas, including for objectives related to the form and character of multifamily residential development and commercial development.

HOUSING

Objective: *All common areas in multifamily buildings are designed to be accessible.*

Parking areas of multi-family buildings have direct accessible routes to primary building entrances. Shared amenities, such as community gardens and rooftop areas, are designed to be accessible.

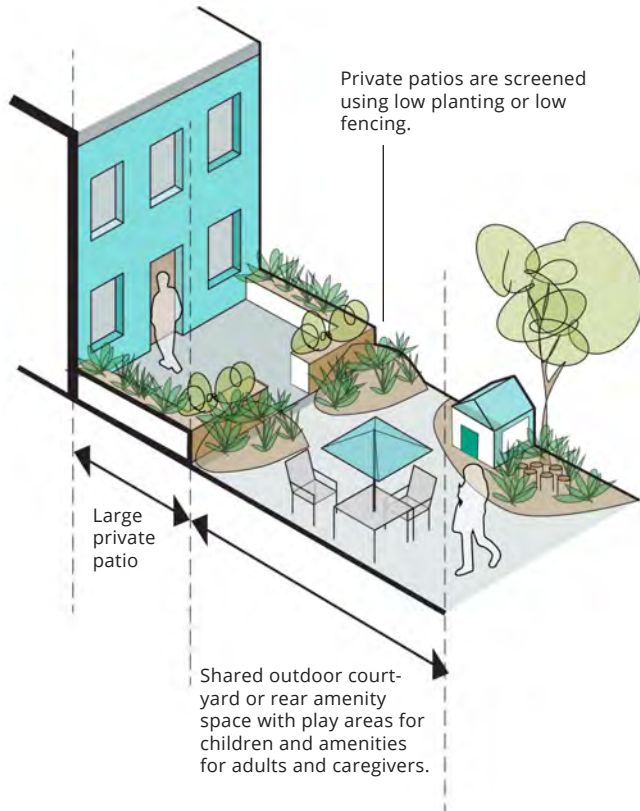**Objective:** *Condominiums are desirable and comfortable places to raise children.*

Guideline:

- Family units should be prioritized at locations that are as close to the ground floor as possible.

- Units shall have direct access to outdoors, through a balcony or preferably through a large ground floor patio.

- Balconies and patios should be large enough to act as functional spaces extensions of the living space, i.e. 8' x 10'.

- The majority of a balcony space should be recessed to feel like a room, to feel semi-enclosed and safe, and to feel like an extension of the living space.

- Family units should provide a minimum play area that is open to the main living area (i.e. 2 x 3m).

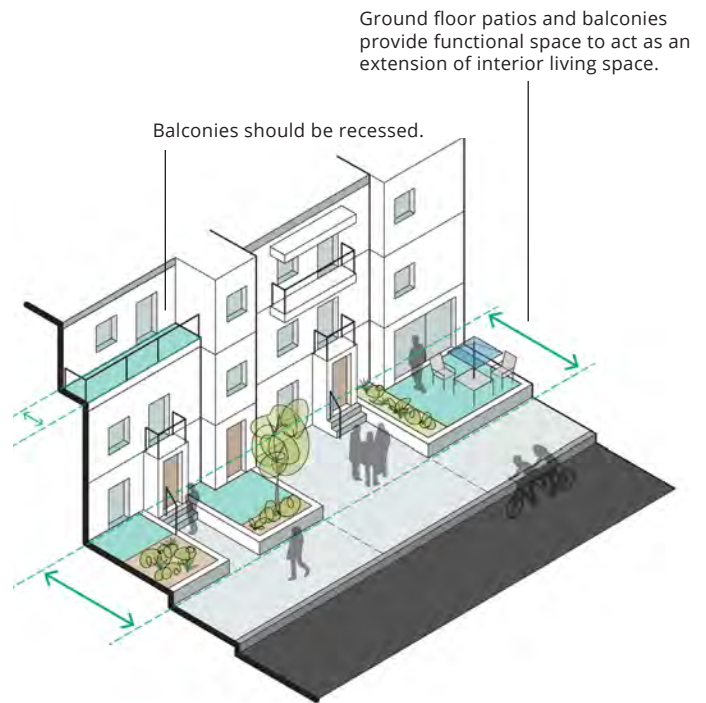- Support shared internal courtyards with

play areas for children of different ages and abilities and community gardening space; when courtyards are not possible, shared rooftop amenities with community gardens and play areas should be provided. Play areas should be carefully designed to minimize noise and nuisance to neighbours.

• Private units which face shared outdoor amenity spaces should be provided with direct access through a private patio. The patio should be screened with low hedge or fence (i.e. 1 metre). Hedges and fences should not be so high as to block views and sunlight entirely, but rather to provide a feeling of privacy.

REAR OR COURTYARD PATIOS AND AMENITY SPACES

FRONT PATIOS

Private patios are screened using low planting or low fencing.

Large private patio

Shared outdoor court-yard or rear amenity space with play areas for children and amenities for adults and caregivers.

Ground floor patios and balconies provide functional space to act as an extension of interior living space.

Balconies should be recessed.

ACCESSIBILITY AND WAYFINDING

Objective: *Accessibility and Comfort in Retail Areas*

Retail streets include frequent seating, with opportunities to sit every 50 metres. Storefronts should have no-step, fully accessible entrances and be well lit at nighttime.

Objective: *Accessibility of Residential Buildings*

Ground floor units of residential buildings should be accessible with a ramp or have no step entrances/be level with the adjacent ground. Entrances should provide sufficient room for maneuvering wheelchairs and strollers, with a minimum turning radius of 1500mm.

Objective: *Ample signage and wayfinding is provided to indicate the location of accessible washrooms and elevators.*

Commercial, mixed use and residential developments provide a consistent and accessible signage strategy. Signage strategy includes directional signage to public washrooms (in commercial and retail areas) as well as elevators. Washroom signage specifies the location of family washrooms with change tables and accessible washrooms.

Objective: *Paths, sidewalks and trails are safe and easy to traverse.*

Pathways, sidewalks and trails are finished with a hard, slip-resistant surface. Paving materials, bollards and tactile strips use strong contrast and colours to for ease of navigation.

Objective: *People of all ages and abilities have equitable access to and use of buildings and outdoor spaces.*

Design with the Seven Principles of Universal Design as developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/:

- Equitable Use
- Flexibility in Use
- Simple and Intuitive Use
- Perceptible Information
- Tolerance for Error
- Low Physical Effort
- Size and Space for Approach and Use

PARKING

Objective: *Developments provide accessible parking with ease of access to primary entrances throughout the development for people with reduce mobility, visual or hearing impairment, or reduced strength or dexterity.*

Parking areas provide accessible parking spaces within close proximity to all primary entrances.

Where close proximity to a primary entrance is not possible, a second accessible entrance will be provided. This entrance will be connected to the main building area with a clear route of access.

Clear routes of access are provided throughout the development, with accessibility consideration of surface treatment and lighting.

Objective: *People of all ages and abilities are able to safely access buildings from parking lots.*

Parking lot design incorporates designated pedestrian walkways for people to cross parking lots safely. These are separated from parking areas by raised curb. Curb let downs to provide access are provided at regular intervals. Where possible, pathways have planted areas with rainwater swales and trees lining either side and are punctuated with seating to provide for an enjoyable experience and comfortable micro-climate.

Objective: *Residential parking areas are physically and visually separated from residential outdoor amenity areas.*

Parking is located underground or to the rear of buildings and is visually and physically separated from outdoor play and amenity areas through the use of vegetation and low fencing. Provision of accessible parking is permitted at the side of the building.

Objective: *Seniors and parents of young children are able to park conveniently near entrances to retail buildings.*

In addition to providing required accessible parking stalls, retail and commercial buildings provide conveniently located priority parking for seniors and families with strollers nearby shop entrances. Parking is demarcated with signage.

PUBLIC REALM

Objective: *Support Socialization and Gathering in Commercial Areas*

Mixed-use and commercial developments include mid-block and corner plazas with opportunities to sit, socialize, and play. When locating plazas, priority should be given to locations with good solar access and with active adjacent uses (such as cafes) and age-friendly amenities (such as public washrooms). Plazas should be a minimum of 9 square metres and include: seating, trees, planting, area for a stroller or wheelchair to park, and elements to inspire play.
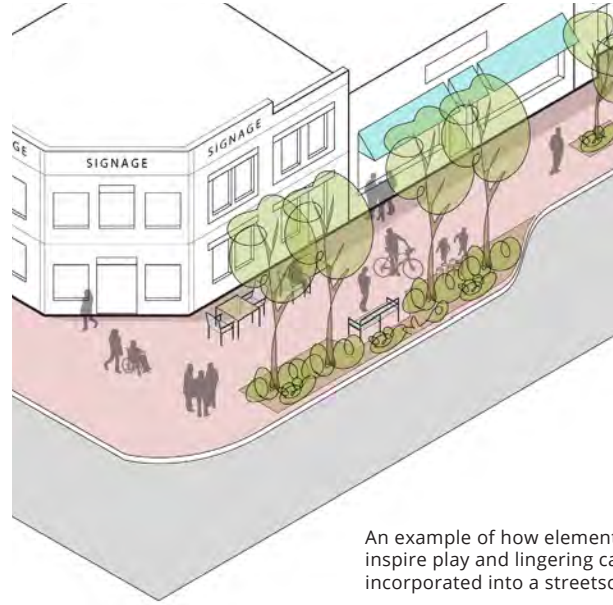
An example of how elements that inspire play and lingering can be incorporated into a streetscape.

APPENDIX

Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities

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 non-slip 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, well-lit 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 well-promoted.

- [ ] 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-to-one 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.