

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE



2015

Maple Ridge

Seniors Engaged, Energized, and Collaborative:
Community Dialogue and Action Planning

Acknowledgments

Age-friendly Advisory Committee

Thank-you to the following committee members who contributed their time and expertise to the implementation of the Age-friendly Communities Initiative:

Mana Bayanzadeh, Community Health Specialist – Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows, Fraser Health

Tony Cotroneo, Recreation Manager, Youth, Seniors & Neighbourhood Development; Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Parks and Leisure Services

Delaram Farshad, Community Health Specialist – Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows, Fraser Health

N.R. Bob Foster, Chair, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network

Petra Frederick, Recreation Access Coordinator, Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Parks and Leisure Services

Carole Goegan, Executive Committee; Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network

Joanne Leginus, Director of Administration & Senior Services; Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services

Fran Pattison, Seniors Housing Task Group, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network

Sheila Pratt, Executive Committee; Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network

Bernice Rolls, Member, Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues

Heather Treleaven, Coordinator; Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network

Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows

Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues

The Maple Ridge & Pitt Meadows Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues (MACAI) advises Council on civic matters which affect people with disabilities. MACAI strives to remove the social, physical and psychological barriers that prevent people from fully participating in all aspects of community life. The committee's focus is to create equal access in the areas of employment, education, housing, transportation and recreation. Projects include sensitivity training for City staff and residents, to create a greater awareness regarding accessibility issues, public facility design consultations and an annual award program.

Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network

The Seniors Network is a seniors' community planning table that formed in 2008. The Seniors Network promotes and supports working in collaboration with community members in order to improve the health and well-being of seniors in Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and the Katzie First Nation. The primary goal of the Seniors Network is to strengthen the availability and quality of services, programs and resources for seniors and to develop a seamless approach to seniors' service delivery. The Table was funded, along with tables in eight other communities, by the United Way of the Lower Mainland from 2008 to mid-2015.



Table of Contents

What is an Age-friendly City?.....	4
Building an Age-friendly City	5
Community Engagement Process.....	6
Local Voices Community Actions	7
Recommendations Background –Maple Ridge	9
Community Profiles.....	10
Maple Ridge: Results & Recommendations.....	11
- Outdoor Spaces & Buildings.....	12
- Transportation	15
- Housing	17
- Respect & Social Inclusion	19
- Social Participation.....	20
- Communication & Information.....	21
- Civic Participation & Employment.....	22
- Community Support & Health Services	23
- Emergency Preparedness.....	25
Next Steps to an Age-friendly City.....	26
References	27
Appendices.....	28
A. Age-friendly Communities Initiative Participants	28
B. Detailed survey results: Maple Ridge.....	29



Provincial funding administered by Union of BC Municipalities

Age-friendly Communities Initiative

MAPLE RIDGE

What is an Age-friendly City?

An age-friendly community is one where older adults can enjoy good health, support and feel a sense of security as they engage and participate in the community. In practice, an age-friendly city works to ensure its structures and services are accessible and inclusive for older people with varying needs and capacities.

In 2004, the Union of BC Municipalities launched the Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative (SHSI) to assist local governments to prepare for an aging population. In 2007, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport provided resources to further support the initiative and local age-friendly projects.

Age-friendly planning in British Columbia is based on guidelines established by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2007, the WHO released *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*, which identified eight aspects or 'dimensions', of community life that overlap and interact to directly affect older adults. This policy framework recognizes that older people face increasing challenges due to the sensory, physiological and other changes that age brings.

Key Features of an Age-friendly Community	
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	Outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean, secure and physically accessible.
Transportation	Public transportation is accessible and affordable
Housing	Housing is affordable, appropriately located, well built, well designed and secure.
Social Participation	Opportunities exist for social participation in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures.
Respect & Social Inclusion	Older people are treated with respect and are included in civic life.
Civic Participation and Employment	Opportunities for employment and volunteerism cater to older persons' interests and abilities.
Communication and Information	Age-friendly communication and information is available.
Community Support and Health Services	Community support and health services are tailored to older persons' needs.
Adapted from WHO, <i>Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide</i>	
* Emergency Preparedness	Emergency plans and procedures are in place to care for our older adults in the event on an emergency or natural disaster.

*Although not originally identified by the WHO, this feature was highlighted at the community level as being important to local age-friendly planning.

Building an Age-friendly City

The World Health Organization determined communities can encourage a good “quality of life” in three ways:

Society – seniors are supported to age actively, enjoy good health, remain independent and stay involved in communities.

Economy – Businesses are better able to support older workers and benefit from support of older customers.

Physical environment – Buildings and streets are safe and barrier-free, with better access to local businesses and facilities. Cities have adequate green spaces.

Everyone benefits when we have safer streets and sidewalks, more inclusive and accessible facilities and services and significant contributions to our communities from seniors. Secure neighbourhoods are safe for children, youth, women and older adults. Families experience less worry and stress when their older relations have the services and supports they need. Older people are a resource for their families, communities and economies in supportive and enabling living environments. Ensuring cities are age-friendly is one of the most effective ways to respond to our aging demographic.

Building an Age-friendly Action Plan

The Age-friendly Communities Initiative is a collaboration between the City of Maple Ridge, our local seniors planning table the Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Katzie, Seniors Network under the guidance of Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Parks and Leisure Services’, and the Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues (MACAI).

This council endorsed initiative brought together residents, stakeholders and resource people to look at optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life as our resident’s age.

Everyone benefits when we have safer streets and sidewalks, more inclusive and accessible facilities and services and significant contributions to our communities from seniors.

This Age-friendly Assessment Report is a series of recommendations identified during the Age-friendly Communities Initiative held in Maple Ridge in 2015.

Funding for the Age-friendly Communities Initiative was provided through the 2014 Seniors Housing and Support Initiative offered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and the Healthy Families of BC program. UBCM launched this initiative in 2004 to assist local governments with preparing for an aging population.

Background & Previous Projects

Age-friendly planning has been ongoing in Maple Ridge for many years through the work of the Maple Ridge/ Pitt Meadows Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues (MACAI) and the Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network. An initial Age-friendly Inventory Assessment and Seniors Community Forum were held in 2009. Over 200 residents participated in these events and the priorities identified have been incorporated into a variety of city and community work plans. To date, the following initiatives have been accomplished:

- Sustained operation of the seniors planning table – Seniors Network
- Consultation evenings with ICBC, RCMP and Engineering Departments to improve community safety
- MACAI published Universal Design Guidelines for Outdoor Spaces
- Seniors Network published three editions of a Seniors Resource Guide
- Offered “Aging Gracefully” free education series at public libraries for three years
- Supported the creation of a senior mentorship program “Grand Buddies”
- Volunteer management program developed by RMSS
- Construction of the Intergenerational Garden (22527 121 Ave., Maple Ridge)
- Establishment of Seniors’ Housing, Transportation and Outreach Task Groups
- Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows became pilot community for the Better at Home program (provincially funded home support services for seniors)
- Resource seminar held for building managers of seniors’ housing complexes
- Free Seniors Housing Advisor service offered
- Annual community promotion of BC Seniors Week celebration
- Recognition of contributions of senior volunteers

Community Engagement Process

The Age-friendly Advisory Committee, comprised of seniors, community agencies and organizations, community facilitators and staff, made it a priority to reach out to as many organizations, agencies, businesses, non-profit groups and segments of society as possible in just a few months.

Seniors from both cities played an active role in our age-friendly communities’ assessments, providing essential input into each city’s positive characteristics and barriers and suggesting priorities for change. Engaging seniors, their caregivers and service providers was important to ensure we focused on the actions that are most needed to ensure Maple Ridge is an age-friendly community.

Phase One: Community Consultation

The first phase of the Age-friendly project was a day long Community Consultation event held in June. Professional facilitators led the discussions around the eight key Age-friendly Cities topic areas and focused around the “lived” experience of older people – what seniors experience in their daily lives. The goal was to assess both communities’ strengths and weaknesses in promoting active aging. Almost 100 residents from Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows attended. The participants were primarily English speaking, age 55 and older and of multiple diverse abilities.

Phase Two: Age-friendly Solutions Workshops

Age-friendly Solutions workshops were held in Maple Ridge (October 1, 2015). The goal of this workshop was to review the opportunities and challenges specific to Maple Ridge that were identified during the Community Consultation earlier in the year.

Participants included older adults, caregivers, City staff, community associations and local service providers representing agencies such as Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services, Fraser Health, and HandyDART etc.

Workshops were held on each of the eight key age-friendly topics and the groups collaborated to develop recommendations for change. There were between 50 and 60 participants in each workshop ranging in age, ability and professional expertise. The discussions were focused on generating recommendations for the Age-friendly Action Plan.

Surveys, Note Boards and Focus Groups

Efforts were made to gather feedback from as wide a cross section of the two communities as possible. To help achieve this, a survey was developed by the Age-friendly Advisory Committee. The survey was made available in print and on-line and was distributed to key locations (recreation centres, seniors' centres, community events, etc.) in the community. The number of survey returns was small (57 total) and not statistically significant. However, it did allow the committee to include an additional segment of the population in the community consultation process. The survey data is included in Appendix A of this report.

In addition to the surveys, Post-it Note Boards were displayed for several months at similar locations to capture quick comments from those who did not have time to complete a full survey.

To ensure as much representation as possible in data collection, three focus group discussions were added with First Nations Elders, private retirement home residents and residents of a low-income independent rental building.

Local Voices, Community Actions

Maple Ridge is quickly growing in population and evolving from a rural community into a major urban centre. Fortunately, the community has maintained much of its small town atmosphere. The City is large enough to support many services and yet small enough that residents still know their neighbours and look after one another. Volunteer **transportation** services such as those offered by the Ridge Meadows Seniors Society and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services ensure our older adults are able to get to medical appointments locally and around the lower mainland. Very few seniors rely on the Translink service to access other communities as it is inadequate to meet their needs.

Access to adequate **seniors' affordable rental housing** is an issue in Maple Ridge just as it is in many communities in British Columbia. At the time of writing, there were 15 homeless seniors on the streets of Maple Ridge and likely many more living at risk of losing their housing. The cutting of federal subsidies for co-op housing developments is a major concern for local residents. Waitlists for existing accessible, affordable and appropriate seniors rental units are long, and in several cases, can take multiple years.

What is the role of the community and the City in supporting the **“vulnerable” seniors** in Maple Ridge? Population groups defined as vulnerable, in general, identify with some type of barrier to accessing a good quality of life. Dimensions of vulnerability could include but are not limited to:

- Economic insecurity
- Social isolation
- Inadequate, inaccessible and unaffordable housing
- Poor mental and physical health
- Inaccessible transportation and built environments
- Food insecurity
- Physical mobility limitations
- Marginalized identities and cultures
- Barriers to multi-lingual communication and lack of multi-lingual services

The United Way of the Lower Mainland Report (2007) “Towards an age-friendly community,” highlighted the lack of advocacy and information and referral services for seniors in Maple Ridge. In 2008, the community came together and the local seniors planning table – The Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network was formed. This table has been filling this information and advocacy gap since that time.



Age-friendly Community Consultation – June 10, 2015
Photo by Herb Croft

Recommendations

Maple Ridge

The following recommendations came out of the community consultation event and age-friendly solutions workshops and ongoing engagement with the local community. Thank you to everyone who participated in the process and shared their experiences, ideas and suggestions. The residents of Maple Ridge are a valuable resource and this work was made possible through their generous participation.

Our hope is that this **Age-friendly Assessment Report** and the subsequent **Age-friendly Action Plan** will be living documents that grow and flex to meet the changing needs of our communities. A lot of work has already been done in Maple Ridge to ensure we meet the needs of our growing senior's population. The goal of this document is to celebrate that work, identify new priorities and keep looking for ways to improve.

Two important pieces of age-friendly work to note are the publication a report entitled, "Universal Design Guidelines for Outdoor Spaces: Plan and Design for Choice in January 2009 by the Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues. This document has been an excellent reference for new development of community outdoor spaces and playgrounds. In 2014 the City of Maple Ridge published a Housing Action Plan which also provides valuable recommendations and background for the development of new housing. Information on how to access this report is available in the Reference section on pg. 27.



*Age-friendly Solutions Workshop – Pitt Meadows
Photo by Ron Harris*

Community Profiles

Maple Ridge

The Maple Ridge Local Health Area encompasses the Cities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows and is also known as Ridge Meadows. Maple Ridge measures 266 km² and Pitt Meadows 86.5 km².

This area is experiencing unprecedented population growth. The total estimated population in Ridge Meadows in 2014 was 97,592, 14 percent of which or 13,663 of residents were age 65 and over.

Population 2011 Census:

Maple Ridge- 76,052

Total 93,788

In the next ten years it is anticipated the senior's population in Ridge Meadows will grow by 62 percent, (compared to 53% in the overall Fraser Health Region) adding an additional 8,494 seniors to the area. By 2027 it is projected one in five residents of Ridge Meadows will be over 65 and the older age groups (75+ and 85+) will make up around 8% and 2% of the community's total population, respectively. (UW Moving Towards Age-Friendly Communities).

In 2014, according to the Fraser Health; My Health, My Community Report, over 93% of the population in the area reported English as their home language followed distantly by Korean (1%) and Punjabi (1%).

Census Canada reported in 2011 that 27% of seniors in Maple Ridge lived alone. 13% of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows seniors were low-income (living below the Low-income Cut-Off line as defined by Statistics Canada).



Maple Ridge

Features of Age-friendly Cities



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Does the natural and built environment help older persons get around easily and safely in the community and encourage active community participation?

Community Strengths

Age-friendly Initiative participants expressed appreciation of the parks and green spaces in Maple Ridge. The work by the City to improve traffic and pedestrian safety along 224th street in the past few years was also acknowledged. The construction and operation of the Intergenerational Garden in the downtown core has been a successful addition to the neighbourhood.

Current Initiatives

The Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility issues has been surveying residents to get detailed feedback about the accessibility of both cities. Increased security patrols in the downtown core of Maple Ridge have improved residents feelings of safety.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Green Spaces and Walkways
<p>Provide more opportunities for urban parks within core town areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to public washrooms • Off leash dog area (small dogs within the core town area; close to high density age-friendly living areas) • Age-Friendly, accessible urban walking routes with accessible surfacing (wheelchair/walkers/scooters etc.) • Adequate green spaces and walkway overhead lighting
<p>Improve the access (walkability) to waterfront area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfacing • Gradient • Lighting • Safety
<p>Work with Ridge Meadows Seniors Society and Parks and Leisure Services to develop, implement and evaluate park-based programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking groups • Park exercise groups
2. Outdoor Seating
<p>Increase bench seating (with arm rests) along specific seniors' walking routes within the core community area, including urban park areas and downtown core areas.</p>
3. Roads Safety and Pedestrian Safety
<p>Provide an opportunity for senior populations, City staff (engineering, parks, planning) and like organizations to walk the community (walkability study) looking specifically at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk safety (roots and vegetation growth) • Street crossing safety • Lighting • Sidewalk surfacing and cracks • Curb letdowns

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street parking impeding pedestrian crossing (visibility at crosswalks when cars parked on the street)
<p>Look at feasibility of lowering speed limit within the core area of the city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower speed limits along 224th street • Lower speed limits along 222nd street
<p>Identify and enforce specific truck routes within the down town core area.</p>
<p>Work with engineering to evaluate local automated crosswalk systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the duration of time allowed for crosswalks • Increase the volume of the automated systems
<p>Educate the public on crosswalk safety and the walk/hand signals</p>
<p>Provide scooter safety education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maneuvering tips • Right of way
<p>4. Traffic</p>
<p>Provide driver education and enforcement of right of way on right hand turns when pedestrians are in the cross walks.</p>
<p>5. Cycle Paths</p>
<p>Partner with the local cycling HUB: Your Cycling Connection (formerly Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition) to promote age-friendly cycling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult trikes • Wheelchairs with hand cycle attachments
<p>Develop more cycling specific routes with separation from high traffic areas.</p>
<p>6. Safety</p>
<p>Please see 'Walkability Study' (#3) to include an assessment on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown core safety • Downtown core lighting • Vegetation overgrowth
<p>7. Buildings</p>
<p>Develop/distribute accessibility materials for local businesses highlighting the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible front door access • Accessible products and services (shelving, width of isles etc.) and washrooms
<p>8. Public Toilets and Services</p>
<p>Provide access to public washrooms within the downtown core area and specifically after public building and business hours, including public events and festivals.</p>
<p>Provide access to public drinking fountains and water sources within the core of the community, urban parks and open spaces.</p>
<p>9. Weather Related Concerns</p>
<p>Educate residents and business owners regarding the City snow removal bylaw and enforce regulations.</p>
<p>Partner with community agencies/organizations to reinstate the Snow Angels program (neighbours helping neighbours):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local high schools • Faith organizations • Community service clubs

10. Directional Signage and Wayfinding

Develop a signage and wayfinding policy for all City streets and buildings that is age-friendly and accessible:

- Improve visibility of wayfinding signage (font sizing)
- Incorporate visual clues within signage (multi-lingual and dementia-friendly)
- Develop consistency within signage and wayfinding

Ensure there is an adequate and up to date printed map available for the community, highlighting points of interest (shopping/ health services/ recreation/ parks etc.).



Transportation

Can older persons travel wherever they want to go in the community, conveniently and safely?

Community Strengths

Residents benefit significantly from the volunteer driving services offered through the Ridge Meadows Seniors Society and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services which provide transportation both locally and throughout the lower mainland respectively.

Current Initiatives

The Seniors Network continues to advocate to Translink for the improvement of local bus transportation. The Consumer Advocate for HandyDART regularly attends the Network's meetings and offers information sessions in the community. RMSS is working to expand the number of users of its volunteer transportation service.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Provide input into regional transit issues
Form a local, transportation advisory committee to represent the needs of Ridge Meadows residents to Translink and the provincial government.
Reliability and frequency
Advocate to Translink to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate and appropriate bus connections, specific to age-friendly travel destinations (medical appointments/ hospital visits etc.); • Service is reliable and frequent to meet the needs of age- friendly demands (afterhours access to metropolitan areas for medical appointments) • Adequate weekend and evening service
3. Specialized Services
Advocate to HandyDART to improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance booking system (one time appointments) • Providing reliable and adequate service for specialist appointments that fall within and outside regular scheduled time frames and service locations (Pitt Meadows/ Maple Ridge to Mission/ Abbotsford area) • Decrease denial rate • Security of transfer points, specifically in rural areas.
1. Transport Stops and Stations
Ensure all bus stops are accessible and provide shelter and adequate seating and washrooms.
2. Information
Advocate to Translink to ensure bus schedules are easily accessible either in print format or electronically and provides adequate details.
3. Taxis
Offer education and sensitivity training to local taxi companies pertaining to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting older adults • Accessibility and affordability of services • Safety
4. Parking
Review accessible parking design with city engineering, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to buildings

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Width of parking stalls• Time limits
Create more: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drop off zones in front of public buildings• Drop off zones in front of medical (service agency) buildings• Free, long-term, downtown parking
Establish an inventory of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current accessible parking within the core town• Need for additional accessible parking
5. Ridership Education
Provide local ridership education, specific to age-friendly access to public transit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scooter, wheelchair and walker access on public transit, Compass card (payment format), etc.



*Age-friendly Solutions Workshop – Maple Ridge
Photo by Heather Treleven*

Housing

Do older persons have housing that is safe and affordable and which allows them to stay independent as their needs change?

Community Strengths

Residents benefit from the location of many health and social services in the downtown core. Three non-profit housing societies operate affordable, seniors' rental accommodation (Baptist Housing, Affordable Housing Society, Royal Canadian Legion). A significant amount of new, multi-unit housing stock is being built in the downtown core which provides the opportunity for the addition of some subsidized units.

Current Initiatives

The Seniors Housing Task Group of the Seniors Network has held several community events to raise awareness about the need for new, affordable, senior's rental housing. The group continues to build relationships and research how to move forward with this initiative. The Maple Ridge Housing Action Plan includes some positive recommendations that will also hopefully help to improve the amount of affordable, seniors', rental housing.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Affordability
Advocate to the provincial government to increase the local stock of affordable rental housing for the seniors' population.
Advocate to the provincial government to increase the 'SAFER' subsidy available through BC Housing for the senior population with lower income.
Advocate to the provincial government to reinstate co-op subsidies (this topic was discussed and voted on at the 2015 UBCM).
2. Accessibility
Form a Seniors Housing Coalition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • represent the needs of local seniors • conduct a needs assessment • develop strategic partnerships to encourage the development of new, affordable, rental accommodation for older adults
3. Design
Develop and endorse a bylaw specific to accessible housing in new multi-level building applications. Include a higher standard of the basic building code to ensure that accessibility modifications are implemented and easily achieved.
Work with City government (planning department) to ensure that rental and affordable units are adequate in size.
4. Community Integration
Develop a program for peer relationship – seniors visiting seniors (to combat isolation and improve security)
In partnership with Ridge Meadows Seniors Society and RCMP, develop a senior neighbourhood watch program.
5. Living Environment
Educate building managers of seniors' housing complexes and rental units, on the importance of developing a pet-friendly policy allowing seniors to age in place with pets.

6. Housing Action Plan

Implement all recommendations as outlined in the City endorsed Housing Action Plan as it relates to the seniors' population.

7. Building Incentives

Encourage the development of affordable housing by waiving development cost charges, applying inclusionary zoning and density bonuses and other methods.

8. Housing Referral

Develop a seniors housing referral service to:

- Keep an up-to-date database of all affordable and accessible housing available within the community,
- Assist and advocate for seniors who are needing support in locating and accessing affordable housing (filing of appropriate documents and applications etc.)



*Age-friendly Solutions Workshop – Maple Ridge
Photos by Heather Treleven*

Respect & Social Inclusion

Are public services, media, commercial services, faith communities and civic society respectful of the diversity of needs among seniors and willing to accommodate seniors in all aspects of society?

Community Strengths

Several age-friendly initiative participants expressed appreciation for the residents of the area, noting that overall people are courteous, helpful and kind. Particular mention was made of the youth population and how respectful and helpful they can be toward seniors.

Current Initiatives

Homeless Action Week activities provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the needs and compassion for the local homeless population. Awareness of the annual Seniors Week celebration continues to grow as does the number of groups who offer events and programming during the week.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Respectful and Inclusive Services
Create an age-friendly business recognition award and age-friendly business accreditation process.
Develop a business related sensitivity training program specific to supporting and serving older adults.
2. Intergenerational and Family Interactions
Engage seniors with a variety of local youth and children through intergenerational learning opportunities (tapping into the knowledge of seniors and sharing experiences):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School reading buddies • School art buddies • Community festivals and events
Create opportunities for the local seniors to engage with young mom's:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community kitchens • Seniors helping young mom's (mentoring programs)
3. Public Education
Work with local post-secondary and continuing education facilities to develop age-friendly learning opportunities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free or low cost
4. Economic Inclusion
Promote the availability of subsidized recreation fees for low-income seniors.

Social Participation

Do seniors have opportunities for developing and maintaining meaningful social networks in their neighbourhoods?

Are the needs and preferences of seniors considered in planning by a diverse range of agencies and institutions?

Community Strengths

During the community engagement process many older adults expressed appreciation for the quality and variety of activities and programs offered by the Ridge Meadows Seniors Society. Although the membership fees are quite low, some still find the cost to participate in programming at the Seniors Centre and Leisure Centre prohibitive.

Current Initiatives

The Community Dinner offered by Golden Ears United Church and Community Kitchens operated by Golden Ears FEAST provide an opportunity for isolated, older adults to connect with community. The Grand Buddies program at Eric Langton Elementary school is growing and connecting more at-risk students with senior mentors (Grand Buddies).

Recommendations and Actions
1. Accessibility of Events and Activities
Educate event organizers on the importance of planning age- friendly events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate and accessible washroom facilities, event seating and accessible transportation and walkways etc.
2. Affordability
Work in partnership with the Ridge Meadows Seniors Society and Parks and Leisure Services, exploring and planning social opportunities for seniors with lower income.
Offer affordable recreational activities for low-income seniors.
3. Leisure and Recreation
Connect RMSS and Parks and Leisure Services to ensure the leisure and recreation needs of all seniors (and more specifically the newly retired seniors 55+) are being met (evening and weekend programming): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, social, mental, emotional wellbeing • Outreach to senior populations • Senior specific programming • Senior specific inclusion marketing
Educate Parks and Leisure staff on the importance for planning, programming, implementing and working with the seniors' population.

Communication & Information

Are seniors aware of the diverse range of programs and services available within their community?

Is information readily available, appropriately designed and delivered to meet the needs of seniors?

Community Strengths

Maple Ridge benefits from two community-minded newspapers and a monthly magazine all of which generously support seniors' service organizations. The City of Maple Ridge operates an electronic reader board with event information. Council meetings are live streamed and televised and social media employed to share information.

Current Initiatives

RMSS continues to improve its print and online publications and information resources. The Seniors Network is preparing to print the fourth edition of its Seniors Resource Guide which helps connect seniors to community programs and resources.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Oral Communication
Offer a local resource and referral information line (live and/or answering service): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government agencies and services • Local housing • Local social and special events information
2. Printed Information
Review and evaluate distribution of print material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meals on Wheels • Library program (home delivery) • Kiosk information (events, programs, services) • Information sheets/resources available at frequently visited locations (Doctor Offices/ pharmacists etc.)
3. Automated Communication and Equipment
Evaluate the need for FM equipped public meetings rooms to provide individuals with hearing devices the ability to actively participate in discussions.
4. Computers and the Internet
Advocate for City websites to be user-friendly and accessible to people of all abilities.
5. Asset Mapping
Develop a mapping system that will highlight all age-friendly services/opportunities within the community (including but not limited to the following): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of worship • Health Service providers • Shopping centres/grocery stores • Parks and recreational opportunities • Senior Centres

Civic Participation & Employment

Do older persons have opportunities to participate in community decision-making?

Do older persons have opportunities to contribute their experience and skills to the community in paid or unpaid work?

Community Strengths

The City of Maple Ridge invites community engagement through its Municipal Advisory Committees. The broadcast of Council meetings and availability of information through social media was acknowledged. The proportion of residents, particularly older adults, who support their community through volunteer activities is very high.

Current Initiatives

Through the Age-friendly Communities Initiative connections between Work BC and the seniors' population were improved and will lead to future information sessions and the promotion of the availability of older adult workers to employers. RMSS and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services continue to try and recruit younger senior volunteers to assist with their programs.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Volunteering Options
Host a volunteer fair specific to the senior population wishing to volunteer.
2. Employment Options
Develop and promote employment opportunities for older adults.
3. Civic Participation
Create a Seniors Advisory Committee that reports directly to the local government on senior-related city, provincial, and federal issues.



Community Support & Health Services

Do older persons have access to social and health services they need to stay healthy and independent?

Community Strengths

The Ridge Meadows Division of Family Practice has been very successful at recruiting new GPs (doctors) to open practices in the area. The majority of survey participants (97% in Maple Ridge) have a family doctor. Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services operates the Better at Home program which provides home support services for seniors on a sliding scale based on income. It is possible for very low-income seniors to receive services under this program. The Golden Seniors Wellness Clinic operated by RMSS at the Maple Ridge Seniors Centre is a tremendous asset.

Current Initiatives

The Seniors Network is advocating for the creation of a seniors clinic in Ridge Meadows similar to those offered by Fraser Health in Abbotsford and Surrey. It would be a one-stop clinic that offered GP offices as well as a pharmacy, social workers, connection to community programs, etc. The need for a dedicated Seniors Outreach Worker has been identified and the Seniors Network is coordinating efforts to establish funding for the position.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Service Accessibility
See Transportation – ensure adequate availability of transportation to specialist appointments within and outside of the community.
Build an open seniors clinic with multiple services available in one location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD • Pharmacists • Home care • Social work • Physiotherapy • Occupational therapy • Mental health (information and assessments) • Day programs • Dental services
Explore alternatives to pay parking for seniors and/or all users of the medical services.
2. Offer of Services
Offer adult respite services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in adult day programming options • Increase respite hours available to older adults who continue to live independently (aging in place)
Explore funding opportunities to create and support a ‘Dementia-Friendly Communities Project’
Hire a ‘Seniors Outreach Worker’ to assist seniors with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System navigation • Hospital discharge planning and follow-through • Isolation intervention including light to moderate shopping and housework etc.
Support building managers of seniors rental complexes:

- Connect residents to home support programs and services
- Provide assistance with obtaining mental health assessments

3. Dental Options

Work with the BC Dental Association and local dentists, to advocate for affordable dental services for low-income seniors:

- Reinstate Community Dental Day – once a year event where low-income residents can receive a free dental check-up and cleaning
- Advocate for the creation of a local, low-cost dental clinic



Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster are adequate plans and procedures in place to care for our older adults? – (This category was developed by the local Age-friendly Advisory Committee to respond to local concerns).

Community Strengths

The RMSS Wellness Clinic offers a free information session to older adult groups on how to prepare for an unexpected hospital visit. The Maple Ridge Fire Department promotes fire safety and the need for working smoke detectors. In the event of a major fire, the community is very generous and supportive of its fellow residents.

Current Initiatives:

The recent apartment fire in Maple Ridge has raised awareness in the community of the need for emergency preparedness plans to support vulnerable populations. The Seniors Network has applied for funding through the New Horizons for Seniors Program to create an Emergency Preparedness book for seniors. Funding approval is pending.

Recommendations and Actions
1. Community Emergency Preparedness
Establish an seniors' emergency preparedness protocol including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping location of vulnerable residents • Developing evacuation procedures/protocol • Sheltering protocol for vulnerable residents • Attending to medical needs of vulnerable residents
2. Senior Specific Emergency Preparedness
Offer education to vulnerable populations regarding importance of emergency preparedness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of fire hall regarding physical evacuation needs • 72 hours self-sufficient preparedness • How to communicate in a major emergency • Education regarding earthquake and fire preparedness • Pet preparedness

Next Steps

Develop and Publish an Age-friendly Action Plan

The Age-friendly Assessment Report provides an overview of the assets, barriers and strengths of Maple Ridge with regards to encouraging quality of life for its older adults. The key priorities and outcomes outlined in this report can be further developed into an Action Plan with goals, objectives, timing, lead agencies, funding and other resources and target measures.

Once an Action Plan has been approved by Council, application can be made for Age-friendly BC Recognition for the respective city. Recognition applications are accepted throughout the year and awards are made once a year.

Engage Lead Agencies

Many local service agencies and organizations participated in the Age-friendly Communities Initiative. Their participation has been integral to the depth and breadth of recommendations that have been generated by the project. Going forward the participation of these organizations will be essential to the success of implementing solutions and moving forward as age-friendly communities.

Conduct Annual Action Planning

Annual Action Planning will ensure that the Age-friendly Action Plan continues to be a living process and, most importantly, that it creates on-the-ground action and results. Those involved in the action planning should review the results of past actions, evaluate the most recent performance data, assess local and regional opportunities, and present a recommended set of actions for the following year. Ongoing communication and collaboration between community and service providers is essential to this process to ensure service gaps are identified and agencies work collaboratively to avoid duplication and create new programs and services where required.



References

Age-friendly British Columbia: Lessons Learned, 2010, by Elaine Gallagher and Angie Mallhi submitted by Gerotech Research Associates to the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, Ministry of Health Services

Becoming an Age-friendly Community: Local Government Guide, 2011, Seniors Healthy Living Secretariat, BC Ministry of Health

Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide, 2007, World Health Organization

Maple Ridge Housing Action Plan: mapleridge.ca/246/Housing-Action-Plan

My Health, My Community Report, 2014, Fraser Health: myhealthmycommunity.org

Seniors Vulnerability Report, 2011, United Way of the Lower Mainland

Plan and Design for Choice: Universal Design Guidelines for Outdoor Spaces, pittmeadows.bc.ca/assets/Planning/pdfs/accessibility_guide09.pdf



Appendices

A. Age-friendly Communities Initiative Participants

Affordable Housing Society	Katzie First Nation Elders
Agency for Cooperative Housing	Maple Ridge City Council
Alzheimer Society of BC	Maple Ridge Group for the Visually Impaired
Baptist Housing	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Community Services
BC Federation of Housing Co-ops, Aging in Place Committee	Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie, Seniors Network
BC Non Profit Housing Association	Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Parks and Leisure Services and Neighbourhood Development
Begin Again Widow's Support Group	Maple Ridge Towers Residents
Chartwell Willow Retirement Community	Ministry of Health
CEED Centre Society	MLA Doug Bing
City of Maple Ridge: Engineering, Bylaws, Communications, Operations, Transportation, Social Planning	City Advisory Committee on Accessibility Issues
Coast Mountain Bus, HandyDART Consumer Advocate	Parkinson's Society of BC
Comfort Keepers	Raging Grannies
Downtown Maple Ridge Business Improvement Association	Red Hat Society, Ridge Meadows Chapter
Fraser Health (Bailey House, Built Environment, Fall & Injury Prevention, Home Health, Ridge Meadows Hospital, Nurse Practitioners, Public Health)	Ridge Meadows Community Network
Fraser River All Nations Aboriginal Society	Ridge Meadows Division of Family Practice
Golden Ears FEAST	Ridge Meadows Hospice Society
Golden Seniors Wellness Clinic, Ridge Meadows Seniors Society	Ridge Meadows Seniors Society
Haney Farmer's Market Society	Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 88, Housing Committee
HUB Cycling Committee	Senior Citizens Association of BC, Branch 149
Immigrant Services Society	Seniors Helping Seniors, Ridge Meadows Seniors Society
	Work BC

B. Detailed Survey Results – Maple Ridge

Age Range:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
40-54		17.0%	8
55-60		12.8%	6
61-69		17.0%	8
70-79		19.1%	9
80-89		23.4%	11
90 +		10.6%	5
		Total Responses	47

Gender:

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Male		30.4%	14
Female		69.6%	32
		Total Responses	46
		Total Responses	47

What is it like for you to live in Maple Ridge? Please comment below:

- Majority of respondent’s stated that Maple Ridge is a great community with wonderful access to parks, green space, community events and services, including Ridge Meadows Seniors Services.
- Some residents expressed concerns with lack of public and private transportation options, neighbourhood safety (including affordable housing options for the soon to be or homelessness population), and the lack of local shopping within walking distance.

2. Are local parks and walking trails accessible to you?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		51.1%	23
No		22.2%	10
Comment:		26.7%	12
		Total Responses	45

- Main barrier to accessing parks and walking trails is the lack of public transportation outside of the core area and in some cases the costs to camping within the provincial park.
- Some respondents mentioned personal access issues for individuals with walking and mobility impairments and feelings of personal insecurities (personal safety).

3. Do you find it easy to access buildings, such as public offices or stores?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		78.3%	36
No		4.3%	2
Comment:		17.4%	8
		Total Responses	46

- Most respondents mentioned the lack of accessible parking within the downtown core area, with some mentioning difficulties accessing specific buildings with stairs and steps.

4. Do you feel safe in your community?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		64.4%	29
No		4.4%	2
If not, why not?		31.1%	14
		Total Responses	45

- Many respondents mentioned feeling unsafe within the downtown core area after dark (lack of policing resources, increased homelessness etc.), and unsafe pedestrian crossings.


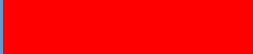
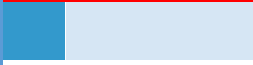
5. Do you use public or community transportation?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		17.8%	8
No		24.4%	11
If not, why not?		57.8%	26
		Total Responses	45

- The majority of respondents stated that they are still driving and have reliable access to a private car.
- The main reason for not using public or community transportation is:
 - Unreliable;
 - Inconvenient;




- Lack of public transit (rural areas);
- Takes too long to get to destination.

6. Are there places you would like to go/need to go that you cannot get to?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		9.1%	4
No		72.7%	32
Comment:		18.2%	8
		Total Responses	44




- Some respondents mentioned that they avoid going out due to unreliable HandyDART drop off and pick-ups.
- One respondent mentioned that she would like to see more evening opportunities for seniors to be active – currently all opportunities happen during the day.

7. Are you happy where you live now?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		73.3%	33
No		0.0%	0
Comment:		26.7%	12
		Total Responses	45



- Majority of residents stated they like where they live. However many noted most of their income, pension is being directed to their rent and living expenses.

8. If your needs change, do you have choices for housing in the community?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		46.7%	21
No		20.0%	9
Comment:		33.3%	15
		Total Responses	45

- Majority of residents mentioned that if they had to find new housing that they would not be able to due to high rent (low-income seniors)
- Some residents mentioned that there is need for rental properties that are pet friendly (dogs and cats)

9. Do you have a family doctor?




Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		97.8%	45
No		2.2%	1
		Total Responses	46

10. Tell us about your experience with the health and social services locally?

A variety of comments were record:




- Some respondents stated that the services are good, accessible and appropriate if you are connected to the systems through a GP
- Some respondents do not feel supported within the Health Care system, having to access services outside of the community (specifically - supported public housing – living last several months or years outside of the community)

11. Does your community show respect for you as an older person?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		79.5%	35
No		6.8%	3
Comment:		13.6%	6
		Total Responses	44

- Most respondents stated most of the time they feel respected. Several noted that at other times, 'people are people'.

12. Is it easy to socialize in your community?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		68.9%	31
No		17.8%	8
Comment:		13.3%	6
		Total Responses	45

- Some respondents believe that Maple Ridge is a social place, especially considering all the special events, and public community centres (library, community centres RMSS etc.)
- Some respondents find it difficult to socialize and make new friends due to negative past social and emotional experiences.

13. Do you have difficulty getting information about events and services?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		11.1%	5
No		77.8%	35
Comment:		11.1%	5
		Total Responses	45

- Some respondents stated community and agency based information is readily available on-line and easily accessible if you are computer literate.
- Others mentioned turning to the local newspapers and library
- Some residents do find it difficult for they are not able to access internet information and find that too much communication/marketing is done on-line only.

14. Do you volunteer?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		43.5%	20
No		45.7%	21
Comment:		10.9%	5
		Total Responses	46

- Many responding reported they are not able to volunteer due to varying abilities.

Are you working or looking for paid-work?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		29.3%	12
No		58.5%	24
Comment:		12.2%	5
		Total Responses	41

- Most responding stated they are not actively working or looking for work as they are retired.




15. Do you participate in City committees?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		22.7%	10

No		54.5%	24
If not, why not?		22.7%	10
		Total Responses	44

- Many responding stated they do not participate in municipal committees due to the timing of the meetings and feeling unsafe being out after dark.

16. Do you think City planning processes consider the needs of seniors?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		34.1%	15
No		34.1%	15
Comment:		31.8%	14
		Total Responses	44

- Many residents believe city planning does consider some senior needs but more can be done to consult seniors early in the planning process (safety, public washroom access, pedestrian safety, etc.)
- Some residents also stated they feel seniors' needs are only highlighted during election time and then the issues are lost.

17. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

- I love Maple Ridge and the consideration they give to SENIORS, my only complaint, is the state of the sidewalks, DEPLORABLE and TERRIBLY UNSAFE.
- Great work by all involved in making this age-friendly initiative happen
- In view of the recent warm/hot weather, I hope future planning will allow for more trees to be added in civic areas. I miss the trees near the municipal buildings ...taken out to make way for road improvements. Addition of more shade trees and benches (especially for seniors to access) would be helpful.
- Adequate affordable housing for seniors is lacking.
- I see that many seniors in my local community are out and about walking and accessing local stores etc. I would just like to ensure safety of these vulnerable people so that they can continue to enjoy their community independently as long as possible. More lighting, safer streets and well-marked crosswalks are all steps to ensure their safety (especially along 224th street).
- I worry about crime in Maple Ridge and the amount of policing. If I were an elderly person living downtown (and I believe most do) then I would be concerned about the amount of homelessness and drug users in downtown Maple Ridge.

- Maple Ridge is a beautiful community, it is noticeably without parks where children can play, people can socialize and walk their dogs, sit, read, etc. Maple Ridge is rapidly expanding, people are moving in resulting in road development that is unable to keep up with the increased traffic. New housing is on the outskirts resulting in urban sprawl, increased traffic and construction. This construction is negative to the natural beauty and rural feel of Maple Ridge. I suspect the only people benefiting from this fast paced and ill-planned development is developers and realtors. Perhaps the taxes are increasing for the city but with the increased commuting this money comes with a damaging price for the environment. Maple Ridge is becoming a bedroom community and losing the feel of the small town inclusiveness, this saddens me.
- Maple Ridge used to be a nice quiet place to live. Now it is like living in the city. I don't like it. It is too busy, too much traffic and not enough places to swim and go camping.
- Try engaging with local youth on a regular basis as they enjoy supporting and working with seniors.
- Fix the homeless problem.
- It seems to me that the City would prefer it if businesses could proceed with out and community input.
- A small park with water feature, flowers, winding paths, benches for conversation, well-lit for seniors.
- More small stores in seniors' communities.
- Lower land taxes.
- More shopping - big box stores.
- Need more handicapped parking.
- Too far to walk - need more than one seniors centre.
- New buildings are more for families –i.e. condos - not for seniors.