

LANGFORD AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN



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Message from the Mayor



The City of Langford is excited to be a part of the BC Ministry of Health's Age-Friendly Community Planning and Projects program, a component of the World Health Organization's Active Aging Policy Framework. It is essential to consider the needs of our aging population in order to ensure their needs can be met locally and that they can continue to make valued contributions to our community.

I would like to thank the Province of British Columbia for supporting this project, the many community members and stakeholders that took the time to participate in our process, and the Ad-Hoc Committee members, staff and consultants that contributed to the creation of this plan. The combined efforts of all participants have provided valuable insight into our community that Langford's Council will utilize moving forward. I am very proud of all of the growth and improvements that have occurred in recent years to make Langford a more accessible and inclusive place to live, work and play for all of our residents. I am committed to continuing to support growth, improvements to our parks and public spaces, and the creation of additional public amenities and programming that will improve opportunities for residents to age successfully within our community and maintain engaged, active, and fulfilled lifestyles.

Introduction

In 2014, the City of Langford was selected by the Union of BC Municipalities as one of twenty-six communities to receive funding from the BC Ministry of Health from their Age-Friendly Community Planning and Projects grant program to develop an Age-friendly Langford Action Plan. The initiative is part of a worldwide project directed by the World Health Organization to address the environmental and social factors that contribute to healthy, active aging in urban and rural settings. The original initiative included thirty-three partner cities including Rio de Janeiro, Cancun, Nairobi, Moscow, New Delhi, Tokyo and Saanich, British Columbia. Each partner city consulted with older persons, community leaders and gerontology experts to identify the major physical and social barriers to active aging. This knowledge has been used to identify concrete age-friendly indicators and to produce a practical tool to guide advocacy, community development and policy changes to support an age-friendly environment. Information was gathered in relation to adults over the age of fifty-five on the existing conditions of Langford through the eyes and experiences of seniors in our community.

The broad questions we asked our seniors were:

1. What are the age-friendly features of Langford?
2. What are the gaps and barriers that seniors encounter?
3. What is missing from the city that would enhance their health, participation, security, and quality of life?



Goldstream Fountain

What is an Age-Friendly City?



Goldstream Station Market

The World Health Organization (WHO) released a Policy Framework on Active Aging in 2002, to support communities in developing and strengthening health and social policies in an aging world. Active aging policy is defined as “optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.” This policy framework recognizes that older people face increasing challenges due to the sensory, physiological and other changes that age brings. The Global Age-Friendly Cities Project, and in part by the federal Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is an attempt to make communities around the world better places to live for the aging population.

In order to achieve our age-friendly goal, the material gathered from the needs based assessment and questionnaire will be used to develop recommendations for eight strategic focus areas identified by the World Health Organization:

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Respect & Social Inclusion
6. Communication & Information
7. Civic Participation & Employment
8. Community Support & Health Services

Langford Demographics

The City of Langford is a bustling community nestled in the foothills of Mount Finlayson located on southern Vancouver Island in the province of British Columbia. Langford is one of the thirteen component municipalities of the Capital Regional District and is the urban core of the West Shore. With a population of 33,000 (est. 2014), Langford is expected to continue growing at a rapid rate and is predicted to reach over 42,000 by 2026.

Today in Langford, 22% of the population is over the age of 55. With the baby boomers beginning to retire, this percentage is expected to increase in the coming years.

Demographic Information of Adults Over the Age of 55 in Langford*

Age	Langford	
	Persons	Percent
55 to 64 years	3440	11.8%
65 to 74 years	1710	5.8%
75 to 84 years	875	3%
85 years and over	440	1.5%
Total over 55 years	6465	22.1%
Total Overall Population	29228	

*Demographic Information available from Census 2011 data

Public Consultation Process

The public consultation process began in July of 2014 with the creation of an in-depth questionnaire covering the eight strategic focus areas identified by the World Health Organization. In addition to the questionnaire that was offered in both digital and physical form, the City of Langford gained input regarding age-friendly topics at the Parks and Recreation Open House, held two dedicated Age-Friendly Action Plan Open House events as well as one focus group session that gave community members and stakeholders an opportunity to speak to those involved in the project. The Open House events allowed participants to provide additional information by identifying concerns on poster boards. Public consultation was sought by personal invitations, newspaper advertisements, posters, and notification on the City of Langford's website.

After the information was gathered, the responses were quantified and analyzed by a team of researchers from the University of Victoria's Centre on Aging. This report is a result of the input provided by more than 200 individuals who chose to take part in our public consultation process.

Who responded?

Respondents	Percent
Under 50 years	11.6%
50 - 65 years	48.3%
66 – 75 years	27.3%
Over 75 years	12.8%

Employment Status	Percent
Retired	48.3%
Semi-Retired	8.5%
Working	37.5%
No Response	5.7%

The public consultation process focused on the following eight key topic areas that were identified and defined by the World Health Organization:

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- Environment is pleasant and clean
- Green spaces are of high importance
- Adequate places for people to rest
- Pavement is age-friendly
- Pedestrian crossings are safe
- Environment is safe and secure
- Accessible walkways and cycle paths
- Buildings are age-friendly
- Sufficient public washrooms
- Buildings and spaces have good accessibility

2. Transportation

- Public transport is available and affordable
- Service is reliable and frequent
- Travel destinations are aligned with destinations of choice
- Vehicles are equipped with age-friendly features like priority seating
- Specialized service for those who cannot use public transit
- Transit is safe and comfortable
- Transit stops and stations are age-friendly
- Taxis are easily accessible
- Community transport services are available
- Information on transit options is available
- Priority parking opportunities for elderly and handicapped people

3. Housing

- Affordable housing options available
- Assisted living options available
- Homes designed with older people in mind
- Home modification options are available
- Home services are accessible and affordable
- Maintenance services are available and affordable
- A range of housing options available, providing sufficient space and privacy

4. Social Participation

- Community events are accessible and affordable
- Wide spectrum of activities that appeal to a range of interests
- Events are adequately promoted to elderly
- Community and family connections are made
- Participation is encouraged, especially for isolated individuals
- Efforts are made to integrate generations, cultures, and communities

5. Respect & Social Inclusion

- Address disrespect shown to older people
- Provide opportunities for intergenerational interactions and public education
- Ensure older people have a place within the community
- Ensure the community is helpful towards older people (inclusive communities)
- Ensure there is a place in the family for older people
- Ensure low-income seniors are considered and included in the community

6. Communication & Information

- Widespread distribution of information
- Get the right information to seniors at the right time
- Ensure seniors are able to speak to someone, not just a recording
- Take older people into account when formatting and designing resource material
- Provide technology training and public access computers
- Ensure communication barriers are addressed

7. Civic Participation & Employment

- Provide volunteer options for seniors
- Provide a range of employment opportunities
- Encourage workplaces and volunteer organizations to be flexible in accommodating older workers
- Encourage civic participation
- Provide adequate training
- Create more entrepreneurial opportunities
- Value older people for their contributions in the workplace and society

8. Community Support & Health Services

- Accessible health services
- A wider range of health services available
- Encourage volunteering activities that help seniors
- Wider range of home support and care services
- Residential facilities for people unable to live at home
- Network of community social services

Information taken from Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Lack of public washrooms and rest spots in parks, beaches, and recreational areas
- Inadequate amount of parking in close proximity to buildings
- Need for increased lighting and signage in outdoor areas and parks
- Pathways need to be more accessible for wheelchairs and assisted walking devices
- More pet-friendly areas

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- 26km of new sidewalk added over the previous five years
- 32km of new bike lanes added over the previous five years
- 25km of other trails added over the previous five years
- Multi-use trail standard in all new parks uses highly compacted gravel to allow for better accessibility by wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers
- Glen Lake park off-leash dog exercise area and swimming beach
- Nine-station outdoor exercise circuit installed at City Centre Park
- Three new public washroom facilities built in the last two years, as well as upgrades to Centennial Park washrooms. All of these are fully wheelchair accessible
- Legacy Donation program allows the public to donate outdoor infrastructure, including benches and picnic tables as well as memorial trees in memory of loved ones.

Recommendations for the future...

- Develop and activate locations that would be appropriate for off-leash or fully fenced dog parks, specifically Danbrook Park and Willing Park
- Complete asset inventory to prioritize new features in our parks
- Create a smartphone app that displays the different parks, trails, and amenities available throughout Langford
- Build public washrooms in all new destination style parks
- Improve signing and lighting as appropriate



Langford Lake boardwalk

2. Transportation

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Improve and extend pedestrian connections, especially outside of the central core
- Perception about inadequate amounts of time allocated at cross walks for people to cross safely
- Improve bus service throughout the community
- Biking is difficult due to lack of bike lanes and hilly terrain
- Many consider the roads to be too unsafe to consider biking due to narrow lanes, speeding traffic, and distracted drivers

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- BC Transit service extension to the Bear Mountain and Westhills communities starting January 2015
- Millstream Road bike lane grant project has improved bicycle safety along this corridor
- Langford Trolley provides service to major commercial and community amenities
- West Shore RCMP Bicycle Rodeos promote bicycle safety and awareness
- Provision of bike parking is mandatory in commercial areas
- Scooter Rodeo is hosted at the Alexander Mackie
- Fifteen sheltered bus stops installed along major roadways
- Free bike rentals for Langford residents at City Centre Park
- Free public parking throughout the community
- West Shore RCMP community lectures on Scooter Safety for Seniors
- New bike shelters installed at Park & Ride on Veterans Memorial Parkway

Recommendations for the future...

- Work with the West Shore RCMP to create a stronger police presence on the roads to diminish driver violations that create an unsafe biking environment
- Conduct a sidewalk gap analysis to determine where new and upgraded sidewalks should be prioritized
- Consider adding audible signals and crosswalk countdowns in pedestrian corridors
- Offer a scooter safety seminar at City Centre Park
- Create a crosswalk information document that explains allocated times for crosswalks and safety tips
- Continue to lobby BC Transit to increase bus frequency as the community grows
- Continue to create bike lanes with increased width in areas of hilly terrain
- Bridge the gap between off-road commute ways (ex. Galloping Goose Trail) by creating separated bike and trail linkages throughout the community



Galloping Goose Trail

3. Housing

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Need various housing options in close proximity to shops and health services and close to transit options
- Focus needs to be on affordability
- Lack of single level, single family homes
- Ensure housing options are safe as well as physically accessible or adaptable

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- West Shore RCMP “Keep in Touch” Program (KIT) – A free program to establish daily contact with seniors who are living alone and/or may have medical conditions. Each day a volunteer phones the client at a scheduled time to check their welfare
- Basement suites permitted throughout most of Langford and detached “carriage house” suites allowed in certain zones to better facilitate elderly people living with in-laws
- Zoning bylaw includes several zones that permit mixed-use buildings that incorporate both commercial and residential uses
- Langford’s affordable housing program currently includes eight condos and forty-one single-family homes
- Kettle Creek development offers small detached homes with no stairs or strata fees

Recommendations for the future...

- Direct funds from the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund to strategic projects in Langford
- Create amenity reduction incentives to facilitate the creation of seniors housing and assisted living facilities
- Encourage new developments to include more rancher style homes in all residential zones
- Alter the Green Development checklist to include points for the inclusion of adaptable housing, seniors housing, and rancher style homes within new developments
- Implement a ten year tax holiday for new seniors housing
- Continue to allow flexibility in housing types
- Continue development cost charge reductions for new rental apartment housing and consider inserting additional reductions for seniors housing



Goldstream Station

4. Social Participation

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Desire for more cooking and art classes in the community
- Library or recreation centre to offer a book club program
- Need for more fitness classes and running groups
- Continual development of hiking trails and green spaces

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- North Langford Adventure Centre will provide residents with new recreation facilities, including clay tennis courts, biking trails, and an outdoor pool
- Music in the Park festival held at Veterans Memorial Park
- Model Boat Club and Fishing Derby held at Langford Lake
- Goldstream Station Market held once a week between May and October
- New YMCA/YWCA will offer a wide variety of programs and classes once completed in the Fall of 2015
- Luxton Pro Rodeo held every Victoria Day long weekend
- Show +Shine car shows
- Isabell Reader Theatre at Spencer Middle School

Recommendations for the future...

- Collaborate and facilitate meetings with YMCA/YWCA and City Centre Park to create valuable programming that reflects the needs of seniors
- Create a seniors centre to incorporate more services, similar to the seniors centre at Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre
- Continue to develop accessible hiking trails and green spaces
- Expand the Goldstream Station Market to twice a week, and explore options that would allow the market to run year-round, such as within tents or an indoor venue
- Better utilize the City Centre Park facilities to offer more programs and community events, like movie nights
- Explore opportunities for additional festivals and public gatherings
- Continue looking for locations suitable for an arts and cultural centre



Goldstream Station Market

5. Respect & Social Inclusion

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Can be difficult for people new to the community to make friends
- Society is youth-oriented with fewer events catering to the elderly
- Interest for engaging activities that create intergenerational connections

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- Public art celebrating intergenerational relationships in our community at Veterans Memorial Park
- Parks Department to plant 1000 red poppies in Veterans Memorial Park in celebration of Veterans
- Published a book to celebrate the history of Langford
- Upgrades to parks to encourage intergenerational use
- Royal Canadian Legion – Langford Branch

Recommendations for the future...

- Collaborate with YMCA/YWCA and City Centre Park to create valuable programming that reflects the needs of seniors
- Create a seniors centre and programming, similar to the seniors centre at Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre
- Consider creating an annual Seniors Award that recognizes seniors that provide excellent community service and contributions to our community
- Encourage local schools to introduce intergenerational activities between students and seniors, as well to include seniors in events that were previously oriented towards children, such as the Earth Day banner painting event
- Encourage the creation of a newcomers club through YMCA/YWCA or City Centre Park
- Create a Seniors Day Celebration
- Encourage more non-profit organizations to establish in the City of Langford



Cops for Cancer Event

6. Communication & Information

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Information not considered to be readily available to meet the needs of the aging population
- Not all seniors use the internet making it more difficult for them to find out about events

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- Accessible City website that allows text size to be increased, allowing for easier reading for those with impaired eyesight
- Community information kiosks are located at Centennial Park, City Centre Park, Langford Lake Beach Park, Glen Lake Beach Park, Veteran’s Memorial Park, Westhills Park, Bear Mountain Village, Bryn Maur Road, Peatt and Goldstream Avenue, Sooke Road and Jacklin Road, Fire Hall No. 2, and Fire Hall No. 3.
- Community events calendar posted on the City of Langford’s website is frequently updated
- Advertise community events in the Goldstream Gazette and other print outlets for those who do not rely on the internet for information
- City Hall reception area was redesigned in a way that provides better customer service

Recommendations for the future...

- Continue to advertise local events and information in local newspapers, as it is the most popular source of information
- Create a program guide to send out seasonally via mail that provides information about programs offered at YMCA/YWCA and City Centre Park
- Create more press releases to improve communication to the public
- Create a City smartphone app that displays information on amenities, parks, trails, upcoming events, and transit
- Implement a seniors community information board at City Centre Park and the YMCA/YWCA
- Utilize kiosks and video boards to display information about community events and programs
- Develop a communications strategy



Parks & Recreation Open House

7. Civic Participation & Employment

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Issue of age discrimination in the workplace and when applying for volunteer positions
- Physiological changes prevent some seniors from working or volunteering
- Some seniors do not like to go out at night and are therefore unable to attend council meetings
- Some believe their opinion isn't valued and therefore do not attend council meetings

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- Seniors comprise many elected or appointed positions on council and a variety of advisory committees
- Accessible Council Chambers with adequate parking allows civic participation by all community members
- Growth of commercial development in the Langford has created many volunteer and employment opportunities for all residents, including seniors
- Advance voting opportunities and a mobile voting booth at Alexander Mackie are available for those with impaired mobility
- City hosts Open Houses and forums that allow the public to take part in the planning process and receive information about different projects being initiated by the city
- Perpetual business licenses allow a one-time only fee to encourage businesses to come and stay in Langford

Recommendations for the future...

- Consider holding quarterly Town Hall meetings to discuss issues and allow the public to interact with City Councillors and ask questions. This event should be held during the day on a weekend to increase the amount of people able to attend
- Continue to encourage commercial development to create additional employment opportunities
- Encourage non-profit organizations to establish in Langford that would generate additional volunteering opportunities



Langford City Hall

8. Community Support & Health Services

Identified Gaps & Barriers

- Poor access to health care professionals and services, including family doctors and specialists, as walk-in clinics do not provide adequate continuation of care
- Need for a wider range of home support and home care services to allow seniors to stay in their homes longer

Projects Currently Underway in Langford...

- New YMCA/YWCA being built will offer a number of programs and facilities that promote good health, including a warm water therapy pool which can be beneficial to those with physical impairments
- Commercial growth has increased floor space available for health services and offices
- United Way Better at Home program offered through the Pacific Centre Family Services Association. The program offers a variety of free non-medical services to seniors in order to allow them to live independently in their homes for longer

Recommendations for the future...

- Companionship program for those confined to their home
- Consider amenity reductions to incentivize specialists to open offices in Langford
- Create a directory of local healthcare professionals with offices in Langford and the surrounding area
- Ensure medical offices are permitted in zones for new commercial developments
- Encourage volunteering activities that benefit seniors



Parks & Recreation Open House

Summary of Findings

1. Social Engagement Leads to Active Lifestyles

Individuals indicated a strong appreciation for being involved in the process of public consultation. They also stated that there was no shortage of local activities and events that offered prospects for social interactions and engagement through participation. The community of Langford was identified as a “home” that residents wanted to remain in as they age.

2. Optimal Outdoor Environments

Improvements to the structure and function of the built environment were the most frequent request. Residents commented that growth was good but challenges such as pedestrian and bicycle safety needed further consideration moving forward. Positive affirmation was given to the creation of additional outdoor spaces, and continued improvements to accessibility standards should be implemented as a greater number of people transition into using devices such as scooters, walkers, or wheelchairs.

3. Transportation and Mobility

As there was a strong desire to utilize alternative modes of transportation, the addition of new and expanded bus routes was appreciated. Additionally, the Trolley was very positively viewed and regularly utilized by respondents. It was acknowledged that building on existing services in small ways can lead the way to progressive changes.

4. Health Care and Professional Services

Access to health care services and professionals was of paramount importance. The largest barrier was that specialist services were either not available or limited within close proximity to Langford. Residents voiced that they did not want to travel outside of the western communities to meet their healthcare needs, and had a strong preference that their community offer a full range of these services.

5. Transitions in Aging and Housing

As people age and experience decreased mobility, their housing needs change. Respondents predominately indicated that they currently lived in their own home, but expected to transition to a residence that did not have stairs or the responsibilities of home and property maintenance in the future. Respondents also stated that they wanted their housing to be affordable and within easy access of amenities, services and transit options.

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