

# ABBOTSFORD AGE-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT REPORT



## Age-Friendly Working Group May 2017



Hub of the **Fraser Valley**

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## INTRODUCTION



Communities in British Columbia and Canada are aging. Along with aging, people are also living longer. This trend brings with it the need to adapt services, recreation, housing, transportation and changes to the the physical environment, to support the continued health and active living for residents of various abilities, and throughout the full spectrum of life.

The population in Abbotsford is 140,000 people (2015). The estimated 2015 older adult population (45 years plus) in Abbotsford is 58,000 people (*StatsCan*) or 41% of the population. Abbotsford's total population is expected to reach 200,000 under a medium growth scenario by approximately 2040 (1.5% per year) (2016, *Abbotsford's Official Community Plan*). Abbotsford is a growing community, with expectations of continued growth for both young families and seniors . Many members of this older cohort will need extra care and support. This anticipated shift demands plans and initiatives that address the specific needs of the older population, support inter-generational connections, and continue to work towards a community that meets their needs, so all residents can be healthy throughout the life span.

In response to these trends, Abbotsford City Council endorsed embarking on an age-friendly strategy that will help Abbotsford meet the needs of its older residents, while providing a physical and social environment that works for all people. Council's corporate *Strategic Plan* (2015-2018) creates a vision for the City that supports diversity, including age, and sets the foundation to build towards Abbotsford being a Complete Community. In October 2014, to confirm Council's commitment towards making Abbotsford an Age-Friendly community, a resolution was passed for Abbotsford to work towards becoming recognized by the Province and BC Healthy Communities as Age-Friendly. An Age-Friendly Abbotsford Work Group was formed to guide the process of community engagement, and work towards plan implementation. The Abbotsford Age-Friendly Work Group is made up of a variety of older adult service providers, along with Fraser Health, many of whom are older adults themselves. Abbotsford Age-Friendly Work Group reports its findings to both the Parks Recreation & Culture Advisory Committee, as well as City of Abbotsford Municipal Council.

## WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

In 2006, the World Health Organization launched the Global Age-Friendly Cities Project with the goal of supporting healthy aging. Cities from around the world that were interested in supporting healthy aging by becoming more age-friendly gathered information from seniors, senior-care providers, and other groups and individuals with an interest in age-friendly communities. This information helped to identify eight key domains of community life in which communities can become more age-friendly.

These domains are:

- 1 OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS**
- 2 TRANSPORTATION**
- 3 HOUSING**
- 4 RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**
- 5 SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**
- 6 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION**
- 7 CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT**
- 8 COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES**

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, four out of 33 cities that took part in the Global Cities Project were Canadian: Saanich (BC), Portage la Prairie (MB), Sherbrooke (QC), and Halifax (NS). A report on the project to help cities was published called: Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide. An age-friendly community is where older adults are supported to live actively, and to be socially engaged. The Province of British Columbia has driven an age-friendly agenda in collaboration with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and BC Healthy Communities since 2007. The City of Abbotsford, alongside many community partners, used the eight domains to guide conversations, and a survey, to create a framework to develop this Abbotsford Age-Friendly Strategy.

## **TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY ABBOTSFORD**

The City of Abbotsford has many initiatives, strategies, programs and partnerships that are age-friendly, that were established before this strategy was created. Recreation centers and community groups have been very active in creating a foundation and legacy of service that this strategy acknowledges and will build upon.

### **The Steps:**

<b>1</b>	<b>Partnered with Fraser Health and invited community stakeholders - Jan 2016</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Review all Existing Policies – Feb 2016</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Terms of Reference, Working Group Established – Feb 2016</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Survey's Created / Focus groups Planned – July 2016</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Community Outreach – August – Nov 2016</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Collate information – Nov 2016</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Develop draft strategy – Dec / Jan 2017</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Present Draft Strategy to Age-Friendly Work Group and Council – April 2017</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Finalizing and publishing the Strategy – April 2017</b>

In order to identify key gaps, opportunities, and directions to inform the strategy, several service provider and stakeholder forums were held to garner the information needed by working with agencies that know the needs of older adults in a meaningful way. Focus groups and outreach sessions were also held throughout the community, including the South Asian community and service providers. Age-Friendly information was included in the leisure guide and newspaper announcements to allow for organizations and the general public to participate as well. The online and in person surveys resulted in over 240 older adults plus 30 representatives of older adult serving organizations who provided information that informed the strategy.

## VISION

The vision of the City is defined through Council's Strategic Plan (2015-2018) and the four cornerstones which supports a Complete Community. Through *Abbotsford's Official Community Plan 2016*, the vision is described as:

*Abbotsford is a city of distinct and increasingly complete neighbourhoods rich with public life. Our compact urban area is anchored by a thriving City Centre and surrounded by remarkable natural areas and flourishing agricultural lands. We are diverse, inclusive, and connected. We are green, prosperous, and healthy. We are a vibrant and beautiful community.*

The Abbotsford Age-Friendly strategy fits within the Strategic Plan and *Abbotsford's Official Community Plan*. Applying an age-friendly lense throughout community planning and strategic planning for both the City and community committees and organizations continues to make sense as the older population grows.

### **The goals of the Age-Friendly Work Group are, that older adults in Abbotsford:**

- Can live healthy and active lives well into their senior years.
- Are valued for their skills and life experiences.
- Participate in the community in ways that they choose.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF ABBOTSFORD**

1. Delivering the vision of the City and the four cornerstones.
2. Advancing the *Official Community Plan* and applying an age-friendly lense.
3. Policy development, master plans and and neighbourhood plans.
4. Partnering with businesses, community organizations, and government agencies.
5. Providing strategic support on selected issues.
6. Providing services. spaces and funding within legislative mandate
7. Making information available.
8. Engaging the community to monitor changing needs and trends.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY**

There are many organizations, government institutions, and nonprofit societies that work in Abbotsford to make life better for older residents. The role of the community and other agencies is determined by both their mandates, as well as promoting an age-friendly culture, in which all businesses, residents, schools and institutions have a role.

## AGE-FRIENDLY CULTURE

An age-friendly culture ensures a high quality of life for older adults, and a variety of options if quality of health declines. Aging at home, in the neighbourhood with proper supports is the best way to maintain a high quality of life over the lifespan. In order to have an age-friendly culture, older adults must be able to actively age with dignity and inclusivity.

### Ways that the City and other community organizations can assure this are:

1. Plan, program, and conduct all activities through an age-friendly lens.
2. Assisting each other to apply and integrate age-friendly initiatives throughout the community's array of programs and events.
3. Creating and enhancing partnerships with community groups and agencies that are promoting and supporting age-friendly initiatives.
4. Continue to encourage cooperation through tables such as the Age-Friendly Abbotsford Working group and other cross community collaboratives.
5. Consider participating and communicate with other local stakeholders when new initiatives from the Province of BC or the Union of BC Municipalities and others offer age-friendly enhancement initiatives and support.



# OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

In an age-friendly community, outdoor spaces and public buildings are pleasant, clean, secure, and accessible to meet older adult's needs.

## WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

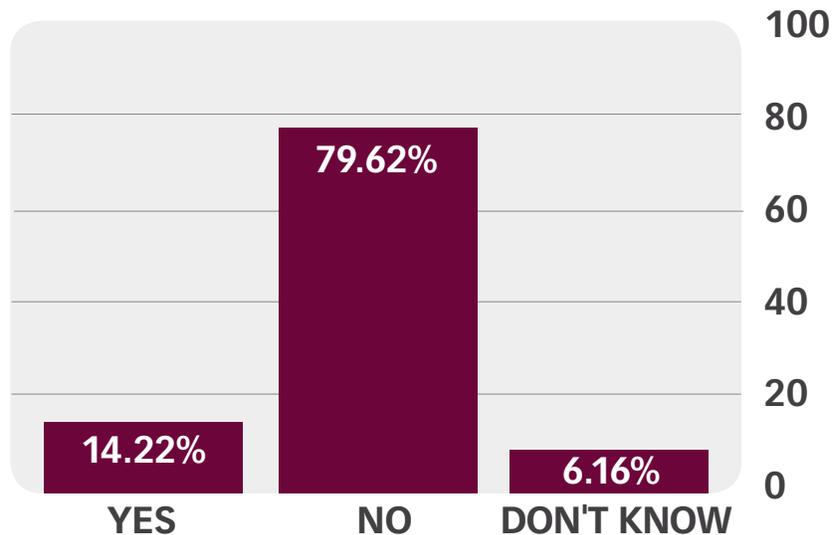
1. Some areas of Abbotsford need sidewalk upgrades for pedestrians and scooters.
2. Some buildings lack accessibility features, such as ramps, automatic door, and handrails
3. Some parks and public spaces lack accessible washrooms, enough benches, water fountains and transit amenities.
4. In some neighbourhoods, parks and public spaces are far apart, and lack linkages to age-friendly pathways, walkways and sidewalks.



## WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

79% of respondents felt that buildings were accessible to them.

Are there ever any buildings you want to access, but for any reason it is just too difficult?



## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. *Abbotsford, the Official Community Plan (2016)* of Abbotsford has identified to “Make Places for People” as one of the 7 Big Ideas of the Future. It states that: “Abbotsford will also create places that are inclusive of all people and their diverse needs and aspirations, and that support a vibrant community. Public places will support people meeting people who are different from one another” (Abbotsfordforward Part III-4-2).
2. *The Abbotsford Official Community Plan (2016)* also calls to “Connect neighbourhoods, where possible, to multiuse pathways and other trails that link neighbourhoods to Mixed Use Centres, park amenities, and recreation areas” (Policy 4.8).
3. *Abbotsford Official Community Plan* states, “Consider the need of older adults to promote active aging, aging in place, and providing a continuum of care to ensure they remain socially connected, active and support in their homes and community” (Policy 4.17).
4. *The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan* is being updated in 2017-2018 and will allow for review and upgrades for age-friendly opportunities around park design, water fountains, lighting, railings, and clear way finding signage.
5. *The Transportation and Transit Master Plan* is being updated in 2017-2018, and will allow for the review and upgrades for age friendly features such as street lighting, signage, paint lines and safety considerations.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?

1. Identify locations improve physical connections between neighbourhood parks and other local destinations through sidewalks, bike routes, and off-street trail connections.
2. Review and or create trail guidelines for accessibility provisions such as width, grade, surface materials, way finding – and consider adopting an accessible trail standard for some trails.
3. Review park washrooms and ensure a standard amount of park washrooms are wheelchair friendly.
4. Explore grant funding to retrofit identified locations to make them more age-friendly.
5. Consider expanding the bench donation program to include public spaces, trails, and well used connectors between neighbourhoods and central destinations.
6. Ensure in our development policies, and available in our planning development are the *Building Access Handbooks 2014* from the Provincial Government.

# TRANSPORTATION

In an age-friendly community, there are many options of transportation that are accessible and affordable, and easy to navigate.

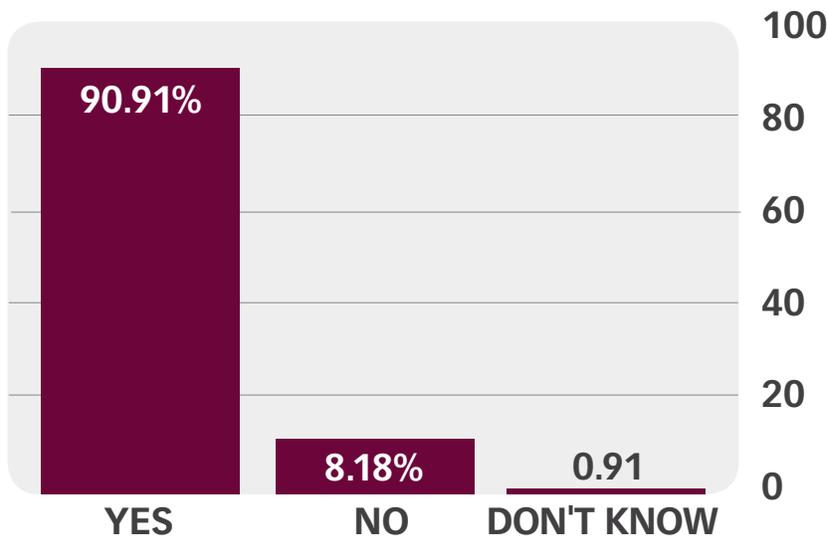
## WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. It is estimated that adults typically live 7-10 years beyond their driving ability *BC Senior's Guide*, (2015) p.86. The need for other forms of transportation other than driving is going to increase as the population of older adults increase. Growing demand for alternative transportation options such as HandyDART and volunteer driver programs.
2. Buses and buses stops are not always accessible for people with reduced mobility.
3. Volunteer driving programs and medical transportation programs are being used to the maximum currently.
4. Foster a culture of public transportation and alternative transportation use.
5. Washroom facilities are not always near transit areas.
6. Transit maps and wayfinding are difficult.
7. Anticipated increase in scooter use will have implications on street and sidewalk design, parking requirements, and building access.

## WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

90% of respondents indicated they were able to get around their neighbourhood walking or scootering.

### Are you able to get around your neighbourhood walking/scootering?





## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. *Abbotsford Official Community Plan (2016)* states “Provide opportunities for rest, with seating at regular intervals on sidewalks and other pedestrian paths” (Policy 3.8).
2. *Abbotsford Official Community Plan (2016)* recommends to “Encourage end of trip facilities including washrooms, changing rooms, and lockers” (Policy 3.14).
3. The City is currently upgrading the *Transportation Master Plan (2007)* to incorporate the new consultation information gathered from the Official Community Plan process to implement the ideas.
4. Volunteer driving programs and medical driving programs exist in the community and are well used.
5. Many senior living facilities operate shuttle buses to ensure their residents have an active lifestyle.
6. Parks, Recreation and Culture offers affordable Adult Bus Tours to recreation and activity locations across the lower mainland to facilitate social interaction, recreation and inclusion.
7. The *Transportation and Transit Master Plan* is being updated in 2017-2018, and will allow for the review and upgrades for age-friendly features such as street lighting, signage, paint lines and safety considerations.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?

1. Create a comprehensive direction system that is easy to understand and navigate for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. Signage and mapping should be located at regular intervals along pathways and transit corridors, and could include real time information. Facilitate this through public art and urban design (*Official Community Plan Policy 3.4*).
2. Work to improve bus stops and waiting areas to make them more comfortable for people.
3. Support initiatives that provide alternative transportation options such as shuttles, volunteer driving programs, and development of a cooperative bus program between areas of high density senior living neighbourhoods.
4. Review parking standards and consider designated senior parking especially at facilities offering seniors services, with wider stalls located near building entrances
5. Consider the increased use of motorized scooters when reviewing road, sidewalk, and trail design standards (*Official Community Plan Policy 3.7*).
6. Advocate for enhancements to alternative services such as HandyDart to meet the increasing demands.
7. Develop neighbourhood maps to assist with trip planning, especially to key destination areas.

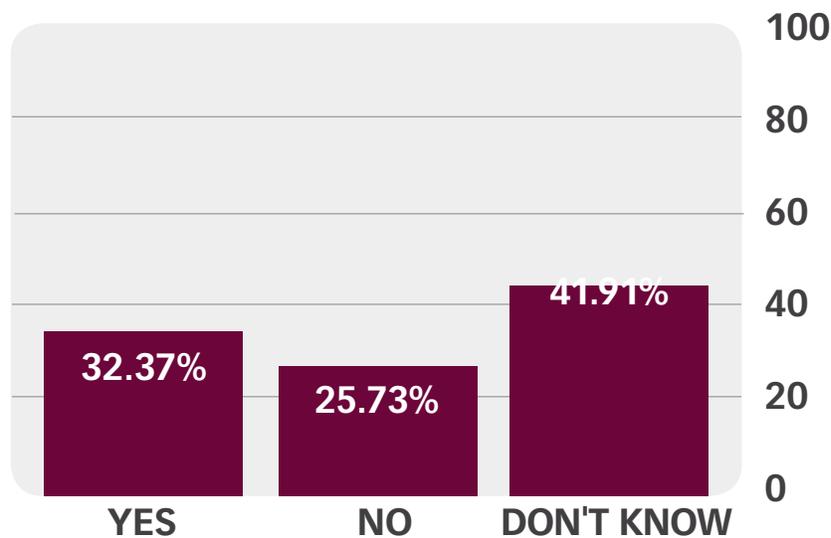
# HOUSING

In an age-friendly community, housing is affordable, appropriately located, well built, and well-designed and secure.

## WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

Many of our respondents didn't know or felt that there weren't enough housing options to support older people as they age.

Is there housing that older adults can afford in areas close to shops and other services?



## WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. Finding housing that is appropriate, affordable, and accessible in Abbotsford is challenging for many people.
2. The expected increase in older adults by the year 2031 (19.3% of the population) will increase the demand for age appropriate housing.
3. Demand for assisted living/residential care beds are reportedly exceeding current supply.
4. Funding to address housing units and support services to address homelessness is limited.
5. Residents seem to be unaware if there is housing and supports available as their care needs change.

## WHAT ARE THE POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. *Abbotsford Official Community Plan (2016)*: "We have more affordable ownership, rental, and shelter housing options, including a variety of housing types for all stages of life, allowing people to stay in their neighbourhoods as they age

(Abbotsford Official Community Plan Policies 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 support this concept).

6. Abbotsford has an *Affordable Housing Strategy*, a *Homelessness Action Plan*, and has done a framework study on senior's housing issues called the *Abbotsford Senior's Housing Study* created in 2010.
7. Abbotsford has an *Affordable Housing Fund* to encourage developers to take on projects that will enhance social housing development in the City.
8. The allowance of secondary suites through zoning bylaw in Abbotsford increases rental stock throughout the city in a consistent, safe way.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?

1. Implement any revisions and recommendations to Master Plans that will increase appropriate housing options for older adults.
2. Advocate and support to ensure that coop and subsidized housing units are rented to older adults who have a socioeconomic need.
3. Create a landlord outreach program, outlining the benefits and ways to reach older adult renters and encouraging renting to older adults.
4. Create opportunities for presentations on the Residential Tenancy Act for older adults so both landlords and renters know their rights under the law.
5. Advocate to the Provincial and Federal government for more resources for affordable housing.
6. Continue to work with BC Housing to identify ways to increase affordable housing in Abbotsford.
7. Ensure that information is available on the different types of housing and supports that are available as older adult's needs change over the lifespan.



## RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

**In an age-friendly community, opportunities exist for social participation in leisure, social, cultural, and spiritual activities with people of all ages, abilities and cultures.**

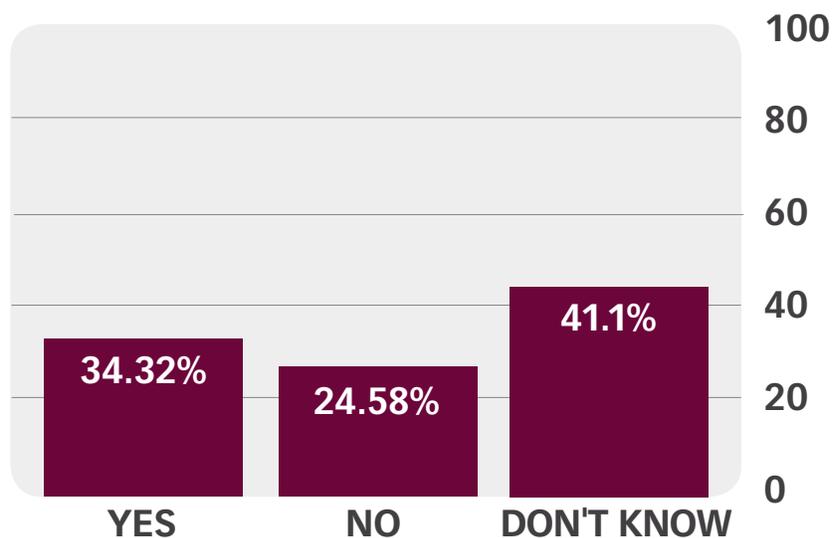
### WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. Social inclusion is the third main indicator of quality of life and effects mental and physical wellness. Issues that affect inclusion can include health concerns. As people age, an increasing number of will face significant challenges in communication or cognition due to stroke, deafness, and differing levels of dementia.
2. Ageism and elder abuse are ongoing issues in society at large, and need to be addressed to stop the harm from these attitudes and actions.
3. There is some lacking in culturally appropriate services for a diverse aging population including programs to address the needs of the immigrant population and other minority groups of older adults.
4. Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of older adults could be enhanced to ensure to acknowledge contributions in the community.

### WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

Only 34% of respondents felt that older adults were recognized for their contributions in Abbotsford.

**Are older adults recognized in Abbotsford for their past and present contributions?**



## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. The *Official Community Plan* calls for actively building a culture of tolerance towards diversity, including age (Policy 4.15).
2. The *Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan* update in 2017-2018 will further embed diversity and inclusion throughout and ensure cultural and senior's programming are appropriate and relevant.
3. Recognition programs, such as the "Order of Abbotsford" acknowledges citizens with remarkable contributions to the community.
4. Some council committees have representative chairs that are specifically reserved for older residents to ensure we have community representation from different generations.
5. Community services and some non-profits specifically have a mandate to reduce social isolationism in the senior's population by programs that include having volunteers phoning and meeting with older adults who are socially isolated, or are at risk for being socially isolated.
6. The City administers Neighbourhood Grant funding where the requirement for funding is to have open invites to all neighbours to receive the support for the project. With this requirement, older adults have more of an opportunity to meet their neighbours and feel connected near where they live.

7. Many organizations across the City support and celebrate *Senior's Week*.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?

1. Foster a community culture where older people are valued and acknowledged for both their past contributions as well as present.
2. Explore ways to increase intergenerational sharing and knowledge such as by specific programming and events to foster mutual understanding.
3. Consider creating or enhancing "Adopt-A-Senior" programs to bridge residents who volunteer to older adults.
4. Support programs and educational materials to encourage respectful behavior, understand diversity, and combat ageism.
5. Implement more recognition programs for older adults, and support initiatives such as Seniors Week, International Day of Older Persons, Grandparents Day, as well as encourage the inclusion of Grandparents in Family Day.



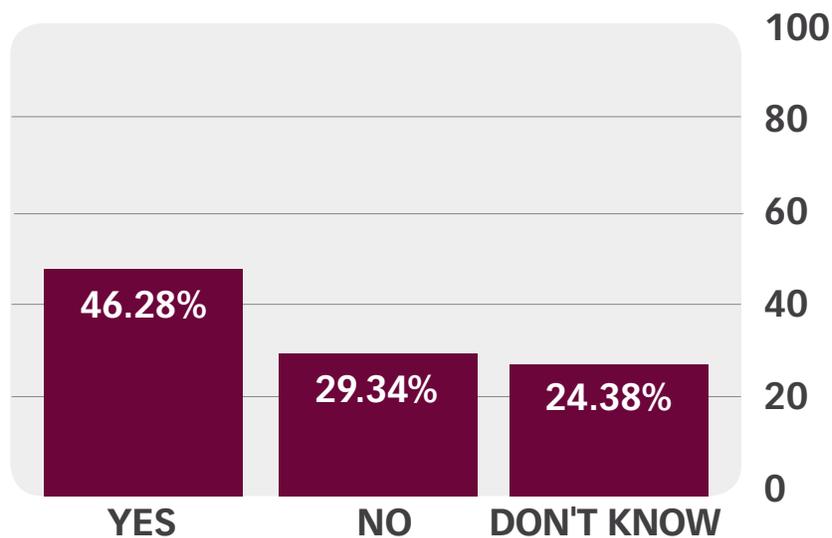
## SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In an age-friendly community, older people are treated with respect and are included in social life. Ensuring older adults' needs are reflected in the development of programs and services is essential.

### WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

About half the respondents 46% felt that there is there good information about things to do in Abbotsford, including how to get there, and about the place it will be held?

Is there good information about things to do in Abbotsford, including how to get there, and information about the place it will be held?



### WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. 23% of Abbotsford's seniors live alone (2011 Census).
2. Places for older adults to meet and interact are available in Abbotsford, but general awareness in the older adult population about the programs being held was cited as lacking.
3. Physical and financial barriers can prevent some older adults from attending some programs.
4. The high level of diversity means that some older adults in Abbotsford have language and culture barriers to participation in some programs.
5. Sometimes events and programs do not adequately consider the needs of older adults of participate.

## **WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?**

1. Parks, Recreation and Culture, as well as many community partners and faith communities offer programs across the city geared towards older adults, including educational, recreation, arts, and cultural events.
2. The City of Abbotsford has agreements in place with several different community groups at the Matsqui Recreation Centre and the Abbotsford Recreation Centre to provide subsidized space for senior's programming.
3. Admission rates at City facilities are subsidized for seniors. For example, the "Super Seniors" pass for adults aged 80 plus are free, and discounted rates from age 60 plus are available at City facilities for specified programs.
4. Volunteer programs and opportunities at the City and other community organizations are available, and coordinators refer seniors to areas of their interest and ability.
5. The Age-Friendly Abbotsford working group has committed to working on the gaps and opportunities for collaboration into the future, and will address some of these Social Participation key areas.
6. *Official Community Plan* Policy 4.18 (2016) will allow for people to stay in the neighbourhoods as they age Part I - 1 – 3, which would include recreation provisions for older adults in neighbourhood centers.

## **WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?**

1. As the population of older adults grows, expand the social and recreation programs available to meet the expanding demand.
2. Encourage organizations to consider the needs of older adults when planning all types of special events across the city. This would make a difference to the attendance levels of older generations.
3. Assess the needs for more seniors gathering centers, and look for partnership opportunities to co-locate different types of programming.
4. Increase and support groups that provide peer to peer mentoring and mentorships.
5. Ensure that older adults who are working have access to older adult programming after the work day ends, for example, on evenings and weekends by reviewing local schedules.
6. Use the neighbourhood association structure to create phone trees for information sharing between interested residents and older adults about local events and activities.
7. Create community resources to make it easier for event and program organizers to bridge language and culture barriers, making programs more inclusive.

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

In an age-friendly community, age-friendly communication and information is available.

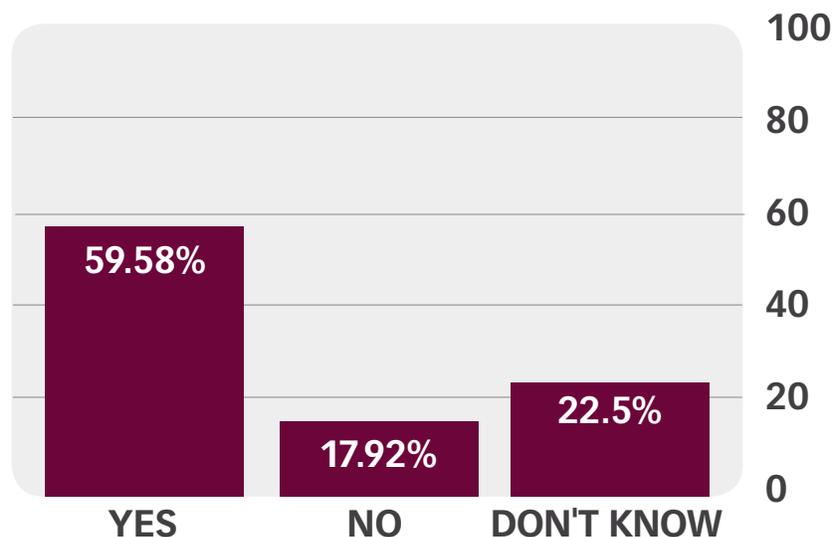
### WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. In general there is a lack of knowledge of the range of programs offered in the community, and no central place for residents to retrieve information.
2. Many older adults lack computer skills, which is how many organizations disseminate information.
3. Language barriers in Abbotsford can sometimes make communication difficult, specifically with a large population of Punjabi speakers.
4. Inadequate details in information that is provided to allow for accessibility to be ensured.

### WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

59% of respondents indicated there are easy ways available to learn about Abbotsford.

#### Are there easy ways to learn more about my community?



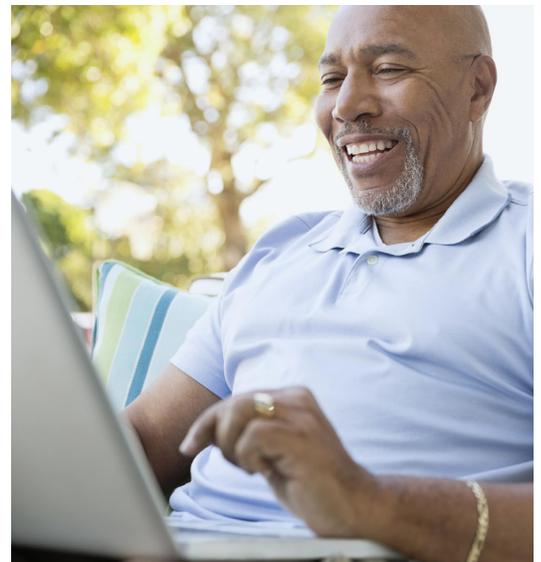
### WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Leisure Guide is delivered free of cost to all residents 3 times a year, and has extensive information about community groups and seniors programs. Some information is translated into Punjabi.

2. Many non-profit groups that serve seniors provide resource sheets and information about upcoming events happening that are designed for older adults.
3. The City of Abbotsford is updating its website to ensure senior's resources are available to staff and residents, as well as sharing links between community partners.
4. The United Way has a resource handbook called bc211, and the Province of BC, through Seniors BC, publishes a *BC Seniors' guide* to disseminate information to older adults.
5. Age-friendly computer classes for seniors are offered at low cost and no cost through non-profits and a private school in Abbotsford.
6. The community is recognizing and addressing the need for more information and programs to be delivered in Punjabi and other languages spoken in Abbotsford.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?**

1. Engage in community outreach to find out where the best places and ways for seniors information to be disseminated. Create information trees to extend out to seniors networks, the municipality and older adult organizations and gathering places. Include larger places of worship with large senior's populations. Create a volunteer team to gather and disseminate information once a month or as deemed appropriate.
2. Consider creating seniors information kiosks in prominent locations where older adults frequent. Ensure that the kiosk information is kept up to date.
3. Assess the possibility of an interagency coordinator for age-friendly work to help build communication, connections and partnerships between agencies, organizations and government.
4. Promote key health and services resources such as bc211 and the nurse line to older adults.
5. Ensure that tips and training are available to front line staff in various roles throughout the community to communicate with those who may have difficulty – such as after a stroke or injury.
6. Create lists of places to access translation services, as well as create a team of volunteer translators in the community.
7. Provide information through various mediums (TV, newspapers, inserts, and etcetera) to ensure that technologically adept seniors, as well as those who prefer more conventional forms of communication will be able to stay informed.



## CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In an age-friendly community, opportunities for employment and volunteerism cater to older persons' interests and abilities. Older adults have ways to share their skills and knowledge with others, and contribute in meaningful ways.

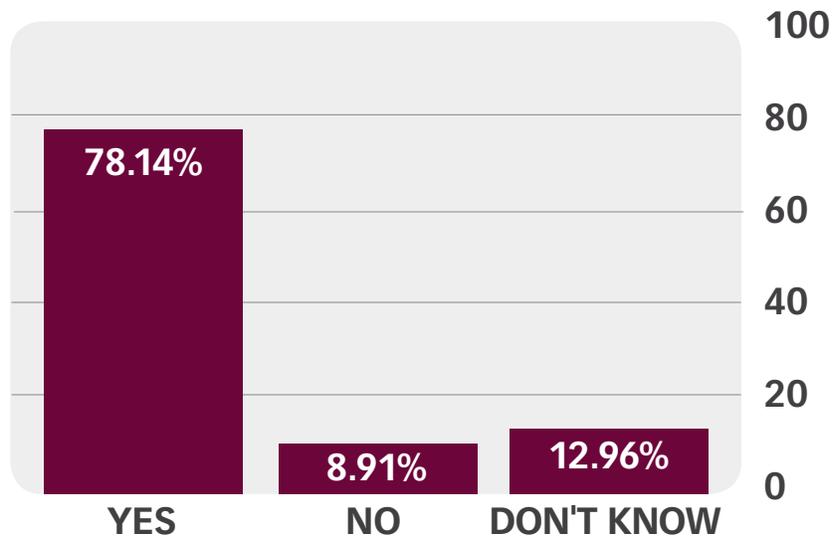
### WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. Older adults are not always fully aware of the types of volunteer and paid opportunities that exist in the community. Some ways that opportunities are advertised may exclude some older adults in the community. Reaching everyone can be difficult.
2. Some organizations may not fully understand or appreciate the benefits of having older adult volunteers and workers who bring a lot of skills, knowledge and experience with them to new positions.
3. As people live longer, many older adults find they need to supplement their retirement income or savings to meet their expenses.

### WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

78% of those surveyed felt there are opportunities for older people to volunteer or work.

**Do you feel that there are opportunities to volunteer or work if you choose to as an older adult?**





## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. The City of Abbotsford has a Volunteer Coordinator, who oversees civic volunteer positions such as adopt-a-street, assisting at the recreation centers, or with special events. The City Volunteer Coordinator also broadcasts and recruits for volunteers for other non-profit organizations across the city.
2. The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Advisory Committee as well as other council committees seek a wide variety of perspectives to assist with decision making for municipal affairs. The Abbotsford Age-Friendly Working Group provides an opportunity to get involved in collaboratively resolving senior's issues that are important to older adults in Abbotsford.
3. Many older adults are committed volunteers to non-profit organizations across the community, and give time to fill positions such as assisting at community events, serving on non-profit boards, and undertaking community initiatives. Examples include volunteer driving programs, service clubs, and peer-to-peer support programs.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?

1. Enhance and assess the City volunteer portal experience to ensure that older adults are not facing barriers to participating. Ensure there are roles that take into the needs of older adult volunteers.
2. Consider an employer knowledge building campaign of the benefits of hiring older workers. Consider creating a specific job posting site to identify employment position for older adults who want to remain in or re-enter the workforce.
3. Assess the ways the city and other organizations reach out to engage focus groups and committee make-up to ensure there are no barriers to older adult participation so that they have ways to contribute to planning and decision making.

# COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICES

In an age-friendly community, community support and health services are tailored to older persons' needs, so they can stay healthy and independent as their needs change over time.

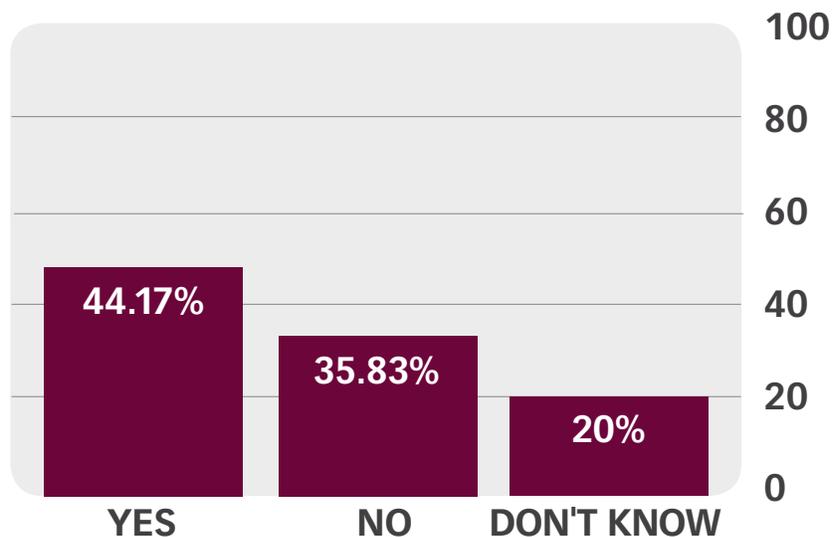
## WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

1. Growth in the need of senior's health services because of changing demographics.
2. Ensuring that information of all ways to access to healthcare is available for older adults.
3. Need for more practitioners – for example 20% of general practitioners in Fraser Health area are planning to retire in the next 4 years (*Abbotsford Division of Family Practice*).
4. Need for expansion of services to allow for seniors to receive health services in their home.
5. Ensuring an integrated system of care to make sure the most vulnerable seniors are identified and served.

## WHAT WERE THE SURVEY RESULTS?

44% of those surveyed thought there are enough health and support services available for them to maintain their health.

**Are there enough health and support services available for helping you maintain or regain your health?**



## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS NOW?

1. Fraser Health Community Health Services and Abbotsford Community Services have a Frail Senior Initiative is focusing on 4 key areas:

**i. Proactively identify frail seniors** Frail seniors are typically individuals 70 and older who have one or more conditions which impacts their ability to do their daily activities. Research focusing on seniors identifies the signs or “red flags” when it is important to seek support for health care needs. Over the past year, there has been more education for health professionals who work in the community. Teams will have increased awareness of signs of when to help seniors and their caregivers and partner with their physicians.

**ii. Working with key stakeholders to simplify processes** Frail seniors could possible receive care and support from physicians, various community health teams and seniors services. These teams could include; Day Program for Older Adults, Geriatric Mental Health Outreach Team, overnight respite Home Support Workers or Home Health professionals such as Case Manager (or Community Care Professional).

Members of these teams are working to simplify the steps for seniors and the caregivers to access these services. They are also testing new partnerships with physicians, were community health teams are partnering directly within the physicians clinics – bringing services closer to those who need them.

**ii. Timely Response System** Receiving the care and support needed in the right time makes a difference for the health of frail seniors. Additionally, nurses and case managers and a social worker have been added to the community health teams to respond the growing demand for care at home. These teams have enhanced their service on the weekends and evenings. There are additional education and specialized support roles – such as educators, pharmacists and dementia clinicians added to support the teams with health issues common to frail seniors. A new “rapid response resource” is now part of community services which supports same day assessment and interventions for frail seniors with urgent care needs and partners with your physician.

**iv. Collaboration with community based services organizations** Fraser Health continues to partner with community service organizations, residents and in particular seniors and caregivers as new and enhanced services are being developed. Collaboration between community health professionals and individuals who work services in Abbotsford who provide social supports, continue to be essential for health and well-being.

2. The Abbotsford Division of Family Practice is actively working towards recruiting practitioners and graduates medical programs to work, stay and play in Abbotsford.
3. Abbotsford Division of Family Practice, Fraser Health, the General Practice Services Committee, and Abbotsford Community Services are working on Building Abbotsford's Integrated System of Care across government nonprofit and for profit organizations to make access a continuum of care more easy for residents.
4. The City of Abbotsford, through the *Abbotsfordforward Official Community Plan* (2016) and the current process of creating the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan (in progress), is working towards providing quality green space, programs, public events and activities to help maintain high quality of life in Abbotsford that will help retain family and geriatric specialist physicians in Abbotsford.
5. Abbotsford Community Services and the Clearbrook Corridor organizations, as well as and other community organizations, regularly hold free wellness information seminars to ensure older adults have the information needed to meet their healthcare needs and age well.

## **WHAT CAN BE DONE NEXT TOWARDS AN AGE-FRIENDLY FUTURE?**

1. Back efforts to bring more health care service providers, geriatric specialists and general practitioners to Abbotsford.
2. During the community planning process, consider the proximity of housing for seniors and health care services in neighbourhoods.
3. Advocate for enhancement and increased access to home support services or other in-home health services.
4. Support and promote age-friendly information to be readily available on various community organizations websites.
5. Support and assist community organizations to promote free programs for older adults.
6. Enhance connections throughout the city in creating, maintaining, and distributing information regarding prevention of health issues, and especially how to access healthcare in alternative ways to hospital visits, when appropriate.

## IMPLEMENTATION

This strategy was created to acknowledge and bring together the work that has been completed to date across organizations to make Abbotsford more Age-Friendly. The City has a number of planning initiatives that will incorporate and overlap with many of the age-friendly concepts that are encouraged in this report. As the City moves forward in the implementation of the Official Community Plan, other supporting planning policies will be created that will provide linkages to this Abbotsford Age-Friendly Assessment Report. These include Plan 200k and the departmental master plans, upcoming neighbourhood plans, and the Long-Term Capital Plan. The City is actively working towards making Abbotsford a place for people, and planning for the needs of older adults.



This report also offers the community recommendations to consider to continue moving forward towards an age-friendly future. Community organizations, health authorities, and other agencies all play a role in making this framework a reality. As many of these recommendations are outside of the municipal scope, it will take the community to work together to collaborate and effect change. Although identified, the opportunities in this report will only be addressed as budgets and priorities allow, across all organizations. Please see Appendix A: "Identification of Key Strategies" to review the proposed starting point to address key identified gaps and opportunities.

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### PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS & STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Older Adult Mental Health (Fraser Health)  
Alzheimer Society of BC  
Fraser Health (Community Health Specialists)  
Medical Transportation Program (Abbotsford Community Services)  
Garden Park Tower  
Clearbrook Library  
Patient Voices Network  
Literacy Matters  
Abbotsford Peer Support  
Learning Plus  
Clearbrook Mennonite Brethren Church  
Abbotsford Community Services, Seniors Services  
Abbotsford Community Services, Punjabi Seniors Group  
Menno Home  
Tabor Home  
Clearbrook Golden Age Society  
Abbotsford Recreation Center Focus Group

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