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Cowichan Valley Regional District - Mill Bay

# Age-Friendly Action Plan





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# INTRODUCTION

## A1. Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the project, the context, and the process. Inside, you will find...

- » A summary of the project context, as well as the local community context and the wider global age-friendly context;
- » An introduction to age-friendly community planning;
- » An overview of the project process, including key phases and the project timeline;
- » An introduction to establishing an age-friendly culture within the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the local community; and,
- » An overview of the CVRD's role in the age-friendly community context.



**24%** of residents are 65+ according to the 2016 census

## A2. Project Context

In early 2017, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) received an Age-friendly Community Planning grant from the Union of BC Municipalities. The CVRD then set out to create an action plan for the community of Mill Bay that would build on the existing strengths of the community and provide a road-map into the future.

The CVRD engaged Barefoot Planning, a Victoria-based planning consultancy, to lead this community-driven process –

which involved baseline research, a public survey, and two stakeholder workshops – and develop a set of recommendations that would act as a catalyst for action in the coming years.

This plan provides an overview of the process and public input, and is primarily intended to present a relevant and actionable list of strategies for the CVRD to pursue, alone and in collaboration with community partners.

## A3. The Global Context

In 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the Age-friendly Community Initiative, with the goal of adapting structures and services to be more inclusive to the needs and abilities of people from all age groups. Through the subsequent Global Age-friendly Cities Project,

the WHO established eight pillars for assessing and developing strategies to create age-friendly communities.

These eight pillars (see sidebar on facing page) provide a framework from which this project was carried out and this plan was structured.



## A4. What is an Age-friendly Community?

In an age-friendly community, the physical, social, and political environments support people of all ages in meeting their daily needs. Accessible infrastructure, housing, transportation, programming, policies, and services enable independence in seniors and people with disabilities – allowing them to enjoy autonomy in their lives. Moreover, age-friendly communities promote a high quality of life, comfort and security, and meaningful participation by accommodating the physical, behavioural, economic, and social changes a person experiences over time.

While this project focuses on adults over the age of 65, an age-friendly community benefits residents of all ages. For example, safe, accessible, and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure provides security and comfort to children, parents pushing strollers, and those with mobility challenges. Senior services relieve families of stress and provide a higher quality of life for older adults. And, intergenerational programs build mutual respect, strengthen community bonds, and provide learning opportunities for all ages.

### The WHO 8 Pillars of Age-friendly Communities

- » Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
- » Transportation
- » Housing
- » Respect & Social Inclusion
- » Social Participation
- » Communication & Information
- » Civic Participation & Employment
- » Community Support & Health Services



## A5. The Mill Bay Context

With a median age of 46, compared to 41 in British Columbia, Mill Bay is aging and growing. The total population of Mill Bay saw 7.3% growth between 2011 and 2016, after years of minimal growth. As a result, 51% of the population is now over the age of 45, and 24% is over the age of 65 – both higher than provincial averages. It is anticipated that these older age cohorts will continue to experience significant growth and change, placing increasing demands on the physical and social infrastructure of the community.

However, as with most rural communities, the CVRD struggles with some key issues that affect seniors, their quality

of life, and their ability to age-in-place. Such issues include transportation and mobility, housing, healthcare, and the large geographical areas of the CVRD. These factors play a particularly key role in the lives of older seniors (70 and older) and influences their likelihood of staying in Mill Bay.

That said, Mill Bay has a number of existing strengths. The local medical centre provides access to much needed services in the core of the community; Kerry Park Recreation Centre provides opportunities for individuals to remain active; and many local interest and volunteer groups present opportunities for socialization.

## Project Advisory Committee

This age-friendly planning process was anchored in a robust community and stakeholder engagement process. The heart of this consultative approach was the establishment of an Advisory Committee, consisting of key stakeholders in the local seniors community – service providers, decision-makers, and other

organizational representatives.

The project team facilitated a working session with the advisory committee in each of the three project phases, helping to either set the stage for or refine the process and outcomes of the wider community engagement process.



## A6. Age-friendly Planning Process

The process for this age-friendly action plan consisted of three primary phases: Context Research, Public Engagement, and Action Planning, each informed by meetings with an Advisory Committee made up of key stakeholders of the seniors community in Mill Bay and South Cowichan.

### **Context Research – Policy Assessment & Best Practices**

Initially, using the 8 Pillars as a framework, the consultant team conducted an in-depth assessment of the local policy context, reviewing relevant policies and regulations. This research was supplemented by a review of best practices from other communities, in which relevant actions were identified to inform this plan.

The first Advisory Committee meeting was used to finalize the workplan and develop an inventory of community assets, which acted to inform the development of a public survey and the beginnings of a Community Needs Assessment.

### **Public Engagement – Community Needs Assessment**

The public engagement phase consisted of a public survey, 'pop-up' consultation, and an action planning workshop with stakeholders.

The public survey consulted a broad

range of local residents about key age-friendly issues and ideas in Mill Bay. The reach of the survey was extended with 'pop up' events, in which the project team engaged with local seniors at key locations and events (e.g., Mill Bay Centre, Cobble Hill Seniors Luncheon), facilitating survey uptake and dialogue about age-friendly issues. Through these events, it became clear that local seniors saw themselves as part of a wider South Cowichan context, rather than a narrower Mill Bay context. This idea informed the rest of the project process, including the development of recommended actions.

From the survey and context research, and with the aid of the Advisory Committee, a Community Needs Assessment was developed, which informed the second half of the project, in which the focus shifted from identifying issues to generating potential actions and next steps.

### **Action Planning – Next Steps & Putting It All Together**

An action planning workshop was held to tap the expertise of key stakeholders. The session was based on the World Café format, in which rounds of dialogue build on each other, addressing key themes in order to connect ideas and generate solutions. The result was a series of potential action items and ideas.

**110+**  
public survey  
respondents



The workshop outcomes were further refined at a third Advisory Committee meeting, where the most relevant, meaningful, and actionable ideas were identified, before an iterative process led to the development of the Objectives and Recommended Strategies that form the core of this plan.

With the support of BC Healthy Communities, a final action planning workshop, was then held to help prioritize these strategies and focus on the development of an implementable plan.

The final Action Plan was then developed with support from CVRD staff.

## Project Timeline

The project was completed between March and December of 2017, based on the requirements of UBCM Age-friendly Communities Grant.

The following represents the key components of the project timeline.

MAR 2017	Assessment of local policy and review of relevant best practices.
APR-MAY 2017	Survey development, public lecture, survey pop-up.
JUN-JUL 2017	Stakeholder workshop to generate potential next steps.
JUN 2017	Iterative development of draft recommendations informed by Advisory Committee.
NOV 2017	Action planning workshop to inform implementation plan.
AUG-DEC 2017	Final Action Plan development and submission.



## A7. An Age-friendly Culture

In becoming an age-friendly community, the CVRD, local stakeholders, and residents need to develop a culture of age-friendliness. In other words, these partners need to collectively foster a community where residents can age in place, feel respected, be independent, and achieve a high quality of life.

Internally, the CVRD can catalyze this evolution by making a commitment to an age-friendly future and by reinforcing a corporate culture that facilitates this.

To successfully implement the strategies recommended in this plan and move this

initiative forward, the CVRD will need to:

- » Take an age-friendly perspective to all community issues;
- » Ensure an integrated, inter-departmental, cross-agency approach to key issues;
- » Build civic advocacy and advisory capacity;
- » Strengthen internal and external connections; and,
- » Engage on-going support from provincial and federal agencies.

## A8. The CVRD’s Role

For Mill Bay to become an age-friendly community, the CVRD must play a key role in the implementation of this plan, including but not limited to:

- » Being (or identifying) a local champion to advocate for and carry initiatives forward;
- » Communicating information and raising community awareness about planning initiatives;
- » Leading or providing support services on key initiatives;

- » Providing space and funding where appropriate;
- » Developing relevant policies and regulations to support action items;
- » Initiating and developing partnerships with service providers, businesses, community organizations, and public agencies;
- » Supporting or leading communication efforts and supporting the provision of information; and,
- » Initiating action planning on an annual basis and monitoring its progress.



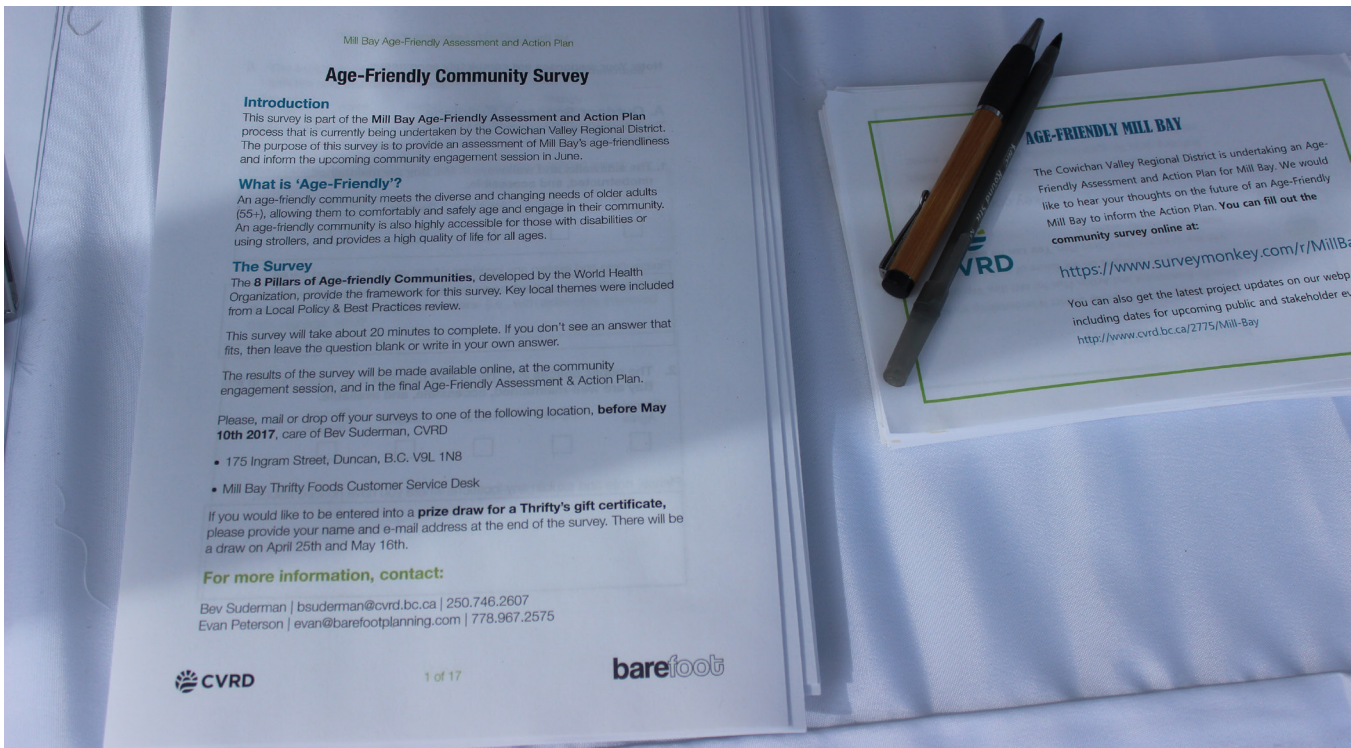


# AN AGE-FRIENDLY MILL BAY

## B1. Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the overall Assessment and Action Plan for Mill Bay, identifying each of the 8 Pillars of an age-friendly community individually. Inside, you will find:

- » The 8 Pillars – A Framework
- » Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
- » Transportation
- » Housing
- » Respect & Social Inclusion
- » Social Participation
- » Communication & Information
- » Civic Participation & Employment
- » Community Support & Health Services



## B2. The 8 Pillars – A Framework

Throughout the process of developing this action plan, the World Health Organization's (WHO) 8 Pillars of age-friendly communities acted as a guiding framework – for research, survey development, workshop format, and the content of this report. While very broad in scope, these pillars necessarily guide us to reflect on all aspects of community that affect older adults and those with mobility challenges.

This section is the core of the Age-friendly Action Plan. For each pillar, a complete synthesis of the project findings has been provided:

- » **Common Barriers** are community issues identified in the context

- » **Key Voices** are notable findings from the survey along with quotes from residents via the survey and workshops.
- » **Current Practices** indicate initiatives and assets that presently benefit older adults in Mill Bay.
- » **Next Steps** are local age-friendly objectives and the recommended strategies to begin achieving those objectives.

The next section (C. Implementation) will further refine these detailed recommendations into a short list of strategies for the CVRD to initially consider and undertake.

## B3. Summary of the 8 Pillars

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The World Health Organization established 8 Pillars of age-friendly communities, which acted as a guiding framework throughout the project process.



### Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

The natural and built environments support the access and active involvement of seniors and those with mobility challenges in the community.



### Transportation

Older adults are able to get around their community conveniently and safely using public, private, and active forms of transportation.



### Housing

Seniors have access to safe, accessible, affordable housing that is well-located and allows them to age-in-place.



### Respect & Social Inclusion

The community is respectful of and dignifies older adults and welcomes their active involvement in all aspects of society.



### Social Participation

Older adults have opportunities to build meaningful social connections and participate in leisure and cultural activities.



### Communication & Information

Older adults are aware of the programming and services available to them and have ready access to relevant, up-to-date community information.



### Civic Participation & Employment

Seniors have the opportunity to participate in civic decision-making and have sufficient opportunity to contribute to the community via paid or unpaid work.



### Community Support & Health Services

Seniors have access to the support and services they need to remain healthy and independent.





## B4. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » Key walking routes, specifically Mill Bay Road, lack infrastructure to support a popular walking route. Seating, garbage cans, access to the ocean, and washrooms are much needed facilities.
- » Shoulders of roads are often not wide enough or difficult to navigate due to mud and potholes.
- » Public washrooms are lacking in the

community.

- » Better wayfinding signage in the Centre and along walking trails and roads is needed.
- » Connections and safe crossing from one side of the highway to the other is an issue for seniors, children and youth alike.

#### Key Voices

- » "It would be a lovely walk along Mill Bay Road by the waterfront if there were sidewalks."
- » "Mill Bay Road is not good as there is no where for pedestrians. I support a teen with autism and it is a challenge to walk from his house to Mill Bay"

- » "Senior or child, Mill Bay roads are dangerous with more and more people speeding well above the speed limit."
- » "Access to the ocean is the key feature of Mill Bay and currently it is invisible and inaccessible"

#### Current Practices

- » Many existing trails and walking routes exist in the community; however, limited age-friendly features have been implemented.
- » Young Seniors Action Group (YSAG) regularly hosts walks.
- » Included in the community vision of

the 2016 Mill Bay/Malahat Community Parks and Trails Master Plan is the community's desire to initiate improved ease of access to most community parks and trails, including public beach accesses, specifically for the needs of an aging population.





## B4. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Improve the accessibility of pathways and trails.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Support recommendations made in the Electoral Area A (Mill Bay/ Malahat) Community Parks and Trails Master Plan and host an event to present these recommendations, and any additional CVRD plans which support the Age-friendly Action Plan, to the public.
- » Establish a roadside, multi-use pathway along Mill Bay Rd. and explore the potential for similar pathways along other roads in the community.
- » Work with property owners to improve way finding signage throughout the village area; additionally, consider signage for age-friendly trails that indicates difficulty level and length of trail.

#### Obj #2

Increase the number of age-friendly amenities located on pathways & trails.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Acquire new street furniture in key locations throughout the community for seniors.
- » Explore internal and external funding opportunities for pedestrian upgrades that benefit seniors directly, including increased lighting.

#### Obj #3

Improve access to public washroom facilities.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Seek ways to extend access hours (e.g., at the Mill Bay Centre).
- » Improve signage for public washrooms.
- » Explore ways to add additional public washrooms and determine appropriate locations for new public washrooms along key walking routes.

#### Obj #4

Calm traffic and improve safety for pedestrians at high priority areas.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Share this report with MOTI - continue to lobby for pedestrian and safety improvements at, in particular, the highway crossing at Deloume Road and along Mill Bay Road.
- » Work with MOTI to assess the feasibility of traffic calming mechanisms along the highway (e.g., landscaped medians).
- » Work with MOTI to extend the pedestrian crossing time at the intersection of Highway 1 and Deloume Road.
- » Explore the adaptability of the current highway underpass to be made more accessible, safe and visible.



## B5. Transportation

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » The current level of bus service does not adequately support an independent senior. Many bus drop-off and pick-up locations are hard to find, or unsafe and inaccessible.
- » Taxi's are too expensive to use as a viable mode of transportation.
- » Traveling at night is very difficult; many do not feel safe driving in the dark, especially in winter conditions.
- » Many rely on the help of family, friends and volunteers for transportation needs; this leaves them feeling vulnerable and limited in the amount of support they can receive.

#### Key Voices

- » "People are hesitant to take buses as they don't feel comfortable about the confusing schedule."
- » "If I need to get to an appointment by bus, then I need to plan hours of time around the appointment to get there and back, and I can't afford a taxi."
- » "The bus takes forever to get to the shopping areas around Mill Bay. And taxis? I can't take a taxi anywhere - I'm not rich enough."
- » "The use of a vehicle is almost mandatory."

#### Current Practices

- » Cowichan Seniors Community Foundation offers volunteer run door-to-door transportation to people 65+ for medical and health appointments, hospital visits to family and friends, and attendance at support groups and meetings.
- » Wheels for Wellness Society provides medical rides to Victoria with pick-up in Duncan or home pick-up for the Nanaimo hospital.
- » HandyDART does have a scheduled route.
- » Cowichan Valley Regional Transit operates in the area, with route 8 Mill Bay via Telegraph Rd/Duncan via Shawnigan Lake Rd and route 9 Mill Bay via Shawnigan Lake Rd/Duncan via Telegraph Rd serving Mill Bay.



## B5. Transportation

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Support the development of convenient and affordable transportation options for medical and non-medical trips for older adults.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Lobby local businesses and other groups to sponsor a local seniors shuttle that can be used to bring seniors to meetings, gatherings, activities and community events.
- » Work with BC Transit to improve community routes (e.g. smaller buses, more buses, increase frequency, access on weekends, middle of day and evenings) encouraging the proposed service improvements in the Transit Future Plan: Cowichan Valley Region, including the implementation of a seniors' oriented transit service.
- » Better communicate and provide information regarding handyDART services to seniors.
- » Explore ways to improve and expand handyDART to be more convenient for seniors in need, allowing for more spontaneity in day-to-day activities.
- » Create opportunity for a 2-way dialogue and feedback on current and needed transportation services between BC Transit, CVRD, and local citizens.
- » Review existing transit service, ridership and potential options for service improvements in the South Cowichan area."

#### Obj #2

Improve the accessibility of transit stops, making them more age-friendly.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Work with the Mill Bay Centre and BC Transit to improve the accessibility of the existing transit stop in the Centre (focusing on signage, grading, lighting, seating, and weather protection).
- » Conduct an accessibility assessment of key transit stops throughout Mill Bay and work with BC Transit to improve key locations.



## B6. Housing

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » A multi-level system of housing is needed, from condo living to palliative care.
- » There is a lack of awareness of in-home care and assistance options available in the community.
- » There are inadequate housing options that support aging in place – seniors housing, cooperative housing, cohousing, and smaller units are all unavailable.

#### Key Voices

- » "I want to stay in the area, close to the library, groceries etc., but still have a shared extensive ornamental and optional veggie garden. Some sort of gradual care facility is needed."
- » "As many of my neighbours have done, I will need to move to Victoria or another area where there are townhouses and condos that I can downsize to, good transportation for when I give up my car, and close medical facilities for illness. I plan on moving in about 5 to 10 years."

#### Current Practices

- » The Cove is currently the only older adult focused living space in Mill Bay, though an additional development, Stonebridge, is anticipated.
- » The 2014 CVRD Affordable Housing Needs Assessment identified the need for more appropriate and affordable housing stock for a range of demographics, including accessible and adaptable housing, senior-friendly rental housing in the private market, and housing suitable for senior women living independently.
- » The Mill Bay OCP has some policy direction to provide additional affordable housing, by permitting secondary suites in the Village Residential Designation (R).
- » Cowichan Regional Better at Home services are available through Volunteer Cowichan.



## B6. Housing

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Support the development of more attainable (affordable), diverse, flexible and accessible housing for seniors in Mill Bay.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Evaluate additional regulatory and policy levers for the development of affordable seniors housing (e.g., OCP objectives and policies, density bonusing, pre-zoning, permitted uses).
- » Consider developing an Attainable Housing Policy for the CVRD which includes provisions for lower income seniors, building on the work of the Regional Affordable Housing Needs Assessment.
- » Advocate for the recommendations made in the CVRD Regional Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, such as the Golden Girls concept.
- » As part of on-going community engagement, consult seniors on housing needs and opportunities.

#### Obj #2

Improve the accessibility standards of housing in Mill Bay.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Advocate for the development of adaptable housing standards and/or guidelines to guide future development in Mill Bay.
  - ✘ Incorporate related policies into upcoming OCP update.



## B7. Respect & Social Inclusion

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » Seniors who cannot drive in the dark are unable to attend many of the community events in their area. Thus, there is a need for more daytime activities in Mill Bay for seniors.
- » Targeted communications, specifically for seniors, regarding activities and available resources in the community are needed.
- » Activities aimed at inter-generational mingling are lacking and would help to improve the resiliency of the community as a whole.

#### Key Voices

- » "I'm lucky. I have a home business, can still drive, and am still mobile. But I will have to move when I can't do these things as then I would be isolated"
- » "There are not adequate activities for seniors. We do not have a senior centre where these things would be going on. I guess this is a young bedroom community for Victoria and the elderly are caught somewhere in the middle."
- » "Seniors don't seem to know about activities in the community. We need to look at the whole South Cowichan, not just individual villages. No village can afford to have its own facilities, we must get better at sharing facilities and services."

#### Current Practices

- » The Cowichan Seniors Community Foundation, Cowichan Region Better at Home, Friendly Visitors program of Volunteer Cowichan, and the Friendly Phones initiative of South Cowichan Community Policing are all excellent resource for older adults living in the community. The advertisement and dissemination of information regarding these resource could be increased.



## B7. Respect & Social Inclusion

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Find more ways to actively celebrate older adults in the community.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Appoint a CVRD staff member to champion existing and future Age-friendly plans and initiatives.
- » Explore opportunities for new seniors and intergenerational programming, such as a storytelling event or youth providing technology training to seniors.
- » Establishing an online directory for seniors to share their knowledge and talents with one another, i.e. a skill share database.
- » Support more cultural inclusion within the community and begin a dialogue with Malahat First Nation regarding seniors initiatives and possible win-win initiatives.

#### Obj #2

Welcome, encourage, and celebrate the inclusion of seniors in community events.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Establish simple but meaningful accessibility guidelines for community events, with consideration given to communicating with seniors as well as provision of accessible transportation, seating, washrooms, and other facilities.

#### Obj #3

Help local community groups and businesses become more aware of the needs and interests of seniors.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Connect with local businesses to share simple improvements that they could do, as well as educate them on the service requirements of seniors for targeted advertising.
- » Consider developing an age-friendly business certification process throughout the CVRD to assess and recognize local businesses that embrace age-friendly practices.



## B8. Social Participation

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » There is a lack of affordable and reliable transportation to events and activities, leaving many to rely on family or friends, which contributes to feelings of social isolation, particularly for seniors who do not have family in the area.
- » It is not commonly known which

seniors social groups are operating in Mill Bay, and efforts need to be made to better advertise these available groups to seniors in the community.

- » Mill Bay lacks a seniors centre, or central gathering place, which makes it difficult for individuals to know where to go for support and engagement.

#### Key Voices

- » "People here don't mingle. The youngest go to school, the adults go to work, and the seniors go to ... well, if there was something to go to I guess seniors would go. There are no opportunities, activities, events, etc. to encourage these groups to mingle and

show respect to each other."

- » "Too many seniors are invisible, have no voice and don't participate, volunteer for activities, or contribute their skills."
- » "You see the same (old) faces, most seniors are invisible and unheard."

#### Current Practices

- » There are fantastic examples of senior engagement and participation from other communities in the region, such as Cobble Hill's South Cowichan Seniors Luncheon, that could be built upon and supported in the Mill Bay area with organized rides for example.

- » The Young Seniors Action Group (YSAG), Mill Bay Community League, Mill Bay-Malahat Historical Society, South End Seniors Social Club, and others all offer fantastic opportunities for seniors to socialize and engage with their community.





## B8. Social Participation

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Explore new seniors and intergenerational programming.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Evaluate the program needs of seniors and consider adding additional programming – e.g., wellness, arts, technology, skills training.
- ✘ Consider the timing of programming and related transportation challenges for some seniors.
- ✘ Look for ways to provide opportunities to learn and share – lecture series, technology classes, and skill swap events.
- » Explore alternative, socially-oriented programming.
- ✘ Give consideration to drop-in style activities, like daytime lectures or 'Do it with Others' (e.g., knitting, painting, drawing, other arts and crafts, music).

#### Obj #2

Improve the accessibility of existing and new programming for seniors.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Explore ways to offer 'low barrier' program rates and drop-in fees for lower-income seniors, in order to encourage participation and support active living in all older adults.
- » Give consideration to drop-in formats with no commitment and convenient hours for seniors.
- » Improve related communication with seniors and consider involving seniors in the development of program ideas.

#### Obj #3

Establish a Seniors Centre/Hub within the South Cowichan Area.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Work with partners to evaluate funding and location options for a Seniors Centre within the South Cowichan area.
- » Identify surplus building space within the South Cowichan and assess the appropriateness as a Hub facility, taking into consideration accessibility, access to transportation, size, location, cost, etc.
- » Work with local community organizations to fund a Seniors Hub Coordinator to oversee services, manage volunteers, etc.



## B9. Communication & Information

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » Not everyone has access to a computer, nor the skills needed, to attain online information for seniors. Many seniors rely on word-of-mouth, newspapers or posters to find out about activities in their community.
- » CVRD and community websites could be improved to better serve older adults.
- » There is a lack of local print information available in the community. A central location such as the Library should be considered to address this gap.

#### Key Voices

- » "You need computer skills and access to a computer to find most information, and the location of pamphlets outlining services are not well known"
- » "Many seniors organizations have no web presence. Just about all seniors have access to technology, but organizations don't use it. There is no single source I can go to find out what's going on in the South Cowichan this week!"
- » "How many seniors are good at working on a computer? How many seniors have a computer? Not many. Most information is found online and that means seniors don't have access"

#### Current Practices

- » Kerry Davis, Electoral Area Director of Mill Bay, sends out a weekly e-mail with upcoming events and other important information.
- » For Everything That's Cowichan Healthy (FETCH) and the Cowichan Seniors Community Foundation both have useful online resources for seniors.
- » South End Community Policing is well supplied with many different types of resources, electronic and paper.
- » Message boards at the Mill Bay Shopping Centre are well used.



## B9. Communication & Information

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Improve the coordination of seniors oriented information between all South Cowichan communities.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Improve the distribution of the Seniors Directory throughout Mill Bay, utilizing such resources as Community Policing and the local Library.
- » Use the CVRD webpage AND/OR Seniors Hub to communicate information about seniors health services, housing, transportation, volunteer, programming etc. in an accessible and easy to navigate format.
- » Identify one or more locations in public spaces and buildings to create a senior-specific bulletin board or kiosk (e.g. Mill Bay Shopping Centre or new Seniors Hub location) for news and resources. Ensure materials are regularly updated.
- » Develop and broadcast weekly community events (e.g., via new Seniors Hub, message boards and specialized e-news).
- » Review CVRD communications protocol and ensure that information relevant to seniors is broadcast through appropriate media channels, such as newspaper, radio, and activity guides.

#### Obj #2

Strengthen bonds with local stakeholders, partners, and First Nation communities.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Explore ways to reach out to local First Nations, particularly Elders, to identify needs as well as areas of mutual support and interest.
- » Consider hosting a semi-annual or quarterly Seniors Forum, with local stakeholders, businesses, and community groups.
- » Consider hosting a community-to-community dialogue that connects stakeholders across the South Cowichan and local First Nation communities to seek win-win partnerships and initiatives.

#### Obj #3

Enhance the level of dialogue and coordination among agencies that support seniors.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Continually evaluate the progress of the age-friendly action plan and communicate this progress to seniors.
- » Direct the Seniors Hub Coordinator to facilitate communication and build connections between agencies, organizations and residents.



## B10. Civic Participation & Employment

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » Need to overcome the barriers to volunteering - awareness, mobility and health issues, motivation and incentives.
- » Need to provide seniors with more information regarding volunteer opportunities in the community.
- » More targeted outreach is needed to isolated seniors, as well as those who are new to the community.
- » There is an untapped opportunity to connect with local schools and many seniors are keen to share their knowledge with younger generations.

#### Key Voices

- » "As long as I can drive and walk, I can volunteer."
- » "I have volunteered for many, many years. But now, volunteer groups appear less eager to encourage seniors to join them."
- » "I participate and see just the same few faces; we are failing to connect and engage with the majority of seniors."

#### Current Practices

- » It is important to know that Cowichan Valley has one of the highest percentages of volunteerism nationally!
- » South Cowichan Community Policing and the Tourism Centre desk both provide excellent volunteer opportunities in the community.
- » The 2011, Cowichan Sustainable Economic Development Strategy acknowledges that more needs to be done in order to support the aging population - however no actions are identified.



## B10. Civic Participation & Employment

### Objectives & Strategies

#### Obj #1

Increase the civic participation and active engagement of seniors in Mill Bay.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Establish a South Cowichan Area Seniors Advisory Committee (including local citizens and a CVRD Board representative) to help better coordinate and address issues facing seniors in the area and link this with the Cowichan Seniors Network to support their work.
- » Host a yearly volunteer fair – invite all local volunteer organizations to recruit and share information about their services. Investigate supporting transportation to and from this event.
- » Establish CVRD communication standards with regard to effective engagement of seniors, including utilization of media channels most used by seniors.
- » Explore intergenerational volunteer opportunities.
  - ✘ For example, school partnerships in which seniors mentor students, or students support seniors with technology.

#### Obj #2

Provide opportunities for seniors to better support one another where possible.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Explore the necessary tools for establishing a seniors sharing service where peer-to-peer support can take place.
- » Work with local seniors groups and support the establishment of a regular repair cafe event for seniors where volunteers can exchange and trade services and skills.



## B11. Community Support & Health Services

### Current Conditions

#### Identified Barriers

- » Many residents feel that services available in the community, such as in-home care, are not affordable.
- » A critical element of seniors care, nurse practitioners and physicians for home visits, are limited or lacking.
- » Improved transportation options to hospitals and specialists as well as

clinics are needed.

- » There is a need for dedicated space for 55+ recreation and other activities, close to transportation options. A Seniors Centre is greatly desired. Mill Bay seniors need a place to meet, to do things, to learn new skills, and to make friends!

#### Key Voices

- » "It is so expensive that one has to balance what one can afford and what one lets go. I had to cut down on my exercise classes to use the money to pay for yard work."
- » "It's great to have doctors clinics, x-ray, lab, eyes & teeth care available at the Mill Bay Medical Centre."
- » "We need a much more vibrant 55+

recreation program with interesting, changing courses in a dedicated building on a bus line."

- » "If I want to attend really worthwhile classes I go to Victoria. And of course, I will be able to continue to go to these classes after I am forced to move to Victoria to find all the services and opportunities lacking here in Mill Bay."

#### Current Practices

- » Our Cowichan Health Network works to facilitate connections for increased health and wellness within the community.
- » There are two pharmacy's and a Medical Centre located within Mill Bay. However, specialists and extended

care options are not available in the community.

- » A variety of private care providers are present.
- » There is grocery delivery available from Thrifty Foods.



## B11. Community Support & Health Services

### Objectives & Strategies

\*Many of these initiatives are beyond the capacity of the CVRD. However, political support and advocacy from the local government remains vital to achieving these objectives.

#### Obj #1

Support the improvement of health care services available to seniors in Mill Bay.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Investigate ways to increase local visits from medical specialists.
- » Facilitate the establishment of a continuous care facility in South Cowichan.
- » Actively explore bringing more nurse practitioners and innovative care models to the community.

#### Obj #2

Support improved transportation options for in and out-of-town appointments and services.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Support the establishment of, and work with, existing local organizations to expand the volunteer patient support program that accompanies seniors to out-of-town appointments.
- » Lobby for increased handyDART services in the South Cowichan area.

#### Obj #3

Establish a Seniors Centre/Hub within the South Cowichan Area.

#### Recommended Strategies

- » Work with partners to evaluate funding and location options for a Seniors Centre within the South Cowichan area.
- » Identify surplus building space within South Cowichan and assess its appropriateness as a seniors hub facility, taking into consideration accessibility, access to transportation, size, location, cost, etc.
- » Work with local community organizations to fund a Seniors Hub Coordinator to oversee services, manage volunteers, etc.

# C

## ACTION PLANNING

### C1. Chapter Overview

This chapter identifies priority actions for the community to undertake in order to become more age-friendly. These actions were identified and refined collaboratively with key stakeholders who will be working collectively to implement each action. Inside, you will find...

- » 11 key Recommended Actions that emerged from the action planning Stakeholder Workshops and Advisory Committee meetings; and,
- » Several recommendations for Making It Happen – facilitating the implementation of this plan beyond the completion of this project.





**10** prioritized actions identified for implementation

## C2. Recommended Actions

This community-driven action plan is founded on the meaningful involvement of the residents and organizations that make up the Mill Bay community. The project process was anchored in four collaborative advisory committee meetings and two solution-oriented workshops, each contributing to the development of an

actionable (i.e., containing practical steps able to be implemented) age-friendly plan.

The action list on page 34 features a refined set of 10 recommended strategies for the CVRD to consider in an initial phase of implementation.

### Common Objectives

- » Several key objectives emerged that reflect the common barriers in the community and the unique local context for this age-friendly action plan:
- » Communication of information for older adults;
- » Coordination of resources, including volunteerism and support services;
- » Meaningful social, recreational, and wellness activities for seniors;
- » Accessible planning, engineering, and design standards;
- » Identification of small changes that may make a big difference;
- » Strengthening partnerships and relationships; and,
- » Fostering social connectedness and reaching isolated seniors.

# Priority Actions

The table below details the 10 action items that emerged as key priorities for the implementation of this plan. Additional action items and next steps can be found through Section B of this plan.

ACTION NAME	FIRST STEPS	NEXT STEPS	LEADS
<b>1 Champion</b>	» Appoint CVRD champion to help facilitate and establish a South Cowichan Area Seniors Advisory committee.	» Engage community leads to take charge of actions	» CVRD
<b>2 Age-friendly Coordinator</b>	» Work with partners to evaluate funding options and define scope of Age-Friendly Coordinator position	» Apply for July 2018 New Horizons Grant to fund position.	» South Cowichan Seniors Advisory Committee & CVRD
<b>3 South Cowichan Seniors Advisory Committee</b>	» Bring together South Cowichan Seniors Groups to discuss common issues, assets and establishment of Advisory Committee.	» Engage with Advisory Committee regularly to implement Action Plan.	» South Cowichan Seniors Groups, Our Cowichan, Seniors Coordinator, CVRD
<b>4 Seniors Hub</b>	» Work with partners to evaluate funding and location options for a Seniors Hub.	» Pilot a “pop-up” drop-in Hub at appropriate locations.	» South Cowichan Seniors Advisory Committee, CVRD, Local Seniors Serving Organizations
<b>5 Communicate Information</b>	» Establish a resource where volunteer opportunities are coordinated and promoted to seniors.	» (a) Develop a communication strategy for older adults; and » (b) start a seniors bulletin board in one or more locations.	» South End Community Policing and CVRD
<b>6 Housing</b>	» Support the development of more attainable, diverse, flexible and accessible housing for seniors in Mill Bay.	» Ongoing engagement and consultation of seniors regarding housing needs.	» CVRD
<b>7 Sidewalks, Crossing, and Pathways</b>	» Share this report with MOTI and lobby for pedestrian safety implementation in Mill Bay, including highway crossing.	» Establish an off-road multi-use trail along Mill Bay Rd and improve accessibility of pathways and trails.	» MOTI, Malahat Nation, CVRD
<b>8 Transportation</b>	» Age-friendly Coordinator to identify local transportation option including available buses and potential for locally funded routes and event based service.	» Work with BC Transit, CVRD and local transit operating companies, to review improvements to community bus routes and implement Transit Future Plan for South Cowichan.	» Age-friendly Coordinator, CVRD, Local Businesses & Schools
<b>9 Guidelines for Inclusion</b>	» Establish simple meaningful age-friendly guidelines for business and events.	» Publish and distribute guidelines, providing educational opportunities for business owners and event coordinators.	» CVRD, Age-friendly Coordinator
<b>10 Seniors Forum</b>	» Evaluate the feasibility of a Seniors Forum and develop a format and list of possible attendees.	» Host an annual or semi-annual Seniors Forum with local stakeholders.	» Age-friendly Coordinator and South Cowichan Seniors Advisory Committee



## C5. Making it Happen – Action planning

Beyond the specific action items recommended on page 34, there are several overarching, strategic “next steps” to help make this plan ‘happen’.

### Annual Action Planning

To make real progress, this Age-friendly Action Plan must be a living document that is annually revisited to review completed or on-going actions, evaluate outcomes, assess current conditions and opportunities, and re-establish a prioritized list of actions for the following year.

This action planning process could be employed in conjunction with a Seniors Forum that brings together relevant stakeholders on a semi-annual or, at least, an annual basis.

The CVRD needs to find ways to initiate and catalyze such improved partnerships. Doing so will broaden the ownership of this plan and so improve the likelihood of its on-the-ground implementation.

There are three key ways that the CVRD can do this:

- » Develop a Seniors Forum that brings stakeholders together to discuss seniors issues in Mill Bay and other communities within the CVRD, to engage them in an annual action planning process;

- » Engage local partners to take ownership of recommended strategies where their organization is the lead; and,
- » Engage local partners to make a commitment to supporting the objectives and strategies of this plan and to helping raise awareness about on-going age-friendly initiatives and issues.

### Seek Funding and Explore Sub-Strategies

Provincial grants, federal grants, partnerships, and other funding options should be pursued as a means to support or jump-start priority strategies in years to come. Some funding streams include:

- » The Provincial Seniors’ Housing and Support Initiative provides Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grants;
- » Employment and Social Development Canada funds a New Horizons for Seniors Program, which funds seniors initiatives across the country; and
- » PlanH (BC) offers Healthy Communities Capacity Building Grants for small, rural, and remote communities.

Moreover, as funding programs and partnerships are identified, the CVRD should be opportunistic in seeking smaller scale sub-strategies that

complement those strategies identified in this action plan.

### **Monitor and Adapt**

Two levels of monitoring should be used to strengthen the implementation of this plan,

- » Strategies undertaken could be monitored and evaluated over time. This would inform decision-making, allow initiatives to be adapted and improved, and provide transparency

regarding implementation success. A special emphasis should be placed on funded projects.

- » The CVRD could monitor age-friendly indicators (like those in the public survey), or those outlined by the Public Health Agency of Canada, over time, in order to identify trends and track progress in the community as a whole. This monitoring would help inform annual action planning and could be used to raise awareness and build enthusiasm for age-friendly initiatives.

## **C6. Age-friendly Culture**

As already addressed in Section 1 of this report, to truly become age-friendly, the Mill Bay community must embrace a culture of age-friendliness. This means business are inclusive of all ages and abilities; local service providers build partnerships to achieve age-friendly objectives; and public

agencies understand and work to meet the different needs of all residents.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District can take the first – and perhaps most important – step in 'making it happen' by committing to an age-friendly corporate culture.

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**CVRD - MILL BAY**

# **AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN**

