

Stewart Age-friendly Assessment & Community Plan



Prepared for the **District of Stewart**

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Acknowledgement

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the number and proportion of older people increases nation-wide, caring for an older population is becoming a priority for BC communities. As the needs and abilities of the local population change with age, there are significant implications for government service provision. In response to this recognition, a growing movement has evolved to facilitate the planning and development of age-friendly communities.

An age-friendly community promotes active aging, enables people to live in security and enjoy good health, while ensuring that policies, services and infrastructure related to the physical and social environment are designed to support older people in participating fully in their communities.

Recognizing that the needs of seniors and people with disabilities in the small, remote town of Stewart will increasingly need to be addressed, the District of Stewart joined the age-friendly community planning movement, and undertook an assessment and planning project. The District engaged a professional planner to conduct the assessment in order to inform the development of a plan to move Stewart closer toward an age-friendly community. This report documents the results of the community assessment process, and provides some recommendations to begin to address the community priorities that emerged, as well as a review and suggested update of the Stewart Official Community Plan.

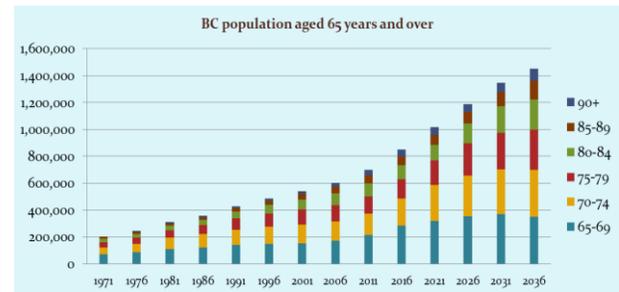
The Stewart age-friendly assessment included a community-wide survey and a public consultation session, supplemented by interviews with a range of community stakeholders and service providers. A small advisory group was also assembled to provide input and feedback on the process. The assessment explored the assets that Stewart currently has to build on, while investigating what Stewart might need to move toward building a more accessible, supportive and inclusive community for an older generation. The community priorities that have been flagged for further attention include:

1. Transportation;
2. Health Services;
3. Housing and Home support services;
4. Walkways and Building Entrances; and
5. Communication.

1.0 BACKGROUND

An Aging Population

Like many nations worldwide, the Canadian age demographic is undergoing a dramatic shift toward a proportionately older population. With the aging of the ‘baby boomer’ generation, the population over age 65 will more than double within less than 30 years.¹ In British Columbia (BC), 14.6 percent of the population was 65 or older in 2006, a figure projected to be over 25 percent within 20 years.²



In general, peoples’ needs and abilities change as they age, and this can have significant implications for government services, such as health care, transportation, housing, and community infrastructure. For example, 44 percent of Canada’s total health care expenditures are currently attributed to seniors who comprise 13 percent of the national population, while studies have shown that disability rates jump from 31 percent among seniors aged 65 to 74, to 53 percent for those aged 75 and older.³ At the same time, older adults are tremendous community resources, as family supports, volunteers and knowledgeable advisors, and there are extensive advantages to ensuring that older persons remain active and involved in their communities. Ultimately, the costs and benefits associated with aging and the impacts on communities clearly illustrate the need to invest now to ensure that the needs of the population are going to be met in the coming decades.

Age-friendly Communities

In response to the recognition of the implications of aging communities, a growing movement has evolved to facilitate the planning and development of age-friendly communities. At the international level, the age-friendly communities initiative started with the World Health Organization’s global age-friendly cities project conducted in 2006, which investigated the barriers and opportunities to developing age-friendly cities – information that was compiled to create *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*. Nationally, the Canadian Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities Initiative was launched to increase awareness about what seniors need to remain active, healthy and productive in smaller, remote communities. The resulting publication, *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide*, documents the unique challenges faced by these small and often isolated communities, including limited resources, housing/home support, and transportation options, as well as limited local health services and thus the burden of having to travel long distances to receive adequate care.

Provincially, the Age-friendly British Columbia (AFBC) initiative is being championed by the BC Seniors’ Healthy Living Secretariat to enhance the activity and independence of seniors throughout BC to improve their overall health and quality of life. In 2007, an Age-friendly Communities Implementation Team was recruited and significant resources were rolled out to enhance community capacity, information sharing, and provide education and resources for local governments and related service providers. An Age-friendly BC section was added to the Seniors BC website providing a clearing-house of information, guides and best practices on age-friendly community planning, and staff resources have been established to support the initiative.

From 2007 to 2010, a provincial grant program was implemented through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Seniors’ Housing and Support Initiative (SHSI) to assist local governments in developing community planning initiatives and projects that focus on supporting age-friendly communities and the ability of seniors to age in place. Specifically, the goal of the program was “to develop planning tools, documents and community projects that support age-friendly communities.”⁴ In the summer of 2010, the District of Stewart was successfully awarded a grant under the SHSI program in order to conduct a community assessment, as well as a review and update of the Official Community Plan.

Features of an Age-friendly Community

An age-friendly community promotes active aging, enables people to live in security and enjoy good health, while ensuring that polices, services and infrastructure related to the physical and social environment are designed to support older people in participating fully in their communities. For a concise overview of the attributes of an age-friendly community, as well as the steps recommended to assess, plan and develop an age-friendly community, please refer to the *Guide for Local Governments* developed by the Age-friendly BC initiative available at: www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly/resources.

Eight key features of an age-friendly community:

1. **Outdoor spaces** and public buildings are well-maintained and physically accessible.
2. Public **transportation** is accessible and affordable.
3. **Housing** is affordable, appropriately located, accessible and secure.
4. Opportunities are available for **social participation** in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages and cultures.
5. Older people are treated with **respect** and are included in civic life.
6. Opportunities are available for **employment and volunteerism** that cater to older persons' interests and abilities.
7. Age-friendly **communication and information** is available.
8. **Community support and health services** are tailored to older persons' needs.

Source: World Health Organization. *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Stewart Age-friendly Community Assessment and Planning Project

Recognizing that the needs of seniors and people with disabilities in Stewart will increasingly need to be addressed, the District of Stewart applied for an age-friendly community planning grant and committed to "assess existing conditions for seniors and people with disabilities, and review and amend the OCP and other bylaws."⁵ In January, 2011, the District engaged a professional planner to conduct the assessment which would be used to inform the development of a plan to move Stewart closer toward an age-friendly community. This report documents the results of the community assessment process and provides some recommendations to begin to address the community priorities that have surfaced.

The central components of the age-friendly assessment included a community-wide survey and a public consultation session, supplemented by interviews with a range of community stakeholders and service providers. A small advisory group was assembled to provide input and feedback on the process (Terms of Reference in **Appendix C**). Advisory assistance was provided by the Age-friendly BC initiative and Northern Health. Extensive resources have been assembled to support local government planning efforts to encourage accessible, inclusive, age-friendly communities, including comprehensive guides and best practices, and much of these resources were drawn upon in developing the Stewart community assessment process.

Supporting the needs of seniors and people with disabilities has been on the District of Stewart's radar for some time. Since 2007, the District has participated in the *Measuring up the North* (MUTN) initiative – a multi-stakeholder program developed to facilitate the development of more accessible and inclusive communities in Northern BC.⁶ Participation in the MUTN initiative has resulted in accessibility improvements in recreational facilities and walkways, and a wheelchair accessible washroom is slated to be installed in the park in the downtown area.

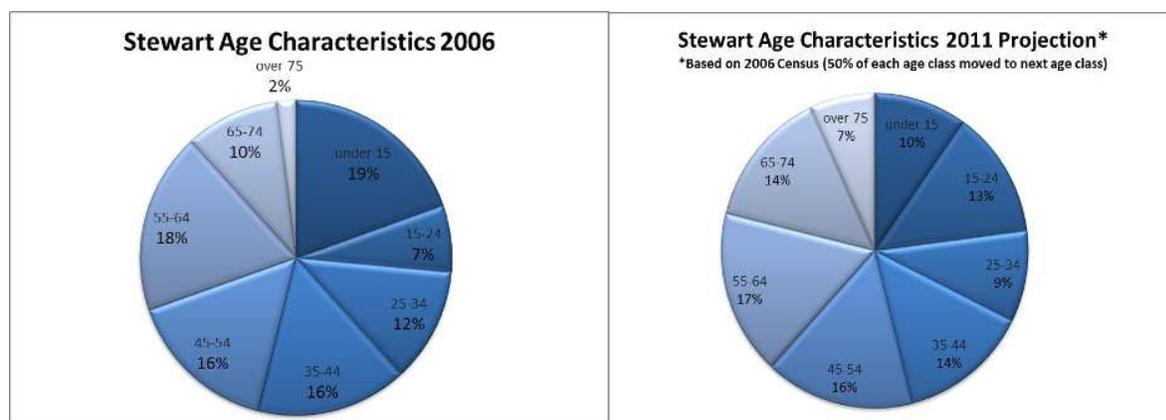


Stewart Context

The national and provincial population is aging quickly, and Stewart is no exception. The 2006 census identified 12 percent of Stewart's population as senior (65+), slightly under the provincial average of 14.6 percent. However, over 31 percent of Stewart's population was identified as age 55 and over, with 19 percent of the population between the ages of 55 and 64. Further, the median age of the Stewart population went up from 36.2 in 2001 to 42.9 in 2006.

Given that five years have now passed since the last census, these numbers have likely shifted upward considerably. To illustrate this shift, an age class projection was developed by moving 50 percent of each age class from the 2006 census to the next class as depicted in Table 1 below. Only the 2011 census will provide firm numbers in this regard, but in the meantime, it is interesting to note that projections indicate that 21 percent of Stewart's population is now in its senior years, with a total of 38 percent of the population age 55 and over.

Table 1: Stewart 2006 Age Characteristics & Projection for 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census, Stewart Community Profile

Community Implications

Although the 2006 census did not reveal a particularly large senior population in Stewart, the age distribution is rapidly shifting toward an older population. Further, it is worth noting that in 2006, only 2 percent of Stewart's population was over the age of 75, which may indicate a trend of seniors leaving the Stewart community. However, the number of people in Stewart aged 75 and older will have likely increased to over 7 percent by 2011, and many of them are determined to stay in the community. Further, property values and financial constraints may not permit some seniors to leave the community when they might choose otherwise in order to follow key services they might need. Therefore, if the Stewart community hopes to retain many valuable community members in the coming years, while supporting a good quality of life for those who are determined to stay or may have limited mobility options, ensuring the age-friendliness of the community is a key priority.

An aging population has far-reaching implications for basic local government services and infrastructure, as the unique needs and abilities of older people can increase the service level expectations related to such things as the accessibility of buildings and walkways, transportation, public facilities and recreation. While a number of other age-friendly related attributes are not directly within local government jurisdiction, the increased needs of the community in areas such as health services and housing necessitate a collaborative approach between governments, businesses, community organizations and individuals. Age-friendly communities are based on the principles of active aging throughout life and are built through an integrated, collaborative community development process that ultimately addresses the needs of the community as a whole, including younger and older persons, as well as people with disabilities.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

Two assessment processes – a community survey and public consultation session – were utilized to assess existing conditions for seniors and people with disabilities to get a sense for the community’s priorities in moving Stewart closer toward an age-friendly community.

3.1 Community Survey

During the month of March, a community survey was conducted on behalf of the District of Stewart to get a sense for residents’ perspectives on a range of features that contribute to the age-friendliness of the community. The framework and questions developed for the paper-based survey were inspired by the eight key domains of an age-friendly community established by the *Global Age-friendly Cities* and the *Canadian Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities* projects.



The surveys were mailed directly to each household in the community and draw prizes were offered as an incentive to return the completed surveys to the District office within just over three weeks of receiving the survey. The draw prizes included 10 pedometers and five re-usable lunch/shopping bag sets generously donated by the Seniors Healthy Living Secretariat.

A total of 31 surveys were completed and returned, showing a relatively positive response by the community (accounting for seven percent of the total population of approximately 450 people). Statistically speaking, this population sample size is sufficiently large enough to infer the general populations’ perspectives in response to the survey questions. Although a cross-representation of various age groups was obtained, the majority of respondents were over the age of 45 (80%), with 41% of the respondents 60 and older.

A summary of the survey results is outlined in Table 2 below and the complete survey response overview can be found in **Appendix A**. Given the large number of respondents that indicated “neutral” responses, a secondary table (**Appendix B**) was developed to reflect only the affirmative and negative responses (i.e. “neutral” answers removed from the percentages) in order to provide a clearer sense of perspectives.

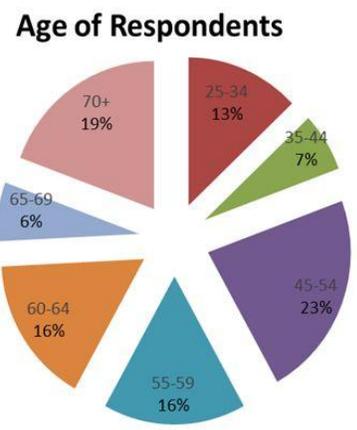


Table 2: Summary of Survey Results

Survey Question	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings...in Stewart:			
The sidewalks and walkways are maintained, unobstructed and accessible.	39%	52%	10%
Public spaces (parks) and facilities (washrooms) are maintained, accessible and readily available.	42%	32%	26%
Buildings are accessible (e.g. ramps) and can accommodate people with disabilities.	42%	29%	29%
Transportation...in Stewart:			
The roads are maintained and snow is cleared in a timely manner.	84%	10%	6%
Sufficient parking is available close to amenities.	84%	3%	13%
Services are available to transport seniors and people with disabilities within the community.	6%	77%	16%
Services are available to transport people to key service areas out of town.	6%	84%	10%
Housing...in Stewart:			
There is a range of appropriate and affordable housing options.	45%	26%	29%
Information on financial assistance programs for senior home modifications is available.	16%	35%	48%
Affordable supports are available to enable seniors to remain at home (e.g. assisted living).	6%	55%	39%
Social Participation...in Stewart:			
There are a variety of events and activities that seniors/those with disabilities can partake in.	26%	39%	35%
Community events and activities are well-publicized and well-attended.	45%	26%	29%

Social Inclusion & Respect...in Stewart:			
Older people are included in community activities and are recognized for their contributions.	42%	16%	42%
Seniors are treated respectfully in the community.	74%	13%	13%
Civic Participation & Employment...in Stewart:			
Seniors serve in an advisory role in the community.	26%	16%	58%
Adequate volunteer opportunities are available in the community.	52%	19%	29%
Paid employment opportunities are available for older adults.	29%	29%	42%
Communication & Information...in Stewart:			
Information about community activities and services is readily available to citizens of all ages.	58%	16%	26%
I have access to the internet and I can use it to gain access to community information.	68%	32%	0%
Community & Health Services...in Stewart:			
Home health and support services are available including health, personal care and housekeeping.	26%	29%	45%
An adequate range of health services is available for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.	39%	29%	32%
Health care professionals are available and responsive to health concerns.	68%	16%	16%

Notable Findings:

- Overall, survey respondents showed a mixed response (i.e. not leaning dramatically one way or the other) in most of the eight domains of community life (except regarding transportation), indicating that there are a range of perspectives and opinions about the age-friendliness of Stewart amongst community members.
- The survey category involving **transportation** produced the most conclusive results:
 - ✘ most residents (84%) agreed that the roads are maintained, snow is removed in a timely manner and sufficient parking is available; and
 - ✘ most residents indicated that the community lacks transportation services both within the community (77%) and to outside destinations (84%).
 - ✘ With the “neutral” responses excluded, these findings are further emphasized as 90% were satisfied with road maintenance/snow removal and parking availability (96%), while 93% indicated transportation services are lacking.
 - ✘ Most of the comments provided in this category, as well as a majority of comments in the **priorities** section, expressed frustration with the lack of transportation services and indicated a strong desire to have a community bus or shuttle service.
- The survey category involving **social inclusion and respect** also produced conclusive results:
 - ✘ most residents (74%) agree that seniors are treated respectfully, recognized for their contributions and are included in community activities.
- The survey category involving **community and health services** received the most comments, but residents were fairly split regarding their feelings about the availability of services as follows:
 - ✘ 26% of respondents agreed that home health and support services are available, while 29% indicated that they are not (the 45% of “neutral” responses were likely unsure);
 - ✘ of the respondents that provided their perspective on the availability of health services, 57% felt that there is an adequate range of health services available; and
 - ✘ of the respondents that commented on health care professionals, 81% felt that health care professionals are available and responsive to health concerns.

- Although respondents seemed to be relatively satisfied with the availability and affordability of **housing** options, of those that commented on the availability of affordable home support services, 89% indicated that services that enable seniors to remain at home (e.g. assisted living) are unavailable.
- Although respondents seemed to be relatively split on the maintenance and accessibility of **outdoor spaces and buildings**, 52% were dissatisfied with the maintenance and accessibility of sidewalks and walkways.
- With regard to **communication and information**, although 58% of respondents indicated that information about community activities and services is readily available, the high number of “neutral” responses indicates that many residents are unaware of community activities and the services available.
- Thematically, comments provided regarding what residents **appreciate and enjoy** about the community generally included reference to the: clean air and water, beauty of the natural environment, lack of crime, quiet, laid-back lifestyle, compact nature of the built environment and positive community attributes such as the friendly, welcoming and helpful people.
- Thematically, comments provided regarding **priorities** for the Stewart community generally included the need for:
 - ✗ Transportation services;
 - ✗ More local health services to reduce the burden of travel to outside medical facilities;
 - ✗ Senior housing and home support services;
 - ✗ More accessible walkways and buildings; and
 - ✗ Economic development to fund community age-friendly services.

3.2 Community Consultation

The District of Stewart hosted a community consultation session entitled **Community Conversation on....An Age-friendly Community** at the Stewart Health Centre on Wednesday, March 16, to hear residents’ thoughts about existing conditions for seniors and people with disabilities, as well as ideas to address community priorities. A notice about the event was included at the end of the community survey that was mailed directly to each household, posters advertising the event were displayed at a number of key locations, and a notice was distributed via email to community contacts and published in the school newsletter.

The event was relatively well attended by diverse community members with at least 14 people participating, including several older adults, health service providers, the Age-friendly Stewart advisory group members, and three municipal elected officials (including the Mayor). Given the size of the community and the number of people attending the event, the session was conducted using a participatory research, focus group consultation methodology.

The session opened with a presentation that:

- reviewed the terminology and features of an “age-friendly” community;
- explored the issues of an ageing population and reasons to plan age-friendly communities;
- highlighted the age-friendly initiative in BC and some example projects; and
- framed the topic in the context of the Stewart community and reviewed the Stewart Age-friendly Community Assessment and Planning Project.



The presentation was followed by an engaging and animated discussion around the assets Stewart currently has to build on and what Stewart as a community might need to move toward building a more accessible, supportive and inclusive community for an older generation. Participants were so motivated by the subject that the facilitator had to actively assign “turns” to speak, as participants passionately shared their concerns and hopes for the community.

To encourage discussion and to provide a framework for feedback, the session was framed around four key questions (below). Participants were first encouraged to individually answer the first few questions (writing their answers on post-it notes), and then their responses were analyzed as a group to find common themes and similarities in order to get a sense for priority items.

Feedback and general themes were generated in response to the following questions:

- 1) In what ways is Stewart currently an Age-friendly community?
- 2) What challenges (barriers) to an age-friendly community do you see in our community?
- 3) What is the ideal situation for these challenges/barriers in an age-friendly community?
- 4) What could be done (actions taken) to address these challenges/barriers to move toward the ideal situation?



Further, in advance of the session, phone and in-person interviews were conducted with a number of community stakeholders, including: members of the Age-friendly Advisory group (who could not attend the session), local service providers, and District staff and elected officials. The interview questions were framed along the same lines as the session questions, and the feedback has been included in the consultation feedback outlined below.

Table 3: Consultation Feedback

Comments listed in the order of amount of times provided, i.e. repeated comments first

1. Current age-friendly features of Stewart:
<p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great health care professionals (doctors and nurses) ▪ Grocery store delivers ▪ Café/restaurant picks up older people that need a ride ▪ School and library have newsletters that publish community information ▪ Health Advisory Committee available for information sharing and to voice concerns (looking for more representation in the community) ▪ Stewart has been participating in the <i>Measuring up the North</i> initiative to support the accessibility of buildings and outdoor spaces in the community (installed two wheelchair accessible bathrooms in the arena and a chair lift to the second floor, installed “curb cuts” at intersections in the downtown area, the District will be installing wheelchair accessible washrooms in the Memorial park) ▪ The District has started a community newsletter which could be used to highlight activities and services available for seniors in the community. ▪ Bear Valley School and the Stewart Health Centre are often used as a community centre ▪ The Stewart Health Centre has a number of services to support older people that are fairly unsubscribed (home support worker under-utilized, facilities such as showers/bath, foot care, meals/kitchen). The Centre is currently working to roll out a “meals on wheels” program.
<p>Physical and built environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compact – things are close (walking friendly) ▪ Flat surfaces (no hills), low curbs, and some curb cuts ▪ Nice park areas (boardwalk and Info Centre) ▪ Benches available (along Main St. and the boardwalk) ▪ Some buildings are completely accessible (Arena, government office, library, Info Centre, Health Centre)
<p>Community social attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lots of activities for older people (badminton, exercise classes at school and Health Centre, quilting at the church, seniors night, choir, walking club, woodworking, cooking and healthy living courses, etc.) ▪ Great turn-out at events – good community involvement ▪ Lots of volunteering ▪ Small-town community dynamic – people tend to look after one-another ▪ Safe (no crime)

- There is a morning student walking club at the school – seniors could be invited to participate

2. Challenges/barriers to an age-friendly community in Stewart:

Services:

- Transportation within and out of Stewart (transportation issues dominated the discussion):
 - Lack of public transportation
 - Need bus service from Stewart to Terrace
- Health services:
 - Lack of overnight bed in hospital
 - Need more health services for people in Stewart to prevent travel
- Seniors home care and housing:
 - Lack of in-home care services
 - Limited assistance grocery shopping/shovelling snow
 - No senior housing facility
- Communication:
 - Lack of communication and awareness regarding services available

Physical and built environment:

- In-accessible housing (no stairs, entrance ways, snow clearing)
- Building code (level grade entrances, wider doorways)
- No public restrooms
- Heavy doors at businesses
- Two-story homes
- Uneven sidewalks, and limited number of sidewalks (especially in winter)
- Snow/ice on sidewalks and building entrances

Socio-economic:

- With population loss, many services have left town (bank, hospital beds, curling, pool, Legion and Lions clubs, etc.)
- Lack of funding for programs (need a grant coordinator)
- Lack of staff resources to see programs through (no continuity)
- Same volunteers trying to do everything

3. Things that Stewart **needs** to move toward an age-friendly community:

Transportation:

- Weekly/monthly transportation to Terrace for appointments, shopping, services, etc.
- Scheduled so can make return trip in same day (no overnight stays required)
- Appointments coordinated to have enough people to warrant a bus service

Health Services:

- Utilizing the building – seniors coming to the Health Centre to use the facilities (showers/bath, foot care, meals/kitchen)
- Increase awareness of services available to seniors in the community
- Advertise to attract health care professionals (dental, physio, chiro, etc.)
- Need to encourage visiting preventative health service providers (dental, optometry, nutrition, etc.)
- Need to balance bringing services in with cost of provincial health care (half of provincial budget spent on health care)
- Economic stimulus/workforce/increase population → then attract health professionals

Seniors housing and home support:

- Affordable, accessible housing to accommodate needs of seniors (possible link with green building demonstration project)
- Home support services are under-utilized – seniors may be unaware of services available

Communication:

- Guide/directory/newsletter of senior services (or seniors' section in community newsletter)
- Seniors advocate – someone to channel info (repository), but needs to be funded/supported (perhaps Service BC, someone would need to inquire)

4. Possible **actions** to address the challenges/barriers to move toward an age-friendly community:

Transportation solutions:

- Community ride-share bulletin board (interim solution to public transport)
- Post ride-share notices at Post Office or Health Centre
- Funding research – subsidy for bus service and other programs
- Possible opportunity for Grandmac vans to be used for bus service (have drivers, need licence (previously refused?), may need subsidy to make business case)
- Possible opportunity with Seaport Limo – used to hold licence, but was not passenger oriented (priority to mail run, need to re-work schedule)
- Communicate with Ministry of Transportation/Transport Canada/BC Transit (need for public transportation, licencing, subsidies)
- Pilot some kind of van/bus service (at least for Christmas)

Community planning exercise:

- Need to prioritize community interests/concerns
- Need to update Official Community Plan – opportunity to engage everyone and prioritize

4.0 ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

A community-wide survey and consultation session were the two main approaches that were used to gather community feedback on existing conditions for seniors and people with disabilities, supplemented by interviews with a range of community stakeholders and service providers. The survey was designed to solicit residents' perspectives on relevant community attributes in the eight categories of an age-friendly community as described by international and national literature on the subject. After discussing the age-friendly attributes and limitations of the Stewart community, participants at the community consultation session shared their thoughts on some key features of an age-friendly community that Stewart needs to address. The results of both assessment processes revealed very similar outcomes and flagged several priority issues that need attention to move Stewart toward a more age-friendly community.

Community Priorities and Recommended Actions

The list of community priorities below was developed based on the number of comments provided related to the issue over the duration of the assessment process, the strength of consensus amongst survey respondents and session participants, as well as general feedback provided related to how important, or how much of a concern, the issue is to the community.

1. Transportation
2. Health Services
3. Housing and Home support services
4. Walkways and Building Entrances
5. Communication



Transportation

Transportation issues dominated the comments and discussion during the assessment process, while survey respondents almost unanimously agreed that transportation options in Stewart are lacking, or non-existent. Of particular concern is the lack of public transportation options between Stewart and neighbouring service centres (Terrace and Smithers), as most residents make the commute often for appointments and to purchase supplies and groceries. The lack of transportation options will be an increasing concern to the community as more people reach the age when driving becomes difficult and eventually impossible, especially given the often treacherous long-distance commute required to access service centres. Further, addressing the transportation needs of the community would have a number of positive co-benefits related to affordability and sustainability.

Moving Forward....

Objective: Given that the movement of people and goods is essential to the economic and social well-being of Stewart, a transportation strategy should be developed in an effort to address the transportation needs of all citizens.

Recommendations for Action:

- **Community Ride-Share Board:** Ride-sharing is common practice within the Stewart community and a community support system has developed in the absence of alternative transportation options. This support system should be further enhanced as an interim solution to the lack of transportation options servicing Stewart. A number of online ride-share programs are available and have been highly successful; however, given the goal of supporting older peoples' transportation needs, the ride-sharing framework should take the form of a traditional notice board in a highly visible area of the community, such as the post office or the Health Centre.
- **Develop a transportation strategy** to provide transportation options for residents to and from a neighbouring service centre (prioritizing the needs of seniors and people with a disability), possibly in partnership with other related service providers such as BC Transit, Northern Health, RDKS and/or a local business.
 - Conduct a user-needs survey to customize service (75% of respondents to the community Climate Action survey indicated that they would pay to use a bus service to Terrace, comments received indicated that residents need a bus (weekly/bi-weekly) that leaves Stewart in the morning and returns in the evening)
 - Investigate opportunities to partner with a local transportation service provider (e.g. Seaport Limousine or GranMac – cost and business case stated as main barrier to providing this service)
 - Work with BC Transit and related service providers to develop a feasibility study for a community shuttle bus service (possible regional significance – Gas Tax Regional Priorities fund)



Health Services

Statistically speaking, of the respondents that provided their perspective on the availability of health services in Stewart, 57% felt that there was an adequate range of services available for promoting, maintaining and restoring health, yet the lack of health services were the subject of a large number of comments received throughout the assessment process. Although the survey and consultation session revealed that most residents are satisfied with the basic medical services provided by the Stewart Health Centre, many residents are concerned about the requirement to travel to Terrace to receive hospital treatment (overnight stays) and professional health services, such as physiotherapy, dental, chiropractic, optometry, etc.

From a professional health service provision perspective, it may not make economic sense to provide some local health services to such a remote community given the relatively small population size of Stewart. However, Northern Health is intimately aware of Stewart's health service needs, and efforts have been and will continue to be made to encourage professionals to intermittently visit Stewart. For example, a trial-run has been arranged for a dental hygienist to visit the Stewart Health Centre in the Spring, and if the trial is successful, arrangements may be made to have the hygienist available a couple of days per month.

In many ways, the gap in health service provision is related to the transportation issue, as a transportation solution would help address the accessibility of health services, while addressing health services locally would help alleviate the need for public transportation services. As health service needs inevitably increase in the coming years, both avenues will need to be pursued to support the health service needs of the Stewart community.

Moving Forward....

Objective: Given that residents are concerned with the availability of certain health services, an effort should be made to address the gaps in local health service provision and to assist with transportation solutions where needed.

Recommendations for Action:

- Work with Northern Health (through the Health Advisory Committee) to encourage health service professionals to visit Stewart to **address gaps in local health service provision** (dental, optometry, physiotherapy, chiropractic, nutrition, etc.).
- Work with Northern Health to balance the medical needs of the Stewart community with the service cost limitations faced by the provincial health care system. Where it does not make sense to bring health services into Stewart, work with Northern Health to **support transportation solutions** for residents (particularly older residents that cannot drive) to receive the care they need.
- Encourage the expansion and use of **“tele-health” services** to put patients in touch with health care professionals at a distance without the need to travel (www.health.gov.bc.ca/ehealth/telehealth)

Housing and Home Support Services

Feedback from the assessment indicates that residents are generally satisfied with current housing options, although some were concerned about the future in-accessibility of the predominantly two-story buildings that make up much of the housing matrix. However, it seems that residents are concerned about the lack of support services to assist seniors and those with disabilities to remain in their homes and/or the community when they have difficulties caring for themselves.

When framed in the context of housing needs, the majority of respondents (89%) felt that affordable services that enable seniors to remain at home (e.g. assisted living) are unavailable. When framed in the context of health service needs, the statistics regarding the availability of home support services are mixed - 26% think that home support services are available, 29% think that they are not, and 45% are unsure. Supported by other feedback, these findings indicate that while medical related home support is sufficient, there may be a shortage of senior support services related to snow shoveling, grocery shopping, meal delivery and wood cutting.

Discussions with Northern Health suggest that general home support services are available, yet under-subscribed. If services available are under-utilized, while residents feel that services are unavailable or lacking, it seems that there may be a general lack of information on home support services.

After in-home care is no longer an option, inevitably older citizens will have to seek some form of seniors' housing assistance. With no such facility currently available in Stewart, this means that as residents reach their later years in life, they will be forced to leave the community unless arrangements can be made to develop some form of housing facility (Supportive Housing, Independent Living, etc.). While the general parameters of this assessment did not allow for an in-depth study of the specific housing needs of the future senior population in Stewart, the absence of a seniors housing facility is a concern that warrants a detailed investigation.

Further, the assessment findings echo the results of a survey that was conducted in 1999 by the Snow Country Health Council which undertook a survey of seniors (59+) to explore the needs of and support services available to seniors in Stewart. Most notably, findings revealed that:

- many seniors (63%) have no family to rely on in Stewart (other than their spouse) for assistance as they age, and
- highest on the list of seniors' anticipated needs are: independent seniors housing, home support services, assistance with snow shovelling, grocery shopping and meal delivery.

Moving Forward....

Objective: Given that older citizens have unique needs to allow them to “age in place,” an effort should be made to support seniors in remaining in their homes and in the community.

Recommendations for Action:

- Work with Northern Health to **raise awareness of the home support services available**, perhaps through a health section in the new community newsletter or a Stewart Health Centre brochure or newsletter.
- Work with Northern Health to **enhance senior home support services** that may be lacking such as assistance with snow shoveling, grocery shopping and meal delivery.
- Work with BC Housing and Northern Health to **assess the feasibility of developing a local seniors’ housing facility** in Stewart.

Walkways and Building Entrances

Although the assessment revealed relative community satisfaction with the maintenance and accessibility of outdoor spaces and buildings in general, a large proportion of residents (52%) are dissatisfied with the maintenance and accessibility of sidewalks and walkways. Many residents commented on the lack of sidewalks, the state of disrepair of existing sidewalks, and inconsistent snow/ice removal along sidewalks and building entrances, while others commented on difficulties with building entrance ways such as narrow, uneven entrances and heavy doors.

“Walkable” sidewalks and walkways are very important for older people, not only because they support safety and physical activity, but they enable older adults to get around and take care of their needs.

Moving Forward....

Objective: Given that accessible walkways and building entrances are essential to public safety and mobility, sidewalks, walkways and building entrances should be developed and maintained to enhance accessibility.

Recommendations for Action:

- As maintenance schedules and infrastructure priorities permit, address residents’ concerns with the maintenance and **accessibility of walkways** (extend and enhance sidewalks in the downtown area).
- Continue to ensure that all public buildings are accessible and encourage local businesses to **enhance the accessibility of building entrance ways**.
 - Encourage the use of accessible building guidelines for all new developments as outlined by the provincial Housing Policy Branch such as [Universal Design Guidelines](#).
 - Promote the Age-friendly Business Guide being released by the Seniors’ Healthy Living Secretariat.

Communication

With regard to communication and information, the assessment process indicated that most residents (58%) feel that information about community activities and services is readily available. However, the high number of “neutral” responses regarding services and activities indicates that information may not be reaching the entire community, particularly with regard to senior housing and home support services. Further, a number of comments regarding the lack of community communication mechanisms were expressed through the survey and consultation session.

There is considerable provincial and federal information and support available for seniors to remain active and healthy in their communities, such as financial aid for home renovations and seniors’ guides, and there is a need to ensure that this information is distributed locally.

Moving Forward....

Objective: Given the importance of ensuring that residents have access to information regarding services available to the community, communication efforts should be enhanced.

Recommendations for Action:

- Continue to develop a **community newsletter** and ensure that it is widely distributed. Consider developing a senior's section in the newsletter.
- Identify a **local seniors' advocate** that could act as a repository of seniors' related information. Given the provincial health link, it was suggested that the Service BC office may be able to provide some sort of clear-housing for seniors' information, but this would need to be investigated further.

Community Priorities in Context

The issues related to servicing an aging population in Stewart are exacerbated by existing community challenges largely related to the population decline over the last decade or two. From 2001 to 2006, Stewart lost 25 percent of its population size, and a total of 43 percent of citizens left the community over the last 20 years.⁷ With the population loss, the tax base to provide for community services has been reduced, while many services have left town, including banking services, overnight stays at the hospital, community organizations (Legion and Lions Club), and recreational facilities have closed such as the curling rink and pool.

The resource-based economy presents further challenges, as major seasonal population influxes (over 2,000 people at certain times of the year) add pressure to already stretched community services and infrastructure, while a healthy tourist economy contributes further to the large population swings. Although renewed mining activity in the region brings the hope of an increased population, it is uncertain if the increased activity will bring the critical mass required to bring back key services to the community. Ultimately, population decline, loss of key services, limited local government resources, and large non-resident population pressures are all key factors when considering the community's capacity to respond to the challenges presented by an aging population.

Resources to Support Community Priorities

BC Transit Feasibility Study Assistance for New Transit Systems

For every community in BC that does not have transit and wishes to investigate the options possible, there is a BC Transit process in place to produce a feasibility study. The interested community formally requests a feasibility study by Council resolution which is subject to approval by the BC Transit Board. This study is cost shared 50/50 between the community and BC Transit and is carried out by BC Transit staff. In cooperation with municipal staff and local agencies, BC Transit prepares a concept plan which reviews the local land use patterns, transportation network, local travel demand patterns and local objectives of the study. The study provides options for transit based on the foregoing factors and public input.

General Strategic Priorities Fund, Gas Tax Agreement

Funding is available for BC local governments under the General Strategic Priorities Fund (GSPF) to provide investments towards projects that improve public transit, local roads, bridges and tunnels, active transportation, community energy, water, wastewater or solid waste infrastructure that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, or provide cleaner air or cleaner water. Within these investment goals, funding is specifically targeted in the GSPF program towards strategic investments that are larger in scale or have regional impact. With possible linkages to servicing Kitwanga and even Dease Lake, a Stewart transportation strategy could have a regional impact and be eligible for support under the GSPF program.

Seniors BC and Age-friendly BC Websites

The Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, in the Ministry of Health, maintains the [SeniorsBC](#) website which provides resources for seniors related to life, healthcare, active aging, finances and benefits, and is the key information source for the [Age-friendly BC](#) initiative. The Age-friendly BC webpages host extensive information on age-friendly community projects and planning, as well as a wide range of age-friendly supports, tools and resources for

communities, organizations and businesses. Through the Age-friendly BC initiative, the province is working with local governments and other partners to support older people in living active, engaged and independent lives, and has hired staff resources to work with local governments in achieving these goals. The Provincial Age-friendly Community Coordinator can be reached by email AgeFriendlyBC@gov.bc.ca or phone at 250.387.4493.

New Horizons for Seniors Program

The [New Horizons for Seniors Program](#) (NHSP) is a federal grant program that supports projects led or inspired by seniors who make a difference in the lives of others and in their communities, enabling seniors to share their knowledge, skills and experiences with others. Local governments, health and non-profit organizations are eligible to receive up to \$25,000 in grant funding per year.

The NHSP supports projects that aim to address one or more of the following five program objectives:

- promoting volunteerism among seniors and other generations;
- engaging seniors in the community through the mentoring of others;
- expanding awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse;
- supporting the social participation and inclusion of seniors; and
- providing capital assistance for new and existing community projects and/or programs for seniors.

A call for proposals for community-based projects is anticipated in late spring 2011 and will be announced on the website at: www.hrsdc.gc.ca/seniors.

Centre for Universal Design

An information, technical assistance, and research center that evaluates, develops, and promotes accessible and universal design in housing, commercial and public facilities, outdoor environments, and products: www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/

5.0 Official Community Plan Review & Amendment

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a planning and decision-making tool used by local governments to set priorities for community development, essentially shaping the way communities are built. An OCP is a statement of goals and policies that provides an overall framework for decisions on a range of areas relating to local governance such as planning, land-use, building, housing, social policies and programs, environmental considerations, and neighbourhood character. Developed through active consultation with the community, the OCP sets a long-term vision for the community and they are usually updated every 5 to 10 years.

A review of the District of Stewart's OCP has been undertaken in an effort to reflect the District's commitment to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of the Stewart community for older people and those with a disability. The District's OCP was last updated in 1996 (15 years ago), and a comprehensive review needs to be undertaken to bring the Community Plan up-to-date in order to reflect current and future community priorities. A community vision, and goals to support that vision, is largely absent from the OCP, but there is a list of policy statements under the "Community Goals" section which are intended to reflect the community's vision and goals.

Despite its fairly dated content and lack of a defined community vision and goals, it is recommended that the existing Stewart OCP be updated to reflect community priorities that have emerged during the age-friendly assessment process. To accomplish this, while fitting into the existing OCP framework, the following policy statement should be appended to the OCP under section [5.1 Community Goals](#).

OPTION 1:

Policy Statement:

5.1.10 Whereas the number and proportion of older people in Stewart is increasing, the District of Stewart is committed to supporting and enhancing the accessibility of services and infrastructure to ensure a good quality of life for its citizens. As such, the following age-friendly considerations have been identified as community priorities:

- a) Whereas the movement of people and goods is essential to the economic and social well-being of Stewart, a transportation strategy shall be developed in an effort to address the transportation needs of all citizens.
- b) Whereas residents are concerned with the availability of certain health services, an effort shall be made to address the gaps in local health service provision and to assist with transportation solutions where needed.
- c) Whereas older citizens have unique needs to allow them to “age in place,” an effort shall be made to support seniors in remaining in their homes and in the community.
- d) Whereas accessible walkways and building entrances are essential to public safety and mobility, sidewalks, walkways and building entrances shall be developed and maintained to enhance accessibility.
- e) Whereas it is important to ensure that residents have access to information regarding services available to the community, communication efforts shall be enhanced.

OPTION 2:

Policy Statement:

5.1.10 Whereas the number and proportion of older people in Stewart is increasing, the District of Stewart is committed to supporting and enhancing the accessibility of services and infrastructure to ensure a good quality of life for its citizens. As such, the District recognizes the ***Stewart Age-friendly Assessment & Community Plan 2011*** as a tool for achieving its commitments in this regard and will strive to implement the recommended actions to address identified community priorities.

Both approaches offer an interim solution to addressing community priorities, however, a comprehensive OCP review should be undertaken to ensure that the District’s central decision-making tool reflects the current goals of the community and sets informed priorities for community development. There are several funding mechanisms available to local governments in BC that provide financial assistance for Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP) projects and a number of small BC communities have addressed the need to update their OCP and zoning bylaw by conducting the processes in conjunction with an ICSP.

Recommendation: Apply an age-friendly planning ‘lens’ when updating the Stewart OCP and when considering future land use, development, infrastructure, and community servicing decisions to encourage the following community attributes:

1. **Outdoor spaces** and public buildings that are well-maintained and physically accessible.
2. Public **transportation** that is accessible and affordable.
3. **Housing** that is affordable, appropriately located, accessible and secure.
4. Opportunities for **social participation** are available in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities with people of all ages.
5. Older people are treated with **respect** and are included in civic life.
6. Opportunities are available for **employment and volunteerism** that cater to older persons’ interests and abilities.
7. Age-friendly **communication and information** is available.
8. **Community support and health services** are tailored to older persons’ needs.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Community Survey Response Overview

Survey Questions	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings...in Stewart:			
<p>The sidewalks and walkways are maintained, unobstructed and accessible.</p> <p>If the respondent disagreed, this is the explanation provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snow removal inconsistent (not cleared properly/often enough) x 5 • Cracked pavement/uneven sidewalks x 5 • Ice and snow of concern x 3 • Very poor shape • Minimal # of sidewalks in town • Some are [maintained/accessible], some are not • Lack of sidewalks, and existing ones in disrepair 	12	16	3
<p>Public spaces (parks) and facilities (washrooms) are maintained, accessible and readily available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no washrooms x 4 • Only one at tourist booth, but not always open • Parks need help • Not in winter months, or just not accessible to disabled • Only for pay users • Yes park is accessible, but no washrooms • Hard to do in Stewart with limited budget 	13	10	8
<p>Buildings are accessible (e.g. ramps) and can accommodate people with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors are heavy and not electric/automated • More ramps needed • Not every building; all buildings should be accessible to people with disabilities • Not adequate • Lips to high at ends of sidewalks when trying to enter • Not all of them • Some are, some are not • Bumps to get in and heavy doors 	13	9	9
Transportation...in Stewart:			
<p>The roads are maintained and snow is cleared in a timely manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the roads in Stewart need to be re-paved and repaired • Only in some areas • Pot holes need more attention 	26	3	2
<p>Sufficient parking is available close to amenities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes parking is an issue during tourist season • No bike racks • Hospital parking is flooded and icy 	26	1	4
<p>Services are available to transport seniors and people with disabilities within the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No services available in Stewart x 6 • Nothing is available – no buses or taxis x 2 • Only family or volunteer help x 2 • Very poor service in or out of town • This is serious problem 	2	24	5
<p>Services are available to transport people to key service areas out of town.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No transportation out of Stewart x 11 • No regular service to Terrace or Smithers • Helicopter medical evacuation (medi-vac) is weather dependant • No way out of town unless you have your own vehicle or get a friend to drive you • Need driver for own vehicle or look for a ride 	2	26	3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappointed there is no bus to Terrace • No service, have to find ride with someone very frustrating • Lack of any public transportation (e.g. Northern Health Connector) is a major problem 			
Housing...in Stewart:			
<p>There is a range of appropriate and affordable housing options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited (liveable) housing • Lots of abandoned places • Old and dilapidated • There are a lot of vacant houses • More housing is needed for low-income families • Rents are high and very limited • Need single story housing • There are many houses, but most are unfit without renovations 	14	8	9
<p>Information on financial assistance programs for senior home modifications is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know of any x 5 • If so, show us where • Where is this info kept? 	5	11	15
<p>Affordable supports are available to enable seniors to remain at home (assisted living).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited options, only one part-time worker • No "meals on wheels" • Don't know of any x 4 • Hospital staff has no interest • We don't have assisted-living options in Stewart • We need a seniors' assisted living home (like "Skeena Place" in Hazelton) 	2	17	12
Social Participation...in Stewart:			
<p>There are a variety of events and activities that seniors/those with disabilities can partake in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much at all x 3 • A few more options now • Have not seen any senior activities available • Few activities for seniors 	8	12	11
<p>Community events and activities are well-publicized and well-attended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No community paper, except school and monthly calendar from library (and bulletins) • Getting better • Improvements can be made • Need to develop activities aimed at seniors 	14	8	9
Social Inclusion & Respect...in Stewart:			
<p>Older people are included in community activities and are recognized for their contributions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe everyone doesn't want to make a contribution • Not very often (not enough) 	13	5	13
<p>Seniors are treated respectfully in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only if they deserve respect • The task of getting around in bad weather and under very slippery conditions is hard • Not always 	23	4	4
Civic Participation & Employment...in Stewart:			
<p>Seniors serve in an advisory role in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are not, but they should be 	8	5	18
<p>Adequate volunteer opportunities are available in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't hear about it, would love to get seniors volunteering at the school • Too much volunteering is demanded in this town • Don't know of any 	16	6	9
<p>Paid employment opportunities are available for older adults.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few jobs • None x 2 	9	9	13

Communication & Information...in Stewart:			
<p>Information about community activities and services is readily available to all ages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School paper has community section • Only available downtown on bulletin boards • Improvements can be made • Some communication gaps 	18	5	8
<p>I have access to the internet and I can use it to gain access to community information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No computer/access to internet x 3 • I would access info on the internet if there was anything there to access • I am computer illiterate • Most sites out-dated/nothing relevant posted • Stewart's website is way out of date. Hardly useful at all. 	21	10	
Community & Health Services...in Stewart:			
<p>Home health and support services are available including health, personal care and housekeeping.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never heard of this • Only to a certain degree • If there are services available, where can I find them? • Not well known/advertised (no housekeeping) 	8	9	14
<p>An adequate range of health services is available for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming is offered only occasionally • We need full-time lab techs and MDs • Any little thing wrong and you have to go to Terrace • Health services are phenomenal • No physiotherapy available 	12	9	10
<p>Health care professionals are available and responsive to health concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff here are great, they rotate into the community • Waited 1.5 years to see a visiting dermatologist, when he did arrive, I was in Terrace! • They are available, but most will send you out of town for medical apt. or “push pills” – need to have more equipment/staff for more procedures. The three beds should be open at the Health Centre – what a waste of our tax dollars. • Doctors are limited to what they can do; a sick person here cannot even stay overnight • Need visiting optometrist, dentist, podiatry, nutritionist and mental health • Absolutely! • Great service 	21	5	5
Further comments or suggestions related to the survey questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We desperately need transportation out of town for all citizens • Nice to have the opportunity to communicate concerns with this survey • Hope to see some improvements with options for seniors to enable them to stay in Stewart • We need to project the needs of the “baby boomers” over the next 5-10 years, and plan now for local supported-living facility here in Stewart • We need to promote Stewart to business, so as to generate revenue to be able to provide all the services required for roads, recreation, health and seniors • This town has been volunteered to death. Maybe some of these programs could be run with a paid position via government grants. • Community seems lacking in cultural and healthy activities and events for all ages • If Stewart had more job opportunities, maybe we could have more health care workers and our hospital could come back, instead of being a clinic. Need more health care outside services coming to Stewart...We have great doctors. • The government forgets about what extras people have to pay for in remote towns, gas to go out of town and back, groceries, no bank, no transportation. We should get a better break in taxes. We have a new hospital with beds, but cannot use them – why? 			

Statements related to what residents appreciate and enjoy about the community:

- Clean air and water x 5
- Low crime / crime free x 4
- Easy to get around – can walk everywhere x 3
- Healthy mountain air and best drinking water x 2
- Love the environment and supported ecosystems
- The scenery is fantastic
- Fishing, hiking
- Peaceful and beautiful surroundings
- The people helping each other out
- Quiet, laid back lifestyle
- No traffic congestion
- No hustle and bustle like city life
- Several avenues to stay active
- The natural beauty (currently at risk from uncontrolled development of the estuary)
- People are generally welcoming and eager to make you feel at home
- Intimate, yet perhaps that can be a negative (everyone knows each other's business)
- Kids are great, very few, if any, issues related to tobacco, drug or alcohol use
- Volunteerism – yet the do-ers are usually the same people and they get tired
- I love the small town atmosphere – everyone is welcome at all town events
- We're all more or less self-sufficient, we're mostly polite to each other, no one bothers us
- I love that we have the infrastructure for all the things we need to have a healthy, clean, and spiritual community
- It's beautiful and surrounded by nature, there is potential for growth, and there are no franchises
- Children can walk to school without being abducted
- Friendly, safe, clean (although not particularly environmentally friendly)

Priorities for the Stewart community:

Transportation

- Transportation services (local and distance) x 4
- Need bus service to Kitwanga or Terrace
- Bus service for seniors and residents #1 priority. Very costly to stay overnight in hotel. Should get support and work something out with Dease Lake and other communities. Gets very frustrating to travel for doctor visits or hospital stay – open some beds in the hospital.

Health and Community Services

- More local health services
- More full-time doctors, so a person could have one or two doctors instead of a different one every time you have to see a doctor
- Medical aids loan program (locally available and free to seniors)
- Support structures for meals (on wheels) and senior focused recreation and groups
- Community coordinator
- It would be nice if a sick person with simple medical problems could stay
- Although we have excellent Doctors, the hospital is not utilized (even for overnight stays)
- I think an exercise facility would benefit the community, including seniors who could get active and help maintain their own health. Maybe convert the pool? Change rooms already in place!

Buildings & Infrastructure

- Long-term care, assisted-living and independent housing options
- Better sidewalks and roads
- Low income housing
- Need single story homes
- Derelict housing needs to be condemned and demolished (very depressing as is)
- Technical advanced communications
- Develop the infrastructure so as to appeal and attract new families and companies

- More reliable hydro

Economic Development

- Develop more jobs and services so people stay and invest their lives
- Port development to create jobs for everyone x 2
- Develop arrow dock to bring in more business
- More emphasis on sustainable development (tourism, parks, etc.)
- To create more jobs so that a better tax base exists in Stewart to help change a lot of these problems
- To promote long-term employment and tax base for our community. We pray weekly for these things – to have a healthy and complaint-free community.

Other

- For everyone to get along and work towards a better Stewart
- To encourage people to see the value that we have as a community and to work together to see improvements for all ages
- To help nurture a healthy, age-inclusive, culturally rich environment
- Open halibut season again
- Elect a new mayor of Stewart at next election x 2
- Lower water table
- Reduce food prices
- Lower property taxes – mine have gone up 300% over 6 years
- We have freedom in enjoyments in a small way, but it will get better. Have a garden, more veggies for the table, and more exercise and fresh air

Demographics

The following categories reflect the personal information provided by each of the respondents.

Age:

Under 24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
	4	2	7	5	5	2	6

Gender:

Male	Female
39%	61%

Home ownership:

Owns home	Rents
81%	19%

Fixed income:

Yes	No
45%	55%

Planned retirement location:

Stay in Stewart	Leave Stewart	Undecided
55%	26%	19%

If the respondent indicated that they plan to leave Stewart, this is the explanation provided:

- Would like to stay, with access to proper health services
- Depends on health
- Snow and distance (cost) to specialized medical care
- Not sure, may have to move if not mobile and healthy
- Remote health services
- No transportation
- Not enough amenities/services currently available
- Nothing here to keep me here
- Here to work; love the area, yet extended family is spread out between 4 provinces
- Job will transfer our family out
- Lack of local family support
- [Retirement] is a long way away!

Appendix B: Summary of Survey Results with “Neutral” Answers Removed

Survey Question	Agree	Disagree
Outdoor Spaces & Buildings...in Stewart:		
The sidewalks and walkways are maintained, unobstructed and accessible.	43%	57%
Public spaces (parks) and facilities (washrooms) are maintained, accessible and readily available.	57%	43%
Buildings are accessible (e.g. ramps) and can accommodate people with disabilities.	59%	41%
Transportation...in Stewart:		
The roads are maintained and snow is cleared in a timely manner.	90%	10%
Sufficient parking is available close to amenities.	96%	4%
Services are available to transport seniors and people with disabilities within the community.	8%	92%
Services are available to transport people to key service areas out of town.	7%	93%
Housing...in Stewart:		
There is a range of appropriate and affordable housing options.	64%	36%
Information on financial assistance programs for senior home modifications is available.	31%	69%
Affordable supports are available to enable seniors to remain at home (e.g. assisted living).	11%	89%
Social Participation...in Stewart:		
There are a variety of events and activities that seniors/those with disabilities can partake in.	40%	60%
Community events and activities are well-publicized and well-attended.	64%	36%
Social Inclusion & Respect...in Stewart:		
Older people are included in community activities and are recognized for their contributions.	72%	28%
Seniors are treated respectfully in the community.	85%	15%
Civic Participation & Employment...in Stewart:		
Seniors serve in an advisory role in the community.	62%	38%
Adequate volunteer opportunities are available in the community.	73%	27%
Paid employment opportunities are available for older adults.	50%	50%
Communication & Information...in Stewart:		
Information about community activities and services is readily available to citizens of all ages.	78%	22%
I have access to the internet and I can use it to gain access to community information.	68%	32%
Community & Health Services...in Stewart:		
Home health and support services are available including health, personal care and housekeeping.	47%	53%
An adequate range of health services is available for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.	57%	43%
Health care professionals are available and responsive to health concerns.	81%	19%

Appendix C: Terms of Reference - Stewart Age-friendly Community Advisory Group

Context:

The District of Stewart is conducting a community planning process to assess existing conditions for seniors and people with disabilities, and will be looking to develop a plan to begin to address the community's priorities. As part of the engagement process, the District would like to seek the advice and participation of a small number of community stakeholders to act in an advisory capacity over the duration of the project. Participation beyond the duration of the project is welcomed at the participants' discretion.

Specifically, the small advisory team will be asked to:

- Liaise with the Project Planner and provide high-level advise on the project
- Attend community consultation/focus group session (March 16, if cannot attend, arrange short meeting/phone call with Project Planner to provide insight into the project and local realities)
- Provide input into key community resources – what's working, what needs attention
- Review results of assessment and provide recommendations

Membership:

- Maria Ryder, RN, Stewart Health Centre
- Alison Campbell, Principle, Bear Valley School
- Sandra Bramhill
- Patricia Grue
- Lori Stredulinsky, Service BC

Advisory capacity:

- Councillor Galina Durant, District of Stewart
- Rosemary Lawrence, Age-friendly Community Coordinator, Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat
- Theresa Healy, Healthy Communities Manager, Northern Health

¹ Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors. 2007.

² Age-friendly British Columbia: Lessons Learned. Prepared for the BC Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, Ministry of Health Services by Gerotech Research Associates. December, 2010.

³ Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors. 2007.

⁴ 2010 Age-friendly Community Planning & Project Grant: Program & Application Guide.

<http://www.ubcm.ca/assets/Funding~Programs/Documents/shsi-2010-guide.pdf>

⁵ UBCM Age-friendly Planning Grant approval letter addressed to the District of Stewart. May 2010.

⁶ Measuring up the North website: <http://www.measureupthenorth.com>

⁷ Statistics Canada. Community Profiles. 2006 and 1996 Census for Stewart, BC. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E>