



AGE-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN



Prepared for the District of Stewart by:



STEWART COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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Introduction

Stewart is located in northwest British Columbia, at the head of the Portland Canal, in close proximity to Hyder, Alaska.

Stewart's economy is supplemented by mining, forestry, port operations and tourism. There is an abundance of all-season recreation opportunities including boating, fishing, hiking, heliskiing, snowmobiling, and exploring the many glaciers in the region—including the Salmon Glacier, the 5th largest glacier in Canada accessible by road.

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Why Be an Age-Friendly Community?

Executive Summary

An Age-Friendly Plan is crucial for several reasons, especially as the population in Canada continues to age. Stewart (where seniors over 65 currently make up approximately 25% of the total population) is committed to investing in age-friendly planning to support its aging residents. This report outlines the key reasons for adopting an age-friendly approach and its benefits to the community.

Demographic Shifts

By 2030, seniors and older adults will account for 23% of the Canadian population. Stewart has already reached this level, and it is anticipated that aging residents will continue to remain in the community. This demographic shift underscores the importance of planning to meet the needs of an aging population.

Challenges in Smaller Communities

While smaller communities like Stewart offer many advantages, they also face unique challenges. Older citizens often have increased needs, limited access to reliable transportation and medical services can make aging in place difficult. Addressing these challenges is essential for supporting seniors in smaller communities.

Addressing Gaps

Age-friendly planning helps address gaps in both built and social environments. By adapting structures and services, Stewart can enhance accessibility, participation, and security for older adults. This includes making public spaces more accessible and ensuring that services are tailored to the needs of seniors.

Benefiting All Ages

Although age-friendly criteria are designed for older adults, they benefit people of all ages and accessibility levels. These adaptations improve the overall quality of life within the community, making it more inclusive and supportive for everyone.

Holistic Approach

Age-friendly communities focus on the physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being of their residents. Planning spans the entire spectrum of life, from infancy through adulthood to the senior years, ensuring that all aspects of well-being are considered and addressed.

Supporting Current and Future Residents

The District of Stewart's commitment to becoming an age-friendly community is key to keeping seniors safe and able to age at home. This commitment not only supports current residents but also attracts new residents seeking a high quality of life as they age. By fostering an age-friendly environment, Stewart can ensure that it remains a desirable place to live for people of all ages.

Conclusion

In summary, age-friendly planning ensures that Stewart evolves to meet the diverse needs of its residents, fostering inclusivity and well-being. By addressing demographic shifts, overcoming challenges in smaller communities, and adopting a holistic approach, Stewart can enhance the quality of life for its seniors and create a supportive environment for all residents.

Who Is Responsible?

Age-friendly planning includes many aspects of community life and therefore, a number of actions may fall outside of the jurisdiction of the local government. In such cases, actions may include partnerships with outside agencies, local organizations, the business community and the Province. In summary, successful implementation of actions requires collaboration, partnership, and coordination.

Key groups responsible for implementation of actions and recommendations for this plan are:

DISTRICT OF STEWART: The DOS is responsible for actions related to District policy, planning and projects (e.g., updating the Official Community Plan with age-friendly goals and objectives) and to participate in partnerships, where and when opportunities exist. As an accredited Age-Friendly Community, the District should also create an “Age Friendly” committee of Council or encourage the continued work of the existing external Age-Friendly working group.

External Agencies: Other actions will require collaboration with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS), other community neighbours, the Province of BC and Northern Health.

Community-Led Initiatives: There are also actions that can be implemented by local non-profit groups and community members.

Community Profile

Find yourself.

At the head of the awe-inspiring 71-mile-long Portland Canal, surrounded by rich forestry, Cambria ice fields, and incredible wildlife. Reliving the history that is Stewart BC, Canada's most Northerly, ice-free port; situated across from Alaska's Misty Fiords National Park and the end of the Portland Canal. Exploring this unique border town that attracts tourists from every corner of the world!

Find yourself.

Hiking In the surrounding mountain ranges on a variety of maintained trails boasting breathtaking views. Capturing photos of the flora and fauna as you stroll along the boardwalk; reaching 805 meters across the tide flats. Kayaking lakes and navigating the Canal with eagles overhead and orcas & seals swimming within view.

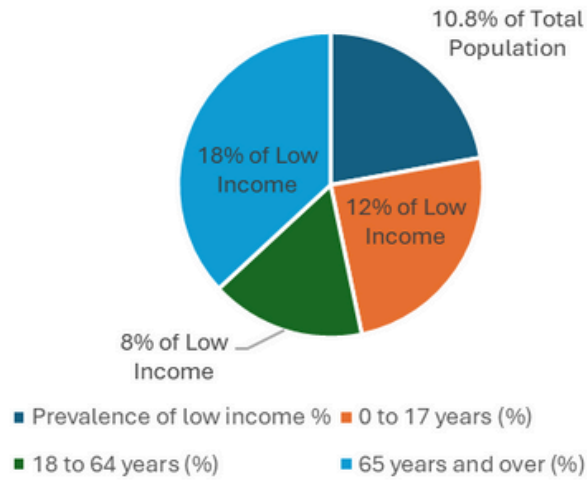
[DOS_StrategicPlan_2023.pdf \(districtofstewart.com\)](#)

[Downtown_Vision_Action_Plan_2024.pdf](#)

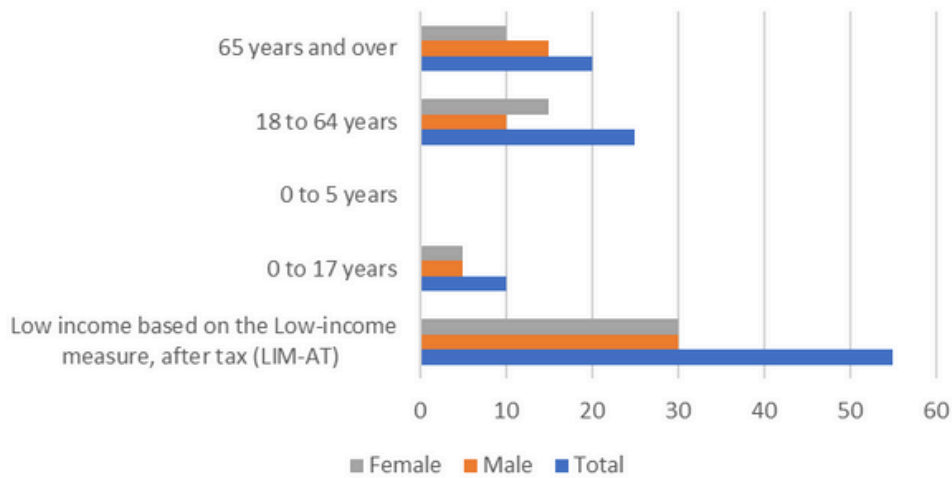
[Stewart_Age_Friendly_Assessment_Community_Plan \(districtofstewart.com\)](#)

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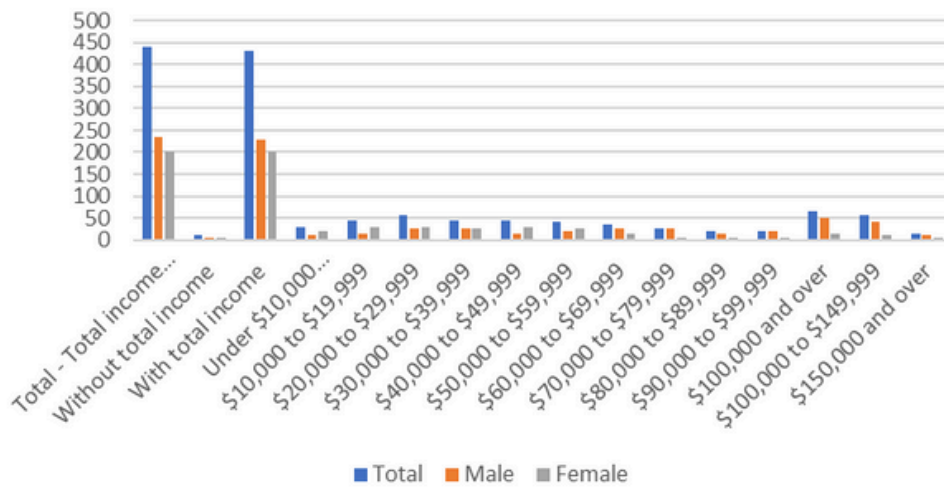
Prevalence of low Income



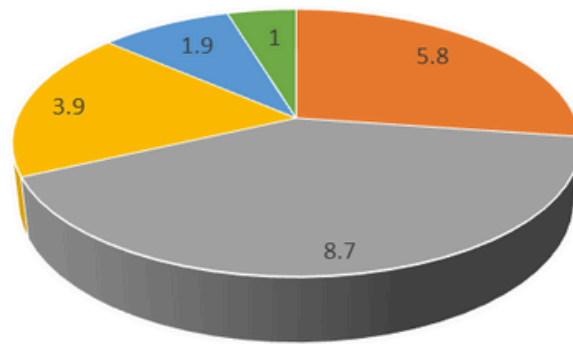
Number of Low Income by Age



Income

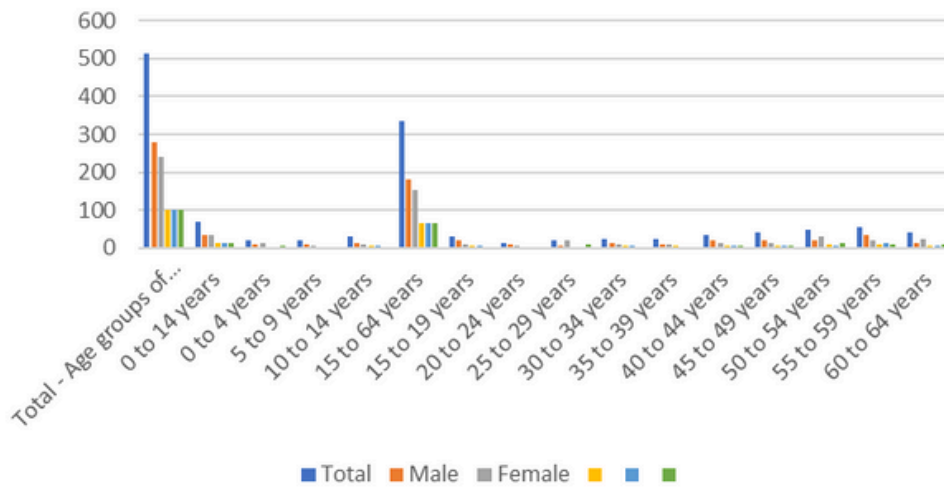


Percentage of Total Population



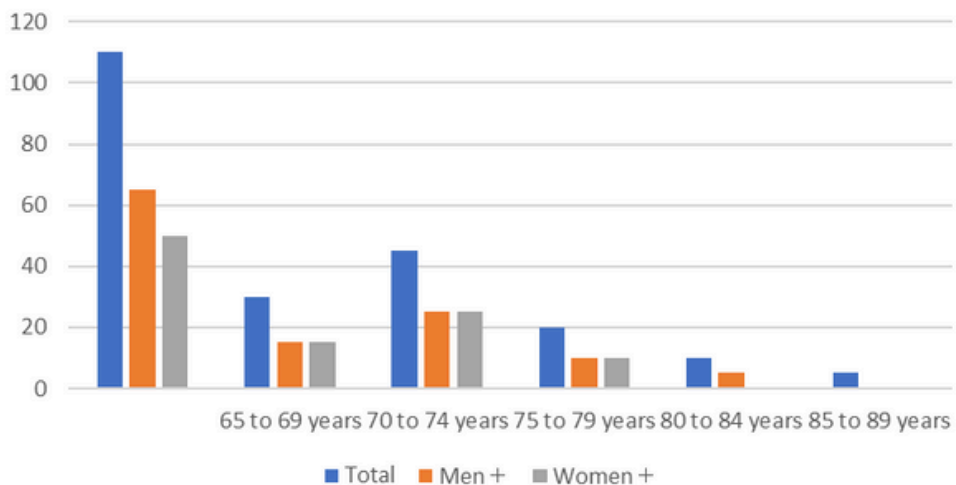
■ 65 to 69 years ■ 70 to 74 years ■ 75 to 79 years ■ 80 to 84 years ■ 85 to 89 years

Total Population by Number



■ Total ■ Male ■ Female ■ ■

Senior Population by Number



■ Total ■ Men + ■ Women +

Transportation

- **Executive Summary**

This executive summary provides an overview of the transportation infrastructure in Stewart, British Columbia. The report highlights the aspects of the town's transportation system that are currently working well, such as the ease of access to active transportation and the community support for carpooling. However, several areas requiring improvement have been identified, including parking challenges, lack of handicap parking availability, limited out-of-town transportation options, and issues with winter conditions affecting pedestrian safety.

To address these challenges, several proposed solutions are recommended. These include establishing a regular bus service to nearby Terrace for medical transportation, prioritizing snow removal and road maintenance in the downtown area during winter, reviewing bylaws to ensure safe and age-friendly access to businesses and the implementation of designated handicap parking spots throughout Stewart. Additionally, enhancements to crosswalks in both downtown and high-traffic areas are recommended to improve pedestrian safety.

This report aims to guide local authorities and community members in creating a more efficient and inclusive transportation system for Stewart. By implementing these recommendations, the town can continue to thrive while ensuring the well-being and accessibility of its residents.



- **Current Assets**

Active Transportation

- **Ease of Access:** Residents find it easy to bike and walk around town to access essential services. The compact layout encourages active modes of transportation, promoting health and reducing traffic congestion.
- **Community Support:** Community members support each other by carpooling or providing rides for in-town and out-of-town appointments, fostering a sense of camaraderie.

- **Current Challenges**

Parking Challenges

- **Event Congestion:** During festivals and community events, finding parking becomes a significant issue. The influx of visitors strains existing parking spaces, affecting both residents and tourists.
- **Recommendation:** Explore creative solutions, such as temporary parking areas during events, to alleviate this problem. Ian McLeod Park could be listed in advertising as an alternative to downtown street parking.

Handicap Parking Availability

- **Accessibility Issues:** Currently, there are no designated handicapped parking spots in Stewart. This lack of accessibility hinders individuals with mobility challenges.
- **Recommendation:** Install marked handicapped parking spaces at strategic locations, including businesses, parks, and government buildings.

Out-of-Town Transportation Gap

- **Limited Bus Service:** Stewart lacks regular bus service to nearby Terrace, especially for medical appointments. Residents must rely on personal vehicles or seek alternative transportation.
- **Recommendation:** Collaborate with local transportation providers or government agencies to establish a scheduled bus service connecting Stewart to Terrace.

Winter Downtown Experience

- **Icy Sidewalks:** Sidewalks are often icy and uneven, making safe access for seniors difficult.
- **Slushy Windrows:** The slushy windrows against sidewalks are a problem for anyone with walking or physical impairments.

- **Recommendations and Action Plan**

Regular Bus Service to Terrace

- **Medical Transport:** Establish a reliable and frequent bus service for medical appointments. This would enhance access to healthcare facilities and reduce the burden on individual drivers.
- **Funding:** Collaborate with existing transportation providers or explore grant opportunities or corporate sponsorship to fund this service.
- **Volunteer Program:** Explore a 'volunteer driver program'.

Safer Highway Plowing in Downtown

- **Snow Removal Priority:** Prioritize snow removal and road maintenance in the downtown area, especially during winter. Safe road conditions are crucial for residents.
- **Engagement:** Engage with relevant authorities responsible for road maintenance to ensure timely and effective plowing.

Winter Sidewalks

- **Business Responsibility:** Review downtown business responsibility in clearing the area their patrons use.
- **Bylaw Review:** Review bylaws on the downtown area as it pertains to safe access and age-friendly access to businesses.

Handicap Parking Spots

- **Bylaw Review:** Review current parking bylaws with an age-friendly lens.
- **Implementation:** Implement designated handicapped parking spots throughout Stewart.
- **Collaboration:** Work with local businesses, parks, and government buildings to allocate space for these spots.
- **Enforcement:** Enforce proper signage and penalties for misuse.

Crosswalk Enhancement

- **Downtown Crosswalks:** Install additional crosswalks in downtown areas to enhance pedestrian safety. Marked crosswalks improve visibility and encourage safe crossing.
- **Pedestrian Signals:** Consider pedestrian-activated signals as traffic load dictates.

Additional Crosswalks Throughout Town

- **Increased Crosswalks:** Increase the number of crosswalks in high-traffic areas near schools, shopping areas, and community hubs. Prioritize safety and accessibility for all residents.



- **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the transportation report highlights both the strengths and areas in need of improvement in the transportation infrastructure of Stewart. The town benefits from a strong culture of active transportation and community support, promoting health and reducing congestion. However, several challenges have been identified, such as parking issues, lack of handicap accessibility, limited out-of-town transportation options, and pedestrian safety concerns during winter.

To address these challenges, the report recommends several solutions, including establishing a regular bus service to nearby Terrace for medical transportation, prioritizing snow removal and road maintenance in the downtown area, implementing designated handicap parking spots throughout the town, and enhancing crosswalks in high-traffic areas.

By implementing these recommendations, Stewart can create a more efficient and inclusive transportation system that meets the needs of its residents. Improved transportation infrastructure will enhance access to medical facilities, reduce parking challenges during events, ensure safe and age-friendly access to businesses, and improve pedestrian safety.

Local authorities need to collaborate with transportation providers, businesses, and community members to implement these solutions successfully. By doing so, Stewart can continue to thrive as a town while ensuring the well-being and accessibility of its residents.

Civic Engagement

- **Executive Summary**

The executive summary highlights the current assets, community engagement, areas of concern, employment opportunities and business support, and poverty reduction efforts in the town of Stewart. The strengths of Stewart include a range of community assets such as a recreation library, a firepit by the boardwalk, a park for children, a natural environment for outdoor activities, and a Canadian boat launch for water-based recreational activities. Community engagement is strong, with residents actively participating in volunteering activities and feeling comfortable expressing their concerns and suggestions to the council. However, there are areas of concern that need immediate attention, including snow plowing issues causing residents to be stranded and instances of bullying at local businesses. To address these concerns, efforts are being made to create more employment opportunities, attract new industries, and improve services for seniors. Poverty reduction advocates are also working collaboratively with local governments to provide integrated community solutions. Moving forward, the focus will be on addressing these concerns and building on the strengths of Stewart to enhance civic engagement and employment opportunities in the community.



- **Current Assets**

Stewart boasts a range of community assets that contribute to the quality of life for its residents. These include:

- **Recreation Library:** A hub for knowledge and learning.
- **Firepit by Boardwalk:** A communal space for social gatherings.
- **Park for Children:** A safe and fun environment for our younger residents.
- **Natural Environment:** Stewart is surrounded by an amazing natural environment, providing opportunities for outdoor activities.
- **Senior's Garbage Pick-up Assistance:** For more information on this, call the District of Stewart office.

Community engagement is strong in Stewart, with residents actively participating in various activities:

- **Volunteering:** Residents are actively involved in volunteering activities, contributing to the community's well-being.
- **Council Interaction:** Residents feel comfortable expressing their concerns and suggestions to the council, fostering a transparent and responsive governance system.

- **Current Challenges**

- **Snow Plowing:** There have been instances where residents, particularly seniors and mothers of newborns, have been stranded due to high berms created by snow plowing. This issue needs attention to ensure residents can carry out essential activities.
- **Develop a Plan for Senior Assistance** during an evacuation alert.
- **Canadian Boat Launch:** A facility that supports water-based recreational activities is needed the current facility is inadequate.
- **Poverty Reduction** advocates are working with other departments to provide integrated community solutions. Many of our senior's income is fixed by government, making it difficult for them to live well. This collaborative approach is crucial in addressing poverty and improving the quality of life for all residents.

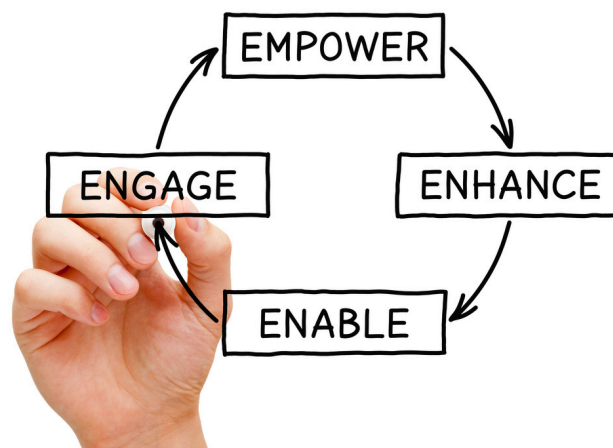
• Conclusion

In conclusion, the executive summary highlights the strengths and areas of concern in the town of Stewart. While the community boasts a range of assets, strong community engagement, and efforts towards poverty reduction, there are still pressing issues that need immediate attention. Addressing snow plowing issues, improving the Canadian boat launch, and combatting bullying at local businesses are among the top priorities.

Efforts are also being made to create more employment opportunities, attract new industries, and improve services for seniors. By building on these strengths and addressing concerns, the town of Stewart aims to enhance civic engagement and provide more employment opportunities for its residents.

Moreover, collaboration between poverty reduction advocates, the age-friendly committee and local government departments is essential to implement integrated community solutions and improve the overall quality of life.

By focusing on these areas and leveraging community strengths, Stewart can continue to thrive, ensuring a safe, inclusive, and prosperous environment for its residents.



Communication & Information

- **Executive Summary**

Our current communication and information dissemination methods include mailouts, social media, and bulletin boards. Mailouts have been well-received, social media has broadened our engagement, and bulletin boards are a dependable information source.

Feedback from seniors includes requests for a regular mailed newsletter, more frequent mailouts for key updates, help with filling out medical and government forms, and improvements in the visibility and accessibility of information.

The recommendations based on this feedback are:

Initiate a Regular Newsletter: Start sending a regular newsletter by mail to keep members informed.

Increase Mailout Frequency: Send mailouts more often to ensure timely updates.

Offer Form-Filling Assistance: Provide support for completing medical and government forms,

Enhance Information Posting: Improve how we post and share information so it's easier to access and find.

These steps aim to refine our communications and services for members, and we encourage ongoing community feedback.



- **Current Assets**

- **Mailouts:** Our mailout strategy has effectively reached our audience. The information is being disseminated efficiently and the response has been positive.
- **Social Media:** Our presence on social media platforms has increased our reach and engagement with the community. It has allowed us to share information quickly and interactively.
- **Bulletin Boards:** Using bulletin boards for posting information has been successful. They serve as a constant source of information for those who frequent the locations where they are installed.
- **H2Notify:** The District of Stewart uses H2Notify to send notifications and provide direction during an emergency event. This service allows every registered number to be reached within minutes.



• Recommendations and Action Plan

Based on the feedback from our senior members, we recommend the following actions:

- **Launch a Regular Newsletter:** Develop and distribute a regular newsletter via mail to keep our community members informed about updates and news.
- **Increase Frequency of Mailouts:** Plan for more frequent mailouts to communicate important updates or changes.
- **Provide Assistance with Forms:** Organize workshops or one-on-one sessions to help members with filling out medical and government forms.
- **Improve Information Posting:** Review and enhance our information dissemination strategy to ensure all relevant information is accessible and easy to find.

• Conclusion

In conclusion, our communication and information assets have been successful in reaching our audience and disseminating information efficiently. Our mailout strategy, presence on social media platforms, and use of bulletin boards have all contributed to positive engagement with our community. However, feedback from our senior members has highlighted areas for improvement. To address their needs, we recommend launching a regular newsletter via mail, increasing the frequency of mailouts, providing assistance with forms through workshops or one-on-one sessions, and reviewing and enhancing our information dissemination strategy. By implementing these recommendations, we will ensure that all relevant information is easily accessible and effectively communicated to our members.

Community Support & Health Services

- **Executive Summary**

This report outlines the current state of health services in Stewart, with a focus on the needs of seniors. It highlights suggestions for improvement and addresses existing challenges to enhance the overall well-being of the community.

The health and well-being of the Stewart community, particularly its senior population, are of paramount importance. This report is based on feedback from seniors through various channels, including focus groups, luncheons, and surveys. The aim is to identify gaps in current services and propose solutions to improve community health outcomes.



- **Current Assets**

- **Stewart Health Centre:**

- Offers daytime clinic hours and 24-hour emergency services, with a physician, nurse, and lab/x-ray on-call.
- There is not a pharmacy in Stewart, so prescriptions are outsourced to a pharmacy in Terrace and are brought to Stewart via a local transportation company 3 days per week. The prescriptions are available during clinic hours to be picked up at the Health Centre.

- **Connections Care Home Support:**

- Stewart Community Connections Society has a contract with Northern Health to provide Stewart with home support services. CCHS offers in-home care, transportation to local medical appointments, and foot care.

- **SCCS Community Meal Program:**

- The meal program offers biweekly meal delivery to clients who have self-referred, physician referrals, and families who refer their elders. Meals are also provided on an as-needed basis when a client is ill, recovering from surgery, or simply in need of help.

- **Stewart Food Bank:**

- SFB offers food boxes to anyone in need, the referral system is the same as the meal program.

- **Senior Exercise:**

- Seniors meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings at the Golden Triangle Gym. They engage in various activities, keeping themselves physically and socially healthy

- **Badminton:**

- Bear Valley School opens the gym for badminton Tuesday and Thursday evenings during the school year.

- **Old-Timers Hockey:**

- This group plays Friday and Sunday, the oldest member is in his 70's!

- **Book Club:**
 - Stewart Public Library hosts a book club.
- **The Golden Triangle Gym:**
 - The gym is a 24-hour centre. Last year a therapeutic room was added with an infra-red sauna, seasonal affective disorder light, massage chair and red-light therapy.

- **Current Challenges**

- **Pharmacy Services:**
 - Advocate for extended pharmacy hours or a system that allows for prescription pick-up outside of clinic hours.
- **Aging in Place:**
 - Services that require travel: optometrist appointments, physiotherapy, mental health practitioners, massage therapy, dentists, and other specialties. It isn't easy to travel, especially during winter months, to the nearest services 4 hours away.
- **Lab/X-Ray Services:**
 - Strive for constant and continuous availability of lab and x-ray services to reduce wait times and travel for seniors.
- **Mental Health Access:**
 - Improve access to mental health services through local clinics. Local counseling services are not available, so advocate to Northern Health to bring a mental health practitioner to Stewart.
 - Stewart Community Connections Society through an Imagine grant brought a workshop facilitator from the Prince George Canadian Mental Health office to Stewart for four days of workshops.
- **Ambulance Staff:**
 - Address the shortage of ambulance staff by recruiting more personnel or collaborating with nearby communities for shared services.
- **Health Care Professionals:**
 - Increase efforts to attract and retain healthcare professionals in the community.
- **Medical Services for Seniors:**
 - Reduce the need for seniors to travel for medical services by enhancing local healthcare offerings or arranging transportation to external facilities.

• Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendations:

- **Invite healthcare professionals** to the Age-Friendly Committee meeting to discuss options to improve direct patient care within Stewart.
- **Establish regular community meetings** to monitor progress and gather ongoing feedback.

Action Plan:

- **Include healthcare professionals** in the Age-Friendly Committee. The committee will coordinate efforts, monitor progress, and ensure accountability.
- **Allocate Budget:** Allocate a budget for, enhancing existing services, and implementing suggested improvements. This will provide the necessary resources to support the action plan and address the identified challenges. Include community senior program leaders Stewart Community Connections, Connections Care, and Stewart Public Library.
- **Collaborate with Allied Health Professionals:** Reach out to allied health professionals such as podiatrists, physiotherapists, and chiropractors to provide local services. This collaboration will expand the range of healthcare offerings in Stewart and improve access to specialized care for seniors.
- **Advocate for Extended Pharmacy Hours:** Advocate for extended pharmacy hours or a system that allows for prescription pick-up outside of clinic hours. This will address the challenge of limited pharmacy services in Stewart and ensure that seniors have timely access to their medications.
- **Improve Mental Health Access:** Advocate to Northern Health to bring a mental health practitioner to Stewart and improve access to mental health services through local clinics. This could include establishing counseling services or organizing workshops and programs to address mental health issues specific to seniors. Continue with non-profit group programs with grant funding as available.

- **Address Ambulance Staff Shortage:** Address the shortage of ambulance staff by recruiting more personnel or exploring opportunities for shared services with nearby communities. This will ensure that emergency medical services are readily available to seniors in Stewart.
- **Attract and Retain Healthcare Professionals:** Increase efforts to attract and retain healthcare professionals in the community. This could involve offering incentives, providing professional development opportunities, and improving the overall working environment to make Stewart an attractive place for healthcare professionals to practice.
- **Enhance Medical Services for Seniors:** Reduce the need for seniors to travel for medical services by enhancing local healthcare offerings or arranging transportation to external facilities. This could involve bringing specialized services such as optometrists, physiotherapy, mental health practitioners, massage therapy, and dentists to Stewart.
- **Develop a Community Welcome Package:** Create a community welcome package containing information about all available services, important contacts, and a guide to the community. This will ensure that seniors and new residents have access to information that can help them navigate and utilize the available healthcare services.
- **Establish Safe Gatherings Protocols:** Implement protocols for safe gatherings to prevent the spread of illnesses like COVID-19 and the flu. This may include providing clear guidelines on social distancing, mask-wearing, and sanitation measures, as well as ensuring that public buildings are wheelchair and walker-friendly for seniors.
- **Explore Assisted Living and Senior Housing Options:** Engage the Age-Friendly Committee, Stewart Community Connections, Stewart Public Library, and local government to identify the current needs of seniors and those looking to retire in Stewart. Explore options for assisted living facilities and senior housing that cater to various levels of care needs.

- **Establish Regular Community Meetings:** Establish regular community meetings to monitor progress, gather ongoing feedback, and ensure that the action plan is effectively implemented. These meetings will provide a platform for community members, healthcare providers, and local authorities to collaborate and address any emerging concerns.

By following this action plan, the community of Stewart can improve the accessibility, quality, and comprehensiveness of its health services, particularly for seniors. The collaboration between various stakeholders and the allocation of necessary resources will ensure the successful implementation of the suggested improvements and result in enhanced well-being for all community members.

• Conclusion

The health and vitality of the Stewart community depend on accessible and comprehensive health services. By implementing the suggested improvements and addressing the identified challenges, we can significantly enhance the quality of life for all residents, especially seniors. It is imperative to collaborate with community members, healthcare providers, and local authorities to achieve these goals.

Housing

- **Executive Summary**

This report presents a detailed examination of the housing situation for seniors in Stewart, outlining their challenges and proposing strategies for improvement. The predominant housing stock, which consists of older single detached dwellings, poses significant obstacles for seniors, including limited access to building supplies, mortgages (no local bank), housing shortages, and the scarcity of rental options. Additionally, issues such as the prevalence of derelict buildings, the need for housekeeping services, and the challenges of property maintenance during winter are addressed. To mitigate these challenges, this report recommits a series of measures, including support for renovating vacant houses, coordinating services for home repairs, promoting higher-density housing, and implementing policies to ensure safe and stable housing for seniors.



- **Current Assets**

- **Existing Housing Stock:**

- The housing stock in Stewart is primarily composed of older single-detached dwellings.
 - Recent building permits suggest a trend towards single-family homes, which may not meet the needs of the aging population.

- **Current Challenges**

- **Access to Building Supplies:**

- Seniors often encounter difficulties in accessing building materials, impeding necessary home repairs and renovations.

- **Mortgage Challenges:**

- Obtaining reasonable mortgages is challenging, especially for first-time buyers, due to the location and higher lending rates.

- **Shortage of Housing:**

- There is an insufficient number of housing options available, limiting choices for seniors.

- **Affordable Rentals:**

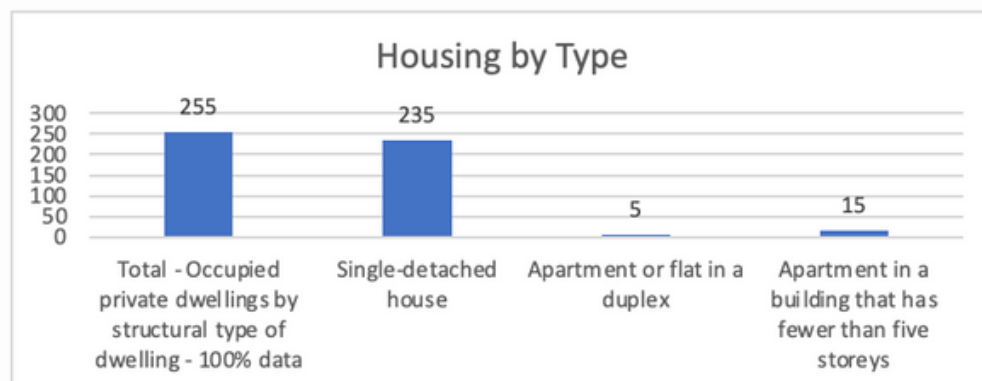
- The availability of affordable rental options is limited, making it difficult for seniors to find suitable housing.

- **Derelict Buildings:**

- The presence of neglected properties and the lack of enforcement against owners contribute to the housing challenges.

- **Lack of Housekeepers:**

- Seniors require assistance with housekeeping, which is often difficult to find.



• **Recommendations and Action Plan**

• **Support for Vacant Houses:**

- Encourage owners of vacant properties to renovate and make them available for seniors.

• **Service Coordination:**

- Facilitate coordination among service providers (electricians, plumbers) for efficient repairs.

• **Higher Density Housing:**

- Explore options like row housing to maximize available land.

• **Safe and Stable Housing:**

- Prioritize safe, affordable housing for seniors.

• **Zoning Considerations:**

- Address housing needs in riskier areas.

• **Snow Removal Assistance:**

- Help seniors with snow removal during winter.

• **Heating Cost Grants:**

- Provide grants to lower heating expenses.

• **BC Housing Availability:**

- Promote awareness of BC Housing options.

• **Lawn Maintenance and Snow Removal Services:**

- Offer low-cost services to seniors.

• **Independent Living Options:**

- Consider senior apartments or 4plex units.

• **Assistance with Applications:**

- Simplify paperwork for seniors.

• **Handyman Services:**

- Provide handyman assistance.

• **Assisted Living Spaces:**

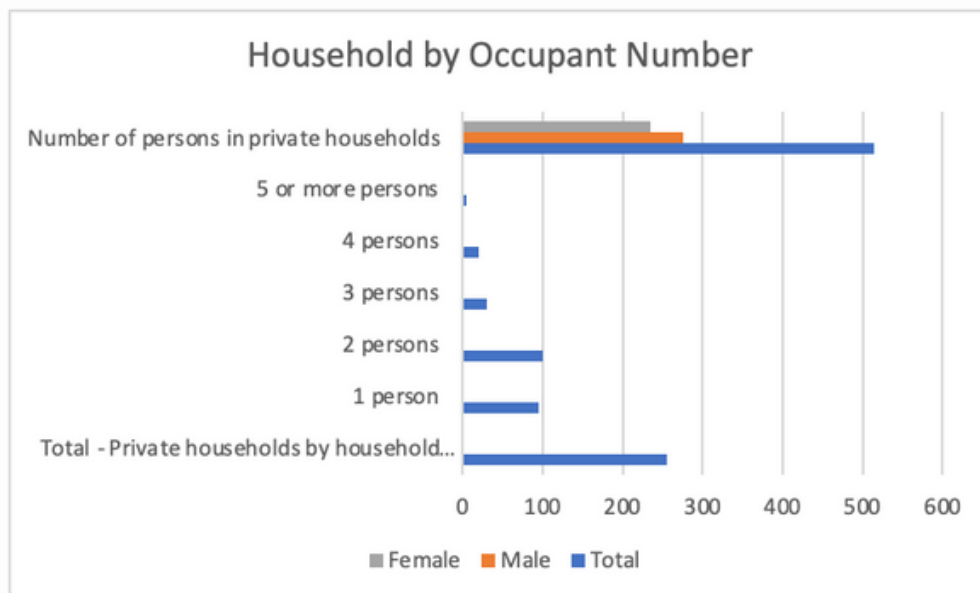
- Explore options for assisted living.

- **Conclusion**

The District of Stewart must address these housing challenges promptly to ensure a better quality of life for its senior residents. By implementing the suggested improvements, the community can create a supportive environment for seniors to age comfortably and securely.

- **References**

- District of Stewart Housing Needs Assessment Report
- Aging in Uncertainty: The Growing Housing Crisis for BC Seniors
- A Growing Crisis: Rising Living Costs Push BC Seniors to the Brink of Homelessness



Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

- **Executive Summary**

Stewart, British Columbia, is a picturesque town with immense natural beauty. However, improvements in public and outdoor spaces can enhance the experience for both residents and visitors. This report outlines the current state of these spaces, identifies challenges, and provides actionable suggestions for enhancement.



- **Current Assets**

- **Well-Maintained Parks:**

- The town's parks receive commendable care, contributing to their appeal.
- The Christmas decorations in the park create a beautiful festive atmosphere.

- **Current Challenges**

- **Uneven Sidewalks and Resting Places:**

- Safety Risk: Uneven sidewalks pose a safety risk. Regular maintenance and repairs are necessary.
- Seating Areas: Installing benches or seating areas along sidewalks would provide resting spots for pedestrians.

- **Handrails and Hands-Free Entry:**

- Accessibility: Lack of handrails and hands-free entry options affects accessibility.
- Installation: Installing handrails in public buildings and ensuring automatic doors can address this issue. Lever-style handles are easier for people with limited hand mobility.

- **Park Lighting:**

- Safety Concern: Inadequate lighting in parks affects safety, especially during evenings.
- Energy-Efficient Lighting: Consider energy-efficient LED lighting to improve visibility.

- **Public Washrooms:**

- Inconvenience: Insufficient public washrooms inconvenience residents and visitors.
- Accessibility and Cleanliness: Increasing their number and ensuring cleanliness and accessibility is crucial.

- **Boardwalks and Signage:**

- Maintenance: Boardwalks need regular maintenance to ensure safety.
- Navigation: Clear, easy-to-read signage helps visitors navigate effectively.

• Recommendations and Action Plan

• Hands-Free Building Entry:

- Implementation: Implement touchless entry systems (e.g., automatic doors, motion sensors) for all public buildings and businesses.

• Accessible Trails:

- Design: Design trails suitable for walkers, wheelchairs, and strollers.
- Enhancements: Wider paths, smoother surfaces, and gradual slopes enhance accessibility.

• More Trails and In-Town Walking:

- Expansion: Expand the trail network within the town, encouraging outdoor activity.

• Trail Connection to Nature Trail (Ian McLeod):

- Connection: Create a trail connecting the town park to the nearby nature trail. This promotes exploration and appreciation of natural surroundings.

• Crosswalks on Main Street:

- Safety: Install additional crosswalks on main streets to enhance pedestrian safety.

• Multi-Use Trail (Walking, Biking, Skiing):

- Development: Develop a multi-use trail for various recreational activities.

• Arena Utilization:

- Year-round Activities: Maximize the use of the arena for both summer and winter events.
- Community Engagement: Engage the community through diverse activities.

• Playground Equipment and Park Areas:

- Updates: Regularly update playground equipment to meet safety and accessibility standards.
- Revitalization: Reopen old park areas to revitalize community spaces.

- **Conclusion**

By addressing these issues and implementing the suggested improvements, Stewart can create more inclusive, enjoyable public spaces for everyone. Let's work together to enhance the town's charm and accessibility!



Respect & Social Inclusion

- **Executive Summary**

This report explores the current state of senior social inclusion in Stewart, highlighting existing assets, identifying needs and challenges, and proposing solutions to enhance the quality of life for seniors. The goal is to foster a community where seniors are actively engaged, respected, and supported.



- **Current Assets**

- **Intergenerational Participation**

- **Community Events:** Seniors participate in various community activities such as dance recitals, youth voice and musical instrument recitals, figure skating carnivals, art in the park, and artisan markets.
- **Youth Involvement:** Students from Bear Valley School assist with senior dinners by setting up, serving, and cleaning up.
- **Reading Club:** The Stewart Public Library's reading club brings together adults of all ages.
- **Badminton:** Twice-weekly badminton sessions are open to teens through seniors, with the oldest resident being a regular participant.
- **Community Garden:** A shared space where young children and seniors garden together, fostering intergenerational interaction and knowledge sharing.

- **Civic Inclusion**

- **Age-Friendly Committee:** Includes seniors with lived experience, a District of Stewart representative, and a Stewart Community Connections Society representative. This committee has been instrumental in data collection, report writing, and planning initiatives.
- **Committee Participation:** Seniors hold seats on various local committees, including the Stewart Public Library, Stewart Community Connections Society, and the Historical Society.
- **Artisan Markets:** Senior artisans participate in local markets, providing social interaction and a sense of purpose.
- **Senior Dinners and Events:** The Stewart Community Connections Society (SCCS) organizes take-out dinners and sit-down events for seniors.
- **Employment:** Some seniors hold part-time or full-time jobs.
- **Exercise Programs:** A group of seniors meets three times a week at the Golden Triangle Gym for an exercise program led by a local senior.

- **Current Challenges**

Despite the existing assets, several needs and challenges must be addressed to improve senior social inclusion in Stewart:

- **Transportation:** Limited transportation options can hinder seniors' ability to participate in community activities.
- **Accessibility:** Some community spaces may not be fully accessible to seniors with mobility issues. The Al Lawrence Arena is the main building used for events, however the second floor is not accessible for people with mobility issues.
- **Social Isolation:** Seniors living alone or with limited family support may experience social isolation.
- **Health Services:** Access to health services and support for chronic conditions can be limited in rural areas.

- **Recommendations and Action Plan**

- **Enhanced Transportation Services:** Develop a community shuttle service to assist seniors in attending events and appointments.
- **Accessibility Improvements:** Upgrade community facilities to ensure they are accessible to all seniors.
- **Social Programs:** Expand social programs and support groups to reduce isolation and provide regular social interaction opportunities.
- **Health Outreach:** Increase outreach and support for health services, including mobile clinics and tele-health options.

- **Conclusion**

Stewart has a strong foundation for senior social inclusion, with numerous intergenerational activities, civic involvement, and community participation opportunities. However, addressing transportation, accessibility, social isolation, and health service challenges is crucial to further enhance the quality of life for seniors. By implementing the proposed solutions, Stewart can continue to build an inclusive and supportive community for its senior residents.



Social Participation

- **Executive Summary**

Social participation is a key component of age-friendly communities, as it improves the quality of life, health, and happiness of older adults. This report reviews the existing assets, feedback from seniors, and suggested enhancements for social participation in Stewart, a small town with a strong sense of community and respect for its elders.



• Current Assets

Stewart has several assets that support social participation among seniors:

- **Exercise Classes:** Promoting physical well-being and social interaction.
- **Feeling of Connection:** Residents experience a strong sense of community and connection.
- **Valuing Older Adults:** The community recognizes and values the contributions and wisdom of its older adults.
- **Opportunities for Engagement:** Various opportunities for engagement through volunteering and community events.
- **Badminton:** Regular events encourage friendly competition and socializing.
- **Library Book Club:** Provides intellectual stimulation and camaraderie, fostering intergenerational interaction.
- **Stewart Community Connections Society:** Offers services through its Senior Programs, including home support, foot care, and home-delivered meals.

• Current Challenges

Feedback from seniors highlighted several areas needing improvement:

- **Challenges with Cliques:** Difficulty in integrating into new groups, which affects inclusivity and social integration.
- **Lack of Winter Activities:** Need for more activities during the colder months.
- **Fitness Opportunities:** Limited options for fitness activities, with suggestions for indoor walking and a variety of exercise options.

• Recommendations and Action Plan

To address the identified areas needing improvement, the following enhancements are proposed:

- **Diverse Exercise Classes:** Offer a variety of exercise classes to cater to different interests, including indoor winter walking.
- **Art and Culture Club:** Establish a club for artistic expression to foster creativity and social connections.
- **Increased Potlucks:** Regular potluck gatherings to encourage shared meals and conversations.
- **Senior Lunches:** Organize regular senior lunches to promote socialization.
- **Additional Events:** Introduce more events, such as bingo, to diversify social opportunities.
- **Education Information Sessions:** Host sessions on relevant topics to engage and inform seniors.
- **Recreation Activities:** Expand recreational options for seniors.
- **Coffee Hub with Soup:** Create a cozy coffee hub where residents can gather over warm beverages and soup.
- **Involve Local Business:** By involving local businesses in supporting seniors can create a more integrated and supportive community.

• Recommendations and Action Plan

- **Partnership Programs:** Establish partnerships between local businesses and senior programs. For example, businesses could sponsor events or provide discounts to seniors.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Encourage businesses to offer volunteer opportunities for their employees to engage with seniors, such as helping with events or providing tech support.
- **Senior Discounts:** Implement special discounts for seniors on certain days or for specific products and services.
- **Workshops and Classes:** Stewart Public Library and SCCS continue to host workshops or classes tailored to seniors, such as cooking classes, financial planning sessions, or tech tutorials.
- **Donation Drives:** Organize donation drives where businesses collect items like warm clothing, books, or non-perishable food for seniors in need.
- **Community Events:** Collaborate with businesses to sponsor and organize community events that include seniors, such as fairs, markets, or holiday celebrations.
- **Health and Wellness Programs:** Partner with local gym, library and Health Centre to offer health and wellness programs specifically for seniors.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Create mentorship programs where seniors can share their expertise and experience with younger employees or entrepreneurs.
- **Transportation Services:** Businesses with transportation capabilities could offer rides to seniors for medical appointments, shopping, or social events.
- **Recognition and Awards:** Recognize businesses supporting seniors with awards or public acknowledgments, encouraging others to follow suit.

- **Conclusion**

Enhancing social participation and well-being in Stewart is crucial for building a vibrant and connected community. By addressing the areas needing improvement and implementing the proposed solutions, Stewart can continue to support its seniors and foster a strong sense of belonging and community. Let's continue building a vibrant and connected community!



Measuring Success

Measuring the success of age-friendly initiatives is essential to ensure they effectively meet seniors' needs and improve their quality of life. Here are some key methods and tools to consider:

1. Surveys and Questionnaires

- **Community Surveys:** Regularly distribute surveys to seniors and other community members to gather feedback on their experiences and satisfaction with age-friendly initiatives.
- **Focus Groups:** Conduct focus groups with seniors to gain deeper insights into their needs and the impact of the initiatives.

2. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- **Participation Rates:** Track the number of seniors participating in various programs and activities.
- **Health and Well-being Metrics:** Monitor changes in health outcomes, such as physical fitness levels, mental health status, and overall well-being.
- **Accessibility Improvements:** Measure improvements in accessibility of public spaces and services.

3. Community Engagement

- **Volunteer Involvement:** Assess the level of volunteer involvement in age-friendly programs, including the number of volunteers and hours contributed.
- **Intergenerational Activities:** Evaluate the frequency and success of intergenerational activities and their impact on community cohesion.

4. Infrastructure and Environment

- **Accessibility Audits:** Conduct regular audits of public spaces and buildings to ensure they meet accessibility standards.
- **Transportation Services:** Measure the availability and usage of transportation services tailored for seniors.

5. Qualitative Feedback

- **Interviews:** Conduct interviews with seniors to gather personal stories and qualitative feedback on how the initiatives have impacted their lives.
- **Case Studies:** Develop case studies highlighting successful outcomes and areas for improvement.

6. Health and Social Indicators

- **Loneliness and Isolation:** Track indicators related to social isolation and loneliness among seniors.
- **Health Service Utilization:** Monitor the use of health services by seniors, including preventive care and emergency services.

7. Economic Impact

- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Perform cost-benefit analyses to determine the economic impact of age-friendly initiatives, including savings from reduced healthcare costs and increased community engagement.

8. Continuous Improvement

- **Feedback Loops:** Establish mechanisms for continuous feedback and improvement, ensuring that the initiatives evolve based on the needs and preferences of seniors

Involving Seniors in Evaluation:

1. Age-Friendly Committee

- **Senior Advisory Boards:** Establish advisory boards composed of seniors who can provide ongoing feedback and guidance on age-friendly initiatives.
- **Focus Groups:** Organize focus groups with seniors to discuss specific aspects of the initiatives and gather detailed feedback.

2. Surveys and Questionnaires

- **Regular Surveys:** Distribute surveys to seniors to collect their opinions on the effectiveness of the programs and services.
- **Feedback Forms:** Provide feedback forms at events and activities to capture immediate responses from participants.

3. Community Meetings

- **Town Hall Meetings:** Hold regular town hall meetings where seniors can voice their opinions and suggest improvements.
- **Workshops:** Conduct workshops that involve seniors in brainstorming and evaluating new ideas and solutions.

4. Volunteer Opportunities

- **Evaluation Volunteers:** Invite seniors to volunteer as evaluators for specific programs, allowing them to observe and provide feedback.
- **Peer Review Panels:** Create panels of seniors who review and assess the initiatives from their perspective.

5. Interviews and Case Studies

- **Personal Interviews:** Conduct one-on-one interviews with seniors to gather in-depth insights and personal stories about their experiences.
- **Case Studies:** Develop case studies based on the experiences of seniors to highlight successes and areas for improvement.

6. Digital Platforms

- **Online Surveys:** Use online platforms to distribute surveys and collect feedback from tech-savvy seniors.
- **Social Media Groups:** Create social media groups where seniors can discuss and share their thoughts on age-friendly initiatives.

7. Participatory Research

- **Community-Based Research:** Involve seniors in participatory research projects where they help design and conduct studies on age-friendly initiatives.
- **Citizen Science:** Engage seniors in citizen science projects that contribute to the evaluation of community programs.

8. Feedback Loops

- **Regular Updates:** Provide regular updates to seniors on how their feedback is being used to improve initiatives.
- **Responsive Changes:** Demonstrate responsiveness by making visible changes based on seniors' feedback and communicating these changes back to the community.

By actively involving seniors in the evaluation process, Stewart can ensure that its age-friendly initiatives are effective, inclusive, and truly beneficial to the community.

Acknowledgements

The District of Stewart (DOS) Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan was made possible through the grant funding of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Age Friendly Communities program. The District of Stewart engaged Stewart Community Connections Society (SCCS), a local non-profit society, to gain input from the community through surveys, focus group sessions, and interviews. SCCS headed up the Age-Friendly Committee, bringing in specific groups and community members at each phase of the project.

Age-Friendly Committee Members:

- **Jessica Hill** - District of Stewart Community Development Manager
- **Judy Elson** - SCCS Senior Champion
- **Lindsay Moore** - Connections Care Home Support Worker
- **Angela Brand** - SCCS Executive Director
- **Dolores Kennedy** - SCCS Vice-President

The Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan is supported by the Official Community Plan (OCP) of the District of Stewart, along with Mayor and Council.

Background

In September 2006, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors endorsed the Age-Friendly Rural/Remote Communities Initiative (AFRRCI).

Acknowledgements

- Objectives of AFRRCI:
 - Increase awareness of seniors' needs within rural and remote communities.
 - Develop a practical guide to identify common barriers and promote dialogue for age-friendly community development.
- Age-Friendly Community Principles:
 - Recognizing Diversity: Acknowledge the varying capacities and resources among older adults.
 - Flexibility: Anticipate and adapt to aging-related needs and preferences.
 - Respect: Honor the decisions and lifestyle choices of older adults.
 - Protection: Safeguard vulnerable seniors.
 - Inclusion: Encourage older adults' participation in all aspects of community life.
- Global Context:
 - The AFRRCI draws inspiration from the World Health Organization's (WHO) "global age-friendly cities" project, which aligns with the WHO's active aging model.
 - The global project has engaged 33 cities across 22 countries, emphasizing age-friendly practices.
- Canadian Success:
 - Canada's AFRRCI builds upon this model, focusing specifically on rural and remote communities.
 - In the original funding, ten communities from eight jurisdictions participated, contributing to positive outcomes.
 - Since 2006, many other rural and remote communities in Canada have done the background work and have Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plans in place.
 - Stewart participated in the 2014 Age-Friendly grant, producing the community's first Age-Friendly document. We are privileged to have been chosen to receive the 2024 grant, and this document is a reflection of our work. As a living document, Council will review the Action Plan annually and add policy, bylaws, and projects with an Age-Friendly lens.

Survey Questions



The District of Stewart has been awarded an Age-Friendly grant. Stewart Community Connections is privileged help with gathering information and preparing the Age-Friendly report for Mayor and Council.

This report will include:

- Your information from this survey
- Your information from upcoming community engagement sessions
- An assessment of current senior assets and services
- A plan for the future including specific projects
- An application to the province to become a designated Age-Friendly community

Personal Demographics:

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer Not to Answer

Age: _____

Name: (optional): _____

Moved to Stewart in: _____

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings:

1. What's kept you from using public buildings (e.g., library, town hall, recreation and community centres, etc.) in Stewart?

Check all that apply

- Physical barriers like improper snow removal, uneven sidewalk or curb.
- Not enough public washrooms.
- Hard to get to – transportation
- Not enough accessibility features like handrails, ramps, lifts, elevators.
- Hard to read signs.
- Hard to find parking.
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____

2. What's kept you from using parks and public outdoor spaces?

Check all that apply

- Not enough public washrooms
- Poor sidewalks, non-existing sidewalks



- Poor lighting at night
- Not enough public seating/ rest areas
- Have no interest in these spaces
- Hard to get to – transportation
- Hard to find parking
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____

Transportation:

1. How do you generally get around Stewart?

Check all that apply

- My own vehicle
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Friend's or family's vehicle
- Scooter
- Wheelchair
- I don't go out
- Other _____

2. How do you get around regionally – Terrace, Smithers etc

- Drive my own vehicle
- Friend's or family's vehicle
- I don't travel regionally
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____

Housing:

1. What type of housing do you live in now?

- Single family home – house where you own the lot
- Single family home – rental
- Apartment
- Live with family or friends



Social Participation:

1. What types of social opportunities do you or would you like to participate in or use facilities?

Check all that apply

- Exercise/ fitness classes
- Art and cultural clubs (i.e. Library book club, painting classes etc)
- Community festivals and social events
- Religious gatherings
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____

2. How often would you like to attend some form of social event?

- Weekly
- Several times per week
- Monthly
- Yearly
- Never
- Suggestions _____

3. Are the following statements true in Stewart?

- There are ample opportunities to engage with other generations.
- There are ample opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds and cultures.
- Older adults are valued by and included in the community.
- Suggestions _____

4. How connected do you feel to other residents in Stewart?

- Very connected
- Connected
- Not very connected
- Not connected at all
- Neutral / not sure
- Comment _____

Civic Participation and Employment:

1. Do you work and/or volunteer in Stewart?

Check all that apply

- I'm retired



- 2. Have you moved family (spouse, parent) to senior housing outside of Stewart?**
- Yes in _____
 - No
 - Are considering this as a option in the near future (i.e. next 5 – 10 years)
- 3. What, if any, of the following factors may influence whether you will stay in your current home to age?**
- Check all that apply
- Health reasons
 - Home / property upkeep and repairs
 - Accessibility of home (number of stairs)
 - Proximity to family
 - Cost
 - Distance to services (shopping, pharmacy etc)
 - Other
 - Suggestions
- 4. If you plan to move to a different type of housing in the near future (within 10 years), what type of housing would you look for?**
- Single family home (house on it's own lot)
 - Smaller family home
 - Apartment
 - Retirement Home
 - Assisted Living (some care and some meals provided)
 - Independent Senior Living (senior's apartment building)
 - Care facilities
 - Move in with family
 - I don't plan on moving
- 5. In your opinion, what would you like to see more of in Stewart?**
- A variety of good housing options for older adults and seniors (i.e. small houses, tiny homes, apartments, assisted living)
 - Affordable housing options for older adults and seniors
 - Low-cost services such as lawn mowing, snow removal, etc
 - Information on and options for financial assistance programs for home modification and maintenance
 - Suggestions _____



- Yes I volunteer (weekly or monthly)
- Yes I work full-time
- Yes I work part-time
- Yes I work multiple jobs
- I own a business
- I don't volunteer
- I'm unemployed

2. Do any of the following factors keep you from volunteering or working?

Check all that apply

- Not enough time
- My health or physical abilities
- I don't have the right training
- Not enough opportunities to volunteer
- Not enough opportunities to work
- I'm not interested
- I can't find information where/when to volunteer
- Lack of transportation to and from
- Other _____

3. Are older adults and seniors engaged politically in Stewart?

Check all that apply

- Represented on Council
- Able to express concerns, thoughts and suggestions to Mayor and Council
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____

4. How do you think businesses in Stewart could improve their age-friendliness?

- More accessibility considerations i.e clear signage, ramps etc
- Patient helpful staff
- Delivery options
- Senior discounts
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____



Communication and Information:

1. Do you agree that community information, events, and activities are posted and available in noticeable/ accessible places?

- Yes, always
- Most of the time
- Not usually
- Never
- Neutral / not sure
- Comment _____

2. Do you get the information you need about Stewart?

Check all that apply

- Friends, neighbours or family members
- Social media
- Advertisements, signage on bulletin boards
- District Website
- Mailouts
- Phone calls from Stewart Community Connections (senior champion, home support worker)
- Other _____
- Suggestions _____



Community Support and Health Services:

1. In your opinion, how available and convenient are the following health and wellness services in Stewart.

- 1 Not Available in Stewart
- 2 Available but inconvenient
- 3 Available intermittently
- 4 Somewhat available
- 5 Very available and convenient

	Not aware of service	1	2	3	4	5
Doctor and nurses						
Public Health						
Emergency Room						
Health Care Professionals i.e. physical therapy, specialists						
Home Support						
Foot Care						
Food Bank						
Meal Delivery						
Mental Health supports						

2. What services are missing in Stewart for you to age well in community?

3. How can access to services be improved?

- Better advertising of services
- Transportation to services
- Other

Suggestions _____

4. Overall, how would you rate life for older adults in Stewart?

- Excellent



- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Neutral / not sure

Thank you for participating, if you have any questions or suggestions for us please contact us by:

Email

info@stewartcommunityconnections.com

Phone:

250-615-3803 or 250-251-9083

Terms of Reference

STEWART COMMUNITY AGE-FRIENDLY COMMITTEE

Mandate: The Stewart Community Age-Friendly Committee (CAF Committee) is dedicated to championing age-friendly initiatives within our community. Our mandate includes:

- Advocating for age-friendly principles by fostering a vision, generating momentum, and catalyzing action.
- Coordinating efforts among local government, citizens, service providers, and community organizations to foster an age-friendly environment.
- Raising awareness of age-friendly principles among residents, local agencies, and businesses.
- Encouraging the adoption of an age-friendly perspective in policies, projects, and programs.
- Establishing communication and collaboration with the Age-Friendly British Columbia coordinator to leverage available resources and tools.
- Securing formal local government commitment and public support for age-friendly initiatives.
- Monitoring available funding for age-friendly initiatives, facilitating funding applications, and offering input on funding strategies.
- Facilitating, promoting, and/or leading age-friendly assessments of the community.
- Reviewing the results of the age-friendly assessment results and formulating recommendations for priority actions.
- Overseeing, promoting, and encouraging the implementation of action plans and specific initiatives.
- Monitoring changes in age-friendliness, ensuring consideration for people of all generations and abilities.
- Regularly advising local government on sustaining age-friendly initiatives.

Reporting Structure: The Stewart CAF Committee reports to the District of Stewart, Mayor, and Council. A structured reporting schedule will be established upon committee formation.

Committee Membership:

- The committee comprises a specified number of volunteers, including:
 - Council/board member(s) appointed by the local governing body.
 - Older individuals actively engaged and attuned to the concerns of their age cohort.
 - Representatives involved in one or more of the eight age-friendly categories. (outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, respect and inclusion of seniors, social participation, communication and information, civic volunteerism and employment, health and community support).

Term, Responsibility, and Authority:

- Members serve a one-year term, with the option for renewal based on mandate requirements.
- Chairperson: _____.
- Committee members: _____
[Roles may include advisory to Council, public relations, or leading implementation].
- Members are tasked with representing the interests of older residents, keeping the community informed of age-friendly efforts, and making recommendations to the District of Stewart Mayor and Council.

Administration:

- The committee will convene as needed, with a minimum frequency of monthly meetings.
- Meeting location: _____; Time: _____.
- Administrative support will be provided by the Stewart Community Connections Society, encompassing logistical arrangements and support services.
- Research support will be furnished by the Director of Community Development and SCCS Executive Director, facilitating funding exploration, best practices research, and liaison with the Age-Friendly British Columbia coordinator.

By aligning our efforts with this refined framework, the Stewart Community Age-Friendly Committee endeavors to enrich the quality of life for all community members, irrespective of age.

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Thank You



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all contributors for their invaluable support and dedication. Their expertise played a crucial role in shaping the Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan. We are also deeply appreciative of the support provided by BC Healthy Communities through the Age-Friendly Communities Grant, which made this work possible.



Executive Summary

As Canada's population ages, communities across the country face the challenge of meeting the needs of older adults. In Stewart, where seniors over 65 already make up approximately 25% of the population, age-friendly planning is a critical priority. This report outlines the importance of adopting an age-friendly approach and the wide-ranging benefits it brings to residents of all ages.

By 2030, seniors will account for 23% of Canada's population. Stewart has already surpassed this milestone, with an aging population expected to remain in the community. This trend underscores the urgency of planning to ensure seniors can live safely, independently, and with dignity.

Smaller communities like Stewart often face unique barriers, including limited transportation options, access to healthcare, and social isolation. Addressing these challenges through targeted age-friendly initiatives is essential for supporting aging residents and ensuring they can thrive in place.

Age-friendly initiatives enhance both the built environment and social infrastructure. By improving accessibility, fostering inclusion, and tailoring services, Stewart can create a community that meets the needs of seniors while benefiting residents of all ages. Improvements such as accessible public spaces, reliable transportation, and inclusive programming elevate the overall quality of life and promote community well-being.

Age-friendly planning considers the physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of residents throughout their lives. This holistic approach ensures that Stewart evolves as a supportive, inclusive, and vibrant community. Successful implementation requires collaboration among key stakeholders, including:

- The District of Stewart (DOS):** Responsible for age-friendly policies, updates to the Official Community Plan, and leading partnerships. Establishing an Age-Friendly Committee or supporting the existing working group is a priority.
- External Agencies:** Partnering with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS), Northern Health, and the Province of BC to deliver key services and programs.
- Community-Led Initiatives:** Local non-profit organizations and residents play an essential role in driving grassroots actions and initiatives.

By fostering an age-friendly environment, Stewart ensures that seniors can age safely and comfortably in their homes while attracting new residents seeking a high quality of life. These efforts will create a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone can thrive, regardless of age or ability.

Age-friendly planning represents a commitment to inclusivity, collaboration, and long-term sustainability, making Stewart a desirable place to live for generations to come.