



Gibsons Age-Friendly

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



Prepared for the Town of Gibsons | 13 February 2013

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A. Executive Summary

The Town of Gibsons over the fall of 2012 and early 2013 has undertaken an Age-Friendly planning initiative to address the needs and capacities of people from all age groups within the community.

The work included reviewing existing policies related to age-friendly planning; engaging a group of community participants from a broad cross-section of the community and through a public forum; and developing policies and actions that set a path forward towards a more age-friendly future for the Town of Gibsons.

Input was gathered through a community workshop; three community meetings; use of an online Wiki-styled platform; through telephone conversations; emails; and direct discussions with youth at Elphinstone high school.

Gibsons faces a few key challenges in planning for an age-friendly community. One is the topographical barrier between Gibsons' two distinct geographical areas Gibsons Landing and Upper Gibsons. The steep change in elevation makes travel between them difficult without a private vehicle. Another is that Gibsons lacks services, like a hospital, that are available in other communities on the Coast. These challenges are heightened by Gibsons' increasingly aging population, making it important to attract and retain young people and to better connect youth and seniors.

Some of the key messages developed during the process have been summarized below.

- Providing sufficient bus service is one of the key issues and barriers to moving around the community. There is a desire for a community shuttle to connect destinations, especially between Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing.
- Prioritizing pedestrian, cycling and crosswalk access to improve the general walkability between neighbourhoods and key destinations.
- Connecting destinations is essential, e.g. bus stops to services and facilities.
- Expanding current housing policy and the regional housing needs assessment to match future needs. A Housing Action Plan or a Housing Reserve Fund for implementation could also be considered.
- Communicating activities, events, programs, and resources through Gibsons' website and the new Sunshine Coast Seniors' Resource Directory
- Developing intergenerational programs and activities.
- Building better quality employment opportunities for both seniors and youth.
- Increasing the awareness of the need for volunteering within the community.



The Age-Friendly Community Initiative was launched in 2006 by the World Health Organization with the practical goal of adapting structures and services to be more inclusive of varying needs and capacities of people from all age groups.

The 2012-2014 Town of Gibsons Strategic Plan identified the need to review and update the Official Community Plan to incorporate age-friendly community planning, policy and initiatives.

Early in 2012, the Town of Gibsons was successful in retaining a \$20,000 grant to undertake an Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.

What Is An Age-Friendly Community?

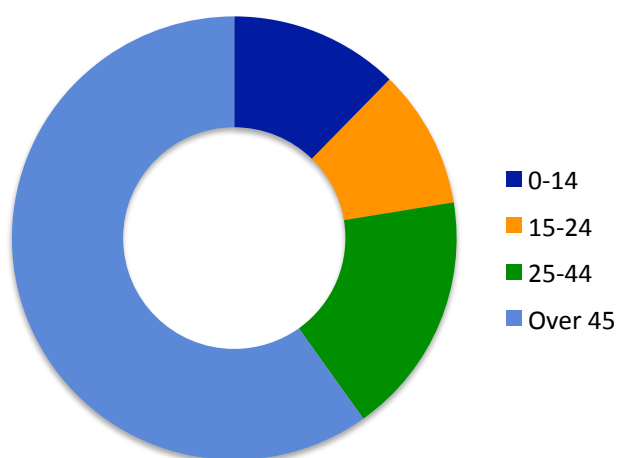
Age-Friendly planning is planning for the full spectrum and arc of life from infancy through youth, young adulthood, mid-adulthood and lastly our senior years.

An “age-friendly” community is one where public officials, service providers, community leaders, and business and community members recognize the diversity among the population by:

- Promoting inclusion
- Anticipating and responding to age-related needs and preferences

In the case of Gibsons almost 60% of the population is over 45. Conversely, youth, ages 15 to 24 only make up 10.1% of the local population compared with 30% in BC overall.

Population of Gibsons



Source for all statistics: BC Statistics (2011)

The 60+ age group is projected to increase from 25% of the total population in 1996 to almost 40% by 2026. That is a substantial increase compared to other age cohort groups. This has the potential to impact a variety of items from housing type demand, social services, transportation preferences, health care, to general retail trends in the local area and more.

The Town has recognized some of these demographic shifts and is now planning for them through the development of this work.

While this report focuses on seniors and youth it should be noted that programs and support for mid-life adults are also warranted.

B. Purpose of The Plan

The purpose of the work is to review existing policies related to age-friendly planning; engage community through a group of participants from a broad cross-section of the community and through a public forum; and to develop policies and actions that set a path forward towards a more age-friendly future for the Town of Gibsons.

While there is a tendency in age-friendly planning to focus on physical improvements and accessibility, there are other aspects to age-friendly planning that deal with socio-economic aspects that link the community with its physical environment. One of these aspects is ensuring program and services are inclusive in how they are delivered.

For this work the areas focused upon include:

Accessible physical environment

- Transportation – what are the limiting factors in transportation services?
- Outdoor Spaces & Buildings – what are some of the physical barriers?
- Housing – do alternative housing options need to be considered?

Inclusive programs and services

- Communication - is information getting out to the people who could benefit from it and how should information be provided?
- Health Services & Community Support – what barriers exist and what needs to be fulfilled?
- Social Participation – are there enough opportunities to participate?
- Respect & Social Inclusion – are people comfortable and welcomed?
- Civic Participation & Employment – are there appropriate opportunities?

These were the topics of discussion during this study, and will be the areas addressed in this report.



Source: University of Regina
Seniors Education Centre (2000)



C. Study Area

The study area includes all of the Town of Gibsons. The following indicates the neighbourhood areas within the Town. It should be noted that lower Gibsons is also known as Gibsons Landing and is identified as such in this report.

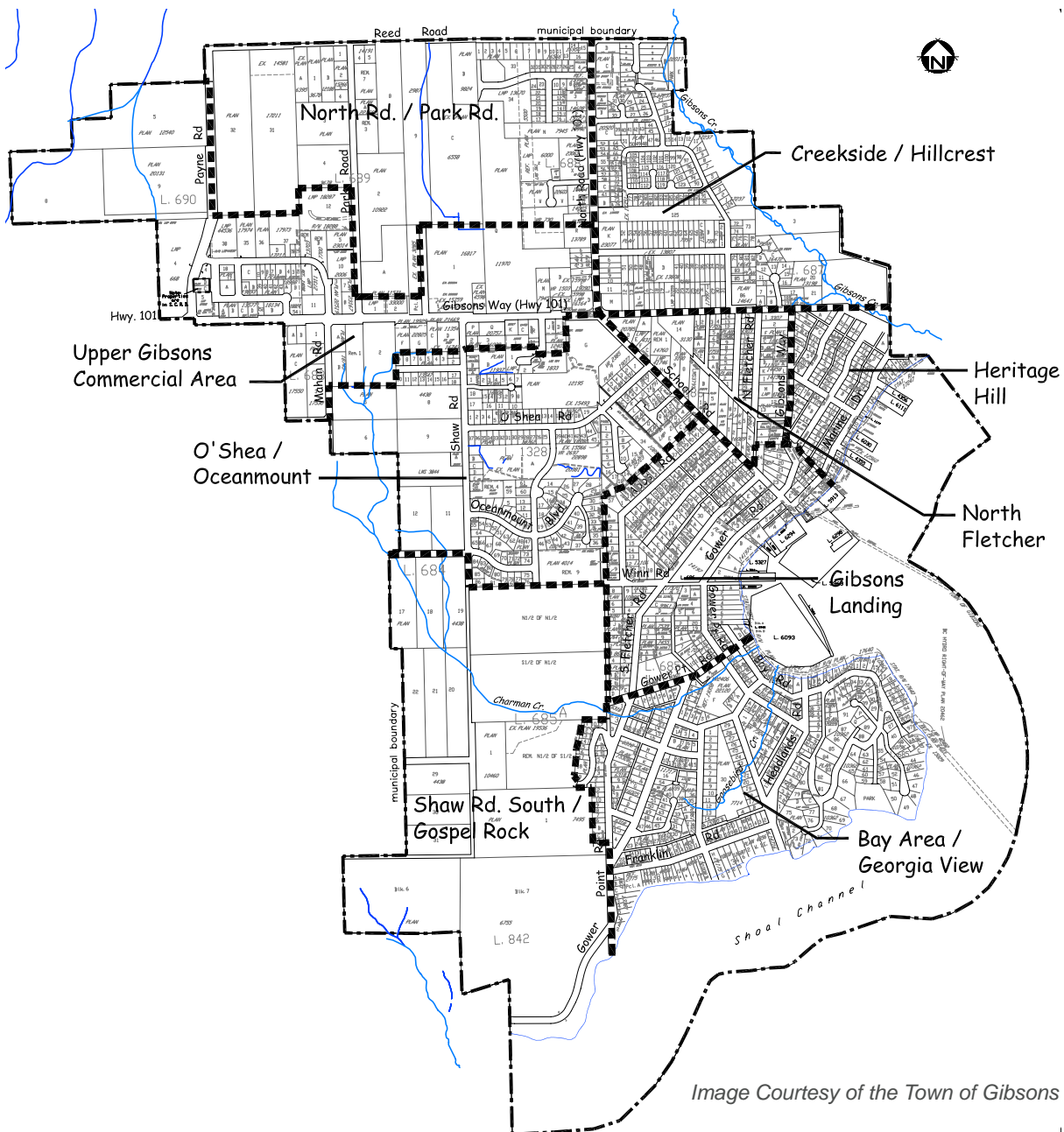


Image Courtesy of the Town of Gibsons

D. Gathering Community Input

The process for engaging both the community and selected groups undertook the following events and resources to gain insight into current challenges, bring forward lessons learned from other communities, develop community conversation, and to develop strategies and actions for the future.

- Community Groups' walking tour and issue identification session (August 23, 2012)
- Public forum with age-friendly specialist, Elaine Gallagher, PhD. (October 27, 2012)
- Community Groups' meeting with age-friendly specialist, Elaine Gallagher PhD. (October 27, 2012)
- Develop content area champions from individual members of local community groups (October 27, 2012)
- Youth engagement (November 5 and 6, 2012)
- Wiki-styled website: to engage Content Area Champions in discussions and develop strategies and actions (October 4 though November 7, 2012)
- Email and phone conversations with individuals and community groups regarding actions and strategies for the plan (October 4 though December 7, 2012)
- Community Groups' review of Plan (February 1, 2013)

A number of groups and individual citizens participated in the process providing their insight, input, and ideas through the wiki-styled website, emails and telephone conversations. Special thanks should be give to the following members who were active in developing the content for the strategies and actions outlined in this report.

- Ted Chisholm, Gibsons and Area Community Centre
- Maureen Goldman, Gibsons Senior Society
- Matthew Hardman, Salvation Army
- Patricia Hetherington, St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church
- Leanne Johnson, Council Liaison
- Marg Kitson, Howe Sound Pharmacy
- Brian Sagman, Sunshine Coast Transit
- Brenda Wilkes, Vancouver Coastal Health
- Silas White, School District No. 46

For a list of all the individuals and groups involved in the process, please see the acknowledgements at the end of this report.



The groups that participated in the development of the plan include the following:

- Capilano College
- Chamber of Commerce
- Christ the King Community Church
- Christensen Village / Good Samaritan Society
- Council Liaison
- Gibsons and Area Community Centre
- Gibsons Seniors Society
- Help on the Way
- Howe Sound Pharmacy
- Rotary Club of Gibsons
- Royal Canadian Legion
- Salvation Army
- School District No. 46
- SCRD Emergency Preparedness
- SCRD Recreational Program Coordinator
- Seniors Information Line
- St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church
- Sunshine Coast Transit
- The Baha'i Faith
- Vancouver Coastal Health Home Care
- Vancouver Coastal Health, Coast Garibaldi Office
- SCRD Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- Voice on the Coast
- (Sunshine Coast) White Cane Club



E. Challenges and Policy Context Overview

Gibsons faces a few key challenges in planning for an age-friendly community. One is the topographical barrier between Gibsons' two distinct geographical areas (Gibsons Landing and Upper Gibsons) which makes travel between them difficult without a private vehicle. Another is that Gibsons lacks services, like a hospital, available to other communities on the Coast. Some services are provided by the Town of Gibsons and some by the Sunshine Coast Regional District, such as, Transit and the Recreation Centre and the tax base is often inadequate to support the desired level of service.

There is also an unsubstantiated sense that people from surrounding areas use Gibsons for services and amenities, while the tax base does not support the demands and adaptations needed to improve accessibility. These challenges are heightened by Gibsons' aging population, making it important to attract and retain young people and to better connect youth and seniors.

As an overview, the Town's existing policies set out key directions related to age-friendly issues. Although they do not include dedicated sections to age-friendly planning, it is evident that this topic has been a priority for the Town in the past. Generally, current policies focus on providing suitable and affordable housing for seniors, disabled-friendly design and adequate supply of parks and recreational amenities.

The Smart Plan (Official Community Plan) recognizes that the community has a growing seniors population and it generally promotes facilities and services for all ages in several sections throughout the document. This priority is made clear in the Planning Issues and Interests section of the Smart Plan where it states "provide for a mix of age groups and integration of multiple age groups".

In the Smart Plan, housing is also highlighted as a priority. One of the Smart Plan goals is to "design and plan for a changing population base and age groups through provision of a wide range of housing types and community services to meet the needs of a growing population".

Several other policy documents make brief reference to age-friendly related issues. The Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan (2006) does not speak to age-friendly issues specifically, but aims to meet the needs of "various age groups, income levels, and occupations". Objective 4.4 in the Harbour Area Plan (2012) is to "design for a range of ages, creating accommodating, accessible and desirable spaces for children, families, and seniors".

Although the Town's existing policies include reference to age-friendly issues, it is apparent that the Gibsons Age-Friendly Community Action Plan is an important initiative to better facilitate a comprehensive approach and needed improvements. For more detailed policy information please see the "Findings, Strategies & Actions" sections.



F. Findings, Proposed Strategies & Actions

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation was one of the key issues that arose in the process. Getting around Gibsons affects every aspect of people's lives from accessing health services, volunteer and work activities to social and recreational events.

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

Many of Gibsons' residents rely on personal vehicles for transportation as it is difficult to get around by transit. Due to the operational structure of Transit on the Coast (Sunshine Coast Regional District (regional) and BC Transit (provincial), Gibsons has little control on how services are delivered. There is an immediate need for smaller scaled, community, transit shuttle buses that can feed into a linear Coastal bus system. There is a particular need of a community-scaled bus between Gibsons Landing and Upper Gibsons. Levels of service are ferry dependent and can limit peoples ability to access transit. Some of the transit hot-spots identified include:

- *Getting to/from the medical centre;*
- *Transit re-route has impacted access to the Library, Coast Health Unit and Town Hall;*
- *Getting to/from the recreation centre;*
- *Getting to/from SCRD offices;*
- *Getting to/from local neighbourhoods and rural areas;*

Bus stops are also limited in amenities (lighting, seating, weather protection) and are not well connected to destinations.

"Gibsons Seniors Society offers affordable programs and opportunities for social inclusion, but seniors are having more difficulty getting there. Transportation is an issue. Transportation to the community centre is equally difficult - one participant was told that Handy Dart is only available for runs to see the doctor, but has seen Handy Dart pull up at the Community Centre. She is not sure what qualifies as a legitimate request for transportation."

CURRENT STATUS: WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

Town of Gibsons Smart Plan Policies (Official Community Plan)

- Provide for a variety of transportation choices in Gibsons Landing, but giving dominance to pedestrians and cyclists.

SCRD Integrated Transportation Study (2011)

The study is for regional transportation but makes many relevant recommendations for Gibsons:

- Recognizes that Highway 101 is both a local connector and a regional highway and therefore has different conditions and service requirements including pedestrian and cycling facilities, traffic control and traffic volumes particularly in Upper Gibsons;
- Alternative routes to the highway are highlighted were feasible, these routes use local roads which are quieter and slower paced;
- The report outlines that transit service is ferry oriented while only 30% of trips are ferry related and this does not necessarily provide service that is convenient or timely for non-ferry trips;
- Recommends improvements at transit stops for improved safety and user experience including shelters, lighting, benches, and transit information;
- Community buses are highlighted as an option to improve local transit conditions and connections to local services and amenities;
- Pedestrian and cycling options are good in Gibsons Landing, improvements on Highway 101 have improved pedestrian conditions in Upper Gibsons;
- Cycling is not actively promoted and the network for cyclists is limited; and
- There are a number of opportunities to improve active transportation.

Transit Feasibility Study (2007)

- Transit service is currently hourly at peak and ferry oriented. It runs a fixed route through Gibsons from Langdale to Sechelt and provides limited local connectivity. The schedule has alternative routes that further limit connections between Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing;
- The study indicated transit alternatives to link Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing;
- Short-term proposal uses community bus routes to link Gibsons Landing and civic buildings with Upper Gibsons and its services with a fixed daytime route and flexible (on-demand) evening routing;
- The long-term proposal includes potential street car route with buses on both a fixed and flexible routes to better service the community;
- Walking and transit are highlighted for their popularity for mode choice;
- Recommended local connector offers flexible and fixed route transit with more stops and better connections, closer to local amenities and services;
- Opportunities for more tailored schedule and service hours local to Gibsons; and
- Proposed fare structure is reasonable and could allow the short-term option to pay for itself, excluding initial start-up costs.



Gibsons Traffic Calming Master Plan (2007)

- The report highlights sites within the community that could benefit from traffic calming.
- Traffic calming is proposed to reduce the negative impacts of traffic volumes and speed, improving pedestrian and cycling conditions. Some of this work has been implemented.

Lighthouse Learning Network, Sunshine Coast Transportation Survey

- This survey highlights travel patterns and potential travel patterns using alternative transportation on the Sunshine Coast based on location and age. The report also summarizes resident requests for infrastructure or changes.

AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

Strategies & Actions for Transit

- BC Transit and the Sunshine Coast Regional District are undertaking a Transit Future Plan that will envision the community's transit network and needs for the next 25 years. As part of the the current BC Transit review, the Town of Gibsons should consider advocating for:
 - Input into transit routing, community buses and schedules to meet the needs of the community including serving local destinations such as health, seniors and community centres; shopping areas; the library; City Hall; post office; banks, etc.
 - Input to ensure there is sufficient time in the transit schedule to accommodate for the loading and unloading of wheelchairs, strollers and other devices
 - Input to explore allowing handyDART passengers a non-medical companion to ride with them (a nominal fee may need to be applied)
- Work with the Sunshine Coast Regional District
 - To educate transit drivers on the needs of the community and those with mobility limitations and to provide transit service with a customer service approach
 - To review traffic calming measures on transit routes to prevent the rerouting of transit based on traffic calming measures.
 - If a smaller community shuttle is implemented, restore service to the Winn Road stop at South Fletcher Road (currently the road base is insufficient for larger vehicles).
- Prioritize select bus stop locations to improve conditions including pedestrian access with curb drops, crosswalks, and sidewalks/walking areas, shelters, benches, lighting, scheduling or contact information, using the BC Transit Infrastructure Design Guidelines (2010). Consider cost sharing with BC Transit.
- Develop public/private partnerships with local community groups to provide transportation for special events.





Car Stop Example

Strategies & Actions for Transportation Programs

- Create a private, business or Town-run community shuttle or school bus fleet to transport people between Gibsons Landing and Upper Gibsons. It was identified in the Transit Feasibility Study (2007) that once the capital was expended to purchase a community shuttle(s), the fares collected could pay for operations. This could be undertaken as a referendum item during an election to secure capital for the buses. Another option could be to develop a communal community cab or shuttle that picks up and drops off anywhere in the community for a flat fee. The Town of Iqaluit in Nunavut uses this type of shared cab service.
- Implement a community ride-share program;
- Develop a brochure with information about local transportation options and services for seniors including where to find information for transit, volunteer driver programs, ride-share information, and local businesses that deliver goods or services to people in their homes. This information should also be provided online on the Getting Around Section of Discover Gibsons;
- Implement car stops - local stops where drivers can pull off the road and pick up people for a local ride. Pender Island uses this form of transportation as there is no transit service; and
- Explore options with BC Transit to provide seniors with a taxi account with a discounted rate to accommodate trips outside of handyDART hours or in areas not served by transit.
- Incorporate policies recognizing the need to accommodate low-speed electric vehicles and scooters in the Official Community Plan.



OUTDOOR SPACES, BUILDINGS & CONNECTIVITY

The design of the outdoor spaces, access to buildings, and the connection between destinations can either facilitate or hinder the ability of community members to freely move around and participate in the community. This was one topic area that received a large amount of input from various individuals and community groups.



Garbage cans obstruct walkway



Cars parked on sidewalks



Incomplete sidewalk to mall

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

The grade of many streets makes walking around town challenging. Benches, stairs and railings would help in steep locations. Gibsons Way should be a priority for a walkway/bikeway connections.

Pedestrian connections and trails to prime destinations like schools, banks, the post office, recreation centres, malls, medical centres, etc., need improvement. Pedestrian challenged hot spots include:

- *Gibsons Way between School Road and North Road - no sidewalk or bike lane School Road at North Fletcher*
- *Gower Point Rd - no sidewalk*
- *South Fletcher Rd - traffic calming is a barrier*
- *Harmony Lane services Gibsons Seniors Centre, the Jack and Jill Preschool and local residents - uneven paved surface in need of repaving and, if possible, a narrow walk*
- *Connections from Highway 101 to the malls - no continuous sidewalk*

Visitability is a concept that requires all new homes to be at least partially accessible. It was felt this concept is worthy of consideration in new residential buildings. See Appendices for specific details.

Key crosswalks could be improved to facilitate ease and safe moment across roads, such as increasing the timing of lights to get across the street. See Appendices for specific details and locations.

There is a lack of marked and safe bicycle routes for all ages. See Appendices for specific details and locations.

While accessible parking is provided throughout Gibsons, some spaces are not wide enough or on slopes where to getting in and out of a vehicle into a wheelchair or walker is difficult.

Throughout Gibsons, roadways are well maintained and provide safe access for drivers. Some specific locations and issues were highlighted as requiring improvements.

CURRENT STATUS - WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

The Town of Gibsons endorsed and adopted Accessible and Adaptable Housing Design Guidelines in February 2012. The guidelines are divided into three categories: Basic Accessibility, Enhanced Accessibility, Townhouses and Single Family, and Multi-Family Buildings.

Buildings are addressed in detail through the guidelines. The guidelines cover interior spaces as well as the “accessible path of travel” from curbside to front door.

Of all the documents reviewed, this addressed the accessibility and visitability the most comprehensively. Further strategies are needed to address some of the issues identified.

Traffic Safety Plan (2009)

- Explores options for improved user safety on School Road and at the intersections of School Road and Gower Point Road, Marine Drive, and Gibsons Way/Highway 101;
- School Road/Gower Point Road/Marine Dr/Gibsons Way is a central and key intersection between civic services, shopping and residential areas;
- Mitigation options to improve pedestrian driver interaction and safety include realignment of curbs and driveways, moving crosswalks, adding pedestrian crossing flashers. Some of this work has been completed;
- Pedestrians are considered but the Traffic Safety Plan (2009) provides no comment on mitigation or the needs of those with limited mobility, wheelchairs or scooters;
- School Road is a significant barrier to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. Alternatives routes exist for drivers but alternatives for pedestrians and cyclists are discontinuous, longer and are not well marked.

Trail & Cycle Network Plan (2001)

- Outlines a network for trails and cycling that provide key pedestrian and cycling connections throughout the community;
- Recommends trail and cycling route facilities to create the network depending on the type and purpose of the route.



AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

Strategies & Actions for Pedestrian Friendliness

- Work with the community to develop a hot spots map that identifies key locations for future sidewalks, street, road, intersection and crosswalk improvements to make Gibsons more pedestrian friendly and to connect destinations. Once complete, prioritize and provide capital over a series of years to incrementally improve pedestrian friendliness. Gibsons Way was considered a priority location for improvements.
- Review and prioritize the safe and accessible passage from bus stops to public buildings like the recreation centre, library, arts centre, post office, schools etc.
- Integrate pedestrian connections in future neighbourhood planning and use existing right of ways (unbuilt road right of ways, or utility corridors) to decrease walking distances and increase walkability.
- Develop guidelines for continuous pedestrian access to private businesses and developments including crosswalks, sidewalks, and marked pedestrian routes.
- Identify areas within the community, especially between Gibsons Landing and Upper Gibsons, where rest stops including railings, stairs and benches are needed to encourage walking. Using the memorial bench program, install benches. Benches should include arms for improved leverage.
- High profile crosswalks should have a number of features that make them more age-friendly including clearly painting and signing, providing curb drops at both ends, lighting and technological features such as audible signals and count down timers.

Strategies & Actions for Trails

- Review the current trail system to determine if upgrades and enhancement can be made to increase the access to local schools and community destinations.
- Encourage local businesses and property owners to improve the exteriors of their properties including stairways, parking areas, paths and other accessibility features, and to upgrade where possible to meet universally accessible design criteria.
- Work with volunteer groups to identify trail improvements that could be completed with donated labour.

Strategies & Actions for Crosswalks

- Work with highways to develop safe and accessible crossings at bus stop locations, such as Elphinstone School.
- Consider pedestrian improvements to pedestrian crossings and walking areas on School Road, particularly at North Fletcher Road.
- Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to increase the crossing time at intersections with traffic signals.



Strategies & Actions for Cycling, Scooters and Bicycle Parking

- Prioritize bicycle route network and implement one improvement / year to enhance conditions for cyclists and scooters by, demarcating routes; providing signage; and connecting to SCRD routes. Use the Trail & Cycle Network Master Plan as a guide.
- Work with MoTI to develop a safe bike route along the Highway.
- Develop a program working with local businesses to provide bicycle parking.
- Promote cycling education workshops and events to encourage cycling, provide information and raise awareness. Some of this information could be provided in the “Discover Gibsons / Getting Around” section of the Town of Gibsons web site.

Strategies & Actions for Parking

- Revise the bylaw requirement for the number of accessible parking spaces to 1 required space if 10 parking stalls are provided. A second accessible space would not be needed until the total number of parking spaces exceeds 49 spaces.
- Encourage developments during building or renovation to include a pick-up / drop off area at the main entrance with benches and a shelter for waiting.
- Provide information on accessible parking passes, the eligibility requirements, and how to use them.
- Enforce the bylaw to require vertical sign post to demarcate accessible parking instead of painting symbol on road surface. Vertical sign will increase visibility during inclement weather.
- Review exiting public accessible parking spaces, monitor their usage and consider options to improve those that are poorly used or those with undesirable conditions.
- Expand on-street accessible parking stalls, especially near civic facilities or services.
- Provide education flyer in neighbourhoods with mountable to encourage owners not to park on the sidewalks.

Strategies & Actions for Maintenance and Roads

- For roads without sidewalks, develop shoulders with materials that provide sure footing including paving or small gravel for drainage and should be well maintained.
- Encourage residents and contractors to leave garbage cans awaiting pick up off the sidewalk to prevent blocking pedestrian routes and to consider pedestrian areas when clearing snow.
- Educate Town Staff or contractors about the importance of clearly marking areas for construction and detour routes if a walker or wheelchair cannot pass the work area.
- Investigate options for higher friction crosswalk paint at crosswalks on steep roads.
- Address sightline problems at Franklin, Gower Point, School and N. Fletcher Roads.



HOUSING

Preferences in Housing Types

There are a number of factors which may affect residents' preferred housing type, which vary amongst demographic groups. In smaller, family-oriented communities, housing demand and consumer preference is, still, predominantly single-detached homes. In the 1950s and 1960s, these homes were, on the whole, modest in size on larger lots and typically located within close proximity to the centre or other community amenities. During the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s, there was a substantial increase in large-format single-detached homes, mostly located in suburban neighbourhoods.

Residents whose preference for low-density, suburban single-detached homes seek attributes including: (i) larger lots; (ii) more open space; (iii) better automobile access; (iv) newer housing stock; and, sometimes, (v) prestige. For some residents, the preferred housing type may change based on tradeoffs such as size of yard, neighbourhood access to public transportation, and other community amenities.

Recently, there has been an increasing trend in mid-size and smaller communities returning to smaller, more modest homes on small lots as well as increased desire for more housing choices, especially the seeking housing located closer to the city centre and community amenities. That is, there is a major shift away from lower density suburban housing development to more compact housing forms in walkable and accessible neighbourhoods.

Household Mix

Based on Census Canada data, the average household size in the Town of Gibsons has ranged between 2.0 and 2.1 persons per household over the past ten years. This is lower than the provincial average of 2.5 persons per household.

As people change over time, so do their housing needs. As a result, there tends to be a natural pattern of household turnover whereby residents relocate to different housing forms in order to better meet their needs. For example, a young family with children may move into a single-detached house, forming a household of four. Over time, children grow and move-out, and the parents may choose to downsize: relocate to a smaller place for one or two, such as, a ground-oriented town-home or independent seniors living facility. As these residents move out, they are normally replaced by young families, repeating the cycle. The replenishing number of young families in neighbourhoods maintain a healthy average household size.

However, this cycle has changed in recent years and there has been a notable downward trend in the average household size in communities across British Columbia and Canada. This trend is due in part to the average couple having fewer or no children. Also trending is the relationship between population age and household size, particularly pre-retirement and elderly residents. As children leave the home, a number of “empty nesters” are choosing to stay in their home and age in place, thereby reducing the number of residents per household.

Generally, household size is decreasing with fewer persons per household compared to previous decades.

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

Many seniors want to age in their homes. Providing or gaining access to the services that can help people to stay safe, happy and healthy at home is desirable. Affordability of rental housing can be an issue, particularly as families change. There is a perception that the mix of families is changing in the community to smaller households. There are limited options for care homes and residential care options. Another care home was seen as needed for the community. The cost of housing and food is generally increasing challenging those on a limited income. There was a desire to utilize Town-owned lands to provide appropriate housing. The range of housing options might include:

- Co-op housing;
- Supportive housing with minimal help needed;
- Commercial/ live/work spaces for younger people in Gibsons Landing and;
- Housing for single women on lower incomes.

CURRENT STATUS - WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

“Housing” is the best addressed topic area throughout the existing policy documents. The Smart Plan (Official Community Plan) provides many policies related to housing. There are also many references to a lack of housing for seniors and the importance of providing housing options and allowing for aging in place.

One of the goals listed under “Social Sustainability” in section 3.2 Goals of the Smart Plan is to: “design and plan for a changing population base and age groups through provision of a wide range of housing types and community services to meet the needs of a growing population.”

Section 7.4 Multi-Family Housing notes that townhomes are desirable for “empty nesters and seniors.” Policies in this section suggest providing multi-family housing for seniors and other demographic groups: “direct the following types of special needs housing to a Multi-Family Residential designation:



- Group homes;
- Extended care facilities;
- Retirement homes providing intermediate or extended care services;
- Community or congregate care housing; and
- Seniors and special needs housing.”

Section 7.5 Affordable and Alternative Housing includes the majority of seniors related policies in the Smart Plan. The plan aims to integrate seniors housing into the community: “A mixture of different age groups is important to sustain the Town’s vitality and character, and is one of the attractions of Gibsons as a community. Housing needs for both families and seniors encompass many housing forms. For seniors this includes independent living to a range of care facilities (i.e. self-care, limited care, extended care)”.

Smart Plan Policies include:

- Support multi-family and seniors housing developments, which are an integral part of the community, with site designs that balance the need for privacy and security with the need to retain an attractive streets frontage and sense of “fit” in the neighbourhood.
- Facilitate the development of a full range of special needs housing for seniors and disabled persons, and consider land designated as multi-family for these uses. Homes that require continual medical care 24-hours a day should be directed to land designated as public/community use.
- Support the provision of seniors housing and related services, which encourages independent living in a support setting, such as congregate housing development. Housing units for seniors should be adequately designed for special needs and include a variety of affordable units that are based on the “aging in place” concept.
- Recognize that seniors housing may be accommodated within single family areas as “granny cottages” or secondary suites, subject to provisions of the zoning bylaw.

Section 9.3 of the Smart Plan under Residential Uses includes the following age-friendly related policy:

- Provide for a combination of housing units, including single-family and two-family homes, townhouses, and apartments in the Gibsons Landing area to support a viable and lively village heart, and to accommodate the needs of different age groups.

In the “Housing” section of the “VitalSigns 2011” document, it notes, the “lack of special needs housing such as subsidized housing, emergency housing, and seniors’ housing”.



AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED



Accessible housing options

- Endorse and support in principle the 'Better at Homes' program to allow seniors to remain in their home longer. The service is currently being considered for the Sunshine Coast and could provide light housekeeping, grocery shopping, transportation to appointments, simple home repairs, friendly visiting, light yard work or snow shoveling.
- Expand current housing policy to undertake a housing action plan so that future needs will be matched with appropriate policy. This work could be undertaken as part of an Official Community Plan update. A Housing Reserve Fund for implementation could also be considered.
- In future updates of the Smart Plan consider some of the following strategies related to housing:
 - Identify a wider range of housing options including; Co-op housing; supportive housing with minimal help needed; commercial/ live/work spaces for younger people in Gibsons Landing; housing for single women on lower incomes and purpose built rental;
 - Consider policies to preserve rental housing stock and to prohibit stratification;
 - Consider utilizing Town owned lands to deliver non-market or to incentivize future partnerships with the private sector or non-profit groups for seniors or other forms of housing; and
- Work with provincial and federal government agencies to continue to deliver needed housing in the Gibsons area.
- Consider making the Accessible and Adaptable Housing Design Guidelines mandatory through the rezoning process.
- Work with the Regional Housing Committee to improve and implement housing policies.



COMMUNICATION

Communicating with the community from all ages groups is fundamental to the role of a local government. Finding easy and appropriate ways to communicate information to the community is essential, especially in small communities.

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

Most people currently get information through newspapers, on-line, community notice boards, or word of mouth. People find it difficult to know what services, resources and activities are available.

Civic forms/notices/mailouts need to be communicated in an age-friendly way including clear, plain language, larger print and signs that are visually accessible.

The many separate entities on the Sunshine Coast could be better coordinated to communicate and share resources to provide more/better programs.

Some felt the ferry was a good place to communicate and provide information.

Emergency preparedness needs to be better communicated.

Lastly the 22 churches on the Sunshine Coast could be used to communicate information.

CURRENT STATUS - WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

There are currently no communications policies related to age-friendly planning.

AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

- Endorse the recently printed "Sunshine Coast Seniors' Resource Directory" developed by the District of Sechelt.
- Consider mail dropping a copy of the Sunshine Coast Seniors' Resource Directory to every household in the Town of Gibsons.
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce and Gibsons Landing Business Group to develop a resource list of businesses that deliver and provide it online and in a future edition of the Senior Resource Directory.
- Update the Community Resource Directory on the Town of Gibsons web page to include a wider range of items like volunteer drivers, food programs, youth opportunities. The information provided should align with the information from the Sunshine Coast Seniors' Resource Directory. The local resource guide and the Seniors' Resource Directory should also be available in hard copy at Town Hall, the library and the community centre and distributed to resource groups such as Gibsons Seniors Society, the Salvation Army, the Legion, Christensen Village, churches etc.

- Consider creating and adopting new visual standards guidelines for all civic forms, notices and mails-outs using the following documents as a guide. The Corporate Services Department should lead in the development of new standards.
 - The Standards for Accessible Design (SAD) developed by the Society of Environmental Graphic Design to comply with the American Disability Act;
 - Making Your Printed (Health) Materials Senior Friendly, National Institute on Aging, May 2008; and
 - Creating age-friendly websites, The Journal on Active Aging, July/August, 2004;
- Consider developing a seniors, youth and intergeneration-ally focused community calendar or Facebook page.
- The Municipal Planner and the Gibsons Area Recreation Centre Youth Coordinator should interface with Planning 10 class at Elphinstone High School on a bi-annual basis to make youth aware of the resources and programs available to them. Utilize the school announcement system to provide information to students on youth events.
- Communicate regarding volunteer programs and volunteer driving resources on the web site in the volunteering section of Citizen Services.
- Develop a church network as a communication tool. Communicate with local churches on resources they provide to the community. Include information the Seniors Resource Directory.
- Work with BC Ferries to develop a community board on the ferry.
- Raise the profile of emergency preparedness by relocating the information currently on the web to the Community Safety section of Citizen Services. Ensure that all links are operational (currently the Grab and Go Kit link, the 26 Weeks to Emergency Preparedness link and SCEP Preparedness Tips link are non-operational). Consider developing a Emergency Preparedness event as part of community event.



HEALTH SERVICES & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Health services and community support are imperative to allow people to age in place. It is desirable to tailor the support to the groups that need it most.

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

One of the key barriers was no direct access to the new medical clinic by transit. While the quality of medical practitioners is good there is a need for more doctors, palliative/hospice beds and support services for family members who have a member of the family that needs to go out of town for health services.

The development of a community-based service for those seniors with no family and few social resources to call on in a time of need could benefit a lot of seniors with limited social networks.

Lastly, there is a greater need to feed more people in the community and to share resources with SCRD.

CURRENT STATUS - WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

- In the Health and Wellness Section of the Sunshine Coast's VitalSigns 2011 document, it is noted that seniors' needing health care have no access to trained overnight caregivers, no private intermediate and long term care housing options, and no ability to transfer here from other communities due to bed shortages for Sunshine Coast residents.

AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

- Utilize the Community Resource directory, once updated, to provide information on meal programs and other resources within the community.
- Work in conjunction with the local food bank, local churches and Salvation Army to lead food bank drives at community events.
- Share and discuss the findings of the Gibsons Age-Friendly Community Action Plan with local health authorities including Vancouver Coastal Health to raise awareness of issues and concerns raised in the community.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION & RESPECT

It is important to recognize the needs of various age groups in the community in relation to interests, activities, and abilities. The intent is to provide opportunities to participate in a variety of events or activities and for these to be accessible to a wide range of interests and ages.

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

Lack of transportation options limits people from participating especially during the evening hours. There are volunteer drivers in the community but people don't know about them or they are not clear how to access the program. The churches may also be able to act as a conduit for participation and inclusion. The Newcomers Club is not well known. The cost of participating in recreation or education programs can be prohibitive. Intergenerational activities were identified as a key desire and priority.

CURRENT STATUS - WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

There are currently no policies related to social participation for age-friendly planning or initiatives.

AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

- Develop, through the Gibsons and Area Community Centre, with input from seniors (Gibsons Seniors Society, Christensen Village) and youth groups (School District 46), intergenerational activities and programs, e.g. an adopt-a-grandparent program, multi-generational collective cooking and eating events, or computer lessons.
- Develop an Intergenerational Advisory Committee (instead of a Seniors Advisory Committee) to address youth concerns, seniors concerns and intergenerational activities. This could include a Facebook page.
- Consider youth and seniors discount days at the community centre to make access affordable.
- Address local transportation needs to access programs and resources either through improved transit, a community shuttle, or volunteer drivers.
- Provide information on volunteer driving in local leisure guide, in the Town of Gibsons Resource Directory on-line and in the Sunshine Coast Senior's Resource Directory.
- Expand online the "Getting Around Section of Discover Gibsons" on the Town's website to include the links to volunteer driving groups.
- Promote the use of the kitchen, multi-purpose spaces, as well as, the Health and Wellness screening office at the future Community Learning Centre at Gibsons Elementary School for intergenerational activities and education.
- Work with Gibsons Elementary School and Elphinstone High School to develop youth centred programs.



CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The desire to participate in civic activity is a common human feeling. It is important to develop opportunities to allow civic participation and to have work that is satisfying.

COMMON ISSUES & BARRIERS - WHAT WE HEARD

There is an increased need for volunteers and a need to communicate volunteer opportunities.

Quality of employment opportunities for youth and young adults is needed to keep younger people on the Coast. Seniors are a growing sector yet employment opportunities are not always inclusionary.

CURRENT STATUS - WHAT POLICIES CURRENTLY EXIST

There are currently no policies related to civic participation and employment opportunities for age-friendly planning or initiatives.

AGE-FRIENDLY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS - WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED

- Expand the online volunteering section of Citizen Services to incorporate volunteer opportunities with the various community groups. This would be a central location to communicate opportunities for volunteering. For those without access to the internet the material would be available at City Hall and the recreation centre. Host a volunteer drive event with the various community groups at the beginning of each year to recruit volunteers. Training and retention would be handled by others.
- Expand Gibsons volunteer awards and recognition to include churches. Consider Spirit Awards for service leadership from spiritual communities and churches.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Sunshine Coast Employment Centre to develop and promote employment opportunities for youth and seniors.

G. Next Steps

The following next steps should be undertaken to ensure continued support for this initiative.

- Incorporate feedback in future Smart Plan (Official Community Plan) policy review
- Present findings to community groups
- Prioritize and implement policy

Appendices



Acknowledgements

Capilano College	Caroline	Depatie
Chamber of Commerce	Claudia	Ferris
Christenson Village / Good Samaritan Society	Liz	Dutton
Citizen	Bob	Curry
Citizen	Clifford	Metcalfe
COSCO - Council of Senior Citizens Organizations	Ruth	Houle
Council Liaison	Leanne	Johnson
Gibsons & Area Community Centre	Ted	Chisholm
Gibsons Seniors Society	Maureen	Goldman
Help on the Way	Jennifer	Birch
Howe Sound Pharmacy	Marg	Kitson
Rotary Club of Gibsons	Jim	Lee
Royal Canadian Legion	Harvey	Metz
Salvation Army	Matthew	Hardman
School District #46	Silas	White
SCRD Emergency Preparedness	Bill	Elsner
SCRD Recreational Program Director	Deb	Shorthouse
Seniors Information Line	Karen	Inkpen
St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church	Patricia	Hetherington
Sunshine Coast Community Services Society	Vicki	Dobbyn
Sunshine Coast Community Services Society	Cheyene	Dyer
Sunshine Coast Transit	Brian	Sagman
Van Coastal Health Home Care	Karen	Inkpen
Van Coastal Health, Coast Garibaldi Office	Dr. Paul Marrtriquet	Medical Health Officer
VCH, SCRDParks & Recreation Advisory Committee, ICAN	Brenda	Wilkes
Voice on the Coast	Meredeth	Illman

Please note the majority of the photos in this report were taken by community members.



Current Resources Identified Through The Process

The following are a small list of resources that were identified in the process. The hope is that the Town of Gibsons will keep a running list of resource that can be provided to the creators of the Sunshine Coast Seniors Resource Guide on a semi-annual basis.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

- BC Transit is currently undertaking a review of the Sunshine Coast between Fall 2012 and Fall 2013

FOOD RELATED INFORMATION

- St. Bart's monthly food bank - providing food for approximately 70 people
- St. Bart's monthly Feed the Hungry dinner
- The Gibsons Salvation Army - runs a number of food programs aimed at helping those in need in the local community:
 - Bread & produce program weekdays 11:00 to 12:00
 - Food bank for registered clients of the Salvation Army which is available on Wednesdays and Thursdays and we provide
 - free hot lunches on Tuesdays and Fridays at 11:30.
- Community Kitchens (cook with a group and take home food)
604-885-5881 or Community_services@sunshine.net

EMPLOYMENT RELATED INFORMATION

Sunshine Coast Employment Centre - 5600 Sunshine Coast Highway, Sechelt
(604) 885-7443

EDUCATION INFORMATION

Sunshine Coast Alternative School
PO Box 280, 5538 Shorncliffe Avenue, Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0
604.885.0127

RESOURCES

- Sunshine Coast Seniors' Resource Directory - Developed by the District of Sechelt
- Sunshine Coast Newcomers Club - With a representative for Gibsons. Contact Penny Clement at clemcastle@dccnet.com
- Medicine Delivery - Howe Sound Pharmacy, Gibsons Park Plaza, 604-886-3365

Current Resources Identified Through The Process (continued)

- Emergency Shelters -
 - Extreme Weather: Run by the Salvation Army at St. Hilda's Church in Sechelt
 - Overflow Coop Shelter: run by volunteers, when feasible at non extreme weather event times, at St. Hilda's Church in Sechelt
- Better at Home Program: The Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. The Government of British Columbia funds the program, United Way of the Lower Mainland manages it, and local non-profit organizations provide the services.

The United Way of the Lower Mainland, as part of its mandate to support programs that help seniors to age with dignity, will manage the expansion of the Better at Home program in up to 60 communities across the province, including Sunshine Coast. The program is in the process of being developed with the hope that the Sunshine Coast Community Services Society will provide the services.

Seniors living in a community which offers Better at Home, can contact a local organization to find out more and to apply for services. A service provider will help determine which services are most appropriate for an individual's circumstances.

See better@home.ca or call April Struther at 604-989-4223 or email betterathomesc@gmail.com.

Transcripts of Individual Comments

TRANSIT SERVICES

- *Transit is operated in Gibsons by the Sunshine Coast Regional District (regional) and BC Transit (provincial). The Town of Gibsons has no control over how it is managed and operated other than as a stakeholder to provide input;*
- *Many of Gibsons residents rely on personal vehicles for transportation as it is difficult to get around via transit;*
- *There is a immediate need for a small scale, community, transit shuttle bus between Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing. The chamber is very interested in this. People cited isolation and depression as problems due to lack of transit connection;*
- *Transit challenge hot spots;*
 - *Getting to/from the medical centre;*
 - *Transit re-route has impacted access to the Library, Coast Health Unit and Town Hall;*
 - *Getting to/from the recreation centre;*
 - *Getting to/from SCRD offices;*
 - *Getting to/from local neighbourhoods and rural areas;*
- *Evening service limits people (youth & seniors) being able to do activities/ programming if they can't drive;*
- *The bus schedule is ferry dependent and buses wait for the ferry which can reduce flexibility and dependability of the schedule. There are limited connections/ scheduling for coming into/out of town;*
- *While buses running on the transit routes are low floor buses that accommodate mobility devices, not all the stops are accessible or allow the driver to load a passenger with a mobility device;*
- *Bus drivers should make sure that limited mobility passengers are seated before moving on;*
- *HandyDart service is good, but should be expanded to allow workers or others help aging family members. This has been noted as a barrier for users of this service.*
- *Is there a safe driving course for seniors so they can remain driving longer?; and*
- *Think about young expecting mothers as well as seniors.*

Infrastructure

- *Bus stops have limited amenities or surrounding connections - Lighting (bus stops are not safe places to wait), benches, continuous sidewalks to bus stops, curb cuts, et cetera;*
- *Any lighting recommendations need to balance issues related to light pollution and providing sufficient lighting for safety; and*



- *Decisions/practices by Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MoTI) can make access for pedestrians along/across the highway a problem, for example, at the Elphinstone High School navigating across the highway to the bus stop.*

Transportation Options

- *Two possible transportation options were highlighted.*
 - *A volunteer driver program which is existing but not well known to residents; and*
 - *Local businesses that deliver pharmacy orders or groceries i.e. Howe Sound Pharmacy and IGA.*
- *There are existing programs such as the Jack Bell Foundation that coordinate ride-sharing and carpooling options for those making regularly scheduled trips which are well used in Gibsons. However, within Gibsons there appears to be a need for an informal ride-sharing board that could allow those seeking a ride, or those making a trip to provide a ride for others. This board could allow those who routinely do their errands one day of the week to post offering to take someone along or for people seeking rides for medical, social, or shopping in other surrounding communities.*
- *Another option could be “para-transit” which provides a bus driver route flexibility to pick up or drop off at non-designated stops.*

Transcripts of Individual Comments

OUTDOOR SPACES, BUILDINGS & CONNECTIVITY

General Accessibility

- *All public entries to facilities need to be looked at from an accessibility point of view, not just getting into the building but how one navigates from a bus stop to the front door;*
- *There is a lack of public toilets;*
- *People desire a continuous, barrier-free access to Gibsons' waterfront;*

Visitability

- *The concept of visitability includes: No steps at entrances; door widths for wheelchairs; one ground level bathroom. There is a desire for visitability to be addressed at the planning and building inspection levels. Accessible/universal design is still seen as limiting by contractors. Need to make it more acceptable.*



Gibsons Skate Park is seen as a positive example of Gibsons being age-friendly

Gibsons Skate Park

- *Gibsons skate park is well located, well designed and well used. What is missing is signage for the park showing that it is a valued and recognized asset. Welcoming people, recommending helmet and safety rules, expectations, communicating pride in the park. Perhaps another way of communicating pride would be to encourage/ arrange better graffiti than what is there now, like down in the Molly's Lane parking lot.*



Area of respite

Areas of Respite

- *This is a nice shaded area for people to sit beside London Drugs. Unfortunately, it is not used much. It would be great to see seniors gathering here to play chess, converse, as you do see in public "mall" spaces in other communities. Family-friendly, too — as it's a relatively safe place to wait for a ride, for example, with kids.*

Pedestrian Friendliness

Pedestrian connections provide safe walking routes between residential areas and community services. Pedestrian infrastructure includes sidewalks, road shoulders, crosswalks, and trails. Pedestrian connections should be continuous, consistent, and well maintained.

- *Impediments exist restricting the community from being walkable or pedestrian-friendly, despite many services being located within walking distance for many residents, including:*
 - *No or incomplete sidewalks*
 - *Poor choice of materials for walkways*
 - *Snow, plowed from roads, being thrown onto sidewalks*
 - *Garbage cans blocking sidewalks*
 - *Vehicles parked on sidewalks*
 - *Gravel accumulation on pedestrian routes with steep grades*
- *While sidewalks are provided on newer streets and in commercial-retail areas, many side streets in Gibsons Landing don't have sidewalks. Sidewalks and road shoulders are not consistently treated to permit pedestrians to walk along continuous routes.*
Pedestrian challenged hot spots include:
 - *School Road at North Fletcher*
 - *Gower Point Rd - no sidewalk*
 - *South Fletcher Rd - traffic calming is a barrier*
 - *Gibsons Way between School Road and North Road - no sidewalk or bike lane*
 - *Harmony Lane services Gibsons Seniors Centre, the Jack and Jill Preschool and local residents - uneven paved surface in need of repaving and, if possible, a narrow walk*
 - *Connections from Highway 101 sidewalks to the malls - no continuous sidewalk*
- *Limited street lighting makes walking at night dangerous as cars can not see you and it can be scary due to animals/wildlife. Some specific locations include: Pratt/ Payne Roads; Reed Road; Gospel Rock area and Reed Road at North Road.*
- *The 21% grade between Upper Gibsons and Gibsons Landing on School Road makes walking challenging. There are several alternate routes each with their own challenges as follows*
 - *Gibsons Way - no safe walking or cycling area*
 - *North Fletcher Rd east of School Road - becomes very narrow and the presence of large hedge makes it difficult to see around it and to be seen by vehicles coming uphill.*



Walkway to school - hard for children to navigate

Trails

- *There is both a formal and informal network of trails in Gibsons yet these trails are not well known, and sometimes do not connect to locations that people wish to use, and destinations are not clearly marked with signage.*
- *Some trail systems do not link up to the neighbourhoods from schools and force students to walk on the highway where there are no sidewalks.*
- *The trail that parallels School Road from Gibsons Landing to the elementary school is a desirable route. Some of the pathway is paved while other portions are gravel. In some areas, steps have been added to reduce the grade. The steps near Abbs Road were noted as being too high for some pedestrians. The trail crossings on the cross streets were noted for having well maintained and signed crosswalks. Improvements would assist in making this a better pedestrian link.*

Crosswalks / Signal Timing

Crosswalks are a key part of the pedestrian network. Several key intersections were highlighted where improvements should be considered.

Crosswalk hot spots include:

- *Intersection of School Road at North Fletcher Road - introduce crosswalk and improve sight-lines for drivers to see pedestrians;*
- *Intersection of Shaw Road at O'Shea Road - The alignment of the crosswalk and large curb radius require pedestrians to step into the street before they are visible to southbound drivers;*
- *Intersection of Shaw Road and Gibsons Way - The timing of the lights should be increased to provide sufficient time to get across the street for elderly people.*
- *At Elphinstone School (between Shaw Road and North Road) to cross between the bus stop and the school. It was noted that there are a high number of students and jaywalkers.*
- *Driver intimidation at crosswalks was noted as an issue for pedestrians. Drivers roll forward or do not always stop at cross walks.*

Bicycle Routes

- *There is a lack of marked and safe bicycle routes for all ages especially along North Road, Payne Road, Reed Road and Gower Point Road. It was noted that the bike route on Gower Point Road through Sunshine Coast Regional District stops at the border to the Town of Gibsons.*

Parking

- *While accessible parking is provided throughout Gibsons, some spaces are not wide enough or on slopes where to getting in and out of a vehicle into a wheelchair or walker is difficult; and*
- *Mountable curbs are encouraging people to park on the sidewalk.*

Roads / Maintenance

Throughout Gibsons, roadways are well maintained and provide safe access for drivers. Some specific locations and issues were highlighted as requiring improvements.

- *The intersection of Gower Point Road, Franklin Road, and Glassford Road was highlighted as having a blind corner due to overgrown trees near the intersection.*
- *Clearing of road snow ends up on the sidewalk making it passage difficult.*
- *During construction sidewalks should remain as clear as possible, if obstructions are necessary signage should indicate an alternative route if necessary.*
- *Recent work on School Rd removed the painted crossbars, which removed the slippery-when-wet painted surface, and roughened the asphalt surface, improving traction underfoot. While it has improved traction, the crosswalk is less clearly marked.*

Transcripts of Individual Comments

HOUSING

- *Cost of housing and food is an increasing concern of marginalized population and for seniors not getting pension yet*
- *Many seniors want to age in their homes. Providing or gaining access to the services that can help people to stay safe, happy and healthy at home is desirable;*
- *Affordability of rental housing can be an issue, particularly as families change. (Please note, according to the 2009 Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Study Update, about one third of renter households live in housing that is unaffordable as it exceeds the 30% threshold of housing cost to income.)*
- *There is a perception that the mix of families has changed in the community and houses tend to be too big based on current family sizes;*
- *Care homes/residential care options are limited and wait-listed. The longer people wait, the more they fall through the cracks. Another care home is needed. Could be an opportunity to partner with groups like BC Housing or Vancouver Coastal Health.*
- *Providing a range of housing including;*
 - *Co-op;*
 - *Supportive housing with minimal help needed;*
 - *Commercial/ live/work spaces for younger people in Gibsons Landing; and*
 - *Single women on lower incomes;*
- *There are opportunities to provide appropriate housing on Town-owned lands.*
- *When new housing is under construction, contractors should provide conduit to allow oxygen to be installed in the future.*

Transcripts of Individual Comments

COMMUNICATION

People currently get information through newspapers, on-line, community notice boards, or word of mouth. Issues include:

- *Difficulty knowing what services and resources are available in the community. There are many resources and activities available, like stress and mental health services, yet people need to know about them to access them. It was noted that a new Senior's Directory is now available.*
- *There are a lot of activities for seniors to participate in - Gibsons Seniors Society at Harmony Hall, the Legion, the Gibsons and Area Community Centre seniors drop in program, Christenson Village programs. Advertising in the paper is expensive - there needs to be a coordinated method of posting seniors related information.*
- *Civic forms/notices/mail outs need to be communicated in an age-friendly way including clear, plain language, larger print and signs that are visually accessible;*
- *Use existing groups/resources to expand the options for programs/resources;*
- *Many separate entities that could be coordinated to better communicate or share resources to provide more/better programs – cross pollenate;*
- *Need a guide for seniors travel;*
- *As everyone uses the ferry is there a way communicate and provide information;*
- *Utilize the 22 churches on the Sunshine Coast to communicate information; and*
- *Businesses that can deliver items for free or a small charge should make this known. For example, Howe Sound Pharmacy, delivers medications, upon request.*

Raise Awareness of Emergency Preparedness

- *Consider emergency access*
- *Emergency preparations:*
 - *Hard to disperse tips/information; and*
 - *Access for emergency resources in development*

Transcripts of Individual Comments

HEALTH SERVICES & COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- *Access to health clinic by transportation was highlighted as a huge problem. The current bus stops on Gibsons Way are too far to walk from;*

Community Support & Health Services

- *There is a need for more doctors;*
- *The health services in Gibson are not as readily available as in Sechelt, therefore are not as accessible;*
- *Palliative/hospice care is very high quality and lots of volunteers but few beds;*
- *There is a need for support services for families who have a member of the family that needs to go out of town for health services;*
- *The development of a community-based service for those seniors with no family and few social resources to call on in a time of need could benefit a lot of seniors with no social network. A solution may be the digital equivalent of the "telephone tree". An email is automatically sent to the subscriber each morning and if it is not replied to by a certain time, the service notifies a contact person who takes over from there. Sounds simple enough but it can be quite expensive to subscribe to such a service. Might there be a more affordable or subsidized version of this service?*

Meal Programs

- *There is a greater need to feed more people in the community. The Salvation Army, which runs a several food programs including the food bank and hot meal program has seen a steady increase in the last two years. Accessibility is a challenge for this group as they are located between the lower and upper sections of town on Gibsons Way. There also seems to be a possible deterrent due to the stigma of using services and the appearance of some of the other clients. The Salvation Army is looking at utilizing the New Hope Cuisine meals program offered by the North Vancouver Salvation Army. This program offers nutritious low cost frozen meals for seniors and other low income individuals on the North Shore. The cost for a meal is \$3.50 and for soup \$1.00. Currently, this program is not running at capacity and has room for expansion. There is distribution in the Lower Mainland and from Squamish through to Pemberton. The Gibsons Salvation Army is seeking input from the community, particularly seniors, to see if they should try and develop a model for distributing this product on the Sunshine Coast in order to promote food security for residents of limited means in our local community.*

Coordination with SCRD

- *Surrounding areas use resources within Gibsons for services, amenities. How can the SCRD assist with providing some of these services?*

Transcripts of Individual Comments

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION & RESPECT

- *One of the limiting factor(s) to participation is adequate transportation and safety of streets (lighting) to get to venues;*
- *Exclusivity needs to be addressed, for example, the cost of participating in recreation or education programs;*
- *There are 22 churches on the Sunshine Coast that could be used as a conduit for participation and inclusion;*
- *A Newcomers Club creates a social bond, yet is not well known; and*
- *There are volunteer drivers in the community, but people don't know about it or they are not clear about how it can be used or how to access the program. This is an important area that needs to be addressed.*
- *Developmental disability programs incorporated into regular programs;*
- *Provide community support for education; recreation; and churches/spiritual aspects;*
- *Need recognition of ethnic diversity and cultures;*

Intergenerational Activities

- *Need to provide intergenerational activities or programs in social for youth and seniors like lawn bowling, adopt-a-grandparent program, or fashion show with youth showing seniors clothes and seniors showing youth clothes*
- *Support for grandparents who are again parenting – resources/assistance. It was noted that grand parents raising grand kids can access \$200/year for leisure services. This needs to be communicated.*

Seniors focused

- *Level of accessibility, both physical and financial, to the pool and recreation facilities is a concern;*
- *Local seniors want to be participate in Elder College programs in Sechelt, but need transport to get to it;*
- *Trips to local attractions or off Coast for seniors would be a potential program activity;*
- *Places like Oliver and Osoyoos with large seniors populations, provide dances through their Seniors Centres. They are a great mixer to dance or just watch.*

Youth focused

- *Youth Centre offers some youth programs need more, for example, dance for youth;*
- *Affordability for youth – the weight room or other programs are expensive;*
- *Education: Courses are only offered during the day that some younger people would like to attend; and*
- *Need greater entertainment options.*

Transcripts of Individual Comments

CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteerism

- *Increasingly there is a need for the continuation of volunteerism that was characteristic of Gibsons' founders. Volunteers are aging which makes it more difficult to have them help out. Groups like the Legion are unable to attract new member volunteers. Gibsons Seniors Society also struggles to get volunteers;*
- *There is a need to have volunteers to provide short, one time seminars on health, law, and technology use. A Law for Seniors program was successful because someone came to Gibsons Seniors Society in person and let seniors know about it;*
- *Need for volunteers to assist with application forms or civic things; and*
- *Need to communicate volunteer opportunities.*

Employment

- *Quality employment for youth (not just at fast food outlets);*
- *Greater opportunities for young adults to keep them in the town – help them stay here – childcare, mentors to link older people in support of younger people staying and working in the community;*
- *Succession opportunities for youth moving into the work world as others retire;*
- *Job creation and identification for all age sectors; and*
- *Seniors are a growing sector yet employment opportunities are not always inclusionary. Can jobs be created that address the needs of aging employees?*



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