



Gibsons Age-Friendly

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



Prepared for the Town of Gibsons | 13 February 2013

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?

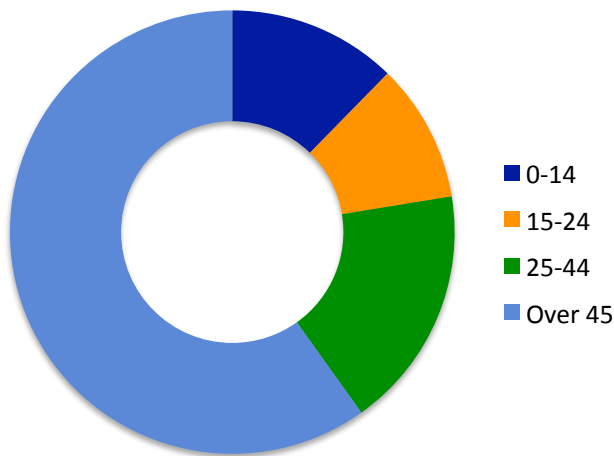
Age-Friendly planning is planning for the full spectrum and arc of life from infancy through youth, young adulthood, mid-adulthood and lastly our senior years.

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.

