

Recommended Age-friendly Official Community Plan Policy, Actions, and Selected Indicators and Targets



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1. Introduction

The recommended policy, actions, indicators and targets are based on a comprehensive age-friendly community assessment conducted in the spring and summer of 2016. The details may be found in the companion document to these recommendations, the *Esquimalt Age-friendly Assessment*.

2. Built Environment

OCP Policy

Land Use Goal

- Build a complete community¹ accessible to all with regard to hearing, seeing, and walking

Objectives

- Ensure some public space designated in the plan is available at no charge to community groups
- Attract and support more local business and services, particularly those that are locally owned
- Promote and enable commercial and service uses within walkable distance to all residents
- Increase functionality of existing public spaces
- Maximize density while promoting human-scale building form with maximum heights of five to six stories forming the street wall

Policies

- Specify commercial and service uses to serve an aging population. Such uses include, for example: retail shops that sell healthy food, clothing and hardware; hotel with restaurant and meeting space amenities; banks, hair stylists and barber shops; 'third places'² such as libraries, coffee shops, neighbourhood pubs and a sit-down family style restaurant; offices for physicians, and medical related services.
- Identify locations for a full service hotel

¹ A 'complete community' is typically described as a place where it is possible to live, work and enjoy daily life within walking distance or a short transit ride from home.

² A 'third place' is a place other than the primary places of home and work, that serves as a formal or informal social gathering place, such as a coffee shop, pub, library or recreation centre.

- Enhance Commercial Area 3—Craigflower Road/Tillicum Road policy (S. 2.3.5) with greater detail on the desired uses and services and a larger geographic footprint which may require re-zoning of areas for commercial uses that are currently residential
- Define specifically what is appropriate or needed in identified commercial nodes
- Promote small scale, locally owned commerce within specified neighbourhood commercial nodes
- Create multi-use functions for facilities such as the lacrosse box and basketball court

Outdoor Spaces & Parks Goal

- Serve, learn and play together

Objective

- Integrate community facilities and programs with seniors, children and youth

Buildings & Accessibility Goal

- Access everywhere for everyone

Objective

- Promote universal design³ for all buildings

Safety & Comfort Goal

- Accessible public washrooms are readily available for everyone

Objective

- Establish criteria, analyze gaps in existing facilities, and identify new resting places and public washroom locations

Other Actions

Land Use

- Consider tax breaks for smaller, local businesses
- Create a non-profit or public meeting space for older adults

Outdoor Spaces & Parks

- Construct benches in strategic locations along trails and roads to 'fill the gaps' for slow moving people

³ Universal design refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities

Buildings & Accessibility

- Revive the Gold Star award program for businesses
- Complete physical accessibility retrofits in municipal facilities starting with high priority and low cost recommendations identified in the Accessibility Audit of 2009: for example, 'high priority' items such as retrofitting washrooms in municipal buildings; and 'low cost' items such as replacing round door knobs with lever style handles
- Encourage partner organizations such as the Esquimalt Neighbourhood House to address accessibility barriers in their facilities

Safety & Comfort

- Construct additional public washrooms in areas that lack them such as the north end of town
- Review street lighting for safety and install additional lighting in areas of deficiency
- Install additional benches for resting along trails and sidewalks in areas that are deficient

3. Mobility & Transportation

OCP Policy

Overall Vision

Everyone can get around safely and conveniently without a car. The walking environment is comprehensive, safe, and convenient. Transit fares are affordable for all, high frequency bus service to downtown Victoria is in place, HandyDart service is more convenient and reliable, and there is full access to ride services for those with mobility devices.

Goals

- Safe pedestrian movement is a priority for all street design, management, and maintenance
- Streets are complete by design, considering pedestrians and all wheeled vehicles

Objectives

- Establish suitable sidewalk standards and network policy by fully incorporating the principles of the Pedestrian Charter (moving from an appendix status)
- Create a cycling network that is safe and suitable for older adults
- Create a safe and convenient pedestrian environment including crossings and supporting amenities such as washrooms and benches

Policies

- Review existing and design new sidewalks, crossings, and signal timing with regard to slow moving people
- Increase the annual capital budget for sidewalk repair and construction
- Identify priority areas for sidewalk construction or renovation: e.g. transit stops, recreation centre, other major destination; some important areas are without sidewalks
- Adopt the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) which addresses matters such as adequate lighting in public environments
- Review and adopt cycling infrastructure policy and standards for an older population

Transit Goal

- No one left behind without a ride

Transit Objective

- Partner with BC Transit to create a 'well served' transit community in which all citizens are within a half kilometer walking distance from bus service with maximum 15 minute service intervals and direct bus route options to Victoria General and Royal Jubilee Hospitals

Other Actions

- Require embedded signal lights in the roadway for crosswalks for new development
- Review option for local trolley service to augment other forms of transit, thereby improving accessibility for residents living in the north to services available in the south
- Provide 'elderly' sign for cars so that people can have extra time in a parking space on or off street
- Review on-street parking duration times for older adults and the option of pay parking for high use areas
- Consider parking spaces reserved for elderly who are not disabled

BC Transit Specific Action Requests

- Encourage BC Transit to reduce the gap between subsidized and non-subsidized fares

- Encourage BC Transit to provide better bus service from Craigflower Road to the Esquimalt Village
- Construct more bus shelters on Craigflower Road between Admirals and Tillicum Roads, especially the north side of Craigflower for bus to Victoria General Hospital
- Increase service frequency between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m on Esquimalt Road
- Easier access to transit options for people with limited mobility

4. Housing

OCP Policy

Vision

We have flexible zoning and our homes are adaptable and affordable. Our culture is moving toward an extended family model and multigenerational young families are moving into the area.

Goal

- Housing is suitable, available and affordable for everyone

Objective

- Expand availability of adaptable housing

Adaptable Housing Policies

- Develop adaptable design standards
- Require adaptable design for all dwellings created through rezoning
- Encourage adaptable design for all housing types by offering incentives
- Encourage more housing for people with mobility devices on the ground floor of buildings
- Encourage aging at home support through means such as low or no fee permits for modifications
- Encourage universal design standards for special needs housing
- Encourage adaptable design retrofit of existing apartment units

Objective

- Expand flexible housing options

Flexible Housing Policies

- Support and facilitate development of multigenerational housing, including in multiple unit buildings

- Support a greater number of boarders by increasing the number allowed in the zoning bylaw to three or four
- Promote shared housing to reduce isolation
- Promote modifying homes into smaller units
- Encourage construction of small houses
- Promote micro-lots where appropriate

Objective

- Increase affordability by design and incentive

Affordable Housing Policies

- Reduce off-street parking standards for special needs and seniors housing
- Incentivize the creation of affordable units in market-oriented developments

Objective

- Encourage residential infill and densification

Infill and Densification Policies

- Promote densification through rezoning where appropriate
- Support a reduction or elimination of minimum unit and lot sizes
- Permit and promote garden suites

Objective

- Expand and protect seniors housing

Seniors Housing Policies

- Protect existing rental apartment buildings from being converted to condominiums
- Expand the number of residential zones in which seniors congregate housing is permitted
- Partner with a non-profit housing provider to identify a land for co-op housing development
- Encourage development of more assisted living units
- Facilitate and promote development of a complex care facility within the Township
- Encourage and support Community Care Facilities within detached dwellings in accordance with the Community Care and Assisted Living Act

Other Action

- Host welcome events for multigenerational families

5. Social Participation & Recreation

OCP Policy

Goal

- Reduce social isolation

Objectives

- Foster an environment congenial to playing, learning and serving together
- Design and promote intergenerational activity in recreation, education, and service activities

Policies

- Encourage affordable social activities by the Township and service providers
- Promote community gardens by offering more space in parks
- Engage in regional initiatives to reduce social isolation
- New facilities are designed as neighbourhood based and multipurpose
- Enhance public gathering spaces by creating more of them, offering greater variety, and providing them to community groups for free or low cost

Other Actions by Partners

- Set up intergenerational activities such as 'adopt a granny' and young people teaching older people

6. Community Support

OCP Policy

New Social Well-being Vision

We have full access to information and resources. Social settings for community events are fully inclusive for all ages. Health care workers are valued and well paid. All programs are inclusive.

Goals

- Reduce isolation of seniors
- Protect financial health of seniors

Objectives

- Support community collective initiatives to advance home support
- Secure more local financial institutions within the Township

Policies

- Explore municipal assistance such as a tax break to make home modifications to help in aging
- Lobby higher levels of government to address issues such as caregiving, and supports through vehicles such as UBCM
- Conduct crime prevention workshops for seniors by the Victoria Police Department (Esquimalt Division)

Actions by Partners

- Launch a senior's coalition for Esquimalt, similar to the Elder Friendly Community Network
- Expand awareness of the Better at Home service for the intermediate, healthier seniors
- Encourage more subsidized or publicly funded facilities such as the Renaissance Retirement Residence
- Promote good accessible services regardless of income
- Encourage a locally grown home delivered meals program
- Create a local senior's advocate role as a dedicated position or shared function
- Provide assessments for folks who need caregiving
- Design an innovation to support people who are between fully able and those not able at all
- De-stigmatize financial assistance
- Develop and offer supports for caregivers: resources, mental health counselling, information about where to go for services, mechanical equipment

7. Health Services

OCP Policy

Vision

We have locally accessible health care and services without excessive wait times. There is an adequate number of nurses and general practitioner family doctors in town. Seniors have greater autonomy in their decision making about health care.

New Social Well-being Section

Goal

- Increase accessibility to health care services within Esquimalt

Objectives

- Advocate for and partner with community groups and neighbouring communities to secure a community health centre in Esquimalt
- Encourage and provide for local medical services (general practitioner doctors and nurses) within commercial/service nodes

Policies

- Ensure sufficient medical office zoning is in place in commercial/service nodes
- Partner with Island Health to attract family doctors and nurse practitioners to practice in Esquimalt

Other Actions by Partners

- Engage with the Songhees First Nation regarding participation in their new Health and Wellness Centre
- Provide education about the BC Pharmacare program which provides prescription medication, subsidized based on income
- Invite Island Health to participate in a public presentation on how to access home care services

8. Respect and Civic Participation

OCP Policy

Goal

- Older adults are celebrated and recognized for their contributions to the community

Objectives

- Older adults of all ages and gender are fully engaged in community life
- Township planning consultation includes all ages

Policy

- Use inclusive language in policy and regulation
- Foster awareness of ageism
- Eliminate ageism, either explicit or implicit, in policy and regulatory language
- Specify how older adults can most effectively participate

Other Actions by the Township & Partners

The community conversations highlighted a number of ways that greater respect and civic participation can be afforded:

- Better pay for caregivers
- Increase funding for public caregiving sector
- Lobby for more time off to care for older adults
- Make it easy to participate in all civic activities
- Educate people on ageism and how to avoid it

9. Employment and Volunteer Opportunities

OCP Policy

Social Well-being Goal

- Specifically identify the employment interests of older adults as a strategic interest in creating a complete community

Objective

- Promote employment and volunteer inclusion in the work place

Other Actions for Partners

- Match seniors with young people, for example, mentoring by seniors, and teaching by youth
- Employ senior community ambassadors
- Encourage seniors to volunteer through Volunteer Victoria or Seniors Serving Seniors

10. Communication and Information

10.1. How We Can Do Better

OCP Policy

Use clear language in crafting policy and publish the OCP in a variety of media formats to ensure accessibility by seniors and disabled people.

Other Actions by Township & Partners

- Make assistance readily available to older adults for filling out forms, and a 'live person' option on telephone calls
- Ensure the usability of information materials, for example, recognize the particular difficulty for those over age 75 who can't make the leap to modern social media
- Promote digital literacy and provide links to health services
- Promote awareness of 811 Health Information and Advice phone line

11. General

Vision Statement

A revised vision statement for the OCP should include a commitment to an accessible and inclusive community.

12. Emergency Planning

Emergency planning policy was not addressed in the assessment, but it is relevant to an aging population. Where appropriate, the OCP and other relevant policy documents should clearly extend the emergency planning processes to include people with disabilities and older people.

13. Selected OCP Objectives, Indicators and Targets

Table 1, following page, identifies selected objectives, indicators, and targets for achievement within each of the age-friendly domains. These recommendations are based on the assessment and the OCP policy recommendations. They are also informed by evaluation guidelines published by the Public Health Agency of Canada.⁴

⁴ Public Health Agency of Canada. (2015). *Age-friendly Communities Evaluation Guide: Using Indicators to Measure Progress*.

Table 1: Selected OCP Objectives, Indicators and Targets

Objectives	Indicators	Targets
Built Environment		
Promote universal design for all buildings	Public buildings have adequate access to and manoeuvrability around buildings: access at ground level, level entry, wheelchair ramps, automatic doors, barrier-free restrooms, wide aisles to accommodate scooters and wheelchairs	100% of public buildings are fully accessible by 2020
Mobility & Transportation		
Create a safe and convenient pedestrian environment including crossings	Safe pedestrian network with sidewalks on at least one side of all streets and on both sides for collector and arterial streets	Completion in 2025
Housing		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand flexible housing options Encourage residential infill and densification 	All housing types, including garden suites, are permissible and available	Updated policy and regulations by 2020
Social Participation & Recreation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster an environment congenial to playing, learning and serving together Design and promote intergenerational activity in recreation, education and service activities 	Proportion of people age 65+ who engage in social activities at least once a week (e.g., meet with friends/neighbours; take part in civic, spiritual or cultural activities; volunteer or work)	75% of seniors by 2025

Objectives	Indicators	Targets
Community Support		
Support community collective initiatives to advance home support	Seniors and service providers have full access to community support information	Fully functioning Esquimalt senior's community support coalition by 2017
Health Services		
Increase accessibility to health care services within Esquimalt	Proportion of seniors who have a primary care physician in Esquimalt	75% by 2025
Respect & Civic Participation		
Older adults of all ages and gender are fully engaged in community life	Sense of belonging evidenced by a lack of ageism in public discourse	Policy and regulatory language is free of ageist language by 2020
Employment & Volunteer Opportunities		
Promote employment and volunteer inclusion in the work place	Employment for seniors who desire it is available	75% of seniors 65+ surveyed in 2025
Communication & Information		
The OCP is published in a variety of media formats	Age friendly communication channels and information formats	In 2020 All government and nonprofit agencies communicate using multiple media channels: word of mouth, face to face, and large print