

Nanaimo Age-Friendly City Plan 2019-2023

Prepared by the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force
(NSTF) and the City of Nanaimo 2017-2019



Acknowledgements

The Seniors Connect Partnership wishes to thank the community-based seniors service sector and all the dedicated Nanaimo community members, Seniors Connect project council participants, and staff who contributed to the development of the plan through participation in the Idea and Event Exchanges, where much of the information for this plan was generated. We would also like to thank the members of the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force who volunteered their time and insights, collated the data from all the research, and created the Age-Friendly City Plan for Nanaimo with the support of the City of Nanaimo and other stakeholders.



The Nanaimo Age-Friendly City Plan was made possible through the support of the New Horizons for Seniors Program.



Nanaimo Seniors Task Force

P: 250-754-3331 E: info@nanaimoseniorsconnect.ca

www.nanaimoseniorsconnect.ca

Contents

- Acknowledgments i
- Contents ii
- AGE-FRIENDLY CITY PLAN 2019 - 2023 (DRAFT, 2018) 1
- Overview 1
- Background 2
- Definitions 3
- AREA OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES 4
 - Area 1 - Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings 4
 - Area 2 - Transportation 6
 - Area 3 - Housing 8
 - Area 4 - Social Participation 10
 - Area 5 - Health and Community Services 12
 - Area 6 - Respect and Social Inclusion 14
 - Area 7 - Civic Participation, Volunteerism, and Employment 16
 - Area 8 - Communication and Information 18
 - Area 9 - Food Security and Healthy Eating 20
- Appendix I - Nanaimo Age Friendly City Survey 22
- Appendix II - Survey Results 24

AGE-FRIENDLY CITY PLAN 2019-2023

Overview

According to the 2016 census, Nanaimo has about 23,000 residents over the age of 65, representing about 23% of the total population. This number is expected to increase over the next decade, so that seniors will represent an even larger percentage of Nanaimo's residents.

In 2015, the City of Nanaimo partnered with four local agencies (Nanaimo Family Life Association, Nanaimo Women's Centre, HealthWell Associates, and Nanaimo District Hospital Foundation) to address social isolation in older adults. This collaboration (called "Seniors Connect") received funding from the federal government's New Horizons for Seniors Program under the auspices of Employment and Social Development Canada.

Seniors Connect is part of a pan-Canadian initiative to explore ways to enhance the social inclusion of older adults (55+). The Seniors Connect project created the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force (NSTF), a group of local residents who advocate for age-friendly community programs and infrastructure. Their hard work has led to this document, *Nanaimo's Age-Friendly City Plan*.



Background

In January 2017, the Seniors Connect (SC) Project held an Ideas & Event Exchange to identify barriers that lead to social isolation for adults over the age of 55 in the City of Nanaimo. The event was attended by members of the general population, with a high concentration of seniors and community-based senior support services. Following the event, several action groups were developed, and activities and programs were funded to implement solutions that could reduce the identified barriers.

In the fall of 2017, the Seniors Connect Project surveyed over 500 Nanaimo residents at the annual Seniors Health and Wellness event as well as at shopping centres and through online surveys, to identify how age friendly Nanaimo is in the seven Areas identified by the World Health Organization (see Appendix 2). In January of 2018, a second Idea and Event Exchange was held to look at all the issues identified through the survey and to ask the community to further elaborate on current practices already being undertaken in the community to share information and to brainstorm creative solutions that could reduce these barriers.

In June of 2018, the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force (NSTF), a committee developed through the SC Project to support the impact plan objectives, examined all the ideas presented at the January 2018 Idea Event Exchange and used the examination to form the basis of an Age-friendly City plan for Nanaimo.

All the issues documented for each Area were reviewed and categorized by importance, and/or by the perceived ability for the NSTF or another organization in the community to address the issue at the city level, either through advocacy or through a collaborative project initiative with another stakeholder. Objectives chosen for inclusion in the plan were based on availability of creative solutions, the impact the objective would have on the community and the likelihood of successful implementation through the adoption of an Age-Friendly City Plan. Objectives are rated in the following way:

IMPACT High or Low DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy / Moderate / Hard



Definitions

Area: An “Area” is defined as a physical or social environment in which we live our lives. The World Health Organization requires eight areas of focus for all age-friendly communities: outdoor spaces and public buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; health and community services; respect and social inclusion; civic participation; volunteerism and employment; communication and information. The community of Nanaimo has identified a ninth area which has been included in this plan: food security and healthy eating.

Barriers: In the Age-Friendly City plan, barriers are circumstances or obstacles in community that were identified through public engagement sessions that may limit a person’s ability to fully partake in community from a social or physical perspective.

Current Improvements: Identified by various stakeholders in community through public engagement sessions and survey information and are either activities, programs and services that are currently underway and are improving the conditions and making Nanaimo more age friendly.

Difficulty of Implementation: The perceived level of difficulty, as identified by the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force, to achieve an objective following recommended strategies within the Age-Friendly City Plan’s five-year timeframe is based on any number of conditions, but most specifically funding, levels of government or agencies involved, stakeholders, advocacy, etc. Difficulty is identified as being easy, moderate, hard.

Impact: The degree to which the achievement of implementation of an objective would have on making Nanaimo an age-friendly community. Impacts are identified as low or high impact relative to the objective.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders have an interest in the outcome of the project, rather than its inception. Stakeholders can include the municipality, seniors, community organizations, not-for-profit agencies, and businesses. In some cases, the Plan identifies objective-specific stakeholders who may only be involved in specific objectives.



AREA OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES



Area #1 - Outdoor Spaces & Public Buildings

Refers to the natural and built environments and the ability of older persons to get around each space easily and safely in the community, thereby enabling their full participation in the public life of the community.

Current improvements:

1. LED Replacement Program in city centre
2. City of Nanaimo's Seniors Connect City Builders program is adding benches in specific areas.
3. Improved pedestrian crossings on Bowen Road, Oliver Road and Uplands Drive; have plans for longer crosswalk times.

Barriers:

1. Difficulty navigating intersections.
2. Insufficient access to public washroom facilities.
3. Inadequate illumination levels.

Objective #1

Improve safety at crosswalks by reviewing crosswalk times, lighting, and proximity to building entrance, with a focus on crosswalks adjacent to senior living communities and community centres as well as near facilities frequented by seniors.

Recommended Strategies:

1. City and advocacy groups identify established pedestrian routes and seek ways to improve pedestrian safety.
2. Explore plans to support safe pedestrian movement close to senior living communities, 55+ apartments, buildings known to have a high density of seniors, and where seniors congregate.
3. Review illumination levels in pedestrian zones.
4. Use pedestrian crossing times appropriate to the needs of seniors.
5. Support the RCMP's *See and Be Seen Campaign* at the Seniors Connect Centre, Harbour City Seniors at Bowen Park, and other senior community development activities.

Stakeholders: RCMP, Seniors Communities and Residential Facilities

IMPACT

High

DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Moderate



Objective #2

Improve access and availability of public washroom facilities.

Recommended strategies:

- Increase the number of public washrooms in high traffic areas.
- Approach clubs like Rotary to sponsor a port-a-potty.
- NSTF to develop an awareness campaign for local businesses to provide access to washrooms for people with mobility challenges, seniors, and children.

Stakeholders: Nanaimo Seniors Task Force, Seniors Connect City Builders, local businesses

IMPACT High

DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy



“There’s nothing more disheartening than going somewhere nice and discovering it’s inaccessible because of stairs.”

– Female 65-69

AREA OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES



Area #2 – Transportation

Transportation takes into consideration convenience, safety, and affordability with the goal of enabling older persons to conveniently travel to their destinations.

Current practices/resources:

1. Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) “Ride the Bus” Program.
2. Announcing timings and stops on the buses.
3. Downloadable Riders Guide in pdf format for ease of scalability.

Barriers:

1. Lack of affordable transportation options.
2. Lack of communication re transportation alternatives for older adults who no longer drive.
3. Lack of scalable online, or large print bus schedules and trip apps that are user friendly for older adults.
4. Lack of alternative transportation options for evenings and weekends.
5. Busy routes, like those going to and from the university, often do not implement priority seating for those who have mobility challenges.
6. Pressure on seniors to move quickly increases danger of falling on buses.
7. Seniors who use walkers and scooters are unaware that low-floor buses are equipped to facilitate loading of some mobility aids.
8. HandyDART issues related to availability and scheduling.

Objective #1

Improve trip planning. Improve user-friendliness of printed and online schedules, maps and trip planning apps for public transportation.

Recommended strategies:

1. NSTF to hold a meeting with Regional District of Nanaimo to bring attention to readability issues regarding schedules and trip apps and the need for more “live support” to assist people with trip planning outside of peak hours.
2. Hold a Focus Group for seniors to identify problems and create solutions to make printed schedules and computer applications more user friendly.
3. Make Rider Guides more accessible in Nanaimo.
4. Print larger schedules.
5. Have bus numbers and schedules available at intersecting routes.

Stakeholders: Transportation Action Groups, Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre, Community Centres, Regional District of Nanaimo, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

IMPACT High

DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Easy



Objective #2

Support the development and awareness of programs that educate seniors on using public transportation.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Increase frequency and awareness of the RDN’s “How to Ride the Bus” program.
2. Request that the RDN make the program available in all areas of Nanaimo.
3. Advocate with ICBC that all seniors in Nanaimo who no longer drive be sent a letter with an invitation to the “How to Ride the Bus” program and a copy of the Seniors Connect “Hanging up the Keys” brochure.
4. Support the development and implementation of a Bus Buddy Program in Nanaimo to assist those who are new to or fearful of using public transportation.
5. Develop a brochure for businesses that sell scooters and/or mobility tools to educate purchasers about how to take their tools on public transportation.
6. Increase the hours of service for the 1-800 bus schedule information phone line to assist seniors outside of traditional business hours.

Stakeholders: Regional District of Nanaimo, ICBC

IMPACT **High** DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION **Moderate**

Objective #3

Support the development of affordable transportation options to transport low income seniors to appointments and activities increasing independence and inclusion.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Explore funding options and advocate for a coordinated volunteer driver program with Volunteer Nanaimo based on the Wheels for Wellness model.
2. Explore funding options, including provincial, federal, and municipal grants, for rideshare programs to provide funding and support to volunteer drivers.
3. Explore partnerships with senior community residences for better utilization of buses.
4. For seniors who lack access to affordable public transportation, coordinate a letter writing campaign to Office of the Seniors Advocate and Island Health to support the idea that Home and Community Care provide transportation to medical appointments, shopping and social activities.
5. Enhance the age friendliness of transit stops by putting lighted bus stop shelters at key locations.

Stakeholders: Island Health Home and Community Care, NSTF

IMPACT **High** DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION **Moderate**



Area #3 – Housing

Older residents need access to housing that is safe and affordable and allows them to stay independent as their needs change. Ideally housing is embedded in a neighbourhood context that minimizes the risk of social isolation.

Current practices/resources:

1. BC Housing is developing 250 units of affordable housing for seniors.
2. Urban Containment Boundary concentrates future development within existing municipal boundaries.
3. City is looking at expanding zoning bylaws to allow for a wider range of forms and styles of residential dwelling units.
4. BC SAFER program offers some assistance with rent.

Barriers:

1. Lack of safe and affordable housing.
2. Limited range of available housing types.
3. Rent increases above affordable rates for pensioners living at or below the poverty level.
4. Affordable housing is not necessarily situated near amenities and services required by seniors, such as transportation hubs, medical centres, and social centres.





Objective #1

Support the development of more attainable (affordable) and accessible housing for seniors in Nanaimo that is close to amenities.

Recommended strategies:

1. Advocate with the City of Nanaimo to offer incentives to builders to incorporate more affordable housing options.
2. Support changes in the existing City of Nanaimo bylaws to support row houses, carriage houses, co-housing, and cluster housing options in areas with a high density of seniors.
3. Undertake a housing study to identify how many seniors in Nanaimo are without safe, affordable, and appropriate housing and explore options.
4. Review how City of Nanaimo considers accessibility to ensure it meets the needs of an aging population.
5. Improve communications with neighbourhoods to develop support for a range of housing options.

Stakeholders: NSTF, BC Housing, Seniors Organizations, Developers and Builders

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Hard

Objective #2

Advocate for the need for better rent subsidy programs for qualifying seniors.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Advocate with the Province of BC to review the SAFER program and increase rent subsidies proportionally to rent increases

Stakeholders: Seniors Connect City Builders, Old Age Pensioners Society

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy

“Affordable, easily accessible public transportation and affordable rental housing in Nanaimo are the most important issues, in my opinion, for the older Seniors. (80plus)”

– Female 85+



Area #4 – Social Participation

Social participation includes opportunities for developing and maintaining meaningful social networks within the community and for full participation in the recreational, cultural, and social life of the community.

Current practices/resources:

1. Seniors Connect website, Seniors Connections newsletter, programming on Shaw TV, and Nanaimo Lifeline Phone “Check-In” Service.
2. Seniors Connect free legacy programs for seniors in various locations throughout the community.
3. City of Nanaimo’s Leisure Economic Access Policy (LEAP) program for low income seniors.
4. Seniors have access to drop-in recreational facilities.
5. Elder College and Harbour City Seniors provide free and low-cost programs for seniors.

Barriers:

1. Affordable and free programs are not evenly distributed throughout Nanaimo.
2. There is a perceived lack of specialized programs and services for seniors. Examples include programs designed for seniors who lack social confidence, have cognitive issues, chronic conditions and/or physical and mobility issues (including vision and hearing challenges); older vs younger seniors; those who prefer gender-based programs, who are house-bound. There may be insufficient outdoor activities, out of town activities, and mentally stimulating programs.
3. There is a lack of space and funding for programming for seniors aging in place who do not access mainstream organizations due to social isolation risk factors (poverty, mental and physical health challenges, lack of transportation, cultural fit etc.).





Objective #1

Advocate for a redeployment of city-delivered and community-based senior service programs to identified areas of the city with high senior residential density and low-income levels.

Recommended strategies:

1. Have Seniors Connect City Builders identify areas for programs based on income levels and density of older adults.
2. Arrange for Parks and Recreation to bring more programs to neighbourhoods that do not have a community centre and work with businesses and non-profits to offer programs in these areas.
3. Encourage the increase of program offerings from non-profit organizations.
4. Build awareness of existing programs and opportunities.

Stakeholders: Seniors Facilities, Non-profit Organizations, Neighbourhood Organizations

IMPACT **High** DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION **Hard**

Objective #2

Actively advocate for volunteer managed information hubs at local libraries and shopping malls.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Apply for municipal, provincial, and federal funding to continue the development of the Seniors Connect pilot program.
2. Approach local shopping malls and library about donating space or allowing Seniors Connect to have a table once a month at each shopping mall to give seniors an opportunity to find out about activities and volunteer opportunities in Nanaimo.

Stakeholders: BC 211 Program, Old Age Pensioners Society, Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre, senior living facilities, medical offices

IMPACT **High** DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION **Easy**

“Participation needs to be encouraged as many are steeped in their isolation. The first steps are always the most difficult.”

– Female 80-84

Area #5 – Health and Community Services

Older residents of our community need access to social and health services to stay healthy and maintain their independence. An age-friendly community is one in which these kinds of services are accessible, affordable, and appropriate.

Current practices/resources:

1. Locally developed Seniors Connect Resource Card with telephone numbers for non-profit support systems.
2. Nanaimo New Bulletin biannual senior's directory.
3. City of Nanaimo biannual Parks and Recreation Program.
4. bc211 telephone and website; a non-profit organization that specializes in providing free information and referral regarding community, government and social services in BC.
5. Public caregiver support groups.

Barriers:

1. Lack of Access to Services
 - » It's challenging to find information about services.
 - » There is a lack of information about support and services for caregivers.
 - » There is poor communication among service providers.
 - » Long wait lists for residential care make planning difficult.
2. Poor Access to Services
 - » Long wait times for medical services including specialists.
 - » Long wait times for non-medical support groups like Better at Home.
 - » Insufficient times allotted for medical appointments.
 - » Not enough support from hospital after discharge.
 - » Lack of loaner equipment.
3. Non-funded health needs are too costly; e.g., exercise programs.
4. Lack of funding for allied health services; e.g., community social workers, occupational therapists, recreation therapists.

“In-home care is a huge issue. There are not enough caregivers or services available of the types that seniors want. Many seniors are under the poverty level and can not afford to pay for the care they need.”

– Female 70-74



Objective #1

Increase access to existing services in Nanaimo by promoting the adoption and encourage wide range support for the BC 211 Program in Nanaimo.

Recommended strategies:

1. Champion the use and promotion of the BC 211 Program through an awareness campaign.

Stakeholders: City of Nanaimo, business community, seniors’ organizations

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy

Objective #2

Engage with the community and improve the health status of Nanaimo residents by advocating for better programs and services, strengthening the health capacity of local communities, and influencing public policy.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Promote Island Health’s free and subsidized programs for those with chronic diseases in all Parks and Recreation and Seniors Directories.
2. Advocate for free medications for those over 65 as is done in other provinces.
3. Encourage Island Health’s Community Health Services to do more general promotion of programs and services at locations that seniors frequent including but not limited to community centres, libraries and shopping centres.
4. Advocate for recreational therapists and dietary nutritionists through Island Health’s Gerontological Specialists Group.

Stakeholders: Island Health, Old Age Pensioners Society, recreational therapists, dietary nutritionists, food security groups

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Moderate



Area #6 – Respect and Social Inclusion

Respect and social inclusion encompass the need for various aspects of the community, such as public services, commercial enterprises, media, community attitudes, to be respectful of and willing to accommodate the diversity of needs among older people.

Current practices/resources:

1. Seniors Connect public awareness campaign.
2. Better Together Champion Program.
3. Anti Ageism program to health care students at Vancouver Island University.
4. Seniors Celebrate Month.
5. Community Champion Volunteer Awards for Seniors.

Barriers:

- Public may not be aware of the high rate of poverty among seniors in Nanaimo or the degree of support low income seniors need.
- Businesses are not always responsive to seniors' needs: voicemail systems are inadequate; lack of access for the mobility-impaired; lack of handicap parking.
- Few government funded programs or philanthropic programs provide for non-medical support requirements; e.g., yard work, transportation programs, etc.
- Ageism.





Objective #1

Advocate for local high schools to include multigenerational support programs as part of their volunteer curriculum to connect to seniors and curtail ageism.

Recommended strategies:

1. Enhance student volunteer programs at the high school level to add 20 hours of support per semester for senior-specific support program, providing services such as snow removal, lawn cutting, food shopping with community senior service non-profit organizations.

Stakeholders: School District 68, Volunteer Nanaimo, senior service non-profit organizations

IMPACT **High** DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION **Moderate**

Objective #2

Advocate that government agencies and service providers offer in-person or phone services to seniors who are challenged by technology.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Advocate for policy changes requiring that all important government services have a live body available to assist with completing applications for vulnerable seniors.

Stakeholders: City of Nanaimo, Island Health, community-based agencies

IMPACT **High** DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION **Hard**

“Trends (especially banks & retailers) are to have self checkouts, yet - a teller or cashier may be the only opportunity for seniors to interact socially. Automated phone systems & computerization also alienate seniors who are not technologically savvy.”

– Senior Serving Organization Survey Response



Area #7 – Civic Participation, Volunteerism, and Employment

Civic participation means the inclusion of older persons in community decision making processes; employment and volunteerism refer to opportunities for older residents to contribute their experience and skills to the community through both paid and unpaid work.

Current practices/resources:

1. Volunteer Nanaimo provides lots of opportunities for volunteerism in Nanaimo.
2. Involvement of older adults in Seniors Connect programs.
3. City of Nanaimo Advisory Committees have strong representation from older residents.

Barriers:

1. Volunteering
 - » Lack of variety of opportunities for seniors over 70.
 - » Work is devaluing.
 - » Insufficient training.
 - » Support needed to keep engaged.
2. Employment
 - » Ageist attitudes in hiring.
 - » Difficult to keep technology skills current for some older adults.

“More situations to become involved in activities that are multi-aged groups of people working in an ensemble volunteering their many skills WITHOUT having to pay to participate in activities that they once were remunerated for in a job! On a fixed income, it is frustrating to have to pay to be a volunteer.”

– Female 65 to 69



Objective #1

Advocate for policy changes to ensure that all City of Nanaimo and Regional District of Nanaimo advisory organizations have representation from adults over age 70.

Recommended strategies:

1. Ask City of Nanaimo to review existing public advisory committees to ensure there is diverse representation.
2. Put out request for volunteers aged 70 or older at senior fairs and community activities.

Stakeholders: City of Nanaimo, Regional District of Nanaimo, Nanaimo Senior Services Network, Harbour City Seniors

IMPACT High

DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Moderate





Area #8 – Communication and Information

Communication and information refer to the availability, appropriate design, and delivery of information to ensure awareness of the full range of programs and services for seniors in the community.

Current practices/resources:

1. Computer technology classes are offered by Volunteer Nanaimo, Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre, Elder College, Literacy Nanaimo, and Seniors Connect.
2. bc211 now available on Vancouver Island.
3. *Seniors Connections* newsletter and website.
4. Seniors101.ca website.
5. Nanaimo Lifeline Seniors Connect “Check-in” service.

Barriers:

1. Low income seniors may not have access to technology.
2. Many older seniors can no longer navigate or use technology due to decline in health.
3. Lack of local news outlet and no daily newspaper mean fewer opportunities for seniors without technology skills to access information.
4. Difficulty of reaching isolated seniors.

Objective #1

Maintain senior serving websites and social media pages through the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force Committee.

Recommended strategies:

1. Create a “What’s on For Seniors” social media page.
2. Include links to all existing community programs and services in Nanaimo.
3. Update the community on progress and implementation of Age-Friendly City Plan.
4. Seek funding to support website maintenance and ongoing updates.

Stakeholders: Community based senior services sector, City of Nanaimo, RDN

IMPACT High

DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Easy



Objective #2

Create and distribute printed documents that list senior service providers, social programs and health and wellness information for seniors who do not use technology.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Make the locally produced Seniors Connect Resource Card, a small, printed pocket version information resource card listing telephone numbers of agencies and non-profits providing senior support services, available to all senior serving agencies in Nanaimo.
2. Distribute materials through Island Health Home & Community Care.
3. Advocate for continued City leadership in providing and updating the *Surviving in Nanaimo Guide*, a listing of local agencies and services providing information and contacts for low-cost and free resources available to individuals living in Nanaimo.
4. Establish distribution centres for available printed materials in strategic locations and list locations in local newspaper.
5. Create partnerships with local papers to regularly publish seniors event listings.
6. Publish a list of clubs and organizations in Nanaimo that is accessible electronically and in hard copy.

Stakeholders: Tourism Nanaimo, City of Nanaimo, Island Health, Old Age Pensioners Society, shopping malls, senior living communities

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Moderate

Objective #3

Work with local media outlets to have Seniors Information public service announcements on local radio stations to support seniors without access to technology or who have literacy issues.

Stakeholders: Local media, Nanaimo Seniors Services Network

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy

“I really appreciate personal calls from community members that let me know what’s going on in the community.”

– Male 65 to 69



Area #9 – Food Security and Healthy Eating

Food Security and Healthy Eating encompasses physical, economic, and social access to sufficient, safe, nutritious, and culturally acceptable food to meet seniors’ dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Current practices/resources:

1. Five local farmers markets.
2. Good Food Box Program.
3. Access to community garden opportunities.
4. Cooking programs for seniors.
5. Island Health Healthy Eating Options and 811 to ask a dietician.
6. Community organizations in Nanaimo collaborated to recover and distribute \$2.4 million worth of food in 2015.

Barriers:

1. Healthy food is not affordable for many low-income seniors.
2. Lack of information about healthy eating options to address chronic diseases.
3. Transportation for seniors to rural Farmers Markets is not available.
4. Inter-agency communication regarding projects and programs for seniors is not available at all levels; e.g., Because many in home support agencies cannot or do not support eating with seniors, seniors who have food delivered eat alone.
5. A national study on malnutrition found that 56% of patients enrolled in the study who entered the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital met the criteria for being malnourished.
6. The majority of malnourished patients at NRGH were not offered a consultation with a dietician.
7. The city does not have a food charter.
8. There are an insufficient number of nutritionists available through the public health system.
9. Seniors services in BC need increased support to expand programs and access to nutritious food.
10. There is no delivery mechanism to house-bound seniors of Foodshare’s Good Food Box program. A local program which puts together low-cost nutritional fruit and vegetable boxes to support healthy eating for low-income seniors.

Objective #1

Advocate for multi-level governmental support for appropriate age-friendly food project funding and/or resources.

Recommended strategies:

1. NSTF and Foodshare do a joint presentation on the need for funding to City Council
2. Advocacy campaign at local events such as Vancouver Island Exhibition

Stakeholders: Nanaimo Foodshare, Nanaimo Community Kitchen, dietary programs

“Nutrition is often lost when supplying food or snacks for seniors. We need healthy whole foods, fresh fruit and veggies with healthy dips and if you are going to have sweets, link up with someone who knows how to make healthy ones.”

– Senior Serving Organization Survey Response

IMPACT

High

DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION

Moderate



Objective #2

Restore Nanaimo community nutritionist with age-friendly responsibilities to reduce the rate of seniors suffering from malnutrition.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Annualized project for delivering food and connected help.
2. Advocate to the health authority for more nutritionists with specialization in seniors’ health.

Stakeholders: NSTF, Nanaimo Foodshare, Better Meals, Meals on Wheels

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Hard

Objective #3

Advocate for a Nanaimo Food Charter (principles to guide decisions, policies, and collaboration for food security in our community) with a section devoted to seniors’ issues.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Develop a Food Charter Tool Kit.
2. Support the development of a food charter ensuring the inclusion of seniors and youth.
3. Support local food including farmers markets and urban farms.
4. Create a senior led home garden program.
5. Advocate for community gardens at all Seniors Facilities.
6. Advocate for transit for seniors to Farmers Markets.

Stakeholders: Community Based Seniors Services Sector, Loaves and Fishes, Island Health, Foodshare

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy

Objective #4

Foster collaborative partnerships between non-profit agencies to advocate and support programs for in-home help focused on healthy eating with services that serve seniors at all stages of dependency.

Recommended Strategies:

1. Non-profits to collaborate and advocate for appropriate food services to allow seniors to age in place.
2. Advocate for age-friendly opportunities for socialising while eating.
3. Friendly visitor program focused on healthy eating.

Stakeholders: Community Based Senior Services Sector, Island Health

IMPACT High DIFFICULTY OF IMPLEMENTATION Easy

Appendix I

Nanaimo Age Friendly City Survey

The Age Friendly City survey created by the World Health Organization allows communities to measure the physical and social environments with the goal of creating frameworks to optimize opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance quality of life for people as they age. The survey was created by HealthWell, a partner in the Seniors Connect project, and together with the other Seniors Connect partners, including the City of Nanaimo, was administered to 500 participants in the fall of 2017.

1. Please indicate your age:

- 54 years and under
- 55 to 59 years
- 60 to 64 years
- 65 to 69 years
- 70 to 74 years
- 75 to 79 years
- 80 to 84 years
- 85 years and older

2. Please indicate your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other

Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = poor, 5 = very well) to assess Nanaimo's age-friendliness, and to indicate how the following factors contribute to, or undermine, healthy and active aging for seniors. Please add additional comments in the space provided at the end of the survey.

3. How well do Nanaimo's outdoor Spaces support healthy and active aging? (Consider: access to public buildings and toilets, signage, lighting, pavement and curbs, green spaces, cross walks, street safety, etc.)

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

4. How well does Nanaimo's Transportation system support healthy and active aging? (Consider access and availability of public transportation, road conditions, parking).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

5. How well do housing options in Nanaimo support healthy and active aging? (Consider affordability, proximity to services, availability of affordable home maintenance services).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

6. How well are seniors' needs for social participation met in Nanaimo? (Consider appropriate location, cost & variety of affordable options, availability of information about activities, friendly and inclusive venues).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

Appendix I

Nanaimo Age Friendly City Survey (continued)

7. Do you feel that seniors are generally respected in Nanaimo? (Consider opportunities to have input into public and/or other services that serve seniors; courteous service personnel; intergenerational opportunities; recognition of seniors' past and present contributions; portrayal of seniors in local media, etc.).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

8. How well are seniors' civic participation and employment supported? (Consider availability of flexible volunteer and employment opportunities; acknowledgement of value of older volunteers/workers; membership on decision-making bodies).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

9. How effectively is information communicated to diverse seniors? Communication and the delivery of information for seniors? (Consider how information is accessed and distributed to seniors including those with visual or hearing/language/literacy issues, low-income or housebound, those who don't use computers).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

10. How well do community and health services support healthy and active aging? (Consider accessibility, availability, adequacy and affordability of home support, personal care services, residential and hospital care).

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

11. How well are seniors supported to eat foods that support healthy aging? (Consider: cost, transportation or mobility, skills, oral health, knowledge, culture, food safety)

1 (Poor) 2 3 4 5 (Very Well)

12. What would assist you, or other seniors, to participate in community activities or socialize outside your home more often? _____

Additional Comments:

Appendix II

Survey Results

In the fall of 2017, the SC Project randomly surveyed over 501 Nanaimo residents at the annual Seniors Health and Wellness event as well as at shopping centres and through online surveys posted on the Seniors Connect website, to identify how age-friendly Nanaimo is in the eight Areas identified by the World Health Organization.

Age of respondents:

- 8.60% were below age 54;
- 25.82% were age 55 to 64;
- 47.18% were age 65 to 79; and
- 18.07% were age 80 plus.

Gender:

- 76.01% female; and
- 23.99% male.

Five ratings were listed on the Age-friendly City Survey for each Area with ratings being 1 for Poor and 5 for Very Well.

Area	>% Better than Average or Best	% Average	<% Less than Average or Poor
1. Outdoor Spaces & Public Buildings	47.84	35.82	16.35
2. Transportation	24.70	29.75	46.50
3. Housing	17.95	33.08	49.23
5. Health and Community Services	31.02	33.25	35.98
6. Respect and Social Inclusion	46.12	36.89	16.99
7. Civic Participation, Employment and Volunteerism	30.49	48.32	21.45
8. Communication and Information	21.68	38.56	40.30
9. Food Security and Healthy Eating	23.37	38.69	37.94

