



CRESTON  VALLEY

TOWN of CRESTON

Age-friendly Action Plan

March 2013

Prepared for the Town of Creston, BC

by the Whistler Centre for Sustainability



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Introduction

An age-friendly community is one where older adults can enjoy good health, community support and feel a sense of security as they engage and participate in the community. In 2011, 33% of the Town of Creston's population was 65 years and older, up slightly from the 2006 census data of 31%, and much higher than the 2011 provincial figure of 16%¹. This statistic emphasizes the importance of making the Creston Valley an age-friendly community, and is at the heart of Creston's Town Council desire to ensure that older adults are active participants in community life and municipal planning initiatives.



Engaging seniors and their service providers is important to ensure we focus on the actions that are most needed in making the Creston Valley an age-friendly community and to help ensure they are done right. To this end, these groups were engaged in applying an age-friendly lens to the development of *Cultivating Creston*, Creston's new Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP), which establishes our long-term vision and strategic direction for the Town. Our ICSP also provides implementation and monitoring tools to help ensure progress toward the vision is achieved.

Using the age-friendly aspects of the *Cultivating Creston* vision, seniors and their service providers were then convened to identify and refine the best actions to begin to move Creston forward on its journey to becoming a more age-friendly and sustainable place. The following resources were used to supplement the actions identified: the 2008 Creston Valley Age-Friendly Assessment; the *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide* (2006); and the World Health Organization (WHO) *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* (2007).

¹ The proportion of seniors in the Creston Local Health Area, which encompasses the Town of Creston, Erckson, Wynndel, Kitchener, Yahk, Rykerts and Kingsgate was 24% in 2010, also higher than the BC figure.

The Town of Creston received funding for this Age-Friendly Action Plan through the 2012 Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative offered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the Healthy Families BC program. The Whistler Centre for Sustainability, which was guiding the development of *Cultivating Creston*, led the engagement initiatives to develop this Action Plan, supplementing local knowledge with the age-friendly resources mentioned above and listed in the References section.



For more background information and local context regarding age-friendliness in Creston, please refer to the 2008 Creston Valley Age-Friendly Assessment, which contains recommendations and the results of an extensive survey conducted with Creston seniors and service providers.

Finally, it should be mentioned that efforts to make Creston and the Creston Valley more age-friendly not only improve quality of life for seniors, it also creates a more inclusive, safe and accessible community for everyone.

Creston's Age-Friendly Action Planning Framework

The eight age-friendly themes developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and used extensively by other countries, cities and communities, including Canada, were used to frame the 2008 Creston Valley Age-friendly Assessment, and are thus also used to frame this Action Plan.

The *Cultivating Creston* desired outcome statements (DOS) that have specific age-friendly relevance were used to guide the action planning during the seniors' action planning workshop, and are included below. It should be noted that the DOS are not statements of Creston's current performance or situation. Rather, they reflect the desired outcomes or goals for the future – their shared vision for what citizens want Creston to look and be like in the future, roughly twenty years out. Essential age-friendly features recommended by the

WHO are also included within each theme to help identify actions moving forward and were used to identify gaps in this Action Plan. Some context and explanation regarding the importance of each theme is drawn from the WHO Global Age-friendly Cities Guide.

Structured by the eight age-friendly themes, and combined with the DOS and the WHO essential features, the content below can provide the framework for structuring future age-friendly action planning in Creston. While the framework will remain constant and continue to guide action planning, each year's recommended actions will be different, and therefore are attached separately as an appendix to this framework.

Theme 1 and 2: Housing, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

“The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”. And of course, housing is essential to safety and well-being.” (WHO 2007)

The WHO separates Housing and Outdoor Spaces and Buildings into two distinct themes; *Cultivating Creston* combines them. Below are the DOS and WHO essential features that relate to both themes.

Age-friendly Desired Outcome Statements from the Cultivating Creston ICSP

- Buildings and homes are designed and retrofitted to be safe, comfortable, durable and flexible, meeting diverse and changing needs efficiently over the long-term.
- All forms of the built environment, including parks, are accessible to people with all levels of ability.
- The built environment provides opportunities for people to meet and interact with others.
- Creston's streets are people friendly, accessible, safe, visually appealing and enjoyable, offering places for people to rest and interact with others.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Public areas are clean and pleasant.
- Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
- Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians.
- Pavements are non-slip, are wide enough for wheelchairs and have dropped curbs to road level.
- Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels and types of disability, with nonslip markings, visual and audio cues and adequate crossing times.
- Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
- Cycle paths are separate from pavements and other pedestrian walkways.
- Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education.
- Services are situated together and are accessible.
- Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.
- Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
- Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

Housing

- Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
- Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
- Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather.
- Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
- Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
- Public and commercial rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.
- Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

Theme 3: Community Support and Health Services

Health and support services for seniors are fundamental to ensuring an age-friendly community. Creston has many health and support services and agencies already in place, providing a solid foundation that can be strengthened to further improve the health and independence of seniors in the community and region.

Age-friendly Desired Outcomes from Cultivating Creston

- The health needs of community members are met in a timely, convenient and affordable manner.
- Frequently used health care services are offered locally, and non-local services can be accessed conveniently and affordably.
- An adequate, affordable and nutritious supply of food is available year round and is efficiently used, ensuring local food security and minimized waste.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

- An adequate range of health and community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Home care services include health and personal care and housekeeping.
- Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport.
- Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
- Health and community service facilities are safely constructed and fully accessible.
- Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.
- All staff are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
- Economic barriers impeding access to health and community support services are minimized.
- Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- There are sufficient and accessible burial sites.
- Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.

Theme 4: Respect and Social Inclusion

“Older people report experiencing conflicting types of behaviour and attitudes towards them. On the one hand, many feel they are often respected, recognized and included, while on the other, they experience lack of consideration in the community, in services and in the family. This clash is explained in terms of a changing society and behavioural norms, lack of contact between generations, and widespread ignorance about ageing and older people. It is clear from the consultation that the respect and social inclusion of older people depend on more than societal change: factors such as culture, gender, health status and economic status play a large role. The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the city is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion.” (WHO 2007)

Age-friendly Desired Outcomes from Cultivating Creston

- There is a strong sense of community and belonging in Creston, where everyone feels connected, respected and included.
- Community members feel safe and their needs are met, including access to housing, nutritious local food, meaningful social interactions, and recreation and leisure pursuits.
- Creston is an accessible community, where all ages are valued, they have opportunities to participate, and there are meaningful connections between the generations.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Older people are regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services on how to serve them better. | <input type="checkbox"/> Service staff are courteous and helpful. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided by public and commercial services. | <input type="checkbox"/> Older people are specifically included in community activities for “families”. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping. | <input type="checkbox"/> Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community-wide settings, activities and events attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences. | <input type="checkbox"/> Older people are recognized by the community for their past as well as their present contributions. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Older people who are less well-off have good access to public, voluntary and private services. |

Theme 5: Social Participation

“Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competence, to enjoy respect and esteem, and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. It fosters social integration and is the key to staying informed.” (WHO 2007)

Age-friendly Desired Outcomes from Cultivating Creston

- A diversity of arts, culture and heritage opportunities exist for all ages, incomes and abilities.
- High quality formal and informal educational offerings meet the needs of all ages, abilities and incomes, and are offered locally or via convenient communications infrastructure.
- Diverse year round recreation opportunities exist for all ages, abilities and incomes.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, accessible, well-lit and easily reached by public transport. | <input type="checkbox"/> Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Events are held at times convenient for older people. | <input type="checkbox"/> A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion. | <input type="checkbox"/> Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centres, schools, libraries, community centres and parks. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs. | <input type="checkbox"/> There is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation. |

Theme 6: Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities

“Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement. Many continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and communities. In some areas, economic circumstances force older people to take paid work long after they should have retired. An age-friendly community provides options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities, through paid employment or voluntary work if they so choose, and to be engaged in the political process.” (WHO 2007)

Age-friendly Desired Outcomes from Cultivating Creston

- Creston’s economy provides employment, entrepreneurial and volunteer opportunities that retain and attract people of all ages.
- Creston’s economy is thriving, meeting most of the product and service needs of the community, and locally owned businesses are the foundation of this success.
- Access to natural and agricultural areas is enabled to provide opportunities for enjoyment and learning for all.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

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| <input type="checkbox"/> A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The qualities of older employees are well promoted. | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted. | <input type="checkbox"/> Training in post-retirement options is provided for older workers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination on the basis of age alone is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees. | <input type="checkbox"/> Decision-making bodies in public, private and voluntary sectors encourage and facilitate membership of older people. |

Theme 7: Transportation

“Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. It is a theme running through many other areas of discussion. In particular, being able to move about the city determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.” (WHO 2007)

Age-friendly Desired Outcomes from Cultivating Creston

- Transportation options are convenient, reliable, innovative, safe, affordable, and accessible, meeting the needs of residents and visitors.
- Creston is connected to the valley, neighbouring communities and non-local health services by affordable, convenient, comfortable and accessible transportation options.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable. | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete and accessible information is provided to users about routes, schedules and special needs facilities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays. | <input type="checkbox"/> A voluntary transport service is available where public transportation is too limited. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections and well-marked routes and vehicles. | <input type="checkbox"/> Taxis are accessible and affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating that is respected. | <input type="checkbox"/> Roads are well-maintained, with covered drains and good lighting. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized transportation is available for disabled people. | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic flow is well-regulated. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off. | <input type="checkbox"/> Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter. | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic signs and intersections are visible and well-placed. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available and respected. |

Theme 8: Communication and Information

“Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. Rapidly evolving information and communication technologies are both welcomed as useful tools and criticized as instruments of social exclusion. Regardless of the variety of communication choices and the volume of information available, it is essential to have relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources.” (WHO 2007)

Communication and access to information was identified as a real barrier for seniors in Creston. In fact, access to information about services, activities, events, etc. is a barrier that is not unique to Creston or to seniors – it is often cited across communities and ages as one of the barriers to active community engagement and participation. While the Cultivating Creston ICSP does not specifically focus on communications and information, and therefore there are no DOS for this theme, it is a common aspect that should be addressed within the community across all areas.

WHO Essential Features of Age-Friendly Cities:

- A basic, effective communication system reaches community residents of all ages.
- Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated, centralized access is provided.
- Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
- Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
- People at risk of social isolation get one-to-one information from trusted individuals.
- Printed information – including official forms, television captions and text on visual displays – has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type.
- Public and commercial services provide friendly, person-to-person service on request.
- Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straightforward sentences.
- Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
- Electronic equipment, such as mobile telephones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
- There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centres and libraries.

Recommended Action Plan

Making Creston an age-friendly valley and community cannot be accomplished by the Town of Creston alone. Commitment and action by many partners will be necessary to achieve this objective. The actions listed below are those recommended for implementation as soon as possible by specific lead organizations. The actions have yet to be reviewed and accepted/declined by the lead organizations, but the most important actions for consideration by these organizations are presented.



Recommended Age-friendly Actions

Age-Friendly Theme	Action name	Proposed Action	Lead
All	1 Seniors Resource Centre	Convene partners to explore the needs and solutions for creating a seniors resource centre.	KCCS and CDCRCS/TAPS
All	2 Seniors Advocate	Convene partners to identify how to fund, expand and communicate seniors advocate services.	Town of Creston (with KCCS)
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	3 Universal Access to Rec Centre	Enable wheelchair access to the rec/community centre from Hillside Street	RDCK (Rec Dept)
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	4 Bench Dedication Program	Expand the tree-grate dedication program to possibly include benches. Include seniors in identifying preferred bench locations.	Town of Creston
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	5 Snow Clearing Communications	Communicate the 'Snow Cats' program and the importance of clearing snow from sidewalks in a timely manner to ensure safety for seniors and others.	Town of Creston
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	6 Public Washrooms Downtown	Establish centralized public washroom facilities within the downtown core area.	Town of Creston
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	7 Accessibility Standards	Embed universal accessibility standards into existing and future design guidelines.	Town of Creston (with RDCK)
Housing	8 Development Cost Charges for Housing	Explore the possibility of including a social housing component into Development Cost Charges to assist in the establishment of additional affordable housing.	Town of Creston
Community Support and Health Services	9 Wait Lists for Nursing Homes and Surgery	Work with Interior Health Authority to address waiting lists for local nursing home beds and reduce wait times for surgery.	TBD
Community Support and Health Services	10 Private Help for Seniors	Investigate ways to provide incentives/subsidies for private help professionals (e.g., house cleaners, house maintenance, meal planners, shoppers) to aid seniors at affordable prices, following standards and protocols.	Chamber of Commerce
Community Support and Health Services	11 Healthy Lifestyle Campaign	Develop a 'healthy lifestyles' awareness campaign to educate all ages (including seniors) about the benefits of an active lifestyle and the programs available.	RDCK (Rec Dept)
Community Support and Health Services	12 Recruit Health Practitioners	Explore the need to expand physician recruitment to include other health service providers (e.g., nurse practitioners) by conducting an inventory of existing services and a survey of local needs.	Town of Creston

Recommended Age-friendly Actions (Continued)

Community Support and Health Services	13	Maintain Existing Services	Lobby Interior Health Authority to maintain and/or enhance existing medical services in Creston.	Town of Creston (with RDCK)
Respect and Social Inclusion	14	Elder Abuse Campaign	Create an education/awareness campaign regarding elder abuse.	KCCS and CDCRCS/TAPS
Social Participation	15	Seniors and Business Mentorship	Establish a mentorship/assistance program to enable businesses to access seniors' knowledge and time.	Kootenay Employment Services
Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities	16	Seniors Advisory Committee of Council	Establish a seniors advisory committee of Council.	Town of Creston
Transportation	17	Transportation Service for Seniors	Explore needs, funding and options for a specialized seniors transportation service in the Creston Valley that is affordable, is offered evenings and weekends, and includes trained drivers that can assist seniors.	Town of Creston, RDCK, TAPS
Transportation	18	Public Transit between Creston and Trail	Explore the need for public transit service to Trail (similar to service to Cranbrook)	B.C. Transit, RDCK
Communication and Information	19	Partner Communication and Collaboration	Extend the Community Network monthly meetings to provide time for seniors' groups and service providers to communicate and collaborate on a more regular basis.	TBD
Communication and Information	20	Tradeshow for Seniors	Establish a seniors information forum/tradeshow profiling the programs, services, etc. that exist for seniors.	CDCRCS, TAPS, COTR

KCCS: Kootenai Community Centre Society

CDCRCS: Creston and District Community Resource Centre Society

TAPS: Therapeutic Activation Program

Next Steps

Annual Action Planning

Annual action planning will ensure that the Age-friendly Action Plan continues to be a living process and, most importantly, that it creates on-the-ground action and results. Those involved in the action planning should review the results of past actions, evaluate the most recent performance data (see monitoring section below), strategically assess local and regional opportunities, and then present a recommended set of actions for the following year.

The action planning process should continue in a manner similar to that which occurred during the development of the initial set of actions provided herein.

Strengthen Partnerships

As was experienced during the development of this action plan, convening the various service providers has the potential to create lasting partnerships and achieve more progress than could otherwise be achieved by everyone working in isolation. The organizations and institutions providing services of all kinds to seniors should continue to meet and look for synergies and partnership opportunities on a more regular basis. Partners should include provincial government agencies, the Town of Creston, regional and community organizations and senior citizens.

At the very least, these groups should come together annually to identify and prioritize actions that may need multiple partners to help ensure successful implementation (see action planning section above). Beyond annual action planning, age-friendly partners can accept actions for implementation, align their decisions and activities with Cultivating Creston and the Age-friendly planning framework, contribute toward raising awareness about age-friendly issues, and engage others in the age-friendly journey.

Monitor Progress and Performance

Monitoring action progress and indicator performance is essential to provide transparency, inform decision-making and enable continuous improvement. Monitoring Creston's age-friendliness could include indicators such as the following gathered through surveys with Creston seniors:

- Satisfaction with overall age-friendliness
- Satisfaction with quality of life
- Satisfaction with access to health services
- Satisfaction with transportation services
- Seniors' perception of sense of belonging/social inclusion

Communicating results will build excitement and support for the overall process, and should ideally be done on a regular schedule in time for action planning. Reporting in the same format and using the same metrics year after year will allow for trend spotting and systematic updating. Benchmarking performance to other regions and to best cases around the world will help to gauge performance and determine areas where opportunities for accelerated improvement might exist.

References

The following resources were used to inform the development of this action plan:

- [Creston Valley Age-Friendly Assessment \(2008\)](#)
- [Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide](#), by the World Health Organization (2007)
- [Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities](#), by the World Health Organization (2007)
- [Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide](#) by the Federal, Provincial, Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Canada (2007)





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