Golden and CSRD Area A

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLAN

DECEMBER 2025

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Economic Development

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Golden is proud to be recognized as an Age-Friendly Community, an achievement that reflects our commitment to creating a town where residents of all ages, especially older adults, can thrive.

Since the implementation of our original Age-Friendly Community Plan in 2014, we've continued to integrate an age-friendly lens into our planning and decision-making, helping to ensure that our policies, spaces, and services are inclusive, safe, and accessible.

Our seniors are the backbone of our community, as mentors, volunteers, neighbours, and family, and we are grateful for the experience and connection they bring to our shared life in Golden. As we look ahead, we remain committed to fostering a community where everyone, regardless of age, feels valued and supported.

Ron Oszust, Town of Golden Mayor

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

As the Electoral Area A Director, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the Age Friendly Advisory Committee for their dedication and leadership on this important community project, guided by Kimberly Millar. Developing an Age Friendly Plan for Rural Golden, Area A is essential to ensuring that our rural residents – who often face unique challenges in accessing information, services, and supports – are included in community planning and decision-making.

This plan will help us identify practical solutions that reflect the realities of living rurally while promoting inclusion, accessibility, and well-being for residents of all ages. Thank you to everyone involved for your commitment to building a stronger, more connected rural community.

Karen Cathcart, CSRD Electoral Area A Regional Director

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The Age-Friendly Community Plan for Golden and Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Area A outlines a shared vision for creating an inclusive, accessible, and supportive environment for residents of all ages. Guided by the World Health Organization's age-friendly community framework, the plan identifies local priorities, strengths, and opportunities across nine key domains of community life.

Through research, community engagement, and collaboration, this plan provides a practical roadmap for action – promoting health, well-being, and participation for older adults, seniors, and elders, while strengthening the social and physical fabric of the community as a whole.

Golden and Area A is a distinctive rural community shaped by the dedication and resilience of its residents. Older adults are a vital part of the community's foundation and identity, contributing knowledge, history, and connection. It is essential to have a plan that honours, supports, and enhances the lives of older adults because when older adults thrive, the entire community benefits. We must ensure that those who wish to age in place have access to services that meet the unique challenges of living in a rural and remote setting.

The Age-Friendly Community Plan Update and Modernization Project aims to revisit the recommendations and goals outlined in the 2014 Age-Friendly Community Plan in order to understand our current progress and determine our path forward. Through this process, we identified both successes and remaining gaps, and have realigned and reprioritized recommendations based on present-day needs and community feedback.

Project goals:
- Strengthen the range and coordination of supports available to older adults.
- Increase awareness and utilization of both existing and newly developed services.
- Facilitate collaboration among organizations to more effectively address the needs of older adults.
- Expand and sustain the resources required to meet current and future needs.
- Enhance overall quality of life for residents aged 55 and older.
- Strengthen the involvement and representation of older adults in community planning and decision-making.
- Promote communication and information sharing in clear, accessible, and age-inclusive formats.
- Support healthy aging through wellness, prevention, and lifelong learning initiatives.

- Improve the accessibility and age-friendliness of public spaces, transportation, and community infrastructure.
- Increase opportunities for social participation, inclusion, and community connection.

Throughout the process of exploring age friendliness in Golden and Area A, this project:
- Engaged the community, increasing knowledge about age-friendliness, and promoted community involvement in age-friendly initiatives.
- Mapped out groups, organizations, and services that work towards age-friendliness.
- Gained better understanding of emergency preparedness and climate impacts for older residents.
- Identified assets, barriers, and recommended projects according to the older adult survey and community engagement feedback.

Age-Friendly Community Plan Process

Literature Review · Community Survey · Community Engagement · Committee Consultation · Recommendation Implementation

WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY?

An age-friendly community is a community where older adults can live active and socially engaged lives through policies, services, and structures designed to support them. It focuses on creating environments and services that are accessible, safe, and inclusive for older adults. Building age-friendliness involves assessing the community as a unique place – its geography, culture, and local assets – and engaging older adults directly to understand their experiences, priorities, and ideas. These insights help guide action across nine key domains of age-friendliness, adapted to meet the distinctive needs of rural and remote settings.

Age-friendly communities:
- Recognize the wide range of capabilities and resources among older adults.
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.
- Respect decisions and lifestyle choices.

- Protect those who are most vulnerable.
- Promote inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life.
- Enable people to age in place, which adds to their quality of life.
- Facilitate healthy aging with physical, social, and mental health opportunities.
- Allow older adults to participate in society without discrimination.[1]

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies eight interconnected key pillars (or domains) that influence the age-friendliness of a community. These domains help communities assess strengths and gaps, and guide planning to support healthy aging. In a rural context, unique challenges such as distance, limited services, and winter weather conditions must be considered. In addition, a ninth domain – emergency services and preparedness – has been added to reflect the growing importance of safety and resilience for older adults in emergency situations.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A stream 1 planning grant from BC Healthy Communities (BCHC) for $25,000 was awarded to the Town of Golden and Golden Community Economic Development (Golden CED) as part of the Age-Friendly Communities Program. BCHC is the administrator for the Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program in partnership with the BC Ministry of Health, and awarded funding for Golden and Area A's Age-Friendly Community Plan Update and Modernization Project. Grant in Aid project funding was provided by the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Area A for $15,000 to Golden CED for program support, recognizing that the rural residents of Area A have distinct needs, ensuring robust engagement and thorough consideration.

Led by Golden CED, with support from the Age-Friendly Project Advisory Committee, this project aimed to reassess and update the priorities of our older adult population by identifying successes, challenges, and areas for new growth in alignment with evolving community needs, equity principles, and global best practices. The Age-Friendly Committee has played a vital role in guiding community dialogue and identifying key priorities for older adults in Golden and CSRD Area A.

Project activities included, but were not limited to, the following:
- A thorough review of Age-Friendly literature was conducted including global, national, provincial, municipal, and local best practices, policies, reports, and plans.

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[1] *The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada: Growing Older – Adding Life to Years. 2010.*

- In order to investigate age-friendliness in Golden and CSRD Area A:
  - Six Age-Friendly Project Advisory Committee meetings were held.
  - 22 one-on-one or small group interviews were conducted.
  - 14 relevant events, meetings, and workshops were attended.
  - Eight targeted focus groups were facilitated including Field and Area A seniors groups, seniors housing providers, and emergency services groups.
- A survey was conducted over a seven-week period for Golden and Area A residents age 55+ utilizing an equity lens for engagement, with a total of 239 responses, representing 10.5% of the age 55+ population for Town and Area A.
- Community engagement events were organized including:
  - A table at the Golden Farmers Market for project and survey promotion.
  - A community lunch and survey event at the Seniors Centre for supported survey completion and respondent appreciation.
  - A community conversation event to facilitate older adult feedback in a small-group discussion setting.
  - A fourth community event - the revival of the annual Seniors Fall Fair - was organized by the Age-Friendly Committee and supported by the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project to further promote the project and launch the Age-Friendly Service Guide brochure micro-project.
  - A final community event (or events) will be held at the time of project completion to distribute the report and celebrate the Age-Friendly Community Plan Update and Modernization Project with residents.
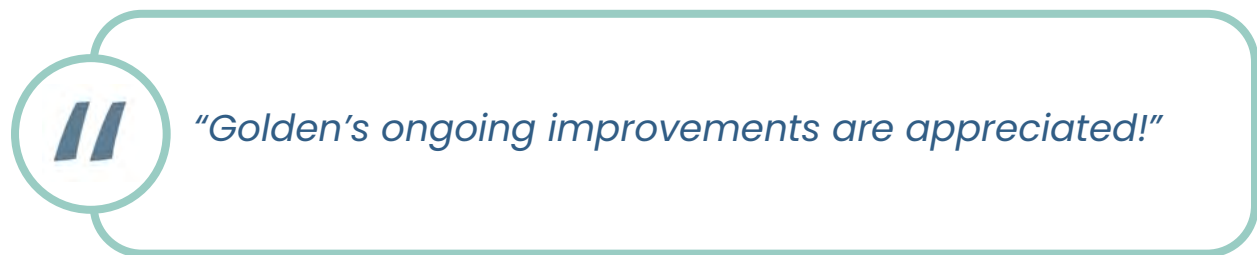
The extensive engagement process undertaken for this project reflects the strong community spirit that defines Golden and Area A. By combining surveys, events, focus groups, interviews, and committee collaboration, the project team gathered a diverse range of perspectives that have directly shaped the priorities and recommendations of this plan. The commitment of residents, particularly older adults and community volunteers, demonstrates the value placed on creating a community where everyone can age safely, comfortably, and with dignity. The insights gained through this process not only inform the Age-Friendly Community Plan but also strengthen the foundation for continued collaboration, ensuring that community voices remain central to all future age-friendly initiatives.

The results of community feedback revealed that the top three priorities of age-friendly initiatives, meaning those areas that residents feel require the most improvement, have not changed since 2014. The new addition of emergency services and preparedness registered as the fourth priority, displacing the importance of previous priorities outlined in 2014. The two lowest priority areas, respect and social Inclusion, as well as civic participation and employment, have remained the same.

Table: Age-Friendly Priorities

	2025	**2014**
1	Community Support and Health Services	Community Support and Health Services
2	Housing	Housing
3	Transportation	Transportation
4	Emergency Services and Preparedness	Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings
5	Communication and Information	Social Participation
6	Social Participation	Communication and Information
7	Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings	Respect and Social Inclusion
8	Respect and Social Inclusion	Civic Participation and Employment
9	Civic Participation and Employment	N/A

Together with local stakeholders, policymakers, and community members, this plan sets out realistic goals to build on our progress toward an age-friendly community where older adults, seniors, and elders can thrive. Each of the nine domains of an age-friendly community was thoroughly investigated and inventoried, identifying strengths, gaps, and guidance to support healthy aging in our rural context. Recommendations come from community feedback and the Age-Friendly Advisory Committee and are not exhaustive; however, they do provide a solid foundation and practical set of objectives for the future of age-friendliness in Golden and Area A.

"Golden's ongoing improvements are appreciated!"

COMMUNITY PROFILE

GOLDEN AND AREA A SYNERGY

The Town of Golden is a small, growing mountain town with a strong foundation in outdoor recreation and resource industries, surrounded by spectacular natural landscapes. It offers a vibrant lifestyle and is actively working to plan for accessible, inclusive growth. Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Electoral Area A is an interlinked large rural electoral area surrounding Golden, offering a low-density, nature-rich lifestyle. While both the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A have seen population growth, the rate of increase in Area A has outpaced that of the town, reflecting increased interest in rural living within the surrounding area.

The Town of Golden and CSRD Area A share a unique and deeply connected relationship that strengthens the region as a whole. While distinct in governance and geography, the two communities function together as one cohesive social and economic area. Residents of Area A rely on Golden as their primary hub for services, healthcare, education, shopping, and recreation, while the town benefits from the contributions, resources, and volunteerism of rural residents. This interdependence fosters a sense of shared identity and mutual support, with both communities contributing to the vibrancy, resilience, and character of the region. The synergy between Golden and Area A underscores the importance of collaborative planning and coordinated decision-making to ensure that age-friendly initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and community programs benefit all residents, whether they live in town or throughout the surrounding rural landscape. Strengthening this synergy will be essential for advancing age-friendly goals and maintaining a unified vision for the well-being of all community members.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

An Age-Friendly Community recognition contributes to the improved wellness of older adults by providing local government, organizations, and residents with the tools, resources, and support they need to keep aging populations engaged, active, independent, and healthy.

On June 10, 2015, the Town of Golden was recognized as an Age-Friendly Community, a designation it achieved after the Age-Friendly Community Plan completion in 2014 and formation of the Age-Friendly Committee. This recognition reflects the community's early commitment to supporting older adults through inclusive planning, collaboration, and proactive policy development. Since that time, the Age-Friendly Committee has continued to meet monthly at the Seniors Centre to serve as a platform for dialogue, coordination, and community engagement, helping to identify local priorities and support projects that enhance accessibility, inclusion, and quality of life. The Age-Friendly Committee is open to anyone interested in furthering the services and programs for older adults in Golden and Area A.

The Age-Friendly Community Plan Update and Modernization Project's purpose is to take stock on age-friendly initiatives since 2014 and to engage with the community to reassess current needs, satisfaction, and priorities. The renewal of this plan builds upon the foundation, reaffirming Golden and Area A's long-standing dedication to creating a community where residents of all ages can live, participate, and thrive. This updated plan represents an evolution of the original effort, reflecting the changing needs, demographics, and priorities. Since the initial recognition, the community has grown and adapted, with new challenges emerging in areas such as housing, healthcare access, transportation, and volunteer capacity. The renewed plan integrates current demographic and health data, expanded rural perspectives, and extensive community engagement to ensure that the vision of age-friendliness remains relevant and actionable. It also strengthens the connection between planning and implementation, building on the solid groundwork laid by the original plan, while charting a path forward that is both inclusive and sustainable.

As Golden and CSRD Area A look to the future, this renewed focus on age-friendliness provides an opportunity to strengthen the foundations laid over the past decade while embracing new insights and priorities. Building on the community's history of collaboration, the following sections explore the geographic setting, demographic composition, and community health profile that shape local life and influence age-friendly planning. Together, these components provide a clearer understanding of the community's strengths and challenges, guiding future actions to ensure Golden and Area A remain safe, connected, and supportive places for residents to age well.

> *Golden was a great place to grow up, and it's a great place to grow old. Nothing stops me! I still dance with my walker.*
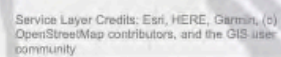
GEOGRAHY

Golden and CSRD Electoral Area A are situated in the southeastern interior of British Columbia, nestled within a landscape of mountains, rivers, and forests that define the region's natural beauty and character. The Town of Golden serves as the primary service hub, offering residential, commercial, and recreational amenities, while the surrounding rural communities of Area A are characterized by low-density settlement, agricultural lands, and expansive natural terrain. The geography of the region shapes daily life by influencing transportation, access to services, housing patterns, and recreational opportunities. Understanding the physical context of both town and the wider regional district is essential for planning an age-friendly community that is accessible, safe, and connected across diverse landscapes and settlement types.

The region's mountainous terrain, dispersed rural settlements, and long distances between services present unique challenges for older adults, particularly in areas such as transportation, access to healthcare, and participation in social and recreational activities. At the same time, Golden and Area A's abundant natural spaces, trails, parks, and scenic landscapes provide significant opportunities for physical activity, outdoor recreation, and connection to nature, which are important for health and well-being. Recognizing the interplay between geography and community infrastructure allows planners and community groups to design age-friendly initiatives that address barriers while leveraging local assets, ensuring that residents of all ages can live, move, and participate safely and fully throughout the region.

TOWN OF GOLDEN

Situated in the Rocky Mountain Trench bordered by the Rocky Mountains to the east and the Columbia Mountains (Purcell and Selkirk ranges) to the west, the Town of Golden lies at the confluence of the Columbia River and the Kicking Horse River. Golden is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Ktunaxa and Secwepemc peoples, and is the chosen home of the Metis Nation Columbia River Society and other diverse Indigenous peoples. Incorporated on June 26, 1957, much of the town's history is tied into the CPR and the logging industry. The town's economy remains strongly tied to these influences, with tourism established as a cornerstone of year-round economic activity. Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, along with a variety of outdoor recreation and adventure attractions and experiences, have designated Golden as a Resort Municipality. The town's boundary is a total of 11.33 km2 at an elevation of 800 m.
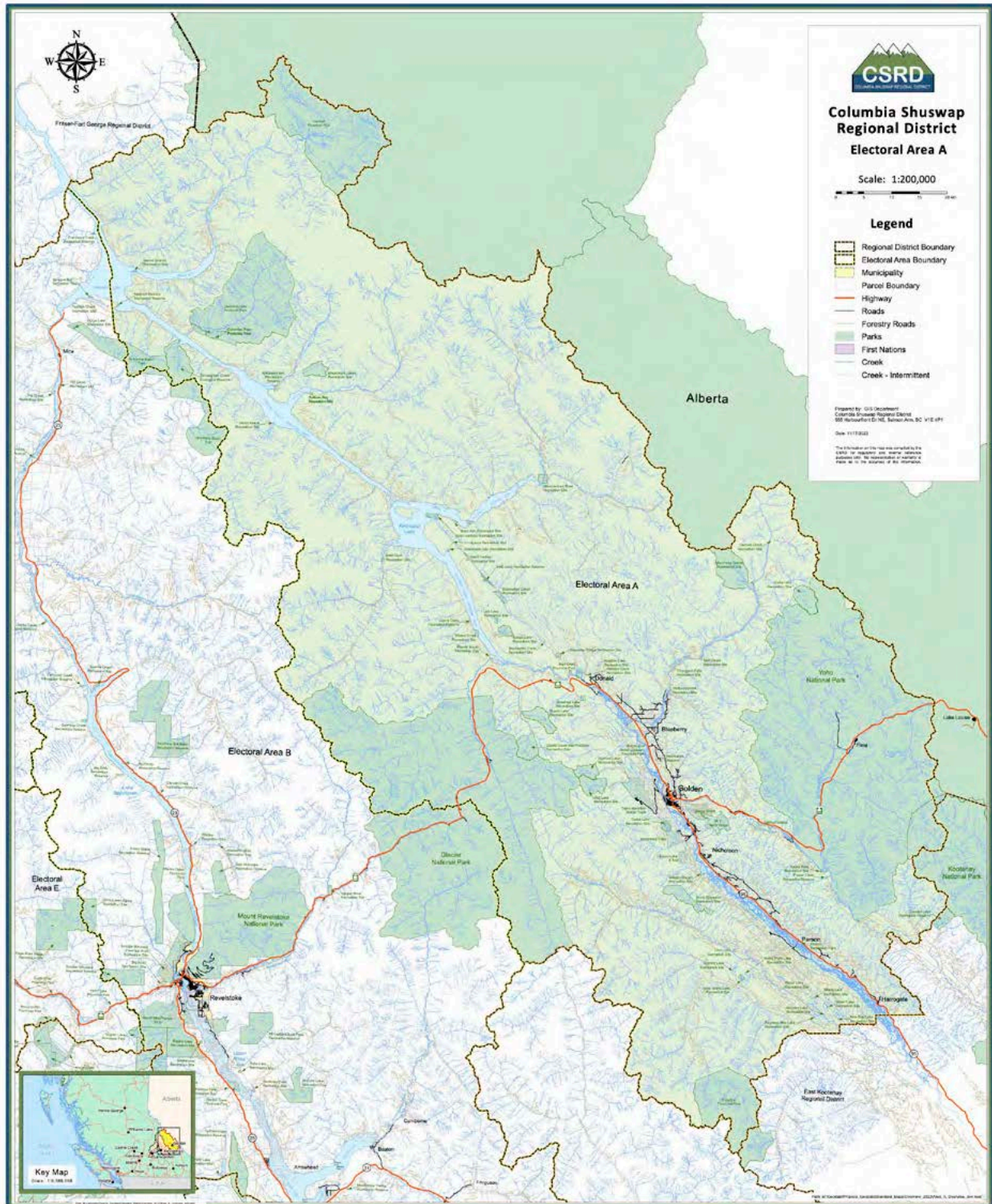
Town of Golden Boundary

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*Any area shown on this map that is outside the Town of Golden boundary lies in the CSRD (Columbia Shuswap Regional District).

TOWN OF
GOLDEN
Kicking Horse Country

Service Layer Credits: Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community

COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREA A

Area A is the rural area surrounding the Town of Golden and includes the unincorporated communities of Parson, Nicholson, Donald, Blaeberry, and Field. The area is 13,435 km2 spanning the Rogers Pass, extending to the Alberta border near Lake Louse, and adjoining the East Kootenay Regional District along Highway 95.

- Field: The community of Field is situated in the Kicking Horse River Valley and is centrally located in the Yoho National Park. Established in the 1880s as a railway siding, it grew into a small residential community characterized by historic buildings, small streets, and a beautiful mountain setting. Because Field is located within the Yoho National Park, it falls under federal jurisdiction for many matters and Parks Canada is responsible for community planning, land management, and municipal services. The Lake Louise, Yoho, and Kootenay (LLYK) Field Unit manages the day-to-day administration of the Yoho National Park and its communities.

- Blaeberry: This area is known for its stunning mountain scenery and the glacial-fed Blaeberry River, which is a 60 km long tributary of the Columbia River. A destination for year-round outdoor recreation, it offers opportunities for fishing, paddling, and hiking. Thompson Falls is a highlight where the Blaeberry River enters a gorge through a narrow funnel.

- Donald: Established in the 1880s, Donald was the terminus for CP Rail service and by 1897 had a population of 400-500 residents. In 1897, however, CP moved its offices to Golden and workshops to Revelstoke. Highway building revived the community in the 1930s. Today, Donald is a small community situated close to the Marl Creek Provincial Park with many redevelopment projects underway.

- Nicholson: Nicholson is a small community just south of Golden along Highway 95 with local services including the Nicholson Fire Department and Nicholson Elementary School which provides grades K-7 for just under 100 students. Nestled along the banks of the Columbia River, this area is another community perfect for outdoor enthusiasts.

- Parson: The community of Parson boasts a community hall for events that was rehabilitated in the 2010s, as well as the Parson Community Recreation Park which facilitates many recreational activities such as baseball and skating, as well as a covered picnic area space for community gatherings. The Columbia Valley Elementary School permanently closed in 2002 and ownership is being transferred to the Shuswap Band to give the building a new purpose to serve the community.

Columbia Shuswap Regional District
Electoral Area A

Scale: 1:200,000

Legend

Regional District Boundary
Electoral Area Boundary
Municipality
Parcel Boundary
Highway
Roads
Forestry Roads
Parks
First Nations
Creek
Creek - Intermittent

Alberta

Electoral Area A

Electoral Area B

Electoral Area E

Key Map

DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the demographic composition of Golden and CSRD Area A provides essential context for age-friendly community planning. Population trends, age distribution, and household characteristics help identify the current and future needs of residents, particularly older adults. This section presents data from Statistics Canada, BC Stats, State of the Basin, and other available sources to illustrate the community's population structure, including population pyramids and projections for growth and aging. By examining these trends, the community can better anticipate changes in demand for housing, transportation, health services, and social supports, ensuring that planning and resource allocation remain responsive and sustainable in the years ahead.

POPULATION

The most recent census data from Stats Canada is from 2021, with the next update in 2026. Based on 2021's data:

- The total population in Golden was 3,986 and in Area A was 3,325.
- The combined population of Golden and Area A for residents over age 55 is 2,285 and for residents over age 65 is 1,210.
- For the age 55+ cohort, Golden has 1,040 residents in this age group and Area A has 1,245.
- For seniors aged 65+, Golden has 565 residents in this age group and Area A has 645.
- There are more older adult residents in Area A than in the Town of Golden, despite the larger population total in town.
- The average age in Golden is 40.4 and in Area A is 44.3.

Table: Population Totals

Geography	2011	2016	2021	Percent Change
Golden	2,701	3,708	3,986	7.7%
CSRD Area A	3,065	3,148	3,325	8.5%
Columbia Shuswap	50,512	51,366	57,021	12.9%
British Columbia	4,400,057	4,648,055	5,000,879	13.7%

POPULATION PYRAMIDS

Population pyramids developed by State of the Basin for both the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A illustrate the age and gender structure of residents by five-year cohorts, highlighting the population breakdown for the 2021 Census. This data provides important context for the Age-Friendly Community Plan, helping to inform planning and decision-making based on the community's demographic composition.
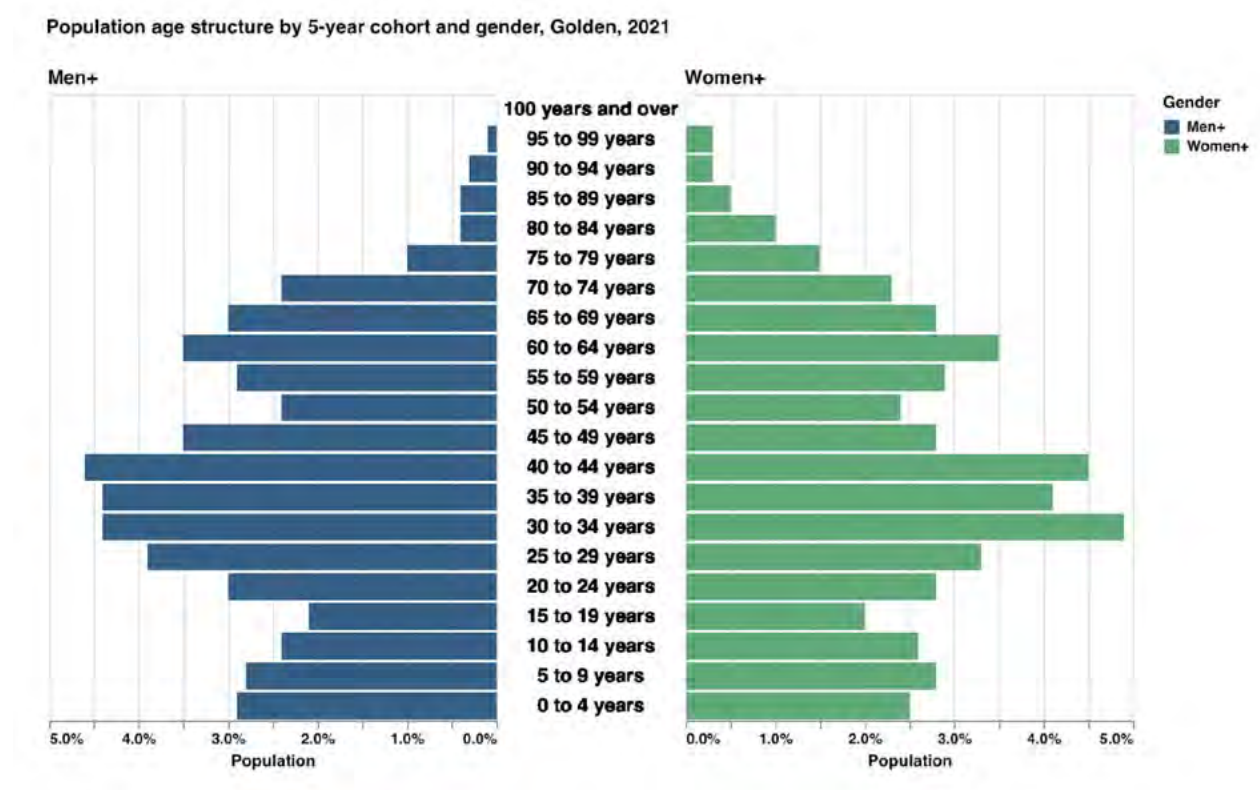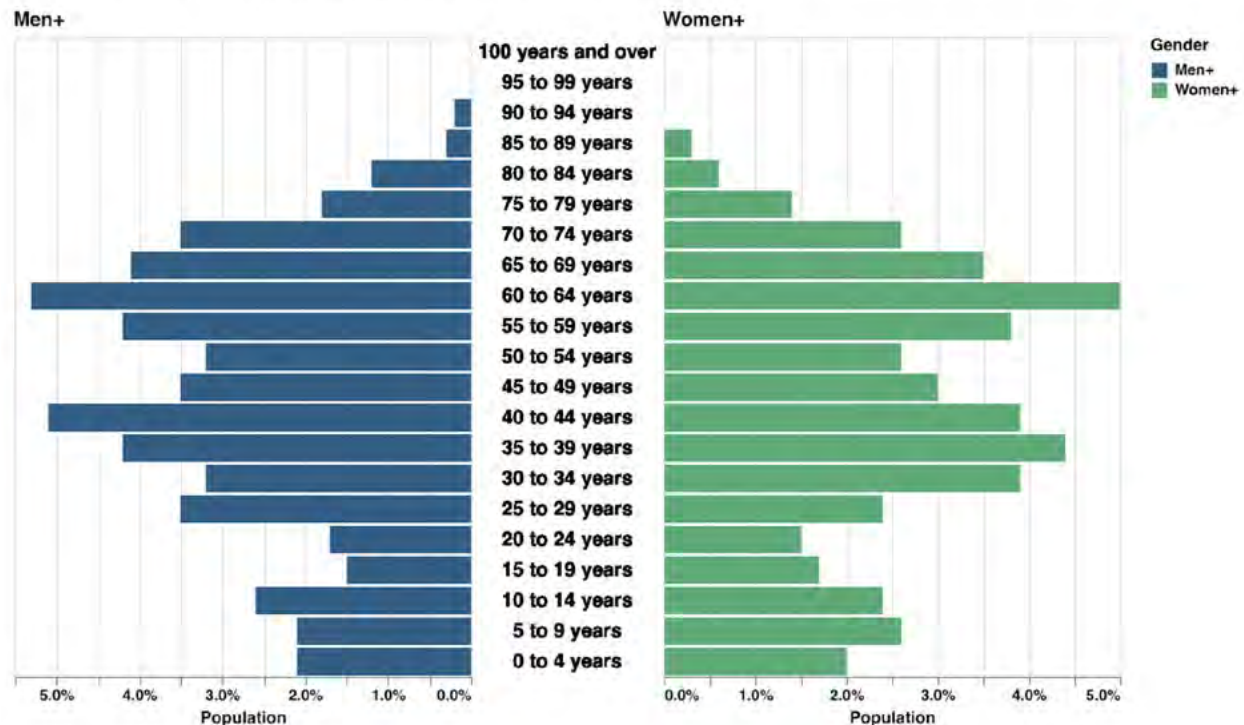
Figure: Golden Population Pyramid

Population age structure by 5-year cohort and gender, Golden, 2021

Figure: CSRD Area A Population Pyramid

Population age structure by 5-year cohort and gender, Columbia Shuswap A, 2021

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are available for each local health area within the Columbia Basin Region. CSRD Area A and the Town of Golden are covered by the Golden Local Health Area. BC Stats provides five-year estimates through to 2045. This data provides important context for the Age-Friendly Community Plan, as it helps identify current and future needs for housing, health services, recreation, and social supports that align with the demographic realities of the population.

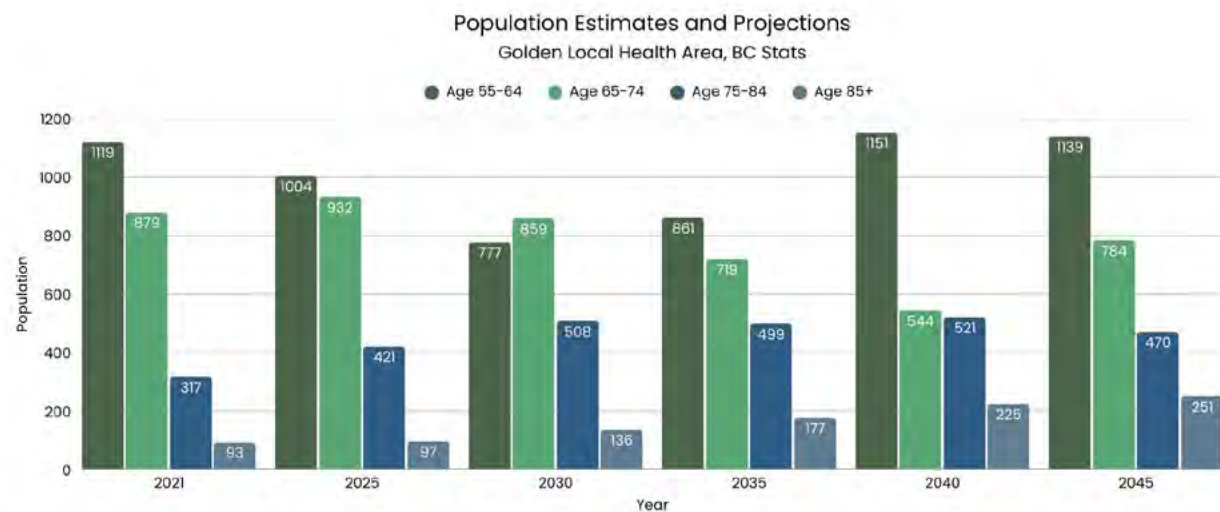The projected population change between 2021 (the most recent Census data) and 2041 for the Golden Local Health Authority shows an overall growth trend of 5.6%, in comparison to the projected population change over the same time period for the Province of BC which shows a growth of 26.1%.

Table: Projected Population Change

Local Health Area	2021–2041
Golden	5.6%
British Columbia	26.1%

The following graph shows five-year estimates for the older adult age cohorts in the Golden Local Health Authority. In many communities, there can be a significant increase noted in the projected population for the age 85+ cohort. Based on the data for the Golden Local Health Area, while this increase is still present, it is not as significant as observed in other communities. However, the age 85+ cohort experiences a steady increase, whereas the other age cohorts fluctuate.[2]

Table: Population Estimates and Projections for Residents Age 55+

Population Estimates and Projections
Golden Local Health Area, BC Stats

● Age 55-64   ● Age 65-74   ● Age 75-84   ● Age 85+

[2] *State of the Basin and BC Stats*

HEALTH PROFILE

A comprehensive understanding of community health is essential for planning an age-friendly environment that supports the well-being of all residents. This section draws on data from Interior Health's local health area profile for Golden and surrounding communities, as well as the Golden & District Hospital facility profile, to provide an overview of health status, services, and resources available locally. Information includes population health indicators, access to primary and acute care, and service capacity at the hospital and associated health facilities. By examining this data, the community can better identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities in health care and wellness supports, ensuring that older adults have equitable access to the care, prevention, and community health services needed to live safely and independently.
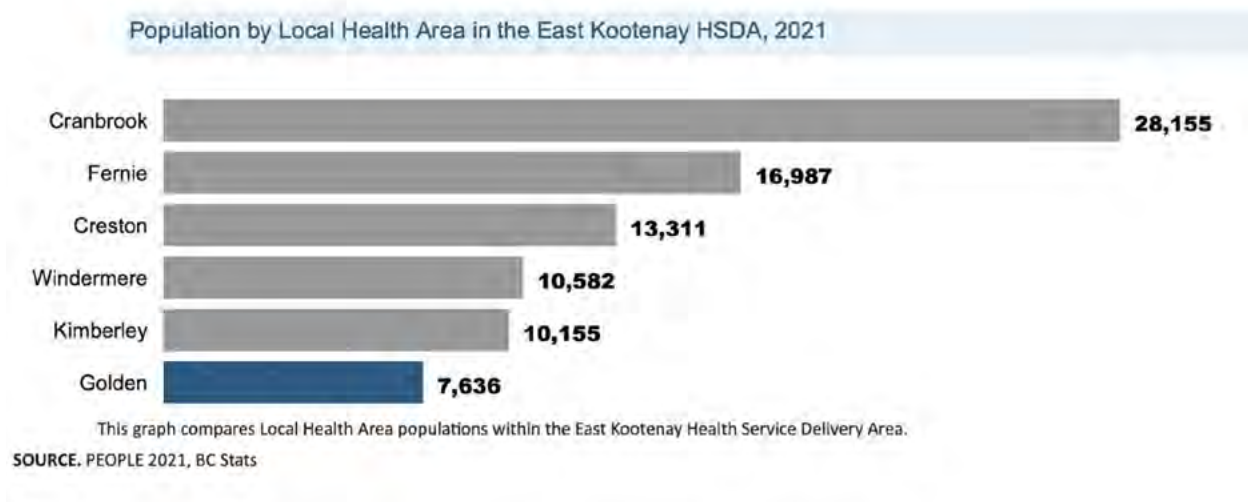
LOCAL HEALTH AREA PROFILE

Local health area information is crucial for age-friendly planning because it provides a data-driven foundation to identify specific needs, target interventions, and measure progress. It helps communities understand local demographics, health-related challenges, and gaps in services, which is essential for creating effective policies and projects that promote health and well-being for older adults. This local data enables communities to create tailored environments that support active aging, such as improving transportation and housing, and ultimately improves the quality of life for all residents.

Local health area profiles are created by the Interior Health Data and Analytics Services Department. The last update was in 2021 and offers statistics and information about population health, health and social status, acute care, home and community care, mental health and substance use, and health characteristics for each of the five local health areas under Interior Health's jurisdiction. The Golden Health Area serves a total of 7,636 residents in an area of 13,347 km2.

According to Golden's Local Health Area profile, the population growth rate over the years 2021 to 2026 is increasing at a rate of:
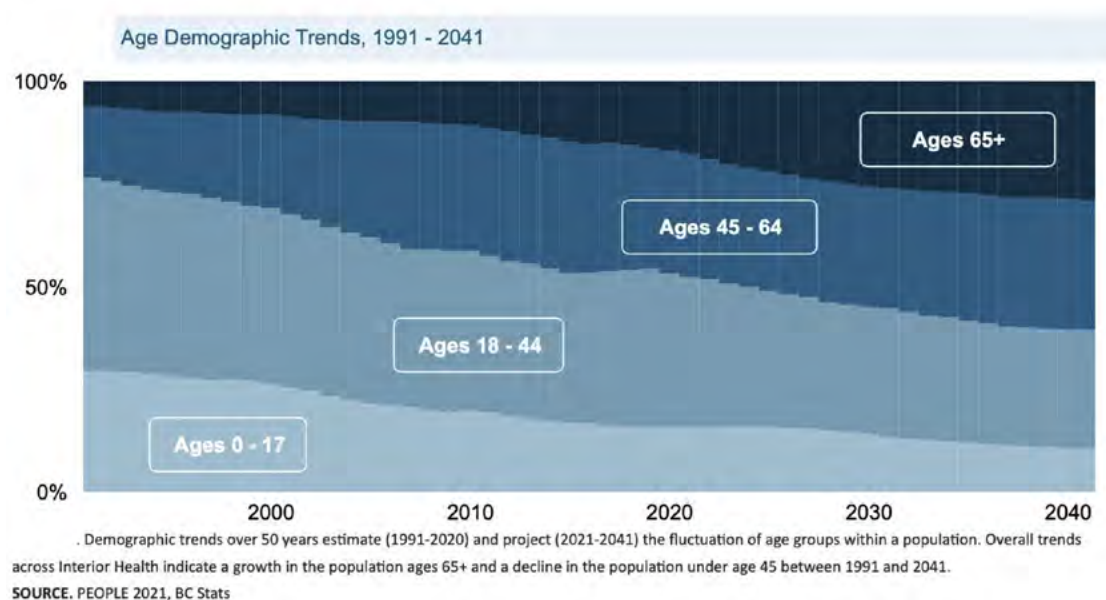
- 2.8% for all ages
- 34% for ages 65+
- 40% for ages 70+
- 40% for ages 85+

Figure: Population by Local Health Area

Population by Local Health Area in the East Kootenay HSDA, 2021

Local Health Area	Population
Cranbrook	28,155
Fernie	16,987
Creston	13,311
Windermere	10,582
Kimberley	10,155
Golden	7,636

This graph compares Local Health Area populations within the East Kootenay Health Service Delivery Area.

SOURCE. PEOPLE 2021, BC Stats

Population demographic trends, such as the following 50-year estimate (1991-2020) and projection (2021-2041), comes from the Population Extrapolation of Organizational Planning with Less Error (PEOPLE) provided by BC Stats and includes estimates of past populations as well as projections of future populations based on migration, employment, and growth trends. Overall, across Interior Health, these trends speak to growth in the age 65+ population and decrease in the age 0-45 population.

Figure: Age Demographic Trends

Age Demographic Trends, 1991 - 2041

Ages 65+

Ages 45 - 64

Ages 18 - 44

Ages 0 - 17

. Demographic trends over 50 years estimate (1991-2020) and project (2021-2041) the fluctuation of age groups within a population. Overall trends across Interior Health indicate a growth in the population ages 65+ and a decline in the population under age 45 between 1991 and 2041.

SOURCE. PEOPLE 2021, BC Stats
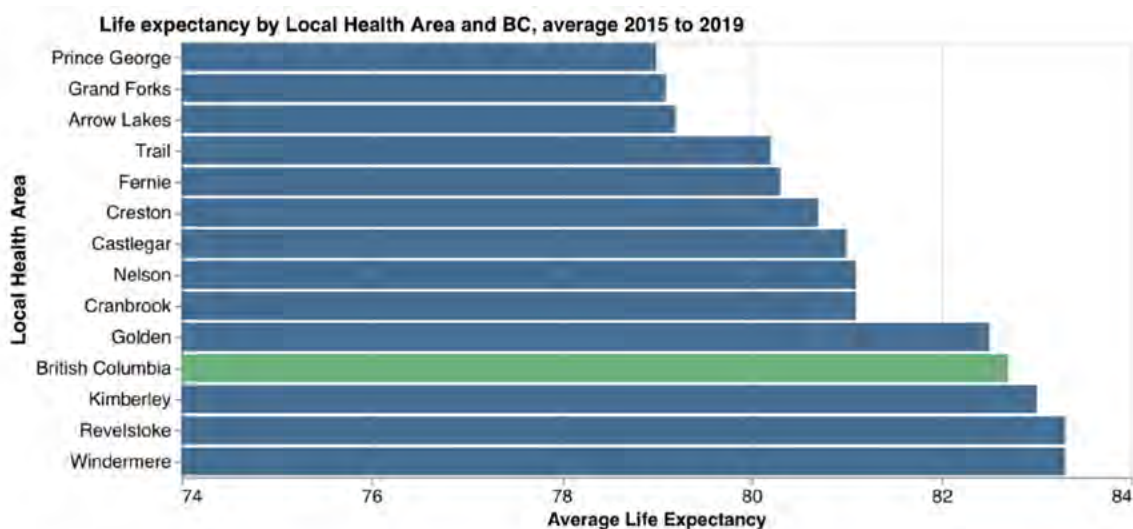
Life expectancy measures the lifespan from birth for persons residing in a particular health region and speaks to a community's overall health, mortality levels, and quality of life. As of 2020, the average life expectancy for the Golden LHA is as follows:

- Female 84 (BC average 86)
- Male 80 (BC average 80)
- Average 82 (BC average 83)

Figure: Life expectancy by Local Health Area and BC

Life expectancy by Local Health Area and BC, average 2015 to 2019

Interior Health's Home and Community Care offers a variety of at-home services to people with acute, chronic, palliative, or rehabilitative care needs and supports the philosophy that aging at home with the appropriate supports is the best place to recover from illness and injury, manage chronic conditions, and live out final days. The following information represents the number of clients, visits, and days of Home and Community Care per 1,000 population. The results should be read with consideration of the COVID19 pandemic response in 2020/2021 (i.e. no Adult Day Care services).

Table: Home & Community Care Quick Stats

Home & Community Care Quick Stats, 2018/19 - 2020/21

Per 1,000 Population

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Case Managed Clients	9	8	8
Case Managed Visits	33	31	31
Community Rehab Clients	9	7	10
Community Rehab Visits	26	20	31
Home Care Nursing Clients	23	22	28
Home Care Nursing Visits	237	201	218

Per 1,000 Population, Ages 75+

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Adult Day Service Clients	25	22	0
Adult Day Service Days	608	1,105	0
Assisted Living Clients	25	20	20
Assisted Living Days	7,111	6,442	5,422
Home Support Clients	135	125	127
Home Support Hours	12,148	11,176	11,110
Long-term Care Days	23,502	19,670	17,245

Home & Community Care measures are based on the number of clients, visits, and days utilized per 1,000 population. Long-term care days include convalescent, respite, end of life, and complex care. Home support rates include long-term, short-term, and end of life care.
SOURCE. HCC Universe | PEOPLE 2021, BC Stats

GOLDEN AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL FACILITY PROFILE

The Golden and District Hospital facility profile, last completed in 2023/2024, offers information about services provided at the hospital. According to this report, there were eight inpatient beds funded and in operation, with 46% of inpatients aged 65+ years. The conditions that accounted for the most inpatient days, including alternate level of care (ALC) days, are:

- 347 days for ALC, awaiting placement
- 162 days for dementia
- 143 days for general symptoms
- 98 days for palliative care
- 94 days for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- 89 days for organic mental disorder
- 81 days for neoplasm of the respiratory system

Alternate level of care days are of particular significance as they represent the amount of days patients are "stuck" in a holding pattern, where they no longer require hospital-level care but are not safe for discharge home, and therefore require an alternate level of care. A high number of ALC days indicates a need for increased capacity of home support, assisted living, rehabilitation, and/or long-term care. Of 2,310 total inpatient days at Golden and District Hospital, 482 were for alternate level of care days, accounting for 21% of all inpatient days.

In terms of outpatient visits for surgical or emergency services:

- Of 1,150 total surgical day care procedures, 28% of these cases were for patients aged 65+ years.
- Of 8,164 Emergency Department visits, 19% of those were for patients aged 65+ years.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement has been a central component in the development of the Age-Friendly Community Plan for Golden and CSRD Area A. Gathering input from older adults, caregivers, service providers, and local organizations ensured that the plan reflects the lived experiences, needs, and aspirations of the community. Through a combination of surveys, interactive events, and conversations, residents were able to share their perspectives on what makes the community age-friendly, identify challenges, and highlight local strengths and resources.

Engagement activities included a table at the farmers market, a community lunch and survey event, a community conversation event, and participation in the Seniors Fall Fair, all designed to provide multiple opportunities for residents to contribute in ways that suited their interests and availability. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by residents in rural Area A, additional outreach efforts were undertaken to ensure their voices were sought out and included. These efforts included targeted invitations, a focus group in Field, offering transportation to attend events, and flexible opportunities for input to account for travel distances and other barriers. This approach ensured that the perspectives of both town and rural residents were represented in shaping the plan. These initiatives not only informed the plan but also strengthened community connections and fostered a sense of shared ownership over age-friendly priorities.

In addition to four community events, the engagement process included eight focus groups; six project advisory committee meetings; attendance at 14 relevant events, meetings, and workshops; and 22 one-on-one or small group interviews with residents, service providers, and community leaders. These sessions provided opportunities for deeper discussion, exploration of emerging themes, and clarification of specific age-friendly needs and priorities. Collectively, these methods ensured a comprehensive understanding of the community's strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to aging in place and social inclusion.

Looking ahead, a future project launch event (or events) will celebrate the completion of the Age-Friendly Community Plan and formally introduce the project to the broader community of the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A. This project launch will provide an opportunity to recognize the contributions of participants, highlight key findings and recommendations, and inspire continued engagement and action toward building a community that supports residents of all ages. By embedding engagement as a continuous process, the plan encourages ongoing dialogue and ensures that the community remains actively involved in shaping age-friendly initiatives over time.

To provide a clear picture of how engagement informed the plan, the following sections break down the specific activities and methods used to gather community input. These include the community survey, which collected quantitative and qualitative feedback from older adults; the community lunch and survey event, which offered an interactive opportunity to share perspectives and facilitate survey completion; the community conversation event, which facilitated in-depth dialogue on priorities and challenges; and participation in the Seniors Fall Fair, where informal feedback was gathered and further connections were made. Each of these activities contributed to unique insights, ensuring that the voices of both town residents and those from rural areas were represented.

> *"As a person that is in good health, socially connected, and financially comfortable, Golden is a fantastic place to live. If one of those three is missing, then I suspect that there are challenges. This survey is making me realize my privilege."*
>
> *"I am just beginning to have problems with mobility but have a husband who can help out as needed. At this time, Golden is a very good place for me to live – I love the friendliness and activities. I do think about how I will be able to age in place here, hopefully staying in my own home as long as possible. Thank you for the survey!"*
>
> *"This survey has let me know that I'm not informed about the capacity of Golden to meet my needs as I age, and I ask myself, 'should I move to a larger community with more services to care for an older me?' I'm unsure where to look to increase my awareness of Golden's capabilities to meet my future age-related needs."*
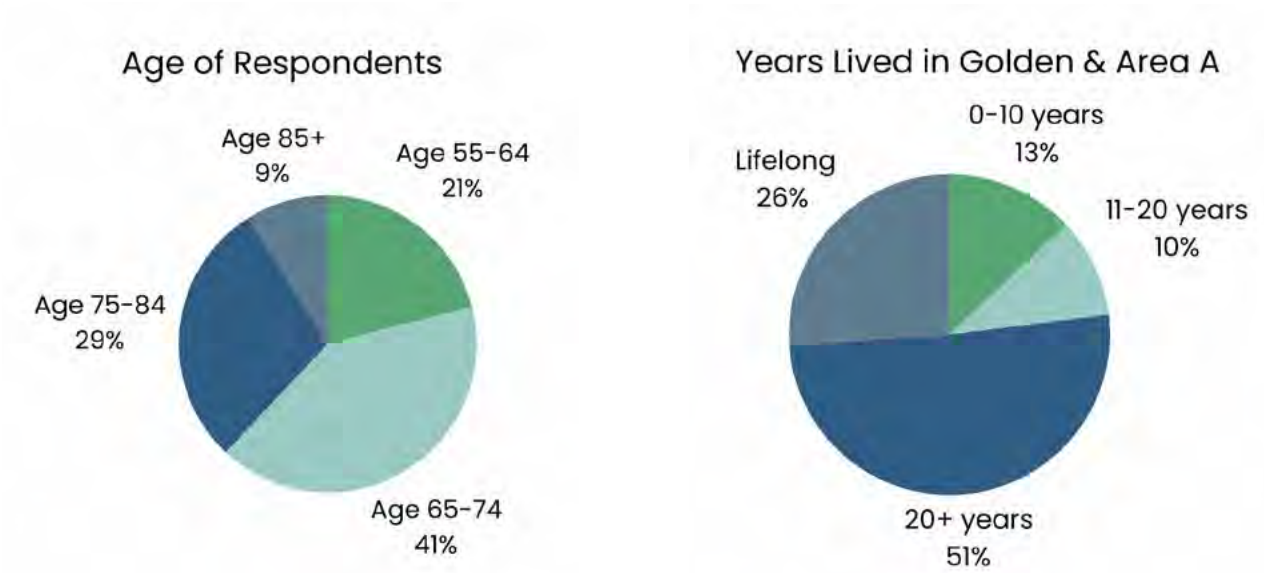
AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Age-Friendly Community Survey served as a key tool for gathering broad input from older adult residents across Golden and CSRD Area A. Designed to be accessible both online and in paper format, the survey collected feedback on local services, accessibility, social inclusion, and priorities across the nine domains of age-friendliness. Responses provided valuable insight into the lived experiences of older adults, highlighting both strengths and barriers in daily life. The survey also helped identify areas where community resources and infrastructure could better support aging in place, ensuring that future planning is grounded in the perspectives of those most directly impacted.

The Age-Friendly Community Plan Survey for older adults aged 55+ living in Golden and Area A was launched from July 17, 2025 to September 2, 2025 for a total of seven weeks. A total of 239 responses were received, including 91 hardcopies and 148 online. Based on 2021 population data for residents aged 55+ of 1,040 living in Golden and 1,245 living in Area A for a total of 2,284 residents, the survey represents approximately 10.5% of this population cohort.

The survey was promoted extensively to foster equitable participation. These activities included but were not limited to:

- Wide distribution and facilitation of survey completion with the help of survey engagement partners including Better at Home staff and volunteers, BCEHS community paramedic, Seniors Centre, Town Hall, Food Bank, Library, Medical Clinic, Metis Nation Columbia River Society, Golden Family Pharmacy, Museum, Hearing Loss Clinic, and Golden Dollar Store.
- Weekly posts to social media pages and local groups.
- Posters on bulletin boards and in business windows, with 30 distributed in town and Area A at locations frequented by older adults.
- Word of mouth distribution with the assistance of the Age-Friendly Committee and CSRD Area A Regional Director's email list.
- Newsletters such as Eat Pure Mountain Market and Local Food Matters.
- A newspaper article on August 4, 2025 in the Golden Star.
- Promotion on websites including the Town of Golden and Golden Community Economic Development.
- A Golden Farmers Market table on August 6, 2025.
- A survey and lunch community event at the Seniors Centre on August 13, 2025.

Out of 239 survey responses, 73% were from women and 27% were from men, despite targeted efforts to seek out a larger representation of male voices. A total of 77% of respondents have lived in Golden and Area A for more than 21 years and 84% plan on spending the rest of their lives here.

Age of Respondents

- Age 85+ 9%
- Age 55-64 21%
- Age 75-84 29%
- Age 65-74 41%

Years Lived in Golden & Area A

- Lifelong 26%
- 0-10 years 13%
- 11-20 years 10%
- 20+ years 51%

A total of 87% of respondents own their own home, 11% rent their home, and 3% have an alternate living situation such as independent seniors housing, long-term care, or living with family.

While 93% say that their income is adequate to meet their basic needs on a monthly basis, 25% describe that their income is not adequate to provide for more than their basic needs on a monthly basis.

When asked to rate agreement with the age friendly statement "Overall, Golden and Area A is a great community to be an older adult," 5% strongly agree, 57% agree, 21% were neutral, 14% disagree, and 3% strongly disagree.

The insights gained through the Age-Friendly Community Survey provided a strong foundation for future engagement, helping identify key priorities, challenges, and areas for deeper discussion. Building on these survey results, a series of community events offered opportunities for residents to explore these topics in more detail, share personal experiences, and provide feedback in an interactive setting. The events complemented the survey by capturing rich qualitative insights, fostering connections, and encouraging participation from a wider segment of the community. In-depth results from the survey will be explored further in each of the nine age-friendly domains sections of this report, providing context and supporting evidence for the findings, themes, and recommendations presented throughout the plan.

Age-Friendly Community Plan
SURVEY SUMMARY

Exploring Nine Domains of Age-Friendliness in Golden and Area A

DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 239 residents age 55+ completed the survey. Key learnings: 77% have lived here for 21+ years and 84% plan on staying. 87% own their home, with 72% of those being a single detached house. 19% spend more than 30% of their income on housing and 25% struggle to afford anything more than their basic needs. 19.5% have mobility impairment, 12% use a mobility aid, 89% drive a vehicle, and 3% are homebound.

SURVEY EVENTS

Two community events were organized for the survey:
- A table at the Farmers Market for project and survey promotion.
- A well-attended community lunch and survey event at the Seniors Centre.

Both events offered support for completion of the survey and fostered project awareness in the community

PARTNERSHIPS

By utilizing engagement partners who work with seniors in the community, as well as offering paper copy pick-up and drop-off locations frequently attended by older adults, robust and equitable participation was ensured.

62% agree this is a great community for seniors
86% get information by word of mouth
75% would like a seniors-specific directory
95% have access to technology and internet
54% require help with technology
78% travelled out of town for medical care
13% require assistance in an emergency
40% experience loneliness
56% volunteer
Spirit Square is the most popular outdoor space

MAIN CONCERNS
- Residents being placed in out-of-town care facilities (90%).
- Affordability and availability of supports to age in place (84%).
- Long-term care/assisted living affordability (81%) and availability (75%).
- Spouses being separated for different care needs (75%).

Age-Friendly Community Priorities
#1 Community Support & Health Services
#2 Housing
#3 Transportation
#4 Emergency Services and Preparedness
#5 Communication & Information
#6 Social Participation
#7 Outdoor Spaces & Public Buildings
#8 Respect & Social Inclusion
#9 Civic Participation & Employment

The Top 3 Priorities have remained the same since 2014

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings fell from 4th to 7th since 2014

Emergency Services made it to 4th place as a new domain in 2025

agefriendly@goldenced.ca

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY EVENTS

FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION OF THE AGE-FRIENDLY PROJECT AND SURVEY

In advance of the community survey and lunch event, an Age-Friendly Community Plan Project table was set up at the Golden Farmers Market on August 6, 2025. The purpose of this engagement was to connect directly with the community, raise awareness about the Age-Friendly Community Plan, and encourage participation in the survey. Residents were able to learn about the project, ask questions, and provide feedback in an informal and welcoming environment. In addition, surveys were distributed on-site and support was offered to those who required assistance completing them, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all participants. This early engagement effort helped to promote the project, increase community involvement, and lay the groundwork for the meaningful input during subsequent events.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY LUNCH AND SURVEY EVENT

The community lunch and survey event provided a welcoming social and supported environment for residents to complete the age-friendly survey while enjoying a shared meal. Held on August 13, 2025 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Seniors Centre, this event was primarily offered to residents aged 55+. The survey was offered both online and hardcopy, and also provided an opportunity to drop off completed surveys that had previously been picked up at any of our survey engagement partner locations. With helpers on hand, including extra devices and tech support for online completion, we ensured that barriers to completion were removed or minimized. A draw prize of a $50 grocery gift card was offered to participants and an honorarium was provided to the Golden Special Olympics for volunteer athletes who helped with serving refreshments and cleanup. Assistance with transportation for event attendance was offered to ensure equitable opportunity for participation.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

The community conversation event brought residents together for an in-depth discussion about the needs and priorities of older adults and caregivers in the region. Facilitated group activities and open dialogue allowed participants to reflect on what is working well in the community, as well as where improvements are most needed. The event also helped identify common themes of focus among participants such as communication, housing, transportation, and health services. The insights gained from this session played a vital role in shaping the plan's recommendations and reinforcing the importance of community collaboration in achieving age-friendly outcomes.

Held on September 24, 2025 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Seniors Centre, this event was offered to older adults, caregivers, and anyone interested in age-friendliness in Golden and Area A as an opportunity for residents to share their lived experiences, ideas, and perspectives in a small-group facilitated discussion setting to explore the domains of an age-friendly community. Anyone needing assistance with transportation to the event was offered taxi vouchers or gas gift cards, and a draw prize for a chance to win a $50 grocery gift card was offered to attendees.

Themes for discussion were focused on the nine domains of age-friendliness including:

- An ice-breaking exercise to get an idea of what was at the forefront of people's minds. Participants provided feedback of both a positive asset and a negative barrier for display on a flip chart.
- Community support and health services: Discussed local services that help older adults stay healthy and independent, as well as which services are easy to access and which are difficult.
- Housing: Discussed housing options for seniors such as downsizing, adaptations, maintenance, affordability, supportive and assisted living choices.
- Transportation: Discussed services for those who do not drive or who have mobility challenges, as well as challenges for those who do drive.
- Emergency services and preparedness: Discussed what could be improved to ensure older adults are supported in emergencies, both with preparation and carrying out evacuations.
- Communication and information: Discussed the best ways to get important information out to the older adult community and barriers to keeping people informed.
- Social participation: Discussed activities and programs available, as well as any barriers to attending.
- Outdoor spaces and public buildings: Discussed features of public spaces that make them either accessible or not accessible.
- Respect and social inclusion: Discussed ways to ensure older adults feel valued and respected, as well as ageism and social isolation.
- Civic participation and employment: Discussed opportunities for volunteering and employment, as well as what could make it easier for older adults to share their experience and skills.

SENIORS FALL FAIR

Participation in the Seniors Fall Fair provided another opportunity to reach residents in an informal and approachable setting. Held on October 25, 2025 from 11:00 to 3:00 at the Seniors Centre, the Seniors Fall Fair event was organized to spread awareness about local resources and services available to older adults, as well as provide societies and organizations an opportunity to recruit volunteers and board members. This well-attended event had vendors showcasing their services to the older adult community and offered a venue for one-on-one conversations, distribution of age-friendly information, and informal feedback collection from older adults and their families. This engagement allowed for connection with individuals who might not attend meetings or formal events, broadening the diversity of voices included in the planning process. It also helped increase awareness of the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project, provided an opportunity to launch the Age-Friendly Service Guide micro-project to the community, and encouraged pride and participation in the initiative. As with all Age-Friendly Project events, assistance with transportation for event attendance was offered to ensure equitable opportunity for participation and a draw prize for the chance to win a $50 grocery gift card was provided as an added incentive for participation and engagement.

FUTURE PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT

To celebrate the completion of the Age-Friendly Community Plan, a future launch event (or events) will be held to share the results of this work with the broader community. This will serve as both a celebration and a call to action, recognizing the efforts of residents, committee members, and partners who contributed their time and insights. It will also provide an opportunity to highlight key findings, share success stories, and outline the next steps for implementation.

Special attention will be given to ensuring meaningful participation from residents from rural Area A so that the project launch reflects the experiences and contributions of the entire region. The celebration will also include an element of volunteer appreciation, recognizing those who served the project advisory committee and consistently supported the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project through their dedication, insights, and community leadership. This launch event will reinforce the message that age-friendliness is a shared community responsibility and marks an important milestone toward a more inclusive and connected future for Golden and CSRD Area A.

THE NINE DOMAINS OF AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

THE NINE DOMAINS OF AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

The Age-Friendly Community Plan for Golden and CSRD Area A is structured around nine pillars (or domains) of age-friendliness identified by the World Health Organization (WHO), with the addition of a locally-defined domain focused on emergency services and preparedness. These domains provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the physical and social environments that influence health, participation, and security of older adults. Each domain represents a key area where policies, programs, and community design can make a meaningful difference in supporting aging in place and enhancing quality of life.

While the eight WHO domains provide an internationally recognized foundation, the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project for Golden and CSRD Area A identified a ninth domain: emergency services and preparedness. This addition reflects the community's rural and geographically isolated context, where emergency response capacity, disaster preparedness, and public safety are vital to the well-being of older adults. The experiences of the summer of 2024 during the Dogtooth wildfire and the evacuation of some Area A residents underscored the importance of coordinated emergency planning and communication systems. These events prompted a re-examination of local procedures, policies, and preparedness measures, with special attention to ensuring that vulnerable seniors are supported during times of crisis. Including this domain acknowledges the importance of strong coordination between local emergency service providers and community organizations to ensure that all residents – particularly those who may be more vulnerable – are supported before, during, and after emergencies.

Community Support and Health Services · Transportation · Communication And Information · Outdoor Spaces And Public Buildings · Civic Participation And Employment

Housing · Emergency Services And Preparedness · Social Participation · Respect And Social Inclusion

AGE-FRIENDLY DOMAINS:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings: Quality, safe, and accessible public spaces, sidewalks, buildings, and facilities that allow older adults to move around and participate in community life.

2. Transportation: Affordable, reliable, and accessible transportation options (public, private, volunteer, active transportation) that enable older adults to reach services, activities, and social opportunities.

3. Housing: Appropriate, affordable, and accessible housing options that support aging in place and meet changing needs over time.

4. Social Participation: Opportunities for older adults to engage in recreational, cultural, educational, and social activities that reduce isolation and foster inclusion.

5. Respect and Social Inclusion: A culture that values older adults, combats ageism, and ensures they are treated with dignity and included in all aspects of community life.

6. Civic Participation and Employment: Opportunities for older adults to work, volunteer, share skills, and contribute to community decision-making.

7. Communication and Information: Accessible, clear, and age-friendly methods of sharing information across multiple formats so older adults can stay informed and connected.
8. Community Support and Health Services: Accessible, affordable, and coordinated health care and community support services that help older adults maintain independence and well-being.
9. Emergency Services and Preparedness: Accessible emergency services, clear communication, and coordinated preparedness plans that recognize the unique needs of older adults to reduce risk, improve response times, and build community resilience.

The following sections summarize findings, themes, and community insights gathered throughout engagement activities, as well as local strengths, barriers, and opportunities for improvement within each domain. Together, these domains form the foundation for the plan's recommendations, guiding future efforts to build a community that is inclusive, connected, and responsive to the needs of residents at every stage of life.

Community Support and Health Services

SUMMARY

Community support and health services were identified as the most important area of age-friendliness for older adults in our rural and remote community. Unlike urban centres with abundant programs and providers, rural regions often face limited availability of specialized health professionals and fewer specialized services. Older adults may need to travel long distances to receive the care they require. Ensuring that these essential services exist locally or are brought to residents through outreach, visiting providers, or virtual care is a key component of improving this domain of age friendliness.

In age-friendly rural communities, community support and health services act as the backbone of independence, well-being, and dignity for older adults. While residents value the dedication of local providers in the Town of Golden, accessing a wide range of care remains challenging due to transportation logistics, high costs, and long travel distances to specialized services. In fact, 78% of survey respondents reported travelling outside of the community for medical care in the last 12 months, demonstrating a strong reliance on out-of-town health services. These challenges are made worse in winter months, when road safety and weather conditions create significant barriers to timely appointments and essential services. For residents of Area A, these challenges are amplified.

When residents must leave their communities for care, the burdens are multifaceted. They are not minor inconveniences; they are fundamental barriers that undermine equitable and reasonable care. The pressures of high out-of-pocket cost of travel, as well as long distances to communities such as Kelowna for cancer care, can lead to delayed or forgone care and worsening rural health disparities. A province-wide survey looking at healthcare-related travel costs for rural residents found that for one health issue, the average out-of-pocket costs total $2,234, with 78% reporting difficulty paying the costs for accessing care outside of their community and 59% expressing that travelling for care negatively affects their health.[3] Travel for care must be recognized as a core component of health planning to ensure interventions meet the realities of rural and remote communities such as ours.

Transportation is also closely tied to residents' ability to access groceries, prescriptions, and basic daily needs, which closely ties into the need for robust community support services. For those who do not drive or who live outside of town centre, the affordability and availability of delivery services are inconsistent. Seniors emphasized the need for reliable and low-cost delivery options, particularly during winter or periods of illness.

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[3] *Centre for Rural Health Research. Out-of-Pocket Costs for Rural Residents When Travelling for Health Care. July 2020.*

Community support services, such as Home and Community Care, Better at Home, and the Social Prescribing Community Connector help seniors remain in their homes and connected to others. In rural areas, these supports are even more important because isolation can be greater and family or neighbour networks may be spread far apart. Age-friendly communities prioritize coordination between agencies, clear information sharing, and flexible service delivery models that meet people where they are. When services are easy to access, seniors feel valued and supported rather than burdened by complex systems.

Another identified gap is the lack of affordable and "appetizing" pre-made meal delivery programs tailored to seniors. Many older adults want healthy ready-to-eat meals but find current options too limited. Expanding meal delivery and nutrition support would promote independence, improve health outcomes, and reduce the burden on caregivers. Strengthening transportation, delivery services, and access to affordable supports will be critical for improving community support and health services in our area.

Health services in an age-friendly rural context must also consider prevention and wellness, not just emergency or acute care. Opportunities for health education, chronic disease management, exercise, nutrition and mental well-being can reduce the demand on over-stretched health systems and improve quality of life. Partnerships between health providers, community organizations, local government, and regional health authorities are vital for creating sustainable innovative solutions that address gaps in care. Golden and Area A benefit from several key assets that enhance access to care:

- Access to a primary care physician.
- Interior Health services – including the Golden & District Hospital, acute and emergency care, diagnostic supports, home and community care, mental health services, palliative care, among others – provide a reliable network that helps residents access essential care close to home.
- Better at Home helps older adults continue living independently in their own homes by providing non-medical support services.
- A Community Paramedic provides primary care within their scope of practice such as health monitoring, promotion, and outreach.
- The East Kootenay Primary Care Network connects patients to allied health professionals.
- A Social Prescribing Community Connector refers seniors to local services and maintains a detailed resource network.

Ultimately, age-friendly community support and health services in rural areas need to be flexible, affordable, dependable, and designed with older adults in mind. By focusing on accessibility, collaboration, and local delivery, rural communities can overcome geographic challenges and ensure seniors receive the care and support they need to age safely and comfortably in place.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- Regarding the importance of the following community support and health services:
  - Knowing what local and community care services are available and how to access them was rated as important or very important to 85% of respondents.
  - The availability of home healthcare services was rated as important or very important to 75% of respondents.
  - Housekeeping, laundry, and cooking services were rated as important to 43% of respondents.
  - Pre-made meal delivery programs were rated as important to 42% of respondents.
- In terms of agreement related to the following statements:
  - 7% of respondents agree that transportation for shopping and other needs is available and affordable.
  - 9% of respondents agree that the delivery of groceries, medicine, and other needs is available and affordable.
  - 19% of respondents agree that transportation to out-of-town medical appointments is available and affordable.
- When asked how often the support of family members or close friends is required: 14% of respondents said never, 29% said rarely, 36% said sometimes, 16% said often, and 5% said always.
- Regarding out-of-town medical travel:
  - 78% of respondents had to travel outside of the community for medical care in the last 12 months.
  - 21% of respondents had missed an out-of-town medical appointment due to cost or travel logistics.

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- Better at Home
  - Friendly visiting and wellness checks.
  - Transportation to appointments within town and out of town.
  - Grocery shopping and delivery.

- ○ Prescription delivery.
- ○ Meal delivery programs.
- ○ Navigation and peer support for complex healthcare and government systems, including form completion.
- Social Prescribing Community Connector
  - ○ Refers seniors to a wide range of local services provided by community agencies. Works with participants to identify their non-medical needs and co-produce their personalized social prescription.
  - ○ Respects an individual's choice, agency, and capacity with "prescriptions" that are unique to an individual's identified social needs and personal goals. These social prescriptions can include various activities such as participating in community groups or classes, engaging in exercise sessions, joining walking groups, art classes, or exploring volunteer opportunities.
  - ○ Benefits include preventing or delaying frailty by fostering resilience and social support, enabling older adults to set and achieve wellness goals, and providing regular check-ins.
  - ○ Has a detailed resource network and provides streamlined access to a broad range of services for older adults.
- East Kootenay Primary Care Network
  - ○ Physician referral required.
  - ○ Access to allied health professionals including social worker, occupational therapist, respiratory therapist, physiotherapist, dietician, chronic disease nurse, and mental health clinician.
- Community Paramedic
  - ○ Referral from a healthcare provider (i.e. Community Connector, physician, pharmacist, social worker, etc.) required.
  - ○ A community paramedic provides primary care services within their scope of practice to increase access to basic healthcare services in non-urgent settings, in patients' homes, or in the community, and in partnership with local healthcare providers.
  - ○ Benefits include better access to healthcare for rural and remote communities, reduced 911 calls and trips to emergency departments, and guidance maneuvering through the healthcare system.
  - ○ Community paramedicine services include but are not limited to: vitals clinics, chronic disease wellness checks, home health monitoring, health promotion and education, and community outreach and awareness.

- Home and community care services help older adults remain independent by providing essential day-to-day support that promotes comfort, safety, and well-being at home.
- Golden Medical Clinic is a full service family medicine practice, presently with three new family physicians accepting new patients.
- Palliative care services in the community offer essential comfort-focused support that helps individuals and families navigate serious illness with dignity.
- Hospice services provide compassionate end-of-life care that supports individuals and their loved ones through a peaceful and well-guided transition.
- BC Transit's Columbia Valley Regional Transit Health Connection route connects Golden to Cranbrook and the East Kootenay Regional Hospital. It must be booked 24 hours in advance and travels from Golden to Invermere to Cranbrook and back on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Non-medical riders are allowed, space permitting. Presently, the pick-up and drop-off location is at the library in the Town of Golden.
- Virtual care delivered through the IH Boardroom at the Golden & District Hospital expands access to specialty services – such as oncology, nephrology, neurology, and psychiatry – without requiring travel outside the community.
- Golden & District Hospital offers visiting specialist services including internal medicine, orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery, rheumatology, and ENT, enhancing access to specialized care without long-distance travel.
- The Interior Health Dinners at Home program provides frozen meals, offering 19 entree options for $6.25 each and six soup options for $2.25 each. Order forms are available at the hospital.
- The Meal Kit program collaboration between Better at Home and Golden Food Bank offers affordable meal kits for $10 for Better at Home clients (prep required, multiple servings) with delivery.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS
- Out-of-town medical appointments can lead to significant out-of-pocket expenses for residents.
- Space constraints of Golden & District Hospital prevent offering increased services.
- Interior Health frozen meals, though affordable and available, can be perceived as unappetizing.
- Supplementary meal programs (like those delivered through Golden Food Bank and Better at Home) operate under inconsistent funding models.
- Public transportation for medical travel is limited, with no options available to communities outside of Invermere and Cranbrook.

- Specialized care generally must be accessed within British Columbia, even when Alberta services are geographically closer or align better with a patient's support network – an issue that is particularly challenging for Field residents who live nearer to Alberta facilities.
- Many healthcare positions remain unfilled, highlighting ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining staff essential for providing care within the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Local and Community-Led Recommendations

- Improve awareness of existing services and programs.
- Support funding initiatives for affordable meal kit programs offering reduced prices and kit delivery to seniors in all parts of the community.
- Increase availability of pre-made, single-portion meal options through private enterprise, culinary initiatives by community agencies, and/or instituting seniors meal delivery services.
- Improve community-informed shuttle services and patient transfer services for out-of-town medical care outside of Cranbrook.

System-Level Policy and Advocacy Recommendations

- Increase visiting specialists, virtual care services, and mobile outreach. This will help reduce distance and transportation barriers, as well as reduce the financial burden on patients.[4]
- Create medical travel assistance programs that fully remove out-of-pocket costs for rural and remote patients to access care. Support must cover all essential travel expenses including mileage or airfare, meals, accommodation and an approved travel companion. Assistance should be delivered in a timely and user-friendly way.[5]
- Broaden medical transportation and patient-transfer services. Transportation is presently only available between Golden and Cranbrook, requiring Area A residents to travel to the designated pick-up/drop-off location. Expanding non-emergency medical transportation routes that align with resident needs should be community informed and fill gaps where public options do not exist to eliminate travel barriers to care.[6]
- Expand Golden & District Hospital to increase space and improve infrastructure to support seniors. "We have outgrown our space in the current hospital and need new infrastructure to support our seniors." – Dr. Clare, Chief of Staff, Golden & District Hospital.

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[4] *BC Rural Health Network. Travel and Access to Care in Rural and Remote British Columbia. June 2025.*

[5] *BC Rural Health Network. Travel and Access to Care in Rural and Remote British Columbia. June 2025.*

[6] *BC Rural Health Network. Travel and Access to Care in Rural and Remote British Columbia. June 2025.*

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Meals on Wheels was recommended as a high priority.
- An age-friendly business program, recognizing and noting the number of age-friendly businesses, was recommended to be carried out by the Kicking Horse Chamber of Commerce.
- An older adult coordinator was recommended to provide support. This is achieved today through the Social Prescribing Community Connector role.
- An inventory of older adult programs was recommended. This is achieved today through the Golden Senior Guide. See Priority Five: Communication and Information recommendation for an update to this guide.

"Golden has good basic medical care, but the centralization of more advanced medical services means I can't age in place here. I observe the challenges faced by older friends here, having to drive them and myself out of town (especially Kelowna but also Cranbrook) for medical appointments."

"I believe our doctors and nurses are such lovely kind people and do their very best for our community."

"Golden and Area A is a great community to be an older adult as long as you have no health issues and are able to live independently."

"In the context of care, older people are known to face situations of great vulnerability, driven by the underfunding of services, ageist attitudes, lack of training, and overburdening of care professionals."
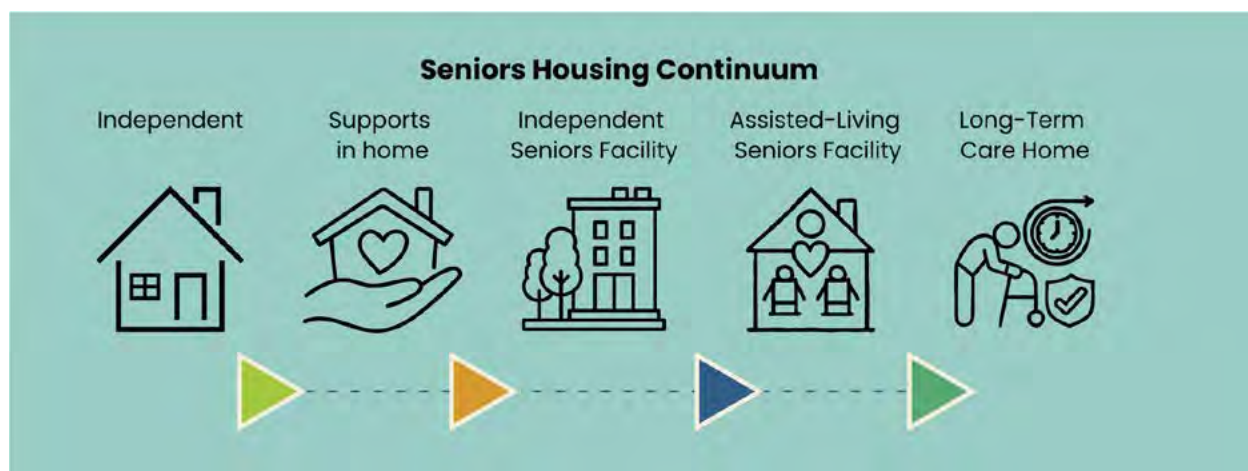
SUMMARY

Safe, affordable, and appropriate housing is essential for older adults to remain in their community as they age. In a rural setting, housing options can be limited, and the needs of seniors are diverse, ranging from those who wish to age in place in their own homes, to those who require smaller more accessible units, to those needing supported or specialized housing. An age-friendly approach to housing recognizes this diversity and seeks to ensure that seniors of all backgrounds, incomes, and abilities have choices that allow them to remain independent, connected, and safe.

Receiving appropriate and affordable help at home is key to aging in place. Data shows that home and community care services can adequately support a person with increasing care needs, allowing seniors to stay home for longer. In fact, it was quoted at a BC Community Response Network webinar on Ageism that only 7% of seniors move into long-term care. Home support services also help to ease the emotional and financial burden placed on caregivers.

Seniors housing at all stages is needed. Long-term care is at the top of the seniors housing continuum and is the most heavily subsidized and costly setting. While other forms of seniors' living offer services such as meals, housekeeping, and some personal services, they are largely inaccessible due to lack of public funding, especially for low to moderate income seniors. Creating more private and publicly-subsidized seniors' living options is a practical and cost effective option to help alleviate some of the demand for long-term care. Research shows that alternatives to long-term care often offer a better quality of life, especially for seniors with lower care needs who may find that long-term care is not a fit for their level of independence. BC data shows that up to 13% of new residents admitted into long-term care could have been cared for in the community through home support or assisted living.[7]

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[7] *Office of the Seniors Advocate BC. From Shortfall to Crisis: Growing Demand for Long-Term Care Beds in BC. July 2025.*

Seniors Housing Continuum

Independent · Supports in home · Independent Seniors Facility · Assisted-Living Seniors Facility · Long-Term Care Home

Planning for housing in our rural community means addressing unique challenges, such as distance from services, limited housing stock, and higher costs of building; and the opportunities, such as strong community networks and the potential for creative, locally driven solutions. At the same time, creating new housing options for seniors in rural communities is often slowed by broader systemic barriers. Complex government policies, funding limitations, and regulatory requirements can delay or restrict the development of housing that meets the needs of older adults. Long waitlists for existing affordable and supportive housing mean that many seniors are left without timely access to appropriate options, increasing the risk of isolation, unsafe living conditions, or the need to leave their home community. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration between all levels of government, local organizations, and community members to reduce barriers, streamline processes, and invest in innovative housing solutions tailored to rural realities.

Moving forward, the community can take more steps to influence change and support the creation of diverse and accessible housing options. Advocacy at the local and regional level is key to ensuring that rural perspectives are considered in housing policy and funding decisions. Partnerships with non-profit housing providers, private developers, and health authorities can open opportunities for creative models such as co-housing, mixed use developments, or smaller-scale supportive and adaptive housing that better fit the realities of rural areas. Pilot projects, demonstration homes, and community-led initiatives can also showcase innovative approaches and build momentum for broader investment. By combining advocacy with collaboration and local action, the community can work to shorten waitlists, expand housing choices, and create environments where seniors can age with dignity, independence, and connection.

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

At the time of the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project completion, the 2025 Golden Housing Needs Report was not published, but preliminary data from their assessment specific to older adults showed that:

- Based on current demographic trends, Golden is an aging community, shaping increasing demand for accessible and senior-friendly housing.
- There are currently 41 non-market housing units that are specifically for seniors, as well as 28 long-term care beds.
- There is a need for more assisted living and supportive housing options for seniors, particularly for seniors with complex health needs.
- Housing that includes supportive services are rarely produced through private market development, as their delivery requires active support from various levels of government such as land contributions, funding partnerships, or regulatory incentives.
- There is a gap in appropriate and affordable housing options for seniors seeking to downsize or live independently.
- Community engagement noted seniors face sizeable barriers in finding suitable and affordable market housing, supportive or otherwise, indicating insufficient support to facilitate aging in place.
- The Housing Needs Assessment is an important tool for informing the Town's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw updates. It also lays the groundwork for collaboration between government, community organizations, and the private sector to enable policy and regulatory change, advocate for funding, and support the capacity of local non-profit housing providers.

The most comprehensive data is from 2021 indicating:

- In 2021, there were 415 senior-led households in Golden (Primary Household Maintainers over 65)
  - 285 households: 65-74 years
  - 110 households: 75-84 years
  - 25 households: 85+ years
- Of those, 85 households had a mortgage and 90 were renter households.
- Area median household income (AMHI) data shows that of all senior households:
  - 155 households have an income 21-50% of AMHI
  - 110 households have an income 51-80% of AMHI
  - 60 households have an income 81-120% of AMHI
  - 90 households have an income over 120% of AMHI

Golden's 2021 Housing Needs Report outlined that the aging population, increasing housing costs, and increasing number of homes in need of repair are common patterns experienced by communities across BC. However, the Golden area has unique challenges given Golden's resort status and amenity-rich features that make it a magnet for visitors, short-stay, and transient populations.

In 2021, seniors represented 16% of the population in Golden and a deficit in assisted living or supportive housing options for seniors was identified, particularly for seniors with complex healthcare needs, indicating insufficient support to facilitate aging in place. The report also identified low-income seniors as a priority group in housing needs, outlining that although there are currently three facilities providing affordable housing for seniors in the Golden area, there can be some challenges for low-income seniors to find housing in the community.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- 87% of respondents own their own home, 77% have lived in Golden and Area A for 21+ years, and 84% are planning to stay and age in place.
- 19% of respondents pay more than 30% of their income on housing with another 13% not sure if they do or not. According to State of the Basin figures for all households, 16.5% of Town of Golden residents and 14.5% of Area A residents spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs.
- The most important housing options expressed by respondents to age in place in Golden include:
    - Independent seniors housing (79%)
    - Assisted living facility (78%)
    - Short-term residential care, i.e. post injury or illness (75%)
    - Long-term care facility (74%)
    - Small single detached homes (57%)
    - Apartments (53.74%)
- The main concerns of survey respondents included:
    - Residents being placed in out-of-town care facilities due to lack of local availability (90%)
    - Affordability of aging-in-place support services (85%)
    - Availability of aging-in-place support services (84%)
    - Long-term care/assisted living affordability (81%)
    - Long-term care/assisted living availability (75%)
    - Spouses being separated for different care needs (75%)

- The lowest satisfaction rating (i.e. those expressing dissatisfaction) for aging-in-place home services include:
  - Help installing home adaptations (12%)
  - Affordability and availability of home repairs and maintenance help (15%)
  - Yardwork and snow removal (18%)
  - Cleaning (20%)

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- Henry M. Durand Manor: This long-term care home has 28 publicly-funded beds, is operated by Interior Health, and offers 24/7 professional care. There are gathering places including a patio area, courtyard, and walking path. Each single-occupancy room has its own bathroom. All meals are provided. There are many programs, services, and amenities available including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, recreation, social work, respite services, etc. The cost of publicly subsidized long-term care is based on 80% of after-tax income with set minimum and maximum rates. In order to enter a publicly subsidized long-term care home, one must have a health care needs assessment completed by Interior Health. At the time of report completion, this facility is full and the waitlist is 3-6 months for the general population and up to 3 months for the secure units. This is calculated using the wait time of the last 10 people to be admitted to this facility, and individual wait times may vary. [8]
- Abbeyfield House: This shared living home for independent seniors is operated by Abbeyfield House Society of St. Paul's and consists of 10 studio units with a common dining room, communal living room space, laundry facility, and salon. Rent is below market value and kept affordable for most seniors. Each unit is 300 square feet with a private bathroom and shower. Residents have self-serve breakfast options and share lunch and dinner meals prepared by House cooks. Afternoon tea is provided for residents and visitors. Utilities are included and in-room cable and internet is optional for a fee. A private cleaner offers reduced-rate cleaning services for residents' rooms. Abbeyfield House has recently upgraded windows, added heat pumps in every room, installed solar panels on the roof, and replaced sidewalks to provide smooth age-friendly outdoor surfaces. At the time of report completion, this facility is full and there are approximately six people on the waitlist.
- Mountain View Apartments: This 16-unit seniors housing facility offers eight units for independent seniors and eight assisted living units. Rent is based on rent geared to income (RGI), with assisted living units at 70% of monthly income and independent

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[8] *Interior Health Long-term Care Home Wait Times. June 2025.*

units at 30% of monthly income. The independent units are operated by BC Housing and Golden Community Resource Society (GCRS), and the assisted living units are operated by Interior Health and GCRS. The assisted living units provide meal service and 24-hour care aide support, though independent residents have the option to have supper provided for $10 per meal. At the time of report completion, this facility is full. There are 10-15 people on the waitlist for the independent units. The assisted living units are filled according to Interior Health's referral criteria and the waitlist is unavailable.

- Purcell View Apartments: A one-story building providing 15 ground floor units for local and long-term senior residents with low to moderate incomes who can live independently, including five studio units and 10 one-bedroom units. This facility is operated by Golden Community Economic Development (Golden CED) with rents below market value. Utilities are not included. This facility is full and has a waitlist of 40 people at the time of report completion.

Note: Waitlists are subject to change; however, it is important to note their current numbers at the time of project completion in order to capture local seniors' housing needs.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- All levels of seniors housing options are full with waitlists.
- Waiting for appropriate housing places a significant toll on seniors, their family and caregivers, as well as emergency rooms, hospitals, and home support and community-based services.
- There is growing disparity between publicly-subsidized long-term care bed supply and bed demand, with Ministry of Health projections showing this trend increasing from a province-wide 2,044 bed shortfall in 2025, to a 7,249 bed shortfall in 2030, and to a 16,858 bed shortfall in 2035.[9]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Local and Community-Led Recommendations

- Improve awareness of providers for home maintenance, yardwork, snow removal, and cleaning services.
- Creation of a community work shed. Many residents expressed reluctance to downsize or move to seniors housing because of an unwillingness to give up access to a garage/shop/shed area, as well as their tools.

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[9] *Ministry of Health Bed Demand Forecast. March 2025.*

- A seniors "coupon book" for discounted trade services such as furnace maintenance, installation of adaptive equipment, etc.
- Seek and invite private and non-profit enterprises to create more seniors housing with a clearly defined process and identified sites and partnerships for projects.
- Create a more inviting development environment for private and non-profit enterprises to build more seniors housing. This would include streamlined processes and consistent support from local government.
- Complete the CED Downtown Housing Project to provide 27 residential units, including a mix of one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. This development addresses key gaps identified by the Housing Needs Assessment and serves the community by increasing affordable rental housing for residents, including seniors, with low to moderate incomes near community amenities and services.
- Increase options for seniors housing at all stages of need, considering all income levels, including private market options that cater to seniors with sufficient income to afford market rates and more amenities.

System-Level Policy and Advocacy Recommendations

- BC Housing National Occupancy Standard forces couples to stay in one-bedroom units. This is an advocacy point to allow couples a two-bedroom home that is more comfortable and still affordable to meet their needs.
- Provide timely access to local long-term care. The impact of not increasing the supply of long-term care beds to keep up with population growth will have a profound impact on emergency rooms, hospitals, family physician offices, seniors, and their families. Given that the most frail and vulnerable seniors live in long-term care, it is imperative that the government ensure there is a place for them to call home when and where they need it.[10]
- Increase Home and Community Care capacity and provide incentives to fill vacancies. Adequate, available, and affordable home support services are an effective alternative or can delay the need for long-term care placement, and are a more efficient use of public funds. The cost to a health authority to provide one-hour of support every day to a client is $15,000 per year compared to the cost of having that client in a long-term care bed, which is just over $100,000 per year. [11]

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[10] *Office of the Seniors Advocate BC. From Shortfall to Crisis: Growing Demand for Long-Term Care Beds in BC. July 2025.*

[11] *Office of the Seniors Advocate BC. From Shortfall to Crisis: Growing Demand for Long-Term Care Beds in BC. July 2025.*

- Maximize the potential for both home support and assisted living to bend the demand curve on long-term care and balance options for seniors requiring assistance for the activities of daily living.[12]

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- It was recommended to create new long-term care residential units and to understand the actual demand, resources, and next steps.
- A housing supply and needs analysis was recommended, which has been accomplished by the Town of Golden's Housing Needs Assessments.
- A shared housing match-up program was recommended as a moderate priority.
- Of lower priority was the recommendation to promote housing support businesses and volunteer programs to improve satisfaction with local services and enhance residents' ability to age in place.

"There is a lack of housing planned for seniors, i.e. a seniors village or apartments, with caretaker to enable seniors to age in place. Housing developments have been targeting weekenders. The move toward low-income housing doesn't acknowledge that many seniors "can afford." There is a misconception that all seniors are poor. While many struggle, the Town should be leading the way in planning housing to suit a variety of demographics. Older people wanting to move into town from Area A have no option for housing."

"Suitable adaptive housing is one of the big discussions going on among a lot of older rural adults."

"I have been on waitlists for seven years and still waiting!!! Seniors are being forced to move from Golden because there is NO place!!!"

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[12] *Office of the Seniors Advocate BC. From Shortfall to Crisis: Growing Demand for Long-Term Care Beds in BC. July 2025.*

Priority Three:
Transportation

SUMMARY

Transportation plays a vital role in supporting independence, social connection, and access to essential services for older adults. In rural communities, however, transportation can be one of the greatest challenges to aging in place. For many older residents, daily activities such as attending medical appointments, grocery shopping, or participating in community events depend on having reliable and affordable ways to get around.

To create an age-friendly community, rural areas must explore innovative, community-driven transportation solutions. Improving transportation is not only about getting from one place to another, it is about ensuring dignity, connection, and access to the supports needed to age well.

VEHICLE-BASED TRANSPORTATION

In our community, there are currently no feasible public transportation options such as buses or community shuttles for residents within Golden and Area A. This creates significant barriers to those who do not drive or who have reduced mobility. While taxi services are available and do offer a seniors' discount, the cost remains high, especially for those living on fixed incomes or at a distance from town. Many older adults live outside of the town centre and must travel long distances to reach essential amenities such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and health care services.

Between 2008 and 2011, there was a public transit system that was a partnership between the Town of Golden, CSRD, and BC Transit. The bus service completed a morning and afternoon trip to and from Golden, Donald, Blaeberry, and Parson. However, the service was cancelled due to very low ridership and high costs. Despite the low ridership, 78% of respondents to the Golden Transportation Plan survey conducted in 2023 indicated that they would like to re-explore options for on-demand transit, private shuttle services, and regional transit in Golden and Area A.

As discussed in the community care and health services domain of age-friendliness, BC Transit offers a Health Connection route in partnership with the East Kootenay Regional Hospital District and the Regional District of East Kootenay that provides out-of-town transportation two days per week, shuttling residents from Golden to Cranbrook and back for medical appointments. Non-medical riders are also welcome, space permitting, according to Columbia Valley Regional Transit. However, Area A residents who need to travel to the Golden library for pick-up, and residents who need to travel to locations other than Invermere and Cranbrook still face transportation barriers due to the limitations of this service.

Improving transportation options, particularly those connecting Area A residents to town amenities, whether through volunteer driver programs, coordinated ride-sharing, community vans or infrastructure upgrades, would help create a more inclusive and supportive environment for older adults. The Golden Transportation Plan 2024 outlined the goal of providing an accessible transportation network that allows people to move throughout the community regardless of age, ability, and income, with the objective of collaborating with community groups and businesses to understand how to improve accessibility of the community. The Town of Golden established targets based on the Golden Transportation Plan's objectives as providing a measurable way to ensure the vision is on track. The plan, however, does not address issues identified around a lack of transportation options linking Area A to town, affordable options for transportation in town, or options for out-of-town medical services beyond Cranbrook, with many residents needing to travel to other communities for medical care.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active transportation includes any form of human-powered transportation, such as walking, cycling, or rolling, including mobility aids such as walkers, wheelchairs, and motorized scooters. An accessible, safe, and comfortable active transportation network creates a more physically active community, encourages social interaction, and facilitates aging in place. It is important to ensure that all members of the community can meet their everyday needs by removing barriers to walking, cycling, and rolling. By applying an equity-focused and age-friendly lens to the planning, design, and implementation of all active transportation amenities, facilities, and programs that prioritize and understand the unique needs and issues of seniors will make Golden's active transportation network more inclusive and accessible for all.

Golden's Active Transportation Network Plan 2024 identified that the top two priorities for the community related to accessibility and walking. Community feedback respondents indicated they would like to see more multi-use paths, trails, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. A low percentage of respondents reported feeling safe when using active models within the town, and noted that the lack of active transportation infrastructure is the key reason they feel unsafe using active transportation modalities. The plan outlines recommendations to improve safety along active transportation routes by considering visibility, sightlines, and access, as well as the inclusion of safety reviews and plan implementation recommendations.

Within the town core, aging road and sidewalk infrastructure present safety and accessibility concerns. Cracked or uneven surfaces and narrow sidewalks can make active transportation difficult for individuals using mobility aids and increase the risk of trips and falls. Winter conditions further compound these issues. Parking was also raised as a barrier, particularly in the town core area, where accessible parking is limited or time restricted. Together, these factors can contribute to isolation and make it harder for older adults to remain engaged and independent in their community.

WINTER AND NIGHT DRIVING CONDITIONS

Living in the mountains presents unique challenges for both vehicle-based and active transportation. Harsh winter conditions, including heavy snowfall, icy roads, and reduced visibility can create barriers to driving, walking, and rolling for older adults and other community members. While the Town of Golden has a comprehensive snow clearing and sanding policy to maintain safe roadways and sidewalks in conjunction with Emcon's service for regional roads, extreme winter weather events and natural snow accumulation can exceed the capacity of local programs, leaving some areas temporarily less accessible. These conditions highlight the need for additional support and planning strategies to ensure safe and reliable mobility for residents throughout the winter months, particularly for seniors and others who may face mobility or health limitations.

Driving at night can be a significant challenge for many older adults as well. Addressing this barrier is important for supporting independence and continued engagement in the community. Finding ways to ease the challenges of night driving through improved lighting, transportation supports, and awareness of alternative mobility options can help reduce isolation for older adults and ensure they remain connected to essential services and community life.

SURVEY FINDINGS
- Regarding modes of transportation, 89% of survey respondents drive, 41% walk, 22% bike, and 12% use a mobility aid.
- 20% of respondents have mobility impairment and 3% are homebound.
- The main concerns identified about transportation are:
  - A lack of transportation services for those who do not drive within town and Area A, with 79% rating this as poor to very poor.
  - A lack of transportation services out of town, with 78% rating this as poor to very poor.

- A lack of information about transportation services, with 9% of respondents expressing satisfaction with this.
- A lack of parking, with 15% of respondents rating this as good to very good.
- The greatest level of satisfaction with transportation services are:
  - Roads: crosswalks (67% are satisfied), visible painted lines (49% are satisfied), maintenance (46% are satisfied), and intersection sightlines (42% are satisfied),
  - Snow removal: roads (30% rating this as good or very good and 58% rating this as acceptable) and sidewalks (27% rating this as good or very good and 53% rating this as acceptable).
- The most requested services include:
  - A community van, bus, or shuttle service within town and Area A
  - HandyDART (TransLink fully accessible door-to-door ride service)
  - Regular out-of-town shuttle and scheduled outings for seniors (separate from medical bus)

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- The Golden Transportation Plan (2023) provides a strategic framework for improving the safety, accessibility, and connectivity of Golden's transportation network, supporting age-friendly mobility by guiding infrastructure upgrades, traffic calming measures, and improvements to roadways, sidewalks, and crossings that enhance travel between key community destinations such as health services, shopping areas, and recreation facilities.
- The Golden Active Transportation Network Plan (2023) strengthens age-friendliness by promoting safe and inclusive walking, cycling, and wheeling routes that connect residents of all ages and abilities to essential services, recreation areas, and community spaces. The plan also highlights the importance of applying an equity-focused and age-friendly lens to the planning, design, and implementation of all active transportation facilities, amenities, and programs by prioritizing these groups to understand unique needs and issues, with follow-up measures recommended to ensure projects have the desired effects and do not create any unintended negative consequences for any group.
- Columbia Valley Regional Transit's Health Connections service route between Golden and Cranbrook presently runs two days per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- At the time of this report, Mount 7 Taxi offers a seniors rate at $4.10/km (rather than $4.80/km) and has a van that can accommodate some mobility aids, such as a walker, but not wheelchairs.

- Better at Home facilitates volunteer drivers for their clients to medical appointments.
- The Cycling Without Age trishaw bike program offers a unique blend of affordable transportation, social interaction, and engagement with the natural environment, and is a practical and empowering response to the challenges that many seniors face. The bikes are owned by the Town of Golden, sourced through a Columbia Basin Trust ReDi Grant from the Rotary Club, and are kept at Durand Manor. There is potential for this program to help deliver some of the age-friendly transportation desires and contribute to overall age-friendliness across many domains.
- The Town of Golden's Snow Clearing and Sanding Policy provides safe municipal roads, sidewalks, and parking lots during winter conditions through snow removal and ice control operations, with special provisions to support the mobility of seniors and those who are mobility impaired. Emcon's snow clearing policies in the CSRD are not publicly detailed but generally include a priority system for snow removal on regional roads.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- There is an overall lack of transportation options serving town and Area A residents for in-town and out-of-town trips. This is further compounded by the long distances between Area A residents and town amenities.
- It has been identified that Columbia Valley Regional Transit's Health Connections bus service would better serve the community by adding a third day of operation on Saturdays to facilitate residents travelling to Cranbrook for Ophthalmology Clinics and Pacemaker Clinics that are only available on Saturdays. At the time of this report, it was expressed that this would require an additional BC Transit bus presently valued at $47,000 plus operating costs.
- Residents of Area A must travel to the Town of Golden's pick-up/drop-off location (library) in order to access the Health Connections bus.
- There is no public transportation option for residents who must travel to larger medical centres, such as Kelowna General Hospital, for specialized care.
- The Cycling Without Age trishaw bike program requires a volunteer coordinator and this role has been difficult to fill. While residents express an interest to volunteer as pilots, the program requires a coordinator to operate.
- A lack of BC Transit's HandyDART door-to-door shared ride service leaves a large gap in transportation options for residents with permanent or temporary physical, sensory, and/or cognitive disabilities. This program is fully accessible, accommodates mobility aids, provides convenient home pick-up and drop-off, and offers trips that can be booked case-by-case or as subscription trips for repeating journeys. This service was highly requested on the Age-Friendly Community Survey by older adult residents.

- Despite a seniors' rate, the cost of using Mount 7 Taxi for day-to-day transportation needs can be prohibitive for some residents.
- Aging road and sidewalk infrastructure, particularly in the downtown core, creates accessibility and safety issues.
- Residents expressed time-limited or inconvenient parking options, especially in the downtown core, as a barrier to accessing businesses and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore the development and expansion of flexible transportation options such as volunteer driver programs, demand-responsive transit, or partnership with local agencies, with particular focus paid to linking Area A residents to the amenities in town, as well as options that cater to seniors and residents with mobility issues.
- Improve awareness of services that already exist such as the Mount 7 Taxi seniors discount, the Health Connections bus service, Better at Home volunteer drivers, and the Cycling Without Age program.
- Increase opportunities for non-formal ride-share options (i.e. carpooling), particularly for attendance to events and programs that take place in the evening and during the winter months.
- Prioritize sidewalk repairs in the downtown core and frequently accessed areas, with particular focus on replacing decorative mixed-texture surfaces like brick and cobblestone, with age-and-dementia-friendly smooth surfaces, as well as addressing areas of water pooling and ice buildup.
- Continue to track the recommendations of the BC Rural Health Network in the area of transportation including advocating for the expansion of community-informed transportation options such as medical shuttles and non-emergency medical transfer services.
- Continue efforts to find a volunteer to fill the Cycling Without Age program's coordinator position.
- Create options for social out-of-town shopping and sightseeing outings for seniors.
- Look into expanding the Wheels of Hope transportation program to Golden and Area A for cancer patients. Presently, Cranbrook is the closest hub, with volunteers transporting patients who live within a one-hour radius from East Kootenay Regional Hospital. There is potential to establish a hub in Golden with locally-based volunteers.

- An age-friendly lens should continue to be applied to plans, projects, and policies around transportation, such as the Golden Transportation Plan and Golden Active Transportation Network Plan.

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- An initiative to increase the Town of Golden's sidewalk budget to improve sidewalk condition and availability.
- Promotion of a "seniors snow clearing program" for sidewalk snow and ice clearing. This is partially addressed by the Town of Golden's windrow clearing program, but could be expanded to include driveways and roofs as a separate formal program.
- Recommendation to support businesses that provide delivery service options.
- Increase transportation services by establishing:
  - Provincial support for public transportation
  - On-demand HandyDART service
  - Formalized volunteer drivers program

"With the highway upgrades happening, it just makes sense to include safe walking and biking paths too. More people are getting e-bikes, and a trail connecting Area A to town would make things so much safer and more fun. It'd create a friendly loop that's great for all ages – whether you're getting exercise, meeting up with friends, or just heading into town without a car."
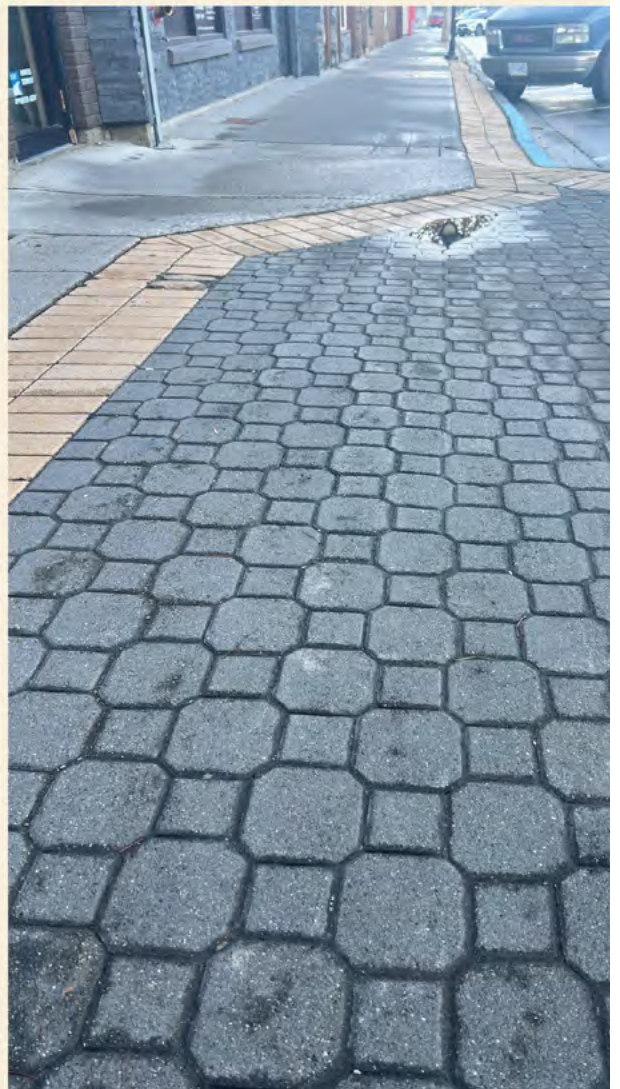
"Transportation for elderly people is a problem with no HandyDART or public transportation."

"Keep walkways like the Rotary ice free, as slips are a senior's worse enemy."

"I have severe hearing loss which makes calling a cab difficult. Email is my main way of communicating but not everyone accesses emails."

"My biggest gripe would be lack of public transportation. If you live out of town, some periodic bus service on 95 would be nice to shop in town."

Photo: Dogtooth wildfire, photo by Bill Pringle

SUMMARY

Emergency services and preparedness are vital components of an age-friendly community, ensuring that residents of all ages – especially older adults – are supported, informed, and protected during crises. In a rural and geographically diverse region such as Golden and CSRD Area A where remote properties, limited transportation routes, and variable communication access can present additional challenges, preparedness and coordination are essential. Older adults may face unique vulnerabilities during emergencies due to mobility challenges, health conditions, or social isolation; however, they also bring valuable strengths through experience, leadership, and strong community connections. Recognizing both perspectives helps to create an emergency response system that is inclusive, resilient, and community driven.

The Dogtooth wildfire of the summer of 2024 brought these realities into sharp focus, leading to evacuations of some Area A residents and prompting a thoughtful re-examination of emergency procedures and communication systems. This event highlighted the importance of timely information sharing, coordinated response efforts, and rural evacuation planning, particularly for vulnerable populations such as older adults. It also reinforced the need for strong connections between agencies, volunteers, and residents to ensure that everyone has access to accurate information and support when it is needed most.

Preparedness for older adults involves more than just response – it includes planning, education, and empowerment. Initiatives that promote personal preparedness such as household emergency kits, wellness check programs, and buddy systems, can build confidence and strengthen community resilience. Collaboration between emergency services, health providers, and community organizations helps identify individuals who may need additional assistance, such as those reliant on medications, home care, or mobility aids. At the same time, empowering older adults as active contributors in emergency planning and community recovery recognizes their knowledge and capacity to lead.

Living in the mountains also presents unique seasonal challenges, with heavy snowfall, extreme cold, and road closures posing risks to both emergency response and mobility. While the Town of Golden and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit maintain a comprehensive snow and sanding policy, significant winter weather events can exceed the capacity of local operations. These realities underline the importance of adaptable plans, accessible facilities, and strong networks of local volunteers to maintain safety and connection during emergencies.

By integrating age-friendly principles into emergency management, Golden and Area A can continue to strengthen their capacity to respond effectively to crises while promoting inclusion, preparedness, and resilience. Building a hardy age-friendly community requires emergency systems that are inclusive, coordinated, and proactive. By recognizing the strengths that older adults bring to preparedness efforts, alongside the unique vulnerabilities they may face, Golden and Area A can strengthen local capacity to respond effectively to emergencies of all kinds. Implementing these recommendations will help ensure that older adults are not only protected during crisis situations, but are also valued partners in building a safer and more resilient community for all residents.

PREPAREDNESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Our older adult community members bring valuable strengths to emergency response and preparedness through life experience, community leadership, and strong social networks. However, certain factors can increase vulnerability during emergencies and require special planning considerations. Addressing these factors through inclusive preparedness initiatives helps ensure that older adults are supported, connected, and able to participate meaningfully in building a resilient community.

The following key factors highlight some of the barriers and vulnerabilities that may place older adults at greater risk during emergencies and should be carefully considered in community preparedness planning:

- Increased vulnerability: Age-related physical and mental health challenges such as reduced mobility, sensory impairments, and chronic conditions can hinder quick evacuation and adaptation during emergencies. Cognitive impairments may further impact decision-making in these high-stress situations. Many older adults no longer drive and may not have access to vehicles or the means to evacuate without assistance.[13]
- Social isolation: Many older adults live alone and can be socially isolated, limiting their access to timely assistance and vital information during crises. An older adult may not have tech devices that alert them that an emergency situation has emerged. They may not be aware that they are in imminent danger and may not know what to do in order to be safe. Age-friendly communities need to be involved in reversing this trend and reaching out to our most vulnerable community members to include them in social activities and safety education. An age-friendly lens helps emergency services

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[13] *Centre for Age-Friendly Excellence,* *https://cfafe.org* .

leaders understand the challenges older adults face in an emergency and act to improve planning and outcomes. [14]

- Dependence on medication and medical equipment: Continuous access to medications and medical devices like oxygen concentrators, CPAP machines, and powered lift chairs is essential for many seniors. Disruptions caused by emergencies can pose significant health risks if these needs are not met. In addition, many older adults use canes or walkers or may be in wheelchairs. Because of this, many older adults cannot move quickly or evacuate in a dangerous situation, so planning ahead is vital.[15]
- Limited technology proficiency: Older adults may be less familiar with digital communication tools (or may not have access to devices) making it challenging for them to receive timely alerts and stay informed during emergencies.[16]

To effectively integrate these considerations, emergency planning can include measures such as wellness check programs for isolated and vulnerable older adults, establishing buddy systems and neighbourhood support networks, and ensuring that emergency alerts and information are available in multiple accessible formats. Collaboration with local health providers and community organizations can also help identify residents who may need extra assistance, such as those reliant on medical equipment or home care. Additionally, offering training sessions or workshops on preparedness tailored specifically for older adults can build confidence, awareness, and resilience within the community.

PREPAREDNESS CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OLDER ADULTS

Engaging older adults in emergency preparedness not only safeguards them but also strengthens community resilience. Seniors often possess valuable knowledge and social networks that can be instrumental during disaster recovery. Some valuable strengths older adults bring to emergency response and preparedness include:

- Mental strength and wisdom: Older adults who have lived through previous emergencies or disasters often possess a strong mental resilience for coping with unexpected situations and a mental toolkit for overcoming adversity.
- Pattern recognition: Decades of experience in their community can allow older adults to notice changes that others might miss.
- Strong community ties: Many older adults have deep roots in their communities and are well-connected to their neighbours, friends, and social networks. These

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[14] *Centre for Age-Friendly Excellence,* *https://cfafe.org*

[15] *Centre for Age-Friendly Excellence,* *https://cfafe.org*

[16] *Centre for Age-Friendly Excellence,* *https://cfafe.org*

relationships are critical for disseminating information during an emergency, such as organizing check-in phone trees.
- Personal support networks: Older adults are often advised to create personal support networks of trusted people who can assist them during an emergency. This planning can be a strength that ensures they have reliable help when needed.

SURVEY FINDINGS

In case of an emergency evacuation:
- 17% do not have access to transportation
- 33% do not have a grab-and-go bag
- 37% do not have a place to stay
- 42% do not have the Alertable app
- 43% do not have a connection with neighbours
- 53% do not use Facebook for Town of Golden/CSRD updates
- 73% have not registered for BCeID

Of particular importance for local emergency planning and support providers is that 13% of respondents state they do not have the ability to evacuate themselves without assistance and 16% do not have a network of others they can rely on in case of an emergency. This highlights the importance of formal systems to fill this gap.

When asked about barriers, the following feedback was provided:
- "I don't wish to use Facebook."
- "I don't use a cellphone."
- "I don't know my neighbours."
- "I don't and won't have a smartphone."

When asked how they receive information related emergencies:
- 65% prefer a phone call
- 58% use the Alertable app
- 52% prefer an in-person/door-to-door visit
- 49% use Facebook (Town of Golden page, community groups, etc).
- 35% use Town of Golden/CSRD websites
- 31% prefer the radio.
- Others mentioned text, email, and TV.

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- Seniors support programs such as Better at Home and Community Paramedic have emergency preparedness plans in place, have identified their vulnerable clients, and offer seniors go-bag checklists.

- The FireSmart program for Golden and CSRD Area A offers neighbourhood hazard assessments, develops plans, organizes committees, and hosts events such as clean-up days, as well as provides monetary support toward FireSmart actions. This program can be accessed through the FireSmart BC website, the CSRD office, fire departments, or through neighbourhood champion volunteers.

- The Golden and Area Emergency Program (GAEMP) provides emergency planning, motivation, preparedness, and recovery support for the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A, and employs an Emergency Program Coordinator who assists first responders in resourcing equipment and materials in an emergency or disaster, and helps the community prepare, face, and recover from the same.

- Emergency Support Services (ESS) provides short-term assistance to residents who are forced to leave their homes because of an emergency evacuation. With a dedicated group of trained volunteers, the ESS Golden and Area Team offer their support at designated reception centres during an evacuation event, assess the needs of evacuees, and offer assistance with short-term necessities.

- The CSRD Area A neighbourhood pods represent a significant community asset, comprising several volunteer groups that have formed organically across the area, many in response to the Dogtooth wildfire. These grassroots groups have demonstrated strong local leadership and initiative, bringing forward a range of valuable preparedness and resilience-building activities. For example, Parson's liaison has developed an effective spreadsheet that functions as a phone tree, containing neighbours' contact information and available fire equipment. In Horse Creek, residents hosted a summer start-up event featuring information about the Neighbourhood Emergency Plan (NEP), FireSmart property assessments, and the Alertable app, as well as organizing a FireSmart debris management day. The Blaeberry group has evolved into the Blaeberry Emergency Response Society (BERS), which provides key resources for communication, education, and coordination. Their website serves as a comprehensive hub linking residents to a variety of emergency preparedness information sources.

- Supported by the Golden and Area Emergency Program (GAEMP), the Neighbourhood Emergency Program (NEP) focuses on empowering residents to be self-reliant during emergencies by fostering a sense of resilience and preparedness, encouraging neighbours to collaborate, plan and support each other. A part of this program is the NEP Information Collection Form which is a project developed to help residents

prepare for emergencies by volunteering information about their property, occupants, and potential access issues, to be safeguarded by Neighbourhood Liaisons and shared with the Emergency Operations Centre in the event of an evacuation alert to facilitate a quick evacuation.

- Golden Co-Op Radio is a free and volunteer-driven radio service that can currently be heard at goldencoopradio.ca/listen and is actively working to evolve into a full service radio station. Golden Co-Op Radio is developing procedures on how to provide emergency live broadcasting to the community and creating connections with community organizations.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- The emphasis on digital information delivery for emergency-related information is not in alignment with how older adults get their information. Golden and Area Emergency Program's recommendations for staying informed with up-to-date information during an emergency, including evacuation orders, relies heavily on digitally delivered messages including the Town of Golden website, Alertable app notifications, and the CSRD Emergency Dashboard (website).

- It was expressed that emergency-related information on the CSRD website for Area A is not as robust or fulsome when compared to other CSRD Electoral Areas.

- Golden Co-Op Radio is in active pursuit of a Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) license to broadcast on the FM band. While the application has been completed, letters of support from local governments that express the community's need for local emergency broadcasting will advance the application process more expediently towards completion.

- There is a perceived lack of formal systems relating to evacuations of vulnerable residents who have age-related physical and mental health impairments, those who no longer drive or have access to transportation, those who are not digitally connected, and those who do not have the means to evacuate without assistance.

- Neighbourhood Emergency Plan (NEP) Information Collection Forms would benefit from oversight and support by local government to ensure appropriate management of confidentiality, storage, distribution, and activation processes. At present, these forms are stored as hard copies at the home of a designated Neighbourhood Liaison for use in an emergency to facilitate a quick evacuation. The valuable efforts of the Neighbourhood Liaison volunteers should be complemented by institutional backing, data handling, and activation protocols.

- Limited cellphone coverage across portions of Area A creates challenges for emergency communication, particularly during power outages and when emergency information and coordination depend on digital systems or mobile alerts.
- Using the Seniors Centre as an emergency reception centre can temporarily displace essential senior services and programs, including its role as a cooling and fresh air space, and as an important hub for social participation and connection among older adults. While it is understood that emergency needs must take precedence, consideration should be given to other facilities that are safe, secure, and accessible, which could serve as alternative reception sites to minimize disruption to seniors' programs. Alternatively, the regular activities at the Seniors Centre could be temporarily relocated to another facility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen emergency communication and information sharing.
    - Develop clear, accessible offline communication systems for emergency alerts using multiple formats (phone trees, radio, printed notices, and door-to-door visits).
    - Create a central directory of emergency contacts and information resources specifically for older adults and caregivers.
    - Ensure consistent information sharing.
- Continue to build community-based support networks.
    - Continue development of neighbourhood systems that connect nearby volunteers for check-ins during emergencies.
    - Continue community partnerships with organizations and support services to provide outreach and wellness checks during extreme weather or evacuation events.
    - Promote preparedness education within existing community gatherings, such as seniors' groups or clubs.
- Enhance training and preparedness for older adults.
    - Offer regular workshops and resource guides that build confidence in personal emergency planning (i.e. go-bags, medication management, home safety, and technology training for relevant apps and websites).
    - Provide emergency preparedness information sessions tailored to older adults at community events and through local health networks.
    - Incorporate culturally relevant and accessible preparedness education for diverse older adults, including rural and remote residents.
- Identify and support at-risk individuals.

- Develop a confidential voluntary registry of vulnerable residents who may need additional support during an emergency. This will address the safety and well-being of vulnerable persons during an emergency, ensuring that first responders and emergency social services teams are better prepared to provide proper assistance. The District of Sparwood has an exemplary Vulnerable Persons Registry program that could provide direction.
    - Collaborate with health and social service agencies to ensure these individuals are prioritized during emergency response and recovery.
    - Develop and implement clear directives for emergency evacuation planning that specifically addresses the needs of older adults and other at-risk individuals residing in seniors' housing and apartment buildings. This guidance should be led by an official emergency management program or designated responder to ensure consistency, accountability, and coordination. Formal protocols for identification, communication, and assistance during evacuations would help ensure that vulnerable residents, and their caregivers, receive timely support and safe transport in the event of an emergency.
- Continue to strengthen coordination among agencies and responders.
    - Conduct regular multi-agency emergency simulations or table-top exercises with a focus on the needs of older adults.
    - Ensure emergency facilities and reception centres are accessible, age-friendly, and equipped to accommodate mobility aids and medications.
    - Pre-designate alternative facilities that are safe, secure, and accessible to serve either as emergency reception centres or substitute locations for seniors activities, ensuring that seniors' programs and services at the Seniors Centre can continue with minimal disruption.
- Plan for rural and winter-specific challenges.
    - Incorporate seasonal risk considerations such as heavy snowfall, power outages, and road closures into emergency response plans.
    - Provide rural emergency preparedness for residents in outlying areas where response times may be longer.
    - Implementation of an emergency-grade address sign program that provides property owners with standard address signs that conform with necessary requirements, ensuring the fastest and most effective response from emergency services by allowing first responders to locate homes or businesses quickly and easily. The Thompson Nicola Regional District is presently offering this program free of charge for their residents until July 2027. The South Shuswap First Responders and Eagle Bay Fire Department have a similar

program called "Signs That Work" which makes and delivers approved address signs with reflective numbers for $40.

- Recognize and empower older adults as community assets.
  - Involve older adults in emergency planning committees and community resilience initiatives.
  - Highlight the role of older adults as mentors and leaders in community preparedness and recovery efforts.

"I have a go-bag packed but I have no social media or any other forms of being notified to evacuate unless someone calls me to let me know."

"A barrier is access to power during an emergency. Living in Area A, if the power goes out, we have no idea why. No power = no internet or phone, and the radio is pretty much useless since it isn't local. Personally, my family and I live from May to October ready to run at a moment's notice. We have no other option. During the winter, we are all prepared to be self reliant for as long as it takes should we have 'one of those' snowfalls or a prolonged power outage."

"With the fire last year, the Alertable app did not call the landline, text or email. Can Facebook information be made public so you don't have to sign in?"

"My iPhone is too old to access the Alertable app."

"I'm concerned that my health might be poor at the time of an evacuation and I will be unable to carry out my plans."

SUMMARY

Effective communication is a cornerstone of an age-friendly community, ensuring that residents of all ages – particularly older adults – are informed, included, and connected. In a rural and relatively remote area such as Golden and CSRD Area A, clear and accessible communication plays an essential role in maintaining social participation, supporting independence, and linking residents to the services and activities that enhance quality of life. Communication of information serves as the vital link connecting all other domains of age-friendliness, enabling residents to learn about programs, participate in opportunities, and access the supports that help them age well in their community.

For many residents, word-of-mouth remains the most trusted and effective means of communication. Neighbours, friends, and local networks often share information about community events, volunteer opportunities, and available supports. This informal system reflects the strong sense of connection and community spirit that characterizes the region. However, word-of-mouth can also be one of the most difficult methods to sustain on a continuous and equitable basis. Information is likely to not reach everyone, particularly those who are newer to the community, live in outlying areas, or are less socially connected. As a result, some residents may miss out on important updates, programs, or resources designed to support their well-being.

To build on this strength while addressing its limitations, a multi-channel approach to communication is needed. Printed newsletters, brochures, and posters on bulletin boards in central community hubs is a valuable tool, especially for those who do not regularly use digital technology. At the same time, expanding digital communication methods such as community websites, social media groups, and email lists can help reach a broader audience, including caregivers and family members who support older adults.

An age-friendly communication strategy should focus on clarity, consistency, and accessibility. Information should be presented in plain language, available in multiple formats, and distributed through trusted local channels. Strengthening collaboration among local organizations, service providers, and municipalities can also help ensure that information is shared in a coordinated and reliable way. By combining the personal reach of word-of-mouth with accessible and inclusive information tools, Golden and Area A can continue to foster a community where every resident stays informed, connected, and engaged.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- The survey identified that respondents received information in the following ways:
  - Word of mouth 86%
  - Social media 59%
  - Signs and posters 57%
  - Email 40%
  - Newspaper 30%
  - Seniors Centre 23%
  - Club newsletters 22%
- 96% of respondents have access to tech devices (i.e. computer, smartphone, tablet) and the internet, while 54% require help finding information online.
- 75% of respondents feel it is important or very important to have a seniors-specific directory to learn about services and programs in the community.
- The age-friendly statement with the lowest agreement rating of 19% was "Information for older adults who are socially isolated is delivered by phone or personal visits."
- The age-friendly statement with the highest agreement rating of 42% was "Information about community events and activities is posted where older adults do their daily activities or gather."

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- The Seniors Centre Newsletter is published monthly and provides information about opportunities for social participation and other older adult topics of interest.
- The Seniors Centre website offers a calendar of events, as well as links to important resources including the Golden Senior Guide.
- Better at Home and Community Connector refer their clients to a wide range of local services provided by community agencies and have a detailed resource network.
- The Golden Senior Guide, last updated in 2022, is a thorough and comprehensive inventory of local resources, programs, and services for seniors.
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) offers one-on-one technological support, as well as many group programs and activities, such as the Gather and Graze program which brings generations together to prepare and share a meal.
- The Field Recreation Advisory Association and The Village of Field Facebook pages provide information on local events, activities, and programs.
- The Golden Star, a family owned and operated newspaper serving Golden and Area A, is a community-focused publication that provides local news, covers events, and shares stories to keep residents informed.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Word of mouth is an unreliable system for information sharing but is the method of communication most older adults use to learn about services, programs, and events.
- Bulletin boards for sharing signs and posters are lacking at some highly visible and frequently attended locations such as the IGA grocery store and Canada Post office. While Canada Post has approved a community display board that allows groups to post information, they expressed that they are unable to engage in any upgrades until the current labour situation has some form of resolution.
- The community's Facebook Golden Community private group was archived January 31, 2025 with a total of 7,000 members. Replacement groups were created to fill this gap but lack the same reach, with the most popular new group, also called Golden Community, presently having 2,500 less members than the original.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen coordination among local organizations to create a unified approach to sharing community information and updates.
- Reinforce a centralized community information hub, such as the Seniors Centre, both online and in print, to serve as a one-stop resource for local programs, events, and services for older adults.
- Continue to support digital literacy and technology access for older adults through workshops, peer mentoring, and partnerships with organizations such as Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.
- Ensure all public communication follows plain language principles and is available in multiple formats to meet a variety of accessibility needs.
- Continue to value and nurture word-of-mouth networks by encouraging local ambassadors, service providers, and volunteers to share information within their circles and neighbourhoods.
- Specific projects that would fill identified gaps in communication and information of local seniors-specific services, events, and resources include but are not limited to:
  - A seniors-specific quick guide for local services, programs, and important contact information was developed.
  - A bulletin board outside of the Seniors Centre for promotion of seniors-specific services, programs, and information was installed. It will be accessible at all times, regardless of indoor programming, and will help to reinforce the Seniors Centre as a hub for all seniors-related information.
  - It is recommended that the Golden Senior Guide be updated. With its last update in 2022, this document is identified as the most thorough and comprehensive inventory of local older adult services, programs,

and information. Once updated, this guide should be distributed through community information hubs both online and hardcopy, made easily available to residents, and thoroughly promoted.

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Utilize a community calendar to communicate events and groups on a monthly basis.
- Hold a community registration night for public participation opportunities.
- Create a non-profit inventory of active registered non-profit organizations.
- Integrate older adult needs by offering opportunities for participation in the indoor pool project discussion.

> *"Older adults are not computer savvy so need help in this digital world. This computer tech will not change but seniors have to cope somehow! So how? Even banking and paying bills is so difficult."*
>
> *"I am unaware of any of the services available to older adults. I feel the Seniors Centre would be the place to access information but the hours or programs don't work for working older adults. It would be nice to have a website and social media site to connect others in this age range."*
>
> *"I would like information as to where I'll be able to obtain services like snow removal, yardwork, or who can be hired for small jobs."*
>
> *"I have very active younger family members that keep me informed of events and include us. What I find is that seniors won't ask for help or try to access help. They are often used to doing things themselves or just do without."*
>
> *"I am very frustrated by QR codes. Don't use them, never will."*

OCT 11   7 PM
MUSIC WITH
TRAVIS AND CURTIS
OCT12   6 PM
HALL DINNER

PARSON
COMMUNITY HALL

SUMMARY

Social participation is a key element of an age-friendly community, contributing to physical and mental well-being, a sense of belonging, and overall quality of life. In Golden and CSRD Area A, opportunities for older adults to engage in recreational, cultural, educational, and social activities help strengthen community bonds and reduce the risk of isolation. Events such as community meals, volunteer opportunities, workshops, and intergenerational programs provide meaningful ways for older adults to stay active and connected, while celebrating the community's shared identity and values.

For many older residents, participation in local activities is influenced by several interrelated factors. Transportation barriers including limited public transportation options, reduced mobility in winter months, and long travel distances in rural areas can make it difficult to attend events or access gathering spaces. Similarly, accessibility and affordability of social participation opportunities plays a significant role in determining whether older adults can fully engage in community life. Ensuring that facilities are physically accessible, well-maintained, and welcoming is essential for equitable participation, as is ensuring that opportunities are made affordable. Many older adults also face time constraints due to responsibilities at their homes and properties, where upkeep and maintenance require significant daily effort, leaving little time to participate as volunteers or attend community events.

Social inclusion also depends on respectful community attitudes and supportive environments. Older adults must feel valued as contributors, not just participants, in community life. Encouraging intergenerational connections and promoting awareness of the strengths, experiences, and contributions of older adults can foster a more inclusive community culture. Community organizations, service providers, and local leaders can help by creating spaces and programs that emphasize belonging, mutual respect, and understanding.

It is also important to recognize that not all older adults seek the same level of social engagement. Some may prefer solitude, smaller circles of connection, or a more private lifestyle. Respecting the choices of seniors who wish to live a quieter, more independent life is an important aspect of age-friendliness. The goal is to ensure opportunities are available, inclusive, and accessible for those who wish to participate, without barriers or stigma.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- The survey identified that respondents stay socially connected in the following ways:

- - Phone (80%)
  - Email (73%)
  - In-person visits to the home of friends and family (68%)
  - In-person visits at a business such as a restaurant, cafe, or retail store (66%)
  - In-person visits in their own home (62%)
  - In-person visits at a public building such as the Seniors Centre, library, or Rec Plex (61%)
  - Social media (54%)
  - Respondents also mentioned outdoor activities, work, farmers market, and Better at Home and Community Care as other forms of connection.
- The age-friendly statement with the highest agreement rating of 61% was: "Activities and events are held in locations that are accessible for all."
- The age-friendly statement with the lowest agreement rating of 22% was: "There is a system to ensure homebound seniors have social contacts."
- The greatest satisfaction with social programs, events, and opportunities are:
  - Community events such as concerts, plays, and movies (65%)
  - Games such as bingo and card games (51%)
  - Arts, writing, crafts, hobbies, and music programs (50%)
  - Fitness programs (44%)
- The lowest satisfaction with social programs, events, and opportunities are:
  - Continuing education courses, such as through the College of the Rockies (32%)
  - Technology training such as smartphones, apps, and computers (34%)
- Relating to barriers to any of the above social programs, events, and opportunities, 7% of respondents expressed that cost prevented them from participating.

IDENTIFIED ASSETS
- The Seniors Centre is a hub for social participation opportunities for older adults in town.
- The Town-funded exercise program at the Seniors Centre is a great success, well-attended, thoroughly enjoyed, and a distinctive asset that should be safeguarded.
- The Parson Community Hall is a hub for social participation for CSRD Area A residents residing in this area.
- The Field Community Centre is a hub for social participation for CSRD Area A residents residing in this area.

- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) offers many programs and activities that support and align with older adult interests.
- The library hosts special interest groups, activities, and events free of charge.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Expressed lack of information and communication about events and programs.
- Transportation barriers to attend events and programs, especially in the winter and evenings.
- College special interest classes were identified as being cost prohibitive with the loss of the Lifelong Learning program.
- Discontinuation of out-of-town excursions with organized transportation, meal, and activity such as Fort Steele, hot springs, Banff Christmas market, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand opportunities for recreation, learning, and cultural engagement that are accessible and welcoming to older adults of all backgrounds and abilities.
- Improve transportation options and coordination for community events including volunteer driver programs or shuttle services for seniors in outlying areas.
- Continue to enhance accessibility of public facilities and community venues to ensure equitable participation.
- Promote intergenerational programs and community awareness campaigns that value and highlight the contributions of older adults.
- Encourage a diverse understanding of social preferences, ensuring supports are available for those who are isolated by circumstance, while honouring those who choose solitude.
- Develop flexible and seasonal volunteer opportunities that accommodate older adults with household responsibilities, allowing participation without creating additional burden.

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- An initiative to inventory specialized fitness and wellness programs for seniors.
- Improve communication to increase utilization of older adult fitness, health, and wellness programs.
- Offer technology training for seniors.
- Ensure older adult needs are integrated into infrastructure projects and increase volunteer opportunities for this.
- Increase opportunities for continuing education.

"Having mechanisms as a community to engage seniors will have a lasting impact on their wellbeing. Making them feel valued is the quickest way to well-being." Lisa Cyr, United Way

"The cost of fitness programs, other than the walking program and fitness programs at the Seniors Centre, are cost prohibitive. Not everyone wants to participate in chair yoga. Some would like to participate in other forms of yoga; some would prefer to use the gym (weights, etc.) but there appears to be no seniors discounts which limits access to other wellness programs."

"I do well with everyday expenses but not luxury expenses like participating in programs."

SUMMARY

Accessible, safe, and well-maintained outdoor spaces and public buildings are essential components of an age-friendly community. They support active living, social participation, and community connection for residents of all ages. In Golden and CSRD Area A, the natural beauty and outdoor lifestyle are central to community identity and well-being. Parks, trails, sidewalks, community halls, and gathering spaces all play an important role in helping older adults remain active and engaged.

In rural and mountainous communities, climate, geography, and infrastructure maintenance present unique challenges. Aging sidewalks, uneven terrain, and winter snow and ice can create hazards for older adults with mobility challenges or limited stamina. Rural roadways lack paved shoulders or pedestrian crossings, making walking and wheeling less safe or appealing. Ensuring outdoor areas are safe, well-lit, and consistently maintained is critical to supporting year-round accessibility.

Living in a community with long, harsh winter conditions also limits opportunities for outdoor recreation and social connection during several months of the year. This seasonal isolation highlights the importance of indoor public spaces where residents can remain active and connected regardless of weather. The development or improvement of facilities, such as an indoor community pool, would provide significant benefits to older adults, offering low-impact exercise options, therapeutic health benefits, and safe year-round opportunities for social interaction and recreation.

Public buildings – including community halls, health and recreation facilities, the library, and municipal offices – serve as important hubs for services and social interaction. Many of Golden's and CSRD Area A's public facilities are generally accessible and provide important spaces for recreation, community gatherings, and services. However, as some facilities continue to age, ongoing maintenance and incremental upgrades remain important to ensure accessibility features stay effective and inclusive for all users. Accessibility standards evolve over time, and continued attention to features such as entrances, washrooms, signage, and assistive listening systems can enhance comfort and safety for older adults and those with mobility, visual, or hearing challenges. Regular assessments and commitment to continuous improvement will help ensure that public spaces remain welcoming, inclusive, and adaptable to the needs of an aging population.

Green and recreational spaces also foster well-being and connection. Benches, shade, accessible pathways, and public washrooms enhance comfort for older adults and

encourage longer stays outdoors. Outdoor gathering spaces strengthen social ties and promote physical activity. These spaces contribute to the health, happiness, and overall livability of the community.

When it comes to private buildings, accessibility improvements play a key role in creating a more age-friendly environment. However, it is important to balance the promotion of accessibility upgrades with an understanding of the financial and structural challenges faced by small, locally owned businesses. Encouraging collaboration, sharing best practices, and exploring grant or incentive programs can help make improvements more achievable while maintaining the economic viability of local enterprises. Supporting business owners through information and resources, rather than regulation alone, helps foster shared responsibility for making the community more welcoming and inclusive for all residents.

Maintaining and improving outdoor and public spaces requires collaboration among local government, residents, and organizations. Ongoing investment in accessibility and maintenance will ensure that Golden and Area A remain vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive places for residents to enjoy throughout their lives.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- The three most frequently attended public locations are:
  - Spirit Square (42%)
  - Rotary Trail (40%)
  - Seniors Centre (29%)
- A lack of parking and an abundance of mosquitoes are identified as the top two barriers to using outdoor spaces and public buildings.
- 64% of respondents agree that benches and other seating is available along sidewalks, paths, and trails.
- 56% of respondents agree that snow removal is done in a timely manner.
- 55% of respondents agree that businesses adequately clear snow and ice in front of their building.
- 44% of respondents disagree that businesses have aisles that are clear of obstacles with enough space for mobility aids.
- 38% of respondents disagree that there are public washrooms available at outdoor public spaces and along walking routes.
- The lowest satisfaction rating was with public washrooms, with 35% rating them as poor to very poor, but with 50% finding them acceptable.

- The highest satisfaction rating was with local parks and trails, with 57% rating them as good to very good and 42% rating them as acceptable.

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- The Town of Golden's Snow Clearing and Sanding Policy provides safe municipal roads, sidewalks, and parking lots during winter conditions through snow removal and ice control operations, with special provisions to support the mobility of seniors and those who are mobility impaired.
- The Town of Golden has a windrow clearing assistance program for eligible seniors or persons with disabilities to apply for complementary windrow clearing assistance of their driveways.
- The Town of Golden and CSRD Area A are well-served with many great facilities and parks including but not limited to:
    - Golden and District Arena and Lounge
    - Civic Centre
    - Golden Curling Club
    - Mount 7 Rec Plex and outdoor gym
    - Seasonal swimming pool and spray park
    - Keith King Memorial Park
    - Tennis and pickleball courts
    - Field Community Centre
    - Parson Community Hall
- CSRD Area A has eight provincial parks and three national parks within or partially within its boundaries, as well as five local and regional parks and green spaces within its boundaries.
- Community accessibility work has been done that identifies wheelchair accessible businesses, as well as those with button-activated door openers. This work sets a foundation for future accessibility audits and funding.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- The benches at the pool were identified as being too low and caused accessibility issues for older adults. This issue was also identified at the Rec Plex lobby. Both will be addressed by the Town of Golden and are items listed for action, with the pool benches anticipated to be complete before the 2026 season and the Rec Plex lobby renovation solution in the works for 2026 as well.

- A curb cut at the corner of 9th St. South and 9th Ave. South is identified as being "tippy" with a motorized scooter and requires maneuvering onto the road in order to utilize it.
- The sidewalk between Durand Manor and Mountain View Apartments is identified as being of low quality.
- The downtown core sidewalks are identified as being in poor shape with many tripping hazards, water pooling, and ice buildup.
- The downtown sidewalks are designed with multiple different textures that are not age-and-dementia-friendly.
- There is no community hall for Blaeberry residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve uneven and broken sidewalks in the downtown core, and prioritize changing cobblestone and mixed-textured surfaces for age-friendly smooth surfaces.
- Continue to prioritize snow and ice removal in high-traffic pedestrian areas and near key community designations, including benches and curbs.
- Incorporate Universal Design principles into facility upgrades and new developments.
- Continue to support improved public washroom availability in parks and downtown areas, with a new year-round washroom already planned for the Rec Plex area.
- Continue to explore the development of an indoor community pool and enhancement of indoor recreation facilities to provide year-round, accessible activity options for all ages.
- Foster collaboration with local businesses to promote accessibility improvements, offering guidance, recognition, and incentives to reduce financial barriers.
- Conduct accessibility and safety assessments of sidewalks, trails, and public facilities.
- Improve lighting, signage, and seating in public spaces to enhance safety and comfort.
- Enhance maintenance and accessibility of trails and paths for walking, biking, and mobility aids.
- Promote community gathering spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities that are inclusive and age-friendly.

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Overlapping recommendations from the transportation domain of age-friendliness including:
  - Increasing the Town of Golden's sidewalk budget to improve sidewalk condition and availability.
  - Promotion of a "senior's snow clearing program."

- Improve public washroom information and promotion with signage for open hours and dates.
- Installation of a hydraulic lift in the pool, which has been achieved.
- Increase public awareness of buildings with a "scavenger hunt" style event or "photo contest," as well as promotion of a public space of the week.

"A practically designed public space with an indoor pool and a walking track would be wonderful for the community, especially as a place for all generations to mingle during the long winters."

"A swimming pool is very important!"

"We need more shaded places to sit, more parking places, and stores that are accessible, i.e. no stairs."

"I saw a lady have to pick up her walker over the snowbank!"

"Benches are available along trails and elsewhere; however, in winter they are invariably covered with snow and ice. Ice especially is virtually impossible to remove. These should be cleared off by someone doing the rounds after a snowfall."

Golden Gazette

LIKED BY MANY —
CURSED BY SOME — BUT, READ BY EVERYONE

VOL. 9 NO. 35   WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27, 1979   15c PER COPY - $5.00 PER YEAR

Drop-In Centre opens

Snip! - and officially the Golden Seniors Drop-In Centre is opened last Thursday. Assisting Mr. Wenman in the cutting ceremony was Mr. Jack Hickmott (centre) along with Mr. Bil Huckermeyer (behind Wenman) and on right Mr. Otto Buser. Mr. Hickmott was co-ordinator of the project which has taken the last several months to complete. The centre provides a place for chatting, playing games or just enjoying a cup of coffee or tea for the seniors in this town.

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SUMMARY

A truly age-friendly community is built on a culture of respect – one that recognizes, values, and includes older adults in all aspects of community life. Respect and inclusion are not individual programs or services, but a community-wide culture that shapes how people of all ages interact, contribute, and feel a sense of belonging. In Golden and CSRD Area A, fostering this culture means ensuring that older adults are treated with dignity, that their voices are heard, and that their knowledge and experience continue to shape the community's future. Older adults have contributed significantly to the growth, stability, and character of the region. Many continue to give their time and energy through volunteering, mentoring, and community participation. Promoting respect for these contributions helps strengthen intergenerational understanding and reinforces a shared sense of identity and community pride.

Combating ageism – the stereotypes, prejudice, or discrimination directed toward people based on age – is essential to inclusion. An age-friendly community challenges assumptions about aging and ability, celebrating the diversity of older adults' experiences and knowledge that each person ages differently. Overcoming ageism requires both awareness and action: promoting positive stories about aging, ensuring older adults are represented in community decisions, and challenging assumptions that aging means decline or dependency. When older adults are viewed as active contributors with unique skills and experiences, it shifts the narrative from burden to strength. Inclusion also means celebrating the cultural diversity, life experiences, and perspectives that older adults bring. When communities make space for these voices, they strengthen intergenerational understanding and create a more compassionate and cohesive community.

True inclusion ensures that everyone, regardless of age, culture, or ability, feels welcome and supported in community spaces and decision-making. Barriers such as inaccessible facilities, limited transportation, or poor communication can unintentionally exclude older adults, leading to isolation and disconnection. Embedding respect and inclusion into programs, services, and everyday interactions fosters belonging across generations. Public education, intergenerational programs, and community events that promote positive views of aging can help strengthen understanding and mutual respect. Encouraging the participation of older adults in leadership roles, community planning, and public consultations ensures that decisions reflect the needs and values of residents of all ages.

Communities can strengthen respect by offering meaningful engagement opportunities through volunteering, mentorship, cultural sharing, and advisory roles, and by celebrating

the contributions and achievements of older residents. Their lived wisdom, resilience, and leadership are vital assets that guide community growth and ensure all generations feel valued.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- 72% of respondents agree or strongly agree that older adults are generally treated respectfully.
- 63% of respondents agree or strongly agree that community activities bring together different generations.
- 63% of respondents agree or strongly agree that community activities welcome diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities.
- 50% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the community recognizes the contributions of older adults.
- 42% of respondents agree or strongly agree that older adults are asked to participate in meetings, activities, and events.
- Regarding how often respondents feel lonely, 28% say they never feel lonely, 32% say rarely, 30% say sometimes, 9% say often, and 1% say always. One respondent stated, "As long as I'm with my best friend – my dog – I'm never lonely."

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- A high concentration of local non-profits, organizations, and societies that foster respectful inclusion.
- Indigenous organizations such as the Metis Nation Columbia River Society, which contribute cultural knowledge, connection, and community presence..
- Service clubs such as the Rotary Club and Royal Canadian Legion, which promote volunteerism, belonging, and intergenerational connection.
- Programs that bring seniors and youth together for meals, such as Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy's Gather and Graze program.
- Supports such as Better at Home and Community Connector, which meaningfully address gaps related to social isolation, exclusion, and neglect.
- A wide range of assets identified within the social participation domain, many of which offer overlapping benefits that strengthen respect and social inclusion.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- Ageism and other forms of discrimination, including negative stereotypes, dismissive attitudes, and assumptions about older adults' abilities that can lead to exclusion from community activities, decision-making, and intergenerational relationships.
- Elder abuse, including neglect and exploitation, which undermines dignity, safety, and trust, and discourages participation in community life.
- Loss of Welcome Wagon program, which has reduced opportunities for newcomers and older residents to connect with community programs, including the Seniors Centre, limiting social integration and awareness of local supports.
- Social isolation and loneliness, especially after the loss of a spouse or friends, combined with limited mobility and transportation options, can reduce opportunities for social participation and community involvement.
- Digital exclusion based on the increasing reliance on online communication and digital registration for activities may exclude those who lack confidence, access, or skills in using technology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Promote a community culture that values aging through awareness campaigns, intergenerational initiatives, and public education about ageism.
- Ensure that older adults are represented and heard in local decision-making, planning, and consultation processes.
- Support inclusive community programming that welcomes participation from residents of all ages and abilities.
- Encourage community celebrations and recognition of older adults' contributions to civic, cultural, and volunteer life.
- Integrate principles of respect and inclusion into municipal policies, facility design, and communication practices to ensure age-friendly service delivery.
- Showcase the diversity of abilities and contributions of seniors and encourage partnerships with local organizations, artists, and cultural groups to share diverse stories and traditions that enrich community life, allowing for older adults' passions and experiences to guide plans.
- Re-establish welcoming and connection programs for newcomers and returning residents to orient older adults to local supports, volunteer opportunities, and social groups, strengthening belonging and participation.
- Reduce social isolation and loneliness through outreach and peer connection with programs, such as Better at Home and the Community Connector role, that proactively reach isolated or homebound seniors and link residents to local activities and support.

- Enhance digital inclusion and communication access by continuing to offer digital literacy training and support for older adults to build confidence using technology for communication and accessing community information. Ensure non-digital alternatives remain available for those who prefer them.

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase promotion and utilization of the Welcome Wagon program.
- Ensure specialized messaging to older adults to increase promotion of community registration night.
- Host training opportunities for super host customer service excellence training for volunteers.
- Establish a coordinator position for volunteer development and management including program design, monitoring, and grant applications.

"I notice some people frustrated when dealing with older folks. Everyone needs to slow down a bit, have patience, and show some care. I am getting on good now but could need more help in the future."

"If you find seniors hard to get along with, it's because we're grieving the loss of so many things – the loss of the things we love, our hobbies, our food, the things that brought us joy."

"I think Golden is a great place to live in. I feel people are aware of their older neighbours and help as required and generally just keep an eye on them. I feel older people are included in whatever is going on in town – if they want to participate."

"We have a wonderful group of Metis Elders. We have a coffee group every week of about 15 or so, a nice social get-together."

"Ageism acts as the type of prejudice that both justifies abusive behaviour against older people and leads to overlooking the consequences it has on older people." - Ageing Equal, 2020

SUMMARY

Civic participation and employment opportunities allow older adults to remain active contributors to the life of their community, helping to sustain local vitality, share knowledge across generations, and strengthen social connectedness. When older adults have opportunities to volunteer, work, and engage in community decision-making, the entire community benefits from their skills, experience, and leadership.

An age-friendly community values the ongoing contributions of older adults in all areas of civic life – through paid employment, volunteering, mentorship, and participation in community decision-making. In Golden and CSRD Area A, many older residents continue to dedicate their time, skills, and experience to strengthening community life, whether through service organizations, local events, or informal acts of neighbourly support. These contributions enrich the social fabric, sustain community services, and model active engagement for younger generations. Older adults also play an important role in local leadership and representation, serving on Town Council and within CSRD Electoral Area A governance, where their lived experience provides valuable perspective on community priorities and long-term planning.

Feedback from community engagement revealed a gap between volunteer demand and volunteer availability. While some residents expressed there are few volunteer options accessible to them, many volunteer-driven organizations described the opposite challenge – an ongoing shortage of volunteers to meet their needs. When calls for volunteers are issued, the response is often limited or inconsistent, leaving essential programs and community events dependent on a small group of dedicated individuals. This reliance on long-term volunteers has created fatigue among some older adults who have served for many years and now feel ready to step back, but face the concern that there are too few younger seniors or adults prepared to take their place.

This generational shift has also contributed to the loss of several long-standing service clubs and volunteer associations, including the local hospital auxiliary, Meals on Wheels, and the Lion's Club, which have either disbanded or become inactive due to declining membership. The loss of these organizations represents more than just a reduction in volunteer hours – it marks the disappearance of important social networks, community supports, and opportunities for intergenerational mentorship. Revitalizing volunteerism in the community will require new approaches that appeal to younger adults, make volunteering more flexible, and ensure that efforts are well-coordinated across organizations.

Beyond volunteerism, employment opportunities for older adults remain an important component of civic participation. Many older residents continue to seek paid or part-time work to remain active, supplement income, or contribute their expertise. In rural and small-town contexts, however, employment options may be limited by a lack of flexible or age-friendly workplaces, physical demands of age-friendly workplaces, physical demands of available jobs, or limited public transportation. Encouraging local employers to consider flexible scheduling, mentorship roles, and the accommodations for older workers can help retain valuable experience in the workforce while supporting the financial and social well-being of older adults.

SURVEY FINDINGS

- A total of 32% of respondents work, 65% of respondents do not work, and 3% would like to work, identifying barriers such as health issues, too many household or property chores, or a lack of transportation.
- A total of 56% of respondents volunteer, 34% of respondents do not volunteer, and 10% would like to, identifying the same barriers as those who would like to work such as health issues, too many chores, or a lack of transportation.
- 55% of respondents agree or strongly agree that volunteers are valued and recognized for their contributions.
- 52% of respondents agree or strongly agree that older adults are encouraged to volunteer and remain engaged in the community.
- 42% disagree or strongly disagree that there is a sufficient amount of volunteers in the community.
- 24% disagree or strongly disagree that there are adequate opportunities for older adults to find employment.

IDENTIFIED ASSETS

- The Age-Friendly Committee meets monthly with varying but often robust attendance at meetings, as well as emailed meeting minutes to ensure those interested in age-friendly initiatives are well-informed.
- Many boards require more board members, which provides opportunities for participation within these groups and organizations.
- The majority of municipal and regional leadership roles are held by older adults.
- Golden Community Economic Development hosts monthly community conversations where everyone is invited to discuss various community-focused topics.

IDENTIFIED BARRIERS

- A lack of knowledge about volunteer opportunities and boards seeking new membership.
- A lack of commitment to the responsibilities of longitudinal involvement on boards and in volunteer roles.
- A perceived lack of adequate and affordable meeting spaces for groups.
- Loss or inactivity of volunteer-based groups and service clubs, such as Lion's Club, Meals on Wheels, Welcome Wagon, and Hospital Auxiliary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage the development of a community-wide volunteer coordination system to connect residents with local opportunities and reduce duplication of recruitment efforts.
- Support volunteer appreciation, mentorship, and transition planning to honour long-term contributions and help engage new generations of volunteers.
- Explore new ways to revitalize service clubs and community groups, including partnerships with schools, youth programs, and intergenerational initiatives.
- Promote age-friendly employment practices among local employers, including flexible hours, adaptive roles, and mentorship opportunities.
- Strengthen communication between volunteer organizations to identify shared needs and collaborate on volunteer recruitment and retention strategies.
- Consider holding a volunteer fair event to engage the community, provide education about volunteer opportunities, and to boost volunteer numbers.
- Advocate for the inclusion of an age-friendly lens in municipal and regional projects, plans, and policies.

LOOKING BACK TO 2014'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a community coordinator role to increase civic and social participation, as well as volunteer development and management.
- Offer engagement opportunities for civic participation through community conversations, which has been accomplished by Golden Community Economic Development, with these events being held on a monthly basis.

"

"In my previous town, I volunteered for 13 years and worked 16 hours per week. I cannot find any volunteer work here."

"I used to volunteer, but my health has really declined."

"I have no time to volunteer yet – we live out of town on an acreage."

"There are unrealistic expectations of how to volunteer by others in the group."

"Before I can volunteer, I need to sell my home and relocate to town first."

"I would like to weed the garden at the Food Bank but I'm not sure if it's accessible. I'm in a motorized scooter."

THE FUTURE OF AGE-FRIENDLINESS

SUMMARY

The process of updating and modernizing the Age-Friendly Community Plan has not only renewed local commitment to age-friendliness but also inspired tangible action. From launching micro-projects to strengthening collaboration through the Age-Friendly Committee, this project has sparked momentum for continued progress. The lessons learned, partnerships built, and community input gathered throughout this process lay a strong foundation for ongoing improvement, guiding next steps and future planning to ensure that Golden and CSRD Area A remain welcoming, inclusive, and supportive for residents of all ages.

AGE-FRIENDLY MICRO-PROJECTS

It quickly became clear that the Golden Area offers many excellent services, programs, and activities for seniors; however, a significant gap exists in how information about these resources is communicated and shared. To remedy this, we focused on two micro-projects:

1. A bulletin board was installed on a highly visible exterior wall of the Seniors Centre as a place for residents to learn about events, services, and programs. Based on literature about how rural older adults get their information, posters on bulletin boards at frequently-attended locations is one of the top ways seniors receive information, next to word-of-mouth. The bulletin board is accessible at all times, regardless of indoor programming, and will help to reinforce the Seniors Centre as a hub for all older adult related information.

2. A seniors-specific tri-fold brochure for local services, programs, and important contact information was developed as a collaboration between the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project and the Community Connector. A total of 75% of older adult survey respondents expressed it is important or very important to have a seniors-specific directory to learn about services and programs in the community. The Age-Friendly Service Guide is an easy to use guide that communicates local supports, resources, and important phone numbers in an age-friendly format. By highlighting health services, recreation, transportation, meal services, housing, information sources, and emergency phone numbers, this micro-project facilitates advancement in all domains of age friendliness. This brochure will be updated and re-distributed as required for years to come thanks to the partnership with United Way's Community Connector. Originally launched and distributed at the Seniors Fall Fair event and through Better at Home, the Seniors Centre, and the Community Connector, this brochure will also be delivered by Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail service to all mailboxes in Golden and Area A.

PROJECT-DRIVEN POSITIVE CHANGE

Throughout the duration of the Age-Friendly Community Plan Update and Modernization Project, the following process-driven recommendations for improvements have been implemented prior to project completion:

- Bench heights were expressed as being too low and difficult to use at the pool. In collaboration with the Town of Golden, the same issue was identified at the Rec Plex and both locations are marked for upgrading the benches to an age-friendly height.
- Social participation was facilitated with meetings, focus groups, and community events.
- Respect and social inclusion was prioritized throughout the project with particular attention paid to targeting rural, remote, diverse, and isolated seniors' sought-after voices.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMITTEE

To ensure that the Age-Friendly Community Plan remains a living and actionable document, it is recommended that the Age-Friendly Committee evolve from a discussion-based table into a more defined entity. The Committee may examine potential structures or models that support their vision for accountability and decision-making processes. Establishing policies, procedures, and defined roles will strengthen the Committee's ability to guide, implement, and evaluate age-friendly initiatives within Golden and CSRD Area A. This evolution would enhance the Committee's ability to move from discussion to coordinated action, ensure consistent implementation of plan goals, and strengthen collaboration, partnerships, and evaluation across all age-friendly initiatives.

The Committee has already made significant contributions by providing a space for collaboration, sharing diverse perspectives, and identifying local priorities that reflect the real experiences of older adults in the community. These achievements form a strong foundation on which to build. The recommendations to move toward formal governance are intended not as a critique but as a natural next step, ensuring the Committee's thoughtful discussions can translate more consistently into coordinated efforts and measurable outcomes.

A more formalized approach would support consistency and follow-through on identified priorities, help align efforts across local organizations, and provide a framework for monitoring progress over time. By adopting a terms of reference, a code of conduct, meeting procedures, and reporting mechanisms, the Committee can transition toward a model

that not only discusses age-friendly priorities but also acts on them through coordinated community projects and advocacy efforts.

This structure will also help secure funding, partnerships, and accountability, ensuring that the principles of age-friendliness remain embedded in local planning and decision-making. A well-structured committee (or alternative model) can serve as a central coordinating body – championing implementation, tracking progress, and recommending policy or operational changes as needed to advance the goals of this plan.

In order to achieve the above, the following steps can be considered by the Committee:

- Transition the Age-Friendly Committee toward a more refreshed entity with defined roles, responsibilities, and working relationships to serve as the foundation for implementing recommendations.
- Develop a terms of reference to establish expectations and guide future decision-making, along with a code of conduct that promotes positive working relationships and reinforces a shared commitment to common goals.
- Develop policies and procedures that guide meeting structure, action tracking, and reporting such as agendas, presentations, and meeting minutes, as well as monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress on plan implementation.
- Encourage ongoing community representation within the Committee to ensure diverse voices continue to inform age-friendly priorities.
- Maintain regular meetings of the Age-Friendly Committee to support steady progress on implementing recommendations, monitor outcomes, and strengthen communication and engagement with community and stakeholder groups.
- Seek out and apply for new funding opportunities to support the ongoing work and objectives of the Age-Friendly Committee.
- Assess the effectiveness of the initiatives carried out, measure progress of community actions that contribute to the advancement of age-friendly factors, and make adjustments as required.
- Implement a 10-year review cycle for the Age-Friendly Community Plan to assess achievements, identify emerging priorities, and guide future action toward sustained age-friendliness.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Age-Friendly Community Plan for Golden and CSRD Area A reflects the voices, experiences, and priorities of local residents, organizations, and leaders who share a commitment to building a community where all residents can age with dignity, connection,and purpose. The recommendations within this plan are rooted in the

nine domains of age-friendliness, each representing a key aspect of daily life – from transportation and housing to health services, communication, and inclusion. Together, these recommendations provide a practical roadmap for creating environments that support independence, social participation, and well-being at every age.

Moving forward, the success of this plan depends on continued collaboration, open communication, and shared responsibility among local government, community organizations, and residents. The Age-Friendly Committee will play a central role in coordinating and guiding this work. As the Committee evolves toward a more formal governance structure, it will be well positioned to oversee the implementation of recommendations, monitor progress, and ensure that age-friendly principles remain at the heart of community planning and decision-making.

CONCLUSION

Golden and CSRD Area A have demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and vibrant community for residents of all ages. The Age-Friendly Community Plan builds on this foundation by identifying local priorities, challenges, and opportunities for action that reflect the unique character of the region. As the community continues to grow and change, maintaining a focus on age-friendliness will help ensure that older adults remain active, valued, and connected participants in community life. Through collaboration, cooperation, shared leadership, and ongoing reflection, Golden and Area A can continue to be a place where aging is not only supported but celebrated.

This plan also recognizes the many existing strengths and community assets that already contribute to age-friendliness in Golden and Area A such as Soup Days, the Seniors Centre Newsletter, Town-subsidized exercise programs, Better at Home and Community Connector programs, along with other initiatives, programs, and partnerships that foster connection, belonging, and mutual support among residents. It is vital not only to honour these community-led and community-loved efforts, but to ensure they are supported, sustained, and not lost over time as needs evolve and resources shift. Building on these local successes will be key to sustaining momentum and ensuring that the region's strong foundation of care, inclusion, and community spirit continues to thrive for generations to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Age-Friendly Community Plan for Golden and CSRD Area A would not have been possible without the dedication, insight, and collaboration of many individuals and organizations. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Age-Friendly Committee and Project Advisory Committee for their commitment, thoughtful discussion, and ongoing leadership in supporting the well-being of older adults in the community.

Gratitude is also extended to the residents of Golden and Area A who contributed their voices through surveys, interviews, and community conversations. Their experiences and perspectives have shaped the priorities and recommendations within this plan, ensuring it truly reflects the needs and strengths of the community.

The project team also acknowledges the valuable input and partnerships of local service providers, non-profit organizations, health professionals, and municipal and regional staff whose collaboration continues to strengthen community connections and advance age-friendly initiatives.

Appreciation is also extended to the Age-Friendly Community Plan Project funders, BC Healthy Communities and the Columbia Shuswap Regional District, for their support and ongoing commitment to creating an inclusive and age-friendly region and province.

Together, these collective efforts represent the shared commitment to making Golden and Area A places where aging is supported and residents of all ages can live safely, participate fully, and age with dignity and belonging.

AGE-FRIENDLY PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mickey Balas, BC Community Response Network, Navigation and Peer Support Coordinator
Carol Caldwell, Age-Friendly Committee, Interested Senior
Karen Cathcart, CSRD Area A Director, 2014 project experience
Jill Dewtie, Golden Community Economic Development, Purcell View Apartments
Jim Halvorson, Age-Friendly Committee, Seniors Centre, Rotary Club
Ruth Hamilton, Seniors Centre
Barb Hooper, Age-Friendly Committee, Interested Senior
Yvonne Johansen, Better at Home and Community Connector
Shelley MacGregor, Metis Nation Columbia River Society
John Manuel, Councillor, Town of Golden
Jordan Petrovics, Town of Golden Recreation
Chrystel Vultier, Local Food Matters

Kim Weatherall, Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)

Alycia Weir, Golden Women's Resource Centre

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

Abbeyfield House: Ann Younger, Karen Smedley and Residents

Age-Friendly Committee

A&W Morning Coffee Group

Bill Pringle Photography

Mandy and Mike Cantle, Area A, interested seniors

Chris Hambruch, Town Councillor and Seniors Centre Society Chairperson

Community of Field Truffle Pig Coffee Group

Jim de Bolebec, Seniors Centre Society

Emergency Response Area A Neighbourhood Champions

Golden CED, Purcell View and host organization

Jackie Lynn Photography

Leanne McKellar, Community Paramedic

Mountain View Apartments: Marla Catbagan and Residents

Leslie Parent, interested senior, former Seniors Centre Society Chairperson

Kerri Wall, Community Health Facilitator, Interior Health

Tourism Golden

Town of Golden

ENGAGEMENT PARTNERS

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)

Columbia Shuswap Regional District Electoral Area A

Golden DollarStore 407 Boutique

Golden Family Pharmacy

Golden Food Bank

Golden Medical Clinic

Golden Museum

Hearing Loss Clinic

Library – Golden ORL

Seniors Centre

Town of Golden

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the research reports and best practices that informed the development of the Age-Friendly Community Plan for Golden and CSRD Area A. This review ensures that the plan is founded in both local context and proven strategies, aligning community priorities with established frameworks and emerging trends in age-friendly planning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Age-Friendly Committee	Transition the Age-Friendly Committee toward a more refreshed entity with defined roles, responsibilities, and working relationships to serve as the foundation for implementing recommendations.
Community Support & Health Services	Improve awareness of existing services and programs.
	Support funding initiatives for affordable meal kit programs offering reduced prices and kit delivery to seniors in all parts of the community.
	Increase availability of pre-made, single-portion meal options through private enterprise, culinary initiatives by community agencies, and/or instituting seniors meal delivery services.
	Improve community-informed shuttle services and patient transfer services for out-of-town medical care outside of Cranbrook.
	Advocate for increased visiting specialists, virtual care services, and mobile outreach.
	Advocate for the creation of medical travel assistance programs that fully remove out-of-pocket costs for rural and remote patients to access care.
	Advocate for broadened medical transportation and patient-transfer services.
	Advocate for Golden & District Hospital to increase space and improve infrastructure to support seniors.
Housing	Improve awareness of providers for home maintenance, yardwork, snow removal, and cleaning services.
	Creation of a community work shed. Many residents expressed reluctance to downsize or move to seniors housing because of an unwillingness to give up access to a garage/shop/shed area, as well as their tools.
	A seniors "coupon book" for discounted trade services such as furnace maintenance, installation of adaptive equipment, etc.
	Seek and invite private and non-profit enterprises to create more seniors housing with a clearly defined process and identified sites and partnerships for projects.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Housing Cont.	Create a more inviting development environment for private and non-profit enterprises to build more seniors housing. This would include streamlined processes and consistent support from local government.
	Complete the CED Downtown Housing Project to provide 27 residential units, including a mix of one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments.
	Increase options for seniors housing at all stages of need, considering all income levels, including private market options that cater to seniors with sufficient income to afford market rates and more amenities.
	Advocate for BC Housing National Occupancy Standards to allow couples a two-bedroom home that is more comfortable and still affordable to meet their needs.
	Advocate for timely access to local long-term care. Not increasing the supply of long-term care beds to keep up with population growth impacts emergency rooms, hospitals, family physician offices, seniors, and their families.
	Advocate for increasing Home and Community Care capacity and provide incentives to fill vacancies. Adequate, available, and affordable home support services are an effective alternative or delay the needs for long-term care placement and is a more efficient use of public funds.
	Advocate for maximizing the potential for both home support and assisted living to bend the demand curve on long-term care and balance options for seniors requiring assistance for the activities of daily living.
Transportation	Explore the development and expansion of flexible transportation options such as volunteer driver programs, demand-responsive transit, or partnership with local agencies, with particular focus paid to linking Area A residents to the amenities in town, as well as options that cater to seniors and residents with mobility issues.
	Improve awareness of services that already exist such as the Mount 7 Taxi seniors discount, the Health Connections bus service, Better at Home volunteer drivers, and the Cycling Without Age program.
	Increase opportunities for non-formal ride-share options (i.e. carpooling), particularly for attendance to events and programs that take place in the evening and during the winter months.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Transportation Cont.	Prioritize sidewalk repairs in the downtown core and frequently accessed areas, with particular focus on replacing decorative mixed-texture surfaces like brick and cobblestone, with age-and-dementia-friendly smooth surfaces, as well as addressing areas of water pooling and ice buildup.
	Continue to track the recommendations of the BC Rural Health Network in the area of transportation including advocating for the expansion of community-informed transportation options such as medical shuttles and non-emergency medical transfer services.
	Continue efforts to find a volunteer to fill the Cycling Without Age program's coordinator position.
	Create options for social out-of-town shopping and sightseeing outings for seniors.
	Look into expanding the Wheels of Hope transportation program to Golden and Area A for cancer patients. There is potential to establish a hub in Golden with locally-based volunteers.
	An age-friendly lens should continue to be applied to plans, projects, and policies around transportation, such as the Golden Transportation Plan and Golden Active Transportation Network Plan.
Emergency Services & Preparedness	Strengthen emergency communication and information sharing.
	• Develop clear, accessible offline communication systems for emergency alerts using multiple formats (phone trees, radio, printed notices, and door-to-door visits).
	• Create a central directory of emergency contacts and information resources specifically for older adults and caregivers.
	• Ensure consistent information sharing.
	Continue to build community-based support networks.
	• Continue development of neighbourhood systems that connect nearby volunteers for check-ins during emergencies.
	• Continue community partnerships with organizations and support services to provide outreach and wellness checks during extreme weather or evacuation events.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Emergency Services & Preparedness Cont.	• Promote preparedness education within existing community gatherings, such as seniors' groups or clubs.
	Enhance training and preparedness for older adults.
	• Offer regular workshops and resource guides that build confidence in personal emergency planning (i.e. go-bags, medication management, home safety, and technology training for relevant apps and websites).
	• Provide emergency preparedness information sessions tailored to older adults at community events and through local health networks.
	• Incorporate culturally relevant and accessible preparedness education for diverse older adults, including rural and remote residents.
	Identify and support at-risk individuals.
	• Develop a confidential voluntary registry of vulnerable residents who may need additional support during an emergency.
	• Collaborate with health and social service agencies to ensure these individuals are prioritized during emergency response and recovery.
	• Develop and implement clear directives for emergency evacuation planning that specifically addresses the needs of older adults and other at-risk individuals residing in seniors' housing and apartment buildings. This guidance should be led by an official emergency management program or designated responder to ensure consistency, accountability, and coordination.
	Continue to strengthen coordination among agencies and responders.
	• Conduct regular multi-agency emergency simulations or table-top exercises with a focus on the needs of older adults.
	• Ensure emergency facilities and reception centres are accessible, age-friendly, and equipped to accommodate mobility aids and medications.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Emergency Services & Preparedness Cont.	• Pre-designate alternative facilities that are safe, secure, and accessible to serve either as emergency reception centres or substitute locations for seniors activities, ensuring that seniors' programs and services at the Seniors Centre can continue with minimal disruption.
	Plan for rural and winter-specific challenges.
	• Incorporate seasonal risk considerations such as heavy snowfall, power outages, and road closures into emergency response plans.
	• Provide rural emergency preparedness for residents in outlying areas where response times may be longer.
	• Implementation of an emergency-grade address sign program that provides property owners with standard address signs that conform with necessary requirements, ensuring the fastest and most effective response from emergency services by allowing first responders to locate homes or business quickly and easily.
	Recognize and empower older adults as community assets.
	• Involve older adults in emergency planning committees and community resilience initiatives.
	• Highlight the role of older adults as mentors and leaders in community preparedness and recovery efforts.
Communication & Information	Strengthen coordination among local organizations to create a unified approach to sharing community information and updates.
	Reinforce a centralized community information hub, such as the Seniors Centre, both online and in print, to serve as a one-stop resource for local programs, events, and services for older adults.
	Continue to support digital literacy and technology access for older adults through workshops, peer mentoring, and partnerships with organizations such as Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.
	Ensure all public communication follows plain language principles and is available in multiple formats to meet a variety of accessibility needs.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Communication & Information Cont.	Continue to value and nurture word-of-mouth networks by encouraging local ambassadors, service providers, and volunteers to share information within their circles and neighbourhoods.
	Specific projects that would fill identified gaps in communication and information of local seniors-specific services, events, and resources include but are not limited to:
	• A seniors-specific quick guide for local services, programs, and important contact information was developed.
	• A bulletin board outside of the Seniors Centre for promotion of seniors-specific services, programs, and information was installed. It will be accessible at all times, regardless of indoor programming, and will help to reinforce the Seniors Centre as a hub for all seniors-related information.
	• It is recommended that the Golden Senior Guide be updated. With its last update in 2022, this document is identified as the most thorough and comprehensive inventory of local older adult services, programs, and information. Once updated, this guide should be distributed through community information hubs both online and hardcopy, made easily available to residents, and thoroughly promoted.
Social Participation	Expand opportunities for recreation, learning, and cultural engagement that are accessible and welcoming to older adults of all backgrounds and abilities.
	Improve transportation options and coordination for community events including volunteer driver programs or shuttle services for seniors in outlying areas.
	Continue to enhance accessibility of public facilities and community venues to ensure equitable participation.
	Promote intergenerational programs and community awareness campaigns that value and highlight the contributions of older adults.
	Encourage a diverse understanding of social preferences, ensuring supports are available for those who are isolated by circumstance, while honouring those who choose solitude.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Social Participation Cont.	Develop flexible and seasonal volunteer opportunities that accommodate older adults with household responsibilities, allowing participation without creating additional burden.
Outdoor Spaces & Public Buildings	Improve uneven and broken sidewalks in the downtown core, and prioritize changing cobblestone and mixed-textured surfaces for age-friendly smooth surfaces.
	Continue to prioritize snow and ice removal in high-traffic pedestrian areas and near key community designations, including benches and curbs.
	Incorporate Universal Design principles into facility upgrades and new developments.
	Continue to support improved public washroom availability in parks and downtown areas.
	Continue to explore the development of an indoor community pool and enhancement of indoor recreation facilities to provide year-round, accessible activity options for all ages.
	Foster collaboration with local businesses to promote accessibility improvements, offering guidance, recognition, and incentives to reduce financial barriers.
	Conduct accessibility and safety assessments of sidewalks, trails, and public facilities.
	Improve lighting, signage, and seating in public spaces to enhance safety and comfort.
	Enhance maintenance and accessibility of trails and paths for walking, biking, and mobility aids.
	Promote community gathering spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities that are inclusive and age-friendly.
Respect & Social Inclusion	Promote a community culture that values aging through awareness campaigns, intergenerational initiatives, and public education about ageism.
	Ensure that older adults are represented and heard in local decision-making, planning, and consultation processes.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Respect & Social Inclusion Cont.	Support inclusive community programming that welcomes participation from residents of all ages and abilities.
	Encourage community celebrations and recognition of older adults' contributions to civic, cultural, and volunteer life.
	Integrate principles of respect and inclusion into municipal policies, facility design, and communication practices to ensure age-friendly service delivery.
	Showcase the diversity of abilities and contributions of seniors and encourage partnerships with local organizations, artists, and cultural groups to share diverse stories and traditions that enrich community life, allowing for older adults' passions and experiences to guide plans.
	Re-establish welcoming and connection programs for newcomers and returning residents to orient older adults to local supports, volunteer opportunities, and social groups, strengthening belonging and participation.
	Reduce social isolation and loneliness through outreach and peer connection with programs, such as Better at Home and the Community Connector role, that proactively reach isolated or homebound seniors and link residents to local activities and support.
	Enhance digital inclusion and communication access by continuing to offer digital literacy training and support for older adults to build confidence using technology for communication, and accessing community information. Ensure non-digital alternatives remain available for those who prefer them.
Civic Participation & Employment	Encourage the development of a community-wide volunteer coordination system to connect residents with local opportunities and reduce duplication of recruitment efforts.
	Support volunteer appreciation, mentorship, and transition planning to honour long-term contributions and help engage new generations of volunteers.
	Explore new ways to revitalize service clubs and community groups, including partnerships with schools, youth programs, and intergenerational initiatives.

Age-Friendly Domain	Recommendation
Civic Participation & Employment Cont.	Promote age-friendly employment practices among local employers, including flexible hours, adaptive roles, and mentorship opportunities.
	Strengthen communication between volunteer organizations to identify shared needs and collaborate on volunteer recruitment and retention strategies.
	Consider holding a volunteer fair event to engage the community, provide education about volunteer opportunities, and to boost volunteer numbers.
	Advocate for the inclusion of an age-friendly lens in municipal and regional projects, plans, and policies.

Quick Dial Services

911 - Emergency
Use in the event of an emergency for police, fire, ambulance

811 - HealthLink BC
Non-urgent health information and advice from nurse, pharmacist, dietician

711 - HealthLink BC For Hearing Impaired
Same as above with a relay service for people who are deaf or hard of hearing

211 - Community Services
Connect to non-medical community and government social services

Information Sources

- Seniors Centre Newsletter and Website
- Find It In Golden Guide www.finditingolden.com
- The Golden Star Newspaper
- Town of Golden & CSRD Websites
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy

Emergency & Community Service Numbers

Ambulance (non-emergency)
250-344-6226

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy
250-439-9665

Community Response Network
250-344-6866

Crisis Line - Canadian Mental Health
1-888-353-2273

Fire (non-emergency)
250-344-6401

Golden Food Bank
250-344-2113

Golden Hospice Society
250-344-6300

Golden Mental Health
250-344-3015

Poison Control Centre
1-800-567-8911

RCMP (non-emergency)
250-344-2221

RCMP Victim Services
250-344-3920

Suicide Distress Line
1-800-784-2433

Victim Link
1-800-563-0808

Women's Safe Home
250-344-2101

Connecting you to local supports and resources

Age-Friendly Service Guide

This quick guide is made for you by The Age-Friendly Community Plan Project in collaboration with Your Local Community Connector
October 2025

United Way British Columbia

GOLDEN Community Economic Development

CSRD COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT

Health Services

Golden District Hospital
250-344-5271
Lab: 250-344-3040

Golden Medical Clinic
250-344-2211

Home and Community Care
250-344-3005

East Kootenay Primary Care Network (EKPCN): Doctor's referral required. Social worker, occupational therapist, respiratory therapist, physiotherapist, dietician, chronic disease nurse, mental health clinician.

Community Paramedic
Healthcare provider referral required.

Recreation

Town of Golden Recreation
www.golden.ca/recreation

Seniors Centre Activities
www.goldenseniors.ca/activities

This quick guide highlights key seniors services and is not a complete list of all available options.

Better at Home

Helps older adults continue living independently in their own homes by providing non-medical support services.

Services Provided
- Light housekeeping
- Transportation to appointments within town and out of town
- Friendly visiting
- Grocery shopping
- Meals and Rx delivery
- Navigation and peer support including form completion

Email
GoldenBetteratHome@gmail.com

Phone
250-272-4660

Community Connector

A Social Prescribing Community Connector refers seniors to a wide range of local services provided by community agencies. A detailed resource network is available online or offline.
250-272-0651
GoldenCommunityConnector@gmail.com

Meal Services

Interior Health
Frozen prepared meals, order form available at hospital registration desk.
Seniors Centre
Soup Day
Golden Food Bank
Affordable Meal Kits, available to all, prep required

Transportation

Columbia Valley Regional Transit
1-877-343-2461
Book 24 hours in advance
Tuesdays & Thursdays
Departs Golden 8:00 a.m.
Arrives Invermere 9:45 a.m.
Arrives Cranbrook 11:15 a.m.
Departs Cranbrook 3:00 p.m.
Arrives Invermere 4:55 p.m.
Arrives Golden 6:30 p.m.

Mount 7 Taxi
250-344-5237
Seniors rate available

Better at Home
250-272-4660
Volunteer drivers for clients

Seniors Housing

Purcell View
info@goldenced.ca
Independent seniors residence one-bedroom and studio units

Mountain View
250-344-7924
Independent and assisted living one-bedroom units

Abbeyfield House
250-344-7997
Assisted living home studio suites

Durand Manor
Long-term care, respite & rehabilitation