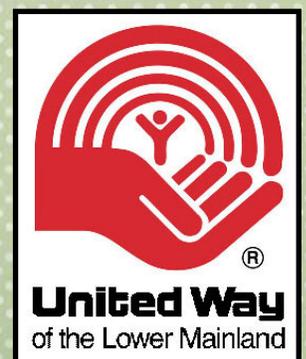
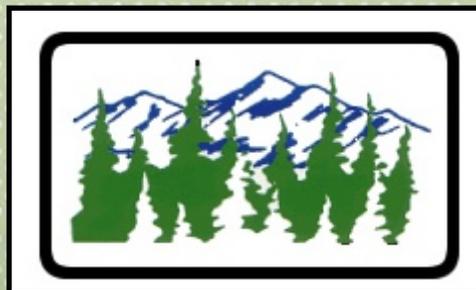


Tri-Cities Seniors Network Project

Final Report
April 2012



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Tri-Cities Seniors Network Project

BACKGROUND

In 2011, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, under their “Seniors Independence and Participation Grants”, awarded funding to a project called the Tri-Cities Seniors Network. Funds for the project have been administered through the Glen Pine 50 Plus Society in Coquitlam. Linda Western and Rosemary Rawnsley were chosen to manage the project on behalf of the Society. The project had a one-year time frame, from April 2011 to March 2012.

The need for the project was based on several factors. According to information compiled by the United Way in 2008 as part of an environmental scan, the Tri-Cities had been identified as one of the areas in the Lower Mainland with an apparent service shortage for seniors given the size of the population served. As well, it was projected to be an area where there will be significant seniors’ population growth over the next 20 years – a forecast of a 190% increase in the population over 65 by 2027. Further pointing to the need for this project was the fact that the Tri-Cities was the only area that did not have in place a coordinating interagency/community planning group addressing the needs of seniors.

The purpose of the grant was to undertake a process of community consultation with seniors, seniors’ groups, and agencies/organizations providing services to seniors in the Tri-Cities area, leading to the development of a plan and the establishment of a seniors’ network. This would provide people in the Tri-Cities the opportunity to work together to create a healthy, caring and inclusive community for the current older adults and to plan for the future needs of the growing seniors’ population. The intended long-term outcomes were: improved services, increased public awareness of the issues and impacts of the aging population, and the opportunity for the seniors and service providers of the Tri-Cities to ensure a focus on building age-friendly communities in conjunction with local government.

PROCESS

Work on the project was divided into four components:

- **Stage 1-** Research, data collection, making community connections, developing an inventory of programs and services currently available and identifying participants for continued conversations.
- **Stage 2** - Establishing focus groups and facilitating discussions with those groups.
- **Stage 3** - Using the profile that emerged from the first two steps as the framework to plan and host a community forum where the focus would be the development of a plan for action.
- **Stage 4** – Project review and outline of next steps.

Stage 1

Valuable demographic data and research information for the Tri-Cities as well as general information on the needs of seniors was available from United Way materials and from their 2011 Seniors Forum. The community activity notices in the local newspapers and the Seniors Directory for the Tri-Cities helped form the base of the inventory of programs and services. Meetings with individuals and community groups added to the inventory and helped establish the outline of the profile of where things are working well and where there is work to be done. Opportunities for community collaboration locally became evident and were pursued. Communication with seniors' planning tables in other municipalities provided a picture of success factors and challenges that could be anticipated in developing a plan for the Tri-Cities area. A number of factors in the larger external environment also lent strong support to the profile that was developing. Examples include the strengthened interest shown by the provincial government in initiatives such as Age-Friendly BC, the work being done by the Ombudsperson looking into issues for seniors, and the high degree of profile given to the topic through the 14-part series published by The Province newspaper in the fall of 2011. Locally, a group was exploring the possibility of better collaboration and planning at a regional level for a broader perspective of the community. The participants included representatives from social service agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, Douglas College, Fraser Health and the three municipalities.

A full list of the resources used in this first part of the project process is available as Appendix A.

Stage 2

Focus groups were used to provide opportunities for interactive discussion on seniors in the Tri-Cities but also to help foster collaboration and rapport. Five focus groups were established. They were comprised of representatives from:

- non-profit agencies
- for-profit agencies
- municipal staff involved in planning
- seniors' organizations
- health agencies

Twenty-eight people attended the meetings. Each focus group session was 1.5 hours long and was structured around six questions. All groups were asked the same questions. Notes were taken at each session capturing key thoughts, questions, and suggestions. Once all five sessions had been completed, the notes were reviewed and the key themes identified.

The focus group information is contained in Appendix B:

- B.1 - the list of participants,
- B.2 - the questions
- B.3 - the key themes.

A full summary of the notes from all the focus groups is available on request.

Stage 3

A community forum – the Tri-Cities Seniors Forum – was held on April 3 at Glen Pine Pavilion. The forum was sponsored by the Glen Pine 50 Plus Society, the United Way, and Community Volunteer Connections. The forum was designed for anyone living or working in the region that had an interest in, or connections to, the needs of seniors. Invitations were sent to all who had participated in meetings and discussions in the earlier stages. As well the invitations went to groups that had not yet been contacted such as Centre Bel Age, Mackin House and the Port Moody Heritage Society and to other municipal planning tables. Local politicians in all three municipalities as well as Anmore and Belcarra and the Provincial local representatives were encouraged to attend. The Tri-City News twice published a press release invitation to the general public. Participation in the forum was free and lunch was provided.

The 80 attendees heard about population trends, the information that had been gathered from the focus groups, the experiences of other community planning tables, and the features of age-friendly communities. They then participated in giving feedback and suggestions for potential strategies for action and the opportunity to indicate individual interest in working towards solutions.

The input received from the participants is captured in Appendix C:

- C.1 - Additional comments on age-friendly communities
- C.2 - Suggested additions of participants to include in the consultation process
- C.3 - Suggestions on how to proceed

The contact list of who people who are interested in continuing in the process has been retained for future use.

Stage 4

This project has been the first step in achieving the longer term outcome of improved and coordinated services. In the short term, the active participation in both the focus groups and the community forum are indicators of increased public awareness of the issues and impact of population aging in our communities. There were also indicators of increased collaboration among the participants. As well, the feedback and commitment to the concepts presented at the forum indicate a strong interest in building age-friendly communities and strong support to the model of seniors planning tables.

There were some challenges to the process. While the grant was for a one-year period, confusion around the hosting of the project took several months to resolve. As a result the time available for completion of the planned activities was curtailed. Further progress on the outcomes might have been greater without this delay. On a more philosophical level, trying to establish the need for an over-arching plan for all seniors that cross municipal boundaries was not always

understood. It will require a shift in thinking that reflects the fact that, while people have a residence in one city, they tend to do their “living” in all three.

The report required to meet the United Way funding agreement will be completed by the May deadline. That information plus the contents of this report will be shared with the Glen Pine 50 Plus Society after which time it will be available to all who participated in the process. A meeting to share the report with municipal representatives is being planned for late May. After that, it is the recommendation of the two project coordinators that a meeting of all who indicated an interest in continuing to work on a coordinated planning structure for seniors in the Tri-Cities be held quickly so that the enthusiasm and momentum that has developed is not lost.

Appendix A – Resources, Community Connections

Print Resources Reviewed

- United Way of the Lower Mainland
 - “Towards an age-friendly community in the Lower Mainland/Sea to Sky Corridor”
 - Moving Towards Age-Friendly Communities – Tri-Cities Seniors and Seniors’ Services
 - 2011 Seniors Forum – “Seniors Community Planning Tables”
 - “Seniors Vulnerability Report” 2011
 - “Community Profile #2 –Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam/Port Moody
- Tri-City News – “2011 Seniors Directory – a Resource for Seniors Living in the Tri-Cities”
- The Province – 14 part series entitled “Boomerangst” published October/November 2011
- British Columbia Seniors BC – “Features of an Age-friendly Community”
- Tri-City News and Now newspapers – community activity listings
- Seniors Engagement Toolkit – New Westminster

Presentations

- CARP – North Fraser Chapter
- Glen Pine 50 Plus Advisory Board
- Wilson Centre Advisory Board
- Dogwood Pavilion Advisory Board

Meetings and events

- Bev Pitman – United Way Planning Consultant Seniors Portfolio
- United Way 2011 Seniors Forum
- Cathy Burpee – Society for Community Development
- Hazel Potsma – Douglas College with introduction to Ann Kitching of Port Moody
- Port Moody Galleria group meetings
- Tri-Cities Community Partnerships (Solutions by Design) meetings
- Stacey Ashton – Community Volunteer Connections
- Jean- Luc LaMarche –Fraser Health Authority
- Gina Hartelano – SHARE
- Effie Garcia and members of the SUCCESS Seniors group

Related Connections

- Voices of Burnaby Seniors – Mariam Larsen
- Lionsview Seniors Planning Society – Tom Carney
- Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Katzie Seniors Network – Heather Treleaven
- Langley Seniors Community Action Table – Carla Robin

Appendix B – Focus Groups

Appendix B.1 Focus Group Attendees

Non-Profit Service Providers

- PoCo Meals on Wheels
- Crossroads Hospice Society
- Community Volunteer Services for Seniors
- Community Volunteer Connections
- Society for Community Development
- SHARE family and Community Services
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S
- ISS of BC

For- Profit Service Providers

- Home Instead Senior Care
- Helping Hands Agency
- Safecare Home Support
- We Care Home Health Services
- Nurse Next Door home Healthcare Services
- Personalized Dementia Solutions
- Driving Miss Daisy
- Comfort Keepers

Seniors' Organizations

- CARP (Canadian Association of Retired Persons) North Fraser Chapter
- Council of Senior Citizen Organizations (COSCO)
- Old Age Pensioners Organization
- Dogwood Pavilion Seniors Society
- Glen Pine 50 Plus Society
- Wilson Centre Society
- Burquitlam Jewish Community Centre
- Port Moody Galleria Group

Health and Support Services

- Fraser Health Authority
- Alzheimer Society of BC
- Canadian Cancer Society Caregiver Program
- PoCo Stroke Recovery Branch

- Parkinson's Self-Help Support Groups
- WHO (Women Helping Others)

Municipal Staff Group

- Coquitlam – Helga Ovington, Judy Hamanishi, Robyn Newton
- Port Coquitlam – Rob Sullivan, Carla Schuk
- Port Moody – Mary de Paoli, Jim Lacroix

Appendix B.2 Focus Group Questions

1. What are your thoughts on what seniors need to remain healthy, independent, and positively connected in our community?
2. Can you identify some of the barriers that challenge seniors' participation in the community?
3. What's working well for seniors in the Tri-Cities now?
4. What gaps do you see between what is now available and what is needed?
5. How is information about the current programs and services communicated? Gathered? Captured and shared?
6. What planning needs to happen now to look at the current needs of seniors? What planning needs to be happening now to look at meeting the needs 10 years or more into the future?

Appendix B.3 Themes Emerging from Focus Group Discussions

The following is a compilation of the responses to the same set of questions asked at each of the focus groups.

WHAT DO SENIORS NEED TO REMAIN HEALTHY, INDEPENDENT AND POSITIVELY CONNECTED?

- Multiple, diverse and affordable opportunities to participate, make connections and to feel valued
- Flexible, adaptable, affordable housing that is integrated into the community/neighbourhood
- A transportation system that is accessible, safe and works within the region as well as affordable transportation assistance for those unable to utilize public transit.
- Easy access to information about regional programs and services
- Communities that are accessible, walkable and safe
- Affordable home supports that allow people to remain in their homes in the community close to familiar services.
- Opportunities to be engaged in meaningful ways that acknowledges their skills and experiences and to have a voice in planning and policies that effect them
- Planned and coordinated services that meet the needs of a complex and diverse population

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION, ACCESS AND CHANGE?

- Income level
- Language abilities
- Mobility issues
- Affordable, accessible and flexible transportation
- Language and cultural expectations
- Lack of information about programs and services
- Lack of communication among service providers
- A municipal focus rather than a regional perspective

WHAT IS WORKING NOW IN THE REGION?

- The three existing community centres with an older adult focus offer places for mobile and active seniors to connect, participate get information all in a safe and welcoming place.
- The local newspapers provide the best source of information about regional community activities

WHAT ARE THE GAPS/ WHAT IS NOT WORKING?

- Options for transportation for the most vulnerable is very limited
- Public transportation does not function well on a regional basis, limiting access to programs and services in some areas.
- There are very limited opportunities for intellectual stimulation
- Programs and services are not meeting the needs of those with accessibility issues that include as well as language and other cultural factors
- Income levels limit the ability of seniors to access programs in the existing centres as well as health related services that may require some cost such as home supports.
- Most centre-based program planning is done on a municipal basis rather than with a regional perspective.

HOW IS INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND RESOURCES GATHERED AND SHARED?

- Local newspapers and centre/ community specific newsletters
- Client surveys provide feedback for specific programs
- Senior participation in centre program planning

WHAT PLANNING NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Planning needs to take into account the whole person meeting physical, emotional, and intellectual needs for a healthy senior.
- A planning process that has a regional perspective needs to be put in place
- Seniors need to be included and engaged in any planning process
- The concept of an age friendly community should be the foundation of all planning.
- Communication between service providers needs to be improved
- A mechanism for accessible one-stop- shop information about regional programs and services should be a priority.
- Regional planning would be more reflective of the way seniors view the daily activities of their lives as they access programs and everyday services and living
- A process that is inclusive of multiple services to locate and connect to isolated and vulnerable seniors needs to be in place.

Appendix C – Community Forum

Appendix C.1 Additional Comments to the Characteristics of Age-Friendly Communities

The following unedited comments were generated at the Forum during an exercise about Age-Friendly Communities.

Community Support and Health Services:

- Service guide for critical and essential services
- Locating isolated seniors within the Tri-Cities
- Having a planning table called “voices of Tri-City Seniors” (VOTS)
- Move the sign for Glen Pine so that it is more visible from the street
- Reduce the barriers for those caregivers needing extra help. The Health Authority does not have set rules. Not all are getting equal services/ hours of care/respice. It appears to depend on the case manager assigned
- Living books through public libraries. Rent a person on a subject of interest.
- More intergenerational programs available at community centre
- More help and encouragement for a senior to stay in their own homes
- Establish patient advocacy
- Building trust and collaboration between for –profit and non profit organizations serving seniors
- Recognize the needs on introverted seniors. Social isolation: many feel different from different folks
- Use it or lose it. People of all ages need to work on prevention, not medicine after the fact
- Support for spouses caring for partner
- More health prevention seminars
- Helping a senior with low-income with homemaking
- A way to coordinate service providers
- Coquitlam library needs home bound services, more accessible by bus and deposit collections
- A senior’s services centre which is a multi- purpose centre offering information on housing, financial matters etc.
- Providing opportunities for non-profits to collaborate on a small scale
- A mechanism for services to cooperate and coordinate
- Seniors helping other seniors financially. Instead of a cruise, help with a donation to support other seniors
- What does a senior do whose medication needs exceed what their health services provide
- A one stop shop for information about seniors services that is publicized and is available through a website for internet savvy seniors
- Caregiver sessions : a drop in at each centre rather than a 5 week session
- Support programs for ongoing health problems such as a stroke recovery groups

Social Participation:

- More mental and intellectual challenges in courses offered in seniors' centres
- Don't forget that seniors have brains and like to use them
- Please advocate for more educational courses at senior's centres and find ways to allow seniors to participate e.g. Douglas College
- Must address hard of hearing and deaf issues in the community at large
- Elder coffee groups
- Get UBC or SFU to do pro bono lectures
- Burke Mountain corner stores in neighbourhoods. Thus far, none are planned above David Ave.
- A mechanism for isolated seniors to get connected to services and programs.
- Engaging seniors from ethnic backgrounds
- Cooking classes for widowed men and/or men caregivers
- More social programs that include transportation for a fee for senior isolated individuals with dementia
- New port village would benefit from a seniors centre such as Glen Pine
- Need to make the Tri-Cities more welcoming /friendly toward immigrant and refugee seniors
- Leisure Connections should be run out of all community centres
- Promotion of senior planning committees in various major visible minority groups like SUCCESS so as to communicate the need in and actions in place in both directions
- How do we get information to seniors living in all the high-rises?
- Need more adult day programs
- Caregiver respite programs
- Technology: help seniors enjoy and the advantages of technology. Liaison between high schools to host seniors to teach skills; drop in days taught by seniors

Communication and Information:

- Expand E-book Library
- Produce multilingual collaterals to expedite information sharing to all
- Recognition that help is available for seniors who are struggling with mixing substances or are affected by a partner doing the same
- More visible signs to locate Glen Pine
- List or publication of companies who work for seniors at reasonable rates
- Opportunity for seniors to meet in groups, to have speakers come in and speak on various topics and to share knowledge themselves
- BC211
- Help to allow welcoming access to facilities for private seniors' services to be upfront and available for all. I.e. in hospitals
- Information sign for community neighbourhood events at David and Coast Meridian
- Better distribution of local papers. Aging neighbourhoods often have no carriers
- More and better publicity for events

- Maps/ signposts in the town centre area to locate city hall, Glen pine, RCMP, Spirit Square. Please!!!
- Increase seniors pages in local papers to include more information about programs, events and activities
- Set up a Tricities Planning table
- Loud and Lively more advertising on radio and local papers re programs for seniors
- Re-establish the Red Book, City Soup, local website, where did they go?
- Build a seniors' website with appropriate information and links to other senior info

Transportation:

- Bus services to low income areas is particularly bad but this is where low income seniors live
- Bus service for Burke Mountain above David Ave. to Hazel Dr supplied 2 to 3 times per day i.e. community sponsored bus
- Transportation between Dogwood and Glen Pine so that a greater exchange could occur for many events
- Better service from Handi-Dart so taxis do not become the only alternative
- Must have government assistance on this. The issue is too big for small organizations
- How can we increase the small bus routes, particularly in hilly areas i.e. Murray and Thermal to facilitate mobility of seniors in those areas?
- Social media transportation on Craig's List. Rideshare for seniors. Employees driving to hospitals/ clinics. Use of volunteers
- Community shuttle to all of the Seniors Centres for increased opportunities to remain connected
- Improve signage at bus stops detailing cost of ride, if exact change is needed or where to get transit passes.
- How about bus service on thermal and Murray Street and thermal drive to allow seniors living in Chineside to access public transit
- More transportation which would solve a lot of problems and enable them to get out and take advantage of a lot of activities and not be so alone.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:

- Install manual gym facilities in parks like Chelsea Park. These facilities do not need power but use the human energy as to exercise them well.
- We should build more senior friendly paths in some of Coquitlam Ravines to make walking easier. I.e. BC Hydro right of ways
- Improve clearing of snow and ice from sidewalks so seniors can use public transit during winter
- Free use of upper track at Port Moody Rec Centre from 10 to 2
- Benches on Heritage Trail perhaps donated by a family in memory of.....
- More washrooms around Poco Trail

- Checkerboard, horseshoes, bocce for new neighbourhood parks on Burke Mnt. Not just activity areas for kids.
- Need for benches on challenging walk areas e.g. Heritage Mountain Blvd

Respect and Social Inclusion:

- Provision of resources for visible minorities in the Tri-Cities area and let them know what they are and where they can be accessed as required
- Invite and enable immigrant and refugee seniors to participate and have a voice
- Don't categorize us as seniors all of the time. We're still people!
- We need to be treated as thinking adults not ancient kindergarteners
- More senior community facilities for particular visible minorities for them to integrate with the majority as a smooth merge. These would phase out over time.
- Cross generation volunteer companions; connect young and old in meaningful activities

Housing:

- Non-Health related in-home support services: cleaning and groceries
- Have Tri-City municipal planners convene representatives of strata councils to address the issues/ needs of seniors
- Adaptable housing
- Mapping the distribution of assisted housing throughout the Tri-Cities to identify gaps and ensure even distribution throughout the region
- As we see more private-highly serviced housing choices. We should not lump them into basement suites who spend the same percent of their income on an entirely different level of housing
- Retirement residences that are not-for-profit or social housing that keeps all ages together and helping each other. Awareness of the needs of all ages.
- Affordable housing options for vulnerable female seniors.

Civic Participation and Employment:

- try to get the 3 Councils of the Tri-Cities to come up with a Regional Plan for seniors
- seniors friendly municipal consultation process
- compile a list of existing seniors services in the Tri-Cities and identify overlaps and merging possibilities
- communication, communication, communication
- a planning table to facilitate and provide leadership in a process where seniors support each other

Appendix C.2 Who else should be included in the ongoing consultation process?

The following is a list of additional organizations that could/should be involved in the planning process for seniors in the Tri-Cities Region. The list was generated by the consultants and participants at the Forum.

- Medical offices/ Clinics
- Blockwatch Captains
- H.E.A.R Dogwood and CHHA
- Volunteer Centres
- Health Authority
- Funeral Homes
- Retired Teachers
- Home Support Agencies
- Major visible minorities group
- Police (RCMP and Port Moody Police)
- Other emergency services
- Service Clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kinsmen etc.)
- The faith community
- Cultural/ Arts groups
- Heritage groups
- Retirement /Assisted Living Homes and Care facilities
- Add other immigrant groups to the planning committee (Farsi, Chinese, Korean)

Appendix C.3 Responses to the question of how we should proceed

Themes emerging from the comments

- The desire to create a regional planning table with the diverse representation of the seniors' community in the room
- Improved collaboration among municipalities at a variety of levels
- Improved communication and collaboration among service providers
- The need to determine the actual services and programs available and a mechanism to distribute to all seniors
- The need to capture information on the gaps in services
- A recognition that there is an opportunity for seniors to be involved in the planning of services and programs in a more significant way

Detailed list of comments (as taken from notes)

- Hire a coordinator to initiate the groups/ project
- Form a network of local seniors, representatives of senior service providers and municipalities
- Regional collaborative planning table, senior led, senior membered
- Seniors Planning Table inclusive of all 5 local municipalities
- Connect with existing seniors groups and support their on-going initiatives
- Tri-Cities Seniors Planning table
- Need a Seniors Planning Table for the Tri-Cities with a paid Coordinator
- Intergenerational planning
- Language support for seniors
- Facilitate opportunities for seniors to contribute their skills, knowledge and experience
- Seniors planner as a municipal role for the Tri-Cities
- Social planners in every municipality that work together
- Inventory of seniors services/ programs in the Tri-Cities

- Solidify /establish the Tri-Cities into an official planning table with the voices of services both for-profit and not-for-profit to meet once a month
- Get some liaison between seniors directors from the three municipalities
- Get message out to seniors about what is available to them and about 211
- Tally our assets: what seniors have to contribute in skills etc.
- How do we get all our members to support our social event
- Tri-Cities Network is in early operation and can be used for spreading information
- Through: funding, coalition among service agencies, maximizing volunteers, donations/fundraising, engaging other cultures
- Connect with the 10 other planning networks
- Get Mayors, Councils and Directors of Seniors Centres to come to meetings like this and to collaborate on planning
- Get more men involved
- Independently funded leadership to sustain roles such as Rosemary and Linda: neutral proven leadership
- Inventory of seniors services and a mapping of service providers
- It is essential to keep the Tri-Cities Seniors Network /Planning table as what is needed by service providers as a team approach

