
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

B.C. communities recognized for Age-friendly activities

VICTORIA – Helping seniors remain safe, active and independent is garnering honours for 11 communities around British Columbia, Health Minister Terry Lake announced today.

“From barrier-free buildings and streets, to increased opportunities for seniors to participate in community decisions, Age-friendly BC is focused on supporting older British Columbians and ensuring they can continue to contribute their skills, knowledge and experience to their communities,” said Lake. “The program engages a variety of stakeholders, from municipalities to business owners, with a goal of ensuring communities are accessible and liveable for seniors and their families.”

The District of 100 Mile House, Village of Burns Lake, Town of Golden, Village of Kaslo, City of Langford, Township of Langley, City of Richmond, District of Sooke, Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality, City of North Vancouver, and the District of North Vancouver will each receive a letter of congratulations, an Age-friendly BC Recognition award poster and a \$1,000 reward to create a legacy project or a celebration.

“I want to congratulate the communities receiving age-friendly recognition,” said Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors Darryl Plecas. “Their hard work and leadership are helping seniors stay active and connected to their communities and they are making a difference in the lives of many of B.C.’s older residents and their families.”

The Age-friendly BC Recognition program is a partnership between the BC Healthy Communities Society and the Ministry of Health and is part of the Age-friendly BC strategy. To date, 36 B.C. communities have received Age-friendly BC Recognition.

To achieve recognition, four key steps must be taken. These include establishing an age-friendly advisory or steering committee, passing a council or district board resolution, conducting an age-friendly assessment, and developing and publishing an action plan.

While all 11 communities have met these key steps, the type of age-friendly priorities vary by community and range from housing, transportation, pedestrian infrastructure and seniors’ safety on buses, to senior-specific information and programs, barrier-free design in public spaces and advocacy for low income seniors.

As an example, Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality has committed to making the community age-friendly by supporting seniors and people of all abilities by providing essential amenities to facilitate walking and skiing around the village.

“We are excited to see such commitment and momentum for age-friendly communities in B.C.,” said Jodi Mucha, executive director for BC Healthy Communities Society. “Age-friendly planning and activities creates conditions for all people to thrive in the places they live, work, learn and play.”

The recognized communities will continue implementing age-friendly plans and projects.

For a complete list of age-friendly recognized communities and to learn more about how communities can receive age-friendly recognition, please visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly/recognition

A backgrounder follows.

BACKGROUND

Age-friendly recognition recipients

The following B.C. communities are receiving age-friendly recognition:

District of 100 Mile House – conducted a community assessment and planning process, which included focus groups, a community café, and a survey. The results identified communication, transportation, housing, and advocacy as age-friendly priorities.

Village of Burns Lake - community consultations included a community walk-through, an open house, and a survey. This process identified a number of priorities, including pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks in high-traffic pedestrian areas, and informed the community's active transportation plan.

Town of Golden - conducted a survey on the eight features of an age-friendly community. Results indicated the top priority is community support and health services, housing and transportation.

Village of Kaslo - passed a council resolution to assess and improve accessibility and inclusion of older persons and for the whole community. As well, Kaslo conducted interviews, a focus group and community discussions to identify age-friendly priorities for action, including community support and health services, communications, transportation, and advocacy for low-income seniors.

City of Langford - completed an assessment of all eight features of an age-friendly community through a survey, focus group, and two open houses. The resulting age-friendly action plan which included findings that Langford offers good opportunities for social activities, participation and engagement, recommendations for future action such as facilitating additional affordable housing choices in close proximity to transit, services and amenities as well as continued improvements to pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility. This plan has now been adopted as council policy.

Township of Langley - actions from the Age-Friendly strategy have included the establishment of a dedicated web page to share information and the Seniors Advisory Committee is continuing to work with the community to implement the strategies identified.

City of North Vancouver – with its community partners, continue to respond to the recommendations of an extensive survey based on the World Health Organization criteria for age-friendliness. Some of the top priorities moving forward will be to enhance outdoor spaces and public buildings, improve transportation services and enhance housing options and opportunities for social participation. North Vancouver has also indicated that they will work with the 55+ Summer Games Committee to display the Age-Friendly BC Recognition award prominently during the games in North Vancouver, August 25-29th, 2015.

District of North Vancouver – worked with community partners who conducted a survey based on the World Health Organization criteria for age-friendliness and 1,200 seniors responded. A workshop was held and the top priorities identified in the district were to create an adult day centre program for seniors with mild dementia and to provide computer classes for seniors who speak Farsi. Other projects related to communications and transportation priorities for seniors and people with disabilities are ongoing.

City of Richmond - conducted a survey, interviews, focus groups and community mapping and the results were used to develop the age-friendly action plan. Next steps include establishing an inter-departmental task force and designing a framework for monitoring and evaluation. One example of an age-friendly strategy is the Older Adults Service Plan, which aims to provide effective, meaningful and appropriate programs and opportunities for older adults.

District of Sooke - published their age-friendly action plan in 2015, which includes securing and supporting options for accessible and independent senior living and promoting barrier-free design in public spaces.

Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality - has committed to making the community age-friendly by supporting seniors and people of all abilities in the community by providing essential amenities to facilitate walking and skiing around the village, as well as promising accessible recreation and adaptive sports.

Learn more:

For more information, visit www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly/recognition.

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