

Seniors Independent Living Assessment Report



2013 Age-Friendly Communities Grant

Prepared on behalf of the District of Sooke and the Sooke Region Community Health Initiative and the Sooke Region Volunteer Centre

by Marlene Barry

¹ Age-Friendly Cities Guide

² Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide

Summary:

The seniors in our community are both the providers of services and the receivers of services, the roles largely determined by their mental and physical health. When we look at the aging Baby Boomers as an impending tidal wave of economic drain, we are only looking at a part of the picture. Many seniors are well set up to be able to pay for their own needs and care throughout their life time. We have 'young' seniors with disabilities as well as active 'older' seniors in our midst. Painting them all with the same brush does them no service, nor will it help us serve those in need.

Sooke boasts a wide range of services as well as senior friendly businesses. There are also gaps and areas needing improvement. Working with an existing organization to develop 'direct volunteer services' (i.e. one-on-one volunteering) in our communities as in neighbouring municipalities, would go a long way to filling some gaps. Connections have been made to learn from our neighbours and this will be used to inform and engage decision makers in developing these services in the Sooke region.

When we build for being 'age friendly' we build for all ages. "Because active aging is a lifelong process, an age-friendly city is not just "elderly friendly". Barrier-free buildings and streets enhance the mobility and independence of people with disabilities, young as well as old. Secure neighbourhoods allow children, younger women and older people to venture outside in confidence to participate in physically active leisure and in social activities. Families experience less stress when their older members have the community support and health services they need. The whole community benefits from the participation of older people in volunteer or paid work. Finally, the local economy profits from the patronage of older adult consumers. The operative word in age-friendly social and physical urban settings is enablement."¹

With a continued focus and action towards making our community more Age-Friendly we will grow with the seniors in our midst and leave a lasting legacy for future generations. "The costs and benefits associated with aging and the impacts on communities and broader society make an investment in healthy aging imperative. While the majority of seniors living at home view their health as good, long-term health problems tend to increase with age—this is the case for most chronic conditions, disabilities and dementias."²

Purpose and Method:

The Seniors Independent Living Assessment in Sooke was undertaken to identify, basic demographic information about seniors and seniors' awareness of and experience with services for seniors in our region. The reason for conducting interviews, rather than surveys, was to connect directly with the participants to, explore their areas of interest, the services they were

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aware of, which ones they were utilizing and to identify gaps in their level of knowledge of services.

During the assessment, in depth interviews were conducted with 34 seniors. Each interview lasted ½ to 1 ½ hours, allowing the interviewee plenty of time to consider their answers. A semi-structured interview was conducted using an interview guide. Both closed and open ended questions were used to ensure that information was gathered that could be compared to available statistics and to allow seniors to comment in a detailed manner on issues that were important to them. Some people wanted and in fact needed additional information, requiring additional research to provide answers and go over the results.

Where possible the interviews were conducted in a comfortable setting (e.g. the participant's homes) over a cup of tea and a cookie, provided by the Interviewer. In some cases participants were looking for new ways to connect in their community and other people were looking for additional supports.

Population total = 11,435
Ages: 55-59 (875) (7.7%)
60-64 (765) (6.7%)
65-69 (520) (4.5%)
70-74 (335) (2.9%)
75-79 (265) (2.3%)
80-84 (185) (1.6%)
85 + (155)(1.4%)

Number of people 55 and over = 27%
of the population within the Municipal
District of Sooke

The median age for District of Sooke =
40.8.

**Statistics Canada, 2011 Census, Focus
on Geography Series on District
Municipality of Sooke**

Findings

The information in the next section follows the interview guide, and presents each question and the number of responses in each of the response categories. Interpretation of the results is provided where necessary.

How long have you lived in this community? Average: 27.75 years, Range: 0.2 – 47 years

How long have you lived in your current residence?
Average 16.9 years, Range 0.2 – 47 years

What is your age? 55-59 (5) 60-64 (4) 65-69 (7)
 70-74 (9) 75-79 (3) 80-84 (6) 85-89 (0) 90+ (0)
Other: (0) Average: (65-59)

Gender: Female (24) Male (10)

Are you a caregiver? Yes (9) No (25)

If yes for whom: Spouse (3), Parents (1) Other family member (3) Still work as a caregiver (2)

What is your current living situation? Rent (4), Own (28), Other (2) (staying with friend until find a place) (lives with family)

Private residence (21) Mobile/Modular (8) Home Retirement community (0, assisted living (0)
Other (4) being: Apartment (2), Staying with friend (1), Living with family (1)

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Do you have a mortgage or other debt that you carry month to month? Yes (6) No (28)
Pad rent was expressed as a concern by 4 of the 8 living in mobile home parks

Which community do you live in: Sooke (28), E. Sooke (0), Otter Point (6), Shirley (0), Jordan River (0), Port Renfrew (0)

Number of people in your household: One (9) Two (21) Three (3) Four (1) Five or more (0)

Do you have any pets? Cat (3) Dog (6) Bird Fish (3) Other (Yes, but not specified – 2) No (22)

Is your home accessible on one level? Yes (15) No (19)

Does your home present any mobility challenges? *Eight of the 15 whose homes are all on one level, mentioned stairs to get into the house, 2 are concerned about them now, 4 indicate they may represent a challenge in the future, 2 felt they would likely always be manageable, 2 also expressed concerns about narrow doorways for wheelchair access, 2 live in an apartment and were concerned should there be a fire.*

Of the 19 whose homes are not all on one level, stairs was the first concern, narrow doorways the second. Seven indicate they have no challenges with their living conditions; only 2 live in houses where they could easily live in on one floor; 7 indicated they have plans to add safety features, lifts, ramps, etc. Two indicated they can no longer bathe and must use the shower.

Do you have grab bars and other safety features in your home and bathroom? 20 participants have grab bars or other safety features. All but one respondent without safety features are under the age of 70 with the remaining person in the 70-75 age brackets.

What is your major life challenge at this time? Six respondents indicated two major concerns and 2 indicated three or more concerns. Finances (12) Health (5) Family issues (5) Social isolation (5) Other: Can no longer drive (2) Housing (1) No major challenges (9)

What senior services are you aware of in our community? Seniors Drop-in Centre (socialization, inexpensive lunches, BINGO) (30): without a doubt, the most well-known service was the Drop-in Centre, though some folks did not know that it had moved recently or in fact where it was.

SEAPARC srs prgms (10), Good Food Box Program (4), Meals on Wheels (15),

The most-frequently reported barrier to accessing services/ programs was “unawareness of services/programs”; transportation was also frequently cited as a barrier.

P. 57 - Sooke Region Community Health Information Project CHI Final Report December 2006

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Seniors Activity Bus (19),	Island Health Sr Day Care (2),	Museum (1),
Church activities (5),	Food Bank (4),	Library (1),
EMCS programs (8),	T'Sou-ke Health Office (5),	Community events (1),
Integrated Health Ntwrk (12),	4 choirs (1),	Hospice (2),
Crisis Centre (7),	Dental (2),	BC Pensioners group (3),
HandyDart (7),	Eye care (2),	Transition House (1),
Thrifty Foods SenDial (2),	Veterans Affairs (1),	Volunteer Centre (1),
Legion (games and Sunday	Island Health Homecare (1),	Private businesses (2),
breakfasts \$5.00) (14);	Walking groups (2),	Business discounts (8)
Contact Loan Cupboard (20),	Counselling (1),	
Contact Drivers (19),	Seniors Serving Seniors (1),	

This was a particularly interesting question because people came up with services beyond those on the initial list. Many recognized services once they were mentioned as well. Some interviewees did not feel they were ready for these services, and knew practically nothing about what services were available. A request was put in for a comprehensive list and a way for seniors to find out about these services when they are ready for them.

Would you like any more information on these programs/services, if so, which ones?

Fifteen respondents said yes and were provided with the appropriate details. The most common requested information was with regard to store discounts, information on the Good Food Box program was in second place, with information on various volunteer opportunities covering the rest.

Who does your taxes? Self (7) Other (27)

If someone else, is it family (2), friend (1), bookkeeper (7), accountant (10), tax business (10), other (1) Crisis Centre

What do you like about where you are now?

'Quiet' is by far the most commonly used adjective below. Ease of access, friendliness and nature are also common themes.

- Familiar and comfortable
- Not too far from amenities, familiar and comfortable
- Comfortable, know my house inside out
- Spaciousness of house and garden, close to church, Child Youth Family Centre and town core
- Private and quiet
- The people, the environment, sheer beauty of the place. I can't imagine me living anywhere but Sooke!
- Nice and quiet
- In town core so I can walk everywhere
- On this spot, I like the waterfront, property, house, garden, proximity to Sooke, bus goes right by the door, all inclusive neighbourhood (broad multi-age, cultures), Kaltasin Project has people involved in neighbourhood, places to walk, everything about it.

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- Can see the water from my kitchen, like the rural aspect and neighbourhood. Convenience of Kemp Lake store, people there are supportive and a resource – will deliver.
- I come from US and like Canada, love the climate here on West Coast, tall trees, rain, size of the community, proximity to broader shopping, the people and more
- Quiet, people are a good age range, my place is easy to look after, easy to get to, and economical
- Nothing about current living condition
- Nice place, easy to get around, lots of areas to walk, people are nice
- No working responsibility, freedom to visit our grandchildren when we want to
- Good community, quiet and close to the water, lots of trees, good quality of air
- Lovely, neat park, friendliness of neighbours, kind of like a family, we help each other.
- Serenity, quiet, peaceful, do what I want when I want to do it. No hustle and bustle.
- Quiet and good neighbours
- View from my window, safe neighbourhood, close to town, accessible to Victoria, the weather
- Close to what you need, no outside yard work, no maintenance needed
- Security when we go away, easy access to town core, view, residents are friendly with a variety of personalities
- Access to Victoria, space, Galloping Goose Trail
- View, peacefulness, animals, I like Sooke and find people friendly. I also spend a lot of time in Langford/western communities as I work there.
- The quiet
- Less maintenance than old place (recently downsized)
- Quiet, away from the crowds, near trails and beach
- I'm in the forest, I like being in a small community and being able to bump into someone I know on the spit or in the stores. We are close to everything that we used to go on a Sunday drive to find.
- Quiet, beautiful view, house is laid out conveniently
- Quiet, space around the house, close to Sooke Village, like living in a small town and feel we have most of the services we need here
- Everything - perfect
- Layout of house, accessibility,
- Peaceful, quiet, I like being away from the hassle of business areas.

What household tasks do you continue to do yourself? *The lower numbers on certain tasks is not necessarily representative of the ability of most participants to continue to manage their own affairs. Rather, it is a reflection of the division of labour in households of 2, or more, people.*

Groceries (25),
 Cooking (23),
 Laundry (25),
 House cleaning (21),
 Vacuuming (18),

Home maintenance (8),
 Yard work (11),
 Gardening (12),
 Managing finances (22),
 Transportation (24),

Take out garbage (2),
 Look after pets (2),
 Dishes (2),
 Nothing (2)

Do you have family and/or friends to help or support you? Yes (30) No (4)

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How often are they able to assist you? When needed (20) daily (4) weekly (5) 2 times/month (1)

What type of support do they provide? *Based on the Interviewer's observations the higher numbers for housecleaning, vacuuming, and home maintenance, are more related to life style choices rather than lack of abilities.*

Auto repair (1),
Cooking (6),
Gardening (6),
Groceries (5),
Windows (1),

Home maintenance (11),
Yard work (7),
House cleaning (9),
Vacuuming (8),
Laundry (4),

Major repairs/renos (2)
Managing finances (2),
Transportation (3),
Personal care (3),

Do you hire people to do some things for you? Yes (26) No (7)
If yes, do they do:

Groceries (0),
Cooking (2),
Laundry (0),
House cleaning (6),
Vacuuming (5),
Home maintenance (11),
Yard work (17),
Gardening (12),

Managing finances (2),
Transportation (3),
Major repairs (19),
Minor repairs (18),
Cut grass (9),
Personal care (2),
Tree work (1),
Mechanics (2),

Dog walking (1),
Remove garbage (1),
Finish painting house (1),
Carry heavy things (1),
Windows (1)
General errands (1)

How much do you spend on average per month for these services? The range was from \$20/month to \$750/month. The average was \$212/month, with a four people indicating they hire on an as needed basis, nothing regular.

If needed, are you able to pay for (more) some support services? Yes (27) No (2) Unsure (5)

Please tell us what you like best about living in this community. *The quiet, good neighbours, general friendliness, small town atmosphere, availability of services, and natural surroundings are repeated throughout the comments. This is similar to the findings of the Arts Wave - Cultural Mapping Project' done in August of 2010, though with slightly different weights to the positive aspects of our community. Seniors may value the quiet and small town atmosphere more than general population.*

- Pretty quiet, good neighbours
- Kind of rural but still have all of the amenities, doctors and stores we need
- Small town where you know most everybody. They are always there to support you, very good friends

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- Friendliness of people, know so many people, medical services are great, weather, small town,
- Not much, I could take it or leave it
- Everything above and especially the location, sea mountains, beaches, the west coast beauty!
- It is quiet, all small town with good services for the size
- Pretty quiet, good neighbours
- My friends, general friendliness of people, small community, concerts and sports events to go to, there is a wholeness to what is offered to all different ages, walking and cycling trails, places to go hiking and beaches. I like all of those things.
- People are friendly and inviting, you know people and they know you, a really nice place to live. Smaller community makes it easier to make the connections to get the support and friendships you need.
- Recreation centre, high school theatre, arts, Sooke Philharmonic, Fine Arts, Canada Days, community spirit and involvement
- Great people, go shopping and people are friendly, animals wandering through
- Clean air, animals wandering through
- Sooke River and Gordons Beach, Whiffen Spit and there are still lots of trees around. Also it is still a little town of sorts though starting to get too big for me.
- Nice area, everything close, most things within walking distance
- Friendly, familiar surroundings
- On the ocean, small community, don't have to dress up, everyone is friendly and nice, forgiving community
- Companion ship and support I get from this community. I like the small town atmosphere
- I like the slow pace, especially when compared to a large city. I don't even like going to Victoria any more.
- I like everything about it. When you go to the store you meet people you know. I always get good service.
- I like all the same things I mentioned about living where I am. Everything you need is here and if you want more you can get to the city easily. Lots of community organizations to be involved in.
- Good community to be in, not much crime, safe enough to go downtown in the dark.
- The talking and sharing that we do, our family is near, we have helpful friends, and opportunities to volunteer
- Small town with a wide range of activities
- The people are friendly, I know lots of people and find it interesting watching Sooke grow and change
- The lower population. I find it very personalized. If I reached out I know I could get all the help I needed.
- The people are friendly; you can get together with people or be private as is your wish.
- It's where my family is, close to the water and back country
- It's just comfortable. I love all the nature. I'm a nature person. Almost everything I need is right here. I love the community spirit.
- I like that it is small, not as 'touristy' as some small towns, rugged, local, countryside, people seem to be very nice, and I like the nature. I like the small stores/businesses – no box stores.

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- Friendly, small, accessible, can get to everything easily. I love being in an outdoors focused community. There are lots of outdoor opportunities. Sooke has all of the things I like, yoga, art, music, close to family in Victoria.
- It's private
- Community spirit, accessibility to beaches and forest.
- Everybody knows everybody; communication is really good between people, if you don't know where to get something someone else will know. I like the small town atmosphere.

What is the main thing you would improve or change in your community if you could?

Various aspects of improving transportation was the most common topic, with a home for the Senior's Drop-in Centre running a close second.

- More doctors and more specialists coming out
- Find or build a seniors activity centre
- Lower taxes, reduce traffic on road
- Second bridge crossing, second route into Sooke
- Better transportation, creating a grid pattern
- We would have a stand-alone senior's centre where we could operate as we want to and offer the services we want to, like every other community in B.C.
- By-pass road for heavy traffic – build a decent 4 lane highway Victoria to Port Renfrew
- More doctors and more specialists coming out
- Would like to see more things like a shoe store, a fabric store, and those kinds of shops
- Better sidewalks, better accessibility for getting in and out of spaces, it's not bad but could be better. Then there's the traffic on Sooke Road. Need a by-pass for trucks especially. Need more infrastructures.
- Central building (common space) for neighbours to meet with neighbours – in trailer park specifically and broader in community
- Stop putting tax money into the Prestige Hotel
- Sidewalks
- Allow access to the back woods again for hunting and fishing
- Find a permanent, accessible home for the seniors drop-in centre, improve accessibility to seniors day-care programs
- Would like to see a proper seniors centre with services
- Do something about the downtown, fix the sidewalks, make it more park-like, more trees and flowers, make it more pedestrian friendly.
- Improve hours for Handidart bus. Move bus shelter to in front of Woodside Estates Park and back from the traveled portion of the road more.
- Create an alternate route
- Better walking space on sides of road if we can't have full-fledged sidewalks. It's scary walking on the main roads.
- Help seniors groups become more integrated so that they have organization emails, websites, ways to connect – one stop shopping for seniors. The younger, active senior piece is completely not addressed. Creating one place to go to for answers when you get sick or injured to find out where to get help would be a big support to citizens. When I was sick, there is no home care or support for people in need of any age unless they can pay market rate.

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- Better sidewalks, and or bike/scooter lanes, some sidewalks have sloped areas at risk for tipping a scooter,
- Bike/scooter lanes as roads are improved; more specialty stores (e.g. shoe store, men's clothing wear store, etc.)
- More trails that link to the downtown core
- Fix Sooke Road. It's a nice drive when it's not raining. I would like to see a bigger more well-rounded Senior Drop-in Centre with more activities. For some of the seniors' computer and camera courses through EMCS I haven't found the main instructor helpful enough.
- A District Council that worked together better with less conflict and more financial responsibility.
- Provide more public access to the waterfront, expand the boardwalk and trails.
- Stop blowing up our mountains to build houses
- I would slow down development. I think we are losing our charm. I don't want it to be too citified; I think it makes it impersonal. It is our natural habitat which attracts people.
- Add potted plants and things that don't cost a lot of money to make it more attractive.
- Transportation system, meaning roadways and public transportation, better trail systems.
- I would do more volunteering if I could and nothing needs changing.
- Get volunteer organizations better connected and coordinated. Create better communication channels for citizens, organizations and government.
- Proper sidewalks, better lighting in some areas,

Please tell us what special skills you have learned or developed during your life time.

Seniors come in all shapes and sizes and from all walks of life, and, as you will see, with a wide variety of skills. Some of the interviewees had developed one or two well-developed skill sets, while others had diverse backgrounds. Some seniors are still working after age 65 in order to supplement their income as well as keep themselves out in the community and engaged. We also have young seniors already retired, well set up for the rest of their days, and with a feeling that there is "so much to do and so little time!"

At the same time, older adults continue to make significant and numerous contributions on a number of fronts—to their families (by providing assistance to spouses, children and grandchildren); to their friends and neighbours; to the community (through volunteering activities); and to the paid economy as skilled and knowledgeable workers. **Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide**

Management (7),
 Construction (2),
 Nursing (5),
 Sales (6),
 Medical office assistant,
 Teaching (4),
 Gardening (7),
 Sewing/tailor (5),
 Computer (8),
 Photography (3),
 Musical instruments (2),
 Engineering (2),

Carpentry (3),
 Supervision (2),
 Artist (2),
 Communication (6),
 Administration (3),
 Organization (6),
 Counselling (3),
 Clerical (5),
 Road maintenance,
 Skiing,
 Swimming,
 Fishing,

Flower arranging,
 Sailing (2),
 Wine making,
 Flood predictions,
 Public relations (4),
 Surveying,
 Flying,
 Figure skating,
 Life skills,
 Law (2),
 Research (2),
 Animal husbandry (3),

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Tree planting and thinning,
 Librarian,
 Fashion designer,
 Child raising,
 Criminologist,
 Assessment skills,
 Medical technician (2),
 Older workers employment
 network,
 House decoration,
 Curtain and blind making,
 Truck driving (2),
 Faller (2),
 Equipment operator,
 House painting,
 House moving (2),
 Making people laugh,
 Logistics,
 Warehousing,
 Helping where I can,
 Chairing meetings,
 Community engagement
 (3),

Community development
 (2),
 Child care,
 Senior care (3),
 Writing,
 Art,
 Leadership,
 Team playing,
 Public speaking (2),
 Air frame technician,
 Farming,
 Cooking,
 Ticket sales,
 Music,
 Technical proof reading,
 Website updating,
 Be creative and do crafts,
 How to make a silk purse
 out of a sow's ear,
 Coaching,
 Lands and forests
 (stumpage, etc),
 Multi-tasking,

Fully competent domestic
 technician (2),
 Leadership,
 Metal work,
 Boat building,
 Marine electronics,
 Golf (2),
 Inventory,
 Creativity,
 Knitting,
 Business and bookkeeping,
 Healing energy work,
 Windows (1),
 Visual problem solving,
 Hobbies,
 Dancing,
 Cribbage,
 Singing (3),
 Banking,
 Waitressing,
 Delegating and taking
 charge where needed,
 Volunteer management

Please tell us what hobbies or interests you still enjoy.

While some seniors will fit into the typical grandmotherly image many people have (reading, knitting, gardening) there is a wide range of senior interests and activities. You may find a senior who knits and reads but who also hikes and travels; some that hate sewing and love working on the computer and traveling; and a full range in between. Age is not the rate-limiting factor, though it can be. We have seniors who exercise and travel well into their 80's as well as young seniors in their late 50's who cannot do these things due to health issues:

Listening to music (3),
 Walking (5),
 Knitting (2),
 Sewing/knitting/crocheting
 (15),
 Selling Avon,
 Swimming/Aquafit (4),
 Reading (11),
 Gardening (7),
 Socializing/entertaining (5),
 Wine making (2),
 Photography (6),
 Computing (7),

Watch TV (2),
 Travelling (4),
 Cooking (6),
 Following politics and
 current events (2),
 Book club,
 Spending time with
 animals,
 Being outside,
 Working with youth and
 seniors (2),
 Carving (3),
 Hunting, fishing (2),

Singing (3),
 Being creative/hand crafts
 (7),
 Golf (2),
 Bird watching (2),
 Art,
 Music (3),
 Biking (2),
 Hiking (3),
 Keeping fit,
 Cross country skiing,
 Sailing,
 Metal detecting,

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Genealogy,
Rock collecting/polishing,
Running,

Yoga,
Playing games (3),
Volunteering,

Do you currently volunteer in your community? Yes (25) No (9)

If yes, where and how often?

Like other sectors of the population, seniors engage in their community at different levels. While some actively engage by joining a group or organization, others volunteer on an ad hoc basis, helping out neighbours and friends. Many people do not see this as 'volunteering' though it still fits under the definition of volunteering. Our local seniors are still volunteering, sometimes well into their 80's. They volunteer on an as needed, irregular or seasonal schedule (5), some on an almost daily basis (4), weekly (7), 2-4x/week (6), every 2 weeks (1), monthly (9), every 6 months (1), once a year (1) and ad hoc (5). They are volunteering for such organizations as:

Contact Drivers,
Contact Loan,
Sooke Senior Drop-in,
Sooke Red Hat Sirens,
BC Pensioners and
Seniors Organization
(OAP),
Kaltasin Project,
T'Sou-ke Arts Group,

Book clubs,
Good Reasons youth group
through 7th day Adventist,
Cooking classes,
Diabetes recovery classes,
CanDrive (seniors driving
survey),
Sunriver Community
Gardens,
Sooke Community Choir,
Children's Garden Club,
Sooke Fall Fair,
Quilting group,
Sooke Food Bank,
Santa's Anonymous,
Juan de Fuca Salmon
Enhancement,
EMCS,
Shirley Women's Institute,

Baking for bake sales,
Sooke Philharmonic,
Long Boats,
Saseenos School reading
sessions,
Sorority (in Victoria),
Sooke Historical Society,
Fine Art Show,
Jobe's Daughters,
Coast Guard,
Dry Grad,
Cops for Cancer,
Festival Society,
Strata Board,
Sooke Region FoodCHI,
Sooke Region Volunteer
Centre,
Lots of other periodic
support

Sooke is well serviced by local community groups and organizations and enjoys a first-class recreational facility. – P.47
– Sooke Region Community Health Information Project CHI Final Report December 2006

Babysitting,
Drive people places,

Tell us about volunteering you have done in the past:

Advisory Planning
Commission,
Economic Development
Commission,
Board of Variance,

Seniors Drop-in Centre,
Cubs,
Boy Scouts,
Girl Guides,
Smokettes,

Meals on Wheels,
Student council,
Life guard,
Wine judging,
Sooke Fall Fair,

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BC Amateurs Wine Makers,
Canadian Wine Makers Association,
Kids sports (football),
Calgary Community Centre,
Lions Clubs,
Organizing events,
Sooke Family Resource Society,
Women in Tune,
Book clubs,
Victoria Police,
Counselling,
Citizens on Patrol,
Victoria Parole Circle of Support,
Hospitals,
Big Brothers,
Elementary school choir,
Story time at Library,
President of school PAC,
Sooke Community Choir,
Hospice,

T'Sou-ke greenhouse,
Sooke Historical Society,
Sooke Rescue Society,
SEAPARC,
CASA,
Country Market,
Folk Music Society,
Various festivals,
Face painting,
Legion,
All Sooke Days,
Shirley Women's Institute,
Church,
Literacy,
Gym registrar,
Public school,
Music activities,
Special Olympics coaching,
Long Boats,
Fine Art Show,
Jobe's Daughters,
Coast Guard,
Dry Grad,
Sooke Food Bank,
Cops for Cancer,

Festival Society,
Choirs,
Political activist,
Union Shop Stewart,
Coopers Cove Protection Society,
Sooke Festival Society,
School PAC's,
Allied Arts,
Political champagnes,
Provincial and local boards,
Gleaning program,
Neighbourhood house,
Legal Advocacy centre,
EMCS,
Chronic Pain Self-Management Courses,
Driving neighbours and friends for shopping and appointments,
Legion,
With kids school,
Ad hoc as well

Would you like us to help connect you with volunteering opportunities that fit within your strengths and challenges? Yes (5) No (29)

- I would like to see a senior's phone tree or buddy system set up so seniors are check in on daily. I could also volunteer for periodic one-off events though I cannot stand for long periods.
- My dream job would be to go to homes to draw blood for seniors for tests rather than have them go to a clinic. (Island Health controlled, so not likely)

Do you have someone you regularly talk to or confide in? Yes (27) No (7)

- not really – that is part that I miss. I don't want to take everything to my family. I have found that people I trusted in the past weren't necessarily trustworthy. I haven't found someone to be a close friend.

Where do you get together or connect with friends and acquaintances?

While the ability to engage in diverse activities tends to diminish with age, weather, day-light hours and mobility, seniors still participate in a variety of locations. Food and beverages are

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still a big part of social contact with this group and some are still hosting small dinners in their own homes well into their 80's. Only one person indicated she doesn't really get out, just meets with family and a couple of neighbours. She doesn't know anyone here yet.

Each other's homes, Legion, phone, friends over dinner, restaurants, email, book clubs, lunches, coffee shops, Red Hat events, travelling, Drop-in Centre, quilting group, meetings, golfing, out in community, church and weekly seniors dinner on Saturday, talking to neighbours, volunteering situations, People's Drugmart Walking Group, Choirs, art school, trips to Victoria, community events, walking on Whiffen Spit, sporting events.

What do you think you need to allow you to continue to 'age in place'?

Not surprisingly, finances (7), health (4) and dealing with stairs (8) were the main concerns expressed by respondents. Eight respondents felt they were in a good position to continue to age in their current location with little or no modifications to their homes. Two people plan to downsize sometime in the future. Four people with interior stairways indicated they may add a stair lift when necessary and 3 with exterior stairs felt a ramp could be built. Future assistance with house maintenance and gardening were also mentioned as supports they would bring in when and as needed, though 2 people could use it now but cannot afford it. Adding grab bars and railings was mentioned by a number of respondents as easy and relatively inexpensive supports they would put in place when necessary. One person was concerned about alternative transportation if she should lose her licence and 2 people are hoping the transit service would improve drastically by the time they need it. Generally, folks are counting on staying healthy for as long as possible, and that things like the Senior Day-Care program has a shorter than 2 year wait list should they ever need it. One lady feels she will be happy and can live well where ever she is as long as she has adequate craft supplies to keep her occupied. One gentleman on a disability pension needs to find a home in the first place. (Note: at the time of writing this report he now has a home in subsidized housing.) It is interesting to note that two of the respondents who indicated they needed more money to age-in place also carried debt from month to month and found it necessary to take out a mortgage in order to make ends meet.

How much of your shopping do you do in Sooke? Major grocery (27), pharmacy (28), other (22)

This was a slightly more challenging question for respondents and perhaps could be re-worded for future assessments. Some people looked at the whole picture while others chose to break it down into categories. Percentages ranged from 20% to 100%. Over all, these seniors spend approximately 73.75% of their grocery money in Sooke; slightly higher on pharmaceuticals at 79.8% and 74.68% of their 'other' shopping is done in Sooke as well.

Challenges people faced around shopping locally included not having much selection for shoes, clothing, craft supplies and vehicles. Also one person cannot walk around the stores so shops at Walmart and Costco as they provide electric carts for those with mobility challenges. Some seniors with mobility challenges do shop at local stores that will deal with their purchases at their car. This generally is the result of building a relationship with the store owner and/or staff

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and calling ahead to make arrangements. One respondent did not know how much shopping was done in Sooke as his family did all of the shopping. One person felt he could not purchase most of the materials he needed for his work (95%) though made more of his personal purchases in Sooke (40%). Both grocery stores, the pharmacies and Sooke Home Hardware were all mentioned as favourite places to shop in Sooke. One respondent lives in Sooke though works in Westshore so still likes to shop at Thrify's and enjoys shopping at Walmart, Canadian Tire and Costco as well. One person also specifically mentioned the country market when in season, and another indicated that she would shop more in Sooke except she must go where transportation will take her.

What is your main method of transportation? Walk (1), Cycle (1), Scooter (1), Drive self (30), friends/family drive you (2), taxi, bus, Seniors Activity Bus (1), HandiDart, other
Two respondents indicate two primary methods of transport (walk/cycle, walk/family drives).
The vast majority of seniors, young and old, value their independence and continue to drive themselves where and when they want to go, though some certainly do restrict their movements due to financial constraints.

When was the last time you were able to go to one of our local parks or beaches? Within the: Last week (17), Last month (7), Last year (7), Several years ago (3), never (0)
Generally the seniors interviewed a very to moderately mobile, with a few individuals clearly unable to carry on with the lifestyle they were accustomed to in earlier times.

What challenges or barriers have you encountered living in your community?

Eleven respondents indicated they had not encountered any challenges while living in this community. A lack of sidewalks (9) and uneven road shoulders (3), lack of bike lanes (3) combined with traffic issues and pedestrians who do not use the sidewalks provided (2), covered the largest area of concern. Other challenges included:

- Finding a local doctor (1)
- No proper senior's centre (1)
- Missing clothing and shoe stores, etc. more variety to be able to shop more local – not box stores! (2)
- No movie theatre (1)
- Whiffen Spit is a whole lot bumpier than I had ever noticed now that I am in a wheel chair. Needs paving or finer gravel. Now that parking at Coopers Cove to access Goose is down lower, it is no longer accessible. The Galloping Goose surface is fine for wheelchair, when you can find a place to get on it. (1)
- affordable housing, parking lots too small, can't get to the backwoods for hunting and fishing (1)

Research has documented that all else being equal, residents that live in communities with well-connected street and sidewalk networks, and a supportive pedestrian environment walk and bicycle more and drive less than residents of more isolated, automobile dependent locations. This results in measurably better physical fitness, reduced likelihood of obesity and traffic crash risk, and fewer air pollutants per capita than residents of more automobile oriented communities. - Promoting Public Health through Smart Growth: Building Healthier Communities through Transportation and Land Use Policies and Practices (2005) www.vpti.ca

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- more supports needed for families to care for their elders in their own homes (1)
- bus schedules/transportation when can no longer drive (1)
- She was the person doing things for others. When she got sick, friendship circle and finances changed. Could not get support when she needed. Can't drive at night. Would like to see more activities and events during the day or alternative transportation (1)
- live on side of mountain, challenging for going for walks – other than that nothing really
- None really for her though have friends who have challenges with the 'small town' everyone knowing everyone's business (2)
- Alternate routes for getting in and out of the village core, (1)
- No electric carts for shopping (1)
- When you are alone it is hard to motivate yourself, so more opportunity opportunities to connect with single people with similar interests. (1)
- No real challenges except I now wish I lived closer in so I could walk more. (1)

How safe do you feel in your own home? Completely safe (27), fairly safe (7), not safe (0)

Generally we live in a safe part of the world. Even some of those who indicated they feel 'fairly safe' chose this more on a philosophical point of view rather than fear or concern.

One additional comment for feedback was: I feel fairly safe during the day though do not as safe at night due to lack of police coverage outside of house and vehicles have been burgled a few times in our area.

How safe do you feel when out and about in your community? Completely safe (25), fairly safe (8), not safe (1)

People with mobility challenges felt slightly less safe while out and about in their community.

Feedback:

- Not safe due to mobility issues, use cane, can't walk far – can't get walker/wheelchair in and out of trunk
- Completely safe though recently had a neighbour put in jail for threatening life of his mother. Some concern about living on an island should any major disaster, economic or natural, occur

Do you feel you can afford the basic necessities; such as housing, food, medication, transportation, entertainment? Yes (30) No (3) One person declined to answer the question.

Feedback:

Two 'yes' responses had caveats with them:

- yes, while living with family – couldn't live on his own in Sooke – still paying off bills when his deceased wife was ill.
- Yes, barely though \$350/mnth for rent from Disability Pension isn't enough

Additional 'no' feedback:

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- No, not doing maintenance on car, house and car insurance challenging, not much for entertainment, insulin costly
- Almost, but not quite – entertainment doesn't happen unless it's free
- No - not where we are, need to figure out a different way to operate

Yearly Household Income before tax: □ Under \$20,000 (3)
 □ \$20,000 - 39,999 (14) □ \$40,000 - 59,999 (3) □ \$60,000+ (10) *Three respondents declined to answer the question and 1 did not know as her husband handled all of the finances. It was interesting to note that those who expressed major concerns about finances represented the spectrum of incomes. Those living on less than \$20,000.00/year did not necessarily worry about finances, while some in the over \$60,000.00 bracket did indicate they worried about finances.*

Source: (for info below) : National Household Survey, Census Canada 2011

Family Income in 2010 of economic families: average \$83,711. Average family size = 2.9

Lone parent economic families average income = \$46,338.

12.1% of people 65 and over in DM of Sooke are in the low income category, based on after-tax income.

What type of out of home activities do you attend?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Legion (11), | Conventions (1), |
| Seniors Center (4), | Travel (3), |
| Church (5), | Family events/parties (2), |
| Coffee or other social group (7), | Lunches out (1), |
| SEAPARC activity (6), | Exercise classes (3), |
| Walking or hiking group (6), | Arts and crafts groups (4), |
| Community events (27), | Opera (1) |
| People's homes (9), | Coffee shops (3), |
| Garden club (1), | Victoria shopping (2), |
| Movies/theatre (5), | Choir (1), |
| Book club (4), | Golf (2), |
| | Restaurants (2), |

- Casino (1),
- Part-time work (1),
- Volunteering (2),
- Bird watching (1),
- Lawn bowling (1)

One person does not get out much at all.

Where do you get most of your local information?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Sooke News Mirror (32), | Family (10), | Sooke Voice News (3), |
| Television (16), | Times-Colonist (7), | FaceBook (1), |
| Friends (14), | Internet (4), | Radio (0), |
| Social contacts (13), | | |

Do you own and/or use a computer or other similar device? Yes (29) No (5)

When was the last time you took a course, workshop or training?

This varies from currently in courses or workshops to 50 years ago, and one person not being able to remember the last time he took a course. The average space is less than 10 years with 9 people either in courses or having taken one with in the past years.

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Do you have a local doctor? Yes (22), No (12). If no, where is your doctor located?

Nine of the 12 have a doctor in Langford, 2 have a doctor in Victoria, and one person does not have a GP at all, though she hasn't needed one yet. One of the people with a doctor in Langford has concerns because her doctor is retiring and the new doctor will be moving the practice to Broadmead are in Victoria.

How do you get there? Drive self (29) although 2 sometimes walk, family member drives (2), cycle (1), cab (1),

Have you completed some form of Future Health Care Plan or Living Will? Yes (17) No (17)

Would you like to participate in future planning and activities for seniors? Yes (23), No (8), Maybe (3)

Would you participate in a group education session to learn how to complete a Future Health Care Plan? Yes (13), No (21)

Conclusions

Over all, seniors in our region are in a fair to excellent position to age in place. Many of them are thinking through their options and some have already taken steps to remove or manage potential barriers.

Sooke has a lower percentage of low income seniors (6.6%) than BC (14.7%). From Local Health Area Profile - Sooke 62 (School District boundaries - includes Sooke, Colwood, Metchosin and Langford)

Many seniors are well set up to be able to pay for their own needs and care throughout their life time. In our small study of 34 respondents we have 3 people living on less than \$20,000.00/year and 10 having over \$60,000.00/year. This would support the belief that Sooke Region has a relatively affluent population compared to the national average. Twenty-eight of the 34 respondents own their own homes and 30 out of 34 own a car and drive themselves about. One respondent owned a vehicle but didn't have a home to live in, so we do have quite a mix.

Finances appeared to be a concern for a spectrum of respondents, regardless of level of income. Interestingly, many respondents indicated they would need more money to continue to age in place though none of those carrying debt considered the reduction of debt as being the next option, and those with cars appear more fearful about losing their independence than their financial situation.

Transportation, in its various forms (e.g. driving, transit, bike lanes, trails, etc.) seems to be the largest area of concern as people reach an age to be concerned about losing their license. As we work to improve transit and infrastructure some of these concerns will be alleviated, though not likely banished.

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Stores sharing the cost of having an electric cart in each mall would not only save mobility challenged seniors money on travel costs, it would also allow them to shop locally more often, addressing both financial and transportation concerns.

Finding creative ways to alleviate the doctor shortage and bring back some of the lost services, while also looking to expand upon existing services, will also address seniors concerns around transportation, finances and health. One senior traded doctors with a friend who now lives in Langford.

A fully functioning, stable Senior Drop-in Centre, would address issues around social isolation, develop further opportunities for engagement and information sharing. The concern about where and how to find the information you need, when you find yourself suddenly needing it, was expressed by the participants and also in the '2008 Age-Friendly Sooke Report on Dialogue'.

Developing 'direct volunteer services' (i.e. one-on-one volunteering) would be a cost effective way to fill in many gaps in services and ensure those services were accessible to all citizens in need. It can well serve to keep more seniors engaged in their community despite any disabilities by creating volunteer opportunities that focus on their strengths (e.g. being on a phone tree to other seniors when they cannot walk or stand to do other types of volunteering). Direct volunteer services would also facilitate some seniors staying in their homes for longer.

There is more work to be done! Increasing the public's awareness of what is already here and building upon on strengths will continue to make Sooke and the surrounding communities a great place for people of all ages to live.

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