Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project

FINAL REPORT – DECEMBER 2021

WHISTLER

The Resort Municipality of Whistler is grateful to be on the shared, unceded territory of the Lil'wat People, known in their language as Lil̓wat7úl, and the Squamish People, known in their language as Sḵwxwú7mesh. We respect and commit to a deep consideration of their history, culture, stewardship, and voice.

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ACRONYMS

B.C.	British Colombia
ICT	Internet Communication Technology
MAC	Whistler Mature Action Community
MOTI	B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
MUSCC	Measuring Up Select Committee of Council
OCP	Official Community Plan
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RMOW	Resort Municipality of Whistler
SLCC	Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre
SLRD	Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
SPARC BC	Social Planning and Research Council of B.C.
UBCM	Union of B.C. Municipalities
VCH	Vancouver Coastal Health
WCSS	Whistler Community Services Society
WHA	Whistler Housing Authority
WHO	World Health Organization

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This report is the outcome of the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project carried out by the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) with the assistance of Cardea Health Consulting Inc. (Cardea) between April and October 2021. The project's purpose was to assess Whistler's current age-friendliness and then develop a plan identifying priorities and potential actions to advance aging-in-place needs and opportunities.

Acknowledgements

The RMOW and Cardea thank community members who participated in the project's survey, interviews and focused conversations, and on the Working Group. More information on community involvement in the project is provided in Section 2 of this report.

The RMOW and Cardea also extend their appreciation to the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM), whose funding provided support for the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project. The project was supported by a grant under the UBCM 2020 Age-friendly Communities Program. The purpose of the UBCM program was to help British Columbia (B.C.) communities support aging populations by: "developing and implementing policies and plans, undertaking projects that enable seniors to age-in-place, and facilitating the creation of age-friendly communities."[1] UBCM awarded the RMOW a grant under Stream 1 of the program: Age-friendly Assessments, Action Plans & Planning.

The RMOW defines aging-in-place as the ability to remain in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income or ability throughout life's stages.

RMOW Official Community Plan, 2018

Report Structure

This report summarizes the assessment of the current situation in Whistler and provides an action plan to support local older adults to age-in-place. The report is divided into three key sections as follows:

- Section 2 details the methodology of the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project;
- Section 3 presents the results of Whistler's age-friendly needs assessment and provides a plan for potential actions; and
- Section 4 identifies considerations for implementation and a framework for future evaluation.

This report also includes five appendices that provide additional information as follows:

- Appendix A presents the terms of reference for the project's Working Group;
- Appendix B details background information on age-friendly planning, with a focus on the Canadian, B.C. and Whistler contexts;
- Appendix C describes Whistler's community profile and includes demographic information that is relevant to the project;

[1] UBCM (n.d.). *Age Friendly Communities.* https://www.ubcm.ca/funding-programs/local-government-program-services/age-friendly-communities

- Appendix D lists RMOW policies related to age-friendly planning by topic; and
- Appendix E details the results of the project's community survey.

SECTION 2: PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project used the eight well-established age-friendly dimensions as its overarching framework and was conducted in two key phases: 1) the needs assessment phase; and 2) the action planning phase. A Working Group of community stakeholders and two members of the public contributed to the project throughout both phases. The following subsections discuss the eight age-friendly dimensions, the Working Group's contributions and the specific steps of the two phases in detail. The end of Section 2 also includes a discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project's methodology.

Eight Age-friendly Dimensions

In 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the Global Age-friendly Cities framework, designed to promote healthy and active aging. Under the WHO framework, age-friendly communities support older adults by providing opportunities for better health, participation and security in eight dimensions. The UBCM 2020 Age-friendly Communities Program also employs the eight age-friendly dimensions and specifies them as follows: 1) outdoor spaces and buildings; 2) transportation; 3) housing; 4) respect, social inclusion or cultural safety; 5) social well-being and participation; 6) communications and information; 7) community engagement and employment; and 8) community support and health and wellness services. Whistler's age-friendly project is structured around UBCM's expression of the eight dimensions.

Working Group

The project Working Group was formed at the outset of the project. The Working Group was comprised of representatives from community partner organizations, the older adult community, RMOW Council and RMOW departments. To seek the two community members-at-large, the RMOW placed advertisements in the local newspaper and promoted the opportunity through a media release and the project webpage.

The purpose of the Working Group was to give input on public engagement opportunities, assist in the development of a shared vision and goals, help define roles and responsibilities for multiple stakeholders, and work to identify strategic priorities and concrete on-the-ground actions to achieve the age-friendly assessment and action plan recommendations. Further information on the Working Group's role is provided in the terms of reference document included as Appendix A. The Working Group met four times between June and October 2021, and many members also provided feedback individually throughout the project.

Working Group Members

Two at-large members representing Whistler seniors

One RMOW Councillor

One representative from each:

- *Better at Home*
- *Vancouver Coastal Health*
- *Whistler Community Foundation*
- *Whistler Community Services Society*
- *Whistler Cycling Club*
- *Whistler Housing Authority*
- *Whistler Mature Action Community*

RMOW staff from the Planning and Infrastructure Services Departments

The Squamish Nation and Lil'wat Nation were invited to be part of the project's Working Group, but unfortunately, they did not directly participate in the project.

Needs Assessment Phase Methodology

After creating the Working Group, the first step in the project was to conduct the needs assessment. The needs assessment was designed to establish a baseline of Whistler's current age-friendly policies, programs and services. The needs assessment was informed by an environmental scan and community engagement activities, which are described below.

Environmental Scan

Using desk research, an environmental scan was used to review pertinent documents and programs, validate previous feedback, identify gaps and analyze relevant data related to Whistler's older adult population. The environmental scan process included:

- A brief analysis of the related peer-reviewed literature and grey materials (information that falls outside of peer-reviewed research, but is still considered "best practice" content);
- An examination of demographic profiles of Whistler's older adult population;
- A review of relevant municipal documents; and
- A scan of other similar sized jurisdictions.

The results of the environmental scan were examined through the lens of the eight age-friendly dimensions and are summarized in Appendix B (background information on age-friendly planning), Appendix C (Whistler community profile) and Appendix D (RMOW policies).

Community Engagement Activities

The environmental scan was followed by community engagement activities intended to understand the assets for, and barriers to, aging-in-place as identified by stakeholders in the community. The community engagement activities were carried out during June and July 2021. Data were collected using a mixed-method approach, gathering qualitative and quantitative information through a community survey (offered in print and online), one-to-one interviews, and a focused conversation. The target participants were service providers, older adult community members, and caregivers of older adults. The community engagement process was also conducted through the lens of the eight age-friendly dimensions.

Data collected in each age-friendly dimension were sorted by select indicators identified in the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC's) Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide. The PHAC indicators were developed for a Canadian context using the original work of the WHO Age-friendly Cities Guide. The indicators are designed for communities to plan, implement and evaluate age-friendly initiatives. The use of indicators in the community engagement activities established both a baseline and a framework to conduct future evaluations.

Community Survey

The Whistler age-friendly survey was designed using the PHAC indicators document. The survey was open to the public online for three weeks between June 28 and July 18, 2021. Hard copies were also available at three public locations: Municipal Hall, the Whistler Public Library and the Meadow Park Sports Centre. The survey was advertised through several mediums, including newspaper advertisements, posters throughout Whistler, the Mayor's report and online through the RMOW website, social media channels, the Whistler Today newsletter and a media release. Caregivers were encouraged to fill out the survey on behalf of any older adult community members that they support.

Based on the 2016 Census Profile, approximately 2,045 adults aged 55 and older live in Whistler (this does not include second homeowners). While the survey was targeted toward community members (permanent residents and second homeowners) aged 55 and older, it was available to all ages. In total, 375 people responded to the survey. While this represented a very good response rate for this target stakeholder group, the survey was voluntary (participants were not randomly selected) and was open to all members of the public. Therefore, while the results provide valuable insights, they cannot be considered a statistically valid representation of all Whistler adults aged 55 and older.

The demographic section of the survey revealed:

- Approximately 80 per cent of the participants (299 respondents) identified as full-time, permanent Whistler residents, while approximately 16 per cent (58 respondents) identified as part-time seasonal second homeowners.
- Of the respondents who identified their age (291 respondents), most were between the ages of 55 to 74 years old, with the most representation from those between 65 and 69 years old.
- Almost two-thirds of the participants shared their gender (290 respondents). Of these, approximately 64 per cent (185 respondents) identified as female.
- At least 50 per cent of identified second homeowners and full-time residents have been a part of the Whistler community for over 20 years.
- Fifty per cent of the respondents indicated they were retired, while the remaining were primarily working full-time for pay, semi-retired or working part-time for pay.
- Almost 60 per cent (154 respondents) of those who answered the related question indicated that their net household income was over $80,000.

- The primary housing type survey respondents reported living in was detached single-family homes, followed by townhouses and apartments.

- Approximately 21 per cent (62 respondents) of those who answered the related question reported currently living in employee-restricted housing.

The survey results are highlighted throughout Section 3 of this report. A complete summary of the survey results is provided in Appendix E.

Interviews and Focused Conversations

Stakeholders were invited to give feedback via one-to-one online or telephone interviews or an online focused conversation. Participants were recruited through posters throughout Whistler, advertisements in the local newspaper, the project webpage and word of mouth using a "snowball" technique with local service providers. Participants were asked to provide their experiences of getting older in Whistler through a series of open-ended questions. Participants also offered suggestions for improving services and programs in each of the eight age-friendly dimensions.

The goal was to reach six people to interview. There was significant interest in the interview call-out, and instead, 22 people were interviewed. This included two caregivers, twelve older adults (six men and six women), and eight service providers. Interview subjects had various socioeconomic backgrounds, differing levels of mobility, and several had workplace experiences providing health services to older adults.

Three focused conversations were planned; although many people registered for the focused conversations, the lack of attendance on the scheduled days meant that two of the three sessions were cancelled. Many of the participants registered for the cancelled focused conversations opted for interviews instead, which translated into additional interviews. The one focused conversation that took place was with service providers.

It is important to note that specific language groups were not targeted for intereviews because of logistical and timing issues during the community engagement process, and reaching a range of more vulnerable older adult community members was not fully achieved.

Action Planning Phase Methodology

The results of the needs assessment provided a baseline and a framework for age-friendly planning efforts. Each dimension area had specific recommendations developed from the community input gathered during the needs assessment process.

Additionally, RMOW staff heard action planning ideas at the Vital Café titled Aging Well in Whistler. This online community event was organized and hosted by the Whistler Community Foundation on September 22, 2021. Several of the ideas raised by Café participants were subsequently fed into the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Planning Project for the Working Group's further consideration.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The needs assessment was conducted in the spring and summer of 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Provincial restrictions on travel and public gatherings meant that data needed to be collected virtually (i.e., Cardea did not conduct onsite visits to Whistler, and there were no in-person engagement activities). All Working Group meetings and the focused conversation were completed via Zoom. Some interviews were conducted by Zoom, and some were carried out over the phone. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a walkability assessment was not conducted as part of the project; in a walkability assessment, Cardea would have toured the community with local older adults to identify age-friendly features and deficits. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 situation, the project's needs assessment was comprehensive, and the community engagement was robust.

SECTION 3: WHISTLER AGE-FRIENDLY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

The discussion below presents the assessment results and actions for each of the eight age-friendly dimensions. The information presented for each dimension consists of the following:

- A section on Whistler's current age-friendly features;
- A section on "what we heard" during the community engagement, which includes identified opportunities for change to improve age-friendliness; and
- A table with recommended strategies and actions.

Under each 'what we heard' section, the collected data are sorted by select indicators identified in the PHAC Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide. Each section includes quantitative information from the survey results and suggestions for changes made by respondents in the open-ended survey questions, interviews and focused conversations. The community input gathered informed the corresponding recommended strategies and actions.

Each recommended strategy, with associated actions, identifies existing resources or related initiatives and timelines to achieve the actions. Timelines are listed as ongoing, short-term (one to two years), medium-term (two to five years) or long-term (over five years). Where possible, actions are identified for consideration by specific community organizations and/or RMOW departments; as the community organizations and RMOW departments are listed in alphabetical order, the listing order does not denote a potential lead organization. The term "N/A" (not applicable/available) is indicated where related initiative linkages do not exist or where they may need to be created.

New Recommended Programs

There are two overarching new recommended programs referred to in many of the actions below. The first program is an age-friendly information webpage or hub (i.e., a place to house older adult information related to the eight age-friendly dimensions) that could be developed to improve awareness of programs and services for older adults in Whistler. Secondly, an age-friendly business program could be explored as a way to better support older adult community members.

Age-friendly business programs are designed to encourage the local business community to create environments that are safe and secure, and that respect the unique needs of older customers. Age-friendly businesses are more comfortable for all ages and ability groups. Age-friendly business programs usually include a simple educational program to help business owners understand the unique needs of their older clientele. Businesses that participate in the program are typically recognized with some sort of visual representation of their participation in the program (e.g., a door or window sticker system).

Starting a business program also creates additional supportive community partners who can help move the age-friendly agenda forward. An age-friendly business program could also be leveraged to attract additional older adult visitors to Whistler. The Township of Langley provides an example of a successful age-friendly business program in B.C.[2]

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[2] Township of Langley (n.d). *Age-Friendly Business Recognition Program*. https://invest.tol.ca/discover/programs-initiatives/age-friendly-business-recognition-program/

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

One of the most important elements of outdoor spaces is how the built environment supports community members to move about their local area on foot. Neighbourhood walkability encourages people of all ages to engage in utility and transport-related walking. Walkability is defined by several measures, including the diversity of land use, street connectivity, lighting, safety, park proximity, and density. Municipalities that focus on these measures tend to be highly walkable.[3]

Walking also provides an easy and accessible way for older adults to obtain moderate to vigorous physical activity while maintaining an active lifestyle. However, it is important to note that walkability tends to focus on those without mobility challenges; as mobility or social connectedness are reduced, the impact of a supportive built environment becomes increasingly important.[4] Working to improve features of the built environment for all types of mobility is an inclusive way to ensure community members stay healthy and independent.[5]

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly outdoor spaces and building features identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The Measuring Up Select Committee of Council (MUSCC), which is intended to "work collaboratively to identify and implement initiatives to enhance accessibility and inclusion across the resort community."
- The Access Whistler Map, which identifies barriers, ramp access, accessible parking, accessible washroom facilities and accessible routes throughout Whistler Village.
- RMOW and Tourism Whistler maps that show the locations of public washrooms in Whistler Village.
- Ramp access maps that are located adjacent to each set of stairs to provide direction to the closest ramp.
- Meadow Park Sports Centre offerings:
    - Accessible front desk and reception area;
    - Pool wheelchair to access the zero-depth entry leisure pool;
    - Water lift into the lap pool;
    - Height adjustable change table and handheld shower in the universal change room;
    - Personal flotation devices, flotation belts and floating hand dumbbells;
    - Elevator access to the second floor weight room;
    - Wheelchair accessible hand ergometer;
    - Recumbent stepper with a swivel chair to enter from a wheelchair;

[3] Van Holle, V., Van Cauwenberg, J., Van Dyck, D., Deforche, B., Van de Weghe, N., & De Bourdeaudhuij, I. (2014). Relationship between neighborhood walkability and older adults' physical activity: results from the Belgian Environmental Physical Activity Study in Seniors (BEPAS Seniors). *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition & Physical Activity*, 11, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-014-0110-3

[4] Choi, Y. J. (2020). Age-friendly features in home and community and the self-reported health and functional limitation of older adults: the role of supportive environments. *Journal of Urban Health*, 97(4), 471–485. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-020-00462-6

[5] Ellis, G., Hunter, R. F., Hino, A. A. F., Cleland, C. L., Ferguson, S., Murtagh, B., Anez, C. R. R., Melo, S., Tully, M., Kee, F., Sengupta, U., & Reis, R. (2018). Study protocol: healthy urban living and ageing in place (HULAP): an international, mixed methods study examining the associations between physical activity, built and social environments for older adults the UK and Brazil. *BMC Public Health*, 18(1), N.PAG. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-6018-0

    - Bands with wall anchors; and
    - Wheelchair accessible viewing area in the arena.

- Meadow Park Sports Centre, Whistler Public Library and Whistler Olympic Plaza, which have all received an accessibility rating through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program.

- The Spruce Grove Field House, Passiv Haus and Maury Young Arts Centre, which are public facilities that have accessible parking, accessible washrooms and elevators.

- The washrooms in the major parks and facilities in Whistler, which all have accessible washroom facilities. The new accessible washrooms at the Whistler Olympic Plaza and Passive Haus, and those under construction at Village Gate, will increase the number of accessible washrooms and increase the number of gender-neutral washrooms.

- The Universal Access Trail, which provides an accessible nature experience that is in close proximity to the Village and parking in Day Lot 4.

- Lakeside Park, which was universally designed with an accessible water lift for people with mobility disabilities.

- The Valley Trail system that supports active transportation.

- The large number of outdoor activities available in Whistler.

- Previous crime prevention webinars facilitated through collaborations between the Whistler Public Library, Whistler Mature Action Community (MAC) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

- Bi-annual sidewalk accessibility and safety audit conducted by the RMOW.

What We Heard

The following sections outline the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to outdoor spaces and buildings expressed during the community engagement.

Walkability

Indicator: Number of rest places and distance between rest places.

Although approximately 73 per cent of survey respondents indicated that available places to rest in the community were good, very good or excellent, interviewees and survey respondents made suggestions for specific improvements to seating and rest places. Suggestions for improvements were:

- **Increase overall seating**: Respondents commented that regular areas to sit down would allow them to periodically rest while on walks.

- **Add covered seating areas**: Respondents suggested that covered seating areas for sun and inclement weather protection would be helpful.

- **Increase seating on the Valley Trail**: Respondents reported that they felt that seating was concentrated in Whistler Village, and they would like additional seating for rest areas along the Valley Trail.

Indicator: Number of accessible washrooms.

Washroom access is a crucial reason why many older adults will not walk in certain areas in their neighbourhoods.

Thirty-two per cent of respondents indicated that the number of accessible washrooms was fair or poor.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- **More washrooms at trailheads**: Examples included at the parking lots for the Function Junction trailhead, Singing Pass Skywalk and the Rainbow Trail.

- **Improve accessibility issues with the existing public washrooms:** Specifically, it was noted that spring-loaded doors are hard to manage for those with low strength or individuals using mobility devices or strollers.

- **Reduce the number of locked public washrooms**: Interviewees indicated that unlocking existing public restrooms would allow better access overall.

Indicator: Crosswalks are safe (e.g., with appropriate crossing times, mid-block crosswalks on long streets, median rest stops, good visibility).

Crosswalk safety is an essential feature of age-friendly communities as over 50 per cent of pedestrians who are struck and injured at crosswalks are over the age of 65.[6]

Survey respondents highly endorsed that crosswalk safety in Whistler was good. Approximately 80 per cent of those surveyed indicated that street sign and crosswalk visibility and placement in Whistler were good, very good or excellent.

Specific suggestions to improve crosswalk and signage safety were:

- **Audit crosswalks for safety:** Areas of concern identified were on Highway 99 (e.g., lack of crosswalk at Emerald Estates, an extension to crosswalk timing at Highway 99 at Spruce Grove Way and at Function Junction/Cheakamus Lake).
- **Clarify flashing light crosswalk protocol:** Interviewees reported feeling unsafe in crosswalks with flashing lights, which seem dangerous because of the differing driver, cyclist and pedestrian understanding of right-of-way (e.g., the crosswalk on Lorimer Road adjacent to Marketplace).

- **Improve crosswalk visibility:** Interviewees and survey respondents suggested that crosswalks be repainted to be more visible after the winter season and that landscaping at busy or dangerous intersections should be trimmed regularly.

[6] Lord, S., Cloutier, M., Garnier, B., & Christoforou, Z. (2018). Crossing road intersections in old age—With or without risks? Perceptions of risk and crossing behaviours among the elderly. *Transportation Research: Part F*, 55, 282-296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.trf.2018.03.005

Indicator: Sidewalks, trails and walkways exist and are in safe condition (e.g., have smooth surfaces, curb cuts, separate bike lanes, are wide, well lit, clear of ice and snow).

Seventy-two per cent of survey respondents indicated that there were excellent, very good or good safe sidewalks, trails and walkways in Whistler. Still, several recurrent themes were noted in the qualitative data:

- **Missing sidewalks:** Respondents reported that smaller neighbourhoods do not have sidewalks or streetlights, making walking feel unsafe.
- **The Valley Trail System:** Respondents indicated a significant fall risk because Valley Trail segments are not consistently plowed and sanded in the winter. Others reported that the speed of cyclists (particularly e-bikes) on the shared trail is both a visibility challenge and a safety hazard.
- **Village paving stones:** Respondents expressed concern with the tripping hazard posed by unstable paving stones in Whistler Village.
- **Off-leash dogs:** Interviewees and survey respondents indicated that off-leash dogs on trails and sidewalks pose a fall or injury risk to older adults.
- **Pedestrian and bicycle interactions:** A recurrent theme in interviews was the speed and the lack of warning from approaching cyclists who pose a significant risk to pedestrians throughout Whistler. This was especially a concern with e-bikes.
- **Curb cuts:** Respondents indicated that some sidewalks in the Village area do not have curb cuts.
- **Snow removal:** Icy walkways can be a slipping hazard during the winter. Interviewees reported that they felt that snow clearance outside the Village core focuses on roads rather than sidewalks or trails.

Actual and Perceived Accessibility

Indicator: Public buildings have adequate access and maneuverability around buildings (e.g., access at ground level, level entry, wheelchair ramps, automatic doors, wide aisles to accommodate scooters and wheelchairs).

Accessible features of neighbourhoods support older adults with mobility issues and other community members to have better barrier-free access to buildings, programs and services.

Fifty-two per cent of respondents rated the accessibility of public areas as good, very good or excellent, and 25 per cent indicated that they did not know about accessibility features. Specific issues identified included:

- **Ramps:** Interviewees and survey respondents found that accessibility ramps throughout Whistler are difficult to find, and some are challenging to navigate.

Crime Prevention

Indicator: Availability of crime prevention strategies, courses and programs for seniors (including focusing on fraud and elder abuse).

Most survey respondents indicated that access to crime information was poor, fair or they did not know where to access information.

Strategies and Actions

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for outdoor spaces and buildings:

Strategy: Increase Access to Seating			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Consider opportunities for additional seating areas, including covered seating, along the Valley Trail (based on existing RMOW inventories)	Medium-term	Whistler Active Transportation Plan	RMOW Resort Operations
Look for opportunities to provide seating that allows informal gathering (include this strategy in any age-friendly business initiative)	Short-term	Creating an Age-friendly Business in BC[7]	Whistler Chamber of Commerce
Strategy: Increase Washroom Access			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore involving businesses in providing washroom access as part of an age-friendly business program	Short-term	Creating an Age-friendly Business in BC	Whistler Chamber of Commerce
Add hours of availability and accessibility features on the current public washroom maps	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Planning, Tourism Whistler
Strategy: Improve Crosswalk Safety			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Enhance crosswalk designs with additional age-friendly features	Short-term	Seniors Walkability Assessment Tool (e.g., SWEAT-R, SWAN)[8]	MAC, RMOW Infrastructure Services, RMOW Resort Operations
Improve signage at crosswalks and, where feasible, consider flashing lights to clarify the right-of-way	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Infrastructure Services
Aim to repaint major crosswalks annually before the May long-weekend	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Resort Operations

[7] Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, B.C. Ministry of Health (2013). *Creating an Age-friendly Business in BC*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/people/seniors/about-seniorsbc/pdf/agefriendly_business_guide_and_assessmentfinalupdated_aug_2013.pdf

[8] Mahmood, A., O'Dea, E., Bigonnesse, C., Labbe, D., Mahal, T., Qureshi, M. & Mortenson, W.B. (2020). Stakeholders walkability/wheelability audit in Neighbourhoods (SWAN): user-led audit and photographic documentation in Canada. *Disability & Society*, 35:6, 902-925. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2019.1649127

Reduce landscaping encroaching on public land, reducing crosswalk visibility or usability	Ongoing	N/A	RMOW Resort Operations
Strategy: Improve Sidewalk and Trail Safety			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Continue to monitor and evaluate sidewalk and trail safety and plan for improvements using an age-friendly lens	Ongoing	Seniors Walkability Assessment Tool (e.g., SWEAT-R, SWAN)	MAC, RMOW Infrastructure Services, RMOW Resort Operations
Continue to prioritize heavily used pedestrian areas/trails for snow clearance	Ongoing	Whistler Active Transportation Plan	RMOW Resort Operations
Consider a bell bylaw for cyclists to improve pedestrian safety on the Valley Trail	Short-term	Whistler Active Transportation Plan	RMOW Infrastructure Services
Manage cyclist speeds on the Valley Trail to reduce conflicts with pedestrians	Medium-term	Whistler Active Transportation Plan	RMOW Resort Operations
Prioritize enforcement of on-leash requirements for dogs to reduce conflicts with trail users on the Valley Trail and Whistler Village	Ongoing	N/A	RMOW Bylaw Services
Strategy: Improve Accessibility in Whistler Village and the Overall Community			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Continue to assess and improve accessibility in Whistler Village and include an age-friendly perspective in ongoing monitoring activities	Medium-term	Seniors Walkability Assessment Tool (e.g., SWEAT-R, SWAN)	RMOW Infrastructure Services, RMOW Resort Operations, RMOW Planning
Support the development of the RMOW Accessibility Action Plan	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Planning
Utilize MUSCC to review projects and initiatives related to aging	Short-term	N/A	RMOW
Strategy: Work with Village Business Owners to Promote Age-friendly Accessibility			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
As part of a potential age-friendly business program, provide businesses with strategies to increase accessibility	Medium-term	Creating an Age-friendly Business in BC	RMOW Planning, Whistler Chamber of Commerce

Strategy: Increase Awareness of Crime Prevention Information			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Add general and Whistler-specific older adult crime prevention information to an age-friendly information hub	Short-term	BC Association of Community Response Networks,[9] Seniors First BC[10]	MAC, Whistler RCMP

Transportation

Mobility, and mobility within one's community, are crucial dimensions to successful aging. More than half of Canadians over the age of 65 have restrictions on their mobility.[11] Having safe, affordable public or private transportation is key to accessing health services, staying socially connected, and maintaining independence. As many older adults will lose their ability to drive, planning for an aging population in transportation strategies is key; examples of viable options include active transportation, rideshare and public transit.[12]

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly transportation features identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The Whistler public transit system, which respondents involved in the community engagement commented positively about in general.
- The NextRide Whistler trip planner and bus tracker.
- The Better at Home volunteer driver program.
- "Concession" passes and rates for seniors 65+.
- The development of the Whistler Transit Future Action Plan, which is intended to update transit service and infrastructure recommendations.
- The development of the Custom Transit Feasibility Study.
- The development of the Whistler Let's Move Active Transportation Plan.

[9] BC Association of Community Response Networks (n.d.). https://bccrns.ca

[10] Seniors First BC (n.d.). http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/

[11] Levasseur, M., Généreux, M., Bruneau, J.-F., Vanasse, A., Chabot, É., Beaulac, C., & Bédard, M.-M. (2015). Importance of proximity to resources, social support, transportation and neighborhood security for mobility and social participation in older adults: results from a scoping study. *BMC Public Health*, 15(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-1824-0

[12] Woodland, A., Rumball, C., & Pitman, B. (2020). Hanging up the keys: planning for driving cessation and the shift to local transportation services. *British Columbia Medical Journal*, 62(8), 289–290. https://bcmj.org/sites/default/files/BCMJ_Vol62_No8_cohp.pdf

- The Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan,[13] which was developed by BC Transit in partnership with the local Sea to Sky partner communities, citizens and stakeholders.

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to transportation expressed during the community engagement.

Transportation Options and Public Transit

Indicator: Availability of a range of affordable options for transportation (e.g., public/private partnerships, volunteer driving program, park and go, shuttles).

Forty-eight per cent of survey respondents indicated that affordable options for transportation were good, very good or excellent. Many made suggestions for specific improvements, including:

- **Improve affordability**: Respondents suggested that older adult subsidies would encourage more people to ride transit. One respondent suggested a subsidized rate specifically for those eligible for a Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. (SPARC BC) parking pass.

- **Consider Transit on Demand**: Respondents indicated that they would like to access transit on-demand or HandyDART services, particularly for those neighbourhoods with long distances to the closest bus stop.

- **Increase service**: Respondents reported that there is no bus service in specific neighbourhoods (e.g., Alta Lake Road).

- **Increase affordable regional options**: Respondents indicated that they had concerns about accessing transportation to medical appointments in Squamish and the Lower Mainland when they could no longer drive. Respondents further linked this issue with the likelihood that they would be unable to age-in-place in Whistler.

Indicator: Proportion (or number) of buses that are accessible, clean, and with destination and number clearly displayed.

Survey and interview respondents indicated that buses were generally accessible and clean, and had information clearly displayed. Suggestions for improvements included:

- **Increase awareness of those with mobility challenges:** Interviewees reported that riding buses in the winter is less desirable because of the perceived safety issues encountered when travelling with riders carrying sporting equipment on transit. Respondents suggested that taking groceries or recycling by transit also becomes a challenge when one's strength, balance or mobility changes.

- **Improve NextRide reliability:** Respondents indicated that bus arrival times were occasionally inaccurate in the NextRide app.

[13] BC Transit (2015). *Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan*. https://bctransit.com/pemberton-valley/transit-future/sea-to-sky-transit-future-plan

Indicator: Bus stops/shelters are safe and accessible (e.g., with seating, well lit, covered, snow removed, close to seniors' residences).

Sixty-three per cent of survey respondents indicated that they had accessible bus stops near to where they live. Responses were grouped into several recurrent themes related to bus stops, including:

- **Bus stop placement**: Interviewees and survey respondents were concerned with the distance of bus stops from residential areas, particularly in the winter. Additional bus stops were requested in the following neighbourhoods: Alpine, Bayshores, Spring Creek and Whistler Cay Heights. Respondents also noted the challenge of crossing a busy highway to get to a bus stop or a destination after being dropped off (e.g., Meadow Park).

- **Bus shelters:** Respondents suggested that they would like to see more covered shelters for inclement weather and sun protection.

- **Accessible bus stops:** Interviewees and survey respondents indicated that there are certain areas where bus stops are inaccessible for wheelchairs and others with mobility issues due to steep hills (e.g., Emerald Estates).

Age-friendly Streets and Parking

Indicator: Snow and ice removal is prompt.

Sixty-seven per cent of survey respondents were satisfied with snow and ice removal.

Although not directly related to the above indicator, additional issues identified related to parking were:

- **Affordability of parking:** Interviewees and survey respondents indicated that they are (or may become) dependent on using their cars for local trips because of mobility issues. As a result, the cost of parking was identified as a barrier. Respondents suggested that they would like a residents' or 55+ parking rate in Whistler.

- **The size of parking spots in the Village:** Respondents indicated that small parking stalls in the Village make it difficult for those with mobility challenges to enter and exit a vehicle.

- **The machines for pay-parking in the Village:** Respondents reported that the machines can be difficult to use (e.g., buttons are difficult to navigate, the screens are impacted by sun, not all older adults can pay by phone).

Strategy and Actions

The transportation recommendations that are included in this section of the report are aligned with the Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan (December 2015) wherever possible and the draft Whistler Transit Future Action Plan (September 2021).

One significant point of note is the recommendation to investigate a community driver program, which provides an alternative to typical volunteer driver programs designed meet the transportation needs gap for older adult community members. Issues with liability, cost, and understanding the unique medical and cognitive challenges for some older adults can make reliance on volunteer services problematic. Trips to medical appointments within or outside of the Sea to Sky corridor can also present challenging driving conditions, particularly in the winter. Therefore, the recommendation is to investigate the possibility of a formal community support driver program to expand and better support the existing Better at Home volunteer driver program that currently services Whistler.

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for transportation:

Strategy: Increase the Range of Affordable Options for Transit			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore opportunities to improve the fare structure, media and fare products, and further explore options to provide free transit to residents 75 years of age and older and further reduce costs to residents aged 65-75 on the Whistler Transit System	Short-term	Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services
Examine the feasibility of introducing Dial-a-Ride/paratransit service to specified neighbourhoods	Medium-term	Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services
Continue to improve service frequency and extend service span on regional and interregional connections as demand on the corridor grows	Medium-term	Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan	BC Transit, District of Squamish, Lil'wat Nation, RMOW Infrastructure Services, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD), Squamish Nation, Village of Pemberton

Strategy: Increase Awareness of Transportation Options			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Promote understanding of the transit/transportation options such as e-biking, taxis, ride-hailing, interregional buses, and transit (e.g., how to get information about the next bus or the cost)	Short-term	N/A	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services, Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS)

Strategy: Increase Awareness of, and Access to, Transit for Those with Mobility Challenges			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Continue to improve local transit service to provide efficient, reliable and safe connectivity	Long-term	Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services

Explore transportation options to medical appointments (and associated grant and funding opportunities), including regional transportation, volunteer driving programs, HandyDART and travel-on-demand options	Short-term	Healthy Aging CORE BC[14]	MAC, Sea to Sky Better at Home
Promote BC Transit information including priority seating on buses educating riders and enforcing the priority seating on buses more to ensure those riding transit who have mobility or strength balance challenges can have a seat if they want or need one	Short-term	Healthy Aging CORE BC	BC Transit
Support the Whistler Transit Future Action Plan by developing a Seniors Bus Buddies program	Medium-term	Seniors Transportation Report[15]	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services, WCSS
Investigate the community support driver program to help address gaps in transportation services	Short-term	Seniors Transportation Report	MAC, Sea to Sky Better at Home
Explore adding a seniors' day once a month or once a week on transit	Short-term	N/A	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services
Strategy: Increase the Number of Covered Bus Stops in Key Locations			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Prioritize covered bus stops and consider additions in key locations	Medium-term	N/A	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services
Strategy: Increase Access to Bus Stops in Whistler			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Conduct an audit of the safety of accessing bus stops in Whistler neighbourhoods	Short-term	N/A	BC Transit, RMOW Infrastructure Services

[14] Healthy Aging CORE BC (n.d.). https://bc.healthyagingcore.ca/

[15] Office of the Seniors Advocate BC (2018). *Seniors Transportation*. https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2018/05/Seniors-Transportation-Report.pdf

Strategy: Improve Parking Accessibility in Whistler Village			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Review the usability and accessibility of pay-parking machines in the Village	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Planning
Consider the number and size of accessible parking spots in the Village	Short-term	SPARC BC[16]	RMOW Planning

Housing

Aging-in-place allows community members to age in their own homes or communities without moving into an institutional setting.[17] Supporting aging-in-place also reduces the need for municipalities to add purpose-built facilities, while increasing the likelihood of community members having more prolonged independence while aging.

As many older adults downsize, they are looking for affordable, accessible and safe housing. Alternatively, many older people also seek home modification programs to stay in their existing homes.

As context to the information provided below, survey respondents primarily reported living in detached single-family homes, followed by townhouses and apartments. Twenty-one per cent of survey respondents reported they currently live in employee-restricted housing. Eighty-four per cent indicated they own their current home, while 12 per cent are renters. Forty-one per cent have homes that are accessible or can be adapted to allow them to age-in-place.

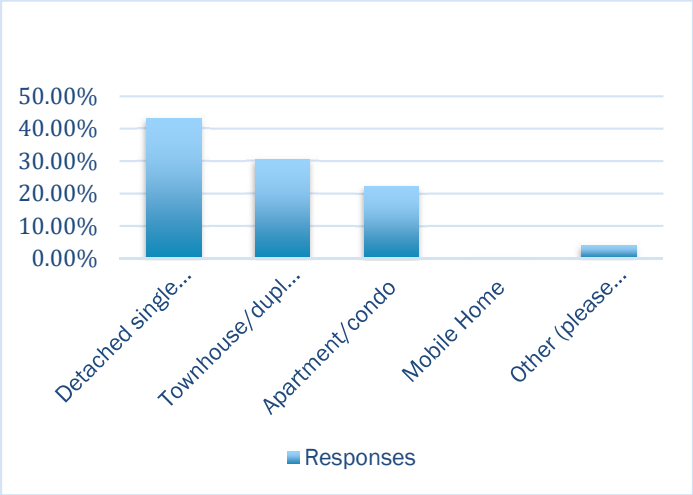

FIGURE 1: AGE-FRIENDLY SURVEY RESPONDENT HOUSING TYPE

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly housing features identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The Whistler Housing Authority (WHA), formed in 1997, which was created by the RMOW to oversee the development of employee-restricted housing in Whistler for Whistler employees and retirees who were Whistler employees for defined durations.
- The Whistler Employee Housing Program, which includes designated rental and purchase inventory that supports the housing needs of Whistler's workforce and eligible retirees.
- The inclusion of MAC as a WHA Board Representative.

[16] SPARC BC (n.d.). https://www.sparc.bc.ca/

[17] Han, J. H., & Kim, J.-H. (2017). Variations in ageing in home and ageing in neighbourhood. *Australian Geographer*, 48(2), 255–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/00049182.2016.1240021

- Sea to Sky Canadian Home Builders' Association, which provides information to the community.

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to housing expressed during the community engagement.

Housing Availability

Indicator: Availability of affordable housing that is appropriately located, well built, well designed, secure, and for which waiting times are short.

Affordability and availability of housing were the two biggest concerns expressed during the focused conversations and interviews. Respondents acknowledged that affordability is an issue for people of all ages in Whistler. Other themes about housing included:

- **Access to the seniors housing program:** Some interviewees admitted that they had no retirement savings and intended that their homes would finance their retirement costs. Because of restrictions on assets for the employee-restricted rental housing program, they worried that there would be no way to access affordable housing in the future. Others expressed concern that seniors on the purchase waitlist are not always ready to move in when a unit becomes available and subsequently the unit may become occupied by someone who is not an older adult.

- **Affordability:** Respondents indicated that renters who retired or those who had health issues that prevented them from working would be forced to leave the community.

Indicator: Availability of affordable multi-purpose and aging-in-place housing options.

Survey respondents indicated they would like to see supportive housing (e.g., independent living, assisted living) in Whistler. Also, interviewees reported that Whistler was unlikely to be able to support this kind of housing at this time because of several factors. Other areas for housing improvements included:

- **Co-housing or intergenerational living**: An intergenerational model of co-housing might be a way for older and younger people to support one another to stay in the community. Co-housing would also help older people who have moved or are planning to move to Whistler to be closer to family.

- **Home support:** Home support services in Whistler were seen as either non-existent or difficult to access. Non-medical home support such as house cleaning and minor home repair services was also often challenging to obtain.

Ability to Age-in-Place

Indicator 1: Proportion of people who want to remain in their current residence and are confident they will be able to afford to do so.

Indicator 2: Availability of programs for increasing accessibility, safety, and adaptability of housing (e.g., handrails, ramps, smoke detectors).

Most survey respondents (almost 60 per cent) indicated that their homes were not accessible or would not allow them to age-in-place. Respondents also suggested that they would like to learn more about retrofitting their existing homes to support them to stay in their homes longer.

Strategy and Actions

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for housing:

Strategy: Explore Options for Aging-in-place			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore housing opportunities for aging-in-place, including consideration of intergenerational co-housing, independent living, assisted living, and additional infill housing	Medium-term	Canadian Cohousing Network[18]	MAC, RMOW Planning, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)
Update the RMOW's Whistler Seniors Housing Policy (Council Policy G-14), including the revision to apply aging-in-place features to all units in seniors housing, and explore models and opportunities to support independent and assisted living	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Planning
Promote individual responsibility for developing an aging-in-place plan and provide checklists and a toolkit (could be added to the age-friendly information hub)	Short-term	Thinking About Aging in Place,[19] Aging in Place Toolkit[20]	MAC
Enhance availability of accessible housing in the community	Long-term	N/A	RMOW, WHA
Work to create a WHA procedure for those looking to downsize from an existing WHA home	Medium-term	N/A	RMOW, WHA

[18] Canadian Cohousing Network (n.d.). https://cohousing.ca/

[19] Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum (n.d.). *Thinking About Aging in Place*. https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/aging.html

[20] United Way (n.d.). aginginplaceplan.ca

Strategy: Increase Awareness of Retrofitting Subsidy Programs			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Add retrofitting subsidy information to an age-friendly information hub	Short-term	Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence Program, [21] BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations,[22] BC Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit[23]	MAC

Respect, Social Inclusion or Cultural Safety

Feeling connected and included in your community is a vital part of successful aging. Social isolation is a known risk to health, impacting mobility, mental health and increasing fall risk.24 The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that with the increasing use of technology for communication, many older adults experience the combined effects of social and digital isolation.[25]

Social inclusion is a crucial part of healthy aging and is a key social determinant of health. Municipalities that focus on the additional elements of respect and cultural safety can help protect a larger range of older adults from social exclusion. Using an equity lens to include groups not traditionally involved in planning efforts, such as older adults from various economic backgrounds, the LGBTQ2S+ community, newcomers to Canada, those with limited English language skills and those facing housing instability, should be considered.

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly elements related to respect, social inclusion or cultural safety identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The 'inclusive' vision characteristic in Whistler's Official Community Plan (OCP), which expresses that residents and visitors of all ages, identities, abilities and incomes are welcome and included.

- The 'conduct' vision characteristic in Whistler's OCP, which expresses that everyone is treated with fairness, respect and care.

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[21] Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2020). *Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence Programs (HASI)*. https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/project-funding-and-mortgage-financing/funding-programs/all-funding-programs/home-adaptations-for-seniors-independence

[22] BC Housing (n.d.). *BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations (BC RAHA).* https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/BC-RAHA

[23] Government of B.C. (n.d.). *Home renovation tax credit for seniors and persons with disabilities*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/income-taxes/personal/credits/seniors-renovation

[24] Petersen, N., König, H.-H., & Hajek, A. (2020). The link between falls, social isolation and loneliness: a systematic review. *Archives of Gerontology & Geriatrics*, 88, N.PAG. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2020.104020

[25] Seifert, A., Cotten, S. R., & Xie, B. (2021). A double burden of exclusion? Digital and social exclusion of older adults in times of COVID-19. *Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences & Social Sciences*, 76(3), e99–e103. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbaa098

- The community service organizations working to reduce social isolation (e.g., WCSS, Better at Home, Whistler Public Library).

- The Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre (SLCC), whose mission is: "We are a centre sharing meaningful experiences, educating all, and lifting our distinct Skwxwú7mesh and Líl̓wat ways."[26]

- The Whistler Welcome Centre, which is working to build cultural awareness, understanding and acceptance in the wider community.

- The Whistler Writing Society, which sponsors literary events and provides a forum for local writers.

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to respect, social inclusion or cultural safety expressed during the community engagement.

Indicator: Availability of intergenerational family activities.

To increase respect and inclusion, many communities turn towards intergenerational programming. Intergenerational programs can benefit both younger and older community members through mutual caregiving, volunteerism and companionship.

Forty-seven per cent of survey respondents indicated opportunities to participate with other age groups were good, very good or excellent.

Indicator: Level of sense of belonging in the community.

Although 87 per cent of those who answered the survey questions were satisfied or very satisfied with their social relationships, 36 per cent indicated that they felt isolated from others often or some of the time, another 39 per cent felt left out, and 42 per cent felt that they lacked companionship some of the time or often. This question was not specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic and was intended to capture general perspectives

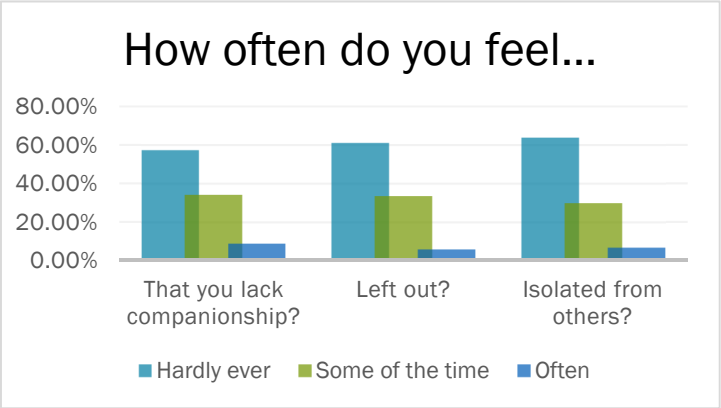

FIGURE 2: AGE-FRIENDLY SURVEY RESPONDENT SENSE OF BELONGING

Belonging was a strong theme in the community engagement process. Many respondents indicated that a loss of a sense of belonging contributed to their desire to leave the community. This was reported as:

- **A loss of identity:** Interviewees suggested that when they lost the ability to participate in sports or activities, they also lost their identity within the community. Some older adults with health or mobility issues reported feeling socially invisible in Whistler.

[26] SLCC (n.d.). https://slcc.ca/

- **A loss of social outlet:** As many of the social activities in Whistler are connected to active living, many people who experienced health or mobility issues reported losing a vital outlet to meet with friends. Others worried that there are few non-active opportunities for older adults to connect socially.

- **Low levels of awareness/acceptance of aging:** Because of the outdoor and sport-focused culture in Whistler, respondents suggested that there is less acceptance of aging as there may be in other communities and felt that a well-rounded community needs visible older adults of all ability levels.

Strategy and Actions

As the Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation were not represented in the assessment process, efforts should be made to include them as part of future age-friendly initiatives. Older Indigenous adults (the term used for those over the age of 55) and elders (which denotes a special meaning not always related to age) may have negative associations and experiences in settler post-colonial cities. As a result, many may be resistant to joining in planning efforts and may feel marginalized in age-friendly implementation. Providing opportunities for feedback and leadership in a culturally safe setting (including offering communications in traditional languages, acknowledging systemic racism, and recognizing the critical role of elders) is key.

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for respect, social inclusion or cultural safety:

Strategy: Increase Intergenerational Opportunities in Recreational, Social and Cultural Activities			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Increase opportunities for intergenerational programming	Medium-term	McMaster Optimal Aging Portal[27]	MAC, WCSS
Develop a "Human Library" program focused on older adult community members from diverse backgrounds	Medium-term	HumanLibrary[28]	Whistler Public Library
Increase representation of older adults and diverse, intergenerational images on RMOW materials	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Communications
Strategy: Increase Opportunities for Non-sport Related Recreational Activities			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Increase and promote opportunities for non-sport related social and recreational activities for older adults	Medium-term	N/A	MAC, Whistler Public Library, Whistler Writing Society
Add links to the Whistler Museum on the information hub	Short-term	N/A	MAC
Explore the creation of a program for older adults who want to share their cultural traditions with other community members	Short-term	N/A	SLCC, WCSS, Whistler Welcome Centre

[27] McMaster University (n.d.). https://www.mcmasteroptimalaging.org/

[28] Human Library (n.d.). humanlibrary.org

Strategy: Employ an Intersectional Approach with Age-friendly Implementation Efforts			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Commit to recruiting and including older adults from culturally and economically diverse backgrounds to be involved in future age-friendly leadership or committee roles	Short-term	Applying an Equity Lens in Age-friendly Communities Planning[29]	RMOW, WCSS, Whistler Public Library, Whistler Welcome Centre
Apply an equity lens to age-friendly implementation and evaluation	Ongoing	Age-Friendly Capacity Building,[30] Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities[31]	All Community Partners
Strategy: Increase Awareness of Older Adults in the Community			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore having the Whistler Museum conduct a history of the people who live in Whistler	Short-term	N/A	Whistler Museum, Whistler Public Library
Strategy: Commit to Working to Include Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation in Age-friendly Implementation and Evaluation			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Consult with Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation, and seek any specific input on older adults and elders as actions are implemented	Ongoing	N/A	All Community Partners

Social Well-being and Participation

Social support is one of the primary social determinants of health. Those who are socially connected to others experience better health outcomes, improved quality of life, and longer lifespans. In contrast, older adults who are socially isolated experience negative health consequences (e.g., higher rates of hospitalizations, increased mental health issues, poor mobility). Providing opportunities for older adults to stay involved with others and stay active

[29] BC Healthy Communities (n.d.). *Applying an Equity Lens in Age-friendly Communities Planning*. http://bchealthycommunities.ca/project/applying-an-equity-lens-in-age-friendly-communities-planning/

[30] BC Healthy Communities (n.d.). *Age-Friendly Capacity Building*. http://bchealthycommunities.ca/programs/agefriendly

[31] City for All Women Initiative (2015). *Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities*. https://www.cawi-ivtf.org/sites/default/files/publications/advancing-equity-inclusion-web_0.pdf

in their communities is a simple way for municipalities to help their more mature citizens slow the "normal" aging process, protect against cognitive decline, and successfully age-in-place.[32,33]

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly social well-being and participation features identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- WCSS, which supports Whistler's social health and wellness. WCSS provides various services related to food security, mental and emotional health, and legal and financial support.
- The Meadow Park Sports Centre's four senior-specific exercise programs and the additional eight older adult-friendly programs.
- Whistler Adaptive Sports, which offers over a dozen different adaptive sports opportunities for residents and visitors with disabilities.
- MAC, which helps many older adults remain well-connected with many relevant activities.
- The Whistler Public Library, which is an excellent place for older adults to find information and programs. It also serves as a no-barrier, no-stigma piece of social infrastructure designed to cultivate a sense of belonging.
- The Whistler active lifestyle, which was cited as a way that many people connect socially.
- The Whistler Writing Society, which sponsors literary events and provides a forum for local writers.
- The Whistler Institute, which provides learning experiences with post-secondary institutions, independent educators and resort associations.
- Arts Whistler, which is the lead agency for arts and culture in Whistler.
- The Whistler Cycling Club, which promotes recreational road cycling and advocates for safe cycling infrastructure.

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to social well-being and participation expressed during the community engagement.

Indicator: Availability of recreation and learning programs specifically for seniors (e.g., computer courses, community gardens, crafts, games, exercise classes).

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[32] Levasseur, M., Dubois, M.-F., Généreux, M., Menec, V., Raina, P., Roy, M., Gabaude, C., Couturier, Y., & St-Pierre, C. (2017). Capturing how age-friendly communities foster positive health, social participation, and health equity: a study protocol of key components and processes that promote population health in aging Canadians. *BMC Public Health*, 17, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-017-4392-7

[33] Choi, Y. J. (2020). Age-friendly features in home and community and the self-reported health and functional limitation of older adults: the role of supportive environments. *Journal of Urban Health*, 97(4), 471–485. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-020-00462-6

Respondents indicated they participate in various community organizations and interest groups, primarily sports clubs and community associations. In contrast, 23 per cent of survey participants indicated that they were not involved in any groups or organizations. Participation in meetings and activities in the past 12 months varied between not at all, at least once a week and at least once a month.

Many interview participants noted a significant gap in older adult programs not focused on physical activity. Less than half of survey respondents felt that there were adequate unstructured social opportunities.

Respondents indicated Whistler could improve social and recreational offerings with:

- **Meeting spaces:** Increasing the number of areas for older adults to meet, particularly during the tourist season(s). Indoor spaces in Whistler could potentially be repurposed after regular office hours to provide a place for groups to meet (post-pandemic).
- **Central hub:** Providing a designated space for older adults to meet and access social and recreational opportunities.
- **Dedicated older adult programs:** Developing more older adult-specific programming. Respondents noted that although there is a youth recreation programmer, there is no longer an older adult programmer.
- **Learning opportunities:** Increasing access to learning opportunities geared towards older learners.
- **Awareness:** Improving awareness of social and recreational information for those over the age of 55.
- **Indoor recreation:** Increasing indoor recreation opportunities, especially during the winter months.

Indicator: Availability of opportunities for social participation in leisure, social, cultural, and spiritual activities with people of all ages.

Under 50 per cent of survey respondents indicated that participation opportunities with other age groups were good, very good or excellent.

Indicator: Affordability of seniors' recreation programs.

The majority (63 per cent) of survey respondents indicated that the availability of affordable older adult programs was good, very good or excellent.

Strategies and Actions

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for social well-being and participation:

Strategy: Increase Awareness of Older Adult Recreation Opportunities			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Add both sport and non-sport recreation opportunities to the age-friendly information hub, including information about the Whistler Institute	Short-term	N/A	MAC
Seek opportunities to increase exposure for the library lunch-and-learn sessions and other library activities	Short-term	N/A	MAC, Whistler Public Library
Strategy: Increase Opportunities for Older Adult Recreation			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore adding more dedicated older adult recreational programs, especially for the winter months	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Recreation
Add a regular intergenerational program of dancing at Whistler Olympic Plaza	Short-term	N/A	Arts Whistler
Utilize the Maury Young Arts Centre for day classes, connecting to the arts community and storytelling	Medium-term	N/A	Arts Whistler
Strategy: Increase Opportunities for Older Adults to Gather			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Identify areas (or one dedicated area) for older adults to meet, including spaces that could potentially be repurposed outside of regular hours	Medium-term	N/A	Arts Whistler, MAC, Whistler Chamber of Commerce
Strategy: Increase Intergenerational Opportunities in Recreational, Social and Cultural Activities			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Increase opportunities for intergenerational programming	Medium-term	McMaster Optimal Aging Portal	MAC, WCSS
Increase representation of older adults and diverse, intergenerational images on RMOW materials	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Communications

Communications and Information

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for communication tools and information access for older adults, many of whom relied exclusively on technology for social contact during the early lockdown. Employing a Smart Age-friendly Ecosystem Framework allows municipalities to improve social determinants of health, "lived"

environment, health care, and public health efforts by utilizing digital outreach for age-friendly planning and implementation.[34]

Internet communication technology (ICT) has become increasingly necessary for keeping older adults connected to family, friends and health services. ICTs, unfortunately, can pose a challenge for many older adults, and some may find themselves digitally excluded from important information about their communities.[35] Although 75 per cent of survey respondents indicated that they were very comfortable using technology and online services, many interviewees indicated they would prefer alternative ways to access information.

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly communications and information assets identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The ongoing development of the RMOW's Accessibility Action Plan, which includes a focus on information, communications technologies, and communication.
- The local newspaper, which provides print access to information.
- Information provided through MAC.
- The RMOW website and Facebook page. The Mayor's video updates and the RMOW podcast were also identified as positive communication features.
- The Whistler Public Library services and information, including "Book A Librarian."
- Whistler-Alert, which is an emergency notification service to inform residents, businesses and visitors of natural or human-made disasters in the area.

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to communications and information expressed during the community engagement.

Assistance Availability

Indicator: Availability of a "live person" option on telephone calls.

Eighty-four per cent of survey respondents indicated that it was somewhat or very important that a person is available to answer questions over the phone. Interviewees felt that those who do not have a computer or have trouble using computers could struggle to find information that may be relevant to them. Many recommended that

[34] Fulmer, T., Patel, P., Levy, N., Mate, K., Berman, A., Pelton, L., Beard, J., Kalache, A., & Auerbach, J. (2020). Moving toward a global age-friendly ecosystem. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 68(9), 1936–1940. DOI: 10.1111/jgs.16675

[35] Hoffman, G. J., Webster, N. J., & Bynum, J. O. W. (2020) A framework for aging-friendly services and supports in the age of COVID-19, *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 32:4-5, 450-459. https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2020.1771239

information from the RMOW be made available through multiple channels (e.g., newspapers, radio, posters, communication through the library).

Usability of Information Materials

Indicator: Materials for the public are produced in large print, plain language and/or with age-friendly considerations.

Although less than half of survey participants indicated that large print materials were somewhat or very important to them, others would like to see the following age-friendly improvements:

- **A dedicated hub for information related to those over 55:** Others would like to see a dedicated 55+ section added to the local newspaper.
- **Technology training:** Improve access to affordable technology training.

Strategies and Actions

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for communications and information:

Strategy: Consider Development of an Age-friendly Information Hub			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Develop an age-friendly information hub that provides resources relevant to Whistler older adults	Short-term	N/A	MAC
Strategy: Promote Existing Information Services for Older Adults in Whistler			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Highlight the "Book A Librarian" and online learning services offered by the Whistler Public Library to assist older adults with technology	Short-term	N/A	Whistler Public Library
Continue to implement RMOW accessibility policies and follow best practices regarding the accessibility of public materials	Long-term	N/A	RMOW Communications
Create and annually update a document like the Savvy Guide	Medium-term	N/A	WCSS

Community Engagement and Employment

Having access to engagement activities, volunteering, and employment opportunities helps older adults stay involved and contribute to their communities. Volunteering is also generally considered to be a crucial part of active aging and social inclusion. Older adults who volunteer typically have better activity levels, more extensive

social networks, and increased quality of life. Having more mature volunteers, in turn, helps support crucial community initiatives and programs.[36]

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly community engagement and employment features identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The opportunities for older adults to work if they want to, especially given the current labour shortage due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The acceptance of older adults in the workforce. Many people gave the example of ski instructors that work well into their 70s and 80s.
- Both the opportunities for volunteerism and the number of Whistler volunteers, many of whom are older adults.
- The RMOW Community Engagement Review – Findings & Recommendations Report (2019-2020), which reviews the RMOW's practices, identifies improvements, and provides guidance for engagement processes moving forward. This report also provides data with respect to age.
- The Whistler Chamber of Commerce, which is the voice of Whistler business.
- The Whistler Community Foundation, which "is the steward of money gifted to the community and provides grants in the areas of environment, arts & culture, social service and education."[37]

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to community engagement and employment expressed during the project's community engagement.

The main themes from survey respondents regarding community engagement were awareness, representation, access to information, and feeling heard. Survey respondents reported that they were sometimes unaware of community engagement activities or did not know where to find information. Others felt that although they had participated in community engagement activities, their voices were not always included in decision-making. Several suggested that having a 55+ representative in civic matters would be helpful. Other common concerns and suggestions for improvements are noted below.

Unemployment and Employment

Indicator: Level of unemployment and employment among seniors.

Twenty-five per cent of survey respondents indicated that they were working full-time for pay, and eight per cent indicated working part-time. One per cent were unemployed but looking for work; for comparison, the overall

[36] Cao, Q., Dabelko-Schoeny, H. I., White, K., Maleku, A., & Sheldon, M. (2021). I wanna help, but my hands can be a little tied: the challenges and benefits of formal volunteering among low-income diverse older adults. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 64(4), 388–404. https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2021.1897723

[37] Whistler Community Foundation (n.d.). https://whistlerfoundation.com/

Whistler unemployment rate is almost five per cent. Many interviewees suggested that they saw few barriers to employment for older adults and that positions are available for those who want to work.

Training and Support

Indicator: Availability of support for volunteers (e.g., training, transportation, reimbursement of expenses, method of appreciation).

There is strong support for volunteerism in Whistler, especially through the Village and Mountain Host programs. However, many volunteering opportunities have been reduced or eliminated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Community engagement participants identified two additional improvements for volunteering:

- **Flexible opportunities:** Interviewees suggested that because of other work, or due to a full social or travel schedule, they would prefer to volunteer for one-time events and seasonal or short-term positions.

- **A volunteering hub:** Interviewees suggested developing a webpage or print supplement that lists all current volunteer opportunities in Whistler.

Strategy and Actions

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for community engagement and employment:

Strategy: Create Additional Vocational Opportunities for Older Adults			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore the possibility of creating a volunteer opportunity hub/webpage	Short-term	N/A	Whistler Community Foundation
Identify flexible or short-term volunteer opportunities that might be of interest to older adults	Short-term	N/A	Whistler Community Foundation
Consider creating an older adult job fair	Medium-term	N/A	Whistler Chamber of Commerce
Strategy: Enhance RMOW Engagement			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Continue to enhance RMOW outreach to further involve low-income community members and those with diverse cultural backgrounds	Short-term	Advancing Equity and Inclusion: A Guide for Municipalities	RMOW
Consider the diversity of age on the overall representation of RMOW committees	Short-term	N/A	RMOW

Community Support and Health and Wellness Services

The challenges of managing chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cancer, or diabetes impact many older adults. Half of people aged 65 and older in Canada live with some form of disability. Having primary medical care and allied health services along with non-medical support allow older adults to stay in their communities while they age.

Current Age-friendly Features

Whistler's current age-friendly community support and health and wellness services identified during the needs assessment process are as follows:

- The Whistler Healthcare Centre, which offers public and emergency services, radiology, C.T., and lab services.
- Several medical clinics within Whistler.
- Visiting specialists who offer specialty services on a rotating basis.
- The Home and Community Care Team, which has an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a case manager and two nurses who offer home support.
- The Healthy Communities partnership agreement between the RMOW and VCH to reduce chronic disease and promote health and wellness in the community.
- The Better at Home Program, which provides non-medical home-support services.
- The Sea to Sky Safety Net, which is a resource hub for mental health, substance use, crisis and basic needs support services.
- Private care providers, who offer home care services in Whistler.
- The Sea to Sky Hospice Society, which offers support and programs for individuals with life-limiting illnesses and their loved ones.
- The Whistler Parkinson's caregiver support network, which is well-established in the community.
- Local grocery stores that provide delivery services.
- The Whistler Food Bank, which is operated by WCSS.

What We Heard

The following section outlines the most common concerns and suggestions for improvements related to community support and health and wellness services identified during the community engagement.

General Comments

When asked about community support and health and wellness services, most respondents identified good, very good or excellent access to healthy food, but most did not know where to find information regarding the availability of assistance with non-medical daily activities or supportive food programs. The availability of supportive housing and assisted living was also rated as poor. Most did not know about the availability of health programs for older adults. Other common concerns and suggestions for improvements are noted below.

Primary Care Physician

Indicator: Proportion of seniors who have a primary care physician.

Having a family doctor plays an essential role in maintaining health and preventing chronic illness. According to the BC College of Family Physicians, "Eighty-five per cent of British Columbians have an ongoing relationship with a family physician, similar to Statistics Canada national reporting that 84.7 per cent of Canadians have access to

a regular care provider."[38] The same report indicates that within VCH, 82 per cent of residents have a family physician. In Whistler, while 75 per cent of those aged 18 to 39 years have a family doctor, 86 per cent of those aged 40 to 64 years and 97 per cent of those aged 65 years plus have a family doctor.[39] Generally, respondents reported that medical care in Whistler was excellent. Some expressed concern that health care providers were very focused on younger populations or those with acute injuries and had less understanding of the issues related to aging.

Supportive Health Services

Indicator: Availability of prevention programs related to health issues of high relevance to seniors.

An overwhelming theme in the community engagement was that Whistler was not a place to stay until the end of life. Interviewees described how things changed significantly after developing a chronic illness or having a catastrophic health event. These types of issues require specialized care that is only available in Squamish or the Lower Mainland. Interviewees also indicated that they may have to move out of the community to access appropriate health services, home support, and supportive housing as they get older.

Indicator: Availability of end-of-life support for seniors, their families, and caregivers.

Fifty-nine per cent of survey respondents did not know about the availability of end-of-life support programs, and those that did indicated that the programs were fair or poor.

Indicator: Availability of assistance for activities of daily living (e.g., yard work, shopping, snow removal, garbage collection).

The majority of survey respondents (approximately 60 per cent) did not know about the availability of assistance with non-medical daily activities. Similarly, most people interviewed were not aware of non-medical home support programs (e.g., Better at Home Program). Respondents reported difficulties hiring non-medical supports such as cleaning, minor home repair, gardening/yard work, and snow removal services. They noted that many of these workers are occupied with rental accommodation jobs.

Indicator: Awareness of Emergency Preparedness.

Although 57 per cent of those surveyed indicated that access to information about emergency preparedness/disaster planning was good, very good or excellent, survey respondents indicated that they would like to see additional information and training on disaster preparedness for the Whistler community.

Strategy and Actions

The following table identifies the strategies and actions for community support and health and wellness services:

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[38] BC College of Family Physicians (2020). *Family Doctors Care: The Role and Value of Family Physicians in British Columbia*. https://bccfp.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Position-Paper.pdf

[39] VCH (2017). *My Health My Community: Community Health Profile: Whistler*. https://myhealthmycommunity.org/community-profile/whistler/

Strategy: Increase Awareness of Community Support and Non-medical Home Services			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Increase awareness of the Better at Home Program in Whistler	Short-term	Better at Home[40]	Sea to Sky Better at Home
Add community service organizations and home support providers to the age-friendly information hub	Short-term	BC 211[41]	MAC
Collaborate with VCH to enhance medical care within the community to reduce the need for travel, including services related to mental health	Long-term	N/A	MAC, RMOW, VCH
Create and promote a caregiver support network	Medium-term	Family Caregivers of BC (Virtual Caregiver Support Groups),[42] BC's Alzheimer Resource Centre – North and West Vancouver[43]	VCH, WCSS
Strategy: Increase the Focus on Older Adults in Emergency Preparedness Planning			
Action	**Timeline**	**Existing resources or related initiatives**	**For consideration by**
Explore existing emergency preparedness plans and how they meet older adults' needs	Short-term	N/A	RMOW Protective Services
Consider a campaign to bring awareness to older adults about current emergency preparedness plans	Short-term	Closing the Gaps: Advancing Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery for Older Adults[44]	RMOW Protective Services, Whistler Public Library

[40] Better at Home (n.d.). https://betterathome.ca/

[41] BC 211 (n.d.). https://bc211.ca/

[42] Family Caregivers of BC (n.d.). https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/

[43] Canadian Mental Health Association, North and West Vancouver Branch (n.d.). *Alzheimer's Disease* https://northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca/documents/alzheimers-disease-2/

[44] Canadian Red Cross (2020). *Closing the Gaps: Advancing Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery for Older Adults.* https://caep.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CRC_WhitePaper_EN-5.pdf

SECTION 4: NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

After assessing the community needs, implementing the action plan and measuring progress against the plan are considered the best practice approaches in planning for age-friendly communities. The following recommendations are intended to help the RMOW and community stakeholders successfully implement the action plan:

1. **Post the final version of the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project report publicly.** Posting the action plan is the fourth key PHAC milestone to becoming an age-friendly community (see below).

2. **Commit to using an equity lens in implementation and evaluation.** A focus on structural influences that create inequities (i.e., the Social Determinants of Health) means regularly asking the questions "Who benefits from this action?", "Who isn't included in implementation?" and "How can we do things differently to included groups that aren't normally part of the process?" Examples include interviewing older adults in the language they are most comfortable with or having an interpreter available.

3. **Identify who will oversee individual implementation efforts.** The RMOW will identify the body who will oversee the implementation of the action plan.

4. **The implementation body will refer actions to relevant internal and external groups to highlight actions for consideration within their work plans.** Potential action owners have been identified within the strategies and actions above. These owners may be internal to the RMOW or part of community organizations who have the expertise and willingness to be involved in implementation efforts.

5. **Encourage action owners to take ownership of their project activities and set expectations for anticipated completion milestones.** Making a clear plan for who is responsible for each action can reduce confusion and create community ownership of age-friendly efforts.

6. **Develop a communication plan to report on age-friendly implementation stories to the public.** Keeping community members and stakeholders updated on activities (even when those efforts are not successful) is an important part of retaining support for age-friendly initiatives.

7. **Choose a schedule for evaluation and monitoring.** A key piece of implementing an age-friendly program is understanding both the process and outcomes of the implementation.

Considerations for Evaluation and Monitoring

The PHAC milestones are recognized as key to helping communities keep track of the age-friendly process.[45] These are:

1. Establishing an advisory committee that includes the active engagement of older adults;

2. Securing a local municipal council resolution to actively support, promote and work toward becoming age-friendly;

[45] PHAC (2012). *Age-Friendly Communities in Canada: Community Implementation Guide*. https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/age-friendly-communities-canada-community-implementation-guide.html

3. Establishing a robust and concrete plan of action that responds to the needs identified by older adults in the community;

4. Demonstrating commitment to action by publicly posting the action plan; and

5. Committing to measuring activities, reviewing action plan outcomes, and reporting on them publicly.

After publicly posting the action plan and developing an implementation schedule, an evaluation method should be established. Evaluation is an ongoing process to understand and provide evidence about what is working well, what could be improved and what changes could be made to improve implementation efforts.

Typically, age-friendly initiatives measure both process and outcomes. The action items in each age-friendly dimension listed above have associated strategies developed based on the community assessment indicators. The assessment is listed by themes for each dimension area and is framed by the PHAC's Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide indicators. These indicators can be used to monitor progress (particularly short- and medium-term) in process and outcomes during the implementation phase.

It is also important to note that many age-friendly indicators are interrelated. For example, the indicator "Availability of a range of affordable options for transportation" could impact the indicator "Availability of support for volunteers (e.g., training, transportation, reimbursement of expenses, method of appreciation)."

Process evaluation assesses whether the age-friendly initiative was implemented in the way that was first intended. Ongoing monitoring of the process also helps to keep implementation efforts focused and on track. The first step is to determine the outputs that were part of the process. Outputs are things that can be counted or measured during implementation (e.g., the number of new seating areas, the number of new non-sport related recreation programs created). Measuring inputs (e.g., resources, sources of funding) is also recommended in process evaluation. Outcomes should also be measured; these are the changes or results that implementation efforts are designed to achieve.

Creating a simple logic model is the best way to track what will be measured and monitored. A logic model provides a visual representation of the evaluation process and helps all stakeholders, community members and partners understand how the implementation efforts will be achieved, documented and measured. The logic model should include:

- **Inputs** – Resources that will be used to implement the action items. This could include staff or volunteer time, funding or in-kind donations.

- **Outputs** – What will be done during implementation (e.g., install additional seating areas on the Valley Trail).

- **Details of what will be created** (e.g., 10 new benches on the Valley Trail).

- **Outcomes** – The changes in behaviour, knowledge or skill that will result from the action (e.g., older adults will feel safe using the Valley Trail knowing they can sit when they become tired). Outcomes should be expressed in terms of short-term, intermediate and long-term changes.

The following table represents a sample logic model that could be used for implementation, monitoring and evaluation efforts:

Goal: To increase the awareness and utilization of older adults' services and programs in Whistler					
Inputs	**Outputs**		**Outcomes**		
Resources	*Activities*	*To be Created*	*Short-term*	*Intermediate*	*Long-term*
Number of staff and volunteer hours	Inventorying older adult services and programs	An age-friendly information hub master list	Increased awareness of programs and services for older adults and caregivers	Increased satisfaction with availability of programs and services	Improved quality of life for older adults in Whistler
Donation of webspace from community partner	Communicate information to the public	Age-friendly information "hub" page	Increased utilization of older adults' programs and services	Higher levels of reported satisfaction with availability of services	Increased physical and mental health among Whistler older adults

Many of the age-friendly focus areas can be tracked using the existing community surveying and monitoring program that the RMOW has had for over 15 years. The current Community Life Survey provides data related to sense of belonging, affordability, community participation, transportation, personal health status, recreation, learning opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and more. These indicators are available by age group and can be used to help understand some of the changes in age-friendly features in Whistler moving forward. The community survey used during the community engagement phase of this project is also intended as a tool that can be used in future monitoring efforts.

Finally, to understand important long-term health and social outcomes that can be influenced by age-friendly initiatives, the PHAC also recommends measuring changes in four specific health and well-being indicators. These are:

1. **Level of health-related quality of life**. Perceived health has been associated with a range of health outcomes, including mortality. A question regarding perceived health can be found on Whistler's annual Community Life Survey.

2. **Level of satisfaction with life in general**. An example survey question can be found on the Canadian Community Health Survey and could be added to future RMOW survey tools.[46]

3. **Level of loneliness**. Loneliness is a significant risk factor for poor health outcomes in older adults. This question was used on the project's community survey and could be replicated on a future survey.

4. **Level of satisfaction with social relationships**. This question was used on the project's community survey and could be replicated on a future survey.

[46] Statistics Canada. (2017). *Archived - Health indicators, two-year period estimates*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310045201&request_locale=en

Communicating Results

The last consideration in implementation and evaluation is ensuring that community members and stakeholders are kept aware of age-friendly efforts and initiatives. The process should begin with a statement from the RMOW committing to reporting and measuring age-friendly activities. This should be followed by developing a multi-level plan for regular communication about ongoing age-friendly initiatives in Whistler. Any communication plan should also consider how outcomes of the implementation and evaluation are shared equitably with all community members.

APPENDIX A: WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

WHISTLER

WHISTLER AGE-FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN PROJECT

WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose of the Working Group

The Working Group will provide insight to the age-friendly consulting Project Lead and the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW) on key older adult issues. The Working Group will primarily give input on public engagement opportunities; assist in the development of a shared vision and goals; help define roles and responsibilities for multiple stakeholders; and work to identify strategic priorities and concrete on-the-ground actions to achieve the age-friendly assessment and action plan recommendations.

1.0 Definition

For the age-friendly project, older adults are defined as all persons aged 55 and older.

2.0 Mandate

- bring information and experiences to the process by representing the older adult perspective on key issues
- review and confirm the vision and goals for active living and age-friendliness in Whistler
- inform the assessment of the current situation in Whistler
- identify the best priorities and potential actions for making Whistler more age-friendly
- be the catalyst for action and ensure a coordinated and efficient approach, including a consideration of roles and responsibilities for the multiple stakeholders to advance the various potential actions

3.0 Composition

The multi-stakeholder Working Group will include up to fifteen (15) members* and will represent diverse and unique perspectives. Invitations will be offered to the following:

- two At-large Members representing Whistler seniors
- one RMOW Councillor

* Working Group members may represent more than one stakeholder group. The Measuring Up Select Committee of Council (MUSCC) is not listed as a separate entity as several Working Group members are also members of this committee.

- one representative from Better at Home
- one representative from Vancouver Coastal Health (Population Health Policy and Projects)
- one representative from Whistler Community Foundation
- one representative from Whistler Community Services Society
- one representative from Whistler Cycling Club
- one representative from Whistler Housing Authority
- one representative from Whistler Mature Action Community
- RMOW staff from the Planning and Infrastructure Services departments

4.0 Procedures and Commitment

The project will be carried out between April and October 2021.

The consulting Project Lead will facilitate the working sessions. The Working Group will meet as a group four times during the project to complete the following tasks:

- Workshop 1: a project overview meeting and collection of initial input (web-based 60-90 minutes meeting)
- Workshop 2: a meeting as part of the assessment to complete a SWOT analysis and develop priorities (web-based 90 minutes meeting)
- Workshop 3: a meeting to set priorities from the assessment plan and create action ideas (web-based 60-90 minutes)
- Workshop 4: a session to refine the Action Plan (web-based 60-90 minutes)

The Working Group will also be invited via email to review other project documents, including (but not limited to) the Community Survey and project reports.

5.0 Living Nature of this Document

This document will be reviewed as required, and any subsequent amendments will be dated and documented in writing.

Version date: April 20, 2021

APPENDIX B: AGE-FRIENDLY PLANNING BACKGROUND

Canadian Context

The Pan-Canadian Age-Friendly Communities Milestones developed by the PHAC provides a framework for using the age-friendly planning approach in a Canadian context. This process includes establishing an advisory committee, obtaining a local municipal resolution, conducting a needs assessment, developing an action plan, publicly posting the plan, and committing to a regular review and evaluation of recommendations.

The Canadian Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities guide provides further recommendations for smaller communities in Canada.[47] The guide was used as an additional resource while building a framework for the Whistler assessment process.

British Columbia Context

The B.C. government recognizes the eight dimensions of age-friendly planning introduced by the WHO and expresses them as follows: 1) outdoor spaces and buildings; 2) transportation; 3) housing; 4) social participation; 5) respect and social inclusion; 6) civic participation and employment; 7) communication and information; and 8) community support and health services.

Age-friendly planning is an important topic in B.C., given demographic trends. Between 2020 and 2041, the population of those aged 65 years or older in B.C. is expected to increase by 63 per cent; older adults will eventually represent almost 25 per cent of the provincial population.[48] Given rapid population aging, designing physical and social environments that support older people to lead healthy, active lives is paramount. Encouraging municipalities to support an aging population also benefits other community members; in particular, focusing on universal design helps those with mobility challenges, parents with strollers, and other residents with different needs. Communities using age-friendly planning strategies are also inclusive of all ages. As one expert suggests, "Design for the young and you exclude the old; design for the old and you include the young."[49]

Whistler Context

Aging-in-place and being inclusive of all ages are important themes in Whistler's current OCP (adopted in June 2020). Key features of Whistler's OCP in relation to age-friendly planning are discussed further in Appendix D.

Whistler also has a considerable history of initiatives related to accessibility as well as age-friendly planning. Some of these earlier initiatives include the following:

- In 2003, the RMOW conducted an access audit of Whistler Village as part of the bid for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

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[47] Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors (n.d.). *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide.* http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age_friendly_rural/AFRRC_en.pdf

[48] Ip, F. & Lavoie, S. (2020). PEOPLE 2020: BC sub-provincial population projections. *BC Stats.*

[49] Biggs, S., & Carr, A. (2015). Age- and child-friendly cities and the promise of intergenerational space. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 29(1), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2014.993942

- In 2004, MAC carried out a Seniors Health Survey for Whistler and Pemberton.

- In 2006, through the Whistler2020 process,[50] the Health and Social Task Force recommended developing an Accessibility Strategy to address the deficiencies revealed by the 2003 audit. Over a corresponding period, 2010 Legacies Now developed a framework for communities to achieve accessibility and inclusivity.

- In 2006, Whistler was approached to become a pilot community applying the Measuring Up[51] framework, and an informal advisory group was formed. During the ensuing years, efforts focused on delivering action items like addressing accessibility at the main entrance to the Village and creating a wayfinding system for ramp access around the Village.

- In 2009, MAC carried out a Seniors Needs Assessment Survey.

- On October 6, 2009, RMOW Council formally created MUSCC.

- In 2010, a Seniors Needs Action Planner joined the WCSS. This coordinator worked with MAC, the RMOW and WCSS to help produce a resource guide for older adults to let them know what resources were available to allow them to live, move and age comfortably in place. The coordinator also worked in the community to identify issues and help WCSS design programs to fill the needs of older and aging adults. This position was discontinued in 2015.

- In spring 2010, the RMOW successfully applied for funding through UBCM for age-friendly planning. Subsequently, SPARC BC was retained to plan and deliver an aging-in-place community forum: *Whistler Through the Ages*. More information on *Whistler Through the Ages* is provided below.

Purpose of MUSCC

MUSCC will work collaboratively to assess and improve community accessibility and inclusion focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities but encompassing the whole community. The Committee will review and improve local access and inclusion as based upon public input and participation on an ongoing basis. People with disabilities will be an active part of this work.

MUSCC Terms of Reference, January 2020

Whistler Through the Ages

The overall objective of the *Whistler Through the Ages* community forum was to engage community members in planning for an age-friendly Whistler that welcomes and includes all age groups within the community. The community forum invited community members to identify existing and future gaps, and to brainstorm solutions. The organizers also asked local residents to suggest their long- and short-term priorities for creating an age-friendly Whistler. This feedback was collated and translated into approximately 30 draft policy statements that were ultimately brought forward into the RMOW's OCP that was adopted in 2020. Some of the recommendations that fell outside the scope of an OCP were fed into the Whistler2020 process and utilized as guidelines for grassroots action planning.

[50] Whistler2020 was Whistler's integrated community sustainability plan and highest-level policy document. In 2020, it was replaced by Whistler's current OCP.

[51] Measuring Up "is a collaborative process that engages people with disabilities, local government, the business sector and other community leaders to assess and improve local accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, seniors and the community as a whole." Government of B.C. (n.d.). *Measuring Up: Accessible and Inclusive Communities*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/people/seniors/about-seniorsbc/activeaging/measuring_up_summary.pdf

Following the *Whistler Through the Ages* community forum, the RMOW, WCSS and MAC committed to working together on Whistler's Aging in Place strategy, outreach, policy development and implementation through a collaborative community process. These partners compiled a list of programming, services and supports that were available within Whistler. This information was then authenticated, organized and published as the Access Whistler guide. This guide was available in print. It was also available electronically on the municipal website, revised to follow the Web Accessibility Initiative guidelines to better engage and communicate with a broad range of stakeholders and citizens. This guide was produced annually from 2010 until 2015.

Connection to Other RMOW Projects

The Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project is inherently linked to other RMOW projects currently in development. These projects influenced the development of the age-friendly action plan and will also be important to implementing those actions. These key projects are as follows:

- Whistler Accessibility Action Plan
  The Accessibility Action Plan details how the RMOW is continuing to make its workplace, services and built environment accessible and welcoming to everyone. This framework will provide a comprehensive approach to the accessibility and inclusivity of municipal practices, facilities and infrastructure by consistently identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility. The RMOW will progressively enhance accessibility consistent with municipal objectives and authorities.

- Whistler Infill Housing Project
  The Infill Housing project is derived from a recommendation of the Mayor's Task Force on Resident Housing. The project will carefully consider increased densification in single-family neighbourhoods to help address the loss of market homes historically more available to locals for rental and ownership and to provide the opportunity for existing owners to stay in the community and age-in-place, by releasing equity in their homes.

- Whistler Custom Transit Feasibility Study
  The feasibility assessment is an action of the Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan that aims to examine custom transit options that could benefit Whistler as the community ages and as travel needs in Whistler continue to diversify. The results will be used to modify the current Whistler Transit System to better serve the needs of Whistler residents and explore the feasibility of introducing a customized transit service in Whistler.

- Whistler Transit Future Action Plan (2022-2027)
  The purpose of the Whistler Transit Future Action Plan is to update transit service and infrastructure recommendations first outlined in the Sea to Sky Transit Future Plan for the local Whistler Transit System. The recommendations in the Whistler Transit Future Action Plan will continue to shape how the local transit system works in Whistler over the following one to five years.

- Whistler Let's Move Active Transportation Plan
  The Whistler Active Transportation Plan will include an engagement plan to identify the community's priority strategies and actions to increase the use of active transportation year-round in Whistler. The findings will be incorporated into municipal planning documents, including the OCP, Whistler Transit Future Action Plan and the Accessibility Action Plan, and the budget process.

APPENDIX C: WHISTLER COMMUNITY PROFILE

Population

Whistler is currently home to almost 12,000 permanent and 4,000 seasonal residents. Based on pre-COVID-19 pandemic statistics, Whistler's residents are joined by over three million annual visitors. Combining Whistler's permanent population, seasonal population, overnight visitors and day visitors, Whistler's total daily population equivalent has grown from a daily average of 25,962 in 2008 to 36,306 in 2017, with a peak occupancy estimated at 55,000. Most importantly for this project, of the permanent resident population, 17 per cent are aged 55 years or older.[52]

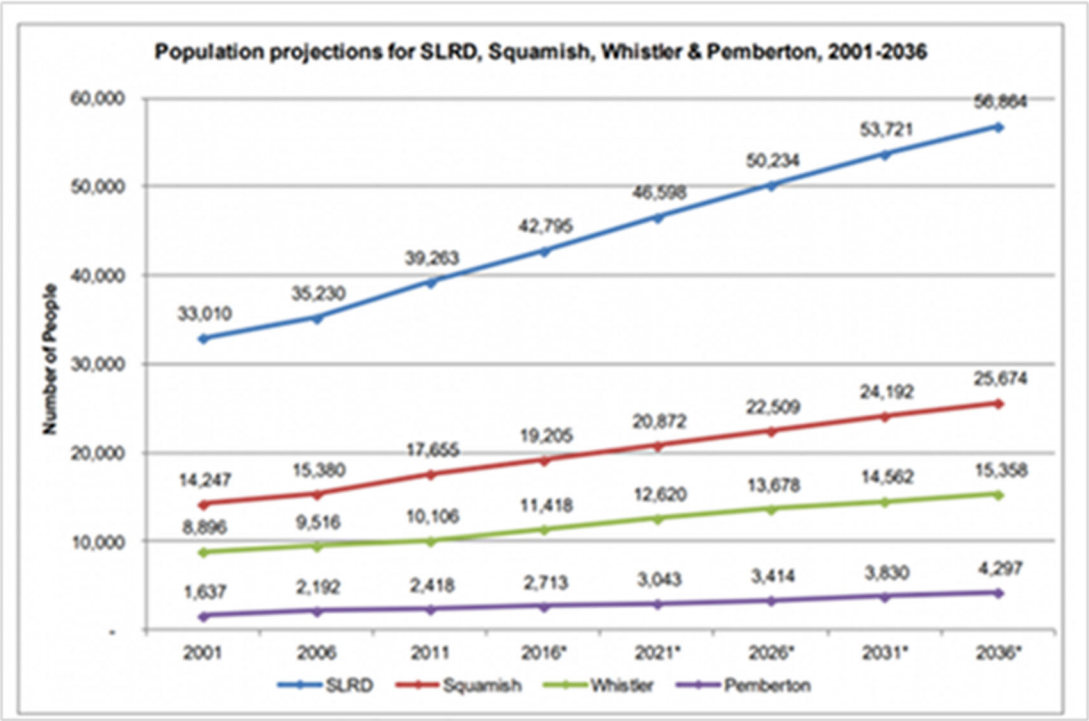

FIGURE C1: POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR SLRD, SQUAMISH, WHISTLER AND PEMBERTON, 2001-2036. SOURCE: URBANICS CONSULTANTS LTD. & CEMSIS 2006 & NH/S 2011

An analysis of Whistler's population trends shows that Whistler has experienced significant growth since 2001. This growth is projected to continue (Figure C1). Existing modelling conducted for the SLRD Regional Growth Strategy projected a 2 per cent growth rate between 2016 and 2021 and a 1.6 per cent growth rate between 2016 and 2031. As demonstrated in Figures C2 and C3, as the Whistler population continues to grow, so does the proportion of residents aged 55 years and older.

[52] Statistics Canada (2017). Whistler, DM [Census subdivision], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province] (table). Census Profile. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E (accessed May 13, 2021).

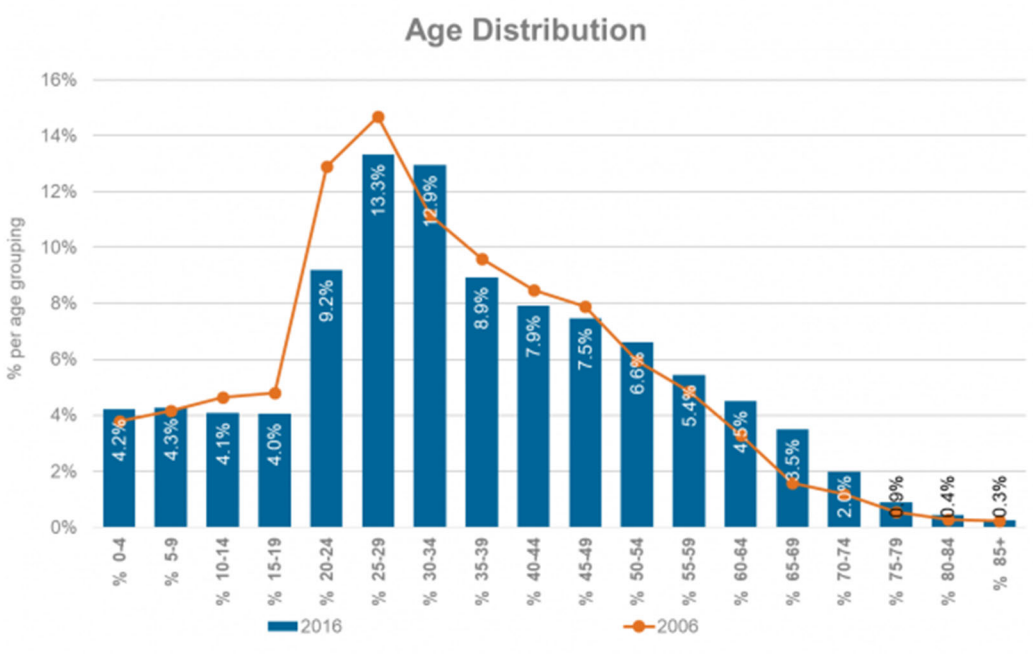

FIGURE C2: AGE DISTRIBUTION 2006 AND 2016 CENSUS DATA COMPARISON

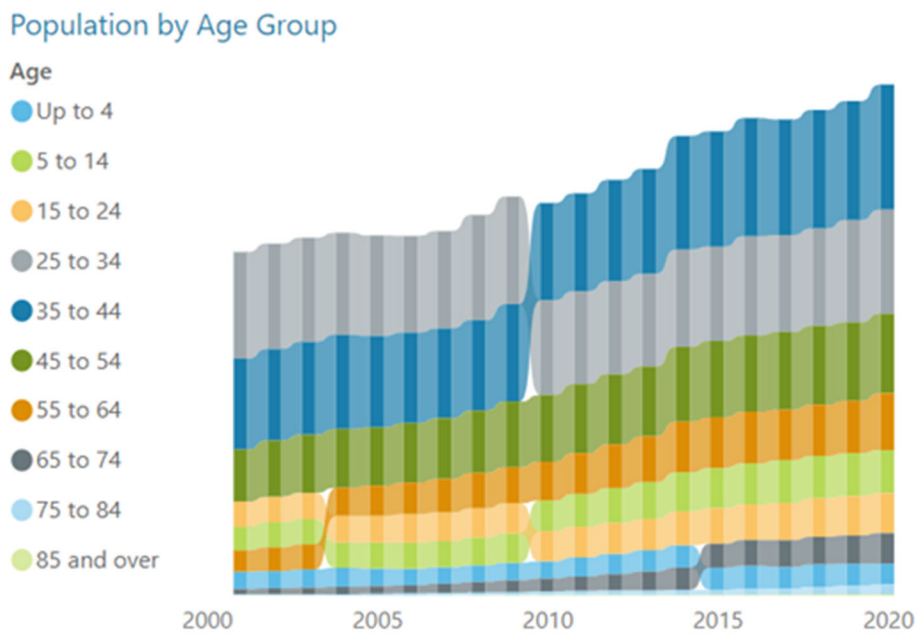

FIGURE C3: POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION OVER TIME

Ethnicity

The Whistler population has become more diverse, with 13 per cent of residents in 2016 (versus 11 per cent in 2006) reporting that the language they speak most often at home is neither English nor French. The change in language diversity over time is shown below in Figure C4. A total of 41 mother tongues are spoken in Whistler. While the vast majority still speak English, French is closely followed by Japanese and Filipino.

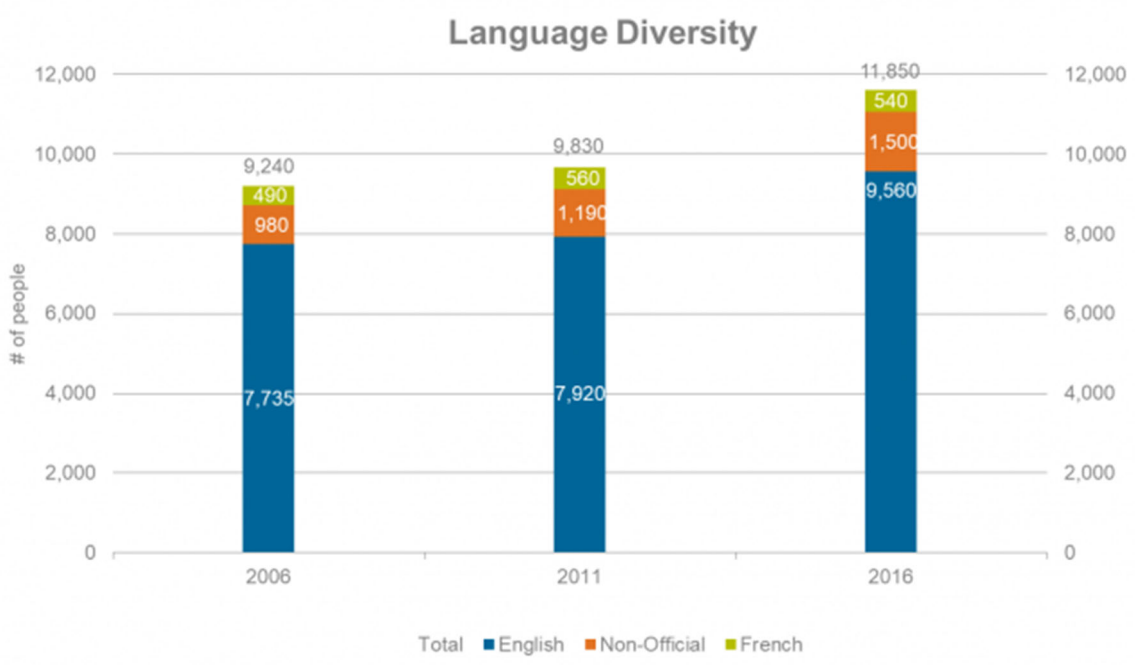

FIGURE C4: WHISTLER LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

With respect to immigration, 32 per cent of Whistler residents (versus 22 per cent in 2006 and 25 per cent in 2011) are now either immigrants or non-permanent residents (including individuals residing in Whistler on work or study permits). Between 2011 and 2016, the number of immigrant citizens in Whistler increased by 970, representing almost 50 per cent of Whistler's total population increase of 2,030 residents during this same period.

Income

In 2015, the median household income in Whistler was $79,752 per year, the median total income of one-person households was $43,520 per year, and the median total income of two-or-more person households was $95,697 per year. Based on the after-tax Low-Income Measure, almost 9 per cent of adults over the age of 65 in Whistler live in low-income households, which is above the Canadian average of 6.6 per cent.[53] The Low-Income Measure is a fixed percentage (50 per cent) of median adjusted household income, where "adjusted" indicates that household needs are considered relative to household size.

Throughout the project, many people expressed that it is important to recognize that older adults in Whistler are not a homogenous group with regard to wealth. It was suggested that there is a perception that older adults in Whistler are either wealthy second homeowners or wealthy residents with significant real estate assets. During the assessment, people reported a broad spectrum of wealth among older adults in Whistler – from wealthy retirees to service workers who are struggling to age-in-place without financial resources.

[53] SPARC BC and the United Way British Columbia (n.d.). *B.C. Seniors' Poverty Report Card.* https://www.uwlm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/B.C.-Seniors-Poverty-Report-Card.pdf

Housing

The 'Quality of Life' vision characteristic in Whistler's OCP identifies affordable housing as one of the essentials that "allow us to meet our needs and participate in Whistler's lifestyle through all stages of life." However, currently, a considerable percentage of homeowners and renters in Whistler are well above the provincial average of those spending greater than 30 per cent of their income on housing, at 30 and 44 per cent, respectively.[54]

Historically, housing affordability, homeownership and quality rental accommodations have been the greatest housing challenges in Whistler and are still challenges that persist today. In the pre-COVID-19 context, these challenges have intensified as Whistler has experienced record visitation, peak workforce numbers, growth in the resident population, and strong demand from second homeowners for recreation and investment properties. Additionally, as Whistler approaches its approved residential accommodation capacity and growth boundaries, market demand and construction activity remain strong. Subsequently, Whistler's original housing stock is undergoing significant renovation and redevelopment; newer, often larger, homes are now appearing in existing neighbourhoods.

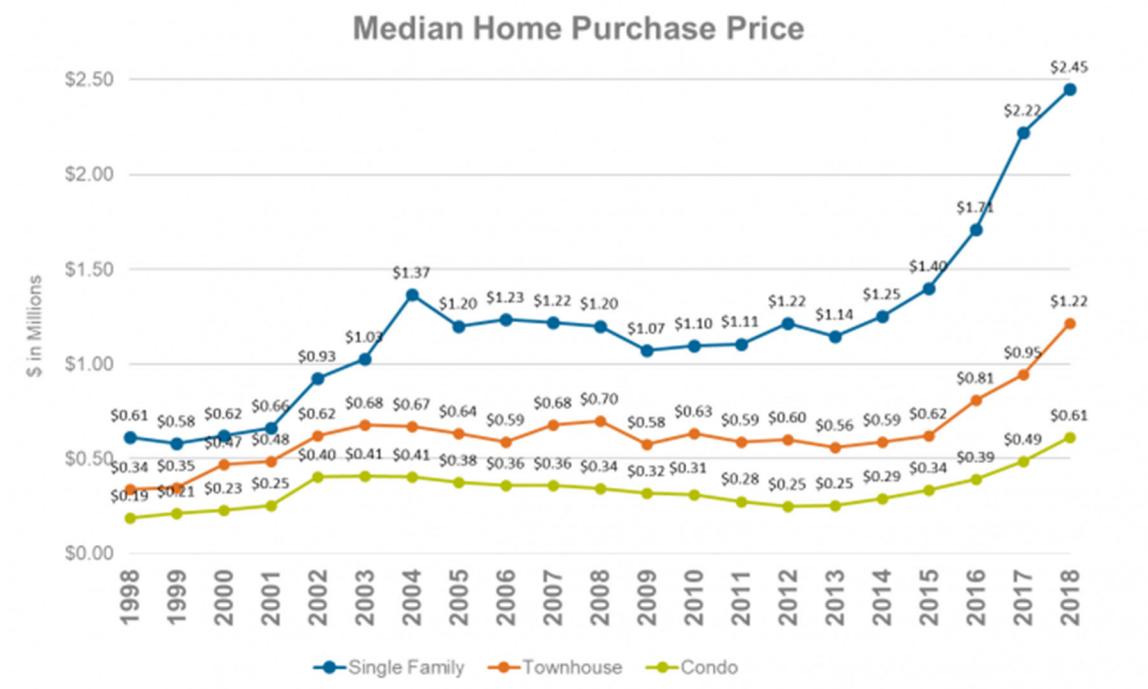

FIGURE C5: WHISTLER MEDIAN HOME PURCHASE PRICE OVER TIME

To address these challenges, Whistler's policies to meet housing needs for at least the next five years focus primarily on employee housing, including housing for qualified retirees of Whistler. The WHA and Mayor's Task Force on Resident Housing are crucial to these efforts, and both are discussed further below.

Whistler Housing Authority

In 1997, the WHA was established as an independent, municipally owned corporation of the RMOW to oversee the development, administration and management of resident-restricted housing in Whistler. The resort

[54] Provincial Health Services Authority (2021). *BC Community Health Profile: Whistler*. http://communityhealth.phsa.ca/HealthProfiles/PdfGenerator/Whistler

community now has over 2,100 units of employee housing (both rental and owner-occupied units) reserved for employees and retirees, with price, eligibility and occupancy restrictions. Embracing the goal of housing at least 75 per cent of employees locally within Whistler, the RMOW and WHA continue to maintain and augment the inventory of resident-restricted housing so that both rental and ownership accommodation is available and affordable for local income earners and retirees in perpetuity. Additionally, the municipality's land bank is available to be developed on an as-needed and as-appropriate basis.

In addition to qualified seniors having access to all WHA rental units within the general program, eligible seniors who are either Whistler employees or retired Whistler employees are prioritized for tenancy at Lumina, in the Rainbow neighbourhood. Seniors are also prioritized for units in the ownership program at the Solana building in the Rainbow neighbourhood, and certain units in The Rise and The Falls in the Cheakamus Crossing neighbourhood.

Mayor's Task Force on Resident Housing

The Mayor's Task Force on Resident Housing was an RMOW Select Committee of Council. The Task Force was comprised of local stakeholder organizations and community representatives. Each of these members had a unique position that enabled them to contribute to the understanding, evaluation, planning and implementation of Whistler's resident housing actions.

The Task Force completed a comprehensive review of Whistler's employee housing needs in 2018. The Task Force found that a significant number of Whistler's employees needed more affordable or more suitable housing. In addition, the Task Force determined that employee housing needs span the full spectrum of type, tenure, household composition and incomes, with residents facing affordability barriers when seeking stable long-term rental options, affordable ownership, aging-in-place opportunities, and homes to accommodate new or growing families.

The Task Force's final report included seven key recommendations. These recommendations informed the residential accommodation policies in Whistler's OCP and helped to direct the RMOW's work with community stakeholders to achieve appropriate and affordable housing for the resort's workforce. The recommendations that are particularly relevant to age-friendly planning in Whistler are as follows:

- Build additional employee-restricted housing;
- Allow private employee housing developments:
- Consider infill housing opportunities; and
- Refine employee-restricted eligibility and enforcement.

Health

Whistler residents self-report good health overall and have a low chronic disease burden compared to other areas in VCH. In the 2017 VCH Whistler community health profile, 77 per cent of those 40 to 64 years old and 88 per

cent of those 65 plus rated their health as excellent or very good. In addition, 72 per cent of those 40 to 64 and 89 per cent of those 65 plus rated their mental health as excellent or very good.[55]

Being regularly physically active is considered a preventative health measure. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend obtaining 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week. The national self-reported average of those meeting this standard who are over 65 is 40 per cent; in Whistler, almost 53 per cent of those in the same age bracket are meeting the standard. Not surprisingly, obesity rates are low and physical activity rates are high in Whistler.[56, 57]

Health services in Whistler are provided by VCH along with community service organizations and private providers. VCH operates the Whistler Health Care Centre. The Health Care Centre offers public and emergency services, radiology, C.T., and lab services. Additionally, the Home and Community Care Team has an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a case manager and two nurses who offer home support. The RMOW has also entered into a Healthy Communities partnership agreement with VCH to reduce chronic disease and promote health and wellness in the community.

As noted above in Section 3 of this report. according to the BC College of Family Physicians, "Eighty-five per cent of British Columbians have an ongoing relationship with a family physician, which is similar to Statistics Canada reports that 84.7 per cent of Canadians have access to a regular care provider."[58] Within VCH, 82 per cent of residents have a family physician. In Whistler, while 75 per cent of those aged 18 to 39 years have a family doctor, 86 per cent of those 40 to 64 years old and 97 per cent of those 65 plus have a family doctor.[59]

Older adults in Whistler face the added challenge of finding specialty care related to aging issues. Currently, no geriatric specialist is serving the Whistler older adult population. Additionally, there are limited mental health services for all ages in Whistler.

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[55] VCH (2017). *My Health My Community: Community Health Profile: Whistler*. https://myhealthmycommunity.org/community-profile/whistler/

[56] VCH (2017). *My Health My Community: Community Health Profile: Whistler. https://myhealthmycommunity.org/community-profile/whistler/*

[57] Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0096-13. Physical activity, self-reported, adult, by age group. https://doi.org/10.25318/1310009601-eng

[58] BC College of Family Physicians (2020). *Family Doctors Care: The Role and Value of Family Physicians in British Columbia*. https://bccfp.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Position-Paper.pdf

[59] VCH (2017). *My Health My Community: Community Health Profile: Whistler*. https://myhealthmycommunity.org/community-profile/whistler/

APPENDIX D: RMOW POLICY RELATED TO AGE-FRIENDLY PLANNING

The age-friendly needs assessment was informed by an environmental scan, including a review of municipal documents. Relevant RMOW documents identified included the OCP, the Whistler Seniors Housing Policy and the Community Engagement Policy. The following materials present the policies that were identified for each of the eight age-friendly dimensions.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The following OCP policies support improving the features of outdoor spaces and buildings in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
5.6.3.5.	Ensure public spaces are safe and accessible to everyone, aesthetically pleasing and comfortable social spaces.
5.6.3.10.	Pursue initiatives that reinforce Whistler Village as a place that is relevant to residents, encourages residents to use Whistler Village and supports a sense of community.
5.6.3.14.	Encourage reinvestment, enhancement and redevelopment of Village properties and public spaces to maintain a high-quality built environment that is comfortable, attractive and universally designed.
5.6.3.16.	Provide convenient and well-maintained public washroom facilities and drinking water facilities.
8.8.1.1.	Encourage development and redevelopment to implement Universal Design principles.
8.8.2.1.	Collaborate with community partners to monitor and evaluate the needs of residents and visitors with disabilities and work collectively to adapt programs, the built environment and the overall resort experience to meet these needs.
9.5.1.3.	Public space is accessible and suitable to a range of ages, abilities and income levels.
9.7.4.3.	Ensure infrastructure is universally accessible where possible, accommodating the functional needs of all individuals, including children, adults and seniors and those with visual, mobility or cognitive challenges.

Transportation

The following OCP policies support initiatives related to age-related transportation needs in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
8.8.1.3.	Promote land use patterns, transportation routes and community facilities, amenities and spaces that meet the needs of an aging demographic.
11.1.1.3.	Reduce conflicts between all types of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, persons with disabilities and other forms of active and personal transportation.
11.1.1.5.	Improve wayfinding for all modes of transportation.
11.1.2.6.	Eliminate barriers to those with mobility challenges through the design of transportation infrastructure, such as sidewalk curbs, intersections and parking lots.
11.1.3.2.	Ensure convenient, safe and accessible infrastructure for those using preferred modes of transportation.
11.5.3.1.	Work with the provincial government, regional stakeholders, B.C. Transit, Lil'wat Nation, Squamish Nation and private sector to develop an accessible, frequent and affordable regional/interregional transit service that meets the travel needs of Sea to Sky residents and employees.

Housing

The following OCP policies support older adults to age-in-place in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
5.1.2.1.	Project and plan for current and future employee housing needs by undertaking ongoing monitoring of key housing need indicators and adapting supply-related policies and actions accordingly.
5.1.3.5.	Explore infill as a tool to support both aging in place and employee housing.
5.3.1.1.	Encourage residential neighbourhood and building design to meet Universal Design standards and best practices.
5.3.1.3.	Encourage a diversity of housing types and tenures (rental and ownership) responsive to the needs of all age groups and family types, including singles, couples, young adults and families, seasonal residents, people with disabilities and seniors, and to support their transition through different housing types as their needs change.
5.3.1.4.	Collaborate with appropriate agencies and organizations to investigate requirements and provide, on an as-needed basis, affordable housing and special needs housing including emergency shelter, transitional housing or special care facilities.

The RMOW's Whistler Seniors Housing Policy (Council Policy G-14) also supports older adults aging-in-place in Whistler. This Council Policy was created on November 19, 2001 and amended on December 15, 2003. This Council Policy is reproduced below:

- That housing developed exclusively for use by Whistler seniors (subject to appropriate price and resale controls and qualification requirements) is considered resident housing. It is therefore not subject to the municipal bed unit limit.

- That Council encourage the development of occupancy restricted market seniors housing for seniors currently living in Whistler and facilitate the development of resident restricted/price and resale restricted seniors housing.

- That Council instruct staff to conduct research on issues relating to affordability and demand for seniors living on retirement incomes in Whistler to clarify needs.

- That Council adopt 55 plus as the minimum the age for seniors for housing planning purposes, recognizing that specific projects to have different age requirements as demographics change.

- That Council direct staff to identify specific sites with potential for seniors housing (non-market and market or combined).

- That Council instruct staff to develop a policy for the use of RMOW bed units to obtain community amenities, that may include the creation of resident restricted seniors housing.

- That Council support relaxations to zoning requirements, where appropriate, to improve affordability of resident restricted seniors' units, but do not change bed unit allocations at this time however recognizing it be subject to GST.

- That Council require occupancy covenants and price and resale restrictions for non-market seniors housing.

- That Council require occupancy covenants only for facilitated market seniors housing.

- That Council instruct staff to develop/adopt siting criteria and adaptable design guidelines for seniors and disabled housing and promote adaptable design.

- That Council consider creating an advisory group on disability issues in light of the aging of the North American population and the upcoming Paralympic games.

- That Council encourage staff to use innovative means to promote the development of resident restricted affordable seniors housing in Whistler and review, in detail, policies for amenity zoning from other jurisdictions.

- That staff provide research on affordability to WHA and request a review of benchmark prices for resident restricted seniors housing, however subject to CSP review.

Respect, Social Inclusion or Cultural Safety

The following OCP policies support respect, social inclusion or cultural safety in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
8.3.1.1.	Provide opportunities for residents to connect with each other during municipal initiatives, events and activities.
8.3.1.2.	Continue to provide well-designed places and opportunities for social interaction throughout the resort community
8.4.1.1.	Work with community partners to provide and support activities and events where community members and visitors can learn about and enjoy experiences with other cultures.
8.4.1.2.	Provide opportunities to be welcoming, inclusive and supportive of all ages, genders, gender identities, abilities, cultures and religions at community events and activities.
8.4.1.3.	Encourage opportunities for interaction among residents, second homeowners, seasonal employees, retirees, students and visitors.
8.4.1.5.	Support the work of community-based service groups and organizations to bring community members and visitors together through arts, culture, festivals and events that enhance cross-cultural understanding with a focus on incorporating First Nations culture.
8.5.1.3.	Encourage greater diversity in municipally-led engagement initiatives, considering a variety of ways to engage diverse community stakeholders.

Social Well-being and Participation

The following OCP policies support social well-being and participation for older adults in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
8.10.2.1.	Encourage services, programs and facilities that support the health and social needs of seniors, with a focus on cultural and recreational opportunities and social programs tailored to the needs of Whistler's seniors.
9.5.3.3.	Continue to provide a broad range of age-appropriate recreation and leisure services.
9.7.4.3.	Ensure infrastructure is universally accessible where possible, accommodating the functional needs of all individuals, including children, adults and seniors and those with visual, mobility or cognitive challenges.

Communications and Information

The following OCP policy supports improving municipal communications and information in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
9.5.3.5.	Provide accessible information and features within municipal websites, parks and facilities, so people may choose the type of recreation opportunities that best meet their needs.

Community Engagement and Employment

The following OCP policies support community engagement and employment in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
8.5.1.1.	Provide appropriate and meaningful opportunities for community and partner engagement in policy-making and other decisions where relevant and appropriate.
8.5.1.2.	Foster a culture of volunteerism, provide opportunities wherever possible and recognize volunteers' efforts.
8.5.1.3.	Encourage greater diversity in municipally-led engagement initiatives, considering a variety of ways to engage diverse community stakeholders.

The RMOW's Community Engagement Policy (Council Policy A-37) also supports the engagement of older adults in Whistler. This Council Policy was created on October 6, 2020. In section 6.2 (Inclusive), the Council Policy speaks directly about diversity and mitigating barriers to participation. Section 6.2 is reproduced below:

(a) The diversity of those affected by a decision are able and facilitated to engage in the decision-making process.

(b) Efforts are made to include under-represented and hard-to-reach groups, and barriers to access, such as physical, economic, language and logistical constraints, are mitigated as much as possible.

(c) Enough people are involved such that the input can be relied upon, where enough depends on the decision being made and the stakeholders impacted.

Community Support and Health and Wellness Services

The following OCP policies support improving health services in Whistler and can be applied to age-friendly planning:

Number	Policy Statement
8.7.2.15.	Provide emergency social services, including food, lodging, clothing, emotional support, information about the emergency and family reunification, in emergency situations.
8.11.1.1.	Review with VCH the expansion of the existing Whistler Health Care Centre, as shown in Schedule D, for additional health services, including overnight care, as necessary.
8.11.1.2.	Explore with VCH future health care sites for additional health services, if required.
8.11.1.3.	Engage VCH in reviewing health care infrastructure capacity in conjunction with future community development, resort development and activities.
8.11.1.5.	Support the private sector in providing general family medicine through a variety of mechanisms, including the possible provision of subsidized space to doctors who provide complex, comprehensive care.
8.11.1.6.	Encourage the private sector in providing a full range of specialized health and wellness services, including sports medicine and injury recovery, that complement the public health care system.
8.11.1.7.	Work with relevant agencies and stakeholders to assess the need and delivery strategies for adult and senior care facilities and services in the resort community, including those focused on mental health and assisted living.
8.11.1.8.	Partner with the Lil'wat Nation, Squamish Nation and VCH wherever possible on community health, education and training initiatives and monitoring to improve health outcomes.
8.11.1.9.	Engage with social service providers to ensure an adequate level of services is maintained.
8.11.1.10.	Advocate for and support a strong, local mental health system adapted to Whistler's unique demographics and community needs.
8.11.1.11.	Provide core levels of recreation services, programs and facilities, recognizing that these services are essential preventive health care and injury rehabilitation services.

APPENDIX E: AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction

This appendix summarizes the results of the community survey that was carried out as part of the Whistler Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan Project.

The survey focused on the current state of age-friendliness in Whistler with regard to the eight age-friendly dimensions: 1) outdoor spaces and buildings; 2) transportation (including traffic safety); 3) housing; 4) respect, social inclusion or cultural safety; 5) social well-being and participation; 6) communications and information; 7) community engagement and employment; and 8) community support and health and wellness services. It also assessed respondents' general views on spending time in Whistler and retiring in the community, and collected basic demographic information. In addition, at the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity provide ideas about the future of age-friendliness in Whistler.

This online voluntary survey was developed and then promoted from June 28 to July 18, 2021. Paper copies were also available at three public locations: Municipal Hall, the Whistler Public Library and the Meadow Parks Sports Centre. While the survey was targeted towards community members (permanent residents and second homeowners) aged 55 and older, it was available to any interested member of the public. Caregivers were encouraged to fill out the survey on behalf of any older adult community members that they support.

In total, 375 people responded to the survey.[60] For reference, based on the 2016 Census Profile, there are approximately 2,045 adults aged 55 and older living in Whistler (this does not include second homeowners). The survey results indicated 299 (~80 per cent) respondents identified as permanent Whistler residents and 58 (~16 per cent) as second homeowners. In total, 255 or ~68 per cent of respondents identified as 55 years and older. While this represented a very good response rate for this target stakeholder group, the survey was voluntary (participants were not randomly selected) and was open to all members of the public. Therefore, while the results provide valuable insights they cannot be considered a statistically valid representation of all Whistler adults aged 55 years and older.

In addition to analyzing the overall results, the survey responses were reviewed for patterns corresponding with gender and age. Data related to gender reflected 290 survey responses. There were no significant response patterns correlated with gender. Based on response rates, the following age groups were utilized: 54 and under, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74 and 75-84. Data related to age reflected 291 survey responses. There were slight differences related to age that have been noted in the summaries below were applicable.

[60] The total number of responses varies per question. The total response number (N) is indicated in figure captions.

Experiencing Whistler

While 97 per cent of survey participants responded that Whistler was a good or excellent place to spend time, only ~68 per cent thought it was a good or excellent place to retire. This is an indication that while people love to live and spend time here, there may be real and perceived barriers to aging in Whistler.

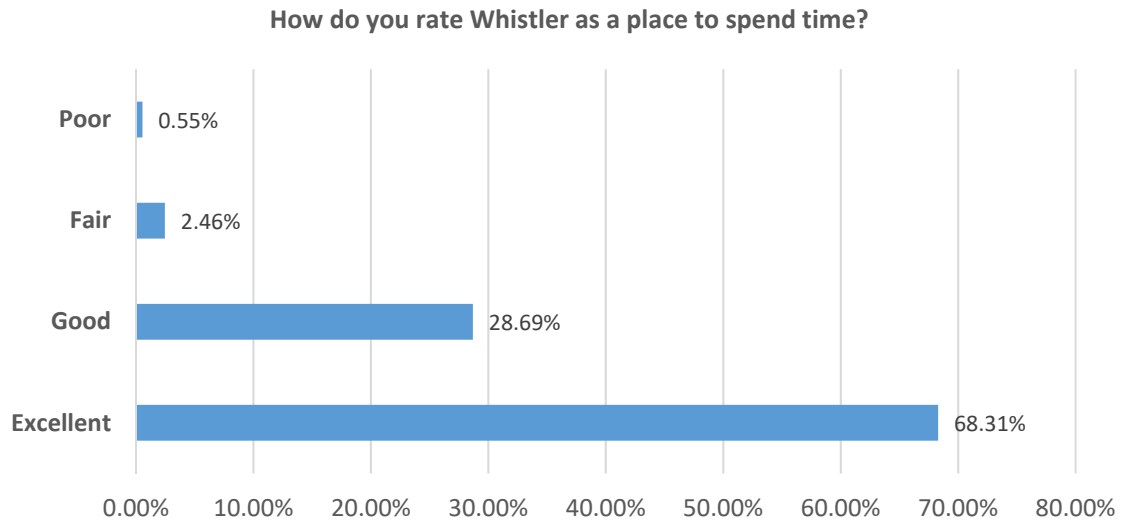

FIGURE E1: SPENDING TIME IN WHISTLER (N=366)

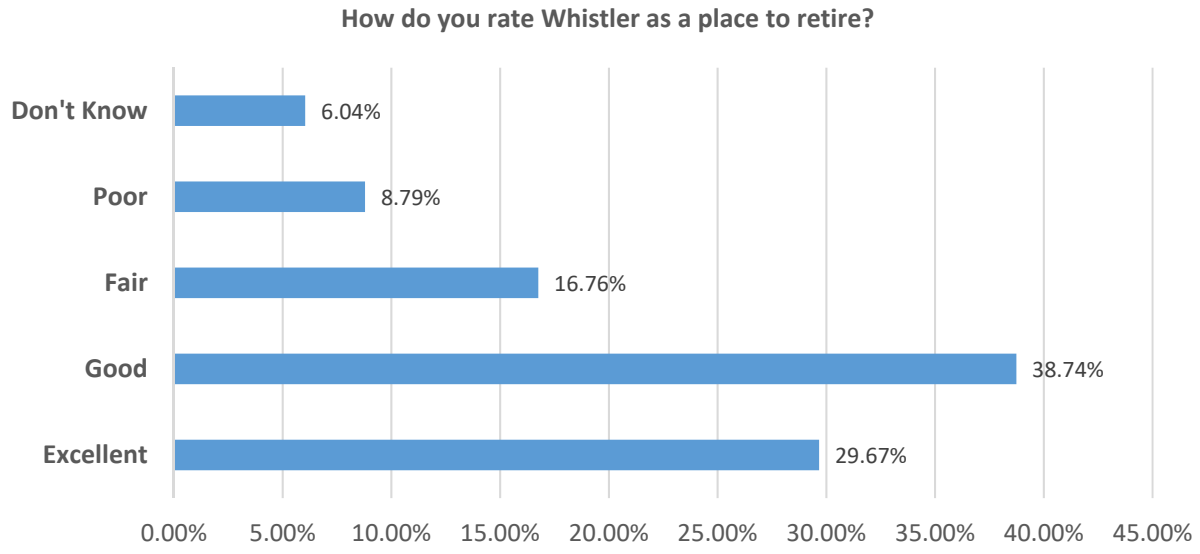

FIGURE E2: RETIRING IN WHISTLER (N=364)

Respondent Demographics

Age and Gender

Most respondents, who provided their age, were between the ages of 55 to 74 years old, with the highest participation from those between 65 and 69 years old. The majority of participants, ~64 per cent, of whom disclosed their gender, were female.

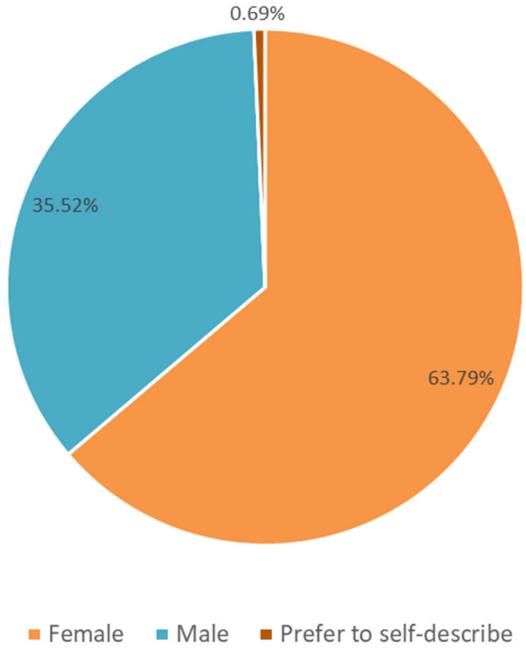

FIGURE E3: GENDER (N=290)

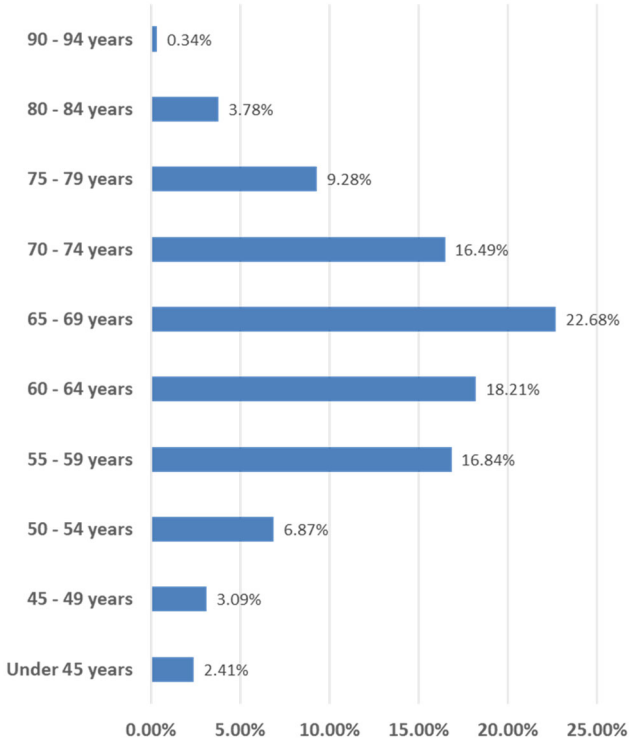

FIGURE E4: AGE (N=291)

Resident Type

When participants were asked to describe themselves, 299 or ~80 per cent identified as a full-time, year round, permanent Whistler resident, 58 or ~16 per cent as a second homeowner, and 5 or ~1 per cent as a service provider (i.e., provides services such as health care, social services or community care for adults aged 55 years and older.) At least 50 per cent of the second homeowner and full-time resident survey respondents have been a part of the Whistler community for over 20 years.

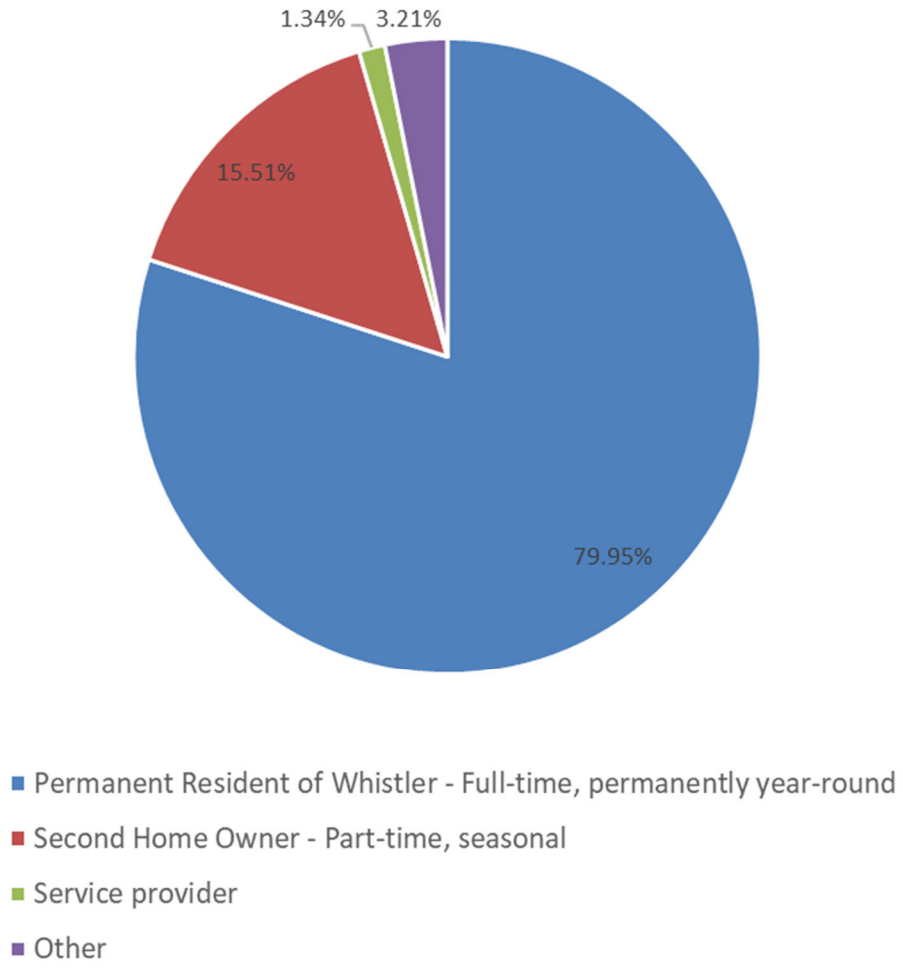

FIGURE E5: SELF-DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENT TYPE (N=374)

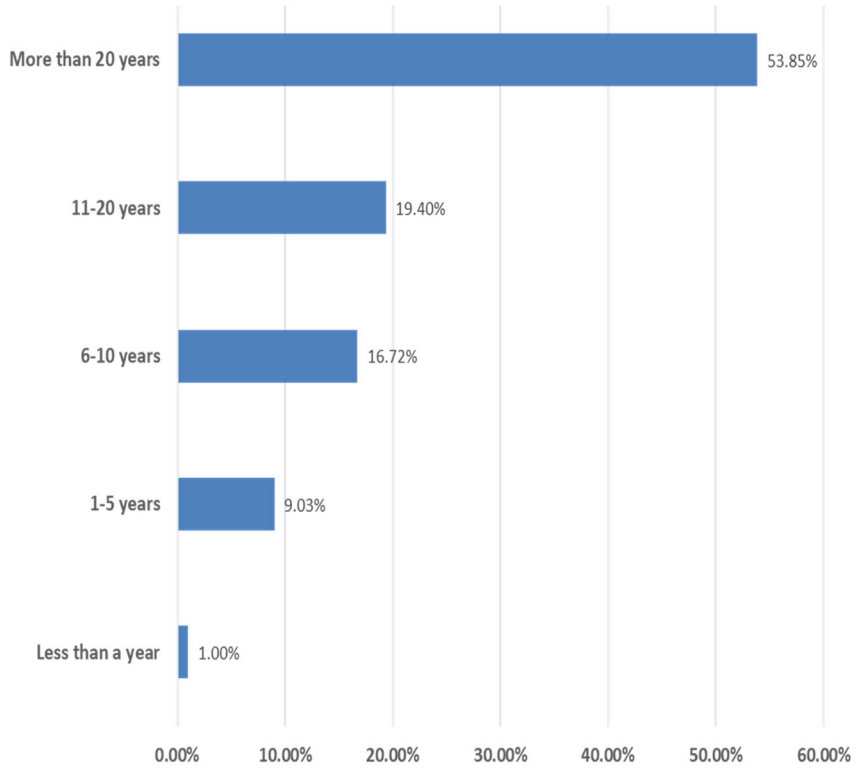

FIGURE E6: YEARS AS YEAR-ROUND, FULL-TIME, PERMANENT WHISTLER RESIDENT (N=299)

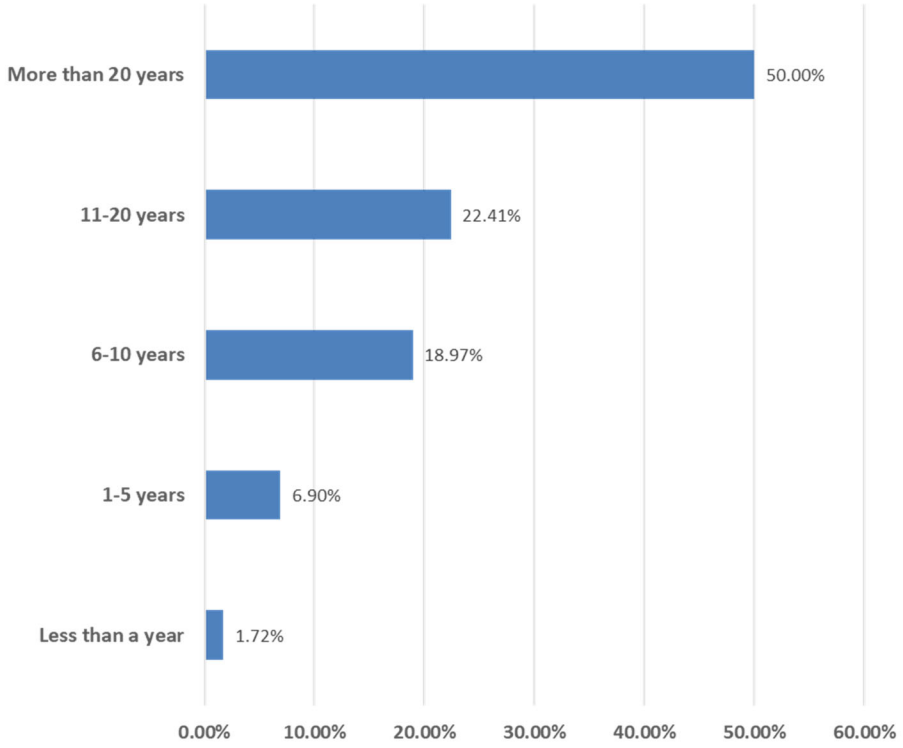

FIGURE E7: YEARS AS SECOND HOMEOWNER (N=58)

Work, Income and Food Security

Half of the respondents identified that they were retired, while the remaining were primarily working full-time for pay, semi-retired or working part-time for pay. The majority, ~60 per cent, of survey participants indicated their net annual household income was over $80,000 and the food bank was not used by 98 per cent of respondents (N=291).

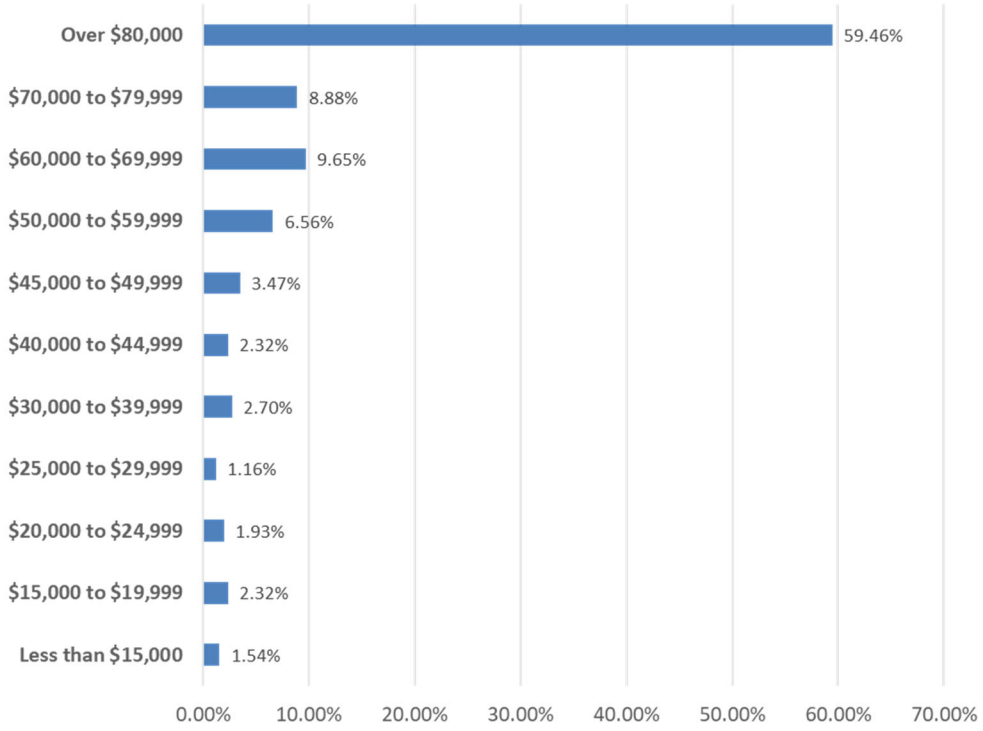

FIGURE E8: ANNUAL NET HOUSEHOLD INCOME (N=259)

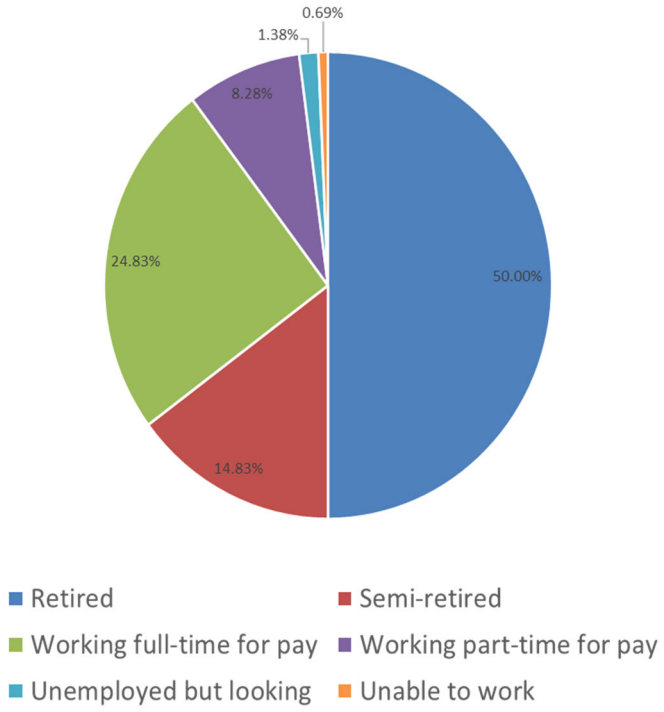

FIGURE E9: WORK STATUS (N=290)

Ethnic or Cultural Background, and Language

The following words were used by survey participants to describe their ethnicity or cultural backgrounds. The word cloud uses font size to emphasize the most commonly used words. The top four words used were Caucasian, Canadian, White and European.

FIGURE E10: ETHNIC OR CULTURAL BACKGROUND – WORD CLOUD (N=206)

English was the first language of 90 per cent of survey respondents. Alternate first languages were primarily German, French and Polish. The following languages were also indicated: Japanese, Italian, Czech, Welsh, Slovak, Chinese, Slovenian, Cantonese, Portuguese and Hungarian.

Housing

The primary housing type survey respondents reported living in was detached single-family homes, followed by townhouses and apartments. Most participants (~84 per cent) indicated they own their current home, while ~12 per cent were renters. Some respondents (~21 per cent) lived in employee-restricted housing, but most do not. Most survey participants' (~59 per cent) homes are not accessible and cannot be adapted to allow them to age-in-place.

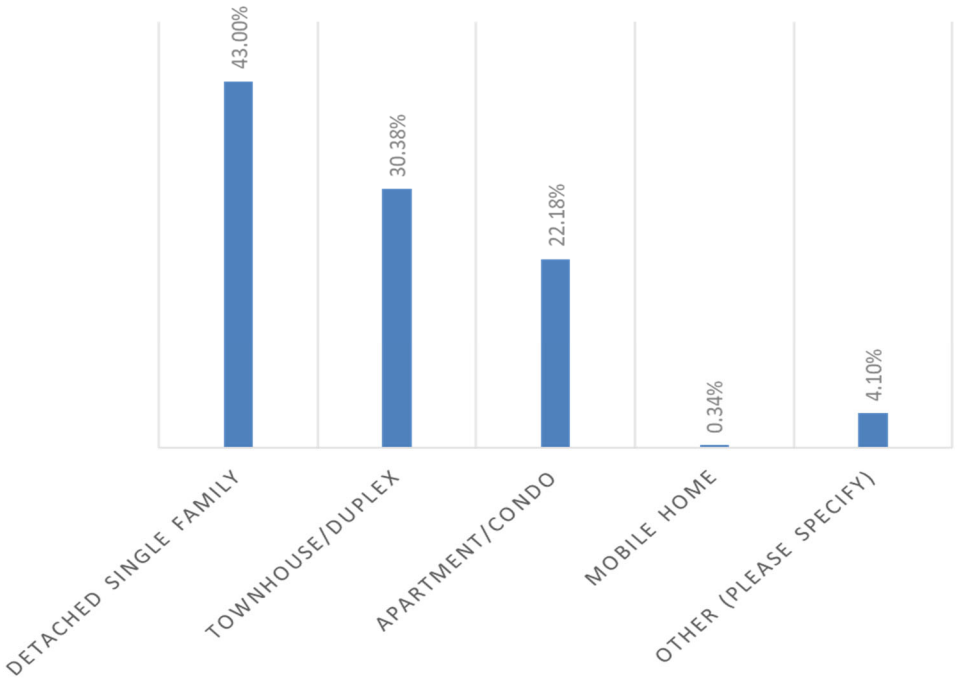

FIGURE E11: HOUSING TYPE (N=293)

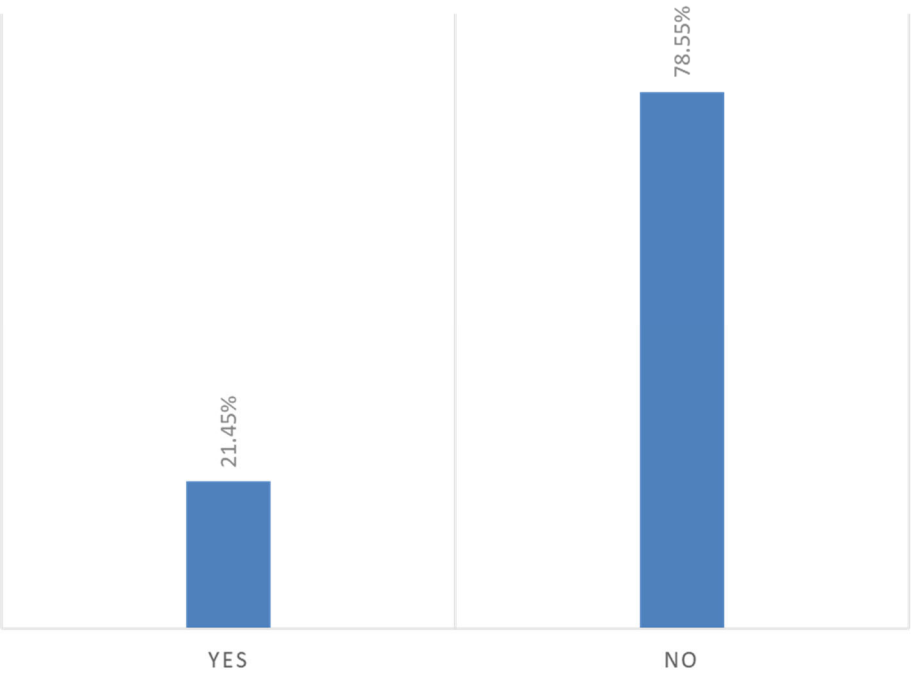

FIGURE E12: DO YOU LIVE IN EMPLOYEE-RESTRICTED HOUSING? (N=289)

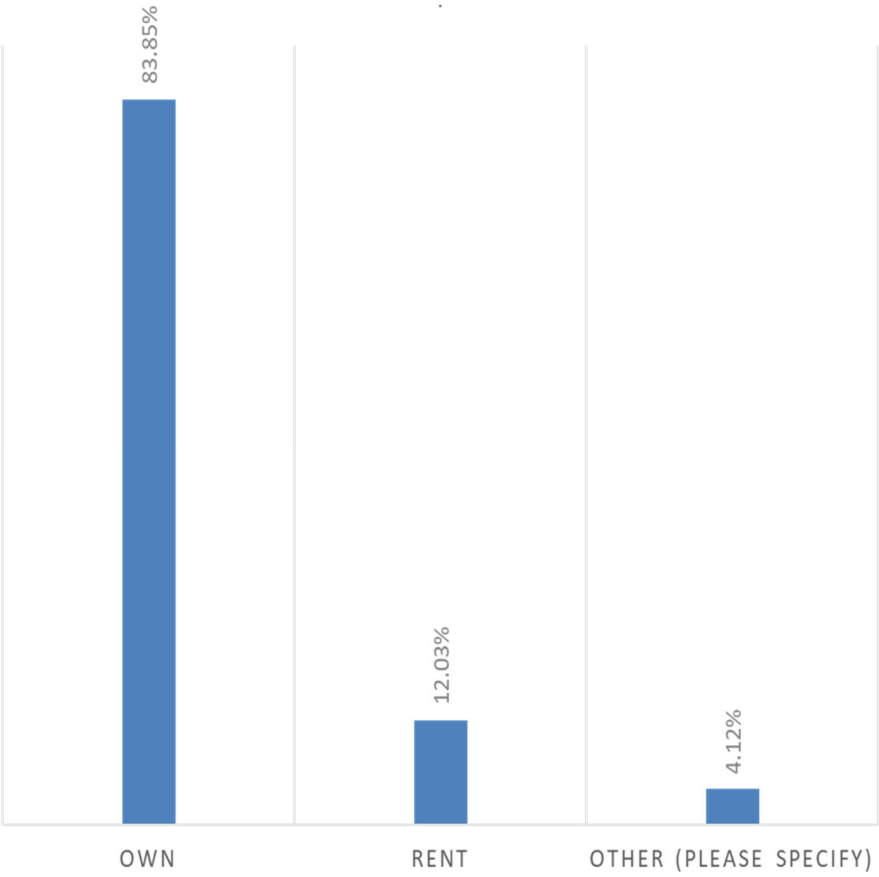

FIGURE E13: HOUSING TENURE (N=291)

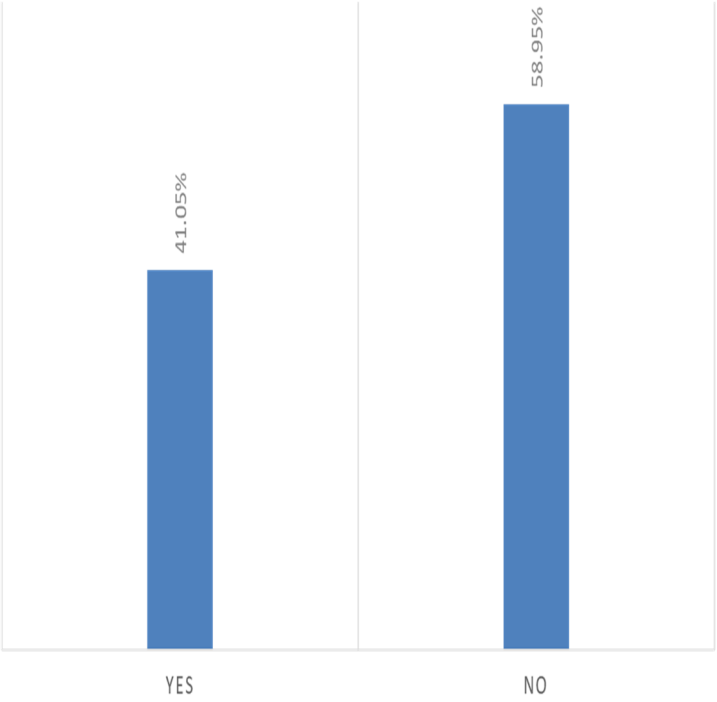

FIGURE E14: IS YOUR HOME ACCESSIBLE OR ADAPTABLE TO AGE-IN-PLACE? (N=285)

Public Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following categories as they relate to adults aged 55 and older, and if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve public outdoor spaces and buildings.

Accessible Public Areas and Buildings

While most participants (~52 per cent) considered accessible public areas and buildings to be good, very good or excellent, ~25 per cent were not able to comment on the accessibility of public areas and buildings. Participants aged under 54 were slightly less satisfied with and less aware of the accessibility of public areas and buildings. Additionally, there were 16 comments with suggestions about improving the accessibility of public areas and buildings; these emphasized improving wheelchair access. Identified challenges included curbs at crosswalks, winter conditions, lack of ramps and access to buildings (e.g., Marketplace).

Number of Accessible Washrooms

Most (~53 per cent) survey respondents considered the number of accessible washrooms to be good, very good or excellent. In contrast, ~20 per cent considered the number to be fair, and ~12 per cent indicated poor. Participants aged under 54 were slightly less satisfied with and less aware of the number of accessible washrooms. There were 12 comments regarding the number of washrooms that acknowledged existing or newly constructed public washrooms located on the Valley Trail and at Whistler Olympic Plaza, the Passive Haus and Village Gate, and that suggested there needed to be more public washrooms at parks and trailheads and more accessible washrooms in the Village.

Available Places to Rest and Distance between Rest Places

A high majority of participants (~73 per cent) rated the availability of places to rest and distances between rest places as good, very good or excellent, while ~15 per cent considered the availability to be poor. There were 13 comments regarding places to rest, suggesting more frequent resting spots on the Valley Trail and more sheltered seating options.

Accessible Parks or Green Spaces

There was very high satisfaction regarding accessible park and green space, with ~50 per cent of survey respondents indicating a rating of good or very good and ~39 per cent rating them as excellent. Those aged 75-84 years expressed a slightly higher satisfaction.

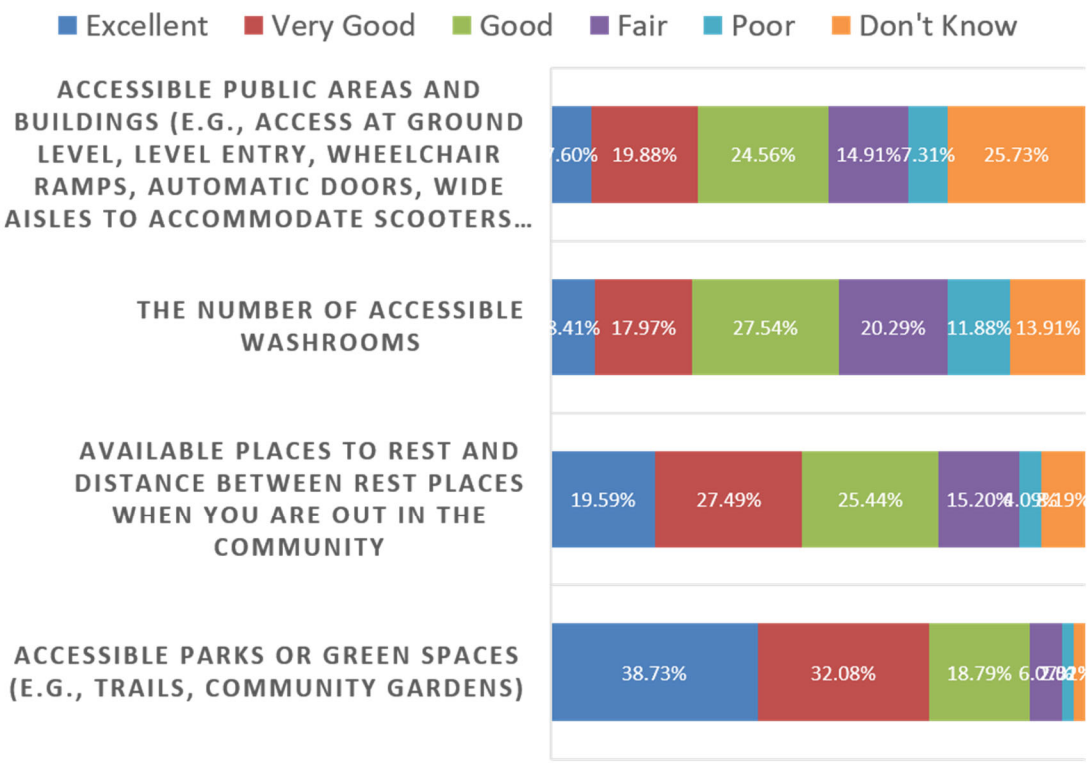

FIGURE E15: PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=346)

Street Signs and Crosswalks Are Visible and Well-placed

A high percentage of survey participants (~80 per cent) rated the visibility and placement of street signs and crosswalks as good, very good or excellent. There were seven comments regarding general signage and wayfinding, suggesting directional signs could be improved and made more prominent.

Safe Sidewalks, Trails and Walkways

The majority of responses (~72 per cent) evaluated the safety of sidewalks, trails and walkways as good, very good or excellent. Some participants indicated they were fair (~18 per cent) or poor (~8 per cent). There were 11 comments expressing concern regarding pedestrian trail conflicts with bicycles, e-bikes, boards and dogs. Suggestions included slowing down bicycles, e-bikes and skateboards, separating bicycles from pedestrians on the Valley Trail, and enforcing that dogs remain on-leash. There were 13 comments indicating the snow and ice on walkways were a barrier to safety. Four commenters suggested more neighbourhood sidewalks, and three comments indicated there should be more sidewalk lighting.

Timing of Traffic Lights

Many survey respondents (~67 per cent) indicated that the timing of traffic lights, to allow enough time to cross the street, was good, very good or excellent, while ~17 per cent rated them as fair, ~8 per cent indicated they were poor, and ~14 per cent did not know. It was suggested that the pedestrian traffic light should be extended at Highway 99 and Spruce Grove Way and it was noted that the crossing light in Brio freezes in the winter, making crossing difficult.

Safe Crosswalks

Most participants (~74 per cent) considered crosswalk safety to be good, very good or excellent, while ~18 per cent rated crosswalk safety as poor. Participants between the ages of 75 and 85 had a slightly higher rating of safe crosswalks, with an average rating as very good. There were 20 comments regarding improving crosswalk safety. Comments indicated that the safety of crossing neighbourhoods along Highway 99 should be improved (i.e., Emerald Estates, Spruce Grove Way, and Function Junction/Cheakamus Lake). Key challenges identified included heavy traffic on Highway 99 makes crossing difficult, and crosswalks need to be optimized for pedestrians. Additionally, concern was expressed regarding the safety of the pedestrian flashing crosswalks located on Lorimer Road adjacent to Marketplace. General suggestions included adding more lighting at crosswalks and slowing down cars and bikes.

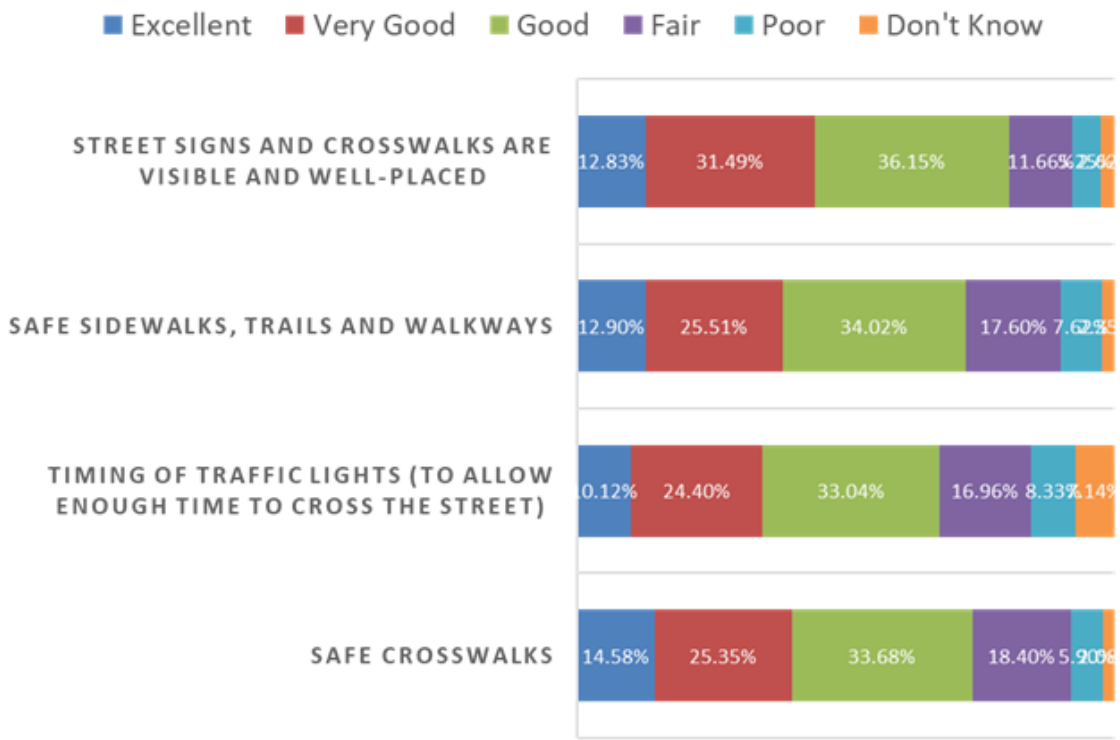

FIGURE E16: PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=346)

Other Comments

Seven respondents made suggestions regarding accessible parking, including increasing the number of accessible parking spaces, improving access to Village parking lots using shuttles, and providing a discounted parking pass for residents aged 55 years or older. In terms of recreation, four respondents requested additional outdoor recreational opportunities, including pickleball courts, weather-resistant workout equipment, additional

green mountain bike trails and an outdoor pool. Seven participants commented on the need for a dedicated space for seniors to meet.

Public Accessibility and Safety Information

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following categories as they relate to adults aged 55 and older, and if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve public accessibility and safety information.

Access to Information about Accessibility in Whistler

Most survey respondents (~42 per cent) indicated that access to information about accessibility (e.g., location of ramps, accessible parking spaces) in Whistler was good, very good or excellent, while ~14 per cent rated access as fair, and ~37 per cent did not know.

Access to Information about Crime Prevention Strategies

Many (~45 per cent) survey respondents did not know if there was adequate access to information about crime prevention strategies.

Access to Information about Emergency Preparedness/Disaster Response

While many (~15 per cent) survey respondents did not know if there was adequate access to information about emergency preparedness/disaster response (e.g., flood, wildfire, earthquake), some (~29 per cent) indicated access was good. Twelve commenters suggested there should be more frequent information regarding emergency preparedness/disaster response. Other suggestions included a community warning siren and a community app to facilitate safe walks home or carpooling in an emergency evacuation.

General Comments

Suggestions regarding how Whistler could improve information related to public accessibility and safety included:

- Creating more awareness on where information can be found;
- Utilizing a variety of mediums such as emails, radio announcements, social media, town hall meetings, printed information, the local newspaper, and mail;
- Providing information in different languages; and
- Sharing information through community organizations, including MAC, WCSS and the Whistler Public Library.

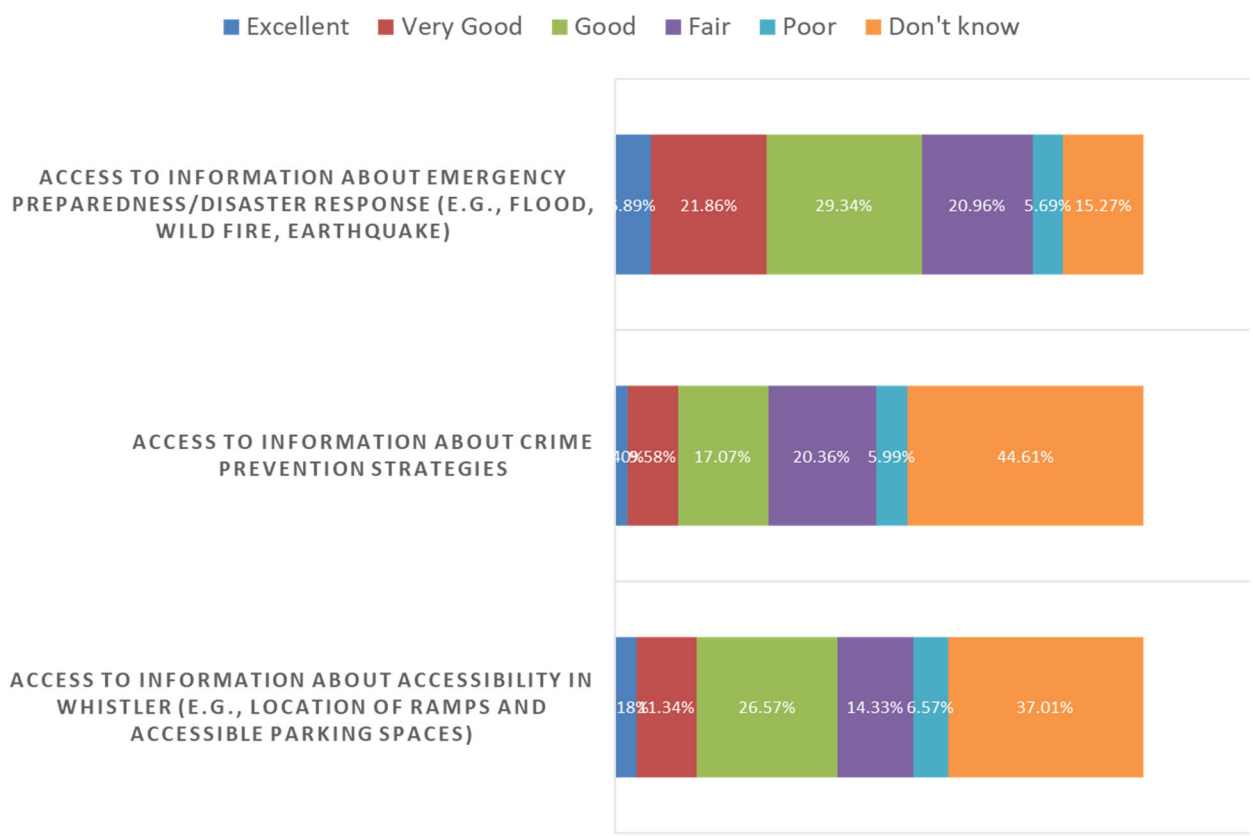

FIGURE E17: PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY INFORMATION – SATISFACTON WITH ACCESS TO INFORMATION AS IT RELATES TO ADULTS 55+ (N=335)

Transportation

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following categories as they relate to adults aged 55 and older, and if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve transportation.

Prompt Snow and Ice Removal

Most survey respondents (~67 per cent) indicated that prompt snow removal was good, very good or excellent, while ~20 per cent rated this as fair. There were 22 comments related to travelling in winter conditions. It was emphasized by several that snow and ice were barriers to accessing bus stops in the winter. Suggestions included improving the quality and frequency of snow and ice clearing on sidewalks and at bus stops, and additional clearing on the Valley Trail. Also, it was stated that snowplows should take care not to block driveways while plowing.

Information about Transit Routes, Destinations, and Schedules

The majority of survey respondents (~75 per cent) rated information about transit routes, destinations and schedules as good, very good or excellent. There were 11 comments regarding improving transit information. Suggestions regarding improving transit information at bus stops included adding payment information, bus times and a map indicating routes. Additionally, it was suggested the transit app update to reflect changes in arrival times. One respondent noted they appreciated the Whistler Transit website 'next ride' feature.

Accessible Bus Stops Near Where You Live

Overall, ~63 per cent of survey respondents rated the accessibility of bus stops near where they lived as good, very good or excellent, while ~28 per cent indicated they were fair or poor. Survey respondents suggested additional bus stops within residential areas, including Bayshores, Alpine, Spring Creek, Whistler Cay Heights and Alta Lake Road. Additional barriers to accessing bus stops were their distance from homes and steep walkways up and down hills. Furthermore, the following suggestions were made to improve bus shelters: more enclosed bus shelters, increased cleaning, and vandal proofing.

Number of Buses that are Accessible, Clean, and with Destination and Number Clearly Displayed

While most (~66 per cent) survey respondents rated the number of buses that are accessible, clean, and with destination and number clearly displayed as good, very good or excellent, ~26 per cent did not know. A couple of comments suggested bus boarding could be improved to be more accessible for strollers and walkers.

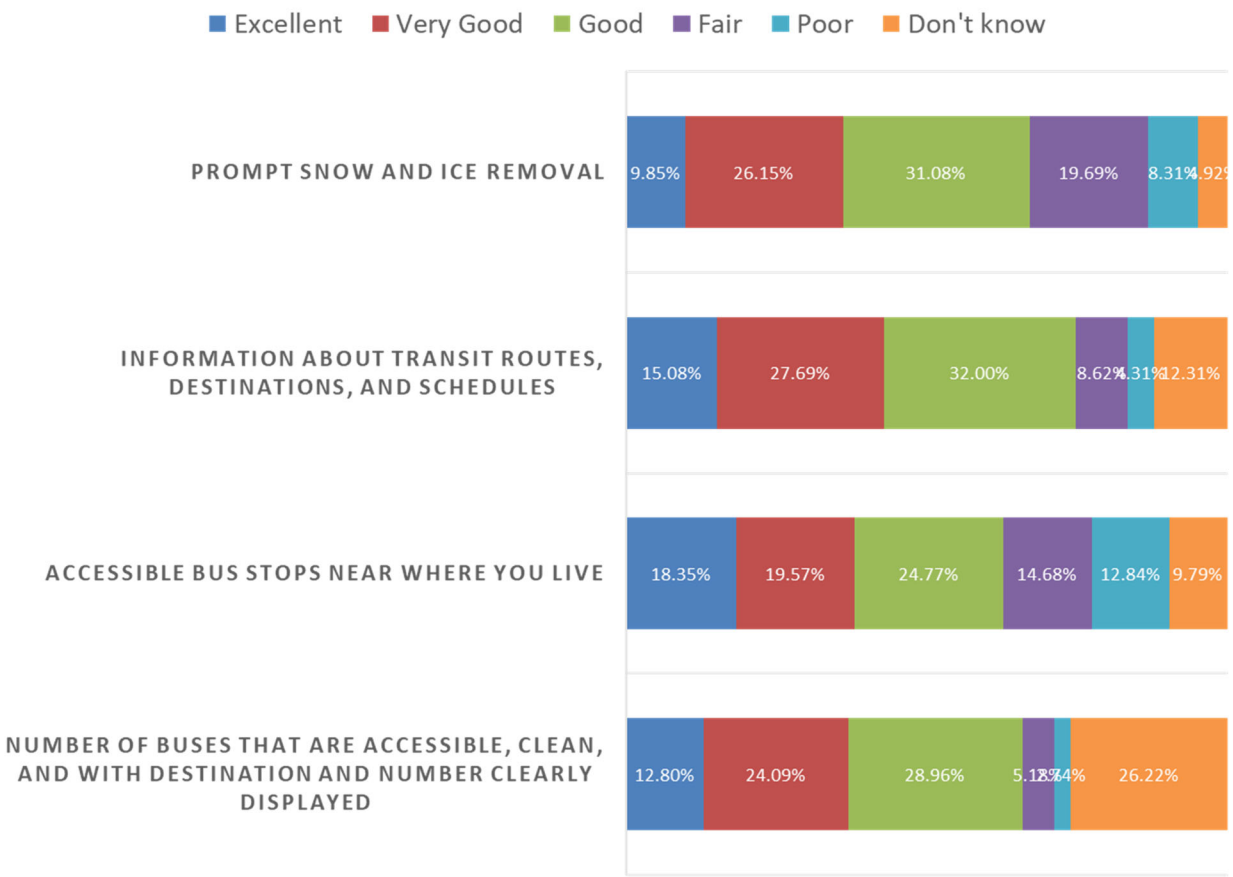

FIGURE E18: TRANSPORTATION – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=328)

Ability to Travel to Medical Appointments Out-of-town

Many survey respondents (~47 per cent) indicated that the ability to travel to medical appointments out-of-town was fair or poor, while ~30 per cent did not know. There were 16 comments regarding increasing regional transit between Pemberton, Whistler, Squamish and Vancouver. Nine comments specifically identified that travelling to medical appointments outside of Whistler can be a challenge. Suggestions to improve transportation to medical appointments included: regional public transit, HandyDART service and volunteer drivers.

Availability of Private Transportation

The majority of survey respondents (~55 per cent) rated the availability of private transportation (including taxis and paid ride-sharing) as good, very good or excellent, while ~27 per cent indicated it was fair or poor and 18 per cent did not know. Across age groups, on average, the availability of private transportation was good and was considered very good by those aged 60-64 and 70-74.

Affordable Options for Public Transit

Overall, ~48 per cent of survey respondents felt that affordable options for public transit (including public/private partnerships, volunteer driving programs, park and go, and shuttles) were good, very good or excellent, while ~26 per cent indicated they were fair or poor and ~25 per cent did not know. A higher proportion of those aged 55 to 84 did not know if there were affordable options for public transit than those who were aged 54 and under. Suggestions to make public transit more affordable included free transit or discounted passes for passengers aged 55 and older. There were 12 comments regarding increasing the use of shuttles, and ideas included utilizing shuttles during low capacity times to reduce carbon emissions, providing more service within residential neighbourhoods to reduce the distance to bus stops, and providing transportation to all parks. Additionally, increased frequency of buses to residential neighbourhoods was suggested.

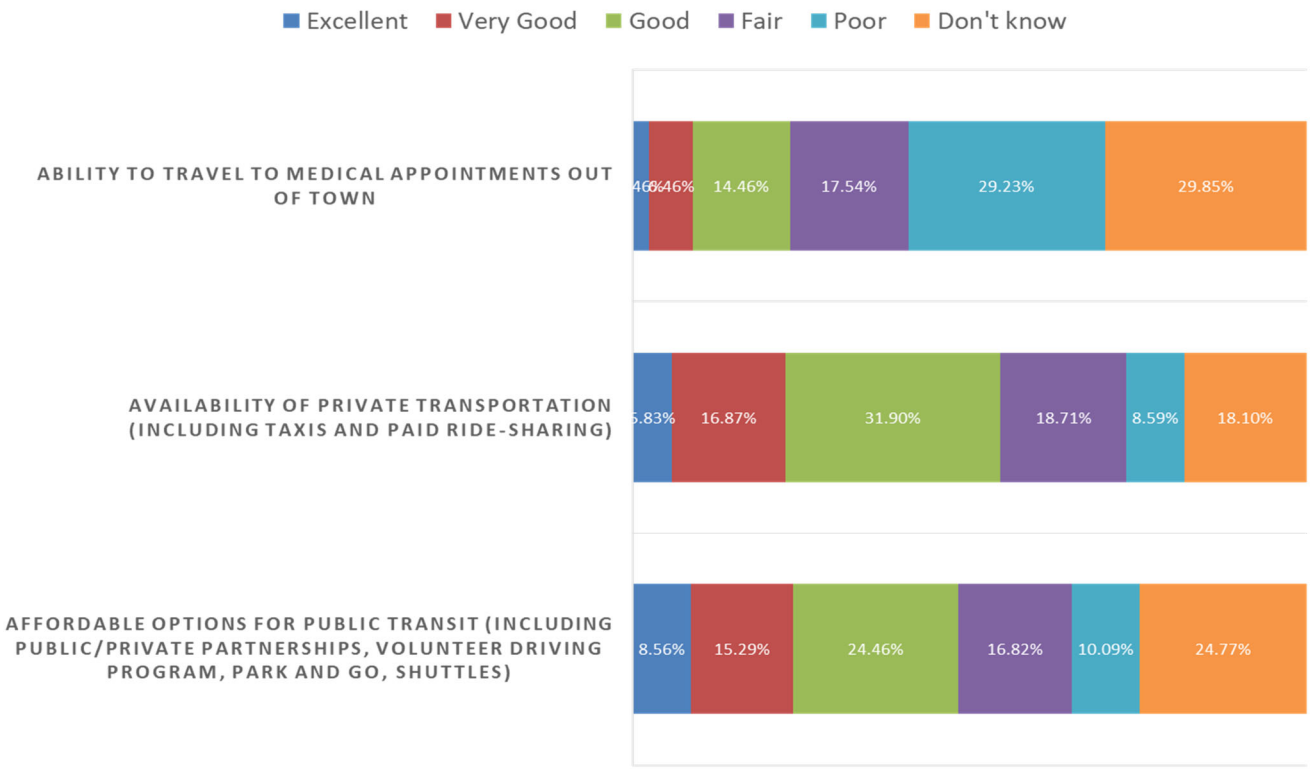

FIGURE E19: TRANSPORTATION – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=327)

Social Well-being and Participation

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following categories as they relate to adults aged 55 and older, and if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve social well-being and participation.

Availability of Multicultural Programs

Many survey respondents (~43 per cent) did not know the availability of multicultural programs. Some survey participants (~14 per cent) indicated that the availability of multicultural programs was fair, while ~39 per cent indicated availability was good, very good or excellent.

Affordable Recreation and Learning Programs

The majority of survey respondents (~63 per cent) indicated the affordability of recreation and learning programs was good, very good or excellent, while some (~19 per cent) indicated affordability was fair. Six comments were made regarding reducing costs for people aged 55 years and older to improve the affordability of recreation and learning programs primarily at Meadow Park Sports Centre; reducing public transportation fares and costs at coffee shops were also mentioned in these comments.

Available Recreation and Learning Programs

Overall, ~70 per cent of survey respondents rated the availability of recreation and learning programs as good, very good or excellent. In terms of recreation and learning programs for adults aged 55 years and older, suggestions were made regarding increasing the number of programs in general, increasing the availability of art programs (studio art, concerts, dance, and theatre) and expanding the availability of educational programs (courses, continuing education, evening speakers, and computer programs). The importance of racquet sports, including tennis, badminton and pickleball, was emphasized by nine survey respondents. Additional ideas for programming included pot luck seniors' events in parks, socializing opportunities for single mature adults, and more availability of programs on weekends and weekdays after work.

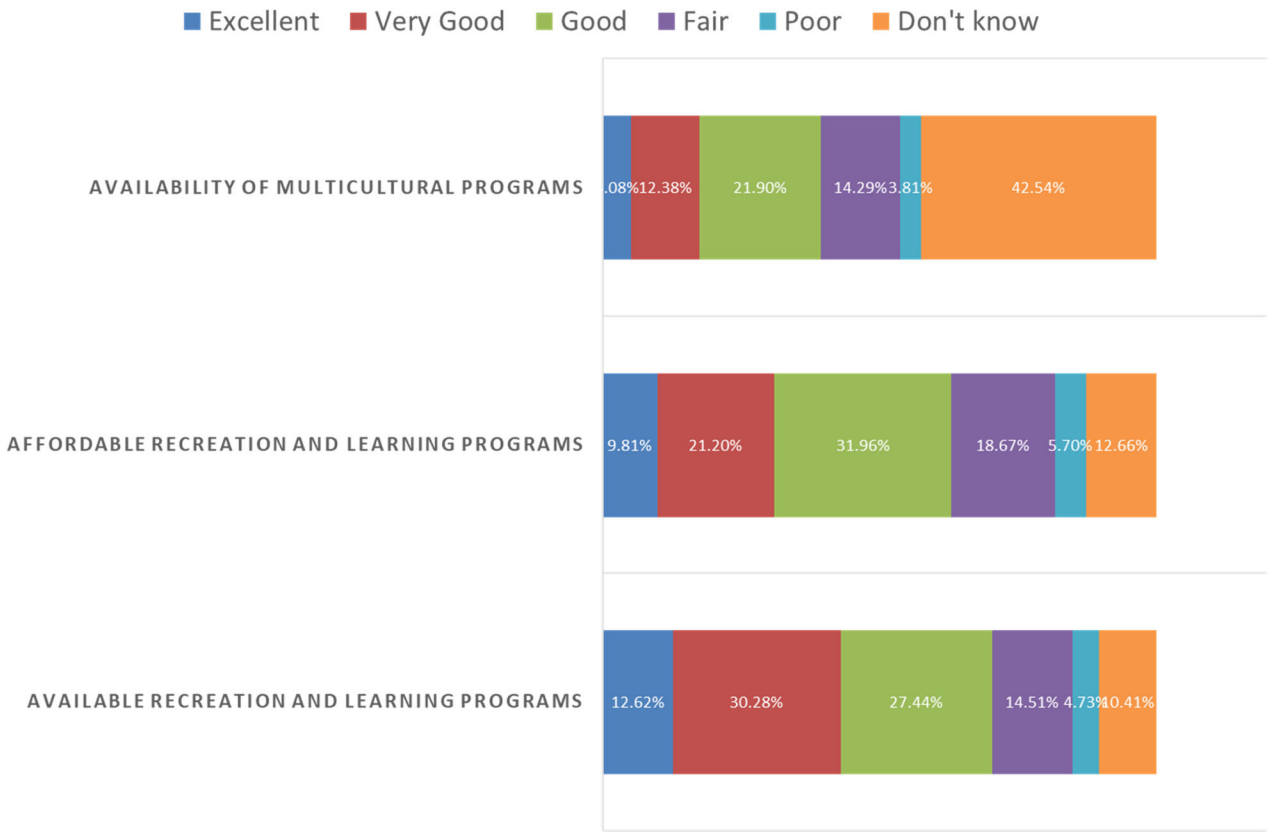

FIGURE E20: SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND PARTICIPATION – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=317)

Access to Information about Community Programs and Events

Most survey respondents (~69 per cent) rated access to information about community programs and events as good, very good or excellent. Participants aged 54 and under were slightly less satisfied with access to information about community programs and events. There were 17 comments about improving access to information about community programs and events. Suggestions included creating a seniors program guide, utilizing the local newspaper and radio stations, posting printed information in public places, and promoting the library as an information source.

Availability of Less Structured Social Opportunities

While ~43 per cent of survey respondents rated the availability of less structured social opportunities (e.g., clubs, programs, gathering spaces) as good, very good or excellent, ~32 per cent indicated availability was fair or poor and ~25 per cent did not know.

Accessibility of Community Events

The majority of survey respondents (~73 per cent) rated the accessibility of community events as good, very good or excellent. In terms of accessibility, respondents suggested more programs and activity options for those who are not physically active. Additional suggestions included continuing online program options for those with mobility issues and providing more indoor activities during the winter. One individual noted that relying on public transportation in the winter can be a barrier to attending programs.

Programs for Older Adults to Participate with Other Age Groups

Overall, ~47 per cent of respondents rated programs for older adults to participate with other age groups as good, very good or excellent, while ~17 per cent rated this as fair and ~30 per cent did not know. There were eight comments regarding intergenerational programming, including:

- Creating a community centre or gathering space where multigenerational programming can occur, and seniors can integrate seamlessly;
- Providing more learning programs for all ages; and
- Connecting young residents with community members aged 55 years and older.

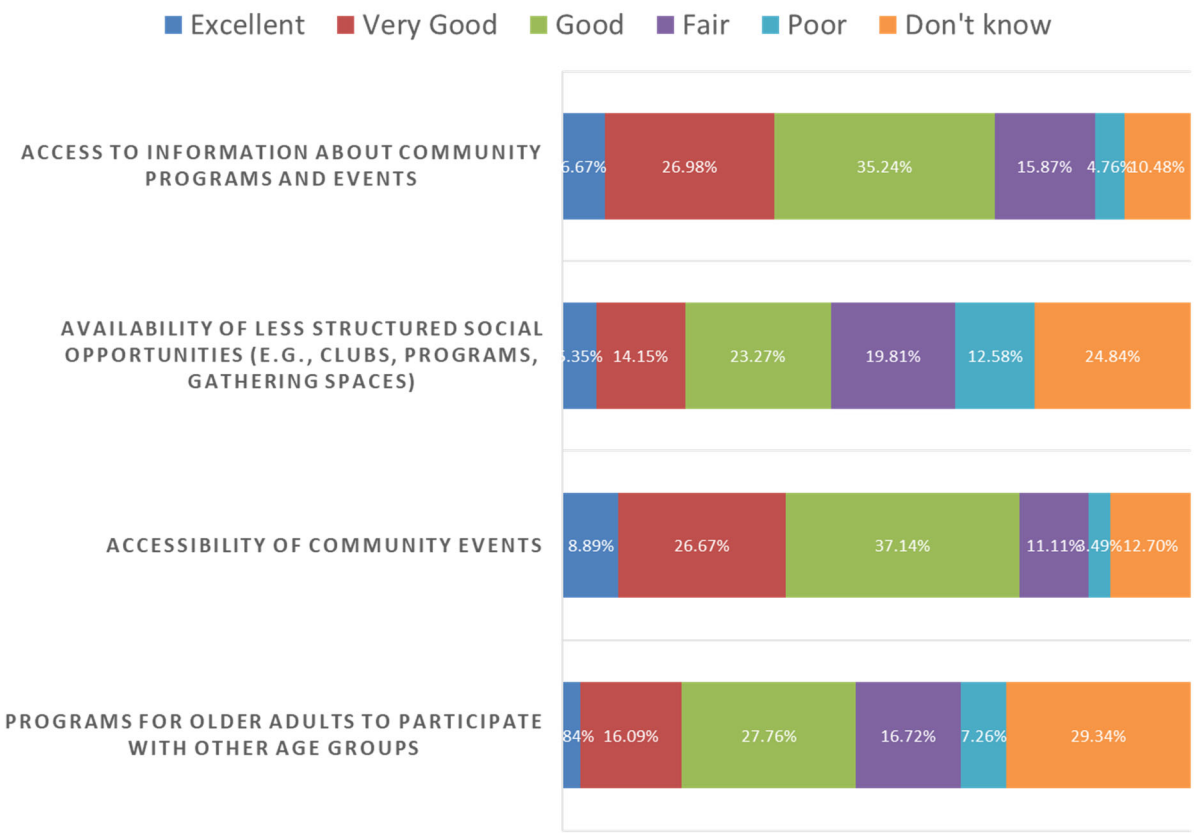

FIGURE E21: SOCIAL WELL-BEING AND PARTICIPATION – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=318)

Community Engagement and Employment

Participants were asked to indicate if they felt they had a voice in the community and then to rate their satisfaction with various categories as they relate to adults aged 55 and older. They were also asked if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve community engagement and employment.

Community Influence

When asked "do you feel you have a voice in the community?" most respondents somewhat agreed (~49 per cent), while ~17 per cent strongly agreed, ~13 per cent disagreed, ~4 per cent strongly disagreed and ~11 per cent did not know.

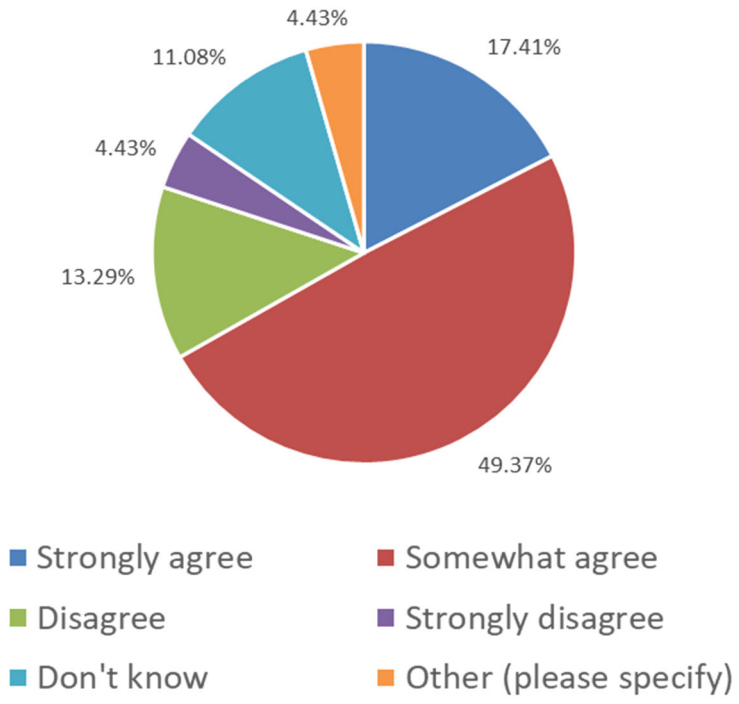

FIGURE E22: DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE A VOICE IN THE COMMUNITY? (N=316)

Opportunities to Volunteer in the Community

It was indicated by ~83 per cent of survey respondents that opportunities to volunteer in the community were good, very good or excellent. There were four comments regarding volunteer opportunities, including increasing opportunities, bringing back bike hosts, creating volunteer positions with the medical centre, and providing additional information on volunteer programs.

Opportunities to Give Your Opinion to Influence Decisions About Your Community

The majority of survey respondents (~69 per cent) rated opportunities to give their opinion to influence decisions about the community as good, very good or excellent, while 14 per cent believed opportunities were fair and 10 per cent indicated opportunities were poor. There were 14 comments emphasizing the importance of listening to community members who are 55 years and older as well as demonstrating how ideas and input are implemented. Eight comments suggested increasing representation of those aged 55 years and older by establishing a seniors advisory person or committee to provide feedback to the municipality, maintaining a seniors-specific director on the WHA, and having more seniors representation on municipal Council. Additional comments suggested focusing on community needs and expressed concern regarding disparities in representation between high and low-income individuals aged 55 years and older.

Access to Municipal Information and Services

While most survey respondents (~80 per cent) indicated that access to municipal information and services was good, very good or excellent, ~12 per cent rated access as fair. Suggestions to use alternative mediums for sharing information aside from the website and social media included: more print information, newsletters, the local newspaper and radio, television, in-person town halls, and a centralized information hub or community calendar. Other suggestions to increase access to information included:

- Providing more information on opportunities to engage;
- Sharing information through the Meadow Park Sports Centre and older adult community groups like MAC;
- Improving the municipal website search function; and
- Providing free technology help programs to assist with computers and phones.

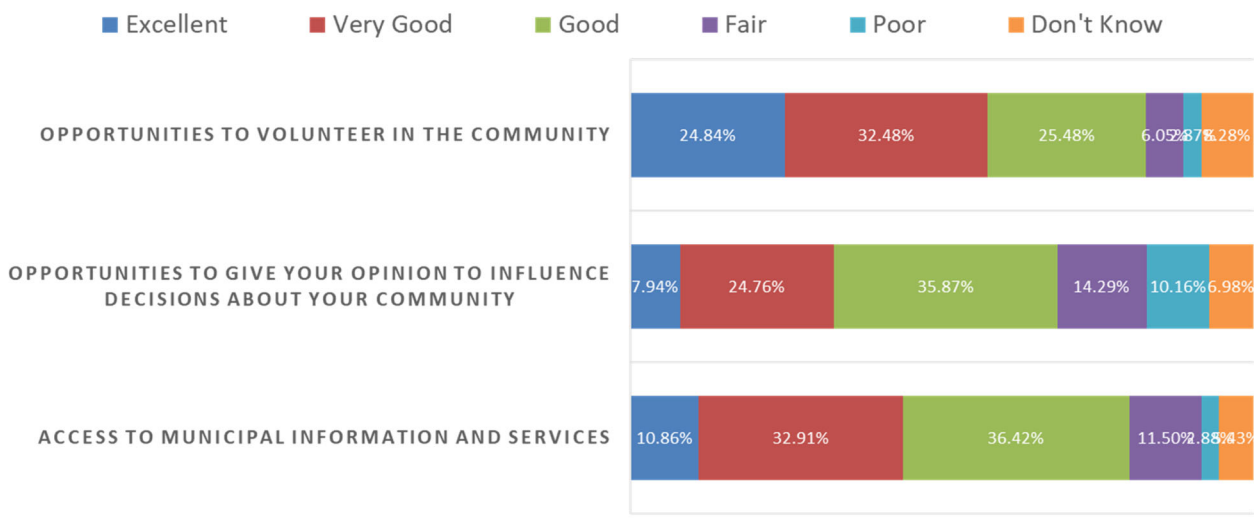

FIGURE E23: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=315)

Communications and Information

Participants were asked how comfortable they were using online services and then rated their satisfaction with various categories related to adults aged 55 and older. They were also asked if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve communications and information.

Using Online Services

When survey respondents were asked how comfortable they were using online services, ~75 per cent indicated very comfortable, ~20 per cent felt neutral and 5 per cent needed assistance or were not comfortable. The average response across all age groups was very comfortable. Three comments referenced that adult computer literacy varies with age. Seven comments suggested the need for additional computer and technology education programs. Additionally, it was noted by one individual that everyone needs the ability to talk to someone to ask questions regardless of how computer savvy they are.

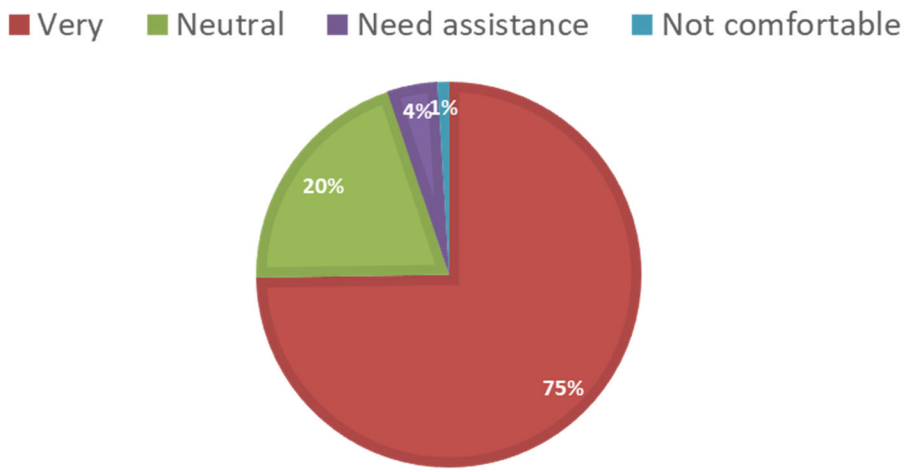

FIGURE E24: HOW COMFORTABLE ARE YOU USING TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE SERVICES? (N=313)

Materials for the Public Are Produced in Large Print

When asked how important it is to have large print materials when accessing services and information, ~47 per cent of survey respondents indicated it was very important or somewhat important, ~27 per cent were indifferent, and ~26 per cent felt it was somewhat not important or not important. The average importance of large print materials was slightly higher for those between the ages of 60-64 and 75-84. There was one comment emphasizing the need for large print.

Paper Versions of Materials are Available

When asked how important it is to have paper copies when accessing services and information, ~47 per cent of survey respondents indicated it was very important or somewhat important, ~24 per cent were indifferent, and ~29 per cent felt it was somewhat not important or not important. The average importance of paper materials was slightly higher for those between the ages of 60-64 and 75-84. There were eight comments supporting the need to make paper copies of information available for those who need it.

A Person Is Available to Assist with Completing Forms and Applications

When asked how important it is to have in-person assistance with completing forms and applications, ~50 per cent of survey respondents indicated it was very important or somewhat important, ~26 per cent were indifferent, and ~24 per cent felt it was somewhat not important or not important. There were two comments regarding in-person assistance, including creating an information and communication booth and having a seniors outreach worker assist with paperwork. One individual noted there needs to be a willingness to provide additional support to those who need assistance finding information.

A Person is Available to Answer Questions Over the Phone

When asked how important it is to have a person available to answer questions over the phone, ~43 per cent of survey respondents indicated it was very important, ~41 per cent rated it as somewhat important, ~10 per cent were indifferent, and ~6 per cent rated it as somewhat not important or not important. There were six comments emphasizing the need for someone to be available to answer questions over the phone.

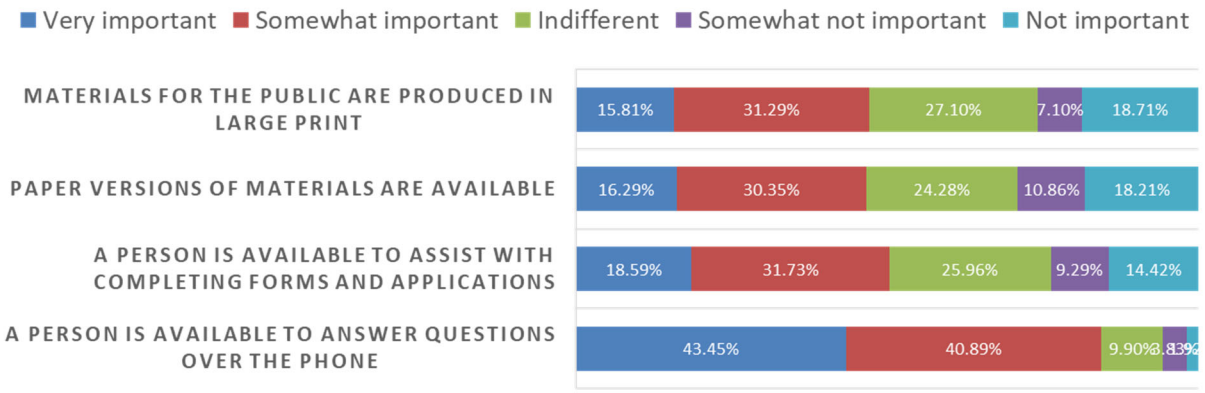

FIGURE E25: WHEN YOU ARE ACCESSING SERVICES AND INFORMATION, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT… ? (N=313)

Other Comments

To improve communications and information, suggested communication mediums included: a physical and digital information hub, email, mailing list or newsletter, social media, and radio. Additionally, it was recommended that all community groups supporting the 55+ community work together to distribute relevant information. Suggestions to improve the RMOW website included ensuring it is accessible and improving the search feature.

Community Support and Health and Wellness Services

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the following categories as they relate to adults aged 55 and older, and if they had any suggestions on how Whistler could improve community support and health and wellness services.

Availability of Assistance with Non-medical Daily Activities

The majority of survey respondents (~60 per cent) did not know the availability of assistance with non-medical daily activities (e.g., snow removal, shopping, yard work). There were 12 comments about improving help with non-medical daily activities, including having a volunteer program to help seniors with chores, hiring staff to support older adults at home, providing personal support workers, and supporting the WCSS. It was also noted that there is support for non-medical services through the Better at Home Program.

Access to Healthy Food Options

Overall, ~68 per cent of survey respondents felt that access to healthy food options was good, very good or excellent.

Available Supportive Food Programs

Most survey respondents (~72 per cent) did not know the availability of supportive food programs (e.g., meals on wheels).

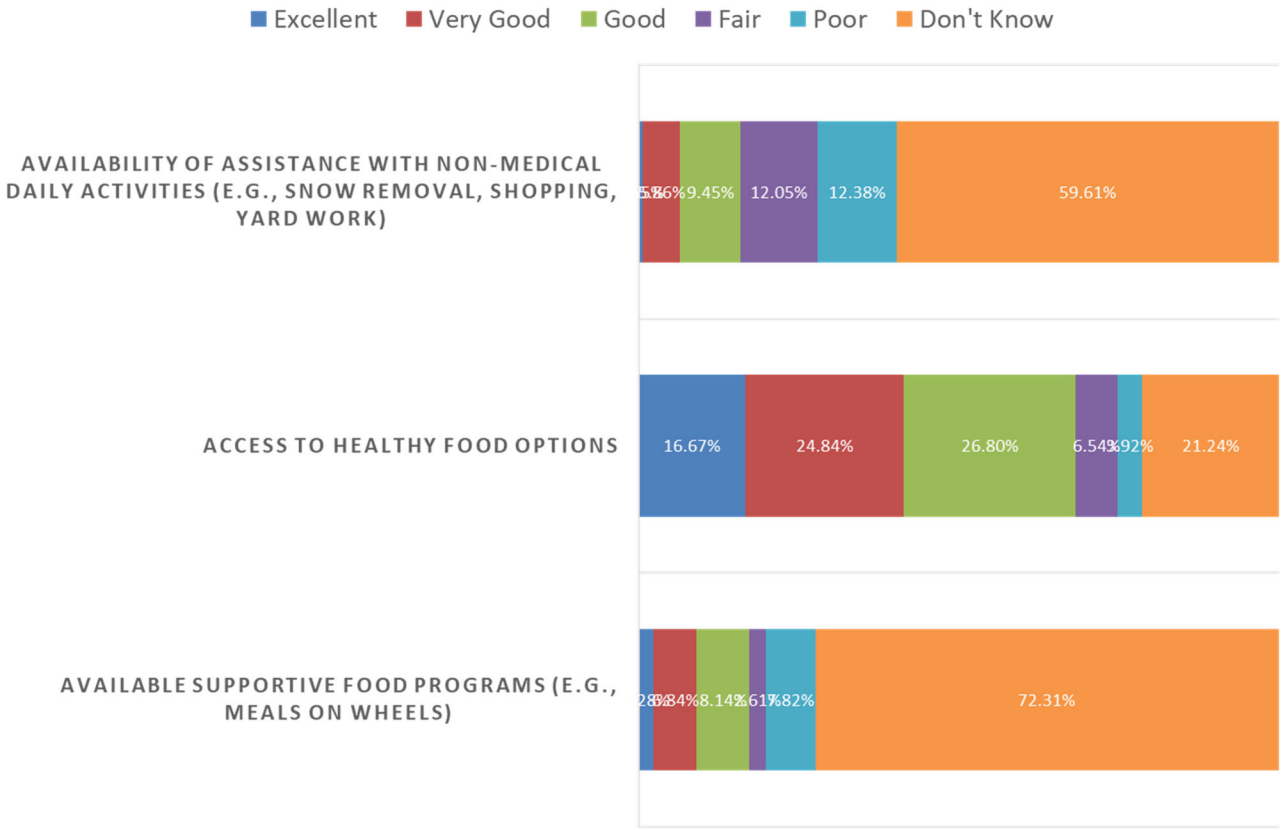

FIGURE E26: COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=307)

Availability of Supportive Housing and Assisted Living

It was indicated by ~58 per cent of survey respondents that the availability of supportive housing and assisted living (e.g., nursing home, retirement home, care home) was poor, while ~33 per cent did not know. There were 36 comments regarding the need for an assisted living facility to enable seniors to stay in Whistler. Specific suggestions regarding assisted living facilities included: services should be public or non-profit to be accessible to all local seniors; there could be an opportunity to blend affordable housing with assisted living and co-housing; seniors housing should be available with a transition from independent to assisted living; and assisted living facilities should be in walking distance to the Village and amenities including the Whistler Health Care Centre. One individual commented that they are not sure if an assisted living home could survive economically in Whistler, as a rural community. Three comments suggested that assisted living facilities may be more appropriate in Squamish due to weather and access to services.

Availability of End-of-life Supportive Programs

The majority of survey respondents (~59 per cent) did not know the availability of end-of-life supportive programs (e.g., hospice, in-home supports), while ~23 per cent indicated the availability was poor. There were six comments emphasizing the need for end-of-life supportive programs, including a hospice to allow those who are near end of life to remain close to home with friends and family.

Availability of Health Programs for Older Adults

Overall, ~39 per cent of survey respondents did not know the availability of health programs for older adults (e.g., vision health, blood pressure screening, fall prevention programs), ~27 per cent indicated the availability was fair or poor, ~21 per cent rated the availability as good, and ~13 per cent believed the availability was very good or excellent. There were comments highlighting the need for more local access to health care practitioners, including family doctors, nurse practitioners, specialists in geriatric medicine, and visiting specialists. It was also noted that the health clinic needs to be expanded and it should be ensured that a stroke kit is available there. There were two comments noting that a local hospital is needed.

FIGURE E27: COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES – SATISFACTION WITH FEATURES AS THEY RELATE TO ADULTS 55+ (N=307)

Social Opportunities

Participants were asked questions regarding social relationships, community involvement, and sense of belonging. They were also asked to identify barriers to using community facilities.

Social Relationships

When asked how satisfied they are with social relationships, overall ~42 per cent of survey respondents were very satisfied, ~43 per cent were satisfied, ~7 per cent were not sure, and ~5 per cent were dissatisfied. Participants were then invited to elaborate on their answers. Many respondents (46) cited strong social connections and established long-term social networks, including friends, family, friendly neighbours, and frequent visitors. Some respondents (eight) also specified that they were socially connected through activities including pickleball, skiing, tennis, biking, golfing, walking, and book clubs. There were 12 comments noting a lack of connection, suggesting it was difficult to find social activities with others, it was difficult to meet people, and there was a lack of time to spend with family and friends. It was also noted by seven respondents that their close family and friends moved away due to a lack of affordable housing, high cost of living, and lack of services. It was also stressed by 16 survey participants that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on feeling socially connected.

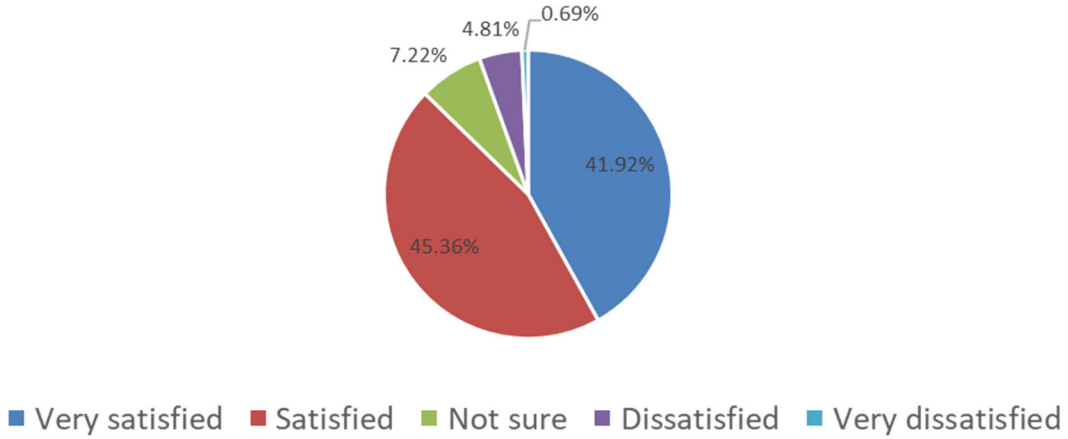

FIGURE E28: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS? (N=291)

Community Involvement

About 23 per cent of respondents indicated that they have not been involved in any groups or organizations. Other respondents indicated they have participated in a variety of different types of community organizations and interest groups, primarily sports clubs (~31 per cent) and community associations (~32 per cent), Participation in meetings and activities in the past 12 months varied between not at all (~31 per cent), at least once a week (~23 per cent), and at least once a month (~22 per cent).

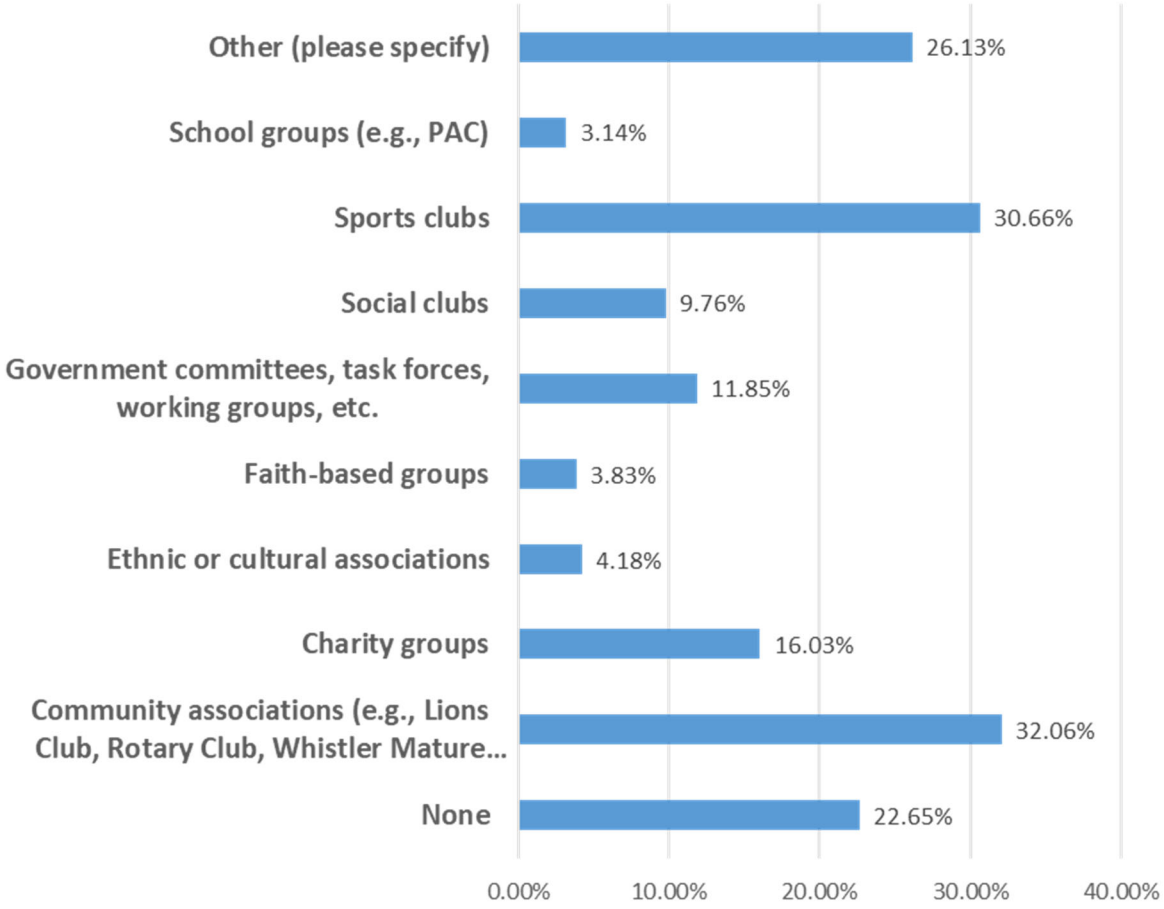

FIGURE E29: ARE YOU A MEMBER OF, OR DO YOU VOLUNTEER WITH, ANY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS OR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS? (N=287)

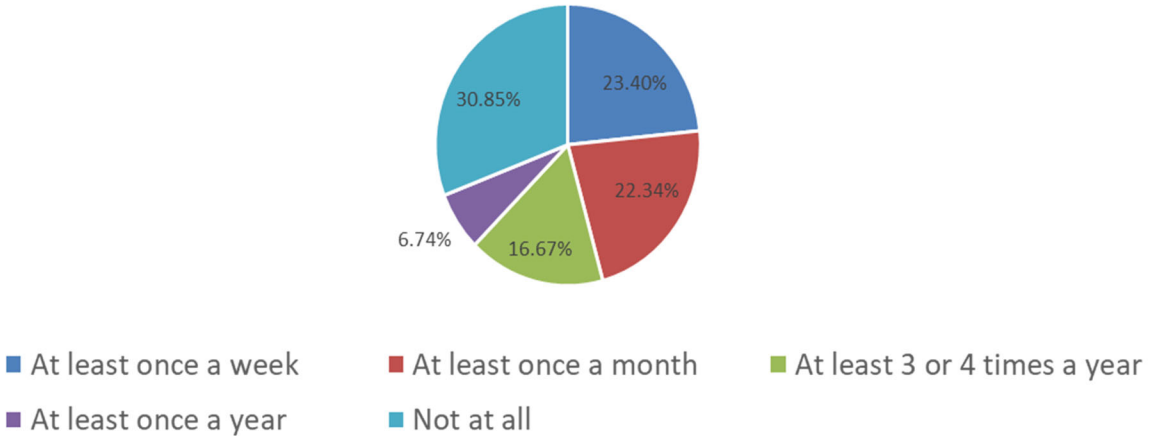

FIGURE E30: THINKING OF THE GROUPS LISTED ABOVE, HOW OFTEN DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN MEETINGS OR ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS? (N=282)

Sense of Belonging

The survey results demonstrated a strong sense of belonging to the community of Whistler among respondents, with ~75 per cent of respondents describing their sense of belonging as either somewhat strong or very strong. Additionally, the majority of survey respondents hardly ever felt isolated, left out or lacking companionship.

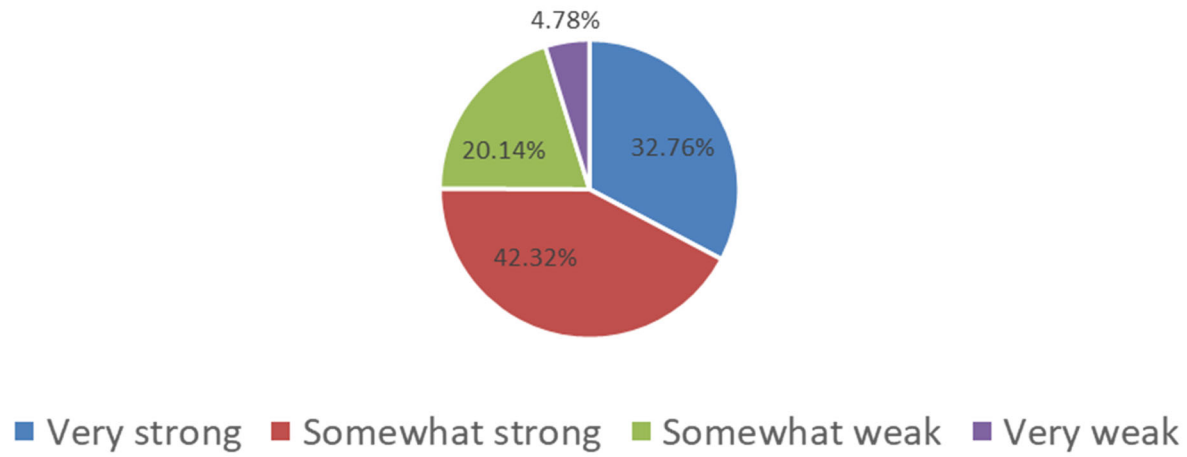

FIGURE E31: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE COMMUNITY OF WHISTLER? (N=293)

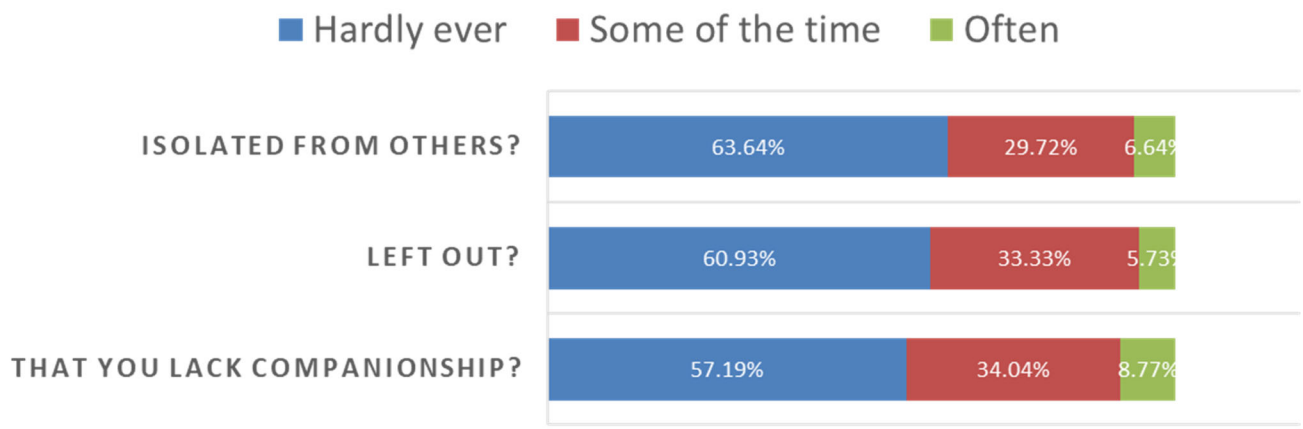

FIGURE E32: HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL … ? (N=287)

Using Community Facilities

When asked if there was anything preventing respondents from using community facilities more, top responses were:

- Nothing is stopping me;
- Not enough time;
- Cost;
- I do not need to use community facilities more often;
- Lack of friends; and
- Lack of information.

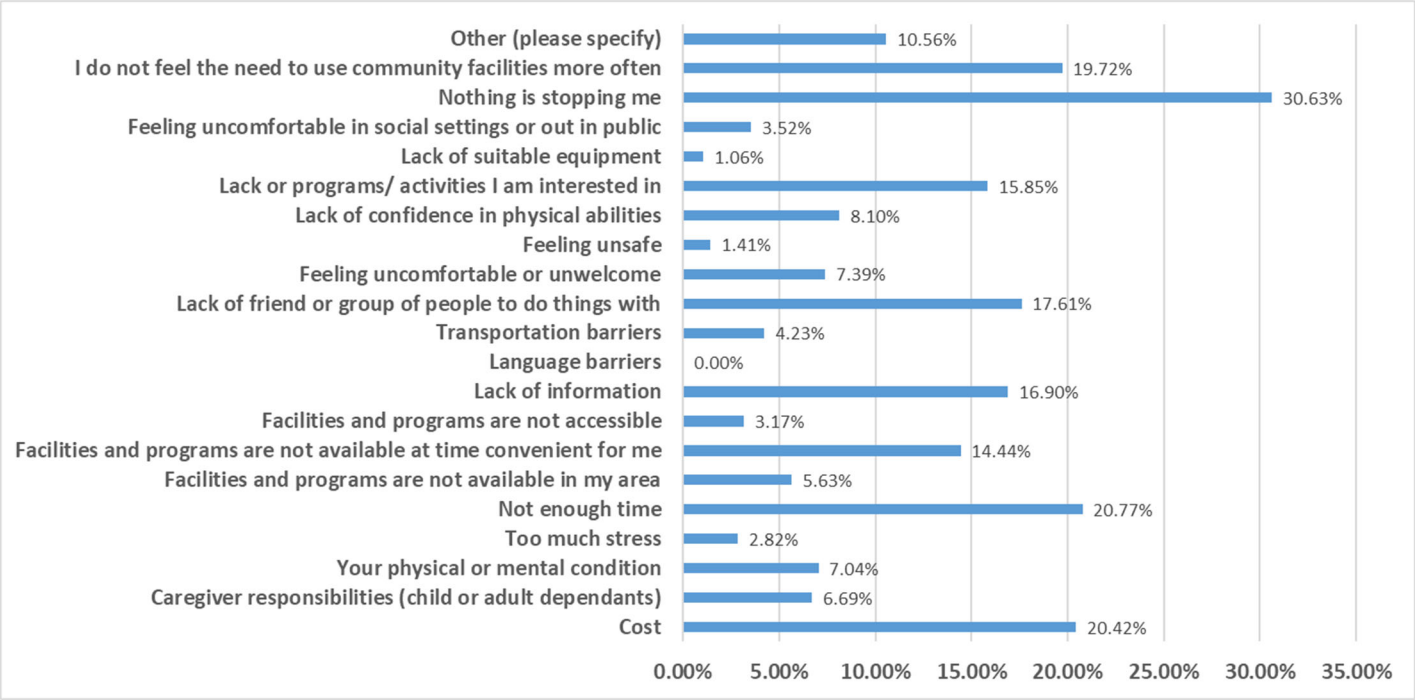

FIGURE E33: IS THERE ANYTHING CURRENTLY PREVENTING YOU FROM USING COMMUNITY FACILITIES MORE OFTEN? (N=284)

Other Ideas and Final Comments

The survey concluded with three open-ended questions, as follows, to identify individuals' roles in preparing to age-in-place, to gauge participants' key ideas on improving the age-friendliness of Whistler, and to provide the opportunity for any final additional comments.

What Actions Should Individuals Take to Prepare to Age-in-place in Whistler?

There were 164 responses to this question. The following key themes outlining actions that individuals should take to age-in-place were emphasized.

Housing

There were 52 comments related to housing, recommending that individuals should secure accessible and affordable housing, downsize to decrease maintenance, and live close to transit, parks, grocery stores and essential services.

Finances

There were 37 comments related to finances, which stated the importance of being financially prepared to retire and age.

Health

There were 29 comments that recommended individuals stay active and exercise and 13 comments that referenced having access to a family physician.

Aging Elsewhere

There were 17 comments regarding being prepared to leave Whistler when a person's health and mobility decrease.

Staying Socially Connected

There were 17 comments that emphasized making connections and staying socially engaged, and seven comments that referenced engaging with the community, including as a volunteer or advocating for seniors.

At-home Support

There were 10 comments stating the need for at-home support, including lawn care, snow clearing, caregivers, and house cleaning to allow for aging-in-place.

What are Your Key Ideas about Improving the Age-friendliness of Whistler?

There were 158 responses to this question. The following themes were identified as key ideas to improve the age-friendliness of Whistler.

Housing

There were 33 comments related to housing, emphasizing the need for accessible and affordable seniors housing.

Transportation

There were 19 comments related to improving transportation, and these suggestions included:

- Improved regional transportation options for travel to medical appointments;
- Discounted or free parking for seniors;
- Increased transportation options;
- Implementing a HandyDART service;
- Improved bus service and free bus passes for seniors;
- Improving Valley Trail safety by enforcing slow zones; and
- Allowing e-bikes on the Valley Trail.

Communications and Information

There were ten comments related to improving communications and information, including:

- Create an information centre either online or in a physical place;
- Provide more information on volunteer opportunities and social clubs;
- Create a weekly newsletter to communicate with homeowners and residents;
- Utilize the communication boards outside of Municipal Hall; and
- Provide information on available support services and how to access them for medical practitioners, caregivers and seniors.

Public Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

There were three comments regarding improving the accessibility of public outdoor spaces and buildings to enhance access for seniors and those with mobility challenges. It was also suggested to include seniors in an accessibility audit to identify barriers.

Social Well-being and Participation

There were 11 comments emphasizing the need for a community centre or dedicated seniors' space, and 24 comments suggesting additional programs, social opportunities and activities for seniors, including:

- Biking, skiing and hiking groups;
- Multi-sport racquet facility;
- Cultural, art and educational activities; and
- Entertainment shows and events.

Community Support and Health and Wellness Services

There were 16 comments regarding the need for improved access to health care services and 17 comments related to the need for assisted living and end-of-life care facilities. Ten comments emphasized the importance of support for aging at home, including assistance with non-medical daily activities.

Respect, Social Inclusion or Cultural Safety

Five comments emphasized the importance of hosting events that are accessible to all ages and abilities and that may also provide opportunities for people to create relationships outside of their age demographics. Additionally, there were five comments stating the importance of education and respect as it pertains to aging.

Aging Elsewhere

There were four comments suggesting that Whistler is not a suitable location to age-in-place.

Do You Have Any Additional Comments?

There were 164 responses to this question. The following themes were identified as key ideas to improve age-friendliness in Whistler.

Housing

There were 10 comments related to the need for affordable housing. Ideas to improve affordable housing included:

- Creating incentives for empty homes to be lived in;
- Factoring in wealth and income when determining subsidized housing for seniors;
- Building 3D printed homes;
- Having the WHA create a separate list for those looking to downsize from an existing WHA home; and
- Increasing the number of affordable rentals.

Community Support and Health and Wellness Services

There were nine comments describing the need to create an assisted living facility. Additional ideas to improve community support and health and wellness services included:

- Having more health care workers;
- Bringing more medical specialists to Whistler, so patients do not have to drive;
- Having a program for caregivers to network and support each other; and
- Allowing overnight stays in hospital rooms in Whistler.

Social Well-being and Participation

There were three comments identifying the need for a dedicated seniors' space and two comments suggesting finding ways for seniors to contribute knowledge and experience in the community.

Communications and Information

There were two comments with suggestions to improve communications and information. The suggestions were publicizing seniors' accessibility information more frequently and posting Whistler clubs and activities on one central webpage.

Transportation

There were two comments regarding improvements to transportation, including implementing a HandyDART bus system and creating a locals' parking pass for access to lakes and trails.

Recreation

There were five comments regarding recreation, which included the following suggestions:

- Creating a community field house;
- Keeping the "seniors only" gym and fitness classes;
- Opening the mountain bike trail "Into the Mystic" to e-bikes; and
- Providing indoor and outdoor pickleball courts.