



***'Age-Friendly Community'* Initiative**

Findings Report



**Prepared by:
Pinnacle Organizational Performance Solutions**

October, 2012

Executive Summary

I. Outdoor Spaces, Buildings and Transportation

Outdoor Spaces

Armstrong supports its community well with respect to outdoor spaces, AND participants speak of improvements that can be made:

- While sidewalks are currently sufficiently wide, in time they likely won't be as the numbers of people driving scooters increases.
- Curbs are well cut and most streets have cross walks where needed.
- The downtown core and commercial areas are well lit.
- There are many paths for the younger and active senior to enjoy, but few options are available to those who are mobility-impaired.
- The importance of keeping paths smooth and clear of snow and debris cannot be over-emphasized.
- More covered benches and rest areas are needed.

Buildings

Participants are concerned about accessibility to many buildings arguing that the number and the height of stairs are a hindrance. This is true of the Haugen Medical Centre and the NorVal Recreation Center. Many participants reported their reluctance to use the elevators available.

Despite Merchants being open to non-patrons using their bathrooms, participants suggest there are too few washrooms available in public areas.

Transportation

Transportation is of utmost importance in the life of seniors and participants from all groups strongly argued that Armstrong does not serve its aging community well in this regard. There is a strong need for reasonably priced and efficient public transportation both within Armstrong, and between Armstrong and its neighboring communities. Many seniors rely on such transportation to meet all their mobility needs and the lack thereof causes them much concern and anxiety.

Housing

Armstrong is well supplied with housing for the active, self-sufficient and wealthy senior but there is currently a shortage of affordable housing for those requiring more care and attention. Furthermore, it is argued that the demand for such housing will only increase as the population continues to age and the numbers increase.

II. Community Participation and Support

Social Inclusion and Participation

According to discussions, Armstrong is ripe with recreational activities for seniors but many of the events are not well attended. Lack of transportation, poor communications about upcoming events, and the social stigma of going to events alone are the reasons cited.

Communication and Information

Following through on the earlier mention of poor communication, some suggest the best way to spread messages amongst seniors is through word-of-mouth and seniors themselves ensuring that other seniors are well connected, published documents, and information technology. The local newspaper is not seen to be effective in reaching all seniors as it targets the younger and more active demographic and overlooks the less-active, older person.

Civic Participation and Employment

Folks from Armstrong are proud of their ability to pull together as a community and accomplish those things they value. They are however, concerned that it is the same set of people who rise to each occasion of need and that many are becoming fatigued of doing so. Something must be done, they argue, to encourage younger folk to step up and take the volunteer reins or else the much-needed support will disappear.

Employment for Armstrong seniors did not appear to be an area of interest.

Community Support and Health Services

Extreme concern was voiced regarding access to medical services for seniors and others living in Armstrong. The redistribution of funding by Interior Health coupled with a shortage of public transportation has resulted in many, perhaps even most, finding it difficult to access timely and efficient medical attention thus exacerbating the health challenges they face. An additional outcome of this concern is the suggestion that many more '*staying healthy*' programs should be offered in Armstrong to seniors.

Respect

Armstrong focus group participants believe that seniors are afforded the respect they deserve. It was suggested that with the small-town community feel that still exists in Armstrong, comes the 'old fashioned value' that all people are seen and valued for who they are. However, discussions on other topics suggest that the level of respect shown to seniors is not as high as assumed.

Advocacy

In an effort to show true respect and concern for the aging population, the consensus in the groups is that formal and informal ombudsmen should be available to help seniors through their daily challenges and concerns.

The Business Community

The discussion held with representatives of the business community showed that members are familiar with and aware of the needs of seniors. Many do much to ensure their shops and businesses service the needs of aging folk.

III. Recommendations

The City of Armstrong favors the approach of collaborating with a representative group of dedicated Armstrong residents. This group would be vested in ensuring Armstrong remains a strong and adaptive community where seniors are respected and can live and thrive with targeted support initiatives throughout all stages of their senior years.

Definition

“In Armstrong, we define age-friendly as a place where people of all ages are accepted and respected, and diverse opportunities are available to enjoy all aspects of a quality life.”

The primary recommendation of the Pinnacle consulting team is for the City of Armstrong to proceed to implementing the **Strategic Objectives and Action Plan** (created in September 2012) through a Council-supported Community Committee. As a result of completing the community consultation process, and the creation of strategic objectives and actions, the City of Armstrong is now able to proceed with applying for the BC Accreditation status.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	.....	6
Methodology	.....	8
Results	.....	10
Outdoor Spaces	.....	11
Buildings	.....	12
Transportation	.....	13
Housing	.....	15
Social Inclusion and Participation	.....	18
Community and Information	.....	19
Civic Participation and Employment	.....	20
Community Support and Health	.....	21
Respect	.....	23
Advocacy	.....	23
The Business Community	.....	24
Recommendations	.....	25
Conclusion	.....	26
Appendix Documents	.....	28
Strategic Objectives & Action Plan	.....	41
Acceptance of the Report	.....	51

Introduction and Purpose

Background

The City of Armstrong received grant funding to engage the Armstrong community in a structured and facilitated planning process to define what an 'Age-Friendly Community' represents to the many constituent groups living and working within this strong and vibrant community. Specifically, the City of Armstrong was seeking an inclusive and creative process that would provide an accurate assessment and improve the accessibility and inclusion of older persons relative to the eight age-friendly community components/features as identified by WHO and other British Columbia respected agencies. The features of an Age-Friendly community are:

1. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings	2. Transportation
3. Housing	4. Social Participation
5. Respect & Social Inclusion	6. Civic Participation & Employment
7. Communication & Information	8. Community Support & Health Services

A key expectation of this initiative is the creation of a Community Committee, reporting to the City of Armstrong (City Council) that will assume the leadership to implement the short-and-long-term priorities identified in the Action Plan.



Initial Statistics Canada available data reveals that Armstrong has a population of approximately 4500 citizens, with twenty-one (21%) of residents 65 years of age and older. A component of initial research yielded limited information from the 2012 Okanagan North Senior's Housing Guide, which contributes specific data about Armstrong-centric facilities.

Additional review of recommended provincial and global web links (including the WHO Discussion Guide), together with targeted research relative to the City's demographics, indicates a driving need for a carefully-planned 'active ageing concept' infrastructure to ensure how to best support the Community's quickly burgeoning ageing population, associated care-givers and service providers in the public, voluntary and private sectors.

This project, at its heart, is a study to gather required and vital information (data) so that the City of Armstrong can meet the needs of this integral group of citizens, through the collaborative efforts of the many community groups focused on providing their unique services to this specific population.

The **overarching objectives** of this study were to:

- 1) Review what being an '*Age-friendly Community*' means,
- 2) Summarize the data findings along with goals and strategies for implementation in the written Age-Friendly BC Community Plan document,
- 3) Catalyze the launch of the Community Committee under City Council and to support, and
- 4) Achieve the '*Age-Friendly*' BC Community Recognition' status.

The **result** of the community consultation process with the identified key stakeholders yielded a wealth of information which was used to facilitate 'next steps' discussions with citizen representatives of the City on September 17, 2012 and confirmed the strategic actions required to meet the goals as identified through the consultation process.

Methodology

An exploratory grounded theory approach as outlined by Glazer and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1987) and Stebbins (2001) was taken to conduct this research. As said in those writings, the overall goal of the process is to theorize about social phenomena through the inductive production of generalizations that emerge from empirical data on any given topic. Furthermore, that study applied an interpretive approach to research wherein an attempt was made to enter the lives of participants and gain an understanding of their lives as staff or volunteers at the studied vaccination clinics. This approach can be traced back to Max Weber and his argument that researchers must acquire a first-hand understanding (or *Verstehen*) of the social phenomenon under consideration. An important premise of interpretive research is that reality is socially constructed and the subject's definition of the situation is an important consideration in explaining his or her behavior.

Data collection

The data for this research was collected through focus group discussions. A moderator guide (see Appendix I) was developed to steer the discussions; certain topics and questions were raised systematically and consistently, encouraging discussion and investigation of the topics.

An initial Kick-off Meeting (KOM) was held with fifteen (15) stakeholders in June. At this meeting the participants created two draft definitions of the Armstrong 'Age-Friendly Community' it was recognized that a final definition could only be achieved after the community consultation process was completed. The Actioning Committee had the ultimate responsibility to finalize the definition.

Five additional focus groups were conducted in July and August, 2012. Altogether, a total of 49 participants represented (15) Seniors, (6) Caregivers, (9) Service Providers, (9) Clergy and (10) Business Community Members. All focus groups were held at the Seniors Activity Center, in Armstrong, British Columbia, with the exception of the Clergy lunch meeting, at a local Bistro. Each group lasted approximately two hours.

Initially, 3 focus groups were deemed to be sufficient to ensure representation, but it was later determined that not all seniors had been represented. A fourth group of Clergy members were therefore invited to share their views about marginalized seniors who were not included in any of the previous focus groups.

The focus group discussions were moderator-led, informal, and non-threatening interactions. They permit in-depth probing of selected groups of individuals with similar characteristics on their behavior, habits, usage patterns, perceptions, and attitudes related to an issue. The Clergy meeting was a more informal

discussion due to the restaurant location of the meeting. Qualitative research allows for a more complete understanding of a segment, in that the thoughts and feelings are expressed in the respondents' own language and at their own levels of passion.

Data Analysis

The mode of analysis used for the study drew upon Glaser and Strauss' (1967) proposed method of comparative analysis. Such a method involves coding data after they are collected, identifying categories, comparing incidents applicable to each category, introducing new categories suggested by the comparisons until new comparisons no longer reveal new information and patterns and categories emerge.

Ethical considerations

A number of steps were taken in the research to ensure participants comfort during the data gathering process. Before the start of each discussion group, participants were again given a brief description of the study, assured that their participation was completely voluntary; and that they were under no obligation to answer a question they found uncomfortable. The interviews were taped, again with participant consent, and they were assured that no one other than the moderators would hear the tapes or read the transcripts.

Results and How to Read this Report

The findings from the research have been divided into eight sections following the layout of the WHO study. The order in which they are listed reflects the order of the discussions and does not represent ranking of any kind.

Each section describes the results as heard from participants in each focus group and the kick-off meeting. Differences across groups are acknowledged where present. If none are listed, then none were seen to exist. More specifically, the results have been broken into the following sections:

- I. Spaces, Buildings and Transportation
 - a. Outdoor Spaces
 - b. Buildings
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Housing

- II. Community Participation and Support
 - a. Social Inclusion and Participation
 - b. Communication and Information
 - c. Civic Participation and Employment
 - d. Community Support and Health Services
 - e. Respect
 - f. Advocacy

Each section is supported with quotes collected during the focus groups. Although these quotes are from specific individuals, they were selected and inserted in the report to demonstrate the general feedback of the participants. All quotes are presented in italics.

I. Spaces, Buildings and Transportation

The importance of outdoor spaces, buildings and transportation must never be underestimated when considering the health and well-being of an aging population. A person's ability to navigate their surroundings impacts not only their ability to get from point A to point B, but also their opportunity to interact with others and therefore their sense of connectedness and feelings of emotional well-being.



Outdoor Spaces

Armstrong supports its community well with respect to outdoor spaces, AND participants speak of improvements that can be made to facilitate moving around outside a little more easily.

In the first instance, participants describe City sidewalks as sufficiently wide for pedestrian traffic and there is generally one sidewalk running down the side of each street, although there are some exceptions. There are no sidewalks in front of the Catholic Church, for example. However, given the increase in scooter use and the number of people who are more comfortable riding them on the sidewalks as opposed to on the road, the sidewalks will in time become more congested and inadequate.

A "Watch for Seniors" sign could be posted at Wood Avenue.

The curbs are also well cut for those with walkers and canes to easily step onto the street. In addition, cross-walks connect streets at frequent enough intervals in the downtown core enabling pedestrians to cross the street easily. (Exceptions to this rule are experienced outside the downtown core, which are problematic as it means walking further than some are able to do.) One important note for consideration for the cross-walks is that they need to allow sufficient time for the slowest of walkers to safely cross. The active seniors participating in the groups say the timing currently works well but that it may be a problem for those whose mobility is starting to falter.

"Rosedale intersection needs a crosswalk and a down ramp – there is no access to cross that busy street."

The lighting is bright enough in the downtown core and commercial areas. Not many seniors venture forth at night, but those that do feel there is enough light for them to see where they're going and to feel safe. It was mentioned that as the

current active senior population ages, they may be out more at night and there would be a need for more lighting on some side streets and trails.

(Regarding safety, the Clergy was the only group who voluntarily mentioned the October 31st tragedy. We are unable to speculate on the meaning of the omission.)

For those who enjoy walking in nature, Armstrong is considered a haven with its multiple trails and meadow. As one participant said, “*we are so lucky with our trails*”. (One participant did suggest that the trails be interconnected to make for more interesting walking.) The general feeling, however, is that there are many paths available and they are being utilized by the ‘younger and more active’ seniors but that there are not many options for those who are mobile impaired. Their needs are different in that the trails and paths must be smooth and clear so they don’t trip and fall.



On that note, and with regard to keeping the trails clear of debris and snow, some are happy with the efforts made by the City, and others feel more frequent attention should be paid to this task, and in maintaining all paths/sidewalks in general. As one ages and one’s stability starts to falter, the importance of clear and smooth paths becomes even greater.

“The path along Patterson on to Pioneer Square is narrow and full of holes.”

What also becomes important as one ages is the ability to rest, and, as such, it was suggested that more rest areas and covered benches be placed along popular paths.

Buildings

The loudest concern voiced by participants when discussing buildings in Armstrong was that of accessibility. The number of stairs and the height of each stair are of real concern to seniors and can prevent them from entering a building. This concern was expressed about the Haugen Medical Centre and NorVal Recreation Center in particular – buildings that are of importance to seniors as they deal with and promote health and active living.

Elevators can of course be used in place of stairs, but, as acknowledged by caregivers participating in the groups, many of those suffering from dementia are frightened to enter the elevator and therefore either have no choice but to battle the stairs or not use the services offered in that facility.

It was noted that a wheelchair ramp is needed at the Legion Hall, and a focus group participant was quick to volunteer information about grant opportunities for such accessibility amenities.



The second-most-frequently mentioned consideration when discussing buildings is that of bathrooms and the conclusion drawn is that there are too few public washrooms available. Participants appreciated that some Merchants are willing about allowing non-patrons to use their facilities but that doesn't help the senior who is out walking and enjoying the trail system. As with more benches, participants

asked for more washrooms. During the course of the focus groups, it became evident that most participants were not aware that public washrooms were open and available at the Park. The desire was frequently expressed to 'put a lid on the swimming pool to enjoy year-round use'.

Transportation

Transportation, and what it means for one's mobility, is of utmost importance in the life of seniors as it impacts both physical and emotional health. Transportation not only enables one to access all services needed but it also prevents isolation - the precursor to emotional deterioration (and depression?). Not enough emphasis can be placed on this point.

"Being independent and independent living is not about just housing – it's about getting out and about as well and Armstrong is really lacking in the transportation end."

In sum, participants from all groups strongly argued that Armstrong does not serve its aging community well when it comes to helping them be more mobile. Like many North American communities, Armstrong relies heavily on the use of private cars and offers little support for public transportation or the use of bicycles. So, when one can no longer drive or ride a scooter, few other options are available.

"There is an urgent need for local transportation solutions."

To describe this in more detail, discussions revealed a high demand for reasonably-priced public transport both within the City and between neighboring cities. It was suggested that a small internal bus route be set up in Armstrong so that seniors can take the bus from home to town. The bus should stop frequently

along the way at often-visited locations enabling people to hop on and off. There is currently no such service in place, and those who can no longer drive a car or navigate a scooter have to rely on the help of others for transportation – help that often isn't available to them - or on expensive taxi rides that many can't afford.

“Armstrong has no wheelchair-accessible taxis; there is one that comes from Vernon but it is expensive (\$60-80 per return trip).”

In addition to an internal bus, many participants bemoaned the inter-city services currently available and advised that more options should be offered. There is a Patient Transport Vehicle that will take seniors to Enderby, Vernon and Kelowna for medical appointments, for example, for a fee of \$60 to \$80, but it doesn't run as frequently as needed.

“If you are a senior with an appointment in the morning (in Vernon), you often have to wait most of the day to get the transport back to Armstrong.”

The same holds true for the Health Connection Bus, which also only runs one day per week. It was acknowledged that the Shriners Organization will transport people to the Cancer Clinic in Kelowna but the pick-up point at a local gas station is still a barrier for seniors if they do not have transportation to the gas station. Imagine someone struggling with the effects of cancer treatment as they struggle to walk to the gas station.



Given the lack of intra-Armstrong public transport, many more seniors who can no longer drive their cars maintain their sense of independence by opting to use scooters and the speculation is that the numbers of scooters in town will increase significantly in the future.

“Seniors need this independence. The donated scooter at Abbeyfield enables residents to maintain their independence and not have to rely on adult children – who may or may not be around to help.”

This in turn will place greater pressure on the City to provide wider sidewalks with down ramps or scooter paths, as many of the current streets aren't wide enough to safely accommodate scooters/bike lanes/pedestrians and vehicles. Plus, the increase in scooter use will not only demand that all scooter lanes are maintained and groomed for safe usage, but scooter parking and plug-ins will be needed.

In the Seniors focus group, there was considerable conversation about handicap parking, with varied sentiments regarding the quantity of parking available as well as concerns about cars who do not have 'handicap' tags parked in those available parking spots.

An additional comment must be added when discussing those who can no longer drive: Procedures for drivers' license renewal has changed to the disadvantage of many. Seniors are now required to use a software program (Drive-able) that assesses their aptitude and ability for license renewal. First, the software is available only in Kelowna or Kamloops necessitating a significant drive to either center, and seniors who are unfamiliar with computer technology are at a higher risk of deemed to have 'failed' the assessment and therefore denied their license renewal due to not using the software correctly. They may not have 'failed' the test at all, but the 'fail' assessment denies their ability to drive and they are now dependent on other people to drive them, or on the limited public transportation options available.

For those physically able, many more would like to ride their bikes when running errands but the lack of bicycle paths and the narrow streets/side-walks leave many feeling it would be unsafe for them to do so.

Housing

As in most North American communities, Armstrong needs a blend of upper-scale housing and less expensive (yet attractive) options for its seniors. And, it needs options to serve the ranging age and ability demographics. Few participants brought up any concerns about the availability of housing for the active and wealthy senior, suggesting that those who can afford such homes and who are still able to do so take care of their own physical needs, but much discussion during the groups on this topic revolved around the need for affordable and comfortable housing for those who are less well-off and who can no longer take total care of themselves and their needs. (The demographic seeking such arrangements are generally single women, although there are some men too, ranging in age between mid 70's and mid 90's, and the price range that suits them well is, in today's dollars, approximately \$1200/month.) There was an opinion that developers should be forced to have 30% of the project be 'low cost' housing, alongside of the expensive homes. In particular, it was suggested that there is a significant unmet demand for accommodations similar to those offered by Abbeyfield House. The Manager of Abbeyfield said:



"I receive on average four calls per week looking for a room and I currently have 5 to 6 on a wait list."



As the Caregiver group articulated well, slightly older and less active -- than those who continue to live and function well in their own homes -- but still relatively independent seniors, seek supportive housing in which they can still express who they are and what they like to do all the while being a part of a family-and-like-minded community. As such they seek accommodation where the facility is smaller (6 to 10 individual rooms or units) and family-like as opposed to institutional in feel. Like Abbeyfield House, each member would have his or her own room that would include, in addition to a bedroom, a small sitting area and kitchenette (with a microwave and bar fridge) for private living. The facility would also offer a community sitting room, kitchen and dining room where all members can interact as a family (cooking and visiting) and share the meals that are provided for them. This facility would also offer some outdoor space for small scale gardening.

The Manager at Abbeyfield house has a Reliever who comes in, however despite Okanagan College's increased graduation of Care Aids, there is an overall shortage of trained relief help in Armstrong, particularly for weekend work. As the aging population numbers expand, there will be an increased need for these specialized services for these supportive living facilities.

Many of the Armstrong folks come from surrounding small towns or farming backgrounds and to insist that they spend their senior years living in apartment-style dwellings does not reflect who they are or how they like to spend their time, as one senior participant vehemently expressed. To also insist that they leave Armstrong and find such accommodation elsewhere is unfair to them, participants argued. Not only would the move be disruptive and expensive, it would also separate them from their remaining friends and family, and the warmth that comes from being in familiar surroundings. An effort must therefore be made, participants suggested, to ensure that these people can remain in Armstrong during this phase of their life, and the next.



If considering where in Armstrong such facilities would do well, participants spoke of them being placed close to commercial districts and public transport. As discussed previously, the ability to get out and about is primary in maintaining mental and physical health, and for those who can no longer drive or afford to do so, living close to amenities and public ways of getting around helps maintain their connectedness with community.

In addition for such community family-style living accommodations, the need for long-term care where all residents' needs are provided continues to expand in Armstrong. Participants weren't as focused on this demographic and made little reference to it other than to acknowledge a current shortage of care providers and trained help, and that it will be of much greater concern in the future. It was interesting for the Facilitators to note that in every focus group, when asked the query to imagine their own life in 10 years, there was difficulty in doing so.

"There will be a real crunch in a few years."

In concluding this discussion on housing, it is important to note two things when considering living arrangements for seniors: First, seniors need and desire to stay in their own homes as long as they possibly can and it is important to encourage them to do so by offering help with household chores and maintenance once those tasks become onerous. This is what allows them to age gracefully. Second, efforts must be made to arrange for like-minded folk to live together. Not only is it best for active folk to live with other active folk, but it is also important that different walks of life be recognized. A teetotaler likely won't be happy living with a roughneck or an aging drug addict if their life experiences and values are very different.

II. Community Participation and Support

Encouraging participation and offering support is based on a respect and concern for another, and in Armstrong focus group participants believe that seniors are afforded the respect they deserve. It was suggested that with the small-town community feel that still exists in Armstrong, comes the 'old fashioned value' that all people are seen and valued for who they are. It is also thought that it would be desirable to involve and create more interactive programs between schoolchildren and seniors so that a familiarity and understanding of generational differences can be maintained and enhanced.



“Some kids seem to be afraid of seniors. ‘Afraid’ = mental impairment. There is a need to make aging ‘normal’ to school-age children.”

Social Inclusion and Participation

“That A&W is full of honky-tonk piano players.”

The A&W and McDonalds is where it's at in Armstrong. Not literally of course, although participants did remark on how busy the fast food chains are serving coffee to seniors every morning. According to discussions, Armstrong is ripe with recreational activities for seniors including those offered at The Legion, The Seniors Activity Centre, the Museum, the IPE, Music in the Park, and churches. Those amenities, however, are under-utilized -- unlike attendance at the A&W.



Some believe this lack of attendance is due to transportation issues – people simply can't get there – and that the information about what is going on around town (for example, organized activities) either is not available or isn't communicated effectively. Others suggest that many seniors, especially women, just aren't comfortable going out alone and they can't always find someone else or a group to go with. It wasn't acceptable to do these things

alone in their day and the past stigma attached to someone who did so lingers

and prevents them from exploring new opportunities today. It was noted that while women 'volunteer a lot', it is perceived that not as many male seniors volunteer and there is an opportunity to get them involved.

Communication and Information

On the previous note about seniors not being aware of what recreational activities are being offered around town, some suggest the best way to spread any message is via the 'seniors telegraph.' Participants recognized that the challenge with this approach is that those who are not well connected will remain that way as they don't ever get the messages of where and when to connect.

Kudos were expressed for organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Parks and Recreation for their helpful information about organized activities. In addition, much discussion on this topic revolved around the importance of information technology and using it as a tool to connect with seniors – the topic was raised at virtually every meeting. The current 'young seniors' will continue to use and expect to keep current as technology evolves, and for them it is an efficient way to connect with others and be up-to-date on the happenings around town. There is however an older seniors' population that is totally excluded from 'inclusion' due to the exclusionary and isolating effects of not being in the technology realm.

The local newspaper is not an effective communication tool as it targets the younger more active senior and overlooks the less-active more aged person. The same is true for postings on bulletin boards. Only those who are already out and about get to see the notices. To overcome these challenges, two recommendations were made by participants: 1) set up a centralized seniors information bank that can be accessed by all for event details etc., and, 2) encourage seniors to work together to help one another in this regard. In other words, work from within.

Civic Participation and Employment



Armstrongers are proud of their ability to pull together as a community and accomplish those things they value. There is a strong ‘I can do’ attitude and this community tends to be more resourceful than most, participants argue. As one participant said,

“People here have worked hard all their lives, they are fiercely independent and very supportive of one another”.

This strength is extremely important in a community such as Armstrong where the average age of its population is quickly increasing while government funding for programs such as the *The Morning Call* and *Meals on Wheels* programs have been cancelled, leaving huge gaps in the social support fabric of Armstrong.

“People don’t eat properly.....we need to figure out how to make food accessible.”

Rather than accepting and making do with less, a number of stories were told of how the community bands together: stories about how members rallied to build the Haugen Clinic, how stores will help those who can’t get out to shop by delivering food and making service house calls, and of the many volunteer hours spent taking care of seniors who need help and who have no one else to turn to.

Volunteers are recognized for their contributions to the social infrastructure through the ‘*Citizen of the Year*’ award, and ‘*lots of thank you’s*’ are readily handed out.

Regarding the previous point on volunteering and as much as they are proud of this commitment, the participants did express some concern that this reliance on volunteers may hurt the community in the long run. The current group is becoming fatigued by the number of tasks required of them and is slowly giving up the role. As in most communities, it is the same group of people who help out time and time again, and the fear is that few new faces are showing up to help. Something must be done to encourage new and younger folk to volunteer, participants argued, as aging seniors cannot rely on their children to take care of them - they are too busy working and raising their own children and simply don’t have the time to help out, or the adult children do not live nearby to help.

There was discussion about how to attract young families to reside in Armstrong, citing a positive quality of life in Armstrong due to a lower tax base and lower cost of living. Offsetting this, though, is the reality of a challenging employment environment and the recognition that the Tolko mill plays a key role in providing employment to young Armstrongs.



No discussion on employment for seniors arose naturally during the groups and when probed on the topic, few participants showed much interest. A handful of people indicated that opportunities are available to those interested in working but it would appear that few are. There were three notions offered regarding those seniors who are working: 1) there may be a need to subsidize pensions, 2) there may not be enough (young) people available to work at the wages offered, 3) the senior finds work socially rewarding and continues to be engaged in this way.

A discussion about money and financial ability too did not arise with any group other than the caregivers, clergy, and the business community. And, in both instances participants indicated that some seniors living in Armstrong are indeed financially disabled, it is shocking that some couples have to move apart/separate/divorce to get the proper funding (through the Interior Health assessment process) they need in order to survive, contributing to premature and needless isolation.

Community Support and Health Services

As in many Canadian cities, extreme concern was voiced regarding medical services available for seniors and others living in Armstrong. Unfortunately for many, aging is associated with declining health and there is much fear amongst those living in Armstrong that they cannot easily access health services when required. Of the current doctors in Armstrong, for an example, none focus on geriatric care, and there are no emergency-after-hours medical facilities available with the only option being an expensive taxi ride to a Vernon medical facility or reliance on a neighbor or family member (if available) to drive the senior into Vernon.

In response to Interior Health's decision to close down the existing health infrastructure in Armstrong some years ago, the community responded by pulling together to build the Haugen Clinic thus ensuring they'd always have family practitioners available. However the redistribution of funding by Interior Health has resulted in most other medical and support services only being offered in neighboring cities (Vernon, Kelowna and Vancouver). This coupled with the

transportation challenges many seniors face, means that seniors have become increasingly afraid that they cannot get prompt and timely medical help and attention at Haugen when they need it. As a further complication, there are concerns about the ongoing ability of Armstrong to sustain the annual funding needed to ensure the Medical Clinic continues to be able to operate (Please see Appendix III).

"We need more doctors here. There is no walk-in clinic here, nor any medical services on the weekend."

"After hours and on weekend there is no option: it's a trip to Vernon, this includes for emergencies."

Two specific notes of concern for the Caregivers is the reality that hospitals are sending people home without the required support in the home or available support services in Armstrong for post-hospital care. Correspondingly, it was reported that Interior Health assessment services for subsidized support is achingly slow with many 'stops' in the assessment process.

"People move away because the services are not available."

An additional outcome of this concern is the suggestion that many more 'staying healthy' programs should be offered in Armstrong to seniors. **Armstrong was critiqued by some as not having an ethos of active and healthy living among seniors.** Participants therefore argued that there is a need for more education on nutrition and vitamin supplements, the importance of exercise, and grief recovery for those seniors affected by death of their partners/spouses. Multiple participants recommended that Armstrong have a 'philosophy of active living for seniors'. Classes should be offered on how to how to remain active or become active for their appropriate age and conditions, as well as, educate seniors in disease and injury prevention.

"We need to help the seniors help seniors."

A number of these programs have been offered by churches and were well accepted but did not reach those people who do not attend church. Suggestions were therefore made that the programs should be supported and offered by secular organizations, such as The City, or medical services.

In the Caregivers focus group, it was raised that many support programs/services which are no longer available in Armstrong, are available in Enderby however the lack of transportation is a barrier to participating in those much-needed Programs.

"Integrated care groups are not available in Armstrong, such as a diabetes awareness group."

“There are few support groups in Armstrong – we need a place to ‘be’ depressed and to be supported through that depression.”

Respect

When probed on the topic of respect, the majority attending the discussions replied that Armstrong is very respectful of one another and their seniors, and they were unfamiliar with instances of disrespect. Focus group participants cited examples such as people saying ‘hello’, holding doors for seniors, and proud that visitors frequently comment on how friendly Armstrong is. However, discussions on other topics reveal that perhaps the level of respect is not as high as initially assumed: how can it be that someone suffering cancer treatment is expected to make his way to the gas station to catch the bus to Kelowna for treatment, or that the woman who can’t afford to pay for a taxi ride to the grocery store must buy all her supplies at the higher priced convenience close by. Complaints were voiced about slow scooter traffic on the roadways and the scooter drivers’ assumed disregard for vehicular traffic. These complaints did not appear to be empathetic regarding the importance of the scooter to the independence of the individual.



Armstrong is not alone in this regard. Other research shows that as a society we expect others to be self-sufficient and we become impatient with those who cannot take care of all their own needs.

Advocacy

An underlying theme in many of the groups was that of senior support and advocacy. Most participants’ perspective on many, if not all, topics of discussion expressed a fundamental concern for people in general and seniors in particular. The business group, for example, spoke of the importance of confidentiality and providing environments in which seniors can express their concerns without fear of retribution from family or others in positions of power. Many become confused and forgetful as they age, and the consensus in the groups is that formal and informal ombudsmen should be available to help people through their daily big (banking, legal situations, medical experiences) and small (renewing their driver’s license, sending an email) challenges and concerns.

The Business Community

The discussion held with the business community showed that those members are familiar with and aware of the unique needs of seniors. As such, they ensure that:

- Stores are well lit,
- Merchandise is easy to see,
- Store aisles are wider than normal to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters,
- All counter tops have rounded corners so that those who bruise easily aren't hurt,
- Flooring is non-slip,
- There is seating for those needing to rest,
- Staff is trained to communicate with seniors (speak louder, address seniors by their title, not first names), and
- Mondays are designated as 'Seniors day' for local businesses.



Recommendations



The primary recommendation of the Pinnacle consulting team is for the City of Armstrong to proceed to the strategy creation stage.

The City of Armstrong favors the approach of collaborating with a representative group of dedicated Armstrong residents. This group would be vested in ensuring Armstrong remains a strong and adaptive community where seniors are respected and can live and thrive with targeted support initiatives throughout all stages of their senior years.

To this end, the City sponsored a Community 'Actioning' Workshop* on September 17, 2012, at which time the invited participants worked with the report findings and:

- finalized the '*Age-Friendly Community*' definition;
- recommended strategies and specific actions to the City to realize opportunities for positive and proactive change;
- described the function of a Council-sponsored Community Committee to move forward with the information created at the workshop and
- supported the City's application for the '*Age-Friendly Community*' accreditation process.

The output from this workshop was the creation of the 'Strategic Objectives & Action Plan' document (Appendix IV).

Subsequent to the September 17th workshop, Pinnacle met with the City to discuss the strategic 'next steps' that would be required to communicate and implement the 'Strategic Objectives and Action Plan' document.

Additional steps pending include:

- 1) The creation of a smaller strategic Council-appointed 'Community Committee' that should further discuss the City's objective of remaining a strong and vibrant community supporting its seniors. The findings of this report coupled with the **Strategic Objectives and Action Plan** should guide their discussions and lead to the development of prioritized tasks, accountabilities and the associated timelines so that all approved objectives are met.
- 2) Create the communication framework needed to apprise the Armstrong residents of the results of the '*Age-Friendly Community*' initiative.

Conclusion

Having completed many discussions with participants on similar and different projects, it is clear that those participating in this project are deeply committed to the topic and outcomes of this particular study. This is indeed a project with a lot of heart. The dedication shown by the City of Armstrong towards its citizens by asking for clarity on what an *'age-friendly community'* in this context looks like is commendable.

As mentioned earlier in the Introduction section of this report, an expected and tangible outcome of the discussions held with members of the Armstrong community is to summarize the characteristics of an *'age-friendly community'* in context. While it was premature earlier on in the consultation process to determine Armstrong's *'age-friendly community'* definition, at the culmination of the community consultation and the review of the information, Armstrong's definition is:

“In Armstrong, we define age-friendly as a place where people of all ages are accepted and respected, and diverse opportunities are available to enjoy all aspects of a quality life.”



References

Glaser, Barney and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Aldine.

Stebbins, R.A. 2001. *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*. California: Sage Publications.

Strauss, Anselm L. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Appendix I

Moderator Guide

'Age-Friendly Community' Focus Groups

March 22, 2012

Purpose (as described in the proposal dated)

The City of Armstrong has applied for, and received grant funding, to engage the Armstrong community in a structured and facilitated planning process that defines what an 'Age-Friendly Community' represents to the many constituent groups living and working within this strong and vibrant community. Specifically, the City of Armstrong seeks an inclusive and creative process that will result in the accurate assessment and improve the accessibility and inclusion of older persons, which is built on the 'eight age-friendly community components' as identified by WHO and other British Columbia respected agencies. A key expectation of this initiative is the creation of a Community Committee, reporting to the City of Armstrong City Council that will take the leadership to implement the short-and-long-term priorities identified in the Action Plan.

This project, at it's heart, is a research study to gather required and vital information (data) so that the City of Armstrong can meet the needs of this integral group of citizens, through the collaborative efforts of the many community groups focused on providing their unique services to this specific population.

The **overarching objectives** for this study are to:

- ⇒ Review what being an Age-friendly Community means
- ⇒ Determine what community members would like to have included in their town so as to enhance their lifestyles and well-being as they age

A. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Hello. Welcome. I am _____ and I'll be the discussion leader for today's group. We'll be here for about 2 - 3 hours, to gain opinions and thoughts concerning life in the City of Armstrong. We'll discuss today's objectives further in a moment, but before doing so, I'd like to say a few words about 'focus groups'.

I just want to remind you that we're not here to sell you anything or convince you of anything – what we want are your thoughts and impressions.

REVIEW OF STANDARD FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINE AND INFORMATION

About me: I'm a research consultant. I'm not an employee of the City of Armstrong - I'm not here to promote any perspective, just to gather opinions. My job involves doing interviews, and leading discussions like this one for all sorts of organizations, and to pass on the feedback I hear to them. It is important that you **express your opinions** about what we discuss - either positive or negative; that's the whole reason why we've asked you to come here today.

Before I go any further, I should let you know about **the room** that we're in today. Has anyone ever been in a focus group before? Focus group rooms are specially set up to record the group's discussion. You'll note that there's a **microphone** here to record the discussion. Also some people will be observing the group. All this is so that we can absorb what you have to say, keep all your comments straight, and so that I don't have to take a lot of notes myself over the course of the discussion.

I'd like to set out a few guidelines to make the discussion flow as smoothly as possible...

- Talk one at a time, in a **voice as loud as mine**.
- I would like to invite you to stick to your real opinions - as conversations get going, it's easy sometimes to **let other people speak more**, or even sometimes to think that your opinions aren't as valuable or interesting as someone else's because they sound like they **know a lot about the topic**. That's not why we asked you here - we asked you here specifically to hear all your views, to **hear all sides of each question**. So I'd like to thank you in advance for being willing to really participate and fully express your views. At the same time, I don't expect that each and every person will have something to say on each and every question - I just **need to hear from everyone over the course of the discussion**.
- So if you tend naturally to be someone who has lots to say, please be aware of this and be sure to give the **quieter people** a chance to speak; and if you're normally more on the quiet side, I'm going to ask you to make that extra effort to speak up when you have something to add to the discussion.

- I'll be the discussion leader, but you **don't need to address all your comments to me**. Just jump in and respond to someone else's comments whenever you'd like to.
- BUT I do ask that just **one person talks at a time** - Please don't have side conversations with your neighbors, or I won't be able to hear what everyone is saying.
- So just to sum up, we're here to gather all the opinions we can. There are no right or wrong answers. Don't let the group sway you - and if you change your mind on something, that's fine too.
- Just a couple of practical items: Please turn off your cell phones. There are washrooms "down the hall" and if you need to leave the room, just go right ahead.
- Please note, that you are not obligated to answer any questions that you're uncomfortable with and that you may leave the session at anytime during the discussion,

A. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

To begin, I'd like to go around the table and have each of you to introduce yourself and tell us a little about how long you've lived in Armstrong, what brought you here initially and what you like about living here.

A. TOPIC INTRODUCTION – adapted from the WHO's Age-Friendly Cities Project (5 minutes)

We're here today to talk about Armstrong as an age-friendly community – which is defined as a community which enables older people to live in security, enjoy good health and participate fully in society. We are going to talk about many different aspects of the community, including environment, buildings, roads, and the different services and activities in the community.

From your experiences as (older person/care provider/service provider) I would like to hear about the positive experiences or good features of Armstrong, that show the ways in which our community is age-friendly. I also want to learn about the ways in which our community is NOT age-friendly. Finally, I would like your suggestions on ways to improve age-friendliness here. As I mentioned earlier, there are no right or wrong answers. Every person's opinion is important.

B. OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To gain an understanding of how well outdoor spaces fit with participants' needs and enhance their lives**

The first characteristic of Armstrong that we're going to discuss is that of outdoor space and buildings. Please take a moment to think about what it is like when you take a walk, run an errand or go visiting.

Group discussion:

How would you describe the design and maintenance of the sidewalks and curbs?

Probe: Easy to navigate
Feel safe/wide enough/smooth/slippery

What about street intersections and crosswalks?

Probe: Enough time to cross the street safely
Well spaced
Easily identified

Thinking about street lights.....

Probe: Give off sufficient light
Spacing
Time they come on

Regarding green spaces.....

Probe: Enough of it
Easily accessible
Pleasant environment
Feel safe
Place to rest/sit
Bathroom facilities

The weather here can be unpredictable, is there sufficient protection from the sun, rain, wind, snow?

Up to this point we've focused primarily on the outdoors. I'd now like us to think about the buildings that you visit here in Armstrong.

What is it like going into a building, such as public offices or stores?

Probe: The number of stairs
The height of stairs
Availability of elevators or escalators
Length and width of corridors
Lighting in corridors
Flooring – sturdy/slippery
Signage – easy to see, easy to read
Toilets – easily identified/clean
Rest areas – well spaced/enough of them

C. TRANSPORTATION (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To understand whether the public transportation offered meets community needs**
- **Assess how easy it is for people to drive and park in Armstrong**

In our earlier discussion, we focused primarily on walking as a means of getting out and about. For the next little while, I'd like us to think about how it is to get around using public transport and driving.

Group discussion:

Do you use public transport?

Probe: Affordability
Frequency and scheduling
Punctuality
Routes
Stops
Waiting areas (seating, lighting, protection from elements)
Comfort (seating, standing room)
Ease of entry
Security

When driving how easy is it to make your way around Armstrong?

Probe: Street signs (easy to see and read)
Street numbers (easy to see and read)
Lighting along the streets and at intersections

Are the traffic signals easy to understand?

Regarding parking.....

Probe: Sufficient and close to buildings
Handicapped reserved parking

Are there sufficient drop and pick-up areas?

Probe: Well placed
Open when needed

D. HOUSING (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To learn about housing choices in Armstrong**
- **To determine whether housing suits the needs of its community**

Our homes are generally very important to us, and I know from experience that our needs change as we age. Can we spend some time talking about your homes and how well they fit with what you'd like?

Group discussion:

Please tell me about the house, apartment or senior's accommodation that you live in.

Probe: Affordability
Comfort (heating, lighting, stairs, bathroom features)
Easy to move around in
Reach and store things
Household chores
Safety
Proximity to services (shops/services, transport)
Access to help when needed

E. RESPECT (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To get a feel for how respected members feel when living in Armstrong**

The other aspect of this community that we're interested in and would like to talk about is how respectful Armstrong, as a community, is towards it's older population.

Group discussion:

In what ways does the community of Armstrong show, or not show, respect for you as an older person?

Probe: Politeness
Listening
Consultation
Helpfulness
Choices offered
Public recognition for contributions made
Responsiveness to needs

F. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To get a feel for how respected and included community members feel when living in Armstrong**

Respect for people is often shown by including them in activities.

Group discussion:

In what ways does Armstrong include, or not include, you as an older person in activities and events?

Probe: Intergenerational activities

Is it easy to socialize in Armstrong? What makes it easy or difficult to do?

What about participation in other activities (education, culture, recreation...), how easy is it to do?

Probe: Affordability
Accessibility
Frequency
Convenient location
Convenient times

Are the activities interesting?

G. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To determine how well information is disseminated to older populations**

Being told about activities is a necessary part in being active and I'd like to hear from you whether you think information about events, and services, is being shared.

Group discussion:

What is your experience getting the information you need about events or services?

Probe: Accessible
Useful
Timely
Easy to understand
Technology
Best way to communicate with older people

G. CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To understand what volunteering and employment opportunities exist for older populations in Armstrong**

Group discussion:

Are any of you currently volunteering? Where?

Are any of you currently working? Where?

Are any of you looking to volunteer?

Probe: Opportunities available
How do you find out about such opportunities

How accessible are these opportunities
How attractive are they/
Reflect older persons' interests and skills

Are any of you looking for paid work?

Probe: Opportunities available
How do you find out about such opportunities
How accessible are these opportunities
How attractive are they
Reflect older persons' interests and skills

What can the community do to motivate older persons' participation in volunteering and/or paid work?

H. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES (15 minutes)

Objective:

- **To understand how well the community responds to the health needs of older people**

Group discussion:

What is your experience with the health and social services in the community?

Probe: Responsive to needs of older people
Accessible
Affordable

I. CLOSING

That's it for my questions, but before we finish, are there any other issues or areas that we didn't address that you'd like to raise?

Appendix II

Business Community Facilitation Guide

City of Armstrong – ‘Age-Friendly - Business Community’

Focus Group/Working Session - Tuesday Aug 14, 2012

7:00 – 9:00 PM

Seniors Centre, Patterson Avenue, Armstrong

Facilitator’s Agenda

Meeting Objective:

- ✓ Introduce the key elements of the Age-Friendly Business Guide to the Business community
- ✓ Acquire their feedback/perspectives regarding the categories as presented in the Guide
- ✓ Collect any concerns regarding implementation of the Age-Friendly business considerations
- ✓ Q&A opportunity

<u>Time/Lead</u>	<u>Topic</u>
7:00 PM – Real (20 minutes)	1. Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introductions and backgrounds, (Real will introduce Michelle & Shirl) b. Participant Introductions c. Session Outline – What the Initiative Is, How is it sponsored, Why the need for this, now. (context) Importance of the business community’s input d. Focus Group ‘guidelines’
7:20 PM (Real)	2. Introducing the Information Gathering Process Focused on pg 2 & 3 of the Age Friendly Business Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety - (inside/outside) - Comfort - Visibility - Clarity - Respect <p><i>Explain the process that we will be using (and our roles), depending on who is facilitating/scribing/recording.</i></p>
7:30	3. Information-Gathering – Option “A” (if the group is small – i.e. 3-7 participants)

	<p>Keep the group together. Real and Shirley will take turns facilitating the group, per each of the 6 sections as outlined above. Whoever is not facilitating will scribe on the flipcharts for the other person.</p> <p>For each section (as listed above), the questions that will be asked are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does this (word) mean to you, in the context of your business services with Seniors? ➤ What do you do (currently) to provide/ensure (safety/comfort/visibility/clarity/respect) to your Senior customers? ➤ What do you think the business community in Armstrong should be doing?
7:30 PM	<p>4. Information-Gathering – Option “B” (if the group is medium-size – i.e. 8-12 participants)</p> <p><i>Break the group into 2 smaller groups (6 @ each table); Real/Shirl facilitate @ separate tables.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Real would explore the first 3 topics <input type="checkbox"/> Shirl would explore the other 3 topics <p>For each section (as listed above), the questions that will be asked are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does this (word) mean to you, in the context of your business services with Seniors? ➤ What do you do (currently) to provide/ensure (safety/comfort/visibility/clarity/respect) to your Senior customers? ➤ What do you think the business community in Armstrong should be doing? <p>Take a bio break when the group has finished their 3 topics.</p> <p>3rd: <i>Each table would share/present their results with the other table.</i></p> <p>The other table would add in information, as applicable.</p>
7:30	<p>Information-Gathering – Option “C” (if the group is larger – i.e. 13-16 participants)</p> <p><i>Break the group into 3 smaller groups (5 @ each table); Real/Shirl/Michelle to facilitate @ separate tables.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Real would explore the first 2 topics <input type="checkbox"/> Shirl would explore the other 2 topics <input type="checkbox"/> Michelle would explore the other 2 topics

	<p>For each section (as listed above), the questions that will be asked are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What does this (word) mean to you, in the context of your business services with Seniors? ➤ What do you do (currently) to provide/ensure (safety/comfort/visibility/clarity/respect) to your Senior customers? ➤ What do you think the business community in Armstrong should be doing? <p>Take a bio break when the group has finished their 3 topics.</p> <p>3rd: <i>Each table would share/present their results with the other 2 tables.</i></p> <p>The other tables would add in information, as applicable.</p>
8:40 (All)	General Q & A (if applicable)
8:45 (Shirl)	<p>Next steps for the Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (results) presentation at the Chamber of Commerce AGM - report due to the City - Actioning Committee (business community participation?)
8:55	Thank you!

Appendix III
Written Submission from Dr. Shore
(Chiropractor)

Appendix IV

Strategic Objectives & Action Plan

City of Armstrong – ‘Age-Friendly’ Community

Definition:

“In Armstrong, we define age-friendly as a place where people of all ages are accepted and respected, and diverse opportunities are available to enjoy all aspects of a quality life.”

Notes about the Action Plan:

- The Community Committee will have to prioritize the Actions, and apply an associated time-frame for initiating the specific Actions.
- The Actions as described below are deemed to be of the most desirable initial pursuits; the transcribed flip charts provide additional Action items for the Committee’s consideration.

Housing
Objective #1: In Armstrong, we have a continuum of housing that promotes ‘active’ aging in place which is: supported, affordable, location appropriate and secure.
Actions:
1. Complete a definition of ‘continuum of housing’.
2. Complete a comprehensive housing needs analysis for our community.
3. Review local regulations, bylaws and processes with the intent to support Senior housing initiatives.
4. Develop a strategy that supports not-for-profit associations (and their volunteer base) so that our local volunteer base is supported and maintained.
5. Investigate funding opportunities such as <i>Habitat for Humanity</i> .
Transportation
Objective #1: To establish ‘local’ transportation that is accessible and affordable for all ages.
Actions:
1. To identify potential ‘local’ transportation partners and funding opportunities.
2. To complete a business case/feasibility analysis that will recommend a preferred local transportation alternative and related funding requirements and sources.

Objective #2: To create an initiative that will communicate the local transportation needs of Armstrong to Provincial Governments, IHA, and other potential funding sources and partners.
Actions:
1. To create the terms of reference for the Transportation Review Initiative group.
2. Recruit group members and establish funding sources for the group.
Objective #3: To plan for the impact and needs of increased motorized scooter ridership in the community.
Actions:
1. To create an awareness campaign that raises the knowledge base of both scooter riders and the public.
2. Conduct a community-wide needs analysis that supports a review of the infrastructure planning process.
Buildings
Objective #1: Public ‘Central’ Washrooms are pleasant, clean, and physically accessible for all ages.
Actions:
1. Investigate opportunities to establish ‘central washroom’ facilities in the downtown area.
Objective #2: Communicate the accessibility needs of all age groups to the owners of all public spaces.
Actions:
1. Liaise with the Chamber of Commerce to educate the building/business owners regarding this issue.
2. Work with the City of Armstrong on the creation of an Accessibility Checklist for Public Facilities and new development.
Outdoor Spaces
Objective #1: Opportunities exist for all ages and abilities to safely use our sidewalks and trails.
Actions:
1. Review existing Armstrong Trail plan.
2. Review the identified crosswalks and streets (that are mentioned in the Findings report) to determine what additional measures are needed to ensure the safe passage of pedestrians and scooters during all seasons.

Objective #2: Outdoor opportunities exist throughout our community for seniors to be active all year.

Actions:

1. Investigate using the existing fairgrounds property for outdoor recreational opportunities.
2. Conduct a needs analysis review with Parks & Recreation, and the Seniors Centre, of existing and possible opportunities to promote the 'active living' philosophy in Armstrong.

Objective #3: We have a network of outdoor shelter facilities throughout the City.

Actions:

1. Review existing shelter sites to identify potential additional sites.
2. Establish a bench donation program.

Social Inclusion & Participation

Objective #1: In Armstrong, opportunities and activities exist for all ages to enjoy a sense of community, and our citizens are aware of those activities.

Actions:

1. Use multiple media to make information available regarding activities that exist in Armstrong for all age groups (see 'Communication' below).
2. Promote and support interest group initiatives in Armstrong.
3. Establish a buddy system for Armstrong seniors.
4. Establish a Newcomers group and 'Welcome Wagon' (type of) program.
5. Create opportunities for single Armstrong seniors to meet.

Communication and Information

Objective #1: Information in our community is centralized and readily available for all groups.

Objective #2: Foster two-way communication of information within our community.

Actions:

1. Establish a 'one stop shop' Coordinator role to collect and disseminate information.
2. Establish a database for sharing information (see Advocacy).
3. Offer information technological (IT) training for seniors.
4. Examine sponsorship opportunities to support additional communication methods.

Civic Participation and Employment
Objective #1: Employment and volunteering opportunities which promote active living are communicated to all age groups.
Actions:
1. Establish initiatives such as a community garden, co-operative cooking, and support access to learning opportunities to support a sense of people helping people to live an active and enjoyable life in Armstrong.
2. Collaborate with the churches/clergy to understand what they do to fill the social and physical needs of their parishioners.
3. Create a 'one stop' place for all age groups to see employment and volunteering opportunities in our community (see Communications).
Community Support & Health Services
Objective #1: 'Staying healthy' and remaining independent at home are our priorities.
Actions:
1. Investigate opportunities to make active living more affordable for our seniors.
2. Investigate opportunities to leverage our neighboring health services and making those more readily available to our citizens.
3. Work with Interior Health Authority (IHA) to identify opportunities for our community to utilize funding that we are not currently taking advantage of.
4. Ensure IHA services and Program opportunities are communicated to all age groups (public is aware of what is available).
5. Publicize the availability of the Medical Equipment Loan Cupboard within the community.
Objective #2: Recruitment of Physician service providers is a priority; opportunities for Physician service providers to move to our community are advertised and promoted.
Actions:
1. Support the work of the Haugen Health Care Society.
2. Conduct a needs analysis to understand community's needs for physicians within the area.
3. Investigate the possibilities to partner with surrounding communities.
Advocacy
Objective #1: Seniors advocacy is a priority; our seniors feel safe and help is available.
Actions:
1. Explore the need to establish an Advocacy group and/or a Seniors Coordinator (refer to Communications & Information section).

2. Explore a partnership with adjacent communities similar to the Vernon Seniors' Bureau.
3. Create the <i>Terms of Reference</i> for a Seniors Advocacy Group, or Coordinator.

Transcribed 'Actions' Flipcharts – Ideas from Participants

Housing (Esther, Karen, Elaine)

Q1: – *Given what you have read in the report, and our discussion about the definition, what steps do you believe could be taken to help Armstrong address the housing issues?*

- No outdoor balconies @ Heaton Place
- Need for outdoor living
- Affordable housing
- Supported housing
- There needs to be a continuum of housing from independent to supported living
- Need to have a definition of what is a 'continuum'
- Looking for 'aging in place' housing
- How to secure assets of non-profit societies considering aging Board members (volunteers)
- Lifestyle choices (i.e. pets and smoking options) – diversity of needs

Need to create conditions:

- 1) Bylaws, regulations, zoning, taxes to support necessary types of housing, including granny suites
- 2) Information, supports, incentives for developers to create this type of housing
- 3) Simplifying the processes (reduce the 'hoops')
- 4) IHA has Armstrong-specific data

Q2: Small Projects (to fill the gap)

- Information collections, what is currently available
- Review zoning, bylaws, process
- Sharing information among service providers and government entities to quantify the need and the opportunity
- Inventory across the housing continuum
- BC housing? Safer Grants (program)
- Donations of land for low-cost homes with Habitat for Humanity
- Create 'outdoor living' as part of developers' projects (ie apartments with patios, space for gardening, workshop for hobbies)
- Indoor exercise room within the housing facility
- Location of housing such that access to amenities is achieved through active living (walking)
- Developers must focus on really affordable housing

Communication & Information - (Peter, Jack Sue)

- Co-ordination of information
- Bulletin Board Central

- Website
- Access for free ads -- sponsored by ?
- Grow 'Country news'
- Maps including public washrooms and rest areas
- Need to get people to take responsibility for being informed
- Bulletin boards @ popular, used locations
- Offer IT training for seniors
- More locations for internet/computer
- Pair seniors with high school students to learn IT
- What could seniors teach younger folks?

Civic Participation and Employment

Q1 – Given what you have read in the report, and our discussion about the definition, what is missing (or what changes would you suggest) in order to achieve the Vision (definition)?

- Opportunities for seniors (single?) to socialize
- Opportunity for Seniors to learn to cook small, healthy meals
- Morning call program
- Volunteering and part-time / casual work 'opportunities' (bulletin) board
- There is no subsidized program (\$\$) for Seniors to participate in some organizations/workshops – need to do this in a dignified way (need to provide support funds for those in need – bursaries?)

Q2—Is there a small project that we could undertake to address the gaps in this area, and what is it?

- 'Community kitchen' for seniors – get together to learn how to cook healthy meals, learn/enjoy new foods; bulk buying opportunities; socialize; healthy meals; take home meals
- Volunteer and part-time/casual work board
- Organized cooking workshops (themes; social opportunities)
- Good Food boxes
- Seniors partner with parks and Recreation for active events

Outdoor Spaces (Judith, Patti F)

Q1 – With respect to outdoor spaces, after reading the report and considering the definition of an 'Age-Friendly Armstrong' what do you believe would be the #1 issue that should be addressed that would make Armstrong that much more attractive to all ages?

1. Maintain sidewalks -snow removal
 - no holes
 - wide enough for scooters
2. Benches – well spaced? / protected?
 - o On well traveled routes (elements) to amenities/service areas

3. Trails and Parks – Available/accessible- all year round? – Summer only
 - Available satisfactory for the times they are open?
 - Incorporate opportunity for exercise Trails and Parks
4. Crosswalks at Corners / one way streets – cross hatched perhaps; (i.e. Long distance to walk across)
5. Speed concerns on Rosedale for walkers and scooters

Q2 – Is there a small project that we could undertake to address the gaps in outdoor spaces, and what is it?

- Focus on new bench program / protection from elements – review major routes and suggest sites for placement and begin bench donation program
- Exercise option – marking distances on city streets or fair grounds / trails, so people can keep track of their mileage. Consider focusing on use of fairgrounds as an outdoor space!
- Sidewalk width for scooters need to be adjusted
- Need scooter parking

Community Support and Health Services

Q1

- Affordable supports for shopping, cleaning, yard work, meals etc. to help people stay in their
- Homes
- *What is included for Spallumcheen?*
- No (after hours) emergency services – no walk-in clinics
- Waitlist for current physicians
- Accessibility issues with Haugen Clinic (2nd floor)
- Ideas for “Staying Healthy” concept (initiative)
 - Partnerships with IHA, Parks and Recreation, non-profit groups
 - Free recreation centre passes for seniors
 - Volunteers for in-home exercises
- What can a community the size of Armstrong afford to provide?
- What opportunities are there to partner with other communities (i.e. Enderby)
- Transportation provided for GDP (physio, OT, etc) but not for the social/respite program (Grandville Getaway), which is also key

Q2 - Projects

- Inventory / Publicize available services for affordable supports for shopping, cleaning, yard work, meals etc. to help people staying in their homes
- Work with IHA re: above issues; collaborate
- Communicate information about semi-urgent “same day” appointments are available at Haugen
- Possibility for a nurse practitioner here in Armstrong?
- Project to identify “what is” (reality) vs what is known / vs what is myth

- Provide a chronic disease clinic on a regular basis

Social Inclusion & Participation – Patti N., Terry, Dawn

Q1: Given what you have read in the report, and our discussion about the definition, what is missing (or what changes would you suggest) in order to achieve the Vision (definition)?

- Communication is key. Not everyone knows who meets where, or what group(s) exist. There are already informal groups. For example, not everyone knows what happens at the Seniors Centre.
- 'Welcome Wagon' concept needed.

Q2: Is there a small project that we could undertake to address the gaps in Social Inclusion and Participation, and what is it?

- Seniors' column in Advertiser or Your Country News
- Encourage current Morningstar columnist to include info
- Encourage Chamber newsletter sign-up (activities are included in the newsletter)
- Need to include information for all age groups
- 'buddy system' for seniors
- Promote interest groups
- Church bulletins
- Newcomers' group needed
- Make written information more 'into the home' as opposed to 'pick up brochures'
- Invite newcomers to attend functions/activities

Transportation - Barbara, Nancy, Gail

Q1: What is missing?

- Small bus through Armstrong
 - a. Daily and Including Home Pickup (by appointment)
- Lobby agencies and service Clubs to provide Bus and Expenses
- Investigate Grants for Bus and / or Operating Expenses
- Share bus with Enderby
- Lobby IHA for transportation out of town
- Lobby – what options are available that we are not taking advantage of? Handi Dart? What else?
- Need to recognize the increase in scooter traffic and respect those users.

Q2 - Small Projects

- Create an Access Centre at City Hall

- Partner with Enderby groups
- Lobby IHA
- Communicate existing bus stops and the schedule
- Explore options / partnerships with other organizations who have buses (ie Boys/Girls Club)
- 'On call' taxi service – explore info ('taxi saver' coupon book)
- Subsidized with BC Transit
- Explore what are other communities are doing for volunteer transportation help
- Need a coordinator to help Seniors confirm/make an appointment for transit
- Volunteer driver list
- Lobby ICBC – Keep seniors off the road who should not be driving
- Lobby ICBC - to bring Drive-able software to Armstrong

Advocacy (Jack, Sue, Peter)

Q1: Given what you have read in the report, and our discussion about the definition, what is missing (or what changes would you suggest) in order to achieve the Vision (definition)?

- Instead of Ombudsman, appoint a small group (3 members?)
 - a. Appointed for 3 year terms staggered so that each year a member is changed/appointed
- Create brochure containing key 'help' contacts in the community
 - a. Provided at various spots in town eg: Chamber of Commerce, Banks / Credit Union, Doctor's offices
- Need a Seniors coordinator
- For people who are alone: how would we help that person?

Buildings - Cindy and Francis

Opportunities for a Quality of Life

- 1. Recommendation to Developers**, Business owners and City of Armstrong to ensure all Buildings are wheelchair accessible (Entrances and Washrooms)
- 2.** Public washroom "Central" (equipped for all ages ie: infant change table, wheelchair assessable)
- 3.** Public Washrooms with the Fair Grounds should be accessible year round - if not already
- 4.** Developers to build lifestyle - appropriate building

Acceptance of the Report

The City of Armstrong affirms that this report, created by Pinnacle Organizational Performance Solutions, reflects an accurate and timely representation of the co-created community consultation process. Further, the results presented within the report reflect the contributions of the participants in the study.

Accepted by:

Patti Ferguson
City Administrator
On behalf of The City of Armstrong

Date: _____

A Message from the Report Authors

“It has been our pleasure to facilitate and guide this project with the City of Armstrong. We believe that the City’s initiative to undertake this project and their approach and cooperation with our team during this project is in itself a reflection of their leadership, commitment and respect they have for the seniors in their community.

We appreciate the many Seniors, Caregivers, Service Providers, the Clergy, and the Business Community (including the Chamber of Commerce) who enthusiastically gave their time and energy to share their opinions and experiences with us.

*We also would like to thank the numerous volunteers who helped organize the numerous focus groups for this project. Of specific note, we would like to thank Nancy Visser whose dedication and caring to her community is truly **the** example of why Armstrong is and will always be a great place for families and seniors to live!*



Michelle Ambrose, Ph.D.



Shirley Leonard, M.A.



Real Rousseau, B.Sc., For. Eng.