



AGE FRIENDLY ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Prepared by: The Age Friendly Advisory Committee (2022 06 30)

The Town of
Humber Arm
South On the
road to becoming
an Age Friendly
Town.

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Executive Summary

A community that supports older adults also addresses inequities among other people; age-friendly towns are those that support all ages and abilities with universal and accessible design. Age-friendly environments are safe and inclusive and support older adults to remain independent. This report outlines the results of an age-friendly needs assessment conducted for the Town of Humber Arm South that took place between April and June 2022. The assessment was based on the age-friendly framework outlined in 2007 by the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO approach assesses eight domain areas: outdoor spaces and public buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, and community support and health services.¹

¹ World Health Organization (2007). Global age-friendly cities: a guide. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_English.pdf

An Age-Friendly Advisory Committee was formed specifically for this initiative and provided advice and recommendations to help guide the needs assessment process. The assessment began with a review of related literature and resources. This review provided information to conduct a community engagement process that included deploying a survey, both online and in print, with 54 respondents, facilitating four focus groups and conducting one-to-one interviews with seniors, caregivers and service providers.

According to participants in the community engagement process, there are already many age-friendly features in Humber Arm South. Community members and service providers also identified key barriers that could be reduced with future age-friendly initiatives.

All the data collected during the community engagement process were grouped by the Public Health Agency of Canada age-friendly indicators in each of the eight WHO domains². Each domain area includes recommendations listed as short (up to two years), medium (within four years), and long term (more than four years) designed to increase age-friendly features in Humber Arm South.

Key findings that emerged during the course of this assessment included:

- Greater emphasis on alternating the building environment to meet all ages and abilities
- Providing public transportation options and opportunities for an aging population
Increase access to affordable and accessible housing
- More seniors-focused recreational amenities and opportunities
- Create opportunities for inclusion and participation, while reducing isolation for some
- Improve communication of Town information for older adults
- Improve access to community and health services

² Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide: Using Indicators to Measure Progress (2015). Public Health Agency of Canada.

Introduction

Individual behaviors such as regular access to physical activity, making healthy food choices, and practicing preventative care all play an essential role in staying healthy while getting older. Even more significant are the social determinants that impact population health in aging. Social and physical environments, access to health care and being connected to one's community all influence the quality of life for older adults.

Towns play an important role in supporting the aging process for their residents. The World Health Organization recognizes the critical role of urban and rural planning in the lives of older adults. Other important determinants in healthy aging include having secure social connections, participating in meaningful activities, having a safe and supportive environment, having access to reliable health services, and being able to access high-quality information. Communities that support these aspects of healthy aging are considered to be age-friendly.

In 2022, the Town of Humber Arm South, started the process of age-friendly planning. This process follows the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) model of a five step approach³. The project includes forming an age-friendly advisory committee, securing a local resolution, conducting a needs assessment, developing an action plan, publicly posting the plan, and carrying out an evaluation of recommendations. This document reflects stages three and four in the cycle – the results of a needs assessment and an action plan that will assist the Town of Humber Arm South become an age friendly community.

Community Profile

Population

The population of Humber Arm South as of 2021 was 1537 residents. This represents a decrease of 9 percent in the past 10 years. At this time 24 percent of the population is over 65 years of age, 36 percent are between the ages of 45 and 64 and 40 percent are under 44. There are 120 seniors over the age of 75 years and out of that number, 20 are over 85 years of age. Over 50 percent of the Town's population identify as indigenous⁴.

³ Age-Friendly Communities Evaluation Guide: Using indicators to Measure Progress (2015). Public Health Agency of Canada.

⁴ Statistics Canada: www.12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021

Housing

There are a total of 748 private dwellings in Humber Arm South⁵ and the majority of residents reside in their own home. There are 8 public housing units, owned and operated by the Benoit's Cove Housing Corporation. One of these units is wheelchair accessible. Ensuring enough affordable and accessible housing for an aging population is a significant issue. Maintenance and refit of seniors' homes to make them accessible will be a financial burden for the majority of seniors.

Income

In 2019, gross income for every man, woman and child (gross personal income per capita) in Humber Arm South was \$34,000. After tax personal income per capita, adjusted for inflation, was \$21,100⁶.

The average income for a couple family in Humber Arm South was \$93,800 in 2019. The average couple family income for the Province was \$113,300 and the national value was \$122,900.

Health

In 2016, 58.9 percent of individuals age 12 and over in Economic Zone 8 noted their health status as excellent or very good⁷. Due to the retirement of two prominent family physicians in 2021, many seniors in this town are without a family doctor.

Needs Assessment Methodology

The first stage in plan development was conducting a comprehensive needs assessment. A needs assessment provides detailed baseline data for understanding the age-friendliness of a town's physical environment, community infrastructure, a focus on inclusion and participation and community services. A needs assessment typically includes community engagement to enlist community members to help guide the process of decision-making. An age-friendly needs assessment of the Town of Humber Arm South was conducted between April and June 2022.

The needs assessment was designed for communities to plan, implement, and evaluate age-friendly initiatives systematically.

⁵ Statistics Canada, Census of Population, Data products, 2021 Census

⁶ Statistics Canada, Census of Population, Data products, 2021 Census

⁷ Statistics Canada, Census of population, Data products, 2016 Census

The needs assessment was conducted using a mixed-methods approach which included desk research, a survey (both online and in print), focus groups and one-to-one interviews with seniors, caregivers and service providers. The community engagement process provided qualitative data as well as comments and suggestions from participants that informed the recommendations listed in each domain.

Desk Research

The process began with:

- Reviewing the most relevant government documents and reports. Reviewing WHO guidelines for age-friendly rural and remote communities, reviewing Statistics Canada reports, reviewing Town policies and plans, reviewing Age-Friendly NL documents, including data from Community Accounts NL.
- Reviewing the new Health Accord NL
- Evaluating characteristics, demographic profiles, social and emerging trends for the Town of Humber Arm South
- Reviewing literature relating to other age friendly towns

Survey

The survey provided quantitative and qualitative information as part of the needs assessment. There is currently no standardized survey tool to assess age-friendliness in communities. The instrument for this project was developed using a combination of demographic questions as well as questions related to their needs regarding health, housing, transportation, social participation, employment and respect and social inclusion. There were also questions to allow respondents to give feedback on their satisfaction with services currently offered, communication, buildings and outdoor spaces.

Although many seniors' services are designed for those aged 65 and older, the survey sample also included any adult who wished to participate.

Focus Groups and Interviews

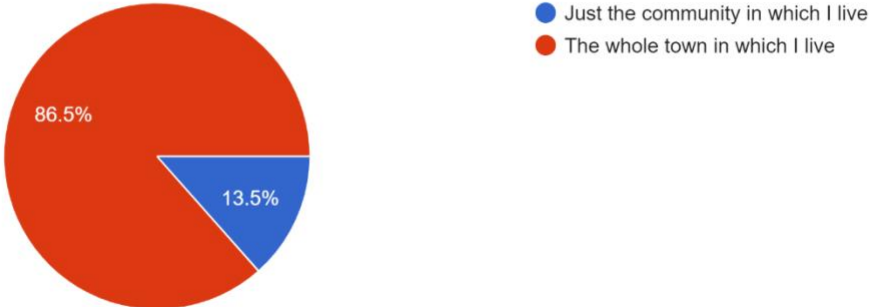
Stakeholders were also consulted by focus groups and interviews. Participants were recruited through personal contact. They were asked open-ended questions about their experiences with issues specific to older adults in Humber Arm South. They were also asked to share their thoughts about the age-friendly domains that they felt could be improved for seniors in the Town. Multiple opportunities for providing input were offered, including:

- Four focus groups with 38 individuals from a range of stakeholder groups including older adults, caregivers and service providers.
- Interviews with 7 key informants including seniors, service providers and key Town personnel.

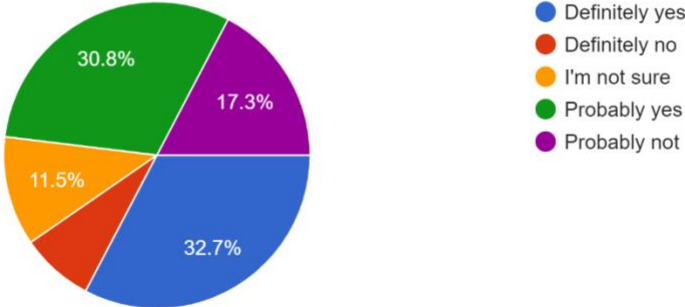
Through the survey, focus groups and interviews over 96 individuals participated in the age-friendly public consultation process.

The following graphs show the demographic profile of the survey respondents:

When you think of your community, what does that describe? Choose your best answer.
52 responses

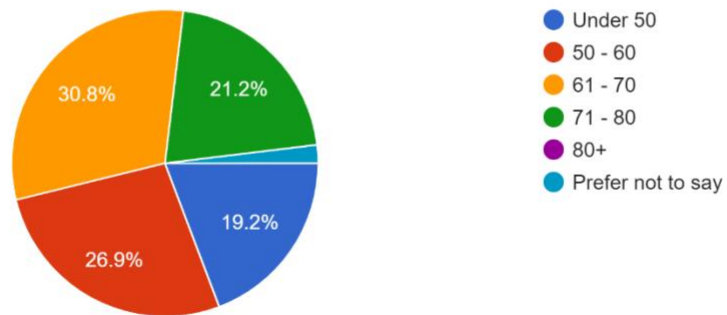


Do you think your community is a good place to live as you age? Choose your best answer.
52 responses



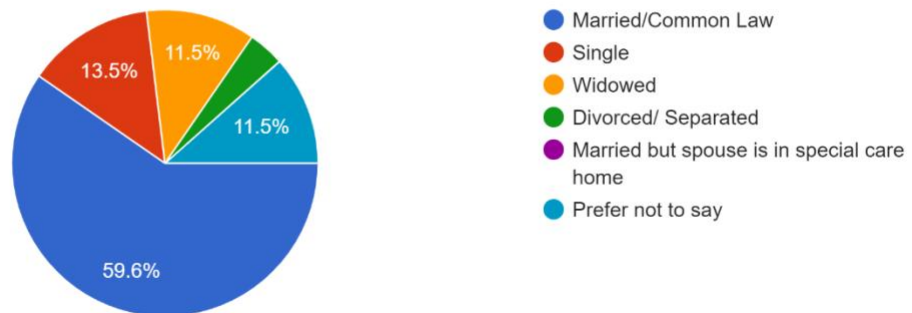
4. What is your age?

52 responses



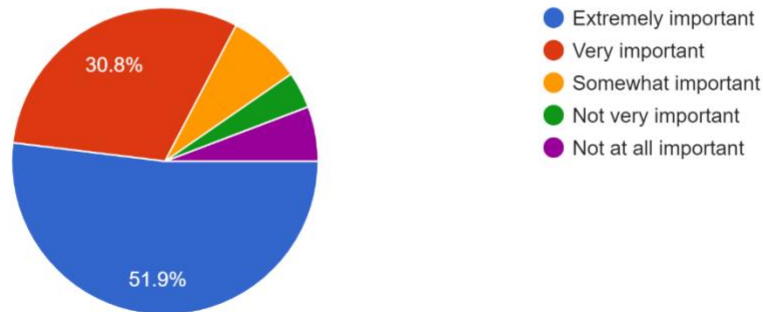
What is your marital status?

52 responses



How important is it for you to remain in your community as you age?

52 responses



Age friendly domains: detailed findings and recommendations

This section of the report is arranged by the eight domains and includes the Town's current age-friendly features, areas for improvement identified during the community engagement process, and recommendations made by community members and service providers for changes going forward.

Recommendations in each domain are listed as strategies with targets for completion by the Town and suggested timelines for completion. The suggested timelines in which to achieve the actions are defined as being short-term (up to two years), medium-term (within four years), or long-term (more than four years).

1. Outdoor spaces and public buildings

Older adults can be supported to maintain their independence, increase their mobility, ensure their safety, and improve their quality of life by focusing on important elements of building design and features of the built environment. Involving older community members in planning and design of outdoor spaces and public buildings can help identify challenges and barriers experienced by older users of facilities and services in Humber Arm South.

When towns are designed for increased walkability, older adults will use their feet as a means of transportation more often. Encouraging older adults to walk serves as an essential public

health function as those who walk more often have lower risk of diabetes, stroke and heart disease, lower blood pressure, better cognitive health, and reduced mortality⁸.

A percent score under 50% suggests need for further opportunities for improvements in age-friendliness.

Table1.0: Survey responses related to outdoor spaces

Survey Responses related to outdoor spaces	Responded “Agree/ Totally agree”
My community buildings are sufficiently accessible for a wheelchair	59%
The shops in my community are accessible for a wheelchair	.05%
The roadsides are safe for walking	.05%
There is sufficient lighting for me to walk after dark	23%
There are sufficient outdoor rest areas	.03%
There are sufficient public washrooms	.01%
There are age friendly walking trails	27%

Participants in the community engagement process identified the following items as being the main age friendly features of the outdoor spaces and public buildings in Humber Arm South.

- The Community Hall is accessible at the lower level.
- Churches, school, post office, and most businesses are accessible.
- Some parts of the walking trails are age-friendly.
- The Bayfest grounds are age-friendly with accessible washrooms.
- Snow clearing is satisfactory.
- The Community Garden is a great addition to the community.
- There is a park/playground in all communities.

⁸ Amireault, S., Baier, J.M., & Spencer, J.R.(2019). Physical Activity Preferences Among Older Adults: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Aging & Physical Activity*, 27(1), 128-139.

Areas for improvement:

The following section outlines the most common concerns expressed during the community consultations and surveys.

Walkability and Accessibility

Several indicators were used to assess walkability from the perspective of older residents in the town, including rest areas, accessible washrooms, safe crosswalks, design of the walking trails, lighting and the condition of the roadsides.

Significant items that arose were:

- The ramp on the Community Hall is too long and steep with no automated doors upstairs or down.
- Most parks are more of a playground for children and not a place for seniors to walk, relax and socialize.
- There is a lack of seating/rest areas/washrooms in the parks and on hiking trails.
- There are no flashing crosswalks and not enough crosswalks.
- Narrow road shoulders and the condition of road shoulders makes it dangerous to walk.
- There are a number of dangerous intersections.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for strategies to increase age-friendliness in the domain of Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings.

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline
Elevator, wheelchair lift, or redesigned ramp for the Community Hall with automated door.	Short Term
Install rest areas and basic toilet facilities on hiking trails.	Short Term
Install rest areas/picnic areas with proper benches on key pedestrian routes.	Short Term
Explore the possibility of putting a picnic area and/or short walking trail on or near the beach in Halfway Point.	Short Term
Design age-friendly walking trails in all communities where possible and consider at least one with a boardwalk for wheelchair/wheeled walkers. The boardwalk - walking trail in Blomidon (Boy Scout Area) should be repaired and the boardwalk portion extended.	Medium Term

The park in Frenchmans Cove needs a breakwater installed to maintain the property and a boardwalk along the park/beach would be a great tourist attraction.	Long term
Work with High Schools to avail of high school senior volunteer hours to assist seniors with snow clearing and grass mowing.	Short Term
Look at having a job creation project to assist seniors with minor repairs, snow clearing and/or mowing.	Short Term
John’s Beach park should be developed into a seniors park and exercise area with age appropriate outdoor exercise equipment installed.	Medium Term
The Community Garden needs to be more age-friendly with even walkways and steps installed to the lower area. A more age friendly plant watering system and toilet facilities should be installed.	Short Term
Security systems need to be set up in public areas to protect the infrastructure.	Short Term
Encourage business that are not wheelchair/wheeled walker accessible to upgrade their facilities.	Short Term

2. Transportation

Having access to regular and reliable transportation is one of the most critical elements for maintaining independence in aging, as it helps older adults to get to the services and programs they require. It also connects them to social, cultural and recreational activities that which helps decrease the risk of social isolation.

The car accounts for approximately 90 percent of all personal trips for those over the age of 65. Many older drivers eventually have to give up their license; men outlive their ability to drive by almost six years and women by a decade⁹. When older adults can’t drive themselves or access alternative transportation, many find themselves losing independence and being at risk for isolation.

Currently, there is no public transportation system in the Town of Humber Arm South. Seniors usually drive themselves or depend on family or friends to take them to necessary appointments.

⁹ Freund, K., & Vine, J (2010). Aging, Mobility, and the Model T: Approaches to Smart Community Transportation. *Generations*, 34(3), 76-81.

Current age-friendly features

- Snow clearing is considered to be satisfactory
- There are some crosswalks in town
- There are mirrors installed for traffic on blind intersections
- Some convenience stores in town offer delivery services
- Most homes have visible house numbers

Table 2.0: Survey results for questions related to transportation in the community survey.

Response to transportation survey options	Agree/Totally Agree
I can easily get on a bus in my community	0%
I can easily get a family member or friend to drive me around	50%
I would use a bus service if available	65%
I use my own vehicle as my main means of transportation	88%
I worry that as I age, the loss of my driver’s license may mean a loss of my independence	77%
I feel safe walking in my community	21%

The following areas were identified as barriers to transportation for older residents of Humber Arm South.

- There is no public transportation system in this town.
- House numbers need to be clearly visible
- Roadsides have washouts/potholes that make them unsafe for driving/walking.
- Crosswalks – need lighted crosswalks and more crosswalks in some areas
- Street lighting isn’t very bright.
- Road signs are difficult to read due to size.

Recommendations

The following table provides recommendations for transportation strategies.

Recommendations	Suggested Timeline
Explore funding to purchase a small van to take seniors and other vulnerable individuals to medical appointments, shopping, local activities, etc.	Short term
Speed bumps should be installed on side roads where speeding is an issue	Short term
Install public charging stations for electric vehicles	Long Term
Work with Department of Transportation to have crosswalks installed by Allen’s Fisheries, RC Church, Frenchmans Cove wharf and by Katie’s Konvenience in Halfway Point. The crosswalks should be equipped with a self-activated flashing light, especially in front of the school.	Short term

Explore the cost to install sidewalks or paved walking paths alongside the roads, or explore the possibility of having a curb and gutter system installed on the roads to make the roadsides safer.	Short to Medium term
The road to the beach in John's Beach needs to be maintained as this is a nice place for seniors to gather, socialize and walk.	Short term

3. Housing

With increasing age comes changes in housing needs. Older adults hoping to age in place need access to safe, affordable and accessible housing. Senior-friendly housing options in this Town are minimal at best.

Current age-friendly features:

Benoit's Cove Native Housing have 8 public housing units for indigenous residents. One of these units is accessible.

Qalipu First Nations offers an emergency home repair program for members.

NLHC offers an emergency home repair program for seniors.

Table 3.0: Information below summaries the survey responses in the housing domain.

Survey responses related to housing	Agree/Totally Agree
My house is physically accessible to me	86%
I want to be able to live in my own home as I age	96%
Poor health may stop me from living in my own home	63%
My home would need modifications for me to continue to live at home	44%
I have the financial resources to pay for any modifications I may need	23%
The cost of living may stop me from living in my own home as I age	60%
Lack of available services, such as home support care, may stop me from living in my own home	60%
If unable to live in my own home, staying in my community would be important	67%

Areas for Improvement

Participants in the community engagement process expressed the following concerns about housing in Humber Arm South:

- Land needs to be developed to encourage investment in more affordable housing and rental units for seniors in all areas of town.
- There is a housing crisis all across the country and in this town as well. There are very few affordable, accessible rental units available for seniors who may wish to downsize.
- Home insurance is expensive and seniors are letting their insurance lapse.
- Some residents expressed worries about having to leave the community or leave a spouse when assisted living or residential care is needed.
- Seniors expressed frustration in trying to find a labourer/trades person to do small jobs.

Recommendations

The following table provides recommendations for Age-Friendly housing strategies. Strategies in these areas are intended to increase housing availability and increase the proportion of people aged 65+ who want to remain in their current residence.

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline
Investigate the possibility of creating new subsidized and senior specific housing units (seniors' village) in Humber Arm South. Possible partners would be BC Native Housing Corp. and the HAS 50+ Club.	Long term
Research and share information with seniors on the Province's energy efficiency rebates which offer financial incentives, information, and support to help residents save energy by switching to high-efficiency heating equipment and making building improvements. Add a link to the Provincial site on Town's website	Short term
Research and share information with seniors on emergency home repairs/retrofit programs offered by Qalipu First Nations and NLHC. Link to Town's website.	Short term
Look at the possibility of applying for make work projects available through the town to do minor housing repairs/maintenance to homes of vulnerable seniors.	Short term

4. Social Participation

Regular social participation can have an impact on quality of life, lower risk of illness, stave off cognitive decline, lessen the likelihood of hospitalization, and reduce mortality. Being able to access affordable and inclusive recreational opportunities helps to improve physical and mental health, and acts as a protective measure against social isolation¹⁰.

Current age-friendly features

Community engagement participants identified many age-friendly social and recreational opportunities in Humber Arm South which include:

- There is a very active 50+ Club operating in this town.
- We have a beautiful town center, some nice green spaces and a fully accessible gymnasium.
- Venues are accessible for the most part.
- Bingos are held regularly and a majority of participants are seniors but it is also an intergenerational activity.
- Card games are held at some venues in the Community, however, attendance has not rebounded since COVID.
- The 50+ Club offers socials for its members, with daily recreational activities and weekly drop in nights open to all seniors.

Table 4.0: The information below summarizes some of the key survey responses in the social participation domain. A score under 50% was flagged as a further opportunity for improvements in age-friendliness.

Survey responses related to social participation	Agree/Totally Agree
There are enough opportunities to meet people in my community	44%
Activities and events are organized in places that are accessible	83%
The information about activities and events is enough for me and suitable for me.	56%
I find the range of events and activities sufficiently varied and interesting.	35%
I would participate in activities and events if transportation options were available.	44%

¹⁰ Levasseur, M., Dubois, M.F., Genereau, M., Menec, V., Raina, P., Roy, M., ...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.

Areas for improvement

- There is no dedicated space for older adult programs or to gather and socialize. If the space is required for a paying guest, seniors have to give up their space.
- A lot of seniors socials are limited to members of the 50+ Club
- There are no inclusive programs to welcome individuals with dementia into regular programs.
- Intergenerational activities are not offered regularly.
- Programs need to be held in both daytime and evening hours to accommodate differing schedules.
- Transportation to activities are not offered.
- Respondents requested programs for all older adults including frail individuals and the very fit.

Recommendations

The following table provides recommendations for social participation strategies.

Recommendation	Suggested Timeline
Partner with community groups to offer transportation to and from events for those in need	Short term
Partner with community groups to offer social teas and information sessions in the afternoons for elder seniors.	Short term
Partner with community groups to purchase comfortable chairs and set up a conversation/reading corner in the new extension to offer an area for seniors to relax and chat.	Short term
Partner with community groups to set up a buddy system where seniors will check up on each other, especially for isolated seniors.	Short term
Due to isolated seniors being hard to engage, have the 50+ Club members and volunteers go to their homes and deliver cookies, soup, or small Christmas arrangements, etc.	Short term
For limited mobility seniors, offer them a small planting box for their own back yard.	Medium term
Partner with community groups to consider starting up a new theatre group utilizing the many different volunteer groups in the Town as skits and plays are usually well attended by seniors.	Short term

5. Respect and social inclusion

The World Health Organization defines the age-friendly domain of respect and social inclusion as one that “...deals with the attitudes, behavior and messages of other people and the community as a whole towards older people.”¹¹ As a result of population aging, social isolation is a significant and growing issue in Canada.

Current age friendly features

Community engagement participants consistently reported that they felt respected and included in their community. The main themes that emerged were:

- The Town of Humber Arm South is generally a friendly and inclusive community.
- There is a sense of overall respect and inclusion of seniors by the community.
- There is a welcoming and inclusive environment by both the 50+ Club and Recreation Committee.
- The Family Resource Centre offers some intergenerational activities through planting at the Community Garden.

Table 5.0: The table below summarizes the responses related to social inclusion from the community survey.

Social Inclusion survey responses	Agree/Totally Agree
I sometimes get annoying or negative remarks because of my age	15%
I sometimes face discrimination because of my age	17%
I feel respected and valued in my community	58%

Areas for improvement:

Respondents also identified these areas for improvement:

Social isolation: This can be a significant problem for those who would not usually join activities or have difficulty joining because of health, mobility, or transportation issues.

Inclusion: Some respondents commented that inclusion is an issue, especially for those with a disability.

¹¹ World Health Organization. (2007). Global Age-friendly cities: a guide. Retrieved from http://www.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

Of particular note, efforts to reduce isolation and improve inclusion should also have a focus on groups that are not traditionally included in planning efforts, such as low-income older adults and older adults with various cognitive and physical abilities.

Older adults with dementia: Dementia-friendly planning works to reduce the social stigmas surrounding dementia as well as to empower those who are living with dementia. In a dementia-positive, age-friendly community, those with dementia can remain involved as active members of their community. Social inclusion is better achieved with efforts toward decreasing stigmatization and increasing awareness of those with dementia.

Recommendations

The following table provides recommendations for ways to improve respect and social inclusion in the Town of Humber Arm South.

Recommendations	Suggested Timeline
The town should have a contact list of seniors who live alone	Short term
Utilize a summer student to contact seniors and do a survey on what activities they would like to see offered in the community.	Medium term
Have the Alzheimer’s Society offer dementia-inclusive training for community groups.	Short term
Partner with community groups to offer more intergenerational events	Short term
If all efforts to get isolated seniors out of their comfort zone fails, we need to respect that decision but still keep in regular contact with them.	Short term

6. Civic participation and employment

The domain of Civic Participation and Employment is designed to support older adults to be active, engaged members of their communities. By volunteering, being employed, or being involved in local government affairs, older adults can continue to participate as productive members of their communities.

Current age-friendly features

Community engagement uncovered the following age-friendly features related to civic participation and employment:

- There is an active 50+ Committee
- The town has a good base of committed volunteers
- Businesses in town are open to hiring seniors
- Self-employment is promoted and supported

Table 6.0: This table summarizes the responses related to civic participation and employment reported from the community survey

Survey results for civic participation and employment	Agree/Totally Agree
I have enough opportunities to interact with younger generations	29%
I am willing to volunteer in my community	75%
There are opportunities for employment suitable to the needs of older adults	15%

Community engagement participants also reported the following concerns:

- There are no municipal committees where seniors can be involved in decision making
- Seniors are not aware of volunteer opportunities

Recommendations:

The following table provides recommendations for civic engagement strategies.

Recommendations	Suggested Timeline
Post volunteer opportunities for seniors on the Town’s website and Facebook page	Short term
Use a Committee structure to assist the town council, ie: Budget and Finance Committee, Projects and Grants Committee, Town By-Laws Committee, Social Issues and Community Safety Committee. These committees would be an excellent way to include seniors in decision making for the Town.	Short term
Celebrate all volunteers on a regular basis and begin a Volunteer of the Year Award.	Short term
Ensure hiring practices are not age discriminatory	Short term

7. Communication and information

As part of helping older adults to age-in-place successfully, towns need to ensure equal access to news and information about events and activities. Although technology can serve as an important role in the dissemination of information, towns should also be aware of accommodating differing needs by using a variety of communication tactics.

Current age-friendly features

- The newsletter is a great way to keep residents updated
- The town’s new website is regularly being updated and enhanced
- The town’s Facebook page is a good means of communication
- Updates with alerts and text messages are great

Areas for improvement:

- Lack of information was an overarching theme across all domains in the community engagement process, even though 50% of survey respondents indicated that access to public information was good.
- Anyone who requests no flyers in their mailbox, does not receive the newsletter.
- Respondents commented that finding information about general and older-adult specific events is difficult.
- Reliance on online information can prove difficult for seniors who are not computer savvy, and it excludes those who don’t use or own computers.

Table 7.0: The following table shows the survey results for the Communication and Information domain.

Survey results for Communication and Information	Agree/Totally Agree
Our community has a basic, effective communication system that reaches residents of all ages	50%
Information is available on community events, activities and opportunities for seniors.	42%
People at risk of social isolation receive needed information	13%
I am interested in attending information sessions on topics such as healthy activities, healthy eating, fraud/scam prevention, etc.	54%
The Town has an effective communication system that reaches older adults	31%
There is public access to computers and internet	.06%

Recommendations:

The following table provides recommendations to improve communication and information sharing strategies.

Recommendations	Suggested Timeline
Updates from all community groups should be regularly included in the Town newsletter as well as their Facebook site and website	Short term
At least quarterly, a newsletter specifically from the 50+ Club should be shared to inform seniors of upcoming activities	Short term
Computer classes should be offered for seniors, with volunteers offering basic computer training and space/equipment made available by the Town.	Medium term
Explore the feasibility of having digital information boards.	Long term
Explore the possibility of developing both a paper-copy and online version of an older adult's directory that could offer a wide range of information for health, recreation, housing, social and other services.	Short term
Increase awareness of 211, a free, multilingual telephone and texting service for anyone seeking information about community, social or government services.	Short term

8. Community support and health services

In age-friendly towns, older adults have access to a range of health services, including home care, social services, residential care, seniors housing, and fully accessible health facilities. Health information is clear and accessible, and staff are respectful and helpful to older people. Finally, a range of affordable health and community support services are offered for both supporting and enhancing good health.

Current age-friendly features

It is important to note that many health programs and facilities used by Humber Arm South residents are located in other municipalities. Participants in the community engagement process identified the age-friendly community and health services in Humber Arm South. These included:

- There are services available from a Public Health Nurse and a Community Health Nurse situated in the Town.
- Town staff are respectful.
- The Town has an Emergency Plan in place.
- Seniors' exercise programs are offered on a regular basis.
- There are walking groups in the town.

Table 8.0: The table below summarizes the responses to community support and health services from the community survey.

Survey responses related to community support and health services	Agree/Totally Agree
When I am ill, I receive the care and help I need	63%
If necessary, I can easily reach health care services by telephone or in person	65%
Older adults are supported in staying physically active	27%
Travelling outside my community for health care services is not a problem	44%

Highlight on Emergency Preparedness

Community engagement revealed that a significant number of people indicated a number of residents didn't know the community had an Emergency Plan and didn't know where to go or who to contact to get information in case of an emergency or natural disaster.

Respondents reported they would like information about evacuation routes and areas of safe refuge during an emergency, especially for those with unstable medical conditions or mobility challenges.

A survey done in 2014 revealed that almost two-thirds of adults over the age of 50 had no emergency or disaster plan and were unaware of resources available during an emergency, Conversely, older adults can play an essential role in disaster response planning, including contributing experience and expertise, and assistance with mobilizing community resources¹².

Areas for improvement:

The following issues were identified for improvement in the community support and health services domain. It is important to note that health services are the responsibilities of the provincial Department of Health and the local health authority.

- Seniors need to know more about the services offered by the Public Health Nurse and the Community Health Nurse.
- Seniors and caregivers need more information about services and support.
- More non-medical home services (e.g. home repair) are needed for those who are isolated, ill or who have mobility limitations.
- Some respondents said improved access to healthy and nutritious foods is needed for those who have a limited income or have trouble accessing groceries.
- Vulnerable seniors must find transportation to access services in other communities.

¹² Shis, R.A., Acosta, J.D., Chen, E.K., Carbone, E.G., Xenakis, L, Adamson, D.M., & Chandra, A. (2018) Improving Disaster Resilience Among Older Adults: Insights from Public Health Departments and Aging-in-Place Efforts.

Recommendations:

The following table provides recommendations for Community Support and Health Service strategies. Strategies in this area are intended to increase the likelihood of “aging in place” and reduce overall healthcare costs.

Recommendations	Suggested Timeline
The Town should advocate with the Dept. of Health and the Regional Health Authority for a Primary Health Care Team to be located in this town to serve the entire south shore of the Bay of Islands. This could be either full time or on a part time basis and include the PHN, CHN, Nurse Practitioner, Mental Health and Addictions Counsellor and a visiting doctor.	Short term
The Town’s website should have links to the services provided by the Public Health Nurse and the Community Health Nurse	Short term
The Town’s Emergency Plan should be presented to the public and discussed in detail with them.	Short term
Develop a senior-specific emergency preparedness strategy for use in disaster response planning.	Short term
A bridge and suitable service roads are required between Frenchman’s Cove and Benoit’s Cove to serve as an evacuation route.	Long term
The service road between Benoit’s Cove and Mt. Moriah should be kept in usable condition for evacuation purposes.	Medium term
The town should work with partners to explore the possibility of having a Community Freezer.	Short term

Moving forward

This Age-friendly Assessment and Recommendations for Action Plan provides a framework for the Town of Humber Arm South to become an age-friendly community. Some of the crucial considerations going forward are:

- Publicly post the Age-friendly Assessment and Action Plan.
- Continue to have an Age-friendly Steering Committee to assist in developing a plan for prioritizing recommendations. Assign a timeframe for implementation efforts.
- Establish partnerships and the resources needed for implementation.
- Apply for grant-funding opportunities to provide resources for implementation.
- Make a formal plan for monitoring and evaluating the age-friendly implementation process.
- Use this report to seek formal recognition as an age-friendly Newfoundland Labrador community.
- Commit to using an age-friendly lens in the overall vision, mission, By-Laws and regulations of the Town of Humber Arm South.

- Extend the Emergency Planning processes to include people with disabilities and older people.
- Commit to involving the Age-friendly Steering Committee and the Humber Arm South 50+ Club in any applicable municipal plan updates.
- Meet regularly with community groups related to areas of the age friendly planning and implementation process.