The New Westminster Age-Friendly Strategy

2026

New Westminster

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Land Acknowledgment

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples.
We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

The Age-Friendly Strategy Update Working Group

The preparation of the New Westminster Age-Friendly Strategy was made possible through the commitment and dedication of the Age-Friendly Strategy Update Working Group. Several of the Working Group members were older adults who live in New Westminster and their lived experience helped inform the Strategy.

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Funding Support

The preparation of the Strategy was made possible through funding support from BC Healthy Communities' Age-friendly Communities Grant Program, which is aimed at helping older adults in BC lead active, socially engaged, and independent lives.

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Introduction

The New Westminster Age-Friendly Strategy reflects City Council's commitment to being a municipal leader in age-friendly planning. It offers a clear framework for the City to support the diverse needs of older adults.

> **It's my sense that the New Westminster has its collective head in the right place.** Trying to be proactive and kind to seniors shows a comprehension—if the whole community realizes that seniors are being treated with respect and care, it's inspiring to those who are middle aged.
>
> Working Group Member, Older Adult and Indigenous and European Liaison with BC Cultural Diversity Association

The term *"older adult"* is used instead of *"senior"* to be more inclusive and avoid negative stereotypes about aging and dependence. For this Strategy, the term older adult refers to people aged 55 and over, recognizing that everyone experiences aging differently.

Building on both past and current initiatives, the Strategy reinforces the vision of New Westminster as a community where older adults feel safe, supported, connected, and informed. It is anchored in core principles of equity, reconciliation, diversity, and co-production, and grounded in the conviction that all older adults deserve autonomy, dignity, visibility, and a meaningful voice in shaping the decisions that impact their lives.

Realizing this vision requires effective collaboration across all levels of government and sectors. At the municipal level, this means coordinating efforts across City departments, actively engaging community members with lived and living experience, and forming strong partnerships with community organizations. The Strategy reflects a commitment to working together to create inclusive and responsive programs and services that genuinely meet the needs and experiences of all older adults in New Westminster.

Background

The City of New Westminster has long been committed to supporting older adults. It was officially recognized as an Age-Friendly British Columbia Community in 2018.

> **I have lived and worked in New Westminster for over 30 years** and, at 66, am grateful for the heartfelt commitment to a strong, supportive community, which keeps people connected across generations.
>
> Working Group Member,
> Older Adult And Gerontologist

Leading up to that recognition, the City developed two key plans: a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan in 2016 and an Age-Friendly Community Strategy in 2017. The 2017 Strategy aimed to respond to both current and future needs of an aging population. It supported a vision of the city as an inclusive, welcoming, and accessible place where seniors can stay active, connected, and lead meaningful lives.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, implementation of the 2017 Strategy was delayed as staff responded to urgent community needs of vulnerable residents, including many older adults. Since the pandemic, older adults have continued to face increasing and interconnected challenges such as: social isolation; the effects of climate change and extreme weather; a rising cost of living, particularly for food and housing; and limited access to adequate supports that help people age safely and with dignity. This has contributed to a “poly-crisis,” where multiple challenges combine and reinforce one another

Aging in a Changing City

In 2024, City Council supported a successful application to the BC Healthy Communities Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program for funding to update the City's 2017 Age-Friendly Community Strategy. The grant provided a valuable opportunity to build on the original Strategy while making sure that the City's approach stays current, coordinated, responsive and equitable to the needs of older adults in New Westminster.

The 2026 Age-Friendly Strategy continues to support all older adults in aging well, while also applying a multi-solving and equity-focused approach that aims to address interconnected challenges faced by older adults in the community.

Key Concepts

From Poly-crisis to Multi-solving

A poly-crisis happens when several connected problems overlap and make each other worse. A multi-solving approach looks for solutions that tackle these problems at the same time, strengthening equity, health, resilience, and overall well-being.

For example, helping older adults build stronger social connections improves their physical and mental health, while also making the whole community stronger and more trusting.

Applying an Equity Lens

Equity means giving people and communities the right support and opportunities based on their specific needs, recognizing that some challenges come from systemic and structural barriers beyond a person's control. Using an equity lens helps us think about all members of our community.

When updating our Strategy through an Equity Lens, we asked: who benefited; who was left out; why; and, what could we do differently to include everyone?

Older Adults in New Westminster

Key Trends

The population of older adults in New Westminster is growing rapidly. Understanding this trend is important for planning an age-friendly community.

- The number of older adults in New Westminster is expected to grow significantly—from 13,978 in 2024 to 23,693 in 2046, **a 70% increase compared to a 54% increase for all other age groups.**
- Older adults will make up 17% of the city's population in 2046, **up from 15% in 2024.** The largest age groups among older adults will be those aged 65 to 69, followed by those aged 75 to 79.

This growth in older adults will bring a wealth of knowledge and lived experience that can enrich the broader community. It will also require a proactive approach to the way we plan civic facilities and infrastructure, and deliver programs and services for an aging population.

> "Everyone deserves to grow older in a community that feels like home, where prevention helps people stay healthy, **and joy is part of life at every age.**
>
> Working Group Member and Community Health Specialist

Many older adults in New Westminster will remain active, connected, and supported as they age. However, others may face barriers that make healthy aging more difficult, such as low income, poor health, limited mobility, language challenges, or lack of access to services. These factors impact how older adults meet their basic needs, stay socially connected, and live safely and with dignity.

Key Insights on Aging in the Community

The following table highlights key statistics showing the experience, challenges and aspirations of older adults in New Westminster. We used the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities Framework to help organize the trends and identify important focus areas to inform actions.

Housing

"Affordable, safe and well-designed housing is essential."

Insights	Community Impact
As of March 2024, 309 older adults in New Westminster were on the waitlist for affordable housing — a 49% increase since 2019.	A growing number of older adults are struggling to find affordable housing. There is a growing need for more affordable homes for older adults.
In 2021, most older adults lived in apartments (both high-rise and low-rise), with fewer in detached houses.	Many older adults live in apartment buildings, so it is important to make sure buildings are safe, accessible, and meet their needs.

Health

"Affordable and accessible health services are crucial in keeping me healthy and active."

Insights	Community Impact
Nearly one in five BC older adults had a serious chronic health condition in 2021/2022.	Many older adults have complex health needs and need regular care and support to stay healthy.
In 2023, most older adults (over 90%) in the region had a family doctor — more than younger adults.	Many older adults have good access to health care but it is important to keep it that way as demand increases.

Transportation

"Affordable and accessible transportation helps me reach services and stay active in the community."

Insights	Community Impact
New Westminster had one of the highest walkability scores in BC (score of 72).	Getting around on foot is generally easy, which supports older adults who want to stay active and independent. However, hills in some neighbourhoods can be challenging.
Two-thirds of trips made by older adults were by car, mostly as drivers.	Many older adults still rely on driving. Alternatives like public transit or ride services need to be age-friendly for when driving is no longer an option.

Built Environment

"The built environment affects my quality of life beyond my home; how safe and independent I feel."

Insights	Community Impact
There were 31 public washroom locations in the city in 2025.	Having enough public washrooms makes it easier for older adults to get out and stay active in the community.
The City plans to plant 6,000 street trees by 2030.	More trees mean more shade and comfort, which can make walking and spending time outside easier and more enjoyable for older adults.

Belonging & Connecting

"I want to form strong connections and feel a true sense of belonging."

Insights	Community Impact
In 2021, about one in three older adults in New Westminster lived alone — higher than the national average.	Many older adults are at-risk of loneliness. This shows the need for programs that help them stay socially connected.
In 2023, nearly half of older adults said they felt a strong sense of belonging in their community.	Many older adults feel connected to their community, which is a good foundation to build on with community events and supports.

Communication & Information

"Having easy access to the right information helps me stay connected and involved in the community."

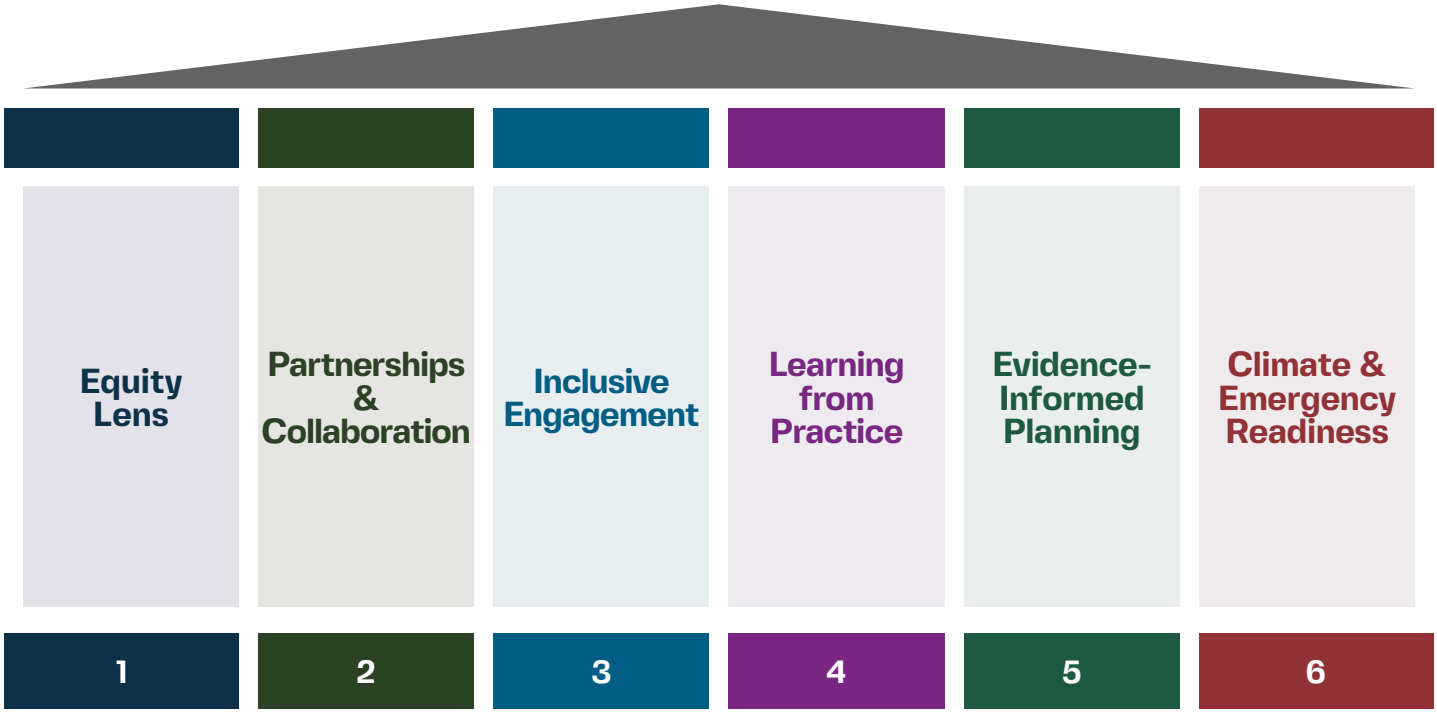
Insights	Community Impact
About 8% of older adults in New Westminster could not speak English in 2021 — much higher than other age groups.	Language can be a barrier for some older adults, so it is important to provide information and services in multiple languages.
Nearly 90% of older adults in BC used the internet in 2022, the highest rate in Canada.	Many older adults are online, which is good for sharing information and services but support is still needed for those who are not.

Participation & Involvement

"I want to stay active and involved because I know I still have a lot to offer through work or volunteering."

Insights	Community Impact
In 2021, about one in five older adults (65+) in New Westminster were still working or looking for work.	Many older adults want or need to keep working, so flexible and age-friendly job options are important.
In 2018, older generations volunteered more hours than any other age group.	Older adults give a lot of time to help others. Supporting and encouraging volunteering can benefit the whole community.

Key Pillars for Updating the Age-Friendly Strategy



1 Equity Lens

Applied an equity lens across strategic priorities, including community belonging, housing, transportation, and a people-centred economy.

2 Partnerships & Collaboration

Strengthened inter-departmental coordination and worked with key community partners to support shared goals.

3 Inclusive Engagement

Engaged older adults with diverse lived experiences, including those facing poverty, isolation, and barriers as newcomers.

4 Learning from Practice

Integrated lessons from recent City-involved initiatives such as the Seniors Housing Collaborative, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Seniors Housing Stability Solutions Lab, and the Seniors Integrated Supports Pilot.

5 Evidence-Informed Planning

Reviewed current research, government and health authority reports, and explored policies and programs that improve quality of life for older adults.

6 Climate & Emergency Readiness

Updated strategies to support vulnerable older adults in responding to climate-related and emergency events.

> Creating more opportunities for intergenerational activities could help bridge the gap between youth and seniors, **allowing both groups to share skills, stories, and wisdom.**
>
> Working Group Member, Older Adult and Community Planner

> The city has made encouraging progress in fostering inclusion through **accessible transportation infrastructure, well-maintained parks, and community programs that promote social engagement.**
>
> Working Group Member, Older Adult and Community Planner

The Age-Friendly Strategy Update Working Group

To deliver on these key pillars, the Strategy update process began with the City establishing an Age-Friendly Strategy Update Working Group. This fostered ongoing collaboration between staff, older adults with lived experience, community partners, and external organizations. Community members played a key role in supporting outreach and engagement with their networks, ensuring that the needs of older adults were included in planning, policies, programs, and practices. The Working Group identified opportunities and promising practices for coordinated action on shared challenges, worked to strengthen the impact of their efforts through cross-sector collaboration, and promoted resources that supported social connections and overall well-being. Honorariums were given to older adult members to recognize their lived experience and participation on the working group.

Interdepartmental Review and Collaboration

An essential part of the update was a thorough interdepartmental review of the 2017 Strategy. Staff engaged with key departments, such as Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Energy and Climate Action, Community Services, Fire and Rescue, Engineering, and the Public Library, which all directly influence the experience of older adults. The interdepartmental review focused on the status of action items, identifying completed, ongoing, and pending tasks, as well as the reasons for delays in implementation. The team then discussed which goals to retain, update, or remove, and identified new actions to add to the updated Strategy.

This process helped build shared ownership across departments, emphasizing their collective responsibility in creating an age-friendly city, with each department playing a critical role.

What We Learned

Key lessons helped frame the City's role in supporting healthy aging and creating a more equitable and age-friendly community.

> Friendly in the title is a nice adjective and staff should be found to be kind and pleasant, but another f-word associated with friends is fun. **We should focus attention on future leisure, recreation and learning events centered on having fun.**
>
> Working Group Member, Older Adult and Community Member

These insights informed the development of the City's vision and action goals, guiding how the city can better meet the needs of older adults now and into the future. As ideas about aging have evolved, so has the understanding that cities can support people in aging well through thoughtful planning, inclusive policies, and meaningful community partnerships.

Shifting Perspectives on Older Adults

Communities around the world, across Canada, in British Columbia, and in nearby municipalities have created successful programs and worked with diverse groups to make their communities more livable for older adults by shifting how they think about aging. In the past, aging was often seen as a challenge, or even a burden, on community systems. The focus is now on the strengths, value, and contributions that older adults bring to community life. This change in understanding promotes dignity, inclusion, and opportunities as people age.

The Importance of Location and Support

Understanding of aging well has also deepened. Where people live, how their neighbourhoods are designed, and the availability of social and practical supports all influence how people experience aging. Aging in place, or aging in the right place, means older adults can live safely, with access to the supports, connections and information they need to stay in their home and community for as long as possible, a concept that directly informs the strategic vision.

Equity in Community Building

Community planning is increasingly focused on equity and inclusion, including through the evolving practice of cross-sector, co-production (e.g., the Age-Friendly Strategy Update and Implementation Working Group). Age-friendly strategies must reflect the real, diverse and intersectional experiences of older adults, not idealized or stereotyped versions. Equity means making sure older adults have the right support and opportunities based on their specific needs as they age. This requires listening to a wide range of voices and ensuring that decision-making reflects the needs of all residents.

Provincial Efforts Towards an Inclusive Society

Across British Columbia, there is a growing commitment to building communities that support people of all ages. Provincial strategies focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, reducing frailty, and improving overall quality of life. Community partners have seen how even small changes can make a big difference. At the same time, lasting impact depends on strong partnerships and ongoing support from all levels of government to embed age-friendly principles into everyday decisions and long-term planning. Local governments, including the City of New Westminster, play a key role in putting these values into action.

Strategy Themes

Our Guiding Tree Analogy

The Overall Strategy		
Tree Canopy →	**Vision**	New Westminster is a community where older adults feel safe, supported, connected, and informed.
Growth + Evolution To Meet Changing Needs		
Leaves / Fruits →	**Actions**	The Strategy Update
Structuring Actions Across Key Areas		
Branches & Stems →	**Categories**	Safe Supported Connected Informed
Core Strength and Resilience		
Trunk →	**Foundations**	Autonomy Dignity Visibility
Foundational Principles for a Healthy System		
Roots →	**Principles**	Equity Reconciliation Diversity Co-production
External Forces that Help the System Thrive		
Inputs water/nutrients/ sunlight →	**Cross-Sectorial Collaboration and Advocacy**	Senior Governments Health Authorities Older Adults Serving Organizations

Strategy Themes Defined

New Westminster is a community where older adults feel safe, supported, connected, and informed.

Categories	An older adult in an age-friendly city is:

Safe when they have the information, relationships and resources or tools needed to address physical, emotional, functional and financial risks at home and in the community.

Supported when they can access flexible or structured programs and services for cognitive, emotional, physical and financial wellbeing.

Connected when they have personal and professional relationships that strengthen their ability to maintain their identity, independence, and purpose.

Informed when they have knowledge and understanding of age-related issues and access to resources and supports that may strengthen autonomy in later life

Foundations	In an age-friendly city, all older adults should have:

Autonomy or self-determination The capacity to make life decisions and choices and the ability to act on those choices, particularly when navigating changes related to aging and the systems in place to support older adults.

Dignity An inherent sense of worth and value as an individual with a right to autonomy, respect, safety, and freedom from judgment.

Visibility Being physically visible, for safety and social connections—and being politically visible, to participate in processes related to their needs and wants.

Principles

An age-friendly community is rooted in:

Equity Giving people and communities the right support and opportunities based on their specific needs, recognizing that some challenges come from systemic and structural barriers beyond a person's control.

Reconciliation Supporting all older adults in the community requires acknowledging the Indigenous experience of colonization and committing to learning, building relationships, fostering trust, and shaping policies in the spirit of reconciliation.

Diversity Recognizing, respecting, and valuing the unique backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and perspectives of all older adults. Diversity goes beyond simply acknowledging differences; in relation to equity, it involves actively designing policies and programs that remove barriers and create opportunities for all older adults in the community to thrive.

Co-production Providing opportunities for older adults, staff and community organizations to work together as equal partners to plan, create, and review policies and actions. It respects the lived and living experiences and ideas of older adults, making sure their voices help shape decisions that affect them. This builds trust, shares responsibility, and leads to better solutions that truly meet the needs of older adults.

Cross-Sectorial Collaboration & Advocacy

Partners in building an age-friendly city.

Different levels of government and diverse service providers play essential roles in cross-sectoral collaboration to deliver, fund, or partner on age-friendly programs for older adults. Key examples include:

Federal Service Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program, and many different Ministries.

Provincial BC Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors' Services and Long Term Care, the Office of the Seniors Advocate British Columbia, BC Healthy Communities, and many different Ministries.

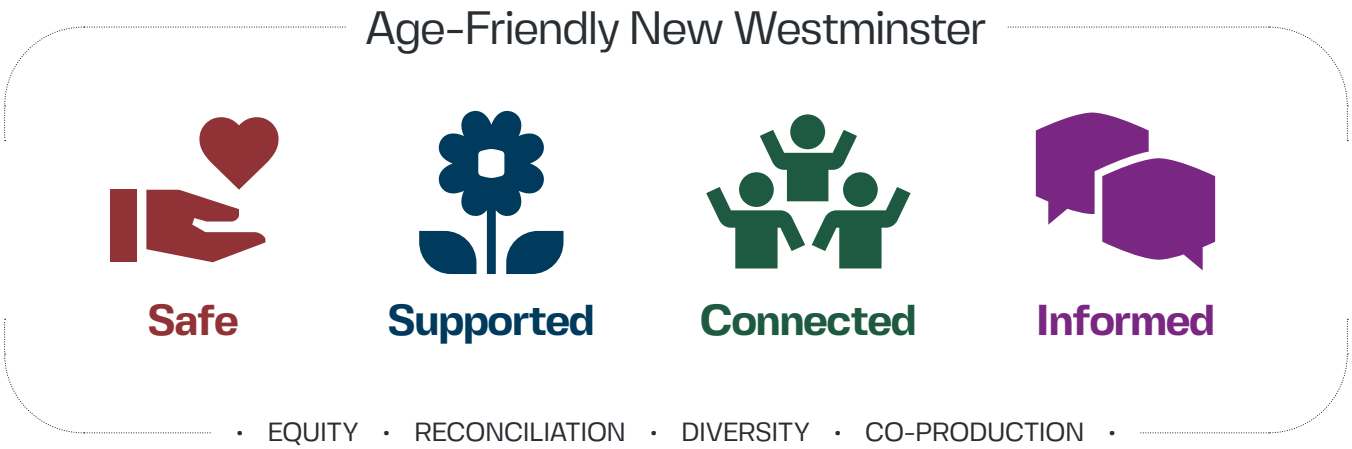
Regional Fraser Health Authority, senior-serving organizations, and organizations related to housing, safety or transportation.

Municipal City departments such as Community Services, Fire and Rescue, Library, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development, and Police.

> "From an Indigenous perspective, there is the objective realization that older populations are **invaluable storehouses for information and culture**, and that is not restricted to oral cultures.
>
> Working Group Member, Older Adult and Indigenous & European Liaison

Recommended Actions

This section sets out key actions to make New Westminster a more welcoming, inclusive city for older adults. Shaped by input from the Age-Friendly Strategy Update Working Group and the community, these actions have been reviewed with City staff and will move forward through approved plans.



CATEGORIES & THEIR ACTIONS	REACH	DIFFICULTY	LEADS
The actions are organized using the World Health Organization's categories for age-friendly communities.	To inform the implementation matrix		
SAFE Outdoor Spaces, Buildings, Transport, and Emergency Preparedness	Actions are marked as being relevant for "All" older adults or focused on those who may be "At-risk" due to specific factors such as disability, being unhoused, language, etc.	Actions that are "Simple," will require fewer resources or time than those that are "Complex".	Identifies the City department(s) or division(s) who will lead the work and engage with older adults and community organizations.
SUPPORTED Community Supports (Health and Food Security) and Housing			
CONNECTED Involvement and Social Participation			
INFORMED Communication and Information			

Safe

1	Outdoor Spaces, Civic Facilities & Parks	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
1.1	Identify and work to address barriers to access to civic facilities, infrastructure and services, in alignment with the *City's Accessibility Plan (2025)*, as mandated by *Accessible British Columbia Act (2021)*.	At-risk	Complex (required)	Human Resources with Implementation Dependent on Specific Departments
1.2	Work with the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee to review standards, practices, and services to assist with continuous learning and improvement towards an accessible city for all, including older adults.	At-risk	Simple (required)	Human Resources with Implementation Dependent on Specific Departments
1.3	Develop guiding principles for accessibility and barrier free access in civic facilities to inform a review of accessibility standards, capital budgets, and long-range planning.	At-risk	Simple	Civic Buildings and Properties
1.4	Implement the Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility actions of the *People, Parks and Play (2026)* related to an aging population. This includes: · Improving universal accessibility to all facilities and park amenities; · Making programs more inclusive and accessible for an aging population; · Diversifying programs for all participants in response to evolving needs and trends; · Equipping front-of-house staff with the necessary skills to meet the diverse needs of people experiencing cognitive and/or physical disabilities; · Engaging older adults in planning, and incorporating their input; · Supporting initiatives that connect residents and reduce social isolation; and · Expanding opportunities for access to and improvement of the Parks and Recreation Financial Assistance Program.	At-risk	Complex	Parks and Recreation
1.5	Take into consideration the recommended actions in the draft *City-wide Toilet Strategy* with regard to improving access for older adults.	At-risk	Complex	Social Planning with Interdepartmental Support
1.6	Work towards advancing accessibility requirements for existing and new public and private facilities beyond the minimum standards of the *BC Building Code* where reasonable.	At-risk	Complex	Building

2 Transportation	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
2.1 Address and incorporate actions related to an aging population by advancing safe, accessible, and well-connected active transportation infrastructure, as part of the City's *Master Transportation Plan (2014)*, *All Ages and Abilities Active Transportation Network Plan (2022)*, and *Queensborough Transportation Plan (2024)*. Prioritize areas with high concentrations of vulnerable sidewalk users, including older adults. This includes: · Improving sidewalks, including both new sidewalks and enhancements to existing ones; · Installing accessible pedestrian signals city-wide through ongoing replacement programs; · Expanding the "Best Routes" initiative for older adults accessing key community destinations in the city; and · Implementing the e-bike educational program for older adults.	All	Complex	Engineering (Transportation)
2.2 Work with TransLink to improve safety and accessibility of transit, as part of the *Master Transportation Plan (2014)* and related plans. Prioritize in areas with high concentrations of vulnerable transit users, including older adults. This includes: · Ensuring a universally accessible transit system to enable all users to access the entire transit network. The City is striving for 100% accessible bus stops, where feasible; · Prioritizing and installing transit shelters throughout the city; · Improving safety and security at and around bus stops and transit exchanges, including the five SkyTrain stations; · Encouraging TransLink to implement its Access Transit Program to ensure that accessible transit is integrated into all its transit plans, projects, and programs; and · Encouraging TransLink to offer transit orientation sessions for older adults.	All	Complex	Engineering (Transportation)
2.3 Promote, facilitate, and encourage older adults to wear reflective apparel in order to enhance visibility and reduce pedestrian-related fatalities and injuries. Support distribution of reflective snap bands and keychain reflectors.	All	Simple	Engineering (Transportation)
2.4 Enforce and provide outreach around the *Street and Traffic Bylaw, No. 6027 (2015)*, which requires that snow and ice be removed from sidewalks abutting private property by no later than 10:00 a.m. of the day following a snowfall event. Prioritize in areas with high concentrations of vulnerable sidewalk users, including older adults.	All	Simple	Street Use & Parking Enforcement

3	Emergency Preparedness	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
3.1	Implement the Emergency Preparedness Program and prioritize isolated or vulnerable community members, including older adults.	At-risk	Simple	Emergency Management
3.2	Expand the Emergency Preparedness Program outreach strategies to reach all residents, including isolated and vulnerable older adults. This includes: · The Emergency Preparedness Program website; · The Emergency Preparedness Program information sessions; · The Emergency Preparedness Program Coffee and Chat sessions; · The Do It Yourself workshops (e.g. air cleaners, emergency kits); and · The outreach posters, including the Stay Safe in Extreme Heat/Stay Connected Resource.	All	Simple	Emergency Management
3.3	Utilize and promote the pre-recorded central information messaging line (604-239-4936) to provide information on emergency preparedness for older adults who do not have access to a smart phones or computer.	At-risk	Simple	Emergency Management
3.4	Promote the Stay Cool Map, which includes information about where to 'cool off' – e.g., drinking fountains, outdoor pools, and spray parks.	All	Simple	Emergency Management
3.5	Distribute a Connect and Prepare information package to multi-unit rental buildings, particularly with high proportions of frail and live-alone older adults. This approach builds community emergency preparedness and resilience by strengthening social connections between neighbours.	At-risk	Simple	Emergency Management and Social Planning
3.6	In developing the *Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Plan*, directly engage with isolated or vulnerable community members, including older adults disproportionally impacted by climate events.	At-risk	Complex	Climate Action

Supported

4	Community Supports	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
4.1	Continue to provide support programs delivered by trained staff or Century House volunteers to encourage healthy aging, including: · Senior peer support (Century House Association); · Falls prevention mobile clinic (Fraser Health Authority); · The Community Connector program (supported by United Way); · Social meals (supported by United Way); and · Free clinics and workshops (e.g. hearing assessment, health monitoring, caregiver support, advanced care planning, etc.)	All	Simple	Parks and Recreation (Seniors)
4.2	Continue using promising practices to recruit and retain older City employees.	All	Complex	Parks and Recreation (Seniors) & Human Resources
4.3	Continue to support organizations vital to the livability of older adults through the City's Community Grants Program.	All	Simple	Community Partnerships
4.4	Encourage community integration and connections with older adults living in residential care by distributing information about City programs and events.	At-risk	Simple	Parks and Recreation (Seniors), Social Planning & Community Services

5	Food Security and Health	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
5.1	Implement the City's *Food Security and Systems Plan (2025)* to support all members of the community, including older adults, to have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally preferable foods in a dignified way.	At-risk	Complex	Social Planning
5.2	Continue to support the New West Hospice Society in its efforts to realize hospice beds for New Westminster, including through advocacy and other forms of assistance.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning
5.3	Advocate to the Fraser Health Authority for: · Collaborative hospital discharge planning, including placement of unhoused and precariously housed patients to support safe, effective and sustainable transitions from acute and emergency care back to community; and; · Increased access to home support and respite services to meet the needs of older adults and caregivers.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning
5.4	Encourage community integration and connections with older adults living in residential care by distributing information about City programs and events.	At-risk	Complex	Community Planning & Communications
5.5	Explore opportunities to work with the Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice to improve access to care for older adults and persons with disabilities.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning

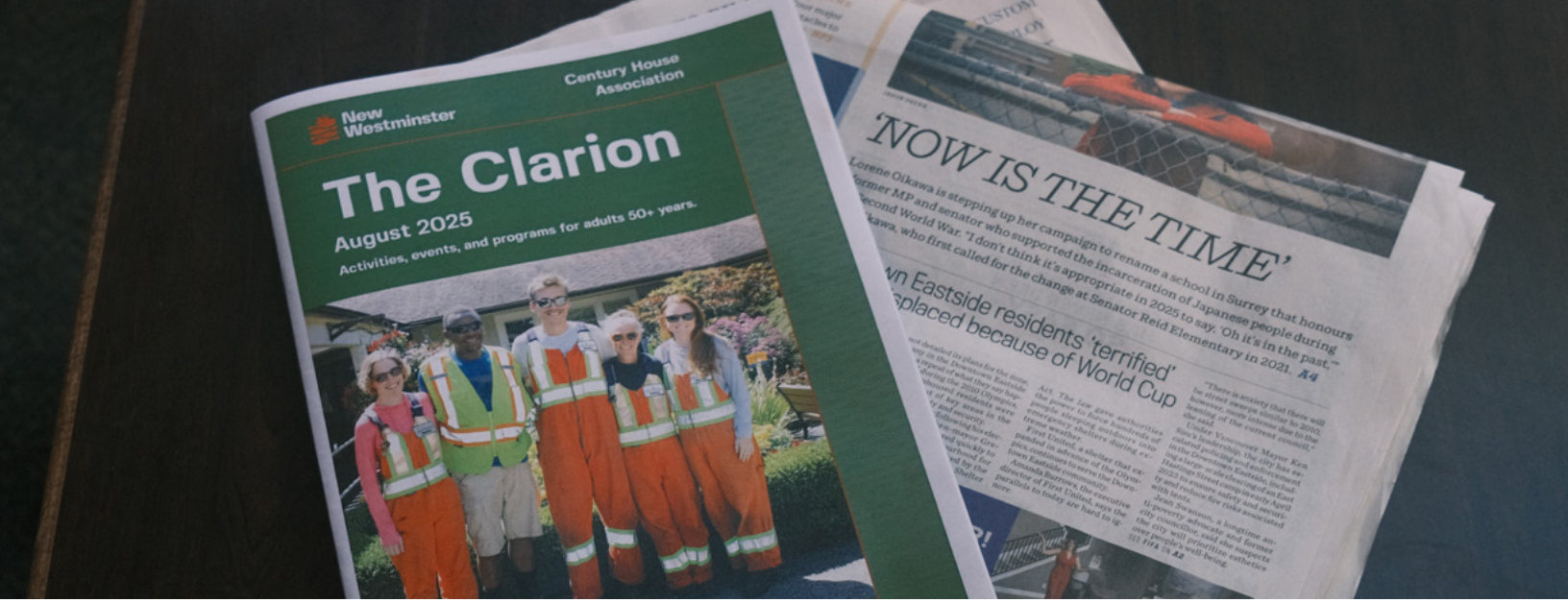
6	Housing	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
6.1	Develop and advocate for additional seasonal shelter capacity, as well as warming and cooling centres, for people experiencing homelessness, including older adults. Engage with organizations serving older adults and those with lived expertise to address the barriers to accessing shelter settings.	At-risk	Complex	Office of the CAO with support from Social Planning
6.2	Advocate for the creation of designated shelter beds and purpose-built transitional and supportive housing units for at-risk and homeless older adults.	At-risk	Simple	Office of the CAO with support from Social Planning
6.3	Advocate for the creation of non-market, subsidized rental housing projects that address the needs of low-income older adults and persons living with a disability.	At-risk	Simple	Office of the CAO with support from Social Planning

6 Housing		Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
6.4	Collaborate with the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society on advocacy and anti-stigma activities related to older adults at-risk or experiencing homelessness.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning
6.5	Advocate to the provincial government for sustainable, long-term, and expanded funding for the Seniors Housing Information and Navigation Ease (SHINE) program, delivered by the Seniors Services Society of BC, which supports older adults experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning
6.6	Provide outreach and continue to enforce the *Business Regulations and Licensing Bylaw No. 6926 (2004)* that prescribes standards of maintenance for residential properties and rental units, including related to heating/cooling requirements. Prioritize buildings with high proportions of isolated and vulnerable tenants, including older adults.	At-risk	Simple	Bylaw Services
6.7	Advance the Vulnerable Buildings Assessment Project, which identifies rental buildings at-risk of overheating and explore cooling measures to improve the health and safety of tenants, many of which are older adults.	At-risk	Simple	Climate Action
6.8	Continue to implement the City's adaptable housing bylaw requirements, which in part support an aging population.	At-risk	Complex	Development Planning & Building
6.9	Implement the *Official Community Plan (2025)*, intended to increase housing options to meet changing needs. This includes providing a diversity of ground-oriented housing forms that enable accessible and supportive living arrangements.	All	Complex	Development Planning
6.10	Implement the *Tenant Assistance Policy (2026)* to protect and assist tenants in multi-unit market rental buildings at-risk of displacement due to redevelopment.	At-risk	Complex	Development Planning & Social Planning
6.11	Encourage the use of the *Building Social Connections Toolkit: Age-Friendly Edition (2024)* by Hey Neighbour Collective and Happy Cities to guide the design and programming of multi-unit housing that supports aging in place and promotes wellbeing for all ages.	All	Complex	Development Planning & Social Planning

Connected

7	Involvement	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
7.1	Establish an Age-Friendly Strategy Implementation Working Group to facilitate ongoing collaboration between staff, older adults with lived experience, external agencies and community partners towards supporting an age-friendly New Westminster. Mandate: · Support the implementation of the Strategy. · Share expertise to ensure the evidence based needs of older adults are considered in planning, policy, programs, and practices. · Identify strategic opportunities for coordinated action on intersecting challenges for older adults. · Strengthen cross-sector impact through networking, outreach and collaboration. · Promote resources and share information to increase connections for older adults' support and social wellbeing. · Provide honorariums to older adults on the working group in recognition of their lived experiences and expertise.	All	Simple	Social Planning with Interdepartmental Support
7.2	Encourage older adult members of the Age-Friendly Strategy Implementation Working Group to apply to join the Community Advisory Assembly and the Accessibility Advisory Committee to strengthen integration of age-friendly practices.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning
7.3	Use the *Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement Guide*, developed by the SFU Centre for Dialogue, to guide staff in advancing equitable engagement of older adults throughout the City. Continue to monitor for updates.	All	Simple	Public Engagement
7.4	Encourage the participation of Age-Friendly Strategy Implementation Working Group staff liaisons in conferences and professional development opportunities related to age-friendly planning and programming.	All	Simple	Social Planning & Parks and Recreation (Seniors)
7.5	Work with the Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster (WINS) Local Immigration Partnership Council to support inclusion of newcomer older adults.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning & Parks and Recreation (Seniors)
7.6	Deliver Advocacy 101 workshops to older adults in the city to share the knowledge and skills needed to advocate for change. Prioritize workshop outreach to underserved older adults.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning
7.7	Explore funding opportunities to support the Library's peer led Community and Resource Team (CaRT), which helps community members, including older adults, with system navigation and social connections.	At-risk	Simple	Social Planning

8 Social Participation	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
8.1 Promote volunteer opportunities for older adults and make appropriate accommodations to facilitate their inclusion and participation.	All	Simple	Community Services
8.2 Work with the business community to increase awareness of the value of older adults participating in the workforce, including through workshops.	All	Simple	Economic Development
8.3 Explore opportunities to work with the business community to promote age-friendly business practices and training, including through a resource guide.	All	Simple	Economic Development
8.4 In developing the *Economic Development Plan*, engage with older adults as a growing sector of the local workforce and customer base.	All	Simple	Economic Development



Informed

9	Communication and Information	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
9.1	Explore opportunities to undertake staff education and training around age-friendly customer service.	All	Simple	Human Resources
9.2	Annually proclaim and recognize Seniors' Week (the first week of June), National Seniors Day (October 1), Alzheimer Awareness Month (January), and other relevant age-related awareness opportunities as they arise.	All	Simple	Mayor's Office with support from the Age-Friendly Implementation Working Group
9.3	Continue to support and fund events to recognize and celebrate older adults' contributions and accomplishments, including through Seniors' Week (first week of June) and ongoing volunteer appreciation events.	All	Simple	Parks and Recreation (Seniors), Social Planning and Community Services
9.4	Continue to support publishing and distribution of the Clarion and other printed material. Explore options to: · Include information about community services; · Expand distribution beyond City locations; and · Ensure information is provided in print as well as through digital channels.	All	Simple	Parks and Recreation (Seniors) & Social Planning
9.5	Explore diverse ways to provide information throughout the community such as: · Increasing the number and location of community bulletin boards; · Mobile kiosks to share City and community resources; · Through home library, home care, food delivery, and other individualized programs; and · Through building managers, pharmacies, and other external partners.	All	Simple	Community Services, Social Planning & Parks and Recreation (Seniors)

9 Communication and Information	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
9.6 Continue to host seniors' resource fairs, seminars and/or wellness events to facilitate community connections and support for safety and wellbeing. Subjects or topics could include: · Caregiver education and support (Fraser Health Authority Home Health) · Death and dying education and support (New West Hospice Society) · Digital literacy and related resources · Elder abuse (British Columbia Association of Community Response Networks) · Emergency preparedness (Emergency Management Office) · Evidence-informed health promotion and programs (Fraser Health Authority) · Falls prevention resources or mobile clinics (Fraser Health Authority Injury Prevention Team) · Fire safety materials (New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services) · Food security resources (Food Table Working Group) · Home library (Public Library) · Housing options (Seniors Services Society of BC) · Information about recreation subsidies and supports (Parks and Recreation) · Intergenerational opportunities · Isolation and mental health supports, including the Older Adult Community Mental Health Program (Fraser Health Authority) · Pedestrian and driver safety (Insurance Corporation of British Columbia and the British Columbia Automobile Association) · System navigation (Seniors Services Society of BC/ Seniors Housing Information and Navigation Ease) · Tenants' Rights and Resources (Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre and the City) · Transit training (TransLink, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation/Seniors on the Move)	All	Simple	Listed Community Partners with Support from the Age-Friendly Implementation Working Group as Needed

9 Communication and Information	Reach	Difficulty	Lead(s)
9.7 Explore opportunities to hold pop-up events in a variety of locations about diverse age-related topics.	All	Simple	Parks and Recreation (Seniors), Library, Community Services & Social Planning
9.8 Prepare and distribute to senior serving organizations: · Socio-demographic information and profiles about older adults; and · Promising and evolving practices for age-friendly communities.	All	Simple	Social Planning
9.9 Assist older adult serving organizations in applying for funding and grants and capitalizing on sponsorship and other opportunities, including letters of support.	All	Simple	Social Planning
9.10 Assist in updating and distributing the *Burnaby* and *New Westminster Community Resource Guide* that lists organizations, services and resources supporting older adults.	All	Simple	Social Planning
9.11 Continue to present critical City information in plain language with visuals to support different language levels, and when required, include the phrase "Important Information Please Have Translated" on urgent health and safety materials in the most appropriate languages for the situation.	At-risk	Simple	Communications
9.12 Support older adults' use of digital technology by partnering with the Digital Inclusion Project and Century House Seniors Embracing Technology (SET).	All	Simple	Social Planning & Parks and Recreation (Seniors)

Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

It is recognized that financial and resource implications of proposed actions have not been fully determined at this time. For actions which are not already accounted for within the budget and/or work program of a Department or which have financial and resource implications, Council approval will be required prior to implementation.

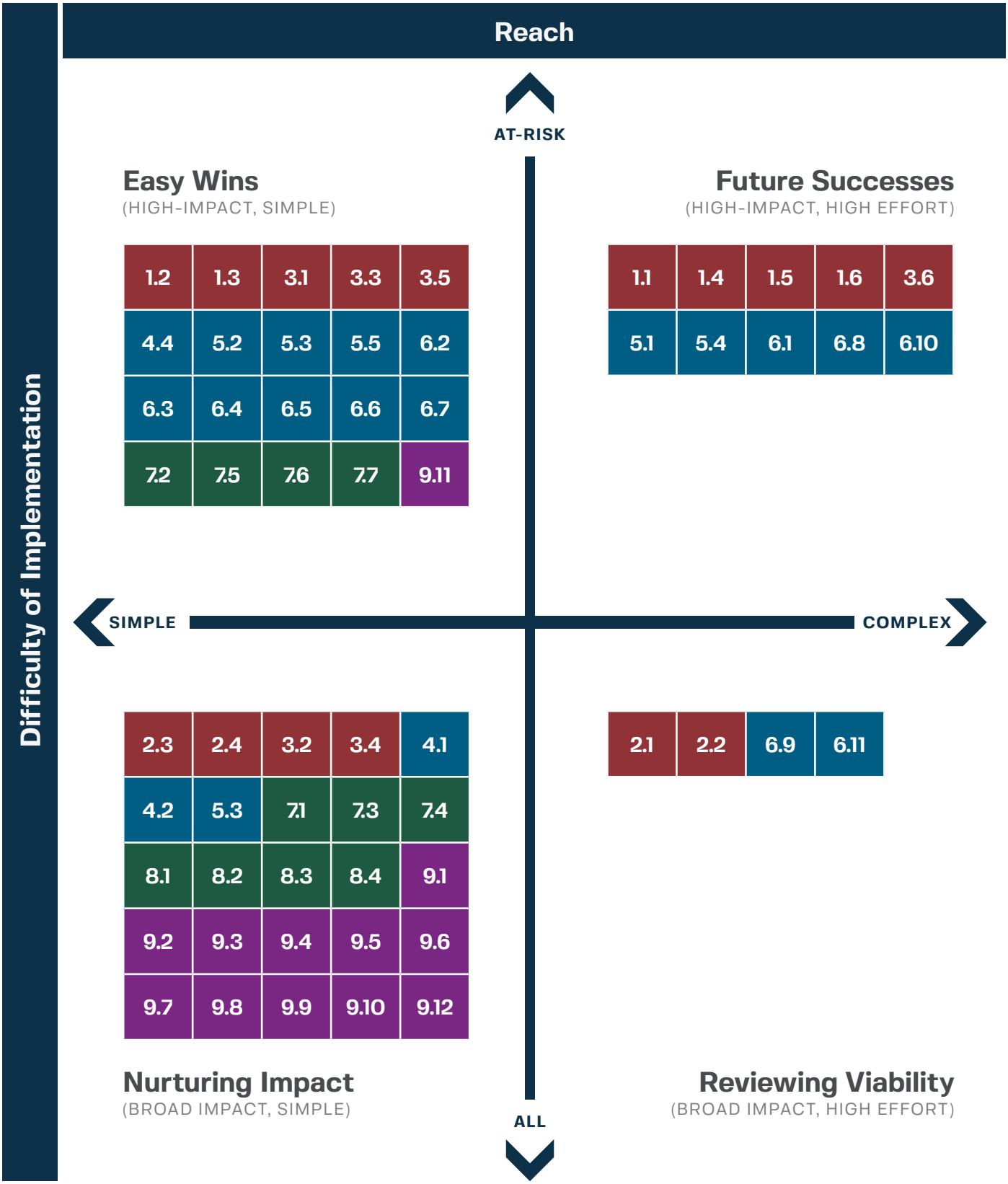
> **We may have wheelchair accessible curb cuts, bathrooms, dog parks and parking; but I also want to participate (in City programs) for years to come**.
>
> For example, wheelchair accessible universal community kitchens and exercise equipment in community centres could be used by everyone and would improve equitable involvement and connection in the City for all.
>
> Community Member, and Accessibility Champion

Age-Friendly Implementation Matrix: Equity in Action

The Age-Friendly Strategy Update Working Group used an equity lens to develop an Implementation Matrix to help prioritize actions. The matrix organizes actions based on who they reach and how simple or complex they are to implement, with an emphasis on supporting older adults who are most at-risk. Matrix structure identifies:

- **Easy Wins (High-Impact, Simple):**
  These actions benefit at-risk older adults and are relatively simple to implement using existing resources. Seen as "low-hanging fruit," they could be prioritized within the first two years following endorsement of the Strategy.
- **Future Successes (High-Impact, High Effort)**
  These actions also focus on at-risk older adults but are more complex to implement. They may require additional funding, staffing, or Council approval. Given their importance, these actions could be scoped and developed early to prepare for implementation when resources allow.
- **Nurturing Impact (Broad Impact, Simple):**
  These are broad actions that are simple to implement. They may also be prioritized early, but their reach and impact will need to be supported over time to ensure equity.
- **Reviewing Viability (Broad Impact, High Effort):**
  These are broad and complex actions that require coordinated effort, significant resources, and ongoing collaboration to ensure equitable access and long-term benefits for older adults in New Westminster. These actions will be monitored regularly for feasibility and impact.

The Age-Friendly Implementation Matrix



> There are times, as an individual in his mid-80's getting off and on transit, sometimes young people get up—and their expression shows they genuinely have a courteous view of seniors, it is something they want to do, an opportunity to be considerate.
>
> Working Group Member, Older Adult And Indigenous & European Liaison

Transitioning to an Age-Friendly Implementation Working Group

A key step towards Strategy implementation is for the Strategy Update Working Group to transition to a Strategy Implementation Working Group. This will ensure continuity, build on established relationships, and support a smooth and efficient shift from planning to action.

The Implementation Working Group will bring together City staff, older adults with lived experience, and community partners to support collaboration and facilitate becoming more age-friendly. Its role includes implementing the Strategy actions; offering expertise to ensure the needs of older adults are considered in planning, policy, programs, and services; and identifying opportunities for coordinated action on complex challenges facing older adults. The group will also strengthen partnerships through outreach and collaboration and promote resources for social connections and wellbeing.

The Implementation Working Group will develop an annual Action Plan based on the Strategy and Implementation Matrix. The selected actions will reflect what can be achieved given the group's membership and available resources. In some cases, the group may invite additional members or form a task-specific group for a particular action.

Monitoring and Evaluation

City staff, in collaboration with the Age-Friendly Strategy Implementation Working Group, will prepare an annual update report, highlighting progress and challenges. It will identify the status of action implementation – i.e., fully, partially, or not at all. If partially or not at all, it will state the reason(s) (e.g., inability to involve key community partners, lack of resources, etc.). Based on the annual report, the Strategy could evolve to include emerging issues.

The New Westminster Age-Friendly Strategy

2026

New Westminster

City of New Westminster
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