



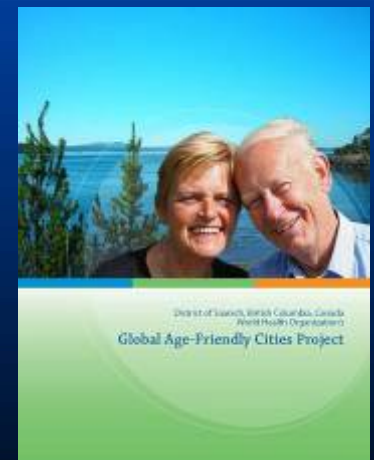
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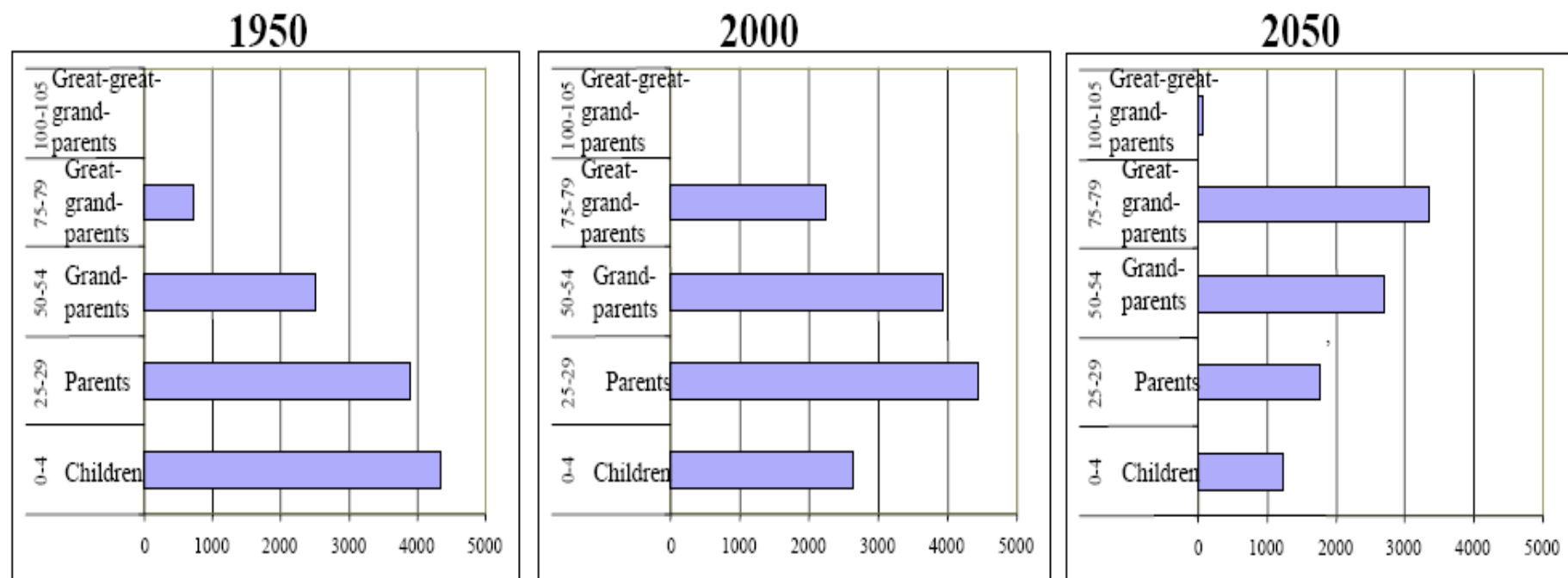


# **Age-friendly Communities: Does One Size Fit All?**

**Presenter: Dr. Elaine Gallagher  
Director, Age Friendly  
Implementation Team  
University of Victoria  
Victoria, BC, Canada**



## A rough evaluation of the size of 5 coexistent generations (in thousands), Italy 1950, 2000, 2050



Fonte: our elaboration on data UN, *World Population Prospects. The 2002 Revision*, New York, 2003

# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: Common Concerns of Older & Younger Seniors

- Poor pedestrian walkways
- Lack of benches & public toilets
- Heavy traffic poses challenges
- Feeling threatened by youth
- Heavy doors
- “Difficult stairs



# Quotes from Older Participants

- *Quote: “I just want to say one thing; those little men don’t last long enough to get across. I cross many intersections, wide streets, and I’m in the middle and the little man is gone...I believe everybody has that problem. Get those men going longer!”*
- *“It seems to me that the cubicles are getting smaller and smaller as the years go by and the doors open inward and I actually in a couple of occasions have nearly gone flying back into the toilet...Also, as you get older and your arthritis sets in, the toilet seats seem to be getting lower and lower.”*



“Snow removal can be a real headache in winter”

“A lot of sidewalks are broken. They don't fix them”





“Crosswalks need to be aligned with curb cuts”

“Painted surfaces are often slippery when wet”



# Transportation: Common Issues

- Transportation, whether provided by the public system or by private vehicle, was the topic which generated the most discussion in both the younger and the older focus groups
- Both groups expressed concerns over connectivity; and accessibility for those with low mobility.
- Both talked about the importance of “handivan” services.





*(Y): “I quit going to church years ago when I couldn’t get myself there just because of the transportation issue.”*

*(O) “I cannot get on a bus. I can get on the bus but the minute the man takes off and the bus rocks and I’m flat on my face.”*





# Older Senior's Thoughts

- *Quote (O): “It’s [the city] good for seniors but then there’s ‘senior seniors.’ For example, transportation – when they take my license which they will some day, I cannot get on a bus.”*

# Housing: Common Issues

- Both age groups expressed concerns about the lack of transitional housing options that were both affordable and deemed appropriate for their preferences and needs
- Both age groups identified a need for more “intermediate” housing such as one-level townhouses
- Concerns about the lack of available support services (help with housework, maintenance and gardening) dominated discussion in both age groups



# Quotes form Participants

- - *“You do wonder about where you’re going to go when your mobility becomes an issue.”*
- *“What they have is one of those huge soaker tubs that you need a ladder to climb in and out of.”*

*(Younger participants)*

- *“Most of the facilities that are at all desirable are way over \$4000.00 a month. How many people can afford to cough up that kind of money to be able to be fed and housed in relatively clean and pleasant surroundings?”*

*(Older participant)*

# Respect and Inclusion: Common Issues

Lack of respect by younger people. Examples include:

- Unfriendly gestures to older drivers in traffic
- Individuals addressing companions or caregivers rather than older person themselves
- Stereotypes of older people “disabled” as a result of their age
- Recreational resources are more directed towards youth rather than older persons





# Social Participation: Commonalities

- Affordability and scheduling of programs

*“A lot of people who have lived in the area for a long ..they all know each other. So it becomes a bit of a clique and to get through you need a jack hammer and a semi-truck because it just doesn't happen.” (Younger senior)*

*“The pool's schedule is all different and you don't know in advance whether that's when there are going to be a lot of school classes there or not. In which case, you know, you really can't go comfortably swimming there....” (Older senior)*

# Differences by Age Group

- Inclusion and acceptance seems more of a concern for the younger senior group
- The noise level of the facility or scheduling (e.g. night time programs) seemed more important for the older senior group



# Communications



## Similarities

Dealing with the complexities of automated phone information services and the size of print related to any communication tools (e.g. medications, phone book, bank statements)-

## Differences

The younger senior group was more concerned about society's move to internet based communication and information services which may decrease accessibility to seniors

# Quotes

*“I spent 20 minutes on the phone just before I came trying to get through to BCAA to membership and do you think I could get through? I was put on five different things and I never did get a membership and I never did talk to a person and that is very frustrating.”*

(Younger senior)

*“I have often wondered if there’s any legislation as to the size of the print and how many times do you have to get out a magnifying glass to look at the words? And I wish something could be done about that, especially with medication.”*

(Older seniors)



# Health and Social Services

## Similarities

- affordability of medical services
- shortage of practitioners
- Home care support difficulties

## Differences

The older senior group was mostly concerned with affordability issues and shortage of practitioners; whereas the younger senior group mentioned a lack of support for those who are caregivers themselves and long waits for medical services





# Transportation: Similarities

## Driving

- The importance of driving
- Handicapped parking – availability and location

***“and there really should be a lot more handicapped parking I think and somehow people who don’t have a handicapped sticker, they still are using handicapped parking spots. I mean they really shouldn’t be, there seems to be no way of patrolling that or enforcing that.”***

(Saanich, BC)

# Transportation: Similarities

## Handicap transport

- Lack of flexibility
- Lack of evening/weekend access

***“I have no complaints with the handi-van, they treat me wonderful, they know where I live and, what time I travel usually. But, my only complaint that I can put towards the transportation here in Portage, is for somebody like myself in a wheelchair, life stops at five o’clock in the afternoon.”*** (Portage la Prairie, MB)



# What Have We Learned?

- Need for a ‘senior’s lens’ in all community planning
- Need for local identification of issues and solutions
  - one size doesn’t fit all
    - transportation, services, clubs, facilities
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure and also specific improvements
  - wheelchair ramps, lighting, x-walks, handicapped parking. Not only are people aging, our cities and towns are aging as well.

# Next Steps in BC: BC Age-friendly Implementation Team

On October 1, 2007, the BC Ministry of Health introduced the BC Age-friendly Implementation Team. Goals will be to roll out Age-friendly communities across BC in time for the 2010 Olympics.

# Objectives of The BC Age-friendly Implementation Team

To develop plans and work with local governments and communities across BC to:

- build capacity & work with Measuring Up
- assist and enable local governments and communities to implement local age-friendly initiatives,
- to create the conditions in BC to enable older people age 65+ to age actively.

# Age-friendly Communities: Steps to Getting Started





# Step 1

- Define your community on a map.
- Decide if it involves a neighbourhood, town region or joint efforts of several communities
- Identify what initiatives are already “ underway that this one could build on.

## Step 2

- Obtain copies of Global Age-friendly Cities guide and Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities guide.
- Available on our web site at [seniorsincommunities.ca/age-friendly](http://seniorsincommunities.ca/age-friendly)

# Step 3

- Create an Age-friendly Project Team.
- Who to include:
  - Seniors
  - Business people
  - City planners
  - Parks and recreation people
  - Health care providers
  - Cultural and racial reps of your community
  - Council members
  - Seniors organizations

## Step 4

- Get local government buy-in. Pass a resolution to support an age-friendly project.

## Step 5

- Appoint an age-friendly Coordinator.

## Step 6

- Get wider community buy-in
- Apply for funding to assist

# Step 7

- Establish timeline and tasks for completing your assessment

# Step 8

- Conduct community assessment using:
  - Focus groups
  - Survey
  - Town Hall Meeting
  - Photography



# Step 9

- Prioritize changes needed
- Submit recommendations
- Secure commitment and funding to move forward.

# What can the team provide?

- Start-up Guide
- Web Site ([www.seniorsincommunities.ca/age-friendly](http://www.seniorsincommunities.ca/age-friendly))
- Newsletter
- On-site, telephone and e-mail consultation
- Assistance with data collection, analysis and interpretation
- Assistance in networking with other communities engaged in age-friendly work
- Funding sources and business case development

# Age-friendly Communities in BC

- Partner Communities in Age-friendly Guides
- Expressed interest in becoming a Partner Community
- Seniors Housing & Support Initiative Age-friendly Projects



# An Age-friendly Community:

- promotes 'active ageing';
- helps prevent and correct the barriers that people encounter as they grow older; and
- ensures policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to age actively – to live in security, enjoy good health and participate fully in their communities.



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*Thank you*