



Westside Health Network Society

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August 27th, 2024

Dear Grants Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Westside Health Network Society to express our strong support for the City of West Kelowna's Age-Friendly Communities Grant application for the Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit.

The Westside Health Network Society is a non-profit organization based in West Kelowna, dedicated to enhancing seniors' wellness through volunteerism, education, referral, and social programs. Since 1991, our 142 volunteers have supported over 600 seniors in the community through a wide range of invaluable services, including visiting, driving, grocery shopping, exercise programs, and assistance with computer and digital technology.

Our volunteers provide over 2,000 drives annually to seniors who find community transportation either too costly or prohibitive for their needs. The need for accessible, active transportation options in West Kelowna is crucial for maintaining the independence and well-being of our senior population.

We have gathered feedback from seniors who have encountered barriers such as inadequate sidewalks, poor street lighting, and insufficient crosswalks and parking. This proposed project will identify necessary actions to improve these conditions, ultimately enhancing the safety, independence, and social participation of older adults. It will contribute significantly to creating a more age-friendly and accessible community for all residents.

The Central Okanagan region has a rapidly growing senior population, projected to increase by 30,000 by 2036. It is vital that our community continues to develop supports that meet the complex and evolving needs of older adults. We wholeheartedly support the City of West Kelowna's application and believe this project will play a critical role in promoting healthy aging in place.

Thank you for considering our letter of support. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sonia Newman, Executive Director

Westside Health Network Society

www.westsidehealthnetwork.com

United Way, Interior Health, City of West Kelowna & the Province of British Columbia

August 29, 2024

Melissa Hunt-Anderson
City of West Kelowna
3731 Old Okanagan Highway
West Kelowna, BC V4T G7

Sent via email: Melissa.HuntAnderson@westkelownacity.ca

To whom it may concern:

RE: Support for West Kelowna's Funding Application to the BC Healthy Communities Age Friendly Communities Grant

On behalf of Interior Health's Healthy Communities program, we are pleased to support West Kelowna's application to the BC Healthy Communities Age Friendly Communities Grant to fund an Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit. There are many intersecting factors that contribute to the health of individuals and communities, including our social and physical environments, our genetics, and our access to healthcare. We know that the social determinants of health (i.e. income, education, employment, etc.) have the biggest influence.

A healthy community provides equal opportunities for all people to thrive and succeed regardless of age, ability, income, or ethnicity. Evidence supports that healthy aging is aided by such elements as social connectedness, local infrastructure, accessible and reliable transportation options, and affordable housing, to name a few. Communities that promote accessible and inclusive physical and social environments, services, and programs enable aging in place as well as improve health outcomes.

It is our understanding that the City and the West Kelowna Accessibility and Inclusion Committee will be working on conducting the Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit. This audit will assess the current infrastructure that supports active transportation and connectivity as well identify barriers that prevent older adults with mobility challenges navigating West Kelowna. This data will help to inform a report that will present the findings as well as tangible actions to create more accessible, affordable, equitable, and safe

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and Tšilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

active transportation that will benefit all in the community. Further, creating a safer and inclusive community through making changes to the built environment particularly will greatly benefit older adults' mental, physical, and social well-being as well as reduce injuries. A project like this will be immensely helpful because in West Kelowna, 21% of the community currently consists of people 65 years and older ([West Kelowna Census 2021](#)).

Interior Health aims to improve health and wellness by working with local governments and community partners to create policies and environments that support good health for all. It is our experience that the City of West Kelowna is committed to working collaboratively with Interior Health and other community partners to improve the health of the community. As such, we strongly support West Kelowna's application to the BC Healthy Communities Age Friendly Communities Grant.

Sincerely,



Janelle Rimell
Environmental Health Officer

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, Syilx, and Tšilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in
BC's North, Interior, Lower Mainland,
Central & Northern Vancouver Island

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August 27th, 2024

RE: City of West Kelowna Age-Friendly Communities Grant - Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit

To whom it may concern,

United Way BC has been working with community partners in the West Kelowna area for over 25 years and in the last ten years have been able to offer senior specific funding through the Ministry of Health. The main goal of the funding is to help seniors stay in their own homes as they age, to engage in community activities to reduce social isolation and as community service navigators in ensuring seniors are accessing services, government assistance and medical care that is needed.

United Way BC is an advocate provincially for the needs of community members as they age, including for accessible, safe, affordable and inclusive transportation options. Our Provincial Community Based Social Service Committee (CBSS) operates a working group on Transportation for Seniors, delivering a think tank on approaches to supporting seniors with a variety of transportation needs as they age including active transportation.

United Way BC funds three roles that support local government partners, community partners and health agencies in the West Kelowna area. Our embedded and subject matter experts regularly hear from community partners about the need for transportation support. As seniors age and give up their keys, transportation can become a major challenge, which impacts a person's ability to age well. Simple day to day tasks such as getting groceries, social outings and getting to medical appointments can be cost-prohibitive and ultimately impact a person's well-being. Creating a robust accessible, active transportation plan for older adults will enhance the independence, safety, and social participation of community members in the West Kelowna area.

United Way BC welcomes strategic planning such as a transportation audit to guide community planners, non-profit agencies, funders and health agencies in understanding the needs, gaps and priorities for active transportation in the West Kelowna area. The audit will allow the City of West Kelowna to evaluate existing infrastructure and identify gaps to support active transportation and connectivity in West Kelowna, focusing on eliminating the barriers that prevent older adults – in particular those with accessibility challenges – to get from one place to another, safely. Our community embedded teams often hear about the challenges faced in moving around, delivering the strategic direction in how we can best focus our efforts will deliver huge improvements to community well-being and ensuring West Kelowna is a vibrant and well-connected place to live.

Kind regards,

Naomi Woodland,
Community Impact & Investment, Central Okanagan

Lisa Cyr,
Healthy Aging, Interior Region

August 28, 2024

BC Healthy Communities

Dear Grants Committee:

Re: Support for City of West Kelowna Age-Friendly Communities Grant - *Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit*

I am writing in support of a grant application submitted by the City of West Kelowna for **Age-Friendly Communities Grants**. For 35 years, Seniors Outreach & Resource Centre has provided quality social services that enhance the belonging, independence, and well-being of seniors in Central Okanagan. We work in partnership with the Westside Health Network Society to provide seniors and care partners with information and navigational supports, social recreation programs, and home support services. Last year, our staff worked with 178 volunteers to support nearly 2,000 seniors in our region.

We are supportive of the City of West Kelowna's intention to complete an **Age-Friendly and Accessible Active Transportation Audit**, which will intersect with West Kelowna's Accessibility and Inclusion Committee to evaluate the existing infrastructure that supports active transportation and connectivity in West Kelowna and identify barriers that prevent older adults, particularly those with accessibility challenges, from safely and conveniently navigating their community.

Their project aims to define actionable items that will address critical gaps in the built environment, ensuring local transportation options are inclusive, equitable, and supportive of aging in place. We understand that some aspects of accessible transportation that the audit will consider include sidewalks, street lighting, crosswalks, and parking. Ultimately, the project seeks to identify actions that will enhance the independence, safety, and social participation of older adults, contributing to a more age-friendly and accessible community for all residents.

We often hear from our clients that a barrier to social participation is local infrastructure. People are more likely to access services and programs if they feel safe of when walking/riding to bus stops and specific destinations. Sidewalks, curb cuts, and trails are inconsistent, and this creates barriers for people with vision loss, strollers, walkers and wheelchairs. People have also identified the need for friendly 'wayfinding' resources such as better signage and audio signals. These physical barriers are amplified during the winter season, if organizations and residents are not doing their part with snow removal. Finally, some facilities need to consider heights of desks/sinks, widths of doors/hallways, and location/comfort of benches, bathrooms and gathering areas. We are excited at the prospect of an actionable report that define timelines and responsibilities for advancing accessible transportation for older adults in West Kelowna.

Thank you for accepting this letter of support, and we hope the grants committee finds the City of West Kelowna's application deserving of support. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ian Gerbrandt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ian Gerbrandt
Executive Director