



SENIORS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2021

A meeting of the Seniors' Advisory Committee was held on Friday, September 17, 2021, at 10:05 am, via electronic means.

PRESENT: Stuart Alcock
Sana Aziz
Donna Clarke (Co-Vice Chair)
Penny Goldsmith
Conrad Guelke
Varouj Gumuchian
Linda Johnston (Co-Chair)
Dale Lutes
Jose Mendoza
Andrea Sara
Susan Scott Gabe (Co-Vice Chair)
Jacqueline Weiler
Marc White (Co-Chair)

ABSENT: Jenny Konkin (Leave of Absence)
Anthony Kupferschmidt (Leave of Absence)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Christine Boyle, Council Liaison
Councillor Jean Swanson, Council Liaison
Winston Chou, Manager, Traffic and Data Management,
(Staff Liaison)
Laura Mackenrot, Persons With Disabilities Advisory
Committee Co-Chair
Chris Morrissey, Persons With Disabilities Advisory
Committee member

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Brian Fukushima, Committee Clerk

WELCOME

Co-Chair White called the meeting to order and acknowledged we are on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Leave of Absence Requests

Jenny Konkin and Anthony Kupferschmidt requested a leave of absence for this meeting, and the committee agreed to vote to approve at the next regular meeting, November 19, 2021.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Donna Clarke
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee approve the Minutes from the meetings of March 19, 2021 and July 16, 2021 as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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1. City Councillor Reports

Councillor Swanson expressed support for the SAFER motion as well as electronic meetings.

Councillor Boyle echoed support for electronic meetings and reported on the accessibility concerns named in the temporary patios report. Councillor Boyle also expressed support in advocating for a dedicated seniors' planner but stated it might be challenging to find the funding.

2. Update on Orientation Guide

Susan Scott Gabe circulated the draft orientation document for review.

3. Housekeeping Motions – Internal SAC Operations

MOVED by Stuart Alcock
SECONDED by Jacqueline Weiler

WHEREAS Linda Johnston and Marc White were appointed as Acting Co-Chairs at the July 16, 2021 City Clerked Meeting, and that they have agreed to officially be Co-Chairs,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Linda Johnston and Marc White be appointed as Co-Chairs, Seniors' Advisory Committee.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Stuart Alcock

WHEREAS In the prior Senior Advisory Committee there was an informal planning process to support Agenda planning typically involving the Chair, Co-Chair and Housing Chair.

Under the new committee officer structure there are two Co-chairs and two Vice Chairs and a Secretary. The purpose of this motion is to establish a more formal Executive Committee to facilitate meeting planning processes and agenda setting in consultation with subcommittee chairs and work groups.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT an Executive Committee consisting of the appointed officers of the Seniors' Advisory Committee be established for the purpose of meeting planning purposes and agenda setting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Donna Clarke

WHEREAS The Seniors' Advisory Committee in recent years had three core subcommittees consisting of: Transportation, Community Engagement, and Housing. Following a review of past Council business and SAC activities and input received by SAC Members participating in the SAC working session held on August 20th, 2021, we are recommending the following subcommittee structure.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT four standing subcommittees for the Seniors' Advisory Committees be created:

- i. Infrastructure: Strategic Planning, Operations, Community Engagement, Government Relations, Partnerships and Communication, Education
- ii. Community Services and Programming: Aging in Community, Campus of Care and Assisted Living, Food Security, Social Isolation and Loneliness, Community Dementia Strategy, Climate Change and Emergency Preparedness
- iii. Housing: Affordable Housing and Community Planning, Homelessness and Shelters
- iv. Transportation and Accessibility: Accessibility Built Environment, Multi-Modal Transportation; and

FURTHER THAT each subcommittee be directed to draft mandate and scope for review at the October working session

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Susan Scott Gabe
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

WHEREAS The City of Vancouver has endorsed and subscribed to several World Health Organization Initiatives which resulted in major planning initiatives *Age Friendly Action Plan: 2013 – 2015*¹, and *Vancouver Healthy City Strategy, Phase 1 2014-2025*². To further the Healthy City planning process the City of Vancouver established an interdepartmental staff team, and a 30-member Leadership Table comprised of a broad range of community leaders which resulted in the creation of *The Healthy City – Four Year Action Plan 2015 – 2018, Phase 2*³ which established tangible steps to create a comprehensive, integrated and measurable path forward for the City. Under this initiative there were three major themes:

- Healthy People: Taking care of the basics,

- Healthy Environments: Ensuring livability now and into the future, and
- Healthy Communities: cultivating connections and proposed actions.

To help monitor progress the City of Vancouver created a *Healthy Strategy Dashboard*⁴ to provide updates on the progress on 13 long-term goals for the well-being of the City and its people with a target date of 2025.

From a municipal perspective each of these WHO reports that underpin the Age-Friendly Initiative and the Healthy Cities Initiative are based on the recognition that local governments play an important role in addressing social determinants of health. The WHO in 2012 released a report: *Addressing the social determinants of health: the urban dimension and the role of local government*⁵ that provided a review of the evidence-based underpinning an action framework underpinning Healthy Cities Initiative, Healthy cities tackle the social determinants of inequities in health: a framework for action. Recognizing the importance of multi-agencies and partnerships needed to create Healthy Cities, the City of Vancouver established a *Healthy City Partnership MOU between the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health*⁶ between March 2013 with an end date of December 2018.

Subsequent to this early work and following a review of what other cities are doing to promote Healthy Cities, in 2020, the WHO and in recognition of changes to demographics around the world the WHO in collaboration with the United Nations have officially launched the *United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030)*⁷. The launch of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing coincides with the release of the *WHO Global Report on Ageism*⁸.

The Decade of Healthy Ageing is a global collaboration, aligned with the last ten years of the sustainable development goals, that brings together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live. A decade of concerted global action on healthy ageing is urgently needed to ensure that older people can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

These foundational documents that underpin the above noted City of Vancouver initiatives provide a theoretical framework and evidence-base to guide the creation of the SAC workplan, and may inform future SAC.

Supporting Documentation

1. [Age Friendly Action Plan: 2013 – 2015](#)
2. [Vancouver Healthy City Strategy, Phase1 2014-2025](#)
3. [The Healthy City – Four Year Action Plan 2015 – 2018, Phase 2](#)
4. [Healthy Strategy Dashboard](#)
5. [Addressing the social determinants of health: the urban dimension and the role of local government](#)
6. [Healthy City Partnership MOU between the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health](#)
7. [United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing \(2021-2030\)](#)
8. [WHO Global Report on Ageism](#)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the use of a framework be approved for underpinning the Seniors' Advisory Committee activities this term, using the following 3 lenses:

- i. Healthy Cities, Age-Friendly Cities, Anti-Ageism and UN Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021 – 2030
- ii. Social Connection, Social Capital and Social Equity including Reconciliation
- iii. Partnerships, Multi-agencies, and Cross-Advisory Committees

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Varouj Gumuchian
SECONDED by Sana Aziz

THAT the following education programs be approved in principle, recognizing that in the future each subcommittee may recommend webinar topics congruent with their priorities for SAC approval:

- i. Research Update on Identification and Support for Vulnerable Seniors
- ii. Planning our future together series – City of Richmond
- iii. Creating Innovative Neighbourhood-based Campus of Care In Collaboration with United Way and False Creek South Neighbourhood Association
- iv. Potential Actions to Improve Housing Affordability for Seniors and their Families
- v. Dr. Eman Hassan, ED BC Centre for Hospice Palliative Care- Compassionate Communities
- vi. Dr. Barb Pesut- Co-Founder Nav CARE- Aging in Place

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Motions To Council

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Jacqueline Weiler

WHEREAS,

- At a population level at a provincial level, BC Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. in their 2020 report estimated a 63% increase in the population of seniors by 2041 compared with 14.5% projected increase of youth population and just under 20% increase in of the working population in BC.
- At the time of the 2016 Census there were more than 95,570 seniors 65 and older living in Vancouver and who accounted for more than 15.1% of Vancouver's total population. Based on this data 20.4% (1 out of 5) of all households in the City of Vancouver are senior-led. It is expected that over the next decade it is expected that senior-led households will represent 23-25% (≈1 out of 4) of all the households in the City of Vancouver.
- There were also 52,700 seniors 65 and older (55%) who reported that they have specific health and activity limitations including 20,660 seniors who reported permanent challenges and 24,045 senior who sometimes experience challenges.

- The available data also shows that a larger proportion of seniors are living on their own including 14,335 (36.8%) seniors who own and 11,170 (58%) of seniors who rent.
- Many of the seniors who are living on their own can be more economically vulnerable (especially renter households) as well as at increased risk of social isolation and loneliness.
- The City of Vancouver homeless count data also shows an actual increase in the number of seniors who are homeless or 'at risk' of homelessness through economic eviction with the 2016 Census showing us that approximately 16.6% of all senior-led renter households were spending 50% or more of their income on their housing costs and were at increased risk of economic eviction. This represents a total of 3,185 households including 2,680 who were living on their own.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and recent climate emergency has highlighted the seriousness and urgency to address existing gaps in policies, systems, housing, community services and programs that have had devastating impacts on many people living in the city, but in particular, their impact on older people.
- The advantage of having dedicated planning capacity is evidenced in the cities of Richmond, Surrey, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal and have resulted in comprehensive planning and formal partnerships and MOU's across different levels of government, multi-agencies, and community organizations specifically focused on supporting Healthy Ageing.
- Given the World Health Organization has declared 2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Ageing, and has incorporated additional metrics under the Healthy Cities strategy. We believe the time is right to take appropriate action in the 2022 budget.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee requests that the City of Vancouver create a dedicated full-time planning position to focus on seniors and older adults across city departments, and liaise with external agencies; and

FURTHER THAT the dedicated seniors' and older adult planner and the designated representatives from the other advisory committees and program areas meet at least quarterly with the Seniors' Advisory Committee

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Stuart Alcock
SECONDED by Donna Clarke

WHEREAS,

1. BC has the highest rate of poverty among seniors across Canada. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of seniors living below the poverty line in the province doubled, to 70,990¹
2. The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program, managed by BC Housing, provides a subsidy to seniors to "make rents affordable for BC seniors with low to moderate incomes." Seniors aged 60 and up who pay more than 30% of their before tax monthly household income towards rent and do not earn more than the maximum

- monthly income are eligible for the benefit. The SAFER program provided rental assistance to 25,000 seniors in 2019-2020².
3. The SAFER program is currently under review.
 4. 94% of SAFER recipients are single and have an average annual income of less than \$20,000³
 5. The average subsidy received by SAFER applicants decreased by 4% from 2019-2020, to \$207³
 6. The maximum benefit a senior can be eligible for is determined by region and by the cost of an applicant's rent (not including the costs of tenant's insurance, utilities, or other associated fees). The "rent ceilings" are said to reflect the different costs for rent in different areas of BC. The maximum rent ceiling for the Vancouver region is \$803 for seniors living alone and \$866 for couples⁴
 7. Rent ceilings have not kept pace with rising rents. They were last raised in 2018. From 2018-2020, the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Vancouver increased by 7.4%⁴
 8. Residents of non-profit housing co-operatives are not eligible for SAFER. Many co-ops report that they have exhausted the subsidy funds provided by the Federal Government for those who pay more than 30% of their before tax monthly household income. Low-income seniors, unable to pay "low-end of market" rents are essentially rendered ineligible for this type of housing⁴
 9. In the 2020 Rental Market Survey, CMHC found that the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment in Vancouver was \$1,515. Average rent for studio apartments in 2020 was \$1309⁵ CMHC has also reported that rents increase an average of 20% on tenant turnover so units for rent are about 20% more than units that are rented. A senior looking for a new place would face this kind of increase.
 10. The maximum amount a single senior can earn to be eligible for the benefit is \$2,550 in before-tax monthly income in Vancouver. Maximum for couples is \$2,750⁴); A SAFER recipient earning the maximum monthly income and receiving the maximum benefit (for a total of \$3353 before tax), and paying the average rent for a 1-bedroom in Vancouver, would still be paying over 45% of their income in rent;
 11. A household is considered to be in core housing need when housing is not: adequate (does not need major repairs), suitable (has enough bedrooms for the household), or affordable (costs less than 30% of before-tax income). Data from the 2016 census shows that Metro Vancouver has the second-highest rate of seniors living in core housing need, or below-standard housing, of metropolitan areas across Canada: 19.7%. Affordability is the number one issue for these households⁶.
 12. Seniors who are women and living alone are particularly vulnerable to housing insecurity⁶
 13. Subsidized housing for seniors is not being constructed fast enough to meet demand, and many seniors must rely on the private rental market. In 2019-2020, there was an 11% increase in the number of applicants to BC Housing for a subsidized place to

- live. The median wait time for these applicants as of March 2020 was 1.7 years, an increase of 13% over the March 2019⁷
14. The 2020 Homeless Count found that seniors (aged 55+) are the fastest growing demographic of homeless people, and make up one quarter of all homeless people in Metro Vancouver⁸
 15. For those seniors spending 50-99% of their incomes on rent in 2016, "The risk of homelessness exists for over 15,000 households ... This number has increased by 49% over ten years, from 10,385 senior households in 2006."⁹

Supporting Documentation

1. <https://www.sparc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BC-Seniors-Poverty-Report-Card.pdf>
2. <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance/SAFER>
3. <https://vancouver.sun.com/health/seniors/its-heart-breaking-more-and-more-b-c-seniors-asking-for-help-with-depression-homelessness>
4. <https://www.bchousing.org/publications/Shelter-Aid-For-Elderly-Renters-Brochure.pdf>
5. <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/#Profile/59/2/British%20Columbia>
6. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/report-seniors-housing-needs.html> (Table 3a/4)
7. <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/app/uploads/sites/4/2020/12/MonitoringReport2020.pdf> (p.ii)
8. <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/homeless-count-numbers-collected-pre-isolation-dont-paint-the-real-picture>
9. http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/MV_Housing_Data_Book.pdf

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee strongly recommends Council direct the Mayor to call on the Province to revise the SAFER program so that the maximum rent ceilings for SAFER are raised to the CMHC average rents for Vancouver; and

FURTHER THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee strongly recommends Council direct the Mayor to call on the province to extend the SAFER program so seniors who are members in housing co-ops are eligible to apply.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Jacqueline Weiler
SECONDED by Susan Scott Gabe

WHEREAS, The United Nations has declared October 1, 2021 to be the International Day of Older Persons

AND In British Columbia alone, the number of seniors and elders are expected to increase by 63% between 2021 and 2041.

AND The COVID-19 pandemic and recent climate emergency has highlighted the seriousness and urgency to address existing gaps in policies, systems, housing, community services and programs that have had devastating impacts on many people living in the city, but In particular, their impact on older people.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee recommends the Mayor and Council declare through a proclamation October 1, 2021 to be the International Day of Older Persons and Elders in the City of Vancouver

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Donna Clarke

WHEREAS, The Vancouver Plan Update and Quick Start Actions is proposing fast tracking a number of initiatives specifically recommending the following actions:

- A. THAT Council endorse the updated scope of work and engagement strategy for the remainder of the Vancouver Plan process.
- B. THAT, as Vancouver Plan Quick Start Actions, Council direct staff to report back with proposed by-law amendments for consideration of referral to public hearing in Q4 of 2021, the following:
 - Streamlining Rental Initiative as set out in Appendix B; and
 - Downtown Eastside Policy Updates to Increase Social Housing Initiative as set out in Appendix C.
- C. THAT, as an immediate Vancouver Plan Quick Start Action, Council approve amendments to the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP), as set out in Appendices D and E, that will:
 - Update the affordability requirements;
 - Exclude eligibility in certain zones; and
 - Extend the opportunity for staff to consider new proposals until January 31, 2022, to enable up to 20 total rezoning applications.

Speaking point highlights:

- The currently the updated scope of work and engagement does not include a strong social development lens considering social connection, social capital and social equity.
- That a very high priority of respondents to the City engagement process was the importance of security tenure which is not adequately addressed in MIRHPP and other social housing developments
- That the City should direct staff to evaluate the current social outcomes of current programs, and to work with Advisory Committees and people living in "social housing" communities to consider what metrics may help to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of current programs and potential opportunities to increase social connection, appropriate voice in one's living environment, neighbourhood cohesion, and civic participation. We believe this evaluation work should occur before quick starts are approved.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Co-Chair Marc White or alternate be authorized to speak to Council responding to the July 21, 2021 City Staff Report: The Vancouver Plan Update and Quick Start Actions

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Subcommittee Quick Updates

Conrad Guelke suggested finding a more secure location for files than Google Drive, citing privacy and accessibility as factors. The infrastructure group is working on climate change and emergency preparedness issues with a seniors focus.

Dale Lutes noted the Accessibility Task Force will meet in 2 weeks.

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Varouj Gumuchian

THAT Dale Lutes and Andrea Sara be named to the Accessibility Task Force with Sana Aziz being named an alternate.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. City Staff Liaison Updates

Karen Liebel circulated the library update.

Winston Chou reported contacting Mark McLellan, Manager, Property Use regarding the elevator matter. Following Council's motion, a consultant was brought in to examine accessibility issues.

7. New Business

MOVED by Linda Johnston
SECONDED by Jacqueline Weiler

WHEREAS The City of Vancouver under the Vancouver City Charter is unable to allow Advisory Committees to utilize a hybrid model to conduct its official business at a regular clerked meeting once the Province of British Columbia rescinds the Public Health order.

AND The Seniors' Advisory Committee has members at the highest risk for serious outcomes including death as a result of potential exposure of COVID due to the age of its members.

AND The City of Vancouver is unable to restrict participation of City Staff or Staff Liaisons who may not be vaccinated at SAC meetings.

AND That this concern has been discussed previously with co-chairs of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee who are also at higher risk for COVID, and is noted as a shared concern.

AND City Staff have communicated to the Province that there is a strong interest for the Province to provide the City with the authority to enable all City bodies under the Vancouver Charter to hold electronic meetings and enable electronic participation

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Seniors' Advisory Committee in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee strongly urge Council to also urge the Province to make the appropriate changes to the Vancouver Charter that will sanction Advisory Committees to be able to conduct hybrid regular and working session meetings that would authorize participants using either electronic or telephone to form part of the quorum with voting privileges.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Jacqueline Weiler
SECONDED by Conrad Guelke

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Next Meeting:

DATE: Friday, November 19, 2021
TIME: 10 am
PLACE: TBD

The Committee adjourned at 12:15 pm.

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