



## Strategic Priority 5: Active and Engaged Seniors

### What we are trying to achieve: OBJECTIVES

- Improve the sense of belonging and connections for seniors in Delta.
- Support seniors to age in place and live active lives.
- Enhance community capacity to support vulnerable seniors.

A table of actions for each strategic priority can be found on page 67.

### Why it is important:

For the first time ever in Canada, seniors outnumber children in Canada. Like many other communities in Canada, Delta's population is aging. In 2001, seniors comprised only 11% of Delta's population, and by 2016 this number had increased to 18.7%. Older residents increasingly prefer to stay in their own homes in their own communities. Municipalities and the not-for-profit sector play an important role in enabling seniors to 'age in place', i.e., live independently and stay active and connected to their communities. As Canadians live longer, older residents with more complex medical needs are entering nursing homes, which puts additional pressure on these facilities. As family structure changes, in 30 years, a typical 85-year old will be less likely than today to be married and have children who can provide care for them. How do we ensure that older residents are supported in Delta, enjoy a good quality of life, and have access to all the resources they need? How do we support frail seniors in Delta who might not have much support from their immediate families? These are the questions to which we are seeking answers.

“Most seniors express a strong desire to live in their own homes as they age, and it is key that they have the financial supports necessary to live with dignity.”

~The Office of Seniors Advocate. 2020 Monitoring Seniors Services Report.



## Active and Engaged Seniors

### What we know: LOCAL CONTEXT

**Fastest Growing Population:** Between 2006 and 2016, the most significant population increase in Delta was observed amongst those between 65 and 84 years of age (5.9% or 5,710).<sup>44</sup>

**Distribution in Delta:** Tsawwassen hosts a higher proportion of those aged 65 and over (compared to Ladner and North Delta); however, North Delta accounts for over 42% of all senior residents in Delta (8,140).

**Low-Income Seniors:** Since 2013, income has decreased by 6.3% for BC's seniors.<sup>45</sup> Close to 9% of seniors in Delta live in poverty, which is comparable to the provincial average poverty rate for seniors. A large proportion of Delta's low-income seniors is concentrated in North Delta (up to 22% in select neighbourhoods). Seniors living on limited incomes have been affected by increased costs of living and limited access to essential services, such as home supports.

### What we can build on: DELTA'S ASSETS

**Seniors Centres:** There are three Seniors' Centres supported by the City of Delta: Kennedy Seniors Recreation Centre, McKee Seniors Recreation Centre, and KinVillage Recreation Centre.

**City's Seniors' Coordinator** plays an essential role in connecting seniors to resources and supports. Recreation centres also provide programming specifically designed for seniors

**Service Providers:** Seniors are also being supported through an established infrastructure of services offered by local community partners. The City provides funding to support this work.

**Delta Seniors' Bus program** was launched by the City of Delta in 2016, and it is an important service for seniors who live in isolation and/or those who rely on others for transportation.

### City's Services to Senior | 2019

- Over 2,200 seniors were members of McKee and Kennedy Seniors Societies
- Over 8,400 seniors bought passes to access programs/services at our recreation facilities
- Over 2,200 seniors have used the Seniors Bus Program

### What we heard: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

**Seniors' Value and Voice:** In the 2021 consultation sessions on seniors, participants talked about how seniors should have more of a voice in the community and a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Their values should be better recognized and appreciated.

**Social Isolation:** Many Delta seniors live independently and are not connected to any community agency or seniors' centres.

**Housing:** There are more low-income seniors now. Seniors are having a hard time finding affordable and accessible housing in Delta. In recent consultations on Delta's Housing Plan, affordable housing for seniors was identified as a key priority. *Note: see Strategic Priority 6 for more actions on Affordable and Accessible Housing.*

**Mobility and Transportation:** Delta's unique geography presents significant challenges to seniors moving around and accessing services in Delta and other communities.

**Better Coordination:** During consultations with service providers, some key priorities have emerged, including the need for more culturally-appropriate services for seniors, and better collaboration and coordination between service providers working with seniors.