

City of Richmond

# Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group Final Report

Community Social Development





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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Richmond is committed to prioritizing age-friendly initiatives, as outlined in the City of Richmond Seniors Strategy (2022–2032). The vision for this collaborative strategy is “that seniors living in Richmond are safe, respected, healthy and engaged in their communities.” It identifies five strategic directions and includes 29 recommended actions that build on previous and ongoing work to achieve the desired outcomes.

Strategic Direction 1, “Age-friendly neighbourhoods that support seniors to age in place,” recognizes the important role that age-friendly environments play in building community, keeping people healthy, well-connected and able to participate in their neighbourhoods throughout their aging journey. The Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Group project is designed to achieve this by engaging seniors in planning at the neighbourhood level, applying the

World Health Organization’s eight domains of an Age-Friendly City<sup>1</sup> to identify areas of strength and potential improvement. Participants also learn about programs and services available to support and better connect seniors with their community. The City’s aim is to facilitate a Neighbourhood Group in each neighbourhood in Richmond.

In 2025, the City received a BC Healthy Communities Age-Friendly Communities grant to facilitate an Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Group in the Blundell neighbourhood in summer 2025. This report shares highlights of the Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group project and its implementation process.

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<sup>1</sup> [Age-friendly domains](#) include outdoor spaces and public buildings; transportation; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communications and information; housing; and community and health care.





## NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP PROCESS

The Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group was comprised of nine seniors, 55+ years, living in the Blundell neighbourhood. Where possible, efforts were made to ensure participants were diverse in age, gender, culture, socio-economic status and ability. Over half (55 per cent) of the participants identified as female and the remainder identified as male. The age of participants ranged from 55 to 85+ years. Among the nine participants, one individual identified as a member of the 2SLGBTQI+ community and one participant was a recent newcomer to Canada.

The mandate of the Neighbourhood Group was to engage in dialogue to explore and identify age-friendly elements (or potential areas for age-friendly improvements) in the Blundell neighbourhood, raise awareness of available age-friendly resources and services in the area and foster connections among seniors.

The Neighbourhood Group met five times at City Centre Community Centre from May to June 2025, with each meeting lasting two and a half hours. The format for each meeting was organized around a social activity/icebreaker, educational opportunity, discussion period and an opportunity for informal conversation over refreshments.

A facilitated bus tour of the Blundell neighbourhood provided an opportunity to further explore and discuss age-friendly elements in the local area. Guest speakers were invited to present on age-friendly topics related to the group's interests and included representatives from the City's Transportation Department, Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives (RCRG), and Richmond Division of Family Practice. Participants also received a tour of the Seniors Centre at the Minoru Centre for Active Living.

In addition, a range of print resources were made available to the group to raise awareness of programs, services and support for seniors to age well in place. Resource materials included the RCRG Seniors Directory and emergency preparedness resources from PreparedBC, such as the Earthquake and Tsunami Preparedness Guide, Home Emergency Plan, Resources for People with Disabilities and the Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide.



## WHAT WE HEARD

Participants discussed the eight domains of an Age-Friendly City in relation to identified features and services available in the Blundell neighbourhood. This included outdoor spaces and public buildings, transportation, housing, social well-being and participation, respect and social inclusion, community engagement and employment, communication and information, and community support and health services.

While all eight domains of an Age-Friendly City were discussed, the depth of conversation varied based on participants' interests and lived experiences in the Blundell neighbourhood. The group engaged most extensively with topics related to outdoor spaces and buildings, as well as social well-being and participation.

An overview of each domain of age-friendly cities and participant feedback, based on their experiences living in the Blundell neighbourhood, is summarized in this report. The domains are presented in an order that reflects the depth of discussion during the Neighbourhood Group sessions.

### **Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings**

Age-friendly outdoor spaces and buildings refer to spaces that are safe, accessible and positively impact seniors' mobility, independence, quality of life and ability to age in place. Examples include design and maintenance of sidewalks and curbs, street intersections and crosswalks, green spaces, street lighting, regulation of traffic flow, accessibility and safety of buildings, pedestrian walkways and sidewalks.

### **Participant Feedback**

Neighbourhood Group participants expressed overall satisfaction with the general condition and maintenance of sidewalks throughout the Blundell area. The beautification of streets, particularly the trees and seasonal lighting along Granville Avenue, was highlighted as a positive feature that enhances the walking experience and neighbourhood character. Blundell Neighbourhood Park and the Railway Greenway were valued as key community assets that are well-utilized and provide opportunities for residents of all ages to gather. Participants also noted that Blundell Centre provides a good range of amenities and shops, making it an important destination for daily needs.

Areas for improvement related to pedestrian pathways were identified, such as the lack of sidewalks or narrow shoulders along some secondary streets that do not buffer pedestrians and cyclists from vehicle traffic. Overgrown vegetation at some intersections was also noted to limit visibility. In addition, delayed response time at one pedestrian-activated crossing was identified. Construction along Gilbert Road that was active during the Neighbourhood Group was identified as a safety concern for pedestrians due to insufficient signage throughout the construction zone.

Participants identified opportunities to improve the age-friendliness of Blundell Neighbourhood Park, such as through enhanced lighting, increased seating and picnic tables, removal and pruning of some tree debris, improved wayfinding signage to washrooms and enhanced pedestrian access throughout the park. Access to some recreational areas within Blundell Neighbourhood Park, particularly the basketball court, was reported to be challenging due to missing or inaccessible pathways.

With regard to the Railway Greenway, some seniors expressed concern with the speed of cyclists and e-scooters along the multi-use pathway. Limited seating, lack of weather-protected benches, placement of garbage bins near seating and a desire for additional community gardens along the corridor were also noted as considerations for improving the age-friendliness of this well-used amenity.

Additionally, participants noted poor walking conditions within the Blundell Centre property due to uneven surfaces and accumulated trash in some areas of the shopping centre.

## Action and Follow-Up

The group received a presentation from the City of Richmond Transportation Department. The discussion emphasized the City's projects, policies and programs to enhance mobility options in the City and safer conditions for all road users, along with education and enforcement related to traffic and accessibility considerations. In response to

feedback expressing the desire for sidewalks on secondary streets, the Transportation Department noted that older neighbourhoods were typically designed with sidewalks on one side of the street and new sidewalks are typically delivered through redevelopment or through the City's Local Area Services Program (LASP). The LASP enables property owners to initiate and fund local improvements through a cost-sharing arrangement with the City. City departments are reviewing specific locations for potential improvements.

Following the Neighbourhood Group meetings, participant feedback was shared with the relevant City departments to help address immediate concerns where possible and to inform future planning and improvements. As a result, the City's Parks Department initiated several actions to respond to the feedback. Two new benches were purchased to increase seating at Blundell Neighbourhood Park and enhanced washroom signage has been installed to improve wayfinding within the park. Tree-related maintenance has been addressed, with additional follow-up scheduled as needed. In addition, a site review was completed along the Railway Greenway to identify and relocate waste bins that were too close to seating.

The Parks Department also noted that while there are currently multiple seating opportunities along the Railway Greenway, an audit will be conducted to identify where seating enhancements may be needed. A signage audit will also be conducted along the multi-use pathway to identify where and what types of signage could be enhanced. In addition, a review of the Community Gardens Program will take place in 2026. Feedback regarding the walkway access to the basketball court in the Blundell Neighbourhood Park was shared with the Richmond School District and noted for assessment.

Concerns about overgrown greenery on some streets were addressed by the City's Public Works Department. Participant concerns related to walking conditions around Blundell Centre was shared with the property owner for their awareness and consideration.



## Social Well-Being and Participation

Age-friendly social well-being opportunities are affordable and accessible to enable seniors to reduce isolation, connect to their community and enjoy good health and longevity. Age-friendly considerations include inclusive and affordable programs and services, offered at convenient locations and times, and a variety of opportunities to suit the different interests and needs of seniors.

### Participant Feedback

Neighbourhood Group participants appreciated the wide variety of programs offered at community centres in Richmond. Seniors residing in the Blundell area reported using nearby facilities such as Thompson Community Centre, City Centre Community Centre, West Richmond Community Centre and the Seniors Centre at the Minoru Centre for Active Living. Participants expressed appreciation for intergenerational music and technology programs at the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living, which foster meaningful connections between age groups and support social inclusion. Dog parks were also highlighted as valuable informal social spaces, where seniors naturally connect with others and build relationships through shared activities.

In terms of programming, participants suggested additional educational workshops on topics related to seniors well-being such as fraud and scam prevention,

as well as social groups for 2SLGBTQI+ communities and intergenerational engagement. Participants also suggested online social programs that help isolated or homebound seniors foster and maintain connections, such as virtual opportunities to play games or chat with other seniors.

While the City's program registration system works well for many, a few participants noted that the 9:00pm opening of seasonal program registration was too late and that navigation of the online system was difficult without in-person assistance. While additional telephone support was available on registration opening night, those needing in-person support reported that some popular programs were already full or had waitlists the next morning.

### Action and Follow-Up

Feedback about online program registration was shared with relevant City departments, who were aware of these concerns and already implementing solutions. These include enhancing Call Centre support during registration periods and providing technology education ahead of program registration to enhance seniors' comfort with using their personal devices to use the online registration system. For programs that reach capacity and are waitlisted on registration night, efforts are made to accommodate waitlisted customers as spaces become available and additional classes are added. Feedback related to additional types of programs suggested by participants was shared with relevant

City departments for future consideration. While a number of suggested programs are already available in recreation facilities, the participant feedback highlighted an opportunity to increase awareness of these program offerings, particularly among seniors who are not already engaged in community programs.

## **Communication and Information**

Age-friendly information about programs and services is accessible and easy to all seniors with varying needs and abilities, enabling them to stay informed and actively engaged. This includes using a variety of communication methods, ensuring information is presented in accessible and readable formats across different technologies (e.g. screen readers), improving access to technology and digital literacy support, and providing a centralized system for accessing information.

### **Participant Feedback**

Seniors in the Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group appreciated having access to information through multiple channels, including the City's website, Let's Talk Richmond, Richmond News and Seniors Coordinators at local community centres, who often share details about upcoming activities and events. For participants who were already engaged in activities at community centres, promotion of programs through Seniors Coordinators, posters and word of mouth was valued, with the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living specifically highlighted as an effective venue to receive information.

Participants appreciated that information about City engagement opportunities shared through Let's Talk Richmond was clear and easy to scan. Group members reported feeling confident in filtering out information that was not relevant to them and engaging with topics of personal interest.

Participants noted that Richmond News email updates kept them informed about citywide events, though some mentioned that events are sometimes shared after they have occurred. Several participants communicated

that they had relied on physical newspapers, highlighting that some seniors are not digitally literate or have difficulty accessing online information.

While participants found the City's website to be a valuable resource, they expressed a desire for improved usability. Participants noted that the website's automatic translation feature could be inaccurate at times. Some participants also experienced challenges locating information due to the need to click through multiple layers of webpages, as well as difficulty locating neighbourhood-specific events on the event calendar. Some seniors reported difficulty navigating the program registration webpage, especially when searching for programs across multiple facilities based on a specific date and time.

Participants expressed a desire for better ways to learn about community-based services for seniors, particularly for those who were not already engaged in recreational or community programs. Many were not aware of resources such as Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives' seniors services, including the social prescribing and Better at Home programs, prior to joining the Neighbourhood Group. Seniors emphasized the need for a centralized location that brings together information on available programs, supports and services available in the community.

### **Action and Follow-Up**

Feedback regarding the importance of accessible and inclusive communication was shared with relevant City departments and partner organizations and will inform future planning. Feedback about the importance of accessible communications that accommodate a range of needs as well as seniors' preference for print materials was acknowledged, alongside the City's ongoing efforts to balance these with sustainability measures. The desire for more centralized and timely communication was noted by City departments and partner organizations. The City launched an online Activity Search tool in October 2024 that enables residents to tailor their search for parks, recreation and culture programs and filter results to make it easier to plan and register for

programs. In addition to the 55+ printed program guide, the City also prints the Arts Programs Guide, that highlights a range of creative programs and learning opportunities offered at the Richmond Cultural Centre and Richmond Cultural Centre Annex.

The City continues to enhance accessibility features across its communication channels. In addition to aligning communication efforts with the needs of diverse audiences, actions will be taken to ensure information is shared with seniors through community centres. Seniors Coordinators at Thompson Community Centre, City Centre Community Centre and West Richmond Community Centre will continue to support Blundell seniors by providing in-person assistance and access to clear, current and easy-to-access information about available programs and services.

Feedback regarding lack of awareness about the range of programs and services available among seniors who are not already engaged in recreational and community programs highlights an opportunity to better understand their needs and to strengthen awareness of offerings. The City is working with a range of community organizations to identify opportunities to improve awareness of community programs and services for seniors.



## Transportation

Age-friendly transportation planning aims to create affordable, safe, well-designed transportation networks in proximity to support services and social connections to encourage independent mobility. Examples include visibility of street signs and numbers, lighting at intersections, accessibility and availability of parking, safety and frequency of public transportation, accessible parking spots and permits and availability and accessibility of drop-off and pick-up areas.

### Participant Feedback

Neighbourhood Group participants identified a mix of strengths and challenges in local transportation. Most participants reported using private transportation, noting that services such as Uber were efficient,

though costly. Public transit, including the Canada Line, worked well for travel to destinations outside of Richmond, and appreciation was expressed for bus drivers that accommodate passengers who are rushing to stops.

Participants noted that the lack of shelter at some bus stops in the Blundell area made travel via public transit difficult during inclement weather. Long distances between bus stops were also challenging for seniors with limited mobility, leading some to depend on driving. Travel using public transit to locations within Richmond could be difficult due to limited bus frequency, particularly along east-west routes, and overcrowding during peak hours further reducing accessibility. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding limited access to HandyDART, with high demand affecting the availability and reliability of the service.

Participants highlighted the need for more accessible parking spaces at Blundell Neighbourhood Park, with particular emphasis on ensuring that stalls are wide enough to accommodate mobility devices. Parking fees at City Centre Community Centre were noted as a potential barrier to participation for some seniors.

### Action and Follow-Up

Feedback regarding the need for accessible parking spaces at Blundell Neighbourhood Park was noted by the City's Parks Department for future enhancement. Feedback regarding parking fees at City Centre Community Centre was acknowledged, alongside ongoing efforts to promote free street parking and nearby locations where free parking is available. Feedback regarding overcrowded public transit, limited options for east-west routes, long distance between bus stops and concerns with the HandyDART service was shared with TransLink through the suggested online customer feedback portal. The City also continues to provide feedback to TransLink for enhanced bus service in Richmond. Comments about the desire for additional shelters and seating at some bus stops was noted.

As part of the presentation from the City's Transportation Department, participants learned about the City's programs aimed at enhancing bus stops and implementing transit amenities to improve service and accessibility. The presentation clarified that bus shelters are available at high-use bus stops and the City continues to deploy new bus shelters annually. Some sites are limited due to space constraints and will be enhanced through the development process. Participants were also encouraged to share their feedback about public transit directly with TransLink.

## Housing

Age-friendly housing is safe and well-designed to accommodate people's changing needs and located near essential services and opportunities for social connection. It includes the availability of housing with different levels of support, from independent living to assisted living and long-term care, allowing seniors to transition as their mobility, health or care needs evolve. Other key factors include accessibility and affordability of housing and the proximity to services to ensure seniors can maintain their independence and quality of life.

### Participant Feedback

Most Neighbourhood Group participants reported having lived in the Blundell neighbourhood for many years, while one was a recent arrival. Overall, participants expressed satisfaction and a sense of security with their current housing situations. To support aging in place, some participants expressed interest in accessing more information about available grants to help offset the costs associated with home maintenance.

Some participants expressed a desire to downsize; however, they noted that available smaller units were either too limited in square footage or prohibitively expensive. This highlights the need for a greater range of appropriate and affordable housing options along the continuum to better support seniors seeking to transition into homes that accommodate their evolving needs while remaining in the Blundell neighbourhood.



Participants also identified a general lack of awareness regarding the availability of long-term care services in the neighbourhood, as well as how to navigate access to them. Additionally, long waitlists and the high cost of assisted living were cited as major challenges, particularly for those requiring more comprehensive care.

### Action and Follow-Up

Feedback from the Neighbourhood Group regarding the limited availability of accessible housing options that support aging in place, along with affordability pressures impacting seniors were shared with the City's Housing Office and will be considered as part of ongoing development and refinement of new and existing policies. Feedback related to policy and design was shared with the City's Policy Planning Department. These concerns align with Phase One findings of the Official Community Plan (OCP) update, which identifies expanding housing options for vulnerable populations, including seniors, as a key strategic direction. Feedback regarding long waitlists, the high cost of assisted living, the need for information about available long-term care and assisted living options, as well as support to access these services, was noted by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) for consideration in ongoing service planning. VCH provided information and resources on accessing long-term care and assisted living options that were shared with the Neighbourhood Group participants.



## Community Support and Health and Wellness Services

Age-friendly community support and health and wellness services are accessible and available in a range of options for those with varying health conditions. This allows seniors the opportunity to remain in their communities and maintain their health and independence. Examples include a range of health services such as home care, nutrition advice, physical activity programs and the availability of adult day programs and residential facilities for people who are no longer able to live at home.

### Participant Feedback

Many Neighbourhood Group participants reported having a family physician based in Richmond, but outside their immediate neighbourhood, with specialist care typically accessed in other parts of the city or outside of Richmond. Participants expressed interest in increased access to gerontology specialists to better support seniors' wellness needs. The recent closure of the LifeLabs clinic in the Blundell neighbourhood was noted as a significant inconvenience.

While a few participants identified VCH's Garrett Wellness Centre as an excellent provider of health and wellness services, overall awareness of available services, both within and beyond the neighbourhood, was limited. There was a strong desire among participants for a centralized and accessible source of information outlining the full range of health and wellness services available to seniors.

### Action and Follow-Up

Feedback regarding the limited availability of local healthcare services, desire for improved access to gerontology specialists, challenges related to travelling outside Richmond for specialist care and the difficulty in navigating the health services was shared with and noted by VCH and the Richmond Division of Family Practice for consideration in future service planning.



## Community Engagement and Employment

Age-friendly community engagement and employment allow seniors to maintain social connections, develop new skills and contribute to their communities in a meaningful way. This positively impacts their health and reduces age-related stigma, which in turn leads to seniors that are respected and engaged in their communities. Examples include opportunities to volunteer in the community, participate in local government meetings, find paid work suited to their skills and access clear information about available opportunities.

### Participant Feedback

Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage in the Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Group, viewing it as a meaningful and worthwhile initiative. Participants who were already involved in volunteer activities noted the availability of volunteer opportunities in the Blundell neighbourhood and beyond. However, they identified the need for improved promotion of available volunteer opportunities more widely to seniors who are not already engaged. The group discussed the importance of emphasizing how volunteer roles align with the diverse skills, experiences and interests that seniors may contribute to encourage broader participation.

Additionally, participants noted that part-time paid roles are limited, often restricted to lower-paid service positions. Some younger seniors may be interested in transitioning from full-time work to part-time work, underscoring the need for more varied and accessible paid options and pathways to learn about these opportunities.

### Action and Follow-Up

Feedback regarding limited awareness of available volunteer opportunities, as well as the desire for more employment options and skill-aligned volunteer roles, was shared with and noted by relevant City departments and partner organizations, including RCRG, for future planning. The City is currently



developing a new Volunteer Management Strategy to respond to the changing needs and interests of the Richmond community and to support volunteer engagement through meaningful, positive opportunities and experiences.

### **Respect, Social Inclusion and Cultural Safety**

Age-friendly communities promote respect, social inclusion and cultural safety of seniors, which positively impacts their overall well-being. This helps reduce ageism and stereotypes, fosters positive attitudes towards the aging population and encourages respectful social connections between all ages in the community. Examples include consulting seniors about their needs and interests, recognizing past and present contributions of seniors, integration of seniors with diverse backgrounds, and the inclusion of seniors in community events and intergenerational activities.

### **Participant Feedback**

Participants from the Neighbourhood Group generally reported feeling safe, respected and socially connected within the Blundell area. Programs such as Block Watch and the visible presence of RCMP bike patrols were seen as contributing to a stronger sense of safety.

### **Action and Follow-Up**

While overall perceptions of safety were positive, participants identified opportunities to strengthen community-based safety initiatives. Some participants discussed the potential value of emergency call infrastructure in parks, while acknowledging the need to consider feasibility and cost given widespread cellphone use. The Parks Department advised that while emergency phones are not commonly installed in municipal parks in the region, the topic will be raised for regional discussion should future opportunities arise.



## PARTICIPANTS' REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

To assess the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Group, pre- and post-program surveys were completed by all participants. These surveys provided insights directly from participants before and after the sessions, helping to inform the City's approach to facilitating future Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups in Richmond.

According to the surveys, the most significant changes from participation in the Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group were observed in participants' familiarity with the age-friendly concept, their awareness of and access to programs and services available for seniors in Richmond, and their sense of belonging in the neighbourhood. Familiarity with the age-friendly concept and awareness of programs and services both increased from 44 per cent before the program began to 89 per cent after the program was completed, while participants' sense of belonging in the neighbourhood increased from 55 to 89 per cent.

There was no change in participants' confidence in advocating for age-friendly changes in their neighbourhood or in their sense of safety within the community.

Additionally, 100 per cent of participants agreed that participation in the Neighbourhood Group provided them with an opportunity to learn more about available seniors' programs and services in Richmond and 94 per cent agreed that they learned more about their neighbourhood. Meanwhile, 88 per cent of participants indicated that their participation contributed to positive change in their community, provided a new experience and built connections with their neighbours.

Participants described their experience with the engagement as "informative, hopeful, respectful and positive." Many found "the process very well implemented." These results highlight the program's positive impact in enhancing awareness, confidence and community connections among seniors.

## NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

The City of Richmond recognizes the important role of applying an age-friendly lens at the neighbourhood level in building community and keeping people healthy, well-connected and able to participate in their neighbourhoods.

The Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group sessions offered valuable insights into both the strengths and challenges experienced by seniors in the community. Participants highlighted key strengths of the Blundell neighbourhood, including availability of parks and recreational areas such as Blundell Neighbourhood Park; a variety of accessible programs and services at nearby community centres; informal social spaces; intergenerational opportunities; and the sense of safety and social connection in the neighbourhood.

They also identified areas for improvement, such as pedestrian infrastructure, enhancing accessibility within local parks, more inclusive communication methods that accommodate different needs related to usability, and greater awareness and alignment of volunteer opportunities with seniors' skills. Participants also noted the importance of increasing availability of affordable housing and awareness of long-term care services and expanding programming that supports intergenerational connections and diverse communities, including 2SLGBTQI+ seniors.

All feedback gathered through the Neighbourhood Group process has been shared with relevant City departments and partner organizations. While this report highlights key themes that were discussed, all feedback has been communicated in full to inform both immediate actions and longer-term planning.

Additionally, these insights, alongside results from the pre- and post-program surveys, will help shape future age-friendly initiatives in Richmond. The City will refine the Neighbourhood Group process by building on strengths and incorporating participants' feedback to refine key elements such as outreach strategies and session structure, ensuring future group sessions continue to be meaningful, inclusive and responsive to the needs of local seniors.

After the conclusion of the Age-Friendly Blundell Neighbourhood Group, in January 2026, the City of Richmond was accepted as a member of the World Health Organization's Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, reflecting the City's commitment to engage seniors and collaborate across sectors to create age-friendly built and social environments. As the City continues to implement Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups across all neighbourhoods in Richmond, emerging trends will be monitored to support the broader implementation of Richmond's Seniors Strategy, particularly Strategic Direction 1: creating age-friendly neighbourhoods that support aging in place. These efforts align with the Seniors Strategy's broader vision of ensuring that "all seniors living in Richmond are safe, respected, healthy, and engaged in their communities."



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