

City of Richmond

Age-Friendly Cambie/East Richmond Neighbourhood Group Final Report

Community Social Development





TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP PROCESS 3

WHAT WE HEARD 4

 Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings..... 4

 Transportation..... 5

 Housing 6

 Social Well-being and Participation..... 7

 Respect, Inclusion and Cultural Safety 8

 Community Engagement and Employment 8

 Communication and Information 9

 Community Support and Health and Wellness Services..... 9

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES..... 10

NEXT STEPS 11

CONCLUSION 11



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 to clarify areas of focus and includes actions that build on previous and ongoing work to achieve the desired outcomes.

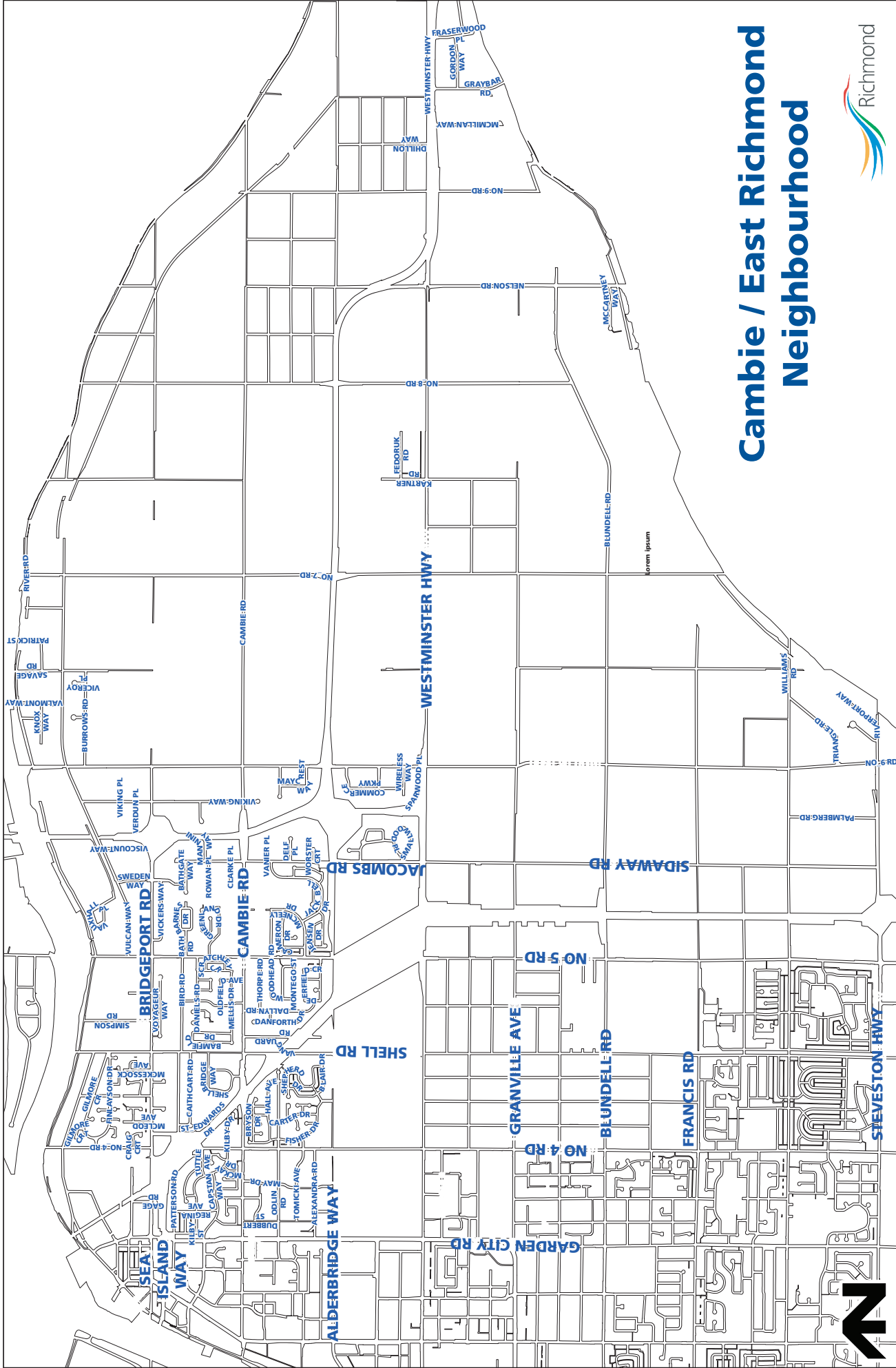
Strategic Direction 1, “Age-friendly neighbourhoods that support seniors to age in place,” recognizes the important role age-friendly neighbourhoods play in building community, keeping people healthy, well-connected and able to participate in their neighbourhoods throughout their aging journey.

The Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Group project is designed to achieve this by engaging seniors in planning at the neighbourhood level and applying the World Health Organization’s eight domains of

an Age-Friendly City¹ to identify areas of strength and areas for potential improvement. In addition, participants learn about existing programs and services available to support seniors and connect them socially with other seniors in their community. The City’s aim is to facilitate a Neighbourhood Group in each neighbourhood in Richmond.

In 2024, the City received a federal New Horizons for Seniors Program grant, to facilitate two Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups, one of which was initiated in fall 2024 in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. The intent of this report is to share highlights of the Age-Friendly Cambie/East Richmond Neighbourhood Group project, its implementation process and suggested next steps.

¹ [Age-friendly domains](#) include outdoor spaces and public buildings; transportation, including traffic safety; social well-being and participation; respect, social inclusion and cultural safety; community engagement and employment; communications and information; community support, and health and wellness services.



Cambie / East Richmond Neighbourhood



NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP PROCESS

The Age-Friendly Cambie/East Richmond Neighbourhood Group was comprised of 12 seniors aged 55+ living in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. Where possible, efforts were made to ensure there was diversity in age, gender, culture, socio-economic status and ability. Over half (60 per cent) of the participants identified as female and the remainder identified as male. Ages ranged from 65 to 84 years. Among the 12 participants, three individuals identified as living with disabilities, including one with a mobility disability and two with sight loss. The group also reflected a diverse mix of ethnic backgrounds.

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

The Neighbourhood Group met six times at East Richmond Community Hall between October to December 2024, 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 walking and bus tour of the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood provided an opportunity to further explore and discuss age-friendly elements in the neighbourhood. Guest speakers were invited to present on age-friendly topics related to the group's interests and included representatives from Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives (RCRG); East Richmond Community Association; and the City of Richmond's Transportation Department and Housing Office. Participants also received a tour of the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living.



Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

Age-friendly outdoor spaces and public 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.

Neighbourhood Group participants identified several strengths related to outdoor spaces and public buildings in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. Albert Airey Neighbourhood Park serves as a popular space for recreational and social activities for residents of all ages. Enhanced accessibility features such as wheelchair ramps and functional black-top pathways at the park promote accessibility for those requiring assistive devices and using strollers. Residents also appreciated the recently added designated left hand turn lane and curb edges in specific areas in the neighbourhood, as these enhancements improved traffic flow and feelings of safety.

Participants noted areas for improvements related to uneven surfaces and overgrown greenery impacting sidewalk walkability and a lack of sidewalks on some streets. These concerns were highlighted as barriers to pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, particularly for persons living with a disability.

Concerns were also raised about the enforcement of accessible parking regulations, with participants noting that some individuals are using these spaces throughout the neighbourhood without displaying an accessible parking permit. They highlighted the need for more visible and clear signage to ensure that accessible parking spots are properly identified.

With regard to wayfinding, participants noted challenges locating the new Richmond East Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC). Clear signage is essential for guiding individuals and ensuring they can easily locate services in the community. A lack

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants discussed the eight domains of an Age-Friendly City in relation to identified features and services available in the Cambie/East Richmond 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' interest and lived experience in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. The group engaged most extensively with topics related to outdoor spaces and public buildings, and transportation.

An overview of each domain of Age-Friendly Cities and participant feedback in relation to their experiences in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood is summarized below. The domains are presented in an order that reflects the depth of discussion during the Neighbourhood Group sessions.

of visible signage for the East Richmond Community Hall was also noted, which participants indicated could lead to low awareness among neighbourhood residents about the facility's location, and the services and programs it offers.

The group received a presentation from the City of Richmond Transportation Department and were informed of the City's commitment to transportation and pedestrian safety. The discussion emphasized the importance of education and enforcement of traffic and accessibility considerations. Feedback regarding missing sidewalks was also shared with the Transportation Department. Staff provided information on the process for sidewalk expansion, noting that new sidewalks are typically delivered through redevelopment or through the City's Local Area Services Program (LASP), which enables property owners to initiate and fund local improvements through a cost-sharing arrangement with the City.

Participant feedback related to outdoor spaces and public buildings was shared with the relevant City departments and partner organizations. Concerns about uneven surfaces and overgrown greenery on some streets were forwarded to the City's Public Works Service Centre for assessment and repair. Several comments related to signage and accessibility, including challenges wayfinding to the UPCC and East Richmond Community Hall were shared with relevant partner organizations, including Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

Transportation

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

Neighbourhood Group participants identified several positive aspects of transportation in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. Participants highlighted recent road and sidewalk improvements, including

the use of textured surfaces to assist visually impaired individuals. The construction of a new blacktop sidewalk has made walking safer and more accessible, particularly for wheelchair users. Additionally, traffic light updates incorporating audible signals and countdown timers were noted as improvements that enhances pedestrian safety.

Public transit options and frequency to key locations within and outside of the neighbourhood were identified as limited. While Cambie Community Centre and East Richmond Community Hall are conveniently located, infrequent bus access to both facilities poses access challenges for neighbourhood residents who live farther away from the facility and do not drive. While Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood has various shops and services, more public transit options, particularly travelling north and south, were noted as desirable to support access to essential services like specialized healthcare and larger grocery stores outside the neighbourhood.

Participants noted that some bus stops in the neighbourhood lack shelter or seating, making them undesirable to use, particularly during inclement weather. The group recognized and appreciated recent pedestrian crossing upgrades, particularly at the No. 5 Road and Cambie Road intersection, while also raising concerns about the need for additional audible traffic signals and adequate crossing times to enhance safety and accessibility.

Feedback regarding limited public transit options, particularly for north and south travel and access to essential services, was shared with the City's Transportation Department to inform ongoing discussions with TransLink. Comments about the desire for additional shelters and seating at some bus stops and for additional audible traffic crossing signals were also noted. As part of the presentation from the City's Transportation Department, participants were informed of the City's programs aimed at enhancing bus stops and implementing transit amenities to improve service and accessibility. It was clarified that bus shelters are available at a majority of stops along Cambie Road and the City continues to deploy new bus shelters annually.



Housing

Age-friendly housing is safe, well-designed and in proximity to support services and social connections. It includes access to a range of options that accommodate changing needs over time by offering 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.

Most of the Neighbourhood Group participants indicated that they have lived in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood for many years and are satisfied and secure with their current housing situation. However, participants noted that the current housing options in the neighbourhood do not fully support aging in place. Participants highlighted that the limited availability of affordable and accessible housing options makes it difficult for seniors to remain in their community as their needs evolve. They noted the need for options in the neighbourhood that could accommodate different levels of care, including independent living, assisted living and long-term care. Participants also emphasized the importance of

incorporating design features that provide space for mobility aids and other accessibility considerations.

Additionally, participants noted that while the neighbourhood offers a variety of services and amenities, there is a lack of accessible, informal gathering spaces such as coffee shops or a community hub for social connection. Informal gathering spaces are important for fostering engagement and reducing isolation among seniors. The availability of these spaces near housing developments would support social inclusion and help seniors remain connected to their community as they age. Participants recognized how affordability pressures and the cost of housing impacts seniors, not only in Cambie/East Richmond but across the city and region.

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. Additionally, the need for a range of options, such as independent living, assisted living, and long-term care, to support seniors as their needs evolve was shared with VCH.

Feedback related to policy and design, including the need for accessibility features such as more space for mobility aids, and the availability of gathering spaces near housing, 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. The OCP includes plans for a neighbourhood village in East Richmond that will bring together services, businesses, and amenities, with a focus on accessibility and community connection. In response to the identified need for informal gathering spaces, the Seniors Coordinator at Cambie Community Centre has connected with participants to explore the potential to host a local seniors' coffee hour.

Social Well-being and Participation

Age-friendly social well-being and participation opportunities are affordable and accessible to allow seniors to avoid isolation, connect to their community and enjoy good health and longevity. Examples include inclusive programs and services, affordability of services, convenience of location and times of programs and services, and a variety of programs and services offered.

Neighbourhood Group participants highlighted several strengths in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood, including the accessibility and variety of programs offered at Cambie Community Centre, East Richmond Community Hall, the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living, and other community facilities in Richmond. The convenient location of Cambie Community Centre and East Richmond Community Hall was viewed as an advantage for seniors living in the neighbourhood.

The Seniors Facility Pass, offered by East Richmond Community Association, was acknowledged as a benefit to removing barriers for low-income seniors to access recreation programs. It provides individuals aged 55 and older with access to different programs at Cambie Community Centre and East Richmond Community Hall for an annual fee.

While the City's program registration system works well for many, a few participants noted that seniors find the evening timing and online system navigation difficult without in-person assistance. While telephone support is available, those needing in-person support may have to wait until customer service is available the next morning, by which time some popular programs may already be full or have waitlists.

Feedback about the barriers to online program registration was shared with relevant City departments, who were aware of these concerns and already implementing various pilot solutions. This includes enhancing Call Centre support during registration periods and providing technology education and support specific to program registration to enhance seniors' comfort with using their personal devices and the online registration system.

Respect, Social Inclusion and Cultural Safety

Age-friendly communities promote respect, social inclusion and cultural safety of seniors, which positively impacts their 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, inclusion of seniors in community events, and intergenerational activities.

In the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood, many Neighbourhood Group participants reported feeling safe, respected and socially connected. However, some participants expressed a desire for stronger social connections with neighbours, particularly among those from diverse cultures. To further promote inclusivity and foster neighbourhood connections, participants suggested enhancing opportunities for social connection between diverse groups and cultures through events and community-based programs.

Participant feedback about the desire for more culturally inclusive programs was shared with relevant City departments to help inform future program and event planning. While a range of cultural programs and events already take place in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood and throughout the city, participants' input reinforces the importance of continuing to expand on and enhance inclusive opportunities that foster intercultural connection and community belonging.

Community Engagement and Employment

Age-friendly community engagement and employment allows 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.

In the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood, several Neighbourhood Group participants reported enjoying volunteerism in varying capacities, particularly with East Richmond Community Association.

Participants identified the need for greater awareness of available volunteer opportunities which suits seniors' skills. While opportunities exist, there was a sense that seniors' diverse skills and knowledge are not fully utilized, indicating room for expansion in this area, particularly opportunities for persons living with disabilities.

The City's Let's Talk Richmond online platform was mentioned as a useful consultation tool, however, participants suggested broadening consultation approaches to include methods that are not web based. They expressed interest in more direct methods, such as in-person meetings, phone consultations and communication with the Seniors Coordinators who work at local community centres and can support accessibility and connect seniors who may not use digital platforms.

Feedback regarding the need to further promote volunteer opportunities tailored to seniors' skills was shared with relevant City departments and community partners including RCRG. Suggestions to broaden public consultation methods beyond online platforms were also noted, including more accessible approaches such as in-person meetings and phone-based engagement. Strengthening the role of Seniors Coordinators in supporting participation among those less comfortable with digital tools was discussed with City and Community Association and Society staff that work directly with seniors to help inform future engagement strategies.

Communication and Information

Age-friendly communication about programs and services is accessible and easy to understand by all seniors with varying needs and abilities, allowing them to stay informed and actively engaged. This includes using clear and varied communication methods, ensuring information is presented in readable formats, improving access to technology and digital literacy support, and providing a centralized system for accessing information.

In the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood, Neighbourhood Group participants noted that information about seniors' programs and services offered by the East Richmond Community Association is communicated through multiple channels. This includes online content available on the City's website, as well as outreach by the seniors coordinator who regularly inform visitors about upcoming activities and events. East Richmond Community Association also provides a wide range of printed materials onsite to promote and raise awareness of programs and services for seniors, including the seasonally produced 55+ Program Guide, along with brochures, posters, pamphlets, and flyers. However, participants noted the importance of translating information into a variety of languages, such as Chinese and Punjabi and ensuring that communication materials are clear, easy to understand and accessible for individuals with varying literacy levels. Suggestions also included adapting both the content and the formats of materials, such as strategic plans, documents and websites, to better support individuals living with sight loss.

Feedback regarding the importance of multilingual and accessible communication was shared with relevant City departments and partner organizations, and will inform future planning. While the City of Richmond's website includes an embedded translation feature, some materials require translation beyond what is currently provided to better serve non-English speakers. Participant feedback reinforces the need for communication materials that are clear, easy to understand and accessible to individuals with varying literacy levels.

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.

Most of the Neighbourhood Group participants noted that they had access to a family physician and medical specialists, when required, but commented that they often need to travel outside of Richmond to meet with them. Participants attributed this to a shortage of general practitioners accepting new patients and limited availability of neighbourhood-based medical clinics, making it difficult for seniors to access healthcare services locally as they age. This necessitates longer travel and may not be an option as residents age and travel becomes more difficult.

Feedback regarding the limited availability of local healthcare services, challenges related to traveling outside Richmond for specialist care and the difficulty in accessing general practitioners was shared with and noted by VCH and Richmond Division of Family Practice for consideration in future service planning.



PARTICIPANT 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, enabling an evaluation of their expectations and experiences before and after the sessions. Participant feedback helps to inform the City's approach to facilitating future Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups in Richmond.

According to the surveys, the primary reasons for participating in the Neighbourhood Group (in order of frequency) were to contribute to positive changes in the neighbourhood, learn more about programs and services available to support seniors in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood and learn more about age-friendly planning.

Comparing responses between the pre- and post-program surveys highlighted the impact of the Age-Friendly Cambie/East Richmond Neighbourhood Group, showcasing improvements in participants' awareness of age-friendly concepts and available programs and services, and how to access them.

Survey results also reflected an increased sense of belonging and greater confidence in advocating for positive change in the neighbourhood to make it more seniors friendly. The most significant results

were in understanding the age-friendly concept and awareness of programs and services available to seniors in Richmond, which increased from 70 per cent before the program to 100 per cent after. This was followed by a reported increase in the ability to advocate for change in the neighbourhood to make it more age-friendly for seniors, increasing from 80 to 100 per cent. Additionally, participants reported a stronger sense of belonging and feeling of safety in the neighbourhood, which increased from 90 to 100 per cent.

All participants agreed that participation in the Neighbourhood Group provided them with an opportunity to do something different, meet new neighbours and learn about available programs and services to support seniors. Ninety-two per cent of participants indicated that participation in the Neighbourhood Group led to greater knowledge about their neighbourhood.

Participants described their experience with the program as "fruitful, inspiring, informative and encouraging." Many found it "enjoyable, communicative and a good opportunity to connect with others." These results highlight the program's positive impact in enhancing awareness, confidence and community connections among seniors.

NEXT STEPS

While this report summarizes the Neighbourhood Group's feedback, detailed feedback has been shared with all relevant City departments and partner organizations to inform short- and longer-term planning, including updates to the City's Official Community Plan.

Additionally, these insights, alongside results from the pre- and post-program surveys, will help shape future age-friendly initiatives in Richmond, such as further refining the Neighbourhood Group process by incorporating participant feedback related to Neighbourhood Group recruitment, session structure and ensuring each group is meaningful, inclusive and responsive to the needs of local seniors.

As the City continues to expand Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Groups across all neighbourhoods in Richmond, emerging trends will be monitored to support the broader implementation of Richmond's Council-adopted 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."

CONCLUSION

The City of Richmond recognizes the important role that age-friendly neighbourhoods play in building community and keeping people healthy, well-connected and able to participate in their neighbourhoods.

The Age-Friendly Cambie/East Richmond Neighbourhood Group sessions offered valuable insights into the experiences of seniors living in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. Participants highlighted key strengths of the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood, including accessible community spaces, diversity of programs and services available, affordability of the Seniors Facility Pass provided by East Richmond Community Association, accessible features at Albert Airey Neighbourhood Park and pedestrian safety improvements such as countdown timers and audible signals at traffic crossings. They also identified areas for improvement, such as specific segments of sidewalks, particularly for persons living with disabilities, more affordable and accessible housing options, and improved access to healthcare by increasing the availability of general practitioners and medical clinics in the Cambie/East Richmond neighbourhood. The need for a variety of communication mechanisms and formats that accommodate disabilities, language barriers and varying literacy levels was also noted. Neighbourhood Group discussions reinforced the importance of fostering social connections among varying cultures and making seniors aware of a variety of existing volunteer opportunities in the community.



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