

City of Richmond

# Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan

## 2019

Community Services Division







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 1
- 1. INTRODUCTION ..... 3
  - Defining Dementia ..... 3
  - Importance of Becoming Dementia-Friendly ..... 4
  - Impact of Dementia in City Facilities ..... 5
  - Dementia-Friendly Communities Initiative ..... 5
  - Alignment with Other City Plans and Strategies ..... 6
- 2. BACKGROUND ..... 7
  - Age-Friendly Communities Initiative ..... 7
  - UBCM Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program ..... 8
  - Specialized Programming ..... 8
  - Partnerships ..... 9
- 3. DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN PROJECT ..... 11
  - Working Group and Stakeholder Committee ..... 11
  - Community Engagement ..... 12
  - Project Findings and Key Themes ..... 17
- 4. DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN ..... 21
- 5. NEXT STEPS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION ..... 27
- 6. CONCLUSION ..... 29



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Richmond's Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan is intended to guide the City, Community Associations/Societies and key stakeholders to support people living with dementia and their families and caregivers. The Action Plan was created based on research about dementia, impacts of dementia, current dementia-friendly activities and findings from the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan project engagement activities.

An estimated 564,000 Canadians are living with dementia; 70,000 people are living with dementia in British Columbia; and 1,730 were diagnosed with dementia in Richmond in 2016/2017. The number of Canadians living with dementia is expected to increase as the population of seniors continues to grow. Stigma remains an issue for people living with dementia increasing their risk of isolation which is detrimental to their health and well-being. City staff have increasingly been reporting challenges when interacting with patrons with dementia who access City and Community Partner programs and services. It is anticipated that this will continue to increase as the population continues to age and residents continue to live in the community.

Richmond received Age-Friendly designation in 2015 for completing an Assessment and Action Plan and for its commitment to become more age-friendly. Developing a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan builds upon and complements age-friendly initiatives by addressing both physical and cognitive needs of people living with dementia. In 2018, the City received a \$25,000 Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Age-Friendly Community Grant to complete a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond. The Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan project resulted in gathering feedback from the community through various engagement activities to create a plan to support people living with dementia.

The project was guided by a Working Group and Stakeholder Committee including City staff, a person living with dementia and representatives from Community Associations and Societies; Alzheimer Society of B.C.; Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives; Vancouver Coastal Health; and Richmond Public Library.

Community engagement activities reached 313 participants and resulted in over 800 insights that helped guide the development of a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond. Highlights of project findings included programming for people living with dementia and their caregivers; supported transportation services; activation of outdoor spaces; programs and services to reduce isolation and support caregivers; and community awareness and staff training.

The Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond includes 25 actions categorized into four strategic directions that will be implemented over the next five years including: Awareness, Education and Stigma Reduction; Built Environment; Programs and Services; and Support for People Living with Dementia and their Caregivers.

A Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond aligns with the City's commitment to become more age friendly.

The actions outlined in the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan will ensure all Richmond residents living with dementia and their families and caregivers are included, supported and valued and continue to be active and engaged with their community.



# 1. INTRODUCTION



The Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan is a plan intended to guide the City, Community Associations/Societies and Key Stakeholders in building a community that is inclusive and supportive of people living with dementia and their caregivers and families.

This Action Plan was developed based on:

- research on dementia and statistics;
- current Dementia-Friendly Community activities; and
- project findings from community engagement activities including a survey, focus groups, a walking interview and community forum

## Defining Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a set of symptoms that are caused by different disorders affecting the brain. Alzheimer's disease is just one type of dementia. Other types of dementia include vascular; Lewy body; frontotemporal; and mixed dementia, which is when a person is living with more than one type of dementia.

It is important to note that dementia is different than normal age-related memory loss. Dementia causes physical changes to the brain which can result in changes in behaviour, personality and judgment. For some individuals these changes can impact the person's ability to perform everyday familiar tasks and activities, such as remembering the steps needed to brew a pot of coffee or attending a class at the local library. As a chronic, progressive and terminal

condition, dementia can eventually interfere with a person's ability to maintain activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, using the washroom and dressing<sup>1</sup>.

## Importance of Becoming Dementia-Friendly

An estimated 564,000 Canadians are living with dementia and the number is expected to rise to 937,000 in 15 years. An estimated 70,000 people are living with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia in British Columbia. Approximately 5,000 people in BC under the age of 65 have received a dementia diagnosis. The number of people living with dementia in Richmond increased from 1,150 in 2007/2008 to 1,730 in 2016/2017.<sup>2</sup>

With a growing and aging population, the number of Canadians living with dementia is expected to increase in future decades. In Richmond, 32 per cent of the total population is 55 years and over and is expected to increase to 39 per cent in 2026<sup>3</sup>. Approximately 60 per cent of people living with dementia remain in their homes, either alone or with a caregiver. People living with dementia continue to work, take part in community activities and remain connected with family and friends. However, anxiety, stigma and frustration can make it difficult to sustain activities and relationships particularly as the disease progresses.

Stigma remains one of the largest barriers for people living with dementia and often increases their potential risk for isolation which may have a negative impact of their health and well-being. Stigma plays a role in discouraging families and caregivers from confiding in others and getting the help and support they need. According to an online survey conducted by the Alzheimer Society of Canada, 61 per cent of respondents felt they would face discrimination of

some kind if they were living with dementia and 36 per cent said they would be uncomfortable interacting with a stranger who was living with dementia.

With support, people living with dementia can continue to live in their community safely and independently. Appropriate programs, services, training and education in the community will help to reduce stigma and increase awareness and understanding of dementia.

### Quick Facts

**16,000** The number of Canadians under the age of 65 living with dementia

**9** The approximate number of seniors diagnosed with dementia every hour in Canada

**25,000** The number of new cases of dementia diagnosed every year

**564,000** Canadians are currently living with dementia

**937,000** The number of Canadians who will be living with the disease in 15 years

**26 hours** The average number of hours that family/friend caregivers spend per week supporting a person with dementia

**56,000** The number of Canadians with dementia being cared for in hospitals even though this is not an ideal location for care

**1.1 million** The number of Canadians affected directly or indirectly by the disease

**\$10.4 billion** The annual cost to Canadians to care for people living with dementia

<sup>1</sup> Alzheimer Society of B.C. and Government of Canada National Strategy on Dementia 2019

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health, Chronic Disease Information Registries, 2016/2017, Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia Measures Report

<sup>3</sup> BC Statistics



## Impact of Dementia in City Facilities

As the population continues to age and residents are encouraged to remain independent in their communities and age in place, the number of residents with chronic conditions including people living with dementia accessing programs and services in City facilities will increase.

City staff increasingly report challenges when interacting with patrons with dementia who access City and community partner programs and services. The challenges affect staff time and existing resources.

Challenges reported by City and Community Association/Society staff include not being equipped with how to best respond and interact with patrons living with dementia and:

- Patrons asking for assistance in locating a missing family member or they themselves are lost;
- Patrons arriving for classes that are not scheduled;
- Patrons not able to function on their own in the centre without reminders and wayfinding directions from staff;
- Patrons who repeatedly ask the same question;
- Patrons dropped off by family members who are unable to independently function without staff or volunteer support;
- Assisting long time patrons who are no longer able to function in regular programs (e.g. disruptive to other patrons or unable to keep up) who have little or no family support.

## Dementia-Friendly Communities Initiative

A dementia-friendly community focuses on the inclusion of people living with dementia and stigma reduction. In a dementia-friendly community, the community is educated about dementia and people living with dementia feel supported by their community.

In 2015, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. launched their Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative. By providing tools, education and forging strategic partnerships, the Society is enabling local governments, the professional sector, community groups and the general public to become dementia friendly. The aim of the initiative is to create inviting and supportive communities where people living with dementia feel comfortable and included, ensuring support and accessibility for all residents.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is currently working with approximately twelve BC municipalities including Richmond on Dementia-Friendly Community initiatives with five communities currently in the implementation phase of their Dementia-Friendly Action Plans. The five municipalities include Burnaby, New Westminster and the North Shore (a tri-municipal partnership between the City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver). The Society, in partnership with the City of Vancouver, has also developed the Dementia-Friendly City Train the Trainer program to educate staff and volunteers in the workplace.

## Alignment with Other City Plans and Strategies

The Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan is a plan that aligns with and is supported by a range of City of Richmond plans and strategies. Key examples include the following:

*Building Our Social Future – A Social Development Strategy for Richmond 2013–2022:*

- Strategic Direction #3: Address the Needs of an Aging Population:
  - Action #9: Support aging in place initiatives and the ongoing development of Richmond as an age-friendly community.

*Seniors Service Plan 2015–2020:*

- Direction #2: Responsive and Relevant Services
  - Action 2.2: Review and Assess the proportion of outreach programming for seniors
- Direction #3: Respect, Inclusion and Sense of Belonging
  - Action 3.8: Launch an educational campaign to combat stereotypes and ageist attitudes

- Direction #5: Targeted Training and Professional Development
  - Action 5.4: Provide educational opportunities to staff, volunteers and partners to dispel myths and stereotypes of seniors and aging.

*Age-Friendly Action and Assessment Plan 2015–2020:*

- Direction 2.4: Social Participation: Supporting consistent outreach to seniors at risk of social isolation
- Direction 2.8: Community Support and Health Services: Exploring the Dementia-Friendly Communities initiative coordinated by the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

*Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023:*

- Focus Area #3: Enhance the equitable access to amenities, services and programs within and among neighbourhoods including:
  - Action #4: Enhancing partner outreach to groups where barriers to access and participation in services and programs have been identified.

## 2. BACKGROUND



Richmond is well positioned to become a Dementia-Friendly community. Being an Age-Friendly Community provides the needed foundation to support people living with dementia and their caregivers and families to remain healthy, engaged and connected in the community.

### Age-Friendly Communities Initiative

The Age-Friendly Community initiative, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006, was designed to optimize the health, participation and security of seniors throughout the course of aging by encouraging communities to adapt structures and services to increase accessibility and inclusion. An Age-Friendly city focuses on its social and physical environments with respect to a mix of land-use,

street connectivity, access to green spaces and neighbourhood aesthetics to promote healthy aging, as well as to support residents to maintain social ties to family and friends. The Age-Friendly City is accessible, in that its features and services are easy to get to and can be used by all age groups including people who use assistive devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, those with visual and hearing impairments, as well as other groups such as parents with strollers.<sup>4</sup>

In 2015, the City of Richmond completed a 2015–2020 Age-Friendly Assessment and Action Plan as part of the Ministry of Health’s Age-Friendly BC initiative to encourage communities to become Age-Friendly. The City received Age-Friendly designation in 2015

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. (2007). *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide*.

for completion of the Action Plan and for the City's commitment to become more age-friendly. The development of a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond builds upon and complements age-friendly initiatives by addressing the physical and cognitive needs of people living with dementia.

## UBCM Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program

Funded by the Province of BC and administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Age-Friendly Communities program assists local governments in BC to support and prepare for aging populations by developing and implementing policies and plans, undertaking projects that enable seniors to age in place, and facilitating the creation of age-friendly communities. Since 2005, the provincial government has provided \$6.25 million to support the program. To date, more than 148 local governments have completed 286 plans and projects have been completed or approved for funding. The Province of BC, in collaboration with key partners including health authorities, has advanced the age-friendly agenda since 2007 to engage and support local governments in preparing their communities for an aging population. The Ministry of Health committed an additional \$500,000 in funding for 2018 to support the Age-friendly Communities grant initiative program.

In 2018, through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Age-Friendly Communities program, the City received a \$25,000 Age-Friendly Community grant to create a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond. A Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond complements and builds upon existing City age-friendly actions and initiatives.

## Specialized Programming

City and Community Association/Society staff have created specialized outreach programs in response to the increasing number of patrons with changing physical and cognitive status attending programs.

Outreach programs have additional supports put in place to reduce barriers for participants who are at-risk, frail and isolated including reminder calls, transportation, volunteers, meals, social time and information and referral supports. Many referrals to the programs come from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) in addition to other community organizations serving seniors in Richmond.

Examples of programs currently offered by the City and community partners include:

- **Educational Workshops** on topics for people living with dementia and their caregivers and families including: Getting to Know Dementia; Introduction to Brain Health; Transition to Residential Care and Self-Care for Caregivers.
- **Minds in Motion® program** hosted at South Arm Community Centre and East Richmond Community Hall (Cambie) in partnership with Alzheimer Society of B.C.: participants enjoy light exercise, activities, social time and lunch in a relaxed atmosphere designed for people with early-stage memory loss and a friend, family member or care partner.
- **Music Works for Wellness Programs** at West Richmond Community Centre: offers participants opportunities to learn to drum or play the ukulele and discover the many benefits of playing and singing music including stress reduction, relaxation and support for overall health and well-being.
- **Iki Iki Social** at Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (Steveston) in partnership with Tonari Gumi: a social program for mild to moderate participants living with dementia with easier-paced and culturally-familiar activities in a safe and engaging program. The program is conducted in Japanese and English.
- **Sit and Be Fit** at Minoru Centre for Active Living and East Richmond Community Hall: a seated basic fitness class delivered in English, Cantonese and Mandarin and designed for people with limited physical abilities including those managing pain and chronic conditions. Transportation is provided.

- **Wellness Connections** at Minoru Centre for Active Living: an outreach program conducted in English, Cantonese and Mandarin designed to reintegrate frail, at-risk and isolated seniors back into the community. Participants have access to one-on-one information and referral and health navigation.

## Partnerships

Partnerships are essential in creating a Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond that will adequately address the needs of people living with dementia and their families and caregivers. A number of key partnerships involved in the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan project included the City, Community Associations/Societies as well as other key stakeholders.

## Community Associations/Societies

Community Associations and Societies are non-profit community organizations that work in partnership with the City of Richmond to provide a variety of recreational, cultural, educational and social opportunities to allow people of all ages to stay active and involved in the community. The City provides the facilities and core staffing, while the Community Associations/Societies fund and deliver programs and services.

Service and program delivery for Community Associations and Societies include:

- A Seniors Coordinator who plans and delivers programs and services specifically for people ages 55+ years;
- Delivery of specialized programming for seniors aged 55+ years who are vulnerable, at-risk and isolated in partnership with other community organizations;
- Information and referral for patrons and their families to healthcare and community programs and services

## Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) provides health care services through a network of hospitals, primary care clinics, community health centres and residential care

homes. In Richmond, VCH delivers programs and services for people living with dementia and their families and caregivers through the departments of Home and Community Care and Community Mental Health. VCH provides a range of support options designed to help people with ongoing health conditions to remain in their homes and to be as independent and safe as possible

Program and service delivery include:

- Adult Day Programs;
- Caregiver Support;
- Community Mental Health Team services including screening, assessment, access to activities and referrals to other services;
- Case Management;
- Geriatric Psychiatry Assessment and Treatment; and
- Home Support.

## Alzheimer Society of B.C.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and care for people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, as well as their caregivers, families and friends. Their mission is to ensure people affected by dementia are not alone, by educating and mobilizing a broader community of care around them, and supporting valuable research into the disease and people living with it.

Service and program delivery include:

- First Link® dementia support is a program that connects people with dementia and their care partners to support services, education and information at any stage of the journey including support groups and one-on-one phone calls.
- Minds in Motion® programs for people with early-stage memory loss and their caregivers to enjoy light exercise, activities, social time and lunch in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Early Stage and Caregiver Support Groups provide a safe environment to exchange information, experiences and coping strategies.



### 3. DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN PROJECT



The Dementia Friendly Community Action Plan project identified a set of actions that will ensure people living with dementia and their caregivers and families are connected, supported and valued through awareness and understanding, responsive and inclusive programming and well designed, accessible and supportive built environments.

The following project activities took place in 2018 under the guidelines and conditions of the UBCM 2018 Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program. The project was led by the Seniors Coordinator, Community Social Development with the support of a project consultant and other City staff.

#### Working Group and Stakeholder Committee

A dementia-friendly working group was formed at the beginning of the project to help guide project activities and play an active role in planning and participating in the community engagement activities. Seven members included a person living with dementia, caregivers and family members of people living with dementia, City staff and representatives from the Alzheimer Society of B.C., Vancouver Coastal Health and Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee.

A larger stakeholder committee was also formed at the beginning of the project to support direction of the project, provide expertise, resources and guidance as well as participate in project activities. Members of the stakeholder committee included

the dementia-friendly working group as well as City staff from different departments, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) representatives including Falls Prevention and Older Adult Mental Health, and service and housing providers. Members attended five meetings throughout the year, which included education sessions about dementia and dementia-friendly communities by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. On average a total of 15 members attended the meetings.

Members of the stakeholder committee included:

- Alzheimer Society of B.C.;
- City of Richmond, Transportation Planning Department;
- City of Richmond, Coordinator, Seniors Services and Seniors Wellness Coordinator;
- Person Living with Dementia, Alzheimer Society of B.C. Leadership Group;
- Minoru Seniors Society;
- MetroVancouver Housing Corporation;
- RCMP;
- Richmond Addiction Services Society;
- Richmond Public Library;
- Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee;
- Richmond Food Bank;
- Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives;
- Vancouver Coastal Health;
- Verve Senior Living (Gilmore Gardens Independent Senior Living).

## Community Engagement

People living with dementia and those affected by dementia—including friends, family, caregivers, neighbours and coworkers were invited to share their experiences and provide feedback by participating in a number of community engagement activities including a survey posted on the City’s online engagement platform, LetsTalkRichmond.ca, community and staff focus groups, a walking interview and community forum. Several adaptations were used to reduce barriers to participation including the provision of

transportation and translation at focus groups, mailed surveys upon request, information by telephone, on-site support at various community centres throughout Richmond and copies hand delivered by several stakeholder committee members and other health professionals. Community engagement activities reached a total of 313 participants.

### 1. Survey

A public engagement survey was developed to gather feedback and ideas from people living with dementia on how to make Richmond more dementia-friendly. A total of 125 people participated.

The survey asked participants about the following:

- Places and Locations: they visit in Richmond including parks, trails and cycling paths, community centres, faith based organizations and arts and heritage locations;
- Programs, Activities and Events: they enjoy including fitness class, events and festivals, educational workshops and volunteer activities;
- Service Utilization: including program registration, recycling and garbage and library services;
- Changes in Lifestyle: how living with dementia has changed the places they visit, how they get around, the number of activities they engage in and time spent with friends;
- Ideas to make Richmond Dementia-Friendly: and to highlight services, activities or programs that have helped them in their journey living with dementia.

The survey was posted on [LetsTalkRichmond.ca](https://lets-talk-richmond.ca), the City’s online public engagement platform from June 4 to July 1, 2019.

The survey was also available in hard copy at multiple city locations (e.g. Minoru Place Activity Centre, Richmond Public Library – Brighthouse Branch and community centres) and was available upon request by calling the Registration Call Centre. Several members of the stakeholder group representing key community partner organizations made copies



available to clients. Some community centres also provided displays with boxes to collect completed surveys. Volunteers were available at some locations to help participants complete the surveys.

## 2. Community Focus Groups

People living with dementia and their caregivers were invited to participate in focus groups across the city. Participants were asked to share their experiences and insights about City-managed places, spaces, services, programs and activities that are important to them. They were also asked to share how dementia may have changed their connections to others as well as ideas to make the community more dementia friendly. A total of 70 participants attended the community focus groups.

The community focus groups offerings included:

- Six community focus groups were offered in a variety of neighbourhoods including City Centre, South Arm, Cambie, Blundell, West Richmond and Steveston; of the six focus groups, three were cancelled due to low registration;
- Two focus groups were designated specifically for caregivers to attend with one offered as an evening session to accommodate caregivers who worked during the day;
- Registration for community focus groups was available in three ways: internet, in person and through the Registration Call Centre;
- Some community focus groups provided translation in Cantonese, Mandarin and Punjabi;
- Bus Transportation was made available from select community centres to community focus groups. Transportation was available upon and suggested for participants who were identified as living with barriers to participation.

## 3. Staff Focus Groups

Thirty-one City, Community Association/Society, Richmond Public Library and Vancouver Coastal Health staff participated in a total of five focus groups. Focus groups were organized based on their potential interaction with people living with dementia.

One of the key findings from the staff focus groups was that over 90 per cent of those who attended reported being directly or indirectly affected by someone living with dementia including caregiving for family members (e.g. parents, grandparents, spouses).

Participants shared experiences and insights about:

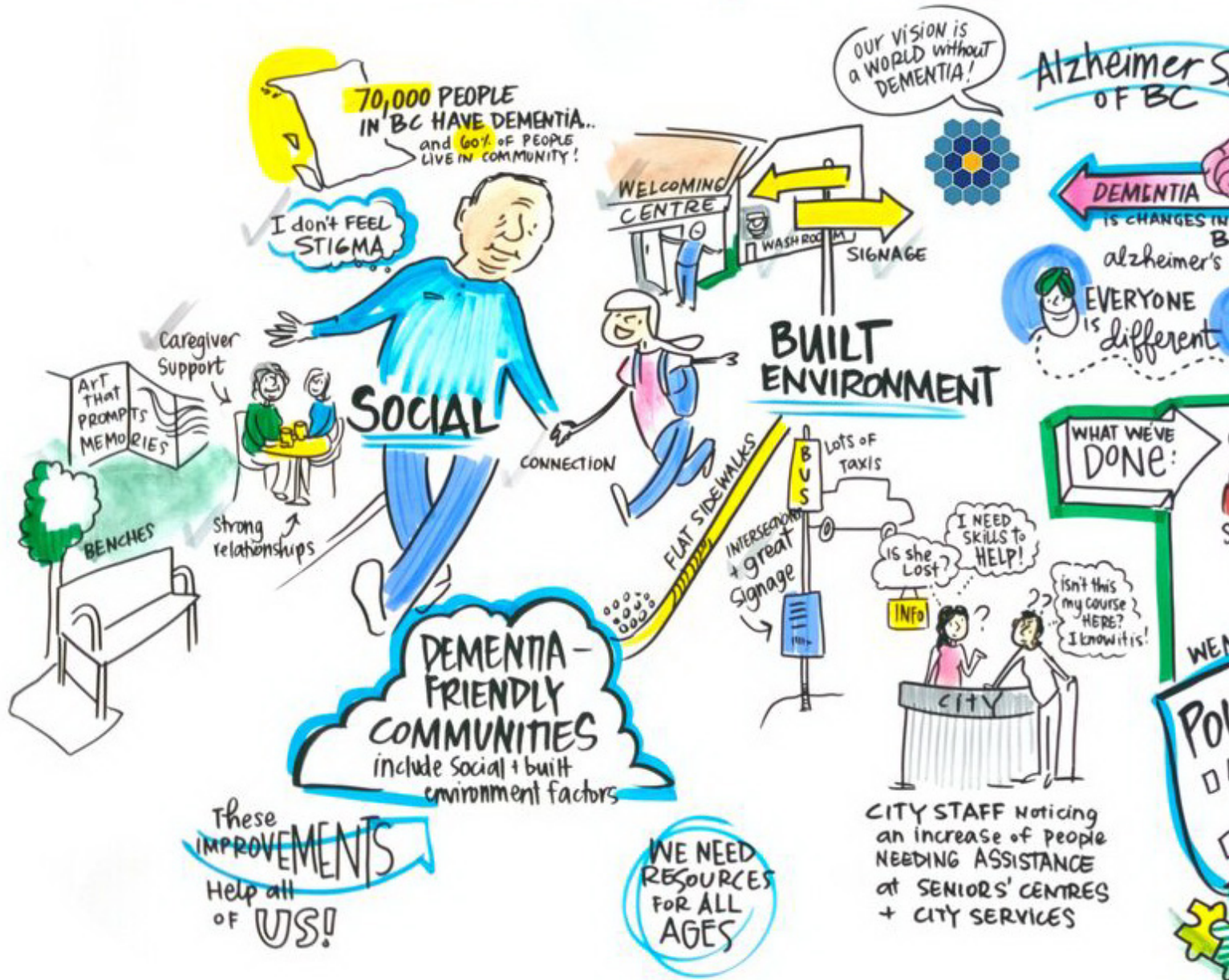
- Interactions and encounters with people living with dementia;
- What they do or say, or assistance they provide when needed;
- What would help them in their role;
- What kinds of support they think people living with dementia and their caregivers need; and
- What works well and what is transferable.

Of those who were caregiving many were unaware of services available for people living with dementia including services provided by the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Participants were also unaware of programs and services available to them from their employer including Employee Assistance Programs to help support employees caring for aging family including people living with dementia.

Participants voiced challenges with managing caregiving responsibilities while working full-time and taking care of their own families including:

- Taking vacation time and lunch hours to complete errands and accompany family to appointments;
- The inability to support people living with dementia to attend programs and services available during the day with no other family and supports available;
- Worrying about loved ones at home alone while they are at work;
- The stress and frustration navigating the health system to access services for people living with dementia;
- Having to schedule appointments during day time hours which often needs to be done from work and the stigma associated with disclosing personal information to colleagues.

# DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY



# WIDELY COMMUNITY

FORUM: SEPT 20, 2018



The composition of the focus groups included staff working directly with seniors and those working in frontline positions who may encounter people living with dementia.

#### 4. Walking Interview



A total of 15 people participated in a specialized focus group held to address elements in the built environment including City staff, a staff representing Alzheimer Society of B.C., the project consultant and two people living with dementia. City staff included the following areas:

- Community Social Development – Accessibility and Seniors;
- Policy Planning;
- Roads and Construction Services;
- Transportation.

The session included a “walking interview” led by two people living with dementia. Participants walked the neighbourhood of Richmond City Hall and

identified and discussed features that worked well or needed improvement, including:

- Signage and landmarks used for navigation and orientation;
- Sidewalks, bus stops and other features;
- Safety (lighting, fall risk, benches);
- Social opportunities.

Staff were given an opportunity to learn how people living with dementia see and interpret various aspects of the built environment and how elements of the built environment impact their safety and well-being as they navigate around the community.

Staff reported how the activity was valuable in highlighting a new perspective of the built environment. This activity highlighted the importance of considering items in City planning including:

- Roads and sidewalks;
- Stairs;
- Interior flooring;
- Colour and signage;
- Seating areas;
- Wayfinding and orientation using existing landmarks in the City (e.g. public art, statues, monuments and prominent distinctive buildings);
- Incorporating “quiet” places into existing and new facilities.

#### 5. Community Forum

The final activity in the project was a Dementia-Friendly community forum open to the public, City and Community Association/Society staff, health professionals and the general public. This drop-in style event included presentations covering topics such as dementia-friendly communities, the Dementia-Friendly project, a keynote presentation by a person living with dementia, and descriptions of specific programs and services offered in the community for at-risk and vulnerable people living in the community including:

- Alzheimer Society of B.C. programs including First Link® and Minds in Motion®;

- Music Works For Wellness Programs at West Richmond Community Centre;
- Iki Iki Social at Steveston Community Centre;
- Wellness Connections at Minoru Centre for Active Living;
- Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) Home and Community Care programs.

Community service providers also had information and resource tables, where they shared materials and

responded directly to questions and concerns from the public. It was estimated that 72 people attended the forum including people living with dementia, City and community partner staff, health professionals and the general public.

A highlight of the forum was the presence of a professional graphic illustrator who captured key themes and shared visions of participants and presenters that will be used in future Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan activities (see pages 14–15 for illustration).



## Project Findings and Key Themes

Data from all sources including surveys, focus groups, the walking interview and the community forum yielded more than 800 insights to make Richmond more dementia-friendly. Highlights of project findings include:

## Programs

The highest number of responses from all of the community engagement activities focused on programming for people living with dementia and the important role it plays in keeping them healthy, active

and connected to their communities. Respondents mentioned the desire for more programs and activities suitable for people living with dementia close to their neighbourhoods at community centres and Minoru Centre for Active Living. Other suggestions included a more dementia-friendly registration process, intergenerational programs, more adult day care programs and programs available through the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

## Built Environment

Responses around the built environment focused on transportation services, signage and facilities for people living with dementia. The majority of responses about transportation focused on the challenges experienced by people living with dementia including the dependence on others, increased risk for isolation and the lack of connection with the community. Respondents commented on the challenges using HandyDART services, issues with parking, training needs for bus drivers who may interact with people living with dementia and the need for more supported transportation services like the City's Community Leisure Transportation (CLT) program (City program providing affordable transportation with mainly to youth, seniors and people with disabilities).

Comments for signage included the need for clear signage to improve wayfinding around Richmond including the use of pictures, consistent fonts, more directional signage and using familiar monuments and pieces in the environment for navigation.

Caregivers commented that they will continue to utilize outdoor spaces in Richmond (e.g. parks and walking paths) often when their family member's physical health was good. Suggestions for improvements centred around pedestrian safety especially on bike paths and accessibility and location of public washrooms. Other suggestions included providing extra supports for outdoor programming to allow people living with dementia to continue to be outdoors including a group within existing programs such as the Walk Richmond program.

## Isolation

There were many responses from respondents commenting on isolation or the potential for isolation. The majority of feedback regarding isolation came from people living with dementia and their families and caregivers. Challenges shared included people living with dementia who have a very small or no network of support, lack of places to go where they felt comfortable, safe or supported and the inability to go places without a person accompanying them. Other comments included the frustration with the change in their previous lifestyle for people who had once enjoyed being active and social in their community and who were no longer able to do so due to barriers that prevented them from getting out or not being accepted in places they once visited.

**"I used to go out on my own every day. Now I can't go anywhere by myself. I have to wait for weekends when my family is free. I get stuck in the house all the time. It makes me depressed."**

Survey Respondent of person living with dementia, Female, 75+ years, Richmond Resident 10 years +

## Safety

The majority of responses about safety focused on the need for clear protocols or guidelines around missing persons. Comments focused on the need to develop clear guidelines to help support staff at all City facilities to locate missing participants and to help community members who are lost.



## Caregiver Support

Comments from respondents caregiving for someone living with dementia included the negative effects on their health and well-being including stress and burnout, isolation from family and friends and the challenge of juggling a full time job. Other comments included their lack of knowledge of programs and services for the person living with dementia as well as for themselves due to lack of time and/or resources. There were also comments about the need for more flexible respite programs and programs for people living with dementia where a caregiver could remain close by.

**“His circle gets smaller and smaller. These days it is just immediate family and caregivers.”**

Survey Respondent, Friend of person living with dementia, Female, 45+ years, Richmond Resident 10 years+

## Community Awareness

Respondents identified the need to raise awareness of dementia in the larger community through delivery of information in various forms, awareness campaigns or other marketing and promotional activities. There were also suggestions to include private businesses and schools in Richmond when delivering information and education to raise awareness to those outside of City facilities and to teach the younger generation about dementia.

## Staff Training

Respondents identified the need for training and education specifically for staff in customer service and front desk roles who may encounter people living with dementia. Education would help support staff to feel more confident and know what to do when encountering patrons living with dementia as well as reduce the stigma and pre-existing stereotypes associated with dementia. Respondents suggested exploring ways to utilize existing systems and protocols that work at other City facilities.





## 4. DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



The Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan for Richmond sets out four strategic directions with 25 recommended actions to be implemented over the next five years. The recommended actions build upon ongoing initiatives and were prioritized based on frequency of response and fit with aligned City plans and strategies. Four key themes emerged from the findings and were categorized into four strategic directions:

1. Awareness, Education and Stigma Reduction
2. Built Environment
3. Programs and Services
4. Support for People Living with Dementia and their Caregivers

The implementation of the actions will be coordinated by the Seniors Coordinator in Community Social Development with support from other City departments, Community Associations/Societies and key stakeholders.

Actions have been identified with the following timelines:

- On-going
- Short Term (0–2 years)
- Medium Term (2–3 years)
- Long Term (4–5 years)

It is important to acknowledge that while the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan covers a five year period, some actions have timelines that, due to community context, may no longer be considered short, medium or long term and are better suited to be ongoing actions.

## 1. AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND STIGMA REDUCTION

Education and awareness is key to understanding and reducing the stigma associated with dementia. Everyone can play a role in ensuring people living with dementia continue to be a part of their community and supporting their safety, independence, value and inclusion. Staff and community members need to understand how to provide appropriate assistance and to feel confident in knowing how to respond to a person with dementia. Appropriate protocols and procedures also need to be in place to ensure efficient use of resources and communication is clear in responding to situations involving people living with dementia and their caregivers and families.

Proposed Actions	Timelines
1.1 Work with key stakeholders and Community Associations/Societies to provide dementia awareness training to frontline staff and those who work directly with seniors.	Short Term (0–2 years)
1.2 Explore opportunities to educate the community about dementia including public awareness campaigns and activities to reduce stigma and existing stereotypes.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
1.3 Research best practices on how to communicate to the public what programs are suitable for individuals living with dementia.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
1.4 Work with Richmond Public Library staff to raise awareness of existing materials and electronic resources available to support people living with dementia and their caregivers.	Short Term (0–2 years)
1.5 Distribute materials and resources on dementia to City and Community Association/Society staff, businesses, schools and the public.	Short Term (0–2 years)
1.6 Continue to engage the Dementia-Friendly Stakeholder Committee in monitoring the progress and implementation of the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan actions, as well as participation in any other Age-Friendly activities and initiatives in Richmond.	Short Term (0–2 years)
1.7 Continue to monitor available grants, research, statistics, current trends and best practices to increase awareness, education and training and reduce stigma.	Ongoing

## 2. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Living in a safe and clean environment with green spaces that encourage physical activity, such as walking and cycling, and social interaction can have a major impact on mobility, independence, quality of life, and well-being. Long term studies show the quality of the environment near housing (e.g. trees, reduced noise, walkable streets and spaces) has a positive association with longevity. As a result of physical changes to the brain, people living with dementia may interact and see things differently in the built environment. Utilizing age-friendly and accessible design guidelines and incorporating safe, calm and welcoming spaces into neighbourhoods will help support people living with dementia to continue to utilize outdoor space on a regular basis.

Proposed Actions	Timelines
2.1 Investigate ways to identify and promote public washroom locations to increase accessibility and support users of outdoor spaces in Richmond.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
2.2 Explore opportunities to include quiet areas within City facilities and City and Community Association/Society events.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
2.3 Review existing guidelines (e.g. Enhanced Accessibility Design guidelines) to ensure they address the needs of people living with dementia and to make amendments accordingly.	Short Term (0–2 years)
2.4 Explore ways to increase awareness of the City’s hazard reporting system (e.g. Richmond Works app).	Short Term (0–2 years)
2.5 Continue to improve transit crosswalks, stops and shelters in the community including age-friendly signage and addition of real-time bus arrival displays.	Ongoing
2.6 Research available technology applications (apps) and other tools and resources related to transportation services for improved navigation around Richmond.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
2.7 Continue to monitor available grants, research, statistics, current trends and best practices in order to find ways the built environment can support people living with dementia.	Ongoing

### 3. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Community facilities are central to our neighbourhoods and can play a large role in supporting people living with dementia to continue being physically active, maintain cognitive function and stay engaged and connected to their peers and community. Key stakeholders in the community currently deliver programs and services for people living with dementia and their families and caregivers. Adding support to existing community centre programs and providing training for staff and volunteers can be effective ways to support people living with dementia. Working closely with community stakeholders (e.g. VCH and Alzheimer Society of B.C.) will also mitigate risk and ensure programming is relevant and appropriate.

Proposed Actions	Timelines
3.1 Research best practices from other communities on the activation of programming in parks and outdoor spaces to connect people of all ages and abilities.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
3.2 Explore options to utilize Community Leisure Transportation (CLT) services to support individuals living with dementia who otherwise could not attend programs and services due to transportation barriers.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
3.3 Work with Community Association/Society staff to identify ways to support existing outreach programs offered at Community facilities (e.g. Wellness Connections) to better support participants living with dementia and their caregivers and families.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
3.4 Identify guidelines and training initiatives for community facility staff to ensure a seamless and supportive transition for patrons with declining cognitive and physical abilities.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
3.5 Research best practices to support the creation of a Citywide 55+ years Missing Persons protocol to ensure staff and volunteers are aware and know what to do when a vulnerable/at-risk participant goes missing from a City facility or event.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
3.6 Research best practices on utilizing volunteers to support community facility programming for frail/vulnerable seniors and people living with dementia.	Medium Term (2–3 years)
3.7 Continue to monitor available grants, research, statistics, current trends and best practices to support programs and services for people living with dementia and their caregivers and families.	Ongoing

#### 4. SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

Caring for someone with dementia can be a complex and demanding task and may impact the emotional and physical health of the caregiver. For those working while caregiving, the demands can be even more stressful and physically exhausting trying to juggle work while scheduling appointments and navigating services in the community. Connecting caregivers with information on programs and services available to support them will help to alleviate stress and frustration. Working with key stakeholders and Community Associations/Societies to make information accessible to caregivers will help to optimize resources as well as connect caregivers with community and health professionals that can best support them in their caregiving journey.

Proposed Actions	Timelines
<p>4.1 Explore the creation of internal workshops (e.g. lunch and learn) to promote existing resources and tools to support City staff caring for family members living with dementia (e.g. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services available to City and Community Association/Society staff to help support those caring for someone living with dementia).</p>	<p>Short Term (0–2 years)</p>
<p>4.2 Collaborate with key stakeholders (e.g. Vancouver Coastal Health and Alzheimer Society of B.C.) and Community Associations/Societies to support workshops, specialized programming and support groups for caregivers.</p>	<p>Medium Term (2–3 years)</p>
<p>4.3 Provide City and Community Association/Society staff and members of the Dementia-Friendly Stakeholder Committee with a set of key print materials and resources to share, distribute and promote to their networks, caregivers and clients living with dementia.</p>	<p>Short Term (0–2 years)</p>
<p>4.4 Continue to monitor available grants, research, statistics, current trends and best practices to support the health and well-being of caregivers of people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



## 5. NEXT STEPS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION



The City will work with Community Associations/Societies and key stakeholders on the implementation of the outlined actions.

The Dementia-Friendly Stakeholder Committee will continue to provide expertise, resources and guidance towards the implementation of the actions.

Progress of actions outlined in the Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan will be reported based on associated timelines and on a yearly basis in the Seniors Service Plan Yearly Update.

The Action Plan will be disseminated to the members of the Dementia-Friendly Stakeholder Committee, Community Associations/Societies and key stakeholder groups. The Action Plan will be posted on the City's website with printed copies available for the public.





## 6. CONCLUSION

The number of Canadians living with dementia is expected to increase with a growing and aging population. Many of the people living with dementia continue to remain at home in the community with many experiencing stigma and at-risk of isolation and loneliness.

The City is committed to taking a proactive role in ensuring people living with dementia feel welcome and included in the community and continue to be active and engaged with their community. The Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan will be the guiding document to further support people living with dementia and their families and caregivers.

With the involvement of Community Associations/ Societies and stakeholders, the actions outlined in the

Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan will ensure all Richmond residents living with dementia and their families and caregivers are connected, supported and valued through public awareness and education, inclusive programs and services and well designed, accessible and supportive built environments.

**“People with dementia can, and should, be able to enjoy quality of life at every stage of their long and difficult journey. With the help of an accepting and inclusive community this is absolutely possible.”**

Survey Respondent, Male Caregiver, 65+ years, 10+ years Richmond resident





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The Age-friendly Communities program assists communities in BC to support aging populations by developing and implementing policies and plans, undertaking projects that enable seniors to age in place and facilitating the creation of age-friendly communities.





## City of Richmond

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