

# CASTLEGAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPER

## FINAL COMMUNITY REPORT

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*"A retired person is the valuable embodiment of a set of skills, talents, experience, qualifications and knowledge"*

*Robert Jackson, Castlegar Health Watch Society,  
2006 Presentation to the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues*



**United Way**

**Better  
at Home**

United Way helping seniors  
remain independent.

Better at Home is funded by the Government of British Columbia.

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I'm 79 and I still parallel park. I do it every day!

Castlegar Senior

We would also like to acknowledge the support, guidance, and direction of Debbie Sharp, Better at Home Field Coordinator. We are pleased to have been given the opportunity to participate as the Castlegar Community Developers for the Better at Home project. Together, we are giving Castlegar seniors a hand.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 *Better at Home Program*

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to maintain their independence at home. The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, with services delivered by a local non-profit organization. The Better at Home program is designed to address the specific needs of local seniors, allowing communities to choose from the following basket of services:

- Friendly visiting
- Transportation
- Snow shoveling
- Light yard work
- Simple home repairs
- Grocery shopping
- Light housekeeping

Castlegar has been identified as a potential Better at Home site. Following an RFP process, Helen Lutz was contracted as the Community Developer to assess community readiness, identify seniors' assets, needs and priorities in regards to the basket of services, and help identify a potential lead organization best suited in the community to deliver the Better at Home program. Helen Lutz sub-contracted Corrine Younie to assist with several aspects of the project.

This report reflects the findings of the community development process conducted between April and July 2013 in Castlegar, BC. This report will be used by the lead organization to design an appropriate local Better at Home program that meets community needs.

### 1.2 *The Local Community Development Approach*

#### **Activities**

The Community Developers took on the role of observers and listeners in order to see and hear the seniors and stakeholders, learn about the Better at Home program, identify the existing community assets, prioritize the Better at Home services for Castlegar seniors, and develop the criteria for a successful lead organization. An important principle of the community development process was the emphasis on gathering information directly from seniors themselves. The community development activities included:

- Analysis of the following reports, project materials and information:
  - *Best of Care Report: Getting it Right For Seniors in British Columbia*, Office of the Ombudsperson, 2012
  - *Local Health Area Profile for Castlegar*, Interior Health Authority, 2012
  - Statistics Canada, Census Reports, 2006 and 2011.

- *Seniors' Vulnerability Report*, United Way of the Lower Mainland, 2011
- *Official Community Plan*, City of Castlegar, 2010
- *Seniors' Study Report*, Castlegar & District Health Watch Society, 2006
- *Making Meaningful Connections: A Profile of Social Isolation Among Older Adults in Small Town & Small City*, British Columbia, 2006
- Key informant interviews:
  - Nine personal interviews with seniors and service provider including one Aboriginal Family Services provider. The list of interviewees grew out of recommendations by local service providers and an online search of seniors' organizations in Castlegar.
- Presentations:
  - One presentation to 16 seniors at the Castlegar Seniors' Association
  - Early in the engagement process, the community developer attended a cultural gathering of aboriginal residents with the intention of speaking to several Elders. Unfortunately, they did not attend the gathering.
- Surveys:
  - 16 paper surveys gathered from the Castlegar Seniors' Association
  - 3 paper surveys conducted by telephone with Castlegar seniors
  - 10 electronic surveys from Service Providers
  - 2 electronic surveys from seniors
- Meetings:
  - One community meeting was held on June 26, 2013 with a total attendance of 23 people (20 seniors and three service providers). The goal was to determine the Better at Home service priorities and develop the lead agency criteria.
  - One stakeholders' meeting was held on June 27, 2013 with seven attendees. The goal was to determine the lead agency and develop next steps for the Better at Home program in Castlegar.

In total, it is estimated that the process linked approximately 18 community agencies, 16 service providers and 45 seniors to the Better at Home process.

### **Marketing / Advertising**

- Notification of the community meeting was submitted online to the Shaw TV Community Calendar, CastlegarNews.com, and BC Local News.
- A news release and PSA about the Better at Home program and the community meeting was sent to Castlegar News, Shaw TV and Mountain FM radio.

- 22 posters and 100 leaflets were delivered to pharmacies, grocery stores, churches, health service providers and the public library. Approximately 40 Better at Home pamphlets were distributed.

## 2.0 CASTLEGAR COMMUNITY PROFILE

Castlegar, named after the home of an Irish man who settled in the area in the early 1890's, is centrally located in the Southern Interior of British Columbia within the Selkirk Mountain Range in the West Kootenay. It sits squarely between Vancouver (615 km to the west) and Calgary (651 km to the east) and is just north of the US border.



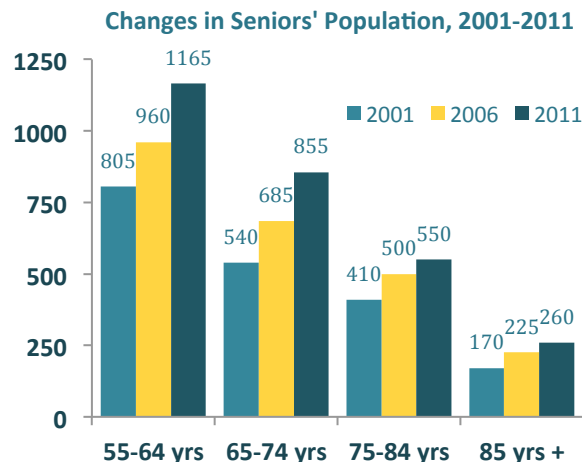
Source: [www.britishcolumbia.com](http://www.britishcolumbia.com)

Castlegar sits at the Southern tip of Arrow Lake and the confluence of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers, truly a beautiful location. The city is at 450 meters elevation above sea-level and 19.6 square kilometers in size with a population of approximately 7,800 residents.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.1 Profile of the Local Seniors' Population

#### Seniors' Population

Following the trend of the rest of Canada, the population of Castlegar is aging. In comparison to BC and Canada, Castlegar has a greater proportion of residents over the age of 65 years. In 2011, 21% of Castlegar residents (1,665) were 65 years or older, which was higher than the provincial (15%) and national (14%) figures. The seniors' age group 65-74 has increased by 58% since 2001 and the most elderly age group of seniors, those aged 85 years and over, has increased 52% since 2001. As can be seen on the chart to the right, the number of Castlegar residents aged 55 years and older has steadily increased since



Source: Statistics Canada Census 2011.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.castlegar.ca](http://www.castlegar.ca)

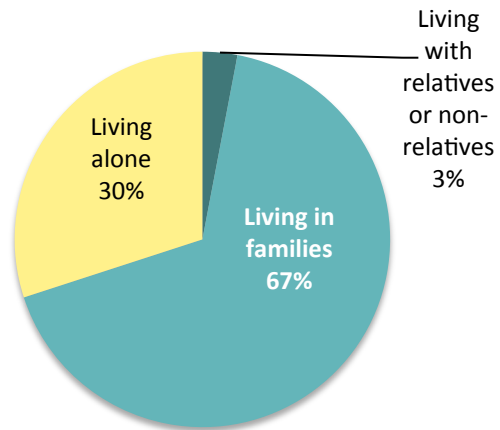
2001.<sup>2</sup>

There are more women aging in Castlegar than men. In 2011, there were 920 women aged 65 years and older compared to 745 men. There were more than twice as many elderly women ages 85+ (175) than there were men (85) in the same age group.

### Family & Household Characteristics

In 2011, 67% of Castlegar seniors aged 65+ lived in Census families<sup>3</sup>. Thirty percent of Castlegar seniors were living alone, and 3% of Castlegar seniors lived with relatives or non-relatives.

Castlegar Seniors' Households



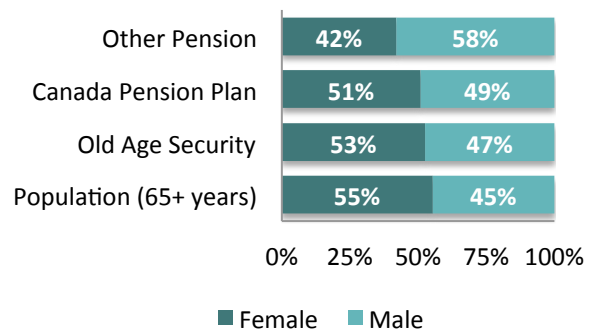
Source: Statistics Canada Census 2011.

### Seniors' Income

The majority of Castlegar income was generated by employment (66%), which, is on par with the BC average. The average income of residents living in Castlegar in 2009 was \$37,855, about \$2,000 less than the provincial average.

The figure below and to the right illustrates employment, pension, investment and self-employment income as a share of total personal income earned by Castlegar tax filers in 2009. Given the older age structure of the population in Castlegar, it is not surprising that there were a greater proportion of seniors reliant on pension income (19%) than the provincial share of 14%.

Share of Senior Taxfilers Reporting Pension Incomes, Castlegar, 2009



Source: BC Stats, BC Taxation Statistics, 2012.

Pensions play an important role in the income security of seniors. Old Age Security and CPP pensions, on average, provide less income to seniors than other pensions. As illustrated in this figure, most of the Castlegar seniors who reported Old Age Security (OAS) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP) income in 2009 were female (53% and 51%). This was close to the share of

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Census, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> According to Statistics Canada, a Census family is defined as a married or common-law couple (with or without children) or a lone parent with children.

females aged 65 and older (55%) at that time. The majority of seniors who reported “other” pension income in 2009 were men.

## *2.2 Summary of Community Assets*

The following section highlights a variety of services that are currently available to Castlegar seniors. A full listing can be found in Appendix B. For ease of analysis, the services were categorized into the following themes:

### **Aboriginal Services:**

Castlegar & District Community Services Society operates the **Aboriginal Family Support Program** (Case management, advocacy, coordinated service interventions with other service providers, referrals and information about other community services programs [both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal], liaison with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, information regarding various cultural gatherings in the region, the Métis Traditional Parenting and Personal Healing Program, drum circles, talking/sharing circles, and drum making ceremonies).

**Lower Columbia All First Nations** is the only incorporated and legally registered aboriginal Society in the West Kootenay/Boundary region. This society works towards the education, cultural awareness and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in the West Kootenay/Boundary region.

### **Advocacy, Safety and Support Services:**

The Castlegar & District Community Services Society operates the **Community Response Network**, West Kootenay Boundary **Regional Crisis Line**, a volunteer **income tax assistance** program and the **Seniors’ Outreach Service**. **Castlegar Health Watch** is a local advocacy group that has seniors’ health care high on their list of concerns.

### **Educational Services:**

The **Castlegar & District Public Library** provides a monthly book service to Castlewood Village for adults who are homebound and/or without transportation. **Selkirk College** offers a variety of college programs as well as university courses. Tuition fees are reduced for adults over age 65 years. The **Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy** (CBAL) offers computer classes for seniors and tutoring support to improve literacy. Employment education and skills training are available through the **Ashland Training Centre**, **Lower Columbia All First Nations Employment and Training** and the **Kootenay Career Development Society**.

### **Food Services:**

There are several options available to seniors requiring extra assistance with grocery shopping or meal preparation. **Castlegar Meal Delivery** is a private business delivering pre-ordered nutritious meals. The **Community Harvest Food Bank** provides food bank service as well as a weekly hot meal. Interior Health operates the **Dinners at Home** program. There are three large grocery stores, **Safeway**, **No Frills** and the **Kootenay Market**. The main challenge for Castlegar

seniors is transportation to get to and from grocery stores. The Kootenay Market will assist with grocery shopping by taking grocery orders by phone then sending the groceries home in a cab (with cab fare due by the senior upon receipt of the groceries).

### Health, Medical and Well-Being Services:

The **Interior Health Authority (IHA)** ([www.interiorhealth.ca](http://www.interiorhealth.ca)) is the main health and medical service provider in Castlegar. IHA operates the **Castlegar & District Community Health Centre** and laboratory services, home support nursing and home care services (recently renamed Home

Health services), supportive housing options (as described below), mental health services (including a geriatric assessment program), and out-patient education, rehabilitation and social work services. In addition to Interior Health, two **private nursing care providers** offer nursing care, respite and home support services. Several non-profit organizations provide education, support and counseling to individuals and families. These include the

**Alzheimer Resource Centre, Stroke Recovery Association, Castlegar Hospice Society, Castlegar & District Community Services Society, and the Canadian Cancer Society. Audiology, optometry, dentistry, respiratory, and foot care** services are available in Castlegar. There are several **physician clinics** and **four pharmacies**. Medical equipment can be borrowed through **Medichair** or the **Red Cross Health Equipment Loan Program**.

Seniors need to have consistency in who they talk to.  
Castlegar Service Provider

### Housing

Interior Health operates several supportive housing options for frail Castlegar seniors, including:

- **Castlewood Village** (110 independent and assisted living suites comprised of studios, one and two bedrooms),
- **Castleview Care Centre** (accredited complex care facility has 61 furnished single bedroom units), and
- **Talarico Place** (38 private rooms and 11 semi-private rooms located in three wings of the facility).



Talarico Place Castlegar. Source: [www.castlegarhospitalfoundation.org](http://www.castlegarhospitalfoundation.org)

There are two BC Housing townhouse developments in Castlegar for low-income seniors. These are **Rosewood Manor** (one-bedroom apartments for low-income independent seniors) and **Rota Villa** Apartments with 12 bachelor and 28 one-bedroom apartments for independent seniors. Castlegar Community Services Society operates a **“Safe Home”** for women and children fleeing domestic violence. Adults living with a developmental disability can find housing and living support through the **Kootenay Society for Community Living**.

### Social and Recreational Services

There is an active **Seniors’ Association Branch #46** in Castlegar. The Blueberry Creek Community School hosts the **Blueberry seniors’ group** every month. The **Castlegar Response Network** organizes “lunch and learns”, social and education events, free food and rides, and

provides an accessible venue. Cultural opportunities can be found in many places, including the **Brilliant Cultural Centre** and through the Castlegar **Heritage Society**. **Castlegar Sun Fest** is an annual event that brings together residents of all ages. Seniors looking for fitness can go to the **Recreation & Aquatic Centre** where admission is free for adults age 80+. There are **bowling** lanes in Castlegar as well as several **golf** courses. There are scenic and level **walking** trails and **monthly dances** are held at Castlewood Village. There is **skating** and **cross-country skiing** which was a popular activity with seniors in the community engagement meeting. The **Castlegar Seniors' Centre** hosts card games, floor curling and darts every week.

### Transportation Services

The Regional District of Central Kootenay operates the **Castlegar Regional Transit System**. There is **one taxi** operating in Castlegar, which is problematic and costly for many seniors. **HandyDART** services are available and require pre-registration and a fee. According to some seniors, there is a waiting list for HandyDART. There is a **Volunteer Driver Program** operated by the Castlegar & District Community Services Society. It requires a fee however, making it a challenge for some seniors. Castlegar is also home to a **Greyhound bus station**, the regional **airport**, and an **ICBC Driver Licensing office**.

### 2.3 Seniors needs related to non-medical home support services

Seniors needs were determined in several ways including telephone interviews, surveys (both written and online), one presentation on May 2, one community meeting on June 26, stakeholder interviews and a stakeholders' meeting on June 27. The feedback gathered was analyzed for common themes.

Transportation is a big issue. For some seniors, getting to a bus stop is difficult plus a delay in the return trip. It makes for a half-day outing.

Castlegar Senior

The primary concern arising for Castlegar seniors appears to be transportation, which stems in part from seniors' challenges with low-income. There is limited taxi service (and it is expensive), the bus routes and times are challenging for seniors, and the volunteer driver program is helpful but has a cost attached. Service providers feel that transportation support for seniors must be door to door. Many seniors and service providers noted that HandyDART assistance is also widely in demand, leading to a wait list at times.

The reality of living with a low-income is challenging for seniors when it comes time to access services. Many seniors cannot afford private service providers for assistance with house or yard work. Without transportation or assistance from family or volunteers, grocery shopping is nearly impossible. Seniors commented that they don't know who to call or what services are available for them in Castlegar. Survey respondents and the seniors present at the community meeting felt strongly that there needs to be better coordination of information sharing in the community. "Knowledge of services is the biggest barrier," commented one service provider. According to another service provider, seniors benefit tremendously from consistency in who they speak with.

Survey respondents felt strongly that all services from the Better At Home basket of services are currently needed in Castlegar.

#### *2.4 Suggested opportunities for service integration/coordination*

Early in the community development process, it became evident that two key community service providers were interested in partnering for program delivery. This was seen as a very positive step as combining the resources of each organization could provide even greater benefits to seniors in the community. Also, each agency comes with a unique and valuable skill set that can be better tapped into.

Service providers need to work effectively together to achieve best outcomes for the clients. Therefore, if one organization was able to undertake that major coordinating role and responsibility, everyone would be better served.

Castlegar Resident

Following some support to each of the agency Executive Directors, and some conversations at the Stakeholders' Meeting, both agencies offered to work together in partnership to deliver the Better at Home program. As an example of this positive partnership, the two non-profit organizations quickly realized that by joining together they effectively double their pool of skilled volunteers to 70. This partnership was seen by all as a "win-win" situation and a demonstration of the willingness and readiness of community organizations in Castlegar to work together for the well-being of seniors.

### **3.0 COMMUNITY READINESS**

#### *3.1 Examination of Community Readiness*

There was much enthusiasm from service providers about the Better at Home program as a way to help fill existing service gaps and reduce the number of vulnerable seniors currently falling through the cracks. Seniors present at the community meeting were likewise enthusiastic as they have friends, neighbours and family members all with varying needs for support. Service providers and seniors recognize that the demand for these types of services is only going to increase with the aging population and everyone feels it is essential to get on board with planning for seniors' independence and care.

#### *3.2 Potential Risks Going Forward*

During the consultation process, the following concerns were brought forward by seniors and service providers:

- Will too much of the Better at Home grant be used to pay staff wages rather than providing services for seniors?
- Many seniors expressed concern about the disrespectful way they are being treated by doctors. This issue was felt to be such a health priority during the community meeting, that a group of seniors are planning to connect with Castlegar Health Watch to discuss it.
- There is recognition that seniors can be a difficult group to reach and make connection with. Therefore the Better at Home services must be promoted very well.

- “I just hope everything happens as promised”
- Will there be enough volunteers to support the program?
- Volunteers will need to be highly trained in order to meet liability requirements as well as be effective in giving support to seniors.
- Some seniors are wary of hiring private home support and housekeeping services due to some bad experiences.
- Don’t leave the older seniors out of the loop for services because the younger seniors may be more vocal.
- It takes time for service providers to build relationships with seniors. It will be important that there is consistency with the people visiting and offering support to seniors in Castlegar.
- “The number of people in need of such services being large enough to justify employing people to provide them.”



Community Meeting, June 26, 2013

## 4.0 LOCAL *BETTER AT HOME* PROGRAM DETAILS

### 4.1 *List of Preferred Better at Home Services*

Though there was acknowledgement that all of the Basket of Home non-medical services would be extremely beneficial to Castlegar seniors, there was agreement that the highest priority Better at Home services for Castlegar seniors are:

- Assistance with transportation
- Assistance with light housekeeping
- Assistance with simple home repairs

One service provider felt strongly that spending time in conversation with most seniors would uncover the fact that many of them are in need of social contact. They felt the friendly visitor component of the Better at Home program would also be very beneficial.

## 4.2 Proposed Lead Key Organization

### Criteria identified by the community

Input regarding the criteria for a strong lead organization was gathered throughout the community development process. The criteria identified by the community fell quite easily into the following five themes:

Theme:	Input Received:
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The experience and infrastructure to be accountable</li> <li>• A good reputation in the community</li> <li>• The capacity to do the work and not depend solely on volunteers</li> <li>• Strong leadership and a solid financial background</li> <li>• Good operating principles</li> <li>• Work with community partners to ensure it augments what's available</li> <li>• Strong connections with existing resources in the community</li> <li>• "COA" Accredited organization</li> <li>• The ability to increase services and staff as needed/funded</li> <li>• A "one-stop" shop location, easily accessible including week-ends</li> <li>• Consistent hours of operation</li> <li>• Sound organizational skills</li> <li>• Ability to recognize that there is an issue</li> <li>• Ability to support outreach services</li> <li>• A charitable federal number so they can issue tax receipts for any donations to the program</li> <li>• Be able to generate public awareness</li> </ul>
Seniors Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organization that already deals with seniors</li> <li>• Should have a thorough understanding of seniors' issues, lifestyles and needs</li> <li>• Work for and with seniors already</li> <li>• Should be familiar with the health system</li> <li>• Be knowledgeable about government services in order to help seniors</li> <li>• Staff must respond in ways that support and empower people</li> <li>• Have lots of patience and be able to break down communication barriers</li> <li>• Be trustworthy</li> <li>• Utilize a client-centred care model</li> <li>• Have a simple referral process</li> <li>• Be unbiased, easily reached, support seniors' concerns, and be able to listen to seniors' needs</li> <li>• Senior friendly – no discrimination,</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone that “just understands” / empathy</li> <li>• Be good listeners</li> </ul>
Volunteer Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be an organization with volunteers already attached</li> <li>• Ability to manage volunteer recruitment, and deliver clear and high quality volunteer training</li> <li>• Should have a large pool of volunteers with different skills</li> <li>• Should have enough volunteers to make it happen</li> <li>• Should be able to attract enough volunteers</li> </ul>
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization should have good training for staff</li> <li>• Staff need to have the ability to get seniors to disclose finances</li> <li>• Must have a very educated workforce</li> <li>• Must have quality counseling staff</li> </ul>

## Rationale

### 4.3 Proposed Lead Organization

As touched on earlier in this report, it became clear that two organizations were interested in being potential lead organizations. These were the Castlegar & District Community Services Society and the Castlegar Hospice Society. During the stakeholders’ meeting held on June 27<sup>th</sup>, the Executive Directors of these two organizations made presentations to the audience. They then met with each other outside of the meeting. Their outcome was an agreement to partner in delivering the Better at Home program in Castlegar. Because of its stronger infrastructure,

the Castlegar & District Services Society will take the role of lead organization in terms of applying for the grant and managing the administrative requirements. They will expand their current range of services to address the priority issues identified during the Better at Home engagement process. As a partner, the Castlegar Hospice Society brings a strong network of highly skilled volunteers, particularly in the areas of seniors’ visiting, counseling and support. In partnering, both organizations feel that the Better at Home program and seniors in the community will be much better served. The stakeholders’ meeting ended positively with a sharing of congratulations to these two agencies.

These two organizations together will put this program on the map. And it’s going to feel good to know I can pick up the phone to refer my clients to this.

Castlegar Service Provider

## 5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Following the community engagement process conducted between the months of April and July, 2013, it is recommended that the United Way of the Lower Mainland recognize Castlegar & District Community Services as the lead organization for the Better at Home program in

I've little doubt that the Better at Home Program would be of value to many seniors in Castlegar.

Castlegar Senior

Castlegar. It is recommended that this lead organization actively partner with the Castlegar Hospice Society for delivery of appropriate aspects of the Better at Home program, notably the Friendly Visiting service. Both Executive Directors of the partnering organizations were presented with the Better at Home Program Manual. The Field Coordinator in attendance at the Stakeholders' meeting agreed to get back in touch with the lead organization to assess whether they needed assistance in completing the grant application.

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