



Age Friendly

Housing & Health Care

ACTION PLAN



December 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many northern communities like Mackenzie are designed for active, able-bodied people. As people age, they tend to move because they can no longer meet their needs locally. Previous work done by the District, the Accessibility Committee, and Northern Health has shown that key issues for seniors in Mackenzie are a lack of accessible housing options, and a growing need for healthcare services (as well as related topics like home care and transportation).

To help address these issues, the District and Accessibility Committee obtained grant funding from the province and Union of BC Municipalities to undertake a focused process to assess what Mackenzie has today, and to identify practical steps we can take to improve housing and healthcare options for local seniors.

The creation of the Age-Friendly Housing & Health Care Plan was a highly collaborative process with input from over 200 people through a public survey and discussion-based workshop. An inventory was also created to identify our current resources and assess what's working well, what needs improvement, and what we are lacking to support seniors in the community.

The key issues identified through this process include:

- The proportion of seniors is growing significantly. This will place even more demand on existing seniors housing and healthcare services.
- Most homes in Mackenzie, as well as some public buildings and businesses, are not accessible for people with mobility challenges.
- There is a lack of all types of seniors housing, from independent living to assisted living to residential care. Seniors want to see a range of options including more single level homes and apartments, as well as an integrated seniors housing complex.
- Additional in-home support (e.g., healthcare, housekeeping, meal/grocery delivery, home/yard maintenance, snow removal) would help seniors remain comfortably in their own homes longer.
- Housing is generally affordable for home owners; however, rents are high which places pressure on people with lower income.
- Because the cost of homes is low in Mackenzie, many seniors worry about having to sell their homes and move elsewhere, where costs are higher.
- Mackenzie has a range of healthcare services for a community of its size; however, many seniors must still travel to larger centres like Prince George for specialists. A lack of flexible transportation options makes this even more challenging for seniors.
- There is need for more / better information and communication with seniors about programs and resources available to them.

Creating an age-friendly community is a complex process with many different players. The influence of federal and provincial policies, limited funding, lack of local government staff resources, and reliance on local organizations and aging volunteers, make it challenging to address some of the key priorities for seniors, such as healthcare and affordable housing.

To address these challenges, it will be essential to form meaningful partnerships with senior levels of government, health authorities and service providers, community organizations, local businesses, developers and other housing providers, and Mackenzie's many dedicated citizens and volunteers, and work together to find creative solutions.

This Plan sets out a number of objectives for housing, healthcare, and other related topics, along with practical and incremental actions to achieve them. Key objectives are listed below while the detailed actions can be found within the Plan itself:

- **Objective 1:** Support the development of more seniors housing across multiple levels of care.
- **Objective 2:** Improve the accessibility of Mackenzie's new and existing housing.
- **Objective 3:** Improve access to affordable in-home support for seniors.
- **Objective 4:** Support seniors to access the housing they need.
- **Objective 5:** Support a range of affordable, easy to access healthcare services and facilities for seniors.
- **Objective 6:** Continue to build and strengthen partnerships to support seniors' health and well-being.
- **Objective 7:** Improve access to transportation for seniors.
- **Objective 8:** Improve information and communications about services, programs, and resources for seniors.
- **Objective 9:** Improve accessibility of public buildings and businesses.

The Plan also sets out an implementation framework for the District and key partners to successfully achieve the Plan's objectives and action. Key steps include:

1. Securing funding to hire a dedicated Age-Friendly Coordinator.
2. Hiring an Age-Friendly Coordinator to lead implementation of the Plan and advocate for the needs of local seniors.
3. Hosting a workshop with key partners to establish a framework for working together to implement actions and achieve shared goals.
4. Developing a framework for monitoring and evaluating the Plan to establish accountability and assess and report on progress over time.

Developing the Plan was the first step on this journey. Implementing the Plan will require continued communication, collaboration, and action by many partners. Together, we can create a more inclusive community where our older residents can maintain a high quality of life and 'age in place' near family and friends.



INTRODUCTION

Many northern communities like Mackenzie are designed for active, able-bodied people. As people age, they tend to move because they can no longer meet their needs locally. To ensure our community is inclusive for our older residents we need to look at what works, what doesn't, and what's missing to allow people to 'age in place' near friends and family.

What is an Age-Friendly Community?

An age-friendly community is one that supports older people to “age actively” – that is, to realize their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being, to participate in society, and to receive the adequate protection, security and care that they need (World Health Organization).

While the focus of this Plan is on older adults and seniors, it will also help to support a more accessible and inclusive community for residents of all ages, including people with disabilities, caregivers and families, and lower income households.

Why Does Mackenzie Need a Housing & Health Care Plan?

Age-friendly plans generally look at 8 different elements of a community: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation & mobility, housing, social participation, respect & inclusion, employment & volunteerism, information, and community support and health services.

Previous work has been done by the District, the Accessibility Committee, and Northern Health to assess how ‘age- friendly’ our community is today:

- In 2013, Northern Health held a public consultation on Healthy Aging and Seniors Wellness.
- In 2017, the District’s Accessibility Committee hosted an Age-Friendly Open House to confirm what’s working well for seniors and what needs improvement.

The key issues that stood out from these consultations were a lack of affordable, accessible housing options, and a growing need for health care services (as well as related topics like home care and transportation).

As a result, this Plan focuses on two key topics: housing and healthcare for seniors. Other topics normally covered in an Age-Friendly Plan are considered in this Plan primarily as they relate to housing and healthcare.

The District and Accessibility Committee obtained grant funding from the province and Union of BC Municipalities to undertake this focused process to assess what Mackenzie has today and to identify practical steps we can take to improve housing and healthcare options for local seniors so they can live and age comfortably in the community.



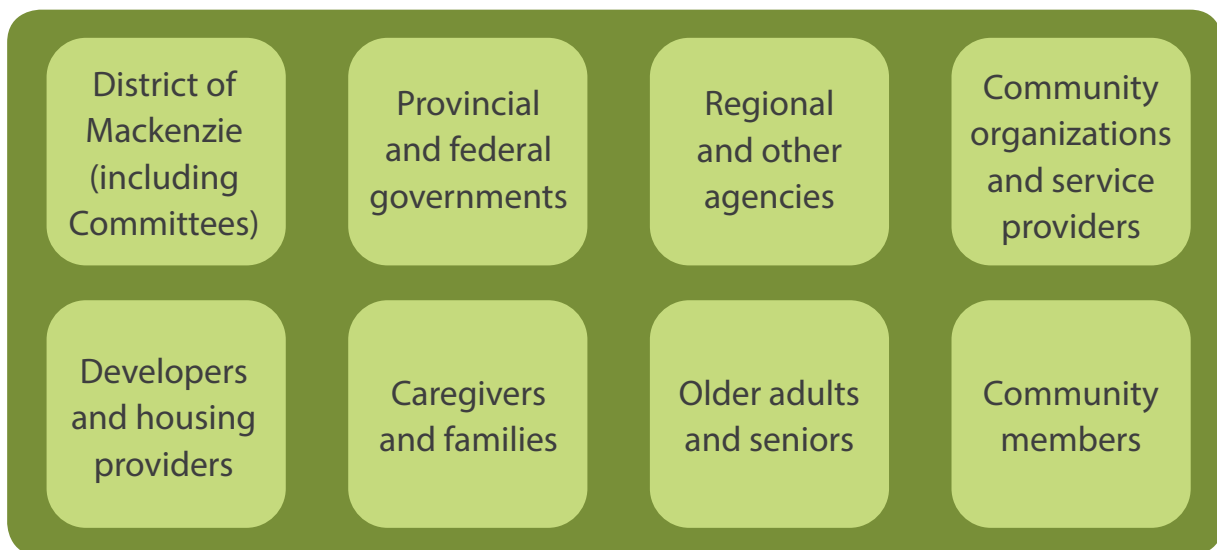
It is estimated that the number of seniors living in the northern communities of British Columbia will grow by over 75% in the next 15 years, causing a shift in both the demand for housing and health care services, as limited seniors housing options are filled and many physicians and other much needed health care practitioners enter retirement.

Key Players & Work to Date

Many organizations are responsible for making a community age-friendly and the District is only one of them. The District currently has a host of existing plans and policies and is also responsible for many functions that support seniors and residents of all ages such as parks, recreation, local roads and sidewalks, and land use planning to create safe, accessible and walkable neighbourhoods.

There are also many things outside of the District's influence that support an age-friendly community, such as health care, public transit, senior's groups, etc. These functions are supported by many partners including federal, provincial and regional government agencies, community organizations and service providers, local businesses, and dedicated citizens and volunteers.

Key players in creating an Age-Friendly Mackenzie



Some examples of recent local age-friendly initiatives include:

- Recreation Access Program (to provide access for low-income households)
- Wheelchair accessibility improvements to the sidewalk at Woodland Blvd.
- Wheelchair accessibility improvements to the gardens and gazebo at the Seniors Centre
- Numerous seniors activities through District facilities and the Seniors Centre (ie., chair yoga, Seniors Lunch Program)

Some relevant District plans and policies include:

- **Council Priorities (2017-2020):** Advocating for seniors and removing physical and social barriers is one of Council's top social development priorities for the next three years.
- **Official Community Plan (2014):** Includes objectives for accessible design, creating assisted living units, establishing partnerships to deliver new housing, and supporting good access to healthcare, food security, and facilities and programming for seniors.
- **Mackenzie Housing Review (2012):** Identifies seniors housing as a key gap in Mackenzie and recommends monitoring the need for seniors housing and planning for new accessible housing and assisted living that is close to amenities.
- **Mackenzie Seniors Housing Study (2012):** Identifies ideas for increasing affordable housing in Mackenzie including increasing membership in the Autumn Lodge Society, and organizing a community-based board to spearhead action towards a new affordable seniors housing project (which led to this Plan).

While these initiatives and plans are a great start, it is clear that concrete action and implementation is needed. The intent of this Plan is to provide clear direction about what local seniors want and need along with practical actions for the District and partners to take to better support seniors to age comfortably in the community.

How the Plan was Created

The creation of the Age-Friendly Housing & Health Care Plan was a highly collaborative process that involved extensive input from local seniors and the broader community. The following provides an overview of community engagement and outreach activities.

District of Mackenzie - Accessibility Committee

The process was guided closely by the District's Accessibility Committee. The Accessibility Committee includes representatives from City Council, Northern Health, AimHI Association for Community Living, and School District 57 as well as broader community and senior representatives. The Committee helped to raise awareness of the project, supported community engagement, and contributed to the creation of the action plan.

Community Outreach

To help raise awareness of the project and reach a broad and diverse range of people, a variety of outreach activities were used including:

- Paper surveys, posters, and handouts throughout the community at the Seniors Centre, Library, Recreation Centre, Community Centre, City Hall, and lotto booth at the mall.
- Project website and District social media
- Press release, news ads, and notices in the Buzzette and Council Highlights newsletter
- Notices on local radio stations
- Email and word-of-mouth promotion through stakeholder and committee networks
- Pop up booths hosted by the Accessibility Committee at popular community events and locations including the Leisure Fair, Seniors Centre, and the mall.

Community Engagement

Thanks to the hard work of the Accessibility Committee and Seniors Centre, over 200 people were engaged through a survey and discussion-based workshop.

- **A public survey:** Available both online and in paper from September 9 to October 15, 2017. A total of 192 people responded; most were older adults (85%) while others were family caregivers (11%) or other paid caregivers, healthcare providers, or professionals who work with older adults (4%).
- **A public workshop:** Held at the Seniors Centre on October 12, 2017. Approximately 40 people attended and participated in group discussions.

A detailed summary of survey and workshop results is provided in Appendix A.



OVERVIEW OF MACKENZIE TODAY

The following provides an overview of key findings from the community inventory and community feedback. Additional details can be found in Appendices A and B.

Mackenzie Population

- **Overall population growth goes up and down.** Our total population has increased over the last 5 years (+6%), but decreased over the last 10 years (-18%).
- **The proportion of seniors is growing significantly.** Over the last 5 years, the senior's population has grown significantly (+32%), while the pre-senior population, aged 55 to 64, has also increased (+6%).
- **Together, seniors and pre-seniors make up 28% of the population.** Seniors, 65 and older, make up 11% of the population while pre-seniors, aged 55 to 64, make up almost 17% of the population.

While these statistics are similar to other small communities in BC, they have important implications for our community. We need to make sure that our housing, healthcare, and other services are accessible and meet the needs of our older adults and seniors as they age.

Age-Friendly Housing & Health Care Inventory

HOUSING

- **The existing housing stock in Mackenzie is not very accessible.** Most homes are single family homes with multiple levels. Other options, such as apartments, are limited.
- **Mackenzie is lacking all types of seniors housing.** Unlike other small, comparable communities in Northern and Interior BC, Mackenzie does not have any assisted living options for seniors. There are a limited number of residential care units (at the hospital), and a limited number of independent living units (at Autumn Lodge) which, unlike other communities, are not dedicated for seniors but rather based on economic need. These spaces are currently at capacity and have a waitlist.
- **Mackenzie is generally affordable for home owners.** Compared with other small communities, median incomes in Mackenzie are notably higher while home prices are generally much lower. As a result, monthly shelter costs for home owners are relatively low.
- **Renting is less affordable in Mackenzie.** Despite having lower home costs, the median monthly cost for rent is higher in Mackenzie than comparable communities, and is higher than the monthly cost of home ownership.

The lack of accessible housing and lack of options for supported seniors housing places pressure on existing resources and often forces seniors to leave Mackenzie as their needs change. To better support seniors to remain in the community as they age, we need to provide more options for seniors to stay in their homes, provide more accessible housing options, and provide a range of supported seniors housing options, from independent living to assisted living to residential care.

The high costs of renting also places pressure on those who don't own homes, often those who have lower incomes to begin with. While the prevalence of low income seniors in Mackenzie is lower than comparable communities, this is still an important issue for some people in the community and can have a significant impact on health and well-being. To ensure all of our older adults and seniors have and maintain a high quality of life, we need to make sure that there are affordable housing options for everyone.

HEALTH CARE

- **Seniors in Mackenzie have access to key primary and secondary care services as well as a range of supplementary health services and programming.** The Mackenzie and District Hospital offers a range of health care including emergency services, a health clinic, home support and home care nursing, palliative care, and diagnostic services including radiology, laboratory services, and acute care. Other services like dental care, physiotherapy, pharmacy, medical equipment, footcare, counselling, and reflexology are also available locally.
- **For access to medical specialists and a broad range of supplementary health services, residents must travel to larger centres.** Many seniors must still travel to centres like Prince George for medical specialists like cancer care or surgical services, or other health services like massage, chiropractic, or support groups.

Compared to other small communities, Mackenzie has better access to primary and secondary health care services locally (such as general practitioners and lab services). We have a slightly higher number of physicians per population while access to in-home healthcare is similar to other small communities.

What We Heard from Community Members

HOUSING

- **The top priorities for community members are more accessible housing, and more seniors housing across multiple levels of care.** While the majority of survey participants reported that their current home meets their needs in terms of size, affordability, quality, and location, 78% stated their current home would be difficult or impossible (without renovations) if their mobility needs were to change.

Community members stressed the need for **more options for independent living, such as single level patio homes and affordable rental apartments** (either single storey or with elevator access), **as well as a seniors housing complex with multi-levels of care** (from assisted living to residential care) with a mix of subsidized and paid units (sliding scale based on income) and integrated amenities like units for couples, a range of services (meals, housekeeping, personal care), shared kitchen space, rooms for visiting family and friends, and programming for social activities, recreation and exercise.

- **Seniors are concerned about long-term affordability.** Because the cost of homes is quite low in Mackenzie, people worry about having to move from the community as the cost of living could be much higher elsewhere.

- **Additional in-home support would help seniors remain comfortably in their own homes longer.** Participants stressed the need for more household support to maintain their independence. While there are existing programs for professional services like healthcare or housekeeping, it is much harder to find support for things like home/yard maintenance, snow removal, or small home repairs.

HEALTHCARE

- **Most seniors are generally satisfied with local practitioners and wellness services.** It is apparent that family physicians, the pharmacy, lab services, massage and nutritional support programs are well used community assets for seniors.

However, the **lack of medical specialists and support groups in Mackenzie** means that many seniors have to regularly travel to other centres like Prince George, or move out of the community permanently as their or their spouse's health care needs change.

OTHER TOPICS

- **There is a lack of flexible, community-based transportation to support seniors.** Many seniors need to regularly travel to other centres like Prince George for more specialized health care or other services not available locally. However, the current option (medical bus) is not flexible enough to meet seniors needs and does not support other needs such as social or recreational trips.
- **Seniors need more/better access to information about the resources available to them.** Many participants noted they didn't know what services or programs were available, or where to look for information. By having a single, well-promoted source for information, people would know where to look and would have better access to the resources available to them.
- **Some buildings in town are not accessible.** In addition to housing, many public buildings and businesses are multi-level or have stair entrances and are not accessible for people with mobility challenges.



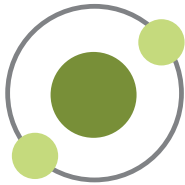
A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Creating an age-friendly community is a complex process with many different players. The influence of federal and provincial policies, limited funding, lack of local government staff resources, and reliance on local organizations and aging volunteers, make it challenging to address some of the key priorities for seniors, such as health care and affordable housing. Therefore, it will be essential to form meaningful partnerships and work together to find creative solutions.

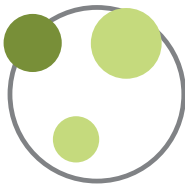
To support successful implementation of this Plan, the following section sets a clear framework for roles and responsibilities, and identifies next steps to coordinate implementation.

Roles & Responsibilities

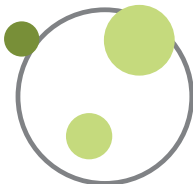
The District has three general levels of responsibility in implementing the actions in this plan. Within each of these levels, the District can play different roles or provide different amounts of resources and support. Because this plan has been funded and coordinated by the District, the Action Plan identifies the type of role the District has in relation to each action. There are three types of roles for the District: lead; partner; and advocate.



LEAD – *primary responsibility*. The District will implement an action (working alone or with other community partners); this would typically involve things that the District is accountable for like planning, policy or service delivery.



PARTNER – *shared responsibility*. The District will work with appropriate community partners to achieve an action; the District’s role could be very limited or quite involved and may involve anything from convening meetings, to public education, to funding, to joint planning or service delivery.



ADVOCATE – *complementary responsibility*. The District will seek to influence decisions and policy that fall outside of its jurisdiction through an organized effort (working alone or with other community partners). Again, the District’s role could be limited or more involved.

LEGEND



Age-Friendly
goal or action



District of
Mackenzie



Other players or
partners

Implementation

The following actions are recommended to coordinate smooth and efficient implementation of this Plan.

1. **Secure grant funding to hire a dedicated Age-Friendly Coordinator** (for a period of at least 1 year) to oversee implementation of this Housing & Healthcare Action Plan, advocate for the needs of local seniors, coordinate and apply for grant funding for specific projects, and lead the implementation process.
2. **Hire a local Age-Friendly Coordinator** who can lead the subsequent steps.
3. **Host a workshop with key community partners** to establish a framework for implementing 'partner' actions (i.e., actions that the District is not leading directly or that requires additional support from other organizations). The framework should identify a process for regular reporting as well as key roles and responsibilities, timelines and budgets for implementing specific actions and/or integrating recommendations into their business planning and decision-making. Key partners may include:
 - District staff and the Accessibility Committee;
 - Provincial agencies (i.e., BC Transit, BC Housing);
 - Northern Health;
 - Senior levels of government and other potential funding sources (e.g., Northern Development Initiative Trust, local industry, etc.), and
 - Other relevant service providers, community organizations, schools, non-profits, businesses, developers, etc.
4. **Develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating progress.** The framework should include, at minimum:
 - Identification of timelines, budgets, roles and responsibilities, and measures of success for each action;
 - An annual evaluation to assess progress on the Plan's goals and actions over time and re-evaluate priorities based on current trends and issues;
 - Steps to publicly report on annual progress; and
 - A 5-year review to assess whether an update is required.



HOUSING

Housing plays a key role in overall quality of life. Ensuring our community has a diverse range of affordable, safe, and accessible housing is essential to the well-being of all residents and supports seniors to age in place close to their friends and family.

GOAL: *Mackenzie has a range of housing options that are affordable, appropriately located, well built, and accessible for people of all ages, including older adults and seniors, and people with mobility challenges.*

Objective 1: Support the development of more seniors housing across multiple levels of care

Action	District's Role
1.1 Complete a business case study to identify demand for specific types of seniors housing (e.g., patio homes, seniors housing complex) and explore potential locations that are close to services and amenities.	Lead
1.2 Use the business case study to attract developers and advocate to senior levels of government and other partners for funding to develop seniors housing across multiple levels of care.	Lead / Advocate

1.3 Work with health authorities, senior levels of government, developers, and other housing providers to explore and establish public-private partnerships to develop seniors housing across multiple levels of care.	Partner
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Objective 2: Improve the accessibility of Mackenzie’s new and existing housing stock.

Action	District’s Role
2.1 Work with developers and other housing providers to explore innovative options for seniors housing and identify and address/reduce barriers to developing more accessible and affordable seniors housing in Mackenzie.	Partner
2.2 Explore zoning and other District incentives to encourage development of seniors housing, affordable housing, and universally-accessible units (e.g., density bonusing, reduced parking requirements, zero-lot setbacks, streamlined permit processes, reduced/waived permit fees, etc.)	Lead
2.3 Compile a list of incentives and funding sources (e.g., property tax credits, homeowner grants) to assist seniors and people with disabilities to make home repairs and modifications for accessibility.	Lead
2.4 Compile a list of local and regional contractors to support home modifications for accessibility.	Lead
2.5 Use existing resources (such as CMHC’s tips for Accessible and Adaptable Housing and Aging in Place), to compile a Seniors Guide to Home Improvements to identify home modifications for accessibility (e.g., ramps, grab bars, lifts) or age-friendly improvements (e.g., built-in medic alert systems) as well as local/regional contractors, and grants to support homeowners.	Lead
2.6 Work with community partners to share information and incentives regarding home modifications for accessibility.	Partner

Objective 3: Improve access to affordable in-home support for seniors.

Action	District's Role
3.1 Work with community partners to connect local volunteers and youth with seniors in need of in-home support (e.g., housekeeping, yard/home maintenance, etc.)	Partner
3.2 Advocate to senior levels of government and other partners for more funding for formal in-home support services (e.g., Meals on Wheels, Community Paramedicine Program).	Advocate

Objective 4: Support seniors to access the housing they need.

Action	District's Role
4.1 Work with community partners to develop support systems to help seniors access various levels of seniors housing and/or subsidized housing and maintain ongoing communications with seniors who are 'waitlisted'.	Partner
4.2 Advocate to senior levels of government and housing providers for sliding-scale support systems (rather than a specific income cut-off) to allow more people to access subsidized housing.	Advocate
4.3 Work with community partners to develop resources for seniors considering changing their housing circumstances (e.g., selling your home, transitioning into seniors housing, financial planning, etc.)	Partner



HEALTHCARE

Access to community support and health services is vital for seniors to maintain their health and independence as they age. While most of these services fall outside the mandate of local governments, the District can support local health care and programs for seniors through advocacy and partnerships with service providers.

GOAL: *Community support and health services are affordable, easy to access, and meet the needs of older adults and seniors.*

Objective 5: Support a range of affordable, easy to access healthcare services and facilities for seniors.

Action	District's Role
<p>5.1 Advocate to senior levels of government and other partners for more funding for health and community support services for seniors, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalizing and supporting the ongoing operation of the Red Cross affordable medical and mobility equipment loan program 	Advocate

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding affordable and flexible transportation to medical appointments • Developing local respite and support programs for caregivers • Continuing and expanding the Community Paramedicine initiative to check in on seniors living alone 	
5.2 Advocate to Northern Health to increase access to telehealth services at the Community Health Center.	Advocate
5.3 Work with community partners to develop and deliver training for paid and unpaid care givers and the broader community to increase awareness and skills in supporting with people with dementia.	Partner
5.4 Advocate for community health partners to develop Senior Health Liaisons to assist seniors and their families to navigate healthcare systems and access the services and equipment they need.	Advocate

Objective 6: Continue to build and strengthen partnerships to support seniors' health and well-being.

Action	District's Role
6.1 Work with Northern Health and other community partners to share information about available healthcare services, programs, and resources for seniors.	Partner



OTHER AGE-FRIENDLY TOPICS

While the focus of this plan is housing and healthcare, a number of other topics emerged from community discussions that play a role in seniors' well-being. To provide a comprehensive approach for Mackenzie seniors, it is important to also address these issues and barriers to accessing services, programs, and resources.

Transportation & Mobility

Objective 7: Improve access to transportation for seniors.

Action	District's Role
7.1 Advocate to Northern Health Connections to improve medical transportation and reduce barriers for seniors and people with disabilities or mobility challenges (e.g., advanced booking, more flexible schedules, home drop-offs).	Advocate
7.2 Work with community partners to establish funding for a community bus service to support seniors to attend events and activities in and out of town.	Partner
7.3 Prioritize snow and ice clearing on sidewalks near seniors housing and amenities.	Lead

Information & Communications

Objective 8: Improve information and communications about services, programs and resources for seniors.

Action	District's Role
8.1 Work with community partners to develop a central hub for seniors and age-friendly information (e.g., annual mail-out, community bulletin board).	Partner
8.2 Work with community partners to develop a communications strategy to keep seniors informed about local services, programs and resources.	Partner
8.3 Organize and host a Seniors Business Week and Age-Friendly Resource Fair to promote businesses that cater to seniors and share information about accessible housing, health care, and other community services, programs, and resources.	Lead

Building Accessibility

Objective 9: Improve accessibility of public buildings and businesses.

Action	District's Role
9.1 Conduct an audit to identify improvements to make public buildings universally accessible. Prioritize improvements based on the impact to senior's health and well-being (e.g., ensuring the dentist office is accessible).	Lead
9.2 Continue to explore alternatives for public buildings that are not universally accessible (e.g., dentist, Chamber of Commerce).	Lead
9.3 Put out a Request for Qualifications for preferred contractors for accessibility and mobility improvements for District-owned buildings.	Lead
9.3 Develop and implement guidelines and explore incentives to encourage local businesses to improve accessibility (e.g., tax credits, waived building permit fees, accessibility awards, etc.).	Lead

Developing the Plan was the first step on this journey. Implementing the Plan will require continued communication, collaboration, and action by many partners. Together, we can create a more inclusive community where our older residents can maintain a high quality of life and ‘age in place’ near family and friends.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SURVEY AND AGE-FRIENDLY WORKSHOP



Age Friendly Housing & Health Care WORKSHOP

WHAT WE HEARD: WORKSHOP SUMMARY

To support the creation of the District's Age Friendly Housing & Health Care Action Plan, a workshop was hosted to dive deeper into housing and healthcare issues and solutions with community members. Discussions focused on the realities of being a senior in Mackenzie – what's working well, what needs improvement, and what the gaps are.

The workshop was hosted October 12, 2017 at the Seniors Centre. Approximately 40 community members came out to share their ideas.

The following provides a summary of what we heard through this event.

What is Mackenzie like today for seniors?

What works well?

Over all, participants in this workshop expressed that they felt Mackenzie is a great place to live, emphasizing the strong sense of community and overall safety that they experience. Specific assets that participants mentioned are summarized below. **Ideas in bold were mentioned multiple times or shared across more than one group in the workshop.**

SOCIAL / RECREATIONAL

- **Seniors Center**
- **Seniors lunch**
- Special events for seniors
- Environment, nature, trails
- Recreation activities
- Legion
- Arts Council
- Radio station
- Churches and spiritual guidance
- Meals on Wheels
- Library
- Education programs for seniors

HEALTH CARE

- Good home support workers
- Short wait times for family doctors, dentists
- Emergency room doesn't turn people away
- Good doctors
- Health unit
- Paramedic support (home check-ins more isolated seniors)
- Physiotherapist
- Dentist

TRANSPORTATION

- Recent addition of some wheelchair accessible sidewalks
- Medical bus to Prince George
- Taxi-savers

What could use improvement?

Workshop participants stressed that the community is lacking accessible housing and health care options for seniors, people with disabilities, and people with health challenges. They also highlighted gaps in services that would allow them to manage better in their current home (such as yard, snow and home maintenance services). Workshop participants stated the result of these compounding gaps is that residents are forced to leave the community if their health status changes. Some specific areas of improvement are included below. **Ideas in bold were mentioned multiple times or shared across more than one group in the workshop.**

HOUSING

- **Need more accessible housing – almost all houses have stairs**
- **Expensive rental housing**
- Lack of local contractors to make existing homes more accessible
- Autumn Lodge should be reserved for seniors housing, waitlists to get in and confusing criteria about who is accepted or not
- Lack of assisted living and residential care

HEALTHCARE

- **Lack of medical specialists**
- **Not enough homecare services**
- Not enough chairs in hospital waiting area
- Lack of communication between health care providers
- Not attracting enough young doctors and nurses
- No consistent family doctor

TRANSPORTATION / GETTING AROUND

- **Transportation within / out of town is lacking** (no greyhound, community bus service)
- **Not enough sanding around town in the winter – risk of falling**
- Town is generally not accessible for walkers and wheelchairs (access into mall and other buildings is limited)
- Medical bus should do home pick ups
- Better lighting
- Not enough benches in public

GENERAL

- **Not enough seasonal yard services, including snow removal and garden / yard maintenance**
- No access number for senior's benefits and not sure where to find information about services that are available

SOCIAL / RECREATIONAL

- Lacking entertainment for seniors
- Lacking access to computers and computer skills

What would be an ideal community for seniors/elders?

What would it look like? What services or programs would it have? How would people act?

Overall, workshop participants felt that an ideal age-friendly Mackenzie would have a variety of housing and healthcare services that would allow them to stay in the community as they aged. Participants shared ideas that ranged from services that would assist them in their own home, to outlining the specifics of an ideal seniors housing facility, as well as sharing general services they wished to see in their community. **Ideas in bold were mentioned multiple times or shared across more than one group in the workshop.**

HOUSING

- **More single level homes (ie., patio homes)**
- **2-3 story apartments with elevators**
- **Single story apartment complex**

THE IDEAL SENIORS FACILITY

- **Multi-levels of care / graduated care units**
- **Mix of subsidized and paid units, sliding scale, based on income**
- **Accessible, no stairs, elevator or single story complex**
- **Units for couples**
- **Qualified staff**
- **Central kitchen – ability to cook if you want to**
- **Connected or close to hospital and other amenities (seniors centre, shopping, etc.)**
- **Amenities – space for hobbies, library, workshop, exercise room, worship services**

- Full services (that you can opt in to) – meals, personal care, housekeeping, etc.
- Social programming including nightly events
- Rooms for family to visit and stay over
- Covered parking
- Green space
- Sun room / interior patio
- Trial room to stay and see if you like the place before you move in

HEALTH CARE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Access to specialists without having to travel to Prince George (more local specialists or access to telehealth)
- More home support services to allow people to stay in their homes – health care, personal care, housekeeping and home making, yard maintenance
- Medic alert button services
- Not having to worry about lawn, garden, snow
- Nutritious meal delivery

GENERAL

- Improved access to information, i.e. pamphlet or information line detailing services for seniors
- Meal service (in-home / delivered)
- Indoor walking path / track
- Better access to all levels of government
- Longer pool hours
- More arts and culture

How could we get from where we are today to our ideal community?

What strengths/assets could we build on? How could we address challenges?

Workshop participants shared several ideas for reaching this vision, including ways to access funding, use existing assets (such as land available for seniors housing), advocate for seniors needs, and connect community champions. **Ideas in bold were mentioned multiple times or shared across more than one group in the workshop.**

- **Secure funding for housing – look at financing and grant options, local businesses (i.e. Duzcho)**
- **Determine appropriate location for seniors housing** (next to hospital, repurpose the Shoppers building, District owned lots next to the Seniors Centre)
- **Promote Mackenzie as a desirable place to live** (attracting/keeping younger people, healthcare workers, etc.)
- **Lobby local and provincial governments**
- Plan and build it!
- Attract health care staff to help increase services (doctors, nurses, home support)
- Advocating for improved services in the community
- Connect with accessibility groups and Accessibility Committee
- Make seniors voices heard
- Seniors meet monthly in a more formal manner (to share information about available services, talk about issues, etc.)
- Seniors helping seniors in the mean time
- Explore a co-op model for seniors housing
- Seek community champions – MLA, MPs
- Provide clear information on available resources (like Autumn Lodge and criteria for acceptance, how to apply, etc.)
- Remove barriers (ie., make it easier to upgrade existing homes)
- House locals first



Age Friendly Housing & Health Care SURVEY

WHAT WE HEARD: SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

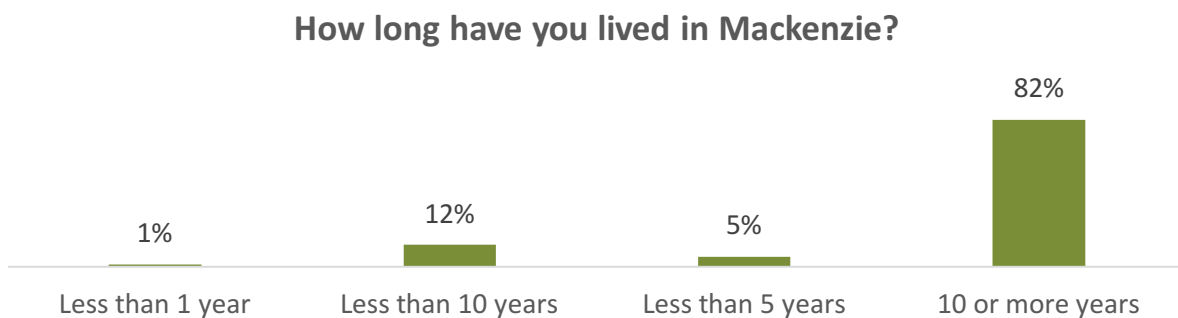
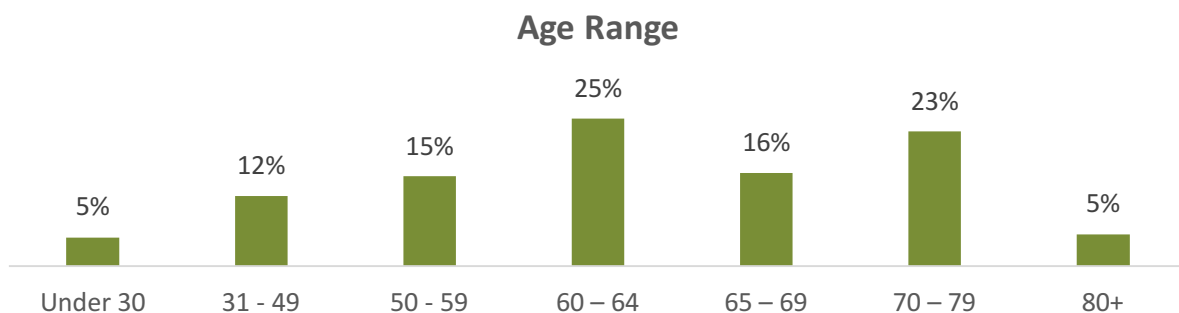
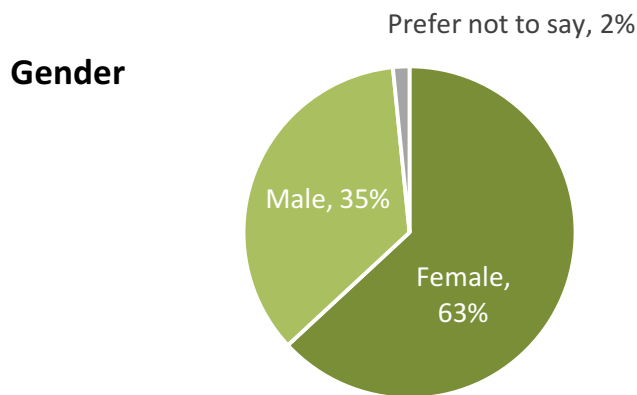
To support the creation of the District's Age Friendly Housing & Health Care Action Plan, a survey was developed to gather input from community members about their current and future housing and healthcare needs.

The Age Friendly Survey was available from September 9 to October 15, 2017 in both online and paper formats. Paper copies were available at various locations throughout the community, including the Seniors Centre, Library, Recreation Centre, Community Centre, District Office, and lotto booth at the mall.

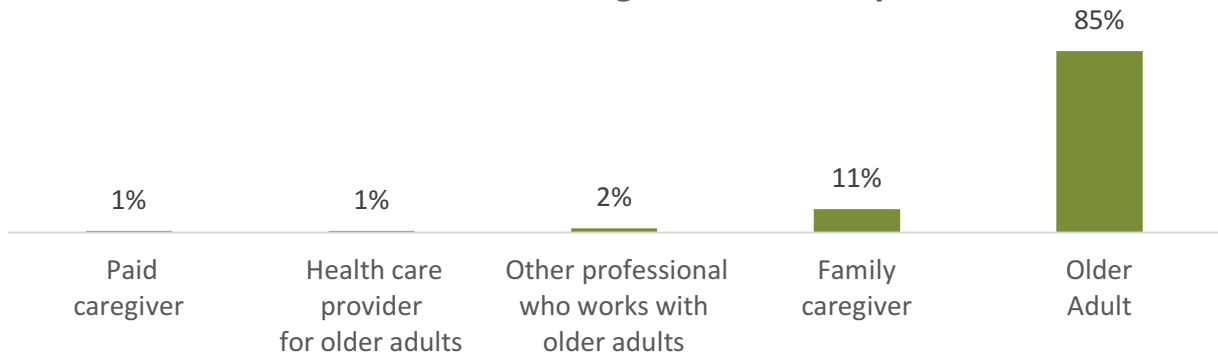
The following provides a summary of what we heard through this survey.

Tell Us About You (Who Participated)

The majority of survey respondents were female and identified as older adults in the 60-64 age bracket. Most reported they had lived in Mackenzie for over ten years, choosing to live in Mackenzie for the social connections, sense of safety, and natural amenities.



Which of the following best describes you?



What are the main reasons you live in Mackenzie? (check all that apply)



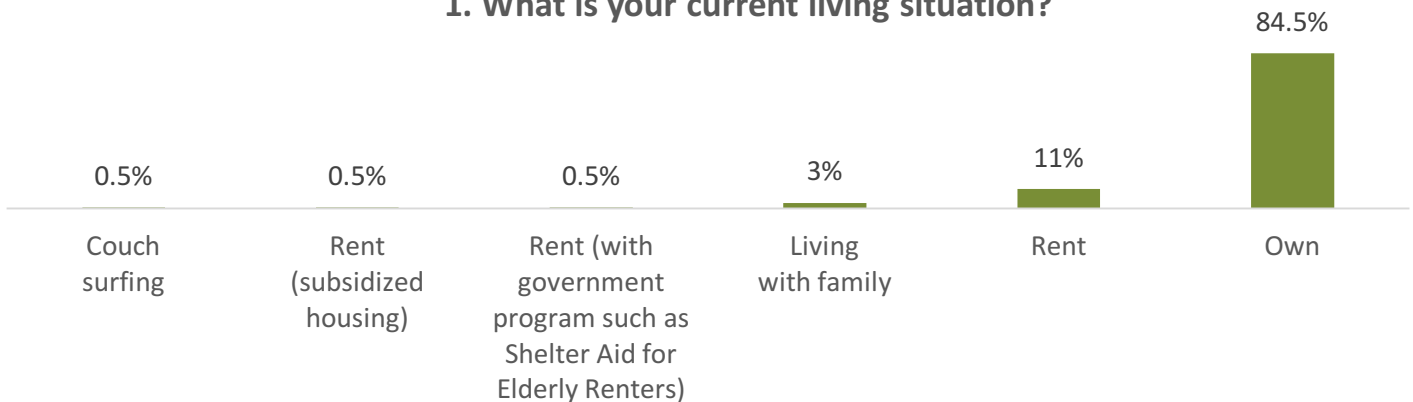
Other reasons for living in Mackenzie:

- Affordable Housing **(7 comments)**
- Family or social ties **(4 comments)**
- Think of it as “home” **(4 comments)**
- Employment or volunteer work **(3 comments)**
- Lifestyle, safe, quiet **(4 comments)**

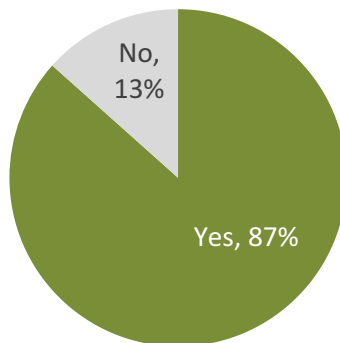
HOUSING (Tell us about your current situation)

Most survey participants owned their own home and felt their housing was stable; however, 13% of respondents did not feel that they had stable housing. Most participants said their homes would be difficult or impossible for someone with mobility challenges and over a third suggested they would need to move to more suitable housing within the next 10 years (while another 31% weren't sure).

1. What is your current living situation?



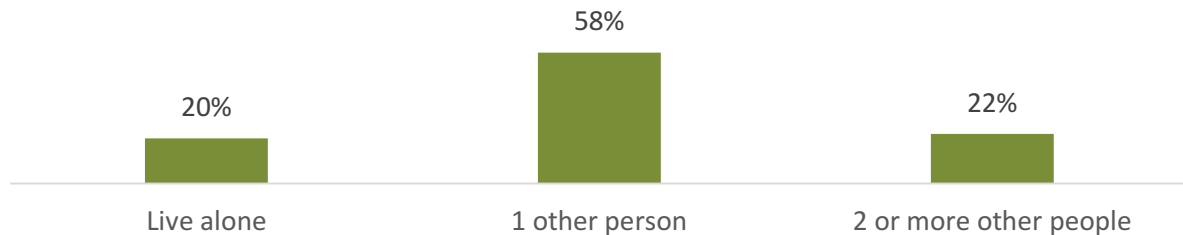
2. Do you feel your housing is stable?



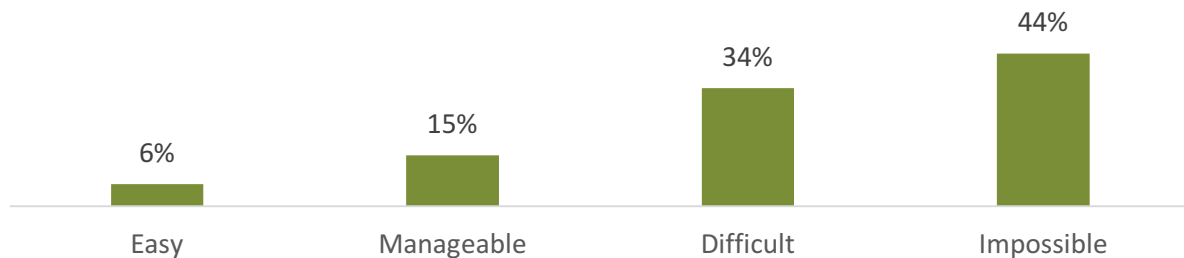
If not, why not?

- Financial reasons (**7 comments**)
- Living with a family member or someone else – they may move or sell their home (**5 comments**)
- Rental situation (**2 comments**)
- Home in need of repairs (**2 comments**)
- Other, didn't specify (**2 comments**)

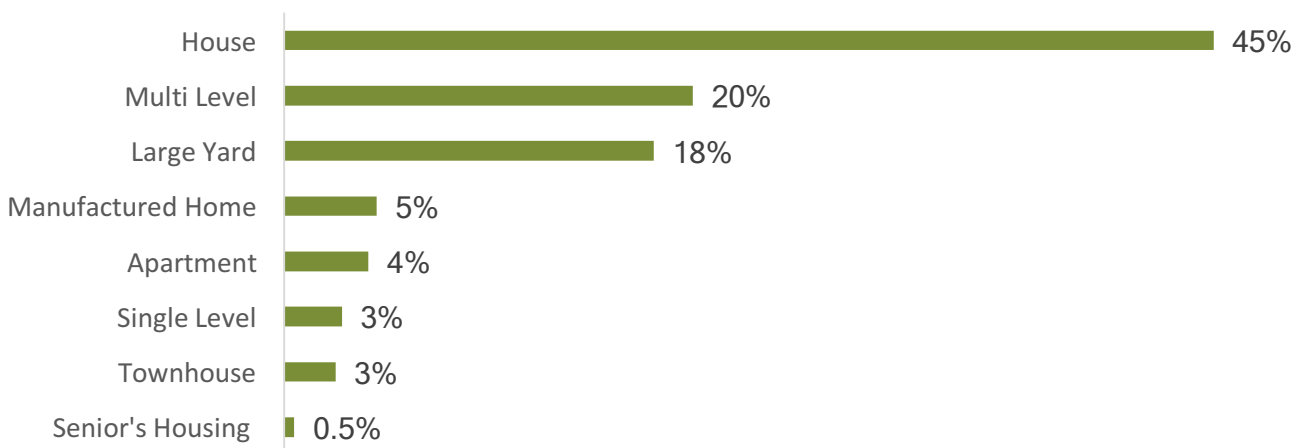
3. How many other people do you live with?



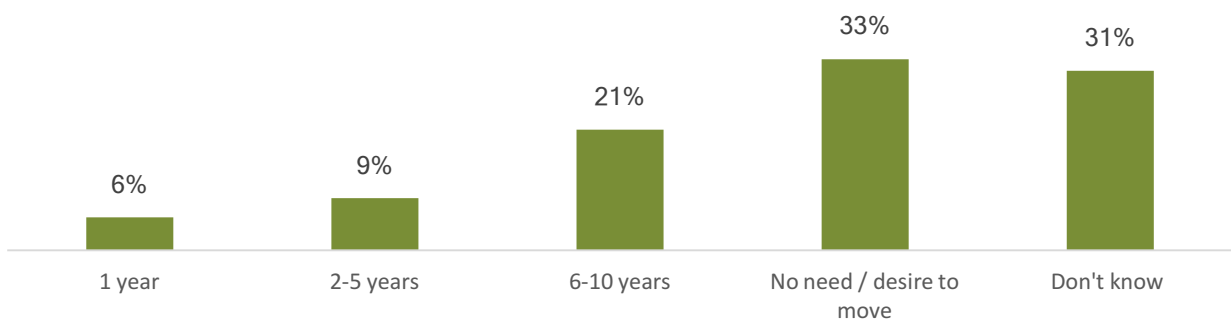
4. How accessible is your home in its current state (with no renovations) for someone using a wheelchair or mobility aid?



5. Which of the following best describes the home you currently live in? (check all that apply)



6. Do you plan to move to more suitable housing (ie., downsizing, moving to assisted living, moving in with family etc.) in the next...

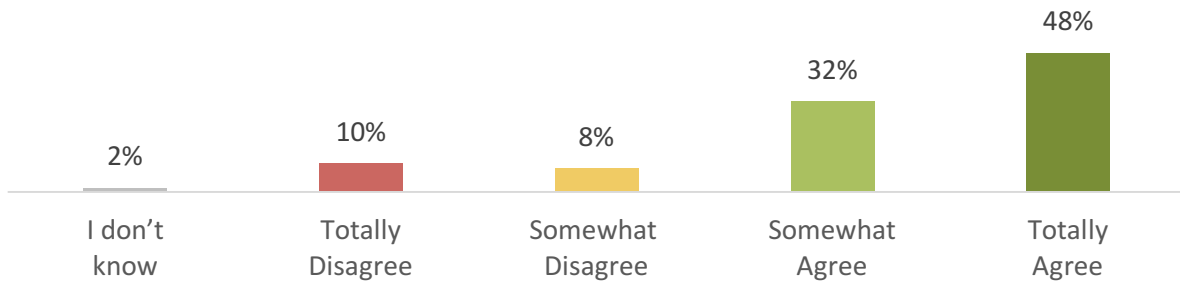


HOUSING (Suitable Housing for Seniors)

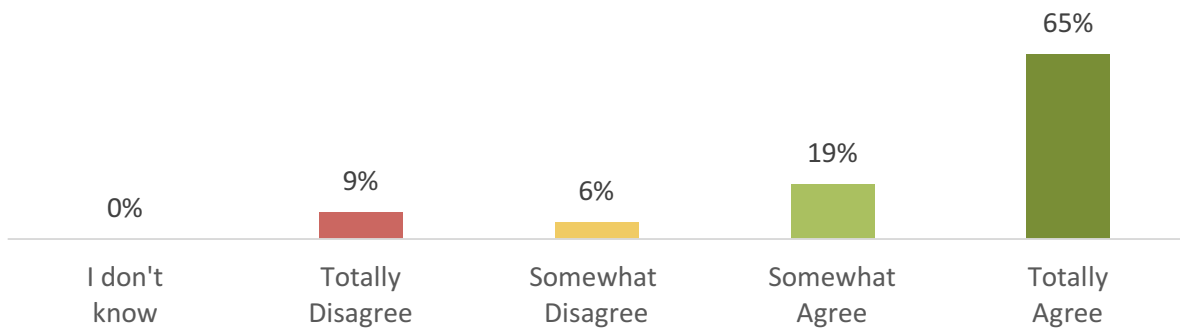
Note: Respondents who said they had no need/desire to move skipped to question 10.

7. Does your current housing meet your needs?

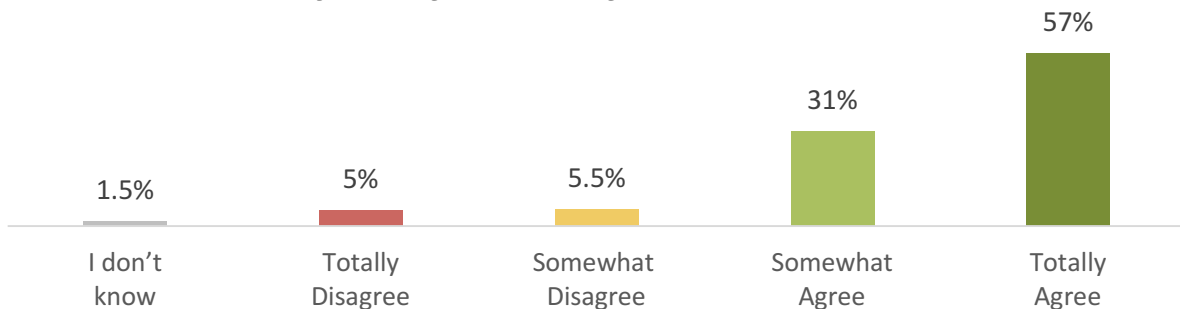
Size – comfortable and easy to maintain



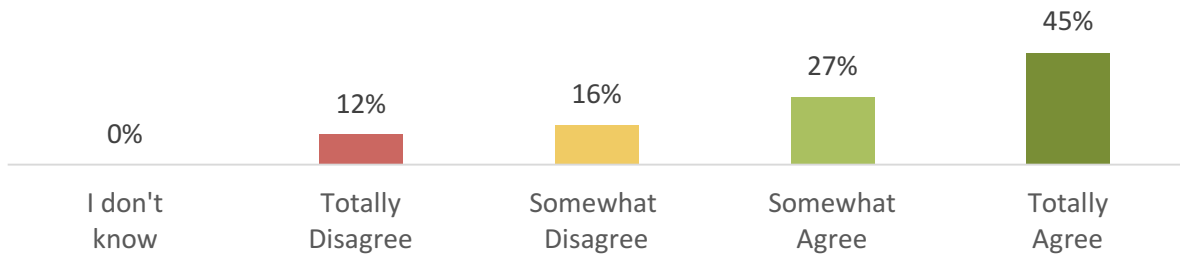
Affordability – suits your available budget



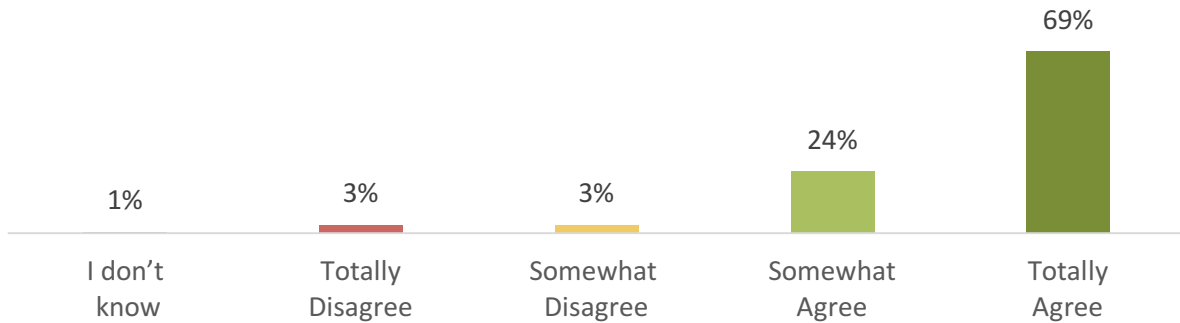
Quality – comfortable, safe and well-constructed



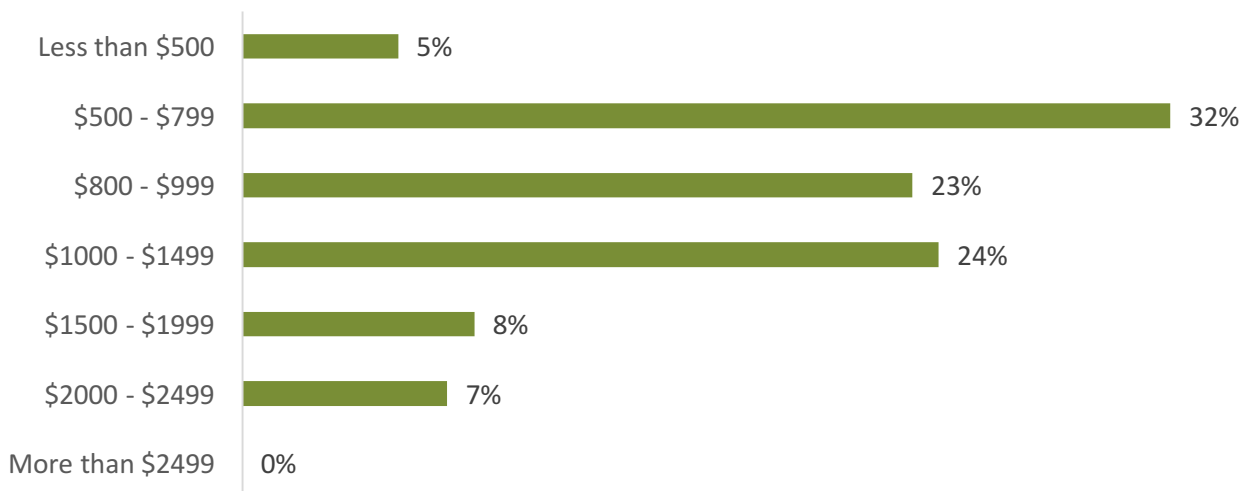
Accessible – suits your mobility needs



Location – close to your daily needs, shops, services, transit, etc



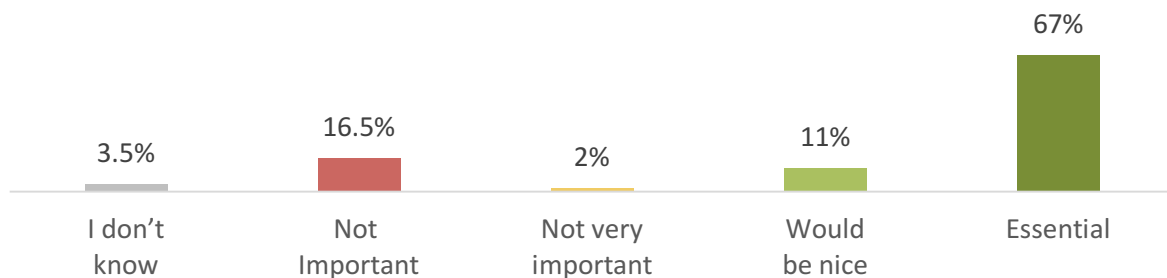
8. What are you able to pay or willing to pay per month for seniors' housing that includes services such as meals, housekeeping, and social activities?



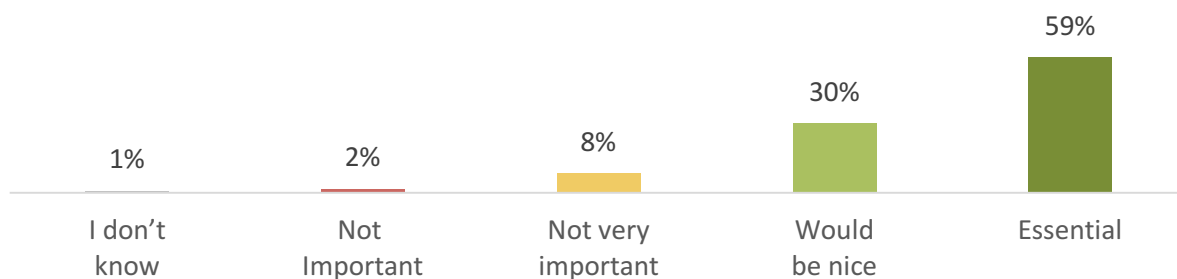
9. What features are important to you in a seniors' residence?

Participants stressed the importance of allowing spouses to reside together, accommodating specific dietary needs, being located in a convenient place, offering various kinds of care and end of life care. Other important features included social activities, culturally sensitive care, and the ability to have pets. Having care providers who speak languages other than English was less important to participants.

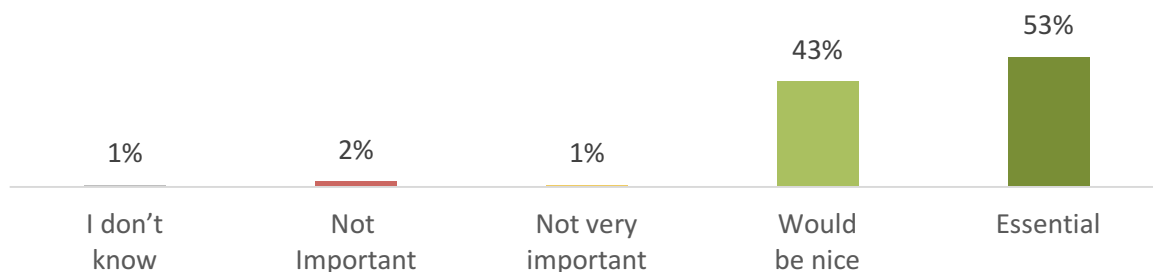
Allows my spouse and I to reside together



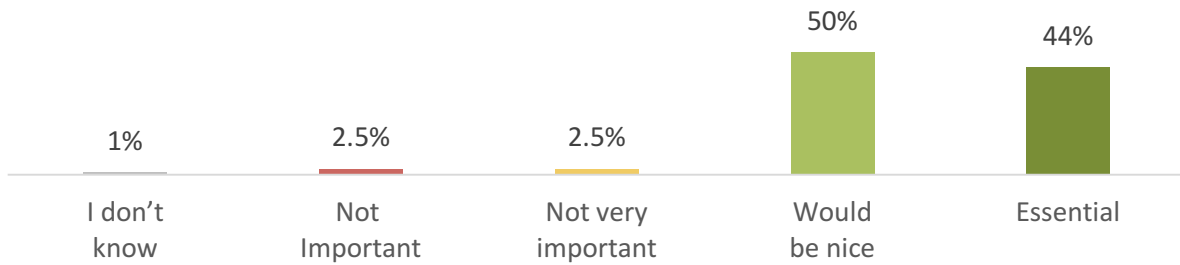
Accommodates specific dietary needs



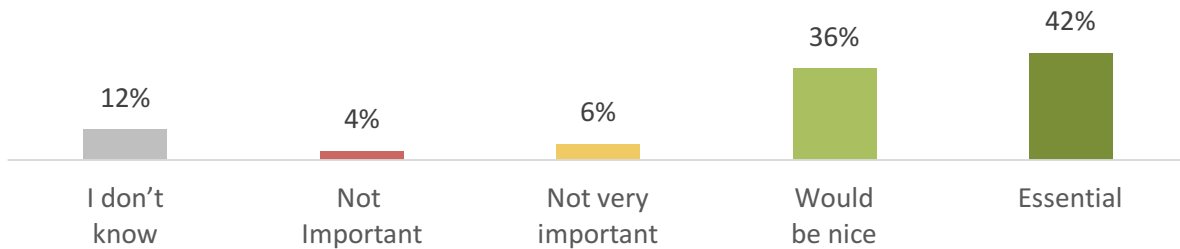
Location – close to shops, services, transit, etc.



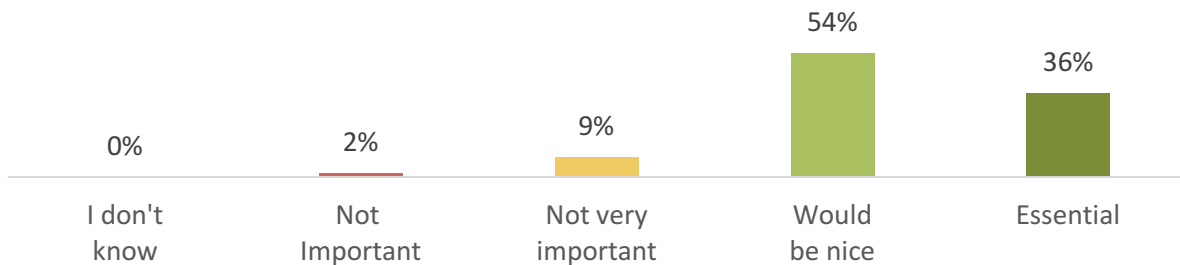
Offers various kinds of care in the same residence



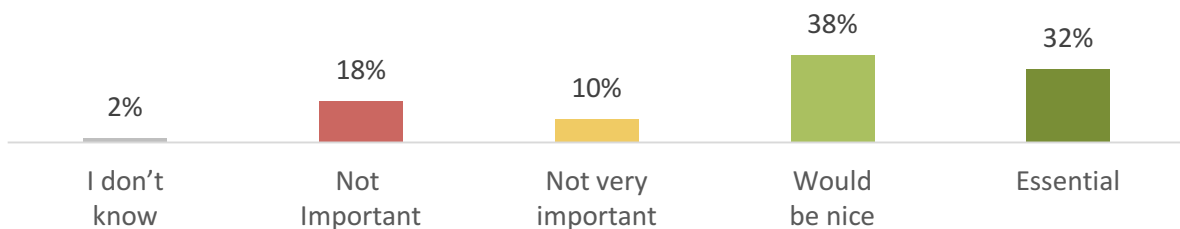
End of life care



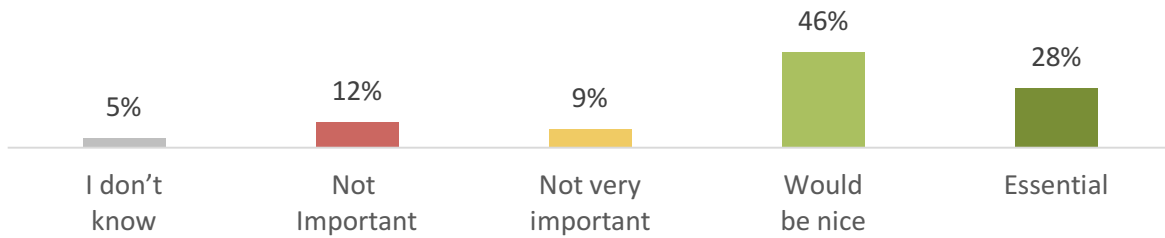
Variety of planned social activities



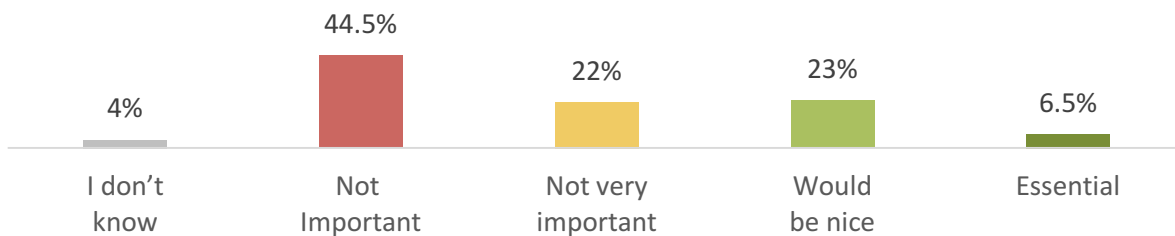
Allows pets



Provides culturally sensitive care



Offers care providers that speak a language other than English



Other features you would like to see in a seniors' residence:

- Common room **(2 comments)**
- Outdoor access, gardens, green space **(2 comments)**
- Rooms for visitors **(2 comments)**
- Physical activities
- Affordable
- Assisted living
- Close to the hospital
- Mix of independent spaces and social spaces
- Have a vehicle for trips
- Safe and secure with quality care

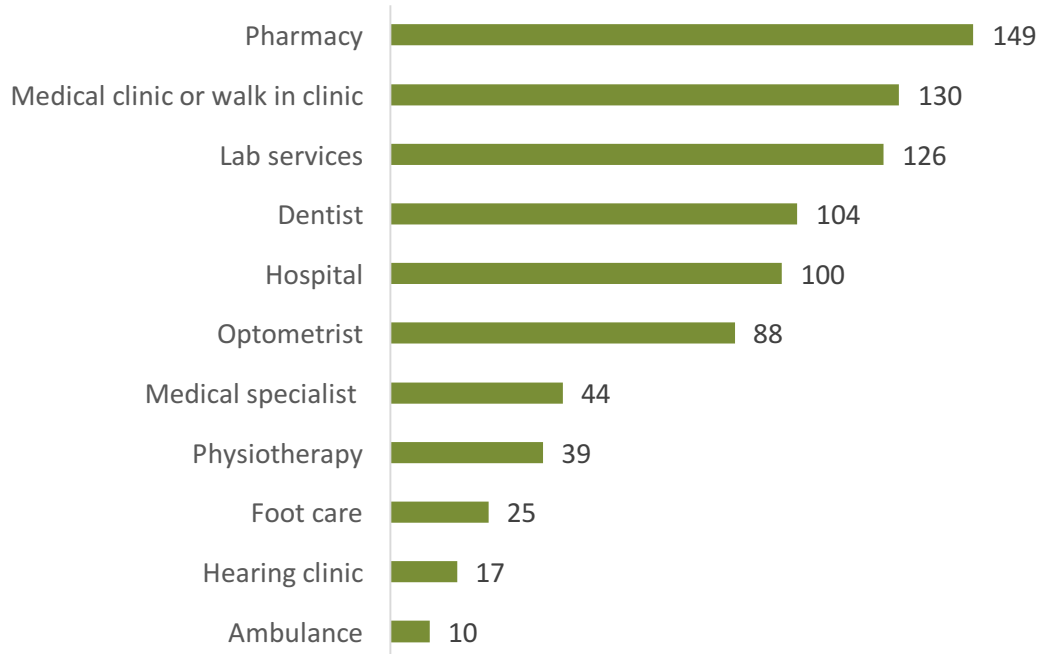
10. What else should we know about housing in Mackenzie?

- Need more seniors housing options including residential care, assisted living, and dementia care **(25 comments)**
- Need for more accessible housing, most homes have stairs and are not suitable for people with disabilities or mobility challenges **(23 comments)**
- Need more affordable rental housing **(12 comments)**
- Need better access to contractors and equipment for home repairs and improvements for accessibility **(2 comments)**
- Aging housing stock, undervalued compared to new construction **(2 comments)**

COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES

11. What services do you use regularly? *Number of responses shown below.*

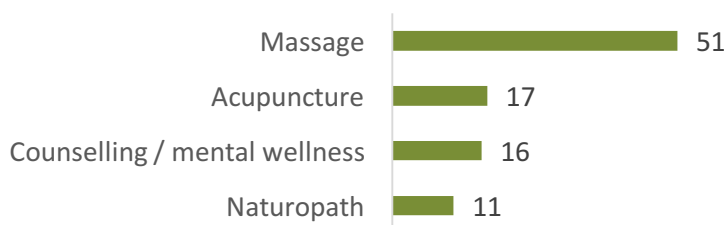
Health Care



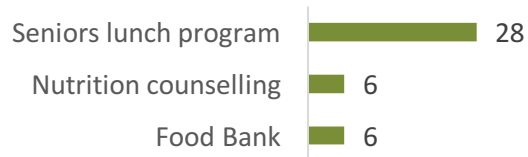
Recreation



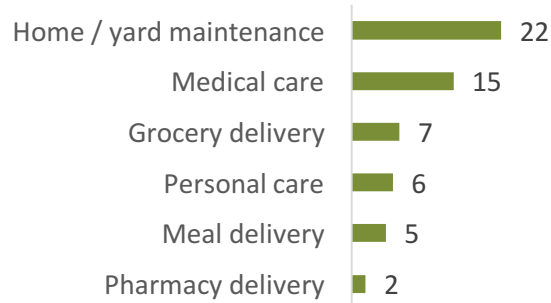
Wellness Services



Food & Nutrition



In-Home Support Services



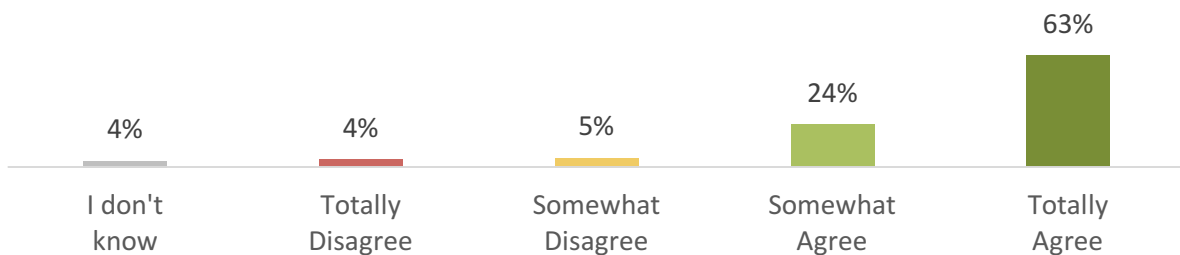
Other services you use regularly:

- Outdoor recreation **(3 comments)**
- Art Center **(2 comments)**
- Dancing **(2 comments)**
- Tai Chi
- Chiropractor
- Church
- Hair Salon
- Reflexology
- School
- Library

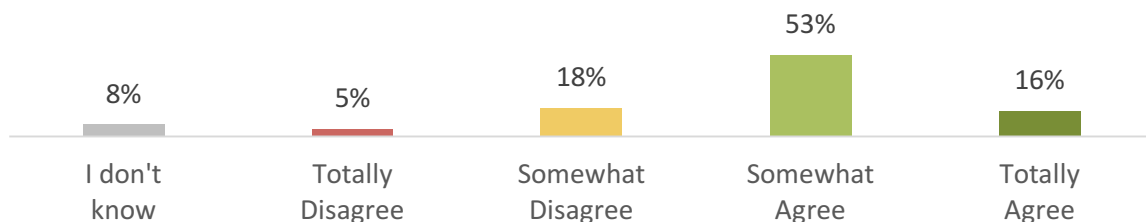
12. What are community and health services like in Mackenzie?

Responses show that most participants have access to nutritious meals and the range of health, wellness and support services are somewhat meeting local needs and the services that are available locally are generally convenient and easy to access. Close to half of participants didn't know about home support services and Adult Ministry services indicating either they do not need or use these services, or there could be a lack of information about them.

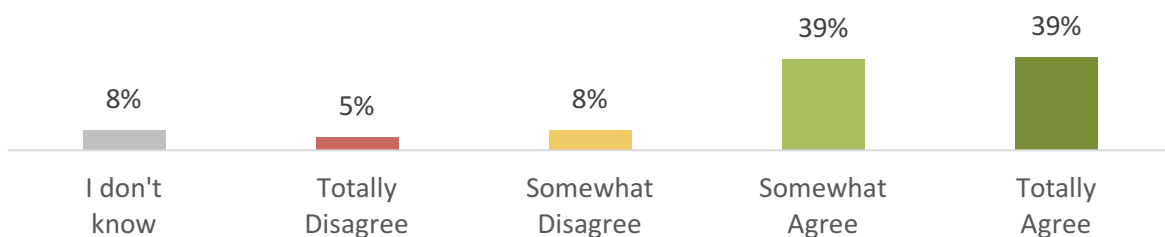
I have access to or the ability to prepare nutritious meals



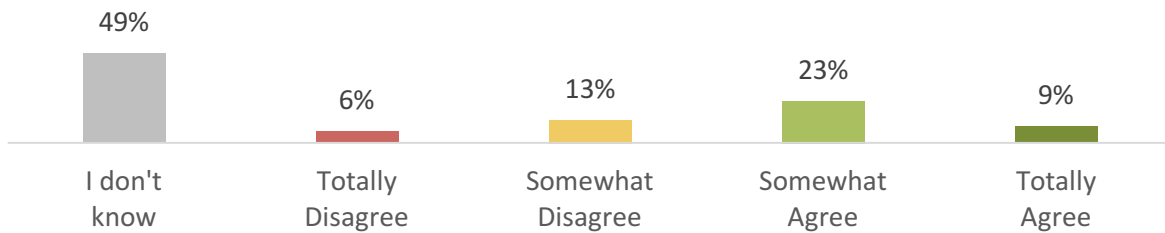
There are a range of health, wellness, and support services in Town to meet my needs.



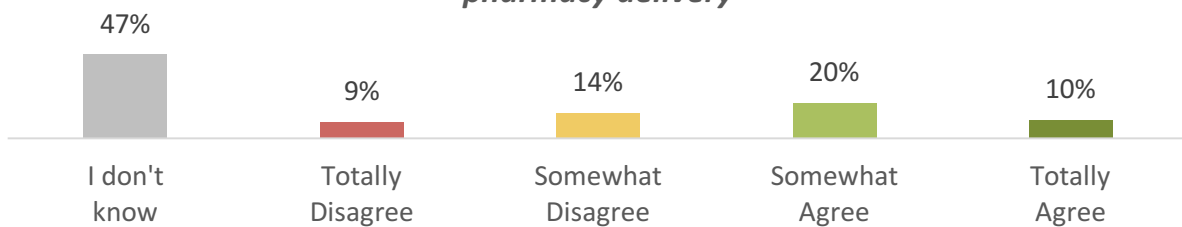
Health and social services are conveniently located and easy to access (by car, transit, or walking).



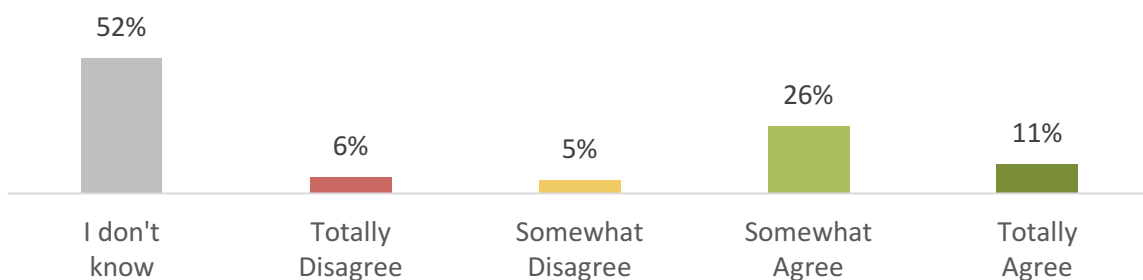
Health and personal care home support services are available and affordable for my budget



Other home support services are available and affordable – such as housekeeping, home/yard maintenance, and meal, grocery, and pharmacy delivery

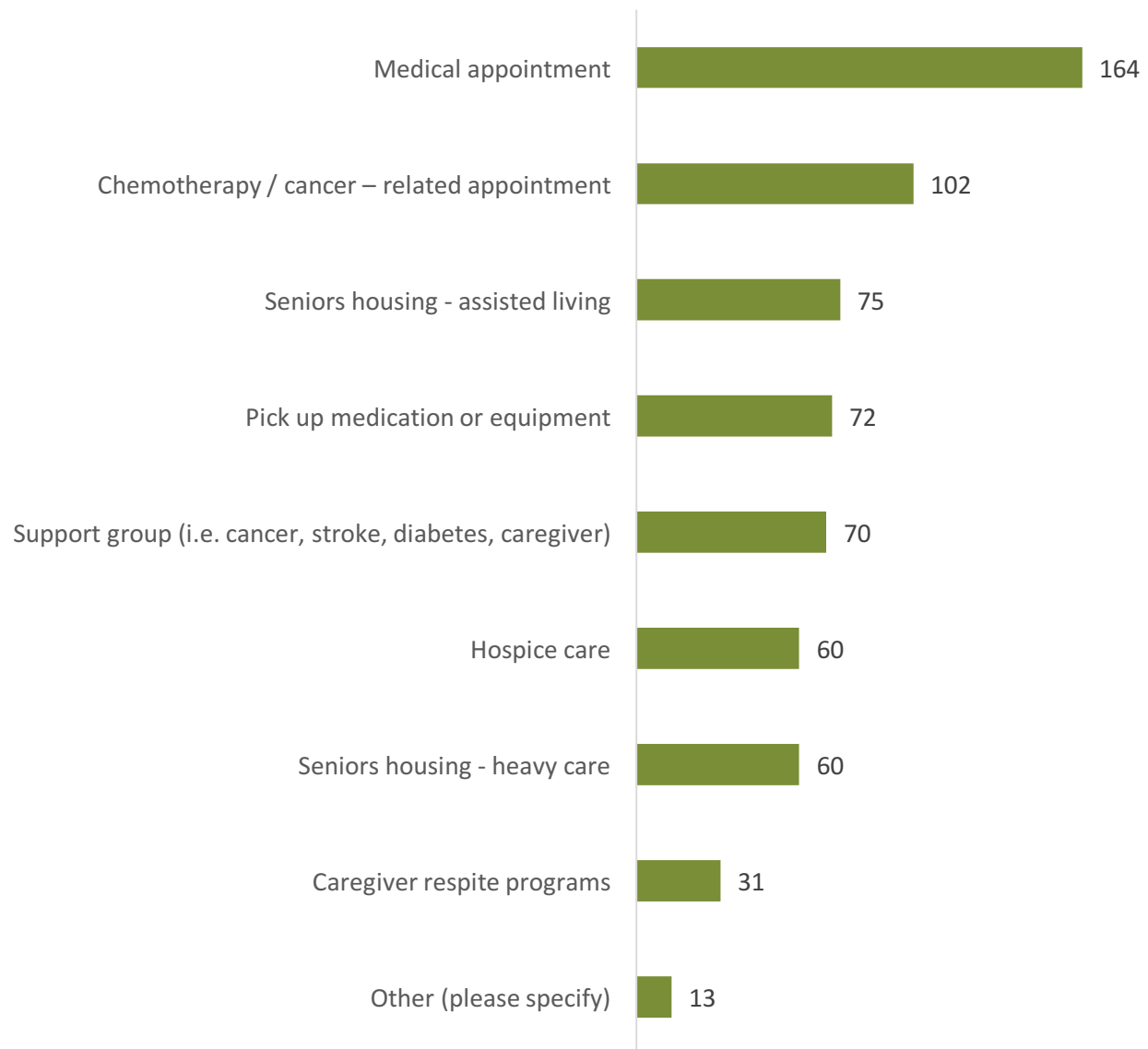


I have access to Adult Ministry Services (ie., social worker, community advocate)



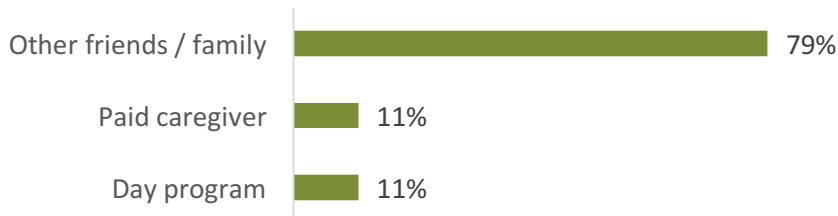
13. Have you or someone you know had to travel or move out of town for any of the following? *Number of responses shown below.*

While not surprising, over 85% of participants either had to or knew someone who had to leave the community for a health or housing-related reason. Almost 200 of these mentions involved moving away permanently for things like seniors housing or hospice care.



14. If you are a caregiver of an older adult, do you have respite support?

Most respondents reported receiving respite support from other friends or family while other supports like paid caregivers or adult daycare programs were less common.



15. What else should we know about health services in Mackenzie?

- **General Practitioners (15 comments):** Overall participants spoke favorably about the physicians in Mackenzie, with some comments noting the need to improve access to doctors. For example, a lack of continuity in doctors, or having to wait or call multiple times for an appointment.
- **Hospital (8 comments):** Suggestions regarding the hospital, including the need for more services or improving access to services (such as telehealth). Some people felt that the hospital should not be used for hospice or assisted living.
- **Specialists (8 comments):** These comments referenced the lack of medical specialists in Mackenzie, including services like optometrists, certain diagnostics and diabetes educator.
- **Travel (7 comments):** These comments noted the burden that traveling to Prince George or even Vancouver for appointments places on them.
- **Needs improvement (7 comments):** General comments that health care services and supports for seniors need improvement.
- **Coordination (2 comments):** Participants noted there is a lack of coordination between health care professional's or messaging about what is available to older adults.
- **Wheelchair Access (2 comments):** These comments noted that some buildings in town are not accessible, making access hard for those with mobility aids.
- **Affordability (2 comments):** Participants stressed the financial burden of having to pay for some prescriptions, ambulance rides and other healthcare like dental services.

16. How else could we make Mackenzie more age-friendly?

- **More seniors housing & accessible housing (44 comments):** These comments called for more options for seniors housing in Mackenzie. Some emphasized the need for single story homes (10 comments), while others desired apartments with elevator access (3 comments).
- **Need a dedicated seniors care facility (18 comments):** Respondents expressed the need for a seniors care facility in Mackenzie that offers a range of care levels from independent living through to end of life care.
- **Improve accessibility of public buildings and spaces (16 comments):** Respondents highlighted areas of town where access is an issue for those with scooters, walkers or wheelchairs. Locations mentioned as being a challenge were the dentist, mall, Chamber of commerce and other businesses.
- **More transportation options (16 comments):** Participants stressed the need for more transportation options both within town as well as to Prince George.
- **Affordability (11 comments):** These comments stressed the need for housing and services to remain affordable for seniors, including those receiving a small pension.
- **In-Home Support and Home/Yard Maintenance (6 comments):** Respondents stressed that more in-home support as well as services to assist with home repairs, ice and snow removal and yard work would help seniors to remain independent in their own homes.
- **Positive Feedback (2 comments):** Mackenzie is quite age-friendly as it is.
- **Other (11 comments):** Other comments addressed things like community safety, more intergenerational activities, better access to information, more recreation programs, allowing golf carts on roads, and other health-related comments addressed in the previous question.

APPENDIX B: MACKENZIE AGE-FRIENDLY HOUSING & HEALTH CARE INVENTORY

District of Mackenzie

Seniors Housing & Healthcare Inventory

HIGHLIGHTS

Population

- Overall population has increased in size over the last five years, but has decreased over the last 10 years.
- Over the last 5 years the Senior's population (65+) has grown significantly, while the Pre-Seniors population (55 – 65) has also increased in size.
- Together, seniors and pre-seniors make up 28% of the total population in Mackenzie
- The proportion of senior's and pre-seniors in Mackenzie is similar to other small northern/interior BC communities.

Healthcare

- Seniors in Mackenzie have access to primary and secondary care services in the community as well as a range of supplementary health services and programming for seniors.
- To receive a broad range of tertiary care services and programs, seniors in Mackenzie must travel to larger centers such as Prince George, Chetwynd, and Quesnel.
- Compared to other small northern/interior BC communities, Mackenzie has better access to primary and secondary health care and a slightly higher than average number of physicians per population. Access to home care services through Northern Health is similar with other small communities.

Housing

- The existing housing stock in Mackenzie presents accessibility issues for seniors aging in the community. The majority are single detached homes, with limited apartment dwellings.
- Compared to other small northern/interior BC communities, Mackenzie has fewer options for seniors housing. This places greater pressure on the options that are available and more often, forces seniors in Mackenzie to relocate when their housing needs change.
 - There are fewer residential care beds available
 - There are no assisted living beds/units available
 - Independent living units in Mackenzie are not dedicated to seniors as they are in other communities
- Compared to other communities, Mackenzie is generally more affordable; median incomes are notably higher and median home ownership costs are generally much lower. As a result monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings are generally lower.
- However, renting is less affordable in Mackenzie. Compared to other communities, Mackenzie has the highest monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings.

1. MACKENZIE DISTRICT POPULATION

Mackenzie Population

The Mackenzie District population has increased in size over the last five years, but has decreased over the last 10 years.

Overall	Source	Total
Mackenzie Population	(Statistics Canada, 2016)	3,714
Fraser-Fort George Population	(BC Stats, 2016)	90,941
BC Population	(BC Stats, 2016)	4,751,612

Trend	Source	Percent %
Mackenzie Population Growth, Last 10 Years	(Statistics Canada, 2006, 2016)	-18%
Mackenzie Population Growth, Last 5 Years	(Statistics Canada, 2011, 2016)	6%

Mackenzie Seniors and Pre-Senior Population

Over the last 5 years the Senior's population has grown significantly, while the Pre-Seniors population has also increased in size.

Overall	Group	Source	Total
Number of Seniors	65+	(Statistics Canada, 2016)	410
Number of Pre-Seniors	55-65	(Statistics Canada, 2016)	625

Trend	Group	Source	Percent %
Last 5 years	65+	(Statistics Canada, 2011, 2016)	+32
Last 5 Years	55-64	(Statistics Canada, 2011, 2016)	+6

Comparison to small Northern and Interior British Columbia Communities:

Senior's and Pre-Seniors age groups comprise a portion of the Mackenzie population that is consistent in size with other small communities in British Columbia's Northern and Interior Regions.

Community	Population	Seniors Population		Pre-Seniors Population	
		(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Mackenzie	3,714	410	11	625	17
Comparable Communities					
Rossland, <i>Kootenay Region</i>	3,729	480	13	625	17
Houston, <i>Nechako Region</i>	2,993	420	14	485	16
Chetwynd, <i>Northeast Region</i>	2,503	210	18	305	12
Golden, <i>Thomson / Okanagan Region</i>	3,240	510	16	475	15
Source	(Statistics Canada, 2016)				

2. HEALTHCARE INVENTORY

District Plans, Policies and Initiatives

The Municipality advocates for Seniors wellbeing through an accessible built form and programming for the Seniors Population.

- **District of Mackenzie Official Community Plan 2014:** The Plan encourages healthcare accessibility through an accessible built environment, including larger scale healthcare facilities which are located centrally within the community. The plan also encourages food security and facilities offering programming for the senior's population (District of Mackenzie , 2014).

Healthcare Providers in Mackenzie

The Mackenzie and District Hospital offers primary and secondary care to the community.

- **Mackenzie and District Hospital:** Emergency Services, Diagnostic Services including Radiology and Laboratory Services and Acute Care Services.
 - Additional services:
 - **Hospice Palliative Care:** Inpatient compassionate care services aimed at relieving pain and building patient capacity. Care is provided by healthcare professionals, including physicians, specialists, nurses and support service providers.
 - **Diabetes Education Centre:** Support service for inpatients and outpatients coping with diabetes. The Canadian Diabetes Association clinical practice guidelines inform education and training, which is delivered both in group and individual formats. Services may also be accessed by family members and health care professionals.
 - **Choice in Support for Independent Living:** A program that offers funding to clients who organize, manage, and purchase home support services that meet their needs.
 - **Home Care Nursing:** In-home care provided by registered nurses on a non-emergency basis for community members. Patients typically receive care for palliative, rehabilitation, chronic or acute illnesses.
 - **Home and Community Care Access:** Intake services provided over the phone which enable patient access to case managers, home care nursing, respite for unpaid caregivers, assisted living and residential care, hospice palliative care, and home support.
 - **Home Support:** In-home personal assistance to extend the time patients may live independently. Services include bathing, dressing and medication support. Care is managed by a Case Manager.
 - **Influenza Vaccine Clinics:** This program provides influenza vaccines to community members. Typically offered during the fall, winter and spring.
 - **Long Term Care Case Management:** Long term monitoring, recommendation and arrangement of care for patients living at home. Delivered by Case Managers who work directly with patients to determine their care needs.
 - **Residential Care (4 beds):** Facilities providing nursing care and supervision in a safe environment for individuals with complex cognitive and physical care needs around the clock. Inpatient care includes meal service, medication support and personal assistance with daily activities.

Source: (HealthLink BC, 2017)

The Mackenzie Family Health Clinic offers primary care to community members, including seniors.

- **Mackenzie Family Health Clinic:** Nine Family Physicians offering primary care services to patients within the Mackenzie community.

Source: (HealthLink BC, 2017)

Community Paramedicine offers in-home visits for seniors living on their own.

- **Community Paramedicine:** Integrated into existing primary and community services in Mackenzie are services provided by Paramedics. Services include in-home visits for seniors living on their own. Referred by their doctor or another community health care provider, services are provided to older adults with chronic disease. Services include monitoring, falls assessments, health system navigation, assistance with mobility, and assistance with respiratory devices.

Source: (BC Emergency Health Services, 2017).

Community Resources

Mackenzie has a range of local community resources including supplementary healthcare providers and organizations offering programming for seniors:

- **Mackenzie Dental Centre:** Family Dentistry
- **Mackenzie Counselling Services Society:** Family Counselling
- **Azu Health:** Physiotherapy and Dietician Services
- **People's Drug Mart Pharmacy:** Community Pharmacy
- **PharmaSave:** Community Pharmacy, Medical Equipment
- **Canadian Red Cross:** Medical Equipment
- **Peter's Pantry at St. Peter's Catholic Church:** Foodbank Services
- **Sole Deep Reflexology:** Reflexology
- **Wildfire Esthetics and Professional Footcare:** License Practical Nurse offering footcare services
- **Mackenzie Recreation Complex:** Family and Seniors Programming. A Recreation Access Program offers Mackenzie Seniors passes to the complex.
- **Club 55 Seniors:** Seniors Programming
- **Autumn Lodge Society Senior Centre:** Community Meals, Recreation Activities such as Tai Chi, Art Classes, Seniors Education
- **Church Groups:** St. Peter's Catholic Church, Mackenzie Baptist Church, Living Joy Christian Centre, Hope Trinity Church

Nearest Next Level of Care (Northern Health)

Senior services and programs that aren't in Mackenzie may be accessed by travelling to other Northern Communities such as Prince George, Chetwynd and Quesnel.

- **Elderly Services Programming:** A mental health support program for recently diagnosed seniors or seniors whose diagnoses are worsening with age. Services range from substance abuse counselling to supportive housing programs, adult protection services, case management and life skills programming. Nearest offering in Prince George.
- **Community Social Work:** Available to all community members, the Community Social Work program supports seniors and their families with geriatric assessment, education and consultation services. The program furthermore advocates for seniors residing both in community and care settings. Nearest offering in Chetwynd.
- **Nutrition Counselling:** In support of all community members, Nutrition Counselling Services offers outpatient counselling, education and support for ongoing health conditions. Nearest offering in Prince George.
- **Meals on Wheels:** Delivered meal offerings for individuals who are unable to prepare food on their own, including seniors and disabled people. Nearest offering in Quesnel.
- **Community Rehabilitation (occupational / physiotherapy):** Assessment and treatment of seniors and disabled people within their homes to ensure their safety. Nearest offering in Prince George.

- **Surgical Services:** Inpatient and outpatient operating procedures. Nearest offering in Prince George.
- **Cancer Care:** Diagnostic Services, Ambulatory Day Care, Nuclear Medicine and Inpatient Care for patients diagnosed with Cancer. Nearest offering in Prince George.

Source: (HealthLink BC, 2017)

Comparison to small Northern and Interior British Columbia Communities

The ability to access secondary and tertiary care locally sets Mackenzie apart from other small communities such as Rossland and Houston. The number of physicians per population in Mackenzie is slightly higher than the average observed in comparable communities. Access to home care services through Northern Health is consistent with communities of comparable size.

Community	Hospital or Health Center	Number of Physicians	Population per Physician	Home Care Availability
Mackenzie	Mackenzie and District Hospital	9	412	Yes
Comparable Communities				
Rossland, Kootenay Region	-	18	207	-
Houston, Nechako Region	Houston Health Centre	3	997	Yes
Chetwynd, Northeast Region	Chetwynd Hospital & Health Centre	5	500	Yes
Golden, Thomson / Okanagan Region	Golden and District Hospital	18	180	Yes
Source		(College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, 2017)	(Statistics Canada, 2016)	(HealthLink BC, 2017)

3. HOUSING INVENTORY

District Plans, Studies and Initiatives

District Plans, Studies and Initiatives identify the need for suitable and affordable housing for Seniors in the Mackenzie community.

- **District of Mackenzie Official Community Plan, 2014:** The Official Community Plan includes objectives and policies targeting accessible design, the creation of assisted living units, and facilitating not-for-profits and senior levels of government in the delivery of new housing development projects (District of Mackenzie , 2014).
- **Mackenzie OCP / ICSP Housing Review:** An input into the Official Community Plan, the Housing Review identified multiple pressures increasing demand for seniors housing in Mackenzie, including an aging population and the reality of seniors living alone and increasing housing costs elsewhere which may prevent seniors from leaving the community as they age. Because of increased demand and limited supply, the study identified seniors housing as a gap in the existing housing spectrum in Mackenzie. Monitoring seniors housing need and planning for new developments including accessible housing, assisted living and housing located adjacent to amenities were recommendations of the study (M. Eberle, Eberle Planning and Research, 2012).
- **Mackenzie Senior's Housing Study, 2012:** The Study generated ideas for future affordable seniors' housing in Mackenzie. Key ideas included increasing membership of the Autumn Lodge Society, and organizing a community-based board to spearhead action toward a new seniors' affordable housing proposal (Terra Housing Consultants, 2012).
- **District of Mackenzie Council Priorities 2017-2020:** Advocating for Seniors in the Community is a social development priority for the District of Mackenzie Council over the next three years. This will include removing the physical and social barriers which impede the full participation of seniors in the community (District of Mackenzie, 2017).

Federal and Provincial Programs

A range of Federal and Provincial programs support seniors and their caregivers and families in improving the accessibility and affordability of housing.

- **Canada Safe Living Guide:** A federal guide for Seniors, family members and care givers which provides advice on how to create a safe home environment and prevent injuries. Measures for indoor / outdoor environmental safety, nutrition and physical activity for seniors, medication, at-home safety aids, and home adaptations are captured in checklists (Government of Canada, 2015).
- **Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence Program-On-Reserve:** Offered by the CMHC, the program provides a grant for modifications to First Nations to pay for on-reserve home modifications which enable seniors to live independently (CMHC, 2017a).
- **BC Housing SAFER:** The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program offers lower income residents in private market rental properties a financial supplement (BC Housing, 2017a).
- **BC Housing Rental Assistance Program:** This program offers cash assistance to eligible low-income working families, including seniors to help with monthly rent payments (BC Housing, 2017b).
- **Home Adaptations for Independence Program:** Provided by BC Housing, this grant program for disabled people helps pay for home modifications which improve accessibility and mobility. Maximum assistance provided is \$20,000, which is administered on a first-come, first-served basis annually. The program is not exclusively available to seniors (BC Housing, 2017c).
- **Home Owner Grant for Seniors:** Eligible seniors receive a \$275 grant in addition to the regular homeowner grant as a reduction to property taxes on principal residences (Province of British Columbia, 2017a).
- **Low Income Grant Supplement for Seniors:** Low income seniors are offered a grant if the Home Owner Grant for is reduced or eliminated due to the assessed value of their principal residence (Province of British Columbia, 2017b).
- **Property Tax Deferment:** Qualified homeowners are eligible for a low interest loan program for the payment of annual property taxes on principal residences (Province of British Columbia, 2017c).
- **Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors:** Eligible renovations which improve the accessibility and functionality of homes may be reimbursed through a tax credit. Example renovations include walk-in bath tubs, hand rails in corridors, hands-free taps, etc. (Province of British Columbia, 2017d).

Mackenzie Housing Stock

The housing stock in Mackenzie is primarily single-detached homes with few other options.

Housing Typology	Number
Single-detached house	1,135
Other attached dwelling	270
Row house	160
Apartment	100
Movable Dwelling	210
Source: (Statistics Canada, 2016)	

Rental Housing

- **Number of rental units:** 350 (Statistics Canada, 2016)
- **Vacancy Rate:** for Rental Housing in outlying Prince George is 3.4% and in British Columbia is 1.3% (CMHC, 2016)

Affordability

- **Median Home Dwelling Value:** \$150,108 (Statistics Canada, 2016)
- **Median Monthly Shelter Costs for Rented Dwellings:** \$1,027 (Statistics Canada, 2016)

- **Average Income:** \$98,455 (Household Before Tax Income, 2016 Census)
- **Prevalence of Low Income among Seniors:** 8.5% (65+ years, Statistics Canada, 2016)¹
- **Prevalence of Low Income among Adults, including Pre-Seniors:** 6.4% (18 to 64 years, Statistics Canada, 2016)²

Senior's Housing

A limited number of residential care units are available for seniors in Mackenzie and there are notable gaps in dedicated independent living and assisted living units for seniors. The Autumn Lodge Society provides independent living units for individuals within the community based on need and are no longer dedicated to seniors. There are presently no assisted living units in Mackenzie.

- **Independent Living Beds at Autumn Lodge:** The Autumn Lodge Society provides 8 beds independent living for members of the Mackenzie Community. There is presently a wait list of 2.
- **Residential Care Beds at Mackenzie and District Hospital:** 4 beds³

Seniors Housing Typology Definitions:

- **Independent Living / Retirement Community:** For members of the community including seniors who are relatively well and able to live with minimal to no assistance, Independent Living housing formats are a desirable alternative. Independent Living communities offer private living units which are fully equipped, with shared amenities which residents may elect to access. Amenities may include community spaces and dining facilities.
- **Assisted Living:** For seniors who are unable to live independently but who do not require a great deal of care, Assisted Living environments offer private living units with multiple care supports including meals, nursing and medication support and housekeeping. Facilities include extensive shared amenities including kitchen and dining facilities and activity areas.
- **Residential Care:** For seniors with complex cognitive and physical health issues, Residential Care formats offer shared or private patient rooms with 24-hour nursing care support. Services also include meals, rehabilitation and activities.

Nearest Seniors Housing Facilities

Seniors in Mackenzie may access Independent Living, Assisted Living and Residential Care beds outside of the community. The nearest options include:

- **Independent Living / Retirement Community:** Country Acres Seniors Community, Prince George
- **Assisted Living:** Surerus Place, Chetwynd
- **Residential Care:** Chetwynd Hospital and Health Centre
- **Northern Health Wait List for Residential Care:** 256 (Office of the Seniors Advocate, 2016)
- **Independent Living Vacancy Rate for the Kootenay and North-Central Areas in BC:** 4.5% (CMHC, 2017b)

¹ Low-income measure, after tax (LIMAT)

² Ibid.

³ Waitlist data unavailable.

Comparison to Small Northern and Interior BC Communities:

In comparison to communities of similar size in the Northern and Interior Regions of British Columbia, seniors in Mackenzie face challenges in the availability of seniors housing:

- *Firstly, there are fewer residential care beds for the seniors population in Mackenzie than in communities such as Houston, Chetwynd and Golden.*
- *Secondly, unlike communities such as Houston, Chetwynd and Golden, Mackenzie seniors do not have access to Assisted Living Beds in their community.*
- *Lastly, unlike Rossland, Houston, Chetwynd and Golden, Independent Living Beds in Mackenzie are not dedicated to seniors.*

Compared to other communities, Mackenzie is generally more affordable; median incomes are notably higher and median home ownership costs are generally much lower. As a result, monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings are lower than comparable communities, apart from Houston.

However, renting is less affordable in the community, with Mackenzie having the highest monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings compared to other communities.

Community	Median Income	Median Value of Dwellings	Median Monthly Shelter Costs, Rented Dwellings	Median Monthly Shelter Costs, Owned Dwellings	Independent Living Beds	Prevalence of low income seniors	Assisted Living Beds	Residential Care Beds
Mackenzie	\$96,154	\$150,108	\$1,027	\$748	8	8.5%	-	4
Comparable Communities								
Rossland, Kootenay Region	\$81,897	\$299,314	\$983	\$897	20*	9.5%	-	-
Houston, Nechako Region	\$80,477	\$150,199	\$695	\$656	12*	16.9%	5*	11
Chetwynd, Northeast Region	\$90,709	\$250,324	\$902	\$963	6*	13.2%	24*	7
Golden, Thomson / Okanagan Region	\$74,325	\$299,382	\$849	\$806	4*	13.3%	4*	26*
Source	(Statistics Canada, 2016)							

*Note: Seniors Housing focus.

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