

**SENIORS ON THE MOVE | STEERING COMMITTEE AND  
SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE EVALUATION**

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

With an aging population, the number of seniors who are isolated and at risk of isolation, will continue to increase without intervention. Finding means of transportation is frequently cited as the number one barrier to connecting seniors to activities, medical appointments and participating in meaningful activities within their communities. This is primarily due to:

- a. Declining physical health of aging individuals, including multiple, chronic conditions, is correlated with a reduction in mobility. Additionally, a decline in cognitive ability makes understanding and scheduling transportation increasingly difficult.
- b. Linguistic and cultural barriers experienced by many seniors, also make understanding, scheduling, and accessing transportation options even more difficult.
- c. For low-income seniors, a lack of financial resources limits accessing existing transportation options.

### About Seniors on the Move

*Seniors on the Move* is one of four projects that are part of the [Allies in Aging \(AiA\)](#) collective impact initiative designed to reduce seniors' isolation in communities in the Lower Mainland. This three-year project has been funded by the Government of Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors program. Understanding that transportation can be a significant obstacle for seniors to participate in daily activities *Seniors on the Move* is a multi-sector collaboration that was designed to: (a) share and enhance existing services and best practices; (b) design innovative new services and partnerships; (c) help seniors plan for age-related changes to their transportation needs and connect them to appropriate options; and (d) advocate for improved transportation services.

Highlights of *Seniors on the Move* include:

- 859 seniors received direct services
- 26 community presentations made about transportation options for seniors and how to make Metro Vancouver more accessible to seniors needing to get around. An example includes the West Vancouver Seniors Health Expo and six events during BC Seniors' Week in June 2018.
- 10 innovative new approaches, such as improved driving program practices (using a car share to provide a fleet of vehicles, insurance tool kit, best practice manual, and joint volunteer recruitment), replicating community shuttle programs, driver cessation brochures and training, transit training, walkability audits, and the creation of the Seniors Transportation Hotline (bc211).
- 15 partnerships for system change leveraged through the Steering Committee, such as working with TransLink and HandyDART on transit training, ICBC on insurance tool kit and driver cessation training, SFU Gerontology for SWAN walkability audits, United Way and bc211 on Seniors Transportation Hotline. *Seniors on the Move* also collaborated on submissions to the BC Senior's Advocate for their *Seniors Transportation: Affordable, Appropriate, and Available* report, Transit Fare Review, Mobility Pricing Commission, the increase on BC's fuel tax and municipal transportation plan reviews.
- An active Seniors Advisory Council that provided direct hands-on input into the development of initiatives and publications (detailed above).

*Seniors on the Move* is supported by a Steering Committee and an Advisory Committee. The *Steering Committee* is comprised of representatives from non-profit community-based organizations, health, transportation, academic and business. Specific members include:

- Burnaby Community Services
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Silver Harbour Centre
- Share Society
- Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST)
- United Way of Lower Mainland
- Immigrant Services Society
- Fraser Health
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- TransLink
- HandyDART
- MODO the Car Co-op
- ICBC
- SFU Gerontology
- Insight Driving Solutions
- Nurse Next Door
- bc211

Roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Terms of Reference include advising and helping on policy direction, identifying opportunities to advance the project, helping brainstorm on challenges and solutions, identifying community issues from the ground, and connecting project to other initiatives related to project.

The *Seniors Advisory Committee* is comprised of seniors 75+ from participating communities in the Lower Mainland who use different modes of transportation to get around, and identify as being isolated, speaking English as a second language, having mobility requirements, or low-income. The purpose of the Seniors Advisory Committee, as per the Terms of Reference, is to: share personal transportation experiences, provide feedback on potential solutions outlined by the project, identify needs and barriers of current transportation options for seniors, and highlight potential improvements and opportunities for seniors transportation.

### Evaluation purpose

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the design and effectiveness of *Seniors on the Move* as a collective impact initiative, through engagement with Steering Committee and Seniors Advisory Committee members. Specifically the evaluation explored the design of the initiative, benefits of Steering Committee and Advisory Committee involvement, and the effectiveness of the approach.

### Methodology

A mixed methods approach was used to conducting this evaluation. An online survey was conducted with members of the Steering Committee (N=10). Findings were shared at a Steering Committee meeting and discussed for further depth and context, and to frame the focus of the engagement with the Seniors Advisory Committee. Interviews were then conducted with Steering Committee members (N=6) representing service providers, funders and business, and a focus group was conducted with the Seniors Advisory Committee.

### About this report

This report provides an overview of findings from engagement of Steering Committee and Advisory Committee members from September 2018 to January 2019. Motivation for participation, assessment of the design, assessment of the conditions for collective impact, impact of Seniors on the Move, lessons learned and suggestions for improvement are reported from Steering Committee members and motivation for involvement, assessment of contributions to improve transportation for seniors, impact of Seniors on the Move and suggested improvements are reported for Seniors Advisory Committee members.







*“Modo is about connecting people with places. We have always been very inclusive but Seniors on the Move has influenced how we talk about volunteering with our members. Using shared vehicles, with the level of insurance we carry can attract more volunteers. For volunteers who have their own cars but were worried about liability or for those who wanted to volunteer but didn’t have their own cars, Seniors on the Move is opening up the door to more volunteers, who may not have otherwise acted on their desire to volunteer.” – Steering Committee member*

## E. Lessons learned

Steering Committee members shared several lessons learned as a result of their involvement with the Steering Committee. They reported the level of effort required to shift policy is significant and requires many partners leveraging their resources and continually connecting. They emphasized the value of collaborative, community based projects, particularly when non-traditional partners are involved and how powerful this can be. The essentiality of consistent and thorough communication was noted as was the pivotal role the Coordinator played in keeping the Steering Committee on track. The value of an engaged and responsive Steering Committee combined with the benefits of seniors’ active voices were critical to the success of Seniors on the Move as a collective impact project. The value of relationships was brought forward by several members as being a leverage point for the success of the Steering Committee. The committee unanimously felt that the collective efforts offer a stronger chances to have practical influence on policy decisions.

## F. Suggestions for improvement

Steering Committee members identified a gap with respect to a political strategy. It was also noted that having a government representative on the Committee would also have been an asset. There was a feeling that not building on the relationship with the Office of the Senior Advocate would be a missed opportunity. Aligned with these areas for improvement is enhancing the media strategy for Seniors on the Move to communicate seniors transportation needs.

*“Everyone is very enthusiast but enthusiasm can only get us so far. The group lacks experience in advocating. The committee also lacks a government representative. We should have had an MLA, MP or City Councilor involved.” – Steering Committee member*

Steering Committee members identified several other improvements including:

- Reaching non-partners (especially more local organizations and government).
- Having a larger Seniors Advisory Committee (including representation from more areas in the region).
- A clearer mandate on what the project should involve at the local level.
- Additional funding for human resources for project partners.
- Having a specific Committee term.
- Having a greater role for Health, leveraging the focus on home health and the subsequent need for transportation to access services and supports.
- To continue to work with HandyDART on customized transportation and enhance training to support conventional transit.

## Assessment of the Seniors Advisory Committee

### A. Motivation for involvement

Seniors became involved with the Seniors Advisory Committee at different times throughout the initiative, including several being involved at the inception of Seniors on the Move. Involvement was for different reasons. One of the Advisory Committee members has a gerontology background and is now a senior. Another is a frequent transit user and interested in providing a senior’s viewpoint. One is particularly interested in supporting seniors who speak a language other than English. A couple wanted to add their viewpoints to policy



and programming needs in the community. Several are involved in other community programs and were invited to join by project partners.

## B. Assessment of contributions to improve transportation for seniors

When asked how seniors on the Seniors Advisory Committee were able to contribute to the committee to improve transportation for seniors the most common responses were providing feedback and helping to promote Seniors on the Move. Specific examples include providing input into: improving transit etiquette, improving HandyDART services, considering washroom needs, considering shelter and bench needs, considering language needs, enhancing transit training, reviewing payment options between transportation services and advertising services. One senior spoke of her role on the Committee evolving to be an ambassador to support seniors using the transit system.

*“I feel like I am an ambassador for Seniors on the Move. Whenever I see someone who looks confused waiting for a bus or skytrain I will go up and talk to them – especially in our language.”* – Seniors Advisory Committee member

Seniors were satisfied with the frequency (quarterly) and location of the meetings. Seniors all saw value in contributing to the Committee. When asked they all said they would recommend being involved in this Committee to a friend. While seniors pointed out that (systemic) transportation issues are challenging to address, seniors felt their voices were heard. They spoke about their participation being valuable both in terms of providing input and learning from each other and from community service providers.

*“I like that seniors are the only voices being heard in this forum. It’s nice to have that focus. This provides an opportunity to really speak on the issues.”*  
– Seniors Advisory Committee member

*“This has been a great chance to share feedback with agencies in the community but also to learn who to advocate to and how the transportation system works.”*  
– Seniors Advisory Committee member

*I like learning from different people and their communities (e.g. Burnaby, North Van, tri-cities, Vancouver). There has been good representation from different people, including different types of housing such as apartments, houses, different neighbourhoods and senior centres.*  
– Seniors Advisory Committee member

## C. Impact of Seniors on the Move

With respect to the impact of Seniors on the Move helping seniors plan for age-related changes to their transportation needs and connect them to the appropriate transportation options seniors felt there was not sufficient change in this area, yet, particularly regarding TransLink and HandyDART. Seniors did feel that Seniors on the Move is on the way to achieving this goal.

*“With the number of agencies involved, this is good for connections, the community, and good for me! [It’s also] good for improving transit!”* – Seniors Advisory Committee member

Regarding building upon the transportation services that are working well in communities the feeling is that there is a need for more services, including volunteer driving programs and there is a need to enhance relationships between HandyDART and community shuttles like the Go Bus. Seniors reported developing their own ‘hacks’ to using the transportation system and wondered whether this information could be shared to shape the system more formally.

When asked about testing new modes of sustainable transportation services that advance innovative partnerships seniors felt it was helpful to provide feedback to get materials and services that speak their language. They were not sure whether some of the issues brought up were acted upon. Seniors would like an open letter to be developed from the Advisory Committee about what seniors need from transportation options as a next step.

#### D. Suggestions for improvements

Several areas for improvement were noted. The priority improvement centred around the need to further clarify Seniors on the Move, including the intention of the initiative and the structure of the Committee. One individual pointed out the fact that improving ways to help seniors plan for changes to appropriate transportation options was primarily still only for seniors connected to community. The feeling was that there is a need to target more isolated seniors.

A concern raised from seniors was what happened to the input they provided after the Committee. It appears that seniors would have liked the feedback loop closed when their feedback was shared and potentially when their feedback (started to) influence policy or practice changes, and if it did not, why this was the case.

*“I feel heard in the meeting but is TransLink or the city listening. How is our information being taken forward and what are the changes and results?”*

– Seniors Advisory Committee member

Several seniors spoke of the need to further promote and advertise the good work of the Committee and of Seniors on the Move, particularly in community centres, seniors centres, doctor’s offices and libraries. There was also mention of using social media (Facebook) to share information.

*“I am happy that changes to driver cessation were made based on Seniors Advisory Committee feedback, but now we need more distribution in places like libraries and senior centres.”* – Seniors Advisory Committee member

*“I love that bc211 is multilingual but needs to be advertised more to get the word out.”*

– Seniors Advisory Committee member

*“Wonderful services have been developed, but they need to be promoted more for greater uptake. Advisory Committee members trying to spread the word but need more resources to do so.”* – Seniors Advisory Committee member

Other suggestions included inviting individuals from other sectors to attend the meetings to provide alternative perspectives (best practices and lessons learned) and tailoring meetings to have a specific focus and inviting associated organizations (i.e. ICBC or TransLink). Seniors said they liked having the CEO of TransLink attend a meeting. It was felt that this was a more direct link to providing input to impact change.

## CONCLUSION

Engagement with the Steering Committee and Seniors Advisory Committee indicate that both groups have been effective in reaching their intended outcomes in order to support Seniors on the Move's outcomes of sharing and enhancing existing services and best practices; design innovative new services and partnerships; helping seniors plan for age-related changes to their transportation needs and connect them to appropriate options; and, advocating for improved transportation services.

The Steering Committee was effective at:

- ✓ Advising and helping on policy direction
- ✓ Identifying opportunities to advance the project
- ✓ Helping brainstorm on challenges and solutions
- ✓ Identifying community issues from the ground
- ✓ Connecting project to other initiatives related to project

Seniors on the Move has had an impact on several sectors including transportation, insurance and volunteerism. Steering Committee members have expressed a desire to continue their involvement to improve transportation for seniors.

The Seniors Advisory Committee was effective at:

- ✓ Sharing personal transportation experiences
- ✓ Providing feedback on potential solutions outlined by the project
- ✓ Identifying needs and barriers of current transportation options for seniors
- ✓ Highlighting potential improvements and opportunities for seniors transportation

Without a doubt there is a definite desire to further promote Seniors on the Move and to scale Seniors on the Move up in existing communities and scale out provincially.