



Delta Connects

Steering Committee Report

Aging in Place Seniors Project



Prepared for:

Delta Seniors Community Planning Table

c/o Deltassist Family and Community Services

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Acknowledgments

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The committee also wishes to thank Deltassist Family and Community Services for their continued support and leadership. This report would not have been possible without the support of the other community agencies that assisted in getting the surveys out into the community including:

Delta Meals on Wheels

Delta North Constituency Office

Delta Seniors Community Planning Table

Kinsmen Retirement Centre

McKee Seniors Recreation Centre

Fraser Health Authority

Kennedy Seniors Recreation Centre

Ladner Pioneer Library

George Mackie Library

Tsawwassen Library

The committee would also like to acknowledge the support received from the Delta Optimist Newspaper in their press coverage.

This project was made possible through a grant received from the United Way of the Lower Mainland.

Steering Committee Members

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Executive Summary

Although Delta's population as a whole is declining, the existing population is also aging. In keeping with provincial, national and worldwide trends, seniors represent a growing proportion of the population. The number of residents aged 65 and over increased by 2% between the 2001 and 2006 censuses. In order for seniors to have the opportunity to remain in Delta (age in place), it is necessary to ensure that adequate support services are in place. To this end, Deltassist Family and Community Services in conjunction with other community agencies initiated a community consultation process during the fall of 2008 and the spring of 2009. The consultation consisted of focus groups, a senior's survey and a service provider's survey.

The good news is that the "seasoned" residents in Delta are relatively healthy, long time residents who hope to remain living in this community. They feel that Delta is a safe place to live in and that the services that they currently need are available to them. The worrisome news is that unless steps are taken to address alternative, affordable housing options, this may not be possible for a large number of our seniors. One person in our consultation noted that they have been looking to downsize from a house to a townhouse however, the townhouses being constructed tend to be larger than their home. Another noted that her income was fixed in 1991 and now her rent takes up $\frac{3}{4}$ of her income. Numerous people also commented about the current economic crisis and the impact on their ability to continue to live in Delta. One noted that their income from investments/RRSPs has gone from 3,000 per month to 1400.00 per month, while another said that their RRSP values have declined over 50%.

Transportation is another concern for seniors. Although the majority of people surveyed drive their own cars, those who rely on public transportation, face numerous obstacles. One woman noted that to get from her house in **Tsawwassen** to **downtown Tsawwassen** she has to take a bus into Ladner and back. To take public transit from one end of Delta (Tsawwassen) to the other (North Delta) requires walking .18kms and taking 3 buses. This trip would take one hour and 12 minutes. People also commented that the bus stops are too far apart, the service is not frequent enough, the fares are too expensive and they feel more vulnerable using public transportation. People also raised concerns about the availability and flexibility of HandyDART since the changes to the contract.

The third theme that emerged in the consultation revolved around awareness of services. Although people generally felt that they currently have access to what they need, they are unaware of existing community resources that they may need in the future. Seniors who currently require services are also unaware of what is available in the community. A number also expressed frustration about getting information from large bureaucracies. One woman recommended a seniors advocate or ombudsman.

These findings were consistent with results from other community consultations conducted within the Lower Mainland as well as with the United Way forum held in October 2008.

Introduction

Is Delta ready to meet the needs of an aging population? What are the strengths of programs and services in Delta? What are the gaps and needs of the senior's population? Recognizing that these questions could not be answered with existing information, Deltassist Family and Community Services applied to the United Way of the Lower Mainland for funding undertake a community consultation on senior's issues.

Provincially, the proportion of older adults is growing rapidly. Thirty-five years ago, fewer than one in ten British Columbians was over 65. Today, nearly one in seven adults is over 65 years of age, and 25 years from now, it will be nearly one in four. It is projected that in less than ten years, there will be significantly more people in B.C. who are over 65 than under 15 for the first time in our history. In addition to there being more older people, they are also living longer. Life expectancy in this Province rose from 62 years in 1921 to over 81 in 2005. (1)

Delta's population is also aging. Even though Delta's total population declined by 0.2 % between the 2001 and 2006 census, the number of people aged 65 and older increased by 2%. According to the 2001 census data, 11% of Delta's population (10,765 people) were 65 and older. By 2006 this number had increased to 13% (12,685 people) of the total population. If people aged 55-64 are included in these figures the percentage of Delta's population aged 55 and older jumps to just over 26%.

The following table provides a breakdown of the increases by age group.

Age Group	2001 Census	Percentage of the Population	2006 Census	Percentage of the Population	Increase in Numbers	Percentage Increase
Age 55-64	10,275	10.6	12,830	13.3	2,555	2.7
Age 65-74	5,925	6.1	6,885	7.1	960	1.0
Age 75-84	3,710	3.8	4,255	4.4	545	.6
Age 85 and over	1,130	1.2	1,545	1.6	415	.4
Total	21,040	21.7	25,515	26.4	4,475	4.7

References

1. *Ageing Well in British Columbia*, Report of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues, November 2006 (http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/seniors/council/docs/Aging_Well_in_BC.pdf, accessed 10 October 2008).

Background

With the funding from the United Way Delta assist hired a facilitator to assist with the community consultation. In the fall of 2008, community partners were invited to sit on a steering committee to oversee the implementation of the community consultation. The steering committee was responsible for developing the consultation plan, creating the survey and focus group questions, analyzing the results and developing this report.

In addition to the steering committee, Delta also has a broader-based Seniors Planning Table comprised of seniors, faith groups and community agencies. It is this group that will be responsible for developing and implementing an action plan based on the results of this consultation.

Seniors Consultation

Overview

The senior's survey had 46 questions, covering demographic information, housing, community participation, transportation, support services, community safety and health and wellbeing. Although, the steering committee defined "seniors" as those aged 65 or older, it was decided that people in the 50-64 age bracket would also be allowed to complete the survey. The surveys were completely confidential and respondents were asked to NOT include any identifying information.

Surveys were available for pick up and drop off at the Kinsmen Retirement Centre, McKee Seniors' Recreation Centre, Fraser Health Authority, Kennedy Seniors' Recreation Centre, Ladner Pioneer Library, George Mackie Library, Tsawwassen Library and the Deltassist offices. In addition to the displays at these locations, surveys were also distributed directly to seniors through various faith groups and Meals on Wheels. Information about the survey and locations for completing the survey was disseminated through articles in the Delta Optimist and Deltassist's 1300 person email distribution list. The survey was also available for people to fill in on-line through Survey Monkey, a confidential on-line survey website. The surveys were available in the community during December and January.

The completed paper survey's were data entered into Survey Monkey which collated the results and allowed the steering committee and planning table to sort the data different ways and to analyze the results.

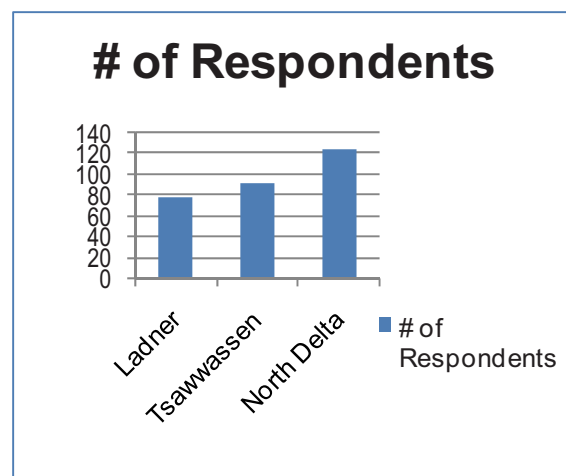
750 copies of the survey were initially printed and distributed. In total 299 surveys were completed. The actual response rate isn't known as some of the community partners photocopied their own copies of the survey as needed and in one location the surveys became lost.

Another limitation to the survey is that it was not possible to do a random sampling of Delta resident's. Although efforts were made to access the isolated seniors, the survey distribution methods meant that many of the seniors completing the survey were already connected to support services.

Survey Results

The following is an analysis of some of the key survey findings. In many cases, filters were used to sort the data by such things as gender, location or marital status. A full copy of the survey results (with unfiltered results) available upon request.

Over 50% of the population of Delta reside in North Delta with just over 20% each in Tsawwassen and Ladner. In terms of the survey response rates 42 % of our respondents were from North Delta while 32 % were from Tsawwassen and the remaining 26% were from Ladner (see Figure 1).



In comparing the survey results to the general population of Delta, females were over-represented. In Delta, females aged 50 and older makes up 52% of the population while females made up 69% of the survey respondents.

As noted, although people between ages 50-64 were allowed to complete the survey, the majority of the respondents (over 75%) were in the targeted age groups of 65 and older. Based upon the survey results, Ladner had a higher percentage of respondents over the age of 76 (Figure 2).

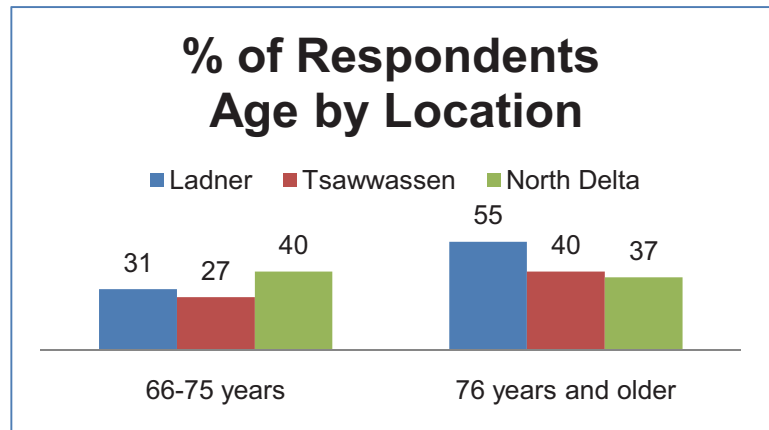


Figure 2

Marital Status

In terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents (54%) were married followed by widowed (26%), divorced (13%), single, never married (5%) and other (2%). The percentage of respondents whom reported being married is in keeping with the general population of Delta. Respondents widowed and divorced are significantly over-represented and singles significantly under-represented as compared to the general population. (Figure 3) This however is likely due to the fact

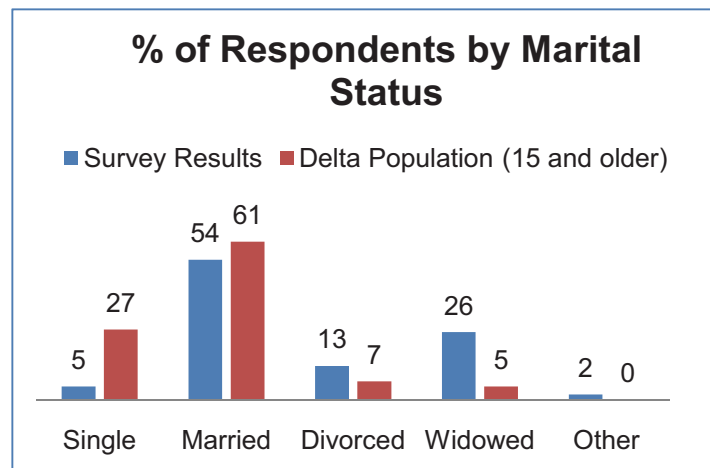


Figure 3

As females have a longer life expectancy combined with the proportion of females completing this survey, it is not unexpected that 86% of the people reporting being widowed were females. Of these females, 68% were aged 76 and older.

Education

The Delta seniors surveyed are well educated: 40% of the respondents were high school graduates, while another 44% had a college diploma or university degree. In each of the 3 geographic areas, the number of high school graduates was comparable. In Ladner and Tsawwassen the percentage of respondents reporting completion of post secondary education were 48 and 49% respectively. This figure for North Deltas was 38%. (Figure 4)

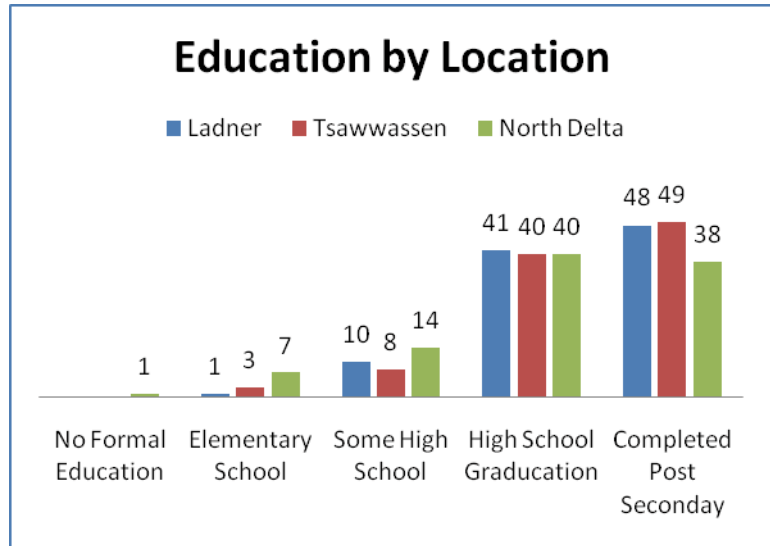


Figure 4

As seen in Figure 5, there were not any significant gender differences in terms of education

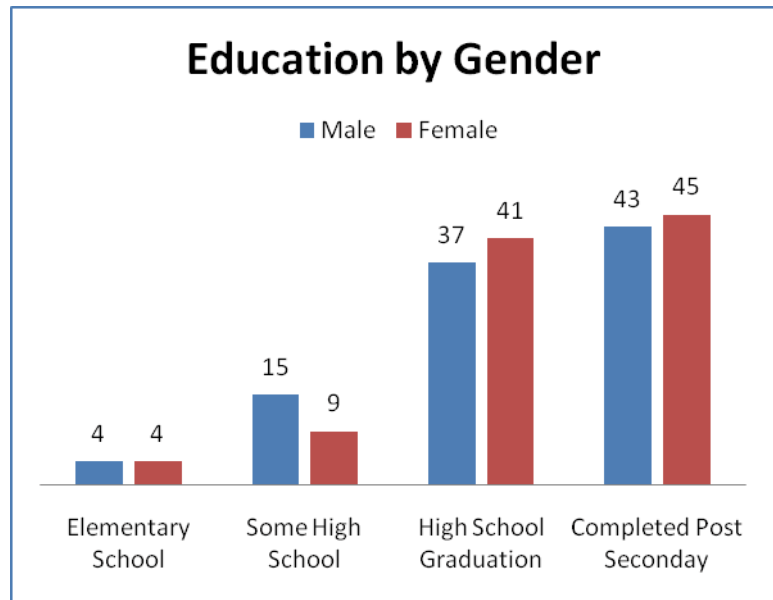


Figure 5

Income

The survey asked respondents 3 questions regarding income:

1. What was your total income last year?
2. What was your household's total income last year?
3. Please check all sources of your income.

Not surprisingly, these were the most skipped questions on the survey. 19% of the respondents skipped the question regarding their income, and 24% skipped the

household income question. People were more willing to answer the more generic question about their sources of income. This question was only skipped by 12 % of the respondents.

Sources of Income

Canada /Quebec pension plan	82 %	Old Age Security Pension	75%
Savings and investments	64%	Retirement pensions, superannuation	47%
Employment	17%	Guaranteed Income Supplement	13%
Veterans Allowance	5%	Unemployment Insurance	2%
Federal Survivor’s Allowance	2%	Provincial Income Assistance	2%
Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER)	2%		

Over 65% of the female respondents reported an income of less than \$30,000, while 60% of the males reported an income of over 30,000.

As noted in Figure 6, females were significantly over-represented in the lowest income level. Of the respondents reporting an income of less than \$15,000, 91% were female and 9% male. 50% of the females are married and 27% widowed. Of these women, 53% had graduated from high school and 38% received a college diploma or university degree.

Of those with an income of \$50,000 or more, the difference between genders was negligible. Most of these people are between 66 and 75 years of age, the majority are married and 2/3's have a university degree.

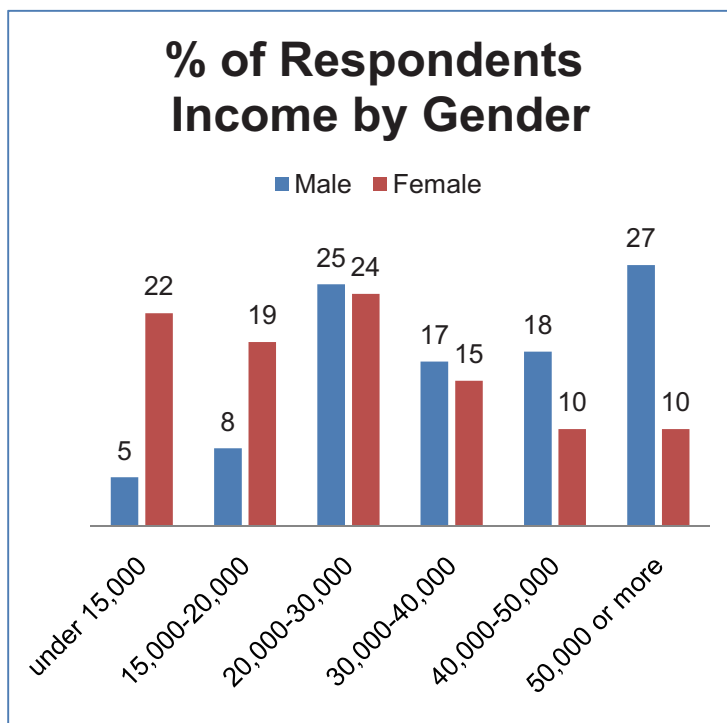
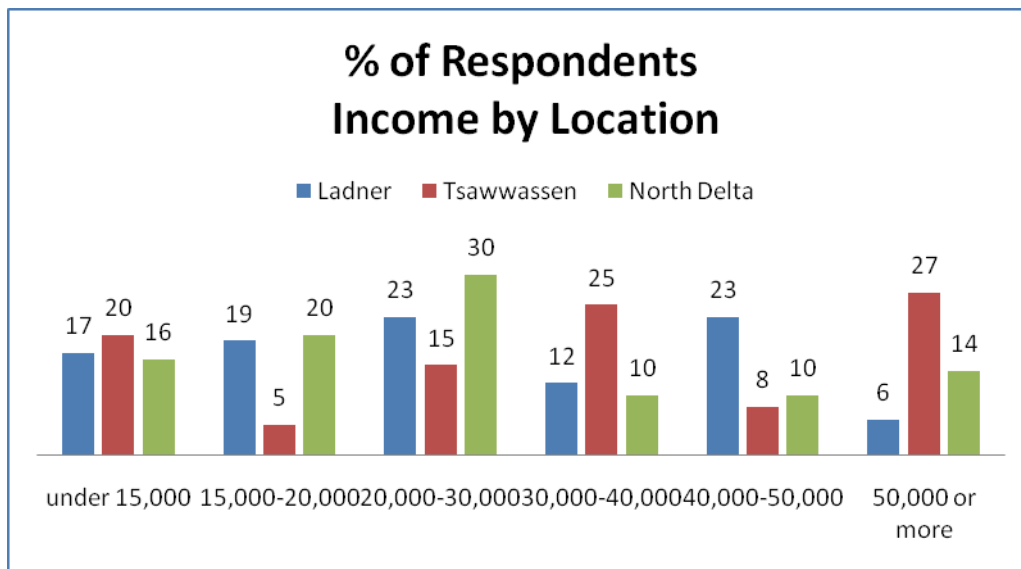


Figure 6



66% of the respondents from North Delta had an income of 30,000 or less. This drops to 57% for the respondents from Ladner and 40% for Tsawwassen. As seen in Figure 7, although Tsawwassen has the highest % of high-income earners, it also has the highest % of people earning less than 15,000.

Figure 7

Housing

The majority of seniors surveyed have been long-term Delta residents. Ninety percent have been residents of Delta for more than 5 years and 67% have lived here for over 15 years. Of the respondents who plan to move from their current home, 58% plan to remain in Delta. Almost 83% of respondents own their home (65% single-family homes). Just over 10% rent their home.

The top challenges of their current living arrangements are keeping up with routine maintenance/cleaning and making needed repairs. These responses were the same for both genders. For men, the third challenge was hearing difficulties (34%) and for women it was going up and down stairs (24%). This isn't surprising as men statistically have a higher incidence of hearing difficulties.

The majority of respondents plan to remain in their own homes. Only 28% have any plans to move from their current home. The top 3 reasons given for planning a move are physical difficulties maintaining the home or yard, home too large and the decline in health of a spouse or partner. Design barriers (e.g. too many stairs) and financial challenges were also higher on the list.

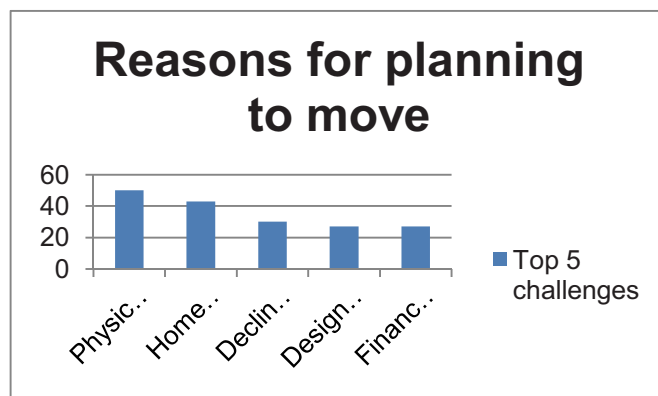


Figure 8

Of those planning to move 53% plan to move within the next 5 years. Overall, 58% plan to remain in Delta and 22% plan to remain in the Lower Mainland. There were significant gender differences. Approximately 38% of the male respondents who plan to move, plan to remain in Delta while for females the percentage is almost 71%. Of all of

the respondents planning to move, less than 15% of these people plan to move to another single family detached home. The majority plan to move to seniors housing.

Delta currently has a combination of 1139 units/beds for seniors (according to the Seniors Housing Directory (www.seniorshousing.bc.ca) with a breakdown as follows:

Assisted Living Public	Assisted Living Private	Residential Care Public (income based)	Residential Care Private	Supportive Housing
88 - 1 bedroom	21- 1 bedroom 23 - 2 bedroom	517 beds	175 beds	94 studio 166- 1 bedroom 55 - 2 bedroom

This works out to an average of 1 bed for every 11 people aged 65 and older. If the current number of beds meets the needs of today's seniors, it is realistic to expect that as the seniors' population increases, the demand for seniors housing will also increase. Given the stability of Delta's population, it is important that housing resources be developed within Delta to allow seniors to age in their home community.

Overall, the Delta seniors completing this survey are unfamiliar with housing related funding sources. Although over half were familiar with reverse mortgages and property tax deferments, over 75 % of respondents were not at all familiar with Independent Living BC or Home Adaptations for Senior's Independence Program. Given the number of seniors who plan to remain in their home, educating them about available resources is crucial. Only 10 % of people were very familiar with Shelter Assistance for Elderly Renters, this corresponds with the percentage of people renting.

Community Participation

The most common activity reported by seniors was watching TV at 86%. It should be noted that we did not ask how much TV people were watching so it shouldn't be inferred that respondents are spending large amounts of time watching TV. It could be that they are just watching the evening news. This was followed by visiting with friends (84%), visiting with family (82%) and shopping (83%). The only other activities that had over a 50% participation rate were using the internet (59%), using the library (60%) and volunteering (56%). Using the senior's recreation centres came in at 50%.

22% of people surveyed indicated that they had difficulties accessing community based programs and activities. Of the activities that they would like to participate in but were unable to males reported the top 3 as being visiting with family, going to the library and physical education classes while females reported their top 3 activities as being organized group day trips, going to the movies and attending Senior's Elder College. The barriers to accessing these services were identified as:

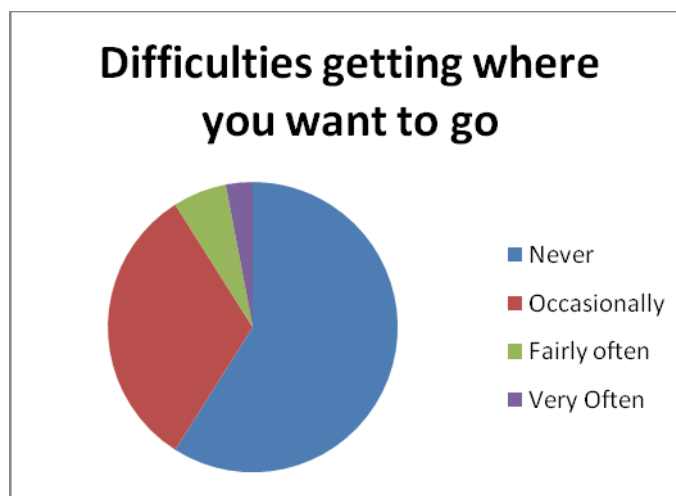
- Finances (47%)
- Lack of Public Transportation (30%)
- Lack of Personal Transportation (26%)
- Hours of operation (21%)
- Lack of information about what types of activities are available (17%)
- Activities aren't available in my community (16%)
- Accessibility to the building (10%)

Transportation

Delta covers 183 square kilometres and has 3 distinct geographic centers. A large percentage of respondents (almost 80%) drive their own car to get around. Other methods of transportation included:

- Walking 49%
- Being driven by a friend or family member 25%
- Being driven by spouse or partner 21%
- Taking public transit 24%
- Taking a taxi 7%
- Using HandyDART 6%

Seniors were also asked how often they had difficulty getting where they wanted to go. The majority (see chart below) indicated that they never have difficulty.



However, when you take gender differences into account, 52 % of females indicate that they do not have difficulty compared to 77% of males. The top 2 reasons given for people having difficulty getting around are:

- I would have to take too many buses (50%)
- I do not like to ask for a ride (45%)

Other responses included:

- The bus stop is too far away (25%)
- I can't afford to run my vehicle (25%)
- I don't feel safe taking public transportation (21%)
- I do not know who to ask for a ride (13%)
- My regular driver was not available (10%)

Support Services

Awareness about the support services varied widely. Seniors Recreation Centres were the most widely known, probably as a result of the surveys having been distributed through these centres. These centres along with free flu clinics were the only support services that over 80% of the people were aware of. People were also more familiar with Meals on Wheels, income tax preparation and Handy Dart. For all other services, awareness was generally less than 50% (see below). This could be the result of people not requiring these services so they haven't had a need to look for them. However, when people were asked if there were other services that they required, some already available in the community were listed.

Awareness of Services

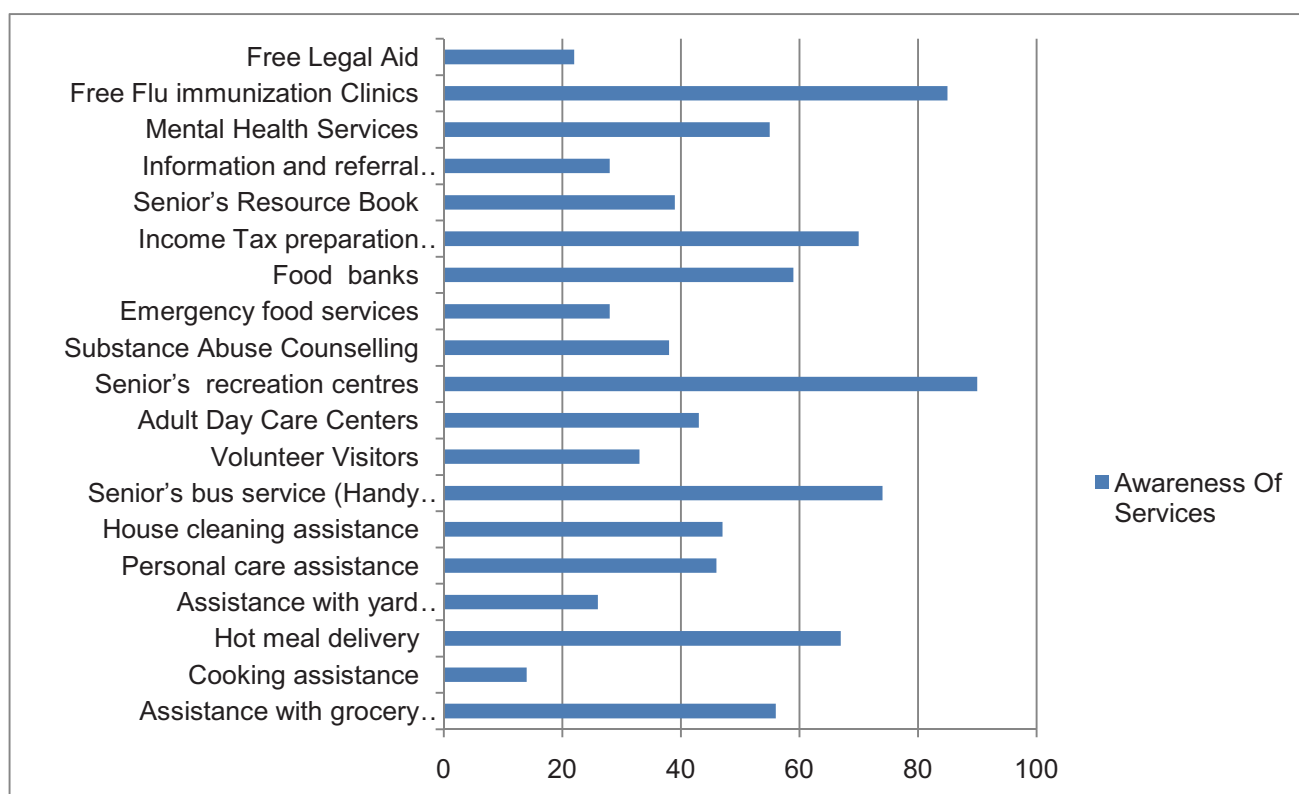


Figure 9

When asked about the barriers to accessing services, finances, hours of operation and a lack of information about what is available were the top 3 responses at around 30% each. These were followed by a lack of public and private transportation at 21% each.

When asked about needing services, there were significant differences between males and females (figure 10). In most areas a larger percentage of females indicated that they could use assistance in this area. Marital status also impacts the needs for services as the percentage of widowed seniors indicating a need for services is generally higher than the percentage of married people needing assistance (figure 11).

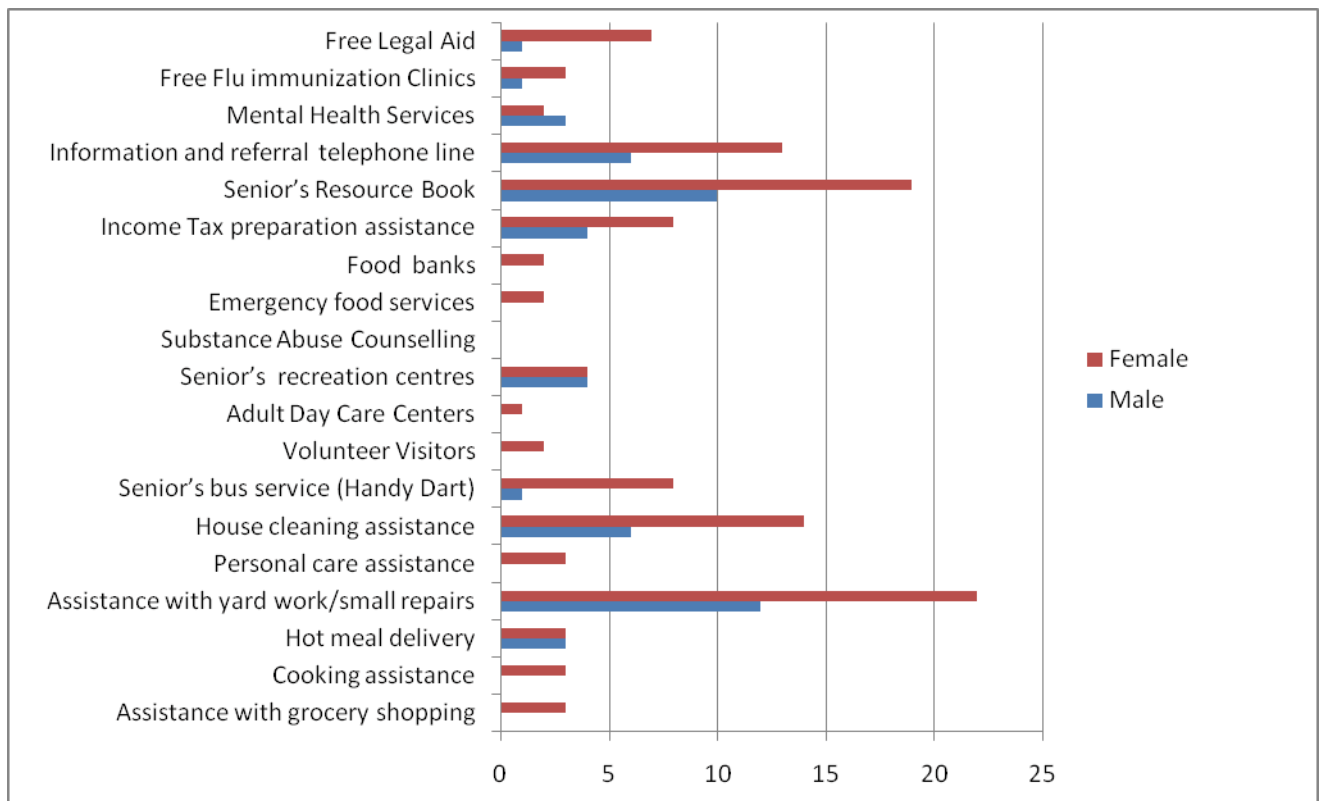


Figure 10

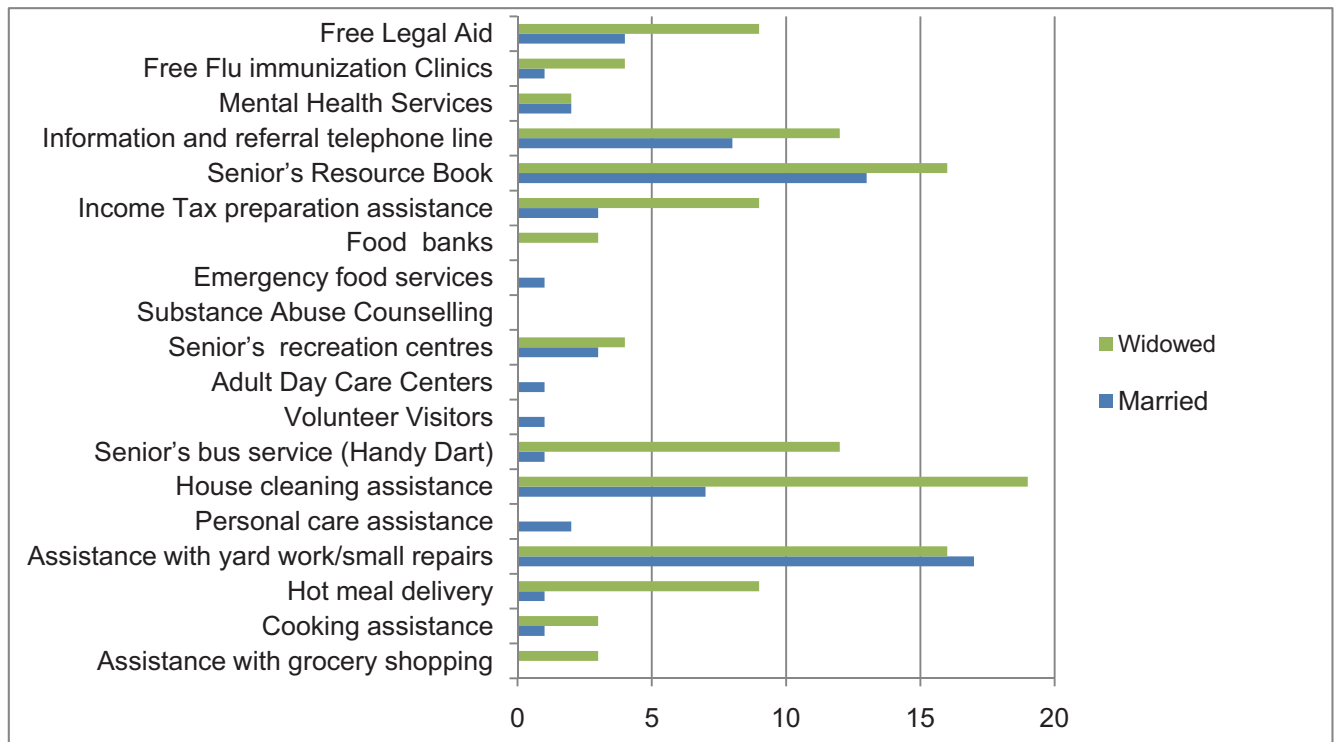


Figure 11

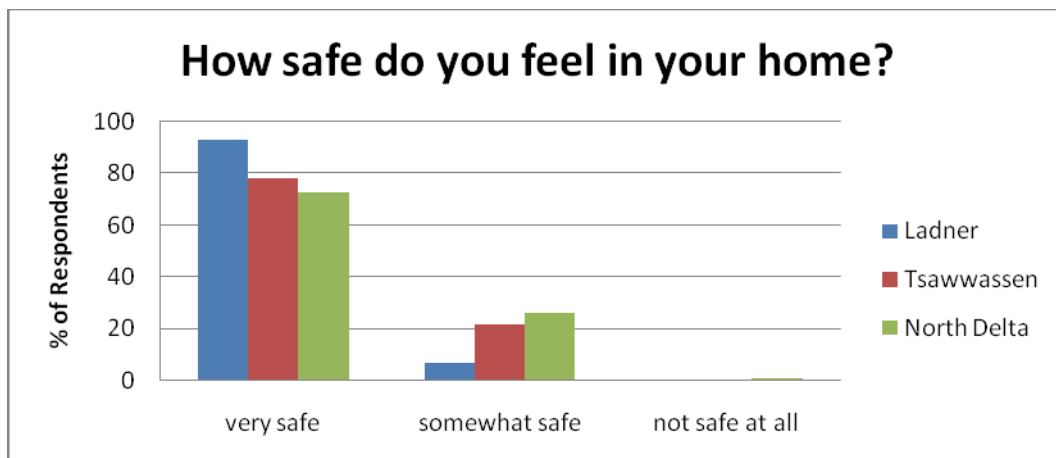
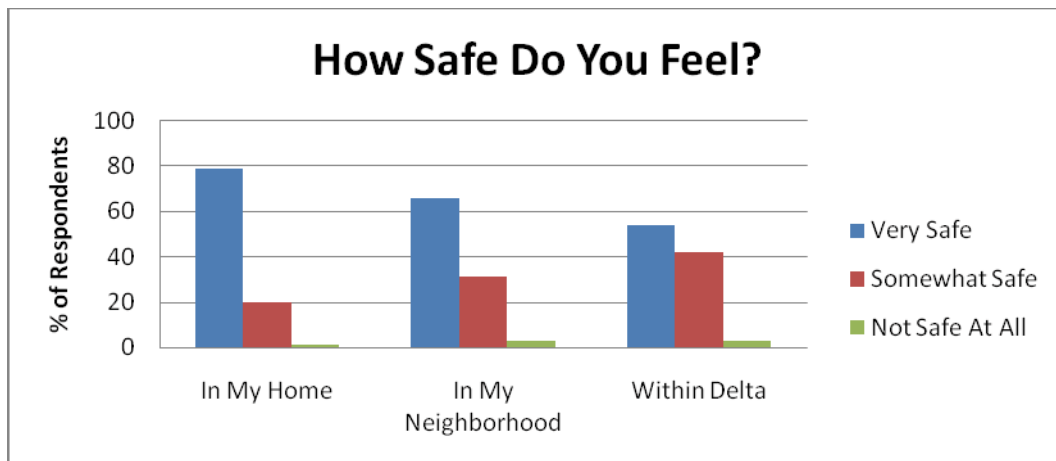
Respondents were also asked where they hear about programs and services. While 11% responded that they don't hear about them, over 70% indicated that the local

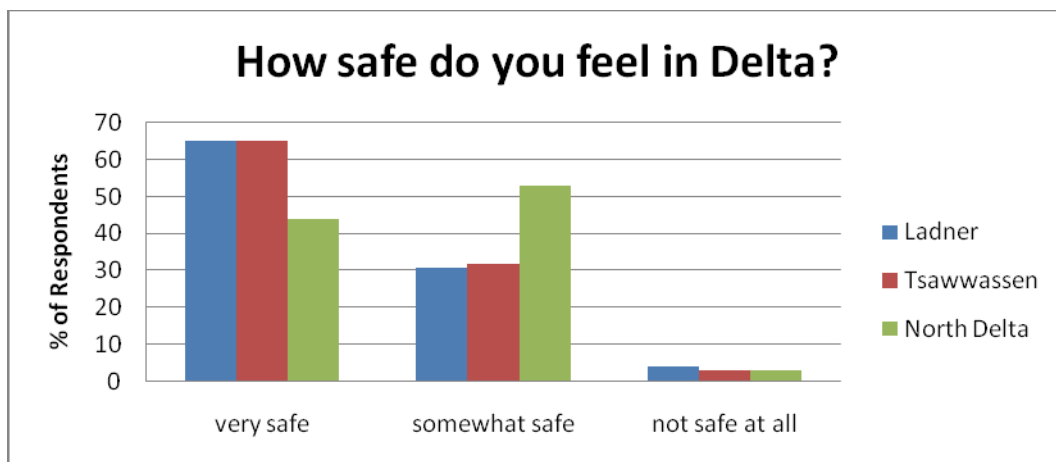
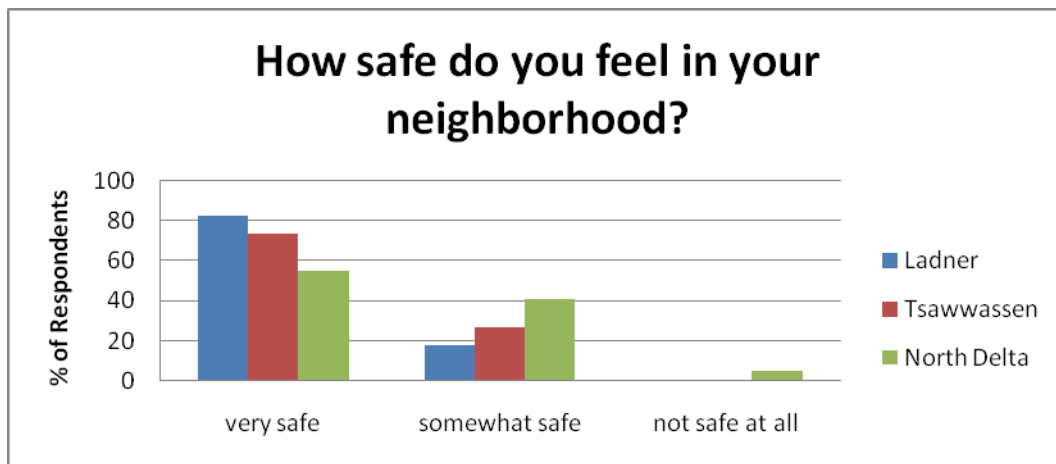
newspaper was their source of information. This was followed by the seniors centres at just over 50%. Less than 16% of the people used the Deltassist Senior’s Resource Guide and less than 5% used information and referral programs. This is not surprising as less than 40% of the people were aware of the Guide and less than 30% were aware of the information and referral line.

Community Safety

Seniors were asked if they had been a victim of crime within the last 5 years. Of 279 respondents, 28 respondents indicated that they had been a victim of a crime that had been reported to police, while 6 respondents had been a victim of a crime that had not been reported to police. Although this represents 13.6% of the population, it is probable that members of the same household reported the same event. By far the majority of these crimes related to auto theft.

As evidenced by the following charts, generally, respondents feel safe in their homes, neighbourhoods and within Delta.

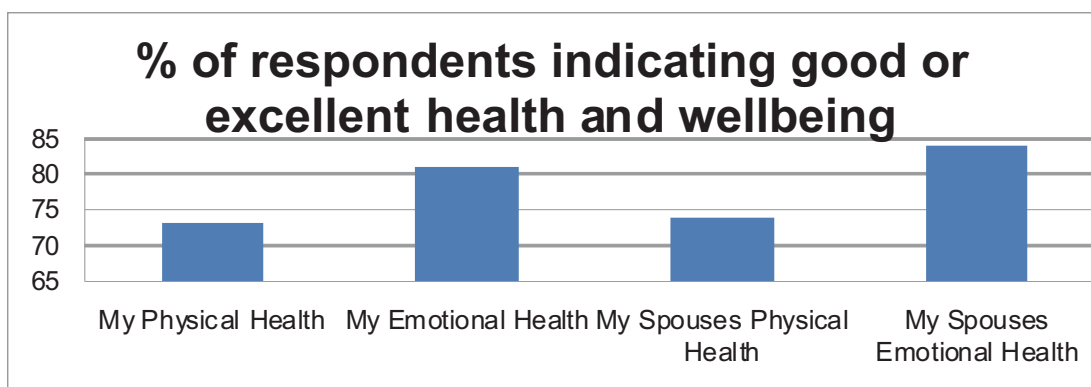




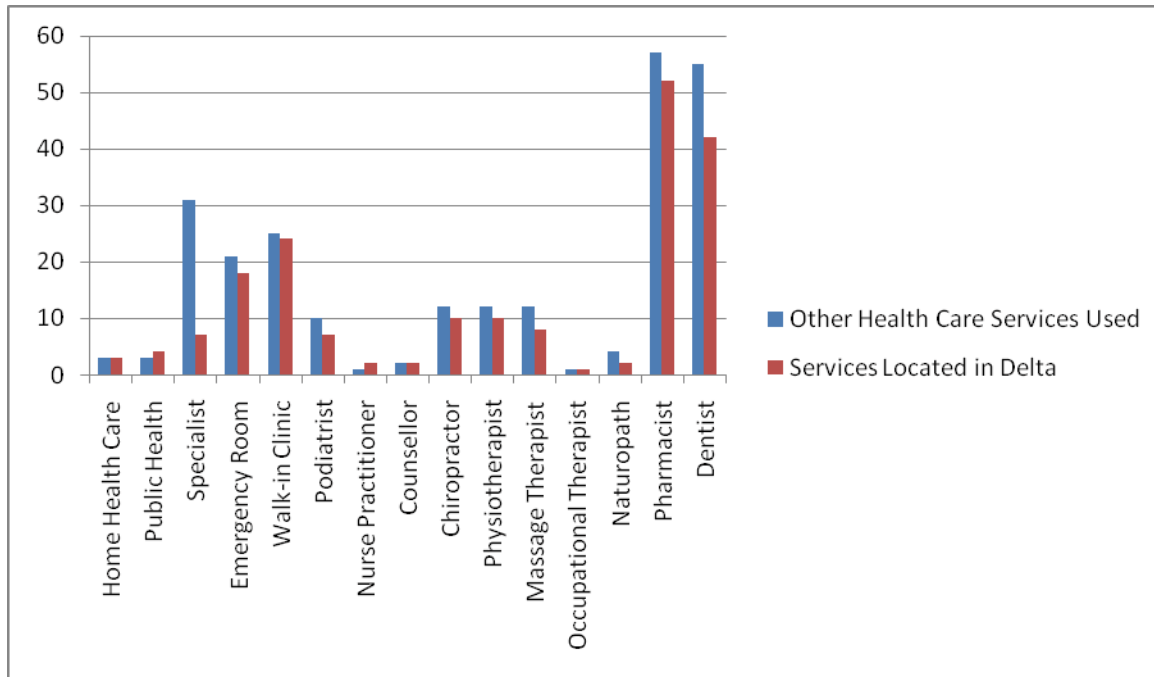
Most seniors in the survey do not limit their daytime activities due to concerns of personal safety. However, over 40% of the female respondents indicated that they do limit their activities during both weekday and weekend evenings. This figure was lower for males at just under 30%.

Health and Wellbeing

Respondents were asked to rate their physical and emotional health along with that of their partner/spouse. There were no significant differences between genders. Almost ¾ of the respondents reported their physical health as being excellent or good while over 80% indicated that their emotional health was excellent or good.



The primary health care provider for the majority of respondents is the family doctor (91%). 77% indicated that their family doctor was located within Delta.



13 % of respondents report being on a waitlist for medical services. Of these, the majority indicated that they were on a waitlist for surgery or to see a specialist. One person commented that they have been waiting for knee replacement surgery for a year. Another ended up going to the States for knee surgery after having been on a waitlist here for 6 months.

Caregiver Consultation

Focus Groups

In addition to surveying seniors about their needs, the steering committee also wanted feedback from families caring for an elderly relative. Families in Delta were invited to attend a focus group to provide feedback and have the opportunity to learn about resources available in Delta. The Delta Seniors and Information Services (operated by Deltassist) provided resource materials and brochures such as the Delta Seniors Resource Guide. Three focus groups were scheduled in January 2009. The focus groups were held at each of the 3 libraries to cover the 3 geographic areas within Delta. The events were scheduled on Saturdays with the hope that it would be easier for working people to attend. Two of the events were held in the morning and one in the afternoon. These events were advertised in the Delta Optimist.

These focus groups were not well attended and of those in attendance, they tended to not represent the targeted audience. However, the information provided at these sessions was helpful. As with the seniors survey, transportation and housing were identified as concerns. It was noted that if you are moving to an assisted living residence, you are unable to take your pet with you. Again, the people in attendance did

not have an awareness of services already available in the community. For example they recommended a seniors hot line and Deltassist already operates an information and referral line.

A fourth focus group was held with the Delta Stroke Recovery Caregiver Support group. At various times there were 10 different people in the room. The biggest challenge that the groups noted was a not only a lack of information on financial matters but also inconsistent information followed by transportation difficulties. The group noted that they did not receive a lot of information from the hospital social workers but for those who were caring for someone who went to a rehab centre from the hospital, the rehab centers provided a lot of information. The group has also found that they tend to be sources of information for each other. As one member said “you have to overhear it or know someone”. An example given was the gas and insurance rebate that is available if you are transporting people who can’t easily access public transportation. Another participant gave the example of disability pension V.S. CPP. Her significant other started collecting CPP at age 60 but could actually have collected the disability pension (which is more money) until age 65. When you are on your own and in a crisis situation such as this, there is no one to advocate for you or guide you through the red tape/bureaucracy. Another example was one woman having to pay the MSP premiums for her husband who was placed in an extended care facility they have an involuntary separation agreement in place.

The second theme of transportation revolved around the recent changes to the HandyDART system. There was general consensus that the system is not as responsive as it used to be. Rather than having a local dispatch centre, there is one large dispatch centre covering a larger area than the local health authority. It is now more a matter of you fitting in with their schedule rather than HandyDART fitting in around your medical appointments. They gave examples of someone being given a very short turnaround time for a medical appointment that was unrealistic as well as a stroke recovery patient waiting outside for over ½ an hour for their scheduled pick up after group.

One suggestion from the group was that for areas in which Delta Optimist does not deliver, perhaps they could have newspaper boxes outside of some of the grocery stores or supermarkets, similar to that used for real estate etc.

Service Provider Consultation

In addition to the senior’s survey on Survey Monkey, service providers were also given the opportunity to complete a survey. 14 surveys were completed. Just over ¾ of the respondents were already involved in the initiative, either in a planning capacity or as a steering committee member. Interestingly almost 43% of the respondents were volunteers. The majority of responders were from the faith community and the libraries at 4 people each.

The top 2 priorities identified by service providers were:

- Developing a strategy to address housing issues
- Increasing awareness of support services.

Summary and Recommendations

Three main themes emerged from the focus groups, seniors survey and service providers survey. There is a need to address housing and transportation issues and to increase awareness of services available to seniors within Delta. The steering committee recommends that the planning table develop:

- a public awareness campaign to disseminate the results of the consultation and the work of the table
- strategies to increase the awareness of services already available in Delta, particularly the Senior's Information Line and Seniors Guide
- a strategy to advocate for increased seniors housing in Delta that is accessible and affordable and will meet a broad range of needs
- a strategy to address the transportation needs of seniors