



Moving Together Project

June 2017

What is Moving Together?

The Moving Together Project (MTP) brings together a broad range of stakeholders to address seniors' transportation issues in the West and Central Kootenays, under the umbrella of Nelson CARES Age Friendly Community initiative.

The Moving Together Project has two central objectives:

- 1) To connect seniors to transportation services.
- 2) To work with stakeholders to make changes at the policy and practice levels.

The MTP's aim is to look at transportation options holistically, "including municipal and regional transit, volunteer/non-profit community transportation programs, and private/for profit transportation services."¹

How did it get started and evolve over time?

The MTP is a pilot project of the Age Friendly Community (AFC) initiative for the Central and West Kootenays. The initiative began in 2012 with the goal of identifying and addressing service gaps and barriers for seniors through a collaborative community model. The AFC initiative is led by the Nelson CARES Society Age Friendly Initiative Coordinator and its work is guided by an advisory committee with cross-sectoral representation from senior-serving community organizations, municipal and regional governments, Interior Health and community members who are seniors. AFC has received on-going support from the Vancouver Foundation, as well as two local foundations (Osprey Community Foundation and Columbia Basin Trust).

In 2013, the AFC initiative surveyed local seniors' service providers, who identified "transportation as the greatest barrier faced by seniors trying to access health and community services or social and recreational activities."² With transportation as an identified priority, AFC secured a development grant from the Vancouver Foundation, and the Moving Together Project was launched in 2014 as a pilot project of the AFC.

The activities for the MTP were developed in two phases using a collaborative community model. In Phase I, community stakeholders came together and conducted research "to identify and quantify seniors' transportation barriers in the region".³ In Phase II, the research was used to develop recommendations for action and key stakeholders from the region and province (including representatives from Interior Health, BC Transit, and the Ministry of Transportation) were brought together to refine these recommendations. The outcome of Phase I and

¹ <http://kootenayseniors.ca/other-projects/>

² <http://kootenayseniors.ca/other-projects/>

³ Younie, C. (2015). *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers. Final Report*. Report prepared for the Age Friendly Community Initiative.

It was a regional Transportation Action Plan, which outlines the priority initiatives for Phase III. Phase III began in January 2016 and will run to January 2019.⁴

What is the Current Programming Model?

Phase III of the project has two objectives:

1. *Connecting seniors to transportation services.* To achieve this, MTP developed a staff position (West Kootenay Seniors Transportation Coordinator) to support seniors in navigating the often-confusing array of transportation services in the region and to help them plan for when they are no longer able to drive. (For more information, see the [Program Profile on the West Kootenay Seniors Transportation Coordinator](#)).
2. *Working with stakeholders to make changes at the policy and practice level.* This is the responsibility of the MTP Working Group, a multi-stakeholder group whose goal is to improve transportation services for seniors living in the region. The group is made up of key decision makers from local government (both the city of Nelson and West Kootenay and Boundary Regional Districts), seniors' services providers, a lead staff person for Nelson Transit and a representative from the West Kootenay Transit Committee. They work closely with BC Transit and undertake various activities including lobbying for changes to improve the access of bus routes and to coordinate medical appointment times with transportation services. The working group is led by the Age Friendly Community Initiative Coordinator, who works with the West Kootenay Seniors Transportation Coordinator to provide an "on the ground" perspective on local transportation issues for seniors.

The MTP has been effective in making needed changes. For example, they recently secured an agreement to have an existing transit route changed so that it works better for seniors living in the West Kootenay Region. In addition, they successfully advocated for the addition of a wheelchair accessible van to the Kootenay Carshare fleet and brought together the West Kootenay community to help to raise funds to acquire the van (donations were received from individual community members, local and regional governments and service clubs).

How is it Funded?

To support the implementation of the Transportation Action Plan, the MTP secured a three-year \$85,000 social innovation grant from the Vancouver Foundation and \$49,000 from the Columbia Basin Trust. These grants fund the West Kootenay Seniors Transportation Coordinator position, the project coordination provided by the Age Friendly Community Initiative Coordinator, the activities of the Project Working Group, and a stakeholder gathering at the end of the three years. The MTP has also received funding from the Osprey Community Foundation, Regional District of Central Kootenay, and BC Association of Community Response Networks, as well as in-kind contributions.

⁴ Younie, C. (2015). *Moving Together: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing Seniors' Transportation Barriers. Final Report.* Report prepared for the Age Friendly Community Initiative.

What are the key elements of success in the Moving Together Project?

It has been very beneficial for the MTP to be a part of the larger AFC initiative, as the AFC has multi-year funding to support the development of cross-sectoral collaboration and decision making. This AFC-organized collaboration has resulted in the development of stronger relationships between, and amongst, key decision-makers, community agencies and seniors. The latter two have firsthand knowledge of both the multiple transportation challenges facing seniors, and the benefits of policy changes that reduce social isolation and increase access to nutritious food, recreational opportunities and health care services. The involvement of seniors and community agencies has ensured that key decision-makers better understand the importance advocating for policy changes, even when it takes considerable time, effort and persistence.

The MTP is beginning to organize an evaluation of the collective impact of the work of the West Kootenay Seniors Transportation Coordinator position and the activities of the MTP Working Group. As part of this evaluative process, a stakeholder gathering will be held in the third year of the project term to reflect on what has been accomplished and how to continue to move forward to address transportation issues for the region.