



# Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors

## **Final Report of the Café Scientifique held on:**

**November 2, 2010, Qualicum Beach Civic Centre**

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Primary Researcher  
Vancouver Island University  
Nanaimo, BC**

**“ Community conversations are a deliberate form of listening to the people in a community in an effort to learn to agree, to become committed and engaged, and to create a place in which discovering the obvious is possible. Like a tide that lifts all boats, community conversations enable real and lasting community change.”**

Born, Paul. *Community Conversations*. Toronto, Canada: BPS Books, 2008.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The success of the *Take Back your Sidewalks Café* was due, in large part, to the generous sharing of expertise and assistance provided by key individuals. In particular, I wish to thank the following people and their supporting organizations:

- Dr. Vicky Scott, Senior Advisor on Fall and Injury Prevention, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, for her significant project planning support from casting a project vision through to sharing injury prevention research, resources and support before, during and after the Café conversation
- Matt Herman, Director of Injury Prevention and Healthy Built Environment, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport for capably moderating the panel of experts and for creating the inclusive space for us to learn together
- Bob Weir, Director of Engineering and Utilities, Town of Qualicum Beach, for providing specific insights into the advances and shortcomings of municipal design affecting seniors' mobility and independence
- Dr. Anne Martin-Matthews, Scientific Director of the National Institute of Aging, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, for positioning the importance of age-supportive built environments using compelling research evidence
- Dr. Joan Sims-Gould, Research Associate at the UBC Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, for sharing specific research-based examples and resources for improving seniors' health and mobility
- Sarah Elliott and Bonnie Fiala, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit and BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, for behind-the-scenes, and front-of-house facilitation support
- Interior Design/Visual Arts Professor Bodil Ellins and senior student, Danielle Lambert, Vancouver Island University, for taking photos and creating dynamic poster displays depicting safety "hot spots" in Parksville and Qualicum Beach
- Mayor Teunis Westbroek, Town of Qualicum Beach, for officially welcoming participants and for outlining civic improvements and ongoing needs for improving the built environment for community seniors
- Dennis Silvestrone, Dean Adult and Continuing Education, Vancouver Island University, for highlighting how the Café contributes to community-based education, research, civic engagement and action
- Marc Lefebvre and Mike Wansink, City Counsellors and members of the Oceanside Healthy Aging Initiative Committee, for their strategic community visioning and support for healthy aging issues
- Christine Jiggins, Parksville Society of Organized Services, and Judy Southern, Qualicum Beach Seniors' Centre, for event promotion and seniors' engagement assistance
- Community-based seniors, those residing in assisted-living seniors' residences, and members of the Measuring Up Committee for grounding our discussion in real-life experiences and identified priorities for downtown accessibility.

I also wish to acknowledge the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for providing the project funding and support that enabled us to host a vibrant and engaged Café conversation during BC Fall Prevention Week in November, 2010.

*Dr. Lynne MacFadgen, Primary Researcher, Vancouver Island University, March 31, 2011*

## **Executive Summary**

On November 2, 2010, a mix of 40 seniors, service-providers, policy-makers, educators and researchers engaged in active dialogue to explore the issue of creating safer, pedestrian environments for older adults in the Oceanside communities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach. The CIHR-sponsored Café Scientifique, entitled, *Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors*, was held at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre on Vancouver Island. The Café conversation was planned and delivered in partnership with Vancouver Island University, Vancouver Island Health Authority, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit and the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.

The Café, organized by advanced registration, brought together concerned community members and researchers with expertise in fall/injury prevention and the built environment to join a conversation about improving street and sidewalk safety for seniors in the Oceanside area. Current, evidence-based research in the fields of healthy aging, injury prevention, and age-friendly building design was used to stimulate a vibrant and engaged discussion about seniors' experiences and the associated street and sidewalk safety issues.

The Café conversation produced a list of suggested solutions for creating safer communities for older people in Parksville and Qualicum Beach. Survey data also substantiated the need for hosting ongoing conversations and knowledge-based workshops about seniors' safety and age-friendly design as a preparatory step toward making identified community changes.

## **Café Context**

Falls and fall-related injuries are a major health concern for seniors as they have been linked to increased risk of hospitalization, mortality, and costly healthcare utilization. In VIHA, the reported rate of direct and indirect deaths due to falls among seniors aged 65+ years, between the years 2003-2007, was 12.6 per 10,000 population, and 77.8 per 10,000 population for those aged 85+ years. Both of these rates exceed the provincial rates, which are 11.3 and 69.0 per 10,000, respectively. In addition, hip fractures account for the largest percentage of cases (40%) for fall-related hospitalization among seniors, while accounting for 52% of average annual hospital costs for fall-related injuries among seniors.<sup>1</sup> When these rates are extrapolated to seniors living in Parksville and Qualicum Beach, these data have staggering implications. According to 2006 census profiles, Qualicum Beach had the highest concentration of seniors of all incorporated municipalities in BC, with 41 % of the Qualicum population aged 65 years and older and with a median age of 61 years; seniors in Parksville represented 34% of the population, with a median age of 56 years (both of these

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<sup>1</sup>Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport (2009). *Falls Among Seniors-VIHA, 2007-2008*. Data compiled from CCIHI's Discharge Abstract Dataset and BC Vital Statistics Agency.

Oceanside communities far exceeded provincial averages, where 15% of the population was aged 65+ years, with a median age of 41 years).<sup>2</sup>

When seniors have limited access to safe, convenient, and accessible walkways in public places, they are at risk for falls and associated injuries that can seriously reduce their mobility, continued independence, and overall quality of life. Recent research on age-friendly environmental design points to the overwhelming importance of the pedestrian environment in creating safe spaces for seniors and for promoting their healthy lifestyles and active living.<sup>3</sup>

## **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose for hosting the *Take Back Your Sidewalks Café* in Qualicum Beach was to create a space for community members to learn together about pedestrian-friendly design issues and to stimulate discussion about needed community changes for improving seniors' safety and mobility in downtown areas.

The specific Café objectives were to:

- Create an open exchange of pedestrian-friendly environmental design information to identify factors in the built environment known to promote or hinder safe, convenient, and easy access for seniors;
- Promote the use of fall/injury prevention research and validated measurement tools for assessing the overall quality of the pedestrian environment in downtown public places;
- Identify the barriers and political constraints associated with upgrading the built environment in central segments of the downtown core; and
- Discuss specific strategies for local policymakers, city planners, engineers, business owners, service providers, and seniors to work together to make meaningful improvements in downtown areas that are grounded in evidence-based research and current practices.

## **Café Design**

### *Marketing and Promotion*

About two months prior to the November 2, 2010 hosted event, promotional posters were circulated throughout the communities of Parksville and Qualicum Beach (see Appendix A for Café Event Poster). Café panelists and members of the Oceanside

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<sup>2</sup>BC Stats, 2006 Census Profiles. Retrieved from:

[http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/detailed/59021\\_023.pdf](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/detailed/59021_023.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Gallagher, E.M. & Scott, V.J. (1997). The STEPS Project: Participatory action research to reduce falls in public places among seniors and persons with disabilities. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 88(2), 129-133; Frank, L.D., Schmid, T.L., Sallis, J.F., Chapman, J., & Saelens, B.E. (2005). Linking objectively measured physical activity with objectively measured urban form: Findings from SMARTRAQ; *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28(2S2), 117-125; and Frank, L.D. & Engelke, P.O. (2001). The built environment and human activity patterns: Exploring the impacts of urban form on public health. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 16(2), 202-218.

Healthy Aging Initiative Committee were instrumental in disseminating event details using organizational distribution lists (e.g. personal invitations were sent to seniors' health educators and practitioners in the Vancouver Island Health Authority, to leaders of seniors' organizations through the Office of the Seniors' Secretariat of BC, to local advocates of seniors' health through the Council of Senior Citizen's of BC, to members of the Measuring Up Parksville Accessibility Committee, and to members of the VIU Elder College Board). Posters were displayed and announcements were made at local seniors' centres (e.g. a notice was placed in the Qualicum Beach Seniors' Activity Centre Association newsletter, and the Café was also announced at the Seniors are Talking Series at the Society of Organized Services in Parksville). Event details were also posted on the Vancouver Island University website/Events Calendar, and a press release was prepared by Vancouver Island University and sent to Parksville and Qualicum Beach Daily Newspapers (PQB News and the Oceanside Star), Island Radio (The Lounge), and the Senior Living Magazine (see Appendix B for the Press Release and News Article).

### *Panelists and Facilitation Process*

The Moderator provided an overview of the Café and placed our topic in the context of current knowledge and practice for promoting seniors' street and sidewalk safety and accessibility. Four Panelists shared their expert knowledge and leading practices in areas of fall/injury prevention, age-friendly environmental design, and healthy aging (see Appendix C for Panelist Bio-Sketches).

The Agenda for the Café conversation included the following key activities:

- Opening remarks by the Mayor Of Qualicum Beach and the Dean of the VIU Faculty of Adult and Community Education;
- Presentations by the four Expert Panelists (5-minutes each);
- Facilitated open dialogue using a simple question and answer format to engage community participants and expert panelists;
- Facilitated Table Top Discussion in small groups, followed by an open-floor discussion about seniors' downtown safety and access experiences and insights (5 facilitators were assigned to small groups, drawn from panelists and planning committee members); and
- Summary of identified issues, impacts, suggested solutions, and research needs. (See Appendix D for Café Agenda, Facilitation Guidelines and Table Top Discussion Questions).

Poster displays were used as props to stimulate discussion using concrete examples of environmental hazards. Displays were created by members of the planning committee who worked with a student in VIU's Visual Arts & Graphic Design Program to take digital photographs of pedestrian routes in Parksville and Qualicum Beach. Four local seniors were also given disposable cameras to take pictures of their downtown routes to document and amplify their concerns and issues – this "photovoice" technique produced a series of photographs of common at-risk areas, seen through the lens of seniors' lived experiences. From all collected images, six poster boards were created to depict sidewalks, intersections, curb cuts, and business entrances that increase the risk of fall-related injuries for seniors. The poster boards were prominently displayed in the

meeting room and were referenced throughout the Café conversation.

### *Participants*

The Café was limited to 40 registered participants, comprised of 20 seniors and a mix of 20 health practitioners, health educators/researchers, community service providers, local business owners, municipal policy-makers, and city planners. Staff at local residential care facilities and assisted living residences were contacted, to ensure that seniors with mobility challenges were included in the conversation; residents with scooters and wheelchairs attended by personal invitation (facilitated by staff at The Gardens, Qualicum Beach and Stanford Place, Parksville). Free, accessible van transportation was arranged for seniors, as requested.

The detailed, demographic profile of Café attendees is included in the Survey Results for the 21 participants who completed evaluation forms, representing a 52% response rate (See Appendix E for tabulated results).

The data are summarized as follows:

- Balanced Age Groups (equally distributed among 51-65, 66-75, 76+ age groups);
- Predominantly Female (30 females, 10 males – these results were tallied from actual lists/names collected at sign-in);
- Relatively High Educational Attainment (14 college-graduate, 5 high school levels); and
- Majority of High Ratings Reported (66 at level 5, 16 at level 4, 2 at level 3).

Qualitative responses to Survey Questions 1-5 captured the predominantly positive evaluative comments in relation to roundtable discussions, and the sharing of diverse perspectives/views. Participants requested additional education on seniors' specific health concerns and issues, as well as more Café conversations to engage and inform seniors directly.

## **Café Results and Recommendations**

The Café conversation focussed on the importance of learning together about fall-injury prevention, sidewalk and intersection safety, and age-friendly environmental design. Emphasis was placed on using evidence-based research to improve downtown design practices for seniors' safety and accessibility.

Common issues were identified and practical solutions were recommended for improving seniors' safe, convenient and easy access to downtown public places – drawing on the experiences of seniors and their advocates (see Appendix F for the Summary of the Facilitated Panel Discussion and Appendix G for the In-session Digital Photos).

Throughout the open session and during the focussed Table Top discussions, facilitators listened for common patterns, insights and suggestions. Three main themes emerged from the conversations and are summarized as follows:

1. Continue the Conversations

- ✓ Host more community-based conversations to raise awareness of seniors' safety and barrier-free downtown design, and use these opportunities for learning and working together to find joint, community-based solutions; and
- ✓ Use strategies to mobilize the knowledge we already have about age-friendly design and seniors' safety concerns (e.g. photovoice posters).

2. Engage in Community Planning

- ✓ Use the rich history of collaboration and seniors' engagement in Parksville and Qualicum Beach to test models of community research, planning and decision-making;
- ✓ Convene a multi-sector advisory group involving key partners and influential leaders from business, voluntary and government sectors, as well as those directly affected by the issues (seniors and those with mobility issues) and develop a formal action plan for creating safe, accessible communities for seniors;
- ✓ Create an inventory of seniors' incidents and hazard-areas for "hot-spot" mapping that can be used to prioritize municipal upgrades in high-use public places; and
- ✓ Establish guidelines/criteria for balancing beautification goals with safety needs for future planning, so that "informed" priorities are set when municipalities are faced with cash flow challenges.

3. Develop an Education Plan for Action

- ✓ Host a workshop to share the conclusions from the Café conversation, and to generate ideas for possible next steps (the Principal Researcher is scheduled to present Café findings at the *16<sup>th</sup> Annual Oceanside Health and Wellness Fair*, on April 9, 2011);
- ✓ Update the Measuring Up Survey and expand its coverage to include all of Oceanside. Conduct barrier-free downtown audits, using validated measurement tools, to identify safe walking routes and to create a common understanding of needed community changes. The specific areas for improvement that were identified included:
  - lengthen crosswalk timing and install audible signals
  - install better lighting on downtown walking routes
  - increase parking areas for disabled, with enforcement
  - provide scooter parking, away from sidewalks and storefronts
  - build more sidewalks for downtown access
  - remove trees/tree grates and lamp posts on sidewalk surfaces
  - level uneven sidewalk surfaces and curb cuts
  - remove pavers that are hazardous for walkers and scooters
  - install benches close to walking paths
  - provide more public transport (improve summer schedules)
- ✓ Establish an annual learning plan for offering workshops on age-friendly design, fall/injury prevention, and adaptations/resources for people with age-

related challenges. The knowledge gaps identified and topics of interest raised included:

- seniors' involvement in municipal planning decisions
  - accessible design for individuals with vision or mobility challenges
  - improvements to the BC Building Code and enforcement policies
  - driver education in relation to sidewalk safety
  - scooter skills-training/licensing
  - assistance purchasing safe walking aids/equipment
  - business awareness about entrance safety (install awnings, clear snow/ice, remove sandwich boards/signs that obstruct)
  - role of exercise in preventing seniors' falls/injuries
- ✓ Host active learning workshops and develop clear language training materials for strengthening seniors' leadership, advocacy, and presentation skills (to enhance seniors' active involvement in municipal planning and to ensure that seniors' voices are heard); and
  - ✓ Identify and launch knowledge translation projects, and/or dissemination events (e.g. CIHR Meetings, Planning and Dissemination Grant/Aging) to address environmental design impacts on healthy aging and to explore actions that seniors can take to improve their own safety.

**Appendices:**

A: Café Event Promotion Poster

B: Press Release and News Article

C: Panelist Bio-Sketches

D: Café Agenda, Facilitation Guidelines, Table Top Discussion Questions

E: Tabulated Survey Results

F: Summary of Facilitated Panel Discussion

G: In-Session Digital Photos

APPENDIX A: CIHR Café Event Promotion Poster

**CIHR CAFÉ SCIENTIFIQUE PRESENTS**

# Science on tap

Quench your interest

**Tuesday, November 2, 2010 (10:00am-2:00pm)**  
**Qualicum Beach Civic Centre**

**Address: 747 Jones Street, Qualicum Beach**  
**Meeting Room: Lions' Room (Ground Floor)**  
**Map: [http://www.qualicumbeach.com/civic\\_map.asp](http://www.qualicumbeach.com/civic_map.asp)**

facebook

### Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors Café

Are you interested in learning more about pedestrian-friendly downtown design for seniors in your community?

You are invited to join an open-dialogue with a panel of experts in fall/injury prevention and municipal design for healthy aging.

Come help us work together to create safe spaces for seniors in Qualicum Beach and Parksville.

**Complimentary Lunch Provided**  
**Attendance by Registration Only**  
Contact: Lynne MacFadgen  
Email: [ccs@viu.ca](mailto:ccs@viu.ca); Tel: (250) 740-8160

**Panelists:**

**Vicky Scott, PhD, RN**  
Senior Advisor on Fall and Injury Prevention,  
BC Injury Research & Prevention Unit

**Anne Martin-Matthews, PhD**  
Scientific Director of the National Institute of  
Aging, Canadian Institutes of Health  
Research, and UBC Sociology Professor

**Bob Weir, PEng**  
Director of Engineering and Utilities, Town of  
Qualicum Beach

**Moderator: Matt Herman, MSc, Director of Injury Prevention  
and Healthy Built Environment, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport**

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**VIU**  
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UNIVERSITY

## **APPENDIX B: Press Release and News Article**

### **Vancouver Island University**

NEWS RELEASE

Oct. 26, 2010

#### **Take back your sidewalks: Creating pedestrian-friendly communities for seniors**

A free forum on pedestrian-friendly communities for older persons in Qualicum Beach and Parksville will be held on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> from 10 am – 2 pm at the Qualicum Civic Centre for registered participants. This first of its kind event will explore the issue of creating safer pedestrian environments for older adults by bringing concerned community members together with experts to take part in a conversation about improving street and sidewalk safety for seniors in Parksville and Qualicum Beach.

This forum is part of the Café Scientifique initiative sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The Cafés are held in communities across Canada to host vibrant discussions about health-related issues of popular interest. The Café is limited to 40 participants, so advanced registration is required. A complimentary lunch will be provided and transportation can be arranged for those needing assistance.

Participants include local seniors, health care providers, business people, municipal officials, engineers, and injury prevention researchers. The discussion will focus on evidence-based solutions for creating safer communities for older people.

While current research in the fields of healthy aging, injury prevention, and age-friendly building design will be presented, there is no need for community participants to have a science degree to share their experiences and join the exchange.

The Café was planned in partnership with Vancouver Island University (VIU), Vancouver Island Health Authority, BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. The forum will be moderated by Matt Herman, Director of Injury Prevention and Healthy Built Environment, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.

Panelists are:

Vicky Scott, Senior Advisor on Fall and Injury Prevention, BC Injury Research & Prevention Unit  
Anne Martin-Matthews, Scientific Director of the National Institute of Aging, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and UBC Sociology Professor  
Bob Weir, Director of Engineering and Utilities, Town of Qualicum Beach

As registration is limited, please contact Lynne MacFadgen of VIU's Centre for Continuing Studies by phone 250-740-6160 or email [ccs@viu.ca](mailto:ccs@viu.ca) as soon as possible.

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For more information, contact: Lynne MacFadgen  
Vancouver Island University 250-740-6323 Email: [Lynne.MacFadgen@viu.ca](mailto:Lynne.MacFadgen@viu.ca)

# FEATURE

## Taking back our sidewalks

Recent forum in Qualicum Beach addressed obstacles, accessibility and quality of life for area seniors

By NEIL HORNER  
NEWS REPORTER

**P**lanter boxes located in the middle of a sidewalk may look pretty, but they can pose a real hazard to elderly seniors who are a little unstable on their feet.

That was one of the messages put forward at a special public forum put on by Vancouver Island University in Qualicum Beach last Tuesday.

The forum, entitled Take Back our Sidewalks, featured presentations by a panel of experts and municipal officials about the need to address trip hazards on sidewalks to keep elderly people safe from falls.

Lynne MacFagden, the project manager for continuing studies at VIU, said the event was a first step in what she hopes will be a continuing conversation about safety, access and quality of life for seniors.

"It's about help in the broadest sense, about the ability to bring people together and raise community awareness about the importance of age-friendly design," she said.

"We saw some specific examples of what doesn't work, in terms of design, and easy solutions that can be inexpensive and immediate."

Some of the hazards identified in the session included narrow sidewalks with changes in materials, which seniors might find unsettling, tree roots lifting sidewalk pavers and sandwich boards placed on the sidewalk, among others.

MacFagden said obstructions such as trees and sandwich boards may



Lynne MacFagden takes notes at forum on seniors mobility last Tuesday.

NEIL HORNER PHOTO

scooters to get around.

In her presentation, Dr. Vicky Scott talked about the various factors that can bring about a fall in an elderly person and why it's important, noting the number of senior citizens over the age of 75 is projected to triple in the near future and these are the people most likely to both fall, and be injured by falls.

Town of Qualicum Beach director of engineering, Bob Weir stressed the municipality is aware of the issue and is constantly seeking ways to make sidewalks safer for elderly pedestrians.

"We are proud of our planning and village feel, and that means a walkable downtown," he said.

"We have a risk management policy of preventative maintenance and safety inspections."

Weir said sidewalks and the placement of what he called sidewalk furniture often came down to a tug of war between engineers and planners, with engineers preferring straight concrete and planners opting for more sidewalk furniture.

Besides just discussing the issues around mobility, MacFagden said she wants to raise awareness of the issue, both with the municipality and the general public.

"We hope they will continue the conversation," she said.

"There has been a lot of work done in Parksville and Qualicum Beach already, so let's continue that momentum so the changes not yet made do get made and seniors have a choice in making an age-friendly community"

news@pqnews.com

### Take a few steps to prevent falls among seniors

**A**bout one in three people over the age of 65 will fall at least once this year

That's bad news indeed for the many Oceanside residents in that category, because the se falls are a leading cause of hospitalization — and many of those who fall will never regain the same level of independence they had before.

Indeed, for many people, a fall is often the beginning of a tragic downward trend of losing more and more of their independence.

Nov. 1 to 7 was B.C.'s fourth annual Seniors' Falls Prevention Awareness Week.

There is some good news, however. There are many things elderly resi-

dents can do to help prevent falls, most of which don't cost anything.

The four key strategies to preventing falls are to be active, take your time, make your home safe and have regular checkups.

When going out in poor weather conditions, seniors might want to consider using ice grippers on their shoes, use walking aids such as a cane or walker and ensure their driveways, porches and steps are properly treated with ice-melting substances before the ice gets a hold.

Inside the home can also pose risks and seniors at risk should consider removing clutter, getting rid of area rugs and cords and improving lighting.

—Neil Horner



Regan Myers makes a point to engineer Bob Weir.

seem either beautiful or effective, but they also pose a problem for seniors, many of whom have mobility issues and must use

## **APPENDIX C: Panelist Bio-Sketches**

**Matt Herman** MSc (Moderator & Expert Panelist) - Matt Herman is the Director of Injury Prevention and Healthy Built Environment within the British Columbia Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. Matt is currently responsible for providing leadership on injury prevention, physical activity and health and the built environment, with a focus on program development and evaluation, policy and standards, legislation and regulations, and strategic planning. He is responsible for monitoring these key health strategies in services delivered by Health Authorities, other ministries, local government and other community partners.

**Anne Martin-Matthews**, PhD (Expert Panelist) - Anne Martin-Matthews is a Professor of Sociology at the University of British Columbia. Since March 2004, she has also been the Scientific Director of the National Institute of Aging of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Under her leadership, the Institute of Aging has supported initiatives in Mobility in Aging, Age-Friendly Cities, Age Supportive Built Environments, and she has led the development of the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging.

**Vicky Scott**, PhD, RN (Expert Panelist) - Vicky Scott is the Senior Advisor on Fall and Injury Prevention for the province of BC with the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit and Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. She is Clinical Associate Professor in the School of Population and Public Health at the University of British Columbia. She is Director of the Centre of Excellence on Mobility, Fall Prevention and Injury in Aging (CEMFIA) at the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, Chair of the BC Fall and Injury Prevention Coalition, a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Knowledge Translation award recipient, and project lead for the Canadian Falls Prevention Curriculum.

**Joanie Sims-Gould**, PhD, RSW (Expert Panelist) – Joanie Sims-Gould is a Research Associate at the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility (CHHM), UBC, Vancouver, BC. Her research interests include: family caregiving, the delivery of home health services to elderly clients, acute caregiving post-hip fracture, transitions in care, the intersection of family care and health care, older women's health, aging and the built environment, interdisciplinary teamwork and education, knowledge translation and exchange and qualitative research methodologies. Joanie is a registered social worker.

**Bob Weir**, P.Eng. (Expert Panelist) - Bob Weir is Director of Engineering and Utilities for the Town of Qualicum Beach. Bob has broad experience in municipal civil engineering design and construction, including 23 years as the Town's first consultant and then as its Director of Engineering. Because the Town of Qualicum Beach has the oldest average age of any similarly sized municipality in Canada, it is a challenge to balance available financial and staffing resources.

## Appendix D: Café Agenda, Facilitation Guidelines, Table Top Discussion Questions

### Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors

Tuesday, November 2, 2010  
Qualicum Beach Civic Centre  
Lions' Room

## AGENDA

Time	Item
10:00-10:30am	<p><i>Welcome &amp; Opening Remarks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town of Qualicum Beach Mayor, Teunis Westbroek</li> <li>• VIU President, Dr. Ralph Nilson</li> <li>• Café Moderator, Matt Herman</li> </ul>
10:30-11:30am	<p><i>Panel Presentations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introductions &amp; Café Context – Matt Herman</li> <li>2. Age-Supportive Environments – Anne Martin-Matthews</li> <li>3. Key Areas of Injury Prevention – Vicky Scott</li> <li>4. Seniors' Health &amp; Mobility – Joanie Sims-Gould</li> <li>5. Municipal Design Issues – Bob Weir</li> </ol>
11:30am-12:00pm	<p><i>Open Discussion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Café Moderator, Matt Herman</li> </ul>
12:00-12:45pm	<p><b>LUNCH</b>      DVD Viewing</p>
12:45-1:45pm	<p><i>Table Top Discussions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences of Downtown "Walkability" and Age-Friendliness</li> <li>• Knowledge Gaps &amp; Priority Issues</li> </ul>
1:45-2:00pm	<p><i>Closing Remarks/Next Steps</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Café Moderator, Matt Herman</li> </ul>

***Take Back Your Sidewalks Café, Qualicum Beach (Nov 2, 2010)***  
**Table Top Facilitation Guidelines**

- 1) Begin the round of Table introductions by introducing yourself and your interest/involvement in the subject. Be sure to acknowledge the mix of participants and their perspectives.
- 2) Review the basic guidelines (participant ground rules that Matt Herman introduced), emphasizing hearing from everyone (all voices heard), no right or wrong answers, respectful discussion, moving through all three questions in the allotted time (one hour). Assign a recorder to summarize key points on the Master Question Sheet (or take on this role yourself).
- 3) Ask each Table Top Discussion Question—one at a time—to draw out participants' experiences and insights. There is no time for an exhaustive discussion on any one question, so be sure to emphasize that we are looking at main themes and issues. Table Top discussion items will be summarized by the recorder and passed on to the Moderator (at the end of the allotted time) to be shared with the larger group.
- 4) Give participants about 2-3 minutes to read the question under discussion and to think of specific experiences that they have had, changes they would like to see, or priorities they would assign. Ask them to write *key words only* on their answer sheet (Q#3 is a rating exercise). Facilitate a discussion engaging all participants, and record highlights of all points raised on the topic (on the Master Question Sheet). Allow only 10-15 minutes per question. At the end of each round (each question), attach participants' key points to the Master Sheet summary of points raised, and pass these up to the Moderator (runner will pick up).
- 5) Be prepared to give more details of your Table's specific examples, or points raised, if the Moderator, Matt Herman, asks for your help to animate a more general discussion. If solicited, encourage Table participants to "tell their story" directly, or to provide additional details (as appropriate, and with permission/comfort level).
- 6) Thank all participants for sharing their experiences and insights and let them know that the collected information will be included in the final report of Café proceedings (without personal identifiers attached).

## **Table Top Discussion Questions**

A discussion about age-friendly communities encourages us to assess our downtown spaces for their safety, convenience, and ease of access.

Q1. How would you characterize the “walkability” and age-friendliness of your downtown area (Parksville or Qualicum Beach)?

Share specific experiences and examples.

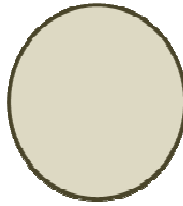
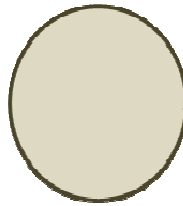
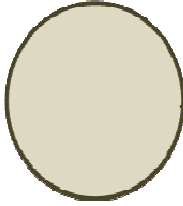
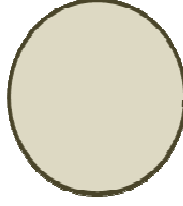
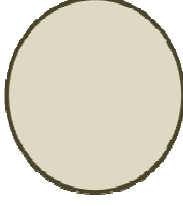
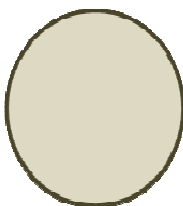
Q2. What changes to your downtown community would have the greatest impact on increasing your pedestrian use and enjoyment?

A discussion about knowledge gaps for creating age-friendly communities will stimulate the generation of new knowledge based on seniors’ priority issues. As a group, discuss the questions on the attached form on Knowledge Gaps. Each person to then complete the form based on their opinion of priority gaps to be addressed.

Q3 What are the knowledge gaps in creating seniors’ pedestrian-friendly communities?

### Seniors' Pedestrian-Friendly Communities Knowledge Gaps

Select your priority issues for addressing our knowledge gaps by putting a number from 1 – 6 in the circle for each of the following – note, the last question is for you to complete.

	How can seniors become more involved in the decisions regarding the design and maintenance of seniors' pedestrian-friendly communities?
	What do seniors need to know to avoid slips, trips and falls while walking in public places?
	What are the features of a pedestrian-friendly community that meet the needs of those who have problems with vision or mobility?
	How can slips, trips and falls be prevented on public pedestrian walking routes and on public transportation systems?
	How can the BC Building Code and enforcement policies be improved to create pedestrian-friendly communities for seniors?
	What question(s) would you ask other than the above? _____ _____

**APPENDIX E: Tabulated Survey Results**

<b>Café Scientifique</b>						
<b>VIU Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors Café, Nov 2, 2010</b>						
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	10*				
	<b>Female</b>	30*				
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Under 25</b>					
	<b>26-40</b>					
	<b>41-50</b>					
	<b>51-65</b>	7				
	<b>66-75</b>	7				
	<b>76 +</b>	7				
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>High School</b>	5				
	<b>College</b>	4				
	<b>Under-graduate</b>	2				
	<b>Graduate</b>	8				
<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Format of Presentations</b>	1				
		2				
		3	1			
		4	4			
		5	16			
	<b>Topic</b>	1				
		2				
		3				
		4	4			
		5	17			
	<b>Speakers</b>	1				
		2				
		3				
		4	3			
		5	18			
	<b>Venue</b>	1				
		2				
		3	1			
		4	5			
		5	15			

**\*Notes:**

- Participant numbers were counted from registration list (checked off at door). Twenty-one participants completed survey forms (52%). Survey data are reported from 21 survey forms completed; totals do not add up to 21 in all cases, due to missing data.
- Summarized comments in response to open-ended questions are included in Appendix F.

## **APPENDIX F: Summary of Facilitated Panel Discussion**

- Suggestion that older people be depicted in CIHR activity, as seniors are willing volunteers
- Recognition that Qualicum Beach and Parksville have the highest number of seniors per capita in Canada, and therefore these communities provide the perfect “living lab” for using evidence to test theories and to seek practical solutions for aging concerns and issues
- There should be a research-based facility in Qualicum Beach/Parksville to take advantage of the aging demographic
- We need to work together to improve conditions for young people who are our future (many baby boomers are retiring with financial security)
- Single most important factor in making communities more accessible for seniors and those with mobility impairments is “enforcement.” The Canadian Disability Association conducts advocacy to address accessibility issues (e.g. petition circulated to make Olympic Stadium wheelchair accessible, when accessible washrooms were removed)
- On a local level, tickets should be issued for people who park in handicapped stalls without approved passes; strict enforcement would prevent abuses and improve accessibility. Handicapped people could be hired to do the enforcement
- Examples were given of sidewalk materials and conditions that present real safety hazards for seniors, for example:
  - Use of cement (instead of asphalt) creates uneven sidewalk surfaces
  - Brick pavers are attractive, but they create uneven surfaces for people using walkers, wheelchairs and scooters
  - Seniors with scooters are driving on the roads because they are smoother than the sidewalks
  - Uneven sidewalks, uneven curb cuts, textured curbs, and cluttered building access ways (business sandwich boards) create hazards for those with visual and cognitive impairments
- Request that public works strike a balance in addressing downtown beautification and seniors’ safety. Priorities should be established that address citizen safety (representing a broad range of accessibility needs)
- Qualicum Beach senior reported a serious fall she had when she tripped on a grate surrounding a tree that was placed in the middle of the sidewalk access (there was little satisfaction received from City Hall and her insurance company; her broken glasses were not even replaced)

- Downtown areas should be mapped for safety hazards and reported incidents (using a safety bureau to publish severity ratings), so that seniors can learn from others' experiences to avoid falls/accidents
- Create a repository of information concerning hazardous sidewalk and street conditions (raising awareness of high-risk areas and frequent slip zones), so that seniors can have a voice when municipal spending priorities are being discussed and decided
- Advisory Boards could be used to bring specific suggestions to City Hall for addressing sidewalk and street safety for seniors
- Seniors' workshops and training packages should be developed so that seniors can make effective presentations to City Hall (e.g. when requesting needed crosswalks in Parksville); this would improve seniors' credibility
- Education of seniors would help raise awareness of safety hazards and it would also help seniors take responsibility for their own safety (how to avoid falls and trips when negotiating downtown streets and sidewalks)
- City Hall staff should be trained in effective listening skills, so that seniors do not receive patronizing and aggravating responses to their legitimate concerns
- Research suggest that the "fear of falling" also contributes to seniors' falls; painted curbs and steps would go a long way to reducing fears and improving safety

**APPENDIX G: In-Session Digital Photos**



**Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors (November 2, 2010)**



Registrants arrive early (mix of 40 seniors, service-providers, policy-makers, and researchers)



Posters depicting downtown access barriers/issues.



Qualicum Beach Mayor, Teunis Westbroek, endorses forum and engages panelists.



L-R: Organizer, Dr. Lynne MacFadgen (VIU); Dr. Vicky Scott (BC Injury Research & Prevention Unit); Panel Moderator, Matt Herman (BC Ministry of Healthy Living & Sport)

**Take Back Your Sidewalks: Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Communities for Seniors (November 2, 2010)**



VIU Dean, Dennis Silvestrone, kicks off the event.



Table top discussions capture issues/actions.



Seniors share experiences that impact their safety, “walkability,” and quality of life



Café stimulates ongoing conversations! (photos taken by seniors and VIU Visual Arts students)

