

Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs

Final Report on Focus Groups

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Laura Ryser, Greg Halseth, and Neil Hanlon
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Availability

Copies of all reports associated with the project have been provided to the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs. Copies of the focus group report have been provided to all focus group participants.

Project Reports

- Summary Report
- Focus Group Report
- Survey Report

Contact Information

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Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Final Report

1.0 Project Description

Many rural and small town places in northern BC were established and designed to attract young families. Since the 1980s, however, the population of these communities has been aging. In Tumbler Ridge, there were approximately 280 people (11.5% of total population) over the age of 65 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, Census). At the same time, the proportion of the older workforce (aged 45 and older) has grown from 10.7% in 1986 to 46.7% in 2006. The increase in the number of older residents, and the increase in the number of residents who wish to remain in Tumbler Ridge when they retire, have increased the level of interest in how the community, local services, and available housing options will meet the needs of a growing seniors' population. As a result, the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia and the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs are working together to assess the needs of older residents.

The purpose of the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs is to examine the following seniors' needs: infrastructure / planning, housing, health care, social support services, transportation networking, physical environment, and education.

The project work was carried out by a research team from UNBC with the goal to provide local leaders with information relevant to decision-making over community planning and infrastructure investments. The project was carried out in the winter of 2008.

This report includes thematic summary comments from focus groups, as well as lists of responses to the questions asked in those focus groups.

Table 1.1 **Timeline**

January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project outline developed • Funding confirmed • Project Contribution Agreement confirmed • UNBC Research Ethics Board process completed • Research team established • Relevant local planning documents identified and obtained • Project logistics schedule completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Field work ○ Household survey • Draft door-to-door survey • Draft focus group script • Complete summary report
February 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct survey database • Enumerator training • Door-to-door survey distributed • Focus groups completed
March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-to-door surveying completed • Complete survey data entry • Analysis of focus group data • Analysis of survey data • Complete draft survey report • Complete focus group report
April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete final reports for survey and focus groups • Review of project reports with the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs • Community meeting to share results

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

2.0 Methodology

The data and information for this project was collected through 3 methods. These include:

- a review of Census population data,
- a community survey, and
- community focus groups.

Selecting Focus Group Participants

Focus groups were conducted between February 25th and February 29th, 2008. The purpose was to provide background information for future planning and community investments. Focus group participants were drawn from community groups, churches, service provision agencies, the business community, and people actively engaged in seniors' issues. During an open house meeting, residents were invited and encouraged to sign up for focus group sessions open to the general public. A total of 52 residents participated in ten focus groups held throughout the week.

A general breakdown of focus group participants by community sector is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Distribution of Focus Group Participants

Sector	Number of Participants	% of Participants
Ministerial Association	6	11.5
Health care / TR Cares	8	15.4
55 Plus	6	11.5
Garden Club	6	11.5
Legion / Ladies Auxiliary	3	5.8
Business community	3	5.8
General residents	5	9.6
49 Forever	7	13.5
Family members	5	9.6
General residents	3	5.8
Total	52	100.0

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Research Ethics

Research conducted by the Community Development Institute is bound by protocols at the University of Northern British Columbia that requires all survey or interview guides be submitted to UNBC's Research Ethics Board for review. A key component to this

protocol is to provide research participants with a copy of the consent form (Appendix B) that outlines the purpose of the study, how the research process will protect their anonymity and confidentiality, and that their participation is voluntary.

Focus Group Questions

The purpose of the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs was to identify general concerns and issues which the community might identify around housing and support service needs for older residents. This report assembles summary notes from focus groups which capture key themes through each section of the research project. A detailed description of questions asked in each section is provided in Appendix B. The summary notes are described in the following 8 headings.

- Migration and Mobility
- Housing
- Health Care
- Social and Support Services
- Transportation
- Physical Environment
- Informal and Formal Care Networks
- Quality of Life

Analysis

During each focus group, comments were taped and recorded. After a summary file was created for each focus group session, qualitative analysis was done to identify, code, and categorize patterns and themes from the data. Once patterns and themes were identified and categorized, responses were tallied in order to generate descriptive statistics. Following a summary discussion of the results, a more detailed description of the issues and topics raised in the focus groups are compiled in Appendix A.

3.0 Results

This part of the report describes the key themes running through each section of focus group questions. As noted above, detailed tables of participant responses are found in Appendix A.

Background Information

Questions asked in this section involved what participants liked and disliked about living in Tumbler Ridge. Key themes stand out amongst the things that participants like about living in Tumbler Ridge. The first theme included positive aspects of small town living, such as the presence of a quiet, small community with friendly people. Environmental assets, such as the scenery, clean air, and wildlife, also attracted residents to the community. These support the third key theme, as many residents enjoyed the recreational opportunities afforded in the area.

By comparison, limited services in the community are attributed as the main disadvantage to living in Tumbler Ridge. In particular, participants were concerned about the lack of health care services and shopping that led to economic leakage from the community. When combined with concerns about winter driving conditions, it will be important for the community to support new investments in services in order to attract and retain residents.

When asked about the key advantages to retiring in the community, the strongest themes included small town living and access to recreational opportunities, followed by health care and housing. Many residents also talked about the presence of strong social networks and service support networks. These themes identify key areas where the community can invest in supporting seniors' needs.

Three items were amongst the most noted disadvantages to retiring in Tumbler Ridge. The first of these involved the need to travel out-of-town for medical needs due to a lack of specific care services, such as a dentist or chiropractor. Housing was raised as another important issue. Built to attract young families, many of the houses in Tumbler Ridge consist of split level dwellings with stairs. There is a lack of seniors' housing equipped with larger bathrooms and wider hallways that are appropriate for wheelchair accessibility. More recently, high rents have become a concern for older residents with limited incomes. Last, there was a concern about a lack of services, such as shopping and trades services.

Housing Questions

The focus group participants were asked about the housing situation in Tumbler Ridge for older residents. The biggest concerns were about design issues. As noted earlier, homes in Tumbler Ridge were designed to attract young families to work in the mining industry. Most of the homes are split level homes with many stairs. As residents have aged, some have expressed difficulty maneuvering within their homes as the bedrooms,

bathrooms, kitchen, and laundry facilities are all located on different levels. Further, some participants talked about problems with narrow doorways and hallways that are inaccessible for wheelchairs.

While many older residents moved to Tumbler Ridge during the 2001 housing sale, affordability is quickly becoming an important issue for new residents. Concerns were expressed about high costs for purchasing or renting accommodations. Stress stemming from rising accommodation costs are compounded by the absence of an emergency shelter that would provide temporary relief for renters forced to leave when their homes are flipped to take advantage of rising housing prices. Rising costs for heat are also a concern. Finally, there is a concern about the limited availability of support services to help seniors renovate and maintain their homes; a problem that can potentially lead to the premature institutionalization of older residents.

In response, there was a lot of discussion about housing design improvements, new housing, and rental accommodation developments. Amongst key design elements are single level, smaller housing units that have lower counter tops, wider hallways, and larger bathrooms to accommodate wheelchairs. Bathrooms could also be improved with the installation of hand bars in tubs and handicapped toilets.

There was a call for multi-level housing units that would provide different stages of care for older residents. Recognizing that the community currently has a fairly young and healthy seniors' population, participants requested that a small facility be developed with the potential to expand in the future. There were several comments provided to improve independent housing options. Suggestions ranged from Abbeyfield-style housing to developing seniors' apartment units that are equipped with two bedrooms. To further support independent living, a safe house for post-surgery patients was recommended to enable residents to return to their community while receiving adequate and efficient care from health care providers.

Driven by a strong desire to remain independent, participants put forth many recommendations to improve social housing options that would also support social interaction. Such recommendations included the provision of a common activities room, a common dining room, and even an activities coordinator.

Health Care

Focus group participants were also asked about health care needs in Tumbler Ridge. To begin, there were many positive comments about health care services being provided in the community. Participants generally felt that they had access to good medical staff and doctors. Unlike communities where participants had previously lived, some were particularly pleased with the ease in which they could access their doctor. They also felt positive about house calls made by local doctors. In a small community with limited medical services, other useful health care service identified by participants included the TR Cares shuttle van and ambulance services that transport patients to nearby centres. A final key theme in useful health care services for Tumbler Ridge was access to visiting

specialists and services, such as the optometrist or mammogram testing, as well as periodic Diabetic clinics.

At the same time, a number of concerns were raised that may impact seniors' satisfaction and local quality of life. Foremost, a limited range of health care services results in frequent trips out-of-town to access care. Of concern is the absence of a dentist, chiropractor, and physiotherapy. Some participants felt that while the TR Cares van is a valuable asset, the service is only provided regularly one day per week. Regular drivers are needed to expand the service. This is important as many reported difficulties booking out-of-town appointments to fit with the shuttle's schedule to Dawson Creek.

Operational challenges with health care workers were of concern to participants who are striving to maintain their independence within their own home. Frustrations were expressed over the limited responsibilities and time allotted with home care workers. Booking appointments with out-of-town service providers often does not account for time zone changes and difficulties traveling. Despite positive comments about the quality of medical staff in Tumbler Ridge, there were concerns about limited staffing for positions such as nurses, technicians, and paramedics. A key message from participants was the need for a "one-stop shop" for health care needs information for residents as they age.

When asked if anyone in their household has any special health care needs, most replied 'yes'. While there was a variety of needs, they generally covered items such as arthritis, heart problems, Diabetes, and mental illnesses, such as depression, dementia, or schizophrenia.

Social and Support Services

Participants in the focus groups were asked about the availability of social and support services for older residents in Tumbler Ridge. In discussing useful social support services, participants highlighted the important role that recreation infrastructure, programs, and groups played in facilitating social interaction and improving their quality of life. As noted earlier, recreational opportunities were one of the most important advantages to retiring in Tumbler Ridge; an asset that should continue to be fostered and developed. Services provided by the voluntary sector and health care support services, such as home care workers and pharmacists, were also prominent amongst the useful support services identified by participants.

A number of key themes were identified around problems with access to social and support services. First, participants generally felt that there are a lack of social support services ranging from shopping to trades workers available to retrofit seniors' homes. Comments regarding limited retail services were accompanied by concerns over high costs for goods and services.

Just as participants requested more information on health care services, they also requested more information on support services. An important component of this request included assistance obtaining information on support services, such as recreation

activities and government programs. Participants advocated for greater promotion of services beyond newspaper advertisements and bulletin board notices. The proposed solution was to establish a 'one-stop shop' for information about local services. Participants recognized that while some residents are very independent, others are embarrassed or reluctant to ask for assistance. Others may be intimidated to pursue information for services that they know little about, or for which are located in distant places.

When asked to identify additional key services needed within the community, participants were most interested in the development of more support services, such as Meals on Wheels and home care, to help maintain their health and independence. The need for a 'one-stop shop' for information was reinforced. This one-stop shop could be operated by a seniors' coordinator to maintain and promote current information, to help older residents to fill out forms, and to coordinate volunteers. It was hoped that some of these volunteers could provide assistance with home repairs and maintenance activities, such as shoveling the driveway. To support this, it was suggested that a snow plough and a lawn mower could be purchased by local churches that volunteers could use to undertake these activities. Assistance with house cleaning and home repairs were also important to maintain their physical and psychological well-being. It can be difficult for older residents to see their home become dirtier or experience the deterioration of their home because they are unable to complete repairs.

As noted earlier, many residents valued opportunities for social interaction. To support this, a number of focus group participants advocated for the development of a seniors' centre where seniors could simply meet for coffee or engage in routine social and recreational activities. To cope with isolation issues, some also advocated for an activities coordinator to organize local activities and recreation trips. Furthermore, as participants expressed difficulty traveling to other places, particularly during the winter, local efforts need to focus on expanding existing retail services or attracting new retail services for items such as clothing, shoes, or even photo development.

Transportation Services

A number of questions were asked about local and non-local transportation needs. As in most northern BC communities, urban design was based on automobile mobility. As people age and their ability to drive is reduced, it can be difficult for older residents to navigate long distances under a variety of summer and winter driving conditions. While many recognized the usefulness of both the TR Cares van and the local taxi service, focus group participants identified a number of challenges for those who are unable to drive.

Within the community, there are no public transportation options. While the taxi service is not always available, there is a perception that barriers to developing a volunteer driver pool stem from concerns that it would take away business from the taxi service. At the same time, high insurance rates were blamed for the closure of a shuttle bus that previously transported residents both within and outside of the community. For those who are able to drive, concerns were expressed about high gas prices.

To improve local transportation options, a Handidart service or a wheelchair accessible bus or shuttle service was recommended to assist residents with physical disabilities. A volunteer driver pool organized by a volunteer coordinator was recommended to assist older residents, some of which are struggling to cope with high rental rates and are unable to afford local taxi services on a regular basis. In addition to driving older residents, volunteers may also be able to assist with shopping. Participants in one focus group felt that the TR Cares van could be used more for meeting local transportation needs. Others recommended that seniors' groups could combine their efforts to purchase a seniors' van. To assist in paying for the van, the vehicle could be leased out to other local groups.

Problems identified with out-of-town transportation included limitations for those who are able to drive and meet their own transportation needs, distance to other centres, as well as winter driving conditions.

For those without vehicles, there were almost no transportation options to meet non-medical needs. Most focus groups talked about the absence of a Greyhound bus service. Taxi drivers will drive residents to nearby centres, but the costs are beyond the financial capacity of pensioners and low-income residents. These residents must search to find a friend or neighbour willing to assist them. It can be difficult to find someone willing to not only drive to a nearby centre, but also to return to the same place a few days later to take them back to Tumbler Ridge. Focus group participants identified that many older women are placed in this situation as their deceased spouse was formerly the only driver within their household.

To improve transportation options to meet non-medical needs, participants would like to see regular transportation services to nearby centres. These regular transportation services may consist of regular Greyhound bus service, a shuttle bus, or even organized shopping trips. Another option could be to develop and coordinate a volunteer driver pool to assist older residents.

Participants felt that medical transportation options could be improved by delivering incentives to attract more volunteer drivers for the TR Cares van. Such incentives may include compensation for gas and insurance. Others felt that additional funding from Northern Health and the town council could assist the organization to obtain a permanent driver that would allow them to expand services. Others felt that the Northern Connections bus should come to Tumbler Ridge to provide wheelchair accessible transportation. For those needing to travel to distant urban centres for medical needs, there are difficulties qualifying for transportation assistance through programs such as Hope Air.

Informal and Formal Networks

Informal and formal networks can have a tremendous impact on the quality of life of older residents. These are important for not only maintaining seniors' mental and physical health, but they are also important in reducing the longer term costs of population aging. The longer that seniors can remain healthy and in their homes, the less pressure they will put on social and health care services. As a result, focus group participants were asked about the informal and formal support networks available to older residents in Tumbler Ridge.

In terms of informal networks, participants cited friends, family, neighbours, churches, and recreational groups as important components of their support base. It is important to note that a number of participants have no family support in Tumbler Ridge. Others cautioned government policies that download support responsibilities onto informal support networks due to limitations with support provided by family and friends. Family members are often located in distant places, and are, therefore, unable to provide the routine assistance needed by some residents. Family members also tend to work longer hours that limits the amount of time that can be allocated to providing timely support for seniors. At the same time, older residents are finding it difficult to obtain support from their friends who are also aging.

Given the constraints associated with support from family and friends, we asked participants about formal support networks. Fewer participants talked about the availability of home care or government support provided by Veterans Affairs. Instead, discussion focused on the limitations of formal support networks. Participants talked about the absence of supports, such as Meals on Wheels or a thrift store. A critical barrier in developing more formal or informal support networks includes a limited volunteer base. Concerns were expressed that with the same people volunteering, burnout is becoming a growing issue. At the same time, it is difficult to attract younger volunteers. A final concern was with assessing the demand for services such as Meals on Wheels.

To improve informal and formal support networks, participants identified key services that are needed in the community. These include Meals on Wheels, a medical equipment cupboard, palliative care, and respite care. They also talked about the need for more homemakers or home care workers in order to help seniors maintain their independence in their own homes. Finally, as some of these recommendations will require more human resources, participants again suggested that a volunteer bureau be established. They also felt that better coordination between groups is needed in order to prevent duplication of services.

Physical Barriers

Focus group participants were also asked a series of questions with regard to the physical environment in Tumbler Ridge. To begin, participants offered many positive comments about the design of the community. When talking about the community centre,

participants liked the automatic doors and efforts to install an elevator. They also noted that the pool has made efforts to accommodate special needs by having a wheelchair in the pool room. In terms of other stores, comments highlighted the absence of stairs to get into shops, as well as automatic doors at Shop Easy. Participants also enjoyed the layout of the community, including the close proximity to recreational opportunities such as the golf course.

Some participants also generally felt that sidewalks and roads were well maintained throughout the year. Wide sidewalks that have wheelchair friendly curbs were also viewed to be important to many participants. In addition to large parking lots, positive parking attributes included adequate handicapped parking spaces at the Shop Easy and the health centre.

When asked about physical barriers that might limit seniors from moving or walking around the community, several concerns about sidewalks were raised. Sloped, icy sidewalks were deemed an important safety issue. In the downtown core, some felt that store owners should be more responsible for maintaining sidewalks in front of their store during the winter months.

Sidewalk maintenance was also a concern outside of the downtown core where snow ploughs pile snow on top of sidewalks; thereby making them unusable for significant portions of the year. As spring approaches, snow piles on residential lawns melt onto the sidewalks during the day and then freeze as ice overnight.

The second most prominent issue for mobility involved building design. Participants talked about heavy doors at the post office, town hall, and True Value. Some favoured installing more automatic doors, particularly in public buildings. Other concerns with the town hall included the absence of a railing at the rear entrance, as well as snow that sheds off the roof onto the wheelchair ramp. In residential areas, elevators need to be installed in apartment buildings.

With an aging population, there are several concerns about how handicapped needs will be incorporated into the community. At the forefront of these concerns are parking limitations. In the case of the community centre, handicapped parking is too far away from the entrance. At town hall, handicapped parking is situated on the opposite side of the building from the wheelchair ramp. Around town, participants generally felt that handicapped parking spaces are not well marked. Due to a lack of handicapped parking, others felt that fifteen minute parking restrictions are insufficient to allow older residents to complete their shopping or banking.

Quality of Life

In the final section, participants were asked to discuss community activities and programs that should be provided to help older residents maintain their health and independence. A wide range of recreation and leisure programs were identified as a top priority. As noted earlier, recreational opportunities were highlighted as a key advantage to retiring in

Tumbler Ridge. Social interaction through these activities also helps to reduce feelings of loneliness and maintain the mental health of older residents. Participants talked about on-going activities currently available, such as crib, aquafit, board games, and whist. They also identified new recreational programs that could be developed, including gardening workshops and horticultural therapy at the Hartford Gardens. Some felt that older residents could also help to maintain planted areas throughout the community.

Once older residents move into smaller living units, many do not have sufficient space to accommodate projects working with tools and equipment. It was recommended that a shop be developed for older residents interested in woodwork. The space could be developed in conjunction with the high school. For residents with special medical needs, physiotherapy and mental health exercises were recommended to help maintain their health and independence. Other venues to improve social interaction included social events, such as dances, movie nights, and seniors' dinners; all of which could be organized and delivered in a newly developed seniors' centre.

To further support seniors' health and lifelong learning, participants discussed educational programs that could be offered through the community college or the public library. These included computer basics, internet training, monthly workshops covering different health topics, and small home repair workshops.

Recognizing that a number of older residents do not have family within the community, participants highlighted the need for additional social support programs. Examples included visiting, adopt-a-grandparent programs, and connecting youth volunteers with seniors. Since recruitment and retention of younger volunteers has been a challenge, incentives were suggested to recruit high school youth, such as school credits or scholarships.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to highlight some of the core themes that came out of the focus group sessions in Tumbler Ridge. The appendices to this report contain the detailed tables that describe the range of responses to each question. These themes, together with the nuances captured in the appendices, can form the basis for developing programs, policies, and infrastructure plans in the future.

Although this report was requested and prepared for the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs, there are a number of issues that fall outside of local jurisdiction. As such, some topics may simply become advocacy points for the District of Tumbler Ridge to raise with other levels of government. Others are clearly available for local action. Below, we have included some possible areas for local action:

Planning needs – As the community was originally designed to meet the needs of young families, there is a need to plan the development of new housing facilities that will meet the needs of an aging population.

Physical environment needs – There is a need to improve snow removal and maintenance of icy sidewalks / ramps to ensure that they remain useable throughout the year. Local action is also needed to ensure that sufficient handicapped parking spaces, ramps, and railings are installed.

Information coordination needs – There is an opportunity to support the development of an information coordination and referral service of both local and non-local service providers and informal support groups. While some aspects may be more challenging given the bureaucratic structure of areas like health care delivery, residents will need more information in order to assist with difficult decisions they face as they and their family age. An information coordinator may also play a role in coordinating volunteers within the community to assist voluntary groups that are filling in service gaps. Volunteer bureaus developed in other communities have been highly regarded.

Service needs – To prevent the premature institutionalization of older residents, lobbying and recruiting personnel who can provide health and social support services is needed. Assistance with home renovations and maintenance will also play an important role in supporting seniors' independence. These service needs are particularly important given the limited housing options that currently exist for seniors in Tumbler Ridge.

Recreational and social needs – The Tumbler Ridge Community Centre and local recreational groups have been proactive in developing programs such as aquafit, carpet bowling, cards, potluck dinners, and floor curling. These efforts can be extended to new activities to fulfill recreational, social, and educational needs.

Transportation needs – Local transportation options need to be examined. Although a key asset of Tumbler Ridge is its compact design, even distances between the lower, middle, and upper benches can become increasingly challenging for older residents to walk. Older residents need reliable, affordable access to local transportation to complete their shopping and banking, as well as to attend social events and medical appointments. Given the distance to regional centres, non-local transportation options for both medical and non-medical needs also need to be seriously evaluated.

Seniors' Centre – The development of a seniors' centre is a long-term goal. It should be linked with the health care centre and the community centre with multiple levels of care plus a place for meals and socializing.

The Community Development Institute at UNBC was very pleased to undertake this project for the Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs. All of the individuals and organizations who participated were passionate about seniors' issues within the community – and we thank them for helping out.

Appendix A:

Data from Focus Groups

Each table consists of theme headings and sub-headings. The theme headings are bolded and have a numerical count beside them of the total number of comments received for that particular topic. Under each theme are sub-headings that are in plain, non-bolded font. These cover the range of issues captured under a key theme. Beside each sub-heading is a numerical count of the total number of focus groups that raised a specific issue.

For example, in Table A1, participants were asked about what they liked about living in Tumbler Ridge. The most prominent theme was small town living. For example, while five out of the ten focus groups talked about the quietness, four of the focus groups had participants that enjoyed the friendly people. When all of the sub-heading comments are added up, the theme of small town living was raised 18 times.

Section A: Migration and Mobility

Table A1: What do you like about living in Tumbler Ridge?

Small Town Living (18)

Quiet (5)
 Friendly people (4)
 Small community (3)
 Strong sense of community (2)
 Beautiful town (1)
 Community spirit (1)
 Knowing other people (1)
 No traffic (1)

Environmental Assets (17)

Scenery (7)
 Clean air (4)
 Wildlife (3)
 Open spaces (1)
 Outdoors (1)
 Weather (1)

Recreational Opportunities (13)

Lots of recreation / social opportunities (3)
 Good recreational facilities (2)
 Activities for different levels of people (1)
 Back roading (1)
 Close proximity to recreational opportunities (1)
 Fishing (1)
 Good trails (1)
 Hiking (1)
 Scenic drives (1)
 Skiing (1)

Health Care Services (5)

Good ambulance service (1)
 Good doctors (1)
 Good medical care (1)
 No interview required to get a doctor (1)
 Short waiting time to see doctors (1)

Cost of Living (3)

Low housing costs (2)
 Low cost of living (1)

Safety (3)

Don't have to lock your door (1)
 Fewer problems with drugs (1)
 Lack of violent crime (1)

Social Support Networks (2)

Good library staff (1)
 Good volunteer groups (1)

Business Opportunities (1)

Ability to operate home-based businesses easily (1)

Community Design (4)

Close proximity to everything (1)
 Good community design (1)
 Lots of street lighting (1)
 No overhanging power wires (1)

Distance to Other Centres (1)

Semi-remote location (1)

Social Networks (1)

Neighbours (1)

Other (3)

Wide variety of ages in TR (2)
 Social equality – no social levels (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A2: What do you dislike about living in Tumbler Ridge?

<p>Limited Availability of Services (24) Lack of medical services (4) Limited shopping (4) Must drive out of town for services (4) No dentist (2) Grocery store needs repair (1) Lack of choice in groceries (1) Lack of communication between medical personnel in TR and Dawson Creek (1) Lack of facilities (1) Limited cell phone service between TR and Dawson Creek (1) Limited towing services between TR and Dawson Creek (1) Loss of health cupboard (braces, wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) (1) Short life span of businesses (1) No chiropractor (1) No health food store (1)</p> <p>Social Networks (5) Distance from family (2) Friends moved away (2) Family moved away (1)</p> <p>Safety Concerns (4) Big rigs / trucks on the highways (1) Drug problems (1) Pets mauled by wildlife (1) Wildlife coming into town (1)</p> <p>Transportation (4) Big trucks on highways (1) Heavier traffic drives away wildlife (1) Roads are not reliable (1) Traffic on highways (1)</p>	<p>Environmental Problems (3) Car exhaust (1) Grass fires (1) Wood smoke (1)</p> <p>Lack of Housing (3) All houses have stairs (1) Lack of housing (1) Lack of low-cost housing (1)</p> <p>Cost of Living (3) High costs to obtain medical services outside of TR (1) High retail prices (1) High transportation costs (1)</p> <p>Climate (2) Driving in winter conditions (1) Winter blizzards (1)</p> <p>Distance to Larger Centres (2) Distant proximity to health care centres (1) Isolation (1)</p> <p>Lack of Social / Recreational Activities (2) Lack of entertainment (1) No seniors' drop-in centre (1)</p> <p>Small Town Living (1) Town polarized between mining and other residents (1)</p> <p>Other Long time to respond to seniors' needs (1) No democracy with municipal administration (1) No dislikes (1) Small group controls influence & information (1)</p>
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Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A3: What are the advantages to retiring in Tumbler Ridge?

<p>Small Town Living (13) Quiet (5) Little traffic (3) Slow pace of life (2) Away from big city problems (1) Cooperation amongst residents (1) No sirens (1)</p> <p>Recreational Opportunities (11) Camping (2) Fishing (2) Close proximity to nature (1) Different activities available for people (1) Walking (1) Hiking (1) Hunting (1) Prospecting (1) Skiing (1)</p> <p>Health Care (7) Good medical staff (2) Good doctors (1) Good emergency response (1) Quick access to local doctors (1) Referrals from TR are a priority in regional centres (1) Waiting lists in cities same as TR (1)</p> <p>Housing (7) Affordable housing (5) Able to finance home for kids in TR (1) Private lots available (1)</p>	<p>Social Networks (5) Acquaintances (1) Friends (1) Neighbours (1) Residents help each other (1) Seniors have expertise they can contribute to the community (1)</p> <p>Social Support Networks (5) Churches (2) Voluntary groups (2) Social groups (1)</p> <p>Community Design (4) Centralized services in the downtown core (2) Community design (1) Middle bench is flat (1)</p> <p>Cost of Living (4) Affordable living (2) Low costs for sewer, water, and garbage (1) Low tax structure for seniors (1)</p> <p>Environmental Assets (3) Natural environment / outdoors (2) Air quality (1)</p> <p>Transportation (3) Close proximity to airport in Dawson Creek (1) Fast transportation by ambulance (1) Transportation services close to medical centre to transport residents to Dawson Creek (1)</p> <p>Economy (1) Town is self-sustainable (1)</p> <p>Safety (1) Low crime rate (1)</p> <p>Other (2) No lawyers (1) Seniors retiring in TR attract others to retire here (1)</p>
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Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A4: What are the disadvantages to retiring in Tumbler Ridge?**Health Care (24)**

Lack of health care services (4)
 Lack of health care services for seniors' needs (3)
 Must travel out-of-town for medical services (3)
 No hospital (3)
 No dentist (2)
 Difficulty travelling in winter for emergency medical needs (1)
 Lack of home care services (1)
 No 24 hour health care available (1)
 No chiropractor (1)
 No mental illness support (1)
 Insufficient hospice and palliative care (1)
 Sporadic visits from specialists (1)
 Uncertainty about health care services (1)
 Veterinarian comes once per week (1)

Housing (8)

Lack of seniors' housing (2)
 High rents (1)
 Houses built for young families (1)
 Narrow doorways (1)
 Small bathrooms (1)
 Split level houses (1)
 Stairs (1)

Limited Availability of Services (8)

Must travel out-of-town to access services (2)
 Lack of retail stores (1)
 Lack of services – general (1)
 No contractors (1)
 No handymen (1)
 No lawyers (1)
 No mechanics (1)

Climate (4)

Long winters (3)
 Snow (1)

Lack of Social Networks (4)

Families moved away (1)
 Losing friends from former community (1)
 Not fitting in TR or in former community (1)
 Takes time to make friends (1)

Safety Concerns (4)

Alcohol (2)
 Drugs (2)

Transportation (4)

Driving on icy roads (2)
 Distance to regional centres (1)
 Losing the ability to drive (1)

Cost of Living (3)

High costs to travel to out-of-town medical services (2)
 Difficulty finding information about financial assistance for medical travel (1)

Limited Recreation / Social Opportunities (2)

Lack of activities for seniors (1)
 No seniors' centre (1)

Limited Social Support Networks (1)

No one to shovel driveways for seniors (1)

Other (5)

Depression (1)
 Distance to families (1)
 Isolation (1)
 Social isolation (1)
 Transient workforce (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Section B: Housing

Table A5: Would you say the current housing situation in Tumbler Ridge / the region satisfies the needs of seniors?

Design Issues (54)

Multiple or split levels (7)
 Inappropriate design of houses for seniors (6)
 Too many stairs (houses) (6)
 Narrow doorways (houses) (4)
 Houses are not wheelchair accessible (3)
 Narrow hallways (houses) (3)
 Washer / dryer are not on the main level (3)
 Bedrooms / bathrooms are on different levels (2)
 Bedrooms and kitchen on different levels (2)
 Small bathrooms (2)
 Too many stairs (apartments) (2)
 Ambulance stretchers cannot get through cathedral entrances (1)
 Bedrooms located at the back of trailers (1)
 Basement stairs are steep (1)
 Metal studs make it difficult to install railings and grips (1)
 Narrow doorways (trailers) (1)
 Narrow hallways (trailers) (1)
 No insulation in some homes (1)
 No rails for steps leading up to house (1)
 No sidewalks between the street leading up to doorways of houses (1)
 Palliative care is a split level house (1)
 Pipes freeze that are not buried deep enough (trailers) (1)
 Some houses have chimneys that don't abide to building code (1)
 Steep sloped driveways (1)
 Too many stairs leading up to trailers (1)

Housing Costs (12)

High rental costs (5)
 Current housing prices are high (4)
 High costs for heating (1)
 High costs for palliative care housing (1)
 Low income housing leased to companies (1)

Availability of Housing (9)

No emergency shelter (3)
 Lack of seniors' housing (3)
 Lack of small housing units (1)
 No seniors' housing for couples (1)
 Only two rooms for palliative care (1)

Housing and Support Services (7)

Difficulty maintaining larger homes (1)
 Difficulty qualifying for government support (1)
 Lack of available local support to renovate seniors' homes (1)
 Lack of awareness about government programs to support home renovations for seniors (1)
 Long waiting period for government grants (1)
 No building inspector in town (1)
 Privately owned apartments do not provide informal support networks (1)

Regulatory Barriers (2)

No land is zoned for seniors' housing (2)

Lack of Support for Rental Costs (2)

BC Housing supports maximum rent of \$750 and does not cover rental costs in Tumbler Ridge (1)
 Limited provincial funds for seniors' housing (1)

Long Waiting List for Housing (1)

Long waiting list for housing in other communities (1)

Safety Concerns (2)

Apartments are noisy with camp workers (2)

Other (5)

Houses appropriate for healthy seniors (2)
 Housing still affordable (1)
 Most seniors bought affordable housing during housing sale (1)
 Some BC Housing units are being converted for wheelchair accessibility (1)

Table A6: What types of housing do you think Tumbler Ridge will have to develop to meet the needs of seniors?

<p>Design Improvements (39) Single level units (7) Smaller houses / units (5) Elevators (2) Ergonomically designed counter tops / shorter counters (2) No stairs (2) Seniors' housing units with gardens (2) Balconies (1) Bedroom, bathroom, and laundry facilities on same floor (1) Drier access to homes (1) Ergonomically designed bathtubs (1) Ergonomically designed sinks (1) Fewer stairs (1) Friendly for ambulance transfers (1) Ground level access (1) Hand bars in shower stalls (1) Handicap toilets (1) Houses with ramps (1) Larger bathrooms (1) Laundry room included (1) Lifts for bathtubs (1) Locate bathrooms on the main level (1) More open spaces (1) Room for RVs (1) Wheelchair accessible units (1) Wider doors (1)</p> <p>Types of Housing (27) Multi-level units (6) Nursing home / units (4) Develop small seniors' housing unit that can be expanded (3) Two bedroom apartment units (2) Seniors' housing (2) Abbeyfield style housing units (1) Assisted living (1) Disabled friendly housing (1) Divide mobile homes for two seniors (1) Housing for people with mental illness (1) Independent living units (1) Palliative care (1)</p>	<p>Respite care (1) Row housing (1) Safe house for after-surgery patients to rest / be taken care of (1)</p> <p>Housing and Social Support (19) Communal activity room (5) Meals (3) Activities coordinator (2) Common dining room (2) Include staff to do house cleaning (2) Chef (1) Social activities included (1) Full-time nurse available in seniors' housing (1) Include staff to do maintenance (1) On call staff (1)</p> <p>Affordability (6) Low-income housing (5) Income-based housing (1) Non-profit housing (1)</p> <p>Location (5) Close to amenities (1) Close to downtown (1) Close to stores (1) Close to the health care centre (1) Town could purchase apartment building and convert it into seniors' housing (1)</p> <p>Regulation / Policy Changes (4) Homeowners grant for seniors to conduct renovations (1) Participation in Community Housing Initiative for one-time grant financing / rent support (1) Rent controls (1) Update building code regulations (1)</p> <p>Communication (2) Better awareness of ILBC (Independent Living for BC seniors / disabled) (1) Better awareness of SAFER programs (shelter aid) (1)</p>
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Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Section C: Health Care

Table A7: Most Useful Health Care Services

Excellent medical staff (6)	All local health care providers are in one building (1)
Good doctors (5)	Close proximity to Alberta health services (1)
Quick access to the doctor (5)	Good optician (1)
Doctors make house calls (4)	Mental health (1)
TR Cares shuttle van (4)	New agreement between BC Ambulance and STARS for emergency transport (1)
Absence of beds leads to quicker access to health care in regional centres (3)	New hospice house in lower bench (1)
Dietician comes once per week (3)	Northern Connections bus (1)
Excellent ambulance services (3)	Palliative care (1)
Visiting mammogram (3)	Physiotherapists in DC write plans for TR home care workers to follow (1)
Visiting optometrist (3)	Quick access to Vancouver from air ambulance (1)
Blood work (2)	Quick emergency transportation out-of-town (1)
Diabetic clinic (2)	Visiting foot care (1)
Good nursing staff (2)	Visiting gynaecologist (1)
Referrals are a priority (2)	Visiting physiotherapist (1)
Visiting respiratory therapist (2)	Volunteers (1)
Visiting surgeon (2)	
X-rays (2)	

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A8: In general, how well do you think the health care system responds to the needs of Tumbler Ridge seniors?

<p>Lack of Health Care Services (23) No dentist (8) No chiropractor (3) No physiotherapy (2) Regular drivers are needed for medical transportation to Dawson Creek (2) More mental health support services (1) Need foot care (1) Need support for lonely elderly (1) No dentist (1) No ophthalmologist (1) No pathologist in the Peace River region (1) No veterinarian (1) Palliative care does not provide standard services (no companionship) (1)</p> <p>Operational Challenges (12) Homemakers / home care workers have time limitations (4) Regulation changes to homemaker responsibilities (2) Better communication needed between patient plans established in Dawson Creek and TR public health nurse (1) Home support workers don't clean (1) Multiple out-of-town tests are not scheduled at the same time (1) Need 24 hour access to medical centre (1) Out-of-town care providers not sensitive to time differences between provinces / regions (1) Some x-rays are not read in TR (1)</p> <p>Limited Human Resources (11) Staff shortage (3) Difficulty retaining paramedics (preference for high paying mine jobs) (2) Lack of home support workers (2) Nursing shortage (2) Doctors are over extended (1) Lack of personnel to conduct tests (1)</p> <p>Communication Problems (10) Lack of information about health care services and contacts (2) Lack of awareness about counselling services (1) Lack of awareness about hospice services (1) Lack of awareness about TR Cares services (1) Lack of communication / awareness about local efforts to improve health and support services (1) Local health care providers don't recommend hospice services in TR (1)</p>	<p>Communication Problems Cont'd Northern Health doesn't know TR needs physiotherapy (1) Northern Health had delay in communicating transportation services to TR residents (1) TR residents don't know key personnel at Northern Health (1)</p> <p>Infrastructure Challenges (8) No hospital status (3) Lack of equipment (1) More mobile facilities needed (1) Only one ambulance (1) Outdated equipment (1) Overnight bed needed (1)</p> <p>Transportation Barriers (8) Must travel out-of-town for medical needs (4) High transportation costs to access out-of-town health care services (3) Must leave town to get a stress test (1)</p> <p>Limited Access to Health Care Services (4) Difficulty connecting with visiting specialists (1) Limited access to physiotherapist (1) Wait times to see a dentist out-of-town (1) Wait times to see specialists out-of-town (1)</p> <p>Regulation / Policy Barriers (4) Zoning regulations need to be changed to enable a dentist to establish accommodations within their practice in TR (2) Cannot hire family members to look after older residents (1) Lack of incentives for health care providers / specialists to come to TR (1)</p> <p>Financial Barriers (2) Lack of funds to replace equipment (1) With no catchment area, TR gets less funding than other places (1)</p> <p>Quality of Health Care Services (2) Concerns about care from psychiatric nurse (1) Health care staff are burnt out (1)</p> <p>Recommendations (5) Need to improve transportation for accessing out-of-town medical services (2) Grand Prairie should be key health care centre for residents (1) Provide funding to assist healthy family members to care for older residents (1) Vial of Life needed (1)</p>
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Table A9: Does anyone in your household require special health services?

Arthritis (3)	Knee transplant (1)
Heart problems (3)	Lung disease (1)
Diabetes (2)	Lung fibrosis (1)
Mental illness (2)	Lupus (1)
Asthma (1)	Osteoporosis (1)
Cartilage problems (1)	Pneumonia (1)
Chronic kidney disease (1)	Poor shoulder (1)
Chronic pain (1)	Schizophrenia (1)
Dementia (1)	Spinal problems (1)
Depression (1)	Stomach issues (1)
Epilepsy (1)	Stroke (1)
Fibromyalgia (1)	None (2)
Heart attack (1)	

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Section D: Social and Support Services

Table A10: Do you think local services currently meet the needs of seniors in Tumbler Ridge?

Lack of Services (16)

Lack of retail choice / selection (5)
 Lack of organized formal services (1)
 Limited choice in banking services (1)
 Limited hardware store (1)
 No carpenter (1)
 No clothing store (1)
 No comprehensive hardware store (1)
 No electrical supply store (1)
 No government agent (1)
 No health food store (1)
 No home nursing (1)
 No social worker (1)

Communication Problems (15)

Seniors don't know where to go to obtain information assistance (5)
 Lack of information on what and when recreation programs are happening (only phone numbers are given in a brochure) (1)
 Need a one stop shop for information (1)
 Need information about renovation programs (1)
 Need information on availability of TR Cares van (1)
 Need information on counselling programs (1)
 Need information on grants / grant applications (1)
 Need information on tax benefits for seniors (1)
 Northern Lights College doesn't advertise that seniors get free tuition (1)
 People don't look on bulletin boards (1)
 People don't read newspaper ads (1)

Financial Barriers (14)

High costs for goods and services (4)
 High commercial rents prevent business development (2)
 High gas prices prevent people from saving money by shopping elsewhere (2)
 Expensive produce (1)
 Medical clinic lacks financial resources for what it wants to do (1)
 Need subsidies for hiring seniors (1)
 Residents watch for sales in DC to save money (1)
 Small trading area prevents development (1)
 Too expensive to build new businesses (1)

Psychological Barriers (11)

Many seniors don't take advantage of local clubs (1)
 Seniors are afraid to use the phone to book appointments (1)
 Seniors are embarrassed when/if they don't incorporate information fast (1)
 Seniors are independent (1)
 Seniors are intimidated to make travel arrangements (1)
 Seniors are uncomfortable asking for help over the phone (1)
 Seniors are too proud to ask for assistance (1)
 Seniors don't want their families to know they need help (1)
 Services not supported by residents who want things for free (1)
 Seniors with physical limitations fear they can't participate / volunteer (1)
 Wife wants to ask for help, but husband doesn't (1)

Limited Human Resources (7)

Lack of home support workers (3)
 Lack of staff at community centre reduces hours of operation (1)
 Lack of friends and family to provide support (1)
 People who took courses in health and social support left TR (1)
 Volunteers are spread too thin (1)

Operational Challenges (6)

Churches take care of their own, but need community-oriented services (1)
 Dieticians have a strict schedule (1)
 Out-of-town service providers take care of their towns first – they will not come to TR if they are busy (1)
 Repetition of services amongst churches, voluntary groups, and service providers (1)
 Sporadic (not regular) visits from out-of-town social workers (1)
 Takes up to 6 months to start an organization / club (1)

Transportation (5)

Must leave town to access services (4)
 Small trading area prevents transportation development (1)

Regulatory Barriers (4)

Too many hurdles to open up a business (2)
 Red tape to get criminal checks to help people in their homes (1)
 School no longer supports / encourages students to assist with catering events by service clubs (1)

Cutbacks in Services (4)

Home care workers no longer clean tubs and sheets, wash floors, do laundry, or vacuum (3)
 Time restrictions for home support workers (1)

Political Barriers (3)

Old boys' club prevents business development (1)
 Town hall did not support Service BC outlet at library (1)
 Town is not business friendly (1)

Recreation Limitations (3)

Lack of entertainment (1)
 No parks in town (1)
 No recreation for seniors who have low mobility (1)

Limited Access to Social and Support Programs (2)

Businesses close early (1)
 Long wait list for home care worker (1)

Quality Concerns (1)

Credit union is not good for investments (1)

Regulatory Barriers (1)

Red tape to organize Meals on Wheels (1)

Technology (1)

Due to isolation, easier to shop online (1)

Table A11: Useful Support Services**Recreation (19)**

Lots of social opportunities in TR (3)
 Reduced rate for seniors at exercise room / swimming pool (3)
 Aquafit (1)
 Assistance available in the morning to help seniors in the gym (1)
 Bingo (1)
 Free admission to exercise room / swimming pool for residents with mental illness / addictions (1)
 Good gym (1)
 Good trails maintained by Wolverine Nordic Mountain Society (1)
 Happy Hookers (1)
 Hot tub – community centre (1)
 Low income residents obtain a free pass at community centre (1)
 Range of activities at recreation centre (1)
 Seniors gather at cafes (1)
 Steam room – community centre (1)
 Yoga (1)

Health and Social Support (15)

Churches provide support (meals / housecleaning) (1)
 Dietician (1)
 Food bank (1)
 Good volunteers (1)
 Home care helps to prevent institutionalization of older residents (1)
 Home care provides seniors with some social time (1)

Home care workers help with meals and beds (1)
 House cleaning services (1)
 Neighbours provide assistance (1)
 Nurses visit homes (1)
 Pharmacist (1)
 Pharmacy will deliver (1)
 Quick response by public health nurse (1)
 Sandy Miller delivers items (1)
 Voluntary groups (1)

Education / Information (7)

Library provides computer training at terminals (2)
 49 Forever brings in speakers (wills, accounting, obtaining assistance) (1)
 College has free courses for seniors (1)
 Good information provided about programs (1)
 Good library (1)
 Library will deliver books (1)

Retail (6)

Good grocery store (1)
 New freezers in grocery store (1)
 New Shop Easy owners have upgraded store (1)
 Patronage rebates at credit union are good (1)
 Shop Easy shovels sidewalk (1)
 Tow truck (1)

Infrastructure / Design (2)

Automatic door at community centre (1)
 Handicapped parking spaces at the community centre (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A12: What additional services for seniors do you think Tumbler Ridge needs the most?

Support Services (27)

Meals on Wheels (5)
 More homemakers / home care workers (5)
 Government agent (2)
 Medical cupboard for crutches, wheelchairs, etc. (2)
 Regular social worker visits (2)
 Respite care twice per week (2)
 Foot care (1)
 Funeral home (1)
 Health inspector (1)
 Home nursing (1)
 Horticulture therapy (1)
 Medical Alert button to connect to 911 (1)
 More time allocated for home support workers per patient (1)
 Permanent dietician (1)
 Someone to monitor / ensure seniors are eating properly (1)

Information Needs (22)

Assistance with government forms (Veterans, Canada Pension Plan, firearms) (4)
 One stop shop for information on services (3)
 Information guide on local services available (2)
 A process is needed to alert key contacts when seniors need help (1)
 Assistance with phone dialing (i.e. voice mail / dealing with recorded messages) (1)
 Better promotion of information on charitable transportation services (1)
 Better promotion of non-ambulance emergency help number (1)
 Calendar of events for fundraisers to avoid overlap (1)
 Develop a permanent secretary to help seniors with information problems (1)
 Improve district website for easier access to information (1)
 More information on subsidies and programs (1)
 Need information about how to become a nurse's aid (1)
 Online catalogue / shopping for seniors to order goods from home (1)
 Promote the Medical Travel Aid booklets available from www.pris.bc.ca/dinohelps (1)
 Return billboard / bulletin board to top of community centre to post events (1)
 Service Canada centre with information on federal / provincial programs (1)

Coordinating Personnel (17)

Seniors' coordinator (4)
 Match seniors with volunteers (2)
 Volunteer coordinator / maintain volunteer list (2)
 Arrange medical travel and accommodation for seniors (1)
 Maintain a booklet with detailed information of all clubs and programs (1)
 Maintain a phone line / website of all information (1)
 Obtain current program information (1)
 Obtain information on regional services / programs (1)
 Organizational bookkeeping (1)
 Organization to coordinate Meals on Wheels, housecleaning, and home repairs (1)
 Person to coordinate donations (1)
 Referrals to government services (1)

Home Repair and Maintenance (16)

Home repairs (3)
 Housecleaning (3)
 Help shovelling snow (2)
 Yard work (2)
 Boat repairs (1)
 Carpenter (1)
 Chopping firewood (1)
 Churches could purchase snow blower / lawn mover to assist seniors (1)
 Get kids to volunteer shovelling seniors' driveways (1)
 Senior discounts for housecleaning (1)

Recreation (13)

Senior drop-in centre (4)
 Bowling alley (2)
 Activities coordinator (1)
 Exercises for seniors (1)
 Maintain the golf course (1)
 Organized recreation trips (1)
 People to help seniors participate in activities (1)
 Theatre (1)
 Trips to casino in Dawson Creek (1)

Shopping (13)

- Clothing store (4)
- Another grocery store (2)
- Photo developing shop / camera equipment (2)
- Comprehensive hardware store (1)
- Health food store (1)
- Organized out-of-town shopping trips (1)
- Shoe store (1)
- Store with underwear (1)

Education (7)

- Computer skills training (1)
- Coping with family life as you age (1)
- How to cope with aging (1)
- Maintaining your will (1)
- Mental health issues as you age (1)
- Nutrition for seniors (1)
- Workshops dealing with finances (1)

Social Events (7)

- Visiting programs (5)
- Church to revive seniors' dinner (1)
- More coffee shops (1)

Transportation (4)

- Develop forms for criminal checks of volunteer drivers (1)
- More volunteer drivers for TR Cares (1)
- Volunteer driver pool (1)
- Volunteer drivers for recreation activities (1)

Financial Support (4)

- Fund to help seniors with yard work, home renovations, and Meals on Wheels (2)
- Financial assistance for transportation (1)
- Financial support for family members taking care of loved ones (1)

Business Services (2)

- Delivery of goods and services (1)
- Lawyers to assist with wills (1)

Other (5)

- Feasibility study about how to obtain these services (1)
- Make building bylaws senior friendly / business friendly (1)
- Offer incentives for students to volunteer (scholarships / credits) (1)
- Offer incentives for out-of-town residents to house people travelling for medical needs (1)
- Use seniors to fill in labour shortage (1)

Section E: Transportation

Table A13: What do you think are the key local transportation needs for Tumbler Ridge seniors?

Useful Transportation Services (6)

TR Cares van (4)

Taxi (2)

Local Transportation Problems (8)

High insurance for shuttle van (2)

Cars in driveways block ambulance access to and from the homes (1)

High gas prices (1)

New gas tax (1)

Taxi is not always available (1)

Town hall against volunteer driver pool (competition for taxi) (1)

TR has no public transportation (1)

Local Transportation Needs (32)

Handydart (4)

Volunteer driver pool (3)

District should invest in local transportation services (2)

Shuttle van (2)

Taxis (2)

Wheelchair accessible bus (2)

A central place to call for rides (1)

Local Transportation Needs Cont'd

Assistance with banking (1)

Assistance with shopping (1)

Car pool (1)

Coordinator to connect people who need rides (1)

Delivery of goods and services from local businesses (1)

Free transportation for seniors to shop locally, get mail, attend activities (1)

Funding for seniors' bus could be raised through BC Lotteries / casino nights in Dawson Creek, Vancouver 2010, or BC 150 (1)

Lower insurance rates for seniors (1)

Lower insurance rates for volunteer drivers (1)

More funding for senior transportation (1)

Need Step Up and Ride (1)

Seniors' bus could be rented out to other local groups to make money (1)

Seniors' groups could purchase van / bus and operate it on a non-profit basis (1)

Subsidized taxi fares (1)

Transportation to and from the food bank (1)

Use TR Cares van for local transportation needs (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A14: What do you think are the key out-of-town transportation needs for Tumbler Ridge seniors?

Out-of-Town Transportation Problems (39)

No Greyhound service (6)
 TR Cares van goes only once per week (4)
 Winter driving conditions (4)
 Taxi was expensive to get to Dawson Creek (3)
 Limited use of former bus / shuttle services (2)
 Northern Connections bus has inconvenient drop-off locations (2)
 TR Cares van only has volunteer drivers (2)
 BC Ambulance will not land in TR unless sky is clear (1)
 Difficulty qualifying for Hope Air (1)
 Distance to airports (1)
 High costs for air transportation (1)
 High costs for former shuttle bus services (1)
 High costs for vehicles (1)
 High costs of flights for medical travel (1)
 High insurance costs for previous local transportation business (1)
 Limited awareness about TR Cares van availability outside of Thursdays (1)
 Many older women don't drive / husbands pass away (1)
 Must depend on others to get a ride out-of-town (1)
 Northern Connections bus operates at inconvenient times (1)

Out-of-Town Transportation Problems Cont'd

Poor communication about weather / road conditions (1)
 TR Cares van is not wheelchair accessible (1)
 TR Cares van can't be used for non-medical purposes (1)
 TR Cares van only connects to Northern Health locations (not Alberta) (1)

Out-of-Town Transportation Needs (19)

Regular Greyhound bus service (3)
 Develop and maintain TR airport / runway (2)
 Shuttle bus to Dawson Creek (2)
 Drivers for TR Cares van should be compensated for gas / insurance (1)
 Helicopter ambulance (1)
 More awareness about Hope Air (1)
 Need tower for a local airport (1)
 Need weather reporting for local airport (1)
 Northern Connections bus to come to TR (1)
 Northern Health should provide more funding for TR Cares van (1)
 Organized trips for shopping (1)
 Regular driver for TR Cares van (1)
 STARS from Alberta (1)
 TR Cares van should hire permanent driver (1)
 Volunteer driver pool (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Section F: Informal and Formal Care Networks

Table A15: Do you have family and / or friends living in the community who might do this?

Friends (6)
Family (5)

Limitations with Social Networks

No family (5)
Friends moved away (1)
Grandchildren live too far away to keep in contact with (1)

Limitations with capacity of family (2)
Seniors want to show independence (2)
Families are not as close as they used to be (1)
Families too proud to ask for help (1)
Families work long hours (1)
Friends are also getting older (1)
Limited capability of seniors to help other seniors (1)
Wife wants assistance, but husband does not (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A16: What are your options if you need assistance with your daily activities, and your family and friends are unable to provide you with assistance?

Informal Support Networks (20)

Volunteers (3)
 Churches (2)
 Churches assist their own members (2)
 Happy Hookers (2)
 Neighbours (2)
 New Life Assembly food bank (2)
 55 Plus (1)
 Hospice Society (1)
 Legion (1)
 Neighbours help to shovel snow (1)
 Neighbours help take out garbage (1)
 Quilters group (1)
 Red Hat Society (1)

Formal Support Networks (4)

Homemakers / home care (3)
 Veterans Affairs assists with home care costs (1)

Support Problems (8)

If you are not involved in groups, then you are not connected to support networks (1)
 Need to know how many residents would use Meals on Wheels (1)
 No palliative care nurses available (1)
 Same people volunteer (1)
 Thrift store closed (1)
 Veterans Affairs support has a ceiling of \$15 per hour (1)
 Volunteer burnout (1)
 Younger residents are reluctant to volunteer (1)

Support Needs (11)

Need more homemakers / home care (3)
 Need a volunteer bureau (2)
 Information from specialists (1)
 Meals on Wheels (1)
 Medical equipment cupboard (1)
 Need to coordinate efforts between groups (1)
 Palliative care (1)
 Respite care (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Section G: Physical Barriers

Table A17: Positive Aspects about Mobility

Community Design (15)

- Community centre has automatic doors (3)
- Community centre installing an elevator (2)
- Everything is close (2)
- Town has good layout (2)
- Community centre designed well for seniors (1)
- Easy to access golf course (1)
- Elevator at Barton Insurance building (1)
- No stairs to get into stores (1)
- Shop Easy has automatic doors (1)
- Wheelchair in the pool room (1)

Sidewalks and Roads (12)

- Sidewalks are well maintained (4)
- Sidewalks are sanded (2)
- All sidewalks are accessible (1)
- Pedestrian controlled stop lights at each end of Willow Drive (1)
- Public Works is working to drain puddles (1)
- Roads are well maintained (1)
- Sidewalks are wide (1)
- Sidewalks are wheelchair friendly (1)

Parking (3)

- Adequate handicapped parking at Shop Easy (1)
- Health centre has some handicapped parking spots at the front (1)
- Large parking lots (1)

Other

- Able to drive golf cart around town (1)
- Neighbours help with shovelling snow (1)
- Skate park has improved safety for seniors walking in town (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A18: What physical barriers prohibit seniors from walking around the community?

<p>Sidewalk / Road Barriers (27) Icy sidewalks (7) Icy roads (2) Poor maintenance of sidewalks outside of the downtown core (2) Areas with no distinguished sidewalks (1) Community centre loading zone has large puddles (1) Crosswalk at community centre has a pillar at the end (1) Hartford Gardens is not wheelchair / stroller accessible (1) Lack of salt on sidewalks (1) Must climb over snow banks to reach some sidewalks (1) No crosswalk between medical centre and post office (1) Puddles (1) Sidewalks on only one side of the street (1) Sloped sidewalks (1) Sloped sidewalk beside furniture store (1) Snow piles on lawns melt and cause icy sidewalks (1) Snow ploughs leave a packed layer of snow on sidewalk (1) Stores don't shovel sidewalks (1) Uneven brick work (1) Walkway between Birch and Willow is located next to house where snow slides off roof onto walkway (1)</p> <p>Building Design (15) Heavy doors – post office (2) No railing at the back entrance of town hall (2) Automatic door button at community centre is poorly designed (1) Heavy doors (1) Heavy doors – town hall (1) Heavy doors- True Value (1) Lack of automatic doors (1) Narrow washrooms in public places (1) No automatic doors at the post office (1) No elevators in condo buildings (1) No swinging doors in TR (1)</p>	<p>Stairs (1) Town hall roof sheds snow onto wheelchair ramp (1)</p> <p>Parking Limitations (10) Handicapped parking at rear of community centre is far from the entrance (2) No handicapped parking at front entrance of community centre (2) Fifteen minute parking is restrictive (1) Handicapped parking at town hall is on opposite side of the building where the ramp is located (1) Handicapped spaces are not well marked (1) Handicapped parking at the community centre is located on opposite side where ramps are located (1) Lack of handicapped parking at community centre (1) No handicapped parking at the bank (1)</p> <p>Climate (6) Cold weather (2) Snow (2) Weather (2)</p> <p>Other (8) Loose dogs (2) Distance between upper / lower benches and downtown core (2) Difficulty shovelling driveway (1) Difficulty mowing lawn (1) Dog feces on sidewalks (1) Trails are unusable in winter (1)</p> <p>Recommendations (8) Get students to shovel seniors' driveways (3) Business owners need to maintain their sidewalks (1) Improve sidewalk maintenance along Murray Drive (1) More trails needed to connect points in town (1) Municipal government should provide snow shovelling of seniors' driveways (1) Need automatic door at town hall (1)</p>
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Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Section H: Quality of Life

Table A19a: What community activities and programs should be provided to help seniors maintain their health and independence?

Recreation and Leisure (24)

Crib (3)
 Aquafit (2)
 Horticultural therapy at the Hartford Gardens (2)
 Board games (1)
 Bowling (1)
 Floor curling competitions (1)
 Gardening programs (1)
 Have seniors work on maintaining plants in local parks (1)
 High school shop teacher could assist seniors with woodworks (1)
 Physiotherapy exercises (1)
 Mental exercise (1)
 Nintendo Wii games for seniors (virtual bowling / golfing) (1)
 Out-of-town recreation trips (1)
 Out-of-town shopping trips (1)
 Quilting (1)
 Relocate bowling alley (not in a basement) (1)
 Running track needed (1)
 Shop for seniors to use bandsaws, table saws, lathes, etc. (perhaps in conjunction with high school) (1)
 Shuffleboard (1)
 WHIST (1)

Education Programs (11)

Computer basics (2)
 Good library (2)
 How to use voice activated computer programs (1)
 Internet training (1)
 Learning about new developments in medical care / research (1)
 Monthly meetings to educate people about medications, healthy lifestyles, etc. (1)
 One-on-one tutoring with computer basics (1)
 Recording oral histories of seniors (by students) (1)
 Small home repair workshops (1)

Social Support Programs (10)

Visiting (2)
 Adopt-a-grandparent program (1)
 CNIB vision clinic (1)
 Connect youth with seniors (1)
 Dietician (1)
 Offer incentives for youth to volunteer (i.e. scholarships / credits) (1)
 Travel agent (1)
 Volunteers willing to assist with cleaning floors, laundry, etc. (1)
 Welcome Wagon (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Table A19b: What community activities and programs should be provided to help seniors maintain their health and independence? Cont'd

Social Events (9)

Dances (2)
 Movie night at community centre (2)
 Seniors' drop-in centre (2)
 Coffee / tea corners (1)
 Seniors' dinners (1)
 Trips to the casino in Dawson Creek (1)

Community Clubs (7)

55 Plus (3)
 TR has lots of clubs (3)
 49 Forever (1)

Information (6)

Communication of phone / e-mail scams (1)
 A suggestion box for infrastructure, programs, and medical needs (1)
 Detailed booklet for people to learn about clubs (1)
 Develop a webpage for seniors to communicate with each other (1)
 More information about subsidies programs for volunteer groups (1)
 What happened to True North grant (1)

Cooperation / Fundraising (4)

Bake sales (1)
 Seniors' groups could raise money through BC Lotteries (1)
 Umbrella group to organize affiliate groups to work on common projects (1)
 Work with seniors' groups in nearby towns on common projects and inter-community events (1)

Employment Opportunities for Seniors (2)

Have seniors teach / mentor home economics students at high school (1)
 Senior training for executing different services in town (1)

Other (4)

Up to individuals to get involved (2)
 Difficult for shut-ins to get out (1)
 Need to motivate people to do things (1)

Source: Tumbler Ridge Mayor's Task Force on Seniors' Needs Focus Groups, 2008.

Appendix B:

Consent Form

Focus Group Question Guide

Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Project
Focus Group Consent Form

Purpose – The purpose of this project is to examine housing, service, and support needs for older residents in the District of Tumbler Ridge. The work will be carried out by a research team from the Community Development Institute at UNBC with a goal to provide the Mayor's Task Force on Seniors Needs with information relevant to community planning and infrastructure investments. The entire project will involve an analysis of local population trends, focus groups, and a community survey. This consent is only for the focus group activity.

How Respondents Were Chosen - The focus group participants were selected from suggestions made by the Mayor's Task Force on Seniors Needs as individuals with an interest in seniors' housing and support topics. The focus group participants were selected for their potential to provide information about issues relevant to present and future seniors' housing and service needs so as to inform community planning.

Anonymity And Confidentiality – The names of participants will not be used in any reporting, nor will any information which may be used to identify individuals. The nature of focus group discussions means that we will be sharing information amongst everyone present. However, all information shared in this focus group will be held within strict confidence by the researchers. All records will be kept in a locked research room at UNBC and accessible only to the research team. The information will be kept until the final project report is complete. After this time, all material and information related to the focus group will be destroyed.

Potential Risks And Benefits - This project has been assessed by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. The project team does not consider there to be any risks to participation. We hope that by participating you will have a chance to provide input into issues relevant to seniors' housing, service, and support needs so as to guide future planning and investments.

Voluntary Participation - Your participation in the focus group is entirely voluntary and, as such, you may chose not to participate. If you participate, you may choose not to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you have the right to end your participation in the focus group at any time and have all the information you provided withdrawn from the study.

Research Results - In case of any questions that may arise from this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Greg Halseth (250-960-5826; halseth@unbc.ca) in the Geography Program at UNBC. The final project report will be distributed to all focus group participants.

Complaints - Any complaints about this project should be directed to the Office of Research, UNBC (250) 960-5820 <reb@unbc.ca>.

I have read the above description of the study and I understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

(Name -please print)

(Signature)

(Date)

District of Tumbler Ridge Seniors' Needs Overview
FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Focus group: _____

Facilitator: _____

Notes take by: _____

Date: _____ Place: _____

Interview Time: Start _____ Finish _____

TOPIC AREAS:

- Opening Questions
- Migration/Mobility
- Housing
- Services
- Transportation
- Informal and Formal Care Networks
- Physical Environment
- Quality of Life
- Health Care
- Concluding Question

A. Opening Questions

Around the table, what is your name and how long have you lived in the area?

What do you like about living in the area?

What do you dislike about living in the area?

B. Migration/Mobility

With respect to seniors:

What are the advantages to retiring in the area?

What are the drawbacks or disadvantages of retiring in the area?

C. Housing

Would you say the current housing situation in the area satisfies the needs of seniors?

Prompts:

Problems or advantages of available housing

What types of housing do you think the area will have to develop to meet the needs of seniors?

Prompts:

Maintain their independence

Assisted Living (nursing homes)

D. Health Care

In general, how well do you think the health care system responds to the needs of area seniors?

Prompts:

Most useful health care services now provided to seniors?

Critical health care service needs for seniors?

Does anyone in your household require special health services?

Prompts:

Types?

How long did it take for this health condition to be diagnosed?

E. Services

Do you think local services currently meet the needs of seniors in the area?

Prompts:

Health

Social support (meals on wheels, home maintenance)

Retail

Recreation and leisure

Information (library, health resources)

What additional services for seniors do you think the area needs the most?

F. Transportation

What do you think are the key transportation needs for area seniors?

Prompts:

Inside the community

Travel out-of-town (i.e. medical)

G. Informal and Formal Care Networks

We want to ask about family and friends, and their role as an informal care network. Do you have family and / or friends living in the community who might do this?

What are your options if you need assistance with your daily activities, and your family and friends are unable to provide you with assistance?

Prompts:

- Home care nursing
- Home occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Adult day care programs
- Meals on Wheels

H. Physical Environment

What physical barriers prohibit seniors from walking around the community?

Prompts:

- Weather
- Safety issues
- Distance to services
- Snowclearing
- Parking spaces
- Doorways/ access
- Stairs/ ramps

I. Quality of Life

What community activities and programs should be provided to help seniors maintain their health and independence?

Prompts:

- Recreation and Leisure Programs
- Community clubs
- Social events
- Library
- Volunteer Groups

J. Concluding Question

From the experiences you have had in the community, do you have anything else that has not been touched on here that you would like to comment on?