



Friday evening's concert of The Other
Workshop
 only the
 first step

JUNE 27TH, 2010

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Fix said the workshop was just one step in the community plan process. The next stage will be researching and creating a draft of the new zoning bylaw, which will be presented to the entire community for input, then it will be presented to city council for approval.

"Even though we're taking an age-friendly lens, the results are intended to appeal to, and benefit, the broad community," she said. "When you design a community for older people, you're designing a community for young people as well."

DAILY

Age-friendly zoning bylaw discussed for seniors at KPAC

JAMIE WOODFORD
 Staff Writer

Dawson Creek seniors were given a chance to offer input into a series of zoning bylaws Monday.

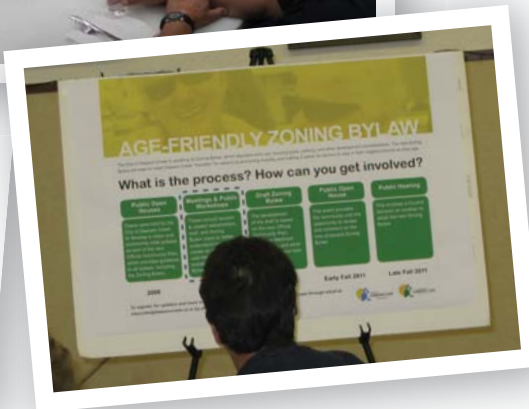
An age-friendly zoning bylaw workshop was held at the Kwantlen Performing Arts Centre (KPAC) as the second step in creating the Official Community Plan for Dawson Creek.

The community plan is an effort to update the zoning bylaw that regulates land use and development, housing permitting, parking, transportation and building considerations such as structure heights.

The workshop was held to explore and identify key issues that seniors face when it comes to accessibility and aging in the community.

Jessie Fitz, an urban planner for H.R. Lawson Construction, who led the workshop, said Monday's presentation was special because it allowed seniors to participate in the development of the community plan directly.

"The unique part of this whole process is that we're taking an age-friendly approach to it," she said. "We're wanting to ensure that seniors are able to give around the community needs will need live in their neighbourhood."



Age-Friendly Zoning Bylaw Consultation Results

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background

Executive Summary

On June 28th 2010, three consultations took place to elicit input on updating the City of Dawson Creek's new Zoning Bylaw, which will reflect best practices in age-friendly planning, new directions set out in the latest Official Community Plan, and input from local seniors, stakeholders, and the public. The three consultations were as follows:

- A survey was distributed at a seniors' community lunch, asking for input on how to promote mobility for seniors, and how to make it easier for them to stay in their neighbourhoods as they age. A total of 71 surveys were completed by seniors or people working with seniors.
- An age-friendly workshop was held to elicit input on the same age-friendly themes. This was open to the public but targeted seniors. Eight people participated.
- An evening workshop was held with members of City Council and the development industry to elicit input on zoning implications of the new Official Community Plan, as well as other zoning issues. Eight people participated.

seniors survey

Summary

Survey recipients and workshop participants were asked to focus on issues pertaining only to the built environment, and to avoid discussion about services and other issues not pertinent to zoning. Themes that emerged from the consultation are as follows:

Most important uses and amenities to have within walking distance of home

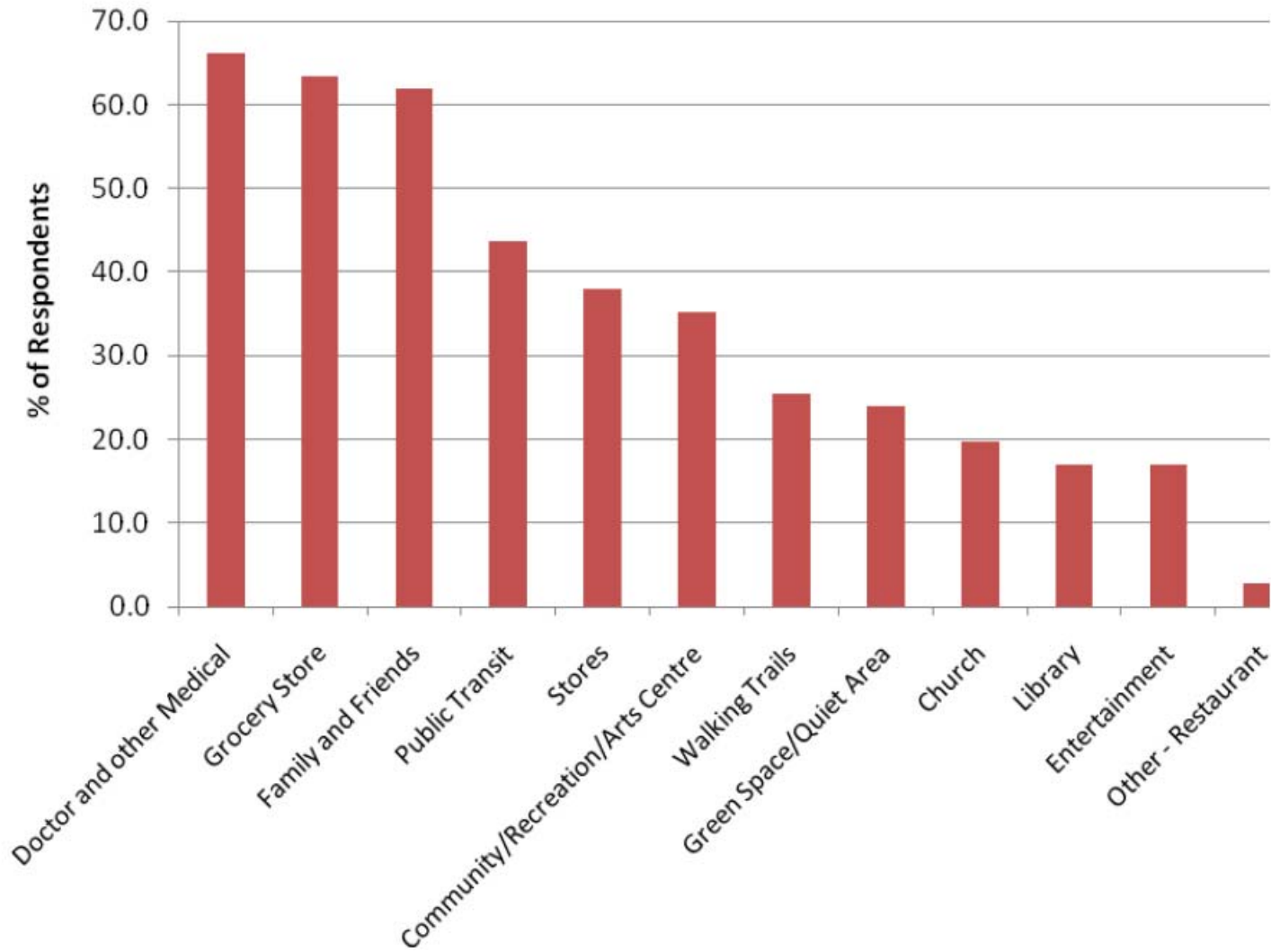
- The majority of survey respondents identify the following as being among the top five most important: doctor and other medical uses; grocery store; and family and friends.
- Other top responses are: public transit (nearly 1/2 of survey respondents); stores and community/arts/recreation centres (more than 1/3 of survey respondents); and walking trails and green space/quiet areas (approximately 1/4 of survey respondents).

Challenges associated with places and streets that are difficult to get around on foot or in a wheelchair/scooter

- The majority of survey respondents identify "uneven" sidewalks as being a challenge.
- Other top responses are: stairs and access to buildings are difficult (nearly 1/2 of survey respondents); and issues with sidewalks (nearly 1/3 of respondents identified: not enough sidewalks, curbs difficult to get over, and not enough weather protection on sidewalks).

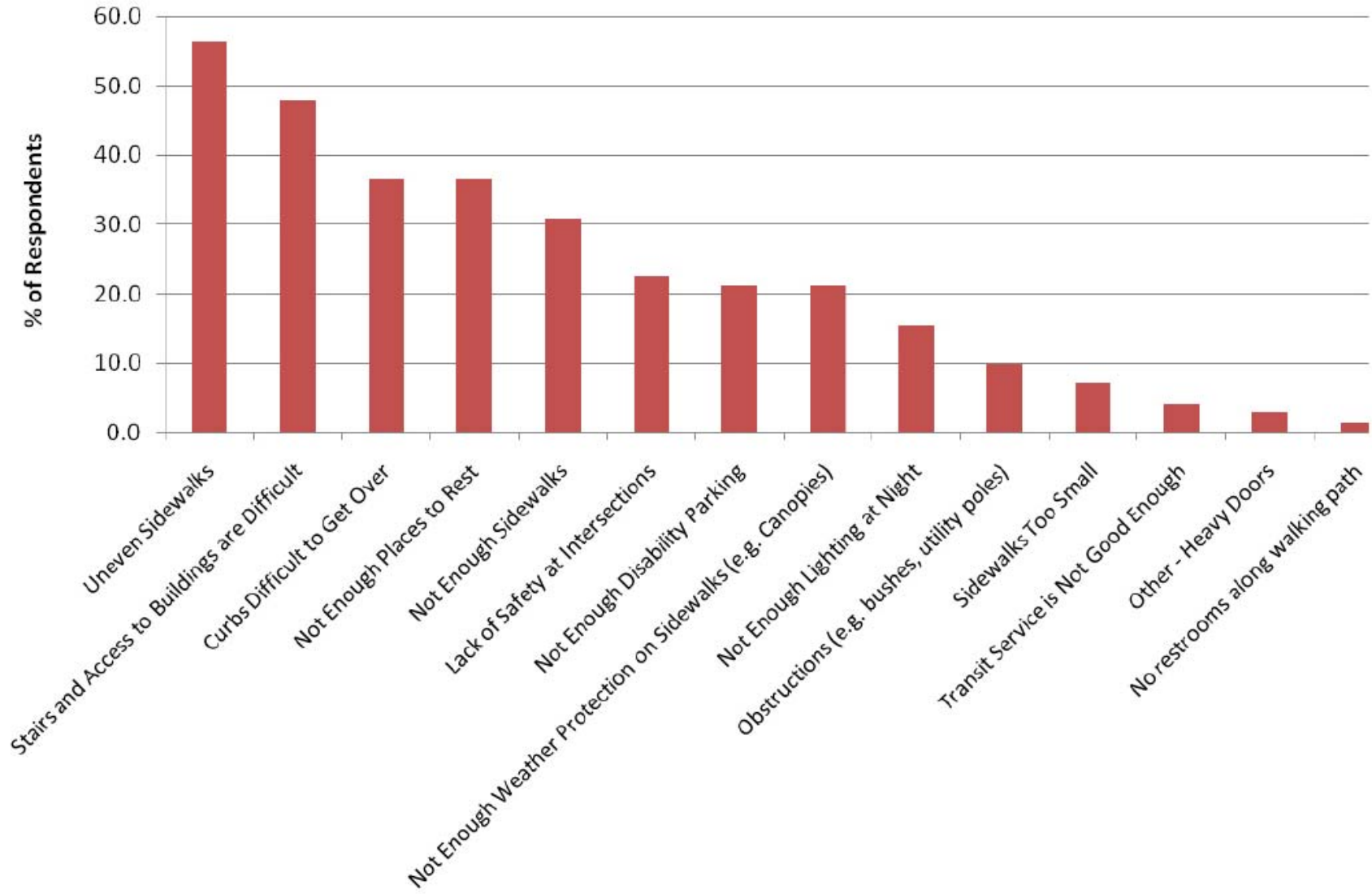
Detailed Survey Results

Most important uses and amenities to have within walking distance of home



Detailed Survey Results (continued)

Challenges associated with places and streets that are difficult to get around on foot or in a wheelchair/scooter



age-friendly public workshop

Summary

The purpose of this workshop was to hear from seniors and other residents about the barriers and possible solutions around helping seniors safely move around Dawson Creek and comfortably stay in their neighbourhoods as they age.

While participants were asked to focus on issues pertaining only to the built environment, and to avoid discussion about services and other issues not pertinent to zoning, comments sometimes fell outside of the scope of the Zoning Bylaw.

Questions and key output are as follows:

What are the Top 3-5 challenges/barriers faced by seniors in Dawson Creek in terms of mobility / getting around in outdoor public and private places? (This include on food, by wheelchair, by bus, and by car).

- Parking spaces are too narrow
- Sloping curbs
- Insufficient bus service to multiplex

What are the Top 3-5 challenges/barriers faced by seniors in Dawson Creek in terms of aging in place? (This includes proximity to uses and amenities, and housing types and location, such as stabilizing and replenishing seniors housing stock).

- The need for more neighbourhood facilities
- The need for greater participation in programs
- The need for assistance in maintaining homes (e.g. single family homes) and associated expenses
- The need to have family nearby

What physical changes would help eliminate or reduce the impact of these challenges/barriers?

- Wider sidewalks, walkways, and doorways
- Better lighting (streets and sidewalks)
- More Inside and outside rails
- More sidewalks
- More crosswalks
- More assistance with home maintenance
- The provision of a seniors access centre

city council & developer issues identification workshop

Summary

The purpose of this workshop was to hear from City Council and active users of the Zoning Bylaw (i.e. development community) on the possible challenges and opportunities associated with new land use and development directions resulting from the OCP process. This workshop was not focused on the age-friendly theme, but included discussion on it.

Challenges and opportunities were discussed for the following four topics, each of which are consistent with age-friendly planning strategies. Key output is as follows:

Regulating for higher densities

- Smaller lots: parking issues must be addressed; Dawson Creek residents like space and there is a market for large lots
- Shorter setbacks: reducing existing setbacks is possible; this would calm traffic and increase the “visitability” of homes for seniors and others with access issues for smaller lots and shorter setbacks will increase the walkability of Dawson Creek, and will help seniors keep up homes

Providing for a greater range of housing typologies

- Multi-family development is possible but must look food and fit within the character of existing neighbourhoods
- Secondary suites will be useful for seniors and youth

Regulating for a greater land use mix

- There is a desire to encourage people to live, work, and play in their neighbourhoods
- A great mix of both housing typologies and uses is desired
- Parking issues will have to be addressed for commercial uses and higher density residential areas

Regulating for less and/or concealed parking

- Dawson Creek is a car-oriented community, partly because transit and other modes are difficult in the winter, so regulating for less parking could be a challenge
- There are no real examples of underground or building-concealed parking in Dawson Creek
- More housing should be situated downtown in order to reduce the need to drive there (i.e. as a destination)
- There is a “chicken-egg” situation with respect to densities and transit; increasing residential densities and targeting demographics (.e.g seniors) through programs like “Step Up and Ride” will help support transit use

Other

- There is a need for more sidewalks as certain areas do not have them at all