



Robson Valley Better at Home
Rural and Remote Pilot Project
Stakeholders Meetings Report, March 2015



United Way



United Way helping seniors
remain independent.

Better at Home is funded by the Government of British Columbia.

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1 Introduction

1.1. Better at Home

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. The program is funded by the Government of British Columbia and managed by the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The Better at Home program is designed to address the specific needs of local seniors, allowing communities to assess their local strengths, identify gaps in services for seniors, and design Better at Home to enhance local capacities to bridge these non-medical seniors support service gaps.

The range of Better at Home services available varies from community to community, depending on the specific needs of local seniors. Services are delivered by a mix of volunteers, contractors, and paid staff, which depends on the capacity and human resource availability in local communities. Examples of Better at Home services include:

- Friendly visiting
- Transportation
- Light yard work
- Minor home repairs
- Light housekeeping
- Grocery shopping
- Snow shoveling

There are currently Better at Home programs in over 60 programs across British Columbia. Programs in the North include Prince George, Quesnel, Dawson Creek and Fort St. John. Programs in the Interior include Kamloops, Logan Lake, Williams Lake, and the Shuswap. A full list of current Better at Home programs can be found online at <http://betterathome.ca/map>. Those with limited access to the Internet are welcome to call the Better at Home Provincial Office on 604-268-1312 to enquire about program availability around the province.

1.2. Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project

In April 2014, United Way of the Lower Mainland received additional funding, some of which was used to undertake the Rural and Remote Pilot Project. The pilot project will test new approaches for delivering Better at Home services in hard-to-serve rural and remote BC communities and inform Better at Home's efforts to effectively serve seniors in these areas.

The project will run in five rural and remote communities, which may devise five different ways to deliver Better at Home services. As part of the pilot project, United Way will support the development of locally appropriate approaches that may differ from the

current approach in various ways—financial, governance, services, delivery, management, and staffing— but will remain in line with Better at Home core principles.

The selection process for the rural and remote pilot programs was evidence-informed, consultative, and responsive, in line with the guiding principles of Better at Home. Following extensive consultation with regional experts and stakeholders, site selection criteria were developed, which included but were not limited to the following:

- Numbers of seniors in community
- Non-medical home support needs
- Number of challenges to overcome (remoteness, small size, winter travel)
- Isolation factors
- Lack of other services/transportation infrastructure
- Outlying areas to work with
- Community readiness
- Community capacity

The criteria provided a guideline to the kinds of communities regional experts considered ideal for participation in the Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project. Communities selected met a number of the criteria to varying degrees while also presenting variation between the pilot communities in an attempt to maximize learning potential for Better at Home.

Nakusp, Invermere, the Villages of Fraser Lake and Valemount, and Pender Island were the five communities chosen to help Better at Home understand how best to deliver services to seniors living in rural and remote communities in B.C. Following a local stakeholder engagement process in each community, local pilot Better at Home programs will be funded from April 2015.¹

1.3. Better at Home in Valemount and the Robson Valley

The Village of Valemount was been identified as a potential Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project community as described in the previous section. Discussions with regional experts as well as local community contacts encouraged the Better at Home Provincial Office to engage not only with stakeholders from Valemount but also surrounding communities such as McBride.

It should be noted that rural pilot programs may have very different challenges and local contexts than communities with more urban-based Better at Home programs. For this reason, Robson Valley Better at Home may come up with very different services and

¹ At the time of writing this report, there were only five pilot communities. A sixth has since been added: the Village of Granisle.

delivery approaches than Better at Home programs to date. The focus for rural programs, as for all Better at Home programs, is supporting seniors to remain at home and connected to communities. How this will look in the Robson Valley is as yet undecided. The approach will be locally appropriate, community-based, and seniors focused. The Better at Home Provincial Office will provide resources and support.

1.4. Description of the local engagement approach

An initial stakeholder meeting was held in Valemount on 12th January 2015 to gauge local interest in participation in the project. The communities of Valemount, Dunster, and McBride were actively represented in the initial meeting and a subsequent meeting is planned for 14th January 2015. This report summarizes the initial stakeholder meeting and will be circulated to stakeholders to correct inaccuracies and offer additional input. Subsequent reports will document the ongoing process as the area continues to engage around Better at Home seniors supports and design a locally appropriate Better at Home approach to support seniors' independence and their ability to remain safely at home and connected to community.

An estimated 28 people attended the preliminary informational stakeholders' meeting on 12th January at the Valemount Seniors Citizens Housing Association (Golden Years Lodge).



Representatives came from Dunster, and McBride, as well as Valemount, indicating interest and capacity in participating in Better at Home throughout Robson Valley. Meeting participants included representatives from non-profit organizations, health associations, local government, seniors' organizations, the media, seniors eager to voice their opinions, as well as those with experience supporting aging parents and neighbours to live independently.

The meeting agenda was as follows:

1. Introductions (all)
2. Better at Home in general and the Pilot Project specifically (Debbie Sharp)
3. Assets (all)
4. Needs (all)
5. Local approach/next steps (Debbie Sharp)

The follow-up preliminary Working Group meeting was held on the Wednesday 14th January 2015, from 10am at the Valemount Seniors Citizens Housing Association (Golden Years Lodge). Approximately 21 people participated, with representatives from Valemount, McBride, Dunster, and Tête Jaune Cache. This group has since self-selected down to about 15 people who will make up the Working Group going forward. The overwhelming interest throughout the process so far is an encouraging indication of community commitment to supporting seniors' issues.

The January 14th agenda was as follows:

1. Review Better at Home program
2. Program responsibilities
3. Program rights
4. Your local approach
5. Working group homework
6. Next visit

The findings from the January 14th meeting are detailed later in the report.



2. Community Profile

2.1 Description of the communities in Robson Valley

As seen in Figure 1 on the next page, the Robson Valley is located in the north-east corner of the Interior region, bordering Alberta to the east. Valemount is 322km from Kamloops and McBride is 209km from Prince George. The drive between Valemount and McBride is 84km, with Dunster and Tête Jaune located inbetween. Dunster is 35km from McBride and Tête Jaune is 20km from Valemount, leaving a 40km drive between the two smaller communities in the middle.

2.2 Description of local seniors populations

Note: Statistics Canada has limited information on Robson Valley communities other than Valemount and McBride.

2.2.1 Village of Valemount

According to Statistics Canada's most recent census, there were 1,020 people living in the Village of Valemount in 2011. At that time, there were 160 people aged 65 and over (16% of the population). There were 240 people aged 60 and above (24% of the village), and 320 people aged 55 and above (31% of the population).²

2.2.2 Village of McBride

According to Statistics Canada's most recent census, there were 586 people living in the Village of McBride in 2011. At that time, there were 95 people aged 65 and over (16% of the population). There were 135 people aged 60 and above (23% of the village), and 200 people aged 55 and above (34% of the population).

2.2.3 Other communities

Statistics Canada has no information for Dunster or Tête Jaune Cache. Local information puts the Dunster population at around 350 people, and Tête Jaune at around 500 people. These are unconfirmed and do not include specifics on seniors' demographics. Similarly, there is no statistical information for Dome Creek, Crescent Spur, Albreida, or Mount Robson. The Working Group and eventual implementing group for the local Better at Home program will decide the service boundaries of the program based on local seniors' needs and the program's capacity to serve seniors safely and effectively. This community information is intended purely for informational purposes.

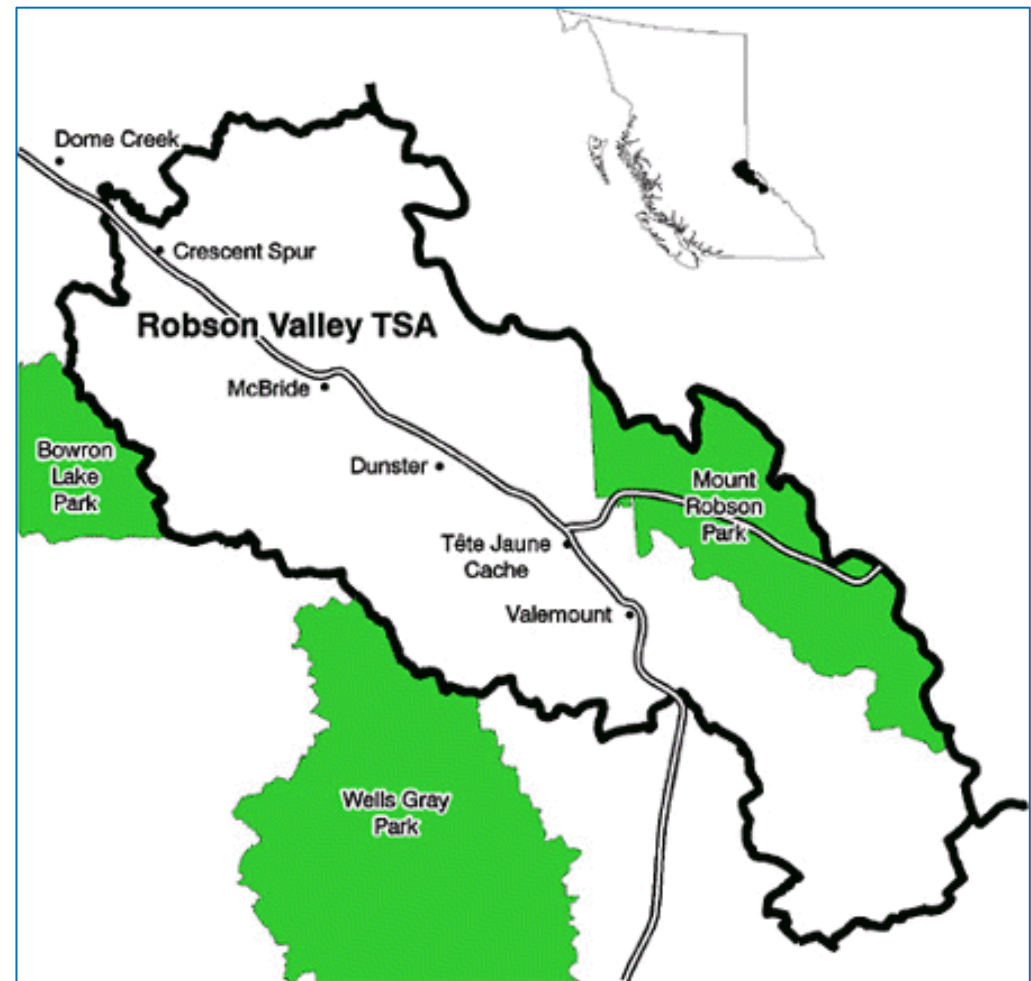
² Community members indicated that there have been significant demographic shifts within the Valley since 2011. The numbers should be considered only as a guideline regarding the population realities of 2015.

3. Summary of the Community Assets for Seniors

Figure 1: Location of Robson Valley



Figure 2: Overview of communities within Robson Valley



This is a rough first draft and there are still many gaps. There may also be inaccuracies, **for which I take full responsibility**. The Working Group will be using this as a basis for a summary of community assets moving forward. Please contact Debbie Sharp at debbies@betterathome.ca if you would like to support the Working Group or if you have other suggestions.

Community	Service available	Service details	Delivered by	Service type
Valemount	Housing		Valemount Seniors Housing Society	For-profit
Valemount	Recreation	Recreational opportunities, e.g. Seniors Music Night on Wednesdays at 7pm; functions, kitchen, socials, etc.	Golden Years Lodge	For-profit
Valemount	Recreation		Seniors Club	
Valemount (and the Valley?)	Meal support		Meals on Wheels	Non-profit
Valemount and McBride	Handyman service for seniors and people with disabilities	Handyman helps with yard maintenance, snow removal, chimney cleaning, annual chores (e.g. washing outside windows), and minor home repairs. This service is provided for a nominal fee of \$5 per hour.	Robson Valley Support Society	Non-profit
Valemount	Snow shovelling and lawn mowing		High school	Public sector
Valemount	Housekeeping		Local providers	Private
Valemount	Support for veterans	Veterans' Independence Program Valemountlegion266@gmail.com 250-566-4343	The Legion	Non-profit
Valemount	Transportation	Community bus		

McBride & Valemount & Dunster	Transportation		Via Rail	Private
Valemount	Transportation	Taxi service 250-566-8294 www.valemounttaxi.com	Valemount Taxi	Private
Valemount	Transportation	<u>Jasper→Edmonton Route:</u> Valemount 12:45am and 3:50am daily <u>Kamloops→Vancouver route:</u> Valemount 2am daily <u>McBride→Prince George route:</u> Valemount 5am daily	Greyhound	Private
Valemount	Entertainment and transportation	Rides for seniors provided to and from the High School Arts and Culture Society	High school	Public sector
Valemount (others?)	Hairdressing	Hairdressers come into homes	Local hairdressers	Private
Valemount	Connections/events	Depends on the specific service club	Lions, the Legion, etc.	Non-profit
Valemount	Exercise	Exercise program—details needed		Private
Valemount	Exercise	Fitness Centre (seniors' discounts)	Canoe Valley Recreation Centre	Private
Valemount	Exercise	Big Foot Trail Walk around the World—1 mile loop trail	Public	Public
Valemount	Health support	Community gardens		
Valemount	Food support	Food Bank: Every second Wednesday 10am-1pm, behind the curling rink	Valemount Food Bank	Non-profit
Valemount	Internet access and other information/services	Library (Tuesday-Saturday) Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9am-5pm Wednesday: 9pm-9pm Saturday 11am-3pm	Valemount library	Public sector
Valemount	Computer help	Wednesday 4pm-5pm Friday 10-11am, 1-2pm	Valemount library	Public sector

Valemount	Community connection	Churches: Anglican United Church Christian Science Services Good Shepherd Roman Catholic Church Valemount New Life Centre Valley Christian Fellowship Valemount Community Church	Various churches (see left)	Non-profit
Valemount	Snow removal equipment subsidies		Local businesses	Private
Valemount	Pet support	Dog grooming and veterinary support	Various	Private
Valemount	Health support	Massage	Various	Private
Valemount and McBride	Transportation to medical appointments	Northern Connections bus	Northern Health	Public sector
Valemount	Medical support	Three doctors in community Contact: 566-9138 Doctor extension: 231	Health Centre/Clinic	Public sector
Valemount	Medical support for women	Northern Health	WellWoman's clinic	Public sector
Valemount (others?)	Medical support	Northern Health	Mammogram bus at regular intervals	Public sector
Valemount	Medical support	Eye specialist	Regular intervals	
Valemount	Medical support	Dentist	Regular intervals	
Valemount	Medical support	Pharmacy	In town	Private
Valemount	Foot care in the home		Clinic	
The Valley	Home care		Northern Health	Public sector
McBride			Robson Health Association	Non-profit
McBride	Medical support	Hospital	Northern Health	Public sector

McBride	Details	Details	Old Age Pension Organization (OAPO)	Non-profit
McBride	Exercise	OAPO and the Recreation Centre have an agreement whereby OAPO members may use the Rec Centre for free	OAPO and Rec Centre	
Dunster	Transportation	School buses are used to transport seniors to and from events		

Other community strengths, assets, and capacities were mentioned that were not service-specific. These include:

- Volunteer base: while many volunteers wear multiple hats and are very committed already, the general consensus was that the attitude and commitment of volunteers in the Valley is a true asset. In many cases, if volunteers become need to take a break or are away from community, other volunteers step in to provide continuous community support.
- Positive community attitudes: community support of and commitment to seniors and other issues were considered an asset
- Valemount Emergency Planning Committee: this asset could be leveraged towards seniors-related considerations
- Valemount TV: a local asset that could be used to promote seniors programming and services
- Local government partnerships: support of and partnership with local government was noted as an important asset
- Support from and by the Health Authorities (Northern Health and Interior Health Authority)
- Robson Valley Support Service (previously called Home Care/Home Support): the existence of this organization in the Valley was considered an important community asset
- Involvement as part of the Columbia Basin Trust Area was considered an asset for the Valley, if only directly for the communities within the CBT area (up to Swift Creek border)
- Family involvement and support for seniors
- Informal supports and networks
- The gutsy, independent attitude and resourcefulness of seniors' themselves

4. Summary of Seniors Needs (according to stakeholders present)

Stakeholders present at the January 12th meeting in Valemount BC were asked, to the best of their knowledge, to list seniors' non-medical home support needs. There were some seniors present and people representing the interests of their elderly parents living independently at home in the community. However, a widespread survey of seniors' needs was not conducted. This may take place at a later stage.

Following the general brainstorming session on seniors' non-medical support needs, the group prioritized the top three needs as (in no particular order):

- Communication / information coordination
- Community connections / socialization / friendly visiting
- Transportation

Seniors' needs as listed by the stakeholders present are shown in the table on the next page. They are roughly prioritized in order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

Other, more medical needs were mentioned. While Better at Home is not able to assist with medical supports, it is important to recognize medical-related needs as they affect the ability of the community to support seniors in general. These needs included:

- supporting seniors' mental health, medical, visual, and dental needs: e.g. working with the local clinic to bring specialists to town

Another issue mentioned was the lack of information on isolated, vulnerable seniors. This connects back to lack of information in general and the potential need for a coordination of information on services and community members.

Similarly, it was recognized that many people find it difficult to ask for help. Better at Home and related service delivery systems need to take this into consideration.

NOTE: A Valemount Community Workshop conducted in September 2014 by Columbia Basin Trust's Our Trust, Our Future initiative found that there were two key needs for seniors' services:

- Home care services for seniors so they can stay in their homes
- Diversity of affordable housing options for seniors

While affordable housing is outside of the mandate of Better at Home, the support of non-medical home care services is central to the aims and experience of the program.

Overview of seniors' non-medical needs in the Valley (as listed by stakeholders)

Socialisation/friendly visits (particularly targeting seniors that are not currently connected)	Alternate mobility (e.g. golf carts in summer)	Neighbourhood Watch to check in on seniors living alone
Telephone check-in/ telephone tree system/seniors daily check-in system	Cleaning (vacuuming, windows, floors, etc.) General home maintenance	Creative ways to support income (e.g. connect renters with seniors who have larger homes— supports income and companionship safely)
Group social activities— functions, including dinners	Home accessibility and safety (e.g. ramps, shower/bath grab bars, fire/smoke alarm checks)	Health education / elder abuse awareness
Adopt-a-senior/grandparent (connect seniors to someone in the area)	Meal support	Information on dementia (e.g. Dementia-Friendly Communities)
Inter-generational services: e.g. linking school children and seniors for reading, etc.	Proper nutrition— connected to friendly visiting or group socialisation?	Filling service gaps (making services available in a balanced way in the Valley)
Information dissemination	Support for heat for homes	Bring seniors from different Valley communities together
Coordination of information and services for seniors	Wood purchase, chopping, delivery, and assistance to bring it into the home	Stair-assists
Improve coordination and implementation of existing services	Pet support/pet walking	Volunteer education
Transportation to appointments	Pet therapy (for seniors without pets)	Support for volunteers (to avoid burnout)
Bus trips for out-of-town shopping (e.g. Hinton)	Snow removal at facilities to accommodate access	Handicapped parking spots
Transportation connecting people to other transport systems (e.g. McBride train)	Interests/activities that stimulate the mind (including meaningful recreation and/or physical activities)	Intermediate care housing (assisted living)
Day out tours	Grocery shopping assistance	Seniors' day care

5. Community Readiness

Based on long-distance interactions with community members in the Robson Valley, and a very active stakeholder meeting on January 12th 2015, a very high level of interest was noted during stakeholder engagement.

6. Potential Risks

As with any small community, the volunteer base is small and tends to be the same people repeatedly donating time and energy to community initiatives. Any Better at Home approach designed for the Robson Valley should keep volunteer capacity in mind in order not to overly rely on this group of people who are already over-extended in many ways. A mix of different volunteers, contractors, and paid staff may be a solution to avoiding overly burdening the volunteers. This issue should be examined by the Working Group.

There is a risk that Better at Home weakens and/or damages existing seniors supports already in place in community. It is vital that the Working Group design a program that does not encroach upon existing seniors support initiatives that are working successfully in local communities.

7. Local Better at Home Pilot Program Approach and Details

A Working Group will be formed out of the initial stakeholder group. Local community strengths and assets will be examined alongside seniors non-medical support needs. Based on this, a Better at Home approach will be designed to enhance local capacities and collaboration in order to provide seniors non-medical supports in a locally appropriate way, with an eye towards long-term feasibility.

7.1. Initial Ideas

A tentative working group met on Wednesday 14th January in Valemount to start to consider a Better at Home program approach for the valley (including communities such as Valemount, McBride, Dunster, Tête Jaune Cache, and others).

As can be seen from the flip chart images on the next page, the basic elements of Better at Home in a rural pilot context were discussed. Similarly, general program rights and responsibilities were also discussed. The flipchart images are captured here as a guide to the key points of the stakeholder conversation.

BAH STAKEHOLDER MTG. JANUARY 14TH, 10AM

1. REVIEW BETTER AT HOME
2. PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES
3. PROGRAM RIGHTS
4. YOUR LOCAL APPROACH
5. WORKING GROUP HOMEWORK
6. MY NEXT VISIT

REVIEWING BETTER AT HOME

SENIORS NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT

- AIM support seniors to be
- independent
 - at home
 - connected to community

KEY:

- fees → sliding scale
- local advisory group/oversight
- volunteers must have CRC

PREFERENCE: one program

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- support seniors
- fulfill grant agreement requirements
 - annual application for funding
 - Δ what you plan to do
 - Δ where Δ when (workplan)
 - Δ budget (12-months; quarterly)
 - data collection & reporting
 - Δ quarterly numbers
 - Δ quarterly phone check-in
 - Δ 9-month report
 - narrative + 9-month budget
 - Δ actual spending after 12 months
- pilot program M+E (focus groups after +/- 1 year)

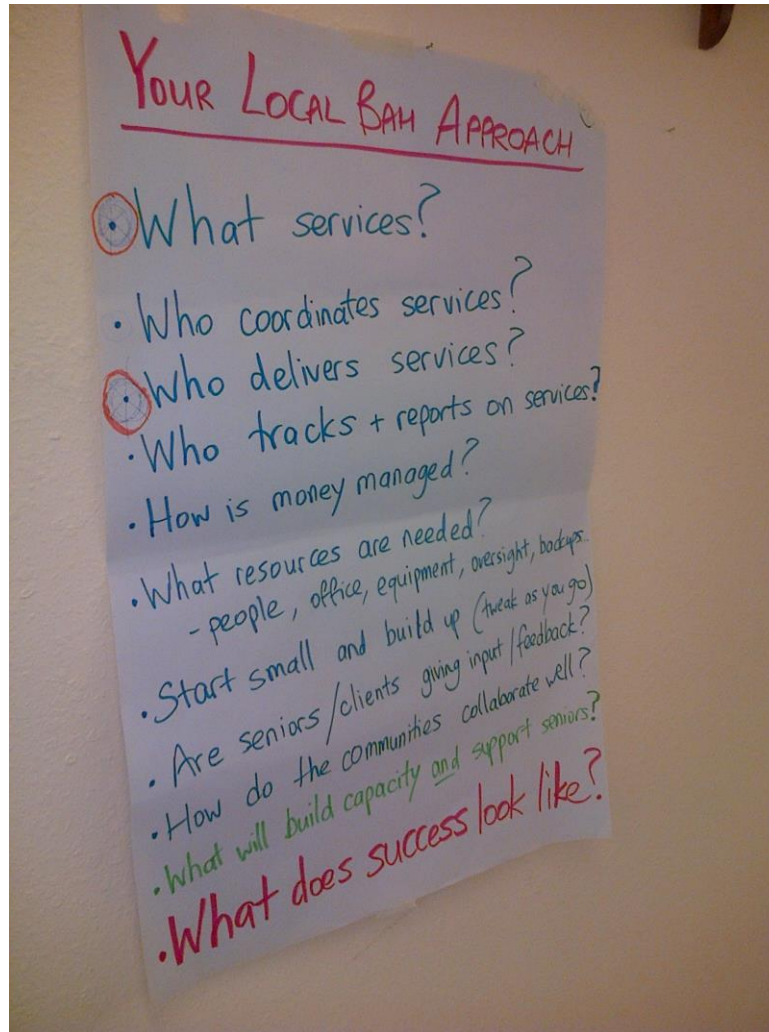
NOTE: Talk about **SUPPORT** needed for all this

PROGRAM RIGHTS

- support + guidance from Prov. Office
- connections to + support from other rural pilot programs
- connections to + support from Better at Home programs across B.C.
 - small programs
 - northern / isolated programs
 - regional / geographically spread out
- it is your RIGHT to ask questions
- it is your RIGHT to be supported
- it is in EVERYONE'S INTERESTS that this succeeds!

7.2. Preliminary discussions about the local program approach

The group was then split into three groups to discuss a number of key questions regarding what the local Better at Home pilot program could look like. These were preliminary conversations aimed at spurring creativity and collaboration and in no way represent the final model.



7.2.1 What services could be offered?

For the most part groups focused on the three priority services identified in the earlier January 12th meeting. These services were:

- Communication / information coordination
- Community connections / socialization / friendly visiting
- Transportation

7.2.2 How could these services be delivered?

Ideas around information:

- Find out who is already doing what and then create a central information locus
 - e.g. we could develop a handout that lists the activities and times and places, and availability of events. Then we could canvas door to door. We could split the town up and everyone connect in that area; even using personal connections. We could find out what people think they need by way of a survey, which is then easy to catalogue in a week
 - this would link information gathering, information sharing, and friendly visiting together
- It is important not to duplicate services—better to identify what we already have and work from there
 - once we know what we have and what people want, we could build on supplemental ideas (e.g. musical activities, a sing-a-long, etc.)
- Some groups thought it was important to have a coordinator for the information; they also encouraged each area to have a coordinator and for each to work together
 - this Coordinator in each area would be the ‘Hub’ in each place and could meet with different people
- Networking is important—door to door canvassing—bulletin up first—plan your activities, including services such as:
 - Snow removal
 - transportation to the mail or groceries
- It is important for seniors to have information and independence so they are ‘calling the shots’
- One group thought it would be important for seniors to have a ‘drop-in place’ and eventually, even, an active and involved seniors’ club.

There were various ideas for sharing information, including:

- using the telephone (telephone tree or check-in system)
- personal letters in mailboxes
- community information/bulletin board in one place (e.g. clinic or post office)
 - e.g. posters
- emailing people in community that have accounts
- creating a printed directory of services
- maintaining an online directory of services (easy to update quickly and cheaply)
 - this information database would list services available and act as a resource for people directly, and for Coordinators (and others) to help seniors
- coordinating with existing organizations (e.g. RVSS, OAPO, etc.)

Ideas for friendly visiting:

- Weekly events for friendly visiting
- Create a buddy system so people are responsible for each other (useful in emergencies as well)

Ideas around transportation:

- Helping seniors get in and around local centres to do grocery shopping, banking, other errands, attend other appointments, etc.
- Transporting seniors using the community bus
 - take seniors to Hinton and Jasper³
 - field trips out of town, e.g. to enjoy nature and interact with others
- Volunteer drivers may be an option but may be difficult

7.2.3 Who should be delivering services?

This will depend on the availability of volunteers, contractors, and staff in town. Groups discussed the option of a variety of volunteers, contractors, the coordinator, community heads, etc. participating in service delivery. In addition, some seniors that receive one service may be interested in actively helping to provide another (e.g. telephone check-ins). Conversations ensued around liability, insurance, equipment, etc., particularly regarding volunteer drivers and services such as snow shoveling.

7.2.4 What does success look like?

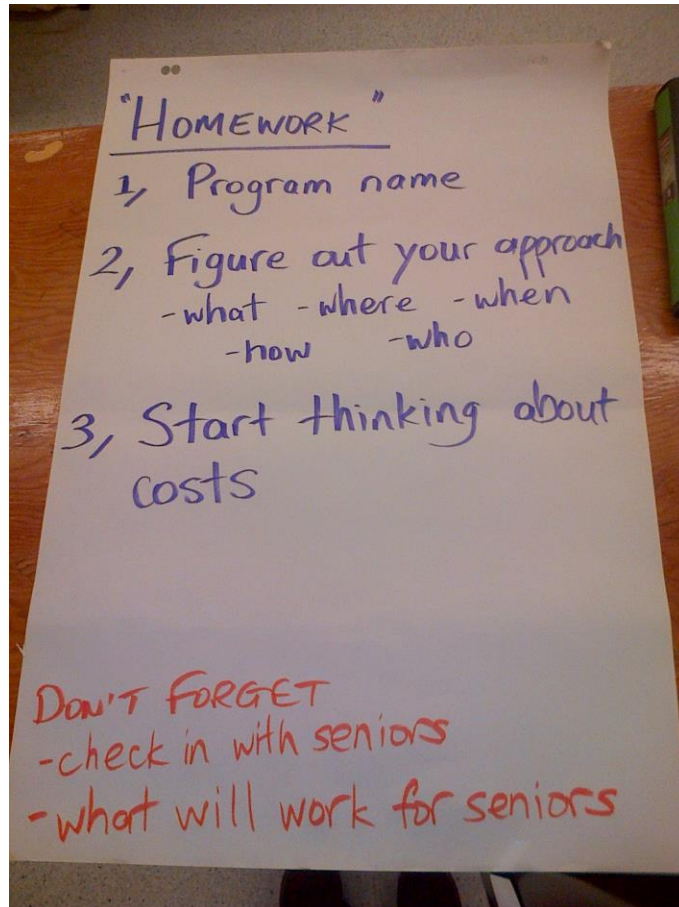
The groups debated the meaning of success and came up with a number of different ideas. These preliminary ideas are as follows:

- Success is that everyone in the Valley knows about Better at Home; gaps in services have been identified; and there is an increase in the use of existing services.
- Success is a sense of connectedness and a web of social interaction. Better at Home ensures there are more ways to interact.
- Success is a Hub that is functioning and doing what is was planned to do; we have seniors involvement and community involvement (young children, teachers, children, school children—this is a community-involved program—bringing in all generations). Success is a community that works together.

³ Long-distance transportation is a difficult and expensive service not suited to Better at Home.

7.3. Homework for the Working Group

The Working Group will be meeting over the coming weeks to discuss the program name and details of the local program approach in each area of the valley (what services, where, when, how, and by who). Once a rough approach has been designed, local costs and a budget should be created.



United Way's Better at Home Provincial Office (represented by Debbie Sharp) will be corresponding with and support the Working Group during the coming weeks. We will be meeting again in person on Tuesday 24th February, 2015.⁴

8. March 2015 Follow-up

The Working Group spent a great deal of time meeting across communities during January and February, discussing service delivery options, work plans and budget ideas for Robson Valley Better at Home. For these efforts and their enthusiasm, the group is to be commended.

⁴ Scheduling difficulties forced this meeting to be moved to March 3rd, 2015.

A March 3rd 2015 follow-up meeting in Valemout again brought the Working Group together to finalise ideas for the Robson Valley Better at Home program. Discussions about program planning included the following key points:

- Not all seniors ask for or need Better at Home services. Similarly not all clients need services all the time—for many Better at Home services represent a temporary measure or an occasional supplement to existing supports. Finally, only a portion of people needing services will require subsidies, so these ideas should be built into program and budget planning.
- Serving seniors 65+ (with the ability to make case-by-case exceptions in communities)⁵
- There is currently a seniors service directory in Valemout and McBride. This will be extended to include coverage of services in Dunster and Tête Jaune. Robson Better at Home will not duplicate the service by creating another directory. Instead, communication and information services will be provided differently.
- While there may be occasional long-distance trips between communities, Better at Home transportation will focus on local trips for seniors to do errands and attend appointments in and around their local centre.
- Robson Valley Better at Home will enhance and expand existing ‘handyman’ services operated by Robson Valley Support Society in Valemout and McBride. Existing funds subsidise the \$18/hour handyman rate, allowing RVSS to charge the service out to seniors for \$5/hour. Within the Better at Home model, this \$5 will be on a sliding scale to ensure that low-income seniors do not have financial barriers to service access.

The Working Group also discussed the question of how to make Robson Valley Better at Home a stable and sustainable program in the long-term. The group suggested the following elements are key:

- Program to support the volunteers
 - Know what volunteers are being asked to do
 - Create a strong volunteer support program
 - Have a skilled Volunteer Coordinator
 - Appropriate volunteer screening
 - Volunteers should feel confident and cared for

⁵ The Better at Home Provincial Office does not define ‘senior’. Local programs define the criteria for senior in their local context (in some communities it is 65 years of age and above, in others it is lower). The [Better at Home annual report](#) (March 2014) notes that Better at Home service users tend to be: women, living alone, between the ages of 75 and 84.

- Instill a sense of responsibility and boundaries in volunteers
- Appropriate backups for the service need to be in place; if people start to rely on the service, it needs to continue to be available
- Strong Program Coordinator
- Internal capacity needs to be built:
 - empowerment of the clients
 - support of the volunteers
 - teaching and guiding all involved
- Continue to keep the information and outreach going and successful
- Develop relationships with other agencies and businesses; community connections and broad ownership improves sustainability
- Ensure that Better at Home is one part of a multi-pronged support service; clients should be surrounded web of support

9. References

Columbia Basin Trust, *Our Trust, Our Future—Community Workshop Summary*, Valemount, September 2014.

Valemount Community Profile, September 2010.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous response from the communities of Valemount, McBride, and Dunster to the Better at Home Rural and Remote Pilot Project in their area. Thanks go to the Valemount Seniors Housing Association for the use of their space for meetings and to Meals on Wheels for catering superb sustenance during stakeholder meetings.

My thanks in particular go to local seniors advocate Marion Farquharson for all the work she did to bring community members together in support of seniors' issues, and in tirelessly answering my questions.

These are initial steps towards creating and sustaining locally appropriate, long-term supports for seniors in Robson Valley. The Better at Home Provincial Office looks forward to working with the Valley to support seniors moving forward.

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