

**PLANNING SENIOR-FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOODS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
JAMES BAY AND FERNWOOD, VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an analysis of the senior-friendliness of the neighbourhoods of James Bay and Fernwood in Victoria, British Columbia. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the senior-friendliness of the James Bay and Fernwood neighbourhoods in order to understand what aspects of these neighbourhoods are senior-friendly and what aspects require improvement. This study on senior-friendly neighbourhoods is relevant to the planning field because of the demographic shift that Canada is currently undergoing as the number of Canadians reaching 65 years of age increases. As a result, seniors will account for a greater proportion of the Canadian population.

Research Method

This Master's report uses a comparative case study approach to evaluate the neighbourhoods of James Bay and Fernwood for senior-friendliness. This is accomplished by utilizing evaluation criteria that cover various areas of seniors' lives. The evaluation criteria used to measure senior-friendliness were developed using established criteria published by Hodge (2008), Kihl, Brennan, Gabhawala, List & Mittal (2005), and the World Health Organization (2007). Based on these criteria and with reference to the literature, the researcher developed evaluation criteria to reflect the key characteristics that make a neighbourhood senior-friendly. The 35 evaluation criteria were organized into six categories. The categories are housing, shopping, pedestrian environment, public transportation, health and community services, and recreation and culture.

Results

The findings and analysis concluded that James Bay is more senior-friendly than Fernwood. James Bay responded significantly better to the housing, shopping, pedestrian environment, and health and community services categories. Meanwhile, in the public transportation category and the recreation and culture category James Bay and Fernwood performed similarly. The results are summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Neighbourhood Score By Category

Category	James Bay	Fernwood
Housing	18	14
Shopping	10	6
Pedestrian Environment	13	9
Public Transportation	8	7
Health and Community Services	8	2
Recreation and Culture	8	8
Total score out of 70	65	46

Conclusions

Creating senior-friendly neighbourhoods should be an important consideration for all Canadian communities. Because of the trend to promote aging in place, the development of senior-friendly communities will benefit the Canadian population. Therefore, it is important that planners work with various professionals and agencies as well as community associations and businesses to create communities that facilitate senior-friendly living.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and analysis, the following recommendations are made for each neighbourhood. The recommendations are separated by neighbourhood as well as responsible agency and consist of short-term, medium-term and long-term recommendations.

James Bay

- **Conduct a pedestrian walkability survey (short term)**
 - Responsible agency: James Bay Neighbourhood Association
- **Install bus stop shelters and benches (medium term)**
 - Responsible agency: BC Transit
- **Consider locating a library branch in James Bay (long term)**
 - Responsible agency: City of Victoria
- **Conduct an accessibility survey (medium term)**
 - Responsible agency: James Bay Neighbourhood Association

Fernwood

- **Conduct a needs assessment for seniors' housing (short term)**
 - Responsible agencies: Fernwood Community Association, City of Victoria and Vancouver Island Health Authority
- **Encourage a bank to open a branch (long term)**
 - Responsible agency: Fernwood Community Association
- **Conduct a pedestrian walkability survey (short term)**
 - Responsible agency: Fernwood Community Association
- **Install bus stop shelters and benches and improve bus stop lighting (medium term)**
 - Responsible agencies: BC Transit and City of Victoria
- **Conduct a needs assessment for a seniors' centre (short term)**
 - Responsible agencies: Fernwood Community Association and City of Victoria
- **Consider opening a library branch in Fernwood (long term)**
 - Responsible agency: City of Victoria
- **Conduct an accessibility survey (medium term)**
 - Responsible agency: Fernwood Community Association