

2023-2025 Community Connections Action Plan

Prepared by
Stewart Community Connections Society



Angela Brand Danuser, Executive Director, Community Connections
Dolores Kennedy, President, Community Connections
Marg Schuett, Vice President, Community Connections
Jane Beaumont, Registered Nurse, Stewart Health Centre
Jocelynn Drew, Treasurer, Community Connections & Principal, Bear Valley School
Lynnda Rygaard, Director, Community Connections
Judy Elson, Citizen

Contents

Accountability and Evaluation of Progress 3

Community Assets 3

Partnerships 5

Work Plan (2023-2025) 5

 Neighbourhood Design 6

 Transportation..... 6

 Natural Environment 7

 Food Systems 7

 Service Environments 8

 Local Economy 9

 Civic Engagement..... 10

 Recreation..... 10

 Arts & Culture..... 11

References 13

Appendices 13

 Appendix A: Engagement Process 13

 Appendix B: Summary of Stewart Community Connections Accomplishments 14

Abbreviations

Community Connections	Stewart Community Connections Society
LIFT	Local Food Infrastructure Fund, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Community Connections was a successful grant applicant in 2022.
NH	Northern Health

Introduction

Stewart Community Connections Society (Community Connections) is a small local working group committed to community development and opportunity. Since 2012 Community Connections has played both leading and supporting roles to a wide range of community development initiatives, including identifying community needs, advocating for services, sourcing funding opportunities, sharing information, and coordinating new and existing programs.

With the support of Northern Health's (NH) Healthy Settings¹ team, Community Connections developed a 3-year Community Action Plan, which is a road map that describes what we want to accomplish, what activities are required, and what resources and partnerships are needed to be successful. The Community Action Plan was informed by citizens through various community engagement opportunities. These involved posters located in frequently visited areas, two targeted focus groups (i.e., caregivers/parents of young children and older adults), a World Café discussion with Community Connections Committee members, and an online survey with business and industry partners.

The goal of this process was to gather community input on what Community Connections should focus on during the next three years. Participants provided input on:

- What do you enjoy about living in Stewart?
- What makes Stewart a vibrant community?
- What are the challenges to living in Stewart?
- What is working well?
- What is not working?
- Suggestions for improvement

¹ NH's Healthy Settings team supports local governments and community groups as they work to make their communities a healthier place to live, work, learn and play. The Northwest Healthy Settings Advisor supported the planning and facilitation processes.

The planning committee used the BC Centre for Disease Control [Healthy Social Environments Framework](#), a new evidence-based tool, that reflects the goals and scope of the Community Action Plan (BCCDC, 2022). These focus areas vary slightly from Game Changers, the framework used to design the 2020-2022 Community Action Plan.

The planning committee carried forward pertinent, uncompleted priorities from the 2020-2022 Community Action Plan, that were stalled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accountability and Evaluation of Progress

Community Connections makes the following commitment to staying accountable to this plan. We will:

1. Assign a lead to each action in the plan.
2. Review the plan progress at each meeting.
3. Create annual updates and a final report on the 2023-2025 Community Action Plan.

This plan is conditional on grant funding and responsive to community needs, and so there is a possibility that it will be revised over its 3-year term. Revisions will be captured through the annual updates and the final report.

Community Assets

The planning process took an asset and strengths-based approach. This means we focused on what is working, what connections can be leveraged, and what talents the team can build upon. Asset based community development “looks for and starts from people’s gifts and strengths (assets). These assets equip people to create local opportunities and respond to needs and challenges in their neighbourhoods” (Tamarack Institute, n.d.).

During the community engagement phase, community members were asked, “What do you enjoy about living in Stewart,” and “What makes Stewart a vibrant community.” These questions helped inform the following list of community assets.

Healthy Social Environments Framework Features	Assets
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Stewart services (e.g., snow removal, lighting)
Natural Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ocean, wildlife, scenery • Trails • Wildlife safety education • Green space and parks for children
Food Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Bank • Food and food skills programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Meal Program ○ School food program (i.e., Backpack Buddies) and cooking classes ○ Library food events ○ Community garden
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some land available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential for new apartments and new buildings • Homeowner assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lawn maintenance program
Service Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accessible and high-quality services and staff
Local Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample job opportunities in various sectors (e.g., industry, local businesses, service industry, etc.)
Civic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community connectedness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Friendly people that support each other • Volunteer activities
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities: arena, Golden Triangle Gym • Programs and activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soccer camp ○ Bike Park ○ Badminton games ○ Junior Army Rangers ○ Seniors exercise classes ○ Library loan cupboard program
Arts & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wine and paint night ○ Festivals ○ Museum ○ Library ○ Youth initiatives

Partnerships

To expand on the list of assets, Community Connections has numerous partnerships in the community.

- Bear Valley School
- Bear Valley School Parent Advisory Committee
- Border Town Residents Society
- District of Stewart
- Hyder Community Association
- Local Business Owners and Industry
- Mountain Madness Bike Park
- Northern Health (Stewart Health Centre)
- RCMP; BC Ambulance; Fire; Border Services
- Sporting Clubs: Minor Hockey; Curling (Canal Rock and Broom; Old Timers Hockey; Mount Raine Figure Skating
- Stewart Museum (Historical Society)
- Stewart Public Library

Work Plan (2023-2025)

Based on our community consultations, Community Connections has identified the following actions for the 2023-2025 timeframe for each of the 10 priority areas:

- Neighbourhood Design
- Transportation
- Natural Environments
- Food Systems
- Housing
- Service environments
- Local Economy
- Civic Engagement
- Recreation
- Arts & Culture

These action items build on existing community assets and connections, the 2020-2022 Community Action Plan, and address current gaps and needs identified by community members. These actions also reflect scope and capacity.

Neighbourhood Design

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Well maintained, inviting, and safe community spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the District of Stewart, twice a year, to promote neighbourhood clean up. Clean the Townsite Park areas. 		
Community leadership and stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support volunteer group to update the bike park. Apply for Mountain Madness motocross grant. Support frisbee golf and trail system. 		
Supportive land use guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to the District of Stewart for temporary washroom area near ballpark during events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for permanent washroom structure near District Ball Field. 	

Transportation

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
District of Stewart Transportation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the District of Stewart with implementing aspects of the Transportation Plan. 		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for vehicle traffic calming measures (e.g., speedbumps, crosswalks, etc.), especially near Ian McLeod Park and school zone. Explore grant opportunities. 	
Event transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate connections for community members, particularly older adults, in need of rides. 		
Snow removal assistance using a health equity ² lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore feasibility of a Snow Angels volunteer program for older adults or people with limited capacity. Explore collaboration with Bear Valley School and Stewart Health Centre. Explore snow removal policies/program with the District of Stewart. 		

² Healthy equity means everyone has a fair opportunity to meet their health potential. Health equity strives for the highest possible standard of health for all people and gives attention to those at greatest risk of poor health, based on social conditions. Source: [Health Equity \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca/health-equity)

Natural Environment

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Safe and quality natural spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate to the District of Stewart to increase snow plowing frequency in the Ian McLeod Park area and boardwalk. Support District of Stewart with Canadian Boat Launch. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for grants to create plaques that showcase Indigenous plants along trails. Promote this initiative as a tourism attraction. Work with the District of Stewart to fund and support trail repairs and expansion. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with District of Stewart and volunteers to improve nature trail accessibility and boardwalk for year-round use. 		

Food Systems

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Community gardening and composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, with the District of Stewart, a community compost system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a community compost system, in coordination with LIFT grant. Coordinate, with Bear Aware Educator, bear safe gardening education sessions. 	
Community food gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate community potlucks, particularly during public ice events. 		
Community food programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate food share programs/bulk buying programs. Coordinate special event food delivery program. Coordinate, with Bear Valley School, food literacy programs (e.g., Backpack Buddies, Fresh Fruit Program, canning, food preservation, harvesting, etc.). Create and maintain a calendar of events and volunteer opportunities. Continue to support the Back-Pack Buddies program and support the Parent Advisory Council with grant opportunities, as needed. Support the Stewart Food Bank in their initiatives, and with banking administration. Continue with SCCS meal program, expand as required. Explore in person gatherings. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate a food literacy program in collaboration with the Stewart Public Library and Bear Valley School.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore indoor food growing opportunities (e.g., garden towers).

Housing

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Housing needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the outcome of the needs assessment and housing plan. 		
Community action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the formation of a housing committee to discuss safe, stable, affordable housing supply opportunities. Support persons living in poverty, with disabilities and on fixed government incomes to remain in their homes in Stewart by: offering home support through Connections Care, yard maintenance summer program and by connecting people with the right service at the right time. Explore options for seniors to age at home through Connections Care and the possibility of assisted living housing units. 		
Community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate, with RCMP, ability to provide emergency housing. Continue collaboration with Stewart Public Library to provide information on grants and government assistance programs. Create, maintain, and distribute a welcome package, with list of community services and housing supports. 		

Service Environments

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer therapeutic room with (i.e., sun lamp). Promote specialists that visit Stewart Health Centre on the Community Connections website and social media. Work with the District of Stewart to update the Age Friendly Assessment Plan from 2011. 		
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for assisted living services.
Home support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Connections Care program (new home support worker program), in partnership with Northern Health. 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for grants to expand Connections Care program. Request community feedback to guide next steps. • Coordinate training opportunities, with Northern Health, for home support workers. • Explore a Meals on Wheels program, in partnership with Northern Health.
Youth and childcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding, partners (e.g., Department of Education), and structure for preschool programming and facility. • Support training for parent childcare facilitators. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss, with school and health unit, the need for teen sexual education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support “Youth Zone” (i.e., youth well-being and mental health initiative) with letters of support, communications, etc. Partner with the health centre and library.
Community support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create, maintain, and distribute a welcome package, with online list of community services and supports. • Advertise the arena as a space for health-related gatherings. • Explore other building locations for to expand the Connections Centre. 	

Local Economy

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Poverty reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the District of Stewart with a poverty reduction grant application. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advertise the income tax program for the Stewart Public Library. • Offer food literacy classes – with the opportunity of learning to prepare a meal and then taking home the ingredients to cook at home with their families. • Offer home lawn maintenance for seniors on government fixed incomes. • Offer meals through the Community Meal Program. • Support the Stewart Food Bank in their food box deliveries. 		

Local goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the Stewart Public Library sport loan program on Community Connections website and social media.
--------------------------	--

Civic Engagement

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Volunteering and community organizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and implement a plan for volunteering opportunities (e.g., trail committee, Snow Angels program, etc.). • Advertise volunteer opportunities on Community Connections website, social media, and at festivals and events. • Organize a volunteer appreciation program, in conjunction with community events. 		
Citizen engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement plan to reassess community priorities through inclusive and accessible citizen engagement processes. • Share yearly update with community members. • Develop and launch a citizen engagement survey prior to Community Connections Annual General Meetings. • Support the Museum in their Earth Month community clean up. 		

Recreation

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Fitness centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the Golden Triangle Gym on Community Connections website and welcome packages. 		
Winter activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate to the District of Stewart to develop a space for children during events (e.g., curling and hockey). • Advocate to the District of Stewart to re-develop the ski hill and explore partnerships to support this development. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer more indoor activities for all ages during winter months (e.g., Winterfest, ladies' gala, bingo, etc.). • Organize community volunteers to support these initiatives. 						
Summer Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for year-round use of the Al Lawrence Arena. • Search for grants to purchase summer use equipment i.e. free-standing basketball hoops, lacrosse equipment, badminton etc. • Support summer youth camps like the previous soccer camps. • Work with the District of Steward and Library to advertise use of the tennis/pickle ball courts, equipment loan for the back yard games, and sports equipment Library Loan Cupboard. • Advocate clean-up and refresh of the tennis courts, perhaps some brushing back of the area as a bear aware safety concern. 						
Adult recreation	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunity to offer adult exercise classes at the Golden Triangle Gym. </td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support a variety of recreation activities. </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunity to offer adult exercise classes at the Golden Triangle Gym. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support a variety of recreation activities. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunity to offer adult exercise classes at the Golden Triangle Gym. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support a variety of recreation activities. 							
Seniors' recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to offer year-round exercise classes at the Golden Triangle Gym. • Explore offering other recreation activities (e.g., lawn bowling, horseshoes, and pickle ball) in the summer months. 						
Youth recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to include the community Bike Rodeo, games, and activities for children and families during July 1-4 celebrations. • Explore, with District of Stewart, use of the Arena for recreation activities during the summer months. • Explore opportunity to provide swimming lessons at the lake. 						
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise all recreation opportunities on Community Connections website and social media. 						

Arts & Culture

Priorities	Year 1 Actions (2023)	Year 2 Actions (2024)	Year 3 Actions (2025)
Community events and celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore partnership with Nisga'a Nation for these events. • Continue with community social events such as: Children's Christmas and Halloween Parties, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate Indigenous culture and art exhibit/display for the July 1-4 celebrations and Community Days festivals. 	

	Remembrance Day Tea, etc.		
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise all arts and culture opportunities on Community Connections website and social media. Cross-promote advertising with the Stewart Museum. 		
Local art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore locations and opportunities for local artists to sell and display their art. 		

References

BC Centre for Disease Control. *Healthy Social Environments Framework: healthy people living in vibrant communities*. Vancouver, B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority, 2022. Retrieved from <http://bchealthycommunities.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/SE-Framework-Summary-V1-Dec2020.pdf>

Tamarack Institute. (n.d.). *Asset Based Community Development at a Glance*. Retrieved from <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/CDC%20ABCD%20resources/ABCD%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix A: Engagement Process

Phase 1: Posters

From August to September 2022 Community Connections gathered preliminary feedback from community members about what they enjoy about living in Stewart, what makes Stewart a vibrant community, and challenges to living in Stewart. The results of this feedback informed the development of the following engagement sessions. Posters and community handouts were displayed at a community event (Stewart Health Fair) and key meeting points (Stewart Public Library, Bear Valley School, District of Stewart, Information Centre, Community Connections building, and Stewart Historical Society).

Phase 2: Focus Groups

On September 20, 2022, Community Connections hosted two focus groups, at the arena, with key community partners to further explore areas of community interest and understand their lived and living experiences.

Attendance for the parent/caregiver focus group and older adult focus group was approximately 3 and 10, respectively. Participants were provided snacks and refreshments.

Phase 3: Survey

On September 23 to October 7, 2022, Community Connections advertised an online survey directly with business owners and industry partners to further understand their experiences and needs. Responses were anonymous; 1 respondent participated in the survey.

Phase 3: World Café

On September 20, 2022, the Healthy Settings Advisor facilitated a World Café discussion with 8 of the Community Connections Committee members.

Phase 4: Importance and Feasibility Prioritization Activity

On January 18, 2023, the Healthy Settings Advisor facilitated a prioritization activity with Community Connections Board members. This activity allowed for discussion about what ideas we wanted to prioritize, backlog, or move out of scope. Three members were present.

Phase 5: Council and Citizen Approval

In the Spring 2023, Community Connections presented the Community Action Plan at a Council meeting for feedback and approval. Community Connections invited members of the public to provide feedback to the draft plan by email or in person.

Appendix B: Summary of Stewart Community Connections Accomplishments

(2020-2022)

Food Security

- Created the Community Garden and Community Meals Program.
- Supported the Stewart Food Bank, Bear Valley School's breakfast cupboard and hot lunch program, and BC Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupons.

Income and Employment

- Supported a volunteer income tax and year-round income tax filing program with the Stewart Public Library.

Education

- Supported the Stewart Public Library to maintain a community tutoring program.

Health

- Assisted the Stewart Health Centre with the annual Health Fair and provided an information table.
- Shared information about visiting specialists and mental health opportunities.

Recreation, Connection, Inclusion & Support

- Opened the Golden Triangle Gym and supported seniors' exercise classes.