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March 2026

Our Healthy Communities team works with Indigenous communities, municipalities, regional districts and other partners to create opportunities for all people to live well. Healthy built and natural environments, along with supportive social and economic circumstances, are the essential building blocks for health. Topics within the newsletter reflect this broad scope. Learn more about the [Healthy Communities team](#), find your [local team member](#) or visit our [website](#).



Community Recognition



Merritt Adopts Age-Friendly & Accessibility Plan

The City of Merritt has adopted its [Age-Friendly and Accessibility Plan](#), a practical three-year roadmap to enhance safety, accessibility and inclusivity for older adults, people with accessibility needs, and others who experience barriers in daily life. The Plan notes that significant floods and wildfires have impacted capital budgets, making targeted, smaller adjustments especially valuable, and is designed to guide both day-to-day decisions and longer-term planning.



Safety in Action: Ashcroft Indian Band's Road-Calming Efforts

Ashcroft Indian Band has shown strong leadership in promoting road safety by proactively advancing initiatives that support safer travel in their community. Their work includes installing detailed community maps at key entry points and co-leading traffic-calming measures, such as road chokers and high-visibility signage. [Check out this link](#) to learn more about the Ashcroft project and others from across the province.



Advancing Healthy Public Policy

New Resources Support Extreme Heat Work in Communities

As climate change intensifies, communities across British Columbia face heightened threats to health, the environment, infrastructure, and agriculture from extreme heat events. The Fraser Basin Council has released [two new resources to support communities working on extreme heat projects](#): the *Extreme Heat Mapping Project Guidance Framework* and *Extreme Heat Mapping Case Study Report*.



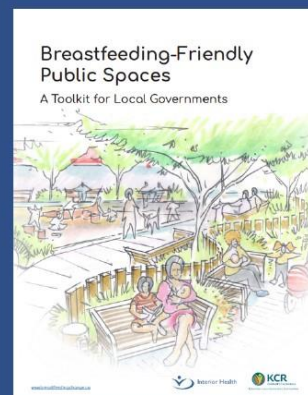
Extreme Heat Mapping Project Guidance Framework

JANUARY 2026



An assessment of breastfeeding locations in your community

Based on the [Breastfeeding-Friendly Public Spaces: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#)



Easy-to-Use Checklist Assesses Breastfeeding-Friendly Public Spaces

This [simple two-page checklist by Interior Health](#) can help local governments improve breastfeeding-friendliness in their facilities, at events, and within policies and procedures. It can be used on its own or paired with the more comprehensive [Breastfeeding-Friendly Public Spaces: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#).



Ageism Toolkit: Ageism Audit Checklist

What does ageism mean? Ageism means treating people unfairly because of their age. According to the World Health Organization, it includes stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) towards others based on their age. It can be in any direction – too young to understand, too old to understand! It can be directed to oneself, it manifests in our relations with others, and it is evident in our organizations, workplaces, communities, and in our society.

Why does it matter? It matters because ageism has been shown to:

- Impact our health, leading to poorer physical and mental health, reduced quality of life, and earlier deaths.
- Affect how older workers are treated, causing discrimination in hiring and promotions and pressures to retire.
- Lead to the exclusion of older persons from society, deepening isolation and inequality.
- Mistreatment of older persons (also often known as elder abuse) is a direct and devastating manifestation of societal ageism.

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Toolkit Helps Uproot Ageism in Communities

This [Ageism Toolkit](#), from the Canadian Coalition Against Ageism, can help communities spot and deal with ageism in daily life by supporting open discussion and encouraging positive change.



Events and Learning Opportunities



How Can Rural Communities Increase Rental Housing?

Rural communities are struggling to build rental and affordable housing due to high labour and material costs and lower rents. In this recorded webinar from the Cortes Housing Society, presenters explore approaches that experts and community champions are promoting to make rental housing development more viable in a rural setting.

[Watch Here](#)

How Did Salmon Arm Collaboratively Build an Anti-Racism Strategy?



In this recorded PlanH webinar, speakers from across the Shuswap region share how a multi-sector collaboration came together to develop a [community-wide anti-racism strategy](#) grounded in culturally informed engagement, lived experience, and respectful partnership with Indigenous communities.

[Watch Here](#)



Funding Opportunities

Deadline April 2026

Urban Forestry Plans & Studies | Green Municipal Fund

This [program](#) offers up to \$175,000 to strengthen planning, management and stewardship of your community's forests.

Due: April 15, 2026

FireSmart Community Funding and Supports | Union of BC Municipalities

This [program](#) offers grants to help BC local governments and First Nations strengthen wildfire resiliency through community-based FireSmart planning and activities. The program has now transitioned into the 2026 Winter/Spring Closed Intake. All applications for this Intake must be submitted by April 30, 2026. Applications will be evaluated based on merit and priority.

Due: April 30, 2026



How would you rate this issue of the Healthy Communities Newsletter?

lowest 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 highest



We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate and work together. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.



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