

# **EAST SOOKE NEEDS SURVEY REPORT**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The East Sooke Neighbourhoods Association would like to thank the people in our community who took the time to complete this survey. Without their thoughtful responses, we would not have been able to draw meaningful conclusions from the information that was gathered. A special thanks go to Dave at East Sooke Grocer and General Store, who never fails to say “yes” to a request to distribute information to the community.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the CRD Juan de Fuca Electoral Area which provided funding for our work through its Grant-in-Aid program. Our appreciation is also extended to Director Mike Hicks for his support and interest in the Association.

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

The East Sooke Neighbourhoods Association (ESNA) was incorporated in December 2013 under the Province of BC Society Act. After some initial work on its structure, purpose and by-laws and some changes to its membership, ESNA now consists of 5 volunteer Directors who work cooperatively to assess and respond to the needs and interests of East Sooke residents.

The three main objectives of ESNA are summarized below:

1. To promote positive neighbourhoods and community spirit in East Sooke by organizing and supporting relevant initiatives.
2. To help maintain and enhance East Sooke's unique character and the quality of life it affords to its residents.
3. To maintain a community website that provides information about community services that can be accessed by East Sooke residents, which has the potential to be expanded based on community need and interest.

ESNA is supported by a contribution from the Juan De Fuca Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid program. This contribution assisted ESNA to establish the East Sooke Services website ([eastsooke.ca](http://eastsooke.ca)) which provides information on health, volunteer, emergency and other services that can be accessed by local residents. The Grant-in-Aid funding also allowed ESNA to conduct a survey of East Sooke residents, which is the focus of this report.

It was clear to ESNA that a community association has a responsibility to establish its priorities based on the needs and interests of the community members themselves. It followed that one of the first tasks of ESNA should be to explore these needs and interests. The East Sooke Survey was designed to address the following 6 areas: (1) health and safety; (2) recreation and social programs; (3) education; (4) child care/children's programs; (5) youth programs; and (6) seniors' programs. In addition, open ended comments were solicited at the end of the survey.

The East Sooke Survey was mailed to all of the 636 households in East Sooke. Residents had the option of filling out and returning the paper version of the questionnaire or completing it on-line. Almost 20%, or 123, households returned their survey for a 19.3% response rate. Information about these respondents, and the survey results are presented below in Section 2.

## SECTION 2: RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

### Demographic Profile

Respondents were asked to involve as many people in their household as they wished in the process of completing the survey. Less than half (44.8%) of the respondents chose to involve other people. When asked to indicate who actually filled out the form, 56% of the households indicated that a female had assumed this responsibility, and 44% said it was a male.

Survey respondents were asked how long they lived in East Sooke. Almost half (46.4%) had lived in East Sooke for 16 or more years. However, 12% were relative newcomers who had lived in East Sooke from 0-3 years. The following Table provides information on how long respondents had lived in East Sooke.

Years in ES	Percent of Respondents
0-3	12
4-6	10.4
7-10	16.8
11-15	14.4
16-20	13.6
21 +	32.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of people (97.5%) owned their own homes and the remaining 2.5% were renting. Almost all of the people who filled out the questionnaire (98%) indicated that they lived in East Sooke year round. The average household had 2.2 people living in it. Information was made available on the ages of 203 of those people. Their age breakdown is as follows:

Age	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-54	55-60	61-65	66-70	71-75	76-80	81 +
#	7	2	13	8	6	47	38	28	17	22	9	6
%	3.4	.9	6.4	3.9	2.9	23.1	18.2	13.7	8.37	10.8	4.4	2.9

Of interest, 58.4% of the household members were in the 55 years and older age categories.

### Health and Safety

The survey identified 6 major areas of concern, and asked respondents about specific services or programs under each area. Respondents were asked to indicate if they had a high, moderate, slight or no need for each service or program. Respondents also had the option of indicating that they were “unsure”. Percentages were calculated for each specific service or program, providing a direct report on identified need. An average score was also calculated by assigning a value of 3 to “high need”, 2 to “moderate need”, 1 to “slight need” and 0 to “no need”. These values produced a rough hierarchy of need. Services and programs that received a score of 1.5 or higher are listed at the end of Section 2, addressing all 6 areas of concern.

In the area of Health and Safety, people believed there was a high need for improved road safety (61% of respondents) and an additional 18% thought there was a moderate need in this area. Almost two

thirds (66.6%) of the respondents indicated that there was a high or moderate need for people in East Sooke to have improved access to community-based health care services. Slightly more than half and (51%) of the respondents reported there was a high or moderate need for access to home-based health care services. Of the 63 households that rated “access to home-based health care services” as a moderate or high need, 52 had people living in the home who were 55 years of age or older.

Areas of high and moderate need are reported below:

Health and Safety	High Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)
Access to community-based health care	30	33.6
Access to home-based health care services	25	26
Improved emergency 911 services	18	19
Improved fire services	15	19
Improved road safety	61	18
Improved police services	15	23
Improved quality of, or access to drinking water	23	14

### Recreation and Social

Recreation and social needs were less likely to be identified as “high need” areas, as compared to areas falling under the Health and Safety theme. However, 50% of the respondents identified a high or moderate need for opportunities to socialize and get to know other community members, and 49% and 44% respectively reported high or moderate needs for access to local recreation programs for seniors and for adults. This was followed closely by the 42% who believed there was a high or moderate need for recreation programs for children and youth.

Areas of high and moderate needs are reported below:

Recreation and Social	High Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)
Access to local recreation programs for children and youth	24	18
Access to local recreation programs for adults	15	29
Access to local recreation programs for seniors	22	27
Opportunities to socialize and get to know other community members	22	28
Improved trails for walking/hiking	26	16

## Education

With the exception of local library services, for which 16% of the respondents felt there was a high need and an additional 26% felt there was a moderate need, there seemed relatively few needs in this area compared to the other areas. Areas of high and moderate need are reported below:

Education	High Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)
Community-based training programs	8	18
Local library services	16	26
Guest speakers on select topics	6	26

## Child Care/Children's Programs

Although less than 5% of the household represented in the survey had young children aged 0-10 years living in them and only 6.4% had children aged 11-15 years, there was a recognized need for child care and children's programs in East Sooke. Over one third (35%) of the households thought there was a high or moderate need for local after-school programs; 32% for park improvements for children; and 31% for local child care/day care programs. The breakdown in these areas is provided below:

Child Care/Children's Programs	High Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)
Local child care/day care	14	17
Local after-school programs	14	21
Park improvements	13	19

## Youth Programs

There is a perceived need for local youth employment programs: 25% of the respondents thought there was a high need in this area and 16% thought there was a moderate need. The percent of responses indicating high and moderate need for youth programs appear below. Again, these responses should be placed in the context of the relatively few youth living in the households that participated in the survey.

Youth Programs	High Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)
Youth drop-in after school	12	21
Youth drop-in evening program	11	19
Local youth employment programs	25	16
Park/outside space developments specifically for youth	11	19

## Seniors' Programs

Two specific service areas were perceived as relatively high areas of need by respondents. Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents thought there was a high or moderate need for a seniors' handyman and home repair program, and 54% thought there was a similar need for a seniors' home-based support program. In addition, 46% thought there was a need for seniors' activity and social programs in East Sooke. The breakdown of responses in the high and moderate need categories are as follows:

Seniors' Programs	High Need (%)	Moderate Need (%)
Activity or social programs	16	30
Luncheons	11	26
Meals on wheels	16	27
Home-based support programs	28	26
Handyman/home repair program	26	29

## Areas requiring the most improvement

Scores of 3, 2, 1, and 0 were assigned to the high, moderate, low and no need for improvement options, and average scores were calculated. Average scores over 1.5 were then highlighted, to show the areas in which people believed there was the most need for improvement. The following areas had average scores greater than 1.5:

Areas with Highest Average Scores	Score > 1.5
Improved road safety	2.4
Access to community-based health care services	1.8
Seniors' home-based support program	1.8
Seniors' handyman/home repair program	1.8
<b>Home-based health care services</b> <sup>1</sup>	1.6
Local recreation program for seniors	1.6
Local youth employment opportunities	1.6

<sup>1</sup> 82% of the respondents who contributed to this high score were 55+.

The above results provide direction for ESNA, local residents and organizations, Ministries and the CRD Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.

## Specific Suggestions and Ideas

The East Sooke residents who completed the survey had many suggestions and ideas about how to address problem areas, fill service gaps and improve their quality of life. These responses were analyzed and have been organized by area of focus.

1. Road Safety: 50 separate comments were made about road safety. Suggestions included repainting the yellow line separating the lanes, widening the road, leveling and improving the shoulders, filling pot holes, signage instructing people to slow down and to avoid crossing the line. In addition, people advocated for building safer walking and bike paths alongside of East Sooke Road, and building connecting trails to Gillespie Road. It is clear that road safety is the priority area for improvement, according to local residents, many of whom have thought about the issue and have their own ideas of how to address the problem.
2. Community Hall: 28 people identified the need for a meeting place where activities could take place, including child care, movie nights, arts and crafts, cards, yoga, shuffle board, gym (with instructors a few times a week), wellness counseling, health care, first aid courses, music nights, festivals, farmers market, potable water classes, and presentations. Many of these additional comments highlighted the need for the fire hall to be refurbished to become a community and social services centre.
3. Beach Access/Boat Launch: 13 comments requested more access to the shore line, including clearly marked access points with signage (e.g. end of Timberdoodle).
4. Improved Transit: 10 comments pertained to the improvement of the transit schedule to accommodate teenagers on weekends, and to take seniors to Sooke and Metchosin without having to transfer buses. Several requests for Handi-Dart were made by respondents.
5. Community Leadership: 9 respondents made comments about the need for a less fractured community, and an interest in building bridges between different factions. It was noted that there was a need for ESNA to work collaboratively with Seagirt Ponds Society and Friends of Coppermine Park Society. There were also concerns raised that East Sooke was under-represented politically, and was out of touch with other parts of the CRD and region as a result of current political arrangements.
6. Emergency Response Plan/Fire Service: Fire prevention courses, and a well-organized group with a plan that also identifies elders living alone, were identified as areas of need. It was noted that there needs to be better coordination of an emergency response plan with follow-up, and that a phone tree needs to be developed. People also suggested that St. John's ambulance training should be provided in East Sooke and that there should be communication about the proper burning of materials.
7. Police/Neighbourhood Watch: Police were asked to provide more traffic enforcement along East Sooke Road. Concern was also expressed about unsupervised vacation homes that were becoming party hangouts.
8. Water: Respondents asked for an extended CRD water system for the purposes of fire protection and home owner use. A request was made to position the Seagirt Water District under a more experienced authority who was capable of running a water utility.

### **SECTION 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Thanks to the time that was spent by people living in 123 East Sooke households, we have been able to identify areas where improvements are required. The top priority is for improved road safety, which not only generated a consistently high score, but which also prompted 50 respondents to make recommendations for change. Under the general heading of community safety, residents also advocated for fire prevention courses and a coordinated emergency response plan. Extending water to individual homes was seen by a few respondents as a way to increase fire safety. The safety of elders living alone was also identified as a concern.

Practical help for seniors, such as a handyman and home repair service, was viewed as a need as was access to home health and support programs. Recreation for seniors, regular seniors' lunches and access to meals-on-wheels were identified as a high or moderate need by many respondents.

Local youth employment opportunities were seen to be a significant area for improvement by many respondents, 41% of whom believed this was a high or moderate need. These are interesting results, in that there were relatively few youth living in the households that participated in the survey. It is possible that the people living in these households were aware of the concerns of other people living in the community, and took advantage of the opportunity to advocate for their needs. After-school programs for children and youth, day care services for children, and an evening drop-in program for youth were also identified as areas of need.

Although not asked directly on the survey, 28 respondents identified the importance of having a meeting place or community hall where activities could take place, highlighting the need for the fire hall to be refurbished and used by the community. The need for a community space can also be inferred in the expressed need for social and recreational activities for East Sooke residents of all ages.

It is our recommendation that the priorities that were identified through the survey be addressed by the community, so that the quality of life in East Sooke can be enhanced. ESNA plans to share the survey results with community members, the CRD and other stakeholders to initiate discussions aimed at sustainable improvements in many of these areas.