



Community-Driven Plan for Candle Lake Health and Wellness Initiatives

What We Heard Report

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Acknowledgements

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This report was prepared by the Candle Lake Health Services Committee in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT: FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

Reliable and accessible transportation, navigation, and in-home support services are essential to the well-being of any community—particularly for individuals who depend on these services for vital needs such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, and social engagement.

From March 23 to 25, 2025, approximately 60 residents of Candle Lake participated in 2-hour focused discussions on local health and wellness solutions. This report consolidates insights from three priority areas: **Transportation, Navigation, and In-Home & Community Supports**, each critical to improving health and wellness in Candle Lake.

To set the stage for meaningful dialogue, participants were first presented with key findings from the Community Resources and Needs Survey. The discussions then moved to identifying priority goals and exploring potential “**simple small-town solutions**” to address them. The consultations focused on three core themes: **Transportation, Navigation, and In-Home & Community Support**—each with a lens on improving health and wellness in Candle Lake. The conversations also explored the role of volunteers in enhancing and sustaining these services.

Facilitated by the Candle Lake Health Services Committee, these discussions employed a **SWOT analysis framework (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)** to identify local assets, challenges, and opportunities for innovation. The resulting strategies emphasize **community-driven solutions**, such as pilot projects, volunteer support, and communication strategies, while aligning with broader provincial initiatives like the *Thrive at Home Action Community* and the *Provincial Volunteer Network*.

By integrating these themes into a cohesive plan, this report aims to:

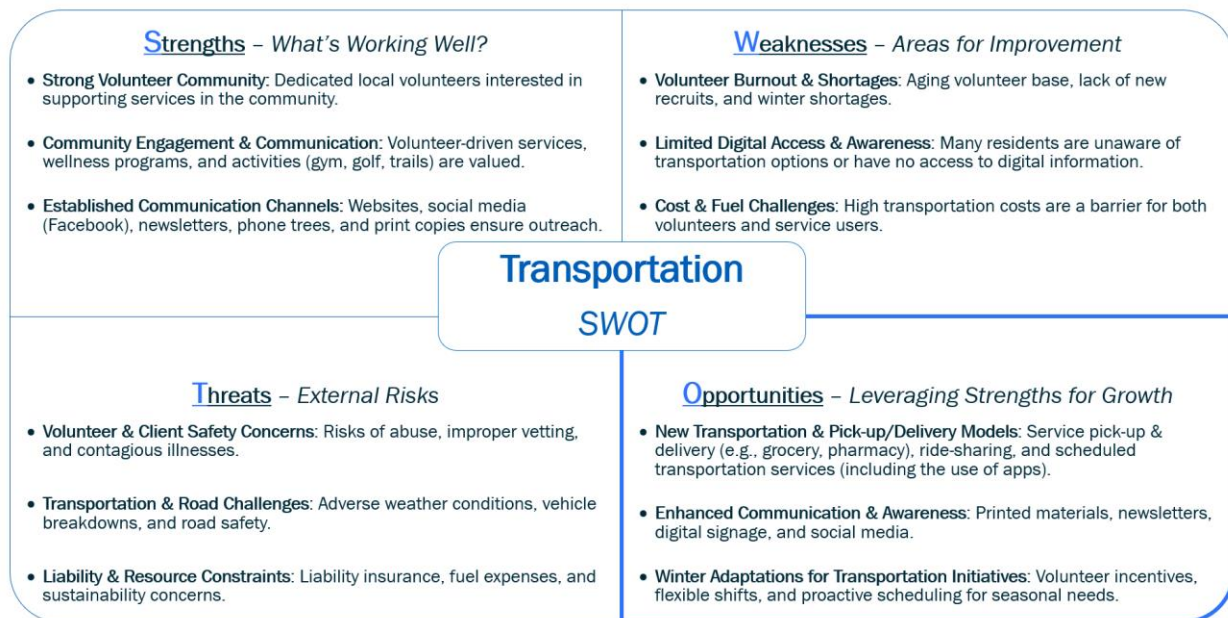
- Enhance service accessibility and sustainability.
- Strengthen volunteer engagement and coordination.
- Foster collaboration between local efforts and provincial strategies.



TRANSPORTATION: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC PATH FORWARD

SWOT Analysis & Thematic Insights

This overview presents the emerging themes—strengths, challenges, opportunities, and risks—identified by Community Consultation participants in relation to the local transportation system. From a strong volunteer base to emerging service models, it identifies key factors influencing mobility and sets the stage for targeted and strategic improvements.



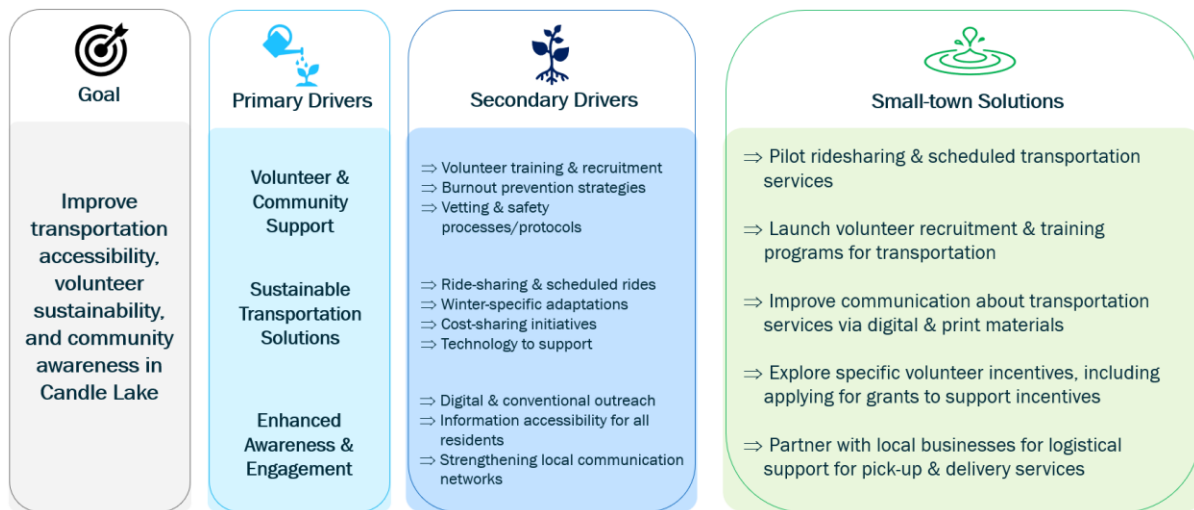
Key message and insight from the Transportation SWOT activity:

- ⇒ **Strengthen Volunteer Engagement**
Develop recruitment campaigns, implement vetting and training processes, and create seasonal incentive and appreciation programs to boost retention and reduce burnout.
- ⇒ **Expand Communication Reach**
Improve digital outreach through social media and community signage, while integrating traditional methods to raise awareness and connect with diverse audiences.
- ⇒ **Leverage Community Assets**
Build on existing networks to broaden service reach and promote awareness of available resources, especially digital information.
- ⇒ **Enhance Transportation Support**
Pilot alternative options like ride-sharing or scheduled rides (including apps), develop contingency plans for winter and emergencies, and explore funding, subsidies, and liability coverage to ensure sustainability.
- ⇒ **Reduce Financial Barriers**
Explore cost-sharing models and sponsorship opportunities to ease financial pressures on programs and participants.

Suggested Action Roadmap for Transportation

Drawing from the Transportation SWOT analysis and insights, we used the identified themes to begin developing an action roadmap for transportation in Candle Lake. The following outlines participant-suggested actions and priorities:

Suggested Action Roadmap for Transportation



Where this could all start: Key Potential Testing Initiatives

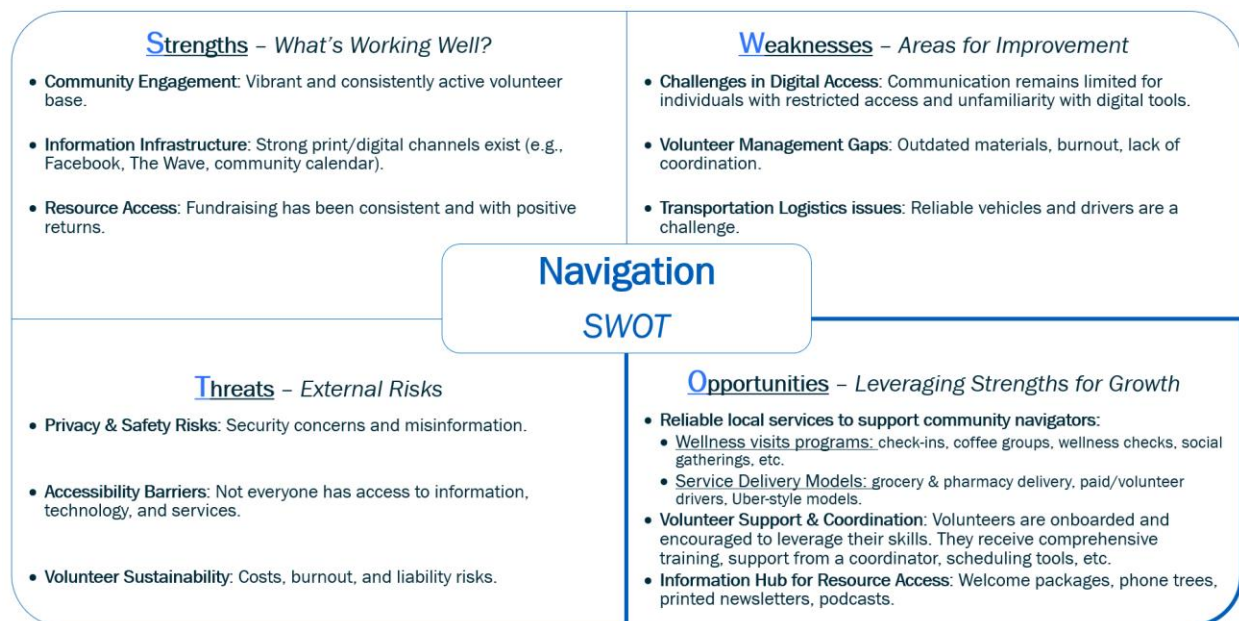
Following the Transportation SWOT discussions, participants were invited to vote on the most actionable areas to begin improving transportation in Candle Lake. Based on the high-priority themes that emerged and the results of the community voting, the following pilot initiatives are proposed:

- **Pilot a Scheduled Transportation Service**
 - Test a ride-booking system for residents.
 - Utilize local volunteers and carpooling strategies.
 - When appropriate, make use of existing transportation apps to enhance accessibility and efficiency.
- **Launch a Multi-Channel Awareness Campaign**
 - Increase engagement via paper-based resources, website and social media, newsletters, QR codes in local businesses, and presence in local events.
 - Bring awareness to residents about existing services and recruit new volunteers.
- **Explore opportunities for a Volunteer Incentive Program**
 - Apply for grants to allow stipends or reimbursement for volunteers (e.g., to cover fuel expenses).
 - Introduce flexible scheduling to encourage participation.
- **Service Delivery Expansion**
 - Implement a volunteer-driven or subsidized delivery model (e.g., grocery, pharmacy).
 - Partner with local businesses for logistical support.

NAVIGATION: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC PATH FORWARD

SWOT Analysis & Thematic Insights

This analysis examines the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and risks in delivering navigation and connection support. From a dedicated volunteer network to trusted communication channels, it highlights what's working well, while also pinpointing gaps like digital access barriers and volunteer burnout. Emerging opportunities, such as expanded local services and better support systems, are weighed against risks like privacy concerns. By mapping these factors, the insights help shape targeted strategies to strengthen community connections.



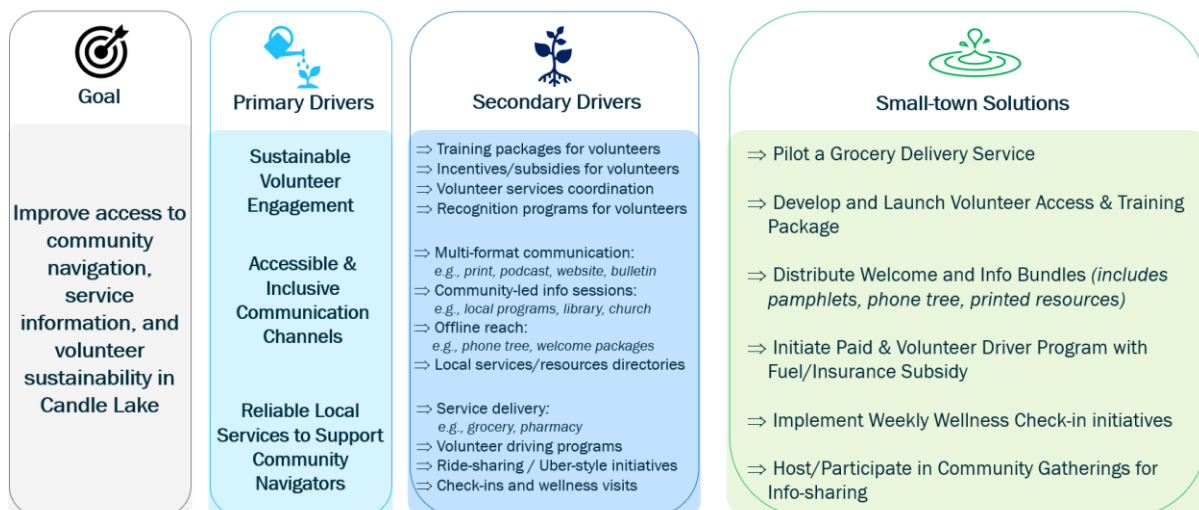
Key message and Insight from the Navigation SWOT activity:

- ⇒ **Support and Sustain Volunteers**
Provide onboarding, skill assessments, training, and updated tools to prevent burnout and equip volunteers for long-term impact.
- ⇒ **Enhance Communication Access**
Build on existing print and digital tools by increasing awareness, addressing tech barriers, and providing trusted, user-friendly platforms to improve reach and reliability.
- ⇒ **Address Accessibility and Inclusion Gaps**
Reduce barriers to participation by improving access to essential information, technology, and services — especially for underserved or digitally excluded groups.
- ⇒ **Strengthen Community Infrastructure**
Tackle sustainability challenges by improving coordination, addressing liability, and exploring reliable service models like wellness visits and delivery support.
- ⇒ **Leverage Community Strengths**
Expand on the community's strong peer support, volunteer culture, and local fundraising systems to foster resilience and shared ownership of initiatives.

Strategic Action Roadmap

Drawing from the Navigation SWOT analysis and insights, we used the identified themes to begin developing an action roadmap for navigation of services in Candle Lake. The following outlines participant-suggested actions and priorities:

Suggested Action Roadmap for Navigation



Where this could all start: Key Potential Testing Initiatives

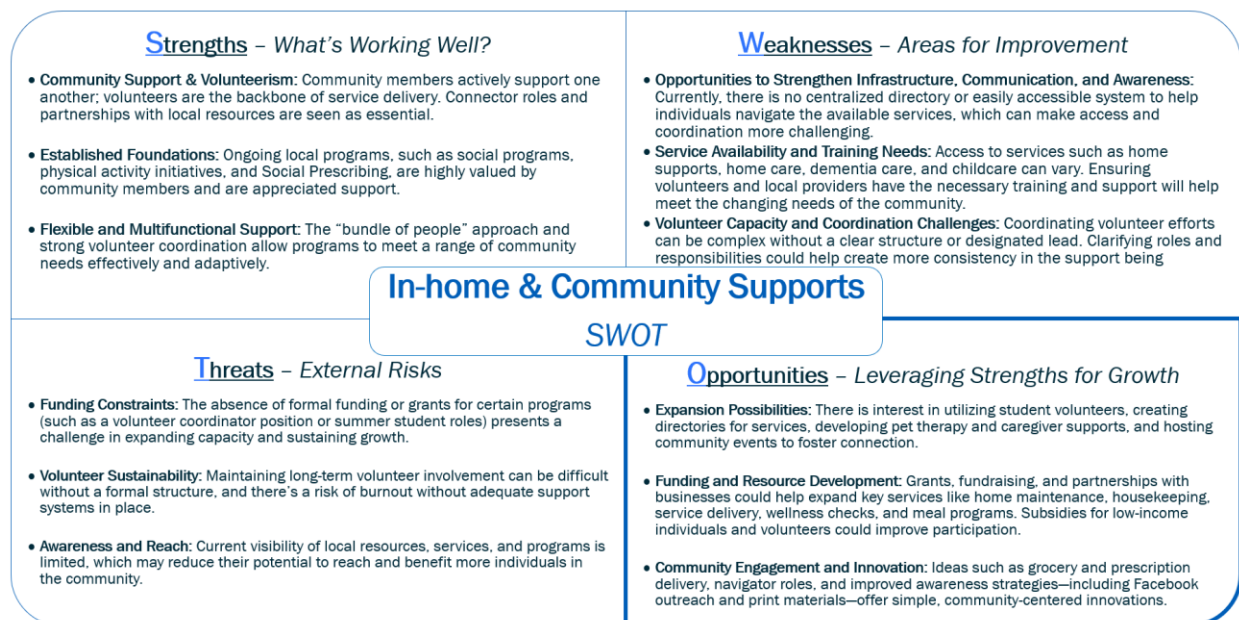
Following the Navigation SWOT discussions, participants were invited to vote on the most actionable areas to begin improving navigation in Candle Lake. Based on the high-priority themes that emerged and the results of the community voting, the following pilot initiatives are proposed:

- **Pilot a Grocery Delivery Program**
 - Include pick-up and drop-off.
 - Leverage local volunteers, paid drivers, and transportation initiatives.
 - When appropriate, make use of existing apps to enhance accessibility and efficiency.
- **Launch Volunteer Support Package + Orientation Program**
 - Leverage provincial partnerships for the program co-design
 - Include safety training, scheduling tools, and access to insurance or subsidies in the volunteer package.
 - Explore applying for grants to hire a volunteer coordinator to support this work.
- **Welcome & Information Bundle Distribution**
 - Bring awareness to residents about existing services and recruit new volunteers.
 - Combine Welcome Wagon, podcast, printed directory, and phone tree.
- **Pilot Volunteer-led Programs for wellness checks**
 - Leverage local services & programs already providing home visits
 - Provide training to local providers and volunteers
 - When appropriate, make use of existing apps to enhance communication, accessibility and efficiency.

IN-HOME & COMMUNITY SUPPORTS: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & STRATEGIC PATH FORWARD

SWOT Analysis & Thematic Insights

This analysis examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in local support systems. While neighbor-driven care and existing programs work well, challenges like service fragmentation and volunteer burnout persist. Opportunities exist in creating service directories and engaging volunteers, but funding gaps remain a key risk. These insights will help build stronger, more sustainable community care networks.



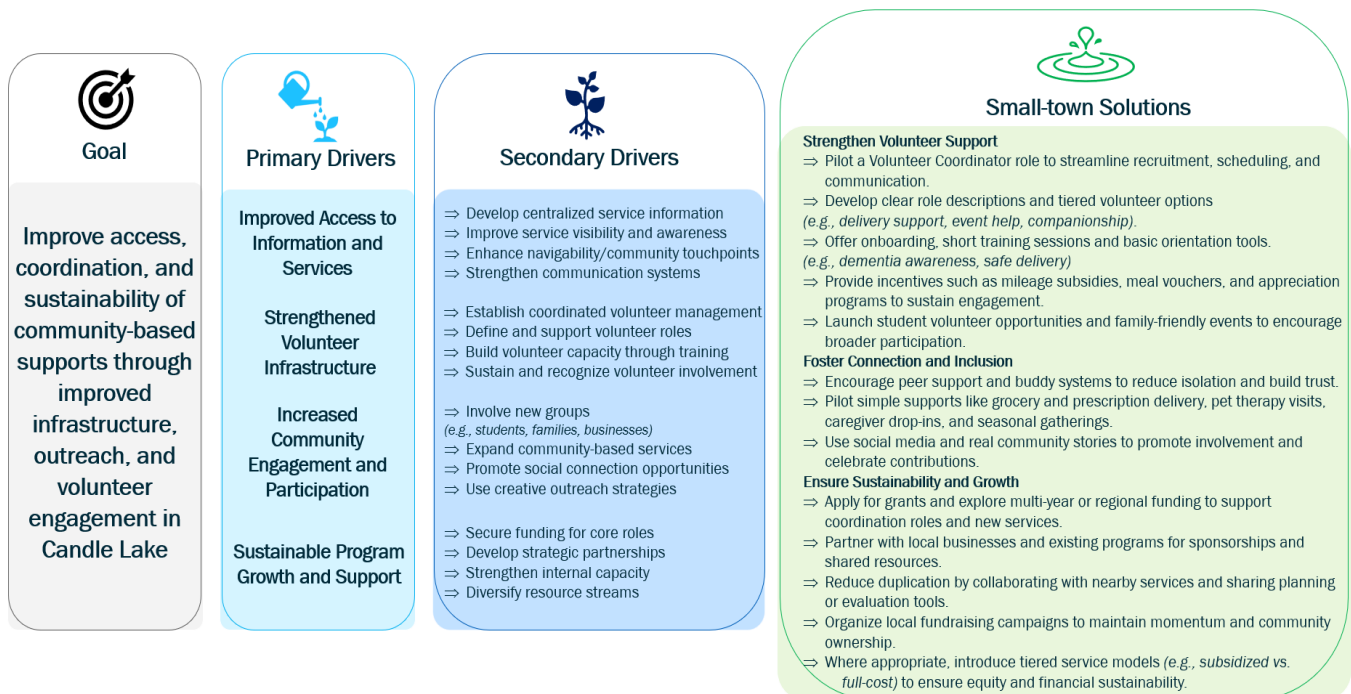
Key message and Insight from the Navigation SWOT activity:

- ⇒ **Strengthen Volunteer Infrastructure**
Establish clear volunteer roles, provide consistent training, and invest in structured management to support retention, reduce burnout, and amplify impact.
- ⇒ **Enhance Access Through Centralized Systems**
Develop user-friendly directories and communication platforms (digital and print) to improve in-home & community service navigation and streamline coordination across programs.
- ⇒ **Expand and Diversify Outreach**
Use creative approaches—like student volunteers, buddy systems, pet therapy, community navigators, and local events—to foster stronger connections and reach underserved groups.
- ⇒ **Invest in Program Sustainability**
Secure funding through grants, business partnerships, and fundraising to support coordination roles, expand service availability, and subsidize access for clients and volunteers.
- ⇒ **Build on Community Trust and Strengths**
Leverage well-received programs like Social Prescribing and local business involvement, and continue growing trusted social and physical supports rooted in community-led efforts.

Strategic Action Roadmap

Drawing from the In-Home and Community Supports SWOT analysis and insights, we used the identified themes to begin developing an action roadmap for in-home and community supports of services in Candle Lake. The following outlines participant-suggested actions and priorities:

Suggested Action Roadmap for In-Home & Community Support



Where this could all start: Key Potential Testing Initiatives

Following the In-Home and Community supports SWOT discussions, participants were invited to vote on the most actionable areas to begin improving in-home and community supports in Candle Lake. Based on the high-priority themes that emerged and the results of the community voting, the following pilot initiatives are proposed:

- **Pilot a Community Services Directory**
 - Create and distribute a user-friendly directory of local services and supports
 - Pilot a dual-format directory (digital + print)
 - Improves awareness, visibility, coordination, and navigation of all services
- **Develop a Volunteer Coordinator Role (pilot)**
 - Apply for funding to pilot a part-time coordinator
 - Centralizes recruitment, scheduling, and support
- **Trial a Community Navigator Role**
 - This is already being tested with older adults
 - To assist community members in accessing appropriate services and supports, while also gathering feedback on service gaps.
- **Test a Student Volunteer Summer Program**
 - Collaborate with schools for home maintenance volunteers

- Offers skill-building opportunities while expanding capacity
- Recruit and train student volunteers for roles in, for example, service delivery and event support.
- **Multi-Channel Awareness & Outreach Campaign**
 - Flyers, posters, and bulletin boards in community hubs
 - Social media, newsletters, and presentations to enhance visibility
- **Local Business Partnerships for Informal Wellness Checks**
 - Train local providers already making home visits
 - Add light check-ins as part of routine services
- **Buddy Wellness System Expansion**
 - Formalize and expand existing buddy check networks
 - Leverage local volunteers for proactive check-ins
- **Short-Term Respite & Home Support Expansion**
 - Train volunteers for safe personal and respite care
 - Test caregiver-volunteer matching for short-term relief



BRIDGING LOCAL STRENGTHS WITH PROVINCIAL STRATEGIES

Strategic Rationale

The Candle Lake community has shown remarkable grassroots leadership, driven by a dedicated volunteer base and a longstanding commitment to supporting residents, particularly in wellness and health initiatives. During the March 2025 Community Consultation session, three priority areas were topics of discussion for community-led action planning: **Transportation, Navigation, and In-Home & Community Supports**. These themes reflect immediate priorities and long-term opportunities highlighted in the Asset and Needs Assessment (survey) to enhance local well-being.

Starting with Existing Strengths

To ensure sustainability, efforts should build on the capacity already in place, recognizing the constraints and volunteer bandwidth of the Health Service Committee. Practical first steps could include (only suggestions):

- **Coordinating and supporting volunteers** to maximize participation and reduce burnout;
- **Developing a Directory of Local Resources** to streamline access to services; or
- **Leveraging existing navigation efforts**, such as Social Prescribing, to connect residents with the right supports.

By starting with small, manageable, and high-impact initiatives, Candle Lake can lay the groundwork for deeper systemic integration.

Strategic Integration for Long-Term Impact

The true opportunity lies not just in strengthening each focus area in isolation but in **interconnecting them** through shared infrastructure, aligned goals, and collaborative planning. By weaving together local plans and aligning with provincial initiatives—such as the *Thrive at Home Action Community* (which includes dedicated hubs for Transportation, Navigation, and Home Supports) and the *Volunteer Provincial Network* (designed to foster cross-regional collaboration)—Candle Lake is poised to develop a small-town model. This approach ensures local efforts are amplified by broader systems while remaining rooted in community expertise.

The following sections outline key insights and leverage points across Transportation, Navigation, and In-Home & Community Supports—highlighting opportunities to maximize impact through coordinated action planning, since they can be seen as interdependent.

Key Insights & Leverage Intersections for greater impact

Volunteer-Centered but Overstretched: Volunteers power every aspect of Candle Lake's community support model, but face growing demands, limited coordination, and high burnout risk.

Strong Communication Tools, but Gaps Remain: Multi-format communication (print, social media, newsletters, posters) is strong but siloed and unevenly accessed.

Valuable Resources Available, but Access Is Fragmented: Many resources already exist, but they are not consolidated in a single location, such as a directory of local resources. Access to these resources varies and is often dependent on word-of-mouth or personal networks.

Interest in Service Delivery Innovations in all three focus areas: Meal, grocery, pharmacy delivery; wellness checks, support in coordinating volunteer services; and navigation support of local services/programs were highly cited.

Potential for alignment with Thrive at Home Action Hubs = Local/Provincial Synergy: Candle Lake HSC members are actively involved in each of the Thrive at Home Action Hubs—Transportation, Navigation, and Home Supports.

Project Maximizing Impact Through Integrated Planning



Potential Coordinated Efforts: Bridging Local Strengths with Provincial Strategy

Focus Area	Local Goal	Provincial Alignment
Transportation	Sustainable ride-sharing models with the support of volunteers	Thrive at Home—Transportation Hub
Navigation	Resource directory + ongoing navigator role with Social Prescribing	Thrive at Home—Navigation Hub
Home Supports	Volunteer-driven service delivery & wellness checks	Thrive at Home—Home Supports Hub
Volunteer Network	Standardized recruitment, procedures, and training modules	Provincial Volunteer Network

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This **‘What we Heard’ report** can support Integrated Action Planning for Candle Lake’s Health and Wellness Initiatives, highlighting the community’s dedication to addressing **critical priorities in transportation, navigation, and in-home supports** through **localized, volunteer-driven solutions**. The insights gathered from residents underscore both the strengths of Candle Lake—such as its **strong volunteer base** and **established communication networks**—and the **challenges it faces**, including **volunteer burnout, digital access barriers, and funding constraints**.

By **leveraging existing assets** while exploring **innovative models** such as — but not limited to — **service directories, wellness check programs, ride-sharing, and service delivery**, the plan sets a foundation for sustainable, community-led improvements.

A key strength of this action planning lies in its **dual focus on immediate, actionable steps and long-term systemic integration**. **Pilot initiatives** such as wellness check programs, community services directory, and volunteer support package offer **tangible starting points**, while alignment with **provincial initiatives** like the Thrive at Home Action Community and the Provincial Volunteer Networks ensures **broader scalability and resource access**. The emphasis on **volunteer coordination, equitable communication, and partnerships with local businesses and provincial networks** will be **crucial in maintaining momentum and preventing overreliance** on overstretched individuals.

Moving forward, the success of this plan will depend on the **active involvement of the community** to explore ways of securing funding for coordinator roles, implementing structured volunteer support systems, and fostering continuous community engagement. By **prioritizing and testing** high-impact, “low-barrier” initiatives — and **maintaining open dialogue with residents and provincial partners** — Candle Lake can create a **replicable model for small-town health and wellness innovations**. This approach balances community-driven adaptability with strategic collaboration, ensuring lasting impact.



‘Alive & Well’ Community Consultations Project Team

(From left to right – Back row: Hugh Garvin, Terry Kostyna, Marianne Kostyna, Michelle Lozej, Terri Garvin, Richard Lang, Bobbi Dunphy, and Amy Wingate. Front row: Adele Ritchie and Suelen M. Góes)