

Update: Seniors Initiative

Initiative Title: Seniors
City Council Lead(s): Councillor A. Knack / Councillor M. Banga
Department Lead(s): Citizen Services, L. Brenneis / E. Betchinski
Sustainable Development, W. Trocenko

Recommendation - Renew for 2017-2021 Council Term

Objective

To support and enhance current work of the City of Edmonton, Citizen Services' Seniors Portfolio and Edmonton's senior-serving sector through Age Friendly Edmonton initiatives and other projects.

Key outcomes, projects or activities and their status as of May 2017

Seniors Housing / Aging in Place in the Community: Address the need for increased affordable and diverse seniors housing options.

- Surplus school sites: Sakaw site tentative opening October 2018.
- Edmonton Home Supports Program established and ongoing funding options being reviewed.
- Home for Life criteria fully developed, online, and incorporated into Hollick Kenyon Pilot Project 2017-18.
- Feasibility study underway for LGBTQ2S Seniors Housing Q2 2018.

Financial Elder Abuse: Address the need for increased awareness and reduced incidence of financial abuse of seniors.

- Bank of Montreal, Canadian Western Bank and Alberta Treasury Branch have incorporated training on financial elder abuse awareness and resources.
- Post-training surveys of staff indicate the materials (brochure and video) have overwhelmingly increased participant knowledge.

Intergenerational Programs: Increase opportunities for youth and seniors to interact and socialize.

- With input from community pilot projects and stakeholders, the Intergenerational Programming Toolkit was created and will be publicly available June 2017.
- Improving intergenerational opportunities is a priority focus area of Age Friendly Edmonton's next work plan and was also identified as a key theme to develop in the Seniors Centres Strategy.

Loneliness / Social Isolation: To enhance supports and reduce social isolation of seniors.

- The seniors-focused component of the “Hello, How Are You” public awareness campaign includes three videos launched on the City of Edmonton’s website, Twitter and Facebook accounts; presentations at City Hall School; distribution of handbills on seniors isolation; and a Buddy Bench project in conjunction with the Urban Isolation /Mental Health Initiative and CityLab.
- The second video incorporated an iPad giveaway contest with 161 entries. Five winners received an iPad to help them connect with their loved ones.
- A third video is in development - focused on a letter writing campaign between elementary-aged children and older adults.
- The Buddy Benches project is based on an idea from a youth featured in the first video. Buddy Benches will be placed around the city and their design will encourage individuals to connect and converse. Buddy Benches will be installed at City Hall, Sir Winston Churchill Square, Constable Ezio Faraone Park, Michael Phair Park, The Quarters, Mill Woods Town Centre Pond, Tawa Medical Centre and the Grey Nuns Hospital grounds.

Cultural Diversity: To support inclusion and enhanced support for seniors from various cultural backgrounds.

- The Age of Wisdom Collective brings together interested immigrant and refugee seniors and cultural community leaders representing diverse ethnocultural communities to build a network and a "core nucleus".
- The core nucleus will meet four times during 2017 to prioritize key issues affecting the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee seniors and to explore opportunities where actions can be taken to address systemic issues. Four major issues are transportation, income levels, housing and language barriers.
- One meeting has been held to date and participants have included representation from the Nepalese, Arabic, Azerbaijani, Southeast Asian, Somali and African communities.

Age Friendly Edmonton / Other Related Work

The Age Friendly Edmonton Annual Update was presented at Community and Public Services Committee on June 8, 2017.

Future Steps

Public engagement for the next work plan of Age Friendly Edmonton and the Seniors Centres Strategy will take place in June 2017.

Evaluation

The progress and accomplishments of the Initiative are due to alignment with Age Friendly Edmonton, ongoing community stakeholder engagement and partnerships, and leveraging of City communications channels and influence.

It is recommended that the work continue and that it support and enhance the current work of Administration and Age Friendly Edmonton.

The following opportunities have been identified for ongoing focus:

- **Housing:** Address the need for a variety of affordable housing options, through innovative strategies and multi-sectoral partnerships.
- **Intergenerational Connections:** Optimize opportunities for participation and social connection between individuals of any age across generations.
- **Diversity:** Support inclusion for and engagement with older adults from various cultural backgrounds.