



# Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton

## Action Plan

Spring 2011

Facilitated by



EDMONTON  
SENIORS  
COORDINATING  
COUNCIL



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# Executive Summary



**Edmonton is part of a global movement exploring what actions their cities can take to enhance the ongoing health, participation and security of seniors as they age.**

Edmonton has joined cities from Istanbul to Tokyo, Islamabad to London, Portage La Prairie to Portland, in using The World Health Organization (WHO) *Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide* as a foundation to ask seniors and senior serving organizations how to shape their communities to be more inclusive to the needs of an aging population. Late in 2010, Edmonton was officially accepted as a member of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities®.

The *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* is the result of extensive community consultation with seniors and their care givers and key stakeholders. It is built on a common vision of Edmonton as a community that values, respects and actively supports the well-being of seniors and promotes an age-friendly community. It acknowledges the economic, social and cultural diversity of Edmonton's current and future seniors. And it is rooted in the principle that seniors take an active role in the implementation of the actions required to meet the Plan's 18 goals.

The *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* is the result of the conversations of thousands of Edmontonians who reflected on the eight key areas identified by the World Health Organization's Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide as important aspects of an age-friendly city. Edmontonians then interpreted those key areas into Edmonton-specific goals and actions that provide a strong framework for improving the lives of Edmonton's seniors and strengthening the communities in which they live. Edmonton seniors also chose to divide the WHO key areas of Community and Health Services—into two separate key areas. This reflects the importance Edmontonians place on each of these areas.

## The time for action is now.

Edmonton's senior population is increasing dramatically. The city is experiencing the first crest of a wave of aging baby boomers expected to swell the ranks of seniors over the next several decades. Longer life spans are fuelling projections that the number of seniors age 80 plus will also increase by 266% over the next 30 years, while at the same time the number of seniors age 55-64 years will more than double.



This affects people of all ages. All Edmontonians will have parents, friends, neighbours, customers, co-workers or colleagues who are seniors. Most Edmontonians will themselves be seniors at some point in time. It is widely acknowledged that a city that addresses the needs of its senior population is a city that is a friendlier city to all ages.

Barrier-free buildings and streets enhance the mobility and independence of people with disabilities, young as well as old. Secure neighbourhoods allow children, younger women and older people to venture outside in confidence to participate in physically active leisure and in social activities. Families experience less stress when their older members have the community support and health services they need. The whole community benefits from the participation of older people in volunteer or paid work.

Finally, the local economy profits from the patronage of older adult consumers. The operative word in age-friendly social and physical urban settings is enablement. An age-friendly city is a city that offers and supports an ongoing quality of life that benefits all.



## The Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan

This document is one of three documents which, together, outline Edmonton's commitment and vision and establish the actions required to become an age-friendly city. The first is the *Edmonton Seniors Declaration*, a call to action to all residents to commit to improving the age-friendliness of our city. The second is *Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait* which reflects the realities of life for Edmonton seniors in 2010 and highlights their contributions, needs and interests.

Though the scope of the *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* is on Edmonton services for seniors, there is potential for integration within the Capital Region.

*This Plan* provides strategic direction to meet the needs of seniors in Edmonton and guide the direction of services for the next five years. The intent for this plan is also to:

- Engage community and stakeholders in action to address needs
- Serve as a framework to guide current and future services for seniors in Edmonton
- Incorporate recommendations from recent local studies, reports and research
- Support the recommendation outlined in *Let's Make it Happen – Blueprint for Action of Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors, 2004*, which says the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council will assume a strong leadership role in “developing a broad strategic plan for addressing the needs of seniors in Edmonton that will provide guidance for planning by its member organizations.”

Together with its seniors, Edmonton will move into the years ahead with a clear vision of how to actively support the well-being of its aging population.



# 9 Key Strategic Areas and Goals

Edmontonians are called upon to work together, across organizations and governments, to accomplish the Vision for the *Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan's* 18 goals. The quality of life of Edmonton seniors can be improved by addressing the goals and actions in these nine key areas.

## 1 Community Support Services

- Community support services are inclusive and responsive in meeting the needs of seniors.
- The community is engaged in meeting the needs of seniors.

## 3 Communication and Information

- Seniors and those who support them easily access information they need when it's required.

## 2 Health Services

- Comprehensive health services address cultural and language barriers and are available, timely, appropriate and easily accessible to help seniors remain in their community.
- Seniors have methods of obtaining education, knowledge and skills that are critical for them to support their own health.
- Information and technology are available to support seniors in managing their own health needs.

## 4 Social and Recreational Participation

- Seniors have access to a wide variety of affordable and personally relevant activities.
- Opportunities for social engagement and recreation are inclusive and welcome diversity.

## 5 Transportation

- Seniors have access to a range of appropriate transportation services that are available, acceptable, accessible, adaptable and affordable.
- Senior drivers are supported to ensure safety of themselves and others.

## 6 Respect and Social Inclusion

- Seniors are treated with respect.
- Seniors have opportunities to participate in, and be engaged by, their communities.

## 7 Civic Participation, Volunteerism and Employment

- Seniors have a voice in decisions that affect their community.
- Seniors are valued as employees and volunteers.

## 8 Housing

- There are a range of age-friendly housing options, from single-family homes to congregate living, available to seniors. (Housing options include adaptations and renovations to existing housing structures, new-built single-family homes, or congregate living structures.)
- Seniors are informed about the range of housing options available.

## 9 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Parks, outdoor spaces, communities and buildings are designed to be age-friendly.
- Parks, outdoor spaces, communities, walkways and buildings are maintained to ensure on-going access by seniors.

# Introduction



**The Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan provides strategic direction to meet the needs of seniors in Edmonton. It is the culmination of a decade-long journey of extensive research and public consultation.**

This plan guides the direction of services for the next five years. It builds upon, and adds to, the considerable body of work service providers, researchers, citizen groups, senior serving organizations and seniors themselves have created with the objective of focusing efforts. This document builds on current strengths and addresses gaps in current processes and programs with the intent of improving the quality of life for Edmonton seniors.

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was created in 2004 to take a leadership role in facilitating shared planning, coordination and collaboration among Edmonton senior-serving organizations. True to the spirit of collaboration, initial drafts of this plan were augmented and honed by review and input from seniors, senior-serving staff, community groups and organizations and other stakeholders.

By the end of 2010, several initiatives and actions converged to further focus efforts on improving the quality of life for Edmonton's seniors. They include:

- **December 2010** The World Health Organization (WHO) accepts Mayor Stephen Mandel's application for Edmonton to be a "Member of the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities." Edmonton is one of four Canadian cities currently involved and joins the Ontario cities of Wellington and London and Saanich, British Columbia.



- **November 2010** The City of Edmonton and the ESCC release *Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait* which reflects the realities of life for Edmonton seniors, highlighting their contributions, needs and interests.
- **November 2010** The Government of Alberta releases two documents:
  - *Aging Population Policy Framework* which defines and articulates their roles and responsibilities in responding to the needs of an aging population. It sets the overall context for how the Alberta government will work with other governments, the private and non-profit sectors, communities, families and individuals to meet the needs of seniors. The framework provides policy directions in eight theme areas of importance to an aging population: financial security and income; housing and aging in the right place; continuing care; healthy aging and health care; transportation and mobility; safety and security; supportive communities; and access to government.
  - *Addressing Elder Abuse in Alberta-A Strategy for Collective Action* which lays the foundation for how the Government of Alberta will work with all sectors to prevent and reduce the incidence of elder abuse.
- **Throughout 2010** Seniors centres in Edmonton, together with the City of Edmonton and the ESCC, work to create the *Seniors' Centres Plan 2011-2021* which outlines the core services local centres strive to offer. The report includes trends and a look at the future capital development needed to serve Edmonton's growing senior population. The plan will go before City Council in 2011.
  - **Fall 2010** ESCC publishes the final report of their outreach assessment project *Helping Seniors Age in Place-A Strategic Framework to Improve Outreach to Isolated and/or At-Risk Seniors*. The report sets out a model designed by the collaborative efforts of 14 of Edmonton's senior-serving organizations.
  - **June 3rd 2010** The City of Edmonton releases the *Edmonton Seniors Declaration* to convey their commitment towards seniors. The declaration speaks to how seniors are valued, recognizes the contributions seniors provide and outlines how the City of Edmonton will work towards making Edmonton more age-friendly.
  - **May 2010** City of Edmonton receives funding from Alberta Health and Wellness to implement two aging in place community demonstration projects. The projects will focus on enhancing community supports to assist seniors to safely remain in their homes for as long as they wish and are safely able to do so. One project will support immigrant seniors in Mill Woods and the second project will focus on seniors in six southeast neighbourhoods.



## Background

The *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* builds upon more than a decade of work which includes the following:

- **2009** In reviewing the work to date, it became evident that there was a need to create a comprehensive strategic plan for service providers and stakeholders. In late 2009, the *Strategic Plan for Services to Edmonton's Seniors-Towards 2015* was published (in small quantities) with the intent of informing stakeholders of the work to date and seeking their input and their commitment to collaboration on the accompanying goals and recommendations. This *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* includes input from stakeholders and their added goals and recommendations.
- **2008** Conclusions and recommendations of the *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* prompted executive directors and board representatives from senior-serving organizations in Edmonton to initiate *A Discussion Paper, Services for Edmonton's Seniors: Creating a Strategic Plan Towards 2015* to address identified gaps. This Discussion Paper was taken to stakeholders in the spring and summer of 2009 and revised accordingly.
- **2008** The City of Edmonton contracted a research firm to conduct the *2008 Seniors Needs Assessment*. The intent of the survey was to gather a clear and accurate representation of the services most helpful to seniors, services that need improvement and the priorities and opportunities in the provision of services to seniors in Edmonton.
- **2007** City of Edmonton Community Services completed a study entitled *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study*, which identified the needs of Edmonton seniors and the potential roles of seniors organizations in Edmonton. A key issue that emerged is the needs of older seniors, especially those 85 years of age and older, who often require additional services and assistance to age in place. This group represents the fastest growing sub-set within the age groupings of seniors.



- **2007** The World Health Organization (WHO) implemented international age-friendly pilot projects and released a checklist that suggests guidelines to support communities in becoming more responsive to seniors' needs. The guide and checklist encourage active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age in the following eight key areas:

- 1. Community support services and health services**

- 2. Communication and information**

- 3. Social participation**

- 4. Transportation**

- 5. Respect and social inclusion**

- 6. Civic participation and employment**

- 7. Housing**

- 8. Outdoor spaces and buildings**

\*\*\* The Edmonton group decided to separate community support services and health services into two distinct categories because of the importance of both of these areas. It also opted to include "Recreational" in the title for the key area of Social Participation; and to include "Volunteerism" in the title for the key area of Civic Participation and Employment.

This strategic plan incorporates key elements of the World Health Organization's *Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide and Checklist*.

- **2004** The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was established from a key recommendation in *Let's Make it Happen - Blueprint for Action*. Since then, the ESCC has facilitated progress in areas such as seniors transportation and raised awareness of obstacles facing immigrant and refugee seniors. Additionally, agencies have increased their collaborative efforts to improve services and have identified gaps in service areas for seniors.
- **2002** The Task Force on Community Services for Seniors was established and it produced *Let's Make it Happen - Blueprint for Action*.
- **2000** *Moving Research Into Action - Seniors 2000 and Beyond*, a one-day event organized by the Edmonton Seniors' Community Network, identified gaps and opportunities in meeting the needs of seniors based on seven research papers on seniors and an environmental scan. This research was presented to more than 160 representatives from the health system, community leagues, multicultural groups, university researchers, the City of Edmonton, agencies and churches.



## Edmonton Seniors Declaration

The *Edmonton Seniors Declaration* represents Edmonton City Council's commitment towards seniors. It speaks to how seniors are valued, recognizes the contributions seniors provide and outlines how the City of Edmonton will work towards making Edmonton more age-friendly. This declaration is integral to Council's vision of enhancing Edmonton's livability and being one of the best cities in Canada to live, regardless of age.

The *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* builds upon the values and intent of Edmonton's Seniors Declaration. This document is a call to action to all Edmontonians to adopt the spirit of the declaration and help ensure that their community and business services and programs are age-friendly.

### Our Declaration

*Edmonton's commitment to seniors rests on four ideals:*

*Individuals are respected* regardless of age.

All generations have much to teach and learn from each other.

*People of all ages are safe* in their homes and neighbourhoods.

Safety has physical, environmental, financial and health aspects.

*The city's transportation systems, urban design and physical infrastructure* allow all people to participate in full lives.

No one is barred by mobility or resources from involvement in city life.

*Older people have ready access* to programs, employment, activities and services that help them stay engaged, respected and appreciated.

City Council declares that it will work towards making Edmonton age-friendly as part of our vision for an integrated, sustainable, liveable city. To do so, we will use the best knowledge available from international, national and local research. We will ensure our decision-making and policies embrace this perspective. We will encourage other organizations, individuals, businesses and institutions to adopt this declaration. And we will work with other orders of government to increase commitment and coordination on seniors' issues.

*Age is a gift  
to the city.  
We will value  
all the individuals  
who bring it  
to us.*

## Vision

A *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan* reflects and embodies the following vision and values.

Vision: Edmonton is a community that values, respects and actively supports the safety, diversity and well-being of seniors.

## Guiding Principles and Beliefs

- Society has a responsibility to ensure the basic needs of seniors are met
- Seniors have the right to choose where and how they live as long as they don't pose a risk to others
- Seniors have the right to feel safe in their homes and communities
- As seniors age, their needs may change and services can adapt to meet these changing needs
- Services are accessible, affordable, equitable and comprehensive to address a wide range of needs
- Seniors access to needed services will not be limited by ability to pay
- Services will be inclusive and respect diversity: they will be responsive to cultures, varied English language skills, marginalized individuals and persons with disabilities
- Programs and services will be based on best practices, research and innovation, and will be evaluated for their effectiveness
- Programs and services will reflect the character of the community
- Communities will be engaged in supporting seniors
- Seniors will be actively involved in the implementation of this plan



# Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait



In November 2010, the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council released *Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait* which reflects the realities of life for Edmonton seniors, highlighting their contributions, needs and interests. The following provides an overview of this document which can be found at [edmonton.ca/SeniorsPortrait](http://edmonton.ca/SeniorsPortrait)

## Demographics

Edmonton seniors are diverse in age, marital status, cultural background and incomes. One in three Edmontonians will be age 55 plus by 2041. Within the senior population, the most dramatic growth is expected to happen in the over 80 age group, with projections of a 266% increase in this group while the number of seniors ages 55-64 is expected to increase by as much as 104% during this same time frame.

As of the 2006 federal census, Edmonton had 65,000 people age 55 to 64; 62,000 people age 65 to 79 and almost 22,000 people age 80 years plus.

Women made up 52% of Edmonton seniors age 60-64 and men the remaining 48%. For those age 85 to 89 years, 67% were female and 33% male. Most seniors aged 55 to 59 were married (64%) while most seniors aged 85 to 89 were widowed (58%).



Edmonton's Aboriginal senior population is relatively young with 60% being between age 55 and 65 years as of the 2006 federal census. Seniors made up 9% of Edmonton's Aboriginal population.

The ethnic make-up of Edmonton's immigrant senior population is also changing. Until 2001, half of the immigrant seniors came from Europe and another 36% were from Asia or the Middle East. From 2001 to 2006, 73% of immigrant seniors came from Asia and the Middle East, 12% emigrated from Europe, 4% from Africa, 3% from Oceania and other, 3% from the Caribbean and Bermuda and 2% from Central America.

As people age, their incomes decrease. According to 2006 Statistics Canada data, Edmontonians aged 55-64 had an average income of just over \$57,000, seniors aged 65 to 74 had an average income of about \$40,000, while those age 75 plus had an average income of \$37,000. More women than men live on low incomes in both the 55-64 age group and the 70 plus age group.

*Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait* provides additional information and insights into the lives of seniors. The document looks at each of the key areas and highlights Edmonton seniors' views in each area.

# The Plan



**The Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan has 18 goals that will improve nine key areas that overlap and interact to add to the quality of city life for Edmonton's aging population. Each goal is advanced by several actions.**

**Lead partners** are listed for each action. These are the agency or organization that will play an initiating/facilitating role in guiding the process of pursuing the goal. The lead partner will identify other participants necessary to achieve the goal. They will also determine if additional resources such as staffing or funding may be required for actions to be implemented.

**Key stakeholders** are listed for each action. These are agencies or organizations that have an interest and/or expertise in the delivery of services to seniors and are able to achieve the action. Once the lead partner and key stakeholders work through the first stages of the process, they will identify the organization or agency that takes the lead in implementing the action.

The implementation period for each action is also provided from immediate and ongoing to short term (one to two years), mid-term (three to four years), and long term (up to five years).

## Strengths, gaps and challenges

Each of the nine key strategic areas include an overview of a selection of comments and insights provided by Edmontonians. These are a result of several years of consultation and findings of research and local studies, consultation with seniors, senior-serving organizations, the public and community stakeholders. The purpose of the overviews is to give a snapshot of the issues, not to provide an exhaustive summary. Items are not listed in priority order. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.



# Key Strategic Areas: Goals and Actions

## Community Support Services



Community support services include everything from help with getting to appointments, running errands, personal care and making meals to home repair and community-based programming for seniors. Community is considered broader than a geographic neighbourhood and refers to the area where people live, work, play and pray.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- An adequate range of community support services is offered for promoting, maintaining and restoring health.
- Delivery of services is coordinated and administratively simple.
- Economic barriers impeding access to community support services are minimized.
- Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
- Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.

## How Edmontonians View Current Community Support Services for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Many seniors centres and senior-serving organizations in Edmonton	<b>Some communities are under-serviced</b>	Seniors are a diverse group, frail seniors have different needs than other seniors
Some service agencies dedicated to seniors	<b>Lack of sustainable funding for community support services</b>	Ability is different than age
Outreach programs at many senior service organizations	<b>Too many small organizations unable to provide the critical mass to deliver services</b>	Language and cultural barriers must be factored into community-based services
City of Edmonton: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a variety of funding programs for seniors centres and seniors groups</li> <li>Has a dedicated staff person for seniors issues</li> <li>Has seniors as a priority area of interest</li> </ul>	<b>Services need to reflect promising practices, and, wherever possible, be grounded in evidence based research</b>	Some seniors want senior specific services, others prefer mixed-age services and settings
Good expertise for seniors	<b>Lack of coordination of services in certain areas</b>	Up and coming seniors may have different needs
Edmonton Senior Coordinating Council helps to coordinate services for seniors and address seniors' issues	<b>Ability to attract and retain staff in the senior sector is difficult</b>	New and emerging senior- focused businesses are pioneering service standards, regulations have yet to be established, onus is on the consumer—buyer beware
Many services provided by non-profit organizations	<b>Seniors and families not always in place</b>	Neighbourhood access is important—geographic coverage is essential
Community organizations throughout Edmonton are a potential resource for seniors	<b>Limited funding to support aging in place</b>	Customer service is highly valued by seniors
Current services are emerging in response to local needs	<b>Community services and businesses are not always age-friendly are not as supportive to seniors as they could be</b>	Minimal connection with the business sector, focus is on non-profit service providers and government services
Not a lot of duplication		Neighbours helping neighbours must be valued and encouraged
More seniors want to stay in their homes, often where they raised their family and are familiar with the area and services		Mature communities have a higher concentration of seniors, this can result in fewer neighbours able to help other neighbours
Increased awareness of pending needs of seniors		

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

# Goal 1

Community support services are inclusive and responsive in meeting the needs of seniors.

## Action 1: Develop/enhance outreach services to isolated and/or at risk seniors, including immigrant and refugee seniors.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Alberta Health Services, Cultural Services Agencies
- Implementation: Immediate and ongoing

## Action 2: Increase the ability of organizations to provide services for seniors that are more culturally sensitive.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Cultural Services Agencies
- Implementation: Immediate and ongoing

## Action 3: Develop and implement a model that defines core and optional services and how they are best delivered and administered.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 4: Develop guidelines for neighbourhood organizations in the area of community support services.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, neighbourhood organizations, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 5: Develop guidelines for core and optional services delivered by seniors centres that act as community hubs.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Seniors centres, City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 6: Develop guidelines for core and optional services that are best delivered and/or administered city-wide.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies that provide city-wide services, City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 7: Develop an on-going process to evaluate service delivery, identify where additional or new services are needed, and identify the resources required.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Form a stakeholder committee that brings together representatives on an ongoing basis
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 8: Establish working agreements between neighbourhood, community hub and city-wide organizations that acknowledge the value and role they play in the delivery of seniors services.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, ESCC member agencies, neighbourhood organizations, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

# Goal 2

The community is engaged in meeting the needs of seniors.

## Action 1: Develop and implement strategies for encouraging and promoting both formal and informal aging in place services and support.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Neighbourhood organizations, City of Edmonton - Community Services, ESCC member agencies, post-secondary institutions, ongoing stakeholder committee
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 2: Develop and implement a strategy for encouraging volunteerism to support aging in place services and supports.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Edmonton, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 3: Develop and implement strategies to encourage businesses and other community stakeholders to support seniors.

- Lead partner: ECSS continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, service clubs, business associations
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

I foresee community support services routinely delivered in the home or neighbourhood to help seniors age in place. There would be coordination of services to community buildings where many seniors reside i.e. apartment buildings, multi-complexes, condos, etc.

Volunteers would be available to advocate and help with forms and income tax preparation. There would be opportunities for elders to share their skills and talents with the community such as mentoring youth or visiting with hospital patients.

Neighbourhood gatherings would help us develop relationships which would then promote caring and support for each other. Local businesses would value our patronage and make their services friendly to seniors.

—Noella Willier



# Health Services



**Overall, the area of health is of prime interest to seniors as they age. It is understood and accepted that as seniors age, there is the possibility that their health care needs may increase.**

*The Findings Report, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports*, produced by the Demographic Planning Commission, states seniors' concerns in this area range from accessing health care services to the lack of availability of family physicians, the lack of rural services, and shortcomings in the ability of community-based agencies to provide services.

*The Continuing Care Strategy: Aging in the Right Place* produced by Alberta Health and Wellness promotes investment in home care funding, transitions back to the community, emergency department support, health system navigation, caregiver support and enhanced respite, community initiatives and dedicated health technology funding to support seniors.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Accessibility of health services.
- Availability of a range of health services, such as geriatric clinics, adult day centres, mental health services, training and respite for caregivers, rehabilitation and palliative care.
- Availability of aging-well services such as preventive screening, physical activity, education on injury prevention, nutritional guidance and mental health counselling.
- Availability of a wide range of home support and home care options such as shopping services, meal provision, personal care options, etc.

# How Edmontonians View Current Health Services for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Canada's Medicare system  Health care available regardless of ability to pay	<b>Information on health related services can sometimes be difficult to obtain and difficult to navigate</b>	A better way is needed to identify seniors who need help in their homes (e.g. if mail not picked up, snow not shovelled—may be a sign of difficulty)  Seniors may not know what resources are available
Public support to improve emergency wait times	<b>Home care support needs to be a higher health priority as demand increases</b>	Many health care staff have limited knowledge of seniors issues and resources
Innovative health services models that are being piloted provide comprehensive, holistic care in seniors' homes	<b>Increased funding and community services are needed to support aging in place, this means bringing care to the individual</b>  <b>Early hospital discharge can put seniors at risk unless care is brought to the individual</b>	Seniors may have multiple health issues yet must restrict their health care visits to a few specific concerns each time  This may mean having to return to seek health care more often and not benefitting from a more holistic approach
Increased awareness and understanding of value of preventive health services and alternative and complementary health practices	<b>Family caregivers require increased support including knowledge and respite</b>	Families are expected to step in to fill human resource shortage in healthcare sector, care may not be there when needed
People are more aware of benefits of active living and healthy living practices	<b>Many seniors do not have family or friends to help provide health related support</b>	Reluctance to question health care professionals
People are living longer, staying in their homes longer	<b>Information services not available in other languages</b>	Emergency department environments are not supportive of seniors, especially those with dementia

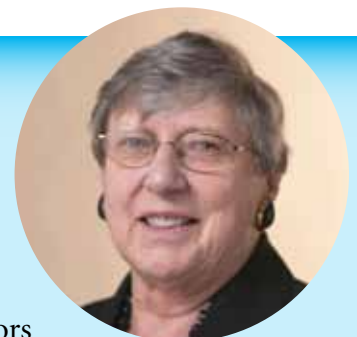
(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

**My hope is that seniors won't need a navigator to access quality health services.** Rather they will have seamless access to primary health care services to obtain or regain optimal health function. Health care practitioners will have the time, resources and support to reintroduce quality care, good management and trust in the system.

Community support and health personnel will form partnerships to ensure seniors receive the essential services they require to age in place.

Since the majority of seniors reside in the broader community, funding for home care and other community support services will be readily available to enhance health and ward off unnecessary illness, incidences of hospitalization and visits to the emergency departments.

—Jean Innes



# Goal 1

Comprehensive health services address cultural and language barriers and are available, timely, appropriate and easily accessible to help seniors remain in their community.

## Action 1: Encourage seniors to be actively engaged in the research of best practices, planning, implementation and evaluation of health services.

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, Edmonton Seniors Community Health Council
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 2: Develop and implement a strategy for supporting family/friend caregivers.

- Lead partner: Alberta Caregivers Association
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, agencies that support caregivers
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 3: Work with Alberta Health Services and health professionals to develop and implement strategies to ensure seniors who experience periodic and/or long-term health problems receive well coordinated, safe and effective care.

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, Edmonton Seniors Community Health Council, Alberta Health Services, Immigrant and Aboriginal-serving agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 4: Work with primary health care providers, including Primary Care Networks and Community Care, and seniors to examine service delivery methods.

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, Edmonton Seniors Community Health Council, Alberta Health Services, Primary Care Initiatives
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 5: Develop and implement innovative strategies to involve community support organizations in collaborating with health services in prevention and early detection of health problems.

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Goal 2

Seniors have methods of obtaining education, knowledge and skills that are critical for them to support their own health.

**Action 1:** Ensure senior volunteers are provided with the support and training to provide mentoring and support to their peers in health promotion and disease prevention (e.g., preventing falls, learning new technologies, etc.).

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Edmonton, ESCC, Member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

**Action 2:** Support personnel to ensure those who work with older adults are knowledgeable about the aging process and are appropriately trained to meet the unique needs of seniors.

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Council on Aging, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

## Goal 3

Information and technology are available to support seniors in managing their own health needs.

**Action 1:** Find effective ways of making sure seniors aware of what technological tools are available.

- Lead partner: ESCC continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

**Action 2:** Ensure innovative age-friendly technology by connecting seniors and tool developers.

- Lead partner: Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health and Wellness
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)





**Getting the right information to seniors, at the right time and in a format designed for them, are key factors in ensuring they can access the information they require.**

*The City of Edmonton's Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* points out that "seniors need information about programs and services and help to navigate the system, however, no single source of information is available." In addition, the province's *Findings Report* points out the need for government departments and agencies to work together, from planning to policy making to program development and delivery.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- The widespread distribution of useful information.
- Getting the right information to seniors at the right time.
- Ensuring seniors are able to speak with someone (not just a recording).
- Taking older persons into account when formatting and designing resource materials.
- Providing computer training if required and public access to computers.
- Ensuring communication barriers are addressed (barriers related to poverty, low literacy and language).

# Communications and Information

# How Edmontonians View Current Communications and Information for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
<p>Several effective referral systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 211 Support Network system 24/7</li> <li>• Health Link phone system</li> <li>• Seniors centres</li> <li>• 311 (City of Edmonton referral line)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seniors organizations don't have budgets to support extensive advertising and promotion</b></p>	<p>Information services need to be promoted more so seniors know how to access them</p> <p>Services for seniors need to work together more collaboratively to share information and better connect seniors to services</p>
<p>Multicultural groups such as Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Catholic Social Services and Multicultural Health Brokers provide a bridge to immigrant/refugee seniors</p>	<p><b>Current sources of information for seniors are not always provided in a format that is easily accessible for seniors</b></p>	<p>Communication between health sector and community agencies is limited by privacy laws—this is a challenge for seniors who would benefit from coordinated care</p>
<p>Senior Friendly™ training in industry</p>	<p><b>Language and literacy issues are not consistently addressed</b></p>	<p>Many seniors/family members access information only when they need it (i.e. crisis)</p>
<p>Some knowledge about how seniors receive information</p>	<p><b>Current information sources are not well known by seniors or their family members</b></p>	<p>Audience is fragmented—a range of ages/stages/locations</p>
<p>Some free newspaper services for community news</p>	<p><b>Seniors currently have to access multiple sources of information to get a full answer—there isn't a single point of access</b></p>	<p>Many seniors may trust information from family or friends rather than through formal communications</p>
<p>Resource manual from SAGE (Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton)</p>	<p><b>Seniors prefer a person to speak with rather than automated services</b></p>	<p>Edmonton seniors often receive support from family members and others not living in Edmonton—how can these networks be reached?</p>
<p>ESCC is a central communication source in sector (Link-Letter and DVD promoting senior centers in Edmonton )</p>	<p><b>Front line staff are not always up to date and informed</b></p>	<p>Future seniors may have different skills and abilities and preferences for accessing information</p>
<p>Real time captioning is available upon request at major City of Edmonton events, meetings, forums—this is a helpful tool for seniors</p>	<p><b>Some seniors lack knowledge on use of technology</b></p> <p><b>Social media is leaving some seniors behind</b></p>	<p>Reduced font size in telephone directories</p>
	<p><b>Fraud prevention programs are under-resourced</b></p>	<p>Majority of information is on the internet— some seniors don't have computer access or familiarity</p>

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

# Goal 1

Seniors and those who support them easily access the information they need when it's required.

## Action 1: Promote and encourage strategies to address elder abuse issues, preventive measures and resources.

- Lead partner: Edmonton Elder Abuse Intervention Team
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, Seniors Abuse Helpline operated by The Support Network, Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton - SAGE, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, the Alberta Elder Awareness Network, Alberta Seniors, ESCC, ESCC member Agencies
- Implementation: Ongoing

## Action 2: Determine how/where seniors access information.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Communications consultant
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 3: Bring together stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated communication model based on concrete and clearly articulated goals.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, communications consultant
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 4: Encourage stakeholders to develop and provide ongoing age-friendly communication.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton IT Branch, Alberta Health Services, Government of Alberta, SAGE
- Implementation: Mid-term



# Goal 1

## Continued

### Action 5: Promote and encourage personal safety and fraud prevention education for seniors and their families.

- Lead partner: Edmonton Police Service
- Key stakeholders: Elder Abuse Intervention Team, RCMP, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Neighbourhood Watch
- Implementation: Mid-term

### Action 6: Develop and facilitate the use of current and emerging technology to enhance access to information.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, Government of Alberta, referral services, post-secondary institutions
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

### Action 7: Develop and/or adopt age-friendly communication guidelines and templates for service providers. Ensure these tools address the diversity of the senior population.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, communications consultant
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

I would like to see one-stop shops where seniors can access information they require in their neighbourhood through a community league, senior centre or library.

Public computers would be available with programs for communicating in other languages. Podcasts would also relay information in different languages.

Seniors who don't speak English could access important information through local cultural media outlets such as: newsletters, newspapers, radio or television.

Rather than read small print in telephone directories, seniors could call 411 for free to access telephone numbers. Service providers would answer phones instead of automated responses. More and more seniors would be tech savvy which opens up many more options for information provision and communications.

—*Mary Fung*



# Social and Recreational Participation



**Meaningful participation in affordable community activities enables seniors to maintain their sense of wellbeing.**

By consulting with seniors and gaining a strong understanding of their needs and desires, organizations serving seniors can determine the most effective ways to meet seniors' needs and support and involve seniors living in our communities.

The World Health Organization considers the following in this area key:

- Opportunities (events and activities) are available for participation.
- Activities are affordable.
- There is a range of opportunities that allows for choice.
- Older persons are aware of the activities and events (events are promoted).
- Older persons are encouraged to participate, especially isolated seniors.
- Efforts are made to integrate generations, cultures and communities.

# How Edmontonians View Current Social and Recreational Opportunities for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Seniors activity centres provide opportunities	<b>Language barriers/cultural barriers may prevent seniors from social participation</b>	Benefits of recreation and social engagement are not widely understood by society
Edmonton Lifelong Learners Association (ELLA) and Minerva at MacEwan University offer lifelong learning	<b>Needs to be equitable access to seniors centres throughout the city</b>	There is a need for both senior-specific facilities and multi-generational facilities for programs
ESCC works with senior serving organizations to enhance their capacity to serve seniors	<b>Transportation barriers affect social participation</b>	There are not senior-specific facilities in all geographic areas of the city
Edmonton Creative Age Festival celebrates the creativity of seniors and encourages more seniors to get involved in arts programs	<b>Not enough opportunities for lifelong learning</b>	Some seniors are unaware of the opportunities for social participation
Seniors agencies connect well with media		Learning opportunities for seniors are not valued and supported
		Difficulty reaching isolated seniors
		Some seniors cannot afford programs or classes

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)



My hope for future seniors is that we continue with the many interests there are available to us—from exercise programs, to learning how to paint, the opportunities are endless.

There are many programs for seniors who need help getting around. Our ‘Care’ program (at North Edmonton Seniors Association) is full always.

We are the youngest, healthiest seniors ever. Don’t be afraid to give it a try. Call any seniors centre in your area. You’ll find a brand new family, make new friendships, find people to laugh with and have a coffee with. You can find absolutely endless new interests.

—Edna Bohachyk

# Goal 1

Seniors have access to a wide array of affordable and personally relevant activities.

**Action 1: Develop and implement new programs and activities that respond to emerging needs and interests.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, ESCC member agencies, post-secondary institutions
- Implementation: Ongoing

**Action 2: Develop and implement strategies for access to social, recreational, artistic, intellectual and cultural opportunities and physical activities.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

**Action 3: Develop and/or facilitate the use of current and emerging technologies to connect seniors.**

- Lead partner: SAGE
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Government of Alberta, post-secondary institutions
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)



# Goal 2

Opportunities for social engagement and recreation are inclusive and welcome diversity.

**Action 1: Develop and facilitate social and recreational opportunities that are sensitive to the needs and interests of diverse populations.**

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Immigrant-serving organizations
- Implementation: Ongoing

**Action 2: Plan and implement strategies that enhance organizational capacity to engage diverse populations and isolated seniors.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, Immigrant-serving organizations, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

**Action 3: Develop and implement strategies to encourage businesses and other community stakeholders to support social and recreational activities for seniors.**

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Key stakeholder: ESCC, service clubs, business associations
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)





# Transportation



## Transportation is a significant concern for seniors as they age.

The loss of a driver's licence, the inability to get to public transportation, or the lack of public transit to take them where they need to go, causes many seniors to lose their independence. The Demographic Planning Commission, *Findings Report* states that two-thirds of survey respondents said they worry about being able to get around in their senior years. In addition, the theme Mobility and Transportation was a key finding in the City's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study*.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Public transport is available.
- Public transport services are affordable (subsidized for low income).
- Service is reliable and frequent.
- Travel destinations are aligned with destinations of choice.
- Vehicles are age-friendly, for ease of boarding and disembarking.
- Specialized service is available to older people who cannot use public transit.
- Older persons are provided with priority seating and passengers are courteous.
- Drivers are considerate of the needs of older persons.
- Transit is safe and comfortable.
- Transport stops and stations are age-friendly (they provide shelter and include lighting, benches and curb cuts).
- Taxis are accessible and drivers are courteous.
- Community transport services include options such as volunteer driving services operated on the basis of best practices.
- Information on transportation options is provided in an age-friendly format.
- Driving conditions (roads, lighting, signage) take older drivers into account.
- Drivers are courteous to older drivers.
- Allotment of parking spaces gives priority to older adults and persons with disabilities.

# How Edmontonians View Current Transportation Services for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Growing awareness of senior transportation issues	<b>Lack of affordable assisted transportation—door through door, particularly for frail seniors</b>	Fear of lawsuits for volunteer drivers
Some senior specific bus routes have been added, more being considered	<b>No or little consideration and/or funding for transportation needs for seniors to get to health appointments</b>	Services for seniors are spread out across the city
Public transportation system is extensive		Edmonton is a winter city
Reduced bus rate for seniors		Public transportation services are reduced on evenings/weekends
Fleet is 100% low floor (kneeling) bus		
Senior Friendly™ trained ETS drivers		
Flexible route stops - ETS - Mobility Access		
DATS service available		
Tax rebate for purchase of bus passes		
Some volunteer driving programs	<b>Some not-for-profit assisted transportation service agencies have no source of core funding</b>	Street signage is not fully age-friendly
Discount taxi coupons	<b>Lack of car pool incentives</b>	Language/cultural barriers prohibit many immigrant/refugee seniors from using the public transportation systems
Driving Angels program encourages neighbours to help seniors with transportation	<b>Inconsistent assessment strategy for aged drivers in Alberta</b>	Safety and security are concerns for seniors using public transportation
Some local corporations have noted the stress on staff who are caretaking their elderly and have set up some assistance such as providing certificates to seniors driving services	<b>Aging drivers often fail to plan for the time when they can no longer drive</b>	Cost of transportation can be a barrier for many seniors
Some for-profit seniors transportation service providers	<b>Volunteer driving programs need more drivers</b>	Cost of parking at medical facilities is prohibitive
	<b>DATS will not go outside City Limits</b>	Some cross walk lights are too quick—doesn't allow enough time to cross for many seniors

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

# Goal 1

Seniors have access to a range of appropriate transportation services that are available, acceptable, accessible, adaptable and affordable.

**Action 1: Develop and implement a plan for a seniors assisted transportation service model (a service providing door to door assistance for customers).**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies that offer assisted transportation, City of Edmonton Transportation and Community Services, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Alberta Motor Association
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

**Action 2: Develop and implement strategies for transportation providers, city planners, developers, Alberta Health Services and others to be responsive to the transportation needs of seniors.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Transportation Services, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC member agencies that offer assisted transportation, Alberta Motor Association, Medically At-Risk Driver Centre
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Transportation is so important to our wellbeing. I sometimes feel like a prisoner in my own house because I am stuck here without the ability to go places when I wish.

I need help. Not all transportation service providers provide assistance so my options are limited. I'd like to be able to call a certain number day or night and get an assisted ride and not have to depend on neighbours or family to help me.

Drivers who are courteous to seniors are so appreciated. Help with carrying groceries, help up the stairs and along slippery sidewalks—that makes all the difference in the world.

—Helen Harry



# Goal 2

Senior drivers are supported to ensure safety of themselves and others.

## Action 1: Develop and implement a plan to share resource information on transportation options for seniors.

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Medically At-Risk Drivers Centre, Alberta Motor Association, City of Edmonton Transportation and Community Services, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Implementation: Ongoing

## Action 2: Research the needs of older drivers and the supports they require.

- Lead partner: Medically At-Risk Driver Centre
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, City of Edmonton Transportation Services, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

## Action 3: Review the current processes for determining older driver competency and the supports available for transitioning from driver to passenger.

- Lead partner: Medically At-Risk Driver Centre
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Additional resources required: Staffing
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 4: Develop and implement a plan for assessing driver competency and supporting older drivers.

- Lead partner: Alberta Transportation
- Key stakeholders: Medically At-Risk Driver Centre, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Additional resources required: Staffing
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

# Respect and Social Inclusion



**The vision of an age-friendly community included in the City of Edmonton's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* is one in which seniors are an integral part of a community that is knowledgeable about their needs and that supports older seniors to age in place and have a healthier, more independent lifestyle.**

This vision is shared by the agencies involved in developing this discussion paper.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Improving the attitudes of society and addressing the disrespect shown to older persons (ageism).
- Providing opportunities for inter-generational interactions and public education (organized positive encounters).
- Ensuring older persons have a place within the community (involved in leadership roles, engaged in community).
- Ensuring the community is helpful towards older people (inclusive communities).
- Ensuring there is a place in the family for older persons.
- Ensuring low-income seniors are considered and included in the community.

## How Edmontonians View Current Respect and Inclusion Practices for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Seniors are engaged and are more coordinated in expressing their views and needs	<b>Some ways to gather input are not age-friendly</b>	Seniors are often not consulted by decision makers in government or by policy makers
Increased interest from all orders of government and community organizations in seeking input from seniors	<b>Lack of knowledge of the needs and abilities of seniors by other age groups</b>	Some seniors don't feel valued or needed
Increased use of age-friendly strategies to meaningfully involve seniors		
Businesses are more aware of growing senior consumer market	<b>Lack of respect for seniors in the media and in society in general</b>	Mass media targeted at young people—seniors often feel invisible
Increased numbers of seniors makes it a group with more strength and visibility	<b>Some community centres and community groups are not programming for seniors, only for youth and children</b>	There is a misconception that seniors are a drain on resources
More seniors continue to be actively engaged in community life bringing extensive skills, experience and knowledge		Today's world is fast-paced and many seniors feel left behind
Edmonton has produced <i>Edmonton Seniors Declaration</i> , <i>Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait</i> , and <i>Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study</i>		Seniors are a diverse group made up of three and four decades of ages—they are not a homogeneous group
Some senior awards		Ageism is still alive in our society
Seniors Week celebrated in Alberta		

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

**Not everyone is blessed with resources. My hope is that won't prevent seniors from taking a class or taking part in community gatherings. It's so important that we keep connected.**

I also hope that there will be basic English classes readily available to immigrant and refugee seniors allowing them to interact with mainstream society thereby reducing their isolation.

When there is respect for all people regardless of age or cultural background, then understanding can occur. Universal kindness, listening, sharing—these are things that can build bridges between generations, between people in general. Realizing the value in consulting seniors for their wisdom and experience, contributes to society. In so doing, we come alive.

—*Delores Berlin*



# Goal 1

Seniors are treated with respect.

**Action 1: Work with community stakeholders and organizations to develop and implement strategies that encourage respect and inclusion of seniors.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Community Services, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

**Action 2: Develop and implement opportunities for utilizing and showcasing seniors' skills and contributions.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

# Goal 2

Seniors have opportunities to participate in, and be engaged by, their communities.

**Action 1: Develop and provide innovative, age-friendly resource guidelines for stakeholders and community organizations to engage seniors.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

**Action 2: Develop and implement a plan for stakeholders/community organizations to engage and support isolated seniors.**

- Lead partner: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)



# Civic Participation, Volunteerism and Employment

**In conducting its 2008 Senior Needs Assessment, Banister Research found that while more than half of the respondents (63 per cent) were retired, 20 per cent were working full time and 11 per cent were working part-time.**

These numbers indicate a shift in the workforce as individuals are working later in life, whether by choice, or by necessity.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Provide volunteer options for older people.
- Provide a range of employment options.
- Encourage workplaces to be flexible in accommodating older workers and volunteers.
- Encourage civic participation
- Provide training.
- Make entrepreneurial opportunities available.
- Value older people for their contributions in the workplace and society.

Banister Research indicated the following employment issues, based on its 2008 Senior Needs Assessment:

- The majority of respondents were not interested in returning to work. However, the 19 per cent who were, wanted work in a business or professional job.
- Sixty-nine per cent of respondents that were interested in returning to work were interested in part-time work, while 22 per cent were interested in full-time.
- Respondents were most interested in a job fair or a 'hire-a-senior' centre as a means of finding employment.



## How Edmontonians View Current Civic Participation, Volunteerism and Employment Opportunities for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Recognition that seniors vote	<b>Language barriers/cultural barriers prevent many seniors from civic participation, volunteering and employment</b>	Up and coming seniors have different expectations for engagement—they want to share their skills, not just stuff envelopes
Some age-friendly voting practices are emerging	<b>Need for more flexibility in the workplace for time off to care for aging family members</b>	Many seniors find they have to go back into the workforce to make ends meet
Many seniors volunteer. Increased knowledge on how to attract and support seniors as volunteers	<b>There is currently no employment agency targeted to help seniors stay, or get back into, the workforce</b>	The contributions that seniors make through volunteering are not valued and supported in some cases—policies and procedures needed
There are more employment opportunities—some employers are recognizing seniors' knowledge and skills and using seniors to mentor younger employees	<b>Need for a graduated retirement option</b>	Seniors live longer and want to continue to be meaningfully engaged in work and community life
More seniors on civic boards	<b>No formal method of valuing and transferring the knowledge of seniors to younger workers</b>	Some employers don't value older workers, especially older female employees
		Many baby boomers are currently unemployed and can't find work though they are under retirement age

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

### Our hope is that there is no compulsory retirement.

Many talented seniors wish to remain working, may not be prepared to retire, or need the income.

We hope Edmontonians continue to step up and volunteer and that seniors continue to account for a large proportion of volunteers. There is such self-fulfillment in helping others! Volunteering will continue to provide interesting opportunities for seniors and active boomers will discover these opportunities.

Seniors should be consulted on decisions that affect their communities.

Their opinions matter. The sheer number of seniors will make businesses and governments responsive to their needs.

—*Jim and Esther Burke*



# Goal 1

Seniors have a voice in decisions that affect their community.

## Action 1: Conduct age-friendly community consultations.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, ESCC
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 2: Develop and implement strategies to encourage seniors' participation in civic\* affairs.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Community Services and Office of the City Manager
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

# Goal 2

Seniors are valued as employees and volunteers.

## Action 1: Research, identify and share best practices with regards to seniors' participation in the workforce.

- Lead partner: ECSS continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Service Alberta, Service Canada, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 2: Develop a plan to assist organizations in recruiting, retaining and supporting older workers.

- Lead partner: ECSS continues to seek a lead partner
- Key stakeholders: Service Alberta, Service Canada
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 3: Research, identify and share best practices with regards to seniors' needs and interests in volunteering.

- Lead partner: Volunteer Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Alberta, City of Edmonton - Community Services, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 4: Develop a plan to assist organizations in recruiting, retaining and supporting senior volunteers.

- Lead partner: Volunteer Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Alberta, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, ESCC, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)



**Housing is often cited as an issue in recent seniors research studies, with the majority of seniors expressing their desire to live in their homes as long as they are able.**

One of the challenges is to find the support services necessary to enable them to do so. Very few housing providers for seniors have taken cultural and language barriers into account in terms of food services, communication techniques and staffing.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Affordable housing options are available for older people.
- Essential services (electricity, gas and water) are available to seniors.
- Homes are designed with older persons in mind.
- Home modification options are available.
- Maintenance services are affordable and workers are qualified to do the maintenance.
- Home services are accessible and affordable.
- Community and family connections are made (older persons can stay in their familiar neighbourhood).
- The living environment has sufficient space and privacy.

## How Edmontonians View Current Housing Services for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
Many seniors housing providers in Edmonton	<b>Many single family homes are not designed to support aging in place (i.e. wide doorways to accommodate wheelchair access; washroom, bedroom and laundry on main level, stair-less entry, etc.)</b>	Some of the apartment buildings where seniors are aging in place were not designed for a senior population—there are many barriers such as no elevators
Nanny suites could be converted to accommodate seniors—accessibility improvements and grant funding may be needed	<b>Need more diversity in senior housing options (i.e. spouses who have differing needs, housing options to include pets, seniors with dementia, housing with doctors/medical support etc.)</b>	Seniors can still feel isolated within a seniors complex
An Elder Abuse shelter in Edmonton	<b>Not enough long term care beds for seniors in Edmonton</b>	Social determinants of health need to drive service
Federal and provincial grants available to assist with modifications to homes to remove barriers and make the home more age-friendly	<b>Need more suitable housing options for seniors from different cultural backgrounds</b>	Emergency services face challenges in rescuing seniors from complexes not designed for seniors (i.e. stairwells not big enough to accommodate stretchers)
Increasing knowledge, education and research on accessible housing for seniors	<b>Often a disconnect between design of seniors housing and actual needs of seniors</b>	Concentration of seniors in mature neighbourhoods
City zoning accommodates secondary suites	<b>Zoning restrictions for garden suites (two housing units on the same lot)</b>	Seniors are asset rich and income poor—they don't have funding for home modifications
Publications/ workshops to inform seniors about their housing options	<b>Some homeless seniors</b>	Many of the housing options for seniors are beyond what they can afford
Some subsidized suites for seniors in Edmonton	<b>Some senior housing facilities are located far from other services, communities may not be age-friendly</b>	Provincial disconnect between housing, health and seniors departments resulting in funding and service gaps—seniors get caught in the middle
Some housing options support seniors ability to age in place within the same complex—especially available for higher income seniors	<b>Need more subsidized senior housing</b>	Wait lists for long-term care beds/ seniors housing in Edmonton
	<b>Need housing options to support seniors ability to age in place within the same complex for low and middle income seniors</b>	Assessment criteria doesn't acknowledge interdependence— independence in housing is not realistic (interdependence is more achievable)
	<b>Gap in housing availability for middle income seniors</b>	Lack of communities designed to attract a variety of ages

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)

# Goal 1

There are a range of age-friendly housing options, from single-family homes to congregate living, available to seniors.

*Housing options include adaptations and renovations to existing housing structures, new-built single-family homes, or congregate living structures.*

## Action 1: Promote and/or develop guidelines and resources on age-friendly housing options.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Sustainable Development and Community Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs, Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region, Alberta Senior Citizens Housing Association
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 2: Develop a strategy for enhancing age-friendly housing options.

Lead partner: ECSS continues to seek a lead partner

- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Sustainable Development and Community Services, Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs, Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

## Action 3: Seniors and senior organizations are informed about fire safety and personal emergency preparedness.

- Lead partner: Edmonton Fire Rescue Services
- Key stakeholders: Senior Centers, ESCC, Greater Edmonton Foundation, Lifestyle Options and other seniors housing providers, City of Edmonton Community Services
- Implementation: Immediate and ongoing

## Action 4: Continue to inform and advocate for building code changes to enhance fire safety within residential care facilities and assisted seniors housing.

- Lead partner: Edmonton Fire Rescue Services
- Key stakeholders: Safe housing, Federal Government, Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, Provincial Government, The Building Technical Council, Fire Technical Council, Seniors Housing Providers and Health Inspection Building Code Committee
- Implementation: Immediate and ongoing



Photo courtesy of Ren Wickman

# Goal 2

Seniors are informed about the range of housing options available.

**Action 1: Promote and/or develop resources to inform seniors and their families about their housing options.**

- Lead partner: SAGE
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton - Sustainable Development and Community Services, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, referral services, housing providers
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4)

It's very important that we talk more about the many contributions older people can make to livable and lifelong communities. Critical to this way of thinking is supporting seniors who wish to age in place and remain in their homes and communities for as long as they choose.

This requires a political commitment to changing home construction regulations and practices so that all new homes automatically include features such as an accessible entry and a wheel chair accessible bathroom for those who may develop mobility impairments at anytime throughout their lifespan.

There must also be strong political support for affordable home renovation programs to enable seniors to make home modifications that allow them to live there as long as possible. This will help seniors maintain regular social interaction with their family, friends and neighbours.

—Peter Faid



# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



## Our growing population of seniors also has unique needs when it comes to outdoor spaces and buildings in our communities.

We need to understand the needs of seniors and focus on their special requirements, whether it is adding more park benches, fixing cracked and broken sidewalks, increasing outdoor lighting or relocating bus stops. These are changes that will make seniors more comfortable and safer in their communities, thus reducing their social isolation.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- The environment is pleasant and clean
- Green spaces are available, accessible and valued
- There are places to rest
- Pavements are age-friendly
- Pedestrian crossings are safe
- Buildings and spaces have good accessibility
- The environment is secure (safe)
- There are walkways and cycle paths
- Buildings are age-friendly
- There are adequate public toilets
- Businesses recognize the needs of seniors and provide age-friendly services such as separate lines, chairs if the wait is long, washrooms, etc.

## How Edmontonians View Current Accessibility of Outdoor Spaces and Buildings for Seniors

Strengths	Gaps	Challenges
City of Edmonton Neighbourhood Renewal program is rebuilding and repairing sidewalks in mature neighbourhoods making them more accessible	<b>Currently there are no standards or guidelines on age-friendly parks or buildings</b>	Edmonton is a winter city and snow and ice build-up on sidewalks is a major concern for seniors
Public buildings are generally accessible for seniors with mobility concerns	<b>Some sidewalks in residential neighbourhoods do not yet have curb ramps at intersections to allow for ease of use for people who require mobility devices</b>	Doors on many businesses are heavy to open and do not have the automated open feature
Most neighbourhoods have sidewalks and curb ramps are being installed in many areas	<b>There are a shortage of benches and public washrooms on park walkways</b>	The cracks in older sidewalks often present many tripping hazards for seniors
City of Edmonton is placing more emphasis on 'walkable' communities	<b>Poor lighting in park areas and buildings is a concern to seniors who worry about safety</b>	Some sidewalk designs, such as interlocking bricks, are difficult to navigate for seniors with mobility challenges
Growing knowledge about age-friendly park and facility design	<b>Large neighbourhood parks are geared to children and only a few parks have features designed for senior use</b>	Snow clearing can create windrows which are extremely difficult for seniors to cross
Age-friendly design is a topic of interest from a variety of sectors (including health, architects, landscape architects, planners, recreation, and parks)		Falls by seniors is a concern and can be reduced through effective facility, park and urban design
Age-friendly design benefits everyone and promotes universal design and inclusion		Edmonton has a beautiful river valley park system not fully accessible to people with mobility concerns
Some age-friendly parks have recently been developed in Edmonton		
City of Edmonton is a national leader with universal design and has been involved in the development of national Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards and resources on accessibility for play spaces—age-friendly parks can build upon this existing work		

(A selection of comments and insights provided during the community consultation process. Items on each horizontal line are not necessarily related.)



# Goal 1

Parks, outdoor spaces, communities and buildings are designed to be age-friendly.

## Action 1: Promote and encourage the use of an audit resource for age-friendly universal design and inclusion.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Infrastructure Services, Sustainable Development, Community Services
- Key stakeholders: Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Chamber of Commerce
- Implementation: Immediate and ongoing

## Action 2: Promote and/or develop guidelines and resources for parks, outdoor spaces, communities and buildings.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Infrastructure Services, Sustainable Development, Community Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Tourism/Parks and Recreation, Alberta Barrier Free Council, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

## Action 3: Encourage the development of age-friendly parks, outdoor spaces, communities buildings, and walkways.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Infrastructure Services, Sustainable Development, Community Services, Transportation Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Tourism/Parks and Recreation, Alberta Barrier Free Council, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)



# Goal 2

Parks, outdoor spaces, communities, walkways and buildings are maintained to ensure on-going access by seniors.

## Action 1: Develop and implement age-friendly guidelines for maintenance.

- Lead partner: City of Edmonton - Community Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Tourism/Parks and Recreation, Alberta Barrier Free Council, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

There are many aspects of our society that keep us separated, including urban sprawl, icy sidewalks and streets, limited public transportation and household entertainment systems. Therefore, public spaces are absolutely vital for the health of our society, to keep us connected face to face.

Our public libraries and city parks are wonderful, but we must ensure they are accessible and available, with appropriate activities for seniors. I would like to see activity parks and community gardens integrated into existing facilities, so that there are healthy outdoor activities for those who want them.

Buildings such as libraries, seniors centres and recreation centres should incorporate indoor green spaces with lots of light – to supplement the Muttart Conservatory and the City park in the Citadel theatre.

—Keith Turnbull



# Next Steps



The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council will form an implementation team with representation from key stakeholders to promote, guide, encourage, and oversee progress on the *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan*. Progress reports will be provided on an annual basis.

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council urges all businesses, community organizations, orders of government and senior-serving organizations to use the three documents—*Edmonton Seniors Declaration*, *Edmonton Seniors: A Portrait*, *Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan*—to better meet the needs of Edmonton seniors and help make Edmonton a more age-friendly city. These documents can inform service plans and program development.

# Glossary of Terms

**Age-friendly** In an age-friendly community, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to “age actively”

**Age in place** The ability of people to choose to live in the home and community of their choice as independently and safely as possible.

**Assisted transportation** A transportation service that provides door-through-door transportation for people who have mobility challenges and other special needs that prevent them from using public transportation or other existing ride services.

**Civic** Pertaining to overall city, including municipal government, businesses, organizations, events etc.

**Communication** Methods of relaying information including print, electronic, face-to-face, etc.

**Community** An area which includes where you live, work, pray, play, etc. (broader than a geographical neighbourhood).

**Community characteristics** Aspects of an area that make it unique.

**Housing options** Options for housing that include adaptations and renovations to existing housing structures, new-built single-family homes, or congregate living structures.

**Key stakeholders** Agencies or organizations that have an interest and/or expertise in the delivery of services to seniors and which are able to take action to achieve the goal/action.

**Lead partner** Agency or organization that will play an initiating/facilitating role in guiding the process to pursue the goal/action.

**Neighbourhood** An area defined by a geographical boundary.

**Promising Practices** Effective methods, techniques and activities that help senior serving providers be more effective. Often referred to as best practices.

**Referral services** Networks that exist to connect people to appropriate services based on their needs i.e. The Support Network 211, City of Edmonton 311, etc.

**Senior** Refers to people generally ages 55 years and beyond.

**Social engagement** Forms of interaction between people including physical, mental, recreational, artistic, cultural, spiritual etc.

**Stakeholder** Any individual or organization that has an interest in the delivery of services to seniors.

## Acknowledgements

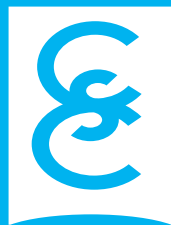
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Thank you to the many seniors who continue to share their wisdom—guiding actions and inspiring change to make Edmonton a special place to live and thrive.







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*Proud supporters of the Vision for an Age-Friendly Edmonton Action Plan*

