

Guidelines for Improving Seniors' Crossings

Recommendation:

That the April 12, 2011, Transportation Department report 2011TD8552 be received for information.

Report Summary

This report responds to the request for updates on guidelines for roadway and transit systems that improve access and mobility for seniors' crossings in alignment with City Council's Seniors Declaration made in 2010 (Attachment 1).

Previous Committee Action

At the February 8, 2011, Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report to the April 12, 2011 Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting, outlining the guidelines for sidewalks, bus stops, crosswalks and other factors that impact improvement of seniors' crossings.

Report

Specific considerations for seniors' is the need for good roadway crossing access to public transit bus stops and good sidewalk accessibility to and from the entrances of the residences to access transit service and destination facilities. When making decisions regarding placement of facilities and proximity to these services, acknowledgement must be given to the higher percentage of mobility challenges

faced by this demographic sector as compared to a typical adult. This report provides summary guidelines and processes that Transportation Department currently has in place or will be proceeding with that improves the access and mobility for seniors in the City of Edmonton in alignment with City Council's Seniors Declaration and The Way We Move.

There are a number of guidelines and programs available or being developed by Transportation Department that improve seniors' access and mobility including:

- Community Transit Bus Service
- Bus Shelter Installation Program
- Mobility Choices Travel Training Program and Seniors on the Go Initiative
- Annual Sidewalk Construction Program
- Pedestrian Crossing Control Review and Design Programs
- Seniors' Developments Guideline Review

More details on the context of how each of these areas specifically accounts for seniors are provided in Attachment 2.

Seniors' Activity Nodes Review

Locations where significant numbers of seniors reside and travel to offer opportunities to improve both existing situations and future developments. These areas tend to be adult/seniors only multi-unit complexes that typically have 50 to 100 living units or more. Primary destinations for these residents are key shopping and medical centre facilities and larger senior centres across the City.

Through guidance from City Council's representative for Seniors' Initiatives, Transportation Department undertook a review of key areas identified as high senior activity areas. The intent of the review was to assess current access and mobility options provided for seniors in these areas for consideration of improvements. The areas identified include:

- Central Lions Seniors Recreation Centre (Attachment 3)
- Westend Seniors Activity Centre (Attachment 4)
- Northgate Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre (Attachment 5)
- Strathcona Place Senior Citizens Centre (Attachment 6)
- Southeast Edmonton Senior Association (Attachment 7)
- Mill Woods Senior Centre (Attachment 8)

These areas were all reviewed for transit stop availability, sidewalk continuity and appropriate crossing measures within a reasonable walking distance surrounding these facilities.

Attachments 3 through 8 provide a graphical summary of these reviews. Each map identifies details of bus stops, sidewalks and pedestrian crossing controls in the area with the key findings being:

- the majority had provisions of community bus service which supplemented general transit service when more local direct access to Transit was required based on the senior centre location
- the sidewalk infrastructure in these areas provided good continuity of access to transit stops and nearby medical and shopping centre
- pedestrian crossing controls (including curb ramp access) were

provided near these centres and also in the overall mapped areas reviewed

This report has identified that for the areas reviewed; Transportation Department's current processes have resulted in generally good continuity for the accessibility needs of seniors. Transportation Department will also continue to work with Community Services Department through the Seniors Coordinator and seniors groups including the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and other seniors' community groups to review and identify potential improvements in other senior activity areas.

As with any existing process, there are ongoing areas where Transportation Department sees room for improvement to further enhance seniors' needs.

Opportunities for Improvement

Areas for improvement flagged through the Seniors' Activity Node Review process, for application to both existing and future developments, included the following.

1. Access to and through shopping and medical facilities varied and did not always provide for continuous pedestrian guidance or accommodation on these sites.
2. A few areas had minor gaps in the sidewalk continuity in connection with bus stop access and nearby pedestrian crosswalks in the immediate area of the centres at the local road level.

These gaps have been identified and will be flagged for review within the relevant programs based on priorities

within each of these areas as summarized in Attachment 2.

Within existing areas that are fully developed, opportunities for further improvements to seniors' crossings and general access beyond the programs identified in Attachment 2 are the neighbourhood reconstruction and roadway rehabilitation annual projects. Through these projects, more emphasis is being placed on providing better access for seniors near seniors' nodes through reviews of bus stop locations and types, proper sidewalk connectivity and reducing the crossing risk at key crossing points with focused reviews of these elements prior to work proceeding.

In addition to this, Transportation Department is involved with two major Aging in Place Demonstration Projects in Edmonton. The focus of those projects is to develop community initiatives to help support older seniors to age in place in their homes within the community. One project is in Southeast Edmonton which incorporates six neighbourhoods between Bonnie Doon and Capilano Mall, and the second project is in Mill Woods which is focusing on support to immigrant seniors. The Southeast project recently hosted a Senior's Transportation Forum. Feedback so far has included improvements to the Senior's Community Route, bus stops and curb ramps. The Mill Woods project will be hosting a Senior's Transportation Forum in late spring. Seniors groups are in the process of exploring options with Edmonton Transit relating to establishing a Seniors' Community Bus Route in Mill Woods.

For new developments including potential future seniors' centres, the current design and review process allows for work areas focused on pedestrian accommodation to review and ensure pedestrian access is appropriate for the area including seniors' node areas. Specific to this, is also ensuring appropriate conditions are placed on new development approvals to ensure appropriate bus stops, sidewalks, and pedestrian crossing controls are in place. This will be required as part of the development to properly support future seniors' facilities.

Corporate Outcomes

This report supports City Council's Seniors Declaration through The Way We Move strategic goal of access and mobility where:

- a senior citizen will feel confident that their city's transportation system meets their needs
- supports the ability of the growing senior population to age in place through providing a transportation system that offers them a continuum of options that are connected and integrated with each other

Others Reviewing this Report

- L. Cochrane, General Manager, Community Services Department

Attachments

1. Edmonton Seniors Declaration
2. Transportation Department Services and Programs for Seniors
3. Central Lions Seniors Recreation Centre Area
4. Westend Seniors Activity Centre Area

Guidelines for Improving Seniors' Crossings

5. Northgate Edmonton Seniors Association Area
6. Strathcona Place Senior Citizens Centre Area
7. Southeast Edmonton Senior Association Area
8. Mill Woods Seniors Centre Area