

Update: Seniors

Initiative Title: Seniors
City Council Sponsor(s): Councillor A. Knack
Supporting Department and Lead Staff: Community Services/Sustainable Development, Lyall Brenneis / Elaine Betchinski / Walter Trocenko

BACKGROUND:

- The number of seniors is increasing in Edmonton, similar to the rest of the world. Currently in Edmonton, 13 % of population is aged sixty five years of age and older, and 25% of the population is fifty-five years and older. The number of seniors continues to grow each year as baby boomers began to turn 65 years in 2012 and life expectancy is also increasing. By the year 2041, the number of seniors aged 80 years and older is expected to increase by 266%.
- Older adults and seniors are not a homogenous group and have diverse skills, interests and needs. They represent a span of about fifty years, reside in all areas of the city, only 5% live in long term care settings, are more culturally diverse with 10% unable to understand English or French, 1/3 receive income supports, ¼ either working part time or full time, and are often very committed experienced volunteers. This demographic shift combined with the desire by most seniors to age in place in their home and community is already having an impact on services in Edmonton, creating opportunities and challenges.
- In 2010, to proactively plan for the growing number of seniors and their diverse needs, Edmonton became a Global Age Friendly City, with the World Health Organization and City Council approved the Edmonton Seniors Declaration. In 2013, City Council approved funding for Edmonton's strategic plan for seniors "Vision for an Age Friendly Edmonton". This plan, being led by the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, includes initiatives in nine key areas: Community Support Services, Health, Communication/ Information, Social/ Recreation Participation, Transportation, Respect/ Social Inclusion, Civic Participation/ Volunteerism/ Employment, Housing and Outdoor Spaces/ Buildings.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- The overall objective of the City Council's Seniors Initiative is to support and enhance current work of the City of Edmonton, Community Services' Seniors Team and Edmonton's seniors sector. It includes Age Friendly Edmonton and many other seniors' projects. Council Sponsors reviewed the Age Friendly Edmonton Initiative and have focused work on five priorities. These topics were identified as needs and opportunities in the Vision for an Age Friendly and by seniors during recent community consultations. The priorities are:

- **Housing/ Aging in Place in the Community** to address the need for increased affordable and diverse seniors housing options in the community
 - **Financial Elder Abuse** to address the need for increased awareness of and incidence of financial abuse of seniors.
 - **Intergenerational Programs and initiatives** to increase opportunities for youth and seniors to interact and socialize.
 - **Loneliness/ Social Isolation** to enhance supports and reduce social isolation of seniors.
 - **Cultural diversity** to support inclusion and enhanced support for seniors from various cultural backgrounds.
- Further research and consultation is still required to develop detailed plans and timelines for the five priority initiatives.

Age Friendly Edmonton

- Many outcomes will be achieved such as increased age friendly knowledge, improved customer service practices by the City of Edmonton staff and over 90 stakeholder groups, new research, increased age friendly businesses in pilot sites, new community projects, enhanced communication resources, age friendly park/ facility and housing resources, ageism workshops, increased consultation of seniors, improved transportation services, and new policies. A comprehensive developmental evaluation plan will identify ongoing learning's, benefits and outcomes.
- This is currently an ongoing Council initiative, supports Age Friendly Edmonton's workplan and will benefit the City of Edmonton, community stakeholders and seniors. It will result in:
 - increased awareness of seniors' interests and needs,
 - reduced barriers and concerns,
 - enhanced and innovative program models, services and supports,
 - increased leadership, knowledge and resource information, and
 - an Age Friendly City which values, respects and includes seniors.
- A focus in 2013-2014 has been meeting the Vision for Age Friendly Edmonton transportation goal of designing and implementing a coordinated and effective shared services model with non-profit organizations providing assisted transportation to seniors – The Door Through Door Program.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- This Council Initiative supports the Edmonton Seniors Declaration and aligns with
 - The Way Ahead
 - Transform Edmonton's Urban Form and Livability

- The Way We Live
 - Goal one: Edmonton is a vibrant, connected, engage and welcoming city.
 - Goal three: Edmonton is a caring, inclusive, affordable community.

START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:

- It is not anticipated that additional funding is required to develop and implement a detailed project plan for this initiative. A detailed plan will be developed by Community Services in consultation with other city staff (Seniors Team, Housing, Multicultural, Edmonton Police Services, Elder Abuse Intervention Team, Community and Neighbourhood Services Branch, and Community Recreation Facilities Branch) and other community stakeholders (such as Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Age Friendly Edmonton Steering Committee, Seniors Centres and multicultural organizations), financial institutions and other government departments.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN:

- It is estimated the detailed project plan will be completed by March 31, 2014.