



Edmonton Seniors Declaration

The Gift of Age

Age is a gift to a city. People in their senior years allow us to connect with the generations before, to learn the stories that brought us here, to understand the shape of a human life and to experience again a way of looking attentively at the world that is sometimes lost in the busy middle years.

A certain resilience comes with age. Edmonton's seniors are survivors of many different histories. They include people from Aboriginal backgrounds; immigrants who come in their later years to join families; residents who have lived here since birth and those who have moved to the city from elsewhere. Leaders, workers, artists, homemakers and professionals of all kinds provide seasoning for our community in their older years.

In many ways, the senior years are like any other time of life. We go through normal changes. We have the ability to learn, the need for love and connection, the desire to create and contribute. We add to the city's economy as providers of wealth and as consumers. However, seniors also bring some special qualities to society, including perspective, wisdom, time to share and the gift of caring.

The period after traditional retirement age can cover more than three decades of continued achievement and change. After a lifetime of experience, we become even more individual in our interests, resources and capacities. However during this time of life, people share some special concerns. We need respect and meaningful, challenging activity. We want control over our lives and connections with others. And we face the possibility that, as a prelude to life's end, there will be a period when we need some extra support, just as we did in our earliest years.

Caring for older people has been a hallmark of human culture from our beginnings. Providing respect and integration becomes more complex in a large contemporary city, but the need to do so will become even more important as the city's senior population expands in coming years. Edmonton must retain its capacity to benefit from seniors' knowledge and abilities, as well as its capacity for caring about them, both physically and emotionally. We all benefit by shortening any period of frailty people may have through preventive measures, and also by supporting families, friends and neighbours through whatever period of extra care is needed.

— written by Alice Major - Edmonton's former Poet Laureate

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to the city.
Let us value all
the individuals
who bring it
to us.*

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, livable 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.



Declared by Edmonton City Council on June 3, 2010.