



Background information: Seniors' housing on surplus school sites

Edmonton needs more seniors' housing to keep up with demographic changes. The number of people stating their age as 60 and up in the 2009 municipal census was 106,914 or 13.7% of the total population. In the [2014 census](#), the same group numbers 128,071 or 14.6% of the total population.

That's an increase in actual numbers of 20% from 2009, and in Edmonton there's a particular need for additional affordable housing for seniors on fixed incomes.

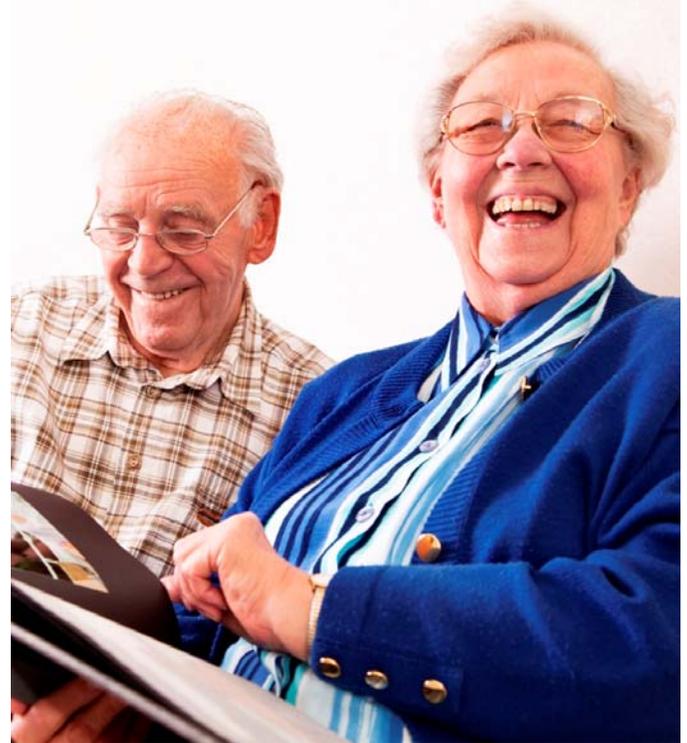
The City of Edmonton has strategies to create housing options for all residents, including seniors, utilizing vacant building sites declared surplus by school boards. Eight of these surplus school sites have been identified for construction of new housing developments for older adults. These sites are in Blue Quill, Bulyea Heights, Caernarvon, Kiniski Gardens, Miller, Overlanders, Sakaw and Wedgewood Heights.

Surplus school sites dedicated for seniors' housing are transit accessible and are near parks and amenities. Seniors' housing on these sites will allow many seniors to downsize from detached homes while remaining in their community, close to their friends and within a familiar neighbourhood.

As seniors transition out of their homes, these properties become available for new families, bringing renewed vibrancy and sustainability to local businesses and services. Creating ways for older generations to remain in their neighbourhood adds richness and stability to the social fabric.

Seniors' housing and your community

After a public hearing at Council, the eight sites identified for seniors' housing were zoned RA7 for low-rise apartments. This will permit housing developments of up to four storeys.



Construction will only occupy the undeveloped building site previously designated for a school. The adjacent green space will continue as recreational space.

A community liaison group has been formed to improve communication and understanding of the program. The group also helps the City understand local context that may influence new home development in each community.

Signs are being placed on all surplus school sites to distinguish school building sites from adjacent open space.

The city's project team will have ongoing communication and consultation with the community as the development unfolds, including public meetings to share information and answer questions.



Anyone interested in developing sites approved for seniors' housing is invited to send an email to surplusschoolsites@edmonton.ca with their contact information and site(s) of interest, to ensure you are contacted when proposals are being solicited for the site.

What's ahead?

- At the moment, there are no firm timelines for building seniors housing on these sites, except for Sakaw. The design engagement process for Sakaw started in May and will wrap up in late fall.
- The timing of seniors' housing developments is influenced by market factors and availability of funding from the City and Province.
- Community engagement will allow residents to respond to development proposals, ensuring that seniors' housing is well integrated into neighbourhoods.

Why and how we have surplus sites

When land for school and park sites was assembled decades ago, parts of each parcel of land were allocated for future buildings as well as open space for school and municipal needs.

A [Joint Use Agreement](#) supports collaboration between the City and school boards, and the planning and assembly of shared sites.

Over the years, many communities did not achieve the planned populations identified in neighbourhood plans. As children grew and left, populations generally peaked below planned levels and started to decline. On occasion, building sites set aside for schools were not developed and were later declared surplus by school boards.

Under the Joint Use Agreement, the school board regularly reviews its need for vacant school sites. Sites it does not require for future schools are declared surplus and returned to the City.

The City has a process for determining use of the surplus school building sites. All sportsfields planned for the school are retained.

Recent declarations of surplus school sites include 20 in 2006, and another 20 in 2009. In addition, sites with school buildings can be declared surplus, with first right to purchase offered to the City.

Of the total 40 declared surplus since 2006:

- 20 are approved for First Place
- 9 are housing sites with final use not yet determined
- 8 are planned seniors' sites
- 3 are retained for civic purposes

For more information

- Web: Edmonton.ca/surplusschools
- E-mail: surplusschoolsites@edmonton.ca
- Ph: 780-442-0905

