Seniors Centres of the Future
Public Consultation Report

Citizen Services | Community Inclusion and Investment
City of Edmonton

March 2017
For more information
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Acknowledgements
The City of Edmonton acknowledges the contributions of Sage Seniors Association and J.A. Smith Research and Consulting Services Inc.
The Seniors Centres of the Future survey was released broadly via The Edmonton Insight Community, an inclusive and accessible online citizen panel made up of diverse Edmontonians who provide feedback on City policies, initiatives and issues.

The key purpose of the survey was to determine a) how people see seniors centres in Edmonton today, and b) what people think seniors centres in Edmonton should look like in the future.

Participation in the survey was voluntary and confidential.

**Aging in Place**

Seniors are increasingly choosing to stay in their home neighbourhoods as they age,¹ and a key assumption of the Seniors Centres of the Future research project is that seniors centres have a role to play in helping seniors to age-in-place.

The Comprehensive survey was used to help us answer two key questions:

1. What do people in the greater Edmonton area think seniors centres currently do; and
2. What should seniors centres look like in the future to support seniors choosing to age-in-place?

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¹ Age Friendly Edmonton (December 2015) *Older Adult Needs Assessment: Final Report*
Two senior centre specific questions were included in The Edmonton Insight Community August 2016 Online Mixed Topic Survey that was completed by 2148 people in the greater Edmonton area.

Respondents were asked to choose the programs that they feel are most important from a list of six options taken directly from the City of Edmonton's Senior Centre Investment Program Operating Grant's application requirements. Respondents were able to select up to six options (all that apply):

**Chart 1**
*(Mixed Topic Survey) What are the most important services for seniors centres to provide (all that apply)?*
Recreation programs were identified as the most important for seniors centres, with 92% of respondents selecting it as an option. Health and Wellness (80%) and Social Services (76%) were also selected as important programs for seniors centres. Community Development was selected the fewest number of times, with approximately half (55%) of respondents choosing it as important for seniors centres.

The second question on the Mixed Topic survey asked respondents to identify only one of their selections as the most important program for seniors centres to provide, and respondents overwhelmingly chose Recreation Programs as the most important for seniors centres (46%).

Notably, only 4% of respondents selected Volunteer Opportunities as the most important program for seniors centres:

**Chart 2**
(Mixed Topic Survey) What is the most important service for seniors centres to provide (select one)?
A final question asked respondents if they would be interested in completing a more intensive survey on the future of seniors centres in Edmonton. More than half (52%) of respondents opted in, and were sent the Comprehensive Survey via email. The Comprehensive Survey was also made available online between August 9 and September 9, 2016, and was completed by 800 people.
These same two questions (Chart 1 and Chart 2) were included in the Seniors Centres of the Future Comprehensive Survey. First, respondents were asked to choose all the programs that apply they feel are the most important for seniors centres to offer:

Chart 4

(Comprehensive Survey) What are the most important services for seniors centres to provide (all that apply)?

Responses from the Comprehensive Survey roughly correspond with the responses from the Mixed Topic Survey.

Recreation programs were identified as the most important for seniors centres, with 93% of respondents selecting it as an option. Health and Wellness (77%) was also selected as important programs for seniors centres. Community Development was selected the fewest number of times, 50% of respondents choosing it as important for seniors centres.
Next, respondents were asked to identify only one of their selections as the most important program for seniors centres to provide, and again respondents overwhelmingly chose Recreation programs as the most important for seniors centres (55%).

Again, the provision of Volunteer Opportunities was very low on the priority list (5%).

**Chart 5**
*What is the most important service for seniors centres to provide (select one)?*
Survey Respondent Demographics

Baby Boomers are those born between 1946 and 1964, and are currently aged between 52 and 70 years.

As they begin to grow older, Baby Boomers are changing the shape of our city and province: decreasing fertility rates and increasing life expectancies are heralds of a ‘greying’ population.

While the future of seniors centres must consider a much broader age range, they will undoubtedly be impacted by this demographic shift.

Survey results have been cross-tabulated by age to help identify how Baby Boomers think about and plan for growing older.

Survey respondents were asked to identify their age by decade (e.g. 40-49) or portion thereof (e.g. 60-64), so for the purposes of this summary, the term “Baby Boomers” refers to survey respondents who are aged between 50-69 years.

The majority (59%) of survey respondents were Baby Boomers.

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See, for example, Alberta Association of Seniors Centres (2014) *Alberta Senior Centres Needs and Capacities Companion Report*
Approximately two-thirds (63%) of survey respondents identify as female. The vast majority of respondents indicated English as their first language (94%).

There are increasing numbers of immigrant, refugee, and newcomer seniors in Edmonton at risk of vulnerability due to the systemic, cultural, and language barriers. Their lack of representation here needs to be considered in any application of these survey results. See Age Friendly Edmonton (October 2015) *The Age of Wisdom: Giving Voice to Edmonton’s Immigrant Seniors and Identifying Their Needs.*

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Caregiving Responsibilities

According to the Demographic Planning Commission, “families are more diverse and increasingly separated by distance. Family size is shrinking, resulting in fewer children to support aging parents. Non-profit services say they are often filling roles that families used to assume” (2008). Yet, it is estimated that as much as 80% of the care for older adults is provided by family and friends (City of Edmonton, 2010). There is a gap related to supports for seniors with limited or no family supports, and it is essential that caregivers have the supports required to provide this care.

A quarter (24%) of survey respondents indicated that they help someone (not necessarily a senior) with their daily activities (e.g. help with getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, eating, housework, taking medication, getting to appointments).

**Chart 9**

*Respondents (%) who help someone with their daily activities*
The majority of respondents (55%) who are helping someone with their daily activities indicated that the help was required because of age.

**Chart 10**
*Reasons why help is required (%)*

16% of survey respondents indicated they provide care to an older adult. More than half of those respondents (52%) are Baby Boomers.

**Chart 11**
*Age of respondents providing care to an older adult (%)*
Living Situation of Survey Respondents

The purpose, function, and location of seniors centres is closely connected to where seniors live, and survey respondents were asked how they think their living situation might change over time.

Most respondents (39%) think it is very likely they will stay in their current home as they age, and the fewest number of respondents (5%) think they will access subsidized housing or move into seniors housing (6%), which is consistent with research suggesting a trend towards aging in place.

Responses from Baby Boomers were slightly higher, but largely aligned with those from the total pool.
Most respondents (87%) think it is very (58%) or somewhat (28%) likely that they will stay in their current home as they age.
When considering what they may need to stay in their homes as they age, the vast majority of respondents (91%) indicate that maintaining a healthy lifestyle is important to them. Managing health and avoiding potential physical problems (77%) and ensuring their current housing is appropriate (70%) are also important considerations.

Chart 15

Have you discussed or considered any of the following to assist staying in your home as you age? (%)

- the availability of supports and services for seniors
- the need for increased supports or services as you age
- ensuring that current housing is appropriate
- maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- managing health and avoiding potential physical problems

[Bar chart showing survey results]
Social and Economic Activity

Two survey questions were directed at anticipated social and economic activities as respondents grow older.

Chart 16
Respondents who think it is very or somewhat likely they will continue to work after age 65 (%)

The number of people who anticipate working after the traditional age of retirement (65) tends to increase as current age decreases.
Respondents between the ages of 50-59 are significantly more likely to think that they will participate, travel, or volunteer more than they do now.

Chart 16
Respondents who think it is *very or somewhat likely* they will participate, travel, or volunteer more as they age than they do now (#)
Senior Centre Use

The majority of survey respondents do not currently make use of seniors centres. The majority (63%) of respondents indicated that they are too young to do so.

Chart 17
Respondents who currently use seniors centres (%)

Chart 18
Age of respondents (#) indicating they are too young to use a senior centre
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Comprehensive Survey Results

Respondents who do not currently use a senior centre were also asked at what age they think they would be interested in becoming involved with a senior centre.

The majority of respondents (42%) - including Baby Boomers (48%) - think they will be interested in using a senior centre between the ages of 65-74.

10% of all respondents and 9% of Baby Boomers do not think they will ever be interested in using a senior centre.

Chart 18
Age at which respondents think they will be interested in using a senior centre

![Age at which respondents think they will be interested in using a senior centre chart]

- All Respondents
- Baby Boomers
Respondents who indicated they currently use a senior centre were asked to indicate the main reason why they do so (open-ended).

While many respondents provided more than one reason for their senior centre use, all of the comments can be grouped into the following categories: recreational programming (60%); socializing (37%); fitness (34%); volunteering (32%); and food (9%).

**Chart 19**
*Reasons for senior centre use (%)*

The majority of respondents who provided a reason for using a senior centre are between the ages of 65-69 (42%).

**Chart 20**
*Age of respondents who indicated reasons for senior centre use (%)*

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4 Refer to APPENDIX PC-B to see the full list of respondent comments.
The primary use of seniors centres for respondents aged 65-69 is recreational programming (62%), followed by socializing (52%).

The primary use of seniors centres for respondents aged 50-59 (10%) is recreational programming (50%) and fitness (50%). This age group is least likely to use a senior centre for socializing (10%).

**Chart 21**
Reason for senior centre use by age (%)
Perception of Purpose of Seniors Centres

Five of the survey questions asked respondents to indicate which programs and services they think seniors centres already provide (i.e. what is the current understanding of the purpose of seniors centres?) and which programs and services they think seniors centres should provide (i.e. what is the vision for seniors centres?).

The questions grouped programs and services into the following categories: support groups; health-related; lifetime learning and educational opportunities; leisure activities; and services.\(^5\)

The programs and services most commonly understood as being offered by seniors centres, with at least 50% of respondents indicating that seniors centres do offer them are largely social-, recreational-, and wellness-related activities.

**Chart 22**
*Programs and services respondents most commonly perceived as offered by seniors centres*

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5 Please refer to Appendix PC-A for more detailed information.
Fewer than 20% of respondents indicated that seniors centres do offer:

- Job placement (9%)
- LGBTQ support groups (13%)
- Employment skills (14%)
- Facility food bank (16%)
- Divorce support groups (17%)
- Help with grocery shopping (18%)
- Telephone reassurance (19%)

With the exception of job placement (35%) and employment skills (43%), the majority of respondents identify these things as services that seniors centres should offer.

**Chart 23**
*Disparity between what respondents think seniors centres do and should provide*
Of 63 options listed in the five categories, only three were identified by fewer than 50% of respondents as being something that seniors centres should provide: spiritual support groups (40%); employment skills (43%); and job placement (35%).

The programs and services most commonly indicated (by at least 75% of respondents) as being something that seniors centres should offer are:

- Opportunities for intergenerational learning and/or engagement (75%)
- Filing income tax or other forms (75%)
- Community gardens (75%)
- Health and wellness activities (e.g. nutrition seminars) (75%)
- Support groups: Caregiver (75%); Dementia (76%); Grief and loss (76%)
- Housing information (76%)
- Guardianship, Trusteeship, and Personal Directive information (76%)
- Outdoor activities (e.g. walking or cycling groups) (77%)
- Financial and legal educational opportunities (77%)
- Challenges with adult children (77%)

The greatest discrepancies between what respondents indicate seniors centres do provide and what they should provide: challenges with adult children support groups (55%); LGBTQ senior support groups (58%); and opportunities for intergenerational learning and/or engagement (51%).

**Chart 24**

*Do < Should: Greatest discrepancy*
Table Games (e.g. cards, board games) and Arts and Crafts were the only two selections to have more people indicate that seniors centres do offer them than those who indicated they should be offered.

Chart 25
Do > Should: Greatest discrepancy
Meeting the Needs of Seniors

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree with characteristics that could help seniors centres meet the needs of seniors in the future. The characteristics were drawn from the eight emerging models of seniors centres outlined by a 2009 Task Force Report prepared for the National Institute of Senior Centres.6

Clear disagreement (≥10%) was evident with only three of the characteristics:

- rely primarily on volunteers to operate (52%)
- be self-sustaining rather than publicly funded (42%)
- are open to all community members and not just seniors (18%)

These same three characteristics also demonstrated the most ambivalence amongst respondents (neither agree nor disagree):

- rely primarily on volunteers to operate (23%)
- be self-sustaining rather than publicly funded (24%)
- Cafés are open to all community members – allows for introduction of new participants to other programs and services (21%)

The vast majority (≥90%) of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that in order to meet the needs of seniors in the future, seniors centres should:

- Meet the highest standards of excellence (93%)
- Hire and support directors with higher education and/or management certificates (94%)
- Consistent use of evaluation tools (92%)
- Play a vital role as the focal points of coordination of information, access and service delivery to the aging population (91%)
- Collaborate with other community organizations, including healthcare institutions, healthcare providers, mental health, educational institutions and community-based service providers to create a unique system of care (92%)
- Provide diverse and comprehensive programming that encompasses health, recreational, educational, cultural, nutritional, and social service needs (94%)
- Focus on intellectual stimulation, personal growth and enhanced quality of life

6 Refer to Appendix PC-C for a complete list of models and characteristics.
Be comfortable and welcoming spaces (98%)
Be located in neighbourhoods and are easy to get to by walking, by car or public transit (95%)
Be very consumer driven: open during non-traditional hours to attract diverse consumers (91%)
Facilitate peer and community connections of all ages (91%)

A significant majority (80-89%) also strongly or somewhat agreed that in order to meet the needs of seniors in the future, seniors centres should:

- Offer comprehensive services and programs that meet the changing needs of consumers as they “age-in-community” (89%)
- Offer program and activities at multiple sites through partnerships (87%)
- Have a health and fitness centre (88%)
- Promote continuous improvement, adaptability and strategic management (86%)
- Provide life planning programs to explore future possibilities and goals as people age (85%)
- Offer continued learning for new direction, enrichment and retooling (85%)
- Operate as nonprofit centres that meet state nonprofit standards (80%)
- Have inclusive, comprehensive and innovative programming (82%)
- Provide state-of-the art services that are characterized by incremental, as well as structured plans that allow for greater dependence on resources and focus as participants age (83%)
- Use evidence-based health promotion models (80%)
- Be centrally located and easy to get to by car or public transit (83%)
Final Comments

Survey respondents were given the opportunity to provide final comments at the end of the survey.

Common themes in the comments from respondents in the 18-29 age category include the need for seniors centres to be inclusive (including intergenerational), to integrate with other City facilities (e.g. rec centres, libraries, community leagues) and to provide connections between seniors and the community.

Respondents aged 30-39 also expressed an interest in the integration of seniors centres with other City facilities and services, and tended to emphasize the potential and need for intergenerational engagement.

A key theme in the comments from respondents in the 40-49 age category is the need to recognize seniors as a diverse population: seniors centres will need to understand and respond to a diversity of needs and desires related to age, generation, culture, and ability.

Respondent comments in the 50-59 age category also emphasized the need for the integration of seniors centres with other City facilities and services, including underutilized schools and community centres.

Support was evident for coordination and communication between service providers in different areas: respondents highlighted the potential for seniors centres to refer seniors to existing resources, rather than provide those services themselves, as a way to minimize duplication of services.

“Overall I feel that more needs to be done to ensure that if people would like to they can age in place. I also think as a younger individual it would be great to have a stronger connection between generations”

“I think seniors centres should become community hubs that offer services for all ages. Seniors could be the focus and comprise a lot of the volunteers, but there is a need for intergenerational programs and more integration. Baby boomers and those younger are not interested in the traditional senior centre model, so they need to adapt to the times”

“I think there is the perception of senior’s centres as institutions meant to conveniently remove the elderly - and all of the problems associated with aging from the public sphere ... I think the most critical area of growth needs to be linking seniors centres to the community so that they are not perceived as places where we just disappear the elderly”
While some respondents in this age category supported intergenerational engagement, another theme emerged regarding the need for senior-specific spaces, particularly for older seniors and those with dementia.

The location and accessibility of seniors centres is also important to respondents in this age category, with an emphasis on seniors centres in neighbourhoods and close or adjacent to libraries and shopping centres.

A central theme in the comments from respondents who are between the ages of 60-64 is concern over duplication of services, including a caution against seniors centres attempting to ‘be all things to all people’.

There is also support from respondents in this category for senior-specific programming and spaces in other City facilities. Other themes include the need for accessibility (e.g. cost, hours of operation), and understanding that what it means to be a ‘senior’ is changing (e.g. interests).

A concern over duplication of services is also a key theme in the comments from respondents in the 65-69 age category, with an emphasis on coordination and collaboration between various service providers as a way to prevent this.

Transportation and affordability also emerged as themes for this age category, as did a need for seniors centres to provide recreational and fitness-related programming, and opportunities for socializing.

Duplication of services continued as a theme in the comments from respondents aged 70-74, particularly with regard to concerns about funding. An understanding of seniors centres as places for seniors to access information (referrals to resources), socialize, and remain active is evident in the comments.

There were very few comments from respondents aged 75+, so it is not possible to identify common themes for this demographic.
Three Sounding Board Sessions on the Future of Seniors Centres were held in September 2016. The purpose of the sessions was to engage community stakeholders in a discussion of the research that emerged from the literature review and environmental scan.

A key objective of the sessions was to garner wide-ranging feedback on the research to date, and a diverse range of participants were invited to attend. The seniors centres and senior groups identified in the environmental scan provided the base of the invitee contact list. Social media was used to identify organizations that might be interested in the project or consider themselves stakeholders, and the Academic Advisory Committee the Community Inclusion and Investment Branch at the City of Edmonton were asked to identify potential participants.

161 potential participants representing 78 organizations were invited to attend the Sounding Board Sessions: 47 individuals – seniors, staff and board members from senior-serving organizations and organizations that provide service to seniors as part of their mandate – attended. The Sounding Board Sessions were facilitated by Anne Smith of J.A. Smith Research and Consulting Service Inc.

A background information document and the questions for discussion were sent to all participants in advance of their Sounding Board Session. The background information document was compiled from information obtained during the literature review and environmental scan. It was used to structure the conversation, and focused on three areas:

1. Concepts for a vision for the seniors centres of the future.
2. The Active Ageing Policy Framework as a tool for focusing and organizing the

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7 Refer to Appendix PC-D to see the invitation process.
8 Refer to Appendix PC-E for a list of participants.
9 Refer to Appendix PC-F to see the Sounding Board Sessions agenda.
3. Key characteristics for the senior centre of the future.

Research Concepts for Future Vision

Rather than provide a fully formed vision statement, the background information outlined concepts that research suggests for a vision for the senior centre of the future. The facilitator identified the following ideas as a summary of these concepts in all three sessions:

- Supports aging-in-place
- Provides community-based human services to seniors—seniors centres are part of a community
- Acts a community hub for service and connection by seniors
- Supports independence, inclusion and quality of life for seniors
- Holistic
- Part of a continuum of care for seniors
- Recognition that an individual senior centre cannot do all things for all seniors
- Partnerships and collaboration are a key means for service delivery and achieving results – many working together
- Focus of service (holistic, community-based, responsive, social support/care and health)

Participants were asked three questions related to the vision concepts outlined in the background information:

1. What excites you about the vision for the future of seniors centres? Why?
2. What causes you concern? Why?
3. What is your comfort level with the vision that research suggests for seniors centres of the future (high/medium/low)?
As participant backgrounds were quite diverse, they approached the vision concepts from a variety of perspectives. The majority of participants expressed a medium level of comfort with the vision concepts presented. Approximately 25% of participants had a high level of comfort with the vision concepts, and five individuals out of the 47 participants expressed a low level of comfort with the vision concepts presented.

**Chart 25**

*Participant comfort level with vision that research suggests for seniors centres of the future*

The concepts that received the most support from participants regarding a vision for seniors centres of the future are that they are holistic, community-based, and offer local accessibility. Several participants identified partnerships and the idea of organizations working together to achieve results as very positive concept.

In one session, the vision of seniors centres as part of the continuum of care was identified as very positive. It was equated with a focus on wellness, and the recognition that seniors centres have a very important role to play in general health and wellbeing. However, as noted below, in another session, the reference to a continuum of care was seen to indicate a focus on health care needs and illness rather than wellness.
Causes of Caution and Concern

The five participants who expressed a low comfort level with the vision concepts all attended the same session. In this session, interest was expressed regarding how the research was undertaken; the core premises being made about seniors centres of the future; and a concern that the concepts were more reflective of the current situation rather than providing a picture of the desired future.

Some participants in this session asked why a seniors-centred approach was being taken, and felt that integrated and intergenerational models should be considered. Participants suggested there was a need for greater clarity on the core assumptions that were being made, and one participant stated that terms like ‘aging-in-place’ and ‘continuum of care’ reflected current rather than future thinking. There was also strong concern expressed by one individual about the use of the words ‘care’ and ‘continuum of care’. For this individual and a few others, these terms suggest a focus on illness for the vision, rather than a focus on wellness.

Causes of caution and concern regarding the vision for the future of seniors centres can be thematically grouped as:

- Senior-focused vs. community-focused
- Definition of community
- Inclusion and exclusion
- Consistency and uniqueness: Diversity of the senior population
- Importance of physical place
- Definition of seniors-centred
- Partnership
- Roles and responsibilities
Senior-Focused vs. Community-Focused

Participants in all sessions expressed some caution about an exclusively seniors-centred approach, warning that it could inadvertently cause seniors to be isolated from the broader community.

In all sessions, the importance of community and community connection was identified. Some participants assumed this concept was covered in the reference to a ‘community hub’, but others did not see the concept of seniors’ contribution and seniors’ interaction with the broader community in the ideas presented.

A key tension raised in discussion is the tension that exists between services designed exclusively for seniors, and services that focus on all community members, regardless of age. Participants identified the need for intergenerational interaction and community-based service, but also identified the need for specific services for seniors, asking both “what is the correct balance?” and “how do we strike this balance?”.

The community-based language of the vision concepts also drew another reaction: many session participants expressed concern this was ‘government language’ for wanting to download responsibility for seniors’ services onto the community, without the accompanying resources.

Definition of Community

The vision concepts appear to define community in terms of geographic neighbourhoods, and in all sessions, participants asserted the definition of community includes far more than geography. It also must include communities defined by culture, language, belief system, economic status and other factors.

The definition of community led directly to conversations about inclusion and exclusion, and how to balance flexibility and responsive service with consistency of service and (possibly) service standards.

Inclusion and Exclusion

Concern in this area centred on inclusion and exclusion within seniors centres themselves, as well as the inclusion and exclusion of seniors within the broader community.
It became apparent through discussion that a common definition of inclusion is important:

- Does inclusion mean treating everyone in the same manner?
- Does inclusion mean inviting all to participate in a full array of seniors’ services?
- Does it allow for the development of unique services based on cultural group, economic status and/or sexual orientation?

Some participants expressed concern that seniors from diverse backgrounds have been invited to participate in current senior centre activities, but did not want to participate. Others identified diversity as a very real issue they are not sure how to address. Some participants supported providing culturally-specific services, or defining community beyond the bounds of geography.

In one session, participants concluded the focus should be on ensuring seniors and sub-groups within the senior population are not excluded.

Session participants also identified issues of ageism, concern with the isolation of seniors and the importance of seniors being a part of the broader community. Some participants noted that many in people aged 55+ do not identify with the term ‘senior’, and do not access services provided by seniors centres.

**Consistency and Uniqueness: Diversity of the Senior Population**

Concern was expressed the vision might suggest one model or approach to the delivery of service. Given the diversity of the population, many identified that a one-model approach is not possible, and asserted the approach to service delivery must be flexible and responsive.

Some participants stressed that no one centre can do it all. At the same time, participants identified the need for consistency of service access and quality across the city.

The tension between flexible and responsive service, and the need for consistency and standards was raised during all three session discussions.
Importance of Physical Place

One statement in the background information document was cause for particular concern with some session participants:

Seniors centres are less about a physical location than they are about a method of service delivery—one that straddles two sectors (social care and support and health).

Participants stressed the importance of an accessible, physical space for seniors. It is why the concept of a community hub was seen as a very positive aspect of the vision.

Participants agreed that physical space needs to take both local access and design of the space into consideration: the space needs to be functional for seniors. Some participants identified the trend towards the design of multi-purposed space as very positive.

Definition of Seniors-Centred

Caution was also raised regarding what is meant by the term ‘seniors-centred’. Some participants expressed concern the vision seems driven by a seniors-serving organizational perspective rather than by seniors themselves. Participants asserted that ‘seniors-centred’ must mean listening and responding to the needs identified by seniors themselves.

For some, seniors themselves should be the drivers of service. There was general agreement with this concept, as long as all seniors have a voice. Concern was raised that this not currently the case. Others raised concern that all community members must have input to ensure citizens, who are all aging, have influence on the programs and services.

Partnership

Clarity of terms is a consistent theme raised during the Sounding Board Sessions, and ‘partnership’ is another term that participants indicated requires definition. Participants wanted to know not only what ‘partnership’ means, but what it requires. For some, the language of partnership suggests downloading responsibility onto the community.
Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities were also cited as a concern in the conversation on vision, and participants suggested that when we imagine the senior centre of the future, we need to think through the roles of:

- Seniors
- Senior’s family
- Community
- Government
- Funders
- Partners
The Active Ageing Policy Framework

The World Health Organization’s *Active Ageing Policy Framework*\(^{10}\) was presented as a way to organize and focus the work of seniors centres in the future. The framework, which is consistent with the Alberta Government’s Ageing Population policies and the City of Edmonton’s Age Friendly Edmonton Initiative, defines ‘active aging’ as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security for people as they age.

The framework suggests several inter-related areas that impact the aging process, and determine our ability to remain as healthy and active as possible as we age:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Health-related</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction (at all ages)</td>
<td>Health promotion and disease prevention</td>
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<td>Income</td>
<td>• Enabling people to take control over their health</td>
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<td>Social protection</td>
<td>• Coordinated and comprehensive continuum of care</td>
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<td>Work</td>
<td>Mental health services</td>
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<td>Social support</td>
<td>Biology and genetics</td>
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<td>• Supportive social connection</td>
<td>Psychological factors</td>
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<td>• Intimate relations</td>
<td>• Intelligence and cognitive capacity</td>
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<td>Violence and abuse</td>
<td>• Self-efficacy</td>
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<td>• Peace and protection</td>
<td>• Coping style and adaptability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and literacy</td>
<td>Safe housing</td>
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<td>• Opportunities for lifelong learning</td>
<td>• Including neighbourhoods</td>
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<td>• Intergenerational learning</td>
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| Physical (environment)        | Behavioural                                         |
| Age-friendly spaces           | Adopting a healthy lifestyle                        |
| Safe housing                  | Actively participating in one’s own care            |
| Falls prevention              |                                                     |
| Clean water, clean air, safe foods |                                                     |

\(^{10}\) To access the full framework, visit [who.int/ageing/publications/active_ageing/en/](http://who.int/ageing/publications/active_ageing/en/).
Participants were asked three questions related to the vision concepts outlined in the background information:

1. Do you feel that the *Active Ageing Policy Framework* is a useful way to organize and focus the work of seniors centres?
2. Do you have any cautions or concerns about using the *Active Ageing Policy Framework* to organize and focus the work of seniors centres?
3. What is your comfort level with the using the *Active Ageing Policy Framework* to organize and focus the work of seniors centres (high/medium/low)?

The majority of participants (30/47) expressed a medium level of comfort using the *Active Ageing Policy Framework* to organize and focus the work of seniors centres in the future. In the first session, participants discussed of both the merits of a framework in general, and of the *Active Ageing Policy Framework* in particular. In subsequent sessions, the facilitator gave greater emphasis to the rationale for a framework during its introduction, and as a result, the reasons for a framework in general was not discussed to the same degree by participants.
Usefulness of the Active Ageing Policy Framework

Participants generally agreed a framework to organize and focus the work of the seniors centres of the future is a good idea. Participants thought the Active Ageing Policy Framework could be useful because:

- the determinants of health are useful to identify
- it will support the delivery of consistent service
- it takes a broad and holistic approach
- it is similar to an eco-map (social work tool)
- would work well in smaller communities
- provides a broad framework so that strategies can be developed to provide needed detail

Participants noted that the Active Ageing Policy Framework is a good starting point for the development of a framework for Edmonton seniors centres of the future. Participants consistently identified the desire for a ‘made-in-Edmonton’ approach.

Causes of Concern and Caution

Nine out of the 47 participants expressed a low comfort level with the Active Ageing Policy Framework. Some participants cited a lack of detail and specificity for their discomfort, asserting the framework is not specific enough to help seniors centres of the future focus and organize their work.

For others, the lack of specificity and direction meant the framework was not a ‘framework’ at all, because it does not outline a position or perspective for each determinant.

The wide-reaching nature of the framework caused concern for some participants, who think it would ask seniors centres to become involved in areas that are the responsibility of others - housing and health, for example. Concern was raised that such a broad-based approach could give additional responsibility to seniors centres in the future, without any additional resources. Others worried that it could become prescriptive, like a rule book for funders.

Some participants were concerned the framework would ask seniors centres to become all things to all people. Others expressed concern that within this framework, they would lose their uniqueness. Some participants did not think the framework was ‘anything
new’ and suggested the Age Friendly Edmonton Action Plan was a more useful framework to explore.

Causes of caution and concern regarding the vision for the future of seniors centres can be thematically grouped as:

- Framework structure and concepts
- Importance of the Edmonton context for a policy framework
- The ‘cookie-cutter’ approach
- The challenges of partnerships and collaboration
- Seniors must have a voice
- Concern with the term ‘care’
- New approaches to funding for seniors centres of the future
- Concern with implementation
Framework Structure and Concepts

Some session participants indicated they were not sure what is meant by the seven determinants identified in the framework: in other words, what is embedded within each of the determinants? As a result, they could not assess whether the framework is a useful way to organize and focus the work of seniors centres of the future. For these participants, the framework needs further discussion and elaboration.

Session participants identified several determinants as missing from the framework:

- Cultural needs
- Cognitive needs (may be included in behavioural determinant)
- Spiritual needs
- Concept of aging with dignity

Importance of the Edmonton Context for a Policy Framework

Many session participants felt the context for the development of a policy framework to focus and organize the work of seniors centres is important, and stressed the significance of ‘Edmonton’ as that context. As a result, participants tended to see the Active Ageing Policy Framework as a starting point for the development of an Edmonton-specific framework.

Some participants suggested Age Friendly Edmonton as a better starting point for the development of a policy framework for seniors centres of the future, and wondered about the connection between the Active Ageing Policy Framework and the Age Friendly Edmonton Action Plan.

Participants also noted that connection to the social policy currently being developed by the City of Edmonton is necessary.
The ‘Cookie-Cutter’ Approach

Session participants expressed concern the framework could lead to the development of a one-size-fits-all approach.

Participants noted the importance of ensuring that seniors centres of the future respond to the full spectrum of need and desire within the senior population, and cautioned that one framework might not be able to capture the range of strategies and approaches to service delivery required. Participants also suggested that a standardized approach to service delivery might not be possible. Others expressed concern that a framework designed to ensure consistency and standardization might result in the loss of the unique nature of seniors centres.

As they did during discussions of the vision, participants again acknowledged that seniors centres of the future will serve a growing and increasingly diverse community. Seniors centres serve a wide variety of clients, and participants continued to assert the need for clarity around the issues of diversity and inclusion. Examples include seniors who want to access services within a particular cultural context and a need to expand our understanding of diversity beyond ‘culture’ (economic, physical, etc.).

The Challenges of Partnerships and Collaboration

Some session participants noted the importance of partnerships and collaboration to the success of the proposed approach to seniors centres of the future, and highlighted a need to explore and define these concepts:

- What does it mean to have an integrated approach? Is this an approach that assumes collaboration and linkages across systems?
- Systems connection and linkages is very complicated – how/can it be done?
- Is the language of partnerships and collaboration another way of ‘downloading’?
- Do we have the capacity and ability to do this?

One option that was proposed to ensure standardized and consistent service delivery was the creation of a ‘menu’ services provided by seniors centres, where individual seniors centres could identify the specific services they provide from a selection of clearly defined options. Service selection (and delivery) could change over time based on community need, and would allow for consistency, flexibility, and responsiveness.
Seniors Must Have a Voice

Some session participants were concerned the tone of the framework suggests something that is being done to seniors, and it assumes the point of view of the service provider and not of seniors themselves.

Participants stressed the importance of both a community-based and senior-centred approach in any framework applied to the future of seniors centres. Seniors should be asked how to achieve the vision, rather than having it imposed upon them.

In one session, participants noted there is a great deal of diversity in the senior population, and as a result, there will be a great deal of diversity within the determinants outlined in the framework.

Two cautions were raised regarding the view that seniors themselves should determine the nature of senior centre services:

1. We cannot assume that all seniors have a singular voice. How do we ensure the full range of seniors have input?
2. Seniors of the future, those not yet 55, also have a stake in the development of seniors centres and they too should have a voice.

The tension between responding to the current needs and interests of seniors, while anticipating future issues, needs, and challenges for a very large and dynamic population was indicated as a key challenge in developing community-based services.

Concern with the Term ‘Care’

One participant felt very strongly the term care should not be used in the development of a vision and framework for seniors centres of the future. ‘Care’ has a specific connotation, and using the term implies that seniors are frail and need to be looked after.
New Approaches to Funding for Seniors Centres of the Future

Another participant asserted a new approach and/or model for funding seniors centres will be needed to realize the framework. This participant felt strongly that having funding models align with service models is an important and strategic issue.

Concern with Implementation

While the session facilitator worked to keep the discussions future-focused, concerns with implementation did arise. These include:

- The need for funding
- Funders using the framework as a required/prescriptive list
- The amount of time it would take to implement such a comprehensive approach
- The degree funders get behind any new approach; without funder support, nothing will happen
- The capacity of current centres to deliver what is suggested by the research
- How services will be coordinated
- The importance of referral systems
- The need for action now
Key Characteristics

The background information provided to participants included a list of key characteristics for seniors centres of the future developed from the literature review (see sidebar).

Participants were asked three questions related to these characteristics:

1. Does your experience confirm what research suggests are key characteristics for the seniors centres of the future?
2. Is there something missing?
3. What is your comfort level with these characteristics (high/medium/low)?

Participants generally agreed with the key characteristics that were identified in the background information. Only two participants expressed some disagreement.
In general, participants felt the key characteristics were fine, but that several characteristics were missing. This is reflected by the fact that only five session participants expressed a high level of comfort with the list of key characteristics.

Through their discussions of the characteristics, participants noted:

- Outreach is important
- The characteristics are all good things and reflect what we are doing
- Focus on level of ability is very important, as is the focus on addressing needs
- The characteristics appear to be repetitive
- Want to ensure the characteristics do not become a checklist of requirements
Missing Characteristics, Cautions and Concerns

One individual indicated they could not support the characteristics as drafted, and one identified their support as medium/low. The reason for this lack of support was the desire to better understand what is meant by some of the terms, and concern the list was not very forward-thinking.

Concern was also expressed that if the characteristics are prescriptive (a list of requirements) rather than examples of promising or best practice, then it would not be supported.

Session participants identified the following as key characteristics for seniors centres of the future:

- Access to transportation
- Ensuring seniors feel and are safe
- Supporting aging with dignity
- Reaching out to identify needs, and then responding to these needs (reaching out is not just a service delivery method, but a way of working, and of being responsible and flexible)
- The concept of diversity
- Modes of service delivery and the use of technology in service delivery
- Connection and involvement in the broader community (seniors need to be needed)
- Flexibility, given the rapidly changing nature of the senior population
- Need for intergenerational connection
- The role of the community
- The role of the funder
- Seniors giving back, and the contribution that seniors make and want to make
- Ensuring inclusion - language needs to reflect diversity (in languages, range of health issues, support for seniors with disabilities, etc.)
- Partnerships and collaboration (clear definitions required)
- Accessibility: easy access and closeness to where seniors live
- Space designed for seniors: both access and functional use
- Holistic approaches
- Family and caregiver engagement and involvement
Session participants made several observations as they discussed the key characteristics. Participant comments are clustered thematically below, and can be viewed as complementary to the key characteristics.

Causes of caution and concern regarding the vision for the future of seniors centres can be thematically grouped as:

- Proactive and responsive
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Partnerships and working together
- Senior-driven
- Communication and referral
- Capacity building
- Accessibility and consistency

\[\text{Sounding Board Sessions}\]

Please note that the intent of the comments is summarized, rather than printed verbatim.
Proactive and Responsive

- The need to be proactive. The Edmonton Public Library was identified as an example of an organization that has transformed itself. A key means of this transformation was going out and asking citizens what they wanted.
- Need to recognize one size will not fit all.
- Given the need for flexibility; government is not the best delivery agent for seniors' services.
- Need to ensure we do not take a cookie-cutter approach. We need to answer the question: does every centre have to do it all?

Diversity

- Need to acknowledge the broad range of needs within the senior population. A key policy question will be whether services are needs-based or age-based.
- The seniors sector is very diverse, and we need to emphasize that diversity: First Nations; refugees; immigrants.
- Concern the focus of the project is on frail seniors.

Inclusion

- Hard to be inclusive if you invite others to participate, and they are not interested.
- If you are demand driven, then you will not necessarily provide all the programs that are suggested by the list of key characteristics.
- Need to ensure we do not exclude. Worry expressed that a senior-only focus could result in isolating seniors.
- Need to define what it means to be inclusive and diverse.
- Need to be sure to address the issue of how we define community. We need to find a balance between senior-specific programs and engaging seniors in the larger community.
- There is a balance needed between senior-based service and general community-based service.
Partnerships and Working Together

- Partnerships help us avoid duplication.
- Partnerships are a key method/means in our discussion. We need to define this term: it means different things to different people, and there must be a shared understanding.
- Reduce duplication, maximize capacity of each piece of the system, all to support the senior: right person, right place, and right time.

Senior-Driven

- Background information says we are senior-centred, but seems delivery-centred.
- Seniors must be the drivers behind changing services and priorities.
- To be senior-centred, we must ensure that services are relevant to seniors. Need to ask seniors about the services they need and require, rather than assume we know.
- Need to engage more than current seniors - we need to look forward as well gather input from current seniors.

Communication and Referral

- Connection to service is very important, but for effective connection, you need to know what is out there.
- If one centre does not do it all, then we need to know what others are doing so that we can make the connection to needed services. If we do not know what is going on, how can we make referrals?
- Need functional referral systems if we are going to support one another and make needed connections.
- Public level promotion: building community knowledge of what seniors centres do is needed.
Capacity Building

- Centres are very dependent on volunteers.
- Funding is a key issue.
- How do you implement these key characteristics?
- Concern with downloading/offloading. Seniors centres have capacity challenges.
- Need to address training and support needs of seniors centres to meet the needs of immigrants and refugees. Need capacity to execute our aspiration around diversity and inclusion.

Accessibility and Consistency

- Accessibility is an issue.
- The reality of current infrastructure is a problem. Seniors are not able to access the physical spaces we are using.
- Standards for service are required.

Final Reflections and Feedback on Sounding Board Session

Comments generally reinforced the concepts outlined above. In addition, participants:

- Thanked the project sponsor for the opportunity to discuss what they understand to be important and timely issues.
- Wanted to know what the next steps in the process are? Will there be a symposium?
- Were hopeful that the Sounding Board Sessions are the beginning rather than the end of a process.
- Wanted to know how the City of Edmonton will use the research.
- Expressed concern with how the ideas discussed could be implemented.
- Identified the need to work with all levels of government not just the City of Edmonton.
- Noted that greater understanding of the context for the discussion would have been helpful.
In September and October 2016, Anne Smith of J.A. Smith Research and Consulting Inc. conducted seven individual interviews following the Sounding Board Sessions held in September. One interview was held with a senior who was unable to attend a Sounding Board Session, and that person was asked the same questions that were posed at those sessions. The input of this individual has been integrated into the Sounding Board Session analysis.

The purpose of the remaining six interviews was to follow-up on key themes identified during the Sounding Board Session:

- Diversity of the seniors’ population
- Providing community-based services when community can be defined as far more than a geographic location
- Challenges with designing inclusive spaces and services for seniors
- Balancing the need for consistency of services for seniors across the city, with the need for unique services that respond to the diversity of the population
- Promising practices related to partnerships and collaboration

The interviewees were selected based on their knowledge and experience with these themes, and participated in one hour long, semi-structured interviews. Participation in the interviews was voluntary, and participants were assured that they would not be identified in any document, report, or presentation without their consent.

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12 Refer to Appendix PC-H to see the interview questions.
Diversity of the Seniors Population

All six interviewees agreed that the seniors’ population is diverse, and that action is needed by senior-serving agencies and the general population to embrace and respond to this diversity. Different aspects of this diversity were given different emphasis by the interviewees. Components of the senior population that were given emphasis include:

- The 20% of the senior population that current seniors’ services are not reaching. This 20% are the most marginalized and vulnerable of the senior population.
- Ethno-cultural communities who do not significantly participate in or access seniors centres.
- The LGBQT population - issues related to access and bullying in particular were identified.
- Seniors impacted by health issues. Health is a key driver for access to services and seniors centres.
- Seniors with limited financial resources.
- Seniors living in local neighbourhoods who have the capacity to identify needs and take action.

A key question asked of the interviewees was “how can we get this diverse population of seniors to participate in seniors centres?” Interviewee responses include:

- Ensuring centres are welcoming and inclusive.
- Understanding the needs and interests of the varied segments of the senior population.
- Collaborative activity inside and outside of the seniors-serving sector.
- Outreach: not only responding to services needed by seniors who cannot access a centre, but also truly proactive reaching out and inviting in. Reaching out was emphasized by several interviewees.
- Principle-based activity: there is a distinction between equal treatment and equity.
- Building on what has worked well.
- Bringing all voices to the table.
- Community development: develop solutions at the local level, driven by community members and seniors.
- Making connections and building networks with organizations that serve seniors who are not currently accessing the seniors centre.
- Explicit policy from organizations on their desire and approach to diversity.
- Funders clearly defining and regularly reviewing policy requirements related to diversity.
- Help for self-advocacy: assist the diverse components of the senior population to have a voice.
- Embrace diversity and create space for it. Move away from siloed approaches.
Interview Findings

- Build common connections across diverse populations, e.g. food, music, dance.
- Support for caregivers.
- Recognition that seniors receive service but also give and make contributions to their community.

Interviewees indicated all of these strategies can be applied to services for seniors generally, as well as to seniors centres specifically. They were positive in their view that solutions can be found to embrace diversity. It was acknowledged this will require change, skill, and hard work.

Interviewees stressed the need for seniors centres to be flexible and adaptable when responding to the diversity of the senior population, and indicated there may be resistance to change, particularly in embracing or welcoming seniors from different ethno-cultural backgrounds. Interviewees also cautioned that many seniors at seniors centres may have little experience of cultural diversity: while the staff and Board of an organization may want to see change, there might be resistance from those they serve.

Interviewees identified several strategies for action, including the need to educate and create awareness, and to understand the issue of inclusion and openness to diversity is more than just a seniors’ issue, thus we cannot expect seniors centres to resolve it. Interviewees indicated a need to call out blatant discrimination, as well as a need for softer approaches that support people in developing awareness and comfort-levels. Many interviewees indicated they do see awareness of these issues within seniors centres, and a desire to take action.

Interviewees also asserted that ageism is an issue, and noted that people over the age of 55 often do not identify with the term ‘senior’. This lack of identification influences whether older adults aged 55+ will access or seek service through a senior centre.
Providing community-based services when ‘community’ can be defined as far more than a geographic location

All Interviewees agreed with their Sounding Board Session peers that ‘community’ must be defined more broadly than as a geographic location. A broader and more inclusive definition of community is necessary.

They also agreed that having a physical space in a geographic location is an important element for providing services to seniors, but highlighted the need to imagine a more varied and dynamic future for how this space is used, and for who uses it.

Interviewees see the senior centre of the future as community-service hub for senior services that may also be home to other service providers (Mill Woods Senior & Multicultural Centre was given as example of co-location). Location is critical for these service hubs, as they need to be truly accessible and easy to get to.

Interviewees indicated seniors are a diverse population with specific service needs, and expressed concern regarding a siloed approach, and the unintended consequence of isolating seniors.

Interviewees supported the idea of a model that creates space for culturally-specific and other non-geographic definitions of community activity and intergenerational connection. A range of culturally-based seniors centres as we now think about them was not supported, however, interviewees indicated that cultural and other groups should be able to access space and use it according to their needs and interests, as well as participate fully in more universal programs and services being offered at the centre.

Interviewees supported a senior centre of the future model that enables seniors to assess their own interests and needs, and to access services outside geographic boundaries if this what they wish to do.

All interviewees suggested it is necessary to implement a framework for the range of possible services provided by seniors centres/community hubs. Interviewees have different approaches to the scope and level of detail outlined within such a framework, but all agreed that defining what is possible within a framework, and then letting organizations respond - according to community need, organizational interest, and capacity - was needed, rather than developing prescriptive service requirements for all seniors centres.

For one interviewee, the framework would primarily be a statement of principles to support community development and action identified by the communities. For another,
it involves identifying core services (a basket of required services) that would be required by all centres, and then optional services seniors centres could provide. Others simply saw it as a defined spectrum of service responses.

Interviewees supported a framework that set the parameters for action so that organizations could respond according to need, interest and capacity. Five of six interviewees see the framework including service definitions and guidelines to some degree. The sixth interviewee focused solely on enabling community development.

Interviewees suggested this approach would allow for both large and small organizations to engage in service delivery, as well as provide for localized and city-wide responses. It would also offer opportunities for some organizations to respond to non-geographic definitions of community (e.g. cultural or spiritual).

Interviewees indicated the development of any framework of possible services needs to be led by the City of Edmonton/public sector. Stakeholders need to be involved in the process, but it is not realistic to expect seniors centres themselves to develop this kind of framework from the bottom-up. Several key questions need to be answered in the development of the framework:

- What is the purpose of the senior centre?
- What is the role of the public sector: what are their priorities and what services will they fund?
- What is the role of the senior centre to support seniors to age-in-place?
- What services are needed to reflect the diversity of the senior population?

Another key element in this discussion is the need to work differently in order to respond to the diverse needs and interests of seniors. Several interviewees suggested the need to develop relationship clusters or hubs, asserting that serving the senior population well requires developing connections, synergies, tapping into expertise, working across sectors, supporting self-advocacy and community development.

Interviewees felt that physical access to service is important, but so too is reaching into the community through outreach services, and using technology more effectively to provide service.

Interviewees indicated the issue of ethno-cultural diversity needs to be thought through very carefully. Cross-cultural connections cannot be forced. Interviewees highlighted a need to understand the process may require bonding within a cultural group, creating bridges across groups and then linking and connecting groups. The provision of space for
smaller ethno-cultural groups to meet is very important: the same was said regarding other elements of the senior population, e.g. the LGBTQ community.

**Interview Findings**

**Challenges with designing inclusive spaces and services for seniors**

While discussing the need for a broad definition of community, interviewees began to answer the question related to inclusive spaces and services for seniors, including assertions about the need for:

- a framework that defines the parameters for seniors’ services
- accessible space with a variety of uses
- supporting the delivery of services based on community need, interest and capacity
- use of a variety of delivery techniques that include outreach and applications of technology
- collaboration within and across sectors
- intentional strategies for inclusion and diversity

Other suggestions raised by interviewees to ensure inclusive spaces and services for seniors are:

- principle-based action
- increasing outreach services: both service delivery and actively reaching out into the community
- using technology more effectively
- supporting self-advocacy and self-organization
- challenging assumptions and asking the hard questions (e.g. who is not accessing current services and why?)
- connecting cultures and generations
- developing the skill (including Board governance) needed to manage change, and build relationships and connections
- recognize that developing inclusive services and space is hard work and takes time
- attracting seniors to enter in and use seniors centres
- developing wraparound approaches to service delivery for seniors
- use existing space wisely
- supporting seniors to match their needs to available services
- ensuring the space is purposefully designed to meet the needs of seniors, and to be accessible to seniors

Interviewees noted that many senior services are provided in spaces not designed for
that purpose, and as a result, their location and physical design may have limitations. Much of the seniors centres’ current infrastructure is aging and this creates long-term sustainability and functionality issues.

Interviewees not only identified the characteristics needed for inclusive spaces and services, but also the characteristics of seniors centres as inclusive organizations:

- Organizational development of seniors centres is a necessity
- Seniors centres of the future need to be adaptable and willing to try new things
- The skills of Board and staff will need to develop to manage change, identify changing service needs, and build collaborative service delivery networks

Balancing the need for consistency of services for seniors across the city and the need for unique services that respond to the diversity of the population

Interviewees believe that a senior centre service framework is the best way to balance the need for consistency of service across the city with the desire for responsive and potentially unique services. A framework could define the universal services the City of Edmonton wants all seniors to be able to access, but interviewees cautioned that the framework should not become too prescriptive.

Several interviewees identified that this tension between consistency and flexibility/uniqueness will always be in play regardless of the approach selected. There is a need to continually manage and assess this issue over time. Interviewees cautioned that centralized models can tend towards one-size-fits-all approaches over time, but more decentralized models can tend toward a lack of consistency in approach.

The following suggestions were made by one or more interviewees to help manage this tension:

- Be clear with the overall intention (what are we trying to do?)
- Make connections with other organizations to build support and complement the range of services seniors centres are providing
- Listen to seniors
- Anticipate change and changing needs: the array of programs and services needed to meet the needs of seniors will change over time; there is not a static array of programs and services that can be put into place
- Support seniors in selecting the service options that work for them; access across geographic boundaries is needed
- Have the City of Edmonton clearly define its role
- Trust service providers to develop promising and emerging practices
- Ensure seniors centres have goals and intentional service plans in place
- Identify areas of mutuality: work across agencies and sectors to meet needs

**Interview Findings**

- Sustain action over time - do not start and stop, or move from one pilot to another
- Develop cultural competencies and hire staff with lived experience
- Develop tools and resources to support effective service delivery

Interviewees stressed the skilled and capable organizations with both strong governance and organizational transparency, and emphasized the need for trained and skilled staff to ensure quality and standardized services across the city.

**Promising practices related to partnerships and collaboration**

All interviewees have been involved in several partnerships and collaborations, and identified factors for success that can be categorized into six themes:

1. **Ensure Readiness**

Collaborating effectively requires that everyone involved has a clear understanding of why they are pursuing the partnership or collaboration and the benefit it will bring to both seniors and their organization. A partnership or collaboration that is dictated or imposed on organizations will not work. Statements made by interviewees include:

- Need to have basic readiness, trust, and intention
- Let go of territorialism
- Be values-based
- Understand the conditions and motivation for change
- If personality disagreements among the decision-makers exist, there will not be success - a condition for partnership is not in place

2. **Build Relationships**

Effective partnerships are built on trust and strong relationships. Relationship building will take time to develop and to be maintained. Statements made by interviewees include:
3. Plan for Success

Partnerships and collaborations take considerable developmental work. Ensuring that common purpose, understanding of the implications of partnership and collaboration, and structures for working together are in place are all key for success. Statements made by interviewees include:

- Ensure strong leadership is in place
- Do the planning work: have a common vision and purpose
- Clarity of purpose is essential
- Ensure that all partners understand the meaning of the agreements they have reached
- Define key roles and responsibilities - know how you will work together
- Need clear definition of terms
- Tools such as a memorandum of understanding are important – they help to give the relationship structure
- Ensure intention and action is senior-centred

4. Build Capacity

Collaboration and partnerships take knowledge, skills, and ability, and building needed capacity is critical for ongoing success. Partnership and collaborative action is an intentional process, and needs to be properly resourced. Statements made by interviewees include:

- Realistically consider capacity, and ensure you have the capacity required
- Draw upon and use the expertise of all organizations involved
- Develop cultural competencies
- Develop tool kits and resources to support self-advocacy
- Partnerships and collaboration take time and resources

5. Intentionally Maintain and Invest in Partnership and Collaborative Activity

Partnerships and collaborative action require ongoing attention and effort. Do not
assume the work is done once an action or initiative is implemented: intentional and ongoing work is needed for results. Statements made by interviewees include:

- Pay attention and maintain the partnership
- Change and adapt as needed

**Interview Findings**

- Acknowledge that conflict may occur and have processes in place to manage conflict
- Do not take for granted that the partnership is working well: assess and keep working to achieve results
- Assess self and results even though this is hard

6. **Funder Role**

The funder’s role, and the role that funding can play in influencing a partnership or collaboration should be considered. Funding should not be the motivator, and funders should not prescribe the method or membership of a partnership or collaborative effort. Statements made by interviewees include:

- Develop intention and purpose, and then locate funds rather than vice versa
- Funders should not prescribe methods of partnership and collaboration
- Funders should reward partnership and collaboration if this is their stated policy (and not reward those that refuse to partner or collaborate)

**Examples of partnerships and collaboration**

As well as identifying thematic areas for successful partnership and collaboration, interviewees also provided successful examples of partnerships and collaborative efforts. These include:

- The C5 Partnership: Boyle Street, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Norwood Family Resource Centre, and Terra Centre working together for service coordination and systems change
- Mennonite Centre for Newcomers and Sage Seniors Association
- Sage Seniors Association and the Multicultural Health Brokers
- Work of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council: Home Supports, Outreach, 211 Seniors Line
- Age Friendly Edmonton
- Age Friendly Calgary
- PEGASIS
One participant noted that it is very important for the province and the City to work together. This individual suggested that the City Charter Edmonton signs with the province include a commitment to collaborate on services for seniors.

### Interview Findings

**Is there a particular role you can play in helping seniors to age-in-place?**

Interviewees suggested a range of roles they could play to support seniors aging-in-place. These roles reflect what they understand to be necessary approaches for effective seniors centres of the future:

- Relationship building
- Cross-sector activity
- Community development
- Capacity building
- Tapping into organizational skills and abilities
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Evaluating results
- Working within a defined framework for the benefit of seniors

Specific roles identified by interviewees include:

- Sharing experience and new practices and learning related to community development
- Acting as companions: we have experience in dimensions of the change process related to diversity and inclusion
- Acting as a connector to seniors who may not currently be accessing the programs and services of seniors centres
- Acting as a connector to our programs and services, e.g. English language training
- Supporting seniors centres to support ethnocultural seniors
- Working together and supporting one another
- Facilitating collaborative discussions to benefit seniors
- Identifying better ways to work together
- Collecting or undertaking research to find ways forward
- Building capacity in the sector
- Keeping an eye on the bigger picture - trends and issues
- Supporting communication across the sector
Supporting evaluative efforts and data management so that we can track results
Educating the sector on collective impact, common agendas, and aligning activities; organizing training
Providing support to organizations so they can change and adapt
Developing policy at the provincial level
Exploring seniors centres of the future at a provincial level

APPENDIX PC-A Respondents indicate which programs or services they think seniors centres in Edmonton do provide and which programs or services seniors centres in Edmonton should provide.
Appendix PC-A: Senior Centre Services

Lifetime Learning and Educational Opportunities

- Volunteer Opportunities
- English as Another Language
- Lifetime learning and educational opportunities
- Employment skills
- Retirement planning
- Roles and relationships
- Finances and legal
- Computer classes
- Writing
- Cooking
- Arts and Crafts

[Graph showing the comparison between 'Do' and 'Should' for each category]
Appendix PC-A: Senior Centre Services
Appendix PC-A: Senior Centre Services
Services

- Programs and services in languages other than English
- Programs for older adults with cognitive impairment
- Access to computers
- Directory of local senior services
- Guardianship, Trusteeship, Personal Directive information
- Housing information
- Transportation subsidies
- Driving service (other destinations)
- Driving service (to and from centre)
- Individual counselling
- Take-home/frozen meals program
- Facility food bank
- Equipment registry (buy and sell)
- Help with grocery shopping
- Telephone reassurance
- Community mental health
- Job placement
- Legal services
- Filing income tax or other forms
- Outreach services
- Help with household maintenance
- Group meals (congregate dining)
- Respite care

Do | Should
### APPENDIX PC-B “What is the main reason why you currently make use of a seniors centre?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation Programs</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukulele Circle</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great classes great prices - kitchen services</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be with other people who are interested in the same things I’m interested in. To stay healthy. To stay connected to my neighborhood. To make new friends and network. To be social so I’m not isolated. To be able to tap into home services if I ever need them. To be involved. To volunteer. To know more about my community and the people in it.</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, some recreational activities</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient and has programs which are fun and healthy</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play whist once a week</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion group</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take yoga there and other classes. Like being around other seniors and getting to know others</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing classes</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For social and recreational activities, functions, some meals and coffee groups.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take courses</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activities, Appropriate classes (computer, photography, health, music, dance, etc), teaching classes, just to ‘coffee’</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was taking classes. I don’t now, but the membership helps reduce the cost of using the city’s swimming pools.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To take part in the activities. For example pickle ball and guitar lessons</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Band rehearsal</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a variety of activities, information and socialization at an affordable price.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment Meeting people Keeping active Learning new things</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in sponsored activities</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise programs, meeting others, lifestyle programs, free forums and seminars, and having a nice seniors centre like Central Lions to enjoy the atmosphere of being able to get out of the house and to be around others. Would like to see a nice centre on the Southside for seniors to access.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My wife and I volunteer and participate in organized activities.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in fitness and general interest programs</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library, recreational activities, occasional meals or coffee break</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a course</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing music and singing, Making new friends. Keep busy.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping mentally and physically active. Socialization with peers. Providing leadership to the organization</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and exercise</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy many activities, learn new things (piano), volunteer in several ways, make new friends, reacquainted with others, meet friends for coffee. I am there on average 3-4 days per week.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activities and fitness program /day trips</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am on the board of one centre and I was on the board of another centre for 6 years (the maximum allowed). I volunteer as a computer instructor. I take fitness and other programs.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy the programs and activities. To stay active. To get to know other seniors.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical programs (yoga) and recreation/ social interaction like playing cards.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The social connection, and the programs offered.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for Senior Centre Use</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take courses</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to participate in workshops and other activities.</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesterday, I attended a Seniors Center to use Foot Care Clinic. In the past I attended a</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seminar or two about transition to retirement strategies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education, recreation</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classes and socialize and volunteer</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location for square dancing and for my husband, wood carving.</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to play pickle ball</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in day trips/outings, special occasion lunches, exercise classes, information</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sessions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to access some of the courses offered; to attend book sales</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet new people Stay active Help others Keep busy Learn new skills Continue to be part of</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the many activities that they provide, as well as it is a great way to meet new</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social activities and as an alternative restaurant and talks about health</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity programs Meeting arrangements for volunteer committee</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer, take exercise classes and learning courses at a seniors center because it is in</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my community and is affordable. Keeps me in contact with people of my age in a secure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For recreation (Dancing)</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at first it was for grievance counselling, now for meeting people and fun and exercise such</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curling yoga, sit and be fit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stay active and involved; take classes in art, writing, music, exercises, and/or any</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other interesting activities being offered; and volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer at a number of jobs, take classes (writing, painting, yoga, viola) and belong</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to clubs (drama). Volunteer and membership feedback is important to the centre, so the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centre is more than a place to put in time. We are a functioning part of SEESA. SEESA is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seniors and staff working together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My wife and I joined a Senior Centre to possibly expand our activities and meet people and</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attend once a week to simply play cards. Though the range of activities offered is quite</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large most of the choices do not appeal to us. Though the people involved in the card games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are outstanding, we in fact have garnered more interesting activities in other independent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clubs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stay active and involved; take classes in art, writing, music, exercises, and/or any</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other interesting activities being offered; and volunteer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures, tours, meet others, luncheons, books</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Social Health</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am on the Board of Directors I meet my friends I go to Book Club I go to writers group</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make friends, have meals, attend health presentations, special outings (day trips)</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned events such as bus tours</td>
<td>85+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix PC-B Reasons for Senior Centre Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Centre Use</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be with other people who are interested in the same things I’m interested in. To</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learn as I age. To stay healthy. To stay connected to my neighborhood. To make new</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends and network. To be social so I’m not isolated. To be able to socialize.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and social events.</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Activities. Appropriate classes (computer, photography, health, music, dance,</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc); teaching classes, just to ‘coffee’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For social and recreational activities, functions, some meals and coffee groups.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a variety of activities, information and socialization at an affordable price.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take yoga there and other classes. Like being around other seniors and getting to</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise programs, meeting others, lifestyle programs, free forums and seminars, and</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having a nice seniors centre like Central Lions to enjoy the atmosphere of being able</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get out of the house and to be around others. Would like to see a nice centre on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Southside for seniors to access.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep from dying of loneliness</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy many activities, learn new things (piano), volunteer in several ways, make</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new friends, reacquainted with others, meet friends for coffee. I am there on average</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 days per week.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the contact with other seniors. I also do much of the program development for</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seniors at our centre and I also sit on the ESCC Inter-Agency Programmers Committee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am nearing my 70th birthday and enjoy the part time work I do, and the contact I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have with other seniors around the city. I also take part in activities at seniors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centres around the city, and there is a lot going on and programming continues to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expand each year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction. Fun and volunteering.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy the programs and activities. To stay active. To get to know other seniors.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping mentally and physically active. Socialization with peers. Providing leadership</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment Meeting people Keeping active Learning new things</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To maintain/build connections</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To shoot pool with a friend</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction. Fun and volunteering.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The social connection, and the programs offered.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical programs (yoga) and recreation/social interaction like playing cards.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer at mwsa and attend various programs there I also enjoy many great</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendships made there additionally we attend most social events and enjoy the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services of the cafe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making connections with people of like interests &amp; to volunteer.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To voluntary and get advice on any free session that are offered to seniors, for</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friendship, for exercise and a place to belong to with common goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer, take exercise classes and learning courses at a seniors center because it is</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in my community and is affordable. Keeps me in contact with people of my age in a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secure environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet new people Stay active Help others Keep busy Learn new skills Continue to be</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part of the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It keeps me busy - enjoy meeting other people - Im on the board - want comoroudery</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the many activities that they provide, as well as it is a great way to meet</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new friends. classes and socialize and volunteer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer. Social activities.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making and retaining new friends. Volunteer in numerous activities. Helping to have</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies/Procedures to assist in making sure that we have the best Senior Centre in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton. Have Tournaments in many physical/non physical events.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix PC-B Reasons for Senior Centre Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My wife and I joined a Senior Centre to possibly expand our activities and meet people and attend once a week to simply play cards. Though the range of activities offered is quite large most of the choices do not appeal to us. Though the people involved in the card games are outstanding, we in fact have garnered more interesting activities in other independent clubs.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures, tours, meet others, luncheons, books</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am on the Board of Directors I meet my friends I go to Book Club I go to writers group</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make friends, have meals, attend health presentations, special outings (day trips)</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living alone is boring so joining a centre gives companionship and the opportunity to volunteer for various jobs there.</td>
<td>85+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Volunteering**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, some recreational activities</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be with other people who are interested in the same things I’m interested in. To learn as I age. To stay healthy. To stay connected to my neighborhood. To make new friends and network. To be social so I’m not isolated. To be able to tap into home services if I ever need them. To be involved. To volunteer. To know more about my community and the people in it.</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am the treasurer of the Millwoods Senior Activity Association</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play pickleball, very few places in the city to play other than seniors centre Volunteer there Use the gym</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer with SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association helping their board with planning.</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering, social aspect, getting out of house</td>
<td>60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy the contact with other seniors. I also do much of the program development for seniors at our centre and I also sit on the ESCC Inter-Agency Programmers Committee. I am nearing my 70th birthday and enjoy the part time work I do, and the contact I have with other seniors around the city. I also take part in activities at seniors centres around the city, and there is a lot going on and programming continues to expand each year</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy many activities, learn new things (piano), volunteer in several ways, make new friends, reacquainted with others, meet friends for coffee. I am there on average 3-4 days per week.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My wife and I volunteer and participate in organized activities.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer at one centre and take exercise classes at another.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise classes, volunteer activities</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am on the board of one centre and I was on the board of another centre for 6 years (the maximum allowed). I volunteer as a computer instructor. I take fitness and other programs.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer at mwsa and attend various programs there i also enjoy many great friendships made there additionally we attend most social events and enjoy the services of the cafe</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction. Fun and volunteering.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To voluntary and get advice on any free session that are offered to seniors, for friendship, for exercise and a place to belong to with common goals.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making connections with people of like interests &amp; to volunteer.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer, take exercise classes and learning courses at a seniors center because it is in my community and is affordable. Keeps me in contact with people of my age in a secure environment.</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity programs Meeting arrangements for volunteer committee</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach others to use computers  - became President of the association</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It keeps me busy - enjoy meeting other people - Im on the board - want commoradery classes and socialize and volunteer</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take keep fit classes, volunteer on the front desk, on the Executive of the Board and at rummage sales, and go for coffee and lunch at the centre on occasion.</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stay active and involved; take classes in art, writing, music, exercises, and/or any other interesting activities being offered; and volunteer.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer, Social activities.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For my volunteer work as a computer mentor for iPads to seniors. Use of the cafeteria for lunch periodically</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix PC-B Reasons for Senior Centre Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making and retaining new friends. Volunteer in numerous activities. Helping to have Policies/Procedures to assist in making sure that we have the best Senior Centre in Edmonton. Have Tournaments in many physical/non physical events.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer at a number of jobs, take classes (writing, painting, yoga, viola) and belong to clubs (drama). Volunteer and membership feedback is important to the centre, so the centre is more than a place to put in time. We are a functioning part of SEESA. SEESA is seniors and staff working together.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am the secretary of our local seniors association and help out with office duties sometimes. However, I participate in very few of the social activities or road trips since I have an active keep fit and social program through other channels.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been very active at NESA since 2007. It is a fact that being active gives meaning to one’s life. NESA provides a wide range of programs, clubs and activities to fill the needs of most seniors. Recently we became autonomous operationally and the city is a silent partner assisting us with maintenance, utilities and some finances as needed. I have been a Board Chairman, one of the negotiators for our present contract with the city and I worked with our Executive Manager through ESCC on the city wide system of home services for seniors so that they can stay in their homes for a longer period of time. However there are quite a few seniors, especially in our area, who are not able to join and participate because of poverty. WE do have an Outreach Worker who tries to assist these people but her limited connection to funds for them is one of the road blocks that prevents it from happening. Another problem that we would like to overcome is having more people joining from a wider range of nationalities. We do appreciate the fact that the City runs ETS service right to our door during the daytime.</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am on the Board of Directors I meet my friends I go to Book Club I go to writers group</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living alone is boring so joining a centre gives companionship and the opportunity to volunteer for various jobs there.</td>
<td>85+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great classes, great prices - kitchen services</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For social and recreational activities, functions, some meals and coffee groups.</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library, recreational activities, occasional meals or coffee break</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once in a while lunch</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I volunteer at mwsa and attend various programs there i also enjoy many great friendships made there additionally we attend most social events and enjoy the services of the cafe</td>
<td>65-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activities and as an alternative restaurant and talks about health</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To participate in day trips/outings, special occasion lunches, exercise classes, information sessions.</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take keep fit classes, volunteer on the front desk, on the Executive of the Board and at rummage sales, and go for coffee and lunch at the centre on occasion.</td>
<td>70-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For my volunteer work as a computer mentor for ipads to seniors. Use of the cafeteria for lunch periodically</td>
<td>75-79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix PC-C Emerging Models of Senior Centres

APPENDIX PC-C Emerging Models of Seniors Centres

The following categories and characteristics, identified as emerging models for seniors centres in the New Models of Senior Centers Taskforce Final Report (March 2009) prepared for the National Institute of Senior Centres by Pardasani et al., were used to organize survey questions regarding how seniors centres might best meet the needs of seniors in the future.

Centres of Excellence
- Meet the highest standards of excellence
- Apply for state association of senior centres accreditation
- Operate as nonprofit centres that meet state nonprofit standards
- Apply for recognition from nonprofit and governmental centres
- Hire and support directors with higher education and/or management certificates
- Promote continuous improvement, adaptability, and strategic management

Community Centre
- Diverse and comprehensive programming
- Programming offered at multiple sites through partnerships
- Provide inclusive programming and activities for all ages and abilities
- State-of-the-art health and fitness centre
- Use of alternative names instead of ‘Senior Centre’
- Programs that encompass health, recreational, educational, cultural, nutritional and social service needs
- Consistent and intensive program evaluation and needs assessments

Wellness Centre
- Use of evidence-based health promotion models
- Consistent use of evaluation tools
- Significant collaborations
- A state-of-the-art health and fitness centre
- Steady participation in health-related research protocols
- Use of innovative technology and current knowledge to promote health
- Coordination with healthcare professionals, universities, research institutions and pharmaceutical companies

Centres for Lifelong Learning and the Arts
- Programs and activities offered at multiple sites
- Focus on intellectual stimulation, personal growth, and enhanced quality of life
● Culturally and linguistically diverse

**Appendix PC-C Emerging Models of Senior Centres**

● Highly skilled, competent and experienced cadre of staff and volunteers
● Programs that are inclusive, comprehensive and innovative
● Celebrating the exploration of our creative selves

**Continuum of Care or Transition Centres**
● Senior centres play a vital role as the focal points of coordination of information, access and service delivery to the aging population.
● Comprehensive services and programs that meet the changing needs of consumers as they “age-in-community”.
● State-of-the art services that are characterized by incremental, as well as structured plans that allows for greater dependence on resources and focus as participant’s age.
● Services/Programs grounded in evidence-based theory and practice.
● Interdisciplinary, comprehensive collaboration with healthcare institutions, healthcare providers, AAA’s, State Offices of Aging and Mental Health, researchers, educational institutions and community-based service providers to create a unique system of care.

**Next Chapter Centres**
● Life planning programs to explore future possibilities and goals as people age
● Engagement through paid work and volunteer service to help find meaning and purpose
● Recognition that seniors prefer to use their skills and experience in flexible work or service opportunities
● Continued learning for new direction, enrichment and retooling
● Peer and community connections of all ages

**Entrepreneurial Centres**
● Focus on philanthropic funding rather than public funding
● Generating earned income
● Positioning in the marketplace as a focal point
● Use of successful business models from the for-profit and nonprofit world
● Use of strategic management tools for continuous improvement
● Use of technology to enhance effectiveness and efficiency
● Contemporary, ‘hip’ facilities that are new or remodeled
● Very consumer driven - open non-traditional hours to attract diverse consumers

**Café Centres**
● Retail approach to programs
● The café is the central focus

Appendix PC-C Emerging Models of Senior Centres

● Programs that are offered in addition to café at various sites
● Smaller, neighbourhood-based focus
● Cafes are open to all community members – allows for introduction of new participants to other programs and services
APPENDIX PC-D Sounding Board Session Invitation Process

161 potential participants representing 78 organizations, three citizens not aligned with an organization, and two city councillors were invited to attend a Seniors Centres of the Future Sounding Board Session. Organizations were asked to limit participants to two individuals.

47 individuals participated in the Sounding Board Sessions, representing the following groups:

- Seniors
- Seniors Centres
- Seniors groups
- City councillors
- Cultural groups
- Nonprofit organizations
- Other key stakeholder organizations (for example, Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, Edmonton Social Planning Council, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Edmonton Public Library)

Many of the individuals who participated fall into more than one of these categories. In addition, organizations were represented by Board members and/or staff members.

The invitation process concluded when 18 individuals were registered in each of the three Sounding Board Sessions. The initial goal had been to have 16 participants in each Session, for a total of 42 participants.
## Appendix PC-E Sounding Board Session Participants

Please note that only those participants who gave consent to be identified have been listed here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asma Qadri</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Lifestyle Helping Hands Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celeste Nicholson</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Mill Woods Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie Saccarello</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Ital-Canadian Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Langford</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Metis Child and Family Services - Edmonton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Michael Alpern</td>
<td>Co-Chair</td>
<td>Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Svetlana Pavlenko</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>JDI Seniors’ Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fion Lee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fransisco Yu</td>
<td>Assistant Executive Director</td>
<td>Strathcona Place 55+ Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Drouin</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
<td>Edmonton Southside Primary Care Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Newell</td>
<td>Board Chairman</td>
<td>North Edmonton Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Cheng</td>
<td>Manager Integrated Settlement Program</td>
<td>ASSIST Community Seniors Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Monfries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Innes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Welch</td>
<td>Co-Chair</td>
<td>Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josie Leiter</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>North Edmonton Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith Abbott</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>South west Edmonton Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Baker</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>South West Edmonton Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Turzansky</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Edmonton Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenn Hample</td>
<td>Vice Chair</td>
<td>Canadian Association of Retired Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Buehler</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>South East Edmonton Seniors Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda F. Ensley</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Strathcona Place 55+ Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Osborne</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Seniors United Now (SUN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Tondu</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Edmonton Meals on Wheels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Olenek</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Heartland Housing Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Takashi Ohki</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Edmonton Japanese Community Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Hannelore (Hanni) Fritz</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>German Canadian Cultural Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Kell</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Edmonton Senior Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San San Sy</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry Robbins</td>
<td>PIA Representative</td>
<td>Alberta Retired Teachers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Morrissey</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Edmonton Social Planning Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tesfaye Ayalew</td>
<td></td>
<td>Africa Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX PC-F Agenda for Sounding Board Sessions

Dates and Location

- September 9, 2016—9:00 to 12:00 at the Bonnie Doon Professional Centre Training Room. 2nd Floor 8330 82 Avenue.
- September 13, 2016—1:30 to 4:30 at the Central Lions Recreation Centre. 11113 113 Street.
- September 15, 2016—5:30 to 8:30 at the Bonnie Doon Professional Centre Training Room. Light Supper provided. 2nd Floor 8330 82 Avenue.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Purpose of Sounding Board and Review of Agenda
   - See Page 1 of Seniors Centre of the Futures Sounding Board Session Background information, August 2016.
3. Participant Consent Form
4. Vision for Seniors Centres for the Future
   - See Page 2 of Seniors Centre of the Futures Sounding Board Session Background information, August 2016.

Questions for Discussion

- What excites you about the vision for the future for seniors centres? Why?
- What causes you concern? Why?
- What is your comfort level with the vision, research suggests, for seniors centres (high/medium/low)?

5. Using the Active Ageing: A Policy Framework to Organize the Focus and Work of Seniors Centres
   - See Page 3 of Seniors Centre of the Futures Sounding Board Session Background information, August 2016.

Questions for Discussion

- Do you feel that the Active Ageing: A Policy Framework is a useful way to organize and focus the work of seniors centres?
Appendix PC-F Agenda for Sounding Board Sessions

- Do you have any cautions or concerns about using the *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* to organize and focus the work of seniors centres?
- What is your comfort level with the using the *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* to organize and focus the work of seniors centres (high/medium/low)?

6. Key Characteristics for Seniors Centre of the Future

- See Page 4 of *Seniors Centre of the Futures Sounding Board Session Background information, August 2016*.

Questions for Discussion

- Does your experience confirm what research suggests are key characteristics for the seniors centre of the future?
- Is there something missing?
- What is comfort level with the key characteristics for the seniors centre of the future (high/medium/low)?

7. Final Reflections and Feedback on Sounding Board Session
APPENDIX PC-G Sounding Board Session Backgrounder

APPENDIX PC-G Sounding Board Session Backgrounder

SENIOR CENTRES OF THE FUTURE PROJECT

Purpose

The City of Edmonton, Community Inclusion and Investment Branch is completing a study to explore what senior centres in Edmonton could look like in the future.

The purpose of the research is to explore the best practices, needs, and potential of senior centres in Edmonton, in order to anticipate and meet the changing needs of a growing population over time.

Increasingly, people are choosing to stay in their home neighbourhoods as they age, and we are interested in learning more about the role that senior centres might play in the future to help seniors “age-in-place”.

In essence, we are asking the question: what should senior centres look like in the future?

Our work to date has included:

a. a review of the research related to the best practices and possibilities for senior centres in North America and around the world;
b. an environmental scan of the visions, mandates, programs, and services currently provided by senior centres in Edmonton; and
c. an online survey of public perceptions regarding the services that senior centres are providing now, as well as ideas about the services they could provide in the future.

Through these Sounding Board Sessions, we hope to engage you in a meaningful discussion of the ideas that have emerged from our research so far.

“Seniors’ Centres offer a community-based approach to aging well. And as our aging demographic continues to increase, the significance of Seniors’ Centres in Alberta will likely expand.”

- Examining Seniors’ Centres in Alberta as Centres of Excellence (2014)

Sounding Board Session Participants

- Edmontonians age 55+
- Employees or volunteers of senior centres
- Employees or volunteers of other senior-serving organizations
- Employees or volunteers of other community-based organizations that count seniors among their clientele
APPENDIX PC-G Sounding Board Session Backgrounder

Partnerships and Collaborations

Research indicates that a key strength of senior centres of the future will be their ability to form genuine partnerships and collaborations with each other and with other community-based service organizations.

Strategic partnerships are critical to best practice models and sustainability for senior centres:

- increases the ability of seniors centres to be responsive, flexible, and to adapt to the needs of a changing seniors’ population;
- maximizes available resources, minimizes the duplication of services, and fosters an environment where centres collaborate in a continuum of care for older adults (i.e. not as sole providers);

What the Research Tells Us

As they have evolved, the focus of senior centres has expanded from primarily providing activities that promote socialization, to one that also includes health promotion, illness prevention, (mental, physical, social) wellbeing, and (housing, financial, food, physical) safety and security.

Senior centres have a demonstrated understanding of the value in a holistic view of wellness that helps individuals to live as fully as possible.

This broadened focus and function of senior centres has implications because of the way that they are funded.

It is, nonetheless, one of their greatest strengths: senior centres are well positioned as community-based hubs that have the potential to foster collaboration and coordination between sectors.

Senior Centres:

- support independence and autonomy, facilitate community engagement and social inclusion, and cultivate quality of life;
- offer a community-based approach to aging well that will be increasingly vital in decades to come;
- exemplify the important role that community-based human service organizations play in the overall continuum of care for older adults;
- have an important role to play in a coordinated effort of service provision to support and facilitate seniors “aging-in-place” in their home communities; and
- are less about a physical location than they are about a method of service delivery – one that straddles two sectors (social care and support; health).

- promotes the development of innovative and diverse program opportunities;
- increases awareness of the needs and desires of seniors across a broad spectrum service provision;
- improves ability for centres to provide information about where seniors can get the support and care they need;
- enhances the potential for government to achieve social policy goals for aging-in-place.
Active Ageing Policy Framework

Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security for people as they age.

There are several interconnected areas that impact the ageing process and determine our ability to remain as healthy and active as we can as we age.

These “Determinants of Active Ageing” are:

- Economic
- Social
- Physical
- Health-related
- Behavioural
- Personal
- Physical (environment)

Senior-centred policies and programs need to consider how these determinants of active ageing impact quality of life as we age.

Policies and programs that support active ageing need to consider coordinated action across sectors, including health, housing, social services, employment, transportation, and urban development.

An active ageing approach needs to recognize the diversity within older populations.

Policies and programs that support active ageing need to reduce inequities between women and men, and between different groups in the older population, including those who are poor and/or marginalized.

Source: World Health Organization

The Active Ageing Policy Framework

When it comes to growing older, age is just a number. Health, ability, independence, and participation differ significantly between seniors of the same age.

When we develop policies and programs for older adults, we need to keep these differences in mind, and the Active Ageing Policy Framework (World Health Organization, 2002) is a good way to think about how we can best meet the needs of all adults as they grow older.

The purpose of the Active Ageing Policy Framework is to support the development of community-based approaches that take into account the truly diverse experience of ageing, and encourage health, activity, participation, and connection as a way to sustain quality of life over time.

Seniors centres in Edmonton have always been community-based spaces where the health, activity, participation, and connection of seniors is valued and supported.

The Active Ageing Framework is a way to organize and focus the work that we do, so that we are able to continue to meet the needs of an increasingly large and diverse senior population in the future.
Research shows that key characteristics for senior centres of the future include:

- ability to appeal to a rapidly changing senior population
- capacity to offering culturally and linguistically diverse programs
- senior driven - thoroughly understand the characteristics of local older adult populations
- diverse and inclusive programming that appeals to the broad range of ages and abilities of senior participants
- ongoing evaluation of programs and services
- easily accessible and close to seniors’ neighborhoods - so that it feels like the centre is part of their community
- outreach programs that generate awareness of seniors’ needs, help to reduce isolation, and address elder abuse
- active networking and outreach
- grassroots and multiple “stakeholder” involvement
- encourage community collaborations that provide a venue for information-sharing, dialogue, and consultation
- seniors-helping-seniors model that can respond to the needs and challenges of immigrant and refugee seniors
- seniors feel as though they belong and are safe no matter what their abilities or disabilities
- flexible hours of operation

Session Dates

September 9
Bonnie Doon
Professional Centre
9:00 - 12:00 pm

September 13
Central Lions
Seniors Centre
1:30 - 4:30 pm

September 15
Bonnie Doon
Professional Centre
5:30 - 8:30 pm

Questions?

Anne Smith
gjasmith55@gmail.com
780-437-6749

A Note on Demographics

As Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1965) begin to age, they are changing the shape of our city and province: decreasing fertility rates and increasing life expectancies mean that aging Baby Boomers are heralds of a “greying” population.

When the last Boomers turn 65 in 2031, roughly 1 in 5 Albertans will be a senior (double the number in 2011).

The way we retire, where and how we live, and how we take care of each other is also changing.

Seniors centres have a key role to play in supporting the health and wellbeing of seniors in the future.

“The future of senior centers is being shaped by the most volatile and active generation in modern history. As a consequence, these facilities are poised to become prototypes of dynamic aging - redefining the concept of what it means to be an elder.”

- Ready or Not: Senior Centers
Steel for Boomer Barrage
APPENDIX PC-H Interview Questions

1. How do you think we can best respond to the growing and diverse nature of the seniors population in Edmonton?

2. How do we design community based seniors centres of the future that address a broad definition of community? For example, community that is defined to include culture, sexual orientation, and/or spiritual identification as well as geographic location?

3. What are the key challenges, from your perspective, in the design and development of inclusive spaces and services for seniors?

4. Sounding Board session participants raised the need for both consistency of seniors services across the city and the need for unique services that respond to the diversity of the seniors population. What are your thoughts on how to balance this tension?

5. What does your experience suggest as promising or best practices related to partnerships and collaboration?

6. Is there a particular organization that you are working with that could play a role in helping seniors to age in place?

7. What role might you or your organization play in helping seniors to age-in-place?