

APPROACH TO SENIORS SERVICES

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

PHASE 1

MAY 2020

The logo for the City of Edmonton, featuring the word "Edmonton" in a white, sans-serif font on a dark blue rectangular background.

Edmonton

APPROACH TO SENIOR SERVICES

A framework to support services in Edmonton now and into the future

Summary Report



1. Mapping Existing Services

Stakeholders were asked to identify programs services or organizations they were aware of that currently support healthy aging in Edmonton. The following responses were collected:

1. Abundant Community (Community Tea Night, other)
2. AHS (Mental Health program, Step Forward at Senior Centres, Stroke Physical Recover Program)
3. Al Rashid Mosque
4. Alzheimer's Society
5. Minds in Motion
6. Apple Stores (Computer Classes)
7. Ballwin (Pickelball court)
8. Be My Eyes App
9. Beacon Heights Community League
10. Belleview Community Hall (Seniors program, Vintage Characters)
11. Benda's Table
12. Bicycle Groups
13. Canadian Native Friendship Centre
14. Canadian Islamic Seniors Society
15. Community Leagues (Contact EFCL Laura)
16. CRF (all locations)
17. Curling Clubs
18. Cycling Without Age (GEF & CNIB)
19. Delwood Community League (Program Director/Pole Walking)
20. Disability groups and programs (e.g. Down Syndrome Society)
21. Driving Services



22. Downtown Chinatown (Chinese Benevolent Association, Chinese Cultural Program)
23. Edmonton Canadian Korean Centre Downtown
24. Edmonton Nordic
25. Edmonton Public Libraries
26. Edmonton Seniors Centre
27. Home Share Pilot
28. Elder Care (Across City in Senior Centres)
29. Ella (U of A learning grants)
30. EMCN
31. EPS
32. ESCC
33. Faith Communities and Programs (e.g., Muslim Association of Canada)
34. Fire Safety Presentations
35. Glastonbury Village (Retirement Homes)
36. Greater Edmonton Foundation
37. Help Program (General Hospital - supportive aids)
38. Jewish Senior Citizens Centre

39. Kipnes Veterans Centre
40. Le Cite Francophone
41. Legions
42. Long Term Care Facilities
43. Local gathering areas (e.g., Malls, Tim Hortons, McDonalds, A&W)
44. MacEwan (Senior Studies Institute)
45. Meadows Rec Centre
46. Mennonite Centre
47. Men's Shed (5 in the city)
48. Multi-Cultural Health brokers
49. Newton Community League Seniors Programming
50. North East Seniors Association
51. Northgate Lions/ Beverly Fitness parks
52. On-line Social Groups (e.g., online scrabble groups)
53. Operation Friendship Society
54. Parkinson's Society (Buchanan Centre)
55. PCN Wellness Program (Prescription for Wellness at Rec Centres)
56. Pride Centre
57. Primary Care Centre
58. Rabbit Hill
59. Recreation Centres
60. Retirement/Senior housing
61. Rocky Mount Senior Ski Club
62. SE Sejong Multi-Cultural Center
63. Senior Centres
64. Senior Home Support Program (Referral Service)
65. Senior Task Force Advocacy
66. Seniors Citizen Opportunity Neighborhood Association
67. Seniors congregate Living Site (Canterbury, Shepherds Care)
68. Seniors Mutual Association Group Society Outreach
69. Seniors Protection Partnership
70. Shepherds Care Housing for profit (Kensington/Castledowns)
71. Snow Valley Ski
72. South Clareview (Sage Partner, Seniors Club, Social Dinners, Tai Kwon Do)
73. South West Seniors Outreach
74. St. Andrews Centre
75. SWESA (Blue Quill)
76. Twin Brooks
77. Funding Neighborhoods/CLOG Ida
78. Twin/Blue Quill Community League
79. Westview Village Seniors
80. Winterburn Golden Agers
81. Yellowbird Community League
82. YMCA (Recreational programming and fitness classes)
83. Zoo (Strawberry tea)
84. North Edmonton Seniors Association/ Cherrydale Park

2. Determinants of Healthy Aging Gaps



Social

Defining Seniors

A number of comments indicated a need to better understand how we define seniors, explicitly referencing “elder orphans,” and the importance of identifying whether or not they are single, never married, widowed, or no children. To better understand how we approach and define seniors, one respondent indicated a need to understand the varying needs of seniors, many of which are specific to various age ranges (e.g., 50-55, 60-64, etc.).

Diverse and Inclusive Approaches

Stakeholders noted that the City of Edmonton’s changing demographics require us to use more inclusive approaches to programs and services so that all seniors feel included, and that their needs are accommodated. This includes ensuring that culturally appropriate programming and services are available and accessible, especially for Indigenous peoples.



Economic, Environment & Political/Policy

Stakeholders noted that effective policy responses are important when designing for healthy aging. City policies should be informed by current and emerging needs of seniors and the issues that impact them in order to support meaningful service responses and effective service delivery practices.



Policy areas/strategies stakeholders believe the City of Edmonton should focus on include: inter-generational living, housing, transportation, urban planning and design, and fee assistance programs (e.g., tax deferral program, low-cost bus passes, etc.).

3. Understanding our Relationships

Stakeholders were asked to think about the relationships or connections between people and organizations in the system that are currently offering senior or healthy aging services, supports or resources.

- What seniors sector activities are occurring under this continuum?
- Who are you/ they doing these activities with?
- What types of relationships or connections exist in our system?
- How does this impact the system’s ability to meet the current healthy aging needs?

The following responses were submitted:

Al Rashid Mosque w. NWESA & ABC Headstart
Sage > AHS > Abbotsfield community (NE)> CLSA

MWSA - different cultural groups & mosques, temples, faith organizations , AHS (program delivery)
CLSA - Elder care, veterans (program delivery) AHS
EMCN/Pride - Shared staff
AHS (Mental Health) > Senior organizations.
Sometimes in partnership (program delivery).
Often affected by those in specific roles (i.e., ED Exploring partnerships) Board > Board; Board > ED
Silo based dependent on funding
Council (city)
AI - Rasheed Mosque > NW Senior to do programming
Competitive funding models.
AMA - Drivers 55+ > Go Solo Program
PCN's - Seniors Centres without walls (Oliver)
Bent Arrow/Metis Child: Family Services - Senior Programs
Pharmacy Groups
Malls - Informal Walking and coffee groups
Alpine Club of Canada - Trips for seniors
Retired Seniors fishing group
Men's Sheds
Retired Associations - (Bankers, Teachers)
Edmonton Lifelong Learning Association (U of A) Shirley Forest
Edmonton SCC > Share info, discussing co-ordination of services
Competition amongst non-profits delivering services (due to funding)
Work together when benefits each other (mandates different but complimentary)
Info sharing based on informal connections (social networks) vs formal processes
Sometimes a lot of overlaps
Work co-operatively for programs to more cost effective (sharing resources, bringing people in)
Seniors won't travel so need to be locally available
Lack of understanding of collective impact that each are contributing to
Co-Ordinate services based on type of seniors.
Edmonton Public Library reaching out to other groups (Cree Conversation Outreach Program)
Generally, not much collaboration
Fitness Centres (Smaller centres join larger centres) although transportation between centres can be an obstacle.
Support for Indigenous Seniors in Long Term Care (knowing who to call)
Sharing of success stories needs to be improved
Philosopher's Café
General providers don't know/how connections'
Facility Sharing (Prince Rupert/Queen Mary) when a building was lost to fire.
How have we arranged our city?
Most seniors utilize "close to home" Younger demographic is willing to drive.
Suburbs are lacking facilities
Private sector is driving the location of new facilities.

Collaboration may lead to funding loss. Silos are still prevalent and desire for new build
Senior Safety: tendencies to "do for" rather than "do with"
Partnerships - health
On your own vs with a partner
Collaboration takes work and trust
Spectrum (55 - 100): Different willingness to collaborate
Dependent on whether they are working
Culture affinity not in place in some groups
planning for next generation of seniors
Transit planning
Extensive list to link people to services portal
Place vs Affinity: Is one enough? Is travel time an issue?
Tension: Local/close to me vs Diverse/coming together choices
Some groups more politically connected than others. Life cycle of being politically connected with an expectation of that continuing (entitlement)
Groups getting into the fund cycle need to have collaboration as criteria.
Physical Environment >>> Winter Trails.

4. Trends & Patterns

Respondents were asked to identify trends, emerging patterns, and expectations related to healthy aging in Edmonton now and into the future. The following trends emerged through respondent feedback:

Social



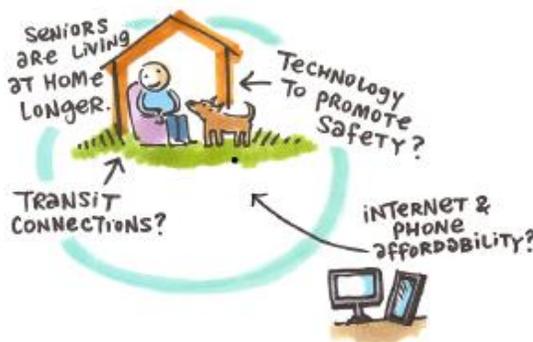
- People are working for longer, often surpassing the traditional retirement age marker of 65.
- People are living longer, and as a result, the aging population is growing.
- Visible minority and newcomer populations in the City of Edmonton are growing.
- Traditional family roles and responsibilities are changing in regards to caring for senior parents, especially in newcomer families.

Technology

- Aging populations will have a greater understanding of and willingness to use technology-based support solutions.

Environment

- Urban design and planning approaches are becoming increasingly age-friendly.
- Development of effective and efficient public transportation continues to be a priority.



- Individuals and communities are increasingly aware and committed to environmental issues such as climate change.

“ Changes to urban design can improve senior’s accessibility and ability to walk and move around. ”

Economics

- As aging populations begin to live longer, financial stability is becoming an increasingly complex issue for seniors.

Political/Policy

- Changes in how City-funded senior centers deliver programs (i.e., policy shifts and changing funding requirements).
- Community-based organizations require increased funding to meet service delivery demands.
- Service providers are not always able or willing to grow or change services/programs they offer to aging populations.



5. Opportunities

Stakeholders were asked to identify any opportunities, real or perceived, there may be for the seniors serving systems. The following opportunities identified by stakeholders include:

Social



Stakeholders noted there are co-housing or inter-generational living group opportunities that are allowing seniors to age in place. Further, there are community-based programs that are connecting seniors in meaningful ways to their communities, such as schools and daycare integration seniors into their programming. These

innovative community programming approaches allow for new ways to improve approaches to increasing senior’s engagement with their peers and communities, helping to increase social inclusion.

Further, stakeholders also noted there are improved recreational opportunities aimed at engaging aging populations in physical activity to improve their overall health and wellbeing. Many stakeholders noted a variety of passive (e.g., trail, natural park spaces, etc.) and active (e.g., pickleball courts, aquafit, etc.) recreational opportunities that are available to seniors in the community.



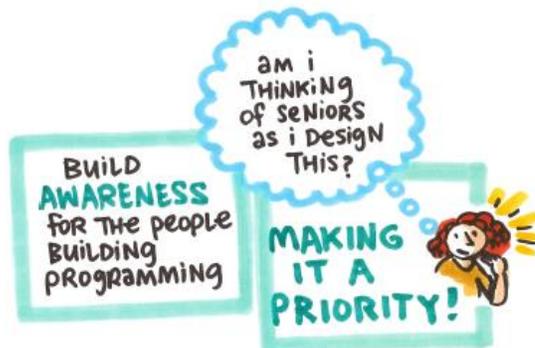
Technology

Stakeholders noted that aging populations will likely have a greater understanding of and willingness to use technology-based support solutions. Technology-based supports available provide seniors with

opportunities to improve their ability to address their own needs while enhancing their wellbeing. Stakeholders noted that there are several technology-based support solutions such as Alexa, which helps to turn on music, lights and gives reminders to assist with medication management that are supporting aging populations already.

Political/Policy

Stakeholders noted increased opportunities for individuals to become participate in public decision-making processes to help inform community change. Additionally, one stakeholder emphasized the need for municipal government review of current approaches to healthy aging, which provides an opportunity to effectively redesign City approaches and policies, so they become more senior-friendly.



6. Challenges

Stakeholders were asked to consider trends and patterns currently existing in the senior service sector, and identify any challenges, real or perceived, that need to be addressed. The following challenges identified by stakeholders include:

Social

Social connectedness and isolation

Many stakeholders noted that there are fewer opportunities for individuals to engage with others in their community. Lack of opportunities for meaningful engagement can increase senior's feelings of disconnectedness, loneliness and social isolation. Further, stakeholders noted that as individuals and families get busier and competing priorities emerge, aging populations may have less support from their families. Fewer connections to family and friends to which could negatively impact their overall health and wellbeing.

“ Less family supports available because people are so busy and have competing priorities. ”

Access to services

Other challenges noted by stakeholders noted that some seniors may not know how to get involved in their communities, and may find it difficult to navigate access to services and programs in their communities (e.g., healthcare, elder support care). Comments noted the importance of addressing the supply and demand side of seniors services needed to support aging populations in our communities. As the senior population continues to grow, what are the most important critical services required to support their overall wellbeing? Additionally, many stakeholders noted that many individuals no longer have the time or desire to volunteer in their communities, which may negatively impact an organization's ability to provide seniors programming and services in the community.



Evolving senior demographics



Visible minority and newcomer populations are growing in the City of Edmonton. Stakeholders noted that while aging population demographics are shifting and becoming more diverse, not all programs and services available are inclusive enough to adequately meet the emerging needs of changing demographics. Newcomer and Indigenous seniors have increasingly diverse needs (i.e., intergenerational trauma, ethnocultural differences, etc.) that are not being adequately addressed in most current program/service designs. Stakeholders noted that it is important to have a greater

understanding of the social issues that impact aging populations (i.e., senior abuse, LGBTQA issues, social isolation) when designing and funding programming and services to address their needs.

“ Indigenous Seniors who were past residential school survivors may now be experiencing more "institutionalizing" due to need for long term care or short term healthcare at a hospital/health care centre. This can cause distress due to past trauma. ”

Technology

Technology was still seen as a challenge for most seniors. Many stakeholders noted that technology remains to be a challenging aspect for seniors today, many of whom feel they are being “left behind” as institutions and organizations shift to online-based services and support while they remain unable to use these technologies. Further, some stakeholders noted that despite increased access to communication through technology, more people, including seniors, are feeling detached, lonely, and isolated. Further, some felt that economic barriers hindered online engagement (e.g., lack of income), and therefore may not be accessible to all, especially seniors with limited disposable income.



“ Shift to programs and services only being provided "on-line" (i.e., City, health care, shopping). Seniors are getting left behind. ”

Environment

Accessible Communities



Another factor that seems to contribute to social isolation and exclusion are urban designs and plans that are not age-friendly. While stakeholders noted that urban designs and plans are becoming more age-friendly, there were still concerns regarding how current spaces and places exclude aging populations. Some stakeholders noted that building designs do not always reflect the varying degrees of abilities in the community and are sometimes not accessible. Additionally, “invisible disabilities” were reported to be rarely considered when designing community buildings and spaces, which can further exclude aging populations. Transportation issues and urban sprawl issues were also referenced as challenges.

Environment

Other challenges noted by stakeholders included climate change and sustainability concerns and issues that impact seniors, as well as inadequate maintenance of winter conditions that create accessibility challenges.

Economic

Financial Stability



Stakeholder feedback addressed how income trends are shifting over time. Stakeholders believed that the seniors' incomes are becoming more limited, effectively reducing their ability to engage in their communities and reducing their ability to access to meet their basic needs. As our aging populations begin to live for longer, many of outliving their financial resources. Further, many seniors are having to work beyond the conventional retirement age of 65, which may decrease their ability to access or engage in week-day programming. Overall, reduced financial stability is impacting the overall wellbeing over senior's overtime and increasing vulnerability.

“ Seniors may be out-living their financial resources; limiting help/care when most needed in advanced years. ”

Political/Policy

One stakeholder noted that the "ever-changing" political worlds at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels could present challenges to senior-serving systems.

7. Priorities

Stakeholders were asked to identify priorities, based on their understanding of the current state and needs existing in the senior service sector and conversations they participated during engagement sessions, they would recommend the City of Edmonton to focus on when developing an approach to senior services.

The following priorities emerged through stakeholder feedback:



1. Ensure community spaces, services and supports are inclusive and representative of community needs.

- Community spaces and programming are inclusive and welcoming, regardless of age, ability, gender or cultural background.
- Seniors have the opportunity to share their voices or perspectives on the design of community programs and services.
- Edmonton seniors have access to services and supports that allow them to age in their communities and homes.

“ Focus on spaces that are more open to being inclusive of people regardless of age, ability, demographic, gender, cultural background. Resources should focus on creating welcoming spaces for everyone to feel safe. ”

2. The City of Edmonton’s Approach for Senior Services has a clear strategic direction and focus.

- Healthy aging strategies are innovative and aligned with the City of Edmonton’s mandates and goals.
- Healthy aging strategies and efforts are implemented through collaborative, community-driven approaches.
- The City of Edmonton has an effective resource allocation plan aligned with its Approach for Senior Services plan to increase the value of services to support aging seniors.
- The City of Edmonton should prioritize addressing programs and services related to housing, affordable and accessible transportation and building community programs and spaces.
- Healthy aging planning considers both the current and emerging needs of seniors.



2. **Community-based service partners have the capacity to deliver innovative and effective programs and services to Edmonton seniors.**



- Community-based organizations have the resources and capacity to deliver community programming and services aligned with the City’s key mandates and goals.
- Sector stakeholders and service-delivery organizations work collaboratively to provide innovative and effective services that meet the needs of Edmonton seniors.

“ Encourage collaboration among senior serving groups for funding of projects. ”

