



CALDER BATEMAN
COMMUNICATIONS

DRAFT
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
EDMONTON SENIORS COORDINATING COUNCIL
(ESCC)

JANUARY 15, 2007

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND OVERVIEW	1
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SENIORS.....	3
ISSUES FACING SENIORS	5
AVAILABLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN EDMONTON	6
SIMILAR SENIORS ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA	9
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	12
SWOT	12
TOWARDS A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS.....	13
AUDIENCES.....	16
KEY MESSAGE DECK	16
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES AND TACTICS	17
INCREASE VISIBILITY	18
STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH CITY COUNCIL	19
CLARIFY ADVOCACY ROLE	25
BUILD MEDIA STRATEGY	26
EVALUATION	31
APPENDIX I: MEDIA RELATIONS TEMPLATES	
APPENDIX II: SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)	
APPENDIX III: PSA MEDIA LIST	
APPENDIX IV: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND TACTICS INVENTORY	

BACKGROUND OVERVIEW

In 2004, the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was established to serve the following dual purpose:

- Provide a forum to support a broad-based coalition of senior-serving organizations in Edmonton to handle key issues facing seniors that are too complex and multifaceted for an organization to address singly.
- Support capacity building of individual senior-serving organizations through collaboration and resource sharing.

Acting as a communications hub, the Council provides support (e.g., through information sharing and fostering collaboration) to organizations for working together to improve the overall quality of life for Edmonton's seniors population. For this purpose, the ESCC communicates with not only its own members, but also non-member organizations and the seniors population in general. Non-member organizations are encouraged to participate in the Council's work and activities.

The ESCC has prioritized within its three-year strategic plan (spanning January 2005 to December 2007) the following goals for the fulfillment of its mandate:

- Establish the infrastructure to manage the Council.
- Establish an evaluation framework for the Council.
- Address priority issues for the delivery of programs and services for seniors.
- Promote and facilitate resources sharing.
- Represent senior-serving organizations on issues pertaining to seniors' programs and services.
- Disseminate information, needs assessments and best practices on behalf of member organizations.
- Support collaboration among senior-serving organizations and strategic allies.

In the execution of its mandate in support of these goals, the ESCC has set out to identify focus areas for the purpose of advocacy on issues affecting the ability of member organizations to fully execute their mandates and to develop mechanisms for consulting member organizations on advocacy issues.

Since its inception, the ESCC has made a number of accomplishments in this regard, including the following:

- Hosting a Roundtable on Seniors' Transportation to address key issues pertaining to the role of transportation in seniors' lives. This roundtable was conducted in partnership with the Alberta Motor Association (AMA) and included the Mayor of Edmonton, a host of senior-serving agencies, traffic safety decision-makers and transportation service providers.

- Producing a workshop on cultural issues related to the seniors population in Edmonton with respect to the specific needs of, and core issues facing, immigrant and refugee seniors. This workshop included an expert guest speaker who facilitated information sharing from another city (Calgary) regarding what is being done for this segment of the seniors population in another Alberta municipality.
- Providing letters of support for member organizations' initiatives and activities. This involved the ESCC endorsing grant applications for member organizations on specific initiatives.
- Advocating on behalf of deaf seniors through assisting in the development of a proposal to build a deaf seniors long-term care unit and meeting with a charitable housing foundation to advance the issue and acquire the necessary facilities to accomplish this.
- Developing a cache of communications mechanisms, including a website, print/electronic newsletters, notices and research reports and the conduction of public open houses.

These accomplishments provide a promising foundation from which the Council can continue to expand its role as a capacity builder for senior-serving organizations and as an advocate for Edmonton seniors. As a new organization, the Council needs to build its profile and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders, such as non-member senior-serving and related organizations as well as municipal government. Through building its profile and strengthening relationships, the Council can fortify its credibility among those key audiences. As a result, it can become the "go to" place on seniors issues and for resources and information, and to become an organization to whom municipalities look to for guidance and perspective on serving seniors. Through doing this, the ESCC can then fully execute its mandate to improve the quality of life for seniors living in Edmonton. A communications strategy will serve to enhance that and enable the ESCC to fully realize its organizational goals.

This communications plan has been built on the ESCC's organizational goals. Communications priorities have been identified in support of those goals. From those priorities, strategic approaches and tactics have been developed for supporting the Council in achieving those goals. The mid-term evaluation on the ESCC that was completed in the fall of 2006 of its first 18 months in operation has also served as a foundation upon which communications priorities, goals, objectives and strategies have been developed in this plan. In part, through learning about the perceptions and opinions of members and non-members regarding the concept of the ESCC and its level of success, communications priorities could be determined upon which communications goals, objectives and strategies were built.

This plan will serve to chart the course for the ESCC's communications activities over the next three years from February 1, 2007 through to January 31, 2010.

Demographic Profile of Seniors

Canada is an aging country. As of 2006, more than 4.3 million Canadians were 65 years of age or older¹. The country's seniors population is expected to rise exponentially as the Baby Boomers begin to turn 65 years old near 2011². At that time, Canada's seniors could reach 4.9 million and represent 14 per cent of the entire population³. The age group that will experience the highest increase is the eldest age group – people 85 years old and older⁴.

Most Canadian seniors are retired and spend their time participating in leisure activities such as traveling, television watching and socializing. As well, a significant number of seniors volunteer their time to organizations in their communities⁵. However, there are still individuals who are employed. In 2005, more than 300,000 Canadians were still employed past the age of 65⁶.

Among the seniors population is a large visible minority group. More than half of seniors in Canada belonged to a visible minority group in 2001 and the number of people in this category are expected to rise as the population ages⁷.

The majority of seniors live in the four largest provinces: Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta. Victoria, BC, for example, is known as the seniors' capital of Canada; it has the highest percentage of seniors than any other city in Canada. Although the majority of seniors live in these four provinces, they comprise the largest segments of the total population in Saskatchewan and Manitoba⁸.

Alberta's Seniors Population

The aging trend that is projected for Canada's population is also expected for Alberta's population. Although seniors are not the largest age group in Alberta, they make up 10 per cent

¹ Statistics Canada. *Population by sex and age group*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo10a.htm.

² The Daily (1999, October) *A portrait of seniors in Canada*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991001/d991001a.htm.

³ Statistics Canada. *Projected population by age group to three projected scenarios for 2006 and 2001 at July 1*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo08.htm.

⁴ The Daily (1999, October) *A portrait of seniors in Canada*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991001/d991001a.htm.

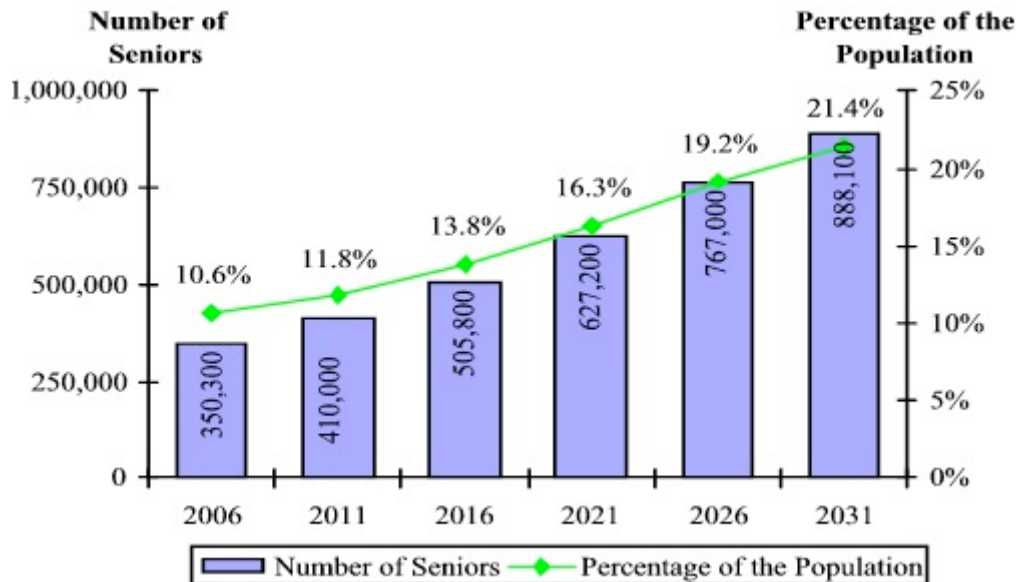
⁵ Statistics Canada. *Selected Highlights from A Portrait of Seniors in Canada*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.statcan.ca/english.ads/89-519-XPE/link.htm.

⁶ Statistics Canada. *Labour force characteristics by age and sex*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/labor20a.htm.

⁷ Statistics Canada. *Visible minority population, by age group (2001 Census)*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo50a.htm.

⁸ Statistics Canada. *Selected Highlights from A Portrait of Seniors in Canada*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.statcan.ca/english.ads/89-519-XPE/link.htm.

of the province's population⁹. In 2006, there were 350,300 seniors living in Alberta and this number is project to increase to more than 880,000 by 2031¹⁰.



The fastest growing age group in Alberta is seniors as a result of the Baby Boomer generation. As well, more seniors are moving to Alberta from other parts of Canada, which gives Alberta the highest number of interprovincial migrants in comparison to other provinces.

Alberta Seniors – Activity and Employment

Overall, seniors in Alberta are generally more active than other seniors in Canada. Their activities range from volunteer work to paid employment. As of 2003, about 20 per cent of Alberta seniors volunteered in their communities and about 11 per cent were employed. However, even with the higher number of seniors in the Alberta workforce, the average income for seniors falls \$5,000 below the average Albertan's salary at \$26,336¹¹.

Alberta Seniors – Immigrants and Aboriginal Populations

Alberta does not have as many senior immigrants or visual minorities as the rest of Canada. In 2001, Alberta's senior immigrants represented about 28 per cent of the seniors population¹². However, the province does have a strong senior Aboriginal population. In 2001, the number of

⁹ Alberta Seniors and Community Supports. *Policy and Planning Highlights*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy_planning/factsheet_seniors/highlights/index.asp.

¹⁰ Alberta Seniors and Community Supports. *How Fast is Alberta Aging?* Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy_planning/factsheet_seniors/aging_population/how_fast/index.asp.

¹¹ Alberta Seniors and Community Supports Ministry. *Policy and Planning Highlights*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy_planning/factsheet_seniors/highlights/index.asp

¹² Alberta Seniors and Community Supports. *Seniors Provincial Electoral Division Profiles: Compiled from the 2001 Census of Canada*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy_planning/PED_profiles/index.asp.

senior Aboriginals surpassed 5,000, and the group is expected to increase by 150 per cent by 2017. Aboriginal seniors are generally a younger group in comparison to the overall seniors population in Alberta; the majority of Aboriginal seniors are between 65 to 69 years old. On average, senior Aboriginals in Alberta have a higher average income than Aboriginal seniors in other parts of Canada, but the group has a lower average income than other Alberta seniors¹³.

Edmonton Seniors

As of 2005, seniors in Edmonton comprise approximately 12 per cent of the city’s population, and the age group is expected to grow by nearly 15,000 people by 2011.

City of Edmonton Population Forecast, 2005-2011¹⁴

Age	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
65 - 69	22,866	23,464	24,187	25,174	26,214	27,300	28,656
70 - 74	20,891	20,943	21,012	21,296	21,557	21,970	22,532
75 - 79	17,071	17,753	18,110	18,287	18,383	18,414	18,419
80 - 84	12,131	12,511	12,683	13,069	13,433	13,847	14,266
85+	9,359	10,141	10,857	11,427	11,972	12,479	12,998
Total	82,318	84,812	86,849	89,253	91,559	94,010	96,871

Edmonton’s senior demographics follow closely with the province’s statistics. However, the immigrant seniors population is higher. The immigrant seniors population in Edmonton in 2001 was one-third of the entire seniors population in the city. As well, out of the total number of people who immigrated to Edmonton, 1.5 per cent of those were seniors¹⁵.

Issues Facing Seniors

As our society becomes more complex, so do the issues facing its citizens—particularly seniors. Seniors today face a host of challenges that in many respects were not considerations for previous generations. Seniors today must grapple with a myriad of interconnected issues and choices, which all have an impact on their quality of life, and are related to:

- Independence and mobility
- Housing
- Social engagement, community connectedness and isolation
- Health and long-term care needs
- Safety (e.g., crime, abuse)

¹³ Alberta Seniors and Community Supports Ministry. *Policy and Planning Highlights*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy_planning/factsheet_seniors/highlights/index.asp.

¹⁴ City of Edmonton Planning and Development Department. *City of Edmonton Population Forecast, 2005-2011*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.edmonton.ca/infraplan/demographic/Population%20Forecast%20City.pdf.

¹⁵ Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council. *Edmonton’s Immigrant Seniors – Population*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/ImSrPop.doc.

With Canada's aging population, issues affecting seniors will inextricably become issues that will impact all levels of society and every member of the population. In particular, as Edmonton's demographics shift, public policy, programs and services will need to be adapted accordingly to accommodate those changes. Specifically, health care, the labour market and the allocation of government funding at all levels will become significantly affected in the coming years as a result of the population aging. Moreover, these issues are also influenced by such factors as urban versus rural, gender and ethnocultural considerations. The city and province will have to rise to these challenges and determine the most effective means of handling these changes as they continue to evolve and come to fruition.

This will require attention to the following:

- Improving health and wellness for those entering late adulthood
- Enabling seniors to participate in various aspects of society (e.g., economic, social)
- Providing supportive communities for seniors
- Maintaining government programs¹⁶

The continual monitoring and management of these issues is crucial so that government at all levels is prepared to respond to the changing needs of the population as the Baby Boomer generation proceeds to enter late adulthood.

Available Programs and Services in Edmonton

Programs and Services Available through the Alberta Government

The Alberta government provides numerous programs and services to seniors for assisting with daily living needs. The programs and services address a wide-range of seniors' needs and includes everything from educational programs about fraud to funding for basic dental coverage. The majority of the programs focus on providing funding and services to low-income seniors or to seniors who may need financial assistance for a certain need.

The range of programs and services available from the provincial government to Edmonton seniors includes:

- **Alberta Seniors Benefit** – Provides monthly payments to low-income seniors.
- **Special Needs Assistance for Seniors** – Assists low-income seniors with unexpected or one-time costs. The only one of its kind in Canada.
- **Education Property Tax Assistance for Seniors** – Provides senior homeowners with a rebate to cover the yearly increase in the educational portion of their property tax.

¹⁶ Health Canada, Division of Aging and Seniors (2002). *Canada's Aging Population*. Government of Canada. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/fed_paper/pdfs/fedpaper_e.pdf.

- **Dental Assistance Program** – Provides up to \$5,000 for up to five years of basic dental coverage.
- **Optical Assistance for Seniors** – Provides up to \$230 for up to three years for prescription eyeglasses.
- **Seniors Lodge Program** – Provides affordable lodge-style housing for seniors.
- **Seniors Self-Contained Housing Program** – Provides affordable apartments for low-income seniors.
- **Residential Access Modification Program** – Provides grants for low to moderate-income seniors who use wheelchairs to modify their home in order to increase mobility.
- **Alberta Aids to Daily Living** – Helps seniors purchase medical equipment and supplies for their basic medical needs so they can function more independently.
- **Alberta Blue Cross Coverage for Seniors** – Provides premium-free Blue Cross coverage for seniors and their family.
- **Alberta Monitoring for Health Program** – Assists lower-income seniors with diabetes.
- **Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta** – Makes recommendations to the municipal government on policies and services related to seniors based on the consultation from seniors and seniors’ organizations.
- **Seniors Information Line** – A hotline for seniors to call and receive information on the programs and services available in Alberta.
- **Office of the Public Guardian** – Provides guardianship services for seniors who are unable to make personal, non-financial decisions for themselves.
- **Protection for Persons in Care** – Investigates complaints of abuse involving seniors receiving services from government-funded agencies.
- **Seniors Fraud Awareness Program “If in Doubt, Check it Out”** – Educates seniors about the most common types of fraud and how to protect themselves against fraud and scams.

Programs and Services Available through the City of Edmonton’s Community Services Department Services to Seniors at Risk

In addition to the provincial programs and services offered to Edmonton seniors, the city of Edmonton has a specific department dedicated to assisting seniors and the local organizations that serve them.

The programs and services available in Edmonton go beyond assisting seniors with basic living needs. Edmonton's programs and services are geared towards improving the overall quality of life for seniors. They focus on the individual and creating a greater sense of community connectedness for seniors living in the city. The organizations providing these programs and services focus more on bringing seniors together through community centres and associations. The majority of programs and services are offered through individual centres dedicated to seniors' activities.

The full list of programs and services available in Edmonton to seniors includes:

- **Greater Edmonton Foundation** – Provides lodging to low-income seniors.
- **Residential Rehabilitation Program** – Provides funding to low-income or disabled seniors to correct major problems in their house or to assist with major modifications to increase mobility.
- **Home Adaptation for Seniors Independence (HASI)** – Provides funding to assist low-income seniors with minor age-related adaptations to their home.
- **Abbottsfield Seniors Drop-In** – Drop-in centre at Abbottsfield Mall that provides information, support and social activities.
- **Grass cutting and snow shoveling registry** – Provides free snow shoveling and grass cutting to low-income seniors.
- **Latin American Senior Citizens Cultural Association** – Social group for Spanish speaking seniors.
- **Oliver Community** – Works with CARITAS to address how to help seniors stay in their own home.
- **Seniors Safe House** – Safe housing is provided to seniors who are in abusive situation.
- **Elder Abuse Intervention Team** – Directs intervention and prevention through community development initiatives and public awareness. A partnership with Edmonton Police Service, Catholic Social Services and Community Services.
- **Central and Northgate Lions Senior Citizens Associations** – Provides senior assistance programs, health awareness programs, health services in collaboration with health care providers, active living programs for frail or low-income seniors (in partnership with other leisure and fitness centres), programs for single women and men, financial abuse information sessions, CARE/outreach programs, CONNECTIONS program, adult day support.
- Additional department initiatives include Falls Prevention Strategy and Canadian Standards for Older Adults.

- **Edmonton Seniors Homeowner Grant** – Provides a flat-rate grant to low-income seniors to help with the possible increase to their municipal taxes.
- **Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)** – Provides general and specific information, referral and advocacy relating to services in Edmonton for older people including: Information about pensions, finances and income support, health services, income tax, funeral services, government resources, Edmonton’s senior centres and other resources as required and the Directory of Seniors Services which lists over 300 agencies and businesses in Edmonton that serve older adults.
- **Calder Senior Drop-In Society** – Provides a wide range of services, programs and events for seniors in the community.
- **Edmonton Seniors Centre** – Provides programs for seniors to promote wellbeing.
- **Strathcona Place Seniors Centre** – Provides a range of services and programs for Edmonton seniors.
- **Westend Seniors Activity Centre** – Provides services and programs to seniors to promote healthy aging of seniors.

Similar Seniors Organizations in Canada

As seniors are set to become a significant segment of the population and already make up a sizeable portion of the population in Canada’s major urban centres, a number of cities across the country have seniors councils and committees already established. These organizations are charged with diverse mandates from simply providing a repository of information on programs and services available in the community to serving as advocates on behalf of seniors to government.

Saskatoon

The Saskatoon Council on Aging (www.scoa.ca) is a non-profit organization that is community-based with over 1100 members comprising older adults as well as representative from agencies and organizations concerned with seniors issues and who have shown an interest in the Council’s work. This Council serves two purposes: managing a walk-in centre for older adults to improve their quality of life and working with local agencies “to initiate, implement and evaluate projects to older adults” in the community. They provide services to seniors (e.g., blood pressure clinic, educational programs) as well as are involved in projects designed to improve the lives of seniors (e.g., older adult abuse task force)¹⁷.

¹⁷ Saskatoon Council on Aging, Inc (n.d.). *About the Saskatoon Council on Aging*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.scoa.ca/main.html.

Toronto

The Toronto Seniors' Assembly (www.toronto.ca/seniors/seniors_assembly) serves as an information provider to seniors regarding city of Toronto initiatives. The Assembly also provides a seniors' perspective on civic issues. Members consist of:

- Seniors who are Toronto residents and who have direct linkages to other seniors organizations or groups.
- Three non-voting associate members who are involved in seniors' issues and who are elected by the Assembly.

The Assembly's mandate is to:

- Be a citizen advisor to Toronto's Seniors' Advocate regarding seniors' issues.
- Consult with communities regarding civic issues and bring issues forward to the Seniors' Advocate.
- Provide advice on civic issues affecting seniors.
- Build its own capacity to address seniors' issues in Toronto and partner with the city in advocating to higher levels of government¹⁸.

Manitoba

The Manitoba Council on Aging (www.gov.mb.ca/shas/councilonaging) advises the Minister responsible for seniors in the province from a senior's perspective regarding government programs and policies impacting Manitoba seniors. The Council's specific responsibilities include:

- Identifying opportunities for government to tailor programs, policies and services to accommodate different age groups.
- Increasing public awareness and understanding of aging and its implications for all Manitobans.
- Evaluating and providing recommendations on projects, programs, proposals and public policy to better serve seniors' needs and reflect their issues and concerns.
- Providing an opportunity for discussions through meetings with relevant organizations, groups and individuals in the fulfillment of its mandate¹⁹.

¹⁸ City of Toronto (n.d.). *Seniors' Assembly – Completed*. Retrieved January 3, 2007 from www.toronto.ca/seniors/seniors_assembly.htm.

¹⁹ Government of Manitoba (n.d.). *Manitoba Council on Aging*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.gov.mb.ca/shas.councilonaging.html.

Victoria

Seniors Serving Seniors Association (www.seniorsservingseniors.bc.ca) has existed since 1981 and was created to serve as a forum for discussing seniors' needs in Victoria. This has evolved into a mandate to promote the well being of seniors through the following:

- Collecting, researching and disseminating information related to seniors.
- Assisting in the development of programs for seniors as well as the community-at-large.
- Coordinating a network of seniors-serving organizations.
- Representing the interests and concerns of seniors²⁰.

Greater Victoria Seniors is a seniors advocacy group that advocates for seniors' rights and provides information to seniors regarding legislation (past and current) from all levels of government²¹.

²⁰ Seniors Serving Seniors (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved January 2, 2007 from www.seniorsservingseniors.bc.ca/about.asp.

²¹ Victoria Community Information Database (n.d.). Retrieved January 2, 2007 from http://society.victoria.tc.ca/show_rec.cgi/984.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESCC has its members interested and engaged in the organization. • The ESCC is on track with a number of its three-year strategic plan's goals. • The organization's members understand its function and appreciate the potential of the ESCC to grow. • The ESCC has already established a range of communications tools. • The ESCC has a good understanding of seniors' issues • In general, the seniors community and a number of senior-serving organizations are supportive of the ESCC and its concept. • The City supports the concept of the Coordinating Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ESCC can only have a limited advocacy role because of its charitable status and has not clarified its role in advocacy. • The ESCC has had limited contact with municipal government and has not established a strong relationship with City Council. • The organization suffers from a lack of awareness and visibility within the community. • Senior-serving organizations that are not members may not fully understand the purpose of the ESCC. • The ESCC has only just begun to use its communications tools to generate public awareness for itself.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the ESCC's role is clarified, the organization can become a strong and active advocate for seniors' issues and its members' ideas and needs. • The City has identified as seniors as a priority in its special initiatives for 2005 – 2007. • ESCC can become a credible voice in generating understanding of seniors' issues amongst City Council, the media, senior-serving organizations and the general public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCC membership levels could diminish due to membership barriers. • The ESCC's effectiveness/relevance could be questioned if it cannot show outcomes and achievements. • Perceived function and credibility of ESCC by senior-serving organizations and City Council. • Assured funding from government. • Limited community visibility and understanding of the ESCC's role. • Support levels from City Council and, in particular, support from individual Council members. • Potential opposition from larger organizations serving seniors in Edmonton who believe they are in a better position to articulate the needs of seniors.

Towards a Communications Strategy: Critical Success Factors

Identifying critical success factors is key to the development of a broad communications strategy, and knowing what the ESCC will need to prioritize will help to shape its future efforts. We have identified four critical success factors that we believe are necessary for ESCC to achieve the goals set out in its strategic plan.

- 1. Role Clarification** – Determining the Council’s role and function is crucial for providing a framework upon which all future planning – both at a strategic organizational and communications level – will be based. Although the Council may have a wide breadth of activities in which it engages to advance seniors’ issues, ultimately having one predominant core function will serve to bring clarity to all of ESCC’s key audiences about who they are and what they have the capacity to do in serving Edmonton’s seniors population.
- 2. Increased Public Awareness and Education** – In order to become an effective voice for Edmonton seniors, particularly at the government level, the Council needs to build its profile within the city and position itself as an organization that has the capacity to effectively bring seniors issues to the forefront of municipal government and effect positive change in terms of public policy, programming and services.
- 3. Strengthen Relationships with Government** – Because the Council acts as a communications hub—providing information about programs and services available to seniors as well as facilitating the collaboration of senior-serving organizations in working together to improve the quality of life for seniors—the Council has the potential to keep government apprised of seniors issues and seniors’ needs in Edmonton. The information the Council could provide on the quality of programs and services available, seniors issues as they evolve over time and the changing needs of seniors has the potential to shape the formation of public policy and the creation or augmentation of programs and services to better meet the needs of Edmonton’s seniors.
- 4. Evaluate Progress and Communicate Successes** – Building on the previous accomplishment of conducting a mid-term evaluation in fall 2006 of the Council’s overall progress on its strategic goals and the opinions of members and non-members regarding its effectiveness, the Council should continue to review its performance and report on its accomplishments on a systematic basis. This would serve the Council in two ways: 1) assist them in monitoring their progress and chart a course for accomplishing their strategic organizational goals in fulfilling their mandate and 2) building credibility among key audiences through communicating ESCC achievements.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Overarching Communications Goal

To improve the quality of life for seniors in Edmonton by strengthening relationships with key stakeholders, such as Edmonton City Council, networking with other senior-serving organizations to form a broad-based coalition and building awareness about the ESCC among key audiences in a way that serves seniors' needs.

YEAR ONE

Goal	Objectives	Audience	Desired Outcomes
To reach and educate key stakeholders about the ESCC, its function and goals.	<p>By January 31, 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior-serving organizations will have full understanding of the ESCC and its benefits as shown by evaluation interviews. The ESCC's primary audiences will understand the priority issues as shown by evaluation interviews. Give positive pieces of media coverage will be generated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCC members Senior-serving organizations Community opinion leaders Government (municipal) Media 	Key stakeholders are knowledgeable about ESCC and its mandate.

YEAR TWO

Goal	Objectives	Audience	Desired Outcomes
To generate increased support from stakeholders and the seniors community.	<p>By January 31, 2009, the ESCC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have routine contact (e.g., meetings) with other seniors-serving organizations and high-priority communities. Routinely connect with City Council one to four times a year. Communicate to stakeholders about ESCC activities and accomplishments. Seven positive pieces of media coverage will be generated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCC members Senior-serving organizations Community opinion leaders Government (municipal) Media 	Stakeholders and the seniors community recognize value in the ESCC and support its work.

YEAR THREE

Goal	Objectives	Audience	Desired Outcomes
<p>To strengthen the ESCC's relationships with stakeholders and the seniors community by reinforcing the purpose of the ESCC, the benefits of membership and the ESCC's achievements in advancing seniors' issues.</p>	<p>By January 31, 2010, the ESCC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have concrete methodologies and tools to reach current and potential stakeholders and communities to relay ESCC information. • Increase the number of scheduled meetings with City Council from one to four per year to monthly or bi-monthly meetings. • Communicate how members and individuals can express their concerns and what steps the ESCC will take to address them. • Have 10 pieces of positive media coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCC members • Senior-serving organizations • Community opinion leaders • Government (municipal) • Media 	<p>Strong relationships are forged and maintained with stakeholders and the seniors community for the shared purpose of improving the quality of life for Edmonton seniors.</p>

AUDIENCES

Primary

- ESCC member organizations
- Senior-serving organizations in Edmonton (potential ESCC members)
- Community opinion leaders
- Media
- Current community supporters of the ESCC (e.g., the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region)
- Government
 - Municipal – City Council, key City Councillors, City of Edmonton departments (Corporate Business Planning, Community Services, Transportation)

Secondary

- Previous community partners of the ESCC (e.g., University of Alberta, Faculty of Arts)
- Organizations directly serving seniors, such as Seniors' Assisted Living facilities and long-term care facilities (e.g., seniors lodges, auxiliary hospitals)
- Seniors living in Edmonton
- Community agencies and organizations serving Edmontonians on issues that affect seniors
- Business leaders
- Community-at-large

KEY MESSAGE DECK

Increase Visibility

- The primary focus of the ESCC is to improve the quality of life for seniors living in Edmonton by ensuring their needs are sufficiently served through public policy, programs and services.
- The ESCC serves as a central hub for Edmonton seniors and senior-serving organizations to exchange information and resources and to work collaboratively.

Strengthen Relationship with Government

- The ESCC is committed to building and sustaining a strong, productive relationship with Edmonton's City Council.
- The ESCC is designed to be a central source of information for government regarding issues facing Edmonton's seniors population and the needs of organizations serving that population.

- The ESCC commends the priority City Council has given to seniors' issues and values its commitment to improving services and increasing opportunities for seniors to more fully participate in the Edmonton community.

Clarifying Advocacy Role

- The ESCC is a voice for Edmonton seniors to government on issues affecting them so programs and services available to seniors can be improved to support a better quality of life for Edmonton's seniors population.
- All seniors and senior-serving organizations are encouraged to communicate their needs and issues to the ESCC so the information can in turn be forwarded to City Council and City Administration.

Building Media Strategy

- The ESCC is dedicated to building constructive relationships with key individuals in the media in order to keep priority issues top-of-mind in the Edmonton community to progress seniors' issues forward.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The ESCC identified seven priorities on which to focus its communications activities. Based on the findings and recommendations from the mid-term evaluation report and the goals set out in the ESCC's three-year strategic plan, it was clear that narrowing the number of communications priorities could better serve those goals. Four specific communications priorities have been identified as the focal point around which the communications strategies and tactics have been developed. Through tackling these four priorities, the remaining communications priorities will subsequently be served as a direct result. These four priorities are as follows:

- Increase visibility
- Strengthen relationship with City Council and City Administration
- Clarify advocacy role
- Build media strategy

There are two reasons for the division of the priorities:

- A small and strategic group of priorities will in turn have a higher success than a large group of priorities.
- The strategies and tactics that are required address these priorities will also address the remaining three priorities in the secondary group.

For example, increasing visibility of the ESCC will not only generate awareness of the Council, but also will require the development of a visual identity and collateral materials and will

strengthen non-subscribers' understanding of the Council and their likelihood of becoming a member.

Increase Visibility

The general strategy for increasing ESCC's visibility is to generate and maintain key stakeholders' awareness of the Council and its function.

Year One

In the first year, the ESCC needs to gain recognition from key stakeholders, such as current and potential members, senior-serving organizations and seniors. The first year of the communications assignment will consist of getting the word out about what the ESCC is and what it does to the people who need to know about it. To get the word out, we recommend the ESCC partake in the following tasks:

1. Distribute packages to its stakeholders that comprise a complete overview of the organization, its goals and how the ESCC benefits seniors in Edmonton.
2. Continue to demonstrate the ESCC's capacity to serve as a communications hub by hosting open houses that provide an opportunity for stakeholders to meet those involved in the ESCC and to discuss the value of the organization.
3. Arrange a broad range of meetings with stakeholders who are potential members to discuss, face-to-face, how the ESCC can assist their organization and the seniors community (e.g., meet monthly with three to four non-members and one to two members on a monthly basis).
4. Seek opportunities to set up a display or booth at a seniors-focused event or conference.
5. Write "Letters to the Editor" from the Executive Director or Board Chair on timely seniors issues and in response to policy changes at the municipal level.
6. Strengthen relationships by including profiles on senior-serving organizations in the ESCC's newsletters.
7. Conduct surveys on issues and establish regular satisfaction surveys on the ESCC and its work.

Year Two

In the second year, as key stakeholders come more and more to recognize the organization, the ESCC must create more opportunities to interact with the stakeholders and begin cultivating relationships. A way to do this is to have the Executive Director of the Council engaged in numerous activities for networking with key stakeholders. Potential opportunities for the Executive Director to interact with stakeholders include:

8. Speaking at public engagements.

9. Meeting with senior-serving organizations to discuss seniors' issues, how the Council can advance those issues at the municipal government level and non-member organization's barriers for becoming a member of the ESCC.
10. Establishing quarterly roundtable sessions.
11. Writing a personal letter to stakeholders to invite their feedback and input on important issues facing Edmonton seniors.

Year Three

In the third year, the ESCC will need to strengthen the relationships it has built between itself and stakeholders during the previous two years. To do this, much individual attention will need to be made to the stakeholders in order to deepen their investment in the Council. The ESCC can do many things to reinforce its relationships:

12. Conduct regularly established meetings with members (e.g., monthly).
13. Host regular events for members and stakeholders (e.g., discussion sessions, open houses and lunches).
14. Distribute letters from the Executive Director to members and stakeholders on a scheduled basis.
15. Host guest speakers to talk about timely topics.

Strengthen Relations with City Council

The overarching strategy to strengthen relations with municipal government is to build relations with the key public officials and policy makers who have a vested interest in seniors' issues. The benefits of a strong, productive relationship with the municipal government cannot be understated. Such relationships would serve the following purposes for the ESCC:

- Build credibility with members, potential members, the seniors community, Edmonton seniors, with elected officials and key public policy makers.
- Inform the formation and/or modification of public policy and the provision of programs and services through advancing seniors issues at the municipal level and communicating seniors needs to those who are in the position to make decisions on public policy, programs and services.
- Position the ESCC as a credible, effective voice for seniors and senior-serving organizations in government and, therefore, a communication intermediary between the community and government on seniors issues and needs.
- Foster larger scale collaboration not only among senior-serving organizations in working together to improve the quality of life for Edmonton seniors, but also to build a collaborative process among the seniors community and its representatives at the

grassroots level with elected officials and senior public policy-makers in municipal government to formulate public policy.

Links to the Municipal Government Agenda

In 2006, Mayor Stephen Mandel prioritized a range of special initiatives for 2005-07 (outlined in the city's corporate business plan for 2006-08) as part of City Council's vision for building a better future for Edmonton. One such initiative is devoted to seniors' issues with respect to enhancing services and opportunities for the senior population in Edmonton to participate more in the community. This is to be accomplished through some of the following Council activities:

- Complete the Seniors Inquiry initiative, which is designed to further understanding about Edmonton's seniors population, available services and the availability of municipal government funding for the city to support seniors.
- Plan to institute Seniors Friendly training for City staff and achieve Seniors Friendly designation.
- Plan invitational forums, with participants who have specific expertise regarding seniors services, to devise ways for the city to prepare to serve the seniors population as it continues to grow.
- Coordinate visits with other Canadian municipalities that have a history of serving large seniors populations.
- Conduct regular liaisons with seniors and senior-serving organizations for the purpose of dialogue to create long-term solutions to seniors' issues.
- Assess current service inequities and ensure service consistency.
- Explore partnerships with the province and teaching institutions to address seniors' issues.

In particular, one of the administration activities identified in conjunction with the above noted Council activities is for the City to facilitate and support the work of the ESCC (as well as other seniors' agencies in the city).

As the City has identified the need to support the ESCC's work and many of the Council activities closely align with the ESCC's core mandate and organizational goals, this provides a prime opportunity for the ESCC to strongly position itself with the municipal government as a voice for seniors and a government liaison on seniors' issues so that Edmonton's seniors are better served in the community.

Upcoming Elections

Typically, organizations work around election cycles. For example, capital announcements usually take place prior to, or during, election campaigns. Contentious policy decisions are usually deferred during election periods. The ESCC should use election cycles to maximum effect as part of its organizational agenda, particularly should the Council become involved in bringing forward seniors' issues to government and informing public policy-makers of Edmonton's seniors evolving needs.

On October 15, 2007, there will be a municipal election in Edmonton. This in turn will potentially have an important impact on the work that the ESCC is striving to do in terms of forging stronger relationships with the City Council via the City Councillor assigned to handle Seniors Issues, Linda Sloan. In conjunction with the fact that Councillor Sloan is assigned to this portfolio, she has also historically been a staunch advocate for seniors and seniors' issues on the political landscape. This coupled with the fact that the city's Special Initiatives are scheduled for action until 2007 means that the degree to which seniors' issues are at the forefront of the municipal agenda may change significantly.

Issues Identification

As outlined in the ESCC's mid-term evaluation report, members and non-members identified the following as key functions of the ESCC in the execution of its mandate:

- Promote collaboration with, and foster resource and information sharing among, senior-serving organizations in Edmonton.
- Build capacity within senior-serving organizations so they can meet the needs of Edmonton seniors as a concerted group.
- Have a facilitation role in helping agencies to work together.
- Endorse collaboration and resource sharing to maximize the effectiveness of program and service delivery to seniors.
- Serve a leadership role in finding opportunities to help senior-serving organizations and Edmonton seniors.

This coupled with the following ESCC's strategic goals places the Council in a favourable position to itself as a conduit for seniors and senior-serving organizations to voice their issues and concerns to government:

- Address priority issues for the delivery of programs and services for seniors
- Promote and facilitate the sharing of resources
- Represent senior-serving organizations on issues related to seniors' programs and services

- Support collaboration among senior-serving organizations

To achieve that aim, the Council could build consultation processes involving senior-serving organizations, other important stakeholders in the seniors community, senior citizens and key government representatives to inform public policy and improve programming and services for seniors in Edmonton. The information gleaned from such consultation sessions could be provided to government (through Councillor Linda Sloan to City Council) as recommendations for developing and/or amending public policy on key issues and initiatives. These consultation sessions involving representatives from the seniors community would facilitate the identification of relevant and timely issues to provide a snapshot to government of the current concerns and needs of Edmonton's seniors.

Matching Message to Messenger and Medium

It is important to identify the individual most appropriate to communicate with government as a representative of the ESCC. The Executive Director of the ESCC should serve as the face for the organization, and would handle all communications with government representatives. As such, the Executive Director would be designated to handle the following tasks:

- On a quarterly basis each year, the Executive Director would meet with the designated municipal government liaison for seniors' issues and would brief that liaison regarding what was heard during consultations with the seniors' community on issues affecting seniors.
- Key messages would be crafted to support the Executive Director for face-to-face meetings with government representatives (e.g., municipal liaison for Councillor Linda Sloan and the appropriate representative from the Seniors Advisory Council of Alberta)
- At the end of each fiscal year for the ESCC, the Executive Director would forward a copy of the ESCC evaluation report and provide a written summary of the findings from consultation initiatives conducted during the course of the year.

Develop Relationships

Ultimately, the ability to put forward messages compellingly is directly related to the degree of good will that exists towards your organization. As such, the ESCC needs to be particularly attentive towards the following:

- Developing clear, open lines of communication with government representatives.
- Approaching government with sensitivity to protocol (e.g., reporting structures, who has final authority).
- Determine the level of understanding and experience the representative has with the ESCC and seniors issues overall.
- Understand government hierarchy and internal processes.

- Understand the provincial landscape on seniors' issues (e.g., what seniors living in rural communities or other large centres have for concerns and needs).

Intelligence Gathering

Gathering intelligence is an integral component of government relations. As such, it is important to monitor the following:

- Voting patterns of political decision-makers
- Who government is listening to, and taking advice from
- Who is likely to be supportive of the ESCC and those who may take issue with the ESCC and its work

Level of Visibility – Low Key or Public?

It is important to decide how to work on advancing seniors' issues – either from within through government channels or from the outside is a key decision. For example, taking a public stance on an issue will require media as an ally. While working from within government would negate the use of media. The following questions will help to determine which course of action to take:

- Does the issue have the potential to embarrass government?
- What are the risks of going public?
- Could media help or hinder the issue?
- Who are the champions of the ESCC and seniors' issues with government?
- Are there vulnerabilities that exist in the ESCC that could undermine the organization's credibility on a given issue?

For the ESCC, it is recommended that a blended approach be taken whereby media is used to increase the visibility of seniors' issues in Edmonton and profile the work of the ESCC from a positive, celebratory standpoint to showcase the ESCC's achievements. However, the main approach to government relations on issues impacting seniors would be through the available channels within government and forging strong relationships with key government representatives for effecting change at the policy level. It is important to build trust with government representatives and position the ESCC as a credible and constructive partner (and not an adversary) in the creation of public policy and initiatives serving seniors.

Determine Allies

It is important to also determine who ESCC's natural allies are and whether they will support the ESCC in its work. Based upon the mid-term evaluation that was conducted on the ESCC, it was found that a number of member and non-member organizations in the senior community see value and a great deal of potential for the Council to benefit member organizations and the seniors they serve even further in the future as the Council continues to build on its successes from the last 18 months. There are, however, two to three large-scale organizations that are

opposed to the Council on a philosophical level with respect to the concept of seniors coordinating councils. Smaller organizations, on the other hand, were seen as being more open to the concept if it can be shown to benefit them.

Within the realm of using consultation processes with representatives from the community to bring forward recommendations to government, it would be important to bear in mind the opposition that is present from within the seniors community and be prepared to manage it during such processes. Opposition from stakeholders, if only from a small number, can become significant barriers, particularly if those stakeholders have a high level of credibility already established with either the seniors community they serve or government.

Determine Timing

Another key question that must be answered refers to when a selected issue(s) should be profiled and brought forward to government. The timing of such actions can be influenced by relevant initiatives or actions that are occurring within the Edmonton seniors community, at other levels of government or within the province or in another province or city. Sometimes opportunities can be maximized to coincide with other happenings that may be taking place politically or at the grassroots level.

Year One

Throughout Year One, the ESCC will need to continue to strengthen the relationship with Councillor Sloan and the city's seniors liaison, Brenda Wong. City Council developed 21 special initiatives, one of which was devoted to seniors and to which Councillor Sloan has been assigned. The relationship between City Council and the ESCC needs to be maximized to the Council's advantage, and the first step is to strengthen the relationship with Councillor Sloan and Brenda Wong. To help strengthen this relationship, the ESCC can:

1. Reserve one-on-one quarterly meetings with Brenda Wong for the purpose of informing Councillor Sloan of the ESCC's work and the needs of its members as they relate to the issues facing Edmonton seniors.
2. Send an annual summary report directly to Councillor Sloan.
3. Invite Councillor Sloan to attend ESCC's events, presentations, roundtables, meetings as a guest.
4. Provide an opportunity for Councillor Sloan to be engaged in discussions regarding seniors' issues.

One consideration for the upcoming year is the municipal election occurring on October 15, 2007. City Council could potentially have new Councillors with whom to build relationships. The upcoming election, however, may not change the face of City Council.

Recommended activities specifically in preparation for this election include:

5. Host pre-election forums.

6. Stage community opportunities to raises questions with respect to candidates' stances on various issues pertaining to seniors.
7. Engage senior-serving organizations in the election process.

Year Two and Three

Throughout Year Two, the ESCC needs to establish a higher credibility with City Council. The ESCC is a new organization and needs to prove to City Council that it is a necessary service. City Council is aware that the ESCC is becoming a successful organization, but the ESCC needs to show City Council that it provides a crucial service to seniors and senior-serving organizations in Edmonton. To obtain the higher credibility with City Council, the ESCC can follow through with a number tactics:

8. Send City Council an annual evaluation that gauges member support, seniors' needs and reports on the organization's achievements.
9. Write a personal letter from the ESCC Executive Director to City Council about the organization, its progress and accomplishments during the previous year.
10. Promote regular face-to-face updates with City Council by registering to speak at a City Council public hearing or requesting meetings.
11. Attend Council meetings — even when the issues are on the periphery of issues affecting seniors.

Clarify Advocacy Role

In general, the ESCC will want to create more opportunities to gather information on issues from its stakeholder and disseminate information on a broad range of issues that impact seniors.

Year One

In Year One, the ESCC will want to inform its stakeholders that it is the information portal for seniors' issues. Stakeholders will need to know how the ESCC is going to be able to assist them with addressing seniors' issues and how they can receive information from the ESCC. To inform stakeholders that the ESCC is an information portal for seniors' issues the ESCC can:

1. Develop an issues binder and inform members of the resource.
2. Create an issues section within the website, Link Letter weekly e-newsletter and Making It Happen quarterly newsletter.
3. Use meetings with senior-serving organizations to address issues and establish understanding of key points.

Year Two

In Year Two, the ESCC will need to create more consultation opportunities with key stakeholders, such as members, senior-serving organizations and seniors. By consulting with its

stakeholders, the ESCC will be able to have a higher understanding of the issues facing seniors and its stakeholders. To create these opportunities the ESCC can:

4. Host roundtable sessions with key stakeholders and decision-makers.
5. Have the Executive Director conduct community presentations (e.g., at Rotary Clubs).
6. Hold community workshops with representatives from senior-serving organizations and the government to discuss seniors' issues and formulate recommendations for modifying public policy.
7. Hold monthly meetings with members to gauge their needs.

Specifically with respect to the conduction of roundtable sessions, the ESCC can build on its partnership with the United Way in Edmonton to create opportunities for the participation of senior-serving organizations (and other related organizations) with government decision-makers (elected officials and/or City Administration) to create new, and/or inform existing, public policy. The United Way of Calgary and Area has already pursued creating opportunities for the voluntary sector to build its capacity to influence public policy through supporting roundtable initiatives bringing together representatives from the community and government to discuss and formulate recommendations on a given issue. The ESCC could build on this interest from the United Way and apply this to its partnership with the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region to build the capacity of senior-serving organizations in Edmonton to impact public policy.

Year Three

In Year Three, the ESCC will need to develop more mechanisms and expand existing communications mechanisms for informing stakeholders about seniors' issues. These mechanisms will communicate what has been heard from the community, what has been accomplished by City Council and what are City Council's plans for the future. The expansion of communications mechanisms is important after opening the communication pathways between the ESCC and its stakeholders through consultation opportunities in Year Two. Examples of developing more communications mechanisms and expand existing mechanisms are:

8. Strengthen existing newsletters by dedicating a section to issues and solutions.
9. Expand the email list of stakeholders for sending ongoing updates.
10. Expand opportunities on the website for people to submit their comments and concerns.
11. Continue to hold community workshops and roundtable sessions.

Build Media Strategy

To build a media strategy, the ESCC needs to generate and increase its media coverage over the three-year time frame. The goal is to produce and maintain positive media coverage over time.

Strategic Goals and Considerations

Principally, the ESCC endeavours to raise its profile within the city and increase awareness among key audiences about the organization and how it can effectively serve Edmonton's seniors. The core purposes for media coverage is to inform key audiences about the ESCC, build higher public profile for the organization and use media as a public forum for routinely communicating ESCC successes and achievements.

Overall, the main objectives, to be achieved by the end of the three-year communications strategy, from generating media coverage are:

- Increase awareness among key audiences about the ESCC and how it can benefit the seniors community.
- Educate key audiences about what the ESCC is accomplishing for Edmonton's seniors.
- Build relationships with specific columnists and reporters.

This will serve to make the Council top-of-mind among target audiences and, over time, build the Council's perceived credibility among those audiences.

There are a host of factors that can shape the quality of media coverage and its tone. Important external and internal issues that have the potential to influence and/or factor into the ESCC's media relations efforts are:

- The upcoming municipal election in the fall.
- The support from members and non-members who agree with the concept of the Council and appreciate its potential to benefit the seniors community.
- The findings from the mid-term evaluation of the ESCC that showed approximately two to three large-scale senior-serving organizations in the city are philosophically opposed to the council.

While public officials tend to take a low key approach during pre-election periods on controversial topics, this can pose a tempting opportunity for organization who have an advocacy role to advance certain issues on their agenda at that time to create pressure on government. As the ESCC is set to build stronger relationships with City Council, it is important for the organization to maintain that focus and resist using media as a tool for agitating public officials as a means of effecting change. Third-party endorsement can be obtained from ESCC members and non-members in the seniors community who consider the ESCC to have value. By having these supporters back the ESCC and its work in a public forum, such as through media, the Council can further build a position of credibility among its key audiences (government and the seniors community). The opposition from larger organizations within the seniors community can pose a threat, however, as these organizations may attempt to use media as a tool to undermine the ESCC publicly. This threat must be monitored on an ongoing basis and sufficient preparation should be done to militate against any potential strike against the ESCC from these organizations in the future as the ESCC gains more of a public profile.

In terms of the ESCC's past and current relationship with Edmonton media, there appears to be no apparent tensions as the Council has had a very low profile in terms of overall media coverage and any type of relationships have not yet been developed with media.

Targeted Media

Media Outlet/ Media Person	Primary Audiences	Approach	Purpose
Edmonton Journal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott McKeen • Paula Simons • Alan Kellogg • Mike Sadava 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Senior-serving organizations • Edmonton seniors 	High profile and aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform audiences about the ESCC. • To motivate to action: senior orgs (to join and/or work with the ESCC) and govt (re: public policy, programs and services).
Community Newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton seniors 	Low profile and passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform seniors about the ESCC's function and its accomplishments.
The Edmonton Senior (magazine)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonton seniors • Senior-serving organizations 	Low profile and passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform audiences about the ESCC's function and its accomplishments.
CFRN TV/Global TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Senior-serving organizations • Edmonton seniors 	High profile and aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform audiences about the ESCC's function and its accomplishments. • To motivate to action: senior orgs (to join and/or work with the ESCC) and govt (re: public policy, programs and services).
630 CHED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesley Primeau • Dave Rutherford 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Senior-serving organizations • Edmonton seniors 	High profile and aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform audiences about the ESCC's function and its accomplishments. • To motivate to action: senior orgs (to join and/or work with the ESCC) and govt (re: public policy, programs and services).
CBC Radio Edmonton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ron Wilson (Edmonton AM radio program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Senior-serving organizations • Edmonton seniors 	High profile and aggressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform audiences about the ESCC's function and its accomplishments. • To motivate to action: senior orgs (to join and/or work with the ESCC) and govt (re: public policy, programs and services).

Strategic Approach

As part of the media relations strategy, the following special awareness month and days could be used to generate media coverage of the ESCC and its work, in particular if the ESCC's work or

accomplishments can be tied in with any additional activities (either at the government level or within the seniors community) that are taking place during those time periods:

- June – Seniors' month
- June 15 – World Elder Abuse Awareness day
- Oct. 1 – International day for older persons

The ESCC could use these aforementioned dates as springboards for generating media coverage regarding specific and timely issues, government announcements, significant ESCC activities and/or important ESCC accomplishments.

The ESCC could also position itself as an organization to which Edmonton media regularly goes to as a credible and reliable source for commentary on a given issue, activity or government announcement at any given time. The ESCC could become a sought after resource for media in this regard. As the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region will be supporting the Council (through providing resources and expertise) between 2007 and 2011, this could potentially provide the ESCC with opportunities to partner with the United Way on events to which media would be invited. This could serve to bolster further the ESCC's credibility within the seniors community and government through its association with, and support from, such a well-respected and established organization as the United Way.

Tactics

Media coverage could be generated in the following ways:

- **Media Kits** – Develop materials that include media releases, media advisories (for upcoming special events), backgrounders and information sheets.
- **Media Lists** – Compile a media list that identifies key media that can provide an opportunity to reach target audiences.
- **Key Message Deck/ Questions and Answers (Q&As)** – A key message deck and Q&A document should be crafted pertaining to the ESCC as an organization— who it is, what it does and how it can benefit Edmonton's seniors community. A roster of key messages as well as Q&As should also be developed in preparation for impending individual and significant ESCC announcements or actions (e.g., the release of a report) as well as in response to significant announcements or actions at the community or government levels (e.g., government funding decisions affecting seniors, new initiatives or programs).
- **Letters to the editor** – These letters would come from the ESCC Executive Director (or Board Chair) regarding an issue such as elder abuse or in response (positively supportive) to a government announcement impacting seniors. This would serve as a simple and easy way for the ESCC to generate more profile through both getting the organization's name mentioned and showing the organization is abreast of seniors' issues and is knowledgeably commenting on those issues within the context of the ESCC's work.

- **Op-Ed Pieces** –The ESCC could pursue generating an opportunity for the Executive Director to submit a guest opinion article to the Edmonton Journal.
- **Feature Articles/Story Leads** –The ESCC could submit feature articles to local community newspapers or other publications (e.g., the Edmonton Senior magazine) on an event or a particular seniors’ issue related to the work of the ESCC. Story leads could be developed for daily newspapers and broadcast media (e.g., radio talk shows).
- **Media Training** –The ESCC’s Executive Director would be designated as the media spokesperson for the organization and receive media training in preparation for that role to handle all media enquiries and interviews.
- **Media Contacts** – The ESCC’s Executive Director could establish and maintain contact with key media figures (including broadcast and print media). The ESCC’s Executive Director would meet with individual reporters and columnists for the purpose of building relationships with select media that that cover stories related to social issues/commentary and government.
- **Editorial Board Visits** – Arrange regular visits to the Edmonton Journal’s editorial board. These visits would involve presentations from ESCC regarding what has been heard during community consultations on seniors’ issues and the accomplishments of the ESCC in advancing seniors’ issues to improve the quality of life of Edmonton’s seniors.
- **Television and Radio Interviews/Segments** – By establishing relationships with the media (e.g., specific reporters and columnists), the ESCC could position itself as a credible resource for media to approach for commentary when covering an issue, event or government announcement. This has the potential to involve all types of media. Feature segments on selected television and radio programs could be used to enable the Executive Director to discuss seniors’ issues and the work of the ESCC.

Year One

Because the ESCC currently has limited media coverage, the first year will be dedicated to generating basic media coverage. To generate media coverage the ESCC can:

1. Pitch a feature article about the ESCC’s response and action on pertinent issues as they arise
2. Invite media to open houses
3. Develop media kits
4. Create a media list
5. Create templates for media tools
6. Be responsive/reactive to issues facing seniors
7. Offer public perspective at all opportunities

8. Cultivate relationships with media figures

Year Two

The second year will be about increasing the profile the ESCC has in the media. Now that coverage has been generated, the ESCC can focus on increasing its presence in the media. To increase its profile the ESCC can:

9. Send media releases addressing the ESCC's accomplishments
10. Pitch additional feature articles to many different publications
11. Generate opportunity for the Executive Director to submit a guest opinion article (op-ed piece) to the Edmonton Journal
12. Invite or request media for interviews
13. Monitor all media coverage
14. Attend publications' editorial board meetings

Year Three

The third year can be used to further strengthen relationships with specific reporters who have an interest in seniors to further increase the ESCC's profile in the media. Building relationships with specific reporters will help to give the reporters a vested interest in the organization and they will in turn write more about the organization. Building a relationship with a reporter can be accomplished through:

15. Condensing the ESCC's media list so it becomes highly targeted
16. Pitching feature story exclusives to specific reporters

EVALUATION

Evaluation arguably is the most important aspect of a communications plan. The evaluation process will provide the ESCC the opportunity to reflect on its work and achievements over the course of the three-year communications strategy. Evaluation establishes a level of accountability for work that has been accomplished. The ESCC can prove it has completed the task it set out to fulfill. To add to the level of accountability, evaluation ensures that the ESCC has in fact completed all its work and no task or objective was overlooked. Evaluation will also assess the efficacy of the ESCC's work.

Evaluation of the ESCC's Communications Plan

To evaluate the ESCC's Communications Plan, the organization must reflect on the goals and objective and create methodologies to assess whether the goals and objectives were accomplished. In order to successfully complete the evaluation plan, certain areas of the plan will be investigated:

- Stakeholders' understanding of the ESCC
- Media monitoring
- Relationship assessment
- Degree of support
- Communication of issues
- Ability to impact public policy
- Satisfaction of members

1. **Stakeholders' perceptions of the ESCC** – the degree to which stakeholders understand the ESCC and their opinions will be assessed. Stakeholders – seniors, members, senior-serving organizations – comprise the ESCC's primary target audience. One of the main objectives of the communications strategy was to educate key stakeholders about the ESCC and its accomplishments. It is integral to the ESCC's success that stakeholders' perceptions and opinions regarding the organization's effectiveness in serving the Edmonton seniors community be monitored systematically. This information will serve to inform the ESCC of any areas where they may be perceived as deficient and whether members are satisfied with the benefits they are accruing from their membership with the ESCC.
2. **Media monitoring** – media stories will be tracked across all formats (radio, television, newspaper) to evaluate the tone of the messages (positive, negative and neutral) and analyze the content of those stories. Each year of the three-year communications strategy had an objective to obtain a certain number of media pieces. The media needs to be monitored to ensure that the objective number of pieces is being reached and that the tone of the coverage is in the ESCC's favour.
3. **Relationship assessment** – the tenor of the relationship between the ESCC and City Council will be assessed. City Council is not only an ESCC stakeholder but also is the key to the ESCC advocacy role. The relationship between the ESCC and City Council has been built throughout the three years, but the relationship needs to be assessed to determine how strong it is. The assessment of its strength will help to establish the next steps the ESCC can take in its advocacy and in its relationship with City Council.
4. **Degree of support** – the level of support the ESCC receives from its stakeholders for its services will be tracked. The level of support of stakeholders is the second goal of the communications plan. The ESCC needs to gauge the level of support it has from its stakeholders to determine what other steps the organization can take to ensure that the support is at a level it needs to continue operation.
5. **Communication of issues** – the overall ability of the ESCC to communicate and update the issues to its stakeholders and audiences will be tracked. Throughout the communications plan, the ESCC will implement tools to communicate information on issues to stakeholders and audiences. The success of these tools needs to be assessed in order to adapt the tools to better accommodate stakeholder and audiences needs when receiving the information.

- 6. Ability to impact public policy** – the overall ability of the ESCC to move issues forward will be evaluated. As an advocate for seniors’ issues, the ESCC needs to keep track of how effective it is on moving the issues forward. This can be evaluated by tracking the issues progress and the ESCC’s involvement in the particular issue. Evaluating the ESCC’s ability to impact public policy will help to determine what advocacy steps work and what advocacy steps the ESCC can take to improve its impact.

- 7. Satisfaction of members** – the degree to which members are satisfied with the ESCC will be evaluated. Membership is an important issue to the ESCC and the satisfaction of the organizations members needs to be assessed in order to maintain current members and gain new ones. Learning the degree to which members are satisfied will determine what steps the ESCC can take to increase its members’ satisfaction and in turn maintain the number of members it has.

APPENDIX I: MEDIA RELATIONS TEMPLATES

Your Logo [The media advisory would be written on your organization's own letterhead.]

MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

MEDIA ADVISORY *(Should be in bold font and placed near the top left hand corner of the page.)*

Event: **[Headline]** *(Provide a main headline that focuses on the most newsworthy item of the event.)*

[Subhead] *(This gives a more specific angle for the story, such as local interest, etc.)*

(The opening paragraph provides a brief overview of the event. It should contain information that answers the who, what, when, where and why as succinctly as possible. The sentences should be brief yet full of pertinent information. Any persons of local interest, dignitaries, elected officials or others who are key to the event should be mentioned.)

DATE: *(PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE DATE OF THE EVENT.)*

TIME: *(PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING THE TIME OF THE EVENT.)*

Location: *(Include the address, room number, etc. and provide parking information for media. Also, include a map if available.)*

Contact: *(Provide a contact name and phone number for someone who is available to speak to media prior to the event. This person, however, is not necessarily the key spokesperson.)*

Program: *(Include information regarding the length of the event and specific details regarding the agenda (e.g., if there will be a luncheon, presentation, etc.).*

Visuals: *(Provide details regarding any exhibits, live entertainment or potential photo opportunities at event.)*

– 30 –

(The symbol -30-, which should be centered at the end of the media advisory, indicates it is finished.)

Your Logo [The news release would be written on your organization's own letterhead.]

NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE

NEWS RELEASE [Should be in bold font and placed near the top left hand corner of the page.]

For Immediate Release – (DATE) [Should be in bold font and located underneath the phrase News Release.]

[Headline]

The headline should capture the essence of the news item to give media a 'handle' for what information will be in the news release. Ideally, the headline should not exceed 80 characters. Only the first word in the headline should be capitalized. It should be considered as similar to the headline of a newspaper article.

[LEAD PARAGRAPH]

City, Province...

The lead paragraph should begin with the location of the news story identified. This paragraph is critical and should succinctly summarize the key elements of the news item by outlining the who, what, when, where, why and how of the story. A story lead is intended to be attention grabbing and inform the reporter why the story is important and newsworthy. It should be no more than four sentences in length.

[Second Paragraph]

This portion of the news release is where further elaboration can be provided on the information outlined in the lead paragraph. A quote from a relevant source may be included in this section to make the news release more intriguing and credible. The person quoted should be a leader or an expert on the topic. Quotes should be authentic and sound conversational. They should also say something about how the speaker views or feels about the subject.

[Third Paragraph]

The third paragraph should expand on the story in order of importance for the reporter. Data and statistics may be provided here to add more credibility to the story.

– more –

[Indicates more pages are to follow, should the news release flow onto more than one page.]

[Fourth Paragraph]

Include an additional quote from the spokesperson may be included in this section to summarize the main message in a few quoted words. A good structure for this paragraph should be either a quote followed by a final summary statement of a fact or else a factual statement followed by a summarizing quote.

[Fifth Paragraph]

The final paragraph of a traditional news release should contain the least newsworthy information.

– 30 –

[The symbol -30-, which should be centered at the end of the news release, indicates it is finished.]

For more information, please contact:

First Name, Last Name, Title [Place here the name of the person handling all media enquiries.]

Organization

Phone number [Place here the person's direct line or cell phone number.]

E-mail

**APPENDIX II: SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT
(PSA)**

Public Service Announcement

No more perfume –This Christmas, get Grandma and Grandpa something they really need!

Edmonton, Dec. 8, 2006—Grandma and Grandpa already have enough cologne, bath and shower products, and jars of jam. This year get them something that will support them. In Edmonton one of the largest issues for seniors is transportation, so why not get them something practical like a voucher book for cab rides, or a senior’s monthly bus pass or a gift certificate for rides with Driving Miss Daisy. Or how about grippers for their boots or cane, so they can feel safer walking on icy sidewalks. These are gifts that keep on giving and really can make a difference in a senior’s wellbeing.

You can shop online at www.takeETS.com for Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) monthly passes and books of tickets or visit www.drivingmissdaisy.net for information of how to contact a service provider near your senior. As well, many taxi companies offer vouchers for cabs. Boot grips or ice grips for canes are available at the Healthcare and Rehab Specialties stores.

This holiday season, help give a senior some independence, so they can get out when they want to.

For more information, contact the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council at 423-5635.

APPENDIX III: PSA MEDIA LIST

Media Outlet	Media Type	Contact Name	Title	Phone	Fax	Email
Edmonton Examiner	Newspaper	Stuart Elson	Editor	(780) 453-9001	(780) 447-7333	selson@edmontonexaminer.com
Edmonton Journal	Newspaper	Linda Mah	Listings	(780) 429-5399	(780) 429-5500	lmah@thejournal.canwest.com
Edmonton Sun	Newspaper	Donna Harker	Managing Editor	(780) 468-0158	(780) 468-0139	dharker@edmsun.com
Global Edmonton	Television	Hugh Oliver	PSA Director	(780) 436-1250	(780) 438-8482	holiver@globaltv.com
Access	Television	Jill Bonenfant	Program Director	(780) 440-7777	(780) 412-2777	jill.bonenfant@chumtv.com
CBC Edmonton	Television	Liz Ng	PSA Director	(780) 468-7402	(780) 468-7421	community-circuit@edmonton.cbc.ca
CFRN	Television	Steve Hogle	PSA Director	(780) 486-9206	(780) 489-5883	shogle@ctv.ca
CBC Radio One--News	Radio	Main email	News Room	(780) 468-7500	(780) 468-7507	cbx_edmonton@cbc.ca
The Bear	Radio	Mel Harysh	News Room	(780) 486-2800	(780) 489-6927	mel@bear.fm
CFCW-790	Radio	Dallas Huybregts	News Room	(780) 490-2490	(780) 438-6397	dhuybregts@newcap.ca
EZ Rock	Radio	Mel Harysh	News Room	(780) 435-7755	(780) 435-0855	mel@bear.fm
The Bounce	Radio	General email	News Room	(780) 424-2222	(780) 424-0357	edmontonevents@ctv.com
Sonic 102.9	Radio	Brent Shelton	Promotions Director	(780) 423-2005	(780) 423-5219	brent@radiosonic.fm
Magic 99	Radio	Attn: Kurt	News Room	(780) 433-7711	(780) 438-8484	kleavins@rawlco.com
Cool 880	Radio	Tanya Laughren	Promotions Director	(780) 424-8800	(780) 469-5937	N/A
K-Rock	Radio	Dallas Huybregts	News Room	(780) 437-4996	(780) 436-9303	dhuybregts@newcap.ca
CISN Country	Radio	Danielle L'Hirondelle	Promotions Director	(780) 428-1104	(780) 469-5937	N/A
Joe FM	Radio	Greg Cooper	News Room	(780) 469-6397	(780) 468-6739	info@joefm.ca
Big Earl	Radio	Sarah Gardener	Promotions Coordinator	(780) 437-4996	(780) 438-2219	sgardener@newcap.ca

**APPENDIX IV: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND
TACTICS INVENTORY**

Increase Visibility

Year One

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Gain recognition from key stakeholders, such as members, senior-serving organizations and seniors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute information packages to stakeholders that provide an overview of the Council, its goals and how it benefits seniors. • Host open houses to enable stakeholders to meet the ESCC and discuss the Council's value. • Arrange meetings with stakeholders (who are potential members) to discuss how the ESCC can assist their organization and benefit the seniors community (e.g., three to four non-members and one to two members on a monthly basis). • Have a display or booth at seniors-focused events or conferences. • Write "Letters to the Editor" from the Executive Director or Board Chair on timely seniors issues and/or in response to municipal policy changes. • Include profiles on senior-serving organizations in the ESCC's newsletters. • Conduct surveys on issues and establish regular satisfaction surveys on the ESCC and its work. 	Feb. 1, 2007 – Jan. 31, 2008

Year Two

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Explore networking opportunities with the Executive Director acting as the face of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director to speak at public engagements. • The Executive Director to meet senior-serving organizations to discuss seniors' issues, how the Council can advance those issues at municipal level and barriers to membership in the ESCC. • Establish quarterly roundtable sessions. • Write a personal letter from the Executive Director to stakeholders inviting their feedback on important issues facing seniors. 	Feb. 1, 2008 – Jan. 31, 2009

Year Three

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Strengthen the relationships between the organization and its stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regularly established meetings with members (e.g., monthly). • Host regular events for members and stakeholders (e.g., discussion sessions, open houses and lunches). • Distribute letters from the Executive Director to members and stakeholders on a scheduled basis. • Host guest speakers to talk about timely topics. 	Feb. 1, 2009 – Jan. 31, 2010

Strengthen Relations with City Council

Year One

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
<p>Strengthen relationships with Councillor Linda Sloan and Brenda Wong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserve one-on-one quarterly meetings with Brenda Wong for the purpose of informing Councillor Sloan of the ESCC’s work and the needs of its members as they relate to the issues facing Edmonton seniors. • Send an annual summary report directly to Councillor Sloan. • Invite Councillor Sloan to attend ESCC’s events, presentations, roundtables and meetings as a guest. • Provide an opportunity for Councillor Sloan to be engaged in discussions regarding seniors’ issues. <p><i>Municipal Election</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host pre-election forums. • Stage community opportunities to raise questions with respect to candidates’ stances on issues. • Engage senior-serving organizations in the election process. 	<p>Feb. 1, 2007 – Jan. 31, 2008</p>

Years Two and Three

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
<p>Forge a stronger relationship with City Council to establish a higher level of credibility for the ESCC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send City Council an annual evaluation summary report that gauges member support, seniors’ needs and reports on the organization’s achievements. • Send a personal letter from the Executive Director to City Council about the organization, its progress and accomplishments during the previous year. • Promote regular face-to-face updates with City Council by registering to speak at a City Council public hearing or requesting meetings. • Attend Council meetings – even when the issues area on the periphery of issues affecting seniors. 	<p>Feb. 1, 2008 – Jan. 31, 2010</p>

Clarify Advocacy Role

Year One

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Inform stakeholders that it is the information portal for seniors' issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an issues binder and inform members of the resource. • Create an issues section on website, Link Letter and Making It Happen newsletters. • Use meetings with senior-serving organizations to address issues and establish understanding of key points. 	Feb. 1, 2007 – Jan. 31, 2008

Year Two

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Create more consultation opportunities with key stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host roundtable sessions with key stakeholders and decision-makers. • Have the Executive Director conduct community presentations (e.g., at Rotary Clubs). • Hold community workshops with representatives from senior-serving organizations and the government to discuss seniors' issues and formulate recommendations for modifying public policy. • Hold monthly meetings with members to gauge their needs. 	Feb. 1, 2008 – Jan. 31, 2009

Year Three

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Develop more mechanisms and explain existing communications mechanisms for informing stakeholders about seniors' issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen existing newsletters by dedicating a section to issues and solutions. • Expand the email list of stakeholders for sending ongoing updates. • Expand opportunities on the website for people to submit their comments and concerns. • Continue to hold community workshops and roundtable sessions.. 	Feb. 1, 2009 – Jan. 31, 2010

Build Media Strategy

Year One

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Generate media coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch feature article about the ESCC's response and action on pertinent issues as they arise • Invite media to open houses • Develop media kits • Create media list • Create templates for media tools (e.g., media release) • Be responsive/reactive to issues facing seniors • Offer public perspective at all opportunities • Cultivate relationships with media figures 	Feb. 1, 2007 – Jan. 31, 2008

Year Two

Strategy	Tactics	Time Line
Increase profile in media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send media releases addressing the ESCC's accomplishments • Pitch additional feature articles to many different publications • Generate opportunity for Executive Director to submit a guest opinion article (op-ed piece) to the Edmonton Journal • Invite or request media for interviews • Monitor all media coverage • Attend publications' editorial board meetings 	Feb. 1, 2008 – Jan. 31, 2009

Year Three

Strategy	Tactics	Timeline
Build relationships with the reporters who have an interest in seniors' issues in order to further increase profile in media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condense media list so it becomes highly targeted • Pitch feature story exclusives to specific reporters 	Feb. 1, 2009 – Jan. 31, 2010