

Strategic Plan for Services to Edmonton's Seniors: Towards 2015

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Facilitated by:



EDMONTON
SENIORS
COORDINATING
COUNCIL

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I. Executive Summary

Nationally, provincially and locally, the population of seniors is increasing dramatically. Statistics Canada predicts that by 2025, 20 per cent of Canadians will be age 65 or older compared to just 13.7 per cent in 2006. An even more dramatic change is predicted in the “older seniors” age group, with those over the age of 80 representing the fastest growing segment of the total senior population. Projections indicate that, by 2030, the number of Edmontonians over the age of 80 will have increased by 158 per cent.

These trends have spurred stakeholders in Edmonton’s seniors community to complete reports, surveys, task forces and more over the past 10 years to address the issue of an aging population and promote an age-friendly community. In 2008, Edmonton’s senior-serving organizations made the decision to work together to initiate this document, *A Discussion Paper, Services for Edmonton’s Seniors: Creating a Strategic Plan Toward 2015*, to begin creating a common vision to address identified gaps and collaboratively work toward a solution. Collectively, these groups have drafted a vision of Edmonton as a community that values, respects and actively supports the well-being of seniors and promotes an age-friendly community.

The World Health Organization, and its Global Age-Friendly Cities project, was used as a guiding resource for this document, and as such, the same key focus areas have been identified: community support, health services, communication and information, social participation, transportation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, housing, and outdoor spaces and buildings. Based on these key areas, a series of goals and action plans were set out. Augmented and honed by further input from seniors, senior-serving staff, community groups and organizations, and other stakeholders, these goals and action plans will serve as a strong framework for improving the lives of Edmonton’s seniors and strengthening the communities in which they live. Together with its seniors, Edmonton will move into the years ahead with a clear vision of how to actively support the well-being of seniors.

This document was created based on experience, available research, and input from a variety of stakeholders.

II. Introduction

1. Background

Edmonton's population of seniors is increasing dramatically. For some time, service providers have been aware of the need to plan and focus their efforts in this area. The following summary outlines the key strategic work that has been completed in the past few years. This document is the culmination of that recent work:

- In 2000, seven research papers on seniors and an environmental scan were completed. This research was presented to more than 160 representatives from the health system, community leagues, multicultural groups, university researchers, the City of Edmonton, agencies and churches at a one-day event called *Moving Research Into Action - Seniors 2000 and Beyond*. Organized by the Edmonton Seniors' Community Network. This event identified gaps and opportunities in meeting the needs of seniors.
- In 2002, the Task Force on Community Services for Seniors was established and it produced *A Blueprint for Action "Let's Make it Happen"*.
- In 2004, the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council was established from a key recommendation in *A Blueprint for Action*. Over the past five years, the ESCC has facilitated progress in areas such as seniors transportation and raised awareness of obstacles facing immigrant and refugee seniors. Additionally, agencies have increased their collaborative efforts to improve services and have identified gaps in service areas for seniors.
- In 2007, a key issue that emerged is the needs of older seniors, especially those 85 years of age and older, who often require additional services and assistance to "age in place". This group represents the fastest growing sub-set within the age groupings of seniors. By 2041 (as compared to 2005), it is estimated that the number of people age 85 and over will increase by 229 per cent. City of Edmonton Community Services completed a study entitled *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study*, which identified the needs of Edmonton seniors and the potential roles of seniors organizations in Edmonton.
- In 2007, the World Health Organization implemented international "age friendly" pilot projects and released a checklist that suggests guidelines to support communities in becoming more responsive to seniors' needs. The guide and checklist encourage active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age in the following eight key areas:
 1. Community support services and health services***
 2. Communication and information
 3. Social participation
 4. Transportation
 5. Respect and social inclusion
 6. Civic participation and employment
 7. Housing

8. Outdoor spaces and buildings

*** The Edmonton group decided to separate community support services and health services into two distinct categories because of the importance of both of these areas. It also opted to include “Recreational” in the title for the key area of Social Participation; and to include “Volunteerism” in the title for the key area of Civic Participation and Employment.

This strategic plan incorporates key elements of the World Health Organization’s *Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide* and *Checklist*.

- In 2008, Banister Research was contracted by the City of Edmonton to conduct the 2008 Seniors Needs Assessment. The intent of the survey was to gather a clear and accurate representation of the services that are most helpful to seniors, the services that need improvement, and the priorities and opportunities in the provision of services to seniors in Edmonton.
- In 2008, the conclusions and recommendations of the Aging in Place study prompted executive directors and board representatives from senior-serving organizations in Edmonton to initiate *A Discussion Paper, Services for Edmonton’s Seniors: Creating a Strategic Plan Towards 2015* to address identified gaps. This Discussion Paper was taken to stakeholders in the spring and summer of 2009 and revised accordingly.

After reviewing the work completed to date, it became evident that there was a need to create a comprehensive strategic plan for service providers working with seniors.

2. The Purpose

The objective of *A Discussion Paper, Services for Edmonton’s Seniors: Creating a Strategic Plan Towards 2015*, the draft version of this strategic plan was to provide a starting point for establishing a shared strategic direction to meet the needs of seniors in Edmonton. The discussion paper was intended to provide opportunities to strengthen collaborative efforts.

The discussion paper’s goal was to complete both the consultation process and strategic plan by the fall of 2009. The consultation process sought input from a broader stakeholder group in order to create a shared strategic plan. The intent is that this strategic plan be a forward-looking document that will guide the direction of services for Edmonton’s seniors for the next five years.

The specific purpose of this document is to:

- Garner community/stakeholder endorsement and action
- Support the recommendation outlined in *Let’s Make it Happen - “Blueprint for Action”* of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors, 2004, which says the ESCC will assume a strong leadership role in “developing a broad strategic plan for addressing the needs of seniors in Edmonton that will provide guidance for planning by its member organizations.”
- Incorporate recommendations from recent local studies, reports and research, including the needs identified in the *2008 City of Edmonton Aging in Place Study*.
- Serve as a framework to guide current and future seniors services in Edmonton.
- Engage process lead and key stakeholder organizations to support the strategic plan.

3. Scope of the Plan

- Services for Seniors in Edmonton, but that there is potential for integration within the region
- Addressing key areas in the World Health Organization's (WHO) *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities*

III. Overall Process/Work Completed to Date

The following summary outlines the work completed to date and proposed future tasks as part of the overall work on the strategic plan.

Overall Process	Work Completed to Date/ Proposed Timeline
1. ESCC establishes a working committee to initiate the process of creating a vision for senior services in Edmonton	June 2008
2. Committee members complete a survey on current senior services in Edmonton (compared to WHO audit checklist)	July-August 2008
3. Survey results are reviewed, strategic areas (using the <i>World Health Organization Senior Friendly Cities Checklist</i>) are identified and strategic areas are prioritized	August 2008
4. Action plans for the four highest priority strategic areas are developed	September-October 2008
5. Stakeholders and resources to complete work plan are identified	November 2008
6. The City of Edmonton's citywide senior survey results, <i>Findings Report of the Demographic Planning Commission</i> , <i>Vision 2020 - The Future of Health Care in Alberta</i> and <i>Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study</i> are reviewed	January 2009
7. Trends, demographic information and relevant information from outside reports (as noted above) are incorporated	January - February 2009
8. The discussion paper is presented to membership/stakeholders and input is sought	April - July 2009
9. The action plans are revised based on input and the plan is no longer a draft.	July 2009
10. The Strategic Plan is taken to the ESCC Board for endorsement	September-October 2009
11. The Strategic Plan is taken to organizations identified as process leads for their endorsement	October 2009
12. Seek endorsement of final Strategic Plan by ESCC member organizations	December 2009-January 2010
13. Present plan to different levels of government and stakeholders	early 2010

IV. Vision and Guiding Principles for Edmonton Seniors

1. *Vision*

Edmonton is a community that values, respects and actively supports the safety, diversity and well-being of seniors.

2. *Guiding Principles and Beliefs*

- Society has a responsibility to ensure the basic needs of seniors are met
- Seniors have the right to choose where and how they live as long as they don't pose a risk to others
- Seniors have the right to feel safe in their homes and communities
- As seniors age, their needs may change and services can adapt to meet these changing needs
- Services are accessible, affordable, equitable and comprehensive to address a wide range of needs
- Seniors access to needed services will not be limited by ability to pay
- Services will be inclusive and respect diversity: they will be responsive to cultures, varied English language skills, marginalized individuals and persons with disabilities
- Programs and services will be based on best practices, research and innovation, and will be evaluated for their effectiveness
- Programs and services will reflect the character of the community
- Communities will be engaged in supporting seniors
- Seniors will be actively involved in the implementation of this plan

V. Key Strategic Areas: Goals and Suggestions for Action

Note: An asterisk * denotes that a term is defined in the Glossary at the back of this document. The suggestions under each of the goals in the following pages identify a **process lead**, which is the agency or organization that will play an initiating/facilitating role in guiding the process of pursuing the goal/suggestion. **Key stakeholders** are agencies or organizations that have an interest and/or expertise in the delivery of services to seniors and which are able to take action to achieve the goal/suggestion. The organization or agency that takes the lead in implementation of each suggestion will be identified by the process lead and key stakeholders once they have worked through the first stages of the process.

Please note: The organizations identified as process leads have not yet confirmed their acceptance of that role. They are seeing the plan for the first time at the same time it is being released to ESCC member boards for endorsement in principle.

1. Community* Support Services

In Edmonton we heard about both strengths and challenges as we received input from working committee members, telephone surveys and seniors groups. The strengths that were identified include strong community-based programming for seniors, a good variety of recreational activities, and city resources committed to seniors and seniors programming. The challenges include gaps in seniors programming and services in some areas of the city, lack of adequate funding, a lack of coordination and planning, lack of a coordinated strategy to provide the home support services required to fulfill the social policy expectations of the Alberta Government (the *Continuing Care Strategy: Aging in the Right Place*), seniors' lack of knowledge about available services, a poor connection with the business sector, and language and cultural barriers for some seniors.

With regards to community support, The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- A system for screening contractors and handyman services, and streamlined application processes
- Co-locating social and health services in communities and providing more funding for services.
- Shelter and protection for homeless and destitute older adults and seniors who have been abused
- Meal services and programs, discounts on utilities for people with low incomes, registers of older people living alone, assistance in obtaining pensions and spiritual support
- Availability of residential facilities for people unable to live at home
- Sufficient volunteers to assist seniors with support services, such as driving, shopping, home care, yard help, pet walking, etc.
- Consideration of older persons in planning for emergencies

The City of Edmonton's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* identifies the following daily living requirements for seniors:

- Information about programs and services and who to call for assistance

- Contact with other people
- Help with personal care and meal preparation
- Home help for snow shovelling and yard work
- Routine home maintenance (older seniors can be challenged by tasks such as cleaning eave troughs or getting up on a ladder to do something in their home)

Goal #1

Ensure community support services are inclusive and responsive in meeting the needs of seniors.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding to cover suggestions 1-6

Suggestion 1: Develop and implement a model that defines core and optional services and how they are best delivered and administered.

- Process lead*: ESCC
- Key stakeholders*: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton
- Implementation: Short term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 2: Considering best practices and community characteristics*, develop guidelines for neighbourhood* organizations in the area of community support services.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, neighbourhood organizations, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Short term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 3: Considering best practices and community characteristics, develop guidelines for core and optional services delivered by seniors centres that act as community hubs.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Senior centres, City of Edmonton
- Implementation: Short term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 4: Considering best practices, develop guidelines for core and optional services that are best delivered and/or administered city-wide.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies that provide city-wide services, City of Edmonton
- Implementation: Short term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 5: Develop an on-going process to evaluate service delivery, identify where additional or new services are needed, and identify the resources required.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Form a stakeholder* committee that brings together representatives on an ongoing basis
- Implementation: Short term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 6: Establish working agreements between neighbourhood, community hub and city-wide organizations which acknowledge the value and role they play in the delivery of seniors services.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, ESCC member agencies, neighbourhood organizations, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Goal #2

Engage the community in meeting the needs of seniors.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project and operational funding for suggestions 1-3

Suggestion 1: Develop and implement strategies for encouraging and promoting both formal and informal aging in place services and support.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Neighbourhood organizations, City of Edmonton, ESCC member agencies, post-secondary institutions, ongoing stakeholder committee
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 2: Develop and implement a strategy for encouraging volunteerism to support aging in place services and supports.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Edmonton, City of Edmonton, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 3: Develop and implement strategies to encourage businesses and other community stakeholders to support seniors.

- Process lead: Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, service clubs, business associations
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

2. Health Services

Overall, the area of health is of prime interest to seniors as they age. It is understood and accepted that as seniors age, there is the possibility that their health care needs may increase. *The Findings Report, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports*, produced by the Demographic Planning Commission, states seniors' concerns in this area range from accessing health care services to the lack of availability of family physicians, the lack of rural services, and shortcomings in the ability of community-based agencies to provide services. The *Continuing Care Strategy: Aging in the Right Place* produced by Alberta Health and Wellness promotes investment in home care funding, transitions back to the community, emergency department

support, health system navigation, caregiver support and enhanced respite, community initiatives and dedicated health technology funding to support seniors.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Accessibility of health services
- Availability of a range of health services, such as geriatric clinics, adult day centres, mental health services, training and respite for caregivers, rehabilitation and palliative care
- Availability of aging-well services such as preventive screening, physical activity, education on injury prevention, nutritional guidance and mental health counselling.
- Availability of a wide range of home support and home care options such as shopping services, meal provision, personal care options, etc.

The City of Edmonton's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* recommends improved communication between health providers and seniors (including the option of other languages), timely access to the full range of services needed, transportation assistance to get to medical appointments, financial assistance to meet medical-related fees, as well as respite for family caregivers feeling stress.

Goal #1

Ensure comprehensive health services address cultural and language barriers and are available, timely, appropriate and easily accessible to facilitate seniors aging in place.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Encourage seniors to be actively engaged in the research of best practices, planning, implementation and evaluation of health services.

- Process lead: Alberta Centre on Aging
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, Edmonton Seniors Community Health Council
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 2: Develop and implement a strategy for supporting family/friend caregivers.

- Process lead: Alberta Caregivers Association
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, agencies that support caregivers
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 3: Work with Alberta Health Services and health professionals to develop and implement strategies to ensure seniors who experience periodic and/or long-term health problems receive well coordinated, safe and effective care.

- Process lead: Alberta Medical Association
- Key stakeholders: College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, Edmonton Seniors Community Health Council, Alberta Health Services, Immigrant and Aboriginal-serving agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 4: Work with primary health care providers, including Primary Care Networks and Community Care, and seniors to examine service delivery methods.

- Process lead: Alberta Medical Association
- Key stakeholders: College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, Edmonton Seniors Community Health Council, Alberta Health Services, Primary Care Initiatives
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 5: Develop and implement innovative strategies to involve community support organizations in collaborating with health services in prevention and early detection of health problems.

- Process lead: Alberta Centre on Aging
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health Services, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Goal #2

Ensure seniors have methods of obtaining education, knowledge and skills that are critical for them to support their own health.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Ensure senior volunteers are provided with the support and training to provide mentoring and support to their peers in health promotion and disease prevention (e.g., preventing falls, learning new technologies, etc.).

- Process lead: Alberta Health Services
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Edmonton, ESCC, Member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Support personnel to ensure those who work with older adults are knowledgeable about the aging process and are appropriately trained to meet the unique needs of seniors.

- Process lead: Alberta Health Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Council on Aging, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Goal #3

Ensure information and technology are available to support seniors in managing their own health needs.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Encourage public promotion of available resources by developing and implementing innovative ways to get information to seniors.

- Process lead: Alberta Health Services
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports

- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Considering best practices and diversity, connect seniors with developers of technological tools to ensure there is an understanding of their unique needs.

- Process lead: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Health and Wellness
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

3. Communication and Information

Getting the right information to seniors, at the right time and in a format designed for them, are key factors in ensuring they can access the information they require. The City of Edmonton's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* points out that "seniors need information about programs and services and help to navigate the system, however, no single source of information is available." In addition, the province's *Findings Report* points out the need for government departments and agencies to work together, from planning to policy making to program development and delivery.

Strengths in the area of communication and information include effective referral services*, knowledgeable staff, with "Senior-Friendly™" training in place, and communication resources. However, the gaps and barriers identified are many, including the lack of an overall plan to get information to those that need it. Other identified gaps are the lack of a cohesive approach that gets all players on board, a failure to adequately address language and literacy issues, and a failure to connect with ethnic media sources. It was noted that there is an inability to get information to seniors in a more timely and consistent manner.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- The widespread distribution of useful information
- Getting the right information to seniors at the right time
- Ensuring seniors are able to speak with someone (not just a recording)
- Taking older persons into account when formatting and designing resource materials
- Providing computer training if required and public access to computers
- Ensuring communication barriers are addressed (barriers related to poverty, low literacy and language)

Goal #1

Develop a communication* strategy that identifies ways to make it easier for seniors and those who support them to access the information they need and connect with each other.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding for suggestions 1-4

Suggestion 1: Determine how/where seniors access information

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Communications consultant

- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 2: Bring together stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated communication model based on concrete and clearly articulated goals

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, communications consultant
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 3: Develop and/or adopt age-friendly communication guidelines and templates for service providers. Ensure these tools address the diversity of the senior population.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, communications consultant
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Suggestion 4: Develop and facilitate the use of current and emerging technology to enhance access to information.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, Government of Alberta, referral services, post-secondary institutions
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

4. Social and Recreational Participation

Meaningful participation in affordable community activities enables seniors to maintain their sense of wellbeing. With a strong understanding of their needs and desires, based on consultations with seniors, service providers can determine the most effective ways to meet their needs, and support and involve seniors living in our communities.

The positive aspects of our city include recreational activities and outreach programs for seniors that are provided and/or coordinated in many locations. The challenges, however, include the absence of seniors centres in some areas of the city and the occasional inadequacy of communication that results in some seniors being unaware of opportunities available to them. There is a need for both senior-specific facilities and multi-generational facilities. There is also a need for expanded programs to meet the needs of cultural groups. Arts and aging is a growing field of interest in the seniors' community and Edmonton has shown leadership in this area by hosting the Creative Age Festival in 2008 and 2009.

The World Health Organization considers the following in this area key:

- Opportunities (events and activities) are available for participation
- Activities are affordable
- There is a range of opportunities that allows for choice
- Older persons are aware of the activities and events (events are promoted)
- Older persons are encouraged to participate, especially isolated seniors

- Efforts are made to integrate generations, cultures and communities

Goal #1

Seniors have access to a wide array of affordable and personally relevant activities.

Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding for suggestions 1-3

Suggestion 1: Develop and implement new programs and activities that respond to emerging needs and interests.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, ESCC member agencies, post-secondary institutions
- Implementation: Ongoing

Suggestion 2: Develop and implement strategies for access to social, recreational, artistic, intellectual and cultural opportunities and physical activities.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 3: Develop and/or facilitate the use of current and emerging technologies to connect seniors.

- Process lead: SAGE
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, City of Edmonton, Government of Alberta, post-secondary institutions
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Goal #2

Opportunities for social engagement* and recreation are inclusive and welcome diversity.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding for suggestions 1-3

Suggestion 1: Develop and facilitate social and recreational opportunities that are sensitive to the needs and interests of diverse populations.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Immigrant-serving organizations
- Implementation: Ongoing

Suggestion 2: Plan and implement strategies that enhance organizational capacity to engage diverse populations and isolated seniors.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, Immigrant-serving organizations, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 3: Develop and implement strategies to encourage businesses and other community stakeholders to support social and recreational activities for seniors.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholder: ESCC, service clubs, business associations
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

5. Transportation

Transportation is a significant concern for seniors as they age. The loss of a driver's licence, the inability to get to public transportation, or the lack of public transit to take them where they need to go causes many seniors to lose their independence. "Two-thirds of survey respondents said they 'worry about being able to get around' in their senior years," the *Demographic Planning Commission, Findings Report* states. In addition, the theme Mobility and Transportation was a key finding in the City's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study*.

Edmonton has a number of strengths in the area of transportation but an even longer list of challenges. The strengths include the City of Edmonton's proactive public transit program. In addition, seniors have participated in two roundtables on transportation and have provided input on the city's transportation master plan. The challenges in this area include the cost of assisted transportation, the requirement that someone accompany frailer seniors on trips, a shortage of volunteers for the volunteer driving programs, implementation and use of best practices in programs, and more.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Public transport is available
- Public transport services are affordable (subsidized for low income)
- Service is reliable and frequent
- Travel destinations are aligned with destinations of choice
- Vehicles are age-friendly, for ease of boarding and disembarking
- Specialized service is available to older people who cannot use public transit
- Older persons are provided with priority seating and passengers are courteous
- Drivers are considerate of the needs of older persons
- Transit is safe and comfortable
- Transport stops and stations are age-friendly (they provide shelter and include lighting, benches and curb cuts)
- Taxis are accessible and drivers are courteous
- Community transport services include options such as volunteer driving services operated on the basis of best practices
- Information on transportation options is provided in an age-friendly format
- Driving conditions (roads, lighting, signage) take older drivers into account
- Drivers are courteous to older drivers
- Allotment of parking spaces gives priority to older adults and persons with disabilities

The City of Edmonton's *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* recommends the following in the area of Mobility and Transportation:

- More accessible public transit
- More easily negotiable sidewalks and roads
- Door-to-door access

Goal #1

Seniors have access to a range of appropriate transportation services that are available, acceptable, accessible, adaptable and affordable.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding for suggestions 1-2

Suggestion 1: Considering best practices and diversity, develop and implement a plan for a seniors assisted transportation* service model.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies that offer assisted transportation, City of Edmonton, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Alberta Motor Association
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Develop and implement strategies for transportation providers, city planners, developers, Alberta Health Services and others to be responsive to the transportation needs of seniors.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC member agencies that offer assisted transportation, Alberta Motor Association, Medically At-Risk Driver Centre
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Goal #2

Senior drivers are supported to ensure safety of themselves and others.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Develop and implement a plan to share resource information on transportation options for seniors.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: Medically At-Risk Drivers Centre, Alberta Motor Association, City of Edmonton, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Implementation: Ongoing

Suggestion 2: Research the needs of older drivers and the supports they require.

- Process lead: Medically At-Risk Driver Centre

- Key stakeholders: ESCC, City of Edmonton, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 3: Review the current processes for determining older driver competency and the supports available for transitioning from driver to passenger.

- Process lead: Medically At-Risk Driver Centre
- Key stakeholders: ESCC, City of Edmonton, Alberta Transportation, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Additional resources required: Staffing
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 4: Develop and implement a plan for assessing driver competency and supporting older drivers.

- Process lead: Alberta Transportation
- Key stakeholders: Medically At-Risk Driver Centre, Alberta Motor Association, ESCC, City of Edmonton, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Health Services, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC member agencies, Alberta Medical Association
- Additional resources required: Staffing
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

6. Respect and Social Inclusion

The vision of an “age friendly” community included in the City of Edmonton’s *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Study* is one in which seniors are an integral part of a community that is knowledgeable about their needs and that supports older seniors to age in place and have a healthier, more independent lifestyle. This vision is shared by the agencies involved in developing this discussion paper.

Indications of how Edmonton works to include seniors are the number of senior advocacy groups, the increased opportunities for receiving input from seniors, and the variety of senior-focused events. Some of the gaps and challenges the community faces, however, include the overall lack of focus on seniors in the mass media, the misconception that seniors are a drain on society, the fast pace of today’s world that leaves seniors behind, the small print in phone books, and more. Inclusion is challenging for immigrant and refugee seniors and there are gaps in this area stemming from cultural and language barriers and from societal attitudes.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Improving the attitudes of society and addressing the disrespect shown to older persons (ageism)
- Providing opportunities for intergenerational interactions and public education (organized positive encounters)
- Ensuring older persons have a place within the community (involved in leadership roles, engaged in community)

- Ensuring the community is helpful towards older people (inclusive communities)
- Ensuring there is a place in the family for older persons
- Ensuring low-income seniors are considered and included in the community

Goal #1

Seniors are treated with respect.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding for suggestions 1-2

Suggestion 1: Work with community stakeholders and organizations to develop and implement strategies that encourage respect and inclusion of seniors.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Suggestion 2: Develop and implement opportunities for utilizing and showcasing seniors' skills and contributions.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Short-term (1-2 years)

Goal #2

Seniors have opportunities to participate in and be engaged by their communities.

- Additional resources required: Staffing/Project funding for suggestions 1-2

Suggestion 1: Considering best practices and diversity, develop and provide innovative, age friendly resource guidelines for stakeholders and community organizations to engage seniors.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Considering best practices and diversity, develop and implement a plan for stakeholders/community organizations to engage and support isolated seniors.

- Process lead: ESCC
- Key stakeholders: ESCC member agencies, City of Edmonton, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

7. Civic Participation, Volunteerism and Employment

In conducting its 2008 Senior Needs Assessment, Banister Research found that while more than half of the respondents (63 per cent) were retired, 20 per cent were working full time and 11 per cent were working part-time. These numbers indicate a shift in the workforce as individuals are working later in life, whether by choice or by necessity.

Seniors play a strong role in our city, from casting their civic vote to volunteering and working, possibly in non-traditional roles. Challenges such as cultural and language barriers, lack of appreciation for volunteer efforts, lack of incentives to volunteer and lack of a targeted employment agency are issues that need to be resolved.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Provide volunteer options for older people
- Provide a range of employment options
- Encourage workplaces to be flexible in accommodating older workers and volunteers
- Encourage civic participation
- Provide training
- Make entrepreneurial opportunities available
- Value older people for their contributions in the workplace and society

Banister Research indicated the following employment issues, based on its 2008 Senior Needs Assessment:

- The majority of respondents were not interested in returning to work but the 19 per cent who were wanted work in a business or professional job
- Sixty-nine per cent of respondents that were interested in returning to work were interested in part-time work, while 22 per cent were interested in full-time
- Respondents were most interested in a job fair or a 'hire-a-senior' centre as a means of finding employment

Goal #1

Seniors have a voice in decisions that affect their community.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Conduct age-friendly community consultations considering best practices and diversity.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, ESCC
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Develop and implement strategies to encourage seniors' participation in civic* affairs.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Goal #2

Seniors are valued as employees and volunteers.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Research, identify and share best practices with regards to seniors' participation in the workforce.

- Process lead: Alberta Employment and Immigration
- Key stakeholders: Service Alberta, Service Canada, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Considering best practices and diversity, develop a plan to assist organizations in recruiting, retaining and supporting older workers.

- Process lead: Alberta Employment and Immigration
- Key stakeholders: Service Alberta, Service Canada
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 3: Research, identify and share best practices with regards to seniors' needs and interests in volunteering.

- Process lead: Volunteer Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Alberta, City of Edmonton, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 4: Considering best practices and diversity, develop a plan to assist organizations in recruiting, retaining and supporting senior volunteers.

- Process lead: Volunteer Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Volunteer Alberta, Alberta Culture and Community Spirit, ESCC, ESCC member agencies
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

8. Housing

Housing is an issue in all the reports and studies completed, with the majority of seniors wanting to live in their homes as long as they are able. One of the challenges is to find the support services necessary to enable them to do so. Very few seniors housing providers have taken cultural and language barriers into account in terms of food services, communication techniques and staffing.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- Affordable housing options are available for older people
- Essential services (electricity, gas and water) are available to seniors
- Homes are designed with older persons in mind
- Home modification options are available
- Maintenance services are affordable and workers are qualified to do the maintenance
- Home services are accessible and affordable
- Community and family connections are made (older persons can stay in their familiar neighbourhood)
- The living environment has sufficient space and privacy

The City of Edmonton's *Aging in Place Proposal* recommends the following in the area of Home Maintenance and Housing:

- Physical adaptations in homes
- Alternative housing and building design
- Options to reduce the costs associated with home ownership
- Home maintenance services
- Support services for seniors who reside in their own homes

Goal #1

There are a range of age-friendly housing options*, from single-family homes to congregate living, available to seniors.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Considering best practices and diversity, promote and/or develop guidelines and resources on age-friendly housing options.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs, Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region, Alberta Senior Citizens Housing Association
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Suggestion 2: Considering best practices and diversity, develop a strategy for enhancing age-friendly housing options.

- Process lead: Alberta Seniors and Community Supports
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs, Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4 years)

Goal #2

Seniors are informed about the range of housing options available.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Considering best practices and diversity, promote and/or develop resources to inform seniors and their families about their housing options.

- Process lead: SAGE
- Key stakeholders: City of Edmonton, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, referral services, housing providers
- Implementation: Mid-term (3-4)

9. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Our growing population of seniors also has unique needs when it comes to outdoor spaces and buildings in our communities. We need to understand the needs of seniors and focus on their special requirements, whether it is adding more park benches, fixing cracked and broken sidewalks, increasing outdoor lighting or relocating bus stops. These are changes that will make seniors more comfortable and safer in their communities, thus reducing their social isolation.

The World Health Organization recommends the following:

- The environment is pleasant and clean
- Green spaces are available, accessible and valued
- There are places to rest
- Pavements are age-friendly
- Pedestrian crossings are safe
- Buildings and spaces have good accessibility
- The environment is secure (safe)
- There are walkways and cycle paths
- Buildings are age-friendly
- There are adequate public toilets
- Businesses recognize the needs of seniors and provide age-friendly services such as separate lines, chairs if the wait is long, washrooms, etc.

Goal #1

Parks, outdoor spaces, communities and buildings are designed to be age friendly.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Considering best practices and diversity, promote and/or develop guidelines and resources for parks, outdoor spaces, communities and buildings.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Tourism/Parks and Recreation, Alberta Barrier Free Council, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Suggestion 2: Encourage design innovation.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Tourism/Parks and Recreation, Alberta Barrier Free Council, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Goal #2

Parks, outdoor spaces, communities, walkways and buildings are maintained to ensure on-going access by seniors.

- Additional resources required: To be determined

Suggestion 1: Develop and implement age-friendly guidelines for maintenance.

- Process lead: City of Edmonton
- Key stakeholders: Alberta Tourism/Parks and Recreation, Alberta Barrier Free Council, ESCC, ESCC member agencies, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Implementation: Long-term (5 years)

Glossary of Terms:

Assisted transportation: A transportation service that provides door through door assistance to a customer.

Civic: Pertaining to overall city, including municipal government, businesses, organizations, events etc.

Communication: Methods of relaying information including print, electronic, face-to-face, etc.

Community: An area which includes where you live, work, pray, play, etc. (broader than a geographical neighbourhood).

Community characteristics: Aspects of an area that make it unique.

Housing options: Options for housing that include adaptations and renovations to existing housing structures, new-built single-family homes, or congregate living structures.

Key stakeholders: are agencies or organizations that have an interest and/or expertise in the delivery of services to seniors and which are able to take action to achieve the goal/suggestion.

Process lead: is the agency or organization that will play an initiating/facilitating role in guiding the process of pursuing the goal/suggestion.

Neighbourhood: An area defined by a geographical boundary.

Referral services: Networks that exist to connect people to appropriate services based on their needs i.e. The Support Network 211, City of Edmonton 311, etc.

Social engagement: Forms of interaction between people including physical, mental, recreational, artistic, cultural, spiritual etc.

Stakeholder: Any individual or organization that has an interest in the delivery of services to seniors.