

Priorities Committee Meeting_Jan30_2018

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Social Framework Update

Report Purpose

To provide the Priorities Committee with an overview of the Social Framework and update on implementation progress.

Council History

March 27, 2007 – Council adopted the Social Sustainability Framework

April 1, 2008 – Council received an update on the Social Sustainability Framework

June 14, 2011 – Council received an update on the Social Sustainability Framework

October 18, 2016 – The Priorities Committee was provided an update on the launching of Community Talk, the Social Framework Renewal engagement process.

February 14, 2017 - The Priorities Committee was provided an update on What We Heard through Community Talk, the Social Framework Renewal engagement process

May 23, 2017 – Council approved the *Social Framework – A Platform to Unlock the Ingenuity of the Community*

Strategic Plan Priority Areas

Economy: The link between healthy social outcomes and a strong and growing economy has been well documented by evidence and research. In the midst of a provincial economic downturn, social outcomes in Strathcona County have been impacted. For example, based on the 2016 Census, 3,922 Strathcona County households are living in poverty; since 2010, RCMP report the incidence of domestic violence has increased by 113%; and in 2017 the Primary Care Network reported an increase of 57% in the number of cases of anxiety reported over the past three years. Further, evidence confirms that strategic investments in social early intervention and prevention can alleviate higher expenses in other municipal downstream costs such as policing and emergency services.

Governance: Civic engagement in the development of public policy increases awareness of community issues and creates a sense of co-ownership in implementing the results of the policy. Public policy achieves enhanced results when it is collectively owned by community, non-profit and private organizations, as well as municipal government.

Social: Enhancing social and community outcomes requires vision and a plan that is shared by many. If done well, a social policy framework can guide planning and decision making for many community groups including social service organizations, faith-based groups, community associations, service clubs, small and large business and Strathcona County departments and leadership.

Culture: A broad-based, collectively owned and inclusive public policy process can contribute to a strengthened and shared community identity.

Environment: n/a

Other Impacts

Policy: The renewed *Social Framework* replaces the 2007 *Social Sustainability Framework*.

Legislative/Legal: The *Municipal Government Act* provides that municipal purposes include the development of safe and viable communities.

Interdepartmental: Family and Community Services; RCMP and Enforcement Services; Recreation, Parks and Culture; Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs; Communications; and Transit.

Summary

The economic and social factors impacted from the economic downturn combined with the comprehensive *Community Talk* engagement resulted in a shared vision created by the community for the community. Following Council approval of the *Social Framework* in May 2017 the Social Framework Steering Committee, whose membership includes business, committees and clubs, school divisions, emergency services, faith community, government, health sector, housing sector, social services organizations and the Strathcona County Library, has continued with its mandate to guide implementation of the framework, promote initiatives and evaluate processes. Through a distributed network of involvement with Family and Community Services (FCS) providing a backbone support role, the Steering Committee continues to work on:

- Initiatives to contribute to the four outcomes of affordability, access to programs and services, safety, connectedness and inclusion
- Shifting the way organizations, community groups and individuals think, behave and convene to address social issues
- Building momentum through networks of participation
- Providing support to the entire process
- Undertaking strategic learning cycles as a way of learning by doing

Highlights of progress toward the *Social Framework* outcomes:

Affordability: Bridging the Gap Supportive Housing Initiative

- A Safe Place, Heartland Housing Foundation, Heartland Alliance and Sherwood Park Alliance Churches, Hope in Strathcona, Salvation Army and FCS are partnering to provide stable, affordable housing and wrap around supports for four families living with vulnerable circumstances through subsidized rent and outreach support services. By breaking down system silos and working together, Strathcona County agencies have worked within existing budgets and increased housing affordability for individuals and families in our community.

Safety: Opioids Community Response

- Sixteen community organizations have come together to create the Strathcona County Opioid Response Committee. This group is rallying to address this crisis impacting Strathcona County. The participating organizations understand that substance use is a complex issue that requires systems to work together and are in the process of developing a broader drug strategy which encompasses the opioid issue. The recently announced opioid treatment clinic in Sherwood Park is an important step that will improve access to care for people in Strathcona County.

Safety: Violence Threat Risk Assessment

- On Oct 23, 2017, partners to the Elk Island Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) formally signed this protocol. VTRA is an integrated community approach to safety. Through *Community Talk*, we heard from residents the importance of safety which is one of the community wide outcomes set forth in the *Social Framework*. The VTRA Protocol has been used multiple times in our community and assumes that violence prevention is a community responsibility, where all community partners work together to promote and maintain safety.

Access to Programs and Services: Walk-in Counselling and Supports

- Family and Community Services has been realigning its programs and services to better meet the social needs of Strathcona County. One example is the new walk-in counselling and supports to provide accessible, affordable services to the community. No appointment is necessary and fees are "pay what you can afford". Research tells us that most individuals in distress require one or a few counselling sessions to make significant improvement in their circumstances. Free professionally facilitated

counselling groups are also available for adults to gather and strategize how to manage life's challenges.

Work is underway to revise the Social Services Grants Policy SER-005-001 to better align with the *Social Framework* and a feasibility study for a Community Hub/Seniors Centre is being initiated. In the next phase of Framework implementation a focus will be on the outcome of inclusion and connectedness, identified by residents as important and desired. Research and evidence is pointing to the lack of human connection and belonging as a root cause for issues such as the current opioid crisis, family violence, and mental health issues. People want to live in places where they know and like their neighbours, where they can do things together to help create welcoming, supportive and safe communities in which to raise their children and grow old.

Communication Plan

The networks, relationships and general tactics that were used to engage residents in the *Community Talk* public engagement and distribution of the *Social Framework* to the community continue to be accessed as we inform County residents about what is new since the Framework was approved.

Enclosure

- 1 Social Framework Update Presentation
- 2 Community Social Profile