

ANNUAL SUMMIT REPORT
Accessibility, Community Living, Seniors and Youth
Advisory Committees

November 14, 2019

BACKGROUND: FOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEES

On September 25, 2015, Council approved Bylaw 46-2015 which incorporated amendments to implement the recommendation of the Cuff Report 'Review of Council's Committees', thereby discontinuing the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Seniors Advisory Committee and Youth Advisory Committee. These committees were replaced with the Community Living Advisory Committee (CLAC) which came into effect January 1, 2016.

CLAC was established as a mechanism for direct input and interaction between Council and the citizens of Strathcona County. After the municipal election in 2017 the new Council reconsidered this mechanism and whether the perspectives of youth, seniors and persons with disabilities were being adequately reflected through the one committee.

In January 2018 Council moved that Administration prepare draft bylaws, for presentation to Priorities Committee by third quarter of 2018, to establish three Council Committees to provide strategic advice in the following areas: seniors; youth; and accessibility. In October 2018 CLAC prepared a report and presentation to Priorities Committee proposing four options for consideration to integrate the addition of the three new Committees (accessibility, seniors and youth). This was received by Priorities Committee as a Report for Information.

Council approved the bylaws for the new Committees in the fall of 2018. The Council decision was for CLAC continue and provided them a revised mandate letter in February 2019. In February 2019 mandate letters for each of the new committees were approved. For the three new committees, appointments were made by Council in March 2019. An orientation of new members was held on May 1, 2019 and the three Committees began meeting at the end of May 2019.

ANNUAL SUMMIT RATIONALE

During CLAC's Annual Report to Priorities Committee in January 2019 a suggestion was made to Council that all four committees (CLAC plus the three new committees) should meet to discuss issues which crossed all committees' mandates. Although no formal endorsement of this suggestion was received from Council, there appeared to be general agreement from Council that the idea had merit and should be pursued.

On October 9, 2019 the Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Accessibility, Community Living, Seniors and Youth Advisory Committees met to develop a plan for an annual meeting. This "Annual Summit" was held on November 14, 2019. The Advisory Committee Chairs and Vice-chairs agreed it would be important to collectively identify some key priorities for Council's consideration as they undertake their upcoming strategic planning. The Chairs and Vice-chairs

recognized that each Committee will be presenting their respective annual reports to Priorities Committee at different times. They also realized that these presentations are likely to occur through the winter and spring of 2020 and that this may not align with Council's strategic planning sessions. The work of the Summit is in no way meant to displace each committee reporting to Council, but rather to augment information for Council to consider through its annual strategic planning process.

The November 14 Annual Summit concluded with the approved motion *THAT the Chairs of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Community Living Advisory Committee, Seniors Advisory Committee, and Youth Advisory Committee collaborate to write a report on behalf of the respective Committees to provide the Priorities Committees with the outcomes and learnings from the November 14, 2019 Summit of Community Committees.*

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with key considerations as it undertakes its strategic planning for 2020 and beyond. The report describes the objectives of the Annual Summit, the process used and the themes arising for Council's consideration.

OBJECTIVES

The Advisory Committee Chairs and Vice-chairs agreed to the following objectives for the November 14, 2019 Annual Summit:

- To develop a shared understanding of each Committee's work
- To understand key issues and recommendations arising from each Committee's work
- Identify areas of work that would benefit from joint work across Committees
- Reflect on progress of work and suggestions for improvement to achieve mandates
- Recommend reporting back process

PROCESS

Of the 27 Advisory Committee members, 17 (63%) participated in the Annual Summit; Accessibility (4), Community Living (7), Seniors (4), Youth (2). One Council representative attended; the other Council representatives were at the Rural Municipalities of Alberta convention or other previously scheduled events. The event was broken into two sections – Viewing the Work and a World Café discussion.

Viewing the Work

Each Advisory Committee prepared a poster (Appendix A) highlighting the work to date on their respective mandate letter activities and identified two or three priorities for their Committee. Participants went through a process where they rotated to review each Committee's work; the

Chair or Vice-chair of each Committee provided an overview and facilitated questions and answers.

World Café

After viewing the work, participants were organized to have a mix of representatives from each Committee at three tables. At each table, a set of questions was discussed, and responses were documented. After a given time, each group rotated to the next table, with one person staying back to provide a summary of the conversation to the next group. After the groups had rotated to answer each set of questions, each table reported back.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The following reflects conversation highlights from the three table discussions.

Table 1: Similarities / differences across work of Committees

The key themes arising from these conversations were as follows:

- Transit issues were common across all four committees including increased availability in rural areas and enhanced service to post-secondary institutions, increased accessibility and affordability.
- Affordability was common across committees housing
 - Affordability of housing, transit, and recreation were highlighted.
- The community cemetery assessment project was noted as a topic that, while not initially identified as cross-cutting, elicited considerable interest.
- Information, including lack of access to information about services and opportunities was identified. It was noted that Volunteer Strathcona has lost the information component and discussion included options such as 211, automated portal, better informing people about Family and Community Services solutions navigators, and early years navigators and family justice navigators.
- Staff training was also a theme; the suggestion for foundational mandatory mental health training for County staff, as well as foundational training on diversity and disabilities.

Table 2: Areas of work that could benefit from collaboration / joint work

Building on the conversations at Table 1, a few themes surfaced as benefiting from collaboration or joint work:

- Affordability continued to be a conversation topic. There may be a perception that Strathcona County is affluent; however, there are gaps between high income and low-income groups. Housing affordability continued as a theme, including the need to identify the amount of homelessness in Strathcona County.

- Transit continued to be identified across committees as a topic that would benefit from joint work.
- Staff training again was identified as an area for collaboration particularly around mental health and diversity and inclusion.
- It was suggested that Committees speak with one voice on common issues as well as reflecting the issue from the perspective of the respective lens of each Committee.

Table 3: Improvements for increased Committee effectiveness to achieve mandates

Several suggestions were identified to improve Committee effectiveness:

- Consideration of mandates and longer terms for committee members, enabling greater progress towards a mandate focus area.
- Ensure the availability of Councillors to attend the Committee meetings on which they are the Council representative.
- A feedback loop is needed so Committees hear back from the County, through Council representatives and Departments, about how their input is being considered and used.
- Continue to find opportunities to have cross-committee conversations to bring together multi-generation perspectives. Hold joint committee meetings for cross-cutting issues such as transportation.
- Consistency of reporting to Council will be important, such as coordination of presentations so each Committee provides its perspective on common issues such as affordable housing and transit.
- Advisory Committees should be consulted at the onset of initiatives when input and advice can be incorporated rather than at the end when an initiative is set to go to Council.
- Participants felt strongly that **it is important for the work of these Committees to be meaningful, relevant and timely** to contribute to the deliberations and decisions of Council.

CONCLUSION

The participants (14/17) completed an Annual Summit evaluation. 93% of respondents strongly agreed that the Annual Summit achieved its stated objectives and that the process worked well. What they liked best about the Summit was the sharing of ideas and concerns, the commonalities across Committees, collaboration, and willingness to work together, and plan for the future. 93% agreed they would like this to become a regular event for the four Committees to continue to work together on common themes and move ideas forward.

The Committees are passionate and highly interested in working together – and ***they want to know they are making a difference.***

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mandate topics	Opportunities
Recreation and Culture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make accessible equipment (like at GARC) available at every facility • Provide disability awareness training for front-line staff • Develop accessibility guidelines for all Strathcona County facilities, spaces and events • Install the hearing loop system at customer service desks in County facilities • Apply accessibility lens in designing programs, services, and facilities • Consider adaptive programs and sports (e.g. sledge hockey) in facility allocation • Provide opportunity for users and visitors to post pros and cons of accessibility to recreation sites and cultural events on Strathcona County website
Transit Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply an accessibility lens to revise current development, redevelopment and service standards • Make standards of accessibility mandatory for new developments • Improve communication to public about consultation on development plans • Increase number of bus pads upgraded per year to 20 from the current 10, prioritized for seniors and those with disabilities • Publish a transit map that shows bus stops not available to people with mobility issues • Include location of future bus stops and sidewalks in Area Structure Plans • Consider direct buses to additional major facilities and post-secondary institutions in Edmonton • Implement Dynamic Transit pilot • Pilot rural service from Ardrossan to Sherwood Park
Diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider mental health and addictions, homelessness and poverty • Urban/rural differences • Consider diversity on this committee • Public marketing campaign related to unconscious bias • Staff training on diversity and inclusion
Sidewalk Bylaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion to change bylaw to 48 hours for snow removal from 8 days for residents and businesses (defeated)

Priorities

- **Recreation and Culture:** create portal on Strathcona County website for public input on accessibility of recreation facilities and cultural events
- **Transit:** increase number of bus pads upgraded annually; and publish transit maps that identify bus stops not accessible to people with mobility challenges
- **accessibility:** All buildings should be easily accessible for everyone, including all interior doors; and revisit the snow removal bylaw

COMMUNITY LIVING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mandate topics	Opportunities
Centre in the Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School sites need to be more walkable • County should take winter design into consideration • Consider vehicle and other modes of transportation • Incentivize underground and stacked parking • Consider aging-in-place opportunities
Community Wellness Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people along a continuum through life transitions • Accessibility beyond regular 9-5 business hours • Physical space as an opportunity for connection • Universality is important; all people need support at some point in their lives • Incentivize organizations with similar mandates to work together for collective good and “warm hand offs” • Bring FCS navigators to where people already gather or convene • Utilize existing infrastructure and programs to support wellness
Recreation and Culture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build relationships and collaborate with partners such as schools, churches, to enhance use of available space without cost • Make better use of existing spaces for sports groups (e.g. ½ ice) • Consider matching non-traditional hours of shift workers with underutilized space, i.e. a “morning shift” and an “afternoon shift” • Build facilities larger than needed so there is room to grow • Address age barriers and economic barriers • Increase information on affordable options for recreation and culture • Include all marginalized including LGBTQ2S+ • Re-examine how County utilizes and allocates resources throughout community • Ensure meaningful volunteer opportunities
Community Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider changing demographics and traditions of different cultures • Need variety of interment options to accommodate diversity of cultures and faiths and affordability • Consider importance and cost of maintenance

Priorities

- **Recreation and Culture:** Aid in the development and implementation of the Recreation and Culture Strategy, finding opportunities for residents to recreate
- **Community Needs:** Assess the needs of residents through outreach opportunities and align those needs with County planning objectives

SENIORS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mandate topics	Opportunities
Recreation and Culture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement seniors' rate at all facilities including Broadmoor Public Golf Course • Include child care in Millennium Cards (many grandparents are caregivers) • Provide inter-generational recreation and culture opportunities • Consider a senior centre with range of services and activities • Need interdepartmental integration, e.g. new developments and transit • Refocus volunteerism including a volunteer hub and incentives, building on Volunteer Strathcona
Transit Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance transit training for seniors in lodges and seniors' residences • Increase number of bus pads upgraded per year including connecting sidewalks to bus pads • Pilot rural service from Ardrossan to Sherwood Park • Include location of future bus stops and sidewalks in Area Structure Plans • Make sure developers are meeting existing standards for building and roadways • Consider direct buses to additional major facilities and post-secondary institutions in Edmonton
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain understanding of the complex affordable housing system and affordable housing need in Strathcona County • Explore variety of affordable housing options including co-operative housing, Habitat for Humanity, mixed-income models, shipping container housing • Consider facilities where seniors can age in place as their needs become more intensive • Consider affordable housing options as part of area structure plans

Priorities

- **Recreation and Culture:** Volunteerism for seniors; and intergenerational recreation and culture opportunities
- **Transit:** Training for seniors on how to use the transit system; and implement a rural bus route from Ardrossan to Sherwood Park
- **Affordable Housing:** Aging in place opportunities to support receiving higher levels of care without moving; and consideration of a variety of affordable housing solutions beyond government subsidized units, such as cooperative housing; Habitat for Humanity; seniors home share to enable seniors to remain in their homes with roommates

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mandate topics	Opportunities
Youth Needs and Assets Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community-based solutions for affordable housing Mental health training of front-line County staff and public facing staff in businesses where youth hang out Increased weekend transit service to post-secondary institutions Access to mental health services beyond walk-in counselling
Recreation and Culture Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link transit opportunities with recreation activities and times Youth and student recreation discounts Diversity and inclusion training for front-line staff Add programs for young adults 18-25 or 16-25 Institute flex passes for art and culture programs Consult with youth on matters that impact them Connect with youth where they are and use incentives Searchable volunteer master list for volunteer opportunities Work collaboratively with community groups and leverage partnerships Institute an interagency type of meeting of recreation and culture groups to explore partnerships and synergies
Diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media and incentives are the best way to engage youth Diversity and inclusion training for all front-line staff
Youth and Young Adult Federal Election Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to alleviate climate crisis while keeping industrial heartland alive Solutions to post-secondary education debt Address affordability issues so young people aren't going into debt if they want to keep living in the County Access to the mental health services people need
Community Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a community cemetery as a more affordable and inclusive option considering the increasing diversity of Strathcona County Integrate idea of park and green burial, merging an acceptance of mortality, celebration of life and aesthetic of a park Incentivize other uses of the space for sustainability Consider accessibility for seniors and people without cars

Priorities

- **Transit:** Expand transit services to be more accommodating to youth and young adults including to post-secondary institutions and recreational centres; and enhance night time and weekend service in Strathcona County and in Edmonton
- **Mental Health:** Provide mandated mental health training for front-line county staff with a longer-term goal to promote such training to organizations and businesses across the community
- **Opportunity:** Incentivize youth to stay in the community through increased job opportunities, affordable housing, and affordable services