

Seniors Supports and Services Project Final Report**Report Purpose**

To provide the final report and potential next steps of the Seniors Supports and Services Project to Council.

Recommendation

1. THAT an expenditure of \$200,000 to initiate an expression of interest process that identifies a seniors-focused, non-profit organization to provide coordination and programming for older adults in Strathcona County, to be funded from \$100,000 from Municipal Reserves and \$100,000 from the existing base fund in 2022, be approved.
2. THAT an amendment to the 2022 Capital Budget in the amount of \$2,000,000 to fund the Seniors' Hub site assessment and design, to be funded from Municipal Reserves, be approved.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

Goal 7 - Provide opportunities for public engagement and communication

ReportProject Background

In April 2021, Administration commenced the Seniors' Supports and Services Project (the Project) with the intention to explore how the County can best serve the seniors in the community. Through this project, Strathcona County is committed to better understanding the priorities of seniors in the community and identifying where seniors experience gaps or barriers for supports.

Need Assessment

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to provide a rounded understanding of the current context, perspectives, values, and needs related to seniors' supports and services in the community. The needs assessment is comprised of multiple activities, which includes:

Statistical profile of seniors in Strathcona County

The statistical profile illustrates some of the characteristics of seniors in Strathcona County, and globally. This information is grounded in currently available demographic data, data about attitudes and beliefs, and engagement data.

Analysis of previous Strathcona County engagement results

Strathcona County has engaged with residents frequently on a number of topics related to recreation, culture, wellness, community spaces, facility usage, and overall community satisfaction. Additionally, the Seniors Advisory Committee conducted their own survey engagements on the topics of transportation, housing, health and wellness, and community involvement.

Strathcona survey reports and data files collected from 2016 to 2020 were analyzed to provide a summary of seniors' impression, access and use of the current provisions and services from Strathcona County and potential gaps.

Jurisdictional scan of seniors' supports, services, and facilities

Administration conducted e-scanning, research, and meetings with local municipalities to collect information on the operations and approaches to seniors' supports and services in other jurisdictions. Much of the jurisdictional scan provides information about seniors centres across the province, including operational structures and funding models. The scan considered federal and global frameworks to support healthy aging and to guide the provisions of meaningful supports and services to seniors in the community.

Inventory of Strathcona County programs, supports, and services geared towards seniors
Strathcona County currently provides a significant amount of supports and services geared towards seniors. These services are provided through numerous departments, at multiple facilities across the County. Additionally, there are four formal 55+ Clubs established in rural and urban locations in the community, which provide dedicated programming and services for older adults.

Seniors Supports and Services Project community engagement

The engagement activities for the Seniors Supports and Services Project built off the analysis of previous engagement conducted throughout the County and by the Seniors Advisory Committee. Two streams of engagement took place between June and July 2021, which included a public survey, and targeted stakeholder conversations with seniors and senior-serving organizations. The goal of the public engagement was to listen to residents of Strathcona County, in particular seniors and senior serving organizations, to understand citizen preferences, values, and priorities related to supporting seniors in our community.

The findings from the Needs Assessment demonstrated that the needs of older adults in Strathcona County are as diverse as the population itself. With a spread of over 30 years in the category of "seniors" aged 65 and older, this population holds a variety of wants, needs, and interests. In addition to the large age range, there is also an array of income levels, physical abilities, cultural backgrounds, rural and urban differences, and digital literacy skills that impact if, how, and where an older adult accesses services.

The diversity of this older adult population means that no single action will benefit the entire population. Bearing this in mind, the proposed options to support seniors in the County takes a "both and" approach. There are both short-term and long-term approaches for the County to consider, which can support older adults now, and into the future. There are both global best practices and local understanding, which can support Strathcona County to ensure the full engagement and participation of older adults in the community. This includes supporting dedicated seniors' spaces, establishing non-profit service leadership and governance in the County, and enhancing seniors' supports and services across the County.

Next Steps

The following priority areas are opportunities to enhance the services in Strathcona County to support a community where seniors feel safe, included and connected.

1. Supports and Services Enhancements
2. Coordination and Programming
3. Infrastructure

1. Supports and Services Enhancements

Through the Needs Assessment, it was identified that there are enhancements of County programming, supports, and services that can take place in the short-term to support older adults.

Additionally, the Needs Assessment revealed that having a sense of belonging is important to the senior population in the County. Strathcona County will focus on creating welcoming and safe spaces for seniors inside County facilities through such actions as instituting dedicated senior matinee programming times and optimizing the spaces for seniors programming so that they are easily accessible and welcoming.

Throughout the ongoing implementation of these enhancements to services, Strathcona County will conduct interactive engagement and ongoing evaluation with older adult population for long-term planning. The enhancement of County supports and services for seniors across the County is an opportunity to learn how to best serve this population and meet their needs now and into the future.

2. Coordination and Programming

There are currently multiple, outstanding organizations across the County providing supports to older adults, including Strathcona County, local 55+ Clubs, and community organizations. However, in addition to the delivery of programs and services, there is a gap of a non-profit, community-based organization to provide subject-matter expertise, advocacy, coordination, outreach, and governance for seniors' supports in the County. The professional stewardship of seniors-focused programming and services throughout the County is in the best service of older adults and the community as a whole.

This need becomes particularly significant in relation to the operations of dedicated seniors' spaces in the community. With any substantial investment in seniors' spaces, it is vital that there is an organization with a rigorous service delivery model to meet the programming requirements and opportunities of such a space.

The coordination of seniors supports and services must be facilitated through the existing, strong community partnerships. Strathcona County has a wealth of knowledge, relationships, and experience to draw on to support the coordination of information and services provided to older adults and caregivers in the community. Partnerships enable public funding and expertise to be leveraged with non-profit sector resources to ultimately provide enhanced services.

3. Infrastructure

Through the Needs Assessment, a dedicated seniors' hub was identified as the type of space required in the community to best meet the needs of older adults. A dedicated, centralized point of access for senior-specific programming and services was identified as a priority need in the community. To fulfill this need, the County can undertake one of two options:

- **Working within existing infrastructure:** Utilize existing spaces in the community to support older adult programming and continue with regular maintenance and renewal of the community halls and seniors' centres throughout the County.
- **New build or renovation of a facility:** Engage in a capital build of a new facility, or the renovation of an existing facility, to provide social, recreation, and wellness programming for seniors.

Through engagement with seniors' groups in the community, Administration has developed a program to meet the social, recreation, and well-being needs of seniors in the County. The Seniors Hub building concept is in Enclosure 4.

Budget Impacts of Next Steps

Action	Cost	Funding Source
Site assessment and design development funding in 2022 for seniors' hub	\$2M in 2022 [determined <i>as approximately 10% of estimated capital construction costs</i>]	Reserves
Seed funding for non-profit, senior-serving organization	\$200,000/year for 3 years	2022: \$100,000 from reserves, \$100,000 from existing base funds 2023 – onwards: \$200,000 from operating budget

Council and Committee History

September 7, 2021	Administration provided Priorities Committee with an update on the findings from the Needs Assessment of the Seniors' Supports and Services Project.
July 13, 2021	Administration provided Priorities Committee with a Report for Information on the status of the Seniors' Supports and Services Project.
April 20, 2021	Administration presented the Seniors' Supports and Services Project workplan to Priorities Committee.
February 2, 2021	THAT Administration provide regular updates to Priorities Committee, commencing at the end of Quarter 2 regarding progress with respect to Priorities Committee motion 2021/ P4 on ongoing work on the Seniors Hub Concept, including the results of ongoing stakeholder communication and research.
January 26, 2021	THAT the January 26, 2021 Seniors Advisory Committee report, Seniors Hub Concept, be referred to Administration for a report, by the end of the fourth quarter of 2021, on options for establishing a seniors hub, including potential collaboration opportunities with stakeholders and options to combine with planned or existing County facilities or sites; and that the report include information on the implications, costs, and feasibility of the identified options.

Other Impacts

Policy: N/A

Legislative/Legal: N/A

Interdepartmental: Family and Community Services, Recreation, Parks and Culture, Facility Services, Communications, Planning and Development Services, Transit Services

Master Plan/Framework: Strathcona County Strategic Plan (2013-2030), Social Framework (2017), Recreation, Parks and Culture Strategy (2019), Transit Master Plan (2018), Diversity and Inclusion Policy (2020), Municipal Land Framework (2019), Municipal Development Plan (2020)

Communication Plan

A media release will be provided to the public upon completion of the presentation.

Enclosure(s)

- 1 Seniors Supports and Services Project – Final Report Presentation
- 2 Seniors Supports and Services Project – Final Report
- 3 Seniors Supports and Services Project Timeline
- 4 Seniors Hub Concept Designs and Capital Costs