

# **2022 Seniors Advisory Committee Annual Report**

Priorities Committee  
October 18, 2022

# Background

**Purpose:** Work with Administration to provide advice and recommendations to Council on issues and opportunities related to the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of seniors in Strathcona County.

## 2022 SAC Members

Barbara Chapman	Carol Parsons
Darryl Diletzoy	Rachelle Sutherland
Jennifer Hillmer (Vice Chair)	Ishvarlal Thaleshvar
Lynn Olenek (Chair)	Councillor Representatives: Councillor Parks and Councillor Lawrence

# SAC Mandate Alignment

## **2021 Strathcona County 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

## **Social Framework Outcomes**

- Affordability, Access, Safety, Connectedness and Inclusion

## **Recreation and Culture Strategy and Transit Master Plan Principles**

- Access, Collaboration, Forward Thinking, Viability, Safety, Customer-focused, Reliable, Efficient

## **Strathcona County policies: Diversity and Inclusion, Inclusive Hiring**

# SAC Mandate Items

## Mandate Letter 2021/2022

- Provide input on seniors housing needs to support the development of a community-led affordable housing strategy
- Identify features and characteristics of gathering spaces that would support the well-being of seniors and provide advice to Council on how the County might maximize use of current assets to increase connection and well-being for seniors
- Participate in engagements related to the concept and design of a potential Fieldhouse to ensure consideration of a seniors' lens

# SAC Mandate Items

## Mandate Letter 2021/2022 (continued)

- Provide advice to Council on how to increase access and use technology to reduce seniors' isolation within the County.
- Participate in engagement opportunities and provide advice to Council on community safety and well-being as it relates to seniors within the County
- Provide advice to Council on pandemic impacts and potential solutions as they relate to seniors within the County

# Mandate Item: Affordable Housing

Activities	Findings
<b>Heartland Housing Foundation</b> <b>Planning and Development Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Continued attention to affordable housing is important</b> and housing for seniors will continue to be a demand</li><li>• <b>Provide a range of housing options</b> to support a diverse, inclusive community for seniors and other demographic groups</li><li>• <b>Affordable options enable seniors to age in place;</b> lack of options may result in residents leaving the County</li></ul>

# Mandate Item: Affordable Housing

Activities	Findings
<b>Heartland Housing Foundation</b> <b>Planning and Development Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Affordable housing needs to include amenity options;</b> there is a false assumption that all seniors have family available to provide supports</li><li>• <b>Affordable housing keeps seniors in community;</b> this is one element of recognizing them as valuable community members</li></ul>

# Mandate Item: Gathering Spaces

Activities	Findings
<b>Community Services</b> <b>Westend Seniors Activity Centre</b>  <b>South East Edmonton Seniors Association Volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Investing in gatherings spaces for seniors is critical</b> to support connection and should not be delayed</li><li>• Contract with Westend Seniors Activity Centre is a <b>positive interim strategy</b></li><li>• <b>Action needs to follow</b> on the recommendations that return to Council in Q1 2023 for non-capital-intensive options</li></ul>

# Mandate Item: Gathering Spaces

Activities	Findings
<b>Community Services</b> <b>Westend Seniors Activity Centre</b> <b>South East Edmonton Seniors Association Volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A seniors community hub provides social supports, a social environment and engagement;</b> these are two elements of the Six Determinants of Healthy Aging</li><li>• A significant gap exists for seniors to gather for connection in urban Strathcona County</li></ul>

# Mandate Item: Fieldhouse Engagement

Activities	Findings
Fieldhouse Project Team	Tabled

# Mandate Item: Technology Access/Use

Activities	Findings
<b>Linking Generations</b> <b>Family and Community Services</b> <b>Volunteer Strathcona</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Access to technology is essential to support connection</b></li><li>• <b>Key issues:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Affordability</li><li>- Access to internet and WIFI</li><li>- Training/knowledge</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Advocate for improved access to internet</b> in seniors housing facilities</li><li>• <b>Seniors gathering spaces should be well-serviced</b> with internet and training opportunities</li></ul>

# Mandate Item: Community Safety and Well-being

Activities	Findings
CSWB Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Seniors have become more disconnected in response to COVID-19</b> – lost their social connections, are afraid, keeping their bubble small</li><li>• <b>Greater loss of physical, social and mental abilities</b></li><li>• Increased isolation can be particularly <b>challenging for rural seniors and seniors in care facilities</b></li><li>• <b>Value of a seniors' hub to provide options for seniors to engage and connect</b></li></ul>

# Mandate Item: Pandemic Impacts

Activities	Findings
<b>Linking Generations</b> <b>Family and Community Services</b> <b>Volunteer Strathcona</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impacts from the pandemic heightened isolation and demonstrated the <b>vulnerability of seniors in the community</b></li><li>• Challenges exposed through the pandemic require ongoing support</li><li>• <b>Important to provide affordable options for seniors to stay connected</b> – inflation impacting seniors who will have less discretionary income</li></ul>

# Mandate Considerations for 2023/2024

## **Mandates with ongoing relevance:**

- Gathering spaces for seniors
- Community safety and well-being
- Affordable housing

## **Mandates with limited future relevance:**

- Pandemic impacts

## **Future mandates to consider:**

- Recreation opportunities for seniors

# Summary Considerations

## **The SAC recommends:**

- Providing a variety of seniors housing options
- Dedicating space for a seniors' hub
- Supporting organizations like Linking Generations, Volunteer Strathcona, the Library and FCS who provide services to seniors that help keep them a connected part of the community

## **Concluding Considerations:**

- A significant concern is that once pandemic impacts have been addressed, momentum to address seniors' issues will dissipate
- The SAC was appointed by Council to bring advice on mandate items; we look forward to evidence of meaningful action on this advice

# Thank You