

2023 Seniors Advisory Committee Annual Report

Priorities Committee Meeting
November 21, 2023

Background

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

2023 Seniors Advisory Committee Members

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

Seniors Advisory Committee (SAC)

mandate alignment

Strathcona County 2023-26 Strategic Plan

- Vision: becoming Canada's most livable community
- Goal of healthy and safe community: a safe and supportive community that is healthy, active, connected and thriving

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

2023 SAC mandate items

- Provide insight on communication and awareness of seniors' programs and services.
- Provide advice to Council on the coordination of seniors supports in the County.
- Provide input on recreation and culture opportunities that support seniors' wellness.
- Provide input on seniors housing needs to support affordable housing initiatives.
- Provide input on relevant activities related to the Community Safety and Well-being strategy development and implementation.

Healthy Aging Framework

Outlines six determinants of healthy aging that support the ability to remain safe, healthy and well while aging



Strathcona County seniors are a diverse group



Mandate item:

Communication/awareness of seniors' programs

Activities	Findings
<p data-bbox="172 465 1503 683">Strathcona County Family and Community Services seniors' landing page</p> <p data-bbox="172 725 973 788">WESeniors Strathcona</p> <p data-bbox="172 836 1503 979">Economic Development and Tourism Business Directory</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1558 465 2784 683">• County landing page topics must reflect range of senior interests and needs<li data-bbox="1558 743 2808 881">• Simplified up-to-date and integrated on-line resources are essential<li data-bbox="1558 940 2882 1166">• Important to provide linkages to public, non-profit <u>and</u> private supports in community<li data-bbox="1558 1225 2876 1444">• Still a place for paper-based resources in addition to web-based and social media tools!

Mandate item:

Communication/awareness of seniors' programs



Other observations

- Many seniors rely on Sherwood Park News for awareness of seniors-related events (paper and electronic)
- A range of effective complementary communications reinforce the active network of seniors informing each other
- Ongoing communications important given dynamic transitions – seniors pay attention differently in transitions
- A preference and need: one place for seniors to make connections

Mandate item:

Coordination of seniors supports



Other observations

- Transportation a major barrier to access programs for older rural seniors
- WESeniors Strathcona: Council learning through “pre-hub” investment
- Community conversations continue - a community hub for seniors
 - Accessible, affordable seniors centered spaces and activities
 - Access to meeting spaces /storage for seniors’ groups
 - One-stop navigation and supports

Mandate item:


Coordination of seniors supports

Activities	Findings
<p>WESeniors Strathcona updates</p> <p>Mens Shed Strathcona County</p> <p>Palliative Care, Medical Assistance in Dying</p> <p>Carol Parsons presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three generations of seniors - different identities, interests and priorities• A way for seniors to be able to communicate their needs• Connection a shared priority, affordability a shared pressure• Flexible programs to adjust as seniors and their needs change• Integrated on-line resources illustrate breadth of options – is this known?• Aging well through life span includes end-of-life support: gap of integrated coordinated community supports?



Mandate item:

Recreation and culture opportunities for wellness

Activities	Findings
<p>Recreation Parks and Culture Strategy implementation</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RPC has increased the range of 55+ programs to support seniors with a range of abilities – important for all to age well<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facility based / virtual• Outdoor• Cultural• Health related and chronic conditions programming<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnerships with Parkinson's, Alzheimer and Multiple Sclerosis Societies• Work with closely with Sherwood Park Strathcona County PCN

Mandate item:

Recreation and culture opportunities for wellness

Other observations



- Connection opportunities for seniors an important part of all recreation programming
- Despite Everybody Gets to Play passes, inflation pressures make affordability a barrier for some seniors
- Possibility for increased partnerships with other community groups to expand reach?

Mandate item:

Seniors' housing needs - affordable housing

Activities	Findings
<p data-bbox="172 401 1426 621">PDS Affordable Housing- Red Tape Reduction, Incentive Program Options (2022)</p> <p data-bbox="172 708 1466 777">Affordable Housing Strategy (2023)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1558 401 2907 621">• Affordable housing important to encourage young and old to stay in our County<li data-bbox="1558 682 2852 902">• Innovations to support garden suites; support for smaller cooperative housing developments; tiny homes<li data-bbox="1558 963 2621 1102">• Mix of market and non-market important for affordability<li data-bbox="1558 1163 2867 1459">• Partnerships with other levels of government and nonprofits to develop non-market housing – County advocacy, leadership

Mandate item:


Seniors' housing needs - affordable housing

Other observations




- Study initiatives by others such as “shared spaces” as option for seniors to retain homes
- Aging well in place/in community also linked to accessing relevant community services and supports
- **Evaluation and results:** will County proposed housing strategies meaningfully impact affordability?

Mandate item: Community safety and well-being

Activities	Findings
<p>Community Safety and Well-being Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Transit Master Plan update</p> <p>Accessibility Framework</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some seniors on fixed income struggling with basic needs (e.g., food, rent, medication, transportation, etc.)• Isolated seniors struggle with mental, physical and social health - more vulnerable to elder abuse• Accessible transportation a pivotal support to support all determinants of healthy aging• Accessibility Framework to address visible / invisible disabilities; impact of unconscious attitudes of ageism

Mandate item: Community safety and well-being

	Other observations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People feel safe when they feel connected; do we have an appropriate mix of options or supports for all generations of seniors to engage or reconnect with community?• Wayfinding, closed captioning, automatic doors, lighting, snow and ice removal impact safety, inclusion for seniors

Mandate considerations for 2024/2025

Mandates with ongoing relevance:

- Communication and coordination of seniors supports and services
- Community safety and well-being (includes Accessibility Framework)
- Affordable housing

Future mandates to consider?

- Process for seniors' organizations to report on how they are addressing the determinants of healthy aging
- Explore gaps for seniors when health needs change

2023 summary considerations

SAC recommends the following for consideration:

- A shared community vision for all cohorts of seniors to age well in Strathcona
 - Developed with range of seniors' representatives
 - Rural and urban perspectives
- Council commitment to a direction on a seniors' hub
 - Understanding the who and the why: which seniors' needs are best be met through this approach?
- Housing strategy balance: leadership in pursuing non-market housing

2023 summary considerations

SAC also recommends the following for consideration:

- Affordability – thinking "outside the box" for seniors to age well in place and in community
- Address the learning from WESeniors Strathcona and continue to build on their work

Thank you!

