**EDMONTON
SENIORS
COORDINATING
COUNCIL**

Three-Year Evaluation
Final Report

September 29, 2008

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Executive Summary

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was set up as a three-year pilot project following the final report of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors in 2003, and the Blueprint for Action "Let's Make it Happen!" in 2004. A mid-term evaluation was completed in September 2006, which documented the accomplishments and challenges of the fledgling organization (see *Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Mid-term Evaluation Final Report, September 25, 2006*).

In March 2008, the ESCC initiated a comprehensive program evaluation to determine the extent to which it is achieving its mandate to support and encourage shared planning, coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations. This three-year evaluation builds on the mid-term evaluation, looking beyond process to ask, "what difference did the ESCC make?" The evaluation team conducted 37 interviews with ESCC staff, ESCC members, City Councillors, City staff and managers, and other stakeholders to answer this question.

Major Findings

Meeting its Mandate
- All stakeholders understand and are able to articulate the ESCC mandate.
- The ESCC has laid the groundwork for shared planning by building relationships, creating meaningful connections among organizations and demonstrating the value of joint action.
- The ESCC is perceived as a broker, helping to make connections among service providers.
- The ESCC is a catalyst for **collaboration,** by providing leadership, resources and support.
- From the perspective of its primary funder, the City of Edmonton, the ESCC is meeting its mandate.

How the ESCC Makes a Difference
- Interview participants identified a number of ESCC successes, including: advocating for funding for senior organizations, transportation roundtable, workshops on immigrant and refugee seniors, and information sharing on human resources.
- Interview participants identified the following benefits of collaboration: efficient use of resources, making connections, collective voice, building sector capacity, raised awareness of issues, joint goals and support for smaller organizations.
- Key success factors included: focusing on the greater good, focusing on common issues, starting where people are, building reciprocal relationships and getting "professional help" when necessary.
- Key challenges to collaboration included: overcoming mistrust (ESCC has largely overcome misperceptions that were expressed in the mid-term evaluation), recognizing organizational differences, responding to staff and board changes in member organizations, and working with limited resources.

Achievement of Outcomes

- *Outcome Area 1: Communications.* The ESCC has made significant progress in communications, achieving high awareness of the coordinating council and its services among both members and non-members and seeing increased use of its resources and services. There remains some confusion about the ESCC's role in central access to information that needs to be addressed.
- *Outcome Area 2: Internal Organizational Development.* Internal organizational development was a major focus for the ESCC in its first 18 months and was formally documented in the mid-term evaluation. As such, it was not a primary focus of this report; however, comments from stakeholders show that the organization is on the right track with its staff, services and infrastructure. One potential weakness is in the organizational bylaws and board structure, which could limit the ability of the organization to bring in fresh and innovative thinking from outside the seniors sector.
- *Outcome Area 3: Representation.* The ESCC has had considerable success in this outcome area by developing a credible and trustworthy voice for senior serving organizations and achieving actual, measurable change in a few targeted areas (funding for senior centres, transportation).
- *Outcome Area 4: Community Development.* The ESCCs greatest achievements in the area of community development have included signing up all seniors centres as members, facilitating the Executive Director and Board Chair meetings, and coordinating events like the transportation roundtable and immigrant seniors workshops. These activities have had the effect of breaking down barriers and building strong, trusting relationships among stakeholders; however, ESCC has work to do, both in building actual capacity in its members and in the senior serving sector.

Conclusion

The ESCC continues to demonstrate its value and relevance to senior serving organizations, the City of Edmonton, other sectors including health, and other orders of government. There is a marked shift in attitudes from the mid-term evaluation, when senior serving organizations were hopeful but waiting for the ESCC to prove its value. Results of the three-year evaluation show that expectations have been met and the ESCC is continuing to prove its worth to the senior serving sector.

Recommendations

Leadership

1. Work with the City of Edmonton (Council and senior management) to articulate the ESCC's governance model and reporting structure. Clearly define how the ESCC complements and contributes to the City's vision and goals for the older adult population.

2. Continue to facilitate the creation of a long-term strategic plan for senior services in Edmonton, including a mechanism for identifying and establishing priorities for the senior-serving sector.

3. Continue to build strong strategic relationships with the health system and all orders of government, in order to break down barriers and address the broad issues that impact older adults.

4. Develop a policy on representation, education and advocacy for the ESCC, including definitions and clear boundaries.

Capacity Building

5. Continue to identify and develop opportunities to increase access to information for older adults and senior serving organizations in Edmonton.

6. Continue to gather and disseminate research studies and other evidence that can enhance collaboration within the senior serving sector.

7. Continue to explore ways to diversify the funding base for the ESCC.

1.   Introduction

The number of older adults in Edmonton is increasing. Approximately 12 per cent of the population is currently over the age of 65 and 25 per cent is over the age of 50. In the next decade, there will be a 100 per cent increase in two separate groups: 50-60 year olds and those over 80. By 2025, the number of seniors, 65 and over, will increase to 25 per cent of the population. This demographic shift will have an impact on programs, services and staffing within community-based senior-serving organizations. It is recognized that present resource levels cannot increase proportionate to the anticipated increases in older adult populations in Edmonton (*2007 ESCC Program Logic Model*). The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was established to provide a mechanism for coordinating the efforts and resources of senior serving organizations in the city of Edmonton to prepare to meet the demand for services presented by this significant shift.

ESCC was set up as a three-year pilot project following the final report of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors in 2003, and the Blueprint for Action "Let's Make it Happen!" in 2004. A mid-term evaluation was completed in September 2006, which documented the accomplishments and challenges of the fledgling organization (see *Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Mid-term Evaluation Final Report, September 25, 2006*). While most respondents to the mid-term evaluation said the ESCC was successful in getting itself established with sufficient infrastructure to pursue its goals, both members and potential members said they were "waiting for the coordinating council to demonstrate its value to the senior-serving community."

In March 2008, the ESCC initiated a comprehensive program evaluation to determine the extent to which it is achieving its mandate to support and encourage shared planning, coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations. This three-year evaluation builds on the mid-term evaluation, looking beyond process to ask, "what difference did the ESCC make?" The evaluation was led by an Evaluation Learning Team that comprised ESCC board members, ESCC Executive Director and the City of Edmonton Seniors Coordinator (see Appendix A). An external evaluation consultant, Alana LaPerle Consulting, was contracted to coordinate the work of the evaluation and a City of Edmonton evaluation consultant, Louise Gendreau, was appointed to work with the external evaluator.

During the course of the evaluation, ESCC launched a voluntary, facilitated strategic planning initiative to begin to move the Coordinating Council and its members to a new level of cooperation and collaboration. Although this initiative is outside the time period and scope of the three-year evaluation, it has provided many insights that have helped the ESCC to interpret the results of this evaluation and to formulate some of the recommendations in this report. A process advisory committee has been formed to identify achievements and set out the journey that will lead to greater engagement within the senior-serving sector in Edmonton, leading to a shared vision that will guide future action.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

- Determine what difference ESCC made to senior-serving agencies.
- Understand people's experience of collaboration (including their experience with barriers to collaboration).
- Determine whether the strategies/program areas achieved the desired outcomes and, if so, why.
- Formulate action-oriented recommendations for the operational improvement of ESCC.

3. Evaluation Methods

3.1 Qualitative

In accordance with the Request for Proposals issued by ESCC in January 2008 and revised February 6, 2008, the primary methodology was to be qualitative, giving priority to learning from people's experience. It was to be learning oriented, collaborative with stakeholders and action-oriented.

The methodological deliverable was to conduct up to 40 interviews with key stakeholders, as defined by ESCC. Thirty-seven one-to-one and group interviews, either in person or by telephone, were conducted with:

1. ESCC Executive Director and former staff (2)
2. ESCC Board Members (3)
3. Senior-serving Organizations (15)
4. Associate members / ex officio members (4)
5. City of Edmonton Council Members (3)
6. City of Edmonton Managers and Staff (8)
7. Other (outside senior sector) (2)

See Appendix B for a list of organizations interviewed.

3.2 Quantitative

A quantitative survey was developed as secondary method to expand the reach of the evaluation and to measure the degree/level of awareness, knowledge, support and satisfaction of/for/with the ESCC and its programs/activities. The questionnaire was posted on the ESCC website and an email invitation was sent to all stakeholders on ESCC's electronic contact list. However, technical problems with the questionnaire created a considerable delay in posting the survey and contributed to a low response rate (n=9). For that reason, comments from the online survey have been integrated into this report but the "numbers" are not reported.

3.3 Limitations

This was a qualitative evaluation study, the purpose of which was to *understand* the difference collaboration makes to senior-serving organizations, how the activities of the ESCC contribute to collaboration and what senior-serving organizations need in order to see participation in ESCC as meaningful (Clarification of Evaluation Focus, February 5, 2008). Interview questions were learning-oriented, in that participants were asked to explain and expand on their answers in order to provide a deeper understanding of their experiences. This method provides rich data that can help answer the "how" and "why" questions with respect to the evaluation question: what difference did ESCC make?

As a qualitative study, this report does not include quantitative data, such as the number of projects undertaken by ESCC, number of participants in ESCC events/projects or number of newsletters distributed. This information is collected by the ESCC on an ongoing basis and reported to the board in the executive director's report and to all members in the Annual Report (see A*ppendix E – ESCC Annual Report 2007 – Executive Summary*).

The evaluation study was outcome focused, seeking to determine whether or not the strategies/program areas used by the ESCC had achieved their desired outcomes. For this reason, the study looked at the four "Activities" identified in the Program Logic Model[*] – Communication, Internal Organizational Development, Representation and Community Development – as "Outcome Areas." These outcome areas and their corresponding "Outcomes" provided a framework for assessing the extent to which ESCC is achieving its outcomes (see section *6. Achievement of Outcomes*). Assessment of the ESCC's progress on its nine Program Goals, set in January 2007, was considered outside the scope of this study (see *Appendix F – ESCC Work at a Glance 2007* for more information on ESCC's progress on its goals).

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[*] Note: The ESCC Program Logic Model was created after the Mid-term Evaluation to guide ongoing work and evaluation by the Coordinating Council. For a copy of the Program Logic visit the ESCC website at www.seniorscouncil.net or contact the ESCC office at 780.423.5635.

4.   How the ESCC Works

> **Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council**
>
> ***Vision***
> *Through the work of ESCC, organizations that provide services to seniors have enhanced capacity and work collaboratively to provide effective, accessible services to meet the diverse needs of seniors in Edmonton.*
>
> ***Mission***
> *To enhance the capacity of organizations that provide social support and recreational services to seniors through facilitating collaboration and resource sharing.*

4.1   Mandate

The ESCC has a mandate to support and encourage **shared planning**, **coordination** and **collaboration** among senior-serving organizations in the city of Edmonton. All of those interviewed for this evaluation were able to articulate the ESCC's mandate, which was a significant change from the mid-term evaluation when a number of organizations had difficulty identifying the mandate, as illustrated by these comments:

> *I don't think they have established any kind of mandate yet. We are still waiting to see what the council does.* (Non-member, September 2006)*.*

> *The mandate is clear. It's about supporting collaboration, networking, coordinating and working together to better serve seniors.* (ESCC member, May 2008)

4.1.1   Shared Planning

The ESCC has been laying the groundwork for shared planning by building relationships, creating meaningful connections among organizations and demonstrating the value of joint action on universal issues like seniors transportation. This spring it initiated a strategic planning process that will engage senior serving organizations in identifying priorities and developing joint strategies to meet the needs of seniors, as described by this comment:

> *The shared planning element is really in the early stages, but once we work through some of the conflict, we will find shared planning to be very helpful. ESCC has done some of the necessary research and has brought facts and information to meetings to allow for decisions and progress.*

4.1.2 Coordination

The ESCC is a coordinator and facilitator – it does not have a direct role in serving seniors in the community. Rather, it is perceived as a broker, helping to make connections among service providers. Most stakeholders see this brokering role as a strength, as illustrated by this comment:

> *The ESCC is objective and neutral and that makes effective collaboration feasible.*

4.1.3 Collaboration

The ESCC is a catalyst for **collaboration.** By providing leadership, resources and support, it helps to overcome the most significant barriers to collaboration – particularly "time" – and allows participants to see real action and real progress on joint initiatives, as shown in this comment:

> *Someone needs to take the lead for the next step. We are all too busy. Sheila takes the lead and is very good at encouraging people's willingness and desire.*

4.1.4 Funder's Perspective

In general, the perceived role of the ESCC is both as a broker and a catalyst for collaboration by providing leadership, resources and support for joint action on initiatives. From the perspective of its primary funder, the City of Edmonton, the ESCC is meeting its mandate, as illustrated by these comments:

> *There was a desire when the mayor made seniors a portfolio in 2004 for a stronger focus and articulation of the issues for seniors and what the City needed to do. ESCC has played a part in articulating the issues, helping us to understand and grasp where the service shortcomings are and what we need to do to prepare for a larger population of seniors in the city.*
>
> *ESCC is bringing the organizations together and providing a place to discuss and address the issues identified by these organizations. It has a very collaborative problem-solving style, which works well in the context. It is also very inclusive, in the sense of bringing all organizations and community representatives together to address issues.*

4.2   Outcome Areas

The ESCC has used numerous strategies to achieve its mandate and has developed a program logic model as an internal evaluation framework to measure outcomes in four program or outcome areas:

- Communication,
- Internal organizational development,
- Representation, and
- Community development.

Each of these outcome areas is described below.

4.2.1 Communication

The ESCC acts as a clearinghouse that collects and disseminates relevant information to senior serving groups. Specific communication vehicles include:
- Website
- Newsletter (2-4 times/year)
- Weekly e-bulletins (Link-Letter)
- Program directories
- Reports and research
- Promotional materials

Through these communication tools, ESCC regularly provides information to the senior-serving community about events, programs, volunteer and job opportunities. The Link-Letter is, by far, the ESCC's most popular and most effective communication tool. Almost all respondents identified the Link-Letter as an excellent source of comprehensive information that would not be available without the ESCC. Although tools like the Link-Letter, website and program directories are "member services," all are available to members and non-members alike:

> *We don't withhold the Link-Letter from people who are not members. We need to keep them informed and let them see that we are doing good work.*

4.2.2 Internal Organizational Development

Internal organizational development continues to be an outcome focus for the ESCC, as it works to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization to, in turn, enhance the capacity of the senior serving community. Specific strategies include ongoing and milestone evaluations of ESCC activities, reporting to funders and members, and staff recruitment, retention and development.

The hope and expectations for the new Executive Director that were expressed by respondents to the mid-term evaluation appear to have been met and exceeded. Many respondents credited the Executive Director, Sheila Hallett, with providing the

necessary leadership and credibility that have allowed the ESCC to flourish, as illustrated by these comments:

> *A large part of credit for meeting the mandate goes to Sheila Hallett. She has brought professionalism and knowledge to the role and has brought credibility to ESCC because of her background.*

> *The staff has significantly contributed to all successes. Sheila has really raised the profile of ESCC in community and developed an excellent relationship with City Administration.*

The ESCC has achieved much with just two staff members (Executive Director and Member Services Coordinator), but its resources are spread very thin. It has reached a point where it must grow in order to meet the needs and expectations of the senior serving community.

> *There are literally tons of things we could be getting into if we had more people, more resources. The more work you do, the more you can do.*

In addition to adding new staff (e.g. administrative assistance, separate member services and communications functions), the ESCC is looking to build relationships that can help it extend its existing resources:

> *Being with the Chamber of Voluntary Organizations has been very helpful. We often ask them for ideas, share resources and that makes us more efficient. We have the same issues – such as looking the human resource shortage in the non-profit sector – and are part of the non-profit sector. Any work they do in that area, we want to be on board with them.*

4.2.3 Representation

The ESCC represents the senior serving community to policy makers and others by informing and educating them about seniors issues and, when necessary, by speaking out on behalf of senior serving organizations to promote change. Specific strategies include:
- Presentations, letters or briefings to policy makers,
- Consultation with senior serving organizations to identify issues and recommend actions, and
- Forums and roundtables on specific issues or trends (e.g. seniors transportation).

Given restrictions on charitable organizations and the ESCC's own understanding of its mandate, the coordinating council does not lobby or advocate for change in the traditional sense. Rather, it supports its members and the broader senior serving community by helping to identify issues and solutions and then working collaboratively with those who can bring change about:

> *I think advocacy is one area that needs improvement; however, our advocacy role is limited by our bylaws and by legislation. I know that our staff spends a lot of time with councillors, funders and communicating with the community about who the ESCC is and how it can contribute.*

> *The advocacy role is very tricky for an organization that has charitable status. Plus, it may confuse the purpose of facilitating the collaboration and cooperation between organizations that are expected to do the advocacy.*

The ESCC works with its members and other stakeholders to identify issues and set priorities for addressing those issues. One way the ESCC identifies issues is through regular and ad hoc meetings with executive directors and board chairs, agency staff, funders, policy makers and seniors. New ESCC members are asked to complete a survey about issues and participants at ESCC events are asked to identify other issues that the council should address. "Sometimes it is as simple as someone calling up and saying, 'we have noticed this (issue) at our place'". Members and other stakeholders value the coordinating role that the ESCC plays in addressing issues at a macro level, as demonstrated by these comments:

> *I do believe that ESCC shares our priorities and can aid in finding solutions.*

> *Our priorities are the daily operation of the centre, so it is nice to have the ESCC to take the lead and be the contact on shared issues and priorities, such as transportation.*

Although the ESCC is very good at identifying issues, some stakeholders believe the coordinating council needs to develop a more formal mechanism for establishing priorities.

> *ESCC does not seem to have a process for identifying priorities and this would make it easier to make use of the ESCC.*

Others identified specific processes or had suggestions for the processes that the ESCC could use to identify priorities, including providing evidence and best practice information, and bringing groups together to set priorities.

> *Maybe we could determine which issue impacts the most people and then prioritize the issues that way.*

> *ESCC does research on seniors' issues and brings information to the organizations and community and, in collaboration, identifies priorities and issues.*

4.2.4 Community Development

The ESCC exists not to serve seniors directly but to build the capacity of senior serving organizations and the broader senior-serving sector to be more effective and efficient in service delivery. It uses three specific strategies for community development:
- Workshops on focus areas (e.g. board development),
- Planning sessions, and
- Resource-sharing projects.

The overlay on these strategies could be called "facilitated networking," whereby the ESCC not only provides an opportunity for organizations to come together but also provides the support to ensure decisions are made and action is taken. The ESCC facilitates at least four regular meetings. These include:
- Executive directors and board chairs,
- Interagency programmers,
- Interagency outreach workers, and
- Volunteer drivers network.

Although the first three meetings pre-existed the coordinating council, the ESCC has helped to give shape to and formalize the work of these groups, as demonstrated by these comments:

> *Coordination of the executive directors and board chair meetings is really helpful in keeping us from getting too silo-ized. It forces us to stay involved, by taking some of the decisions about the when and how often of these meetings.*

> *The ED and board chair meetings have allowed our board presidents to get a richer understanding of the landscape of seniors programming and has helped them to expand (our) role in the community.*

Facilitated networking, through the ESCC board and its activities, has also helped to give a voice to all senior serving organizations, regardless of size. Moreover, the ESCC has proven to be a valuable resource to smaller organizations that lack the capacity of larger organizations, as indicated by this comment:

> *It is important for us to be on the board of ESCC because we are not a mainstream organization. We serve those who are unheard and often forgotten. We continually raise this point. The ED meetings help agencies to be heard.*

5. How the ESCC Makes a Difference

As described in the previous section, the ESCC has been successful in establishing infrastructure, meaningful activities, communication channels and connections with senior serving organizations. These achievements are necessary for collaboration but they are not collaboration, per se. This section of the evaluation report describes the "experience" of collaboration, coordination and resource sharing among stakeholders in the senior serving community in order to answer the questions:

- Was the ESCC successful in facilitating collaboration?
- What did that collaboration look like?

5.1 Defining Collaboration

Given its mission and mandate, the ESCC seeks to make a difference for senior serving organizations and seniors in the city of Edmonton by facilitating collaboration and resource sharing among service providers. Collaboration is loosely understood as "working together" to achieve individual and joint goals. Most interview respondents used the word collaboration to mean:

- networking and information sharing to achieve organizational goals, and
- coming together to identify issues and develop solutions to mutual problems.

Although most stakeholders share this common definition of collaboration, some respondents noted that it does not always translate into true collaborative action. While the ESCC has been effective in modeling collaboration, there is a need to come to a shared definition of collaboration and to develop a clear understanding of what collaboration entails, as this respondent said:

> *People don't necessarily share the same definition of "collaboration." It would be helpful if we could walk our members through the process of collaboration and help them build the skills to be more effective. Help facilitate the "shared vision" and help the groups achieve their goals and objectives in collaboration.*

5.2 Successes

Evaluation respondents identified a number of "successes" that were achieved through collaborative effort. The following achievements of the ESCC were mentioned most frequently by evaluation participants.

5.2.1 Funding for Senior Serving Organizations

The ESCC worked closely with its members to represent the senior serving community and its financial needs to the City of Edmonton during the 2007 budget process. By coming together, their voice was made stronger and the collaborative successfully presented its case for funding. Although a small number of respondents acknowledged the leadership role of the City staff that advocated on their behalf, most recognized the

leadership role played by ESCC. ESCC has also assisted smaller organizations in obtaining funding.

> *The city has adopted a long-range funding strategy for funding centres which was the result of the coordination of those groups. They have one voice asking for something – that has resulted in something good for everyone.*

> *ESCC took the lead on lobbying council and provincial governments for funding. We are recipients of the communal efforts made by the ESCC, as a catalyst.*

> *Through the efforts of ESCC, smaller agencies and organizations have received funding that might otherwise not been made available to them.*

5.2.2 Transportation Roundtable

A Transportation Roundtable coordinated and hosted by the ESCC was mentioned over and over again by respondents as an example of successful collaboration, as illustrated by the following comments. The Roundtable brought together both those who understood the issue and those who could help implement solutions.

> *I think the work on transportation is superb. It has some ways to go but there is the potential that we will be able to rethink how we serve seniors with transportation services.*

> *The transportation roundtable was a very good experience of ESCC facilitating collaboration and coordination among senior serving organizations and raising the awareness of City Council about seniors' issues.*

5.2.3 Isolated Immigrant and Refugee Seniors

The ESCC collaborated with the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative (MCHB) to present workshops to address the issue of isolated immigrant and refugee seniors and to raise the profile of these issues with the provincial and municipal governments. This work was well received by its members:

> *The ESCC has proven very helpful to us. They have definitely helped senior organizations understand issues for immigrant seniors…and have put us in touch with organizations that would like help with this issue.*

> *I would say that the ESCC helped our organization build organizational capacity through collaboration. I am facilitator in intercultural coordination, so the ESCC has helped me specifically build my capacity by coordinating with other organizations to deliver programs to immigrant seniors.*

5.2.4 Human Resources Information Sharing

On a smaller but significant level, the ESCC facilitated the sharing of staff salary information among senior serving organizations. This information not only helped these organizations set competitive salary levels, it also helped them make the case for increased funding to their different funders.

> *The meeting on human resources was good. It was the first time we shared information on what staff was earning. So we could give priority for this to funders. Last year we updated the salary grid and it helped me to apply to FCSS. I could say we were underpaying staff and I need to pay them more. We got the additional funding for this. There is strength in numbers.*

5.3   Perceived Benefits of Collaboration

5.3.1 Efficient Use of Resources

Senior serving organizations recognize that collaboration allows their organizations to make the best use of limited resources, by sharing the workload and avoiding unnecessary duplication, as illustrated by this comment:

> *Collaboration will make it possible for all of us to make the best use of our resources, rather than all of us working [separately] on the same issues at the same time.*

Although, in general, respondents were still waiting to see the "fruits" of collaboration – such as improved transportation options, shared personnel (e.g. human resources) or reduced insurance costs – most were very positive and hopeful that these benefits would soon be realized.

5.3.2 Making Connections

ESCC has helped senior-serving organizations make and strengthen connections with other organizations – both within and outside the seniors sector. These connections allow them to learn from each other and to share their successful practices more broadly. This, in turn, has contributed to the development of a new way of working, where agencies now ask, "how can we collaborate?" when starting a new initiative or addressing a common problem.

> *Any time members got together, there was feeling of "this deepens our work"; we are learning things from people and places we haven't heard from before.*

> *We benefit from the whole being bigger than the parts. I can now take my learning to others. And it benefits us all. Collaborative thinking requires the desire to share.*

ESCC saves us work and time. They help us to share with others. It would have been harder to connect with each other had it not been for ESCC.

5.3.3 Collective Voice

The ESCC allows senior serving organizations to speak with one voice on issues that affect all or most of them. Rather than take the voice away from individual organizations, the collective voice amplifies the individual voices and is more readily heard by decision makers and those who can contribute to the solution.

When other stakeholders who are not familiar with the issue hear it from so many voices, they are willing to come to the table to help solve the problem.

5.3.4 Building Sector Capacity

Although only mentioned specifically by a few respondents, collaboration not only benefits individual organizations but also helps to build capacity across the seniors sector. These respondents noted that the ESCC should work to build the capacity of the sector, as a whole, in addition to (or instead of) helping individual organizations develop their internal capacity.

Collaboration builds sector capacity. I think – coming from zero – we have come a long way. There were collaborations before but that has really increased with ESCC.

We have reached the point where we have to stop building internal capacity and start building sectoral capacity. We must honestly and courageously bring our organizations' skills, programs and passions to the table, discuss how we should alter how we work and decide who needs to change or shift completely.

5.3.5 Raised Awareness

The ESCC has worked with senior serving organizations to raise awareness of seniors issues among policy makers and within the broader public. It has also provided opportunities for organizations to reach a broader audience in promoting their own programs, services or priorities.

The shared resources under the ESCC means a wider audience can be reached.

ESCC helped us by increasing promotion possibilities. The ESCC displays our material at conferences and promotes the senior sector. I get calls from strangers based on these promotional efforts.

5.3.6 Achieving Joint Goals

Although priorities and short-term objectives vary across senior serving organizations, ultimately they all share the same goal: providing better services to seniors. Collaboration makes it possible to work together towards this common goal, while maintaining the individuality of each organization.

> *It is very motivating because everyone is on the same page with something and trying to figure out what would work to make this better. They are collected by the desire to do something.*

In addition, the ESCC is helping the City of Edmonton to meet its own goals, with respect to serving the needs of the growing senior population.

> *Speaking generally, what ESCC has done is help us be a responsive municipality to the needs of our citizens. We have a responsibility to be leaders, as well, but ESCC has served a function in articulating the needs of seniors as a demographic group within our population. They have brought some things to the forefront – such as the needs of immigrant seniors and transportation challenges.*

5.3.7 Support for Smaller Organizations

The ESCC makes a special effort to ensure smaller organizations are included and their voices are heard in shared planning and collaborative initiatives. The smaller organizations recognize and value this effort.

> *There are little fish and big fish in our pond. I do not want the big fish to swallow the little fish. We can be better together and there is no need for duplication. The little fish are close to grass-roots and direct service. They are the pulse of the community.*

5.4 Success Factors

5.4.1 Focus on the "Greater Good"

Collaboration will only be successful if organizations are willing to contribute to "the greater good," accepting that they may not realize a direct or immediate benefit to their own organizations. This requires a "collective mindset," whereby organizations see themselves as "part of something bigger." The benefit to individual organizations is the ability to address issues that are larger than their own organizations.

> *Collaboration requires thinking in terms of being part of a larger collective.*

> *Coming together in a way that encourages a collective mindset is not easy. But this is what the council tries to do.*

5.4.2 Focus on Common Issues

Organizations are willing to collaborate around "big" issues that impact the seniors sector, such as transportation. They are much less willing to collaborate on sharing scarce resources (particularly funding).

> *It is much easier for organizations to network around big issues such as transportation, where they can share experiences and look at solutions.*

> *Issues are easier to get collaboration around, rather than saying "we want you to collaborate to figure out how you will work together to share a pot of money."*

5.4.3 Start Where People Are

Collaboration starts slowly and takes time. Organizations must first come to see an issue as a problem for their own organization and collaboration as the best solution. This means starting with issues that are most pressing, most important to potential collaborators.

> *I do not need to be mandated to collaborate. I do that because I believe in it. You have a desire to participate because your heart is in it. You feel obliged when you operate out of duty rather than desire. One gives you energy the other saps it.*

5.4.4 Build Reciprocal Relationships

True collaboration is built on a platform of trust among the potential collaborators. ESCC has devoted significant time and effort to establishing trust between itself and its membership, and among its members and non-members in the senior serving community. The first step was establishing its own credibility through "quick wins," like the transportation roundtable and City funding for senior centres. Facilitated networking, through the executive director and board chair meetings, and programmer and outreach worker meetings, has further helped to build and strengthen relationships between the ESCC and its members and among its members.

> *ESCC is viewed as a knowledgeable resource and voice for seniors issues. Agencies speak of it as credible. It has a good reputation for representing organizations and seniors issues in general.*

> *ESCC staff contributed to success by producing results, reaching doubting agencies, gaining trust, doing what they said they would and achieving the council's objective. When you have people's confidence they trust you and you can build bring them into new territory.*

> *The key to the work and to being successful as a coordinating body is relationship building. This is one of the early successes of the ESCC.*

5.4.5 Get Professional Help

Effective collaboration does not just happen because people or organizations *want* it to happen. It requires a solid understanding of what collaboration can – and cannot – do and the steps that are needed for successful collaboration. As a facilitator and catalyst, the ESCC both needs to develop these skills and to know when to bring in professional assistance.

> *It is one thing to bring people together to look at making things better; it is another to have a facilitator with all sorts of resources and skills to build collaboration.*

5.5 Challenges

5.5.1 Overcoming Mistrust

If trusting relationships are necessary for collaboration, then, obviously, mistrust will work against collaboration. At the mid-term evaluation, potential members expressed significant mistrust or misperceptions of the ESCC, including: the fear that they would lose their autonomy and identity, particularly in dealing with funders; the belief that they would have to compete with the council for scarce resources; and concern that the council had a "hidden agenda" that had not been articulated (ESCC Mid-term Evaluation Report, September 25, 2006, p. 22). For the most part, the ESCC has managed to overcome these misperceptions, but it must remain vigilant and transparent to overcome any lingering mistrust, as indicated by these comments:

> *The ESCC was not intended to take over funding (i.e. not to act as distributor of funds). In fact, it was proposed by (City) Council but we actively lobbied against it. We want to be clear that funding of individual groups is not "threatened" by ESCC.*

> *One of the main reasons I joined was that I saw value in an umbrella group that was different from a funding body. I did not want it to disperse funds, as this would create divisiveness among non-profits.*

The growing trust among member organizations is demonstrated in a number of ways, particularly through a greater willingness to share information. For example, members have brought information on funding and grant opportunities to ESCC board meetings, which has then been shared with other members.

5.5.2 Organizational Differences

Even though senior serving organizations are, by definition, there to serve seniors, there is a tendency for some organizations to see themselves as "different" or "unique" from other senior serving organizations and, therefore, unlikely to benefit from collaboration. Whether these differences are real or perceived, they are a significant barrier to

collaboration. Similarly, if organizations do not perceive an issue as relevant to their members, they are not likely to collaborate.

> *It should be remembered…that most of the agencies involved with ESCC have very different mandates and often all we have in common is service to seniors. This can make collaboration and cooperation difficult, if not impossible to effect.*

5.5.3 Organization Boards

An organization board might not understand the purpose of collaboration or see any benefits and, as a result, might limit or stop an organization from collaborating with other organizations in the seniors sector. This issue is exacerbated by changes at the executive director and/or board level, when one or both may need to be convinced of the need to collaborate.

> *Agency boards can be a barrier to moving forward (on collaborations). The ED may support something, but the board may not give that person permission to move forward.*

> *It is a challenge when there are changes at the ED and/or board level. We have to go back and educate them on how important it is to collaborate.*

5.5.4 Internal Resource Limitations

Although it has a mandate to facilitate collaboration within the senior serving sector, the ESCC is limited in what it can realistically accomplish. There is an obvious limit to what two to three staff members can do and, therefore, they must decide between "quantity" of collaborations and "quality." To its credit, the ESCC has emphasized "quality," giving focused attention to a small number of issues. This has allowed it to make real progress on these issues; however, it necessarily means that other opportunities or issues must be put on a back burner.

6.   Achievement of Outcomes

Outcome Area 1: Communication

This outcome area includes not only increased knowledge of ESCC information and services but it also refers to the utilization of that information and service by agencies.

Outcomes:

- **Short-term:** Senior-serving groups are aware of ESCC and the services it provides.

- **Intermediate:** Senior-serving groups have an increased knowledge of ESCC and start using the resources/services of ESCC.

- **Long-term:** Senior-serving groups have increased effectiveness because of the ESCC's information provision.

The ESCC has made significant progress in this outcome area, achieving high awareness of the coordinating council and its services among both members and non-members (short-term) and seeing increased use of its resources and services (intermediate term).

Despite these achievements, there is a certain amount of confusion about the ESCC's role in central access to information. For some, central access refers to everything the ESCC does to facilitate networking and share information, as these comments suggest:

> *Through events and newsletter, it has been particularly successful acting as a central access point for program information.*

> *I would say they have been very effective as a point of central access for program information. I have contacted ESCC for volunteer information and recommendations for board members.*

Others believe it refers to specific activities, particularly the website and program directory, with both positive and negative perceptions of the ESCC's success in these areas, as these comments suggest:

> *The website is not really a success. I don't know how many seniors are accessing it. They still look to the better known and more traditional sources (such as the Active Edmonton program directory).*

> *The ESCC has not made any significant improvement as a central access for program information. It only provides information that is available from other sources and these other sources still provide that information.*

One board member addressed the confusion, in this way:

> *There has been some misperception about the central access role for program information. It is true that there are numerous sources of information, but that is something of a problem. The ESCC combines the information available from other sources, since those other sources keep their own information limited. For example, HealthLink provides information about home care services that are non-profit but not businesses. That does not seem to be complete information. So, our database is intended to be complete.*

These varying perspectives indicate a need for the ESCC to review its role in central access to information. It needs to clearly define the gaps and describe what – if any – should be its unique role in filling those gaps. As one member said:

> *It was an early win that was useful but not the best way to spend resources. Given that they are three years in, the council should honestly reflect on what it does and ask, "was it expedient to get early wins?" Should we switch our resources to higher level initiatives?"*

By clearly defining its role and activities as a central source of information, the ESCC will be better positioned to achieve its long-term communication objective of helping to increase the effectiveness of senior-serving groups by providing the right information, at the right time and in the right format.

Outcome Area 2: Internal Organization Development

> Internal organizational development includes activities to build the infrastructure and capacity of the ESCC to carry out its mandate.
>
> **Outcomes:**
>
> - **Short-term:** Volunteers, the board and staff of ESCC have the knowledge and capacity to respond to members.
>
> - **Intermediate:** ESCC is being utilized by the community and is recognized as a credible resource.
>
> - **Long-term:** ESCC is adequately resourced to meet its goals.

This outcome area was a major focus for the ESCC in its first 18 months and was formally documented in the ESCC Mid-term Evaluation Final Report (September 2006). For that reason, it is not a primary focus of this report. However, comments from stakeholders show that the organization is on the right track with its staff, services and infrastructure.

> *By obtaining funding, the ESCC succeeded in guaranteeing its own survival. That is not an easy task when we look at the diversity and independence of member organizations, as well as historical failures.*
>
> *The main success was building credibility with the seniors' community. The new ED made a huge difference to the issue of credibility. This credibility is essential to achieving the ESCC's mandate.*
>
> *I find the ESCC is also becoming pro-active with things, too, by taking decisions and action following meetings and discussions.*

One potential weakness is in the organizational bylaws and board structure, which could limit the ability of the organization to bring in fresh and innovative thinking from outside the seniors sector. Given the relatively low number of members (*"There are not that many regular members to go after – all the senior centres belong."*), the bylaw requirement that board members must come from the membership could create a situation where there are fewer and fewer individuals with new ideas and expertise who are eligible for the board. This could lead to a stagnant and unimaginative organization. The ESCC needs to review its bylaws to ensure it can continue to have a dynamic and renewing board.

Outcome Area 3: Representation

This outcome area involves developing the ESCC's capacity to speak on behalf of senior serving agencies to achieve mutually beneficial changes. Senior serving agencies not only perceive the value of having a collective voice, but also feel that they contribute to that voice and experience change as a result of advocacy efforts or membership.

Outcomes:

- **Short-term:** ESCC has identified key issues.

- **Intermediate:** Senior-serving groups recognize the benefit to a collective voice and contribute to a strategy on a key issue.

- **Long-term:** A proposed change has occurred as a result of representation.

The ESCC has had considerable success in this outcome area by developing a credible and trustworthy voice for senior serving organizations and achieving actual, measurable change in a few targeted areas (funding for senior centres, transportation).

When the ESCC was established, it was given a set of six priority areas that had been developed over a number of years, through extensive consultation with seniors. These priority areas include:
- Community supports
- Diversity
- Fitness and recreation
- Personal safety
- Transportation
- Health and wellness

There is clear evidence from the evaluation data that the ESCC has taken seriously its mandate to address these priority areas. The transportation roundtable is a high profile example, but there are other examples including workshops on isolated immigrant and refugee seniors, adoption of the "Snow Angels" program (to encourage people to assist seniors with snow shovelling), and its support of the "Creative Age Festival."

Outcome Area 4: Community Development

This outcome area involves activities for increasing the organizational capacity of senior-serving organizations to be responsive to seniors.

Outcomes:

- **Short-term:** Staff, board members and volunteers of senior-serving organizations participate in ESCC workshops, planning sessions or resource-sharing projects.

- **Intermediate:** Staff, board members and volunteers of senior-serving organizations have increased their knowledge in a focus area. Staff, board and volunteers of senior-serving organizations feel they have contributed at a planning session or benefited from a resource-sharing project.

- **Long-term:** Senior-serving organizations experience a sustainable change as a result of the community development work of the ESCC.

The ESCCs greatest achievements in the area of community development have included signing up all seniors centres as members, facilitating the Executive Director and Board Chair meetings, and coordinating events like the transportation roundtable and immigrant seniors workshops that have been well-received by members and non-members alike. The activities have had the effect of breaking down barriers and building strong, trusting relationships among stakeholders.

Despite these early successes, the ESCC has work to do, both in building actual capacity in its members and in the senior serving sector and in changing perceptions about what it means to build organizational capacity. These comments provide an illustration of this challenge:

> *The ESCC has not helped us build organizational capacity. Our capacity is no different, since collaboration is often taking place to save money, so the end result is to combine efforts for the same outcome. Only collaboration from positions of strength will result in increased capacity. Collaboration may make programs more visible and make funding cuts more palatable but it hasn't changed anything.*

> *Our agency is self-sufficient and we respond directly to our community, so ESCC has not helped us in building our capacity. We are not in a city building, we take care of ourselves. On the other hand, we are more than willing to participate in helping others build capacity.*

During the evaluation period, the ESCC initiated a series of facilitated strategic planning workshops to begin to move beyond one-issue collaboration and one-off events, into more sector-wide collaboration. Both participation levels and results from those initial

sessions indicate that senior serving organizations are more prepared for shared planning than they were three years ago, when the council was formed, and are ready to do the work. For example, participants identified the need for a comprehensive vision for services to seniors, recognizing that such a vision would help to increase opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. They also recognized that the role of ESCC was to be a facilitator and not a dictator in this process, as indicated by these comments:

> *It is everyone's responsibility to create a vision and not ESCC alone.*

> *This long-term strategic plan which we have just started working on will help us a lot. Providing research will be very useful. Continue to insist on our participation, encourage us to take the time to participate.*

This process is ongoing and holds much promise for continued community development and capacity building in the senior serving sector.

7. Conclusion

The ESCC continues to demonstrate its value and relevance to senior serving organizations, the City of Edmonton, other sectors including health, and other orders of government. There is a marked shift in attitudes from the mid-term evaluation, when senior serving organizations were hopeful but waiting for the ESCC to prove its value. Results of the three-year evaluation show that expectations have been met and the ESCC is continuing to prove its worth to the senior serving sector.

The ESCC is successfully carrying out its mandate to support and encourage shared planning, coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations in the city of Edmonton. It has been careful not to stray into service delivery or funding decision work, which were both identified as "out of scope" by the Task Force on Community Services for Seniors and the original ESCC board.

The ESCC's bylaws, strategic plan and, more recently, program logic model have helped to guide the ESCC's development; however, clarity about its role has come more from the relationships it has developed and the work it has completed in carrying out its mandate, than from specific definitions and documents.

The ESCC is not just helping to build capacity in individual organizations; it is helping to strengthen the whole senior serving sector by creating an environment in which even the smallest voice can be heard. By making strategic connections and linking community based services, the ESCC is helping to build trust in the senior serving sector. Both of these conditions – equal voices and trust among organizations – are essential to creating a strategic vision and plan for senior services in Edmonton. The time is now right to begin this process (and the ESCC is acting on that opportunity).

In the three-year pilot, the ESCC has proven its worth and established its foundation. It is now ready to claim its unique place in the senior serving sector and continue to work with stakeholders to help make Edmonton a truly age-friendly city.

8. Recommendations

Interview participants provided a large number of practical suggestions for the ESCC, including ways it could improve the work it is already doing and opportunities it could pursue in carrying out its mandate (see *Appendix G – What We Heard from Our Stakeholders* for a complete list of these suggestions). As part of the evaluation process, the ESCC board reviewed the evaluation findings, including these practical suggestions, and developed action-oriented recommendations that would allow the organization to build on its achievements and address any outstanding issues from its first three years.

The following recommendations identify key priorities for the ESCC as it moves beyond the pilot stage and continues to work with its stakeholders to make Edmonton a more age-friendly city.

Leadership

1. Work with the City of Edmonton (Council and senior management) to articulate the ESCC's governance model and reporting structure. Clearly define how the ESCC complements and contributes to the City's vision and goals for the older adult population.

2. Continue to facilitate the creation of a long-term strategic plan for senior services in Edmonton, including a mechanism for identifying and establishing priorities for the senior-serving sector.

3. Continue to build strong strategic relationships with the health system and all orders of government, in order to break down barriers and address the broad issues that impact older adults.

4. Develop a policy on representation, education and advocacy for the ESCC, including definitions and clear boundaries.

Capacity Building

5. Continue to identify and develop opportunities to increase access to information for older adults and senior serving organizations in Edmonton.

6. Continue to gather and disseminate research studies and other evidence that can enhance collaboration within the senior serving sector.

7. Continue to explore ways to diversify the funding base for the ESCC.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

ESCC Evaluation Learning Team

Jean Innes *(Chair)*	ESCC Board	Associate Member
Sheila Hallett	Executive Director	ESCC
Trina Homeniuk	ESCC Board (ex officio)	United Way of Alberta Capital Region
Pat MacDonald	ESCC Board	Strathcona Place Senior Centre
Grace Maier	ESCC Board (ex officio)	Capital Health
Brenda Wong	Seniors Coordinator	City of Edmonton
Alana LaPerle	Evaluation Consultant	Alana LaPerle Consulting
Louise Gendreau	Evaluation Consultant	City of Edmonton

Appendix B

Organizations Interviewed

The following organizations were represented in the one-on-one and group interviews:

- Alberta Motor Association
- Catholic Social Services
- Central Lions
- City of Edmonton Community Services
- City of Edmonton Councillors (3)
- City of Edmonton Transportation
- Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- Edmonton Meals on Wheels
- Edmonton Seniors Centre
- Edmonton Transit Services (ETS)
- Lifestyle Helping Hands
- Multicultural Health Brokers
- Northgate Senior Citizens Association

- Operation Friendship Seniors Society
- Seniors Assisted Transportation Society of Greater Edmonton
- Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)
- Seniors Outreach Network Society
- Society for Seniors Caring About Seniors
- Southeast Edmonton Seniors Association (SEESA)
- Southwest Seniors Outreach Society
- Strathcona Place Senior Centre
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
- West End Seniors Activity Centre

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Question	SSO	Assoc / ex officio	Others	City	City Council
What was the experience of coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations?					
1. How would you describe your experience of the mandate or the purpose of the ESCC? *(Prompt, if necessary)* Has your perception of ESCC mandate changed over time? If so how and why? How successful was the Coordinating Council in achieving this purpose? Help me understand what shared planning, coordination and collaboration looked like in your experience with ESCC?	X	X	X	X	X
2. In what ways did the ESCC assist you or your organization in achieving (your goals)? (The goal of addressing a complex issue that could not be addressed alone.)	X	X	X	X	X
3. When you reflect back on your experience with ESCC, is there anything that stands out as a good experience of shared planning? A good experience of coordination? A good experience of collaboration? Tell me more. What made that experience meaningful?	X	X	X	X	
In what ways did the ESCC support and encourage coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations?					
4. How does the Coordinating Council support and encourage coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations? Specifically, what helped you to connect with others, or even to think of making a connection with others? Would you have connected had it not been for ESCC?	X	X	X (AMA, maybe others)	X (staff not mgrs)	
5. What would you describe as the Coordinating Council's main successes or accomplishments? Why? Could these have been achieved in other ways?	X	X	X	X	X
6. What factors contributed to these successes?	X	X	X	X	X
To what extent did the ESCC and its programs (outcome areas) achieve desired outcomes?					
7. Can you identify or list any specific products, services or activities offered by the Coordinating Council? Which activities did you participate in and what was it like?	X	X	X	X	X
Communications					
8. How would you describe the communications between the ESCC and you / your agency?	X	X	X	X	X
9. Was the website, newsletter, electronic newsletter, notices, resources and research reports, mainstream media, and open house effective in communicating helpful information? What information was most helpful and why? *Bring examples to show.*	X	X	X	X	

Question	SSO	Assoc / ex officio	Others	City	City Council
10. Did the ESCC provide any information that made you feel connected and part of something "bigger"? What type of information and how was it delivered?	X	X	X	X (staff, possibly mgrs)	
11. What would you say are the main benefits of belonging to the ESCC? How well did the ESCC communicate these benefits to you / your organization? Did this information encourage your organization to become a member?	X	X			
12. Did any of the information provided by the Coordinating Council encourage you to become a board member or more involved in the organization?	X	X	X		
Internal Organizational Development					
13. In what ways has the ESCC staff contributed to the success of the Council? How would you describe your experiences with ESCC staff?	X	X	X	X	X
Representation					
14. What issues has the ESCC and its members identified and addressed as priorities? What difference did it make to address these collectively?	X	X	X	X	X
15. How does the ESCC identify and choose priority issues that should be addressed by the Council and its members? In what ways were you or your organization involved in identifying priority issues? Did you feel heard in this process?	X	X			
16. In what ways did or could your organization benefit from collective representation (unified voice on issues) undertaken by the ESCC? For example, the unified statement on the need for senior centre funding presented to the provincial government in December 2007 (and associated activities). Where relevant, how did organizations experience activities such as letters of support, issue fact sheets, roundtables on issues/trends, presentations or briefings to policy makers?	X	X		X	X (Linda Sloan)
17. Are you aware of any efforts undertaken by ESCC to advocate for individual organizations or issues?	X	X			
18. Did you / your organization participate in any of these activities or events (*prompt if necessary*)? In what ways did you or your organization benefit from these activities or events? Have you used the information? Where and how?	X	X	X	X (staff)	
19. How effective is the ESCC in providing central access to information by senior-serving organizations (e.g. website)? By seniors looking for program information? Did your organization promote your programs on the ESCC website? What difference, if any, does this type of central access to information make to your organization?	X	X	X	X (staff)	

Question	SSO	Assoc / ex officio	Others	City	City Council
Community Development					
20. Can you name any workshops or other resources offered by the ESCC to build organizational capacity? (e.g. benefits and salaries, board development, human resource clusters, insurance toolkit, volunteer driving network, other?) Sheila to provide names/examples.	X	X			
21. Did you participate in any of these capacity-building workshops or use any of these resources *(prompt if necessary)*? In what ways did your organization benefit from these workshops?	X	X			
22. How successful were the capacity-building workshops in encouraging coordination and collaboration among senior serving organizations? As a result of the workshops, are you more willing to connect with others? Why or why not?	X	X			
How can the ESCC improve its operations and/or do things differently to support meaningful coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations? [Note: these questions would be asked in the appropriate sections]					
23. Any practical suggestions for how communication processes can be improved?	X	X	X	X	X
24. Any practical suggestions for how the ESCC could improve its operations?	X	X	X	X	X
25. Do you have any practical suggestions for improving ESCC efforts at providing a unified voice for change?	X	X	X	X	X
26. Any practical suggestions for issues that the ESCC should address or for the process it should use to identify issues?	X	X	X	X	X
27. Regarding the issues that have already been addressed, do you have any suggestions for the next step? Is there something you see yourself involved in that could support movement forward?	X	X	X	X	X
28. Any suggestions for how the ESCC could support your organization to build its own capacity for collaboration in order to better serve seniors?	X	X			
29. Any suggestions for how the ESCC could better achieve its purpose, which is to support and encourage shared planning, coordination and collaboration among senior-serving organizations?	X	X	X	X	X
In what ways can the City of Edmonton and other funders continue to support the ESCC?					
30. In what ways can the ESCC support and contribute to the City of Edmonton's/United Way's goals with respect to older adults?		X (United Way)		X	X
31. In what ways can the City of Edmonton/United Way support and contribute to the ESCC and its mandate? Are there other funders or resources that could support the work of the ESCC? (Interested in moving beyond city boundaries,		X (United Way)		X	X

serving the broader region)					
32. What do you see as key opportunities for the ESCC in the next few years?	X	X	X	X	X
33. What do you see as potential barriers for the ESCC in the next few years?	X	X	X	X	X
34. What do you see as the most significant contribution of the ESCC to serving seniors in the community?	X	X	X	X	X

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Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council
The First Three Years

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

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The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) was established in November 2004 as a three-year pilot project, following the final report of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors. The ESCC has been operating for three full years and is now undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of its goals and activities.

Please take the time to complete the questionnaire – it will only take a few minutes. We really want to hear what you have to say!

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the evaluator, Alana LaPerle, at 416-8085 or alaperle@telusplanet.net.

1. When did you **<u>first</u>** become aware of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC)?

[ ] When it was created – 3 years ago
[ ] Some time after it was created – but more than 6 months ago
[ ] Very recently – within the past 6 months
[ ] Today – when I came to this website
[ ] Don't know / not sure

2. Which of the following statements **best** describes the purpose of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council?

[ ] Coordinate service delivery on behalf of senior serving organizations
[ ] Support shared planning, coordination and collaboration among senior serving organizations
[ ] Advocate for individual seniors to different orders of government
[ ] Educate the public on the role and value of seniors in society

3. In your opinion, how effective is the ESCC in achieving its purpose?

Not effective			**Very effective**	**Do not know**
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

4. The ESCC uses a number of different methods to communicate with its members. Which of the following communication vehicles have you seen? **Please check all that apply**.

[ ] ESCC website www.seniorscouncil.net
[ ] Newsletter
[ ] Weekly e-bulletin (Link-Letter)
[ ] Program directory (published with Active Edmonton)
[ ] Activity Reports (various)
[ ] Research Reports
[ ] Promotional material (e.g. display, brochures)

5. The ESCC has coordinated a number of opportunities for shared planning, coordination and collaboration by senior serving agencies. Which of the following events or activities did you participate in or were aware of? **Please check all that apply**.

[ ] Seniors Transportation Roundtable and follow-up meetings
[ ] Isolated immigrant and refugee seniors - workshops
[ ] Regular meetings of Executive Directors and Board Chairs
[ ] Interagency outreach worker meetings
[ ] Interagency programmers meetings
[ ] Yard maintenance network meetings
[ ] Representing senior serving organizations to council on funding for senior centres

6. The ESCC has offered a number of workshops and sessions to increase the capacity of senior serving organizations to serve the seniors community. Which of the following workshops or sessions did you participate in or were aware of? **Please check all that apply**.

[ ] Benefits and salaries
[ ] Board development
[ ] Human resource clusters
[ ] Insurance toolkit
[ ] Volunteer driving network

7. We would like your opinion on the ESCC and the role it plays in serving the senior serving community. For each statement below, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know / not sure
The ESCC makes it easier for senior serving organizations to work together to serve seniors.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The ESCC supports senior serving organizations in achieving their own goals.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The ESCC is an important voice for organizations that serve seniors.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The ESCC makes is possible for senior serving organizations to address broader issues that affect many seniors (e.g. transportation, isolation, etc.).	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
The ESCC provides useful resources, activities and events that help to strengthen senior serving organizations.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

8. Is there anything else you would like to say about the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council?

Appendix E

ESCC Annual Report 2007 – Executive Summary

In its third full year of operation the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) made great progress on its goals and celebrated many successes. An evaluation framework (program logic model) has allowed us to measure our outcomes in 2007 using short, mid and long-term goals in each of four program areas: communications, internal organizational development, representation and community development. These program areas encompass the goals outlined in the ESCC three-year strategic plan.

Communications:
- As a communication hub for the senior sector our website experienced an average of 1700 downloads per month in 2007.
- Our weekly electronic sector bulletin had a 175 per cent increase in the number of contacts over 2006.
- Demand for the ESCC/Active Edmonton Program Directory (published three times in 2007) increased. In 2006 we mailed (electronically and surface mailed) 293 copies of the Program Directories. In 2007 we e-mail and surface mailed 929 Program Directories. This publication was also downloaded from the ESCC website an average of 535 each month in 2007.

Internal Organizational Development:
- Membership to the ESCC has grown: 36 regular members (29 in 2006); 11 associate organizational members (10 in 2006); five individual associate members (four in 2006).
- The monthly average of first-time ESCC website visits in 2007 (2,277) increased over 2006 (853).
- The overall monthly average of hits to the ESCC website increased from 2006 (42,215) to 2007 (49,860).

Representation:
- In 2007 we doubled our input on issues from member agencies (14 regular member agencies participated in issue identification in 2006 vs. 28 in 2007).
- The 2007 Seniors Transportation Roundtable had 103 participants, an increase over 2006 when 86 people participated.
- In our 2007 Seniors Transportation Roundtable 86 per cent of evaluation respondents (26 out of 30) said their breakout sessions were excellent or good and 19 of these respondents were able to name actions their organizations are going to take to move forward on this issue.

Community Development:

- An increased number of people participated in workshops, planning sessions or resource sharing projects in 2007 (191) over 2006 (157).
- Out of 21 evaluations received from 26 attendees at the cultural sensitivity training event, participants named 27 ways in which the session was 'most helpful.'
- One-third of regular members completed evaluations on ESCC's work and 66 per cent were able to name at least one benefit to belonging to the ESCC—some named multiple benefits.

Future Plans:

- In the City of Edmonton 2007 *Aging in Place* Report the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council was identified as a key player in three key recommendations
  1. To assess current outreach services to seniors and make recommendations to City Council. This would involve ESCC work with senior-serving organizations to review programs, determine what 'outreach' means, and what is needed and encourage a more co-ordinated approach.
  2. ESCC be part of a working committee to examine the options for funding in-home support services for seniors, such as housekeeping and personal assistance.
  3. Work with the City of Edmonton and other senior-serving organizations to plan and implement the neighbourhood strategy.
- Continue meeting with the Alberta Seniors and Community Supports Department regarding senior centre funding models and explore hosting a provincial senior centre conference.
- Engage the sector in development of a broad strategic plan for senior services.
- Coordinate a Roundtable on Services to Immigrant and Refugee Seniors.
- Work on year-one objectives from Seniors Transportation Steering Committee.
- Coordinate a Creative Aging Festival June 2008.
- Facilitate the production of a senior centre promotional DVD.
- Produce diversity resource for senior-serving agencies.
- Continue with regular publications and communications.
- Continue to provide regular workshops and events for staff and key representatives of senior-serving organizations.

Appendix F

ESCC Work at a Glance 2007

Program Area 1: Communications

Program Area 2: Internal Organizational Development

Link Letter—weekly electronic bulletin to sector

Physical Activity and Recreation Directory for Older Adults—bi-annual program directory

Www.seniorscouncil.net—website with databases for:
1. Programs;
 2. Transportation information;
3. Diversity information

Seniors Scene—monthly full page ad in the Edmonton Examiner to advertise programs and events for seniors

ESCC Annual Report

ESCC promotional material

ESCC reports

ESCC bi-annual newsletter

Membership recruitment/retention

ESCC Board recruitment and training

ESCC Staff recruitment and training

Evaluation

Annual General Meeting

ESCC Program Logic Model

ESCC Strategic Plan

ESCC Bylaw Review

Program Area 3: Representation	**Program Area 4: Community Development**
Senior Centre Promotional DVD Senior Centre Funding Strategies Committee Member of Aging in Place Study (City) Snow Angels—social marketing campaign Presentations on behalf of sector Public relations and displays Participate in broad initiatives i.e. Transportation Master Plan	Facilitate/support meetings for: 1. Executive Directors and Board Representatives 2. Interagency Programmers 3. Interagency Outreach Workers 4. Edmonton Voluntary Drivers Network 5. Yard Help/Snow Shovelling Network 6. Broad Strategic Plan for Senior Services sector in Edmonton Work on Issues: <u>Transportation</u> 1. Roundtables 2. Steering Committee 3. Project Work: a. Clearinghouse/Tool creation; b. Assisted Transportation Model Development; c. Social Marketing <u>Diversity</u> 1. Roundtable 2. Steering Committee 3. Project Work: a. Cultural Clearinghouse/Tool <u>Health and Wellness</u> 1. Creative Age Festival's Fiscal Agent and Member of Steering Committee

Appendix G

What We Heard from Our Stakeholders: Practical Suggestions from Interview Participants

Enhancing Collaboration
- Provide more specific communication, training and support in how to achieve effective collaboration.
- Create opportunities for collaboration, rather than waiting for them to be presented by one of the players. Use the credibility established by the ESCC to take a stronger, proactive role.
- Encourage more out-of-the-box thinking.
- Recognize that incentives can be very good motivators, at least initially, to get people to make the changes we are looking for.
- Develop an assessment tool to determine what approaches or strategies will be most effective for all our members. Collaboration may not be the most effective tool for all members.

Strategic Plan
- There needs to be a long-term strategic plan for seniors. The "vision" needs to be developed now that the ESCC has proven its effectiveness.
- Do not be reluctant to farm things off that do not fit the mandate of the ESCC.
- Leading the conversation around how we will deal with the tsunami of seniors that is coming. That is the biggest issue and the biggest challenge. Challenge the status quo and be tough.

Identifying Priorities / Issues
- Have members describe and define their priorities. ESCC should contact SSOs to suggest priorities and plans: surveys to member agencies on an annual basis; having conversations, listening to the space between the lines.
- ESCC could be responsible for identifying how organizations can contribute to addressing these priorities (i.e. who has what and whom? Who can contribute what to the solution?) Assist them even in the initial stage of identifying priorities.
- ESCC needs to be pro-active in identifying gaps, duplication and how to work smarter. The next issue ESCC could address is the one of collectively identifying the strength of each organization with an eye to addressing service duplication and gaps.
- There needs to be a body that takes more proactive role in identifying the shortcomings in service delivery/program requirements. This may be part of the expansion that the ESCC could take on.
- ESCC could be looking at identifying future trends for seniors; planning for collaboration of senior services; continuing to work on the "big" issues (housing, health, aging in place, transportation, isolation).

Addressing Issues

- There may be other ways, in addition to roundtables, to address issues e.g. social marketing campaign for public education on transportation issues for seniors; using focus groups. Roundtables do work very well, though, by bringing stakeholders together, identifying topics, taking advantage of keynote speakers, identifying solutions and actions. Steering committees, sub-committees are also very effective in making progress on issues.
- Continue working on the identified issues and maybe include health and housing issues.
- Housing is definitely becoming an issue.
- As we move to a social policy – "Aging in Place" in the community – there needs to be a coordinated strategy for providing the services. We don't have that right now. It needs a bit of research into what does aging in place look like elsewhere. Need to develop the data to take forward to municipal and provincial govt. how it can be resourced, how can agencies be engaged.

Communication
- Educate the broader community about the ESCC and senior serving organizations. There should be more promotion of themselves, outside of the senior-serving organizations, so that the broader community is aware of what is available and what the organizations do.
- Raise the profile of ESCC as a central access for seniors programs.
- Proactively communicate on the ESCC successes. With the credibility they have, they will have an even stronger voice with the City, communicating and educating the City and the community on seniors programs and needs. Should use this credibility to "toot their own horn" with Council.
- The ESCC has not yet firmed itself in the minds of the City and will need to provide evidence of tangible success and clearly communicate what it is and what it does. Once that happens, it will be seen as a contributor to the City and this could be reflected in budget decisions. Need to raise profile of the needs of seniors, in a politically astute way.
- The ESCC should have a physical presence that is more readily identifiable (i.e. not on the second floor of an office building). More of a "neighbourhood presence" or a storefront (although would need to remain centrally locate). I hate that they are downtown, hidden in a high rise, so parking and accessibility are issues.

Mandate / Define Role
- The ESCC has to be clear on what its mandate is and it has to have a good understanding of its own bylaws. The City of Edmonton, as a funder, can be more supportive if the ESCC knows who it is and what it can do.
- Seems to be some confusion on who the ESCC reports to at the City. This was apparent in budget discussion, where Council appeared to believe the ESCC reports to them. Admin thinks this has now been clarified but should be followed up with Management.
- ESCC has to ensure that it is NOT involved in service delivery. They should take some time to more clearly define what they do and how they do it, to be clear in communicating that to the City Council and broader community.

- The ESCC should more strictly define its difference from the City, as there seems to be growing confusion over the roles of ESCC and the Seniors Representative in the City Admin.
- ESCC should remain limited to their initial mandate of working to develop coordination and cooperation among agencies. The City should be taking the leadership role in community-wide issues.
- The power for issue resolution rests largely with the City. ESCC should define its role in cooperation, collaboration, facilitation between seniors organizations.
- There are some business product needs that they could serve. There is a need for a business unit related to senior services.
- Another gap, we don't have a neutral seniors advocate – a neutral person to offer assistance in navigating systems.
- Should be looking at regional service delivery model as possible direction, but issue of providing services outside of City while the City is largest funding source. Surrounding communities – we are getting the message that we need to think in a more regional way, e.g. with transportation

Internal Organizational Development
- Partnership agreement may be developed between admin and ESCC. Need to clarify role and support of City to ESCC, as well as keeping ESCC as voice for seniors to the City and NOT vice-versa.
- I think we need to increase staff, too much is being done by Sheila. Split the member services position into two. Admin support is needed. Perhaps this would mean project-specific hires.
- More staff, more funding. We have shown that roundtables and workshops can be effective, but resources are needed to do more of these things. The board is a policy board, not a working board, and we cannot provide any human resources to operation.
- We also have to build up our volunteer force.
- The board should also consider setting up committees.
- A strong board, with commitment to the objectives and purposes of the Council, so as to assure its continued growth and success. The ESCC board – lacking creativity, new ideas.
- Continue to do these evaluation reports on a periodic basis to assure ourselves that the Council is being as effective and successful as it appears to be.

Funding
- ESCC should not remain too dependent on single funding source, the City.
- Perhaps participating in a more region-wide model for a Seniors Coordinating Council, thereby having access to funds from those other municipal governments.
- There may be other grants available through New Horizons Funding, provincial lottery grants. So much funding is project funding, not operational funding, which is the biggest need for ESCC.

Representation

- The ESCC should clearly define what it means by "advocacy" as it could create problems when communicating with council. The advocacy cannot be "political" or serve political purposes. In addition, the purpose of the ESCC does not include the word "advocacy", it is to facilitate collaboration, cooperation, and shared planning. The perception of political activism could create problems with City Council, especially as regards funding.
- Assist in policy action. Although, the need for a close relationship with municipal government means that any advocacy can have a negative impact on this relationship. It will require a unique skill set, thoughtful development of this skill set.
- We'd like to see more seniors speaking for seniors. Also keep in mind that the "voice of seniors" is not necessarily the "voice of agencies". ESCC should be clear on whether they are voice for seniors or voice for agencies.
- There does seem to be an expectation from City Council that ESCC will be THE representative for seniors in the city. But that is not what we are intended to do
- There needs to be more provincial advocacy. Some of the areas of need are beyond the capacity of the city to fund. ESCC could play a role.

Community Development
- Find new ways to build capacity in our member orgs. Continue to identify outside orgs, commercial entities, NGOs, etc with whom we could collaborate for mutual benefit (like the AMA in transportation.)
- ESCC could also help us with board training/development (i.e. how to operate, what the duties are, and make decisions as a board.) Could also help to search for board members. They should continue to offer, maybe even increase, staff-strengthening support and board support for non-profits (i.e. ED and Board training).
- Provide more practical training sessions, such as HR management, volunteer training, etc.
- Find reasonable accommodation for small seniors organizations (one which can be shared by many such groups.)
- Foster small networking opportunities for ED's. Coffee meetings for E.D's would be good, without board members. ED are isolated and we have no peer network.
- Learning circles is one way of encouraging support, sharing of ideas and feel supported. Learning circles are another effective way of communicating. The face to face is good. It would be good to learn and talk about the best things we've done in our agencies. Informal gatherings are very valuable. Barrier to this is of course time.
- ESCC could support us to build our funding development capacity. By sharing staff, let's pilot a project and share the learning from this pilot.
- We would be the natural place to develop a tool kit for a senior centre that is just getting going, connecting them to other resources and agencies to get help – rather than reinventing the wheel.