

“Let’s Make it Happen!”

Blueprint

for Action

What is a Blueprint for Action?

A *blueprint* is a detailed plan for building something new. It is not a vision or a list of recommendations that somebody – somewhere – should do something about. It is a plan for action. It shows the steps that must be taken to turn an idea into reality.

Why a Blueprint?

In the next 20 years, the proportion of older adults in Edmonton will balloon from 12% to 25%. The way we deliver programs and services may work well today but it may not be the most effective way to meet the needs of the increasing aging population.

This blueprint was prepared by the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors to reflect the ideas, desires and wishes of older adults, service providers and funders who recognize that the time for study and reflection is over. To prepare for the significant challenges ahead, **the time to act is now!**

Surveying the Site

We started by looking at other cities across Canada and around the world. We also surveyed senior-serving organizations in our own community and asked, “What is working? Where are the gaps?”

What we learned is that there is no “best way” to deliver programs and services, but there are some things that should be included in any approach. In particular, three themes came up again and again: prevention, quality of life and collaboration.

Creating the Design

We took these findings to the community and asked: “what would work in Edmonton?” People had many opportunities to answer this question, including a questionnaire at flu clinics, community planning workshops and workbooks, and discussions with service providers and funders. Our task was to suggest an approach to the delivery of social and recreational programs and services that would be meaningful and appropriate for our community.

Setting the Foundation

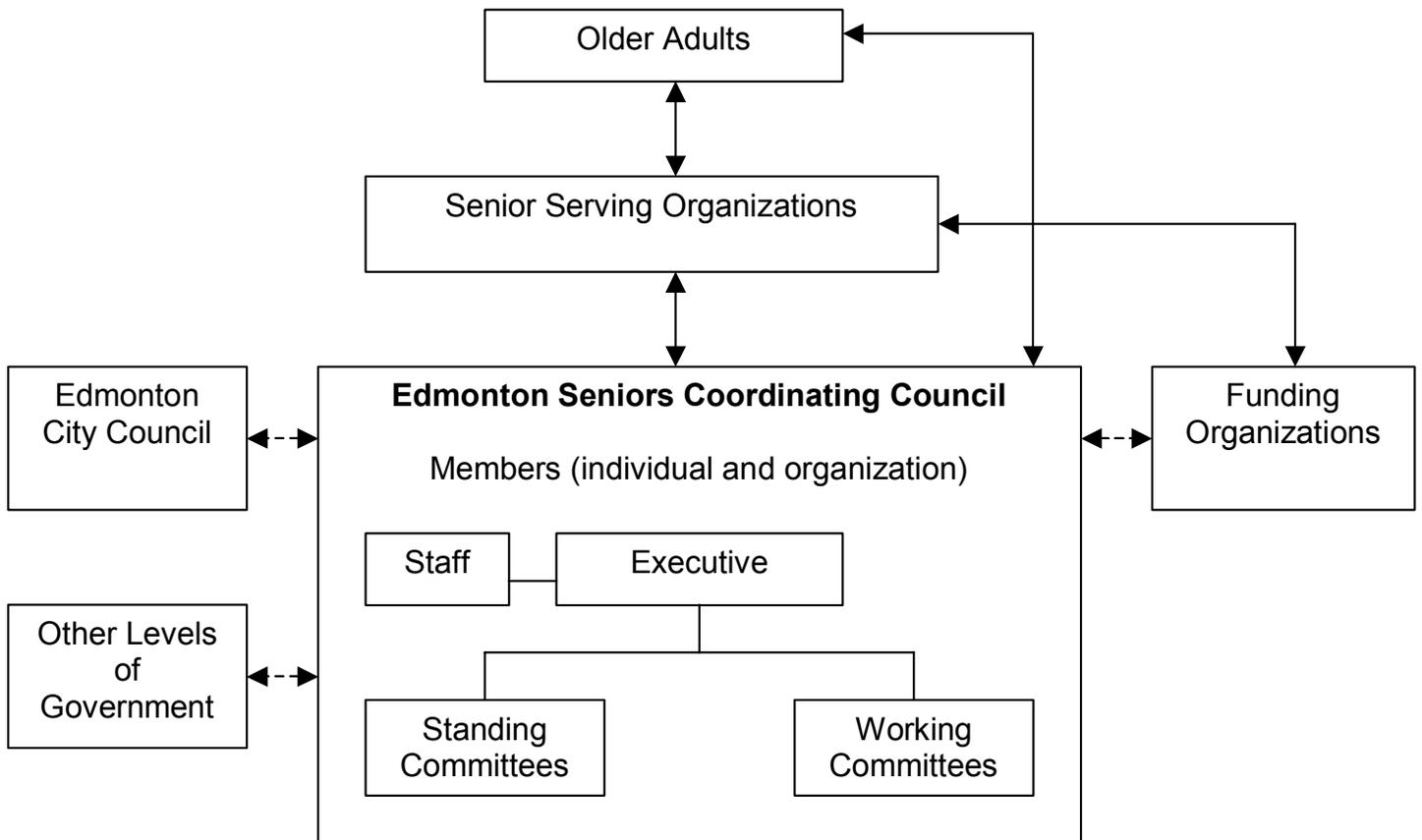
You told us that any approach to the planning and delivery of social and recreational programs and services for seniors should reflect five key principles: sustainability, diversity, accessibility, equity and community involvement.

Through a series of dialogue and decision-making workshops with senior-serving organizations, we reached consensus on creating an *Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council*. This Coordinating Council would build on the Edmonton Seniors Community Network and take a leadership role in helping organizations to plan and coordinate programs and services for older adults. We believe this is a forward-looking and flexible approach that will position Edmonton to meet the needs of seniors, now and well into the future.

This blueprint provides the “tools” for building an Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council...**now, let’s make it happen!**



Proposed Model – Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council





Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Proposed Terms of Reference

Introductory Statement

It is proposed that the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council be established as a three-year pilot project, to determine its effectiveness in achieving the stated purpose.

A. Purpose

- The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council will assume a leadership role in facilitating shared planning and coordination among senior-serving organizations in the City of Edmonton.
- The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council will assist senior-serving organizations in the delivery of social and recreational programs and services to the aging population that are comprehensive, effective, efficient and accessible.

B. Structure

Legal Status

- The Coordinating Council will be a legal entity and recognized as such following incorporation.

Executive

- An executive board will be elected by the membership to serve as representatives of the members rather than of their individual organizations.
- The executive board may have up to 15 members.
- The executive board will be made up of 11 representatives from identified constituent groups and 4 members at large who are older adults (55+). Constituent group representatives include:
 - 2 representatives from large seniors recreation and social centres (>750 members);
 - 2 representatives from small to mid-sized seniors recreation and social centres, including drop-in centres (<750 members);

- 2 representatives from cultural, immigrant or other social agencies that represent people from diverse cultural groups;
- 2 representatives from direct service organizations other than senior centres (e.g. meal service, home/yard support services, etc.);
- 1 representative from a funder;
- 1 representative from the City of Edmonton, Community Services Department; and
- 1 representative from Capital Health.
- The executive board will have two co-chairs – a constituent group representative and a member at large.
- The term of membership on the executive board will be a maximum of 3 years. Terms will be staggered to ensure continuity and the regular introduction of new ideas.
- The executive board will be elected at the Coordinating Council's annual general meeting.

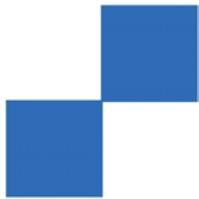
Membership

- Membership will be voluntary, open to individuals, senior-serving organizations and other organizations that have an interest in the delivery of services to seniors, including funding organizations and the various levels of government.
- Membership will include individual and organizational members.
- The term of membership in the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council will be 1 year from the payment of membership fees.

Fees

- Members will be assessed an annual fee based on the following schedule:
 - \$XXX organization membership
 - \$XX individual membership
- Membership fees may be waived for in-kind contributions or based on need.





Sub-Committees

- The executive board may establish one or more committees to address specific priorities or tasks identified by the membership.

C. Accountability

- The executive board will be accountable to its members and the seniors community in the city of Edmonton.
- The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council will be accountable to its funders for the appropriate use of funds and attainment of agreed-upon outcomes.
- The Edmonton Senior Coordinating Council will develop and implement a comprehensive evaluation framework that includes process, outcome and impact measures.

D. Key Responsibilities

The Coordinating Council will assume a strong leadership role in:

1. Developing a broad strategic plan for addressing the needs of seniors in Edmonton that will provide guidance for planning by its member organizations.
2. Raising and addressing existing priority issues as identified through the public participation process and other issues as they emerge.
3. Promoting and supporting collaboration among senior-serving organizations for the delivery and evaluation of social and recreational programs and services.
4. Promoting and supporting the sharing of resources (financial, staff, volunteer, equipment, policies and other resources) among senior-serving organizations.
5. Representing senior-serving organizations on issues.
6. Working with its member organizations to make it easier for seniors to learn about and access programs and services.

7. Obtaining and disseminating information, including research, needs assessments and best practices on behalf of its member organizations.
8. Identifying opportunities for providing cost-effective services to member agencies.
9. Making recommendations to funders based on common goals and priorities.

E. Meetings

- The executive board will meet a minimum of 9 times per year in open meetings.
- An annual general meeting will be held in June to which all members will be invited.

F. Resources for the Operation of the Coordinating Council

Funding

Funding sources may include:

- Grant funding for the ongoing operation of the Coordinating Council.
- Membership fees.

Staffing

- Staff person(s) who provide(s) coordination and support to the members under the direction of the Executive Board.

G. Communication

- The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council communicates with its members through a variety of mechanisms, including:
 - Quarterly newsletter
 - Telephone
 - Email bulletins/listserv
 - Regular and special meetings, open to all members
 - Social events
- The executive board communicates with funders and all levels of government to provide an update on its work and to raise issues that are important to its members.





Implementation Plan

This implementation plan includes the broad “next steps” that we believe are needed to move the work of the Task Force forward. It does not provide detailed processes for carrying out each of these

steps. This was a deliberate decision on the part of the Task Force to allow the processes to evolve, building on the work and decisions that are made in each step.

Step	Complete by	Activity	Responsibility
1	Nov 2003	Present the draft Blueprint to the broader community for confirmation.	Task Force
2	Dec 2003	Release the final Blueprint and final report of the Task Force	Task Force
3	Dec 2003	Determine and oversee the process for establishing a transition team.	Task Force
4	Jan 2004	Appoint a transition team of up to 15 members that may include representatives from the Task Force, older adults, representatives of senior serving organizations and others.	Task Force
5	June 2004	Obtain operational funding for the first year of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.	Transition Team
6	June 2004	Establish the nature of the relationship between the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and the City of Edmonton and other levels of government.	Transition Team
7	June 2004	Determine and oversee the process for establishing the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and Executive.	Transition Team
8	Sep 2004	Elect an executive for the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.	Inaugural members
9	Sep 2004	Establish the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council as a legal entity.	Transition Team/Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Executive
10	Dec 2004	Determine Year 1 objectives and outcomes for the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council based on the Blueprint and Final Report of the Task force to address key issues and priority areas.	Transition Team/Edmonton Senior Coordinating Council Executive
11	Dec 2004	Establish appropriate structures for carrying out the work of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (i.e. working committees, standing committees, etc.)	Edmonton Senior Coordinating Council Executive
12	Sep 2006	Evaluate the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and make necessary adjustments.	To be determined





Addressing the Priorities

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council is the entity that will take responsibility for providing leadership in addressing priority areas through sub-committees as part of its mandate.

The original mandate of the Task Force was to develop specific outcomes in each of the following six priority areas:

- 1) Community Supports;
- 2) Diversity;
- 3) Fitness and Recreation;
- 4) Personal Safety;
- 5) Transportation; and
- 6) Health and Wellness.

Past attempts to address each of these priority areas as a separate issue have resulted in long lists of recommendations that have not been implemented. However, through the work of the Task Force, we now have a better understanding of these priority areas and how they fit together.

Simply put, the priority areas are not issues. Rather, they are strategies for addressing issues that are important to older adults. In most cases, more than one priority must be considered when addressing an issue. For example, improving access to programs and services must look at diversity, transportation, personal safety and the types of programs and services that are offered.

By letting the issues drive what we do – rather than trying to take action on each of the priorities – we can make small changes in many areas. Over time, this approach should result in big changes in the six priority areas, while at the same time allowing us to respond to new issues as they emerge.

The matrix presented on the following pages was developed from the work of the Task Force. It shows how the six priority areas relate to the five key principles of sustainability, diversity, accessibility, equity and community involvement.

It also shows the key issues that were raised in the community planning workshops and discussions with senior-serving organizations and funders, along with some of the proposed solutions.

We believe the issues and solutions identified in the matrix should serve as an important starting point for the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council as it begins to set priorities and take action on the big issues that effect seniors and senior-serving organizations.

How was the matrix created and what does it mean?

- Participants in the public participation process were asked to identify the major issues in each of the six priority areas and to propose possible solutions.
- The “X’s” beside each identified issue show whether or not that issue was identified in the discussion of a particular priority. For example, “lack of funding, volunteers or other resources” was identified as a major issue by participants, whether they were discussing community supports, diversity, fitness and recreation, personal safety, transportation or wellness.
- The proposed solutions also come from the public participation process. Although there were many different ideas, the proposed solutions presented in the matrix are those that can be addressed most effectively through collaboration and coordination.

For detailed results of the community planning workshops, see the report:

The Blueprint Project: Results of the Public Participation Process, February 2003

Available at www.services4seniors.com.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
Sustainability							
Lack of funding, volunteers and other resources.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign one FCSS Liaison Team member to work with all FCSS funded senior-serving organizations. • Lobby the provincial government for increased, stable funding to provide programs and services for seniors in the city of Edmonton. • Establish a central volunteer registry that is “shared” by all senior-serving organizations. • Offer educational opportunities to train older adults to contribute to the delivery of programs and services (e.g. fitness instructors). • Broaden access to resources through increased connections with community businesses and organizations. • Establish appropriate evaluation criteria to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of funded programs and services.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
Low awareness/ understanding of the needs of older adults within the business community and general public.	X	X		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase connections among senior serving organizations and the business community. • Encourage use of Senior Friendly™ standards by businesses and the public sector. • Educate the public sector to be Senior Friendly™.
Diversity							
Limited understanding of the range of cultural diversity in Edmonton within senior serving organizations.	X	X					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for cultural education/sensitivity training for staff and volunteers. • Provide opportunities within senior serving organizations for staff, volunteers and members to learn about other cultures.
Lack of a systematic process to assess the diverse program and service needs of older adults.	X	X	X				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct periodic needs assessments within the aging population that specifically address the needs of diverse groups.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
Limited availability of programs and services that are culturally or language appropriate.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate and/or use current research to develop and provide culturally relevant programs and services.
							<p>service needs of older adults from different ethno-cultural groups in Edmonton, including Aboriginal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnerships with ethno-cultural organizations, immigrant serving agencies and multi-cultural societies. • Encourage existing centres to provide space for use by cultural groups in the community. • Establish centres and services in areas outside of downtown with growing numbers of Aboriginal seniors. • Advocate for expanded availability and access to ESL programs for older adults. • Work with educational and social institutions to provide leadership training for cultural group representatives.



Addressing the Priorities

Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
Limited incentives for senior-serving organizations to meet the needs of diverse groups.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set objectives and outcomes within the broad strategic plan that respond to the needs of diverse groups. • Establish policies that address diversity issues and direct service delivery by organizations and municipal services. • Establish appropriate evaluation criteria to determine the extent to which diverse needs are being met.
Accessibility							
No central access to information about the broad range of programs and services available to older adults in Edmonton.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive directory of programs and services (print and online). • Establish a central telephone information line answered by a person. • Provide information in culturally-appropriate formats, including different languages. • Provide opportunities for older adults and caregivers to learn how to access programs and services.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish appropriate evaluation criteria to assess the extent to which service users can access information about programs and services.
Limited transportation options for older adults.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for adequate funding for public transportation for older adults. Work with transportation providers (i.e. ETS, DATS, taxi companies, insurance companies) to find appropriate solutions on an issue-by-issue basis, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased use of mini-buses in areas with high numbers of older adults; use of a dial-a-bus system; increased use of low floor buses; Senior Friendly™ training for transit drivers; group insurance that covers car pooling and volunteer drivers. Discounted taxi rides for seniors.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
Some older adults face barriers to accessing community support services, including supports for caregivers.	X	X		X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a central registry of home support service providers, where listed providers must meet specific standards (similar to BBB).
							<p>senior-serving organizations to provide community support services, including services that are culturally and language appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish support services for caregivers, such as a distress line, volunteer registry and educational opportunities.
Some older adults face barriers to participating in fitness and recreation programs.		X	X			X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support existing public education campaigns (i.e. Active Edmonton) to educate older adults about the importance of fitness. • Provide opportunities for older adults and other community members to provide specialized instruction for older adults.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set objectives and outcomes within the broad strategic plan that respond to the fitness and recreation needs of different groups based on age and ability.
Some older adults face barriers to accessing health services.		X				X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for increased public funding for health services for older adults, including public pharmacare program, dental care, eye glasses, assistive devices, etc.
Concerns about personal safety, including physical, emotional and financial safety, can isolate older adults.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for increased community policing programs. Support the expansion of programs like Phone Busters and Wise Owls. Develop a comprehensive strategy to combat elder abuse. Develop a comprehensive strategy to increase the physical safety of neighborhoods, including improved lighting, sidewalk repair, bylaw enforcement and pedestrian signals.



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
Equity							
Limited access to income support programs by new immigrant seniors.	X	X					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for policy changes that will ensure adequate support for immigrant seniors. • Support the increased use of cultural brokering. • Advocate for funding programs to reward organizations that develop programs for culturally diverse groups.
Limited access to programs and services by low-income seniors.	X	X	X	X	X	X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive strategy to increase access to programs and services by low-income seniors. • Establish appropriate evaluation criteria to determine the extent to which the needs of low-income seniors are being met.
Not all areas of the city are equally served by fitness and recreation facilities for older adults.		X	X		X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the establishment of seniors centres in areas of the city that are under-served. • Work with the community, including lodges and private apartment complexes, community leagues and



Addressing the Priorities

Principles & Key Issues	Community Supports	Diversity	Fitness and Recreation	Personal Safety	Transportation	Wellness	Proposed Solutions
							schools, to make their recreation programs and facilities available to older adults.
Some older adults, especially those who live alone, do not eat well.	X	X				X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive strategy to address nutrition issues among older adults, including dental care, education, meal programs, restaurant discounts and grocery store services. • Initiate and/or use current, relevant research to take action on the health and wellness needs of older adults.
Community Involvement							
Older adults are isolated for different reasons and to different extents.	X	X					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce isolation among older adults. • Initiate and/or use current research to develop appropriate programs for seniors who are socially and physically isolated.





Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors

The Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors was created by the Edmonton Seniors Community Network in February 2002. Its task was to work with older adults, senior-serving organizations, funders and other stakeholders to find the best way to deliver and evaluate social and recreational programs and services for our growing aging population.

Members:

Lorraine Assheton-Smith
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Jean E. Innes (Co-Chair)
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Susan Morrissey (Co-Chair)
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David J. Parks
Dr. Gerry Predy
Denise Prefontaine
Vi Presley
Denise Ryan
Susan Scott
Vicki Strang

Reports and Other Documents:

1. Case Study Review: Approaches to the Delivery of Social and Recreational Programs and Services for Older Adults in Other Jurisdictions, October 2002.
2. An Inventory of Social and Recreational Programs for Older Adults in Edmonton, October 2002.
3. The Blueprint Project: Results of the Public Participation Process, February 2003.
4. "Let's Make it Happen!" Final Report of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors, September 2003.

Reports can be downloaded at www.services4seniors.com

For more information, contact:

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