

Strengths of the older adult

The reality of aging today has changed. People are living longer, and are in better physical, mental and economic health.

The Older Adults Plan for Strathcona County emphasizes the strengths of the older adult:

- ▶ Older people are an incredible resource with the capacity to continue to make important contributions to society.
- ▶ A vibrant community builds upon the strengths of individuals, families, and the community itself. Likewise, a vibrant community builds strengths in its residents and increases the likelihood that one will age well.
- ▶ While today's older adults are generally healthier, better educated and living longer than at any time in our history, they need a range of flexible options for housing, transportation, leisure activities and health care.

▶ I am looking forward to doing something meaningful; leaving a legacy.

– Strathcona County resident commenting in the Older Adult survey

Shared responsibility to support older adults

While recognizing strengths, it is also important to provide needed supports. The responsibility for aging well must be shared by individuals, families, neighbours, communities, and municipal, provincial and federal governments. Working in collaboration, with a shared commitment by all segments of society, will ultimately provide the holistic approach necessary to support older adults.

Further information

Strathcona County
Family and Community Services
780-464-4044
www.strathcona.ab.ca

▶ How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?

— Satchel Paige

Strathcona County Older Adults Plan

▶ supporting healthy aging in our community



Strathcona
County



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The **Older Adults Plan** for Strathcona County sets out goals and strategies that focus on meeting current and anticipated needs of older adults, aged 55+ years, over the next 15 years.

The need to develop a comprehensive community older adults plan was identified through Strathcona County's Social Sustainability Framework. It recognized the importance of understanding and being prepared for the changing demographics in our community.

- ▶ Baby boomers will begin turning 65 in 2011. For the first time in our history, there will be more older people than children and youth.
- ▶ Strathcona County is projecting an increase of 1,000 seniors per year over the next 12 years.

Vision of the Older Adults Plan

Strathcona County is an age-friendly and caring community that values the contributions and strengths of older adults, is responsive to their diverse needs and desire for choice, and provides a spectrum of opportunities for active and purposeful lives.

Key issues and needs

The Older Adults Plan was developed through extensive community consultation. Using a variety of methods, and involving over 1,100 participants, these key issues emerged as the top concerns and needs for older adults.

- ▶ Access to seniors housing
- ▶ Access to health care
- ▶ Rising living costs combined with fixed incomes
- ▶ Availability of personal care and home services
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Outreach services
- ▶ Information about programs and services

Healthy, active aging

Healthy, active aging allows people to realize their potential for physical, social, and mental well-being throughout their lives—to participate in society—while being provided with adequate protection, security and care when needed.

Factors that influence aspects of aging are called determinants. These determinants interact throughout our lives, and are an accumulation of a lifetime of effects and experiences.

The goals of the Older Adults Plan are organized within the determinants.



Older Adults Plan - Goals

Cross determinants

(impact all the other determinants)

- Goal 1** Services for older adults in Strathcona County are coordinated and emerging needs are identified and addressed.
- Goal 2** Older adults receive clear, user-friendly information about services and programs in a variety of formats.

Older Adults Survey findings...

- ▶ 77 per cent of respondents had used a computer in the past year

Social determinants

(social supports, social connections, life-long learning opportunities)

- Goal 3** Opportunities for social connection are encouraged and facilitated.
- Goal 4** Older adults are provided with a variety of local choices for new learning opportunities and new skill development.

Older Adults Survey findings...

- ▶ 95 per cent of respondents stated they had loving and supportive people in their lives
- ▶ 39 per cent had participated in learning opportunities in the past year

Physical Environment determinants

(housing, transportation and mobility, accessibility, safety issues)

- Goal 5** There is a range of affordable and accessible housing options appropriate for older adults.
- Goal 6** Transportation options are affordable, accessible, safe and address the diverse needs of older adults.
- Goal 7** Strathcona County will follow the 'Principles of Universal Design' in the design and construction of new or renovated buildings.
- Goal 8** Crime prevention initiatives will reduce the incidence of older adults impacted by scams and crime.

Older Adults Survey findings...

- ▶ 47 per cent indicated feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark, compared to 90 per cent of general community members
- ▶ 11 per cent had difficulty getting transportation when needed

Economic determinants

(income, employment, social protection)

- Goal 9** Opportunities exist for meaningful paid and volunteer work for older adults.
- Goal 10** Older adults have the means to support themselves financially through retirement.

Older Adults Survey findings...

- ▶ 17 per cent indicated they will continue to work after age 65 in either their current job, or a different job
- ▶ 80 per cent believe there are meaningful volunteer opportunities in Strathcona County

Behavioural determinants

(recreation and leisure, healthy lifestyles)

- Goal 11** A variety of opportunities are available for social, recreational and cultural activities.

Older Adults Survey findings...

- ▶ 45 per cent preferred to attend formal leisure activities open to the general public
- ▶ 25 per cent preferred to attend a designated seniors program in a community facility
- ▶ 12 per cent preferred to attend formal leisure activities at a seniors' centre

Health and Social Services determinants

(health, long-term care, mental health, outreach services)

- Goal 12** A spectrum of health and wellness programs is available to older adults.
- Goal 13** Older adults are provided necessary supports to remain in their homes as long as it is safe and appropriate.
- Goal 14** Vulnerable older adults and their families receive the emotional supports/interventions and advocacy they require to adjust to the changes they experience.
- Goal 15** The incidence and prevalence of elder abuse is reduced; services and supports are available to assist those who are affected.

Older Adults Survey findings...

- ▶ 82 per cent rated their overall physical health and 92 per cent rated their overall mental health as good, very good or excellent
- ▶ 5 per cent of survey respondents indicated they have experienced abuse by a family member since turning 55

These goals are supported through 65 strategies that will move us toward reaching our vision.

The full Older Adults Plan for Strathcona County is available at www.strathcona.ab.ca