

The Seniors Driving Centre of Edmonton

Incorporated in the Province of Alberta under the Societies Act

Corporate Registries Number 5097-12303

Date of Incorporation January 15, 2002

Charitable Registration Number 86249 3715 RR0001

Business Plan – Model of Operation & Operating Priorities for 2008

**Received by the SDC Board of Directors
December 18, 2007**

Background Information

The Seniors Driving Centre of Edmonton (SDC) is an incorporated society, under the Alberta Societies Act. As such it is a membership based organization with membership open to anyone over 18 years of age, residing in Edmonton and with a currently paid annual membership. All members in good standing are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting and all other meetings of the members. SDC is recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency as a registered charity and as such is able to issue tax creditable receipts for donations (as per CRA regulations).

The vision, mission, target audiences and core values are contained in the strategic planning document for the organization.

SDC currently serves ~300 members (users). A waiting list of equal size has been maintained for a couple of years. Other agencies have acknowledged that they no longer refer people to SDC because the length of the waiting list is too long (it takes too long to get onto active support).

Funders have also questioned the viability of SDC (although circumstances have significantly improved in the year since this planning work was initiated). It was this questioned raised by a funder that specifically led to this level of planning being undertaken. The funder had a sense that the kind of service being provided was needed in the community. However, the funder also felt the organization needed to be much stronger, starting with a clear vision and understanding of the need and what organizational model was most likely to be successful in addressing it.

SDC had been unable to serve a larger number of those in need of the services due to insufficient number of volunteer drivers, a very weak financial base, very limiting office space and very old technology. The strength of the Board and the limitations of a single part-time senior staff person were also contributing factors.

The technology issues have recently been significantly improved thanks to the use of funds from the first casino for the organization. Some key grants have allowed the organization to hire additional staff resources. The Board undertook significant work in their hands on operational roles, participating in strategic planning, board development and policy development over the last year.

There is still a very critical need to build a solid base of annual operational funding, to continue efforts to strengthen the Board and add to the volunteer pool through the development of committees that can share the work load.

The number of individuals living in Edmonton aged 85 and over (at the time of the 2006 census) was 10,620 (an increase of 28% from 2001) and the population for those aged 75 – 84 was 31,345 (an increase of 20% from 2001). For comparison purposes the population of the City grew by 10% over that 5 year period. These are the primary age groups of members/clients for SDC. The growth in this portion of the senior population and the fact that “research shows that, for most Americans, life expectancy now exceeds driving expectancy by 7 to 10 years” (no similar information has been found for Canada). These two facts combined make a very strong statement about the need for this service to help keep seniors in their homes and engaged in community, a very significant quality of life consideration for many of them.

Summary of Approach

SDC's service to its member users is provided by matching, in advance, one-on-one volunteers to assist its members in getting to and returning from their appointments, services or other activities using a door through door approach. Those activities include but are not limited to medical appointments; social, leisure and recreational activities; and essential services such as banking and grocery shopping. Included in this service may be assistance getting into the office or facility, waiting during appointments or assistance bringing groceries into the home of the senior.

Operating Model

The operating model for SDC is to have a "membership" base that can be served thanks to the individual commitment of volunteer drivers; to significant volunteer support in the office and from the Board; the generosity of donors and funders; and the commitment of its staff.

The "members" pay a fifteen dollar annual membership fee and purchase tickets, at \$7.00 each which provide for one return ride within a two hour period. Two tickets are required for longer trips. Members that require and are assessed to need individualized transportation assistance book for their needs at least three days in advance. Members are primarily in their late seventies and eighties with a few into their nineties.

Volunteer drivers are reimbursed for direct expenses related to operating their personal vehicles. All of the funds received from the purchase of tickets by the members have gone into reimbursement of expenses for the drivers (approximately 70% in previous years – changed to reflect increased cost of operating vehicles). The increased cost of gasoline and other related costs in the past couple of years have had an impact on the volunteers and therefore the program. Recent decisions made on this now provide that the full amount of the ticket value will go to reimburse drivers for their direct expenses.

The membership fees charged and ticket sales have produced 25% of the revenue required to operate the program during its bare bones years. Affordability is a key value for the organization. The focus on serving low income seniors means that raising prices will often have a negative effect on the goal of keeping seniors engaged in the community. Therefore, the organization is dependant upon donations, grants and fund raised dollars to ensure the service can be provided.

The volunteer base of the organization is split between those that volunteer to drive (~30 individuals with a majority of the driving done by less than half of the group), those that serve in the office area (again ~ 25 volunteers may be on the list but the majority of the work is done by a much smaller number). The Board can have from 7 – 11 directors (the number has been closer to 7 or less for most of the last two years). The number of Board members has been increased in recent changes to the bylaws which are now fully registered.

The organization held its first casino in 2007 and will now be in line to hold a casino licence a regularly and request the use of proceeds within Alberta Gaming guidelines. This is anticipated to provide approximately \$40,000 per year to support the delivery of this vital service.

Key Operational Areas

Four key operational areas are identified as current priorities - in order to increase the numbers of “members” that can be served.

1. Build a sustainable cash flow to fund core operations
2. Strengthen our capacity to solicit for donations, grants, sponsorships and volunteers
3. Increasing the operational capacity of the organization through improved space and increased numbers of staff/volunteers to carry out the work
4. Strengthen and create partnerships - local groups & organizations

Audiences/Clientele

SDC has a number of very important audiences:

Members – Users of the Service

Members

Volunteers (all of whom receive honorary memberships) [Drivers, Office, Board, Committees]

Donors & Funders

The secondary audiences being served are:

The families of our members (users of the service)

The health care system (appointments for medical, dental, physiotherapy and other services)

Retail and financial service providers

Provincial and City Government – providing an essential service to the fastest growing portion of our population

Financial

The financial requirements of the organization need to be further developed so that forecasts can be made of the financial needs if 600 hundred were being served instead of 300 and incrementally upwards.

Governance

Governance of SDC is provided by a volunteer Board of Directors. The directors are elected annual by the membership. In addition to serving as the legal decision making body for the organization the Board is also a working Board, with Board members taking on roles to support the organization in areas such as fundraising, financial management and other day to day operational supports.

The board has operated with seven or fewer members for most of the last few years. Developing an effective committee structure would allow the board to share the work load among a greater number of people and provide a greater pool of individuals with an operational understanding of the organization to fill vacancies on the board.

Leadership

The leadership for the organization comes from the senior staff person, from the volunteers on the Board and occasionally from volunteers with specialized skills, such as in technology areas, fundraising and office management.

Marketing Experience

The organization has experienced the reality that it can attract more members/clients, but has not been able to attract the additional resources, human or financial, to service a larger portion of the target audience. Efforts to recruit more volunteer drivers and fundraising events have often resulted in limited success (attracting more volunteers or funds) and at the same time have increased enquiries about getting the service from those in need.

Before it can handle additional members/clients it must first increase its ability to find and secure the financial and human resources (volunteer drivers, volunteer board and committee members, and increase its paid staff component) to allow it to meet the needs of a larger client base.

Key Organizational Question

The research completed as a part of this planning process has shown that almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of all agencies providing services similar to those of the Seniors Driving Centre (in a US study) operate as a part of a larger “umbrella” organization. This fact combined with the challenges of growing a small not-for-profit organization suggests that the Board should carefully consider whether the members/clients would be better served by growing their stand alone agency or by searching for opportunities to become a program within a larger organization.

Current Operating Priorities

Sustainable Cash Flow

Seniors Driving Centre Financial Modeling

| | 2007 estimated | 2008 Forecast no growth rent & staffing increases | Forecast with growth 600 served | Forecast with growth 1000 served |
|--|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Revenue | | | | |
| Membership Fees | \$ 3,120 | \$ 3,120 | \$ 7,000 | \$ 1,000 |
| Ticket Sales - Member Rides | \$ 15,000 | \$ 15,000 | \$ 30,000 | \$ 50,000 |
| Fundraising Events & Appeals | \$ 48,000 | \$ 48,000 | \$ 48,000 | \$ 48,000 |
| Donations | \$ 9,000 | \$ 9,000 | \$ 9,000 | \$ 9,000 |
| Grants & Special Awards | \$ 30,200 | \$ 23,500 | \$ 23,500 | \$ 23,500 |
| Interest Income | \$ 500 | \$ 500 | \$ 500 | \$ 500 |
| Miscellaneous Revenue | \$ 100 | \$ 100 | \$ 100 | \$ 100 |
| Total Revenue | \$ 105,920 | \$ 99,220 | \$ 118,100 | \$ 132,100 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Staffing Expenses | \$ 57,700 | \$ 67,700 | \$ 77,000 | \$ 170,000 |
| Volunteer Expenses | \$ 21,640 | \$ 25,000 | \$ 43,300 | \$ 72,000 |
| Office Expenses | \$ 9,175 | \$ 30,000 | \$ 32,000 | \$ 40,000 |
| Fundraising Expenses | \$ 3,200 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 5,000 | \$ 10,000 |
| Other Expenses | \$ 3,300 | \$ 4,000 | \$ 4,000 | \$ 7,500 |
| Total Operating Expenses | \$ 95,015 | \$ 131,700 | \$ 161,300 | \$ 299,500 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | \$ 10,905 | \$ (32,480) | \$ (43,200) | \$(167,400) |
| Average cost per client to provide service for a year (excluding tickets & capital) | \$267 | \$389 | \$243 | \$250 |

Note: The revenue forecasted is based on changes to sales of memberships and tickets only the shown deficit is to illustrate the level of fundraising that will need to take place at new service levels

This modeling has been developed to forecast the level of fund development that will need to be developed in order to achieve a sustainable operation capable of growing to serve more.

2008 Operating Priorities

Strengthen the leadership capacity in the organization by establishing Board Committees such as:

- ✓ Volunteer Committee (recruitment, retention, training and recognition)
- ✓ Advocacy/External Relations Committee (building and strengthening relationships with key groups including funders and allied agencies)
- ✓ Fund Development Committee (identifying, initiating and building relationships with those who are able to financially support the organization in its efforts to provide this service)
- ✓ Finance & Audit Committee (ensure budgets and plans are developed that allocate resources to ensure the long-term health of the organization, sound record keeping and reporting)
- ✓ Member/client Satisfaction Committee (a committee to understand the needs and desires of the members/clients and help to organization prioritize growth as resources become available).
- ✓ Administration Committee (monitoring the administrative capacities of the organization as it grows – including suitability of office space, technology and policies on privacy and other related matters).

It is recommended that the Board limit their work on establishing committees to two at a time.

Given the need to grow the level of funds raised and to recruit new drivers the first two committees to be developed or strengthened should be the Fund Development Committee and the Advocacy/External Relations Committee.

Strengthen the capacity to solicit for donations, grants, sponsorships

The financial modeling shows that the organizations should build its fund development efforts around a need to serve 1,000 clients annually. The forecast shows that the organization will need to raise annually \$250 per person served and should therefore SDC should be building a fund development strategy that can grow to generate \$250,000 per year.

The fund development committee will need to look at finding some ongoing annual support from the City of Edmonton and possibly the United Way. Using the strategic plan and business plan as supporting materials SDC should also develop a presentation to appeal to services clubs and organizations. It should also create a focus on building relationships with individual donors that want to see seniors be able to stay in their homes longer and engaged in the community and therefore choose to provide annual donations in support of that effort. SDC should continue to access casinos and should watch for formal announcement of the Alberta Community Spirits initiative (in which the Province may choose to match up to \$50,000 of donated funds).

SDC should also continue to pursue opportunities with funders such as the Edmonton Community Foundation, Wild Rose Foundation, Alberta Lottery Community Initiatives Program (CIP), New Horizons Program (Federal Government) and other.

Strengthen the capacity to recruit volunteers

SDC has been awarded a New Horizons Grant to develop marketing materials to tell the story of the needs of seniors for assistance and generically recruit volunteers for all agencies that engage volunteer drivers to support area seniors. SDC will be working closely with the Alberta Motor Association and the Edmonton Volunteer Driving Network on this initiative. This initiative is anticipated to be completed in the first half of 2008.

Based on work in this planning process over the fall of 2007 and in anticipation of the New Horizon grant being approved, SDC has contacted the Community Initiatives Program to see if the application they currently have under review can be modified such that a portion of the funding could be used in the development of marketing material specifically for SDC. These funds would require the organization to commit a matching level of funds to be committed from its 2007 casino proceeds. These funds would allow SDC to contract professional marketing services to develop materials and a plan that will raise the profile of the need, the organization itself and specifically recruit volunteers. This work should also take place over the first half of 2008.

The results of both of these initiatives will therefore be ready to launch a major awareness/recruitment drive for the fall of 2008.

This is the reason that the establishment of an Advocacy/External Relations Committee is one of the first two priorities for the Board to establish. This is a very significant project with the commitment of some very significant dollars. Building a committee to see the development of these projects and then the implementation will play a vital role in determining the ability of SDC to grow its capacity to serve a much larger portion of the seniors population in need of this kind of assistance.

Improved Office Space

SDC has been working on finding new office space for a while. They have been advised that the space they currently occupy will not be available to them long term. Since the space is also not large enough to handle the forecasted growth a move must be made.

SDC is taking advantage of a recently announced New Horizons Funding opportunity for equipment and is preparing the application to support the purchase of equipment and furnishing for the move.

It would be most advantageous for the move to take place in time for all of the marketing material being developed to have the new contact details.

It is for this reason that a significant increase in rental costs has been included in the 2008 financial forecast.

Strengthen and create partnerships

SDC has been very actively working on this area over the past couple of years and needs to continue that efforts.

The organization has a great opportunity to really strengthen its relationship with the Alberta Motor Association during the implementation of the New Horizons funded initiative. This initiative will also require SDC to work closely with other agencies that engage volunteer drivers, especially those associated with the Edmonton Volunteer Driving Network.

SDC is also an active member of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and has been involved with the last two Seniors Transportation Round Tables (held in Edmonton).

The Board needs to attract members that are able to help open doors and help build these relationships. As well during 2007 the Board approved moving the Executive Director position to full-time thus recognizing the amount of time being given by the Executive Director and officially providing increased time to work on relationships with key organizations and with the effort to find funding support. It should be furthered recognized that the Executive Director is an active member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Edmonton and Area Chapter and that she achieved recognition as a Certified Fund Raising Professional (CFRE) in 2007.

2008 Focus First on Capacity & Tools and then on implementation

SDC has a considerable amount of capacity and tool building work to take place in the first half of 2008. It also must increase the level of fund raised support for the year by \$32,500. The Board needs to ensure that the efforts of all are focused on the initiatives outlined above. This is a very significant increase in work load. Attempting to undertake other initiatives will likely negatively impact the ability to successfully get the foundation of the organization strengthened to the point where it can grow with confidence and serve a much greater number of seniors in need.

Addendum – Supporting Material

The Province of Alberta – Seniors Ministry

http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/about_ministry/ASCS_BusinessPlan_lrg.pdf

The Seniors Ministry, in its strategic planning process, recognizes the diversity and breadth of its client population. Identifying trends, challenges, and opportunities is an important part of setting the Ministry's strategic priorities. The following factors have influenced the Ministry in developing its goals, strategies and priorities:

1. Aging Population

Over the next decade, the number of Albertans aged 65 and over is projected to grow by more than 40 per cent as the baby boom generation reaches its senior years. This group will likely have different skills, abilities and expectations from current seniors. As Albertans live longer and expect to remain in their communities, demand for financial, housing and community supports to maintain independence will continue to grow. Traditional senior services may not be well adapted for the needs of this group.

6. Shift to Community-Based Supports

The shift from facility care to community-based care allows individuals to return home after shorter hospital stays or have their ongoing health and personal care needs met in their community where they may experience greater quality of life. However, this shift currently requires Albertans to absorb a significant portion of the costs of equipment, supplies, drugs, transportation and other items that would have previously been covered by facilities or through the acute care system. This shift requires flexible options for assisting Albertans with some of these costs.

8. Partnerships

There is a growing movement among persons with disabilities and seniors regarding the right to be fully included in all aspects of community life. At the same time, communities are developing greater capacity to include these groups and are becoming increasingly engaged in collaborating with the Ministry on issues and services that impact their citizens. There is an opportunity for the Ministry to work in partnership with individuals and their families, communities, other ministries and other levels of government to reduce barriers and enhance the capacity of all persons with disabilities to succeed. Health and housing partnerships are also essential in the Ministry's efforts to coordinate services, expand continuing care and improve standards. Partnerships with industry and educational institutions may result in improved opportunities for seniors and persons with disabilities to work. Such partnerships provide opportunities to develop service approaches that result in the best possible outcomes for Albertans.

The National Advisory Council on Aging

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/paho/paho_toc_e.htm

The Canadian National Council on Aging states that, “People who remain actively engaged in life and socially connected to those around them are happier, in better physical and mental health and more able to cope with change than those who are less engaged and connected. Social isolation increases the risk of poor health, whereas the presence of supportive social relations (families, friends, participation in local organizations or church groups) has a positive effect on health.”

“Communities have an important role to play in fostering socialization and promoting engagement.”

“The council outlines the operational guidelines for a comprehensive system of support that promotes active aging as being characterized by:

1. Accessibility
2. Person Centred
3. Coordinated
4. Shared Responsibility
5. Equity and Sustainability
6. Quality”

The council identifies that the development and maintenance of a comprehensive system of support that promotes active aging would be a shared societal responsibility. Strong linkages and partnerships would exist among the four agents of support for active aging: among individuals, families, and community agents; between community agencies or groups and local government; and among the various government sectors responsible for health and social well-being. All would share a common vision of active aging and would understand the roles and responsibilities of the various agents involved in achieving this vision. There would be opportunities for all to contribute to the identification of needs and to the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs.

“The council also notes that transportation is the passport to independent living for most seniors. Safe, convenient, affordable transportation helps reduce isolation and provides access to services, recreation and leisure pursuits. At least half of the seniors in one survey said they rarely or never went out to community functions, ate out or visited friends because of transportation problems. Clearly transportation should be an integral part of all program designed to serve seniors.”

Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors
Prepared by the Beverly Foundation (USA)
In partnership with the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
www.beverlyfoundation.org
June 2001

Some of the significant findings reported in the “Supplemental Transportation Programs for Seniors” report were that:

82% of the organizations that responded to the survey were nonprofit organizations and 72% were part of an umbrella organization
67% charged no rider fees
39% used only volunteer drivers; 36% used only paid drivers and 22% used both volunteer and paid drivers

from a funding perspective sources of funding were as follows:

62% were supported by government agencies
45% were supported by Nonprofit organizations
29% were supported by churches and
12% were supported by businesses.

Problems/challenges faced by the organization were identified as follows:

43% drivers
42% finances
15% vehicles
8% marketing
6% operations

They developed the Five A’s of Senior Friendly Transportation

Availability
Accessibility
Acceptability
Affordability
Adaptability

The information contained in this report and the “Senior Transportation: Tool Kit and Best Practices Manual” (May 2003) prepared for the Community Transportation Association of America and the manual “How to establish and maintain door through door transportation services for seniors”, September 2005, prepared by WESTAT in conjunction with the Beverly Foundation all provide great information about the need for services similar to those being provided by the Seniors Driving Centre of Edmonton.