

# Seniors Driving Centre Strategic Plan

April 10, 2007

**The Seniors Driving Centre Board of Directors completed their final review of the Strategic Plan in March 2007 and the members were given a presentation on the Strategic Plan at the AGM on April 17, 2007 where it was endorsed by the membership. Later that spring the plan was formally approved by the Board for a three year period running through the 2009-2010 fiscal year.**

## Vision

Older seniors and all seniors with health/physical limitations are able to stay in the community longer and remain engaged in activities that contribute positively to their quality of life.

## Mission

Our mission is to assist seniors, as identified in our target audiences, in maintaining their independence and quality of life by staying engaged in the community for as long as practical through the assistance of volunteers helping them to participate in essential appointments, key services and social engagements.

## Audience

The key audience being served is seniors, primarily older seniors, with disabilities impacting their mobility, but still able to walk, and limited financial resources residing in the City of Edmonton.

The secondary audiences being served are:

The families of our primary audiences

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

## Methodology

Our service is provided by matching, in advance, one-on-one volunteers to assist our members in getting to and returning from their appointments, services or other activities. 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.

## Major Assumptions

These are the major assumptions that have brought Seniors Driving Centre to undertake this strategic planning process.

1. The population of seniors that would benefit from our service is growing at a rate faster than the remainder of the population. The fastest growing segment of Edmonton's senior population is the 85 year and older cohort (which increased by 29% from 1996 through 2001). The 75 – 79 years age group was the second fastest at 27.6% and the 80 – 85 age group third at 21.1%. (Source - Canada's Oldest Seniors, Canada Seniors, No. 2, Statistics Canada 2001)
2. There is not a high level of understanding in the community about the needs of our aging population and the services/supports that will assist them to maintain an acceptable quality of life. This lack of awareness and understanding makes attracting funding and volunteers more difficult.
3. The Board has made a major commitment of time and effort in the 2006-2007 year to planning, developing policies and being involved in fundraising activities in order to improve the operations of Seniors Driving Centre. In the previous year the bylaws of the association were revised.
4. Seniors Driving Centre has not been able to attract enough resources (volunteers and money) to serve the existing population of seniors identified in our target audience. We currently serve 300 members and maintain a waiting list equal to that. [Note: the financial health of the organization did improve significantly over the last twelve months as a Wild Rose Quarterly Grant was received to hire additional staff to work on volunteer recruitment and SDC held its first ever casino in February 2007.]
5. The Edmonton Community Foundation declined a grant proposal submitted to add volunteer recruitment staff in the spring of 2006. In meeting with them to discuss their decision they suggested that they believed the development of a sound strategic plan, business operating model and operating plan should be a higher priority for the organization and encouraged Seniors Driving Centre to develop a proposal to undertake those activities. That proposal was developed and approved by the Edmonton Community Foundation in the summer of 2006.

## Values

Core values help to define the manner in which Seniors Driving Centre, its volunteers, staff and members interact with each other. These core values are not negotiable – they must be incorporated in all engagement within the organization.

Genuine caring for others

Respect, compassion, patience and appreciation for those being served and those serving.

Safety, security, trust

An appropriate balance between independence and support

Social engagement is an important part of all of our quality of life

Affordability and accessibility\*

The positive impact made on quality of life for those that remain in and engage in the community.

Providing service to our members based on a one-on-one model that assists them with their efforts to stay engaged.

\* (note: while the service we offer is delivered at a very affordable rate to our members accessibility is limited by the amount of resources available causing significant distress among many in the organization)

## Critical Issues/Desired Outcomes

1. There is limited awareness in the community of the issue (the importance of keeping seniors in and engaged in the community for as long as practical). A key quality of life issue for the seniors and an issue of a community caring for all of its members.

**Desired Outcome** – Seniors Driving Centre volunteers, staff, champions (to be recruited) and members seek out opportunities to build relationships with other groups, government and the media to both share the story of the needs of our growing senior population and to encourage their involvement in helping to address those needs. Seniors Driving Centre recognizes that for each senior this is a very important personal need and that there is a growing systemic challenge and therefore the solutions must come from many and not just from Seniors Driving Centre. This issue must be addressed in order to better position Seniors Driving Centre to attract the resources (volunteers and funding) required to serve the growing senior population.

2. There is limited awareness of Seniors Driving Centre and the service we provide in the Community.

**Desired Outcome** – Senior Driving Centre becomes known for providing an essential service based on a one-on-one volunteer-member experience - assisting members to get to key appointments, services and other engagements in the community. Currently Seniors Driving Centre tends to get more requests for its services when it actively recruits volunteers, which it has not been able to meet. This has caused other senior serving organizations to not refer people and to drop Seniors Driving Centre off their radar screens.

3. The name of the organization and our story (as currently told) has not positioned us for success.

**Desired Outcome** – A new name will need to be considered - the current name creates images in the minds of many, who do not know the organization, that are not consistent with the mission of the organization (for example - that we help seniors prepare themselves to continue driving). A well thought out and effectively implemented re-branding initiative will assist the organization in getting the attention required to attract the volunteers, partnerships and funding necessary to effectively deal with this very significant community issue.

4. The organization at present has very limited capacity to address the core issue (see #1 above – especially in context of the magnitude of the issue and projected growth).

**Desired Outcome** - In 2001 there were 34,535 seniors aged 75 years and older in Edmonton, 8,315 of those were 85 years and older (the average age of Seniors Driving Centre members). Statistics indicate that over half of those in the 85 years and older population have mobility-related disabilities. Seniors Driving Centre currently serves 300 (the maximum our resources and structures will allow). Our desired outcome is to see the capacity for this vital service to grow to where it can serve thousands.

## Key Supporting Information

The following quotes from the Edmonton Social Plan SENIORS (August 2004) provide a framework for many of the assumptions made in projecting the need for the service we provide.

The average income for people aged 65 and over in the Edmonton region was \$26,578 in 2000. This is equal to 87% of the average income of the total population aged 15 years and older.

A chronic health condition was reported by 83% of seniors living at home in 1999 (i.e. arthritis/rheumatism, 38.5%; high blood pressure, 33.1%; food/other allergies, 21.5%).

Seniors 85 years and older generally have greater needs for social supports and health care than do younger seniors.

“Health Expenditures for seniors are substantial, representing 43% of total health expenditures in Canada in 2000-01. Health expenditures for seniors increase notably with age; per capita health expenditures for seniors aged 85 or older were over four times that of seniors aged 65 to 74 in 2000-01.”  
(source: Canada’s Aging Population, Division of Aging and Seniors, Health Canada, 2002, p. 28)

According to the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2001 conducted by Statistics Canada mobility-related disabilities are a significant issue. 23.3% of seniors aged 65 to 74 years reported a mobility-related disability; 39.5% of seniors aged 75 to 84 and 57.7% of seniors aged 85 and older reported disability problems.

*Active Living* is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a way of life in which physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual activities are valued and are integrated into daily living. The Active Living Coalition for Older Adults (ALCOA) estimates that approximately 60% of older Canadians are “inactive” and as a result, lack the health benefits of active living.

In 1997, Canada Parks/Recreation Association published **The Benefits Catalogue** summarizing studies demonstrating why fitness (along with other leisure activities) is essential to personal, social, economic, and environmental well-being. Some of the benefits ascribed for seniors are:

- ◆ More self-confidence, more independence, and more enjoyment of life than other older adults who are sedentary;
- ◆ Prevention of the onset of old age
- ◆ Improvement of chronic conditions that cause functional limitations;
- ◆ Prevention or reduction of the muscular frailty in older people;
- ◆ Support network to bolster commitment; and
- ◆ Reduced mortality and overall increased quality of life.

The 2003 General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Engagement was designed to gather comprehensive information on the wide range of activities in which Canadians are involved and well-being. The “preliminary findings show that people who derive their highest sense of satisfaction from life are those who describe their sense of community as very strong, those who are involved in one or more groups or organizations, and those who express confidence in their public institutions.

A 1999 study by the Society for the Retired and Semi-Retired in Edmonton reported that seniors as they age frequently find physical activity more difficult and that it is harder to participate in traveling, volunteering, and recreational activities. In addition, more vulnerable seniors may be worried about their health, personal control, and personal safety.