

Seniors Supports and Services Survey

Summary Report
August 2021



Through the combination of a research and public engagement, Strathcona County is working with the community to identify what opportunities and services currently exist for seniors, and where the County can provide further supports. The focus of this project is on age-friendly approaches to gathering spaces, mental health, wellbeing, recreation, transit, housing, and volunteerism.

In June 2021, Strathcona County conducted an online survey to look at the various supports and services available to seniors in the County and to look at additional measures that could be implemented in the future. A paper version of the survey was also made available to those without computer access. In total, 898 responses were received, with 82% of the respondents being from Sherwood Park and 17% living in rural Strathcona County.

Survey Results

A. Satisfaction with Community Supports

- The highest levels of satisfaction were *feeling safe in the community* (80.7% combined very satisfied/satisfied), followed by *recreation opportunities* (78.1% very satisfied/satisfied), *volunteer opportunities* (64.3% very satisfied/satisfied) and *cultural opportunities* (58.9% very satisfied/satisfied).
- The lowest level of satisfaction occurred with *seniors-only facilities*, at 26.2%.
- In general, satisfaction with seniors' services and supports was lower in the rural portions of the County compared to Sherwood Park.

B. Access to Information

- The newspaper is the most popular source for everyone regardless of age, but its use increases substantially for those over the age of 65, compared to younger age groups.
- Close to half (46.3%) of the respondents did not experience barriers accessing information. In terms of barriers, the largest encountered by respondents is that they didn't know where to find the information (30.1%).

C. Barriers Preventing Accessibility

- 29.8% reported that nothing stops them from accessing services, with an additional 6.6% who didn't want or need to access supports or services. The response of nothing stops me from accessing supports and services increases dramatically with household income; from 10.0% for income under \$20,000 to 42.7% for an income of \$140,000 and over.
- Of the remaining respondents, the most prominent barriers to accessibility were that people either didn't know about the services offered (33.3%) or that there wasn't enough programming specially geared toward their age and interests (25.5%).
- With respect to what *supports/services I want are not provided locally*, many respondents expressed a need for a dedicated seniors' center.
- 31.1% of rural residents thought that supports and services were *too far from where they lived* compared to 2.8% those living in Sherwood Park.

D. Affordability

- 56.1% of respondents were not struggling with their expenses. Of the remaining respondents, the most prominent expenses were housing costs or the cost of food.

E. Social Connections

- Less than 38% felt that there were strong opportunities to connect with others in the community. Positive perceptions of opportunities to connect in the community increased substantially as household income increases

Volunteering

- The majority of people are contributing by helping out neighbours, friends and family (68.4%), supporting local businesses (65.3%), or attending local events (48.4%). Smaller percentages of people are volunteering for a variety of organizations.

Social activities

- The top places that respondents prefer to socialize with their peers are *a coffee shop or restaurant* (71.5%), *their own home* (69.2%), *a family or friend's home* (66.1%), or *public outdoor spaces* (55.6%).
- People having less than \$20,000 in annual income were much less likely to socialize in their own home (40.0%) than people in higher income brackets (75.3%).
 - Respondents with less than \$20,000 in annual income were more likely to socialize at a local community hall/seniors centre (40.0%) than people in higher income brackets (17.8%).

Physical wellness

- There are a variety of places that people like to go to do physical activity. The top location noted by respondents were *public outdoor spaces* (60.8%), followed by a *multi-use facility* (52.2%), or *their own home* (48.3%).

Cultural activities

- Overall, 22.4% of respondents are not participating in any cultural activities. For the remaining 77.6% who did, a public facility was the top location (48.9%), followed by public outdoor spaces (28.9%), and community halls/seniors centres (26.7%).
- Going to a public facility, such as Gallery 501, increased significantly as one's household income increased.

F. Facility Use

- 62.8% of respondents accessed multi-use facilities in Strathcona County either frequently or occasionally; urban residents accessed multi-use facilities more often (66.4%) compared to rural (47.7%).
- The top reasons for accessing multi-use facilities were *dedicated space time and programming, affordable, opportunity to interact with other people my age, and ample parking*.

G. Seniors-Only Facility in Strathcona County

- While the majority of respondents (56.8%) indicated that a dedicated seniors' facility is very important/somewhat important to meet their social, recreation and well-being needs.
 - 41.2% prefer to access the services that were most convenient to them, regardless of age, while 23.3% prefer to access services in a seniors-only facility. The remainder of the respondents prefer to access services and programming, for their specific needs, based on age and/or ability.
- The top reasons for accessing a seniors-only facility were: *space/programming specifically geared toward seniors' age and interests* (49.3%), followed closely by *opportunity to interact with other people their age* (46%) and *affordability* (42.9%). The *ability to access multiple services and supports in one location* (42.6%) was a very close fourth choice overall.

What's Next?

The analysis of these conversations, as well as the results from the Seniors' Supports and Services Survey, will be used to inform the final report to Council at the end of 2021.

For the full list of responses, see the Full What We Heard Report.



Find more information about seniors supports and services at strathcona.ca/seniors

More Information

Name: Nicole Wilke

Phone: 780.416.6776

Email: Nicole.wilke@strathcona.ca

Website: www.strathcona.ca/seniors