



Needs Assessment

“55+ in SouthWest Edmonton...we hear you”

April 2, 2014

Background

In October of 2013, SWESA contracted Banister Research to conduct a comprehensive Needs Assessment to explore the interests of the SouthWest Edmonton senior community for social and recreational programs, and the most effective way for SWESA to meet those needs. This assessment was designed to help SWESA determine the size and scope of seniors’ programming needs and to inform their strategic and business planning for 2014-2017. This information will also help SWESA both develop an effective gathering space and offer programming and services relevant to the needs of seniors in SouthWest Edmonton. The project entailed:

- A telephone survey of the SouthWest Edmonton population aged 55+;
- An online SWESA member survey;
- In-depth interviews with community leaders and service providers; and
- Two (2) focus groups.

In March 2014, the SWESA Board received the Needs Assessment Report and is proceeding to utilize it in business planning.

Community Partners

The Board is grateful to the many community partners who participated in the needs assessment and looks forward to continued work together to meet the needs of seniors in southwest Edmonton. The Board is pleased to share some of the key themes that emerged and some of the detail that might guide ongoing work together.

Needs Assessment Report

The final report, at over 100 pages, is comprehensive, with unique and interesting results revealed through each research method. The SWESA Board and Board Committees will be using the detail to inform all areas of planning including: programs, activities, volunteers, community partnerships and business plans. A presentation on these findings will be provided to members at the Annual General Meeting on April 2, 2014 and was also provided to community partners. Highlights of the report will be shared on the SWESA website.

Key Themes

There were a number of key themes that emerged throughout the research:

- There is strong community support and a defined need for a SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Activity Centre.
- A SouthWest Seniors Activity Centre should contain as much multi-purpose space as possible.
- Social isolation and health issues are among the most pressing concerns facing seniors in SouthWest Edmonton.
- Accessibility and transportation around the city and to a SouthWest Seniors Activity Centre is one of the most significant issues that SWESA will need to consider moving forward.
- Younger seniors may need to be targeted in a different way, or with different programs, than those over 65.
- The large majority of community stakeholders are happy to partner with SWESA now and in the future.
- SWESA members are generally more active and social than the non-member SouthWest Edmonton senior population.

- Getting the word out about programming and events, and attracting new members will be among the greatest challenges SWESA will face in its growth and development.
- SWESA members would like more communication.
- Courses for lifelong learning, social activities around coffee or meals, and recreational and leisure activities are of high interest to seniors.
- A \$30 SWESA membership fee was seen as being a fair charge to the large majority of participants.
- A SouthWest Seniors Activity Centre should be located North of the Anthony Henday.
- Outreach services are viewed as being a vital aspect of SWESA programming.

For more information about this report or SWESA:

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