

## **Executive Summary**

By 2031 one in four Canadians will be over 65. This age group will live longer than preceding generations. This presents a revolutionary opportunity for seniors and senior serving organizations like SEESA.

The Building Tomorrow Today initiative is about positioning SEESA for success in the long term so it can celebrate another 40-year anniversary. SEESA must evolve to remain relevant and on the leading edge.

Building Tomorrow Today is implementing the first year, of SEESA's five-year strategic plan. This process is a continuation of SEESA's 40-year evolution, and it will remain just as exciting.

## **About SEESA**

With 1,600 members in 2019, SEESA is an organization that has worked diligently to be the activity centre of choice for seniors in south east Edmonton where they can volunteer and participate in programs, clubs and events that contribute to healthy aging. SEESA celebrated its 40-year anniversary in 2020, a remarkable achievement for any organization.

In 2018 SEESA began to experience financial management issues which in 2019 produced a \$77,000 deficit. In 2019 SEESA received approximately \$476,000 in government grants (subsidies). That same year a management firm was retained by SEESA to conduct an

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organizational review which revealed serious capacity issues. The recommendations of the firm were not implemented.

For many years, SEESA has been very much reliant on subsidies provided by the City of Edmonton. This reliance on subsidies resulted, unintentionally, in dependence on an unsustainable business model.

The COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in March 2020, resulted in SEESA closing its physical doors. This closure has persisted to this day. The Board of Directors (the Board) and administrative staff worked together closely together to address the issues revealed in the organizational review report.

It became apparent that if SEESA was to remain relevant, financially sustainable, and ready to address the emerging trends impacting the senior centre sector, it would need a strategic plan and vision that would carry SEESA forward in the long term.

The strategic planning process concluded in the fall of 2020 with the delivery of a five-year strategic plan. The Building Tomorrow Today initiative implements year one of the five-year strategic plan. The strategic plan is a continuation of SEESA's 40-year evolution.

### **Trends and Complexities Impacting Senior Centres - things we need to know**

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During the strategic planning process, it was discovered that the City of Edmonton had published guiding principles intended to guide future senior centre funding decisions by the City as follows (areas of particular interest to SEESA italicized):

- that seniors centres provide opportunities that *enable older adults to live well in their communities;*
- that seniors centres facilitate access to physical and mental health and wellness services, resources, and information;
- that seniors centres *foster community connection* and support active aging by offering high quality experiences in accessible spaces that *enhance skills, increase knowledge, provide opportunities for community contribution, and promote social connections with people of all backgrounds and ages;*
- that seniors centres be welcoming, *diverse, and inclusive;*
- that seniors centres create *welcoming spaces for everyone in the community regardless of age, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, income, health status and physical and mental ability;*
- that seniors centres provide a diverse range of programs and services that *appeal to older adults and the broader community, fostering connection, intercultural, and intergenerational sharing and learning between community members;*
- that seniors centres *model operational flexibility, sustainability, and accountability;*
- that seniors centres *provide* programs and services that are *responsive to changing community needs, cost effective, and developed according*

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*to relevant occupational health and safety regulations and professional standards;*

- *that seniors centres place a focus on further developing partnerships and collaborations to foster sustainability and demonstrate fiscal and asset responsibility and effective governance.*

### **Building Tomorrow Today**

The focus of the Building Tomorrow Today initiative is to address the trends and complexities stated above and the issues identified in the organizational review.

### **Approach**

Our approach is based on seeking ideas and input from SEESA members and community stakeholders, who will be kept informed about the initiative and encouraged to participate.

### **Teams**

There are seven (7) teams addressing specific areas:

- communications,
- research analysis,
- stakeholder engagement,
- program development,
- food services,

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- administration (fee structure, space utilization, facility refresh, collaborations), and
- brand refresh.

Teams are comprised of SEESA volunteers and individuals experienced in community engagement.

### **Activities**

- Brand Story Sessions - one-on-one interviews and facilitated group sessions will seek input from SEESA members to understand SEESA's roots, its mission, what makes SEESA unique, what SEESA could be doing better and what is most important to SEESA members. These sessions will be facilitated by "The Met Agency", a local communications firm.
- Community Engagement - exploring potential collaborations that could help SEESA achieve its future goals.
- Program Development - ensuring that SEESA's programs and activities meet specific determinants of healthy aging and the needs of participants.
- Food Services - ensuring that SEESA's kitchen and dining area are ready to re-open and serve nutritious fresh food.
- Brand Refresh - ensuring that SEESA's brand is congruent with the evolving organization. This work will be facilitated by "TallGuy", a local communications firm.
- Communications - ensuring that SEESA members and community stakeholders are aware of and engaged in the process.

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- Administration - ensuring that SEESA is maximizing technology and collaborations with other like-minded organizations to increase efficiencies, improve communications, reduce administration costs, and propel the organization forward in meeting the needs of current and future members.

### **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

- SEESA engages a growing and diverse 55+ population through accessible, innovative, inclusive, multigenerational programs and services that address key determinants of healthy aging.
- SEESA attracts community members of all ages, cultural heritage, ethnicity, gender orientation, religion, physical abilities, and economic circumstances.
- SEESA earns a reputation for initiating and maintaining mutually beneficial collaborations that increase efficiencies, strengthen service delivery and build stronger communities.
- Everyone encountering SEESA feels supported, respected, and valued.
- SEESA is strategically positioned for long term success.

The Building Tomorrow Today project enhances our vision and mission statements of creating a vibrant, compassionate, inclusive place to grow up and grow older.