

# AGE FRIENDLY OKOTOKS

WHAT WE HEARD  
REPORT | JULY 2023

Okotoks



# BACKGROUND

## Okotoks' population is aging upwards - 14% are age 65+

### What is an Age-Friendly Community?

Age-friendly communities (AFC) is an international movement initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in response to global aging and urbanization. AFC promotes inclusion and supports older adults to maintain their independence. It ensures older adults have access to needed physical, social and service environments to be able to live in security and engage meaningfully in community life.

### Age-Friendly Okotoks

Okotoks is striving to become more age-friendly to meet the needs of those over 65 - our fastest growing population. This initiative will promote healthy and active aging, help seniors to maintain their independence, and ensure they are engaged as active participants in all aspects of community life. Accordingly, an Age-Friendly Okotoks Subcommittee was formed in 2020 with the goal of developing an Age-Friendly Okotoks Action Plan. The plan was completed in December 2022, taking into consideration the following means of data collection:

- Municipal Plans
- Public Participation
- Service Asset Mapping
- Population & Demographic Review

*Special thanks to the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Committee and the Age-friendly Okotoks Subcommittee members for their leadership, participation and commitment to the process and development of the plan to make Okotoks more age-friendly.*

## TIMELINE

- **OCT 2020:** Formation of Age-friendly Okotoks Subcommittee
- **NOV 2020 - JUL 2021:** Population & demographic review, literature & municipal document review
- **JUN 2021 - NOV 2022:** Service asset mapping
- **AUG 2021 - MAR 2022:** Public participation - series of focus groups & interviews
- **DEC 2022:** Shared public engagement findings with FCSS Committee & participants.
- **DEC 2022:** Finalized Age-Friendly Okotoks Action Plan
- **JUL 2023:** Present Age-Friendly Okotoks Action Plan & What We Heard Report to Council
- **OCT 2023:** Apply to AB Government for age-friendly designation


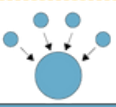
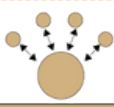

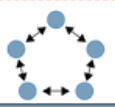
Scan to read the  
2023 Age-Friendly  
Okotoks Action Plan



# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

We are committed (through the Town's Public Participation Policy) to giving the community an opportunity for input into decisions that will have an impact on residents and businesses.

Age-Friendly Okotoks participants included seniors, service providers and municipal staff

	 <b>INFORM</b>	 <b>CONSULT</b>	 <b>INVOLVE</b>	 <b>COLLABORATE</b>	 <b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>GOAL</b>	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain feedback on analysis, issues, alternatives, and decisions.	To work with public to make sure concerns and aspirations are considered and understood.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision-making.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE</b>	"We will keep you informed."	"We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns."	"We will work with you to ensure your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the decisions made."	"We will look to you for advice and innovation and incorporate this in decisions as much as possible."	"We will implement what you decide."
	<b>input zone</b>		<b>engagement zone</b>		

## WHAT STAGE?

Age-Friendly Okotoks public participation took place at a **CONSULT** level



**24**  
Interviews



**10**  
Focus Groups



**76**  
Participants



# THEMES

## What We Heard from participants

### **Okotoks offers a range of municipal, community and health services for older adults, BUT.....**

Greater awareness and communication is needed in knowing what is available and how to access the many programs and services.

### **Okotoks is a great place to live, BUT.....**

Many participants expressed strong affordability and accessibility concerns around housing and housing options, recreation services, transportation to and from communities in and around Okotoks including Calgary, as well as in home and yard maintenance services.

### **There are many opportunities for older adults to connect and participate in community life, BUT.....**

Newcomers and individuals living alone still experience social isolation and loneliness.

### **There are many age-friendly partners in the community, BUT.....**

It's important to identify future ways of working together to better support older adults and their families.

### **There are many ways to improve age-friendliness in Okotoks, INCLUDING.....**

Hosting a seniors expo, increasing time for pedestrian crossing at traffic lights, launching online and in-person communication hubs, and more!

### **Continue the conversation!**

Hearing from older adults with diverse lived experiences helps to better understand how different people engage and participate in community life.

## 8 World Health Organization Dimensions of an Age-Friendly Community

- 1 - Outdoor Spaces & Buildings
- 2 - Social Participation
- 3 - Respect & Inclusion
- 4 - Civic Participation & Employment
- 5 - Transportation
- 6 - Communication & Information
- 7 - Housing
- 8 - Community Support & Health Services

# FINDINGS SUMMARY

The public participation findings are presented by age friendly dimension, and provide a baseline of current strengths, and highlight strategies to advance the vision of an Okotoks age-friendly community. For full details, visit [okotoks.ca/age-friendly](https://okotoks.ca/age-friendly)

Age-Friendly Dimension	Common Barriers	Current Supports & Initiatives	Suggestions for Improvement
<b>Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of accessible parking &amp; misuse of existing accessible parking spaces</li> <li>Lag timeliness of residential snow removal</li> <li>Limited accessibility in older business buildings</li> <li>Difficult access to river for those with mobility aids</li> <li>Lack of mobility accessible gathering spaces</li> <li>Pathway safety</li> <li>Uneven, damaged sidewalks</li> <li>Insufficient number of benches in business areas and in parks/pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2021 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) &amp; Land Use bylaw prioritize safety, connectedness and well-being through an inclusive lens.</li> <li>New developments will look at elements of accessibility, including wider sidewalks, locating amenities within certain distance, accessible pathways &amp; infrastructure</li> <li>Initiatives currently underway to improve accessibility and connectedness for all residents (e.g. expanded sidewalks, wayfinding signage, and balance parking with people moving about safely).</li> <li>Snow removal on pathways is generally cleared in a timely manner</li> <li>Calvanna Village is an older adult building in close proximity to amenities and health services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase available &amp; accessible parking and/or public transit closer to events</li> <li>Closer monitoring and enforcement of disability/emergency parking spaces is needed</li> <li>Increase/expand availability of snow shoveling services at private homes</li> <li>Increase connectivity of pathways and sidewalks throughout town</li> <li>Update Pathway Trail Map to include current location of benches in addition to public washrooms, rest areas, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social isolation and loneliness</li> <li>Reduced drop-in &amp; winter programs for older adults</li> <li>Affordability of programs for low-income older adults, even with subsidies,</li> <li>Minimal community awareness of rec programs for older adults</li> <li>Few intergenerational opportunities and ways to engage people from all backgrounds (culture, ethnic, economic)</li> <li>Lack of language supports and resources</li> <li>Lack of initiatives to encourage neighbours to connect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget 2022 survey indicated residents satisfied with municipal community events, programs &amp; indoor/outdoor recreation facilities</li> <li>Recreation, Parks &amp; Leisure Master Plan identified strategies to reduce financial barriers to participation, increase program awareness &amp; prioritize social inclusiveness</li> <li>Broad range of programs/activities (e.g. indoor/outdoor rec, spiritual, arts &amp; culture), events &amp; service clubs available for older adults</li> <li>Social connection opportunities via phone support program</li> <li>Local service groups offer programs connecting older adults &amp; youth</li> <li>Recreation fee assistance program</li> <li>Some restaurants cater to older adults by providing a quiet atmosphere &amp; smaller portions for less cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage programs that enhance informal connections (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch)</li> <li>Increase peer support &amp; volunteer programs where seniors assist seniors.</li> <li>Create more intergenerational opportunities where older adults can mentor &amp; share their skills with younger generations</li> <li>Offer info sessions to learn about dementia &amp; changing needs of aging parents</li> <li>Offer social times after older adult recreation programs</li> <li>Physicians to promote <i>Social Prescriptions</i> that refer patients to community activities (e.g. exercise or bereavement group)</li> <li>Create more social connection opportunities for diverse groups (e.g. Men's Shed)</li> </ul>

# FINDINGS SUMMARY

Age-Friendly Dimension	Common Barriers	Current Supports & Initiatives	Suggestions for Improvement
<p><b>Respect &amp; Inclusion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service providers lack knowledge of how to interact with people who have slower mobility, hearing &amp; vision deterioration, dementia, or other cognitive impairments</li> <li>• Majority of older adult programs offered during the day, excluding older adults 55+ who are working</li> <li>• Insufficient outreach to new (older) residents</li> <li>• Gap in connecting individuals who are isolated</li> <li>• Newcomers employed in the service industry may be required to work long hours, increasing social isolation</li> <li>• Newcomers do not always know about or how to access programs, services and various ways to become engaged in community life</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of Indigenous Peoples culture &amp; learning styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement that Okotoks residents &amp; service providers are friendly/helpful</li> <li>• Service organizations provide inclusive programming for diverse groups, employment supports for older adults &amp; persons with disabilities, and programming to help newcomers connect &amp; increase sense of belonging</li> <li>• Newcomer club is a safe &amp; welcoming place for new female residents.</li> <li>• Parking placards available for those unable to walk 50 metres</li> <li>• Town Civility Charter highlights the Town's commitment to respect, civility and dignity in working collaboratively with citizens and all users of its services and facilities</li> <li>• Town participated in the Dementia Friendly Community Pilot project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to find ways to connect the care facilities (Heartland, Tudor Manor, Sandstone Lodge) with the community, "Residents are our neighbours and we need to include them"</li> <li>• Dementia Friendly Community: implement action plan strategies from pilot project and A Guide for Creating Dementia Friendly Communities in Alberta</li> <li>• For isolated older adults, home care is a good way to connect if they have health care needs</li> <li>• Identify ways to welcome, engage and support all newcomers to our community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Civic Participation &amp; Employment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-19 pandemic led to fewer opportunities for volunteers</li> <li>• Challenge to accommodate diverse interests &amp; skill level of the older adult volunteer sector</li> <li>• Lack of employment &amp; skill building opportunities for older adults and those re-entering the workplace</li> <li>• Lack of education &amp; awareness of what it means to be an inclusive employer</li> <li>• Older adults are not formally recognized for their meaningful community contributions</li> <li>• Inadequate communication &amp; awareness of services available to support older adults looking for volunteer &amp; employment opportunities geared specifically to their interests and abilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors' Week recognized as an opportunity to celebrate importance of older adults &amp; their contributions in the community</li> <li>• Plentiful volunteer opportunities and contributions make Okotoks a great place to call home</li> <li>• Volunteer Resource Centre provides assistance &amp; facilitates meaningful community volunteer opportunities</li> <li>• Volunteer Driver Program (VDP) connects older adults with each other</li> <li>• Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) available to eligible residents with low income and a simple tax situation.</li> <li>• Employment, advocacy, skills training and related support services are available for older adults age 60+ who are seeking employment and specific work programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find ways to increase recognition, visibility of older persons' strengths and meaningful community contributions</li> <li>• Provide education and tools for employers to become an inclusive employer.</li> <li>• Provide training for employees regarding best practices to serve customers with disabilities, such as mobility restrictions, hearing loss, dementia and English as a second language, etc.</li> </ul>

# FINDINGS SUMMARY

Age-Friendly Dimension	Common Barriers	Current Supports & Initiatives	Suggestions for Improvement
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Okotoks Budget 2022 Survey cited that majority indicated On Demand Transit is important, while less than half indicated satisfaction with the way the program is currently offered</li> <li>Transportation related infrastructure issues (e.g. speed bumps, poor signage, street lighting, fading road markings, traffic light timing, etc.)</li> <li>Insufficient number of accessible crossings for the visual, hearing impaired and mobility challenged.</li> <li>No Handi-bus operation with lift in Okotoks</li> <li>Exclusivity of Community Access Program (CAP)</li> <li>On Demand Transit not always available</li> <li>General lack of affordable, accessible and assisted transportation to Calgary</li> <li>Volunteer Driver Program (VDP) does not offer support to help navigate inside building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approx. two thirds of Okotoks 2022 Budget Survey respondents reported satisfaction with safety of the current traffic and pedestrian related infrastructure</li> <li>The Municipal Development Plan highlights equitable and integrated transportation systems in line with the Okotoks 2015 Active Transportation Strategy .</li> <li>VDP is an essential and well used program that provides transportation for eligible residents to medical appointments in Okotoks and surrounding areas (e.g. Calgary)</li> <li>Community Access Program is beneficial to those who qualify</li> <li>Some participants expressed satisfaction with the On Demand Transit Service, citing it is a great system, easily accessible online or by phone, affordable, good hours of service, on time, available long hours during the day, with friendly, door to door service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase awareness of how the provincial driver fitness &amp; monitoring program works</li> <li>Consider feasibility of traffic circles</li> <li>Develop transportation program that provides support to accompany people into the buildings when needed</li> <li>Expand transit to include accessible, affordable and available transportation, specifically to take older persons to medical appointments located in Calgary and surrounding area</li> <li>Offer a Handi-bus service (wheelchair accessible) that serves the whole community</li> <li>Separate use of sidewalks &amp; pathways for pedestrians from cyclists &amp; motorized scooters</li> <li>Implement more speed bumps to slow high traffic areas</li> <li>Increase time of crosswalk indicators</li> <li>Designate parking stalls for older persons</li> </ul>
<b>Communication &amp; Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of awareness of existing programs and services (housing, health, social support), especially when new in town</li> <li>Insufficient understanding of how older adults are accessing information</li> <li>Increasing trend towards digital vs print communication, which leaves out those that prefer print</li> <li>Lack of access to information in different languages and locations</li> <li>Lack of a central communication system – one stop to get information and resources. There is too much information and people do not know where to look</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free access to computers &amp; Wi-Fi available at Okotoks Public Library.</li> <li>Numerous channels for disseminating information about community events including social media, website, local paper, Community Guide, bulletin boards, churches, local radio stations, indoor/outdoor LED screens, etc.</li> <li>Covid-19 pandemic made information more digitally accessible with older adults turning to online sources</li> <li>Okotoks Seniors Club and Okotoks Family Resource Centre provide in-person &amp; phone information and referral services for older adults</li> <li>Accessibility improvements have been made to The Town's website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive messaging in multiple media formats</li> <li>Increase awareness of Okotoks Family Resource Centre</li> <li>Increase awareness of available services/programs</li> <li>Target communication directly to older adults - not family</li> <li>Include info in tax assessment notices, utility bills or other mediums older adults receive</li> <li>Increase communication to care facilities</li> <li>Host a seniors expo</li> <li>Establish a central communication system to find any and all supports provided in Okotoks</li> </ul>

# FINDINGS SUMMARY

Age-Friendly Dimension	Common Barriers	Current Supports & Initiatives	Suggestions for Improvement
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable housing is a huge issue facing older adults in Okotoks as few rental subsidized units are available</li> <li>Lack of affordable housing availability for older adults with pets</li> <li>Inadequate range of housing options for older adults (e.g. Supportive Living, Long Term Care, Transitional Housing)</li> <li>Hard to attract developers</li> <li>Limited aging in place options with lack of affordable, accessible home maintenance services and fewer bungalows for rent/own</li> <li>Even with subsidies, there is significant cost for home modifications</li> <li>Existing bylaws do not support more affordable housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2020 Affordable Housing Strategy provides an action plan to address affordable housing needs for current and future Okotoks residents.</li> <li>Policy and Land Use Bylaw updated to permit secondary suites.</li> <li>Some affordable housing (e.g. Sandstone Lodge) allows pets</li> <li>Housing available for older adults with varying levels of support required (independent to fully supported living) IF residents can afford them.</li> <li>Fee for service resources are readily available for older adults to remain living in their own home</li> <li>Town participates in an Alberta Government Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program for homeowners 65+</li> <li>AB Gov't: Seniors Home Adaptation &amp; Repair Program and Residential Access Modification Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build integrated housing communities that support independent living to hospice care</li> <li>Affordable housing - build smaller detached bungalow houses 800-1000 sf with small yard; include options that allow pets</li> <li>The community needs a plan to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing shortages</li> <li>Affordable housing options</li> <li>Housing to accommodate different levels of care</li> <li>Increased educational opportunities about aging in place safely</li> <li>Home and yard maintenance supports that are affordable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Supports &amp; Health Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of knowledge, coordination, and delivery of support services between organizations.</li> <li>Increasing number of single older adults age 50+ with complex/multiple challenges and older adults with dementia living on their own with no support systems</li> <li>Lack of access to affordable in-home supports</li> <li>Urgent care provides one time service, unsettling wait times, and clients are rushed out with no follow-up</li> <li>Not enough doctors in Okotoks.</li> <li>Gap in available, affordable and accessible transportation to medical appointments</li> <li>Limited dietary options available for food delivery food programs</li> <li>Lack of awareness of available informal supports services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service providers work together informally to support older adults</li> <li>Foothills interagency and Seniors interagency meetings encourage connectivity between health, social and non-profit groups</li> <li>Okotoks Health and Wellness Centre is a service hub with Urgent Care, Public Health, Home Care &amp; Okotoks Family Resource Centre (OFRC)</li> <li>An AHS mental health program is available 7 days/week</li> <li>There are a number of support services already in place (e.g. meals &amp; grocery delivery; homecare; financial services, domestic violence support, grief support, etc.)</li> <li>OFRC provides information, referrals, assistance completing forms and connection to supports.</li> <li>Regional coordinated response to elder abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand Foothills Seniors Interagency to include an organized community collaborative strategy for reaching out to isolated older adults</li> <li>Expand Meals on Wheels (MOW) to include more diverse dietary options</li> <li>A seniors' advocate to help older adults and their families navigate the healthcare system</li> <li>Create a service HUB to include a multidisciplinary team of police, health care &amp; social workers.</li> <li>Explore how other towns offer home maintenance programs</li> <li>Implement a Social Prescription program</li> <li>Increase awareness of home fire prevention inspections</li> </ul>



# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

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The feedback received from the age-friendly public participation process points to some emerging priorities. These include:

## **OUTDOOR SPACE & BUILDINGS**

Continue improvements to accessibility, focusing on older downtown buildings and parks and pathways.

## **SOCIAL PARTICIPATION & CONNECTION**

Enhance engagement initiatives.

## **RESPECT & INCLUSION**

Engage older adults who have lived with inequity to contribute their unique experience and needs in making Okotoks more age-friendly.

## **CIVIC PARTICIPATION & EMPLOYMENT**

Recognize older adults' strengths and meaningful contributions.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Continue improvements to transportation related infrastructure.

## **COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION**

Improve awareness of existing programs and services across all eight WHO dimensions of an age-friendly community.

## **HOUSING**

Continue improvements to affordability, accessibility and range of home ownership and rental housing options available to older adults.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES**

Improve navigation of existing programs and services and enhance/create new partnerships.



Scan to  
read the  
detailed  
findings



# ACTION PLAN

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The Age-Friendly Okotoks Action Plan was created in consultation with the community, service providers and older adults, and considers global, national and local research, as well as Town of Okotoks administration data.

Findings from the 2022 public participation process provided key insights and new ways of looking at current projects, initiatives and possible partnerships with an age-friendly lens.

**With this plan, Okotoks will apply to become a recognized age-friendly community** with a firm commitment to engage and support all community residents to be active, valued and contributing members.

The strategies outlined in this plan rely on continued commitment from the Town of Okotoks Council, Administration and local service providers to work collaboratively and efficiently to support the growing population of older adults.

The action plan identifies specific and measurable short, mid and long term strategies to implement and monitor. It builds on the many community programs and services that currently support Okotoks to be age-friendly and emphasizes the need to listen to the voices of older adults.

Working towards becoming an age-friendly community is intended to spark ongoing conversations and awareness of the importance supporting older adults in our community.

8 Goals

11 Short-Term Strategies

7 Mid-Term Strategies

3 Long-Term Strategies

6 Ongoing Strategies

Scan to read  
the 2023  
Age-Friendly  
Action Plan



# ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

STRATEGY	LEAD ORGANIZATION/ PARTNERS	TIMELINE
<b>GOAL 1: RESPECT &amp; INCLUSION</b> Develop a plan and engage older adults who have lived experience with inequity to contribute their unique experience and needs in making Okotoks more age-friendly.		
Establish a process to be used to support community engagement. Meet people where they are at. Administer surveys and host focus groups in-person where older adults are.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks and District Seniors Club Seniors Interagency Condo buildings Foothills Community Immigrant Services Okotoks Family Resource Centre Foothills Advocacy in Motion Inclusion Foothills Wildrose Community Connections Home Care	Short-term. Summer 2023.
Offer information sessions for families of older adults to help them better understand the aging process and the changing needs of their aging family member. This could include information sessions related to dementia and memory loss.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks Public Library Homecare Okotoks and District Seniors Club Primary Care Network The Brenda Strafford Foundation	Short-term. Fall 2024.
Build awareness and community based learning opportunities. Continue to deliver "It's Not Right" (elder abuse) and provide education on ageism through presentations, workshops and events.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks Public Library Okotoks and District Seniors Club Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response Team	Fall 2024.
Ensure that in person program delivery options are available and prioritized. During the pandemic many programs transitioned to virtual delivery, which can be beneficial, however in person connections are crucial to engage a diverse range of participants.	All older adult serving organizations	Ongoing.

# ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

STRATEGY	LEAD ORGANIZATION/ PARTNERS	TIMELINE
<b>GOAL 2: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION &amp; SOCIAL CONNECTION</b> Enhance engagement initiatives focusing on older adults who are socially isolated and underserved; intergenerational opportunities; neighbors connecting with neighbors and expanding coordinated outreach services to new residents, persons living alone or in care facilities and from a range of cultural and economic backgrounds.		
Ensure the provisions of opportunities and space for social gathering after older adult recreation programs.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b>	Short-term. Spring 2023.
Review the membership of the Seniors Interagency to ensure there is representation from a diverse range of older adult serving organizations, for example representatives from churches and others	<b>Seniors Interagency</b>	Short-term. Spring 2023.
Increase communication and advertising about supports that are available to support low-income older adults access recreational program (Fee Assistance Subsidy).	<b>Town of Okotoks</b>	Short-term. Fall 2023.
Increase variety and availability of educational and winter recreational activities for older adults and persons with disabilities.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks & District Seniors Club Okotoks Public Library	Short-term. Winter 2023/24.
Create opportunities for older adults to share their skills and experiences and for attendees to “learn from a pro”. These could be structured in a similar way to Repair Cafes and have different topics such as knitting, fishing, meal prep, etc.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks Public Library Okotoks & District Seniors Club	Mid-term. Fall 2024.
Facilitate opportunities for more community-based options for social connection and groups that align with individual interests. (Example: Men’s Shed program).	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks & District Seniors Club Community Gardens Service Clubs Churches	Mid-term. Winter 2024/25.
Explore neighbourhood-based programs that help to build the natural supports of residents. Block parties, adaptations of the Community Champion Program and Community Gardens are examples of initiatives that can support this. Integrate elements that encourage intergenerational relationships.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks & District Seniors Club Okotoks Public Library Others	Long-term. Spring 2025.

# ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

STRATEGY	LEAD ORGANIZATION/ PARTNERS	TIMELINE
<b>GOAL 3: CIVIC PARTICIPATION &amp; EMPLOYMENT</b> Find ways to formally recognize older adult's strengths and meaningful contributions, as well as increase awareness of volunteer and employment opportunities.		
Provide education and information to volunteer managers on recruitment, recognition and retention methods specific to older adult volunteers.	<b>Volunteer Mangers Partnership</b>	Short-term. Fall 2023.
Provide a drop in, help desk style of option for older adults to access in person support with computers and technology.	<b>Okotoks Seniors Club</b> Okotoks Public Library Bow Valley College Literacy for Life	Mid-term. Spring 2024.
Provide education and awareness for employers on how to become an inclusive employer. Include training on how to engage with older adults and people with disabilities and programs on aging.	<b>Inclusion Foothills</b> Okotoks Chamber of Commerce MCG Careers Town of Okotoks Okotoks Public Library Bow Valley College Foothills Advocacy in Motion	Mid-term. Winter 2024.
<b>GOAL 4: OUTDOOR SPACES &amp; BUILDINGS</b> Continue improvements to accessibility, focusing on older downtown buildings and parks and pathways.		
Ensure timely snow removal from curb, pathways and in parking stalls to increase safety when getting in and out of vehicles.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks Chamber of Commerce Snow Removal contractors	Short-term. Winter 2023/24
Create an age friendly and public safety focused communication strategy around the importance of private snow removal. This can promote available snow removal programs.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b>	Short-term. Winter 2023/24.
Ensure Town of Okotoks trail maps capture current location of benches and public washrooms.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b>	Mid-term. Summer 2024.
Enhance safety education through signage on pathways. Reminders can include the use of bells, keeping to the right etc.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b>	Mid-term. Summer 2024.
Create an accessibility audit program that engages older adults and persons with disabilities.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Inclusion Foothills Foothills Advocacy in Motion Okotoks Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term. Fall 2024.

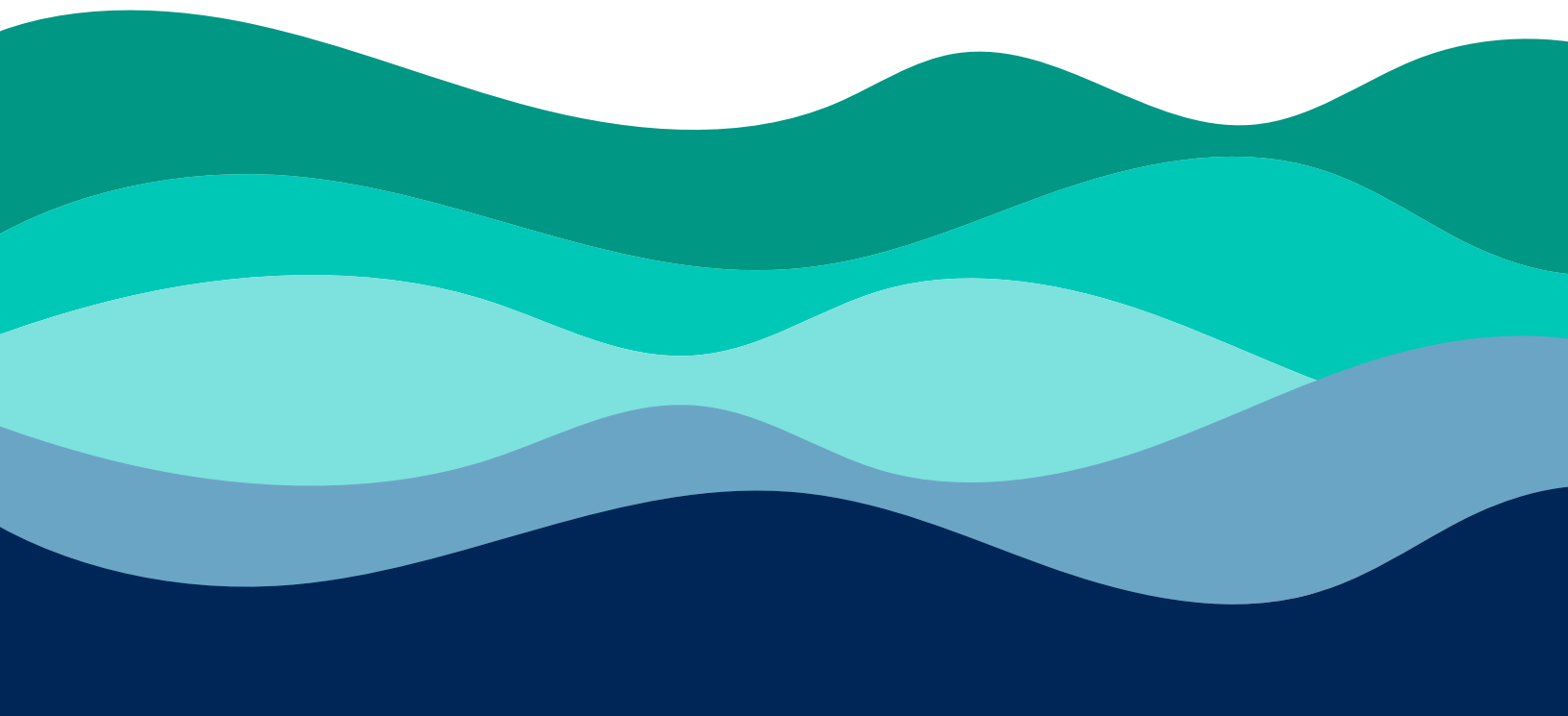
# ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

STRATEGY	LEAD ORGANIZATION/ PARTNERS	TIMELINE
<b>GOAL 5: COMMUNICATION &amp; INFORMATION</b> Improve awareness of existing programs and services and ensure information is easily accessible.		
Increase the profile and awareness of the Okotoks Family Resource Centre as a central information hub, offering referral services, document and forms assistance, and connection to supports.	<b>Okotoks Family Resource Centre</b>	Ongoing.
Continue to have community information available in a printed version, such as community resource guides and recreation information. These should be available in Town facilities and distributed throughout the community.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Seniors Interagency Homecare Condo Boards	Ongoing.
Provide in-person, community-based information sessions and overviews on benefit programs and supports that are available for older adults. These should be interactive and allow for questions.	<b>Okotoks Family Resource Centre</b> Seniors Interagency Condo Boards Okotoks Public Library Okotoks and District Seniors Club Alberta Seniors Canada Revenue Agency	Short-term. Fall 2023.
Utilize local advertising avenues to highlight services, programs and events of interest to older adults and persons with disabilities. Include stories, interviews and editorials as well as advertising.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Okotoks Western Wheel Eagle 100.9 Okotoks and District Seniors Club	Short-term. Fall 2023.
<b>GOAL 6: COMMUNITY SUPPORTS &amp; HEALTH SERVICES</b> Improve navigation of existing programs and services and expand and create new partnerships.		
Communicate and promote the availability of existing resources that offer system navigation support for older adults (e.g. Okotoks Family Resource Centre, the Okotoks Health and Wellness Centre, Primary Care Network staff).	<b>Seniors Interagency</b> Okotoks Family Resource Centre Okotoks Health & Wellness Centre Primary Care Network	Ongoing.
Expand Seniors Interagency to include an organized community collaborative strategy for reaching out to isolated older adults.	<b>Seniors Interagency</b> Homecare Churches Primary Care Network	Long-term. Begin strategy in 2023/24 & implement in 2025.

# ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

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STRATEGY	LEAD ORGANIZATION/ PARTNERS	TIMELINE
<b>GOAL 7: HOUSING</b> Continue improvements to affordable, accessible and range of home ownership and rental housing options available to older adults.		
Encourage the addition, development and use of shared spaces and amenities in condominium buildings.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b> Developers Condo Boards	Ongoig.
Consider feedback and suggestions received for different housing models and align them with the existing recommendations of the Town of Okotoks 2020 Affordable Housing Strategy & Action Plan.	<b>Town of Okotoks</b>	Ongoing.
Create a volunteer program to help older adults with small repairs, changing lightbulbs and other household maintenance projects.	Wildrose Community Connections Okotoks & District Seniors Club	Long-term. Spring 2025.



# NEXT STEPS

[okotoks.ca/age-friendly](https://okotoks.ca/age-friendly)

1

## Implement Age-Friendly Okotoks Action Plan

The successful implementation of the Age-Friendly Okotoks Action Plan will be reliant on continued collaboration and conversations between all stakeholders. The Town of Okotoks will need to play a lead role in convening partners and ensuring that progress is made on the Action Plan.

2

## Provide quarterly updates to FCSS Committee

It is recommended that Town administration provide quarterly progress updates to the Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) Committee

3

## Provide a full progress report to FCSS Committee in April 2025

All strategies are anticipated to be implemented by 2025 year-end and Town administration will be expected to provide a complete progress report.

