



2021 SOCIAL IMPACT Report

COMMUNITY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Community & Protective Services Division

Community Social Development

Mission

Fostering social wellbeing through information, collaboration, capacity building and engagement by supporting community, organizations, and individuals towards enhanced quality of life.

Vision

Spruce Grove is an inclusive, thriving community where residents are empowered, resilient, and experience belonging.

COMMUNITY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES DIVISION

2021 SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021
PREPARED BY COMMUNITY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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T. 780-962-7583

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation we acknowledge that we live and work on Treaty Six Territory and within the traditional lands of the Nehiyawak, Blackfoot, Nakota, Anishinaabe, and Métis Peoples.

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Community Social Development

Community Social Development (CSD) is structured to help build a strong community that meets the diverse needs of residents. CSD is a department within the Community and Protective Services division of the City of Spruce Grove.

Strong, resilient communities are developed through caring connections where individuals and families support one another. As communities grow and change, more complex needs emerge as does the need for more innovative solutions.

Social sustainability is about ensuring we can collectively meet the needs of residents today as well as into the future. In order to meet that goal, CSD focuses on two functional areas – supporting individuals and families, and supporting community.

Community Social Development operates in accordance with relevant statutes, codes and regulations, adheres to program standards and best practices, and maintains professional certifications for credentialed staff. CSD receives a portion of its mandate from the Provincial FCSS Act and Regulation as well as other funding agreements.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)

Supports individuals and families through delivery of preventative programs and services aimed at supporting the increasingly diverse needs of residents.

Social Planning

Supports at the community level by focusing on achieving broader social change through collaboration, engagement, community development, research, education and grants.



Message from the Acting Director

The year 2021 saw the continuation of the COVID pandemic. Thank you to our staff and community for their ongoing efforts to support each other in the face of pandemic challenges. This year the 2021 Social Impact Report provides an overview of the accomplishments realized in the face of COVID.

Community Social Development continued to support the changing needs of the community. Discovering and adapting to the continued challenges, creating opportunities for community empowerment and success, and making difficult choices around realignment of resources to effectively further the well-being of our diverse community remained at the forefront.

This would not have been possible without the collaborative spirit of stakeholders and community partners. Whether it be residents, staff, community organizations, or council, we worked to ensure the network of services within our community remained collaborative, connected, relevant and safe.

As we look forward, we are taking stock of our environment and preparing to address the needs of the future, equipping residents and civil society with the capacity and resilience necessary for a strong, vibrant community. Together we are strong.

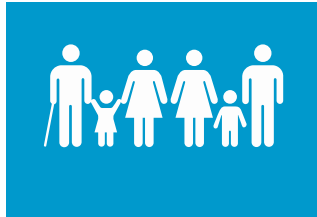
Tammy Woroschuk

Tammy Woroschuk, MSW, RSW
Acting Director, Community Social Development

Community Social Development worked to ensure the network of services within our community remained:

- Collaborative
- Connected
- Inclusive
- Relevant
- Safe

2021



8941
residents serviced through



24 +
programs, services, and initiatives



40+
program partnerships



99%
positive outcomes

AT A GLANCE

Partnership: is an arrangement where parties (usually business partners) agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests and/or goals

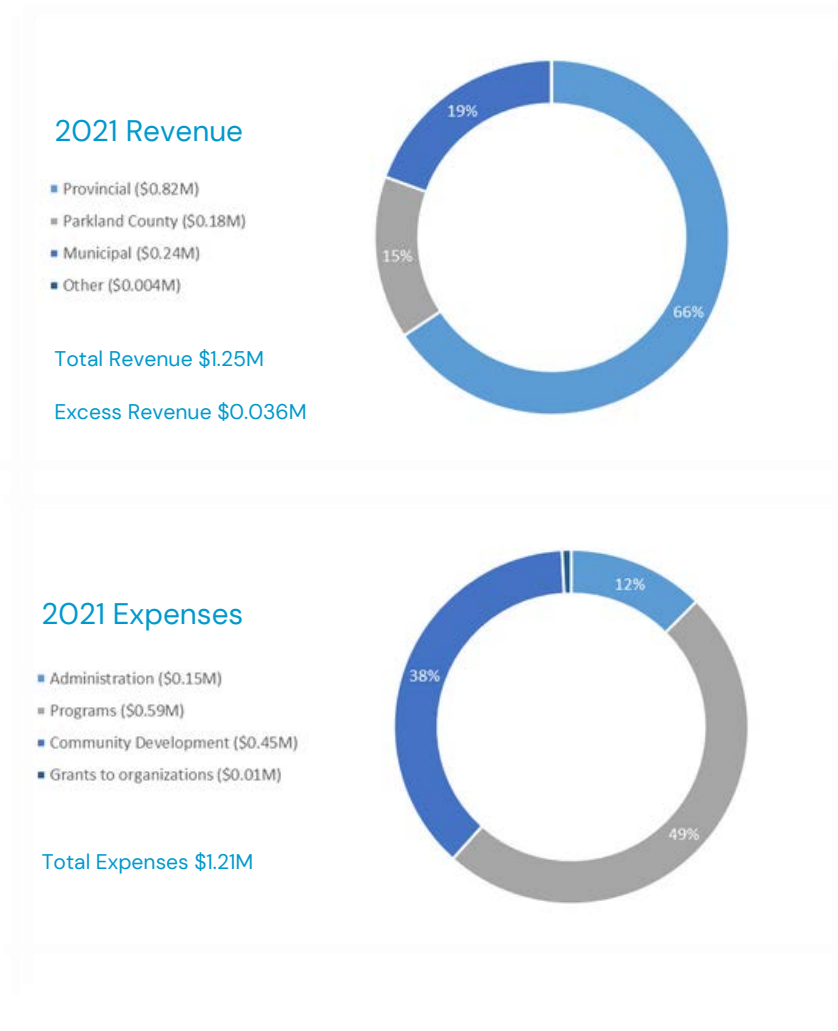
FINANCIALS

Community Social Development is financed through a combination of government transfers, property taxes, and user fees which fund programs, services, and initiatives supporting the social needs of the community.

In 2021, the department's operations comprised \$ 1,214,328 million as outlined below.

2021

AT A GLANCE





RESPONSE TO COVID-19

THE PATH FORWARD

Out of adversity, a more resilient and sustainable community will emerge.

COVID-19 continued to have an impact on our daily lives, our community, and society in 2021. Community Social Development stayed informed on the latest news, trends, and social science research to help us to better serve the community and provide service providers with information to help with their own decision-making. Community Social Development continues to conduct local research as it is important as we move forward to know where people are at, where there are gaps in service, and where there are opportunities.

In 2021 and beyond, Community Social Development will continue to focus on reducing barriers to community social supports, community capacity building, and regional collaboration.

AN INNOVATIVE PIVOT

Continued provincial public health measures resulted in many staff working remotely and technology played a major role in service continuity for residents. In 2021, examples of continued innovative services in response to the pandemic included:

- Distribution of community grants to build capacity
- Hosting of virtual Mental Health Clinics for youth and adults to promote social connections and provide tools to support mental wellbeing during difficult times
- Phone access to direct client, and tax preparation services with accommodation to those residents requiring in-person supports, ensuring vulnerable residents maintained access to services they need
- Continued use of HelpSeeker app to assist service providers and residents connect in an ever changing environment



SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN KEY AREAS FOR ACTION

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

increase access to social wellness programs, services, and supports in the community

HOUSING

develop a continuum of housing

HOMELESSNESS

develop supports for the homeless population

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

create sustainability through community engagement

FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

reduce levels of family and domestic violence

INCLUSION

create and sustain Spruce Grove as an inclusive city

CIVIC GOVERNANCE

modify civic governance and administrative practices to incorporate into the plan

Transportation is also an identified key area for action. Transportation is managed and delivered by Spruce Grove Transit Services.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

Individual Client Services

Individual Client Services, supports individuals and families with a wide range of needs. Accessibility to programs and services continued to be a challenge in 2021, in a global pandemic, whereby social distancing was required to maintain the physical health and safety of residents and staff. The use of virtual systems and accommodation plans to mitigate digital exclusion were in place to ensure services were available for those who need them the most.

3905

individual client contacts

INFORMATION & REFERRAL (I & R)

I & R makes a significant difference to the quality of life of residents by connecting people to appropriate resources, programs, and service information. Community Social Development reception staff are certified Community Information and Referral Specialists and trained to assess individual needs to support appropriate and timely referrals at the earliest opportunity.

294

individual counselling sessions

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Short-term counselling services are offered to low-income residents meeting eligibility requirements. Following a formal intake, counselling may be offered through FCSS or referred to an appropriate resource in the community. In 2021, 49 eligible residents accessed counselling services, thereby increasing personal resiliency and optimism for the future.

HOME SUPPORT SUBSIDY PROGRAM

The Home Support Subsidy Program was re-established in December 2021. This program will enable residents who qualify, the ability to maintain their independence, feel less isolated and establish a connection with the community.

6

volunteers

300+

volunteer hours

629

tax returns

over \$3 Million

returned to community

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX PROGRAM (CVITP)

Support with tax returns is an important poverty reduction strategy. A tax return may support individuals with modest incomes to maintain or access needed financial benefits, pay off debt, or develop a savings strategy. These supports also inject dollars back into the community as individuals with modest incomes gain more money to spend locally.

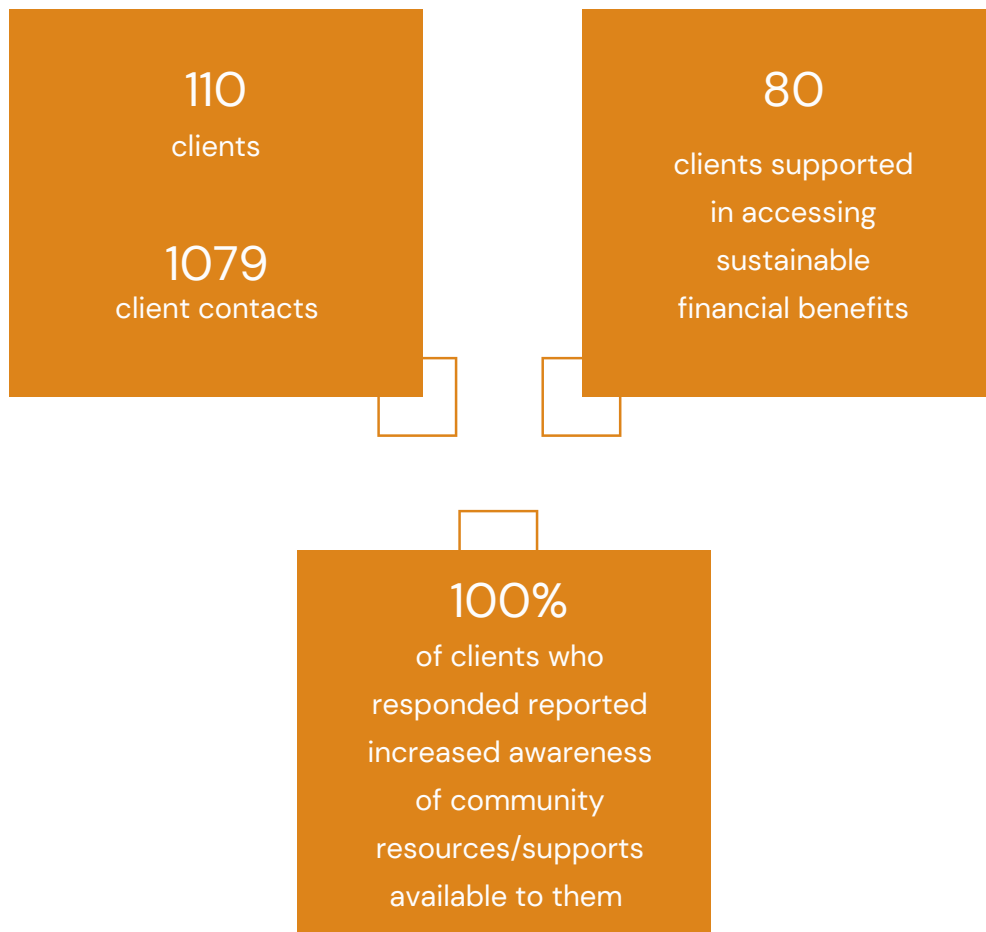
PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

Individual Client Services

Community Social Development case managers are registered social workers who assist eligible individuals and families with information on available resources, and supports to navigate the social serving system. Case manager's work collaboratively to develop client-led service plans and support connection to needed resources.

This program empowers individuals and families to increase their knowledge, skills, and ability to access resources and supports independently in order to build resiliency.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

Individual Client Services

COMMUNITIES SERVED:

57%



SPRUCE GROVE

18%



STONY PLAIN

15%



PARKLAND COUNTY

REGIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

Access to secure, long term housing is fundamental to a person's sense of dignity, safety, participation, and inclusion within communities. Housing can become insecure when issues arise, such as unaffordable rents or mortgages, job loss, medication conditions, mental health, and financial struggles.

Funded through the federal Reaching Home grant, the Regional Housing program was launched in 2020 in partnership with the Town of Stony Plain and Rural Development Network. The program aims to support eligible residents struggling with instances of housing instability.

A dedicated housing coordinator, housed out of Spruce Grove Community Social Development, supports eligible residents living in the Tri-region with:

- Housing placement or *core prevention services
- Gaining access to secured financial benefits
- Connecting to community resources to support housing sustainability

**Core prevention services include activities that help to prevent housing breakdown and allow residents to remain living in their home.*

25
individuals/families
housed

12
individuals/families
were provided
core prevention
services

A widowed senior reached out to Community Social Development – FCSS to determine why their monthly income had been reduced. As a result of the income reduction, they were unable to maintain their basic needs and were at risk of losing their housing. This individual was supported by the FCSS Case Management Program and received:

- support to find out which financial benefits were suspended
- advocacy to Service Canada to reinstate the benefits
- assistance to complete the required forms
- information on how seniors benefits are impacted by withdrawing savings

This community member had their low-income supplements reinstated and received retroactive back pay. In addition, they were better able to manage their financial needs as a result of their increased knowledge and understanding of senior's financial benefits.

This senior remains in their family home and can sustain their basic needs, improving their overall quality of life.

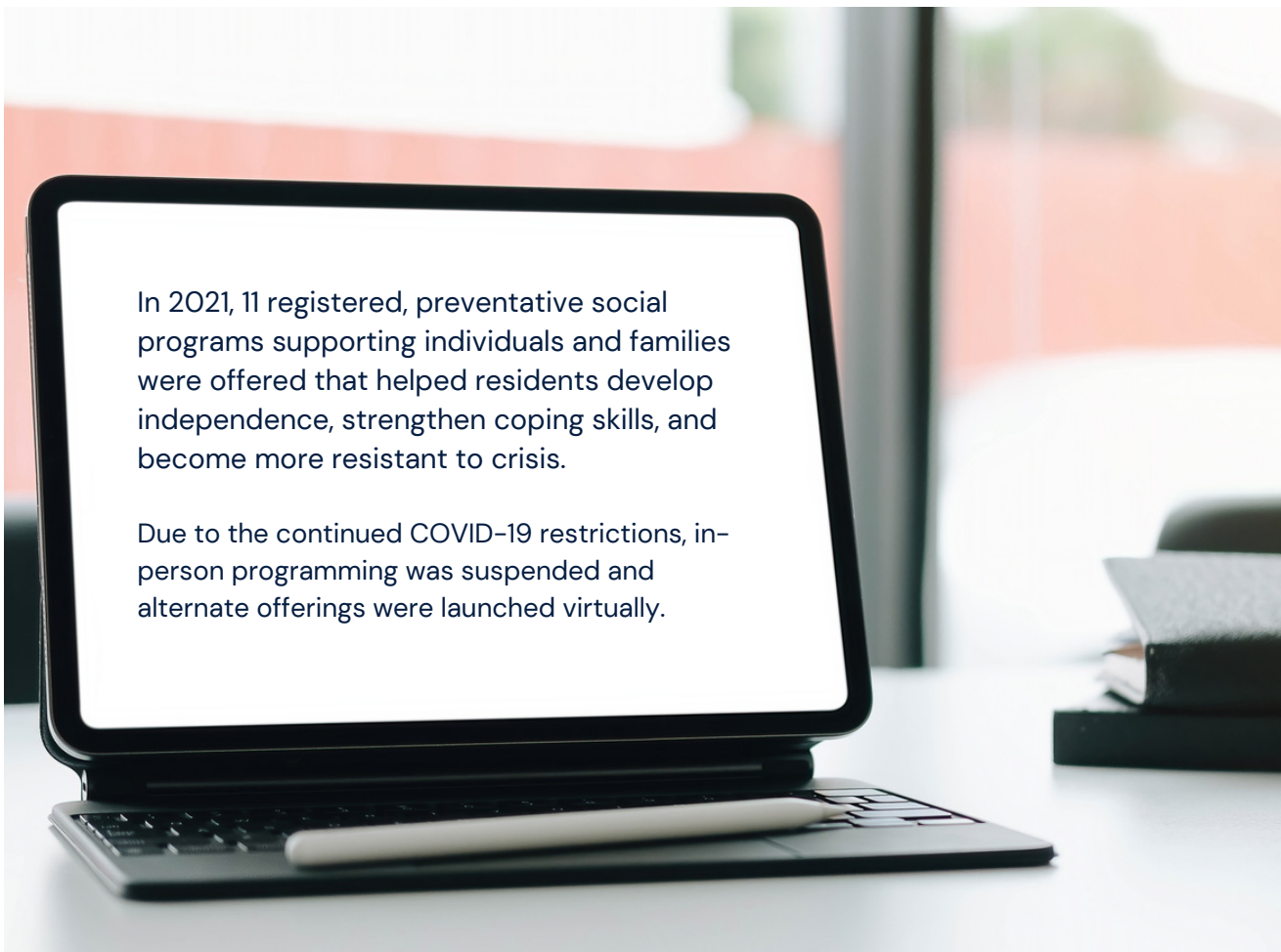
Community Social Development – FCSS received a Regional Housing Program referral from a community partner. An individual with a disability needed housing support as they were unable to afford their rent. The resident had significant rental arrears and lost their Additional Shelter benefit through Income Support. In addition, they were a couple of month's away from receiving AISH benefits. After advocating to the MLA's office, the Additional Shelter benefit was re-established and AISH was expedited. The back-pay received from these two benefits allowed the resident to pay-off their rental arrears. They were then supported to move into affordable housing where the new rental rate was significantly lower.

The support from the Regional Housing Program increased the resident's overall ability to remain housed and meet their medical needs to improve their quality of life.

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Social Programs



In 2021, 11 registered, preventative social programs supporting individuals and families were offered that helped residents develop independence, strengthen coping skills, and become more resistant to crisis.

Due to the continued COVID-19 restrictions, in-person programming was suspended and alternate offerings were launched virtually.

clients supported in
maintaining current
housing (tenancy
breakdown prevention)

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Social Programs

People are Optimistic About Their Future

Counselling Program
Managing Stress: Top Down & Bottom Up
Thriving in Tough Times: coping during COVID-19
Connection Based Wellness Attachment Workshop

Optimism is a mental attitude that is strongly connected to psychological well-being and personal resilience.

Developing skills, knowledge, and the ability to plan for the future enhances quality of life and increases access to vital community supports when they are needed. In 2021, Community Social Development offered 5 programs geared to developing independence, strengthening coping skills, and increasing resiliency. Many programs were offered jointly with local and regional partnering organizations.

5
programs

93
participants

99%
experienced improved social well-being



Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

Social Programs

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

In 2021 Community Social Development offered registered programming virtually through FCSS, providing opportunities to find community and build genuine relationships with peers and program staff. When youth feel connected and valued, this promotes a sense of purpose and an optimistic view of the future.

Children and Youth Develop Positively

Healthy Relationships
Social-Emotional Skills & Strategies for Self-Regulation
Understanding Stress & Anxiety
Wise Mind Wednesdays
7 Dimensions of Connected Living
Navigating Through Times of Change and Loss



6
programs

103
participants

75%
experienced increased confidence at handling whatever comes their way

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

Community Development

Community Social Issues are Identified and Addressed

In 2021, Community Social Development led or partnered with other community organizations on 14 programs and initiatives geared to collectively identify and address current and emerging social issues, locally and regionally.

100%

reported their organization is better able to provide service the people in their community

14

programs & initiatives

343

participants

Increase access to social wellness programs, services and supports

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Community Capacity Building

Community Social Development helps the community to thrive through administering grants. The Community Grant Program was able to provide local and regional agencies the opportunity to flex and expand their services to virtual offerings during COVID-19.

\$ 10,000 – FCSS Recovery Grant

Change Health Alberta

\$30,000 – CSD Domestic Violence Reduction Grant

Edmonton Violence Prevention Centre

Parkland Turning Points Society

The Today Centre

Develop a continuum of housing

Housing Needs and Supports

HOUSING

Federal ReachingHOME Funding

The City of Spruce Grove, in partnership with the Town of Stony Plain, receives Federal funding administered through the Rural Development Network to address housing supports in the Tri-Region. The total award amount brings over \$400,000 to the Tri-Region from 2020 – March, 2024 and helps establish the Regional Housing program, including a Housing Coordinator and rent subsidies for eligible residents.

Tri-Municipal Regional Plan: Affordable Housing Strategy and Needs Assessment

Research is an important step in understanding complex social issues. In 2021, the City of Spruce Grove, Town of Stony Plain and Parkland County worked together to develop the Affordable Housing Strategy and Needs Assessment as part of the broader Tri-Municipal Regional Plan. The goal of the Housing Strategy is to "provide for a complete Tri-Municipal community by ensuring adequate, affordable and diverse housing options in support of more diverse neighbourhoods, improved employment, accessibility, and overall social and economic health".



Develop supports for the homeless population

HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY REDUCTION

Winter Emergency Response (WER)

For the third year, community stakeholders worked collaboratively to plan and implement a community Winter Emergency Response (WER) within the City of Spruce Grove. The response is intended to mitigate risk for individuals that are vulnerable to serious, critical or potentially fatal health impacts as a result of extreme cold weather exposure. Risk of exposure is due to several factors, but in particular, this response focused on unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness and is activated when a cold-weather threshold is reached.

In 2021, there were 28 activations of the response between November 1, 2020 to April 1, 2021. The response involved:

- Outreach
- Distribution of cold weather kits
- Transportation
- Warming locations

The response is planned and implemented collectively by community stakeholders in Spruce Grove, and is convened and co-lead by Community Social Development. Active partners of WER include:

- City of Spruce Grove – Protective and Fire Services & Community Social Development
- RCMP
- Spruce Grove Community Church
- Congregational Christian Fellowship Church
- Saints Church Glory Hills
- Tri-Region Pay Forward Kindness Society
- Trans Alta Tri Leisure Centre
- Rotary Club of Spruce Grove
- Spruce Grove Public Library

Develop supports for the homeless population

HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY REDUCTION

Champions Table: Hope & Home Tri-Region Poverty and Homelessness Reduction Initiative

PathwaysHOME seeks to build on already existing community strengths through regional collaboration and collective action. Coordinating resources, formalizing partnerships, and developing shared vision and goals are key steps.

The Champions Table, formalized in March 2020, continues to meet on a monthly basis strengthening a structured partnership between stakeholders in the Tri-Region to advance poverty and homelessness reduction work. The City of Spruce Grove provides backbone support and co-chairs the Champions Table.

In 2021, the Champions Table continued with a common agenda to advance the work regionally through established common definitions, identifying Tri-Regional challenges, and addressing poverty and homelessness regionally.



A TRI-REGION HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY INITIATIVE

www.hopeandhome.ca



BRINGING HOPE
TO POVERTY &
HOMELESSNESS

Create sustainability through community engagement

Neighbourhood Development

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community is Connected and Engaged

SPRUCE GROVE NEIGHBOUR NETWORK

Knowing your neighbours is vital to creating resilient, safe and connected communities. The Spruce Grove Neighbour Network supported residents with access to resources, ideas, and neighbourhood building tools to help grow the connections on their blocks and in their neighbourhoods. The Neighbour Network operated virtually.

CONNECT THE BLOCK

The Connect The Block initiative helped build and support positive neighbour-to-neighbour relationships. It was developed as a way to help residents strengthen their neighbourhoods and make connections with those who live around them. When people know their neighbours, it helps create safer neighbourhoods, allows people to feel connected, and increases the likelihood that they will help provide social supports to one another during difficult times.

NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY

It was exciting to reinstate the Neighbourhood Block Party in 2021, following the Provincial guidelines for COVID-19.

Block parties provided a fun way to engage and reconnect neighbours. Neighbour-to-neighbour connections can help create a safer community, increase pride and neighbourhood identity, and increase social supports. Community members who register their Block Party with the City of Spruce Grove receive a helpful kit filled with information, tips and tools, including invitations, a checklist, and Block Party swag.



100%
reported a stronger sense of community with the people on the block/in the neighbourhood

Create sustainability through community engagement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SENIORCONNECT

The SeniorConnect priority is to develop a network of caring connectors in our community to identify seniors at risk. Many of our senior population are isolated. Connecting with seniors is a caring way to show support and provide connections to community resources when needed.

Community Social Issues are Identified and Addressed

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS Interagency

Community Social Development has been a leader in the development and backbone support for Critical Connections since 2014 and it is chaired and supported by Community Social Development staff. The interagency exists to enhance relationships between social service agencies for the benefit of the community by promoting collaborative engagement, and identifying strengths and opportunities in community service needs.

In 2021, the interagency met 3 times to help identify and address the needs of residents emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stakeholders consist of a wide range of government, non-profit and business with over 26 participants.

The Community is Connected and Engaged

HelpSEEKER

An increase in demands for support was noted in the social service landscape.

Community Social Development continued to work with other City departments and partners across the Tri-Region to bring awareness to the HelpSeeker app to residents and service providers alike.

In 2021, there were 115 unique searches within the app, with the top categories being:

- Housing
- Food
- Mentoring/Coaching
- Children
- Early Childhood Development



Local services were accessed 1318 times by users.

Create sustainability through
community engagement

Non-Profit Development

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SUPPORTING NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Thriving non-profits are key to a healthy, resilient community that can effectively address local needs. CSD supports capacity building for non-profits and their boards through workshops, strategic planning, and grant-writing support.

The Capacity Conversations workshop provides an opportunity to come together and uncover the many skills, abilities, wisdom, and experiences that our community non-profits have. The organic conversations and connections made in these sessions help to strengthen our local non-profit sector.

TRI-COMMUNITY ADULT LEARNING ASSOCIATION (Tri-CALA)

Community Social Development is a member of the Tri-CALA Board of Directors. Tri-CALA's mission is to provide literacy and foundational learning opportunities to the Tri-Community area so that learners are able to participate actively in society and pursue further learning.

FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Reduce levels of domestic violence

Domestic Violence Grant Funded Programs

The Spruce Grove Domestic Violence Grant offers funding opportunities to agencies providing services and supports to victims, offenders, and children exposed to domestic violence. Funded agencies provide direct services to residents in the Tri-Region and have adapted to COVID-19 protocols to deliver services safely.

In 2021, a total of \$30,000 was awarded through the Domestic Violence Grant.

Parkland Turning Points Society (\$10,000 Grant)

- 58 participants (two terms & individual counseling)
- 60 hours

Edmonton Violence Prevention Centre (\$17,000 Grant)

- 40 participants (two terms)
- 30 hours

Today Family Violence Help Centre (\$ 3,000)

- 10 participants (full-year term)
- 30 hours

Create and sustain Spruce Grove as an inclusive city

INCLUSION

Measuring Municipal Inclusion Project

The Measuring Municipal Inclusion Project ended in December 2021 with the submission of the final reports to Alberta Municipalities (formerly known as AUMA). The project team celebrated with virtual hugs and congratulations. They also attended the EDI Committee meeting to share their wisdom and insights with the committee to continue to build upon the foundation laid by the MMI project.

Reconciliation

Working towards Truth and Reconciliation in Spruce Grove is important. Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls help set a path forward. Building on the work from New Beginnings, we support Indigenous rights to self-determination and will work with Indigenous partners to co-create and equitable future together. Ways that we supported reconciliation in 2021 include:

- Hosting Listening Circles and Community Blanket exercises
- Hosting a city-wide staff talking circle on September 30th facilitated by an Indigenous Elder
- Starting the Community Social Development department and leadership meetings with land acknowledgements.



Staff Feedback: Taking up the Calls to Action by learning the historic Truth of our Indigenous Peoples

Number of responses: 40 | Time period: Oct. 5th-12th, 2021



Key Learnings:

- Continued listening and learning is needed
- More compassion and empathy
- Understanding their pain and trauma
- Blessed versus privileged
- Enjoyed the session and facilitators/speakers
- Power of storytelling

Applying the learning going forward:



CIVIC GOVERNANCE

Modify civic governance and administrative practices to incorporate the plan

Accessibility Audit Report

The City of Spruce Grove approved the Community Inclusion Initiative as part of the 2021-2023 Corporate Plan. This three year project seeks to create a culture that integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion practices into daily operations. As such, in 2021, Community Social Development – Social Planning led the way to undertake an Accessibility Audit of some City facilities. This was to determine how welcoming, comfortable, and safe these facilities are for the diverse residents using them and to learn what can be done to improve those experiences.

The accessibility audit assessed four City facilities: City Hall, Jubilee Park, the Agrena, and Elks Hall for opportunities to integrate universal design elements that will enable all patrons, regardless of ability and identity, to feel comfortable, safe, and welcome in that space. The vendor, Universal Access Design, provided an assessment of each site's current level of accessibility and recommended in detail a spectrum of options for improving the accessibility and inclusivity of each.

The Accessibility Audit Report is intended to assist the implementation of the Community Inclusion Initiative. It marks the turning of a new page for the City, one that involves supporting Council to set the course for the next decade, embracing the principles of transparency, sustainability, equity and competitiveness. The initial findings from the four accessibility audits reflect that the City of Spruce Grove is well on the road to creating the environment where an inclusive community is possible.



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