WOOD BUFFALO AGE-FRIENDLY WORK PLAN

2021-2024

Advisory Committee on Aging - RMWB

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Advisory Committee on aging

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Table of Contents

What is an Age-Friendly Community?

Worldwide, governments have recognized the need to make communities more Age-Friendly to the increasing aging population. Population aging and urbanization are two global trends that comprise major forces shaping the 21st century. Simultaneously, as cities are growing, their share of residents aged 60 years and over is increasing. World Health Organization (WHO) regards active aging as a lifelong process shaped by several factors that increase health, participation, and security in older adult life.

An age-friendly community encourages active aging by optimizing health, participation, and security opportunities to enhance the quality of life as people age. In practical terms, an age-friendly community adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.It is widely acknowledged that a community that addresses its senior population's needs is a community that is friendlier to all ages.

Who is the Lead?

The Advisory Committee on Aging (ACoA) is taking the lead in shaping an age-friendly Wood Buffalo. In 2017, the ACoA recommended that an Age-Friendly Needs Assessment be undertaken by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) to help assess and identify gaps, needs, and standards needed to meet the criteria of an Age-Friendly Community as set by WHO. The assessment was completed by the RMWB, through a consultant, and was guided by the eight domains of WHO Age-Friendly Communities. ACoA will work with the RMWB to advise and monitor the work plan's implementation progress and provide an annual update to Council and community regarding the progress, next steps, and re-assessment.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan priority 1# Responsible Government, Strategy and Initiative 1#f – Foster equality, diversity and inclusion in the region, supports the adoption of the ACoA's vision of aging with dignity and commits the Municipality to track the implementation of the guidelines set out by the WHO Age-Friendly Cities designation. The RMWB Culture and Social Development (CSD) branch will take on the leadership role to support, monitor and implement the Age-Friendly Work Plan providing a quarterly and annual progress report to the ACoA.

CSD will engage and coordinate with community partners and provide strategic guidance to work on the implementation of action plans and coordinate the development of a shared progress and evaluation process. With the advice of the ACoA, CSD will further

the Wood Buffalo Age-Friendly recognition application process from the Government of Alberta and the WHO. Strategic partners and community stakeholders will play a key role in implementing the proposed actions.

> *"We dont have access to home care in rural areas. A public nurse will come to visit, but we cannot access services that will allow us to stay in our homes."*
> ***Age-Friendly Needs Assessment-RMWB (2017)***

Local Priorities

The age-friendly assessment scope identified needs and gaps based on the eight domains within the WHO's Global Age-Friendly Cities framework. Based on the input received from community stakeholders and public working groups, the WHO's eight domains were refined as local priority areas. Residents, community stakeholders, and the ACoA are committed in ensuring supportive policies, services and programs are in place to enable older adults to age and live comfortably in Wood Buffalo.

WHO-Eight Domains Identified as Local priorities
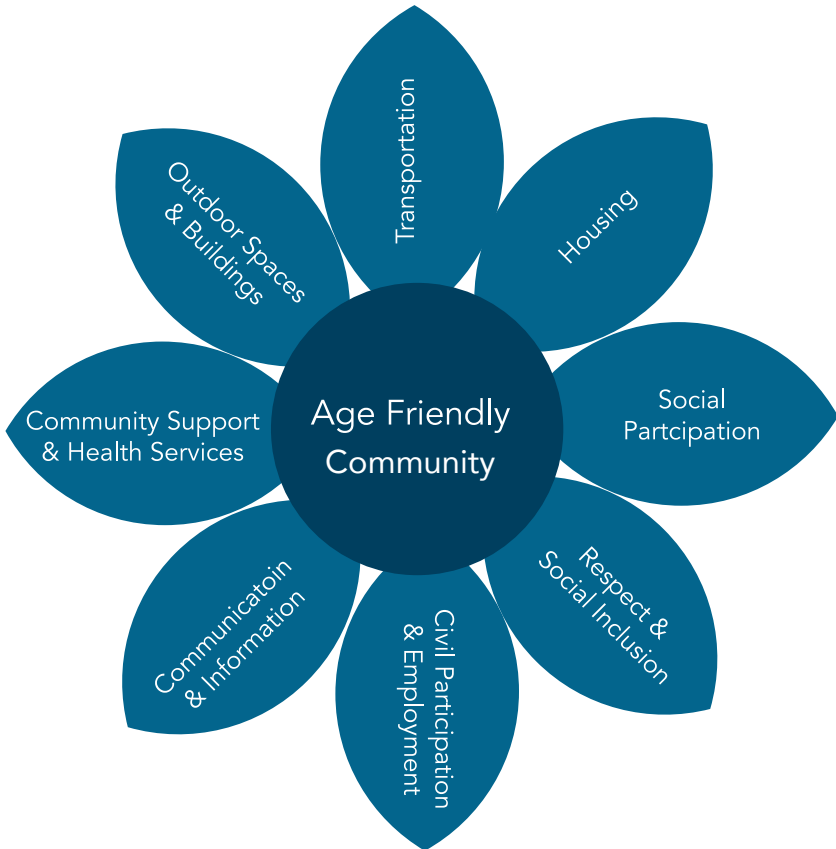
WHO-Eight Domains Identified as Local priorities

- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services
- Outdoor spaces and buildings

Needs Assessment Summary

Overall, the Age-Friendliness of the Wood Buffalo region showed several trends, needs, and gaps. Most needs/gaps were highlighted in the rural communities, though some are prevalent region wide:
- Streets and sidewalks accessibility
- Public washrooms not generally available, especially in outdoor spaces
- Rural areas have fewer transportation options and little information on existing options
- Older adults' housing availability issues and homecare services
- Less accessibility of information about events and activities
- There are few activities offered to older people and people with disabilities
- Challenges with social participation due to lack of transportation options and accessibility issues
- Need for more social inclusivity and respect opportunities
- More civic engagement and employment opportunities
- Need to amplify communication and information media

Wood Buffalo Older Adults – By the Numbers

In 1971, older adults accounted for of Canada's population. It is estimated that by 2036 that number will rise to %25.Wood Buffalo's population among the 59-50 age group has steadily increased from %16.3 in 2012 to %17 in 2018. This progression indicates a future increase in the population of older adults 65years and above.

From 2012 to 2018, the older adults' population increased by %1.2 to %3. According to the 2018 Municipal Census, %11.6 of the older adults' population live in the rural communities.

Local statistics further underscore the need for age-friendly policies, services and programs to keep this key demographic living comfortably in our region.

Our Work Plan

The Age-Friendly Wood Buffalo Work Plan highlights the ACoA's vision of aging with dignity in Wood Buffalo. It highlights goals, proposed actions, strategic partners, and community stakeholders for each identified local priority, implementation approach, the implementation structure, and the progress and evaluation framework.

Due to the broad scope and complexity of gaps and community needs identified, the work plan focuses on high-priority areas of needs in the region. This plan will require collaborative efforts between the RMWB, community stakeholders, associations, community groups, and other levels of government. The timeline of actions may be short-term (up to two years), medium (two – three years) or long-term (more than three years).

It should be noted that the actions are preliminary and require refinement through additional dialogue with broader groups of both internal and external stakeholders during the implementation phase. Subsequently, the implementation plans must be developed to ensure the actions are robust and measurable. Potentially more actions could be identified in the future to achieve the highlighted goals. This work plan highlights short-term, medium and long-term goals, as well as on-going goals, which make it a "living" document.

Work plan terms

Strategies: Ways that leaders and partners can act collectively to achieve the identified goal.

Proposed action (s): Steps that must be taken by strategic partners or community stakeholders or in small collaborative teams. A detailed list of actions and activities will be highlighted in the implementation plan.

Measurement indicators: These are quantifiable measures of progress toward the identified goal.

Strategic partner (SP): The strategic partner agency or organization will initiate/facilitate a role in guiding the process of pursuing and achieving proposed actions.

Timeline: This is the implementation period for the identified priority areas and each action highlighted. The timeline of actions may be short-term (one to two years), medium (two to three years), or long-term (more than three years).

> *"When we build for older adults, we are being an inclusive community"*
>
> **From Community Partner**

Wood Buffalo Age-Friendly Work Plan

Domain 1: Housing
Priority Area: Maintenance and Modifications

Goal: Home maintenance services and modification services are available and are affordable for older adults.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Develop programs and services for older adults that aid with costs related to home maintenance, modification, and affordability.	Enhance awareness of and access to services and information about programs that provide financial assistance for the cost associated with housing affordability.	• Number of awareness campaigns • Resource guide update • RMWB older adults' webpage updated • Number of discount/credits programs for older adults	Short-Term
	Explore potential support for home maintenance and modification assistance and volunteer programs.	• Develop and implement the program • Number of volunteers/contractors signed-up • Number of older adults served	Short-Term
	Develop and support a lawn care volunteer-based program for older adults.	• Develop and implement the program • Number of older adults signed up for the program • Number of volunteers • Number of service hours provided	

Priority Area: Housing Options

Goal: There is a range of age-friendly affordable, and accessible housing options for older adults in the region (lack of older adults housing and housing option was noticeable in the rural communities according to the 2017 Needs Assessment).

Support the development of age-friendly affordable and accessible housing options for older adults in RMWB.	Advocate for sustainable funding for the development of new affordable and accessible older adults housing options (i.e.,Older Adults Housing Master Plan).	• Letter of advocacy submitted to the Minister from the Mayor and Council • Number of acres of land acquired • Older Adults Housing Master Plan developed • Number of grants secured • Number of affordable housing units available for older adults • Number of older adults appropriately housed	Long-Term
	Promote and advertise available housing options with consideration for both digital and print channels.	• Number of in-person sessions, open houses, workshops, or forums	Long-Term
	Continuous collaboration with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Willow Square facility to ensure that local needs are prioritized when placing clients.	• Number of older adults appropriately housed	Short-Term

Domain 2: Transportation
Priority Area: Health and Assisted Transportation Services

Goal: Accessible, safe, and affordable transportation services are available for older adults in the region.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Develop and implement transportation strategies that are responsive to seniors' transportation needs.	SMART Bus curb to curb, priority "pick-ups" and "drop-offs" services to older adults and older adults with mobility differences.	• SMART Bus monthly data • Number of age-friendly designated businesses • Number of senior designate parking	Short-Term
	Age friendly training is provided for transportation service providers and partners.	• Number of training sessions • Number of training participants	Short-Term

Priority Area: Health and Assisted Transportation Services

Goal: Community transport services are available and affordable for older adults.

Ensure affordable, safe, and accessible community and alternative transportation services for older adults are available in the community.	Develop a continuum of affordable community transportation services.	• Number of volunteer program drivers • Number of older adults'alternative transportation services available	Long-Term
	Facilitate access to and use available information and resources about seniors' transportation services.	• SMART Bus monthly data • SMART Bus Handbook annual update • Older adults' resource guide updated	Medium-Term

Domain #3: Community Supports and Health Services
Priority Area: Diversity of Health Services

Goal: Older adults have access to a wide range of affordable in-home supports and health services.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that older adults have access to a wide range of services and information about medical professionals and specialists.	Promote existing services and provide information to older adults in different formats including language translation.	• Number of new health care services for older adults • Maintain anupdated list of accessible services and programs	Short-Term
	Advocate and lobby for required health services (i.e., specialist services in town).	• Number of new specialist services available in town	Medium-Term
Promote education and training specific to the needs of older adults, for those providing community support and health services.	Support programs that train and prepare older adults and service providers for emergency disaster response.	• Number of elder care and abuse awareness training sessions • Number of age-friendly training sessions • Number of Vulnerable Persons Registry (VPR)information sessions • Number of older adults registered	Long-Term

Priority Area: In-home support and Community Services Delivery

Goal: Older adults are supported to maintain independance.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that older adults in-home and community supports, and services are available, affordable, and are appropriate.	Promote older adults in-home support programs and community services that provide support for arrange of needs.	• Number ofolder adults' community services • Number of home care visitations & programs in the community • Number of check-in and drop-in programs • Meals on wheels programs	Medium-Term

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure older adults are informed and aware of health and wellness activities that promote physical and mental wellbeing.	Promote and advocate for health and wellness initiatives that promote and inform older adults of educational opportunities/ programming that allow them to live as independently as possible regardless of living situation.	• Number of health and wellness sessions • Older adults have an increased awareness of benefits of healthy living physically and mentally	Long-Term
Older adults are safe from preventable injury in and around their homes.	Support rural communities to develop and coordinate Snow Angel Program.	• Number of communities participating • Number of older adults supported • Number of Snow Angel volunteers	Medium-Term
	Collaborate with partners to develop and implement strategies to coordinate in-home safety check.	• Number of fall prevention sessions • Number of older adults participating in home fire safety inspection	Medium-Term

Domain 4: Social Participation
Priority Area: Connection and Engagement

Goal: Older adults are socially and physically active and are connected to community.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
There are opportunities for older adults to participate and interact with other people in the community both socially and physically.	Encourage and support community programs that engage older adults to enhance their social connections and mental well-being.	• Number of programs offering check-in and drop-in services • Number of older adults' engagement and social programs • Number of older adults accessing services	Short-Term

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
	Create and design affordable and accessible community activities and programs that promote physical and social well-being opportunities for older adults.	• Number of senior activities • Number of community in-person or virtual programs • Number of participants	Short-term
	Continue to consult and engage senior citizens on community initiatives that affect their well-being.	• Number of community older adults' consultation and engagement sessions	

Priority Area: Affordability and Accessibility

Goal: Establish accessible and universal design of programs and facilities as a framework of best practices.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that information, programs, and facilities are accessible and are affordable for older adults and older adults with disabilities.	Continue to support the implementation of barrier-free building design.	• Complete a comprehensive accessibility audit • Number of barrier-free/accessible and designated parking stalls	Medium-Term
	Develop and promote universal and accessibility design guide.	• Number of policies supporting universal design • Universal design guide • Promotional practices • Number of new buildings adopting the guidelines	Short-Term

Domain 5: Civic Participation and Employment Opportunities
Priority Area: Volunteer Opportunities

Goal: Older adults' skills are valued and respected as volunteers.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure there are a range of volunteer opportunities available and supported for older adults to participate.	Raise awareness about the benefit of older adults'contribution and participationon boards/committees.	• Number of awareness campaigns • Number of older adults volunteer opportunities	Medium-Term
	Continue to support and enhance older adults volunteer appreciation opportunities.	• Number of older adults recognized • Number of volunteer recognition events • Number of partnership programs	Short-Term

Priority Area: Age-Friendly and Inclusive Workplace

Goal: Older adults' skills are valued and respected as employees.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that older adults' skills and attributes are recognized and appreciated in the community.	Develop and promote an age-friendly business recognition program.	• Age-friendly business recognition program completed • Number of businesses participating • Number of older adults supported through the program	Long-Term
	Collaborate with local businesses to adopt age-friendly business practices.	• Increased older adults' priority parking • Number of age-friendly businesses • Number of staff trained	Long-Term

Goal: Older adults are well represented in both public and support organizations, and have a voice in the decisions that affect their community.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Encourage public and support organizations to engage and involve older adults in the community decisions and initiatives.	Engage and consult older adults on the community development initiatives.	• Number of engagement sessions • Number of consultation sessions	Short-Term
	Conduct awareness workshops and age-friendly training to public and support organizations.	• Number of sessions conducted • Number of organizations • Number of participants	Short-Term
	Promote existing opportunities and increase older adults' representation in both public and support organizations.	• Number of civic engagement opportunities • ACoA By-law amendment	Short-Term

Domain 6: Respect and Social Inclusion
Prioriry Area: Intergenerational Respect and Interactions

Goal: Older adults are valued and are treated with respect.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Establish opportunities, and programs that supports intergenerational interactions, mental health, and social connection.	Facilitate and promote community wide education and awareness campaign to combat ageism and stereotypes.	• Number of age-friendly training sessions • Number of participants • Number of older adult activities/events • Number of intergenerational programs and activities • Number of specific campaigns	Medium-Term
		• Number of annual events • Number of community contributors/champions	Short-Term

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
	Establish a recognition program for the contributors/ champions of older adults' quality of life in the RMWB.	• Number of older adults' week events	

Priority Area: Social Inclusion

Goal: Older adults have access to opportunities to participate and contribute to the community.

Ensure that community activities, events, programs, and facilities are accessible, affordable and are inclusive.	Create and foster cultural, social, and recreational educational programs and activities.	• Number of cultural activities for older adults • Number of participating community organizations • Number of senior inclusive programs	Short-Term

Domain #7: Communication and Information
Priority Area: Accessible Information

Goal: Informationis accessible, reliable, and available for older adults, caregivers, and support providers.

Ensure older adults have access to information about services that is accessible, reliable, and accurate.	Promote and maintain existing information media/channels (such as MAC Calendar, Older Adults' Resources Guide).	• Number of resource guides distributed • Number of media engagement/ visits • Number of languages translated	Short-Term
Enhance opportunities for digital access, information, and technology literacy for older adults.	Enhance and continue support of information-sharing network for older adult service providers.	• Active information sharing networks • Number of support organizations participating	Short-Term

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
	Gaps and barriers to COVID-19 information and resources are identified and addressed.	• Number of programs supporting older adults with COVID-19 information • Number of COVID-19 resources provided to older adults • Number of older adults supported	Short-Term
	Promote collaboration among community organization to improve technology literacy and ensure that internet and computer services are accessible, affordable, and available for older adults.	• Number of technology literacy classes for older adults • Number of community organizations with tech literacy classes • Number of older adults signed-up and supported	Short/Medium-Term

Priority Area: Widespread Communication

Goal: Older adults have access to information in all desirable formats of communication.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that information is available in a variety of formats and in contexts that are inclusive of older adults' interests and is easily accessible.	Use age-friendly formatting and designing practices for website information and other publications.	• Update older adults web page • Easy access tab for older adult resources	Short-Term
	Support and provide alternative accessible communication and information sharing (i.e., closed captioning service, sign language, and interpretation services).	• Close captioning services available for Council meetings and other municipal virtual events. • Sign language and interpretation during council meetings	Long-Term

Domain #8: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
Priority Area: Accessible Buildings, Public Restrooms and Rest Areas

Goal: Outdoor spaces and community buildings are designed and maintained to be age-friendly safe, and accessible.

Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that public washrooms and rest areas around public spaces, parks, and trails are available.	Support and promote the development of universal and accessibility design.	• Universal design guide developed and promoted • Number of accessible universal designed facilities, and indoor and outdoor spaces	Long-Term
	Increase number of accessible rest areas and accessible public restrooms.	• Number of age-friendly seat/benches installed in public spaces, parks, and trails • Number of accessible restrooms available	Long-Term

Priority Area: Sidewalks, Parks and Trails

Goal: Parks, pathways and trails are maintained to be safe, clear, and are accessible.

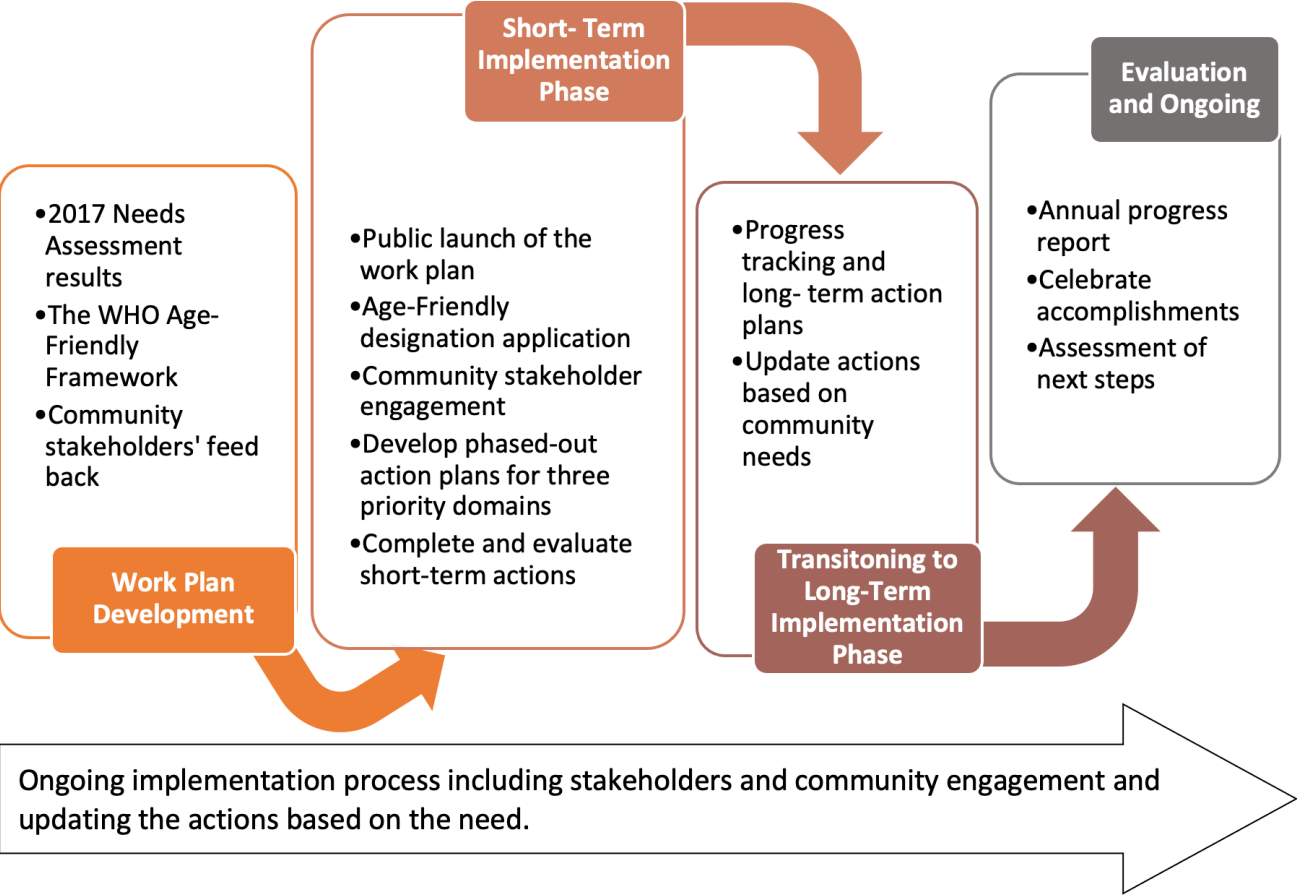| Strategy	Proposed Action(s)	Measurement	Timeline
Ensure that sidewalks, parks, and trails in most or all areas of the community are well-maintained and are accessible.	Follow the age-friendly standards and universal design practices repairing and installing curb cuts, sidewalks and designing outdoor spaces.	• Number of new curb cuts completed • Number of repaired and maintained sidewalks and trails • Barrier free designed outdoor spaces	Medium-Term
	Support rural communities to develop, adopt and coordinate Snow Angel Program in their communities.	• Number of Snow Angel volunteers • Communities signed up for the Snow Angel Program • Number of older adults served	Short-Term

Implementation Approach

This work plan identifies strategies and measurement indicators for each goal and a series of actions to achieve those goals. The work plan requires collaborative efforts from both internal and external stakeholders to assist in carrying out the actions. The implementation approach outlines the implementation path, work plan leadership, and the implementation structure.

The implementation process will begin with a public launch of the work plan and a short-term transition phase. ACoA will pursue Wood Buffalo Age-Friendly recognition from the Government of Alberta and the WHO. The implementation plan will focus on high priority domains and short-term actions.
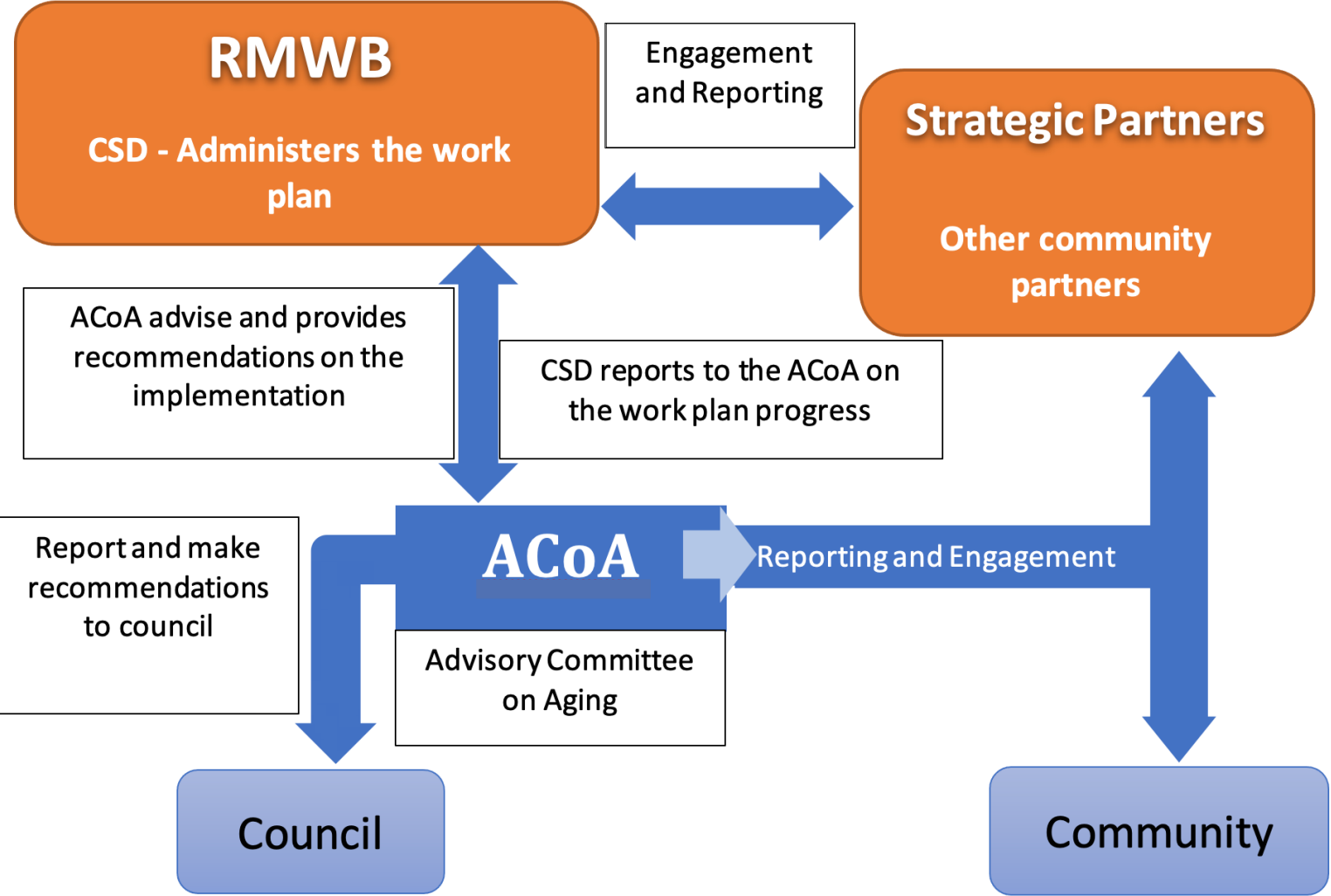
The strategic partners and community stakeholders will develop phased-out implementation action plans, and evaluation framework from the workplan proposed actions and measurement indicators. In the short term, ACoA is prioritizing the implementation of the work plan's three domains, including Housing, Community Supports and Health Services, and Social Inclusion. The work plan will transition to a long-term implementation phase to achieve the remaining domains' medium and long-term actions.

This work plan is a living document. It requires ongoing processes such as stakeholder engagement and evaluation processes, and an update to include new partners, actions, and emerging community needs.

IMPLEMENTATION PATH

WORK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

Progress & Evaluation Framework

Strategic partners and community stakeholders will develop an evaluation framework for the proposed actions and measurement indicators. These should include both reporting process, outcome measurement, and progress tracking. Reporting process evaluation will focus on measuring and improving the effectiveness of implementation to support continuous improvement. Outcome measurement will evaluate positive impact change towards age-friendliness of the community and measures changes in older adults' well-being. ACoA will provide an annual progress update. This will highlight progress made towards the Age-Friendly Work Plan proposed actions and measurement indicators. The report will be presented to Council and will be made available to the public.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
of WOOD BUFFALO

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