

# Research, community engagement and policy development: Pathway to a population aging framework in Alberta Canada

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## A quick glance of Canada

- Canada's Population: 34.4 million (2011)
- Number of Households: 12.4 million (2006 census)
- Size of Canada: 9,984,670 sq.km.
- Annual Births: 381,382 (to June 30 2010)
- Life Expectancy: 80.7 Years (2007)
- GDP Per Capita

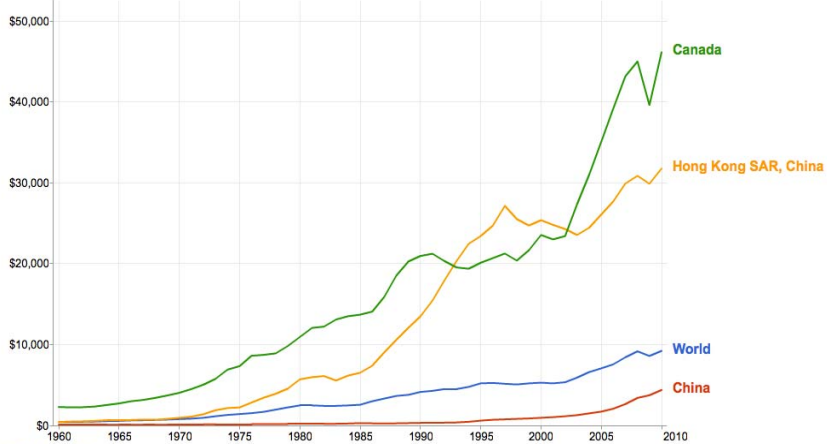


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GDP per capita (current US\$) ▾



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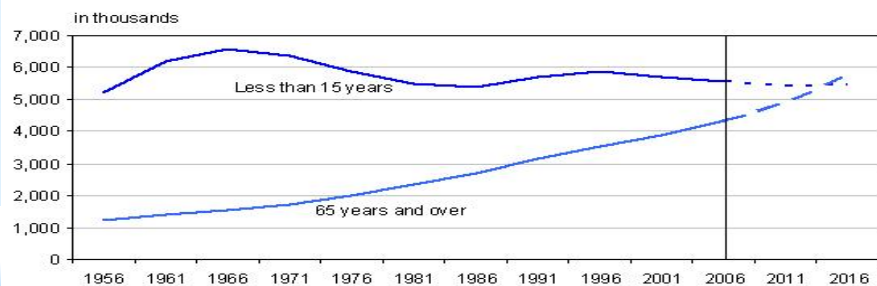


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## Population Aging in Canada....as a normal and positive trend



Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1956 to 2006; and Alain Bélanger, Laurent Martel and Eric Caron-Malenfant. 2005. *Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories 2005-2031*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-520, scenario 3.



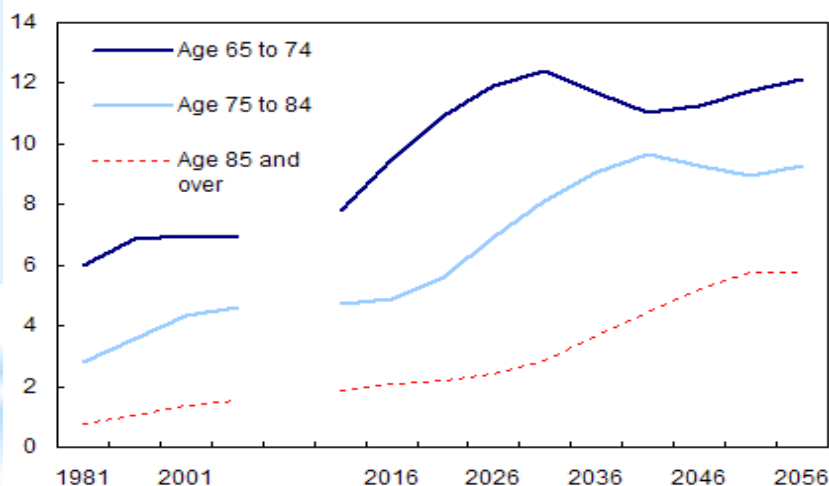
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<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/res-sa/97-551/figures/c1-eng.cfm>

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percentage



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<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-519-x/2006001/c-g/4181481-eng.htm>

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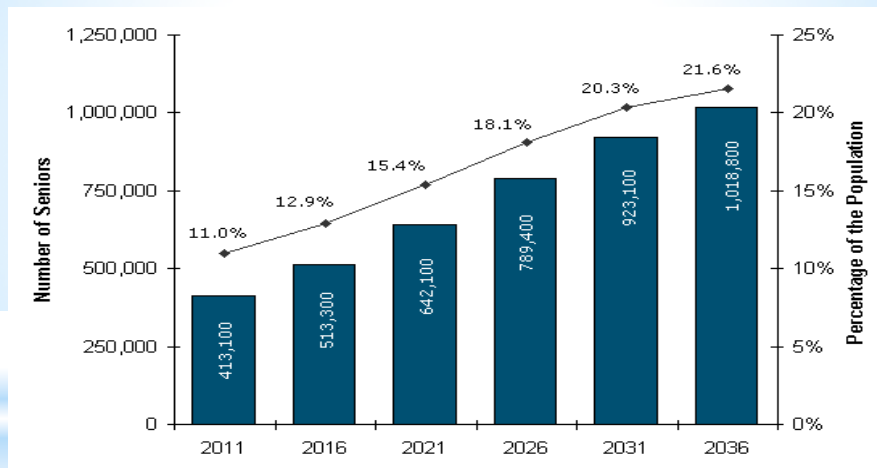
- Baby-boomers (people born between 1946 and 1965) as the contributors:
- In 2006, they were between 41 and 60 years old
- Canada's population would age rapidly until 2031, by the time the entire baby boom generation would have turned 65.
- 2006: 55-64 yrs = 3.7 million (↑28%)  
16.9% of working-age population (1:6)
- By 2016, 55-64 = >20% of the working-age population (1: 5).



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## Population aging in Alberta



[http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy\\_planning/factsheet\\_seniors/aging\\_population/how\\_fast/](http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/policy_planning/factsheet_seniors/aging_population/how_fast/)



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- Alberta continues to remain one of the youngest provinces in the coming years.
- In 2009, seniors accounted for about 10% of the total population (1 in 10).
- March 2011, 65+ -- 410,000
- 2031 ... projection of 65+ >923,000 (1 in 5 Albertans) with the last of the baby boomers reach 65 years of age

Government of Alberta



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An aging population =

Opportunities and Challenges

Multi-sectorial involvement:  
 finance, transportation, housing, health,  
 infrastructure, municipal affairs,  
 community services, public safety and  
 others.



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## What is social policy?

“Social policy describes societal visions – that is, values and beliefs that people hold about what a society, and the way society and humans interact.”

(Graham, Swift, & Delaney, 2011)



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## In practical sense ....

- A consistent course of action
- An attempt by the government to address a public issue.
- The selection of choices about the most appropriate means to a desired end.

Chi Loo (2011)  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Alberta Seniors



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## Public policy evolution in Alberta

- **Public administration based (1970s to early 1990s)**
  - Policy was rooted in consideration of what programs were needed and what level
- **Business planning based (Early 1990s to early 2000s)**
  - Policy based on “who” does “what”
- **Moving into public assurance role (2005+)**
  - Holistic approach to policy
  - More consideration to allocation of public goods and longer term societal outcomes

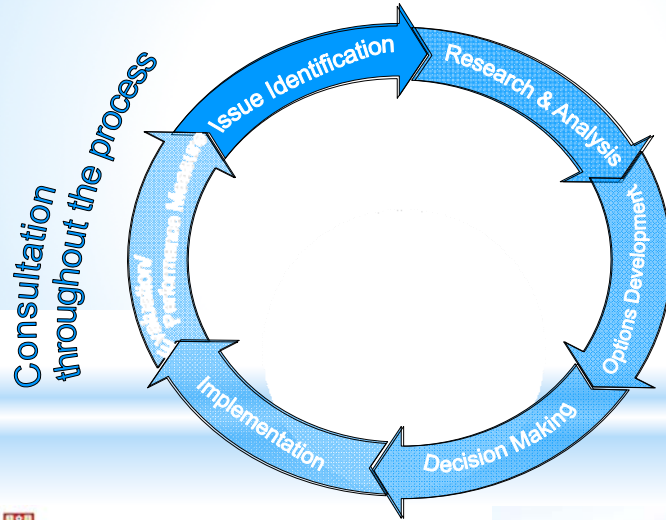


## Changing social contexts

- Increase of aging population
- Health care needs vs. expenditure
- Role of government vs. private & public
- Financial benefits vs. environmental stewardship
- Social media in public opinions
- Diverse population, diverse expectations



# Policy development process



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(Loo, 2011)

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2006 Research activities

2008 Demographic Planning Commission

2010 Aging Population Policy Framework



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## Demographic Planning Commission

- Established May 2008
- 7 “experts”
  - geriatric medicine, social work, non-profit sector, business sector, gerontology, sociology, and transportation
- 5 dialogue sessions with 100 stakeholder organizations
- Public survey with 10,170 responses



-To provide analysis and proposals to prepare for an aging population.

-A holistic approach for addressing Alberta's current and future seniors in effective and sustainable ways.

-Strategic directions and goals support consistent and coordinated government decision making.



# DPC Survey Findings

## Most Important Issues Facing Seniors

### Current Seniors

- 1 Being able to afford the cost of living
- 2 Being able to stay in the home
- 3 Affordability of pharmaceuticals and health care aids
- 4 Affording costs of home ownership
- 5 Finding a family doctor or getting access to health care

### Future Seniors

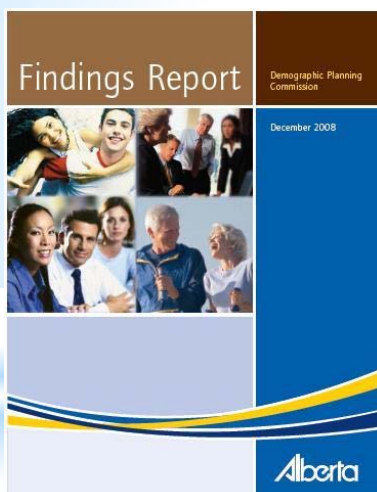
- 1 Being able to afford the cost of living
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- 3 Being able to stay in the home
- 4 Affording costs of home ownership
- 5 Affordability of pharmaceuticals and health care aids



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# Findings & Report (Loo, 2011)



December 2008

### •Key themes:

- Housing
- Healthy Living
- Health Care
- Services
- Transportation
- Finances
- Families & communities

<http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/seniors/tomorrow/FindingReport.pdf>



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## From Demographic Planning Consultations to Aging Population Policy Framework

- Demographic Planning Commission
  - *Findings Report*
- Cross-ministry Advisory Committee
  - Representation from 10 ministries providing input and advice.
- Research and analysis

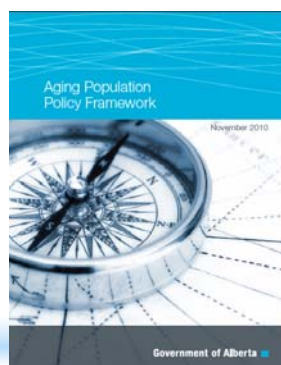


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## Aging Population Policy Framework Released November 8, 2010



[www.seniors.alberta.ca/  
Seniors/AgingPopulation](http://www.seniors.alberta.ca/Seniors/AgingPopulation)



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## Purposes

The *Aging Population Policy Framework*:

- To identify government's roles
- To communicate government's key policy directions
- To provide an overall context for coordinated and aligned policy, program and service development
- To provide a framework to inform the allocation of resources
- To foster improved collaboration and integration

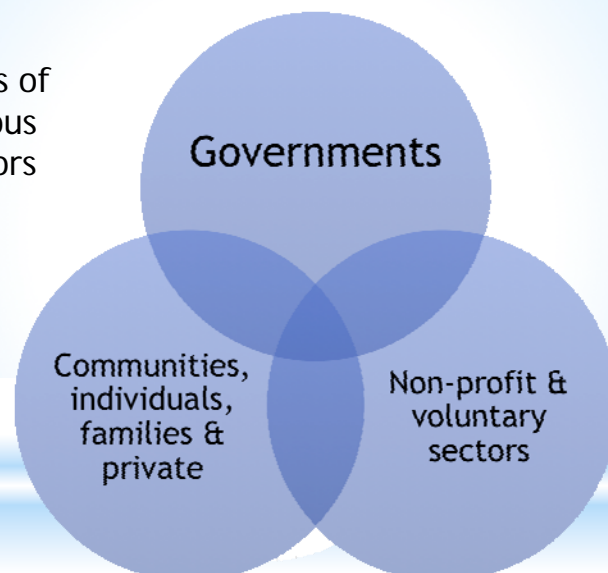


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Roles of  
various  
sectors



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## **Government of Alberta Roles & Responsibilities**

- Setting province-wide policy directions
- Facilitating collaboration among individuals, communities and governments
- Providing supports and services

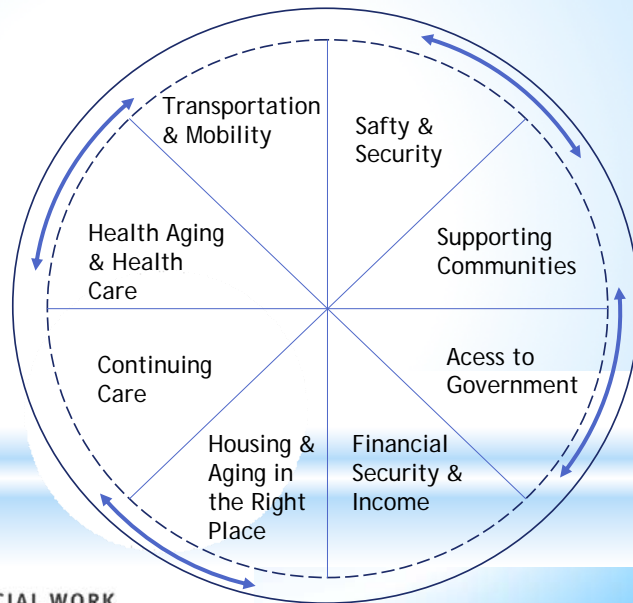


## **Roles and responsibilities of Non-Profit & Voluntary Sector**

- Providing community-based services that respond to local needs.
- Helping the Government of Alberta identify and respond to aging Albertans in need.



## Eight Strategic Policy Directions



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## 1. Financial Security and Income

### • Outcome:

- Albertans have access to adequate financial resources to meet their needs in their senior years.

### Policy directions:

- Support financial planning.
- Support workforce engagement.
- Appropriate, effective and sustainable targeted government-funded supports.



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## 2. Housing & Aging in the Right Place

- Outcome:

- Alberta seniors are able to reside in the place that is appropriate for their circumstances.

- Policy directions:

- Sufficient supply of affordable housing.
- Encouragement of market innovation and housing options.
- Efficient delivery of targeted government home supports.



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## 3. Continuing Care

- Outcome:

- Seniors have access to a range of continuing care services that enable them to reside in an environment that is appropriate for their circumstances.

- Policy directions:

- Foster diverse supply of affordable living, home care and community care services.
- Monitor safety and quality of government-funded services.
- Ensure appropriate level of services to support aging in place.



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## 4. Healthy Aging and Health Care

- Outcome:

- Alberta seniors are supported in maintaining optimum health as they age.

Policy directions:

- Encourage healthy living and healthy aging.
- Timely, efficient and effective health care services.
- Appropriate health workforce supply.



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## 5. Transportation and Mobility

- Outcome:

- Albertans have access to safe, affordable, appropriate and accessible transportation options during their senior years.

Policy directions:

- Supporting safe driving.
- Affordable, accessible, appropriate transportation options for non-drivers.



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## 6. Safety and Security

- Outcome:

- Alberta seniors are supported in maintaining optimum independence in making decisions about their lives and are free from abuse.

- Policy directions:

- Preventing and responding to elder abuse.
- Support appropriate decision making and planning for individuals and caregivers.



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## 7. Supportive Communities

- Outcome:

- Alberta seniors are engaged as full and welcome participants in their communities.

- Policy directions:

- Age-friendly communities.
- Recognition of seniors' contributions.
- Working with organizations to clarify mandates and expectations.



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## 8. Access to Government

- Outcome:
  - Alberta seniors are able to easily access Alberta government programs, services and supports.
- Policy directions:
  - Improve alignment of government programs and services.
  - Improve accessibility.



## Next steps & implementation

- Implementation plan developed by ten ministries.
- To be comprised of representatives from ministries having responsibility for issues identified in the *Framework*



## Would the Aging Population Policy Framework work?

Essential conditions for a social policy to be successful & be well received

- Clear goals, directions, and measurable outcomes
- Clarity in roles and responsibilities
- Public support from multiple sectors
- Financial commitment



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## Challenges & Future

- Are the objectives fulfilled?
- Is the scope well defined?
- Is the coverage comprehensive?
- Is the process engaging and informed?
- How would the outcomes be monitored and evaluated?



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## Is the future hopeful?

- Policy coordination and implementation (particularly across ministries) could be challenging.
- Financial implications of the framework not addressed.
- Flow through has to be sustained in various bureaucratic levels
- Political courage to apply and implement the framework for planning and evaluation.



## The End

## Thank you very much

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