

# GEF Seniors Housing

## Sustainability Framework

AUGUST 2022



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Edmonton is located within treaty 6 territory and within the métis homelands and métis nation of alberta region 4. We acknowledge this land as the traditional territories, traditional meeting grounds, gathering places and travelling routes of many first nations such as the nehiyaw (cree), denesuliné (dene), nakota sioux (stoney), anishinabae (saulteaux) and niitsitapi (blackfoot), métis and inuit peoples.

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The following document was commissioned by GEF Seniors Housing and was prepared by DIALOG.





# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

GEF Seniors Housing has a more than 60 year history of providing safe, welcoming, affordable, quality housing for seniors throughout many of Edmonton's neighbourhoods.

Quality, ecologically-sound housing is an essential need in our communities—now more than ever. At Sakaw Terrace we implemented low carbon heating systems to reduce our carbon emissions footprint. We also understand that housing is an essential element that contributes to a person's Quality of Life, and this framework emphasizes the importance of social sustainability and reinforces our people first philosophy.

We embarked on this journey of creating a Sustainability Framework because we understand the impact we have on our seniors, our staff, our city, and the environment we all share. Under the three pillars of Social, Environment, and Economic sustainability, our framework outlines a path for us to achieve advances in sustainability that are inspirational yet pragmatic, with clear, transparent goals to drive action.

**Dale Forbes**

**Chief Executive Officer**





# **PART 1: GEF SENIORS HOUSING & SUSTAINABILITY**

# ABOUT GEF SENIORS HOUSING

*GEF Seniors Housing is the largest provider of subsidized seniors' housing in Alberta.*

We provide friendly, affordable and secure housing and services to close to 4,000 seniors in Edmonton on a daily basis.

Our **Vision** is to “positively influence seniors’ quality of life” and our **Mission** is to be “leaders in friendly, affordable and secure housing and services for seniors”.

We offer a wide selection of seniors’ self-contained apartments and lodge accommodations throughout Edmonton, to provide seniors choices of where they want to live.

In 1959, our organization was established under provincial legislation as the Greater Edmonton Foundation (GEF).

Since then, we have continued working with the community as an active partner in the important work of providing quality housing for seniors from Edmonton and surrounding communities. Our apartment buildings and lodges offer accessible, affordable and safe housing in comfortable, supportive environments that promote opportunities for seniors to live and engage with others in ways that contribute to their quality of life.



## Quality of Life Philosophy

In support of GEF Seniors Housing's Vision and Mission, our Guiding Principles include working together to:

- Promote and respect individual **choice**, recognizing that each senior has knowledge and experience to be able to determine how best to live their life;
- Ensure each senior is treated fairly and with **dignity**, regardless of their age, gender identity, religious belief, ethnicity and culture, sexual orientation, financial means, ability or life experience;
- Foster opportunities that contribute to promoting one's **well-being** by supporting and encouraging each senior to live a healthy, independent life, where their voice is heard and respected;
- Encourage relationships between seniors, staff, and communities based on **respect, kindness, and compassion**;
- Promote **accountability** by providing each senior with the opportunity and encouragement to take ownership of, participate in, and provide feedback to the community in which they live.

Close to **4,000** seniors call a GEF community home



GEF Seniors Housing is the **largest provider** of subsidized seniors housing in Alberta



GEF Seniors Housing is a registered charity and we **welcome donations**





# OUR APPROACH – SETTING A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

## *Why a Sustainability Framework?*

Recent data from the Canadian Census 2021 tells us that seniors over the age of 85 are the fastest growing age group in the country, and the largest increase in proportions of seniors is happening this decade<sup>1</sup>. 82% of GEF seniors are between 71 and 100 years of age. Aging in Canada is coupled with complex systemic failures and vulnerabilities<sup>1</sup>. However, aging can be framed as an opportunity to enhance our society, economy, and culture.

The last 25 years in seniors living has seen a dramatic shift away from an institutional model to one that stresses the dignity and general wellbeing of the client, and the opportunity to maximize quality of life. At the same time, the needs of seniors are becoming increasingly more complex.

Concurrent with the focus on the client is the focus on the quality of work environment for staff and the integration of family members into seniors living to create environments that are stimulating and positive for all involved.

This Sustainability Framework is our opportunity to grow **sustainably** – socially, environmentally, and economically. This Framework will allow us to continue to deliver on our quality of life philosophy, without compromising the needs of future generations.

## *Why now?*

Currently, we believe that we excel in areas of sustainability requiring relatively low investment while delivering high impact and visibility. We demonstrate excellence in efficient operations which enable resources for social programming that contribute to clients' wellbeing. For areas where significant investment is required, this Framework sets out a plan for improvement through strategic thinking and alignment with funding sources.

This Sustainability Framework provides clear principles, key performance indicators (KPIs), and strategies to improve sustainability through a holistic, yet pragmatic lens embedded in the operations and culture of the organization.



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<sup>1</sup> [Aging & Thriving In the 21st Century - James Institute for Community | Canada Commons](#)

## *A Three Pillar Approach - with Community Wellbeing at the Forefront*

Delivering our Quality of Life Philosophy, sustainably and with purpose, requires a holistic approach that emphasizes the health and wellbeing of our community. To do this, our framework is founded on the three-pillar approach to sustainability.

Social sustainability and wellbeing are multi-faceted, multi-dimensional, and dynamic concepts. To capture the different aspects of wellbeing within the context of our community, this Sustainability Framework was created using Community Wellbeing: A Framework for the Design Professions<sup>2</sup>.

### *OUR SUSTAINABILITY PILLARS*



<sup>2</sup> [Community Wellbeing: A Framework for the Design Professions \(conferenceboard.ca\)](https://www.conferenceboard.ca/)

## **The Community Wellbeing Framework**

The Community Wellbeing Framework (CWBF) was conceptualized based on the definition of community wellbeing, which encompasses the essential domains related to the **social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political** conditions identified by individuals and their communities as essential for them to flourish and fulfill their potential. The Framework was used as a guide for understanding the relationship between the physical environment and the wellbeing of people and natural systems. The CWBF is well aligned to the three pillars of Social, Environmental, and Economic sustainability, on which this Framework is founded.



## Our Sustainability Purpose Statements

GEF is recognized by the community as a respected and valued Seniors Housing Organization serving low to moderate income seniors in Edmonton.

Through our focus on the 3 pillars of **Social, Environmental, and Economic** sustainability, we are committed to positively contributing to our clients' quality of life by providing homes and workplaces that celebrate diversity and provide a strong sense of community that encourages residents, tenants, and employees to flourish.

We will continue to meet the evolving needs of Edmonton's aging population, with a commitment to environmental stewardship that leverages opportunities to enhance both the natural environment and the lives of our community members.

### SOCIAL CULTURAL POLITICAL

We will nurture a sense of belonging, learning, and engagement, supporting clients and employees from various backgrounds to recognize and celebrate our diversity across the organization.

Our goals will be clearly ingrained in our governance system, with a transparent and accessible method of input so clients and staff have a voice.

We will contribute to a meaningful quality of life for both clients and staff, by promoting homes and workplaces that enhance social engagement, social support, and community safety so that individuals and their communities can flourish.

### ENVIRONMENTAL

We will sustain and enhance the healthy functioning of natural systems, understanding the link between the natural environment, health, and wellbeing. We will serve the needs of our current community without depleting the resources needed by future generations.

### ECONOMIC

We will leverage sustainable operations to expand our offerings that support affordable, accessible, and high-quality client services, and provide long-term resilience to our operations model.



## Our Journey – How We Got Here

Guided by the leadership of an engaged and community-minded Board of Directors who identified and encouraged the need for a more holistic, integrated approach to planning – where GEF Seniors Housing doesn't just exist but rather co-exists within the broad community – the Sustainability Framework was created in close consultation with key stakeholders internal and external to the organization.

Our journey began with a baselining exercise to determine the current state of Sustainability at GEF Seniors Housing. Establishment of a baseline provided a starting point to track progress towards key areas of action and supports the implementation of the Framework. The baselining exercise was comprised of two methodologies for collecting data and input: a review of GEF documentation, and internal stakeholder interviews.

Following the baselining exercise, DIALOG facilitated a virtual workshop on March 16, 2022. The workshop provided an inclusive and collaborative opportunity for GEF stakeholders to share their thoughts regarding the purpose, vision, and principles of the Sustainability Framework. The key findings of the baselining exercise, and outcomes of the workshop have informed the development of the Sustainability Framework.



# **PART 2:**

## **PRINCIPLES, STRATEGIES, and ACTIONS**

# ***Our Sustainability Principles***

## **Social/Cultural/Political**



**Employee Quality  
of Work Life**



**Client Quality of Life**



**Sense of Belonging &  
Accessibility**



**Transparency, Agency &  
Engagement**



**Equity, Diversity &  
Inclusion**

## **Environmental**



**Energy, Carbon &  
Climate Resilience**



**Transportation**



**Materials & Waste**



**Delight & Enjoyment**



**Water & Ecology**

## **Economic**



**Funding Sustainability  
& Wellbeing**



**Maintenance**



**Investment in  
Community**



**Technology &  
Connectivity**





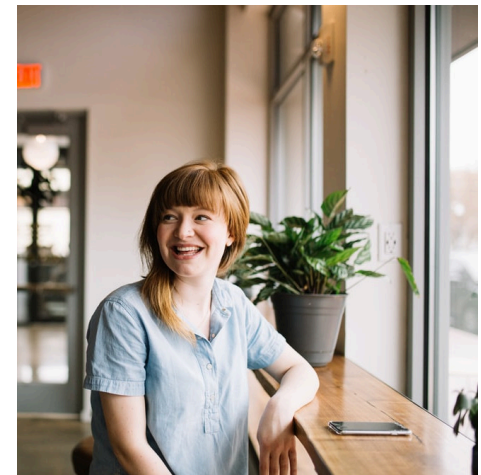
## Employee Quality of Work Life

GEF recognizes that the environment we live and work in directly impacts our wellbeing. Prioritizing a holistic goal of providing a high quality of work life for employees acknowledges that employees who are well-supported, in turn, are better able to support the quality of life of GEF clients. This symbiotic relationship is the foundation to creating and maintaining a strong sense of “home”, for our clients and promoting a meaningful and rewarding workplace for our staff.

Quality of Life as a principle is paramount to GEF, demonstrated by the Quality of Life Philosophy which supports the organization’s Vision and Mission. As such, there are several initiatives in place to support a high quality of life for both staff and residents.

To support employee health and wellness, GEF offers a Corporate Wellness Program which offers employees subsidized membership rates to access City of Edmonton Recreation Facilities and a Mental Health and Wellness policy with access to mental health benefits through the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). Together with standard leave policies, GEF seeks to promote and sustain a healthy and supportive organizational culture. Results of the 2021 Employee Engagement Survey indicate that 75% employees feel that GEF actively support their wellbeing.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	2020
Employee Quality of Life	% of employees who feel GEF actively supports their wellbeing	75%
Short-term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete annual comprehensive review of the benefits program, including mental health and emotional wellbeing programs, offered to employees to ensure offerings meet demand</li> <li>2. Provide additional volunteer and fundraising opportunities that are across all sites and central services, and increase communications/engagement around volunteer opportunities</li> <li>3. Improve list of discount incentives for staff, leveraging GEF's existing partnerships and vendors</li> </ol>		





### Client Quality of Life

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted conditions of isolation and loneliness among seniors, while operational and demographic shifts have presented new barriers to community relationships.

The GEF has a number of ongoing and specific initiatives that address quality of life for clients, including those that address the physical environment – such as rigorous standards for the reduction of noise pollution, employing design principles that support and promote senior friendly, crime-free, and barrier-free spaces, as well as amenities and programming that support recreation, leisure, and fitness. GEF is committed to ensuring that staff have the appropriate training and designation/certification – e.g. Chefs with Red Seal Certification -- ensuring a high level of expertise in service delivery.

The majority of GEF buildings provide space dedicated for social gatherings. Many of the clients' units provide living spaces that can accommodate guests. Buildings also have spaces where clients and their families and friends may gather for private functions. Through Activity and Wellness programming, clients are also connected to the external community via trips and outings.



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Client Quality of Life	Average vacancy rates	9% Lodges 5% Apartments
	% of food offerings that meet lodge residents' dietary needs	75% Lodges
	% of food offerings that meet lodge residents' expectations for taste and appeal	64% Lodges
	% of buildings with Fitness and / or Recreation facilities	100% Lodges 73% Apartments
	% of Properties with dedicated Social Gathering Space	82% Lodges 88% Apartments
	% of outings and trips offered as part of the Activity and Wellness Program	Not yet tracked
	Average client participation in Activity and Wellness Programs	Not yet tracked
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete an annual comprehensive review of the Activity and Wellness Program to recognize the variability for each building/community, recognize the needs of the changing population, identify staffing capacity required, and apply lessons learned</li> <li>2. Commit to holding at least one event per year related to affordable, healthy food options for apartment tenants</li> <li>3. Gather input from lodge residents on food preferences and incorporate into meal planning</li> <li>4. Implement tracking mechanisms to gather data on participation in Activity and Wellness programming to inform future programs</li> <li>5. Implement tracking mechanisms to gather data on client use of amenity spaces to inform future retrofits and new construction projects</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with local libraries, newspapers or other organizations to provide brain games in GEF common spaces</li> <li>2. Organize transportation to points of interest for seniors to spend time outdoors / walking</li> <li>3. Set up book and music sharing libraries in common spaces at GEF buildings</li> </ol>		





## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

GEF provides an open, welcoming, and inclusive working environment where current employees represent over 40 different cultures. To support and promote a healthy and respectful workplace, GEF has developed an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy and will review gaps in representation –for example, increased opportunities for engagement with Indigenous representatives.

78% of employees at GEF Seniors Housing are female, and a representative number of female employees are in management roles. To further support gender inclusivity, GEF has made available the opportunity for employees to identify their personal pronouns.

For clients and staff to celebrate their religion, GEF has reflection rooms and religious programming available for residents at 75% of lodge sites and tenants at 3% of apartment sites.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion	% leadership roles held by women or non-binary individuals	70%
	% non-management roles held by women or non-binary individuals	78%
	% of properties with multi-faith space for spiritual/religious activities	75% Lodges 3% Apartments
	% of employees who believe the organization is purpose oriented and socially responsible	85%
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leverage the housing intake interviews to identify diversity in GEF clients to inform programming, building design, and other needs for GEF.</li> <li>2. Complete an assessment of GEF's current client demographic and compare to the demographics of seniors in the City of Edmonton. Identify any perceived barriers to inclusivity (language, other).</li> <li>3. Provide language translations and support for new clients who speak in the other commonly spoken languages used in the City of Edmonton.</li> <li>4. Ensure GEF's entertainment and social programming includes a diversity of perspectives to increase exposure to diverse groups.</li> <li>5. Explore partnerships with Indigenous housing groups. Provide opportunities to share GEF's knowledge on affordable housing development with others.</li> <li>6. Include Indigenous Land Acknowledgement on publications and at events. Explore opportunities for providing Indigenous languages on signages and graphics.</li> <li>7. Review and retrofit spaces to accommodate a diversity of religious or cultural activities.</li> <li>8. Review employee recruiting methods to ensure there are no perceived barriers to individuals with diverse backgrounds and/or needs.</li> <li>9. Engage employees in on-going education and training on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, through such methods as tool kits, articles, internal publications, internal reading materials, and internal events.</li> <li>10. Establish partnership with Edmonton Pride Seniors Group for additional programming or staff training for GEF.</li> <li>11. Create a cultural calendar to increase awareness of diversity and to share with all GEF employees.</li> </ol>		



## Sense of Belonging & Accessibility

Cultivating a sense of belonging depends on individual and collective opportunities to feel connected and engaged in civic and community life, regardless of background or ability. With an aging population, GEF is supporting more seniors with increasingly complex needs, including limited mobility. The FM Standards and Design Guidelines reference Seniors Friendly Design for all new developments and major renovation projects will meet or exceed barrier-free design requirements. The Design Guidelines also reference provisions for barrier-free and future adaptable units. Based on amenity data provided, while all GEF sites have barrier-free access, not all sites have barrier-free units. GEF may consider retrofits to properties that improve barrier-free accessibility as needed to meet clients' accessibility requirements.



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Sense of Belonging & Accessibility	% of sites that are barrier free	50% Lodges 36% Apartments
	% of employees who experience a sense of belonging at work	81%
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Broaden definitions of accessibility to acknowledge ongoing demographic changes in seniors, such as evolving cognitive abilities, and incorporate into design guidelines / process</li> <li>2. Create long-term suite renewal plan for barrier free upgrades based on client demand</li> <li>3. Provide food growth gardens at existing GEF sites with available landscape space.</li> <li>4. Engage with local artists for opportunities to incorporate public art at GEF sites that represent diverse cultural heritage</li> <li>5. Provide accessibility features for virtual programming for staff, such as subtitles on videos</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work towards 10% of total GEF units being designated as accessible units</li> </ol>		



## Transparency, Agency & Engagement

The pandemic has highlighted how ongoing engagement, transparency and agency is critical to maintain healthy connections and how this can happen in multiple ways thanks to new virtual tools and platforms that can increase access and participation. GEF demonstrates transparency by publishing a number of documents online to share insights on the organization, including the Strategic Plan, quarterly newsletter, stories and profiles. The organization also provides clients with a physical bulletin board in each building to encourage and promote community engagement.

GEF engages regularly with staff, clients and their families, seeking feedback through surveys and interviews. GEF also provides a feedback form in each building and a virtual form on the website as an avenue for confidential comments to be submitted from residents, tenants, family members, visitors, and others.

To support the independence and agency of clients, GEF provides opportunities for clients to contribute to their own wellbeing with the ability to furnish and decorate their living spaces, providing opportunities for self-expression and personalization. Additional opportunities outside of living spaces will also be considered.

GEF staff are also supported in fulfilling their potential with the Learning and Development Program supporting educational opportunities to expand employee skillset. This program supports career advancement within the organization and contributes to staff retention.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Transparency, Agency & Engagement	Annual opportunities for feedback / comment surveys	4
	% of employees that find a sense of accomplishment from their work	81%
	% of employees that feel GEF's mission provides them meaningful direction	78%
	Employee participation rates at social events	Not yet tracked
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Publish annual update to Sustainability Framework</li> <li>2. Close feedback loop on all surveys by publishing annual action plans outlining GEF's steps</li> <li>3. Explore opportunities for personal expression outside of individual units (boards, displays, doors)</li> </ol>		





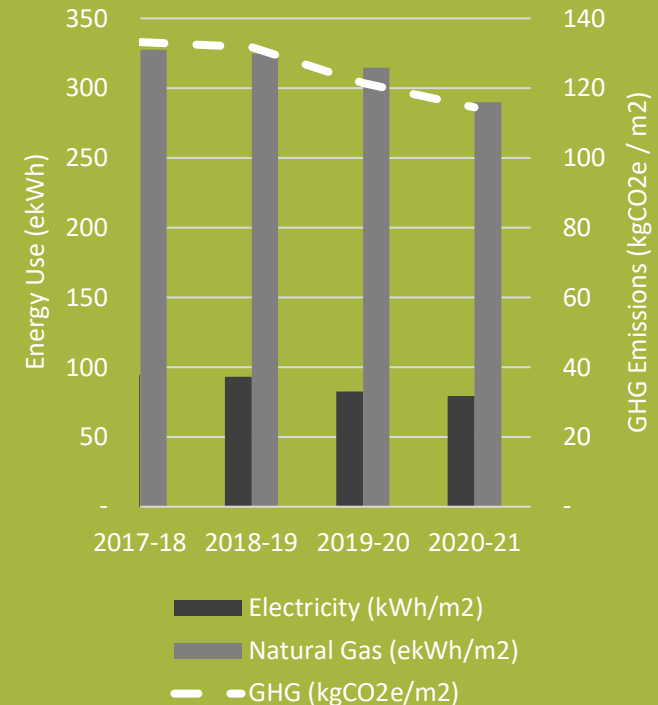
## Energy, Carbon & Climate Resilience

The main sources of energy used throughout our building's portfolio are electricity from the provincial grid, as well as natural gas used for heating and domestic hot water. As of 2019, the majority of electricity in Alberta is generated by fossil fuels - approximately 36% from coal and 54% from natural gas<sup>3</sup>. The remaining electricity is produced from renewables, including wind, hydro, and biomass. While the province is currently transitioning the grid away from coal to natural gas by 2030, it is predicted that the majority of generation will remain as fossil-fuel based and comparatively high carbon intensity.

Reducing energy use will not only reduce our carbon footprint, but also reduces our operating costs to maintain healthy buildings –these resources can be directed towards other initiatives that support improving sustainability and quality of life. As such, it is essential for GEF to integrate high performance designs for any new buildings and retrofits to existing buildings in order to reduce total energy use.

We also recognize that Edmonton's climate is changing – increasing temperatures and precipitation, and low air quality events from forest fires have been projected by the City of Edmonton<sup>4</sup>. To expand our efforts on our Emergency Preparedness Plan, we will integrate resiliency strategies to help protect buildings and occupants from future climate risks. To date, we have already begun implementing strategies to mitigate air quality issues during forest fire season.

Greenhouse gas emissions from GEF's buildings energy use have decreased by 14% from 2017 levels. This is primarily due to retrofit work such as LED lighting upgrades, water fixture retrofits, and upgrades to mechanical systems. It should be noted that this data may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and has not been normalized in this analysis.



<sup>3</sup> CER – Provincial and Territorial Energy Profiles – Alberta ([cer-rec.gc.ca](http://cer-rec.gc.ca))

<sup>4</sup> [Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan](#)



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Energy, Carbon & Climate Resilience	Annual energy use intensity / energy consumption	417 ekWh/m <sup>2</sup>
	Annual renewable energy generation	Not currently tracked
	Annual average greenhouse gas emissions intensity	132 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>
Short-Term Strategies		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Align our Design Standards for new construction to target material improvements over code minimums for energy efficiency and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Optimize massing and density, envelope assemblies, and mechanical systems to balance carbon reductions and capital costs, while aligning with the latest version of NECB as a minimum</li> <li>2. Mandate purchase of Energy Star certified equipment to improve efficiency and opportunities for rebates</li> <li>3. Complete a net zero carbon feasibility analysis at the early design stages of every new construction project, and implement any measures that are cost neutral over the lifecycle of the project (NPV neutral). Explore partnerships with third-party renewable energy providers that can provide upfront capital</li> <li>4. Develop an Existing Building Decarbonization Strategy, based on archetypes / clusters of existing buildings in the portfolio (based on design, vintage, etc.)</li> <li>5. Prioritize internal functional audits / ASHRAE Level 1 audits on highest energy using buildings in the portfolio (top 25%). Based on results, apply upgrades to building archetypes</li> <li>6. Seek funding for buildings in the GEF portfolio plan that are due to renewal to study feasibility of deep carbon retrofit (ASHRAE level III)</li> <li>7. Build a Net Zero Carbon development as a pilot project to inform future developments before 2030</li> <li>8. Include considerations for space cooling though passive or active measures in any new construction projects while balancing carbon objectives</li> <li>9. Retrofit existing common areas in any of the buildings without a cooling system to include air conditioning capability</li> <li>10. Conduct training for GEF building operations staff to improve operational efficiency</li> <li>11. Review and analyze utility consumption on a monthly/annual basis</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design new buildings to be net zero operating carbon</li> <li>2. Retrofit existing buildings to be net zero operating carbon by 2050</li> <li>3. Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from GEF portfolio by 30% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 from 2019 levels</li> <li>4. Consider seeking funding for a portfolio wide Climate Change Resiliency Strategy to identify major climate risks and opportunities for action</li> </ol>		



## Transportation

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Edmonton. At the same time, the ability for seniors to meet their daily needs independently is a fundamental determinant of quality of life. As such, transportation is a key principle for both reducing environmental impacts of GEF operations, as well as supporting quality of life for seniors.

The City of Edmonton has an average transit score of 49 out of 100, and an average Walk Score of 40 out of 100. The average transit and walk scores for GEF buildings are slightly above the average for the City, as our buildings are generally located along public transit routes. Transit and walk scores, however, do not generally account for safety or accessibility considerations that would specifically affect seniors' populations.

From an emissions perspective, GEF has a relatively small fleet of vehicles, mainly vans and trucks, for our operations. Compared to carbon emissions related to our building operations, transportation emissions are minor. To reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles for commuting staff, GEF offers a corporate discount for employees to purchase bus passes, and we are currently exploring opportunities to decarbonize the corporate fleet through electric vehicles and charging stations at various GEF locations.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Transportation	# of electric vehicle charging stations	0
	Annual Fleet Vehicle Emissions	125 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e
	% of properties with bicycle parking spaces	10% Lodges 3% Apartments
	Average Walk Score	50
	Average Transit Score	53
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install EV chargers at building sites to support electric vehicle uptake</li> <li>2. Review fleet vehicle inventory and consider replacement with electric vehicles when new purchases are required</li> <li>3. Implement requirements within procurement agreements for service providers with fleet optimization</li> <li>4. Prioritize food procurement secured from local farms/vendors to reduce transportation related to food services and deliveries</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include mixed-use buildings into portfolio planning that include space for services to meet senior's daily needs</li> </ol>		



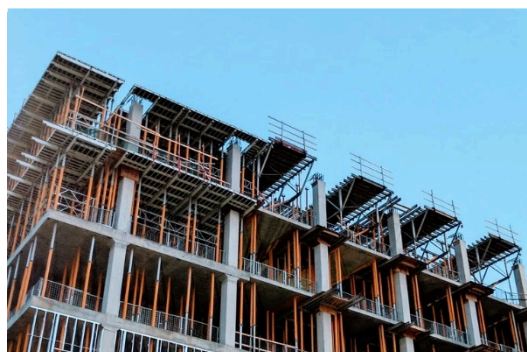


## Materials & Waste

The extraction of raw materials and manufacturing of products is a significant driver of climate change. In fact, manufacturing, industry, and construction represent the second largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Edmonton. In addition, disposing of materials requires space for landfills, which have negative impacts on air quality and the ecosystem. GEF has an impact on materials and waste throughout our operations:

- As property developers, our construction projects have an impact on climate change through the greenhouse gas emissions associated with extraction and processing of materials (embodied carbon), as well as the notable amounts of waste generally produced from construction projects.
- As property managers, our residential buildings generate waste from households. We use the City's waste collection services for our buildings, collecting both landfill waste and recycling.
- As an organization, our operations themselves use materials and generate waste.

GEF has been exploring opportunities to reduce waste across our portfolio. For food services, single-use plastics are only used in rare occasions such as when there are safety implications involved. On the other hand, the use of paper for printing has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where the requirement to share urgent information with clients had increased. Tracking our impact, whether through our daily operations or on construction projects, is an important starting point to reducing our waste production.



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Materials and Waste	Operating Waste Diversion Rate (estimate)	40%
	Construction Waste Diversion Rate	Not tracked
	Annual pages printed for operations	1.073M
	Waste Streams Collected	Waste Recycling Organics (Lodge only)
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide opportunity for organics waste collection through lodge kitchens</li> <li>2. Review food-related services to identify opportunities to reduce food waste related to over production</li> <li>3. Select construction materials with low embodied carbon such as concrete with high supplementary cementing materials (SCM), timber from sustainably managed forests, and steel with high recycled content</li> <li>4. Implement mandatory 75% construction and demolition waste diversion for new project developments</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore potential for on-site composting for any GEF building sites with greenhouses or food growth gardens</li> </ol>		

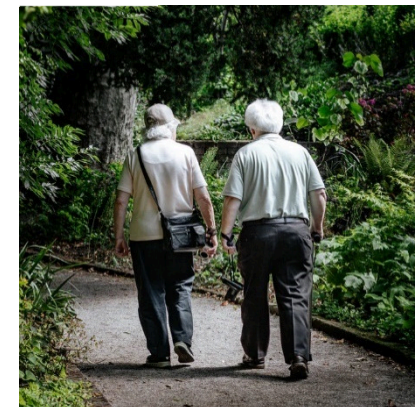
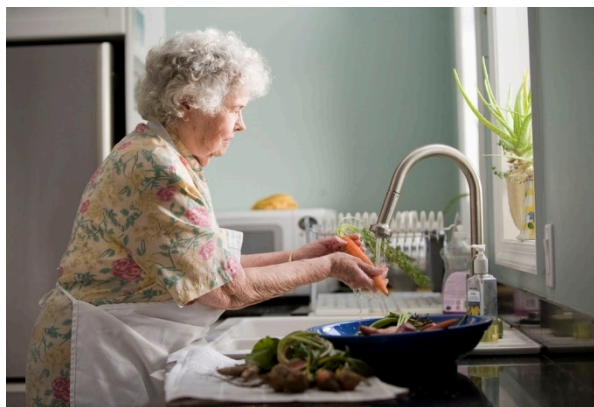




## Water & Ecology

Water is a valuable natural resource. Collectively, our buildings consumed 321,391 cubic meters in 2021, which is equivalent to about 129 Olympic sized swimming pools. Water conservation measures have been implemented in recent years, such as installing aerators on faucets. Our strategy to further reduce water consumption includes auditing the water use of our existing buildings, and installing water efficient fixtures in our retrofits and new construction projects.

GEF provides garden amenities in the majority of lodge and apartment sites positively contributing to the buildings' aesthetics and connections to nature for clients. The preservation and restoration of natural ecosystems and their functions is an important consideration given the amount of land that GEF is responsible for. While many of the GEF sites have soft scaped outdoor space, much of this area is turf grass. Naturalized sites that include native and drought tolerant plantings can improve site biodiversity and help to protect and restore natural wildlife habitats. Naturalized sites also support natural hydrology patterns and on-site storm water retention to protect sites from flooding.



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Water & Ecology	% of properties with pollinator or native species in landscape	82% Lodges 40% Apartments
	Annual potable water consumption intensity (m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> )	1.23 Lodges 1.3 Apartments
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update design standards for new developments to restore native or adapted vegetation for 30% of the site area</li> <li>2. Update design standards for new developments to mandate use of water sense labeled fixtures</li> <li>3. For buildings in the portfolio plan that are due for renewal initiatives, use water sense fixtures to reduce water use</li> <li>4. For top 25% of water consumers in the building's portfolio, conduct water audit to determine water conservation strategies</li> <li>5. Use captured rainwater to water plants and gardens for buildings with onsite greenhouse or community gardens</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For existing sites with permanent irrigation consider using captured rainwater to reduce potable water consumption</li> <li>2. Integrate low impact development storm water management strategies for new site developments</li> </ol>		



## Delight & Enjoyment

The Delight and Enjoyment principle reflects how residents can enjoy their surrounding environment, and the impact of the built environment on health and comfort.

Thermal comfort and air quality are important determinants of quality of life. All GEF buildings include thermal controls for clients' suites, supporting thermal comfort. We have begun purchasing air quality monitors, which will be used to review all sites for indoor air quality and creating a strategy to improve quality where needed. Many GEF buildings include on-site green space and outdoor amenities for clients, and we will continue explore opportunities to leverage existing greenspace for further activation, furnishings, art installations, or gardening.

For construction and renovation projects, we will develop a healthy materials strategy that will prioritize materials that contribute to healthy indoor air quality.



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Delight & Enjoyment	% of properties with on-site garden or greenhouse	90% Lodges 45% Apartments
	% of properties with on-site green space	80% Lodges 89% Apartments
	Average PM2.5 Levels in common areas/facilities	Not yet tracked
	Average total volatile organic compound (TVOC) concentration level	
	Average CO2 Levels in common areas/facilities	
	% of properties that include balconies	40% Lodges 20% Apartments
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement a healthy materials procurement strategy that prioritizes materials that contribute to healthy indoor air quality</li> <li>2. Complete a hazardous materials assessment (for example, asbestos, lead paints, etc.) of existing, older buildings to determine an appropriate abatement strategy</li> <li>3. Consider opportunities to integrate informal gathering spaces to existing green space for those buildings where none currently exist</li> </ol>		
Long-Term Aspirations		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement monitor and tracking of indoor air quality indicators</li> <li>2. Explore opportunities to leverage existing greenspace for further activities, furnishings, art installations, or gardening</li> </ol>		



## Funding Sustainability & Wellbeing

Incentive, funding, and grants programs are moving towards requiring sustainability initiatives for eligibility. Having this robust Sustainability Framework in place allows us to prepare the organization for these opportunities.

Currently, GEF maintains a Quality of Life fund to support the well-being of clients through the provision of services and amenities to enhance their quality of life. The fund is supported by fundraising events, incentive programs on purchasing, as well as revenue generated from laundry services. GEF also maintains a per-client recreation budget for the Activity and Wellness Program plans, which is highly important to contributing to social sustainability and wellbeing of clients. The Activity and Wellness Program manages community events and entertainment. The organization also supports clients through the Community Support Program, which connects seniors to opportunities and resources in the community.

The Community Support Program and the Activity and Wellness Program do not receive external funding, despite their importance to seniors' health and wellbeing. To explore additional revenue streams, GEF included a daycare facility at Ottewell Place, which also contributes to multi-generational interactions. GEF is exploring more opportunities for mixed use communities to provide additional revenue streams, and leveraging our position as a not-for-profit registered charitable organization to increase community donations.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Funding Sustainability Initiatives	Quality of Life funds raised by GEF through donations/ fundraising	\$121,000
<b>Short-Term Strategies and Actions</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Track incentive programs, funds, grants, and forgivable loans that are available to GEF to enable sustainable building practices</li> <li>2. For any new development, commit to exploring building mixed-use developments with rentable ground floor space to provide additional revenue streams while also supporting walkable communities where feasible</li> <li>3. Leverage position as a not-for-profit registered charitable organization to increase community donations</li> </ol>		
<b>Long-Term Aspirations</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pursue funding for and achieve ISO 50001 certification to demonstrate leadership in the non-profit industry</li> </ol>		







## Investment in Community

GEF partners with a variety of other non-profit organizations that support seniors' quality of life and provide family support services, including:

- **Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE)**- GEF provides one floor of an apartment building that SAGE uses as a Seniors Safe House – the only one in Edmonton.
- **Skills Society** – GEF provides space in 3 buildings that Skills use for their clients who have developmental disabilities.
- **Operation Friendship Seniors Society** – GEF provide maintenance services to all Operation Friendship buildings.
- **Alberta Health Services** – GEF supports a community-based Mental Health Program where we provide 38 units and associated accommodation supports to AHS clients 55+ at Ottewell Manor.

Various volunteer opportunities are provided to clients throughout the year. Engagement in these opportunities has decreased by more than 50% since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to re-invigorate the Volunteer Program, we are increasing communication with clients regarding available volunteer opportunities, and exploring additional avenues to provide opportunities for varying skillsets and interests, for volunteers from within and outside of GEF buildings.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Investment in Community	# of on-going partnerships with non-profit organizations	6
	# of annual client volunteer hours	350
	# of partnerships with community organizations	31
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
1. Increase client access to and participation in volunteering by exploring opportunities for partnership with community organizations, increasing frequency of communications, and ensuring adequate variety of volunteer opportunities to meet abilities and interest of seniors.		
Long-Term Aspirations		
1. Work collaboratively with clients and community members to provide GEF common space to community organizations for programming and volunteer events		







## Maintenance

Proper and proactive maintenance of our assets is paramount to GEF. We ensure that buildings are well-maintained, healthy, and vibrant places to live. The maintenance of the buildings is part of the commitment to Quality of Life, and investments are thoughtfully planned to create and maintain places where people want to live, and can live safely.

As part of the 2020 Annual Experience Survey, 95% of clients noted that they are satisfied with the overall maintenance of the building they live in, and 94% of clients are satisfied with the overall maintenance of the exterior of the building they live in. In order to take our maintenance approach to the next level, we will be implementing green cleaning policies and procedures that will reduce our impact on the environment, as well as improve health of our staff and clients.

Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Maintenance	# of maintenance projects annually	136
	% green cleaning products	Not yet tracked
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement a green cleaning policy to reduce levels of chemical, biological, and particulate contaminants that can compromise air quality, human health, building finishes, building systems, and the environment, while adhering to Public Health, and Infection, Prevention, and Control (IPC) standards and regulations</li> <li>2. Purchase cleaning products that are certified by a third party such as UL EcoLogo or Green Seal</li> <li>3. Develop and integrate a pest management policy to reduce exposure to harmful pesticides and notify clients when pest treatments are occurring</li> </ol>		





## Technology & Connectivity

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened society's awareness of the impacts of social isolation on mental health, and the need to be digitally connected. Over the course of the pandemic, GEF adopted several digital technologies for both clients and staff.

During the pandemic, GEF introduced technology-based programming to offset the impacts of social isolation on clients. iPads with cellular service were provided to clients to expand engagement opportunities with other seniors, as well as their families.

At the same time, virtual programming isn't always appropriate for senior populations. However, in today's society, technology and connectivity are important for maintaining a high quality of life. We provide Wi-Fi in common areas of the buildings for clients and visitors, and will explore opportunities to host education sessions for seniors on using technology.



Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2020
Technology & Connectivity	# of clients attending virtual programming	125
	# of clients requesting to borrow iPads	200
	# of virtual staff meetings	9
Short-Term Strategies and Actions		
1. Host education sessions for seniors to use technology		
Long-Term Aspirations		
1. Explore partnerships with service providers to negotiate a competitive rate for Wi-Fi within clients' units		

# **PART 3:**

## **IMPLEMENTATION, GOVERNANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

# IMPLEMENTATION, GOVERNANCE, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## Governance

Our Sustainability Framework is a living document, which will evolve as we grow and change with our community. Our *Chief Executive Officer*, with the active involvement of the senior leadership team, will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Framework and identifying key areas for improvements over time. We have committed to reviewing the Framework on an annual basis, with a comprehensive review every three years.

In concert with the annual review, the *Senior Leadership Committee*, comprising of department portfolio leads, will be responsible for on-going reporting through the Reporting Framework (Appendix A) on an annual basis to track the impact of our strategies on sustainability and health and wellbeing.



## Implementation

The success of implementing our Framework is grounded on accountability through our organization. Throughout the process of creating this Framework, we have involved our community at all levels, from the Board of Directors to staff that are responsible for the daily operations of our facilities. Each community member plays an equally important role in achieving our sustainability purpose. To ensure accountability is carried over the next years in implementation, the **Senior Leadership Committee** will be responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of our identified strategies.

To maintain momentum, the Committee will meet quarterly and be responsible for providing updates related to their assigned strategies to our Board of Directors.

## Exploring Funding Opportunities

Many of the actions identified within the Framework can be met at relatively low costs, but can have a significant impact on the environment and health of our community. At the same time, specific actions may require additional costs that GEF Seniors Housing will have to carefully plan and prepare for. As such, we will explore funding programs that will enable our low carbon, healthy community strategies. For example, we will explore programs available from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation, and others that align with our long-term sustainability purpose.



### *Further Areas for Study*

This Framework sets our priorities and direction over the next five year period related to sustainability and community wellbeing. While we have set clear goals for the organization, additional studies are required to determine the best value approach to realizing these goals, for example:

- Existing Building Decarbonization Strategy + Design Guidelines for New Developments
- Demographics Analysis for Clients and Employees
- Food Waste Monitoring and Reduction Strategy
- Climate Change Resiliency Strategy

Completing these studies is a part of our implementation of this Framework, and will lead to additional areas for action.

### *Accountability*

This Framework was built upon engagement with many GEF staff members to represent a fulsome approach to sustainability for the organization. Successfully implementing this policy will require continuing the same momentum around engagement of community members. We will provide updates to our Framework implementation through our newsletter, “In the Loop”, that is provided to all staff on a bi-monthly basis, and will publish our annual reporting on this Framework to our website for all to access.





# **APPENDIX A: REPORTING FRAMEWORK**

GEF Seniors Housing - Sustainability Framework

# Reporting Framework

Updated: August, 2022

Framework Pillars	Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Metric	Baseline (2022)		Data Source
				Lodge	Apartments	
Social, Cultural, Political	Cultural Domain					
	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	% leadership roles held by women or non-binary individuals	%	70%		Current % based on employee list by gender provided by GEF.
		% non-management roles held by women or non-binary individuals	%	78%		Current % based on employee list by gender provided by GEF.
		% of properties with multi-faith space for spiritual/religious activities	%	75%	3%	Amenity data
		% of employees who believe the organization is purpose oriented and socially responsible	%	85%		Based on Kincentric employee survey report provided by GEF
		% of sites that are barrier free	%	50%	36%	Amenity data
	Sense of Belonging & Accessibility	% of employees who experience a sense of belonging at work	%	81%		Based on Kincentric employee survey report provided by GEF
		Political Domain				
	Transparency, Agency & Engagement	Annual opportunities for feedback / comment surveys	#	2		Survey Information
		% of employees that find a sense of accomplishment from their work	%	81%		Based on Kincentric employee survey report provided by GEF
		% of employees that feel GEF's mission provides them meaningful direction	%	78%		Based on Kincentric employee survey report provided by GEF
		Employee participation rates at social events	%	not yet tracked		
		Social Domain				
	Client Quality of Life	Average vacancy rates	%	9%	5%	GEF Client Profile Data Collection
		% of food offerings that meet residents dietary needs	%	75%	N/A	% based on 2020 Experience Survey Report
		% of food offerings that meet resident expectations for taste and appeal	%	64%	N/A	% based on 2020 Experience Survey Report
		% of buildings with Fitness and / or Recreation facilities	%	100%	73%	Amenity data
		% of Properties with Dedicated Social Gathering Space	%	82%	88%	Amenity data
		Average client participation in Activity and Wellness Programs	#	not yet tracked		
	Employee Quality of Life	% of employees who feel GEF actively supports their wellbeing	%	75%		Based on Kincentric employee survey report provided by GEF



GEF Seniors Housing - Sustainability Framework

# Reporting Framework

Updated: August, 2022

Framework Pillars	Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Metric	Baseline (2022)		Data Source
				Lodge	Apartments	
Environmental Sustainability	Environmental Domain					
	Energy, Carbon & Climate Resilience	Annual energy use intensity	ekWh/m2	417		Utility Consumption Data - 2019
		Annual renewable energy generation	%	not currently tracked		
		Annual average greenhouse gas emissions intensity	kgCO2e/m2	131.7		Utility Consumption Data - 2019
		Emergency preparedness plan	y / n	y		Policy Database
		Climate Change Adaptation Strategy	y / n	n		Policy Database
	Transportation	# of electric vehicle charging stations	#	0	0	
		Fleet Vehicle Emissions	kgCO2e	124,017		Fuel Tracking - April 2022 Extrapolated
		% of properties with bicycle parking spaces	%	10%	3%	Google Maps
		Average Walk Scores Across Properties	walk score	48.1	52.3	Walk Score
		Average Transit Score Across properties	transit score	53	54	Transit Score
	Materials and Waste	Operating waste diversion rate	%	40%		Waste Management Data - Based on Frequency of Pickups rather than Weight
		Construction waste diversion rate	%	not currently tracked		
		Waste streams collected	types	Landfill Waste Recycling Organics (Lodge only)		Waste Management Data
		Annual pages printed at GEF facilities	#	1,073,412		Data from GEF
	Water & Ecology	% of properties with pollinators or native species in landscape	%	82%	40%	Amenity data
		Annual potable water consumption intensity	m3 / m2	1.23	1.30	Utility bills

GEF Seniors Housing - Sustainability Framework

Reporting Framework

Updated:    August, 2022

Framework Pillars	Sustainability Principle	Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	Metric	Baseline (2022)		Data Source
				Lodge	Apartments	
	Delight and Enjoyment	% of properties with on-site garden or greenhouse	%	90%	45%	Amenity data
		% of properties with on-site green space	%	80%	89%	Google Maps
		Average PM2.5 Levels in common areas/facilities	µg/m³	not currently tracked		
		Average total volatile organic compound (TVOC) concentration level	mg/m3			
		Average CO2 Levels in common areas/facilities	ppm			
		% of properties that include balconies	%	40%	20%	Google Maps
Economic Sustainability	Economic Domain					
	Funding Sustainability Initiatives	Quality of Life funds raised by GEF through donations/ fundraising	\$	\$	121,232	Resident Quality of Life Fund Development Summary Sheet - 2020
	Investment in Community	# of on-going partnerships with non profit organizations	#	6		List Provided by GEF
		# of annual resident volunteer hours	#	350		List Provided by GEF
		# of partnerships with community organizations	#	31		List Provided by GEF
	Maintenance	# of maintenance projects annually	#	136		2021 - GEF Project Breakdown
		% green cleaning products	%	not currently tracked		
	Technology & Connectivity	% of properties with free Wi-Fi access for residents and guests in common spaces	%	100%		Stakeholder Interview
		% of properties with free Wi-Fi access for residents in units	%	0%		