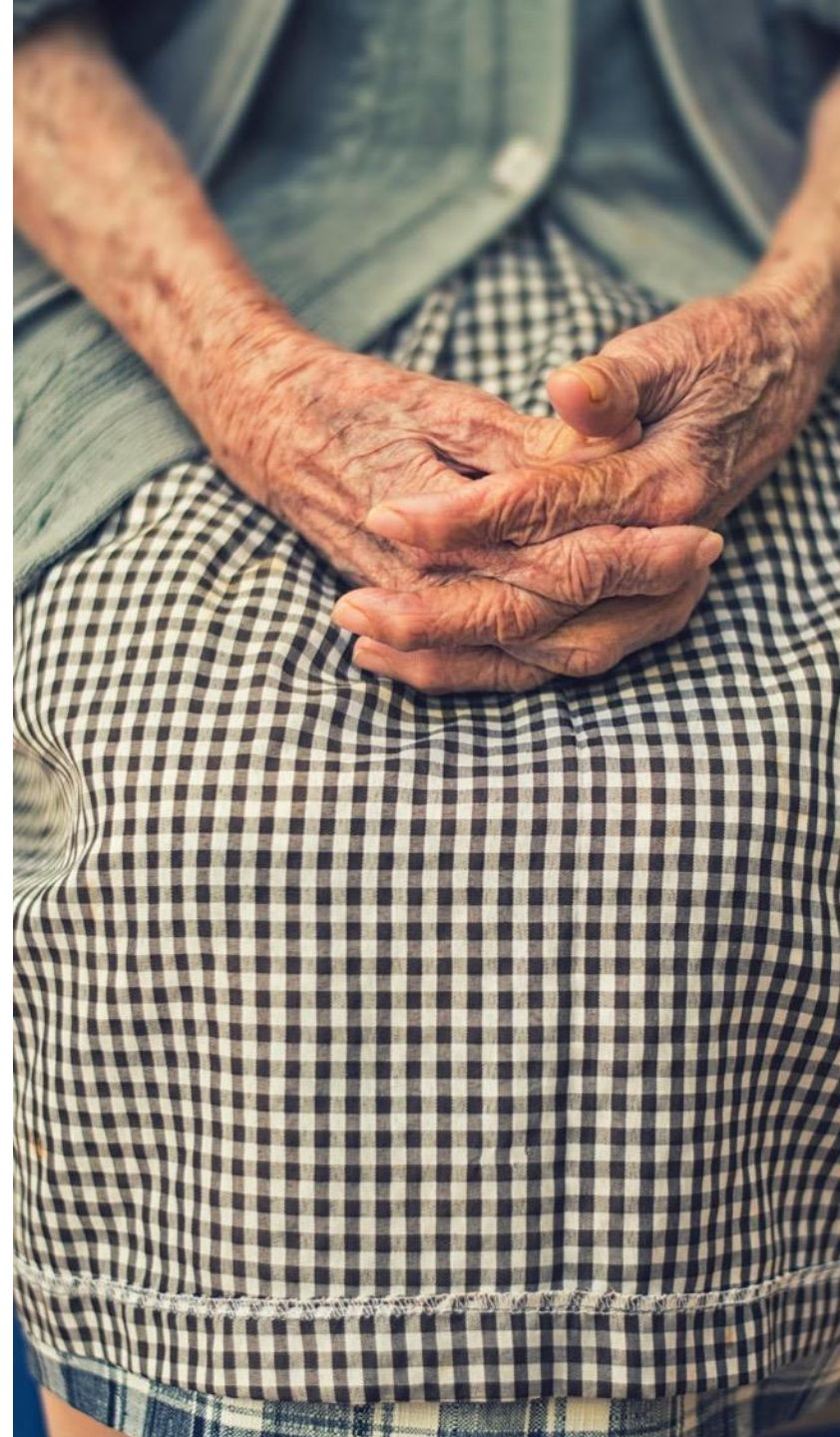




## SENIORS HOUSING LAB

Insights Report – Workshop 1



The Seniors Housing Lab was initiated, and is now supported, by the partners below, and made possible by funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Lab.



---

#NationalHousingStrategy  
**placetocalhome.ca**



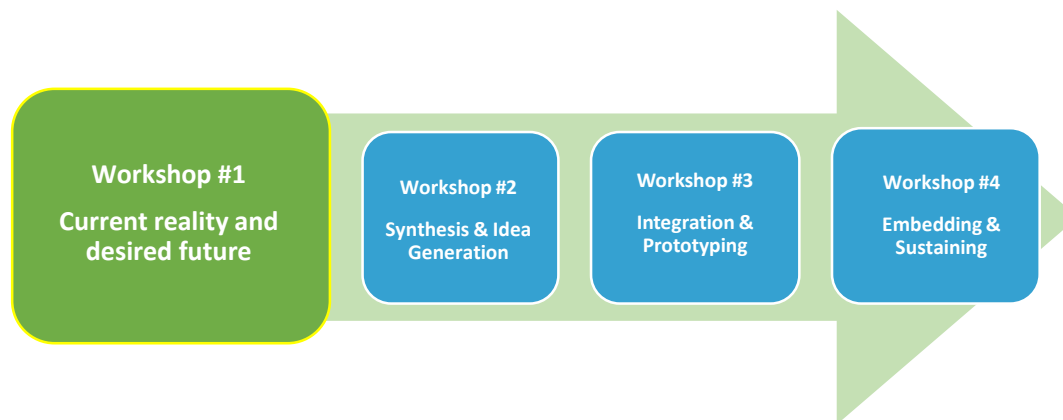
*This project entitled, Seniors Housing Lab, received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Labs, however, the views expressed are the personal views of the authors/presenters and CMHC accepts no responsibility for them*

# Context

The project, **Seniors Housing Stability Solutions Lab**, otherwise referred to as the Seniors Housing Lab, intends to tackle the following challenge statement:

## The Challenge Statement:

What might enable low-income senior renters in multi-unit buildings to retain their housing, age in the right place and thrive?



## Why a Seniors Housing Lab? Why Now?

A Challenge Brief and a Summary Report were compiled and sent to all Lab participants in advance of Workshop 1 (all reports can be found on our [webpage](#), hosted by Seniors Services Society of BC).

In Metro Vancouver, the region's rental market threatens the housing security of low-income tenants at an unprecedented extent. Increasing numbers of older tenants are at-risk of losing their housing due to rent escalation, low vacancy rates, and fixed incomes. More than other renters struggling today, seniors are often living alone, on low and fixed incomes, and are at-risk of being socially isolated and in poor health. Many are at risk of eviction because they cannot access the services and supports they need to age in place.

# Workshop 1 Overview

## **The Objectives:**

- Get to know one another;
- Share our various perspectives on seniors housing stability in Metro Vancouver;
- Discuss and document a more desirable future;
- Explore our shared and individual interests; and
- Capture what we know and identify what we need to learn more about.

## **The Agenda**

- Welcome, Introductions and Workshop Framing
- Gallery Walk
- Lunch and informal networking
- Vision of Desired Future
- Exploring Key Themes
- Closing, Reflections & Next Steps



# Welcome, Introductions, and Framing

Our first Seniors Housing Lab Workshop took place September 18, 2019, and was a successful start in our process of co-creating solutions to enable low-income senior renters to age in right place and thrive.

In total, 41 participants gathered together for one full workshop day, at the Collingwood, Neighbourhood House Annex in Vancouver, BC.

The workshop was designed and facilitated by a team of individuals: Kari Kessler (Lab Manager), Annelies Tjebbes (RADIUS SFU), Stephen D'Souza (Burnaby Community Services), and Tamara Connell (RADIUS SFU).

Our multisectoral approach to this complex issue has brought together a diverse group of individuals and organizations, opening up opportunities for collaborative discussions and setting the stage for innovative co-design of solutions.

Onsite photos: Amanda Hillis



# Welcome, Introductions, and Framing

We would like to acknowledge that our workshop took place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.



In the opening remarks, Alison Silgado, CEO of Seniors Support Services of BC, highlighted the connection of the objectives and goals of this project to the broader [definition of Indigenous homelessness](#) in Canada [Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012].

“Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities.”

Alison noted the intersection of our work to co-create solutions to address seniors housing stability, by more broadly considering what will enable seniors to retain their housing, age in the right place and thrive, to the definition of Indigenous homelessness.

# Welcome, Introductions, and Framing

We were grateful and honoured to have Leslie ground us in this important work by sharing her personal story of housing instability and homelessness.



*I've worked all my life. Approximately 2 years ago I became very ill. I eventually found out I had Cancer and my world came crashing down. I went through massive amounts of chemotherapy and radiation. I was on so many medications and concoctions I became very confused, so my sister came to look after me and ensure I made my appointments and treatment.*

*I was on short term then long term disability from my Extended Medical through my employer. I received \$1550/month and my rent was \$1350; about to go up to \$1400 per month. There wasn't enough money to pay all my utilities, food or transportation to my sometimes daily appointments. I was refused Transit subsidy. I racked up over \$10,000 in debt. I searched for help. I found Hollyburn Family services in North Vancouver. They were able to give me a subsidy. That helped for a while until they couldn't help anymore.*

*I moved out of my 1 bedroom apartment and put everything into storage. I became a couch surfer until I had nowhere else to stay so I scoped out parks and green spaces to sleep or pitch a tent. All the stress brought on Shingles. I was a mess. I didn't have any hair on my head, I was bloated from Cancer treatment and I had shingles on my face and Looked sick. People were afraid of me.*

*I reached out to Hollyburn again. They knew of my desperation to find a safe place in order to get better. They were able to put me into a lovely Seniors Safe House. In April, Hollyburn, Brightside and BC Housing were able to find me a bachelor suite in Vancouver. I wasn't able to find a place near my family but I found my safe, affordable, comfortable home and it's mine. Transportation is very close and so is my grocery store.*

*I am 1 year Cancer Free, am happy and I know I can get through and survive whatever life throws at me.  
Thank you for listening to my story.*

# Welcome, Introductions, and Framing

We are particularly grateful for the seniors with lived experience who are taking their personal time to guide us in this work.

These organizations have made the commitment to join the Seniors Housing Lab and work together over the next 8 months:

411 Seniors Centre Society  
Advent Real Estate Services Ltd.  
Amacon  
Atira Women's Resource Society  
BC Housing  
BC Non-profit Housing Association  
Brightside Community Homes Foundation  
Burnaby Community Services  
Carnegie Community Centre, City of Vancouver  
City of New Westminster  
City of Richmond  
City of Vancouver  
Fraser Health Authority  
Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University  
Hollyburn Family Services  
Homelessness Services Association of BC  
Jewish Family Services  
LandlordBC

Lookout Health and Housing Society  
MathMountain  
MOSAIC  
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House  
Network of Inner City Community Services Society (NICCSS)  
New Chelsea Society  
Private-sector landlord  
Reach Community Health Centre  
Renfrew Collingwood Seniors Society  
Seniors Services Society (SSS) of BC  
RADIUS SFU  
SHARE Family and Community Services  
Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre  
The Bloom Group  
The New Vista Society  
United Way of the Lower Mainland  
West End Seniors' Network  
Whole Way House Society

In our opening introductions, the depth of experience and existing capacity and resources fueled interest in building avenues to share information and unite to find solutions.



# Welcome, Introductions, and Framing

After our introductions, we discussed and agreed to the following Community Agreements.

These agreements can help guide our thinking, responses, and behaviours while participating in the Seniors Housing Lab.



# Welcome, Introductions, and Framing

## Lab Framing:

### What is a Solutions Lab?

- Brings many different perspectives into the room
- Builds collaborations
- Empowers individuals & communities
- Builds towards solutions over the course of the workshops
- Builds and tests tangible solutions & prototypes

## Lab Principles:

### What are our Seniors Housing Lab Principles?

- Seniors-centred design *Nothing about us without us*
- Community-based approaches
- Diversity makes us stronger



SENIORS HOUSING LAB

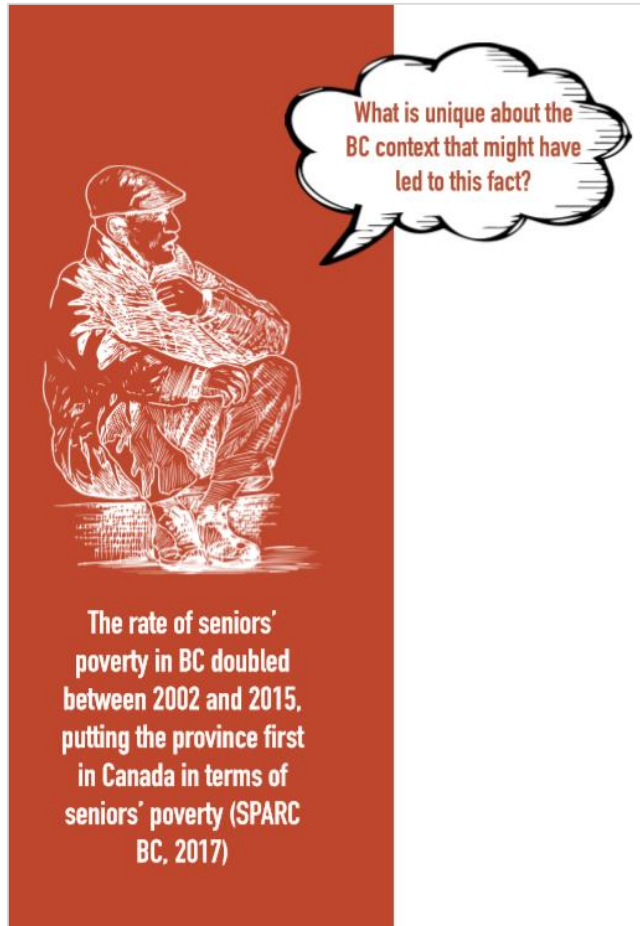
# Gallery Walk

The facilitation team prepared 12 posters touching on various parts of the current system, its dynamics, and its impacts. Participants were invited to join up with two other individuals and walk around the space at their own pace and interest. They were invited to have conversation about the posters, responding to the question prompts, and document their thoughts on post-it notes.

The following pages show the posters, and summarize all the responses from the post-it notes.



# Gallery Walk



- Weather! Popular retirement destination
- Lack of poverty reduction plan for many years
- Change in economic situation
- High housing costs and lack of affordable spaces
- Increase cost of living relative to retirement incomes
- Longer life expectancy
- Increased health costs
- Out-of-country financial support skews data on poverty rates because that income may not be reported
- Demographic change & competition for housing
- Differences in family values e.g. including seniors
- Not enough supports for families to take care of their family members

# Gallery Walk

## Homelessness is not just a Vancouver issue

Sub-Region	2005 Total	2008 Total	2011 Total	2014 Total	2017 Total	2014 – 2017 Change	
						#	%
Burnaby	42	86	78	58	69	11	19%
Delta/White Rock <sup>50</sup>	12	17	14	19	46	27	142%
Langley	57	86	103	92	206	114	124%
Ridge Meadows	44	90	110	84	124	40	48%
New Westminster	97	124	132	106	133	27	25%
North Shore	90	127	122	119	100	-19	-16%
Richmond	35	56	49	38	70	32	84%
Surrey	392	402	400	403	602	199	49%
Tri-Cities	40	94	48	55	117	62	113%
Vancouver	1,364	1,576	1,581	1,803	2,138	335	19%
Unspecified	1	2	13	0	0	0	0%
Total	2,174	2,660	2,650	2,777	3,605	828	30%

Which sub-region do you live in and what can you share about the context of your sub-region?

What surprises you about these statistics?

- The tools we use for the homeless count are not up to the task
- Hidden homeless! Not in count. Rule of thumb = 23 homeless for every 1 counted
- How do we define homelessness?
- How do we understand the diversity of experiences?
- Increase in the 'burbs'
- People move to outlying areas for lower rent but still precariously housed, so many end up homeless
- Fewer support services for people experiencing homelessness in 'burbs'
- If seniors have to move somewhere more affordable but there are fewer services, how well do they do?
- Problem is not getting solved – it's just getting moved around
- Different jurisdictions need more collaboration
- It's everywhere!



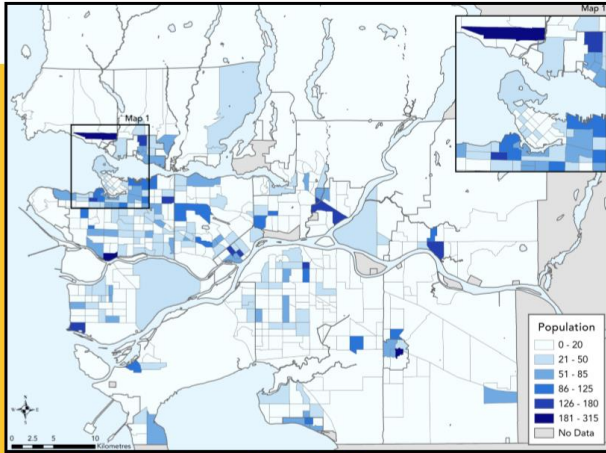
# Gallery Walk



Please add to this drawing in words  
or pictures to capture what makes a  
home or community for you.

- Respect for space
- How does house become home?
- Chosen community versus location
- A community to support each other like a co-op
- Personal decision-making authority and choice
- Security and stability
- Having something to look forward to
- Creating community with
  - Design
  - Volunteers
- Close to community resources
- Opportunity for social connection
- Knowing your neighbours and being engage with them
- Interconnection of house – home - community

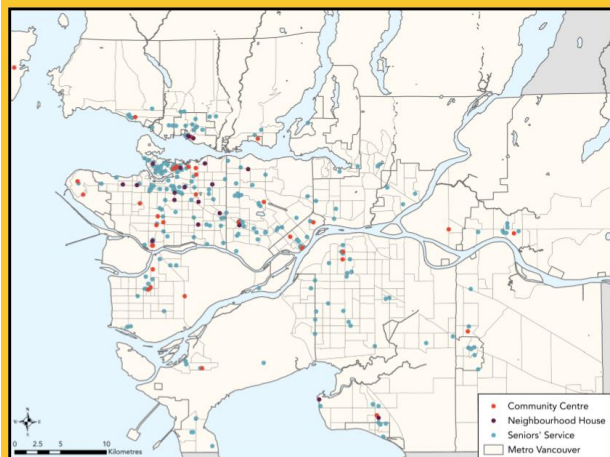
# Gallery Walk



Unaffordable 5+ Stories Housing & Living Alone Renter

**Why are there hotspots with higher concentrations of vulnerable senior renters?**

- No rentals in single family zones
- NIMBY ism in neighbourhoods
- # of lower-cost private market units – older units



Locations of Community-Based Seniors' Services in Metro Vancouver , 2019

**Do you think there is a link between these hotspots and the amount of services available in each area?**

- Senior services are concentrated around city centres but those areas are unaffordable
- Because of urban planning policies
- Access to transit hubs
- Transportation
  - May need car further out of core
  - Lack of transit

# Gallery Walk

Where have you seen or experienced ageism?



Unlike other forms of discrimination, including sexism and racism, ageism remains socially acceptable, strongly institutionalised, largely undetected and unchallenged.

- No senior protection system like child protection
- Language barrier adds to elder abuse
- Invisibility
- Disempowering and infantilization and silencing
- Looking for young and new
- Accessing a rental unit - Landlord screening
- Overreliance on technology in our society when it comes to communication means many seniors are left out
- Structural ageism – funding and oversight of ‘seniors’ by government, e.g in Ministry of Health
- Not enough input in high level decisions
- Municipal processes e.g. Council meeting are unwittingly ageist in design
- Employment discrimination based on age, opportunities given to younger vs older people - ‘not right fit’
- Employment ageism toward youth as well, not just seniors
- Volunteer opportunities
- Ageism differs from place to place and intersects with income, culture, physical ability, geography, gender = not universally experienced

# Gallery Walk

**“Family support and my job are helping me keep my place.”**

**What's your personal experience supporting older family members?**



**“No one comes to see me. I’ve got no family left.”**

**If you’ve been a caregiver, what worked and didn’t work?**

- Being able to live in same city
- Challenge of working and caregiving – employers don’t understand and support or provide flexibility
- Can’t look after
- Can’t always have family support
- Need supports from others too - community services
- Safety concerns
- Residential care – one floor for specific ethnic group
- Need to be creative!
- Private home care very beneficial for some – helping keep seniors functional

- No money for supporting the caregiver
- Hard to offer caregiver support that encompasses all needs
- The funding is crucial – has to come from Health Authority
- The processes, templates, systems are important
- Effective/individualized respite (‘do better self-care’ is not enough)
- Domino effect when caregiver gets ill
- A lot of seniors who are lonely would benefit from a pet
- Need pet friendly rentals

# Gallery Walk

The top reasons for seniors' evictions in Metro Vancouver according to Seniors Service Society of BC (SSS) are:



What experience have you had with any of these issues?

- Creates a crisis
- Access to resources
- Lack of support for hoarding
- Hoarding help with sorting out stuff before move in to minimize things
- Trauma scene charges = \$1,000 / visit (bed bugs)
- Catch 22 with pest removal because public health won't visit infested suites
- Support staff in building is much needed & should be mandatory
- Harm reduction meetings and OPS sites [overdose prevention sites] in the building
- Safe use person to contact if using alone
- Refusing assistance is a pride thing and difficult for service providers/housing provider/city – common to older men
- RTB [Residential Tenancy Branch] does not take action (frequently) on 'dangerous behaviour'
- Tenant complaints can also lead to eviction
- Right attitude of 'staff'
- Community development
- Technology
  - Phone
  - On-line
- Fear of scams can dissuade from using tech



# Gallery Walk



EVICTION

"Our worst fears were confirmed when the new landlords immediately began to encourage us all to move out "voluntarily," using various tactics, including pressuring us into accepting a small cash buyout, and intimidation and scaremongering. Six months later, we were all served eviction notices."

Do you know anybody who has been renovicted?  
If you were facing renoviction, what would you do?

- Building permit application can trigger city of New West to investigate and inform tenants of their rights
- Learned buy-outs were being offered to tenants
- Renters (seniors) not well informed of going rents or buy-out value – don't know their rights and who to trust
- If they do, the services may not be accessible (in sense of jargon)
- Digital divide impacts seniors
- City of New West use utility notices as means of communicating tenant rights and resources.
- Organize with other renters and supporters (unity, communication) -> Legal action together
- I could take them to RTB [Residential Tenancy Branch], but would be stressful and prohibitive
- Go to the media
- Put up flyers
- Call City of Vancouver renter's office
- Pivot legal society
- Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC)
- Strategy needs to be collaborative with landlords and at a regional level
- Floating stock of housing to have renters move during renovictions
- This is exploitation based on housing insecurity

# Gallery Walk



Where have you seen seniors centered in design  
(ex. Program, technology, infrastructure)?

- Municipal seniors advisory committees
- Seniors Community Planning Tables
- Dementia village in Langley
- North Shore design guidelines
- CMHC accessibility
- Whole Way House programs
- Public transit
- Mostly low-level impact – programs
- Peer-developed programming - seniors helping seniors
- Senior centred designed/led programs
- Seniors Centres
  - Programs
  - Place for consultation
- Accessible building design (crossovers disability and aging)
- Public and private spaces designed for seniors (e.g. private assisted living)
- Work closer between housing and health authority
- What are assumptions about seniors' centres (who are they for?)
- Guidelines for accessibility – diverse & senior focused

# Gallery Walk

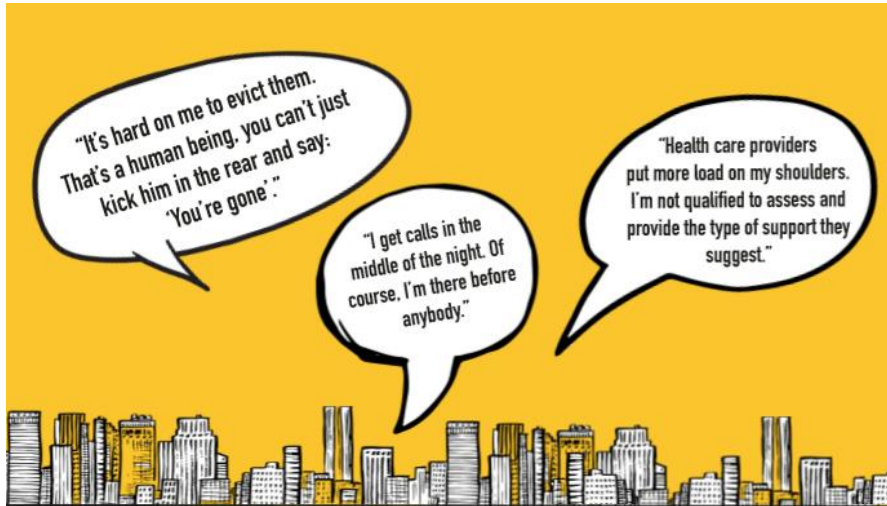
What have been your experiences with  
volunteers in the seniors services sector?

"There is a huge risk management for seniors services organizations  
relying on volunteers for complex service delivery... volunteerism is  
fluid, time specific, and not free labour..."



- Many volunteers stay for decades and provide stability and consistency for organization
- Some become staff
- Key for peer-to-peer support
- Asset of knowledge and lived experience
- Opportunities to combine innovation and experience
- Should not be expected to be driving force of organization. Can be risky as may not have skill for work or leave
- Volunteers are not free labour
- Resources needed to coordinate, train and support them and document their expertise for transition to others

# Gallery Walk



What have been your best experiences with landlords?

- Some landlords want to do what they can to support older adult tenants but don't always know how/what resources/best practices
- Ideally relationship-based not transaction based
- Some landlords want to evict older adult tenants in order to raise rents
- A building manager phoned our society concerned about a senior tenant and didn't want to evict
- I haven't had good experiences with landlords. They accept working people over seniors
- Landlords who provide space and trust
- Best landlord
  - Supportive
  - Have a heart
  - Willing to negotiate
- Lack of knowledge of RTA [Residential Tenancy Act]
- Flexibility to accommodate
- Respect for human element

# Gallery Walk



In the National Housing Strategy Act in Bill C-97, Canada has recognized its commitment to the right to housing in federal legislation for the first time in its history.

How might this legislation affect you, your family, or your work?

- Then no one should be homeless
- Requires an office of the legislative to monitor and provide remedies
- Put money behind the legislation and fund more affordable housing
- Elevate senior's status in society, community and families
- Valuing seniors as resource
- Change in politics can affect this. What if government changes?
- How is the housing sustainable?
  - Long term?
  - Adapts to changing needs?
- How is 'housing' defined?
  - Not just the building, needs to be safe, accessible, supported, etc.
  - Not just quantity but quality
- How is this being implemented?
  - What resources are available?
- Needs to be operationalized – details, financial support
- Aging in place over time = changes in housing needs



# Gallery Walk

Place 2 green dots on the categories where you feel we are succeeding and 2 red dots on the categories where we are failing in terms of offering services to seniors.

Category	Icon	Green Dots (Success)	Red Dots (Failure)
Education, Recreation, and Creative Arts programming	Paint palette and brush	5	0
Nutritional Support	Apple	0	4
Information, Referral, and Advocacy	Megaphone	1	2
Physical Activities	Swimmer	2	0
Wellness Program	Lotus flower	0	0
Transportation	Bus and car	0	4
Affordable Housing	House on hands	1	5





# Vision of a Desired Future

In this interactive session participants worked in small groups to envision and describe a desired future for low income senior renters.

A newspaper front page, hot off the press in 2024, was created and reflected what supports, conditions, and trends would be present and therefore allow senior renters to be thriving in the right place.

Each group presented a summary of their newspapers (and their desired futures) to plenary.



# Vision of a Desired Future

Posters for Groups 1, 2, and 3:

## Renters Wanted!

- Vacancy Rate: Over 5%

**CLASSIFIED**

- More surrounding services
- Rental units available
- Rents guaranteed for next 5 yrs.
- Fully accessible
- Seniors wanted
- Bring your Pets!

**VACANCY**  
20,000 new social housing units for seniors!

## NEW HOUSING TIMES

Bold New Housing Strategy Announced... "HOUSING FOR ALL"

- Seniors special strategy
- SAFER ceiling raised, geared to market rent
- 100,000+ affordable housing will be created
- Integrated Seniors social housing in all new housing developments
- On-site Community Development & Health Services (transition to supported living)
- One stop Shop for housing Questions

*Illustration showing new seniors supported housing building*

### SUBSIDIZED RENTAL UNITS AVAILABLE

CALL: 1 800 HOME NOW

## THE COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

Breaking Down the Walls  
Sept 18 2024

### Under One Roof

Balloons were released in the air with the announcement that three levels of government and community partners, led by a senior coalition will break ground today. This new community led, intergenerational approach to housing and mixed services hub, is part of a national housing ~~new~~ project that moves housing from a commodity to community need.

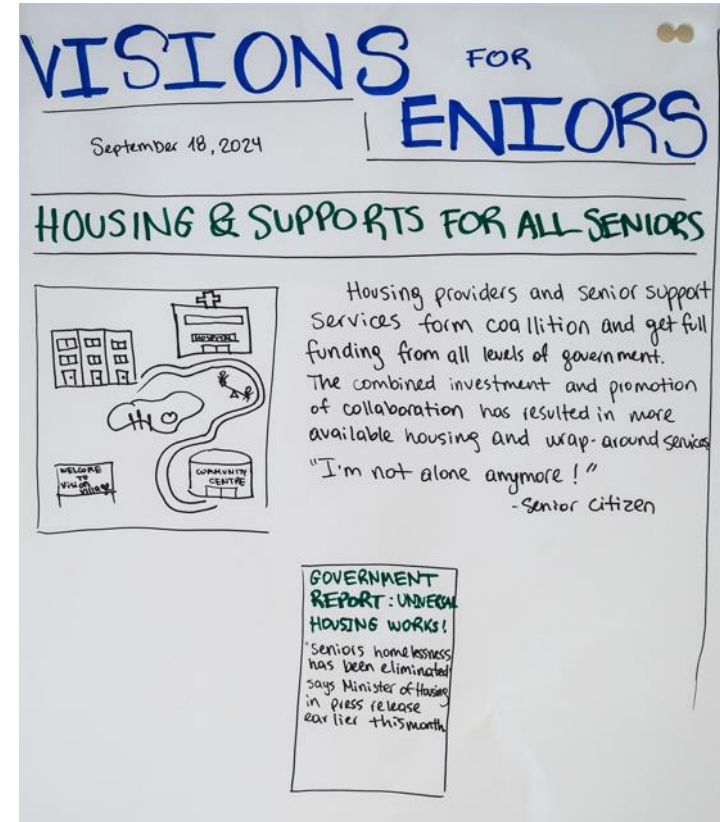
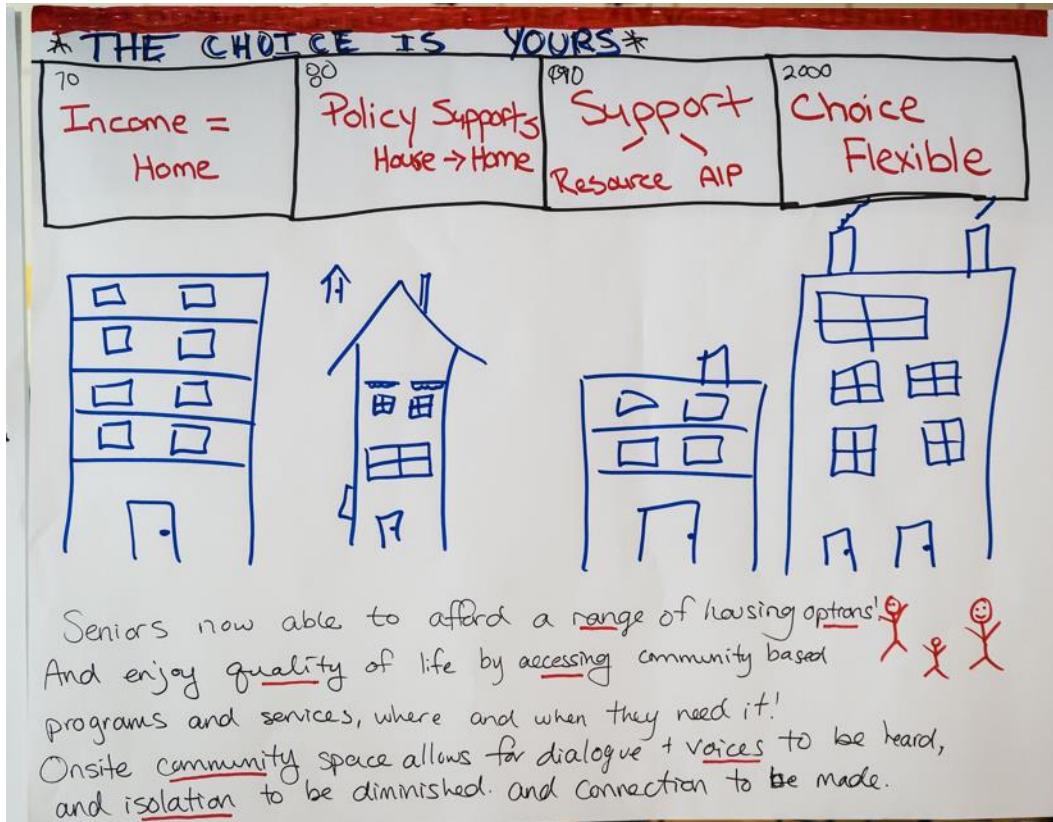
"We are happy that BC is pioneering a new model of multigeneration and longitudinal care." - Minister for Housing

"this is what aging in the right place looks like."



# Vision of a Desired Future

Posters from Groups 4 and 5:



# Vision of a Desired Future

**Themes or patterns** found from the work presented on the Vision of a Desired Future included:

Abundance of housing options leads to **choice**

Seniors housing needs **integration**:

- In mixed (inter-generational) communities
- With wrap-around services
- Community spaces
- And transportation options:
  - public transit
  - active transport
  - shared assets (*e.g.* car/bike/mobility devices)

Specific Mechanisms:

- Match income to rent
  - “SAFER on steroids”, amount tied to cost of living
  - Fixed rent
- Need for new units
- Transition support
- One-stop-shop to access resources
  - **Partnerships**

Shared Values:

- “Home” = feelings of safety and connection
- Seniors are valued
- Includes social inclusion and quality of life
- Moving housing from “commodity” to **“community”**



# Exploring Key Themes

The final activity of Workshop 1 included two rounds of discussion, where participants were invited to join any of the five themes for a short discussion.

The five themes were:

- **Preventing Seniors Homelessness** - For seniors who are experiencing evictions or discharge from the hospital without alternative housing, how do we divert them from homelessness or the shelter system?
- **Keeping Senior Renters in Their Homes** - For senior renters struggling to maintain their housing, how do we prevent eviction?
- **Long-Term Seniors Housing Stability** - For seniors who are vulnerable to housing insecurity, how do we provide stability and well-being?
- **Removing System Barriers** - For seniors who could benefit from public systems, supports, and entitlements, how do we enhance access and improve outcomes?
- **Proactive Policies** - What policies and legislation would address the root causes of seniors housing insecurity?

During each round of discussion, the groups were asked to document their answers to the following three questions:

- Where is this already being done?
- What are the barriers to change?
- What do we want to know more about?

The following pages summarize the responses taken during both rounds of discussion.

# Exploring Key Themes



# Exploring Key Themes

**Preventing Seniors Homelessness** - For seniors who are experiencing evictions or discharge from the hospital without alternative housing, how do we divert them from homelessness or the shelter system?

## Where is this already being done?

- Quick response teams
- Housing outreach
- STOP team - Richmond
- RAAC (Rapid Access Addiction Clinic)
- Tenant support services e.g. Whole Way House Society
- Brightside – Housing Navigator
- The Hub @ St. Pauls Hospital
- New West tenant survival guides (sent in mail as part of utility bill)
- stage 1 and 2 transition house and shelter
- Person with Lived Experience steering committee
- Medical beds in shelters
- Non-Profit collaboration and prioritizing to support individuals with urgent need
- Landlord education
- Follow-up/transitionary support to maintain housing
- Wrap around support not just housing
- Cross agency collaboration to ease referral process and transition

## What are the barriers to change?

- Finances
- Policies
- Lack of:
  - knowledge of services and actual needs
  - mobility and ability to move
  - support network/no family
  - trust
  - advocacy support
  - housing options – landlords screen, not accessible
- Program limitations – criteria (e.g. age based), scope of practice
- Precarious immigration status
- Language barriers
- Racism and ageism

## What do we want to know more about?

- Collate available information/ services/programs
- Increase communication between agencies
- Housing Navigation System – centralized HUB for ease of access to information & support
- Success elsewhere- Canada, international
- More transparent system
- Intergenerational supports – cultural differences
- Why we removed support and tax credit for housing older adults?
- Novel financing
- CORE, united way activated

# Exploring Key Themes

## **Keeping Senior Renters in Their Homes** - For senior renters struggling to maintain their housing, how do we prevent eviction?

### Where is this already being done?

- Onsite support (trusted)
- Education
- Seniors
- Landlords
- Rent bank
- Creative rehousing (over housed)
- Better at Home
- Residential Tenancy Branch
- Homes supports
- Medical
- Personal care
- Community support – not home
- MOW
- Grocery shopping
- The Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC)
- SAFER
- Food bank / food sharing
- Buddy system
- Family support
- Gov't assistance – e.g. GIS

### What are the barriers to change?

- Lack of knowledge of resources
- Shifting criteria
- No coordination of services
- Cognitive/physical decline (with no family support)
- Technology use limits accessibility
- Isolation
- Pride
- Language barriers
- Paper work –e.g. ID's
- Lack of landlord references
- Style of management
- Lack of safe housing (theft)
- Building restrictions
- Lack of low barrier housing
- Racism
- Ageism

### What do we want to know more about?

- Best practices and resources for prevention
- Knowledge HUB
- Platform for front-line collaboration
- Input for design in development
- Resources for landlords
- Criteria – informed when changes
- Navigating services
- How do we influence policy makers?
- How supports are paid for?



# Exploring Key Themes

## **Long-Term Seniors Housing Stability** - For seniors who are vulnerable to housing insecurity, how do we provide stability and well-being?

### Where is this already being done?

- SAFER
- Rent bank
- Purpose build rental enhances security of tenure
- Home and health support - under one roof
- National Housing Strategy
- 30 Point Plan for Housing Affordability in BC
- Social integration
  - Outreach
  - Activities/happenings e.g. amenity space use
  - Connection
- Federal government – OAS, CPP
- Income tax done for free
- Independent and assistance living in same building to facilitate transition (Little Mountain)

### What are the barriers to change?

- Not knowing resources available
- Accessing services
- First time renter as senior do not understand rights and responsibilities
- Language and digital/tech deficiencies
- Funding
- Geography
- Accessibility
- Trust between landlord and senior tenant as a senior's needs increase
- Responsibility of landlord as tenants age

### What do we want to know more about?

- Seniors perspectives
  - What do they want
  - What's working for them and not working
- How to enhance SAFER
- Innovations specific to services/supports for seniors – Canada and internationally
- Local models that are working
- Hey Neighbour
- Incentives for private sector landlord to support seniors – tax credits/education
- Education for renters – senior focused
- BC Housing not on the ground – knowledge gap for supportive services.
- Grey area – landlord responsibility to support senior tenants – boundaries/liabilities (both non-profit & market rental)
- Seniors Council in building

# Exploring Key Themes

**Removing System Barriers** - For seniors who could benefit from public systems, supports, and entitlements, how do we enhance access and improve outcomes?

## Where is this already being done?

- BC 211
- BC Seniors Guide – multi-lingual
- 411 Seniors Centre
- Outreach and navigation e.g. Hollyburn.
- Income assistance, CPP disability
- Bloom Group – financial management
- Right Fit
  - Includes 10 rental supplements
- Emergency rental subsidies
  - BC Housing
- Portable rent subsidies for some individuals
- Lu'ma Native Housing Society - Cultural supports
- Cross cultural Health Navigators
- Our Place - Community Table City of Vancouver
- Senior navigators
- Brightside - iPads in amenity room for resource access

## What are the barriers to change?

- Working in silos
- computer access, literacy & wifi
- Language barriers
- Systems designed by white people (for white people) and these don't always serve other communities
  - parallel groups tend to emerge
- Access to meeting spaces
- Need easily accessible, sustainable, non-bureaucratic grants
- Inadequate support for mental health or multiple barriers
- Age criteria - being 'near senior' (<64 ) may not let you access services
- Lack of trust of systems/authority
  - Elders
  - Newcomers
- Public systems are underfunded
- Gatekeepers to resources often not well trained, bad tone, lack of compassion (e.g. government supports)

## What do we want to know more about?

- Naturally organizing groups
  - how did they come together?
  - What needs are they serving?
- Our Place Community Table
- A repository of information – share information including funding
- Pilot projects/models



# Exploring Key Themes

## Proactive Policies - What policies and legislation would address the root causes of seniors housing insecurity?

### Where is this already being done?

- New West
  - reno and protect tenants
  - Easy to read notices about by-laws
- Renter /tenant protection policies
- Rental tenure zoning – being tried out
- Modular housing
- Policies for providing moving help
- Tenant relocation policies
- Renters office
- Germany - Tenant protection is stronger
- BC housing registry – shows trends are changing
- Rental 100 – City of Vancouver
- Finland - Housing first model – eradicated homelessness
- Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba
  - Rent caps, SAFER and RAP
- Fix term leases
- Linking rent increase to Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- SAFER

### What are the barriers to change?

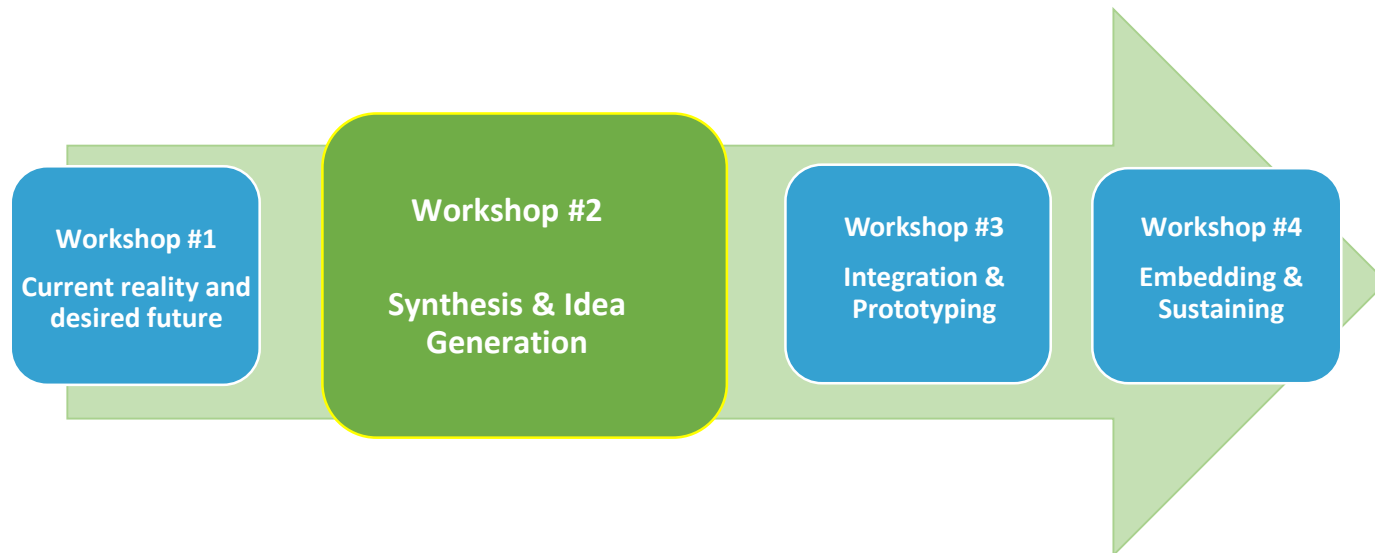
- Follow-up (after reno do people come back)
- Challenge
  - Affordable stock owned by smaller companies /landlords
  - Lots of policies think landlords are bigger companies
- Land freezing policies – effect quality and affordability
- Cost of asset management
  - Small landlord versus large
- Tax-policies really impacts small landlords and other services
- Lack of supply – creates waiting lists
- Population growth
- Political will and changes in gov't
- Discrimination and stigma

### What do we want to know more about?

- Rental only zoning
- Inter-connection
  - Housing, health, transportation
- Parking lots - opportunities
- Tax incentive programs for private sector landlords
- Staggered tax increase
- Legislation
  - Who is it protecting - who is it disadvantaging?
- Why is housing no longer a federal issue?
- Co-op housing
  - Operating agreements with federal gov't / leases
- Other jurisdictions and countries
  - Rural versus urban
  - A country in Europe has laws where no property goes unoccupied
  - Toronto – paramedics doing check-ins
- How rent banks will work to support services
- Knowledge mobilization

# Next Steps

Workshop 2 will be held on November 13, 2019, at Collingwood Neighbourhood House Annex.



Between Workshop 1 and Workshop 2, participants were asked to explore or research areas of interest, through conversations or interviews, academic or informal research.

In the plenary closing, there was interest expressed to set up a mechanism to be in touch with the other participants. The organizers agreed to look into this.

Appreciation was shared for all the Lab partners, the funding made possible by CMHC, our wonderful volunteers, and LandlordBC for sponsoring the venue rental.

# Reflections and Learnings

- ❖ The project, **Seniors Housing Stability Solutions Lab**, must bring the context of individual rental housing units into focus (e.g. apartment buildings, neighbourhoods and communities) to discover ways of addressing seniors' housing instability and insecurity. We need to focus and align our work to move beyond traditional goals of simply increasing the number of units available, to ensure we collaborate to address all components of the challenge:
  - What might enable low-income senior renters in multi-unit buildings to:
    - ✓ Retain their housing
    - ✓ Age in the right place
    - ✓ Thrive
- ❖ In our Vision of the Desired Future we recognize our need to acknowledge that specific groups and individuals are impacted differently by homelessness and housing instability. As we work towards testing and prototypes of solutions, we must consider the multiplicity of desired futures. This calls for collaboration amongst a broader cross-section of stakeholders than in the past, including community-based social and health service organizations, not-for-profit housing organizations and others

# Feedback

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form at the closing of Workshop 1. A summary of the results is found below.

Over all the Lab participants enjoyed the experience – 80% of those completing the evaluation indicated they were **‘very satisfied’** while the remaining were **‘satisfied’**

Suggestions for improvement included the following:

- Increase diversity in the room
- More time for group discussions
- Time for personal reflection
- Opportunities for informal networking
- Adjust pace for content
- Decrease waste / plastic

*“Great mix of partners and expertise they brought to the workshop. Learning lots from partners who I didn’t know before. Help to build a more balanced view of seniors housing”*

*“The knowledge in the room was amazing.  
Powerful personal stories”*