



# FORUM SUMMARY

**Challenge statement:** What does it take for low-income senior renters to retain their housing, age in the right place, and thrive?

## SENIORS HOUSING LAB

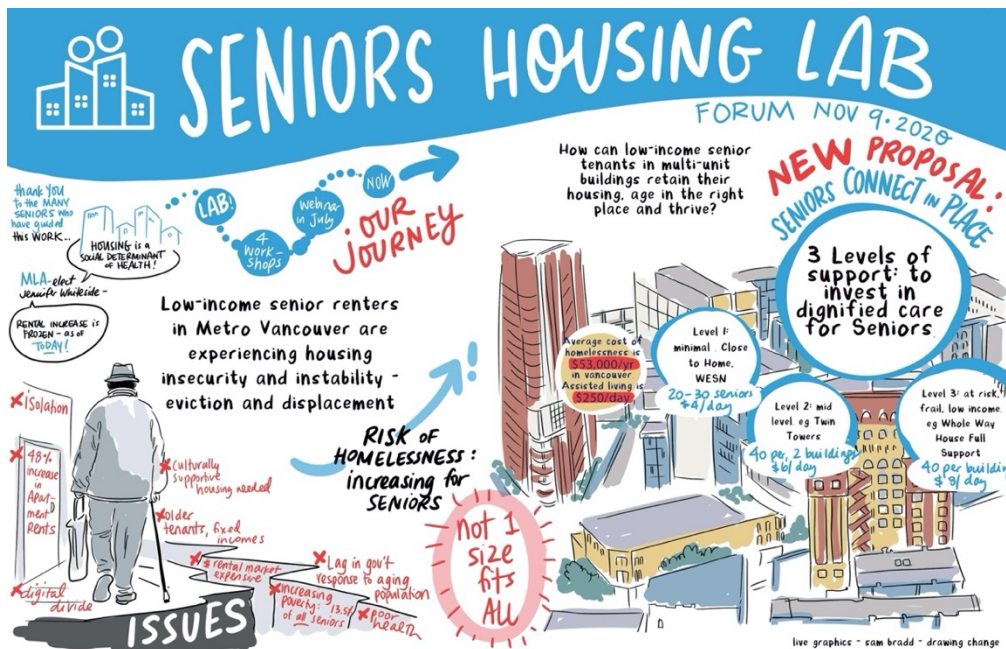
From 2019 - 2020, more than 50 cross-sector stakeholders and senior advisors participated in Seniors Housing Innovation Lab (SHL) workshops to rethink systems and services for senior renters in Metro Vancouver.

On Nov. 9, 2020, project leaders hosted a virtual, half-day Forum to present key ideas and invite stakeholders to carry ideas forward. Activities included senior renters sharing their experiences, presentation and discussion of two key ideas to address challenges for senior renters, and engagement to strengthen ideas and build partnerships.

More than 52 people participated, including sector stakeholders and service providers, seniors/elders, funders, and government representatives. Most were from Metro Vancouver. MLA Jennifer Whiteside contributed to opening remarks and discussion. Forum sharing was documented with virtual and traditional tools, and graphic recording.

### PROJECT PARTNERS

BC Non-Profit Housing Association  
 Burnaby Community Services  
 Brightside Community Homes Foundation  
 Homelessness Services Association of BC  
 Landlord BC  
 Seniors Services Society of BC  
 Simon Fraser University  
 United Way of the Lower Mainland  
 and  
 senior/elder advisors and stakeholders who were generous with their expertise and time for this work.



#NationalHousingStrategy | placetocallhome.ca

SHL was made possible by funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Labs. However, the views expressed are those of the authors/presenters and CMHC accepts no responsibility for them.

## IDEA #1: Seniors Connect In-Place

This solution addresses seniors' housing transitions and place-based needs. Partners drafted three models to invest in dignified care for seniors with varying levels of need. Breakout groups explored the idea from the perspective of seniors, service providers, and funders.

### What stood out?

- Seniors and those with lived experience are at the center; they can choose the type and level of support they receive.
- Allows seniors to age in the right in place, which reduces stress and supports their dignity.
- Services include outreach *and* in-reach. Onsite connections help build trust and increase accessibility.
- It is cost effective and may help avoid hospitalization.

### Observations:

- Funders might not understand the holistic, place-based approach and may cherry-pick based on their priorities.
- Must ensure stable funding for full-time staff and for evaluation to ensure stability and sustainability.
- Must ensure safety in housing that may include residents with significant mental health or substance use concerns.
- It has potential for homelessness prevention but needs to be coupled with other housing strategies.
- The program needs adequate housing supply to be scaled out.
- Must integrate with existing services and address socio-economic disparity.

## IDEA #2: System Redesign

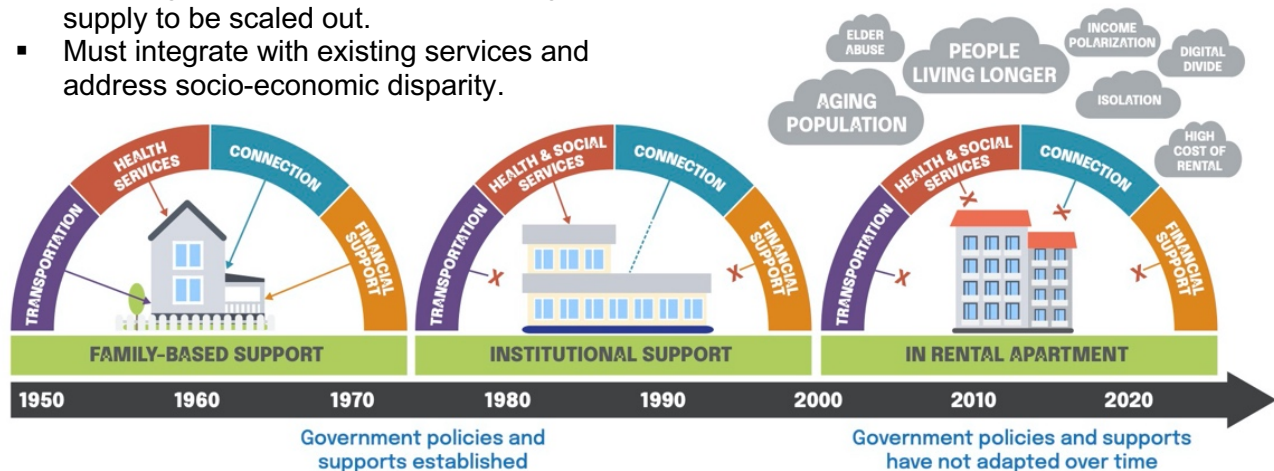
This solution aims to address systemic issues through development of a provincial Seniors Ministry and a regional approach to ensure senior tenants are included in housing policy and processes. The community-based seniors' sector is integral to the idea. Breakout groups discussed how the idea might align with their work and explored ways to collaborate.

### What stood out?

- The gap between owners and renters is a big problem in our region.
- Using system redesign to reduce silos was very well supported.
- Features that seem expensive at the building stage may actually save money.

### Observations:

- A call for core funding for community based, not-for-profit senior serving organizations and seniors' centres is essential for this model to work.
- Would this result in amalgamating ideas and a loss of organizational identity?
- It is important for provincial and federal ministries to align.
- Would a cross-ministry collaboration team be a next step?
- We need to make sure health providers and others are part of the conversation.
- Can inclusion be expanded to seniors and people with disabilities?



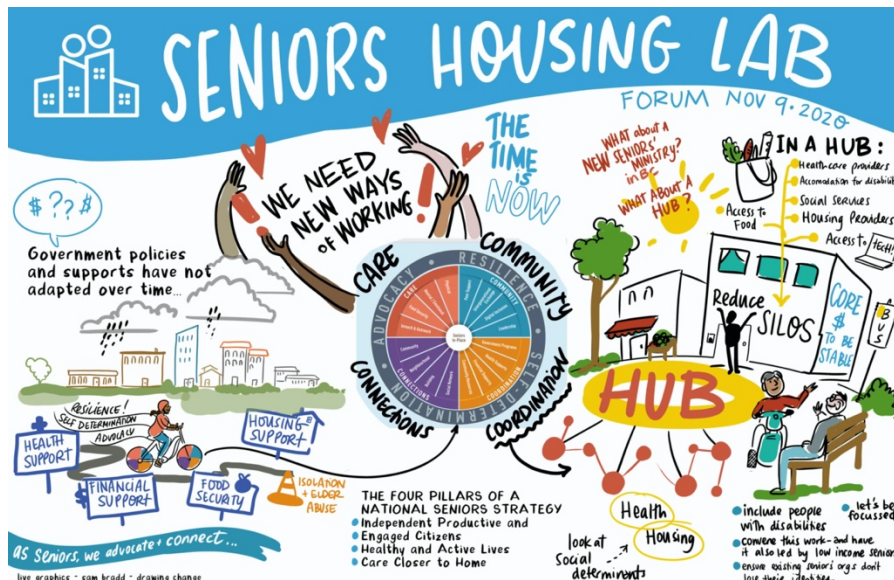
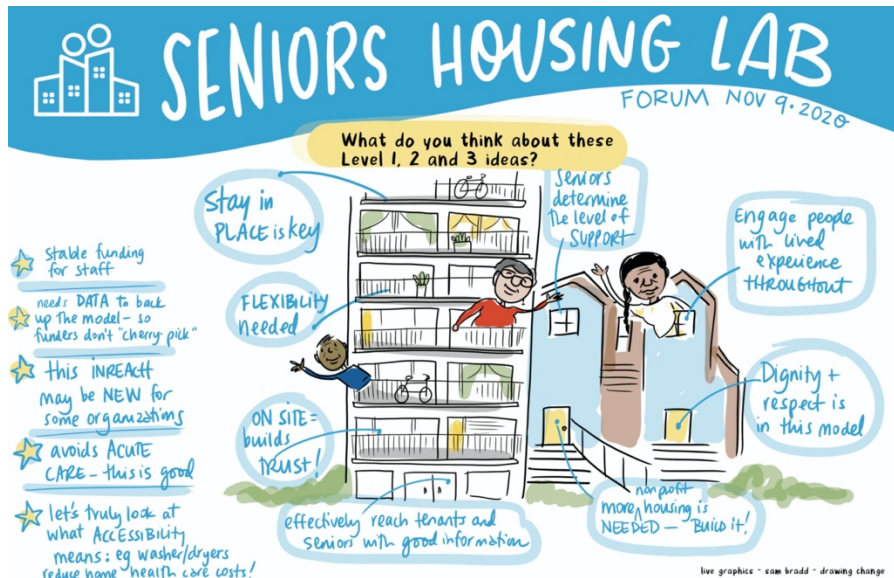
## Highlights and Final Chat

Forum highlights included the video and graphic recording, which are available on the [Seniors Services Society of B.C. website](http://Seniors Services Society of B.C. website).

The impact of COVID-19 on seniors was evident throughout the Forum. Participants identified shared challenges, including increased social isolation, technology barriers, and the difficulty of complex, rapid service adaptations.

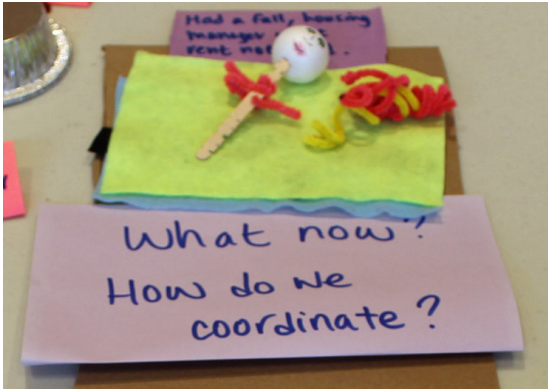
Participants signed up to collaborate in moving ideas forward. They will be contacted when project leaders clarify resources. In closing, people used “chat” to share what they felt at Forum closing.

re-energized  
 deliberations collaborative  
 Informative  
 hopeful heard  
 connection Grateful thought  
 progressing provoking  
 inclusiveness thoughtful  
 unclear  
 inspired encouraged  
 empowered



Tech Facilitator: Tejaswinee Jhunjunwala  
 Graphic Record: Sam Bradd, Drawing Change  
 Idea Graphics: Tom Norman, Kapow Creative  
 Video: Miguel Fernandez and Mariam Larson

**Thank you to all Lab participants for your continued dedication to building age-friendly communities.**





**SENIORS HOUSING LAB**  
**FORUM**  
Nov. 9, 2020



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The Seniors Housing Lab was supported by many partners.

The Seniors Housing Lab was made possible by funding under the National Housing Strategy Solutions Labs. Views expressed are those of the authors/presenters.



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We are grateful for the seniors/elders with lived experience who took their personal time to guide us in our work.

We also recognize the many organizations who committed to work together in this project.



411 Seniors Centre Society  
 Advent Real Estate Services Ltd.  
**Alice Munro, Senior Advisor**  
 Amacon  
 Atria Women's Resource Society  
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 BC Non-profit Housing Association  
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 City of New Westminster  
 City of Richmond  
 City of Vancouver  
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 Homelessness Services Association of BC  
 Jewish Family Services  
**Kathryn Wilder, Senior Advisor**  
 Landlord BC

**Leslie Grigg, Senior Advisor**  
 Lookout Health and Housing Society  
 Math Mountain  
**ML Burke, Senior Advisor**  
 MOSAIC  
 Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House  
 Network of Inner City Community Services Society (NICCSS)  
 New Chelsea Society  
**Nicholas Wennington, Senior Advisor**  
**Norman Goodings, Senior Advisor**  
**Patsy Craig, Senior Advisor**  
 Reach Community Health Centre  
 Renfrew Collingwood Seniors Society  
 Seniors Services Society (SSS) of BC  
 SHARE Family and Community Services  
 Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre  
 The Bloom Group  
 The New Vista Society  
 United Way of the Lower Mainland  
 Vancouver Coastal Health  
 West End Seniors' Network  
 Whole Way House Society

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## Agenda

### Seniors Housing Lab Overview

- Who, why, when, and how
- Our challenge


### We Share Our Ideas and Hear From You

- Seniors CONNECT In-Place
- Seniors Activate

### Moving Ideas Forward




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# Seniors Housing Lab Overview

Dr. Beverley Pitman

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## Who:

Low-income senior renters in Metro Vancouver experiencing housing insecurity and instability, eviction and displacement

- Fixed incomes, poor health
- Living alone, socially isolated
- Diverse backgrounds
- Unable to access services and supports

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**Why:**

**Metro Vancouver rental housing market**

- Rent escalation, low vacancy rates, building demolitions, renovictions

**Lag in government response to population aging**

- Age-Friendly Communities, Aging in Place, Care Close to Home, SAFER

**Older tenants**

- More, living longer; increasing poverty; increasing diversity; accumulated disadvantage (trauma)

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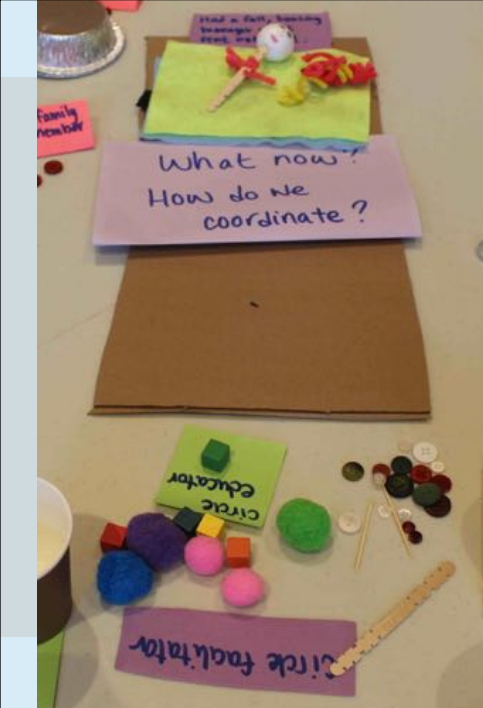


**Why:**

- The rate of **seniors poverty** in Metro Vancouver is **13.5%**
- Between 2008 and 2020, the number of seniors 65+ experiencing **homelessness increased 5X**
- Between 2006 and 2016, the number of 55+ households that rent increased by **21%**
- Between 2008 and 2018, **apartment rents** in Metro Vancouver increased by **4.8%**

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## When and how:

**Solutions Innovation Lab:** Venue for co-creation, mobilization and implementation of innovative solutions.


**2019 June:** Launch

**2019 – 2020:** Workshops (4) and Forum

**March – May:** Pandemic Pause

**July:** ECOH Webinar

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## Challenge Statement:

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

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**Key questions**



**Transitions**  
*How might we collaborate to improve transitions between service for the long-term goal of achieving aging in place?*

*How might we move health and community to a common understanding and action to achieve person-centred, long-term aging in place with smooth trusting relationships?*

**System Linkages**  
*How might we connect tenants with/to supports before crisis occurs and create more stable, accessible system linkages between services and tenants?*

**Place-based**  
*How might we embed place-based programming and service navigation into all multi-unit buildings with a high proportion of seniors (inclusive of other seniors in the neighbourhood)?*

**Senior-led System Redesign**  
*How might we give voice to diverse groups of seniors in order to redesign the system that:*

*is both respectful and responds to the urgency of the current situation; builds on what currently works; and engages a broad range of stakeholders including landlords?*

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**SENIORS HOUSING LAB**  
**Seniors CONNECT**  
**In-Place**

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### How might we address...

Transitions?  
Place-based needs?



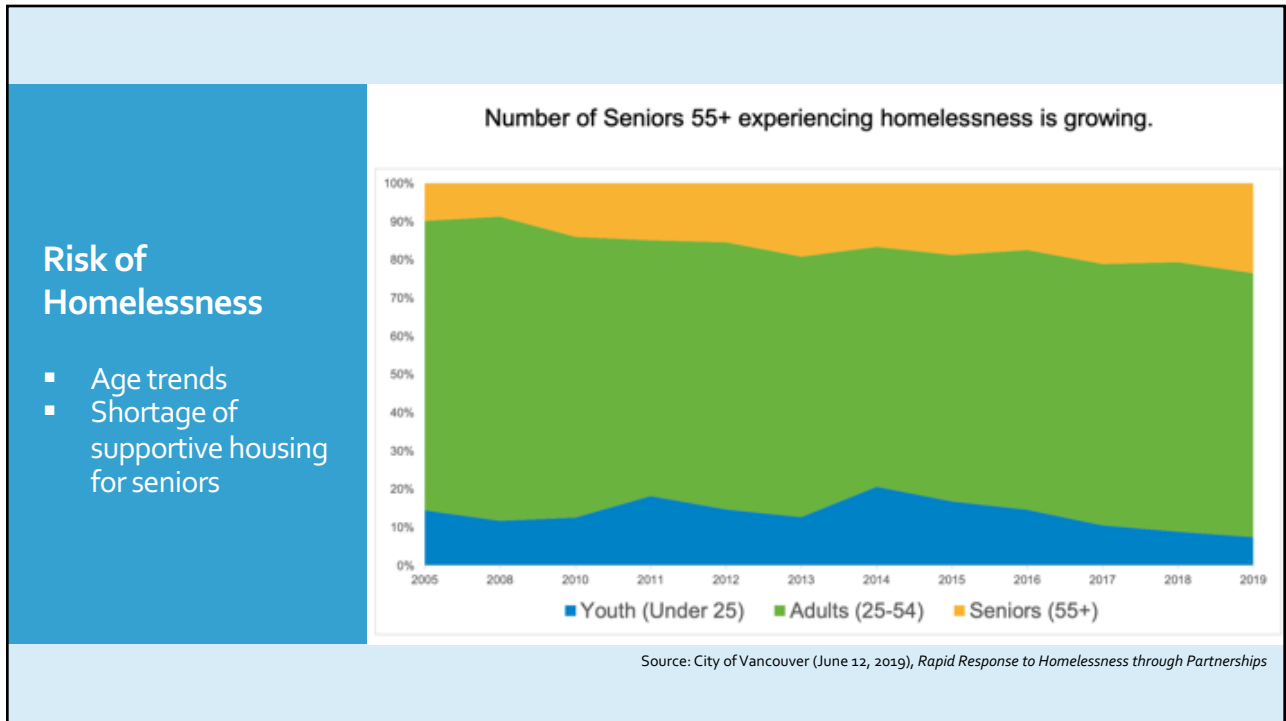
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### How might we address...

Transitions?  
Place-based needs?



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Hospitalization  
**\$1500/day**

Assisted Living  
**\$250/day**

Homelessness  
**\$145/day**

- Seniors without support can face longer hospitalization, early assisted living or homelessness.
- Average cost of homelessness in Vancouver is \$53,000 per year.

Source: Metro Vancouver Homelessness Count

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### Three Levels of Support

- Seniors at the Centre
- Proactive Prevention vs. Reactive Intervention
- Replicable, scalable
- Effective use of funds



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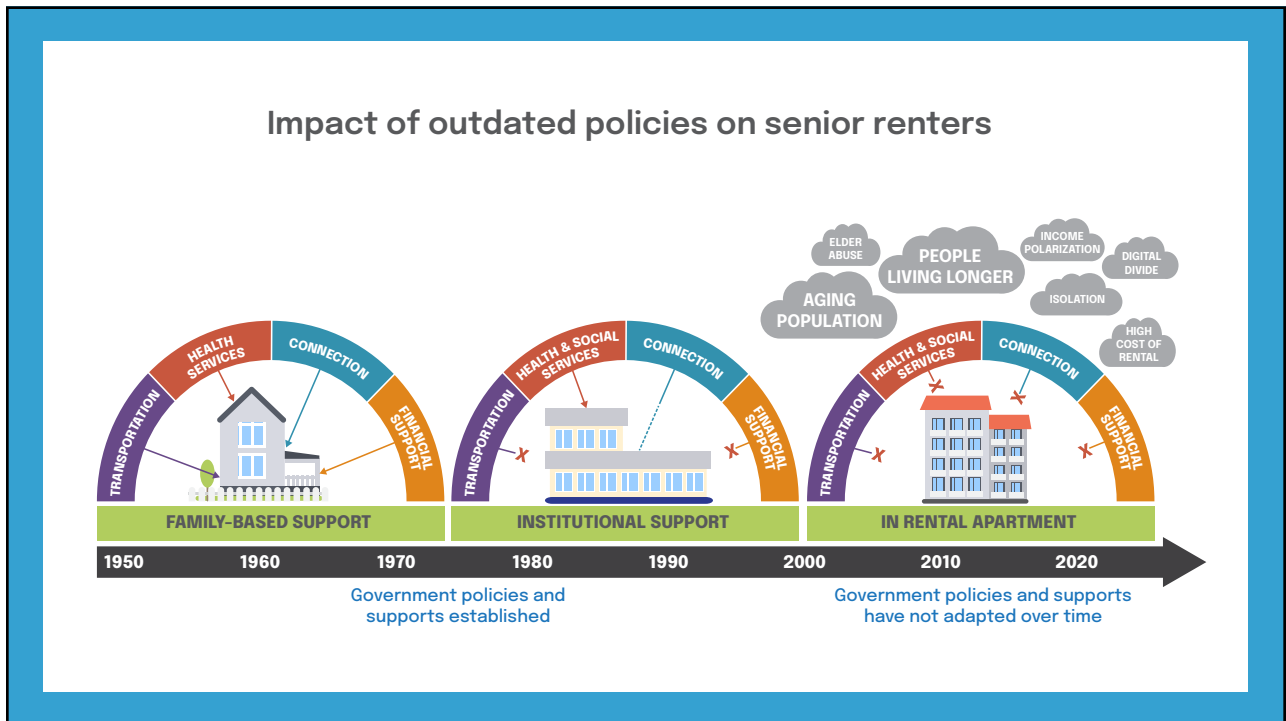
### Seniors CONNECT In-Place: Let's invest in dignified care for seniors

Lev.	Modeled On	Features	# Seniors	Commit	Yearly Prog. Cost	Daily Cost P/P
1	Close to Home, West End Seniors Network <i>Good pilot location: South Granville Seniors Centre</i>	<b>Seniors:</b> Independent, some mobility challenges <b>Level:</b> Minimal support <b>Building:</b> Mixed age, on-site social programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1 day per week, light support and navigation</li> <li>▪ In-reach Connector connected to community org.</li> <li>▪ Driven by tenant leadership, resident volunteers</li> </ul>	20 – 30	3 yr min	\$30,000	\$4
2	Twin Towers <i>Good pilot locations: New Chelsea, Shiloh Housing</i>	<b>Seniors:</b> Some decline, not thriving <b>Level:</b> Mid-level, semi-supportive <b>Building:</b> Seniors' only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 days per week, medium navigation</li> <li>▪ Social programs, engaged volunteers/residents</li> </ul>	40 per, in 2 buildings	3 yr min.	\$87,600	\$6
3	Whole Way House Full Support <i>Good pilot location: Vancouver Native Housing Society</i>	<b>Seniors:</b> At risk, frail, low income <b>Level:</b> High, 1 to 1 tenant support <b>Building:</b> Seniors' only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-site 7 days/week, full navigation, social programs, advocacy, engaged volunteers/residents</li> <li>▪ No duplication of services</li> </ul>	40 per building	3 yr min.	\$116,800	\$8

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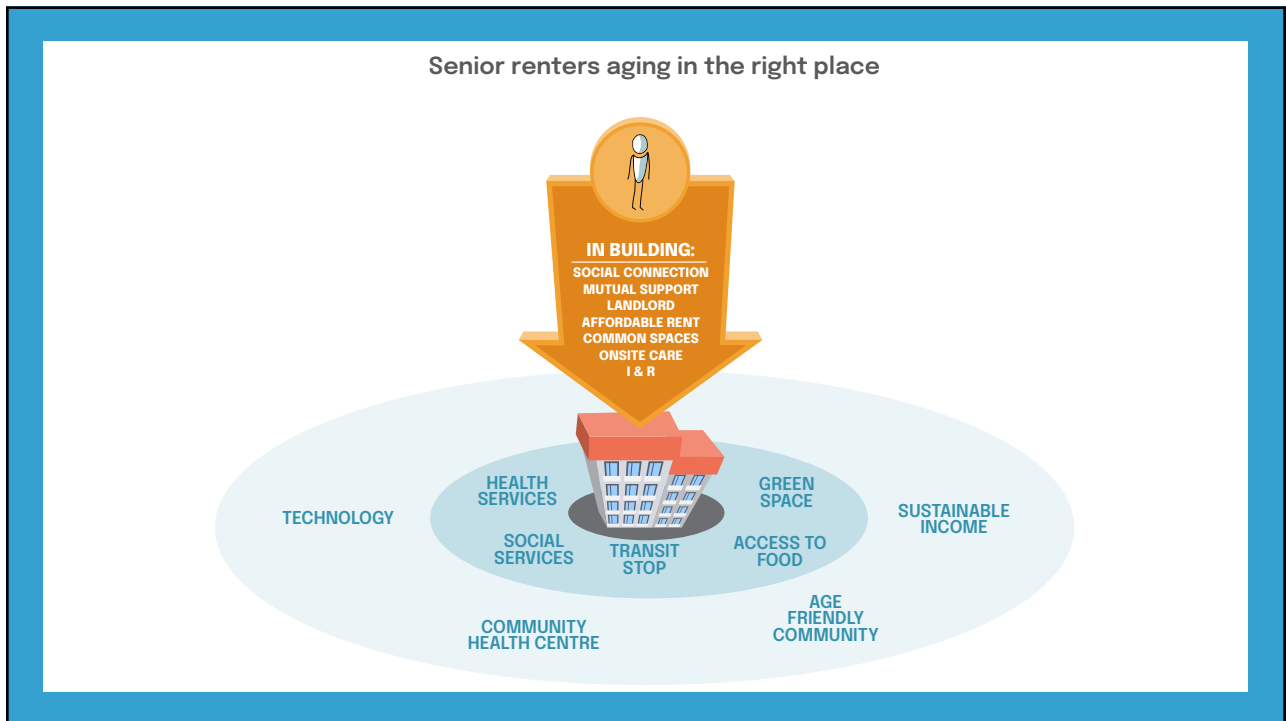
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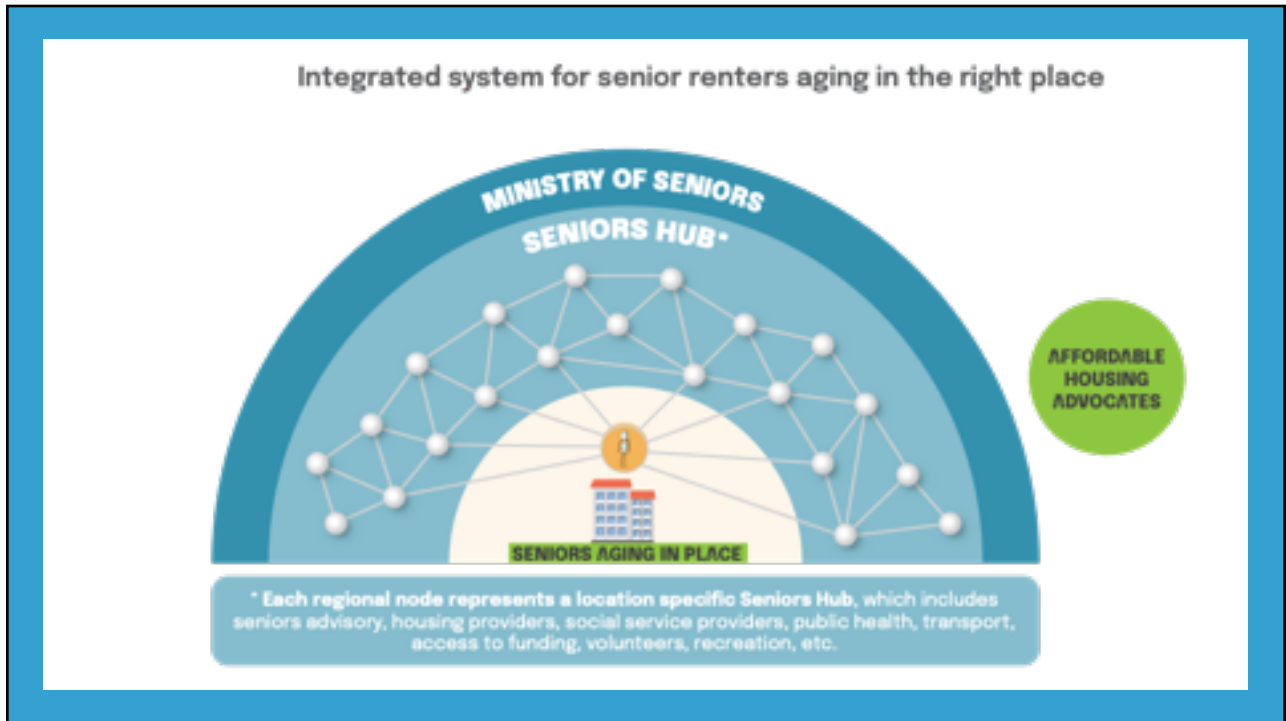
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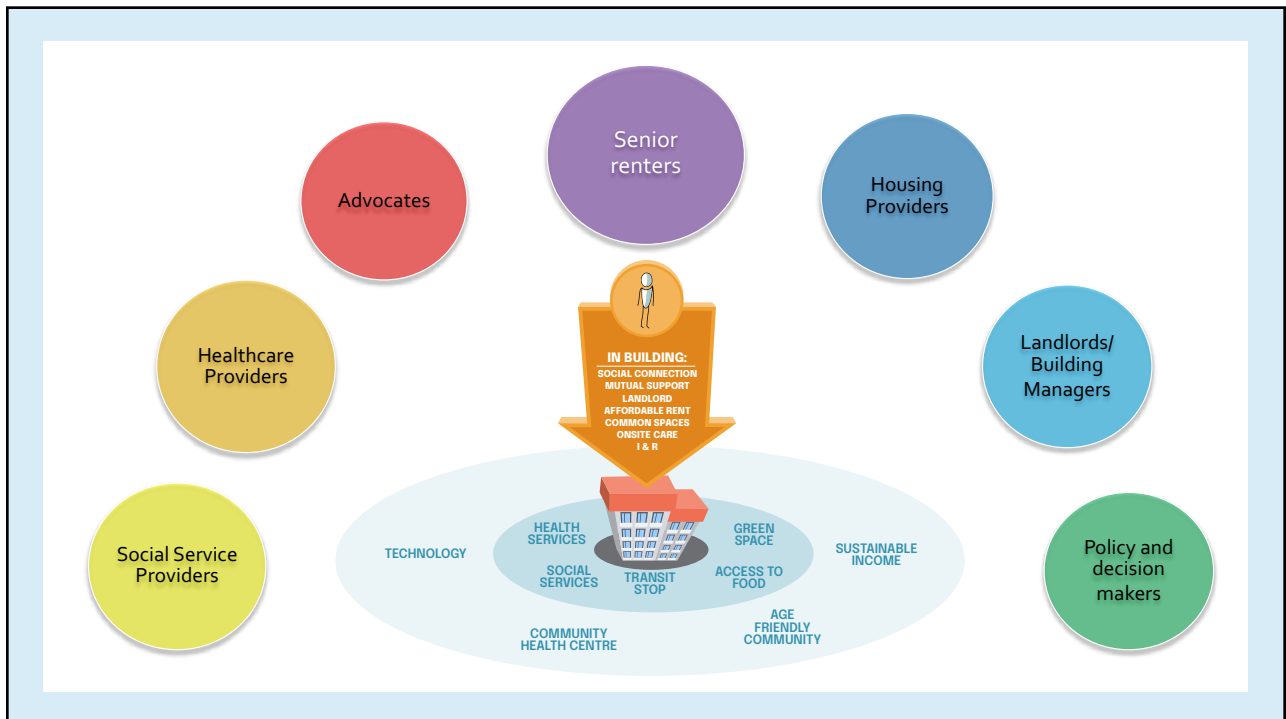
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COLUMBIA

### **Terms of Reference for BC Ministry of Seniors**

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of the BC Ministry of Seniors is to guide policy development across government to create and deliver programs and services that support the health and social wellbeing of seniors. The Ministry will promote the values of inclusion, diversity, and healthy active living to change perceptions about, and promote the benefits of, age-friendly communities.

#### *Objectives*

The mission of the Ministry is to ensure seniors living in BC have access to health, housing, and social services that meet their diverse needs. In response to the growing number of seniors in BC, the Ministry will work to facilitate the meaningful social, cultural, and economic participation of seniors in day-to-day life. Moreover, the Ministry will adapt and respond to the changing needs of seniors over time to ensure all seniors can live healthy and fulfilling lives and age well in their communities.

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## References

BC Non-Profit Housing Association. (2020). *2020 HOMELESS COUNT IN METRO VANCOUVER Preliminary Data Report*. Prepared for Reaching Home's Community Entity for Metro Vancouver. [https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/2020HomelessCount\\_MetroVan\\_PreliminaryDataReport.pdf](https://www.vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/2020HomelessCount_MetroVan_PreliminaryDataReport.pdf)

The Homelessness Services Association of BC, Urban Matters, and BC Non-Profit Housing Association (2018). *2018 Report on Homeless Counts in B.C.* Prepared for BC Housing. Burnaby, BC: Metro Vancouver. Retrieved from <https://www.bchousing.org/publications/2018-BC-Homeless-Counts.pdf>

SPARC BC and United Way Lower Mainland. (2018). *B.C. Seniors' Poverty Report Card*. Prepared for UWLM. Retrieved from <https://www.uwlm.ca/news/bc-seniors-poverty-report-card/>



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## Next Steps

*Want to learn more or get involved? Please contact:*

Seniors Services Society of B.C.  
604-520-6621  
[www.seniorsservicesociety.ca](http://www.seniorsservicesociety.ca)

