

City of Vancouver Seniors Housing Strategy

The City of Vancouver is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial.

As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver has committed to “form a sustained relationship of mutual respect and understanding with local First Nations and the Urban Indigenous community.” This is an ongoing and evolving commitment, and one that is essential to our path forward.



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Acknowledgements

The development of the City's first Seniors Housing Strategy is the result of the involvement and expertise of many older persons, caregivers, community-based organizations, non-profit housing providers, and Council advisory committees. Staff would like to express thanks to the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC) for their leadership, vision, and advice in the development of this Strategy. Gratitude also goes to the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC), the Renters Advisory Committee (RAC), the 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee and non-profit organizations that serve older adults for their expertise in this area.

A key consideration in developing the Seniors Housing Strategy is recognizing that the City's scope, role and influence may not extend to all challenges identified. In these instances, the action is scaled to the City's specific role, and opportunities for advocacy and working with partners are also identified.

Executive Summary

The Seniors Housing Strategy was developed through extensive public and stakeholder engagement. It highlights the diversity of housing needs of elders and older adults, which vary widely depending on age, health, income and other factors. For this strategy, the terms *seniors*, *older adults*, *older persons* and *elders* are used interchangeably and refer to a person who is 55 years of age or older.

With a rapidly aging population and some seniors in crisis, there is an urgent need to advance actions to improve housing for older adults, in collaboration with partners. The strategy outlines policies, partnerships, and advocacy to work towards the overarching goal of ***ensuring elders and older adults have the housing and supports needed to allow for aging in appropriate and affordable housing in their community***. It includes five key directions and over 20 actions to be implemented across City of Vancouver departments and in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing, and community partners.

Key Directions:

1. Increase the supply and renewal of affordable and appropriate housing for older adults.
2. Improve home and building supports for older adults.
3. Increase supply of deeply affordable housing, rental subsidies, and other services for older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
4. Improve access to information to connect older adults to housing and services.
5. Continue advancing other work to make Vancouver more equitable for older adults.

The Seniors Housing Strategy is one piece of the City's work to improve the lives of older adults and will continue to evolve over time as other strategies and related policies progress. The Monitoring Framework in Appendix IV outlines the partnerships required and a timeline to implement this strategy.

1. Introduction

Seniors are a fast-growing age demographic, with more older persons in the City of Vancouver than ever before. Many older adults live on fixed incomes and will need to consider changing health, accessibility and housing needs as they age. Some older adults will choose to stay in their existing home or community as long as they can, while others may seek out or require housing with supports or will downsize to a more manageable or accessible home. Low-income seniors who rent their homes face serious affordability challenges and are in urgent need of additional rental supports and secure affordable non-market housing (i.e., non-profit social, co-op, and supportive housing). Further, the City of Vancouver faces a shortage of subsidized long-term care beds and assisted living units, which will only be made worse by the aging population.

The overarching goal of the City of Vancouver's Seniors Housing Strategy is to ***ensure elders and older adults have the housing and supports needed to allow for aging in appropriate and affordable housing in their community***. To achieve this, the City of Vancouver will:

- Use regulatory tools to encourage more appropriate and affordable housing options for older adults across the housing continuum and within neighbourhoods, so they may age in their community.
- Advocate to the Provincial and Federal governments for the needed health and rental supports to allow older adults to maintain their housing, and partner to deliver seniors-specific non-profit and government-owned housing.
- Prioritize those who need it most by focusing on affordable housing options, such as seniors social, co-op and supportive housing, and subsidized assisted living and long-term care.

This strategy focuses on housing and related supports; however, it is important to note that work is needed across the city and with partners to better support the well-being of older adults and elders. The Seniors Housing Strategy is one step towards improving the lives of older adults and will continue to evolve.

The responsibility for seniors housing and supports falls across all jurisdictions, with many important factors beyond municipal jurisdiction, such as rent supplements, health care, and other services such as home supports. However, the City of Vancouver has a role to play in advocating on behalf of older adults in Vancouver, and in facilitating partnerships across levels of government and with senior-serving community organizations. With a rapidly growing older population and some older adults in crisis, the time to act is now.

2. Housing Needs of Older Adults

Older adults in Vancouver are a diverse group with different needs, preferences, cultures, life experiences, abilities, and ages. For this strategy, seniors are generally considered to be 55 years or older. However, a nuanced approach to aging needs to be considered as intersecting inequities and barriers can create a younger threshold for aging. For example, people with disabilities experience aging in different ways, with people's disabilities often becoming more complex and challenging as they age. Conversely, many older persons show positive socioeconomic outcomes, and are doing relatively well in terms of housing security and affordability when compared to younger age groups.

The below sections reference several quantitative data points to give us an understanding of the existing and future housing needs of older adults and elders. However, this data does not fully represent the diverse needs of older adults and should be supplemented by community and public engagement findings in section 3.

Existing Housing Needs

In terms of existing housing tenure, the majority of older adults 55+ are homeowners (70%), with over two-thirds of these residents no longer having a mortgage on their home. Only 30% of older adults 55+ are renters, significantly less than the overall City of Vancouver population, which is made up of 55% renter households. Homeowners tend to have greater security of tenure, less affordability pressures, and live in their homes longer than renter households.

Though fewer in numbers, older adults who rent experience greater affordability challenges as they age. About 30% of older adults 55+ who rent experience core housing need – an inability to find housing that is affordable based on their income, housing unsuitability or inadequacy, such as living in a building that is in need of major repairs or living in an inaccessible unit. Core housing need tends to increase with age for renter households as shown in Figure 2, from 23% of those aged 55-64 to a peak of 41% for those 75-84 years of age.

Figure 1 - Vancouver 55+ population by housing tenure (2021)

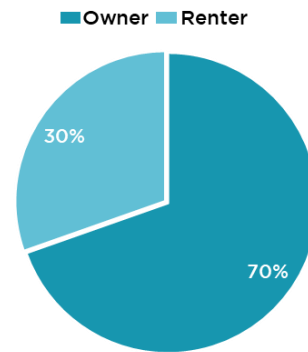
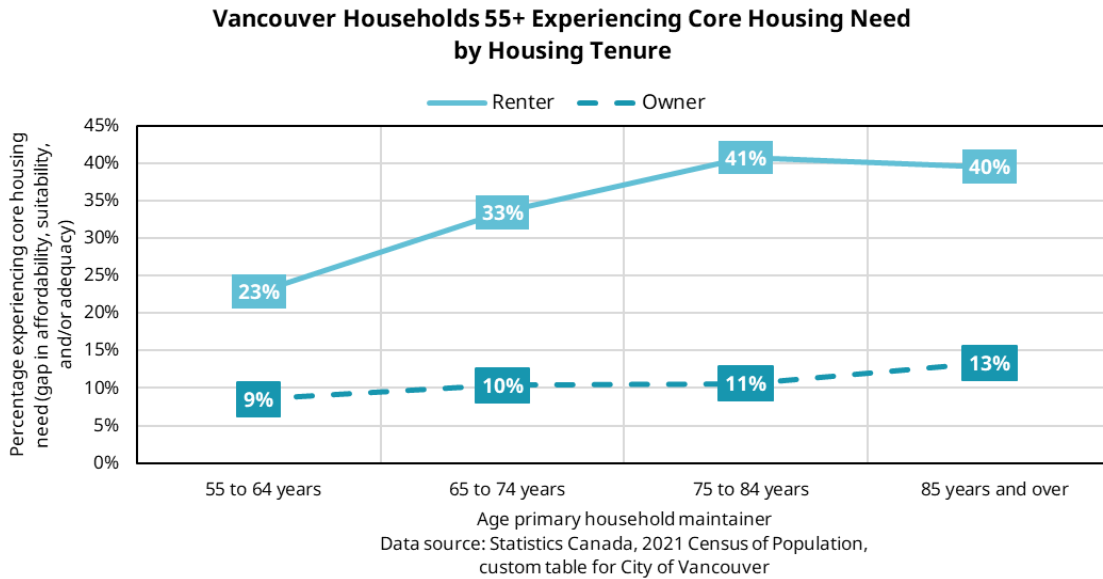
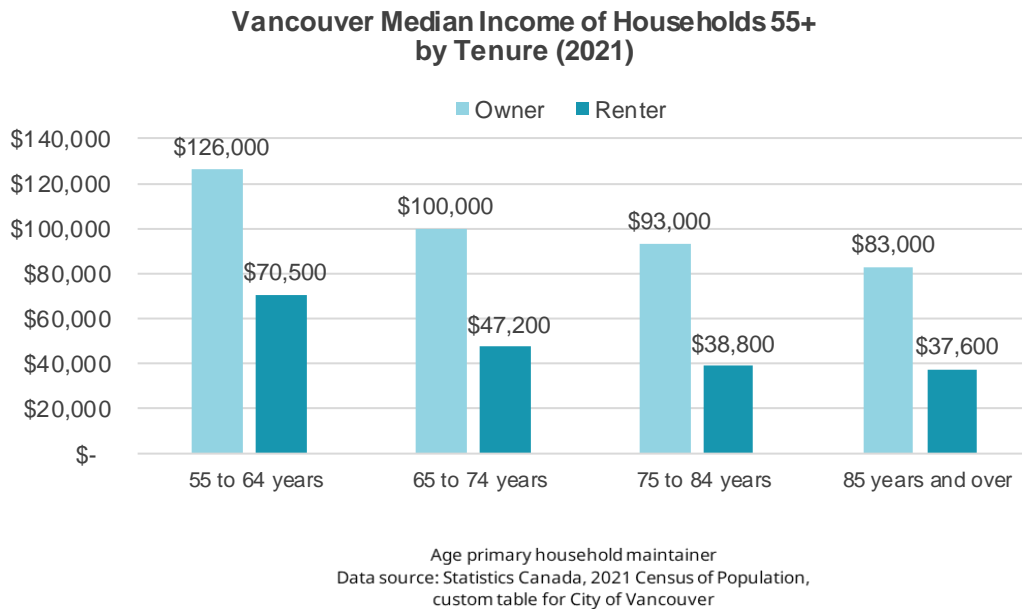


Figure 2 - Vancouver 55+ households in core housing need (2021)



A large share of older adults 55+ are low-income in Vancouver. As of the 2021 Census, 17% of older adult households are considered low-income and make less than \$26,503. Low-income older adults typically rely on retirement income benefits from the Provincial and Federal governments, including Old Age Security (OAS), Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), and the BC Seniors Supplement, to supplement their own income and savings. Low-income older adults who rent their homes are especially impacted by inadequate income supports. As shown in Figure 3, older adults who rent tend to have about half the median income as older adults who own their homes.

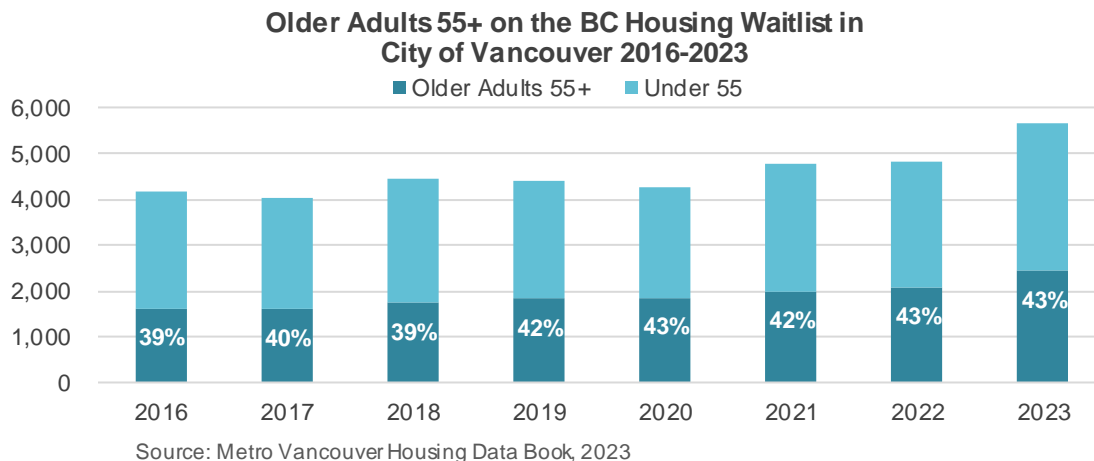
Figure 3 – Vancouver median incomes of households 55+



Even with income supplements market rents in Vancouver, which averaged \$1,786 for a one-bedroom unit in 2023, are unaffordable. In 2023 there were close to 3,250 older adults receiving the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program rent subsidy in the City of Vancouver. The average monthly rent of SAFER recipients was \$1,113 and the average monthly payment was \$219 per household as of a March 2023 data snapshot. While the program works for older adults with lower-than-average market rents, it is inadequate for people with rents closer to market. Statistics Canada 2021 census data shows there are over 14,000 senior-led households aged 55+ who are paying more than 30% of their household income on rent in the private market. Over one-third of these households are in crisis (5,100 households), spending over 50% of their household income on rent.

As a result of unaffordability in the rental market, there is a significant and growing number of older adults on the BC Housing Social Housing Waitlist. In 2023, about 43% of people on the social housing waitlist in the City of Vancouver were 55+ (2,420 persons), even though older adults 55+ made up only 30% of the City’s overall population. From 2022 to 2023, the number of people on the social housing waitlist increased by 18%, the largest increase seen in recent years.

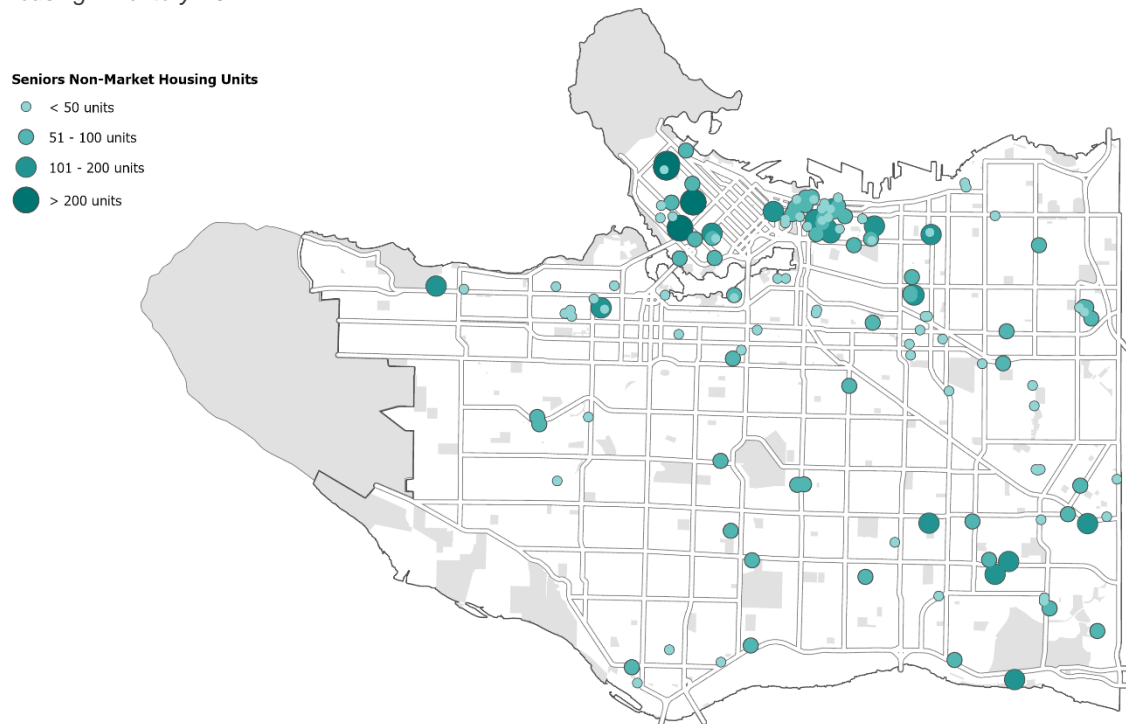
Figure 4 – Older Adults 55+ on the BC Housing Waitlist within the City of Vancouver



There are a significant number of older adults currently living in social housing and non-profit co-op housing. About 25% of individuals aged 55+ who live in rented housing live in subsidized rental housing. This includes both seniors-specific non-market housing, restricted to households aged 55+, and non-market housing with no age requirements, but does not include long-term care or assisted living.

Approximately 30% of non-market housing (social, supportive and non-profit co-op housing) within the City of Vancouver, or approximately 9,000 units, is restricted to residents aged 55+ (see Figure 5). This type of housing offers affordability and relative stability, however, it does not generally include at-home or building supports. We heard from that there are not enough supports for older residents with social, physical, and mental health needs. While both paid and non-profit support organizations exist, high fees and long wait times act as a barrier to accessing these services.

Figure 5 - Locations of Seniors Non-market Housing (restricted to 55+), City of Vancouver Non-market Housing Inventory 2024



Older adults experiencing homelessness or living in inadequate Single Room Occupancy Hotels (SROs) have the highest housing needs. The 2023 City of Vancouver Homeless Count found that 21% of people experiencing homelessness were 55 years of age or older. Of these older adults, almost half (47%) experienced homelessness for the first time when they were 55 or older. The top cited reasons for why older adults lost their housing included: not enough income for housing, landlord conflict, physical health issues, and unfit or unsafe housing conditions.

Although there is little data on the number of older adults living in SROs, we’ve heard from Downtown Eastside housing and service providers that many older adults living in SROs face multiple and complex health, social, and economic challenges.

Further, we know some older adults are disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis and the lack of affordable health and other supports. This includes women, older adults living alone, Indigenous persons, racialized older adults, persons with language barriers, persons with disabilities, and older adults who identify as 2SLGBTQ+. According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, 43% of older adults (65+) live with a disability. We know that finding accessible housing can be very challenging and this is especially true of affordable accessible

Women+ Living Alone

The percentage of women+ living with a partner decreases substantially in older age groups. Older women+ are more likely to have experienced separation or divorce, and much more likely to experience being widowed, compared to older men+. Only about 40% of women+ who are 80 years old live with a partner compared to 70% of men+.

housing. Findings from public and stakeholder engagement help to better describe these housing challenges (see section 3).

Urban, Rural, and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy for BC (2022)

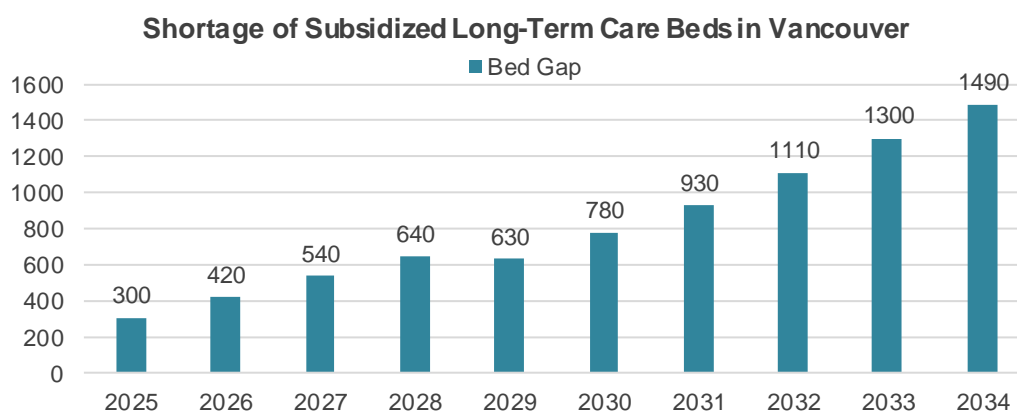
The Aboriginal Housing and Management Association (AHMA) identified a growing elders population and a high number of elders living alone within AHMA housing providers buildings. The report identified the need for greater tenant supports for elders and inadequate funding for these services. Most funding programs offer limited funding for culturally appropriate supports and services, reducing housing providers ability to offer cultural and community events, and reducing opportunities for the involvement of elders.

Trends

When considering the housing needs of older adults into the future, it's important to take into account increasing populations as well as where older adults live. According to BC Statistics population growth estimates, the population of older adults 55+ will increase by close to 30% from 2024 to 2045. In addition to overall growth, there is anticipated to be a growing cohort of older seniors, with a high share of adults aged 80 and over in 2045.

Growing and aging older adult populations means a higher need for buildings with supports as well as at-home supports. For older adults who require complex care, there is a shortage of long-term care and assisted living in Vancouver. According to Vancouver Coastal Health, in 2025 there will be a shortage of just over 300 subsidized long-term care beds and 90 subsidized assisted living units in the City of Vancouver and without further action, this shortage could grow to close to 1,500 long-term care beds and 350 assisted living units over the next ten years due to demographic changes.

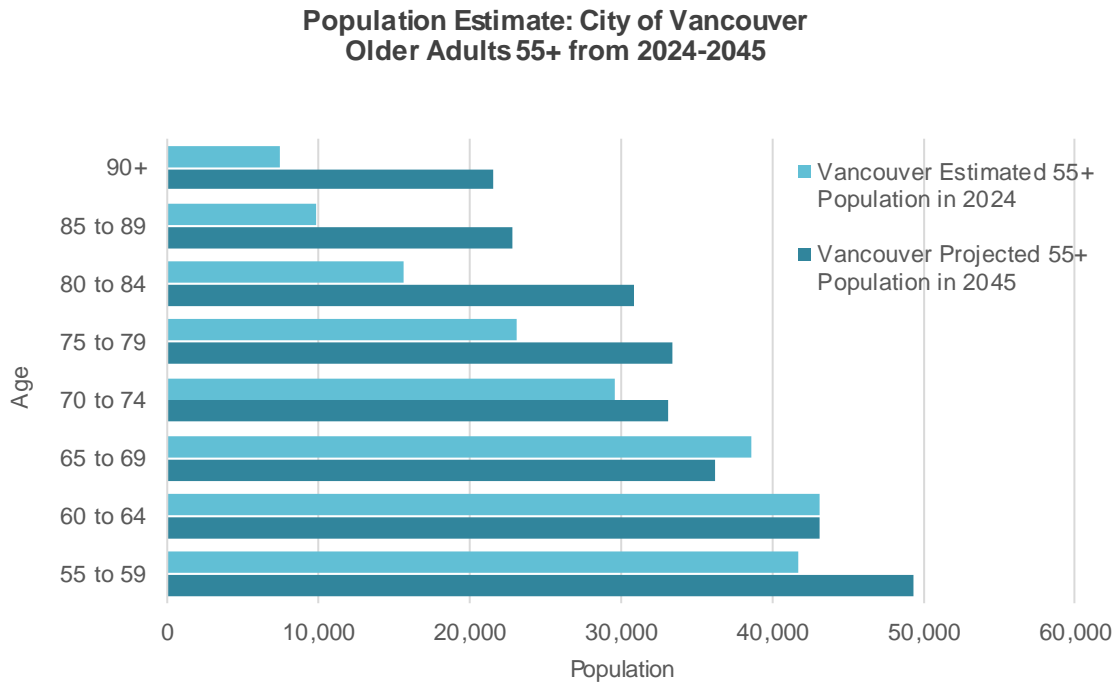
Figure 6 - Estimated Shortage of Long-term Care Beds if no actions taken, City of Vancouver



Source: Vancouver Coastal Health, June 2024

The number of older adults on the social housing waitlist points to the need for more social and non-profit co-op housing, and more subsidized assisted living and long-term care or low-cost home supports as needs change. In addition, for older adults who don't require supports, there will likely be a higher need for more accessible and manageable housing, should they choose or need to downsize over time. This could include both rental and condo housing options in communities where older adults are living now.

Figure 7 – BC Statistics Population Projections for Older Adults 55+ in the City of Vancouver 2024-2045



Source: BC Statistics

3. Engagement: What We’ve Heard

From March to May 2023, the City of Vancouver along with consultant Happy Cities heard from more than 1,500 people through an extensive engagement process. The purpose of this first phase of engagement was to understand the housing challenges and future housing needs of older adults. Engagement activities included:

- 200 phone survey responses,
- 950+ online survey responses,
- 7 pop-up and community outreach events, reaching over 150 people,
- 4 focus group discussions, reaching 45 stakeholders,
- 9 conversation kits, reaching 65 people, and
- 1 ideas fair, attended by 60 stakeholders.

We heard from a variety of people and organizations that serve older adults in Vancouver. While experiences varied, in summary, we heard:

- The majority of seniors are satisfied with their current housing situation. However, those who are living in unaffordable or inadequate conditions need immediate action and support. Low-income renters are vulnerable and the most likely to describe their housing situation as unstable. If they lose their housing, they may struggle to navigate the housing system, placing them at risk of homelessness.

- Though there is a high overall level of housing satisfaction, older seniors tend to experience different challenges than younger seniors. Adults 65+ expressed higher concerns with health issues affecting their ability to age in place.
- Affordability is the top housing challenge for adults 55+ in Vancouver. Most older adults are in favour of measures to improve affordability with 97% in support of adding more social and supportive housing options for seniors.

Chinatown Affordable Seniors Housing Inventory Study

The community-led study Vancouver Chinatown Affordable Seniors Housing Inventory 2023 identified the severe lack of affordable, suitable and secure housing with culturally appropriate and integrated eldercare for Chinatown seniors. The study recommended to re-imagine ways of senior living aligned with the vision of a “campus of care”, meaning seniors have different options for housing across the care spectrum so they can meaningfully age-in-place.

- Older adults in Vancouver are a diverse group with different needs, preferences, cultures, life experiences, abilities, and ages. Factors including racism, ageism, and lack of accessibility make it difficult for some older adults to access appropriate housing.
- Most people want to age in place in their current home, but not everyone can access the supports and home upgrades they need.
- 16% of those surveyed had not yet considered their future housing options. People often won't explore their options until a change in health requires them to do so.
- Around two thirds of older adults would consider in-home support services, but existing services offered are not affordable and cannot meet the growing demand.
- Walkable neighbourhoods are key to supporting well-being, social connection, and independence for older adults. Universal design in new housing is also important to ensuring older adults can remain in their homes as long as they want.
- Caregivers expressed similar challenges for those they care for, related to high rents, home costs, and the need for more affordable at-home supports. They also expressed challenges for themselves related to a lack of resources and burnout, stressing the importance of respite and adult day program options.

Key Challenges

In addition, we heard several common challenges from older adults and the organizations seeking to serve them. These include:

Housing affordability and availability

- There is a lack of affordable housing for low-income older adults. There are long waitlists for social, co-op and supportive housing and many on it have no other options while they wait. Older adults on the waitlist are living in inadequate or unaffordable housing or may be experiencing homelessness.
- Similarly, there are long waitlists for subsidized assisted living and long-term care. Many people do not have family or other supports and cannot afford to pay for home supports while they wait for the needed care.

Figure 8 - Top challenges from public engagement



Housing and health supports

- Leaders in the non-profit sector expressed a serious lack of mobile, often temporary, supports to assist older adults living in social housing after suffering from minor health incidents. Without these supports, tenants may undergo a rapid deterioration in their health and no longer be able to maintain successful tenancies. The non-profit organizations noted that because these buildings are independent social housing, they are not staffed or equipped to provide the supports needed. In addition, as landlords they do not have the legal authority to intervene and request assistance from the health authority when needed.
- We heard there are poor supports for market renters, for example, the existing SAFER Program that provides rent supplements to market renters is grossly inadequate given current area rents. An overhaul to the program is needed, which should include a regular inflator to keep up with changing market conditions.
- There is a lack of culturally appropriate supports in long-term care and assisted living settings. There are only a few buildings in Vancouver that provide culturally focused meals, activities, and staff who speak residents first language. Older adults with disabilities may also face specific challenges, such as a lack of support staff trained in American Sign Language. In addition, some organizations serving older adults have stated there continues to be discrimination of 2SLGBTQ+ residents in care settings and has called for improved staff training to ensure safe and inclusive spaces.

“Not knowing where I’m going to end up when I’m older, that’s my biggest fear. There’s not many options out there.”

—Pop-up attendee and BC Housing resident

We Must Do Better: Home Support Services for BC Seniors Report 2023

The BC Seniors Advocate highlighted the inadequacy of the current home support services system in the province in a 2023 report, noting BC is the most expensive province when it comes to the cost of home support services. In 2023, a senior with an annual income of \$29,000 would have to pay \$9,000 a year for a one-hour daily visit of home support. The majority of other provinces do not charge any amount for home support, and it was found that this leads to a higher number of seniors in BC being admitted earlier than needed to long-term care facilities.

Challenges navigating the system

- Many people noted the process to get in to subsidized assisted living or long-term care is complex, especially if the person does not speak English or has no family or other supports to assist them.
- We heard that older adults often find navigating systems related to finding affordable housing challenging. This can include technological challenges, onerous applications and proof required, or the need for translations of materials.
- Challenges navigating the changing supports for low-income older adults from income assistance to OAS and GIS. Without assistance from outreach organizations, some people experience gaps in income support that have to be filled through other rent supplements or sources.
- Some older adults are discharged from hospital without appropriate discharge planning. Their existing home may no longer be accessible or adequate for their health needs and without social worker support, this can lead to homelessness.

For the full summary of public and stakeholder engagement findings, see Appendix I: [What We Heard Report](#).

Figure 9 – City of Vancouver Seniors Housing Ideas Fair (June 2023)



City of Vancouver Older Persons & Elders Advisory Committee (OPEAC)

The mandate of the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee is to advise Council and staff on enhancing access and inclusion for older persons and elders to fully participate in City services and civic life.

Staff engaged with the OPEAC throughout the Strategy development, including in scoping, engagement, and drafting policies. The committee provided critical insights and was key to assisting staff to reach a number of other valued stakeholders.

Some of the key findings and opportunities highlighted by OPEAC include working closely with non-profit housing organizations, service providers, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Province, housing experts, and other community organizations to:

- Expand rent-gear-to-income non-profit housing options for lower income seniors.
- Ensure a continuum of care and support systems are in place to prevent homelessness and better meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness, including the creation of safe senior-designated shelters across all neighbourhoods as well as SRO replacement and improvements.
- Fast track planning initiatives and continue existing property tax exemptions to facilitate the development of seniors' appropriate housing geared to incomes of older persons across all neighbourhoods.
- Support ageing in the right place by ensuring new homes are better designed, including through building by-law changes, to support temporary and permanent mobility impairments, dementia, and to foster social connections.
- Explore cost-effective innovative housing solutions for older adults (e.g., Abbeyfield houses, dementia villages, home share, multigenerational living), and encourage the co-location of age-friendly retail and other services with housing.

4. Housing Affordability & Supports for Older Adults

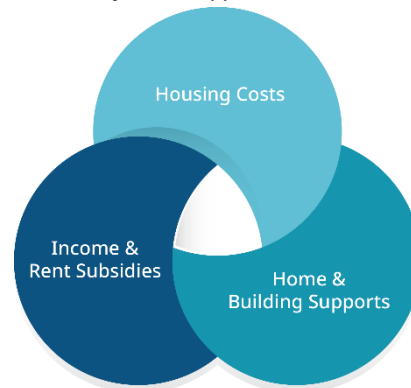
The typical approach to understanding housing affordability, whereas housing costs should be less than 30% of a household's income, does not work as well for older adults. This is because as people retire incomes are likely to decrease and become largely fixed, meaning people are more vulnerable to inflation and unforeseen economic crises. However, older adults may have savings, and homeowners may have accrued equity in their homes.

Most older homeowners in Vancouver have fully paid their mortgages, so monthly housing costs are typically lower for homeowners. There are also existing programs to defer property taxes and other costs for older homeowners, should this be needed. Built-up equity may also allow homeowners to move to a more appropriate or accessible home, or to bring in home support services as needed.

Conversely, older adults who rent tend to have lower incomes and are not as likely to have built-up equity. Having a fixed lower income is even more challenging as a renter as they must continue to pay rent, which increases regularly as allowable under the Residential Tenancy Act. Without significant savings, these older adults need rental supports or other government assistance to maintain their housing as they age. If older renters are evicted or otherwise displaced from their homes where they have lived for a long time, they are likely to need significant rent supports or to secure a social housing unit, due to high market rents.

In addition to the costs of housing, at home medical and other supports are key to allowing older adults to maintain their housing, as well as their health and well-being. Home supports are essential to enabling older adults to maintain independence in their home, reducing the need for long-term care and supporting health outcomes. The costs of housing, the availability of income supports and rent subsidies, and the affordability of home or buildings supports all need to be considered in meeting the housing needs of older adults.

Figure 10 - Connection of housing affordability and supports for older adults



Roles & Responsibilities

The housing and supports needed to ensure the well-being of older adults fall under multiples jurisdictions and all authorities need to work together to ensure success.

The Government of Canada is key to supporting older adults through federal income supports such as the Canadian Pension Plan, Old Age Security, the Guaranteed Income Supplement for low-income older adults, and tax credits. It also plays a key role in funding provincial health and housing systems, and in direct funding and financing to non-profit housing providers.

The Province of British Columbia and its authorities including BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health have the primary responsibility to build and fund affordable and appropriate housing and supports, along with providing health care for older adults. This includes funding social and supportive housing and new and replacement subsidized long-term care and assisted living, both of which are crucial to meeting the housing needs of older adults now and into the future. The Province also funds home and health supports so older adults can stay in their homes as their health needs change. In addition, homeowner grant programs, property tax deferral programs, and the SAFER program is under provincial jurisdiction, which are key to ensuring older adults can continue to age in their homes affordably.

In terms of municipal roles, cities are largely responsible for regulating land-use, building requirements through the Vancouver Building By-law, and creating policies to encourage uses. Additionally, the City of Vancouver invests in affordable housing through granting and provision of land, and partners with other levels of government and non-profit organizations to meet housing needs.

Within the realm of seniors housing, the City of Vancouver is active in all its roles. This includes enabling new seniors housing developments throughout the city, regulating development designs, and regulating tenant and resident relocation requirements. The city also partners and invests with other levels of government and non-profit organizations on social housing projects and will advocate for the funding and supports needed by older residents of Vancouver.

The community non-profit sector also plays an important role in meeting the needs of specific populations, such as newcomers and those at risk of homelessness. Seniors' centres, neighbourhood houses, and other non-profit and charitable organizations serve important roles in connecting older adults to services and supports, as well as providing supports directly.

Figure 11 - Role of Governments in Seniors Housing & Supports



Advancing Non-Profit Social, Co-op and Supportive Housing

The non-profit housing sector provides affordable, stable homes for households earning low and moderate-incomes and has become increasingly important to meeting specific housing needs. In addition to the actions to encourage seniors housing within this strategy, the City continues to advance the development and protection of affordable housing through a number of other initiatives. This includes: Vancouver’s Social Housing Initiative to pre-zone land for social and co-op housing in every neighbourhood to speed up approval of projects; building new co-op housing on City-owned land; exploring opportunities to support building acquisitions by the non-profit sector; continuing to expedite affordable housing projects through City processes and permitting; providing capital grants to non-profit and co-op housing construction; and exploring the creation and implementation of standardized building designs that would allow the use of off-site construction methods to increase the speed of development. See the Housing Vancouver Three-Year Action Plan (2024-2026) for more information.

5. Goals & Priorities

The overarching goal of the City of Vancouver’s Seniors Housing Strategy is to **ensure elders and older adults have the housing and supports needed to allow for aging in appropriate and affordable housing in their community**. This means:

- Using regulatory tools to encourage more appropriate and affordable housing options for older adults across the housing continuum so they may age in their community (see Figure 12),
- Advocating for the needed health, rental and income supports to allow older adults to maintain their housing, and
- Prioritizing those who need it most by focusing on affordable housing options, such as seniors social and supportive housing, and subsidized assisted living and long-term care.

Figure 12 - Seniors Housing Continuum



Most older adults will choose to age in their existing home, whether ownership housing, rental housing or social or co-op housing, and will typically only move into housing with supports when their needs change (see Appendix II for seniors housing type definitions). As an alternative to moving into housing with built-in supports, some older adults will have personal care or medical services brought into their home, or have renovations done, allowing them to age in place for longer.

Based on housing data and public and stakeholder engagement, we know that low-income renter households, people experiencing homelessness, and people with disabilities or health needs tend to be the most housing insecure and vulnerable as they age. This **Strategy seeks to prioritize the housing that is needed most**, including social, supportive and co-op housing for older adults, along with subsidized assisted living and long-term care. The replacement of SROs with self-contained social housing, and the continued provision of homelessness services and shelters that serve older adults are also priorities.

Aging in the Right Place

'Aging in the right place' is a concept that recognises the “the process of enabling healthy aging in the most appropriate setting based on an older person’s personal preferences, circumstances and care needs”

Source: National Institute on Aging, 2022, p. 18

In addition, at-home supports are important to ensuring appropriate housing for people as they age. Adequate private market rent supplements, such as the BC Housing SAFER program are similarly vital to ensuring rental housing remains affordable to people as they age.

While the emphasis of this strategy is on non-profit and government owned housing types, including social housing, assisted living and long-term care, all types of

housing are necessary to meet the diverse socioeconomic levels of seniors. This includes secured market rental and condo housing, so older adults may downsize to a more manageable or accessible unit, as well as lower density options such as multiplexes. Multiplexes are a new form of housing approved by Council in 2023, which will provide more low-density ownership options within neighbourhoods so people can age in their community or live in multigenerational households.

More housing types will also be added through ongoing implementation of the Vancouver Plan (2022), the City’s long-range planning framework, which will allow for the full continuum of housing types, including more social, rental and strata housing options across the city. Private pay and public, subsidized long-term care and assisted living will also provide options that may be appropriate for existing homeowners. These new housing additions, along with other factors that create “Complete Neighbourhoods” such as improved amenities, transportation, parks and plazas, and shops and services, will allow for better aging in community.

Multigenerational Living

While the focus of this strategy is on seniors-specific housing, there are many benefits of multigenerational living for older adults. Through the Housing Vancouver Three-Year Action Plan (2024-2026), the City is supporting multigenerational social and co-op housing through pre-zoning, advancing new projects on City-owned land, and exploring opportunities to support building acquisitions by non-profits, among other actions.

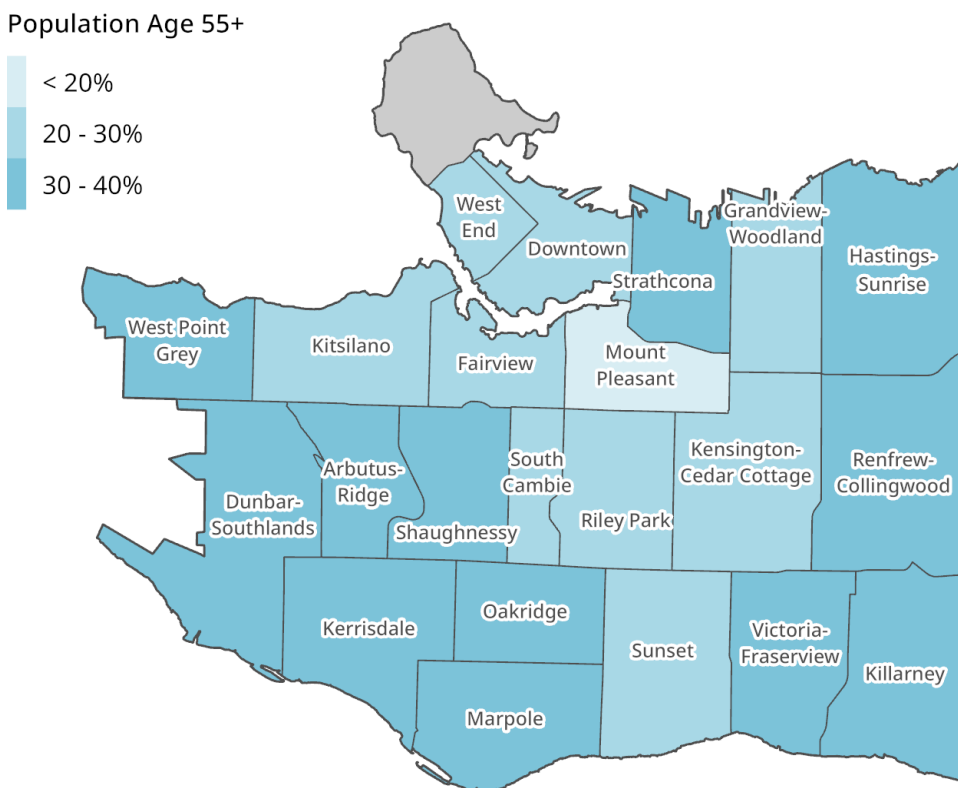
Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs)

The NORC concept refers to communities that over time may house a higher proportion of older adults. It may also include communities that were designed to house a concentration of older adults, such as apartment or social housing buildings with a high number of adults aged 55+. NORCs can be identified across housing types. Source: *National Institute on Ageing and NORC Innovation Centre, 2022*

There is a growing body of work that supports the need for housing models and infrastructure that support older adults' independence, safety, health and social well-being. Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) provide the opportunity to deliver health and social services more efficiently, while promoting engagement with the aging community. In Vancouver, there are several neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of 55+ households, as well as seniors specific buildings that should be considered in future planning processes.

As shown in Figure 13, there are higher concentrations of older adults in lower density areas of the city. This aligns with the data that there are a high number of homeowners and is an important consideration in creating new policies to enable diverse and affordable housing options for seniors to age in community. In addition to housing and support options for older adults, it is important to promote multigenerational living in these areas. Within engagement, many people expressed that mixed-income and multigenerational buildings and communities can help foster connections and have positive impacts in terms of sociability for both older adults and younger adults and families.

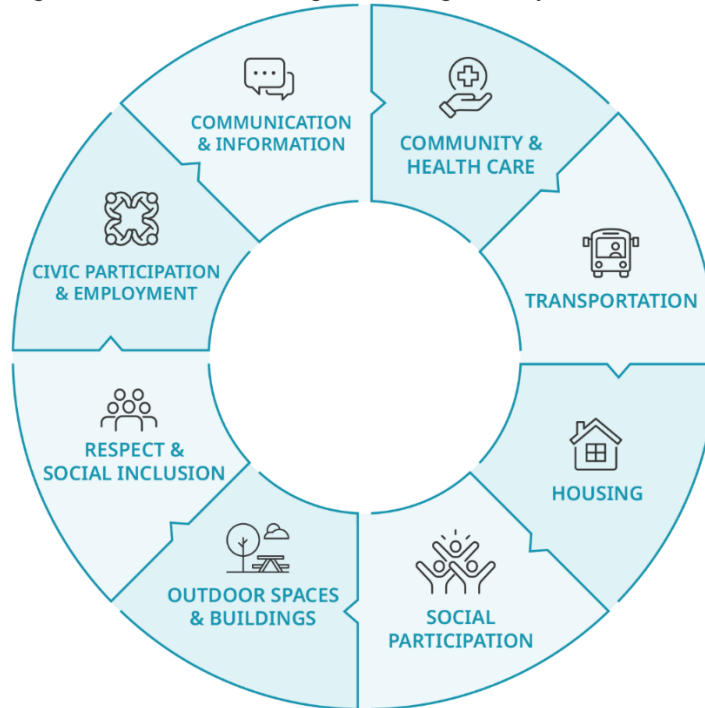
Figure 13 - Concentrations of older adults 55+ by local area (Statistics Canada Census 2021)



6. Connections to Broader Work to Improve the Lives of Older Adults

This Strategy focuses on improving housing for older adults; however, it is important to note that this goal is highly connected to other areas such as transportation, accessibility, and health services. The World Health Organization (WHO) Age-friendly Cities Framework (see Figure 14) lists eight interconnected domains linked to the well-being of older people.

Figure 14 - World Health Organization Age-friendly Cities Framework



The City of Vancouver *Age-friendly Action Plan 2013 – 2015* identified over 60 actions for the city to take to help make Vancouver a safer, more inclusive and engaging place for older adults. Many of these actions have now been completed or are continuing within related City strategies and ongoing work. The following strategies also work to advance the well-being of older adults:

- **The Healthy City Strategy (2014)** – The Healthy City Strategy, approved in 2014, is Vancouver's overall social sustainability framework. It takes a comprehensive approach to advance a Healthy City for All, including healthy people, healthy communities, and healthy environments, and 13 goals to improve outcomes across the social determinants of health. Its vision of a “healthy city for all” seeks equitable access to the best possible health and well-being across the whole population, including people of all ages. The Healthy City Action Plan (2015) also specifically supported training staff in responding to the needs of older persons and persons with dementia, and initiatives to promote social connections and inclusion.

- **Resilient Vancouver** (2019) – This is a citywide strategy that takes a comprehensive approach to addressing shocks, such as earthquakes, and stresses, such as social isolation. The strategy recognizes the importance of safe and adaptive buildings and infrastructure in the face of extreme heat and earthquakes and building community capacity to care for vulnerable people during emergencies through the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program.
- **Extreme Heat Response Plan** (2022) – The City prepares annually for extreme heat and wildfire smoke by establishing Cooling Centres and Clean Air Spaces, expanding access to water and outdoor cooling, investing in cooling in non-market housing, and working with community organizations on neighbourhood-scale heat plan. The City also distributes Cool Kits and Air Filters to ensure older adults and other vulnerable community members have cooling and clean air in their homes.
- **The Accessibility Strategy Phase 1** (2022) – The City’s first Accessibility Strategy was approved in 2022. This work was inclusive of older adults, including those with age-related impairments, and noted that people with disabilities experience aging in different ways. Phase 2 will be considered by Council in July 2024 and includes a city-wide multi-year action plan. It reflects upcoming accessibility improvements to the Vancouver Building By-law, to better align with Provincial Building Code changes to improve accessibility in multifamily buildings. Additionally, it includes engaging with the community to increase the number of affordable accessible units and advocate for other changes needed.
- **Grants for Seniors’ Centres and Programs** (Ongoing) - The City is active in providing services and support for our growing seniors population. Council provides operating funding to Vancouver's Community Centres, and annual grants to help seniors’ centres, neighbourhood houses and other community-based organizations serving older adults. The result of this funding is increased organizational capacity to provide a diverse array of outreach initiatives, peer counseling programs, and culturally inclusive programming for seniors.

Older Persons Strategic Action Plan

Pending Council direction, the City of Vancouver will continue advancing broader actions in response to the aging population through the creation of a new, comprehensive *Older Persons Strategic Action Plan*. This action plan will build on the *Age-Friendly Action Plan 2013-2015* and subsequent aligned efforts by implementing actions and strengthening partnerships to help ensure that Vancouver meets the needs of older persons. This work will plan for and promote access to supports and services for the City of Vancouver’s diverse cohort of older persons.

7. Key Directions & Actions

The following key directions and actions will help achieve the City's goal of ensuring elders and older adults have affordable and appropriate housing options and supports to allow for aging in the right place. These actions are wide ranging in their scope and implementation timeline. Some actions have corresponding policies that have been developed with this Strategy, while others will be implemented over time through citywide planning processes and in partnership with other levels of governments, health authorities, and community organizations.

Key Directions

Direction 1: Increase the supply and renewal of affordable and appropriate housing for older adults

More social, supportive and co-op housing for older adults, along with more long-term care and assisted living options is critical to allowing older adults to age in an affordable, safe and secure home. Providing these options within neighbourhoods will provide opportunities for local residents to downsize or move to a building with health supports within their existing community, allowing people to age in the right place. Further to increasing supply, the renewal of existing affordable housing and tenant protection is important to maintaining housing for senior renters. The City will work in partnership with senior levels of government to advance more affordable housing, with rents geared to income and shelter rate options for older adults, as well as subsidized care options.

Actions:

- 1.1. Implement a new seniors housing rezoning policy to enable more social, co-op and supportive housing serving older adults, as well as assisted living, and long-term care residences within neighborhoods, with greater allowances for non-market (social, supportive and non-profit co-op housing) and subsidized options.
- 1.2. Implement a Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences to ensure residents of redeveloping long-term care and assisted living buildings receive added protections.
- 1.3. Encourage more appropriately designed seniors housing through improved City design guidelines for community care and assisted living residences, and seniors supportive or independent housing.
- 1.4. Develop policies and practices to support new and redeveloped long-term care, assisted living, and seniors social, co-op and supportive housing in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and BC Housing.

1.4.1. Streamline and expedite subsidized long-term care and assisted living projects within city processes.

- 1.4.2. *Explore the development of a campus of care model¹ with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health, including both seniors social housing and subsidized long-term care or assisted living, including opportunities on City-owned land.*
- 1.4.3. *Work with community leaders to advance a project serving Chinese and Indigenous seniors housing needs in Chinatown, in partnership with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health.*
- 1.4.4. *Partner with BC Housing to increase supportive housing programs for seniors that meet the needs of older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.*
- 1.5. Streamline the development of seniors social housing within neighbourhoods throughout the city through pre-zoning.
- 1.6. Investigate opportunities to strengthen City of Vancouver tenant relocation and protection policies for older adults and additional protections under the Residential Tenancy Act, in collaboration with the Provincial government.

¹ The campus of care model typically offers a range of housing and care options in one location, from independent housing to assisted living and complex care. Campuses of care can minimize the transition for older adults when their care needs change, allowing aging in place. It also allows couples, family members and friends to remain on the same site when their levels of care are different. Further, a campus of care can also be created on a neighbourhood level, with care facilities introduced and integrated into NORCs (naturally occurring retirement communities) to minimize the relocation of seniors and to allow aging in familiar environments.

Case Study: North Arm Seniors Co-op on City Land

Located at Fraser Street and 19th Ave, this non-profit co-op houses 58 new studio and one-bedroom homes for older adults aged 55+. The co-op has five fully accessible one-bedroom homes, and the remainder of the homes are adaptable as required by the Vancouver Building By-law. The ground floor of North Arm is the new permanent home of the 411 Seniors Centre Society. The 8,000 square feet space allows 411 Seniors to offer a wide range of free services and low-cost programs. This includes information and referral services, as well as events and seminars.

This affordable housing co-op, which opened in 2023, is a new addition to the Community Land Trust (CLT) portfolio. It was built in partnership with the City of Vancouver, who provided a nominal long-term lease on City-owned land as well as development fee exemptions, and BC Housing, who contributed grant funding to the project. For more information, see www.northarmcoop.ca.



Direction 2: Improve home and building supports for older adults

Housing affordability for older adults cannot be achieved without access to affordable and adequate home and building supports. Home and community supports are essential to enabling older adults to be as independent as possible in their home, reducing the need for long-term care and supporting health outcomes. Home supports in British Columbia are amongst the most expensive to access in Canada. Non-profit housing providers have signaled the significant need for mobile support services to be delivered to older adults living in social housing to prevent unnecessary moves to long-term care or loss of housing.

Culturally appropriate building supports are also crucial to meeting the needs of older adults. These supports vary depending on the type of building and resident population and may include translation services or hiring multilingual staff, running culturally relevant activities and programming, serving culturally appropriate meals, or having building staff who are trained to create safe spaces for Indigenous and 2SLGBTQ+ residents, and other equity-denied groups.

Actions:

- 2.1 Advocate to the Province for the expansion of funding to support the delivery of mobile support services to older adults living in social housing to promote healthy aging in place.
- 2.2 Support the BC Seniors Advocate in calling on the Ministry of Health to eliminate the daily rate to receive home supports so all older adults can afford at home assistance, reducing pressure on the long-term care system and supporting healthy aging in place.
- 2.3 Work in partnership to ensure home and building supports are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner, specific to the population, including by:
 - 2.3.1 *Advocating to the Province for improved training for long-term care staff to ensure safe spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ residents, building supports and programs provided in residents' first language (including American Sign Language), and additional funding for spaces in social housing to hold culturally specific programming.*
 - 2.3.2 *Ensuring the City of Vancouver's approach to selecting housing development partners and operators for any buildings serving older adults prioritizes partnerships that will serve older adults in a culturally appropriate manner.*
 - 2.3.3 *Continuing to ensure housing capital granting processes encourage seniors housing providers to come forward with applications for culturally appropriate housing operations in buildings serving older adults.*

Case Study: Whole Way House Onsite Community Building

Whole Way House is registered Canadian charity serving vulnerable seniors and veterans who have disabilities or are facing marginalization, addiction issues and/or mental health issues in the Downtown Eastside since 2013. The organization partners with seven non-profit housing societies across 11 social housing buildings to support low-income seniors with onsite community building programs and tenant support services to build healthy communities in housing.

Their programs include one-on-one tenant support to help access community resources, health care, groceries, laundry, counselling, food and other supports, and monthly room and wellness check-ups. It also includes group activities such as exercise classes, games, outings, and family-style dinners, among other services. According to social housing building operators, these programs have allowed some older adults to safely remain in their housing, reducing unnecessary moves to long-term care or hospital, and preventing homelessness. For more information, see www.wholewayhouse.ca.



Direction 3: Increase the supply of deeply affordable housing, rental subsidies, and other services for older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness

A number of interventions are immediately needed to house older adults experiencing homelessness and to prevent older adults from becoming homeless. Low-income older adults who rent their homes are at risk of homelessness should their existing rent go up or if they are evicted or displaced due to redevelopment. More deeply affordable housing, referring to units renting at the shelter rate of income assistance or persons with disabilities assistance programs or at rent-geared-to-income, are needed.

Rental subsidies through the SAFER program needs to be increased to work with market rents in Vancouver. This would have an immediate and significant impact by providing affordability relief and security of housing to older adults facing a loss of housing and homelessness. The shelter portion of Income Assistance and Persons with Disabilities Assistance programs requires similar significant increases. In addition, there is a high need for the redevelopment and renewal of Single Room Occupancy hotels, as well as new seniors-specific social and supportive housing so older adults can age in secure and affordable housing.

Actions:

- 3.1 Advocate for continued improvement of the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program to ensure affordability in existing rental housing, including a one-time increase in the rent ceilings to reflect CMHC current average one-bedroom market rents of \$1,786, a formula for regular annual increases to keep up with inflation and allowable rent increases under the RTA, and an increase in income limits to \$45,000 to capture more older adults in need.
- 3.2 Continue to advance the replacement of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings through the SRO Intergovernmental Investment Strategy, with consideration given to ensuring replacement housing meets the needs of existing tenants who are seniors, and improve SRO building conditions for existing residents to ensure secure safe housing for older residents living in SROs.
- 3.3 Explore opportunities to further provide outreach supports for older adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, for example through the Won Alexander Cumyow Civic Office in Chinatown, and continue funding organizations that provide seniors-specific homelessness outreach and supports.
- 3.4 Explore the suitability of seniors-only shelters or shelter spaces as an interim step to permanent housing with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health, to ensure older adults can access safe, appropriate shelter.
- 3.5 Work in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and other health organizations to ensure appropriate housing options are provided to older adults who are discharged from hospital.

- 3.6 Encourage partnerships across the sector to explore and incorporate temporary housing options serving older adults to prevent homelessness, including Seniors Services Society of BC's Temporary Housing Program, Seniors Rapid Access Shelter Program, and other housing models.

Case Study: Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) Program

The provincial SAFER program provides a portable rent supplement for people aged 60 or over renting in the private market. This program does not apply to people who already receive income assistance or another shelter subsidy from a Ministry or the Province. SAFER is important to creating affordability for older adults living in the private market. We heard through public engagement that the program needs a significant overhaul as it has outdated income allowances, maximum rent ceilings and no regular built-in increases.

Recent update: On April 9th, 2024, the Province announced improvements to the SAFER program and a one-time rental benefit of \$430 to those already receiving the rent subsidy. The improvements included an increase to the income limit for eligibility from \$33,000 to \$37,240, increasing the minimum benefit from \$25 to \$50 per month, and an increase to the rent ceiling from \$803 for a single-person households and \$866 for a two-person household to \$931 per household. It also included the ability to review and amend the rent ceiling annually.

These are positive changes; however, more improvements should be made. For older adults who have had to move in recent years and have near market rents, the SAFER program remains inadequate. If the SAFER formula was updated to work for older adults renting in Vancouver, with a rent ceiling of \$1,786 to match the average one-bedroom rent in 2023 (CMHC Rental Market Survey) and an income limit of \$45,000 to meet the average incomes of those overpaying on rent, it would create immediate affordability for those in urgent housing need and at risk of homelessness.

If this reached the over 4,900 seniors with incomes below \$45,000 who are paying more than 30% of their household income on rent in the private market (Census 2021 for 65+ led households), it is estimated it would cost the Province approximately \$25 million annually. This is a significant increase from the estimated \$8.5 million in SAFER program costs for recipients within the City of Vancouver in 2023. However, the costs of creating affordability in the existing market through SAFER remains significantly lower than the billions in funding and financing to build new social housing that would otherwise be needed. Further, this increase would reach low-income seniors now, improving overall health and well-being and preventing homelessness.



Direction 4: Improve access to information to connect older adults to housing and services

Many older adults do not have adequate information on their housing and care options as they age or do not know their rights. The City of Vancouver can help support older adults by better hosting information, as well as connecting and partnering with the community organizations serving older adults and other government agencies to better reach older adults where they are. This includes increasing awareness of and accessing housing programs and services such as the SAFER rent subsidy, assistance in applying to social and co-op housing, and accessing the Provincial accessible home adaptation program, seniors' renovation tax credits, and property tax deferral options.

"It doesn't feel like there's anyone out there who's listening who can help us. You have to go through the system [to find affordable housing] but the system isn't working. So you have to live in fear every day."

—Focus group participant

Actions:

- 4.1 Engage with community organizations serving older adults and provincial and national experts on a regular basis to further explore knowledge gaps and actions to improve access to housing and supports and strengthen capacity of the seniors-serving sector to provide effective and culturally appropriate outreach and programs.
 - 4.1.1 *With support from the new Strategic Lead, Older Persons, efforts will be made to ensure disproportionately impacted groups are reached, including through community organizations such as cultural associations, shelter providers and transition houses.*
- 4.2 Advocate to the Province to increase funding to seniors' centres, neighbourhood houses, and other organizations that provide housing navigation and referral services, and services that support older adults to age in the right place, such as light housekeeping.
- 4.3 Investigate opportunities and partnerships with the Tenant Resources and Advisory Centre (TRAC), senior serving organizations, and the Provincial government to improve renter knowledge and offer better supports for older adults who rent.
- 4.4 Build partnerships with the BC Non-profit Housing Association and Landlord BC to educate and encourage landlords and building managers to better support aging residents, and to reduce stigma and discrimination for older adults accessing rental and other housing.
- 4.5 Review and update seniors-related housing information on the City's media and webpages and information provided via the 311 platform, with the aim of improving clarity of information. This will also consider how to increase prominence and knowledge of topics such as SAFER and property tax deferral, both online and in partnership with community centres, seniors' centres, neighbourhood houses and the Vancouver Public Library.

Case Study: Seniors Services Society SHINE Program

The Seniors Housing Information and Navigation Ease (SHINE) program, funded by the BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and led by the Seniors Services Society of BC, is a province-wide initiative designed to facilitate timely access to and navigation of appropriate housing services and support for seniors. The program assists seniors and their caregivers to easily access senior-specific programs, supports and services across BC related to housing, housing security, isolation and mental wellness. This includes advising tenancy rights, communication support with rental organizations/applications, mediation, conflict resolution and self-advocacy training, and representing the needs of local seniors at community committees. For more information, see

www.seniorsservicesociety.ca/shinebc.



Direction 5: Continue advancing other work to make Vancouver more equitable for older adults

Recognizing that housing is only one part of creating a city that supports older adults, the City of Vancouver will continue to advance other areas of work. This includes moving towards more accessible and universal design, which benefits older adults and the general population, through the Accessibility Strategy (2022), as well as broader work related to transportation, service hubs, and resiliency to improve the lives of older adults. Through planning processes, the City will enhance the consideration of older adults by promoting the types of housing and services needed.

Actions:

- 5.1 Pending Council direction, continue advancing broader actions in response to the aging population through the creation of a new, comprehensive Older Persons Strategic Action Plan.
- 5.2 Refresh the Healthy City Strategy as Vancouver's overall social sustainability plan, including renewed social development goals and outcomes that can be disaggregated and reported for older persons, and an updated implementation and governance framework.
- 5.3 Support non-profit housing organizations to deliver alternative housing types and explore new models, including home share.
- 5.4 Investigate opportunities to foster and support Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) when undertaking future area planning processes, including by:
 - 5.4.1 *Using specific engagement methods to reach older adults (e.g., in-person events, paper surveys)*
 - 5.4.2 *Encourage opportunities to co-locate uses and pair population needs in the development or improvement of public spaces, infrastructure, transportation and provision of services, so older adults can continue to age in community.*
 - 5.4.3 *Plan for more affordable and diverse housing options and services while considering community planning around NORCs to encourage multigenerational communities.*

Case Study: Oasis Program

Oasis is an older adults' driven model of aging in place, located in naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs). It offers programs including onsite recreational and social programs in apartment buildings with a larger population of older adults, free of charge and with the support of the landlord. Oasis is founded on three pillars: preventing social isolation, facilitating better nutrition and promoting physical fitness for members. An Oasis site includes a coordinator and volunteers who work directly with residents in a NORC to establish, implement, and co-coordinate programming to help establish a sense of community. This program was founded in Kingston, Ontario and has expanded to multiple sites in Vancouver, in partnership with community organizations. You can learn more about Oasis here: www.oasis-aging-in-place.com.



8. Implementation & Monitoring

Each strategy in this plan will be achieved through the accompanied list of actions. Some actions have started, while others will begin soon after this plan is adopted, as Council approves them, or once staff capacity allows. Actions that have been completed to date, subject to Council approval, include: the Seniors Housing Rezoning Policy, the Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences, and updated Seniors Housing Design Guidelines.

This strategy and included actions will be reviewed and updated in line with the broader Housing Vancouver Strategy and Three-Year Action Plan. The Vancouver Plan Official Development Plan (ODP) and subsequent regular ODP reviews, will also provide opportunity for the integration of seniors housing priorities and policies.

The housing needs and trends of older adults will continue to be monitored through the City of Vancouver Annual Housing Progress Report, Housing Data Book and the Housing Needs Report. This includes data on:

- The number and proportion of older adults 55+ experiencing homelessness,
- The number of older adults receiving the SAFER rent supplement,
- The number of seniors on the BC Housing Social Housing Registry,
- Tenure of senior-led households (i.e., renter vs ownership),
- Income distribution of senior households, and
- Share of senior households spending 30% or more of income on shelter.

In terms of outcomes, it will take continued efforts, funding and actions by all levels of government and community partners to significantly improve outcomes for older adults with high housing needs. Some actions will take time to see the effects, such as newly constructed seniors social and supportive housing and assisted living and long-term care. Other actions, such as an improved SAFER program, could create immediate and significant improvements to outcomes for older adults who rent their homes.

Staff will continue to monitor and update seniors housing outcomes, with the objectives to decrease the number of older adults experiencing homelessness, spending more than 30% of their income on shelter, and waitlisted on the BC Housing Social Housing Registry. Another important outcome, monitored by the BC Seniors Advocate, is the number of subsidized assisted living and long-term care beds within Vancouver Coastal Health, with an objective of increasing and renewing subsidized beds over time. This, along with increased and more affordable at-home health supports, will ensure elders and older adults can age in appropriate and affordable housing, in their neighbourhood of choice.

Appendices

Appendix I: Seniors Housing Strategy Phase 1 Engagement Summary

You can find the Phase 1 Engagement Summary Report [here](#) or at <https://www.shapeyourcity.ca/seniors-housing>.

Appendix II: Seniors Housing Types Definitions

Older adults live in many types of housing and their needs change as they age. The following types of uses are all considered “Seniors Housing” for the purposes of this strategy; however, it should be noted that vast majority of older adults do not live in housing specific for seniors.

Assisted Living provides housing and assistance services to seniors and people with disabilities who can live independently but require regular assistance with daily activities. These types of buildings are regulated by the Provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act and must be registered through the Assisted Living Registrar. The Residential Tenancy Act does not apply. Each residence has private units, shared dining and social areas, housekeeping services, personal care services and emergency response. Assisted Living can be subsidized or private pay. For subsidized units, residents can expect to pay 70% of their after-tax income, plus a hydro surcharge.

Home Sharing typically refers to a program where older adults share their homes with students for a below-market rent and, in turn, the students provide some light assistance around the home, such as walking a pet, mowing the yards, or offering technical support. Home sharing initiatives aim to combat social isolation among older adults while adding much needed affordable housing for students.

Independent Housing, which is not defined in any legislation, typically refers to retirement communities or other housing geared towards older adults. These may be stand-alone seniors’ housing facilities, or there may be independent living units co-located within assisted living and long-term care facilities. Independent housing can be ownership or rental in tenure, there is no subsidized option. As part of a tenancy agreement with the landlord/facility operator, services such as leisure activities, dining or housekeeping may be offered. These types of tenancies generally fall under the Residential Tenancy Act.

Long-term Care (i.e., Community Care, Residential Care) is regulated by the Provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act and is for persons who require 24-hour professional care and are unable to live independently. These facilities are licensed by local health authorities, and do not fall under the Residential Tenancy Act.

Seniors Social Housing is long-term housing for low-income adults aged 55+, with rental fees calculated on a rent geared to income basis (30% of household total gross income) or at

the shelter rate of income or disability assistance, or at low-end of market rents. In Vancouver, this type of housing must be owned by a non-profit housing organization or government body, with a housing agreement on title securing the use and affordability.

Seniors Supportive Housing provides low-income seniors and people with disabilities accessible housing with supports. It represents accommodation for individuals who can live independently with some assistance. The buildings also have services that include hot meals, housekeeping, laundry, social activities and emergency response systems. Each building varies in style, size and amenities. This program assists low-income adults who are 55 years of age or older and falls under the Residential Tenancy Act. This type of housing is subsidized, with rental costs generally 50% of gross income.

Seniors-centred Temporary Housing refers to several types of temporary housing that are appropriate for older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This may include seniors-specific shelters, home share options for seniors, Seniors Services Society of BC's Temporary Housing Program and other alternative temporary housing initiatives.

Appendix III: Additional Seniors Housing Maps

Figure 15 - Density of older adults 55+ in Vancouver, Census 2021

Density of Older Adults 55+

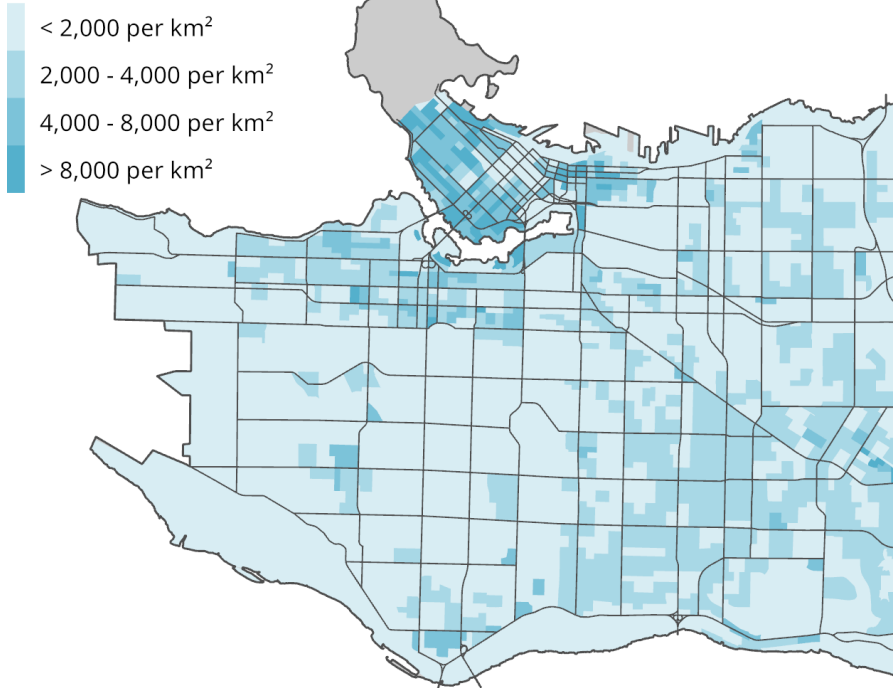


Figure 16 - Density of older adults 55+ by Local Area, Census 2021

Density of Older Adults 55+

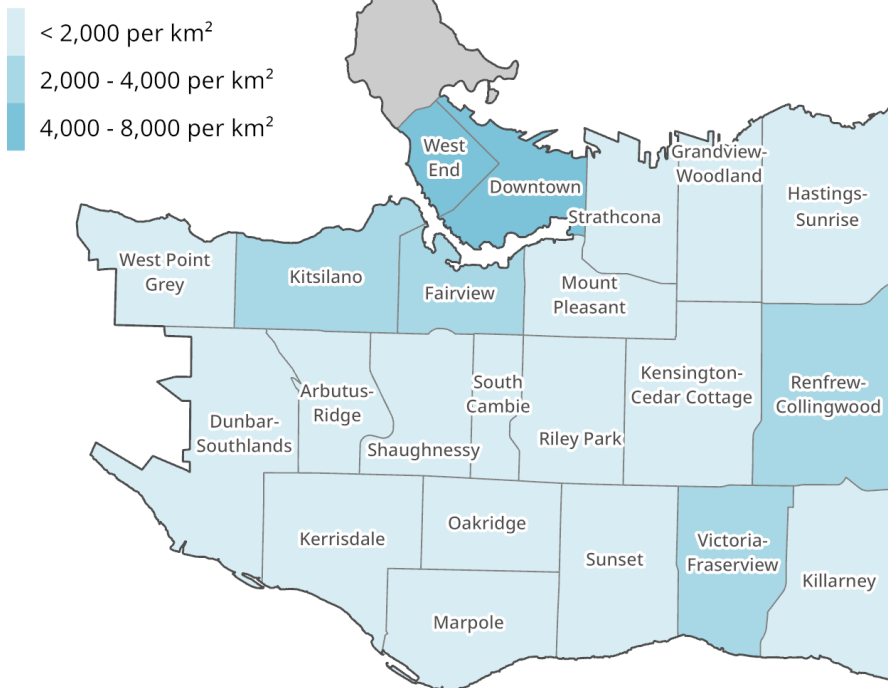


Figure 17 - Density of households renting aged 55+, Census 2021

Households Renting & Age 55+

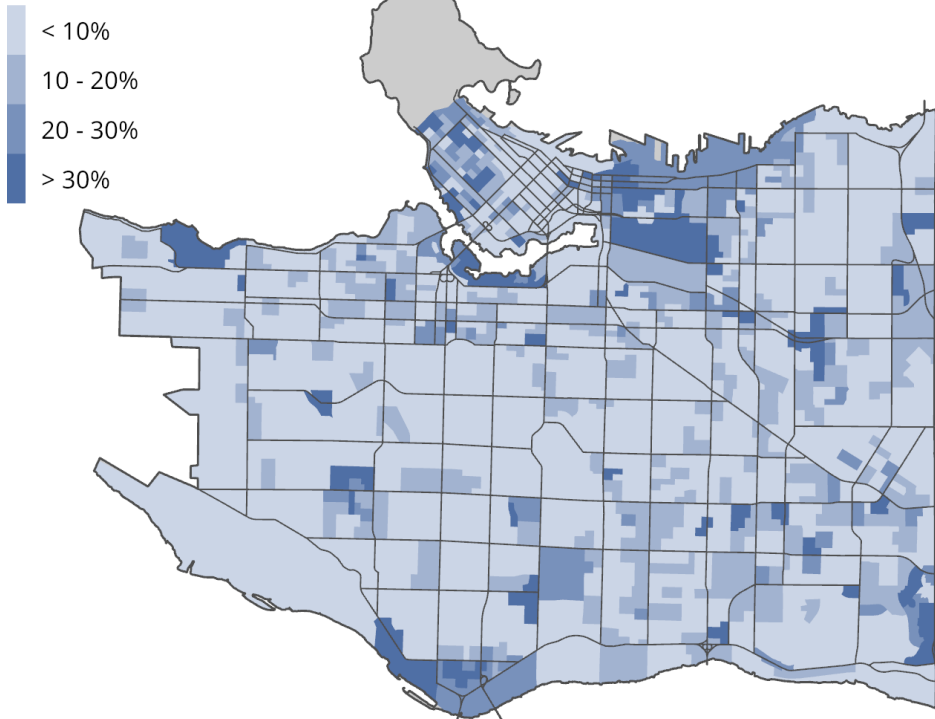


Figure 18 – Long-term Care Inventory (2024)

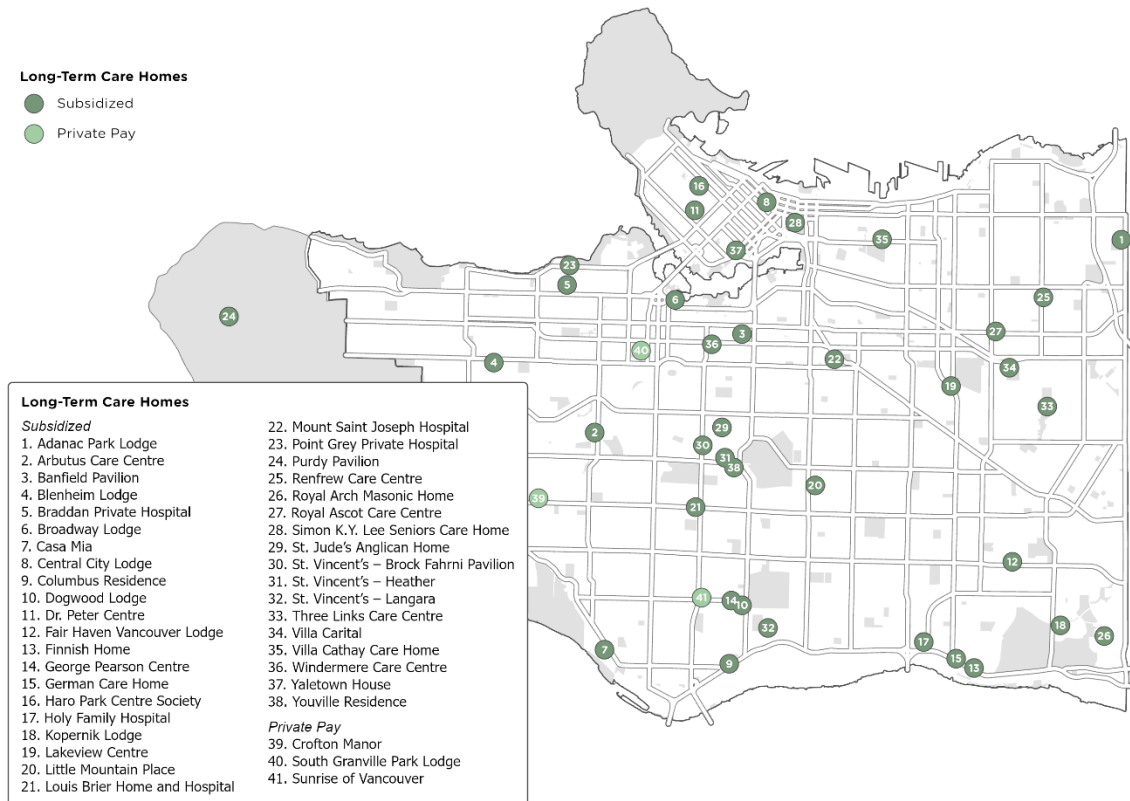
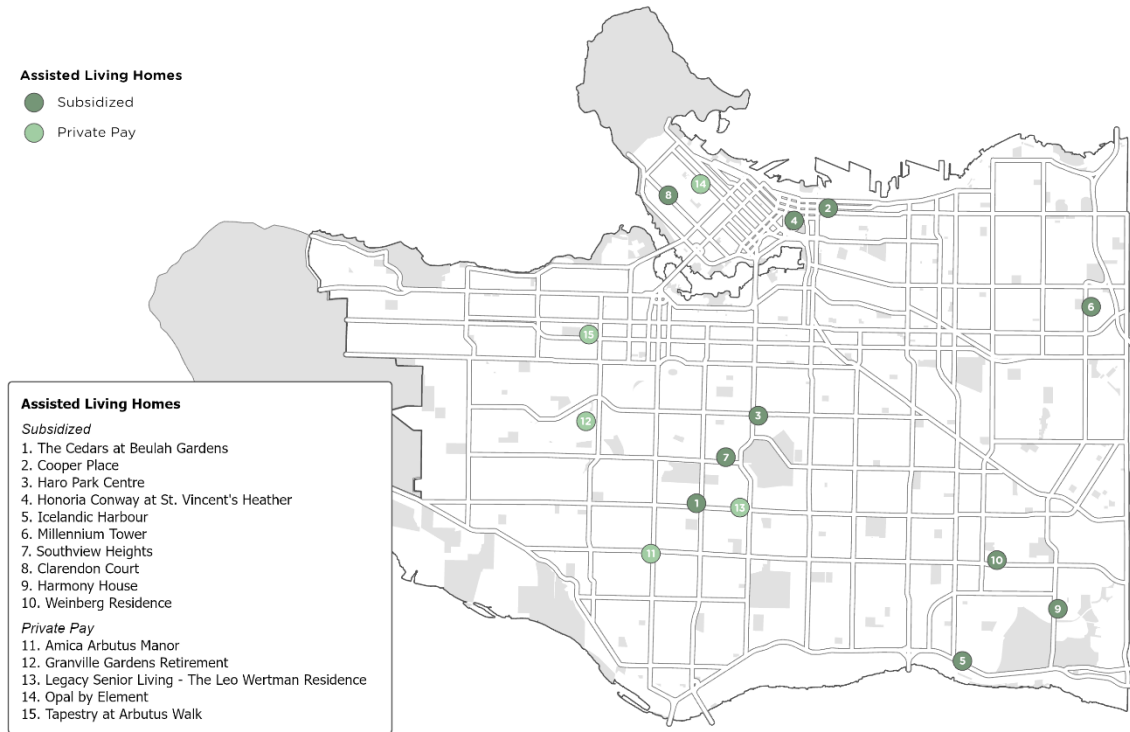


Figure 19 - Assisted Living Inventory (2024)



Appendix IV: Monitoring Framework

This monitoring framework outlines an approximate timeline for each action and the party or parties responsible for completing the action. Short-term refers to an action to be completed over the next 1 to 2 years, medium-term refers to 3 to 5 years, and long-term is 5+ years to completion.

Direction 1: Increase the supply and renewal of affordable and appropriate housing for older adults

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
Short-term	1.1 Implement a new seniors housing rezoning policy to enable more social, co-op and supportive housing serving older adults, as well as assisted living, and long-term care residences within neighborhoods.	City of Vancouver
Short-term	1.2 Implement a Resident Relocation Policy for Community Care and Assisted Living Residences to ensure residents of redeveloping long-term care and assisted living buildings receive added protections.	City of Vancouver
Short-term	1.3 Encourage more appropriately designed seniors housing through improved City design guidelines for community care and assisted living residences, and seniors supportive or independent housing.	City of Vancouver
Medium-term	1.4 Develop policies and practices to support new and redeveloped long-term care, assisted living, and seniors social, co-op and supportive housing in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and BC Housing.	City of Vancouver Vancouver Coastal Health BC Housing
Short-term	1.5 Streamline the development of seniors social housing within neighbourhoods throughout the city through pre-zoning.	City of Vancouver
Medium-term	1.6 Investigate opportunities to strengthen City of Vancouver tenant relocation and protection policies for older adults and additional protections under the Residential Tenancy Act, in collaboration with the Provincial government.	City of Vancouver Residential Tenancy Branch

Direction 2: Improve home and building supports for older adults.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
Short-term	2.1 Advocate to the Province for the creation of a new fund to support the delivery of temporary	Ministry of Health Ministry of Housing

	home supports to older adults living in social housing to promote healthy aging in place.	
Short-term	2.2 Support the BC Seniors Advocate in calling on the Ministry of Health to eliminate the daily rate to receive home supports so all seniors can afford at home assistance.	Ministry of Health
Short to medium-term	2.3 Work in partnership to ensure home and building supports are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner, specific to the population.	City of Vancouver Ministry of Health

Direction 3: Increase the supply of deeply affordable housing, rental subsidies, and other services for older adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
Short-term	3.1 Advocate for continued improvement of the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program to ensure affordability in existing rental housing, including a one-time increase in the rent ceilings to reflect CMHC current average market rents and a formula for regular annual increases to keep up with allowable rental increases and rental market changes.	Ministry of Housing
Medium to long-term	3.2 Continue advancing the replacement of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings through the SRO Intergovernmental Investment Strategy and improve SRO building conditions for existing residents to ensure secure safe housing for older residents living in SROs.	City of Vancouver Ministry of Housing
Short to medium-term	3.3 Explore opportunities to further provide outreach supports for older adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, for example through the Won Alexander Cumyow Civic Office in Chinatown, and continue funding organizations that provide seniors-specific homelessness outreach and supports.	City of Vancouver BC Housing
Short to medium-term	3.4 Explore the suitability of seniors-only shelters or shelter spaces as an interim step to permanent housing with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health, to ensure older adults can access safe, appropriate shelter.	City of Vancouver Vancouver Coastal Health BC Housing

Short to medium-term	3.5 Work in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and other health organizations to ensure appropriate housing options are provided to older adults who are discharged hospital.	City of Vancouver Vancouver Coastal Health
Short to medium-term	3.6 Encourage partnerships across the sector to explore and incorporate temporary housing options serving older adults to prevent homelessness, including Seniors Services Society of BC's Temporary Housing Program or other housing models.	City of Vancouver Non-profit sector

Direction 4: Improve access to information to connect older adults to housing and services.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
Short to medium-term	4.1 Engage with community organizations serving older adults and provincial and national experts on a regular basis to further explore knowledge gaps and actions to improve access to housing and supports and strengthen capacity of the seniors serving sector to provide culturally appropriate outreach and programs.	City of Vancouver
Short-term	4.2 Advocate to the Province to increase funding to seniors' centres, neighbourhood houses, and other organizations that provide housing navigation and referral services, and services that support older adults to age in the right place, such as light housekeeping.	Ministry of Housing Ministry of Health
Short to medium-term	4.3 Investigate opportunities and partnerships with the Tenant Resources and Advisory Centre (TRAC), senior serving organizations, and the Provincial government to improve renter knowledge and offer better supports for older adults who rent.	City of Vancouver Non-profit sector Ministry of Housing
Short to medium-term	4.4 Build partnerships with BC Non-profit Housing Association and Landlord BC to educate and encourage landlords and building managers to better support aging residents, and to reduce stigma and discrimination for older adults accessing rental and other housing.	City of Vancouver Non-profit sector
Short-term	4.5 Review and update seniors-related housing information on the City's media and webpages and information provided via the	City of Vancouver Community Centres Vancouver Public Library

	311 platform, with the aim of improving clarity of information.	
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Direction 5: Continue advancing other work to make Vancouver more equitable for older adults.

Timeline	Action	Responsibility
Short-term	5.1 Pending Council direction, continue advancing broader actions in response to the aging population through the creation of a new, comprehensive Older Persons Strategic Action Plan.	City of Vancouver
Short-term	5.2 Refresh the Healthy City Strategy as Vancouver’s overall social sustainability plan, including renewed social development goals and outcomes that can be disaggregated and reported for older persons, and an updated implementation and governance framework.	City of Vancouver
Medium-term	5.3 Support non-profit housing organizations to deliver alternative housing types and explore new models, including home share.	City of Vancouver Non-profit sector
Medium-term	5.4 Investigate opportunities to foster and support Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) when undertaking future area planning processes.	City of Vancouver