

WHAT WE HEARD

HOUSING SOLUTIONS LAB

Understanding Our Context Workshop

The North Shore is Full of Assets

community organizations · local papers · newsletters · green spaces · neighbourhood associations · advocacy groups · fed/provincial funding · strong community ties + knowledge · housing programs · public + private transportation networks · community centres · seniors activity centres · senior ambassadors



Solutions Ideas

- Identify **community ambassadors** (55+) who can support outreach efforts
- **Co-location of seniors' housing + daycares** – enhancing wellbeing, reducing isolation
- Create a “**solutions cohort**” where participants are supported + can feel like they are part of the solution

Older Adults' Needs, Values + Assets

NEEDS

Social connections

Continuity - want to stay in their homes as they grow more frail as they age

Accessible transportation - not all are comfortable on public transit

Neighbourhood affordability - can their extended family afford to live nearby?

Connections - well-matched tenant or homeshare participant

VALUES

Aging in place

Walkable, transit-connected neighbourhoods

Sense of autonomy, privacy, safety

Culturally appropriate care + support

ASSETS

Asset rich, but some are struggling with finances

Neighbourhood knowledge

Political power

Some are privileged, living a stable life, can maintain their home

Seniors have a lot to offer in the way of knowledge, expertise, time, energy.
—workshop participant



Motivations to Consider Housing Solutions

- **Financial** - extra income, capital costs (most powerful case)
- **Creating community** - foster support from neighbours, not just community services
- **Maintenance + chore support**
- **Physical space** to support a homeshare or renovated suite
- **Safety** - having an extra person, trusting those they live with
- **Strong framing** - i.e., program participants are not just renters but a support for seniors
- **Interest** in living with others
- **Similar cultural backgrounds** could be a motivator
- Organized, trusted program **policies + procedures**

LAB PHASE 2 SO FAR

We connected with **30+** organizations across a wide range of sectors on the North Shore + in BC, **11+** of which attended our first workshop for service providers + community groups.



Exploring Potential Solutions

Coach Homes for Seniors

CHALLENGES

- Navigating systems + platforms
- Bureaucratic barriers, costs
- Assuring seniors of safety
- Building coach homes + renovating suites are large undertakings (zoning applications, lot considerations, current uses)
- Adapting home to share space or renovate

IDEAS

- Streamline process to go directly to building permit if zoning compliant
- Organization vetting tenants
- Include >1 coach home in building applications; parcel as a unit
- Explore new zoning for single lots

ROLE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Share accessible reports of successful programs
- Talk to council to support rezoning of certain areas
- Reduce bureaucracy through file management systems (lots of underutilized homeshare resources)

Homeshare Programs

CHALLENGES

- Safety- ideally needs participants to have a background check, tied with credible organization
- Age - older adults may not be as open to these type of programs (popular among younger people)
- Marketability - how do you encourage people to share their homes?
- Location accessibility

IDEAS

- Involve social workers (e.g., like in Canada Homeshare's program)
- Connect with cultural agencies to identify specific needs
- Ensure that program safety + reliability are clear for participants

Secondary Suite Funding

CHALLENGES

- Figuring out the process of building suites
- High time/money investment + red tape, deters people from trying
- Understanding how suites affect finances (e.g., taxes)
- Limited municipal funding - monitoring funds also needed
- Projects need political support + follow through

IDEAS

- A staff person could help guide the process (not a document)
- Structure funds + grants to reflect the type of buildings municipalities want to build
- Change zoning application decisions from case-by-case to large scale approvals
- Shorten approval processes

Secondary Suite Tenant Matching

CHALLENGES

- Incentives for homeowners
- Improved access for those not tech savvy

IDEAS

- Senior ambassadors with credibility to act as messengers in the neighbourhood
- Program could connect with organizations that work with specific communities (e.g., refugees)

PROGRAM NEEDS

- Solid structure
- Safety issues (addressed by service provider)
- Employing generalists on staff to respond to dynamic program needs
- Connections with multiple community stakeholders
- Service provider should have experience in housing

SENIORS' CONCERNS

- Changing neighbourhood dynamics
- Parking

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Do social + community connections need to happen in the same place?
- Would another type/size of home better serve a senior's interest?
- How does a community determine which lots are dedicated to affordable living?

NEXT STEPS

May 25, 2023 online workshop focused on detailed program co-design

Have more ideas? Let's talk: rebekah_parker@sfu.ca | 778-652-4077



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