

HOUSING SOLUTIONS LAB
Homeowners Workshop

WHAT WE HEARD

Overall, Participants Reported

- Feeling hopeful about change and how it may relate to **more efficiency in bureaucratic systems** and **increased affordability**
- Excitement for how the possibilities of increased housing options may fulfill their needs of **aging in place in a single-level home**



Solutions Ideas

- Interest in homeshare programs with students, where alternative payment structures are possible (e.g. exchange for home or yard repair)
- Short terms rental contracts (8-12 months) for homeshare, with a screening process

Broad Themes from the Workshop

PRIVACY + SAFETY

A barrier for single women interested in homeshare options

Having more people in the house is safer

LANDLORD RIGHTS

Need support in resolving conflicts with tenants

Eviction options for troublesome tenants

COMMUNITY COHESION

Benefits of access to "third spaces" - where people can connect in between work + home (e.g. bench in a park)

Importance of walkability + public transit networks

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Potential high cost to bring buildings up to code

Unknown impact of rental income on income tax brackets

AUTONOMOUS SPACE

Preferences for sharing outdoor spaces (some liked communal areas, some wanted privacy)

"We feel forgotten, I have to get in my car. I have trails all over with nature but I can't access a coffee shop or store without a car"

— workshop participant



Participant Assets

- **Extra rooms or garage** - within the home there is lots of space but may not be laid out in a way that makes sense to share
- **Green space** - having access to it or offering more community members green space access through housing solutions

Concerns + Needs

- **Comfort with sharing space** - what it would feel like to share space with another person
- **Transport** - need increased public transit options and walkability to age in place
- **Financial needs** - what government incentives exist? Financial security needed to invest in solutions. Moving may add strata fees to costs.
- **Efficient systems** - interest in fast-tracking bylaws that facilitate housing options

NEXT WORKSHOPS:

Saturday, May 13, 2023 at the Parkgate Community Centre. 9:30-11:30am
Thursday, May 18, 2023 at the Lions Gate Community Centre. 9:30-11:30am

Exploring Potential Solutions

Coach Homes

CHALLENGES

- Parking (e.g. resident only parking streets)
- Incentives can make these attractive (e.g. reverse mortgage), but need to be substantial
- All levels of government involved (provincial + federal incentives, municipal bylaws)
- Supply + labour shortage can lead to construction delays
- Inspections, restrictive government guidelines
- Upfront costs

IDEAS

- Financially feasible way to keep seniors and children in place with **low interest loans**
- Prefabricated building materials can increase speed + efficiency of building (e.g. shipping container homes)
- One participant named this as the cheapest method for keeping seniors and children in place

Secondary Suites

CHALLENGES

- Lack of support at municipal level
- Needs public support and awareness
- Requires landlord support
- Parking
- Taxes - concern over being pushed to next income tax bracket
- Some start creating secondary suite for renting but then turn to AirBnB because of better money and increased control
- Noise - (voices/pets) set up sound proofing or communication systems with tenant

IDEAS

- Need clarity from all government levels on position and supports for secondary suites
- Flexible lease lengths
- Knowledge sharing about secondary suites and laneway houses
- Change language - don't refer to them as illegal suites; public education needed as suites currently seem to be discouraged
- Rights for small landlords; RTB can take a long time
- New suite designs- could like a studio apartment, or similar to student housing (rooms with fridge)
- Own entrances?

Homeshare Programs

CHALLENGES

- Relationship between homeowner and tenant - need to build trust, some participants were nervous about this
- Economic challenges - extra income may jeopardize financial benefits provided based on income level
- Managing expectations of all involved
- What happens when tenant relationship deteriorates? Participants said they generally have faith in people, but have heard horror stories
- What if tenant doesn't actually have the skills to maintain the property?
- How to successfully share space?

"I'm excited about exploring options for a roomie to share my space with! Potentially a friendship could develop." — workshop participant

IDEAS

- Third party roommate vetting
- Be transparent about allowing space for an adjustment period for the program- big transition from living alone to sharing space again
- Deciding what parts of the home will be shared (shared vs. separate bathrooms, living space, kitchen)
- Pair with another senior on fixed income as a "guest tenant"
- Exemption/rebate for rent income on taxes

"I love that this project is bottom up, not top down. Really doing more things and sharing and participants." — workshop participant

NEXT STEPS

Attend our next workshop on co-designing housing solutions!
Register via email or phone: rebekah_parker@sfu.ca 778-652-4077



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Published by [Simon Fraser University \(SFU\) Renewable Cities](https://renewablecities.sfu.ca), a program of the [SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue](https://sfu.ca/morrisjwosk/), 2024.

This report is offered under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) License, enabling free sharing and reprinting for non-profit and non-commercial purposes with attribution.



CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

The Seniors Hidden Housing Solutions to Affordability and Climate Change received funding from [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](https://cmhc.ca) (CMHC) under the NHS Solutions Labs, however, the views expressed are the personal views of the author and CMHC accepts no responsibility for them.

« Seniors Hidden Housing Solutions to Affordability and Climate Change » a reçu du financement de la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement (SCHL) en vertu du les laboratoires des solutions de la SNL Cependant, les opinions exprimées sont les opinions personnelles de l'auteur et la SCHL n'accepte aucune responsabilité à l'égard de telles opinions. »

Additional funding received from Vancity. Catalyzing funding from the North Family Foundation.

