**Seniors’ Housing: Examples of Successful Developments in BC**

***Prepared by Josh Cook for CBSS Provincial Working Group on Seniors Housing***

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| *5.1 Kiwanis Housing Development, Richmond[[1]](#footnote-1)* |
| **Economic region:** Mainland/Southwest |
| **Community size:** Large urban |
| **Lead agency profile:**  The Richmond Kiwanis Senior Housing Society was formed in 1959 to build and operate affordable housing for seniors. |
| **Background:**  The Richmond Kiwanis Club had owned a 2.02 hectares of land in central Richmond since 1959. By 1970, 14 small buildings had been constructed and 122 rental units for low-income seniors were being operated by the Richmond Kiwanis Seniors Housing Society (RKSHS). In the mid-2000s, two events intersected which resulted in redevelopment. First, RKSHS became concerned about fire safety due to the age of the buildings, but concluded that they did not have the financial resources to retrofit the structures or to repair them in the event of an incident. Second, Polygon Homes, a local developer, approached the society to discuss buying their land. By 2009, negotiations had begun for Kiwanis to sell part of the land in order to redevelop the remainder of the land for new affordable housing. |
| **Project:**  Progress began in earnest when BC Housing granted RKSCHS an early discharge on their CHMC mortgage to improve the society’s bargaining power. An agreement was struck for Polygon to purchase a 1.23 hectare portion of the site for $21 million; however, this was not enough to allow Kiwanis to finance their planned redevelopment. Municipal, provincial, and federal policies – along with steadfast support and outside the box thinking from Polygon – were critical in overcoming this hurdle.  In 2007, the City of Richmond enacted an inclusionary zoning policy which required all new developments to provide 5% of their units at below market rent. After BC Housing agreed to provide both interim construction financing and long-term take-out financing, Polygon made an innovative proposal to the City of Richmond. Supported by Kiwanis and BC Housing, the developer convinced the city to convert the value of the organization’s affordable unit allocations from seven buildings into dollars to cash to fund the Kiwanis project.  The city also provided Kiwanis with an additional $2.1 million from its Affordable Housing Capital Reserve fund, which allows developers to trade cash for density exceptions, and agreed to waive $3.3 million in developer fees. This generated a total of $20.8 million in funding for Kiwanis and helped to ensure financial sustainability for Polygon’s role in the project. Finally, Polygon was also able to secure a GST exemption which generated an additional $2.5 million for Kiwanis’ BC Housing loan.  Construction of the two towers which housed the 296 affordable housing units took two years. During this time, the 152 original tenants who were displaced received $800 for moving expenses and $175 per month for rental assistance from Kiwanis. |
| **Outcomes:**  After two years of construction, 296 affordable one-bedroom units were created in two high-rise towers – more than double the number from the original development. All suites were built with durable features such as granite countertops and a number of amenities were put in place to encourage activities and social integration for residents, including a multi-purpose room, a craft and hobby room, a games room, a hair salon, a fitness area, and a reading room. In the end, 40 residents of the old complex moved into the new buildings.  However, while the existing stock of affordable housing was increased, so too were prices – in some cases significantly. Prior to the redevelopment, residents paid as little as $364 per month in rent; the average rent in the new building is $713 per month. This is increase was necessary to ensure the sustainable operation and repair of the buildings, and rents remain well below the market average and are in part mitigated by the availability of SAFER to eligible residents.  As a result of this collaboration, the City of Richmond received the Union of BC Municipalities Community Excellence Award in 2016. |

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| *5.2 Brightside Lions View Properties, Vancouver[[2]](#footnote-2)* |
| **Economic region:** Mainland/Southwest |
| **Community size:** Large urban |
| **Lead agency profile:** Brightside Homes  Brightside is a non-profit housing provider which currently operates 27 buildings with 900 affordable units in the Lower Mainland area. The organization emphasizes partnerships with both government and the private sector, and utilizes its economy of scale to take over buildings which have become unaffordable for smaller non-profits. |
| **Background:**  In 1991, the organization partnered with Van Maren Construction, dys architecture, Terra Housing Consultants, and all three levels of government to redevelop land and replace units which had provided affordable housing to seniors since 1952. |
| **Project:**  The redevelopment of the Lions View properties required cooperation from a number of groups. First, Brightside and Van Maren Construction came to an agreement which would see Brightside sell a three acre plot of land to the contractor in exchange for a profit-sharing agreement on the market condominium they planned and the construction of two new buildings with 92 units of affordable housing for seniors.  This was facilitated by all three levels of government. At the municipal level, the City of Vancouver agreed to the rezoning and subdivision of a three acre parcel of land owned by Brightside. Additional support was provided by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which allowed the agency an early payout of their mortgage. Financing for the planning 92 units of affordable housing was then provided by the provincial and federal governments. Finally, once construction began, the BC Housing Management Commission provided assistance in relocating the residents. |
| **Outcomes:**  By 1995, four buildings for seniors had been constructed. The three originally planned and a forth that Brightside constructed with the money from their profit-sharing agreement with Van Maren. The end result was a total of 126 new units of affordable housing for seniors which were managed by Brightside – the 92 government-subsidized suites originally planned and 34 additional units which were subsidized directly by the agency. |

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| *5.3 Greenecourt, Sechelt[[3]](#footnote-3)* |
| **Economic region:** Vancouver Island/Coast |
| **Community size:** Small population centre |
| **Lead agency profile:** Sunshine Coast Lions Club Housing Society  The Housing Society operates 139 units of affordable, independent living suites for seniors in Sechelt. |
| **Background:**  In the late 1970s, the Housing Society took over the 39-unit Greenecourt affordable housing complex at the request of its founders. Between the early 1980s and 1990s, an additional 22 units were developed. |
| **Project:**  Redevelopment of Greenecourt began to take place in the early 2010s when the federal, provincial, and local governments; the non-profit sector; and the business community came together to build the Jack Nelson Annex. $10.1 million in total funding was provided:   * The CMHC provided $2.1 million, $10,000 in seed funding, and a mortgage loan of up to $4.1 million * The Province of BC provided $2.3 million * The Sunshine Coast Lions Housing Society provided $275,000 and land valued at $650,000 * The District of Sechelt waived development charges of $508,226 and provided a ten year tax exemption for the property * The Sunshine Coast credit unions provided $50,000 in equity * Delta Cable provided $10,000   This multi-sectoral support resulted in the replacement of 10 aging affordable housing units with 65 new ones. The new units were filled almost immediately and the waitlist soon held several hundred people.  Following the success of the Jack Nelson Annex, the Lions Club received a density-exemption and announced their intention to replace aging cottages which housed 29 persons with a new 5-story development which would house 104. The project received $10.4 million from the provincial government and was formally announced on March 13, 2019. This will bring the total number of affordable units for seniors at Greenecourt to 215. |
| **Outcomes:**  By the 2020 anticipated completion of the Lions Club’s most recent development, fewer than 40 aging units will have been replaced by 169 new ones spread across three new buildings. All this was accomplished with minimal disruption to previous tenants – all 29 persons impacted by the latest project were rehoused in other buildings on the same property – at a total price of $20.5 million. |

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| *5.4 Nechako View Senior Citizen Home Society, Vanderhoof[[4]](#footnote-4)* |
| **Economic region:** North Coast & Nechako |
| **Community size:** Rural |
| **Lead agency profile:** *Nechako View Senior Citizen Home Society*  The society was founded in 1959 with the goal of providing affordable rental housing to seniors in the Vanderhoof area. The organization currently operates 33 units of housing with plans to add…. By …. |
| **Background:**  In response to growing concerns surrounding affordable housing for seniors in the north, the society developed plans to replace an aging building two new buildings containing a total of nine affordable housing units for low-income seniors. |
| **Project:**  In 2009, the project received $516,449 in funding towards the total cost of $688,949 from Northern Development’s Community Adjustment Fund. The other funding partners included the BC Real Estate Foundation and the Nechako-Kitimat Development Fund Society. By 2012, building was completed. |
| **Outcomes:**  The new development brought the total number of affordable units for seniors operated by the society to 33. As of 2016, the organization began receiving funding for a $1.7 million facility which will house 14 of the 45 households waitlisted.  In addition to providing much needed housing for seniors, the project also had a positive impact on the local economy during the economic downturn. The equivalent of 8 full-time jobs were created for the duration of the construction, the contractor purchased their supplies locally, and prioritized the subcontracting of work to local groups. |

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| *5.5 Oncore Riverbend and Mayfair Manors, Kamloops and Prince George[[5]](#footnote-5)* |
| **Economic region:** Cariboo (Prince George)  Thompson-Okanagan (Kamloops) |
| **Community size:** Medium population centres |
| **Lead agency profile:**  The Oncore Seniors Society was formed in 2013 with the merging of the River City Seniors Society and the Seniors Outreach Services Society. In addition to its other services, the society provides subsidized housing to low and moderate-income across three locations: RiverBend and Mayfair Manors in Kamloops and RiverBend Manor in Prince George. |
| **Background:**    2011, RiverBend Manor in Kamloops opened as a replacement for an existing seniors housing facility. This, and the two subsequent developments, were the result of the developer approaching Oncore with the business model described below. |
| **Project:**  The three Oncore developments are a notable blend of a public-private partnership. Across the sites, there are 148 affordable units operated by Oncore and BC Housing, and 284 market condominiums. Persons who own or rental the condo units each pay $50 per month to Oncore in order to subsidize the affordable housing units and ensure their financial viability.  RiverBend Manor in Prince George was completed in 2017 at a total cost of $30 million – with nearly $9 million in public funding. The BC government contributed $4 million and $3.8 million in financing, while the City of Prince George waived $265,050 in developer feesrs, provided a grant of $885,000, and exempted the development from municipal tax for 10 years. While it is challenging to find exact figures for the Kamloops sites, the federal and provincial government provided $3.21 million for RiverBend Manor in that city.  All three sites are located close to downtown cores or shopping centres, near public transit, and a range of optional support services such as meals, laundry, cleaning, and recreational activities are available to help residents to age in place. |
| **Outcomes:**  At each location, a considerable amount of affordable housing was created for seniors: 62 out of 168 units in the RiverBend in Prince George, 66 out of 165 unites in the RiverBend in Kamloops, and 20 out of 99 units in Mayfair Manor in Kamloops.  The success of this project also positioned Oncore to continue to develop affordable housing for seniors. In 2019, the provincial government provided the society with $2.25 million in capital funding and the city of Kamloops provided $64,000 to create 12 units of affordable housing which will rent at $375 per month in a planned multi-use development in the downtown area. |

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| *5.6 Ambleview Place Housing Co-op, West Vancouver[[6]](#footnote-6)* |
| **Economic region:** Mainland/Southwest |
| **Community size:** Large Urban Centre |
| **Lead agency profile:**  The District of West Vancouver is the municipal body which governs the region. |
| **Background:**    The District acquired this property in the mid-1980s with the goal of constructing non-profit housing for seniors. However, after the province repeatedly rejected petitions for funding for the project because of the prioritization of “family housing”, the District requested funding from proposals from alternative sources. This resulted in the creation of the co-op. |
| **Project:**  The District of West Vancouver leased the land to the co-op for a period of 60 at roughly 60% of its market value. In exchange, the co-op agreed to maintain and operate the building as non-profit seniors housing. Upon completion of the lease, the co-op will sell their building back to the municipality.  The total development costs exceeded $3 million, with land costs of $775,000 and construction costs of $1.7 million. After 25% of the equity was raised by members, the VanCity Credit Union agreed to finance the project. Upon completion, units were priced at 17% - 27% below their market value. The co-op is required to maintain this level of affordability for the duration of their lease. |
| **Outcomes:**  The project would end up producing 42 units as well as shared amenities, including: a community lounge, a meeting room, a workshop, laundry facilities, and secure parking for every unit. |

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| *5.7 Hornby Island Elder Housing Village, Hornby Island[[7]](#footnote-7)* |
| **Economic region:** Vancouver Island/Coast |
| **Community size:** Rural |
| **Lead agency profile:**  Hornby Island Elder Housing Society[[8]](#footnote-8)  Founded in 1992 following a successful rezoning application, the Society is a community-driven group dedicated to providing affordable housing to older adults living on the Island. |
| **Background:**  Discussions around affordable housing for seniors began to occur in the early 1980s. It was from these early days that the Society and the Village would eventually emerge following the approval of a rezoning application in 1992. Following the official formation of the Society in May 1992, an initial fundraising appeal result in $25,000 and more than 100 members. |
| **Project:**  In 1993, the Society purchased a centrally-located 5-acre plot of land with the backing of a $60,000 mortgage from the Union Bay Credit Union. Because of the widespread support of the community, it would take less than a year to discharge the mortgage.  Robust community support has been a consistent feature of the village from the very beginning. The Society has received considerable funding from the regional district, community fund, and the province; favourable mortgage rates, local fundraising efforts have raised more than $300,000.  Community members have also donated their time and their skills. A local design and construction company spearheaded a partnership with UBC which resulted in three successive cohorts of architecture students engaging in the planning and design of the site, 59 Island residents have served on the Society’s governing board, and in 2008 the BC government noted that “…a significant portion of the construction of [four new units] at The Village was carried out by volunteer labour”. The Society’s website notes that the Village has seen hundreds of volunteers over the years. |
| **Outcomes:**    By 2008, a total of 11 units had been built and were occupied. Because of the involvement of the community, this was accomplished at a cost that was well below what would have otherwise been possible. |

1. BC Housing Research Centre, 2018; City of Richmond, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Brightside, 2019; Terra Housing, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Summit Magazine, 2011, p.7; Sunshine Coast Lions Club, 2019; Jacques, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Northern Development Initiative Trust, 2012; Balzer, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Oncore Seniors Society, 2019; Koopmans, 2010; Hinzmann, 2016; Balzer, 2017; Kergin, 2019; Kamloops This Week, 2019; BC Housing, 2016; Interviews with Oncore leadership. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Restakis, 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Northern Development Initiative Trust, 2012; Balzer, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. BC Government, 2008; Hornby Island Elder Housing, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)