

Innovative Seniors Housing

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Content

Introduction	3
Canadian Senior Housing Context	4
Vancouver Senior Housing Context	5
Three Stages of Retirement	8
Best Practice Case Studies	10
Built Form	11
Dementia Villages	11
Abbeyfield Houses	13
Mixed-Use Developments	15
Programming	17
Senior Villages	19
Homeshare Programs	21
Multigenerational Programs	23
Summary of Findings	23
Next Step Recommendations	25
References	26
Glossary	27

Introduction

The world's population is aging. According to the United Nations, seniors aged 60 and older are now the fastest growing demographic globally. This population shift is anticipated to have profound social impacts on various sectors, including:

- Labour and financial markets
- Demand for goods and services
- Family structures and multigenerational communities

Drawing upon global trends, this report focuses on innovative senior housing “best practices” categorized into two main categories, Built Form and Programming. Within a Canadian context, this report highlights six international case studies that could be implemented in the City of Vancouver, with the potential for further deployment throughout Canada.

To maintain diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods in the coming decades, these creative solutions could offer communities a broader range of housing options to help accommodate seniors’ evolving budgets, needs and desires!

Think Globally, Act Locally



Context

Policy makers, housing advocates and community members all play a vital role in supporting seniors' sense of home. This report is intended to inspire senior housing innovations in the decades ahead.

Canada

Many aspects of Canadian society are shifting with the Baby Boomer generation entering their retirement years (age 65+). According to Statistics Canada's projections, approximately 1 in 4 Canadians (23%) will be over 65 years old by 2031[1].

In the coming decades, governments at all levels (i.e., Federal, Provincial and Municipal) will need to work collaboratively to support vulnerable seniors and accommodate Canada's growing population trends.

Aligned with Canada's first-ever *National Housing Strategy*, ensuring all Canadians have access to healthy, affordable and "right supply" housing options will remain a top priority!



By 2031, 1 in 4 Canadians will be over 65 years old

Based on the 2016 Canadian Census, Vancouver's residents over 65 years old grew by 19% between 2011-2016, making it the fastest-growing demographic group in the City.

To meet the needs of Vancouver's growing population and ensure residents of all ages can call the city home, it is essential to offer affordable and varied housing options. Although Vancouver has been creating new housing supply at a record rate, there is a substantial need to explore new housing approaches to help accommodate the City's most vulnerable residents. Amongst those most vulnerable, seniors currently account for Vancouver's fastest-growing demographic group.

With the goal of encouraging seniors to flourish in their communities, housing advocates and cities around the world have been exploring creative senior housing solutions. Further review of innovative global trends through a Vancouver lens could aid local policy makers with addressing two of the City's pressing social issues, housing affordability and caring for an aging population.

Vancouver Housing Challenges

Homeowners and aging populations are facing challenges securing housing in Vancouver, which makes aging in place, downsizing and preserving a sense of community increasingly more difficult. The City of Vancouver's data reflects, 70% of people over 65 are over-housed^[2], which could present unique rental (i.e., supplemental income) opportunities for aging homeowners. Housing experts also suggest, multigenerational housing options could present mutually beneficial opportunities for both Baby Boomers and Millennials that are too often priced out of Vancouver's competitive housing markets.

As noted in the 2018 *Vancouver Housing Strategy* report, the City's current housing crisis is further compounded by the region's projected population growth. Metro Vancouver has forecasted the population will expand by 11% from 617,200 in 2011 to 685,000 by 2021, with seniors driving a significant proportion of population gains^[3]. As evident in these forecasts, there exists an urgent demand to explore new housing strategies to meet the region's growing needs in the decades ahead.



Aging in Place

Researchers and urbanists have long documented the health, social and community benefits of fostering multigenerational relationships. In Happy City's report, *Design to Engage*, Charles Montgomery stated, "Strong social connections are the greatest contributors to human health, happiness and resilience." The report also highlighted that residents who live in one place for a long period of time often report greater satisfaction, sense of community and neighbourhood trust. This research further supports the importance of municipalities promoting residents to age in place and remain in their neighbourhoods.

Traditional Senior Housing Options:

1. Remain in homes
2. Live with family or friends
3. Age-restricted retirement communities
4. Long-term care facilities/nursing homes

Social Isolation

In 2011, after extensive community engagement throughout the region, the Vancouver Foundation reported residents' primary concern was a growing sense of social isolation. Social isolation is commonly defined as low quantity and quality of contact with others. Throughout Canada and Metro Vancouver, social isolation is becoming a prevalent concern among senior populations. Seniors are at risk of isolation due to an increased chance of living alone, having comprised health status, changing family structures, death of family members and/or friends.

In 2014, the National Seniors Council of Canada published a report noting isolated seniors are at higher risk of negative health behaviours, such as drinking, smoking, poor diet and sedentary lifestyles. The report also identified a strong link between increased mental health issues and social isolation.

Cultural Influences

Growing cultural influences have also contributed to the demand for more flexible communal living options in Vancouver. Indigenous and immigrant families, both of which account for a growing share of the population, are more likely than others to live with elder family members. These cultural trends are further contributing to the increasing desire for multigenerational households [4].

Housing Affordability and Insecurity

Since the City of Vancouver's Council approved the *Housing and Homelessness Strategy*, Vancouver has experienced even more rapid housing price growth than what was predicted in 2012 [5]. Recently, the price of single detached homes have far outpaced local incomes, which has contributed to the current housing crisis. As illustrated in the *Vancouver Housing Strategy* report (see Table 1), rising housing costs are driving an increase across nearly all income levels in the number of Vancouver renters considered to be housing cost burdened, paying over 30% of their incomes on rent [5].

Table 1. Share of Renters Paying Over 30%* of Their Income on Rent By Income Level

ANNUAL INCOME (\$)	% OF RENTER HOUSEHOLDS PAYING OVER 30 PER CENT OF INCOME ON RENT (2016)	CHANGE FROM 2006
0-30,000	17.5%	-7.3%
30,000-50,000	10.8%	+3.4%
50,000-80,000	5.0%	+3.0%
80,000-100,000	0.7%	+0.5%
100,000+	0.5%	+0.4%

Source: Census 2006 and 2016
 *Renter households paying 30-99% of income on housing.

Providing a mix of flexible tenure options can help address seniors' housing affordability and insecurity concerns. According to research by the National Conference of State Legislatures and the AARP Public Policy Institute, approximately 90% of people over the age of 65 want to age in place and remain in their home as long as possible. Unfortunately, rising unaffordability facing renters and homeowners can make it difficult for seniors to remain in their homes and/or neighbourhoods.

In addition to protecting seniors' desire to age in place, multigenerational home share programs could help maximize Vancouver's existing housing stock. According to Empty Nests, a Vancouver-based social enterprise focused on home sharing, an estimated 800,000 spare bedrooms may exist in Metro Vancouver. With rental vacancy rates hovering around one per cent, introducing these spare bedrooms to the market could help ensure Vancouver's existing housing stock is prioritized as homes for residents who want to live, work and play in Vancouver.

Three Stages of Retirement



Go-Go

- Active
- Little to no assistance needed
- Tend to spend more money in this stage



Slow-Go

- Decreasing energy levels
- Some assistance may be needed
- Decreasing annual spending



No-Go

- Limited energy levels
- Assistance often needed
- Dramatic spending decrease

Global Innovative Solutions



Cruise Ships



Tiny Homes



Modular Homes



Home Share



Dementia Village



Multigenerational



Mixed-Use



Abbeyfield

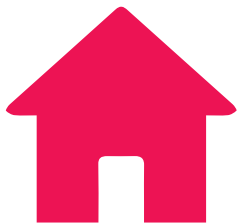


Senior Villages

Best Practice Case Studies



Built Form



Programming



Built Form



Dementia Villages

Background

The Dementia Village is a senior housing concept that was developed in Weesp, Netherlands. Dementia Villages are designed to care for seniors affected by Dementia, an umbrella term for neurodegenerative diseases associated with aging [13]. These facilities are for patients affected severely by dementia. The Alzheimer Society of Canada states that one out of 20 Canadians over 65 are affected by Dementia [18]. In 2018, it was estimated approximately 70,000 people in British Columbia lived with dementia. By 2033, the number is expected to increase to approximately 120,000 [13].

While some memory care facilities in Canada have implemented similar strategies, Canada is set to open its first Dementia Village in Langley, BC in the spring of 2019. With an aging Baby Boomer population, and knowing that dementia affects predominantly seniors, there is a need for these new models of seniors housing.

Designed to simulate "regular" life, Dementia Villages offer residents a safe environment emulating daily routines, such as shopping, walking their dog and cooking with the comfort of knowing support staff can assist, as needed. The model minimizes disabilities and maximizes wellbeing by providing a physical and social environment congruent with residents lifestyle [15]. This innovative concept elevates the idea of care home to the next level and enhances the quality of life of dementia patients by enabling them to live in a community setting rather than a hospital [16].

Strengths

- Offers residents with Dementia a sense of independence and normalcy
- Creates safe environment to meet residents' physical and mental needs

Challenges

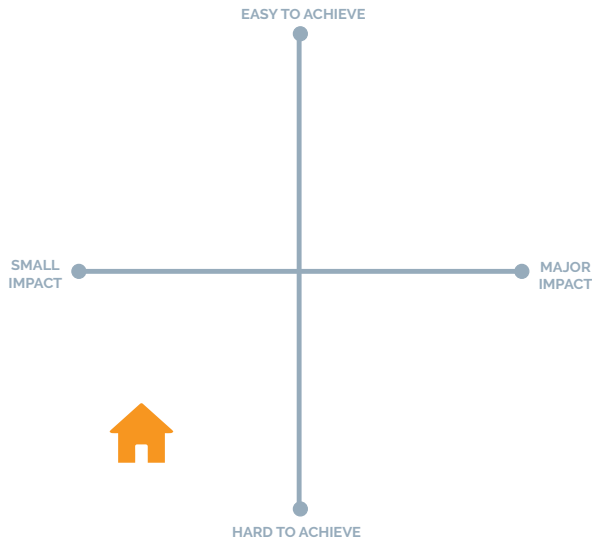
- Cost potential barrier for lower-income seniors (approximately \$5,900 to \$7,550 monthly)
- Limited public funds available
- High development and operational cost



Dementia Villages



Housing Quadrant



Case Study

Hogewyk Village, Netherlands

Dementia Villages originated from Weesp, Netherlands where a memory care facility was built to accommodate 152 people living in 23 houses on 3.7 acres in 2009 [20]. The first facility started in 1993 and has been a successful example that empowers individuals affected by dementia. Hogewyk includes a grocery store, parks, restaurants, theatre and barber shop. Fake money is given to residents to engage with each of the commerces on the premise.

Residents of Hogewyk share a house with 6 to 7 others with similar needs and lifestyles. At Hogewyk, there are 7 types of lifestyles that a residents can choose from: urban, artisan, Indonesian, homey, Goois, cultural and Christian [20]. Each household has one health-care provider that helps with house chores. Unlike typical memory care facilities, Hogewyk residents are free to walk around the village as they please. This facility is publicly funded and residents pay rent depending on their income [19].

While this type of facility requires large financial investment upfront, it is often considered a gold standard for meeting the needs of individual with dementia.



Abbeyfield Houses

Background

The first Abbeyfield House in Canada opened in 1987 in Sidney, BC. As of 2019, there were approximately 21 Abbeyfield Houses across Canada, housing over 300 residents. British Columbia has a high concentration of Abbeyfields (approximately twelve properties), with several homes located in the City of Vancouver, a popular North American retirement destination. There are currently only two Abbeyfield houses in the City of Vancouver.

The Abbeyfield House is an affordable housing program (non-profit) that provides residents with a sense of community while maintaining a homey atmosphere. The first Abbeyfield prototype was initiated in 1956 in South London. Designed by Richard Carr Gomm, the original prototype was designed to accommodate low-income residents.

Abbeyfield Houses typically accommodate 12 to 15 residents of retirement age. Residents have their own private bedroom and/or sitting room, which they furnish on their own. Residents often share lunch and dinner while breakfast is a self-serve breakfast bar. Dedicated coordinators/staff provide residents with assistance running errands, preparing meals and maintaining the property; however, on-site support and/or medical services are not available 24 hours a day. Abbeyfield Houses operate under independent supportive living Canada wide.



Strengths

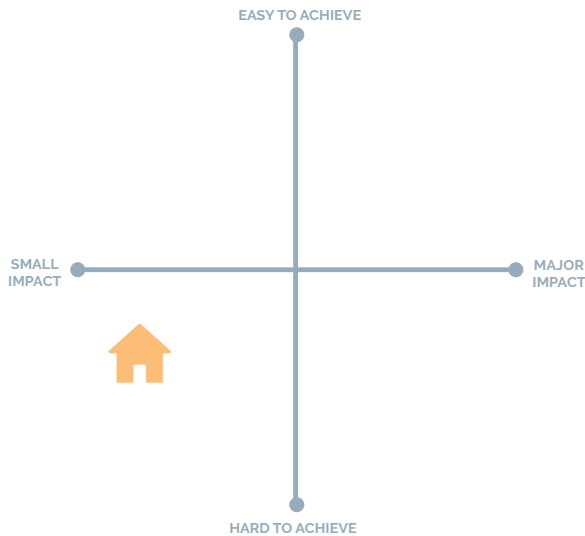
- Privacy and independence maintained
- Reduced household chores
- Home-like atmosphere
- Promotes social interactions
- Rental rates may be adjusted to accommodate seniors' income (\$1,450 average monthly rate in the Vancouver area)

Challenges

- Not suitable for seniors requiring on-site medical care and/or extensive assisted support
- No overnight supervision



Housing Quadrant



Case Study

Abbeyfield Houses - Comox Valley, Canada

While there are successful examples of Abbeyfield Houses in Canada (i.e., Vancouver and Sidney), these properties have been recently decreasing; however, approximately only 21 remain.

The Abbeyfield model is designed for independent seniors, it is expected that as residents age and need more support, they move to residential care facilities. While this is essential for the success of the Abbeyfield Houses, limited availability for dependent senior facilities in Canada leads Abbeyfield residents to often end up staying longer than they should in this independent housing option. For the Abbeyfield Houses model to be successful, there must be available beds in residential care facilities. This is one of the reason for the recent closure (2017) of the popular Abbeyfield House in Comox which was housing 10 seniors with a 30 eligible senior waitlist [11].

The Courtenay's Abbeyfield House opened in 1997. With ten individual bedroom suites, the facility included a dining room and sitting area, and three meals a day provided to residents. This facility was designed for people 55 and older that want to maintain independence while avoiding

loneliness. Unfortunately, the majority of the aging residents needed more care than available requiring on average 115 Island Health worker visits weekly. In addition, needing to increase the set \$1,820/month fee to sustain operation costs, the Courtenay facility lost its independent facility care designation and fell under the landlord act and rules. This new designation unenabled on-site staff to check on residents in their units and requiring even more ambulance calls to check on residents who for the most part, need care that goes beyond what is available in an independent supportive living facilities but have nowhere else to go [12].

While more thorough resident expectation guidelines can help the success of these establishments, there must be an adequate stock of residential bed facilities for this model to thrive [11].



Mixed-Use Developments

Background

Many seniors want to live in vibrant communities with easy access to retail, health care and entertainment. With more retirees striving to remain independent and engaged, incorporating senior housing projects into mixed-use developments has become a growing trend. These creative housing projects can be integrated with public libraries, daycares, hospitals, cultural centers and various community-based facilities.

Due to the wide-variety of development options, mixed-use projects can be designed with the flexibility to meet seniors' evolving needs at various stages of retirement.

Strengths

- Encourages multigenerational community and cultural influences
- Provides easy access to retail, health care and entertainment
- Supports wellness and health
- Promotes social interactions
- Increases seniors' independence

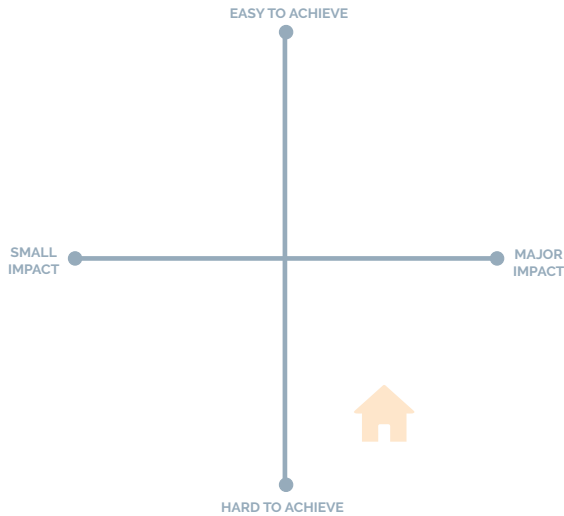
Challenges

- Development and operational costs
- Land use limitations
- Cost potential barrier for lower-income seniors





Housing Quadrant



Case Study

Aegis Gardens - Newcastle, Washington

When developers created Aegis Garden, they did not want to build a typical retirement home, they wanted to build a Chinese “cultural hub” in the Pacific Northwest. This 5 storey mixed-use development features 131 units ranging from studios, one and two-bedrooms options.

Aegis Garden's thoughtful Feng Shui design offers the public and residents the following benefits:

- Multigenerational Programming (i.e., on-site preschool, Mahjong tournaments, community theater, financial advising)
- Health and Wellness Services (i.e., Tai Chi classes, spa treatments, traditional Chinese medicine)
- Social and Educational Activities (i.e., public lectures, traditional dining/tearooms, organized social events)
- On-site publicly accessible multi-use trails

Opened in February 2018, the project cost approximately 52 million (USD) to develop. Reflecting on Aegis Garden's innovative design, the developer noted, “A lot of people look at mixed-use as an obstacle, but we looked at it as an opportunity!”

Programming



Senior Villages

Background

With the motto of "neighbors helping neighbors", Senior Villages are part of a growing movement to empower residents to age in place and remain in their neighbourhoods. Started in the United States in the early 2000s, the "village movement" has spread internationally offering a variety of non-profit and member-driven models.

Member benefits may include free and/or discounted transportation, home maintenance, wellness and social services. Operating in diverse urban and suburban communities, monthly fees typically range from \$200 to over \$1,000 (USD). Tiered-membership packages can be tailored to meet seniors' evolving retirement stages and needs.



Strengths

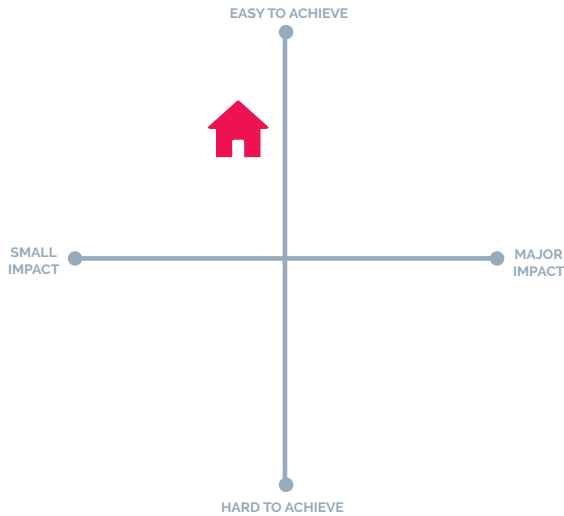
- Promotes aging in place
- Increases seniors' independence
- Supports wellness and health
- Encourages social interactions
- Strengthens multigeneration neighbourhoods

Challenges

- Not suitable for seniors requiring on-site medical support and/or assisted care
- Cost and membership-based structure potential barrier for lower-income seniors and/or neighbourhoods



Housing Quadrant



Case Study

Beacon Hill Village, Boston

Beacon Hill Village, a non-profit in the United States, supports seniors (50+) to age in place at home. The member-driven organization is operated primarily by the neighbourhood's seniors, with assistance from a small group of volunteers and support staff.

Member benefits include free and/or discounted rates for the following services:

- Transportation (i.e., transport to grocery stores, airport, medical appointment)
- Household Management (i.e., dog walkers, landscaping, financial experts)
- Health and Wellness (i.e., discounted gym memberships, physical therapists and medical appointment companions)
- Social and Educational Activities (i.e., lectures, networking, organized social events)

Due to international interest, Beacon Hill's founders created the *Village to Village Network* to promote Senior Villages. Launched in 2010, the organization provides expert guidance and resources to help other communities establish and maintain their own villages.



Homeshare Programs

Background

Homeshare programs have become a popular form of senior housing as it allows seniors to age in place and remain engaged in their communities. Homesharing can be defined as an arrangement between two people who share a dwelling. In the context of senior housing, homesharing is commonly undertaken by seniors who have a spare room in their home and offer reduced rent in exchange for chores and companionship.



To effectively deliver homeshare programs, public-private partnerships can be developed. These public-private partnership often establish a policy framework to help oversee and regulate the program, as well as ensure seniors and renters are properly matched. The matching process typically includes interviews, home visits, and face-to-face meetings.



Strengths

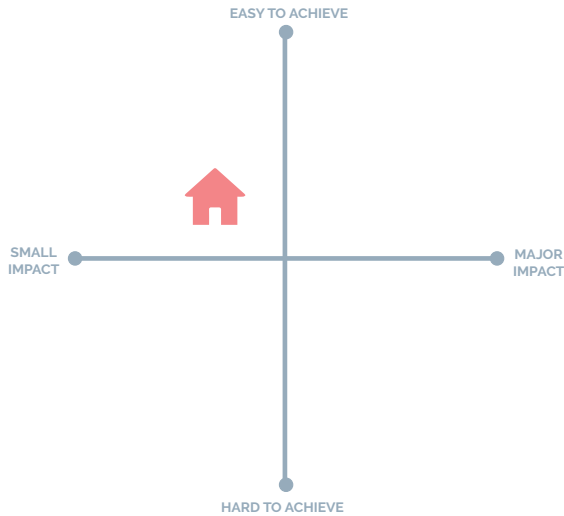
- Allows seniors to age in place
- Enhances social interactions and multigenerational relationships
- Promotes more affordable housing and financial relief
- Utilizes existing housing stock

Challenges

- Responsibilities of renter may exceed expectations
- Costs to the senior may outweigh social benefit



Housing Quadrant



Case Study

Homeshare Pilot Project, Toronto

The City of Toronto recently launched the *Toronto Homeshare Pilot Project* with the hope of developing a model that can be tailored to cities across Canada. As recommended in Toronto's *Seniors Strategy 2.0* report, the pilot program pairs university/college students with older adults with spare rooms in exchange for reduced rents. Students contribute 5-7 hours weekly helping with chores, running errands, and sharing a meal together. Recognizing the importance of strategic partnerships, Toronto partnered with various community organizations (Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, Local Health Integration Networks, Health Quality Ontario, and the Regional Geriatric Programs of Ontario) to help implement the pilot program.



Multigenerational Programs

Background

Multigenerational living is an emerging innovative solution to solve for housing problems. It focuses on the of merging generations, development of relationships and fostering of community between individuals from different age groups. Due to the wide-variety of options, Multigenerational Programming can be tailored to meet seniors' evolving needs at various stages of retirement. Popular trends include the following concepts:

1. Students and Seniors

This initiative emphasizes multigenerational living between seniors and university students. University students are provided with rent-free accommodation in a dorm room in a seniors resident and care facility in exchange for volunteer work. The volunteer work is completed through students participating in activities with senior residents, providing social opportunities for seniors. The number of hours of volunteer work can be determined by the senior resident and care facility are often dependent on how the facility values the investment of social return.

2. Neighbours Helping Neighbours

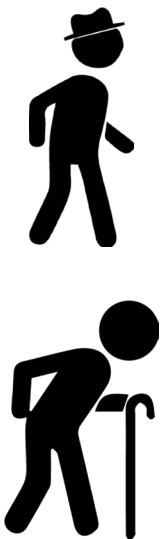
This initiative focuses on co-living amongst seniors and younger cohorts. The participating seniors are independent individuals who are comfortable with providing support and assistance to their neighbours. The younger demographic group are those who may require temporary support until they can find their own independent housing. In developing this multigenerational initiative, the geographic location and design of the building are important as it helps create an environment in which the seniors can live comfortably while the younger age group feel safe to develop the necessary skills to establish their own independence. The basic concept of the initiative is to create a safe community in which neighbours can help each other.

Strengths

- Allows seniors to age in place
- Enhanced social interactions and relationship building
- Opportunity for seniors to gain new skills
- Promotes more affordable housing and financial relief
- Seniors can become mentors and offer advice on their life experiences
- Creates a sense and meaning in participants' lives, countering the sense of loneliness

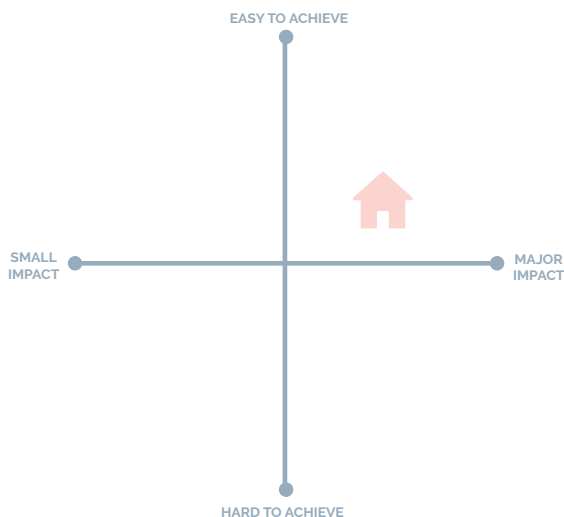
Challenges

- Difficulty in engaging seniors who may view programming as a long term commitment
- Program coordinators may not have the capacity or time to develop community partnerships and/or oversee implementation
- Responsibilities of participants may exceed expectations
- Costs may outweigh social benefit





Housing Quadrant



Case Study

Rudolf Seniors Home Helsinki, Finland

Finland's first multigenerational project was piloted in 2015 in the City of Helsinki. It was a part of a wider city-funded program called *A Home that Fits*. The program was organized by the city's youth department and received funding from the European Social Fund. The project was established with the aim of addressing youth homelessness, reducing social isolation amongst seniors, and encouraging social interaction between generations. It was undertaken at Rudolf Seniors Home, where it made three studio rooms available to young people aged 18-25 years old in exchange for spending a minimum of five hours a week with the older residents [21]. The project focused on wellbeing and informal interactions between the seniors and students, which has proven to be successful in building relationships. Seniors and students participate in activities together, such as baking or playing music. The success at Rudolf Seniors Home has resulted in four other Finnish cities establishing their own multigenerational projects in seniors' residents and care facilities. Due to international interest, this trend is anticipated to grow in the coming decades.

Case Study

Beekmos, Houten, Netherlands

In Beekmos, Netherlands, two non-profit agencies partnered to establish a multigenerational housing initiative that focused on seniors and young women with or without children. The partners are Habion, a housing corporation specialized in affordable housing for seniors, and Stichting Timon, a young adult welfare organization. Habion was responsible for the construction of 17 housing units that have been located in an urban context and are in close proximity to necessary services, such as schools and health/social services [22]. Stichting Timon rented four units to seniors who reside on the ground floor and have specifically been chosen to live in the apartment building on a permanent basis as 'coaches' to the young mothers and adolescent girls that live in the 13 remaining units [22]. The young mothers and adolescent girls live in the apartment building on temporary basis until they are ready to move into their own accommodation. While living in the apartment building, the seniors provide young mothers and adolescent girls with assistance in their small daily needs, relational support and help to build social networks. Throughout the building there are communal spaces and consulting rooms that provide opportunities for neighbours to develop a sense of community and connection. The multigenerational housing initiative also focuses on organizing activities that allows the seniors and young women to become better acquainted and improve their social skills.

Summary of Findings

To help summarize the case studies presented in this report, Figure 1 provides an overview of the housing concepts' potential impact and ease of implementation. For comparison, Figure 2 charts a summary and target retirement stage(s) associated with each of the six case studies.

The concepts highlighted in this report are intended to inspire policy makers, housing advocates and community stakeholders to seek out more creative seniors housing solutions. Acknowledging there is no easy "one size fits all" approach to accommodate Canada's aging population, collaboration at all levels of government is essential to support seniors.

To maintain diverse and vibrant communities in the coming decades, these innovative solutions may offer communities a broader range of housing options to accommodate seniors' evolving budgets, needs and desires!

Comparative Housing Quadrant

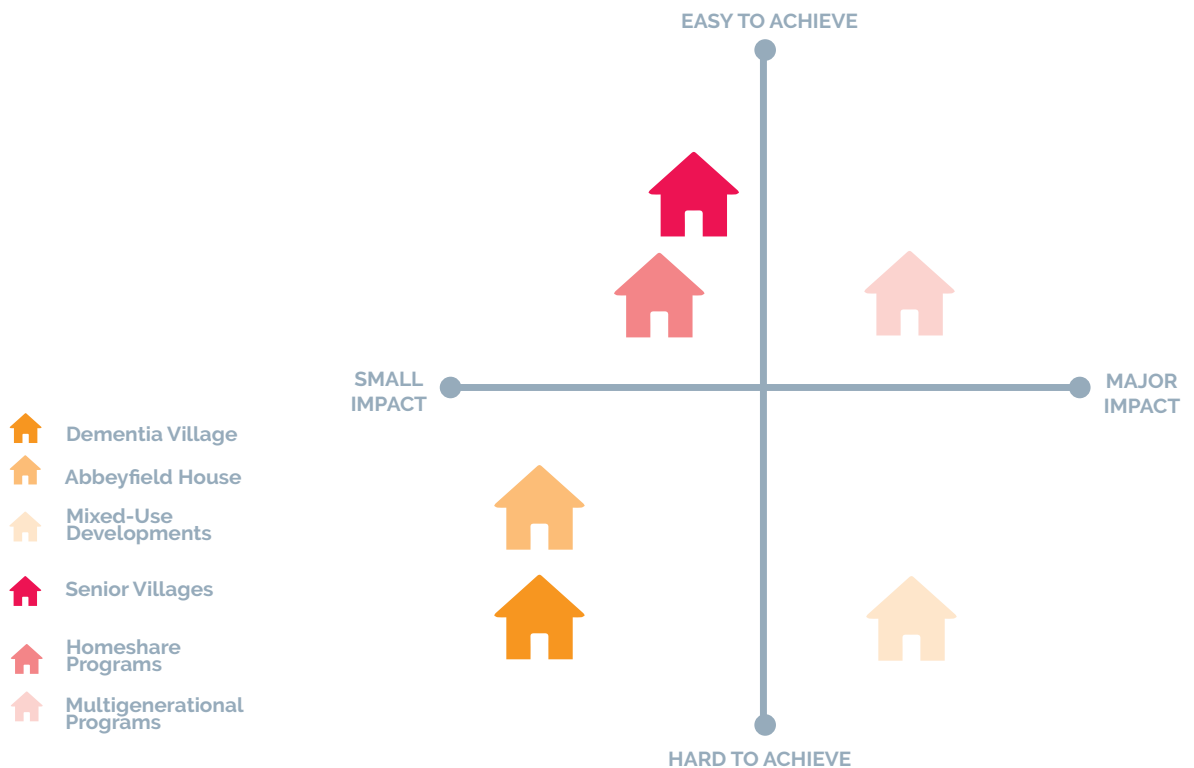


Figure 1. Comparative Housing Quadrant

Comparative Housing Chart













	Three Stages of Retirement			Summary
Dementia Villages				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors affected by Dementia Offer sense of independence Cost may be potential barrier for lower-income seniors High development/operational costs
Abbeyfield Houses				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companionship Home-like atmosphere Limited supervision
Mixed Use Development				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy access to goods/services Increase independence/social interactions Multigenerational communities High development/operational costs
Senior Villages				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports aging in place Multigenerational neighbourhoods Increase independence High membership costs
Homeshare Programs				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports aging in place Encourage social interactions Utilizes existing housing stock Cost may outweigh social benefit
Multigenerational Programs				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports aging in place Encourage Social Interactions Companionship Cost may outweigh social benefit

Figure 2. Comparative Housing Chart

Next Step Recommendations



Identify potential funding sources and resources



Explore private and/or public opportunities



Outline future implementation and/or feasibility strategies



Engage policy makers, housing advocates and community stakeholders

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Glossary

Age in Place	The ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.
Baby Boomer	Individuals born in the years following World War II. Born between 1946 and 1964.
Cohort	In statistics, marketing and demography, a cohort is a group of subjects who share a defining characteristic (typically subjects who experienced a common event in a selected time period, such as birth or graduation).
Millennial	Individuals reaching young adulthood in the 21st century. Born between 1981 and 1996.
Public-Private Partnerships	Collaboration between a government agency and a private-sector company.
Rent	The actual amount a resident pays per month for his or her accommodation space and all mandatory services. For vacant spaces, the rent is the amount the owner is asking for the space.
Social Isolation	A state of complete or near-complete lack of contact between an individual and society.