



**CITY OF RICHMOND**

**REPORT TO COMMITTEE**

**TO:** Planning Committee

**DATE:** May 30, 2001

**FROM:** Terry Crowe  
Manager, Policy Planning

**FILE:** 4057-04

**RE:** Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing Study

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorse the recommendations to encourage the development of affordable seniors supportive housing in Richmond as identified in **Appendix A** of the Manager, Policy Planning report dated May 30, 2001.



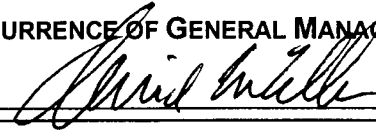
Terry Crowe  
Manager, Policy Planning

Att. 2

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**CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER**



### STAFF REPORT

The attached report "Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing" provides a comprehensive overview of the requirements for planning, developing and operating affordable seniors supportive housing.

#### **Definition for Seniors Supportive Housing**

The report presents the following definition recommendation for seniors supportive housing:

*"Supportive housing combines a supportive and appropriate physical environment designed for privacy and independence, with a social model of flexible supports and assistance including emergency call, meals, and access to personal care and professional health care as required."*

The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with:

- Information on the need for affordable supportive housing among seniors within the municipality.
- Models to develop new and redevelop existing supportive housing for seniors that are compatible with the geographic and cultural characteristics of Richmond.
- Recommendations to guide the City of Richmond regarding development and collaborative approaches to providing both shelter and services to seniors who need both housing and support.

It is recognized that the City of Richmond can only meet the goal of affordable seniors supportive housing in partnership with other partners who play key roles in capital and operational funding.

#### ORIGIN

On June 20, 2000, the City of Richmond was awarded a grant of \$10,000 Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) Program (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) to evaluate the opportunities for developing and redeveloping seniors housing projects to better meet the needs of today's seniors.

**Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing Project Steering Committee** consisted of:

- Neil Bernbaum, Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
- Lois Carson-Boyce, Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
- Aileen Cormack, Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
- Carol Smith, Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
- Gene Durnin, Richmond Health Services
- Elain Duvall, Progressive Homes
- Peter Simpson, Greater Vancouver Homebuilders' Association
- Peter Staniscia, Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation
- Linda Thomas, Vancouver/Richmond Health Board

The project consultants retained were Options Consulting and Nancy Gnaedinger, Consultant in Gerontology, who guided the development of the study with advice and guidance from the Steering Committee and City staff.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

**Richmond Official Community Plan (OCP)**

The Richmond OCP adopted on March 15, 1999, acknowledges the growing aging population and the need to increase the provision of affordable accessible, supportive and specialized housing. As such, the OCP policies encourage the development of a variety of supportive seniors 'housing' options.

**Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing Study**

The completed study "Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing" (attached) now provides a comprehensive overview of information and requirements for the planning, development, redevelopment, and operation of affordable seniors supportive housing in Richmond.

The study is structured into the following ten chapters (with findings and recommendations under each section):

1. What is seniors supportive housing?
2. What supports are provided and how?
3. What design features are important in seniors supportive housing?
4. Who in Richmond needs affordable seniors supportive housing?
5. How can affordable seniors supportive housing be developed in Richmond?
6. What are key factors to consider in re-development projects?
7. How can the provision of supports be made more affordable?
8. What are the regulatory and operational considerations?
9. What can the City of Richmond do to encourage seniors supportive housing?
10. A best practices model for providing affordable seniors supportive housing, detailing the models of housing, and the models of support.

The report also provides:

- Project profiles of a number of supportive housing projects across Canada (**Appendix A** of the attached report), and
- An overview of current community resources in Richmond, which could have a role in the development or operation of a seniors supportive housing project (**Appendix B** of the attached report).

The study's Executive Summary and Recommendations are attached as **Appendix A**.

**Demand for Seniors Supportive Housing**

- There is a significant current and growing future demand for affordable seniors supportive housing in the City of Richmond.

*Richmond Population Projections - Age*

Age	2000	2010	2020	Population Growth Rate
65-69	5,625	9,031	14,300	154%
70-74	4,233	6,313	12,279	190%
75-79	3,726	4,607	7,333	97%
80-84	2,430	2,913	4,362	80%
85+	2,160	3,265	4,177	93%
Total 65+ Population	18,174	26,129	42,451	134%
Total Population	166,717	188,131	203,222	22%

- There is no single “ideal” model of seniors supportive housing. Different models are appropriate to different circumstances and development conditions.
- The rapid development of private sector congregate housing is a partial market response to the demand created by the growing gap between seniors’ need for some supports and the existing provision of community-based supports. However, private sector supportive housing is not affordable to seniors with average or low incomes.
  - *Statistics Canada data for 1998 indicates that for Richmond the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) (after taxes) for a one person family was \$14,510 (or \$1,209 per month). For a two person family, the LICO (after taxes) was \$17,705 (or \$1,475 per month). In Richmond, 30.7% of seniors live on \$1,475 per month or less.*
  - *Housing is deemed to be affordable if it is equal to 30% of gross income. For seniors who earn less than the average income in Richmond, housing would be affordable if it cost between \$6,206 and \$3,358 per year, or \$517 and \$280 per month. This is significantly below current market rents. The study, *Poverty in Richmond: A Sense of Belonging (2000)*, noted that the average rent in Richmond is \$904.*
- Seniors move to supportive housing when it becomes apparent that their current housing does not meet their needs.
- The growing demand for affordable seniors supportive housing is due to an increasing number of frail elderly living in the community (typically, unattached females aged 75 and over) who need supports but who are unable to have their needs met through community-based services and who cannot afford available private sector supportive housing options.
- For seniors who cannot afford to pay for market supportive housing, there are limited alternatives. These seniors may be living at home-at-risk or with inadequate supports. Or, they may move into an institution prematurely, because affordable supportive housing is not available.
- There are currently 873 units of subsidized seniors housing in Richmond.
- There are currently no units of affordable supportive housing in Richmond.
- There is a significant current demand for this housing option – estimated to be in the range of 500 units.

The table in **Appendix B** summaries the current and future status of seniors in Richmond.

### **Recommendations For City Action**

The recommendations for City action are contained in **Appendix A**.

Approval of the recommendations involve the following management steps.

The City of Richmond can encourage and support seniors supportive housing initiatives in Richmond by setting short and long term goals, policies, and priorities to ensure a range of supportive housing solutions, based on community needs, that vary in terms of affordability and level of support.

To achieve this goal, the City will need to work in partnership with other key stakeholders such as Richmond Health Services Society, BC Housing and other agencies which provide capital and operational funding for affordable supportive housing.

### Role of the City of Richmond in Creating an Enabling Environment

1. Place priority on a City leadership role in facilitating and supporting seniors supportive housing partnerships.
2. Place priority on planning and funding of seniors supportive housing projects.
3. Communicate with community organizations and private sector developers that affordable seniors supportive housing is a planning and development priority.

#### □ Resources

1. Formally acknowledge affordable seniors supportive housing as a specific housing priority in the Official Community Plan.
2. Develop planning and design resources, including design guidelines and an annotated bibliography of planning and design resources.
3. Provide:
  - Staff resources to support meetings,
  - Research, planning assistance, and partnerships in applying for grants,
  - Ways to facilitate partnership building,
  - Assistance in better defining the model of housing and supports that will appropriately meet the needs identified by the City of Richmond, and
  - Assistance to Richmond Health Services, BC Housing and other agencies to find suitable sites to develop seniors supportive housing.
4. Pursue land acquisition opportunities through rezonings and other circumstances.
5. Identify and evaluate potential tools to contribute to affordability of seniors supportive housing.

#### □ Proactive Initiatives (City, Richmond Health Services, BC Housing, other agencies, etc.)

1. Better define need projections to 2021.
2. Develop a detailed profile of prospective tenants, based on the profile of residents currently using home support and home care nursing and rehabilitation services and residents who are waitlisted for long term care.
3. Work in partnership with project teams to develop affordable seniors supportive housing.
4. Secure appropriate sites for seniors supportive housing, or engage in a partnerships with organizations which own appropriate land.
5. Identify the terms of an operational model of support services, to be used as the basis for a competitive proposal call (based on the principles, practices and affordability data described in the "Richmond Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing" report).
6. Identify the terms of the capital development model, based on the specific site, and including the terms of site acquisition, and design criteria, based on the tenant profile, and design criteria.
7. Issue proposal calls for organizations (private sector or non-profit organizations, or as specified by the City) to provide seniors supportive housing in accordance with the development and operational terms defined.
8. Following completion, formally evaluate projects to ensure that "lessons learned" can be incorporated into subsequent projects

### **2001 Work Program**

- Prepare a Work Program for 2001.
- In 2001, Council has approved \$15,000 for implementation. Staff will pursue additional funding partnerships.

**Richmond Health Services Society**

Richmond Health Services has reviewed "Richmond Affordable Seniors Affordable Housing" report, endorses its recommendations in principle, and are ready to work in partnership with the City to implement the report recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

1. To prepare this study,
  - No City funds were allocated.
  - A grant of \$10,000 from the Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) Program (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) funded this project. The recommendations outlined in the report can be planned as part of the City's annual capital budget process.
2. To implement the report recommendations, in 2001 \$15,000 is available.

CONCLUSION

- Based on this report, the City of Richmond is encouraged to form partnerships to undertake the planning and development of seniors supportive housing projects.
- The City may assume a leadership role in some initiatives, but in many cases the role of the City will be to encourage, support and facilitate supportive housing projects to be developed by private sector developers and community organizations.
- The role of the City will be complemented by the role of Richmond Health Services; both parties could have a considerable role in the practical, regulatory and financial considerations to be addressed in the planning and development of seniors supportive housing projects.
- Specific actions and priorities for the City of Richmond have been identified and described for consideration.



Kari Huhtala  
Senior Planner

KEH:cas

## Richmond Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing Study

### Executive Summary and Recommendations

This study of Seniors Supportive Housing provides a comprehensive overview of information and requirements for the planning, development and operation of affordable seniors supportive housing in Richmond. The report includes ten chapters and recommendations, summarized below.

#### 1. What is seniors supportive housing?

For this project, supportive housing is defined as follows. "Supportive housing combines a supportive and appropriate physical environment designed for privacy and independence, with a social model<sup>1</sup> of flexible supports and assistance including emergency call, meals, and access to personal care and professional health care as required."

#### 2. What supports are provided and how?

Support services, typically including 24-hour emergency response, housekeeping and laundry services, and one or two communal meals per day, are provided by a combination of on-site and visiting service providers and by volunteers. Generally, the more "upscale" the development or the higher the level of needs, the more services are provided by on-site staff.

#### 3. What design features are important in seniors supportive housing?

The most important design features are those which accommodate the provision of support services (such as offices and communal spaces for meal service and social activities), those which support frailty and ageing in place (such as wheelchair accessibility, handrails, specially designed bathrooms, plenty of light, no stairs), and those which contribute to affordability by providing functional and aesthetic design, without "gold plating".

#### 4. Who in Richmond needs affordable seniors supportive housing?

Seniors move to supportive housing when it becomes apparent that their current housing does not meet their needs (for example, they can no longer manage stairs) and/or when a crisis, such as widowhood, pushes them to move from their familiar home. Typically, unattached females aged 75 and over who lack social supports are candidates for supportive housing. Seniors who are spending 30% or more of their gross income on shelter and who cannot get adequate home support services and who are living at risk or may otherwise move to residential care in the absence of a viable alternative, are the people in Richmond who need affordable supportive housing.

#### 5. How can affordable seniors supportive housing be developed in Richmond?

The development process can be complex and often requires a large, multi-sectoral project team with the skills and expertise to plan, develop, finance and operate an affordable seniors supportive housing project. The leadership role will likely be taken by an organization with the capacity to provide either the housing or the supports or both.

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<sup>1</sup> A social model of health recognizes and integrates residents' medical and social needs to achieve their wellness and independence by maintaining their quality of life through improved nutritional status, reduced social isolation, reduced risk factors due an unsupportive physical environment, and the flexible provision of supports at the margin of need.

Recognizing that "affordability" varies with a range of incomes, there are various ways to make supportive housing less expensive: land acquisition, re-development, zoning modifications, covenants, financing, and shelter subsidies. For many Richmond seniors, affordable supportive housing will require some form of subsidy, which may be means tested and should be equitable with existing housing and long term care costs.

#### **6. What are key factors to consider in re-development projects?**

In some cases, the re-development of a site and its buildings can offer significant capital advantages, although these may be minimal if only a building (as opposed to a site) is re-developed. The re-development of buildings often results in functional and design compromises. Other advantages of re-development (site and building, and building only) may be less tangible, but very beneficial, such as a good location or a building with positive associations for the potential tenants.

#### **7. How can the provision of supports be made more affordable?**

"Affordability" varies within a range of incomes. The model of supports can be structured to be more affordable by consolidating existing services, by block funding of service delivery, utilizing existing community based services, such as Meals on Wheels, and ensuring that the supports do not diminish residents' capacity for independence. By providing supports at the margin of need and subsidizing on a means tested basis, the provision of supports will balance affordability and adequacy of supports.

#### **8. What are the regulatory and operational considerations?**

Because seniors supportive housing is a relatively new concept, there are aspects that are still being clarified, including licensing, the applicability of the Residential Tenancy Act, "exit policies", institutional drift, and tenant selection. All of these areas involve responsibilities, liabilities and protections related to consumers, service providers, and funders.

#### **9. What can the City of Richmond do to encourage seniors supportive housing?**

The City of Richmond can encourage and support seniors supportive housing initiatives in Richmond by setting short and long term goals, policies, and priorities to ensure a range of supportive housing solutions, based on community needs, that vary in terms of affordability and level of support. To achieve this goal, the City will need to work in partnership with other key stakeholders such as Richmond Health Services and BC Housing or other agencies which provide capital and operational funding for affordable supportive seniors housing.

#### **10. Best Practices Model**

The report provides a best practices model for providing affordable seniors supportive housing, detailing the models of housing, and the models of supports.

#### **Project Profiles**

**Appendix A** of the Study Report provides detailed project profiles of 15 projects which are relevant to affordable seniors supportive housing.

#### **Inventory of Services**

**Appendix B** of the Study Report provides an inventory of current community services in the City of Richmond.



**Recommendations**

The recommendations for each section of the Study Report are summarized in the following table:

2.1	It is recommended that the City's role in facilitating, supporting and developing seniors supportive housing, should ensure that the support model (range and type of supports, cost of supports) is considered as an integral component of project design and development.
2.2	It is recommended that in facilitating and evaluating potential seniors supportive housing projects, the City of Richmond ensure that the model of support services is grounded in values of residents' personal autonomy, self-determination and independence.
2.3	It is recommended that in facilitating and evaluating potential seniors supportive housing projects, the City of Richmond ensure that support services are flexible and individualized to provide for each tenant at their margin of need. Supports should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of 24 hour on call emergency response</li> <li>• at least one meal a day</li> <li>• access to personal care and health care</li> <li>• social and recreational opportunities</li> <li>• availability of laundry and housekeeping</li> </ul>
3.1	It is recommended that the City of Richmond establish general development and design guidelines for seniors supportive housing. The guidelines should address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of personal, private space and amenities</li> <li>• common space and amenities</li> <li>• be flexible</li> <li>• be based on a defined program of supports</li> <li>• ensure flexibility of future use and specific development conditions</li> <li>• require the provision of design features that support ageing-in-place</li> <li>• recognize that for a supportive housing project that has minimal supports, greater amenities should be provided within residents' dwelling units</li> </ul>
3.2	It is recommended that the City of Richmond develop an annotated bibliography of design references and other resources for wheelchair accessibility and ageing in place.
4.1	It is recommended that the City of Richmond, in partnership with Richmond Health Services, make planning and funding for seniors supportive housing projects a priority, based on the current and growing demand for seniors supportive housing in Richmond. Potential specific initiatives may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City should work with Richmond Health Services Society to develop a detailed profile of prospective tenants, based on the profile of residents currently using home support and home care nursing and rehabilitation services, and residents who are waitlisted for long term care.</li> <li>• The City and Richmond Health Services should better define need projections to 2021.</li> </ul>
4.2	It is recommended that the City of Richmond obtain comprehensive demographic information that would define and describe the range and type of housing and support needs specifically required in Richmond now and in the future. This could include graphics showing current services and gaps, demographic data and development of needs profiles in partnership with Richmond Health Services.

5.1	It is recommended that, in addition to existing policies regarding seniors supportive housing, the City of Richmond formally acknowledge seniors supportive housing as a specific housing priority within the context of the Official Community Plan.
5.2	It is recommended that the City of Richmond proactively acquire land through large scale rezonings and other purchase opportunities, and that the City designate appropriate sites for affordable seniors supportive housing.
5.3	It is recommended that City partnerships and alliances teams (e.g. with Richmond Health Services) take a leadership role in encouraging, and facilitating the City developing seniors supportive housing with organizations that may have land assets, such as churches, Legions, community associations, cultural and ethnic organizations, and seniors' associations.
5.4	It is recommended that the City of Richmond explore strategies to encourage private sector landowners with properties that have re-development potential to engage in public-private partnerships to develop affordable seniors supportive housing.
5.5	It is recommended that the City of Richmond offer to assist community organizations that are taking the leadership role in the development of affordable seniors supportive housing projects, by providing expertise, facilitating meetings, and contributing to the initial stages of project development.
5.6	<p>It is recommended that the City of Richmond evaluate potential tools that it can use to enhance the development affordability of affordable seniors supportive housing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• zoning changes,</li> <li>• zoning relaxations and exemptions;</li> <li>• density bonuses;</li> <li>• restrictive covenants;</li> <li>• reducing, waiving or rebating development cost charges; and</li> <li>• accessing the Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund of the City of Richmond.</li> </ul>
5.7	It is recommended that the City of Richmond consider a role in facilitating financing for affordable seniors supportive housing, through the Municipal Finance Authority or through the Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund of the City of Richmond.
5.8	<p>It is recommended that the City of Richmond recognize that the complex and innovative approaches required to develop and operate affordable seniors supportive housing will require that the City exercise flexibility and have development expertise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because this is a relatively new type of development, these projects are likely to require considerable staff resources, both in the number of staff and types of skills, and in the time required.</li> <li>• The City must have a clear understanding of the role and goals of the affordable supportive housing project proponent, and needs to have skills compatible with the development sector in negotiating a viable capital project arrangement.</li> </ul>
6.1	It is recommended that the City of Richmond encourage organizations with land assets who wish to explore re-development by providing direction and information, by discussing potential incentives, and by exploring partnership opportunities.
6.2	It is recommended that the City of Richmond explore strategies, such as use of the Affordable Housing Fund, to compensate for the capital costs associated with

	<b>project amenity and support spaces that are not funded by BC Housing.</b>
6.3	It is recommended that for re-development projects that involve the renovation of existing buildings, any design guidelines should make provision for evaluation of the design capacity to appropriately meet residents' needs and accommodate ageing-in-place.
7.1	It is recommended that the City of Richmond support and encourage supportive housing project proponents in the development of affordable support services. This may be achieved by facilitating linkages among community organizations, providing some type of ongoing funding support (such as a property tax exemption or other measures), and by supporting organizations in the development of appropriate and affordable support models to the greatest extent feasible.
8.1	It is recommended that the City of Richmond clearly understand the development and operational implications of various regulatory and operational considerations, and how they may impact the City's role and objectives. This may include licensing, operational funding, and capital funding.

**2020 OVERVIEW (Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing)**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>CURRENT STATUS</b>	<b>FUTURE STATUS</b>
Seniors' Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seniors now comprise 10.2% of the total population in Richmond.</li> <li>There are now 18,174 seniors in Richmond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seniors will comprise 21% of the population of Richmond by 2020.</li> <li>By 2020 there will be 42,452 seniors in Richmond.</li> </ul>
Seniors' Incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The average gross annual income of seniors in Richmond is \$20,688.</li> <li>More than half of all seniors cannot afford the cost of private sector supportive housing, which is about \$31,000 to \$37,000 per year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proportion of seniors who cannot afford market supportive housing will likely remain unchanged.</li> </ul>
Home Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trend toward fewer supports for seniors with lower levels of need, as limited resources are concentrated on those with greatest need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing gap between services needed and services provided, increasing demand for supportive housing as an alternative.</li> </ul>
Residential Facility Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trend toward admission of residents with higher care levels.</li> <li>Longer waiting lists: in Richmond there are currently 217 intermediate care clients waitlisted for 415 beds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential care facility construction is not expanding to meet population needs and role is changing to meet only highest needs, contributing to demand for supportive housing as an alternative.</li> </ul>
Affordable Seniors Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are currently 873 units of subsidized seniors housing in Richmond.</li> <li>The SAFER program provides a rent supplement but it is capped and creates an affordability gap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is likely that there will be less construction of affordable housing and increased reliance on rent subsidy programs.</li> <li>If current trends continue, this will result in increasing demand for supportive housing as the capped housing subsidies become less attractive than the affordable seniors supportive housing projects.</li> </ul>
Market Seniors Supportive Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are currently 100 units of market seniors supportive housing in Richmond.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The private sector market will continue to expand (rate unknown) to meet market demand for seniors who can afford market supportive housing.</li> </ul>

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>CURRENT STATUS</b>	<b>FUTURE STATUS</b>
<p>Affordable Seniors Supportive Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are currently 0 units of affordable seniors supportive housing in Richmond.</li> <li>• There is a significant current demand for this option – estimated to be in the range of 500 units.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The demand for affordable seniors supportive housing will increase for two reasons:</li> <li>• It is a desirable alternative for the growing seniors' population.</li> <li>• The demand will increase faster than the rate of seniors' population growth due to reduced availability of subsidized housing, home supports, and residential facility care.</li> </ul>