



To: Planning Committee
From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Community Services

Date: October 5, 2009
File: 01-0100-20-SADV1-01/2009-Vol 01

Re: Province of B.C. "Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework"

Staff Recommendation

That a letter be sent to the Premier requesting that the Provincial Government better address certain seniors' issues, as proposed by the Richmond Seniors' Advisory Committee, regarding the B.C. Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport's "Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework" (September 2008).

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Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Community Services

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Att.

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ROUTED TO: CONCURRENCE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING Y [checked] N []
POLICY PLANNING Y [checked] N []
SENIORS, COMMUNITY SERVICES Y [checked] N []
REVIEWED BY TAG YES [checked] NO []
REVIEWED BY CAO YES [checked] NO []

Staff Report

Origin

On June 2, 2009, the Richmond Seniors' Advisory Committee (RSAC) sent a letter to Richmond City Council (**Attachment 1**) requesting that a letter be sent to the Premier of British Columbia urging that certain recommendations put forward in the "Aging Well in British Columbia" Report of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues (November 2006) be incorporated into and better addressed in the Province's "Seniors in BC: A Healthy Living Framework".

Findings Of Fact

In 2005, the Provincial Government established a Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues, mandated with identifying how the participation, health and well-being of older adults in B.C. would best be supported. Eighteen (18) volunteer representatives with expertise in seniors' issues were selected to serve on the Council, including a member of the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee. The Council heard approximately 100 presentations and received approximately 200 written submissions from around the Province. Based on this extensive consultation, the Premiers' Council prepared a report with recommendations, "Aging Well in British Columbia" (November 2006) (hereafter referred to as "Aging Well in B.C."). A report summary and list of recommendations is attached to the RSAC letter (**Attachment 1**).

In January, 2007, the RSAC wrote to the Premier requesting that the Aging Well in B.C. recommendations (**Attachment 2**) be fully included in the final Provincial policy framework.

In September, 2008, "Seniors' in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework", the B.C. Government's response to "Aging Well in B.C.", was published (hereafter referred to as the "Healthy Living Framework"). The RSAC reviewed the report and concluded that some recommendations from "Aging Well" were insufficiently addressed, specifically those pertaining to home support, affordable housing, volunteerism and cultural diversity. A summary of the Framework is attached to the RCSAC letter (**Attachment 1**).

In June, 2009, the RSAC wrote to the Mayor and Councillors requesting that a letter be sent to the Premier requesting that RSAC concerns regarding these recommendations be addressed (**Attachment 1**).

Analysis

A table is provided that identifies the relevant 2006 "Aging Well in B.C." recommendations (home support, affordable housing, volunteerism and cultural diversity), the 2008 "Healthy Living Framework" responses and corresponding RSAC concerns (**Attachment 3**).

1. Council Policies

The RSAC request of Council is consistent with the Council-approved RSAC Terms of Reference, which indicate that the RSAC may initiate studies on matters deemed of concern to seniors and submit information, options and recommendations to City Council as necessary and as requested.

The RSAC request of Council also reflects the following Council Term Goals for 2008 – 2011:

- *Improve the effectiveness of the delivery of social services in the City through the development and implementation of a Social and Community Service Strategy that includes:*
 - *Increased social housing, implementation of the campus of care concept, and an emergency shelter for women;*
 - *The development and implementation of an effective lobbying strategy in partnership with community groups that targets the Province for funding for social service needs; and*
 - *Initiatives to reduce homelessness in the City, including SROs.*

The following analysis includes a brief background on the issue and refers to Provincial initiatives undertaken subsequent to the September, 2008 publication of the Healthy Living Framework.

2. Home Support

(1) Background

Home support services are those which “help clients remain in their own homes by providing personal assistance with daily activities. These include bathing, dressing, grooming and light household tasks to help maintain a safe and supportive home” (BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, BC Seniors’ Guide, 9th Edition, 2009). Home support services are delivered by trained community health workers, and are to be distinguished from “home care” which is provided by visiting health professionals (e.g., nurses, physiotherapists).

The 2006 “Aging Well in B.C.” report recommended that the Province introduce a new broader and more widely available home support system because of the limited range of home services provided, and their restricted availability, offered to high-need clients only. As the current Provincial program, initiated in 2002, does not include housekeeping services (e.g., meal preparation, house cleaning) for those without high health care needs, the preventative value of home support service has been eroded. The Premiers’ Council on Aging proposes that an additional expenditure of \$120 million per year on home support services would result in significant cost-savings to the health care system.

In response to the 2006 “Aging Well in BC” recommendation, the 2008 Healthy Living Framework proposes to provide “new tools and support” for caregivers and family members providing in-home care, and commits the Seniors’ Healthy Living Secretariat to “explore innovative and sustainable models to provide non-medical home support services”. While such innovation is a worthwhile investment, neither of these initiatives commits to an expansion of services.

(2) Recent Provincial Home Support Initiatives

In implementing the Framework, the BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport announced funding in April, 2009 for “Community Action for Seniors Independence Projects” (**Attachment 4**), provided in partnership with the United Way (Provincial funding \$700,000; United Way funding \$250,000) intended to help seniors live longer in their own homes. A total of five (5) communities (Vancouver, Dawson Creek, Osoyoos, Maple Ridge, Surrey) will “engage community members and local organizations, including non-profit, volunteer, faith and multi-cultural groups, health authorities, corporate sponsors and businesses, in discussions on innovative service delivery models for those areas”.

(3) RSAC Position

The RSAC’s concern that home support services are not sufficiently addressed in the Healthy Living Framework remains relevant. While commendable, the Framework’s subsequent “Community Action for Seniors Independence Projects” community engagement initiative in five (5) select communities, at a cost of \$700,000, does not substantively address the RSAC concern regarding the need for the increased provision of home support services.

3. Affordable Housing

(1) Background

Seniors’ affordable housing, as with home support, is a preventative, cost effective way to reduce health care costs, and is considered a basic requirement for maintaining health (BC Healthy Living Alliance, Healthy Futures for BC Families, 2009). Safe, affordable, accessible housing for seniors is recognized as providing significant physical, mental, social and economic benefits (BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Affordable Housing for Seniors, May 2009).

The need for seniors’ affordable housing is well documented. As reported in “Aging Well in B.C.”, the 2001 Census indicated that more than 27,000 older renters in BC were in core housing need, as their housing was either inadequate, too costly for their income, or both. The report calls for an increase in a range of affordable housing types (e.g., affordable rental units, secondary suites, assisted living and other forms of congregate housing, opportunities to adapt one’s own home while “aging in place”).

Richmond-specific data indicates that, in the 2006 Census, 25% (5,341) of those 65+ were identified as low-income (before tax). A total of 345 households were comprised of someone 65+ who pays at least 50% of their income on rent. While this is not significantly different than the number reported in the 2001 Census (344 households), the number of seniors in Richmond, as elsewhere, is anticipated to grow exponentially in the coming years. A May 2003 report to Council, “2001 – 2026 Demographic Profile/Needs Assessment: Seniors Affordable Supportive Housing” indicated that the 75+ population in Richmond is expected to grow 174% between 2001 and 2026.

Results of the recent Metro Vancouver Homelessness Count, indicating that the number of older homeless people (aged 55+) rose 316% between 2002 and 2008 (51 to 212 in the region), underscores the need for seniors’ affordable housing. In the 2008 count, 7 of the 56 homeless identified in Richmond were in the 55+ age group (2002 and 2005 figures for 55+ Richmond

residents are unavailable). Due to challenges in accessing and identifying homeless people, the Metro Vancouver count is widely considered to provide a conservative estimate of the actual numbers.

While the critical role played by affordable housing in maintaining seniors' health and reducing health care costs is evident, the Healthy Living Framework does not address this need.

(2) Recent Provincial Seniors' Affordable Housing Initiatives

Since the publication of the September 2008 Healthy Living Framework, the Province has announced two (2) new initiatives regarding seniors' affordable housing.

- April 2009 BC Housing News Release, "B.C. – Canada Partnership to build new homes for seniors" (**Attachment 5**)
 - The Provincial and Federal Governments will provide matching contributions of \$61.79 million to build up to 1,000 new housing units across the Province for seniors and people with disabilities.
 - Construction of the first 218 units will start in 19 communities over the next few months.
 - The Seniors' rental housing will be created through partnerships with municipalities, non-profit housing providers and the private sector.
- September 2009 BC Ministry of Housing and Social Development News Release, "B.C. Gives \$600K for Housing for Seniors and Veterans" (**Attachment 6**)
 - The Province is providing \$600,000 to the Royal Canadian Legions to redevelop Legion-owned sites with affordable housing for veterans and low or fixed-income residents.
 - The fund will allow one (2) Legion branch at a time to access the \$600,000 as a "revolving contribution fund"; to be paid back once a development is complete, which can then be accessed by other Legion branches.

Please note that City staff is exploring how the Canada Partnership funding may be brought to Richmond. The Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 291 (Richmond), has indicated that it is not in a position to pursue the latter funding opportunity.

(3) RSAC Position

The RSAC expressed concern that seniors' affordable housing, identified as a top priority in the Aging Well recommendations, was not addressed in the Healthy Living Framework. While Provincial initiatives announced subsequent to the development of the Framework begin to address this need (B.C. Canada-Partnership will result in up to 1,000 new units across the province), they are insufficient to help the 27,000 senior British Columbians identified as being in core housing need.

4. Volunteerism

(1) Background

"Aging Well in B.C." calls for enhanced support of volunteer organizations to ensure that senior-serving volunteers, as well as seniors who volunteer, are well supported. However, the

report also cautions that volunteers should not be relied on or requested to fill gaps that should be provided by paid service providers.

As acknowledged in the subsequent Healthy Living Framework, the demand for volunteer services is increasing at a time when the number of volunteers is decreasing, resulting in an undue burden on voluntary sector staff and volunteers. Seniors-serving voluntary organizations are identified as needing increased volunteer capacity and funding to maintain services.

(2) Recent Provincial Seniors' Volunteerism Initiatives

A September 2008 News Release issued by the BC Ministry of Housing and Social Development announced the creation of the "Government, Non-Profit & Volunteer Secretariat"

(**Attachment 7**). The Secretariat was created to foster the ongoing relationship between the BC Government and the non-profit and volunteer sector. According to the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, the Government, Non-Profit & Volunteer Secretariat is currently exploring partnerships to better support the voluntary and non-profit sector, with a specific focus on senior-serving organizations.

(3) RSAC Position

The RSAC is concerned that the emphasis placed on volunteerism in the Healthy Living Framework undermines the need for professional services, as identified in "Aging Well in B.C.", and does not acknowledge the inappropriate burden and burn-out currently experienced by volunteers serving seniors. The RSAC position remains relevant. While the Government, Non-Profit & Volunteer Secretariat is seeking to improve much-needed support for senior-serving voluntary organizations, no specific initiatives have yet been announced. Furthermore, the need to ensure that volunteers are not used to replace paid services has not been addressed.

5. Cultural Diversity

(1) Background

The "Aging Well in B.C. Report" recognizes the challenges faced by older people from ethno cultural minority communities, and particularly those with limited ability to communicate in English, to access and benefit from seniors' services. Rather than proposing isolated recommendations addressing cultural diversity, Aging Well recommendations are interspersed throughout the report (e.g. providing cultural-specific services in residential care and acute care facilities; ensuring the availability of translation services). The benefit of government services collaborating with ethno cultural communities to ensure accessibility is emphasized.

While none of the four (4) cornerstones highlighted in the subsequent Healthy Living Framework address cultural diversity, the Framework does mandate the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat to "work and/or consult with the Multicultural Advisory Council and the Joint Federal-Provincial Immigration Advisory Council" to ensure accessibility to information and services. Working directly with ethno cultural communities is not proposed.

(2) Recent Provincial Seniors' Cultural Diversity Initiatives

In July 2009, the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport issued a News Release, "\$782,000 expands services for older immigrants" (**Attachment 8**):

- Eight (8) community-led demonstration projects (in Vancouver, Fraser Valley, on Vancouver Island and in the Interior) will be undertaken that target isolated immigrant seniors.
- Goals are to help immigrant seniors improve English language skills, access services and increase knowledge of life in Canada.
- Expanded services will include modified English language and computer skills training, information and support services, referral resources, community outreach, peer support and mentorship programs.
- Skills development and training will also be provided to enhance access to volunteer opportunities.

(3) RSAC Position

While the recently-announced older immigrant demonstration projects at least partially address the need to involve ethno cultural service organizations (e.g., SUCCESS, MOSAIC) in cross-cultural seniors issues, the need for the provision of culturally appropriate services (e.g., home support and care) is not addressed. While worthwhile, the Demonstration Projects focus on community integration in specific communities rather than province-wide service provision in a linguistically and culturally sensitive manner.

The RSAC concern regarding culturally-appropriate services remains valid, as does the need to involve ethno cultural community service agencies (e.g., SUCCESS, PICS, MOSAIC), aboriginal and ethno-cultural organizations in service planning and implementation.

6. Summary

City staff has reviewed the RSAC concerns regarding the Healthy Living Framework, deemed them appropriate and recommends that Council request the Premier's support in their implementation.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

In reviewing the Aging Well recommendations, the Healthy Living Framework and subsequent Provincial initiatives, staff support the RSAC concerns and recommend that a letter be sent to the Premier both commending recent initiatives to benefit seniors and requesting that matters identified by the RSAC be addressed as priorities.

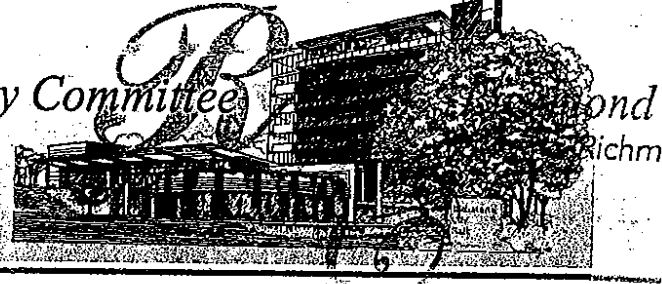


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Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
Serving Richmond since 1991



June 2, 2009

File:

Planning and Development Department
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Mayor and Councillors
Richmond City Hall
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor Brodie and Councillors:

Re: Province of B.C. "Healthy Living Framework"

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to request that Council convey concerns identified by the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee to the Province of British Columbia regarding the need to incorporate recommendations made in the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues report "Aging Well in B.C." into the Province's "Seniors in BC: A Healthy Living Framework".

Background

In 2005, the Premier of British Columbia appointed 18 volunteer representatives to sit on the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues and tasked them with identifying how our society can best support the participation, health and well-being of older people in B.C. The Council heard approximately 100 presentations at meetings held throughout the Province and received approximately 200 written submissions.

The resulting "Aging Well in B.C." report, submitted to the Premier in November 2006, contained 16 recommendations addressing a wide range of issues, including housing, health, transportation, isolation and diversity. A summary and recommendations are found in **Attachment 1**. As you may be aware, the Richmond Seniors' Advisory Committee (RSAC) has standing subcommittees that focus on these issues.

The Report was discussed by the RSAC and a letter was sent to the Premier in early January 2007 urging him to give consideration to all the recommendations. We particularly focused on the introduction of a new, broader and more widely available Home Support system.

"Seniors in BC: A Healthy Living Framework" (September 2008) is the B.C. Government's response to "Aging Well in B.C." A summary of the Framework is found in **Attachment 2**

Both of the above Reports were studied in detail by the RSAC. At our request, Mr. Silas Brownsey, Manager of the Senior's Healthy Living Secretariat, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, met with the RSAC at a specially called meeting on March 18, 2009 to discuss the Framework. This meeting was informative but not all issues were satisfactorily addressed.

Request

The RSAC therefore urges Richmond City Council to write to the Premier of British Columbia to convey our disappointment that many of the issues contained in "Aging Well in BC" are not dealt with in the Healthy Living Framework, and to request that the "Aging Well in BC" recommendations be addressed as a matter of urgency. Among these issues, we would like to focus on four interrelated ones:

- Home Support: The Framework ignores the importance and need for home support. There is an urgent need for a wider range of home support services, including cleaning and home maintenance. Research shows that the cost for keeping seniors at home is lower than that for institutional care.
- Affordable Housing: This major issue that has not been addressed in the Framework; in our opinion, it is the central issue. "Aging Well in B.C." had recommended that the need for seniors' affordable housing be addressed as a matter of priority.
- Volunteerism: The Framework relies heavily on volunteerism to meet seniors' needs. While we appreciate that volunteerism is beneficial to seniors and society, it should not take the place of services. Representatives from grassroots organizations serving seniors are already reporting extensive volunteer burn-out in their efforts to look after the frail and elderly seniors in their communities.
- Cultural Diversity: There is no effort to recognize cultural diversity. While multicultural issues are to be referred to the Multicultural Advisory Council and the Joint Federal-Provincial Immigration Advisory Council, these bodies do not specialize in seniors' issues. Rather, service organizations (e.g., SUCCESS, PICS, MOSAIC), aboriginal groups and ethnocultural organizations need to be involved when working on cross-cultural seniors' issues.

We recommend that concrete actions be taken by the Province of British Columbia to urgently address the above issues so as to truly facilitate healthy living for all BC seniors.

Yours truly,

J8 per
Aileen Cormack

Aileen Cormack, Chair
Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee

:ls

Aging Well *in British Columbia*



Report of the Premier's Council
on Aging and Seniors' Issues

November 2006

Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues

Dear Premier,

In October of last year, you announced the formation of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues. It has been an honour to serve as chair of this diverse and talented group of British Columbians.

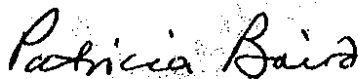
You gave the Council the task of identifying how our society can support the participation, health and well-being of older people in B.C. Over the past year, we have met regularly, heard nearly 100 presentations, met with hundreds of British Columbians, and received written input from more than 200 individuals and organizations across the province.

We have learned a great deal through this process, and are confident that implementation of the recommendations in this report will help our province deal successfully with the dramatic demographic and social changes that are taking place.

On behalf of Council members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to carry out this important work.

I wish to close by acknowledging with great sadness the loss of Dr. Bill Webber, a long-time colleague and a valuable member of this Council, who passed away during the course of our work. He has made many contributions to our province over the years, and even during the short time he was able to serve on the Council, he enriched our thinking and contributed greatly to its value. He is very much missed.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Patricia Baird
Chair

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Photo front cover, clockwise from top, 4th image; and photos on pages 12, 23, 24, 31, 38, 40, 46, 50, 54, 57, 65: source *Dare to Age Well! Vieillir...Passionnement!*, *Division of Aging and Seniors*, Public Health Agency of Canada (2001). Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2006.

Report Summary

British Columbia's population is becoming significantly older, and the demographic and social changes that are beginning to affect our province will forever alter how our communities look and function. There are many more older people, we are living longer and we are more active and healthier than ever before.

It is time for a new view of aging and of the role of older people in our province. The fact that older adults are a valuable and contributing part of our society hasn't been fully recognized. We must increase opportunities for older people to remain engaged with others in their communities, and continue to share their knowledge, experience and skills.

Most older British Columbians do not need or want a large number of services or supports from society, while a smaller number do need society's support. We must recognize and respond to these varying needs.

The Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues envisions a society where everyone benefits from the wealth of talent and experience of older adults, where older people are actively involved, integrated rather than isolated, supported in our desire to remain engaged with our communities, and assisted when poor health, lack of income or other barriers stand in the way of a good quality of life.

This vision is reflected in our 16 recommendations for change in our communities and in our province. We have highlighted in bold type five recommendations we judge to be key.

Participating in society

We want a province where older people can remain involved and interacting with others in their communities, filling roles that are respected and valued.

British Columbia's *Human Rights Code* does not protect people 65 and older from discrimination on the basis of age. This is fundamentally unfair and must change immediately. The current lack of protection for older people allows mandatory retirement to be practiced in many workplaces, and when people do work after 65, they cannot count on receiving the same wages, benefits and working conditions as others doing the same work. The vast majority of older people are not finished being productive at 65, and it is inappropriate to have laws suggesting otherwise.

- **KEY:** We recommend that the B.C. government immediately change the *Human Rights Code* to extend human rights protections to those over the age of 65, thereby eliminating mandatory retirement in B.C.

Full participation of older people also depends on taking into account the particular circumstances of those in Aboriginal and ethnocultural communi-

ties to ensure that the differing needs of people in these communities are met. We must also encourage volunteerism and the non-profit sector because of the important services this sector provides and the valuable opportunities for older people to contribute through volunteerism. And we must improve the availability of information on opportunities and services for older people, because these opportunities are only useful if people know about them.

- We recommend that the B.C. government work with Aboriginal and ethnocultural organizations to ensure cultural appropriateness of services for older adults.
- We recommend that the B.C. government proactively support and promote volunteerism.
- We recommend that the B.C. government make accessible information services and outreach for older adults a priority.

Transforming work

We must change workplaces to make it easier for older people to continue to work if they want. Our vision is of a province that welcomes older workers, benefiting from their skills, experience and dependability and enabling those who wish to work to do so.

More and more people are choosing to remain in the labour market after turning 65. Increased workplace flexibility would make it easier for people to make this choice, and would have the added benefit of helping address our province's growing labour shortage.

Increased workplace flexibility must go hand in hand with modernized rules for retirement savings. Opportunities for people to save for their retirement should be improved and promoted.

- We recommend that the B.C. government take a leadership role in supporting and promoting increased workplace flexibility.
- We recommend that the B.C. government promote greater individual retirement savings.

Reshaping our neighbourhoods

We must reshape our neighbourhoods to make it easier for older people to thrive and remain in their homes as they age.

Our vision is of neighbourhoods designed to accommodate people of all ages and abilities, easy to walk, with highly accessible shops and services, recreational and cultural opportunities. We believe the B.C. government should work with local governments to encourage these sorts of developments. We also want a central role for a new type of enhanced community centre, which could play an important part in bringing people of all ages and cultural backgrounds together, providing a focus for interaction and community service delivery.

- We recommend that the B.C. government engage key partners and lead a provincial initiative to reshape neighbourhoods.

Our vision also includes a range of housing options supporting continued independence and quality of life, and a strong emphasis on accessible transportation, which is vital in linking older people to services, their friends and their communities.

- We recommend that the B.C. government take a strong leadership role in the area of housing for older people.
- We recommend that the B.C. government proactively address the transportation needs of older people.

Staying healthy

It's urgent that British Columbians live healthier, so that we age better. Tomorrow's older adults have the potential to live even longer and healthier than the current generation, but how we live now affects how healthy we will be in the future. Older people are more likely to have chronic health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, dementia, or arthritis if they have been physically inactive and eaten a diet high in salt, fat, and sugar. We are concerned by recent data showing that most British Columbians are not sufficiently active and are eating unhealthy diets.

We need to structure our communities so they support healthy choices, with healthy living on municipal and local community agendas to reach people where they live, on an everyday basis.

- **KEY:** We recommend that the B.C. government significantly enhance healthy living initiatives focused on older adults, customized for British Columbia's diverse population.

Ensuring sufficient incomes

All older British Columbians must have sufficient incomes to live decently.

Viewed as a total population, older people in B.C. are better off financially than ever before, and many who will be retiring in coming years are even wealthier. However, some older people still live with very low incomes.

This can contribute to social isolation and non-participation, significantly affecting quality of life and resulting in higher costs to society due to increased use of residential care and the health system. Action to remedy the situation of those older people who are living below the poverty line is essential.

- We recommend that the B.C. government take steps to ensure adequate incomes for all older people.

Supporting independence

We must bring vital services, such as a broader range of home support, to older people's homes and neighbourhoods to enable continued independence and a good quality of life.

The support services currently available to older British Columbians in their communities fall well short of meeting the needs of some older people. We need a new vision for home support – one focused on prevention, maintaining quality of life, and avoiding the high cost – financial and human – of institutional care.

- **KEY:** We recommend that the B.C. government introduce a new, broader and more widely available home support system.

We also endorse the expansion of assisted living across the province, and increased support for informal caregivers.

- We recommend that the B.C. government recognize the contribution of informal caregivers.

Providing medical services

Our health system must focus on quality so that sustainable and accessible health services will be available when older British Columbians need them. Misuse, overuse and under-use of health services raise concerns over quality, so a strong focus on quality improvement is essential.

By improving quality, not only will we provide better health outcomes, but we will also help control costs. Quality improvements should include increased attention to the reform of primary health care, the provision of sufficient residential care beds, and improved prescription drug evaluation, acquisition, regulation and information. We also support assistance for low-income older people with the cost of certain aids and treatments (such as hearing and vision aids).

- **KEY: We recommend that the B.C. government implement aggressive quality improvement initiatives across our health system, in a culturally appropriate way.**
- We recommend that the B.C. government move to more objective, transparent, evidence-based decision-making regarding what health care treatments, services and devices – mainstream and

alternative care – should be funded by our publicly-supported health system.

Making it happen

The B.C. government must show leadership and be a catalyst for change, building partnerships with organizations and communities across the province. We need a new approach to adapt successfully to the changing age composition of our population.

A champion for change is needed both within government and for the government's outreach efforts. A Minister of State Responsible for Aging should act as this champion, supported by a secretariat with broad responsibility for programs, services and issues affecting older British Columbians. The secretariat should be attached to a ministry other than the Ministry of Health.

- **KEY: We recommend that the B.C. government appoint a Minister of State and secretariat to lead the changes needed to adapt to an older population, and to monitor and report on progress.**

The Council urges government and all British Columbians to seize the opportunity to make the changes necessary to adapt successfully to an older population.

Appendix 1: List of Recommendations

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Protect human rights and end mandatory retirement

We recommend that the B.C. government immediately change the *Human Rights Code* to extend human rights protections to those over the age of 65, thereby eliminating mandatory retirement in B.C. Exemption clauses that allow bargained and employer-imposed retirement ages should be removed, and the ground of age be extended to *Section 8*.

2. Live healthier

We recommend that the B.C. government significantly enhance healthy living initiatives focused on older adults, customized for British Columbia's diverse population. These initiatives should include putting in place policies that will lead to the prevention and management of chronic conditions common in older people, and must be established as permanent, high profile, and well supported programs by:

- Investing in education and marketing programs, including the recruitment of major media involvement.
- Developing outreach programs to be delivered directly in B.C. communities.
- Providing funding to local governments for enhanced activity and outreach programs at community centres, and free access to community activity programs for those with low incomes.
- Imposing higher taxes on unhealthy foods, and pressuring the federal government to examine policies to limit salt and fat in foods, and limit fast food portion sizes.

3. Help people stay independent

We recommend that the B.C. government introduce a new broader and more widely available home support system by:

- Providing a wider range of home support services, including cleaning and home maintenance (culturally-specific where appropriate, such as with meal preparation) to people who are unable to carry out these tasks on their own.
- Moving responsibility for non-nursing/non-medical home support services to a ministry other than the Ministry of Health, and making available information about services and expenditures so as to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Pressuring the federal government to provide additional funding for support services delivered in people's homes.

4. Improve health care quality

We recommend that the B.C. government implement aggressive quality improvement initiatives across our health system, in a culturally appropriate way by:

- Making primary care renewal a high priority, using salaried teams of health care professionals working in multi-disciplinary clinics that provide quick access to primary care.
- Providing sufficient residential care beds for those whose medical needs cannot otherwise be met in the community.
- Improving prescription drug evaluation, acquisition, regulation and information to ensure that our provincial drug plan continues to enhance the health and quality of life of older people.
- Assisting low income older people with the cost of vision and hearing aids, assistive devices for those with mobility limitations and necessary dental care and dentures for those with serious dental problems.

5. Provide leadership on aging issues

We recommend that the B.C. government lead the changes needed to adapt to an older population by:

- Appointing a Minister of State on aging to champion a coordinated change agenda across government.
- Establishing a secretariat, within a ministry other than the Ministry of Health, to coordinate aging-related initiatives and policy across ministries and with other partners. It must develop and implement a change agenda, including the implementation of the recommendations in this report, and must have significant staff resources and budget.
- Monitoring and reporting annually on our province's progress in supporting the independence, health and continuing contribution of older British Columbians.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

(Presented in the order they are discussed in this report)

6. Respond to diversity

We recommend that the B.C. government work with Aboriginal and ethnocultural organizations to ensure cultural appropriateness of services for older adults by:

- Evaluating government services to ensure they are delivered in ways that meet the needs of older people in those communities.
- Recruiting and training more health care and home support workers from those communities, and training other service-providers to provide culturally-appropriate services.

7. Support volunteerism

We recommend that the B.C. government pro-actively support and promote volunteerism by:

- Providing ongoing core operating funds to non-profit groups providing volunteer-delivered services for older people, including peer advocacy, abuse prevention, community response networks, and others.
- Funding to help remove barriers to volunteer participation, for example by enabling reimbursement of volunteers for their expenses.

8. Get information out

We recommend that the B.C. government make accessible information services and outreach for older adults a priority by:

- Building and maintaining a province-wide database of services for older adults, and making it available in ways that both inform individuals and help address gaps in information sharing among communities.
- Integrating information services delivered using more than one technology, such as telephone and internet, and providing a single point of access for each technology to the common database.
- Working with Aboriginal and ethnocultural organizations to develop culturally-appropriate information and resources.

9. Make workplaces more flexible

We recommend that the B.C. government take a leadership role in supporting and promoting increased workplace flexibility for older people by:

- Acting immediately to implement changes in its own workplaces that remove incentives to retire early, and increase options for phased retirement, part-time work and job sharing.
- Taking a strong lead in encouraging other employers to act similarly, starting by bringing employers and employees together for a Premier's forum on workplace flexibility for older workers.
- Actively promoting the modification of pension rules (public and employer-sponsored) to allow workers to choose among retirement with full pension benefits at 65, part-time work while receiving a pro-rated pension, or continued full-time work while continuing to contribute toward an enhanced pension when they do retire.

10. Save for retirement

We recommend that the B.C. government promote greater individual retirement savings by:

- Lobbying the federal government to revise Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) and Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) rules to enable people to work until later in life while continuing to save for their retirement.
- Encouraging the use of pooled pension plans and matching RRSP contributions to enable smaller employers to provide their workers with increased retirement savings.

11. Create neighbourhoods where people can thrive

We recommend that the B.C. government engage key partners and lead a provincial initiative to reshape neighbourhoods by:

- Working with local governments to encourage small-scale developments providing a mix of housing types and other land uses, creating more inclusive and accessible neighbourhoods.
- Developing a federal-provincial-local government infrastructure program to provide funding for physical improvements that help produce walkable, accessible, mixed-use neighbourhoods.
- Establishing a substantial innovation prize to be awarded annually to a community undertaking an outstanding project designed to create a walkable, accessible mixed-use neighbourhood.
- Assisting communities to provide an expanded range of integrated community centres that deliver services to older adults as well as people of other age groups.
- Promoting safe/ universal design through the harmonization of construction standards, and the integration of these standards into the *B.C. Building Code*.

12. Make affordable housing a priority

We recommend that the B.C. government take a strong leadership role in the area of housing for older people by:

- Working with the federal government and other partners such as non-profit housing providers to set and meet specific targets for new affordable housing.
- Delivering all government housing programs through one provincial agency, including current CMHC programs.
- Increasing funding for housing programs, including those jointly funded with the federal government. Forgivable seed funding to non-profit groups for low price rental housing should be part of this.

13. Make it easier for people to get around

We recommend that the B.C. government address the transportation needs of older people by:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to improve transportation services for older people.
- Committing to strong ongoing funding of conventional transit to allow for service improvements and its establishment in communities where service is feasible but has not yet been implemented.
- Evaluating, significantly expanding and improving handyDART and other custom transit services, including improved service across jurisdictions.
- Providing incentives and assistance with the establishment and expansion of supplementary transportation services, particularly in rural and remote areas.

14. Ensure sufficient incomes for older people

We recommend that the B.C. government ensure adequate incomes for all older people by:

- Working with the federal government to enhance income security programs so all older people in B.C. have incomes above the after tax low-income cut-off.
- Ensuring that low-income older renters need not spend more than 30 per cent of their income on housing, within approved regional ceilings.
- Taking a leadership role in pressing for changes to the OAS and CPP to increase flexibility, to remove the CPP work cessation test, and allow OAS and GIS recipients more part-time work without penalty.
- Expanding initiatives to enable people trained outside Canada to begin using their professional skills in B.C. more quickly. This should include encouraging professional and trades organizations to evaluate the credentials of immigrants promptly, and provide remedial training where it is needed.

15. Recognize informal caregivers

We recommend that the B.C. government recognize the contribution of informal caregivers by:

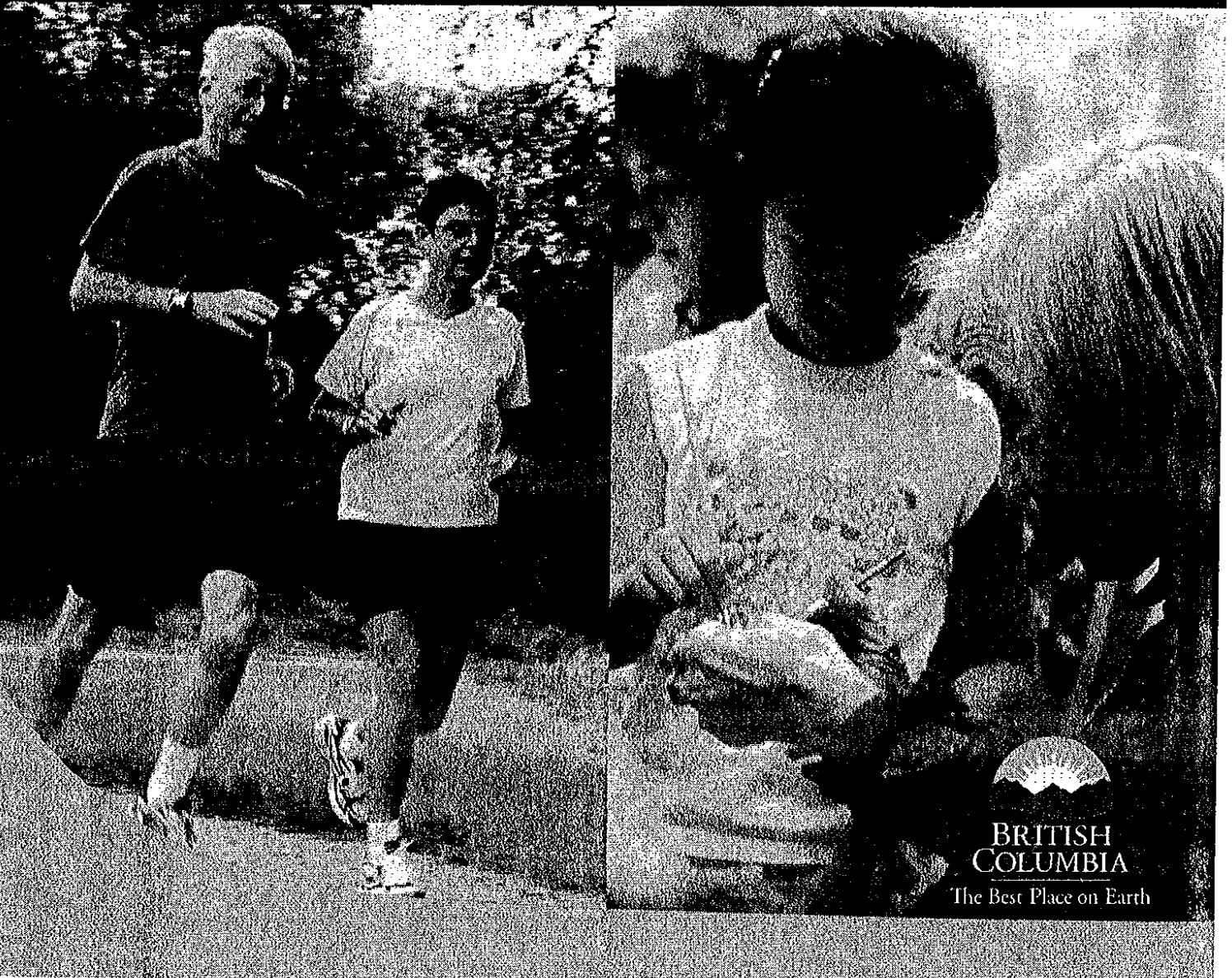
- Improving respite options at the community level, such as adult day care and substitute care provided in the home.
- Enhancing the retirement incomes of those who leave work to provide informal care.
- Exploring the expansion of tax credits for informal care providers.

16. Support the right health treatments, services and devices

We recommend that the B.C. government move to more objective, transparent, evidence-based decision-making regarding what health care treatments, services and devices – mainstream and alternative care – should be funded by our publicly supported health system. This decision-making should be supported by independent and unbiased analysis of information on the safety and efficacy of treatments, services and devices.

SENIORS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Healthy Living Framework



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HEADS-CANDID



The savings below are achieved when PC recycled fiber is used in place of virgin fiber. This project generation uses 9232 lbs of paper which has a postconsumer recycled percentage of 50%.

trees preserved for the future	38.77
waterborne waste not created	50,7842 kilograms
wastewater flow saved	74,874.2505 litres
solid waste not generated	826 kilograms
greenhouse gases prevented	1 627 kilograms
energy not consumed	27,465,200 BTUs

Calculations based on research by Environmental Defense and other members of the Paper Task Force.

The Framework at a Glance

CORNERSTONE 1: CREATE AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

- ▶ Work with local government and other partners to promote and implement age-friendly practices in communities throughout British Columbia.
- ▶ Include age-friendly criteria in the Green Cities programs to encourage local government to consider age-friendliness in the development of their initiatives.
- ▶ Explore partnering with the Planning Institute of British Columbia to ensure planners have awareness of aging issues, so that they will incorporate age-friendly design in their plans.
- ▶ Make "Planning for an Aging Society" a research area in the Pacific Leaders Graduate Student Fellowship Program.
- ▶ Continue to expand public transportation services and options, including handyDART.
- ▶ Deliver educational and safety initiatives for motorized scooters.
- ▶ Support the expansion of the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation's Mature Drivers Program, which helps seniors assess their driving ability and learn about issues affecting older drivers.

- ▶ Develop and increase the inventory of independent living spaces through Housing Matters BC.
- ▶ Submit an amendment to 2010 National Building Code to require adequate reinforcement in the walls adjacent to toilets, tubs and/or showers for grab bar installation.
- ▶ Table the issue of adaptable housing standards with the Provincial/Territorial Policy Advisory Committee on Codes.

CORNERSTONE 2: MOBILIZE AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEERISM

- ▶ Create an Aging in Action campaign to promote volunteer initiatives that support older people.
- ▶ Establish an Aging in Action Grant Program for volunteer organizations serving older people.
- ▶ Launch a provincial recognition program to celebrate the contributions of older volunteers.
- ▶ Work with partners to develop opportunities and profile older volunteers during events such as the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the BC Games and the BC Seniors Games.

CORNERSTONE 3: PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING

- ▶ In partnership with local governments, First Nations, seniors' and community organizations, build ActNow BC Seniors' Community Parks.
- ▶ Implement a provincial Active Aging Plan, including five Active Aging Coordinators, an annual Active Aging Symposium and regional forums to engage multiple stakeholders to create supportive environments to enable healthy lifestyle choices.
- ▶ Develop an ActNow BC program in partnership with Aboriginal communities to build on the Province's commitment to improve the health of Aboriginal communities.
- ▶ Provide new tools and supports for caregivers and family members who are providing in-home care.
- ▶ Evaluate the opportunities and costs associated with establishing a new Independent Living Savings Account, to allow citizens to make tax-free investments for their future home care and housing needs.
- ▶ Pilot new community-based models to support persons with disabilities, including seniors.
- ▶ Work with partners to support families dealing with dementia.

CORNERSTONE 4: SUPPORT OLDER WORKERS

- ▶ Increase flexibility and choice in retirement planning by permitting pension plan members to accrue pension benefits until age 71, and allowing British Columbia registered pension plans to offer phased retirement benefits.
- ▶ Deliver a Targeted Initiative for Older Workers program to retrain older workers affected by changes to British Columbia's economy.
- ▶ Launch a Mature Workers marketing campaign to promote the experience and skills that older workers bring to the workplace.
- ▶ Host a provincial forum on flexible work options for older workers to discuss best practices for creating more flexible workplaces.
- ▶ Explore options to promote pooled pension plans for smaller employers, to increase the participation of British Columbia workers in registered pension plans.
- ▶ Implement a Flexible Work Options Toolkit for the BC Public Service to promote flexible workplace practices and provide an effective model for other employers.

The Framework at a Glance

SENIORS' HEALTHY LIVING SECRETARIAT

The Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat will:

- ▶ Lead government's implementation of the Seniors' Healthy Living Framework, and monitor and evaluate progress.
- ▶ Explore innovative and sustainable models to provide non-medical home support services.
- ▶ Launch a one-stop, integrated information source on government programs and services for older people.
- ▶ Work and/or consult with the Multicultural Advisory Council and the Joint Federal-Provincial Immigration Advisory Council to ensure that older people from immigrant and ethnocultural communities can access the information and services they need.
- ▶ Establish a provincial Seniors' Healthy Living Network to engage citizens and stakeholders.
- ▶ Support opportunities to engage Aboriginal Elders in program and policy development.
- ▶ Promote public education on age discrimination.
- ▶ Encourage and support people to plan and save for retirement.



Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
Serving Richmond since 1991



January 5, 2007

Honourable Gordon Campbell, Premier
Province of British Columbia
PO Box 9041, STN PROV GOVT,
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Re: Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues Report: *Aging Well in British Columbia*

The Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee is a group of citizens appointed by Richmond City Council. We act as a resource to City Council, and provide advice on City policies and issues that may affect present and future Richmond seniors.

We are writing to express our strong support for the report recently produced by the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues: *Aging Well in British Columbia*. All of the issues mentioned in the report are of interest to us, and we shall be reviewing the document in more detail. Of immediate interest, however, is the recommendation on Home Support (Appendix 1, item 3, page 73), and the recommendation to immediately change British Columbia's Human Rights Code, to extend human rights protections to those over-the age of 65 (Appendix 1, item 1, page 73).

We were gratified at the formation of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues, apparently in response to the promise in the Throne Speech of February 8, 2005 that "*BC can and will do more to respond to the needs and expectations of an aging society*"

Among these needs and expectations is the desire for independence. Enabling seniors to remain in their homes for as long as possible contributes not only to their health, well-being and quality of life; ultimately it will result in savings to health costs, thus benefiting the entire population. While these savings will not immediately be apparent, we encourage you to act with foresight to expand the home support systems necessary to enable and encourage seniors to remain in their own homes or with their families, as they choose.

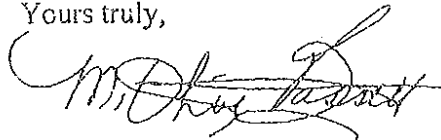
We understand that you have promised that your government will consider changes to the BC Human Rights Code, and are pleased at the prospect that our province will finally catch up with most other Canadian provinces in recognizing the right of people over the age of 65 not to be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of age.

.../2

Finally, we congratulate the members of the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues on the production of their report. One of the members of the Richmond Seniors Advisory Council also served on the Premier's Council and we have learned from him, the careful work and thoughtful discussions that went into the report.

We urge you and your government to give equal thought and consideration to your appointed Council's recommendations.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Olive Bassett".

Olive Bassett, Chair
Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee

pc: Dr. Patricia Baird, Chair, Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues
Elizabeth Baird, c/o Ministry of Community Services



January 17, 2007

Olive Bassett, Chair
Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC
V6Y 2C1

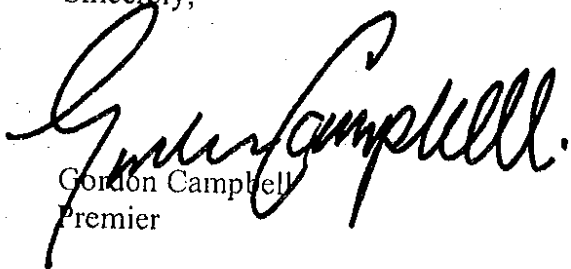
Dear Ms. Bassett:

Thank you for your letter expressing your Committee's support for the recommendations outlined in the report entitled *Aging Well in British Columbia*, which was recently released by the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues.

As you may be aware, government has identified that one of our five great goals is to "build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk, and seniors." I formed the Council to obtain guidance for the ways in which government policies and programs can best achieve that goal for seniors. Comments such as yours and the Council's recommendations will provide a road map for moving us ahead.

Again, thanks for taking the time to send me your views.

Sincerely,



Gordon Campbell
Premier



"Aging Well in BC" Recommendations, "Healthy Living Framework" Responses, and Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee Concerns	Richmond Seniors' Advisory Committee (RSAC) Concern (June 2009)
<p>Issue</p> <p>Aging Well in BC (November 2006)</p> <p>Recommendation: Help people stay independent We recommend that the B.C. government introduce a new broader and more widely available home support system by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a wider range of home support services, including cleaning and home maintenance (culturally-specific where appropriate, such as with meal preparation) to people who are unable to carry out these tasks on their own. • Moving responsibility for non-nursing/non-medical home support services to a ministry other than the Ministry of Health, and making available information about services and expenditures so as to ensure transparency and accountability. • Pressuring the federal government to provide additional funding for support services delivered in people's homes 	<p>Healthy Living Framework: (September 2008) Identifies (1) 4 action "cornerstones" and (2) establishes the Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat</p> <p>Cornerstone: Promote Healthy Living PRIORITY ACTION: In partnership with local governments, First Nations, seniors' and community organizations, build ActNow BC Seniors' Community Parks. OTHER ACTIONS: One of 6 listed pertains to home support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new tools and supports for caregivers and family members who are providing in-home care. <p>Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat The Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, established to "have a broad stewardship role for implementation of the framework across government and with other important partners", will: Explore innovative and sustainable models to provide non-medical home support services.</p>
<p>Home Support</p>	<p>"The Framework ignores the importance of and need for home support. There is an urgent need for a wider range of home support services, including cleaning and home maintenance. Research shows that the cost for keeping seniors at home is lower than that for institutional care."</p>
<p>Affordable Housing</p> <p>Recommendation: Make affordable housing a priority We recommend that the B.C. government take a strong leadership role in the area of housing for older people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the federal government and other partners such as non-profit housing providers to set and meet specific targets for new affordable housing. • Delivering all government housing programs through one provincial agency, including current CMHC programs. • Increasing funding for housing programs, including those jointly funded with the federal government. Forgivable seed funding to non-profit groups for low price rental housing should be part of this. 	<p>Cornerstone Create Age-Friendly Communities PRIORITY ACTION: Work with local government and other partners to promote and implement age-friendly practices in communities throughout British Columbia. OTHER ACTIONS: Nine listed, one of which refers to Affordable Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and increase the inventory of independent living spaces through Housing Matters BC. <p>Seniors Healthy Living Secretariat No mention of affordable housing</p>
<p>Affordable Housing</p>	<p>"This major issue that has not been addressed in the Framework, in our opinion, it is the central issue. "Aging Well in B.C." had recommended that the need for seniors' affordable housing be addressed as a matter of priority."</p>

“Aging Well in BC” Recommendations, “Healthy Living Framework” Responses, and Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee Concerns

<p>Volunteerism</p>	<p>Recommendation: Support Volunteerism We recommend that the B.C. government pro-actively support and promote volunteerism by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing ongoing core operating funds to non-profit groups providing volunteer-delivered services for older people, including peer advocacy, abuse prevention, community response networks, and others. • Funding to help remove barriers to volunteer participation, for example by enabling reimbursement of volunteers for their expenses. 	<p>Cornerstone: Mobilize and Support Volunteerism PRIORITY ACTION Create an Aging in Action campaign to promote volunteer initiatives that support older people. OTHER ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an Aging in Action Grant Program for volunteer organizations serving older people. • Launch a provincial recognition program to celebrate the contributions of older volunteers. • Work with partners to develop opportunities and profile older volunteers during events such as the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the BC Games and the BC Seniors Games. <p>Seniors Healthy Living Secretariat No mention of volunteerism</p>	<p>“The Framework relies heavily on volunteerism to meet seniors’ needs. While we appreciate that volunteerism is beneficial to seniors and society, it should not take the place of services. Representatives from grassroots organizations serving seniors are already reporting extensive volunteer burn-out in their efforts to look after the frail and elderly seniors in their communities.”</p>
<p>Cultural Diversity</p>	<p>Recommendation: Respond to diversity We recommend that the B.C. government work with Aboriginal and ethnocultural organizations to ensure cultural appropriateness of services for older adults by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating government services to ensure they are delivered in ways that meet the needs of older people in those communities. • Recruiting and training more health care and home support workers from those communities, and training other service-providers to provide culturally-appropriate services. 	<p>Cornerstones: None of the four Cornerstones mention cultural diversity.</p> <p>Seniors Healthy Living Secretariat Secretariat will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and/or consult with the Multicultural Advisory Council and the Joint Federal-Provincial Immigration Advisory Council to ensure that older people from immigrant and ethnocultural communities can access the information and services they need. <p>Support opportunities to engage Aboriginal Elders in program and policy development.</p>	<p>“There is no effort to recognize cultural diversity. While multicultural issues are to be referred to the Multicultural Advisory Council and the Joint Federal-Provincial Immigration Advisory Council, these bodies do not specialize in seniors’ issues. Rather, service organizations (e.g., SUCCESS, PICS, MOSAIC), aboriginal groups and ethnocultural organizations need to be involved when working on cross-cultural seniors’ issues.”</p>

Prepared by Social Planning
September 2009



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

The Best Place on Earth

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2009HLS0029-000665
April 6, 2009

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS WITH UNITED WAY TO HELP SENIORS

VANCOUVER – The Province is partnering with the United Way of the Lower Mainland to develop and implement an innovative community-driven approach to help seniors live longer in their own homes, announced Healthy Living and Sport Minister Mary Polak.

“Seniors have told us they want to remain in their own homes as long as possible. Sometimes all it takes to maintain their independence is a little help with yard work or grocery shopping,” said Polak. “For seniors who choose to live at home, government is providing \$700,000 toward the development of Community Action for Seniors Independence projects.”

This follows through on a key recommendation from the Premier’s Council on Aging and Seniors’ Issues, chaired by Dr. Patricia Baird, and is part of Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework, where government committed to explore innovative and sustainable models to provide non-medical home support services. These include help with physically demanding tasks such as housekeeping, laundry, shopping, meal preparation, outdoor chores and transportation to appointments.

“Simple tasks such as housekeeping, shopping, or driving to appointments can become increasingly difficult for many older adults,” said Michael McKnight, president and CEO, United Way of the Lower Mainland. “We’re pleased the Province has asked us to help develop models of support that will allow older people to remain where they are most comfortable and maintain their independence for longer.”

This partnership will support the development of Community Action for Seniors’ Independence projects in up to five communities around the province, engaging community members and local organizations, including non-profit, volunteer, faith and multi-cultural groups, health authorities, corporate sponsors and businesses, in discussions on innovative service delivery models for those areas.

“Supporting seniors to remain independent was one of the highest priorities of our Premier’s Council on Aging and Seniors’ Issues,” said Baird, now a member of the new Seniors’ Healthy Living Network. “I’m pleased to see government moving forward to develop this partnership, as the support will help people remain near family and friends and stay active in their communities.”

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The United Way of the Lower Mainland is contributing \$250,000 toward community engagement in three locations and will begin implementation of a new model in one community this year. It will also work with United Way agencies in Northern British Columbia and in the Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen to engage community partners in those areas.


Media Anne McKinnon
contact: Communications Director
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 250 952-2387

Michael Becker
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Communications
604 268-1333

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BC Housing

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B.C.-CANADA PARTNERSHIP TO BUILD NEW HOMES FOR SENIORS

April 8th, 2009

VANCOUVER - The Government of Canada and Province of B.C. are launching a new, \$123-million Seniors' Rental Housing Initiative to build up to 1,000 new housing units for seniors and people with disabilities.

Premier Gordon Campbell and The Honourable Gary Lunn, Minister of State for Sport, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), made the announcement today.

Under terms of the new agreement, the provincial and federal governments will provide matching contributions of \$61.79 million. Construction of the first 218 units will start in 19 communities over the next few months. In total, the project will create close to 800 jobs.

"Providing safe, secure, and affordable housing helps seniors and people with disabilities improve their lives," said Premier Campbell. "We're investing \$469 million each year in housing support programs like this, and more than 85,000 households across B.C. are benefiting. Working with the Government of Canada, these projects are getting started right away, helping not only the individuals in need, but also the construction and related industries who are building and supplying these homes."

"The Government of Canada continues to work hard to support Canadians during these challenging economic times, and has moved aggressively to ensure the Economic Action Plan is implemented rapidly," said Minister Lunn on behalf of Minister Finley. "We are making housing more accessible for the most vulnerable, including seniors and persons with disabilities both in British Columbia and across Canada."

The new seniors' rental housing will be created through partnerships with municipalities, non-profit housing providers and the private sector. In most cases, modular, manufactured housing construction will promote wood product use. Including municipal and third-party contributions such as land, the estimated total project capital cost is approximately \$161 million.

This new initiative is part of an overall \$14-billion capital infrastructure program supported by the Province that will create up to 88,000 jobs and help build vital public infrastructure in every region of the province.

CMHC has been Canada's national housing agency for more than 60 years. CMHC is committed to helping Canadians access a wide choice of quality, affordable homes and making vibrant and sustainable communities and cities a reality across the country. To find out more about how the Government of Canada and CMHC are working to build stronger homes and communities for all Canadians, call CMHC at 1-800-668-2642 or visit www.cmhc.ca. For more information on Canada's Economic Action Plan, call 1-800-O Canada.

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BACKGROUND SENIORS' RENTAL HOUSING INITIATIVE

There are 218 units of housing identified for 19 proposed housing developments in 19 communities for seniors and persons with disabilities under the new Seniors' Rental Housing Initiative, which will eventually create up to 1,000 new units of housing:

PLN - 93

North

Community	Site Address	Number of Units
Fort Nelson	4903 49 St.	6
Fort St. John	9804 106th Ave.	10
Mackenzie	90 Centennial Drive	8
McBride	To be determined	10
Prince George	7054 Hart Highway	30
Prince Rupert	547 McKay St.	12
Terrace	4620 Davis St.	20
Valemount	1222 3rd Ave.	8
	Total Units	104

Interior

Community	Site Address	Number of Units
100 Mile House	350 Aspen St.	8
Baynes Lake	Baynes Lake	8
Golden	750 8th Ave. S.	8
Keremeos	412 12th Ave.	14
Lake Country	10230 Bottom Wood Lake Road	12
Lillooet	1011 Murray St.	6
Logan Lake	To be determined	12
Lumby	Glencaird St.	14
	Total Units	82

Lower Mainland

Community	Site Address
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Pemberton	7420 Flint St.	
	Total Units	18

Vancouver Island

Community	Site Address	Number of Units
Campbell River	1808 S. Island Hwy.	4
Qualicum Beach	280 Lions Way	10
	Total Units	14
	Total Units Overall	218

-30-

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2009HSD0030-000298
September 8, 2009

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

B.C. GIVES \$600K FOR HOUSING FOR SENIORS AND VETERANS

VICTORIA – The Province is providing \$600,000 to the Royal Canadian Legion Branches across B.C. to redevelop Legion-owned sites with affordable housing for veterans and low or fixed-income seniors.

“These funds will allow Legion Branches to access financing for development planning and construction,” said Rich Coleman, Minister of Housing and Social Development. “Once a development is complete, the funds are paid back and they can then be accessed for other Legion developments. This will allow Legion Branches to continuously create housing for low-income seniors and veterans across B.C. – now and into the future.”

“This is a very exciting initiative and one that Dominion Command, through the Legion Seniors Housing Centre for Excellence, has been trying to establish on a national basis for three years without success,” said David W. MacDonald, from the Centre for Excellence. “We are very pleased that the Province has agreed to provide equity gap funding for Legion projects in British Columbia. This is a winning initiative for all involved.”

Through this pilot project, the Royal Canadian Legion Branches across B.C. plan to redevelop a number of sites with affordable housing for veterans and seniors. Although the Legion Branches own the land, they may not have the entire 15 to 20 per cent in equity typically required to qualify for project financing. The Province is providing \$600,000 as a revolving contribution fund to bridge this funding gap.

“Our mission is to serve veterans and their dependants, promote remembrance and act in the service of Canada and its communities,” said Wilf Edmond, dominion president of the Royal Canadian Legion. “We are accomplishing our mission as Legion Branches work towards building additional affordable housing for veterans and seniors in B.C. and thus creating communities where veterans and senior’s housing needs are met.”

The Royal Canadian Legion was formed in 1926 and is the largest veterans’ organization and one of the largest community service organizations in Canada with more than 360,000 members and approximately 1,500 branches in Canada, the United States and Europe.

“Over time, this innovative partnership with the Province will bring many Legion projects across B.C. to the construction stage and will create much needed housing for veterans and seniors,” said Dave Sinclair, President B.C./Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion. “We hope that this revolving funding model will eventually be used in other provinces to help Legion Branches address the need for housing for veterans and seniors across Canada.

“This is an innovative approach to meeting the financial needs of organizations like the Royal

PLN - 96

Canadian Legion so they can help provide more affordable housing for veterans and senior citizens in British Columbia,” said the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans Affairs. “Our veterans have always been willing to stand up for Canada. We must be there for them, just as they have always been there for us.”

The \$250-million Housing Endowment Fund was established in the 2007 provincial budget. The fund generates investment revenue, which is used to fund new ideas and support innovative housing solutions that meet the diverse housing needs of British Columbians.

Increasing affordable housing, reducing homelessness and helping our most vulnerable citizens is a key agenda for the Province of British Columbia.

-30-

Contact: Rhonda Nguyen
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604 374-8301

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Government, Non-Profit, and Volunteer Secretariat, Province of British Columbia

Government, Non-Profit, and Volunteer Secretariat

The Government, Non-Profit, and Volunteer Secretariat is a new division under the Deputy Minister's Office in the Ministry of Housing and Social Development.

The Secretariat was formed on September 1, 2008 to foster the ongoing relationship between the B.C. Government and the non-profit and volunteer sector.

Working with a broad spectrum of Ministries and non-profit foundations, associations and service agencies, the Government, Non-Profit and Volunteer Secretariat develops and implements strategies to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and sustainability of the government, non-profit, and volunteer sector alliance in achieving strong and positive service and policy outcomes for the people and communities of British Columbia. The Secretariat is a centre of excellence for non-profit relations, and will be a repository and distributor of best practices.

The overarching objectives of the Secretariat are to:

- Build government and non-profit relationships through activities that the two parties can engage in such as goal setting, medium and short term priority setting and service design.
- Identify barriers, opportunities and best practices to maximize alignment of non-profit and government strategic direction.
- Improve linkages and relationships among non-profit and volunteer agencies and government.
- Identify improvements to government's procurement, funding and performance measurement processes that better serve the non-profit and volunteer community.
- Build government, non-profit, and voluntary internal capacity: the knowledge, abilities, structures and processes that enable the sectors to meet joint goals in a sustainable and efficient way.

Many of the objectives will be realized through the work of the [Government/Non-Profit Initiative](#). The Secretariat plays a key support role in the coordination and development of this Initiative.

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Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market
 Development
 Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

\$780,000 EXPANDS SERVICES FOR OLDER IMMIGRANTS

VICTORIA – The Province is investing an additional \$782,000 for eight community-led projects that will help immigrant seniors improve their English language skills, increase their access to services and increase their knowledge of life in Canada, announced Moira Stilwell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and Ida Chong, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport.

“We’re proudly committed to providing new immigrants with the tools and support they need to thrive in B.C.,” said Stilwell. “Immigrant seniors will truly benefit from these projects, which will help them to better access the information and services they need to participate in their communities in a meaningful way.”

Expanded services will include modified English language and computer skills training; information and support services, referral resources, community outreach, peer support and mentorship programs, as well as skills development and training to enhance access to volunteer opportunities. The projects are targeted especially to include immigrant seniors who are isolated from the broader community, to help increase their awareness of community and government resources.

Through a provincewide public procurement process, agencies in the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and the Interior were selected to provide a range of services that will create a sense of belonging and well-being among older immigrants and refugees. The projects will focus on immigrant seniors over the age of 55 with priority given to permanent residents who are recent arrivals.

The agencies will also partner with established seniors’ and health service networks to support their ability to provide responsive services to immigrant seniors from increasingly diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds.

“As B.C. faces an unprecedented demographic shift in the years ahead, government continues to build the best system of support for older adults,” said Chong, who is also Minister responsible for seniors. “With a growing number of older immigrants across the province, investments in community-based projects at the grassroots level support better access to services as well as age-friendly communities.”

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Thirty-nine per cent of all seniors in British Columbia are immigrants, and it is expected that the number of seniors of culturally diverse backgrounds will dramatically increase by 2017. These demonstration projects support the goals outlined in Seniors in British Columbia: A Healthy Living Framework, the B.C. government's action plan to support the aging population, including immigrant seniors. More information on the plan can be found at www.hls.gov.bc.ca/seniors.

The Province is establishing these projects through WelcomeBC, which provides services to immigrants and refugees to support their integration into their new communities and builds on the province's history of welcoming newcomers and creating inclusive communities. More information can be found at www.WelcomeBC.ca.

WelcomeBC is supported through the Agreement for Canada-B.C. Co-operation on Immigration, which provides funding through the transfer of approximately \$120 million per year from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to the B.C. government, which is responsible for administering settlement services for new immigrants.

BACKGROUND

Demonstration Projects for Immigrant Seniors

A description of each new project and funding amount follows:

Lower Mainland – \$288,578

- Vancouver, \$187,987: S.U.C.C.E.S.S. will work with MOSAIC to provide outreach and referrals to new and existing services to immigrant seniors through a specialized multilingual seniors' settlement worker team.
- Vancouver, \$37,678: Little Mountain Neighbourhood House will use peer and volunteer support to provide outreach and interactive combined ESL and settlement services to isolated immigrant seniors.
- Vancouver, \$62,913: Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House will provide outreach to immigrant seniors and offer combined ESL and social and recreational activities that support their inclusion in the community.

Fraser Valley - \$258,500

- Surrey, \$200,000: DIVERSEcity will provide cultural educational services to immigrant seniors to support their inclusion in community activities and the building of supportive senior networks.
- Chilliwack, \$58,500: Chilliwack Community Services will provide immigrant seniors with blended ESL and settlement services to enhance immigrant senior participation in the community.

Vancouver Island- \$110,000

- Victoria, \$70,000: Intercultural Association of Victoria will provide weekly group recreational and educational activities for immigrant seniors within existing senior-serving organizations with a focus on developing leadership and skill development to support their inclusion in services and enhance community participation.
- Nanaimo, \$40,000: Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Association will provide targeted outreach and support to immigrant seniors to encourage their participation in the broader community and in services that target seniors.

Interior - \$125,000

- Penticton, \$125,000: Penticton and District Multicultural Society will provide ESL and community connection opportunities to immigrant seniors in a culturally sensitive and age appropriate manner.

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