Insights Report – Workshop 2

The Seniors Housing Lab was initiated, and is now supported, by the partners below, and made possible by funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Lab.
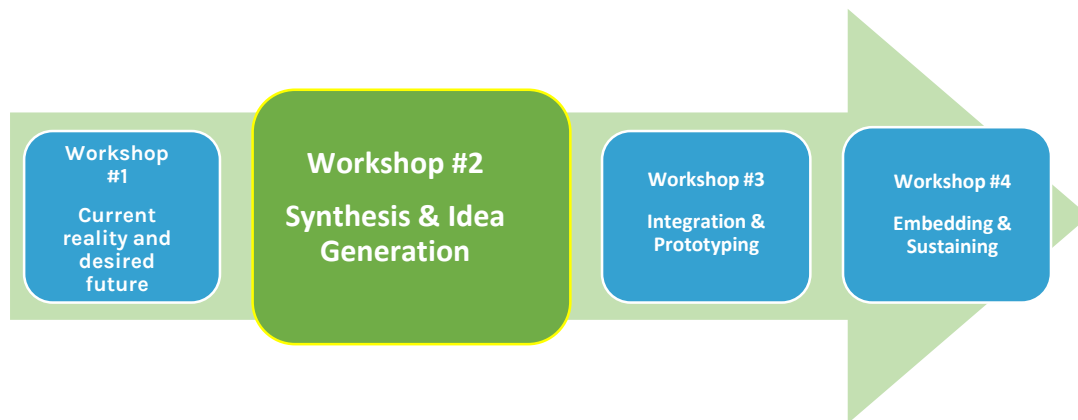
Context

The project, **Seniors Housing Stability Solutions Lab**, otherwise referred to as the Seniors Housing Lab, intends to tackle the following challenge statement:

The Challenge Statement:
What might enable low-income senior renters in multi-unit buildings to retain their housing, age in the right place and thrive?

Workshop #1
Current reality and desired future

Workshop #2
Synthesis & Idea Generation

Workshop #3
Integration & Prototyping

Workshop #4
Embedding & Sustaining

The first in the series of four workshops took place September 18, 2019. In the large group introduction, participants became aware of the breadth of knowledge, experience and passion for the issue, which provided a strong foundation to begin our work together. The day provided opportunity to delve deeper into our various perspectives on seniors housing stability in Metro Vancouver. We explored our visions for a desired future for senior renters, and considered key themes related to our Challenge Statement. This report reflects the next step in our Lab process – Workshop #2.

Welcome, Introductions and Framing

Our second Seniors Housing Lab workshop took place November 13, 2019. We welcomed back our participants from the first workshop, along with a few new individuals in efforts to bring greater diversity of perspectives to the project.

The 40 participants gathered together for a full workshop day at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House Annex in Vancouver, BC.

The workshop was designed and facilitated by a team of individuals: Annelies Tjebbes (RADIUS SFU), Tamara Connell (RADIUS SFU), Stephen D'Souza (Homelessness Services Association of BC) and Kari Kesslar (Lab Manager).

Onsite photos: Amanda Hillis

Welcome, Introductions and Framing

Stephen D'Souza, Executive Director of Homelessness Services Association of BC, opened our day by welcoming the participants and acknowledging out workshop taking place on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), Səl̓ílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

Stephen spoke as well about his personal commitment to reflect on and bring into his work, the historical and continued impacts of colonialism for Indigenous People, and encouraged those gathered to consider how they can engage in reconciliation efforts more meaningfully.

Kathryn, an older adult participant with lived experience, shared her personal story of housing instability. Her experience supporting her ex-husband brought focus to the challenges when vulnerable individuals with chronic illnesses are discharged from hospital. Without strong advocacy from her and her daughter, he would have been discharged to a shelter, or the street, where his medical and functional needs would not have been supported.

She expressed concern for those who do not have a strong support network available. Accessing and navigating needed resources, like housing, is complicated and many need individual and guided support in order to prevent them from ending up homeless.

She expressed gratitude to Brightside Community Homes Foundation for the housing options available for low-income senior renters like herself.

Welcome, Introductions and Framing

We are particularly grateful for the seniors with lived experience who are taking their personal time to guide us in this work.

In additions, these organizations have made the commitment to join the Seniors Housing Lab and work together over the 8 months of the project:

411 Seniors Centre Society
Advent Real Estate Services Ltd.
Amacon
Atira Women's Resource Society
BC Housing
BC Non-profit Housing Association
Brightside Community Homes Foundation
Burnaby Community Services
Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Carnegie Community Centre, City of Vancouver
City of New Westminster
City of Richmond
City of Vancouver
Fraser Health Authority
Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University
Hollyburn Family Services
Homelessness Services Association of BC
Jewish Family Services
LandlordBC

Lookout Health and Housing Society
MathMountain
MOSAIC
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
Network of Inner City Community Services Society (NICCSS)
New Chelsea Society
Private-sector landlord
Reach Community Health Centre
Renfrew Collingwood Seniors Society
Seniors Services Society (SSS) of BC
RADIUS SFU
SHARE Family and Community Services
Silver Harbour Seniors' Activity Centre
The Bloom Group
The New Vista Society
United Way of the Lower Mainland
Vancouver Coastal Health
West End Seniors' Network
Whole Way House Society

Welcome, Introductions and Framing

Annelies Tjebbes, RADIUS SFU lead facilitator, set the stage for our second workshop with a reminder of the Lab focus:

What might enable low-income senior renters in multi-unit buildings to retain their housing, age in the right place and thrive?

Participants were also reminded of our Community Agreements as a tool to guide our thinking, responses, and behaviours. These agreements help produce an environment that enables collaborative and innovative idea formation to flourish.

Community Agreements

- ❖ Stay curious / Learner mindset
- ❖ Share the space
- ❖ Be present
- ❖ Confidentiality
- ❖ Speak personally
- ❖ Collaboration > Competition
- ❖ Patient Urgency
- ❖ Generative / Supportive Energy

Workshop 2 Overview

The Objectives:

- (Re)Connecting with fellow Lab Participants and sharing new insights

- Identifying problem spaces and forming groups to work on solutions

- Brainstorming possible solutions

- Building skills and tools to test ideas with community

The Agenda

- Welcome, Workshop Framing & Recap
- Pair Share Back
- Grounding in Problem Statements
- Building Wicked Questions
- Lunch & Wicked Questions Follow-up
- Brainstorming Solutions/Ideas
- Prioritizing and Testing Ideas
- Sharing, Feedback & Action Plans
- Closing & Next Steps

Pair Conversations and Group Share Back

Participants were asked to find a partner and share any insights, research, learnings or interesting conversations related to the Lab that occurred since Workshop #1.

After an opportunity to speak in pairs, some participants chose to share some highlights of those conversations.

There was sharing of information about innovative solutions for homelessness, including mention of Dignity Village in Portland. This initiative provided a group of homeless individuals with designated land to build and manage their own community.

One participant spoke of the Squamish Nation's planned construction of 11 housing towers with 6,000 new housing units on property near Burrard St. Bridge.

Others spoke about connections that were formed at workshop #1 that led to collaborations benefitting others beyond the workshop. Leslie, our senior guest speaker at workshop #1 was invited to share her story with a new group brought together by one of the participating organizations. Another example of relationships formed resulted in a housing solution for a senior in crisis. This individual success story was framed as a glimpse into the opportunities and impact our collaborative work can build.

A senior participant spoke of her reflections after the workshop; of witnessing and experiencing the need for support and connection among residents within her apartment complex. The diversity of cultural identity was valued, but lack of common language among many, made connecting a challenge that she wanted to find ways to address.

A volunteer at a senior serving organization relayed statistics from her work on an Information and Referral Line. The organization is seeing a steady rise in issues related to housing instability, including many being evicted.

Having individuals from various areas of Metro Vancouver provided new insights for others, not only into resources and programs available but served to challenge stereotypes we hold about needs and access in different regions.

Grounding in Problem Statements

Incorporating themes introduced at Workshop #1, and conversations that emerged as these themes were explored in more depth, a list of Problem Statement categories were presented to the participants.

Low-income senior renters in Metro Vancouver are not currently able to retain their housing, age in the right place and thrive because (of):

- ❖ Lack of social support
- ❖ Lack of affordability & availability of housing
- ❖ Declining health
- ❖ Lack of system cohesion
- ❖ Poor system design
- ❖ Lack of access to supports

Grounding in Problem Statements

The Problem Statements were further detailed with more specific areas under each category:

- **Lack of social support**
  - Family conflict or a lack of family support
  - Social isolation

- **Lack of affordability & availability of housing**
  - Rent escalation
  - Fixed incomes
  - Shortage of affordable housing options (e.g. current solutions only focus on one type of rental housing – social housing)
  - Shortage of accessible housing option

- **Lack of system cohesion**
  - Landlords and building managers are providing support to declining senior renters that exceeds their knowledge and skill
  - Failed transitions between services and programs
  - Lack of collaboration across senior services
  - Evictions or discharge from the hospital without alternative housing

- ❖ **Declining health**
  - Physical decline
  - Cognitive decline
  - Mental health and/or addiction issues

- ❖ **Poor system design**
  - Policies and legislation don't address the root causes of seniors housing insecurity (e.g. the focus is often placed on homelessness and supporting homeless seniors)
  - Seniors are involved only in a peripheral way in program design and systems support
  - Seniors are categorized as a uniform group with uniform needs (e.g. cultural and regional differences are not taken into account)

- ❖ **Lack of access to supports**
  - Linguistic and cultural barriers
  - Lack of knowledge around tenant rights
  - They cannot access the interventions and supports needed to age in place
  - They are not provided appropriate support to age in place

Grounding in Problem Statements

Participants were invited to engage in small group conversations around two of the Problem Statements. Individuals rotated through two table discussions, providing an opportunity to dive deeper into the concepts and consider how the area may be a fit for their interest, knowledge and resources.

Discussion at the tables were guided by the following questions:

- ❖ What drew you to this group?
- ❖ How do you see the problem?
- ❖ What do you know/not know?
- ❖ Why does this challenge matter to you?
- ❖ How would it help with something you already have passion and/or mandate for?

Lack of System

System fragmented Siloed

② Lack of affordability & availability of housing

Declining Health

Building Wicked Questions

After further conversation and deliberation over the morning break, individuals were asked to choose a Problem Statement and form groups to work together. Using the template below, the groups were guided through the process to develop ideas for testing.

Desired Future:
The six groups first worked to agree upon and refine their group's Problem Statement. Next steps involved a statement of the Vision of the Desired Future.

Values & Patterns in Current Problem:
The groups continued the process by identifying the positive values that have been in place which have served to uphold the current situation. Discussion continued with consideration given to those values that are worth maintaining, but might be at risk of being lost if systems are to change.

Groups went on to identify the patterns and influencing factors that are holding the current problem in place.

Building Wicked Questions

Horns of Dilemma – Problem Framing

Group members:
Lead/group contact:

Current Situation	Wicked question	Vision of desired future
The problem statement	"How might we"	Capture the opposite of the problem statement

Current situation values
What aspects about the current situation do we want to retain?

Barriers to achieving this desired future

Appreciative inquiry
What solutions already exist in this space? What is working?

⑥ Lack of Access to Supports

① Lack of Social...

Horns of the Dilemma – Problem Framing

④ Lack of System Cohesion

Building Wicked Questions – "How Might We …"

"How might we" Statements:
In combining the Desired Future and the values we want to uphold from the current problem, groups began to formulate their "How might we …" statements. The statements strived to balance the desired future while upholding those values that are seen as important to maintain.

The following are the initial "How Might We …" statements:
How might we change zoning so that housing developers can build affordable rental housing anywhere in the region?
How might we build on existing successes to provide enough affordable housing options that meet the diverse needs of seniors now?
How might we collaborate to improve transitions between services, for the long-term goal of achieving aging in place? How might we move health and community to a common understanding and action to achieve person-centred, long-term aging in place, with smooth transitions and trusting relationships?
How might we connect tenants with/to supports before crisis occurs and create more stable, accessible system linkages between services and tenants?
How might we give voice to diverse groups of seniors to redesign the system that is both respectful and responds to the urgency of the current situation, builds on what currently works and engages a broad range of stakeholders including landlords?
How might we embed place-based programming and service navigation into all multi-unit buildings with a high proportion of seniors (inclusive of other seniors in the neighbourhood)?

Brainstorming Solutions/Ideas - Creative Ideation

Brainstorming solutions/ideas:

Tamara Connell, RADIUS SFU facilitator, led our afternoon activities with a goal of generating multiple ideas for solutions in preparation for testing.

The ground rules for Creative Ideation and brainstorming were reviewed with emphasis on producing a quantity of ideas, in order to facilitate movement beyond what has been attempted in this challenge space previously.

As a warm up activity, image cards were placed on the tables and participants were asked to select one card that in some way represents a 'superpower' or skill that they might bring to the group's work, and this was then shared.

Creative Ideation Ground Rules:

❖ We are brainstorming. MORE is better.

❖ There are no wrong ideas!

❖ No single idea may be discussed for more than 15 seconds.
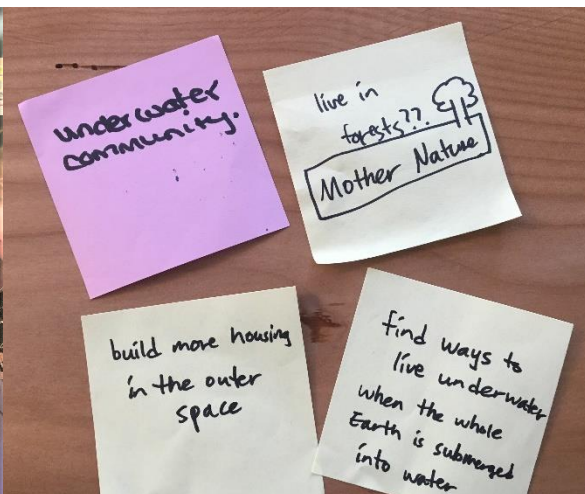
Creative Ideation

Round 1:
Participants were asked to write 2 ideas they had for their challenge. These were then shared with the group.

Round 2:
To continue to generate new ideas, participants were then asked to write 1 to 3 new ideas related to each of the following prompts.

What if…

… you had unlimited resources to build your solution?

… you had only $2000 to build your solution?

… your solution made people laugh?

… your solution was just a tap away?

… Mother Nature designed your solution?

Creative Ideation

Round 3:
The last round utilized the image cards. Every 60 seconds, 4 to 6 image cards were flipped over and participants were asked to incorporate something from the image card into a new idea. These individual ideas were then shared with the group.

Grouping and Prioritization of 3-5 Solution Directions:
The ideas were grouped into clusters of similar themes. Each person was provided 4 sticky dots in order to indicate their vote on the ideas that were of interest, and captured where they would like to spend energy. Further discussion as a group determined which ideas would be taken forward (maximum of 5).
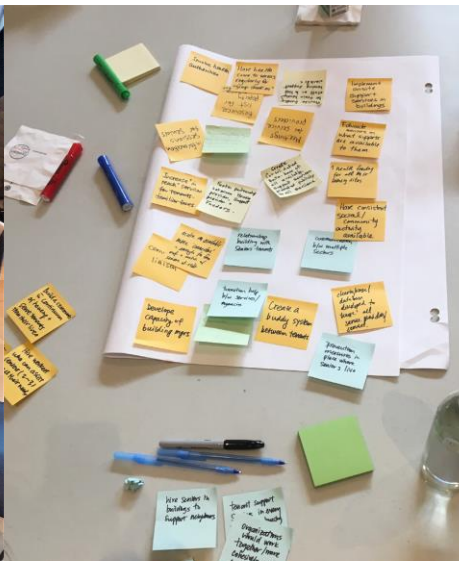
Idea Generation

The worksheet is followed by 6 pages that summarize each of the groups' HMW statement and their 3-5 solution directions.

Horns of Dilemma – Idea generation (Capture your top 3-5 Ideas)

Rewrite your wicked question "How might we"	**Ideas #1**	**Ideas #2**
Ideas #3 community)	**Ideas #4**	**Ideas #5**

Idea Generation – individual group work #1

How might we change zoning so that housing developers can build affordable rental housing anywhere in the region?

1. Universal livable seniors' income.

2. Transform zoning to reduce the shortage and maximize affordability.

3. Hand back more land to First Nations.

4. Create a 'Centre for Housing Innovation" with researchers (SFU/UBC), cities, developers, housing providers and landlords.

5. More funding for non-profit housing providers.

Idea Generation – individual group work #2

How might we build on existing successes to provide enough affordable housing options that meet the diverse needs of seniors now?

1. Encourage shared accommodation for under/over housed seniors.
   - 'Happipad' App to connect roommates; adapt for ease of use by seniors.
   - facilitator/coordinator to ensure co-habitation is appropriate, positive and healthy.
   - reduce isolation/loneliness.

2. Less barriers to re-zoning for affordable housing.
   - up-zone single family zoning areas for multi-family residential.
   - "rental tenure zoning" with specifications for different levels of seniors.

3. Develop co-housing for seniors.
   - municipalities to facilitate more creative development forms.

4. Provide supports to maintain seniors' current housing.
   - rent banks
   - increase SAFER / other rent subsidies.
   - social supports integrated into housing that is purpose built for seniors.

5. Peer support groups facilitated in buildings.

23

Idea Generation – individual group work #3

How might we collaborate to improve transitions between services for the long term goal of achieving aging in place?
How might we move health and community to a common understanding and action to achieve person-centred long term aging in place with smooth, trusting relationships?

1. Resident/client personal life journal.

2. Big conference hub that people attend to connect.

3. On-line common system for information sharing (space for multi-media notes).

4. Integrated service teams.

5. Having health and community services in same location.

Idea Generation – individual group work #4

How might we connect tenants with/to supports before crisis occurs and create more stable, accessible system linkages between services and tenants?

1. On-site wrap-around support service.
   - to help identify needs and connect to services.
2. Community social development programs.
   - on-site and local.
3. Resource database that is accessible to all stakeholders (easy to use technology).
4. Shift housing paradigm:
   - cohabitation.
   - range of housing options.
5. Peer to peer support.

Idea Generation – individual group work #5

How might we give voice to diverse groups of seniors in order to redesign the system*, that:
- is both respectful and responds to the urgency of the current situation;
- builds on what currently works; and
- engages a broad range of stakeholders including landlords?

*A system that enables low-income senior renters to retain their housing, age in the right place, and thrive.

1. Create a seniors advisory or task force or community stakeholders group including government.

2. Investigate technology enablers.

3. Identify services that will support seniors to age-in-place.

4. Advocate to provincial and federal government.

Idea Generation – individual group work #6

How might we embed place-based programming and service navigation into all multi-unit buildings with a high proportion of seniors (inclusive of other seniors in the neighbourhood)?

1. Hire/engage a program coordinator/service navigator to cover multiple buildings, empower building animators/seniors living in building to offer programs = provide service navigation.

2. Facilitate choosing seniors-led building animators/program committees to identify, plan + implement programming.

3. "PLAYGROUND" - Facilitate choosing seniors-led building animators/program committees to identify, plan + implement programming.

4. "SCHOOL" - Another group of programming focuses on information, learning, skill development/knowledge + service connection

Testing Ideas

Participants were provided instructions on how to test their ideas during the weeks between this workshop and workshop #3.

The group participants were asked to solicit feedback from relevant stakeholders to inform their work going forward. This might include speaking to individuals about how the problem impacts their own life, their work or their community.

Feedback is also gathered about the solution ideas which will add knowledge about the problem space and help guide direction for the next steps of prototype development.

Testing Ideas

Planning the research

To further guide the testing process, participants worked in their groups to identity key stakeholders that they would like to connect with to learn more. Assumptions that are being made about the problem space were also discussed and documented.

All of the groups then shared their action plan in order to solicit feedback from the larger group of Lab participants.

Testing Tips - When interviewing:

- ❖ If possible, go with a partner to interview.
- ❖ Consider bringing something with you that they can interact with (low-fidelity prototypes).
- ❖ Be humble, open, and curious.
- ❖ Take a few moments to build rapport with the person you're asking for feedback.
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions.
- ❖ Ask participants for their ideal solution.
- ❖ Don't defend your ideas!
- ❖ Ensure the participant is talking twice as much as you are.
- ❖ At end of interview, ask about anything else the person may want to discuss.
- ❖ Express gratitude for the person's time.

Testing Ideas

Horns of Dilemma – Action plan

Assumptions List out the assumptions made about the problem space itself	**Key stakeholders** List the key stakeholders you'd like to connect with to learn more

Engagement Plan Capture your engagement plan for 'testing' your ideas with the most critical 3-5 stakeholder groups	2. Identity how you will gather feedback on your ideas.	3. Capture how you will test your assumptions and expand your understanding about the problem space.

Next Steps

Workshop 3 will be held on February 5, 2020, at Collingwood Neighbourhood House Annex.

Workshop #1	Workshop #2	Workshop #3	Workshop #4
Current reality and desired future	Synthesis & Idea Generation	Integration & Prototyping	Embedding & Sustaining

In the plenary closing, participants were reminded of the action to take place before our next gathering and encouraged to begin detailing specifics of their group's collaboration and tasks:

- How will you keep in touch (phone, email, etc.)?
- When can you meet again (suggestion to meet 1 to 3 times before February)?
- How will you record and share your learnings from the interviews?
- Who will reach out to which stakeholders?
- What else do you need to do to prepare yourselves to get some input on your solution directions?

All groups were asked to complete, at minimum, 10 interviews with stakeholders. The Seniors Housing Lab Facilitation team will connect by phone at least once with each group to check in and provide support as needed.

Reflections and Learnings

❖ The diverse knowledge and experience present in the room, results in conversation that reveals the complexity of the issue and the breadth of opportunity for intervention and solutions. As we delve deeper, we continue to work to ensure we are focused on the Seniors Housing Lab's overarching project scope - **What might enable low-income senior renters in multi-unit buildings to retain their housing, age in the right place and thrive?**

❖ Idea generation takes time to discuss, reflect and revise. It is recognized that there is value in further opportunity to delve even deeper and push ourselves towards solution ideas that have not been considered in the are of focus of this project.

❖ Bringing together new sectors with connections to seniors housing was a deliberate focus of this Solutions Lab design; to provide a catalyst and venue to pool knowledge and resources. We have seen the value in this approach already, with the connections made at Workshop #1 resulting in collaboration outside of the Lab space (details of these are noted on page 8.)

❖ Despite the breadth of diversity that does exist among the participants, we continue to be aware that there are voices still missing from this work. Although outreach to some groups have not resulted in attendance at the actual workshops, we can make efforts through testing and prototype activities to solicit increased diversity of perspective.

Feedback

Participants were asked to complete a feedback form at the closing of Workshop 2. A summary of the results is found below.

Over all the Lab participants enjoyed the experience – 100% of those completing the evaluation indicated they were either **'very satisfied'** or '**satisfied**'.

Suggestions for improvement included the following:
- Detailed agenda to help stay on track and plan accordingly
- Support to maintain energy throughout the day
- More breaks
- More activity

"Lab participants have a diverse background and experience. Lab Facilitators are well prepared and the approach is well designed"

"A highlight was working together with my peers on SOLUTIONS"

"A highlight was Creative Ideation! Everyone jived really well and are clearly passionate with diverse opinions. Open and honest in the process and created safe space for discussion"