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SENIORS AND HOUSING: THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Backgrounder



Canada faces a seniors housing crisis—one that will have serious impact on everything from our economy to our communities. *Seniors and Housing: The Challenge Ahead* lays out the perfect storm facing our seniors: rising rent costs and a doubling of the seniors' population just as federal support for social housing disappears. We're all getting older, so this is an issue that impacts every Canadian. Taken together, this new reality is simply unsustainable.

The report explores the fundamental role housing and transportation play in meeting the needs of our aging population and highlights how municipalities are leading the way in developing solutions. It also examines what the federal government must do to work with cities and communities to meet the housing needs—and ensure quality of life—for all Canadians.

REPORT AT A GLANCE

Our Population is Aging Rapidly

In 2011, there were nearly 5 million adults aged 65 and over in Canada. By 2036, that number is **expected to double** to 10.4 million.

The City of Edmonton alone will see its population aged 80 and over **increase by 266%** between 2006 and 2041.

By 2036, seniors will account for **almost one-in-four Canadians**.

Seniors Struggle to Find Affordable Housing

With limited and fixed incomes, **close to 700,000** senior-led households face a housing affordability challenge.

One half of seniors who rent live in housing that swallows up more than a third of their before-tax income—representing 229,205 households.

Rent at seniors' residences is **2.5 times the cost** of rent on the private market.

Yet Federal Support for Seniors Housing is Disappearing

The federal government's annual contribution of \$1.6 billion for social housing is **scheduled to expire** over the next 20 years.

By 2040, federal support for seniors' social housing will **all but disappear**—just as the number of seniors is set to double.

Compared to the OECD average of 59 per cent, government transfers to Canadian seniors account for **less than 40.5 per cent** of their gross income.

Solutions Do Exist, Municipalities are Taking Action

93 per cent of seniors live at home and prefer to age in place, but there is no one-size-fits-all answer. The current range of housing and transportation options for the growing seniors' population—and their well-being—is inadequate.

Local governments are on the ground, exploring solutions and delivering programs to address the **high cost of rental housing** and increase **accessibility of public transit** for seniors.

The federal government must play an active role—in partnership with municipalities—by **reinvesting social housing agreements**, providing incentives for the creation of **affordable rental housing units** and supporting programs that allow seniors to **retrofit their homes** so they can remain at home longer.