

As Per Online Survey: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page20905.aspx>

Abbeyfield Canada

January 14, 2019

Abbeyfield Canada is a modest, national not-for-profit organization that represents 20 “Houses” across Canada. We have 4 Houses in Ontario. Each house is an independent charity and is home to 12- 15 seniors who have chosen to live in shared accommodation. We believe that our model does and can play an increasingly critical, niche role in adapting to the seniors housing demand across the Province.

Our small scale and local management model is very flexible. A House is able to adapt to new build, renovation, or repurposing of infrastructure. The model is particularly adaptive to rural, culturally diverse, and unique identity communities. The small scale of the House is able to adapt to demographic change over time. As independent, not for profit organizations, a low tax payer burden is implied in each House.

We are currently cooperating intensively with provincial organizations in sharing our model and exploring opportunities for cooperation, with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Concept:

- Revolves around generally independent, healthy seniors of modest income who choose to live with 12-15 other seniors in shared not-for-profit accommodation

Top Criteria

- Price or Rent
- Ability to Age in Place – within community
- Rental rates – must be affordable for low to modest income
- Abbeyfield Target: monthly in 2019 \$'s \$1200 to \$2000 inclusive of meals, laundry, parking, utilities

Question Relating to Five Themes

Speed: It takes too long for development projects to get approved.

Municipal affairs can encourage municipalities to allow for adaptive zoning, wherein “infill housing” matches the built environment of a given neighbourhood or suburb.

Infill housing will allow for independent persons to choose to live together in groups of up to 12-15 persons.

The strict criteria for “retirement”, “long term” or “health” care facilities should be much reduced and lean toward the same or similar standards as private homes.

Mix: Restrictions - Planning and Development

The focus for development should be on the following criteria:

- repurposing existing (e.g. churches, schools, other minor institutional)
- renovation existing (homes, buildings within residential neighbourhoods)
- adaptive (attached to or adjacent to existing minor strip malls, “main streets”)
- new build (especially using modular home models).

All of the above criteria should include “community space” within the shared accommodation facility.

Mix: Restrictions - Existing Neighbourhoods

- Abbeyfield offers proven examples of “new” housing in existing neighbourhoods.
- Lakefield, in Toronto, is a purpose built home for 12 seniors that, from the exterior is hardly distinguishable from the surrounding suburban neighbourhood.
- Ottawa House is a renovated century old home that had next to no impact on the built environment of its downtown urban streetscape.
- Caledon and Durham Houses are purpose built homes adapted to their neighbourhoods, one suburban and one in a modest, rural mixed use neighbourhood.

Mix: Restrictions - Employment and Industrial

- Each Abbeyfield is an employment contributor to its neighbourhood.
- Each House typically employs 1.5 to 2.0 fte persons.
- Residents continue to contribute to the local economy through personal activities.

We strongly recommend that adaptive housing for seniors be provided within walking distance of existing amenities. Whether purpose built, adaptive, renovation, or repurposed, a House can fit into existing zoning (with flexibility) and contribute to densification, while increasing each senior’s presence within community.

Development Costs - Lower Impact on Infrastructure

The Abbeyfield House model of 12-15 residents imposes negligible to no costs to urban development or existing infrastructure.

We strongly recommend including builders and developers in “new build” discussions. We believe that there is economic opportunity in diversifying neighbourhood housing built

environments. Municipalities, with the support of the Province, can support not-for-profit and profit partnerships.

Abbeyfield Canada has been cooperating with the Canadian Manufactured Housing Institute in this regard.

Development Costs - Serviced Land

Serviced land must be planned “green” = walkable, diverse institutional, light commercial / retail, etc.

What is good for community is good for seniors housing.

Engage seniors directly in the planning process.

Landlord and Tenancy - Landlords and Tenant Protections

We recommend that the not-for-profit housing sector be brought securely to the table in discussions over ownership, tenancy, residential rights and obligations.

In a shared living accommodation environment, negotiations can include:

- life leasing
- donations
- tenancy committees
- grounds use
- and, importantly, community participation within the same facility in which the seniors live.

Landlord and Tenancy - Homeowners

We propose that home ownership can securely transfer to not-for-profit, corporate ownership of the building / facility. That same corporation and facility can then pursue adaptive restructuring / renovation of their building, within the parameters of a community plan (supported by the municipality toward creative infill, diversified living / use purposes).

Other Opportunities - Encourage Innovation

Abbeyfield Canada has been cooperating with municipalities, architects, Algonquin College, and the Canadian Manufactured Housing Institute with respect to innovative, shared accommodation housing.

Cooperation with the Institute, the College, and professional architects leans the process toward safety and efficiency. We recommend such partnerships.

Other Opportunities - Innovative Ownership

The Province of Ontario can invest in rapid development of the not-for-profit sector's participation in development of the shared accommodation model, as proposed by Abbeyfield Canada, wherein 12-15 consenting senior persons can choose to live in shared accommodation, in safety, comfort, and full engagement in their work lives and community activities.

Other Opportunities - Creative Ideas

Existing homes, small institutional buildings within urban / suburban neighbourhoods, and other like built environment can be easily renovated, repurposed, or otherwise modified to include shared accommodation living facilities. We believe these offer positive impacts on existing neighbourhoods.

Examples:

- Lakefield, in Toronto, is a purpose built home for 12 seniors that, from the exterior is hardly distinguishable from the surrounding suburban neighbourhood.
- Ottawa House is a renovated century old home that had next to no impact on the built environment of its downtown urban streetscape.
- Caledon and Durham Houses are purpose built homes adapted to their neighbourhoods, one suburban and one in a modest, rural mixed use neighbourhood.

Other Opportunities - Other Creative Ideas

We strongly recommend pursuing the interests, concerns, and creative ideas of rural, culturally diverse, and unique identity communities. Each of these have special reasons and incentives to organize, renovate, build, and live out their lives in the communities in which they have live their lives. They bring unique resources, opportunities, and long term investment engines to the shared accommodation model.

Other Opportunities - New Home Buyers - Protections

Financing and long term management securities are among the most important concerns in developing shared accommodation. We recommend Provincial support to the following:

- financial institutions that provide 30-35 year mortgages to affordable not-for profit housing associations (e.g. Housing Services Corporation)
- land trust management of multiple shared accommodation facilities (e.g. BC Land Trust)
- diverse toolkits that meet the needs and creative potential of small not-for-profit organizations that management unique, locally adapted shared living accommodations in Ontario (e.g. Abbeyfield Toolkit)