



Village Canada

March 2025

A Vision for an Intergenerational Seniors Village in Ottawa's Confederation Heights

Purpose: A group of nonprofit organizations are interested in forming a consortium to develop a Seniors Intergenerational Village in Ottawa. This project depends on leasing a portion of federal land in Confederation Heights, preferably the Data Centre property behind the RA Centre. Our first goal is to secure an agreement from the federal government to entertain a full proposal, as a full proposal will require significant funding and human resources investments by the proponent organizations, which are listed below.

Proponents: Village Canada will be developed by a consortium convened initially by the Seniors Health Innovations Hub (SHIH), a volunteer-driven nonprofit in central Ottawa. The planning and development phase will be guided by a Consortium Steering Group, supported by professional resources.

Background: The Government of Canada plans to support the development of housing on federal properties, including nonprofit and affordable options. The property of particular interest is [Confederation Heights](#) which is located near the Rideau River, Carleton University, and the Billings Bridge Shopping Centre. Public consultations have been ongoing since 2021, and planning activity stretches several years previous. However, the situation and purpose of federal landholdings has shifted dramatically in recent years, triggering a rethinking of the process of development or disposal of these resources.

The 2024 federal budget announced increases in support of the development of nonprofit and cooperative housing, given the current crisis in housing affordability. Subsequent announcements have indicated a desire to see nonprofit development on unused federal lands. Nonprofit housing designed to accommodate seniors, with various combinations of specialized design, supportive services and subsidized or market rents, are much needed, and creative developments can serve as important models for an exploding national need. A large challenge is the multi-variate economic, social and personal situations of the aging baby boom. Some seniors are living alone or as a couple in family houses which exceed their space requirements and are not adapted to their accumulating disabilities. Many of these houses could be available for

younger families if the seniors had acceptable options in their communities. For those who are affluent, high-end condos or retirement homes may serve the purpose, but these are often price-prohibitive or life style restricting. Modest-income and lower-income seniors have almost no options until such time that they become dependent on institutional care. Moreover, the endless combinations of medical conditions, disabilities, social isolation that restrict Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and I(Instrumental)ADL are obstacles to affordable market responses to seniors needs.

Fortunately, recent federal willingness to have portions of federal lands developed for nonprofit housing, have encouraged the proponents to consider the development of a multi-purpose "campus" responding to a variety of situations and needs. The City of Ottawa has also confirmed provincial funds for social housing, and there is the potential for CMHC support for development financing.

Proposal: Several well-established institutions and community organizations are interested to take part in a social enterprise which will develop an innovative combination of housing and care options, coordinated from a community base. We ask federal authorities to lease several acres of land within Confederation Heights, to the consortium. This lease would ensure that the land is used for nonprofit social purposes, providing mixed-income housing including market rental and cooperative components, supportive health and social services, and welcoming social diversity. A federal commitment is requested to secure financing for development planning and to start construction within five years. The total number of housing units cannot be clearly identified at this time, but will be substantial, subject to financing options. The operating consortium will be incorporated with a board representing participating organizations, including possibly the federal government and the City of Ottawa.

The Vision of the Village: Confederation Heights' location offers a unique opportunity to create a nonprofit village complex with affordable and market housing for seniors, students, and people with disabilities, in a vibrant, multi-generational urban village setting. The development will include market rentals, supportive housing, and integrated community-based health and social care.

Components of the Village (Preliminary):

1. **Housing Cooperative:** Rental housing with options for life-lease or ownership through cooperative shares, maintaining affordability.
2. **Non-Profit Rental Housing:** A mix of market and reduced rent units.
3. **Co-Living Opportunities:** For seniors and students.
4. **Supportive Retirement Residences:** Small, village-scale residences for independent or assisted living, including options for adults with disabilities or early-stage cognitive decline.
5. **Long Term Care Housing:** To assure continuity for seniors in the complex who need to move to long term care, the project will seek funding from the Province to have a long term care facility.

6. **Village Square:** Social spaces and services, including intergenerational cafeterias, integrated health/community care services, and easy access to shopping, universities, and transportation.

Social/Economic Benefits: Village Canada will:

- Provide research and training opportunities for local universities and service agencies.
- Stimulate local businesses and create employment opportunities for new residents and disadvantaged workers.
- Serve as a focal point for diversity-friendly social supports increasing likelihood of independent living.
- Free up family-suited accommodation in the urban core as seniors downsize, easing market housing pressures.
- Welcome social diversity, reflecting a diverse community base, and including equity-seeking groups and service organizations.

About the Seniors Health Innovations Hub (SHIH): The SHIH is a community catalyst with extensive collaborations across central Ottawa. It has approximately 200 volunteers and partners with various organizations with the common goal of supporting age-friendly communities and aging in place. The SHIH has received recognition and support from political leaders and has been involved in national advisory committees on aging and healthcare.

Organizations interested in participating in a consortium if land is available:

Abbeyfield Riverside Housing Inc

Abbotsford Seniors Centre and Community Services

AGEWELL National Innovation Hub

Carefor Health and Community Services

The Causeway

The Glebe Centre

Guildwood Residents Association

Ottawa Senior Pride Network

Ottawa Community Land Trust

Perley Health

RA Centre, Riverside Drive

Seniors Watch Alta Vista

South East Ottawa Community Health Centre

Heron Park Community Association

(This list will continue to expand as other organizations are considering their potential participation.)

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