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# LANGLEY SENIOR HOUSING SURVEY REPORT 2015

[www.tripleaseniorhousinglangley.ca](http://www.tripleaseniorhousinglangley.ca)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This stand-alone report of the Langley Senior Housing Survey (Appendix A) was developed with the oversight and direction of Triple A (Affordable, Accessible and Appropriate) Senior Housing, a non-profit group of senior volunteers advocating for housing options for older adults in both the Township and City of Langley. The research was driven by the necessity of informing and educating seniors and all levels of government, architects, developers and builders about the changing housing needs of our older population.

The survey results draw attention to a statistically relevant and noteworthy number of participants exploring the need for accessible, affordable and appropriate housing options for seniors in The Langleys. 541 respondents felt it was important enough to participate in this survey and make their views known. Not all respondents answered every question and yet, the results are remarkable for a local grassroots survey project.

The report serves as a companion reference to the report of our Senior Housing Summit “ACTING NOW: Housing for Our Aging Population” held in September 2014. It complements the Vancouver Coastal Health, Fraser Health: My Health, My Community Survey Report of June 2015, expanding its local research on housing, a widely recognized determinant of health. Survey results note the needs, options and challenges for senior housing related to affordability, accessibility and appropriateness.

Exploration of these needs and desires has never been more pertinent as the number of seniors in The Langleys is projected to increase by 12,415 by 2024, a whopping 57 percent!<sup>1</sup>



**“Giving you a chance to tell us and decision makers your concerns about affordable, accessible and appropriate senior housing in The Langleys”**

**Triple A Invitation to Respondents.**



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<sup>1</sup> Fraser Health, 2015, Healthy Aging Profile accessed on August 27, 2015 at [www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

## HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

1. Affordability is a large concern for the majority of respondents in the low-income range. 52 percent of all respondents indicated that they spent more than 30 percent of their gross household income on housing costs. 75 percent of those in the \$30,000 or less income range spend over 30 percent of their household income on accommodations. In the \$0-\$40,000.00 group, 67 percent find themselves in the same boat.
2. Seniors in our community are 'making ends meet' by cutting back on the necessities of life. 215 people overall indicated they cut back on living costs such as food and prescriptions giving housing a spending priority, perhaps to avoid eviction and homelessness. 34 percent of those with income of \$30,000 or less cut back on these expenses.
3. The need for accessible housing is a priority of many residents as they look forward to aging in place and their health and mobility changes. 37 percent of survey respondents indicated personal limitations that might affect where they live, the majority being mobility related.
4. Seniors in our community are not accessing financial supports designed to assist low-income renters and homeowners to provide for their housing needs. Only 42 out of 517 reported receiving government assistance for housing with about half naming SAFER as the source.
5. Many senior respondents would prefer to remain in their present community as they age and, regardless of income, they are hoping to move to assisted living when they are no longer able to live independently.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the City and Township of Langley, along with planners, developers and architects move forward with an age-friendly focus to:
  - a) Create more universally accessible, affordable and appropriate housing (both purpose built rentals and ownership models) to meet the housing needs of seniors of all ages, financial means, abilities and mobility needs.
  - b) Preserve existing affordable rental stock by instituting policy and plans to renovate and upgrade to current safety and accessibility standards. If redevelopment is necessary, institute policy to ensure a level of replacement commensurate with demand.
2. Stronger and more coordinated efforts be made by Provincial, City and Township governments and senior-serving organizations in The Langleys to promote programs (i.e. SAFER and HAFI) providing financial aid for housing to low-income seniors and, if required, to provide assistance with the application process.
3. That the City and Township of Langley lobby BC Housing, the Ministry of Health and the Fraser Health Authority to take action to respond to the preference of the majority of older adults in The Langleys by ensuring an adequate number of assisted living units and regulated services will be available to provide housing and care in their community when they are no longer able to live independently.

All recommendations in this report relate directly to survey findings with supporting ancillary information included herein. We have done our best to provide a report of the Langley Senior Housing Survey that respects the contribution and view of all who participated and offer a way forward to respond to its findings. Though it has taken more than a year for our small group of volunteers on a very limited budget to produce this report, we believe the reader will find the information extremely relevant. We invite you to read on...

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the invaluable input of older adults in The Langleys (City and Township of Langley) who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire. The support and involvement of the City and Township of Langley, as well that of community groups, businesses and volunteers was fundamental to the achievement of such a high survey response rate. (Appendix B)

Each member of the Triple A Senior Housing Working Group played an essential and invaluable role in making this survey a huge success. A special note of appreciation is warranted for Evan Brett, Lynda Brummitt, Marilyn Fischer (chair, co-writer), Lynda Lightfoot, and Petrina Arnason (former co-chair) who helped create this report and offered their guidance and unrelenting support. Triple A Senior Housing owes its gratitude to Deirdre Goudriaan, Team Play Consulting Inc., for her contribution to the design and conduct of the online version of the survey, overall data analysis and as co-writer of this report.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In June 2013, a passionate group of seniors from the Langley Seniors Community Action Table (LSCAT) and the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP), Chapter 48, came together in The Langleys (the City and Township of Langley) with a desire to explore the need and further the cause of the development and preservation of housing options for older adults in both communities. The Langley Seniors Resource Society was subsequently invited to participate as the third founding member of Triple A (Affordable, Accessible, Appropriate) Senior Housing.

Direction of the development and focus of Triple A Senior Housing has been influenced by the Housing Action Plan adopted by the Township of Langley in February, 2013 and the City of Langley's Affordable Housing Strategy which was passed in 2009.



**Triple A and Langley Seniors Resource Centre volunteers at Willowbrook Mall**

From humble beginnings at a garden side meeting at the Maples Discovery Gardens in the summer of 2013 emerged an incredible amount of volunteer effort. The response from participants at the November, 2013 workshop **“Searching for Solutions to Senior’s Housing Concerns”** and the **Langley Senior Housing Survey** results formed the basis for Phase II – **“ACTING NOW! Housing for Our Aging Population”**, a Senior Housing Summit held in September 2014, attracting 150 participants, and shining a spotlight on the critical housing needs of older adults in the hope of inspiring responsive action from the regional community and beyond.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey methodology was a purposive sample of seniors between ages 45 and 85+ in The Langleys. The majority of respondents were between 65 and 85+. A community based participatory action research process was used. Older adults were engaged in the survey design, administration and analysis, a “by and for seniors” approach enlisting those affected by and passionate about the housing issues defined.

Between October, 2013 and February, 2014, a questionnaire was developed and administered through both online and print options. Many community members engaged in the extensive outreach effort (Appendix B) that resulted in the collection of 541 survey responses. The survey consisted of a structured format and open ended questions that prompted respondents to reply through a variety of text boxes with additional comments related to the questions. (Appendix A). The Township and the City of Langley kindly provided complimentary printing services for paper copies of the questionnaire to enhance accessibility and readability for seniors who may not have computer access or skills sufficient to allow them to complete the survey online.

Review and analysis of survey results was reflective and iterative in nature and involved multiple rounds of analysis, interpretation and actions by Team Play Consulting Inc. and Triple A Working Group members.



**85 year old Triple A volunteer at Meals on Wheels (Food & Friends) luncheon at Brookswood Seniors Centre**

## **SURVEY LIMITATIONS**

Every effort was made to touch on all geographic centres in The Langleys and as a result some typically under-represented areas such as the community of Aldergrove were more equitably represented than has often been the case with historic surveys. No plausible explanation can be offered for the lack of response in Fort Langley given the reasonable effort expended. Though it was recognized that The Langleys are increasingly multilingual and numerous seniors speak other than the predominant language, efforts to include this group of seniors fell short due to limited resources. Likewise, lack of inclusion of homeless seniors in the survey was not intentional and some efforts were made to design a process that would capture input from this population. Limited capacity led to such survey limitations.

## **SURVEY RESULTS: GENERAL INFORMATION**

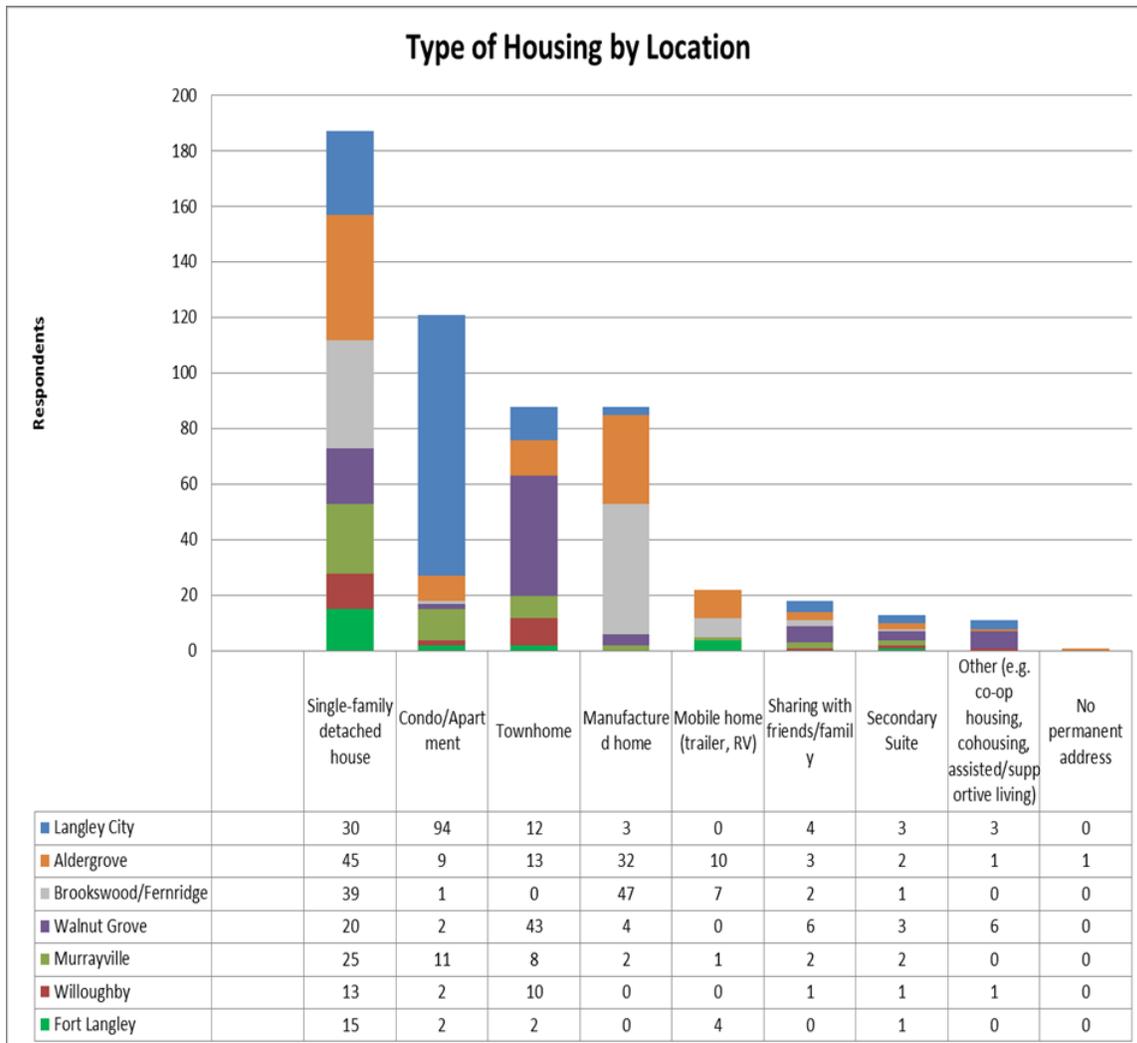
Housing is seen by researchers and policy-makers as an important determinant of health and well-being. Everyone, including seniors, requires stable housing not only to meet their physical shelter needs but for their mental, social and emotional well-being. It is the secure foundation from which we address our other needs like meal preparation, socializing and safety.

Overall, 28 percent of the 541 respondent households lived in the City of Langley, with the remaining 72 percent being Township of Langley residents. Older residents of the long term neighbourhoods of Walnut Grove (80), Brookwood/Fernridge (94) and Aldergrove (115) provided the highest number of household respondents.

220 people responded as a couple, indicating that a total of 761 residents were accounted for in the survey. Lone women or men make up the balance of the 321 or 59 percent of respondents. Of the total 541 respondents, 129 were male and 412 were female. 100 were under the age of 65 (9 aged 45-54 and 91 aged 55-64).

Significant data was collected from 441 respondents aged 65-85+ and 168 spouses aged 65+ were reported overall, representing a total of 609 residents aged 65+.

Figure 1

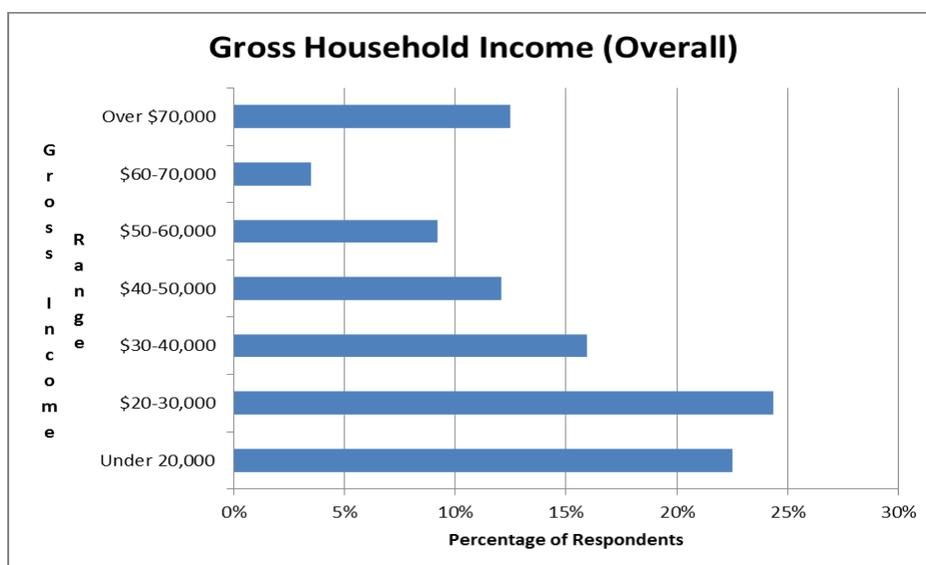


538 respondents described their present housing situation. 319 were lone households and 219 were couples. The highest overall response rate came from senior residents in the City of Langley, followed by Aldergrove, and the Brookwood/Fernridge area. Single family detached homes represented the type of housing with the highest number of respondents. Aldergrove and Brookwood/Fernridge reported the highest number of respondents living in detached and manufactured homes. Though both the City and Township have policies legalizing secondary suites, very few seniors reported living in this type of housing.



Langley Grove Estates, Courtesy of Evan Brett

Figure 2



489 respondents reported on their gross household income (Figure 2). Their gross income varied widely with the \$20-30,000 income range reported most frequently followed by those with incomes in the under \$20,000 income category. 47 percent of respondents were in the \$30,000 or less gross income range. The third highest category was between \$30 and \$40,000 in gross income. Though there is a large disparity in gross income levels across The Langleys, 37 percent of respondents reported income of \$40,000 plus.

334 respondents indicated they owned their home without a mortgage (at the time of the survey) and the breakdown by location across The Langleys is noted in Figure 3. Brookwood/Fernridge, followed by Aldergrove, two of the oldest communities in the Township, have the highest percentage of homeowners without a mortgage.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Homeowners (without a mortgage)**

Location	Percentage
Brookwood/Fernridge	23.05
Aldergrove	22.46
Langley City	16.46
Walnut Grove	16.17
Murrayville	11.38
Fort Langley	5.39
Willoughby	5.09

## SURVEY RESULTS: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Housing costs continue to climb and rental vacancy rates are low so the economic burden for seniors is ever increasing. According to a Metro Vancouver report in 2010, “Renters in The Langleys spend more on housing and transportation combined than residents of any other municipality in the region. Homeowners spend a combined 42 per cent of their incomes on their mortgage and transportation costs.”<sup>2</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) noted that “purpose-built rental apartment vacancy rates declined to 1.0 per cent in October 2014 in The Langleys.

In an effort to ease the burden of housing costs, the Government of British Columbia provides assistance to low-income senior renters and homeowners. SAFER (Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters), a monthly subsidy is available to eligible renters age 60+. According to BC Housing, “only 512 residents of The Langleys are currently in receipt of SAFER.”<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that SAFER is available to eligible seniors who are renting pads in manufactured home parks. HAFI (Home Adaptations for Independence) forgivable loans up to \$20,000 for small renovations to enable seniors to continue living in their homes are available to eligible homeowners, renters, and landlords. Recently, the BC Senior’s Advocate reported that, “50 percent of senior renters under the age of 75 did not know about the SAFER subsidy, and 58 percent of those over the age of 75 were also unaware of the subsidy program.”<sup>4</sup> Almost 70 percent of seniors did not know about the HAFI program.

<sup>2</sup> Accessed from Metro Vancouver on August 15, 2015 at [http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/boards/RegionalPlanning/RPL- April\\_24\\_2015-Agenda.pdf&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1](http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/boards/RegionalPlanning/RPL- April_24_2015-Agenda.pdf&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1)

<sup>3</sup> BC Housing Correspondence and Report on Shelter Allowances for The Langleys, 2015

<sup>4</sup> Office of the BC Seniors Advocate, Report #2, March 2015. BC Senior’s Survey: Bridging the Gaps Accessed on October 22, 2015 at <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/05/Seniors-Housing-in-B.C.-Affordable-Appropriate-Available.pdf>

Home affordability is considered in greater detail by more deeply exploring the highest rental areas, rates of government assistance and noting the costs seniors cut back on to make ends meet. The survey question about affordability follows the practice widely adopted in North America to define when housing is affordable.

Housing is affordable when tenants/owners do not have to spend more than 30 per cent of their gross income on housing costs (including rent, mortgage payment, property taxes, home insurance and utilities such as heat, electricity, water and other municipal services, excluding telephone, Internet, cablevision and the like).

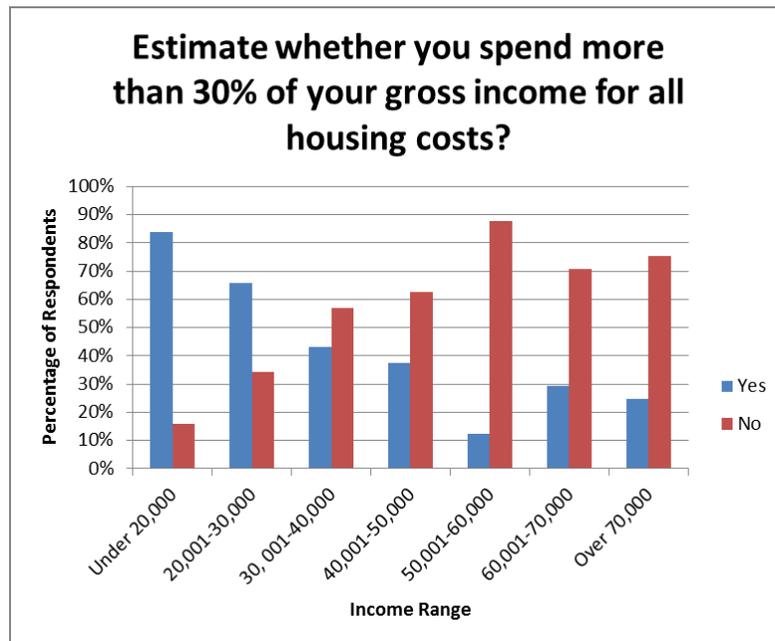


Figure 4

485 people replied to the question (Figure 4) about whether they spent more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing costs. In the under \$20,000 income range 84 percent spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs as did 66 percent of those with incomes of \$20-30,000. 75 percent of those in the \$30,000 or less income range spend over 30 percent of their household income on housing.

As the reader will note, those with incomes \$30,000 or under tend to spend more than 30 percent on housing costs and then the trend begins to reverse in the \$30 - \$40,000 income range and continues to reverse as income increases. In the \$30 - \$40,000 income range, 43 percent indicated they spent more than 30 percent on housing costs. In the \$40,000 and under income range, 67 percent reported that housing costs accounted for more than 30 percent of their income. Interestingly, 30 percent of those in the \$60,000-\$70,000 income range are also spending at the plus 30% level.

Affordable rental housing offers rental rates that are at or below CMHCs average market rent. For example, CMHC reported that the “average 2014 market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Greater Vancouver was \$1,311 and for a one bedroom apartment was \$963.00.”<sup>5</sup>

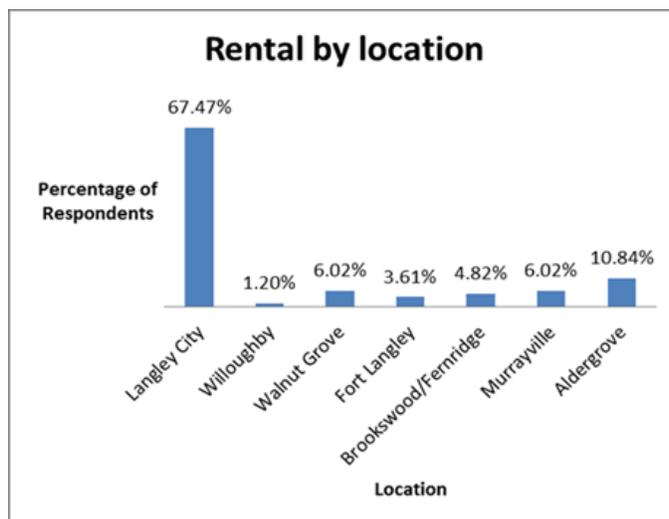
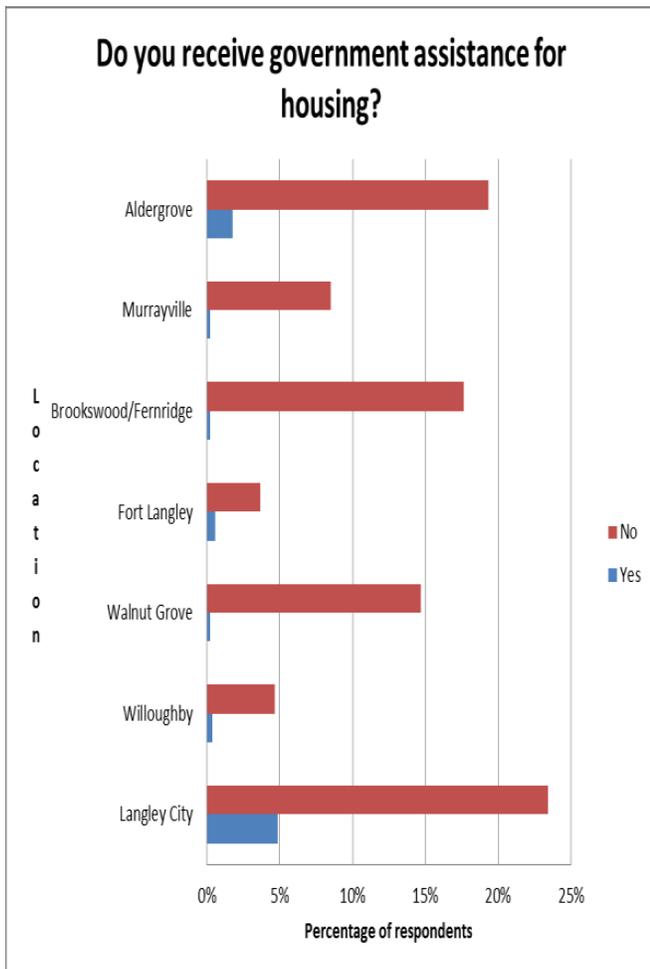


Figure 5

15 percent of those who responded reported renting versus owning their accommodation (Figure 5). The highest percentage of rental reported is in the City of Langley at almost 68 percent and the second highest location was Aldergrove at close to 11 percent. Renters include those renting a pad in a manufactured home park.

<sup>5</sup> Accessed from Central Mortgage Housing and Research on August 11, 2015 at <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda/>

Figure 6



517 (96 percent) of respondents replied to the question about government assistance for housing, with the vast majority (475) reporting no aid (Figure 6). Of the “Yes” responses, approximately half identified SAFER as the source, with others citing GIS, home owner’s property tax grants, property tax deferral and subsidized housing.

No one reported a HAFI grant. The City of Langley reported both the highest numbers of respondents who did not receive housing assistance along with the highest number of those who did. Aldergrove respondents noted almost 2 percent of seniors received government aid for housing. It is concerning to note the high number of respondents from across all of the jurisdictions answering “No” to receiving government assistance for housing when 47 percent reported living on gross income of \$30,000 or less. Government assistance could make a big difference to the quality of life for those struggling to make ends meet or to modify their housing to accommodate their limitations.

522 people replied to the question- Do you cut back on your food budget so you can pay your rent or mortgage? (Figure 7). Overall, 141 people indicated “yes”, “sometimes” or “often”. Those reporting under \$20,000 and \$20,000 to \$30,000 income responded “yes”, “sometimes” and “often” to this question more than any other income bracket. In the “sometimes” category, respondents across all income ranges continued to indicate that they cut their food budget. This may be correlated with high housing costs in The Langleys or indicate that people feel some food costs are discretionary.

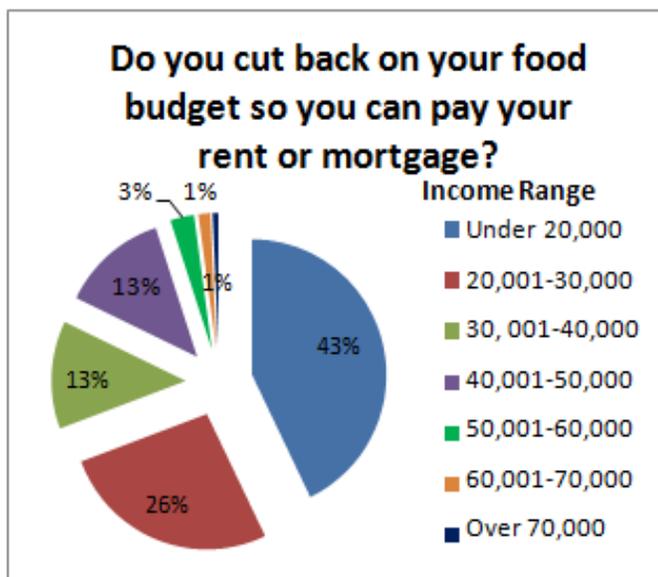


Figure 7

514 people replied to the question about deferring prescriptions to pay their rent or mortgage. In this case, the trend indicates a noteworthy number (74 people) or 14 percent. Most significant, across the three lower income brackets, seniors tend to put off prescriptions to pay their rent or mortgage.

215 people overall indicated they cut back on living costs such as food and prescriptions giving housing a spending priority, perhaps to avoid eviction and homelessness. 34 percent of those with income of \$30,000 or less cut back on these expenses. This is a momentous indicator that shelter costs are beyond people’s means if they cannot afford the necessities of life. This also has important implications for seniors’ health and wellness and the sustainability of our healthcare system.

## SURVEY RESULTS: HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY

Accessible housing and universally designed or adaptable homes offer numerous features that support people of varying mobility levels to live independently throughout their life. These features include a continuum of barrier-free designs such as zero-step entries, wider hallways and doorways to accommodate wheelchairs or walkers, as well as bathrooms, kitchens and bedrooms that are accessible to everyone.

Annually In BC, according to the Ministry of Health “more than 200,000 BC seniors will experience one or more falls, resulting in more than 10,000 hospitalizations and more than 800 direct and indirect deaths”. The Seniors Fall Prevention section of the Ministry of Health notes “one in three British Columbians over the age of 65 will fall once every year, and falls are the main reason why older adults lose their independence” through resulting injury requiring placement in residential care. Fraser Health reports “Keeping a frail BC senior in their home and out of residential care can save an average of \$43,018 yearly.”<sup>6</sup>

Accessible housing is an essential aspect of retrofits and new housing design that must be considered to accommodate the changing health and mobility needs of older adults in our community.

Another feature of accessibility is “visitability” which supports social connections and service delivery. Most respondents (85 percent) specified that support, emergency services, nor guests, would have difficulty entering their home. The remaining 15 percent indicated barriers to access such as narrow hallways and doorways, gated access, alarm systems or locked passageways.

506 people replied to the question asking whether or not they or their spouse/partner have any personal limitations that would affect where they could live? 187 or 37 percent indicated that personal limitations would affect where they live. The majority of respondents (88 percent) noted personal limitations were mobility related and included stairs, walkers, canes, scooters, wheelchairs and other issues. The remaining concerns focused on vision and hearing limitations (12 percent).

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<sup>6</sup> Fraser Health, 2014 Healthy Aging Profile, as reported from 2011/12 CIHI Hospital Discharge Data.

## SURVEY RESULTS: APPROPRIATE HOUSING

Appropriate housing substantially impacts healthy and productive aging. Conversely, inappropriate housing for seniors can contribute to more physical accidents and injury, lowered immune system, lack of social connections as well as increased anxiety and depression, and, indirectly, to acute and chronic illness. Appropriate housing supports greater autonomy, individuality and heightens identity and integrity. The challenge is how to provide a full range of appropriate housing options for a diverse and growing population with unique needs, preferences, lifestyles, cultures, abilities, socio-economic status and varying degrees of health and disability.

Some promising signs that our community is taking up this challenge are:

- the increasing focus on age-friendly community as demonstrated by the “Age-Friendly Development” theme of the Township’s 2015 Economic Forum;
- ongoing efforts of the Langley Division of Family Practice to improve the access and delivery of home supports, especially to ‘frail seniors’ to allow them to age-in-place and;
- The work of the Langley Healthier Communities Partnership (chaired by the Mayors of the City and Township of Langley) towards a plan to reduce poverty and enhance prosperity and health in The Langleys.

The survey and anecdotal information indicates that 85+ percent of seniors want to remain in their own homes as long as possible. This preference was overwhelmingly noted in responses to the survey question “How long do you plan to live in your present home?” with answers like “as long as I live”, “forever”, “the rest of our lives”, “until our bodies wear out”, “until the end”. “My 92 year old husband won’t move...I will only get a rest when I get to heaven.”

30 percent of respondents to the preceding question indicated somewhat definite decisions to make a move in the next 1-5 years; the reasons for such a move may be found in answers to the next question. 462 survey respondents answered the question: “What reasons would lead you to decide to move?” It was clear that many had given considerable thought to the aging process and what changes they might have to make in their housing to support them to remain independent and to ‘age in place’. The most prevalent reasons that would lead to a future move included:

- affordability;
- downsizing;
- inability to do necessary upkeep on existing home and yard;
- mobility concerns, especially stairs;
- cognitive decline, health issues, including loss of driver’s license;
- to be closer to family and grandchildren.

On a more humorous note, respondents indicated they might move when they: “win enough money to buy a condo which allows our small dog”, “graduate from the program” or and “until they have to wheel us out.”

A small number of people (36) suggested that their current housing did not meet their present personal limitation needs. Since mobility needs were highlighted by a large majority of respondents, this is somewhat alarming given the increased risks of falls, possible risk of social isolation and the resulting burden on the health care system.

While some may choose to live at risk, it may be as probable that the 36 people mentioned above whose housing does not accommodate their personal limitations are unable to rectify the situation due to affordability, lack of physical support to actually make a move or as likely, the unavailability of a more appropriate housing option.

Optimistically, most Langley seniors (93 percent) indicated they feel safe in their current housing location with the exception of seniors in Langley City where 20 people were concerned about their safety. This concern was no surprise considering that based on the rankings for all Canadian communities with populations of 10,000 or more, “Langley City had the highest crime severity index in Metro Vancouver in 2013.”<sup>7</sup> Given recent reassurances by the Langley RCMP Superintendent that it is “safe to walk the streets of the City and Township and that home invasions are down 45 percent from the last year,”<sup>8</sup> we hope these Langley City seniors are feeling more secure in their community.

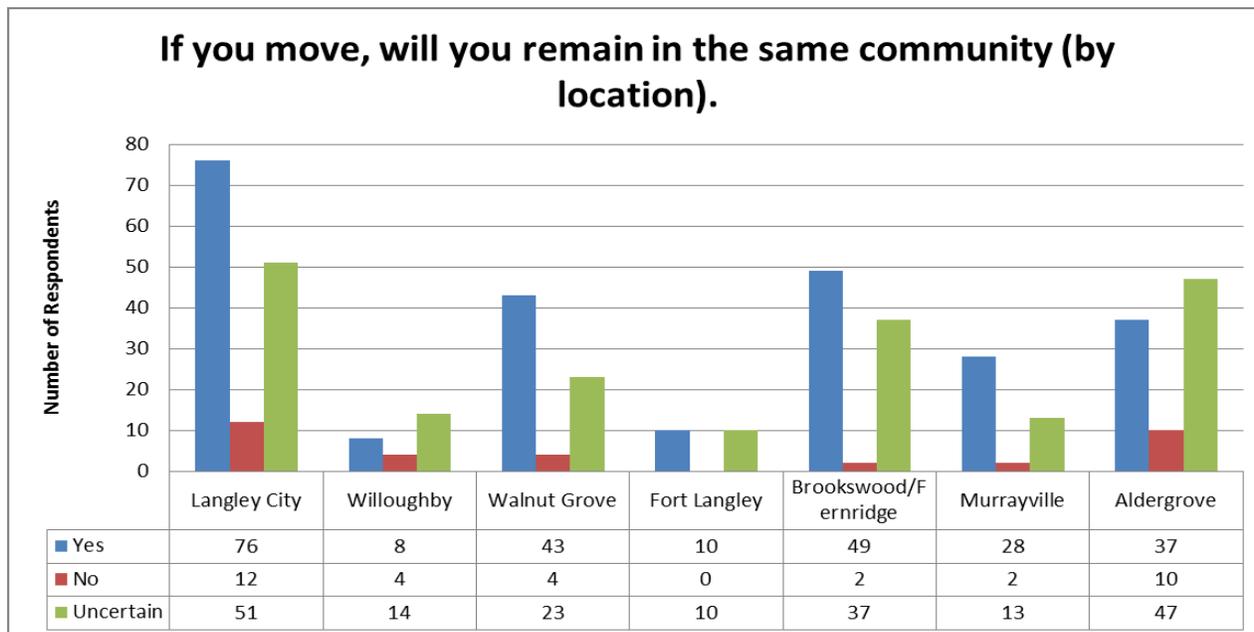
The efforts of the City of Langley to address safety concerns stemming from its high crime rate are to be commended and encouraged. We look forward to future initiatives of the Community Crime Prevention Task Force to allay the fears of seniors in our communities.

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<sup>7</sup> Police-reported 2013 Crime Severity Index (CSI) released by Statistics Canada on Wednesday, July 23.

<sup>8</sup> Langley Times, October 2, 2015

Figure 8



When respondents were asked whether or not they would remain in the same community (Figure 8), 52 percent thought they would; 41 percent were uncertain; and 7 percent indicated they would not.

A significant number of the ‘uncertain’ responders noted plans to move within The Langleys, indicating that most of our current elderly residents prefer to remain in the area, if not in the same community.

Residents of some communities expressed high uncertainty in response to this question. 51 Langley City residents, possibly due to safety concerns, and an additional 47 Aldergrove residents were unsure whether they would remain in their present community if they were to move.

Based on conversations with seniors in that community, “Triple A strongly suspects their uncertainty is because they do not foresee the availability of an assisted living facility in Aldergrove despite their longstanding efforts to have one developed.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Triple A meeting with seniors at Aldergrove United Church, November 12, 2013.

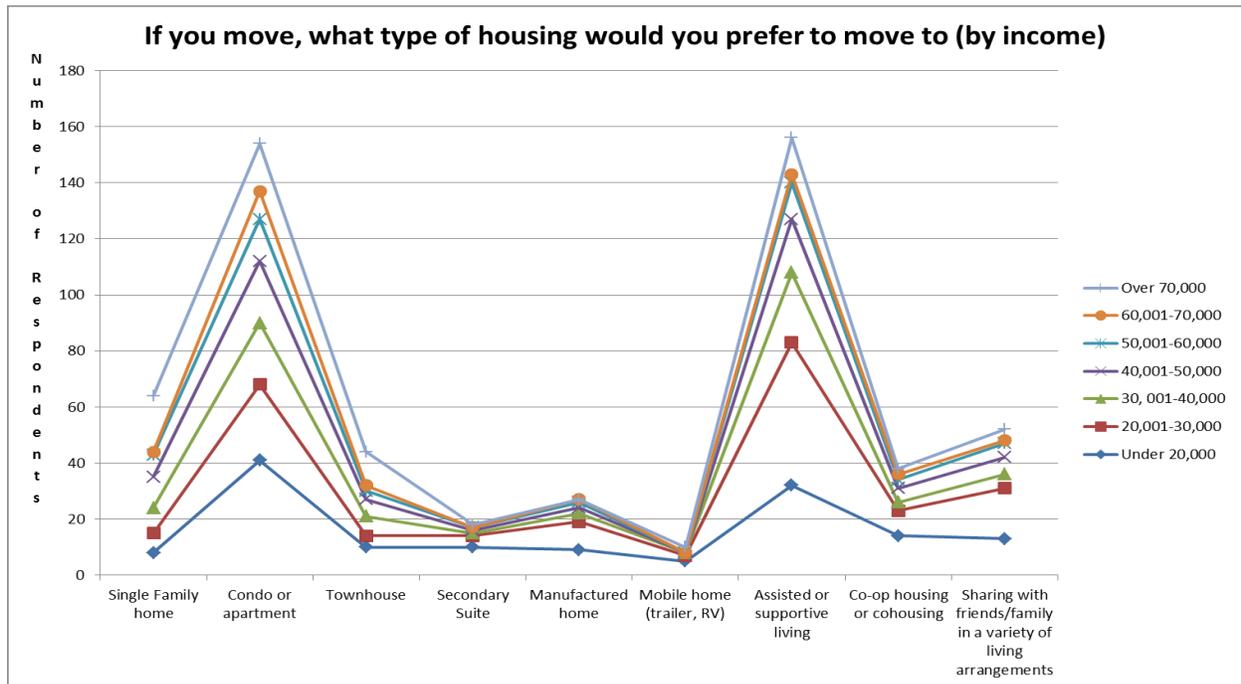


Figure 9

The type of housing that people preferred to move to varied widely across income levels (Figure 9). The first preference, regardless of income, was assisted living followed by condos (owned) or apartments (rented). While all income brackets signalled a preference for assisted living if and when they move, there is concern whether low-income respondents will be able to access subsidized assisted living offered by the Fraser Health Authority. According to a recent report by Isobel Mackenzie, B.C. Seniors Advocate, “some of these seniors may have needs that cannot be accommodated under the current regulation model for Registered Assisted Living.”<sup>10</sup> The Seniors Advocate concludes that such seniors may find themselves referred prematurely to residential care, sometimes referred to as a nursing home. More affluent seniors have the option to move to a non-registered local private-pay assisted living facility where arrangements can be made to have all of their needs met on an ‘as needed’ basis.

<sup>10</sup> Office of the Seniors Advocate, Seniors Housing in BC, accessed on October 22, 2015 at <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2015/05/Seniors-Housing-in-B.C.-Affordable-Appropriate-Available.pdf>

55 percent of the 431 respondents noted their preference for owning if they were to move from their present home with the balance of 193 respondents preferring renting or leasing. Concerns cited most often were related to affordability, health and mobility. Also of concern was a lack of availability of rental housing.

## FINDINGS

- 1) Affordability is a large concern for the majority of respondents in the low-income range. 52 percent of all respondents indicated that they spent more than 30 percent of their gross household income on housing costs. 75 percent of those in the \$30,000 or less income range spend over 30 percent of their household income on accommodations. In the \$0-\$40,000.00 group, 67 percent find themselves in the same boat.
- 2) Seniors in our community are 'making ends meet' by cutting back on the necessities of life. 215 people overall indicated they cut back on living costs such as food and prescriptions giving housing a spending priority, perhaps to avoid eviction and homelessness. 34 percent of those with income of \$30,000 or less cut back on these expenses.
- 3) The need for accessible housing is a priority of many residents as they look forward to aging in place and their health and mobility changes. 37 percent of survey respondents indicated personal limitations that might affect where they live, the majority being mobility related.
- 4) Seniors in our community are not accessing financial supports designed to assist low-income renters and homeowners to provide for their housing needs. Only 42 out of 517 reported receiving government assistance for housing with approximately half naming SAFER as the source. None reported receiving HAFI. A recent study by the Seniors Advocate found that many seniors are not aware of these programs.<sup>11</sup>
- 5) Most senior respondents would prefer to remain in their present community as they age and regardless of income, they are hoping to move to assisted living when they are no longer able to live independently. Recent research by BC's Seniors Advocate raises concern about admission regulation that restrict the provision of service that would support aging –in-place and avoid or delay referral to residential care (i.e. nursing home).
- 6) Safety, a vital aspect of appropriate housing, was a concern to 20 Langley City respondents who felt unsafe in their home. Current reports indicated that while violent crimes, including home

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<sup>11</sup> Office of the Seniors Advocate, Report #2, March 2015 B.C. Senior's Survey: Bridging the Gaps, accessed on October 23, 2015 at <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/10/Seniors-Advocate-Survey-Results-Summary.pdf>

invasions are decreasing, property theft (mail, auto, business break-and-enters) are increasing substantially.<sup>12</sup>

- 7) Secondary suites are not a popular housing option for seniors.
- 8) The majority of seniors who plan to move in the next 5 years would choose to own, and 47 percent expressed a preference for rental housing, often for reasons of affordability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Triple A Senior Housing recommends that:

1. The City and Township of Langley, along with planners, developers and architects move forward with an age-friendly focus to create more universally accessible and affordable housing (both rental and ownership models) to meet the housing needs of seniors of all ages, financial means, abilities and mobility levels, and:
  - a) In conjunction with the goals and objectives of its Affordable Housing Strategy, the City of Langley move forward to institute policy and plans to address the need for renovation or redevelopment of existing rental stock to meet current safety (i.e. sprinklers) and accessibility standards.
  - b) In conjunction with the goals and objectives of its Housing Action Plan, the Township of Langley move forward to institute policy and plans to preserve and improve existing rental housing and increase the supply of affordable rental housing for seniors.
2. Stronger and more coordinated efforts should be made by Provincial, City and Township governments and senior-serving organizations in The Langleys to promote programs (i.e. SAFER and HAFI) providing financial aid for housing to low-income seniors and, if required, to provide assistance with the application process.
3. The City and Township of Langley lobby BC Housing, the Ministry of Health and the Fraser Health Authority to take action to respond to the wishes of the majority of older adults in The Langleys, especially Aldergrove, by ensuring that an adequate number of assisted living units and regulated services will be available to meet their care needs when they are no longer able to live independently.

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<sup>12</sup> Police reported 2013 Crime Severity Index (CSI) released by Statistics Canada on Wednesday, July 23.

4. That the City of Langley's Crime Prevention Task Force continues its vigorous efforts to address safety concerns, some of which were expressed by seniors in survey comments.

## CONCLUSION

Every day for the next 18 or so years, one thousand people in Canada will celebrate their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Fraser Health Authority is projecting a whopping increase of 57 percent, a total of 12,415 more seniors in The Langleys by 2024.<sup>13</sup> The silver tsunami (as some refer to it) is not coming - it has arrived!

All of us would like to believe we are immune to the housing needs described in this report. We do not want to think about "what if's" and would rather avoid the sometimes discomfoting realities of aging.

Our survey confirms that seniors in our community are living at risk of poor health and accidental injury as a result of their lack of financial resources to obtain the necessities of life and obtain accessible housing to accommodate their limitations.

The results of the Triple A survey indicate that when participants were asked how long they would remain in their present home 30 percent suggested they would move in the next 1-5 years but given the lack of affordable, accessible, and appropriate housing options to meet their respective financial, mobility, social connectedness and safety needs, one must ask "where will they go?" and "when will suitable housing be made available?"

Affordable housing demand estimates, based on population growth projections, have been established for each municipality for a 10 year period beginning in 2011. Net additional units of affordable rental housing estimated for low-income and low to moderate income tenants' total 600 units for the City and 3,100 units for the Township.<sup>14</sup>

A review of the Housing Action Plan of the Township of Langley (2013) and the Affordable Housing Strategy of the City of Langley (2009) confirms that both jurisdictions are aware of the need to develop new non-market housing (for owners and renters) and to preserve and improve the quality of existing rental units. Hopefully, these survey results will add impetus to planning and policy development designed to achieve the targets included in the Metro 2040 Affordable Housing Strategy.

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<sup>13</sup> Fraser Health, 2015, Health Aging Profile accessed on August 27, 2015, at [www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

<sup>14</sup> Metro Vancouver 2040 Shaping Our Future, Appendix A4, accessed on October 23, 2015 at <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/RGSAdoptedbyGVRDBoardJuly292011.pdf>

Responding to the demographic reality of our changing housing needs is no easy matter. True collaboration and partnerships are necessary to meet the challenge. Triple A Senior Housing is hopeful that the Langley Senior Housing Survey conducted “by and for seniors”, and this report highlighting its significant findings, will result in a new awareness and motivate decision-makers in our province and community to work together to provide for the housing needs and preferences of our aging population in The Langleys.

## THE LAST WORD

We’d like to share a few of the “other ideas or comments to consider for housing for older adults,” provided by respondents to the survey:

*“... a safe, environmentally friendly, mentally stimulating, supportive house ... not a clinical environment where I’m expected to make crafts out of toilet rolls!”*

*“...build communities or little villages where, as the expression ‘it takes a village to raise a child’, well, it takes a village to support aging seniors”*

*“manufactured homes are ideal affordable housing for seniors...impossible to find anything bigger than a small breadbox in a basement...for the same price. The MH park is a community – we look after our neighbours, help those with mobility or other challenges, provide activities ... have a bit of land for gardening, a safe place to walk and visit...please consider keeping or increasing manufactures home parks for affordable senior housing.”*

*“it would be healthier to have elder housing interspersed with units of younger people as opposed to...warehousing us into virtual ghettos...”*

*“it’s not affordable, and if it is, it’s usually not safe...”*

*“allow one pet. A pet is the only friend some people have and the senior would probably live longer (and pay taxes longer)...I would like to keep my cat”*

*“subsidize rent for old farts...I only get about \$1200 a month ... housing for people in my situation needs to be available.”*

*“Aldergrove needs ...more housing for seniors...an assisted living complex”*

*“...even though stairs are a problem, I cannot afford to live anywhere else”*

*“Langley is building far too many town homes and condos that only appeal to younger people...not enough ranchers to downsize to”*

*“live on a cruise ship...rather than a \$3-5,000/month ...retirement community”*

*“ a need in the City and Township for one-level, small lot homes in a neighbourhood/community environment where seniors could own their own homes and walk to amenities”*

*“not enough homes for seniors, baby boomers will need lots in the future...”*

*“affordability, affordability, affordability”*

## APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Langley Senior Housing Survey

This Housing Survey is for older adults who reside in the Township or the City of Langley.

#### SPONSORED BY:

CARP (Canadian Association of Retired Persons), LANGLEY SENIOR RESOURCES SOCIETY (LSRS) and LANGLEY SENIORS COMMUNITY ACTION TABLE (LSCAT)

The “Triple A” (Affordable, Accessible, Appropriate) Senior Housing Workshop & Summit working group successfully presented a half day workshop at the Langley Seniors Resource Centre on November 23, 2013 and a 2-day Summit is being planned for early May or June, 2014. Seniors in all of Langley are invited to participate in both of these events which will be inspired by the information derived from this survey.

The survey has been designed to protect your anonymity by avoiding identifying questions. Your co-operation in answering the questions will help us achieve our goal of working together to find solutions to the housing problems of seniors. Once the Survey Report has been published, the results will be confidentially deleted and destroyed. The report will be available to the public at the Triple A (Affordable, Accessible, Appropriate) Senior Housing Summit. **NOTE:** You may receive a request to complete this survey from various sources. **If you have already filled it out and returned it, please do not continue.**

#### A. General Information:

1. **Where do you live?** Langley City \_\_\_\_ Walnut Grove \_\_\_\_ Fort Langley \_\_\_\_  
Brookwood/Fernridge \_\_\_\_ Murrayville \_\_\_\_ Aldergrove \_\_\_\_ Willoughby \_\_\_\_
2. **Are you male** \_\_\_\_ **or female** \_\_\_\_?
3. **Your age group?** 45-54 \_\_\_\_ 55 – 64 \_\_\_\_ 65 – 74 \_\_\_\_ 75 – 84 \_\_\_\_ 85+ \_\_\_\_
4. **If responding as a couple, what age group is your spouse or partner in?**  
45-54 \_\_\_\_ 55 – 64 \_\_\_\_ 65 – 74 \_\_\_\_ 75 – 84 \_\_\_\_ 85+ \_\_\_\_

**5. Check which one describes your present housing situation?**

- Single-family detached house
- Condo or apartment
- Townhouse
- Secondary suite in single-family detached house
- Manufactured home
- Mobile home (trailer, RV)
- Sharing with friends/family
- I have no permanent address
- Other (e.g. co-op housing, cohousing, assisted/supportive living)

**Please explain:** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Is your housing:**

- Owned without a mortgage
- Owned with a mortgage
- Rented/leased
- Other (**Please describe**) \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Housing Affordability:**

**7. Please estimate your household's total gross income in 2012 (before income tax). Or, if you live alone, enter your personal gross income.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$20,000      | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 - \$60,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,001 - \$40,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,001 - \$70,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,001 - \$50,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$70,000       |

8. Estimate whether you spend more than 30 percent of your gross monthly income for all housing costs? (rent, mortgage payment, property taxes, home insurance and utilities such as heat, electricity, water and other municipal services)

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel your housing costs are affordable? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you receive government assistance for housing? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If YES, what type of assistance do you receive?

11. Do you cut back on your food budget so you can pay your rent or mortgage?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ SOMETIMES \_\_\_\_\_ OFTEN \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you put off paying bills so you can pay your rent or mortgage?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ SOMETIMES \_\_\_\_\_ OFTEN \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you put off filling prescriptions so you can pay your rent or mortgage?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_ SOMETIMES \_\_\_\_\_ OFTEN \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Housing Accessibility:**

14. Do you or your partner have any personal limitations that might affect where you can live?

NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_

15. If you answered YES to the last question, please describe the limitation:

Vision \_\_\_\_\_ Hearing \_\_\_\_\_ Mobility Related: \_\_\_\_\_ **Please specify:** Wheelchair \_\_\_\_\_

Walker \_\_\_\_\_ Cane \_\_\_\_\_ Scooter \_\_\_\_\_ Stairs \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Would anyone (e.g. ambulance attendant, visitor) have difficulty entering your current home?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ If YES, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Appropriate Housing:**

17. Do you feel safe in your present housing? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

18. Does your present housing meet your needs at this time? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered NO, please explain why not? \_\_\_\_\_

19. How long do you plan to live in your present home? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What reason would lead you to decide to move? \_\_\_\_\_

21. If you move, will you remain in the same community? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ UNCERTAIN \_\_\_\_\_

If NO or UNCERTAIN what community would you prefer to move to? \_\_\_\_\_

22. If you move, what type of housing would you prefer to move to?

- \_\_\_\_\_ single-family detached house
- \_\_\_\_\_ condo or apartment
- \_\_\_\_\_ townhouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ secondary suite in single family-detached house
- \_\_\_\_\_ manufactured home
- \_\_\_\_\_ mobile home (trailer, RV)
- \_\_\_\_\_ assisted or supportive living
- \_\_\_\_\_ co-op housing or cohousing
- \_\_\_\_\_ sharing with friends/family an apartment/condo
- \_\_\_\_\_ sharing with friends/family a secondary suite
- \_\_\_\_\_ sharing with friends/family a townhouse
- \_\_\_\_\_ sharing with friends/family a detached house
- \_\_\_\_\_ sharing with friends/family a mobile home (trailer, RV)
- \_\_\_\_\_ sharing with friends/family a manufactured home

23. If you move would you prefer to: Own                      Rent/lease \_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other: (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

24. Other ideas or comments for us to consider about housing for older adults:

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**THANK YOU** for your time and attention in completing this important survey. Please return it to the Triple A Senior Housing Survey Committee by:

1. Complete and hand it back to the person who provided it to you.
2. Put it into the Housing Survey Collection Box at the Langley Seniors Centre, 20605 – 51B Avenue, Langley.
3. Mail it to Langley Seniors Community Action Table in the self-addressed envelope provided with the survey.

## APPENDIX B: OUTREACH EFFORTS

Community members and organizations played an imperative role in the promotion and conduct of the survey:

- Langley Seniors Community Action Table (LSCAT) members: Allan Skuce, Arlette Raza, Mary Kydd and Sylvia Anderson;
- Melody Leskun (Melody's House Calls), Teunis Schouten (BCared For) and Andrea Droege (former owner, Comfort Keepers );
- Langley Meals on Wheels: Ashley Scott, Sharon Reeder and numerous volunteer drivers;
- Aldergrove Vets & Seniors: Marlene Samuelson and Marie Gold;
- Langley Senior Resources Society: Barb Stack (former executive director), Janice McTaggart and Pam Reed (staff) and several volunteer housing counsellors as well as members of the Volunteer Ambassadors;
- Brookwood Senior Centre – staff and membership;
- Central Fraser Valley Manufactured Homeowners' Association – Fernridge Park representative, Patricia McEachern (also a Triple A Working Group member);
- Maples Discovery Gardens - Leo Mitrunen, meeting space;
- CARP website and local Chapter 48 website - CARP is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to advocating for a New Vision of Aging for Canada;
- City of Langley website - Meetings and Events Page – notice, direct access to the survey;
- Township of Langley website - Events Page notice and survey link information; Langley Senior Resources Society (LSRS) (a Triple A founding member) provided paper surveys and promoted of online surveys as well as a drop-box for hard copy surveys. The survey was piloted with a group of LSRS volunteers. Housing counsellors promoted it.
- Municipal Pension Retirees Association and BC Government Retired Employees Association presentations and distribution of survey and link information at meetings;
- Several manufactured home parks in the Township and a few apartment blocks in the City were provided with the survey. An online link was sent to the Central Fraser Valley Manufactured Homeowners' Association.
- No Frills grocery store, Price Smart (now Save-On) Willowbrook Mall and Otter Co-op provided a table for volunteers who sought respondents. Hard copies of the survey along with return envelopes were handed out and survey links were also distributed;
- Senior's luncheons (Food & Friends), sponsored by Langley Meals on Wheels) in Walnut Grove, Fort Langley, Aldergrove, Otter, Langley City and Brookwood. Triple A Working Group members and, on a few occasions Meals on Wheels staff, made a presentation and provided the survey for completion
- Aldergrove Vets and Seniors – Triple A Working Group member presentation, distribution and collection of completed surveys;
- Notices for insert in Sunday Service bulletins were sent to several churches.