

Assisted Living Action Group (ALAG)

Assisted Living Seniors' Housing Initiative PHASE ONE

November 2013

The community based Assisted Living Action Group (ALAG) consists of senior volunteers who work in collaboration with key district service providers who in turn are very supportive and involved. The ALAG Core Planning Team (ACPT) continues to be very active with research and planning activities which help to move the Rainy River Valley (RRV) Assisted Living Housing Initiative forward.

Phase One Assisted Living Seniors' Housing Goal:

- To build for seniors an attractive, not-for-profit, fully secured, free standing Assisted Living facility in the Rainy River District that is built in accordance with The Accessibility for *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, and *Building Code* which will be enforced in 2025.

Ideal Location

- Close proximity to health care facilities and social, recreational amenities is essential.

Who is Assisted Living Housing is for:

- Seniors 55+
- Seniors who are in need of some support services but are able to perform basic independent activities of daily living

Planning Process:

- The construction will be an innovative model customized to the life style and needs of seniors as identified by seniors in the RRD and will be the first facility of a sustainable 20-30 year plan for cluster housing with phases of development to expand as required to meet the needs of changing demographics of the senior population and the baby bust generation that follows

- The number of units will be determined and built for seniors who are currently in need of assisted living accommodations and personal services
- Units will be a combination of subsidized and market rent (ownership could possibly be negotiated)
- The bricks and mortar of Phase One Seniors' Housing will house future services that will provide customized personal support and will allow seniors to age at home as long as possible (i.e.: nutritional food preparation, transportation, laundry, housekeeping, 24/7 on site personal support and medical supervision)

Service Restructuring Currently in Progress:

- Start small and repurpose as we go
- Construct a model of inter-agency collaboration to maximize services for minimal cost by starting within the existing facilities and with existing services.

District Issues:

- Paper mill lay-offs result in workers leaving RRD for employment, in turn there is a decline in caregiver support for seniors
- More seniors will follow their children and grandchildren who are employed elsewhere (already happening)
- Out migration of youth and local professionals
- Population 65+ in RRD is above the Provincial and National average while potential caregivers are leaving the district for education or employment
- More seniors are caring for seniors. Consequently, the personal health of senior caregivers is impacted increasing their level of risk and corresponding healthcare cost
- Low population density in a large geographic area is costly to provide quality personal support and healthcare services

- There is a huge gap, in accommodations and support service options, between living in single dwelling houses or apartments and long term care facilities
- Out migration of seniors to find the accommodations and services they require
- When seniors leave they take with them their financial resources, community history, wisdom and volunteer contributions of money & services, etc.
- Decline in local Family Tourism (ie: celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions and even funerals)
- Decline in local tax base and income from Municipal services
- The proposed operational business plan of New Gold Mining Inc. has been reported to be for 20 years. What then?
- All levels of government tell us, "there is NO money", yet we continually see evidence that large sums of public money is being wasted by disjointed, segmented, short term planning and funding at all levels of government

Community Benefits:

- Assisted Living Facilities and personal support and care services will contribute to a sustainable future for the RRD by increasing job opportunities and sustaining population of all ages. Seniors don't take jobs away, they create jobs and contribute to our local economy
- Seniors use less Municipal services but pay the same as other residents
- This innovative solution will provide the missing link and options in the continuum of affordable senior housing, personal support and care needs and will be an attractive option to seniors and their families who are seeking quality care and life style for self or aging parents and grandparents when making relocation choices
- The higher the population density living in close proximity will decrease the public and private cost of services and housing and increase quality of care, availability of amenities and affordability

- A sustainable future will be supplemented by increasing job opportunities, sustaining population of all ages and will help sustain Municipal tax base and income from Municipal services

Summary of ALAG Strategic Action Plan Community Based Process:

- Gathered input from a variety of key RRD service providers and community partners during three community strategic planning events (March and October 2012 and January 2013) and ongoing interaction with community services and partners
- Listened to the input from seniors in communities where they live and gather: Reports on the *ALAG Aging at Home Survey for Older Adults in the Rainy River District; 2012* and *ALAG Community Presentations, 2013*; and ongoing interaction with seniors
- Received consultation from key professionals both inside and outside RRD district.