



Our New Lodge:

The Need

Wheatland Housing Management Board (WHMB) has a credible history of fulfilling the provincial mandate given to municipalities to supply low-income housing for seniors for over 50 years. Wheatland Lodge was built in the 1960's. It is well cared for, but unfortunately outdated in structure and design. Wheatland County is an area of economic and population growth, and future demographic projections demonstrate an urgent need for seniors housing.

<p>Does Wheatland County really need a new lodge?</p>	<p>Yes. Regional demographics predict the need for 400 spaces in the next 20 years. 1 in 4 seniors over the age of 80 will need support for housing in our area. Our existing 89 room lodge has a waiting list for 20 seniors. Without new beds, this will never be resolved.</p> <p>Even worse, imagine the demand as more baby boomers enter their later years. WHMB hopes to start a 120 bed phased-in build east of Kinsmen Lake soon.</p>
<p>Why do seniors live in a lodge?</p>	<p>While each person's situation is unique, most seniors choose to move to a lodge once driving longer distances to services, mobility on stairs and in bathrooms, cooking or house maintenance, and social isolation are too great.</p>
<p>Didn't Sagewood fix the seniors housing needs in our area?</p>	<p>No. Sagewood serves a different need: both independent and Supportive Living Accommodation Standards SL3/SL4 or Long Term Care (LTC) settings. These are <i>care</i> supports. Seniors in a lodge do not require much care supports, just meals, light housekeeping, and social supports.</p>
<p>Aren't most people living longer in their own home?</p>	<p>Yes. Family and care services have done a great job helping our seniors stay in their homes longer. The average age for entry to the Lodge is now 89, and our seniors can expect to live for 5-10 years further.</p>
<p>If you build a new lodge will the old lodge be torn down?</p>	<p>No. To meet the rapidly increasing need for more spaces in our area our plan is to use the existing lodge for the next 20 years as part of the phased build of new space(s). There is no definitive future plan to "decommission" the old lodge or land but we'd be interested in your ideas.</p>



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<p>Won't the proposed Chara facility near Speargrass resolve the housing need?</p>	<p>No. It's our understanding that this proposed project depends on either a rental or investment option. A low income senior would likely be unable to invest. The Byma models target mostly a seniors demographic that do not typically require daily supportive services found in a lodge environment (remember only 1 in 4 will require it).</p>
<p>Are there other local private facilities providing congregate senior's care?</p>	<p>Yes. Lakeshore Manor in Chestermere has recently opened; it is a converted Best Western Hotel. WHMB believes we could better provide a variety of spaces and opportunities while living together with a design build specific to seniors.</p>
<p>Aren't seniors supposed to "age in place" in their own homes now?</p>	<p>Age in Place (AIP) is the ability to live in one's own home safely and independently regardless of income or ability. Alberta Health hopes to fund more in-home support in our rural area, but it's tough to find contract staff to go into remote areas. Actual time in the home is diminished by travel/commute time. So unfortunately, sometimes a move into a lodge setting is necessary. In the future, WHMB hopes to secure more funding to expand its own SL3 and SL4 care services to ensure all lodge residents can stay longer in their new home.</p>
<p>How did the covid pandemic affect seniors living in congregate facilities?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, Ontario and Quebec studies show there were more pandemic deaths in private care facilities than not-for-profit facilities like WHMB. In this situation, small is better, where dedicated staff tend to work in one facility only, and there is greater agility to deal with urgent situations.</p>
<p>What are the lessons from COVID in building the new senior's lodge?</p>	<p>Older buildings don't have specific aerosol ventilation or an ability to segregate individual areas rather than people; our new building design would be built with these up-to-date principles in mind.</p>
<p>Isn't it creepy to have a hospice located within a seniors' facility?</p>	<p>No. In fact we are replicating the new Alberta Health model throughout Alberta where two services are in one building (such as 26 bed Dulcina Hospice located in St Marguerite Manor LTC in Calgary). More often now organizations that work together get priority for funding from governments because there is huge savings in operating costs (land, kitchen, laundry, staff) as well as leveraging and synergies of similar goals (such as compassion, care, and local community backing).</p>



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<p>I think it might be upsetting to live so close to a hospice.</p>	<p>Most visitors find hospice settings comforting. Regardless, design plans are for a separate entrance, minimal foot traffic between the two areas, and a distinctly calm atmosphere that is very different from the unique vibe of active lodge life. On the other hand, Wheatland Area Hospice Society (WAHS) hopes the hospice will also have family visiting, volunteers coming and going, and even the great smell of cookies baking in their kitchen, just like the atmosphere in our new lodge.</p>
<p>Why not a stand-alone hospice?</p>	<p>Neighborhood zoning, parking for family, volunteers, staff, and service vehicles make placing a hospice in a residential neighborhood difficult. Additionally, operational costs would be higher as a stand-alone. A countryside location would be even more difficult: for example, for the daily delivery and security of narcotics, and ability to attract staff and doctors. Most new hospice beds are now within existing facilities and, following a long-standing hospice tradition, are free of charge to families. And fundraising by communities not government programs always raise 100% of the cost to build a hospice.</p>
<p>Once 120 spaces are added, when will the next phase roll out?</p>	<p>WHMB’s immense responsibility to provide seniors and low-income housing requires an immediate and ongoing response. We will continue to look at all options and likely continue with a phased in approach to add even more spaces at the new site.</p>
<p>Any last advice?</p>	<p>Just like building your home, WHMB is considering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function: What do we need? • Form: What will the build look like? • Costs: Can we afford the cost and financing? <p>WHMB realizes this proposal is intimidating. But because of the incredible need to provide housing for our seniors who <i>built this community</i>, we must move towards the hard work, even if it is a bit overwhelming.</p>