

Seniors' Housing in Alberta: Providers & Key Financial Considerations

The Town of Coaldale is conducting a survey on the future of seniors' housing in the community. This document provides an overview of the different types of seniors' housing providers in Alberta, as well as information on how rent is set. The goal is to ensure survey participants have a clear understanding of the available options.

Types of Seniors' Housing Providers

Seniors' housing in Alberta is provided by three different types of providers, each with different cost structures and service levels.

1. Public Seniors' Housing Providers (Housing Management Bodies)

These providers are established by the provincial government to provide affordable housing for seniors. They operate under the *Alberta Housing Act* and are funded through a combination of rental income, government subsidies, and municipal requisitions.

- Rent is controlled by the Government of Alberta, making it the most income-adjusted option.
- Services typically include meals, housekeeping, utilities, and 24/7 staff.
- Public housing providers may offer various levels of care, allowing seniors to transition from independent living to more supportive environments if needed.
- In Coaldale, residents contribute to a reserve fund for future public housing projects through municipal requisitions. These requisitions are collected by the Green Acres Foundation - the Town's provincially established Housing Management Body.

2. Private Not-for-Profit Seniors' Housing Providers

These providers are usually faith-based or community-driven and operate without the goal of generating profits. They provide housing open to the public but set their own rental rates. Examples in the region include Covenant Health (Martha's House in Lethbridge) and the Good Samaritan Society.

- There are no rent controls, meaning costs can vary.
- Some providers offer additional services, such as memory care or health care, but not all facilities provide the full range of care under one roof.
- These providers conduct their own feasibility studies to determine whether to build in a given community.

3. Private For-Profit Seniors' Housing Providers

These are market-driven businesses that provide seniors' housing for those who can afford market rates. They generally offer higher-end amenities but do not typically provide full medical or memory care services. Examples in Lethbridge include Atria Retirement Canada (The View) and Seasons Retirement Communities.

- There are no rent controls, and rental rates are set based on market demand.
- Services often include meals, housekeeping, and recreational activities, but medical and memory care services are generally not included.
- Like not-for-profit providers, for-profit providers conduct feasibility studies before deciding where to build new facilities.

Cost Comparison of Seniors' Housing Options

The cost of seniors' housing varies significantly based on the type of provider. Below is a comparison of monthly rental costs for a one-bedroom unit in public, private not-for-profit, and private for-profit facilities in neighbouring Lethbridge.

Provider Type	Monthly Cost	Included Services
Public Housing (Green Acres Foundation - Pemican Lodge)	\$1,264 + 30% of income	Rent, meals, housekeeping, utilities, 24/7 staff
Not-for-Profit Housing (Martha's House - Covenant Health)	\$2,979/month OR \$155,000 down + \$2,187/month	Rent, meals, housekeeping, utilities, on-site pub
For-Profit Housing (The View - Atria Retirement)	\$3,495/month + \$600 for meals	Rent, utilities, housekeeping, maintenance

To understand how these costs affect seniors, let's look at what percentage of income they represent for seniors at different at both average and median income levels.

For a senior with an annual income of \$53,100 (average income in Alberta):

- **Public Housing:** \$31,098 per year (58.6% of annual income)
- **Not-for-Profit Housing:** \$35,748 per year (67.3% of annual income)
- **For-Profit Housing:** \$49,140 per year (92.5% of annual income)

For a senior earning \$35,100 per year (median income):

- **Public Housing:** \$25,698 per year (73.2% of annual income)
- **Not-for-Profit Housing:** \$35,748 per year (101.8% of annual income)
- **For-Profit Housing:** \$49,140 per year (140% of annual income)

This comparison shows that affordability varies depending on income levels, with public housing generally offering the lowest cost relative to income

Considerations for Future Seniors' Housing in Coaldale

Each type of seniors' housing organization has different benefits and challenges. Below is a summary of key considerations for Coaldale.

Public Seniors' Housing Providers (Housing Management Bodies)

- ✔ **Affordability:** Costs are income-based, making housing accessible for a wide range of seniors.
- ✔ **Comprehensive Services:** Housing includes meals, housekeeping, and 24/7 staffing.
- ✔ **Community Investment:** Coaldale residents already contribute to a reserve fund for future public housing projects.
- ◆ **Considerations:** To develop a new public housing facility sooner, the Town may need to contribute land or additional funding.

Private Not-for-Profit Seniors' Housing Providers

- ✔ **Diverse Service Offerings:** Some providers include healthcare and memory care services.
- ✔ **Does Not Require Public Land or Funds:** These providers handle their own feasibility studies and funding.
- ◆ **Considerations:** Without rent controls, costs can be significantly higher than public housing, affecting affordability for some seniors.

Private For-Profit Seniors' Housing Providers

- ✔ **No Public Funding Required:** Developments are funded by private companies.
- ✔ **Market-Driven Amenities:** Typically offer high-end housing with recreational and lifestyle-focused services.
- ◆ **Considerations:** Costs tend to be higher than both public and not-for-profit options, and most facilities do not provide full medical or memory care.

Conclusion

Coaldale has multiple options for seniors' housing development, each with different cost structures and service offerings. Public housing provides income-based affordability and is already supported by municipal funding. Not-for-profit and for-profit housing options offer additional choices but tend to be more expensive and subject to market conditions. Your input will help determine the best path forward to ensure that Coaldale provides a range of seniors' housing options that meet the needs of our aging population.