



News Release

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WBHDC releases reports to ensure informed conversation

The new Parsons Creek continuing care centre and existing seniors housing options meet the for seniors housing for the next decade

Fort McMurray—Wood Buffalo Housing & Development Corporation (WBHDC) has completed a number of technical reports and public engagement exercises required to advance the concept for its proposed redevelopment of the site formerly known as Willow Square.

As promised, those documents are released to the public on its website to support an informed conversation about the community’s needs and development concepts best suited to meet those needs.

WBHDC hired Altus Group, Canada’s premier real estate appraisal agency, to conduct an independent assessment of seniors housing and health care needs in Wood Buffalo for the next decade. Working from the Regional Municipality’s 2012 Census, and with instructions to be as liberal as possible in its investigations, Altus determined that all seniors housing – except for market-pay independent and supportive living – will be accommodated by the existing facilities at Araubasca House, Legion Manor and Rotary House Lodge, plus the long-anticipated long-term care centre in Parsons Creek.

The Government of Alberta announced in May it had awarded the contract to build the 100-bed Parsons Creek continuing care centre. When opened, it will enable the 30-40 people occupying acute care beds in the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre who need long-term care to move to a more appropriate facility. The move will also free up much needed acute care space in the hospital.

WBHDC’s online survey has also been closed and the results analyzed. In short, residents of Wood Buffalo share the concern that seniors housing needs be met as required as quickly as possible. Residents also indicate, however, interest in a mixed-use facility that would include affordable housing, retail space, commercial office space and below-market office space to be used by non-profit organizations and, potentially, health care services. Survey respondents shared their opinions from January to March, before the results of the seniors needs assessment were known.

Documents released today include the following:

- the Executive Summary of Altus Group’s *Market Demand Study and Seniors Needs Assessment*, prepared by WBHDC;
- the *Online Survey Analysis Executive Summary*;
- the *Online Survey Analysis* full report; and
- the *Online Survey Respondent Comments* report (raw responses unedited).

These documents can be obtained by visiting www.wbhadc.ca, clicking on “What’s New” and then on “Aging in Place/Community Village.” The Regional Municipality also released a scanned version of Altus’ full report last Friday, which can be obtained by viewing the materials for Council’s June 9 meeting.

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