



PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS

Moving toward Greater Indigenous Opportunities
in British Columbia's Real Estate Industry



About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries. More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

Territorial Acknowledgment

ULI British Columbia acknowledges that we carry out our work on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səlilwətal (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and the Coast Salish peoples.

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About ULI British Columbia

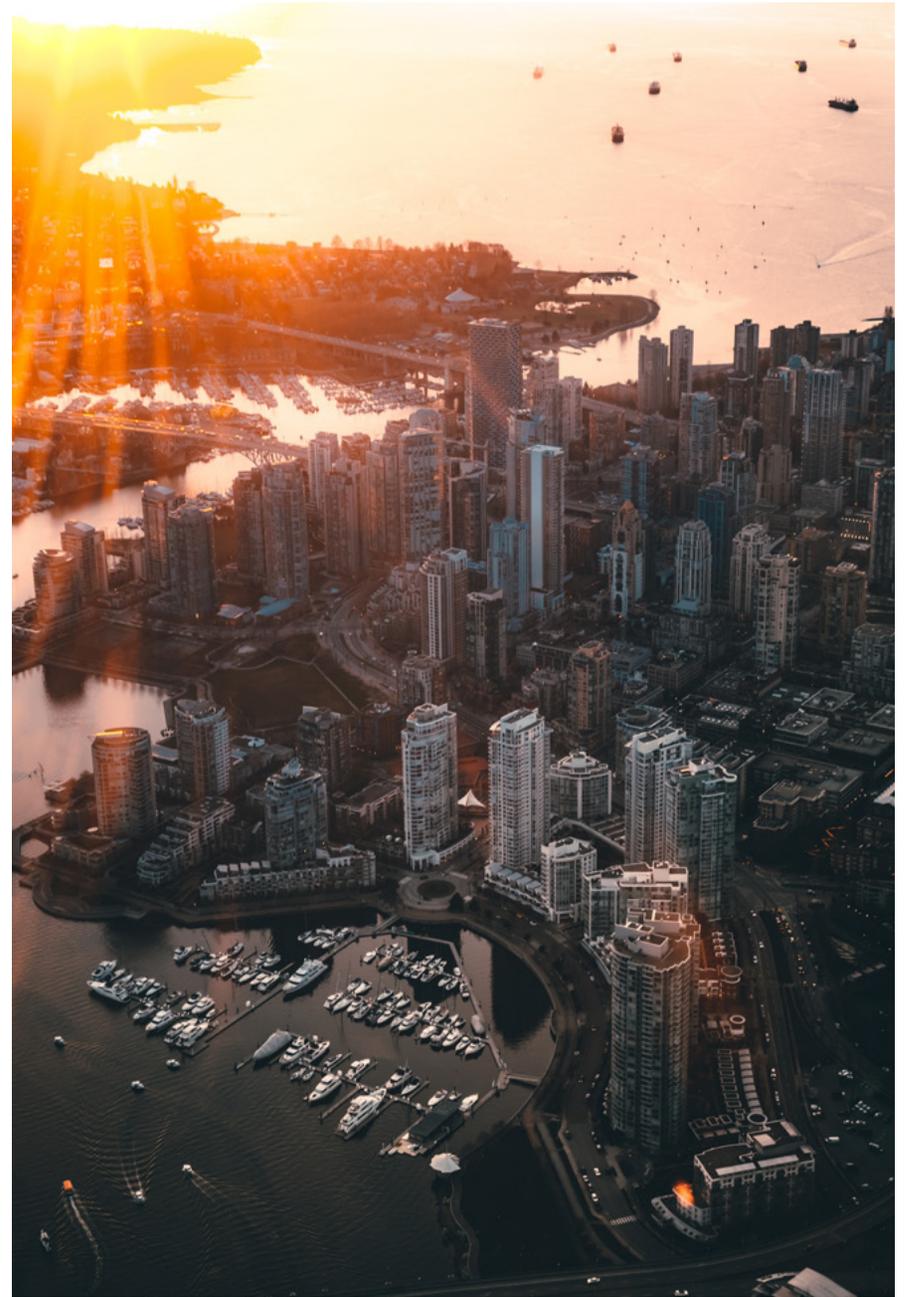
ULI British Columbia brings together multidisciplinary professionals with a range of experiences and expertise. We offer nonpartisan, unbiased content that lends itself to being the leading organization in the region dedicated to excellence in city building and best practices. Through thought leadership, developing the leaders of tomorrow, leveraging ULI's global network, and being fully engaged in our communities, we are committed to tackling the greatest urban challenges we face as cities, regions, provinces, and the country.

About the Randall Lewis Center for Sustainability in Real Estate

The ULI Randall Lewis Center for Sustainability in Real Estate leads the real estate industry in creating places and buildings where people and the environment thrive. In collaboration with ULI members and partners, the Lewis Center drives industry transformation, cultivates leaders and champions, and helps foster solutions for sustainable, resilient, healthy and equitable cities and communities. The center pursues these goals via cutting-edge research, global convenings, community technical assistance, and other strategies. The center's main programs are Decarbonization, Urban Resilience, and Healthy Places.

About the ULI District Council Partnerships for Health and Racial Equity

Beginning in August 2021, member-led partnerships organized by ULI district councils in British Columbia, Houston, Northwest, St. Louis, and Toronto worked to understand historical inequities and racial discrimination in land use. Working independently and collectively, each team crafted creative strategies to address the ongoing impacts of these inequalities on community health and wealth disparities. Local efforts were part of ULI's District Council Partnerships for Health and Racial Equity, led by ULI's Building Healthy Places Initiative with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In addition to identifying a local challenge and executing an 18-month scope of work, each team was encouraged to document its project, outcomes, and recommendations, producing a deliverable that would meet the local need. The result is a library of five distinctive reports reflecting the work done in each community. Additionally, a synthesis report and online StoryMap provide a high-level summary of the collective effort and the project overall. More information is available at uli.org/partnerships.



Aerial view of downtown Vancouver.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the story of our shared Canadian history, how colonialism and past policy/legislation have laid the groundwork for the current context for Indigenous peoples living in British Columbia. The specific focus is on Vancouver and the Lower Mainland communities, but the lessons are applicable throughout BC and the country of Canada.

An abbreviated timeline of British Columbia's interaction with Indigenous communities follows:

- Passed in 1876, and still in force with amendments today, the Indian Act is the primary document that defines how the government of Canada interacts with the 614 First Nation bands in Canada (204 of which are in British Columbia) and their members. The removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands along with other government-sponsored policy and programs established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture has severely affected their health and well-being, access to services and housing, economic opportunities, and loss of culture, traditions, and teachings.

- Documenting some of the effects of past government policies and drawing a line between government policy and current health, housing, and socioeconomic status of Indigenous peoples is an important part of this work as historically this information has been absent in Canadian schools and many postsecondary curriculums.
- Understanding that simply removing or reversing this action is not an option or a viable solution to entrenched, generational trauma, ULI BC also looked to cues from and calls to the sector to participate under recent and current legislation and policy, such as the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 calls to action and the 2022 BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) aimed at reconciliation.
- The 92nd TRC call to action and DRIPA sections 4.36–4.49 provide specific opportunities for the real estate sector to meaningfully engage in economic reconciliation. Through this framework, ULI BC seeks to challenge the real estate sector to think about the life cycles of their projects and work in collaboration to identify opportunities for training and skills development, shift procurement to support Indigenous-owned business, and create meaningful jobs from preconstruction through postconstruction occupancy.
- Through successful case studies, ULI BC provides example partnerships and projects and assembles resources into a tool kit. Each transaction, each contract, each business moment is an opportunity, and this report is about creating a space to apply the tool kit and example areas of economic partnerships.



First Nations totem poles in Canada.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The ULI BC Partnerships for Health Equity Program (PHEP) approach is one of guided learning, discussion, and development of a resources tool kit for members who are looking to augment their reconciliation journey and who aspire to evolve their business by addressing chronic barriers to housing for Indigenous persons.

The program is made up of three collateral pieces and is meant to be a “living” resource. ULI BC’s event series* comprises fireside chats and panel discussions that are broadcast to members. The event series starts with an overview of how we arrived here—“Our Shared Canadian History and Urban Indigenous Context.” It then looks at what the sector can do with a panel discussion of “Building Better: Partnering with First Nations” and ends with “Economic Mobility and

*Due to challenges in coordination and availability caused by the pandemic, the event series commenced in February 2023 and continued into spring. Updates and features of this series will be posted on the ULI BC [website](#).

Housing Resiliency: Jobs and Housing.” To support and document these conversations, infographics with web-based links for further exploration and data representing impacts and opportunities are presented. And last, the ULI BC Health Equity Resource Hub is a digital library filled with links and references for members, including case studies, **additional readings, podcasts, and a plethora of links to Indigenous-based businesses, development companies, and First Nations communities.**

The Resource Hub is “living” and meant to be evolutionary. Members will be able to add resources and references. ULI BC’s goal is to encourage thought leadership and innovation for Indigenous partnerships in housing, so that health and well-being initiatives will continue beyond the ULI PHEP: this program is simply the beginning, an ignition, of this much needed resource.



BACKGROUND

ULI BC’s Partnership for Health Equity Program has been designed to provide a tool kit to the public and private real estate sectors while breaking down and building awareness of some of the systemic barriers to housing and employment for Indigenous populations. Looking beyond affordability and housing design, the PHEP works to support Indigenous businesses and groups by guiding organizations toward the many employment opportunities that can be offered to Indigenous peoples throughout the development life cycle while redirecting procurement spending to Indigenous businesses. With its upcoming event forums, ULI BC’s PHEP will facilitate the local real estate sector in developing tools to contribute to safe, affordable housing while promoting increased health, well-being, and long-term social and economic sustainability.

A preliminary survey¹ of ULI BC members showed that of those that participated in the survey, 62.5 percent saw that their organization worked directly with and/or provided services to Indigenous persons. Most were interested in building Indigenous employment opportunities (29 percent); engaging with Indigenous communities (25 percent); and partnering with Indigenous business (25 percent).

The Data: Housing Inventory and Housing Needs

The Indigenous housing need should be examined from two lenses, on reserve (national) and off reserve (urban). This geography of housing differences not only presents distinct characteristics in housing availability and accessibility, but it also has long-lasting implications for access by Indigenous persons to education, health, and employment systems that are key to long-term health and well-being. In the urban context, the conditions of title ownership and land administration that facilitate the delivery of housing are mostly wielded by government systems (i.e., senior levels of government fund housing, and municipal governments generally oversee land use policy, zoning, and density) that differ from national on-reserve housing systems. Until recently, land administration and funding for on-reserve housing was solely under the jurisdiction of the federal government, and First Nation self-governance was still conducted under the auspices of the Indian Act, which has had limiting effects on First Nations growth and sense of community.

In 2022, a report prepared by Carleton University, *Assessing First Nations Housing Need in BC*, for BC Housing, the first province in the country to implement a First Nations housing program, quantified housing needs across First Nation communities in BC.² It is important to not only understand the inventory of housing options for Indigenous communities, but also the condition of housing and tendency for overcrowding if

one is to understand the impacts of housing, or lack thereof, on this demographic. The report authors, Colbourne et al., estimate that 5,700 on-reserve homes are in need of capital improvements, where home inadequacies were 27 percent in the urban communities, 36 percent in rural communities, and 39 percent in remote communities. Overcrowding was identified as about 5 percent across the same groups.

The same report cited on-reserve challenges with funding and human resources; civil infrastructure and servicing; community planning (governance and policy structures); and integrated connections to other systems that determined success, such as health. The data released in the report noted that a majority of band members live off reserve and that an overwhelming number of Indigenous persons living off reserve in urban contexts (i.e., metropolitan cities or regions, like Metro Vancouver), some 80 to 100 percent, would like to move on reserve where they feel a better sense of belonging. However, because of a lack of housing choices, they are finding themselves in off-reserve options.

When looking at challenges of affordability, where affordable shelter costs are measured at 30 percent of monthly income or lower, a clear deficit exists in the inventory. Colborne et al. estimate that when considering off- and on-reserve housing needs and disparities across the province of BC in remote, rural, and urban contexts, a potential demand exists for between 11,500 and 16,500 homes for Indigenous persons.

Barriers to Housing Experienced by Indigenous Populations

In correspondence with the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), Canada's first grassroots housing authority with Indigenous membership, which oversees 95 percent of all off-reserve housing in BC, AHMA mentions the following barriers and challenges for Indigenous communities:³

- **Affordability and suitability.** Indigenous peoples are over-represented in statistics showing affordability and housing adequacy and/or suitability.

“. . . 27% spent more than 30% of their income on housing, and almost 10% spent more than 50% of their income on housing. Nationally, the 2016 Census found that 1.7 million households were in housing need, and 19.8% of these households identified as Indigenous.”⁴

- **Income.** Overall, Indigenous people have lower-than-average incomes.

“The average income for off-reserve Indigenous households in 2015 is \$83,673 compared to \$95,816 for non-Indigenous households. The unemployment rate was also higher for Indigenous peoples (12.2% versus 6.3%).”⁵

- **Overcrowding.** Family size for Indigenous peoples is generally 1.5 times more likely to have more persons per household (5+) than non-Indigenous households, resulting in overcrowding or inadequate housing.⁶

- **Lack of housing supply, both on and off reserve.** A review of BC Housing's (the provincial agency in charge of administration of government programs sponsoring affordable housing) directly managed housing stock (stock BC Housing manages itself) as well as nonprofit-managed housing stock shows Indigenous households represent 24 percent across the province with 17 percent represented in the Lower Mainland alone.⁷
- **Lack of supports related to housing.** A shortage in supports for vulnerable community members, specifically, trauma-informed resources, mental health and addictions, elder care, and cultural safety options, have exacerbated the lack of adequate housing options for health and wellness.
- **Discrimination in private market housing.** The report Housing Discrimination and Spatial Segregation in Canada, prepared by the Centre of Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA), National Right to Housing Network (NRHN), and Social Rights Advocacy Centre (SRAC) and presented to the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council in May 2021, went into great length on the subject of discrimination in the housing industry. The report notes that all roles in the housing sector, from government agencies to property managers, to landlords, to realtors, to community housing workers, have elements of cultural biases that create cultural and systemic impediments to suitable housing for Indigenous groups.

Author Jesse Thistle distinguishes Indigenous homelessness and housing instability from those experiencing homelessness who do not identify as Indigenous with the following 12 components: historical displacement; contemporary geographic separation; spiritual disconnection; mental disruption and imbalance; cultural disintegration and loss; overcrowding; relocation and mobility; going home; nowhere to go; escaping or evading harm; emergency crisis; and climate refugee.

The 12 Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness

As articulated by Indigenous Peoples across Canada

Historic Displacement Homelessness

Indigenous communities and Nations made historically homeless after being displaced from pre-colonial Indigenous lands.



Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness

An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from Indigenous lands, after colonial control.

Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness

An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from Indigenous worldviews or connection to the Creator or equivalent deity.



Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness

Mental homelessness, described as an imbalance of mental faculties, experienced by Indigenous individuals and communities caused by colonization's entrenched social and economic marginalization of Indigenous Peoples.

Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness

Homelessness that totally dislocates or alienates Indigenous individuals and communities from their culture and from the relationship web of Indigenous society known as "All My Relations."



Overcrowding Homelessness

The number of people per dwelling in urban and rural Indigenous households that exceeds the national Canadian household average, thus contributing to and creating unsafe, unhealthy and overcrowded living spaces, in turn causing homelessness.



Relocation and Mobility Homelessness

Mobile Indigenous homeless people travelling over geographic distances between urban and rural spaces for access to work, health, education, recreation, legal and childcare services, to attend spiritual events and ceremonies, have access to affordable housing, and to see family, friends and community members.



Going Home Homelessness

An Indigenous individual or family who has grown up or lived outside their home community for a period of time, and on returning "home," are often seen as outsiders, making them unable to secure a physical structure in which to live, due to federal, provincial, territorial or municipal bureaucratic barriers, uncooperative band or community councils, hostile community and kin members, lateral violence and cultural dislocation.

Nowhere to Go Homelessness

A complete lack of access to stable shelter, housing, accommodation, shelter services or relationships; literally having nowhere to go



Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness

Indigenous persons fleeing, leaving or vacating unstable, unsafe, unhealthy or overcrowded households or homes to obtain a measure of safety or to survive. Young people, women, and LTGBQ2S people are particularly vulnerable.



Emergency Crisis Homelessness

Natural disasters, large-scale environmental manipulation and acts of human mischief and destruction, along with bureaucratic red tape, combining to cause Indigenous people to lose their homes because the system is not ready or willing to cope with an immediate demand for housing.



Climatic Refugee Homelessness

Indigenous peoples whose lifestyle, subsistence patterns and food sources, relationship to animals, and connection to land and water have been greatly altered by drastic and cumulative weather shifts due to climate change. These shifts have made individuals and entire Indigenous communities homeless.



In addition, jurisdictional issues and government status are major barriers to Indigenous housing in Canada. There is a lack of clarity between the federal and provincial governments about the ultimate accountability for the delivery of affordable housing. Numerous examples exist where federal programs are targeted toward the creation of affordable housing while at the same time, provincial programs look to create additional affordable housing, often leveraging federal transfer of funds, but the programs are not coordinated and do not complement each other to maximize outcomes. This is further exacerbated when First Nations on-reserve governments are layered in, who develop their own land codes, land use plans, and housing policy to deliver housing. Moreover, municipalities are critical to enabling housing projects for urban Indigenous persons and often play a key role in service delivery (i.e., water and wastewater) for on-reserve communities.

This can be illustrated through the following example: an urban First Nation looks to leverage reserve lands to develop multifamily housing that will serve local members, other First Nations members, and urban Indigenous individuals. The First Nation applies for provincial funds and succeeds in receiving capital dollars and ongoing subsidy to keep rents low. It still needs to coordinate with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada to get water and wastewater to the site. This takes time and requires annual funding allotments to be targeted to this particular development (that just received funding, so planning in advance would have been challenging). Moreover, even with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) monies, coordination with the regional or municipal government to arrange an agreement to access and pay for services is required.

Once all of this is sorted, there has to be a way to leverage on-reserve security; this is often achieved through a land designation process and long-term lease of the reserve lands. This requires a community vote (parameters change if the First Nation is under the Indian Act, land code, or modern treaty). The province and the federal government will need to agree to the lease terms if the First Nation is still under the Indian Act, in addition to chief and council, and the community vote (which technically the government of Canada does not have to grant even if the community approves).

If all of these barriers are overcome, then comes the question of the tenancy agreements and dispute resolution mechanisms. Currently, the BC residential tenancy act does not apply on reserve, which means that tenants seeking affordable housing may have to familiarize themselves with an alternate system of housing rights. This also likely limits a contracted property management company or another nonprofit working with a local nation in performing property management for the affordable housing.

How Did We Get Here?

ULI BC PHEP EVENT 1

Our Shared Canadian History and Urban Indigenous Context

February 2023

Since first contact of settler colonialism, Indigenous peoples have and continue to be displaced from their lands for development and capital. First passed in 1876, the Indian Act has been one of the primary documents that inform how the government of Canada interacts with Indigenous peoples across the country. Prompting violent systems of assimilation like Residential Schools and the 60s Scoop, which forcibly removed Indigenous children from their homes with or without the consent of their parents, policies like the Indian Act have facilitated displacement and continue to contribute to the barriers Indigenous peoples face today. With a history of government regulation of Indigenous lives through restrictions of status, mobility, and rights, this violence and displacement, this ongoing trauma have prompted an overrepresentation of unhoused Indigenous peoples.

Having access to a safe home space and stable income remains a fundamental factor in individual and community well-being, health, and safety.

As cost of living rises and Indigenous peoples continue to face added barriers in accessing affordable, safe, and secure housing, major gaps remain in supporting Indigenous businesses. Struggling with erasure of land, language, and tradition, Indigenous peoples are one of the most marginalized groups in Canada. Spaces have been transformed to leave minimal capacity for Indigenous peoples, knowledge systems, ceremony, or community, so it is essential for the local real estate sector to support, and compensate, Indigenous peoples in decolonization and reconciliation. Although developing housing continues to be a priority, major gaps remain in supporting economic sustainability for Indigenous peoples. Today, one in 15 Indigenous people in urban centers experiences homelessness, in comparison with one in 128 non-Indigenous persons.⁸

As a result of systems that enforced assimilation, marginalization, and displacement like the Indian Act, Residential Schools, and the 60s Scoop, Indigenous peoples lack opportunities in the local real estate sector. Facing high rates of unemployment, poverty, incarceration, addiction, and mental health issues, they require adequate and sustainable support in addition to housing to maintain a happy and healthy lifestyle.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

ULI BC PHEP EVENT 2

Building Better: Partnering with First Nations

Spring 2023

Given limitations in overall data to identify indicators, finding statistics to measure the complex subject of Indigenous people's health has been challenging. Often because it is just not sought after, inaccurately recorded, and minimally accessible to communities or due to unclear definitions of Indigenous groups in data or a general lack of response to surveying and reporting, statistics often do not include input of all groups. Findings in this research have suffered from the issues of this data gap; as in development, obtaining statistics is not always a one-size-fits-all approach.

Focusing on where the real estate sector can make a difference while aligning with reconciliation, ULI BC used the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its 94 calls to action together with the 2022 Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), aligning them in the context of land development and real estate as well as economic opportunities. Following the TRC's 92nd call to action, which focused on how respectful business dealings can contribute to reconciliation, and DRIPA's sections 4.5 (policy framework for Indigenous postsecondary education and skills training), 4.25 (on- and off-reserve housing), 4.36–4.49 (economics), and 4.42 (co-develop economic metrics to evaluate progress), ULI BC moved beyond basic procurement and found ways to support Indigenous business throughout all phases of development.



Apartment buildings in Vancouver.

With this, the importance of Indigenous partnerships is highlighted as a key factor in creating economic synergies within our realms of influence by approaching economic sustainability from an Indigenous perspective. Building and creating housing does not create tangible change unless supports for economic, social, and cultural sustainability are also available.

Herein lies an opportunity. While the sector at large is challenged with market demands and municipal land use and community programming policies, the alignment of social planning requirements for affordable housing can align with new business development prospects for Indigenous-based businesses and for-profit and nonprofit Indigenous housing providers.

Affordable Housing

In the case of nonprofit housing opportunities, a network of Indigenous housing providers exists both on and off reserve. Membership can be sourced through AHMA or through the BC Non-Profit Housing Corporation. By combining government funding and both the nonprofit and real estate and construction sectors at large (notably constructors, consultants, and engineers), the sector can deliver innovative projects such as Kwayatsut or Ho'-kee-melh Kloshe Lum. These two case studies are profiled below.

Kwayatsut

BC Indigenous Housing Society

LOCATION:

2465 Fraser Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

SIZE:

- 101 units (30 youth)
- 9 stories
- 2 floors youth center

OWNER/OPERATOR:

BC Indigenous Housing Society (city of Vancouver land) and Broadway Youth Resource Centre

COMPLETION:

December 2014

PARTNERS:

VNHS, BYRC, BC Housing, Province of BC, Pacific Community Resources Society, Street to Home Foundation, City of Vancouver

Translated from Coast Salish language meaning “spirit quest” or “seeking one’s power,” Kwayatsut is a 101-unit (30 beds dedicated for youth) housing project owned and operated by BC Indigenous Housing Society in Vancouver. A supportive housing model that provides housing for singles, Indigenous youth, LGBTQ youth, and youth leaving foster care, the project provides stabilized housing, educational and skills training, cultural opportunities, and other much needed services, such as meal preparation and recreation. To bring such a project to successful fruition requires multi-tiered partnerships for both capital and project delivery, as well as in operations with partners like the province of BC, the city of Vancouver, BC Indigenous Housing Society, Pacific Community Resources Society, Street to Home Foundation, and Broadway Youth

Resource Centre. Living space is integrated into a one-stop center that provides health, education, employment, and life skills services for at-risk youth. For more information, check out this [project/program highlight from BC Housing](#).



The front of the Kwayatsut building, which contains 101 residential units.

Ho'-kee-melh Kloshe Lum

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre

LOCATION:

1015 E. Hastings, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

SIZE:

- 80 welcoming, safe shelter beds for people and families experiencing homelessness
- 25 studios and one bedrooms for people who are ready to move from the shelter to more independent living
- 87 new affordable rental homes for people and families with lower incomes (one-, two-, and three-bedroom units)
- 56 new market-rental homes to help pay for the cost of the more affordable units
- Social enterprise space operated by VAFCS

OWNER/OPERATOR:

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre

COMPLETION:

Anticipated late 2025

PARTNERS:

VAFCS, BC Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, City of Vancouver, WCPG

Other integrated and mixed-use models of housing include not only affordable housing, but also market-rate rental housing, such as the [Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society's \(VAFCS\)](#) 1015 East Hastings in Vancouver. The partnership of VAFCS, BC Housing, and the city of Vancouver is bringing forward a model of 80 shelter beds for individuals and families; 25 transitional homes; 87 nonmarket, affordable homes, 56 market-rate rental homes, and social enterprise on the ground floor. With the help of Indigenous consultants [M'akola Development Services](#), the project achieved zoning approvals in 2021 and started site remediation in 2022, with full construction targeted to start mid-2023.



A rendering of the proposed Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre.

ULI BRITISH COLUMBIA

These projects are Indigenous led and serve both the Indigenous and general community.

Indigenous Entrepreneurs and a Range of Housing Opportunities

If housing supply is partly to blame for affordability conditions, then the sector should also look to Indigenous entrepreneurs to help remedy the situation—like Squamish Nation’s [Nch’kay Development Corporation](#); or the [MST Development Corporation](#), a proud partnership of the Musqueam Indian Band, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

In spring 2022, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) announced the impressive and transformational development of the [Senákw](#) lands, a prominent landholding at the south end of the Burrard Street Bridge in Vancouver. Aptly, Senákw means “the place inside the head of False Creek.” Fully led by the nation, the project aspires to bring over 6,000 units to the area with 1,200 of those units being affordable rental in partnership with the federal government. The balance will be market rental. Senákw provides a response to the recent forecast of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) that between now and 2030, the region needs to create 1 million new units of housing.

Of the 1,200 affordable housing units, 250 units will be earmarked for Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw members and operated by the nation’s nonprofit housing provider, [Hiyam Housing](#).

Also impressive is the partnership of MST Development Corporation and the Canada Lands Company, a federal crown agency, and their concept for the Jericho Lands, a 90-acre land parcel on the coveted west side of Vancouver. The project is expected to be home to 15,000–18,000 new residents when completed and includes not only housing but also 20 acres of new parkland.

Like the examples in the previous affordable housing examples, these projects are Indigenous led.



A rendering of the transformational development of the Senákw lands, which aims to bring over 6,000 residential units to the British Columbia region.



ECONOMIC MOBILITY LEADS TO STABILITY

ULI BC PHEP EVENT 3 **Economic Mobility and Housing Resiliency: Jobs and Housing**

Spring 2023

In line with the 92nd call to action, ULI BC is suggesting some steps that the real estate sector can take in building a new inclusive approach toward wealth generation. In support of ULI BC's recommendation for the industry to prioritize Indigenous groups and businesses throughout the entire life cycle of development, it will be providing a tool kit to guide the industry in where these opportunities can be made. Finding that many organizations and companies are interested in increasing their

capacity to support Indigenous groups and businesses but are just unsure how or where to source them, ULI BC hopes this tool kit can be an effective resource in providing those opportunities. Broadening targeted hiring approaches beyond the construction sector to include a range of hiring to fulfill professional needs from youth to corporate positions can provide examples of areas for economic partnership. ULI BC would also like to remind the sector that just because an opportunity is created, does not mean there will be immediate uptake because it takes time and care to build relationships and capacity.

Recommendations

Understanding the past and the impacts of past and current policy on the current socioeconomic status of Indigenous peoples in British Columbia is only the first step. The work of this committee should just be the first step of many, and ULI BC has the following recommendations to make change happen in the real estate sector at different levels.

Proposed Changes to Internal Real Estate Practice (ULI British Columbia)

The legacy of ULI BC's PHEP participation will be its ULI BC Health Equity Resource Hub. A digital library of sorts, the hub will be a centralized location to list Indigenous businesses, templates, and housing providers that ULI BC's partnerships can connect to as they travel on their own reconciliation journey.

The tool kit also provides lists of Indigenous contractors, developers, architects, nonprofit housing providers, maintenance agencies, templates of clauses for RFPs, example policies to support Indigenous procurement, Indigenous artists and designers, Indigenous food and drink vendors, Indigenous university and school programs/services, Indigenous counselors, elders, and knowledge keepers.

- Continue to work with CMHC's HIYY internship program to arrange Indigenous internship opportunities annually either through ULI BC or a member organization.
- Reach out to Indigenous developers and encourage ULI membership (e.g., MST).

- Commit to land acknowledgment at the start of every ULI event.
- Propose that this committee continues to work to put out content long term two to four times per year, ensures Indigenous content is offered consistently, and remains relevant and on the minds of the membership. This committee could recruit new members and work to enact all of the preceding ideas, including keeping the resource hub fresh and up to date with content.

Change to External Real Estate Practice

- Work with the Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS) to develop a project management/development cohort and match job opportunities with ULI member organizations or other real estate/development firms.
- Hire Indigenous liaisons to work with local developers to develop relationships and protocols when partnering with Indigenous communities or developers; normalize cultural consultants as a key part of the design team (e.g., structural, mechanical).
- Incorporate co-design principles into development projects.
- Compensate Indigenous community members who provide feedback on design ideas or developments.
- Develop a fund to help compensate for positions within local Nations that are available to arrange for meetings when developers are looking to build relationships with local nations related to land use and development.

Change in Policy (locally)

- All municipalities and regional governments should look at adopting DRIPA principles into local priorities.
- Municipal and regional governments should develop procurement policies that prioritize hiring Indigenous-owned companies, see Capital Regional District policies ([Staff Report Procurement Policy Amendments.pdf](#)) or city of Vancouver ([Social, Indigenous, and diverse businesses | City of Vancouver](#)) for examples.
- Document and share best practices related to reconciliation, procurement, and policy.
- Establish working groups with local First Nations to collaborate on shared goals or overlapping endeavors; look at a mix of elected officials and community members. Leverage existing groups and relationships, where possible.
- Look at building representation at regional government tables for First Nations. Currently Nations have to have a modern treaty to be able to have an official seat at regional government and vote on key land use, water, transportation, and other resource issues that affect development on or near reserve lands.

Change in Policy (province and/or national level)

- Both federal and provincial governments need to continue to fund Indigenous housing at deeper levels.
- Develop programs that encourage hiring Indigenous individuals or firms when leveraging government monies.
- Develop best practices and case studies to share with different communities.
- Government needs to consider continuous funding (not on one- or three-year cycles), with regular reviews to ensure outcomes, which will allow stability in long-term planning (real estate developments are multiyear projects).
- Reexamine the National Occupancy Standards as a metric for housing standards, especially requiring children of different genders to have separate bedrooms.
- The Indian Act and national government jurisdiction on reserve really disconnects First Nations from the provincial context, especially when it comes to developing housing. Key policy barriers include the following:
 - The applicability of the Residential Tenancy Act on reserve, meaning that First Nations have to adopt the BC Residential Tenancy Act to fall under the same structure as any units off reserve; however, the Residential Tenancy Branch does not provide arbitration on reserve, presenting a major hurdle to managing landlord/tenant issues.
 - A similar situation exists for the building code. First Nations need to adopt the BC building code for it to apply on reserve.



CONCLUSION

The future is bright. Political and market will exist to form partnerships to not only make new housing options available for Indigenous peoples, but also housing options for the general public. In the creation of this housing, the sector has ample opportunity to partner with, skill-up, and train Indigenous youth and those seeking employment as well as to partner with Indigenous business—all positive movements to economic prosperity/mobility—a great lead-in for housing stability.

The sector needs to build more capacity. This is an issue in all aspects of our sector, as baby boomers retire and labor shortages in project management, design services, and construction labor wane. This will take time—but is essential to our continued growth. How we do business and create capacity is just as important. There are lessons in how we respond to land use and partnering with Indigenous groups that can only enrich our aspirations.

As a sector, there is room to close the gaps in research, facilitating/funding community surveying, reporting, and statistical research through better community outreach.

As noted in the executive summary, this is just the ignition. Or more appropriately, and in honor of Indigenous elders and ancestors that walked and watched over these lands first, a re-ignition. Let's fan the flame.

Should you have an Indigenous business, service, or housing opportunity, or if you would like to partner, see the [ULI BC Health Equity Resource Hub](#) or email britishcolumbia@uli.org.

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A Note from ULI BC

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