



ALBERTA
REAL ESTATE
FOUNDATION

Enabling Housing Choice Project

Preliminary Research

Reconciliation &
This Project

April 2022



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Enabling Housing Choice Project encompasses all of what we call Alberta, and is the traditional and ancestral territory of many peoples, presently subject to Treaties 6, 7, and 8 including the Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Stoney Nakoda, and the Tsuu T'ina Nation and the Métis People of Alberta. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on and that which we refer to in this research.

RDN is committed to supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and believes in the need for meaningful engagement and consent with Indigenous peoples in the community. Colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation. As this project specifically touches on development and planning concepts which are built on a colonial system of governance and land use management, we also recognize that we have more work to unpack the systems in which we are upholding and working within.

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PROJECT CONTEXT

The Enabling Housing Choice (EHC) project aims to provide insight on how Albertan municipalities can support growth in their communities and help provide more housing options and choices to their residents through local policy changes and capacity building strategies. In the first stage of our project, we conducted a literature review, subject matter expert interviews, and case studies, as well as a province-wide survey.

Our intention with every project at RDN is to take meaningful steps towards reconciliation in Canada. This project touches on land use policy and management, which is embedded in colonial systems. As we work through this project with the perspective of moving forward in our commitment to reconciliation, we intend to update this document as we move deeper into the project and highlight our efforts.

In the first stage of our project, we conducted a literature review, stakeholder interviews, and case studies.

We have broken our findings into five main themes, in order to make the relevant information more easily accessible:

- » Housing and the Economy;
- » Housing and Equity;
- » Housing and the Environment;
- » Housing and NIMBYism; and
- » Housing and Capacity.

It is important to note that all these themes intersect with each other. A holistic approach to enabling housing choice that considers all of these themes is required to make meaningful change that positively impacts various groups and their unique needs within a community. These preliminary findings will inform the next phases of our project, including the creation of our Guidebook for Enabling Housing Choice.



RECONCILIATION & THE ENABLING HOUSING CHOICE PROJECT

LAND USE PLANNING & RECONCILIATION

When considering land use planning and development while respecting Indigenous lands and reconciliation, there is a dichotomy because while we are advocating for land development, we must also recognize that the land is not “ours” to develop. From the beginning of colonization, there was the Doctrine of Discovery in the 1400s, a doctrine based on racist notions to legalize the claim of land for the British Crown outside of Europe. Although, Indigenous people should be the sovereign land holders of what we call Canada today, they are not because everything, from the treaties to the legislation we use, is based on the Doctrine of Discovery. Within the lands we reside on, Treaty 6, 7, and 8 is proclaimed and outlines that the Indigenous peoples would share their lands in exchange for small parcels set aside for their reserves, the right to hunt, healthcare, and support to farming.

For 100s of years, Indigenous peoples have used and lived on these lands, but with colonialism those lands were stripped from them. Indigenous peoples were assured they were agreeing to the sharing of land and its resources, not the complete surrender of land to the Crown.

These laws and legislation were created to put Indigenous peoples in the colonial framework and put them at a disadvantage. In terms of city planning, Indigenous lands were not considered because within the Indian Act of 1876, cities were allowed to push Indigenous peoples off their reserves for the development of city planning purposes. The ‘sharing’ of the land did not come to fruition and today Indigenous reserves are a mere 0.2 per cent of Canada’s total land mass¹.

We must understand that all development, growth, and land use planning in Canada takes place on Indigenous lands and we must partake in the processes of reconciliation to respect and honour the lands in which we live and use.

Reconciliation is not only the restoration of friendly relations with Indigenous peoples, but an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to tell their stories. Reconciliation is about education and understanding why the long standing piece of colonial history still impacts the wellbeing of Indigenous lives today. As planners guide the development of this land, it is our responsibility to build these relationships with Indigenous peoples and demonstrate awareness and respect of Indigenous culture and ways of

¹Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (2018). Insight on 10 myths about Indigenous Peoples. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/insight-on-10-myths-about-indigenous-peoples>



living through our planning practices².

We must understand the impacts of our own practices and that Indigenous cultures have their own way of doing things. Planners must bring through more collaborative Indigenous-informed approaches to demonstrate the importance of Indigenous rights. Planning is only satisfactory when it embraces respect, trust, and need to engage with and get consent from Indigenous nations.

TRC CALLS TO ACTION & THIS PROJECT

The Enabling Housing Choice Project aims to continue RDN's commitment to respect Indigenous peoples and their culture. We are dedicated to supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Here are the ways we believe the EHC Project is and will continue to interact with the TRC Calls to action:

- » By changing policy to enable housing choice, we can help Indigenous families find affordable and suitable housing and keep families together. TRC, 1.
- » By looking at enabling housing choice, we are looking to address


health needs as housing is a human right and is needed for the physical and mental health of individuals, including Indigenous peoples. TRC, 20.

- » Helping to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people in custody through our housing project and the support of enabling housing choice. TRC, 30.
- » Through enabling housing choice and elevating barriers to development, we can help encourage the sense of community for the needs of offenders with FASD. TRC, 34.
- » By looking at policy changes, we will look to encourage policy that does not restrict the development of halfway houses. TRC, 37.
- » Through our phase 1 research findings, in our environmental report, we are bringing awareness around the victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. TRC, 41.

FUTURE WORK

We will be incorporating an Indigenous perspective to each project we partner with in the next phase of this project. How this looks will be shaped by each individual partnership with the municipalities so that we can create genuine and meaningful

²United Nations. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [PDF]. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf



relationships between the municipalities and local Indigenous groups.

We are trying to involve more peoples and nations' voices through consultation of the surrounding communities. We are still working on our Indigenous Strategic Engagement Plan currently as of writing this. This document will also be treated as a live document as we will keep trying to progress for more positive change and engagement.

By knowing our past histories and how they affect our present we hope to do better and improve our future relations with Indigenous peoples. Whatever step we take we hope to be taking with the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. We will endeavor to be treaty peoples together as long as the sun shines, grass grows, and rivers flow. This is our commitment to future generations and each one of us on this team hopes we can further Reconciliation in step with Indigenous peoples.



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