



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship

DISABILITY HOUSING IN CANADA: A JURISDICTIONAL SCAN

January 2025

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Funded by: The Summer Foundation

To cite this research:

Hole, R., Sharma, R.H., Galvan Hernandez, N., & Youssef, N. (January 31, 2025).
Disability Housing in Canada: A Jurisdictional Scan. The UBC Canadian Institute
for Inclusion and Citizenship. 155 pages.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION.....	5
METHOD	6
FINDINGS	12
Overview of Included Initiatives	12
Provincial/Territorial Summaries	13
Residential Models.....	38
Funding Structures	40
Roles of Government and Other Stakeholders	43
Oversight, Safeguarding, and Quality Assurance.....	46
Cross-Jurisdictional Comparison and International Relevance	48
Lessons for Policymakers.....	49
LIMITATIONS	51
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	52
CONCLUSIONS.....	53
REFERENCES.....	54
APPENDIX 1.....	56
APPENDIX 2.....	94
APPENDIX 3.....	123

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive jurisdictional scan of disability housing initiatives and policies across Canada, offering insights into federal, provincial, and territorial efforts to address accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity in housing for individuals with disabilities. It explores key residential models, funding structures, governance roles, and oversight mechanisms, synthesizing findings to inform future policy and practice in Canada and beyond.

The findings reveal a diverse landscape of housing options, including group homes, supportive living arrangements, and independent living models, with some provinces introducing innovative approaches such as mixed-market housing, culturally tailored solutions, and universal design principles. However, significant disparities persist between regions, particularly in northern and smaller provinces, where access to specialized housing and services remains limited.

Funding structures rely heavily on federal programs in combination with provincial and municipal contributions and partnerships with non-profits and private entities. However, the lack of publicly accessible information about funding mechanisms, resident costs, and quality assurance protocols highlights systemic challenges in transparency and accountability.

Governance roles are distributed across federal, provincial, and municipal levels, with provinces and territories taking primary responsibility for housing delivery, guided by federal oversight and supplemented by local administrative practices. Non-governmental organizations and community groups play critical roles in service provision and advocacy, often filling gaps left by public systems.

Key challenges include long waitlists, insufficient funding, and limited integration of cultural and geographic considerations in housing strategies. Additionally, the difficulty of obtaining comprehensive, accurate data during this scan underscores a broader need for centralized, transparent reporting and improved communication across jurisdictions.

The report concludes with actionable recommendations, emphasizing the importance of adopting inclusive design, improving intergovernmental collaboration, enhancing data transparency, and integrating cultural and local considerations into housing policies. These findings offer valuable lessons for federated systems worldwide, including Australia, in advancing equitable and sustainable disability housing solutions.

INTRODUCTION

Adequate, accessible, and inclusive housing is a basic human right; it is also a critical need for persons with disabilities, yet ongoing challenges persist in ensuring that such housing is both available and supported by appropriate services (Anderson & Kim, 2021; Freedman et al., 2023; Martin & Sakamoto, 2022). Individuals with disabilities often face barriers related to physical accessibility, affordability, and regulatory gaps that limit housing options, and despite growing awareness of these issues over the past two decades, gaps remain in understanding the full spectrum of residential models in use and how effectively different levels of government collaborate to deliver integrated services and supports (Jenkins & Zhou, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2023; Williams & Grant, 2020).

Multiple factors contribute to the complexity of disability housing. Existing evidence on the long-term impacts of various residential supports is still evolving, as service providers and policymakers experiment with models such as group homes, supportive living programs, and independent living arrangements (Gordon et al., 2022). There is also significant variability in how key actors and parties interpret and fund housing programs, which are shaped by regional policy differences and the interplay among federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal authorities (Smith & Reyes, 2019). Well-designed disability housing can reduce social isolation, promote community integration, and enhance quality of life, but inconsistencies in oversight and funding mechanisms may impede the development of cohesive strategies (Brown & Mitchell, 2021).

The accessibility, clarity, and comprehensiveness of disability housing initiatives and policies are crucial in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Clear mandates on accessibility, rights protections, and service coordination can bolster housing programs and reduce disparities, whereas fragmented or inadequate policy and/or information dissemination can lead to inequitable resource distribution and leave certain populations, such as those living remote areas and those with higher support needs, at greater risk of instability or institutionalization (Harris et al., 2020; Nicholson & Patel, 2023). Moreover, misalignment between government levels can create confusion for individuals seeking support, as well as for service providers attempting to navigate complex regulatory frameworks (Wilson & Carver, 2022).

In Canada, despite multiple disability housing initiatives at the federal, provincial and territorial, and municipal levels, knowledge remains limited about specific provisions, oversight mechanisms, and how effectively housing policies and initiatives address the needs of persons with disabilities. This current jurisdictional scan explores these housing initiatives and provides an overview of their scope and impact, focusing on governance, funding, and quality assurance. This focus is highly relevant to international contexts, given that many jurisdictions worldwide face similar questions on how to structure and finance supportive housing for persons with disabilities. In particular, the findings hold significance for Australian stakeholders, due to the comparable federal–provincial/state/territorial governance arrangements in both Canada and Australia that support opportunities for policy transfer and adaptation (Nicholson & Patel, 2023; Wilson & Carver, 2022).

METHOD

A scan of jurisdictional disability housing initiatives and related policies was conducted between October 2024 and January 2025 at two levels: federally across Canada, and provincially and territorially in all 13 Canadian jurisdictions. The methods used in this jurisdictional scan were adapted after Arksey and O'Malley's framework for scoping reviews, in combination with PRISMA scoping review guidelines (Moher et al.,

2009). Only initiatives and policies currently in effect at the time of the search were included. Examining disability housing across federal, provincial, and territorial levels provides insight into how various programs may overlap or diverge, how responsibilities and funding are structured, and how these approaches collectively shape housing options for persons with disabilities. Canada's demographic and geographic diversity (Statistics Canada, 2023) offers a robust setting in which to assess how multiple governance levels address accessibility, oversight, safeguarding, and quality assurance in disability housing.

This jurisdictional scan addressed the following five research questions:

1. What kinds of residential models exist in all 13 Canadian jurisdictions?
2. How are these models funded?
3. What role do the various levels of government play in the funding and operations of residential support (e.g., federal, provincial/territorial, municipal)?
4. What policies exist for oversight, safeguarding, and quality assurance?
5. What key initiatives are taking place in each jurisdiction?

Overview & Search Strategy

A search for disability housing initiatives and related policies was carried out by three reviewers (RS, NY, NGH) who divided the federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions among them. Biweekly discussions with the supervising author (RH) guided refinements in the search approach and resolved any uncertainties.

Google was first used to locate relevant initiatives or policies issued by the Government of Canada and by each provincial, territorial, and municipal body. Search terms combined references to disability (e.g., "disability housing," "accessible housing initiatives," "supportive housing disability," "community living programs") with terms related to policy or regulation (e.g., "policy," "Act," "Bylaw," "Guideline"). Only official government, regulatory authority, or recognized institutional websites were included, and any internal references to other initiatives were followed.

Subsequent searches were carried out in databases, such as Canadian NewsStream (ProQuest) and desLibris, using variations on (“disability” OR “accessible” OR “supportive”) AND (“housing” OR “home” OR “residence”) AND (“initiative” OR “program” OR “policy” OR “Act” OR “Bylaw”). Additional contacts were made with federal, provincial, and territorial authorities to identify any recently launched or updated initiatives not readily available online or in standard database searches. No novel initiatives were identified beyond those found in the Google search.

Initiative Selection and Screening

All identified initiatives and policies were compiled and screened. This process was conducted by the three reviewers (RS, NY, NGH), who each evaluated multiple provinces or territories, plus the federal domain. A predetermined set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was applied to maintain clarity and consistency, as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1.
Inclusion and exclusion criteria used in jurisdictional scan of disability housing initiatives.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Issued or endorsed by a Canadian federal, provincial, territorial, or municipal authority	1. Not currently valid, expired, or no longer enforced
2. Currently in effect at the time of the search (October 2024–January 2025)	2. Draft or hypothetical measures with no official approval
3. Explicitly addresses disability or accessibility needs in a housing/residential context	3. Focuses only on general housing affordability without disability- or accessibility-specific components
4. Active initiative or policy (i.e., being implemented or enforced, with no predetermined end date)	4. Irretrievable, inaccessible, or purely conceptual documents

Any questions regarding eligibility were discussed during biweekly meetings with the supervising author (RH). Documents failing to meet inclusion criteria were excluded, and any overlapping or duplicate sources were consolidated.

Data Extraction & Synthesis

Data extraction was conducted collaboratively using Google Sheets, allowing the reviewers (RS, NY, NGH) to chart and track key characteristics for each initiative or policy. Extracted data were charted in a standardized table to facilitate consistent collection and comparative analysis across all jurisdictions. This table was collaboratively maintained in Google Sheets by the three reviewers and organized into four main categories: (1) Source and Search Information, (2) Housing Information, (3) Funding Information, and (4) Governance/Regulation of Funding and Operations. Table 2 outlines the data fields and provides example details or descriptions for each category.

Table 2.*Jurisdictional scan data extraction fields.*

Category	Data Fields
Source and search information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Province • Initiative/policy/document name • Jurisdiction/governing body name • Source database/website name • Search terms • Date accessed • URL • Initial hit URL (if redirected) • Related links
Housing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential model type • Target/eligible population (age, gender, disability type, etc.) • Specifics on housing (rooms, utilities, furniture, etc.) • Supports/accommodations/opportunities • Capacity • Rent/cost to residents • Resident enrollment or recruitment process • Other notes
Funding information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary funding source • Federal government funding • Provincial/territorial government funding • Municipal government funding

Category	Data Fields
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other (e.g., NGO) funding • Other notes

Governance/regulation of funding and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal government roles • Provincial/territorial government roles • Other (e.g., NGO) roles • Resident/tenant safeguarding • Accessibility standards • Psychosocial supports (e.g., mental health, linguistic, cultural) • Training/staffing standards • Sustainability/environmental standards • Other safeguarding/quality assurance/implementation policy info • Additional info/comments (e.g., barriers to access, readability)
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Extracted information included the issuing body (federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal/regional), relevant dates (proposal, passage, implementation, and modifications), type of residential model (e.g., group home, supportive living, independent living with supports), funding mechanisms (e.g., federal or provincial transfers, municipal grants, private partnerships), and details on oversight or quality assurance processes. The accessibility and clarity of each initiative were also documented, noting how easily it could be located online and whether it was presented in plain language. All data fields were recorded to ensure thorough coverage of each initiative's scope, structure, and operational details. Contacts were made with federal, provincial, and territorial authorities to identify any details not readily available online. This method allowed a systematic comparison of residential models, funding mechanisms, and oversight policies across Canada's ten provinces, three territories, and the federal level. [To access the extracted information for this jurisdictional scan please see the excel sheet located here.](#)

Collated data were reviewed and synthesized to identify patterns, similarities, and differences across federal, provincial, and territorial contexts, as well as what was missing. This allowed for an assessment of how intergovernmental responsibilities, funding approaches, and regulatory frameworks shape the disability housing landscape.

Special attention was given to factors relevant to Australian policymakers, including any strategies or best practices that might inform or be adapted to comparable governance arrangements.

FINDINGS

Overview of Included Initiatives

A number of disability housing initiatives were identified across all 10 provinces, 3 territories, and the federal level. These initiatives ranged from large-scale federal programs, such as those supported by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) under the *National Housing Strategy*¹, to more localized community-driven efforts like Chez-nous solidaire in Quebec or Nunavut's Accessible Home Adaptations Program. Collectively, these initiatives highlight a spectrum of approaches to addressing disability housing needs, with a focus on accessibility, affordability, and inclusive living environments.

Federal programs, such as the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, the Rapid Housing Initiative, and the Enabling Accessibility Fund, provide critical funding and set national accessibility standards that influence initiatives across provinces and territories. At the provincial level, regions like Ontario and Quebec lead with expansive programs, including cooperative housing models, tax credits for home adaptations, and integrated supportive housing for individuals with disabilities. Meanwhile, territories such as Nunavut and Yukon prioritize smaller, geographically tailored programs addressing unique challenges like limited housing stock and remoteness.

High-level observations reveal a consistent shift toward inclusive, community-based housing solutions, emphasizing accessibility through universal design, adaptable spaces, and integrated support services. Many initiatives are backed by multi-level funding partnerships, with contributions from federal, provincial/territorial, municipal, and

¹ <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/housing-logement/ptch-csd/index-eng.html>

non-profit sectors, showcasing the importance of collaboration in sustaining these efforts. While policies such as the Accessible Canada Act shape how these initiatives operate, the focus remains on practical, tenant-centered solutions that enable independence and community inclusion. Challenges persist in ensuring equitable access, maintaining affordability, and meeting accessibility standards consistently across all regions.

Provincial/Territorial Summaries

The following section provides concise profiles of each province, territory, and the federal level, highlighting key initiatives, funding structures, residential models, and oversight measures, along with notable innovations or challenges.

Federal (Canada)

Canada's federal government plays a pivotal role in shaping accessible and affordable housing through initiatives that influence policies and practices in all provinces and territories. Central to these efforts is the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), which administers and oversees the majority of federal housing programs, including the National Housing Strategy (NHS). The CMHC ensures that funding allocations, project compliance, and accessibility standards align with national priorities, creating a unified framework across the country.

The National Housing Strategy, a 10-year, \$82+ billion initiative, underpins Canada's housing efforts. It includes programs such as the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, which mandates accessibility targets and promotes universal design principles. This strategy sets the standard for provinces and territories, ensuring regional alignment with federal goals while allowing flexibility for local adaptations. Through bilateral agreements, provinces receive funding to support accessible housing developments, with accountability measures enforced by the CMHC.

The Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) exemplifies federal leadership in addressing urgent housing needs. By focusing on rapid construction and conversions, the RHI facilitates the creation of barrier-free housing for vulnerable populations, including

persons with disabilities. These projects, funded and monitored by the CMHC, integrate features like ramps, widened doorways, and accessible washrooms, setting a benchmark for accessible and affordable housing in all regions.

Programs like the Canada Housing Benefit empower tenants through portable rental subsidies, allowing individuals to choose housing that meets their accessibility and financial needs. This benefit, delivered in partnership with provinces and territories, reflects the CMHC's commitment to tenant-centered solutions. Meanwhile, the Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) provides grants for housing modifications, including adaptive technologies and structural changes, ensuring older housing stock meets modern accessibility standards.

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) reinforces the federal government's focus on accessibility by requiring compliance with universal design principles in all federally funded housing projects. The CMHC plays a crucial role in ensuring ACA standards are met, collaborating with provinces, municipalities, and non-profits to implement accessibility improvements across Canada.

Collaboration between federal, provincial, and municipal governments is a cornerstone of Canada's housing strategy. Federal programs often require matching contributions from provinces and municipalities, which may include funding, land donations, or expedited zoning approvals. Non-profits and community organizations, supported by CMHC funding, are key players in delivering housing projects and support services, bridging gaps between policy and practice.

One notable national non-profit housing initiative is My Home, My Community² – a partnership between Inclusion Canada and People First Canada and their member organizations. “My Home, My Community is a national initiative supporting the creation of inclusive, affordable housing”. This initiative prioritizes choice, freedom, and inclusion in community, favouring dispersion housing models as opposed to congregate care housing. They work with communities, developers, funders, support agencies, and families to create, promote, and celebrate inclusive housing for Canadians with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They do this by promoting evidence-based

² Three case studies – show cases – developed by Inclusion Canada and People First Canada are described in this report. The full case studies are attached as appendices. www.myhomemycommunity.ca

policy solutions to encourage governments and the private sector to invest in inclusive affordable housing. They engage in public education and awareness campaigns to demonstrate what inclusive housing looks like, using real life examples. Finally, they provide technical support for housing development by supporting planners, developers, and investors with practical tools and guidance.

At the federal level, despite significant progress, challenges remain, including administrative delays, inconsistent accessibility standards, and limited awareness of available programs. However, the CMHC's governance ensures accountability through regular audits, tenant grievance systems, and adherence to national accessibility guidelines.

Canada's federal approach offers some valuable lessons, particularly in how the CMHC facilitates coordination across jurisdictions while maintaining accountability and accessibility standards. Programs like the RHI and NHS demonstrate scalable models for urgent housing needs, while the emphasis on universal design and portable benefits underscores the importance of equity and autonomy in housing initiatives.

Alberta

Alberta remains one of two Canadian provinces that has not yet fully transitioned away from institutionalization for individuals with disabilities. The Michener Centre, an institution with a controversial history tied to eugenics and forced sterilization, was slated for closure in 2013. However, significant public protests resulted in the centre remaining operational to this day. Advocacy organizations such as Inclusion Alberta and Inclusion Canada continue to champion the shift toward deinstitutionalization, emphasizing the fundamental right of individuals with disabilities to live and thrive within community settings.

Despite these efforts, Alberta faces significant challenges in achieving equitable housing accessibility. According to the Alberta Disabilities Forum's Affordable & Accessible Housing Working Group, only 2.98% of the province's affordable housing sites meet accessibility standards for individuals with disabilities. This falls well below the Alberta Building Code's requirement that a minimum of 10% of publicly funded

housing projects be accessible. This disparity underscores the urgent need for systemic reform in housing design and development.

The province's inclusive housing options vary from group homes providing high levels of support to supported independent living arrangements that empower individuals to live more autonomously. Accessible public housing initiatives, such as Alberta's Affordable Housing Programs, offer grants and subsidies to housing providers to enhance accessibility and accommodate individuals with "special needs [sic]". These programs are primarily funded through provincial mechanisms like the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program or Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) program, with additional funding from federal initiatives such as the Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Agreements. Non-profit organizations, including Catholic Social Services Alberta (CSSA) and Accessible Housing Alberta (AHA), also play a vital role in funding and implementing these initiatives.

An example of innovative housing in Alberta is the Inclusio³ program in Calgary, a purpose-built supportive housing apartment building designed specifically for adults with limited mobility resulting from physical disabilities. While this is an example of congregate housing, which has its critic with disability communities, Inclusion offers independent living with on-site support with 45 fully accessible units that incorporate universal design principles to ensure ease of use for residents. Key features include automatic doors, barrier-free bathrooms, roll-under countertops, and wide hallways to accommodate mobility devices, ensuring that every aspect of the living environment fosters independence and dignity.

In addition to its accessible design, Inclusio provides on-site support services tailored to meet residents' unique needs. These services include assistance with daily living activities, community engagement opportunities, and wellness programs, creating a holistic environment that promotes both autonomy and a sense of belonging. This approach enables residents to live independently while having access to the support they require, bridging the gap between independence and care. Inclusio is the only housing program in Canada to receive the prestigious Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Certification for exceptional accessibility. This recognition underscores its adherence to

³ <https://accessiblehousing.ca/inclusio/>

the highest standards of physical accessibility, functionality, and universal design. Its success as a benchmark for accessible housing demonstrates how integrating accessibility with community support can significantly enhance quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The Inclusio model demonstrates the value of prioritizing universal design, accessibility, and integrated support services.

British Columbia

Over the past several decades, British Columbia (BC), the third most populated province in Canada, has transitioned from institutionalized housing for individuals with disabilities to inclusive, community-based housing models. This shift has been driven by the principles of universal design and community integration, resulting in diverse residential options such as group homes, supportive housing, independent living apartments, and shared housing/shared living. BC's housing landscape emphasizes person-centered planning, promoting independence, and fostering inclusivity for individuals with physical, developmental, and mental health disabilities.

Community Living BC (CLBC) is the primary governing body (a provincial crown corporation) responsible for supports and services for adults with intellectual disabilities including housing. CLBC supports various types of housing models: Independent Living; Shared Living (Home Sharing/Live-in Support); Staffed Living (e.g., group homes). Programs like the Inclusive Housing Initiative, UNITI Surrey, and the Key to Home Campaign highlight innovative approaches to accessible housing supported by CLBC, including shared living spaces, communal areas, and on-site support services. A key partner to CLBC is BC Housing who plays a critical role, offering programs such as the Supportive Housing Program and the BC Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations, which provides financial assistance for accessibility modifications.

BC's housing funding structure is a collaboration between federal, provincial, and municipal governments, supported by non-profits and private donations. Federal contributions through the National Housing Strategy and provincial grants ensure the

sustainability of projects like the Indigenous Housing Fund⁴ and Spinal Cord Injury BC's initiatives⁵, which support individuals with disabilities. Municipalities contribute through zoning changes and land provision, while NGOs and community partners manage housing projects and service delivery.

One provincial program that enhances inclusive housing is the Choice in Supports for Independent Living (CSIL)⁶. While not directly a housing model per se, CSIL allows people with disabilities access to individualized funding to manage their own support needs. Clients must manage all aspects of their care, from hiring and supervising staff to overseeing how CSIL funds are spent. While provincially funded, eligible individuals receive funds directly from their local health authority to purchase their own home support services, allowing individuals to remain and reside in their own communities.

Another innovative inclusive housing model in BC is Uniti's Chorus⁷. Chorus is a 71-unit inclusive apartment and is home to South Surrey families, seniors, people with intellectual disabilities, essential workers, and students creating a community of mixed tenants (see Appendix 1). UNITI developed an integrated, mixed-market apartment building using undeveloped land. Chorus provides independent living apartments for CLBC eligible individuals with shared spaces to foster community engagement and inclusion for all residents. The housing complex features accessible units equipped with universal design elements, such as barrier-free bathrooms, roll-under sinks, and wide doorways to ensure mobility for residents with physical disabilities. Shared amenities include community kitchens, recreational spaces, and gardens, encouraging interaction and a sense of belonging among residents. UNITI goes beyond physical accessibility by offering on-site support services tailored to residents' needs, such as life skills training, employment assistance, and wellness programs. These services enable residents to live independently while fostering personal growth and community participation. Additionally, the housing initiative incorporates partnerships with local organizations to

⁴ <https://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/Building-BC/IHF>

⁵ <https://sci-bc.ca/>

⁶ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/home-community-care/care-options-and-cost/choice-in-supports-for-independent-living>

⁷ <https://uniti4all.com/chorus/>

offer culturally sensitive programming, ensuring inclusivity for Indigenous and multicultural populations.

In BC, challenges include long waitlists, inconsistent funding, and the need for more accessible housing units. However, successes like UNITI's inclusive housing initiative, Chorus, and culturally appropriate programs through Indigenous Disability Canada demonstrate effective models that prioritize community integration and cultural sensitivity. In fact, UNITI's Chorus is an exemplar of BC's commitment to inclusive housing, blending accessibility, community integration, and tailored supports. Chorus is a valuable example for creating inclusive housing solutions that prioritizes support for independent living, accessibility, and community and social inclusion that promotes a strong sense of community for all tenants.

Manitoba

The transition to community living for individuals with developmental disabilities⁸ in Manitoba began, as in other provinces, with the dissatisfaction of family members and advocates regarding institutional life. This process has been gradual, with a significant milestone achieved in December 2024 when the Manitoba Developmental Centre (MDC), the province's last large institution for individuals with developmental disabilities, closed its doors after a three-year transition plan to move residents into community living arrangements. A main driver for the closure of the has been the de-institutionalization movement in Canada that is supported by Inclusion Canada and People First Canada and their member organizations.

Manitoba now offers a range of housing options designed to meet the varying needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. Supported Independent Living⁹ provides individuals with rent top-ups and the opportunity to live independently, while those living with family can access social supports and funding for vehicle and home modifications. Shift-Staffed housing is available in two forms: part-time or 24-hour staffing for homes shared by three to four individuals. Clustered Living offers limited

⁸ Manitoba uses the term developmental disabilities and this language will be used in this section of the report.

⁹ <https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/clds/services-supports.html>

staff support, focusing on helping residents achieve greater independence over time. The Home Share and Home Share 24-Hour models involve caregivers who are the primary residents of the home, with the 24-hour model offering additional daytime support. These arrangements are particularly beneficial for individuals who value a consistent and trusted relationship with their caregivers.

These options are funded through Community Living disABILITY Services¹⁰, a division of the Manitoba Department of Families, which works in partnership with private and non-profit housing providers. Organizations can also apply for grants and funding initiatives to create or adapt accessible and affordable housing. This framework is supported by provincial policies, including The Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act (1996), The Residential Care Licensing Guideline, and Building on Abilities: Understanding the Assessment-Informed Personal Supports Budget Framework. These policies aim to ensure person-centered support and enhance accessibility and autonomy for individuals with disabilities.

Notable initiatives in Manitoba include counselling services to foster long-term, respectful relationships between Home Share Providers and the individuals they support, helping to prevent disruptions in living arrangements. The Home Share 24-Hour model provides additional daily assistance for those who prefer consistent care from a familiar provider. Another key program is the provincial government's Home and Community Care services, which enable individuals to receive health care at home instead of in hospitals or long-term care facilities, promoting greater community integration.

Challenges persist, such as the rigidity of standardized assessments used to determine funding and services, which do not always reflect the unique needs of individuals. Furthermore, in the Home Share model, funding is tied to the provider, meaning that if a relationship does not work out, the individual will most likely need to leave the home and find alternate housing. This can lead to significant disruptions and negatively impact the well-being of those with disabilities.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/clds/>

Manitoba's efforts, from diverse housing models to supportive initiatives, offer a valuable framework for promoting community integration and person-centered care. These approaches balance innovative housing solutions with flexible funding structures that prioritize stability and individualized support.

New Brunswick

The journey toward community living for individuals with intellectual disabilities in New Brunswick has evolved over centuries, transitioning from asylums and almshouses in the 19th century to more inclusive housing frameworks. The adoption of the Community Living 2000 framework in 1986 marked a significant milestone in this transition, aiming to eliminate institutionalization entirely. However, one institution, the Restigouche Hospital Centre, continues to operate as a psychiatric hospital for adults, despite allegations of abuse and external recommendations for its closure. Additionally, some institutions for youth continue to function as mental health facilities, highlighting the lingering presence of institutional models in the province.

Today, New Brunswick offers a range of housing and support options for individuals with disabilities. The Canada Housing Benefit provides short-term rent assistance, while the Long-Term Care Program supports individuals aged 65 and older, offering personal care and housekeeping services at home or 24-hour supervision in licensed residential facilities. The Home First program also assists seniors who own or rent homes by funding repairs or adaptations to improve safety. Public housing and rent supplements are available for low-income individuals, families, and couples, including those where one partner provides care for the other. For adults with disabilities aged 19 to 64, Community Residences provide 24-hour care and supervision, while Special Care Homes offer housing for adults with disabilities who need some care but not full-time support. These housing options are primarily managed by private entities or NGOs and are licensed and inspected by the Department of Social Development. Additionally, the Homeowner Repairs and Landlord Program provides forgivable loans of up to \$36,000 for accessible modifications to private homes.

Most of these housing supports, with the exception of long-term care, are fully funded by the Department of Social Development, which also offers financial assistance to long-term care residents when needed. Provincial policies such as The Family Services Act, The Standard Family Contribution Policy, and Social Development's Standards and Procedures for Adult Residential Facilities guide the provision and regulation of these supports to ensure quality and accessibility.

Among the innovative initiatives in New Brunswick, the Extra-Mural Program¹¹ stands out for delivering multi- and interdisciplinary health care services directly to individuals in their homes, enabling them to access essential health services without leaving their communities. Another noteworthy initiative is the Self-Managed Support¹² program under the Long-Term Care and Disability Supports framework, which empowers individuals to directly manage their funding and hire family members as caregivers, provided they do not reside in the same household. Additionally, the Portable Rent Supplement Program, part of the Public Housing and Rent Supplement initiative, links funding to the individual rather than the housing unit or landlord, allowing greater flexibility and choice in selecting the most suitable living arrangement. Moreover, the policy and practice of linking funding directly to the individual means that if the individual moves the funding goes with them providing more funding stability for the individual.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. Accessing most housing options and supports requires medical documentation, which can be costly for some individuals. The Canada Housing Benefit is limited in availability and offered on a first-come, first-served basis, restricting its reach to those in immediate need.

These examples provide valuable lessons for other regions: they promote housing flexibility, autonomy, and home-based care. The integration of portable funding models and self-managed support systems demonstrates how empowering individuals can lead to more tailored and effective housing solutions.

¹¹ <https://extramuralnb.ca/>

¹² <https://socialsupportsnb.ca/en/>

Newfoundland and Labrador

Over time, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) has transitioned from institutional care toward community-based housing models designed to promote independence, inclusivity, and community integration for individuals with disabilities. The province now offers a variety of housing options, including family-based care, shared living arrangements, and tailored support services. Programs such as the Alternative Family Care Home Program and Individualized Living Arrangements (ILAs) prioritize personalized care, enabling individuals with disabilities to live in environments that resemble traditional family settings while fostering strong community connections.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) is a central entity in driving disability housing initiatives, working in partnership with the federal Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Through the National Housing Strategy Action Plan, the province has made significant strides in accessibility by assisting approximately 650 households with investments in social housing, accessibility retrofits, and infrastructure upgrades. Complementing this effort is the Home Modification Program (HMP), which provides forgivable and repayable loans of up to \$10,000 to homeowners needing accessibility improvements such as ramps, widened doorways, and other modifications that enable individuals to live safely and independently.

Funding for these programs stems from federal-provincial partnerships under the National Housing Strategy, as well as direct contributions from the provincial government. The Cooperative Apartment Program and Shared Living Arrangements, overseen by the Department of Health and Community Services, provide tailored services such as personal care, household management, and life skills development. Accessibility remains a guiding principle across all housing initiatives, with NLHC retrofitting older units to meet accessibility standards and embedding universal design principles into new constructions under its Accessibility Plan (2024–2026).

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including a limited supply of accessible housing units and the use of individualized assessments for program entry, which can result in prolonged waitlists. However, the province's successes, such as the Alternative

Family Care Home Program¹³, which creates supportive, family-like living environments, and innovative shared living models, highlight NL's dedication to inclusive and community-focused housing solutions.

A standout example of innovative housing in NL is the Cooperative Apartment Program, which supports individuals with disabilities in semi-independent living environments. Residents receive customized support services, including assistance with household tasks and skill-building activities, while maintaining a high degree of autonomy. This program exemplifies how collaboration between government entities, NGOs, and communities can create housing solutions that prioritize independence and dignity.

The Newfoundland and Labrador's integrated approach to disability housing prioritizes family-centered care, income-based affordability models, while embedding accessibility standards into both retrofits and new housing developments. Such approaches offer a roadmap for fostering inclusive and sustainable housing solutions.

Northwest Territories

The Northwest Territories (NWT) faces unique challenges in addressing the housing needs of its population, where 25.7% of residents identify as having a disability. Despite this high prevalence, inclusive housing options specifically designed for individuals with disabilities remain limited. The Public Housing Program, operated by NWT Housing, provides subsidized rental units for low- to moderate-income households and offers priority access to individuals with disabilities for units modified to improve mobility and accessibility. However, the lack of purpose-built housing tailored to disability needs remains a significant gap.

The harsh weather conditions and geographic isolation of the NWT further complicate housing accessibility. Severe winters, coupled with the high cost of construction and materials in remote areas, make it difficult to develop and maintain inclusive housing that meets the needs of the population. These barriers often

¹³ <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/personsdisabilities/fundingprograms-hcs/>

exacerbate housing insecurity, particularly for individuals with disabilities who require specific modifications or proximity to support services.

To address some of these challenges, the NWT government provides funding for homeowners to improve the accessibility of their residences, enabling individuals with disabilities to remain in their own homes. Programs like Home and Community Care allow individuals to receive essential health and support services in their homes, promoting independence and reducing reliance on institutional care. Additionally, semi-independent Supported Living options offer housing and care for those with physical or mental health challenges, although these options remain limited in scope and availability.

Federal support through the Canada-NWT Housing Benefit also contributes to affordability by offering financial assistance to renters, though this program is not exclusively targeted at individuals with disabilities. While these initiatives provide some relief, the combination of harsh environmental conditions, geographic barriers, and limited infrastructure highlights the urgent need for more tailored, inclusive housing solutions in the territory.

The experience of the NWT demonstrates the importance of incorporating accessibility considerations into public housing systems, particularly in remote regions with challenging climates. Expanding financial support for home modifications and prioritizing accessible design in new developments could help other jurisdictions address similar barriers in their own rural and remote communities. The lessons from the NWT underscore the need for robust collaboration between federal and regional governments to overcome logistical and environmental challenges in providing inclusive housing.

Nova Scotia

Preface: It is important to note that in August 1, 2014, a human rights complaint was filed by three individuals with intellectual disabilities against the Province of Nova Scotia due to institutionalization against their will/choice. “The complaint states that the Province systematically discriminated, not just against the three named complainants,

but against all people with disabilities in Nova Scotia who have been denied supports and services to order to live in the community. The complaint states that the Province has basically ignored the needs—and **rights**—of hundreds/thousands of low-income persons with disabilities who need supports and services to live in community and, in doing so, has violated their fundamental human rights” (Disability Rights Coalitions of Nova Scotia, n.d.). In October 2021, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal found in favour of the complainants. Subsequently, the Province filed an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. On April 14th, 2022, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in favour of the Disability Rights Coalition representing the complainants awarding costs against the Province as well as requiring the development and implementation of a plan to remedy the policies and system(s) that have violated the rights of disabled people in the Province – called *The Remedy*¹⁴. *The Remedy* includes court ordered concrete steps that the Province is legally obliged to take to remedy the systemic discrimination that covers a five year time period that started April 1, 2023. Given this, the province is undergoing dramatic changes to disability services including housing options for folks with disabilities needing residential supports.

In Nova Scotia, the Disability Supports Program¹⁵ (DSP), administered by the Department of Community Services, serves as the cornerstone of inclusive housing for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The DSP offers a range of housing options tailored to different levels of support needs, including Licensed Homes for Special Care, which provide staffed residential care, and the Alternative Family Support program, which creates family-like living arrangements for individuals requiring additional support. The DSP also promotes independent community living through its Independent Living Support Policy, which provides funding for individuals living independently to cover essential needs such as household management, personal care, and social participation. Eligibility for these programs is determined based on DSP criteria, ensuring that support is directed toward those most in need.

¹⁴ <https://humanrights.novascotia.ca/remedy>

¹⁵ <https://novascotia.ca/coms/disabilities/index.html>

Funding for these initiatives is primarily provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services, though non-profit organizations like New Dawn Enterprises and Breton Ability Centre supplement provincial funding through grants and community fundraising efforts. These organizations play a pivotal role in delivering inclusive housing and support services, often working directly with residents to create tailored living solutions.

The Breton Ability Centre¹⁶ stands out for its innovative, community-centered approach to supporting individuals with disabilities. Unlike traditional institutional models, the centre adopts a dispersed housing model, integrating homes into neighborhoods throughout the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. This approach emphasizes community inclusion and fosters a sense of belonging for residents, aligning with contemporary best practices in disability housing.

As noted at the start of this section, Nova Scotia's approach to disability housing is undergoing substantive change to remedy years of systemic human rights violations against people with disabilities. That said, there are pockets of examples where folks are being supported to live in residential contexts in community. In these cases, there is a combination of government funding, community involvement, and commitments to housing models that promote inclusive environments for individuals with disabilities. Lessons can be drawn from the dispersed housing model used by the Breton Ability Centre, which prioritizes integration into the broader community over centralized care facilities. Additionally, the collaboration between provincial governments and non-profits highlights the potential for leveraging partnerships to expand housing solutions while fostering community engagement and support. It will be important to watch how housing options, policies, and practices emerge and evolve in response to the unfolding of *The Remedy*.

Nunavut

Nunavut has prioritized integrating accessibility and cultural appropriateness into its housing strategies, addressing the unique challenges faced by individuals with

¹⁶ <https://bretonability.ca/>

disabilities living in remote and harsh environments. The territory emphasizes community-driven approaches and inclusive design to ensure that housing projects are not only functional but also culturally sensitive, meeting the unique needs of Inuit communities.

The Nunavut Housing Authority (NHA) serves as the primary body managing disability housing programs. Initiatives such as the Accessible Home Adaptations Program provide financial support for essential modifications, including ramps, widened doorways, and adaptive technologies, enabling individuals to continue living in their homes with enhanced accessibility and independence. The Supported Housing Capital Program complements this by funding the construction of supported housing projects equipped with accessibility features and integrated support services, which are critical for improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in a region with a limited and expensive housing market.

Strategic planning is evident through initiatives like the Nunavut Housing Strategy – Accessibility Components, which ensures that new housing developments meet accessibility standards and incorporate inclusive design principles. Further innovation is encouraged through the Nunavut Solutions Grant, which provides funding for projects that address accessibility and inclusivity while improving local infrastructure.

Funding for these programs is derived from a combination of federal contributions through initiatives such as the National Housing Strategy and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) accessibility programs, alongside provincial contributions from the Government of Nunavut. Local municipalities and non-profit organizations also play supportive roles, providing technical assistance, forming partnerships, and engaging with communities to tailor solutions to local needs.

Despite these efforts, Nunavut faces significant challenges, including a limited housing stock, high costs of construction, and logistical difficulties in delivering building materials to remote areas. However, initiatives such as the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) Housing Initiatives for Disabilities stand out as a success. These projects combine culturally tailored housing designs with integrated support services, ensuring that adaptive housing aligns with Inuit cultural practices while offering personal care services and fostering community integration.

Nunavut's approach underscores the value of integrating cultural and geographic considerations into housing solutions for remote and Indigenous communities. Flexible funding models, culturally responsive designs, and community-driven initiatives provide valuable lessons for addressing the unique challenges of disability housing in remote regions while respecting cultural heritage and traditions.

Ontario

Ontario has adopted a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to disability housing, placing a strong emphasis on accessibility, inclusivity, and affordability. As Canada's largest and most diverse province by population, Ontario has implemented innovative programs and partnerships to meet the housing needs of individuals with disabilities, fostering independence and community integration across its urban and rural regions.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) serves as the foundation for housing accessibility in the province, mandating rigorous standards to ensure compliance with universal design principles. Housing initiatives are further bolstered by the Ontario Building Code, which reinforces these standards through regular audits and upgrades, ensuring that accessibility remains a priority in both new constructions and existing housing stock.

Ontario's housing landscape includes a variety of programs designed to support individuals with disabilities. The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) – Housing Component integrates financial assistance for rent and housing-related expenses with broader support services, ensuring a holistic approach to disability housing. Additionally, an initiative of Inclusion Canada and People First Canada called, My Home My Community, highlights the work being done by Community Living Toronto and Houselink & Mainstay Community Housing - a Toronto non-profit supportive housing provider. This partnership works with housing developers in Toronto to secure dispersed (mixed tenant) individualized rental units to provide security of tenure, housing affordability, and supports for inclusion" (Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL; now Inclusion Canada), 2019, p. 5; see Appendix 2). This housing

initiative provides thousands of dispersed accessible, affordable units combined with supportive services such as counselling, life skills training, and employment assistance to promote independence and stability.

Another highlight in Ontario, an initiative highlighted by My Home, My Community, is Legacy Homes (see Appendix 3), a project being implemented by Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement. “This initiative provides individuals and families planning resources, acquires individual homes in the community, and provides lifelong lease agreements to individuals with developmental disabilities to ensure security of tenure and supports to enable inclusion” (CACL, 2019, p. 5)

The province has embraced innovative housing models that cater to diverse needs. Initiatives such as the Inclusive Community Grants encourage non-profits and municipalities to develop inclusive housing projects, while Intentional Living by Reena¹⁷ focuses on supported living arrangements tailored to individual preferences. Cooperative housing models, led by organizations like the Ontario Association of Accessible Housing Providers (OAAHP), promote community ownership and long-term sustainability while prioritizing affordability and accessibility.

Funding for Ontario’s disability housing initiatives is a collaborative effort. Federal contributions through programs like the National Housing Co-Investment Fund and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Accessibility Programs are complemented by provincial and municipal investments. Private donations and partnerships with community organizations further strengthen the financial sustainability of these programs, enabling innovative solutions and expanded outreach.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist. Ontario faces long waitlists for affordable housing, escalating construction costs, and a limited supply of accessible units to meet growing demand. However, successes like the Toronto Community Housing Accessibility Program and the Ontario Renovates: Home Accessibility Tax Credit illustrate the province’s ability to integrate accessibility into existing housing and incentivize home modifications, improving quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

¹⁷ <https://reena.org/initiatives/intentional-living/>

Ontario's approach to disability housing is exemplified by the Intentional Living by Reena program, a notable initiative that underscores the province's commitment to creating tailored, supportive living arrangements for individuals with disabilities ¹⁸. This program provides individuals with personalized assistance in a supported living environment that emphasizes independence, community engagement, and self-management. Residents benefit from accessible housing units designed with universal design principles, ensuring ease of mobility and daily living. The program also integrates community engagement opportunities and life skills support, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment among residents. What sets Intentional Living by Reena apart is its focus on holistic, person-centered care. The program works closely with individuals to identify their specific needs and preferences, ensuring that the support provided aligns with their goals for independence and quality of life. The initiative's dedication to accessibility and inclusivity has made it a benchmark for similar programs in Ontario and beyond.

Ontario's approach to disability housing offers valuable insights into fostering inclusive and sustainable housing environments. Programs like Intentional Living by Reena highlight the potential of supported living arrangements to enhance autonomy and community participation for individuals with disabilities. Ontario's integration of accessible design, individualized support, and community-focused initiatives provides a replicable model for creating inclusive housing solutions that address diverse needs. Coupled with the province's robust regulatory frameworks like the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), collaborative funding models, and innovative, community-driven strategies, Ontario demonstrates how a comprehensive approach can effectively meet the housing needs of individuals with disabilities. Similar strategies may inform other jurisdictions wanting to advance efforts for equitable and accessible housing, particularly in urban centers and growing communities.

¹⁸ It is important to note that *Reena* provides three different housing models. <https://reena.org/programs-housing/residential-programs/>

Prince Edward Island

In Prince Edward Island (PEI), six residential models are available for individuals with disabilities, tailored to their levels of independent living skills. These include independent living supports and supported apartments, where residents are responsible for managing their own homes, grocery shopping, and meal preparation. Associate Family placements, similar to home-sharing models in other provinces, involve adults or families in the community providing housing and care for adults with disabilities who need assistance with daily living. Group homes serve individuals with limited independent skills, while Small Options Homes are designed for those with complex needs and more significant support requirements. Specialized Residential Placements cater to individuals with specific and complex needs, typically those aged 65 or older, though younger individuals may qualify based on their care needs and lack of alternative options. These placements offer flexible service durations, including short-term, long-term, or day-based services. Additionally, respite housing is available to provide temporary support.

PEI's housing supports operate under the Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act and the AccessAbility Supports Policy. Funding for these options primarily comes from the AccessAbility Supports Program, managed by the PEI Department of Social Services and Seniors Residential Services Program. Associate Family placements draw funding from programs such as the PEI Social Assistance Program (SA) and Disability Support Services (DSP). For specialized residential placements, costs are shared between the resident and the provincial government. Housing options are operated by independent agencies, with oversight and monitoring provided by the government to ensure quality and compliance.

One noteworthy initiative in PEI is the short-term or day-based service options offered through Specialized Residential Placements. These services allow individuals to access supports and resources without needing to permanently leave their homes, enabling them to benefit from specialized care in a flexible manner. This model can help fill service gaps that are not typically addressed in community settings, fostering greater inclusion and support for individuals with disabilities.

PEI's approach to providing flexible, tailored housing and support options offers valuable lessons. The diversity in residential models, such as short-term and day-based Specialized Residential Placements, highlights how services can be adapted to meet the unique needs of individuals without uprooting them from their homes. Incorporating similar models, other jurisdictions could improve service accessibility for individuals with disabilities in rural and urban areas alike, while ensuring that funding and assessments better address intersectional and complex needs. PEI's integration of community-driven care and collaborative funding frameworks provides a replicable example for fostering independence and inclusivity in disability housing systems.

Quebec

Quebec offers a diverse array of innovative housing programs and services aimed at improving accessibility, affordability, and independence for individuals with disabilities. The province has prioritized creating accessible environments through financial assistance, specialized housing options, and comprehensive support services tailored to individual needs.

A key initiative is the Programme d'adaptation de domicile (PAD), administered by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ). This program provides financial aid for home modifications, such as ramps, roll-in showers, and grab bars, enabling individuals with disabilities to live safely and independently. Applications are assessed through local CLSCs (Centres locaux de services communautaires) to ensure adaptations are personalized. Complementing this, the Crédit d'impôt pour l'adaptation de domicile offers a refundable tax credit to seniors and individuals with disabilities, further incentivizing home modifications that promote accessibility and autonomy.

The Maisons des aînés et alternatives initiative provides long-term care and supportive housing for seniors and adults with disabilities. These modern, small-scale facilities¹⁹ are designed to prioritize autonomy, dignity, and accessibility, featuring private rooms, communal spaces, and accessible bathrooms. Staff trained in person-centered care ensure residents receive holistic support in a home-like environment. This

¹⁹ Of importance, these are congregate facilities that are often critiqued by members of disability communities.

initiative reflects Quebec's commitment to fostering community integration and quality of life for vulnerable populations.

Quebec also supports housing affordability through initiatives such as the Programme Allocation-Logement, which provides rent subsidies for low-income households, including those with disabilities. Beneficiaries typically pay only 25% of their income toward rent, significantly alleviating financial burdens. Meanwhile, federally supported projects like L'Étoile du Nord, developed through federal, provincial, and municipal partnerships, focus on affordable housing for individuals with mental health challenges.

Private organizations such as Immo Accessible Québec contribute by connecting individuals with disabilities to accessible housing options and facilitating home modifications through professional networks. Community-focused initiatives, like Chez-nous solidaire, provide supervised housing for individuals with intellectual disabilities, incorporating 24/7 support and universal design features to promote independence and social engagement.

Quebec's funding model involves substantial provincial contributions, bolstered by federal initiatives such as the National Housing Co-Investment Fund and support from local governments. Collaborative partnerships with non-profits and private developers enhance the reach and efficacy of these programs, ensuring a broad spectrum of solutions for diverse needs.

While challenges such as limited capacity in specialized housing facilities and waitlists for financial assistance persist, Quebec's innovative approaches offer valuable insights. Quebec's emphasis on universal design, autonomy, and accessible community integration provides a replicable framework. By adapting similar initiatives—such as tax incentives for home modifications, community-based housing models, and rent subsidy programs—other jurisdictions may advance their efforts to create inclusive, sustainable housing solutions for individuals with disabilities.

Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan, housing programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities are overseen by the Ministry of Social Services through its Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) branch. CLSD collaborates with various service providers to deliver a range of housing options tailored to meet diverse needs, including Approved Private Service Homes (APSH), group homes, and Supported Living programs. These models aim to foster independence and community integration for individuals with disabilities.

An innovative example of inclusive housing in the province is Willowview Heights²⁰ in Saskatoon, developed through a collaboration between the National Affordable Housing Corporation (NAHC) and Inclusion Saskatchewan. This initiative exemplifies a mixed-market model, where affordable units are offered to individuals with disabilities alongside market-rate units. The integration of residents with and without disabilities creates an inclusive and supportive community while reducing stigma. The site's proximity to essential services, such as healthcare and public transportation, further enhances accessibility and convenience for its residents.

Funding for housing programs in Saskatchewan stems from a combination of federal, provincial, and municipal contributions. The Ministry of Social Services provides significant funding through CLSD, supporting housing options for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Additional funding is allocated through the province's Social Housing Program, which offers affordable housing to low-income residents, including persons with disabilities. Federally, programs under the National Housing Strategy, such as the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, contribute to housing developments in the province. Municipal efforts, particularly in cities like Saskatoon, involve partnerships with non-profits such as the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), which plays a pivotal role in developing affordable housing projects. Non-profit organizations such as the NAHC, Inclusion Saskatchewan, and the Saskatoon Housing Authority (SHA) further support housing initiatives by providing resources, advocacy, and funding to bridge gaps in affordable and accessible housing availability. These

²⁰ <https://www.realliferentals.ca/saskatoon/willowview-heights>

collaborative efforts are integral to ensuring that housing developments like Willowview Heights meet both accessibility and inclusivity goals.

Saskatchewan's mixed-market housing model offers an excellent example of how affordability and inclusivity can coexist in a single development. By integrating individuals with disabilities into broader communities and prioritizing proximity to essential services, other jurisdictions could adapt similar approaches to create inclusive, community-focused housing environments that reduce stigma and enhance quality of life for people with disabilities.

Yukon

The Yukon has historically lacked large institutions for individuals with intellectual disabilities, though some were sent to other provinces for care, and the legacy of residential schools leaves much about Indigenous children with disabilities undocumented. In 2024, the St. Elias Adult Group Home, originally opened in 2016 for individuals with developmental disabilities, was repurposed into a live-in program for individuals requiring intensive support for substance use recovery, with residents relocated to smaller group homes.

Detailed information on disability housing in the Yukon is sparse, and efforts to gather additional data from government departments and local agencies yielded limited responses. However, the available housing options are primarily managed by the Yukon Department of Health and Social Services and include long-term care homes (with unspecified age requirements) and Care at Home and Respite Care services. These programs provide acute, chronic, palliative, rehabilitation, and respite care and are supported through partnerships with territorial, federal, and First Nation governments, as well as community organizations. Additionally, the Yukon offers home renovation loans for low- to moderate-income homeowners, along with funding to assist eligible seniors with heating costs.

The Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) program, regulated by the Yukon Housing Corporation Policy, provides subsidized housing for low-income individuals, families, or seniors, with rent set at 25% of the total gross monthly household income—lower than

the 30% standard seen in many other provinces. Priority consideration is granted to applicants experiencing family violence, those with severe chronic or acute medical conditions, or individuals whose health conditions significantly impact their mobility and independence. While the program typically requires 12 months of continuous residency in the Yukon, exceptions are made for victims of violence.

One noteworthy initiative in the territory is the Cornerstone Community Residence²¹, a supported rental housing project that reflects efforts to create inclusive, mixed-use spaces. Of the 53 apartments in the building, 45 are reserved for individuals with disabilities, while the remaining units are available at market rates. This project represents a collaborative effort between federal, territorial, and municipal governments and underscores the potential for increased housing models in the Yukon. However, the lack of detailed information from the coordinating agency at the time of reporting leaves questions about its operations and broader impact.

Challenges in the Yukon include a general shortage of affordable and accessible housing and barriers to accessing programs like the RGI program, which requires third-party verification of applicants' priority housing needs. These challenges are further exacerbated by the territory's harsh weather conditions and geographic isolation, which pose significant logistical and financial hurdles for housing development and maintenance.

The approach in the Yukon offers potential lessons on adapting housing solutions to unique geographic and climatic conditions, particularly in remote and underserved areas. The territory's focus on mixed-use housing models, such as the Cornerstone Community Residence, and its prioritization of vulnerable populations within subsidized housing programs, provides valuable insights for addressing housing challenges in other jurisdictions.

²¹ <https://www.yukon-news.com/news/cornerstone-community-building-opens-its-doors-7003746>

Residential Models

This section synthesizes the residential models identified across Canadian provinces and territories. These models are grouped into four overarching categories: group homes, supportive or assisted living, independent living models, and specialized or unique housing approaches. Each category reflects distinct approaches to supporting individuals with disabilities, with some overlap in practices and funding mechanisms.

Group Homes

Group homes remain one of the most widespread residential models across Canada, particularly for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and those requiring 24/7 care. Typically accommodating 3 to 10 residents, these homes provide varying levels of support tailored to the specific needs of their residents. For example, in Saskatchewan, group homes offer shift-staffed care, ranging from limited hours to round-the-clock support. In provinces like New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, group homes primarily cater to individuals with limited independent living skills, offering structured environments that promote stability and care.

While group homes are common, their prevalence and structure vary by region. In some territories, like the Northwest Territories and Yukon, logistical challenges and limited resources have necessitated reliance on group homes as a primary model. In contrast, provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia are gradually diversifying housing options to prioritize more inclusive and autonomous models. Funding for group homes is typically provided by provincial governments, with oversight from agencies such as Saskatchewan's Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) or New Brunswick's Department of Social Development. Many homes are operated by non-profits or community organizations, adhering to provincial guidelines. However, challenges remain, including lengthy waitlists, funding constraints, and the need for well-trained staff to deliver individualized care.

Supportive or Assisted Living

Supportive or assisted living models offer moderate levels of assistance, allowing individuals with disabilities to maintain some independence while receiving support for daily living activities. Programs such as Nova Scotia's Independent Living Support Policy and Alberta's Supported Living arrangements exemplify this approach, combining services like life skills training, personal care, and community inclusion with flexible housing options. In Ontario, initiatives like Intentional Living by Reena emphasize person-centered support within community-based living arrangements, showcasing how tailored assistance can foster autonomy.

Funding for supportive living programs is often a collaborative effort, combining provincial contributions—such as Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) program—with federal funding from the National Housing Strategy. Best practices are evident in initiatives like Quebec's Maisons des aînés et alternatives, which integrate universal design into smaller-scale facilities, offering accessible environments alongside person-centered care. These examples demonstrate the potential of supportive living models to bridge the gap between independence and comprehensive care. For other jurisdictions, this category underscores the value of collaborative funding and scalable solutions to meet the needs of individuals across a spectrum of abilities.

Independent Living Models

Independent living models prioritize autonomy and self-determination, supporting individuals who are capable of managing their daily lives with minimal assistance. Examples include BC housing's Independent Living BC Program and Newfoundland and Labrador's Individualized Living Arrangements. These models often incorporate assistive technologies, home modifications, and funding for personal support workers to enable residents to maintain control over their living environments.

Eligibility for independent living programs is typically determined through assessments that evaluate an individual's ability to manage household responsibilities. Provincial programs like Quebec's Programme d'adaptation de domicile and PEI's Independent Living Supports provide financial aid for adaptive technologies and modifications, such as roll-in showers, ramps, and accessible kitchens. Despite their success in promoting independence, these models face challenges, including limited availability in rural and remote areas and funding shortfalls.

Specialized or Unique Models

Specialized housing models in Canada prioritize inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and community integration. Nunavut's Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Housing Initiatives address Inuit cultural and accessibility needs, while Saskatchewan's Willowview Heights promotes inclusivity through a mixed-market approach. Alberta's Inclusio program sets a high standard for accessibility with its universal design and tailored supports, and Manitoba's Home Share 24-Hour model fosters personalized, trusted care. Ontario's Intentional Living by Reena highlights the benefits of person-centered, community-based housing.

These specialized models emphasize the importance of tailoring solutions to local contexts, collaborating with non-profits and Indigenous communities, and addressing cultural and geographic considerations, which may be of relevance to other jurisdictions. These lessons are particularly relevant for designing housing strategies that meet the needs of diverse populations in remote and urban settings alike.

Funding Structures

The funding structures supporting disability housing initiatives in Canada rely on a combination of federal, provincial or territorial, municipal, and non-governmental contributions. These diverse funding streams ensure the sustainability of housing programs, enable accessibility retrofits, and foster innovative housing models. While

each province and territory has unique mechanisms, there are consistent themes, such as reliance on federal transfers, collaborative cost-sharing, and partnerships with NGOs and private entities.

Federal Funding Streams

Federal funding is a primary cornerstone for disability housing initiatives, providing significant allocations that shape provincial and territorial approaches. Programs like the National Housing Strategy (NHS) and its components, including the National Housing Co-Investment Fund and the Canada Housing Benefit, ensure a steady flow of resources to build, repair, and subsidize housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) plays a pivotal role, administering funds and overseeing compliance with national standards, such as universal design principles. Federal contributions often require matching funds from provinces or territories, emphasizing a collaborative approach. For example, the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) has facilitated the swift construction of affordable housing, including units tailored for individuals with disabilities. These programs set baseline requirements for accessibility and affordability, enabling consistent integration across jurisdictions.

Provincial/Territorial Funding Strategies

Provinces and territories employ varied funding mechanisms tailored to regional needs, often leveraging block funding from federal programs. In many cases, provincial programs like Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) or Nova Scotia's Disability Supports Program (DSP) allocate funds directly to service providers or individuals, ensuring targeted support. Cost-sharing arrangements are common, as seen in Quebec, where provincial contributions through the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) complement federal funding to finance initiatives like the Programme d'adaptation de domicile (PAD). Specialized subsidy programs, such as Manitoba's Home Share funding or British Columbia's BC Rebate for Accessible Home

Adaptations, address specific accessibility needs. While these strategies promote flexibility, challenges like long waitlists and funding inconsistencies remain prevalent.

Municipal Funding and Incentives

Municipal governments contribute through localized funding mechanisms, often focused on land acquisition, property tax incentives, and direct grants. For instance, municipalities in Ontario, such as Toronto, work with non-profits and developers to integrate accessibility into affordable housing projects, supported by initiatives like the Toronto Community Housing Accessibility Program. In Saskatchewan, cities like Saskatoon collaborate with organizations like the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership to develop affordable and accessible housing. Additionally, municipal incentives, such as expedited permitting processes or fee waivers, facilitate the development of housing tailored for individuals with disabilities. These localized efforts are critical for bridging gaps in federal and provincial funding and ensuring community-centered solutions.

Other Funding Models

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), philanthropic contributions, and private sector investments play a vital role in sustaining and innovating disability housing initiatives. Organizations like Inclusion Canada and Habitat for Humanity Canada collaborate with governments to deliver accessible housing and retrofit projects. Alberta's Inclusio program exemplifies successful joint ventures, integrating funding from the private sector, provincial programs, and non-profits to achieve its gold-standard accessibility certification. In some cases, community fundraising efforts, such as those by Newfoundland and Labrador's Breton Ability Centre, supplement governmental contributions to enhance services and infrastructure. The emergence of mixed-market models, like Saskatchewan's Willowview Heights, showcases the potential of combining affordable and market-rate units to ensure financial sustainability while promoting inclusivity.

In summary, Canada's disability housing landscape demonstrates a multi-layered funding structure, with federal transfers providing foundational support and provinces, territories, and municipalities tailoring funding mechanisms to local needs. Partnerships with NGOs, philanthropic entities, and the private sector further enhance the reach and impact of these programs. Other jurisdictions may be interested in developing similar collaborative approaches and leveraging diverse funding streams to help address accessibility and affordability gaps in disability housing.

Roles of Government and Other Stakeholders

The governance and implementation of disability housing in Canada involve a layered structure of responsibilities shared among federal, provincial or territorial, and municipal authorities, with significant contributions from NGOs, community groups, and the private sector. This collaborative approach ensures that housing solutions are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities while addressing local priorities and leveraging community resources.

Federal Roles

At the federal level, the government provides overarching guidance and funding frameworks for disability housing through legislation and strategic plans. The National Housing Strategy (NHS), introduced in 2017, represents a cornerstone policy, emphasizing accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity. Administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the NHS includes key funding streams like the National Housing Co-Investment Fund, the Canada Housing Benefit, and the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI). These programs establish national standards, such as universal design principles, while requiring provinces and territories to meet funding criteria tied to accessibility and affordability. The Accessible Canada Act (ACA) further enforces accessibility standards in federally funded housing projects, ensuring alignment with broader inclusivity goals. The federal government also monitors progress

through oversight mechanisms like the Federal Housing Advocate, who reviews systemic housing challenges and promotes accountability.

Provincial/Territorial Roles

Provinces and territories hold primary responsibility for implementing and managing disability housing initiatives within their jurisdictions. This includes policy development, funding allocation, and program delivery. Ministries or agencies such as British Columbia's Community Living BC (CLBC), Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD), and Quebec's Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) oversee inclusive housing programs for adults with intellectual disabilities, ensuring alignment with provincial goals and federal funding requirements. Provinces also establish regulatory frameworks, such as Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), to enforce accessibility standards.

Provinces and territories are often tasked with monitoring and evaluating housing programs, conducting needs assessments, and maintaining compliance with housing guidelines. For example, Manitoba's Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) works with service providers to deliver housing options tailored to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Provincial governments also engage in cost-sharing agreements with the federal government to maximize resources, as seen in the implementation of federal programs like the NHS within regional contexts.

Municipal or Regional Roles

Municipal governments play a crucial role in operationalizing housing initiatives through zoning regulations, local bylaws, and administrative practices. They are often responsible for identifying land for affordable housing projects, facilitating partnerships with developers, and ensuring compliance with accessibility standards. For example, municipalities in Saskatchewan, such as Saskatoon, work closely with non-profits like the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) to create affordable and accessible housing.

Local governments also provide property tax incentives, expedited permitting processes, and grants to support inclusive housing development. In Ontario, cities like Toronto lead initiatives like the Toronto Community Housing Accessibility Program, which retrofits existing units to improve accessibility. Additionally, municipalities often manage waitlists for social housing and administer rent supplement programs, such as New Brunswick's Portable Rent Supplement Program, ensuring that support reaches those most in need.

NGO and Private Sector Involvement

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), advocacy groups, and private entities are instrumental in addressing gaps in disability housing and delivering specialized services. Organizations like Inclusion Canada, Habitat for Humanity, and Reena collaborate with governments to develop housing projects, provide life skills training, and advocate for policy reforms. For instance, Alberta's Inclusio program, a joint initiative involving public, private, and non-profit stakeholders, exemplifies how partnerships can achieve exemplary standards in accessibility and inclusivity.

NGOs often take on the role of service providers, managing group homes, supported living facilities, and community integration programs. Private developers contribute by constructing mixed-market housing models, as seen in Saskatchewan's Willowview Heights, which integrates affordable units with market-rate housing to promote inclusivity and sustainability. Advocacy networks further amplify the voices of individuals with disabilities, pushing for systemic changes and ensuring that housing solutions are equitable and inclusive.

In summary, Canada's disability housing system relies on a multi-stakeholder approach, with federal leadership setting strategic directions, provinces and territories adapting these strategies to local needs, municipalities operationalizing them, and NGOs and private entities filling critical gaps. This collaborative model underscores the importance of shared governance, localized implementation, and leveraging partnerships to create effective and inclusive housing solutions.

Oversight, Safeguarding, and Quality Assurance

Canada's disability housing initiatives and policies are supported by regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring accessibility, tenant protection, staff competency, and compliance with standards. However, a notable challenge during this research was the difficulty in accessing comprehensive and transparent information about these safeguards. The lack of easily available data highlights broader systemic issues in the visibility and accountability of disability housing programs across the country.

Accessibility and Universal Design Standards

Accessibility is a fundamental pillar of disability housing initiatives, guided by frameworks like the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and regional legislation such as Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Accessible BC Act (ABCA). These enforce universal design principles, including barrier-free layouts, widened doorways, and roll-in showers. Programs like Quebec's Programme d'adaptation de domicile and BC's Rebate for Accessible Home Adaptations provide funding for modifications to meet or exceed these requirements. Alberta's Inclusio program, which earned Rick Hansen Foundation Gold Certification, demonstrates exemplary compliance with universal design standards. However, gathering detailed information on how consistently these standards are applied across regions proved challenging, pointing to gaps in public reporting and accountability.

Tenant Safeguards and Rights Protections

Tenant protections are central to maintaining safety and well-being. Most provinces have frameworks like Ontario's Residential Tenancies Act, which includes rights charters and complaint mechanisms. Advocacy groups, including Inclusion Canada, also provide critical support to tenants navigating the system. While many regions prioritize vulnerable populations, such as those experiencing domestic violence, obtaining clear and uniform data on how tenant safeguards are implemented was often

difficult. This lack of transparency underscores a broader issue: tenants may struggle to navigate housing systems or understand their rights without accessible and centralized information.

Staffing and Training Requirements

Staff qualifications and ongoing training are crucial to ensuring high-quality care. Programs like Quebec's Maisons des aînés et alternatives require staff to be trained in person-centered care, disability accommodations, and cultural sensitivity. Nova Scotia mandates periodic professional development for residential facility staff, while Manitoba implements performance evaluations and feedback systems. However, detailed regional variations and compliance data were notably hard to find. This lack of publicly available information complicates efforts to evaluate staffing adequacy and the effectiveness of training programs across Canada, raising concerns about standardization and accountability.

Monitoring and Compliance

Monitoring mechanisms, such as regular inspections and licensing, are key to maintaining quality assurance. Provinces like Manitoba and BC conduct routine checks to ensure facilities comply with accessibility and safety standards. Programs under federal oversight, such as those supported by the National Housing Strategy Co-Investment Fund, also require stringent reporting and compliance. While these mechanisms are designed to ensure accountability, accessing reliable data on inspection schedules, enforcement actions, and systemic outcomes proved difficult. The broader issue of insufficient transparency in compliance and monitoring underscores the need for more publicly available information to ensure these systems function effectively.

The challenges encountered in accessing detailed and transparent data during this research suggest systemic barriers to understanding and improving oversight mechanisms in Canada's disability housing initiatives. These findings emphasize the

importance of not only implementing strong safeguards but also ensuring that information about these systems is readily available and easily navigable. Enhanced transparency could improve accountability, accessibility, and public trust, strengthening housing strategies for individuals with disabilities.

Cross-Jurisdictional Comparison and International Relevance

Canada's disability housing landscape reveals a complex patchwork of federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal initiatives, each reflecting unique regional priorities and challenges. While the country's federated system allows for locally tailored solutions, it also creates disparities in the availability, funding, and quality of housing options for individuals with disabilities. These variations offer valuable insights for other jurisdictions with federated systems, where governance structures similarly require coordination across multiple levels of government.

Similarities Across Jurisdictions

One consistent trend across Canada is the prioritization of accessibility, inclusion, and autonomy in housing initiatives. Universal design principles and funding for adaptive technologies, such as those under Quebec's Programme d'adaptation de domicile or Ontario's Ontario Renovates tax credits, feature prominently. Moreover, most provinces and territories offer a spectrum of housing models—ranging from group homes to independent living arrangements—that are designed to meet diverse needs. Programs like BC's Community Living BC and Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities emphasize person-centered planning, aligning with international best practices for disability-inclusive housing.

Federal funding streams like the National Housing Co-Investment Fund and Canada Housing Benefit provide an overarching framework that supports provincial and territorial initiatives. These programs help reduce inequalities by directing resources toward vulnerable populations, ensuring that even regions with limited

financial capacity can implement critical housing projects. However, accessing reliable data on how these funds are allocated and utilized remains a challenge, raising concerns about transparency and equity.

Key Differences Across Regions

Despite shared goals, significant disparities exist in the availability and accessibility of disability housing across provinces and territories. For instance, while provinces like Quebec and Ontario have established robust frameworks for accessibility and funding, smaller or more remote jurisdictions, such as Yukon or Nunavut, face unique challenges due to geographic isolation and logistical constraints. These territories rely heavily on federal contributions and often struggle with limited housing stock and the high costs of construction and maintenance.

Cultural tailoring is another point of differentiation. Nunavut's emphasis on integrating Inuit cultural practices into housing initiatives highlights the importance of addressing Indigenous and regional needs. Conversely, more urbanized provinces like Ontario and BC focus on innovations such as cooperative housing models and community-driven projects, exemplifying the potential for collaboration between governments, NGOs, and the private sector.

Lessons for Policymakers

Canada operates under a federated system where responsibilities for housing and disability services are divided across federal, state, and local governments. Several aspects of Canada's approach offer potential valuable lessons for policy makers from other jurisdictions:

1. Coordination Across Jurisdictions

Canada's use of federal frameworks, such as the National Housing Strategy and Accessible Canada Act, establishes nationwide goals while allowing provinces and territories to adapt programs to local contexts. For similar

federated jurisdictions, similar overarching strategies to ensure consistent standards for accessibility and funding across all states and territories are crucial.

2. Tailored Solutions for Remote and Indigenous Communities

The inclusion of cultural and geographic considerations in housing programs, as seen in Nunavut and Yukon, underscores the importance of addressing the unique needs of Indigenous populations and remote communities. Adopting region-specific approaches that incorporate Indigenous perspectives and local expertise in housing strategies could benefit other jurisdiction to meet the unique needs of individuals, families, and communities in Indigenous and remote communities.

3. Diverse Funding Models

Canada's mixed funding strategies, combining federal transfers, provincial contributions, municipal grants, and private sector partnerships, demonstrate how collaborative financing can enhance the sustainability of housing programs. Expanding reliance on and partnerships with public-private partnerships and community-driven initiatives to leverage additional resources for disability housing may inform strategies in other jurisdictions.

4. Transparency and Accountability

A notable gap in Canada's system is the difficulty in accessing clear and consistent data on funding allocations, compliance, and program outcomes. Ensuring transparency and robust monitoring mechanisms would enhance public trust and facilitate evidence-based policy adjustments.

LIMITATIONS

The jurisdictional scan faced significant challenges in accessing detailed information about funding structures, resident costs, and quality assurance or safeguarding measures. In many cases, such details were either unavailable or buried within broader policy documents, making it nearly impossible to discern exact funding mechanisms, the financial burden on residents, or how safeguarding protocols were implemented. Efforts to reach out directly to government departments, housing authorities, or community organizations often resulted in delayed, incomplete, or absent responses, highlighting systemic issues around transparency and accessibility in disability housing. Additionally, many programs and initiatives, particularly in smaller provinces and territories, operated with inconsistent levels of public documentation or relied on informal communication channels to relay critical details.

These difficulties were compounded by the limitations of the scan itself. The reliance on publicly available information sourced through Google made it possible that some housing initiatives, policies, or frameworks were not captured. With three researchers conducting the scans, variations in the pieces of information identified across jurisdictions may have occurred, adding another layer of inconsistency. Furthermore, the sheer size and complexity of the data table limited the depth of analysis in some areas, potentially omitting nuanced details or smaller-scale initiatives. Crucially, the review offers only a structural overview, failing to reflect the lived experiences of disabled individuals navigating housing systems: key insights into accessibility, usability, and real-world barriers remain absent.

These challenges emphasize the need for improved communication, centralized databases, and stronger accountability measures to ensure that housing programs and policies are not only transparent and well-documented but also accessible to individuals with disabilities, advocates, and policymakers. The inability to consistently find specific funding information, costs to residents, or clear safeguarding measures raises concerns about how effectively these programs can be accessed or evaluated, both by researchers and the populations they aim to serve.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This jurisdictional scan revealed significant insights into the landscape of disability housing across Canada, structured around the five research questions. The findings highlighted diverse residential models, funding structures, governance roles, safeguarding measures, and systemic challenges, providing a broad yet fragmented picture of housing initiatives for individuals with disabilities.

Residential models varied widely across provinces and territories, encompassing group homes, supportive living arrangements, independent living models, and regionally specialized programs. While group homes remained the most prevalent, newer models such as mixed-market housing (e.g., Saskatchewan's Willowview Heights) and culturally tailored initiatives (e.g., Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Housing Initiatives in Nunavut) demonstrated innovative approaches to inclusivity. However, disparities in availability, particularly in remote areas, underscored pressing gaps in equitable access.

Disability housing initiatives were funded through a combination of federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal contributions, supplemented by partnerships with NGOs and private entities. Federal programs like the National Housing Strategy and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) initiatives shaped provincial strategies, but the reliance on decentralized funding created inconsistencies. Transparency in funding mechanisms and clarity on resident costs were major gaps, complicating both program evaluation and accessibility for end users.

Federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments played complementary yet fragmented roles. The federal government provided overarching frameworks and funding, while provinces/territories managed policy implementation and service delivery. Municipalities supported local initiatives through zoning and grants, and NGOs filled service gaps, often leading innovative programs. However, the lack of centralized oversight created inefficiencies and confusion for stakeholders navigating these systems.

Accessibility standards, tenant rights, and licensing protocols varied significantly across jurisdictions. Federal mandates such as the Accessible Canada Act offered national guidance, but the absence of consistent monitoring and enforcement diluted

their impact. Gaps in safeguarding mechanisms, particularly for vulnerable populations, and limited transparency in quality assurance measures remain critical areas for improvement.

While Canadian jurisdictions showcased promising practices, including community integration, universal design, and culturally sensitive approaches, these efforts were often inconsistent and inadequately documented. For other jurisdictions, Canada's emphasis on multi-level governance, community-driven initiatives, and inclusive design offers valuable lessons. However, challenges in equity, transparency, and accessibility highlight areas requiring further study and adaptation.

Several recurring themes emerged, including the need for greater transparency, standardized accessibility standards, and improved funding clarity. Pressing gaps in rural and Indigenous housing, equitable resource distribution, and consistent monitoring mechanisms also surfaced. Future research should prioritize lived experiences of individuals with disabilities to capture on-the-ground realities, and policymakers should consider centralized data systems to streamline access to program details and foster greater accountability. These findings contribute to a growing body of global disability housing knowledge, offering critical insights for federated systems like Australia to address structural and systemic barriers.

CONCLUSIONS

Canada's disability housing system demonstrates the potential of federated governance to balance local innovation with national oversight, offering important lessons for other federated systems like Australia. By drawing on Canada's successes, such as its emphasis on universal design, collaborative funding models, and culturally tailored initiatives, policymakers from other jurisdictions can enhance accessibility, equity, and sustainability in housing for individuals with disabilities. At the same time, addressing shared challenges, such as regional disparities and limited data transparency, are critical to fostering more inclusive housing outcomes.

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APPENDIX 1



My Home My Community

*Inclusive Housing Options for
People with Developmental Disabilities:
A National Demonstration Initiative*

Case Study Report 3: UNITI-Chorus, South Surrey, BC

October 2019

This report was produced as part of My Home My Community, a national initiative of the Canadian Association of Community Living and People First of Canada.

The Canadian Association for Community Living is a national federation of 13 provincial-territorial associations and over 300 local associations working to advance the full inclusion and human rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families. CACL is dedicated to attaining full participation in community life, ending exclusion and discrimination on the basis of intellectual disability, promoting respect for diversity, and advancing human rights to ensure equality for all Canadians. CACL leads the way in building a more inclusive Canada for people with an intellectual disability by strengthening families, defending rights, and transforming communities into places where everyone belongs.

www.cacl.ca

People First of Canada is the national voice for people who have been labeled with an intellectual disability. We believe in the right to freedom, choice, and equality for all. We support each other to reclaim our right to be recognized as full citizens through peer support, sharing our stories, developing leadership skills, advocating for our right to choose where and with whom we live, and by ensuring that our voices are heard and respected. We work together to educate and influence communities and government to ensure that all persons with intellectual disabilities are fully included and supported to live as equal citizens in Canada.

www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

My Home My Community is a national partnership initiative that is opening doors to inclusive affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. My Home My Community is driving innovation in housing development and community supports to ensure all persons with developmental disabilities have a home that offers choice and affordability, recognizes rights, addresses support needs, and fosters social inclusion in the community.

www.myhomemycommunity.ca

How to reference this report:

Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). *My Home My Community: Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities. Case Study Report 3: UNITI-Chorus.*



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR
L'INTÉGRATION COMMUNAUTAIRE

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.

PEOPLE
FIRST
OF CANADA



PERSONNES
D'ABORD
DU CANADA

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who participated in the study, from focus group participants to interviewees, who dedicated their time and shared their experience with us while developing this case study report. Your contributions will help to transform communities into places where everyone belongs.

In particular, we want to thank Doug Tennant, Nolda Ware and Lise Boughen who helped us organize and design each engagement session. Without their help, this report would not have been possible.

Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Demonstrations Initiative to produce this work. The views expressed within are solely of the Canadian Association for Community Living, together with project partners where expressly stated. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) accepts no responsibility for the views expressed within.

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Introducing the Project	3
3.0	The Development Timeline (2003 – 2019)	4
4.0	Project Impact	12
5.0	Project Description	16
6.0	Community Inclusion	21
7.0	Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Scale	26
8.0	Appendices	29

1.0 Introduction

This report provides an in-depth review of UNITI-Chorus' efforts to develop new housing solutions for individuals with a developmental disability. This case study report is part three of three in a series developed for the Canadian Association for Community Living's *My Home My Community* Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities national demonstration project.

1.1 The Case Studies

The My Home My Community: Inclusive Housing Options Demonstration Initiative profiles three innovative approaches to developing inclusive, affordable, and accessible housing. These models not only provide support, but also foster social inclusion for individuals with a developmental disability.

The models profiled as part of this demonstration initiative are just a small sample of the diverse range of ways people with developmental disabilities and their circles of support are making inclusive affordable housing a reality. None are perfect: the models developed in these case studies all have their strengths and weaknesses; each emerged out of a specific context with its own limitations and areas of excellence. Together, they contribute to a growing body of work recognizing the potential of housing to be the cornerstone of inclusive communities.

The three case studies profiled in this series are:

- **Case Study 1: Community Living Toronto, Toronto ON**
This initiative works with housing developers in Toronto to secure dispersed rental apartments to provide security of tenure, housing affordability, and supports for inclusion.
- **Case Study 2: Legacy Homes – Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement, Brockville ON**
This initiative provides individuals and families planning resources, acquires individual homes in the community and provides lifelong lease agreements to individuals with developmental disabilities to ensure security of tenure and supports to enable inclusion.
- **Case Study 3: UNITI-Chorus – Semiahmoo House Society, South Surrey BC**
This initiative leverages undeveloped property and capital assets to develop affordable rental housing, designed to fit the needs of people with intellectual disabilities but including tenants with and without disabilities.

This report provides an overview of the findings from the UNITI-Chorus case study (case study three). This report may be of particular of interest to organizations who have capacity to provide supports in a larger building, as well as the internal capacity and land or other equity available they can leverage to develop such a building.

For detailed descriptions of the case studies Community Living Toronto and Legacy Homes, please see case study reports one and two in this series.

Case Study 1: Partnering with Developers Community Living Toronto	Case Study 2: Family-Led Solutions Legacy Homes	Case Study 3: New Development UNITI-Chorus
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1.2 Why These Case Studies

Throughout Canada, at least 24,000 Canadians with developmental disabilities are in core housing need¹, with tens of thousands more in vulnerable housing situations. The *My Home My Community* initiative is a local-to-national program framework that promotes new development pathways to affordable and inclusive housing for individuals with a developmental disability.

Previous research has identified three development pathways that have demonstrated success in delivering inclusive affordable housing. These pathways were identified through a series of consultations from December 2016 to October 2018 and involved individuals with developmental disabilities and family members, Provincial and Territorial Associations for Community Living (ACLs), members of People First of Canada, housing developers, community partners and local support agencies. The identified development pathways are:

1. Individual and/or family-led housing solutions

Many families have ideas or are successfully developing their own housing solutions. With some support, knowledge sharing, and financial tools, more individuals can take action, with a flatter learning curve.

2. Partnered Solutions

Local or provincial/territorial organizations can partner with families and housing sector professionals to develop new housing.

3. New Development and Regeneration

Providers of housing and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities are seeing a mismatch between their own inclusivity principles and outdated models of residential services. Increasingly, housing providers are looking to leverage their assets and invest in inclusive, affordable housing that prioritizes the needs of people with developmental disabilities but welcomes residents with and without disabilities.

The National Housing Strategy released in 2018 by the Federal Government has allocated funding and initiatives to construct a total of 2,400 units for individuals with developmental disabilities. An asset inventory² conducted as part of *My Home My*

¹ Statistics Canada defines a household in core housing need as one whose dwelling is considered unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community.

² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). *My Home My Community: Asset Inventory*: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d56a5e63df6e9000117b679/1565959655552/MHMC+Asset+Inventory+FINAL.pdf>

Community identified that along the three pathways there is an estimated development potential of up to 35, 000 units Canada wide.³

The goal of this project is to create a platform that will engage the housing sector, government, and community partners in learning about these three development pathways and help achieve scale along these approaches across Canada through replication.

Report Format

The case study report consists of three main parts. Part one develops an in-depth overview of UNITI-Chorus' approach to creating new housing for individuals with a developmental disability and the impact of this approach on tenants, families and support staff. The remaining section outlines UNITI-Chorus' lessons learned and opportunities for replication of this initiative across Canada. For an overview of the approach taken to develop this case study, see appendix A.

2.0 Introducing the Project

UNITI-Chorus is a partnership between three organizations. These are the Semiahmoo House Society, the Peninsula Estates Housing Society and the Semiahmoo Foundation. Through the UNITI-Chorus partnership, the organizations own, operate and provide supports to the Semiahmoo House apartment building.

The Semiahmoo House apartment building is a mid-rise building with 71 units of purpose-built rental and long-term lease (60 years) housing in White-Rock South Surrey, BC. Of the 71 apartments, a total of 20 apartments are reserved for individuals with a developmental disability, who live independently while receiving supports through the Semiahmoo House society or other support providers. There are 10 studio apartments, 40 one-bedroom, three two-bedroom and two three-bedroom apartments in the building.

The building was constructed on land Semiahmoo House Society had accumulated slowly over a period of 13 years in South Surrey. Construction lasted about 16 months. Tenants first occupied the building in 2016. One aspect that makes the Semiahmoo House apartment building so unique is the extensive pre-construction consultation that was conducted with parents, extended families, individuals with a developmental disability and the wider community. The results of the consultations are reflected throughout the development of this new purpose-built rental building: the first one built in South Surrey in 20 years.

³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Asset Inventory: 4.



UNITI-Chorus Apartment Building

3.0 The Development Timeline (2003 – 2019)

3.1 From Idea to Action (2003 – 2005)

The idea for an apartment building designed specifically for individuals with a developmental disability was born during a brainstorm session organized by the Semiahmoo House Society in 2003. There were over 40 participants, including individuals with a developmental disability and their families. During the session, many of the individuals expressed a desire to live in a semi-independent apartment, as opposed to a more traditional congregational setting, such as a group home. In subsequent sessions organized throughout 2003 to 2005, this desire was repeated many times over by individuals and their families. However, in those years, a group home or a home-share agreement were the only real alternatives for individuals with a developmental disability to living in the family home.

In response to what Semiahmoo House Society was hearing during these consultations, the organization started to think about several possibilities to develop new housing options for individuals with a developmental disability. This included partnering with developers through a cluster model⁴, similar to the demonstration project described in the Toronto Community Living case study (see report 1 in this series). However, unlike in Toronto, it was found that many of the existing apartment buildings in the area were old and not suitable, while no new purpose-built rental housing was being built. In addition, there

Key Drivers of Change

- Feedback from individuals with a developmental disability and their families that they were looking for alternative housing options to group homes and home-share arrangements.
- A lack of suitable rental apartments in the community of South Surrey BC.
- Confidence within the organization that they had the capacity to develop an apartment building.

⁴ A cluster model in this context is a number of independent apartments in an apartment building that are clustered around one larger unit from where supports are delivered.

was no financial assistance available at the time to make the rents affordable or the project feasible.

Around 2005, the leadership team at Semiahmoo House Society reached the conclusion that it would be better for the organization to develop its own apartment building with a number of apartments dedicated to individuals with a developmental disability. Another factor that influenced this decision was the fact that Semiahmoo House Society already had experience operating a building it had inherited in 1983 through a partner organization called the Peninsula Estates Housing Society. This experience gave the leadership team and the board the feeling that they would be capable of such an undertaking and set the organization on a course to explore development opportunities in the community.

**Project
Representative**

"Apartments in the area were old, expensive and at the end of their life. In addition, there was no financial assistance to make a partnership financially feasible for individuals with a developmental disability"

3.2 Pre-Development (2005 – 2015)

3.2.1 Purchasing Land (2005 – 2009)

An opportunity arose in 2005, when a number of group homes Semiahmoo House Society owned could be closed and sold off. Usually support agencies are required, through operating agreements with the Province, to re-invest the proceeds of a sale into new group homes. However, after a number of conversations with BC Housing, it allowed Semiahmoo House to use the proceeds of the sale for other purposes than creating new group homes. From 2005 to 2009, the group homes were sold, and the proceeds used, in combination with some of the equity in Semiahmoo House's new head office (built in 2002), to purchase four lots adjacent to the head office. The lots were bought by the Semiahmoo House Foundation, an affiliated of Semiahmoo House Society, and were combined into one lot that could fit a mid-sized apartment building. The decision to purchase land close to the head office was a conscious one, as that would allow easy access to the services and day programs future tenants might need.

3.2.2 Developing the First Concept, Design, and Re-Zoning (2009 – 2014)

Once all the land had been acquired in 2009, Semiahmoo House Society proceeded with the development process by conducting additional community consultations with individuals with a developmental disability and their families on what a future building could look like. Through this work, an organic list of 140 interested individuals and families was created, confirming the strong need in the community. Based on the findings of these consultations, the services of an architect were retained to come up with preliminary designs for a future building.

In addition to finding an architect, Semiahmoo House Society applied successfully for \$10,000 in CMHC Seed Fundings to conduct an initial feasibility analysis and found a

⁵ The CMHC Seed Funding Program still exists but the maximum funding amount has increased in recent years to \$150,000.

partner in a local developer and general contractor, who would develop this initial concept of the building. To minimize the risk to Semiahmoo House Society, this first concept was a 55-unit condominium/strata complex with 80 parking spaces, and of which 15 apartments would be transferred to the Semiahmoo House Foundation upon completion of the project.

In 2010, the re-zoning process was started. The properties needed to be re-zoned from single-residential to multi-residential. This initiated the relationship with the City of White-Rock South Surrey BC. Initially, there was quite some opposition to the proposed development from the community and the rezoning was voted down in City Council in 2011. The main reason the rezoning application was denied was because the City had tied the council decision on re-zoning the property to another change regarding a road that would disrupt an existing cul-de-sac, a change that was very unpopular in the community.

At the same time as the failed re-zoning application in 2011, conversations with the City of White-Rock South Surrey on easing development charges were also not moving forward. This led the Semiahmoo House Society's development team to engage with a development consultant who could help them through this process. With the assistance from the consultant, the development team led a more intentional rezoning strategy from 2012 to 2014. They engaged actively with the wider community and brought individuals with a developmental disability who were supported by Semiahmoo House to Council meetings. Furthermore, the development team ensured that the application for rezoning was not tied to any other decisions Council would vote on.

**Project
Representative**

"When we did it [the second time], we had stations serving tea and coffee [for participants] and created a very different experience. Locals felt valued and consulted with. Taking control of the public consultation made it go much better."

While going through the re-zoning procedure in late 2012, the Semiahmoo House development team started to realize that in a condominium/strata model, the tenants with a disability would be in a minority position compared to the other owners. This could cause issues when decisions were being made by the condominium board. In addition, interest rates were coming down and construction costs were levelling off in the aftermath of the financial crisis. This gave Semiahmoo House the idea they could potentially lead the development themselves and rent out the entire building. This change in approach would also create more equity for the organization and give them more control over the design. Furthermore, owning the building outright would also

increase Semiahmoo House Society's ability to leverage its equity to finance other developments in the future. However, most importantly, it would put the tenants with a disability on the same footing as the other tenants in the building. In consultation with the board and the development consultant, it was decided to pursue this approach.

3.2.3 Re-thinking the Concept, Design Feasibility and Financing (2013 – 2015)

In early 2013, financed by a \$20,000 grant from the Vancity Community Foundation, a housing needs assessment was conducted by City Spaces, and a business plan was developed by the development consultant. The research at the time suggested a strong need for affordable rental housing in the community and pro-forma analysis suggested this could be financially feasible. Based on additional research and feasibility analysis, the development team decided to continue to pursue the development of a purpose-built rental building. However, this did mean a new design and concept was required. With the help from the development consultant, the development team landed on a 71-unit purpose-built rental building with 20 apartments reserved for individuals with a developmental disability. Of the 20 apartments a total of 10 apartments were reserved for units with a 60-year long-term lease⁶ paid upfront by the family or the individuals.

The feasibility analysis conducted in 2013 showed the total cost of the building would be \$13 million. The fact that the organization already owned the land outright was instrumental in the project's financial feasibility. The land was used as an equity contribution valued at around \$2,350,000. A number of financing strategies were pursued. A \$400,000 grant and a low-interest pre-development loan were obtained through the Vancity Partnership Funding Program. In addition, a \$1,100,000 grant from BC Housing through the Investment in Affordable Housing Program was secured. Lastly, the remaining project cost, approximately \$9,150,000, was financed through low interest loans and loan insurance provided through BC Housing and CMHC. In a key meeting with the three boards of the Semiahmoo House Society, the Semiahmoo Foundation and the Peninsula Estates Housing Society, a total of 20 motions were passed to secure the funding. For more information on how the organizations were able to make these decisions in one evening see section 6.2.

In general, Semiahmoo House had been very careful in its board member selection to ensure the values of each board member were in line with the organization's values. However, prior to this decisive board meeting, the development consultant and the development team had hosted a board retreat with all board members. They developed psychological profiles of each other and engaged in trust building

Key Lessons Learned

- Make sure the re-zoning application is not tied to another decision to be made by the Municipal Council.
- Engage a development consultant early in the process to ensure the right steps are taken at the right time.
- Developing a condominium apartment where some apartments are transferred to the agency puts the individuals with a developmental disability in a minority position compared to the other owners on the condo board of their own building.

⁶ Interest in the long-term lease apartments was lower than expected and only three leases were sold. The remaining seven long-term apartments were converted to regular rental apartments.

exercises. In addition, the development consultant had prepared a registry outlining all the risks the organization would face in the coming years. This helped everyone to voice their concerns in a stress-free environment and allowed for efficient decision-making under pressure throughout the development process.

During this pivotal year (2013), the development team continued to work with the City of White-Rock South Surrey in an attempt to get a break on parking requirements, development charges and property taxes. Unfortunately, the team was not able to secure reductions in property tax or development charges, although some of the permits were expedited by the planning department and parking requirements were reduced by 20 spots to take into account the fact that the tenants with a developmental disability don't have driving licenses.

**Project
Representative**

"It was frustrating because other municipalities were stepping up to the plate at that time. Pretty much all other municipalities nowadays offer some kind of waiving of charges or something."

During these years (2013 to 2015), the development team discovered they had been on the right track but had made a number of missteps early on in the development process before the development consultant got involved. First of all, back in 2009, it had been decided that the Semiahmoo Foundation (Charity) would purchase the properties, since charities do not pay property taxes. However, charities are not allowed to operate unrelated businesses or ventures in Canada. A legal opinion obtained in late 2013 by the Semiahmoo House Society indicated that rental housing and collecting rents from tenants without disabilities is considered an unrelated business or venture. As a result, it was decided to transfer the properties from the Semiahmoo Foundation to the Peninsula Estates Housing Society, the non-profit housing society through which the Peninsula Estates had been managed since 1983. This cost the organization an additional \$40,000 in land transfer tax that could have been avoided.

Another misstep in hindsight was engaging an architect too early in the process. The preliminary designs no longer fit the new concept and were not financially feasible for a building with rental and long-term lease apartments. This resulted in the need to re-design the building to fit the new concept and financial realities. Many of the ideas from the original design had to be modified, including an increase in the total number of apartments, reduction in unit sizes and reductions in the available amenity space. During conversations with the project representatives, it was acknowledged that these missteps could have

Key Lessons Learned

- Hire an architect **later in the development process**, after the project concept has been determined.
- Work closely with the board to develop a relationship **based on trust** that can be relied on in stressful moments and during key decisions.
- Make sure the land and building are **not owned by a foundation** if the building contains market rental apartments to prevent engaging in unrelated business ventures, putting the charitable status of the organization at risk.

been avoided by engaging a development consultant with development experience earlier in the process.

**Project
Representative**

"Purchasing the property as a charity and then selling it to a non-profit, cost us \$40,000 in land transfer tax. We should have made sure the land was put into the right holding company from the start."

3.3 Construction (2015 – 2016)

With the land, zoning and financing in place, construction was able to start⁷. In 2014, the houses on the four properties were torn down and in collaboration with the same general contractor who was previously engaged to develop the condominium building, a construction manager was hired to tender the work to the range of trades required throughout the construction process. The winning bids were rolled into a CCDC2 contract⁸ to ensure the building would be delivered at a fixed price to mitigate additional costs that would be Semiahmoo House Society's responsibility. The construction took around 19 months, with occupancy in the fall of 2016. No major delays were incurred during this part of the process.

One comment that came up during engagement sessions with family members was that families and individuals had limited input on the final design of the building. While initially the development team had actively engaged with potential tenants, as well as their families, and used their feedback to develop the initial design, the switch to a purpose-built rental building resulted in limited opportunities for further input as part of the re-design.

During the construction phase, some jobs were created on the development site for an individual whom Semiahmoo House Society supported. This included site cleaning, vacuuming and other hands-on support for the construction workers. An interview with the construction manager identified that while he initially had to adjust his communication methods to provide more explanation of the tasks or show physically how something should be done, he also noted the individual caught on really quickly, and soon was able to execute most of her tasks properly. He expressed that it was a really nice experience, to see his company including opportunities for individuals with a disability in this way.

**Construction
Manager**

"Her job was maintaining the site during construction, including cleaning, vacuuming and protecting the floors from damage. She was able to do the work just fine. The support worker felt she could do the job [and she could]. I was very impressed with her punctuality and ability to memorize all the tasks!"

3.4 Tenant Selection and Preparation (2015 – 2016)

⁷ For the final design and floorplan, please see Appendix D in this report.

⁸ A CCDC 2 -2008 Stipulated Price Contract is a standard prime contract between Owner and Contractor that establishes a single, pre-determined fixed price, or lump sum, regardless of the Contractor's actual costs.

Key Lessons Learned

- Use a person-centred planning approach to identify which individuals might be suited.
- Make sure to spend as much time preparing the families as the tenants for the upcoming move.
- Hire support staff that are aligned with the support vision for the building.

As was mentioned earlier, during the discovery and pre-development stage from 2009 to 2014, the Semiahmoo House Society had consulted frequently with individuals with a developmental disability and their families. Because of these consultations, there was a list of 140 interested individuals and families.

When construction started, the Semiahmoo House Society's team, led by the manager of person-centred practices and family services, used this list as a starting point for the tenant selection process. Her team used a person-centred planning methodology⁹ and started to work intensively with the 140 families to understand which ones would be a good fit. About

half of the interested individuals and families were considered a match. However, not everyone was quite ready to commit at that time, and a new list was created for future projects. On the other hand, during engagements with family members and current tenants, many explained they were quite anxious to get a spot at that time.

With the remaining families, the Semiahmoo House Society team began an intensive personal planning process over the course of 2015 and 2016 to prepare the future tenants for the upcoming move. Support plans were created for each individual to determine what supports they would need. In addition, families spoke frequently with one another and were encouraged to assess their family members with a developmental disability's readiness to live independently, such as leaving them home alone for an evening and giving them chores in the house. All the families spoke very highly of these sessions during their engagement with the research team conducted as part of this report.

Parent

"I have to bring her [manager person centred practices] into this. She introduced all of our children to living independently by designing life plans, talking them through situations, making them more aware of responsibilities and teaching them to recognize where they needed help. She played a huge part in making this successful".

Simultaneously with the personal planning, sessions with parents and family members were held to identify perceived risks and worries and communicate how these would be addressed in the building. One of the main challenges with family members was that many felt their loved one had to master all the skills of independent living before moving out, while in reality, many of these skills can be learned in the process of becoming independent.

⁹ Person-Centered Planning refers to a family of approaches whereby the individual and their chosen network come together to recognize the unique gifts, strengths, talents, and relationships of the individual. Person-centered planning assists in the establishment of meaningful/purposeful goals that support the accomplishment of the individual's identified wants, needs, and dreams.

**Project
Representative**

"What we found is some of the life-skills are not pertinent until after you move out, like when anybody moves out of their family home for the first time."

Lastly, new support staff were intentionally hired to support individuals in independent living. This was done to ensure the implementation of the "just enough support" model¹⁰ envisioned for the building would be implemented appropriately. For more information on this model, see section 6.4.3.

3.5 Move-In (2016 – 2019)

Tenants moved in during the month of October 2016. Tenants with a developmental disability moved in first and were dispersed throughout the building to avoid stigmatization. There was quite an adjustment period for many of the tenants with a developmental disability. Most tenants had only lived with their parents and needed to acclimatize to the newfound freedom. The Semiahmoo House Society Life-Skills team had to step in a number of times to educate tenants with a disability on apartment etiquette.

**Project
Representative**

"The humorous thing was in the first month they started having pyjama parties in the hallway, treating it like hotel life."

In addition, tenants had to learn the difference between an emergency and a non-emergency. One staff person, who is a tenant in the building, is usually on-call overnight. In the first months, this staff person would get calls from tenants in the middle of the night, with the request to hang-out or fix a game console. However, these challenges were mostly overcome with time and only one tenant has moved out as of the writing of this report. During engagement sessions with residents, almost all individuals clearly indicated they never want to move back to their family home and enjoy the life in their new apartment, which is frequently less regulated than it was before while they lived at home.

Resident

"I SLEEP IN!!!! I see my friends, family, girlfriend. I have fun doing what I love to do. Sometimes my dad comes over and fixes things. My mom comes over to see me a lot – I like this."

There were also some issues with staff who would start organizing events, such as communal dinners with tenants. The project leadership team had to step in a number of times to ensure these events would be initiated by tenants and supported by staff, instead of the other way around, to remain in line with the "just enough support" model.

After the residents were settled in, the other tenants without disabilities moved into the building. To help develop an integrated community, the Semiahmoo House Society

¹⁰ The just enough support model is a support approach that encourages the person receiving support to do as much as possible by themselves. The approach aims to only provide support where absolutely necessary and in doing so aims to foster a sense of independence and control over one's life for the person receiving the supports.

organizes monthly events, such as coffee mornings and movie nights, inviting all tenants in the building.

3.6 Moving Forward (2019)

The UNITI-Chorus building is one of the first of its kind in Canada, where a support agency and its partners developed a community for individuals with and without disabilities, as well as a proof of concept for the “just enough support” model in Canada. The UNITI-Chorus team hopes this building can function as an example for other groups interested in developing housing for individuals with a developmental disability and regularly shares information with interested parties. In addition, UNITI-Chorus is now invited frequently to take part in Federal housing policy conversations.

Lastly, the experience of this first development has further increased the interest of UNITI-Chorus to pursue similar projects. The group is looking to develop a second building to support more individuals with a developmental disability in the future.

4.0 Project Impact

This section provides a description of the impact the UNITI-Chorus building has had on residents with a disability, their families, support staff and residents without a disability.

4.1 Impact on Tenants with a Disability and their Families

A total of two engagements were conducted with residents with a disability and their families. During one session, three family members shared their experience of finding a suitable home for their family member with a developmental disability, while the second session with current tenants of the UNITI-Chorus building uncovered the experiences of tenants living in their new home.

4.1.1 Impact on Families

During the engagement with family members of tenants with a disability, it became clear that all residents had lived in their family home before they moved to the UNITI-Chorus building. The families had been actively looking for different housing solutions while their loved ones lived at home. However, none had been successful. Some families had arranged for their family member to go to respite centres over the weekend, but this had not worked out well.

All families were familiar with the Semiahmoo House Society, and some had been engaged at the beginning of the development process 13 years earlier. When the opportunity came up for their family member to obtain a home in the building, the families indicated they were very excited, but nervous at the same time. One family even went as far as to sell their family home to obtain one of the 60-year lease apartments. The evening before registration opened up, this family slept outside the Semiahmoo House to obtain an apartment the day they became available.

**Family
Member**

"We didn't care, just wanted what we could get, I slept outdoors that night. I thought a huge number of people would be coming so I camped out in front of Semiahmoo House, but I was the only one. One other family showed up at 6am in the morning, so we had first pick."

Two families indicated their family members were nervous but excited about the opportunity. One family mentioned they had many discussions to ensure their family member would be comfortable with the idea of moving to a new home.

During the engagement, all families mentioned how surprised they were with the level of preparation they, and their family member, received from the Semiahmoo House team to get ready for the move. This made them feel comfortable that they were in good hands and allowed them to help their family member with the practical aspects of the move. Two families actively involved their family member in the moving process, by letting them choose furniture and decorate their home. Another family did not involve their family member as he was nervous and had initially indicated he did not want to leave the family home. Therefore, the family focused on reducing stress and not confronting this individual daily about the upcoming move. This turned out to have been a successful approach as the tenant is now very happy in his own apartment.

**Family
Member**

"The Semiahmoo team was incredible when it came to the planning process. All the steps that I take for granted they touched on. They made them realize what the [moving] process would look like and could get them to say what they felt."

The families were all very involved in helping their family members move in. While some families indicated the adjustment period went very quickly, others mentioned there were challenges with finding the right level of support and communication method between staff and tenants. However, it was mentioned that all tenants eventually settled in the building.

Two families indicated the adjustment process for themselves went more slowly than for their family members. Families in particular had to learn how to let go and allow the process to unfold. However, they also indicated they like having more time for themselves now and being able to develop a different type of relationship with their family member.

On the other hand, one family indicated they would like to have more support available in the building due to changing support needs of their family member. They indicated they are in the building almost every day, and were hoping for more measures to allow residents, should their support needs change, stay in the same living apartment.

**Family
Member**

"She loves her independence; I still worry sometimes. [...] Mornings are nicer now and I live only five minutes away. I worry about

eating and exercise. [...] But I am a control freak and micro manager."

4.1.2 Impact on Residents

During the engagement with tenants, it became quite clear they really enjoy living in the building. In particular having their own independence and being able to do more things by themselves such as cooking, doing groceries and laundry, as well as paying bills or sleeping in on a weekday. This was a new experience to them.

Resident

"I like taking care of my home. Doing chores and groceries, and I don't feel lonely anymore. I like being alone to do my own thing and have friends and family over but sometimes I miss my old neighbours."

Tenants also indicated they needed some time to learn what to do in unfamiliar and stressful situations but felt assured they could always get in touch with support staff if they had to. Particularly in the beginning, tenants indicated they were nervous or scared about living alone. Some residents had their parents sleep over the first couple of days to settle in, but now everyone indicated they did not want to move back to their previous home.

Furthermore, many residents mentioned there are more people in their lives now, and they are busier with daily activities such as hobbies and preparing meals. Some indicated they work a couple of days a week and others indicated they would like to work because "living independently is expensive".

Lastly, a number of things residents disliked about the building were also brought up. These were predominantly around noise and sounds from neighbours, indicating it would be important to take soundproofing into account when developing a future building.

4.2 Impact on Support Staff

During the engagement with support staff, we spoke with staff members who worked in the new building or with tenants living in the building. It was noted that all support staff workers had experience or were curious about working in a non-congregated living environment. In addition, the way they described their current roles was very focused on enhancing independence in the lives of the residents, which they indicated as providing more job satisfaction for them.

Some support staff mentioned this was a challenge for them in the beginning. They had concerns about vulnerability and there being enough supports available in the building. However, support staff also mentioned there were a lot of training sessions and engagements together with families. This made them feel heard and increased their confidence in the model.

Support Staff

"There were a lot of meetings ranging from one-on-ones with families, staff or others on

the different [support] approach. We had world café discussions and the luxury of having the leadership spending time and energy to think through potential issues and address our concerns."

During the move-in process, the support staff confirmed some of the issues identified earlier in this report. In particular, residents needed to learn when and how to engage with support staff and other residents in the building. Some staff had issues with the lack of planned structure in the lives of the tenants with a disability. However, this lack of structure was intentional and allowed for the development of a baseline of what residents needed in terms of support, so they could be calibrated moving forward.

Support Staff

"Moving in was figuring out person by person, day by day, letting the chaos unfold."

Now that tenants have settled, the support staff are seeing residents growing in confidence. The residents are taking responsibility over their own schedules and while staff initially felt they should step in to remind them about appointments, they are feeling now that the residents can handle it by themselves. For example, one resident with diabetes has started to administer her own insulin, something she had never done before.

4.3 Impact on Residents without a Disability

In addition to tenants with a disability, three residents without a disability were interviewed as part of this study. From these conversations, it was clear that two out of the three had developed strong connections with the building and their neighbours. These two residents had also moved intentionally to the building as they were intrigued by its concept. The third resident was just looking for an affordable apartment and willing to give living in the building a try.

None of the three residents had previously lived next to, or in the same building with, individuals with a developmental disability. All interview participants mentioned they've had a positive experience so far. One resident, a single mother, mentioned she felt safer due to the supports in the building, while another, a senior, indicated she felt less lonely.

Resident

"I know everyone on my floor, with supports or not. I speak more with the individuals with a developmental disability because they are home more often."

Two of the three tenants who participated in an interview indicated they regularly attend the monthly coffees and annual barbeque events organized by the Semiahmoo House staff. Both residents felt these events were very valuable in staying connected to the people in the building. However, all three participants indicated they received very

little information about the residents with a disability and would have liked to receive a bit more education on developmental disabilities, as well as things they should take into consideration on how to best support their new neighbours.

Resident

"It would have been helpful to know if there were any rules for people, like not giving things to someone who hoards, being aware of dietary restrictions or curfews so we can support the other residents too."

Furthermore, similar to the tenants with a disability, they also mentioned the building was very noisy and could have been soundproofed better.

5.0 Project Description

This section provides a more detailed description of some of the structures and partnerships that made this project possible, including the partnership and organizational structure of UNITI-Chorus, the physical design of the building, the tenants and how UNITI-Chorus ensures affordability.

5.1 Partnership Structure

As mentioned in earlier sections of this report, the UNITI-Chorus building is owned and operated through a partnership of three organizations. The partnership is called UNITI-Chorus. UNITI-Chorus is not a registered entity but a brand-name. The organizations involved in UNITI-Chorus are:

1. The Semiahmoo House Society
2. The Semiahmoo Foundation
3. The Peninsula Estates Housing Society

Having three separate organizations is an intentional choice. First of all, it allows for a separation of housing and supports. This is important because it ensures tenants are not locked into the support philosophy of Semiahmoo House Society. Initially the intention was for the Semiahmoo Foundation to own the building. However, this was not possible because renting out apartments to the general population at market rent is considered an unrelated business activity, which jeopardizes the charitable status of the Semiahmoo Foundation. As a result, it was necessary to include the Peninsula Estates Housing Society into the partnership.

All three organizations are incorporated under the British Columbia Societies Act of 2018 and the Semiahmoo Foundation is a federally registered charity. Each organization has its own board consisting of 11 members, including one self-advocate member with a developmental disability. All boards share the same members, with a different member acting as chair, vice-chair and treasurer for each society. This is important because it allows for an efficient decision-making process. This has allowed the organization to move quickly on a number of occasions since a majority only needs to be achieved once.

All three organizations have members; however, the membership structures differ between the organizations. The Semiahmoo House Society is a membership-based organization with a broad membership. With regards to the other two organizations, the board of directors of Semiahmoo House Society are their only members. This ensures that the Semiahmoo House Society's board has effective voting control of the other two societies at all times.

Board members are carefully selected to ensure they support the vision of the three organizations. During the development process, the development team conducted intensive training and offsites with the board on risk management strategies. This developed a level of trust between the development team and the board members, which helped board members to trust the information and strategies presented by the team throughout the development process.

5.2 Organizational Structure

The three organizations outlined in section 6.1 have different roles within the building. This section outlines the function of each organization.

5.2.1 The Semiahmoo House Society

The Semiahmoo House Society is the central organization in the collaboration. It is also the agency that provides the majority of supports and programs to tenants in the UNITI-Chorus apartments¹¹ from its head-office located adjacent to the UNITI-Chorus building.

5.2.2 The Peninsula Estates Housing Society

The Peninsula Estates Housing Society owns, operates and collects rents from the UNITI-Chorus building. A property management firm takes care of day-to-day maintenance and operations. The Peninsula Estates Housing Society also owns the Peninsula Estates apartment building in White-Rock South Surrey through an operating agreement with BC Housing.

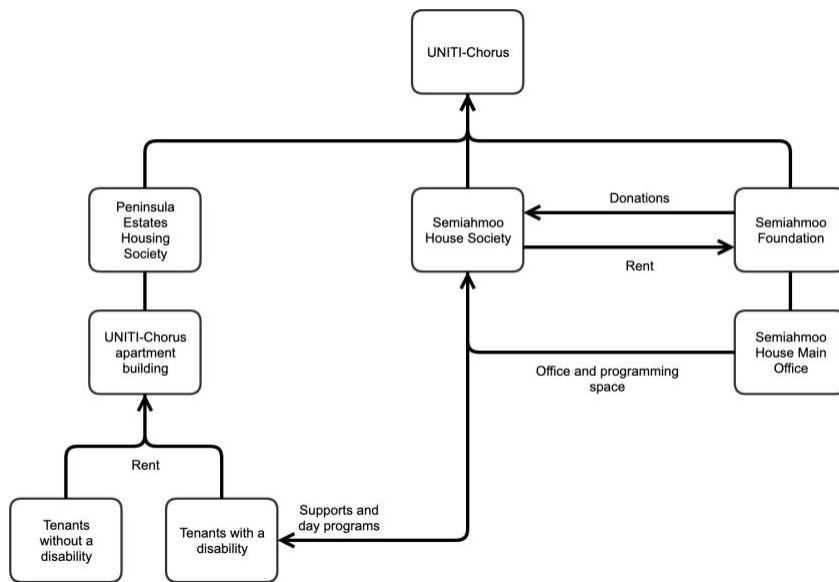
5.2.3 The Semiahmoo Foundation

The Semiahmoo Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Semiahmoo House Society. The foundation also holds title on the Semiahmoo House Society's main office. The Semiahmoo House Society pays rent to the foundation to cover monthly mortgage payments and the cost of operations.

For an overview of all societies and their relationship with all stakeholders, please see the diagram below.

¹¹ Tenants may choose to use other support agencies if they desire to do so.

Figure 1: UNITI-Chorus Organizational Structure; 2019



5.3 Physical Design and Support Model

This section provides an overview of the design and support model in the building.

5.3.1 Building Design and Amenities

The UNITI-Chorus building is a mid-rise apartment building of 4 storeys with a total of 71 apartments, 21 of which are designated for individuals with a disability. The building has 5 three-bedroom apartments, 16 two-bedroom apartments, 8 one-bedroom plus den apartments, 32 one-bedroom apartments and 10 studios. There are 60 underground parking spots, as well as a number of amenities, including a community living room on the ground floor and an outside community garden/greenspace to help facilitate connection between the various residents in the building.

The exclusion of other common spaces, such as a common dining space or a game room, was a conscious decision in the design because the idea was to build an apartment building that was as typical as possible.

Project Representative

"We often think that it's necessary to have communal dining spaces or a hub. That is not what we built. We wanted an apartment like any other. There is a paradigm around disabilities that somehow it needs to be special, but with proper supports people can live in an apartment like anyone else."

For an overview of the floorplans, please see Appendix D.

5.3.2 Unit Design

All 71 apartments occupied by residents in the building include a full kitchen, washer dryer combination, storage space, bedrooms, bathrooms and living spaces. They also include a patio or balcony for personal outside space.

Apartments have not been developed with wheelchair accessibility in mind. In addition, the apartments currently contain limited accessibility features like a walk-in shower, grab bars, higher toilets, etc. A total of 10% (7 apartments) are adaptable and could be made accessible with some small investments. While accessibility is not an issue for the current residents, given their age and type of disabilities, it could become a problem as the current residents age and their support needs evolve. In addition, the lack of wheelchair accessible apartments currently limits the ability for individuals with a dual diagnosis of physical and developmental disabilities to move into the building.

Lastly, during the conversations with parents, it was mentioned that some of the appliances broke easily and conversations with both tenants and parents indicated the building could be noisy. This suggests that future developments should pay attention to sound absorption and appliance quality during the design and development phase.

5.3.3 Support Model

Semiahmoo House Society provides supports for most of the residents with a developmental disability in the building. Residents can receive some minimal support as required to facilitate independent living, day programming or a combination of the two. The Semiahmoo House Society practices a support philosophy called "Just Enough Support" developed by Helen Sanderson Associates in the United Kingdom.

The primary goal of the philosophy is to increase the chances of individuals connecting with local people in their communities and to increase their circle of un-paid supports. The secondary goal is to prevent over-supporting individuals. The approach suggests over-supporting can undermine people's confidence and abilities, create more barriers to being a part of the community, use unnecessary staff resources and lead to a lack of community involvement, which might cause isolation and loneliness.

A Just Enough Support approach helps support staff, individuals and their families think about "who or what can be" in someone's life, and how various supports can be combined and integrated to provide a life where people can be happy and safe.

5.4 Tenants

This section provides a brief description of the current residents with a developmental disability living in the UNITI-Chorus apartment building.

5.4.1 Tenants by Age

When looking at the residents in the UNITI-Chorus building by age, the data show almost all tenants with a developmental disability (80%) are between the age of 25 and 44 years old. In comparison, when looking at tenants without a disability, there is a wider spread between the different age groups.

Table 1: Tenants by Age: UNITI-Chorus Apartment Building; 2019

Tenants by Age	Tenants with a disability	Tenants without a disability
Youth (24 years or younger)	0.0%	13.2%
Young adults (25 - 44 years)	80.0%	35.3%
Older adults (45 - 64 years)	15.0%	27.9%
Seniors (65+ years)	5.0%	23.5%

Source: UNITI-Chorus 2019

5.4.2 Tenants by Support Provider

All tenants with a developmental disability in the building receive some form of supports. Supports can be organized through the Semiahmoo House Society or residents may opt to find a different support service provider. Residents can also choose a home share arrangement where a roommate provides the required assistance. Currently, 17 residents (85.0%) receive supports from the Semiahmoo House Society. A total of 2 (10.0%) residents have a different support service provider and 1 tenant (5.0%) has a home share roommate.

5.5 Affordability

Individuals with a developmental disability often have limited disposable income available to spend on housing. Based on Disability Assistance rates in British Columbia, residents can only afford rents up to \$375 per month. To make the development feasible, rents could only go as low as 20% to 30% below the average market rent in the area. This was not enough to make the rent affordable to residents living on Disability Assistance (see table below). UNITI-Chorus does help tenants with finding employment and the property management company employs a number of tenants in the building as part of the maintenance staff. However, not all residents with a disability are able to work, indicating families would have to supplement the incomes of their family members to ensure affordability.

Table 2: Rents by Apartment Size: UNITI-Chorus; 2019

Apartment Size	Monthly Rent
Studio	\$725
One-bedroom	\$825 - \$850
Two-bedrooms	\$1,100
Three-bedrooms	\$1,375

Source: UNITI-Chorus 2019

In response to the rent levels, parents organized and advocated for BC-Housing to provide portable housing allowances to their children to cover the gap between the rents and what the individuals could afford. While there was no direct subsidy available, continued pressure resulted in BC-Housing making a \$75,000 lump-sum capital contribution to UNITI-Chorus that they can use as rent supplements for tenants over the next 10 years, under the assumption that after 10 years there will be a federal portable

housing allowance, as announced in the National Housing Strategy, that can cover the gap moving forward.

UNITI-Chorus divided this subsidy over the tenants on an as of need basis. A total of 15 out of 20 tenants receive a subsidy ranging from \$82 per month to \$428 per month. While this is not sufficient for all residents, and parents on some occasions would still need to supplement the rents, it has been a significant improvement to the affordability of the building overall.

6.0 Community Inclusion

6.1 Measuring Inclusivity

My Home My Community has developed an innovative new **Housing Inclusivity Framework** for measuring inclusivity by expanding the existing definition of social inclusion and introducing a housing lens.¹² In this framework, housing inclusivity is defined as “the degree to which a person’s home either contributes or presents barriers to their participation in the broader community.”¹³ The framework evaluates the tangible aspects of a housing situation across five domains which, together, lead to socially inclusive outcomes for residents. The five domains are:

1. Person Domain: The individual resident. Aspects pertaining to the individual, including income, functional capacities, support needs, etc., have a significant impact on required living situation and degree to which supports are needed to engage in community;
2. Household Domain: Similarly, the structure and capability set of the household, including income, support needs, etc., impact housing requirements and opportunity to engage in community;
3. Dwelling Domain: The built environment of the unit (which can take many forms) will either present or eliminate barriers to participation and independence;
4. Structure Domain: In the case of multi-unit structures, the building within which the home is situated also has an impact on visitability, accessibility, and opportunity for engagement with the first line of community: neighbours;
5. Neighbourhood Domain: The broader built, social and service environment in which the dwelling and structure are situated, and which affords resources like transportation, opportunities for community involvement, etc. The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in and be safe in their communities.

What makes the MHMC housing inclusivity framework so innovative, is its ability to distill complex aspects that affect inclusion into an applicable framework.

¹² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing ‘Housing Inclusivity’: A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d5582bdbacd560001233e9b/1565885118508/Conceptualizing+Housing+Inclusivity+Lit+Review+-+FINAL+.pdf>

¹³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing ‘Housing Inclusivity’: A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 15.

To assess inclusivity in each domain, the framework uses indicators (for example, suitability, affordability, safety, choice and control) that examine the following:¹⁴

- Does the living situation present or eliminate barriers to activities of daily living?
- Is it a home-by-choice, and not the result of congregation of people in a housing unit, development or neighbourhood, based on a demographic characteristic?
- Does the living situation enhance capabilities to:
 - Participate in the social and economic life of their community?
 - Be recognized and valued as a full member of their neighbourhood?
 - Live independently and be included in the community?

6.2 Evaluation

This evaluation uses MHMC's Housing Inclusivity Framework to assess the inclusivity of the Semiahmoo House apartment building.

6.2.1 Person¹⁵

Indicators within the Person Domain:

- Personal Choice
- Social Connection
- Personal Supports
- Safety

The person domain focuses on the individual and evaluates how well they can live in, utilize and benefit from their housing.¹⁶ It also looks at location to assess whether the individual can access services and supports within the housing development or in the broader neighbourhood.

This domain considers the resources a particular person needs to access amenities on an equal basis with others, and to secure safe, affordable housing in inclusive communities.¹⁷ For example, can tenants exercise basic autonomy over the decisions about where and how they live? Do they have opportunity to make voluntary social connections?

The UNITI-Chorus building demonstrates a high level of inclusivity in the person domain. For example, supports and housing are intentionally provided separately through different organizations. This ensure tenants are not locked into the support philosophy of Semiahmoo House Society and can make their own decisions about the supports they receive. UNITI-Chorus uses the Just Enough Support approach which helps individuals, their families and support staff, and think how various supports can be combined and integrated to provide a life where people can be happy and safe to live the life they chose. The goal of Just Enough Support model is to not over support individuals. This over support can undermine a person's ability and independence which then becomes a barrier to accessing the community and therefore impedes a person's inclusion. This model of support also works to increase the chances of individuals connecting with local people in their communities. This encourages individuals to increase their social circle outside of people they pay to support them.

¹⁴ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

¹⁵ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16

¹⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 17.

¹⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

6.2.2 Household¹⁸

Indicators within the Household Domain:

- Suitability
- Affordability
- Tenure Security
- Digital Connection

This domain refers to the capability of the household for an individual to access suitable, affordable, secure housing that meets the needs of all household members¹⁹. A household is defined by Statistics Canada as “a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling. The household may consist of a family group such as a census family, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, or a group of unrelated persons or a person living alone.”²⁰

Within this domain, is the examination of the suitability of housing based on household size. Housing suitability can be determined from whether a dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size of household. CMHC's definition of suitable housing, requires one adult per bedroom, unless they are co-habiting adult couple whereas two adults per bedroom is permitted.²¹ At the household level, the size and type of dwelling will impact an individual's likelihood of experiencing social exclusion.²² Inadequate housing that does not provide sufficient space can impact daily liveability and increase social exclusion, loneliness, and poor health outcomes for members of the household.²³ ²⁴

All of the units at UNITI-Chorus that house persons with a disability can be considered suitable as they meet CMHC's requirements for suitability. This means that there is no overcrowding occurring which could negatively affect a person's inclusivity by creating a barrier to accessing social and community services.

Affordability is an important aspect of inclusivity. Households experiencing housing affordability challenges are substantially more likely to experience social exclusion than households that are not spending more than 30% of their income on housing.²⁵ For building development to be feasible UNITI-Chorus was unable to provide entirely affordable rents to all tenants with a disability. To assist with affordability, UNITI-Chorus has put measures in place, such as provincial housing benefits and a tenant employment program. UNITI-Chorus will employ tenants with a disability as part of their maintenance staff, this helps individuals offset the cost of rent, make their own money and gives them a sense of purpose and help to foster social relationships throughout the building.

What also increases the inclusivity of the UNITI-Chorus housing, is the autonomy tenants have over their own lives and apartments. For example, tenants can invite guests over and can come and go as they desire. In addition, residents have tenure security in that

¹⁸ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

¹⁹ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

²⁰ (Canada. Statistics Canada, "Data Dictionary" <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage007-eng.cfm>

²¹ CMHC. "Housing in Canada Online" https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions_EN.html#_Suitable_dwellings

²² Stone, "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," 50.

²³ Stone, "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," 51.

²⁴ Fiona Rajé, "Leave no-one behind: infrastructure and inclusion," K4D, University of Birmingham (2018):2. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5aafd3b7ed915d1d03ce1f22/Infrastructure_and_Inclusion.pdf.

²⁵ Stone, W., et al. "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," AHURI Final Report No.207, (2013): 50.

they cannot simply be moved to a different home against their will. They also were not forced to move into the UNITI-Chorus but chose to move there.

6.2.3 Dwelling²⁶

Indicators within Dwelling Domain:

- Accessibility
- Adequacy
- Adaptability

This domain examines how the physical features of a person's home will either present or eliminate barriers to participation and independence²⁷. The connection between this domain and inclusion is fundamental: if one's living environment is inaccessible, both living within the unit and leaving the unit to access the community become difficult²⁸.

Physical barriers can restrict an individual from participating in the community and result in social exclusion.²⁹ Barriers to accessibility include trouble opening doors, difficulty using the stairs, and issues simply getting in and out of their home.³⁰ For example, a doorway that has not been made wide enough to accommodate the size of a wheelchair becomes an accessibility barrier.³¹ An inaccessible doorway can restrict an individual's access to important services – and potentially important social connections.

This domain represents an area where the UNITI-Chorus building could perform better. Within the UNITI-Chorus building there is a lack of fully wheelchair accessible apartments and the limited number of apartments which are adaptable. This limits the ability of individuals with physical disabilities or dual diagnoses to move into the building. In addition, it could become an issue as residents age. However, because UNITI-Chorus is the owner and one of the providers of supports, units could be adapted in the future if this would be required.

6.2.4 Structure³²

Indicators within Structure Domain:

- Resident Mix
- Social Connection
- Linkage to community supports and services

The structure domain evaluates how well the building itself allows for the integration of tenants with a developmental disability.³³ For example, is the building made up of only people with a disability or people without a disability? Are tenants with a disability congregated together on one floor of the building?

²⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁸ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁹ European Disability Forum, "Disability and Social Exclusion in the European Union: Tune for change, tools for change," (2002):6. http://sid.usal.es/Idocs/F8/FD07040/disabiUty_and_social_exclusion_report.pdf.

³⁰ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "Maintaining Seniors' Independence Through Home Adaptations a self-assessment guide," (2016):3.

³¹ City of Toronto, "Accessibility Design Guidelines" (2004): 52.

³² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

³³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

Having only individuals with a disability in a building, or in an area of a building, would make up a non-inclusive living situation.³⁴ Disability advocates and experts with lived experience note that concentrating people with development disability together on the basis of that single characteristic makes it harder for people without a disability to 'see' the individual past the disability, increasing the likelihood of stigmatization and social exclusion. These findings are consistent with research that indicates that "smaller-scale, non-congregated housing in the community is a fundamental condition for social inclusion, self-determination, and wellbeing of people with intellectual disabilities."³⁵

The UNITI Chorus building represents an inclusive, non-congregated living situation. UNITI-Chorus had full control over the design, which allowed tenants to provide input on the building design. It consists of 71 apartments, with 20 apartments reserved for individuals with a developmental disability dispersed throughout. The integration of common spaces such as a lobby, greenspace, and communal lounge area facilitate social connection and interaction between tenants. Semiahmoo hosts building events such as monthly coffees and annual barbeque to encourage social connection between all residents of UNITI-Chorus, which further increases this building's inclusivity in this domain.

UNITI-Chorus facilitates linkages to the community through the Semiahmoo Society which runs community-based programs with connections to other agencies where residents can volunteer and find employment, like working in soup kitchens, and thrift stores.

6.2.5 Neighbourhood³⁶

Indicators within
Neighbourhood Domain:

- Proximity to Services
- Safety

The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in and be safe in their communities.³⁷

Locating housing in a walkable neighbourhood can have important implications for inclusion. A feature of walkable neighbourhoods is having close proximity to services. Studies suggest that walkable neighbourhoods are healthier than non-walkable neighbourhoods as they encourage diverse modes of transportation other than driving, such as walking, bicycling or using transit. By encouraging more people to walk or be physically active, walkable neighbourhoods facilitate social interaction, social inclusion and access to jobs.³⁸

Having a low crime rate is especially important when examining inclusion for persons with a developmental disability who face high rates of violent victimization. A real or

³⁴BC Non-Profit Housing Association, "Exploring Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities in BC," 17.

³⁵ Wiesel, Ilan, "Housing for People with Intellectual Disabilities and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Reforms." Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2:1, (2015): 46.

³⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

³⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

³⁸ Hulse, K., Jacobs, K., Arthurson, K. and Spinney, A. "At home and in place? The role of housing in social inclusion," AHURI Final Report No. 177, (2003): 24.

perceived lack of safety among one's neighbours is an obvious barrier to inclusion.³⁹ Feeling safe is important for populations with and without disabilities to be able to access their community and community supports. When a person has a positive perception of their own safety, they are less likely to be fearful of being victimized by crime.⁴⁰ However, when an individual is concerned for their safety, they are less likely to participate in their communities, leading to social exclusion.⁴¹

In this domain the UNITI-Chorus building performs well, predominantly because of the walkability of the neighbourhood and access to public transit as well as the close proximity to the Semiahmoo House Society's central building which helps tenants to integrate in the community.

Due to a relatively high crime rate in South Surrey BC, one area where the UNITI-Chorus building could perform better is neighbourhood safety⁴².

6.2.6 Conclusion

Applying the Housing Inclusivity Framework to the UNITI-Chorus development shows that it contributes to a person's social inclusion. One area where UNITI-Chorus could improve on is accessible apartments. However, it is important to note that none of the tenants currently need an accessible apartment. If this need arises, UNITI-Chorus could decide to make adjustments to a unit considering they are the owner of the building. Another area that could be improved upon is safety. While UNITI-Chorus only can mitigate for the high crime rate of South Surrey, in the future when choosing to develop a building it may be in the best interest to locate it in an area with less crime. The high performance in all other domains are a clear reflection of the intentionality and inclusion of all stakeholders UNITI-Chorus has shown throughout each step of the development phase of the building.

7.0 Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Scale

In this section, the observed lessons learned are described and a number of opportunities to replicate the UNITI-Chorus approach for inclusive housing throughout Canada are identified.

7.1 Lessons Learned

Through conversations with project representatives, tenants, families, and support staff, a number of lessons learned were identified that other organizations pursuing similar initiatives should take into consideration.

First of all, it was noted that the length to which the development team went to consult with all stakeholders played a crucial role. This impact was observed along almost every step of the development journey: from the decision to pursue the development of a

³⁹ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 24.

⁴⁰ The Smith Institute, "Communities Social Exclusion and Crime," (2004): 76.

<http://www.smith-institute.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CommunitiesSocialExclusionandCrime.pdf>

⁴¹ The Smith Institute, "Communities Social Exclusion and Crime,"": 76.

⁴² It is important to note no neighbourhood specific crime data could be obtained and general South-Surrey, BC data was used.

building to identifying tenants, preparing tenants to move into the building, and developing trust between the development team and the board so they could make timely decisions. All these touchpoints ensured the development process could be successful in the end.

In addition, it was identified that it is important to involve people who share similar values. This ensured the entire organization, from the board to the support staff, were on the same page with the approach and the risks this might bring.

Another key lesson was to involve professionals, such as construction managers and development consultants, at the appropriate time in the process. Working with a development consultant earlier could have prevented the redesign of the building as a consequence of involving architects too early. It would also have helped to smoothen the rezoning procedure and prevented the transfer of the land from the foundation to the Peninsula Estates Housing Society.

From a design perspective, the apartments could have been developed with higher quality appliances, more noise reduction measures to ensure tenants don't hear their neighbours and higher levels of accessibility in mind, so tenants with or without disabilities can age in place.

Lastly, while the tenants with a disability received a lot of support before moving in, residents without a disability indicated they could have used more information about how to interact with and support their neighbours with a disability, where appropriate or necessary.

7.2 Opportunities for Replication

Based on the sections in this case study report, there are a number of aspects to this demonstration project that could be replicated throughout Canada.

7.2.1 Opportunities for Replication and Scale

UNITI-Chorus has been able to develop an inclusive community where individuals with a developmental disability can thrive. The organization has accomplished this without significant previous development experience and limited government funding, indicating that other organizations could be able to accomplish something similar.

Many support agencies throughout Canada, like Semiahmoo House, have group home properties that could be repurposed or sold to purchase land or buildings. This is particularly true in more urban areas where land and house prices are high, in combination with a dense population that could support rental or condominium apartment buildings.

In addition, the National Housing Strategy includes a number of programs that provide more financial assistance than UNITI-Chorus had at the time, including funding for 2,500 units for individuals with a developmental disability. Of these programs, the Co-Investment Fund and the Rental Construction Financing Initiative are the most significant ones. There could be opportunities to use these programs in the near future to replicate the model pioneered by UNITI-Chorus.

7.2.2 Drawbacks

While there are a number of opportunities that became evident from this case study, there are also some drawbacks compared to other development pathways. Developing a building is a risky undertaking that could take a number of years. For example, it took UNITI-Chorus almost 10 years from purchasing the land to constructing the building.

Furthermore, the board and the development team of an organization must trust each other and be comfortable with taking these risks before embarking on such a project. This is not always the case.

In addition, even with the capital grants and loans, a building might still not be affordable to tenants with a developmental disability. UNITI-Chorus relies on a one-time transfer of \$75,000 in lieu of a portable housing benefit to bridge the gap from what tenants can afford and what rents must be charged to ensure a feasible project.

The type of building and support model demonstrated by UNITI-Chorus is also set up to support individuals with light and moderate support needs. While this model in general can support peoples of all abilities, there would need to be changes in the building design and support model for organizations attempting to use this approach to support people with more diverse needs.

Lastly, BC Housing is a major funder of affordable housing in British Columbia. Other provinces and territories cannot always rely on similar organizations for funding, or the availability of portable housing allowances to maintain tenants to remain housed. This indicates that other projects who use this model may need to rely on municipalities willing to waive or defer property taxes and fees or parents making continuous financial contributions to maintain housing affordability for their family member.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Case Study Approach

8.1.1 Case Study Approach

This section describes the research team's approach to collecting data and engagements conducted during this study.

8.1.2 Lines of Inquiry

To guide all the research activities, the following lines of inquiry were developed for this case study:

Table 3: Lines of Inquiry

<p>Project relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes this project stand out compared to other housing models for individuals with developmental disabilities? <p>Development Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the key stages in the development journey of the demonstration project?• What is the governance structure of the demonstration project and what are the benefits of this governance model?• Who were the key stakeholders involved in the development process; what roles did they play?• What were the key challenges and lessons learned in the development process?• Were there any challenges in the tenant selection for each demonstration project and how were these overcome?• What was the collaboration experience like between multiple partners and stakeholders?• How could this process be replicated in other communities?	<p>Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the experience of residents with the delivery method of supports?• What levels of support can be delivered in the demonstration project?• How were the supports as well as the community linkages developed to promote the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in the wider community? <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the housing and support situation like of residents before they became involved with the demonstration project?• What is the impact of the demonstration project on residents and their families?• To what extent have the residents been able to reach their short, medium and long-term goals (including supports, employment opportunities, community engagement, life skills and self-esteem, improved housing, etc.)?
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8.1.3 Sources of Information

To answer the lines of inquiry identified above, a number of data collecting activities were undertaken as part of the development of this case study. The data collecting process was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved transferring readily available data from UNITI-Chorus to the consulting team while the second phase consisted of a number of engagements with the UNITI-Chorus team, tenants, their families, support staff and neighbours.

Collecting Readily Available Information

The research team submitted an information and data request to UNITI-Chorus in April 2019. This list included a request for relevant documentation and background reports as well as quantitative data such as the number of tenants supported, their age, rent ranges etc. For an exact overview of the data requested and received see Appendix A of this report.

All the data received from UNITI-Chorus was anonymized and did not provide identifiable details about specific residents.

Engagements

In addition to the readily available data, a total of 4 engagement sessions were conducted with a range of key informants as well as 4 interviews with neighbours and tenants in the UNITI-Chorus building without a disability. This includes the following sessions:

1. A session with project representatives and key decision makers was conducted on July 8th, 2019. A total of four people participated in this session.
2. A session with family members of residents was conducted on July 10th. A total of three people participated in this session.
3. A session with residents with a disability was conducted on July 10th. A total of six people participated in this session.
4. A session with support staff was conducted on July 8th. A total of three people participated in this session.
5. A total of four interviews with tenants without a disability were conducted on July 18th.

A total of 20 individuals were interviewed or participated in an engagement session. For an overview of each session's format, questions and materials, see appendix B of this report.

Please note, because the research team was not able to visit South Surrey, all engagements were conducted via videoconference calls except for the engagement with residents with a disability. To allow for an engaging session, online sticky note sessions were used through a tool called Stormboard.

The engagement session with residents with a disability was conducted in person by the UNITI-Chorus staff. To help the staff conduct these sessions and take notes, a step by step self-facilitation guide was developed by the research team. For an overview of this guide, see Appendix C.

8.2 **Appendix B: Data Needs & Engagement Guide**

8.3 **Appendix C: Self Facilitation Guide**

8.4 **Appendix D: Floorplans**

Appendixes and video documentary to support this case study are available on the My Home My Community website: www/myhomemycommunity.ca

APPENDIX 2



My Home My Community

*Inclusive Housing Options for
People with Developmental Disabilities:
A National Demonstration Initiative*

Case Study Report 2: Legacy Homes, Brockville, ON

October 2019

This report was produced as part of My Home My Community, a national initiative of the Canadian Association of Community Living and People First of Canada.

The Canadian Association for Community Living is a national federation of 13 provincial-territorial associations and over 300 local associations working to advance the full inclusion and human rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families. CACL is dedicated to attaining full participation in community life, ending exclusion and discrimination on the basis of intellectual disability, promoting respect for diversity, and advancing human rights to ensure equality for all Canadians. CACL leads the way in building a more inclusive Canada for people with an intellectual disability by strengthening families, defending rights, and transforming communities into places where everyone belongs.

www.cacl.ca

People First of Canada is the national voice for people who have been labeled with an intellectual disability. We believe in the right to freedom, choice, and equality for all. We support each other to reclaim our right to be recognized as full citizens through peer support, sharing our stories, developing leadership skills, advocating for our right to choose where and with whom we live, and by ensuring that our voices are heard and respected. We work together to educate and influence communities and government to ensure that all persons with intellectual disabilities are fully included and supported to live as equal citizens in Canada.

www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

My Home My Community is a national partnership initiative that is opening doors to inclusive affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. My Home My Community is driving innovation in housing development and community supports to ensure all persons with developmental disabilities have a home that offers choice and affordability, recognizes rights, addresses support needs, and fosters social inclusion in the community.

www.myhomemycommunity.ca

How to reference this report:

Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). *My Home My Community: Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities. Case Study Report 2: Legacy Homes.*



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
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Diversity includes. On se ressemble.

PEOPLE
FIRST
OF CANADA



PERSONNES
D'ABORD
DU CANADA

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who participated in the study, from focus group participants to interviewees, who dedicated their time and shared their experience with us while developing this case study report. Your contributions will help to transform communities into places where everyone belongs.

In particular, we want to thank Harry Pott and Betty Daley from Community Involvement Legacy Homes and Kimberley Gavan from the Brockville District Association for Community Involvement, who helped us organize and design each engagement session. Without their help, this report would not have been possible.

Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Demonstrations Initiative to produce this work. The views expressed within are solely of the Canadian Association for Community Living, together with project partners where expressly stated. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) accepts no responsibility for the views expressed within.

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Introducing the Project	3
3.0	The Development Timeline (2001 – 2017)	4
4.0	Impact.....	8
5.0	Project Description	11
6.0	Community Inclusion	15
7.0	Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Scale	20
8.0	Appendices.....	23

1.0 Introduction

This report provides an in-depth review of Legacy Homes' efforts to develop new housing solutions for people with a developmental disability. This case study report is part two of three in a series developed for the Canadian Association for Community Living's *My Home My Community* Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities national demonstration project.

1.1 The Case Studies

The My Home My Community: Inclusive Housing Options Demonstration Initiative profiles three innovative approaches to developing inclusive, affordable, and accessible housing. These models not only provide support, but also foster social inclusion for individuals with a developmental disability.

The models profiled as part of this demonstration initiative are just a small sample of the diverse range of ways people with developmental disabilities and their circles of support are making inclusive affordable housing a reality. None are perfect: the models developed in these case studies all have their strengths and weaknesses; each emerged out of a specific context with its own limitations and areas of excellence. Together, they contribute to a growing body of work recognizing the potential of housing to be the cornerstone of inclusive communities.

The three case studies profiled in this series are:

- **Case Study 1: Community Living Toronto, Toronto ON**
This initiative works with housing developers in Toronto to secure dispersed-individualized rental apartments to provide security of tenure, housing affordability and supports for inclusion.
- **Case Study 2: Legacy Homes – Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement, Brockville ON**
This initiative provides individuals and families planning resources, acquires individual homes in the community and provides lifelong lease agreements to individuals with developmental disabilities to ensure security of tenure and supports to enable inclusion.
- **Case Study 3: UNITI-Chorus – Semiahmoo House Society, South Surrey BC**
This initiative leverages undeveloped property and capital assets to develop affordable rental housing, designed to fit the needs of people with intellectual disabilities but including tenants with and without disabilities.

This report provides an overview of the findings from the Legacy Homes case study (case study two). The case study may be of particular interest to families looking to leverage their own assets to develop a housing solution for their family member with a developmental disability. It may also inspire organizations to work together with groups of families to develop customized housing solutions for individuals with a developmental disability.

For detailed descriptions of the case studies of Community Living Toronto and UNITI-Chorus please see case study reports one and three in this series.

Case Study 1: Partnering with Developers Community Living Toronto	Case Study 2: Family-Led Solutions Legacy Homes	Case Study 3: New Development UNITI-Chorus
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1.2 Why These Case Studies

Throughout Canada, at least 24,000 Canadians with developmental disabilities are in core housing need¹, with tens of thousands more in vulnerable housing situations. The *My Home My Community* Initiative is a local-to-national program framework that promotes new development pathways to inclusive, affordable housing for individuals with a developmental disability.

Previous research has identified three development pathways that have demonstrated success in delivering inclusive affordable housing. These pathways were identified through a series of consultations from December 2016 to October 2018 and involved individuals with developmental disabilities and family members, Provincial and Territorial Associations for Community Living (ACLs), members of People First of Canada, housing developers, community partners and local support agencies. The identified development pathways are:

1. Individual and/or family-led housing solutions

Many families have ideas or are successfully developing their own housing solutions. With some support, knowledge sharing, and financial tools, more individuals can take action, with a flatter learning curve.

2. Partnered Solutions

Local or provincial/territorial organizations can partner with families and housing sector professionals to develop new housing.

3. New Development and Regeneration

Providers of housing and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities are seeing a mismatch between their own inclusivity principles and outdated models of residential services. Increasingly, housing providers are looking to leverage their assets and invest in inclusive, affordable housing that prioritizes the needs of people with developmental disabilities but welcomes disabled and nondisabled residents.

The National Housing Strategy released in 2018 by the Federal Government has allocated funding and initiatives to construct a total of 2,400 units for individuals with

¹ Statistics Canada defines a household in core housing need as one whose dwelling is considered unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community.

developmental disabilities. An asset inventory² conducted as part of the My Home My Community Initiative identified that along the three pathways there is an estimated development potential of up to 35,000 units Canada wide.³

The goal of this project is to create a platform that will engage the housing sector, government, and community partners in learning about these three development pathways and help achieve scale along these approaches across Canada through replication.

1.3 Report Format

The case study report consists of three main parts. Part one develops an in-depth overview of Legacy Homes' approach to creating new housing for individuals with a developmental disability and the impact of this approach on tenants, families and support staff. The remaining section outlines the lessons learned and opportunities for replication of this initiative across Canada. For an overview of the approach taken to develop this case study, see appendix A.

2.0 Introducing the Project

Legacy Homes is a non-profit charitable housing corporation located in Leeds and Grenville United counties (Ontario). The initiative grew out of a desire by parents of people with a developmental disability to ensure their children could remain in the community where they had always lived, even after their parents could no longer support them in the family home.

Legacy Homes does this by acquiring homes in the community and renting these homes to people with a developmental disability through a life-lease. This allows people with a developmental disability to have a home of their own without having to navigate the complexities of accessing homeownership, such as obtaining a mortgage and entering into an agreement of purchase and sale.

Supports are organized through a committed "circle" of organic support, including family members, friends, neighbours, and paid support workers. The circle also ensures that the family's philosophy for inclusive housing and supports is advocated for, even after the parents can no longer do it themselves.

Legacy Homes strongly believes that housing and supports should be separated from one another. Therefore, the corporation does not provide paid supports. Supports are organized through a partnership with the Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement (BDACI) or other support agencies, so tenants can live as independently as possible in the community.

As of 2019, Legacy Homes operates a total of seven (7) homes and two (2) condominium apartments in Leeds and Grenville United counties. These homes offer

² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Asset Inventory <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d56a5e63df6e9000117b679/1565959655552/MHMC+Asset+Inventory+FINAL.pdf>

³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Asset Inventory: 4.

housing for ten tenants. Some homes are located in Brockville, ON while others are located in other areas of the counties such as Smiths Falls, ON or North Augusta, ON.

3.0 The Development Timeline (2001 – 2017)

3.1 From Idea to Action (2001 and earlier)

The start of the Legacy Homes initiative can be traced back to the 1980s in a period of de-institutionalization of supported housing for people with a developmental disability. During this time, parents of individuals with a developmental disability in the Leeds-Grenville area started a group that regularly came together to explore what supported decision making⁴ and inclusive housing could look like for individuals with a developmental disability. There was a strong sense among the members of this group that the group home model, or any other form of congregate living, would not be able to foster inclusion and facilitate a normal life for people with a developmental disability. In addition, group members felt strongly that there should be a separation between housing and supports. In most housing solutions for people with a developmental disability paid supports are provided by the agency who owns the housing, and the group of parents felt this would lock their children into a specific way of life they might not have necessarily chosen for themselves.

Key Drivers of Change

- Discontent with the lack of options for people with a developmental disability outside of group homes and other congregated settings
- A desire to separate the organization that provides the housing from the organization providing the supports
- A fear that as primary caregivers/parents were aging, they could no longer prevent their loved ones from entering congregated living environments

Project Representative

"It is absolutely essential to separate housing from supports. As long as you keep it separate you can figure out a more natural way for an individual to live. If you put it together, you lock the individual into a specific way of life designed by an organization."

From the 1980s and throughout the 1990s the group of parents continued to meet, and held community consultations on housing-related issues with families, professionals, politicians, counties, universities, health providers, etc. However, as time progressed, many group members started to age and became increasingly worried that their children would eventually end up in congregate housing and support settings when they themselves could no longer take care of them. This was something they wanted to prevent at all costs.

⁴ Supported decision-making is a model that helps a person with a developmental disability understand, make, and communicate their own choices. When using supported decision-making, the person can execute an agreement which identifies their personal method of decision-making, regardless of their communication means. This document can help doctors, bankers, lawyers, and other third parties understand and accept the decision of the person with a disability.

In 2001, the group of parents, now named the Legacy Committee, was able to involve Ryerson University in their quest for a solution to their problem. One member of the group, associated with the University and with funding from BDACI, wrote a research proposal to investigate the needs of older parents with children with developmental disabilities living at home. Through this work the Legacy Committee found housing was the core issue among older parents who had a child with a developmental disability.

3.2 Preparation Stage (2001 – 2007)

The results of the study motivated the Legacy Committee to pursue the issue of housing further. Over the course of two years they visited a number of other parent groups who were trying to explore alternative housing and support solutions, as well as a number of facilities offering housing and supports for individuals with a developmental disability throughout Canada. One of these organizations was Nabors in Toronto, which helps families to create a circle of non-paid supports around individuals with a developmental disability.

Legacy Homes' Concept of Home:

- Home is a unique creation that comes from the heart of the person, and their life. It could never be created by an organization.
- Home is a reflection of one's unique identity.
- Home is the base from where one participates in society and connects to their neighbourhood as well as their community. It is where one issues the invitations and controls the environment.

At the same time, in the early 2000s and with the continued support of BDACI and an outside legal consultant, the Legacy Committee found ways to connect with other parents in the area through additional consultations. Taking almost two years to complete, the key objective of these sessions was to develop an inclusive concept of home and explore how this could be achieved for individuals with a developmental disability. During the consultations the Legacy Committee renewed its exploration on alternatives for group homes and heard from individuals and their families about the importance of receiving their own mail and having a key to their own front door. In addition, the consultations found that stability of tenure was a key issue, in particular when the primary caregivers, such as the parents, were no longer there to

provide support if necessary.

A number of delivery methods for housing were considered, including a housing co-operation. However, the Legacy Committee determined that it would be hard to maintain the vision of the co-operation as values often change after the first generation of tenants move out. Therefore, it was decided a housing corporation, independent from BDACI, would be best suited to enable the separation of housing and supports and the facilitation of individualized approaches to housing. At that time the Legacy Committee had no funding or knowledge on how to move forward. It took another two years before they were able to do so.

In 2007, with financial support from BDACI as well as assistance from the independent legal consultant who helped write by-laws, lease agreements and general processes, Community Involvement Legacy Homes Inc. was incorporated. Based on legal advice, it was decided that Legacy Homes would purchase the homes on behalf of the families and provide a life-lease to tenants to ensure stability of tenure and an approximation to

homeownership. Particular time was spent developing the lease agreement, which was designed to allow for a supported decision-making framework so that all residents, regardless of perceived legal competency, could sign. In addition, the Legacy Homes lease includes a clause protecting the tenants from Legacy Homes forcing them out of their homes in the future, so long as they continue paying their rents⁵.

While separate, Legacy Homes maintained and continues to maintain strong ties with BDACI. For example, the president of BDACI also sits on the board of Legacy Homes as an ex-officio member and for a number of years BDACI provided yearly funds from their reserve so that Legacy Homes could acquire staff. BDACI also offered Legacy Homes accounting services, office space, and telephone lines, which it continues to do.

3.3 Acquiring Homes (2007 – 2017)

With the corporation legally established, it could start purchasing homes in the community. The first home was purchased in 2008 for a community member with a developmental disability who struggled to find safe and affordable housing in the community.

Marlene had lived in foster care, group homes, locked institutional wards, social housing, low-income rental apartments, and on friend's couches. She had also experienced episodes of homelessness, but from 2003 to 2008 she lived in a basement apartment. As she aged her housing needs changed, and Marlene could no longer manage walking up the stairs. Together with the Legacy Homes team, Marlene worked to find a condominium apartment that suited her needs in the Brockville area. However, both Marlene and Legacy Homes did not have the money to put toward a down payment. Instead, the Legacy Homes team fundraised the money required through the community and applied for funds from two foundations.

Support Circles

In addition to providing housing, Legacy Homes, with assistance from BDACI, helps to build a circle of supports around each individual. The circle may consist of family members, friends, neighbours or support staff familiar with the individual. The circle plays a key role in ensuring the support and housing philosophy for the individual remains intact after the parents can no longer advocate for their loved one.

When enough money had been raised, Legacy Homes purchased the home and secured a mortgage. Marlene became the first tenant, with her rent payment covering the monthly mortgage payment, and lived in her home until her death in 2018. Between 2009 and 2015, Legacy Homes acquired three more homes. As opposed to recruiting for tenants, Legacy Homes was acutely aware which families in the community had the highest need from their community outreach and consultations. The Legacy Homes team worked closely with each family to determine what kind of home and support model would fit each individual and their circle of support⁶.

In 2015, to increase capacity, Legacy Homes and BDACI partnered with a likeminded organization in Durham Region (the Durham Association for Family Respite Services). Together they successfully applied for funding from the Ministry of Community and

⁵ For more information on the life-lease agreement, see section 6.1.2 in this report.

⁶ For more information on how Legacy Homes secures homes and establishes circles, see section 6.

Social Services through the Developmental Services Task Force Project. This additional financial support allowed Legacy Homes to increase its capacity to help more families secure individualized housing and improve its services. As a result, Legacy Homes more than doubled its housing portfolio from four to nine homes by 2017.

Key Lessons Learned

- Involve a legal professional to help draft the lease agreement and by-laws of the organization.
- Work closely with each family to design a housing and support situation that fits the individual.
- Connect with local or provincial governments to obtain information on any housing subsidies or funding that might exist for tenants or the organization.

Legacy Homes wanted to make the monthly rent more affordable for its tenants. The Legacy Homes team set up a meeting with Leeds-Grenville counties and the Service Manager for housing in the area to see if there were any rent supplements available. During this meeting, county staff pointed Legacy Homes to capital grants of \$150,000 per house and the Housing Allowance component it manages on behalf of the Province of Ontario through the Investment in Affordable Housing Program – Extension (IAH Program).

The team made attempts to secure capital grants during the purchase of new homes, as well as secure housing allowances for existing tenants. They were able to secure some capital grants; however, according to the guidelines of the Housing Allowance Program, most tenants were considered “over housed”⁷ and did not qualify for an allowance because of it. All homes had

two bedrooms or more, while most individuals were living on their own. The Legacy Homes team worked together with the Service Manager for almost a year to overcome this barrier and secured housing allowances for several of the tenants. However, only tenants in need of 24-hour supports or those living with a roommate were ultimately able to secure a housing allowance.

Project Representative

“We had a meeting with Leeds-Grenville Counties. Originally, we applied for Marlene to get a housing supplement. Then we found out housing allowances were available. [...] It took about a year to get them in place. Initially they said they [the tenants] were over housed. We had to justify why they really were not”

3.4 Moving Forward (2017 – 2019)

Since 2017, funds from the Developmental Services Task Force Project and annual transfers from BDACI were unavailable, meaning Legacy Homes could no longer afford paid staff and halting the process of acquiring new homes. Currently, the organization is working to acquire a stable stream of funding to hire qualified staff to continue helping individuals with a developmental disability and their families secure independent housing in the area. Some avenues they are pursuing include working with the local counties and political advocacy through supportive Members of Parliament.

⁷ ‘Over housed’ is a term that defines the dwelling as too large for the occupying household size.

4.0 Impact

This section provides a description of the impact the Legacy Homes Initiative has had on tenants, their families, and support staff. A total of three engagements with tenants and their support circles were conducted as part of the data collection phase.

4.1 Impact on Tenants and their Support Circles

4.1.1 Impact on Tenants

All tenants in this study do not use spoken or written communication. This made it challenging for the research team to assess the impact of the project on the tenants' lives from first-hand account. However, based on observed behaviour of the individuals and conversations with circle members who regularly help translate a person's expressed communication, an understanding was obtained.

Two out of three tenants lived in the parental home before moving to their current home, and both circles indicated the parents of these tenants were aging and could no longer support them. These families became involved with Legacy Homes to prevent their loved ones from entering into a congregate housing setting, such as a group home. The third tenant was living in a condominium apartment in Brockville. This family had developed a plan with the individual to achieve a stable housing and support situation outside of the family home; however, the urban setting was not working out. Some of this individual's favourite activities were outside, such as digging, wandering in the garden, or going for country drives - activities that were not feasible in a condominium apartment in a city. While all three tenants do not communicate with words, one tenant had clearly indicated a desire to move out and was showing signs of increasing frustration with the structure and strict routines in the parental home.

Circle Member

"He likes having space and independence to be able to do what he wants to do. When he still lived at home, he used to leave the house and wander to the grocery store or pizza place which was dangerous. [...] He did not like to hear no, which would lead to conflict."

When the opportunity arose to live in a home of their own through Legacy Homes, two of the three tenants' circles did not hesitate. They had been part of the Legacy Committee for many years and were prepared to move forward. One circle needed more time before they were ready to commit to an independent housing option. All three circles expressed that the move to the new home went smoothly from the tenant's perspective. This was partly due to significant time spent on preparing a familiar environment for the tenants - with pieces of furniture from their old homes, music and appliances they liked, as well as spaces in the home tailored to their interests. For example, one home included a large space in the garden for digging, the tenant's favourite activity. This family also ensured the garden would be a safe place for the individual to wander independently.

After the tenants moved into their respective houses, two circles indicated that they observed little to no negative change in their loved one's behaviour and daily routines. One circle reported noticeable positive changes in behaviour after the move, indicating that the tenant had become less aggressive and more welcoming to visitors. One circle had issues getting the necessary support network in place, which caused a one-year delay in the move-in process. However, they also expressed that this did not impact the tenant significantly.

For two tenants who chose to live in the same home, the experience of moving in together was described as generally positive for both. The two families had come to this arrangement because at previous gatherings these two individuals always found each other and appeared to share a mutual connection. While the experience overall has been positive, both circles noted that they had to learn how to understand each other's needs due to the different lifestyles of both families. However, the circles also expressed that these differences had positive effects since it led to new experiences for their loved ones that they would not have experienced otherwise.

Circle Member

"Life is different here [in the new home]. Before he lived with old parents, now there are younger people around him. He lived a quiet life in a house, while we were reading or listening to [classical] music. His roommate's family took him to a Neil Diamond concert and he really liked it!"

One circle noted that weekends were less busy for their loved one compared to weekends in their family home, and they were afraid they might get bored. To mitigate this issue some tenants have family or circle members come over on weekends, while others have a roommate without a disability who can support them when paid staff are not available. This is not applicable for all tenants.

One circle also noted they realized moving forward there might be a need to make modifications to the home, as the tenant was starting to have issues walking up stairs to enter the home. However, the family members of this individual also expressed confidence that these adjustments could be made when required.

4.1.2 Impact on the Support Circle

All the circles of support became involved with Legacy Homes to find a permanent inclusive housing solution for their loved one that would be sustainable after they were no longer there to support them. All circles responded that for the tenant to have their own home and supports was a great relief and peace of mind to them.

Some circles indicated that their role had changed. One circle member mentioned that the individual's mother had started working again, while another circle member indicated that they had become more a point of contact instead of a support worker.

**Circle
Member**

"Her father's role is not as hands on anymore. It is more a point of contact, managing finances, clothes etc."

All families did express that initially it took some time to hire the right support staff and that this caused some stress. It was very important to all families in this project that support staff followed the lead of the individual and cautioned that most support staff are not trained this way, coming from a background in congregate settings such as group homes. Therefore, it was necessary to let staff go when the support arrangement was not working out. Still, all families expressed confidence that the circles would be able to maintain the support philosophy, together with BDACI, if the parents could no longer be there to provide guidance. One family expressed a desire to find a roommate for their loved one to lower the cost of hiring overnight support staff.

Some of the circle members expressed a concern about what would happen if the individual's support needs changed so significantly that they would no longer be able to remain in the home. In particular, the two circles with loved ones who are roommates were aware of the interdependency of the situation and were not sure what they would do if one of the tenants had to move out, as living in the house would not be viable if a replacement roommate could not be found. It was noted BDACI would work together with the family and circle to find a replacement roommate, but it remains a concern.

**Circle
Member**

"There is still a risk, if one or the other can't live here anymore. However, we trust the organization [Legacy Homes] to give us control over choosing who a new tenant might be."

4.1.3 **Impact on Support Staff**

Some of the paid support staff were contacted separately from the circle. All support workers had some previous experience working in congregate support settings. Two had worked in an institution while one had worked in a group home.

All support staff indicated that the one-on-one support model worked really well for them and provided an opportunity to really get to know an individual. Support staff also mentioned they had to make some adjustments in the way they provided supports. They mentioned they had to learn this was the tenant's home and to take their lead. All were on board with the tenant-led support philosophy used in the Legacy Homes initiative. They expressed how working one-on-one with tenants made them feel like they could have a much larger impact on an individual's life than they could previously.

Support Worker

"It is very different from working in an institution. I am glad to see that people with a disability can live in their own home like this, having freedom to have choice. [...] He decides my day. [...] He

communicates with us through his actions, taking us by the hand where he wants to go".

In contrast, support workers also mentioned that the smaller setting made it harder to take time off. It was also mentioned that salaries were relatively low compared to other similar positions due to the small scale in which supports are provided. This might explain why some families indicated they had issues finding good support staff.

5.0 Project Description

This section provides a more detailed description of some of the structures and partnerships that made this project possible, including the process for acquiring homes, the organizational structure, support model, demographics of the tenants and how Legacy Homes ensures affordability.

5.1 Organizational Structure

Legacy Homes is incorporated as a non-profit charitable housing corporation. The corporation has its own Board of Directors. The decision to incorporate Legacy Homes as a separate organization instead of making it a part of BDACI was an intentional choice made by the Legacy Committee at the moment of incorporation. Setting-up a separate non-profit housing corporation [Community Involvement Legacy Homes Inc.] allowed for the formal separation of housing and supports, one of the core values underlying this initiative. Legacy Homes provides housing, while BDACI or another organization provides support. Separating housing and supports ensures families and individuals are not tied to one support provider, which gives the individual and their circle control over the philosophy of support without jeopardizing the access to housing.

The Legacy Homes Board of Directors consists of five Board members. In addition, the president of BDACI sits on the Board as an ex-officio member. This is a formal recognition of the close ties between Legacy Homes and BDACI.

In addition to the Board, Legacy Homes has an Executive Director who manages day to day operations. This role is currently filled by a volunteer. In the past there were funds to ensure the Executive Director was a paid position, but current funds do not allow for paid positions within the organization.

Being an entirely volunteer driven organization creates a number of issues, particularly as the existing group of volunteers is aging. Continuing the required maintenance and upkeep of the homes is a challenge and the organization is looking for funding that would allow them to hire a staff person to oversee the required maintenance.

5.2 Process for Acquiring Homes

5.2.1 Purchasing the Home

Instead of acquiring homes and offering these to prospective tenants, Legacy Homes first consults extensively with interested families and individuals with a developmental disability before it purchases a home. During these conversations the prospective

tenant's housing and support requirements are determined as well as the available budget. Legacy Homes, together with the family, will then start looking for a home in the community that is suitable for the tenant.

With the help of BDACI, a support circle and support plan is formed around the prospective tenant. This circle may consist of families, friends, neighbours, paid support staff familiar with the family, or other appropriate individuals. The purpose of this circle is to provide impromptu supports where necessary and to ensure the decisions made by the support circle on behalf of the individual with a developmental disability are in line with the philosophy of the individual and their family.

When a suitable home is found and a support circle and support plan is in place, the family, circle members, and/or other donors make a donation to cover the required down payment of the home to Legacy Homes. Legacy Homes uses this donation to obtain a mortgage and purchase the home. Once the home is owned by Legacy Homes, the tenant signs a lease which guarantees security of tenure. The tenant pays a monthly rent to cover the mortgage payment. If this is not affordable to a tenant, Legacy Homes works with the family and partners to ensure prolonged affordability (see section 6.5). One significant lesson learned through this process was that the donations families make, unlike general donations, are not recognized as tax deductible by the Canada Revenue Agency as the donation benefits only one individual and not a group.

Once a tenant vacates a home, it returns to Legacy Homes who can then rent it out to another tenant or sell the home in order to purchase a new home. The donations made to purchase the home are final and not recovered by the family after the tenant moves out.

**Legacy Homes
Legal
Consultant**

"The donation is a trade-off for families to secure stability of tenure for the tenant and should be seen as a contribution to the community."

Key Considerations

- **Benefits**

Families do not need to obtain a mortgage while acquiring a similar stability of tenure as homeownership.

Families can apply for housing allowances or other housing subsidies generally not accessible to homeowners.

- **Drawbacks**

Under this structure there is no equity build up in the home and the donation families make to Legacy Homes are not recuperated when the tenant moves out. Additionally, the donation is not tax deductible.

The inability to deduct the donation from taxes and to recover the investment after the tenant moves out might be a deterrent for some families to pursue this model, as there is no equity built into the home. Groups concerned about equity might want to consider a more traditional life-lease model where individuals and families pay an upfront fee and make monthly payments to cover the mortgage, but the equity built-up in the home is returned to the individual or the family at the time of move out⁸. Note, in an equity-based model as described here, tenants would not likely be eligible for

⁸ AbleLiving (2013). Life Lease: A Supportive Housing Model. p.17.

housing subsidies or housing allowances. This could mean families would have to make other contributions to ensure the housing solution is affordable.

5.2.2 The Lease

While Legacy Homes refers to the lease as a life-lease, it is different from a life-lease commonly found in Canada. The most important difference is that tenants do not build up equity under the Legacy Homes model, unlike a standard life-lease model. Instead, the individual enters a landlord-tenant relationship with Legacy Homes, with their rent covering the mortgage payment. In addition, the lease that is signed between the tenant and Legacy Homes is different than a standard tenant-landlord lease. The lease was designed in close collaboration with Legacy Homes and their legal consultant:

- 1) There is no end date in the lease. The lease ends only when the tenant passes away, or decides, in collaboration with their circle, to find a different home and provides written notice to Legacy homes, or abandons the property. Legacy Homes can only terminate the lease if a tenant refuses to pay rent. This ensures the lease is for life.
- 2) It was paramount for the Legacy Homes team that the lease recognizes the tenants as individuals and adheres to a supported decision-making model over a substitute decision-making/guardianship model. Therefore, the lease may be signed by parents or circle members on behalf of the tenant if the tenant is unable to read or make a meaningful decision to sign; however, the lease is in line with supported decision-making practices and adheres to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities.⁹

Key Considerations

- Investigate the status of supportive decision-making legislation in the relevant province or territory.
- In case of a missing legal framework, consider the level of trust that exists between all key stakeholders to ensure everyone is comfortable with the agreement.

Certain provinces in Canada have been more progressive in supported decision-making legislation than others. Manitoba, British Columbia, and Alberta have taken steps to allow for supports in decision-making models to recognize the rights of individuals with a developmental disability. Ontario has taken some steps but does not yet have a legal framework in place for supports in decision-making. The Legacy Homes initiative works even without a strong legal framework for supports in decision-making in Ontario because of the high degree of trust that exists between the tenants and their circle in relation to the Legacy Homes organization. This is possible due to the decades of collaboration that exists between the organization, tenants, and their families.

It is important for other groups who are considering this model to investigate the status of supported decision-making in their respective province or territory and reflect on their level of comfort using a supports in decision-making model if the legal framework is still developing in the respective province or territory. Trust between the organization, the tenants, and their families is important because the lease agreements could face legal

⁹<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-12-equal-recognition-before-the-law.html>

challenges in courts of provinces and territories where supports for decision-making is not fully recognized.

5.3 Tenants and Support Needs

Legacy Homes is currently the landlord to 10 individuals dispersed over nine homes. Two tenants live in the same home as chosen roommates. Two tenants have a roommate without a disability who supports them when paid supports are not available. Tenants all vary in gender, age, and support needs. A number of individuals have significant developmental disabilities, where they do not communicate with speech or text and need 24-hour support. Other tenants have need only occasional support to live independently in their own home.

The intensive consultations with families and individuals at the beginning of the process of acquiring a home ensures this housing initiative is able to accommodate a wide range of support needs.

5.4 Physical Design and Support Model

5.4.1 Housing Design

Homes vary in design, type, and shape. Almost all tenants live in single detached one-floor bungalows. However, two tenants live in a condominium apartment. All homes could be adapted for accessibility and support needs if required in the future.

5.4.2 Support Model

Support models are adjusted based on the needs of the tenant. Some tenants require support 24 hours a day while others only need occasional supports, which may be given by a roommate. Before tenants move in Legacy Homes requires that a support plan is in place, developed together with Legacy Homes and the support circle.

Paid supports are generally offered through BDACI, but some tenants opt to find other support agencies or hire their own support staff. This is possible due to the separation between housing and supports that is at the foundation of the Legacy Homes initiative.

5.5 Affordability

The intent of Legacy Homes is to provide rents that are geared-to-income. The affordability of the dwellings is secured in a number of ways. Families can opt to make higher donations which will ensure lower monthly rent payments as a result of a lower mortgage payments. If a home is not affordable to a tenant, Legacy Homes has a number of tools at its disposal to reduce monthly payments for the tenant. Because of its status as a housing corporation, Legacy Homes has been able to work with the local service manager¹⁰ to obtain housing allowances for a number of tenants, which reduces their monthly rent. Other homes were purchased with increased down

¹⁰ Service Managers are upper tier municipalities such as counties or cities who, in Ontario, are responsible for delivering affordable housing after the devolution of the housing portfolio from the Province to the Service Managers in 2001.

payments, secured by successfully applying for Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH)¹¹ funding of up to \$150,000 per home.

6.0 Community Inclusion

This section gives an overview of how the Legacy Homes housing contributes to the inclusivity of its tenants.

6.1 Measuring Inclusivity

MHMC has developed an innovative new **Housing Inclusivity Framework** for measuring inclusivity by expanding the existing definition of social inclusion and introducing a housing lens.¹² In this framework, housing inclusivity is defined as “the degree to which a person’s home either contributes or presents barriers to their participation in the broader community.”¹³ The framework evaluates the tangible aspects of a housing situation across five domains which, together, lead to socially inclusive outcomes for residents. The five domains are:

1. Person Domain: The individual resident. Aspects pertaining to the individual, including income, functional capacities, support needs, etc., have a significant impact on required living situation and degree to which supports are needed to engage in community;
2. Household Domain: Similarly, the structure and capability set of the household, including income, support needs, etc., impact housing requirements and opportunity to engage in community;
3. Dwelling Domain: The built environment of the unit (which can take many forms) will either present or eliminate barriers to participation and independence;
4. Structure Domain: In the case of multi-unit structures, the building within which the home is situated also has an impact on visitability, accessibility, and opportunity for engagement with the first line of community: neighbours;
5. Neighbourhood Domain: The broader built, social and service environment in which the dwelling and structure are situated, and which affords resources like transportation, opportunities for community involvement, etc. The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in and be safe in their communities.

¹¹ The Investment in Affordable Housing program is a Federal/Provincial program that supports the creation of affordable housing through new construction, renovation, homeownership assistance, rent supplements, shelter allowances, accessibility modifications, and accommodations for victims of family violence.

¹² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing ‘Housing Inclusivity’: A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d5582bdbacd560001233e9b/1565885118508/Conceptualizing+Housing+Inclusivity+Lit+Review+-+FINAL+.pdf>

¹³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing ‘Housing Inclusivity’ A

What makes the MHMC housing inclusivity framework so innovative is its ability to distill complex aspects that affect inclusion into an applicable framework.

To assess inclusivity in each domain, the framework uses indicators (for example, suitability, affordability, safety, choice and control) that examine the following:¹⁴

- Does the living situation present or eliminate barriers to activities of daily living?
- Is it a home-by-choice, and not the result of congregation of people in a housing unit, development or neighbourhood, based on a demographic characteristic?
- Does the living situation enhances capabilities to:
 - Participate in the social and economic life of their community?
 - Be recognized and valued as a full member of their neighbourhood?
 - Live independently and be included in the community?

6.2 Evaluation

This evaluation uses MHMC's housing inclusivity framework to assess the inclusivity of the Legacy Home's case study.

6.2.1 Person¹⁵

Indicators within the Person Domain:

- Personal Choice
- Social Connection
- Personal Supports
- Safety

The person domain focuses on the individual and evaluates how well they can live in, and benefit from their housing.¹⁶ It also looks at location to assess whether the individual can access services and supports within the housing development or in the broader neighbourhood. This domain considers

the resources a particular person needs to access amenities on an equal basis with others, and to secure safe, affordable housing in inclusive communities.¹⁷ For example, can tenants exercise basic autonomy over the decisions about where and how they live? Do they have opportunity to make voluntary social connections?

Legacy Homes' model of support is rooted in recognizing and respecting the decision-making authority of the tenant. Rather than use a guardianship approach, where others make legal decisions on behalf of a person with a developmental disability, Legacy Homes uses a supported decision-making model. The model helps a person with a disability understand, make, and communicate their own choices – recognizing their authority to enter into an agreement about where and with whom they would like to live.

Legacy Homes separates supports from housing to allow individuals to dictate their own supports without jeopardizing their housing situation. The Legacy Homes support model is driven by a person-led philosophy designed to put control into the hands of the tenant and their circle. Tenants can have visitors, indicate with whom they want to live,

¹⁴ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

¹⁵ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

¹⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

¹⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A

receive overnight guests and come and go as they please if they are able to do so independently.

While the support circle often includes paid support staff, it is important to note that the support circle also includes by majority friends and family. This helps individuals achieve inclusion by surrounding them with a committed network of people who care about them and advocate their will and preference.

6.2.2 Household¹⁸

Indicators within the Household Domain:

- Suitability
- Affordability
- Tenure Security
- Digital Connection

This domain refers to the capability of the household for an individual to access suitable, affordable, secure housing that meets the needs of all household members¹⁹. A household is defined by Statistics Canada as “a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling. The household may consist of a family group such as a census family, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, or a group of unrelated persons or a person living alone.”²⁰

Within this domain is the examination of the suitability of housing based on household size. Housing suitability can be determined from whether a dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size of household. CMHC's definition of suitable housing requires one adult per bedroom, unless they are a co-habiting adult couple in which case two adults per bedroom is permitted.²¹ At the household level, the size and type of dwelling will impact an individual's likelihood of experiencing social exclusion.²² Inadequate housing that does not provide sufficient space can impact daily liveability and increase social exclusion, loneliness, and poor health outcomes for members of the household.²³

All of the homes that Legacy Homes operates are in compliance with CMHC's suitability requirements.²⁴ This means that there is no overcrowding occurring which could negatively affect a person's inclusivity by creating a barrier to accessing social and community services.

Affordability is an important aspect of inclusivity. Households experiencing housing affordability challenges are substantially more likely to experience social exclusion than households that are not spending more than 30% of their income on housing.²⁵

¹⁸ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

¹⁹ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

²⁰ (Canada. Statistics Canada, "Data Dictionary" <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage007-eng.cfm>

²¹ CMHC. "Housing in Canada Online" https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions_EN.html#_Suitable_dwellings

²² Stone, W., et al. "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," AHURI Final Report No.207, (2013): 50.

²³ Stone, W., et al. "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," AHURI Final Report No.207, (2013): 51.

²⁴ CMHC. "Housing in Canada Online" https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions_EN.html#_Suitable_dwellings

²⁵ Stone, W., et al. "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," AHURI Final Report No.207, (2013): 50.

Currently all of Legacy Home's housing are affordable to tenants. If a home is unaffordable, Legacy Homes has a number of methods it can employ to reduce the amount of a tenant's monthly payment – for example, through a housing allowance.

Tenants have security of tenure with Legacy Homes through their lease agreement. Unlike a standard lease agreement, the Legacy Homes lease includes a clause protecting the tenants from eviction as long as they continue to pay their rent.

6.2.3 Dwelling²⁶

This domain examines how the built environment of a person's home will either present or eliminate barriers to participation and independence.²⁷ The connection between this domain and inclusion is fundamental: if one's living environment is inaccessible, both living within the home and leaving to access the community become difficult.²⁸

Physical barriers can restrict an individual from participating in the community and result in social exclusion.²⁹ Barriers to accessibility include trouble opening doors, difficulty using the stairs, and issues simply getting in and out of the home.³⁰ For example, a doorway that has not been made wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair becomes a barrier.³¹ An inaccessible home can restrict an individual's access to important services – and social connections.

Many of the houses owned by Legacy Homes are single detached homes that are not currently wheelchair or otherwise universally accessible. This limits the ability of individuals with physical disabilities or dual diagnoses to move into the houses if they become vacated. In addition, it could become an issue as residents age. However, the existing tenants do not currently require physical accessibility modifications, and as Legacy Homes is the owner, homes could be adapted in the future should the need arise.

Indicators within Dwelling Domain:

- Accessibility
- Adequacy
- Adaptability

²⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁸ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability:19.

²⁹European Disability Forum, "Disability and Social Exclusion in the European Union: Tune for change, tools for change," (2002):6. http://sid.usal.es/idos/F8/FD07040/disability_and_social_exclusion_report.pdf.

³⁰Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "Maintaining Seniors' Independence Through Home Adaptations a self-assessment guide," (2016):3.

³¹ City of Toronto, "Accessibility Design Guidelines" (2004): 52.

6.2.4 Structure³²

Indicators within Structure Domain:

- Resident Mix
- Social Connection
- Linkage to community supports and services

The structure domain evaluates how the building itself allows for the integration of tenants with a developmental disability in the community.³³ For example, is the building made up of only people with a disability or people without a disability? Are tenants with a disability congregated together on one floor of the building?

Having only individuals with a disability in a building, or in an area of the building, would make for a less inclusive living situation.³⁴ Disability advocates and experts with lived experience note that concentrating people with development disability together on the basis of that single characteristic makes it harder for people without disabilities to 'see' the individual past the disability, increasing the likelihood of stigmatization and social exclusion. This approach is consistent with research findings that indicate that "non-congregated housing in the community is a fundamental condition for social inclusion, self-determination, and wellbeing of people with intellectual disabilities."³⁵

The approach taken by Legacy Homes is consistent with the disability community's vision for full inclusion in community. Almost all tenants live in single detached one-floor bungalows, with two residents in condominium apartments. Tenants have a "home of their own" and are not congregated in one building or area of town but live in the community similar to any other resident in the town. This approach is highly inclusive as it supports people with a developmental disability to live where and with whom they want to live.

One disadvantage of the location is that tenants may find it difficult to form organic connections in the community, due to the rural location of some of the tenants and lack of transportation. Still, this location was chosen as directed by the tenant and their circle based on the will and preference of the individual.

6.2.5 Neighbourhood³⁶

Indicators within Neighbourhood Domain:

- Proximity to Services
- Safety

The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in and be safe in their communities.³⁷

Locating housing in a walkable neighbourhood can have important implications for inclusion. A feature of walkable neighbourhoods is having close proximity to services.

Studies suggest that walkable neighbourhoods are healthier than non-walkable

³² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 20.

³³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability.

³⁴ BC Non-Profit Housing Association, "Exploring Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities in BC,": 17.

³⁵ Wiesel, Ilan, "Housing for People with Intellectual Disabilities and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Reforms." Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2:1, (2015): 46.

³⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

³⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

neighbourhoods as they encourage diverse modes of transportation other than driving, such as walking, bicycling or using transit. By encouraging more people to walk or be physically active, walkable neighbourhoods facilitate social interaction, social inclusion and access to jobs³⁸.

Having a low crime rate is especially important when examining inclusion for persons with a developmental disability who face high rates of violent victimization. A real or perceived lack of safety among one's neighbours is an obvious barrier to inclusion.³⁹ Feeling safe is important for populations with and without disabilities to be able to access their community and community supports. When a person has a positive perception of their own safety, they are less likely to be fearful of being victimized by crime. However, when an individual is concerned for their safety, they are less likely to participate in their communities, leading to social exclusion⁴⁰.

The homes profiled in this case study are situated in a rural setting with very low crime scores. Due to this rural setting, the homes are also in low walkability areas with limited access to public transportation and services. Members of the tenants' support circle and/or paid staff are available to drive tenants to appointments and community activities.

It is important to note within the neighbourhood domain that while urban locations can provide many benefits such as walkability and transit, urban living is not a preference for everyone. For example, one the tenants found that his home was too urban and moved into a Legacy Homes house to be in rural setting that was more to his preference, as it gave him more room to garden and to do the activities he enjoyed.

6.2.6 Conclusion

Applying the Housing Inclusivity Framework to the Legacy Homes initiative shows that it contributes to a person's social inclusion. Legacy Homes performs very well throughout the framework and the high performance in the majority of domains is a clear reflection of the intentionality toward inclusion Legacy Homes stakeholders have shown throughout each stage of development and implementation. The remote location of some of the homes can make it difficult to make social connections; this is offset by the use of a support circle, or linkages to community organizations. Rather than pose barriers to a person's inclusivity, Legacy Homes housing contributes to socially inclusive outcomes for those that live in them. Legacy Homes consistently uses person-centered planning and a supported decision-making model which allows the individuals to make their own decisions about where, with whom, and how they want to live.

7.0 Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Scale

³⁸ Hulse, K., Jacobs, K., Arthurson, K. and Spinney, A. "At home and in place? The role of housing in social inclusion," AHURI Final Report No. 177, (2003): 24.

³⁹ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity' A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 24.

⁴⁰ The Smith Institute, "Communities Social Exclusion and Crime," : 76.

In this section, the observed lessons learned are described and a number of opportunities to replicate the Legacy Homes approach for inclusive housing throughout Canada are identified.

7.1 Lessons Learned

Through conversations with project representatives, support circles, and paid support staff, a number of lessons learned were identified that other organizations pursuing similar initiatives should take into consideration.

The most important lesson learned by the project representatives is that this model might not be feasible for all families. It requires significant time investment and it is crucial that all the key decision makers have the same values to keep everyone aligned toward the goal. This can be assessed by conducting sufficient consultation with families, circles, and support workers.

It was mentioned it is important that the housing corporation has at least one paid staff. Currently the Legacy Homes Board of Directors is finding it increasingly complicated to continue the organization on a volunteer driven basis. A steady and sustainable funding stream should be identified at the beginning of the project to ensure long-term sustainability.

Lastly, it was mentioned it would have been good to formalize procedures on paper at the outset of the initiative, so they can be passed on to new generations.

7.2 Opportunities for Replication

The Legacy Homes initiative has been able to approximate homeownership for people with a developmental disability, and there are a number of aspects in this initiative that would be suitable for replication and scale throughout Canada.

7.2.1 Opportunities for Replication and Scale

The idea to use a corporation to purchase a home on behalf of an individual with a developmental disability is a positive “work around” to a common barrier where people with developmental disabilities may struggle to legally obtain a mortgage due to perceived contractual capacity. In addition, the purchased homes remain in the chosen community and are dedicated to individuals with developmental disabilities even after the current tenant has moved out.

The intensive consultation conducted by the Legacy Homes team, in particular during the early stages of the project, helped the partner organizations to develop a common belief system that has assisted in navigating significant challenges throughout the course of the project.

7.2.2 Drawbacks

While there are a number of opportunities that became evident from this case study, there are also a number of drawbacks compared to other development pathways. Much of the success of Legacy Homes is related to the trust between BDACI, families,

and Legacy Homes. For example, while supported decision-making is recognized in some provinces (to date, in various models - Manitoba, British Columbia and Alberta) and experimented with throughout Canada, Ontario and other provinces and territories currently lack a legal framework to formally support the approach. While Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the considerable research on legal capacity by the Canadian disability community provides some structure for implementation, a strong bond of trust between the tenants, families and the organization is necessary to compensate for this lack of legal framework and avoid any legal challenges to the model. It is the strong bond between the support circles and Legacy Homes that make the model so successful. Other groups looking to replicate this initiative should carefully assess the risks that a trust-based model could expose them to and evaluate if they are comfortable taking these risks or explore approaches to mitigating the risks.

The Legacy Homes model depends on family equity that can be used to invest in a new home. Not every family has this capital available, limiting the number of families who could participate in this model. In addition, the donation each family makes to the corporation to facilitate the purchase of the home cannot be recovered after the tenant moves out. Many families may not be willing to make an investment that cannot be recovered. Groups who are more concerned about equity could consider a traditional life-lease model that does build equity over time, but this might also limit the ability to secure rent subsidies and development grants to improve affordability for tenants.

While many of these concerns could be overcome through long-term community and internal engagements, they require effort and determination from new organizations as they consider replicating all or some of the Legacy Homes initiative.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Case Study Approach

This section describes the research team's approach to collecting data and engagements conducted during this study.

8.1.1 Lines of Inquiry

To guide all the research activities, the following lines of inquiry were developed for this case study:

Table 1: Lines of Inquiry

<p>Project relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes this project stand out compared to other housing models for individuals with developmental disabilities? <p>Development Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the key stages in the development journey of the demonstration project?• What is the governance structure of the demonstration project and what are the benefits of this governance model?• Who were the key stakeholders involved in the development process; what roles did they play?• What were the key challenges and lessons learned in the development process?• Were there any challenges in the tenant selection for each demonstration project and how were these overcome?• What was the collaboration experience like between multiple partners and stakeholders?• How could this process be replicated in other communities?	<p>Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the experience of residents with the delivery method of supports?• What levels of support can be delivered in the demonstration project?• How were the supports as well as the community linkages developed to promote the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in the wider community? <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the housing and support situation like of residents before they became involved with the demonstration project?• What is the impact of the demonstration project on residents and their families?• To what extent have the residents been able to reach their short, medium and long-term goals (including supports, employment opportunities, community engagement, life skills and self-esteem, improved housing, etc.)?
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8.1.2 Sources of Information

To answer the lines of inquiry identified above, a number of data collecting activities were undertaken as part of the development of this case study. The data collecting process was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved transferring readily available data from Legacy Homes to the consulting team while the second phase

consisted of a number of engagements with the Legacy Homes team, tenants, their family/circle, and support staff.

Collecting Readily Available Information

The research team submitted an information and data request to Legacy Homes in April 2019. This list included a request for relevant documentation and background reports as well as quantitative data such as the number of tenants supported, their age, rent ranges etc.

As the Legacy Homes organization is predominantly volunteer and parent driven, less information was formally documented over time - knowledge was predominantly transferred verbally. Where possible, this was compensated for during the engagements.

Engagements

In addition to the readily available data, a total of five engagements were conducted with a range of key informants. This includes the following sessions:

1. One session with project representatives and key decision makers was conducted on July 11th, 2019. A total of three people participated in this session.
2. Three sessions with tenants and their circles were conducted on July 12th. A total of eleven people participated in these sessions.
3. An interview with the legal consultant of Legacy Homes was conducted on Friday August 9th.

A total of 15 individuals were interviewed or participated in an engagement session. For an overview of each session's format, questions and materials, see Appendix B of this report.

8.2 Appendix B: Data Needs List & Engagement Guide

Appendixes and video documentary to support this case study are available on the My Home My Community website: [www/myhomemycommunity.ca](http://www.myhomemycommunity.ca)

APPENDIX 3



My Home My Community

*Inclusive Housing Options for
People with Developmental Disabilities:
A National Demonstration Initiative*

Case Study Report 1: Community Living Toronto, Toronto, ON

October 2019



This report was produced as part of My Home My Community, a national initiative of the Canadian Association of Community Living and People First of Canada.

The Canadian Association for Community Living is a national federation of 13 provincial-territorial associations and over 300 local associations working to advance the full inclusion and human rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families. CACL is dedicated to attaining full participation in community life, ending exclusion and discrimination on the basis of intellectual disability, promoting respect for diversity, and advancing human rights to ensure equality for all Canadians. CACL leads the way in building a more inclusive Canada for people with an intellectual disability by strengthening families, defending rights, and transforming communities into places where everyone belongs.

www.cacl.ca

People First of Canada is the national voice for people who have been labeled with an intellectual disability. We believe in the right to freedom, choice, and equality for all. We support each other to reclaim our right to be recognized as full citizens through peer support, sharing our stories, developing leadership skills, advocating for our right to choose where and with whom we live, and by ensuring that our voices are heard and respected. We work together to educate and influence communities and government to ensure that all persons with intellectual disabilities are fully included and supported to live as equal citizens in Canada.

www.peoplefirstofcanada.ca

My Home My Community is a national partnership initiative that is opening doors to inclusive affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. My Home My Community is driving innovation in housing development and community supports to ensure all persons with developmental disabilities have a home that offers choice and affordability, recognizes rights, addresses support needs, and fosters social inclusion in the community.

www.myhomemycommunity.ca

How to reference this report:

Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). *My Home My Community: Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities. Case Study Report 1: Community Living Toronto.*



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
FOR COMMUNITY LIVING
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR
L'INTÉGRATION COMMUNAUTAIRE

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.

PEOPLE
FIRST
OF CANADA



PERSONNES
D'ABORD
DU CANADA

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who participated in the study, from focus group participants to interviewees, who dedicated their time and shared their experience with us while developing this case study report. Your contributions will help to transform communities into places where everyone belongs.

In particular, we want to thank Frances MacNeil, Heidi Reynders and Michelle Nanton-Whyte who helped us organize and design each engagement session. Without their help, this report would not have been possible.

Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Demonstrations Initiative to produce this work. The views expressed within are solely of the Canadian Association for Community Living, together with project partners where expressly stated. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) accepts no responsibility for the views expressed within.

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Introducing the Project	3
3.0	The Development Timeline (2010 – 2019)	4
4.0	Impact.....	12
5.0	Project Description	14
6.0	Community Inclusion	19
7.0	Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Scale	25
8.0	Appendices.....	28

1.0 Introduction

This report provides an in-depth review of Community Living Toronto's efforts to develop new housing solutions for individuals with a developmental disability. This case study report is part one of three in a series developed for the Canadian Association for Community Living's *My Home My Community* Inclusive Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities national demonstration project.

1.1 The Case Studies

The My Home My Community: Inclusive Housing Options Demonstration Initiative profiles three innovative approaches to developing inclusive, affordable, and accessible housing. These models not only provide support, but also foster social inclusion for individuals with a developmental disability.

The models profiled as part of this demonstration initiative are just a small sample of the diverse range of ways people with developmental disabilities and their circles of support are making inclusive affordable housing a reality. None are perfect: the models developed in these case studies all have their strengths and weaknesses; each emerged out of a specific context with its own limitations and areas of excellence. Together, they contribute to a growing body of work recognizing the potential of housing to be the cornerstone of inclusive communities.

The three case studies profiled in this series are:

- **Case Study 1: Community Living Toronto, Toronto ON**
This initiative works with housing developers in Toronto to secure dispersed-individualized rental units to provide security of tenure, housing affordability, and supports for inclusion.
- **Case Study 2: Legacy Homes – Brockville and District Association for Community Involvement, Brockville ON**
This initiative provides individuals and families planning resources, acquires individual homes in the community and provides lifelong lease agreements to individuals with developmental disabilities to ensure security of tenure and supports to enable inclusion.
- **Case Study 3: UNITI-Chorus – Semiahmoo House Society, South Surrey BC**
This initiative leverages undeveloped property and capital assets to develop affordable rental housing, designed to fit the needs of people with intellectual disabilities but including tenants with and without disabilities.

This report provides an overview of the findings from the Community Living Toronto case study (case study one). This report may be of particular interest to organizations that have capacity to provide supports in a larger building or development, but do not have physical assets (e.g. surplus land, real estate etc.) they can leverage or the expertise to develop a building.

For detailed descriptions of the case studies of Legacy Homes and UNITI-Chorus please see case study reports two and three in this series.

<p>Case Study 1: Partnering with Developers Community Living Toronto</p>	<p>Case Study 2: Family-Led Solutions Legacy Homes</p>	<p>Case Study 3: New Development UNITI-Chorus</p>
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1.2 Why These Case Studies

Throughout Canada, at least 24,000 Canadians with developmental disabilities are in core housing need¹, with tens of thousands more in vulnerable housing situations. The *My Home My Community* Initiative is a local-to-national program framework that promotes new development pathways to inclusive, affordable housing for individuals with a developmental disability.

Previous research has identified three development pathways that have demonstrated success in delivering inclusive affordable housing. These pathways were identified through a series of consultations from December 2016 to October 2018 and involved individuals with developmental disabilities and family members, Provincial and Territorial Associations for Community Living (ACLs), members of People First of Canada, housing developers, community partners and local support agencies. The identified development pathways are:

1. Individual and/or family-led housing solutions

Many families have ideas or are successfully developing their own housing solutions. With some support, knowledge sharing, and financial tools, more individuals can take action, with a flatter learning curve.

2. Partnered Solutions

Local or provincial/territorial organizations can partner with families and housing sector professionals to develop new housing.

3. New Development and Regeneration

Providers of housing and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities are seeing a mismatch between their own inclusivity principles and outdated models of residential services. Increasingly, housing providers are looking to leverage their assets and invest in inclusive, affordable housing that prioritizes the needs of people with developmental disabilities but welcomes residents with and without disabilities.

The National Housing Strategy released in 2018 by the Federal Government has allocated funding and initiatives to construct a total of 2,400 units for individuals with developmental disabilities. An asset inventory² conducted as part of the *My Home My*

¹ Statistics Canada defines a household in core housing need as one whose dwelling is considered unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community.

² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). *My Home My Community: Asset Inventory*
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d56a5e63df6e9000117b679/1565959655552/MHMC+Asset+Inventory+FINAL.pdf>

Community Initiative identified that along the three pathways there is an estimated development potential of up to 35, 000 units Canada wide.³

The goal of this project is to create a platform that will engage the housing sector, government, and community partners in learning about these three development pathways and help achieve scale along these approaches across Canada through replication.

1.3 Report Format

The case study report consists of three main parts. Part one develops an in-depth overview of Community Living Toronto's approach to creating new housing units for individuals with a developmental disability and the impact of this approach on tenants, families, and support staff. The remaining section outlines Community Living Toronto's lessons learned and opportunities for replication of this initiative across Canada. For an overview of the approach taken to develop this case study, see appendix A.

2.0 Introducing the Project

The Community Living Toronto Housing Initiative creates supportive housing for individuals with a developmental disability through partnership agreements with local developers and landlords to secure a number of apartments in existing or new buildings.

Community Living Toronto currently has active partnership agreements in two buildings, offering 34 apartments for 51 individuals with a developmental disability. One building is located on Dan Leckie Way and provides 21 apartments for 38 individuals with a developmental disability. The second building, West Don Lands, is in the east end of the City of Toronto's downtown core and provides 13 apartments for 13 individuals. Both buildings are owned and operated by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC).

In addition to the two existing buildings, Community Living Toronto has a partnership agreement with a private developer, Mahogany Management, for a number of apartments in a new building that is currently under construction. This building is located on Madison Avenue. Overlooking Casa Loma, this new development will provide an additional 12 apartments to 25 individuals who are currently living in group homes. Tenants are expected to move in during the fall of 2019.

The majority of tenants (59%) live in one-bedroom apartments while some tenants (31%) live in a group setting in three- or four-bedroom apartments. Community Living Toronto provides all paid in home supports. Tenants in the larger apartments have a support staff worker 24 hours per day, while the residents in the one-bedroom apartments receive supports as required. Most tenants previously lived in group homes owned and operated by Community Living Toronto.

³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Asset Inventory: 4.

In addition to the aforementioned buildings, Community Living Toronto is actively looking for new partnerships with other developers in the City.



Dan Leckie Way



West Don Lands



Madison Avenue

3.0 The Development Timeline (2010 – 2019)

3.1 Getting into Action (2010 and earlier)

For a number of years Community Living Toronto had been thinking about finding new ways to develop housing for individuals with a developmental disability. Traditionally Community Living Toronto has offered housing through group homes spread throughout the City; however, the organization was finding that the group home model posed a number of challenges. Additionally, the group home model is not considered inclusive by much of the disability community and is not aligned with a rights-based approach to disability supports.

Most group homes operated by Community Living Toronto are buildings over 100 years old, which are increasingly in need of additional maintenance. Community Living Toronto was not sure they could keep up with the required maintenance moving forward, while still meeting the requirements of the building code. In addition, many of the residents were aging rapidly. An internal report produced by a summer student and one of Community Living Toronto's building managers found that most group homes would need significant modifications to remain accessible and prevent tenants from needing to move into long-term care facilities.

Community Living Toronto has a long-held unwritten policy that it would delay moving residents to long-term care facilities for as long as possible. Realizing the current building stock could not be adapted was an important driver for Community Living Toronto to start thinking about alternative solutions.

Key Drivers of Change

- Aging housing stock in need of complex repairs.
- Aging residents required significant modifications to the existi
- ng homes to accommodate their changing needs.
- Changing internal perspectives on group homes versus individual apartments.
- Conversations with parents and family members highlighting the need for

Research has found that most people with disabilities prefer more privacy and control over their own space than that offered by group living⁴. These concerns had been on the minds of the leadership team at Community Living Toronto for a number of years but did not spark action until 2010.

In 2010, during a regular meeting with family members who were trying to set-up a co-living arrangement, Community Living Toronto was asked if they had considered partnering with a non-profit or for-profit developer to secure a number of apartments for individuals with a developmental disability. The family members had heard of another organization who was partnering with TCHC to secure a number of units in a new development at Dan Leckie Way.

**Project
Representative**

"In a meeting with family members who were co-creating housing, we were asked if we work with developers to find housing units in the community. We had never been asked that question before [...] This pushed our thinking towards new housing and support models"

This conversation sparked several internal discussions within the Community Living Toronto leadership team. While previously Community Living Toronto had approached new independent living solutions for one family at the time, the leadership team felt that apartment style living could solve a number of challenges with congregated living in group homes. In particular, apartments would provide a better environment for tenants to age in place and would offer more customized supports due to the scale that could be achieved in an apartment building over an individual home. Furthermore, it would reduce the cost of maintenance of aging group homes. Lastly, it would create an opportunity for some tenants to live independently in an environment where supports could be provided on an as-needed basis.

With that, Community Living Toronto decided to further explore the opportunities in the identified building at Dan Leckie Way.

3.2 The First Building – Dan Leckie Way (2010 – 2012)

3.2.1 Preparation (2010 – 2011)

After the decision to pursue partnerships with developers was made in 2010, Community Living Toronto reached out to the organization that was already working with TCHC at Dan Leckie Way, who connected Community Living Toronto to TCHC. After a number of phone conversations about the vision of Community Living Toronto for the arrangement, a meeting with TCHC and Community Living Toronto was set where it was discovered that TCHC was quite open to partnering with support agencies such as Community Living Toronto. A key reason for TCHC's willingness to partner was that Community Living Toronto was very clear that they were not seeking to get into the housing business, but were looking for an experienced partner so they could focus on

⁴ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Asset Inventory <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d56a5e63df6e9000117b679/1565959655552/MHMC+Asset+Inventory+FINAL.pdf>

supporting individuals. This appealed to TCHC because it would give them an opportunity to add “extra eyes and supports in the building”.

Within that same meeting, a verbal agreement was reached that Community Living Toronto would take on 21 apartments in the building (5% of 420 units). Due to the fast sequence of events, the number of apartments was articulated based on a rough estimation of the number group homes with the highest need of repairs from which they would be able to transfer the residents to this new building.

**Project
Representative**

“We had a few conversations and arranged a meeting. In that meeting we said we wanted 20 units based on nothing at all really [...] We were uncertain because it all seemed too good to be true, and we wondered if they [TCHC] would follow through.”

In the subsequent calls and meetings throughout 2010 and 2011, it was decided the 21 apartments would include a total of ten (10) Rent Geared-to-Income one-bedroom⁵ apartments with a referral agreement⁶ and 11 affordable⁷ apartments with a head-lease for one year⁸. TCHC gave Community Living Toronto flexibility to determine where in the building the apartments would be located. They opted to disperse the apartments through the building in clusters, where one-bedroom apartments would be located in proximity to multiple bedroom apartments where tenants with higher support needs would live in a group setting. The larger apartments would be staffed 24/7 while the one-bedroom apartments could receive supports as needed. This set-up would enable support staff to easily reach tenants who lived with fewer supports in one-bedroom apartments if the need arose.

3.2.2 Tenant Selection and Preparation (2012)

In 2012, when the head-lease and referral agreements were signed, Community Living Toronto had to determine who would move into the new apartments. As opposed to a more person-centered approach, it was decided they would focus on group homes with the highest need for repairs and with the highest proportion of aging residents. Individuals with fewer support needs would be offered a one-bedroom apartment, while the individuals in need of higher supports would be offered a small group setting in the three- and four-bedroom apartments.

⁵ Units with an operating subsidy agreement where rents do not exceed 30% of a household's income

⁶ A referral agreement on a unit gives the exclusive right to Community Living Toronto to refer a tenant to the landlord for that specific unit. The agreements with TCHC guaranteed this right up to 45 days after a tenant vacates a unit.

⁷ Rents that do not exceed 80% of the average market rent in Toronto in 2012.

⁸ A head-lease is an agreement between an organization and a landlord/developer for a number of units in a building(s). The organization on the head-lease is responsible for paying rent to the landlord. This structure is frequently combined with sub-leases between the organization and the resident.

Key Lessons Learned

- Take time to prepare the residents for the upcoming move.
- Take the time to inform and prepare the families of residents in person.
- Involve support staff early and address their concerns where possible.
- Develop a communications plan for staff to ensure a unified message to all stakeholders.

Throughout 2012, support staff members had individual conversations with residents to prepare them for the upcoming move. Family members were first notified via written communications. While there was little resistance from families and residents to the proposed new housing model, the written communication did cause some confusion among a number of family members. Community Living Toronto followed up over the phone with the families who were concerned. They were able to address most of these concerns by focusing on the vision for the apartments and how the move would help their family member achieve stability or avoid having to move to a long-term care facility. There was no communications plan in place with key messages to help staff members navigate these conversations.

At the same time, Community Living put together the support staff team for the new building. The intent was to transfer support staff familiar with the residents where possible to ensure the tenants would not be confronted with too many changes at the same time.

During the initial conversations, there was some fear among support staff about how this new environment would work. To mitigate these fears, senior staff conducted additional conversations with support workers and their union to acclimatize them to the upcoming transition and address any concerns. One of the measures Community Living Toronto built in was to promise support staff that they could be relocated if the new work environment did not work out for them.

Residents were mostly excited to live in a new building. This was confirmed during an engagement with current residents of West Don Lands and Dan Leckie Way. Some indicated they were a little bit nervous at the beginning, but they also said that the group homes were getting very old and that they were excited about the freedom to have more space in their own apartments.

3.2.3 Moving-In (2012)

Tenants were able to move into their new apartments in late 2012. Community Living Toronto provided some help during the move, but mostly families took on the responsibility of helping the tenants through the transition to their new home. A Frequently Asked Questions document was developed to help families navigate this process with their family member. As a precaution, Community Living Toronto worked with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) to keep a number of the vacated group home rooms empty for a period of three months to ensure any tenant who did not transition successfully could return to a group home. In the end, only one out of the 38 tenants moved to another building. This individual did not move back to a group home, but to the West Don Lands building instead. No tenant returned to a group home.

3.3 The Second Building – West Don Lands (2013 – 2015)

3.3.1 Preparation (2012 – 2015)

In 2012, when Community Living Toronto was in the process of moving the first tenants into the building at Dan Leckie Way, the leadership team became aware of another TCHC development in which they might be able to secure a number of apartments. This development, consisting of three buildings, was predominantly targeted at seniors. Before Community Living Toronto could formally reach out, TCHC made contact to see if there was an interest in taking on a number of units. Because of the positive experience Community Living Toronto had with TCHC at Dan Leckie Way, it was decided to pursue this opportunity as well.

TCHC was looking for community partners to operate 13 one-bedroom affordable apartments at 80% of market rent. The Community Living Toronto leadership team indicated they could take all 13 apartments, and because no other organization responded to the offer Community Living Toronto secured the thirteen units. However, the financial team considered 13 tenants to be on the low end to achieve economies of scale with regard to supports.

As all units were one-bedroom apartments, a different staffing model was also required, and Community Living Toronto decided to create a staffing hub on the ground floor of the building.

TCHC was going through significant leadership changes at the time, including at the CEO level. When the dust settled in 2013, some of the internal policies on partnerships in buildings had changed. One of the main differences was, unlike at Dan Leckie Way, Community Living Toronto would have very little flexibility in the location of the apartments. In the end, all 13 apartments were spread out through the building.

A key issue that arose early during the preparation stage was that Community Living Toronto needed the City of Toronto to lower its age requirements in order to accommodate some of the tenants intended to move into the building. For TCHC seniors' buildings, individuals need to be aged 59 years and older to be deemed eligible to live there. Community Living Toronto intended to move some tenants that were younger than 59 and needed TCHC to lower the age requirements to 45 years and older to accommodate everyone. It took several conversations over the phone and in person with the City of Toronto and TCHC to remove these requirements.

Due to the additional roadblocks, it took almost three years to arrange all the details before Community Living Toronto signed the referral agreements and tenants could move in. The experience also convinced Community Living Toronto to seek other development partners, including in the private sector, to allow for more customization in terms of apartment sizes, location, etc.

Key Lessons Learned

- Ensure the leadership of the development partner is stable.
- Investigate if the development partner and the support agency are on the same page with regards to the vision for the project.
- Make sure there is control over apartment selection and that these apartments fit the intended support model.

**Project
Representative**

“To get everything in place for West Don Lands took years... [...] we almost gave up!”

3.3.2 Tenant Selection (2013 – 2015)

Tenant selection and preparation took place from 2013 to 2015. Because it took longer compared to the previous building at Dan Leckie Way, Community Living was able to be more intentional with tenant selection and preparation of the support staff, tenants, and families.

For this building, Community Living Toronto focused on older tenants in group homes, in particular tenants who currently shared a bedroom. This would help ensure that all tenants supported by Community Living Toronto across all housing models would have their own bedroom. Some tenants who lived in Supported Independent Living were also selected for the new building. One tenant moved directly from their family home.

Similar to the Dan Leckie Way development, support staff familiar to the tenant were selected to work at the West Don Lands building. However, there was more time to prepare and give notice to staff, as well as prepare tenants and their families for the move.

3.3.3 Moving In (2015)

When residents could finally move into the building in early 2015, many of the other tenants were already living there. Similar to the project at Dan Leckie Way, Community Living Toronto helped residents prepare for the move, but families assisted significantly with moving the residents to their new homes.

Initially there were some frictions with the other tenants who had already moved into the building. Residents were wondering why people with a developmental disability were moving into the building, and this resulted in some initial stigmatization. In response, one of the residents with a developmental disability wrote a letter to the other tenants about inclusion, and support staff made significant efforts to host monthly events for all tenants in the building. This allowed the tenants with a developmental disability to make social connections in the building and the neighbourhood, turning around the atmosphere in the building significantly. Four years in, conversations with Community Living Toronto staff and residents indicate the tenants with a developmental disability are fully included into the building and its community of residents.

3.4 Working with a Private Developer - Madison Avenue (2015 – 2019)

3.4.1 Preparation (2015 – 2018)

While the Community Living leadership team felt the partnership approach with developers was working well as a whole, they also felt the experience with the West Don Lands building had not been optimal. The lack of control over the apartments with

regard to unit type and location in building caused the leadership team to look for other partners who may be better suited to meet the needs of the people Community Living Toronto supports. In 2015 an opportunity arose when a local private developer, Mahogany Developments, looking to submit an application to the Toronto Open Door Program, contacted Community Living Toronto to partner on their new development at Madison Avenue. Four other non-profit organizations (WoodGreen, Vita Community Services, LOFT, and Bellwoods) were also offered apartments in the proposed development to provide housing for youth, seniors, and people with a disability.

At the outset of the partnership, there were some hesitations from the Community Living Toronto leadership team. In particular, there was a concern that many of the apartments in the building would be rented out to organizations offering supports, which might create an institutionalized setting. However, by continuing discussions with the developer and all the partners, it became clear few of these tenants would have a developmental disability and the building as a whole would be a mixed community. In addition, the partners formed a steering committee which was frequently consulted by the developer to ensure all units would meet the needs of the partners and the tenants they support.

Community Living Toronto signed on for a total of 12 apartments (14% of the development) to provide homes for 25 individuals. This included three three-bedroom apartments, seven two-bedroom apartments and two one-bedroom apartments. During the development of the previous two buildings at West Don Lands and Dan Leckie Way, the Community Living Leadership team had taken on much of workload related to the project. This experience motivated Community Living Toronto to assign a dedicated project manager to the initiative to help create a clear line of communication with the developer and ensure the Community Living Toronto team would meet all their internal deadlines.

Early in the development process, Community Living Toronto found that the benefit of working with a smaller organization such as Mahogany Management was that there were more opportunities for customization, compared to the buildings at Dan Leckie Way and West Don Lands. For example, Community Living Toronto and the other partners could select the location of the apartments in the building, as well as the size and features (e.g. walk-in showers over bathtubs and other accessibility accommodations).

**Project
Representative**

“The developer asked us questions! I felt this was the benefit of a private developer. He catered more to us as partners on what we needed. For example, they were going to put bathtubs, but we said showers would be better”

Even though Community Living Toronto would have more influence on the design and structure of the Madison Avenue building, the leadership team also learned that unlike TCHC, Mahogany Management as a for profit developer had different needs than a non-profit developer. For example, they had a strong preference for a head lease because it would mean they only have to deal with the organization, compared to a number of tenants. There were a lot of discussions with the developer about this issue and the Community Living Toronto team remained adamant to use a referral agreement in favour of a head lease. This was important because they wanted to

ensure the residents would be recognized as individual tenants, something that a head lease would not accomplish.

To find a solution, Community Living Toronto worked closely together with Mahogany Management. A hybrid agreement was developed where the referral agreement stipulates that Community Living Toronto is responsible for collecting monthly rents, ensuring the developer gets paid every month. This made the developer feel more comfortable signing individual leases with the tenants.

Other issues arose in this early phase of the development process. Some delays occurred because the Open-Door Program had indicated three-bedroom units could only be used for families and could not house a two or more unrelated single adults⁹. Community Living Toronto worked with the City's Affordable Housing Office and a City Councilor to remove the family allocation. In a combined effort with the developer and one City Councilor,

Community Living Toronto succeeded in removing the family allocation, which would allow single individuals to occupy the apartments in a shared setting, a crucial piece for ensuring the financial viability of the project for Community Living Toronto.

Key Lessons Learned

- Hire a project manager to maintain clear communications with the developer and ensure internal deadlines are met.
- Listen to the developer to understand and accommodate their needs.
- Be available to the developer and provide them with the information they need.

3.4.2 Tenant Selection and Move-In Preparation (2018 - 2019)

When the time for tenant selection and move-in preparation came in 2018, the experiences with Dan Leckie Way and West Don Lands allowed Community Living Toronto to be more intentional in its planning around tenant selection, preparation, and outreach to families to inform them about the move. Throughout 2018, Community Living Toronto staff consulted frequently with prospective tenants to understand their goals and wishes. In addition, a communications plan was developed with input from staff, outlining key messaging to help explain the transition to family members. Family members were informed through in-person or telephone conversations, instead of the written communication previously used. Speaking with families in-person with a prepared, unified message helped to adequately prepare individuals and their families for the move. It also helped families to overcome any hesitations they had about their family member moving into an apartment building.

3.5 Moving Forward

The experience with Mahogany Management strengthened the interest of Community Living Toronto to pursue other partnerships with smaller for-profit or non-profit developers through the Toronto Open Door initiative in different parts of the City. Community Living Toronto has also started an internal real estate project management department to investigate how the empty group homes could best be repurposed. Project representatives from Community Living Toronto went to British Columbia in 2019 to study

⁹ This is often a positive and welcome policy guideline that avoids the development of congregate living arrangements. However, 2-bedroom apartments can be an inclusive housing option for people with disabilities that require more support, allowing a person's chosen support to reside in the apartment in a shared living/roommate environment.

other partnership models piloted there. In addition, three housing forums were organized through the Toronto Developmental Services Alliance for other sector organizations to learn from the experience with these three developments.

4.0 Impact

This section provides a description of the impact the Community Living Toronto Housing Initiative Demonstration Project has had on tenants, their families, and support staff.

4.1 Impact on Residents and Families

The project team conducted two engagement sessions with tenants and families of the Community Living Toronto housing initiatives. In one session, a sister of a resident explained her experience finding a home for her family member with a developmental disability, while the second session invited tenants with a developmental disability to recount their experience of living in their new home.

4.1.1 Impact on Families

The engagement with a sister of one of the current tenants in the West Don Lands building revealed that after their parents passed away, there were no immediate housing options available besides group homes. The family had always attempted to avoid placing their family member with a disability in a group home due to the lack of choice and control for the resident and wish for an inclusive life in community.

As a temporary solution after their parents' death, the sibling with a developmental disability had moved in with her sister and the sister had taken up the role of providing all supports. This housing and support situation caused friction within the household, resulting in an unsustainable situation in the home.

Family Member

"My sister did not like living with me due to family dynamics in the home. Our house is very busy, and she was not used to that. She didn't like that I was working, and could not comprehend if I was not able to come home when she expected"

The family had tried a number of respite centres when they would go away or to provide a change of scenery, but that did not improve the situation. In the respite centre the sibling would be with people she did not know, which she was not comfortable with. When the opportunity arose to move to a one-bedroom apartment in the West Don Lands building, the family welcomed the new option. They gradually prepared their family member with a developmental disability for the move. She picked which pieces of furniture to take to the new home and which to leave behind, went shopping for new items, and gathered mementos from their family home to ensure the new apartment felt like home.

Since the sibling moved into her own apartment, the family has observed that the relationship between the two sisters has stabilized. Living at West Don Lands has allowed

the tenant to make new friendships and develop a more active social life than she had before. For the family and the sister in particular, there is less of a support role, which has allowed for more time to be spent as sisters, compared to a caregiver/care receiver relationship.

**Family
Member**

"She is involved in activities like concerts, movies, dinners, musicals, picnic organized in the building [...] it was like her wings spread after she got her independence. I just feel good when I leave after visiting. I feel at ease with my sister being there."

4.1.2 Impact on Individuals

Some of the themes identified in the conversation with the family member also came through in conversations with residents with a developmental disability. All three residents mentioned that while they initially missed their old home, they enjoy living in their new apartments, especially the proximity to cafes and stores and the ability to attend events in the building.

Tenants also mentioned the quality of the buildings, which were better than the older group homes, and the ability to move freely throughout the home without having to use stairs or encounter barriers.

Tenant

"I like being close to everything. I can walk to Tim Hortons, the Rogers Centre and the Ripley Aquarium."

Tenants indicated that they had learned a number of skills they did not have before, such as preparing food in their own kitchen, and had the opportunity to be alone when they wanted to be.

There were some things residents mentioned that they did not like about their new homes; these were mainly focused on sounds in and around the building. The area can be noisy and neighbours loud, which some tenants indicated as overwhelming, while others mentioned it as something that they found exciting about their new environment. This might be an indication that a person-centered approach to housing would have highlighted that some residents would prefer to live in smaller neighbourhoods that are less busy and provide a calmer environment, compared to downtown mid- and high-rise apartments.

In addition, some support staff indicated that some residents had to adjust to the change from living in a group setting to living alone. This was a challenge initially when residents would feel lonely, particularly in the West Don Lands building, where the staffing hub is on the ground floor.

4.2 Impact on Support Workers

Project representatives and support staff indicated that the new housing model required a new philosophy of providing supports. This model focuses more on independence of the individual and less on assistance with routine tasks. Project representatives indicated that they had not realized this initially, and it was addressed only after residents moved into the West Don Lands building. Support staff confirmed this finding, reporting that in the early days there was a lot of turnover among support staff who had difficulty adapting to the new work environment. Project representatives indicated that after the move to West Don Lands, additional resources were made available to help support workers transition from supporting individuals in congregated settings to supporting individuals in independent living.

Support staff also indicated that with constrained support dollars, the organization on their own did not have the capacity to support tenants with all levels of support needs in an individual apartment. Especially among older residents, support and accessibility needs can change quickly. Project representatives indicated that one of the reasons Community Living Toronto is focusing on partnerships with smaller non-profit or private developers was to have more control over unit sizes and design in future projects, to ensure a wider range of support needs can be addressed in future buildings.

5.0 Project Description

This section provides a more detailed description of some of the structures and partnerships that made this project possible, including the physical design, support model, partnership structure, demographics of the tenants, and how Community Living Toronto ensures affordability.

5.1 Physical Design and Support Model

This section provides an overview of the design and support model in each of the three buildings.

5.1.1 Dan Leckie Way

Building Design and Amenities

The Dan Leckie Way building is a mixed-use high rise building of 41 storeys, with a total of 420 units. The building has a number of amenities that include access to public transit (walking distance), 206 covered bicycle spaces, eight vehicle parking spaces for electric vehicles, 18 heavy duty washers and 20 dryers.

The building also includes a number of common spaces with ample opportunities for residents to meet one another, such as fully glazed corridors at the perimeter of the building which form organic meeting spaces within the building. There is also a community multi-purpose room on the second level, a communal kitchen, playrooms, and a landscaped courtyard that occupies one of the roofs. In addition, there is a

common outdoor living room for residents of the building to use. The roof of the west section of the building includes planter boxes for urban gardening by the residents.

Unit Design

All 21 apartments occupied by residents supported through Community Living Toronto include a full kitchen, bedrooms, and living spaces. The apartments have been adapted for accessibility to including wider door frames, walk-in showers, and the option to install accessibility features (e.g. grab bars). Elevators bring residents to their floor.

Support Model

All residents within the 21 apartments receive some level of paid support through Community Living Toronto. The residents living in multi-bedroom apartments have a support staff present at all times. Residents in the one-bedroom apartments receive more limited supports to facilitate independent living. The multi-bedroom apartments anchor clusters of apartments throughout the building, with a number of one-bedroom apartments located close by. The residents in the one-bedroom apartments can access the support staff in the multi-bedroom unit if required.

5.1.2 West Don Lands

Building Design and Amenities

The West Don Lands building is a mixed-use mid-rise building of five stories, with a total of 128 units mandated for seniors age 59 and up or persons with disabilities aged 45 and up. The building has a number of amenities, including a shared courtyard with seating and a splash pad for children, as well as a large multipurpose rooms and green roofs to facilitate connection between the various residents in the building.

Unit Design

All 13 apartments occupied by tenants supported through Community Living Toronto include a full kitchen, bedrooms, and living spaces. The apartments have been adapted for accessibility including wider door frames, walk-in showers, and the option to install accessibility features (e.g. grab bars). Elevators bring tenants to their floor.

Support Model

All tenants in the 13 apartments receive some level of paid supports through Community Living Toronto to assist with independent living. Community Living Toronto set up a 24-hour support hub on the ground floor of the building that tenants can access in case they need ad hoc supports.

5.1.3 Madison Avenue

Building Design and Amenities

The Madison Avenue building is a mid-rise building of 6 storeys with a total of 85 units. The building has a number of amenities including direct walking access to public transportation, office space for the various agencies working in the building, a pet spa, and a shared courtyard. The building features a library, community kitchen, and a large

multipurpose room with a divider that allows for the room to be used for multiple functions at the same time. The building features two green rooftops, including a community garden with views of downtown Toronto and Casa Loma, to facilitate connection between the various tenants in the building.

Unit Design

All 14 apartments occupied by tenants supported through Community Living Toronto include a full kitchen, bedrooms, and living spaces. All apartments are fully wheelchair accessible including wider door frames, walk-in showers, and other accessibility features (e.g. lowered counter space, grab bars etc.). Elevators transport the residents to their floor.

Support Model

All residents of the 14 apartments receive some form of paid supports through Community Living Toronto. The residents living in multi-bedroom apartments have a support staff present at all times. Tenants in the one- and two-bedroom apartments receive more limited supports to facilitate independent living. Similar to Dan Leckie Way, the multi-bedroom apartments anchor clusters of apartments throughout the building, with a number of one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartments located close by. Tenants in the one- and two-bedroom apartments can access the support staff in the multi-bedroom apartments at all times.

5.2 Partnership Structure

This section outlines the different partnership structures for each of the three projects. There are small differences between each partnership structure.

5.2.1 Dan Leckie Way

On the Dan Leckie Way project, the landlord is TCHC. A mix of structures was used to formalize this partnership. A total of ten one-bedroom apartments was secured through a referral agreement between TCHC and Community Living Toronto, where the tenant and/or their families sign a lease with TCHC to ensure the apartments can be offered through the Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) program.

The remaining eleven apartments were secured through a head-lease between TCHC and Community Living Toronto. Tenants in these apartments sign a sub-lease with Community Living Toronto.

5.2.2 West Don Lands

For the West Don Lands building, TCHC is the landlord. All 13 apartments were secured through a referral agreement structure. Tenants and/or their families subsequently sign individual leases with TCHC. Tenants also sign a service agreement with Community Living Toronto to ensure Community Living Toronto as the paid support provider.

5.2.3 Madison Avenue

On the Madison Avenue project, Mahogany Management is the landlord. A hybrid between a head-lease and a referral agreement structure was used to secure all 14

apartments. This referral agreement stipulates Community Living Toronto is responsible for collecting monthly rents. Tenants and/or their families sign individual leases with Mahogany Management and a service agreement with Community Living Toronto. The intent is the tenant has the relationship with the landlord and is the one signs the lease, but families can also sign the lease if for some reason the tenant is unable.

Table 1: Partnership Structures by Building; 2019

	Head-Lease	Referral Agreement	Hybrid
Dan Leckie Way	11 units	10 units	0 units
West Don Lands	0 units	13 units	0 units
Madison Avenue	0 units	0 units	14 units
Total	11 units	23 units	14 units

Source: Community Living Toronto

5.3 Tenants

This section provides a brief description of the current tenants living in the Dan Leckie Way and West Don Lands, as well as the prospective residents for Madison Avenue building.

5.3.1 Average Age

When tenants move into the Madison Avenue building, Community Living Toronto will support a total of 76 residents across the three buildings. The average age of tenants will be 52 years old. The average age of tenants in Dan Leckie Way is slightly younger than the average age of tenants in West Don Lands and Madison Avenue. The higher proportion of youth and young adult tenants in Dan Leckie Way, compared to the West Don Lands and Madison Avenue buildings, can be explained by the focus on older tenants for the second two developments.

Table 2: Community Living Tenants by Age and Building; 2019

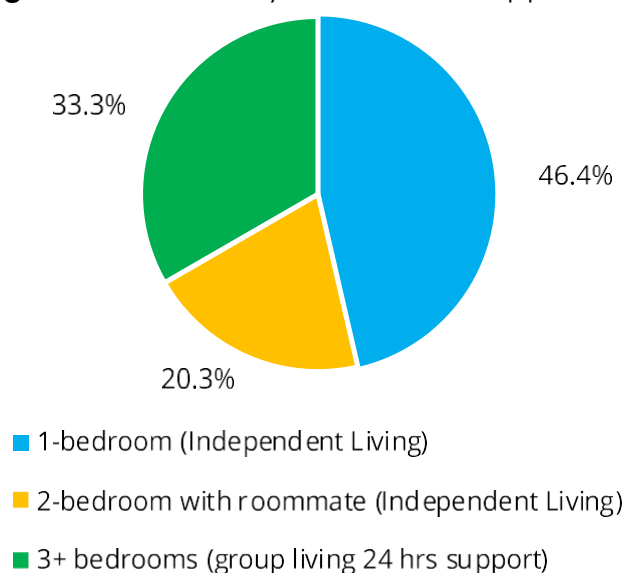
	Dan Leckie Way	West Don Lands	Madison Avenue	Total
Youth (24 years or younger)	9.7%	0.0%	4.2%	5.9%
Young adults (25-44 years)	29.0%	0.0%	29.2%	23.5%
Older adults (45-64 years)	45.2%	69.2%	54.2%	52.9%
Seniors (65+ years)	16.1%	30.8%	12.5%	17.6%
Average	49.4%	62.8%	50.4%	52.3%

Source: Community Living Toronto

5.3.2 Level of Supports

All individuals who currently live in a one-bedroom apartment (46.4%) or a two-bedroom apartment with a roommate (20.3%) are part of the supported independent living program where minimal paid supports are used. Those living in a group-setting in three- and four-bedroom units (33.3%) have 24/7 paid supports.

Figure 1: Residents by Unit Size and Support Level; 2019



Source: Community Living Toronto

5.3.3 Income Source

Of the individuals supported by Community Living Toronto in all three buildings, the majority (81.2%) receive income support through the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). A smaller group (13.0%) receive their income through the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS). Two residents work in addition to receiving ODSP (2.9%) and two residents receive Passport funding¹⁰ on top of ODSP (2.9%). This indicates all residents have limited income and mainly rely on income support to pay for their housing. Shelter allowance for ODSP is \$497 per month in 2019.

Table 3: Tenants by Income Source; 2019

	Dan Leckie Way	West Don Lands	200 Madison Avenue	Total
ODSP	80.6%	69.2%	88.0%	81.0%
ODSP + Passport	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
ODSP and Employment	6.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
CPP/AOS	6.5%	30.8%	12.0%	13.2%

Source: Community Living Toronto

5.4 Affordability

The income section above demonstrates that all tenants have limited income they could spend on rent. This section outlines how Community Living Toronto has ensured rents in each building are affordable to all residents.

¹⁰ Passport is a program that helps adults with a developmental disability be involved in their communities and live as independently as possible by providing funding for community participation services and supports, activities of daily living and person-directed planning.

5.4.1 Dan Leckie Way

The apartments in the Dan Leckie Way building have been made affordable to residents in a number of ways. Ten apartments have RGI subsidies attached to them ensuring residents pay no more than 30% of their monthly income on rent. The four multi-bedroom apartments are rented at market rent ranging from \$1,514 to \$1,895 per month, but this is shared among three or four individuals, ensuring the ODSP shelter allowance can cover the monthly rent. The remaining seven one-bedroom apartments are rented at 80% of market rent based on 2012 rents ranging from \$441 to \$958 per month. Community Living Toronto has been able to secure housing allowances for some of these residents, but not for all. These individuals would pay more than 30% of their income on shelter or receive additional income from their families.

5.4.2 West Don Lands

The 13 one-bedroom apartments located at West Don Lands are all rented out at 80% of market rent ranging from \$698 to \$829 per month. A total of four residents receive housing allowances on top of their ODSP shelter allowance to make their shelter cost more affordable. The remaining residents would pay more than 30% of their income on shelter or receive additional income from their families.

5.4.3 Madison Avenue

While the exact rent level for each apartment has yet to be determined, in collaboration with the developer, it was agreed that all units rented to residents supported by Community Living Toronto will be offered at the same rate as the ODSP shelter allowance. This is a unique achievement in a development like this. The ODSP shelter allowance was \$497 in 2019. This indicates that two-bedroom units will have rents of \$994 per month and three-bedroom apartments will have rents of \$1,491 per month.

6.0 Community Inclusion

6.1 Measuring Inclusivity

My Home My Community has developed an innovative new **Housing Inclusivity Framework** for measuring inclusivity by expanding the existing definition of social inclusion and introducing a housing lens.¹¹ In this framework, housing inclusivity is defined as “the degree to which a person’s home either contributes or presents barriers to their participation in the broader community.”¹² The framework evaluates the tangible aspects of a housing situation across five domains which, together, lead to socially inclusive outcomes for residents. The five domains are:

1. Person Domain: The individual resident. Aspects pertaining to the individual, including income, functional capacities, support needs, etc., have a significant

¹¹ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing ‘Housing Inclusivity’: A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57f27c992994ca20330b28ff/t/5d5582bdbacd560001233e9b/1565885118508/Conceptualizing+Housing+Inclusivity+Lit+Review+-+FINAL+.pdf>

¹² Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing ‘Housing Inclusivity’: A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 15.

impact on required living situation and degree to which supports are needed to engage in community;

2. Household Domain: Similarly, the structure and capability set of the household, including income, support needs, etc., impact housing requirements and opportunity to engage in community;
3. Dwelling Domain: The built environment of the unit (which can take many forms) will either present or eliminate barriers to participation and independence;
4. Structure Domain: In the case of multi-unit structures, the building within which the home is situated also has an impact on visitability, accessibility, and opportunity for engagement with the first line of community: neighbours;
5. Neighbourhood Domain: The broader built, social and service environment in which the dwelling and structure are situated, and which affords resources like transportation, opportunities for community involvement, etc. The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in and be safe in their communities.

What makes the MHMC housing inclusivity framework so innovative is its ability to distill complex aspects that affect inclusion into an applicable framework.

To assess inclusivity in each domain, the framework uses indicators (for example, suitability, affordability, safety, choice and control) that examine the following:¹³

- Does the living situation present or eliminate barriers to activities of daily living?
- Is it a home-by-choice, and not the result of congregation of people in a housing unit, development or neighbourhood, based on a demographic characteristic?
- Does the living situation enhance capabilities to:
 - Participate in the social and economic life of their community?
 - Be recognized and valued as a full member of their neighbourhood?
 - Live independently and be included in the community?

6.2 Evaluation

This evaluation uses MHMC's Housing Inclusivity Framework to assess the inclusivity of the Community Living Toronto case study.

6.2.1 Person¹⁴

¹³ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

¹⁴ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16

Indicators within the Person Domain:

- Personal Choice
- Social Connection
- Personal Supports
- Safety

The person domain focuses on the individual and evaluates how well they can live in, utilize and benefit from their housing.¹⁵ It also looks at location to assess whether the individual can access services and supports within the housing development or in the broader neighbourhood.

This domain considers the resources a particular person needs to access amenities on an equal basis with others, and to secure safe, affordable housing in inclusive communities.¹⁶ For example, can tenants exercise basic autonomy over the decisions about where and how they live? Do they have opportunity to make voluntary social connections?

The Community Living Toronto buildings demonstrate a moderate amount of inclusivity within the Person domain. In the majority of cases, Community Living Toronto chose the residents to be moved from the group homes to the new buildings, which residents would reside together in the multi-bedroom apartments, as well as the staff who provide various levels of supports. Within the buildings that offer 1-bedroom apartments, a higher amount of inclusivity is demonstrated where the residents can come and go as they desire and have control over who visits the unit. This same autonomy is not offered within the multi-bedroom shared units. Residents do have the ability to move to a different apartment as their needs change.

In each of the three Community Living Toronto developments, housing has theoretically been separated from supports. TCHC or Mahogany Management provides the housing, and Community Living Toronto provides the paid supports to the individual. However, due to the service contracts that are signed, it is unclear whether residents can choose another service provider for paid supports when living in the individual apartments or in the multi-bedroom apartments where a paid Community Living Toronto staff is always present.

Each of the buildings has features that facilitate connections between residents both with and without a disability. These features include a library, a community kitchen, a large multipurpose room, green rooftops, and a community garden.

How residents are introduced to each other is also important. Those living in the Community Living Toronto units in the West Don Lands building moved in after everyone else, resulting in some initial friction and stigmatization by the other tenants. To help include the new tenants and reduce stigma, Community Living Toronto answered questions from existing residents and introduced the residents to each other.

To help facilitate an inclusive environment, Community Living Toronto builds social functions by hosting monthly events for all tenants. As a result, tenants have noticed a reduction in stigma and more supportive attitudes between neighbours. This has

¹⁵ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 17.

¹⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 16.

allowed residents with a developmental disability to make stronger social connections in the building.

6.2.2 Household ¹⁷

Indicators within the Household Domain:

- Suitability
- Affordability
- Tenure Security
- Digital Connection

This domain refers to the capability of the household for an individual to access suitable, affordable, secure housing that meets the needs of all household members¹⁸. A household is defined by Statistics Canada as “a person or group of persons who occupy the same dwelling. The household may consist of a family group such as a census family, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, or a group of unrelated persons or a person living alone.”¹⁹

Within this domain is the examination of the suitability of housing based on household size. Housing suitability can be determined from whether a dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size of household. CMHC's definition of suitable housing requires one adult per bedroom, unless they are a co-habiting adult couple in which case two adults per bedroom is permitted.²⁰ At the household level, the size and type of dwelling will impact an individual's likelihood of experiencing social exclusion.²¹ Inadequate housing that does not provide sufficient space can impact daily liveability and increase social exclusion, loneliness, and poor health outcomes for members of the household.²²

As all residents supported by Community Living Toronto are each in their own bedroom, all of the households can be considered suitable. This means that there is no overcrowding occurring which could negatively affect a person's inclusivity by creating a barrier to accessing social and community services.

Affordability is an important aspect of inclusivity. Households experiencing housing affordability challenges are substantially more likely to experience social exclusion than households that are not spending more than 30% of their income on housing.²³ For building development to be feasible Community Living Toronto was unable to secure entirely affordable rents to all tenants with a disability. To assist with affordability, each of the three buildings has approaches in place to assist with affordability of rent for tenants, including RGI subsidies and housing allowances. In some cases, tenants will pay more than 30% of their income on shelter or receive additional income from their families. None of the units will cause residents to pay more than 80% of the current market rent in Toronto.

¹⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

¹⁸ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 18.

¹⁹ (Canada. Statistics Canada, "Data Dictionary" <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/households-menage007-eng.cfm>

²⁰ CMHC. "Housing in Canada Online" https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions_EN.html#_Suitable_dwelling

²¹ Stone, "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," 50.

²² Stone, "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," 51.

²³ Stone, W., et al. "Housing and social inclusion: a household and local area analysis," AHURI Final Report No.207, (2013): 50.

6.2.3 Dwelling²⁴

Indicators within Dwelling Domain:

- Accessibility
- Adequacy
- Adaptability

This domain examines how the physical features of a person's home will either present or eliminate barriers to participation and independence.²⁵ The connection between this domain and inclusion is fundamental: if one's living environment is

inaccessible, both living within the home and leaving the home to access the community become difficult²⁶.

Physical barriers can restrict an individual from participating in the community and result in social exclusion.²⁷ Barriers to accessibility include trouble opening doors, difficulty using the stairs, and issues simply getting in and out of the home.²⁸ For example, a doorway that has not been made wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair becomes an accessibility barrier.²⁹ An inaccessible home can restrict an individual's access to important services – and social connections.

Each building performs well in this domain. All of the units operated by Community Living Toronto are fully wheelchair accessible and have wider door frames, walk-in showers, and other accessibility features (e.g. lowered counter space, grab bars etc.).

6.2.4 Structure³⁰

Indicators within Structure Domain:

- Resident Mix
- Social Connection
- Linkage to community supports and services

The structure domain evaluates how the building itself allows for the inclusion of residents with a developmental disability in the community.³¹ For example, is the building made up of only people with disabilities or without disabilities? Are tenants with disabilities congregated together in the building?

Having only individuals with a disability in a building, or in an area of a building, would make for a less inclusive living situation.³² Disability advocates and experts with lived experience note that concentrating people with development disability together on the basis of that single characteristic makes it harder for people without disabilities to 'see' the individual past the disability, increasing the likelihood of stigmatization and social exclusion. This approach is consistent with research findings that indicate that

²⁴ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁵ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁶ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 19.

²⁷ European Disability Forum, "Disability and Social Exclusion in the European Union: Tune for change, tools for change," (2002):6. http://sid.usal.es/idos/F8/FD07040/disability_and_social_exclusion_report.pdf.

²⁸ Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "Maintaining Seniors' Independence Through Home Adaptations a self-assessment guide," (2016):3.

²⁹ City of Toronto, "Accessibility Design Guidelines" (2004): 52.

³⁰ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 20.

³¹ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 20.

³² BC Non-Profit Housing Association, "Exploring Housing Options for People with Developmental Disabilities in BC," 17.

“non-congregated housing in the community is a fundamental condition for social inclusion, self-determination, and wellbeing of people with intellectual disabilities.”³³

The three buildings vary in their achievement of inclusive resident mix. Each building has a mix of apartments for tenants with and without disabilities. At West Don Lands, units for persons with a disability are spread throughout the building, indicating a high rating of inclusivity within this domain. The units at Don Leckie Way and Madison Avenue are clustered together, and some tenants live in 3- or 4-bedroom apartments, i.e., group living arrangements. This is not indicative of inclusive housing within the Structure domain.

All units are wheelchair accessible, and in all three buildings there are plenty of common and outdoor spaces. These include lobbies, outdoor gathering spaces like community gardens, community kitchens, roof terraces and a pet spa. Due to the three buildings' central locations, there are a lot of linkages to other community organizations and amenities. These organizational linkages could help include individuals in the community such as community centres, schools and community agencies.

6.2.5 Neighbourhood³⁴

Indicators within Neighbourhood Domain:

- Proximity to Services
- Safety

The neighbourhood and its amenities can either present barriers or opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to engage in and be safe in their communities.³⁵

Locating housing in a walkable neighbourhood can have important implications for inclusion. A feature of walkable neighbourhoods is having close proximity to services. Studies suggest that walkable neighbourhoods are healthier than non-walkable neighbourhoods as they encourage diverse modes of transportation other than driving, such as walking, bicycling or using transit. By encouraging more people to walk or be physically active, walkable neighbourhoods facilitate social interaction, social inclusion and access to jobs³⁶.

Having a low crime rate is especially important when examining inclusion for persons with a developmental disability who face high rates of violent victimization. A real or perceived lack of safety among one's neighbours is an obvious barrier to inclusion.³⁷ Feeling safe is important for populations with and without disabilities to be able to access their community and community supports. When a person has a positive perception of their own safety, they are less likely to be fearful of being victimized by

³³ Wiesel, Ilan, “Housing for People with Intellectual Disabilities and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Reforms.” Research and Practice in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2:1, (2015): 46.

³⁴ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

³⁵ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 23.

³⁶ Hulse, K., Jacobs, K., Arthurson, K. and Spinney, A. “At home and in place? The role of housing in social inclusion,” AHURI Final Report No. 177, (2003): 24.

³⁷ Canadian Association for Community Living (2019). My Home My Community: Conceptualizing 'Housing Inclusivity': A review of literature on housing, inclusion and developmental disability: 24.

crime. However, when an individual is concerned for their safety, they are less likely to participate in their communities, leading to social exclusion³⁸.

Community Living Toronto performs very well in this domain. Each building is connected to various forms of transit including buses, streetcars and subways. The crime rate in each neighbourhood is low, while the walkability is very high. Lastly, due to their central location, there are a lot of community linkages to other organizations that could help include people in the community such as community centres, schools and community agencies.

6.2.6 Conclusion

Applying the Housing Inclusivity Framework to the Community Living Toronto project shows that it contributes to a person's social inclusion. Areas where Community Living Toronto could improve on is with respect to individual choice and control, affordability, tenure security, and resident mix. Involving the residents in the planning from the outset would strengthen the process, ensuring residents can choose where and with whom they live and drive decision-making in their own lives. Dispersing apartments throughout all buildings and using a "Just Enough"³⁹ support model would also increase the Inclusivity of this housing option. While Community Living Toronto can only mitigate the high cost of housing in Toronto, it has demonstrated a high capacity to achieve affordability results in its partnership with Mahogany Management.

7.0 Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Scale

The following section describes some of the lessons learned, and a number of opportunities to scale Community Living Toronto's approach for inclusive housing throughout Canada.

7.1 Lessons Learned

Through conversations with project representatives, residents, families, and support staff, a number of lessons learned came to light that other organizations should take into consideration when pursuing partnerships with local developers. These can be categorized into three themes:

1. Housing
2. Organization
3. Collaboration and partnerships

7.1.1 Housing

The lessons learned under the theme of housing were:

- Involve residents and families early in the design process and be open to exploring new ideas.

³⁸ The Smith Institute, "Communities Social Exclusion and Crime," 76.

³⁹ The Just Enough support model is a support approach that encourages the person receiving support to do as much as possible by themselves and through unpaid, natural supports. The approach aims to only provide paid support where absolutely necessary and in doing so aims to foster a sense of independence and control over one's life for the person receiving the supports.

- Ensure conversations with families and individuals occur as early as possible to help them explore different housing options, whether it's adapting current space or moving. This will help the organization find the right fit for each apartment and help residents and families to make the appropriate housing decision for themselves or their loved one.
- Use referral agreements as opposed to head-leases, as this form of agreement treats residents as individuals who can have a relationship with their landlord like that of any other tenant.
- Set a move-in period for residents with a disability at the same time as other residents. If that is not possible, be prepared to do upfront work to answer questions and encourage inclusion.
- Attempt to sign long-term leases with development partners to ensure stability of cost and tenure to residents.
- Consider this type of partnership even if your organization is not a housing expert. It takes time and knowing who to talk to, but in the end the patience will pay off.

7.1.2 **Organizational Aspects**

The lessons learned under this theme were:

- Work to build buy-in from the entire support staff team and involve all aspects of the organization in creating comfortable environments to discuss concerns from the get-go. This is a transition that requires change management.
- Ensure staff is available to all housing and support partners at all times, in particular during critical phases of the process such as the building design phase, moving residents into the apartments, and the first months after residents move in, to respond to any issues that might emerge.
- Remember the needs of the organization, and thereby the residents, are as important as those of other stakeholders.
- Ensure there is a project manager to oversee the bigger picture and ensure all aspects of the project remain on track.
- Take a team-based approach with the partnering landlord by responding to tenants quickly and looping in the superintendent or the family when issues arise.

7.1.3 **Collaboration and Partnerships**

- Build good relationships with housing partners, such as developers and landlords. Gaining trust can be achieved by being available, staying in touch regularly, and showing dedication to the project.
- Keep an open mind to what developers need but be clear on your organization's needs. It is important to have a vision that speaks to developers, and that allows for flexibility to come together.
- Be ready to go when a call comes in from partners – have information ready or be prepared to make it available potential partners on short notice.
- Consider forming a housing coalition with a variety of groups to make it easier to collaborate with developers and to create a critical mass that helps increase negotiating power.
- Attend conferences and other industry events to tell the story of your organization and its vision in this work.

- Be discerning in selecting developer partners. Pay attention to their reputation and research what other projects they have developed in the past.

7.2 Opportunities for Replication

Based on the sections in this case study report, there are a number of aspects to this demonstration project that could be replicated throughout Canada.

7.2.1 Opportunities for Replication and Scale

This approach lends itself to replication, as it is relatively cost neutral and risk free to the organization compared to direct development or purchasing units. Community Living Toronto has already been able to replicate the model twice in different areas of the city and with different types of developer/landlords. This demonstrates there is flexibility to tailor this approach to the individual needs of an organization and its residents. Especially in urban areas, there will be a number of non-profit as well as for profit housing providers that could be engaged as partners, making it easier to replicate the process in different areas throughout the country.

This case also shows that with patience and long-term relationship building, potential partners can be influenced to include a number of units for individuals with a developmental disability, even in areas where vacancy rates are historically low. This provides an opportunity for organizations throughout Canada – with or without assets or capacity for development – to obtain inclusive affordable housing for individuals with a developmental disability.

7.2.2 Drawbacks

While there are a number of opportunities that became evident from this case study, there are also a number of drawbacks compared to other development pathways. Most prevalent is the frequent inability to provide input into the design of the units, and therefore the lack of choice and control from the perspective of the person with a developmental disability and their family. This means it is necessary to become involved with development at an early stage, which requires long-term time investment to find the right developer in the right stage of development.

In this model the support organization does not actually own the units. This results in some vulnerability in the future if a landlord decides to sell or demolish the building or increases the rent levels to a point where they are no longer affordable. This could be circumvented by signing long-term leases or referral agreements for 10 years or more.

The model is somewhat dependent on rent subsidies and housing allowances to ensure affordability. This can be mitigated by seeking private and non-profit developers who are committed to finding ways of offering units at rents affordable to individuals receiving ODSP.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Case Study Approach

8.1.1 Case Study Approach

This section describes the research team's approach to collecting data and engagements conducted during this study.

Lines of Inquiry

To guide all the research activities, the following lines of inquiry were developed for this case study:

Table 4: Lines of Inquiry

<p>Project relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes this project stand out compared to other housing models for individuals with developmental disabilities? <p>Development Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the key stages in the development journey of the demonstration project?• What is the governance structure of the demonstration project and what are the benefits of this governance model?• Who were the key stakeholders involved in the development process; what roles did they play?• What were the key challenges and lessons learned in the development process?• Were there any challenges in the tenant selection for each demonstration project and how were these overcome?• What was the collaboration experience like between multiple partners and stakeholders?• How could this process be replicated in other communities?	<p>Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the experience of residents with the delivery method of supports?• What levels of support can be delivered in the demonstration project?• How were the supports as well as the community linkages developed to promote the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities in the wider community? <p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the housing and support situation like of residents before they became involved with the demonstration project?• What is the impact of the demonstration project on residents and their families?• To what extent have the residents been able to reach their short, medium and long-term goals (including supports, employment opportunities, community engagement, life skills and self-esteem, improved housing, etc.)?
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8.1.2 Sources of Information

To answer the lines of inquiry identified above, a number of data collecting activities were undertaken as part of the development of this case study. The data collecting process was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved transferring readily

available data from Community Living Toronto to the consulting team while the second phase consisted of a number of engagements with Community Living Toronto, residents of the demonstration project and their families as well as support staff.

Collecting Readily Available Information

The research team submitted an information and data request to Community Living Toronto in April 2019. This list included a request for relevant documentation and background reports as well as quantitative data such as the number of residents supported, their age, rent ranges etc.

All the data received from Community Living Toronto was anonymized and did not provide identifiable details about specific residents.

Engagements

In addition to the readily available data, a total of five engagements were conducted with a range of key informants. This includes the following sessions:

1. A session with project representatives and key decision makers was conducted on June 10th, 2019. A total of six people participated in this session.
2. A session with family members of project tenants was conducted on June 3rd, 2019. A total of one family member participated in this session.
3. A session with tenants with a developmental disability was conducted on June 3rd, 2019. A total of three participants and their support staff participated in this session.
4. A session with support staff was conducted on June 10th, 2019. A total of two support staff working with residents in the demonstration project's developments participated in this session.
5. An Interview with the president of one of the development partners of Community Living Toronto (Mahogany Development) was conducted on June 18th, 2019.

A total of 13 individuals were interviewed or participated in an engagement session. For an overview of each session's format, questions and materials, see Appendix B of this report.

8.2 Appendix B: Data Needs List & Engagement Guide

Appendixes and video documentary to support this case study are available on the My Home My Community website: www.myhomemycommunity.ca