

Co-Designing Canada's Housing Futures



HOUSING SOLUTIONS LABS

We have a long history of helping communities reach their housing and community development goals.

OUR IMPACT

SHS Consulting is a Canadian consulting firm dedicated to delivering excellence in housing policy and research, affordable housing development, and business model innovation.

Since 1999, SHS Consulting has played a key role in working with governments in every corner of the country to evolve their role in the housing system, as well as guiding non-profit organizations in launching impactful programs and services. The SHS team has prepared more than 200 housing-related studies, strategies, action plans and evaluations; conceived new business models to increase the development of affordable housing; and engaged with a broad range of stakeholders including elected officials, government representatives, non-profit support agencies and housing providers, the private sector and people with lived experience.

5,000+
housing units built
across Ontario

10,000+
people housed in
affordable, secure
housing

\$1 billion+
in social impact
developments built

25,000+
stakeholders engaged

32+
national housing
research studies
completed

40+
communities impacted
by Official Plan policy
recommendations

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

The housing discourse and landscape is changing in Canada. Through our extensive experience in all aspects of the housing sector, we are highly-equipped to take on your innovation challenge. The following provides a brief overview of some of our most recent solutions lab projects.

CMHC Solutions Labs for Developing a Canada Housing Benefit for the governments of Nova Scotia, Yukon, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador (4 projects; 2019)

How might we support Canadians with a housing benefit that is accessible and flexible in its delivery and leads to increased security and dignity for recipients?

Region of Peel, Housing Strategy: "The future of housing is about more than housing." (2018)

How might we reframe the Region of Peel's role in an evolving local housing system to ensure housing opportunities for all?

Raising the Roof, Reside (2018)

How might we increase housing options for individuals at risk of homelessness by leveraging underutilized assets in our communities through a scalable, nation-wide solution?

WoodGreen Community Services, Development Concept Design Charrette (2018)

How might we design an inter-generational living experience that seamlessly integrates appropriate services, design components, and building characteristics for youth transitioning out of foster care and seniors in Toronto?

City of London, Business Case for a Housing Development Corporation (2014)

How might we reach the City of London's affordable housing goals through the establishment of a new vehicle for housing development?

MICAH, Tony Wong Place Collaborative (2010)

How might we create an affordable living environment to help individuals with disabilities thrive through fostering collaboration across support service agencies in Markham?

We are the most established multi-faceted housing consultancy in Canada.

OUR UNIQUE OFFERING

The housing system is a complex organism with several competing interests and priorities, existing within a rapidly-changing economic and social environment in Canada. Today's housing challenges require comprehensive knowledge of the system (past and present) to identify key intervention points where the most impactful innovations and ideas can emerge.

The SHS Consulting team combines deep subject matter knowledge and training across the housing system with our extensive experience as consultants, strategists and researchers. This unique combination of subject matter and process expertise yields plans and strategies that are thorough, grounded in evidence, and address each community's unique needs.

We know that housing problems are connected to all of the other social determinants of health. Through this systems-oriented approach, our work has influenced programs, businesses, and policies in the realms of employment and labour markets, social services, public health, social inclusion, early childhood development, food security, Indigenous issues, gender, race, and disability.

Subject matter expertise

- Social and affordable housing
- Social and economic outcomes of housing
- Social determinants of health
- Housing finance
- Social inclusion
- Community development
- Healthy communities
- Seniors' housing
- Housing needs of vulnerable populations
- Northern, remote, and rural housing
- Economics of real estate development

Process expertise

- Public policy design
- Financial modelling
- Human-centred design research tools
- Socio-economic data analysis
- Program evaluation
- Quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Facilitation/community engagement
- Strategic foresight
- Business model innovation
- Visual communications design

OUR FOCUS ON THE NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY PRIORITY AREAS

From the beginning, the focus of our work has been in the six priority areas of Canada's new National Housing Strategy.

Housing for Those in Greatest Need

The breadth of our reach has allowed our team to work on significant projects across a wide range of key population groups, including: individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, women and children fleeing violence, victims of human trafficking, seniors, people with mental health and addictions issues, Indigenous peoples, youth, and people experiencing homelessness.

Community Housing Sustainability

A significant part of our business model innovation practice involves working with community housing providers to improve resiliency through modernization and systems design. Most recently, we worked on Peel Housing Corporation's Business Transformation Strategy and an Innovation Strategy for Ottawa Community Housing.

Indigenous Housing

We have been hired by a wide range of Indigenous groups looking to conduct research and to develop affordable housing. These include North Shore Tribal Council, Nipissing First Nation, New Frontiers Aboriginal Residence Corporation, Lovesick Lake Native Women's Association, and Wigwamen Incorporated.

Northern Housing

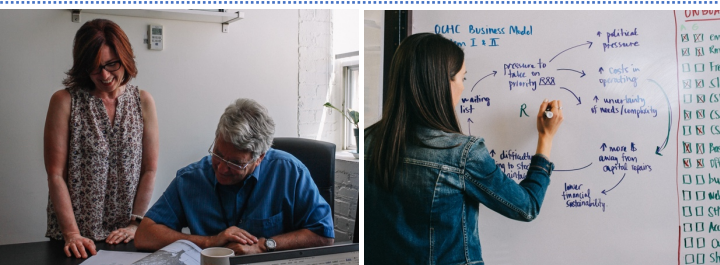
Our team has had the privilege to travel to all three Canadian Territories to engage with a broad range of stakeholders in 13 northern communities as part of our research for CMHC's study on the Challenges of Financing Market Housing in Northern Canada.

Sustainable Housing and Communities

Through the development of over 5,000 affordable housing units in Canada, SHS continues to strive to create sustainable buildings for our clients by working with planners, architects and builders who are experienced and passionate about sustainable building strategies.

Balanced Supply of Housing

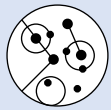
Our deep experience in developing affordable housing strategies involves understanding the diverse needs of Canadians and exploring tools and policies to promote affordable rental and ownership housing in urban and rural communities. SHS has prepared more than 30 housing needs assessments and strategies for municipalities in Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.



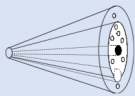
Our approach is designed to create inclusive, safe, and accessible spaces for co-creation and implementation.

TOOLKITS

At SHS, we employ a range of tools and methods to ensure effective project management, create spaces for collaborative strategic conversations, conduct research with those in greatest need, and test solutions and prototypes. Our established processes emerge from the fields of **human-centred design**, **strategic foresight**, and **systems and service design**, and guide us through each phase of the solutions lab process.



SYSTEMS THINKING



STRATEGIC FORESIGHT



HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN

Here is how we will work with you through each phase of the Solutions Lab process:

Definition

The Definition phase is used to establish the project scope and frame the problem to be solved. Through the employment of SHS' specialized project management approach, our team utilizes strategic foresight techniques to unpack the current system to reveal embedded dynamics and potential intervention points. Some of our commonly-used methods include: backcasting, Three Horizons model, trend scanning, empathy mapping, and system archetype development.

Discovery

The Discovery phase is highly divergent, allowing for deep exploration of human behaviours, hopes, and fears, to develop insights across diverse stakeholders. During this phase, we prioritize building empathy with all stakeholders involved in the design process. Some of our commonly-used methods include: interviews and focus groups, mobile ethnography (such as photovoice), observational research, "make tools", journey maps, and persona development.

Development

During the Development phase, we create collaborative, safe, and accessible spaces (physical and virtual) to co-design new ideas, based on the insights gleaned from the first to phases of work. Some of our commonly-used methods include: business model design, design charrette workshops, rapid low-fi prototyping, service design blueprints, and role play.

Prototyping

We believe the act of making ideas tangible can help stakeholders communicate their ideas, share insights, and provide feedback on proposed solutions in an effective and inclusive way. These activities also help evaluate the feasibility of a solution, to reduce risk during implementation. During this phase, some of our most commonly-employed methods for prototyping and testing solutions include: future narrative development, wind-tunnelling, service design blueprints, SHS' real estate development pro-forma model, financial modelling, and higher-fidelity prototyping (such as drawings, mock-ups, and service delivery models).

Roadmap

The Roadmap phase is used to develop and communicate a clear path to solution uptake and implementation. During this phase, we work with our clients and stakeholders to develop comprehensive and sound recommendations based in the evidence and insights gathered through the entire design process. We employ our long-standing strategic planning and project management approaches to the process. We often utilize methods such as: recommendation and action plan reports, roadmap visualization, final prototypes (including financial models and/or cash-flow projections), policy recommendations, and detailed program designs.

WORKING WITH US

Our Solutions Labs

For SHS, Solutions Labs are inclusive, safe, and accessible spaces for co-creation and implementation in a physical or virtual setting.

Our Added Value

- We bring a team with deep passion and dedication to the issues of housing, poverty reduction, and inclusion. This drives us to get to action; to see your innovations through to implementation.
- Our tools and methods allow us to constantly challenge our own assumptions and to push our stakeholders to think creatively.
- Our lean model allows us to deliver great value for money to our clients, by spending more time in the field building empathy with the people with whom we are designing, and allowing our firm's Partners and Principals to be actively involved in the project work.
- Having worked directly with all stakeholders in the system (from private developers to politicians, individuals experiencing homelessness, governments, and non-profit agencies), we are known to foster collaboration through practicing attentive listening and humility.

We have the team to co-create new housing opportunities with your community.



OUR TEAM

Consultant Team Member

Expertise and Solutions Lab Roles

Christine Pacini, Partner

Christine has more than 30 years of experience in the housing sector and is involved in all three of SHS's practice areas. She holds a degree in public policy and administration and is an award-winning policy designer, researcher, and strategist. Her roles include: principal lab consultant; stakeholder engagement specialist; facilitation and consultation expert; and subject matter expert.

Ed Starr, Partner

Ed has over 40 years of experience in the housing sector and is involved in all three of SHS's practice areas. He holds an MBA and a Master's of Environmental Studies. His role is a subject matter expert.

Adrienne Pacini,
Principal, Strategic Design

Adrienne has 6 years of experience in the housing sector. She leads SHS's Business Model Innovation practice, focusing on design research with individuals in greatest housing need. She holds a Master's of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation. Her roles include: innovation analyst, systems and service designer, stakeholder engagement specialist, facilitation and consultation expert, visual communications designer, and report writer.

Glenda Lucas, Principal

Glenda has 25 years of experience in the housing sector. She is a registered Project Management Professional and leads SHS's Development practice. Her roles include: subject matter expert and service stimulation and testing analyst.

Cheryl Hsu, Senior Design
Researcher and Strategist

Cheryl is an established strategist and ethnographic researcher. She has extensive experience designing for health and other service systems. She holds a Master's of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation. Her roles include: innovation analyst, systems and service designer, facilitation and consultation expert, communications officer, and visual communications designer.

Johanna Hashim, Senior
Consultant

Johanna has 10 years of experience in the housing sector. She holds degrees in architecture and urban planning and architecture and leads SHS's Policy and Research practice. Her roles include: data scientist, research advisor, and ethnographic researcher, stakeholder engagement specialist, subject matter expert and report writer.

Jan van Deursen,
Consultant, Housing Policy
and Research

Jan is one of SHS's key housing researchers. He holds a Master's of Science, focusing on the economics of housing development. His roles include: data scientist, research advisor, and ethnographic researcher, and report writer.

Lanxi Dong, Design
Researcher

Lanxi is a design researcher at SHS. She holds a Bachelor of Design in Industrial Design, focusing on collaborative tools for space and program design. Her roles include: ethnographic researcher, communications officer, and visual communications designer.

Atif Siddiqui,
Communications and
Research Coordinator

Atif supports the research and development efforts at SHS. He holds a degree in political science. His roles include: technology specialist, and logistical, resources, travel, and technology support.

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