

Delivering your CMHC Solutions Lab

Introducing Intelligent Futures

WE ARE CHANGE AGENTS FOR EQUITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND PROSPERITY — IN PURSUIT OF A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

At Intelligent Futures, we are here to help organizations navigate complex challenges and make a positive impact. Our purpose is to be change agents for equity, sustainability, and prosperity. Drawing on our roots in urban planning and utilizing strategic, design, and systems thinking, we guide our clients through an intentional change process that is designed to benefit the community, culture, society, and the environment.

We understand that change can be a formidable force, but we firmly believe in the possibility of creating a better future that is more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous. We bring this belief and expertise to every project, making us an invaluable asset to your team. Our approach is grounded in dependable processes and extraordinary collaboration. We understand that challenges are best addressed when diverse perspectives are brought together. That's why we design our consultation and strategy development with a human-centred focus, ensuring meaningful exchanges occur with our clients, the community and members of our project team. We foster a culture of innovation and creativity by embracing cross-disciplinary experiences and curiosity. We prioritize the psychological safety of all participants, creating an environment where everyone's voices can be heard and valued. We understand that people are at the centre of making change happen.


Humility, humanity and reciprocity are the foundations on which we lead. We believe that shared success is achieved through collaboration and a true team environment. While this approach may go against the traditional consultant model, it is our method for achieving great results and making a lasting impact.

Today, the challenges we face and our choices as both community members and organizational leaders are interconnected. We cannot overlook the fact that our collective actions have the power to either strengthen or weaken the fabric of society. Issues such as social divisions, limited government funding, cultural divides, climate change, and more demand our attention and action. At Intelligent Futures, our greatest work requires courageous action for collective good. Because what good is today without a brighter tomorrow?

Intelligent Futures is committed to work of the highest standard. We have been grateful to receive awards from the following organizations:

- » The Canadian Institute of Planners (x7)
- » The Alberta Professional Planners Institute (x9)
- » The Planning Institute of British Columbia (x1)
- » The Commonwealth Association of Planners (x1)
- » The International Association for Public Participation (x1)
- » The Economic Developers Association of Canada (x1)
- » The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (x1)

As a firm committed to sustainability, equity and prosperity, Intelligent Futures is a certified B Corp, joining a global movement of companies focused on business for good and ensuring that the global economy benefits all people, communities, and the planet. We are currently only one of approximately 550 companies in Canada with this certification.



Since 2020, our award winning CMHC Solutions Labs have engaged **12** partner organizations, and over **160** participants, generating **13** prototyped housing solutions.

Addressing Wicked Problems

We live in a time of wicked problems. A wicked problem is a societal challenge that is difficult to address due to its evolving nature and intertwined influencing factors. This characterizes many of the social and environmental challenges we face today, including poverty, climate change, and social inequality and requires a collaborative, adaptive and innovative approach to address.

Enter Solutions Labs. A Solutions Lab is a process that brings systemic, social and experimental thinking as well as transformational learning to tackle wicked problems. These labs are designed to address the complexity that is part of wicked problems. While each lab is different, they have common elements, including:

- » **They're Systemic:** Unlike traditional methods that might address problems in isolation, labs embrace a holistic viewpoint. They connect the dots across various domains and levels, ensuring that solutions are not just effective in a narrow context but bring about widespread, systemic change.
- » **They're Social:** Labs break down the walls that usually limit participation in solution development. By valuing diverse perspectives and prioritizing the inclusion of those with lived experience, these labs ensure that solutions are grounded in a deep understanding of the issues at hand.
- » **They're Experimental:** The experimental nature of labs is a departure from the often rigid, linear approaches of conventional methods. By embracing a cycle of trial, feedback, learning, and iteration, these labs foster a culture where failure is seen as a valuable step towards innovation.
- » **They're Transformational:** Labs are committed to driving profound, lasting change, not just quick fixes or temporary alleviations. They aim to transform the landscape of the problems they tackle, pushing beyond the usual boundaries to explore what might be possible.

We will work with you to co-create a process that is focused on developing impactful solutions while building capacity, relationships and knowledge. We have experience working with a diverse range of stakeholders, including individuals with lived experience of housing challenges, municipal governments, housing providers, small businesses and many more.

A Values Aligned Approach to Change

Solutions labs can vary in size and scope depending on the challenge a group or organization is addressing. Some groups establish physical spaces for their innovation labs, while others operate virtually. No matter the medium, the ultimate goal of a solutions lab is to drive change through innovative thinking and respond to the rapidly evolving social landscape. To get started, all a group or organization needs is to embrace the potential for change and dedicate the human resources necessary to contribute to the innovation process.

Solutions labs align closely with the core values of Intelligent Futures, demonstrating these ideals through their focus on collaboration and impact:



Always Strive for Positive Impact: At Intelligent Futures, we believe in leveraging our expertise for the greater good. Focused on generating meaningful change, the labs align with our intention of delivering lasting, positive impacts on society.



Stay Curious: Curiosity is at the heart of progress. We continuously seek to learn about different perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. Encouraging exploration and continuous learning, the labs reflect our commitment to curiosity and innovation.



Take Courageous Action: Working towards change requires bold steps and a willingness to confront bias and inequality. We are unafraid to address challenges head-on, and the labs mirror our ethos of courageous action and trailblazing solutions.



Extraordinary Collaboration: We recognize that the best solutions are born from collaboration. These labs exemplify collaboration, uniting clients, collaborators, and communities to co-create solutions, reinforcing our belief in the power of teamwork.

"As an organization committed to serving the needs of our community, we are incredibly proud of the groundbreaking work achieved by the Halal Housing Lab. The Lab's innovative approach to integrating culturally appropriate design, community engagement, and Shariah-compliant financing has set a new benchmark for inclusive housing solutions. We are fully aware of the dedication, research, and collaborative efforts that have been poured into this project to ensure its success and alignment with the needs of the Muslim community."

— Omar Yaqub, IslamicFamily; Halal Housing Lab partner.



Our Approach to Solutions Labs

Working at the intersection of a variety of disciplines and practices, Intelligent Futures has extensive experience in the methods and tools that are deployed in social innovation labs. Through a collaborative process, we will help design and deliver processes that are focused on developing impactful solutions while building capacity, relationships and knowledge.

1. Systems Exploration

Housing challenges are extremely complex. Through a rigorous ‘*issue ecosystem mapping*’ process and applied systems thinking, our practice is continually pushing our clients and collaborators to understand the nuances and contexts of issues and their root causes, rather than focusing solely on the symptoms. Surfacing the complexity of converging issues leads to a more robust understanding of the system in which a particular challenge exists. Thanks to the diversity of our project history and understanding of diverse community systems, we are able to understand how issues connect in order to intervene at a systems level.

2. Ideation and Prototyping

A core element of the lab process is the co-development of ideas that effectively intervene in the system to affect positive change. Our collaborative approach to ideation involves creative exploration of potential solutions and a rigorous approach to prioritizing the most promising ideas. These leading candidate ideas are then prototyped - making the ideas tangible. With empathy as the frame, prototypes are designed to integrate the voice of the community and encourage exploration of solutions that challenge previously held views of participants. Prototype solutions are rapidly developed, tested with users and iterated to increasingly move towards more tangible and effective solutions. The process also identifies ideas that do not hold promise through testing early in the process, saving time, resources and energy in the long run. The end result is a solution(s) that has been tested and refined, paving the way for implementation.

3. Roadmap Development

With a set of solutions developed and tested, a roadmap identifies the process of implementing the proposed solution. Clarity on next steps, responsibilities, resourcing and key decision points allows implementers to proceed with greater confidence and certainty to address housing challenges in their community.

Experience in Solving Community Problems

Over the past four years, our team has been leading innovation solutions labs to address wicked housing problems in Canada. These labs reflect a diversity of issues, but all align with our purpose of leading change for more equitable, sustainable and prosperous communities:

The Better Housing Lab

Exploring how environmental performance can be fundamentally integrated into the economic model of affordable housing with a group of 30 professionals and community members, to enhance the long-term livability and viability of housing projects through [five prototypes](#).

The Halal Housing Lab

Exploring affordable, culturally appropriate housing solutions and financing approaches for larger and extended Muslim families. The lab addressed a critical gap in the market and challenging existing systemic structures and cultural paradigms, resulting in the [Halal Open Source Guide](#). In 2024, the Halal Housing Lab was recognized with an Alberta Professional Planners Institute Award of Planning Merit.

The Saskatoon Housing Lab

Exploring new ways for the Saskatoon housing sector to work together by addressing the needs of community members facing an intersection of challenges. Prototype solutions were designed to empower community organizations in Saskatoon, enabling them to deliver more effective and compassionate support to the city’s most vulnerable residents.

The 2SLGBTQIA+ Seniors Housing Lab

Exploring innovative housing that supports the unique needs of 2SLGBTQIA+ seniors while proactively integrating these folks into the broader community. The collaborative efforts led to the development of the ‘[Safe Village](#)’ prototype—a community-centric model that fosters a supportive and secure environment for all seniors.

The Veterans Village Housing Lab

Exploring the housing needs of Veterans through unique housing models and innovative modular design. The Lab facilitated meaningful engagement with Veterans from across Canada to deepen the understanding of their experiences that could inform an [open-source engagement toolkit](#) to streamline engagement in the site development of Veterans Villages.

“Through an extremely thoughtful process design, Intelligent Futures has successfully brought together over 30 incredibly diverse stakeholders for our affordable housing Solutions Lab. Over the course of 11 months to date, IF has led us through a highly engaging process that enabled us to get to know one another as people, while also accessing the tremendous expertise in the room to learn from one another and generate new ideas. IF’s understanding of communities, collaboration and human nature demonstrates what a leading-edge innovation practice can be.”

— Jesse Hindle, Architect; Better Housing Lab participant.



Key Team Members



John Lewis RPP MCIP M.E.DES.
President & Founder

John wants to change the world. He provides strategic direction for our firm, working to build a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future through everything we do. John is passionate about building Intelligent Futures as a role model for how organizations can achieve profound impact in their communities while also fully living its values and creating a caring, curious and high-performing team culture. A compelling speaker and dedicated innovator, John loves finding new approaches to community and capacity building.



Cassandra Caiger M.PLAN.
Principal

Cassandra is the quintessential people person who thrives in bringing people together to solve wicked problems. As the Principal responsible for operations, Cassandra leads the Intelligent Futures team in the delivery of projects and provides leadership to clients on an incredibly diverse range of change processes. An empathic listener, she has the ability to put people at ease, encouraging them to hear and be heard. In the first decade of her career, Cassandra received the Canadian Institute of Planners President's Award for Young Planners in recognition of her work in community building.



Jeff Robson RPP MCIP MUP
Senior Strategist

Jeff is a chameleon. While his professional training keeps him well-rooted in strategic change, his creative and artistic nature shines through in his design work. Jeff's professional background resists easy categorization, with diverse experience in corporate branding and communications, environmental planning, information design, organizational sustainability and community engagement. Jeff leads our design practice and manages a range of strategies addressing varied and complex challenges across the country.



Helen Loghrin RPP MCIP M.SC. PL.
Strategist

Helen's relentless curiosity drives innovation and impact on our team. Helen leads our research practice, building on her knowledge base of design, cartography, organizational structure and change management. With her diverse experience in processes such as accessibility, watershed health, urban agriculture and organizational change, she informs and motivates clients to build strategies on a foundation of rigorous understanding of data and community ideas.



Alastair Wycliffe-Jones MUP
Strategist

Alastair is passionate about integrating all voices into conversations about the future. Alastair combines knowledge of community systems with active listening and project management skills to deliver meaningful engagement that brings people together to create common goals for the future. Whether in digital or in-person space, Alastair loves to design gatherings that tap into the collective wisdom of community members.



Shayna Wedderburn M.PLAN.
Strategist

A passionate advocate for inclusivity, Shayna ensures that underrepresented audiences have a chance to influence the issues they care about. Shayna's experience in urban and regional planning and her natural warmth give her a fresh perspective on ways to resolve complex community challenges like poverty, homelessness and the creation of safe spaces.



Jay Heule M.PLAN. BSC
Analyst

Jay brings a blend of curiosity, rigour and creativity to everything he touches. Armed with an undergraduate degree in engineering and a graduate degree in urban planning, Jay contributes research, analysis and design skills to challenges as diverse as urban agriculture, affordable housing, climate change and social well-being.