

## Introducing Intelligent Futures

INTELLIGENT FUTURES IS A CALGARY-BASED FIRM OF VERSATILE COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVERS. At our core, we put people at the centre of the change process. Working at the intersection of design, engagement, strategy, and sustainability, we deliver memorable experiences and impactful results to our clients and their communities. Our core purpose is helping communities and organizations find better ways of living together.

Our firm has a uniquely diverse range of experiences in all manner of community challenges, including urban agriculture, infill development, social wellbeing, community livability, indicator development, community engagement, cultural planning, environmental planning and community sustainability. This breadth of understanding community issues allows us to approach affordable housing in Solutions Labs in a holistic way.

No matter the context of our work, Intelligent Futures remains true to our core purpose of helping communities find better ways of living together. We are guided by three core values in everything we do - from the projects we deliver, to how we hire and how we evaluate our performance.

- » **Stay curious.** Intelligent Futures is a place where we are constantly pushing ourselves and the people we work with to learn, improve, and leave a lasting impact on the world around us.
- » **Always strive for amazing work.** Intelligent Futures always ensures that we are producing the best quality work and processes possible for our clients, team, and collaborators.
- » **Take courageous action.** Intelligent Futures is a company that thrives by taking action in places and in ways that others won't. We are a team of boundary-pushing innovators, always looking to expand our limits, and evolve our practice and expertise.



Our team is committed to the most innovative, high-quality work. We have been grateful to have our work recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners, the Alberta Professional Planners Institute, the Planning Institute of British Columbia, the Commonwealth Association of Planners, the International Association for Public Participation, the Economic Developers Association of Canada and The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.



Intelligent Futures produces the award-winning 360 Degree City podcast, which focuses on sharing stories of cities from every angle. The podcast has covered issues related to housing, including best practices, the stories of those with lived experience and green building design.

Guests have included urban innovators from Brooklyn, Amsterdam, Vancouver, Copenhagen and Detroit (to name a few).



Since 2014, our processes have engaged over **60,000** citizens, generating over **100,000** ideas.

## Addressing Your Housing Challenge Through a Solutions Lab

Our team brings an approach to Solutions Labs that is built upon collaboration. 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, new Canadians, environmental organizations, small businesses and many more. Our team can bring the following expertise to a Solutions Lab process:

- » Solutions Lab process design, including systems exploration, ideation and prototyping - all key elements to a successful lab
- » Facilitation of Solutions Labs
- » Leading practice research on housing solutions
- » Data and trend research on housing and related community issues
- » Engagement across a spectrum of stakeholders connected to housing
- » Podcast production of those with lived experience and content expertise
- » Document and graphic design
- » Project Management

The graphic to the right highlights how our approach and experience can help deliver an impactful Solutions Lab for your housing challenge.

### A People-Centred Approach to Change

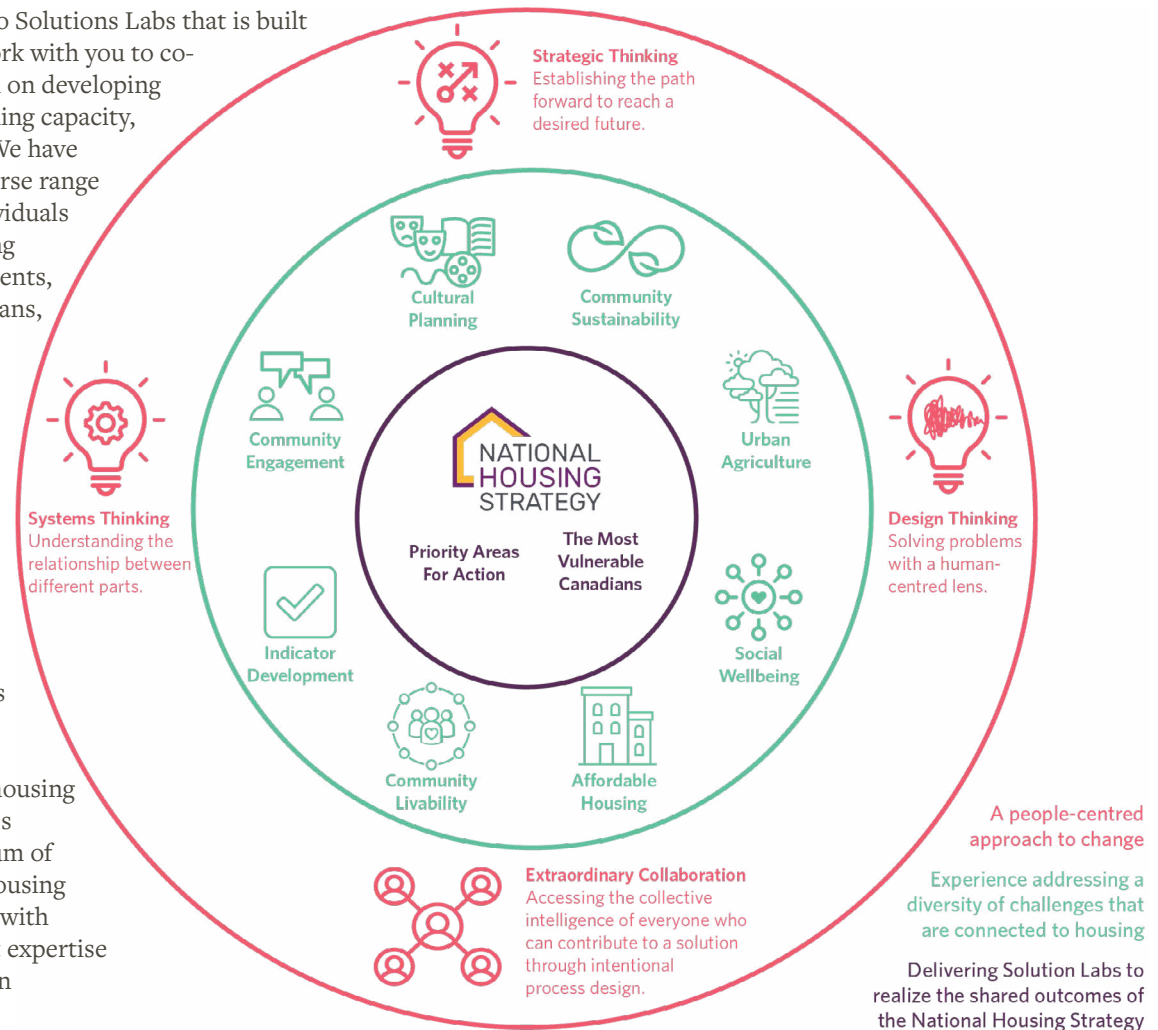
We believe that finding better ways to live together happens when we bring these four pillars together in our practice. Through the Solutions Lab process, these pillars are applied to co-create innovative approaches to house Canadians.

#### Design thinking

*"Design thinking starts with divergence, the deliberate attempt to expand the range of options rather than narrow them."* — Tim Brown  
Design thinking takes a human-centred approach to problem solving - focusing on the needs of those you serve. It is also a method to explore new housing solutions and rapidly prototype ideas in order to inform action-based learning.

#### Systems thinking

*"The behaviour of a system cannot be known just by knowing the elements of which the system is made."* — Donella H. Meadows  
Systems thinking provides a framework to adequately understand the relationships between the different elements of a system. This enables the creation of housing



solutions that address root causes, rather than simply addressing symptoms of a more systemic issue.

#### Strategic thinking

*"The most subtle aspect of 'thinking strategically' lies in knowing 'what needs to happen.'"* — Peter Senge

Strategic thinking is a way of identifying the most critical steps that need to be taken in order to realize a desired future. This frame will force us to continually ask "what matters most?" to ensure that housing solutions are as impactful as possible.

#### Extraordinary Collaboration

*"We all wear masks, and while masks have uses, taking them off can allow for deeper connection, shared growth, and more fruitful collaboration."* — Priya Parker

If we are to grow positive change in this world, we believe that true collaboration - with our clients, our stakeholders and our communities is necessary. Through intentional process design, we want to access the collective intelligence of everyone that can contribute to a solution.

## 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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

As a team of versatile community problem solvers, we have a wealth of experience that frames housing in a broader context of community issues. The following highlights some of our experiences.

### Better Housing Lab

A CMHC Solutions Lab exploring how environmental performance can be fundamentally integrated into the economic model of affordable housing projects in order to enhance the long-term livability and viability of projects.

### Sparwood Livability Study

An initiative to develop a community-based set of livability indicators that help the community measure what matters most over time.

### Tri-Municipal Social Development Strategy

A strategy to meet the social development needs of a diverse variety of urban and rural residents in Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and Parkland County.

### Banff Environmental Master Plan

A plan to preserve the natural environment in the townsites in Canada’s most visited National Park.

### Strathcona County Community Hub Study

An exploration of how a community hub can provide integrated social services while also serving as a gathering place for the entire community.

### Airdrie Placemaking Strategy

An approach to building community, enhancing the quality of life of residents and generating new economic opportunities.

### Calgary Biodiverse Communities Initiative

A new approach to integrating community into habitat restoration to enhance understanding and involvement in biodiversity initiatives.

### Strathcona County Urban Agriculture Strategy

A strategy to build community and economic opportunities through agriculture in the urban spaces of the County.

*“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 brings together elements of community engagement, design thinking, strategic planning, effective communication and capacity-building to create positive impact in communities and organizations alike. Over his career, John has been involved in a number of different community-building projects - from development approvals, sustainability planning and policy planning to cultural planning, urban agriculture, and community engagement. John is also the host of 360° City, a podcast that explores communities from a variety of angles. John is a LEAD (Leadership in Environment and Development) Fellow, who also served as LEAD Canada President and as a member of the LEAD International training team.

**Cassandra Caiger** M.PLAN.

**Engagement Lead**



Cassandra designs, organizes, and executes engagement activities and is an expert engagement feedback analyst. She is keenly interested in—and devoted to—making municipal processes approachable to all stakeholders that might be affected by a particular issue. Cassandra has led the facilitation of cross-sectoral community conversations in areas as diverse as urban agriculture, electric vehicles, waste management, circular economy and social well-being. Empathy, humour, and clear communication help Cassandra build strong relationships in the communities where she works. Cassandra led the development of the *Sparwood Livability Study* (winner of an award from the Planning Institute of British Columbia), which establishes a community definition of livability and suite of indicators to measure livability over time. For her leadership in championing the community's voice in the change process, Cassandra has been recognized with the 2019 Canadian Institute of Planners *President's Award for Young Planners*.

**Jeff Robson** RPP MCIP MUP

**Design Lead**



Jeff's professional background resists easy categorization, with a diversity of experience in municipal strategy development, corporate branding and communications, information design, urban planning, and community engagement and group facilitation. Jeff led the development of the Town of Banff's first Environmental Master Plan, which was built on extensive community engagement and was unanimously approved by Council in 2019. Jeff also led the development of the City of Calgary's *Biodiverse Communities* project (winner of awards from the Commonwealth Association of Planners and the Canadian Institute of Planners), which explores how communities can be more involved in the habitat restoration process. Demonstrating his diverse skill set, Jeff led the *Brooks Region Branding & Communications Strategy* (winner of the 2019 Economic Developers Association of Canada Award).

**Helen Loghrin** M.SC. PL.

**Planner**



Helen supports Intelligent Futures' design and engagement practices, utilizing her experience in architectural design and cartography, knowledge of effective community and corporate communication tactics, and curiosity for making processes more transparent and accessible for community members and organizations. Since joining at IF, Helen has presented on, and updated Intelligent Futures' document practices to become more accessible. In particular, she has focused her attention to ensure that our documents and research practices are compatible with screen readers, legible to those with dyslexia and mental health conditions, in addition to our existing practice of ensuring documents and web platforms use common language and straightforward navigation systems. Helen has varied professional experience in the realms of placemaking, community engagement facilitation, design support for business improvement areas and community groups, economic development, heritage architecture, urban planning, and information design.

**Get in touch!**

John Lewis RPP MCIP M.E.DES.

President & Founder

E: [john@intelligentfutures.ca](mailto:john@intelligentfutures.ca)

W: [intelligentfutures.ca](http://intelligentfutures.ca)



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