

# Co-Designing Canada's Housing Futures with SHS Consulting

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, social purpose real estate development, and business 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 240 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**

**25,500+**  
**stakeholders engaged**

**35+**  
**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 Lab on Housing Journeys Reimagined** with Blue Door and Habitat for Humanity GTA (2021)

*How might we challenge the current housing continuum journey by introducing new equity-building tenure models for people experiencing homelessness?*

### **CMHC Solutions Lab on Enabling Citizen-Led Housing Development** with Toronto Council on Aging (2021)

*How might we create housing opportunities where seniors and people of all ages can thrive by rethinking the business of development as a vehicle for community stewardship and belonging?*

### **CMHC Solutions Lab on Health Housing Quality in Toronto** with Wellesley Institute (2020)

*How might we ensure older private rental apartment buildings are in good repair and provide quality housing in Toronto by introducing new regulatory or program interventions?*

### **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?*

### **Ottawa Community Housing Business Model Innovation Strategy** (2018)

*How might we reimagine the OCHC business model to remain financially sustainable in the long-term while providing supports and appropriate housing to its tenants?*

# 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 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
- Socio-economic data analysis
- Program evaluation
- Quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Facilitation and community engagement
- Strategic foresight
- Systemic design
- 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 innovation practice involves working with community housing providers to improve resiliency through modernization and systems design. Most recently, we worked on a Community Housing Sector Transformation Lab with Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and an Access and Acquisitions Strategy for Covenant House Toronto.

### 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

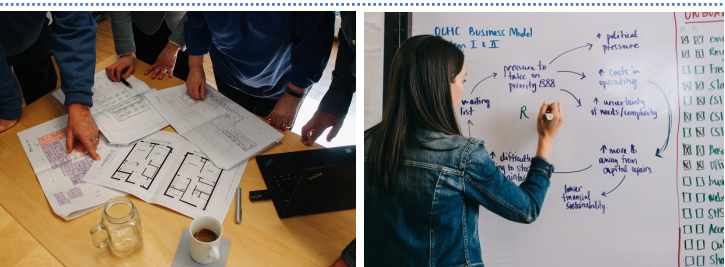
Our team has had the privilege to travel to all three Canadian Territories to engage with a broad range of stakeholders in 13 northern communities as part of our research for CMHC's study on the Challenges of Financing Market Housing in Northern Canada.

### 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

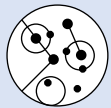
Our deep experience in developing affordable housing strategies involves understanding the diverse needs of Canadians and exploring tools and policies to promote affordable rental and ownership housing in urban and rural communities. SHS has prepared more than 40 housing needs assessments and strategies for municipalities in Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland.



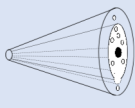
# Our approach is designed to create inclusive, safe, and accessible spaces for co-creation and implementation.

## OUR TOOLS

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 and evolving 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 involving all stakeholders 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 two 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, Principals, and Senior Consultants 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

**Christine Pacini,**  
*Partner and Co-Founder*

### Expertise and Solutions Lab Roles

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,** MES, MBA, RPP  
*Partner and Co-Founder*

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 of Environmental Studies. His role is a subject matter expert.

**Adrienne Pacini,** MDes  
*Principal, Strategic Design*  
**Solutions Lab Lead**

Adrienne has 8 years of experience in the housing sector. She leads SHS's Business Innovation practice, focusing on design research, strategic foresight, and systems change to support individuals in greatest housing need. She holds a Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation. Her roles include: principal lab consultant, innovation analyst, systems and service designer, stakeholder engagement specialist, facilitation and consultation expert, visual communications designer, and report writer.

**Tristina Sinopoli,** MCP  
*Principal, Real Estate Development*

Tristina has 9 years of experience in the social finance, supportive, and affordable housing sectors in the US and Canada. She is a leader in SHS's social purpose real estate practice area, helping organizations envision and realize new real estate development projects. Tristina holds a Master of City and Regional Planning (University of Pennsylvania).

**Lanxi Dong,** BDes  
*Senior Design Researcher*

Lanxi holds a Bachelor of Design in Industrial Design, focusing on collaborative tools for space and program design. She has experience with design research on several CMHC Solutions Labs supporting seniors, people with disabilities, and individuals experiencing homelessness. Her roles include: ethnographic researcher, communications officer, and visual communications designer.

**Cheryl Hsu,** MDes  
*Senior Design Strategist*

Cheryl is an established strategist and ethnographic researcher. She has extensive experience designing for health and other service systems. She holds a Master 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 12 years of experience in the housing sector. She holds degrees in architecture and urban planning and is a leader in SHS's Policy and Research practice. Her roles include: data scientist, research advisor, ethnographic researcher, stakeholder engagement specialist, subject matter expert and report writer.

**Isanna Biglands,** *Senior Housing Policy Analyst*

Isanna holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and is pursuing a Master of Arts in Economics. She is knowledgeable about municipal policies and programs to promote the creation of affordable housing, including inclusionary zoning policy. Her roles include: data scientist, research advisor, and report writer.

**Shannon Holness,** MES  
*Development Planning and Policy Analyst*

Shannon holds a Master of Environmental Studies in Planning and has 7 years of experience engaging diverse communities in community and urban planning initiatives related to housing policy, neighbourhood resilience, and cultural planning. Her roles include: facilitation and consultation expert, data scientist, and ethnographic researcher.

**Dalton Wudrich,**  
*Senior Consultant*

Dalton has 20 years of experience as an engineer, housing policy manager, and housing planner at various municipalities in Alberta and Ontario. Dalton brings his multi-jurisdictional experience to his analysis of provincial and regional housing policies and programs.

## CONTACT

### Mailing

70 East Beaver Creek Road, Unit 30  
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3B2

### Contact • Adrienne Pacini

**T:** 905-763-7555 x. 101 • **E:** apacini@shs-inc.ca  
**W:** shs-inc.ca