

Improving *Housing Stability* Among Indigenous Residents at Horizon Housing

Report Compiled For:
Horizon Housing

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About the *Author*

NICK FALVO IS A CALGARY-BASED RESEARCH CONSULTANT WITH A PHD IN PUBLIC POLICY. FLUENTLY BILINGUAL (ENGLISH/FRENCH), HE IS A MEMBER OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE *CANADIAN REVIEW OF SOCIAL POLICY/REVUE CANADIENNE DE POLITIQUE SOCIALE*. HE IS ALSO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, NORTH AMERICA, OF THE *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON HOMELESSNESS*.



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Author's Situation Relative to Indigenous Peoples

Nick is a non-Indigenous man. Prior to pursuing a PhD, he spent 10 years working directly with persons experiencing absolute homelessness in Toronto, some of whom were Indigenous. While pursuing his PhD, he was the primary researcher on one research project in the Northwest Territories and another in the Yukon (in both of these territories, most persons experiencing absolute homelessness are Indigenous). Both of those projects were supervised by Professor Frances Abele (Carleton University) and involved community research partnerships. Also while pursuing his PhD, he was a member of the Curriculum Sub-Committee of the Carleton University Institute on the Ethics of Research with Indigenous Peoples. The sub-committee created summaries of core curriculum modules, learning objectives for those modules, and module descriptions for the Institute. In 2019, he completed Fundamentals of OCAP®, a partnership between Algonquin College and the First Nations Information Governance Centre. He recently wrote a chapter for a report commissioned by Calgary Homeless Foundation seeking to better understand the flow of persons between Treaty 7 First Nations and Calgary's homeless-serving sector; in order to do this research, he travelled to both Kainaiwa First Nation and Piikani First Nation. He is still learning about Indigenous world views and has benefitted enormously from mentorship he has received from the Advisory Committee guiding the present project, most of whose members are Indigenous.

Acknowledgements

APPROXIMATELY 100 PEOPLE ASSISTED WITH THIS PROJECT. THEY INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

STAFF AT HORIZON HOUSING: Martina Jileckova came up with the idea for this report as the consultant was completing another exercise with Horizon. She was very receptive to his suggestion that these questions be pursued, and she supported her staff in moving the idea forward. Che Greywall then led the funding application, taking the time to carefully understand the project and coordinate early discussions involving the funder; she also provided very important logistical assistance at various stages of the project, after it had begun. Arianne Brady project-managed the exercise from start to finish, providing thoughtful leadership during all phases. Finally, Sarah Wherry provided ongoing assistance and support throughout the life of the project; this includes her participation as a member of the project's Advisory Committee (see below).

COMMUNITY HOUSING TRANSFORMATION CENTRE: This project would not have been possible without the generous support of the Community Housing Transformation Centre (CHTC). Luc Labelle and Chris Rootsart were especially helpful in moving this application forward.

MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE: This project has been guided by an Advisory Committee, consisting of the following six individuals: Arianne Brady (Horizon Housing); Richard Horvath (Metis Calgary Family Services), Katelyn Lucas (Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary), Christy Morgan (Trellis), Tim Patterson (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness) and Sarah Wherry (Horizon Housing). They gave generously of their time, knowledge and wisdom, participating in monthly meetings, reviewing documents and participating in focus groups and presentations of draft findings.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED: This project involved interviews with 15 of Horizon's Indigenous residents and 10 subject specialists in Alberta and British Columbia. Each interview lasted approximately one hour, and several of the people interviewed provided feedback on an early draft of the report. Their identity is being preserved in order to prevent any possible reprisals.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS: Four focus groups were held with a total of 32 individuals, including: Elders and Knowledge Keepers; staff at Calgary-based non-profits that partner with Horizon; staff at primarily Indigenous-serving organizations that do not currently partner with Horizon; and all members of Horizon's Leadership Team. All focus group participants were very generous with their time and provided invaluable input into the report's content. Several focus group participants also provided very helpful feedback on a draft version of the report.

REVIEWERS: Several individuals not formally part of this project agreed to review an early draft of this report. They include Catherine Boucher, Jodi Bruhn, Bree Denning, Susan Falvo, Sharon Goulet, Rod Hill, Lisa Ker, Christina Maes Nino, James McGregor, Jenny Morrow, Allan Moscovitch, Matt Nomura, Shayne Ramsay, Michael Sadler and Ray Sullivan. They were generous with both their time and input.

REPORT DESIGN & LAYOUT: Joel Sinclair



Purpose of Report

THE MISSION OF HORIZON HOUSING IS TO PROVIDE SAFE, STABLE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO PEOPLE IN CALGARY. THIS REPORT WAS BORN FROM A RECOGNITION THAT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE WHO LIVE AT HORIZON HOUSING EXPERIENCE DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGH LEVELS OF HOUSING INSTABILITY AS A RESULT OF NON-VOLUNTARY EXITS. HORIZON ENGAGED CONSULTANT NICK FALVO TO EXPLORE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. **What are the major factors that account for less favourable housing outcomes for Horizon's Indigenous residents?**
2. **What should Horizon do differently in order to improve outcomes for Indigenous residents?**
3. **What should Horizon's partners do differently in order to improve outcomes for Indigenous residents?**
4. **What, if any, measures should be taken by the various orders of government in order to improve housing outcomes for Horizon's Indigenous residents?**

Thank You to Contributors

Horizon Housing worked closely with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, residents with lived experience, subject matter experts, and front-line service providers to inform the assessment process and develop resulting recommendations. Horizon Housing wishes to extend its gratitude to all participants for their contributions.

Land Acknowledgement

With this project and in daily practice, we reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships between nations and building our own understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures.

We honour and acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani as well as the Îyâxe Nakoda (Stoney Nakoda) and Tsuut'ina Nations. We acknowledge the city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We give thanks to the generations of people who stewarded this land, and we recognize our shared responsibility to continue to honour and care for it.

While most contributors are located within Treaty 7 territory, this assessment also included contributions from individuals and organizations who reside within other traditional territories. We would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and caretakers of those lands as well.

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Abstract

Horizon Housing is a non-profit affordable housing provider in Calgary that currently owns and operates over 800 units across 19 buildings. Residents at Horizon Housing who identify as Indigenous (i.e., First Nation, Métis or Inuit) have experienced a higher rate of negative exits relative to non-Indigenous residents. The present exercise therefore sought to shed light on what might reduce the rate of negative (i.e., involuntary) exits among Indigenous residents. This exercise involved 15 one-on-one interviews with Indigenous residents at Horizon, as well as 10 interviews with subject specialists and four focus groups. The findings suggest Indigenous residents may experience more positive housing outcomes if they had access to: on site cultural programming; Elders; and opportunities to smudge. Further, by enhancing its resident orientation process, Horizon could work with residents, partner agencies and Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for Indigenous residents. All of these measures would be easier to implement if Horizon were to hire an Indigenous liaison person, improve staff training on Indigenous world views, and increase the size of its Resident Services Team (which provides front-line assistance to residents). Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, an approach to building design whereby a law enforcement lens is applied to the built environment, could potentially result in a reduced police presence at Horizon's buildings (making Indigenous residents feel safer). And some evictions for non-payment of rent could be prevented if Horizon were to implement an eviction prevention initiative whereby rent could be covered in the case of extenuating circumstances. All of these policy recommendations would benefit from external funding (including from all orders of government) as well as Indigenous representation among Horizon's leadership. Progress could be gauged with the help of an annual survey specifically for Horizon's Indigenous residents.

Executive Summary

HORIZON HOUSING IS A NON-PROFIT AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDER IN CALGARY THAT OWNS AND OPERATES OVER 800 UNITS ACROSS 19 BUILDINGS. THEY ALSO OWN NINE SUPPORTED GROUP HOMES. WITH 25 FULL-TIME STAFF, HORIZON WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MORE THAN 40 COMMUNITY AGENCIES THAT REFER RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE ONGOING SOCIAL SUPPORTS SO RESIDENTS CAN MAINTAIN STABLE HOUSING OVER THE LONG TERM.

One of Horizon's desired outcomes is low rates of negative exits among its residents (see Appendix 1 for Horizon's logic model). A negative exit at Horizon is defined as an exit that happens for reasons other than a resident wishing to move, meaning it is involuntary on the part of the resident. Negative exits include both evictions (typically due to non-payment of rent or a serious incident) and non-renewals, where Horizon chooses not to enter into a new lease with a resident. While just over 10% of Horizon's residents are thought to be

Indigenous, 44% of Horizon's negative exits concern Indigenous residents (i.e., residents who are First Nation, Métis or Inuit). It is worth noting that 78% of negative exits experienced by Indigenous residents at Horizon involve a tenancy that lasts less than a year (see Appendix 2). Such high rates of negative exits create challenges not only for Indigenous residents, but also to the organization as a whole (e.g., non-payment of rent, damage to the unit, etc.).

In 2020, Horizon reached out to Nick Falvo Consulting to help them answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the major factors that account for less favourable housing outcomes for Horizon's Indigenous residents?**
- 2. What should Horizon do differently in order to improve outcomes for Indigenous residents?**
- 3. What should Horizon's partners do differently in order to improve outcomes for Indigenous residents?**
- 4. What, if any, measures should be taken by the various orders of government in order to improve housing outcomes for Horizon's Indigenous residents?**

In order to shed light on these questions, the following methodological approaches were used: a literature review; interviews with Indigenous residents at Horizon; interviews with subject specialists; and focus groups. An Advisory Committee consisting of four Indigenous people

and two non-Indigenous people met monthly to advise the consultant.

The findings suggest Indigenous residents may experience more positive housing outcomes if they had access to: on-site cultural programming; Elders; and opportunities to smudge. With that in mind, this report recommends that Horizon organize on-

site programming with an Indigenous focus, arrange access for residents to a rotation of Elders and create opportunities for residents to smudge in Horizon's buildings. Further, by enhancing its resident orientation process, Horizon could work with residents, partner agencies and Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for Indigenous residents.

All of these measures could be more easily achieved if Horizon were to hire an Indigenous liaison person and improve staff training with respect to Indigenous world views. Horizon should also consider increasing the size of its Resident Services Team (which provides front-line assistance to residents); ideally, it should do so with Indigenous staff. Crime Prevention Through Environmental

Design, an approach to building design whereby a law enforcement lens is applied to the built environment, could potentially result in a reduced police presence at Horizon's buildings over the long term. Finally, some evictions for non-payment of rent could be prevented if Horizon were to implement an eviction prevention initiative whereby rent could be covered in the case of extenuating circumstances.

All policy recommendations outlined in this report would benefit from funding support from external sources (including all orders of government) as well as Indigenous representation among Horizon's leadership. Progress could be gauged with the help of an annual survey specifically for Horizon's Indigenous residents.

Introduction

HORIZON HOUSING IS A NON-PROFIT AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDER IN CALGARY THAT OWNS AND OPERATES OVER 800 UNITS ACROSS 19 BUILDINGS. THEY ALSO OWN NINE SUPPORTED GROUP HOMES. WITH 25 FULL-TIME STAFF OF THEIR OWN, HORIZON WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MORE THAN 40 COMMUNITY AGENCIES THAT REFER RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE ONGOING SOCIAL SUPPORTS SO RESIDENTS CAN MAINTAIN STABLE HOUSING OVER THE LONG TERM.

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While just over 10% of Horizon's residents are believed to be Indigenous (i.e., First Nation, Métis or Inuit), 44% of Horizon's negative exits concern Indigenous residents. It is worth noting that 78% of negative exits experienced by Indigenous residents at Horizon involve a tenancy of under one year (see Appendix 2). High rates of negative exits create challenges not only for Indigenous residents, but also to the organization as a whole (e.g., non-payment of rent, damage to the unit, etc.).

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The following methodological approaches were used: a literature review; interviews with Indigenous residents at Horizon; interviews with subject specialists; and focus groups. An Advisory Committee consisting of four Indigenous people and two non-Indigenous people met monthly to advise the consultant. A more nuanced explanation of the methodological approach can be found in Appendix 3.

The present report begins by discussing the national, provincial and local policy context. It then discusses cultural identity and racism, followed by the report's findings and policy recommendations.

Policy Context

HOUSING STABILITY IS NOT DETERMINED SOLELY BY INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND THEIR LANDLORDS. RATHER, DECISIONS BY GOVERNMENTS BOTH PAST AND PRESENT HAVE AN IMPORTANT IMPACT ON THESE INTERACTIONS. SUCH DECISIONS AFFECT THE LIFE EXPERIENCES OF RESIDENTS, PREVIOUS HOUSING EXPERIENCES OF RESIDENTS, THE FINANCIAL CONTEXT OF BOTH RESIDENTS AND HOUSING PROVIDERS, AND BOTH THE AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF HOUSING. THE PRESENT SECTION DISCUSSES THIS CONTEXT.

The National Context

Across Canada, Indigenous Peoples struggle to find affordable and appropriate housing. A 2018 federal government evaluation makes the following observation:

Key informants for the evaluation noted that many Indigenous people migrate to urban centres due to a lack of housing and/or employment in their home communities, or to access health services, but then find it challenging to find employment, and have adequate income to support themselves, and to obtain housing in their new community (ESDC, 2018, p. 9).

It is hardly an accident that Indigenous Peoples face housing challenges in Canadian cities. As Bruhn (2020) notes: “According to the Constitution as it was originally designed, **no** First Nations person was to feel at home in the city – at least not while retaining their Indigenous identity” [emphasis in original] (Bruhn, 2020, p. 110). Bruhn further notes that “few foresaw a future in which First Nations people would live outside reserve boundaries **as Indigenous people** [emphasis in original]...” (Bruhn, 2020, p. 110). Belanger and Weasel Head further note: “Until recently it was commonly understood that Aboriginal peoples live on reserves...Federal policy unwittingly manufactured a reserve-urban binary that acknowledged First Nations as political communities that simultaneously offered no

provisions for urban Aboriginal peoples.” (Belanger & Weasel Head, 2013, p. 6).

A 2019 report by Canada’s Parliamentary Budget Officer includes a revealing assessment of future planned federal spending on urban Indigenous housing in Canada, noting: “The planned level of funding for federally administered community housing for Indigenous households not living on reserves (\$257 million) is less than half the level of funding provided over the prior 10 years (\$534 million)” (Segel-Brown, 2019, p. 17). This holds even in light of the re-emergence of long-term federal involvement in housing, broadly outlined in the National Housing Strategy unveiled in November 2017.

The Alberta Context

On a per capita basis, Alberta has fewer subsidized housing units than Canada as a whole.¹ According to the most recent Census, subsidized housing represents just 2.9% of Alberta’s housing units; for Canada as a whole, the figure is 4.2%.

Further, when Alberta’s provincial government does fund new subsidized units, the process lacks transparency. Housing funding is not allocated via a formal grant program through which non-profits (i.e., community housing/non-market housing providers) can apply for funding; such a process has not been in place in Alberta since 2012.

¹ According to Statistics Canada’s 2016 Census of Population, subsidized housing “includes rent geared to income, social housing,

public housing, government-assisted housing, non-profit housing, rent supplements and housing allowances.”

The Government of Alberta also lacks a clear, public reporting structure for provincially-subsidized housing. For example, most Albertans—including very well-placed sources in the affordable housing sector—do not know: how much recent funding was used for repairs vs. new builds; how much of this funding has been dependent on cost-matching from other orders of government; what types of projects have received the funding; which types of households have been targeted; or to which municipalities the funding has flowed. This lack of transparency makes it very challenging for key actors in the non-profit housing and homeless-serving sectors to plan; it has also made it virtually impossible for key players in the sector to have a democratic dialogue about how public funding for housing is being allocated.

In the 2020 Alberta budget, the Government of Alberta announced that its Indigenous Housing Capital Program, which seeks to increase the supply of affordable housing for Indigenous Peoples, was being cut from \$120 million over four years to \$35 million over four years.

The Calgary Context

According to Belanger et al. (2019), “*Indigenous peoples have been migrating in larger numbers to urban centres such as Calgary since the mid-1950s. Friendship Centres were established in response to this influx...*” (Belanger et al., 2019, p. 8). Belanger et al. also identify the following barriers to Indigenous Peoples finding and maintaining rental housing in Calgary: long wait lists for subsidized housing; racist stereotypes held by landlords; and a lack of support for individuals transitioning from reserve to city (Belanger et al., 2019). Based on their interviews with Calgary landlords, the authors argue:

The landlords were most concerned about Indigenous peoples importing reserve lifestyles to the city and as such their properties. Reserve lifestyles were portrayed as being incompatible with being

a suitable renter and citizen. As the landlords noted, living on reserve means your rent is paid, and that home maintenance remains the First Nations government’s responsibility. Being raised with an expectation of subsidies led landlords to conclude that Indigenous tenants’ rents will fall into arrears due to the fact that they’ve never had to formally pay their rent... [T]he landlords condemned reserve lifestyles, while portraying those individuals moving from the reserve and into the city as ill prepared for urban living. (Belanger et al., 2019, p. 18).

In discussing homelessness among members of Treaty 7 First Nations, Lindstrom notes: “*On the reserve, they’re so many living in one house and you come to the city. You don’t realize, ‘oh I can’t have all my relatives and a bunch of people living with me, it just has to be me’*” (2020, p. 52). Bruhn further notes: “*Indigenous people often need to house large, intergenerational families and require larger houses than can be afforded in most cities. Crowding often leads to evictions*” (Bruhn, 2020, p. 120). Landlords have a general awareness of this phenomenon—recent research undertaken in Calgary finds many landlords believe “*that Indigenous tenants will inevitably invite family to stay permanently; or large numbers of uninvited family members will simply arrive and never leave*” (Belanger et al., 2019, p. 18).

A 2018 study about tenants housed in Calgary Homeless Foundation-funded Housing First programs found that Indigenous tenants needed social work support longer than non-Indigenous tenants—even after the study controlled for income, education, and a history of family violence. In other words, it took Indigenous tenants longer to move on to independence than non-Indigenous tenants, even non-Indigenous tenants with the same income, same education and same reported history of family violence (Jadidzadeh & Falvo, 2018). Results of this Calgary study suggest that data alone does not tell us what we need to know

about the supports needed by Indigenous tenants; clearly, qualitative research is needed to shed light on this important social challenge.

To gauge the housing needs of Canadians, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation uses a measure called core housing need. A household is said to be in core housing need if, out of financial necessity, it either pays more than 30% of its gross

household income on housing, lives in housing requiring major repairs, or lives in housing with insufficient bedrooms for the household size in question. According to the 2016 Census, just under 10% of Calgary’s population experiences core housing need; by contrast, nearly 17% of Indigenous households in the city are in core housing need.

Table 1
Indigenous Peoples in core housing need, Calgary (based on 2016 Census)

	Number of people	Number of people living in core housing need	Percentage of households living in core housing need
<i>Total population</i>	1,335,095	130,290	9.8
<i>Indigenous persons</i>	39,405	6,605	16.8
<i>Status Indian persons</i>	13,225	3,260	24.7
<i>Non-status Indian persons</i>	5,820	975	16.8
<i>Métis persons</i>	21,845	2,555	11.7
<i>Inuit persons</i>	455	45	9.9
<i>Non-Indigenous persons</i>	1,295,695	123,690	9.6

Note. These figures do not account for households living on reserve, as rates of core housing need are not calculated in many of Canada’s First Nations communities. To calculate core housing need, one must know the cost of market housing (which often does not exist in First Nations communities). Further, many Indigenous people do not self-identify, and so the true numbers could be higher.

Source. CMHC (2019). Core housing need characteristics by population and gender. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>

It is also important to remember that, as mentioned, Alberta has far fewer subsidized housing units than Canada as a whole.

Academic Literature on Housing Stability

There is very little academic literature on factors that predict housing stability, though one Canadian study is worth considering here. As part of Canada’s five-city At Home/Chez Soi research project, Adair et al. (2017) followed nearly 2,000 individuals over

two years, interviewing them every three months. The study found participants housed for the shortest period were more likely to have had lower income before receiving housing and longer histories of homelessness; they were also more likely to be both male and Indigenous. While this finding adds useful context to the present report, it is worth noting that the lack of existing Canadian research on housing stability makes the present exercise especially important.

Cultural *Identity* and Racism

MORE THAN TWO DECADES AGO, THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL PEOPLES (RCAP) FOUND THAT URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE STRESSED “*THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF RETAINING AND ENHANCING THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY WHILE LIVING IN URBAN CENTRES...*” (NEWHOUSE & PETERS, 2011, P. 8). THE FOLLOWING QUOTE FROM THE REPORT OF THE NATIONAL ROUND TABLE ON ABORIGINAL URBAN ISSUES (PUBLISHED IN 1993 AS PART OF RCAP’S WORK) IS ESPECIALLY INSTRUCTIVE:

One speaker on urban issues declared,

“We don’t leave our identity at the edge of the city.” Crossing the city limits does not transform Aboriginal people into non-Aboriginal people; they go on being the particular kind of person they have always been—Cree, Dene, Mohawk, Haida. The intention of Aboriginal people to go on being here, to go on expressing their Aboriginal identity and to pass it on to their children, was a consistent theme in presentations by urban Aboriginal people at the round table and in hearings across the country (RCAP, 1993, p. 3).

This is especially challenging in light of the well-documented racism experienced by Indigenous persons in Calgary. Public opinion polling has found the following:

There is a very strong perception among Aboriginal peoples in Calgary that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes about them, the most prominent being about alcohol and drug abuse. Although a minority believe that these attitudes may be changing for the better, the balance of opinion is that they remain unchanged... Almost all Aboriginal peoples in Calgary agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people. A majority say they have personally been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background... (Environics Institute, 2012, p. 36).

Against this backdrop, the present report will now outline the major findings from interviews and focus groups.

Findings

THREE DOMINANT THEMES EMERGED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS DURING THE PRESENT STUDY. THE FIRST PERTAINS TO A STRONG DESIRE ON BEHALF OF INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS FOR THERE TO BE REGULAR CULTURAL PROGRAMMING ON SITE AT HORIZON BUILDINGS. THE SECOND RELATES TO A DESIRE TO SMUDGE. THE THIRD MAJOR THEME RELATES TO UNEASINESS EXPRESSED WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERABLE POLICE PRESENCE AT HORIZON BUILDINGS. LESS DOMINANT TOPICS RAISED BY INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS INCLUDED: A STRONG APPRECIATION FOR THE FACT THAT THIS ANALYSIS WAS BEING DONE (INCLUDING FOR THE TOBACCO OFFERING PROVIDED BEFORE EACH INTERVIEW); AN APPRECIATION FOR THE INDIGENOUS ART LOCATED IN SOME HORIZON BUILDINGS; AND RACISM FROM OTHER RESIDENTS AND SOME STAFF. EACH THEME WILL NOW BE FURTHER DISCUSSED.

“You have to heal the trauma.”

- Subject specialist

“Healing circles are important. Clients are afraid to open up. They start to open up once they start to hear other stories.”

- Elder

A Strong Desire for Cultural Programming On Site

A strong desire was expressed by Indigenous residents for bringing together Indigenous residents at Horizon, ideally with an Elder. This might include for activities such as: smudge; sharing circles; sweats; arts and crafts; food-related activities (e.g., stew and bannock); and possibly drumming.

One resident expressed frustration with respect to the current lack of opportunity in getting to know other Indigenous residents in their building, stating:

It would be nice to have a craft group or a healing group for the building. I think this should all be done at the level of the building. I don't feel comfortable approaching strangers. When just walking by them, it's a bit superficial. Ice-breaking opportunities would be nice... I would like to see Elders brought in. It's probably been a

good 15 years since I've seen an Elder... I would like it if Elders were to come in and teach me how to smudge... If we had group activities at the building, [staff could] learn by stopping in to those activities.

Another resident noted:

It would be nice to have access to a community Elder. For example, the Elder could help us both in accessing sweetgrass and sage, and also coming to smudge with us. Right now, [my partner and I] would like to give our kids Indigenous names. We don't know where to start. An Elder could help point us in the right direction... Sharing circles would also be nice. It would be nice to have such venues to talk and move on with their lives; get things off our chest. I would like to connect with someone or a program that could help with language... A community Elder would be perfect. Maybe

they'd know about a sweat happening nearby; they could tell us about it.

Yet another resident noted:

I'd be interested in knowing about the other Indigenous residents in the building. It would be nice to be introduced to them. Where are they from? If we were all brought together to get to know each other, that would be nice. It's a bit odd approaching a stranger on my own.

Another expressed the need for Indigenous residents to come together as a community, in part to get to know each other's respective Indigenous cultures. The resident noted: *"This is Blackfoot country. I'm Cree and the Blackfoot are taught to hate the Cree. If we were brought together, that would make things easier...It would also be nice if Horizon helped us access Elders."*

While cultural programming already exists at other Calgary non-profit organizations, offering this program *on site* can be particularly important, keeping in mind that some residents have physical mobility challenges. In the words of one subject specialist interviewed for this report: *"When I go to a sweat in Calgary, I need to drive 45 minutes away; I have a truck, so I can do that, but lots of tenants can't."*

Another resident offered a suggestion for the relatively near future:

It would be nice if someone could organize a feast for tenants. That would be a nice thing to do after the pandemic. Maybe for all of Horizon's residents. It could be a community feast. It would have to have an Elder to do the prayer for the food. Invite all tenants. Some people might bring their own offerings. There could be lots of prayers as well.

Residents who expressed interest in such on site programming consistently suggested that all such programs be open to non-Indigenous residents and

Horizon staff as well. One focus group participant added: *"It's crucial that the non-Aboriginal residents be exposed; you must do that in order to get to the heart of racism."*

One subject specialist interviewed for this report added the following: *"Many Indigenous households are disconnected and have learned about their culture through the media, which is not a great way to learn about Indigenous culture."*

Some specific advice on such programming gathered during interviews with subject specialists included:

- Start with one monthly activity at each building.
- Work diligently to advertise the event (possibly by paying some Indigenous residents to distribute flyers and put up posters).
- Invite all residents of a building (including non-Indigenous residents) and possibly extend invitations to Indigenous persons from the local community.
- Offer child care to participants (possibly in another part of the room).
- Provide food and beverages.
- Have each planned activity initially last 1-2 hours.
- Use a rotation of Elders, keeping in mind the diversity of Indigenous Peoples (e.g., Blackfoot, Cree).
- Have Elders 'on call' to residents who want to seek guidance outside of organized events.
- Provide appropriate compensation to Elders.
- Develop a protocol on how to work with Elders (e.g., how to approach them, what to ask of whom, what kind of compensation to provide, etc.).
- Do not be discouraged with low attendance on the first several attempts at organizing group activities.
- Anticipate that people walking past such events ('rubbernecking') may lead to those

same individuals participating in future activities.²

Several subject specialists noted that the use of physical space in each building plays a very important role in enabling such activity. One noted:

Make your common room [sometimes known as ‘amenity space’] used. That may require resources. That may require intentional planning. Don’t let it go unused. And as other residents see it, they’ll want to use it more. We feel that a space like that should be able to accommodate 20-30 people at once. This sometimes means pushing back to funders and insisting on a larger common space, and this may mean articulating to the funder on why you need a relatively large common area.

Availability of common space currently varies a great deal from one building to another at Horizon. The Horizon View building, for example, has five common spaces. But some of Horizon’s older buildings have no common space at all; further, in the case of some older buildings, converting one or more units into common spaces could easily cost \$50,000 to \$100,000 (not to mention the loss of the housing unit). Horizon includes common space in all newly constructed buildings—sometimes this includes a common amenity room, but sometimes it is simply office space.

A Desire to Smudge

Several Indigenous residents expressed a strong interest in smudge—i.e., “the lighting of herbs and medicines to cleanse the mind, body and spirit to bring peace and balance” (Mount Royal University, n.d.). However, many also expressed concern about a lack of clarity pertaining to rules about smudge at Horizon, as well as a concern that the smell from smudge can be mistaken for drug use. Some expressed interest in seeing a designated space to

smudge in Horizon buildings. (Horizon allows residents to smudge in their units, but cannot guarantee this will not trigger smoke alarms.)

Most Indigenous residents interviewed stated that it is very important for them to be able to smudge. One offered the following observation about smudge:

It’s important that I be able to do this inside my unit. I tried once and the smoke alarms went off; this has made me hesitant to do this again. Ideally, I’d like to smudge most days. Perhaps a designated area in the building for us to smudge and pray would work well... Home blessings are important. This is something I could do alone (as long as I can burn sage and sweetgrass).

One resident noted: “I’m worried about burning sweetgrass. We’ve had people call management on us, thinking that we’re smoking drugs.”

According to another resident: “I always feel I cannot light sweetgrass. I’m so afraid someone’s going to think it’s drugs and report me.”

Yet another noted: “Other residents and staff need to get used to the smell of smudging so they know we’re not using drugs. That’s actually the main reason I don’t like to smudge—I don’t want to be judged.”

One resident offered the following specific advice pertaining to residents moving into a building:

Upon moving in, it’s nice to get sage, sweetgrass and tobacco. People moving into a unit like to get this. In future, they should offer all three at move-in and then, now and again. When bad stuff happens in a building, a lot of Aboriginal people want to clear their space and energy.

One subject specialist interviewed suggested that non-Indigenous residents attending cultural

² In the words of one subject specialist interviewed for this report, “eventually, people’s curiosity gets the better of them.”

programming would help familiarize them with the smell, adding: *“Elders can teach them everything.”* Another subject specialist noted: *“It helps if other residents understand what smudge is.”* Yet another suggested that signage could help—e.g., a sign saying *“The scents you’re smelling are related to a cultural practice.”*

One subject specialist suggested that the same common room that accommodates activities could be renovated to make smudging easier:

You can have a large industrial-like hood fan in the building that appeases the fire department. Then, put cedar planking on the inside of the room—especially the top third of the walls, as the smoke usually sits at the top third of the wall. The scent of cedar will always be stronger than that of the smudge. A maintenance person or cleaner might have to use a spray bottle to improve the smell from time to time.

There is some capacity for smudge at Horizon, but not unlimited capacity. One focus group participant with strong knowledge of Horizon’s buildings said that smudging in one’s unit might set off a smoke alarm. Indeed, moving forward, some work would be involved in facilitating smudge in the privacy of one’s unit. Horizon staff would therefore have to lead a process in which, by trial and error, they could figure out how likely it would be for the smoke alarm to be activated.

The same thing applies with respect to smudge in group settings, which would likely be a more feasible way to justify the staff resources required to allow smudge in a safe way at pre-set times. This would involve notifying Calgary Fire Department (CFD) of Horizon’s intent to disable one or more smoke detectors and then creating a ‘fire watch’ system whereby staff monitor the halls to watch for smoke. There would be costs involved in making such arrangements, not only for staff time, but also (possibly) costs required by CFD. It would not be

unreasonable to expect \$500 in costs associated with a one- or two-hour group smudge.

If smoke alarms are indeed easily activated by smudge, a considerable amount of work might be required to facilitate it—work that might involve disabling the smoke alarm at pre-set times, and having staff monitor the halls.

Concern About Police Presence

Indigenous residents interviewed for the present report expressed concern about ongoing police presence at Horizon buildings. One reason this is cause for concern stems from an ongoing tense relationship between law enforcement officials and Indigenous Peoples (Comack, 2012). According to a recent Statistics Canada study, and not surprisingly: *“Indigenous peoples report less confidence in police compared with non-Indigenous people”* (Statistics Canada, 2020, p. 2).

One resident who lives in the Horizon View building noted: *“There seems to be a lot of police around. There’s always something going on. At least once a week there’s a police cruiser here, making me think there’s a lot of criminal activity here.”*

An Indigenous resident who lives in the Alice Bissett building noted:

I see gang members pull up in the back...There are EMS vehicles here almost daily...[T]here are cars that pull up that make me feel uneasy. I feel there may be gang activity. These guys act tough. I later see syringes in the area. We deal with a lot of gangs on my reserve. I’m familiar with them.

Another Indigenous resident noted:

I’ve had other tenants ask me for drugs. I just got asked last night for drugs...I feel uncomfortable (e.g., being asked for drugs when I take out the garbage). I have two children here with me. They’re 3 and 4.

Yet another resident was not as concerned with the police presence itself as the source of the police presence, noting: *“I sometimes think that the people who get referred often have problems with the law. Police cruisers are on site a lot.”*

One focus group participant offered the following: *“Many Indigenous people have negative experiences with law enforcement officials. So there’s a genuine fear. They worry they’ll get in trouble, either with police or their neighbour. It’s good to have police liaison officers come to meetings with residents.”*

One subject specialist suggested that cultural-specific programming (discussed above) could help address this, suggesting the following:

Invite other residents into a circle or conversation. Policing could be a topic of a conversation, with the following question being asked: “OK, why did you call the police?” A tea ceremony can also be held (i.e., a community consultation). There can be a report back afterwards.

Another went further:

Bring the police into the fold. Bring them into planning sessions and ask them for their advice. Genuinely ask them their

advice on how to develop new housing and plan spaces. Build a reputation with local police as being engaging and transparent.

Likewise, one focus group participant with strong knowledge of development said that police and other law enforcement officials can provide constructive advice about fencing, shrubs and ‘blind corners.’

Another focus group participant had the following suggestion: *“Maybe invite police officers to a meal with residents.”*

In one of the focus groups, a staff person from one of Horizon’s partner agencies noted that most Calgary police districts have community liaison staff who could be contacted by Horizon staff, noting: *“Reaching out to them would be a starting point.”* According to the Calgary Police Service website:

The Indigenous liaison officer also works with numerous agencies and programs to help promote awareness and healing within the community. This collaboration serves to better educate the Calgary Police Service of current issues as well as provide opportunities to assist the community in its own healing (Calgary Police Service, n.d.).

“Art makes residents feel they exist in a building.”

- Subject specialist

Indigenous Art

Several Indigenous residents interviewed for the present report expressed appreciation for the Indigenous art on display inside Horizon buildings. In the words of one resident: *“There’s native art around, and that’s pretty cool. It makes me feel that they respect our culture.”*

Another noted: *“I like the recognition shown. I see that Horizon has paintings in their lobby from a Native artist from my reserve. That’s pretty cool that Horizon does that. I know the guy!”*

Racism and cultural safety

Residents interviewed for the present study expressed concern about racism experienced,

particularly from other residents. One resident who lives in the Alice Bissett building reported experiencing racism on a daily basis from two specific residents in common areas of the building: “Sometimes they’ll say: ‘Did you drink up all your cough medicine today?’”

One resident told the following story about their building manager at Horizon:

He spoke to me like I was a child in front of The Alex case manager. He told me not to leave the key in the door. I’m 56. I’m not a child. Condescending statements like that bring me back to residential school.

One subject specialist interviewed for this report offered the following advice:

Develop an anti-racism policy into your tenancy agreements. Have people initial beside a specific clause about racism—even if it’s not legally binding, it can send an important message. Also, when residents are brought together in a common area, this provides an opportunity to discuss racism. Maybe even have a workshop just about anti-oppression/racism.

Staff Training

Several subject specialists interviewed for this project suggested there be more training on Indigenous world views for Horizon staff (including for building managers). At present, Indigenous training for Horizon staff lasts less than a day.

One subject specialist interviewed (who is himself Indigenous) noted: “I just did the Indigenous Canada online training through Coursera and it was fantastic!”

According to one focus group participant:

There are Circles of Reconciliation in the community, accessible to anyone. They’re their own organization. You don’t need to lead that; you can just attend [link:

<https://circlesforreconciliation.ca/>]. It’s a response to some of the TRC around learning. It’s pretty grassroots, with just some staff leading it across Canada. It’s open to all.

Another participant in the same focus group added (with respect to Circle of Reconciliation):

Yes, this was developed in response to the TRC. It’s a 10-week curriculum design co-facilitated by an Indigenous person and a non-Indigenous person. Maximum of 10 person per session. Each session is one hour long. We’re encouraging them to offer a Treaty 7 angle to their work; they may make this happen. It’s also free.

Resident Orientation

When new residents get the keys to their units at Horizon, the current intake process typically consists of a 20-minute conversation between the building manager and the new resident. Several subject specialists interviewed for the present report suggested that Horizon introduce an enhanced approach to resident orientation, in order to improve upon this. According to one subject specialist, an ongoing dialogue throughout a resident’s tenancy is crucial: “At intake, don’t just ask incoming residents if they want access to an Elder. Keep circling back to questions like that during tenancy.”

One subject specialist stated: “Residents need to identify their goals and know that the housing provider wants to help them get there.”

At Ambrose Place in Edmonton, The Medicine Wheel is used during intakes, with an Elder asking the questions and a staff person taking notes. Horizon might wish to use a similar approach with new Indigenous residents.

An enhanced resident orientation process, attended by the resident’s designated staff support person from the referring partner agency, might

provide a good opportunity to clarify policies and opportunities related to smudge at Horizon. It could also offer an opportunity for Horizon staff to discuss the organization's approach to anti-racism.

According to one focus group participant: *"Make sure it doesn't sound punitive. A lot of the Indigenous residents we have experience with have had very negative experiences with landlords in the past...The resident orientation process should be thorough but friendly."*

Another focus group participant offered the following insight about resident orientation:

At my agency, we do our orientation in stages. Otherwise, it's too much information at one time. The first stage involves the signing of the lease and a walk-through and review rights and responsibilities; the next stage discusses tenant's needs and what resources are available; then, we meet them weekly and make sure they're settling in, depending on acuity level. After three months, we start seeing them once a month; after six months; every three months.

Members of Horizon's Resident Services Team would, in principle, be well-placed to assist with such an enhanced resident orientation process.

However, there are currently just three staff on that team, with only two doing front-line work with residents. This is a rather limited staffing component when one considers that: a) Horizon has more than 1,000 residents; and b) Horizon is growing quickly. It would be ideal if that team could not only grow in size, but also bring on team members who are Indigenous.

Funding for Rent in the Case of Extenuating Circumstances

Several subject specialists suggested that it is important to both anticipate extended resident absences, as well as mitigate loss of tenancy stemming from such absences. Several key informants interviewed stated that it is common for Indigenous residents to leave the city for several months at a time to help a family member who is ill, or to be close to family members who are grieving. It is further noteworthy that 35% of negative exits among Indigenous residents at Horizon pertain to non-payment of rent (see Appendix 2).

Ideally, provincial income assistance policy would account for this, and demonstrate flexibility when a recipient leaves their unit for several months. Short of that, however, an eviction prevention program—possibly a 'rent bank' of sorts—could be created to address this challenge.



Recommendations

THIS REPORT OFFERS 10 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HORIZON HOUSING, NONE OF WHICH ARE INTENDED TO BE PRESCRIPTIVE. MANY WOULD INVOLVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER CALGARY-BASED NON-PROFITS—IN SOME CASES, WITH EXISTING PARTNERS, AND IN OTHER CASES WITH NEW PARTNERS.

All of these policy recommendations would benefit from external funding support, including from all orders of government. Historically in Canada, provincial and territorial governments have led on the ‘social work’ support front when it comes to affordable housing for vulnerable households. Thus, policy precedent would suggest that the provincial

government would likely be the most appropriate order of government to provide the additional funding assistance needed to support the measures considered below. Having said that, federal funding through Reaching Home could also assist each of these initiatives, as could funding from private sources.

Each will now be further discussed.

Cultural Programming


Indigenous residents at Horizon Housing have expressed a strong, consistent desire for cultural programming on site at Horizon buildings. Horizon’s Leadership Team should therefore make it a strong priority to operationalize such programming as quickly as possible. This would require resources, including to plan such activities, to pay Elders and to offer supports to residents (e.g., child care, refreshments, and transportation assistance).

Smudge Support

Since Indigenous residents consistently expressed a strong desire to smudge, Horizon should seriously consider having smudge be a major focus of some of the above cultural programming (with support from Elders). Horizon should also explore the likelihood of smudge setting off smoke alarms both inside units and in common areas, as well as mitigation strategies (i.e., encouraging smudge strategies that would be less likely to set off alarms). Regrettably, it may prove challenging to enable smudge inside units because of smoke alarms; however, smudge in common areas would likely be very feasible, possibly with an industrial fan in place. It should also be borne in mind that outdoor spaces can be used for smudge during warmer weather.

An Indigenous Liaison Person

Several participants suggested that Horizon hire a designated Indigenous liaison person (other terms for such a position include: Indigenous Advisor and Cultural Resource Person). This person could lend support to the Resident Services Team, help steward (i.e., ‘project manage’) Horizon’s Indigenous initiatives, track recommendations made in this report, and report on them regularly to meetings of Horizon’s Leadership Team, Horizon’s Board of Directors and the community at large. It is also likely that this new hire would soon develop their own recommendations for Horizon, and these too could be tracked and reported in this manner. Additionally, this tracking and reporting could provide updates on rates of negative exits experienced by Indigenous residents.



An Enhanced Resident Orientation Process

Several participants suggested that Horizon enhance its current resident orientation. Horizon might wish to consider a multi-stage orientation. One stage might focus on lease signing; another might review rights and responsibilities of both the resident and landlord; and another stage might focus on the resident's needs. It would be reasonable to assume the following:

- Approximately 100 Indigenous residents move into Horizon each year.
- An estimated \$500 in additional costs might be required in order to enhance each orientation process (i.e., \$250 for an Elder to participate + \$250 in additional staff costs for their additional time).
- A total of \$50,000 annually could allow for such an enhanced orientation.
- External funding could support this. For example, a \$175,000 grant application could support a three-year pilot that would include a \$25,000 budget line for evaluation.

Enhanced Staff Training

Several participants suggested that Horizon enhance its staff training, offering advice on a variety of learning platforms. Circles of Reconciliation and Coursera were both held up as good platforms, available free of charge. One way to track progress on this would be through staff performance reviews—this would not only create a mechanism for tracking progress, but also encourage staff to pursue their own independent learning paths.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is an approach to building design whereby a law enforcement lens is applied to the built environment. Persons certified in CPTED—often persons with law enforcement backgrounds—can provide specific recommendations pertaining to such things as blind spots, fencing and shrubbery in new buildings. Horizon might consider formally embedding CPTED in future building design. This might result in less criminal activity at Horizon buildings, which in turn could reduce police presence on site.

Eviction Prevention

In light of the desire/need of Indigenous residents to leave their units for extended periods and the risk this presents to tenancy, Horizon should consider offering funding for eviction prevention that would support residents needing to leave their units for an extended period. Such funding could help prevent eviction due to rental arrears. If Horizon does not already have funding for such an initiative, they might be able to receive it from Calgary Homeless Foundation, the Government of Alberta, or another funder. One idea would be to apply for three years worth of funding for such an initiative (on a pilot basis), pairing it with a budget for program evaluation.

Additional Staffing for Horizon's Resident Services Team

As noted by one focus group participant: "Even if Horizon wants to lean on partners for support, recall that Horizon is the first agency that often has knowledge of a crisis." This report's findings suggest that enhanced capacity is needed at Horizon in order to act on the recommendations contained herein. In the words of one Horizon staff person participating in a focus group:

Yes, we've got to do it ourselves in terms of leadership and resources. It's hard to lean on partners when you're not providing money. But it's good to go to them for their skills, knowledge and wisdom... You can lean on them for advice, but not delivery...unless you're paying them to do it.

One or more additional members of the Resident Services Team could allow Horizon to better support an enhanced resident orientation process, cultural programming, outreach with Elders and Knowledge Keepers and eviction prevention. When hiring, Horizon should be very intentional about trying to recruit Indigenous people for such positions. This may involve outreach by members of Horizon's Leadership Team, including to Treaty 7 First Nations located outside of Calgary.

Leadership

As Horizon moves forward on a journey to better support Indigenous residents, it would be useful for the organization to review its current leadership structure. In the words of one well-placed source who reviewed an early draft of this report:

One of my first questions would be: how reflective is the board and leadership at Horizon of the folks they serve? From the pictures and bios of the board and senior staff that I found on the website, not much. The corporate picture of the board with Calgary high-rises in the background is not very welcoming to marginalized folks. Unless those other voices are brought in and empowered, positive change is difficult.

With this in mind, it would be worthwhile for Horizon to recruit at least one Indigenous person to their board. It would also be worthwhile for Horizon to consider Indigenous representation on their staff leadership team, which currently includes their Chief Executive Officer and Directors. One possible way of addressing such staff representation could involve giving an Indigenous liaison person status at that level of the organization.

An Annual Survey

One way Horizon could assess their progress in making Indigenous residents feel more welcome would be with the help of an annual survey specifically for Indigenous residents. The survey could include open-ended questions that would encourage Indigenous residents to indicate both how they currently feel and how they perceive specific changes being implemented. In order to encourage participation in the survey, each survey could be administered either in person or by telephone—and each participant could receive a gift card. The person administering the survey could be either a Horizon staff person, a student, a consultant or even Horizon's Indigenous liaison person. Sample questions might include:

- When did you receive your resident orientation, and what did you think of it? Did it make you feel welcome? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
- Have you participated in some of the on-site cultural programming at Horizon?
- Do you feel comfortable smudging at Horizon? Are you aware of the rules pertaining to smudge?
- Are you aware that Horizon has hired an Indigenous liaison worker? Have you met them? If yes, what were your impressions? If no, why not?

Conclusion

INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS AT HORIZON HOUSING HAVE HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY REMAINING HOUSED, RELATIVE TO NON-INDIGENOUS RESIDENTS. WHEN ASKED DURING THE PRESENT INITIATIVE WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGE AT HORIZON, THEY INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ON-SITE CULTURAL PROGRAMMING, MORE OPPORTUNITY TO SMUDGE, ACCESS TO ELDERS AND A REDUCED POLICE PRESENCE.

With that in mind, this report recommends that Horizon organize on-site programming with an Indigenous focus, arrange access to a rotation of Elders and create opportunities for residents to smudge in Horizon's buildings. Further, by enhancing its resident orientation process, Horizon could create a more welcoming and supportive environment for Indigenous residents.

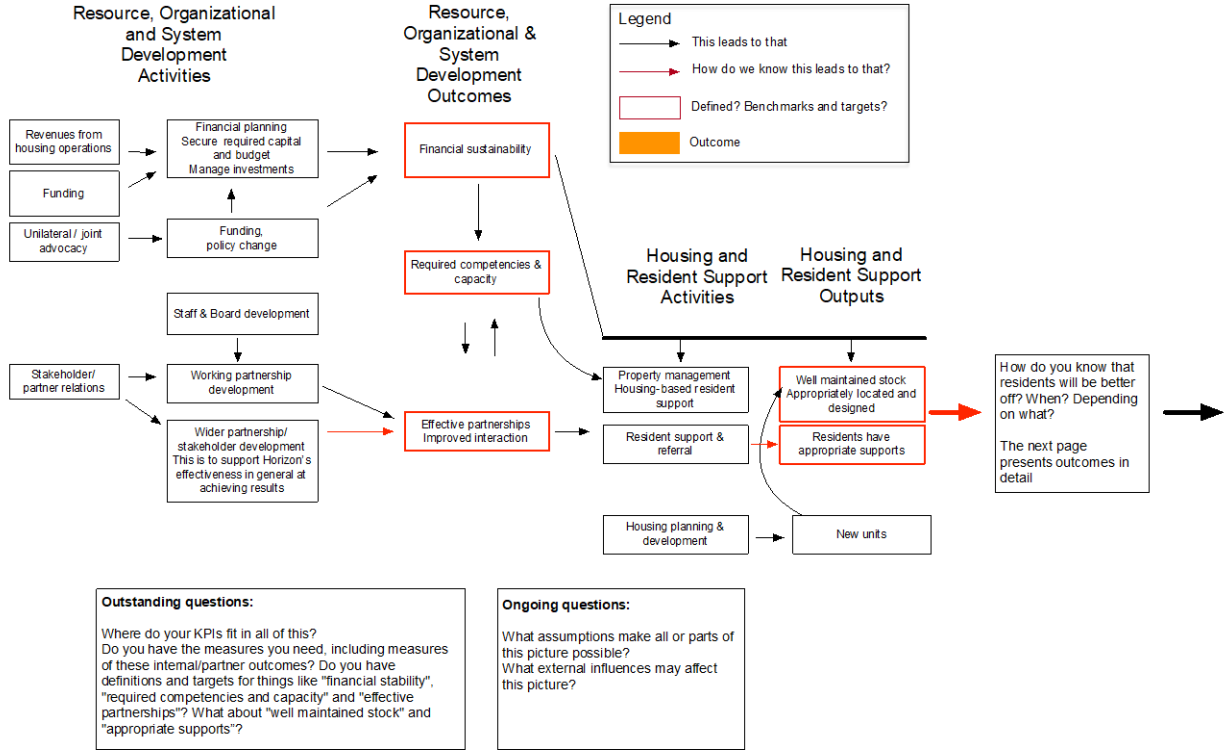
All of these measures could be more easily achieved if Horizon were to hire an Indigenous liaison person, improve staff training with respect to Indigenous world views, and increase the size of its Resident Services Team, which provides front-line assistance to residents—ideally, it would do so with Indigenous staff.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, an approach to building design whereby a law enforcement lens is applied to the built environment, could potentially result in a reduced police presence at Horizon's buildings over the long term. Finally, some evictions for non-payment of rent could be prevented if Horizon were to implement an eviction prevention initiative whereby rent could be covered in the case of extenuating circumstances.

All of these policy recommendations would benefit enormously from funding support from senior orders of government as well as Indigenous representation among Horizon's leadership. Progress could be gauged with the help of an annual survey specifically for Horizon's Indigenous residents.

Appendix 1: Logic Model

Horizon Housing Logic Model: Activities and Outputs
June 2020



Appendix 1: Logic Model (cont'd)

Horizon Housing Logic Model: Outcomes June 2020

This page carries on from the previous page, to present the outcomes that Horizon has identified as a) logically resulting from their activities and outputs (previous page); and b) measurable in the immediate, near or longer term.

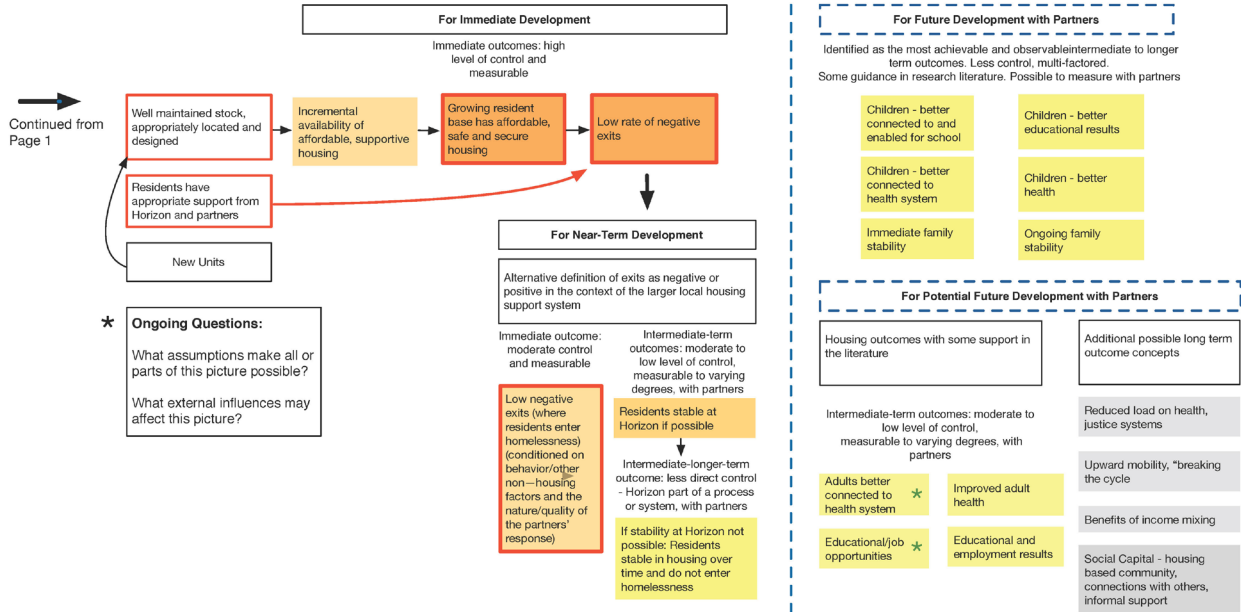
These outcomes are posited to follow from Horizon's outputs and activities, and from immediate outcomes, potentially, to intermediate and longer-term outcomes, as described by "theories of change"

Outcomes defined by Horizon and the degree of control expected are colour coded here
more control by Horizon → less control by Horizon

Legend

* Indicates that research exists on the connection of this outcome to affordable/stable housing

Indicates that definitions and/or benchmarks need development



Appendix 2: *Horizon Housing* data on negative exits

Data provided here covers the April 2019 - December 2020 period.

During this time, there were 98 total negative exits. Of those, 43 were Indigenous (representing 44% of all negative exits).

The official reasons for negative exits among Indigenous residents are as follows:

Official reasons for negative exits among Indigenous residents (Apr. 2019 – Dec. 2020)

<i>Reason</i>	Number of cases
<i>Eviction: 24 hours</i>	6
<i>Eviction: Guest management</i>	3
<i>Eviction: Non-payment of rent</i>	7
<i>Eviction: Other</i>	1
<i>Non-Renewal of lease: Guest management</i>	1
<i>Non-Renewal of lease: Non-payment of rent</i>	8
<i>Non-Renewal of lease: Ongoing issues</i>	17
TOTAL	43

Note. Evictions are typically more serious than non-renewals, with the former requiring an immediate resolution. “Ongoing issues” involves a combination of lease breaches (e.g., noise, late rent, behavioural challenges, guest behaviour, etc.).

In terms of length of tenancy, the following data is worth considering.

Length of tenancy among Indigenous residents experiencing negative exits

(Apr. 2019 – Dec. 2020)

<i>Less than 3 months</i>	11
<i>Less than 6 months</i>	12
<i>Less than 12 months</i>	10
<i>1-2 years</i>	7
<i>2-3 years</i>	2
<i>More than 3 years</i>	1
TOTAL	43

It is worth noting that 78% of negative exits experienced by Indigenous residents involve a tenancy that does not even last one year.

Appendix 3: *Methodology*

This project was guided by a six-person Advisory Committee that met virtually via Zoom on a monthly basis for the project’s duration. Four of its members were Indigenous and two were non-Indigenous. The Advisory Committee’s membership consisted of Arianne Brady, Richard Horvath, Katelyn Lucas, Christy Morgan, Tim Patterson and Sarah Wherry.

The project’s methodological approach consisted of the following components.

Literature Review

Readings were done about housing stability, urban Indigenous people in Canada, the national housing context, the provincial housing context and the municipal housing context. Some were identified by the consultant and some by members of the Advisory Committee.

Interviews with Residents

The consultant conducted 15 one-on-one semi-structured telephone interviews with current residents of Horizon who identified as Indigenous; they were either identified by Horizon staff or responded to promotional posters. Every reasonable effort was made by staff to recruit every Indigenous resident who was willing to participate; residents were not ‘cherry picked’ based on a perception that they would speak positively about their experiences. All interviews were voluntary and lasted approximately one hour each. In exchange for their time, each resident interviewed was provided with both a tobacco offering and a \$50 VISA Gift Card. The interview guide for these interviews can be found in Appendix 4 of the present report.

Interviews with Subject Specialists

In February 2021, the consultant conducted semi-structured Zoom interviews with 10 subject specialists located in either Alberta or British Columbia. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. All persons interviewed at this stage were identified by members of the project’s Advisory Committee. The interview guide for these interviews can be found in Appendix 5 of the present report.

The subject specialists were as follows:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>
<i>Carola Cunningham</i>	Ambrose Place
<i>Kim Ledene</i>	Trellis
<i>Arlene Oostenbrink</i>	Closer to Home Community Services
<i>Kirby Redwood</i>	Miskanawah Community Services Association
<i>Colin Sanderson</i>	Lu'ma Native Housing Society

Name Organization

<i>Jessica Smith</i>	Trellis
<i>Earl Thiessen</i>	Oxford House
<i>Alita Tocher</i>	M'akola Housing Society
<i>Dave Ward</i>	Ambrose Place
<i>Sarah Wherry</i>	Horizon Housing

Note. The naming of individuals and their organizations does not indicate a formal endorsement of this report's recommendations.

Focus Groups

Four focus groups were held in March 2021. Focus Group #1 was with Elders. Focus Group #2 was with staff from local non-profits that currently partner with Horizon Housing. Focus Group #3 was with front line staff from Calgary and area non-profits that primarily serve Indigenous clients. Focus Group #4 took place with members of Horizon's Leadership Team. Questions posed to focus group members can be found in Appendix 6 of the present report.

Focus group participants were as follows:

Name	Affiliation	Focus Group #
<i>Florence Alexson</i>	Saulteaux / Cree from Kahkewistahaw	1
<i>Wallace Alexson</i>	Saulteaux / Cree from Kahkewistahaw	1
<i>Jackie Bromley</i>	Blood Tribe	1
<i>Doreen Healy</i>	Blood Tribe	1
<i>Rod Hunter</i>	Bearspaw First Nation	1
<i>Rod Scout</i>	Siksika Nation	1
<i>Willow Burles</i>	Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary	2
<i>Amanda Dubois</i>	CUPS	2
<i>Kate Heney</i>	Trellis	2
<i>Kate Lepine</i>	Children's Cottage Society	2
<i>Erin Neal</i>	Calgary Drop-In Centre	2
<i>Stawan Wankhede</i>	CUPS	2

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>	<i>Focus Group #</i>
<i>Jennifer Webb</i>	Accessible Housing	2
<i>Tracy Anderson</i>	Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary	3
<i>Kehinde (Kenny) Ekpudu</i>	Stoney Health Services	3
<i>Mauricio Leiva</i>	OneContact Maintenance Services	3
<i>Joyce One Spot</i>	Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary	3
<i>Tanner Singer</i>	Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority	3
<i>Kathryn Williams</i>	Eagle's Nest Stoney Family Shelter	3
<i>Arianne Brady</i>	Horizon Housing	4
<i>Ellen Close</i>	Horizon Housing	4
<i>Louise Fisher</i>	Horizon Housing	4
<i>Martina Jileckova</i>	Horizon Housing	4
<i>Aaron Morris</i>	Horizon Housing	4
<i>Derek Muzyka</i>	Horizon Housing	4

Note. The naming of individuals and their organizations does not indicate a formal endorsement of this report's recommendations.

Circulation of Draft Documents

Drafts of all documents were circulated to the Advisory Committee for input; this included all interview guides as well as an early draft of the present report. An early draft of the present report was also circulated to all residents who were interviewed, all subject specialists, all focus group participants and several experts across Canada. All participants were then invited to attend virtual presentations of early findings in April 2021, one of which was geared specifically to participating Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Appendix 4: Interview Guide (*Residents*)

Target

Current Horizon residents who are Indigenous.

Anticipated length of interview

One hour

Opening script

“Thanks for agreeing to talk to me today. As you may recall, I’m helping Horizon Housing learn more about the experiences of residents who are Indigenous. The main goal of this exercise is to better understand their experiences. We’d like to also understand how Horizon can help create better experiences for their Indigenous residents. A report will get written about all of this. Your name won’t appear in that report. The report will talk about what people said when they were interviewed, but it won’t attach names to those comments. So this is a confidential discussion. I’ve made a tobacco offering; you’ve likely already received this. There will also be a \$50 VISA Gift Card delivered to you shortly after today’s interview.”

Consent

Consultant asks participant if they’re OK with this. If yes, consultant makes note of this. No signature required.

Questions

[***A version of each question will be asked, but wording may be modified. Some questions may be skipped. In many cases, there will be probing. Questions will be modified depending on whether it's a previous or current resident.]

General questions

Are you still a resident at Horizon?

What is your gender?

How old are you?

Have you lived in a First Nation community outside of Calgary? If yes, which community/communities and for how long?

During what years have you been a resident at Horizon Housing?

When you moved in, was it just you moving into the unit? Or, did you move in with other people (e.g., a child, a spouse, etc.)?

Can you tell me a bit about that experience? Has it been a good experience? A bad experience?

How were you referred to Horizon? Which partner organization referred and supported you (if applicable)?

In what location do you live at Horizon?

Successes

Can you tell me about what you have liked about your time at Horizon?

The unit. What do you like about your unit? For example, its size, layout, the kitchen, the view from your unit, etc.

Building. What do you like about the building and its neighbours?

Location. What do you like about the location of the building (e.g., the neighbourhood)?

Staff support. What do you like about the support you are receiving from staff at the partner organization? What do you like about the staff support you've received from Horizon?

Policies. Are there any rules or policies that have assisted you in being comfortable or feeling welcome in your home? If yes, are these rules/policies of Horizon or, are they the rules of a partner agency providing support?

Culture. To what extent would you say your culture has been respected at Horizon? In other words, have there been culturally-sensitive services offered to you as a resident?

Challenges

What have you not liked about your time at Horizon?

The unit. What do you not like about your unit? For example, its size, layout, the kitchen, the view from your unit, etc.

Building. What do you not like about the building and its neighbours?

Location. What do you not like about the location of the building (e.g., the neighbourhood)?

Staff support. What do you not like about the support you have received from staff at the partner organization? What have you not liked about the staff support you've received (or have not received) from Horizon?

Policies. Have there been any rules or policies that have prevented you from being comfortable or feeling welcome in your home? If yes, have these rules/policies been Horizon's, or have they been the rules/policies of a partner agency providing support?

Culture. To what extent would you say your culture has been (or not been) respected? In other words, have there been culturally-sensitive services that you feel could have been offered to you as a resident, but that have not been?

Safety

Do you feel safe when you are in your unit?

Do you feel safe in the building's hallways and common areas?

Do you feel safe in the neighbourhood?

Affordability

How much is your rent?

Do you find that affordable? Why or why not?


Culture

What is important to you when it comes to connecting with your culture at home?

While living at Horizon, have you faced stigma? Have you felt discriminated against on account of being Indigenous? Please explain.

Do you feel there has been enough opportunities to engage in your culture while living at Horizon? For example: home blessings, smudging, sharing circles, cultural programming; Elders; language opportunities? Which organization has provided these opportunities (if applicable)?

Do you feel that the staff who support you are sufficiently knowledgeable about Indigenous world views? Please identify which organizations they work for. If they are not sufficiently knowledgeable, what do you think would help them gain a better understanding?



As an Indigenous person, what could Horizon do to increase the opportunities to engage in your culture in their buildings?

If you could help us design a space that would meet your wishes and that of other residents, what programs or services would you like to see?

Family

While living at Horizon, have you felt that your family can come and be close to you?

Do you have the option to have extended family members move in without affecting your housing situation?

Do you have the option to move to a different unit at Horizon with one or more other family members?

Conclusion

Is there anything Horizon could have done or can be doing to create a more positive living experience for you?

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

We'd like to be in touch with you about results of this work. There will be a draft report to share (for comments) as well as a final report to distribute. There may also be a public event where results are presented. What's the best way for us to reach you about all of this?

Length of interview:

Appendix 5: Interview Guide *(Subject Specialists)*

Confidentiality

The content of interviews will be confidential. In other words, your name will not be associated with any answers you give.

Consent

Do I have your verbal consent to proceed?

Offerings

Is there an appropriate way for me to offer you tobacco and/or something else as part of this interview?

Interview questions

- Can you tell me a bit about your experience with this subject?
- What can housing providers do to create welcoming, inclusive spaces and homes for Indigenous residents?

Researchers often define ‘housing stability’ by length of time consecutively housed. Losing one’s housing after just a few months would suggest a low rate of housing stability; while a tenant remaining housed for several years would be viewed as involving a higher rate of housing stability.

- When it comes to housing stability for Indigenous residents, what do you think works?
- What specific measures do you feel housing providers need to take in order to encourage housing stability among Indigenous residents?
- What do support providers need to do in order to increase levels of housing stability of Indigenous residents?
- What specific measures should be taken by the various orders of government in order to improve housing outcomes for Indigenous people?
- When it comes to police presence in buildings, do you have specific advice for housing providers in terms of making Indigenous residents more comfortable?
- When it comes to addressing racism experienced by Indigenous residents, do you have specific advice for housing providers such as Horizon?
- Do you have specific advice as to how Indigenous residents can be brought together with an Elder/Knowledge Keeper on a regular basis for activities (e.g., smudging, sharing circles, sweats, arts and crafts, meals, drumming)?
- We’ve received feedback from both providers and residents that, on occasion, smudging may be mistaken for drug use. Do you have any advice for how we can navigate this in a positive way with residents?
- How can a housing provider support education about what smudge is to residents, partners and community?
- To what extent do you believe in the feasibility of having designated space in a building for smudging?

Length of interview:

Appendix 6: Protocol and Sample Questions (*Focus Groups*)

Land acknowledgement

Horizon staff person does land acknowledgment.

Introductions

Consultant goes first, then Horizon staff, then Advisory Committee members, then participants.

Overview of project

Consultant does this.

Two minutes (keeping in mind a written overview has already been provided to each participant).

Prayer (if applicable)

Initial findings

- Lots of appreciation that this project was happening (and that there was a tobacco offering).
- Appreciation for Indigenous art in the building.
- On the whole, a strong degree of satisfaction was expressed about the neighbourhood in which each resident lived.
- Concern re: extensive police presence at building.
- Racism from other residents.
- Strong desire expressed for bringing together Indigenous residents, ideally with an Elder. Smudging. Sharing circles. Sweats. Arts and crafts. Stew and bannock. Maybe drumming.
- Strong interest expressed in smudge. Lack of clarity re: rules and concern re: being mistaken for drug use. Perhaps a designated space to smudge in each building.

What's required today

-Consultant will ask questions.

-Participants will answer/respond.

-No firm plan for breaks; we can play this by ear.

Sample questions

1. Indigenous residents at Horizon have expressed a strong desire to have cultural programming offered on site (e.g., smudge, sharing circles, sweats, arts, crafts, drumming, meals). What advice do you have in terms of partner agencies that might be able to assist? How much of this programming should be done by Horizon staff (possibly newly-hired staff) and how much of it should be done by partner agencies? What specific advice can you offer about physical space needed for such activities?
2. Indigenous residents at Horizon have expressed interest in having an Elder come on site on a regular basis. Should Horizon lead this, or should Horizon ask a partner agency to lead this? Do you have

- advice on how to select and approach an Elder (or Elders), and what kind of remuneration should be offered? How often should the Elder come to each building? And how exactly would they engage with residents once on site (or once engaged)? Should one Elder be used all of the time, or should multiple Elders be used?
3. Indigenous residents at Horizon have expressed a strong desire to smudge—both in their own units and as a group. Many worry that the smell will be mistaken for drugs. What specific steps should Horizon take to support smudge? In other words, what does ‘smudge support’ look like in this context? Who should provide the support (Horizon vs. partner agencies) and how should Horizon engage with partner agencies?
 4. Indigenous residents at Horizon have expressed concern about a routine police presence at Horizon buildings. What can Horizon do about this? What kind of communication and engagement (possibly with both police and residents) can help reduce anxiety expressed by residents about police presence?
 5. Do you have specific advice on what a good resident orientation process might look like, keeping in mind the need to make Indigenous residents feel at home and the need to set expectations with all residents about racism?
 6. Does Horizon need a part-time (or even full-time) Indigenous advisor (somebody that could coordinate much of the above)? Is that a good idea? Or, should an existing staff person handle the coordination of this? Or should Horizon rely more on partner agencies for this additional cultural support to be coordinated?
 7. What specific advice would you offer Horizon with respect to improved staff training (in terms of understanding Indigenous world views)? Which organizations or persons should provide the training, and what does such training look like?
 8. For future partnerships between Horizon and Calgary-based organizations that are primarily Indigenous-serving, what are the essential ingredients/elements required for those partnerships to succeed? Should these partnerships involve co-ownership of units?
 9. Going forward, how would you like Horizon to involve you in ‘next steps?’

Length of interview:

Appendix 7: *Reference list*

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Improving Housing Stability Among Indigenous Residents at Horizon Housing

Report Compiled for:
Horizon Housing

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