



NAN HOUSING STRATEGY

Community Housing Plan Development Workshops

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Fall/Winter 2019 Community Visits

As part of developing the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Housing Strategy two community visits took place between October and December 2019. These visits looked to build on the learnings of the six community visits which took place in the summer of 2019 and focused on identifying the specific needs, concerns and goals of community members. In developing the NAN Housing Strategy it is recognized that while there are common issues within housing shared by NAN communities, each First Nation has a unique vision for its future.

During the eight community visits throughout 2019 over 250 community members were engaged in meetings, interviews and workshops. Over the three day visits, community housing workshops and meetings were held with youth, Elders, community members, Chief and Council, housing managers, construction crews and trainees as well as community health workers. The workshops followed a consistent format and asked similar questions to learn about current housing issues and to learn what each First Nation wants to see in their community, including types of housing, services, and public spaces.

The main themes which come from these community visits included:

- The need for greater housing diversity to address the needs of community members facing the greatest inequities. This includes: housing for people with disabilities, housing for Elders, housing for singles, housing for youth, housing for youth transitioning out of the care system, transitional housing and others.
- The need for housing designs and materials more appropriate for the climatic, geographic and cultural context of NAN First Nations.
- A need for additional capacity, training and skills development for community members. Importantly, this required the creation of new, appropriate programs and certifications to ensure success.
- The need for equitable access to community services including: health services, grocery stores, laundromats, postal services, play spaces, libraries, education and others.
- The need for long-term planning and improved governance structures for housing systems.

Developing the NAN Housing Strategy



The Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Strategy will fulfill the right of access to adequate housing and end the collective housing emergency in NAN territory. NAN and Together Design Lab have partnered with NAN First Nations for a 3 year project to:

1. Work at the community and regional level to develop housing solutions and action plans that recognize the unique needs, geographies and cultures of NAN First Nations.
2. Create community-led approaches to data collection and problem identification.
3. Support NAN First Nations' right to self-determination to their housing systems.
4. Encourage flexibility and creation of design solutions rooted in local lived experience.

Project learnings from workshops with community members in this phase will shape future phases of the project by providing specific areas of change needed and areas where NAN can support the goals of communities. In particular, some recommendations for NAN have included:

- Identifying possible design alternative for varying households which include accessibility requirements in each design;
- Exploring housing design alternatives that integrate traditional practices and considers surrounding environment and climate;
- Exploring integrative models of youth housing for NAN First Nations which include healing components;
- Reviewing definitions of remoteness and existing remoteness quotients and policies impacting funding;
- Identifying and advocating for the expansion of funding programs which support community infrastructure and growth;
- Developing resources to support and inform housing managers;
- Reviewing current funding policies for training and skills development programs.

Metrics Development

One of the objectives of community workshops in this phase of NAN Housing Strategy development was the co-creation of housing metrics which are representative of community members understanding of the collective housing emergency. Before beginning the co-creation process, the NAN Housing Strategy Team outlined guidelines for metric creation to guide community engagement and ensure that community member participation would be meaningful, these guideline were:

1. Housing should be measured at the individual level, where possible;
2. Housing is more than a physical structure, so it should be evaluated on more than its physical components;
3. Housing metrics should reflect local understandings and priorities in housing; and
4. Different people may have different housing priorities, and where possible, all should be accounted for.



Mattagamis First Nation and Cat Lake First Nation Elders workshop.

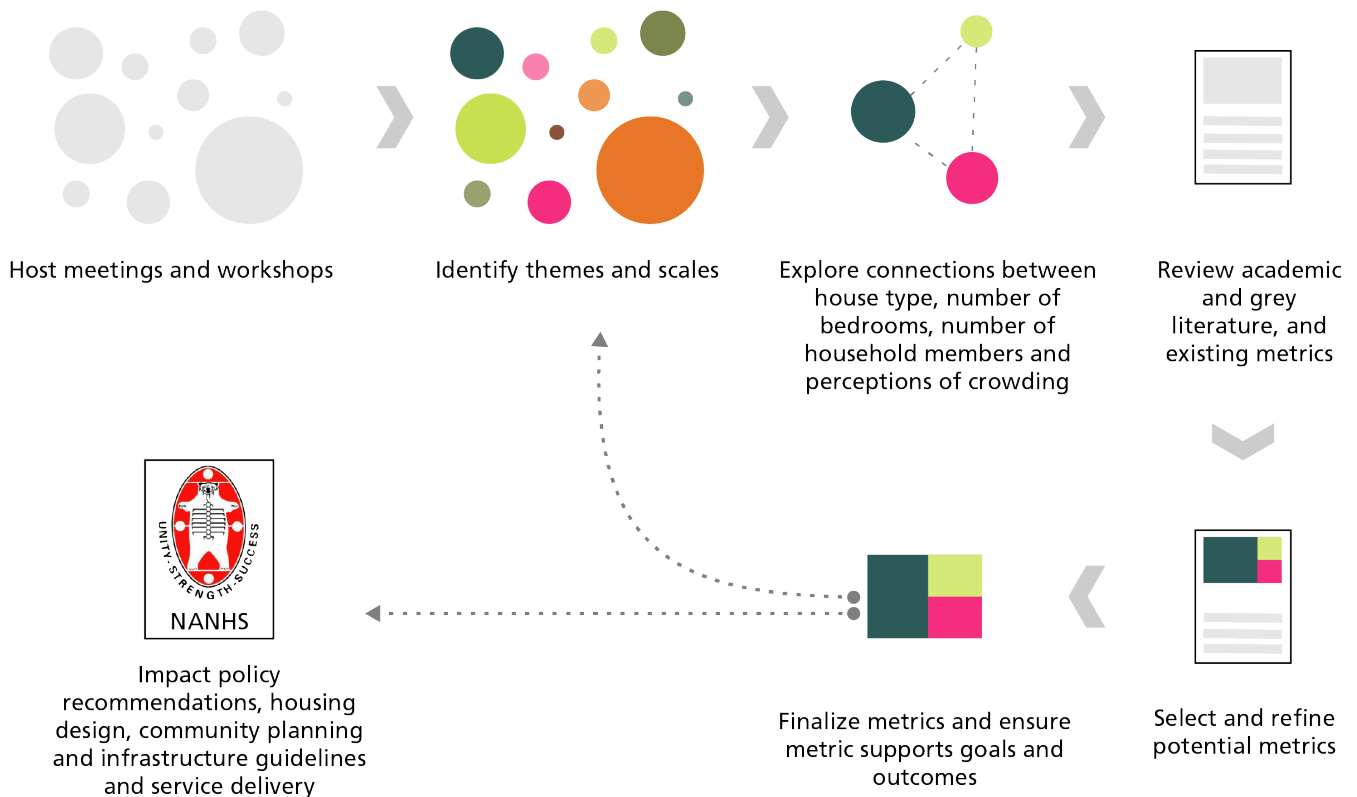
Community member input was reviewed and analyzed at three stages. The first review in spring 2019 followed the workshops held at events, second stage followed the six local labs held in June and July 2019 and December 2019 following local labs in October and December 2019. In moving from the issues identified by community members in workshops to indicators, three considerations were made for organizing information: themes, scale and measurement type.

- Themes allow for community member input to be organized into cohesive groups and for the identification of similar or interrelated factors;
- Scale refers to the unit of analysis, who or what would potentially be the focus: individual, family, unit/ house, First Nation, Tribal Council, NAN, provincial or federal government; and
- Measurement type refers to whether a factor likely requires expertise or special capacity for assessment or can allow for self-assessment.

Current potential indicators are organized into three domains:

- Physical characteristics often rely on technical standards measuring the safety, quality and code compliance of homes.
- Occupant satisfaction measures the ability of home to meet the needs of each occupant, including whether spaces are appropriately designed to satisfy the lifestyle requirements of individuals.
- Lived experience measures the social, emotional and spiritual outcomes of occupants as a result of housing systems.

The NAN Housing Survey – which will be the culmination of co-created metrics– will be divided into two sections, a household survey and an individual survey. The household survey focuses on objective indicators while the individual survey uses subjective measures recognizing that each occupants experience of their home is unique. Survey data will be used together to demonstrate housing need across the NAN territory rooted in community-members’ understandings of needs and goals.



All potential indicators were also assessed for their applicability to creating change to the existing housing system. The objective of this needs assessment is to quantify housing need within the NAN territory and create action plans for change in policy, design and materials to create meaningful impact in the lived experience of NAN members.

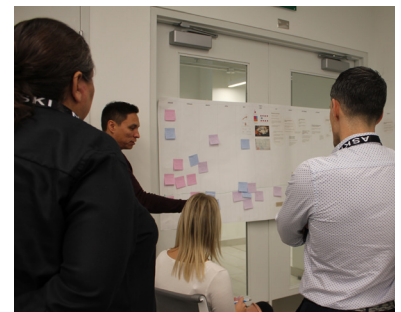
Advisory Lab

The NAN Housing Strategy Advisory Lab was a one-and-a-half-day event that brought together housing and policy experts to collectively explore housing system issues and begin to identify potential solutions. As part of the NAN Housing Strategy, the Lab provided an opportunity to rethink the housing system and the delivery of housing in First Nations in northern Ontario. Through a collaborative setting, participants explored current barriers found throughout the housing system with a particular focus on early interventions in the pre-building phases. Pre-building phase components can include community engagement, design, tendering and procurement and are integral to the success of construction phases and larger housing system.

The Lab focused on exploring questions proceeding from project learnings from Local Labs and workshops to date.

- What are the critical junctures and barriers in the current housing system?
- What are the current components of the pre-building phase? How can they be reimagined to set First Nations up for success?
- What would you need to do to (re)build or (re)create a housing system to support culturally appropriate housing?
- How can we begin to test or operationalize proposed changes?

Key takeaways from the advisory lab will continue to be developed through community workshops and the housing managers symposium which will take place in spring 2020. Testing and validating solutions and potential areas of focus developed at the Advisory Lab will ensure that findings are appropriate and relevant for the NAN context.



*Participants at the Advisory Lab
hosted at Ryerson University
November, 2019.*

Next Steps

- NAN Housing Strategy team will be hosting workshops at Women's Gathering (Feb. 4-5) and Youth Gathering (Feb. 15-16).
- A housing manager's symposium will be held in spring 2020 with details to be released shortly
- The NAN Housing Survey will be launched in summer 2020 in at least 6 NAN First Nations. If you are interested in participating please look for the call out which will be coming shortly.

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