



## What We Heard – Summary Report, Vancouver Café

### Thought Leaders on Climate Change and Community Housing

Ian Cullis and Christine Williams shared their knowledge of issues in BC. Discussion highlights included:

- Buildings are increasingly overheating - financially sustainable adaptations are required to improve building envelopes, cooling and heat management systems.
- Building operation and resident health and wellbeing are inherently linked.
- It is essential to reach out to tenants and raise awareness and understanding of the importance of energy efficient changes (e.g. why change light bulbs, avoid opening windows with heat on).
- When you educate, you create a sense of pride and ownership.
- There is merit in simple, low-cost, easily understood solutions for building performance and managing unit temperatures - such as including interior courtyards and planting trees. By contrast, LEED standards are complex to maintain and may not be suitable for this sector.

#### ***A resilient community housing sector...***

- Is able to withstand, adapt and/or bounce back in the face of change
- Has capacity and resources (fiscal, community, built environment) to plan for and respond to change
- Is starting to adapt to climate change today - e.g. thinking about buildings, long-term staff needs and organizational performance
- Is able to continue functioning as a sector by creating a culture and building relationships to overcome fragmentation

#### ***A sustainable community housing sector...***

- Is equitable and inclusive of residents who are adversely affected by climate change
- Has a long-term focus, maintaining buildings and supporting communities indefinitely
- Benefits from innovations and solutions that are shared across sectors and can be scaled up
- Is well-resourced financially, has durable energy-efficient buildings, and is attentive to residents' wellbeing
- Puts people first, and understands that climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable and poorer people

### Who was in the room?

| Sectors                                     | # present |
|---|-----------|
| Community housing providers                 | 3         |
| Provincial departments & agencies           | 3         |
| Municipal departments & agencies            | 2         |
| Networks & associations                     | 7         |
| Housing advocates                           | 2         |
| University<br>(excl. research team members) | 3         |
| Lived experience                            | 2         |

**“ The community housing sector is among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and therefore it should be our highest concern. ”**

# Towards Responses and Solutions: Five Priorities

## Transformation not transition

- Accept that fundamental change is needed and be open to collective problem-solving on a massive scale
- Adopt holistic understanding - we can't do it alone, but need to bring in partners from all levels (government, health, insurance...)
- Identify context-specific responses by asking: who is most vulnerable here?
- Create a culture of climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Move beyond cost-benefit analysis to other (broader, more inclusive) measures of economic impact

## Decolonizing & Indigenizing

- Include Indigenous agencies and housing providers as equal partners in addressing climate change
- Work within broader TRC recommendations

## Resident focused

- Embed inclusion in everyday practices and decisions
- Empower residents, providers, sector to be part of solution
- Engage clients to ensure buildings meet their needs
- Encourage collaboration in building design

## Evaluate & Improve

- Develop consensus on measurable indicators
- Measure, report and share results of interventions
- Demonstrate the impact of steps being taken
- Learn through review and feedback

## Address fragmentation

- Sharing best practices is key to sustainability
- Mobilize platforms for sharing knowledge and expertise
- Support skills and capacity of smaller providers
- Create partnerships and networks to lead sector transformation

**“ No cooling is becoming a code-related deficiency. ... This is not just ‘it's too hot in the building.’ It is a matter of life and death in some cases. ”**

