



## Housing Resources Service

Serving the communities of Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, and Upper Nicola

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# FALL 2025 GATHERING REPORT

October 8-9, 2025 | Delta Hotel. | Kamloops, BC



## Introduction

Just as the Fall season was rolling in and the leaves were transforming into their brilliant autumn colours, our Housing Resources work family came together for another uplifting time of knowledge exchange and professional collaboration.

Representatives from Community Power, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF), 3D Remote Building Inspections (3DI), and Splitsin Homes delivered very interesting and informative presentations. This season's community presentations came from Whispering Pines Clinton Indian Band (WPCIB) and Esk'etemc First Nation.

To make things a little more interactive and challenging, we had some quizzes that tested everyone's knowledge on topics we have covered at past gatherings.

## Gathering Objectives

- Knowledge is Power – Adding to your skill set toolbox and sharing what you know
- Finding the Funds – What's new or ongoing
- Thinking Outside the Box – There's more than one way to build a home

## Housing Resources Service Update

The Housing Resources Service (HRS) Team provided a thorough update of activities since the last gathering in March.

Ruth shared how HRS continues to be a voice wherever it can in regards to the housing needs of First Nations Peoples. Due to multiple factors, the growing need and expense for renovations is never being met. Poor quality housing standards for on-reserve building in the 1980's and 1990's has created huge renovation needs today.

So, while the housing departments are tasked with addressing the renovation needs to bring houses up to Health and Safety standards, and always with limited funding, the need for new housing builds is also a constant concern. HRS hears how overwhelming this can be for housing staff and it is one of the reasons why we host these gatherings.



## Honouring Our Leader

Our tireless leader, Ruth Williams is always, always, always, out there looking for ways to address these housing issues. She doesn't take no for an answer and seeks out creative solutions instead. We are truly honoured to have Ruth's knowledge, expertise and experience lead the HRS initiatives.

During day 2 of the gathering, the Steering Committee members who were present, acknowledged Ruth's most recent achievement, the Order of Canada. Congratulations Ruth on receiving Canada's highest civilian honour based on your outstanding dedication and service in the areas of housing, justice, child welfare, finance and anywhere else you see the needs of First Nations People not being met.



## Asset Management Pilot Program | Louis Toolkit

HRS Team member, Dianne Oppenheim, provided an update on how much work has been done in each participating community since the Louis Toolkit (LTK) Asset Management project launched in March of this year. The LTK project has been a great success with much positive feedback. Dianne has been very busy coordinating and participating in all of the community training sessions along with Trevor Wiens. She keeps everyone organized and ensures that everything is moving along at a good pace. Dianne is always available to answer any questions from participating communities as well as communities who just want to learn more about LTK.

In addition to the online training sessions, participating communities met in Kamloops on July 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> for a 2 day in-person intensive training session with Trevor Wiens. This was a great opportunity for everyone to ask questions, unique to their community, directly to Trevor and everyone learned from each others' experiences.

The first year of LTK is coming to a close soon and at that time, communities will have the option of renewing the contract and continuing with the program at their expense and HRS will continue to offer technical support where we can.

We are all so fortunate to have Dianne's leadership in the delivery of this program.



## Circuit Rider Program

HRS team member, Colleen Mosterd-McLean, provided an update on the community Circuit Rider pilot project funded by CMHC and ISC.

Since the last report to the HRS communities, Nooaitch Indian Band (NIB) agreed to be the first community to participate in the project. HRS and Nooaitch met in June for a strategic goal setting exercise where Nooaitch identified 3 goals they wanted to achieve before the end of December 2025.



As of the end of September, 2 of 3 goals are well underway and one is still being worked on as the community of Nooaitch currently has numerous projects in the works; in particular, with Housing, Capital and Public Works departments.



All in all, Nooaitch, with both Patricia Shackley and Rick Gauthier working extremely hard, has accomplished so much this past year and HRS has been honoured to be a part of this good work. Rick and Patricia are great, hardworking people and Nooaitch is fortunate to have such dedicated employees.



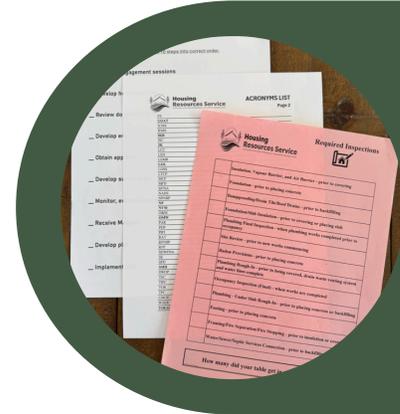


## Connecting Through Activity

To make things a little more interactive, the HRS team created some fun, yet challenging quizzes that tested everyone's knowledge on topics we have covered at past gatherings.

Everyone was "tested" on the following:

- Stages of building inspections
- How much they have paid attention to Rick's "10 Steps to Creating a Housing Plan"
- How well they know their acronyms used in everyday work in the field of construction, development, capital planning, texting, etc.



It was a lot of fun and fun to watch everyone's competitive nature shine through in a good way. You can expect more of these activities at future gatherings.

## Community Power

The first presentation was from Tim McCormick and Katrina Cote of Community Power. They describe themselves as being a company who "helps partner communities build, repair, and improve homes that are safe, healthy, comfortable and energy efficient."





Community Power has partnered with over 70 communities in the past 15 years to complete thousands of assessments, designing hundreds of programs and projects including new home builds and renovations.

After a great presentation, Tim and Katrina lead the group through a card game they created that had teams work through unique housing scenarios, complete with very realistic challenges faced in communities, to work together to come up with ways to overcome the challenges and still deliver a successful project.

Thank you Tim and Katrina for providing us more options to achieve success in our communities. We look forward to working with you in the future.

## **Finding the Funds** **What's New or Ongoing**

Jeff Mercer from CMHC and Simmi Sandhu and Keith Grier from ISC described the current streams of funding available for various different types of housing projects from proposals and infrastructure to new builds and health and safety related renovations. There was some clarification noted on how some funding streams may be stacked in order to better fund projects in communities.

The information shared at this time may change after the Federal Government presents the Government of Canada Budget 2025 on November 4, 2025.

After the presentations, the three presenters fielded questions from the communities.



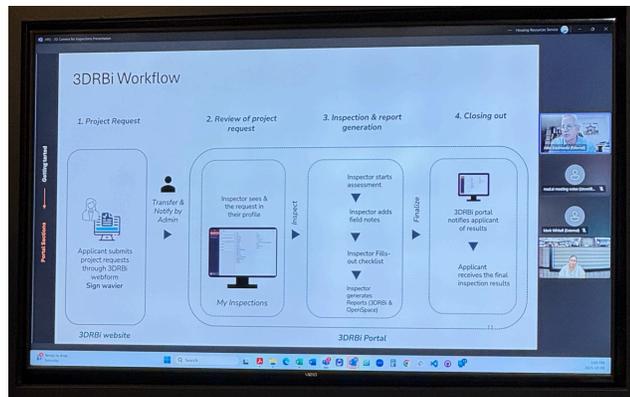


## Thinking Outside the Box

### 3D Remote Building Inspections

We changed gears to a virtual presentation by John Kiedrowski of 3DRBI who shared with us some very interesting technology designed to provide secure, quality and reliable home inspections in a timely manner no matter where the work is being carried out.

Through this technology, remote communities will be able to have inspections done without relying on or paying high fees to bring inspectors into community. John did a great job of describing how 3DRBI works and provided contact information for anyone who would like to follow up with this option for their community.



### Splatsin Homes

New on the block, but not our only HRS member community providing alternative housing options, Splatsin Homes, presented their exciting new pre-fabricated housing options. Doug Thomas and his team gave the group an informative overview of what Splatsin Homes has been working on. They shared the various housing floor-plans that are currently available to accommodate a range of unit sizes and explained how the homes are built and what materials are used. Many questions about the company were raised and answered. The team make some good connections and we wish them well as they continue to build on their business. It was encouraging to hear that one of the HRS community members is having this success.





## Knowledge is Power

### Community Presentations

**Whispering Pines Clinton Indian Band** – Viola LeBourdais

**Esk'temc First Nation** – Tahnea Alphonse

The sharing of knowledge between the communities has become one of the most valuable times spent at the HRS Gatherings. These presentations are inspiring, uplifting, informative and always a joy to watch. The collective experiences and expertise of the Housing Managers is amazing. This session did not disappoint as we learned about how both WPCIB and Esk'temc have successfully been constructing new homes in their communities enabling them to provide housing so their members can live in community.

Viola shared how the growth of housing in her community has been slow having 33 homes built between 1972 and 2026 but by 2028 this number will jump to 55 homes. Viola's community is committed to supporting a "Zero Waste" program that encourages maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacturing, recycling and composting.



Another great piece of advice that Viola shared is to test run policies to see if they work. She encouraged everyone who writes or reviews policies to make them simple and easy to enforce. Tahnea's community has also seen a lot of new builds in the past couple of years with plans to build, renovate or replace more homes. Tahnea is the only staff member in the Housing Department so she recommends the assistance of consultants and a well appointed Housing Committee. Similar to other communities, tenants can be challenging at times and Tahnea believes it is important to always "read the room when dealing with tenants", "keep communicating even when the conversations are difficult" and "reach out to the Housing Committee representatives".

Viola and Tahnea have many irons in the fire and they are doing a fantastic job and we thank them for sharing their professional journeys with us.



## First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF)

HRS is always happy to see Erika van der Grinten from FNMHF because she always cheerfully shares how FNMHF can offer support to its partner communities.



Erika provided information about the different ways in which FNMHF can assist with capacity building and home building projects. They are always available to problem solve and come up with creative solutions to everything housing. You won't be disappointed when you reach out to Erika at FNMHF. Thank you Erika for always bringing such positive energy to our gatherings.

## Quiz time!

**How do you make a cowboy tear up?**

Tell him he's appreciated... thanks Rick for everything you do.



## That's a Wrap!

Before concluding the meeting, participants were asked to provide an estimate of the total value of the housing assets they manage by reviewing their community's housing stock. In total, 1,569 homes were counted; if each is valued at \$400,000.00, the total estimated value exceeds \$600 million. This figure reflects the scale of responsibility managed by Housing Managers and housing staff in terms of financial oversight and asset management. Therefore, investing in the ongoing training and retention of Housing staff should be prioritized within communities.



Many thanks to everyone who attended and helped make the HRS Fall Gathering such a great success. We appreciate all of your input because that is how these gatherings happen. They are a result of your good work and success. We can only move forward together – as a team.

We have reviewed your evaluations and hope to incorporate your suggestions into our future gatherings including the opportunity to learn more about the other HRS member communities who are thinking outside the box and offering creative housing solutions.

All of the presentation slide decks that were shared, will be or have already been sent out.

**Until next time,**

Your HRS Team – Ruth Williams, Jacqueline Johnson, Rick Sabiston, Dianne Oppenheim & Colleen Mosterd-McLean



## Fall Gathering Loonie Auction Winner

CMHC's Jeff Mercer will be donating the proceeds from the Loonie Auction to the Bonaparte Elders and Youth groups. Thank you Jeff!