

A Replicable Affordable Housing Idea Exchange Guide

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Summary

Inspired by our participation in the reGenerate Idea Challenge hosted by the City of New Westminster ([see pages 11 and 12 in the long-range vision document](#))—students and faculty in the PEAK-Buildings Certificate program are submitting this idea for consideration as a tool to surface and implement affordable housing strategies at local levels.

We propose the development of a freely available, adaptable “Affordable Housing Idea Exchange Guide” to support municipalities, regional districts, Indigenous communities, and non-profit organizations in convening structured, community-engaged innovation processes focused specifically on affordable housing solutions.

Rather than prescribing housing forms or policy outcomes, the AHIE Guide would provide a scalable framework for engagement, evaluation, and implementation that can be adapted to diverse economic, climatic, regulatory, and social contexts across British Columbia.

Purpose and Alignment with BPiBS

The AHIE guide supports the objectives of the Best Practices in Building Systems by:

- Mobilizing knowledge across sectors
- Supporting collaboration between municipalities, builders, educators, and communities
- Accelerating implementation pathways for affordable housing ideas
- Integrating building system best practices into civic decision-making processes

This proposal focuses on the **process infrastructure** required to move building system innovation from isolated expertise into community-supported action.

The following is a list of ideas of what could be included in an AHIE Guide.

Core Components

The guide would be modular, editable, and open access. Key components include:

1. Communications Framework

- Stakeholder mapping templates
- Public messaging samples
- Multi-language and accessibility considerations
- Transparent evaluation communication tools

2. Project Management Toolkit

- 3–6 month implementation timeline
- Roles and governance templates
- Risk management worksheet
- Evaluation rubric framework

3. Digital Infrastructure

- Open-source website (or other website) structure guidance
- Secure submission portal model
- Public-facing idea gallery template
- Privacy and data management guidance

4. Funding and Budget Models

- Sample municipal budget scenarios
- Sponsorship and grant pathways
- Prize structure options
- In-kind partnership strategies

5. Implementation Pathways

- Linking ideas to municipal planning departments
 - Connections to BC Housing and funding programs
 - Pilot project development roadmap
 - Monitoring and reporting templates
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Distinguishing Features

- **Bottom-Up Engagement:** Encourages contributions from builders, residents, students, Indigenous organizations, and technical experts.
 - **Scalability:** Adaptable for urban, mid-sized, rural, and remote communities.
 - **Systems Integration:** Recognizes affordable housing as interconnected with building performance, climate resilience, neighbourhood amenities, transportation, and long-term operational affordability.
 - **Knowledge Feedback Loop:** Outcomes from local exchanges can be contributed back to BPIBS as case studies, strengthening the provincial knowledge ecosystem.
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Potential Impact

By lowering the barrier to launching structured Affordable Housing Idea Exchanges, municipalities can:

- Surface context-appropriate housing innovations
- Increase transparency and public trust
- Strengthen cross-sector collaboration
- Accelerate movement from concept to pilot

As a student–faculty initiative grounded in applied learning, this proposal reflects the PEAK-Buildings program’s commitment to integrating building systems expertise, community engagement, and affordable housing outcomes.

We invite collaboration through BPIBS to co-develop and pilot this Guide across British Columbia.