

NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE



Student Housing Design Brief

May 2019

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Introduction

North Island College is honoured to acknowledge the traditional territories of the 35 First Nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish traditions, on whose traditional and unceded territories the College's campuses are situated.

Purpose: This Design Brief addresses priorities for creating student housing at the Comox Valley Campus. Throughout this document, our goals for creating housing to address student, college, community and government expectations are identified. Our themes of sustainability, accessibility, Indigenous access & support, and skills training are pillars of our plan.

Foreword: North Island College is primarily funded by the Province of British Columbia through the 2018/19 Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training Service Plan, with a purpose that “ensures British Columbians can access affordable, relevant and responsive education and skills training that builds up our province, communities and citizens”.

This design brief is consistent with a key strategy of that Service Plan - Objective 2.2: “*Work to increase the number of student housing beds to contribute to the Province's housing strategy and support student success.*”

It is also an objective under government's Service Plan to foster access, inclusion and success of Indigenous learners in post-secondary education. This Comox Valley Campus housing project will reflect the importance of the Indigenous peoples of this region through design and policy.

Student housing at the Comox Valley Campus would provide accessible housing so that people can acquire post-secondary education and skills training. The Comox Valley region has an extremely low vacancy rate and lack of housing prevents some potential students from accessing our programs, especially those from more remote areas of our region. The availability of student housing directly affects access to skills and training, which has labour market consequences. Thus this brief also addresses housing accessibility of students in skills training, especially in the trades.

NIC Student Housing Mission Statement: Student Housing at North Island College Comox Valley Campus supports the College's commitment to safe, inclusive, engaged, learning experiences that promote accessibility, enhance community engagement, and nurture student success.

Project Scope – Overview

- A. **Site:** The housing development will be located on the Comox Valley Campus of North Island College, on land situated to the west of the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre. This property is owned by North Island College and currently zoned PA-3 (Public Use and Assembly) in the City of Courtenay. Height restrictions would limit to a maximum of 4 stories. Major services are located adjacent to the site.

B. Buildings:

Consideration may be given to the construction of up to four buildings to meet outlined design considerations and site requirements. The housing for single students will be referred to in this brief as the Main building, but design considerations may lead to this being 2 buildings. Family housing may also be split into 2 buildings based on design considerations. Both the Main building and Family housing will each have a large Commons area, likely on the Main floor. The requirements for the student Commons are discussed later in the design brief.

Note that the number of units and number of bedrooms are guidelines for planning purposes. We welcome professional advice about how the objectives can be met through design options.

C. Living Units: 168 students (+ family in 20 units =188+ occupants)

- a. Main Building: We hope to accommodate 148 students, mostly in quad-style, 4 person apartments and the rest in studio apartments. Studio apartments would see community kitchens available on each floor, but would not be individually equipped with full kitchens. Each quad apartment would have a full kitchen, two bathrooms, shared seating and study space. One of the bathrooms would be fully accessible in each *or most* of the apartments. (See Appendix 2 for a sample quad-style apartment.) Each floor would have shared space, flexibly designed for increasing social and academic engagement.
- b. Family Housing: We hope to provide 20 units of family style apartments, designed as 2 bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. This building will have shared space, particularly to support child play.

Commons: For planning purposes, a student Commons would be part of both the Main Building and Family housing. Essential functions required in the common areas are laundry, mailroom, Campus Security (including security technology) and approximately three other offices, including a visiting office for Elders (with storage for ceremonial items).

A distinctly separate but connected part of the Commons in the Family Housing units will house a community kitchen (multiple cooktops and food preparation areas) and an adjacent Indigenous teaching and learning space, all equipped for multi-function, multi-media purposes. This cultural space will be used for gatherings and celebrations as well as providing flexible learning space for Aboriginal Leadership and Indigenous Language courses.

The campus is well situated to integrate students to the community without requiring a health care centre, a significant fitness centre or a food service in this project. There is a medical clinic across the street; the Comox Valley Regional Hospital and the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre are adjacent to the campus; and, grocery stores and restaurants are located or nearby.

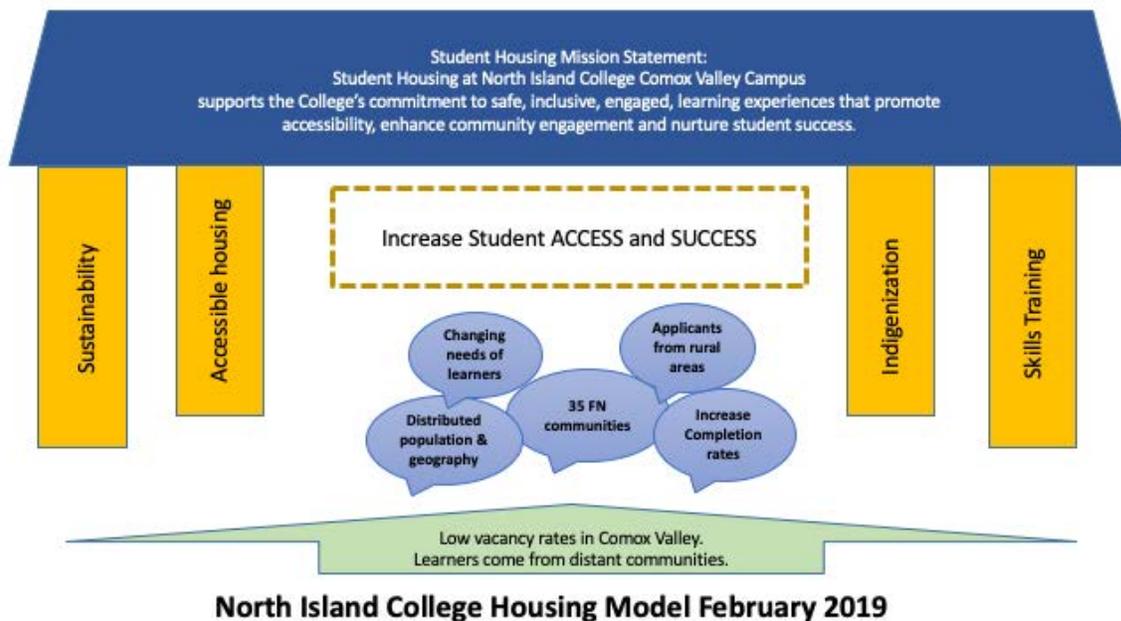
NIC Housing Model

The housing model in Figure 1 identifies key priorities that North Island College and our community hold for this project. The pillars of our housing model are: Sustainability, Accessibility, Indigenous Reconciliation, and Skills Training. These are discussed below to identify supporting strategies and input we have gathered from stakeholders. Successful designs will incorporate consideration to these priorities.

The objective is for this site to have a net positive impact on human and environmental well-being. We seek effective, efficient and affordable design that will be characterized by effective and efficient ongoing operational management.

Our aspiration is that student housing advances our desires to foster student engagement through campus engagement opportunities, supportive networks, and increased institutional-student attachment: we aspire to foster a sense of belonging.

Figure 1: NIC Housing Model



The Pillars of the NIC Housing Model

Sustainability

Throughout the design process, North Island College desires elements that support sustainability within a broad scope and interpretation. Toward this goal, the following elements are considered desirable.

- Consider loading and waste management strategies (including recycling and composting) early in the design process.
- Establish rainwater and site considerations appropriate to our climate and ecosystem.
- Promote cycling and walking lifestyles, including storage for equipment.
- Design attractive stairways as the primary mode of vertical circulation.
- Use wood construction and natural local products whenever possible.
- Consider affordability a sustainability goal of NIC and for this project.

Accessibility Housing

Post-secondary education at our college is only accessible if students can find a safe and secure housing situation. Housing opportunities in the Comox Valley are scarce, with very little rental housing available to NIC students. Since the length of a program of study can often be less than a year, students can be less attractive tenants to local landlords. Highway commutes from neighbouring towns and cities are stressful, consuming excessive amounts of both time and fossil fuel.

We strive to provide universal access across the site, and gender neutrality as a design principle. Consideration to design for accessibility should be given in all public spaces; maximized in living spaces. We desire easy access and passage through the Commons for people, goods and services including pedestrian access, resident moving and delivery. This would include 2 elevators or one elevator plus one other accessibility alternative to stairs.

Indigenization

In keeping with College Plan 2020 Strategic Priority #4: Aboriginal Education and Indigenization: NIC seeks to enhance Indigenous-centred services, learning environments, student and community spaces and learner success.

NIC serves significant populations of Indigenous students and is proud to support these students and our connections to communities, its heritage, and future. The college region includes the traditional territories of 35 First Nations communities. It is expected that partners joining NIC in this project will bring expertise and intention to the Indigenization of the housing project.

Culturally sensitive design aspects shall be integrated in respect and support of Indigenous students; facilitating education, and sharing of cultures amongst all our students. Appendix 1 brings together input we have received from the K'ómoks First Nation and the North Island College Aboriginal Education Council.

Skills Training

North Island College offers a wide variety of programs, including applied, job-related skills training as well as university transfer arts and sciences, and many business, health and social service programs. Students in our housing will not all have the same program start and end dates. Furthermore, as the average age of our students is 27 years, many of our students have specific job-related, educational goals. Separate bedrooms in quad-style apartments are essential.

Most important in this regard, there are students who come to the college for periods as short as 6 or 8 weeks. Apprenticeship students do most of their training in the workplace, attending the college for a short period of time. Accessible housing in the community for these students is particularly difficult: renting motel/hotel rooms increases their education costs exponentially. Short term availability for trades students and those attending weekend institutes will allow the college to maximize skills training enrolments at our college.

Living Units

Quad apartments: for planning purposes, n = 29

4-bedroom apartment style layouts with a kitchen, living room, and 2 bathrooms

Natural light to bedrooms is preferred, double beds, Wi-Fi access.

Equipped with study space and a small fridge in bedrooms.

Common space to eat and socialize, with a smart TV.

Design to allow engagement: socially, academically, and in food preparation.

Studios: for planning purposes, n = 32

Small complete living units with partial kitchen, study space, double bed, Wi-Fi access.

Full community kitchens available on each floor.

Consider floor layouts that have a mix of quad apartments and studios

Mix of studio size (e.g. 375 sq ft and 450 sq ft) to allow some for couples would be considered.

Family apartments: for planning purposes, n = 20

2-bedroom apartments with one larger bedroom (double bed + 2 singles), and bathroom with tub.

Consider a few larger family apartments for larger families

Design Requirements

Key stakeholder groups at North Island College (NIC) are prepared to work with potential consultant design teams and architects to ensure that our goals and values are embedded during the design process. Primary design considerations include:

1. Promote student engagement
2. Contribute to Indigenization
3. Maximize designs and systems for sustainability
4. Manage limited resources to a maximum fixed budget

A Functional Program, developed in close consultation with stakeholders, will be used to develop estimates of the amount of built-space and funding required for this project.

1. Student Engagement Goals

Design of NIC's student housing will intentionally foster student engagement and create a community of learners. NIC seeks an atmosphere of learning and living; providing opportunities for residents to gather and for the campus to learn and celebrate. Our buildings should nurture connections and community, supporting students to reach their potential. We desire accessible indoor and outdoor spaces that facilitate and promote active, healthy lifestyles.

- Design to include small indoor and outdoor spaces that close the gap between public and private space, encouraging connections between members of a community.
- Link spaces for the use of all residents, such as including study tables and a small exercise area or games room adjacent to the laundry, with the ability to see between the rooms. Design considerations of this type allow students to meet, accomplish tasks, and have fun; fostering student engagement.
- Outdoor site furnishings will allow our community to be comfortably outdoors much of the year. A covered, wind protected outdoor area is desirable, as there is significant rainfall in the Comox Valley. This will support a variety of social, educational and recreational programming.
- In family housing the design will provide opportunities for mutual support while caring for children and connecting to the NIC community. Access to play spaces while studying or doing laundry assists parents to be successful students.
- Internal and/or external space to accommodate an exercise program is desirable.

2. Indigenization Goals

The reduction of barriers for Aboriginal students and the Indigenization of curriculum are goals that are central to North Island College through our Aboriginal Service Plan, and are most important to this housing project.

First Nations peoples comprise 13% of the regional population, and 16% of the North Island College students. Aboriginal applicants to full-time study from within the college region will be guaranteed space in student housing if they apply by an early application deadline.

North Island College is committed to expanding the indigenization of our curriculum to

reflect Canada's first peoples, and are working with Aboriginal partners to ensure educational programs include Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

- Throughout the site, use local Indigenous input and influences.
- Internally and externally, create opportunities to learn about local flora and fauna, including items used in food and ceremony by Indigenous peoples of the region.
- The Commons will include space for the teaching of Indigenous language courses. This could be an area of the Commons adapted for celebration, ceremony and flexible delivery of instruction in Indigenous courses.
- The Commons will require an area that by its venting and alarm system can enable ceremonies that involve smoke or flame - to allowing activities such as smudging or pipe ceremony (also lighting the menorah or birthday candles). Given sufficient weather protection, this could be an outdoor space.

3. Environmental Sustainability Goals

The Ministry of Advanced Education requires that these projects be built to the Passive House standard. We have interest in LEED® Gold standards related to energy efficient materials, lighting and building systems; in reducing energy loads through passive design, maximizing heat recovery, and minimizing the carbon footprint of this housing project.

- Site: Incorporate native plants into the landscape design and plan to achieve a net addition of native trees and plants to the campus.
 - Design operational facilities necessary to achieve high diversion rates of solid 'waste' materials.
 - Maximize use sustainable transportation by providing shelter for people waiting for the bus/NIC shuttle.
- Rainwater: Use rainwater management harvesting techniques to protect the watershed; maximize use of storm water to the landscape via trees, on-site bio swales and rainwater retention/detention. Limit the effect on municipal storm sewers during storms: achieve a net reduction of storm water flow.
- Water: Minimize water consumption through low flow fixtures, and explore use of grey water for landscape irrigation.
- Energy: Strive for net positive operational energy/carbon utilizing renewable energy supply. Consider renewable energy generation including solar hot water and solar PV.
- Carbon Footprint: Minimize the carbon footprint of construction and strive to be carbon positive; consider application of wood frame, mass wood timber and fly ash concrete. Avoid materials from the Cascadia Green Building Council's Red List. Recycle construction waste.

4. Management Goals

Consultants and architects and construction teams will be expected to deliver a highly integrated project with due consideration to life cycle costs.

- Optimize design for efficient, effective and affordable construction and ongoing maintenance; minimizes change orders and schedule disruptions. Utilize management systems for procurement.
- Maximize value through performance assessment key performance indicators to track

sustainability performance against Design Brief.

- Minimize service runs by grouping facilities with shared infrastructure servicing. Consider efficient use of custodial labour, and ease transfer and flow of materials.
- Design systems and processes such as solid waste management very early in design to maximize community participation in sustainable waste management programs. Consider efficient use of custodial labour, and ease transfer and flow of materials.
- Design and select building systems and equipment appropriate for the college's operational skills and resources. Consult NIC Technical Guidelines during the design process and include operations staff in sustainability discussions.
- Secure building and room access processes and equipment are part of this intention. Crime prevention through environmental design (e.g. CPTED) is desired.

Appendix 1: Indigenization

Outreach to identify Indigenous cultural considerations for the NIC Housing Project has to date included consultation via meeting and e-mail. This information below gathers together input received. When items are repeated, it represents the repeated times this input was provided (separated by semi-colon).

- A meeting with K'ómoks First Nation on Dec 19, 2018 was attended by Charlene Everson and Tina McLean of K'ómoks First Nation; Lisa Domae, Colin Fowler, Amber Neumann and Kelly Shopland of North Island College; and consultants Dan Huang and Zack Haigh of Urban Systems.
- Kelly Shopland of North Island College sent an e-mail asking a sub-committee of the NIC Aboriginal Education Council for advice by February 15, 2019, on how to indigenize the physical buildings and landscapes as well the accompanying services. Responses to date have been received from Grace Smith, Adam Gleeson, Marie Lavoie, and Pamela Lee Lewis.
- On February 15, 2019, the Aboriginal Education Council at NIC endorsed the feedback provided and offered their support of the project.

Suggestions to consider when designing the CV Student Housing:

“Natural wood/post & beam, 4 pillar design, totem poles, natural lighting and welcoming doorways would help to make Indigenous students feel welcome and supported.”

Grounds:

- Include a community garden with indigenous plants; Traditional plants
- Bring water in as part of the natural landscape and plants from the territory
- Outdoor space with greenery that includes trees, indigenous plants and natural edible landscapes
- “Multicultural” Aboriginal themes that recognize multiple traditions
- Holistic - Student feeling of safe, security and comfort in their surroundings, and able to practice their traditions and culture that they are able to at home.
- Display should speak to the territory and describe who we are; Housing design inspired by local traditional dwellings; Information about local Nations
- Naming projects and rooms in local languages; Local language

Building (particularly Commons):

- 4 pillars design; 4 pillar design
- Big House faces the water
- Post & Beam; Post and beam construction
- Entrance to the building: Double doors & posts on the side

- Welcoming entranceways: double doors and posts on the side; Grand entrance
- Exposed natural wood/logs (like cedar posts); Local materials
- Appropriate use of colour
- Lots of light; View of the outdoors and access to natural light; Inviting of light, natural light, clerestory windows
- Round shape to the buildings
- Big House style with bench seating around the edges – ability to bring in round tables and chairs
- Space in the middle; Kitchen space for an industrial kitchen
- Family rooms; Family space - shared cooking area when family is there; Place for their family
- Quiet; quiet room
- Cultural space (*used for*): Stripping cedar, Making drums, Center space & water – teaching language while doing
- Covered outdoor space
- Fire pit; Smudging – ventilation
- Music – soundproofing – stereo to play traditional music
- Washrooms

Other

- Art work; Totem poles; Carvings; Aboriginal art, especially art that recognizes local territory; Art work on the walls, historical pictures, a display describing K'omoks history and lands, glass cases with regalia and rotating artwork
- Accessibility to Elders; Elder in residence; Elders in residence; Elders on campus