

# HOUSING: Using a 7 Generations lens

A Haudenosaunee Philosophy Approach

## 7 Generations Philosophy is Timeless

- ▶ It's a way of life, a tool to use to take responsibility for events now, using the knowledge and cultural teachings of our ancestors so we can take care of people today and in the future;
- ▶ "the most important thing that I have learned about being a Haudenosaunee, it's the idea that we are connected to a community, but a community that transcends time.
- ▶ We're connected to the first Indians who walked on this earth, the very first ones, however long ago that was. But we're also connected to those Indians who aren't even born yet, who are going to walk this earth. And our job in the middle is to bridge that gap. You take the inheritance from the past, you add to it, your ideas and your thinking, and you bundle it up and shoot it to the future. And there is a different kind of responsibility. That is not just about me, my pride and my ego, it's about all that other stuff. We inherit a duty, we inherit a responsibility. And that's pretty well drummed into our heads. Don't just come here expecting to benefit. You come here to work hard so that the future can enjoy that benefit."
- ▶ Rick Hill Sr. (Tuscarora)  
Chair, Haudenosaunee Standing Committee on NAGPRA

## **“All for one and one for all” with a future twist: (Musketeer motto)**

- ▶ “The Seventh Generation philosophy is integral to Haudenosaunee life. It intensifies the bond of community, promotes stability, and provides concrete values with which each person can test his or her everyday actions. Although the Haudenosaunee practice ancient traditions, their culture is not frozen in the past. Their ability to adapt to dramatic change and survive on their own terms is historically proven, but they are equally focused on the security of future generations.
- ▶ "The Peacemaker taught us about the Seven Generations. He said, when you sit in council for the welfare of the people, you must not think of yourself or of your family, not even of your generation. He said, make your decisions on behalf of the seven generations coming, so that they may enjoy what you have today."
- ▶ **Oren Lyons (Seneca)**  
Faithkeeper, Onondaga Nation

## Sustainability of our ways on Mother Earth

- ▶ “if you have been given responsibilities within that structure, you must really attend to those responsibilities. You start to think in terms of the people who come after me. Those faces that are coming from beneath the earth that are yet unborn, is the way we refer to that. They are going to need the same things that we have found here, they would like the earth to be as it is now, or a little better.”
- ▶ **G. Peter Jemison**  
Faithkeeper, Cattaraugus Reservation  
Seneca Nation

## 7 Generations spiral



## Place: helps determine what we do and how we do it! •

The surrounding Great Lakes greatly influence the climatic region of southern Ontario. During the fall and winter months, heat stored from the lakes is released, moderating the climate near the shores of the lakes. This makes some parts of southern Ontario have milder winters than mid-continent areas at lower latitudes. Parts of Southwestern Ontario (generally south of a line from Sarnia-Toronto) has a moderate humid continental climate, similar to that of the inland Mid-Atlantic states and the Great Lakes portion of the Midwestern United States. The region has warm to hot, humid summers and cold winters.

### PLACE



# From dependence to Independence: Reversing a federal imposition:

- ▶ I'm using my own community as an example. Oneida Nation of the Thames is located in Southwestern Ontario; We are at the same latitude as northern California;
- ▶ We are surrounded by the Great Lakes, Erie, Huron, Ontario and Lake St. Clair;
- ▶ The Great Lakes are the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth by total area, and second-largest by total volume, containing 21% of the world's surface fresh water by volume.
- ▶ The Great Lakes began to form at the end of the last glacial period around 14,000 years ago, as retreating ice sheets exposed the basins they had carved into the land which then filled with meltwater.
- ▶ What is your climate like now and climate change predictions?;

## Our current state

- ▶ We have 500 homes, 400 need renovations and a waiting list of over 200;
- ▶ Building techniques and materials did not always suit our moist climate, building with wood, building at the water table encourages rot and mold;
- ▶ Look at your housing stock going back a couple of generations;
- ▶ Has there been maintenance and is there salvageable units;
- ▶ What repairs are needed and their costs;
- ▶ We need at least 100 acres just to accommodate current housing needs which we don't have;
- ▶ 70% of our population is under 30 years;
- ▶ We don't have an economy so where do we go;
- ▶ We had a revolving loan fund that might have allowed for future generations but because of poverty and other socio-economic factors this did not work;
- ▶ So where do we go from here?

## So where do we go from here?

- ▶ We need to become land use planners relying on our values and traditional knowledge;
- ▶ Planning means the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities. CIP
- ▶ We deal with pressures and impacts of urbanization and the real potential of encroaching city boundaries which are only 3 kilometers away. We are promoting a buffer zone between our community and urban sprawl to protect natural and wildlife habitats and source water;
- ▶ A planner's activities include designating land use, designing social and community services, managing cultural and heritage resources, creating economic capacity in local communities and addressing transportation and infrastructure. This has to be done using a 7 generations lens;

## What should be our approach?

- ▶ Since we are used to communal living we might consider larger homes that house at least 2-3 generations;
- ▶ The home would be put into the family name and remain as a home forever with contributions made by all the families' generations;
- ▶ Design a home with enough quiet leisure space and communal living;
- ▶ Design homes for individuals with disabilities so they can live inclusively within the community;
- ▶ Use new technologies and sustainable solutions like solar, thermal and wind applications;
- ▶ Utilize ideas like cooperatives geared to income, tiny homes, apartments for abstainers and apartments for singles;
- ▶ Establish wellness as a central theme and in a location where you can go for peace, mental wellness and leisure activities
- ▶ Gated communities for elders where independent living is available in a space surrounded by a leisure center and services;
- ▶ Plant a community garden and a community market where local goods can be sold;

## This is an Earthship

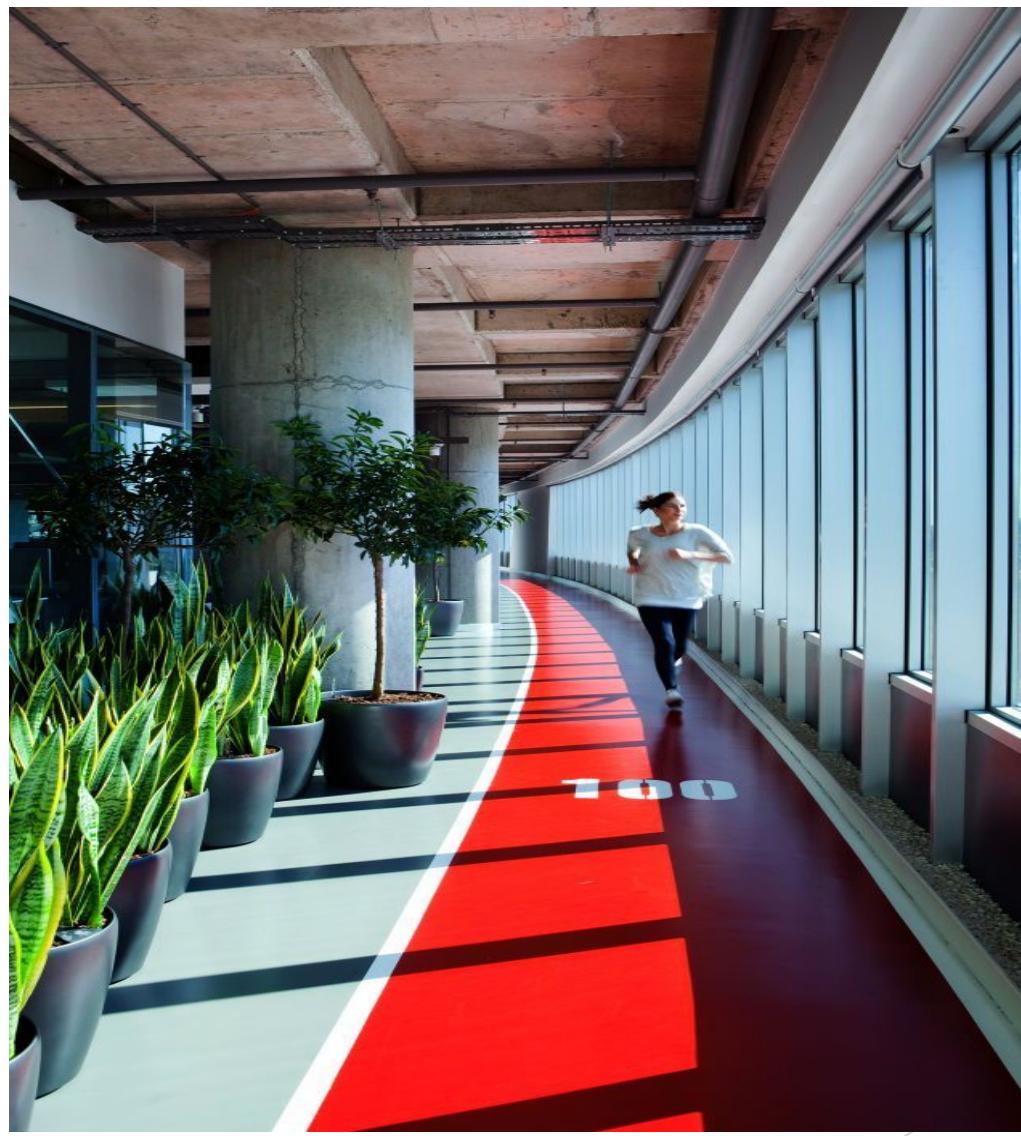
- ▶ An Earthship is a brand of passive solar earth shelter that is made of both natural and upcycled materials such as earth-packed tires, pioneered by architect Michael Reynolds.
- ▶ Earthship structures are intended to be "off-the-grid-ready" homes, with minimal reliance on public utilities and fossil fuels. They are constructed to use available natural resources, especially energy from the sun and rainwater.
- ▶ Eco-friendly, sustainable
- ▶ Self sufficient



## Thinking of 7 generations

- ▶ We have met a young Indigenous inventor of Brighter Future Homes (BFH) with LACS technology which offers homes that can provide an alternative solution to the current model of high debt home ownership. By using our patent pending Living Atmosphere Control System (LACS) and unique home designs, BFH offers homes that provide lower living costs and are self sustaining.
- ▶ His name is Brad Reid and he is challenging the lack of innovation in the housing industry which currently leaves low and middle income families financially challenged and unable to focus on their own and their family's well-being and growth, thus weakening our economy and quality of lives. He is committed to increasing the resiliency of community infrastructure which supports families and future generations;
- ▶ This is future direction that is appealing and could work in our environment.







# Why do we think of the future?

- ▶ We are drawn to our home our land our traditional territories. This is in our blood memory;
- ▶ We need to be socially and culturally connected;
- ▶ Our home is our sanctuary for peace and rest and connection to family;
- ▶ Building for the 7<sup>th</sup> generation means inclusivity and caring for one another;
- ▶ We need to know our environment and use sustainable ideas and methods to bring a balance between inside and outside structure;
- ▶ We need services and infrastructure that are geared to our needs and that help us flourish in changing times;
- ▶ Changing our mindsets as we travel from dependence to independence will take education and leadership;
- ▶ AND you can be that leader!