

Project Summary Report

This is a brief overview is intended for evaluation purposes for projects co-delivered by the City of Lethbridge and Prentice Institute (PI). Evaluation looks at the project's relevance to broader themes within the PI's mandate, as well as workplace deliverables, objectives, benefits, and challenges.

Project Name: "Optimizing off-site construction for housing in Lethbridge: Exploring innovative and affordable housing solutions".

Course Name: Housing Research Independent Study - City Scholars Program- Winter 2025

Student: Clara Khosravizad

City supervisor: Matthew Pitcher

Academic supervisor: Dr. Ivan Townshend

Project Overview (approx. 500-750 words):

"This research project explores how off-site construction (OSC) can enhance housing construction in Lethbridge. It focuses on meeting different housing needs, like providing permanent supportive housing, affordable non-market housing, and housing options for rent or ownership with 4 to 10 units. The study also looks at the bigger picture, considering social, economic, and political factors that influence housing policies and how the city develops. OSC construction provides a fast and easy way to build homes quickly, which helps to lower costs and ensures high quality. This approach supports the city's plans to tackle housing insecurity, meaning it helps people who need safe and stable places to live. It also reduces social isolation by creating more opportunities for people to have neighbors and community connections. Additionally, it assists groups who are at risk by providing them with stable housing options. OSC uses homes that are built in pieces, known as modular homes, and these are put together later. They are made in safe, controlled factory settings by local companies like Triple M Housing and SRI Homes. This makes it possible to customize these homes for people with low to middle incomes—those earning between the 25th to 75th percentile. These individuals are often the most in need of secure housing solutions. OSC plays a vital role in boosting the local economy of Lethbridge. It supports local businesses and provides many jobs in the modular housing sector. This sector employs a lot of people and uses advanced manufacturing techniques. These techniques help to lower costs, reduce waste, and maintain high quality. By keeping prices stable and shortening the time needed for construction, it becomes possible to build more affordable housing units. These units fit well within the budgets set by the city and the province. Also, small projects like duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes play a big role in improving neighborhoods and providing different housing options. This type of

development encourages a slow but steady increase in housing density and adds to market variety. Lethbridge has income-based programs for affordable and community housing that are made even better by OSC's budget-friendly housing solutions. This really opens up more choices for working families and individuals who don't qualify for social housing but still can't afford the regular market rates. The whole idea behind this study is to show how OSC can help get affordable housing to folks with low to middle incomes in Lethbridge faster. It aims to use strong data on costs, timelines, and social outcomes to improve city policies and planning. There are several challenges. We need to change how people think about modular housing (stigma), handle rules and zoning laws, and secure ongoing funds for supportive housing units. Community involvement is a top priority to gain support and make sure the project meets local needs. Policy work is also critical. The information gathered will help update the city housing plans, push for changes in regulations, and support research by the Prentice Institute on migration, population change, and sustainable development. In the end, this study wants to place OSC at the heart of Lethbridge's housing strategy. It aims to demonstrate that innovative building methods can provide high-quality, affordable homes to those most in need and evaluates which of the housing options ranging from permanent supportive housing and affordable housing (non-market sector) to the market housing, including rental housing and home ownership are suitable for the off-site construction. This approach can also boost the local economy, and promote social inclusion".

Student Reflection (approx. 500-750 words):

"While I was doing my work placement with the City of Lethbridge, I had this exceptional chance to connect my background in architecture and urban studies in this research project. I was eager to see how my academic courses in architecture, urban studies, housing policy, and sustainable development could contribute to tangible solutions for the city's housing challenges, particularly through the lens of innovative off-site construction (OSC) methods. Right from the start, I leaned on what I learned in residential building design, data analysis, and policy research—skills I sharpened through various assignments and group projects. I look into the feasibility and effects of OSC housing options across the housing continuum—from permanent supportive and affordable housing to the market-oriented housing sector, specifically for low to mid-income people. My research involved a content analysis of local housing needs, exploring best practices both in Canada and other countries, and contributing to reports that would help guide city decisions. I learned how to emphasize key findings, spot potential issues, and present recommendations, so that made sense to both technical and non-technical audiences. This whole process helped me understand how important compromise, negotiation, and creative problemsolving are in city work, and I realized that the theories about housing equity and urban development from my studies needed to be adjusted to fit the real-world challenges of local governance. Looking back on my placement, I see that not only improved my existing skills but also revealed new ones that will definitely help me in my future studies and career".

Project Stewardship:

"The project is completed, with final deliverables including a research poster (submitted as part of my independent study requirements) and a comprehensive final report to be submitted to Dr. Townshend and Mr. Pitcher".