Proposed Office Complex Project Action Paper.

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**The Purpose-Built Office Complex Construction for Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) to Advance Contemporary Lending and Heal from the School Legacy of Residential Schools**.

The document offers a more strategic perspective on “Building Forward: Construction of a Purpose-Built Office Complex for the Community Features Development Corporation (CFDC) to Advance Contemporary Lending and Heal Beyond the Legacy of Residential Schools. Healing and resilience are deeply intertwined in this development. The new building will significantly enhance CFDC’s capacity to serve Indigenous entrepreneurs. In light of economic development and cultural revitalization priorities of the Central Interior First Nations, this is foundational for new infrastructure development by Indigenous people that is inclusive, responsive, and transformative.

**History and Background of the CFDC of CIFN**

The Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations (CFDC of CIFN) was created in 1990 as part of the Community Futures Program initiated by the Canadian government. This program sought to independently foster economic activity in rural regions regarded as ‘economically depressed’ by aiding small business development and entrepreneurship. CFDC of CIFN was set up to serve the First Nations people, which makes it one of the few organizations of its nature and Indigenous leadership in Canada because it is regionally scoped to British Columbia’s Central Interior region.

**Mandate and Services**

Recognizing the gap in addressing Indigenous entrepreneurs and communities, the CFDC of CIFN was designed to address these gaps as a response to the Indigenous community’s needs. Under its mandate, CFDC of CIFN tasked itself with:

● Funding Indigenous entrepreneurs through business and micro loans

● Developing business plans and providing associated training

● Promoting economic development within the community that is consistent with the indigenous way of life.

● Encouraging community development through partnering with the region, conducting workshops, and nurturing leaders.

CFDC of CIFN has helped hundreds of businesses and community initiatives undertake economic activity and build Indigenous Economic Resilience across the region.

It is also part of a larger ecosystem of Indigenous financial institutions developed and nurtured by the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association.

**Obstacles and Requirements for Infrastructure**

After more than two decades of service, CFDC of CIFN has consistently remained within leased space not designed for Indigenous governance, culture, and clientele. These spaces, which are so ethnocentric, were devoid of adequate infrastructure, either supporting a strong institutional presence or servicing indigenous clientele aspirations.

These visceral and intangible deficiencies, which together form weak institutional identity, pose profound tangible and intangible threats to organizational credibility and public relations partnerships stemming from indigenous identified clients.

The absence of a grounded permanent facility in indigenous culture has severely hindered organizational capacity regarding long-term operational planning, disabling a commanding presence representative of self-determination and indigenous leadership within the socio-economic sphere.

The focus area regarding healing from legacy trauma of the residential school system utilizes intergenerational memories of attending these schools as defining landmarks of their life transitions and heavily supports their Indigenous identity purpose.

The CFDC of CIFN integrates economic development initiatives with healing processes, as they develop these processes in conjunction with the healing processes, which makes them more effective.

The creation of a culturally sensitive office complex, located further from the sites of former residential schools, is both an expedient response and an act of reclamation. This development transforms a space once dominated by colonial violence into a place that holds promise, economically empowered self-governance, and Indigenous sovereignty.

**Looking Forward: Building for the Future**

This office complex is not solely an architectural addition; rather, it embodies an enduring vision:

* A centerpiece for economic advancement driven by Indigenous initiatives
* An inclusive safe space that is culturally appropriate and places trust while cultivating empowerment.
* A healing and resiliency landmark that encourages financial access alongside community revitalization.

CFDC of CIFN, by situating its operations in the office designed by and for Indigenous people, is transforming contemporary lending approaches, policy development, and community-based growth.

**Location and Design as a Pathway to Healing**

It is not an operational or logistical shift but rather an office complex for the CFDC that signifies healing, sovereignty, resilience, and the profound statement of the central interior First Nations.

This initiative employs location and design formulated by and with the Indigenous Peoples as key components to stimulate the economy and continue the healing journey from residential schools.

**Reclaiming Space through Relocation**

For decades, a wide range of services and institutions that cater to Indigenous Peoples have been situated in or next to former residential school sites, either because there was inadequate infrastructure or as a colonial legacy. These facilities carry painful associations with former trauma and, invariably and often unconsciously, contribute to dissociation and embedded trauma. By moving these operations as far away as possible, the organization distances itself, both symbolically and pragmatically, from colonial frameworks of control, asserting its commitment to Indigenous self-determination and healing.

This move is decolonizing; it is the reclamation of space previously occupied without consent, redefining it in alignment with Indigenous vision. The relocated site represents a place of moving forward from trauma, altering economically and culturally, and becoming vibrant.

**Culturally Grounded Design Principles**

Design is important, not only as an aesthetic but also on spiritual and emotional levels. This new CFDC complex will be designed with an Indigenous architectural approach that will include, but not be limited to, the following:

● Use of local and green building materials

● Construction of rounded halls promoting community inclusion

● Central Interior First Nations cultural pieces and artworks

● Indigenous people’s relationship with the land, water, and sky is integrated in the orientation.

Such design considerations provide a sense of safety, dignity, belonging, and primordial trust even for those who are unconsciously grappling with the effects of colonialism's legacy on their life. It signifies the possibility, at the very least, the urgent necessity, that economic zones can and should embody cultural identity and sustain spiritual continuity.

**From Empowering Places to Institutional Spaces**

It is in the manner that services are delivered that greatly determines how they are received. With the building of a new office, CFDC’s lending strategies will also include cultural sensitivity as well as physical courtesy to promote ease of mobility. Such courtesy is an invitation to participation and trust, which are vital to modern indigenous lending. Aside from lending, the new space will help anchor community activities, mentorship, training, and business development, and advance indigenous economic leadership.

**Economic Self-Determination and Healing are Intertwined**

Healing from the impacts of residential schools is not solely about remembrance, it is also about reclaiming the future. By aligning the location and design of its new headquarters with both cultural and economic objectives, CFDC demonstrates how physical infrastructure can serve as a vehicle for holistic healing, reinforcing that economic self-determination and cultural resurgence are inextricably linked.

**The Effects of Structuring Lending Infrastructure from Social and Economic Standpoints on Indigenous Peoples**

The mere construction of a purpose-built office complex for the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Central Interior First Nations is an approach definitely intended for investment, not only confounding the people’s well-being, but also fixing low social credibility and sovereignty sanity.

Infrastructure devoid of meaning contrasts sharply with Indigenous communities, who were historically marginalized, discriminated against, and deprived of development opportunities. These communities pose unique social and economic consequences. Furthermore, it is not socially favorable.

1. Fostering Economic Participation Through Presence

In regard to Indigenous workers, they face remote geographical barriers, proprietary service structures, and socially irrelevant cultures that are profiled as obstacles to their access to financing. The absence of nationalism also impedes efforts. Indirectly, these issues are flushed out by a professional, centralized building service that is culturally appreciative, such as:

* Raising the prominence of lending institutions in the region.
* Allowing untreated access to capital as a right instead of a privilege.
* Granting trust and support based on fighting.
* Ensuring Indigenous clientele a discrimination-free environment, devoid of rhetoric on finances.

Such infrastructure serves the area beyond lending. It becomes a monument of incorporation and fosters a profound sense of perseverance within finances.

2. Infrastructure as Drivers of Indigenous Driven Economy

Integrated training, mentoring, and business incubation for entrepreneurs can be facilitated and structurally supported by having a leasing loan center. These funds can improve the infrastructure provided by CFDC. This enables hosting:

* Community workshops aligned with Indigenous business culture.
* Individual coaching and financial literacy grouped sessions.
* Entrepreneur and funder incorporation networking sessions.

These initiatives are tailored to improve the rate of success of Indigenous-owned businesses, thereby aiding in job creation, strengthening community resilience, and fostering multi-generational wealth.

3. Social Welfare and Healing by Economic Empowerment

Culturally supportive facilities are advanced offices that enable self-sufficiency and economic advancement. Culturally supportive facilities are advanced offices that enable self-sufficiency and economic advancement. Reclaiming one's identity is possible with earning power, autonomy, self-determination, and pride.

Construction of culturally supportive facilities constitutes self-sufficiency from basic-level marginalization. Economically advanced and culturally supportive facilities are powerful strategies from the most advanced forms of marginalization.

4. Strengthening Institutional Trust

Indigenous people have been underserved and over-scrutinized by most mainstream services due to systemic discrimination. Services that have previously been provided to them have done little to serve actual needs for oversight of services provided.

Culturally affirming office complex reinforces systemic reliability and institutional trust and strengthens the framework that the community considers to be authentic. It substantively affirms the client's long-term persistence, investment in structural and infrastructural, and performative strategy.

Once this trust is integrated, reclaiming self-sufficiency becomes easy. Increased client trust will significantly improve engagement, funding via lending, and overall financial health.

This cohesive reclaiming poses limitless possibilities for Indigenous people so long as it is firmly believed that the services and tools required to enact these powerful, funded-enabled visions are accessible.

5: Restorative engagement is vital to secure sustainable and social possibilities.

Ultimately, we cannot underestimate the importance of sustainable social and economic determinants of lending infrastructure for Indigenous people.

With the purpose-built office complex for CFDC of CIFN, construction works leading to the complex have innovatively expanded service delivery. Now, Indigenous Financial Institutions can further advance the economy while simultaneously integrating culture as the newly built infrastructure helps drive economic reconciliation. This serves as the first stride towards dismantling colonial infrastructures in addition to building an ecosystem that enables sustainable thriving ecosystems for Indigenous people financially, socially, and spiritually.

**Scholarly Literature and Sector Review**

The development of a purpose-built office complex for the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Central Interior First Nations is informed by a growing body of research and sectoral best practices that underscore the critical intersections between economic development, infrastructure, cultural safety, and healing in Indigenous communities. This literature and sector review synthesizes findings from academic, governmental, and Indigenous-led sources to justify and support the goals of this project.

**Framework and Overview**

1. Indigenous Economic Development and Lending

In the study of the Harvard Project on American Indigenous Economic Development, it was concluded that there is a dire need for developing self-sustaining institutions. The institutions should be culturally based as they encourage self-initiated economic development among the Indigenous population. It was also discovered that the growth of Indigenous-led financial institutions such as CFDCs within their respective regions allows them to outperform widespread lenders due to:

* Community governance
* Alignment to community attitudes
* Existence of strong socio-infrastructural frameworks

The enhancement of access to capital via Indigenous Financial Institutions, as demonstrated by Indigenous Services Canada and NACCA, leads to an increase in business startups, lower unemployment rates, and overall community wealth.

2. The Role of Community Futures Development Corporations

The level of entrepreneurship among Indigenous peoples and in remote areas of British Columbia is enhanced by CFDCs because they have community knowledge and flexible lending practices, according to reports from Community Futures British Columbia.

These reports mention that widespread funding gaps limit the impact of CFDCs. Space is also important, and visibility, cultural relevance, accessibility, and user-driven tangibility all influence how services are provided and used.

3. Physical Infrastructure and Financial Access

In most literature on the subject, infrastructure is considered to be one of the most important factors that enable the economically inactive to fully participate. Research by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the FNFMB includes the following:

• The expansion of financial services is matched by increased investment in physical infrastructure.

• Purpose-built client facilities strengthen community trust and long-term relationships.

• Trust and long-term client relationships are developed in designated community-based facilities.

• Culture-friendly environments help in reducing the barriers women and other marginalized groups face when engaging with financial services and entrepreneurial activities.

The scholars posit that custom-tailored indigenous financial institutions are more effective and are better able to maintain their purpose over a period of time.

4. Healing and Reconciliation from Residential School Impacts

As it relates to the residential school system, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) expects every sector of society to contribute towards healing and reconciliation. Out of the Commission's 94 Calls to Action, some highlight the need to create spaces that confront the past constructively, promoting healing in the Indigenous context, revitalizing the economy, and fostering self-determination.

The Commission’s Final Report notes that healing, as placing or reclaiming in the physical sense, is a fundamental step in the recovery process from the trauma of the residential schools. People need to be able to strategically reclaim their narrative and control their future by constructing places that are symbolically free from trauma, culturally, and deliberately filled with imagination.

5. Indigenous Architecture and Design Principles

Cardinal and Patrick Stewart, among others, affirm that design constitutes a language of culture. Building in a way that adheres to indigenous architectural principles involves:

● Being bound to the land and nature

● Being respectful of the forms and materials used in the building of old structures

● Use of traditional art and storytelling to shape buildings.

Applying these principles to the CFDC’s new office complex would expand the cultural visibility of the space, as well as make it welcoming, safe, and empowering for the Indigenous clients it serves.

 **Evidence Supported Reasoning**

The literature undeniably advocates for the healing and economic development of Indigenous peoples as attainable if these people are provided with appropriate infrastructure. The office complex for CFDC of CIFN seeks to support these concepts by trying to contain modern lending facilities in a community-motivated, culture-friendly environment. This builds on the community's desire, alongside national and indigenous aspirations towards reconciliation, self-determination, and holistic progress.

**Stakeholders and Funders**

Building a modern-style office complex for Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) of Central Interior First Nations is an integrative endeavor focused on modernizing infrastructure alongside driving indigenous economic development. The success of this initiative depends on collaboration between Indigenous governance, financial stakeholders, community members, and public and private institutions.

1. Principal Participants

a. CIFN (Central Interior First Nations)

The CFDC is supported by Central Interior First Nations, this group is critical in providing strategic vision, cultural direction, infrastructure values, and steering long-term goals.

Their leadership in the project places great importance on self-determination, cultural healing, and revitalization.

B. Community members and Indigenous entrepreneurs

Directly within the scope of their work as local Indigenous entrepreneurs, these community members stand to gain the most from this project. Community needs such as culturally appropriate financial services, as well as ample training, mentorship, and business support, greatly shape the community as a whole, which makes their contribution to this endeavor invaluable.

C. Indigenous architects and builders

The economic development of Traditions is complemented by the employment of Indigenous professionals in the design and construction of the office complex. This enables the project to reclaim and revitalize traditional knowledge and expertise in the built environment.

D. Indigenous Financial Institutions (IFIs)

Because CFDC is part of a national association of Indigenous lending institutions, the project also enhances the institutional presence of IFIs and helps advance the broader goal of increasing access to capital and financial education in the sector.

2. Funding Partners

A. National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA)

With CFDC, NACCA has a particular role as a national umbrella of Indigenous Financial Institutions (IFIs) in Canada. As a main financial, funding, and advocacy body, NACCA offers funds, capacity building, and other support to CFDCs and similar organizations in a strategic form. Bringing NACCA into this project enhances the sustainability of the institution, as well as the linkage to national development plans for Indigenous people.

b. Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

ISC may fund capital projects that aid in the social and economic development of the Indigenous Peoples. This type of support is in alignment with federal obligations under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, specifically in relation to advancing economic reconciliation, community infrastructure, and community development.

c. New Relationship Trust (NRT)

This Indigenous Trust supports the economic and capacity-building initiatives in the British Columbia region. NRT may fund the planning, capital investment, and business support services associated with the new facility.

d. Community Futures British Columbia (CFBC)

CFBC is responsible for the regional CFDCs and may provide some form of technical or financial assistance to develop infrastructure, governance, and service expansion.

e. Province of British Columbia

The provincial government tends to be increasingly supportive of Indigenous Peoples’ initiatives and the economically developmental undertakings of reconciliation. It is possible that some of the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, and Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation may offer grants or funds for infrastructure initiatives.

f. Philanthropic and Private Sector Partners

Some businesses and CSR companies may contribute to the project as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts, focusing on reconciliation, social impact initiatives, and integrating Indigenous people into their business framework.

3. Strategic Collaborations

The tailored office building gives room for collaboration across different sectors by means of: ● Co-investment models

● Capacity-building partnerships

● Joint programming in business development, training, and innovation

Engaging stakeholders with common objectives improves the longevity, effectiveness, and perception of the project.

**Building Together for Lasting Change**

Constructing a CFDC Office with Culturally Responsive Features is more than an office; it is a capital project. It goes beyond walls and reconciliation, it is a unifying narrative of economic inequity, justice, and prosperity for Indigenous people. With Indigenous leadership, community stakeholders, and allied funders such as NACCA and growing support from the Government and the Private Sector, this project will stand as a beacon for the country on the healing, empowering, and transformative potential of infrastructure in Indigenous communities.

**Strategic Actions for a Built Office Complex**

In order to achieve the Purpose-Built Office Complex for the CFDC of Central Interior First Nations, a defined set of strategies must be implemented that outline steps to achieve success and sustain impact. These strategies incorporate economic growth, cultural healing, and community healing into every phase of the project, starting from planning, funding, designing, constructing, and continuing throughout the operational life of the project.

1. Culturally Appropriate Infrastructure Development

● To ensure incorporation of culture, hire Indigenous designers, planners, and builders who will incorporate values into the parts of the building that will be used for the community.

● Engender pride, ownership, and spirituality by featuring Indigenous art, traditional knowledge, and land-based design principles in the community space planning and layout.

● Ensure that the emotional wellness, accessibility, and safety concerning the physical environment are Indigenized for the clients and staff, breaking away from the legacy of trauma from colonial prisons, such as residential schools.

2. Reconciliation through Place-Making

● Choose a new empowering location that eliminates any ties to former residential school sites to symbolically dismantle the legacy of oppression and reclaim the land.

● Utilize the office as a community space/studio that can offer healing programs and cultural workshops, as well as caring for community-oriented financial services, entrepreneurship training.

● Integrate the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action into the project’s mission, including programming around economic reconciliation and institutional transformation.

3. Strengthening Indigenous Lending Capacity

● Design and build a professional, centralized, and highly visible CFDC office to enhance trust building and visibility for Indigenous lending programs.

● Increase the capacity to deliver financial literacy training, mentorship, business incubation, and technical support by offering the appropriate facilities and resources.

● Increase overall reach and client engagement through embedded outreach services in the new infrastructure that serve community entrepreneurs from surrounding Indigenous communities, improving access to capital and training.

4. Leverage Strategic Partnerships and Funding

● Initiate funding and technical support from NACCA, ISC, Community Futures British Columbia, and New Relationship Trust (NRT) by formalizing partnerships with them.

● Reconciling Indigenous Economic Development involves reaching out to philanthropic and corporate partners, as well as provincial government departments.

● Design a strategy that will appeal to better investment, including feasibility studies, business plans, community consultation, and modeling for the sustainability triad, along with long-term investment to ensure that there are stakeholders willing to invest for a long time.

5. Governance and Community Accountability

● Obtain guidance on funded projects from elders, youth, community leaders, entrepreneurs, and seasoned financial professionals with a steering committee.

● Bring in new community members, integrate their feedback, and engage them to ensure that the facility continues to nurture and evolve over time.

● Establish trust by making the development and funding scope transparent by embedding reporting and feedback structures for development.

**Action with Purpose**

By grounding the construction of the CFDC’s office complex in cultural values, reconciliation objectives, and economic empowerment strategies, this project goes beyond infrastructure. It becomes a model of Indigenous self-determination in practice. Through these strategic actions, the CFDC can create a space where healing meets entrepreneurship, and where past harms are acknowledged while new futures are built.

**Conclusion**

The purpose-built office complex construction for the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) in the Central Interior First Nations stands as a single landmark, representing infrastructure that migrates alongside relocating in place, emerging in parallel with settled office upgrades.

It marks a courageous leap in the unfolding path of economic self-determination, cultural healing, and historical healing for the Indigenous Peoples of the region.

This initiative seeks to address the business gap that Indigenous entrepreneurs face due to deep-rooted systemic exclusion and an ongoing colonial legacy, including residential schools. By providing a community-based, culturally relevant, and professionally supportive space, CFDC is working to create the conditions for Indigenous entrepreneurs to flourish within culturally and professionally supportive infrastructure frameworks that are strengthened by Indigenous ways of knowing and modern business practices.

The location and configuration of the facility support a restorative act of troubling and place-making, transforming a space associated with trauma into one that offers hope, nurture, and community. This is moving from healing the past to celebrating the Indigenous future.

Throughout the consultations, several key themes emerged through the research:

● Infrastructure benefits trust, visibility, service delivery, and capturing space.

● Provides discretion, dignity, Indigenous identity, and engagement, enabling clients to participate.

● Pathway conceptualization of reconciliation, healing, and economic development.

Indigenous Peoples’ goals of social and economic justice and intersectional structure innovation poverty can be served through infrastructure, involving the right community-driven strategic partnerships, funding supports, and engaged communities. Initiating infrastructure can strategically position this project as a national benchmark model.

The participation of stakeholders such as NACCA, ISC, and New Relationship Trust enhances the scope and impact of the initiative.

As I wrap up this discussion, I would like to add that “Building Forward” (Office Complex) is not centered solely on a building; it sets out to change the story so that Indigenous people and communities self-govern, develop, engineer, and achieve predetermined milestones as defined by them. The CFDC's vision is unequivocal: enabling through capital, healing through spatial environments, and advancing together as one.

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