

Reimagining our relationships to land and housing: housing as a common good

Imagine a future Tkaronto in the year 2050 (approx. one generation from now)...

Imagine Indigenous place names in their original Anishnaabemowin, Wendat and Kanien'kehá:ka languages displacing colonial names throughout the city of Tkaronto, their sounds and meanings rerooting us all in the lineage of this place...

Imagine Waasayishkodenayosh (possibly meaning the Burning Bright Point in Anishinaabemowin), or the lower Don River Watershed, an extensive ravine system snaking through the valley and neighbourhoods...

Around early October, the leaves on the trees shimmering in the breeze

Vibrant autumn colours of fire red, amber, green, dusky brown and orange

Great Staghorn and Fragrant Sumac, White Pine, Sugar Maple, Eastern Hemlock, Eastern White Cedar and Hawthorn...

Our first Elders and teachers of what it means to be a living entity with agency and dignity and self sovereignty, of rootedness and being connected in place...

Teachers of how organisms cooperate deeply and share nutrients, energy, electrical and chemical communication, decisions, and intelligence...

Teachers of a great ravine network sustaining 1700 more-than-human species and diverse human communities...

Tree Elders hold our ancestral and collective wisdom and memory,

And an imprint of our constant unfurling and becoming, and of futures to come...

Imagine the mycelial-type network, under-gridding the ravine system...

Extending those interdependent relationships and flows, ecological and climate resilience, and ancestral plant wisdoms into our communities, systems and institutions...

Connecting and enlivening and sustaining social and civic infrastructures,

And contributing to community cohesion, wellbeing and vitality...

Imagine that present-day First Nations, Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous wisdom and knowledge holders, Earthworkers, harvesters, land and water defenders...

Their embodied, ancestral lineages attuned to the cycles and rhythms of these diverse landscapes across this Tkaronto homeland and assemblage of life worlds...

Their hereditary, cultural, experiential and Earth wisdoms

Infused into the land stewardship practices and relationships of nearby treaty-holders,

The Michi Saagiig of the Credit First Nation, and urban Indigenous community

Their ways of not only practising land stewardship with deep care, but of *being* that

stewardship and care

Reinvigorate lineages of knowing and caring for the land and our Earth kin

Within the many settler communities on these homelands of the Anishnaabeg, the Wendat and the Haudensaunee Confederacies...

Their ways of *being* land stewardship model the teachings, spirit and sacred Wampum Covenant of the Dish With One Spoon—

Different peoples sharing in, caring for, abundant gifts of the treaty lands of Tkaronto;

Engaging in reciprocal and conscious relationships;

Never exceeding one's share and never asserting ownership over the gifts of the land...

Imagine a complex of homes resembling in their interconnectedness and cooperative energy...

A self-organizing honeycomb bursting with people and life

Stewarded through collectively held roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to home, land and community;

Where everyone has safe, secure, regenerative housing enshrined as a human right for everyone, and an inherent right of the First Peoples;

A vibrant space where no one is unhoused, and where everyone is connected to the commons and to community

Imagine a housing commons where the design and development of these homes emulates the beauty, form, function and reciprocity of gifts of the landscapes and waterscapes and natural beings of the ravine, and the ecological and biodiversity corridors they create...

Homes that are designed to support and augment the ecological health of the ravine by improving urban climate resilience by sequestering and storing carbon;

Designed to reduce heat island effect and mitigating flood risk through new and re-purposed timber building materials, green roofs, upcycling materials and retaining rainwater;

A housing commons based on bioregional governance, where our cities and communities – and underlying cultural, political and economic systems – are organized around bioregional living systems or wide-scale, complex lifeworlds...

Imagine that Indigenous-inspired and guided stewardship protocols and practices enable deep, long term forms of resident stewardship taken up by all residents...

Collectively defined and mutually agreed upon resident and land stewardship rights, roles and responsibilities—and a system of accountability;

That would hold all of us accountable to an ethic of love and care of place,

In service of the flourishing of all peoples, lands and beings in the ravine

Agreements that honour land as a living entity with self-sovereignty and agency and self-owning rights;

And houses and collective living spaces are also self-owning and honoured as living entities with agency...

Agreements that bind residents to intergenerational custodianship of the house structure, Including timbers that store carbon and the renewable, distributed energy infrastructure; Abundant and resilient food systems and living resilience structures that enable water access and drainage and waste decomposition...

Imagine a housing commons and community where Elders are at the centre, with young people learning from and inspiring and supporting them, and all of us in between caring for and stewarding the whole commons...

Where land and housing stewardship and deep rootedness in place importantly bring us into a sense of communion and intentional practice with the land, with the sacred, with community, and with the generations to follow...

We are creating a living, breathing housing and land commoning and stewardship narrative Beyond colonial, extractivist and for-profit housing and real estate structures, We are imagining and manifesting an emergent housing system based on deeper and more reciprocal land relationships

And where housing is allocated and governed as a common good

We are embedding accessible housing, community building, local food and circular economy possibilities as transformative social infrastructure

That creates deeply inclusive, long term relationships, spaces and hubs, networks and resources – the connective tissue for the community

Housing and social infrastructure embedded in Truth and Justice and Reconciliation...

Imagine FreeHouse Tkaronto...