

Challenge: Ensure access to affordable, reliable housing options by matching tenants with available rental properties or house owners in Canada

Understanding:

The challenge of ensuring access to affordable, reliable housing options in Canada exists due to several factors like limited supply of affordable rental properties, the cost of housing has been rising faster than middle-income households in many parts of Canada, particularly in high-demand areas [1]. Lack of Information and Accessibility, about available properties and rental processes prevents individuals from accessing affordable housing options due to trust issues. Additionally, the limited availability of social housing and insufficient government support systems, such as rental subsidies, lack of comprehensive rental regulations or inadequate enforcement, resulting in unfair rental practices and potential discrimination.

Objectives and Constraints:

The primary objective of the design challenge is to enhance access to affordable housing for individuals and families with available rental properties, ensuring that they can find suitable and dependable housing options that reside within their financial means. Another crucial objective is to promote housing stability by providing long-term housing solutions and establish stable living arrangements, fostering a sense of security. Another objective is to ensure that the rental properties offered are reliable and of good quality. This includes properties that meet health and safety standards, have appropriate maintenance, and provide a comfortable living environment for tenants. The design challenge necessitates a robust information and technology infrastructure to ensure access to reliable and up-to-date information on available rental

properties and tenants needs. Addressing the supply-demand dynamics in the housing market requires innovative strategies as there is high disparity between the number of available rental properties and the demand from tenants [2]. Efficient and transparent matchmaking processes can be facilitated through suitable technology platforms.

Resources:

A range of resources can be utilized to develop a solution for the design challenge of ensuring access to affordable, reliable housing options in Canada. Government support is crucial, as it involves allocating funds for the construction of new affordable housing units, providing rental subsidies, granting tax incentives to promote affordable housing, and enforcing fair housing regulations. Technological advancements, such as online platforms like Kijiji [3], Facebook [4], should attract a wide range of property owners and encourage them to list their properties, thereby increasing the supply of available housing options for tenants. Engaging with developers and property owners is essential to increase the supply of affordable housing in the market. Research institutions and experts by obtaining, analyzing information related to housing must provide valuable insights and best practices to inform the development of effective solutions.

Existing Solutions:

Online platforms and applications Platforms like Kijiji [3], and Facebook [4], Rentals.ca [5] that connect tenants with available rental properties enable users to search for rental listings, filters based on their preferences such as location, price range and directly communicate with landlords or property managers. These platforms streamline the rental process and enhance transparency by providing comprehensive property information, including photos, virtual tours, and rental

history. The Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS) goals include increasing housing affordability and reducing homelessness through investments and initiatives [6].

Anticipated Challenges:

Firstly, it is important to ensure accurate and reliable data about rental properties by verifying the information and keeping it up-to-date. Secondly, privacy and security measures must be in place to protect user data and comply with regulations. Lastly, complying with legal requirements, such as tenant-landlord laws and fair housing practices, can be complex but necessary. Fourthly, getting users including tenants and property owners, to use and actively participate in the application can be difficult. It involves convincing them to overcome their initial hesitations, building their trust in the platform, and clearly demonstrating the advantages of using it. Integrating with property management companies and government agencies can be challenging because it involves agreeing to share data and fostering collaboration to ensure the success of the solution.

References:

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