

# **Co-op Housing Development**

## ***Modular and Prefabricated Construction Methods Toolkit***



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## Introduction

Modular and/or prefabricated construction is an umbrella term for construction technologies which use pre-constructed or pre-assembled building materials and components to advance the construction of buildings or infrastructure. Modular and prefabricated construction are considered modern methods of construction (mmc). They are used with the goal of speeding up construction timelines, reducing waste, and improving quality control. Canada is undergoing a rapid expansion in investment and capacity to produce modular and prefabricated buildings. CHF Canada is proud to be engaged in supporting the co-op housing sector with its growth to becoming a strong modular and prefabricated early adopter partner.

This toolkit is designed to assist co-op housing groups in the development of new co-op housing using modular/prefabricated methods of construction. It can be used alongside CHF Canada's Modular Design Manual (2026) and CHF Canada's Co-op Housing Development: Modular Housing Fundamental Tools workshop (2026). In addition, we would encourage prospective co-ops seeking to use Modular and/or prefabricated constructions methods to reach out to CHF Canada's Development and Growth services team at [growth@chfcanda.coop](mailto:growth@chfcanda.coop).

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# Modular and Prefabricated Construction Feasibility

This feasibility checklist is designed for use by co-op housing board of directors, committee members, staff, and development consultants. This list is used as a guide to support discussions and facilitate decision-making during the process of choosing a method of modular and/or prefabricated construction, procuring your modular partner and site. These items are not a comprehensive list, and other considerations may be necessary for your project.

## 1. As Strong As Its Weakest Link: Partner Capacity

### A. Manufacturer Selection

- Factory capacity fits project schedule
- Manufacturer certified for the jurisdiction's code
- Manufacturer insolvency or delay risk evaluated

### B. Procurement & Contracting

- Appropriate CCDC contract compatible with manufacturer
- Risk allocation clearly defined (factory vs. GC vs. consultants)
- Quality assurance plan: factory inspections, in plant testing
- Contingency for on-site modifications

### C. Co-op Governance & Community Feasibility

- Co-op board consulted early on modular benefits/limitations
- Governance model and staff support accelerated construction timeline
- Adequate support for existing members, considerations for proximity to construction

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## 2. Location, Location, Location: Assessing Your Site

### A. Site Suitability

- Adequate lot size and adjacent building setbacks for material staging (module storage), crane swing, and trucking access.
- No extreme slope complicating module placement
- Soil conditions suitable for bearing heavy machinery (Geotechnical study)
- Climatic compatibility of modular design to localized condition

### B. Zoning and Permitting – Speak to your municipal officials

- Adequate zoning: Modular construction permitted, Density (Floor Area Ratio), height and building massing
- Identify if building permit approvals process includes module reviews and what is required to submit to municipality
- Coordinate application for road closure permissions for scheduled delivery of oversized loads

### C. Transportation

- Route planning (bridges, turns, overhead wires, etc.)
- Weather considerations for module delivery booked into schedule
- Transport limits (module size restrictions) verified

### D. Remote or Northern Site Considerations

- Shipping windows, lead time and routes available for project timeline
- Local workforce is trained for adequate modular installation
- Additional shipping costs due to location integrated into project budget

### **3. Home Sweet Home: Building Design and Technical Feasibility**

#### A. Unit Mix & Co-op Needs

- Module dimensions allow for co-op goals for family sized units, and quality of space and light
- Communal spaces (laundry, gathering, offices) align with modular system
- Accessibility standards met within module limitations

#### B. Sustainability

- Modular system supports required energy codes and efficiency goals
- Lifecycle cost comparison (modular energy performance, durability)

### **4. Financial Considerations**

#### A. Capital Budgeting

- Modular cost comparison including the validation of hard and soft costs
- Craning and transportation inclusive costing
- Contingency levels appropriate to modular construction

#### B. Funding

- Financing, cashflow model and draw schedules are coordinated with modular needs and timeline
- Agreements to certify progress payments without on-site verification

#### C. Operational Feasibility

- Co-op carrying costs and long-term lifecycle maintenance modeled with modular efficiency advantages/disadvantages

## 2026 CHF Canada Modular and Prefabricated Approved Vendors

In 2026 CHF Canada completed a Modular Constructor Request for Expressions of Interest and pre-qualified the below list of vendors. To receive any updates made to this list since the publication of this toolkit, please contact [growth@chfcanada.coop](mailto:growth@chfcanada.coop). For more information including design templates, regional capacity and 'project fit' contact approved vendors below.

Firm	Region	Modular type	Contact
Smart Modular	North Western Ontario	Volumetric	<a href="mailto:Contacts@smartmod.ca">Contacts@smartmod.ca</a>
Tooketree	Ontario	Panelized, Hybrid	<a href="mailto:Info@tooketree.com">Info@tooketree.com</a>
Element5	Ontario	Mass Timber, Panelized, Hybrid	<a href="mailto:Info@elementfive.co">Info@elementfive.co</a>
3Twenty Modular	Western Canada	Hybrid, Volumetric,	<a href="mailto:info@3twenty.ca">info@3twenty.ca</a>
ATCO	Canada wide	Volumetric	<a href="mailto:troy.buchanan@atco.com">troy.buchanan@atco.com</a>
Ron Anderson and Sons	British Columbia	Panelized, Hybrid	<a href="mailto:info@rasltd.ca">info@rasltd.ca</a>
Intelligent City	British Columbia, Ontario	Mass Timber	<a href="mailto:office@intelligent-city.com">office@intelligent-city.com</a>

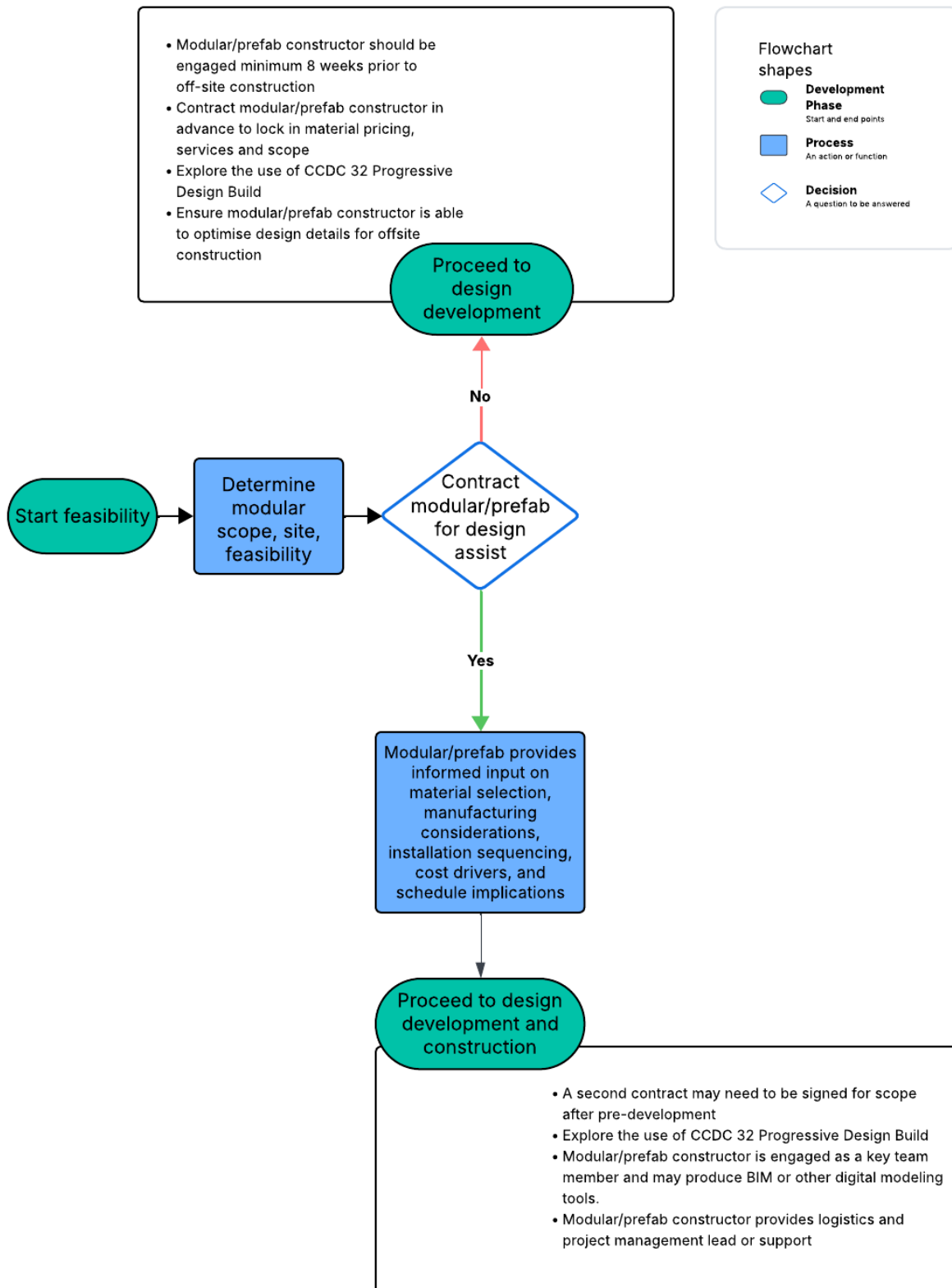
CHF Canada encourages all co-op development projects to explore construction using made in Canada only products and constructors. It is at the discretion of each co-op to explore local material sourcing from modular Canadian partners.

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## Procurement Guidelines

Procurement in co-op housing development relates to the process of acquiring all goods, services, and contractors necessary to complete a construction project efficiently, on time, and within budget. Procurement for prefabricated and/or modular projects can look similar to traditional construction projects but will have additional considerations and may require innovative approaches. Housing co-ops will need to carefully consider the additional project management resources that will need to be deployed while procuring prefabricated and/or modular projects as often engaging a consultant is an additional layer of procurement. Housing co-ops at early stages of project development should enter discussions with modular partners around familiarity for CCDC contracts including CCDC 32 Progressive Design Build (released in 2026).

## Procurement roadmap



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## Risk Mitigation

Modular and prefabricated construction requires highly collaborative and integrative approaches to project development. Risk mitigation can be approached with best-practice project tools such as pre-mortems, risk mapping, scenario planning, and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. Some potential risks to projects are highlighted below, with practical mitigation strategies that may be utilized in addition to the above project tools. Housing co-ops are encouraged to build and sustain strong strategic partnerships across diverse project teams to ensure values-aligned housing, shared economic benefits and responsible risk management collaboration occurs.

### 1. Funding and Financing

- a. **Risk:** Modular construction front loads many construction costs, bringing a risk of damaged, undelivered or incomplete goods/scope before installation on site. The cost of pre-fabrication includes procurement of materials and sub-trade labour before any shovel touches the ground.
- b. **Mitigation:** Ensure contractual safeguards are in place and financing model balances these risks between client and modular provider. Engage holdbacks as necessary. Carry contingency appropriately.

### 2. Assembly

- a. **Risk:** On-site assembly coordination can be more complicated than traditional construction methods, leading to a risk of delays, poorly installed modular components, or significant deficiencies.
- b. **Mitigation:** Engage in construction management services that have expertise in modular construction. Engage the modular constructor as part of the on-site assembly team. Ensure any on-site constructor is engaged collaboratively with the modular constructor. Invest in local modular training in advance of construction. Include modular on-site experience as part of the procurement qualifications model.

### 3. Transportation

- a. **Risk:** Modular Housing requires large, prefabricated building components to be brought to the building site from the construction warehouse. This process may require specialized transport vehicles including flat-bed trucks, cranes and heavy construction equipment. Inherent risks during transportation include disruption to transportation routes due to political or weather conditions, damage to components, inflation of transportation costs and lead times for specialized transport vehicles.
- b. **Mitigation:** Finding relevant precedents can inform your team of any transport concerns throughout the development process. Lock in transportation costs at early stages of the project. Hold realistic contingency in timeline and budget. Identify seasonal challenges early.

### 4. Local Unfamiliarity with New technologies

- a. **Risk:** Inexperienced modular builders may run into method specific roadblocks. Roadblocks may also arise from municipal unfamiliarity.
- b. **Mitigation:** Invest in local modular training in advance of construction. Include modular on-site experience as part of the procurement qualifications model. Engage municipal officials early and include your builder, architect or developer for facilitation.

## Conclusion and further references

Thank you for your interest in the growth and development of Canadian co-op housing. As CHF Canada continues to grow, member-led development projects are necessary to build new co-op homes and strengthen our co-op communities. We hope that our tools will help to educate and empower your community to engage and guide your projects.

CHF Canada's commitment to education and understanding the needs of our members is always evolving. Your feedback and engagement continue to shape our goals and directives. Please reach out to our growth and development team at [growth@chfcanda.coop](mailto:growth@chfcanda.coop) with any questions or if you require assistance with your project.

We are excited to support your new co-op community, acquisition, conversion, or expansion initiatives.

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