

STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

SUBMITTED TO:

Planning Institute of British Columbia



SUBMITTED BY:

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in partnership with
Human Capital Strategies

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Contents

Executive Summary	ii
1. Introduction	1
2. Labour Market Analysis and Demand Outlook for Planners in BC and the Yukon	1
Profile of Urban and Land Use Planners from 2021 Census	1
Outlook 2025 - 2035	10
3. Additional Insight from Membership Data	17
4. Methodology on Primary Research	23
5. What We Have Found in Primary Research	24
References	29
Appendix I Detailed Survey Responses	30
Appendix II Key Themes from Survey Responses	47
Appendix III Map	54
Appendix IV List of Variables for Census of PIBC Members	55

Executive Summary

Planners create plans and associated policies that support a community's vision for the future. In addition to their traditional field of practice in land use and municipal planning, planning professionals are increasingly called upon to develop policies and plans that encompass areas such as transportation, housing, environment, recreation, and other aspects to make communities vibrant and sustainable and across the public, private, and non-market employment sectors. To better understand the labour market prospects of planning professionals in BC and the Yukon, Roslyn Kunin and Associates, in partnership with Human Capital Strategies, has been retained by the Planning Institute of British Columbia to collect demographic and labour market demand data to produce this report.

Although official statistical documents describe people in planning as urban and land use planners, we note that people counted in the planning category do far more than these two functions. The many other categories of planners' work are listed in the report. Nevertheless, we use the official statistical title to be consistent with our statistical sources.

This report begins with a detailed analysis of the planning labour market. Key findings include:

- The planning workforce is composed of a roughly equal number of men and women.
- Male planners are concentrated in the 35–64-year age group, while females are slightly younger.
- There are fewer visible minority people among planners than in most comparable occupations and the total BC labour force.
- Both the unemployment rate and the self-employment rate are lower than the BC average. This indicates that planners are more likely to have a job than be self-employed consultants.
- Planners earn incomes above the BC average and among those in the most comparable occupations.
- A higher proportion have a bachelor's degree.

The BC Labour Market Outlook (2025) projects an annual growth rate for planners of 1%. This estimate is low because the number of openings we describe in this report indicates that jobs now and in the future could go unfilled without more planners and the wide and growing range of tasks that planners now perform will generate more demand.

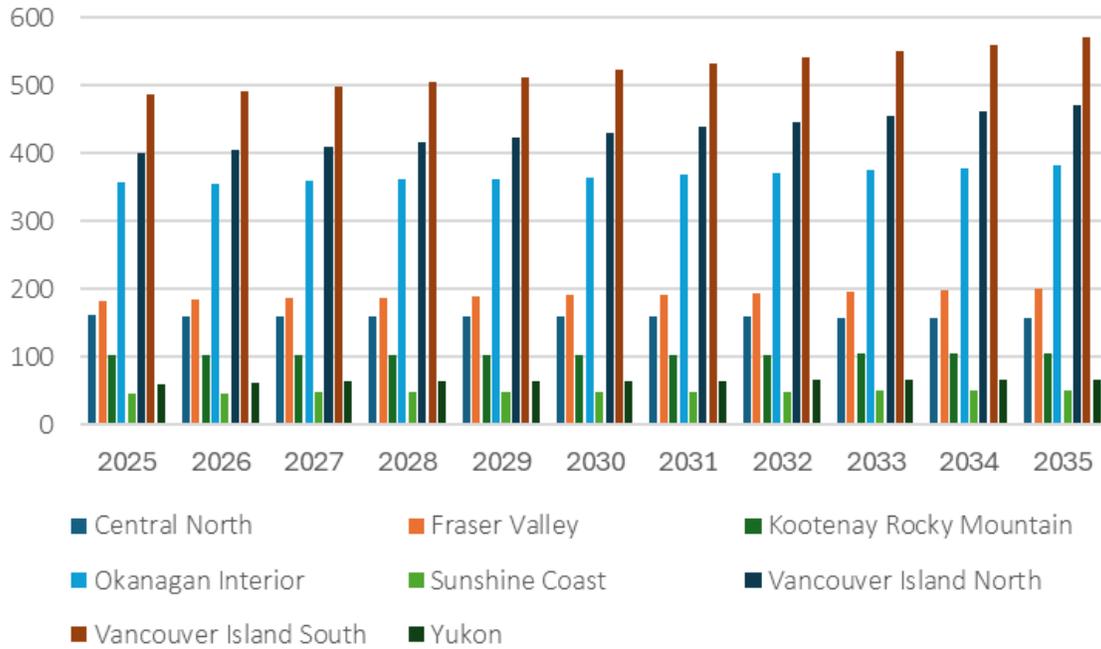
Analysis of both our primary and secondary research leads us to conclude that planners are in short supply and that this will continue. Non-metro areas face greater challenges than in Greater Vancouver, but mayors in Metro still have difficulty filling planning jobs. This is because of the much wider range of tasks that now require planners especially those who are certified and have the needed skills and experience.

Our report concludes with some suggestions for dealing with these issues such as providing more information about opportunities in planning and simplifying the certification process

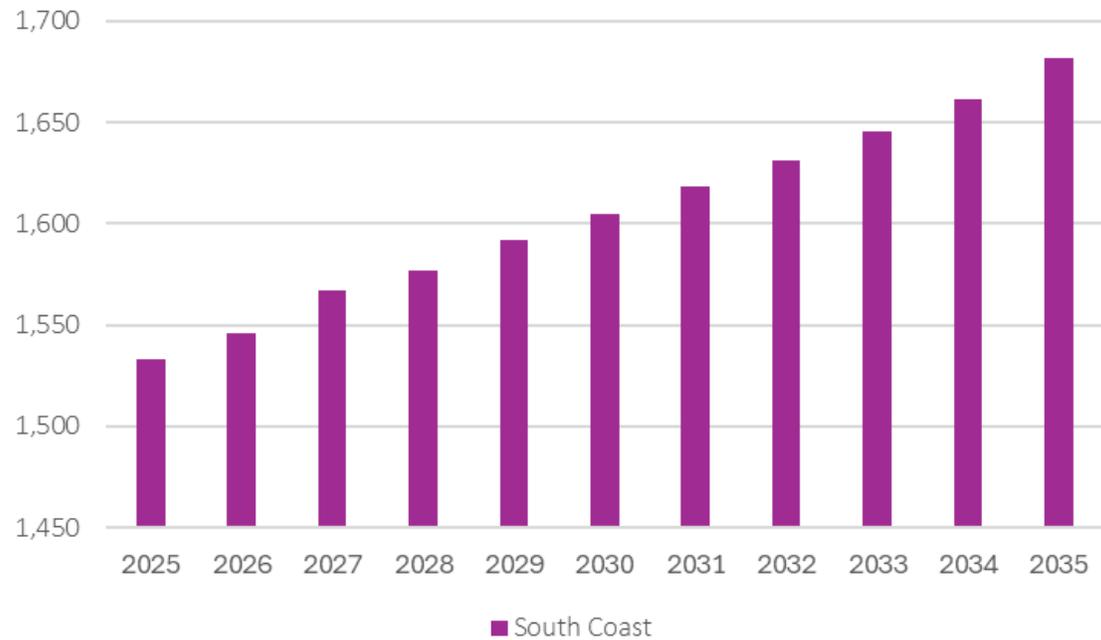


STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Estimated (2025) and projected employment (2026-2035) of Urban and Land Use Planners by PIBC Chapter (except South Coast)



Estimated (2025) and projected employment (2026-2035) of Urban and Land Use Planners in BC (South Coast Chapter only)





1. Introduction

As per the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC), economic circumstances and labour force constraints are affecting many sectors of the economy. Communities in British Columbia and the Yukon are experiencing challenges in recruiting and retaining planners to fill vacant positions. Addressing the housing crisis and infrastructure deficits, in addition to addressing climate change and other strategic issues affecting the livability and prosperity of communities across British Columbia and the Yukon, requires the unique skillsets of trained, competent professional planners in the public (i.e. local governments), private (i.e. real estate developers, consultants), and non-profit sectors.

Adding to the labour force challenge are reductions in training opportunities for new planners, such as recent changes to some university planning schools and a growing field of employers in various sectors who engage and employ planning professionals. Other barriers also include the recognition and matching of foreign (non-Canadian or American) credentials and experience for planners who are immigrating to Canada. Also, making progress in reconciliation requires the profession and the Institute to be more open and accessible to Indigenous planners and practitioners. Therefore, there needs to be better ways to recruit and retain Indigenous planning professionals to serve their communities.

PIBC also wants to ensure that recent adjustments to federal immigration targets, economic cycles and the recent provincial housing legislation which sets out new requirements (and authorizations) for local governments to facilitate more housing development are reflected in labour market demand projections of the planning professional.

2. Labour Market Analysis and Demand Outlook for Planners in BC and the Yukon

Profile of Urban and Land Use Planners from 2021 Census

Planning, in general, is systematic decision-making that leads to informed action. Community planning, in particular, is an evolving process unique to each community that envisions and shapes where and how people live, work, and play. Intended outcomes are plans and policies that balance people, communities, environment, and economy. Community planning is an ever-changing and increasingly important field.¹

Planners create plans and associated policies that support a community's vision for the future. Most of them perform their work in one or more specializations such as:

- Land-use planning and development
- Regional, urban, or rural planning
- Infrastructure and transportation planning
- Parks and environment planning

¹ From PIBC Fact Sheet – What is planning? What do planners do?



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- Social, cultural, or heritage planning
- Housing analysis and planning
- Economic development planning
- Stakeholder education and community engagement
- Project management and planning
- International development planning

In the Canadian National Occupational Classification (NOC) system, planners are called Urban and Land Use Planners. It should be noted, though, that those persons who are classified in this NOC code are planners who specialize in urban and land use planning. The definition of this NOC code is

Urban and Land Use Planners develop plans and recommend policies for managing land use, physical facilities and associated services for urban and rural areas and remote regions. They are employed by all levels of government, land developers, engineering and other consulting companies, or may work as private consultants.²

Examples of working titles include, but not limited to:

- City planner
- City planner - land use
- Community and urban planner
- Community planner
- Community recreation planner
- Environmental planner
- Heritage planner - land use
- Heritage work planner
- Land use planner
- Land use specialist
- Long-range planner - land use
- Mass transit services analyst
- Municipal park planner
- Municipal planner
- Neighbourhood planner
- Park planner
- Planner
- Planning analyst - land use
- Recreation planner
- Regional planner
- Senior planner - land use
- Site planner
- Town planner

² As per Statistics Canada: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects/standard/noc/2021/indexV1>.

- Transportation planner
- Transportation route planning analyst
- Urban and regional planner
- Urban planner
- Urban renovation planner
- Zoning officer - land use

In this section we present statistics pertaining to demographic characteristics of urban and land use planners in BC and the Yukon, based on 2021 Census data.

Age and Gender

Table 1: Number and Distribution of Urban and Land Use Planners by Age and Gender, BC and the Yukon

	BC		Yukon	
	Labour Force	% distribution	Labour Force	% distribution
Men+ / 15 to 24 years	40	3%	0	0%
Men+ / 25 to 34 years	315	21%	10	50%
Men+ / 35 to 44 years	455	30%	10	50%
Men+ / 45 to 54 years	365	24%	0	0%
Men+ / 55 to 64 years	240	16%	0	0%
Men+ / 65 years and over	120	8%	0	0%
Men+ subtotal	1,535	100%	20	100%
Women+ / 15 to 24 years	35	2%	0	0%
Women+ / 25 to 34 years	470	32%	0	0%
Women+ / 35 to 44 years	490	33%	10	33%
Women+ / 45 to 54 years	290	20%	10	33%
Women+ / 55 to 64 years	140	10%	10	33%
Women+ / 65 years and over	45	3%	0	0%
Women+ subtotal	1,470	100%	35	100%
Total Labour Force Status	3,005		55	

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0593-01 Class of worker by occupation unit group, labour force status, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Of the total 3,005 urban and land use planners in BC, 1,535 (51%) identified as men and 1,470 (49%) identified themselves as women.³ Note that the total counts for urban and land use planners in the Yukon Territory are extremely small and also due to rounding, the distribution by gender is not reliable.

On age distribution, there are higher proportions of those aged 15-24 years old and those aged 65 years and older for men than for women. The majority of workers were in the 25-64 years of age group. Within this broad age group, those in the 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54 age cohorts account for the largest share, indicating that workers in this profession are relatively young.

For comparison purposes, we have shown in the following table the age/gender distribution of urban and land use planners with the distribution of similar professional occupations and the general workforce in BC.

Professional occupations in applied science (except engineering) include architects, urban planners and land surveyors, mathematicians and statisticians, data scientists, computer and information system scientists, as well as computer, software and web designers and developers. This is the occupational group urban and land use planners are part of. Professional occupations in social and community services include social and community service professionals, police investigators, and education and employment counsellors. Professional occupations in government services include policy and program researchers, consultants, and officers.

³ As per Statistics Canada's explanation: given that the non-binary population is small, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is sometimes necessary to protect the confidentiality of responses provided. In these cases, individuals in the category "non-binary persons" are distributed into the other two gender categories and are denoted by the "+" symbol.

Table 2: Age and Gender Distribution of Urban and Land Use Planners, Professional Occupations in Applied Science (except Engineering), Professional Occupations in Social and Community Services, Professional Occupations in Government Services, and All Occupations, BC

	Urban and Land Use Planners	Prof. occ. in applied science (exc. engineering)	Prof. occ. in social & community services	Prof. occ. in government services	All occupations in BC
Men+ / 15 to 24 years	3%	6%	2%	4%	12%
Men+ / 25 to 34 years	21%	32%	16%	25%	22%
Men+ / 35 to 44 years	30%	29%	24%	25%	22%
Men+ / 45 to 54 years	24%	19%	24%	22%	20%
Men+ / 55 to 64 years	16%	11%	21%	16%	18%
Men+ / 65 years and over	8%	3%	13%	8%	7%
Men+ subtotal	51%	75%	30%	40%	52%
Women+ / 15 to 24 years	2%	7%	3%	5%	12%
Women+ / 25 to 34 years	32%	38%	23%	27%	22%
Women+ / 35 to 44 years	33%	26%	28%	28%	22%
Women+ / 45 to 54 years	20%	18%	23%	22%	21%
Women+ / 55 to 64 years	10%	10%	17%	14%	17%
Women+ / 65 years and over	3%	2%	7%	4%	5%
Women+ subtotal	49%	25%	70%	60%	48%
Total Labour Force Status	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0593-01 Class of worker by occupation unit group, labour force status, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts

In terms of gender distribution, urban and land use planners are fairly evenly distributed between male and female workers, like the overall workforce in BC. Compared with the professional occupations shown in the table above, they are most in line with the distribution amongst professionals in government services. This means that proportionally, more female workers are joining the planning profession.

In terms of age distribution, urban and land use planners are more likely in the 25-64 years age group than the general workforce, and this age distribution is like those observed amongst other professionals shown in the table. Proportionally, there are more female and male planning professionals in the 35-44 age group than any other professionals shown in the table. There are also more female professional planners in the 25-34 age

group (proportionally) than those in professional occupations in community services and professional occupations in government services.

Labour force status and Class of Workers

Table 3: Labour Force Status and Class of Workers Distribution of Urban and Land Use Planners, Professional Occupations in Applied Science (except Engineering), Professional Occupations in Social and Community Services, Professional Occupations in Government Services, and All Occupations, BC

	Urban and Land Use Planners in BC	Prof. occ. in applied science (exc. engineering)	Prof. occ. in social & community services	Prof. occ. in government services	All occupations in BC
Total Labour Force Status	3,005				
Employed	2,935				
Unemployed	70				
Unemployment rate	2%	3%	3%	4%	8%
All Class of Workers	3,005				
Employee	2,680				
Self-employed	325				
Self-employment rate	11%	16%	18%	18%	17%
Total Labour Force Status	3,005				

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0593-01 Class of worker by occupation unit group, labour force status, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts

Note that the total counts for urban and land use planners in the Yukon Territory are extremely small and also due to rounding, the statistic in this category is reported for BC only.

The unemployment rate for urban and land use planners in BC was 2%, much lower than the provincial average unemployment rate of 8% for the general workforce. Self-employment rate amongst urban and land use planners was 11%, much lower than the provincial average self-employment rate of 17% for all occupations.

In Table 3 above, we have also shown unemployment rates and self-employment rates for other professional occupations. Urban planners had the lowest unemployment rate amongst all the other professional occupational groups, indicating their favourable labour market condition. They were also more likely to work as employees as opposed to working for themselves.

Visible minority

Table 4: Visible Minority Representation of Urban and Land Use Planners, Professional Occupations in Applied Science (except Engineering), Professional Occupations in Social and Community Services, Professional Occupations in Government Services, and All Occupations, BC

	Urban and Land Use Planners in BC	% distribution	Prof. occ. in applied science (exc. engineering)	Prof. occ. in social & community services	Prof. occ. in government services	All occupations in BC
Total visible minority population	715	24%	49%	25%	29%	34%
South Asian	150					
Chinese	305					
Black	30					
Filipino	50					
Arab	15					
Latin American	45					
Southeast Asian	25					
West Asian	30					
Korean	15					
Japanese	30					
Visible minority, n.i.e.	0					
Multiple visible minorities	30					
Not a visible minority	2,285	76%	51%	75%	71%	66%
Total Labour Force	3,000	100%				

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0586-01 Employment income statistics by occupation unit group, visible minority, highest level of education, work activity during the reference year, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories

One in four planners are represented by visible minority population. Still this share is lower than the provincial average for all occupations (34%). This section does not examine the proportion of planners who identify as being of indigenous in Canada.

Note that the total counts for urban and land use planners in the Yukon Territory are extremely small and also due to rounding, the statistic in this category is reported for BC only.

When compared with other professional occupations as shown in the table above, non-visible minority urban and land use planners account for the majority, similar to professionals in social and community services as well as professionals in government services. However, in professional occupations in applied science, visible minority groups and those in the non-visible minority group were equally represented, which means there is more room for the planner occupation to improve its visible minority representation.

Highest level of educational achievement

Table 5: Distribution of Urban and Land Use Planners, Professional Occupations in Applied Science (except Engineering), Professional Occupations in Social and Community Services, Professional Occupations in Government Services, and All Occupations, by Highest Level of Educational Attainment, BC

	Urban and Land Use Planners in BC	% distribution	Prof. occ. in applied science (exc. engineering)	Prof. occ. in social & community services	Prof. occ. in government services	All occupations in BC
No certificate, diploma or degree	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%
High (secondary) school diploma or equivalency certificate	255	8%	10%	4%	9%	28%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	105	3%	1%	0%	1%	8%
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	300	9%	14%	5%	11%	18%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	60	2%	3%	3%	4%	4%
Bachelor's degree	975	31%	45%	38%	39%	22%
University certificate or diploma above bachelor level	75	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%
Degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Master's degree	1,370	43%	22%	44%	28%	7%
Earned doctorate	40	1%	2%	3%	5%	1%
Total Population Aged 15 and over	3,185	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0404-01 Occupation by major field of study (detailed, 4-digit): Canada, provinces and territories

Not surprisingly, those with a bachelor's degree and higher account for the largest share of urban and land use planners in BC, almost one in five (77%).

Note that the total counts for urban and land use planners in the Yukon Territory are extremely small and also due to rounding, the statistic in this category is reported for BC only.

Given the educational knowledge requirement for planners and other professional occupations shown in the table above, the proportions of professionals who had achieved at least a bachelor's degree is much higher than the general workforce (about 75% vs. 33%).

Compared with professional occupations in applied science (except engineering), professional occupations in community services, as well as professional occupations in government services, professional planners with a bachelor's degree account for the smallest share (31% vs. 45%, 38%, 39%). However, professional planners with a master's degree account for the highest share amongst these comparable professional groups. This indicates the high level of educational attainment required of professional planners.

Employment income

Table 6: Employment Income for Urban and Land Use Planners in 2020, BC

Urban and Land Use Planners in BC	Total - Number of employment income recipients	Median employment income (\$)	Average employment income (\$)
Total - Work activity during the reference year	3,000	79,000	80,400
Worked part year, part time or full time	655	32,400	52,500
Worked full year part time	125	45,600	43,000
Worked full year full time	2,220	85,000	90,800

Table 7: Employment Income for Urban and Land Use Planners in 2020, Yukon

Urban and Land Use Planners in Yukon	Total - Number of employment income recipients	Median employment income (\$)	Average employment income (\$)
Total - Work activity during the reference year	65	76,000	76,000
Worked part year, part time or full time	15	0	24,000
Worked full year part time	0	0	0
Worked full year full time	50	77,500	92,000

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0586-01 Employment income statistics by occupation unit group, visible minority, highest level of education, work activity during the reference year, age and gender: Canada, provinces and territories

Both average and median employment income were reported for urban and land use planners. For those in BC, the average employment income reported for year 2020 was \$80,400, while for those who worked full time and for the full year (74%), the average was \$90,800.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

According to BC Labour Market Information Office, annual earnings of urban and land-use planners in BC were \$83,560 in 2025.⁴

In the Yukon, average employment income reported for planners for the year 2020 was \$76,000. For those working full time and full year (77%), the average employment income reported was \$92,000.

Table 8: Comparison of Average Employment Income for Urban and Land Use Planners, Professional Occupations in Applied Science (except Engineering), Professional Occupations in Social and Community Services, Professional Occupations in Government Services, and All Occupations, BC

	Urban and Land Use Planners in BC	Prof. occ. in applied science (exc. engineering)	Prof. occ. in social & community services	Prof. occ. in government services	All occupations in BC
Average employment income in 2020	\$80,400	\$92,100	\$56,500	\$66,000	\$55,100
Proportion who worked full time and full year	74%	73%	59%	63%	52%
Average full time and full year employment income in 2020	\$90,800	\$108,300	\$69,900	\$83,900	\$77,700

Comparing with other similar professionals and the general workforce, data from the table above shows that average employment income of planners in 2020 was above similar occupations in social and community service and the general government services, but not as high as employment income for professionals in other applied science occupations. This held true even when we compare only full-time full-year earnings.

Outlook 2025 - 2035

Estimated employment (2025) and projected employment (2026-2035) by province and by PIBC geographic chapter

The starting point for the estimation of employment in BC in 2025 is the published employment value in the provincial labour market outlook publication, *BC Labour Market Outlook, 2025-2035*. It is noted that the number of urban and land use planners in BC has increased drastically between 2016 and 2021, based on Census data. In 2016 there were 1,855 planners in the province, and by 2021 the number was 3,000, an increase of almost 62%. By 2025, the provincial labour market outlook estimated that there were about 3,270 urban and land use planners in BC, which is a further increase of 9% between 2021 and 2025. Such increase translates to an average annual growth rate of 2%, in line with the general population increase during the same period.

⁴ Information derived from 2025 Job Bank Wage data, as per https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/urban-and-land-use-planners#industry_highlights.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

However, population growth itself played only a small role in driving the increase of planners in BC. Census data for 2016 and 2021 show that population growth in the Yukon Territory increase by 12% between 2016 and 2021, yet the number of planners in the Territory remained essentially the same during the same period. Therefore, the starting point for the estimated number of urban and land use planners in the Yukon in 2025 is 60.

Going forward, the average annual growth rate for planners in BC is projected to be 1% per year from 2025 to 2035, partly reflecting a slower population growth but probably more importantly the fiscal constraint in the public sector where many planners work. To derive the projected number of planners employed by the eight PIBC geographic chapters within BC, we rely on shares (distribution) derived from the analysis of PIBC membership data (see Section 3, specifically, the shares derived based on certified members and candidate members) and the projected growth rates for development regions where these chapters are aligned with.

For Yukon, employment projection is derived by multiplying the employment estimate in 2025 by projected growth rates in the Northeast region in BC.

The table below presents our employment projection in BC and the Yukon. This is a minimal projection. See below for additional demand due to replacement and other factors.

STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

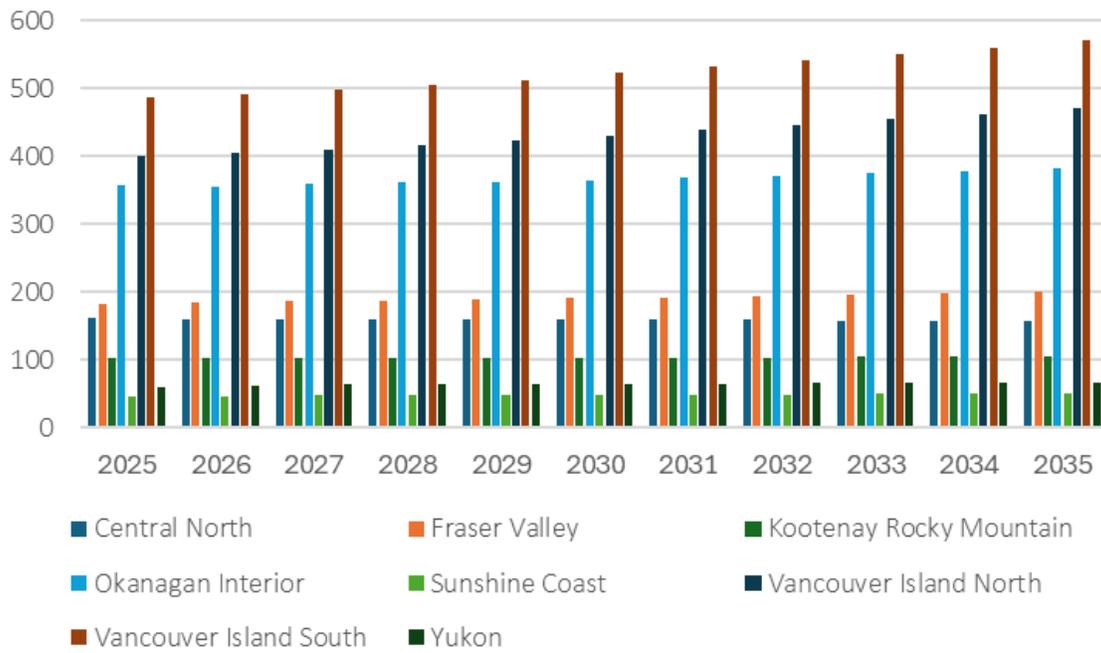
Table 9: Estimated (2025) and Projected (2026-2035) Employment of Urban and Land Use Planners in BC and the Yukon

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Central North	162	160	160	160	159	159	159	158	158	158	157
Fraser Valley	182	183	186	187	189	190	192	193	195	197	199
Kootenay Rocky Mountain	103	102	102	103	103	103	103	104	104	104	104
Okanagan Interior	357	356	359	361	362	365	368	371	374	378	381
South Coast	1,533	1,546	1,567	1,577	1,592	1,605	1,618	1,632	1,646	1,662	1,682
Sunshine Coast	46	46	47	47	48	48	49	49	49	50	50
Vancouver Island North	401	405	410	416	422	430	438	446	454	462	470
Vancouver Island South	486	491	497	505	513	522	532	541	551	560	570
Yukon	60	62	63	64	64	65	65	65	65	66	66
Total	3,331	3,352	3,391	3,419	3,452	3,486	3,523	3,559	3,597	3,636	3,679



The representation of the employment outlook projection is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Note that because the number of employed in the South Coast chapter is substantially larger than in other chapters, the estimates and projections shown in Table 9 are split into Figure 1 and Figure 2.

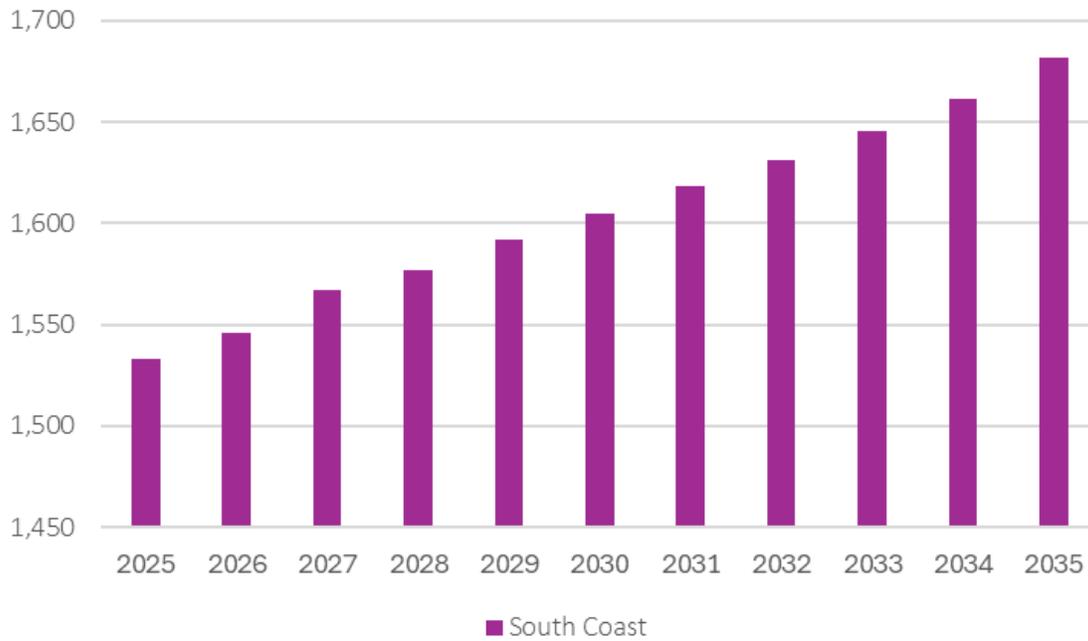
Figure 1: Estimated (2025) and projected employment (2026-2035) of Urban and Land Use Planners in BC (except South Coast) and the Yukon



Source: RKA.



Figure 2: Estimated (2025) and projected employment (2026-2035) of Urban and Land Use Planners in BC (South Coast chapter only)



Source: RKA.

Total job openings 2026-2035

While table presented above shows the size of the occupation over time, actual job openings are far greater than the year-to-year change in the size of the occupation, which is generally referred to as “new jobs or expansion demand” as they represent the change in the size of the occupation due to factors such as population increase, policy changes, economic activities, and others. There are many other reasons where, even if there is no change in the size of the occupation, recruitment occurs. These factors include retirement, leave due to illness or returning to education and training, changing jobs, etc., and they create openings that are referred to as “replacement jobs or replacement demand”.

In the subsection we present estimated number of job openings for planners in BC and the Yukon. In deriving these estimates, we first collect replacement projections from the BC Labour Market Outlook publication, including detailed data per development regions. We derive shares of replacement needs by projected employment in each year. Then we apply these shares to the projected employment in each year by PIBC geographic chapter and arrive at an adjusted replacement opening projection for each of the PIBC geographic areas.

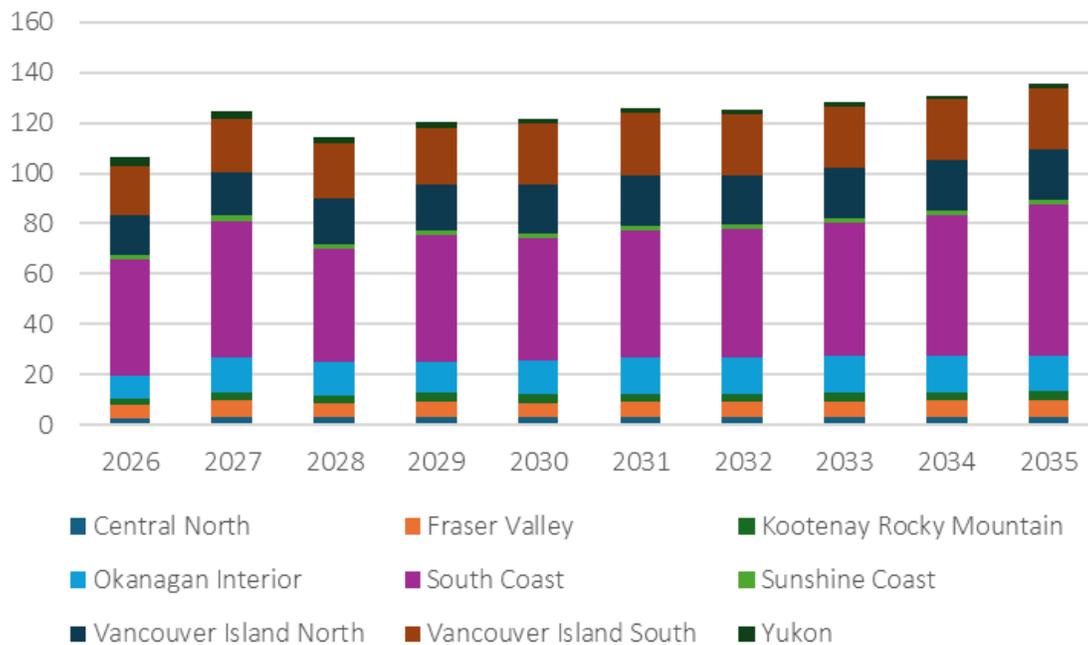
It should be noted that the replacement needs per the provincial labour market outlook publication mainly captures attrition, i.e., replacement due to retirement, death, returning to education and training, and does not capture staff turnover – leaving the occupation or leaving the industry. Therefore, it is possible that actual total job openings presented in the table can be higher.



Also contributing to the demand for planners that was revealed in our primary research is the broadening scope of what it is that planners do (e.g. dealing with environmental issues) and the increasing range of employers that now use planners (e.g. First Nations). This has not yet been estimated in our quantitative work due to lack of specific data. For example, if we assume that each of the 70 First Nations Development Corporations require the hiring of at least one planner,⁵ the total number of new jobs over the projection period can increase by 70. Thus, the table below should be taken as a minimum.

Figure 3 depicts the total number of job openings from 2026 to 2035 for planners in BC and the Yukon. Details of the data in Figure 3 are shown in Table 10.

Figure 3: Projected Total Number of Job Openings (2026-2035) for Urban and Land Use Planners in BC and the Yukon



Source: RKA.

⁵ Based on information from the First Nations Business Development Association in 2025.

STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Table 10: Projected Total Job Openings for Urban and Land Use Planners in BC and the Yukon, 2026-2035

		2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Central North	new jobs	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	replacement jobs	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	total job openings	2	4	3							
Fraser Valley	new jobs	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
	replacement jobs	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5
	total job openings	5	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	7	7
Kootenay Rocky Mountain	new jobs	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	replacement jobs	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	total job openings	2	3								
Okanagan Interior	new jobs	-1	3	2	1	3	3	3	4	4	3
	replacement jobs	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
	total job openings	9	14	13	12	14	14	14	15	15	14
South Coast	new jobs	13	21	10	15	12	14	13	14	16	20
	replacement jobs	33	34	35	35	36	37	38	39	39	40
	total job openings	46	54	45	50	48	50	51	53	55	60
Sunshine Coast	new jobs	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	replacement jobs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	total job openings	2									
Vancouver Island North	new jobs	4	5	6	7	8	8	8	8	8	8
	replacement jobs	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
	total job openings	16	17	18	18	20	20	20	20	20	20
Vancouver Island South	new jobs	4	6	7	8	9	10	9	10	10	9
	replacement jobs	15	15	15	15	14	15	15	15	15	15
	total job openings	19	21	22	22	24	25	24	24	24	24
Yukon	new jobs	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	replacement jobs	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
	total job openings	4	3	2							
Total – BC & Yukon	new jobs	21	39	28	33	34	37	36	38	39	43
	replacement jobs	85	85	86	87	87	88	89	90	91	92
	total job openings	106	124	114	120	121	126	125	128	131	135

3. Additional Insight from Membership Data

PIBC’s membership data provided a snapshot description of its membership. The database shows a total of about 3,940 records. Out of the total number of records, about 2,360 were active members (status “active”), while the rest were inactive members. For those in the “inactive” category, 5 records fell under “pending approval”, 605 considered “resigned”, and 639 considered “restricted”.

For the purposes of this analysis, we concentrated on the “active” members. Within this group, there were different types of members depending on the status of their certification. The table that follows lays out the various kinds of active members.

Types of Active Members

Table 10: Distribution of PIBC Membership by Status of Membership

	Count	% distribution
Active, certified	1,161	49%
Active, accredited student	324	14%
Active, non-accredited student	164	7%
Active, candidate	382	16%
Active, certified - life member	1	0%
Active, honorary	10	0%
Active, non-practicing - candidate	9	0%
Active, non-practicing - certified	48	2%
Active, non-resident - certified (secondary)	46	2%
Active, non-resident – student (secondary)	26	1%
Active, pre-candidate	123	5%
Active, public subscriber	14	1%
Active, retired - life member	2	0%
Active, retired - member	55	2%
Total	2,365	100%

With the different type of active membership, we analysed five types – certified members, candidate members, pre-candidate members, accredited student, and non-accredited student members.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Certified Member

Certified members are qualified professional individuals who have met the membership certification requirements and are recognized by PIBC and CIP as a Registered Professional Planner (RPP).

Demographic attributes of the certified members have been shown in the following table. For each of the tables in this section, we have shown data by PIBC chapter. In Appendix III, there is a map showing all local governments (generally considered urban areas) and electorate areas (generally considered rural areas) in the province. For information on PIBC chapters, please refer to <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pibc-chapters>.

Table 11: Demographic Attributes of PIBC Members – Active Certified Members

		Count	% distribution
Gender	Male	582	50%
	Female	551	47%
	No-binary	0	0%
	Did not provide	28	2%
Average length of membership	active, certified members	17.7 years	
Average length of time between 1st year as Candidate and Full Membership	60% of all active certified members	4.2 years	
PIBC chapter	Central North	47	4%
	Fraser Valley	54	5%
	Kootenay Rocky Mountain	31	3%
	Okanagan Interior	134	12%
	South Coast	533	46%
	Sunshine Coast	14	1%
	Vancouver Island North	142	12%
	Vancouver Island South	170	15%
	Yukon	21	2%
	blank	0	0%
	unknown	15	1%
	Total	1,161	100%



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Candidate

A candidate is an individual who is in the process of obtaining Certified membership and 'Registered Professional Planner' status with the Institute (PIBC).

Their demographic profile is shown in the table below.

Table 12: Demographic Attributes of PIBC Members – Active Candidates

		Count	% distribution
Gender	Male	113	30%
	Female	126	33%
	No-binary	1	0%
	Did not provide	142	37%
Average length of membership	candidate	5.8 years	
PIBC chapter	Central North	27	7%
	Fraser Valley	29	8%
	Kootenay Rocky Mountain	16	4%
	Okanagan Interior	29	8%
	South Coast	167	44%
	Sunshine Coast	7	2%
	Vancouver Island North	41	11%
	Vancouver Island South	52	14%
	Yukon	5	1%
	blank	0	0%
	unknown	9	2%
	Total	382	100%

Pre-Candidate

A pre-candidate is an individual who has declared her/his intention to seek Candidate and ultimately Certified membership and 'Registered Professional Planner' status with the Institute, but who is not yet eligible for admission to Candidate membership.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Table 13: Demographic Attributes of PIBC Members – Active Pre-Candidates

		Count	% distribution
Gender	Male	27	22%
	Female	36	29%
	No-binary	0	0%
	Did not provide	60	49%
Average length of membership	Pre-candidate	4.9 years	
PIBC chapter	Central North	5	4%
	Fraser Valley	13	11%
	Kootenay Rocky Mountain	6	5%
	Okanagan Interior	9	7%
	South Coast	56	46%
	Sunshine Coast	4	3%
	Vancouver Island North	12	10%
	Vancouver Island South	12	10%
	Yukon	5	4%
	blank	0	0%
	unknown	1	1%
	Total		123

Accredited Student

Those with accredited student membership are post-secondary planning students who are currently enrolled full-time in a university planning school/program which is formally accredited by the CIP & PIBC.

Their demographic profile is shown in the table below.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Table 14: Demographic Attributes of PIBC Members – Active Accredited Students

		Count	% distribution
Gender	Male	96	30%
	Female	100	31%
	No-binary	3	1%
	Did not provide	125	39%
Average length of membership	active, accredited students	2.6 years	
PIBC chapter	Central North	21	6%
	Fraser Valley	13	4%
	Kootenay Rocky Mountain	1	0%
	Okanagan Interior	6	2%
	South Coast	216	67%
	Sunshine Coast	1	0%
	Vancouver Island North	39	12%
	Vancouver Island South	9	3%
	Yukon	1	0%
	blank	2	1%
	unknown	15	5%
	Total	324	100%

Non-Accredited Student

Those with non-accredited student membership are post-secondary planning students who are currently enrolled full-time in a university planning school/program which is NOT formally accredited by the CIP & PIBC.

Their demographic profile is shown in the table below.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

Table 15: Demographic Attributes of PIBC Members – Active Non-Accredited Students

		Count	% distribution
Gender	Male	54	33%
	Female	55	34%
	No-binary	1	1%
	Did not provide	54	33%
Average length of membership	active, non-accredited students	1.7 years	
PIBC chapter	Central North	6	4%
	Fraser Valley	11	7%
	Kootenay Rocky Mountain	4	2%
	Okanagan Interior	17	10%
	South Coast	93	57%
	Sunshine Coast	0	0%
	Vancouver Island North	3	2%
	Vancouver Island South	21	13%
	Yukon	0	0%
	blank	0	0%
	unknown	9	5%
	Total	164	100%

From the tables above, several patterns can be seen:

- Gender distribution: it is one of the professional occupations where male and female workers have fairly equal representation. From the student membership data, it can be seen that the proportion of female workers is surpassing the proportion of male workers.
- Average length of membership: for those in certified RPP designation, average length of members is almost 18 years, indicating members staying in their profession for a long time.
- Geographic distribution: there are more student members (proportionally) in the South Coast and Fraser Valley than certified members. However, that is likely due to the location of the accredited education programs. For practicing professionals, the shares in the South Coast and Fraser Valley regions are smaller than the general population distribution.
- Number of years to obtain RPP certification: for the approximate 60% of active, certified members, it was found that the average number of years it took to obtain certification is 4.2 years.



Analysis of data from the Census and membership database has provided valuable information about the planning profession in BC and the Yukon. However, there are still areas where further data can be collected to inform a comprehensive picture of the profession. These areas include:

- Data to quantify Indigenous representation
- Data to quantify the extent Indigenous organizations requiring planning professionals
- Salary differential between planners in urban and rural areas
- Salary differential between planners in the public and private sectors

4. Methodology on Primary Research

The main purpose of the labour market study for planners in BC and the Yukon is to understand the main factors driving its current and future demand and to derive future labour demand projections for planners in BC and the Yukon.

A central and important aspect of this process is the engagement of key stakeholders. Key stakeholders and Indigenous representatives with which the research team engaged include:

- Business, industry and professional organizations
- Employers and employees
- Local governments in the regions and relevant provincial government departments
- Education, training providers, HR professionals

The distribution of stakeholders who participated in interviews and surveys are:

Table 16: Distribution of Survey / Key Informant Interview Participants

	Count	% distribution
Local government	20	66%
Provincial government	1	3%
Private employer	3	10%
Indigenous organization	2	7%
Post-secondary education	3	10%
Crown agency	1	3%
Total	30	100%

This engagement includes key informant interviews and surveys of a total of 30 stakeholders and of Indigenous representatives.



Key questions for the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Approach include:

- Is there a planner shortage in British Columbia and the Yukon?
- Was it easy or difficult for employers to fill planning roles?
- Were the advertised roles additional positions and/or replacement positions?
- Are senior roles being filled by less experienced or qualified candidates?
- What are the barriers to attracting, recruiting, and retaining planners?
- Are planners staying in their roles or leaving to different employers or industries?
- Are there gaps in specific skills and knowledge that you are seeing in potential recruits?
- How important was it for you to hire a certified Registered Professional Planner or candidate member of PIBC?
- Have you filled a planner role with someone who is not a certified Registered Professional Planner or candidate member of PIBC?

The results of this survey are presented in detail in Appendices I and II.

5. What We Have Found in Primary Research

A shortage exists

According to our research, there is a shortage of qualified planners, especially for more experienced and high-level people. Competition for planners is fierce at all levels of government: local and provincial as well as at crown agencies and non-government bodies. The private sector contributes intensifying competition for skilled planners, particularly for complex infrastructure, resource, environmental, and Indigenous engagement work. Indigenous communities seek planners with Indigenous governance knowledge, cultural competence, and community planning experience.

Vacancies that need to be filled include a mix of replacement and additional or new positions.

Although it is usually not a problem in getting applicants for entry-level planning positions, the shortage of more senior and experienced planners puts time and workload pressures on management who have to compensate with the use of junior and less experienced planning staff.

Recruitment and retention challenges are significant. Not all employers are able to provide the competitive compensation, flexibility in working conditions and geographic location planners prefer.

The shortage is exacerbated by a significant level of turnover, partly to do with competition for able, experienced and certified planners. Growing turnover rates in certain organizations has significantly increased recruitment activity in order to backfill the resulting vacancies.

Issues of work-life balance, burnout and interest in career change also contribute to turnover. More planners are choosing early retirement due to stress and the increased complexity of the planning role. The lack of hybrid work and other workplace flexibilities (e.g., flex time) are also deterrents to retention of some planners, especially the younger ones. We cover these issues more fully further in this report.



Metro versus non-metro areas

Geography makes a big difference. In Metro Vancouver, it is easier to find qualified people although still a challenge to keep them. In the non-Metro areas, finding and retaining even less qualified or experienced people is very difficult, a problem that is exacerbated the smaller the community. Employers find that providing the training and upskilling needed does not always work in the long run. Smaller, more rural planning organizations often lose their investments in training their junior planners who eventually move on to higher level planning roles elsewhere and/or to organizations which can pay more compensation or offer better working conditions.

Relevant infrastructure, support staff and other amenities may not exist outside of Metro. Budgets in small centres may not stretch to provide competitive salaries. In this study, the main context in which compensation came up was the issue of smaller communities being unable to afford planners. These issues are especially evident in Indigenous communities where it is desired that planners have additional knowledge about the culture and the community.

Changes in planning functions

There is increased complexity in the planning profession. Planners now need to stay on top of changes in policies and legislation which have an impact on how they can do their jobs. The recent provincial legislative changes that have been mandated have contributed to increases in planners' workloads. Expectations from both the public and politicians are rising due to pressures like the housing crisis, infrastructure investment, Indigenous planning needs and climate change along with the on-going need to plan for community growth and redevelopment. Changing technologies like AI affect how work is done. Older planners must keep their skills up to date. Younger planners may rely too much on AI as opposed to analysis and judgement.

Need for Skills and Certification

Most employers hire non-certified planners for entry-level or junior positions. This is especially true in smaller centres. However, certification is much more important for senior planner positions. Strong interdisciplinary skills are needed to deal with communities in general, Indigenous issues including treaties, infrastructure and the environment. Technical skills like GIS are now required.

What is now expected of and require from planners is much more than what was the case in the past. Many sources told us that university programs should now include:

- more practical learning.
- project management skills.
- interpersonal skills and effective communication.
- real estate.
- Finance.
- development planning and zoning.

- knowledge of how local governments operate.
- knowledge of the legislative framework in which planning occurs.
- negotiating skills.

The educational programs to deliver these capacities should be applied and experiential and offered in different formats including remotely to be available to Indigenous people and others who would find it difficult to get to traditional courses.

In BC, demand for planners is high due in part to the cost of housing, the challenges of becoming certified and other factors covered in this report. However, the need for more qualified planners is indisputable. Universities and the Province should be increasing training places and thus the supply of planners to meet this demand. Instead, the opposite is happening. The number of post-secondary planning-related programs which are currently already limited compared to other jurisdictions like Ontario are now falling further as universities contract. For instance, the Vancouver Island's only graduate planning program created ten years ago, Vancouver Island University's (VIU) Master of Community Planning program, will end in June 2026. However, to fill this gap, subject to other approvals, the University of Victoria (UVic) Senate approved this year a new Master of Community Planning program that focuses on small city and town planning, First Nations and rural/urban interface planning and climate change adaptation and resilient urban design.

In addition, the complex process of obtaining professional status deter some from considering a planning career. Factors include the amount of time and costs involved in the requirements such as schooling, experience, mentorship and providing a sponsored logbook. We heard that uncertified planners can be expected to start the certification within 6 months of hiring. Those unwilling to do so would be lost to the profession.

Some organizations are willing to offer training and eventual pathways that would lead to certification. However, too many of the workers benefitting from these opportunities leave the employer who invested in them.

An increasingly politically charged environment and other complexities have made soft skills more important for planners to have, in order to be able to handle the demanding public and political pressures now placed on local governments and other bodies. Negotiating skills, change management skills and other leadership competencies have become essential for most planners.

While there is an awareness of AI and its implications for the workplace and planning, most feel it is still too early to know exactly how it will affect the planning profession and how it can be used. Although there is a perception among politicians and senior administrators that some planning work can be conducted or shortened using AI, there needs to be further investigation and evidence. However, even now it is obvious that AI will be a component in planning work and that it cannot completely replace experience and judgement.



Flexibility and working conditions

The ability to work remotely is often desired by those considering taking a planning position or remaining in it. Yet, remote work opportunities for planners are relatively rare even though remote work could well be part of the solution to planner shortages particularly in non-metro areas.

Our research showed younger less experienced planning staff are motivated by factors like remote work. Family issues may be a factor in preference which is not exclusive to young workers. A positive work culture, work-life balance, and advancement opportunities were also considerations in their job choices. These young workers are the labour pool in which employers, especially in non-urban areas, must find their staff. However, many municipal and public sector planning organizations have collective agreements which limit not only remote work but also innovative compensation and other flexible working conditions. This seriously reduces their ability to recruit and retain planners.

Diversification, gender and family issues

Diversification of the planner work force was not raised as an issue in our interviews and surveys, but the statistical data show that planners as a group are less diverse than is the BC labour force and many comparable occupations. More detailed analysis of this issue will be derived from a planned demographic census of current PIBC members. There is gender balance in the planning workforce. Family issues were not mentioned but may come up in the forthcoming demographic census of planners.

Possible solutions

Organizations in rural and smaller communities have to be more creative in filling planning positions, including part-time planners, planners contracted for one day a week, sharing planners among a group of organizations, etc. Taking advantage of remote work and other flexible options is essential.

Both employers and unions need to be more engaged in finding solutions relating to remote work, higher wages and other issues especially in smaller/rural communities where recruitment and retention are already quite challenging and will likely persist into the future.

More training places must be provided offering more applied components, a faster pipeline and generating more capacity for Indigenous planning.

The planning profession and career path need to be more aggressively and positively promoted to the general public, students and post-secondary institutions (e.g., “local government is a great place for career advancement”).

The process for becoming certified should become clarified, simplified and if possible, made shorter and less costly. One interviewee referred to the costs and times involved in schooling, experience, mentorship and a sponsored logbook can deter some from considering a planning career. Immigrants and



international students are considered a talent source for planning positions but there are challenges with international credential recognition and training and the differences in certification processes.

Also, the certification process and requirements need to keep up with emerging competencies such as: Indigenous relations; climate adaptation; infrastructure planning; complex regulatory environments; and public engagement interests.

Most organizations hire non-certified planners for entry-level or junior positions, but the certification is much more important for mid- and senior-level planner positions. Planner certification is seen as important; however, recruiting more senior level, certified planners has become increasingly challenging and competitive for employers. One KII indicated that within 6 months of hiring, they are expected to start the process of being a candidate if they are not already.

Immigrants and international students are a possible, valuable talent source for planning positions, but there are challenges with international credential recognition and training and the differences in certification processes. These challenges need to be addressed.

Conclusions

Analysis of both our primary and secondary research leads us to conclude that planners are in short supply and that this will continue in the future. Non-metro areas face greater challenges than in Greater Vancouver, but mayors in Metro still have difficulty filling planning jobs. This is because of the much wider range of tasks that now require planners especially those who are certified and have the needed skills and experience.

Our suggestions above for dealing with this shortage describe actions that planners, employers and others can take to attract, retain and train more planners. A forthcoming census of PIBC members will shed more light on issues such as expected retirement, family constraints and diversity. See Appendix 4 for a draft of the census questions.

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Appendix I Detailed Survey Responses

Statistics and Detailed Comments of Survey Responses on Professional Planners in BC & Yukon

Type of entity represented by respondent (n=24)

	Count	% distribution
Local government	14	58%
Provincial government	1	4%
Private employer	3	13%
Indigenous organization	2	8%
Post-secondary education	3	13%
Crown agency	1	4%
Total	24	100%

Geographic area(s) in which organization operates / serves (n=23) (response can be more than one)

	Count	% distribution
Central North	5	12%
Fraser Valley	6	14%
Kootenay Rocky Mountain	2	5%
Okanagan Interior	4	9%
South Coast	14	33%
Sunshine Coast	1	2%
Vancouver Island North	4	9%
Vancouver Island South	3	7%
Yukon	3	7%
Other (please specify)	1	2%
Total	43	100%

Geographic area identified as “other” includes “outside British Columbia, rural, northern and First Nations”.



Type of planning (n=23)

(response can be more than one)

	Count	% distribution
Land use	23	26%
Real estate	7	8%
Transportation	12	14%
Social	16	18%
Environmental	15	17%
Culture and recreation	9	10%
Other	6	7%
Total	88	100%

Types of planning identified under “others” include

- Economic development
- Agricultural, heritage, accessibility, sustainability/climate, emergency, economic development
- Housing
- Geographic information systems mapping
- Capital projects, health, long-range
- Municipal planning

Analysis: given more than half of the respondents work in local governments, it is not surprising to see the most frequently cited type of planning is land use, followed by social planning and environmental planning. According to BC government’s *Local Government Act*, municipalities must adopt an official community plan to “support community sustainability and resilience”, which means incorporating “community plans and strategies addressing such matters as transportation, housing, sustainability or the impacts of climate change”.

Unusual are the two incidences where “economic development” was cited, and “health” was cited in one incidence. These are less traditional roles of planners.



Q - Is there a planner shortage in British Columbia and the Yukon?

	Count	% distribution
Yes	16	67%
No	8	33%
Total	24	100%

All respondents provided an answer to this question (n=24), with two-thirds affirming shortage, while one-third of the respondents do not believe there is a shortage.

Q - Is it easy or difficult for employers to fill planning roles? What has changed in this regard?

When asked whether it is easy or difficult to fill planning positions, those respondents affirming shortage versed:

- There appears to be more candidates for entry level positions or management level positions. There are less qualified candidates for mid-career positions (e.g., Planner 2 or 3).
- In my experience, it can be challenging for smaller local governments in Metro Vancouver to fill planning roles. There are many competing local governments, organizations, agencies (e.g., TransLink), and private sector businesses that are recruiting, and living costs are high.
- It is challenging to find qualified planners who "tic" all the boxes and often employers are hiring someone who may not be ready but has capacity to grow in the role. Generally, cost of living in Metro Vancouver is impacting ability to retain talent.
- Recruitment is challenging in the lower mainland. Easy for planners to move around with little incentive to stay. Also, our location is not well served by transit so there are commuting challenges.
- Currently very challenging. I have recruited about 20 Planning Assistants through Planner 3s over the last year in long range and development planning. There are lots of Planning Assistants with master's degrees and very few qualified Planner 2 and Planner 3s. This makes me wonder if we are losing educated people through attrition / not enough entry level jobs.
- A year ago, it was very hard to get planners. The job market has changed significantly and now it is much easier, but it is still hard to find the "right" planner for the job. Many junior planners are being promoted quickly and may not have the experience required for the position. Many postings have scaled back the requirements for positions or they are adjusting and posting for a senior role, or planner 2, depending on experience. Expectations and qualifications and job requirements are being adjusted due to the lack of qualified experienced applicants.
- Needs planners as does local gov's, many of whom don't have capacity. Small places can't get and afford. Use regional district staff or consultants.
- Non metro really challenged. Using untrained people or insufficiently experienced people. Metro does not have this problem.
- From my perspective as a person who does one or more references a week for VIU alumni and other RPPs, it appears that there is constant motion in filling roles in planning: people move up/move along and the domino effect is evident in hiring processes. The constant change is

perhaps difficult for employers, but is also indicative of a healthy job market as planners are shifting into new roles or advancing in their careers. It is a good time to be a planner.

- From my perspective - it seems that 100% of our graduating students that want jobs in planning already have these roles on graduation. In my conversations with employers in our region, they would like us to have more graduates. We do have the 'seats' but 'awareness' of the profession of planning is a long term issue for us for recruiting into the undergraduate program. Over the past five years, some changes in community affordability with few changes in starting planner salary have made rural/northern roles less advantageous for starting planners -- although for many municipalities and regional districts there is still an advantage over starting work in the lower mainland or on the island.
- In the past it has been difficult to find candidates that have the appropriate 'soft skills' to succeed in the planning environment that comes with working for a Nation, especially if they are not Indigenous. For me this comes from a change in focus from demonstrated hard skills/experience towards demonstrated soft skills/aptitude and flexibility. This could be unique to the environment I work in, and less applicable to development or transportation planning.
- I know where I work, it is extremely difficult because we don't have the same level of departmental involvement in planning, there is no graphics department to help provide further detail to documents similar to large consulting firms
- Difficult. Always has been but has gotten more so since 2020. Lots of entry level applicants, but limited mid-career or senior applicants. Seems to more challenging to get people willing to move for career advancement.
- It has been in the past, but I'm not sure about right now. I have a posting going out tomorrow and I will find out.
- It tends to be the more challenging to fill intermediate and senior positions compared to intro level positions, and this has gotten worse in recent years.
- Finding educated is less hard than finding experienced, from a municipal standpoint. Their qualifying degrees make selecting the right candidate harder as well. Someone that might have an academic degree in global geography and a masters in planning has a vastly different take than someone with an academic degree in environmental studies with a masters in planning. At the end of the day, neither are adequately prepared for roles in a municipal government environment coming straight out of school.

Verbal comments from respondents indicating no shortage of planners:

- previous years it was always easy to find fresh grads for entry level positions, but tough to find mid-level or senior planners. these days, many planners are looking for a job and we've attracted senior people looking to move from their current employment. seems easier at this point in time.
- The general market conditions for real estate development and planning are not strong, so it is not currently a challenge to fill planning roles.
- I have not participated on any hiring panels since 2024 (I am a planner in a non-leadership/subject matter expert role), but amongst my colleagues' discussions have centered on the prevalence of layoffs and the impacts of hiring freezes and other fiscal constraints on the availability of planning jobs.
- While there is no shortage, there is a shortage of experienced planners. Many seasoned planners have retired or about to retire. The young ones are not ready to fill this gap.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- It used to be difficult to fill planning vacancies, but more recently this seems to have shifted. Recent applications have seen a larger number of qualified applicants.
- It has been easy for me to fill positions.
- My sense is that the employment market for planning roles has shifted over the past year or so, where it is now easier for employers to fill planning roles. It remains somewhat more difficult to find more qualified and experienced planners.
- It depends on the position and the employer / location. I would say that it is perhaps more difficult to find experienced planners than applicants per se.

Q - How important was it for you to hire a certified Registered Professional Planner or candidate member of PIBC?

A total of 20 respondents answered this question.

	Count	% distribution
Very important	6	30%
Slightly important	9	45%
Not important at all	5	25%
Total	20	100%

Those who considered it is very important or slightly important to hire a certified RPP or a candidate member of PIBC accounted for three quarters of the respondents.

Q - Have your members filled a planner role with someone who is not a certified Registered Professional Planner or candidate member of PIBC?

A total of 20 respondents provided answers to this question.

	Count	% distribution
Never	1	5%
Rarely	1	5%
Sometimes	10	50%
Usually	8	40%
Always	0	0%
Total	20	100%



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

90% of all the respondents replied that filling a planner position with one who is not a certified RPP or a candidate member of PIBC occurred “sometimes” or “usually”. Only 10% of the respondents did not think this “rarely” or “never” happened.

Q - Were the advertised roles additional positions and/or replacement positions?

A total of 19 respondents provided answers to this question.

	Count	% distribution
Additional positions	1	5%
Replacement positions	7	37%
Need to fill both	11	58%
Total	19	100%

Although six out of 10 respondents agreed that positions to be filled are a mix of new positions and replacement positions, it is clear that more often than not the positions are to replace someone who have left, indicating limited growth in the size of the occupation, yet significant turnover within the profession.

Q - Are senior roles being filled by less experienced or qualified candidates?

A total of 23 respondents replied to this question.

	Count	% distribution
Never	2	9%
Rarely	3	13%
Sometimes	12	52%
Usually	6	26%
Always	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Almost four out of five respondents confirmed that senior roles being filled by someone less experienced or less qualified happened “sometimes” or “usually”. Only one in five respondents believed that this situation happened only “rarely” or did not happen at all.

When asked to provide a reason, respondents versed:

- Positions need to be filled due to increased demands.
- Lack of experienced and highly qualified planners, in part due to retirements.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- Needed someone to do the work and the candidate pool was slim
- It depends on the individual doing the hiring. I look for the best candidate, but sometimes there is someone with tremendous potential but lacking in experience. I would mentor them in more junior roles and invest in their future within the organization.
- It is not ideal, but very difficult to attract planners at the Planner 2 level. Sometimes a candidate with growth potential may be promoted in order to retain them.
- Due to provincial legislative changes and the 20-year long housing boom we are still experiencing, there is a lot of work with strict timelines that just needs to get done.
- We just need people who have a decent education and the ability to do work.
- Not enough supply of experienced, qualified and certified professionals
- Dearth of qualified of experienced (10- 15 years) people especially in non-metro.
- This question pre-supposes the response. If it is indeed the case that employers are "lowering" the experience standard, the likely reason would be that more fully qualified candidates are not available. I would add that "years of experience" should not be the indicator used to measure "qualification" for a candidate: a candidate with five years of progressive and interesting experiences would be a better candidate than someone with 10 years of "groundhog" experience (doing the same thing every day)
- I hesitate to say, 'less qualified', but it is true that more senior roles are being filled across rural and northern municipalities by less experience candidates. While there are some issues, it is a regional advantage over many workplaces in the lower mainland, where the opportunities can be stultifying.
- Because they are Band Members.
- Lack of candidates. Work demands.
- Work needs to get done, so we need to hire someone.
- It's often been a case of adjusting expectations to fit what has been available
- Most planning experience is learnt on the job, not in school. School gives you the basics. The passion and learning of the profession tend to come from boots on the ground. Sometimes a passionate person with a basic background in planning can far exceed the abilities of someone with no passion or vision that works strictly by the book.
- Salary expectations. Senior people want, and deserve, higher pay. But our budgets cannot support it. For example, in consulting, paying a senior person with a lot of experience will cost clients more money for the project and they often don't have those budgets. It's difficult to make budgets work with senior people at higher salaries.

Q - If senior roles have been filled by less experienced or less qualified candidates, have the performance of these new planners exceeded expectation or not?

A total of 19 respondents replied. Most respondents (84%) did not believe these less experienced or less qualified new hires exceeded expectation.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

	Count	% distribution
Yes	3	16%
No	16	84%
Total	19	100%

When further asked “If not, what resources are employers putting in to ensure these new planners are gaining the requisite experience and training?”, respondents versed:

- Leadership and management training is required.
- Enhanced on-the-job training, additional supervision of work, and providing opportunities for formal education outside of the workplace.
- The new planners have been mentored and provided training (when suitable training is available), and management staff have been more involved on projects that would have been delegated to a more experienced planner.
- I can't speak for "employers" in general, but my approach is to expose new planners to as many different planning assignments as possible. I'm looking to develop strong generalists.
- Mentorship and training in areas such as leadership.
- Significant resources go into coaching and guiding planners to build up their skill base in a promoted role. Sometimes the candidate does not appreciate the skill gap as early promotion seems to be the norm.
- There is little training that can accelerate on-the-job experience. For recruits who are from other provinces or out of the country, there is training we can provide such as via the Langara or SFU certificates that can translate their experience to BC. But, for educated planners with little to no relevant work experience, they just need time processing applications and working to gain experience.
- I am not entirely sure how to answer these as I don't do hiring very much -- but from my personal perspective, it has been difficult for me to acquire the range of skills necessary to exceed expectations in senior planning roles.
- We spend a lot of time training and mentoring.
- Training budgets are being cut across government positions. There is also a pack of mentors for junior staff.
- Again, the question is pre-supposing the response. Is the "underfilling" of senior roles actually a problem? On resources, it is both the responsibility of the employer and the planner to address any areas where experiences or training is needed. That is, the employer needs to provide the funding and time for the planner to access opportunities, but the planner also needs to be an active participant and advocate for their own learning. The CPL system is a good way to ensure learning happens each year.
- I do not have a general knowledge sufficient to assess overall performance of rapidly advancing employees. I know that some are thriving, and I note that among our graduates last 7 years, some rapidly advance, some advance less rapidly, some are not employed in traditional planning roles. Anecdotally, some of our alums have mentioned difficulty with getting started in northern and rural employment specifically with a) availability of mentoring capacity, b) a low level of resources



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

in support of attendance at in-person learning (conferences) and building professional relationships.

- Working to support the new planners, basic skills and knowledge training below pay grade worked into their duties and responsibilities. Tasking of experienced staff with mentorship roles.
- Finding that it is not worth it to hire underqualified people to fill senior roles. It takes too much time to train unqualified people. Employers did not ensure that these new planners received the right training.
- It depends. Given the challenges with hiring experienced staff I've often tried to focus on training and developing talent from within.
- A lot of mentorships, shadowing, strategic oversight.
- Often project management experience.

Q - What are the barriers to attracting, recruiting, and retaining planners?

A total of 22 respondents provided answers.

	Count	% distribution
A complex and costly accreditation process	9	23%
Entry-level and community-focused roles underpaid	5	13%
Competing priorities from various stakeholders	4	10%
A lack of commitment to the planning process itself	3	8%
Other	19	48%
Total	40	100%

The most often cited barriers to attract, recruit or retain planners fall under the “other” category. Details are as follows:

- In the public sector, many of the more qualified and experienced planners may be less willing to leave their current employer due to the benefits they are receiving due to seniority (e.g., vacation entitlements and pay). Public sector employers also generally provide higher compensation to management positions, which can sometimes mean that individuals with strong planning experience and expertise are incentivized to pursue management roles, despite a lack of interest in the leadership components of those roles.
- That's a strange set of multiple-choice answers for this question. The RPP candidacy application process is cumbersome, very time-consuming, and deters many people. To practice planning, the RPP MCIP designation is voluntary, so it's not clear why the professional organization has erected such a high barrier. Also, high demand for planners leads to competition in attracting and recruiting experienced planners. Plus, it appears we are seeing an increase in retirements.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- In general, candidates with related or complementary experience face a somewhat arduous accreditation process - but I don't think that is a bad thing. I'm an advocate for a good planning education. However, I think that the emphasis on generating graduates, and lowering the requirements - i.e., from thesis down to keystone project to group project has lowered the quality of today's planning school grads.
- Cost of living in Metro Vancouver is seeing talent move outside of BC
- Location of our municipality, and the changing nature of the planning profession. It has become more adversarial as residents feel less heard by Council and the overall eroding of local government control of planning matters.
- The applicants that we get in the pool just don't have enough or the right kind of experience. I'm seeing people straight out of school or with a year of experience applying for P2 or P3 roles. I expect someone to have 6-8 year's experience for a Planner 2 and 8-12+ for a Planner 3 in the planning field, whether it's public or private sector in BC or abroad. Salaries can be an issue, but I find the postings for Planning Assistants and Planner 1s to be reasonable salary ranges. They taper out at Planner 2 or Planner 3. Major barrier to recruit more senior staff is whether the role is unionized or exempt. If unionized, there are some limitations for negotiating vacation time and hours of work are fixed. If exempt, there's more flexibility to match someone's existing vacation time and provide more flexible work hours.
- It appears finding the right person for the position is more challenging. Matching roles and candidates is harder.
- Geography is the big one. Qualified people do not want to move outside metro.
- An examination of the accreditation process is a good idea - are we actually achieving the outcomes of creating new RPPs, or are we setting up barriers and unnecessary requirements to justify a process?
- This question seems intended for employers. One of our clear strengths in recruiting undergraduate students is that the employment prospects for our graduates is very good. Our issue is that the profession itself is not well-known among 'prospective recruits' ... e.g. there is little awareness of 'community planning' at high schools, or at colleges that offer compatible programs where students might 'transfer in' to a full undergraduate.
- Related to the above - a lack of commitment to true community engaged planning and being reactive in planning which makes priorities shift quickly. This makes it difficult to retain people.
- I work for a First Nation so finding the right fit is difficult, cultural sensitivity is hard to gauge in an interview.
- Cost of living not commensurate with salary
- Housing costs for planners to relocate. Poor management is driving good planners away. Pay, vacation time, and flexible hours attract good staff.
- There just don't seem to be enough planners around. In the lower mainland some planners tend to just jump between municipalities, at times moving up quicker than would be ideal. For the municipalities there's sometimes the choice between getting someone a little greener and not getting anyone at all.
- The lack of existing planning schools or recognition of planning diplomas versus degrees. The fact that a person MUST have an academic degree to be deemed worthy of accreditation, even for the PLAR route, despite having alternate planning education, time and experience and a solid record of ethical and positive community planning. (Something akin to a planning diploma and



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

apprenticeship in the field). The location. It's quite difficult to get planners to come to northern areas for longer than two years. We've become a training field that has produced some excellent planners and given them great and varied experience, but everyone wants to be in a major centre, not necessarily a growing one.

- Costs, budgets.
- On the private side, some leave to pursue public positions (city positions) where there is generally more time off and job security.

Q - What are the patterns of work modes for planner? How and why have these changed, if at all?

A total of 21 respondents provided answers.

	Count	% distribution
In-office / on site	9	31%
Remote	5	17%
Hybrid	15	52%
Total	29	100%

The most often cited work mode was a hybrid of in-office and remote (working from home). Verbal comments supplementing their choices include:

- During COVID, we worked remotely and productivity remained high, so we continued with a hybrid arrangement following the pandemic. Some in-office time is helpful for collaboration, team building, and customer service.
- This question stems from industry/government responses to pandemic lock downs and social distancing. A hybrid work environment has become the new norm, although some organizations are trying to claw this back. I think that today's workforce has come to expect more work-life balance and, with today's technologies, remote work is not only possible but perhaps more efficient.
- Post-COVID it is hard to roll back work from home. And generally some planning work can be done remotely, but skill development has slowed.
- All my recruits want a hybrid work environment. As an employer, we need it because we don't have enough office space for everyone. But hybrid work makes teamwork and mentoring much harder.
- Most planners I know are working in hybrid roles, though some political leaders are increasingly advocating for a full return to the office. As the gap between wages and the cost of living continues to grow across professions, reduced workplace flexibility could make planning less attractive compared to fields offering similar pay with more flexible arrangements.
- Our office has 3 days in the office, 2 days remote. This has been consistent for the past couple of years and appears to find a good balance.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- There is a move to call people back to the office in some organizations. Remote workers seem to be more vulnerable to cuts and or lack of opportunity for promotion.
- Mainly office. Not enough site visits because of use of Google street view, etc.
- Addressed above. Employers need to abandon the recent "back to the office" orders and understand that work from home is a viable option for much of what planners do.
- I know our alum work in all these ways, but again, maybe this is an employer question
- Some planners are looking for remote jobs so they can choose to live in their preferred location.
- We are municipal governance, and a small community and we are semi remote. 2+ hours from nearest major City. It is still very much an in-person oriented position here. We do accommodate meetings with remote developers, but we don't hire remote planners. We want people invested in our community, planting roots here, and living in the community they are part of creating.
- There are some people who are real office people, and some people who are real work from home people. some in between. there is personality conflicts in this, trying to convince the other side that life is better either in office or out of office. there is tension. planners are hating the open office concept because distracting and less creative. open office sounds good in theory but in reality, its turned into a nightmare.
- We want our staff on site. The projects we manage involve multiple groups and disciplines and we find that relying purely on online communication is insufficient. It has its place, but we find project performance drops when the team is fully remote.

Q - Are there clear career/advancement paths for planners?

A total of 19 respondents provided answers. The majority (almost 80%) agreed that there are clear career advancement paths for planners.

	Count	% distribution
Yes	15	79%
No	4	21%
Total	19	100%

Many respondents added comments to their choice of responses. These comments include:

- Generally, yes, but as noted above, in the public sector, more advanced positions are typically management roles, which may not suit all planners.
- There are more specialty areas and, therefore, more paths available. Also, with baby-boomer retirements senior roles are opening, and with population growth (and resulting greater demand for services), there are more mid-level and entry level roles available.
- This is a very subjective question and depends on the individual and their place of work. My suggestion to any young planner is to not be a specialist. This is a very limited career path. Strong generalists with diverse experience, which may include a variety of "specialist areas" will have the best opportunities for career advancement - in both traditional (government/development) and non-traditional fields.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- Factors such as budget can impact the filling of positions and potential paths for advancement of planners.
- There are different levels of planning positions in the union and in exempt (management positions).
- In a municipal environment we have progressive roles. Staff don't get promoted, though. Instead, the job has to be posted and they apply.
- I have only been in the profession for 10 years and cannot comment on changes. I have not had issues advancing my career by moving from employer to employer (however advancing within a single organization has been difficult for me)
- Many young planners have not been in the profession for a long time, but they expect to have senior roles by having a checkered career path. For instance, we see a lot of very young people in provincial leadership roles (senior directors, DMs and ADMs) who have very short and shallow professional public serving experience. It took at least 20 to 25 years of working in the provincial government for the last batch of Baby Boomers to reach senior management roles.
- Yes, but they are limited and we do have some excellent planners who are ready for advancement, but with limited opportunities.
- If you are mid-career, I think there is plenty of opportunity if you are flexible in where you live and go to work. Less so for remote workers. The competition is much higher for junior level positions.
- Things aren't as straightforward as starting in a role/area and advancing up from there, sometimes you need to be willing/able to switch specialities and/or organizations in order to advance.
- Really dependant on the organization or company. Different types of planners - current, policy/long range, first nations focus, etc. There is some advancement paths related to complexity but also type of planning. Also, management levels.
- Yes and no. There's current planning and long-range planning in a P1, P2, Senior Planner trajectory, but there are also many other areas for planners in the private sector or at the provincial or federal levels that don't have those clear paths for advancement.
- As mentioned above, the paths seem to have sped up (in some instances a bit too quickly).
- I find most planners work their way up in organizations. When there is no clear path up, they relocate for alternate opportunities or for a clear path up.
- It's more competitive to access senior roles and not everyone who is qualified and ready will land that spot. That limits the opportunity for salary increase as well. This means that some senior planners get bored, need a change, and considering making a career move...starting to see senior planners or managers looking at other industries where their skillset is transferrable. We are starting to lose the very highly skilled and highly experienced planners because they are looking for advancement and most of that is looking for salary increase because cost of living and life goals.
- Career advancement can be faster than in years previous

Q - To what extent are there challenges in recruiting and retaining planners created by compensation and/or benefits issues?

A total of 21 respondents provided answers.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

	Count	% distribution
A great deal	3	14%
A lot	4	19%
A moderate amount	6	29%
A little	5	24%
None at all	3	14%
Total	21	100%

Most of the respondents (86%) agreed that compensation and benefits contribute to recruitment and retention of planners.

The explanations provided by respondents include:

- It depends on the level we are recruiting for. For experienced planners, vacation and pay expectations may not align with what our municipality is willing to offer. For recent graduates, the entry pay scale and benefits are generous compared to entry-level jobs in other professions/industries.
- Going into the planning field is more about interest/passion/personality/skills - not about making a lot of money. However, the public sector tends to pay more than consulting firms, particularly for new planners - but the opportunities to gain varied experience over a shorter time is much greater in the private sector.
- Some people's motivation for job movement are benefits packages. These are not the same across Metro Vancouver/BC.
- Our pay is less competitive compared to neighbouring municipalities and our senior roles are not exempt, so we can't match vacation time.
- As noted earlier in the survey, the disparity between wages and the cost of living is not unique to the planning profession. Young planners in BC, like many early-career professionals, can no longer expect to purchase a home in a major city or comfortably save for major life expenses. This challenge is widespread across multiple sectors in the province and is largely driven by rising costs of housing, transportation, and other essentials. Given the ubiquity of the issue, compensation levels may have a reduced influence on attracting and retaining planners relative to broader affordability pressures.
- We have a Collective Agreement in place.
- I think generally municipal and federal government wages are competitive. Provincial wages are low and private sector is reducing compensation.
- Compensation and benefits are generally more than adequate, but some employers offer less than the going rate.
- Rates of compensation should reflect that planning is an accredited profession, and most RPPS hold graduate degrees.



- compensation and benefits in rural and northern communities have not in general kept up with community affordability changes. The relative advantage in affordability that used to help retain planners in northern and rural communities remains, but as housing crises hit specific communities such as Terrace, Smithers, Kitimat, as well as regional districts across southern BC, the affordability advantage is smaller.
- employees have left for other fields or roles providing more compensation with less stress
- Many municipalities pay their planning staff very well, while some of the smaller RDs and municipalities cannot offer an adequate wage to cover the cost of living.
- Compensation isn't sufficient to attract or keep planners.
- The cost of living is high and planners don't seem to mind moving around to get the best deal for themselves.
- It depends on the organization.
- We have a very robust wage and benefit plan, and we need to because of our size and location. For example...we are 2+ hours away from what is considered "real" city amenities.
- We don't generate the revenue to pay for salary and other benefits related to compensation. can't keep up with inflation. Planners always asking for more but we can't find the money to pay them what they want.
- Salaries have increased substantially over the last 5 years, however that has moderated recently.

Q - To what extent has the emergence of AI affected the planner profession and recruitment, retention and education/training?

A total of 23 respondents provided answers.

	Count	% distribution
A great deal	2	9%
A lot	1	4%
A moderate amount	7	30%
A little	7	30%
None at all	6	26%
Total	23	100%

Most respondents (86%) do not believe that the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) has affected the profession of planners, or the recruitment, retention, and training of planners yet.

Additional comments include:

- Currently, the effect is moderate, but it will likely increase to 'a lot' in the near future. The planning profession needs to better understand the possibilities, and limitations, of AI.



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

- This is a really broad question that would require its own survey. It's impacted different areas in different ways.
- I really don't think that AI is a significant consideration for the planning profession at this time, but don't know how it will evolve over the coming years.
- For new planners, AI impacts learning important skills such as critical thinking and analysis. These are critical skills for knowledge growth. For seasoned planners, AI can be a helpful tool for refining work or speeding up process review.
- Hard to say right now. My largest fear is that planners at all levels of experience will trust AI for answers instead of going back to the legislation and regulations to be sure or the answer for how to interpret a planning requirement or set a direction.
- I am not sure as the last time I hired someone for a position, AI was not prevalent. With the growing use of AI screening systems today, applicants may need to understand how these tools function to ensure their applications are actually reviewed by a hiring manager.
- Not at this point, as planners are critical thinkers. At present, AI is based on word patterns and events and the statistical probability of repeating the same. Good luck replicating the heuristics of a planner!
- Muni tech advances in development processing is improving efficiency but does not appear to be taking job away, yet.
- Using AI on process side is good. Not as useful on planning side directly, that is, not going on anything that requires judgement or knowledge (different views on community engagement). Using gov guidelines better than AI. Undermines critical thinking. AI cannot do distinctions and nuance, e.g. the north shore local governments (AI may not be able to distinguish btw the City and the District Municipality).
- So far, mainly affecting negatively the quality and capabilities of planners and potential planners. See Q10.
- This is more than one question. AI has huge impacts on the profession: ideally, AI will be used to complete rote activities, leaving planners to work on bigger and more important issues/projects. AI has an impact on the recruiting process, as online "bots" that review resumes can exclude candidates who would have been a good fit for the job. AI has an impact on education and training, but we have only scratched the surface on this - the landscape is changing rapidly.
- It seems a bit soon to tell, however I would expect that some of the planner tech jobs will be vulnerable to greater AI automation, as there is no bonus for creativity in the writing of planner reports. As to education/training, as undergraduate educators we have incorporated the critical use of AI into the education of our students. We typically do not provide the kind of 'skills-training' that can be replaced by AI at the present time.
- I have noticed no effect to date, but this could change in the near future.
- Still early days.
- We aren't allowed to use it yet, so no impact.
- It's helped planners who have English as a second language a great deal (with their writing). Many planners experiment but it's not making their life substantially more efficient. But I think we are still in the beginning stages of this technological revolution and I think we're going to start seeing less need for interns, planning technicians, planning analysts and planning assistants. Chat GPT can do it and it will help make departments more cost effective and we can take those savings and pay senior people more money, and retain them. But, the trade off is that new planners



STATE AND FUTURE OF THE PLANNING PROFESSION STUDY

looking to learn won't get those experiences and we'll end up having a cohort gap to fill replacement roles at the senior level....one day...is my theory

- Resume quality has increased a lot as candidates make use of AI to improve applications. It puts a great deal of importance on interviews, references and reviewing past work.

“Historical practice of planners has no bearings on what the future is for this discipline. We are at this pivotal point that this discipline is being increasingly burdened with tackling very big societal crises – housing crisis, climate crisis, mental health crisis – with that responsibility comes with this heightened political scrutiny. I think at this point there are a lot of people who put their hands up and say, I can’t bear this level of stress or this volume of work anymore, and that is influencing the number of people going to planning school, and influencing people that want to do a career change, to exit this level of stress or workloads. To correct the course, the professional code of ethics and practice and the designation itself need to be protected because it is under attack by both the politicians and the development industry for all these “quick wins”. There are all these factors that need to be re-examined in order for the planning profession remain a discipline, a choice, for people.”⁶

⁶ From key interview informant.



Appendix II Key Themes from Survey Responses

Summary of Survey Responses on Professional Planners in BC & Yukon

The layout of the summary of survey responses on professional planners in BC and the Yukon is as follows. It summarizes the key findings of responses by type of survey entity, that is,

1. Post-secondary institutions
2. Private sector employers
3. Indigenous / First Nation organizations
4. Local governments
5. Professional associations
6. Provincial government

Followed by cross-cutting themes across all sectors.

1. Post-Secondary Institutions (PSE) (n=3)

Key Findings

Strong consensus that a planner shortage exists

- Near-universal agreement that BC is facing **current and growing shortages** of professional planners.

High confidence in future demand growth

- Respondents consistently expect **increasing demand over the next 5–10 years**, driven by:
 - Housing crisis
 - Infrastructure investment
 - Indigenous planning needs
 - Climate adaptation
 - Community growth and redevelopment

High importance of interdisciplinary skills

- Strong emphasis on:
 - Community engagement
 - Indigenous relations & reconciliation
 - Environmental & sustainability planning
 - Land use regulation & policy
 - GIS and technical analysis
 - Communication & facilitation



Major training challenges

- Insufficient capacity in planning programs
- Limited funding for program expansion
- Need for **more applied / experiential learning**
- Need for **remote and Indigenous-accessible delivery models**

Interpretation

PSE institutions strongly support **expanded training capacity, remote delivery, and Indigenous-accessible planning education**, and see labour shortages worsening without intervention.

2. Private Sector Employers (n=2)

Key Findings

Mixed but rising shortage signals

- Smaller firms report:
 - Moderate shortages
- Larger firms report:
 - Significant difficulty recruiting experienced planners

Severe difficulty hiring experienced planners

- Entry-level hiring is manageable
- Mid-career and senior planners are **very difficult to recruit**

High competition for talent

- Private firms compete directly with:
 - Local governments
 - Provincial government
 - Crown agencies
 - Indigenous governments

Critical skills demanded

- Project management
- Development approvals
- Environmental assessment
- Indigenous engagement
- Infrastructure & energy permitting
- Public consultation

Interpretation

The private sector sees **intensifying competition for skilled planners**, particularly for **complex infrastructure, resource, environmental, and Indigenous engagement work**.



3. Indigenous / First Nation Organizations (n=2)

Key Findings

Strong recognition of planner shortages

- Acute difficulty recruiting planners with:
 - Indigenous governance knowledge
 - Cultural competence
 - Community planning experience

Extremely high demand for Indigenous planners

- Strong desire to:
 - Build **Indigenous planning capacity**
 - Train **community-based planners**
 - Reduce reliance on external consultants

Key priorities

- Land use planning
- Treaty implementation planning
- Community development planning
- Housing planning
- Environmental stewardship planning
- Major project engagement

Training gaps

- Lack of Indigenous-accessible planning programs
- Need for:
 - Local delivery
 - Modular training
 - Cultural integration
 - Community-based experiential learning

Interpretation

This sector shows the **strongest workforce urgency** and the **greatest opportunity for Indigenous-led training programs**, especially through **remote, modular, and community-based delivery**.

4. Local Governments (n=4)

Key Findings

Very strong evidence of shortages

- Most respondents report:
 - Persistent vacancies



- Long recruitment timelines
- Intense competition for qualified planners

High retirement risk

- Aging workforce
- Significant retirement expected within 5–10 years

Core hiring challenges

- Lack of applicants
- Wage competition with private sector
- Remote and northern recruitment challenges

Key skill needs

- Development approvals
- Policy planning
- Housing planning
- Infrastructure planning
- Public consultation
- Indigenous engagement

Interpretation

Local governments face **both immediate shortages and structural workforce risk**, particularly outside major urban centres.

5. Professional Associations (n=12)

Key Findings

Unambiguous confirmation of a province-wide shortage

- Consistent reporting of:
 - Increasing vacancies
 - Declining applicant pools
 - Skills gaps

Strong support for training expansion

- Need for:
 - Expanded planning education capacity
 - Flexible training pathways
 - Indigenous planning streams
 - Remote & hybrid delivery

Emerging competency needs

- Indigenous relations



- Climate adaptation
- Infrastructure planning
- Complex regulatory environments
- Public engagement

Interpretation

Professional associations strongly endorse **system-level workforce interventions** and **training system reform**.

6. Provincial (BC) Government (n=1)

Key Findings

Strong confirmation of workforce shortages

- Persistent hiring challenges across ministries and agencies

High future demand

- Housing initiatives
- Infrastructure expansion
- Environmental regulation
- Climate adaptation
- Indigenous reconciliation

Critical skills

- Policy analysis
- Regulatory approvals
- Environmental assessment
- Community engagement
- Indigenous relations

Training priorities

- More planners
- Better Indigenous planning capacity
- Faster training pipelines
- More applied learning

Interpretation

Provincial government sees **planning workforce development as strategic**, especially for **housing, infrastructure, reconciliation, and climate policy delivery**.



OVERALL CROSS-SECTOR THEMES

1. System-wide shortage of professional planners

Every sector confirms:

There is already a shortage, and it is getting worse.

This is one of the strongest findings.

2. Demand growth across all sectors

Key drivers:

- Housing crisis
- Infrastructure megaprojects
- Indigenous governance expansion
- Climate adaptation
- Energy & industrial development
- Environmental regulation

3. Critical shortage of experienced planners

Entry-level hiring is easier

Mid-career and senior planners are extremely scarce

This creates:

- Bottlenecks in approvals
- Project delays
- Overreliance on consultants

4. Acute Indigenous planning capacity gap

Strong consensus that:

Indigenous governments lack sufficient internal planning capacity.

This drives:

- High consulting costs
- Capacity dependency
- Slower community planning outcomes



5. Strong support for Indigenous-led and community-based training

There is broad cross-sector support for:

- Indigenous-focused planning education
- Remote & modular delivery models
- Community-based training pathways

6. Northern & rural regions face the most severe shortages

Especially:

- Northern BC
- Remote communities
- Indigenous territories

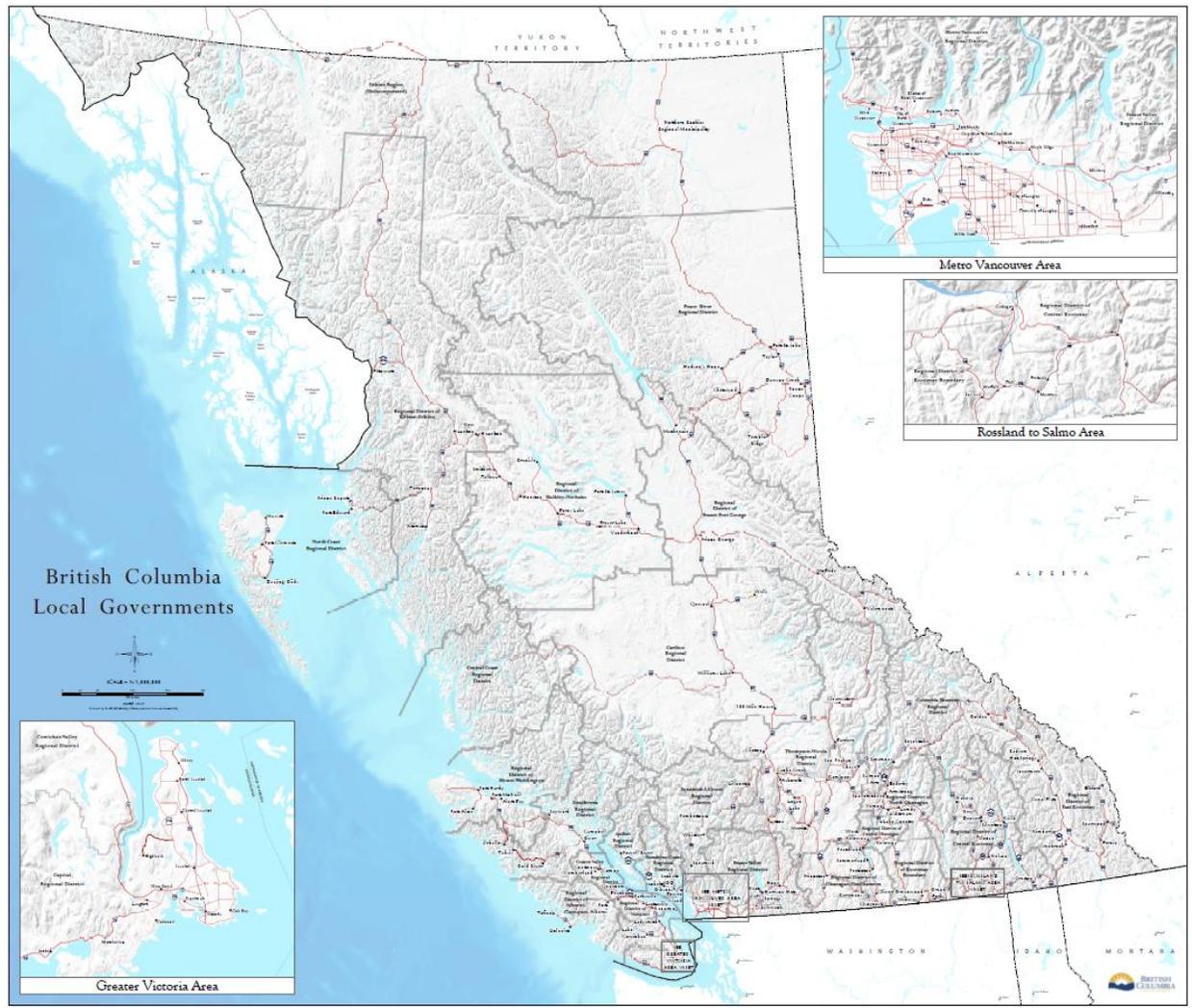
STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

This survey data strongly supports:

- **Indigenous-led planning education programs**
- **Remote and hybrid training delivery models**
- **Community-based professional development**
- **Accelerated training pathways**
- **Indigenous planning streams and credentials**
- **Local education centres/delivery**

Appendix III Map

BC Government's website provides a detailed interactive map showing all regional districts throughout the province, showing boundaries of local governments as well as unincorporated areas. To access: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/facts-framework/local-government-maps>



Appendix IV List of Variables for Census of PIBC Members

As per RFP, “PIBC currently lacks robust data about the demographics of its members in BC and the Yukon. For the reasons stated in the proposal context, the Institute is interested in implementing a census to enumerate of all of its members”. The following is a list of variables that will be included in the questionnaire:

- Age (15-24,25-44,55-64, 65 &+))
- Gender (M, F, non-binary, etc.)
- Identity as part of an equity-deserving group (Yes, No)
- Identify as an Indigenous person (First Nation, Metis, Inuit)
- Identity as part of a visible minority group (South Asian, Black, etc.)
- Sexual orientation
- Identity as a person with disability
- Born in Canada
- Immigration status (Canadian citizen, landed immigrant, temporary resident)
- Highest level of educational achievement (No certificate, diploma or degree, high school or equivalent certificate, apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma, college, university degree etc.)
- Have an accredited planning degree
- Bachelor’s Level Degree issued inside or outside of Canada
- Master’s Level Degree issued inside or outside of Canada
- Bachelor’s Level Canadian Accredited Planning Degree: Graduation Year
- Master’s Level Canadian Accredited Planning Degree: Graduation Year
- Professional planning status
- Additional professional designations/credentials
- Current employment status (employed, unemployed (looking for work), on leave)
- Current employment status (employed, self-employed, owner/principal)
- Current employment status (full time, part time)
- City or town current employer is located
- Years Employed in a planning position
- Years employed with current employer
- Union membership
- Type of entity currently employed in (local government, provincial government, private sector, not-for-profit, Indigenous government/organization, post-secondary institution, etc.)
- Sector currently employed in (transportation, natural resources, real estate, education, etc.)
- Planned retirement age