

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING



2024 PIBC AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING

Kelly Chan, PIBC Manager of Member Programs & Services

The PIBC Awards for Excellence in Planning honour the best in professional planning work undertaken by members in communities and regions across British Columbia and Yukon. Award winners were celebrated in Nanaimo, BC on May 8, 2024, following PIBC's Annual General Meeting.

Award for Excellence in Planning Practice City & Urban Areas

GOLD WINNER

Title: Home suite Home: Guidelines on How to Add and Manage a Secondary Suite or Accessory Dwelling Unit in British Columbia

Organizations: Plassurban Consulting Inc., Province of British Columbia – Ministry of Housing, and BC Housing

Partners: Building Officials' Association of British Columbia, Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC, Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre, LandlordBC, and Union of BC Municipalities

New provincial legislation means that secondary suites are now permitted in most single detached and some side-by-side attached homes across British Columbia. With these legislative changes, people can build homes for their aging parents or growing children, as a mortgage helper, or as an investment in their existing property, while contributing to more long-term rental housing in BC communities. "Home suite Home" was developed as a guide to help local governments and property owners understand what is required to plan, build, and rent a secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit in BC.

The jury found this guide a commendable effort to spread the message of 'gentle densification' and offer the tools for local governments (particularly in the suburbs) and homeowners to implement secondary suites without difficulty or fear – making the new incentive accessible.





Award for Excellence in Planning Practice City & Urban Areas

SILVER WINNER

Title: University of Victoria – Student Housing and Dining Project

Organization: University of Victoria

Partners: Province of British Columbia – Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and University of Victoria Ancillary Services: Residence Services, Food Services, Parking Services

The University of Victoria's (UVic) Student Housing and Dining project (SHD) encompasses two new buildings on campus, and is the largest capital project in UVic's history, at over 32,000 m² of gross floor area. Meeting LEED V4 Gold and Passive House standards, the new buildings provide 783 total student spaces, a new 600-seat dining hall, two 225-seat classrooms, an Indigenous student lounge, a conference centre, and meeting rooms. It also includes a new plaza between the buildings, connected to the Campus Greenway, a stormwater retention pond, seating areas, and Indigenous plantings.

The jury was impressed with the high level of sustainability, engagement process, and the project team's commitment to incorporating the public's feedback. It addresses the housing and climate crisis and is transferable to other jurisdictions and institutions.



Award for Excellence in Planning Practice Small Town & Rural Areas

GOLD WINNER

Title: Rossland Yards - Net Zero ready, Mixed-use Affordable Workforce Housing and City Hall

Organizations: City of Rossland, CitySpaces Consulting Ltd, and Lower Columbia Affordable Housing Society

Partners: BC Housing, Columbia Basin Trust, and Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The City of Rossland acquired a former highway works yard in 2005. Recent growth posed challenges to the town's historic affordability, and City staff were rapidly outgrowing the space in the old City Hall building. A unique opportunity arose through a partnership with the non-profit organization, the Lower Columbia Affordable Housing Society, to create a mixed-use, Net-Zero ready building featuring affordable housing units and a new City Hall on the ground floor. Project support also came from BC Housing, Columbia Basin Trust, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the City. Despite challenges, including construction during the COVID-19 pandemic, labour and material shortages, and meeting the needs of multiple funding partners, the project still came in within budget.

The jury appreciated such a thoughtful and integrated development and partnership. It is an excellent example of planning practice on the ground which demonstrated responsiveness to the community and achieved a better overall project as a result.



Award for Excellence in Planning Practice Small Town & Rural Areas

SILVER WINNER

Title: Chet wa í7sun “We Pull Together”: Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw Elder’s Program Plan

Organizations: Xwi7ski (representing Squamish Nation Elders), Squamish Nation, and Beringia Community Planning

Partners: First Nations Health Authority, First Nations Public Service Secretariat, BC Healthy Communities, and City of North Vancouver

In recent years, Squamish Elders and staff identified the existing Elder’s Program as a priority area for improvement, as Elders provided feedback that they were not feeling appropriately included and safe in the existing Program due to social isolation and challenging relationships, as well as a lack of program structure, plan, and policies.

In response to this need, the 2-year Elder’s Program Engagement Project was initiated. This Elder-led, community-driven process involved over 400 Elders (including those living

away from home) and 50 Youth and other planning participants that came together to create Chet wa í7sun “We Pull Together.” Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw Elder’s Program Plan.

The jury found this an exciting project with an important focus, with a very strong engagement process which integrates Elder and youth voices both in plan development and ongoing implementation efforts. It is a lovely example of decolonization efforts with clear and meaningful goals – something that we need more of in planning.



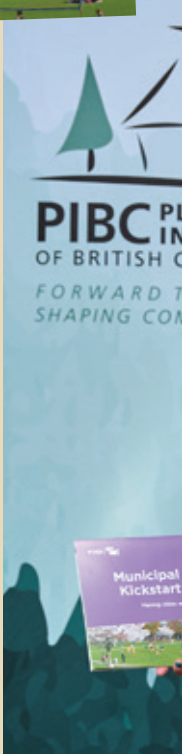
Award for Excellence in Policy Planning City & Urban Areas

GOLD WINNER

Title: Municipal Equity Kickstart Guide

Organizations: Resilience Planning and YWCA Vancouver

Partners: Policy subcommittee members (Amina Yasin, Fancy C. Poitras, Katie Fitzmaurice, Mandy Bhullar, Miley Leong, Rebekah Mahaffey and Renee de St. Croix) and Community Advisory Council members (Beatriz Salinas, Kaiya Jacob, Kimberley Wong, Sara Sagai and Thivyva Shanmuganathan)



The Municipal Equity Kickstart Guide includes the importance of defining equity, the dimensions of equity, ways cities can do this work, shares information for how to measure success, provides three different operationalization tools, discusses the importance of seeking input from a variety of diverse community audiences, and provides direction on how to sustain the work over the long term. It also outlines things to be mindful of, including: internal work for the organization and staff, and external facing work. Supported by case studies, an illustrative story, an overview of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls’ Calls for Justice, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it also includes sample council motions and staff report templates to support embedding equity in local government work.

The jury found this to be an exemplary guide, daylighting issues that have been identified for a long time but not taken seriously. It is a true quick-start guide which is highly transferrable, as evidenced through adoption by several municipalities.



**Award for Excellence in Policy Planning
City & Urban Areas**

SILVER WINNER

Title: Richmond Circular City Strategy

Organization: City of Richmond

The Richmond Circular City Strategy (RCCS), articulates six strategies and eighty-four policies and actions that are built on two decades of City initiatives. These strategies include Maximizing Ecosystem Services, Regenerative Food System, Resilient and Innovative Economy, Shared Mobility, Adaptive Built Environment, and Consumer Materials Management, involving the flow of materials, nutrients, products, and energy in the complex Richmond urban mesh. Adopted in 2023 and the first of its kind in Canada, the RCCS is an ambitious plan to transform Richmond into a 100% zero-emission, circular city by 2050, covering areas such as consumer materials, food systems, ecosystems, and the built environment. The strategy’s key focus, which differentiates it from other plans, is reducing the impacts of material and energy flows throughout the community. The result is a range of actions the City can pursue to

transition from a linear to a circular economy by 2050, providing environmental, social and economic benefits for all.

The jury appreciated that the Strategy introduces circular economy principles into urban development – a concept which has been largely ignored in western planning paradigms thus far.



Award for Excellence in Policy Planning Small Town & Rural Areas

GOLD WINNER

Title: Grown in Pitt Meadows: Our Agricultural Viability Strategy

Organizations: City of Pitt Meadows, Upland Agricultural Consulting, and Urban Food Strategies

Farming has a long history in Pitt Meadows, beginning with ȩičəý (Katzie) First Nation's land and water-based food practices. It continues to be a vital part of the social fabric, as well as an important economic driver. Management of agricultural land is important, not only to ensure the continued business viability of producers, but to address food security and climate change on a broader scale. The Strategy provides local context regarding the agricultural sector, emerging trends, and opportunities for growth. The Strategy includes 17 recommendations that are presented

within 5 goals. Rather than assigning implementation to other organizations, the City is identified as the key leader throughout. This approach ensures that the community can hold the City accountable to moving the Strategy into direct action.

The jury found the Strategy to be forward-thinking, with an impressive degree of integration between ecological, social, economic, and regulatory recommendations in ways that address the role of First Nations, all residents, and City-owned lands in achieving the goal of preserving agricultural viability.



Award for Excellence in Policy Planning Small Town & Rural Areas

SILVER WINNER

Title: Ladysmith Unparalleled

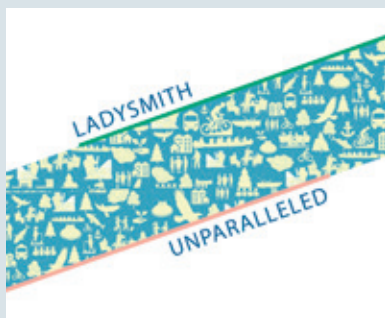
Organization: Town of Ladysmith, Ahne Studios, Sustainability Solutions Group, and WATT Consulting Group

Partners: Union of BC Municipalities (funding support for active Transportation Planning), Matthew Thomson Design, Licker Geospatial, Colliers International, and subconsultant Sanala Planning (formerly Alderhill Planning)



Ladysmith Unparalleled is the culmination of one and a half years of community visioning. It is a roadmap to an “unparalleled” Ladysmith in 2049, detailing practical, actionable and ambitious steps to, among other things: adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, support reconciliation, concentrate Ladysmith’s growth in core growth areas, support and accelerate sustainable modes of transportation, and be a place people from all walks of life can call home, with access to affordable and appropriate housing.

The jury appreciated how comprehensive and creative this plan was and were impressed with the range of meaningful and spontaneous opportunities for public engagement.



Award for Excellence in Policy Planning Small Town & Rural Areas

HONOURABLE MENTION

Title: Uchucklesaht Tribe Government Active & Alternative Transportation Plan

Organization: Barefoot Planning + Design and the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government

Partners: UTG Citizen Working Group, Urban Systems, and LARCH Landscape Architecture

The Uchucklesaht Tribe Government (UTG) Active and Alternative Transportation Plan (AATP) sought to develop a policy framework and action plan to support active (e.g., walking, cycling) and alternative (e.g., shared mobility, watercraft, UTVs/ATVs) transportation on UTG Treaty Lands with a focus on the traditional village of Ehtlathese. The unique challenge of the AATP was achieving UTG’s key priorities in a rugged, remote territory, including seasonal and permanent resettlement of the village, accessibility and connectivity of key infrastructure (pathways, docks, roads, etc.), facilitating commuting and recreation, economic development, and preservation of cultural and environmental values. The final plan offers a practical set of strategies to achieve incremental growth of UTG’s active and alternative transportation network.



Award for Research & New Directions

GOLD WINNER

Title: Building the Case for Removing Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements

Organization: City of Vancouver

Partners: Coriolis Consulting Corp. with sub-consultants Step One Mobility and BTY, Licker Geospatial Consulting, and Sustainability Scholar Thais Ayres Rebello

The City of Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan aims to eliminate minimum vehicle parking requirements citywide. As part of this work, environmental and economic analyses were undertaken to study the potential impacts of an expanding the removal of minimums to the West End of Downtown and Broadway Plan Area.

It was found that avoiding parking stall

construction could significantly reduce the amount of embodied emissions and somewhat reduce vehicle ownership. As well, it was determined that removing minimums would increase the number of financially attractive projects, improve certainty of requirements for developers, and support reductions in construction costs to enable increased affordability at non-market rental projects. This work will assist other Canadian municipalities looking to reduce environmental impact from both construction and vehicle use.

The jury found this project to be well-researched, covering all major perspectives, and addressing a key issue as we transition away from auto dominance. Having tangible numbers will be very useful for other cities and towns.



Transportation 2040

Award for Research & New Directions

SILVER WINNER

Title: City of Kelowna Housing Needs Assessment 2021-2031

Organizations: City of Kelowna, CitySpaces Consulting, and rennie group

Kelowna's Housing Needs Assessment 2021-2031 (HNA) recognizes the vital role that needs assessments play in improving the housing system and sets out to take a leading-edge approach that can serve as a blueprint for communities across the country. The HNA provides a detailed investigation of the housing system in Kelowna and estimates the current and future housing need using in-depth quantitative and qualitative analytical methods.

The jury appreciated that this project takes into consideration more aspects than typically seen in HNAs, as well as projecting implementation. It will be very useful as a model and adds to our tools for housing planning as a profession.



Congratulations to this year's winners!

Make a submission for next year's awards program to help us recognize and celebrate the places, plans, projects, and people across our membership contributing to communities and regions across BC and Yukon.