

June 26, 2024

Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing
Province of British Columbia
Room 248 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Kahlon:

RE: Planning Institute of British Columbia - Peer Learning Network Initiative (PLN)

On behalf of the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC), I would once again like to express our appreciation to the Province for providing PIBC with funding to support a new Peer Learning Network (PLN) for professional planners and other practitioners working in and with local governments across BC. Our Board was pleased to incorporate delivery of the PLN into our Strategic Plan. The overall objectives and direction of the PLN align well with many of our long-standing strategic objectives.

This letter provides the Province with an update on the implementation of the PLN and with feedback from practitioners who have participated in the Peer Learning Network activities.

Since our meeting with the Province on January 26, 2024, we have:

- Conducted a survey of nearly 200 practitioners to understand the most critical needs concerning implementation of the new housing legislation and the most appropriate format for the delivery of peer-to-peer learning.
- Organized and facilitated six regional housing forums, attended by over 200 participants, including in-person events in Prince George, Victoria, Vancouver, Kelowna, and Nelson and a province-wide online event for Regional District and rural practitioners.
- Organized and delivered three topic-specific webinars, including "Ask a lawyer," Servicing and Infrastructure, and Affordability, which were attended by nearly 400 participants.
- Organized and facilitated a 3-hour "Deep Dive" session on the housing legislation at the BC Land Summit and participated on a panel discussion at the UBCM Housing Summit.
- Subsidized ongoing access to Quickscribe, which will provide online legislative and legal resources for practitioners until August 1, 2024.
- Produced a special issue of *Planning West*, PIBC's flagship professional magazine, which included 15 housing-related articles from planners, housing organizations, and industry partners across BC.
- Developed and launched a dedicated PLN webpage on the PIBC website, which includes information, resources, events, and relevant links.

- Developed and launched a dedicated online Peer Discussion Forum for practitioners across BC. To date, the Forum has over 180 active members.

Since its inception, the PLN has made significant efforts towards outreach, coordination and partnership with industry organizations, including the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM); Local Government Management Association (LGMA); Association of Regional District Planning Managers (ARDPM); Building Officials' Association of BC (BOABC); Small Housing BC; Hey Neighbour Collective; the Urban Land Institute; the Urban Development Institute; Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC (CHBA-BC); and Quickscribe, among others. These organizations and their constituents play a critical role in implementing the legislative changes concerning housing regulation across the Province, and we are pleased to be engaging with them in advancing knowledge and understanding of the new legislation

To date, the PLN's in-person and online peer learning sessions have been attended by approximately 600 local government practitioners and built environment professionals from across BC. Participants have shared their general feedback on implementation of the new legislation with PLN. Highlights of this feedback include:

- **Compliance timelines.** Tight timelines for compliance with SSMUH and TOA legislation do not allow local governments adequate time to assess servicing capacity and ensure the viability of future developments.
- **Cumulative impacts.** Additional density could lead to negative cumulative downstream impacts, particularly in regional districts and rural communities.
- **Green Infrastructure.** Significant concern about how private development interacts with green infrastructure to create livable communities (e.g. loss of tree canopy with densification could have significant negative impacts).
- **Long Term Affordability.** Concern about local governments ability to negotiate long term affordability due to increased as-of-right densities.
- **Public Hearings.** Concern that prohibiting public hearings breaks public trust and positions planners as adversaries to the public.
- **Standardized Regulations.** Standardization of regulation requirements is necessary to ensure similar definitions and standards are used between local governments. For example, it was suggested that zoning bylaws should defer to BC Building Code standards wherever possible.

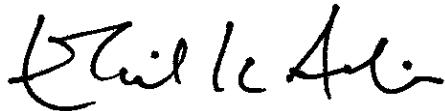
Local government practitioners across the province are working diligently to implement the Province's new suite of legislative changes to increase housing choice and supply and to enable proactive planning processes. Looking beyond the initial actions of the PLN, PIBC aims to build and enhance opportunities for collaborative processes between the planning profession and the Province. We believe that a high degree of collaboration is necessary for us to continue to effectively support the implementation of the Province's legislation and regulations around land use, planning, transportation, and housing.

To help enhance and build an effective ongoing partnership, we respectfully request that the Ministry work with PIBC to develop an appropriate long-term consultative or advisory structure

that enables the Institute and planning profession to provide external input, feedback, and expertise to the Ministry and enables the Institute and profession to receive information about forthcoming provincial policy work, initiatives, publications, communications, and announcements on a regular and timely basis. A regularized structure and approach offers ongoing benefit to the Ministry, while also enabling PIBC to better support local governments and practitioners across the province, who are experiencing unprecedented challenges, as they plan and support resilient, livable communities.

In addition to PLN's regular update meetings with the Planning and Land Use Management Branch of the Ministry (PLUM), PIBC looks forward to comprehensive meetings with the Province in the coming months to discuss emerging issues of mutual interest and avenues for further collaboration.

Kind Regards,



Emilie K. Adin RPP, MCIP,
President,
Planning Institute of British Columbia

CC:

Honourable Anne Kang (Minister of Municipal Affairs),
Marijke Edmondson (Strategic Advisor, Ministry of Municipal Affairs),
Jessica Brooks (Executive Director, Ministry of Housing),
Rebecca Penz (Planning and Land Use Management, Ministry of Housing),
PIBC Membership