

PLANNING INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

# PLANNING WEST

Spring 2024

*FORWARD THINKING  
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**THE  
HOUSING  
ISSUE**





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The Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) recognizes, acknowledges, and appreciates that we are able to live, work, and learn on the traditional territories of the First Nations and Indigenous peoples of BC and Yukon. Acknowledging the principles of truth and reconciliation, we recognize and respect the history, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and all Indigenous peoples of Canada whose presence continues to enrich our lives and our country.



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NEW HOUSING LEGISLATION IN BC

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ON THE COVER  
Aerial photo of Coquitlam, BC

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## President's Message



**W**ho says planners can't be fun? (My ex, that's who.) The best event I've been to in ages was a social in Prince George held jointly by the PIBC North Chapter and UNBC planning students. On offer was great company and some of the best Indian fusion food I've ever had. Meeting up-and-comers in the profession, including students and recent alumni, made the evening sing. You had me at "hello."

Not for the first time, I found myself reflecting on the high caliber of PIBC's membership. I'm consistently impressed as I meet our Fellows, Student, Candidate and Certified members, in every corner of BC and Yukon.

Despite the caliber of our membership, we're burdened. Demands on our profession are significant. Climate change, resilience, emergency preparedness, the opiate crisis, many facets of inequity and injustice – just some of the "new normals" with which we grapple in 2024. Add to this, of course, the housing crisis, which looms large for many communities.

A slew of events and activities are tackling the housing crisis head-on, offering planners a few silver linings.

Twelve days after the social in Prince George, I'm one of hundreds attending an Alumni UBC event, "Shaping Solutions for the Housing Crisis," offered in partnership with the Lambda Alpha Land Economics Society, and UBC's Urban Studies program, School of Community and Regional Planning, and the Peter A. Allard School of Law. It's a full house.

The next thing I know, I hear these words: "*Property owners are highly undertaxed,*" says Tom, with an American twang. "Let's tax valuable properties much more." The room bursts into applause. He's pointing to the phenomenon where hundreds of people with little taxable income are sitting on enormous wealth (i.e., valuable single-family homes) while paying hardly any tax.

'Tom' is the prolific speaker on housing, Dr. Thomas Davidoff, with the UBC Sauder School of Business. That's right. An economist. With the Sauder School of Business. Getting planners' applause.

Whether Tom's at the podium giving his opening comments or sitting on the stage for a panel discussion, he looks lanky and his stance is wide. A crisp navy blue jacket and dress shirt sits atop well-worn jeans and high-end walking shoes.

The next speaker is Jill Atkey RPP, MCIP, and CEO of the BC Nonprofit Housing Association. Where Tom is blunt, Jill is stark. Looking laidback in her casual suit, high black boots and sleek bob, Jill manages to wed informative and witty. We're captivated, but shaken by the sobering statistics she relays. Between 2016 and 2021, BC lost 97,390 units that rented below \$1,000. During this same time-period—our jaws drop—only 8,027 non-market rental units were constructed.

Deana Grinnell RPP, MCIP, a Vice-President with Canada Lands Company, and then Dr. Alexandra (Alex) Flynn from the UBC School of Law, are up next. Deana speaks to us about using "surplus" federal lands to increase the proportion of affordable units in a development.

When Alex chimes in, she has a look on her face like she's perpetually surprised by her own comments; she can't believe how ridiculously bad things have gotten. For example, 10.5% of renter households in BC have reported being forced to move between 2016 and 2021, compared to 5.9% nationally. In that same time period, 85% of evictions in BC were no-fault, compared to 65% nationally. Whoa, Nelly. "BC is the epicenter of [Canada's] housing crisis," says Alex. We believe her.

This is but one example of an event that I've attended; so many others are on offer. Every week, housing events bloom across BC and Yukon, and PIBC is adding to the mix. Our 2024 rollout of the Peer Learning Network (PLN) is like nothing we've ever done before. An initial survey, the first of a webinar series, six regional events across BC, plus many meetings all within two months' time? Yes, indeed. I'm proud of PIBC's Board members, volunteers, staff, and consultants who are working hard to pull off all these events; and to build up many resources for you to access.

We're all under enormous pressure. No wonder planners are bursting into applause when we hear solutions that could ease the housing crisis—and our workloads. No wonder we break into applause when we hear about new funding sources for non-market housing. We can only hope. But the PLN? That's going to make a difference too.

For more on PIBC's Peer Learning Network: <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pln>

For a look at our one-page summary of our Board's strategic priorities, check this out: <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pibc-institute-news/pibc-board-strategic-priorities-2023-2025>

**Emilie K. Adin** RPP, MCIP



# OUTLINES



What's Trending?... Member in Focus...



Image credit: Hey Neighbour Collective

## What's Trending?

by **Cindy Cheung** PIBC Communications & Marketing Specialist

**Hey Neighbour Collective**

@HeyNeighbourBC

<https://www.heyneighbourcollective.ca/>

Loneliness and social isolation are growing health concerns and the Hey Neighbour Collective is working with local community partners (including Happy Cities and Simon Fraser University) and six local governments in Metro Vancouver to co-create policies for stronger social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing environments in BC.

The core of Hey Neighbour Collective is their Community of Practice, comprised of non-profit and for-profit rental housing operators, non-profits, and researchers, all working together to develop tools that propel social connectedness in multi-unit housing, which are quickly becoming the prominent form of housing in urban areas.

### Read-worthy Practice Guides

How best to share approaches for nurturing and strengthening neighbourly connections? Hey Neighbour Collective created five Practice Guides, written specifically for residents, landlords, housing operators, non-profit organizations, and municipal governments. These guides summarize key learnings about the vital roles each group can play in fostering neighbour-to-neighbour connectedness and social resilience in multi-unit housing. Get top tips, tactics, strategic approaches, and the most common benefits that emerge for everyone involved. Download these guides under the Hey Neighbour Collective Resources web section:

<https://www.heyneighbourcollective.ca/resources/>

### Stay Updated with PIBC e-News!

Keep up-to-date regularly with current Institute & local planning news, events and job opportunities with PIBC e-News! The Institute's electronic newsletter is emailed to members every other Wednesday. Haven't seen your PIBC e-News? Check your spam/junk email folder and be sure to add [enews@pibc.bc.ca](mailto:enews@pibc.bc.ca) to your contacts.



## Canadian Housing and Renewal Association

@CHRA\_ACHRU

<https://chra-achru.ca/>

What began as concerned discussions within a group of Toronto urban professionals became the foundation of an established, national non-profit organization. Founded in 1968, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) is dedicated to supporting and strengthening the social and non-profit housing sector. It serves as the national voice to lead and advocate for system-wide action toward the right to housing for all. Advocating for better housing policies and programs, CHRA has been working to bring affordable housing and homelessness issues and solutions to the attention of policy-makers.

CHRA's four key pillars are:

- Keeping homes affordable
- Ending homelessness
- Renewing our communities
- Supporting a sustainable housing profession

### Learn more ... The Indigenous Housing Caucus

The Indigenous Housing Caucus was established in 2013 at CHRA's annual Congress on Housing and Homelessness, as members who were Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving wanted to work together for better housing for northern, rural, and urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples.

Since its inception, the Indigenous Caucus has grown to become an influential and credible voice for developing and providing policy advice on urban, rural, and northern (URN) Indigenous housing and homelessness. When this alliance officially became the National Urban, Rural, Northern Indigenous Housing Coalition in November 2022, it marked a significant advancement towards self-determination and the creation of an overall national Indigenous housing strategy that was created AND delivered by Indigenous peoples.

Before the Coalition, Indigenous friendship societies, housing associations, and corporations served their provincial communities without a common national Indigenous voice. Now, through the Coalition, members can contribute collectively across all regions and territories together to create and deliver a national URN Indigenous housing strategy.

Learn more about the Indigenous Caucus here:  
<https://chra-achru.ca/about-the-indigenous-caucus/>

### Planning West Call for Submissions

Summer 2024 Issue:

**2024 BC Land Summit & PIBC Awards**

Submission deadline: June 15, 2024

Fall 2024 Issue:

**Climate and the Environment**

Submission deadline: Sept 15, 2024

Articles should be 1000-1200 words in length in an unformatted MS Word document. Please note: not all articles may be accommodated based on editorial decisions and the number of submissions received.

## What Membership Means to Me

Planners across British Columbia and Yukon join PIBC and value becoming Registered Professional Planners for a variety of reasons. From Candidate members working towards their certification to Retired members who continue to contribute through important volunteering work, we reached out to our members across the province and beyond to learn why they value becoming an RPP and what membership means to them.



### Cleopatra (Cleo) Corbett RPP, MCIP

Senior Specialist, Municipal Relations, CMHC

Specialization: Working in BC and Yukon, actively aiming to increase the supply and variety of housing to better serve the diverse needs of communities.

“ I guess like any good relationship, I'd say .... it's complicated! I took the alternate route to membership, which was long and bumpy. I worked my way through the trenches in small resort communities where my degree in tourism and recreation was incredibly relevant, but not always valued by other planners. I was relieved and proud to finally obtain membership, and, in community, found a network of superhero planners to call upon when needing support and advice. We've laughed, we've cried, and we've served our communities with conviction.

Over the years, my relationship with membership has matured and brought about a greater sense of responsibility. I regularly volunteer to mentor candidate members (usually with undergrad degrees in tourism, which is more common now) and review applications for certification through the PSB. I find volunteerism very rewarding, but recently wanted to take it further.

I ran for the Board in 2023 to shake up the status quo, call out inequity, and challenge the wrongs the profession has enabled over the years. I want people to be proud to be a member, ensure the community is welcoming and diverse, and that people see themselves reflected in the profession and in membership.

I was recently appointed to Co-Chair of the Member Engagement Committee and I hope to curate these conversations with you over the next year. I look forward to dialogue and co-creating the community we all need right now to support great planning work in very challenging times. ”





## Member in Focus

**Tammara Soma** PhD, RPP, MCIP  
Assistant Professor, Simon Fraser University  
and Director of Research and Co-founder  
of Food Systems Lab

We recently had the pleasure of having Tammara Soma join us as speaker for our webinar on food security. Here, we learn more about the important work Tammara is spearheading as Research Director of the Food Systems Lab and as an award-winning educator at the School of Resource and Environmental Management (Planning Program), SFU University. She shares how her passion for placemaking and social justice started with someone very close to her and why she thinks planners are essential to helping communities “connect the dots” for long term food security and supporting Indigenous food sovereignty and justice as part of actively contributing to Truth and Reconciliation.

### **What inspired you to become a planner? Was there a person or event that led you to explore planning as a profession?**

I remember calling my father in Indonesia to let him know that I got into the planning program (MSc.Pl) at the University of Toronto and he said, “Oh wow, you’re going to be a planner like me!”

Funnily, I never realized that my father was a planner! What I knew about my father was that he always cared about the environment, was passionate about civic involvement and participation, and he was also constantly analyzing urban design and the placement of infrastructure. I remember him commenting on roads and housing plans, and he also started a neighbourhood vermicomposting program, which was quite fun but also adventurous in our little community. It dawned on me that planning was so integrated into his being that it was just contagious (in a good way!) and rubbed off on me. He influenced me to care deeply about the city, our community, and the neighbourhood that I live in. I also think that it was his deep sense of justice and his care for the communities who lived in informal housing (with no access to waste infrastructure in our country) that was a constant reminder that planners have an important role to play to plan with justice and balance.

As for food system planning, I credit a lot of that passion to Carolyn Steel and her book, *Hungry Cities*, and my late mentor, Dr. Wayne



Roberts, who was one of the pre-eminent city builders and food advocates in Toronto.

**You had completed your PhD in Planning at the University of Toronto. What brought you to the West Coast?**

At the University of Toronto, I created a niche for myself and focused on food system planning. My PhD was focused on urban household food waste management, the modern retail revolution, and planning implications in Indonesia. During my master's degree, I focused on exploring the work of an emerging group of planners across North America who were specializing in the field of food system planning and who identified as food system planners. With a food systems lens and an interdisciplinary approach, I was looking for an academic home that would support my vision and approach to planning, and especially a department that would support research in the field of food system planning and sustainability.

Unlike housing, transportation, or economic development planning, food system planning was, and still is, relatively new and still considered a niche in the Canadian context. I was glad to see a posting at Simon Fraser University at the School of Resource and Environmental Management (REM) planning program that focused on interdisciplinarity. SFU REM was looking for a planner who can advance the discipline of planning through an interdisciplinary approach. Food system planning issues cannot be solved in silos and this sub-field is a perfect example of the need for planners who have the capacity and ability to think in a systematic way. Moreover, food system planning requires the ability and the skills to engage diverse communities and across sectors. I immediately felt like I belonged at the Resource and Environmental Management Planning program.

**Aside from being a Registered Professional Planner, you are also an avid educator and recently awarded SFU's 2023 Early Career Award for Excellence in Teaching. What motivates or inspires you to continue educating others? Can you share a rewarding experience from this important work?**

Nothing brings more joy to me as an educator than happy and thriving students! To see my students succeeding, securing amazing planning positions, and doing great community planning work is highly rewarding. I am still in touch with many of my students, many of whom still send me articles of interest,

photos of their family, report on successful promotions, and wedding announcements!

As an educator, I am interested in continuing to grow and to learn to be a better and more engaging teacher. I think it dawned on me during the start of the Covid-19 pandemic how quickly we became isolated and how that connection between professors and students became disrupted. I never want to lose that connection with students, even if I am teaching in an online asynchronous class. I developed online field trips and tours of farms and approached my lecture videos in a conversational YouTube influencer style.

I am also passionate about outdoor learning and love to take my students to the garden, to the forest, and around neighbourhoods. I find that students learn better when they get the opportunity to apply their learnings in different contexts. When I heard from SFU that I was nominated, I was deeply honoured and this recognition from my students meant the world. I invest in my students' successes and I continue to remind my students that I deeply care about their learning. To know that they feel the same way brings me so much happiness.

**You co-founded the Food Systems Lab with Belinda Li (Director of Innovation, and current SFU PhD student) in 2016 at a coffee shop. What are the Lab's current objectives or activities? What has been the biggest change or progress since its inception?**

In 2016, we (Belinda and I) started with trying to use the Lab as a launching point to address the issue of food waste and understanding the problem and identifying systems solutions. We worked with the folks at the City of Toronto, with diverse farmers, retailers, NGOs, a migrant farm worker, and also a local Indigenous Elder. Since 2016, we have focused even more on doing our best to contribute to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) process and to use planning as a tool to support Indigenous food sovereignty and justice.

We often explored and questioned how the tools we have (zoning, plans, policies) can be used to create belonging, thriving communities, and better environmental stewardship. In the Lab, whether we are working upstream on food production issues or downstream at the consumer level, we seek to centre the voices of the host communities that we are working with. To support TRC, we have worked with Indigenous community partners to support citizen science research and food asset mapping, as well as work on planning pathways that can truly promote the principles of "All

My Relations" and "Food is Medicine." The Lab's new paper, published in the Journal of American Planning Association, titled *Indigenizing Food System Planning for Food System Resiliency: A Citizen Science Photovoice with Kitselas First Nation*, is an example of some of the work we are doing.

**You speak about how food security and food waste is vitally linked to finding solutions to climate change and social injustice (access to food as a basic human right). What are the most important things you think the planning profession can do to push and keep us moving in the right direction?**

I think planners need to do more to make connections with the communities they work with and to also help connect the dots. As a planner, I have applied social innovation in community engagement process to identify root causes in the food system and identify the role of planners.

We often hear about the problems of planning in silos and this is also a problem with our current industrial food system. There is such disconnect and distancing between the producers and the consumers, and also between the needed infrastructure that will keep our communities' food sovereign and promote a closed loop food system. Planning has the potential to move the needle along, to build upon the awareness and consciousness, and, therefore support a movement for a more equitable and sustainable food system.

**Can you share a place you like to visit or a hobby that brings you joy?**

I took a permaculture design certificate in the Summer and Fall of 2023 with an amazing instructor (Dr. James Richardson) who did his degree on resilient regional planning at UBC and Kym Chi (a permaculture instructor), which was held on UBC Farm and other locations across BC. Together, we did everything - learning how to grow food, building a cob house, learning about food forests, mushrooms, and livestock, placemaking, and also food processing (canning, jams, sauerkraut). I love to be out on the land and in nature, to grow food, to learn about plants, and to build communities together via food. I am looking forward to my sabbatical because I miss reading and illustrating for pleasure. But most importantly, I just want to be outdoors and take good care of my baby plants. Participating in a permaculture project with a team allowed me to do everything that I enjoy, including designing a school food garden for my final project.

# Planning Podcasts

The podcasts in this issue tackle the "pavement paradise". Take a listen to how planners can transform car-dependent suburbs into healthy, walkable places and how a single parking policy decision can reshape a city (and how people live in it) with unintended consequences.

**Got a podcast about planning you want to share? Contact us with your podcast summary at [editor@pibc.bc.ca](mailto:editor@pibc.bc.ca)**

*\*Please note: Podcast content and opinions are solely those of the podcast creators. PIBC does not endorse third party content and/or necessarily share the same views as expressed in these podcasts. Podcast links and content may change without notice and PIBC is not responsible for updates to content from podcast creators.*

## Strong Towns Podcast – Walkable City Design is Critical for Economic Health

**Run time 1:24:00**

Podcast summary by Leah Karlberg  
Candidate Member

**Host:** Charles Marohn  
**Guest:** Tristan Cleveland, PhD, MCIP  
Urban Planner at Happy Cities

**Podcast link\***  
<https://podcast.strongtowns.org/e/walkable-city-design-is-critical-for-economic-health/>

### Podcast Summary

After World War II, the U.S. embarked on an experiment in how we build cities. Instead of creating places scaled to people who walked, we built suburbs that focused on moving cars quickly and efficiently. Many cities in North America are looking to become walkable again, but it's not easy. Time and time again, change makers are hit by bureaucracy and complicated logistics.

Author and urban planner, Tristan Cleveland, discusses his recently published PhD thesis, which identifies impactful strategies to transform car-dependent suburbs into healthy, walkable places in Canada and the United States.

### Why Planners Should Listen

Urban planners face a new challenge in low-density suburbs. If they zone an area for compact, mixed-use development, often nothing changes. The economic logic of car-dependent areas encourages low-cost, car-oriented strip malls and big box stores, and it can be difficult to shift these incentives. Cleveland lays out a practical program for overcoming these challenges to kickstart a new kind of healthier, more people-friendly growth. The conversation also touches on unexpected topics affecting communities today.

## 99% Invisible, Episode 537 – Paved Paradise

**Run time 27:00**

Podcast summary by Kali Holahan RPP, MCIP  
Communications Committee Chair

**Hosts:** Roman Mars, creator of 99% Invisible Podcast  
**Guest:** Henry Grabar, author of Paved Paradise: How Parking Explains the World

**Podcast link\***  
<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/paved-paradise/>

### Podcast Summary

Design is everywhere in our lives, perhaps most importantly in the places where we've just stopped noticing. 99% Invisible Podcasts are a weekly exploration of the process and power of design and architecture.

LA might be the most extreme parking city on the planet. Parking regulations have made it nearly impossible to build new affordable housing or to renovate old buildings. Parking has a massive impact on how the city looks. LA is chock-full of commercial strip malls, where buildings sit alone and isolated in a sea of asphalt. All of this is the result of one policy decision that has reshaped American cities for the last eighty years.

Henry Grabar tells a mesmerizing story about the strange and wonderful super-organism that is the modern American city. In a beguiling and often absurdly hilarious mix of history, politics, and reportage, Grabar brilliantly surveys the pain points of the nation's parking crisis, from Los Angeles to Disney World to New York, stopping at every major American city in between.

### Why Planners Should Listen

Planners are used to discussions about parking. For every development application, parking and traffic seems to be a top concern. But before you sigh and say, "another parking discussion emphasizing buses and bikes – I've already heard it," 99% Invisible challenges this and achieves an engaging conversation that lays out how policy decisions made now may have unintended consequences for decades to come. For anyone struggling with parking regulations and how to rationalize reducing them, I strongly recommend checking this podcast out.



\* Podcast links are available on the [PIBC Planning Podcasts web page at www.pibc.bc.ca/planning-podcasts](http://www.pibc.bc.ca/planning-podcasts)



# PIBC Peer Learning Network: Supporting Collaboration Between Communities

Kristin Agnello RPP, MCIP

**PIBC has launched a new Peer Learning Network (PLN) in support of local governments and practitioners across BC who are working to implement the new provincial housing legislation, enacted in December 2023.**



The need for a Peer Learning Network was identified during consultation with stakeholders as part of the Province's Development Approvals Process Review (DAPR). As a result, the Province has provided PIBC with \$500,000 in funding for the development and implementation of this network over the next three years.

PLN convened in January 2024 and, in conversation with the Housing Task Force (a subcommittee of PIBC's Policy and Public Affairs Committee), has identified several initial actions aimed at supporting local governments and practitioners across the province who are working to update their zoning bylaws and comply with the Province's new housing legislation. These initial actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Facilitation of peer-to-peer learning and support at the regional level;
2. Access to targeted legal guidance to support the revision of zoning bylaws and other associated regulations; and
3. Development of a digital knowledge centre to centralize information delivery and sharing, and to facilitate timely access to emerging and best practices.

PLN has worked to meet the needs of local governments and practitioners across BC, informed by the results of a survey that was circulated in early February 2024. The survey was completed by 189 practitioners, including both PIBC and non-PIBC members, across all regions of the province. A report outlining the survey results can be found on the PLN webpage under "PIBC Peer Learning Network – Input & Engagement Survey Report."

The survey indicated a significant need for legal information, particularly concerning regulatory changes that are required to comply with the new provincial housing legislation. This new and complex legislation has raised many legal questions about definitions, implementation, public processes, and existing regulatory conditions. PLN hosted an "Ask a Lawyer" webinar on February 23, 2024, which provided an opportunity for practitioners to participate in a Q&A session with lawyers Bill Buholzer RPP, FCIP, Don Lidstone K.C., and Janae Enns RPP, MCIP, and moderated by planning lawyer and PIBC Board member, Lui Carvello. The webinar was well-attended, with nearly 300 participants online during the Q&A session. The webinar was recorded and all questions and answers were transcribed as a reference for public use. You can find

the recording, Q&A, and the lawyers' presentations on the PLN webpage under "PIBC PLN Webinar #1 – Ask A Lawyer: Provincial Housing Legislation (February 23)."

On the PLN website, you will also find information about Quickscribe Online, a tool which allows practitioners to navigate, research, understand, and follow relevant annotated local government legislation and related information. The service includes an "Ask Bill" (Buholzer) feature that allows participants to pose questions and receive legal guidance regarding the new planning and land use reforms. All PIBC members are entitled to make use of Quickscribe Online, free of charge until August 1st, 2024. Instructions for access and a link to the original PIBC Quickscribe training webinar, hosted by owner Mike Pasta, are available on the PLN website under "Quickscribe Online."

PLN has also been working diligently to organize and facilitate regional in-person learning sessions across the province, including in Prince George, Victoria, Vancouver, Nelson and Kelowna. Each of these sessions included a presentation from one or more local practitioner(s) outlining the approaches they are taking to addressing and implementing the new housing legislation. The practitioners



Deepa Chandran, from the Town of Smithers, presents to the PIBC PLN session in Prince George.

Right: Guy Patterson Presents in Prince George



Speakers at the Peer Learning Network Okanagan-Interior session (l-r) Sara Muir, Alison Espetveidt, Randy Houle, Brad Dollevoet, Nola Kilmartin  
Photo: CitySpaces Consulting

Left: Michael Moll Presents at the Victoria PLN event  
Photo: CitySpaces Consulting

Middle: Andrea Pickard presents at the Victoria PLN event

were each joined by a lawyer, who provided information about compliance requirements and answered any specific questions relevant to the region. The presentations were followed by facilitated peer discussions, where participants could share their challenges and successes, brainstorm solutions, and network with other local governments and practitioners in their region. All of the presentations were recorded and have been posted to the PLN webpage. Additional in-person and virtual sessions will be added in the future, depending on the needs and preferences of practitioners in each region. PLN is also working to support practitioners and organizations wishing to organize their own regional peer learning events through a newly introduced "Peer Learning Pod" program. Please visit <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pln> for more information."

PLN recognizes the need to include both PIBC members and non-members, as well as practitioners and members from other organizations. To ensure alignment, and prevent duplication of efforts, with other organizations, PLN has established communications and working relationships with the Union of BC Municipalities, Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC, Local Government Management Association of BC,

BC Housing, Building Officials' Association of BC, Quickscribe Online, Association of Regional District Planning Managers, and Small Housing BC. In the coming months, PLN will be working to strengthen and expand this network to include all those working in the housing arena across the province.

Lastly, PLN has been working to centralize information delivery and facilitate timely access to emerging and best practices via the PLN webpage. PLN has launched a dedicated Peer Learning Network page on the PIBC website, which serves as a central knowledge hub and includes links to emerging and best practices, resources, timelines, and PLN recordings and summaries. PLN has also launched an online discussion forum, intended to allow participants from the regional events and webinars to continue conversations that started in the PLN sessions. The link to the forum can be found on the PLN website.

All PLN events will remain free of charge, eligible for continuous professional learning credits, and open to both PIBC and non-PIBC members. Please watch the PLN webpage (<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pln>) for details about future events. If you would like to volunteer with the PLN, please email [peerlearning@pibc.bc.ca](mailto:peerlearning@pibc.bc.ca).

References:

PIBC Peer Learning Network: <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pln>  
Province of BC, September 22, 2023, Press Release: [https://www.pibc.bc.ca/sites/default/files/internal\\_pages\\_pdfs/news-and-events/BCMinsitryHousing\\_NR\\_PLN%20CapacityFunding-Sept22FNL.pdf](https://www.pibc.bc.ca/sites/default/files/internal_pages_pdfs/news-and-events/BCMinsitryHousing_NR_PLN%20CapacityFunding-Sept22FNL.pdf)

Kristin Agnello RPP, MCIP is the Director of Plassurban Consulting Inc. She is the Editor of *Planning West* and the Lead Strategic Consultant for the Peer Learning Network.





# BC Local Government Housing Initiatives: Origins

Gary Penway RPP, MCIP

In 2023, the Province of British Columbia introduced dramatic legislative changes to compel municipalities to deliver more housing. This article provides a summary of the evolution of planning legislation and what led to this action being taken.

## Evolution of Development Controls

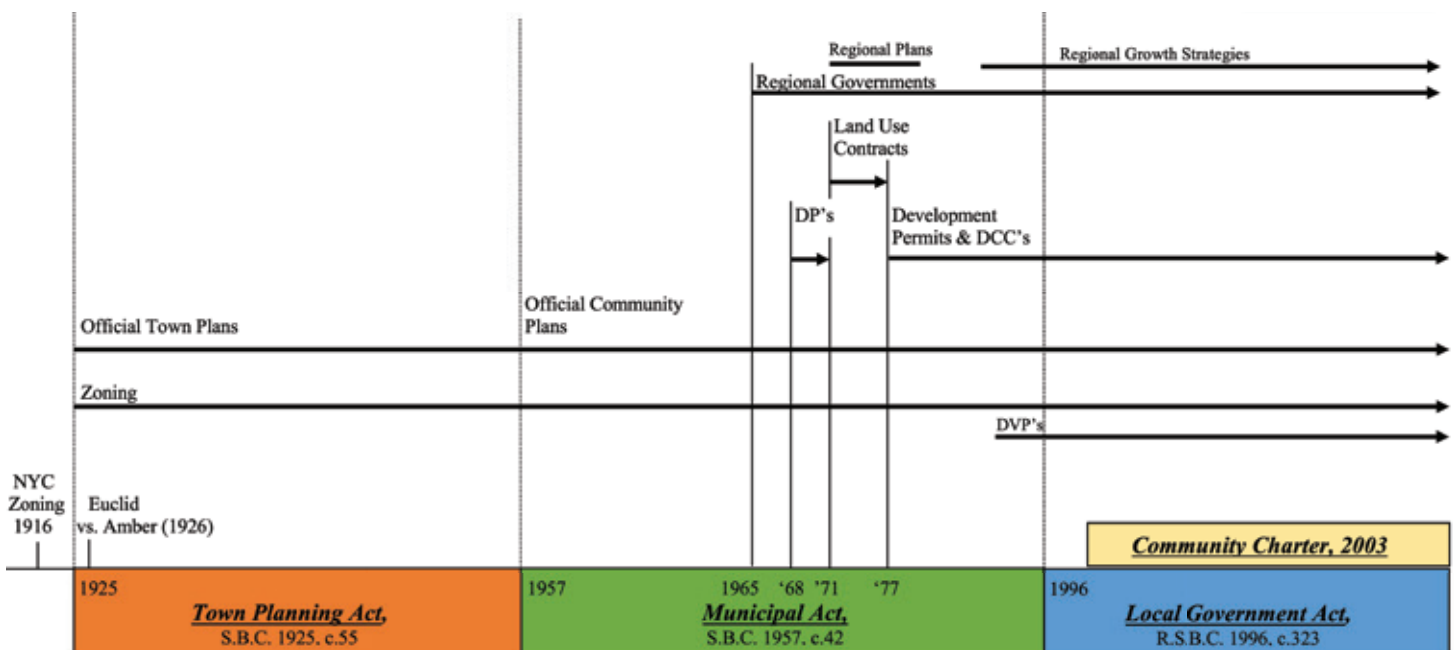
Land use regulations have evolved over time. Zoning was invented as a planning tool in New York City in 1916. The Province of British Columbia enacted the *Town Planning Act* in 1925, which enabled Official Town Plans and zoning bylaws (see chart below), including public hearings and Boards of Variance.

The 1957 *Municipal Act* introduced Official Community Plans with a broader focus than Official Town Plans. In the mid-1960's, planning tools expanded significantly, with regional governments and regional planning created. Powerful municipal Development Permits

(DPs) were introduced, but the development sector was not pleased and they were soon replaced with Land Use Contracts (LUCs) in 1971. Though popular with municipalities, LUCs were also not liked by the development community and they were replaced by a new, but weaker version of development permits in 1977.

When concerns were raised over regional plans having precedence over municipal decision-making, the Province disbanded regional planning altogether in the 1980's. It would later be re-established with the more consensual Regional Growth Strategies. In 1996, the *Local Government Act* (LGA) refreshed planning tools and now remains the primary source of legislative planning authority. As this chronology shows, there is a history of tension between development rights and local planning authority, with the Province intervening at various times.

## Evolution of Planning Legislation in B.C.



## Recent Concerns

Since 1996, many additional responsibilities have been placed upon local governments, such as riparian regulations, contaminated site regulations, GHG reductions, wildfire spread, sea level rise, etc. In addition, municipalities have ventured into matters that senior governments had either abandoned (e.g., affordable housing) or were slow to act upon (e.g., sustainable development, climate adaptation, CPTED, stormwater management, daycares, infrastructure, urban design, tree retention, etc.).

With limited authority, municipalities looked for ways to address such matters. The LGA enabled density bonusing, but this had limitations. The most open-ended tool available was the absolute discretion offered through the rezoning process. This allowed the imposition of higher development standards and also led to a new, unlegislated way to achieve amenities, later known as “community amenity contributions” (CACs). With no legislated standards, CACs were handled individually in each jurisdiction. At times, development approvals functioned like “let’s make a deal” negotiations. This provided municipalities more authority and delivered many public benefits, but introduced uncertainty and costs for applicants.

The evolution of development approvals resulted in development becoming more complex, more expensive, slower, and with greater uncertainty. At the same time, housing prices were rising dramatically and supply did not seem to be keeping up with demand (albeit a demand inflated by factors such as investor speculation/short-term rentals/money laundering/increase in foreign students, etc.).

Over time, complaints about development approvals became common. This was documented in the Greater Vancouver Homebuilders Association (HAVAN) *Getting to Groundbreaking* report (2014) and *Housing Approval Study* (2017) for Metro Vancouver. The Urban Development Institute and others were also expressing concerns to the Province.

The Province began to address concerns about housing supply and approvals through *Homes for B.C.: A 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia*, in 2018. It sought to address:

1. Stabilizing the Market;
2. Cracking Down on Tax Fraud and Closing Loopholes;
3. Building the Homes People Need;
4. Security for Renters; and
5. Supporting Partners to Build and Preserve Affordable Housing.

This has since evolved into the *Homes for People* action plan, an ongoing effort.

In 2018, BC initiated a province-wide study known as the Development Approval Process Review (DAPR). It was led by Pinna Sustainability and included consultation with the public, private, and non-profit sectors, as well as community associations in four regions across the province. A Phase 3 DAPR report was released in 2019 with guiding principles, key insights, and a ranked list of 38 areas called “Opportunities for Improvement.” All participants agreed that changes were necessary, including legislative, municipal sector, provincial agencies, developers, and professionals.

The 2019 DAPR Phase 3 report was not an action plan and did not make specific recommendations. Rather, actions were to be determined through a 4th Phase, entitled “Initiate Solutions.” The 2019 DAPR Phase 3 report included the following direction for Phase 4:

*“Proceed with significant ongoing input from all parties involved. This is to avoid unintended consequences resulting from changes to policies, regulations or legislation. Deep consultation with stakeholders on specific proposals is essential for success” (p. 20).*

*“Many of the identified ideas could have significant implications for local governments and other stakeholders. MAH is committed to ensuring that work undertaken to implement the opportunities identified in this report is fully informed by the knowledge and expertise of those who are directly working with and impacted by the development approval process” (p. 4).*

Following the release of DAPR, the provincial and federal governments undertook the “Canada-British Columbia Expert Panel on the Future of Housing Supply and Affordability.” Unlike the DAPR process, the Expert Panel had no municipal members. Their final report, entitled *Opening doors: unlocking housing supply for affordability*, was released in 2021. That study identified a significant existing undersupply of housing. It includes 23 recommendations in five categories:

1. Creating a planning framework that proactively encourages housing;
2. Reforming fees on property development;
3. Expanding supply of community and affordable housing;
4. Improving coordination among and within all levels of government; and
5. Ensuring more equitable treatment of renters and homeowners.

## Implementation

Since the release of DAPR and the federal-provincial task force report, the Province has proceeded with implementation in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- Legislation to allow delegation of minor zoning variances to staff;
- Digitizing and enhancing the approval process;
- *Housing Supply Act*, 2022, with 10 municipalities given housing targets in 2023;
- Permitting Strategy for Housing (coordinating ministry approvals);
- *Short-term Rental Accommodations Act*;
- Strata age restrictions and rental prohibitions removed;
- Speculation and vacancy tax; and
- Secondary Suite Incentive Program.

For local governments and planners, the most dramatic changes have occurred through Bills 44, 46, and 47. Implementation of these changes included local government consultation, but more limited than anticipated in the DAPR report. Many DAPR “Opportunities for Improvement” have yet to be addressed.

The purpose of this article is not to describe or comment on the merits of the recent legislative changes, but rather to put them into context. Changes were certainly required. However, the effectiveness of Bills 44, 46, and 47 are still to be determined. Would more consultation have avoided unintended consequences? Is adequate time and information being provided? Such considerations are perhaps the topic of another article.

Gary Penway RPP, MCIP is the former Director of Planning & Development for the City of North Vancouver. He taught Planning Process & Law at Langara College for 6 years. He was part of the consultation team that led the DAPR process and continues to work as a planning consultant.

## References:

BC Homes for People Action Plan:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/>

DAPR Phase 3 Report: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr\\_2019\\_report.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr_2019_report.pdf)

Canada-B.C Expert Panel Final Report: [https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/06/Opening-Doors\\_BC-Expert-Panel\\_Final-Report\\_Jun16.pdf](https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/121/2021/06/Opening-Doors_BC-Expert-Panel_Final-Report_Jun16.pdf)



# BC Homebuilders Cautiously Optimistic on Legislation that Significantly Increases Density

The Canadian Homebuilders' Association of BC

During the fall legislative session, the BC Government introduced a series of Bills aimed at expediting home construction, particularly focusing on small-scale and multi-unit housing (SSMUH) and transit-oriented developments (TODs).

The three pieces of legislation, Bills 44, 46, and 47, will significantly change the way municipalities plan and approve new housing, whether it be a secondary suite, multi-unit or transit-oriented development. Expanded and new funding tools were also introduced to help municipalities with the cost of providing the infrastructure and amenities required to meet this increased growth.

The implementation of these Bills will have a major impact on the delivery of homes in communities across BC. The Canadian Homebuilders' Association of BC (CHBA BC) is supportive of the spirit of the legislation, which will increase density in communities across the province and, hopefully, increase the variety of housing choices and improve affordability.

At the announcement, BC Premier David Eby said, "BC isn't building enough small-scale multi-unit homes that fit into existing neighbourhoods and give people more housing options that are within reach. That's why we're taking action to fix zoning problems and deliver more homes for people, faster."

## What Does the Homebuilding Industry Think?

The introduction of more SSMUH is something CHBA BC has been advocating for years. However, as the industry that will be expected to deliver these homes over the years to come, it will be vital to ensure all stakeholders, including local governments, have clarity on how the legislation will be implemented to ensure it has a positive impact on the livability of communities across the province.

Homebuilders are optimistic about the legislation. Tom Calne, Owner of Fulcrum Developments in Kamloops has built many multi-unit developments in the growing city. He says legislation like this is long overdue and will help accelerate the homebuilding process if it is implemented effectively. "Bills 44, 46,

and 47 will succeed in creating an environment of certainty for builders and developers," says Calne. "When industry knows that the initial time and money invested to create housing for British Columbians will result in permits being approved, they will step up and create projects that provide diverse housing options for their communities."

Since the initial announcement, CHBA BC has sought additional direction and support from the Ministry of Housing that will protect in-stream housing projects and plans during the foreseeable transition period so that housing can continue to be delivered during the interim period.

Homebuilders have many questions about how this legislation will be introduced over the next couple of years, says CHBA CEO Neil Moody: "While we're encouraged by the positive direction the BC Government has taken to enable more housing to be built through increased as-of-right density measures, it remains unclear what this means for current, in-stream applications and local government neighbourhood plans that are in progress."

## What is the Impact on Homebuilding in BC?

### Bill 44 – Housing Statutes Act – Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH)

This legislation identifies the prescribed number of housing units which must be permitted by local governments on single-family and duplex lots. It includes a policy manual to be used by all local governments to guide updates to zoning bylaws, other regulatory bylaws, and policies to comply with the SSMUH legislation. Site standards also set the provincial expectation for how local governments can enable financially viable SSMUH developments by providing flexibility for builders and developers.

Bill 44 will have a major impact on the use of single-family zoned lots across the province. It will permit one secondary suite or an accessory dwelling unit in all communities in BC. It also requires bylaws in municipalities with more than 5,000 people and within an urban



containment boundary to allow three to four units on lots zoned for single-family or duplex use, and up to six units on larger lots zoned for single-family or duplex use that are close to frequent-service transit stops.

Bill 44 also requires Housing Needs Reports (HNRs), Official Community Plans (OCPs), and zoning to be updated to plan for 20-year housing needs and reduces one-off public hearings for OCP-conforming projects.

Local governments that do not comply with the legislative requirements for SSMUH by the June 30, 2024, compliance date may be subject to a Ministerial Order. An extension may be granted by the Minister of Housing under certain circumstances, as identified in the announcement.

The Province intends to phase in the requirements of this legislation over the next

two years, with two major milestones. By January 1, 2025, local governments must have completed their interim Housing Needs Report and by December 2025, municipalities must have updated their Official Community Plans and associated zoning bylaws.

#### **Bill 46 – Housing Statutes (Development Financing) Amendment Act**

Bill 46 expands the infrastructure categories Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and Development Cost Levies (DCLs) can collect and establishes a new Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) tool for municipalities to use to collect monetary and in-kind contributions for amenities. The DCCs and DCLs can be used for new infrastructure, including fire protection services, police facilities, solid waste and recycling facilities, and provincial highway infrastructure projects where there is a cost-sharing arrangement between the municipality and the Province.

#### **Bill 47 – Housing Statutes Act (Transit-Oriented Areas)**

This Bill will require municipalities to designate Transit Oriented Development Areas (TOD Areas) near transit hubs to permit housing developments that meet minimum provincial standards for allowable height and density. In Metro Vancouver, this would allow for condo towers of up to 20-storeys if they are located less than 200 metres from rapid transit and up to 12-storeys if they are the same distance from a bus exchange. In medium-sized municipalities, like Victoria or Kelowna, it would allow for mid-rise buildings up to

12-storeys if they are 200 metres or less from a bus exchange and up to 6-storeys if they are located between 201 and 400 metres.

An accompanying Provincial Policy Manual for Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs) will be a resource to support local governments with the implementation of the Provincial TOA requirements. Within TOAs, local governments are required to adhere to minimum densities when amending a zoning bylaw or updating an Official Community Plan (OCP) or Official Development Plan (ODP). There are 104 TOD areas in 31 municipalities that the Province has prescribed to adopt the minimum allowable densities.

#### **How can we Ensure the Success of this Legislation?**

Overall, these Bills signify a concerted effort by the BC government to address housing challenges and facilitate more efficient and sustainable development practices. However, clarity and support for stakeholders, including homebuilders, remain critical during the transition period.

As the legislation takes effect, collaboration between government agencies, municipalities, and industry stakeholders will be essential to ensure its successful implementation and positive outcomes for housing in British Columbia.

#### **References:**

Canadian Homebuilders' Association of BC: <https://chbabc.org/>

Province of BC News Release, December 7, 2023: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023HOUS0171-001945>



**Top: Fourplex infill project built by Fulcrum Developments in Kamloops**

**CHBA BC Legislature Day: In November 2023, CHBA BC representatives met with Premier David Eby, several ministers, and MLAs from across the province at CHBA BC's Legislature Day. Pictured at far right: Tom Calne, Owner Fulcrum Developments, Kamloops**



# It's Not All Doom and Gloom

Randy Houle RPP, MCIP

Many communities are grappling with the new housing legislation, with concerns expressed over staffing, impacts to existing infrastructure and stormwater management, reduction in tree canopy, and, of course, the age-old question: Where do the cars park? As planners, all we can do is work with what we are given, which in this case is the lofty goal of amending our zoning bylaws by June 30th to allow for small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH). This article will share my experiences with implementation thus far through a small-town lens and to reassure you that it is not all doom and gloom.

A recent slower trend in development permit and building permit applications in Oliver has enabled me to focus my attention solely on the implementation of SSMUH. I

was afforded the necessary time to research the legislation in depth, engage in thoughtful discussion with neighbouring planners, and prepare an implementation plan and draft zoning amendments for discussion at two recent Council meetings. Not every community is fortunate enough to have the resources to implement these changes, and consultants are hard to come by.

I was invited to be a panellist at the most recent UBCM Housing Summit on February 13th, which focused on the impacts of Bill 44 on small and mid-sized communities. The discussion centered around the anticipated uptake of SSMUH, staffing levels, impacts on affordability, as well as the steps that communities have taken toward implementation and anticipated challenges. I was also part

of a similar discussion with CBC Daybreak South that same morning, a sort of 'panel before the panel,' with Meeri Durand from the City of Castlegar.

I presented a session organized by Small Housing BC on February 22nd called "Simplifying your Zoning – Town of Oliver." This session focused on the Town of Oliver's initiatives to simplify its zoning, which included combining all single-family zones into one zone, allowing up to four units per parcel in any configuration, removing maximum floor areas for accessory dwelling units, and reducing setbacks and parking requirements. The goal of the approach was to clear the path for development and let the market dictate housing needs. This approach was appropriate for a smaller community with only a few residential zones to consolidate and not the same level of development pressures as larger communities. It was also made simpler by the fact that Oliver is not subject to transit-oriented development areas and has not historically negotiated for CACs or road dedications during rezonings. On March 25th, I co-presented with a fellow colleague at PIBC's Peer Learning Network Session for the Okanagan-Interior, at which I shared Oliver's experiences with the implementation of Bill 44.

The other major change associated with Bill 44 - the removal of public hearings for OCP consistent rezoning proposals for housing projects - is a step in the right direction, provided that meaningful consultation occurs during the preparation of the OCP. I have experienced several contentious public hearings in my short career, lasting several hours, with comments such as "I don't want to live next to the kind of people that live in duplexes" and "kids will die due to the increase in traffic." For planners, it will be a breath of fresh air not having to sweat through public hearing presentations while residents shake their heads at every word. A reduction in public hearings will also speed up the approval process, reduce risk for developers, and not put elected officials in as many difficult situations.

The steps of implementation will be different for all communities, depending on the size and number of resources at their disposal. Oliver's implementation plan for Bill 44 is as follows:



Randy Houle and Brad Dollevoet present at the PIBC Peer Learning Network session in Kelowna

Photo: CitySpaces

1. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for SSMUH (**due June 30, 2024**) – which includes a public open house to provide education and awareness about the new legislation.
2. Conduct Interim Housing Needs Report (**due January 1, 2025**) – based on guidance from the Province.
3. Conduct Infrastructure Capacity Review – to better understand overall water supply and sewer treatment capacity and identify underserved areas of the community.
4. Amend the Development Procedure Bylaw – to reflect notice requirements for when no public hearing is held.
5. Amend the Council Procedure Bylaw – to prevent delegations (de facto public hearings) in cases where no public hearing will be held.
6. Update the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw based on the Housing Needs Report (**due December 31, 2025**).

7. Update the Development Cost Charge Bylaw – to include additional categories and update identified projects and costs.
8. Explore the implementation of an Amenity Cost Charge Bylaw.
9. Update the Subdivision and Development Bylaw – to reflect servicing requirements and frontage upgrades for areas previously zoned for single family.

To assist in the implementation process, I recommend that fellow planners watch the recorded webinars from the Ministry of Housing and attend as many legal seminars as possible. I also recommend joining the PIBC Peer Learning Network and the Gentle Density Network through Small Housing BC. Don't be afraid to reach out and collaborate with fellow planners in the area. I also recommend hosting a public open house on Bill 44, as you just might learn something from the residents of your community.

Time will tell how the new legislation

will play out and the impacts it will have on housing starts and affordability. Even if that increase is incremental, it could lead to a greater variety of housing options, especially in areas traditionally zoned for single detached dwellings. Continued infrastructure funding from the Province to update housing needs reports and OCPs every five years will be key moving forward. For small communities, such as Oliver that don't have developers knocking down the door, interest rates and construction costs will need to subside before any meaningful increase in SSMUH occurs. In terms of implementation, Oliver is in a good place due to adequate staffing levels and recent repeated investment in infrastructure. It is not all doom and gloom, but rather an opportunity to diversify our communities.

Randy Houle RPP, MCIP is the Director of Development Services with the Town of Oliver.

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# Change and Choice: Kelowna as We Grow

Nola Kilmartin RPP, MCIP and Adam Cseke

## Perfect is the enemy of good

For the last 20 or so years, the City of Kelowna has applied a progressive approach to housing policy and planning. The city is geographically constrained by Lake Okanagan, several mountains, and fertile agricultural lands, which are the very reasons this is such a desirable place to call home. As one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, we have to use our land and natural resources responsibly and efficiently.

Like many other BC communities, Kelowna is increasingly unaffordable. Efforts to increase housing units in existing neighbourhoods started in 2002 when the City began to allow carriage houses and secondary suites in residential neighbourhoods. After some

experimentation, false starts, and learning through tinkering, the City ran a design challenge pilot project in 2016 to promote infill housing diversity and increase supply.

This first design challenge resulted in the pre-zoning of approximately 800 lots to allow townhouses and houseplexes on lots where, previously, only single-detached homes were permitted. This has resulted in approximately 20% of those lots being redeveloped, creating more than 500 new housing units. Kelowna has shown it is possible to ensure attractive, quality design and thoughtful planning that integrates into existing neighbourhoods.

The creation of a new Official Community Plan (OCP) began in 2019 and was adopted in early 2022. With a great deal of community engagement, our administration truly took on the mantle of 'growing up, not out.' The OCP even went so far as to say that greenfield – in our case, hillside – development was no longer supportable for financial, environmental, and social reasons, and Council generally supported this direction with their votes.

To accommodate the goals and policies identified in the OCP, a new zoning bylaw was adopted at the end of 2022. Throughout 2023, the City initiated a new infill housing stakeholder process, working on infrastructure gaps and other internal improvements with the goal to expand the initial 800 pre-zoned lots for infill housing to the remainder of the Core Area (approximately 11,100 lots).

*You don't need to see the whole staircase to take the first step.*

At the end of 2023, the federal government announced that Kelowna was the first BC community, and one of the first nationally, to receive significant funding from the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) to create transformational and long-lasting systems change to increase housing supply. This funding will allow Kelowna to expand on innovative projects and undertake initiatives such as acquiring land for affordable housing and investing in infrastructure to unlock additional housing in urban areas.

Blanket local government housing initiatives from the Government of British Columbia will introduce a swath of new legislation that will drastically alter the local government land use planning framework. Overall, Kelowna is in a strong position to manage these changes and even deliver ahead of the timelines set by the Province. We had anticipated initiatives similar to those recently announced for Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) and Transit Oriented Areas (TOAs), so we have been able to consider, in some shape or form, how to accommodate their goals in our planning framework. The City had also been evaluating short-term rental rules and enforcements, and a housing needs assessment was completed in the fall of 2023, right before the provincial legislation was revealed.

Most days, all this flux seems manageable, but it hasn't all been smooth sailing. There has been an inordinate amount of time, attention, and resourcing paid to Bill 35, the legislation concerning short-term rentals. As tourism is a significant part of our economy, but we struggle with housing challenges, staff sought creative ways to combine legislation with exemptions to achieve balance. Unfortunately, we have not been able to achieve the balance we had in mind.

We were also responding to frequent inquiries from frustrated citizens regarding our only Heritage Area, located along Abbott St. just



## Kelowna Community Vision

*"Kelowna is a thriving mid-sized city that welcomes people from all backgrounds. We want to build a successful community that honours our rich heritage and also respects the natural wonders that contribute to our identity. As a place with deep agricultural roots, Kelowna understands the need to protect our environment, manage growth and be resilient as our future unfolds."*



Photos: Nola Kilmartin

south of downtown. It will be impacted by Bill 44, which has resulted in the creation of new zones and design guidelines that were neither planned nor resourced. This means that our planning department must find practical ways to incentivize the retention of the precious little residential neighbourhood heritage we have.

Further south from Abbott, a new transit exchange was designated by the Province on account of employment numbers. This exchange currently consists of two bus stops in front of Kelowna General Hospital (KGH.) Meanwhile, our busiest actual transit exchange, located downtown right next to City Hall and our waterfront, has not been designated a TOA. So, we have had to quickly sort out issues related to building heights and construction cranes around KGH, including what restrictions would be needed to comply with Federal Aviation requirements for air ambulance (aka helicopter) operations.

Staff and Council have obviously received plenty of criticism that we were not advocating strongly enough to the Province regarding short-term rentals or the heritage area; we continue to receive that feedback and we continue to seek out ways to improve the situation and address community concerns.

### For us, this is personal

Amid all this change, it was understood the team was going to be stretched thin. We have needed to not only work hard, but also make decisions at a rapid pace, which is not the typical hallmark of government. It also felt like short-term pain for what we hope is long-term gain. One of our talented planning colleagues spends 40% of their gross salary on rent. Another colleague in finance (and yes, she is very good with money) has lived and worked here for over 20 years and has not been able to find a condo over 400 square feet in her price range. These are smart, professional people who contribute to our community in a multitude of ways. They have done all the 'right' things. They should be able to thrive here.

We are grateful for the professional recognition and federal and provincial funds we have received, but beyond all of that, there are gainfully employed people in our city who question their long-term viability here. While we are working to make Kelowna a more inclusive, diverse and accessible city for everyone, the struggle of our own colleagues underscores the need for us to be persistent in our efforts, deliberate in our decisions, and committed to our community.

Kelowna has accomplished many of its own infill housing objectives while accommodating provincial and federal housing expectations. In summary, the results Kelowna has achieved toward increasing infill housing are:

- Rezone ~ 11,100 Urban Core Area lots to allow up to six dwelling units.
- Rezone ~14,000 suburban lots to allow up to four dwelling units.
- Allow approx. 2,675 rural lots to have a secondary suite and a carriage house.
- Amend the zoning of 793 lots that are within Transit Oriented Development Areas to comply with height and density.
- SSMUH and TOA zoning bylaw amendments fully adopted as of March 18, 2024.

The summary of changes can be viewed at [www.kelowna.ca/planninglegislation](http://www.kelowna.ca/planninglegislation).

Nola Kilmartin RPP, MCIP is the Development Planning Department Manager for the City of Kelowna.

Adam Cseke is a Planner Specialist at the City of Kelowna.



# Amenity Cost Charges Are Not Enough for Heritage in Our Province

Liberty Brears RPP, MCIP & CAHP and Britney Dack RPP, MCIP & CAHP

Heritage conservation is sometimes perceived as a barrier to housing development. But there are many examples of heritage buildings converted to multi-unit residential or being retained alongside compatible infill, or even high-density, housing. In these situations, greater housing density has been achieved in tandem with heritage conservation, and existing buildings have been made safe, accessible, and energy efficient. This shows the reuse of existing buildings can be part of the solution for both environmental sustainability and housing affordability and availability; they do not have to be at odds.

Heritage professionals were already tackling the complexities associated with accommodating significant on-site density before Bills 44 and 47 were introduced. Similarly, heritage professionals were already adapting to a greater need to conserve buildings more practically and flexibly. This is because, in the past few decades, securing heritage designation or undertaking heritage conservation work has heavily relied upon incentivization: increased density, density bonusing, or relaxation of zoning provisions for unit count, height, use, or siting. Through this model, the density of older neighbourhoods increased while still retaining the existing buildings that reflect the neighbourhoods' distinct character and history.

Recent changes to the legislation have made it much more difficult, if near impossible, to incentivize and ultimately achieve such projects. And heritage professionals across the province are now trying to grapple with the sudden shift in order to avoid future significant loss of our communities' important places and spaces.

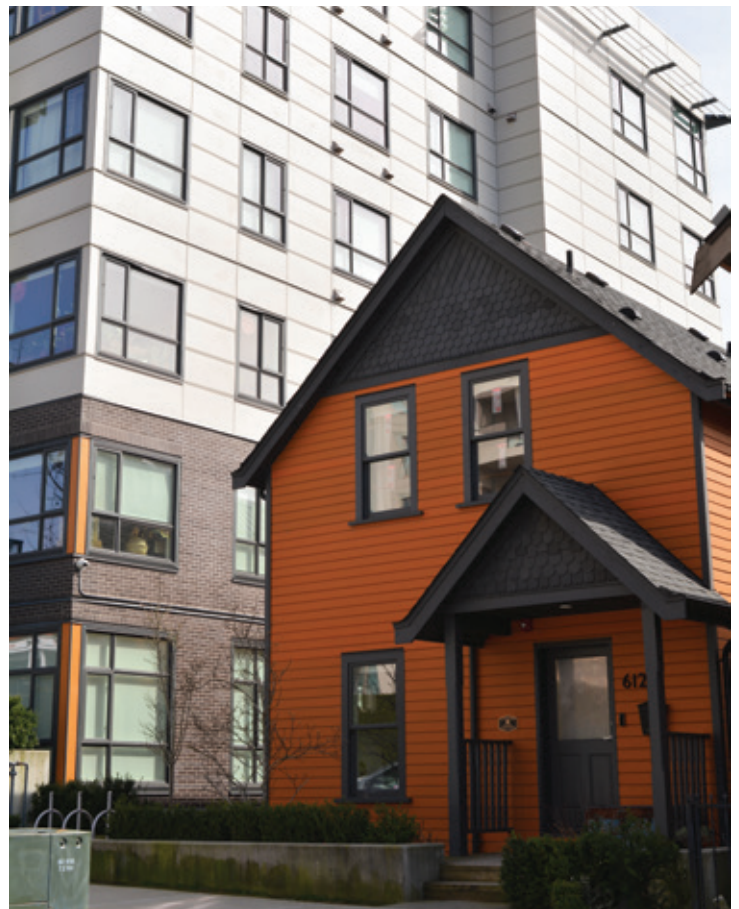
Previously, local governments had the legislated ability to use tools to incentivize the private sector into delivering outcomes (like heritage conservation) for the public interest, while still being privately owned. The legislative amendments have reduced this capacity, not by removing heritage-related tools, but by removing the incentives used to undertake conservation or establish protection.

The new Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) tool has been touted as a means for heritage conservation to continue. However, the ACC regulations appear to only allow local governments

to direct funds toward heritage conservation when the heritage asset is publicly owned or in government partnership. As such, ACCs are not functionally able to replace development incentives. The new ACC also forces competition among community amenities, reducing their impact even further.

Managing heritage conservation projects with funds collected through ACCs, or collecting ACCs to acquire heritage sites, puts heritage conservation back onto local governments exclusively, and they do not have the capacity to achieve similar results as we see today. The same struggle exists with grants and financial incentive programs; it is more difficult for local governments to put forward capital, rather than create the opportunity for private investment, especially in the face of demolition.

The legislative amendments also encourage local governments to put more emphasis on proactive planning. Though not able to make







up for the loss of key development incentives, or low capacity of ACCs, local governments will now need to rely on creative solutions to support heritage conservation projects, especially on private sites. Planners and heritage professionals will need to keep advocating for and tackling the complexities of creative solutions. How could heritage building retention be encouraged in a neighbourhood plan? What's the trade off when many of the heritage places are exactly where the density needs to occur? Will conservation projects be an option in small-scale multi-unit housing programs? Can updating community heritage registers put buildings on a path for retention? Could revitalization agreements be sought in the place of rezonings in historic neighbourhoods which overlap with transit-oriented development areas?

Heritage conservation has always been about the thoughtful management of change. It has progressed considerably in the last fifty years and it can move forward to tackle today's housing issues. Therefore, managing the need for more housing doesn't mean ignoring the impacts for heritage conservation.

A group of heritage professionals and local government planners recently met online

through the BC Association of Heritage Professionals (BCAHP) in order to discuss the need for an array of strategies province-wide. As many BCAHP members are also members of PIBC, it is hoped that a strong relationship can be developed so planners with heritage conservation in their portfolio can stay informed of current and emerging practice in this field. Further conversations are planned for the Heritage BC conference in Nelson this May and at the annual BCAHP meeting in Burnaby this September. You can find out more about upcoming meetings and events by becoming a member of Heritage BC, subscribing to its newsletter, or by watching for BCAHP posts on LinkedIn.

References: Heritage BC: <https://heritagebc.ca/>  
Liberty Brears RPP, MCIP is the principal of Liberty & Co. Heritage Consulting and a member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP).

Britney Dack RPP, MCIP is the Supervisor of Land Use Planning at the City of New Westminster and Chair of the Board at Heritage BC.

**A 2021 heritage restoration project with infill duplex in the Lower Mainland.**

**Left: An 1890 house incorporated into a development in 2020 with 43 total units.**

Photos: Stephanie Mak



## Hello ACCs – Good-bye CACs?

Bill Buholzer RPP, FCIP

Several years ago Nico Calavita, then professor emeritus in planning at San Diego State University, gave the following advice in an opinion piece in the American Planning Association's Planning magazine entitled "Getting Our Fair Share":

*The message for planners is clear: Land value capture is a fair system with great potential. Its positive track record in other countries and implementation in a number of North American cities should embolden planners to incorporate LVR in their plans. So, land-use planners, don't upzone or change your plans willy-nilly. Recapture some of the increases in land value for the building of the public city.*

Many BC planners had already been emboldened by the time Calavita's advice may have landed on their desks, in part due to our provincial government's longstanding resistance to expanding the scope of development cost charge bylaws to include an up-to-date array of growth-impacted municipal facilities and amenities. By 2014, the government was concerned enough about the impact of one-off land value capture negotiations (over "community amenity contributions") on development approval processes and the cost of housing that it issued policy guidance – for a burgeoning municipal revenue source that had never been statutorily authorized. Soon to follow were references in the government's Development Approval Process Review and in "Opening Doors", the Report of the Expert Panel on Housing Supply and Affordability, to the detrimental effects of Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) negotiations. Possibly the scale of non-statutory CAC revenues had also become a concern: in 2018, Vancouver's CAC revenues (\$70 million) nearly rivaled Development Cost Levy (DCL) revenues (\$92 million), though by 2022 DCLs had restored a comfortable lead (\$220 million vs. a mere \$63 million of CACs). Hundreds of millions of dollars have accumulated in unspent CAC reserves around the province, as the practicalities of operating and maintaining amenity projects and affordable housing have become clearer.

Enter the *Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023*, which Professor Calavita might call the *Willy Nilly*

*Act*. Official Community Plans, and the zoning bylaws of municipalities, will now have to designate sufficient land to accommodate, housing type by housing type, the 20 years' worth of housing demand documented in the most recent local government housing needs report (which will, we might surmise, encompass the demand that must be accommodated pursuant to any housing target order that might have been issued under the *Housing Supply Act*). And in any event, the lowest-density residential zones around the province must be "upzoned" to permit additional housing units up to a maximum of six, depending on parcel area and location. By the end of 2024, and earlier in the case of the low-density residential zones, the land value capture opportunity that has come to be associated in this province with zoning amendments affording greater residential density entitlements, will vanish.

But wait: Bill 46 has also entered the room. The government's resistance to requiring more complete development impact mitigation by developers has finally softened. Local governments may now enact and apply Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) bylaws, which differ from our familiar Development Cost Charge (DCC) bylaws in some significant ways.

- Purposes for which charges may be imposed are not statutorily restricted; any "amenity" project is eligible, and the *Housing Statutes (Development Financing) Amendment Act, 2023* defines the term quite loosely.
- Bylaws must, however, identify the specific amenity projects that will be funded with ACC revenues, unlike DCC bylaws which deal only with broad classes of projects and thereby offer greater flexibility in expenditures of DCC funds.
- The legislation requires local government contributions to project costs, to recognize any benefit to existing populations and to provide explicit local government contributions to assist with the cost of amenities exclusively benefiting new populations, rather than enabling these policy-based requirements to be applied (via the "Best Practices Guide") by government officials reviewing DCC bylaws for provincial approval.
- The government is given significant regulation-making powers that could be used

to cap ACC levels and deal in detail with how ACC-funded project costs are calculated.

- No Inspector of Municipalities approval is required for an ACC bylaw.

In other respects, such as triggers for payment of ACCs (subdivision and building permit approvals), use of statutory reserve funds, and tight restrictions on expenditure of fund reserves, the new ACC regime closely resembles the existing DCC regime.

### Where does that leave CACs?

Since Bill 46 explicitly does not restrict or affect any power of a local government under the *Local Government Act*, *Vancouver Charter*, or any other Act, the most that can be said about the future use of discretionary authority over zoning changes (those changes that are not compelled by Bill 44 or Bill 47, the minimum density entitlements for transit-oriented development) to "capture" land value generated by those zoning changes is that its legal status is unaffected. In the short term, since the development of an ACC bylaw will typically involve a great deal of work in identifying and costing out specific amenity projects and working out ACC rates, which will in many jurisdictions simply be applied across the board, site-specific CAC negotiations will probably continue. In the longer term once ACC bylaws are in place, some local governments will presumably continue to negotiate CACs, but recognizing that local ACC levies will be showing up as another soft cost on the pro forma statements used to identify the "land lift" associated with the developer's project. (Developers will automatically be entitled to an ACC credit in respect of any ACC bylaw project to which they have already contributed via CACs.) The open question, going forward, is whether the existence of express authority for ACC bylaws will have any significance in any legal challenge to the authority of a local government to use the zoning power in an *ad hoc* way to generate revenue to fund community amenities.

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# Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing Zoning: Legislation and Impacts

Janae Enns RPP, MCIP

## Statutory Context

Bill 44 – 2023 *Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023* and the Local Government Zoning Bylaw Regulation (the “Zoning Bylaw Regulation”) introduced significant amendments to the *Local Government Act* (“LGA”). Local governments must amend their zoning bylaws to comply with new small-scale multi-unit housing (“SSMUH”) density requirements by June 30, 2024. The Province also released the Provincial Policy Manual & Site Standards (the “Policy Manual”), which provides suggested guidelines for the new zoning requirements. This article references the changes made to the LGA but Bill 44 also enacted comparable amendments to the *Vancouver Charter*.

## Mandated Pre-Zoning

First, the SSMUH legislation mandates all local governments to exercise their zoning powers to permit at least one secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit on a parcel in a “restricted zone,” where the zone would otherwise restrict the permitted residential use to single-family dwellings.

Second, the legislation introduced higher density zoning requirements, ranging from 3 – 6 units, for lands in more urban areas and in “restricted zones,” where the zone would otherwise restrict the permitted residential use to single-family dwellings, single-family dwellings with a secondary suite or accessory dwelling unit, duplexes, or duplexes with up to two additional housing units. The initial applicability of the 3 – 6 units of density is not exactly straightforward. The lands must be in a “restricted zone,” then you have to consider the location of the lands and whether they are in an urban containment boundary or in a jurisdiction with a population over 5,000. If applicable, the 3 – 6 units requirement varies depending on the size of the parcel and whether the lands are in close proximity to a high-frequency bus stop.

Notably, the definition of “restricted zone” is specifically defined in relation to zones where the residential use would otherwise be restricted. This could capture mixed-use zones that only permit these limited residential uses. Generally, the SSMUH density must be automatic and cannot hinge on conditional density rules to achieve the required number of housing units.

## Exemptions

Section 481.4 of the LGA provides that the SSMUH 3 – 6 units requirement will not apply to:

1. land that is protected under section 12.1(2) of the *Heritage Conservation Act* [lands with heritage or archaeological value];
  2. land that was already designated as protected under a heritage designation bylaw on December 7, 2023, under section 611 of the LGA;
  3. land that is not connected to a water or sewer system provided as a service by a municipality or regional district [ie. lands must be connected to both systems for the SSMUH density to apply];
  4. land within a zone that prescribes a minimum lot size on subdivision of 4,050m<sup>2</sup>;
  5. a parcel of land larger than 4,050m<sup>2</sup>.
6. The Zoning Bylaw Regulation also sets out two exemptions that apply to all the SSMUH zoning requirements (the additional one-unit requirement and the 3 – 6 units requirement). Lands will be exempt if a qualified professional certifies that the additional density would significantly increase a hazardous condition. Second, the SSMUH zoning requirements will not apply to land within a transit-oriented area, as those areas are subject to a distinct statutory scheme.

If an exemption applies, the LGA requires local governments to give written notice to the minister, as soon as practicable, after a local government adopts the zoning bylaw. The notice must identify: (a) the lands subject to the exemption; and (b) the provision under which the exemption is exercised (ie., the specific exemption under either the LGA or the Zoning Bylaw Regulation). To clearly identify the lands, it would be prudent to include a map that outlines the boundaries of the exempt lands.

## Extensions

Local governments can apply to the minister to request an extension for complying with the SSMUH zoning requirements. Applications must be submitted on or before June 1, 2024, unless there are “extraordinary

circumstances,” then applications can be submitted on or before June 30, 2024. The minister may grant time extensions for any of the following reasons:

1. the local government is in the process of upgrading servicing infrastructure for the area;
2. the infrastructure that services the area is such that compliance by June 30, 2024, is likely to increase a risk to health, public safety or the environment;
3. there are “extraordinary circumstances” that otherwise prevent compliance in relation to the area [the Policy Manual’s examples of extraordinary circumstances include major wildfire or flood events].

An outcome on an extension application will never be certain or guaranteed. As such, local governments should strive to comply with the June 30, 2024, deadline.

## Practice Advice

As the June 30 deadline approaches, there are several items for planners to consider when embarking on necessary updates to zoning bylaws.

1. The LGA provides that local governments “must consider” the Policy Manual when updating its zoning bylaw. Local governments are only obligated to consider Part 4 of the Policy Manual and do not have to comply with every single recommendation contained within the Policy Manual. Planners can demonstrate that they have reviewed and contemplated the Policy Manual in the accompanying staff report when updating the zoning bylaw.
2. The SSMUH legislation does not vest automatic or unfettered rights to the density. The density entitlements will occur when the necessary zoning bylaw amendments have been adopted by June 30, 2024. However, the anticipated changes may render in-stream rezoning applications that are consistent with the SSMUH densities unnecessary and planners should communicate this to the applicants.
3. Section 457.1 of the LGA provides that local governments cannot use development permit areas, land use regulation bylaws, land use permits, heritage alteration



permits or heritage conservation areas in a manner that “unreasonably prohibits or restricts” the SSMUH density. This does not mean that these powers will not apply to SSMUH developments. Rather, the application of these powers must be based on a rational analysis that can be justified in the circumstances. If a competing local government regulation has the effect of completely sterilizing a proposed SSMUH development, the local government may wish to seek further legal advice.

4. There may be overlapping provincial legislation and contractual tools that impact the applicability of the SSMUH density. Overlapping provincial legislation such as the *BC Building Code*, *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the *Riparian Areas Protection Regulation* will continue to apply to SSMUH developments and take precedence. There could also be covenants or building schemes on title to the lands that restrict density, which will also prevail. SSMUH developments do not get blanket protection from other provincial enactments, contracts on title, or other competing local government regulations.
5. Servicing Considerations: The incremental SSMUH development patterns could have a cumulative impact on servicing needs that exceeds conventional higher density developments located on a single lot. SSMUH developments can also raise emergency access and fire prevention issues. The location of accessory dwelling units can make it challenging for emergency vehicle access and SSMUH developments are subject to more relaxed fire prevention requirements in contrast to conventional higher density developments. Planners may want to engage in conversations with building and engineering departments to consider whether changes are needed to address an influx of infill SSMUH developments.

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## Housing Supply Legislation: Putting the “Plan” Back in Planning?

Guy Patterson RPP, MCIP

British Columbia's preoccupation with housing affordability is not new. Governments from across the political spectrum have been trying for years to put the genie of rising land and construction costs back in its bottle. Allowing an increase in the supply of new housing is one response. Every planner working in this province will likely by now be familiar with, if not fed-up hearing about, Bills 44 and 47: mandatory and almost immediate zoning changes to permit more housing units, especially in existing settled areas and close to transit. Have we reached “peak webinar” on this topic? One can only hope.

While direct interference in local governments' use of the zoning power feels like the most jarring of the changes introduced in late 2023, this article reviews adjustments to housing needs reports and public hearings. The Province has created stricter rules on gathering evidence to support planning for residential land uses, and taken most zoning decisions for those land uses out of the crucible of direct public scrutiny. Alongside Bill 46, the gist might be summed up as, “more planning; less negotiating.”

It has long been the case that regional growth strategies, the broadest type of local government land use planning contemplated in the *Local Government Act* (the “Act”), are meant to work towards, among other purposes, “adequate, affordable and appropriate housing<sup>1</sup>.” Official community plans, under section 471 of the Act, are supposed to work toward the same purposes, and for years the first item in the list of required content for an OCP had to do with meeting anticipated housing needs. An OCP must also include policies on affordable, rental, and special needs housing. Finally, legislative changes that pre-dated Bill 44 require local governments to receive housing needs reports, prepared in accordance with the *Housing Needs Report Regulation*.

So, what can be said of the most recent amendments? First, OCPs are now mandatory instead of optional for all municipalities, and for prescribed regional districts, so the obligation to plan for housing cannot be avoided by deciding not to adopt an OCP. And, not only must the local government consider its housing needs report when preparing or amending an OCP, the housing policies required to be included in an OCP under section 473 of the Act must be more directly responsive

to the specifics of the report. More rigour; less wiggle room.

Second, Cabinet's regulation-making authority respecting the content and methodologies for housing needs reports has been enhanced. Third, local governments must receive housing needs reports every five years, beginning on December 31, 2028, at the latest, and an “interim housing needs report” by a date to be prescribed by regulation.<sup>2</sup> Fourth, and perhaps most important, the planning time horizon for housing needs reports and for housing supply and housing policies in official community plans jumps from five years to twenty years.

All of this lays the groundwork for a requirement in section 481.7 of the Act, which says local governments must adopt or amend zoning bylaws to make room for 20 years of housing supply, but if you were looking forward to the many public hearings required to enact zoning for all this new housing supply, you will be disappointed. More likely, you already knew public hearings are now prohibited, not only for zoning bylaws to accommodate small scale multi-unit housing under section 481.3, but also, under the revised section 464 of the Act, for a proposed zoning bylaw if “the sole purpose of the bylaw” is to permit a development with at least 50% residential floor area.

Like its new work on housing needs reports, the Legislature's public hearing changes are not without precedent. A 2019 report identified a “need to improve, supplement or replace the public hearing process,” and mentioned the possibility of “removing the requirement for a public hearing for minor amendments.”<sup>3</sup> The BC Law Institute's (BCLI) “Renovate the Public Hearing” project took a closer look at the history of and common complaints about statutory public hearings. That project explores options to retain the important democratic function of public participation in local land use decisions, without getting bogged down in the legal and procedural minutia, and power imbalances that have prompted critiques for almost as long as public hearings have been around<sup>4</sup>.

But a renovation is not the same as a demolition, so the prohibition on public hearings might be more dramatic than most planners in BC would have imagined. It also raises at least three new legal issues: determining the sole

purpose of a bylaw; considering other forms of input; and inadvertently holding a prohibited public hearing.

The “sole purpose” question may place a sharper focus on the “general purpose” statements required for any notice given in advance of first reading, or a public hearing, for a zoning bylaw. On the current law in Canada, a municipal council or regional board gets deference in interpreting its own bylaws, which should include deference on interpreting the purpose of the bylaw. So, before you ask a lawyer what the sole purpose of a proposed bylaw is, consider asking your local elected body. The Supreme Court of Canada says the members of that body should be deciding if the new public hearing prohibition is engaged.

The question could be posed well in advance of any scheduled first reading of a bylaw, at which time a council or board might also consider other forms of public input, similar to the manner in which consultation must be considered in advance of OCP amendments. It would of course make sense for elected officials to take the advice of professional planners on what kinds of public input might be in order, and how to gather said input. That approach might at least be consistent with one thrust of the DAPR Report and BCLI’s public

hearing renovation project, which was to re-invent, but not necessarily abandon, public engagement altogether.

Equally, local governments might rely on, and perhaps deepen, engagement efforts at the OCP stage, and then point to OCP consistency in response to concerns about inadequate consultation in the zoning arena. The other benefit of this approach, beyond removing process obstacles to the production of more housing units, is it might avoid inadvertently holding a public hearing in the face of the prohibition. As tricky as it is to hold a fair hearing where one is required, or allowed, is it even harder to not hold a public hearing where one is prohibited?

On one view, the prohibition itself might be a full answer to any suggestion a public hearing has occurred; on the other hand, any time interested members of the public are given an opportunity to be heard or present written submissions on a proposed bylaw, it could look a lot like a public hearing. If the question of whether a local government held a hearing when it wasn’t supposed to ever arises, that is another point on which the local government is entitled to deference: if a council or board did not think or say it was holding a public hearing, then courts should be slow to reach the opposite conclusion, even though courts

are traditionally less deferential on procedural issues. So, for any consternation over provincial meddling in zoning decisions, it’s probably fair to say the new housing supply legislation also invites more and better local planning work (including public engagement) ahead of the zoning moment.

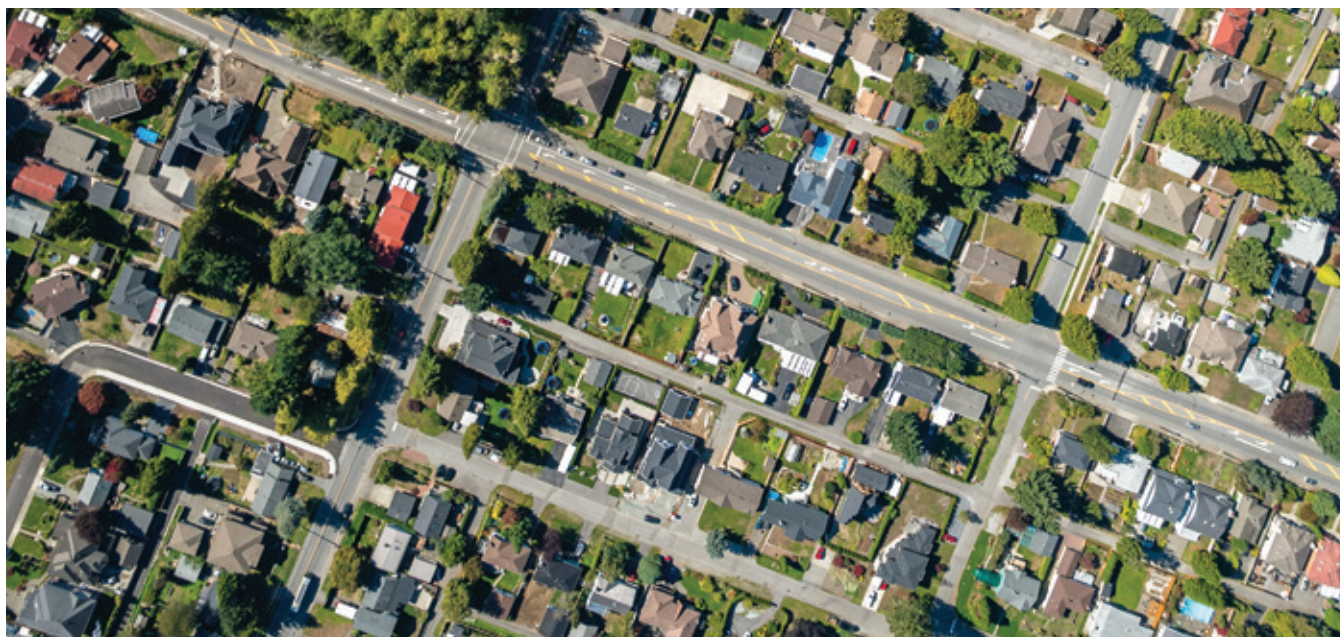
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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Act [the “Act”], section 428.

<sup>2</sup> The Province has, apparently, suggested the date for interim housing needs reports will be January 1, 2025, but as of the date of writing the author has not located a regulation prescribing that date.

<sup>3</sup> Development Approvals Process Review, Final Report from a Province-Wide Stakeholder Consultation: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr\\_2019\\_report.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/dapr_2019_report.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> BC Law Institute, 2022, Study Paper on Public Hearings: <https://www.bcli.org/wp-content/uploads/13-Study-Paper-on-Public-Hearings.pdf>







# PlanGirl Travels: Housing and Equity Lessons from Baltimore

Emilie K. Adin RPP, MCIP

We're so high up that it feels like the sun is shining up at us. Maybe it's the reflection, in the early evening sunlight, from the Inner Harbour laid out below. Perched at the top of the world's tallest pentagonal building, at the "Top of the World" observation deck of Baltimore's World Trade Centre, we sup and sip, mingle, read our copies of *Baltimore: A Preview*, and the January 2017 issue of *Baltimore Magazine*, with the cover story, "You're Welcome, America: How Baltimore Invented the Modern World." Below the 360-degree panoramic windows huddle glass-and-metal structures reminiscent of the Louvre Pyramid, jutting quays, carapace-shaped tents, the juxtaposition of brick and concrete, and broad expanses of water.

We're attending the opening reception of a land economics conference, in the waning days of April 2018. Planners, architects, developers, activists, academics, and other city builders have gathered to discuss – and tour – redevelopment sites and neighbourhoods in transition.

The young cellist, Luka Stefanovic of the Baltimore School for the Arts, plays at our gathering. We're in thrall with him, the views, and the cusp-of-the-south hospitality that's as bright as the sunshine. Baltimore's moniker, "Charm City," rings true.

Planner-turned-developer, Ernst Valery, takes center stage. He's the Principal, Managing Member and President of SAA|EVI, an urban development firm. His tall stature at the podium is striking. His skin is dark brown, glowing, healthy. His energy is high, his eyes bright. If he was starring in an infomercial for a health product, any product, I'd be tempted to buy it.

He speaks of bringing new life to communities he serves and helping to create vibrant city neighbourhoods. His passion silences the room.

"Who are you to tell me that investment in my community is gentrification?" he asks rhetorically. "Don't *we* deserve to be invested in?"

Valery urges cities to commit resources (including private capital) if there is any hope of addressing systemic poverty and racism. We must reduce or eliminate displacement from development, without calling all infill development, all redevelopment, "gentrification." He reminds us that the loudest voices are sometimes just that: loud. He urges planners and city officials to use metrics to gauge the value of a development through the eyes of those in the community: find out what the community actually wants.

Baltimore has a difficult history, particularly in race relations. In 1910, it became the first U.S. city to introduce a segregation ordinance. Despite that law being struck down by the Supreme Court, white suburbanization and systemic racism led to virtually all-Black neighbourhoods being the norm in many parts of the city. Concurrently, Baltimore lost 35% of its population between 1950-2010 due to the collapse of heavy industry and the manufacturing sector, with attendant disinvestment and urban decay.

The city has a long history of race riots, including the month-long riot following the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, and protests following the death of Freddie Carlos Gray Jr. in 2015. Gray was a Black man who died due to a significant spinal injury



incurred while being transported unrestrained in the back of a police van, according to multiple media sources. The autopsy ruled his death a homicide and found Gray would have lived had he received prompt medical attention or been secured in the van, as per police policy. This story is to Baltimore what the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, has meant to the world.

Disinvestment in existing urban fabric, suburbanization of wealth, and failure to fix systemic inequities are not confined to American cities. Even while experiencing population growth, in recent decades, British Columbia and Yukon have faced similar challenges. To focus on growing the number of housing units, without attention paid to land economics, public policy, city-built racism – particularly in regard to Indigenous peoples – is to miss the big picture.

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Back in Baltimore in April 2018, we listen to a rousing speech by the president and CEO of Associated Black Charities, Diane Bell McKoy. She talks about using ‘innovative transactional strategies’ to address systemic racism and the depressed economic outcomes experienced by African American communities. The word “transactional” is used pejoratively in BC, so it’s jarring to hear the word used in this context as a compliment; as a means to describe interaction based on mutual influence and exchange.

In East Baltimore, we see whole blocks of rowhouses derelict and boarded up, numerous empty lots, abandoned shops, crumbling buildings, piles of garbage. But there are also people getting by, caring for their homes – sometimes the only home on the block that isn’t boarded up.

The East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI), a not-for-profit community development corporation, is busy rebuilding 88 acres of East Baltimore. EBDI’s president and CEO, Cheryle Washington, a Black woman, speaks eloquently about inclusion, engagement and transformation. EBDI is giving housing priority on new and refurbished units to local residents, working hard to retain and rebuild the community bonds undermined by decades of economic turmoil, environmental degradation, and racial unrest. The resulting Eager Park neighbourhood (the developer’s attempts to brand it Forest City fizzled) features a central park, close proximity to Johns Hopkins University and the associated Hospital, the first new K-8 public school in East Baltimore in 20 years, and a strong retail strategy. By 2020, more than 600 homes and apartments had been built, with a full build-out anticipated of

2,000 new and renovated residential units at completion, including at least 33% affordable units plus 33% workforce housing units. In the BC context, these targets are astounding. In the USA, a not-for-profit community development corporation can survive, even thrive, to a greater degree than in Canada due to differences in the tax system. How can we replicate that?

The plan for Eager Park is not without controversy. While the EBDI is a not-for-profit, its founding purpose is to deliver on Johns Hopkins University’s vision. The University’s vision and the original residents’ vision for the neighbourhood often don’t align. Between the start of the redevelopment effort in 2002 and my visit in 2018, EBDI had relocated about 740 families – sometimes to better housing, often to housing within the same neighbourhood. However, “relocation” as a concept has a weight of its own: gentrification is often whispered—or shouted.

Supporters of the effort say the aim is a sustainable, mixed-income, mixed-race neighbourhood. Is that better than a predominantly Black, thriving blue-collar community? Of course not, and therein lies the controversy. Yet a slew of community builders – including many activists – are counting on this effort as a key to economic recovery and the kind



Ray and Andy at Eager Park

The View (left)  
Ernst Valery (left bottom)

Photos: bobmadden.com

of inclusivity that will dislodge Baltimore’s reputation as a battleground of racial unrest. Do you hear echoes of local controversies? Is “mixed-income” a laudable goal or double-speak for gentrification? A sell-out or a leg-up for the local population? Debates swirling around Vancouver’s Downtown East Side come to mind. At the same time, Ernst Valery’s voice rings out: “Don’t *we* deserve to be invested in?”

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What is the lesson that we can bring home? It is that thoughtful, dogged, resourceful activists can and do shape public discourse, municipal decisions, and ultimately even a non-profit developer’s definition of success. East Baltimore’s activists have won many battles around affordability and access to amenities, helping further the goals of equity and inclusivity for Eager Park; even as debate rumbles on. BC and Yukon can learn to advance equity goals even as we focus on housing affordability and supply. Let’s invest in racial justice as well as homes.

Emilie K. Adin RPP, MCIP is the President of the Planning Institute of BC as well as an Adjunct Professor at UBC. In 2023, Emilie was named by *BIV magazine* as one of the 500 most influential business leaders in BC.



# Planners: Paving the Way for Streamlined Non-Market Housing

Kaeley Wiseman RPP, MCIP, PMP; Eleni Gibson RPP, MCIP; Rebecca Mersereau MPA, MSc

It has been stated, again and again, that we are in a housing crisis – British Columbia (and much of Canada) has seen costs associated with all types of housing soar exponentially in the past five years. There are barriers to increasing our housing supply across all sectors – public, private, non-profit – and at all stages of development, from unsatiated demand, slow political approvals, challenging funding and financing environments, lack of readily available land, and low supply of all tenure types. Despite dialogue about whose responsibility it is, we are seeing all levels of government step up to address

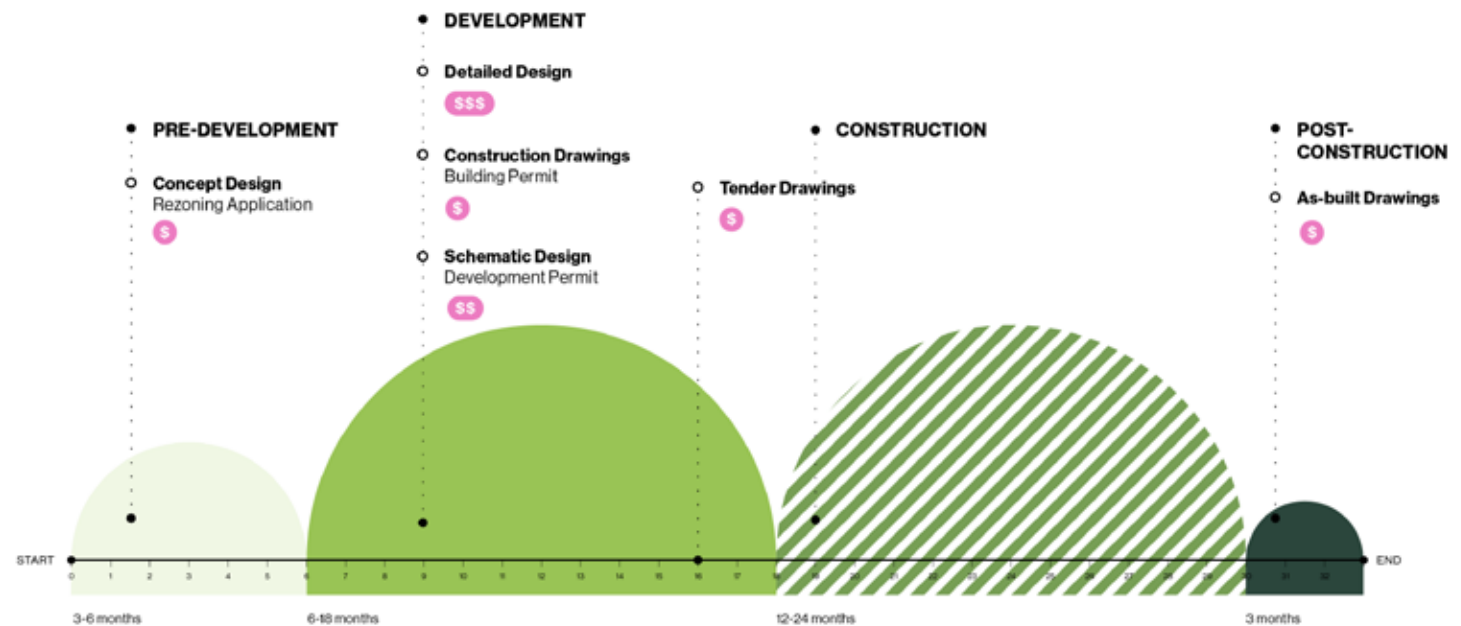
housing-related challenges within their jurisdiction – and sometimes extend beyond them – often at some political and community risk.

Our team at Wisier Projects works exclusively on public, non-profit, and Indigenous planning and development projects across Western Canada. We are both professional planners and planner-adjacent professionals (public administration, business, design, and engineering backgrounds). We assist in navigating the often overly complex world of development, from site planning and land acquisition and partnerships, to municipal approvals, funding, and financing negotiations, through to operations. This article

provides an overview of the development process from this perspective – and provides creative, practical ideas for accelerating the delivery of non-market housing projects based on our experience working with over 100 non-profit organizations.

The timeline below introduces the phases of development in a capital project and general time and effort associated with each. Cost and time and complexity vary by site, project and regulatory and governing body; however the phasing and approach below applies to any development project from concept through to completion.

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Typically for non-market projects, it takes five to eight years to bring non-market projects from concept to completion. Image: Wisier Projects

## 1. Pre-development

Securing land and adequate funding to begin the process of development are two of the biggest hurdles that non-profits face when beginning the process of delivering non-market housing.

- *Where is the land?* Thanks to the provincially mandated Official Community Plan update and alignment with accurate housing need projections, identifying who holds your community's big land assets and ensuring there is a clear pathway to use them for housing is low-hanging fruit.
  - Institutional: policies that encourage the use of institutional lands for mixed-use development as-of-right. This includes faith-based, health authorities, post-secondary, and other big institutions in your community that may not have a history of delivering or managing housing.
  - A flexible view of what constitutes amenities will help ensure land-holding non-profits continue to be positioned to provide services in your community, such as recreation space, childcare, social services, and worship space that doubles as low-cost community rental space.
- *Where are your policy barriers?*
  - Pre-zoning areas to support non-market housing: this could be pre-zoning specific sites that are owned publicly by non-profits or institutional organizations to allow housing as-of-right. The reduction in development timelines, pre-development costs, and uncertainty will help non-profit partners in your community more readily come to the table and envision alternate uses of their valuable assets.
- *The right voices, at the right table:* ensure you are targeting specific landowners/ community groups at the right tables, which increasingly means during OCP consultations. Those groups who are sitting on valuable, underdeveloped assets know where barriers are and where community needs are and can share that with municipal partners.
  - Non-profit partners understand community needs: many of our faith-based clients have long-standing partnerships with child-care providers, musical

groups, and community health providers; give them the flexibility through mixed-use pre-zoning to dictate the most appropriate uses for them to see success in the long-term.

- *Is your policy political?*
  - De-politicizing policy de-risks the delivery of non-market projects. Focus on OCP updates for political approvals and prioritize staff approvals for site-specific development projects. Set specific and achievable timeline targets for accelerated review of applications for non-profit-led projects.
- *Play match maker:* While your municipality may not be able to supply land or direct financial supports to a project, you may have a network of developers, non-profit organizations, and other landholders who may benefit from introductions to discuss opportunities.

## 2. Development Stage

Once a project has an initial concept and business plan, the development phase begins. This is when an organization seeks project funding, engages a full design team, secures required permits, and enters into legal agreements. This phase is challenging for community groups, as there is limited and competitive funding available to advance projects that aren't "shovel ready."

- *Providing seed funding* that organizations can leverage to secure additional funding from other government sources. Money attracts money.
- *Minimize current and future costs:* waiving development fees and landscape bonds. The limited funding available to non-profits can make these challenging costs to bear. If waiving is not possible, consider allowing the proponent to pay reduced fees or pay at a later date, once construction or take-out financing is in place. Municipalities can also 'vend in' their own services – infrastructure upgrades, extensions, civil on and off-site support – are all valuable contributions a local government can make to help a project pencil out.
- *Consider guaranteed, accelerated, and prioritized reviews* of development applications for non-market projects. Certainty saves money by limiting interest on interim high

interest loans (even 'affordable' housing projects pay interest on interim loans).

- *Support, don't complicate:* understand that non-profits often have less internal experience or capacity to manage development projects than private developers. They are busy doing what they do best – often operating housing or providing critical community and social services. Local government planners may need to provide more support and education along the way.

## 3. Construction

When all relevant permits and construction financing have been secured, community projects often have other approvals (such as provincial and federal) to acquire. Only once those are done can construction proceed. While projects have more certainty at this point, municipalities and planners can still support them by:

- *Issuing building permits in a timely manner* (and if variance permits or changes to permits come up, prioritizing their review and approval).
- *Supporting and finding creative solutions* for complex sites during construction. Neighbours often find barriers to construction in neighbourhoods, especially those who have not traditionally experienced redevelopment of sensitive sites (faith-based sites, for example). Where parking and access issues arise, work with the proponent to find creative solutions.

## 4. Operations

If all goes well, a non-market housing project is built and in your community for at least 50 years, if not more (for example, CMHC take out financing offers up to a 50-year term). Support doesn't stop upon occupancy, however.

- *Keeping it affordable.* Waiving or staging a reduction of property taxes. The operational impact of the savings realized by waiving property taxes can help non-profits establish successful operations, create sustainable long-term financials plans, and pass savings on to tenants wherever possible.
- *Covenants:* all too often, local governments layer on covenants that cost time and money. Meanwhile, higher levels of government (who are often funders of these projects), supersede these covenants. Expend legal energy where and if it makes most sense.



It is a tremendously exciting time to be in the planning profession, and despite the wicked problem that our housing crisis poses, we are seeing creative solutions happening everywhere. Municipalities are the perfect place to take the recent provincial legislation as an opportunity – and not a threat or challenge – to expedite and create housing. Updates to Official Community Plans, Zoning Bylaws, and Housing Needs Assessments create immense opportunity to release some of the historical bottlenecks we see in housing development, and to create a more streamlined and collaborative process that gives clarity to those trying to serve their community.

Kaeley Wiseman RPP, MCIP, PMP is the Principal of Wiser Projects and Founder of Wiser Development Non-Profit Society.

Eleni Gibson RPP, MCIP is a Project Manager with Wiser Projects.

Rebecca Mersereau, MPA, MSc is the Director of Policy with Wiser Projects.



**The Anglican Diocese of British Columbia is considering the redevelopment of their St Peter's Lakehill site in Saanich. Recent provincial legislation changes, as well as policy updates contemplated by the District of Saanich, may help accelerate its development.**

Image: office of mcfarlane biggar architects + designers

**Where is the land? The District of Sooke sought a community partner to help develop a District-owned lot to meet community needs, and the Sooke Region Communities Health Network (SRCHN) has proposed a seniors' centre and affordable seniors' housing.**

Rendering: FaulknerBrowns Architects



# Indigenizing Housing Research By, With, and For Community: A replicable data collection framework

Lisa Moffatt RPP, MCIP, Wendy Simon, and Jessica Hum RPP, MCIP

## Context

Indigenous people continue to experience the injustice of homelessness and displacement in their homelands. High rates of Indigenous homelessness<sup>1</sup> are attributed to discrimination, cultural genocide, and the impacts of colonization, including financial inequities and policies that actively sought to dismantle Indigenous families and communities. These distinct causes are compounded by the more common barriers of a lack of affordable and safe housing. We know Indigenous ceremonies and protocols heal, honour, and uplift, and we focussed on how to bring those into the research process.

The BC Homelessness Strategy did not give attention to the unique Indigenous experiences of homelessness, so the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) formed a multi-sectoral Steering Committee of key partners and Indigenous-led service providers to develop a BC Indigenous Homelessness Strategy. The Steering Committee hired Resilience Planning to lead the creation of a data collection framework and hire Indigenous, in-community co-facilitators with lived and living experiences of homelessness to provide recommendations to help alleviate and eradicate the experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity in BC Indigenous communities.

## Project scope

Our guiding principle was: “by, for, and with Indigenous communities.” The data collection framework was developed to hire, train, and support the co-researchers. This decolonized process to collect truths, stories, and knowledges was rooted in and trusted multiple Indigenous values and wise practices. The process centred Indigenous Peoples’ past (lived) and present-day (living) experiences of homelessness and housing insecurity in BC.

We were intentional about centering Indigenous values, ways of listening and learning, and the ways in which we reciprocated the exchange with research participants. At times the ‘data’ and information was triggering and potentially harmful, and we anticipated this

by providing songs, prayers, and opportunities for participants and co-researchers to support their journeys towards healing from trauma.

## What we did

We committed to knowing and doing better by communities that are harmed by planning practices and research conventions. We consciously questioned who holds power, how data is collected, and why. Co-created processes protected and enhanced the cultural values and traditions through respect and dignity for all. We listened with humility and agility, pivoting the research plan based on the knowledge and wisdom of co-researchers about what works best in their communities. We remained responsive to co-researchers via cell phone, email, and regular check-ins.

We were transparent about the power Indigenous Peoples had over project process and outcomes, adhering to the OCAP<sup>2</sup> principles for data, and getting endorsement from our co-researchers for the draft report. They presented the draft with us to the Steering Committee, sharing their experiences on the project, and conveying what communities were experiencing and saying.

We supported the co-researchers to: design promotional materials and distribute for events; independently seek out peers to conduct interviews; co-develop discussion circle agendas and co-facilitate them. We opened and closed sessions in a good way with culturally responsive blessings, songs, and prayers.

Participants in the process were honoured for their time and wisdom with a living wage payment, gifts, snacks, and small cash donations to help provide some of life’s comforts. Co-researchers were honoured for their time and wisdom with an hourly rate (\$40) and a guaranteed minimum income, gifts, and a (virtual) celebration at the end of the project where we had food delivered to each participant so we could share a meal together.

## What we learned

**Put immediate needs first.** The diverse Indigenous participants had needs emerge for

safety and immediate housing for which we were unable to sufficiently address or help to alleviate, though we were able to put people in touch with resources and participants trusted co-researchers to help them. We shared resources for wellness and after care supports to the co-researchers and participants.

**Honouring a good exchange.** We brought nourishment and payment to immediately honour each participant’s time.

**Be prepared to change.** Honouring our guiding principle required us to be nimble to changing circumstances in communities. This included having to adapt to changing COVID-19 health orders and create multiple options for virtual, in-person, and hybrid engagements, in addition to in-person interviews.

**Not replicating the domination and dehumanization.** Indigenous Peoples regularly experience racism resulting in dehumanization that conventional engagement can exacerbate by either leaving people out of the conversation, or asking in ways that cause harm. Indigenous Peoples living today’s experiences of colonization were clear about what actions are needed to help address experiences of homelessness, told us to stop studying the issue and get to real solutions. Meanwhile, the BC government insists on current data to influence and inform government policy, hence this project that centred Indigenous People with lived and living experience.

**Indigenized community-based engagement supports healing.** Interviews and discussion circles are powerful ways to offer a safer space and acknowledge participants’ truths.<sup>3</sup> One co-researcher shared that “People wanted to be heard and really wanted someone to listen and they wanted their voice [in decisions].” Another participant shared: “I could listen to your [co-researcher’s] voice all day”<sup>4</sup> and emphasized the positive impacts of having someone to share their story with.

## Impact

Recommendations informed an update to the BC homelessness strategy and was also endorsed by the BC First Nations Housing and







## Project outcomes shared through art

Justene Dio-Glowa (Métis) was commissioned to interpret the findings through art.

“You Need a Lot of Luck in this Business”

**Artist statement:** *This piece was inspired by my work as a community co-researcher and a person with lived experience of homelessness. The title is sardonic – the business is survival. I intended to capture the impacts of colonialism and feelings of futility in a world actively in opposition to Indigenous ways of knowing and being. The beadwork includes a flower to represent each direction. They are scattered about – all sense of wellness as it pertains to the emotional, physical, spiritual and mental, lost as days and nights blend – Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon appearing at once.*

*The collage is focussed on the loss of culture and identity, and the loss of lives due to residential schools and the ongoing crisis of MMIWG2S. We see there are folks that walk by tents and ignore the humanity of those facing dark times. We also see land juxtaposed against the city, and how modernity is in direct opposition to sustainable living. The birch tree reminds me that Creator is always watching, with the knots, often looking like eyes, as the bark is harvested.*

*The tents are hand sewn into the work, as is the beadwork, and the loosely tufted flowers. The tufting is caribou fur. I wanted to include these elements as fibre arts are an integral part of Indigenous culture.*

The poem reads:

Sidewalk home  
Colonial Monster killing people  
But they're  
Millionaire undertakers  
Starvation  
Danger! Take your pick  
Mental poisoning!  
A government who don't care  
Lost Power  
Need a miracle or  
One thousand golden opportunities  
How to cure the future  
Imagine their joy — colonial victims free!  
Sun Earth Animals Water  
Home.

Infrastructure Council. (<https://www.fnhic.ca/news/bc-indigenous-homelessness-strategy>)

Award: PIBC honourable mention award for the Research + New Directions in Planning (2023)

Visit the project website: <https://www.ahma-bc.org/bcindigenouhomelessness>

Project completed by Resilience Planning project team members: Lisa Moffatt, Wendy Simon, Jessica Hum, Alix Krahn – AND – Co-researchers: Wayne David, Justene Dion-Glowa, Marla Feniuk, Gretchen Lewandowski, John MacLellan, Raven Ann Potscha, and Bernice Thompson

Lisa Moffatt RPP, MCIP is a white, cis woman of Irish and English descent, raised on the territories of the (now extinct) Beothuk people and the Anishinaabeg peoples, and honoured to currently live on the territories of the ʔamən First Nation.

Wendy Simon is Haida and Mohawk. She is closely connected to her family and ancestral territories. She currently lives, learns, and heals on the traditional and unceded territories of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxú7mesh and səliłwətaʔ.

Jessica Hum RPP, MCIP (譚德娟) is a third generation Chinese/Ojibway visitor (uninvited guest) on the unceded territories of the W̱SÁNEĆ and Ləkʷəŋən-speaking Peoples (Victoria, BC).

Alix Krahn is a trans, queer settler with ancestry from Germany, England, Ireland, and the Netherlands who was born and grew up as a settler in amiskwaciwāskahikan in Treaty 6, and is now fortunate to live on the territories of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxú7mesh and səliłwətaʔ.


<sup>1</sup> For this project, we used Jesse Thistle's definition of Indigenous homelessness, you can learn more about that definition here: <https://www.homelessshub.ca/IndigenousHomelessness>

<sup>2</sup> Standing for ownership, control, access and possession, the First Nations principles of OCAP® are a set of standards that establish important ground rules for how First Nations data can be collected, protected, used, or shared. We made a commitment to gather and share information in a way that brings benefit to the community, while actively seeking to minimize possible harm. See the First Nations Information Governance Centre: <https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/>

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, Shawn. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Co-researcher debriefing, personal communication, July 25, 2022.





# Secondary Suite Incentive Program to Create More Affordable Housing Options Across BC

BC Housing

Photo by Tierra Mallorca on unsplash

More affordable housing options could be on the way for people in BC through the Secondary Suite Incentive Program (SSIP). The three-year pilot program is designed to help homeowners create affordable housing in their communities by supporting them to turn underutilized space on their property into a new secondary suite. The program does this by providing a forgivable loan up to \$40,000.

SSIP is being delivered through BC Housing and is open for applications as of April 2024. Applications will be approved on a first come, first served basis until annual funding is used up.

It is expected that the program will support the delivery of as many as 3,000 affordable rental units over the three years. The program will provide homeowners with forgivable loans of up to \$40,000 to create a new secondary suite or an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on their primary property. To qualify for the loan, units must be rented at below market rates for at least five years.

Homeowners who qualify will receive up to 50% of the cost of renovations, up to the maximum amount of \$40,000. The money is provided by a rebate in the form of a forgivable loan — a loan that does not need to be repaid if the homeowner follows the terms of the program. Funds would be provided after construction is completed, and the new secondary suite is issued an occupancy permit. Homeowners who have recently built or are considering building a secondary suite may also be eligible for the incentive.

For the purposes of the program, a secondary suite must be:

- A newly constructed, self-contained legal unit with a sleeping area, kitchen, and full bathroom.
- Located on the same property as the homeowner's primary residence.
- Attached to the primary residence, or built as a laneway home or garden suite.

The two units (the primary residence and

the secondary suite) and any common spaces cannot be legally separated or converted into a strata, such as a condo or townhome.

In February 2024, Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon touted the program's benefits, saying, "We're using innovative solutions to make it easier for homeowners and communities to build homes faster, so people can live and work in the communities they love."

The SSIP is part of the *Homes for People* action plan and the \$19-billion housing investment by the BC government. Since 2017, the Province has nearly 78,000 homes delivered or underway.

Last year, the Government of BC announced that it would be speeding up the permitting process through the launch of a one-stop shop, the Single Housing Application Service. This service eliminates the need for homebuilders to go through multiple permitting applications across different ministries. The government expects that permit timelines will be reduced by two months, reducing permitting backlogs.

Government also introduced legislation last year to allow secondary suites and ADUs across BC, eliminating a potential barrier for those looking to take advantage of the SSIP.

For more information about the program, including an eligibility tool to determine whether residents qualify, please visit [bchousing.org/secondary-suite](https://bchousing.org/secondary-suite) or call 604-439-4727 (option 3).

## What you need to know: Secondary Suite Incentive Program

### Which communities are eligible?

The SSIP applies to all 161 incorporated BC municipalities and 15 regional districts:

- Alberni–Clayoquot
- Capital
- Central Kootenay
- Central Okanagan
- Cowichan Valley
- East Kootenay
- Fraser Valley
- Fraser–Fort George
- Kootenay Boundary
- Nanaimo
- North Okanagan
- Squamish–Lillooet
- Sunshine Coast
- Thompson-Nicola
- Peace River

### Who is eligible?

The following summarizes homeowner and property eligibility for this rebate as well as eligibility for secondary suites:

#### Homeowners

- Registered owner(s) of the property
- Canadian citizens or permanent residents
- Live in the property as their primary home
- Combined gross annual income of homeowners on title of less than \$209,420 (in the previous tax year)

#### Properties

- Located within the approved list of municipalities or regional districts in British Columbia
- Have a BC Assessment value below the homeowner grant threshold (\$2.15 million in 2024)

#### Secondary Suite

- New legal, self-contained unit with a kitchen and full bathroom (improvements to existing rental units are not eligible)
- Laneway homes/garden suites are eligible
- Received municipal or regional district building permits on or after April 1, 2023

BC residents can determine their eligibility and apply for permits from their municipality or regional district. The steps for applying are:

1. Residents can visit the BC Housing website and use the online eligibility tool.
2. Plan the project and prepare to apply:
  - Check if municipal zoning allows for a secondary suite
  - Arrange contractors and financing
  - Apply for a building permit as required (when applications open, applications where the building permit was issued on or after April 1, 2023, will be considered. If a building permit was issued before April 1, 2023, applications will not be eligible.)
3. Gather documents and apply online:
4. Submit application
  - Submit eligibility documents (proof of residence and income)
  - Include municipal building permit
5. Receive approval and construct the secondary suite:
  - After approval, complete construction of the secondary suite
6. Once construction is complete:
  - Submit the occupancy permit issued by the municipality or regional district
  - Provide proof of construction costs to receive the loan
7. Rent out suite and maintain program requirements:
  - Rent out the suite at an affordable market rent
  - When program requirements are met, the loan will be forgiven at 20% per year over 5 years.



**Secondary Suite Incentive Program**

Get up to \$40,000 toward building a new affordable rental suite in your home.

The Secondary Suite Incentive Program will help homeowners create new affordable rental housing in their communities. The program will provide a rebate in the form of a forgivable loan—a loan that does not need to be repaid if the homeowner follows the terms of the program. The rebate will provide up to \$40,000 for homeowners to convert part of their property into a new secondary suite.

Applications will open on April 17, 2024 and will be available for at least 3,000 homeowners over three years. The program is part of the Government of B.C.'s plans to create more affordable housing in the province.

### References

2024/2025 Rent Affordability Limits: <https://www.bchousing.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/BC-RAHA-Rent-Affordability-Limit.pdf>

Single Housing Application Service, Permit Connect BC: <https://permitconnectbc.gov.bc.ca/>

BC Housing SSIP: [bchousing.org/secondary-suite](https://bchousing.org/secondary-suite)





# Navigating the Shift from Gatekeeper to Facilitator in Gentle Density Housing

Carl Isaak RPP, MCIP

## First steps

Housing legislation in British Columbia resembles the proverbial bus stop of policy making — you wait indefinitely for meaningful change and, suddenly, a fleet of groundbreaking Bills arrive all at once! Since the fall, the provincial government has introduced a suite of much-needed housing reforms, but it is important to keep in mind that measures such as requiring more as-of-right zoning potential are not enough in and of themselves to actually get new housing built.

Bill 44 lays a critical groundwork which must be well-implemented if it is to stimulate new construction and entice current homeowners and small-scale builders to take on projects of this type. The Coles Notes here are: make the regulations flexible enough to account for a variety of property conditions and project needs; the more rigid and prescriptive they are, the less likely that they'll get built.

At present, in most housing markets across BC, multiplex builds remain a minuscule, niche industry, with a limited number of builders proficient in delivering products at the gentle density scale.

Further, our lending sector isn't yet well set up to be providing straightforward

construction financing on these types of projects; they're generally approached as one-off deals, which can take substantial time and diligence to set up and can present a major risk to a project, deterring many homeowners and small builders from proceeding.

Zoning and other reforms alone, in communities where these other industry conditions are not yet in place, will not lead to the sudden influx of new housing that these communities urgently need.

The next steps therein lie in our ability to collaborate and draw on various actors' strengths to address the housing challenge strategically and make a lasting impact. As Kelowna's Chief Planner, Nola Kilmartin, recently outlined: "You don't need to see the whole staircase to take the first step." The time for action is now.

## Redefining our role as planners

At our Gentle Density Leaders Summit, held in Vancouver in January, it was posed that BC's planning professionals, and specifically those of us who are focused on housing, are at a critical juncture in reflecting on our role in housing production.

Though few, if any, of us set out from planning school intending to administer layers of onerous requirements that add cost and complexity to housing development, many of us have indeed inherited the role of "gatekeeper" — be it through the policies, procedures, and/or cultures of the organizations we work within.

But at this juncture, when our profession is challenged to reflect on how our local policies and regulations have played out and whether they've overly restricted new housing development and contributed to our housing crisis, we're also provided with the opportunity to reimagine the potential of our roles as community and housing planners.

Can we shift the script from "gatekeeper" to "facilitator," actively bringing together various actors to accelerate the development of the right kinds of housing that will meet our communities' changing needs?



Photo by Graham Scott on Unsplash

## Collaboration is key to facilitating gentle density housing

To propel the gentle density housing initiative beyond its infancy and into a realm of substantial success, we must extend our focus beyond the conventional realms of solely local planners and government actors. While these stakeholders play pivotal roles, delivering solutions to challenges and getting the housing built requires the integration of a diverse array of contributors, notably from key industry players alongside non-profit actors.

Industry brings much-needed subject matter expertise to the table and is a vital component in the gentle density equation. With a greater focus on the business side of housing development, industry players possess insights into market dynamics, construction techniques, and economic viability. Their involvement is crucial for aligning housing goals with pragmatic and feasible solutions.

Further to this, non-profits and professional organizations, such as Small Housing and PIBC respectively, can be highly collaborative and generative forces in the gentle density arena. Functioning as idea incubators and knowledge spreaders, they can foster innovation and serve as strong advocates for inclusive and sustainable housing practices. Their commitment to community well-being and social impact positions them as essential partners in navigating the nuanced landscape of housing reform.

If we were to envision these key actors in a Venn diagram, the convergence of interests becomes the nexus of progress for gentle density housing, as well as where we can reimagine our roles as planners. California presents a useful case study as to how this collaboration may look closer to home.

### Learning from trailblazers

It has been well-established for several years now that California stands out as a trailblazer in setting the standards that promote the growth of gentle density housing, and with good reason. There's a lot we can glean from their efforts, particularly in this field of cross-sector collaboration and how it can lead to innovative, pragmatic housing solutions that get the kinds of houses that people want built.

This collaboration has led to many effective drivers of housing supply, including the delivery of pre-approved/reviewed design programs.

For example, the Napa Sonoma ADU Center is a partnership venture between several local and county governments and non-profit actors, with support from industry, to promote the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The group routinely engages City and



County staff, builders, architects, and homeowners interested in building ADUs, establishing itself as a hub for valuable insights. At the heart of this is the creation of a catalogue of pre-approved designs, to which over 168 architects have contributed, helping to streamline the planning process. Since its founding in 2020, the Center has facilitated 540 of these consultations, with an impressive 73% of participants moving forward with ADU projects.

Examples such as these highlight the division of labour that can be effectively deployed to advance gentle density homes; government bodies can provide regulatory support, non-profits contribute community insights and advocacy, and industry professionals bring innovation and technical expertise. Together, these stakeholders form an influential alliance, navigating the complexities of urban development with a shared vision of creating gentle density homes that enhance livability, promote inclusivity, and contribute to the overall well-being of communities.

### Lessons for BC

From our colleagues in California, a number of lessons emerge for BC practitioners.

Engaging industry early in the process is highlighted as a crucial ingredient for successful housing outcomes. This early involvement helps navigate potential regulatory constraints and fosters an environment conducive to construction uptake.

Particularly in regions like British Columbia, where local industry actors may need introduction and socialization to the market opportunity, collaboration becomes imperative for capacity building and market integration.

By reducing risk and uncertainty, cross-sector collaboration becomes a key enabler, encouraging small-scale builders to undertake gentle density projects. Notably, small scale developers include citizen developers, who represent a significant, untapped potential for

supporting attainable housing growth as they can utilize their own resources without government subsidies. Here, simplifying regulations and processes is essential to harnessing their full potential, underscoring the pivotal role of collaboration in shaping a more accessible and inclusive housing landscape.

### Final thoughts

Through provincial reforms, we have effectively broadened the range of actors and resources available to address the generational housing crisis we are facing.

The journey toward realizing the full potential of gentle density housing first necessitates a shift beyond traditional confines. While local planners and government actors remain integral, if we are to unlock genuine progress, we must champion more collaborative approaches across a diverse range of actors.

The synergy between influential industry players, impassioned non-profit and professional organizations, as well as more traditional planning stakeholders, holds the key to propelling the initiative from its infancy into a realm of lasting and substantial success. It is through this collective commitment that we can usher in a new era of sustainable and inclusive urban development.

### References:

<https://smallhousing.ca/gentle-density-leaders-summit-2024/>

<https://storeys.com/vancouver-surrey-kelowna-provincial-housing-legislation/>

<https://napasonomaadu.org/>

Carl Isaak RPP, MCIP is Director of Planning with Small Housing BC. Carl rallies industry and municipal partners to accelerate the delivery of gentle density homes that fit well in neighbourhoods, and advocates for government policies that encourage 'right-sizing' new housing.



# New Housing Legislation in BC: How Can Planners Ensure That Denser Neighbourhoods Support Wellbeing?

Happy Cities & Hey Neighbour Collective

The Province of BC has announced wide-ranging housing policy changes over the past six months, including requirements for greater density in all cities, particularly near transit. Sometimes, residents wonder whether more density will be bad for health and wellbeing. Our research shows the opposite: people can live healthy, happy lives in all types of housing. What matters is how we design it.

Denser housing, particularly near transit, creates a strong foundation for healthy, resilient, inclusive communities. But upzoning is just the start. Policy needs to equally create places where people of diverse ages, incomes, experiences, and abilities can access a range of attainable housing options, connect with neighbours, and meet their daily needs close to home.

Urban design influences our wellbeing to a surprising degree. For example, access to amenities in multi-unit buildings and destinations in the neighbourhood (where we can bump into people) are linked with greater trust and social ties. Happy Cities and Hey Neighbour Collective have been studying the connections between people's housing, neighbourhoods, and wellbeing in communities across BC. In this article, we recommend three evidence-based policy changes to ensure that denser neighbourhoods and housing contribute to happier, healthier, more inclusive communities.

## 1. Design inclusive, walkable neighbourhoods to unlock the benefits of density

Denser neighbourhoods make it possible to deliver the services and amenities that people love, by concentrating more residents and tax revenue in an area. In Happy Cities' research in Metro Vancouver, some of the top reasons why people choose to live in their neighbourhoods are proximity to transit, shops and restaurants, and outdoor spaces.

Not only are these amenities desirable, they also improve health and happiness. When people live within a short walk or roll of jobs, shops, services, parks, and transit, they can spend less time trying to get places and more time with friends and family. They are more likely to be physically active, happy, and socially connected.

The challenge is that it is very difficult to transform car-oriented, low-density or suburban areas into people-oriented places. Our planning and engineering systems prioritize infrastructure for cars — parking requirements, wide roads, fast speed limits — over places for people.

To overcome this challenge, cities can start by implementing clear design standards that prioritize pedestrians in the areas within 400 metres of rapid transit stops. This means slower streets, shorter crosswalks, and spaces for diverse retail and services. Streets should be lined consistently with buildings that have multiple ground entrances, small shops, patios, seating, and public spaces — rather than with surface parking lots. All these elements work together to create a community heart, ensuring that people who live in multi-unit housing can reap the social benefits of living in a dense neighbourhood.

**Healthy,  
unique  
growth:**

**Essential  
ingredients:**



To unlock the benefits of density, cities first need to implement the essential ingredients for vibrant, healthy communities.

Illustration: Happy Cities



## 2. Prioritize diverse affordable housing options

Affordability is another key factor that influences where people live. Amid our growing housing crisis, only households with high incomes enjoy a range of choices. To ensure that upzoning supports wellbeing *and* equity, we must offer housing options for people of all income levels in walkable, healthy communities. Municipalities can implement policies both to protect existing rental stock — which is intrinsically more affordable than new builds — and to prioritize affordability and diverse forms of tenure models in new development.

Security of tenure and affordability are closely linked to wellbeing. People who have lived for longer in the same home are more likely to know their neighbours — and to do activities together with them. However, people’s ability to stay in their unit long-term is influenced by factors like rent and mortgage costs, housing quality and security, and changing household needs. Our research finds consistently that homeowners without mortgages tend to report greater social wellbeing than renters and those with mortgages, likely reflecting differences in overall income, affordability, housing security, and length of tenure.

The Rental Protection Fund is one initiative in BC that provides grants for nonprofits to purchase older rental buildings from the

market and preserve them as non-market supply. Cities can also strengthen renter protection policies — for example, requiring compensation for residents, interim housing options, and new units at equivalent rents when rental buildings are redeveloped.

Additionally, cities can explore ways to encourage development of diverse forms of affordable, non-market housing options in upzoned areas. Policy tools can include streamlined approvals processes, tax exemptions and fee waivers, or density bonuses for deeply affordable projects.

## 3. Make it easier to design socially connected housing

Neighbours that know and trust one another can provide mutual support — lending items, watering plants, dropping off groceries, or even watching a pet or child. These social connections can be a lifeline during times of crisis: having someone to check in on an elderly neighbour during extreme heat can save a life. Friends and acquaintances are also good for basic health. People with strong social connections live 15 years longer on average than those who are socially isolated. Conversely, social isolation is as bad for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

In multi-unit housing, shared spaces and amenities play an important role in connecting



## Happy Cities

### Design

Buildings and community spaces can be designed to encourage residents to bump into each other and linger in common areas.

### Design & programming

Social programming can help residents make the jump from casual encounters to meaningful relationships. The design of physical spaces facilitates successful programming.







**Rendering of the Aster, a new 12-storey, non-market housing development in Mount Pleasant, Vancouver with affordable, secured rental homes for independent seniors, families, and people with disabilities. The building includes universal design and shared amenities, such as rooftop and ground-level urban agriculture.**

Renderings: Brightside Community Homes Foundation

Illustration left: Happy Cities







**Social walkways with seating nook at Driftwood Village Cohousing, North Vancouver, co-located with active stairways and an elevator.**

Photo: Emma Avery, Happy Cities

neighbours. Presently, many municipalities offer incentives for developers to build shared amenities, which are often defined as enclosed spaces with a specific function, such as a gym or lounge. Amenity rooms are important, but most residents do not use them every day. People interact far more often in the practical shared spaces that we use and move through on a daily or weekly basis: hallways, elevators, lobbies, and even shared laundry or parking.

To truly maximize social potential, circulation spaces need to feel comfortable and convenient: For example, wider corridors or outdoor walkways with small seating nooks encourage neighbours to linger and chat. Shared laundry that is placed next to a lobby or play space increases opportunities for residents to interact. But under most municipal policies, extra space devoted to these social features — which don't fall under a typical 'amenity' definition — takes away from space for private units, increasing the costs per unit for future residents.

Narrow definitions of amenity space limit the ability of design teams to create truly social buildings where opportunities for connection are woven into daily routines, rather than confined to a specific 'social' space, like a rooftop on the top floor of a building.

To enable more neighbourly connections in multi-unit housing, cities can first expand the definition of social spaces beyond traditional amenities, and then offer clear guidelines and incentives for developers. For example, the City

of North Vancouver's Active Design Guidelines enable developers to build more overall floor space if they include features that promote physical activity and social connection, such as wide outdoor walkways, courtyards, and inviting stairs. These incentives make it easier to add social spaces without adding enormously to the overall cost of a building or jeopardizing a project's financial viability. Shifting the focus to designing for wellbeing outcomes — for example, social connection — also creates flexibility for designers to propose creative solutions that respond to the site context and building demographics.

### The key takeaway

Social connections are the building blocks for healthier, happier, more resilient communities. The actions presented in this article — walkable communities, diverse and affordable housing choices, and social design features — build these connections into our daily lives, ensuring that everyone has opportunities to grow, age, and thrive in the place they call home.

### Further reading

- Building social connections: Case studies to inspire socially connected multi-unit housing <https://www.heyneighbourcollective.ca/2023/12/building-social-connections-inspire-socially-connected-multi-unit-housing/>
- Learning from community housing

movements: Six principles for building happier homes <https://happycities.com/blog/learning-from-community-housing-movements-six-principles-for-happy-homes>

- Developing Truly Complete Communities, Discussion Paper <https://www.heyneighbourcollective.ca/2021/03/developing-truly-complete-communities-discussion-paper/>
- How social connectedness between neighbours supports health and well-being <https://www.heyneighbourcollective.ca/2022/06/how-social-connectedness-between-neighbours-supports-health-wellbeing/>
- Aging in the right place: Designing housing for wellbeing and older adults <https://happycities.com/projects/aging-in-the-right-place-designing-housing-for-wellbeing-and-older-adults>

Happy Cities is a BC-based urban planning, design, and research firm. We work with municipalities, developers, and community organizations to create happier, healthier, more inclusive communities.

Hey Neighbour Collective is a systems change project housed at the SFU Morris J Wosk Centre for Dialogue that brings together organizations from across housing, urban planning, and public health to build community, social connections, and resilience in multi-unit housing.

# Planning For a Social, Just, and Ecologically Sustainable World.

Andréanne Doyon RPP, MCIP; Martha Killian; Carely Termeer; Owen Wilson

In the School of Resource and Environmental Management's (REM), we bring together natural and social sciences, and an understanding of complexity and systems thinking, to provide students with knowledge and skills to identify and understand environmental challenges and to contribute to solutions. Within REM's Planning Program, we situate this interdisciplinary approach within the planning discipline and profession. We weave together the essential components of planning theory, methods, practice, and ethics with the environmental, social, economic, and human settlement dimensions of planning.

Within our environmental planning program, one key focus area for our students is ecology. In particular, all of the Masters students must take 'Population and Community Ecology'. The goal is for students to be able to communicate with biologists, understand

the findings of scientific studies, and incorporate ecological considerations into planning processes. Our students learn about the important role of natural assets and green infrastructure in human communities, both for human well-being and as habitats for more-than-human species.

Some of our Masters students are doing a deeper dive in this area by completing research on Nature-based Solutions (NbS). One student, Carley Termeer, has assembled a toolkit of regulatory mechanisms that can facilitate the uptake of NbS in municipalities, and she worked with the City of Port Moody to evaluate the usefulness of the toolkit. Another student, Lauren Smith, is developing a green space quality assessment framework, and she is testing its utility by applying it in the City of Surrey. In addition, Sean Markey and Andréanne Doyon have been awarded a

SSHRC research grant to explore the potential for NbS in rural and Indigenous communities. This research will involve current and future students as well as community partners across the province.

Another key focus area of the REM program is planning for climate change. From wildfires, to flooding, to extreme heat, the impacts of climate change are evident across BC and will only continue to increase in the coming decades. Recognizing the need to plan for and adapt communities and landscapes to these impacts, REM is one of a few planning programs in Canada that requires students to take a course on climate change and environmental management. The course, taught by a climate scientist, helps students gain an understanding of scientific processes and their intersections within ecological, political, economic, and cultural contexts.



SFU Planning Students





SFU Planning Students

Several students have chosen to pursue climate-focused research, including Martha Kilian and Chelsea Mathieson, who are working with the Pembina Institute to develop an evaluation framework for climate policies and apply it to federal and provincial contexts. Wesley Chenne's research explores how Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley local governments plan for extreme heat. He found that planning regimes differ in focus, but regional coordination and alignment with senior governments are opportunities for improvement. Post graduation, some students have specialized in climate mitigation and adaptation planning, including Laura Beattie who is currently working on the City of Coquitlam's Climate Action Plan, and Emma Squires who is working with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness.

At REM, the commitment to social and ecological justice means studying and working on issues of Indigenous resource management and governance with Indigenous partners. This

is certainly part of the popular 'Indigenous Governance and Resource Relationships' course, where students explore Indigenous perspectives on resource issues and inter-governmental relations in Canada. It is also a prominent theme throughout REM courses, from lectures and seminar discussions, to term projects that task students with developing practical research reports in partnership with Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and ʔamən (Tla'amin) Nations. REM is also excited to be launching a new course in September, titled 'Indigenous Planning and Stewardship'.

Students are also writing major research projects on these issues. Ian Smith is exploring Indigenous perspectives on zero-emission marine vessels in Haida Gwaii. Amy Metzger is conducting a policy and discourse analysis of forestry in BC, with a closer look to the events at Ada'itsx (Fairy Creek) as a catalyst for policy shift. Owen Wilson is part of the Xwe'étay/Lasqueti Archaeology

Project, an interdisciplinary project working with Indigenous and settler communities to build a better model for heritage protection, specifically studying landowner knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous heritage on private property. REM students are eager to challenge settler-colonial systems and support Indigenous rights across resource and environmental management fields.

Andréanne Doyon RPP, MCIP is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Planning Program at Simon Fraser University's School of Resource and Environmental Management

Martha Killian is a student in the Master of Resource Management (Planning) program at Simon Fraser University.

Carely Termeer is a student in the Master of Resource Management (Planning) program at Simon Fraser University.

Owen Wilson is a student in the Master of Resource Management (Planning) program at Simon Fraser University.



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For more information contact the program coordinator at [resscipc@uvic.ca](mailto:resscipc@uvic.ca) or visit [continuingstudies.uvic.ca/TCA](http://continuingstudies.uvic.ca/TCA)



### Looking for a faster route?

We also have the **Climate Action Planning** micro-certificate which takes the three core courses and packages them into a unique blend of policy, social justice and science, empowering you to implement effective collaborative action across communities within as little as four months.



## PIBC BOARD NOTES

On **December 1st, 2023**, the PIBC Board of Directors met in Nanaimo, BC.

It was acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on the traditional territories of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

### DELEGATION

Dr. Pam Shaw from the Vancouver Island University Master of Community Planning program welcomed the Board to VIU and provided an overview of the program's history, activities and recent developments. It was highlighted that the program has a teaching/student focus, strong professional employment success of graduates, international connections, a mentorship program and internal demands for a potential second cohort for the program. The program will be celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2025.

There was discussion regarding the geographical diversity of students, student progression following graduation, research linkages, internships, potential program expansion and the relationship between the program/academia and the profession.

### MEETING MINUTES

The Board approved the minutes of the October 27th, 2023, meeting, as presented. The Board also received the summary meeting notes from its roundtable discussion on the Peer Learning Network held on November 10th, 2023.

### PRESIDENT

Emilie K. Adin RPP, MCIP provided an update on various activities, including work on volunteer recognition, work on the Peer Learning Network (PLN), finalizing the new streamlined strategic plan, an upcoming Governance & Nominating Committee meeting, work on various national matters, and activities with the Member Engagement Committee.

### BOARD & GOVERNANCE

The Board discussed outcomes from the strategic planning session held in September and approved the updated strategic plan and priorities, including discussing an updated vision and mission statement and the

inclusion of additional values supporting the new plan and priorities.

The Board also discussed and approved a proposal from QuickScribe Services Ltd. to provide a trial option for members to access online resources, information, and analysis regarding BC legislation and regulation.

### ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Executive Director Dave Crossley reported on the ongoing and key projects, initiatives, and activities at the PIBC office, including the ongoing hiring process for new administrative and policy support roles.

The Board discussed sponsorship policies and practices for local chapters and Institute events. There was agreement to refer potential policy updates in this area to the Governance & Nominating Committee.

The Board reviewed the 2023 unaudited financial statements to October 31, 2023, for information. Additionally, a copy of the final 2024 operating budget was circulated for information as previously approved.

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS:

The Board received an update summarizing the work at national level progressing with reorganizing and restructuring the national Professional Standards Committee

(Standards Committee, or SC) as a committee of the Professional Standards Board (PSB), for information.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS & BUSINESS

**Policy & Public Affairs Committee:** The Board reviewed and discussed an update and recommendations from the Housing Task Force of the committee regarding implementation of the Peer Learning Network (PLN). The Board discussed the proposed options, and approved moving ahead with the key recommendations, including engagement of a consultant, exploring models and additional capacity for engagement with the Province on legislative development, and sending an update letter to the BC Minister of Housing.

The Board also reviewed and discussed an update from the Committee regarding the Professional Governance Act (PGA), including a draft analysis from legal counsel. The Board agreed to proceed with recommended next steps, including member outreach and engagement, appropriate outreach with government officials, and continued legal analysis and advice.

**Professional Standards & Certification:** The Board approved the admission of a number of new members, and a number of membership transfers and other changes.



The Board received and discussed recommendations from the Climate Action Sub-Committee regarding the Institute's ongoing relationship with the Community Energy Association (CEA) and agreed to table the matter to a future meeting, subject to discussions with the CEA.

Member Engagement Committee: The Board received an update from the Committee regarding its recent meetings and ongoing work.

The Board approved the designation of Dear Bhokanandh RPP, MCIP as co-chair of the Institute's Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization and Inclusion (JEDDI) task force.

### INSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS & BUSINESS

The Student member representative from VIU, UBC, and SFU each provided a brief update to the Board on activities at their respective planning programs. It was also noted that work was underway at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) to have a new planning program accredited.

### NEXT MEETING(S)

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on January 26, 2024, in Victoria.

On **January 26, 2024**, the PIBC Board of Directors met in Victoria, BC.

It was acknowledged that the meeting was taking place on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen speaking peoples of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations First Nations.

### MEETING MINUTES

The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on December 1st, 2023.

### PRESIDENT

Emilie K. Adin RPP, MCIP provided an update on various activities, and there was discussion of ongoing strategic priorities and activities.

### BOARD & GOVERNANCE

The Board discussed and approved the revised Board meeting schedule for the

2023-2025, confirming the date for the June 2024 meeting in Whitehorse as Friday June 28, 2024.

### ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

Executive Director Dave Crossley reported on the ongoing and key projects, initiatives, and activities at the PIBC office.

The Board discussed options relating to the current trial opportunity with QuickScribe, and options for providing access to *BC Planning Law & Practice* through PIBC as part of the Peer Learning Network (PLN) initiative. The Board approved allocating funding to support providing access to the publication and directed the Housing Task Force to develop criteria to implement the initiative.

The Board reviewed the 2023 unaudited financial statements to November 30, 2023, for information.

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

It was reported that meetings had been held recently in Toronto to discuss moving forward with the transition of the existing national Professional Standards Committee (SC) to the new model under the Professional Standards Board (PSB). A report summarizing the outcomes of this meeting and next steps would be forthcoming.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS & BUSINESS

Professional Standards & Certification: The Board approved the admission of a number of new members, and also approved or acknowledged a number of membership transfers and other membership changes including a number of membership revocations due to expired membership time limits. The Board also approved the extension of membership time limit for Candidate members.

There was further discussion around the revocation of membership for Candidate members who had exceeded their prescribed time limits to remain as Candidate members, and the follow up work undertaken with such members. It was noted that, going forward, it would be beneficial to look at applying a JEDDI lens to this process.

Policy & Public Affairs Committee: The Board discussed the recent meeting held

with the Province of BC, Ministry of Housing, regarding the development and implementation of the PLN and the associated actions. It was noted that the Housing Task Force will be developing an updated initial action plan for implementation of the PLN.

The Board discussed and approved the retention of consulting services as required to support the work of the JEDDI task force. The Board also approved the appointment of Mary Storzer to the Housing Task Force of the Policy & Public Affairs Committee.

Member Engagement Committee: The Board received and discussed the summary meeting notes from the committee. It was noted that D. Bhokanandh had stepped down as a co-chair but was continuing as a member of the committee.

### LOCAL CHAPTERS

Central North: The Chapter's 2023 annual report was reviewed. The Board approved receipt of the report and the release of the Chapter's 2024 annual seed funding.

Okanagan-Interior: The Chapter's 2023 annual report was reviewed. The Board approved receipt of the report and the release of the Chapter's 2024 annual seed funding.

Vancouver Island-North: The Chapter's 2023 annual report was reviewed. The Board approved receipt of the report and the release of the Chapter's 2024 annual seed funding.

Vancouver Island-South: The Chapter's 2023 annual report was reviewed. The Board approved receipt of the report and the release of the Chapter's 2024 annual seed funding.

### INSTITUTE REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS & BUSINESS

A brief update on the activities of the university planning programs at SFU and UBC was provided by the Student member representatives of each program.

### NEXT MEETING(S)

It was noted that the next regular meeting would take place on March 1, 2024, in Prince George, and that a brief online meeting would likely be required to review the draft 2023 Audited Financial Statements in April.



**SAVE THE DATES!**

## UPCOMING WEBINARS

Save the date for these exciting and informative PIBC Continuous Professional Learning webinars. (Eligible for 1.5 units each)

---

**PIBC PLN Webinar #3  
Provincial Housing Legislation:  
Affordability  
May 29, 2024**

Part of our new Peer Learning Network (PLN) series, this third webinar will include a brief overview of common affordability questions in relation to the Province's new housing legislation. Participants will have an opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with the speakers.

---

**Save the Dates  
PIBC Fall 2024 CPL Webinars**

PIBC's Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) webinars will return in the fall for the follow dates:

**CPL Webinar #6:  
In Recognition of National Day  
of Truth & Reconciliation  
September 25, 2024**

**CPL Webinar #7  
October 30, 2024**

**CPL Webinar #8  
November 27, 2024**

**Visit the PIBC Webinars webpage  
[www.pibc.bc.ca/pibc-webinars](http://www.pibc.bc.ca/pibc-webinars)  
for information on current  
webinars, registrations, and the  
latest webinar recordings.**

## MEMBERSHIP REPORTS

### DECEMBER 1, 2023

#### Welcome New Members!

**Congratulations and  
welcome to all the new  
PIBC Members!**

At its meeting of December 1, 2023, it was recommended to and approved by the Board to admit the following individuals to membership in the Institute in the appropriate categories as noted:

#### **CERTIFIED:**

**James Hnатовich**  
*(Transfer from SPPI)*  
**David Kuperman**  
*(Transfer from OPPI)*  
**George Robinson**  
*(Transfer from OPPI)*

#### **CANDIDATE:**

**Jack DeSante**  
**Andrew Nisha**  
**Gnanasingarajan**  
**Samuel Loran**  
*(Transfer from APPI)*  
**Laura MacTaggart**  
**Alicia McLean**  
**Meleana Searle**  
**Brad Smith**  
**Lise Townsend**

#### **STUDENT:**

**Abhinav Ahuja** *(SFU)*  
**Jasmine Bal** *(UBC)*  
**Kyle Chorlton** *(UNBC)*  
**Dylan Clark** *(UBC)*  
**Yara Elmahdy**  
*(Waterloo / Joint with OPPI)*  
**Christian Higham** *(UBC)*  
**Angus Kwan**  
*(Queens / Joint with OPPI)*  
**Sierra Leung** *(UBC)*  
**Jessica Ryan** *(UBC)*  
**Natasha Srinarayan** *(UBC)*  
**Akane Yamaki**  
*(York / Joint with OPPI)*

#### **RETIRED:**

**Karen Kreis**  
**James Rudolph**  
**Deborah Sargent**

#### **PRE-CANDIDATE:**

**Keven Fulmer**

#### Member Changes

It was further recommended to and approved by the Board to grant or acknowledge the following membership transfers and changes in membership status for the following individuals as noted:

#### **FROM CERTIFIED TO MEMBER ON LEAVE:**

**Julia Bahen**  
**Patrick PJ Bell**  
**Laurel Cowan**  
**Caitriona Feeney**  
**Jessi Fry Jackman**  
**Samantha Huchulak**  
**Hannah McDonald**  
**Hsuan-Ju Rosa Shih**

#### **FROM MEMBER ON LEAVE TO CERTIFIED:**

**Shelby Mark**  
**Winnie Yip**

#### Student Memberships

It was further reported and noted that two Student members ceased to be members having left their respective accredited university planning programs.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORTS

### JANUARY 26, 2024

#### Welcome New Members!

**Congratulations and  
welcome to all the new  
PIBC Members!**

At its meeting of January 26, 2024, it was recommended to and approved by the Board to admit the following individuals to membership in the Institute in the appropriate categories as noted:

**CERTIFIED:**

- Pablo Golob**  
*(Transfer from OPPI)*
- Stephan Hews**  
*(Transfer from APPI)*
- Arthur Lo**  
*(Transfer from OPPI)*
- John Lunney**  
*(Transfer from OPPI)*
- Luke Mari** *(Reinstate)*
- Amber Osadan-Ullman**  
*(Transfer from APPI)*

**CANDIDATE:**

- Demetra Barbacuta**
- Owen Bloor**
- Samantha Bowen**
- Conor Britton** (  
*Transfer from SPPi)*
- Yat-Wah (Angela) Chau**
- Colin Dring**
- Jennifer Getz**
- Cameron Graham**
- Zane Hill** *(Reinstate)*
- Shannon Hogan**  
*(Transfer from APPI)*
- Daniel Lake**
- Claire Lee**
- Lauren Malo**
- Duncan Miller**
- Jacob Newkirk**
- Rodolfo Paras Diaz**
- Maria Paulson**
- Krishna Shah**
- Harpal Singh**
- Tara Slater**  
*(Transfer from APPI)*
- Matthew Smith**
- Andrew Stewart-Jones**
- Scott Wilson**  
*(Transfer from APPI)*
- Caitlyn Wiltsie**
- Melanie Wittes**
- Alana Wittman**
- Holly Yee**

**STUDENT:**

- Sidrah Anees**  
*(University of Calgary)*
- Thor Boe**  
*(University of New England, NSW Australia)*
- Brandon Chow** *(UBC)*
- Joshua Lee** *(UBC)*
- Aaron Li** *(UBC)*
- Maharjan Shiwani** *(UBC)*
- Kripa Thomas** *(UBC)*
- Ning Yan** *(UBC)*

**RETIRED:**

- Annie Booth**
- Penelope Gurstein**
- David Harper**
- Gwyn Symmons** *(Life Retired)*
- David Witty** *(Life Retired)*

**PRE-CANDIDATE:**

- Graeme Budge**
- Matthew Campbell**
- Monique Cheung**
- Nicolas Huige**
- Pamela Nall**
- Marina Richter**
- Erik Ursel**
- Hannah Walsh**

**Member Changes**

It was further recommended to and approved by the Board to grant or acknowledge the following membership transfers and changes in membership status for the following individuals as noted:

**FROM CERTIFIED TO MEMBER ON LEAVE:**

- Cathy Bernard**
- Selena Brill Jutras**
- Rebecca Chaster**
- Jeanette Elmore**
- Pablo Golob**
- Yazmin Hernandez Banuelas**
- Kimberly Lemmon**
- Eliakim Longaquit**
- Shelby Mark**
- Gill McKee**
- Sian Mill**
- Brian Miller**
- Karen Moores**
- Kent Munro**
- Meghan Murray**
- Holly Pridie**
- Jordan Rea**
- Yuli Siao**
- Sean Tynan**
- Mary Wong**
- Taylor Zeeg**
- Anna Zhuo**

**CANDIDATE TO MEMBER ON LEAVE**

- Robyn Hay**
- Alexandra Heinen**
- Mary (Helene) Miles**
- Sarah Ravlic**
- Chengyu (Tate) Zhang**

**FROM MEMBER ON LEAVE TO CERTIFIED:**

- Candice Benner**
- Patrick Foong Chan**
- Angela Davies**
- Jeanette Elmore**
- Karin Kronstal**
- Chris Marshall**
- Philip Testemale**
- Mary Wong**

**FROM MEMBER ON LEAVE TO CANDIDATE:**

- Tamera Cameron**

**RESIGNED:**

- Darren Braun**
- June Klassen**
- Catherine LeBlanc**
- Diana Leung**
- Alison McDonald**
- Brian Sikstrom**
- Melisa Tang Choy**
- Gerhard Tonn**
- George Van**
- Gae VanSiri**

**Membership Time Limits:**

It has been reported and confirmed by the PIBC Board of Directors on January 26, 2024 that the following individuals had reached or exceeded the prescribed time limits to remain a Candidate member and, in accordance with the Institute's bylaws, ceased to be Candidate members of the institute effective as of December 31, 2023.

- Suzanna Kaptur**
- Emily MacDonald**
- Kyle McStravick**
- Allison Pickrell**
- Jessica Shoubridge**
- Daniel Sturgeon**

It was further reported and noted that 40 Student members ceased to be members due to the expiration of applicable time limits on remaining as Student members.





Photo: UNDP Rwanda/Mucyo Serge

## IMBUGA CITY WALK, KIGALI, RWANDA

### Transformative City Walk for All

The Imbuga City Walk, a 520-metre corridor, became the City of Kigali's largest car-free zone in December 2021. The official name change (the area was previously known as the "Car-Free-Zone") signified the City's commitment to cutting vehicle emissions and to creating more social and communal spaces that welcomed everyone, including pedestrians and cyclists.

Led by Kigali's Urban Planning Department, the Imbuga City Walk was a collaboration between the University of Rwanda's School of Architecture and two private companies contracted for design and construction. Using a participatory approach, the City engaged local businesses for ideas and also to discuss their concerns about the potential impact of reduced street parking for their businesses. With successful local input, the Imbuga City Walk incorporated green spaces, event areas, small business kiosks, benches, and other visitor-friendly infrastructure to boost pedestrian traffic and access to businesses in the transformed corridor.

The car-free Imbuga City Walk also encouraged visitors from different economic levels to use the space openly; families visit the playground and green spaces without worry of vehicle traffic and various, differently-abled people enjoy the wide open areas. There is also free WiFi, a city lounge, an arcade, pedestrian-friendly street lamps, and public lavatories.

Source: <https://www.urbanet.info/car-free-urban-spaces-kigali/>





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