



WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY GALA LOOKING AHEAD, LOOKING BACK

/ Kristin Agnello RPP, MCIP *Planning West* Editor

On November 5th, 2022, Planners from across BC and the Yukon gathered in Vancouver on the traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations to celebrate World Town Planning Day.

World Town Planning Day was first celebrated in 1949 as a way to increase public and professional awareness of urban planning. Now observed in more than 30 nations, World Town Planning Day is a day to acknowledge and celebrate the enormous contributions of urban planning to the development of livable, beautiful, and sustainable communities. But it is also a day to reflect on the relationships, and responsibilities that accompany the privilege of contributing to the design and management of sustainable human settlements.

The planning landscape is changing at an unprecedented speed. Planners today

address not only land use, but tackle challenges relating to climate change, reconciliation, public health and well-being, equity, and resource scarcity. As PIBC welcomed 71 new full members and one honorary member, I couldn't help but reflect on the trust placed in us as a profession by the communities we serve. In recognition of World Town Planning Day, I would like to share a few reflections on the importance and future of planning in our communities.

Reconciliation

While listening to the territorial acknowledgement at the World Town Planning Day gala, I reflected on how much of our perception of place is rooted in a colonial understanding of land governance, ownership, and power. Canadian Institute of Planners President Dan Huang echoed my thoughts as he

took to the stage and reminded us of the importance of working in solidarity to advance progress toward reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

Indigenous peoples have always held the inherent right to self-govern; however, Indigenous planning power was historically taken away from communities and placed in colonial hands. It is clear today that this imbalance of power – in terms of self-determination and self-governance – has had wide-reaching impacts, affecting every aspect of community life. As planners begin to reflect on our professional and colonial history and work toward implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action (2015), we recognize that our normative practices may no longer be good enough to support our collective well-being. There is a pressing need to change planning practices and processes to recognize



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Indigenous rights, including redesigning policies, programs, and legislation to bring the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into action.

In the spirit of learning that is at the heart of World Town Planning Day, I would encourage all planners to engage with the PIBC Planning Practice and Reconciliation Committee (Planning Institute of British Columbia, 2022b). I would also urge everyone to take advantage of the webinars and resources provided by CIP (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2019) and PIBC to increase awareness of the historic harms that have resulted from colonialist planning practices and to engage with and support Indigenous communities in determining their own future.

The Planning Practice and Reconciliation Committee's Summer 2022 *Planning West* article, "Reflections on the

Past & How We Move Forward" is now available to read online.

Climate Change

As generally happens when a mixed group of people gather at a shared table, the conversation quickly turned to the weather; in particular, an unseasonably warm autumn halted by the sudden appearance of snow. Climate change is one of the most pressing issues facing our profession today and, while the majority of planners are aware that planning is essential for addressing its causes and minimizing its effects, many of us find it difficult to incorporate climate-driven solutions into our daily practice.

In 2016, PIBC established the Climate Action Task Force (CATF) to "champion action on climate policy, help members understand how to take climate change into account in their planning activities

and collaborate with and advocate for progressive policy solutions by senior levels of government" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2018; Planning Institute of British Columbia, 2022a). As a result of this work, PIBC will soon be releasing a new climate action policy.

Planning West is now collaborating with PIBC's Climate Action Task Force to include a regular feature highlighting the great climate action work going on across BC and the Yukon. With a focus on actionable solutions to climate challenges, the intent of this feature is to raise awareness of innovative practices, share knowledge and resources, and support one another in practice. The Climate Action Task force welcomes submissions from PIBC members for topics or content to include in these brief Climate Action Spotlights.

Have a look at this issue's climate feature on page 16.

MEMBERS AND GUESTS CELEBRATING AT THE 2022 WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY GALA ON NOVEMBER 5, 2022.



Partnerships

Planning could not exist without the commitment, partnerships, and collaborations of our members and those in allied professions. At the World Town Planning Day gala, PIBC recognized ten outstanding members who are celebrating 25+ years of certified membership. Their decades-long commitment to community building is a testament to the dedication of our colleagues.

This year, PIBC also welcomed Franc D'Ambrosio, Principal Architect of D'Ambrosio architecture + urbanism (DAUstudio) as an honorary PIBC member. Franc spoke about the co-dependence between the public and private realms and about uncovering the unique potential of a site based on its spatial, ecological, and historic context. He reminded us of the importance of collaboration with our



“sister professions” to ensure an integrated and comprehensive approach to planning healthy, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable communities.

As professionals concerned with the shaping of the built, natural, and social environment, planners often come to the profession from diverse backgrounds, including architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, geography, environmental studies, or social science. By leveraging the unique skills of our planning colleagues, and our colleagues in allied professions, we can produce more sustainable, beautiful, and inclusive urban forms that benefit the development of healthy, equitable, and prosperous communities.

Closing thoughts

As we gather in the wake of COVID-19, we are reminded of the importance of

communities – for health, safety, prosperity, equity, and sustainability. World Town Planning Day provides an excellent opportunity to reconsider our profession, its ideals, its limitations, and its impacts in relation to the communities we serve. Please join me in congratulating PIBC’s 71 new members, 10 senior members, and one honorary member.

Happy World Town Planning Day.

Canadian Institute of Planners. (2018). *Policy on Climate Change Planning*. <https://www.cip-icu.ca/getattachment/Topics-in-Planning/Climate-Change/policy-climate-eng-FINAL.pdf.aspx>

Canadian Institute of Planners. (2019). *Policy on Planning Practice and Reconciliation*. <https://www.cip-icu.ca/getattachment/Topics-in-Planning/>

[Indigenous-Planning/policy-indigenous-en-interactive.pdf.aspx](https://www.pibc.bc.ca/indigenous-planning/policy-indigenous-en-interactive.pdf.aspx)

Planning Institute of British Columbia. (2022a). *Climate Action Task Force*. <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/climate-action-task-force-0>

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Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/indigenous-people/aboriginal-peoples-documents/calls_to_action_english2.pdf

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