

Penticton is the host location for this year's PIBC annual conference. Thank you for your work as a volunteer member of the Conference Committee!

What are you most excited about for this conference and for attendees visiting Penticton?

Penticton is exceptionally well suited to host an event like this, and with PIBC coming here for the first time, we are eager to put our very best foot forward! We have a number of tours planned to showcase our communities and how our approaches to important planning challenges share common ground with planners from other communities.

I'm also proud that we're highlighting our collaboration with the Snpink'tn (Penticton) Indian Band. It's an important relationship for our city, and one I deeply value as we continue to live and work on the traditional territory of the Syilx people.

Beyond the sessions and tours, I'm genuinely excited to share our downtown with visiting attendees. It has such a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere – with fantastic coffee shops, breweries, art galleries, and local retailers – that really reflects the unique character of Penticton. A few City staff and I will also be leading optional morning walks and jogs, giving delegates a chance to enjoy some of our most beautiful places before the day begins.

Overall, I hope people leave the conference not only with new ideas and inspiration, but also with a real appreciation for what makes Penticton such a unique and vibrant community. I can't wait to show off my town!

What is something new or exciting you recently tried that brings you pride or joy?

Outside of work, I have two kids Miles (9) and Sarah (7) who keep me happily busy with their energy, antics and extracurriculars. Watching Miles bang out "Master of Puppets" on his electric guitar has inspired me to pick up a guitar for the first time since my teenage punk days. It has been fun (callouses aside) to get back into playing the guitar. I can't say it's a source of pride (since I have never been especially proficient) but there's definitely a lot of joy in it!

Planning Podcasts

Join the PIBC Communications Committee in sharing interesting planning-related podcasts!

Planning Xchange: How AI is Transforming City Planning with Scott Matheson (Episode 132)

Podcast summary by Kali Holahan RPP, MCIP, PIBC Communications Committee Chair

Run time: 54 minutes
Host: Jess Noonan and Peter Jewell
Guest: Scott Matheson, Head of Planning at MyLot

Podcast link
<https://planningxchange.libsyn.com/planningxchange-132-how-ai-is-transforming-city-planning-with-scott-matheson>

Podcast Summary
 PlanningXchange is a podcast devoted to urban planning and the people who make it happen. In this episode, the hosts speak with Scott Matheson, Head of Planning at

MyLot, an Australian AI technology company focused on simplifying the planning process for councils and communities.

Exploring his journey from traditional regulatory planning into the dynamic world of AI, Scott shares examples of how MyLot is transforming development assessments with automated tools and data-driven insights and how AI can enhance transparency, reduce processing times, and better engage citizens. Together, they also discuss the broader implications of AI on the planning profession, potential ethical concerns, impacts on employment and how planners can position themselves to work *with* emerging technologies rather than against them. Scott also shares a light-hearted story about using AI to open up relationship discussions.

Why Planners Should Listen
 This podcast offers a timely contribution to the ongoing conversation around artificial intelligence (AI) in the planning profession, specifically in Victoria, Australia. Scott Matheson, Head of Planning at MyLot, speaks candidly about his work applying AI tools to real-world planning challenges. Rather than replace planners, Matheson is clear that AI can support planners at a time when the system is under real strain.

Got a planning related podcast you want to share? Contact us with your podcast summary at editor@pibc.bc.ca



One of the most resonant themes in the episode is around workforce shortages within the planning profession. With planning programs closing at universities and a reported 20% of rural communities unable to attract qualified planners, the profession is facing a genuine capacity crisis. This decline is not just a staffing issue; it represents a loss of local knowledge and contextual understanding that is fundamental to good planning decisions. Matheson identifies the potential for AI to “backfill” this gap by strengthening regulatory decision-making processes where human capacity is limited, without suggesting that technology can replace local insight or professional judgement.

The discussion repeatedly reinforces that planning is, at its core, an inherently human task. However, Matheson highlights how AI may be able to support planners in spending more time on the aspects of our work that we enjoy and are passionate about compared to administrative and procedural tasks. In particular, for public sector planners where process often dominates day-to-day work, this reframing may feel hopeful.

The episode also explores the role AI could play in increasing accessibility to planning systems. By translating complex planning frameworks into plain language, AI has the potential to make planning more approachable and navigable for both communities and applicants. It also highlights that if applicants are increasingly submitting AI-prepared applications, local governments may need to more strongly consider codification and getting planning documents into machine-readable formats.

Although AI may come with efficiencies, it also introduces new challenges, particularly for ensuring that speed and automation do not come at the expense of understanding. While AI may make planners more powerful, it does not inherently produce coherent or holistic insight, which remains central to sound planning decisions. This is especially relevant for early-career planners, who are often the most enthusiastic adopters of generative AI but may not yet have the broader conceptual and professional experience required to recognize what these tools might overlook.

Finally, the discussion closes with a reference to the ‘Jevons Paradox’, reminding listeners that efficiency doesn’t automatically result in less work or fewer impacts.

This podcast makes a strong case that AI can be a powerful tool for planning by improving access, alleviating capacity constraints, and refocusing our professional efforts on what matters most so long as humans remain firmly in the loop. It’s a must-listen for anyone thinking seriously about the future of AI in the planning profession.



Victoria Real Estate Podcast: What Happens if We Ignore Rural Communities? with Jada Basi

Podcast summary by Steffi Sunny,
PIBC Communications Committee Member

Run time: 25 minutes

Host: Adrian Maclaren

Guests: Jada Basi RPP, MCIP, co-owner and
Principal of CitySpaces Consulting

Podcast link

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/2249878/episodes/18499234>

Podcast summary

Victoria Real Estate Podcast focuses on the latest market trends, buying and selling tips, and investment opportunities in Greater Victoria, BC. This special episode was recorded live from *BC 2030: The Future of BC Real Estate conference in Vancouver*, hosted by the Real Estate Institute of British Columbia and offers a rare look beyond the major cities and into the communities that quietly support the province.

Adrian is joined by Jada Basi RPP, MCIP, co-owner and Principal of CitySpaces Consulting, a community planning and infrastructure expert with two decades of experience working in rural, regional, and resource-based communities across Western Canada.

Their conversation explores many topics including:

- The impact of the Instant Towns Act of 1965 on development
- What company towns were and how they shaped British Columbia
- Why these towns still matter to BC’s economy today
- How Indigenous-led utilities and regional partnerships are changing the future
- Why the future of BC’s economy may depend more on what we repair than what we build next

Jada also shares practical insights for younger planners and entrepreneurs, plus a few personal picks in a fun rapid-fire closing segment.

Why Planners Should Listen

Jada Basi starts by sharing a personal summary of her background and describes the small forestry-based town where she grew up. She explains the origins of Instant Towns Act, describing how resource-based communities became municipalities. The conversation also explores what that means today for these small towns with aging infrastructure, limited tax bases, and single industry dependence. She further elaborates on real examples of mill

closures, underfunded water and sewer systems, and industries operating outside municipal boundaries.

The discussion shifts to Canadian examples where small towns have amalgamated and annexed nearby industrial lands to expand their tax base and strengthen local revenues. Jada highlighted an emerging model from Northwest BC involving a consortium of 21 local governments known as the Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA). These communities have joined together to advocate for a share of the revenues generated from major projects such as pipeline and port expansions, wind farms, etc., an approach that truly demonstrated leadership.

Adrian and Jada also discuss how policy and decision makers need to explore new ways of reinvesting in local industries for these communities to thrive. Strengthening small towns isn’t only about improving residents’ quality of life, but also about ensuring that these communities are places where people genuinely want to live, with access to strong amenities, reliable healthcare, dependable fire protection services, etc. Throughout the podcast, Jada mentions the noticeable disconnect between urban and rural regions, and how we forget to fully appreciate the interdependence of urban and rural communities. Their conversation wraps up with a light personal Q&A where Jada shares a few fun recommendations and preferences.

This engaging 25-minute episode is one I would recommend to all my planning colleagues as well as planning students and anyone interested in extending their knowledge on planning in rural communities. Adrian and Jada keep listeners hooked - their conversation breaks down the realities of rural-urban interdependence, how major projects and community readiness must align, and what policy tools are needed to make small remote towns truly livable and sustainable.



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