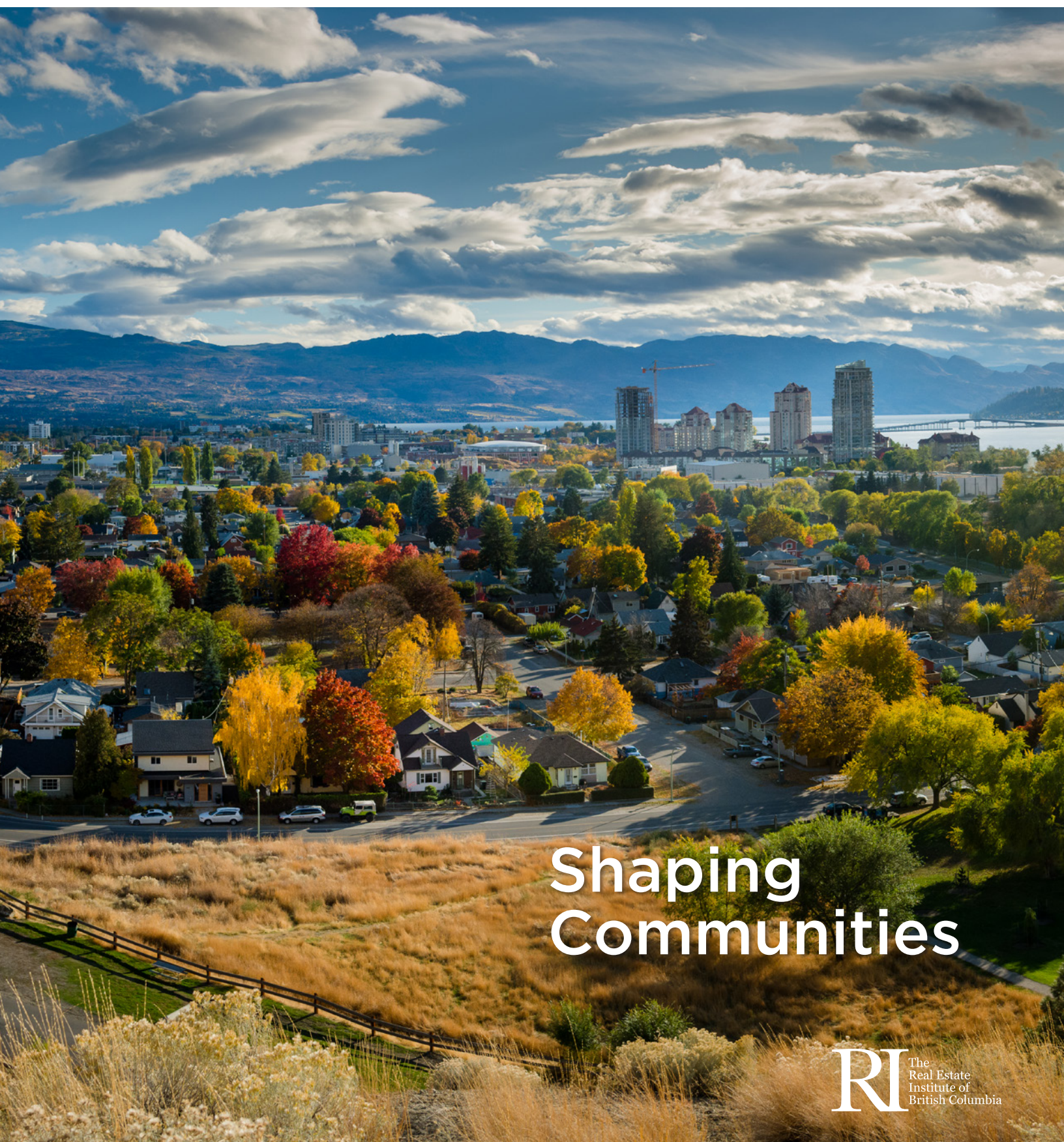


INPUT

LAND AND REAL ESTATE
ISSUES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Shaping
Communities

INPUT

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



SUSAN ANTONIALI, RI
REIBC PRESIDENT

Welcome to Fall 2020 edition of *Input*.

This is a year that has changed our lives, not just for now, but for many of us for years to come. It has been a year of fires, storms, a health pandemic, and social and political unrest. The one constant is change.

Our industry and our members typically rely on one-on-one networking and events with fellow RIs and industry supporters. A major change for us happened early on in the year when the Board of Governors realized that we would need to suspend those big in-person gatherings. REIBC instead presented a large variety of topics via webinars, and our members and others have engaged in them at record levels. We on the Board always struggle not to be Vancouver-centered, and this new approach has opened up our offerings to the whole of the membership throughout the province and beyond.

"Navigate the now" is a phrase that I find encompasses the times. We are receiving news and information constantly and trying to navigate our response. We must take time to stop and reflect on what is happening and how it affects our lives.

If you are fortunate enough to have parents, you know that the lockdowns and changes have affected some greatly, like my 90-year-old mother who has had to adjust to no visits and with that the anxiety and loneliness as each day spills into the next. Some of you are parents who have had to adjust your work and schedules to home-school your children. Some of you are younger and have had to change your busy social lives. The pandemic has affected everyone.

I hope that you and your family have found "the new normal" by inspiring and educating each other to "navigate the now." I have confidence in our members that your new experience and knowledge are helping you and your family through these changes. Wishing you and your family a healthy and happy new year in 2021.



COVER: City of Kelowna, view from Knox Mountain. Credit: City of Kelowna.

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FROM THE EO'S DESK



BRENDA SOUTHAM
EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I am pleased to present to you the Fall 2020 edition of *Input*.

The articles in this edition are diverse at first glance, but all discuss how planning and development respond to demographics and shape communities.

Inside, you'll read about social purpose real estate in the Lower Mainland—why and how it's built—and the work of a Vancouver organization, which provides a lens for how we view social and economic challenges in our quest to build livable and inclusive communities.

You'll also read about regional transit—particularly new projects—and the transit-orientated approach to community building that responds to and influences where we live and work.

Across BC, real estate development, zoning, and land use respond not only to demographics, but also to the needs of the municipality to serve these developments and the people in them. Municipalities are starting to depend on modelling tools, such as ModelCity at the City of Kelowna, to better understand the impacts of development scenarios and aid in decision making that gets us to the future we want.

And for something to help us gain perspective on the issues we face here at home, consider the land ownership and housing challenge in Mazatlán, Mexico. How housing is provided, who has access to it, and what methods people employ to house themselves—especially when when housing is difficult to impossible to obtain under established channels—are questions we could spend some more time considering.

I found this edition quite interesting and the perspectives enable me to look at issues a little differently. We thank all the authors, including those who contributed to our regular columns of Member Profile, On the Job, and Ask a Lawyer.

I wish you all a happy holiday season and a wonderful new year! Stay safe.

ABOUT

Input was established in 1976. It ran at 12 pages and stayed that size for a long time. It was more like a newsletter then: when something new happened in the real estate industry, one of our RIs wrote about it, but the publication didn't cover much industry information otherwise.

Many years later, *Input* runs at an average of 48 pages, sometimes a bit bigger or smaller, and our authors hail from around the globe. Our focus is on keeping readers informed with all aspects of the industry, particularly hot topics.

REIBC delivers *Input* to 4,000 people or organizations within the real estate industry.

Who receives *Input*?

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Please let us know your ideas for upcoming issues and how you like the magazine—and check out our Facebook and Twitter pages for up-to-the-minute information on REIBC activities.

reibc.org
info@reibc.org

CONTRIBUTORS

ARTICLES



Kevin Desmond, MA, is an experienced executive with a career built in the public transportation industry. As the chief executive officer of TransLink, Metro Vancouver's transportation authority, he oversees planning, financing, and management of a region-wide multimodal transit network, with over 8,000 employees. Desmond has pioneered an array of operational, fleet, technology, and market development initiatives over the years and has a longstanding commitment to progressive environmental policies and investments. These initiatives were recognized last year when TransLink was awarded the American Public Transit Association's Transit System of the Year Award for its 2016 to 2018 achievements. Prior to joining TransLink, Desmond served in senior roles at King County Metro Transit in the Seattle metropolitan region, Pierce Transit in Tacoma, and New York City Transit.

translink.ca



Jennifer Johnstone is the president and CEO of Central City Foundation, an organization that has been working to improve lives in Vancouver's inner-city since 1907. Johnstone's background is in non-profit management and community resource development. Over the past 30 years, she has held key leadership positions at Vancity Community Foundation, Battered Women's Support Services, Vancouver Status of Women, and Ballet British Columbia. Johnstone is a founding member of the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative, sits on the national board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, and serves as a volunteer board member for several local organizations.

centralcityfoundation.ca



Johannes Säufferer, RI, MBA, AACI, P. App, is the City of Kelowna's Real Estate Services department manager, leading a team of specialists in real estate, land development, property management, and parking systems to create solutions that support council and corporate priorities. Säufferer has been involved in the real estate industry for over 15 years, with previous experience as an appraiser specializing in commercial and industrial properties at BC Assessment, and as a hospitality/tourism consultant specializing in valuations, economic impact assessments, and feasibility studies at Grant Thornton LLP. Säufferer is an accredited appraiser with the Appraisal Institute of Canada and holds an MBA from Simon Fraser University along with an undergraduate degree in mathematics from UBC Okanagan.

kelowna.ca



Mandy Hansen, RI, PMP, is currently the principal at Insight Specialty Consulting, a boutique real estate and management consulting firm. She advises the public and non-profit sectors on strategies to make the best use of their land and buildings. Her practice extends along the continuum from the strategic (looking at policy, governance, and research) to the tactical (executing on program and project management). She proudly carries her RI designation, as well as her PMP. She has an undergraduate degree in Real Estate, a graduate degree in Public Administration and Development, and is completing her doctoral studies in the social sciences studying housing economics.

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John McLachlan, RI, LLB, is a lawyer at Lex Pacifica Law Corporation in Vancouver. His practice is focused on civil litigation with an emphasis on real property matters. McLachlan has appeared as counsel before the British Columbia Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the Provincial Court of British Columbia, the Federal Court, and various Administrative Tribunals.

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Nicole K. Wong, JD, is an associate at Lex Pacifica and advises clients in a wide range of commercial disputes. She was called to the bar in British Columbia in 2020 after completing her articles at Lex Pacifica. Nicole received her Juris Doctor from the Peter A. Allard School of Law at UBC in 2019. Prior to attending law school, she completed her Bachelor of Science at UBC.

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LETTERS . . .

Dear Brenda,

I would like to commend you and the REIBC Board of Governors on the publication of *Input*, Summer 2020. I read, with great interest, the dedication and accomplishments of the leaders profiled therein and celebrate their respective roles in our professional community.

They will serve to inspire current and future generations, as their impressive and proven leadership skills show the strength of women's voices in our industry today.

This is encouraging to me given today's ever-changing business environment and the obvious need for more diverse leadership. To me, leadership is not just about holding titles, degrees, and offices but rather it's about empowering people to reach and fulfill their potential.

I congratulate all the leaders profiled as cultivating women leaders continues to be essential in creating a culture where talent thrives.

Wayne Yu, RI

Managing Director, Investments,
Prominent Real Estate Services

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Brenda,

I've been meaning to send you a note on this Summer 2020 issue and the spotlight on the many talented women in our industry.

It was very striking to have all these strong voices of professionalism and leadership showcased in this way.

Congratulations to you and team for this very compelling issue of *Input* magazine.

And please do everything possible to keep the print copies going as such content would get "lost" in the electronic media (although we should do both).

Tony Letvinchuk, RI

Managing Director, Macdonald Commercial Real Estate Services Ltd.





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MOVING METRO VANCOUVER

Kevin Desmond

I am a firm believer that the backbone of all vibrant cities is a strong public transportation network. Over my three decades working in the transit industry, I have observed first-hand how public transportation can affect positive social change and make cities more livable, sustainable, and resilient.

Here in Metro Vancouver, transit is the connective tissue that binds together 23 distinct communities into a thriving and vibrant metropolitan region. In addition, transit is also key to addressing some of the most pressing social issues of our time.

Our integrated transit system provides residents from all corners of our region with equitable access to jobs and helps address our region's housing affordability crunch by opening new areas where young families can live. Beyond the livability benefits, it is one of the most immediate and impactful ways that our region can reduce congestion and lower greenhouse gas emissions in the fight against climate change.

Many people know TransLink as Metro Vancouver's transit agency, which operates buses, SkyTrain, SeaBus, West Coast Express, and HandyDART. But what they might not realize is that we also have a mandate to support modes of active transportation in our region, including cycling and walking.

Over the past decade, TransLink has invested tens of millions in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Last year alone, TransLink invested \$15 million to build new or improved cycle paths across Metro Vancouver. We have also been rapidly expanding our offering of bike parkades in the past year, with the vision of building the most cycle-friendly transit network in Canada. These investments don't just improve mobility options, they also promote healthier lifestyles and can help increase all residents' quality of life.





SkyTrain at VCC-Clark Station, Vancouver. Credit: TransLink.



Marine Gateway, view from WeWork coworking space. Credit: flickr/GoToVan.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES AROUND TRANSIT

In my address to the Real Estate Institute of British Columbia late last year, I spoke about the symbiotic relationship between public transportation and the real estate industry.

We know that many people want to live near high-quality transit options, which provide reliable and efficient ways to move throughout our region. We also know that building more homes near transit directly translates to an increase in ridership, which has a host of social benefits for our region.

Over the past 10 years, Metro Vancouver has seen a significant increase in housing developments in and around transit corridors and stations. Recognizing the importance of these projects to our society, our enterprise fully supports the development of transit-oriented communities and encourages the real estate community to view TransLink as a resource.

TransLink's Adjacent and Integrated Developments (AID) team works closely with developers to ensure that projects constructed around our network have as little impact as possible on transit infrastructure and integrate with the system's facilities. Through this collaborative approach, Metro Vancouver is now considered a global leader when it comes to transit-oriented developments and transit-oriented communities.

The premier example of a successful transit-oriented community is the Marine Gateway community, which

saw the transformation of an underutilized industrial site into a thriving mixed-use community adjacent to a Canada Line station. This development sold out in under four hours, which is a testament to the demand for homes built in proximity to transit.

Over the past decade, more than 7,000 homes have been built along the Cambie Corridor near the Canada Line, representing more than half of all developments in the City of Vancouver during that time. With upwards of 8,000 more homes currently being considered for the area, it's clear that transit-oriented development will be a key part of our region's growth moving forward.

EXPANDING TO NEW SERVICE AREAS

Over the next 30 years, it's estimated that 1.2 million residents will move to Metro Vancouver. To prepare for the future needs of our region, the Mayors' Council developed its 10-Year Vision for Metro Vancouver Transit and Transportation in 2014—a region-wide, integrated plan that supports our Regional Growth Strategy.

The 10-Year Vision provides TransLink with a clear roadmap for delivering new projects and expanding transit services in our region. In Phase One and Phase Two of the plan, we have overseen the investment of billions in new infrastructure and fleet, increased service levels across all modes, and expanded to 12 new service areas.

How does TransLink decide where to expand our services? In short, we work closely with municipalities and

Artist's rendering of preliminary conceptual station design. Final streetscape and potential development will be subject to the City of Vancouver's Broadway Plan.



Great Northern Way Station, looking southeast. Credit: flickr/BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

stakeholders to identify areas designated for future densification that will result in more demand for transit service. These decisions are undertaken using existing ridership data as well as long-term forecasts to predict future ridership levels.

In order to roll out new transit service in an emerging neighbourhood, our teams will assess the planned density and determine future transit needs. We work closely with our municipal government partners to understand the current needs of their communities and prepare for any major high-density communities under development.

Expansion decisions are also informed by Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy, which identifies the region's urban centre and other priority growth areas as well as the land-use policies and objectives that support them.

To further advance a "centres and corridors" concept, TransLink has recently introduced the concept of a Frequent Transit Network, to help increase certainty about where high-quality transit is located or will be located to inform developers in their investment decisions.

MAJOR PROJECTS ON THE HORIZON

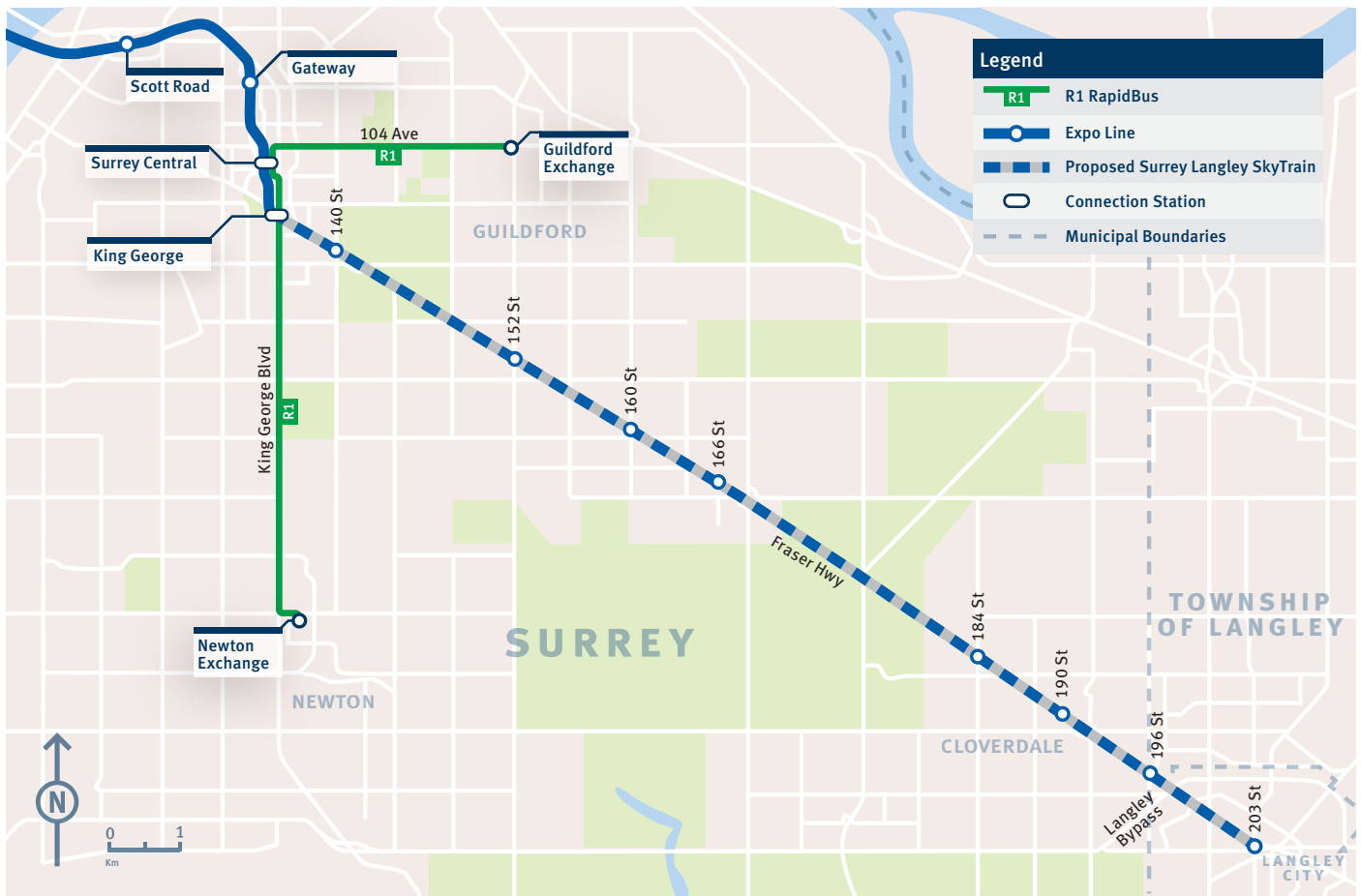
In addition to expanding bus service, TransLink is also supporting two major rapid transit projects, which will further expand and transform transit service in Metro Vancouver.

The first is the Broadway Subway project, a 5.7-kilometre extension of the Millennium Line from VCC-Clark Station to Broadway and Arbutus. This project will provide fast, frequent, and convenient SkyTrain service to BC's second-largest jobs centre, world-class health services, an emerging innovation and research hub, and growing residential communities.

The Broadway Subway will bolster our region's economy and provide much-needed transit capacity along what is currently one of the busiest bus routes in North America with more than 100,000 transit trips each day.

Construction of the project will commence in 2021 and will be delivered by the Province of BC; TransLink will assume operation when complete. With service slated to begin in 2025, the Broadway Subway will spur housing density and commercial growth along the Broadway corridor. The City of Vancouver is currently working to create a 30-year plan for the area, which will focus on integrating new housing, jobs, and amenities around the future subway stations. In addition, TransLink has begun working on a planning initiative with the City, provincial government, and the University of British Columbia to extend the subway from Broadway and Arbutus to UBC campus in a second phase of construction.

The second major capital project on our radar is the proposed Surrey Langley SkyTrain, which would extend the Expo Line from King George and provide rapid transit to one of the fastest-growing areas of our region. The proposed extension, which would be delivered in two phases, connecting Surrey Metro Centre and Fleetwood



Surrey Langley SkyTrain extension map. Credit: TransLink.

Town Centre in the first phase, and Langley Regional Centre in the second phase, would provide residents with improved access to employment opportunities, schools, and social services.

Similar to what we have experienced along the Canada Line, it is expected that the future Surrey Langley SkyTrain will have a transformational effect on our region, with new high-density housing options and mixed-used developments built around future SkyTrain stations.

By building rapid transit into the fast-growing suburban area south of the Fraser River, TransLink can help support regional plans to make Surrey a thriving centre of economic activity in our region. The proposed extension is projected to serve 62,000 daily riders in the year 2035 and grow to 71,200 riders in 2050. It's estimated that upwards of 30,000 of these trips will be made by those who switch to transit from other modes.

MOVING OUR REGION FORWARD

The world has changed immeasurably since I spoke to the Real Estate Institute of British Columbia less than one year ago.

Needless to say, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic had posed some significant challenges for TransLink and the public transit sector at large. Over the past eight months, our enterprise has had to rethink many aspects of how we deliver our services, to ensure the health and safety of our customers, but it hasn't changed the why.

We still firmly believe that a robust transportation system is a key to our region's long-term prosperity. With that in mind, our team remains focused on planning for a sustainable post-pandemic transportation system.

We must keep our eyes on the horizon. At TransLink, we are continuing to move ahead with plans to expand mobility options and high-capacity transit throughout our growing region, and we want to work together and partner with the real estate and development industry for the betterment of Metro Vancouver.

As always, our team is ready to answer any questions you may have. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at realestate@translink.ca.

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SOCIAL PURPOSE REAL ESTATE IS KEY TO BUILDING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Jennifer Johnstone

For more than 100 years, Central City Foundation has been bringing British Columbians together to help disadvantaged community members improve their lives. We strongly believe in the intrinsic value of all human beings and that everyone has value, gifts to share, and the capacity to contribute to community—and therefore deserves to be part of the community.

COMMUNITY BUILDS COMMUNITY

For Central City Foundation, the key to developing financially sustainable and impactful real estate and community projects has been our continuous effort to develop a deep understanding of the challenging social issues and systemic inequalities and inequities that underlie the demographics of inner-city communities as well as the broader context of British Columbia. Our many decades of working in proximity to Vancouver's inner city and in close relationship with innovative and effective non-profits, social enterprises, and charitable organizations has taught us many lessons. Most notably, our experience has taught us that if we invest in projects that are led by community organizations, wherein those most affected by an issue have meaningful input into the design and delivery of programs and projects, we are much more likely to build a solution that is lasting and effective.

To this end, we have worked to build safe, suitable, and affordable community spaces and projects. By mobilizing all our resources to invest in community-led projects and social purpose real estate, we have built homes,

family centres, and facilities for health and community care, created jobs and income opportunities, supported learning and cultural activities, and fostered connection among those who have been pushed to the margins of our society. In so doing, we have been working to build complete communities—that is, communities that are socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and financially secure.

WHAT IS SOCIAL PURPOSE REAL ESTATE?

Social purpose real estate includes space for the vast array of non-profits and social enterprises that serve our society, such as:

- arts and culture groups and artists
- health, community, and social service organizations
- environmental groups
- childcare services
- advocacy organizations
- non-market/affordable housing



SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In 2020, the necessity of this approach to real estate development and investment—a social purpose real estate approach that seeks to balance community benefit with blended value returns on investment—has never been clearer. Indeed, it is clear to a growing group of real estate investors and developers that ensuring the availability of suitable, secure, and affordable space for community groups is at the core of building livable communities, and our experience, alongside other social purpose real estate investors, has demonstrated the financial viability of this approach to land use and development. Our own social return on investment analysis of the Central City Foundation real estate portfolio determined that, very conservatively, for every \$1 we invest we create \$3.90 in social benefit each year and an 18% combined social and financial return on our capital.

COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS IN THE INNER CITY

The importance of a social purpose approach to real estate has been reinforced time and again through our work in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, where we have witnessed numerous well-intentioned revitalization or rejuvenation projects lacking in meaningful participation by community organizations or residents, which have only served to displace the most vulnerable in the community or deepen the challenges

AUNT LEAH'S PLACE

Aunt Leah's Place in New Westminster is an example of the effectiveness of social purpose real estate. Central City Foundation purchased a building in 2012 that provides a secure and subsidized home for Aunt Leah's—an organization that provides essential services to youth in care and young mothers to prevent homelessness and secure their better future. This affordability and security of tenure has provided the underpinning for growth and innovation at Aunt Leah's and has contributed substantially to the sustainability of this essential community organization while strengthening the balance sheet of Central City Foundation. There are many more insightful examples and case studies on the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative website: www.socialpurposerealestate.net.

of poverty, homelessness, and the profound lack of opportunities.

Central City Foundation continues to stand alone as a charitable foundation that is directly investing its capital in social purpose real estate. Since the early 1990s we have been investing in low-income housing in Vancouver's inner city through the acquisition of SRO (single-room occupancy) buildings, in response to the community's need to preserve this uniquely



PHIL BOUVIER FAMILY CENTRE

Our project in Strathcona, the Phil Bouvier Family Centre, is a striking example of the value of community-led projects to respond differently to the needs of inner-city communities. The acquisition and redevelopment of this commercial site to provide essential early childhood development and family support services has undergone a number of changes over the past decade as the demographics of the immediate neighbourhood changed and our understanding of the deepening need for culturally relevant services for Indigenous families grew. Today, it is home to the unique Indigenous Early Years, a program of Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society, serving hundreds of Indigenous families with childcare and a wide range of essential services and supports.

affordable housing stock. As well, these buildings provide opportunities to ensure essential community health services remain located in the community, including the Vancouver Women's Health Collective and the Crosstown Clinic that provides essential harm reduction services to address the overdose crisis in the Downtown Eastside.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and the necessary public health response of temporary closures (of public institutions, local businesses, and civic services) began to impact residents and their families, it was the non-profit sector that acted immediately to address their emergent and most urgent needs. Not just the healthcare sector, but non-profit organizations across our communities pivoted their operations to provide food and supplies, information, and support for those made vulnerable by the pandemic. And, in the inner city, community organizations came together to support the hundreds of people who were literally pushed out onto the streets despite the message being to "go home and stay safe."



Mural ceremony at the Phil Bouvier Family Centre. Mural created by artist Paul Windsor (shown).

In recent weeks, in response to the increased media attention and growing visibility of the challenging social issues of Vancouver's inner city, including homelessness and the ongoing overdose epidemic, we have seen a number of "solutions" proposed in the media and in government plans for the post-pandemic recovery. Some of these proposed solutions do indeed demonstrate some level of community consultation, but at Central City Foundation our experience has taught us that effective and lasting change will require substantial investment in community-led solutions—where those most affected by the challenges in this community have meaningful input into the design and delivery of solutions.

MORE WORK IS NEEDED

Looking to the future for our inner-city social purpose real estate investments, we see unchanging demographics in the Downtown Eastside where those impacted by systemic inequality—by racial and gender inequities—are profoundly overrepresented among those pushed to

the margins of community and living in deep need. We know that it is necessary to continue to build strong relationships with organizations that are working to change the underlying conditions and address the deep trauma of generational poverty and injustice if we wish to make meaningful improvements in the community and help those in need improve their lives. We believe that investing in these community solutions will benefit all of us, not just inner-city communities.

At Central City Foundation, with the support of our community partners, we will continue to deepen our understanding of the social issues that the community has grappled with for generations and which have been dramatically amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the support of our donors, we will continue to invest in community-led solutions and social purpose real estate that benefit all of us. To learn more or to make a donation to this work, visit www.centralcityfoundation.ca.

Photos by Central City Foundation.

KELOWNA'S MODEL CITY AIDS EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

Johannes Säufferer





Kelowna, view from Knox Mountain.

Imagine, for a moment, that you are an elected official or municipal employee evaluating the merits of a development application. The proposal before you involves a rezoning and includes a request for a parking and height variance. On what basis do you make your decision?

THE ROLE OF THE OCP

The textbook answer, as most astute readers will know, is to evaluate the merit of the proposal in light of the municipality's official community plan (OCP), a document that establishes a high-level vision and direction for the community by signalling where development is to be accommodated in a manner that aligns with civic infrastructure and amenities. The OCP is, to be sure, a powerful tool, rooted as it is in extensive public consultation and incorporating a wide variety of considerations, from housing to parks, and from economic development to the natural and social environments. Unfortunately, the inherent nature of the OCP—its visionary and macro-community focus—often limits its applicability on a granular, site-specific level. As a result, while the OCP provides valuable direction to an elected official or municipal employee, in most instances it won't provide all the information needed to make the optimal decision for the benefit of the community.

In our example, the OCP would inform the decision maker whether the proposed zoning (and land use) aligns with the city's vision for the subject property, but direction beyond this—whether any variances are appropriate—is generally outside of the OCP's scope. Our example, in many ways, represents a best-case scenario because it is generally consistent with the OCP. But what about development applications that are not consistent with the OCP? Experience (and reason) dictates that



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Newest_Building_Year	2006
Total_Gross_Land	\$11,508,300.00
Total_Gross_Building	\$15,064,000.00
Total_Gross_Values	\$26,572,300.00
Home_Owner_Grant	Y67%
BL_Numbers	Number of Bussiness: 3
BL_Type_Codes	9000
BL_Description	Online Trading
BL_Employees	1
BL_Vehicles	0
BL_Area_Sqf	0
Zoning_Codes	C7
FutureLandUse_Codes	MXR
Res_House_Total_Area	0
Res_House_Stories	14
Res_House_Bedrooms	74
Res_House_Bathrooms	94
Total_Building_Area_sqf	57198
T_Pop	51
San	Y
SFE	32.83308
CityWater	Y
Muni_Tax	\$77,610.00
UBilling	\$19,613.63

Figure 1.

applications of this nature should not be denied without some consideration—but on what basis? By what standard are these applications to be measured?

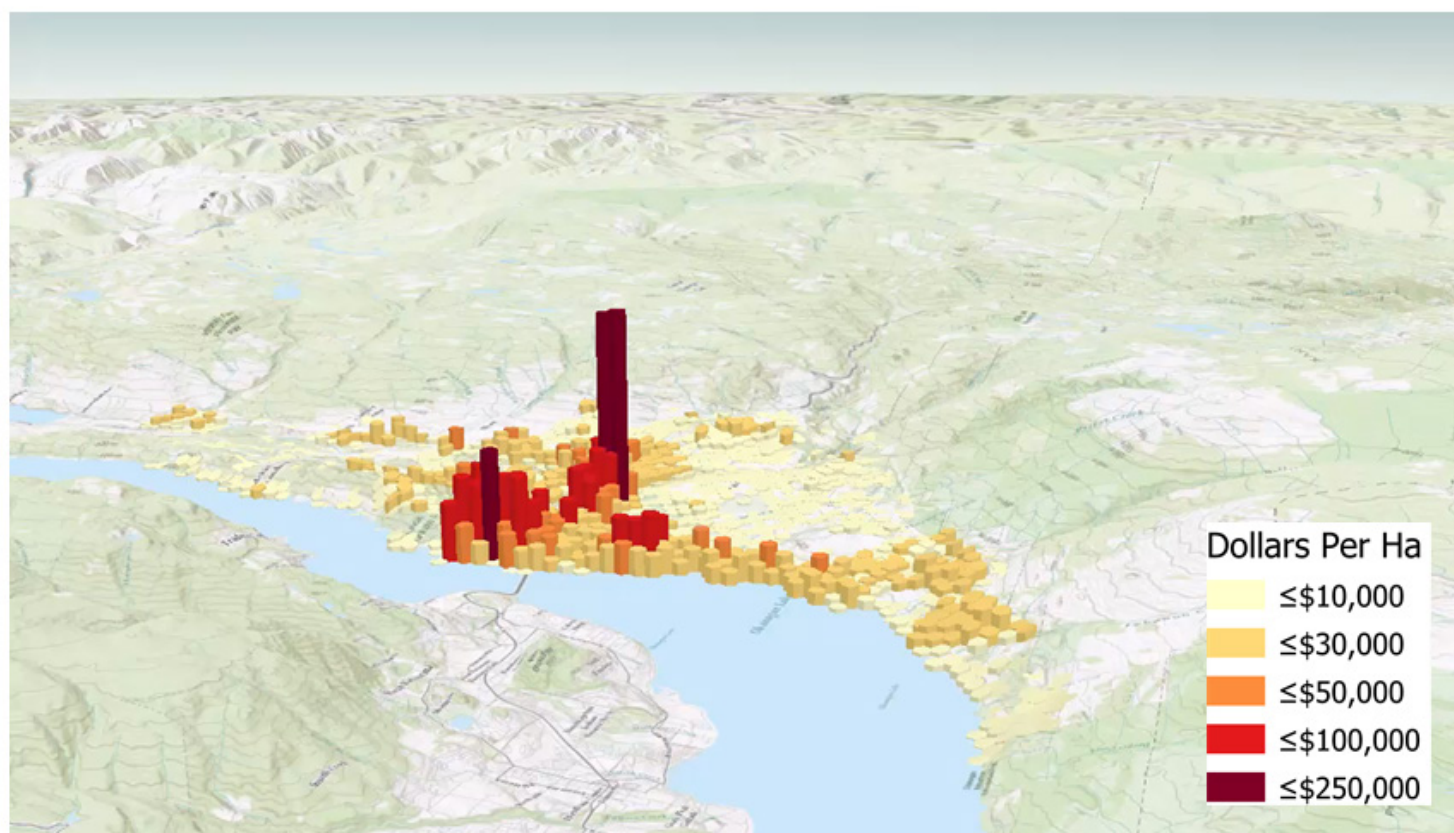
In these situations there is, unfortunately, no textbook answer. These decisions get made in the somewhat abstract world of community fit and economic rationale and community amenity charges and myriad other factors—some well-based, some less well-based—that feed into the ultimate decision. As communities grow and land use decisions become more sophisticated, additional policies, tools, and procedures to support the OCP—and the decision-making process—are often developed; however, the application of these tools frequently remains subjective, abstract, and conceptual. Tools that provide objective, concrete results are often few and far between.

THE MODEL CITY TOOL

Enter ModelCity: a proprietary tool developed by the City of Kelowna that connects and synthesizes data from a variety of internal and public sources in a manner that allows predictive modelling and evidence-based decision making on a city, neighborhood, or parcel basis. To help us better understand the value of this tool, let's look at some real-world applications.

ModelCity consolidates a wide range of interconnected data on existing developments and infrastructure servicing costs to create a holistic summary of how individual parcels contribute to our community across a wide array of factors. This gives us insight into patterns, connections, and relationships that were not clearly visible before. For example, the ModelCity summary shown for the building in Figure 1 includes, among other items, the

ModelCity Scalability



kelowna.ca

Figure 2.

number of commercial and residential units in the building, total assessed value, percent of owners qualifying for the homeowner grant, number of businesses operating out of the building, and estimated population. As a result, we can much more meaningfully describe the impact this building has on our community: it is no longer simply a 45-unit condominium tower, but a 45-unit condominium tower of which 30 units are occupied by principle residents, home to approximately 51 people and 3 businesses, contributing to taxation based on an assessed value of \$26.5 million.

The applicability of this level of data on a neighborhood or citywide basis is substantial. For example, using ModelCity, we can estimate the taxation revenue associated with each parcel in the City of Kelowna, which we can then overlay with estimated servicing costs associated with each parcel to create a literal picture (in Figure

2) of which parcels and neighborhoods have a net-positive or net-negative taxation impact.

A TOOL TO ASSIST SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUITY

As valuable as this tool is to understand the current status of our community, its real value comes into play when we consider its application for helping to create a sustainable and equitable city of the future. Our original example was based on an existing development; however, the functionality of ModelCity allows us to make projections about density, number of residents, and taxation impacts on any property based on its designated land use and associated development capacity. As a result, we can not only estimate our community's population growth over the next 20 years, but identify specific properties and neighborhoods those individuals are likely to live in,



Kelowna, view from Kuiper's Peak.

how much taxation revenue they will likely contribute, and how much it will likely cost the city to service those new residents.

Furthermore, as the outcomes above are all directly linked to land use controls dictated by the City, ModelCity creates the opportunity to generate different scenarios about what our city will look like in the future in response to specific land use decisions made by council and staff today. For example, using this tool, one can gauge the theoretical impact of OCP policies that encourage suburban growth versus urban growth, or quantify the net taxation impact associated with a newly proposed hillside single-family community. ModelCity effectively acts as a highly customized Kelowna-based version of the original SimCity, allowing us to create and contrast realistic alternate-future “Kelownas” based on different land use scenarios and land development priorities.

OBSERVATIONS

Three key observations are appropriate in closing. To begin with, ModelCity as developed by the City of Kelowna is still in its infancy. We are currently applying the benefits of this technology on a community-wide basis as part of ongoing 2040 OCP discussions, but it still lacks the refinement for application on a development-specific basis. Nevertheless, this tool is an example of how the City of Kelowna is creating a culture of innovation, collaboration, and creativity in order to proactively plan for our future.

Second, land use decisions are inherently complex and multifaceted. It would be naive to believe that an algorithm such as ModelCity—even if perfected—will serve as a panacea for all land use considerations. This should, however, not detract from its value as a potentially critical tool in making decisions that are defensible, equitable, transparent, and data driven.

Last, with respect to ModelCity as developed in Kelowna, it should be made clear that I personally can take no credit; I am privileged to work with colleagues much smarter than me, who share my passion for spreadsheets and effective community building.

All of us want to improve the cities we live, work, and play in. Given the increasingly complex and dynamic variables influencing land use decisions and development outcomes, leveraging tools such as ModelCity will help us to make better decisions and build better communities for both the present and the future.

Photos and illustrations by City of Kelowna.

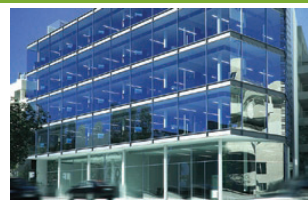


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ORGANIZATION PROFILE

PLANNING INSTITUTE OF BC (PIBC)



The business and practice of real estate is inevitably interrelated with land use and related regulations, policies, and plans. It is therefore also interrelated with community and regional planning in most localities. Planning often sets the current legal and regulatory framework for the use of most lands, from the individual property level right up to the neighbourhood, community, and regional levels. Planning also guides and shapes the medium- to longer-term future use and evolution of land at those levels.

Professional planners play a central role in applying particular knowledge, skills, and experience to help guide and shape planning. And the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) is the professional organization of planners in British Columbia and Yukon. PIBC plays a key role in regulating, supporting, and enhancing the practice of planning, in partnership with the broader planning profession across Canada. PIBC was founded in 1958, becoming part of an organized planning profession that nationally dates back to 1919 with the founding of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, now the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP). There are currently over 1,600 members of PIBC, including about 1,300 practicing professional members.

Fully qualified professional, or Certified, PIBC members have the exclusive right and privilege to utilize the professional title Registered Professional Planner and designation RPP in BC. They may also use the designation MCIP to indicate their professional status nationally with CIP. Professional members work in the public and private sectors and in many different specialized fields of planning, including land use and development, municipal and regional planning, resource and environmental management, policy planning and law, heritage conservation, transportation planning, economic development, urban design, and more.

In addition to its professional regulatory functions, PIBC delivers a range of relevant benefits and services to members (and others) that may be of interest. These

include ongoing professional publications, including: our flagship magazine *Planning West*; electronic newsletters and social media communications; professional development events and online webinars; a major annual professional development and networking conference; local networking and professional development events delivered through nine local chapters across BC and Yukon; planning-related job posting and consultant listing services; access to the many benefits and services of CIP (through joint membership opportunities); and advocacy and research on key planning issues and topics.

PIBC fulfils its role as the professional association of planners by maintaining and administering standards and requirements for professional membership and certification; upholding professional and ethical standards for the profession; providing services, events, programs, and other benefits to our members in support of their professional practice; and advancing, promoting, and supporting the planning profession and good planning practice.

How can planners and the planning profession help? First, planners can be a very valuable resource for landowners, community members, and real estate professionals in helping them to better understand existing planning and land use regulations and processes, as well as helping them navigate the sometimes complex and involved processes that shape future changes and adjustments to planning and land use regulations.

Second, PIBC can provide a useful hub to connect with and engage professional planners, to offer new learning and professional development on key planning topics and issues, to provide access to useful resources, information, and services, and to help build an interdisciplinary network that includes planners and the planning profession. Opportunities exist for those who may work outside the planning profession but who nevertheless want to get connected and involved. Learn more at www.pibc.bc.ca.

TOP 10 THINGS

YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WORKING AS A REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL



AVAILABLE AT: WWW.REIBC.ORG/WHITE-PAPERS



Who owns what?

The Land Owner Transparency Registry records information about who has an indirect interest in BC land.

Find out more at landtransparency.ca.



DEMOGRAPHICS AND REAL ESTATE IN POLICY

John McLachlan, RI, LLB, and Nicole K. Wong, JD

Demographics are data on the composition of a population, including age, race, gender, income, migration patterns, and population growth. They are a significant factor that affects real estate trends, pricing, and demand. For example, a shift in demographics can mean a change in the preferences of actual or potential buyers, which in turn can change demand for specific types of property.

Government policies and legislation as a response to changing demographics have the potential to boost or hinder the real estate market. We will highlight and analyze the government response to changes in two key demographics in BC: migration patterns and age.

MIGRATION

Influence of Foreign Investors

Increased immigration has stimulated international trade and attracted foreign investors. Nowhere is this as clear as with the real estate market in BC. Investment and immigration is essential to the Vancouver real estate market, with 80%–85% of business immigrants being from China.

Before the introduction of legislative measures, foreign buyers accounted for approximately 10% of home sales in Vancouver, with non-resident ownership at approximately 7.6%. House prices increased 173.7% in Vancouver from January 2005 to November 2017.¹

How Has the Government Responded?

The provincial government introduced a 30-point housing plan, with one part of the plan being the intention to stabilize the housing market. This involved the implementation of more taxes to foreign buyers and more transparency in the real estate market.²

Government intervention has led to some debate. Some proponents are advocating for more affordable housing in BC and the housing support focused on British Columbians. In contrast, others have expressed concerns that higher taxes and regulations will hurt BC's reputation for value and stability with international investors.

Over the past few years, the government has implemented the following programs with varied success:

Foreign Buyers' Tax

In 2016, the provincial government implemented a 15% property transfer tax for residential real estate purchases by foreign buyers in the Metro Vancouver region. There was a clear short-term impact following the implementation of this tax. Total real estate sales fell 19% in August 2016 and dipped below expected levels for several months.³ However, this dip in the market was not long-lived. Throughout 2017, sales were on par with expected levels had the tax not been in place.⁴ This suggests that the Foreign Buyers' Tax alone was not enough to curb the inflated real estate market.

In 2018 non-residents saw more legislative changes to their tax assessments. First, the Foreign Buyers' Tax was increased from 15% to 20% and its reach expanded to include the Fraser Valley, Capital Regional District, Nanaimo Regional District, and the Central Okanagan. This same year also saw the introduction of the Speculation and Vacancy Tax.

Speculation and Vacancy Tax

This tax is intended to target individuals who own residences in BC but do not pay income taxes in the province. In 2018, the tax rate was 0.5% for properties subject to the Speculation and Vacancy Tax. For 2019 and subsequent years, the rate differs depending on residency status. The tax rate increased to 2% for foreign



Construction is underway for more than 100 affordable rental homes for seniors on the North Shore, thanks to a partnership between the Province and Kiwanis North Shore Housing Society (November 22, 2019).

owners and satellite families. For Canadian citizens and permanent residents, the tax rate stayed at 0.5%.

In the first year of its existence, the government reported that this tax generated \$115 million in revenue, with 90% of this revenue collected from foreign owners, satellite families, and Canadians living outside of BC.⁵ The government suggests that these numbers mean the Speculation and Vacancy Tax is working as intended.⁶

Beneficial Ownership Registry

Another part of the government's 30-point plan is currently in the process of being implemented. Starting on November 30, 2020, the Land Owner Transparency Act comes into force. This Act will create a publicly accessible registry of beneficial interests in land in BC.

This means that those who hold an interest in corporations, trusts, and partnerships that own property will be affected. This is likely to affect a significant number of shareholders, considering that approximately 10% of non-individual owners are corporations, and that corporations own approximately 9.8% of residential properties in BC.⁷

The main purpose of the registry is to combat money laundering, tax evasion, and tax fraud. Money laundering often relies on the ability to disguise ownership of property, making it difficult to link the property back to

the proceeds of a crime or for criminal purposes. The collection of information on beneficial ownership of land will help tax authorities and law enforcement to identify tax fraud and money laundering. The aim is to make the real estate market fairer and more transparent by ending hidden ownership in BC. We will not know whether this program is proven effective for some time yet.

Empty Homes Tax

Aside from the BC government, certain municipalities have made similar efforts to curb foreign investment. For example, the City of Vancouver launched its own vacant home tax in 2017 separate from the Speculation and Vacancy Tax. Properties deemed empty in the City of Vancouver are subject to a tax of 1% of a property's 2019 assessed taxable value.⁸ This rate increased to 1.25% in 2020.

Has It Made a Difference?

Although many British Columbians see foreign investors as having a large impact on the real estate market, migration is just one of many factors that work in tandem to affect the market.

Most analysts owe the drop in 2019 at least in part to the cumulative effects of government legislation. In 2018, approximately 5.6% of Vancouver residential properties were owned by non-residents of Canada, with the market dropping further since then.⁹ However, not all of the drop

can be attributed to foreign buyers, as is made clear when considering travel patterns and the real estate market in Vancouver during the current COVID-19 health crisis.

COVID-19

At the beginning of the pandemic, there was a clear impact on migration. Net migration numbers fell off sharply as borders closed. During a regular year, international students make up a significant number of migrants to Canada, with 645,000 international students entering the country last year alone. These students make up a significant chunk of the real estate market. This year, the number of international students that came to Canada has been cut roughly in half. The lack of immigration and travel has led to rising vacancy rates, lower prices, and luxury homes that usually attract rich foreign investors struggling to be sold.¹⁰

Even with this dip in migration, the housing market saw marked increases this summer as COVID-19 restrictions lifted. There was a 28% increase in sales in July 2020 over July 2019. Individuals who held off buying during the worst of the pandemic may be buying now, and others may be taking advantage of lower rates arising out of the pandemic.

Overall, it does appear that government intervention has had some effect on the real estate market in BC and has managed to curb inflation of the market to some degree.

AGE

Baby Boomers and the Aging Population

Another demographic influencing real estate is the age of the current population in BC. Many baby boomers have left the labour market or are soon to retire. Life expectancy has increased, meaning that more people will be receiving an old-age pension and will require a greater number of healthcare services. Housing and transportation needs change as the age of a population changes.

Almost 25% of seniors are living below standards. Especially for seniors who live alone, suitability and affordability of housing is crucial.¹¹ Government intervention is required in order to ensure that seniors receive the necessary care. In order to accommodate an aging population, the government must promote age-friendly principles in policies for building design, neighbourhood design, and city planning.

How Has the Government Responded?

The provincial government provides the following programs for seniors:

Home Adaptations for Independence

This program provides funding for modifications and adaptations necessary to address an individual's disability or loss of ability. This includes items like handrails, ramps, and walk-in showers with grab bars. Individuals can apply for a grant with a maximum total lifetime amount of \$17,500. With this grant, landlords are able to better accommodate senior renters, and seniors themselves can modify their existing homes and not be required to find alternative housing to accommodate their needs.¹² More baby boomers are choosing to stay in their homes as opposed to downsizing or entering into assisted-care facilities.

Home Renovation Tax Credit for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Individuals 65 and over and those with disabilities are eligible for a tax credit for the cost of certain permanent home renovations designed to improve accessibility or functionality at home.¹³

Although these programs are helpful, the needs of the elderly can vary depending on their living situations. These programs do little to account for those seniors that live in assisted-care facilities.

Assisted Living

One area in which the government requires more action is with respect to assisted living homes and living conditions.

Eighty percent of assisted living residences are run as for-profit businesses, meaning that low- to moderate-income seniors struggle to afford the cost of living in such a facility and may not be getting the proper care. This income issue highlights the need for increased funding and better planning of seniors' services to ensure that there are enough subsidized non-profit facilities to meet the needs of an aging population.¹⁴

Another issue is the regulation of assisted living facilities. Under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, all assisted living operators in BC must register with the Assisted Living Registry. The registry is used to post complaint information reports, but is not proactively enforced.

There is currently no requirement that assisted living facilities be inspected at regular intervals. In fact, with only two assisted living investigators for the whole province as of May 2019, regular inspections seem impossible.¹⁵ Instead of ensuring that issues do not arise in the first place, the Assisted Living Registry is set up to address issues after the fact. Additionally, the registry does not have jurisdiction over many issues that may affect seniors, including tenancy disputes, operating

issues (including problems with staff), and complaints about being assessed as ineligible for certain government subsidies.

Although it is clear that the government recognizes the need to address the concerns of the elderly, more proactive methods and better home and city planning is necessary as the population continues to age.

Millennials

On the other end of the spectrum, millennials are experiencing difficulty with home ownership in BC. Millennials, defined as those born from 1980 to 1999, only account for a small share of residential property owners, at 13.9%. The largest share of residential properties owners at 23% is those born from 1950 to 1959.¹⁶

However, millennials make up the majority of first-time buyers.¹⁷ In many cases, millennials are forced to continue to rent instead of purchase property. Multi-generational living has also increased, and millennials are moving out later in life. In order to purchase property, many millennials must turn to their families for financial assistance. The BC Notaries Association reported that 90% of first-time buyers in 2019 received help from family to meet down payment requirements, compared to 70% of first-time buyers in 2015.¹⁸

How Has the Government Responded?

The government methods in place to support young homeowners are not very effective, at provincial and federal levels.

First Time Home Buyers' Program

BC's First Time Home Buyers' Program reduces or eliminates the amount of property transfer tax paid when a first home is purchased. However, first-time buyers only qualify for this exemption if the fair market value of the purchased property is not more than \$500,000.

The \$500,000 cap makes it difficult for many millennials in BC to qualify for the program, especially in Vancouver. The average detached home price in Vancouver has dropped, but still averages over \$1 million, while condos in Vancouver cost an average of \$645,607. These prices are well over the value to qualify for the property transfer tax exemption.¹⁹

First-Time Home Buyer Incentive

The federal government launched the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive in 2019. This is a \$1.25 billion shared equity program where the federal government contributes a portion of a home purchase price in exchange for an equity share in the home's value. Qualifying homebuyers receive an interest-free loan of 5%-10% of the cost of the home. The target is to help 100,000

Canadians take out a smaller mortgage and become homeowners in the next three years.

A report from April 2020 found that between September 1, 2019, and February 1, 2020, 4,414 Canadians applied for the program, 3,708 applications were approved, and only 2,061 applicants actually received funds.²⁰

The program puts a cap on home prices of around \$500,000 to \$600,000, meaning again that many individuals in major markets will not qualify for the program, considering that the average house price in Canada is \$648,544 in 2020.²¹

There is precedent of a similar program to the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive failing in BC. In 2016, the BC Government launched the Home Owner Mortgage and Equitable Partnership Program. This program was cancelled in 2018 after it repeatedly missed its targets. The government had expected about 42,000 people to use the program over three years. However, only 3,000 British Columbians applied.

Though initiated with good intentions, the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive does not appear to be the program that millennials want or need right now and offers little substantial assistance. For the moment, it appears that millennials and first-time buyers will have to rely on assistance from their parents or others as opposed to assistance from the government.

Demographics have a clear effect on the real estate market. The government has, as demonstrated above, had mixed results in its attempts to address changing demographics and the unique issues they bring to the province.

Photo by Province of BC, via flickr.

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MEMBER PROFILE

GRAHAM WOOD, RI

DIRECTOR, REAL ESTATE
THE BLOOM GROUP COMMUNITY
SERVICES SOCIETY



As the director of Real Estate at Bloom Group, Graham Wood's days are hectic, but he enjoys them. "Every day is different and it's not a cliché. I can go from scoping property management software, to helping staff deal with plumbing leaks, to discussing raising capital to purchase property before its even noon," he says. "...Everything is done on a nonprofit shoestring budget, but I can see marginal improvements almost daily and it's somewhat empowering."

Early in his career, Graham worked as an appraiser at a firm in Port Coquitlam, which really opened his eyes to the valuation and economic consideration that goes into real estate beyond simply market-driven analysis. The experience emphasized the importance of nuance: "Not everything is as it seems and not everything has or needs a cookie-cutter approach. There are a set of skills needed to analyze a problem, but you need to continually look for different ways to come to new answers. In the nonprofit

world, this is more than helpful because you already start at a financial disadvantage, but overcome that and you find a solution."

Graham's role at Bloom Group involves overseeing many of the day-to-day issues and planning for facilities, including recently spearheading a centralized inventory and distribution system for personal protective equipment due to COVID-19. He also deals with strategic issues, including acquisition and disposition of real estate, rezoning and redevelopment, partnerships, responding to RFPs, procurement, and ensuring the sustainability of programs—to ensure that Bloom Group is able to continue to effectively and efficiently provide dignified services to those it houses and cares for.

For Graham, professional achievement comes in the form of providing better facilities, such as affordable housing, shelter for women and children fleeing violence, mental health housing, and hospice care.

He finds his family life equally rewarding. "Somehow stumbling into a relationship with my wife is a huge achievement for me. She's great and I just try and keep up," he says.

In his youth and then through university, Graham swam competitively. Now he coaches and also volunteers with his son's Summer Swimming club in Port Moody, where he was the treasurer for three years and now serves as a director.

RI

UNDERSTANDING HOUSING IN MAZATLÁN

Mandy Hansen, RI





Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) neighbourhood, Mazatlán.
Credit: Mandy Hansen.

There are generally three ways that people, anywhere, can procure housing for themselves: the government provides it for them, they are able to buy or rent it from the private market, or they build it themselves.

In Canada, at least after the Second World War, the market supplied housing to the majority of households, and government supplied those who couldn't effectively be served by the market.

But there are many areas where the market doesn't function effectively, and where government isn't able to step in to bridge the gap. In these cases households, by necessity, take matters into their own hands and build their own homes wherever they can, with whatever materials they find. These informal settlements are sometimes called "slums," "favelas," or "shanty towns." The people living in them have a different word, however. They call them home.

INFORMAL HOUSING

I had the privilege this past winter to stay in Mazatlán, Mexico, to do my field research for my PhD. I am studying the role of informal housing in resort communities. Mexico has decades of experience in managing informal housing, after its population urbanized in the mid-1900s. The population exploded and the agricultural industry collapsed, so millions of people moved from small villages to larger centres in search of work and opportunity. The private market was not interested in building houses for the poor migrants, and the government was not in a position to undertake large-scale infrastructure investment. So, the migrants themselves built their own shelters on lands that they were able to find, such that approximately 65% of all housing is informal nationwide. These individual shelters became communities and grew to encompass whole cities over time, getting access to services, infrastructure, and eventually property titles. A significant portion of Mazatlán started as informal communities—land "invasions," as they call them—and have now become regularized neighbourhoods.

Mexico has a specific provision in its constitution stipulating that housing is a right, so removing untenured houses is difficult. Homebuilders in untenured circumstances



Homes like these ones built in the slide zone of a hazardous hillside are not able to get titles. General Phillippe Ángeles neighbourhood, Mazatlán. Credit: Mandy Hansen.



can call on this right to ensure they are not removed unduly. Private lands are generally secured for this reason—so that the owners do not lose the right of access to those lands to occupants. Public lands are not generally secured, and therefore occupation can occur. In the event that a government wishes to use the lands for something else, or has deemed the lands a hazard to the occupants, the government has to provide alternative housing for the occupants. There is considerable public support generally for this right to housing, and government and private owners do not take occupant removal lightly considering the risk of public backlash.

In a sense, the development process for informal neighbourhoods is very similar to tenured neighbourhoods. A developer identifies a site, establishes interest from potential occupants, collects deposits, and then acquires the land. The subdivision is laid out, with space for roads, public buildings, and parks, and then families start building their homes. The difference is the home-building process. In a formal development, one would hire an architect and a builder to build the house. In an informal community, the family starts with a tarp, perhaps some pallets, and adds on from there as they acquire materials. Over the course of five years, they have built a relatively permanent house. Over the course of 10 years, the houses are regularized and formal title is granted, unless there is a very good reason for it not to be titled, such as being built in a hazard zone, or on *ejido* (communal farm) lands.

Mazatlán does have a planning department, and as of 2014 has a community plan and zoning regime. Density is encouraged to maximize infrastructure investment return and limit transportation requirements, as is infill

development to contain sprawl. Informal settlements are not planned for specifically, rather they are dealt with as they arise. Invasions onto private lands are either prevented through the use of security forces, or the owner negotiates with the developer to sell a portion of lands at fair market value.

The City of Mazatlán works with the developers of informal neighbourhoods very early in the process to help lay out the subdivision, ensure compliance with regulations, and limit exposure to hazards. Some informal developments occur without this assistance and are poorly placed. If they are not in a permitted location, they will not receive infrastructure services or ever qualify for regularization. However, authorities are not able to remove households from their location due to the right to housing.

Homes and lots in Mazatlán, both formal and informal, are very small and dense as compared to the Canadian standard. Lots are typically 7 metres by 20 metres, approximately 1,500 square feet. This is a common size for new communities as well as established ones. There are no side yards, and unless one buys into a gated community, there are few constraints on building form or size. This provides for a very dense form of development, while still maintaining single-family dwellings. Family sizes are also generally larger, so there are more people per square foot of dwelling as well.

The photo above is of my friend's home. This is a middle-class neighbourhood with teachers, engineers, and government employees living here. His house is the red one, but does not include the garage to the right. It covers the full lot and has a small open patio at the rear,



Left: Middle-class Jabalies neighbourhood just outside of downtown Mazatlán. Credit: Google Maps 2014. Above: Newly constructed INFONAVIT homes in Pradero Dorado neighbourhood, Mazatlán. Credit: Google Maps 2014.

which is walled on all sides. This two-bedroom structure is considered a family-size home. This area began as a formal development, though many of the neighbouring areas started as invasions. The formal and informal areas are indistinguishable at this point when driving around the neighbourhoods.

PUBLIC HOUSING

The Government of Mexico has created a number of programs to support homeownership for citizens. If you are a formal employee—someone hired under a formal employment agreement and subject to employment laws and payroll deductions—your employer pays into a savings program that is then expendable on a down payment for a home built under the program. One of the more common programs is called INFONAVIT (Institute of the National Housing Fund for Workers), which is tailored for private sector employees. It, unlike the private market, allows for a loan for the outstanding balance. Loans for home purchase are not common otherwise.

The size and shape of INFONAVIT homes approximates that of other homes in the city. Each is modestly built and intended to be affordable. They are often expanded with additions of garages and second stories, so the subdivision becomes less homogeneous within a short period of time after completion. The program is quite successful, at least for the approximately 40% of the population that has formal employment and would qualify for such a program. During my research I met with several formal employees who have purchased such homes, one of whom purchased it for investment and has it rented to another family.

HOUSING STANDARDS IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRANCY AND POVERTY

Poverty is the social phenomenon that has driven and continues to drive real estate decisions, especially in housing, in Mexico. Individuals and families continue to come to cities in search of jobs and opportunity. They require housing, but are often priced out of the private market. They don't qualify for public housing units without formal employment, so they take housing within the informal market. This drives the demand for inexpensive housing units that are close to job centres. There is a market for rental housing for all types of renters, regardless of budget.

However difficult life may be for those migrating to cities, it remains better than staying in rural areas where there is no opportunity for advancement. Often, the menfolk will migrate, leaving their families behind. They will send money back to sustain their families and will eventually send for them once they are established in their new community.

Those who need housing in Mazatlán are able to procure it. It wouldn't meet the measure of Canadian standards for housing, but we need to remember those standards are relatively new for us. Our own development as a country was based on migrants coming to work, taking occupancy wherever they could, and eventually sending for their families to make Canada their home. And looking at the rising incidences of homelessness—manifesting as tent cities, people living in cars, and couch surfing—we would do well to reconsider whether those standards continue to help rather than hinder.



"Old Squatters Shacks, Stanley Park, circa 1910." Source: City of Vancouver Archives.

The standards we have grown accustomed to here in Canada, such as large yards, wide roads, and very low single-family densities, worked well when our own population and demographic pressures were lower and we had room to expand. I would suggest that these standards no longer serve the needs of the greater good. Individually, each of us may appreciate our homes and private spaces, but they and the system that enables them are exclusionary.

According to the existing design guidelines and our public planning processes, the space available is full, and we (the greater we) are unwilling to sacrifice to allow more people into our space with us. National and international migrants continue to move into our cities. However, our housing markets are not allowed to keep pace. This is true for middle-class or even wealthy migrants, let alone those who would need assistance. It comes down to competition for space, where those who cannot compete are excluded from having any space at all. Our standards, both from a design standard and from a cultural norm, have parcelled out our existing space, and therefore the competition continues to get stiffer with each passing year. We are playing musical chairs with the same number of chairs and ever more people, and people are losing the game.

LOCAL REFLECTION

In a sense, our market is broken, or inefficient if we are being technical. In places all over the developed world, for every buyer of housing space there is a seller. But we have effectively stifled the number of sellers through development and building restrictions, while inviting additional buyers. Something will give, and so far it looks like tent cities. In the not too distant future it will look like the shanty towns that used to populate the many areas in Vancouver until the middle of the twentieth century.

But notice something: those shanty towns were not (and will not be again when they re-emerge) 4,000-square-foot McMansions on 10,000-square-foot lots. They were and will be again little more than two-room huts, stuffed side by side, maximizing every inch of space available. Our collective design and cultural standards will run up against the very real human necessity of shelter from the elements, and the reality is that they are not likely to co-exist comfortably.

ON THE JOB



**CAMERON
BEZANSON, RI**

**SECTION HEAD
BC MINISTRY OF
INDIGENOUS RELATIONS
AND RECONCILIATION,
IMPLEMENTATION AND
LAND SERVICES BRANCH**



WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE?

I support the negotiation and implementation of land-based agreements between the Province, Canada, and First Nations in British Columbia by advising on matters such as survey, appraisal, and navigating provincial legislation. The advice that I provide is to ensure that land packages in agreements can be effectively implemented. Once negotiations are complete, I manage the resolution of conflicts on lands to be transferred and coordinate the provincial approval process that authorizes the transfer of land. I am also responsible for leadership, human resource matters, and operational support for the team that I supervise.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAY?

I attend and facilitate meetings throughout the day. These meetings are focused on resolving issues with other natural resource professionals, legal counsel, and negotiators representing the Province and the First Nation. The remainder of my day typically includes brainstorming solutions with internal Ministry staff. When the province is not in a pandemic, I am often travelling for work to Victoria and other locations around BC.

WHAT PREPARED YOU FOR THIS ROLE?

My education and experience have prepared me well for this position. I have an Environmental Geography degree from Simon Fraser University as well as a diploma in Urban Land Economics from the University of British Columbia. A broad range of studies has given me the skill and knowledge to be conversant across the many topics that come up in my position. As well, my experience working in real estate-based positions in both the private and public sector has been very helpful.

IS THE WORK YOU DO TYPICAL FOR YOUR TYPE OF POSITION?

This type of work is unique within the BC Public Service and other government organizations. It differs from many other real estate-focused positions, as I am responsible for working with both titled and untitled Crown land. Most other positions are responsible for land that has been Crown granted and managed under the Land Title Act.

WHAT DO YOU FIND CHALLENGING ABOUT YOUR WORK?

I am required to speak to a range of real estate topics in my position. I am constantly on a learning curve with issues as far ranging as contaminated sites, legal contracts, or the administration of ungulate winter range. My challenge is keeping up with these issues so that I am always prepared to address them accurately.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT YOUR WORK?

Educating myself and finding solutions to complex questions and situations keeps my workday interesting. I also enjoy being part of a workplace that is dynamic and strongly encourages creative solutions to solve problems.

ARE THERE COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE WORK YOU DO OR THE POSITION YOU HOLD?

Yes: the time required to transfer land through the provincial government process. Due to the requirements of the legislation under various acts, it can take up to 18 months to complete a standard land transfer. If there are other third-party requirements, such as subdivisions, the transfer can take multiple years.

WHAT DO YOU WISH PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THE WORK YOU DO ?

I wish people knew how rewarding it is to be directly supporting a tangible aspect of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

WHAT GOALS ARE YOU WORKING TOWARD?

Managing a fast-paced career and fast-paced family life requires many of my goals to be more short-term than I would prefer. My current goal would be to find a good balance in my career and family life in the current challenge of COVID-19.

RI

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