

The CitySpaces team and project partners won a 2026 PIBC award for the Council of Yukon First Nations' Family Preservation & Wellness Centre. What is a key takeaway from this project aimed at helping those most vulnerable in rural communities?

CitySpaces was fortunate to be referred by another non-profit client/collaborator to the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) to help conduct a needs assessment for emergency housing for Yukon First Nation and Indigenous women and children. This led to our involvement in the project pre-development phase and as the development manager through construction.

The list of key takeaways is long. "First-of-its-kind" meant we were all learning in real time. Planners – along with other public regulators and funders – can help more projects like this become a reality in rural places by reducing the costs and risks Indigenous-led organizations must take on alone to prove need, to secure, service and rezone land, and to puzzle together capital funding.

The concept of "decolonizing planning" pops up in webinars and conference sessions but the reality is that much of what we do as planners still perpetuates colonization. Instead of continuing public systems that harm, or waiting for the courts to act, or expecting non-profit organizations to shoulder all the risks, planners can ask Indigenous leaders and communities how we can help move their projects forward and then champion the systems changes (big and small) needed to actually help.

As a planner who actively works on affordable housing in rural communities, is there something from a current project you can share that you are excited about?

CYFN is already far into planning a second stage housing project on the same site as the Family Preservation and Wellness Centre. This will be transitional housing for Yukon First Nations and Indigenous women and children who are ready to move from emergency to independent housing while retaining access to culturally appropriate supports. This is another first-of-its-kind for *Yukon First Nations women by Yukon First Nations women* project that is exciting to support because it will start to fill the gap between crisis housing and market rental housing in Whitehorse. CYFN is leading the way in creating a continuum of housing and supports for Yukon First Nation and Indigenous families.

For visitors to Salt Spring Island, what is your top recommendation for something to do or a place to visit?

I recommend getting out on the water if possible - be it on kayak, paddle board or any boat. The nooks and crannies of the shoreline and nearby water-access parks are special places that you just can't experience the same way from the road. We also have a new brunch spot - Café Flora - that has brought a sweet community vibe back to the Fernwood neighbourhood. The mushroom toast and Shakshuka are excellent!

Cycling with daughter in Victoria



Planning Podcasts

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How a First Nation Saved a Rail Trail AND Changed the Region

Podcast summary by Steffi Sunny, PIBC Communications Committee Member

Run time: 43 minutes

Host: Peter Ladner, Chair of the Board of the BC Cycling Coalition

Guest: Phil McIntyre-Paul

Podcast link (Season 4, episode 4)

<https://bccycling.ca/podcast>

*Check out additional links related to this podcast on the PIBC Planning Podcasts page

Podcast Summary

Since 2023, Bike Sense has interviewed people who are at the leading edge of transportation in British Columbia: innovators, educators, researchers, engineers, planners and practitioners.

In this episode, Phil McIntyre-Paul, a consultant and key organizer behind the

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Splatsin to Sicamous Corridor in the North Okanagan (a 50-km rail trail and active transportation greenway running parallel to Highway 97A between Sicamous and Armstrong) shares practical insights from this project. The CP Rail's 2009 abandonment kicked off a long, messy acquisition process but the Splatsin leadership changed everything by securing critical sections and bringing regional districts and municipalities into a shared model for managing the corridor. Phil also shares the larger Sicamous to Osoyoos vision (connecting with the Okanagan Rail Trail, the Kettle Valley Rail corridor and the Trans Canada Trail) to form a destination cycling network with real economic and active transportation impact for rural BC.

Why Planners Should Listen

This podcast conversation offers a detailed, real-world case study of a 17-year-long rail trail project that is part of a 250 km regional active transportation corridor. The discussion explores how Indigenous leadership, multi-jurisdictional governance and creative interim solutions (example: Sicamous bike ferry) can overcome political, funding and infrastructure barriers.

Phil McIntyre-Paul discusses the challenges and lessons learned from this project; the nearly complete 50 km Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail from Sicamous to Armstrong, which forms part of a larger 250 km trail vision to connect Sicamous to Osoyoos. He shares insights for funding strategies and network design to help shift trails from 'nice-to-have recreation' to safety-focused transportation infrastructure.

Phil talks about a few unexpected challenges and solutions that arose during the implementation phase of this rail trail project. One such hurdle was an access issue during the Bruhn Bridge construction, which prevented residents from reaching kilometre zero of the rail trail in Sicamous. In response, local leaders and businesses creatively converted a houseboat pontoon into a free, donation supported bike ferry that carries up to 11 people and bikes in a two-minute crossing. This example illustrated how rural communities can overcome infrastructure barriers through local collaboration and innovation.

Phil also shared how Splatsin leadership positively transformed the rail trail project by strategically purchasing key sections of the corridor, advocating directly with federal government, and bringing regional and municipal governments together to acquire, develop and manage the rest through reciprocal easements. This is an example of what a true First Nation-led collaboration can look like.



Spacing Radio THE OVERHEAD: When Policy Pauses Public Ownership

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

Run time: 37 minutes

Host: Glenn Bowerman

Guests: Djaka Blais, Executive Director
Hogan's Alley Society, and Andy Bond,
Executive Director Downtown East Side
Community Land Trust

Podcast link

<https://spacing.ca/national/2026/05/28/the-overhead-when-policy-pauses-public-ownership/>

Podcast summary

"The Overhead: Understanding Canada's Affordable Housing Crisis" is a special podcast series by Spacing and the Balanced Supply of Housing research node. This episode, the host and guest talk about how some policy choices are stalling community land trust projects and how these barriers can be removed, highlighting two cases from Vancouver - a municipal plan to rehabilitate an historically Black community and a plan to acquire property for affordable housing in a low-income neighbourhood.

Why Planners Should Listen

This podcast conversation highlights why community land trusts are becoming an increasingly important tool for community

planners seeking to address housing affordability, social equity, and long-term community resilience. Through examples from Vancouver's Hogan's Alley Society and the Downtown Eastside, the guest speakers talk about how policy decisions can both create and repair historic injustices. Their discussions reinforce that land use decisions have lasting social consequences.

The destruction of Hogan's Alley illustrates how infrastructure projects and urban renewal policies displaced a thriving Black community, while current redevelopment presents a rare opportunity to restore community through culturally informed planning. The Hogan's Alley Community Land Trust shows how municipalities can partner with community organizations through mechanisms, such as long-term municipal land leases, to deliver affordable housing alongside cultural spaces, childcare, small businesses, and other community infrastructure.

The episode also highlights community land trusts as practical partners for municipalities. Rather than focusing solely on affordable housing, land trusts can preserve existing affordable housing, protect vulnerable residents from displacement, steward community assets over generations, and support culturally appropriate development. The examples in this episode demonstrate how acquisition strategies can maintain affordable independent housing, such as preserving Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing, while reducing reliance on more expensive supportive housing models.

Finally, this discussion identifies several policy considerations relevant to planners, including aligning municipal policies to avoid unintended conflicts, directing publicly owned land toward community ownership models, supporting acquisition funding, standardizing regulatory frameworks, and recognizing community land trusts as scalable partners in achieving long-term planning objectives. Overall, the podcast presents community land trusts as an innovative planning tool that integrates housing, equity, cultural preservation, and community development into a lasting model of land stewardship.

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