



## State and Future of the Planning Profession Study

(issued August 13, 2025)

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### 1. Introduction

The Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) seeks to engage a qualified consulting team to undertake a study of the state and future of the planning profession in British Columbia and the Yukon. This work is authorized by the PIBC Board and directed by the Institute's Member Engagement Committee, a standing committee of the Board.

### 2. About PIBC

PIBC is the professional association of planners in British Columbia and Yukon and has been dedicated to the advancement of the planning profession for more than 60 years. PIBC is the westernmost provincial/regional planning institute aligned with the Canadian Institute of Planners – the national association for the profession – and was incorporated in 1958 under the *Society Act* of British Columbia. Today, PIBC has over 2,000 members and operates with 11 Board members, 7 staff or appointed positions, and 11 committees. For more information about PIBC, please review the [2023-2025 Strategic Priorities](#) and [2024 PIBC Annual Report](#).

### 3. Context for Proposal

Economic circumstances and labour force constraints are affecting many sectors of the economy, and the planning profession is no exception. Communities in British Columbia and the Yukon are experiencing challenges in recruiting and retaining planners to fill vacant positions. Addressing the housing crisis and infrastructure deficits, in addition to addressing climate change and other strategic issues affecting the livability and prosperity of communities across British Columbia and the Yukon, requires the unique skillsets of trained, competent professional planners in the public (i.e. local governments), private (i.e. real estate developers, consultants), and non-profit sectors.

Adding to the labour force challenge are reductions in training opportunities for new planners, such as recent changes to some university planning schools and a growing field of employers in various sectors who engage and employ planning professionals. Other barriers also include the recognition and matching of foreign (non-Canadian or American) credentials and experience for planners who are immigrating to Canada. Also, making progress in reconciliation requires the profession and the Institute to be more open and accessible to Indigenous planners and practitioners. In a pluralistic society and increasing mistrust of institutions, planners should reflect the diversity of the communities that they serve.

It is acknowledged that WorkBC, a program of the Province of British Columbia and Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills ([https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/urban-and-land-use-planners#career\\_overview](https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/urban-and-land-use-planners#career_overview)), has compiled statistics of the number of urban and land use planners in British Columbia the province and developed a forecast of job openings in 2024-2034. However, there is uncertainty about the jobs forecast and whether they reflect recent adjustments to federal immigration targets, economic cycles and the recent provincial housing legislation which sets out new requirements (and authorizations) for local governments to facilitate more housing development. Also, the WorkBC jobs forecast does not take into account the new federal government's policy platform related to housing, climate action, energy, and infrastructure.



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PIBC is also undertaking several initiatives that will benefit from the proposed work. First, the [Professional Governance Research and Engagement Project](#) is well underway to engage members about the BC *Professional Governance Act* and the pros and cons of having planners and the planning profession become regulated by the Province of British Columbia. The Board has taken no position on any potential transition to the *Professional Governance Act*. Second, PIBC is undertaking an equity audit to evaluate the Institute's current practices, policies, and culture to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in promoting one of the key strategic priorities of the Board around advancing justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility within the organization and its activities. PIBC is also committed to advancing Indigenous reconciliation, including increasing the number of Indigenous planners and decolonizing planning practices.

### What is Planning?

Planners work in large urban centres, small communities, across rural and remote landscapes throughout British Columbia, the Yukon, and beyond. Planning is a diverse, multi-disciplinary professional field that includes traditional land-use and municipal planning, but also encompasses many other diverse areas of practice and specialization. Some of these can include:

- General land-use & development
- Long term land-use planning
- Residential & commercial planning & development
- Facilities & infrastructure planning
- Transportation planning
- Social & policy planning
- Housing planning & policy
- Heritage planning & policy
- Environmental planning
- Parks & recreation planning
- Resource management planning
- Economic development

#### *Definition of Planning:*

The profession's traditional, technical definition of 'planning' is as follows:

*'Planning' means the planning of the scientific, aesthetic and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities.*

## 4. Goal and Objectives

### Goal

The goal of the proposed work is to establish a foundation of knowledge about the current state and potential future of the labour market for the planning profession in British Columbia and the Yukon.



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### Objectives

In service of the goal, the objectives are to:

- Undertake data collection and analysis to develop strategic insights into the current and future labour market for planners in BC and the Yukon
- Design a census questionnaire to enumerate all PIBC members to understand key demographics characteristics and other attributes (the administration of the census, analysis of data, and reporting may be included in the proposals to be undertaken within the budgetary scope of this study).

### 5. **Scope of Work**

The general scope is outlined below. The successful Proponent is expected to develop a detailed scope of work for each activity in collaboration with PIBC staff and guidance from the Institute's Member Engagement Committee.

#### **ACTIVITY 1: LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS AND FORECASTS OF PLANNER DEMAND IN BC AND THE YUKON**

The Proponent will assess the demand for planners in British Columbia and the Yukon in the recent past, estimate the range of demand over the next decade, and identify specific strategic challenges and opportunities.

The retrospective portion of the activity will involve engaging a selection of employers that have advertised planning-related job postings with PIBC in the last 24-36 months. A cross-section of employers will be identified to ensure a balanced representation of public sector employer size and geography in BC and the Yukon, private sector employer size and areas of specialization, seniority of roles posted, etc. Whether through surveys, key informant interviews, or a combination thereof, sample lines of inquiry may include:

- *Is there a planner shortage in British Columbia and the Yukon?*
- *Was it easy or difficult for employers to fill planning roles?*
- *Were the advertised roles additional positions and/or replacement positions?*
- *Are senior roles being filled by less experienced or qualified candidates?*
- *What are the barriers to attracting, recruiting, and retaining planners?*
- *Are planners staying in their roles or leaving to different employers or industries?*
- *Are there gaps in specific skills and knowledge that you are seeing in potential recruits?*
- *How important was it for you to hire a certified Registered Professional Planner or candidate member of PIBC?*
- *Have you filled a planner role with someone who is not a certified Registered Professional Planner or candidate member of PIBC?*

The retrospective analysis will also include undertaking an exploratory analysis of PIBC membership rolls for any noteworthy patterns or trends (e.g. members suspending their PIBC membership or leaving the profession earlier in their careers).



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The prospective portion of the activity is to quantitatively estimate the labour demand for planners over the next 5 to 20 years (the precise time horizon and number of forecast scenarios will be determined in the final scope). Where appropriate, the forecast scenarios should be disaggregated by British Columbia and the Yukon at a minimum and in other categories as agreed upon with PIBC (e.g. sectors that employ planners, the nine geographic chapters of the Planning Institute of British Columbia <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/pibc-chapters>, etc.).

As part of the work, the Proponent should engage other key informant organizations, such as post-secondary planning program administrators in BC, the Local Government Management Association, Urban Land Institute, NAIOP, Urban Development Institute, Canadian Homebuilders' Association of BC, etc. PIBC may provide assistance in facilitating connections to these key informant organizations.

### **ACTIVITY 2: CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

PIBC currently lacks robust data about the demographics of its members in BC and the Yukon. For the reasons stated in the proposal context, the Institute is interested in implementing a census to enumerate all of its members. The Proponent will design a census questionnaire that captures demographic information and other key attributes of members. The Proponent is expected to engage with select standing committees of PIBC as appropriate, such as the Planning Practice and Reconciliation Committee and Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization and Inclusion Working Group, in the design of the census questionnaire. Please note: the Proponent may include in their proposal the administration of the census and conduct of the data analysis and report preparation, all within the scope of the maximum budget (see next section). The timing of the census will be determined during detailed scoping.

### **6. Budget**

The maximum budget is approximately \$50,000. The final budget will reflect the scope agreed upon between PIBC and the successful Proponent.

### **7. Deliverables**

The expected output deliverables for each activity are in the form of memos and PowerPoint slides communicating the methodologies, assumptions, data analysis, key findings, and, where appropriate, recommendations or future considerations.

The Proponent is expected to meet and coordinate with PIBC staff on an agreed-to regular basis for the purposes of project management. The Proponent is expected to engage with the Institute's Member Engagement Committee at project start-up and at pre-determined milestones to present draft and final findings. Engagement with other PIBC standing committees, such as the Planning Practice and Reconciliation Committee, Policy and Public Affairs Committee, and Justice, Equity, Diversity, Decolonization and Inclusion Working Group, may be appropriate and will be determined in the final scope. The Proponent may also be requested to present the final findings to the PIBC Board, other key internal audiences, and one online webinar open to members.



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### 8. Schedule

The Proponent will provide a schedule to achieve the scope of work set out in this RFP. A final detailed scope of work and schedule will be prepared in collaboration with PIBC and be finalized generally within several weeks of onboarding.

### 9. Submission Requirements

Interested Proponent teams must submit the following materials by 4:00PM PST, September 19, 2025 to PIBC's Manager of Research and Policy, Raymond Kan RPP, MCIP ([Raymond.Kan@pibc.bc.ca](mailto:Raymond.Kan@pibc.bc.ca)).

- A cover letter expressing interest and understanding of the project, qualifications, and experience
- A proposal (not to exceed 12 pages, excluding key personnel resumes) comprising:
  - **Team description:** overview of team members, including qualifications and experience
  - **Team expertise and experience:** detailed summation of the team's expertise and experience related to this scope of work.
  - **Project management structure:** critical for efficient and effective workflows and engagement with the client.
  - **Personnel Qualifications:** provide the key personnel, their roles, and their time allocation; for each personnel, include a resume in the appendix.
  - **Proposed project work plan:** include approach, methodology, tasks, deliverables, timelines, and time allocation of personnel; identify and describe any proposed deviations from the scope of work specified in this document.
  - **Proposed project budget and allocation:** separated by task
  - **Other information:** Any other information you consider relevant to the work.

### 10. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Qualifications and experience (Maximum Points TBD<sup>1</sup>)**
  - Qualifications of the team to undertake the project based on expertise, past project experience, and assembled personnel
  - Appropriate allocation of personnel to specific tasks
- **Approach and Methodology (Maximum Points TBD):**
  - Demonstrated understanding of the project
  - Clear articulation of the approach, methodology, schedule, and project management structure
  - Value-add or innovative offerings
- **Price (Maximum Points TBD):**
  - The Proponent offering the lowest price will be awarded the maximum points (TBD)
  - Other Proponents' scores = Maximum Points x (Lowest Price/Proponent Price)
- **References (Maximum Points TBD):**
  - Previous client or employer feedback

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<sup>1</sup> The maximum points achievable for each criterion will be determined by the Member Engagement Committee (or a designated evaluation working group) prior to the initiation of the evaluation of the proposals.



Planning Institute of British Columbia  
Request for Proposals

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The evaluation process noted above will determine the prominent submission(s) with the highest point score(s). PIBC may deem the Proponent with the highest point score to be the successful Proponent, or PIBC may conduct an interview with a minimum of two Proponents with the highest point scores.

Should PIBC choose to conduct interviews, the results and impressions from the interviews will be combined with the total point scores to determine which Proponent is deemed to be the successful Proponent.

PIBC will select, at its sole discretion, the Proponent that it determines is best suited to achieve the objectives for this work. Based on its evaluation and determination, PIBC reserves the right to, at its sole discretion, decline to proceed with any Proponent or submission received.