

# Association of Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities 77th Annual General Meeting & Convention

April 24-26, 2026 – Victoria Conference Centre, 720 Douglas Street, Victoria



## PROGRAM Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026

### PRE-CONVENTION PROGRAM

- 7:30 am Registration Desk Opens (Upstairs Lobby)
- 8:00 am – 11:30 am Tour: Victoria Placemaking & Marine Emergency Response (meet at Registration Desk)
- 8:30 am – 11:30 am Tour: CFB Esquimalt Base (meet at Registration Desk)
- 8:30 am – 11:30 am Tour: Saanich Rewilding Walking Tour (meet at Registration Desk)
- 9:30 am – 11:30 am Workshop: Navigating the Big Divides (Carson Hall C)
- 11:30 am – 1:30 pm Chiefs, Mayors and Chairs Forum and Lunch (Sidney Room)
- 11:30 am – 1:30 pm Electoral Area Directors & Friends Forum and Lunch (Colwood Room)
- 1:00 pm Trade Show Opens (Upstairs Lobby and Carson Hall A)

**TRADE SHOW HOURS: 1:00 pm – 7:30 pm**

### AGM & CONVENTION MAIN PROGRAM – Carson Hall B & C

- 2:00 pm Lekwungen Dancers & Territorial Welcome  
Convention Welcome & Opening Remarks: President Ben Geselbracht  
Welcome from Host: Mayor Marianne Alto
- 2:20 pm Provincial Address
- 2:35 pm Nominating Committee Report: Past President Penny Cote  
Municipal Finance Authority Update
- 2:40 pm Keynote Address: Shachi Kurl: *Where are We Headed? And Where are We Now?*
- 3:40 pm – 4:05 pm Refreshment Break (Trade Show – Carson Hall A)
- 4:05 pm BCLC Trivia!
- 4:15 pm Island Health Update: Leah Hollins, Chair, Island Health Board of Directors
- 4:20 pm Nominations from the Floor and Candidate Speeches for Table Officers
- 4:25 pm E-Comm 911 Update
- 4:30 pm Plenary Session: *Fostering Collaborative Governance – Modernizing ICET*
- 5:30 pm Final Comments and Wrap-Up, Door Prize Draw, Adjourn
- 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm Welcome Reception – CUPE BC (Upstairs Lobby and Trade Show – Carson Hall A)
- 5:30 pm Voting for Table Officers begins (voting is on-line)

DRAFT PROGRAM – April 1, 2026

# PROGRAM

## Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026

### TRADE SHOW HOURS: 7:15 am – 3:00 pm

- 7:00 am – 8:30 am Breakfast Service (Upstairs Lobby)
- 7:30 am – 8:30 am Working Breakfast: *Partnering on Vancouver Island & Coastal BC Healthcare Recruitment* (Carson Hall, B & C)
- 8:30 am Convention Day 2 – Opening Remarks  
Annual Meeting and President’s Address
- Convention Rules and Procedures
  - Minutes of 2025 Annual General Meeting
  - 2026 Annual Report
  - 2025 Audited Financial Statements
- 8:40 am MIABC Update
- 8:45 am UBCM President Address: President Cori Ramsay
- 9:00 am Consideration of Resolutions, Session 1
- 10:05 am – 10:30 am Refreshment Break (Trade Show – Carson Hall A)
- 10:30 am Voting for Table Officers closes (voting is on-line)
- 10:30 am UBCM Governance Review Update
- 11:00 am Consideration of Resolutions, Session 2
- 12:00 pm Nominating Committee Report  
Nominations from the Floor and Candidate Speeches for Directors at Large
- 12:10 pm CREST Emergency Communications Address
- 12:15 pm – 1:25 pm Delegates Lunch (Upstairs Lobby, Desserts served in Trade Show – Carson Hall A)

### CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

- 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm #1 *Troubled Waters – Regulation of Activities In and Around Waterways* (Carson Hall C)
- 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm #2 *Permissive Tax Exemptions, Grants, and More: Exploring Good Practices* (Sidney Room)
- 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm #3 *What Councils Need to Know – AI in Local Government: Strategy, Governance, and Responsible Adoption* (Colwood Room)
- 2:30 pm – 3:00 pm Refreshment Break (Trade Show – Carson Hall A)
- 3:00 pm Voting for Directors at Large opens (voting is online if required)
- 3:00 pm Trade Show closes
- 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm #4 *How Do We Solve a Problem Like Engagement?* (Sidney Room)
- 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm #5 *Cowichan Tribes Case: Implications for Local Government* (Colwood Room)
- 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm #6 *The Future of Forestry on Vancouver Island & Coastal BC* (Carson Hall C)

### GALA RECEPTION (BANQUET)

- 6:30 pm – 10:30 pm Gala Reception ('Banquet') (Fairmont Empress, Rattenbury Ballroom & Foyer)  
Signature Cocktails, Chef’s Action Stations & Reception-Style Dinner Service  
“Four Frames” Photobooth, DJ Jill Cooper, “Four Suits” Close-Up Magicians,  
Elena Antontevca – Cellist, and Sarah Murphy aka “Lil Jam Jam” as our host

# PROGRAM

## Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026

7:30 am – 8:30 am	Networking Breakfast (Carson Hall B & C, Upper Lobby)
7:30 am	Voting for Directors at Large closes (voting is online if required)
8:30 am	Convention Day 3 – Opening Remarks & Life Membership Award Nominating Committee Report Nominations from the Floor and Candidate Speeches for Electoral Area <and CRD> Representative (if required)
8:40 am	Insurance Corporation of BC Update
8:45 am	Federation of Canadian Municipalities Update – Councillor Will Cole-Hamilton
9:00 am	Island Coastal Economic Trust Update
9:00 am	Voting for Electoral Area <and CRD> Representative opens (voting is online if required)
9:05 am	Plenary Session: <i>Strong Towns: Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild Canadian Prosperity</i>
10:05 am – 10:30 am	Refreshment Break (Upper Lobby)
10:30 am	Green Party Leader, Emily Lowen
10:40 am	Student Delegate Address
10:45 am – 11:40 am	Consideration of Resolutions (including Late & Off-The-Floor), Session 3
11:00 am	Voting for Electoral Area <and CRD> Representative closes (voting is online if required)
11:40 am	AVICC Advocacy Update / Resolutions Prioritization & Advocacy Survey
11:55 am	Nominating Committee Report (as required) Installation of New AVICC Executive Remarks by President-Elect 2027 Convention Announcement Grand Prize Draw – BC Ferries Prize Package – Must Be Present to Win
12:00 pm	Adjourn & Safe Travels

### THANK YOU TO OUR HOSTS



Special thanks are extended to the City of Victoria for hosting AVICC's 77<sup>th</sup> AGM & Convention, and to the City of Colwood, the District of Saanich, the District of Metchosin, and the Township of Esquimalt for their in-kind and financial contributions. Our hosts helped with many aspects of the planning to make the 2026 Convention a success.

Thank you for making the Convention a great experience!

# ACCESSIBILITY AT AVICC

This year, the AVICC Executive is thrilled to offer a more accessible and inclusive convention. We are offering the following accessibility features:

- A designated quiet space with a low-stimulus environment & viewing access to the plenary sessions;
- Access to [GoodMaps](#) indoor navigation at the Victoria Conference Centre (VCC)
- [KultureCity®](#) trained event staff at VCC to support those with invisible disabilities or sensory needs
- Sensory backpacks with white noise machines, headphones, and other supportive tools
- Wireless microphones and spotters for Q & A at sessions for those with mobility challenges;
- **Auracast™**, the next generation of Bluetooth® audio broadcasting for assistive listening brought to us by [Advanced Listening](#), based on Vancouver Island. Thank you to Tim and his team for making this possible!

AVICC actively seeks out this input to guide accessibility improvements. Please write to [info@avicc.ca](mailto:info@avicc.ca) with questions or recommendations on accessibility at AVICC.

## TIM ARCHER – ADVANCED LISTENING

With more than 40 years of experience in professional audio, Tim Archer, based in North Saanich, has designed immersive sound environments for IMAX films, museums, science centres, and themed attractions. In 2012, he founded Advanced Listening to apply this expertise to improving communication access for people who are hard of hearing, designing and installing assistive listening systems across Canada.



Founded in 2012, Advanced Listening works nationwide, researching and implementing technologies that make public spaces more accessible for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing communities. The team regularly presents at audiology conferences and contributes their expertise to the Rick Hansen Foundation's technical advisory work on accessibility. Advanced Listening also works with clinics across the country, showcasing the wide variety of assistive listening solutions available to support people with hearing loss.

At this conference, Advanced Listening is excited to introduce **Auracast™**, the next generation of Bluetooth® audio broadcasting for assistive listening and will be providing an Auracast transmission of the presentations for attendees to experience during the conference.

Advanced Listening has helped create accessible listening environments for transportation and health authorities, municipalities, houses of worship, and educational institutions, using technologies such as induction hearing loops, RF and I/R broadcast systems, and adaptive SoundField solutions.

Reach us at [info@advancedlistening.ca](mailto:info@advancedlistening.ca), by phone at 778.426.4327 & at [www.advancedlistening.ca](http://www.advancedlistening.ca) or visit their kiosk at this year's event to connect!



# TRADE SHOW

## TRADE SHOW HOURS

Friday 1:00 pm – 7:30 pm  
Saturday 7:15am – 3:00 pm

## EXHIBITORS

- ◇ BC Assessment
- ◇ BC Hydro
- ◇ BC Nurses' Union
- ◇ BC Salmon Farmers
- ◇ BC Transit
- ◇ Children's Health Foundation
- ◇ Council of Forest Industries
- ◇ CREST Emergency Communications
- ◇ CUPE BC – Canadian Union of Public Employees BC
- ◇ CUPE 8911 – Emergency Communications Professionals of BC
- ◇ CUPE Vancouver Island District Council
- ◇ Disability Alliance BC
- ◇ FortisBC Energy
- ◇ Green Roots Play Equipment
- ◇ Insurance Corporation of BC
- ◇ Interchange Recycling
- ◇ Island Coastal Economic Trust
- ◇ Island Health
- ◇ Managed Forest Council
- ◇ Mosaic Forest Management
- ◇ ParkMobile
- ◇ Strategic Natural Resource Group
- ◇ Private Forest Landowners Association
- ◇ Trans Mountain – **TRADESHOW SPONSOR**
- ◇ Urban Systems
- ◇ Vancouver Island Community Health Networks
- ◇ Western Canada Marine Response Corporation
- ◇ Western Forest Products

## PROGRAM SPONSOR



**BC ASSESSMENT**

# SPONSORS

We wish to thank our sponsors for their contributions toward the 2026 AVICC Convention:

## PLATINUM SPONSORS

### Gala Reception Entertainment

BC Lottery Corporation

### Friday Welcome Reception

CUPE BC

## GOLD SPONSORS

### Keynote Speaker

Municipal Finance  
Authority of BC

### Delegates Lunch

CREST Emergency  
Communications

### Saturday Morning Breakfast

Municipal Insurance  
Association of BC

### Gala Reception Dinner

Young Anderson

### Sunday Closing Session

Insurance Corporation of BC

### Friday Plenary Session

E-Comm 911

### Friday Opening Session

Island Health

### Sunday Plenary Session

Island Coastal Economic Trust

## SILVER SPONSORS

**Gala Reception Appetizers:** Fortis BC

**Chiefs, Mayors & Chairs Forum:**  
Lidstone & Company

**Gala Reception Cocktails:** Urban Systems

**Trade Show:** Trans Mountain

**Friday Morning Session:**  
BC Council of Forest Industries (COFI)

## BRONZE & CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS

**Program:** BC Assessment

**Communications:** Mosaic Forest Management

**Registration Services:** Western Forest Products

**Friday Afternoon Refreshment Break:** CUPE 8911 – Emergency Professionals

**Saturday Morning Refreshment Break:** Interchange Recycling

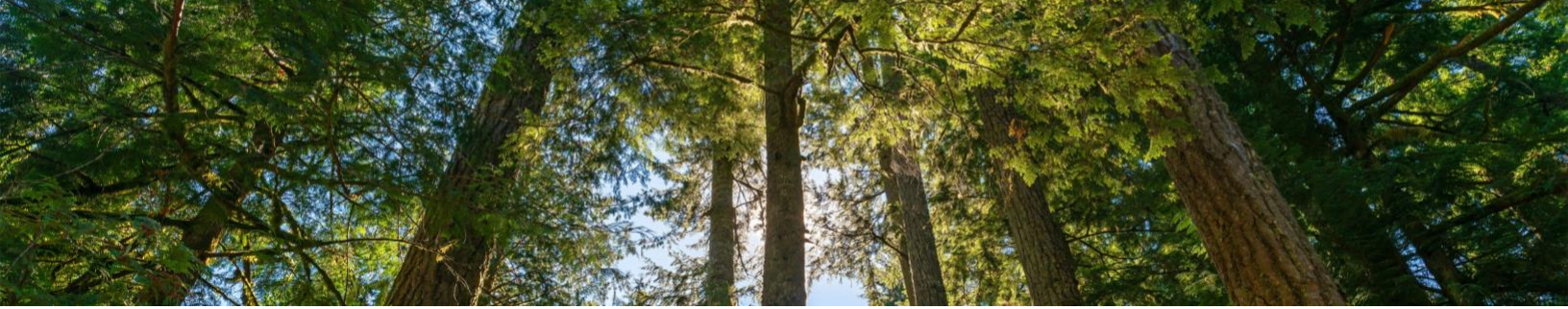
**Saturday Afternoon Refreshment Break:** BC Hydro

**Sunday Morning Refreshment Break:** CUPE VI District Council

**Grand Prize:** BC Ferry Services

**Transportation:** BC Transit

# SPEAKER GIFT DONATION



Historically, AVICC has provided gifts to our speakers to thank them for their participation in our convention. Since 2022, the AVICC Executive determined that rather than purchase gifts, that we donate to a local charitable organization that benefits the residents in our region.

This practice is being continued for 2026, and a donation will be made to The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, and to the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society in lieu of Speakers Gifts. Please visit their websites to learn more about how these organizations benefit our communities.



For more than fifty years, the Inter-Cultural Association's (ICA) purpose has been to support the full integration of newcomer immigrants and refugees into the social, economic and civic life of the Capital Region of British Columbia. Founded in the 1970s as a response to racism in our community, today, we

continue that important work by offering wide ranging services that help newcomers access housing, healthcare and employment as well as English language instruction and mentorship. Alongside our direct services to newcomers, ICA helps Greater Victoria be a more welcoming place by providing anti-racism programming and community education. At ICA, we believe no one who joins our community should ever feel vulnerable or alone. When people have the support they need, they end up giving back far more to the community than they receive.

Visit <https://www.icavictoria.org/about-ica> to learn more or to make a donation.

Founded in 1992 through the merger of two Victoria youth organizations, the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society (YES) has grown from five staff and three programs into a leading youth-serving agency with 80 full- and part-time professionals and an annual budget of more than \$3 million. While rooted in supporting street-entrenched youth, YES now offers a continuum of prevention, intervention, treatment, and education services. Programs include youth and family counselling, outreach, crisis response (including after-hours support and emergency shelter), life-skills and independent-living supports, and advocacy related to mental health, addictions, housing, education, and employment. Responding to increasing mental health and economic pressures, YES continues to expand practical, holistic supports, including its Youth Food Pantry—providing groceries, cooking-skill building, employment workshops, and a safe, welcoming space to connect with supports.



Visit <https://www.vyes.ca/agency> to learn more or to make a donation

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER: SHACHI KURL

### Where Are We Going? And Where Are We Now?

*An informed look at today's most important issues*

**Friday, 2:40 pm**

As a keynote speaker, Shachi Kurl takes a “kitchen table” approach to discussions of economic, cultural, and political exigency. That means she’s an expert at breaking big, complicated ideas down into everyday language, and showing groups and individuals why they matter. Jobs, health care, immigration, education, US/Canadian trade and political relations, all the way to the state of social media, entertainment, and access to technology – no topic is too large, or too broad. And she does this with humor, disarming charisma, and the timeless appeal of informed, insightful commentary.



As the Executive Director of the Angus Reid Institute, Kurl looks at the ripples, waves, and major tides of public opinion. And as a leading nonpartisan research organization, Angus Reid isn’t beholden to private or government interests; in fact, it isn’t beholden to profits, period. Which means Kurl can guide and frame the narrative around issues that pull us together, free of obligation to some third-party guiding her hand. It also means she can debunk harmful myths that could otherwise have serious consequences. Why? Because these issues matter; because they matter to ordinary people who are concerned about their future; and, sometimes, simply, because it’s good to know. So, pull up a chair to Shachi Kurl’s kitchen table talk and come away knowing so much more!

## BIOGRAPHY

As the head of the Angus Reid Institute, Shachi Kurl uses data to consider today’s most critical questions. The non-partisan research she oversees reveals startling truths about how our values, beliefs, and priorities shape both the future of our country, and the current reality of our lives. In her frank and compelling talks, Kurl shares how to get to the heart of our major cultural, economic, and political shifts—and find common ground during times of upheaval.

When The Wall Street Journal, The Globe and Mail or The National Post want to understand everything from the public perception of Justin Trudeau to the meat consumption of millennials, they turn to Shachi Kurl. As the Executive Director of the Angus Reid Institute, Kurl has a remarkable grasp on what we’re collectively thinking about society’s most pressing issues. One of North America’s premier nonpartisan, nonprofit research and public polling organizations, the Institute helps debunk harmful myths and expand public knowledge in a meaningful way. Kurl, having spent the first half of her career as a political reporter, brings nearly two decades of public policy expertise to her role, and has even been sought by policymakers to testify before the House of Commons. Today, she is regularly called upon by the media for her unique insights, including on CBC’s At Issue, Canada’s most watched political panel.

Kurl is a recipient of the Jack Webster Award for Best TV Reporting. Along with former Australian and UK Prime Ministers Julia Gillard and Margaret Thatcher, she is an Alumnus of the US State Department’s International Visitor Leadership Program. She holds a degree in Journalism and Political Science from Carleton University.

# FRIDAY PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

## Navigating the Big Divides:

*An experience of self-reflection and exploration to more effectively navigate polarization*

**Friday, 9:30 am – 11:30 am**

Feeling the strain of division in your council, board, or in your community? Finding it challenging to engage in dialogue with those who hold diverging views? Do you want to engage more constructively across differences without compromising your core values? Join us for an **interactive workshop** that offers a practical and reflective space for elected leaders who want to navigate divisiveness with greater intention and skill. We will apply the *Polarity Management Framework* to explore the challenge of holding steadfast convictions and staying open to other perspectives – essential skills for anyone in public service today. By the end of the workshop, you'll have a deeper understanding of this dynamic within yourself and identify new strategies to help cultivate relationships across divides while staying true to your values.

Through this workshop, you can expect to:

- ◇ Feel less alone by connecting with others facing similar leadership challenges
- ◇ Gain fresh insight into how you personally respond to conflict and difference
- ◇ Learn a practical framework for navigating polarities and complex tensions
- ◇ Identify actions you can take to lead with greater confidence, clarity, and empathy

This is not about changing others. It's about deepening your own awareness and capacity to show up with courage and connection in the face of disagreement. Whether you're navigating tension at the council table, in your constituency, or within your own leadership, this session will support you in strengthening your relational and leadership effectiveness.

### PRESENTERS:

**NikNaz Kahn moui** (she/her) – With over twenty years of experience in strategic and operational planning across a variety of organizations, including public, private, and non-profit sectors, NikNaz has worked internationally with Fortune Global 500 companies as well as grassroots groups operating on limited budgets. Over the past ten years, her focus has been supporting non-profit and public sector organizations, helping them navigate complex decisions and drive transformational change. She is a certified Non-Profit Lifecycles Capacity Consultant (CLCC), holds an MA in interdisciplinary studies, possesses a Project Management Professional (PMP) certificate, and has also earned a certificate in Dialogue and Civic Engagement. She is a first-generation queer immigrant from Iran and settler on the unceded lands of the skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), selílwitulh (Tsiléil-Waututh), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) nations.



**Lynda Gerty** (she/her) – For more than ten years, Lynda has worked as a leadership coach and organizational consultant, supporting numerous executive directors and senior leaders through times of change. Her aim is to help them boost their impact and foster healthier, more effective teams. Her consulting draws on extensive experience in adult learning, group dynamics, and systems change. She carefully considers both strategic challenges and interpersonal relationships, guiding mission-driven leaders and organizations with inquiry and dialogue that opens doors to new possibilities and solutions. Lynda is a Certified Executive Coach (CEC) from Royal Roads University and holds the Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credential from the International Coach Federation. Additionally, she earned a Masters in Human Systems Intervention (HSI) from Concordia University and a Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University. She is a fifth-generation settler of Irish, Scottish, and French descent, and member of the LGBTQIA+ community, residing on the unceded territories of the Ləkʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ people.

# FRIDAY PLENARY SESSION

## **Fostering Collaborative Governance:**

*Modernizing Island Coastal Economic Trust to Build Systems for Prosperity*

**Friday, 4:30 pm**

Vancouver Island and the coastal region are entering a new era of regional economic development, where the Province of British Columbia, First Nations, and local governments are jointly co-governing the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET). This collaborative approach aims to foster innovation, trust, and shared prosperity by aligning power, vision, and resources among partners. New provincial legislation, shaped by years of partnership and consensus-building, is formalizing this model. It reflects modern governance principles that respect Indigenous rights and local input, marking a significant policy shift toward building resilient economies.

Recent AVICC conventions highlighted progress, with both First Nations and local government leaders supporting legislative recommendations. This session, including the Province as a full partner, offers delegates a chance to explore how co-governance can drive lasting community-led prosperity. These efforts position the coast as a leader in co-governance, potentially informing similar models across BC and Canada.

## **MODERATOR & PRESENTER**

**Brodie Guy** is an executive leader focused on sustainable development, conservation, innovation, and ecological restoration in British Columbia. He is the **CEO of Island Coastal Economic Trust**, Chair of Comox Valley Project Watershed Society, Director with Community Energy Association, and advisor to the Watershed Security Fund. Previously, he led Coast Funds, partnering with First Nations and generating \$1.7 billion in economic output. Brodie holds a Chartered Director designation from McMaster University and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Victoria.

## **PANELISTS**

**Tim Lesiuk, ADM, Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth** leads efforts to promote inclusive economic growth in BC, supporting entrepreneurs, small businesses, regional economies, and provincial strategy. He previously oversaw international trade development, created CleanBC, and served as Senior Executive with the Climate Action Secretariat for BC's first Climate Action Plan in 2008. With experience in sustainable development and the energy sector, Tim has worked at BC Hydro and Westcoast Energy. He holds a B.Sc. in Biology from the University of Victoria and a Diploma in Environmental Science from Camosun College.

**Bob Chamberlin** is a Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation citizen and a former multi-term Chief Councillor. He served as Vice-President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs for ten years, advocating on democratic, environmental, and social issues through presentations to Senate Committees and other authorities. Bob now lives in qathet (Powell River), chairs the First Nation Wild Salmon Alliance, and is a director at the Royal BC Museum.

**Ashley Wright** is a member of the K'ómoks First Nation from Comox Valley, educated at Vancouver Island University and UBC Sauder School of Business. She works with several BC Nations on treaty processes, led ratifications for K'ómoks and Kitsumkalum, and supports Te'mexw Treaty Association and Metlakatla towards ratification. Ashley also serves as Indigenous Advisor to ICET, offering strategic guidance.

**Mayor Michelle Staples, Chair** was elected Mayor in 2018 after seven years on Duncan City Council. She is Executive Director of Social Planning Cowichan, with two decades of community development experience. Elected to the Trust's board in 2018, Mayor Staples chairs the Duncan Community Sustainability Advisory Team. She owns a small business and facilitates diversity education for Cultural Connections Cowichan. Michelle holds a BA in Applied Communications, Counselling, Diversity Training, and is pursuing a Masters in Integrated Studies for Community Development and Administration.

# SATURDAY PLENARY SESSION

## Partnering on Vancouver Island and Coastal BC Healthcare Recruitment

Saturday, 7:30 am

As we work to expand our health care workforce, through focused US, national, and local recruitment campaigns, collaboration between health authorities and local governments has never been more important. This workshop will offer perspectives and opportunities for collaboration on all parts of the recruitment journey, from first interest to working and living in the community. The interactive session will ask participants to discuss how housing resources, transportation information, and community navigation can help shape a compelling and supportive experience for prospective recruits and their families. We will generate ideas regarding how we can all welcome healthcare workers to find their place at Island Health and Vancouver Coastal Health.

### PRESENTERS:

**Kent Flint** is an accomplished HR executive with over 20 years of experience leading workforce strategies and cultural transformation across healthcare, technology, and professional services. As **Executive Director of Human Resources & Organizational Development at Island Health**, Kent provides Human Resources Leadership for the health authority, driving initiatives that strengthen leadership, engagement, and inclusive practices across the entire workforce. Kent's work emphasizes collaboration across sectors to build systems that care – for people, purpose, and performance. His experience in creating resilient organizations positions him as a strong advocate for partnerships between health authorities, municipal governments, and public service partners to attract and retain healthcare workers in our communities.

**Kara Ronse, Director, Workforce Strategy, Island Health** brings over six years of experience in health human resources, grounded in a long-standing career in human-centered design across diverse sectors. With a Master of Arts in Conflict Analysis and Management from Royal Roads University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, she blends analytical insight with a deep commitment to understanding people and systems. Her work is fueled by a drive to innovate and empower others through collaborative, coach-centered approaches. Kara is known for creating environments where diverse voices can contribute to meaningful change and where solutions are shaped by the lived experiences of the communities they serve.

**Damian Lange** is the **Executive Director, Clinical Service Delivery at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital**. Damian brings 20 years of mixed clinical and administrative leadership to his daily activities and is dedicated to improving patient care to patients locally and across the region. In addition to his leadership role, Damian sits on the Nanaimo & District Hospital Foundation (NDHF) Board. A further opportunity for Damian and the teams to advocate for improved healthcare services for the local and broader region.

**Pat Deakin**, is a seasoned Community Economic Development Practitioner with an abiding belief in the power of partnerships and regional collaboration. With extensive experience in economic development and public sector partnerships, Pat has served as the **Economic Development Manager for the City of Port Alberni** since 2007. His previous roles include Manager of Public Sector Partnerships with the OneStop Business Registry at the BC Ministry of Finance, Economic Development Manager for the Town of Oliver, and Band Manager and Economic Development Manager for the Uchucklesaht Tribe. Throughout his career, Pat has been dedicated to fostering sustainable growth and collaboration across communities and sectors

**Rudy Terpstra, Director of Education, SD69** has been a secondary teacher, vice-principal and principal before becoming Director of Instruction. He has been involved in Career Education throughout his career, and his current portfolio includes the district career education program lead. Currently, he is co-chair of the Vancouver Island Regional Collaborative. His district also has a Health & Human Services Explorations Program.

**Additional Panelist from Vancouver Coastal Health, to be confirmed.**

# SUNDAY PLENARY SESSION



## **Strong Towns: *A Bottom-Up Revolution to Rebuild Canadian Prosperity*** **Sunday, 9:05 am**

Why are so many cities and towns across North America going broke? Our roads are deteriorating. Our governments are in debt. No matter how much we increase them, our taxes aren't enough to fix it all. And no one seems to be able to agree on how we got here, much less how to change the course. This isn't just about numbers on a budget. This is about the fate of the communities we love most, and the real people that live there. This is about how to give our citizens a chance at the future they deserve. If we want Canadian cities to be strong and resilient, we need to change everything about the way we plan and build our places.

In this presentation, we explain, in plain language, how so many Canadian cities have found themselves in decline after decades of "growth." And then we show you a revolutionary way forward that could create enduring prosperity – if we just have the courage to change our minds.

In this session, Norm Van Eeden Petersman will discuss:

- ◇ Why our cities are on the cusp of a long, slow decline, and how to approach the necessary triage in a rational way;
- ◇ Why inducing growth and development has been the conventional response to urban financial struggles – and why it just doesn't work;
- ◇ Why old and blighted areas are often more financially productive than shiny new ones;
- ◇ The power of "little bets" to strengthen communities and improve the lives of citizens; and
- ◇ How humble public engagement can create amazing insights. The surprising ways that strong neighborhoods make us better people.

### **PRESENTER:**

**Norm Van Eeden Petersman** is the Director of Membership at Strong Towns. He is a skilled communicator of the Strong Towns message and a community builder. He leads DelPOP, a land use reform and housing advocacy group in Delta, British Columbia, and is a leader of the [Strong Towns Toastmasters Club](#).

Norm has a Master of Divinity and a Bachelor's in Political Studies. He spent 10 years pastoring churches in Canada as a preacher, teacher, and leader. He worked in communications for the second-largest city in British Columbia and carried out infrastructure-related stakeholder outreach for Canada's Minister of Health and Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario in Ottawa, ON.



Norm has published articles on housing, transportation, faith, and culture and his writing appears regularly on the Strong Towns site. You can connect with him on Twitter at [@normvep](#) or [on LinkedIn](#).

# PLENARY UPDATE SESSIONS

## **UBCM Governance Review Update and Engagement**

**Saturday, 10:30 am**

Update and engagement on the UBCM governance review process, which responds to recent requests from the membership through resolutions and direct correspondence. The governance review focuses on representation of the range of UBCM members as reflected in the composition of the UBCM Executive board and the name of the organization.

Immediately following the Session, UBCM Executive Director Gary MacIsaac, and UBCM Staff and Consultants will be available in the Metchosin Room for further questions, conversations and further engagement.

### **PRESENTERS**

**Gary MacIsaac**, Executive Director, Union of BC Municipalities

**Additional presenter(s) to be confirmed**

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## **Federation of Canadian Municipalities Update**

**Sunday, 8:45 am**

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is the national voice of local governments in Ottawa. This update will touch on new FCM programs secured in the past year and include a brief update on the future of federally supported local government programs.

### **PRESENTER**

**Will Cole-Hamilton**, AVICC Director at Large; FCM BC Caucus Chair; Councillor, City of Courtenay; Chair, Comox Valley Regional District

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## **AVICC Advocacy Update, Resolutions & Advocacy Prioritization Survey**

**Sunday, 11:40 am**

The primary role of AVICC is to advocate on behalf of its members. Following a strategic planning session in 2021, the Executive presented the outcomes at the 2022 Convention, where the membership formally endorsed an AVICC Advocacy Policy. In March, the AVICC Executive updated its Strategic Plan, establishing direction for the Association's forthcoming terms, following our transition to becoming an independent organization with a designated full-time employee.

The AVICC Executive has determined that input from members will enhance the prioritization of issues in the development of the Advocacy Plan for the upcoming term. To facilitate this, an inaugural advocacy planning meeting, distinct from the Regular Executive Meeting, will be convened to provide an opportunity for the Executive to review what we heard from our members to help inform our advocacy plans for the term. Before the convention adjourns, members will have the opportunity to participate in an online survey designed to assist in prioritizing resolutions and guiding advocacy efforts that will shape the Association's work. This survey will also be sent to members who are not in attendance at the convention, for additional opportunities for feedback.

### **PRESENTERS**

**Ben Geselbracht**, AVICC President; Councillor, City of Nanaimo; Director, Regional District of Nanaimo

# SATURDAY CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

## **Troubled Waters:** *Select topics in local government regulation of activities in and around waterways* **Saturday, 1:30 pm – Carson Hall C**

Vancouver Island and Coastal BC's communities and their local governments face unique regulatory challenges due to their proximity to the ocean along with the reliance of some of these communities on watersheds that may be impacted by forestry operations in their vicinity. The legal complexities of regulating activities on water or impacting water are further compounded by the division of powers between the Federal and Provincial Government, which grant these levels of government authority over distinct matters affecting waterways. This presentation will discuss select topics on how local governments can effectively and lawfully regulate activities in and around bodies of water. Topics discussed will include the removal of abandoned and grounded vessels from the ocean, the regulation of construction in the foreshore, the regulation of liveaboards, maintaining watersheds on privately managed forest lands and the use of land title instruments to develop flood mitigation plans to address sea level rise and other hazards.

### **PRESENTERS**

**David Giroday** is an **Associate Lawyer at Young, Anderson**, specialising in local government law. Since completing his Juris Doctor at the University of Windsor in 2018, he has worked with local governments and public authorities, focusing on economic development corporations. David assists with incorporation, real property transactions, capital alterations, FOI requests, and commercial agreements.

**Sophie Marshall** is an **Associate Lawyer with Young, Anderson**. She maintains a general municipal law practice, with a focus on real estate and development work. Prior to joining Young Anderson, Sophie worked in the real estate teams at a large Vancouver law firm and an international law firm in Sydney, Australia. She also worked as a Judicial Law Clerk at the Supreme Court of British Columbia. She obtained her Juris Doctor from the Peter A. Allard School of Law at UBC.

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## **Permissive Tax Exemptions Grants & More:** *Good practice in supporting community impact* **Saturday, 1:30 pm – Sidney Room**

Local governments use a variety of tools to support community impact, including permissive tax exemptions, grants-in-aid, grants-in-kind, service agreements, fee waivers, and more. Each tool varies in effectiveness, ease of administration, equity, fairness, scale of impact, cost to taxpayers, and more.

How are local governments reconsidering how they support community impact? How else might we imagine providing aid the groups that add to the health, vibrancy, and creativity of our communities? This interactive session will focus on the "hivemind" of local government attendees and activities designed to explore both what is, and what else is possible.

### **PRESENTERS**

**Trina Isakson, Councillor** with the **City of Powell River** and **Director at Large, AVICC** grew up in Secwépemc territory (Salmon Arm, BC) moved to Powell River and łaʔamin (Tla'amin) territory in 2018. Her professional work is as a facilitator with community groups that need help doing strategic planning, implementing changes, or dealing with conflict. Trina has also taught university courses on community development and non-profit leadership and management, and she holds an MBA in community economic development. She has been able to volunteer these areas of interest on several qathet region non-profit organizations.

**Additional Panelists, to be confirmed.**

# SATURDAY CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

## **What Councils Need to Know – AI in Local Government:**

*Strategy, Governance, and Responsible Adoption*

**Saturday, 1:30 pm – Colwood Room**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology is advancing rapidly, and councils and boards increasingly need to understand what these tools can, and cannot, do in order to assess both opportunities and risks.

Artificial intelligence is already appearing in the tools local government staff use every day, often before formal policies or council direction are in place. For elected officials, this raises important questions: how can councils ask the right questions, ensure responsible adoption, and establish appropriate guardrails without needing to become AI experts?

Designed specifically for elected officials and board members, this session takes a governance-first approach and explores the role councils play in setting direction, establishing oversight, and ensuring that AI adoption adds value while remaining safe and aligned with community values.

Drawing on examples from municipalities across Canada that are beginning to explore AI, the session will examine what early decisions look like in practice and what councils can learn from communities that are a few steps ahead.

Delegates will work through a simple prioritization framework that councils and boards can use to evaluate which uses of AI may be worth exploring and which may carry risks that warrant caution. A brief, non-technical illustration will ground the discussion by showing how AI is being implemented in municipal processes and systems.

Delegates will leave with practical questions to bring back to their boards and councils and a clearer sense of how councils and boards can proactively build organizational capability for the future.

### **PRESENTERS:**

**Dj Levy** is the Founder and President of ALPHA IT, a Vancouver Island–based technology firm supporting local governments, First Nations organizations, and businesses across the region. Dj works with leadership teams on technology strategy and helps organizations move from reactive IT management toward more confident, strategic use of technology. As AI capabilities rapidly appear in workplace software, he works with clients to explore how these technologies can be introduced safely, responsibly, and in ways that deliver meaningful operational value.

**Geoff Linton** is a digital technology executive, entrepreneur, and advisor with more than 30 years of experience helping organizations adopt emerging technologies in practical and responsible ways. A professional engineer with an MBA, Geoff has founded and led several technology and marketing firms, including Inbox Marketer, a North American digital messaging agency. Today he advises organizations across Canada on AI adoption, helping leadership teams move beyond hype to identify realistic, high-value use cases. Geoff also serves on the Canadian Marketing Association's AI Committee, where he collaborates with industry leaders to advance responsible AI adoption across Canadian organizations.

**Kim Arsenault** is the Director of Sales & Marketing at ALPHA IT. She works with leadership teams across Vancouver Island to help organizations make informed decisions about technology, cybersecurity, and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence. Kim focuses on translating complex technology topics into practical conversations for organizational leaders and will moderate the session discussion, guiding participants through governance considerations and shared experiences from communities across the region.

# SATURDAY CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

## The Future of Forestry on Vancouver Island & in Coastal BC

Saturday, 3:00 – 4:30 pm – Carson Hall C

Join us as we look at the future of forestry on Vancouver Island and across Coastal BC through a collaborative conversation that brings together a range of lived and professional perspectives. The discussion will include voices connected to the resource sector, First Nations, representatives from the forestry and lumber work industry, and climate and environmental experts. Designed as an interactive workshop, the session will combine brief presentations with moderated discussion and audience Q&A, creating space to talk honestly about the economic, social, and environmental realities shaping forestry-dependent communities today.

A key part of the conversation will focus on collaboration around climate change mitigation and wildfire resilience, and how these priorities intersect with forestry practices, workforce impacts, and land stewardship. Panelists will be invited to reflect on shared challenges, areas of tension, and opportunities for working together across sectors and communities. The goal is not to reach simple answers, but to build understanding and highlight pathways for stronger collaboration as local governments, communities, industry, and Indigenous partners navigate the future of forestry in Coastal BC.

### MODERATOR

**Mayor Rob Douglas**, Municipality of North Cowichan

### PRESENTERS

**Dr. Younes Alila** is a **Professor of Forest Hydrology and Watershed Management** in the Department of Forest Resources Management at the **UBC Faculty of Forestry**. A leading expert in hydrology, flooding, and the impact of forestry practices on water resources, Dr. Alila's research has challenged traditional, century-old paradigms regarding the relationship between forest management, clear-cutting, and large-scale flooding, aiming to improve risk assessment for industry and government.

**Michael Armstrong, SVP and Chief Forester at the BC Council of Forest Industries** is a Registered Professional Forester and Chartered Professional Accountant. He brings over 30 years of experience in forestry and professional services to his role at COFI BC. Throughout his career, Michael has been a dedicated advocate for the BC forest industry, focusing on navigating regulatory challenges and promoting the sector's multi-billion-dollar contribution to the provincial economy.

**Geoff Dawe's** tenure as National President of the **Public and Private Workers of Canada (PPWC)** is marked by a steadfast commitment to workers' rights and proactive engagement. Throughout his career at Crofton Mill, he contributed to positive business results through effective organization, prioritization, and follow-through of key organizational projects. Now Past-President of PPWC, Geoff understands first-hand the impacts that forestry policy has on community members throughout the region.

**Chris McGourlick** is a Registered Professional Forester and **Operations Manager with the Forest Enhancement Society of BC (FESBC)**, where he oversees diverse forestry projects across British Columbia. With extensive experience spanning from the Central Coast to the Interior, he focuses on collaborative wildfire risk reduction and innovative fibre utilization strategies. Chris works closely with local partners and project proponents to implement cost-effective solutions that protect communities and reduce GHG emissions.

**Klay Tindall** is the **General Manager of Forest Operations for Lil'wat Forestry Ventures (LFV)** and serves as a **First Nations Technical Forestry Advisor at the BC First Nations Forestry Council**. He earned a Bachelor of Forestry in Forest Resource Management and a Certificate in Advanced Leadership from UBC. At LFV, he oversees contract safety, environmental leadership, and leads the forestry planning team. He manages budgets and coordinates with Lil'wat Nation's Indigenous Affairs/Referrals to support Rights and Titles.

# SATURDAY CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

## How do We Solve a Problem Like Engagement?

**Saturday, 3:00 – 4:30 pm – Sidney Room**

How can local governments deepen trust, reduce polarization, and make better decisions through more meaningful public engagement? This interactive session explores practical, scalable ways to strengthen democratic practice in BC communities. The session begins with a brief look at why traditional engagement tools, especially public hearings, often fall short of what communities need today. Participants will reflect on their own experiences through an assembly-like facilitated deliberation that will lead to shared understanding of democratic values, challenges facing municipalities in public engagement, and how to overcome these challenges using participatory processes.

A panel featuring municipal leaders and democratic-innovation practitioners will introduce realistic pathways for piloting community assemblies and other deliberative models. Speakers will share cost and staffing considerations, recent examples from across the Province, and options for processes that can be delivered in-house using existing and emerging toolkits. The session also introduces the **Community Assembly Network**, a new multi-phase non-partisan initiative launching ahead of the 2026 BC municipal election. Its goal is to make community assemblies a normal part of the local decision-making processes for budgets, OCPs, and other significant issues—while building municipal capacity, improving coordination among practitioners, and strengthening public understanding of deliberative processes. Delegates will leave with practical tools, a clear sense of “what it would take” to adopt assembly-style engagement in their own community, and a QR-code resource package to support next steps.

### PRESENTERS & PANELISTS

**Sonia Furstenau** served ten years in public office, including four as Leader of the BC Green Party. Before politics, she worked as a teacher, researcher, and National Administrator for RESULTS Canada. She holds a BA and MA in History from the University of Victoria. Sonia helped lead a four-year community campaign in Shawnigan Lake to protect local drinking water, resulting in the province revoking a permit for a major contaminated landfill. Her decision to enter politics was driven by the systemic failures she witnessed in BC’s decision-making and its lack of meaningful public engagement.

**Maeve Maguire** served for four years as an elected council member for the Municipality of North Cowichan. For six years, she served with Sonia Furstenau, first as constituency assistant then as chief of staff for the Green Caucus in the British Columbia Legislature. Maeve was instrumental in initiating the Citizens’ Assembly on the Duncan–North Cowichan amalgamation study and served as a facilitator for the Victoria–Saanich Citizens’ Assembly on amalgamation. Prior to politics, Maeve worked as a technical writer, columnist, and communications specialist. Maeve has extensive experience working with communities to shape decisions and is skilled in guiding discussions to ensure all participants feel informed, included, and supported

**Dr. Aftab Erfan** (she/her) is Executive Director of SFU Centre for Dialogue and Associate Member at SFU School of Public Policy. She was Vancouver’s first Chief Equity Officer and previously led Dialogue and Conflict Engagement at UBC. With a PhD in planning from UBC, an MSc from McGill, and a BSc from UBC, Dr. Erfan brings 15 years of global experience in designing and facilitating dialogues. Her honours include BC500 Most Influential Business Leaders, SSHRC’s Storytellers Challenge, and the Best Published Paper Award Shortlist.

**Susan Kim** grew up on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Anishnabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples, and moved to Lekwungen Traditional Territory in 2013. She is now a City Councillor for Victoria, with leadership experience in government, healthcare, and non-profits. Advocating equity-based decision making, Susan supports diverse communities. Her academic background is in biology and political science, and she has served on boards including Sierra Club of BC, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Coalition to End Homelessness, and Public Library.

# SATURDAY CONCURRENT WORKSHOPS

## Cowichan Tribes Case: Implications for Local Government

Saturday, 3:00 – 4:30 pm – Colwood Room

This decision of the BC Supreme Court has attracted significant public attention as it is the first case to address the interface between Aboriginal title and registered fee simple title, and other matters such as the validity of statutes affecting Aboriginal interests. The panel will discuss the impact of the case on municipal and regional district governance, taxation, and intergovernmental affairs.

The panel will present advice, recommendations and best practices arising from the case on several matters, including:

- ◇ Balanced and fair interpretation of the court decision
- ◇ Local government negotiations with First Nations (for example: MOUs, service agreements, partnerships)
- ◇ Land use decisions by boards and councils
- ◇ Implications for local government recognition and reconciliation efforts
- ◇ Impacts on fee simple title of local governments, including lands acquired by Crown grant or tax sales
- ◇ Identifying potentially relevant unceded lands in your municipality or region
- ◇ Canada and BC: appeals processes, and ongoing coexistence negotiations

### PRESENTERS

**John Allan Jack, Sayaačath,** is **Chief-Councillor for the Huu-ay-aht First Nations.** He holds a BA in Global Studies with Distinction (2004) and contributed to HFN's Constitution Committee during treaty self-government. John advocates for economic growth, ethical resource development, partnerships with government and business, and gender equity. He also chairs the Alberni-Clayoquot RD, serves as Vice-Chair of the ICET, is a Director for the Gathering Voices Society and a Governor for North Island College.

**Don Lidstone K.C.** is licensed in BC, Alberta, and Yukon, specializing in local government law, including governance, finance, taxation, land use, environmental, aboriginal law, and bylaw drafting. He regularly speaks at conferences and universities and has chaired several panels such as the Sustainable Region Initiative and Municipal Law Section of the CBA. Don has published numerous papers, consulted on municipal statutes like the Community Charter, and was appointed King's Counsel in 2008.

**Robert Janes** is a seasoned litigator with over twenty years of experience advising First Nations, Aboriginal people, and others on complex legal issues. He is committed to finding practical solutions and effectively representing his clients in court when needed. Robert's practice centers on serving First Nations, Aboriginal organizations, and individuals facing constitutional or public law matters, supported by broad litigation experience in courts across Canada, including appearances before the Supreme Court of Canada.

**Will Cole-Hamilton** is a lawyer and legal researcher with expertise in law, governance, and policy development. He serves his second term as Councillor for the City of Courtenay and has held leadership roles regionally, provincially, and nationally, including chairing the Comox Valley Regional District and BC Caucus at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Will has led initiatives such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) advocacy and chaired bodies like the Comox Strathcona Waste Management Board. He also works in family law research and supports economic development and infrastructure through various board positions.

*The AVICC acknowledges that we are grateful to live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, Nuu-Chah-Nulth and Kwak-Waka'wakw Peoples*