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SEPTEMBER 21 - 23
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APPI 2020 Conference-Session Summaries

Program Streams

Stream A Lessons from Community Engagement

Stream B Risk Management

Stream C Planning Actions Revisited

Monday, September 21

1-Re-Building Bridges - Across a River and Between People

Stream A

Courtney Laurence, RPP, MCIP, Community Planner/Engagement Specialist, ISL Engineering

Crowchild Trail provides a key north-south connection on the west side of Calgary. In 2017, the Crowchild Trail Study won the IAP2 Canadian Project of the Year award and other awards, for the project's engagement and communications approach. However, as a result of community outrage following the presentation of draft concepts, City Council paused the project until the engagement approach for corridor studies could be reviewed. Two years later, with a new Corridor Study Engagement Policy in place, the Crowchild Trail Study started again. The project was met with a lot of cynicism, frustration, mistrust and outrage that remained from the first iteration of the study. Through the implementation of a collaborative and iterative engagement process and thorough communication process we were able to rebuild relationships and trust which resulted in broad community support and unanimous Council approval for the final recommended plan. Learn the key approaches used to build back community trust and how to scale and apply lessons learned to projects and challenges you may be facing.

Courtney Laurence is a Community Planner / Engagement Strategist with ISL Engineering and Land Services. She has a particular focus on community engagement, policy development, housing, and social wellbeing. Courtney's passion is working with citizens and community members at a local level to help them articulate and identify their needs and aspirations for the communities they live and work in.

2-Using Value Management to Enhance Decision-Making

Stream B

Mushtaq Rabbi, MCIP, RPP, Certified Value Specialist, City of Calgary

Programs and projects are unique endeavors. Traditionally program and project scoping, planning, designing and delivery have suffered from a high level of misalignment resulting in solution focused thinking (prior to clarifying the problem), poor communication, stakeholder dissatisfaction and nightmares for civic administration with overspent budgets.

In a fiscally constrained environment, the public sector is struggling to maintain satisfactory levels of service to the citizens with competing priorities. Value Management addresses these shortcomings and leads to a much higher levels of satisfaction all round with effective outcomes.

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce Value Management (VM) to planners and other professionals and share applied success stories from the City of Calgary. VM is a consistent, repeatable, structured approach to innovation and decision-making. By focusing on functions, it is a method designed to generate new ideas and alternative solutions to complicated and complex issues that offer most substantive benefits to tax payers, citizens or stakeholders alike.

Mushtaq Rabbi is an architect, a Professional Planner and a Certified Value Specialist (CVS®) accredited by the Society of American Value Engineers. With over 20 years of experience in both private and public sectors. Mushtaq is working as a Project Management Consultant for the City of Calgary. He is a Board member of Value Analysis Canada and involved in applying Value Management for City's infrastructure programs and projects.

Keynote Speaker

Leadership in Accessibility and Designing for the Future

Darby Lee Young, Principal Accessibility Strategist, Level Playing Field Inc.

Accessibility is becoming increasingly important in the built environment. With rapidly evolving accessibility policy it is key that city builders understand the importance of accessibility. Without having a disability, it is impossible to fully understand living with a disability. How can you design, plan or build something accessible when you do not have to experience inaccessibility daily? The practice of empathetic design is key to understanding disability and the built environment for city builders that do not have experience living with disabilities. The goal of this presentation is to empower planners, designers and developers to design, build and plan empathetically.

Darby has over a decade of experience working as an accessibility strategist. She is an expert in Universal Design and international accessibility guidelines and standards. Darby has successfully contributed to the removal of barriers at municipal, provincial and national levels, ultimately establishing inclusive environments. Darby's expertise in Universal Design has developed throughout a wide range of public roles including her achievements as a competitive para-alpine skier. She is committed to contributing her unique lived-experience and various political appointments to passionately advocate for lasting inclusive environments that benefit everyone regardless of age or ability.

3-Growth and Failure in the Crowsnest Pass: Overcoming Challenges and Unharnessing Potential in a Regional Context

Stream C

Ryan Dyck, RPP, MCIP, Planner, Oldman River Regional Services Commission

One of three mountain passes in Alberta, the Municipality of the Crowsnest Pass (CNP) is nothing if it is not unique. Five once autonomous urban historic urban communities dotted along a busy highway corridor have been under the umbrella of a regional government (specialized municipality) since 1979. But has regionalization been successful?

Major resort development proposals in the mid-2000s had speculators envisioning the future of the CNP akin to that of a place like Canmore. However the failure of this development (ending in criminal charges to two Calgary developers) and others cast a shadow on the community.

Today the CNP grapples with matters like the prospective return of the coal mining industry, competing with the small but burgeoning natural focused tourism industry. Country residential development proposals that challenge environmental and biodiversity outcomes continue to be received. Come hear about both the challenges and opportunities we face.

Ryan Dyck is a southern Alberta native and holds a Bachelor's degree in Urban & Regional Studies from the University Lethbridge. Prior to coming to ORRSC in April 2013, Ryan worked as a Planning Assistant with the Town of Taber, Development Officer with the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, and Planning Officer with the City of Medicine Hat. Ryan has a passion for small communities, redevelopment planning and a strong interest in planning law. Ryan presently provides planning services for the Town of Cardston, Town of Coaldale, Town of Magrath, Town of Nobleford, Town of Vulcan and Vulcan County.

4-Jasper Gates – Shopping Centre Redevelopment

Stream A

Yolanda Lew, RPP, MCIP, Planner, Stantec

Stuart Carlyle, Planner

Stantec, on behalf of the private land owner, was tasked to coordinate and facilitate the transformation of the aged Jasper Gates Shopping Centre into a mixed-use transit-oriented development located along the City's future Valley LRT line.

There was significant community interest in the vision for the site and the intent for redevelopment. Guiding principles for the project came from the area's redevelopment plan, the Jasper Place ARP, adopted by City Council in 2015. A comprehensive engagement process included several open houses and stakeholder meetings with representatives from surrounding community leagues. Concerns heard throughout the process included increased traffic and parking issues, density and shadowing. The concept was adjusted several times, based on community feedback.



The project received Council approval in February 2020. Yolanda and Stuart will discuss the chronology of this project, the process involved in guiding each round of concept revisions, challenges and what it took to get the project approved.

Yolanda Lew is a planner with over 18 years of experience, having completed work in areas such as policy development including Municipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans, subdivision development, municipal approvals, neighbourhood planning, and zoning. Yolanda is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan's Regional and Urban Development program, and is a full member of APPI and CIP.

Stuart Carlyle is a planner with 5 years of experience in reviewing and making recommendations and decisions on land development applications for the City of Edmonton. Most recently, Stuart has been making recommendations to City Council for re-zonings and statutory plan amendments for a variety of infill development ranging from small scale residential projects to comprehensive mixed use projects. Stuart is a graduate of the University of Alberta's Human Geography program.

5-Contemplating Community Criticism: Success and Failure in Engagement for Affordable Housing Stream A

Scott Cole, RPP, MCIP, Managing Leader, Community Development, Stantec (Edmonton)

Michele Perret, Stakeholder Engagement, Stantec (Edmonton)

Stantec partnered with Capital Region Housing, an affordable housing developer and operator, to prepare a draft concept and rezoning application for a surplus school site in the southwest Edmonton neighbourhood of Keheewin. Throughout 2019, Stantec and Capital Region Housing undertook a comprehensive engagement approach including community meetings, advisory committee meetings, and ongoing communication with the public.

The development concept evolved over time in response to community feedback, while supporting Capital Region Housing's mission to provide affordable housing options to Edmontonians in need. However, community opposition caused many barriers in the process and defined the project in local news coverage. After a two-day public hearing in January 2020, the project was successfully approved by Council.

Michele and Scott will describe their experiences and learnings engaging the community to resolve competing policy and site priorities for much needed affordable housing.

Scott Cole is a professional planner with twenty years of combined private and public sector experience in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Scott has acquired a diverse range of experience in planning, having completed work in such areas as subdivision development, municipal approvals, land use studies, and policy development. He is a full member of APPI and CIP.

Michele Perret has 28 years of experience in community engagement and regulatory issues in industry managing large teams of professionals.

Michele has been responsible for the development and execution of engagement and consultation strategies, plans, processes, evaluation tools and frameworks. She has a track record of generating creative, strategic and effective solutions in challenging environments.

6- From Initial Failure to Ultimate Success: Long Lake Area Structure Plan

Stream C

Wayne Shanks, RPP, MCIP, Manager of Planning and Development, Thorhild County

After five years of study and public engagement, on August 22, 2017, Thorhild County Council held a formal Public Hearing to adopt the ASP. On September 12, 2017, Council passed third and final reading to the ASP.

However, ultimately the lengthy process failed, as the resolution did not receive the final endorsement of the Official Administrators appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Further consultation took place in 2018, and a private consultant was contracted. The new Manager of Planning was subsequently given the task to try to rework (i.e. revive) the ASP to try to come up with a Plan that would work for everyone and receive approval. A further Open House and Public Hearing was held, and on November 2018, the Long Lake Area Structure Plan was given third and final reading, resulting in an approved Area Structure Plan. This presentation illustrates failure being turned into success.

Wayne Shanks is a Land Development and Urban Planning professional with a Master's Degree in Urban & Regional Planning and over 20 years of experience in public and private sector environments. Recent experience includes project managing several residential developments for a major land developer in Edmonton.

Tuesday, September 22

7-Vision Shmission: The Failure of Unconstrained Engagement

Stream A

Sarah Lumley, Planner, O2 Planning and Design

Matt Knapik, Urban Designer, O2 Planning and Design

As planners, we have all faced trying to make sense of 8000+ of responses to an open-ended question on “your vision”, or finding a way to reconcile stakeholder expectations with what can realistically be achieved. We sometimes ask stakeholders to provide their “blue sky” visions without providing realistic constraints or critical trade- offs in decision making without setting limits.

In this presentation, O2 will explore several ways that we have developed successful engagement processes through gamification, online tools, and other process changes.

As part of this, participants will get to test out a decision-making card game that was developed for a downtown revitalization planning process. The card game allowed us to work with stakeholders to prioritize actions considering time and resource constraints as well as the relationships between different actions. Additionally, we will share how we are using AI (robots!) to rationalize and visualize large quantities of engagement data and inform the development of better engagement questions.

Sarah Lumley is a Planner at O2 Planning + Design (O2). Foundational to Sarah's planning approach is her commitment to meaningful community engagement. Her passion is bringing together diverse groups of stakeholders and translating collaborative visions into policies and actions. Sarah has worked with communities in Alberta, B.C., and Ontario, and most recently in Edmonton, Lloydminster, and Drumheller.

Matt Knapik is an Urban Designer at O2 Planning + Design (O2). He has taught at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary since 2011. Matt brings a multi-scalar design sensibility and advanced modelling techniques to a wide range of projects in planning, landscape architecture, and urban design projects throughout western Canada.

8-Regional Transportation Planning Consensus Buildig Stream C

Brian Conger, RPP, MCIP, Community Planning Manager, ISL Engineering & Land Services Ltd

Michael Ge, P.Eng., POTE, Transportation Engineer, ISL Engineering & Land Services Ltd

Having experienced tremendous growth, municipalities in the Calgary Region face pressures to fund regional transportation infrastructure. Planners and Engineers from ISL together with representation from the 10 largest municipalities in the Region, Alberta Transportation and the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board itself undertook two regional transportation studies north, south and east of Calgary totaling billions of dollars of infrastructure assets.

It was clearly understood from the beginning that it was about consensus building, as much as it was about regional transportation planning. Concrete steps were taken to de-politicize the planning process and secure buy-in early on the land use and transportation modelling, which was applied to the evaluation and prioritization of regionally significant infrastructure in the regional transportation network.

Takeaways include: the importance of an engaged technical committee; developing a technical, defensible and repeatable process; understanding the connection between land-use planning and regional transportation networks; and navigating tough conversations and decision-making.

Brian Conger is a Community Planner specializing in municipal policy, neighbourhood development and social sustainability in both urban and rural contexts. He leads the planning practice in Calgary in the pursuit and execution of comprehensive planning policy and land development plans across Western Canada. Brian has a proven ability to research, develop and successfully deliver planning projects.



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Michael Ge is a transportation planner with ISL. He has a Master's degree in transportation engineering from the University of Alberta and is currently attending the University of Calgary's Master of Planning program. He is experienced in regional and urban transportation planning, transportation network and master planning, and is interested in integrated land use and transportation planning.

Planning, COVID and the Economy - Panel Discussion

Peter Ohm, RPP, APPI Councillor, Facilitator

Jamie Doyle, RPP, CAO, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Stephen Prendiville, Strategy & Transactions Consultant, EY

Yolanda Lew, RPP, Principal Planner, Stantec

We know that COVID19 has had a seriously negative effect on the economies of the world. Real GDP has diminished, personal, business and government debt has risen, and incomes and revenues have fallen. People have lost their jobs, mortgage failure rates have increased and the real estate market has become unpredictable. However, we do not know if COVID19 is a short term disruption, if it will be more long lasting and deeper disruption, or if it will be followed by another virus causing pandemic.

Whether short or long term, what can planners learn from the economic impacts of this disruption? Will life return to "normal", or will there be a new normal based on the impacts we've already seen? What adjustments do we need to consider in the planning process, or to the commonly held goals and objectives of the planning profession in an economic context? Join the session moderator and panel to explore these questions and more with the audience as they offer their ideas and potential approaches to moving forward despite this uncertainty.

Peter Ohm is a Registered Professional Planner (RPP, MCIP) whose career spans over three decades. Upon his retirement from the City of Edmonton in late 2019, Peter was Edmonton's Chief Planner where he led a number of integrated teams to develop and implement urban policies and programs to help build a livable, inclusive and resilient city. The diversity of Peter's leadership experience includes policy development at the city-region scale to design and policy implementation at the site-specific scale.

Yolanda Lew is a planner with over 18 years of experience, having completed work in areas such as policy development including Municipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans, subdivision development, municipal approvals, neighbourhood planning, and zoning. Yolanda is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan's Regional and Urban Development program and is a full member of APPI and CIP.

Stephen Prendiville is an infrastructure advisory specialist. While he spends a large portion of his time advising governments and private sector parties on infrastructure strategy and transactions, he also advises a wide variety of clients on disruption awareness and readiness, agility, and resilience planning. Stephen is a former partner with EY and KPMG and recently moved back to Ireland having called Edmonton home on and off over the last decade.

Jamie is the Chief Administrative Officer with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Jamie moved to Fort McMurray in 2005 after completing his degree in Community Design/Urban Planning from Dalhousie University. He has held many roles within the organization throughout his 15 years in the region. Additionally, Jamie has a Graduate Certificate in Professional Project Management, Certification in SafeGrowth and CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), and a Diploma in Graphic Design and currently completing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Community Economic Development. When Jamie is not involved in some sort of natural disaster or pandemic, he enjoys golfing.

9-Legal Session – Statutory Plans

Stream C

Alifeyah Gulamhusein, J.D., Associate, Municipal Law Department, Brownlee LLP

Long term planning is addressed through statutory plans. But how do you ensure a statutory plan is drafted to withstand a challenge? And what can you do to ensure the passage of a bylaw enacting a statutory plan is insulated against challenge? Knowing how to draft a plan and the procedural steps to enact the bylaw adopting the plan is a key aspect to successful long range planning. We will review two recent cases that touch on these subjects and draw out tips for planners. Also, we will review the interesting interaction between development permits and provincial approvals and discuss the most recent case addressing the Section 619 of the MGA.

Alifeyah began working at Brownlee LLP as a Summer Law Student in 2008. Throughout law school, Alifeyah continued working for Brownlee LLP on a contract basis helping developing a planning and development database. In 2010, Alifeyah joined Brownlee LLP as an Articling Student (Student-at-Law), was called to the bar in 2011 and joined the firm as an Associate in the Municipal Law Department. Alifeyah chose law because she enjoys a challenge and enjoys helping clients resolve problems. Alifeyah also enjoys the oral advocacy and any opportunity to provide educational training. In 2013, Alifeyah took a position as in-house legal counsel for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. There she began as an associate and in 2014 she became the Manager of Legal Services. Alifeyah helped the Regional Municipality through the devastating fires of May 2016 and in May of 2017 she rejoined Brownlee LLP's Municipal Law Department.



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10-The Need for More Success: Creating Healthier Housing for Vulnerable Populations

Stream C

Dr. Karen Lee, MD, MHSc, Associate Professor, Public Health & Preventive Medicine, University of Alberta

Our populations are aging. Income inequalities are growing. Housing is increasingly unaffordable for many people. All of these issues are also impacting the health of our populations, where non-communicable diseases like diabetes, heart disease and strokes, cancers and mental health - and their risk factors like physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and social isolation - are now leading causes of mortality, morbidity and/or disability. There are opportunities the planning of housing developments to address these issues concurrently, thereby improving the health of our populations, including and especially the health of the most vulnerable in our communities such as seniors and those impacted by growing social inequalities.

Best practice opportunities, current and previous, from various jurisdictions including Peel Region in Ontario and Atlanta, New York, and San Antonio in the United States.

Locally, the Housing for Health project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, brings together over 100 partners in Alberta and elsewhere including health, planning, and development and home building sectors to address creating healthier housing and surrounding neighborhoods for aging populations.

Dr. Karen Lee is an Associate Professor of Public Health & Preventive Medicine at the University of Alberta. She is also the founder of Dr. Karen Lee Health + Built Environment + Social Determinants Consulting, helping municipalities towards the goal of Fit Cities, cities that help prevent and reverse Non-Communicable Diseases such as heart disease, cancers and diabetes, and their key risk factors, while achieving other critical co-benefits such as equity, environmental sustainability, universal accessibility, aging in place, safety and economic fitness.

11-From a Sprint to a Marathon: Sub-Regional Integrated Land and Recreation Planning in the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills

Stream C

Cheryl Dash, Planning Lead South, Alberta Environment and Parks
Peggy Holroyd, RPP, MCIP, Integrated Resource Planner, Alberta Environment and Parks

Imagine starting a new planning process that only has geographical boundaries with no defined process or imagined end product... Are you ready to run? Oh, and you have a year.

The Livingstone-Porcupine Hills is a landscape with rich Indigenous culture and ranching history. The area is known internationally for its biodiversity, iconic views, and diversity of climate regimes and ecosystems. It is managed as a multi-use area, is rich in timber and energy resources, and enjoyed by many people for cultural, recreational, and hunting pursuits.



During this session, Alberta Environment and Parks staff will share lessons learned from the development and initial implementation of the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint and Recreation Management Plans. These stories will bring together the insights and experiences of the project team that can be used to enhance engagement, governance, and the translation of science to policy as part of plan development and implementation.

Cheryl Dash was born and raised in Alberta, with over 25 years with the government of Alberta with a range of experiences in planning, partnerships, engagement, resource management and policy. Currently employed with Alberta Environment and Parks as Planning Lead-South, her work time is occupied with tracking the implementation of the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint and Recreation Management Plans.

Peggy Holroyd is an Integrated Resource Planner for Alberta Environment and Parks. Born in Banff, AB, raised in Yellowknife, NWT, Peggy has over fifteen years' experience working with provincial/territorial governments, non-governmental organizations, and Indigenous governments in a variety of capacities related to recreation, land and resource management. Peggy is a Registered Professional Planner and holds a Master's in Environmental Design.



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12-Be Bold! The Real Struggles with Planning Differently

Stream B

Lisa Kahn, RPP, MCIP, Coordinator, Land Use Bylaw and Legislative Services, City of Calgary

Carlie Ferguson, RPP, MCIP, Coordinator,
City Wide Policy, City of Calgary

Asking a team to think about doing planning projects differently than they've been done in the past can be exciting but also challenging. Teams often love the permission space to think differently, but leaders find it hard to predict what a different approach could mean to how they manage day-to-day activities. Change management is one of the most important elements to ensuring the success of a project. Sometimes there isn't the awareness of what that actually means to "Be Bold". Without a leader willing to step up and help lead through change, teams will fall back into their usual patterns and approaches. Planning differently requires leaders that are willing to be bold, fail fast and adjust, and inspire others to be comfortable with the uncomfortable.

Join Lisa Kahn and Carlie Ferguson, two leaders from The City of Calgary and the Guidebook for Great Communities initiative, who will share some of the lessons learned.

Lisa Kahn is currently a Coordinator at The City of Calgary. Over Lisa's 13 years at The City of Calgary, she has had a range of positions and responsibilities including working on Centre City land use planning, the Land Use Bylaw Team and Citywide Planning & Policy. Lisa has a Masters of Environmental Design and is a full member of APPI.

Carlie Ferguson is currently a Coordinator at The City of Calgary. She began her planning career when she first joined the same team she now leads nearly 17 years later. Since then she has held various positions all allowing her to explore how best to implement policy (not just create it). Carlie is a full member of APPI.

13-Resolving Policy Misalignments: The Story Behind the Guidebook for Great Communities

Stream C

Robyn Jamieson, RPP, MCIP, Senior Planner, City Wide Policy, City of Calgary

Stephen Pearce, RPP, MCIP, Senior Planner, Legislation and Land Use Bylaw, City of Calgary

Communities and cities are never static, they are constantly evolving and growing. In an increasingly complex environment, planning needs to reimagine approaches and processes to be more agile, strategic and comprehensive. The Guidebook for Great Communities introduces a shift in how The City of Calgary plans for growth and change in communities by focusing on how people experience their communities and how built form influences that experience, rather than focusing on buildings and use.

Planners identified what wasn't working in a complex and misaligned policy landscape, and took risks to experiment with new approaches for planning policy at the community level. This resulted in starting over with a new Guidebook when initial approaches were not as successful as hoped. That conversation began with a conversation about where citizens go in their communities and how they experience the built environment. With an emphasis on systems thinking, new concepts, innovative ways of engaging, and the creation of a new policy landscape, the Guidebook for Great Communities demonstrates learning from the past and innovation in planning for Calgary's future.

Robyn Jamieson and **Stephen Pearce** worked together with their high performing team to create the *Guidebook for Great Communities* that is delivering exciting new ways to plan for growth and change in Calgary. With well over 30 years of combined planning experience (nearly 22 years at The City of Calgary), Robyn and Stephen bring diverse planning experience and knowledge to the team and the *Guidebook*.

Wednesday, September 23

14-Don't Repeat History: Time for a Stormwater Intervention!

Stream C

Meghan Norman, RPP, MCIP Business Strategist, Water Resources, City of Calgary

Bert van Duin, P.Eng., Drainage Technical Lead, Water Resources, City of Calgary

The City of Calgary's Municipal Development Plan envisions 50% of Calgary's future population growth to take place in the Developed Areas (1900-1990 era of development) by 2076. Planners advocate for redevelopment, infill, and vibrant inner city neighbourhoods – however, when those neighbourhoods were built stormwater planning was practically ignored or still in its infancy resulting in infrastructure deficits from the start.

How can we learn from the past and incorporate storm water management into redevelopment planning and policies? Instead of leaving stormwater management solely in the hands of the engineer, implementation of green stormwater infrastructure and best management practices requires a multidisciplinary approach to influence stormwater policy.

This presentation will provide context to the stormwater challenges that Calgary is experiencing with increased density in older neighbourhoods; identify past stormwater mistakes/omissions and how planners are learning from our past; and discuss current strategies on how Calgary is determining best stormwater management practices in a redevelopment setting for the future.

Meghan Norman works in Water Resources at The City of Calgary. Her background includes working in a rural municipality and handling a multitude of planning and development permit applications. More recently Meghan is in a strategic planning role and sees the need for more planning conversations to include water, utilities, and stormwater. Meghan has been a Registered Professional Planner since 2016.

Bert van Duin joined The City of Calgary in 2009 after more than 20 years in consulting engineering. Bert is responsible for the evolution of Calgary's stormwater management practice, coaching/mentoring of staff, and is an adjunct assistant professor. Bert chairs the Canadian Standard Association's Green Infrastructure for Stormwater Management Technical Committee and participated in creating CSA's new flood resilient design standard.

15-Shared Vulnerabilities – Leaning into Discomfort

Stream B

Susan Holdsworth, RPP, MCIP, Project Manager, City of Edmonton

Every city and town is concerned about “social disorder” and has various ways of addressing it to improve urban wellness. RECOVER started with deep ethnographic research, gaining insights into opportunity areas and generating solution ideas. We tested about 25 of these ideas - rapidly and cheaply. We knew many would fail. We weren't designing for success but for learning; to testing the elements we were most uncertain about.

We began talking about “vulnerable populations”, but we now have learned that what is important is our shared vulnerabilities; what we really mean when we talk about urban wellness. We have learned a lot about the need for an experimental culture that supports the asking of questions, design of alternatives, testing options and spreading learning.

In this session, we will highlight how we have created safe spaces for difficult conversations, becoming more comfortable with being uncomfortable, scaling promising solutions, and grounding ourselves in Indigenous concepts of wellbeing.

Susan Holdsworth is the project manager for RECOVER. Sue has also worked as a land use and policy planner for three local governments, as well as a project manager for Planning Academy – a public education initiative, and as the WinterCity Manager for Edmonton's broad and holistic WinterCity Strategy. To all her work, she brings a learning mindset and a systems thinking lens.

16-Barriers to Planning for Wildfire Mitigation in Alberta

Stream B

Dr. Elise Gatti, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, University of Alberta

A population's vulnerability to disaster and its desirable opposite, resilience, results from society's actions over the long-term. “Failure” in this context can therefore be viewed as the consequence of inadequate hazard and risk mitigation and preparedness.

Currently, an estimated 11 million Canadians live in wildfire-prone areas. FireSmart Canada has promoted community wildfire mitigation and preparedness for nearly 30 years.



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Among FireSmart's recommendations is that municipalities use land use planning and development standards to reduce the risks and impacts associated with wildfire. However, while a planning approach to wildfire mitigation is highly effective and cost-efficient, it is consistently underused. Communities are not maximizing their resilience to a known threat. In the face of a knowledge deficit about this topic in Alberta, researchers surveyed municipalities across the province in order to establish baseline data about their use of planning and development standards for wildfire mitigation, and in particular to assess barriers to using these municipal tools. The results—and implications—of this research will be the focus of our presentation.

Dr. Elise Gatti is a postdoctoral researcher and member of the Human Dimensions of Hazards Research Group at the University of Alberta. She has a background in urban planning and design and in weather-focused social science research. Dr. Gatti coordinates the Barriers to FireSmart Development Project, which is funded by the Alberta Government.

17-Community (dis)engagement: Failure in the Age of Dialogue

Stream A

Kim Hyshka, Certified Public Participation Professional (CP3), Dialogue Partners (Edmonton)

Spencer Croil, RPP, MCIP, Town of Coaldale & Sessional Lecturer, Urban and Regional Studies, University of Lethbridge

When we invite people to be a part of decision-making processes, to share their perspectives about issues that impact their lives, the path is not always clear, we can experience significant delays, unexpected hurdles and unwanted media attention. Yet we often only share what went REALLY well. What about the rest?

We want to come together in failure and turn the classic conference presentation on its head. Let's leave fear of judgement at the door and take a fun and open approach to sharing some of our "best" public engagement failures.

We commit to....

1. Share stories and experiences of what happens when public engagement all goes wrong
2. Unpack failure and associated perceptions, perspectives (both spoken and unspoken) and how it impacts our future engagement efforts and initiatives
3. Identify common triggers for engagement missteps and mistakes while also understanding our own contribution to the situation
4. Collaboratively build a narrative around vulnerability, connection, recovery and opportunity to build trust and relationships

Kim Hyshka has been a leader in the fields of civic engagement and public participation for over a decade. As the principal and owner of the Edmonton-based Dialogue Partners, Kim has served clients across North America with her tireless pursuit of positive change through meaningful dialogue. Kim has been an IAP2 instructor for many years and is a Certified Public Participation Professional (CP3).

Spencer Croil is trained as a planner and urban designer, and has been dedicated to the pursuit of better communities for over a decade. Having worked for a number of towns in Southern Alberta, he has always been passionate about pursuing the community's voice in the processes focused on managing growth and change.