

Volunteer Highlights

Stephen Yu, RPP, MCIP



When Stephen first came across a call to join the Edmonton Events Committee with APPI, he saw an opportunity not just to meet industry peers, but also to contribute meaningfully to the planning community. What began as a way to network quickly turned into a passion for shaping events that resonate with fellow planners. Today, Stephen is co-chair of the 2025 Conference Committee, chair of the City of Beaumont's Urban Design Committee, mentor to a Master of Planning Student at the University of Calgary, and most recently appointed as the incoming chair of the Edmonton Events Committee. Stephen's dedication and passion in creating events and bringing speakers that inspire and inform continues to grow.

Stephen came to Alberta to pursue his Masters of Planning at the University of Calgary. Having completed his undergraduate degree in Ontario, moving to Alberta meant building your network from scratch. This was a challenge as a student who didn't know the ins and outs of the planning world in Alberta.

Now as a member of the Edmonton Events Committee, Stephen was inspired to promote events to students, one of his impactful contributions. Noticing low student participation despite events being held on campus, Stephen spearheaded efforts to connect with The Geography And Planning Students' Society (GAPSS) and its representatives. This outreach has increased student involvement, helping them access invaluable opportunities to network with seasoned professionals, future employers, and future colleagues.

Volunteering has helped Stephen develop strong connections with the next generation of planners. As a mentor to planning students, Stephen has been able to watch as they venture into the workforce. The most rewarding moments come from reconnecting with them in a professional session, at things such as the annual conference, which brings it all full circle. Stephen recently attended the Edmonton Chinatown Food Tour, led by Christine Lee, Stephen's co-chair of the 2025 Conference Committee. This tour was a standout experience of bringing together many of Stephen's passions: exploring the City, getting exercise, and most importantly, food. He enjoyed learning about the rich history behind Edmonton's Chinatown and fun facts, such as tofu is made fresh daily in Edmonton!

Advice for Aspiring Volunteers: Just like Nike's famous slogan, Just Do It. The various organizations that Stephen has volunteered with have started as things that interested him, followed by things where he saw he could bring value. Stephen is always encouraging others to volunteer, whether its through your PTIA, your alma mater, or your local municipality. These opportunities help you meet new people that could grow your career, but also to help drive the direction of your PTIA. There is always a hunt for fresh perspectives that are valuable in improving the way things are being done. But once you start, your value might get recognized and your presence might be requested on other committees or events!

If a colleague or friend were to describe Stephen, they would say he works hard and plays hard. He's always ready to jump into the deep end to get his projects done, while also talking and laughing with those around him. Unfortunately for his colleagues who sit around him, the mute button has become their new best friend.

Outside work, Stephen can be found at the local Goodlife Fitness, exploring Edmonton's culinary scene, or jet setting to the next all-inclusive resort. He also has a love of movies and TV series, and is regularly seen bringing home numerous DVDs from the spaceship we call public library, catching the latest releases. Pro tip: your library often has new releases before the streaming services do.

"Find what you enjoy and lean into it." Whether its the next industry social, mentoring the next generation, or spending three hours watching the next Best Motion Picture, never forget to celebrate the milestones and make the most of every opportunity.