

Urban & Land Use Planners

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as an Urban & Land Use Planner

[NOC 2021: 12102/ NOC 2016: 2153]

Job Description

Urban and Land Use Planners deal with a wide range of issues including: land development; maintenance and use of natural resources and habitats; preservation of the natural environment; development of transportation infrastructure; and urban design and growth.

Working as an **Urban and Land Use Planner** you perform the following duties:

- Analyze population statistics, economic data, and physical aspects of communities
- Meet with residents, politicians, scientists, lawyers and others about land use proposals
- Create plans to manage and/or protect land
- Develop policies and programs on land use
- May specialize in urban, regional, environmental, or construction planning

Sources:

- National Occupational Classification (NOC) <https://noc.esdc.gc.ca/>
- Career Cruising database (Profile for Planner)
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

Industry Overview

Approximately 1,800 people work as urban and land use planners in BC. The majority of these planners work in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island.

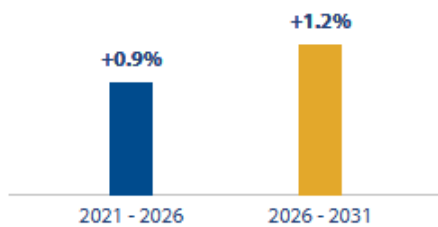
There are limited employment opportunities for urban and land-use planners in British Columbia. Many urban and land use planners are employed by municipal or provincial governments.

Planners may specialize in areas such as urban, regional, environmental, or construction planning.

Job Outlook in BC

Urban and land use planners, 2021-2031

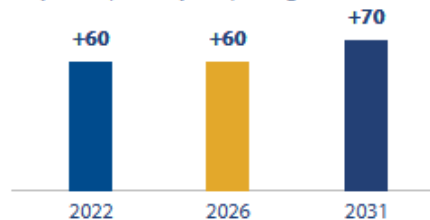
Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings

10 year expected job openings: 580



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Composition of job openings

Replacement of retiring workers:
60.3%
350 openings



New jobs due to economic growth:
39.7%
230 openings

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC regions from 2021-2031:

Region	Employment in 2021	Average Annual Employment Growth	Expected Number of Job Openings
Vancouver Island	450	1.2%	140
Lower Mainland / Southwest	1,250	1.0%	340
Thompson-Okanagan	220	1.2%	60
Kootenay	60	0.7%	10
Cariboo	50	1.1%	10
North Coast & Nechako	30	1.0%	10
Northeast	30	1.5%	10

You can learn more about the urban and land use planning sector in BC from

- **Work BC, Career Profiles**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- **Career Cruising**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/> [profile for Planner]
 Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

Types of Employers

Urban and land use planners work in both the public service and the private sector, in a wide variety of fields including:

- Municipal and/or provincial governments
- Environmental resource management
- Land developers
- Engineering and other consulting companies
- Economic development

You may also be self-employed as a private consultant.

Salary

The median annual salary for Urban and Land Use Planners in BC is \$82,506. Your earnings depend on a number of factors, including education, experience, employer, and geographic location. Planners who work in management positions tend to have the highest incomes.

In addition to a salary, planners who are employed full-time usually receive paid vacation, and health and dental benefits.

Sources: Work BC & Career Cruising

In BC regions you can expect to make:

Community/Area	Low (\$/hour)	Median (\$/hour)	High (\$/hour)
British Columbia	30.77	46.15	51.00
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	30.77	46.15	51.00
Thompson–Okanagan Region	30.77	46.15	51.00
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	30.77	46.15	51.00

Source: Job Bank Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Working Hours

Most planners work between 8 and 10 hours a day, 40 to 50 hours, Monday to Friday, although you may sometimes need to attend evening or weekend meetings or public hearings. If you work in the private sector you should be prepared to work outside of conventional office hours more frequently.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- strong written and oral communication skills
- leadership, negotiation and problem solving
- project management and team project work
- making presentations
- knowledge of geography and the environment
- interest in social and economic issues

Education and Experience

To be an urban and land use planner you must have a **Bachelor's degree** in urban and regional planning, geography, architecture, engineering or related discipline. Also, a **Master's degree** in one of these disciplines **may be required**.

Qualifications

Urban and Land Use Planner is not a regulated profession in BC.

This occupation is non-regulated, which means that individual employers set employment qualification requirements. Most employers require:

- Membership in the **Canadian Institute of Planners** (CIP)
<https://www.cip-icu.ca>
- Membership in the **Planning Institute of British Columbia** (PIBC)
<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/>
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification offered by the **Canada Green Building Council** may be required
<https://www.cagbc.org/>
- Certification as a *Registered Professional Planner (RPP)* may also be required
For requirements see:

RPP Certification <https://www.pibc.bc.ca/rpp-certification>

Internationally Trained Urban and Land Use Planners

There are three routes by which you can become a Registered Professional Planner. Candidate membership with the Planning Institute of British Columbia is mandatory before applying for RPP Certification in BC.

- **Accredited Planning Degree Route:** requires a university degree in planning from a program accredited by the Canadian Institute of Planners
- **Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) Route:** for internationally trained planners or planners who hold any academic degree other than a university degree in planning and have completed at least five years of responsible professional planning experience gained through employment.

Note: internationally trained Urban and Land Use Planners must provide an evaluation of your degree(s) from a recognized international credential evaluation service such as:

- **International Credential Evaluation Service**
<https://www.bcit.ca/ices/about-ices/>
- **Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials**
<https://www.cicic.ca/>
- **Reciprocal Professional Membership Route:** available if you are fully professionally certified by a foreign professional planning organization with which Canada maintains a formal reciprocal membership agreement

For further information:

- **Professional Standards Board for the Planning Profession in Canada**
<https://psb-planningcanada.ca/certification-process/application-process/>
- **Planning Institute of BC (PIBC), Certification**
<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/rpp-certification>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **Civic Jobs**

<https://www.civicjobs.ca/index.asp>

- **CivicInfoBC**

<https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/careers>

Career opportunities with municipalities throughout British Columbia. Under "Advanced Search" search professional category 'Planning and development'

- **Urban Land Institute Career Opportunities**

<https://britishcolumbia.uli.org/resources/career-opportunities/>

- **Indeed.com**

https://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search

Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **Planning Institute of British Columbia**

<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/all-jobs>

- **Canadian Institute of Planners**

<https://jobboard.cip-icu.ca/>

Employment opportunities in Canada and internationally, as well as opportunities for consultants

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For urban and land use planners, look for these related job titles (from NOC):

- City or Municipal Planner
- Community and Urban Planner
- Community Recreation Planner
- Environmental Planner
- Heritage Planner – Land Use
- Land Use Specialist or Planner
- City or Municipal Park Planner
- Neighbourhood Planner
- Planner, Community Recreation
- Planner, Urban and Regional
- Transportation Planner
- Zoning Officer

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers who work in the urban and land use planning sector in British Columbia or Canada. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **CivicInfo BC**
<https://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories>
Contact information for BC local governments and related agencies
- **Planning Institute of BC Register of Members**
<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/members/register-of-members>
Search by city to locate names of employer organizations
- **Reference Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>
Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business

Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "urban planning" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>
- **Networking for Employment**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for urban and land use planners in BC and Canada can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC)**
<https://www.pibc.bc.ca/>
- **Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)**
<https://www.cip-icu.ca>
- **Professional Standards Board for the Planning Profession in Canada**
<https://psb-planningcanada.ca/>
- **Urban Land Institute BC**
<https://britishcolumbia.uli.org/>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession, for example:

- **Plan Canada** / Canadian Institute of Planners
Available at the Central Library, 710.405 P69 and online at:
www.cip-icu.ca/Resources/Plan-Canada#
- **Planning** / American Planning Association
Available at the Central Library, 710.05 A513n and online at:
<https://www.planning.org/planning/>

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch,
Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic/>