RETHINKING THE REGION VI

MUNICIPAL RESPONSIBILITY IN AN AGE OF URBAN INEQUALITY

Co-hosted by
SFU Urban Studies &
Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Saturday, April 28, 2018
SFU Surrey
Welcome to this year’s Rethinking the Region conference.

As cities throughout our region struggle to lower the opioid death toll, address the housing crisis, and settle often vulnerable newcomers from around the globe, this conference asks whether and how much our municipalities have the responsibility, capacity, and imagination to address urban inequality.

We’ve brought together municipal officials, frontline professionals, community advocates, and thought leaders from around Metro Vancouver to explore how these local realities and the response to them are stretching and straining notions of community and belonging in cities across the region. For what and to whom are municipalities responsible and accountable in this context? If cities are responsible for addressing these issues, where will the resources come from? What are the hard policy and political choices emerging out of these realities? How are communities’ social fabric and municipal identities being transformed when supposedly city-centre dynamics like gentrification, displacement, and homelessness come to define the suburbs as well?

By addressing these questions and others, Rethinking the Region VI will uncover what’s going on in our region, both in government and civil society. In the midst of our current social emergencies, we offer a day to reflect on these regional realities and responses, learn from each other, and improve practices.

**Acknowledgements**

As co-hosts of Rethinking the Region VI, the SFU Urban Studies Graduate Program and Kwantlen Polytechnic University would like to express our gratitude to all the speakers, moderators, volunteers, participants and others who contributed to making this event a success. Thanks also to the social enterprises that provided our brown bag lunch and thank you gifts for our guests.
**SCHEDULE**

8:30–9:00am:  
Registration

9:00–9:30am:  
Welcome from Kwantlen First Nation (Hereditary Chief Marilyn Gabriel, Kevin Kelly, and Michael Kelly Gabriel)  
Opening remarks from Karen Ferguson, Professor of Urban Studies and History, Simon Fraser University

**KEYNOTE SESSION**

9:30–10:30am:  
David Miller, North American Regional Director, and Global Ambassador for Inclusive Climate Action, C40 Cities.  
Former Mayor, City of Toronto.

10:30am:  
Break

**PANEL #1 - RESPONDING TO CRISIS**

10:45am–12:00pm:  
- Perry Kendall, Former BC Provincial Health Officer  
- Jennifer Breakspear, Executive Director, Portland Hotel Society  
- Chris Friesen, Director, Settlement Services, ISSofBC  
- Sarah Blyth, Co-founder & Manager, Overdose Prevention Society  
- *Moderator:* Michael Ma, Faculty Member, Department of Criminology, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

12:00pm:  
Lunch Break

**PANEL #2 - WHO’S RESPONSIBLE: THE POLITICS OF ANSWERING THE NEED**

1:00–2:15pm:  
- Nicole Read, Mayor, City of Maple Ridge  
- DJ Larkin, Legal Director, Pivot Legal Society  
- Feezah Jaffer, Executive Director, Surrey Food Bank  
- Veronika Bylicki, Co-Director, CityHive; Organizer, Generation Squeeze  
- *Moderator:* Lisa Freeman, Faculty Member, Department of Criminology, Kwantlen Polytechnic University

2:15pm:  
Break

**PANEL #3 - MAKING AN ACCESSIBLE CITY FOR ALL**

2:30–3:45pm:  
- Jonathan Cote, Mayor, City of New Westminster  
- Kevin Barlow, CEO, Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council  
- Surinder Bhogal, Chief Librarian, Surrey Libraries  
- Vi Nguyen, Director of Youth Engagement, Vancouver Foundation  
- *Moderator:* Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, Faculty Member, Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies and the Urban Studies Program at Simon Fraser University

3:45–4:00pm:  
Closing Remarks
DAVID MILLER

David Miller is the North American Director, C40 Climate Leadership Group, and Global Ambassador of Inclusive Climate Action. He served as Chair of C40 Cities from 2008 until 2010.

Prior to joining the C40, Mr. Miller served as President and CEO of World Wildlife Fund-Canada, Canada’s foremost conservation organization. The WWF creates solutions to the most serious conservation challenges facing our planet, helping people and nature thrive.

Mr. Miller was Mayor of the City of Toronto from 2003 to 2010. Under his leadership, Toronto became widely admired internationally for its environmental leadership, economic strength and social integration. He is a leading advocate for the creation of sustainable urban economies, and a strong and forceful champion for the next generation of jobs through sustainability.

Mr. Miller has held a variety of public and private positions and served as Future of Cities Global Fellow at Polytechnic Institute of New York University from 2011 to 2014.

David Miller is a Harvard trained economist and professionally a lawyer. He and his wife, lawyer Jill Arthur, are the parents of two children.
PANEL #1 - RESPONDING TO CRISIS

MODERATOR

MICHAEL C.K. MA
Michael C.K. Ma is a faculty member in the Department of Criminology at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, British Columbia. He works in the area of social justice, community advocacy, anti-racism, and harm reduction.

PANELISTS

PERRY KENDALL
Perry Kendall has devoted his career to promoting innovative policies and actions to protect public health, prevent disease transmission, promote population wellness, and reduce the harms of difficult health issues like drug and alcohol addiction, including providing advice on evidence-based policy options. As BC's Provincial Health Officer from 1999 to 2018, he was the senior public health official in the province, responsible for advising the government and monitoring complex health issues. He has led the charge to contain the opioid overdose emergency. Prior to his post as Provincial Health Officer, Perry Kendall was the Medical Health Officer for both the City of Toronto and the City of Victoria, and was CEO of the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario.

JENNIFER BREAKSPEAR
Jennifer Breakspear has always been passionate about building and supporting inclusive, healthy communities. Her interest in human rights and public policy has informed her leadership of progressive organizations including PHS Community Services, Options for Sexual Health and QMUNITY. Before moving into non-profit management, her career path included a decade as a paramedic in Ontario and labour-related advocacy through OPSEU and CUPE, which allowed her to champion workplace progress on LGBTQ rights and family related benefits. Jennifer Breakspear has a Bachelor's Degree in Public Affairs and Policy Management from Carleton University specializing in Human Rights Policy.
CHRIS FRIESEN
As settlement services director at Immigrant Services Society of BC for over 25 years, Chris has been at the forefront of major immigration and refugee resettlement initiatives in BC and Canada in recent history, including the unprecedented resettlement operation involving Syrian refugees in 2015-2016. Chris also played a key role in the development and construction of the ISSofBC Welcome Centre. Chris currently serves as chair and founding member of the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA-ACSEI), and is co-chair with Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada of the National Settlement Council. In 2013, he co-chaired the UNHCR Annual Consultation on Refugee Resettlement in Geneva, Switzerland as the NGO focal point.

SARAH BLYTH
Sarah Blyth is a community advocate, mental health and addictions worker, and co-founder of the Overdose Prevention Society. She initially became involved in politics through advocating for the availability of skateboard parks, founding the Vancouver Skateboard Coalition, and serving on the Vancouver Parks Board. Her work for the Portland Hotel Society led her to her current role as an overdose activist. The Overdose Prevention Society on Vancouver’s Downtown East Side has not only saved over 1,000 lives through naloxone intervention, but also inspired other pop-up safe injection sites in the region and in cities across Canada.
PANEL #2 - WHO'S RESPONSIBLE: THE POLITICS OF ANSWERING THE NEED

MODERATOR

LISA FREEMAN
Lisa Freeman is a faculty member in the Criminology Department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Her research focuses on the questions of law and regulation in the city, the relationship between gentrification and the sub-urbanization of poverty, and the role of municipal government in regulating low-income housing.

PANELISTS

NICOLE READ
Mayor of the City of Maple Ridge, Nicole Read holds an MA in History from Simon Fraser University. Between 2000 and 2003, she worked as a Historical Research Consultant for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and in 2003 founded her own company, THG The History Group Inc. Through THG she has created jobs for over 100 people in five Canadian cities, and is a foremost provider of project management and historical consulting services in Canada. Nicole's volunteer projects across the region include work for the Carnegie Centre at Main and Hastings and the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre. She also served for a year on the Maple Ridge Community Heritage Commission, and served for two years on the Yennadon Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee.

DJ LARKIN
DJ was drawn to a career in law by her belief in the law's power to build a more just society. DJ has been a litigator with the BC Regional Office of the Department of Justice, has worked as a prisoners' rights advocate with Prisoners' Legal Services, and has been a staff lawyer with the Pivot Legal Society since 2013. Her practice has focused on litigating and researching the criminalization of homelessness and poverty, and defending the rights of people who are marginally housed, or homeless and living in public spaces. More recently she has coordinated Project Inclusion, a strategic research project grounding Pivot's work in communities around BC and in 2018 she became the Legal Director for Pivot's strategic litigation campaigns.
Commissioner on the Vancouver City Planning Commission. Urban Sustainability and was a RADiUS Fellow. Veronica currently serves as a special advisor in urban sustainability. Policy and Planning. The was awarded a TOP 25 Under 25 Environmentalist in Canada in 2015. Veronica also attended a TEDxYouth talk on meaningful engagement of citizens, particularly youth, in addressing young people are engaged in civic processes, in particular planning cities. Energetic, a social entrepreneur on a mission to transform the way that sustainable strategies. She is the co-founder and co-director of community builder and community.

VERONIkA BLYSTIKI

In her spare time, she volunteers as a policy maker and facilitation looking at the concern of food security, poverty reduction, mental health and social isolation. A member of several local community initiatives, non-profit boards and advocacy tables, Feezah sees the importance of connecting people into micro-finance, disaster relief, mother and child health initiatives into micro-finance, disaster relief, mother and child health.

Feezah Jaffer has been with the Surrey Food Bank team since 2010.
PANEL #3 - MAKING AN ACCESSIBLE CITY FOR ALL

MODERATOR

TIFFANY MULLER MYRDAHL
Tiffany Muller Myrdahl is a faculty member in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies and the Urban Studies Program at Simon Fraser University. Her work combines interests in municipal social policy, participatory planning, and collaborative approaches to researching and responding to urban change.

PANELISTS

JONATHAN COTÉ
Jonathan X. Coté served three terms on New Westminster City Council before being elected as Mayor in 2014. He has earned a reputation as a strong leader around issues such as transportation, affordable housing and urban planning, and represents New Westminster on several Metro Vancouver Committees. Currently he serves as Vice Chair of the Regional Planning Committee and as a member on the Housing Committee and the Zero Waste Committee. Jonathan is a member of the TransLink Mayors' Council. He also serves on a number of local task forces, including the Affordable Housing Task Force and the Transportation Task Force. He serves as the Chair of the New Westminster Police Board and is a member of the New Westminster Utility Commission. Jonathan earned a Master's Degree in Urban Studies from Simon Fraser University.

KEVIN BARLOW
Kevin Barlow is Mi’kmaq from Indian Island First Nation in New Brunswick. He is Chief Executive Officer of the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) which currently has 25 urban Indigenous member agencies, serving an estimated 70,000 urban Indigenous people in Metro Vancouver. Throughout his career, Kevin has worked for and with Indigenous people, often in the health sector, where he has held over $3M in community-based research grants. His research areas have included residential schooling, sexual violence, HIV and Indigenous women, substance use in the Indigenous community, and cultural competency. For over 16 years Kevin has held senior executive posts, including Chief Administrative Officer in his home community where he significantly reduced the number of people on social assistance through community economic development.
**SURINDER BHOGAL**

As Chief Librarian of Surrey Libraries, Surinder Bhogal provides strategic leadership in the administration of Surrey’s 9 libraries and is responsible for planning, leading and delivering a broad range of library services to meet the evolving needs of Surrey residents. Surinder is also a member of the City of Surrey's senior management team and represents the library at various provincial and national tables. Since joining Surrey Libraries in 1997, Surinder has led significant initiatives such as the planning of the award-winning City Centre Library. In her previous role as the Deputy Chief Librarian, Surinder was an active member of the Surrey Local Immigration Partnership. Surinder holds a Master of Library Information Studies from University College London, and a Bachelor of Management Science from Manchester University, England.

**VI NGUYEN**

Vi Nguyen is currently a Director in the Grants & Community Initiatives department at Vancouver Foundation. Vi has spent the majority of her career working with immigrant, refugee and Aboriginal youth and families in community development settings with the Vancouver Parks Board, Pacific Community Resources' Broadway Youth Resource Centre and the United Nations International Labour Organization. Vi has worked across a variety of granting portfolios at Vancouver Foundation, including Children, Youth & Families; Youth Philanthropy; Education, Youth Homelessness Initiative, Environment and Arts & Culture. She is currently overseeing the Fresh Voices Initiative at the Foundation, working to engage immigrant and refugee youth in shaping policies and programs that affect their participation and sense of belonging in B.C. Vi holds an MA from the School of Child & Youth Care at the University of Victoria.
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