



Corporate Services

1450 K.L.O. Road  
Kelowna, B.C. V1W 3Z4

Telephone: (250) 763-4918  
Fax: (250) 763-0606  
www.regionaldistrict.com

February 1, 2021

Email: [yoursilga@gmail.com](mailto:yoursilga@gmail.com)

Dear SILGA Executive Director:

Re: 2021 SILGA Community Excellence Awards – Regional Planning Lab  
Category: Social Responsibility

---

The Regional District of Central Okanagan respectfully submits its Regional Planning Lab project to the 2021 SILGA Community Excellence Awards under the Social Responsibility category.

A Regional Planning Lab is a forum for planners and other professionals from around the region to meet (once or several times over a series of meetings) to work through difficult technical challenges related to a specific planning topic or to support regionally significant projects.

The Regional Planning Lab is structured such that it begins with an exploration of the challenges faced and ends with actions that can be implemented, learned from, and improved upon which can also lead to the creation of new collaborative projects. The format and focus of each Regional Planning Lab can be adapted based on each topic and participants. Topics are varied and selected based on feedback and recommendations collected from previous Regional Planning Labs and through feedback received from the RDCO's Regional Growth Strategy Steering Committee. The ongoing success of Regional Planning Labs is a measure of the depth of and commitment to collaboration among regional partners.

To date, Regional Planning Labs have focused on key social, economic, and environmental issues related to land use planning, including topics such as: Housing, Short Term Rentals, Cannabis Production, Agricultural Land Reserve Policies, and Cell Tower Policies. Depending on the topic, different planners, professionals, and experts working for other area partners are invited to participate, including staff from other government departments and ministries, industry, non-profit organizations, and researchers from local educational institutions. As these groups develop solutions to their common challenges, the Regional Planning Lab may result in the emergence of new initiatives.

Beneficial outcomes of this project include the following:

- As a forum for discussion and relationship building, the Regional Planning Labs strengthen the foundation of regional knowledge-sharing and consistency.
- Provides opportunities to exchange best practice knowledge, gain new perspectives, and stay abreast of issues affecting neighbouring communities in the region.
- Knowledge sharing and connections reduces duplication and increases efficiencies.

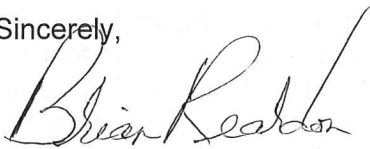
- As a space to identify and test possible solutions to shared problems, the existence of the Regional Planning Lab expands the opportunities for collaboration and works towards solutions to the region's greatest challenges.
- To communicate the outcome of Labs and ongoing regional work, Regional Planning Bulletins were created and circulated. In addition to distributing the information to emails, these two-page documents can be located on the RDCO's webpage: <https://www.regionaldistrict.com/your-services/planning-section/regional-growth-strategy.aspx>

To date, in addition to the RDCO, the following organizations have participated in a Regional Planning Lab:

- District of Lake Country
- City of West Kelowna
- City of Kelowna
- District of Peachland
- Westbank First Nation
- City of Penticton
- Rogers Communications
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Interior Health Authority
- Agricultural Land Commission
- Regional District of North Okanagan
- Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

The Regional District of Central Okanagan is proud of our region's ongoing accomplishment; the Regional Planning Lab is a fantastic project to share with SILGA's members.

Sincerely,



Brian Reardon  
Chief Administrative Officer