



LOWER MAINLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN LOCAL LEADERSHIP

LOWER MAINLAND LGA CONFERENCE & AGM | April 29 to May 1, 2026, Whistler

Presidents Message



The Lower Mainland LGA is looking forward to seeing you soon in Whistler for our 2026 Conference & AGM. The theme of this year's conference is "Continuity and Change in Local Leadership".

We have a great pre-conference tour planned which is a bus trip to Pemberton to the "The Beer Farmers" which is a perfect example of agritourism. This guided tour and educational session tells the story of how a fourth-generation family evolved from cattle and potato farming into successful craft beer brewers.

Our opening keynote speaker is the former Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Janet Austin. I always love hearing Janet speak and listening to the stories of her illustrious career.

Other sessions are on topics such as "Lessons Learned from Municipal Council Conflict", "Strength in Difference: Advancing Diversity in Local Government", "Understanding Voter Sentiments for the 2026 BC Municipal Election" and "Strengthening Public Participation from the Inside Out". The Honourable Brittany Anderson, Minister of State of Local Government and Rural Communities will be speaking with us on Friday, and we will have a media panel to finish off the conference.

As usual, we will have several opportunities for networking and socializing including two receptions and our networking dinner as well as our annual resolutions session.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

President Paul Albrecht

Opening Keynote Speaker

The Honourable Janet Austin



The Honourable Janet Austin served seven years as the 30th Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, from 2018 to 2025.

During her mandate, she championed Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, promoted the importance of respect for diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of Canadian society, and worked actively to uphold Canadian democracy and encourage participation in civil society.

Prior to her service as Lieutenant Governor, she spent 15 years as Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA Metro Vancouver, one of the province's largest and most diversified non-profits. There she oversaw operations delivering services to tens of thousands of people annually at more than 40 locations. Under her leadership, the reach and scope of services offered by the YWCA increased significantly and flourished under the social enterprise model she championed. Using solutions oriented and collaborative advocacy, she positioned the YWCA as a leading voice on gender equality and social justice.

Janet has also served many organizations in commitment to improving the lives of others, including: TransLink, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, the Canadian Paediatric Society, the Council for Early Child Development, the Women's Health Research Institute, MOSAIC, the Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation and many others.

Upon retiring from the role of Lieutenant Governor, she continues to support various community initiatives, with a particular emphasis on climate, upholding democracy, and encouraging constructive conversations among people with diverse views.



Networking Dinner Entertainment

Laugh Out LIVE!

The Improv Show is coming to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association Conference! Join Laugh Out LIVE!, Whistler's go-to comedy specialists, for an exclusive night of fast-paced improv comedy where your suggestions will spark outrageous scenes, unexpected characters, and laugh-out-loud moments created completely on the spot! No scripts. No safety nets. Just pure comedy chaos!

2026 Conference Charity - Fraser Basin Council



The Fraser Basin Council is a charitable non-profit organization that works with communities, governments, and partners across British Columbia to advance sustainability solutions, including flood management, climate resilience, watershed planning, and clean energy initiatives.

fraserbasin.bc.ca

Candidates For 2026/2027



Candidate for President:
Michie Vidal

Michie is an experienced municipal Leader and regional advocate with a long-standing commitment

to public service, community safety and collaborative local governance. She currently serves a First Vice-President of the Lower Mainland Local Government Association and is a Councillor for the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, where she is serving her second term on Council.

Michie's professional career spans more than two decades in emergency communications with the City of Surrey Fire Service. As a 911 Communications Official, she worked at the front line of public safety, coordinating responses across fire, police, ambulance and emergency management agencies. This role demanded clarity under pressure, strong judgement, and the ability to work collaboratively across jurisdictions-skills that continue to inform her approach to leadership and governance.

At the regional level, Michie has been an active and engaged member of the Lower Mainland Local Government Executive. As First Vice-President she has worked closely with elected officials from municipalities large and small, supporting the Association's mandate to advocate on behalf of its members with the Province of British Columbia. Her work reflects a strong belief in collective advocacy, respectful dialogue, and the importance of ensuring all member communities have a crucial voice.

Michie's leadership style is collaborative, cooperative, and grounded in responsibility and reliability. She brings a practical understanding of governance, an appreciation for diverse perspectives, and a strong commitment to inclusive decision-making. Her experience in emergency services and municipal government has reinforced her belief that effective leadership is built on trust, preparation and cooperation.

Through her work locally and regionally, Michie has demonstrated a clear commitment to strengthening local government, fostering collaboration, and advocating for communities across the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley.



Candidate for First Vice President:
Chris Pettingill

Chris Pettingill is a Councillor with the District of Squamish on the traditional and unceded

Sḵw̓xwú7mesh territory. Chris also serves as a Director for the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Board, and as an active member of the Climate Caucus. Everyone deserves a bright future so Chris brings thoughtful consideration of equity and climate change to these roles.

Chris has served on the boards for Tourism Squamish and the Squamish Arts Council, and as the chair of the BC Green Party Provincial Council and Squamish Chamber of Commerce respectively.

Chris' professional career has focused on software development, and he is involved in a variety of software projects supporting everything from Children's Mental Health to Climate Adaptation.

Chris also stays busy as a long-standing volunteer for Squamish's "Amped in the Park" music program. Through this involvement, Chris was able to enjoy his passion for music while supporting others as they learn to be performers and leaders.



Candidate for Second Vice President:
Jeff Murl

Jeff's professional career started after graduation from UBC in Finance with work in the

investment industry. That evolved to building and operating his own restaurants and after receiving his CPA designation, into his own accounting practice. His teaching career started as a ski instructor and has evolved into teaching accounting courses at the college level, and recently speaking at Accounting conferences.

Jeff is serving his first term as a Councillor in Whistler, where he's bringing his skillset and perspective from his professional life. His input is highly valued on boards for his ease with numbers, but also his professional skepticism and problem-solving acumen which leads to robust discussion and comprehensive solutions. Jeff serves on several committees as councillor: Audit and Finance, Housing and Strategy, and the Advisory Design Panel. He also currently sits on the boards of the Whistler Development Corp. and the Whistler Museum.

Prior to joining council, Jeff volunteered on boards across a wide spectrum of industries and fields. Jeff's spare time is spent making his house into a home and with his wife and two young boys, who are always entertained by his stories of council meetings, policy work and advocacy to other levels of government.

Lower Mainland LGA Executive Positions

An eleven-person Executive Board that is elected at the AGM during the Annual Conference governs the ongoing operations and policy direction of the Lower Mainland LGA.

Seven Elected Positions

- President
- First Vice President
- Second Vice President
- Third Vice President
- Director at Large (3 positions)

Non-Elected Positions

Appointed representatives from:

- Fraser Valley Regional District
- Metro Vancouver Regional District
- Squamish Lillooet Regional District

Eleventh Position

- Past President

The Nominations and Elections Process

Thursday, April 30th (During AGM)

- Nomination Committee Chair, Patricia Ross presents the nominations received
- Nominations from the floor can be received for elected positions
- Candidates' speeches, will follow

Nominations Received for the 2026/2027 Lower Mainland LGA Executive

As a result of the call for nominations, the Nominating Committee has received and will be placing the following names forward for consideration:

President:

Councillor Michie Vidal,
Harrison Hot Springs

First Vice President:

Councillor Chris Pettingill,
District of Squamish

Second Vice President:

Councillor Jeff Murl,
The Resort Municipality of Whistler

Third Vice President:

Councillor Jessica McIlroy,
City of North Vancouver

Director At Large (three to be elected):

Councillor Alison Evans, City of Pitt Meadows
Councillor Nicole Read, City of Chilliwack
Councillor Maita Santiago, City of Burnaby





**Candidate for
Third Vice President:
Jessica McIlroy**

Jessica is currently in her second term on Council in the City of North Vancouver, being first elected in 2018, and is appointed to the City's Integrated Transportation Committee and the Lonsdale Energy Corporation Board of Directors, and the Metro Vancouver Indigenous Relations Committee. Jessica previously served two terms on the LMLGA Executive as a Director-at-Large.

Over the past twenty years, Jessica McIlroy has provided leadership on clean energy development and climate action policy with for-purpose organizations and currently works with a clean energy think tank focusing on the decarbonizing and climate resiliency of our built environment.

Jessica is on the board of directors of Climate Caucus, a non-profit network of local government elected officials leading the transformation needed for communities to thrive, and on the board of the Anthropocene Foundation. She is passionate about advancing collaborations across local governments and currently is a member of the B.C. Municipal Climate Leaders Council Steering Committee.

When not working or in the community, Jessica takes every opportunity to be in the forest and mountains with her family and two dogs.



**Candidate for
Director at Large:
Alison Evans**

Alison Evans is a Councillor with the City of Pitt Meadows. She represents a municipality that balances strong agricultural roots with growth pressures in Metro Vancouver.

Alison understands the shared challenges faced by Lower Mainland communities, including housing affordability, infrastructure demands, transportation issues, and maintaining livability as communities evolve.

She is an advocate for food security and farmland protection, having successfully presented two agriculture-focused resolutions in 2024 and a third at UBCM 2025.

With more than 19 years as a 911 dispatcher, Alison brings calm decision-making, collaboration, and emergency management skills to her governance work. She is also an entrepreneur, having founded two successful small businesses.

Committed to continuous learning and good governance, Alison holds an LGLA Level 1 Certificate (2025) and is working toward a Civic Governance and Innovation Certificate at UFV. She also holds a Bachelor of Kinesiology and a Certificate in Public Relations.

Elected in 2022, Alison has helped advance active transportation, tourism initiatives, and a transition to full-time career fire staffing in Pitt Meadows.

As a Director at Large with LMLGA, she offers a solutions-focussed, innovative, collaborative, and pragmatic voice in support of strong local government across the Lower Mainland.



**Candidate for
Director at Large:
Maita Santiago**

Maita Santiago is a first-term Burnaby City Councillor who cares about building a community where everyone belongs. She serves as Chair of the Access Advisory Committee and Vice-Chair of the

Social Planning, Environment and Public Safety Committees. She is also a member of the Burnaby Public Library Board, the Burnaby Healthier Community Partnership Steering Committee, the Burnaby and New Westminister Task Force on Sexually-Exploited and At-Risk Youth and the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee. Through her work locally and regionally, Maita understands the importance of collaborating with other cities as well as non-profits, school boards and health authorities to address common issues.

An immigrant from the Philippines, Maita has spent nearly three decades supporting everyday people through community organizing and advocacy to all orders of government. She has held leadership roles with nonprofit organizations and worked as a front-line service provider and family daycare owner, giving her a deep understanding of the challenges many residents in the Lower Mainland face.

A Simon Fraser University graduate, long-time Burnaby resident and mother of two teens, she believes local governments play a powerful role in shaping communities where people feel seen, supported and connected.



**Candidate for
Director at Large:
Nicole Read**

Nicole Read is a Councillor with the City of Chilliwack and an active member of the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Board. She also served for one year as the FVRD appointed director

for LMLGA, providing regional leadership and working collaboratively with local governments across the Lower Mainland. Through her roles on City committees including Arts and Culture, Economic Development, and Affordable Housing and Homelessness, Nicole brings a strong commitment to building resilient, inclusive communities.

Professionally, Nicole works in community economic development and is deeply passionate about helping local economies thrive. Her work focuses on supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs to start, expand, and diversify, recognizing the critical role they play in creating vibrant local communities and sustainable regional economies.

Nicole believes strong local government leadership and collaboration between municipalities and regional partners are essential to addressing the complex issues facing communities today. Her experience working at both the municipal and regional levels gives her a broad perspective on the needs of local governments and the importance of cooperation in advancing shared priorities.

Through her nomination for Director at Large with the Lower Mainland Local Government Association, Nicole hopes to contribute her experience, collaborative approach, and commitment to strengthening local government leadership throughout the Lower Mainland.

2026 Sponsors

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Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC)