

September XX, 2025

Dr Reuben Rose-Redwood
Professor and Associate Dean Academic, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Victoria
soscasdn@uvic.ca

Re: Letter of Support – Proposed Master of Community Planning (MCP) Program

Dear Dr Rose-Redwood,

On behalf of myself and Council, the Municipality of North Cowichan would like to offer its strong support for the creation of a new MCP program at UVic in response to the closure of the Vancouver Island University MCP program.

The VIU MCP program is very highly regarded, with its strong focus on applied planning and links with planning practitioners “in-the-field”. Having become an integral part of the character of the planning profession on Vancouver Island, its demise is a huge loss to us all. Many planners on the Island - including staff within North Cowichan - have been involved with the program in various ways. The experience they gain from this is enriching for both their careers and their municipal work projects, providing opportunities for growth, mentorship, and gaining continuous professional learning credits.

MCP students and alumni find employment at many Island municipalities, and we are no exception; we have hired 6 VIU MCP students or alumni over the past three years, including our last three planning department summer student placements. The program operates effectively as a feeder system for graduates to gain entry positions as junior planners at municipalities, non-profit organizations and private sector firms across Vancouver Island and beyond. The program also offers a valuable career path for Vancouver Island locals who would otherwise have to travel farther from home, with all the barriers that this creates. Recruiting professional planners to central Vancouver Island can be a challenge, and the loss of an on-island MCP program will exacerbate this considerably.

It is with great enthusiasm therefore that we offer our support to UVic in creating an MCP program. We look forward to forging a new relationship with UVic, working with its future students and graduates, to the benefit and betterment of both our organizations.

Sincerely

Rob Douglas
Mayor

cc: pam.shaw@viu.ca