

Q&A:

JOANNA GAULD PROJECT MANAGER



Joanna Gauld is a Project Manager with a diverse skillset. She brings experience in health policy, housing and homelessness, community needs analysis, and development consulting. Most recently, Joanna obtained a Masters Certificate in Project Management from UVIC, further developing her career in development consulting, with a focus on projects that have positive social impact.

What inspired you to go into project development?

While policy and planning are still close to my heart, the draw to development consulting is the desire to make a real impact for our clients and communities. It is amazing to look at the end product of your efforts, which are quantifiable in size, and the number of people housed. It is also exciting to get involved in construction. Although this remains a male-dominated field, I have met some amazing women in construction.

What do you hope to see in future projects?

Partnerships is a trend gaining momentum. While multiple participants can increase project complexity, with each project, we see opportunity for greater collaboration. I have a particular interest in projects that bring together housing and health supports and treatment.

Tell us about your favourite kind of work at CitySpaces.

Without a doubt, my favourite projects are ones where I work closely with non-profit housing providers, some of which may not have extensive experience in development. This type of work provides an opportunity for learning on all sides, and pushes the boundaries in designing for vulnerable people. Typically, we undertake engagement sessions at the outset of design development, which is an empowering process for all involved, particularly the end user.

Is there a project or milestone you are particularly proud of? Why?

That's a tough one ... In my planning work, I've been fortunate to contribute to the review of the BC Emergency Shelter Program, the framework under which 60 shelters operate and receive funding.. The project was a success for our client, and was invaluable to my professional learning. Engaging with front-line workers across BC provided valuable insight into the challenges faced in designing and operating shelters, and other housing forms for vulnerable populations. I've been able to apply this knowledge time and again.

In terms of development projects, I'm particularly proud of the Cause We Care and náca?mat ct Strathcona Library Branch in East Vancouver. While it was challenging working with multiple stakeholders, this speaks to partnerships and the future of housing. The building and its programming will serve Strathcona for years to come.

What advice would you give other project managers pursuing their Certificate in Project Management?

I highly recommend pursuing a Masters Certificate in Project Management. Though much of what we learn as professionals takes place on the job, it was extremely valuable to learn from project managers from other fields. My peers brought diverse insights to best practices and lessons learned. As every project is unique, it was valuable to take a step back, study the trends, and brush up on skills.