

BUSINESS EXAMINER

UDI Okanagan Successfully Launches ‘Our Future City’ Conference



Cameron Uganec provided keynote address on the rapid technological change that is shaping cities and the opportunities that this offers to Kelowna and the Okanagan. (Photo Credit: UDI - Okanagan)

KELOWNA - The organizers of Kelowna’s inaugural **Our Future City Conference**, held recently at the **Rotary Centre for the Arts**, were thrilled with the community’s response to the event and with the quality of the presentations and conversations that took place.

Andrew Gaucher, President of the **Urban Development Institute’s** (UDI) Okanagan Chapter, which organized the conference noted that

nearly 300 people turned out on Friday afternoon. “We’ve been blown away by the level of community enthusiasm and support for this event, the first of its kind here in Kelowna and we feel that we have achieved what we set out to do, which was to spark conversations around some of the key topics and issues that we will all have to grapple with as our community develops and grows.”

The event, which explored leading topics related to the future growth and direction of Kelowna and the Okanagan, saw a wide range of attendees from both within and outside of the development industry. “Most of our events are geared specifically towards our members”, says Gaucher. “This time, we wanted to put something on that would be relevant to both our core membership base as well as members of the general public. It seems to have worked!”

Some of the topics that were discussed this year included:

- A keynote address on the rapid technological change that is shaping cities and the opportunities that this offers to Kelowna and the Okanagan;
- Future architectural styles in the Okanagan;
- Leading Edge Initiatives coming out of the University of British Columbia and Okanagan College;
- Future approaches to building cities, communities and homes;
- Improving community health and sustainability by incorporating active living and local food production into our living spaces;
- Demographic shifts and the future of retirement housing needs in the Okanagan;
- Density and its implications around housing affordability, market demand, transportation and parking considerations.

Going forward, UDI intends to build on the success of this first of its kind event and plan the next Future of Our City Conference in two years. “We want to continue to advance the important dialogue around the issues facing our community and we are glad that the community is as interested in this as we are”, added Gaucher.