

Heritage Conservation Act
Transformation Project (HCATP)
Phase 3

UBCM Electoral Directors Forum
March 10, 2026



Photo: Kootenay Region, BC. (Kevin Floyd, 2023)

Key Policy Outcomes for the HCA



Making permitting faster and easier



Helping communities rebuild quicker after disasters

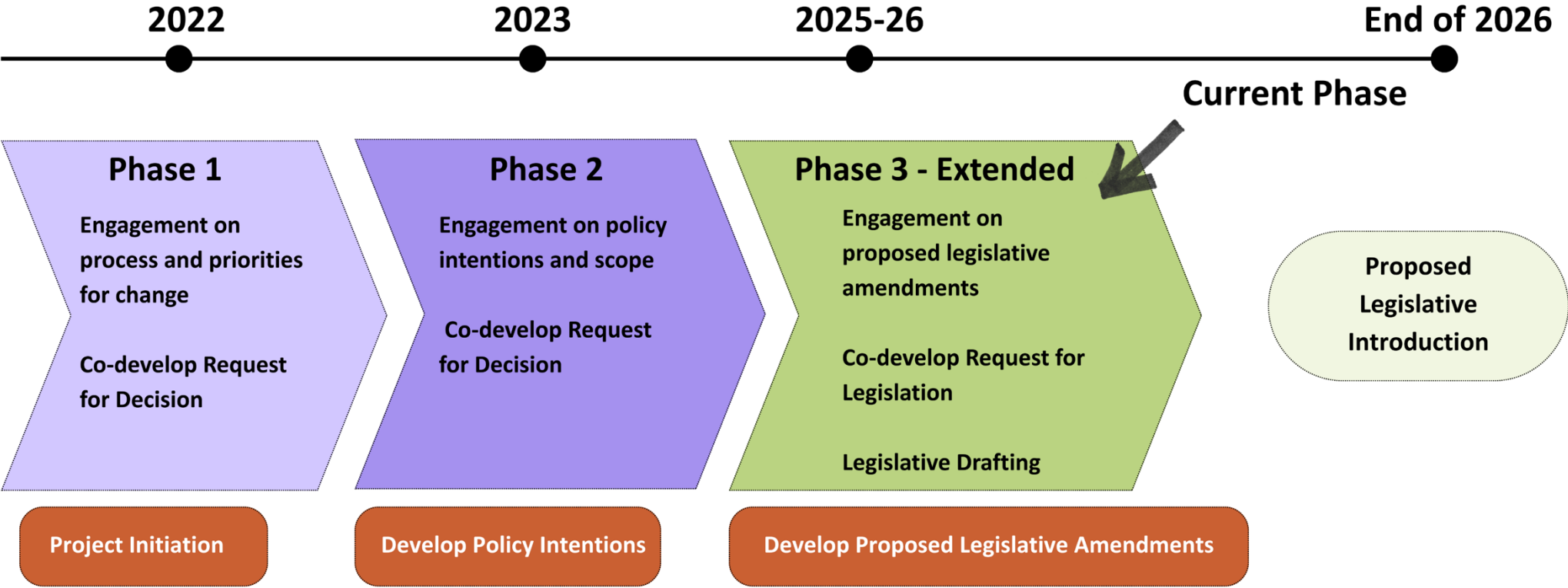


Strengthening the role of First Nations in the Management of their cultural heritage



Protecting heritage more effectively

HCATP Process



Local Governments Phase 3 Participation Summary

Phase 3 engagement opportunities	Results
Virtual engagement sessions	Local government Session - August 12, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 142 attendees Stakeholder Session - August 20, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 145 attendees Stakeholder Session - September 17, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 213 attendees
Written submissions	19 written submissions from 18 local governments and 1 local government organization
Feedback form submissions	21 local governments submitted feedback forms
One-on-one meetings	8 one-on-one meetings with 6 local governments, 1 local government organization and multiple meetings with UBCM
OVERALL REACH	90 Local Governments and 4 Local Government Organizations/Boards represented



What We Heard from Local Governments

Feedback received from UBCM

Consultation and Process	Resourcing and Capacity	Governance and Clarity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pause legislative drafting • Co-develop materials/ Provide draft legislative text • Hold regional engagement sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund provincial and local staff • Create Indigenous and municipal training programs • Expand archaeologist workforce • Address conflict of interest in contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain provincial oversight for consultation • Define roles clearly between BC, LG, FNs • Formalize shared decision-making through agreements
Permitting and Efficiency	Heritage Management Plans	Compliance and Enforcement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline and digitize • Enforce target timelines • Enable emergency exemptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot co-developed plans • Integrate with land-use frameworks • Provide financial support for HMPs • Update heritage mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish standardized procedures, appeals and training • Maintain provincial consistency • Apply regulations to federal/reserve lands
Integration and Alignment		Public Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align HCA with the Local Government, Emergency Management and Housing Acts • Clarify legal definitions and division of responsibilities • Consider trade-offs with other critical societal values (e.g., housing & infrastructure) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch awareness campaigns • Publish plain-language resources • Improve data transparency

What We Heard – Local Governments

Phase 3 Engagement Feedback

- **Streamlining permitting:** Support for streamlining permitting, including a single project-based permit. Flags that delays may remain if capacity needs not addressed.
- **Disaster/emergency pathways:** Strong support for emergency and disaster pathways that allow urgent work and timely recovery, along with the need for clear definitions around what constitutes an emergency/disaster.
- **Earlier due diligence:** Support for earlier awareness/due diligence to reduce late-stage “surprise” encounters. Need for capacity to conduct higher volume of checks, data reliability, and liability.
- **Data quality, transparency & access:** Need for reliable, accessible archaeological data tools (including RAAD) and calls for improvements and clearer protocols.

What We Heard – Local Governments

Phase 3 Engagement Feedback (Cont'd)

- **Greater policy clarity needed:** Heritage Management Zones, intangible heritage.
- **First Nations role:** Support in concept for strengthening First Nations' role in cultural heritage stewardship/decision-making. Questions about overlapping territories and how agreements may impact local governments.
- **Compliance & enforcement:** Support for strengthening compliance and enforcement options, with emphasis on role clarity and due process. Concerns expressed around inconsistent approaches and downloading responsibilities to local governments.
- **Resourcing, capacity, guidance & training:** Adequate resourcing and staffing are needed for Province, First Nations, and local governments to implement changes. Need for plain-language guidance materials. Concerns about costs to proponents and communities.



Proposed Changes Made in Response to Engagement Feedback

Proposed Change Already Communicated Consent-seeking

- Remove consent-seeking language
- Intent remains to use existing processes to fulfill Province's s.35 duty to consult on permitting decisions

Proposed Change Already Communicated Intangible Heritage

- Do not include references to “intangible heritage” in the HCA

Proposed Change Already Communicated

Heritage Data Checks

- Provide greater clarity as to when a heritage data check is needed (i.e., not applicable to condos)

Net New Proposed Changes

- Records of Engagement
- Heritage Management Zones
- Compliance and Enforcement



**Making permitting
faster and easier**

Permitting Current/ Proposed Future

Current	Potential Future State
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projects may require up to three different permits• Linear, non-flexible approach to permits• Site identification and assessment must take place before alterations are authorized	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replace 3-permit system with a single project-based permit• Potential modular approach with simultaneous and conditional authorizations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No legislative structure for multi-assessment permits or disaster permits• Lack of legislative tools to support disaster recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create several fit-for-use permit types:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A multi-project permit framework with enhanced notice of intent process• A conservation and research permit• A disaster response and recovery permit

Permitting Current/ Proposed Future

Current	Potential Future State
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Nations are consulted on individual permits at different stages in a project• New permit or amendment and consultation required for any alteration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-consultation on potential impacts• Potential to proceed to alteration subject to meeting pre-consulted conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited ability to regulate the archaeology profession, outside of permit-holder requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulation of the archaeology profession
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permits are held by archaeologists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permits could be held by proponents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of transparency in how permitting decisions are made	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Codified statutory decision-making criteria

Permitting Current/ Proposed Future

Current	Potential Future State
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited ability to modify permitting requirements where there are minimal or low impacts to a site	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a regulation-making authority to allow for modified permitting requirements for specific or specified circumstances: e.g. low-impact activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical infrastructure operations risk HCA contraventions when conducting urgent emergency works• First Nations risk contravening the HCA when conducting continued-use activities on their own heritage sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exemptions to permitting to support urgent emergency response and recovery activities• First Nations may conduct continued use activities on Crown land without a permit
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No pro-active planning tools for LGs, industry, or BC to work with First Nations to manage heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable Heritage Management Plans that allow for pro-active collaboration on heritage management approaches

Making Permitting Faster and Easier

Modified Permit Requirements

- Allow for streamlined activities for specific circumstances
- Regulations would lay out circumstances, eligibility, and requirements
- More consultation will be conducted as this regulation is developed

Helping people and communities rebuild quicker after disasters


Allow for flexibility in the permitting structure in disaster situations

Proposals:

- **Exemption to permitting in regulation:**
 - For critical infrastructure operators and local governments to conduct emergency repairs, where there is imminent threat to life/public health
- **Ministerial order** to exempt specific people from HCA permit requirements
- **Emergency Management Permits**
 - Impacted homeowners to be added quickly to permit held by Province; reduce duplicative work across communities
- **Modified permitting requirements in regulation** to include permitted activity modules for rebuild

Helping communities rebuild quicker after disasters

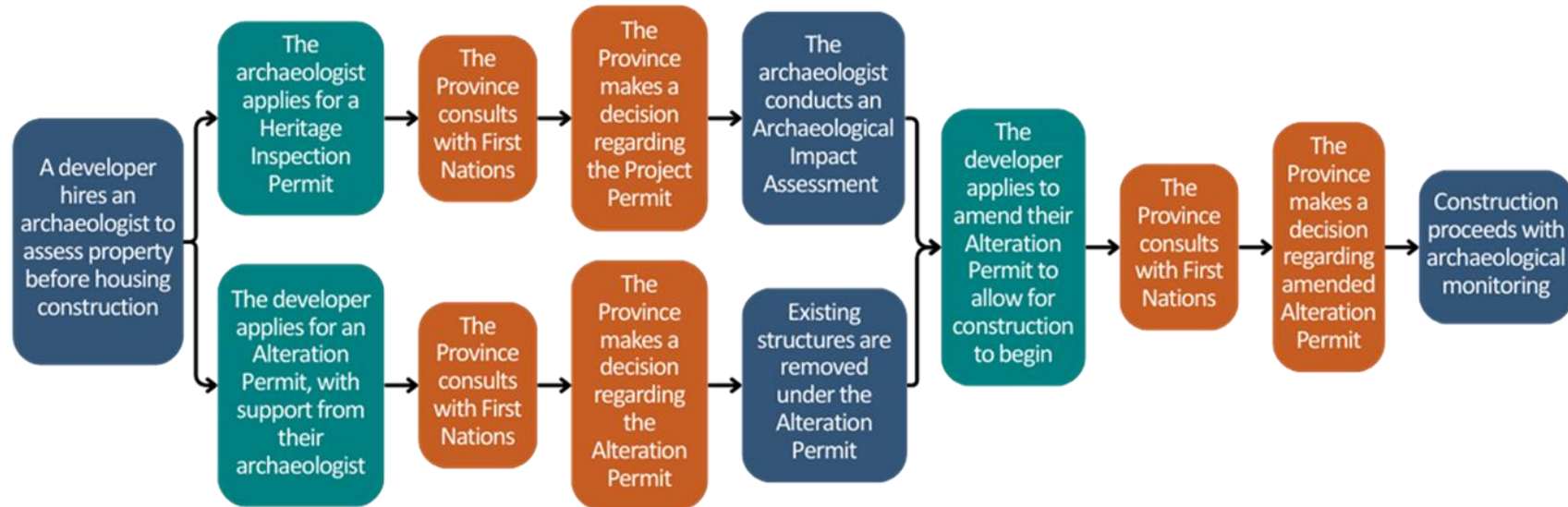
Allow for flexibility in the permitting structure in disaster situations

	Emergency Exemption in Regulation	Ministerial Order	Emergency Management Permit	Modified Permitting Requirements in Regulation	EDMA s. 83 Modification of Enactments
Infrastructure Failures or Critical Incident Example: Sewer-line break					
Emergency Response Example: Landslide					
Emergency Recovery Example: Community recovery from wildfire					
Major Disaster Example: Catastrophic earthquake					

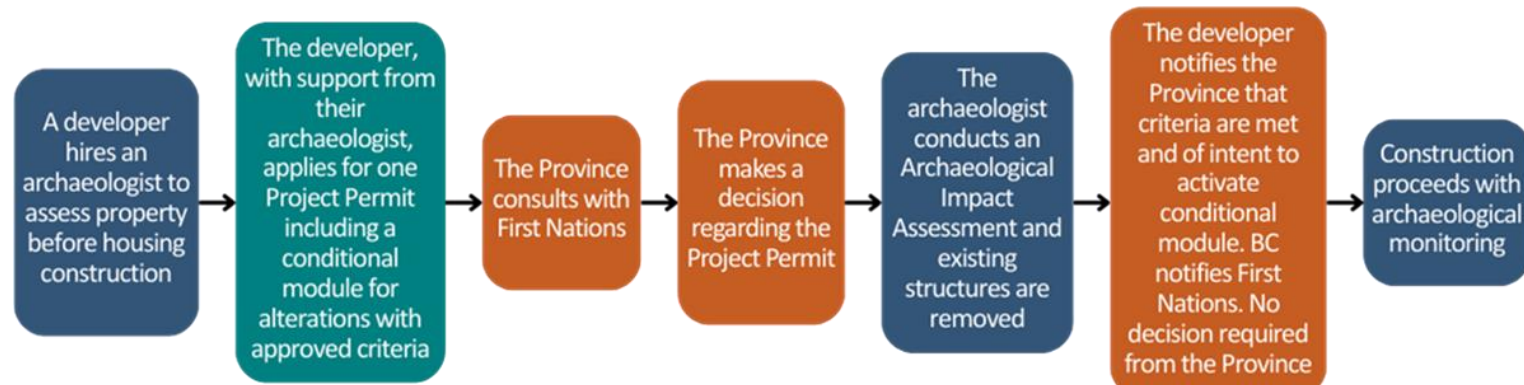
Making Permitting Faster and Easier

Example: Single Project-Based Permit

Current State



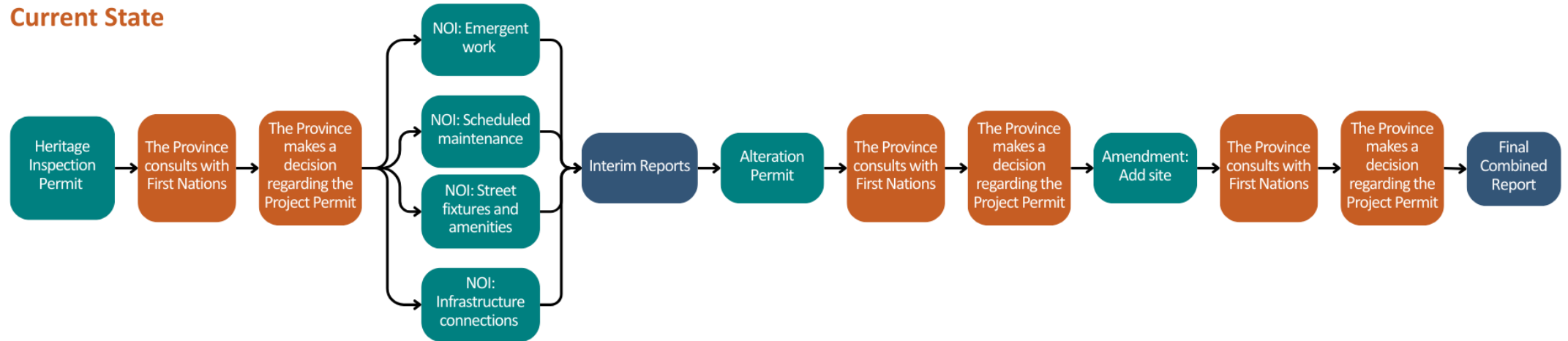
Future State



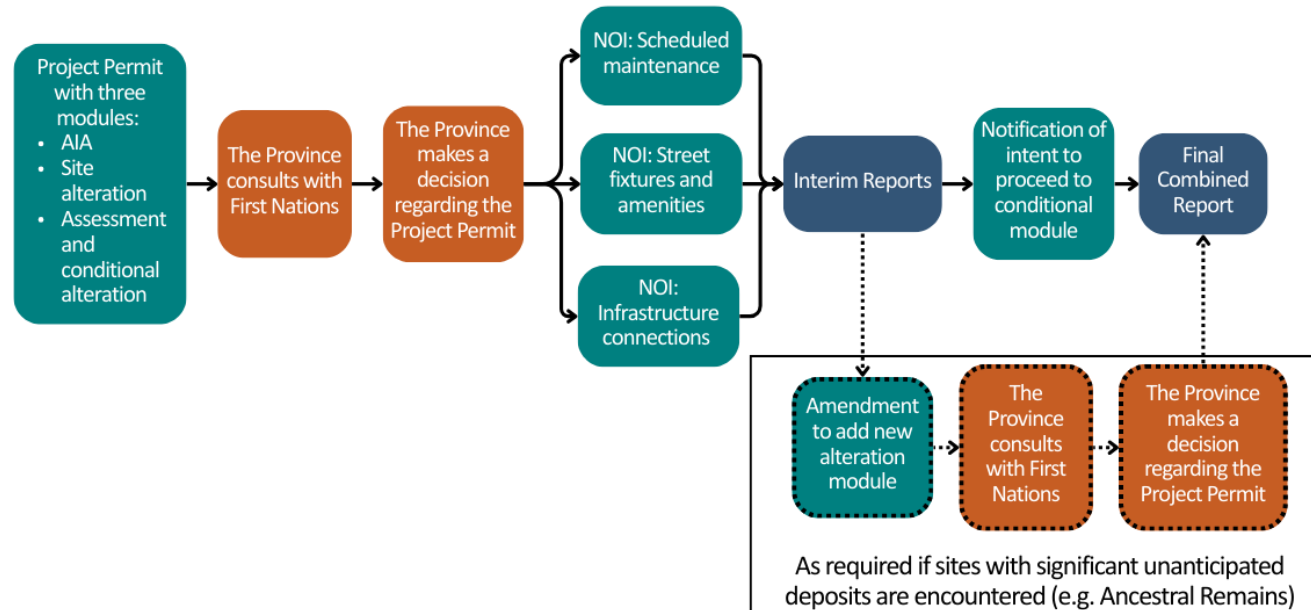
Making Permitting Faster and Easier

Example scenario: Local government infrastructure maintenance

Current State



Future State





Other Permitting Supports

Heritage Management Plans

- Proposed for use by First Nations and other third parties (e.g., local government, major proponent)
- A tool that allows for parties to collectively agree and map out the ideal ways in which permitting could support heritage management in a given area
- Plans considered in permitting decisions

Ensure greater regulation of the archaeology profession

- Clarify authorities in the HCA to regulate the archaeology sector
- Establish a registry of archaeologists and enable the charging of fees for registered archaeologists
- Further engagement on regulation of the archaeology profession will take place in summer 2026
- Parallel work to update BC archaeology standards and guidelines this year to provide greater consistency in archaeology work and reporting

Making Permitting Faster and Easier

Parallel Operational Changes

- **Current Actions to Improve Permitting Timelines:**
 - Expanding expedited permit application reviews across all permitting sectors, from an initial focus on housing
 - ***Application process improvements:*** Updated templates, clarified guidance, change to permit terms
 - **Bundled Consultations:** Combined forestry/archaeology packages to reduce turnaround times
 - **System Upgrades:** Replace several outdated and inefficient business systems



Discussion

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Q&A

Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

- UBCM-hosted webinar for local governments: **March 20th, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM**
- Written feedback and meeting requests: EngageHCA@gov.bc.ca
- Please visit our project website for more information <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/heritageconservationact>

Thank you

Questions/comments/written feedback: engageHCA@gov.bc.ca

