



**2012 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Category Worksheet**

**LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION  
Climate Action**

---

**Name of Local Government: Town of Qualicum Beach**

**Project/Program Title:**

Qualicum Beach Sustainability Plan: From Planning to Implementation

**Project Summary Paragraph**

The Town of Qualicum Beach engaged the community to create a comprehensive Sustainability Plan in 2009, which was adopted by Council in 2010 and incorporated into the Official Community Plan in 2011.

The Sustainability Plan establishes a vision of Qualicum Beach in 2050. It sets ambitious goals for the reduction of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions and continues the Town's long-standing commitment to compact, walk-able development and managed growth.

The Plan includes implementation measures which are now being realized such as:

- Sustainability Action Plan
- Village Neighbourhood Planning Project
- Sustainable Food Strategy
- Watershed and Water Quality and Protection
- Waterfront Master Plan
- Youth & Family Retention/Attraction Strategy

This project shows leadership for other communities that are trying to "put all the pieces together" in terms of achieving sustainability. It is transforming the town into an ecologically healthy, economically prosperous and socially vibrant community.

**Project Analysis**

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

**1. CLIMATE**

Please describe how the program/project contributes to the achievement of one or more of your [Climate Action Charter](#) goals:

- i. Corporate carbon neutrality:
- ii. Using your community energy and emissions inventory:
- iii. Creating complete, compact, energy efficient rural and urban communities:

The Town is a member of FCM and ICLEI's "Partners for Climate Protection Program" and has been recognized for completion of three of five milestones in the "Five Milestone

Framework for GHG Reduction". The final two milestones in the PCP framework are already underway.

The Town adheres to the land use principles in the Official Community Plan that promote compact nodal development and has therefore not seen the uncontrolled growth witnessed in communities with a higher acceptance of greenfield development and sprawl.

**How we are (iii) creating complete, compact, energy efficient rural and urban communities:**

Specifically, we are achieving this goal by focusing growth in the downtown "Village Neighbourhood" area. The OCP defines this area as the compact, walkable heart of the community, home to businesses, institutions and many of the Town's residents. The OCP designates this area as the best place for continued growth and densification. In the 2012-2014 Council Strategic Plan, Council recognized this long-standing objective as one of their top priorities.

As part of this, the Town is considering policies and bylaws to encourage infill on empty lots in the downtown area. Staff recommendations include reducing downtown development cost charges and amendments to the OCP that would allow consideration of building heights above three storeys and having residential on the ground floor of downtown commercial buildings. These bylaws have been introduced to Council and are expected to be adopted in September.

This multi-phase planning project has involved members of the community through surveys and extensive public discussion.

In summary, through the implementation measures identified in the OCP, the Town is already making progress toward sustainability and maintaining its commitment to being a complete, compact, and energy efficient community.

## 2. PROCESS

Please provide a brief outline of the steps involved in the program/project and the status of each step.

Date	Step	Status
2007	Town signed the BC Climate Action Charter to achieve carbon neutral operations by 2012	Complete
2009	Council identified sustainability and environmental initiatives in the Strategic Plan (i.e. 2% of property tax for climate change adaption)	Complete
	Community Work Shop – Sustainability Focus	Complete
	Education Public Event – Sustainability Plan	Complete
2010	Analysis, policy and technical work GHG reductions/targets/policies	Complete
	Drafting of sustainability principles	Complete
	Presentation of Draft Sustainability Plan	Complete
	Sustainability Plan adopted by Council	Complete
	Discussion Papers submitted	Complete
	Quality of Life Survey	Complete
	Public Meeting – Discuss survey results and sustainability plan	Complete

	Public Meeting – Discuss content of plan and OCP	Complete
2011	Public Meetings – Focus groups and additional meetings	Complete
	OCP Drafted, including sustainability plan principles	Complete
	OCP adopted by Council	Complete
	Implementation of Sustainability Action Plan & Measures	Ongoing

### 3. RESULTS

Tell us how your submission addresses climate change issues in terms of reduced GHG emissions and /or supports your community to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

The Town of Qualicum Beach is a signatory to the Provincial Climate Action Charter and as such, it has committed to:

- Making its civic operations carbon-neutral by 2012;
- Creating a complete, compact, and more energy-efficient community.

The Provincial Community Energy and Emissions Inventory (CEEI) initiative has established a baseline for Qualicum Beach's emissions.

**Buildings (residential, commercial, industrial):** 11,691 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)

**Transportation (cars, trucks, commercial, RVs):** 32,389 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)

**Solid Waste:** 6,758 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)

**Total: 50,837 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)**

The scale of these emissions is small when compared to large emitters such as heavy industry and resource extraction. Regardless, the Town of Qualicum Beach and its residents take responsibility for their own impact just as large emitters are expected to do.

The 2011 Qualicum Beach Official Community Plan establishes the following provisional emission reduction targets from its 2007 emissions baseline for its Official Community Plan (these are absolute reductions regardless of growth levels):

- 33% by 2020 ~ 34,061 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)
- 50% by 2030 ~ 25,418.5 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)
- 65% by 2040 ~ 17,793 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)
- 80% by 2050 ~ 10,167.4 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>(e)

These targets are consistent with balance of scientific evidence represented in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report regarding the level of global emission reductions necessary to avoid dangerous, runaway climate change.

The OCP advances policies and objectives to advance the following sustainability principles:

- **Land Use** - Build complete, compact, connected neighbourhoods with a vibrant, prosperous downtown core;
- **Buildings** - Reduce emissions from buildings through increased energy and water efficiency, greater housing choice, as well as through creation of a zero/low-carbon heating source;
- **Transportation** - Shift transportation away from the private automobile to walking, cycling, transit and zero/low-emission vehicles;

- **Solid Waste** - Work to reduce solid waste and associated landfill emissions, in conjunction with the Regional District of Nanaimo; and
- **Civic Emissions** - Reduce emissions associated with civic facilities, operations and community infrastructure systems, including becoming carbon-neutral by 2012, in accordance with our commitments as signatories to the BC Climate Action Charter.

Since this data was collected seven years ago, the Town of Qualicum Beach has implemented significant reduction measures to reduce emissions. These building initiatives include retrofitting lighting for energy savings, reductions in the vehicle fleet sector include replacing older vehicles with newer, more efficient fuel vehicles, the addition of electric vehicles to the fleet, anti-idling policy, driver education and tire audits. From 2006 to 2011 the Town's corporate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have been reduced from 624 tonnes to 443 tonnes resulting in a 29% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The Town continues to update its targets, policies and actions through planning processes such as the Sustainability Action Plan.

#### 4. LEADERSHIP

How does the project reflect leadership and excellence in the advancement of climate action?

To overcome the purchasing of carbon offsets abroad, the Town of Qualicum Beach was instrumental in the Regional District of Nanaimo establishing a Memorandum of Agreement on the development and implementation of emission reduction projects within the region. This is intended to ensure that any investment by local governments in achieving carbon neutral operations remain within the region and directly benefits residents of the member municipalities.

#### 5. ECONOMICS

a. How was the project a good use of budget and resources?

This project achieved a significant amount of work on a modest budget of \$110k. These funds were maximized through the following approaches:

- Sharing tasks with consultants: splitting work between public engagement and writing of the plan, with Town staff taking on the majority of the written work
- Making use of grant applications: this project involved 50% funding from a Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Planning Grant.
- Creative use of newspaper outreach: by using news releases and earned media to let residents know about public engagement opportunities and events, the Town was able to spread the word in a cost-effective way, in addition to spending dollars on paid ads and notices.

b. How does the project encourage economic sustainability? (e.g. life cycle analysis, internalizing costs and alternative financing, economic instruments)

The Sustainability Plan outlined and encouraged the use of economic tools to provide economic incentives for different groups to achieve sustainability goals. For example, the Town recently reviewed development cost charges for the Village Area, and has outlined recommendations for an incentive to developers that would encourage densification in this

area through encouraging a mix of commercial and residential use. This is currently being considered by Council.

Part of the thinking that went into the creation of the Sustainability Plan included Council identifying sustainability and environmental initiatives in the Strategic Plan. This led to creating a budget line item for climate change adaptation that is currently in place: two percent of property tax revenue is identified as a budget line item for climate change adaptation – such as dealing with windfall of trees in parks and beach erosion that may occur due to climate changes over time.

## 6. ENGAGEMENT

How does the project encourage engagement? (*e.g. stakeholder engagement, public participation, equity and diversity, knowledge sharing, capacity building, community identity and marketing*)

The Town began a comprehensive public engagement program to review its sustainability priorities and Official Community Plan in 2009. At the start of this process, given the mounting evidence concerning greenhouse gases and global warming, it was clear that the updated OCP would have to expand on the strengths of its existing goals and policies in order to produce a more sustainable plan.

Part of the public engagement process involved conducting a Quality of Life survey that asked residents about their sustainability priorities. The questionnaire was designed with input from Council, staff, advisory committees and community groups. It was distributed to each household, business and property owner within town boundaries. A total of 1717 questionnaires were completed and returned with 370 subsequent phone interviews.

This survey was a valuable tool for gathering information and was instrumental in encouraging public engagement in the following ways:

- The survey acted as an educational tool to get residents thinking about what their values were due to the wording of the questions and the information that it included.
- The survey was strategically placed in the process—just prior to the public and stakeholder meetings—so that residents were “primed” for further discussion on these topics.

Many attendees at the public engagement events referred to the survey during discussion, and said it had ignited their interest in sharing their views and values on sustainability.

Public consultation during the Sustainability Plan and Official Community Plan process was extensive, including over 2,000 survey responses, twenty large-format meetings, extensive stakeholder discussions and numerous reviews on a more informal basis. Staff, working with consultants from HB Lanarc, listened to and recorded the concerns of the community, weighed the options based on input from the community, and worked to communicate the community’s vision and interest.

The process demonstrated innovation and leadership by the fact that it was sustained over a significant period of time while not losing momentum or public interest.

## 7. INNOVATION

What makes your program/project innovative?

Two main elements help this project “stand out” as innovative:

- 1) Comprehensiveness: How it is rolled out across the organization and municipality.
- 2) How we have spread the word.

1) Comprehensiveness: The Sustainability Plan has inspired countless programs, policies and bylaws across the entire organization and municipality.

Examples include:

- Anti-Idling Bylaw adopted
- Walking & biking trail systems expanded
- Erosion and Sediment Control bylaw
- Hybrid vehicle purchase, electric vehicle lease/purchases
- Participation in Pilot Electric Vehicle Fleet Program w BCHydro
- Water User Rate Bylaw amendment re: increases
- Green Building Policy
- Energy rebate program
- Geothermal elements in civic buildings
- Watering restrictions changed to conserve water
- Low Flush Toilet Rebates
- Increase in water rates for excessive users
- Variable frequency drives installed at Town water well pump stations
- LED street lighting installed at new roundabout, and on a test basis at Town intersections
- Conversion of lighting, via BC Hydro grants, to LED
- Reduction in running time for downtown street light hours
- Participation in a region-wide Food Waste Collection Program
- Participating in Bike to Work Week

2) How we have spread the word. The Town continues to educate and spread the word about the Sustainability Plan and priorities through:

- Employee awareness building, work of an active staff Green Team
- Partnering with the Regional District of Nanaimo to form Team Water Smart
- Staff and public demonstration and presentations
- Newsletters, website, brochures, posters, kiosks and reader boards
- Using the pilot electric vehicle program at public events locally and regionally
- Participating in BC Hydro Power Smart programs, winning the Turn It Off Challenge

## 8. TRANSFERABILITY

How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

This project shows leadership for other communities that are trying to “put all the pieces together” when it comes to achieving sustainability. All elements are transferable, doable and achievable.

We continue to help demonstrate leadership in how to put the pieces together through the following initiatives:

- Sharing through teaching: Qualicum Beach CAO Mark Brown presented an overview of “Connecting All Pieces of the Sustainability Puzzle” at the February 2012, Building Sustainable Communities Conference

- Acting as mentor to other mid-sized communities: Qualicum Beach is a mentor and advisor to various communities who are considering making a change to their vehicle fleet to incorporate electric vehicles and charging stations.

## 9. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

- Break things down into pieces: increasing sustainability takes a series of steps.
- Engage the public early in the process.
- Articulate goals publicly to ensure accountability.
- Work to include budgetary and Council support for this direction.
- Review progress annually.
- Keep the following image in mind: in order to change direction, consider the process of turning around a large ship; it takes time and a series of small course changes or corrections to begin moving in a new direction, but it is possible.

## 10. TELL US MORE

Please share any other information you think may help us better understand your submission.

One of the positive and direct “side effects” of the Sustainability Plan has been the Town’s participation in an innovative Electric Vehicle Pilot Program. This program helps reduce GHG emissions, moves the Town towards corporate carbon neutrality, and acts as an educational tool for the community and other governments.

Background elements of this program include the following:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2009 | Town consulted with the City of Vancouver on their Electric Vehicle Pilot Program then became a member of the Fraser Basin Council Climate Change & Air Quality Green Fleets BC E3 Fleet Program, and received endorsement from the BC Hydro Electric Vehicle Program to become a pilot.   |
| 2010 | Level 1 and Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations installed in the underground parkade of the Town Hall plus beneath nearby Qualicum Foods for free public use and to encourage residents and visitors to ‘go green’.   |
| 2011 | Town of Qualicum Beach became one of the first BC communities to operate a production model electric vehicle. The 100% electric Mitsubishi i-Miev was the first electric vehicle to join the Town’s fleet. The Town of Qualicum Beach and Mitsubishi Canada entered a three year test agreement. The Town provides Mitsubishi Canada with driving data. The i-Miev replaced a fossil fuel fleet vehicle. |
| 2011 | i-Miev vehicle display in Woodgrove Mall to draw attention to electric vehicle use in local government.  |
| 2011 | The Nissan Leaf was added to the Town’s electric fleet. The 100% electric vehicle joined the i-Miev in assisting the Town to attain its greenhouse gas emissions reduction target. The Leaf replaced a fossil fuel fleet vehicle.  |
| 2011 | The Chevrolet Volt became the Town’s third electric vehicle. The Volt is unique with two sources of energy: lithium battery and gas-powered generator.   |

- 2011 Town hosted an Electric Vehicle Demo Day to give residents an up-close look at the Town's electric fleet. BC Hydro, ForeverGreen Electric Cars, Canadian Electric Vehicles, QBGreen.ca, Ford Transit Connect and Leviton Charging Stations took part.
- 2012 Working to establish a Central Island Electric Vehicle User Group.

UBCM