



**2012 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Category Worksheet**

**LEADERSHIP & INNOVATION
Small/Mid/Lg/RD**

*Please note there is a separate application form for the Climate Action sub-category

Name of Local Government: Village of Lumby

Project/Program Title: Brownfield Revitalization – Norris Avenue

Community Size: *Small (population 1750)*

Project Summary Paragraph

This project involved beautifying an existing brownfield property in downtown Lumby that had been vacant for over 20 years. The municipality had received continuous complaints of the property based to the aesthetics (weeds, abandoned 45 gallon drums, and other accumulated debris) and lack of maintenance to the site. The location of this site is highly visible in the community as well to the travelling public, which is one of the first sites you see as you enter Lumby coming from the east. Council decided to take action and enter into discussions with the property owner to resolve these issues. The outcome is a lease with the property owner for a green space / garden area / informational signage that beautifies the property, and incorporates a meandering path connecting the local Salmon Trail, which is a local trail system that follows Bessette and Duteau creeks which are the easternmost spawning grounds of Pacific Coho and Chinook Salmon.

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. ENVIRONMENT

How does the program/project protect BC's environment?

Yes – it raises awareness about brownfields to community members as well as showcases the importance of salmon habitat, the local creeks, rivers and watersheds. The project will connect to the local Salmon Trail and incorporate signage and a Salmon Trail theme that profile the Pacific salmon. The Salmon Trail is an 8 km trail that is wheelchair accessible including interpretive kiosks that have information, art, and activities to educate users on the Pacific salmon's life cycle, their incredible journeys, and about the habitat that sustains them. Everyone can enjoy the trails, touch and play

activities that will engage young children while puzzles and discovery points will captivate the attention of older children and adults. The public will learn about the environment - fish habitat, the local watershed, first nation culture; through family outings, community walks, group and school outings, etc. The trails were built as a community effort – the Village of Lumby built them with funding from the Government of Canada, Weyerhaeuser, and in collaboration with the Okanagan Indian Band, local industry and landowners.

The project will have signage and information pertaining to the Salmon Trail and connect it through downtown streets that access the 3 specific trails. This will allow community members and visitors, a chance to be more aware of the local environment, understanding that the Coho and Chinook salmon that are born and grow in these creeks travel more than 1,000 kilometers, upstream, from the Pacific Ocean to come back to spawn.

2. PROCESS

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

The process started several years ago. Discussions with the property owners have been ongoing for over 5 years. With brownfields the concern is mainly about contamination and liability. The municipality wanted to lease the property but not assume any liability as to the existing condition of the site from its previous activities.

Complaints from community members as to the neglect of the site escalated to a point that Council decided to enter into negotiations again with the property owner.

Discussions picked up again in early 2012 and a draft sketch of the proposed improvements was agreed upon in principle. The only item left was to discuss terms of a lease agreement that both parties were accepted. This was finalized in July 1, 2012 where the property owner also contributed to the site beautification costs.

3. RELEVANCE

Tell us how your submission is relevant to current environmental issues.

This project is relevant to current environmental issues as almost every community in British Columbia is dealing with the same issue. As vehicles become more and more fuel efficient compounded by consumers becoming more environmental aware, global markets and competitive business, more and more fuel stations are closing or amalgamating to be more efficient. This leaves almost every community with the same problem – a brownfield where they have little control over the clean-up timeframe / etc. of the property. Some clean-ups can take decades while the communities have a piece of property, usually in a high profile location, that is unsightly and a continual complaint to the municipal office.

By raising awareness that these sites can be turned into a greenspace, or other use, through an agreement that is acceptable to each party that meets the objectives of the community (in our case downtown beautification) then

both parties can benefit. The municipality is being proactive and innovative while the oil company is seen as being a good corporate citizen.

4. LEADERSHIP

How does the project reflect leadership and excellence in the advancement of community development?

This project showcased the leadership that the Council took with community support to deal with an ongoing issue that was problematic not only to downtown business owners, community members but also the tourism industry as Lumby is considered the Gateway to the Monashees and on the edge of the Okanagan – a great tourist draw. The community persevered and in the end an agreement was reached that was suitable to both parties that benefit everyone. The new greenspace receives complements almost daily. The day the chain link fence was removed and the site was mowed, we received almost a dozen complements in the municipal office – quite remarkable in a small community such as Lumby.

Council has taken a chance on the development of the site through a small capital investment which is paying off as the Chamber of Commerce, residents and people dropping by the Information Centre have all commented on the upgrades to the old site.

5. ECONOMICS

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

The municipality has a very limited tax base and budget. Roads, water and sewer are priority. The challenge was allocating the minimal resources we have and applying them to this project without affecting the current level of service that the community expects. Public Works Department used existing materials and supplies as well as all the labour to upgrade the property which includes a meandering pathway, benches, trees (in planters), signage as well as an educational kiosk. Ongoing maintenance of the site is provided by Public Works staff. The spin off from this refurbishment has been extremely positive – the Lumby and District Chamber of Commerce have informed us that their membership has been extremely supportive of this upgrade as it shows leadership through leading by example

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

The project is assisting in cleaning up the downtown and encouraging other businesses to show civic pride and perform similar revitalization to their own properties, which encourages economic sustainability. A cleaner well-kept location encourages investment/development opportunities and fosters civic pride in the community that will realize economic benefits and sustainability. The opposite is also true – unkept, weedy properties with accumulated garbage and debris discourages investment/development opportunities and sends the wrong message to other property owners.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

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

This lot is an old fuel station which has been vacant for over 20 years. Accumulated debris, weeds and an uninviting chain link fence sends the wrong message to community members as well as visitors to our community. The Chamber of Commerce has tried in the past to obtain a lease on the property as well as had discussion with the property owner to clean-up the site on a regular basis. This was driven by the business community in Lumby that were upset with the condition of the lot that is located in the downtown in a highly visible area – it was sending the wrong message to visitors, tourists as well as the local community members. The entire community was upset with its condition yet it seemed there was nothing that could be done about it.

Council, the Chamber and the community persevered and after many discussion between municipal staff and the property owners, an agreement has been reached that will allow a green space, garden area and signage. The site layout incorporates a meandering path, benches, signage, and trees that will be maintained by municipal staff on a regular basis. This arrangement encourages social sustainability by fostering a safe, inviting environment that will promote educational material on the community, the Salmon Trail, and other community related items to engage the users of the park / site, encourage the public to participate in community events, take a tour of the Salmon Trail (touch and play activities that will interest young children while puzzles and discovery points will captivate the attention of older children and adults). The material encourages knowledge sharing through engaging the users on the informational brochures, pamphlets, pictures, etc. on the local environment, promoting social activities for people of all ages (children, adults and seniors). The previous site discouraged people from gathering and being socially active in the area. The new site encourages social activity, it is a welcoming meeting place that the community is proud of – it showcases the great opportunities the Village of Lumby has to offer.

7. INNOVATION

What makes your program/project innovative?

This project is innovative as it does not meet the traditional lease agreement seen with oil companies and brownfields. In Lumby this is promoting a healthy, educational environment that is aesthetically pleasing and low maintenance to ensure that our limited resources are efficiently managed. Council and the community advised staff of what the opportunities could be for this location, and through discussions with the property owner, an agreement that everyone is happy with was realized. Innovation was also incorporated into the planning of the site layout to ensure that if notice was given by the property owner to terminate the lease agreement, the municipality could easily remove the items and relocate them to other areas of the municipality – encouraging fiscal responsibility and making the most of the limited materials and resources our small community has available.

8. TRANSFERABILITY

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

This project could be transferable to almost every community that has a vacant old service station / fuel station / brownfield. The objectives of each community will be different – the results should be the same: a project that meets the needs of the community that engages the citizens and other stakeholders (businesses, property owners, etc.). Some examples are negotiating locations for parking lots, farmers markets, green spaces, etc. – whatever the community needs may be. Each community is different so the project details will be specific to their specific circumstances. The results are the same and transferrable – it is a win / win for everyone involved.

9. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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

Our advice is to not give up. Continue negotiating with these big oil companies (or whomever the property owner may be) to come to an agreement that meets the needs of the community. There is give and take as with any partnership and our efforts show that great things can be accomplished if everyone approaches the discussions with this in mind – be respectful, understand their situation. Be open and honest right from the beginning so that there are no surprises down the road.

10. TELL US MORE

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

This issue was identified in the community for well over a decade. The location in question had far reaching effects on the community – socially, economically and environmentally. Discussions and development of an agreement was attempted over and over again. Council, the Chamber and community members persevered and an agreement was reached that not only allows a green space/garden area/signage that promotes social activity through a safe, welcoming environment, fosters civic pride and encourages economic sustainability, and focuses on educating the public on the local environment! The property owners even pitched in - provided funding for the “salmon trail” style new fence on the property, and increased the timeframe in the agreement for giving notice to terminate the agreement. A great example of successful negotiations – you never know what can be accomplished unless you ask for it! Quite an achievement that the community is very proud of.