



***A GUIDE
TO
COMMUNITY
REVITALIZATION***

September 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
WHY EMBARK ON REVITALIZATION PROJECTS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?	4
ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS	5
A SUCCESSFUL PROCESS	7
<i>Phase 1 – Establish a vision</i>	7
<i>Phase 2 – Concept Planning</i>	9
<i>Phase 3 – Planning for Implementation</i>	10
<i>Phase 4 – Implementation</i>	12
<i>Phase 5 – Maintaining Momentum</i>	14
SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES	15
CASE STUDY – DISTRICT OF CAMPBELL RIVER	16
CASE STUDY – VILLAGE OF RADIUM HOT SPRINGS	19
CASE STUDY – CITY OF VANCOUVER	22
CASE STUDY – CITY OF VICTORIA	24



Introduction

This guide is for local governments, interest groups and citizens interested in community revitalization. The material describes common ingredients, key phases, timing and use of development tools for revitalization projects.

The guide includes the following information:

- how to create a successful project;
- case studies of communities that have met the challenge of re-energizing their communities; and
- information to identify which planning tools to use in projects.

Revitalization projects involve almost every aspect of civic life – social, cultural, economic, environmental and physical. Experience shows that these projects result in an enhanced quality of life and stronger sense of community for local residents.

Successful projects include:

- downtown street improvements;
- walking and cycling trail construction;
- transportation corridor enhancements;
- public space design;
- public art;
- building facade improvements;
- heritage preservation;
- gateway construction; and
- improvements to accessibility infrastructure.



Why embark on revitalization projects for your community?

Communities consist of economic, social, political and physical elements that are constantly interacting and adapting to change. To thrive, communities need to address the issues of change, fix what doesn't work and draw on what does work.

There are many reasons to consider enhancement projects to help re-energize a community.

Communities that experience the decline of their economic base can use enhancement opportunities to plan and implement changes to diversify the economy and make the community competitive.

Communities experiencing rapid growth often face the loss of the environmental, heritage or cultural resources that attracted the growth in the first place. Enhancement projects can help protect existing community features and resources, and provide opportunities for new public facilities, commercial areas and neighbourhoods.

Stable or vibrant communities also need to strengthen and diversify their economies and enhance the quality of life to maintain their position. Revitalizing older commercial areas, upgrading major corridors, developing visually appealing highway signs, or integrating new developments will benefit the community.

Why Now?

The guide is timely for several reasons.

Changing economics

Communities across the province are in economic transition. For example, some communities are moving from an economy based on natural resources to tourism, film or information industries.

Renewed emphasis on the built environment

Communities are rediscovering the positive relationship between the built environment and social and economic development.

Changing demographics

British Columbia's population is aging. As a result, there is more attention to accessibility, safety and other quality of life issues.

Demands of citizens

Residents have higher standards for services, parks, recreation, safety and accessibility.

Increased competition between communities

People and businesses have more options on where to locate. Quality of life is more important as communities compete for business, industry and population.



Reform of the framework of local government

New legislative tools are increasing the flexibility and opportunity for citizens, business and local governments to re-energize their communities.

Community revitalization is not a simple process. Successful projects seldom occur without overcoming significant challenges. Each phase of a project requires critical steps and appropriate tools.

Community revitalization can be complicated, confusing, challenging and frustrating. But for communities that persevere, projects can be rewarding with many benefits, including:

- increased community pride;
- improved accessibility in the built environment;
- increased tax revenues;
- more social interaction;
- added recreational choices;
- increased tourism;
- increased local businesses;
- vibrant street life; and
- environmental preservation.

Essential Ingredients

To build a solid foundation, successful community projects have the following ingredients:

1. strong local leadership;
2. shared vision;
3. public involvement;
4. partnerships;
5. community base;
6. policy base;
7. dynamic process;
8. financial responsibility; and
9. continuous monitoring.

1. Strong Local Leadership

Strong leaders expedite and complete projects, and stay focused on the shared vision. They overcome hurdles and are knowledgeable about the tools and programs available.

2. Shared Vision

For revitalization to be successful, all participants, including the public, business owners, local interest, recreation, service groups, and other levels of government must share the project's vision.

The vision must be broadly based and clearly communicated to earn community support. Without a clear, shared vision of the finished project, controversy, doubts and obstacles will deflect efforts.



3. Public Involvement

Involving residents is necessary to create awareness, generate ideas, receive feedback, and itemize work. Successful projects recognize the unique contribution individuals, organizations and agencies make to a project; and offer opportunities for input throughout the process.

A project including public involvement will generate community support.

4. Partnerships

Partnerships capitalize on the strength of many contributors and make possible projects that would otherwise be more difficult. Partnerships can occur between organizations, private companies, community groups, local agencies or different levels of government.

Partnerships can help a project financially, through cost sharing with local, provincial and federal grants, gift and foundation programs. Project capital costs can be reduced through donations by community groups of time, machinery or labour. Maintenance costs can be reduced with private sector assistance, innovative technologies, flexible procurement and compensation arrangements, and maintenance by third parties.

5. Community Base

A community-based project builds on the area's unique values and characteristics and responds to the specific needs and desires of residents. A revitalization project can help a community identify its unique characteristics, such as natural or man-made features, location, history, climate or economy.

6. Policy Base

Projects reflecting a community's existing policies will succeed, if the projects also complement policies at other levels of government. Revitalization efforts that support the initiatives of other agencies, organizations and other levels of government are also more likely to obtain funding assistance.

Awareness of common strategies at other levels of government and agencies providing local services can reduce costs (by sharing equipment and labour), avoid duplication, and increase the project benefits.

7. Dynamic Process

A dynamic process is flexible enough to respond to unique situations without compromising the project's vision. A clear and manageable process allows participants to understand the steps necessary to complete the project.

A staged process makes a large project more manageable, recognizes on-going progress, and lets participants focus and re-energize before moving forward.



8. **Financial Responsibility**

Successful projects work within the community's financial means using resources such as volunteer labour, supplies and equipment, grants and donations. They also consider innovative financing combinations, such as specified area charges, local improvement areas, community bonds and development cost charges.

9. **Continuous Monitoring**

Physical improvements, no matter the scale, do not alone revitalize a community. Improvements set the stage for other initiatives to build on the excitement and momentum created by the completed community project. A long-term strategy to maintain and enhance a completed project ensures success.

A Successful Process

Successful projects follow a series of phases designed to maximize the chances of success.

Phase 1 – Establish a vision

In the first phase, a broad vision is established to provide a general, integrated view of the proposed community enhancement. The vision should:

- clearly state the project goals;
- outline how the goals will be achieved; and
- describe an action plan, or strategy, to address the different phases, financial issues, and allocate responsibility for specific project tasks.

The following steps may help establish a vision.

1. Identify project participants and determine their roles.
2. Conduct background research with other agencies to ensure vision and design are compatible with complementary initiatives.
3. Generate ideas for community enhancement by brainstorming with participants to identify project goals and objectives to guide the decision-making process.
4. Consult with the public as early as possible. This can generate excitement and provide a forum for discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the enhancement idea.
5. Estimate costs and evaluate the local government's ability to pay for enhancement works.

Consultation Tools

Throughout the project, consultation tools should be developed and used. Certain tools will be more effective than others, depending on the phase of the project.

To establish a vision, consultation tools can include surveys, workshops, web sites and open houses.



Planning Considerations

A revitalization project must take into account the development policies, plans, and guidelines of the local government. The project vision may serve as an opportunity to review and amend the following planning tools to make sure they support the project.

- Official Community Plans provide a local planning context for improvement efforts. These plans can complement, reinforce and implement improvement strategies. Official Community Plans also establish development permit areas and guidelines for certain types of land uses and areas.
- Area plans define an Official Community Plan's policies for specific areas, such as neighbourhoods, corridors, commercial areas, downtown areas, and access points to the community. These plans can also provide guidance.

Other planning tools to take into account in preparing a vision include:

- regional growth management strategies apply to regional districts;
- economic development or tourism strategies identify and promote various community revitalization efforts;
- five-year financial plans detail how local governments will finance and recover capital and operating costs;
- parks and recreation plans detail how local governments acquire, develop and manage parks and recreation facilities; and
- transportation plans provide direction for future development of roads, transit, cycling and pedestrian networks.

Options for financing and cost recovery

Specific financial tools don't need to be in place at this stage. However, it is important to identify all project costs.

Consideration of the project's financial implications will occur at a later phase. Financial realities are important, but should not shift the focus of establishing a vision for the project.

End Product

Upon completing the first phase, a strategy for improvement will:

- elaborate the project vision for the community;
- identify components and initiatives;
- identify participants;
- describe the process and anticipated timelines;
- identify possible funding sources; and
- establish links to policy directions of other agencies.



Phase 2 – Concept Planning

After developing a project vision one particular design approach may appear more appropriate than others. It is critical all available options be explored. Successful projects often result from a combination of design concepts.

After a vision is determined, a concept plan should be developed. The plan will provide the design of proposed physical improvements and a framework for refining costs. Plans can be prepared in phases if the vision calls for a number of separate initiatives, and other complementary initiatives can also be highlighted in the plan.

The following steps will help prepare a concept plan.

1. Find expertise to help prepare the concept plan. Concept planning and design requires technical knowledge to identify unique opportunities and avoid hazardous pitfalls.
2. Pay attention to unique community features. The concept plan will identify and consider site features as they relate to the project's surroundings.
3. Identify policy directions to be considered and implemented as a result of the project.
4. Develop conceptual options to evaluate the goals and objectives of the project and anticipate problems. Develop complementary design solutions.
5. Establish evaluation criteria to identify the preferred option, such as accessibility, overall community benefit, cost and timing.
6. Review the options with key participants and the public. Identify the preferred conceptual option based on the evaluation criteria and public consultation.
7. Prepare a final concept plan describing a detailed design approach, key features, policy relationships, project phases and the community benefit associated with the preferred concept.

Project Momentum

Momentum builds on the excitement generated by determining the vision with the public. An early follow-up meeting with the public should be held to discuss the conceptual options. This can help maintain community support.

Consultation Tools

As with developing a vision, consultation with affected or interested parties is essential to preparing a successful concept plan. While there is still considerable emphasis on exchanging ideas, the focus is now on planning the physical improvements and features. Consultation tools at this stage include design charrettes, workshops and open houses.

Planning Considerations

In preparing concept plans, local government procedures must be considered. These include Official Community Plans, development permit area guidelines and area plans. Previously established design objectives and guidelines are important at this stage. Bylaw amendments may be required if the guidelines have already been adopted.

An opportunity for the public to review and question objectives and guidelines is recommended.



End Product

Upon completing the second phase, a concept plan based on the vision will be chosen for the project.

Phase 3 – Planning for Implementation

During this phase, implications of the chosen design concept are considered. It is recommended that the financial strategy, design details and public support for the project be finalized.

The following steps will help prepare an implementation plan.

1. Prepare detailed cost estimates of the concept plan.
2. Obtain formal approvals, which may include rezoning, development and building permits.
3. Research funding sources such as provincial and federal government grant programs, charitable donation programs, and service group assistance. Financing and cost-recovery strategies can be prepared and the appropriate tools chosen for the project.
4. Undertake a detailed concept review involving all parties. Review the ability to recover costs and consider phasing the project to spread costs out over time.
5. Discuss the preferred value of capital investment and method of cost recovery with project participants and the community. Obtain consent from the electorate if funds are to be borrowed.
6. Put financial mechanisms in place that will pay for and maintain the project over the long term.

Avoid trying to complete the entire project in one phase. If one part of the project is completed, residents can better visualize the end product, recognize the benefits and create momentum for the next phase. The first phase can also act as a pilot, allowing for design and construction adjustments.

If the community is kept informed of cost estimates, cost-recovery strategies and project staging, surprises can be avoided. Maintaining community involvement in the project will improve the chances of securing financial support from the community.

Consultation Tools

The emphasis in this phase is to carefully review implementation activities. Audiences may be diverse and include property owners, special interest groups and local government engineering staff. Appropriate consultation tools include open houses, newspaper ads, interviews and internet notices.

Project implementation may depend on formal consent of the electorate. If required, referenda or council initiatives are appropriate consultation tools.



Planning Considerations

The Official Community Plan and other formally adopted plans must support the project. Amendments may be needed to allow the project to proceed. Particular attention should be paid to the development permit guidelines in the Official Community Plan.

Successful implementation of a project will also require careful consideration of regulatory bylaws, such as zoning and tree protection.

Formal approval will be required prior to beginning the project. This may include rezoning, development or building permits. The relevant regulatory bylaws include zoning bylaws, subdivision and development servicing bylaws.

Design Tools

At this point, it is important to verify practicality of the concept plan. Opportunities to incorporate related initiatives should be considered. Useful tools include:

- detailed surveys;
- servicing overviews;
- geo-technical investigations; and
- preliminary construction cost estimates.

Financing and Cost Recovery Options

Financial considerations are important in this phase. Project implementation depends on obtaining the necessary funds. There are a number of important considerations: sources of capital revenue; methods of covering costs; agreements and partnerships.

Most community improvement programs involve capital spending. Funding sources or options may include:

- reserves;
- long and short-term borrowing;
- community bonds;
- grants; and
- contributions from developers where development or redevelopment is proposed.

If the local government finances the capital cost of an enhancement project, costs can be recovered from landowners that benefit from the change. Cost recovery methods for improving existing development may include:

- general taxes;
- specified area taxes (by area, parcel, or frontage) in proportion to value;
- local improvement taxes; and
- user fees.

Cost recovery for a new development can be achieved through development cost charges.



If the improvement program involves new development or redevelopment, options allow developers to contribute necessary capital. This can be done through comprehensive development agreements and density bonusing.

End Product

Upon completing the third phase, the community's vision is reflected in the description of the project components, design, the preferred method of cost-recovery and financing the long-term maintenance of the project.

By this stage, local government and the community will have the necessary information and confidence to implement and construct the project.

Phase 4 – Implementation

This phase is an extension of the established vision, concept plan and financial decisions. Implementation finalizes the design and builds the project; the goal is to minimize disruption and delay.

Plans and specifications must clearly define all aspects of the project. Work must be described, coordinated and scrutinized in detail, as it is easier and less expensive to solve problems on paper. This also allows contractors to bid accurately and work efficiently.

If physical improvements to buildings, public spaces or streets are contemplated, the following are required:

- approval of local government;
- detailed design drawings and specifications;
- tenders to bid on the work; and
- contracts.

The following steps will help implement the project.

1. Consult early with all affected parties. Adjacent property owners, business owners, residents, and emergency service personnel will appreciate this consultation.
2. Assess the area's infrastructure to determine its condition and capacity.
3. Establish a timetable for decision-making, and a clear reporting structure. Vague schedules and a lack of leadership can cause project delays.
4. Advise public utility agencies that design work is proceeding. Determine if services need to relocate and/or be upgraded.
5. Obtain necessary plans. legal, topographic and as-built information will help to generate an accurate, comprehensive map upon which to base the detailed design.
6. Assess the impact of the project on local drainage patterns, vehicle and pedestrian circulation and business operation.
7. Minimize negative impact by using appropriate design guidelines.
8. Prepare detailed drawings and cost estimates based on financing strategy, infrastructure evaluation, agency meetings, and other relevant information.
9. Invite and evaluate tender submissions by contractors.
10. Have council pass a motion to award the contract to the winning bid.



11. Ensure that the contractor obtain the necessary bonds, insurance and proof of Workers' Compensation Board compliance to protect the local government against loss or legal action.
12. Organize a pre-construction meeting with local government representatives, the contractor, contract administrator and site inspector to clarify outstanding issues, roles and responsibilities, as well as construction timing.
13. Initiate and complete the project, ensuring the contractor meets quality and performance specifications.

Consultation Tools

In this phase consultation is very important. Communicating with interested parties ensures the implementation of the project takes their views into account. This requires consistent communication so that contractors, project administrators and neighbours are well informed of progress, emergencies and changes to the construction schedule.

Tools for effective consultation include open houses, newspaper ads, public meetings and internet notices.

Planning Considerations

If not complete at this point, amendments to the official community or other plans should be made. This will ensure they are consistent with and supportive of the project.

Any design and construction work must comply with the standards and specifications set out in the local government's development services bylaw, or other relevant bylaws. Enactment or amendment of some bylaws may be required to fully implement the project.

Financial and Cost Recovery Tools

The financing and cost recovery methods chosen in the previous phase should be initiated. Depending on the chosen options, various actions may be necessary. For example, if borrowing is involved, consent of the electorate is required. This may then require bylaw preparation and other activities.

Design Tools

Various tools will be required to ensure that the design is adhered to during construction, including:

- detailed design drawings (blueprints) that provide instructions to the contractor;
- specifications describing in detail what is to be built, and how it is to be built;
- contracts between the contractor and local government for construction; and
- contract administration ensuring that the contractor is abiding by the contract.

End product

Acceptance of the construction work marks the beginning of the warranty period for the project (usually a year). Acceptance sets the standard for the quality of subsequent work. Allowances for future expansion of a staged project should be made. This stage is the culmination of efforts by many people and should be celebrated!



Phase 5 – Maintaining Momentum

The final phase promotes and ensures the project continues to meet the needs of the community. A project's long-term success can build support for future community initiatives.

The following ideas can help maintain momentum for community enhancement.

- A ribbon-cutting ceremony can open the project for public enjoyment and celebrate the end of construction.
- As appropriate, arrangements can be made to plan and design a follow-up phase.
- Partnerships can be established with local and provincial agencies to promote and maintain the completed project.
- An organization can be established to maintain momentum. The role of the organization will vary depending on long-term goals and objectives, but may include event promotion, liaison with local government, communication with the public and consideration of related initiatives.
- A community improvement project is never finished. Milestones set immediately after finishing construction allow for project evaluation and regrouping.

Momentum Tools

By working with other organizations and agencies to identify complementary initiatives that capitalize on the project's completion, community involvement can be maintained. Initiatives may include economic development and tourism, or recreational opportunities. Discussions may be held around:

- partnerships;
- business improvement areas;
- joint-use agreements;
- maintenance agreements; and
- the local government five-year financial plan.

End Product

The local government will have completed an enhancement project that represents a significant and ongoing contribution to the community, and sets the stage for future enhancements.



Special Circumstances

For special circumstances, there are tools to ensure the protection of important physical or environmental features in a community.

Heritage Preservation

Improvement projects often include important heritage or natural resources in the community.

Where heritage preservation plays an important role, the following should be considered:

- development permit areas;
- Heritage Revitalization Agreement;
- Heritage Conservation Area;
- Heritage Registry;
- Heritage Alteration Permit; and
- Heritage Designation Bylaw.

Environmental Protection

When considering the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, the following should be considered:

- land trust agreements;
- development permit areas;
- tree protection and removal bylaws;
- water course protection bylaws;
- landscaping bylaws; and
- environmentally sensitive area plans.

Universal Accessibility

Enhancement projects must ensure universal accessibility. This includes buildings, vehicles, streetscapes, outdoor areas and other spaces designed for enjoyment by the public. People with disabilities, seniors and children face physical boundaries that can limit enjoyment of amenities in their community.

The following should be considered:

- building bylaws;
- development permit guidelines;
- parking bylaws;
- winter city design guidelines; and
- subdivision and development servicing bylaws.



Case study – District Of Campbell River

The [District of Campbell River](#) is located on the east coast of Vancouver Island, midway between Victoria and Cape Scott. The municipal boundaries encompass an area of 33,955 acres, and 22.5 kilometers of waterfront bordering Discovery Passage.

The District of Campbell River, with a regional population of over 40,000, is a major economic and social centre. It has an international reputation as the "Salmon Fishing Capital of the World." Campbell River is renowned for some of Canada's finest natural landscapes and hospitality.

Revitalizing the Estuary

For 75 years, commercial and industrial uses have taken their toll on the Campbell River estuary. Over the last 10 years, efforts to restore its dynamic ecosystem have been widely accepted by residents of Campbell River. A log booming area and dry land sort have been closed on the south side of the estuary, as have log booming and sawmill operations on the north side.

To preserve the environmental integrity of the area, public trail access, information signs, and educational initiatives are considered integral to the process of community renewal. City Council, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, landowners, local interest groups and the general public are working together to "clean up" the area.

The Revitalization Process

In 1994, the Canadian Coast Guard explored the possibility of dredging a portion of the estuary to facilitate log transport for area sawmills. Dredging provided significant operational cost savings to the industry. As a viable source of revenue for the community, the future of forestry was confirmed. No significant negative impacts to the environment were felt.

Establish a Vision

Responding to citizen concerns and recognizing the potential impact of dredging, Campbell River initiated a local area plan in 1995. Estuary restoration and long-term industry relocation were explored. An Estuary Management Plan would address community environmental goals, minimize socio-economic disruption, and guide the development of the plan. Participants included:

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans;
- Quinsam River Salmon Hatchery;
- District of Campbell River;
- Canadian Coast Guard;
- Ministry of Environment Lands & Parks;
- BC Hydro;
- local industry;
- sport fishing industry; and
- public interest representative.



Developing the plan required extensive community consultation. Open houses and questionnaires generated ideas and helped in reviewing options for the plan. Industrial users, Tyee Spit users, the Estuary Society and the Campbell River Indian Band were consulted individually on two occasions. Feedback obtained in this way provided important policy directions for the Estuary Management Plan. The plan was completed in February 1996.

Recommendations arising from the plan established the organizational framework for plan implementation, identified possible partnerships, and prioritized short- and long-term projects. A number of changes were made to the Official Community Plan (OCP), which suggested that the estuary continue to be rehabilitated. It was also suggested that Tyee Spit be transformed into a public recreational zone, supporting only limited commercial activity. The OCP also determined that all development of the land fronting on the Campbell River and estuary would be subject to a development permit to protect the natural environment.

Since completing the Estuary Management Plan, the District of Campbell River and the Estuary Management Commission have worked hard to make the plan a reality. In 1999, the Nature Conservancy of Canada identified the Campbell River Estuary as a nationally significant area. An agreement to purchase 18.9 hectares (46.7 acres) of estuary lands at an appraised value of \$1,675,000 was negotiated. These lands are a "nursery area" for Campbell River salmon and other fish populations. The Conservancy plans to give these estuary lands to the District of Campbell River for use as a natural habitat in perpetuity.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans announced in 1999 that it would contribute \$500,000 towards the purchase of the site. The District of Campbell River will also be partnering with the Conservancy to assist in paying for the purchase and to identify additional corporate and private donors.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is currently in the process of completing a long-term habitat protection plan for the estuary. This plan will identify important restoration works and priorities. The District of Campbell River has renewed a number of water lot leases to float plane charter companies on the Spit. Revenue generated here will help pay for restoration works on Tyee Spit and in the estuary.

Concept Planning

Campbell River has just begun the concept planning stage of the improvement process. An Estuary Park Planning Committee has a mandate to preserve sensitive environmental areas in the estuary and develop a plan for "passive recreational opportunities." Trail systems will be created, allowing users the opportunity to access the area. Educational and interpretive features will be developed to facilitate environmental education and historic interpretation.

Remaining steps in Campbell River's process include:

- planning for implementation;
- implementation; and
- maintaining momentum.



Essential Ingredients

The long-term plan for restoration of the Campbell River estuary exemplifies the essential ingredients of a successful project.

- Shared vision – project participants worked closely with the community to develop a clear long-term vision for the area.
- Strong local leadership – the Management Commission remains committed to the vision in day-to-day decision-making.
- Significant public involvement – open houses and questionnaires were used to generate ideas and review concepts.
- Solid policy basis – the OCP and Estuary Management Plan set the framework for restoration works.
- Community based – physical improvements will allow residents to access a unique natural community feature.
- Effective partnerships – established to help finance the project.
- Dynamic process – adapted to issues raised and succeeded in remaining committed to the vision.
- Fiscal responsibility – revenue from water lot leases to help finance restoration works.
- Continuous monitoring – to ensure restoration works are functioning properly.

Project tools for the Revitalizing the Estuary

- Local Area Plan
- Open House
- Surveys
- Official Community Plan
- Development Permit Area

Key Contact

Ronald Neufeld, P.Eng.
Engineering Services Supervisor
District of Campbell River
250-286-5748



Case Study – Village of Radium Hot Springs

The [Village of Radium Hot Springs](#) has a population of approximately 583 permanent residents living in a total land base of 573 hectares.

The Village is located in south-eastern British Columbia and serves as the Gateway to Kootenay National Park. The village is three hours from Calgary and the area's natural hot springs and other outdoor activities help make it a popular tourist destination.

Revitalizing the Community

In the early 1990s, Village Council and the local Chamber of Commerce started to look for ways of increasing Radium's competitive advantage over other communities in the Windermere Valley. The Village wanted to increase its share of local tourism and attract more retirees and second homeowners to the Village. Community enhancement was seen as a way of achieving these objectives.

This goal of community enhancement was included in the revised Official Community Plan: "Foster continued improvements to our streetscapes in order to attract additional services that will make the village more self-sufficient and to increase the value of our commercial area. Encourage our small town sense of pride and ownership of attractive public space."

The Revitalization Process

The enhancement of Radium's downtown core actually began as a village square project. Local residents soon recognized the value of this project and supported other enhancement initiatives. The project plan for the village square quickly grew and eventually most of Main Street was included in the beautification plan.

Establish a Vision

In 1992, the Village commissioned a study to examine design options for enhancing the visual appeal of the community. The Village Square program strategy identified the beautification of the downtown core as a priority for the community. The strategy identified four main concerns:

- poor visual impressions of the downtown;
- lack of pedestrian facilities;
- poorly defined parking; and
- lack of family activities and events.

In response to these concerns, Radium Hot Springs set in motion the Main Street Beautification Project in the second half of the decade.

Concept Planning

The Main Street Beautification Project was ambitious for a community of just over 500 people. Those involved knew that the objectives of the project would only be achieved through a staged approach and strategic financing.

In preparing the concept plan for the downtown core, Village officials wanted the plan to address the four main concerns identified in the strategy, as well as a number of other design and beautification issues. Throughout the process, members of the community were consulted, and a concept plan was in place by 1998.



The plan was designed to reflect the mountain village atmosphere of Radium Hot Springs and included the following elements:

- the use of red stone (symbolic of Redstreak Mountain);
- spacious sidewalks and integration to the pathway networks also being developed;
- corner flares with decorative fans;
- the use of river stones for planters and street lamp foundations;
- a life-size bronze sculpture of three Mountain Sheep;
- street trees; and
- extensive road improvements, drainage, and additional parking.

A goal of the Main Street Beautification Project was to ensure that the downtown core would be fully accessible and offer a number of parking spaces for people with disabilities.

The concept plan also promoted and highlighted several features of the community: mountain vistas, local wildlife, the hot springs, local flowers, and the Columbia wetlands. Radium's status as the gateway to Kootenay National Park is emphasized.

Planning For Implementation

The Village of Radium Hot Springs had limited financial resources. The submission of grant applications was necessary to acquire additional funding. The Village received a provincial grant, which was pooled with municipal funds assembled from general taxation and the Village's small surplus. With financing in place, the Village was able to proceed with the implementation of stages 1 and 2 of the Main Street Beautification Project.

On the success of the now completed four blocks and support from the community, Council wished to finish the remaining project as quickly as possible. The final four block phase was included in the 2002 financial plan and construction began in early May.

Implementation

The staged approach embraced by the Village of Radium Hot Springs allowed the Main Street Beautification Project to be implemented over a number of years. The project will have spanned almost a decade and consisted of four different stages.

Phasing:

Phase I	1998 – Development and Design
Phase II	1999 – 2 blocks
Phase III	2000 – 2 blocks
Phase IV	2002 – 4 blocks

After the design stage, phase II was carried out in the summer of 1999, enhancing two blocks of Main Street. The third stage, completed in the fall of 2000, consisted of two more blocks plus additional enhancements to the street. The unveiling of the bronze sculpture also took place in this stage. The fourth stage marked the completion of the project.

Essential Ingredients

The beautification and enhancement of downtown Radium Hot Springs is generally regarded as a success. This project demonstrates that communities of virtually any size can successfully undertake a community enhancement project.



The project plan made use of the following essential ingredients necessary for successful community revitalization.

- Shared vision – the project team worked closely with the community and local businesses to develop a common vision.
- Strong local leadership – the success in Radium was based in large part on the strength of local leadership.
- Solid policy base – the Village OCP clearly identified beautification and enhancement of the downtown as a key priority and established the policy framework.
- Community based – the enhancement of the downtown core increased community pride and will help the Village develop into a high-quality tourist destination.
- Effective partnerships – to finance the project, the Village established strategic partnerships with key provincial agencies.
- Dynamic process – the project team encountered hurdles, but the strength and dynamic nature of the enhancement process ensured success.
- Fiscal responsibility – the phased approach ensured fiscal responsibility and continued commitment to the new operational costs incurred.
- Continuous monitoring – the project team demonstrated that continuous monitoring can maintain project momentum.

Community Enhancement Tools Used by the Village of Radium Hot Springs

- Alternative Funding Sources
- Special Area Study
- Partnerships
- Official Community Plan

Key Contact

Mark Read
Chief Administrative Officer
Village of Radium Hot Springs
250-347-6455



Case Study – City of Vancouver

The [City of Vancouver](#) is the largest municipality in the province and is currently home to more than 560,000 people. It has operated since its incorporation in 1886 under the authority of the Vancouver Charter.

The Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkways Project

In 1995, Vancouver city council decided to conduct a number of street improvements in the area around Mount St. Joseph Hospital that would enhance the urban environment for pedestrians. The Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkways project proposed visually appealing streetscapes that are accessible, and offer physical and psychological comfort to local residents and visitors.

The project was designed to offer therapeutic benefits to pedestrians, many of whom may be in poor health, physically challenged or elderly. These improvements were also designed to assist people with visual, auditory, tactile and sensory impairments and to encourage social interaction.

Establish a Vision

The impetus for the project came from a development proposal submitted for the Edith Cavell Gardens complex for seniors, which included streetscape improvements along Sophia Street as part of the rezoning application. The project gained further momentum with the decision by city council to upgrade Watson Street and another portion of Sophia Street.

In 1997, the City began to promote the idea of enhancing several streetscapes in the neighbourhood as being cost effective and improving accessibility. Funding was available from the City's Innovative Residential Street Program and the municipality felt that a neighbourhood-wide enhancement project would be eligible for additional grants.

Concept Planning

The City of Vancouver contracted with landscape architects for the preparation of a detailed concept plan for the neighbourhood around Mount St. Joseph Hospital. The concept planning involved extensive consultation with local residents and pedestrians who frequent the area.

The Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkways Design Study Report was the result of co-operation between a large number of individuals and organizations and eventually became the blueprint for this unique and innovative enhancement project. The report identified the following objectives:

- create a variety of circuits within the neighbourhood;
- eliminate physical barriers;
- provide for physical and psychological comfort;
- provide for appropriate levels of way-finding;
- stimulate the senses of sight, touch, smell and sound;
- incorporate elements of interpretation;
- provide opportunities for social interaction;
- maintain or improve safety;
- increase access to natural elements; and
- beautify the neighbourhood.



Mount St. Joseph Hospital, the Cavell Gardens senior's complex and Venture House, the three largest health care facilities in the area, also played an important role during concept development.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the B.C. Paraplegic Association and the B.C. Coalition of Persons with Disabilities provided input to ensure the needs of all users were considered.

Implementation

The most recent phase of the Mount Pleasant Wellness Walkways project will be completed in summer 2003. Funding was provided by the provincial government, the City of Vancouver, local businesses and community foundations. Proponents are conducting a survey to gauge resident satisfaction and are confident that additional improvements will continue to be implemented over the next few years.

Strategic Partnerships

The Wellness Walkways Concept Plan was the result of a strategic partnership between a number of diverse organizations and individuals. Others eventually joined the visionaries who initiated the process.

Strategic partnership brought together representatives of:

- the City of Vancouver,
- the Province of British Columbia,
- Mount St. Joseph Hospital,
- Cavell Gardens seniors complex,
- Venture House,
- the Canadian National Institute for the Blind,
- the B.C. Paraplegic Association, and
- the B.C. Coalition of Persons with Disabilities.

Essential Ingredients

A comprehensive approach meant several initiatives could be combined into one, allowing the desired streetscape changes to be made at considerable cost savings. The end result will be the creation of a fully accessible, pedestrian-friendly streetscape for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Project tools for the Wellness Walkways Concept Plan

- Zoning Bylaw
- Alternative Funding Sources
- Partnerships

Key Contact

David Yurkovich,
Greenways Landscape Designer
City of Vancouver
604 873-7526



Case Study – City of Victoria

The [City of Victoria](#) is located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island and has a population of about 75,000. To the east of downtown and within easy walking distance, is a 12-block mixed-use neighbourhood called Harris Green. The 1996 census identified about 1400 people living in the area. The population of the neighbourhood is expected to double within fifteen years.

In the early 1990s, the city's planning department undertook a review of the Harris Green neighbourhood area plan. The revised plan appeared to favour moderate density. However, the development community felt the area had great potential for high-density residential redevelopment. Soon the development community and local residents found themselves at odds and the process of planning for the future became deadlocked.

Establish a Vision

In an attempt to resolve community differences, the city tried a new and innovative planning tool called a charrette. A charrette is an inclusive planning process that brings together the members of a community, regardless of their views or interests, to create a shared vision.

The Harris Green charrette brought together representatives from:

- the City of Victoria;
- the Harris Green Neighbourhood Association;
- Harris Green property owners;
- the development community; and
- designers (architects, planners, landscape architects and urban designers).

Representatives attended two intensive 3-day weekend workshops and the public was advised of progress through open houses. The charrette took place over a period of 6 months from January to June 1997.

Concept Planning and Implementation

Charrette participants were asked to conceive of a concept and to identify strategies needed to achieve the vision, which was for Harris Green to develop as a densely populated, vital, inclusive, and mixed-use community. The charrette met two objectives: create a concept plan and identify the contents of a zoning bylaw and or regulations needed to achieve the vision.

To develop the concept, participants divided the charrette's mandate into tasks to address urban, economic, social and regulatory design. At the conclusion of the charrette, participants presented a report entitled *Harris Green... A Neighbourhood of Choice* to Victoria City Council.

The report identified issues that needed to be resolved to achieve the Harris Green vision.



These included:

- further refinements to the design concept;
- a less restrictive zoning bylaw with regard to floor space ratio and parking;
- design guidelines based on a more "European" and urbane appearance;
- a street beautification plan for two blocks of Yates Street;
- a funding strategy based on a partnership between the City of Victoria, local property owners and senior levels of government; and
- a policy on public art.

Essential Ingredients

In 1997, the Canadian Homebuilders' Association awarded a Gold Georgie Award to the Harris Green charrette for excellence displayed by a local government in co-operation and or leadership with industry.

The Harris Green charrette was successful in developing a new vision for the neighbourhood, because it brought community interests together to develop an innovative plan to address community concerns. Community involvement and leadership played a pivotal role.

The major work of the charrette took place at the 3-day intensive weekend workshops. These events required considerable pre-planning and key to the charrette's success was the relationship between the city and the private sector.

The city assigned a senior planning staff member to work full time on the project for several months, which totalled approximately \$28,000. The private sector contributed meeting space in the neighbourhood, staff time and money to cover overhead costs, which totalled approximately \$70,000. Design professionals and business leaders were engaged and also volunteered their time and expertise.

Project Status

Some redevelopment has taken place and several projects have been completed. During the summer of 2000, the street beautification plan for two blocks of Yates Street, identified in the charrette, was also completed. This project cost a million dollars and was financed through a cost shared local improvement.

Project Tools for Harris Green

- Design Charrette
- Zoning Bylaw
- Development Permit Area Design Guidelines
- Special Area Plan
- Financing Strategy

Key Contact

Stephen Barber
Heritage Planner
City of Victoria
250-361-0289

