

Small Talk Forum

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**COMMON
GOOD** UBCM
2026





NATIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

UBCM 2026 | WCCRP Mayors' Presentation | Small Talk Forum



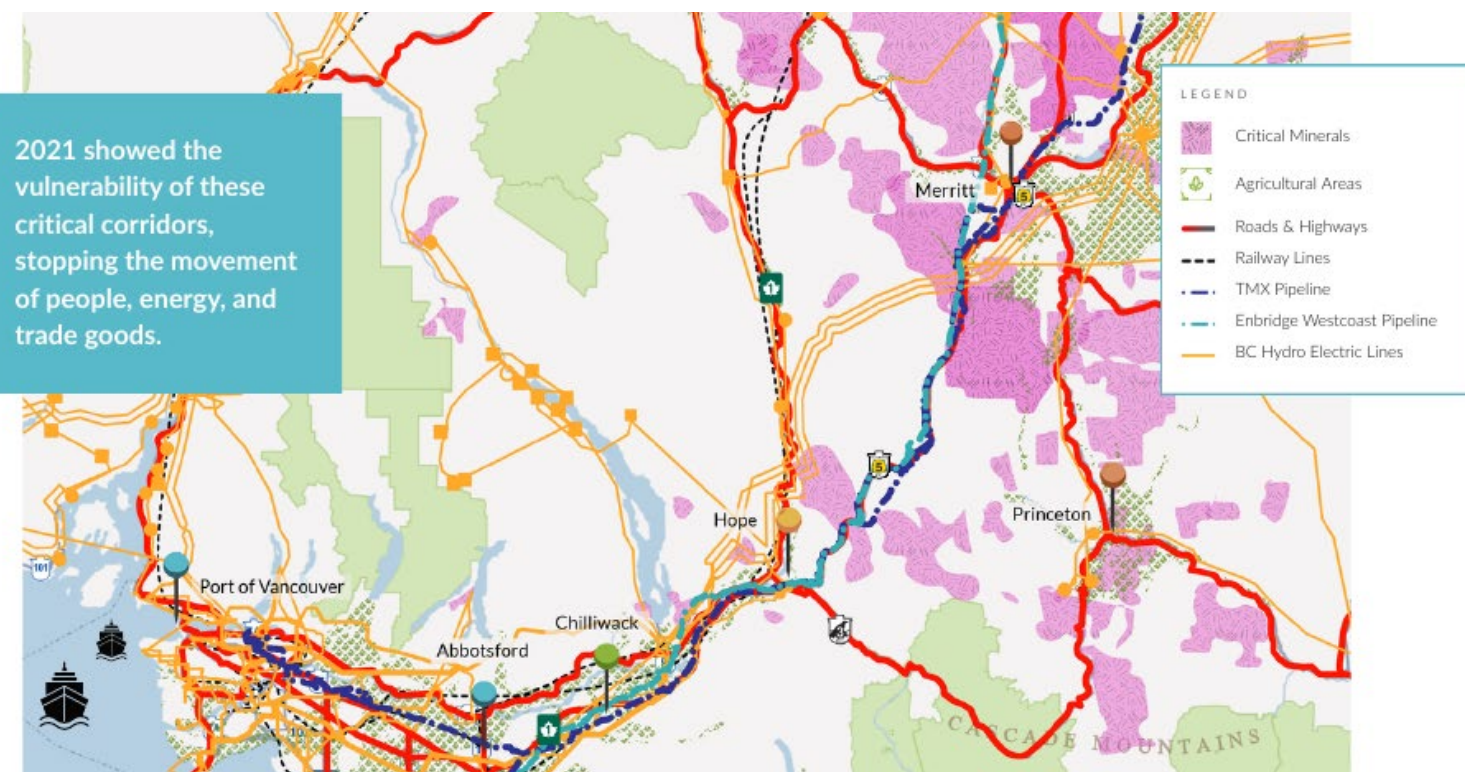
WCCRP...

Turning Joint Advocacy
Into Momentum.



The corridor operates as one connected system

Road, rail, energy, food and communities share the same narrow geography.



**A disruption in one place
does not stay local.**

It can interrupt supply chains,
emergency access, energy movement
and the reliable flow of goods across
Canada.

Local resilience protects Canada.

Merritt



A disruption in one place
does not stay local.

November 2021
British Columbia

Chilliwack



Hope

Princeton



Abbotsford



The cost of corridor failure cascades quickly



Climate-driven disruptions affect far more than the damaged site.

TRANSPORTATION

People, emergency response and goods lose reliable passage.

ENERGY

Pipelines and transmission systems face compounding risk.

FOOD SECURITY

Farms, livestock and market access are disrupted.

When the corridor is unsafe or unreliable, confidence and investment move with it.

The weak point is not local commitment.

It is the gap between local needs, senior government policy and stable funding.

Funding streams are fragmented

Programs often separate infrastructure that functions together, and bias towards readiness rather than needs.

Small communities carry major systems

Limited staff and tax bases support assets with national consequences.

Historic policy is inadequate for modern challenges

Combined voices of communities result in faster policy changes.

WCCRP's role: connect prepared local projects to coordinated senior-government investment.

Communities are aligned around one cause

Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Hope, Merritt and Princeton are working across boundaries.

Participating Municipalities



ABBOTSFORD, BC

Abbotsford acknowledges that we are located on the traditional and ancestral territory of the Semá:th, Mathxwi, and Leq'á:mel First Nations.



CHILLIWACK, BC

The City of Chilliwack acknowledges that we are honoured to live, work, and play on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Stó:lō Coast Salish peoples.



HOPE, BC

We acknowledge that the District of Hope lies on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the Stó:lō people, particularly the Chawathil, Union Bar and Yale First Nations.



MERRITT, BC

The City of Merritt officially acknowledges that it is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Nlaka'pamux and Syilx people.



PRINCETON, BC

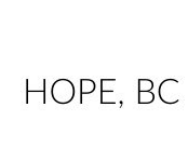
We respectfully acknowledge that Princeton is on the unceded traditional territories of the Nlaka'pamux and Syilx peoples.

The partnership brings together:

- Local knowledge
- Ready infrastructure priorities
- A shared national case
- One coordinated voice

Each community has a distinct regional priority to the shared case.

Existing plans and active projects provide a practical starting point.



The National Gateway Node

Hope is where Highway 1, 3, 5, and 7 converge, alongside CN and CP rail lines. It is also a corridor for major natural gas transmission lines moving supply from northeastern BC to the Lower Mainland and export points.

Why it's critical to the WCCRP:
Road, rail, and energy infrastructure all converge in a narrow valley system. Disruption here simultaneously impacts fuel supply, goods movement, and national connectivity.



Resiliency Infrastructure Investment

The District of Hope has multiple flood mitigation projects ready to advance, with two currently underway and awaiting Provincial permitting. The 2021 Atmospheric River event significantly impacted Hope, and it has experienced ongoing riverbank erosion, land loss, and avulsion events since then. The District is now completing another update to its Flood Protection Plan, identifying 12 areas of concern, including four urgent sites.

These projects protect more than highways and energy corridors. They safeguard the community, nearby First Nations, critical infrastructure, and regional economic continuity. The District of Hope is seeking timely Provincial permit processing and funding support to move this urgent public safety and resiliency infrastructure work forward.

HOPE | National gateway node



The Interior Distribution Hub

Merritt connects Highway 5, 5A, and 97C, acting as a redistribution point between the coast, Interior, and north. The region is also intersected by key natural gas pipeline corridors feeding southern BC.

Why it's critical to the WCCRP:
It is a critical inland node and the 'compass' of the interior, with 5 major highways and multiple energy corridors converging on the City, making it critical for both logistics rerouting and energy continuity.



Resiliency Infrastructure Investment

The City of Merritt is advancing shovel-ready projects under its Council-adopted Flood Mitigation Plan (2022), developed in response to the 2021 atmospheric river event and full community evacuation. A dedicated Flood Mitigation Team is in place to deliver key infrastructure, including diking, and nature-based restoration. These projects protect local homes and infrastructure while safeguarding a critical transportation corridor essential to interprovincial trade and supply chains.

With letters of support from local Indigenous communities and projects already underway, Merritt is seeking the remaining 30% of funding to complete the plan. For more information, visit: flood.merritt.ca

MERRITT | Interior distribution hub

Each community has a distinct regional priority to the shared case.

Existing plans and active projects provide a practical starting point.



WEST
COAST
CORRIDOR
RESILIENCY
PARTNERSHIP



ABBOTSFORD, BC



The Agricultural, Transportation & Trade Corridor

Abbotsford is a major transportation and trade corridor, with Highway 1, Highway 11, major rail access, and close connections to the U.S. border and the Port of Vancouver. It is also a key energy corridor, with natural gas and Trans Mountain pipelines serving the Lower Mainland. Abbotsford is one of Canada's most intensely and diversely farmed regions, generating \$3.8 billion in economic activity annually and supporting nearly 17,000 jobs.

Why it's critical to the WCCRP:
Flooding impacts national food supply chains, provincial food security, cross-border trade, and regional energy distribution, compounding risk across multiple systems.



Resiliency Infrastructure Investment

Since the 2021 flood, the City of Abbotsford developed a long-term flood mitigation plan and in April 2023 signed the Sumas River Watershed Flood Mitigation Collaborative Framework, an agreement with the Province of BC, Semáth, Mathwá and Leq'ámel First Nations and the City of Chilliwack to make Sumas Prairie more resilient to flooding.

The City of Abbotsford's long-term flood mitigation urgent works plan includes:

- adding another pump station
- enhancing dikes,
- adding flood storage areas, and
- environmental features that make it fish friendly.

Implementing a comprehensive, large-scale solution requires a firm funding commitment from senior government.





WEST
COAST
CORRIDOR
RESILIENCY
PARTNERSHIP



CHILLIWACK, BC



The Corridor Compression Zone

Chilliwack connects Highway 1 and regional routes, with two rail lines and critical hydro and pipeline infrastructure moving through the Fraser Valley toward constrained canyon systems.

Why it's critical to the WCCRP:
It is the final convergence point before major bottlenecks, where transportation and energy corridors compress into limited pathways, amplifying disruption impacts.



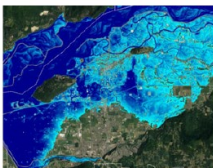
Resiliency Infrastructure Investment

Chilliwack's Integrated Flood Hazard Management Plan highlights the importance of the extensive 50 km diking network to protect the community and critical infrastructure from floods.

The City has a proven track record of completing diking and drainage upgrade projects, but has not had sufficient funding to upgrade the remaining 25% of dike that still requires significant raising to meet current provincial standards.

One of the City's major drainage pump stations has also reached end-of-life and requires full replacement. Reliable funding assistance is essential to carrying out the required flood mitigation projects that will then support community flood resilience and critical infrastructure protection.

For more information, visit: chilliwack.com/FloodProtection





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PARTNERSHIP



PRINCETON, BC



Southern Trans-Provincial Corridor

Princeton is the convergence of Highway 3; the Southern Trans-Provincial Corridor, with Highway 5A. Highway 5A serves as the alternate route to the coast via Highway 3 whenever the northern route (Highway 5) is impacted by major events or road closures.

Why it's critical to the WCCRP:
Highway 3 is the Southern Trans-Provincial Corridor and serves as the primary backup trade route to the coast. Highway 3 is of high importance to industry that produces critical minerals in our valley. The movement of these products over the life of the mine in Princeton (2043), result in a Gross Domestic Product of \$11.5 Billion+ to British Columbia and a \$22.1 Billion+ Economic Output to Canada.



Resiliency Infrastructure Investment

Princeton is at the confluence of 2 major rivers: the Tulameen and the Similkameen. Both are prone to flooding. There are 3 major bridges that cross the rivers at Princeton,

1. Highway 3 bridge over the Similkameen river,
2. Highway 5A bridge over the Tulameen river and
3. The original wooden bridge also over the Tulameen river.

Engineers and consultants have identified concerns with both bridges over the Tulameen river. A major concern is that the highway 5A bridge abutments impinge upon the water course, putting the integrity of the bridge and the community at risk. The concerns surrounding the Highway 5A bridge need to be addressed in order to secure the economic trade corridor to the coast.

For more information www.princetonfloodhub.ca



ABBOTSFORD

Agricultural, transportation and trade corridor

CHILLIWACK

Corridor compression zone

PRINCETON

Southern trans-provincial corridor

Five communities. One model. One voice. Real momentum



A model that turns joint advocacy into momentum.

ORIGIN

A challenge that crossed boundaries

Five communities recognized that shared challenges could not be addressed community by community.

VEHICLE

One table and one collective voice

WCCRP brings local knowledge and priorities together, creating a stronger regional and national voice.

MOMENTUM

A model built to carry more

The same model can advance many shared initiatives; not just a single issue or funding request.

BUILT LOCALLY. SCALABLE BY DESIGN.

Three actions can turn alignment into momentum



The WCCRP model can work for many different challenges

01

Establish Joint Advocacy

Bring the right communities with shared challenges and together.

02

Identify Positive Policy Changes

Identify current policy that may be constraining momentum.

03

Advocate for Stable Funding

Work collaboratively between Communities and the province to advance regional goals.



JOINT ADVOCACY BUILDS MOMENTUM

West Coast Corridor Resiliency Partnership

WCCRP.CA | SUPPORT@WCCRP.CA



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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

The Wells Experience

Small Talk Forum – UBCM 2026

District of Wells

Councillor Dorothea Funk, CAO Jerry Dombowsky

Sept 15, 2026

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT

The Wells Experience

• Who are we?

What are we going to share today?

Our intended takeaway for you.

Wells is a charming little town. This little community is known for its history, artistic scene and exciting outdoor adventures.



Wells Area gold history

- Lowhee Creek hydrologically mined starting in 1890s
- Williams Creek (Barkerville) produced 1.1million ounces of gold
- At today's price of \$6,000 per ounce (over \$6 billion today)
- Greater Cariboo gold claim area produced over 2 million ounces (\$12 billion)

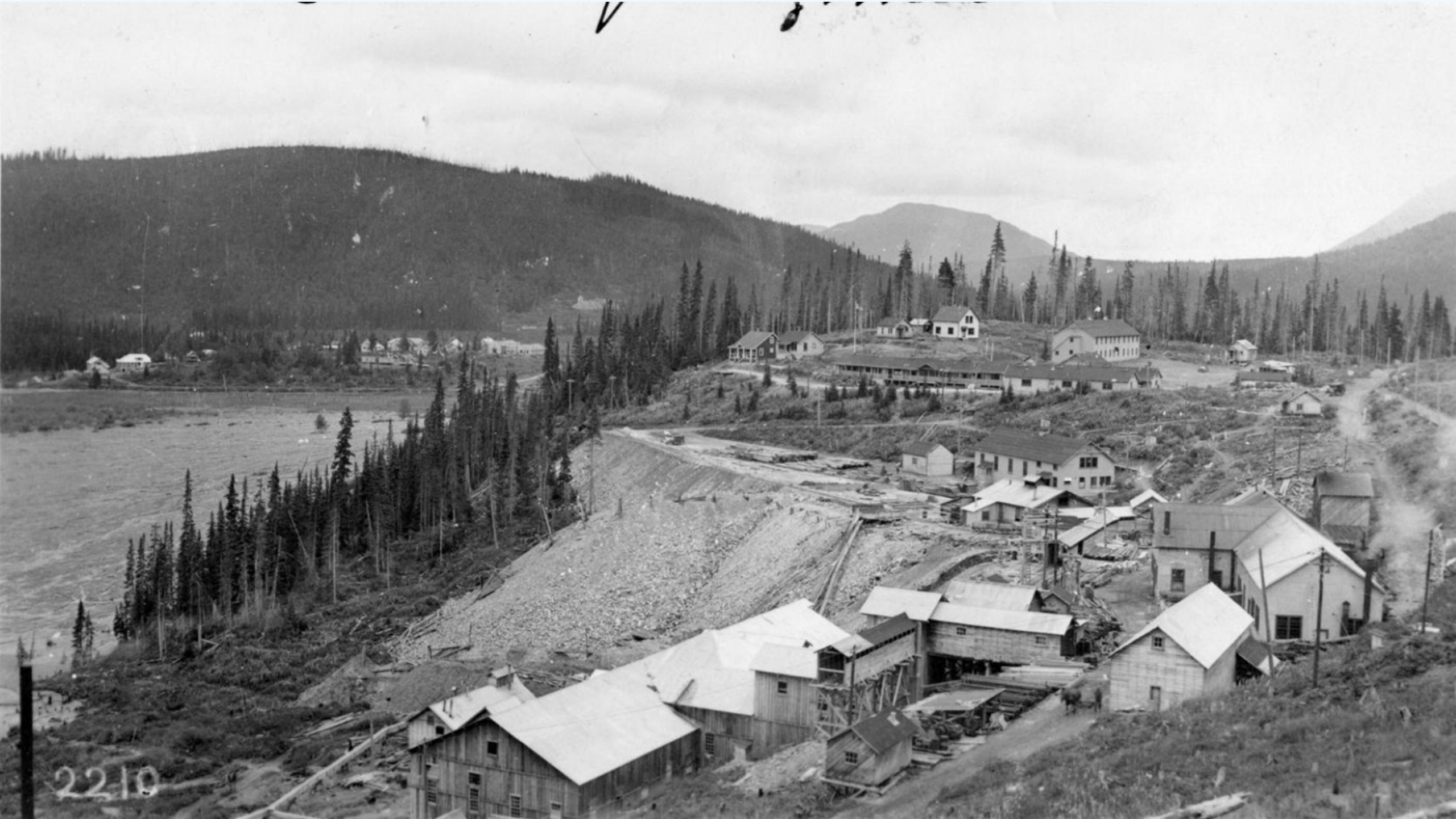




Town of Wells history

- 1860s Cariboo Gold Rush (Barkerville) long over when gold interest renewed in Neighbouring Wells.
- Wells built as industrial mining town in the early 1930s. Operated for 30+years – with population at one time of 3,000 -- before shutting down 34 years later in 1967.
- Town was abandoned. Other people moved in and a different community developed - focused on culture (history, the arts) and recreation. Barkerville Historic Town and Park, created in 1958, was part of the appeal.
- One arts organization (Island Mountain Arts) has existed for 40 years, longer than Cariboo Gold Quartz mine.
- Mining continued, at a smaller scale, but wasn't the dominant industry. Ebbs and flows.
- During these decades, Wells governed by the Cariboo Regional District, then incorporated as a municipality in 1998.
- DoW motto is 'More than just Gold' to recognize and reflect the changed economy.





2210









Wells re-invents itself

- After town was abandoned, artist and “free-spirit” influx
- Placer mining in small amounts
- Birth of tourism economy
- Forestry continues



Wells today – demographics and economy

- 218 residents year-round (2021 census)
- Summer population increase due to tourism economy and impact of Barkerville Historic Park/ Bowron
- Summer tourism – Barkerville, Outdoor adventure – camping, hiking, boating, fishing, hunting, atvs, ...
- Winter tourism – cross country skiing, sledding, downhill skiing (Troll Mtn.)
- Extensive trail network
- Artist retreats, live theatre, Island Mountain Arts,...
- Forestry
- Placer gold mining



← CARIBOO WAGON ROAD →

















HISTORIC

Wells

Osisko, Cariboo Gold and Barkerville Gold

- Recent history of Osisko, Cariboo Gold mine, Barkerville Gold
- After 20+ years of exploration to further develop the gold in and around Wells, and beginning of engagement in 2016, Barkerville Gold Mines applied for an Environmental Assessment Certificate for the Cariboo Gold Project in summer, 2020.
- The mining would be underground but plan included a huge concentrator in a large above-ground industrial development - Mine Site Complex – within visible town boundaries, half the footprint of the town. (In community meetings beforehand, we'd been told the concentrator would be on the other side of the mountains, at an already disturbed site -- Bonanza Ledge open pit mine).
- ***For the most part, Wells supported a mine, but not this plan.



BARKERVILLE GOLD MINES LTD.

CARIBOO GOLD PROJECT COMMUNITY WORKSHOP AND DISCUSSION

Virtual Workshop

July 13, 2020 – 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2841894918298979340>

In-Person Meetings

July 14, 2020 by appointment – call 778-414-8493 to book

Please join BGM in a virtual workshop and discussion as we present an update on the Cariboo Gold Project focusing on key changes and updates to project components since our last community meeting. Specifically, we want to update you on the:

- Concentrator Plant
- Island Mountain Portal
- Water Treatment Plant
- Transmission Line
- Waste Rock Storage and Access Roads
- Dry Stack Tailings Facility site options

We would also like to have an open discussion where you can ask BGM questions about these components or any aspect of the Project.

This is the first in a series of community workshops and discussions that we are planning. Please let us know if there are any topics that you would like to discuss at future events.



Environmental Assessment Process

As you may be aware, the Project is in the Early Engagement Phase of the BC Environmental Assessment Process. If you would like to provide input to the BC Environmental Assessment Office regarding the Project Description, please go to www.gov.bc.ca/eao and click 'Commenting on Projects' or contact 778-414-8493 for mail and fax information. **The Public Comment Period is open until July 27, 2020.**



If you would like to learn more about the Project, the studies we are undertaking, or the environmental review process please join us at one of our Community Discussions or contact us directly.

Community Relations Office:

Address: 4270 Sanders Ave, PO Box 250, Wells, BC V0K 2R0

Phone: +1 (778) 414-8493

E-mail: feedback@barkervillegold.com

Environmental Assessment

How did we get here – EA process 2018 onward:

- No formal role for local government in the Act
- District of Wells optional part of the Technical Advisory Committee.
- EA Act includes setting up a Community Advisory Committee where there is ‘sufficient community interest in a project’, to advise on the potential effects of the project.
- Volunteer makeup, no resources provided.
- Three of the CAC members were later elected to Wells Council (two are at UBCM).

Environmental Assessment

How did we get here – EA process 2018 onward:

- Community Advisory Committee members were repeatedly told the EAO could not suggest changes to the project, could only decide mitigation. We maintained the impacts could not be managed without changes.
- At the same time, Act requirement says proponent must provide ‘alternative means of carrying out the project...’. Their rationale was never assessed independently.
- CAC members came to realize they had no influence on final decision, though some mitigations may be the result of their work.
- Cariboo Gold Project Environment Assessment Certificate granted (announced) October 10, 2023.

Assessement Evaluation

- 'Summary of Engagement Report' 2021
- Local government land use authority
- Mining Act and legal challenges
- What impact will the mine have on resident's quality of life?

Environmental Assessment

Consultation gaps:

- EA Certificate Conditions require the company to produce a number of management plans. District of Wells excluded in consultation and info-sharing for many of them, e.g. Construction Environmental Management Plan, and End Land Use Plan, among others.
- Capacity of Wells to navigate assessment office documents for review
- Difficult to get Conditions amended and yet, EAO Compliance and Enforcement is based on those Conditions / Management Plans.

Environmental Assessment

From the Minister's approval letter:

- *“We considered that during the EA, ODV made project design changes during the EA for Cariboo Gold to minimize negative effects to the town of Wells and environmental effects. This included changes to the Services Building which is located within the town, including reducing the original proposed ... and adding sound insulation as part of efforts to reduce the building's visual and acoustic impacts ... and removing a haul road option that was visible from the town of Wells.”*
- *“We understand that ODV is negotiating a Community Benefits Agreement with the District of Wells”*





Environmental Assessment

- Source: The Social Impacts of Gold Mining on Rural Communitites: Insights from the Academic Literature" Baran Karsak (August 2026).
- "This review is particularly relevant to municipal and provincial decision-makers, because many of the social impacts documented in the literature fall squarely within the domains for which local governments are responsible, such as housing, community safety, service provision, and the wellbeing of residents; yet Nova Scotia's mining governance framework does not assign municipalities a formal role in mining approvals, despite their responsibilities for community wellbeing under the Municipal Act."*

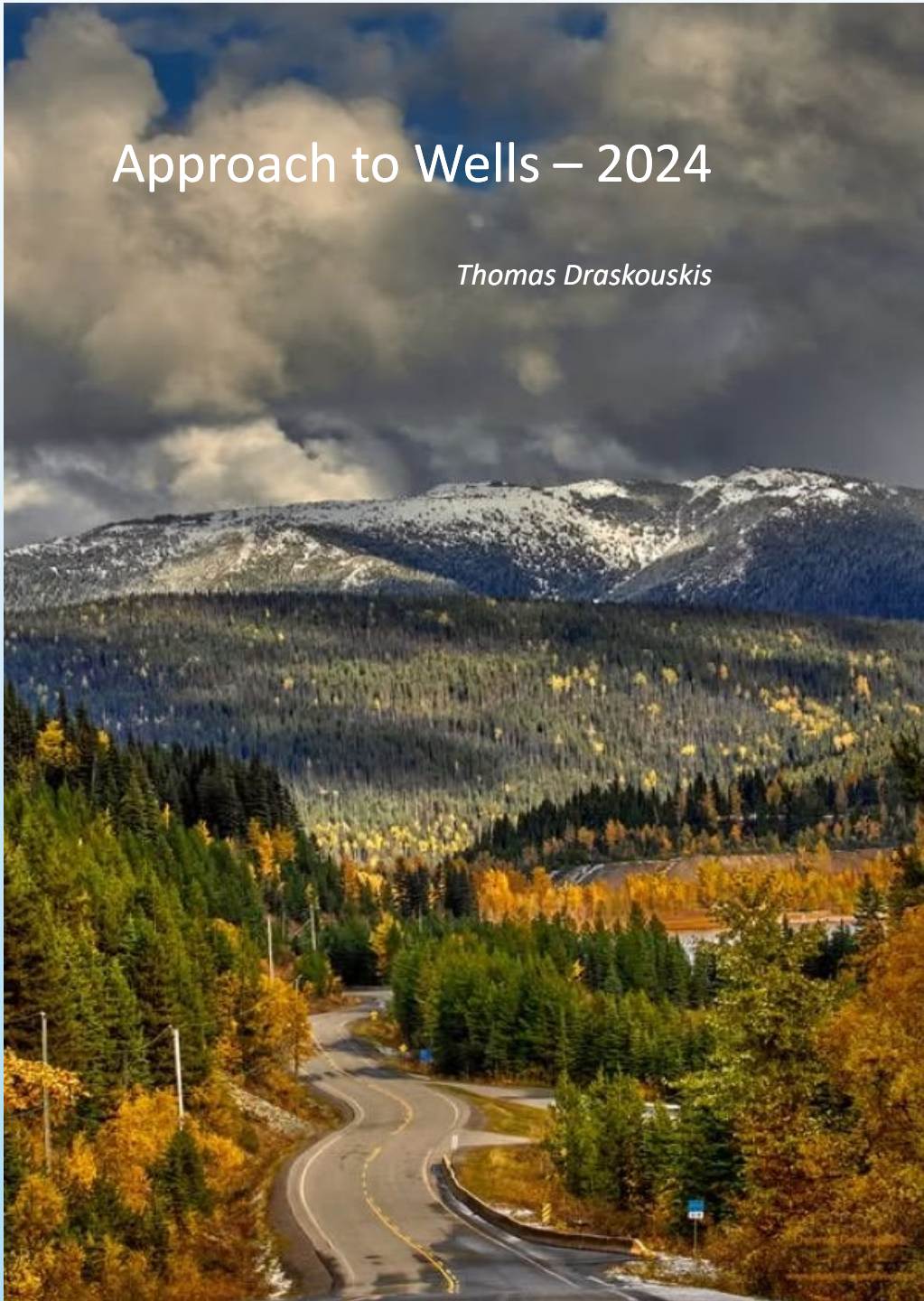
Environmental Assessment

Other Permits:

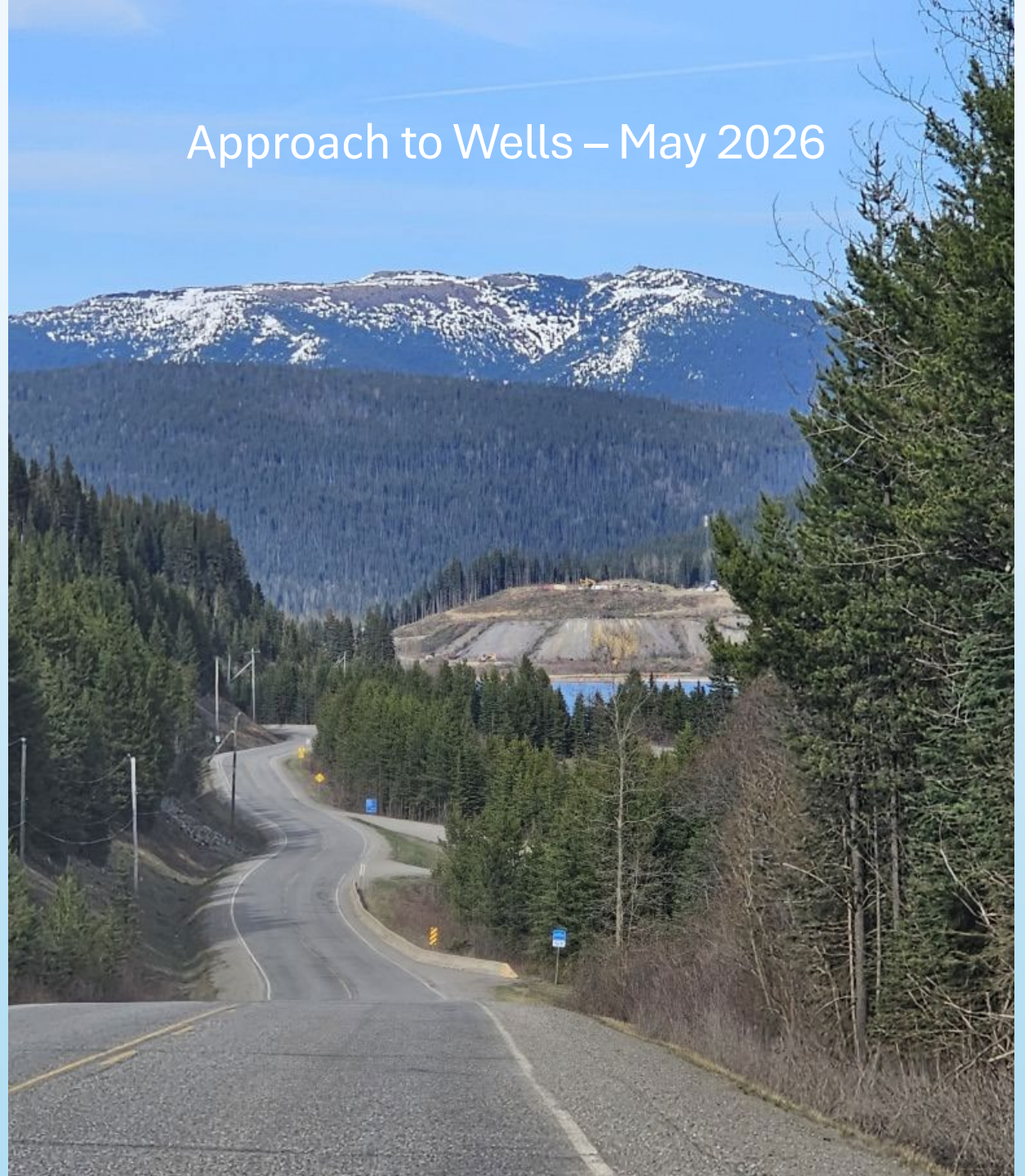
- Approval for the mine also included Permits from Mines and from Environment after Certificate granted. For Cariboo Gold - permitting review had begun before the Certificate was awarded to save time in event it was approved (which it was).
- Again, no special consideration for the local government (District)– other than as a TAC member. In the permits themselves, Wells not included as a member of e.g. the required Environmental Monitoring Committee, or included in the information-sharing required of the company.

Approach to Wells – 2024

Thomas Draskouskis



Approach to Wells – May 2026















Projected layout | Camp complex & offices

**Fully integrated mine site to support
underground mine operations and
production**



**RESTRICTED
ACCESS
AUTHORIZED
PERSONNEL
ONLY**



Environmental Assessment

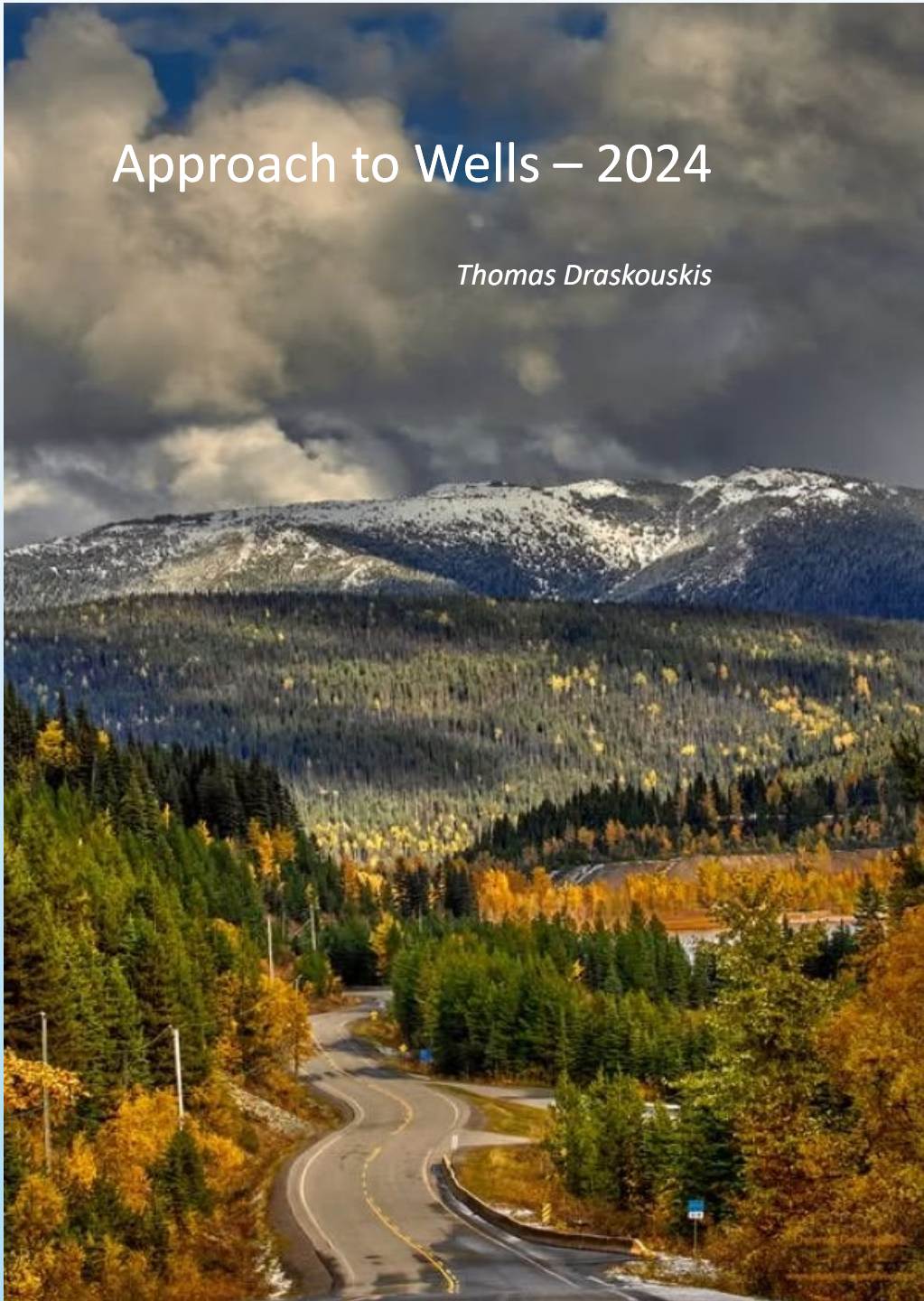
- Impact upon the town character
- Impact upon the residents
- Issues with public plans vs. reality
- ODVs responsibility vs. EA Office

Environmental Assessment

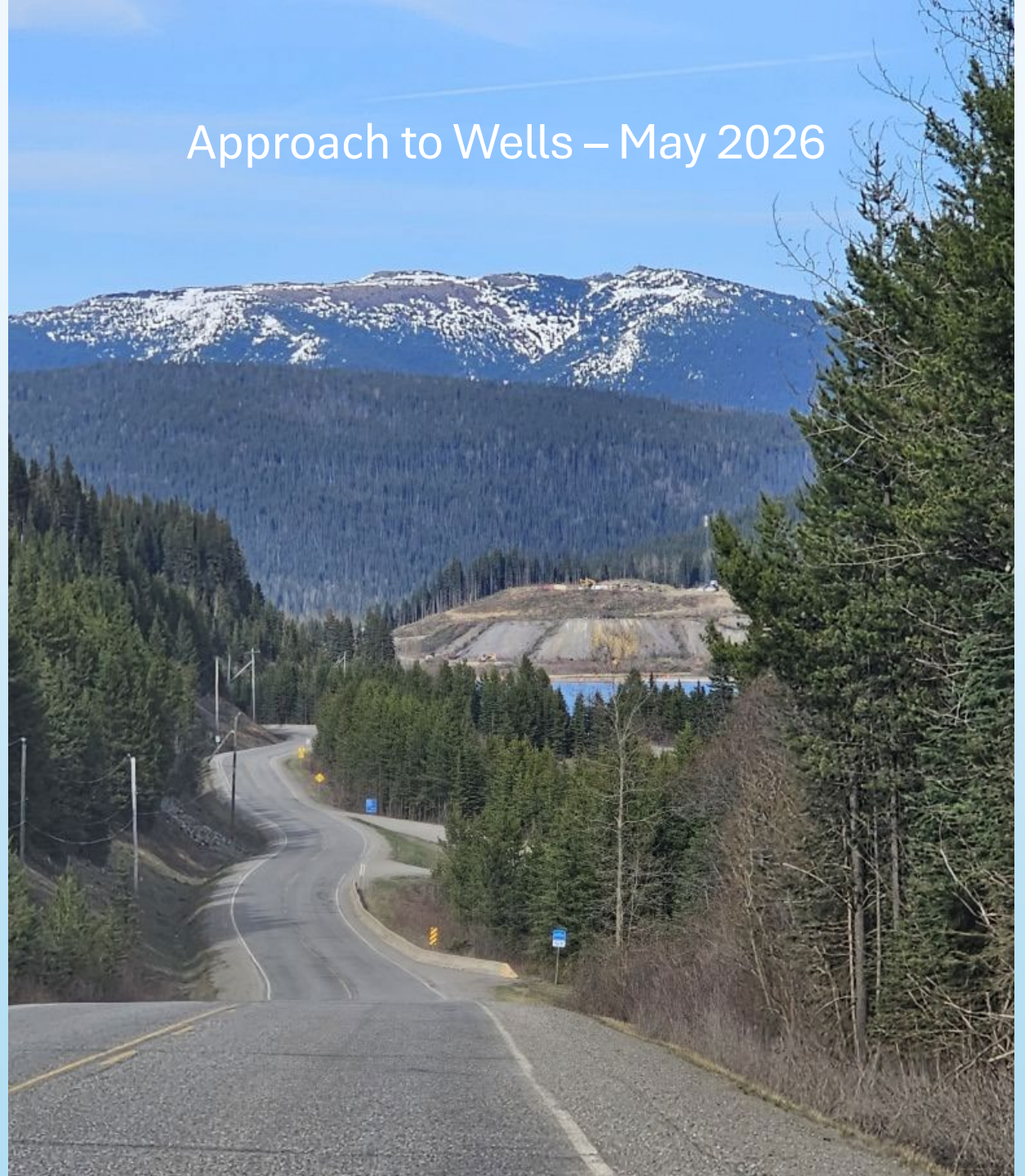
- What's next? Is there hope for the citizens of Wells?

Approach to Wells – 2024

Thomas Draskouskis



Approach to Wells – May 2026



Proposed Infrastructure Layout



**Mine Site Complex centered on orebody and
built on brownfield within the historic
mining district of Wells**





Final thoughts

- Opening story link
- Takeaway for audience





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LOGANLAKE.C
A

The District of **LOGAN LAKE**

DROUGHT, FIRE and LOGAN LAKE

INTRODUCTION...

WHO ARE WE?

Small town in the Highland Valley

*First **FireSmart Community** in Canada*

Logan Lake Community Forest

Located in the forest, grassland/forest interface

Feeling the impacts of warming climate and long term drought

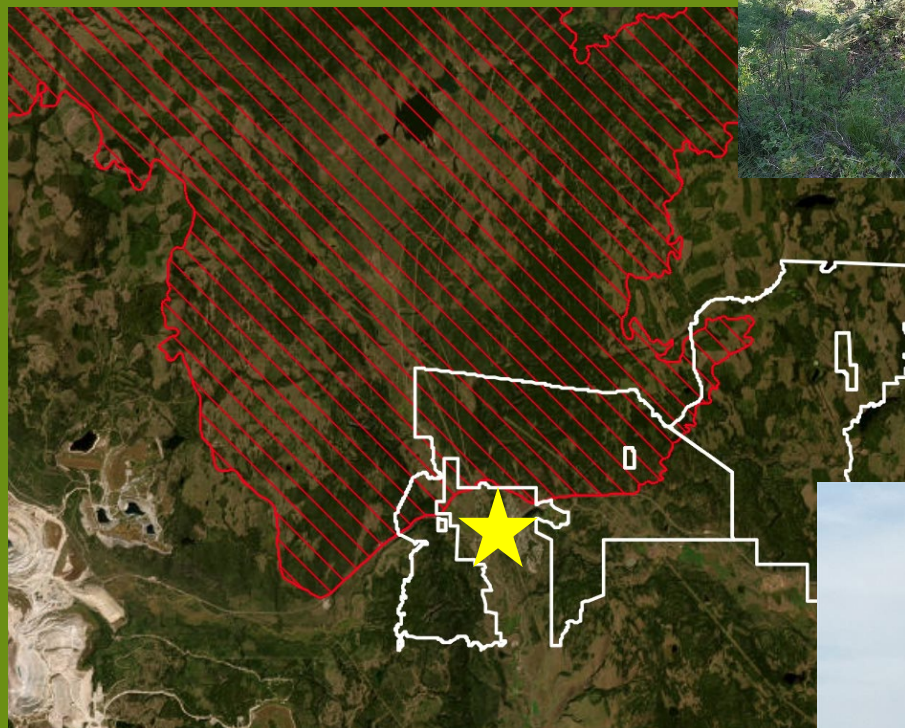


LOGANLAKE.CA

A



WILDFIRE



*First **FireSmart Community** in Canada – FireSmart Canada
Community active in preparing the town
Community Forest Active on the landscape and in the town
Tremont Fire in 2021 – burned all the forests north of town (180°)
Recent Fire July 29, 2026 within 1 km of town*



DROUGHT AND WILDFIRE

*Longterm drought in the area
Tremont Fire 2021 started during unprecedented hot/dry conditions
Increasingly volatile (wildfire) situation
Acting at various levels to influence things...*





WILDFIRE RISK MGT

FireSmart Principles – 7 disciplines

*Collaborations – First Nations, BC Wildfire
Sprinklers, landscaping, education, training
Harvesting, fuel treatments, grazing*

*Embarking on **prescribed fire** program – Spring 2027*



DROUGHT AND WETLANDS/STREAMS

Low flows in streams, rivers and wetlands in the area

Wetland restoration work underway

Beaver Dam Analogs being installed to support restoration and biodiversity

BCIT Partnership

DROUGHT AND FORESTS

Drier ecosystems, extended periods of higher fire hazard

Increases impacts in the forest

Loss of trees to drought, challenging regeneration, forest pests increasing

Elevates overall concern



DROUGHT AND REFORESTATION

*Challenges in reforestation work. Following wildfire. Following harvest.
Impacts the Logan Lake Community Forest is grappling with
Some ecosystems under climate change – not really forest anymore...
Working this out on the land...*





DROUGHT AND MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

*Supplied by multiple wells within the same aquifer –
currently steady recharge*

Recognize potential impacts to downstream needs/users

Water use bylaws linked to drought mapping



SUMMARY

*Logan Lake – **Discover Our Nature** – who we are, who we want to be*

The land in and around the community is being pressed

Risks are increasing

Resilience is key – a community and land that is resilient

Withstand, Absorb, Recover From, Adapt

Collaborations, partnerships, working at various levels and scales

LOGANLAKE.CA

DISTRICT OF LOGAN LAKE

THANK YOU

Discover Our Nature



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Status Quo Forestry is a Problem It can't be a solution

Albert Einstein once said:

“If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.”



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VILLAGE OF
radium
hot springs





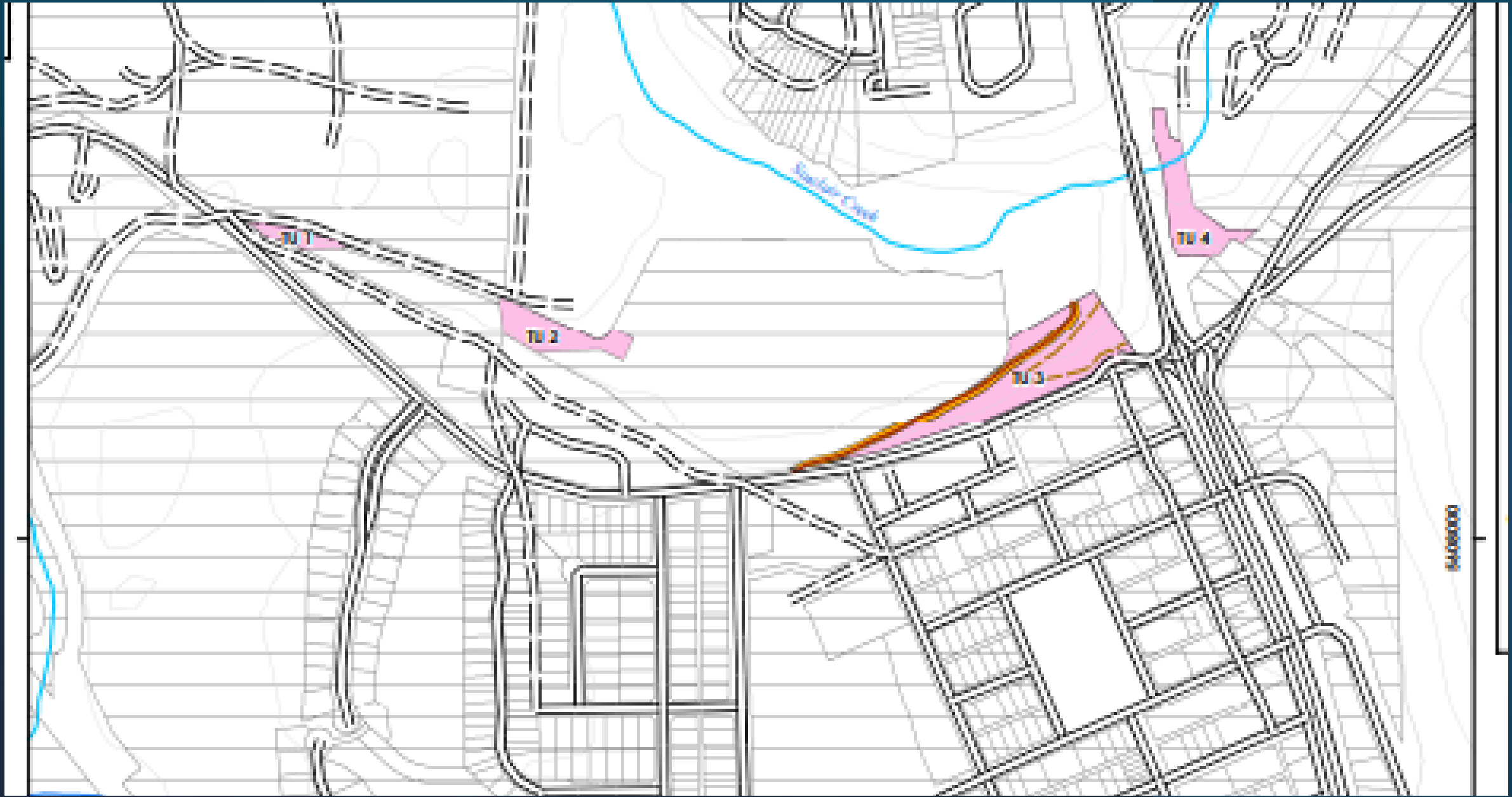
Let's talk ...

- CWRP
- DPA
- CRI
- FFMC
- TU
- WUI

Do we really have a wildfire problem?



Lots of water; still highest risk class for fire...



Wildfire
Hazard
Development
Permit
Area



-
- **Opportunity?**





Could a million dollars in fuel reduction work prevent 100 million in community loss?





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Recreation Reimagined

How Port Hardy turned a facility crisis into a community-wide invitation to participate, connect and belong.



DISTRICT OF PORT HARDY



We had facilities—but not a recreation system

1997

Mine closure and economic downturn

The Recreation Manager position disappeared. Capacity, programming and community animation went with it.

2020

A pool. An arena. A shoestring budget.

Swim lessons, public swims, aquafit, hockey and public skating continued—but little beyond traditional facility use. The Centre closed for two months each summer.

The missing asset was not a building. It was capacity.

A failing pool forced a bigger question



1 A new pool could not be funded

2 COVID and maintenance requirements closed the facility

3 We pivoted: retrofit the pool—and reinvent recreation

We invested in people before adding programs

RECREATION MANAGER

Leadership, operations, partnerships and a mandate to imagine more.



OUTREACH COORDINATOR

A direct connection to residents, ideas, participation barriers and new opportunities.

Two roles changed what the whole recreation centre could be.

Programming moved beyond the walls—and beyond sport

MOVE

Dryland fitness

CREATE

Paint nights

GROW

**After-school
programs**

LEARN

Skating lessons

CELEBRATE

**Festivals + New
Year's Eve Party**

EXPLORE

Outdoor activities

When the pool reopened, Council chose momentum

“

**Keep doing this.
And remove the cost barrier.**

The goal shifted from operating facilities to creating access—especially for residents least likely to participate when fees stand in the way.

Barrier-free became a design principle, not a one-time promotion.

A partnership model made access sustainable

\$100K

annual Regional District
support

DISTRICT

Local tax dollars
anchor the
service.

BUSINESS

Sponsors keep
festivals free or
low-cost.

GRANTS

Applications
expand camps and
after-school
access.

COMMUNITY

Participation turns
investment into
belonging.

No single partner carries the transformation—but every partner strengthens it.

More residents can find their way in

- 01 | CHILDREN Play • learn • belong
- 02 | YOUTH Connect • create • grow
- 03 | FAMILIES Share time without cost pressure
- 04 | ADULTS Move • socialize • recharge
- 05 | SENIORS Stay active • stay connected

The return reaches far beyond recreation

HEALTH

More ways to move and build confidence

BELONGING

Shared experiences reduce isolation

FAMILIES

Affordable activities ease pressure

ECONOMY

Events bring people out and spending with them

PLACE

Vibrancy supports attraction and retention

INCREASED ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

Four choices made transformation possible

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 01 | Build capacity | People create momentum. |
| 02 | Treat disruption as permission | A closure can open space to redesign. |
| 03 | Make access a policy choice | Barrier-free programs require intention. |
| 04 | Stack partnerships | Local, regional, grant and business support all matter. |
| 05 | Work with non-profits | Showcase all recreation offerings. |



WE DIDN'T JUST
REOPEN A POOL.

We reopened
possibility.

Recreation can be where a small community
rebuilds confidence, connection and momentum—
one invitation at a time.

DISTRICT OF PORT HARDY

Presented by: Heather Nelson-Smith, CAO



Scan me



COMMON GOOD

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VILLAGE OF
Daajing Giids

**Mayor Lisa Pineault
Village of Daajing Giids
Haida Gwaii**

Healthcare Equality

"Health equity is created when individuals have the fair opportunity to reach their fullest health potential."





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UBCM Small Talk Forum

Data and action gaps perpetuate BC's rural health care crisis

Iglika Ivanova • iglika@bcpolicy.ca

Co-Executive Director & Senior Economist

Co-Director, Understanding Precarity in BC Project

September 15, 2026

UBCM has already called for action

2023-SR1 Health Equity for Rural and Remote Communities - UBCM Executive

Whereas rural and remote communities in BC experience significant health care challenges, including a lack of access to emergency services, on-demand mental health and addictions facilities, physicians, paramedics, and other health professionals;

And whereas the long distances, limited public and private transportation options to travel to the nearest health care service, and high costs for accommodations to stay near those sites while receiving treatment, are substantial barriers for people living in rural communities across the Province:

Therefore be it resolved that the provincial government introduce metrics and policy to identify reasonable travel distances from each community to health care services and facilities, to ensure transparent, accountable, and equitable health care access for those living in rural and remote communities in BC; ...

UBCM has already called for action

2023-SR1 Health Equity for Rural and Remote Communities - UBCM Executive

Whereas rural and remote communities in BC experience significant health care challenges, including a lack of access to emergency services, on-demand mental health and addictions facilities, physicians, paramedics, and other health professionals;

And whereas the long distances, limited public and private transportation options to travel to the nearest health care service, and high costs for accommodations to stay near those sites while receiving treatment, are substantial barriers for people living in rural communities across the Province:

Therefore be it resolved **that the provincial government introduce metrics and policy to identify reasonable travel distances from each community to health care services and facilities**, to ensure transparent, accountable, and equitable health care access for those living in rural and remote communities in BC; ...

What we know about the rural health care crisis is mostly narrative

Key research on BC's rural health care crisis

- Based on interviews or surveys of rural residents and health care providers
 - Key themes: travel delays, out-of-pocket cost of medical travel, the impact of medical travel on mental health, communication issues and continuity of care, family impact, difficulty with travel logistics and unfamiliarity with the urban environment, and the Indigenous context.
 - Recommendations include: more support for travel costs (comprehensive coverage), making travel arrangements for patients and better coordination of care, cultural safety, and increasing telehealth services and visiting specialist services.
- Collaboration between governments, health care providers and community leaders is identified as essential for addressing specific community needs.

Attempts to quantify travel costs/burden

- Kornelsen, J., et al. (2021) “The rural tax: comprehensive out-of-pocket costs associated with patient travel in British Columbia”. *BMC Health Services Research* Vol. 21, No. 854, p. 1-17.
 - On average, costs for respondents were \$856 and \$674 for transport and accommodation, respectively.
- Canadian Institute for Health Information (2024) *Travel burden for hospital care in Canada*. www.cihi.ca/en/travel-burden-for-hospital-care-in-canada
 - Developed a 5-point travel burden scale (from very low to very high) using information from hospital inpatient discharge records, considering travel time, cost and availability, social and opportunity cost, and other factors.
 - Found that 34.5% of patients from rural/remote BC had high or very high travel burden, compared to 5.3% of patients from urban areas (2018/19 to 2022/23).

We lack data about how much people are paying out of pocket for different types of care and how different communities are affected.

Public policy decisions have led us here

- Austerity policies starting in 2001
 - Centralization of care: 6 health authorities replaced the 52 regional health boards and community health councils
 - Specialized services centralized in large regional hospitals
- Spending increases after 2011 failed to keep pace with inflation, aging and population growth. Capital spending was deferred to reduce debt.
 - Rise of private clinics and outsourcing to private clinics
 - Continued centralization of services, increased the travel burden
- Re-investment in the public health care system since 2017 but “re-pacing” in Budget 2026 is a concern

Care is a major blind spot in Canada's current economic strategy

- Renewed federal commitment to housing
- No vision for meeting Canadian's social, educational and health needs
- Yet the care economy is foundational to building a dynamic, innovation-driven and inclusive economy

Our country is held together by
more than concrete and steel.

We must invest in health care to
build the future we want to live in.

Thank you!

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Vancouver Food Runners

In appreciation of our speakers today and with thanks for your contribution, UBCM has made a donation to the Vancouver Food Runners. Building connections between local businesses, nonprofits, and volunteers to ensure surplus food reaches essential community food programs. Vancouver Food Runners believe in turning surplus food into meaningful change. They believe good food belongs to people, not landfills!