

C14 - From Dogpatch to Leader of the Pack: Tales and Tools of Langford's Downtown Renewal

Presentation title: From Dogpatch to Leader of the Pack: Tales and Tools of Langford's Downtown Renewal

Presenters:

Emilie Adin - City of Langford Planning

Jason Parks - City of Langford Parks

Leanne Blackwood - City of Langford Communities in Bloom

Abstract

When Langford incorporated in 1992, the municipality faced the immediate challenge of changing its reputation regionally as "dogpatch". Langford could boast not one sidewalk, and faced a dearth of parks, trails, and pedestrian-oriented development. Mayor, Council and staff worked quickly and collaboratively with the development industry and practitioners in a variety of disciplines to develop and combine a number of tools: a downtown revitalization strategy; a downtown and city-wide beautification program; ecological restoration initiatives; a shift of the tax base and an increase in the ratio of jobs to residents; the adoption of urban design guidelines; the development of a policy to collect affordable housing, park space and amenity contributions from developers on a per unit basis; the development of a free biodiesel trolley system; free Wi-Fi and sponsored free computer use locales in the City Centre; and most recently, a joint sustainability –focused Official Community Plan, and an ALR Protection Strategy lauded by the Agricultural Land Commission. From "Dogpatch" to "Leader of the Pack": Tales and Tools of Langford's Downtown Renewal will be a panel discussion on the resurgence of this quickly growing community, with tales of its successes, as well as frank discussions on the benefits and side-effects of the City's efforts in renewal. A focus on the Communities in Bloom competition as a tool of downtown revitalization will also be a centrepiece of discussions. Panellist dialogue will relate to virtually any profession represented at the 2009 BC Land Summit, be they urban designer, planner, landscape architect, land appraiser, agrologist, developer, or ecologist. Inter-disciplinary representatives from Langford's departments will be in attendance to present on their piece of the puzzle, and to answer any questions relating to their areas of expertise. This panel will provide a case study of a small and fledgling municipality which has pulled itself up by its britches and faced down its past reputation to become an award-winning and progressive place to live, work, play and build. Proving out the expression, "Where there's a will, there's a way," conference attendees will witness a full exposé of the City's efforts to get out from under and come out on top.

Speaker Biography

Emilie K. Adin, MCIP, is the Deputy Director of Planning for the City of Langford. For the past 15 years, Emilie has presented on sustainable urbanism, housing, and urban design across North America, and has facilitated or acted as Master of Ceremonies at over a dozen workshops and conferences. She has published in national and international newspapers, magazines and journals on such issues as child-friendly cities, urban design and affordable housing. She has written on social sustainability in *Just Doing It*, published in 2002 by Black Rose Press. Ms. Adin is currently writing a book on urban design best practices in Europe, with special regard to sustainable urbanism.

Jason Parks, MBCSLA, is the Parks Department Manager for the City of Langford. He has a wide range of experience designing and building public spaces, and in particular the design and construction of Langford's urban plazas, neighbourhood parks, trail systems, wayfinding programmes, boulevards and streetscapes, and recreational amenities. He has 10 years of experience working on Langford beautification initiatives, both in the private and the public sector.

Leanne Blackwood has been a member of the City of Langford's planning team for over three years. During this time, she has managed the City's Communities in Bloom initiative, which is a national program for the improvement of the quality of life through revitalization, environmental awareness and community involvement. Leanne has a Bachelor of Science with a Major in Geography from the University of Victoria and a Master's in Urban Planning from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.