



About the Communities: Lil'wat First Nation and Village of Pemberton, BRITISH COLUMBIA

FCM First Nations-Municipal Community Infrastructure Partnership Program

The communities of Lil'wat First Nation and the Village of Pemberton have been living side by side for over one hundred years. The interactions by community members occur daily; there are a number of programs that both children and adults are involved in on an ongoing basis. However, with high turnover in leadership and staff, both communities felt it was important to come together, renew the relationship and enhance ways of working together for the benefit of all.

Prior to CIPP, the communities have had a good working relationship. They have had shared service agreements, including a protocol agreement on joint economic development, fire protection and an interim water and sewer agreement. However, the water and sewer agreement was outdated and in need of renewal. Lil'wat Nation currently supplies the Pemberton industrial park with water, but the wells are running at full capacity with no back up system available. One participant mentioned, "Given the reciprocal

needs for the communities, it is about time we got down to it and talked about the future, as some of these resources are limited."

The community governments have previously shared open communication, yet there had never been joint council meetings to discuss common goals and bridge their relationship. Both communities were ready to discuss intergovernmental relationships and determine the best path forward for shared services, including water and sewer, as well as identifying possibilities for enhancing other pre-existing agreements such as fire protection. One participant reflected on the process, stating, "We needed to know how to take the first step to do the service agreements, so this project brought us together in that way." The community of Lil'wat contacted the Village, and the two communities agreed to submit a joint application to the program expressing their interest for assistance to renew their water service agreements.

FCM would like to thank:

Alex Kleinman, Capital Infrastructure Manager, Lil'wat First Nation
Karen Ross, Councillor, Village of Pemberton
Mike Richman, Mayor, Village of Pemberton

for participating in interviews to assist in the preparation of this case study.

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Josh Anderson, Councillor, Lil'wat First Nation
Alex Kleinman, Capital Infrastructure Manager, Lil'wat First Nation
Karen Ross, Councillor, Village of Pemberton
Nikki Gilmore, CAO, Village of Pemberton



Highlights of the Process

The participants who attended the first workshop shared objectives for their work, which included:

- To identify ways that the Village and the Nation can work together to collaborate on current plans, make new plans and modify existing ones based on the needs and interests of the other community;
- To review and update the water agreement that is currently in place;
- To build relationships with the wider community, and establish community buy-in so community members can see the benefit of this relationship;
- To get a better understanding of each other's unique jurisdiction and roles and responsibilities.

The launch workshop focused on relationship-building and an exploration of their knowledge about their partner community. Participants shared that the community analysis was interesting, noting that, "Lil'wat had more knowledge of Pemberton history and the

Village of Pemberton knew not so much about Lil'wat; that was definitely an eye-opener." When this exercise was done at the second workshop, one participant mentioned, "We really made a lot of progress in the relationship [in the last year]." Another highlight from the first workshop was getting to hear from both community leaders:

The Chief and Mayor were speaking the same language, they were both speaking of needs and opportunity. That was very heartening to see.

Between the launch workshop and the second visit from the CIPP team, the two communities experienced a great deal of change. There was an election in Lil'wat, which resulted in a change in leadership for the Nation, as well as significant turnover with key staff positions at the Village of Pemberton. Although it was a challenge, the Village staff and Lil'wat staff were committed, and persevered to communicate between the workshops to keep the agreements moving forward as best they could.

Where we would have otherwise been making a lot of progress between the workshops we were going through changes. So a lot of that progress was made up in the second workshop.

The second workshop was more of a working meeting, focusing on what the communities hoped to get out of the relationship in the future, to bring new staff and elected leadership into the process, and to re-focus on the shared goals identified during the first workshop. Throughout the workshop process the communities were able to identify and address issues with regard to their Interim Agreement for water supply. In particular, they spoke about addressing the cost of water supply and delivery to the industrial park. The groups were able to re-negotiate prices and ensure that both communities agreed on an appropriate cost. The communities worked toward "an understanding of the values, respect and the need for a long term solution." A third and final workshop was held to define shared priorities moving forward, as well as to determine a timeline for the finalization and signing of a Cooperation Agreement, and an updated Industrial Park Water Agreement.

Participants share ideas about the future of the communities



Lil'wat councillor Josh Anderson presenting to the group

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Results

Community partners expressed satisfaction with the CIPP process and their progress on the joint service agreement, as their expected outcomes were achieved. The communities of Lil'wat and Pemberton achieved their goal by having a water service agreement ready to go to both councils for approval. Unexpected outcomes were also highlighted by the community participants. For instance, the two communities will be able to continue working together because of the relationship built and now have "a much better understanding of the neighbouring community." Participants commented on the relationship:

I believe the most important outcome was the relationship-building over the year and working with the staff and council from Lil'wat.

We built trust and understanding by sitting at the table and talk about something important to both of our communities.

Another outcome from the CIPP process was that there was more trust between the community representatives. One participant explained: "The level of trust increased by being able to tell stories from each community and to be honest with each other."

Lessons learned

The communities learned many lessons through the process, including how well the two communities can work together. The partnership between Lil'wat Nation and Pemberton was unique in that both communities were going through major changes in leadership and staff. Although it was challenging at times, one participant mentioned that having the facilitators helped in overcoming the challenge as they were driving the work and bringing the group back together. One council member spoke about the importance of having each community's

councillors involved in the process. They mentioned that while staff often develop service agreements and bring them to council to approve, "Having everyone at the table to talk about it while it is being developed gives everyone a better understanding." Furthermore, participants spoke about the value of CIPP, commenting:

Having the CIPP structure gave us the opportunity to take the next step and provided us a platform to move forward.

Lil'wat First Nation and the Village of Pemberton are now discussing multiple joint priorities including updating sewage infrastructure and reviewing emergency response procedure. The two communities are committed to work on these individually and together moving forward.



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