



City of Port Coquitlam, BC



Population: 58,612
Project duration:
2016–2018

BROWNFIELDS: BLAKEBURN LAGOONS PARK

This guide is designed to help municipal staff and decision makers understand how excellent sustainability projects are developed, and help them adopt best practices in their community. Read the guide to learn more about award-winning strategies, then use the guiding questions to kick-start your sustainability initiative.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Citizens wanted to create a park on contaminated land. Decontamination began as soon as the municipality received federal funding.
- The City of Port Coquitlam transformed two former sanitation waste settling ponds into a naturalized park. The new landscape provides environmental education, ecosystem benefits and recreational opportunities for citizens.
- Project planning involved extensive community consultation, which set the direction of transforming the site into a park.
- The municipality relied on key performance indicators to monitor the environmental impact and evaluate the potential for using the same approach elsewhere.

How does this initiative benefit the environment?

- Revitalizing brownfield sites can help **mitigate health and environmental risks**.
- The **naturalized landscape** uses a variety of plants to enhance wildlife habitat and to promote the growth of native species.
- Vegetative buffers protect **environmentally sensitive areas** from frequent public access.

How does this initiative benefit the community?

- The new park promotes recreation, exposure to nature, **physical and mental well-being**, and community pride.

- The paths in the park are **universally accessible**, encouraging use by all citizens.
- **Environmental education** is promoted with interpretive signs and nature-viewing platforms throughout the park. The neighbouring elementary school plans to use the park as an outdoor environmental studies classroom.

How does this initiative benefit the local economy?

- The park development has increased **neighbourhood property values**.
- There has been renewed interest in **land development and other small business activity**.

What are some of the successes of this project?

- **Community support** for this type of project is crucial to success. This was achieved by:
 - Engaging the community early in the development phase.
 - Seeking public input throughout the project.
 - Developing detailed public consultation materials.
 - Writing the consultants' mandate based on the results of the engagement process.
- Instead of the costly off-site remediation approaches initially proposed, the municipality used **on-site strategies** such as **phytoremediation and capping techniques**. These efforts reduced upfront costs while promoting natural materials and ecological restoration.
- The municipality will continue to learn from this project through ongoing monitoring of the efficiency of the remediation techniques in the coming years, which may result in **readjusting their approach over time**.

Want to revitalize a brownfield site in your community? To get started, answer these questions:

Think of a site in your community that could benefit from redevelopment or reuse. Where is the site located (e.g., downtown core, waterfront)?

Is the site currently being used? If so, how? Who owns the site?

What is the history of the land use? Is remediation needed?

What surrounds the site (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial properties)? What land uses might be appropriate for the site?

Does the municipality have a redevelopment or reuse vision for this site?

Which stakeholders should you engage to develop a vision for the site or to implement an existing vision? What should the stakeholder engagement process look like?

Innovative solutions to common problems can generate multiple benefits for your community. What support do you need to implement unconventional solutions to a particular challenge in your municipality (e.g., a willingness to test new ideas, public support, support at different levels of the organization, knowledge about similar initiatives)?

Has your municipality developed performance indicators for a project? If so, what were the benefits and challenges of using these indicators? If not, what do you think is preventing the use of such indicators?

Learn more about Blakeburn Lagoons Park at fcm.ca/scawardsbrownfields

Are you interested in learning from other municipal brownfield practitioners? Join our Leadership in Brownfield Renewal program (LiBRé), or consult our suite of useful guides and tips fcm.ca/libre.