



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

for Expanding the Village of Lytton's Younger Demographic

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines a set of strategic recommendations to the Village of Lytton Council focused on supporting long-term growth and attracting new residents, especially younger people, families, and small business owners. These recommendations come from research, class insights, and different community personas that helped us understand what people are looking for when deciding where to live. Overall, the report looks at six main areas: resilience, housing, services, mobility, economics, and placemaking. These are all things that shape whether a place feels livable, sustainable, and welcoming. For Lytton, rebuilding after the 2021 wildfire is not just about replacing what was lost, but rather an opportunity to rethink how the community can grow in a stronger, more sustainable, and future-focused way.

Using a holistic approach, the team developed recommendations by connecting each focus area to the lived experiences and needs reflected through several community personas. The Climate: Young Migrant Remote Worker Persona helped guide recommendations around fostering a Climate Resilient Community, while the Housing recommendations focused on Living in an Affordable Community that supports long-term residency and accessibility. The Services: A Young Mother & Child Persona informed recommendations related to Living in a Supportive Community, emphasizing access to essential services, family supports, and everyday amenities. The Mobility: A Car-Lite Living Persona shaped recommendations centered on Living in a Connected Community through improved walkability, accessibility, and transportation options. In addition, the Economics: Small-Business Persona contributed to recommendations focused on Driving a Growing Community by supporting local businesses, entrepreneurship, and economic resilience. Lastly, the Placemaking: Young Couple Looking for Community Persona informed recommendations aimed at Living in a Vibrant Community by strengthening social connections, public spaces, recreation, and community identity.

This report sees Lytton's recovery as an opportunity. A chance not only to rebuild, but to create a community that is more connected, resilient, affordable, and attractive in the long run. These recommendations are intended to provide the Village of Lytton Council with a starting point for future planning and decision-making, while recognizing that challenges and limitations will continue to exist along the way.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

To determine our main areas of research and to ensure that our selected topics were relevant to the Village of Lytton, our strategy was to collect data from contacts involved with the Lytton redevelopment, members of the 20s to 30s demographic, and literature. The data was then used to develop strategies and recommendations for enticing a younger demographic to live and work in the Village of Lytton.

As post-secondary students who are part of the age demographic that the Village of Lytton is seeking, our research started with self-reflections. Then we surveyed a Geography class at the University of the Fraser Valley to gain a broader perspective and to verify if our self-reflections truly aligned with the priorities of our target demographic. We also visited the Village of Lytton and met in person with Caroline Lamont, Director of Development, Maggie Cross, Planning Assistant, and Patrick Michell, local community member and retired Chief of the Kanaka Bar Indian Band. This visit was key to understanding the Village of Lytton's identity and the rebuilding progress. The engagement and collected data have been compiled in an Outreach Report.

From the collected data, we selected our research areas and conducted a Literature Review. The research topics were based on the topics we heard the most about during data collection. The intention behind the Literature Review was to understand how and where new amenities are being successfully developed and amenity-focused strategies implemented. The literature, including case studies, provided insight into community-based resiliency, the need for affordable housing, the benefits of coworking spaces, how access to services can grow a community, how greater regional connectivity can encourage car-lite residents to live in more remote locations, and how planned community spaces can contribute to community identity and create social and tourist opportunities for residents.

After completing the Literature Review, the next step was to develop a set of recommendations. The recommendations, as outlined in this Final Report, were originally developed for mock Staff Reports to Council. The staff reports helped refine the strategies and were presented to the Director of Development and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). For this report, we bring together the information we gathered through engagement as "personas" and explain in more depth the reasoning behind our recommendations.



PART 1: STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Our strategic directions are categorized into 6 sections: Placemaking, Economic Development, Resilience, Mobility, Services, and Housing. The following are our strategic directions.

PLACEMAKING

1.1

That Council support a program to activate a space within the Village so that residents can use it for art displays, events and cultural heritage

1.2

That Council supports an economic development strategy that leverages Tourism, with a focus on cultivating spaces that can be advertised in collaboration with local and provincial authorities.

1.3

That Council supports a Placemaking Guide implemented within the Official Community Plan

ECONOMICS

2.1

That Council establish an Economic Development Plan that provides short-term and long-term strategies to attract and grow businesses which align with the Village of Lytton's economic vision.

2.2

That Council promote diversifying the local economy through small businesses and entrepreneurship.

2.3

That Council considers zoning for shared business space and shared work space (coworking spaces).

1. Provide business space that considers efficient land use and essential, attractive services found in municipalities across British Columbia.
2. Provide coworking spaces for individual skilled workers to work in the community without the costs of a large building space.

RESILIENCE

3.1

That Council directs staff to: (1) initiate formal discussions with Lytton First Nation, with the goal of establishing joint protocol and standards agreements defining a shared relationship for resilience through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); and (2) initiate pre-application and scoping discussions with the BC Ministry of Forests and Lytton First Nation to assess the feasibility of a joint Community Forest Agreement (CFA) for adjacent Crown land.

3.2

That Council directs staff to develop a place-based resilience marketing and settlement campaign, using digital platforms as a primary channel, with young people and amenity migrants as the primary target audience.

3.3

That Council designates a Residential Development Officer (RDO) as the primary access point for residents seeking to access rebuilding financial programs, alongside physical and digital access to clear information. The role should incorporate plain-language communication in person and digitally, creating accessible connection to available services and tools for both existing residents and prospective newcomers.

MOBILITY

4.1

That Council supports the development of a regional connector shuttle pilot program to improve access between Lytton and larger service areas, including Kamloops and Hope.

4.2

That staff look into opportunities for shared mobility services, including car share programs and community-based vehicle sharing options, to improve mobility and access for residents without access to private vehicles;

4.3

That Council endorses the coordination of existing transportation services, including the implementation of VIA Rail flag-stop access and improved communication regarding current transportation options, such as BC Transit's Kamloops/Lytton Health Connections shuttle;

4.4

That Council considers including mobility and regional connection policies into future iterations of the Official Community Plan (OCP), prioritizing access to flexible transportation options; and

4.5

That staff look into hybrid funding options including provincial and federal programs and grants, partnerships with non-profit organizations and cost-recovery models to support long-term transportation operations.

SERVICES AND HOUSING

5.1

That Council work together with the provincial and federal governments to secure funding for youth services and recreation opportunities in Lytton, including the development of recreation spaces, parks, and youth programming through partnerships with School District 74 and community organizations, alongside an integrated youth service hub that provides counselling, mental health care, and employment supports in one place.

5.2

That these services be developed in close partnership with neighbouring reserves, bands, and Nations, working together through shared planning, decision-making, and a holistic funding approach, to ensure the services are accessible, culturally appropriate, and inclusive for Indigenous youth..

5.3

And that Council work with neighbouring Nations to include Elders in the youth service hub to provide cultural guidance and support to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

5.4

That Council zone for higher-density housing, to facilitate rental options for future youth residents



PART 2: OUR COMMUNITY PROFILES



RESEARCH PERSONAS

The strategic recommendations outlined in this report were guided by personal reflections and comments received from fellow students of the University of the Fraser Valley. The personal reflection exercise and outreach with other young people provided critical insight into what young people, who are currently in the work force or going into the workforce, look for when considering a move to a new city. Housing, jobs, health services, attractive social spaces and things to do, a strong sense of community, and safety and security during extreme events and disaster were all considered top priorities. Using this information, the following personas were developed to reflect the younger demographic that the Village of Lytton may seek to attract.

Climate: Young Migrant Remote Worker Persona

Jordan is a young adult in their late 20s who works remotely for a consulting firm in Canada. They rent a small apartment in the city but are looking for an opportunity to own property and start a family. Jordan is drawn to a slower pace of life and is seeking a community that reflects their values of sustainability, connection to the natural environment, and meaningful local belonging. They have followed Lytton's rebuilding story with interest, drawn by its potential as a place still being shaped. Jordan enjoys outdoor recreation and is interested in participating in environmental and community initiatives, seeing Lytton as a place where those opportunities are accessible at a more personal scale.



- **What they need to work:** Jordan requires reliable high-speed internet to do work and communicate with family and friends. Local co-working spaces, such as at cafes or a community hub, would also be highly appealing to them.
- **What they need to live:** Jordan needs affordable land and housing that is more competitive than other appealing areas like the Fraser Valley or Vancouver Island. They also require access to essential services, including a grocery store, health services, and fuel within a reasonable distance. Jordan would need a clear understanding of Lytton's approach to fire safety, building standards, and evacuation to ensure they are informed and safe with their decision to live there.
- **What they desire:** Jordan desires a local community with a strong identity and sense of belonging, characterized by shared environmental values and active outdoor participation. They are drawn to a place with a unique local character where businesses are local and local initiatives are easy to engage with.
- **Goals:** Jordan's goals are to become a homeowner, or create a path to homeownership, within a place that is personally meaningful. They want to have continuous access to natural beauty and physical activity. They seek connection to the local community through smaller social networks and more tangible impacts on local initiatives, all while maintaining continued access to professional independence.



Housing: Young Couple Looking for Housing Persona

Tom and Amy are in their 20s and looking to rent in the Village of Lytton. Tom found work with a local employer, and now they need a place to live. However, they've just completed their post-secondary education and are now starting in the workforce full-time. They are looking for affordable housing while paying off student loans and saving for a single-family house.

- **What they need to work:** An affordable and liveable rental with a reasonable commute to Tom's job. Amy is looking for reliable internet so she can continue her new, remote job.
- **What they need to live:** Affordable and stable housing.
- **What they desire:** To find a friendly community where they can join local activities and eventually raise a family.
- **Goals:** To live in the Village of Lytton, work full-time, and pay off their student loans while still saving for a permanent housing situation.



Services: A Young Mother & Child Persona

A 32-year-old single mother is considering relocating to the small community of Lytton with her 13-year-old son in search of a quieter, safer, and more affordable lifestyle. She is motivated by the opportunity to build a stable future in a close-knit rural community, but the decision depends heavily on whether suitable and affordable housing is available. As a parent, she is focused on ensuring her son has access to a supportive environment where he can feel connected, active, and engaged while adjusting to a new town and school setting.

Her son is outgoing and curious but may struggle with boredom and isolation if there are limited youth programs or recreational opportunities available. To successfully settle in Lytton, she would need access to community supports, youth activities, and spaces where her son can socialize, stay active, and build friendships. Reliable housing, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for both herself and her child to thrive are essential factors in making the move sustainable long term.

- **What they need to move:** Affordable and stable housing, employment or income stability, and confidence that youth supports and community services are available.
- **What they need to live:** Access to safe housing, healthcare, education, transportation, groceries, and recreational or youth engagement opportunities.
- **What they desire:** A welcoming community, a peaceful lifestyle, meaningful social connections, and opportunities for personal and family growth.
- **Goals:** To create a stable and supportive life for her son while becoming an active and connected member of the community.

Mobility: Car-Lite Living Persona



Christopher is a 31-year-old remote worker who recently moved to Lytton from Vancouver. He was looking for a slower pace of life, connected to nature and more options for affordable housing. He previously relied on transit, cycling and Evo car-share services. He wants to continue embracing his car-lite lifestyle.

Christopher is drawn to Lytton's proximity to provincial parks and the opportunity to be part of rebuilding a community. He enjoys the ability to walk through the village core and feel connected to his neighbours and community, but is aware of the challenges of accessing essential services and travelling outside of the town without a private vehicle.

- **What they need to work:** Reliable internet connection and occasional access to transportation for meetings, errands and travel to nearby urban centres like Kamloops and Chilliwack.
- **What they need to live:** Access to essential services like healthcare, groceries and banking either locally in the village or through reliable regional mobility options.
- **What they desire:** A car-lite lifestyle that is supported through services like shared vehicles, a regional shuttle and coordinated transportation options.
- **Goals:** To establish himself in Lytton and own his very own home, while having the independence of having reliable transportation options without having a private vehicle.

Economics: Small-Business Persona



Sarah and Jennifer are two friends in their early thirties who dream of opening a coffee shop combined with a bookstore. They are looking for an opportunity to move to a small town where their families can enjoy a slower pace of life compared to a big city. Sarah sees the Village of Lytton advertising for new small business owners. Lytton would allow them to have a space right downtown, they could walk to work, and they could travel to big cities when they need to.

- **What they need to work:** Land for a building in the downtown area that has electricity, water, sewer, and reliable internet.
- **What they need to live:** Housing they can own or rent, a nearby school for their kids, and essential services like a grocery store, bank, and gas station. They would also like access to the outdoors and a community centre for their families after school, work, and on weekends.
- **What they desire:** A friendly, creative community where they can walk or bike to work (or a short drive), feel at home, and live out their dreams of being small-business owners.
- **Goals:** To partner with other like-minded community members so that their business space can be a space for the community. Maybe selling locally made baked goods, artwork, jewelry, or other small-business goods in their building. Or hosting trivia nights and crafting clubs.



Placemaking: Young Couple Looking for Community Persona

Isaac and Haley are a young couple in their 20's who moved to Lytton to own property and grow their businesses. Isaac is a fisherman and a rail worker. Haley is a nurse and considers herself a creative person. Together they grow produce and flowers to sell at local farmers' markets. Lytton gave them new opportunities to grow their small business while working in local industries.

They moved to Lytton from Mission because Lytton provides proximity to areas where Isaac can hunt and fish, and spaces where Haley can grow her small produce business. As a nurse and a fisherman, they want to support people and support our natural resources. In doing that, they support their community by participating in community events, community gardens, and cultural heritage.

- **What They Need to Work:** Land in the core area for medical offices or a clinic, and connections to the rail line
- **What They Need to Live:** Housing they can own, key services like a bank and a gas station. A secure and safe community.
- **What They Desire:** A place where they can grow produce, access to the river, and creative areas where they can support the growth of their community.
- **Goals:** To live affordably while supporting a community that is growing.





PART 3: A THRIVING COMMUNITY



PLACEMAKING

Living in a Vibrant Community

Introducing services, housing, transportation, and business are essential for Lytton's future growth. By making these recommendations, we hope that new residents will be inspired to move to the Village of Lytton. A key aspect of community building is the profile that a community broadcasts. The aesthetic features, design elements, attractions, and community ideals that are put on showcase every time someone new enters the community. The following recommendations are targeted to make the community vibrant. By leveraging small-town tourism, creative spaces, and unique design features, Lytton's services can come alive, bring the community to market, and invite young creative families to the village.

Small-Town Tourism, Creative Spaces, and Placemaking

Starting with small-town tourism incentives and tactics, a few threads emerged, one of which is telling a narrative through tourism. In BC, much of our tourism industry relies on attractions, natural beauty, and food production. In Lytton's case, natural beauty can become an easy way to bring in sightseers and travellers. However, the other two modes are limited and limiting. Attractions can be major revenue generators; however, they can displace individuals through gentrification. Food production can be a challenge in Lytton due to the lack of agricultural land within the village's limits. However, agritourism can be used through different methods, such as a farmers' market. Lytton currently has a farmers' market, but it does not currently operate.

The two threads came after exploring what other small towns use for tourism to drive economic development. The first thread led to creative spaces. Creative spaces, or "Mini Attractions," can be a place where visitors must stop, or spaces that showcase local artistry and cultural heritage. These spaces are powerful marketing tools for a community that can generate revenue if supported by neighbouring businesses. The second thread that emerged is narrative storytelling through tourism. Using tourism developments to tell a story can support the redevelopment of a community and can be particularly effective when used as "Post-disaster Tourism". "Post-disaster Tourism" leverages people's curiosity to generate revenue. This concept is not to be conflated with "Dark Tourism". Post-disaster Tourism can be a tactic used by the Village to market itself; however, this mandates a bottom-up approach, and that is community-led. Combining this tactic with the implementation of creative spaces will allow the community to gain new sources of revenue while protecting cultural heritage and community identity.

If a community is using creative spaces for tourism, how they are designed is critical to their effectiveness. The placemaking elements of the community can provide a guide for developments, tell meaningful stories, and be programmed for future community events. In Lytton's case, building many of the community spaces from the ground up, we have the opportunity to guide the design to build a vibrant community.

1.1

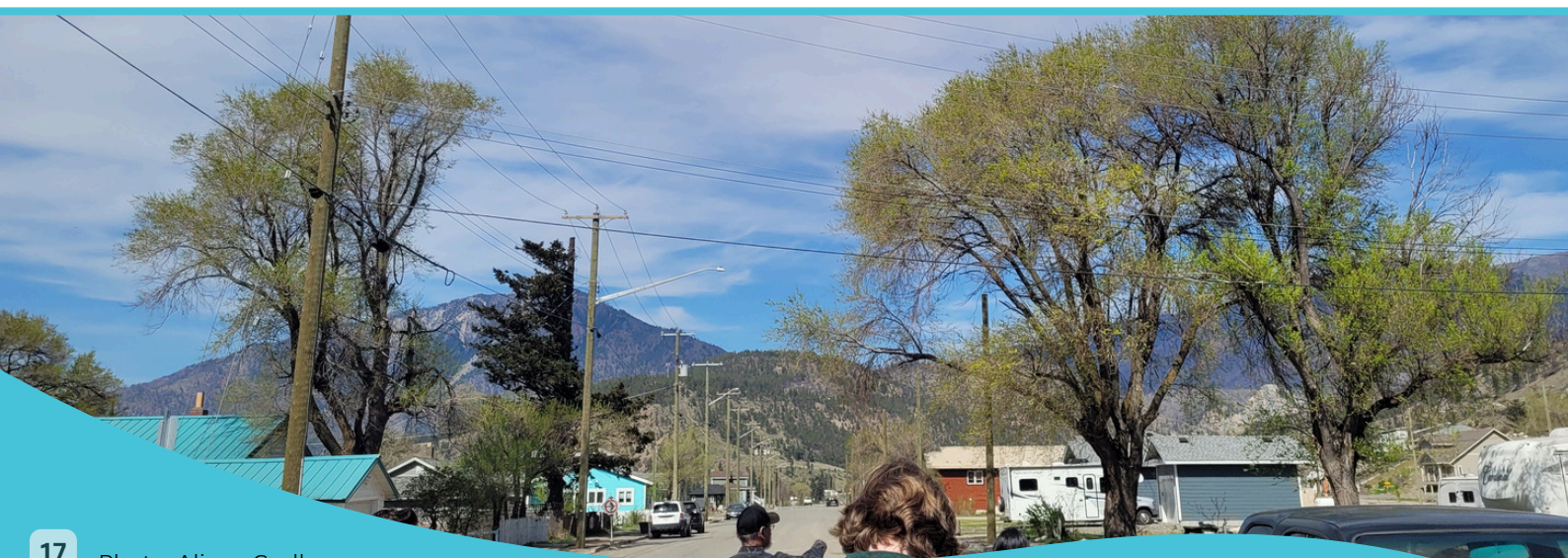
That council supports a program to activate a space within the Village so that residents can use it for art displays, events and cultural heritage

Placemaking activities are a powerful tool to bring a community together. A community coming together to build, create, or design something can also send a powerful message to people who are considering relocating. If the Village of Lytton uses public spaces to showcase artists or allows residents to design a space, it gives the community a new place to come together and be proud of where they live. A space like this can also be used to market the community. A program used in Kaslo, BC, brought in young artistic families to design a space in a design competition. This highlights the community's charm and markets the community to creatives who may consider relocating.

1.2

That council supports an economic development strategy that leverages Tourism, with a focus on cultivating spaces that can be advertised in collaboration with local and provincial authorities.

Developing an economic development plan is outlined in goal #13. An economic development plan can outline key areas for development, including business supports, and which industries can rebound. This plan should also support tourism incentives and businesses involved in arts or cultural activities. Supporting these types of small business have shown to be a powerful driver for the local economy and allows people to use their artistic crafts to start a business, bringing in more jobs and potentially new residents. Supporting this will also help the community market itself to those who are interested in starting a small business. Businesses that engage with tourism and are designed with purpose and meaning can be advertised by Tourism BC, and may be eligible for funding from Canada Summer Jobs, potentially bringing in new jobs to the community.



1.3

That council supports a Placemaking Guide implemented within the Official Community Plan

Developing a placemaking guide in the Official Community Plan can mandate design elements for public spaces. A placemaking guide can also describe how cultural or creative spaces look, feel, and are programmed. This could also be used to facilitate the development of creative spaces. Creating spaces for residents to showcase their culture and art creates a greater sense of community and supports the liveability of the community. This can also become a powerful tool for marketing and tourism. Spaces for arts and culture can become key stops for tourists and bring in new opportunities to the community. These spaces can both market the community to newcomers and help people consider staying in the community. Including this in the OCP can give residents input on how art, cultural spaces, and tourism are used. This is an important aspect as it can support building a relationship with local First Nations, including Lytton First Nation. This section of the OCP should ideally outline key policies for how spaces can be developed and what they can and cannot be used for.



ECONOMICS

Driving a Growing Community

Since the 2021 fire that destroyed 90% of the buildings in the Village of Lytton, there has been a need to rebuild essential services. The grocery store, the bank, and the health centre are examples of critical amenities currently missing, but needed for the community to retain current residents and to draw in future residents. The Village of Lytton community relies on access to these services, and so do thousands of people living in surrounding communities.

As the Village of Lytton rebuilds and plans for a self-sufficient, sustainable, and resilient future, the community is seeking to attract small, independently owned businesses. Essential businesses beyond grocery stores, banks, and health centres include cafés and coffee shops, restaurants and diners, specialty retail shops, and service-based businesses. Having these businesses in the Village of Lytton will provide more services for residents, new opportunities for residents to become small business owners, and additional space for social activities.

To entice young workers and their families to make the move to the Village of Lytton, a mix of essential services will need to be built - those that are critical to community operation and those that are attractive because of the service and the social space they provide.

Advantages and Challenges

The Village of Lytton is situated at the confluence of the Fraser River and the Thompson River. It is also located along the Trans-Canada Highway (Highway #1) and the Lytton-Lillooet Highway (Highway #12), connecting the community to the greater area. A strong connection to nearby communities, especially if new mobility infrastructure is implemented, is an advantage for the Village of Lytton. Residents will be able to live within a small, self-sustaining community with access to multiple large city centres and their amenities (e.g. shopping centres, airports, and major sports events or concerts).

To be self-sustaining, the Village of Lytton cannot solely rely on amenities in other cities; the community needs to have its own essential and attractive services. This could prove difficult to realize, as the Village of Lytton's downtown area has limited land availability. The total area of the Village of Lytton is 6.73 square kilometres (km²) (Thompson-Nicola Regional District, n.d.). As well, zoning bylaws have favoured single-family dwellings and two-story buildings rather than density. With limited land available, density could provide additional small-business space.

The Village of Lytton faces the challenge of diversifying its economy through small businesses despite limited land availability and density.

An Economic Development Plan

2.1

That Council establish an Economic Development Plan that provides short-term and long-term strategies to attract and grow businesses which align with the Village of Lytton's economic vision.

Economic Development Plans provide an opportunity for communities to determine their economic vision, mission, goals, and strategies (Government of British Columbia, 2020a). Whether planning for short-term or long-term economic goals, or both, an Economic Development Plan can align with official community plans and outline the specific actions the community wants to see enacted. Economic planning can help communities identify their economic challenges and barriers, their opportunities, and their priorities. With their interests clearly outlined, residents and local governments can collaborate and coordinate with both public- and private-sector businesses. The establishment of an Economic Development Plan could also help attract new businesses, by marketing the community as open to new business opportunities and may highlight resources and strategies, such as any tax incentives that the community is implementing.

Having an Economic Development Plan also helps communities track the success of economic development efforts (Government of British Columbia, 2020b). Using a Performance Measurement Toolkit and community-relevant indicators (e.g. number of new businesses opened, full-time or part-time jobs created, and building permits issued), the Village of Lytton could track how its economic development strategies are working and if priorities are being achieved.

A Diverse, Small-Business Economy

2.2

That Council promote diversifying the local economy through small businesses and entrepreneurship.

In a review of North American case studies, notably the Village of Kaslo, B.C., Mississippi Mills, Ontario, Estevan, Saskatchewan, Desert Hills Ranch in Ashcroft and Cache Creek, B.C., Canada, and DeWitt, Arkansas, U.S.A., it was found that diversifying the local economy supports a resilient economy. In the case of DeWitt (population approx. 3,000), the local community began encouraging more locally owned business development after a major employer (i.e., a shoe manufacturer) pulled out in the early 2000s, resulting in the loss of 200 jobs (Arkansas Business, 2002). Small, locally owned businesses have been a way for residents to stay in the community, provide services that locals need and want, and help foster the community's identity. In DeWitt, locally owned businesses include the sporting goods store, a coffee shop, a dress shop, and a florist shop. The coffee shop then supports other entrepreneurs by supplying baked goods from a local baker, a local spice and dip mix line, a local ice cream business, and produce from local farmers.

To guide business development goals and attract certain demographics, communities have developed clear strategies. Estevan has an Economic Development webpage highlighting its industries, incentives, and the development partners the community is seeking. As the community is a two-hour drive from Regina, the closest urban centre, Estevan residents focus on the resources they have at hand and building services they struggle to otherwise access (More, 2025). The Village of Kaslo has adopted a similar idea - build what your residents need. To attract a younger demographic and remote workers, they developed the Kaslo infoNet Society (KiN), a community-controlled non-profit society focused on providing the community with affordable high-speed internet (BC Ideas Exchange, n.d.). Thus, allowing economic development to grow due to new tech and home-based businesses.

“In the end, DeWitt's revitalization was not driven by a single project but by a combination of mindset change, local ownership, economic diversification, and a willingness to adapt, turning a failed initiative into the foundation for long-term renewal.”

GOVERNOR MICHAEL BARR

Shared Work and Co-Working Spaces

2.3

That Council considers zoning for shared business space and shared work space (coworking spaces).

- Provide business space that considers efficient land use and essential, attractive services found in municipalities across British Columbia.
- Provide coworking spaces for individual skilled workers to work in the community without the costs of a large building space.

To encourage entrepreneurs, remote workers, and small businesses, communities around the world have implemented co-working spaces. These are fully equipped workspaces where professionals can work independently or collaboratively, with access to all the traditional office amenities, including internet, printers, and meeting rooms. In the Village of Kaslo, the Kempl Memorial Centre, an old government building, was repurposed as the Kootenay Lake Innovation Centre (KLIC).

KLIC is a coworking space developed in partnership between the Chamber of Commerce, BC Rural Centre, and KiN (Lord, 2021). It attracts remote workers and small businesses in tech, marketing, and arts and events by providing rentable downtown office spaces, collaborative spaces, and meeting rooms all in one building and with a connection to high-speed internet. The building then supports additional community needs by being a place for youth programs to meet.

As multiple businesses and entrepreneurs can work within the same building, coworking spaces also provide an advantage for communities that have limited available land for storefronts and other business developments.



Pictured is Kootenay Lake Innovation Centre

RESILIENCE

Fostering a Climate Resilient Community

The destruction of the 2021 Lytton wildfire left behind both physical rebuilding challenges and exposed structural governance failures. The BC Office of the Auditor General's 2026 review found that the Province lacked a legal framework for disaster recovery and did not facilitate Lytton's ability to meet its own administrative needs. Additionally, the review found that the collaborative partnership between the Village of Lytton and Lytton First Nation did not meet the needed thresholds for substantive and cooperative recovery; a failure Mayor Denise O'Connor described as a "missed opportunity" (Village of Lytton, 2026). Despite this, the disaster presents the Village of Lytton with what Kingdon (2010) describes as a policy window: a convergence of problem recognition, available solutions, and political will. The policy window that has opened following the 2021 fire can be purposefully utilised through changes made within the BC Emergency and Disaster Management Act (2023), which now formally requires local Indigenous partnership within emergency planning, and through updates to the OCP.

Resilience is a key capacity for Lytton to anticipate, withstand, and recover from fires, serving as both a protective measure and a crucial aspect of ensuring continuous trust, reciprocal growth, and resurgence within the community. Communities that utilise post-disaster recovery windows as opportunities for substantive change build lasting safety, a stronger identity, and long-term sustainability (Salvia & Quaranta, 2017; Schumann et al., 2025). For Lytton, this means embedding consistent fire-resilient building standards, implementing co-governance measures with the Province and specifically Lytton First Nation, and innovating successful pathways for residents to understand and activate resilience standards. This ensures that compliance is viewed not merely as a strict regulatory obligation (Schumann et al., 2025), but rather as a foundational condition for building an attractive and sustainable community.

To draw younger demographics to the Village of Lytton, resilience must be integrated into physical infrastructure codes and standards while being strongly communicated to current and prospective residents to ensure accessibility, clarity, and long-term community sustainability.





Advantages and Challenges

Lytton's positioning as a community rebuilding from near-zero allows for modern construction to net-zero emissions and fire-resilient standards that go beyond what other communities would be capable of renovating to. Federal funding through PacifiCan and provincial programs through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) assist in providing financial tools on an individual resident level. As wildfire risks grow across BC's interior, a proactive approach in Lytton could become increasingly attractive, positioning it as a community that has navigated an extreme climate event and built stronger in response to mitigate future risks and strengthen itself.

The challenges create significant structural barriers, with the administrative and fiscal capacity of the Village of Lytton being limited. As identified by the OAG, this lack of administrative capacity constrains the ability to translate recommendations and plans into action without external support. The governance relationship between the Village of Lytton and Lytton First Nation also requires deliberate investment to build, as the collaborative structure needed for effective resilience planning does not yet formally exist. Public perception of Lytton as a place of ongoing risk will require strong reframing and consistent communication to reshape. Additionally, the ecological impact on the forests and surrounding area creates constraints on near-term landscape recovery. Burned areas require attention to avert high-risk hazards during regrowth to prevent future fires and other ecological dangers. The current lack of remaining timber and greenery also prevents the initial viability of a Community Forest Agreement.

A Formal Co-Governance Structure for Resilience Planning

3.1

That Council directs staff to: (1) initiate formal discussions with Lytton First Nation, with the goal of establishing joint protocol and standards agreements defining a shared relationship for resilience through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); and (2) initiate pre-application and scoping discussions with the BC Ministry of Forests and Lytton First Nation to assess the feasibility of a joint Community Forest Agreement (CFA) for adjacent Crown land.

The OAG's identification of a lacking collaborative framework between the Village of Lytton, Lytton First Nation, and the Government of BC represents a gap that has constrained Lytton's recovery (Office of the Auditor General of BC, 2026). In response, this recommendation proposes two steps. (1) A Memorandum of Understanding between the Village of Lytton and Lytton First Nation, further formalizing standards and practices for emergency planning while managing administrative cost for both parties. This also aligns with the requirements of the BC Emergency and Disaster Management Act (2023). (2) The initiation of a Community Forest Agreement (CFA) on Crown land surrounding the village. The CFA would give a joint governing body formal authority over fuel management, access to provincial funding streams through the Community Resiliency Investment Program, and a long-term structure for ecological recovery. CFAs are also designed to leverage community involvement, combining the place-based and historical knowledge that Indigenous stewardship uniquely provides with the provincial funding access that makes implementation viable (Dickinson-Hoyle et al., 2024).

Place-Based & Resilience Marketing and Settlement Campaign

3.2

That Council directs staff to develop a place-based resilience marketing and settlement campaign, using digital platforms as a primary channel, with young people and amenity migrants as the primary target audience.

Lytton's public identity is closely associated with being the hottest place on record in Canada and equally associated with the 2021 wildfire. This recommendation proposes the deliberate acknowledgement of this notoriety. Research shows that communities which design their own recovery narrative, drawing on local identity and values, attract residents, and promote durable resilience more than those that do not (Salvia & Quaranta, 2017). Harnessing this identity and acknowledging Lytton's history could be achieved through digital platforms, a channel that is most effective for reaching Lytton's primary growth demographic of young adults (Beyazit, 2024). The campaign should be produced internally, reflect local community voice, and advocate for Lytton as a resurging community.

A Resident-Facing Program Navigation Function

3.3

That Council designates a Residential Development Officer (RDO) as the primary access point for residents seeking to access rebuilding financial programs, alongside physical and digital access to clear information. The role should incorporate plain-language communication in person and digitally, creating accessible connection to available services and tools for both existing residents and prospective newcomers.

The OAG audit found that the majority of residents in Lytton were uninsured or underinsured at the time of the fire, and that insurance payouts covered merely the replacement cost of prior, outdated structures (Office of the Auditor General of BC, 2026). This does not account for environmental remediation, archaeological requirements, or the higher costs of rebuilding to resilient construction standards such as fire-grade materials. Research across comparable post-fire communities shows that compliance mandates without robust financial support systems lead to socially stratified resilience outcomes (Schumann et al., 2025; Baker, 2009). Programs to close this gap exist: the PacifiCan Rebuild Lytton Program, FireSmart BC household rebates, and BC Housing streams all provide financial assistance, however their accessibility, particularly for prospective residents from outside the community, is not immediately apparent. This recommendation would designate a Residential Development Officer as a point of contact for both existing and prospective residents. This position would also support Recommendation 2, complementing the digital marketing campaign through plain-language materials and clear online contact points.

MOBILITY

Living in a Connected Community

The Village of Lytton is geographically positioned along major provincial corridors, including Highway 12 and Highway 1, allowing for access to regional connections to larger service areas like Hope and Kamloops. However, even with it being well-positioned between these urban centres, access to transportation remains limited, especially for residents who don't have access to a private vehicle. This creates barriers for residents to access essential services like healthcare, education and employment, all while limiting the village's ability to attract new residents.

Mobility improvement in Lytton does not mean replicating other urban transit systems, but rather introducing flexible, context-specific solutions that reflect the scale of the village and its needs and opportunities. A coordinated, equitable approach to transportation and mobility can help support current and future residents, allowing for a more inclusive, connected and resilient Lytton.

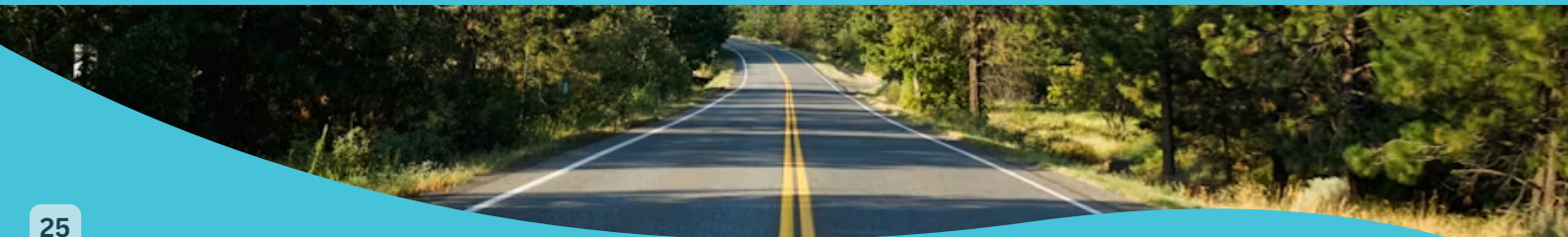
Advantages and Opportunities

Lytton's rebuilding phase showcases a unique opportunity to integrate mobility into long-term planning. When looking at many established communities, Lytton is in a position to design a mobility system that fits the current residents' needs, while improving livability and allowing it to be adaptable to meet future population growth.

The location of Lytton along key regional corridors allows for a strong foundation for improving inter-community connectivity. Improving transportation links to nearby urban centres like Hope and Kamloops would allow residents to access essential services while living in a smaller, more affordable community. This regional connection would also attract future residents, who may be seeking a balance between rural living and access to urban amenities.

There is also growing interest in car-lite lifestyles. By implementing shared mobility options, flexible transportation services and improved coordination of existing systems, Lytton can position itself as a place that supports these growing lifestyle preferences.

In conclusion, mobility and access improvements can help serve as a catalyst for broader community development. Improved access to employment, services and social opportunities can improve the quality of life, support strong economic growth and contribute to long-term population growth and retention.



Regional Connector Shuttle Pilot

4.1

That Council supports the development of a regional connector shuttle pilot program to improve access between Lytton and larger service areas, including Kamloops and Hope.

Implementing a regional connector shuttle would give residents a structured and reliable mobility option to access essential services outside the village. A pilot program would allow Lytton to record demand, look at travel patterns and adjust service times and frequency accordingly. If the village focuses on essential trips and predictable scheduling, this would offer a cost-effective and scalable solution that matches Lytton's population and needs.

Shared Mobility and Vehicle Access

4.2

That staff look into opportunities for shared mobility services, including car share programs and community-based vehicle sharing options, to improve mobility and access for residents without access to private vehicles.

Services like shared mobility give residents an alternative to private vehicle ownership, allowing for reliable transportation when needed without the financial burden of owning a car. In smaller communities like Lytton, community-based vehicle sharing programs can be especially effective, allowing for flexible access for occasional trips such as errands, medical appointments and regional travel. These types of services can also be implemented on a relatively small scale and grown over time based on community usage.



Shared Mobility and Vehicle Access

4.3

That Council endorses the coordination of existing transportation services, including the implementation of VIA Rail flag-stop access and improved communication regarding current transportation options, such as BC Transit's Kamloops/Lytton Health Connections shuttle

Bringing more awareness and improving coordination of existing transportation services is a low-cost and immediate opportunity to improve mobility in Lytton. While current services like VIA Rail and BC Transit's Health Connections shuttle are available, they are not always fully understood or easily accessible to residents. Improving communication through signage and a centralized area for information regarding all transportation options can increase usage and ensure existing services are maximized before introducing new mobility options.

Mobility Integration into the OCP

4.4

That Council considers including mobility and regional connection policies into future iterations of the Official Community Plan (OCP), prioritizing access to flexible transportation options.

Having mobility integrated into the Official Community Plan would formalize Lytton's commitment and goal to improve transportation access and ensure mobility is featured in future land use and development decisions. Policies that allow for flexible transportation systems and regional connectivity will guide long-term planning and achieve broader community goals including economic development, sustainability and population growth.

Sustainable Funding and Partnerships

4.5

That staff look into hybrid funding options including provincial and federal programs and grants, partnerships with non-profit organizations and cost-recovery models to support long-term transportation operations.

Securing sustainable grants or funding is a key element for any rural transportation project. Hybrid funding models that could combine multilevel government support, partnerships and user-based contributions could help ensure long-term viability, all while reducing financial risk on the municipality. Looking at funding options through provincial and federal programs, as well as partnerships with community organizations, non-profits or in the private sector, will be essential to implementing and maintaining transportation services over time.

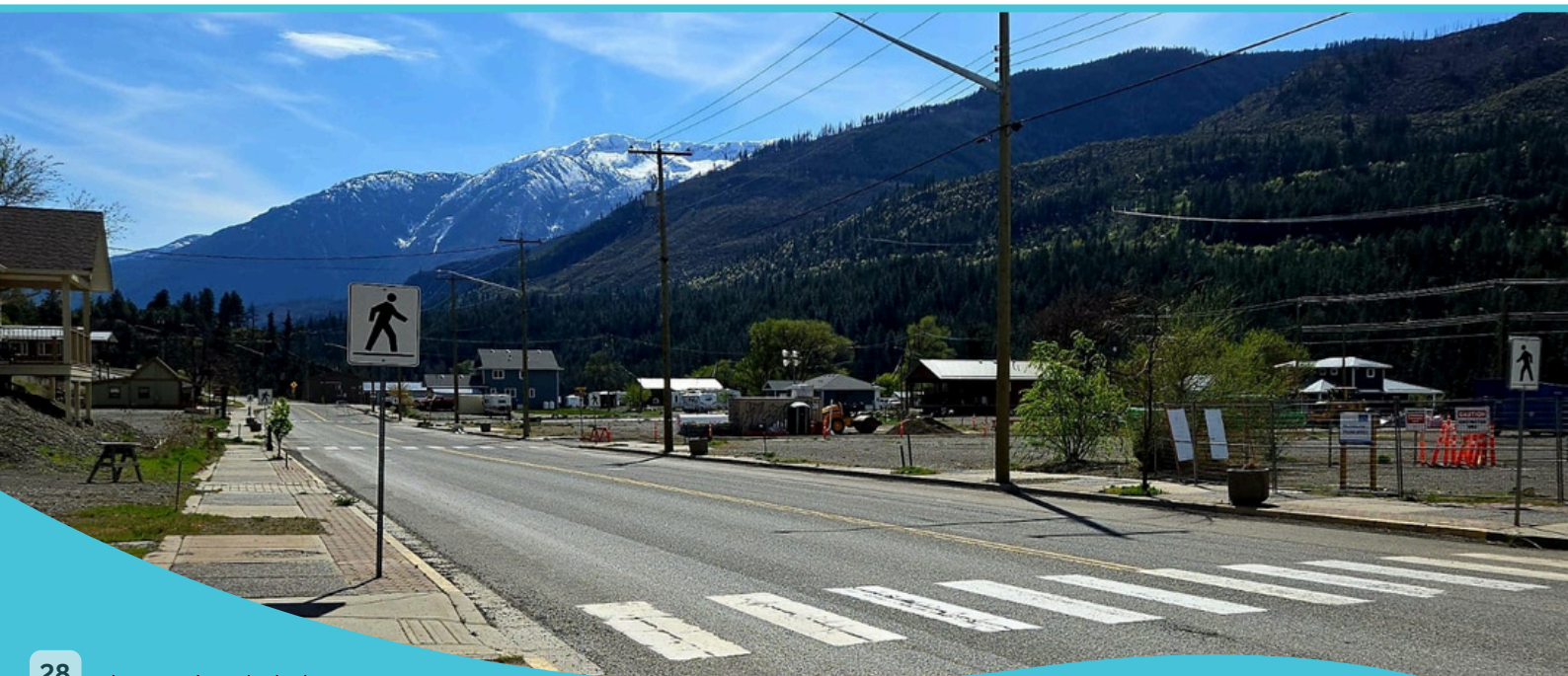


SERVICES AND HOUSING

Living in a Supportive Community

As Lytton continues rebuilding and looking toward long-term community growth, there is an increasing need to create supports that attract and retain families, youth, and future residents. Using a persona as an example, for a parent, such as the 32-year-old mother relocating to the community with her 13-year-old son, the decision to move is influenced not only by housing and employment opportunities, but also by whether the community can provide meaningful supports, recreation, mentorship, and safe spaces for youth. Without accessible youth services, recreation programs, and opportunities for social connection, families may face challenges feeling supported and rooted within the community. These recommendations were developed to address those gaps by creating a more connected and collaborative approach to youth wellbeing through partnerships with schools, neighbouring Indigenous Nations, governments, community organizations, and Elders. Together, the recommendations aim to strengthen youth engagement, cultural connection, mental wellness, and community belonging for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth in Lytton.

To support a potentially growing youth population, we must build housing. While the Village of Lytton is quickly rebuilding housing for current and incoming residents. Despite cheaper single-family homes and zoned residential lots compared to the Lower Mainland region, housing affordability can still be a challenge for those who consider themselves low-income. This may include low-income families/single parents, single or couple households, Indigenous youth, people living with permanent disabilities, and seniors who are more likely to have lower income than average earnings. High-density homes can bring in new options for incoming youth.



Enhancing Youth Recreation, Wellness, and Community Supports

5.1

That Council work together with the provincial and federal governments to secure funding for youth services and recreation opportunities in Lytton, including the development of recreation spaces, parks, and youth programming through partnerships with School District 74 and community organizations, alongside an integrated youth service hub that provides counselling, mental health care, and employment supports in one place.

This recommendation was developed in response to the identified lack of accessible youth supports and recreational opportunities within the community. Partnerships with schools and community organizations were recognized as important to creating sustainable programs and shared spaces that keep youth active, connected, and supported both inside and outside of school environments.

Building a Shared Vision for Youth Services Through Regional and Indigenous Partnerships

5.2

That these services be developed in close partnership with neighbouring reserves, bands, and Nations, working together through shared planning, decision-making, and a holistic funding approach, to ensure the services are accessible, culturally appropriate, and inclusive for Indigenous youth.

This recommendation reflects the importance of collaboration with neighbouring Indigenous communities to ensure youth services are developed in a respectful, inclusive, and culturally grounded way. Shared planning and funding approaches were identified as key to strengthening regional relationships and improving access to services for all youth in the area.

Creating Meaningful Connections Between Elders and Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Youth Through Schools and Youth Programs

5.3

And that Council work with neighbouring Nations to include Elders in the youth service hub to provide cultural guidance and support to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth.

This recommendation recognizes the valuable role Elders play in supporting youth wellbeing, mentorship, cultural learning, and community connection. Including Elders within youth services was identified as a way to foster stronger relationships, cultural understanding, and holistic support systems for young people in the community.

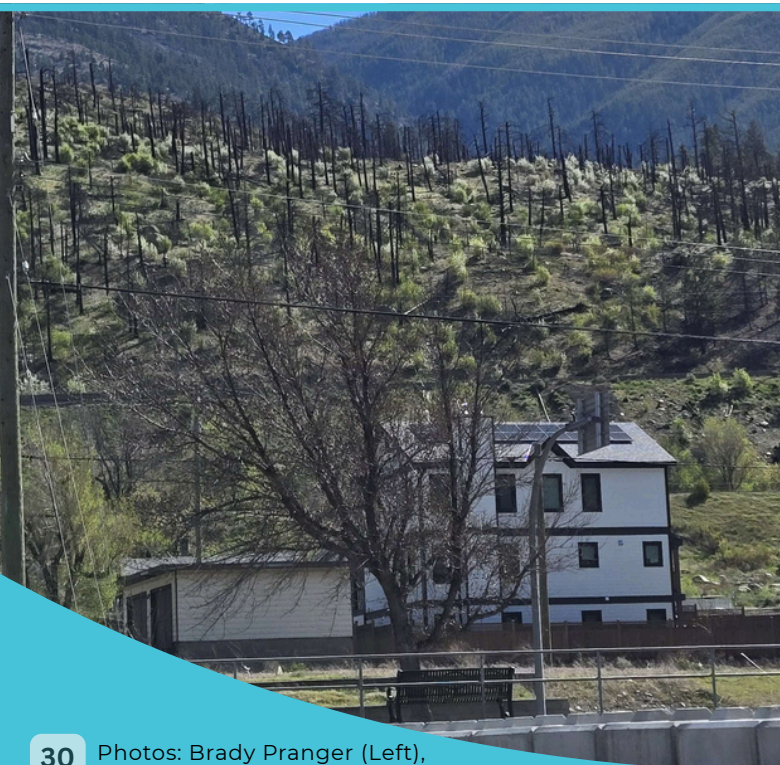
Living in an Affordable Community

5.4

That Council zone for higher-density housing, to Facilitate Rental Options of Youth

To help solve housing affordability in alignment with single-family housing, higher-density methods should be implemented in the village. Suggested areas include the main downtown strip, where proposed two-story commercial buildings with residential suites above are planned. One suggestion is to have an apartment block that could potentially add a third story in the main area, providing higher density while also maintaining the historical design approach of the downtown area.

In addition, another suggested location for densified housing would be at the old vacant school lot, where subsidized housing could be built with up to three stories, providing affordable housing units designed for the financially vulnerable with certified housing supports. This type of housing would be aimed at the most vulnerable in the community, including low-income households, people with disabilities, First Nations peoples, women and children recovering from trauma, single/couple households, and youth. The local councillors can collaborate with the provincial and potentially federal governments to obtain subsidized rental housing for the most vulnerable living in the rural regions surrounding Lytton.





PART 4: NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

Our key topics, Placemaking, Economic Development, Climate, Mobility, Services, and Housing, were chosen to support making this community thrive. The next steps for our directions rely on three streams for their success. Developer action, Official Community Plan support, and partnerships. Developer action on tactical housing, social supports, and mobility infrastructure will bring our strategies into action. Developer actions can be guided by the Official Community Plan with targeted community amenity contributions, an economic development strategy, a placemaking guide and a climate resilience design guide. This demonstrated the Importance of the Official Community Plan for the Village of Lytton.

Partnerships are another critical next step. Reaching out to corporations and organizations to form an agreement can support development actions and potentially allow companies to set up a base of operations in the Village of Lytton.

We also suggest programming a design and public spaces competition to drive local and regional engagement with the village. A program like this can market the community to newcomers and be advertised in partnership with BC Tourism.

To conclude, the Village of Lytton has a lot of potential to become a vibrant, thriving community; however, many barriers stand in its way, chief among them are financial challenges. While council and staff have already begun addressing these financial challenges, we, as planners, hope these actions will support community development.





THANK YOU

Prepared for:

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Pictured left to right: UFV students Mira Chahal, Liam Fuller, Agostinho Vieites, Brady Pranger, Alison Groll, Jackson Phillips, and local community member Patrick Michell in the Village of Lytton Parish Hall. (Photo @Maggie Cross)

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