

# Outreach Report

Mira Chahal, Liam Fuller, Alison Groll, Jackson Phillips,

Brady Pranger, Agostinho Vieites

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Dr. Cherie Enns

Contact: Caroline Lamont [Clamont@lytton.ca](mailto:Clamont@lytton.ca)

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## **Introduction**

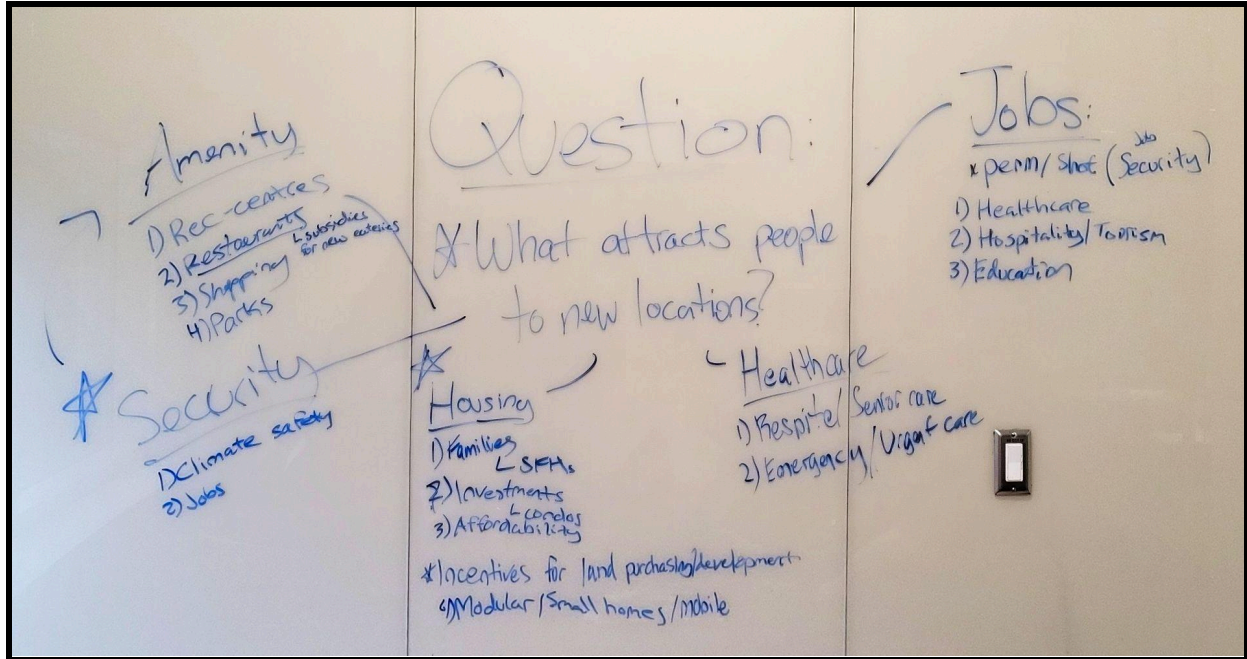
When we first began the practicum, our group knew that we had to gather information on how “youth” have experienced the Village of Lytton and what might entice new youth to move to a small town. We also agreed that to better understand the community and the challenges it faces, we must visit it. With these research requirements decided and with direction from Dr. Cherie Enns, we conducted two forms of outreach. Our first was to engage with the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) students. We asked critical questions to our classmates and had a conversation in Dr. Enns’ Geography 364 class during the winter semester. We also scheduled our site visit for April 10, 2026. This Outreach Report details both our process of engagement with other students, our site visit, and the results. We share our key findings from the outreach with students and personal reflections from our visit to Lytton. Our outreach helped us establish our ideas and was critical in determining the direction we would take for our final report.

## **Web Mapping Ideas**

For this project, our practicum group was asked to identify and research amenities that would entice a younger generation to live and work in the Village of Lytton. As young students ourselves, we sat down as a group back in March and asked each other which amenities we consider to be critical when moving to a new place. We asked the big question, “What attracts people to new locations?” To capture our ideas, we generated a web map on a whiteboard.

The key amenities that came up in our group discussion were: Housing, Healthcare, Jobs, Security, and Amenities. These “umbrella” amenities were then fleshed out. For housing, single-family homes, affordability, incentives for purchasing and developing land, and smaller, modular homes were all identified as key aspects we may consider. For amenities, we included recreation centres, restaurants, shopping, and parks.

Our group felt it was important not just to have a place to live, but stable jobs, things to do, and places to meet other community members. When considering a new place to live, we focused on permanence. To realistically live in a new place long-term, these amenities would be expected.



**Table of Web Mapping:**

What Attracts People to New Locations?				
Housing	Healthcare	Jobs	Security	Amenity
Families - Single Family Homes	Respite/Senior Care	Healthcare Industry	Climate Safety	Rec-centres
Investments - Condos	Emergency/Urgent Care	Hospitality/Tourism Industry	Jobs - Permanence	Restaurants - Subsidies for new eateries
Affordability		Education		Shopping
Incentives for land purchasing/development				Parks
Modular/small homes/mobile				

## Discussion with Student Group

Our web mapping exercise was also an attempt to refine what we heard from our peers in a UFV class. In early March, we asked a Geography 364 class if they would move to the Village of Lytton. We got back a lot of diverse and important feedback, and the conversation quickly became not just what young people would look for, but also ideas and incentives for how the Village of Lytton could attract industries and workers.

As shown in the table below, a lot of students focused on basic needs: housing, jobs, livable wages, access to healthcare, and, for those students with children or wanting children, schooling was important too. The UFV students were familiar with the Village of Lytton because they were aware of the 2021 fire that had burned through the community. One of the first questions raised by the students was “what if the fire happens again?” and they commented on needing reassurance about fire risk and community safety if they were to move to the Village of Lytton.

When considering day-to-day life in the Village of Lytton, the students focused on amenities that facilitate a social life and a lively community. Amenities that provide activities for workers and their families during personal time. Young workers often want a “nightlife,” and this was brought up by a couple of students. More students were concerned about “having things to do” and places to go. Recreation centres, coffee shops, and multi-use areas all came up during the discussion.

Something of interest was that the students seemed to consider moving to the Village of Lytton as a long-term decision. The majority of the students were not discussing the Village of Lytton as a one or two-year, temporary location. When they thought of the amenities they would need, they considered their current and future families. A few of the students mentioned bringing children to Lytton, or their elderly parents, and the services needed for all generations of a family. Housing was a priority, and the students were curious about what type of housing would be offered and what they would be able to buy. Considering the costs of living in other areas of B.C., affordable housing could be an amenity that attracts young people to the Village of Lytton.

### Table of Comments from Students:

Wants/ Needs	Concerns	Incentives	Other
Hospital and health centres	Reassurance that fire isn't a risk - that trains won't cause other fires.	Incentives to take teaching or medical jobs	Remote workers and people who want a quiet life could easily adapt to Lytton
Living Job Wages	Plan in place for traffic during peak tourism	Living Incentives	Young people will have elderly parents who may live with them, so healthcare is important
Consistent Transportation	Proximity to multiple bypasses	Tourism Grants	Old age amenities so people can live there their whole lives and have things to do
School	Will Lytton have everything needed to age in place		Market Lytton as an alternative to those who want to remain in BC but are moving to Alberta
Gas station			Work in conjunction with nearby cities
Entertainment and Night Life			
Coffee shops and multi-use areas - Gathering places			
Recreation centres			

## Site Visit

After talking to our UFV student peers, conducting our web mapping exercise, and starting our literature review, our next step was to visit the Village of Lytton. Our intention for the site visit was to see the layout of the downtown area and the rebuilding progress for ourselves. On April 10, all of our members drove up to the Village of Lytton and spent the afternoon meeting Caroline Lamont, Director of Development, Maggie Cross, Planning Assistant, and Patrick Michell, local community member and retired Chief of the Kanaka Bar Indian Band. We met at

the Parish Hall, one of the only buildings still standing after the 2021 fire. Before the tour, we were given a presentation by Patrick. In this presentation, he shared his long history of living in Lytton and his connections to the community before and after the fire. After his presentation, Patrick guided us through a tour of the community. On the tour, Patrick brought up homes being rebuilt with fire-resistant materials and strategies. However, the community still lacks a grocery store and housing, which are critical amenities for young people. The Community Hub has been approved, which does align with the needs and interests of young people and their families. In the following sections we will share our reflections of our site visits and the information Patrick shared with us.

## **Patrick's Books: A Reflection from Jackson Phillips**

One of Patrick's book recommendations is "*A Long and Terrible Shadow: White Values, Native Rights in the Americas*" by Thomas R. Berger. This book discusses the actions of colonial powers and how Indigenous Peoples across the Americas have resisted. By reading this book, I gained a new understanding of colonialism and power in South America. In relation to Lytton, this book helped me reflect on the history of Indigenous Peoples in the Fraser Canyon. Being the site where the Fraser and Thompson Rivers meet, Lytton was an important place for Settler-Indigenous relations. Understanding the history between the Indigenous Peoples who lived in Lytton and their relationship with the Canadian Nation State was a key point that Patrick wanted us to understand and reflect on. To supplement this, he also recommended reading "*The Letters of Simon Fraser, 1806-1808*" edited by Kaye Lamb. This book pieces together and annotates the letter of Simon Fraser. Simon Fraser's letter document travels down the Fraser River. Reading them helped me to understand the change that colonialism brought to Lytton. Together, these two books gave me a greater understanding of the region's history and identity.

## **Team Reflections**

### **Reflection from Mira Chahal**

Reflecting on our trip to Lytton, it was a very meaningful and welcoming experience because it allowed us to see not only the challenges the town has faced but also the strong potential and resilience within the community. It was inspiring to witness how much care, planning, and hope is being invested into rebuilding and shaping the town's future. Caroline and Patrick greeted us with so much kindness and friendliness, which made the visit feel warm and comfortable from

the beginning. A particularly heartfelt moment was Patrick taking the time to prepare sandwiches for us, which reflected the genuine hospitality and care that made the visit feel even more personal and welcoming. Moreover, the books Patrick recommended were very thought-provoking and encouraged us to think more deeply about the town, its history, and its future. Learning more about the community and hearing about the work being done there was both inspiring and eye-opening. Walking through the town and seeing different sites helped me better understand the challenges and changes that Lytton is currently facing. It was intriguing to learn about the logistics, planning efforts, and future goals the town is working toward. Seeing the vision for redevelopment firsthand made the experience especially impactful, as it highlighted the possibilities for growth, recovery, and long-term community development. In a nutshell, this field trip was not only educational but also a very memorable and meaningful experience.

### **Reflection from Liam Fuller**

I visited the Village of Lytton one time way back in 2013, when it was a thriving little small town. After the 2021 fire, I was devastated to hear that most of the town was destroyed because of the fire and recall hearing it progress through the media. After hearing about the practicum opportunity for the village, I was excited and looked forward to working with peers and staff to study and research the recovery planning process and conduct the site visit.

Overall, I was impressed by how quickly the village is coming back to life. After a slow beginning to the full recovery process, a lot has changed in the past couple years in terms of the rebuilding progress. It was nice to hear that some businesses have already obtained permits and will be returning, including the local community grocery store, bank, and a Chinese museum. I was also impressed that an ambitious multi-million dollar community center has been approved for building as well.

At the beginning of the tour, I was surprised to hear that the reason for some of the buildings surviving the 2021 fire was because of fireproofing methods that were already implemented to protect the buildings from fire hazards, including the main gathering hall and some houses that had special fireproofing material installed. In addition, it was nice to see some single-family housing return, but I was shocked to hear that they were remaining vacant despite homeownership. Another important topic our local tour guide, Patrick, mentioned was how the most important word of the village is "open," where if businesses remain closed, they won't be receiving sustainable income dependent on customers, including locals and tourists.

Finally, at the end of the tour, it was interesting to hear about the current building restrictions, where only a maximum of two-story buildings can be built in the village. Patrick mentioned and showed us a single-family house that had three stories, where apparently the owner had a dispute with the village council regarding the three stories, claiming that the basement does not count. The permit went forward regardless, but if the village were to increase housing density to three stories, they would need to collaborate with Lytton Fire & Rescue to acquire funding to purchase a ladder firetruck, which one is not currently present at the village at this time.

### **Reflection from Alison Groll**

Before our group trip to the Village of Lytton, I found that the community identity was somewhat elusive. The majority of news articles I could find were about the 2021 fire and the destruction it left behind. I was relying on Lytton's local websites and Google Maps imagery to gain insight into the community's identity and values. However, when I virtually attended a couple of the Official Community Plan (OCP) Update community conversations, I saw just how dedicated members of the community are to rebuilding, and using the rebuild as an opportunity to share their community identity. To the locals, the community's identity is strong. Many of the community members present in those meetings spoke of a love of the local trails, the opportunities to sit in the shade and relax, and the flowerbeds that local members care for. They want to see opportunities for the community to meet and socialize, as well as park spaces for all ages to enjoy. They want to foster a strong sense of community ownership and pride.

The community's identity and their vision for the future became clearer when we visited the Village of Lytton on April 10, 2026, and met local community member and Kanaka Bar Indian Band's retired Chief Patrick Michell. Patrick has spent decades reading books on local history. These books supplement the knowledge he gained from stories that his family members and Elders shared with him growing up. Patrick knows how historically significant the Village of Lytton is and the importance of its location at the confluence of the Fraser River and Thompson River. He, like others in the community, does not want to leave. Since the 2021 fire, he has been shuttling around his family members to nearby cities with grocery stores and pools so that they can still live in the Village of Lytton and the surrounding communities, while waiting for the amenities to be rebuilt. The area is his family's home.

Seeing it in person, the rebuilding of the Village of Lytton felt overwhelming. With so many lots still flat and empty, it is clear that there is still a long way to go. Yet, as Patrick spoke so passionately about his community and gave us a tour of the lots – both rebuilt and those that

are still empty – I could see the small-town identity shine. Patrick knew the names, ages, careers, and family members of the people he spoke of. He showed us an area that he likes to share with his grandkids. He showed us the historical monuments and spoke of some of the landmarks. To an outsider, the Village of Lytton might currently appear bare, but to a local, there remains a lot of life and connection. I could see why the community members want to remain in the area.

To make a long future in the Village of Lytton possible, the community’s vision includes resiliency, self-sufficiency, natural disaster preparedness, and essential services. Homes are being rebuilt with fire-resistant materials, and a new community hub hopes to bring multiple services back into the community. If the community can implement its vision and get the word out about its positive vision for the future, I can see people in B.C. and beyond strongly considering a move to the Village of Lytton, and I would recommend that people do so.

### **Reflection from Jackson Phillips**

Our site visit gave me a new outlook on the project. Seeing the level of destruction was challenging at first, but Patrick’s presentation and tour gave me hope. As we walked down Fraser St, we passed by empty lot after empty lot, and Patrick shared what he knew of the family that once lived there. My past new builds and old parks. The old pocket park is called O’Dwyer Viewpoint Park. This park has a lot of potential and has an incredible view. Further down the road, new homes are beginning to be built. We discussed smart technology and climate resilience. If we are to create change with the Village, building safe homes is an absolute necessity.



*Photo by Jackson Phillips. Lytton Pocket Park*

At the end of the road, we reached the area where the fire started. This space is being used for engineering purposes as they are renewing their water and sewer lines. As we turn the corner and head back toward the parish hall, I get a better sense of the work that is happening. There is a Matcon Site (Construction company), the rebuilt Chinese History Museum, a few new homes, and a space designated to be a new village office. Seeing the new construction help me understand the scale of work that needs to be done.

We had a long discussion about the new community hub. These spaces will be homes to rental homes, commercial spaces, and the visitor information centers run by the local chamber of commerce. I think this space has a lot of potential to bring the community to life. If the building leverages smart design or is potentially designed by residents, it can send a strong message to those wishing to move to a strong and growing community.

This site visit was very important to the development of my ideas. I see placemaking as a valuable tool that the village can use to bring in new residents and build back the strength and identity of the community.

### **Reflection from Brady Pranger**

Our time spent in Lytton was short but memorable, and it gave a much stronger physical illustration of the place and the people there. When driving in, it was striking to see a former forest reduced to the dark skeletons of timber, with little greenery. Within Lytton itself, we were able to see both the extent of the destruction and what was being rebuilt, with many new, clean gravel lots showing the potential of the space to build anew. When touring the town's main streets, we also saw how difficult it is to make structural progress, with land held across various parties and permits taking considerable time to approve and subsequently build upon. However, around the community, the beauty of the town was also clear, with an impressive mountainside to one side and a grandiose view of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers converging in a stunning view of the canyon, made better by the fortunate weather.



*Photo by Brady Pranger. Confluence of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers.*

The presentation we received from Patrick Michell was eye-opening in terms of the local perspective on Lytton. Lytton is a place of rich history, both for the Nlaka'pamux and within the colonial history of BC. It was a frequent visiting place of BC's first Governor, James Douglas, and was at one point considered for the capital of BC. The town also previously held greater importance in its positioning as an entry point to the BC interior prior to the construction of the Coquihalla Highway. Patrick gave us an informative lecture on this history and much more, along the way changing my perspective on how resilience should be represented in the town going forward. It became clear that my meaningful contribution to resilience research and recommendations could not be in materials or architectural areas, as doing so would be beyond the scope of my undergraduate studies and our timeframe compared to the knowledge and progress Lytton had already made. Rather, my focus should be on social strategies and addressing the structural flaws of the recovery response to form stronger frameworks for future effective recovery and mitigation. Patrick also brought forward an interesting perspective on how Lytton could become a forward-thinking and assured community in its resilient rebuilding, serving as a potential place of refuge for other BC communities experiencing fires as towns across the province become increasingly vulnerable to wildfire risk. While this idea may seem

highly optimistic, it speaks to the aspirations people in Lytton hold, as well as the need for resilience to be transformative rather than restorative of prior states of vulnerability.

### **Reflection from Agostinho Vieties**

Visiting Lytton was truly eye-opening for me, and it gave me a much better understanding of what rebuilding actually looks like on the ground. Caroline showed us the current renderings and plans for the new Village Office and Community Hub, which was very interesting to see how much thought is going into them. She also highlighted features like residential units and workshop spaces within the Community Hub, showing how these facilities are being designed to be both functional and adaptable over time.

Patrick's presentation really stood out to me. He discussed how the Lytton First Nation is rebuilding with a strong focus on resilience, including current construction on a new subdivision for LFN members and a future food processing site. It was very clear that the nation's approach was more than just housing, but rather long-term sustainability, economic growth and community strength. He also shared his personal collection of books, which was very interesting. Books like *"A Good War"* and *"British Columbia in Flames"* that connect community action, policy and the effects of climate change. I reflected on how Lytton's situation is part of a much bigger dialogue around climate action and adapting to a changing environment.

Walking through the village core was probably the most impactful part of the trip for me. Looking at the mix of new builds and empty sites made the whole situation feel very real. Patrick also touched base on fire-resistant building standards and how Lytton has a special opportunity to become an example for other Interior communities regarding building stronger, more resilient. It was honestly very emotional as well, walking through because it made me think about how much we take for granted and how fast it can be taken away. What was even more powerful was seeing how resilient the people are here and how strong the community is.

Overall, this experience has made me reflect on what rebuilding really means. Lytton has a unique opportunity to be an example of how it approaches fire-resistant community planning and long-term sustainability. It is not just about replacing buildings, but creating a stronger and more resilient place for the residents now and future generations.



## Would We Move to Lytton - Why and Why Not?

Below is a list of pros and cons from group discussions, student peer feedback, and the site visit, in no particular order.

### Pros

- A strong and attractive community identity focused on resilience and implementing green, renewable energies.
- A quieter, slower pace of living than in a big city.
- The community is small in size, allowing for a walkable day-to-day once rebuilt. Less car dependency in town.
- The community is rebuilding with a focus on fire-resistant materials. Leading the way in BC for preparing for future extreme weather and natural disasters.
- Access to multiple large city centres (Kamloops, Hope, Abbotsford, Vancouver, etc.) for shopping, airports, and events.
- Local landscape and the Fraser and Thompson Rivers are beautiful and inspiring.
- Opportunities for outdoor recreation (trails, parks, hiking, river rafting, etc.).
- A historically relevant place in BC's history.
- Community members mentioned growing food, so access to local, fresh produce or personal or community garden space.
- New infrastructure is to be rebuilt. Includes homes, stores, the Community Hub, the sewage system, etc.
- Access to multiple internet companies.

- New Community Hub located downtown.

### **Cons**

- Current lack of housing, health, and service amenities.
- It gets very hot in the summer. It can also get very dry, creating the right circumstances for fires. The heat may also limit outdoor recreation.
- Unclear about the emergency alert system within the Village of Lytton. (Voyent Alert system?)
- Proximity to trains (noise, fire risk, pollution).
- Proximity to highways (noise, pollution, busy roads and traffic).
- Boredom if there isn't a developed community identity, social places, and events.

Considering these pros and cons, the Village of Lytton certainly has safety risks (e.g. fire, extreme heat) that need to be strategically addressed and planned for. While the proximity to rivers, railway, and highways means consideration of impacts to health and safety, many cities throughout B.C. are located along rivers, major highways, and have trains passing through downtown areas. The Village of Lytton is far from alone in that matter.

However, comparing the pros and cons to our identified amenity needs and desires, the Village of Lytton has a lot to offer, and once the envisioned and proposed developments are complete, there will be many more amenities for residents. There is also certainly a strong community identity that, if marketed, will reach young people in B.C. and attract them.

When it was discussed as a group, some members could see themselves living in the Village of Lytton. Others who did not see themselves ever living in the Village of Lytton were influenced by where their families lived, specific career options only available in larger cities, and overall desires to remain in larger cities. It was discussed, however, that many of us know people seeking a more affordable life and a small, quiet community. We would all recommend the Village of Lytton as an option for our friends and families.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, conducting outreach with other UFV students helped our group to understand how students feel about potentially moving to the Village of Lytton and what amenities they deem to be essential. Asking these questions and mapping our ideas helped our group develop critical directions for our research and final report. The site visit to the Village of Lytton was critical for both our learning and the outcomes of our report. The site visit helped us frame our directions, target new areas, and support new developments. Combined, our two outreach strategies brought our individual ideas together to create a strategic direction for realizing a strong community.