

Navigating Complexity in Community: Local Government Leadership is Key

Colleen Jones, Mayor City of Trail

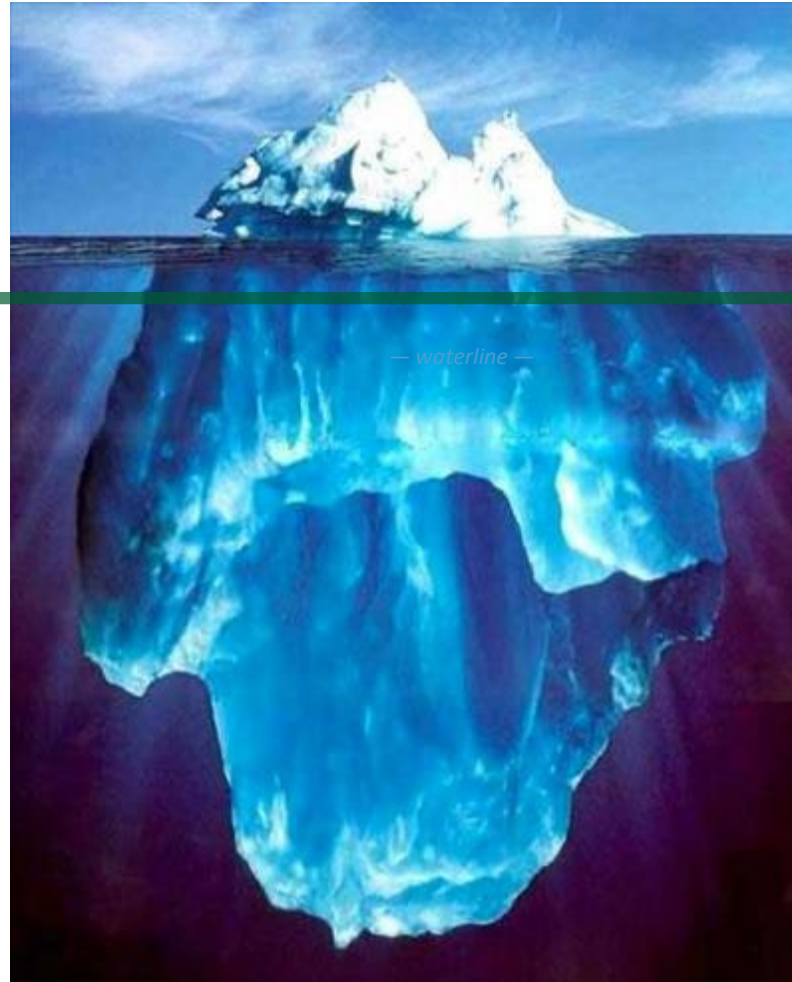
Karin Goodison, IH Medical Health Officer

Matt Parrilla, General Manager, Teck Trail Operations

Host: **Michelle Laurie**, Trail Area Health & Environment Committee

What We See and What We Don't

- Health data
- Environmental measurements
- Technical reports



- Community concern & fear
- Economic dependence on industry
- History and legacy
- Trust (or lack of it)
- Relationships between partners
- Political pressure
- Identity and pride

From Legacy Challenge to Community Strength

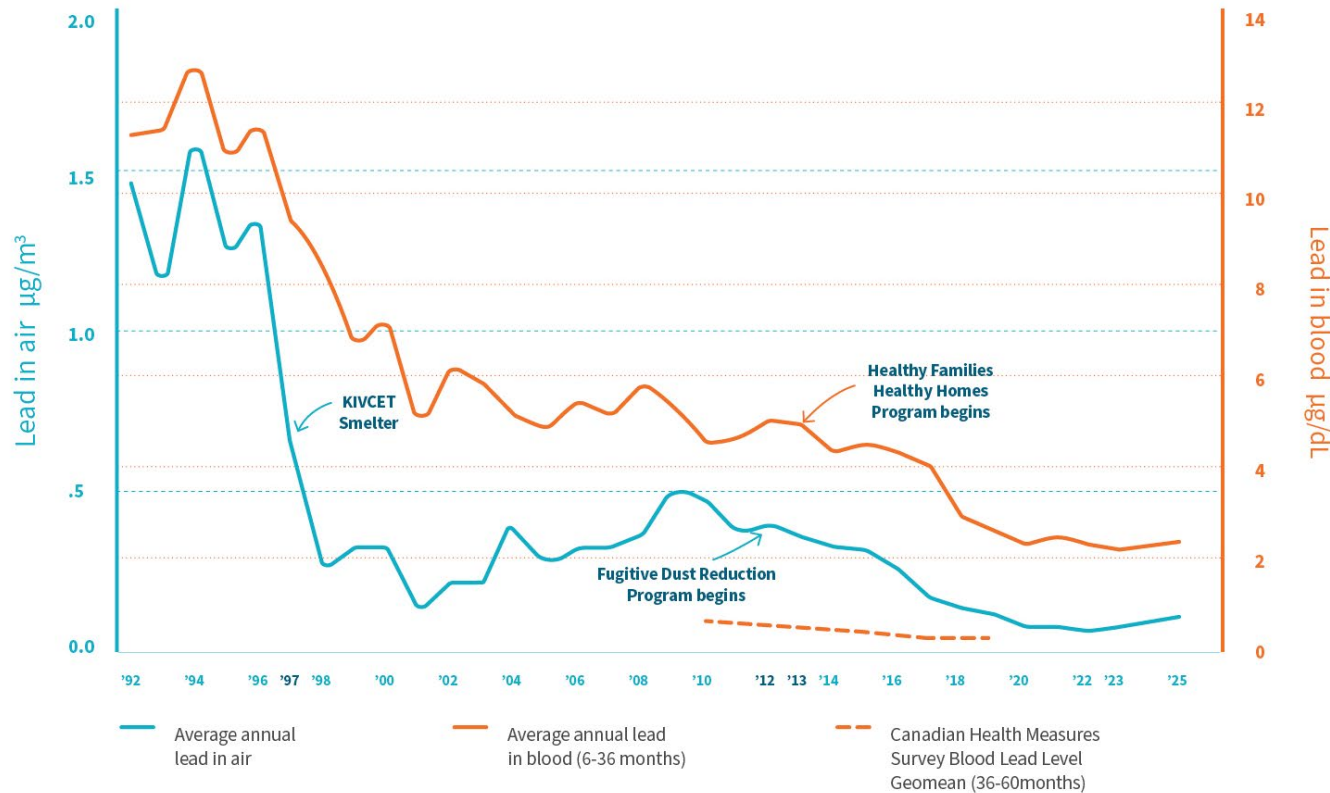
- 125+ years
of smelting activity in Trail, B.C.
- Real health concerns
especially for children, lead in air and blood
- Risk of stigma
division, blame, and community fracture
- Instead:
sustained collaboration and measurable progress



Decades of Partnership = Measurable Progress

Annual average for lead in community air and children's blood

(1992-2025, Trail, B.C.)

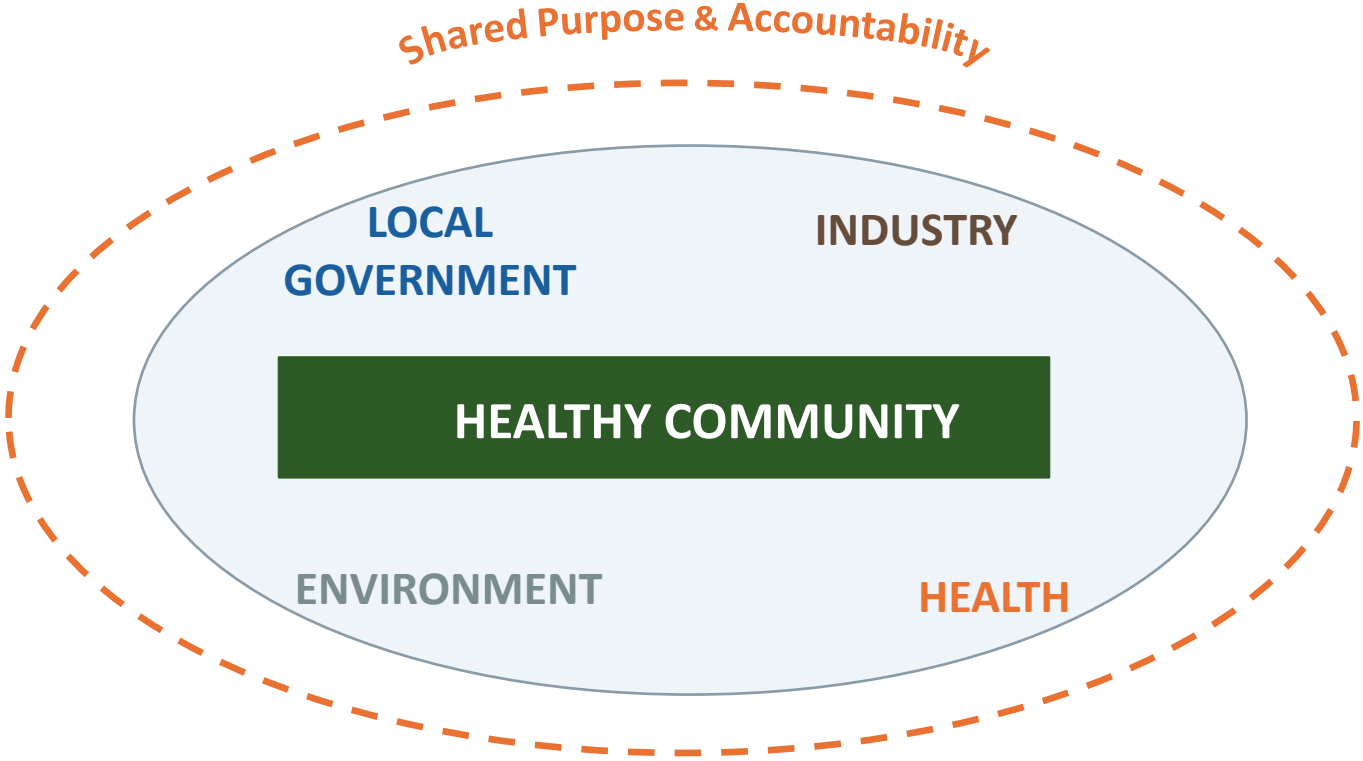


2011
Premier's
Award winner

2025
WARP submitted to
Minister of
Environment for
approval

Source: THEP Annual Data — Annual average for lead in community air and children's blood, 1992–2024, Trail, B.C.

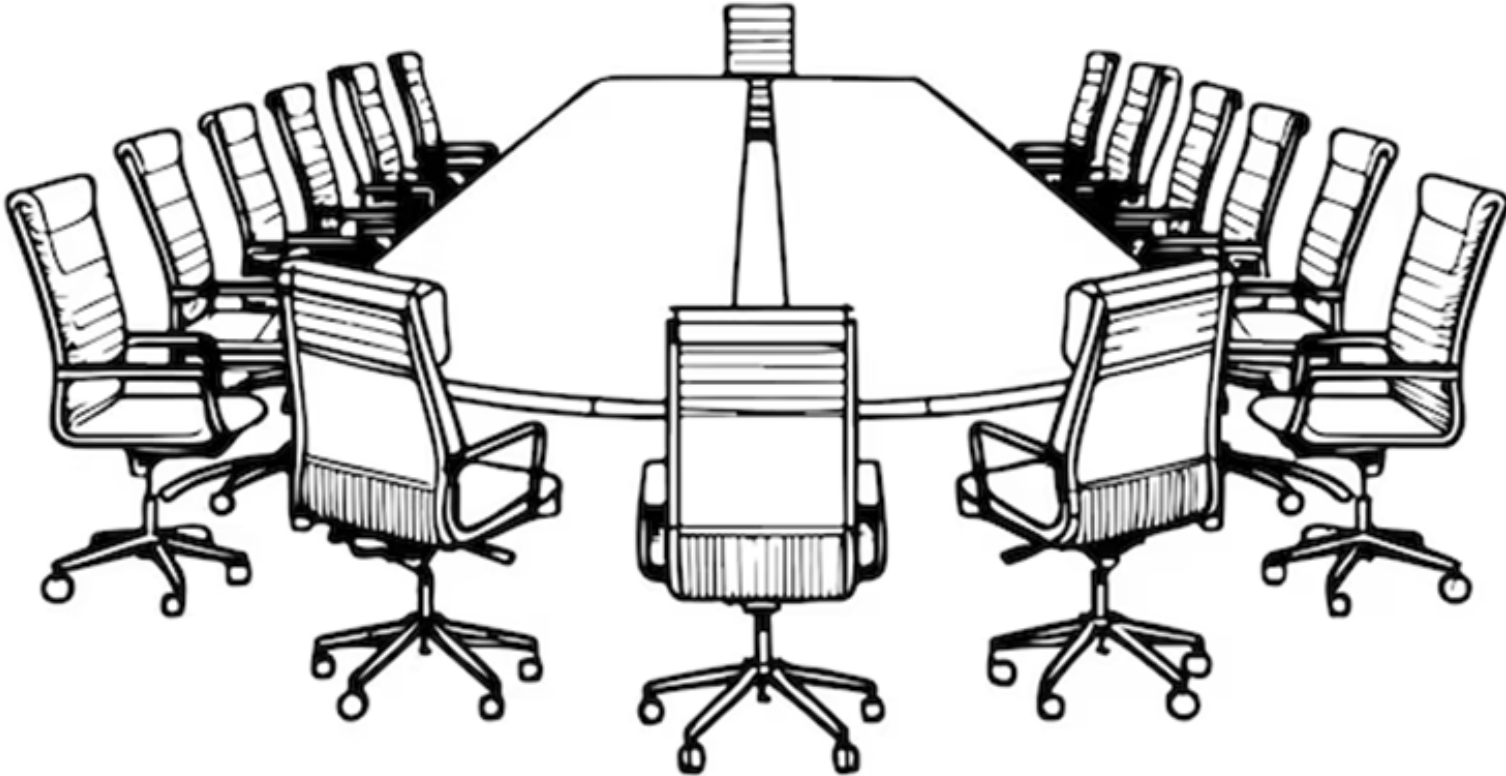
Navigating Complexity: Strong Foundations



FOUNDATIONS

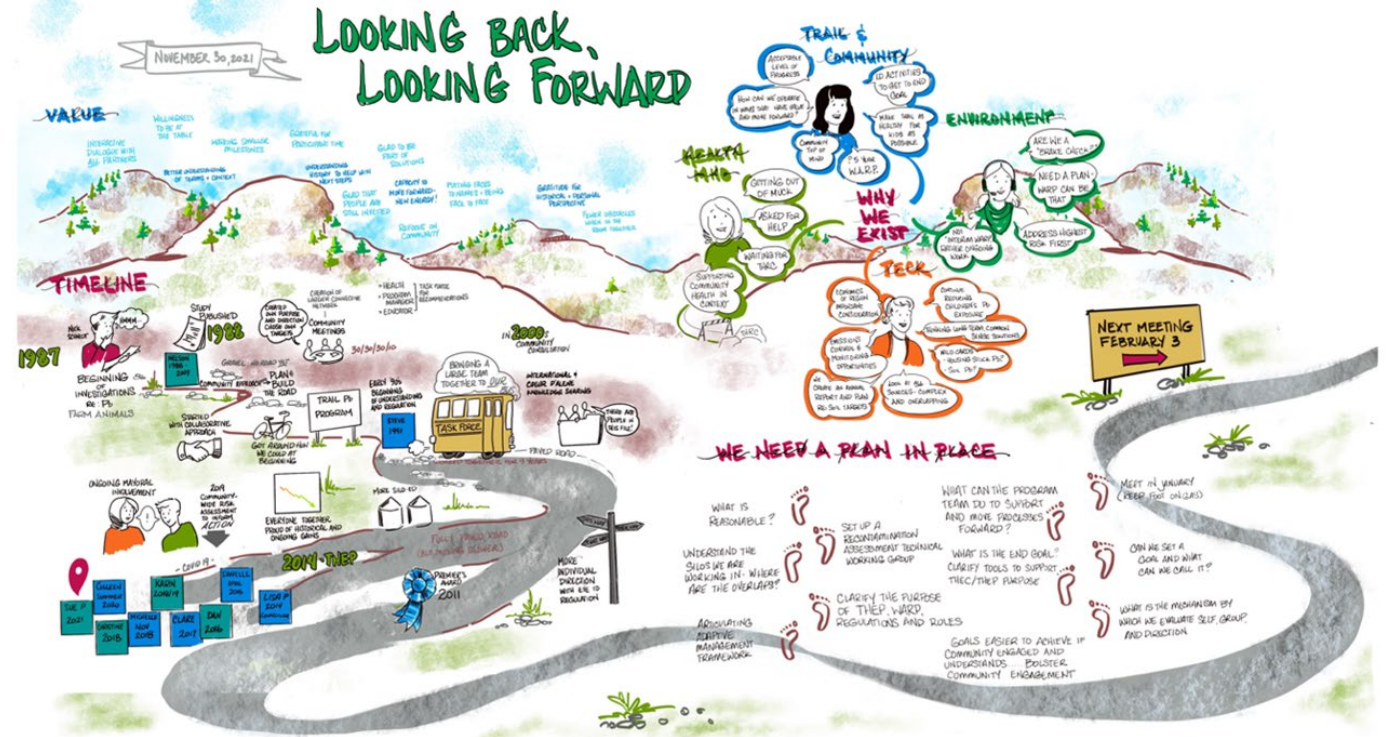


Partnership Is Not Easy: 2017-2022



Rebuilding: No More Empty Chairs

- Mayor and partners agreed: sit together and hash it out
- Year-long process - messy but necessary
- Developed a joint 5-year strategic plan
- Community Engagement & Renewal Working Group launched
- Recommit to shared understanding and open dialogue



Industry Perspective: Long-Term Commitment & Transparency

Transparency

- Sharing data openly, even when it's hard
- Honest about challenges and timelines
- Accountable to community, not just regulators

Relationships & Trust

- Trust built through consistency and follow-through
- Showing up, even for the difficult conversations
- Partnership, not just compliance: a mindset shift

Health Perspective: Evidence, Evolving Science & Community Trust

Shared Learning
& Transparency

Communicating clearly to community and partners.
Openness builds credibility.

Facilitative
Leadership

No one organization owns the issue. Bringing perspectives together, staying focused on shared outcomes.

Community
Grounded

The community grounds the work to ensure relevancy and accountability.

The Foundations in Practice



Key message:

These foundations are not soft skills, they are infrastructure.

When they're in place, complex problems become navigable.

When they erode, progress stalls.

Why Local Government Leadership Was Critical

Continuity through change

Convening across silos

Legitimacy with residents

Keeping community central



What This Means

01

You don't need all the answers to lead

02

Invest in relationships, not just solutions

03

Expect the process to be messy

04

Create structures that outlast political cycles

05

Keep community at the center

Partnerships That Withstand Time

- Complex challenges don't disappear
- But with strong foundations, they can be managed
- Progress can be sustained through change
- Leadership can endure beyond individual terms



