



For Immediate Release

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Council considering regional correctional centre for Lumby

The Village of Lumby is approaching the province to consider locating a new regional correctional centre in Lumby to service the Okanagan. And council members want to know what residents think.

"Our local economy has been in transition over the last decade," says Mayor Kevin Acton. "A correctional centre would create significant economic stimulus in our community, both during construction and through long-term employment and service support.

"Having said that," he adds, "we want to ensure that all residents' questions have been answered and concerns have been addressed before proceeding to the next step."

Councillors themselves had many questions, answers to which they sought from a variety of sources. First, they met with Corrections Branch representatives, then with provincial and federal politicians, and then with the City of Kamloops.

"Kamloops has been home to a regional correctional centre since 1989," explains Acton, "so we wanted to know about the positive and negative impacts of having a facility in their community. They had nothing bad to say about it. The economic benefits were significant, and there was no increase in crime."

A correctional centre could house about 200 inmates being remanded for custody or serving sentences of two years less a day. Perhaps built on private land located in one of Lumby's industrial areas, the centre would have high levels of physical and technological security to ensure inmate control and separation.

"We still have questions," says Acton, "and we won't move ahead until we've carefully weighed the benefits against any potential barriers. We intend to do our homework."

Benefits, as seen by Lumby councillors, include economic diversity, jobs during construction (the Surrey Correction Centre took two years to build), jobs after construction (in the facility and supporting businesses), training for local workers, and an increased tax base. Economic spin-offs would also be likely for Vernon, Coldstream, and Lavington.

Barriers are less tangible, and include residents' lack of understanding and lack of acceptance. "Research shows that crime does not increase in a community with a correctional centre," says Acton. "We would not be considering this if we thought otherwise."

THE CORPORATION OF THE VILLAGE OF LUMBY

P.O. Box 430, Lumby, B.C. V0E 2G0

Telephone (250) 547-2171 • Fax (250) 547-6894 • E-mail: info@lumby.ca

Research continues to find answers to council's other questions. "We want to know how many jobs, both directly and indirectly, the facility would generate," says Acton. "And how much people can expect to earn in those jobs.

"We also want to know the estimated value of the facility for tax purposes, and whether or not the province would contribute to needed infrastructure upgrades. "And what about lighting, and transportation, and changes to the local RCMP?"

Council isn't sure how long it will take to get the answers it needs to make an informed decision, but it will update residents regularly as information becomes available. Whatever your questions, we encourage you to contact village councillors or town staff.

Lumby's part in Canada's criminal justice system?

Canada's criminal justice system is divided into four separate, but interdependent components: police, courts, correctional services, and the parole board. We'll look at the first three.

The **police** are on the front lines, empowered to arrest and lay charges against offenders under the Criminal Code. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is responsible for law enforcement at the federal level, and provides policing services under contract to eight provinces, three territories, 184 aboriginal communities, and more than 190 municipalities — including Lumby.

The **courts** get involved once charges have been laid. If a case proceeds to trial — as determined by the crown attorney — the judge or jury decide whether or not the accused is guilty. Sentencing for guilty verdicts is outlined in the Criminal Code; imprisonment is reserved for the most serious offences. Courthouses closest to Lumby are located in Vernon and Kelowna.

Both imprisonment and probation are the responsibility of **correctional services**. Depending on the crime, an offender may be ordered to serve his/her sentence in a federal, provincial, or territorial facility. In Canada, there are more than 190 correctional facilities with about 35,000 inmates; that represents an incarceration rate of 131 per 100,000 adults.

BC is home to nine federal prisons, which house almost 2,000 inmates serving terms of more than two years for crimes considered most serious under the Criminal Code. BC also has six correctional centres that house about 2,800 inmates just remanded into custody or serving two years less a day. Nearest Lumby is the Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre, which was opened in 1989 and now houses about 350 inmates — 50 percent more than intended. Because overcrowding is an issue, the provincial government is looking at options for another Okanagan facility.

The Village of Lumby sees this as an opportunity for economic diversification and growth, and welcomes your questions and concerns about locating a regional correctional centre in Lumby.