BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Mining has had a very long and successful history in Timmins, although its environmental legacy remains an on-going challenge. The City of Timmins was established as a mining town in the early 1900s during a gold rush that led to the discovery and development of numerous mines.

The Dome, Hollinger and McIntyre mines, which today fall within the municipal boundary of the City of Timmins, have been amongst the most successful gold mines in Canada over the last century with a combined production history of close to 50 million ounces of gold.

The success of these three large mines, combined with the later discovery of a large copper and base metal deposit at Kidd mine, attracted interest and investment in many other mines over the years in the area surrounding Timmins. Most of these mines were developed at a time when the mining industry paid little attention to land claims of indigenous people, environmental concerns or any consideration for the eventual reclamation and closure of the mine sites.

As production dropped in the 1960s many of the mines were abandoned or companies were forced into bankruptcy, leaving behind a landscape scarred by open pits, massive networks of underground shafts and tunnels, mine waste and tailings.

The problem for the City of Timmins is that a large amount of the municipal land base adjacent to the city’s downtown core had been rendered unusable due to the lack of proper site remediation and mine closure planning. Over the last 10 years, Goldcorp, through its Timmins based operating unit known as Porcupine Gold Mines, has launched a comprehensive closure program to remediate more than 20 legacy and closed mine sites that they had acquired during their expansion in the Timmins area.

The remediation costs are being funded from Goldcorp’s existing operations around Timmins and are being planned.
and implemented in close cooperation with the City of Timmins and the Ontario Ministry of Environment.

» CHALLENGE

Reclamation of an historic gold mine into a sustainable green space, with the unique challenges of being located immediately adjacent to the downtown core of the City of Timmins in Ontario.

» APPROACH

One of Goldcorp’s larger sites, the Hollinger mine, which is located next to the downtown core, has been experiencing significant ground subsidence and was identified as a hazardous site resulting in its closure in 1989. Some of the main steps in the reclamation and closure process for the Hollinger mine include the following:

1. Mine Closure Plan

Originally submitted in 2006 and updated in 2010 the Mine Closure Plan proposed the removal of site hazards through back filling or flooding and the restoration of the site for recreational purposes.

2. Technical Studies

A series of environmental and feasibility studies funded by Goldcorp were undertaken between 2007 and 2010 to identify the scope and complexity of the problem and to identify reclamation and closure options. These studies determined that the best solution would be to transform the underground mine into an open pit mine that could eventually be reclaimed as a lake and converted for recreational use.

3. Public Engagement

The creation of the Hollinger Project Community Advisory Committee was a key step in the consultation and communication process. The Committee, which included citizens from different parts of Timmins, as well as technical advisors from Goldcorp and the City of Timmins, provided an open forum to gather ideas and inputs from the community through regular monthly meetings.

4. Site Plan Control Agreement

An Agreement was negotiated between the City of Timmins and Goldcorp that outlined specific issues that will be mitigated during the mining and closure phases of the Hollinger Mine Project. The Agreement, which was signed in 2012, also outlines the roles and responsibility of the company and the city during the implementation of the project.

5. Best Management Plan

Due to the close proximity of nearby residential, commercial and industrial land users, the Best Management Plan (BMP) was developed by Goldcorp to act as a practical manual to address aspects relating to the management and monitoring of blasting and vibration, noise, fugitive dust, site reclamation and contingency plans for the Hollinger Mine closure.

To support the monitoring component of the BMP, Goldcorp installed a state of the art monitoring system that tracks dust, noise and vibration levels at key sites around the project in real time. The monitoring system, and all data, is maintained and managed by a third party and reports are available on a publically accessible website.

6. Subsequent Land Use Plan

The stage of the process involves the development of a land use plan by Goldcorp that outlines the final design and layout of the site once all of the reclamation work has been completed. The development of this plan has been informed by extensive consultation with citizens and must be approved by City Council.

» RESULTS

Apart from establishing the Community Advisory Committee to facilitate citizen engagement in developing the closure and reclamation plan for the site, a number of other mechanisms were put in place to strengthen community interaction, facilitate oversight and to enhance the transparency of the process. These steps include the following:

• Hollinger Project Information Centre

The Information Centre was established in 2007 in response to the communities request for access to information on the project and is designed to act as a focal point for channeling information to the community. As of 2012, the Centre has
been staffed by a full-time community liaison person to answer questions, provide information and manage feedback from the public.

- **Community Feedback Protocol**

In consultation with the Community Advisory Committee and the City of Timmins, the company established a web-based system and dedicated email address for citizens to provide immediate feedback directly to the company with respect to noise, vibration, dust or any other concerns they may have with the project.

- **Response Procedures**

Goldcorp worked with Timmins to develop detailed guidelines, with target response times, for managing routine enquiries received via telephone calls or electronic forms submitted through the Community Feedback Protocol. All feedback must be recorded in a database to track the level and types of enquiries coming from the community which are shared with the City of Timmins through regular meetings.

- **Site Plan Control Agreement**

In 2012, the City of Timmins and Goldcorp signed a Site Plan Control Agreement. This legally binding document, sets out the operating and final land use parameters for the Hollinger mine project and stipulates the need for the company to develop a Best Management Plan.

- **Best Management Plan**

This plan covers all phases of the project (planning, operation, closure) and provides details on the expectations and commitments regarding: levels of noise, vibration and dust; reporting and public communications; complaint resolution, and; contingency planning. The Plan incorporates global best practices into the Hollinger project.

- **Subsequent Land Use Plan**

The final design and use of the Hollinger site will be presented in the form of a Subsequent Land Use Plan for approval by the City of Timmins following review and consultation with the community.

- **Monitoring System**

Goldcorp invested in a sophisticated monitoring system that uses a series of sensors which have been strategically located around the Hollinger pit to track the levels of noise, dust and vibration in real time on an on-going basis. This system, the only one of its kind in North America, is operated by a third party and is accessible on-line to anyone interested. The system also includes two portable units that can be brought to a specific location to follow-up on any complaints received where permanent sensors have not been installed.
LESSONS LEARNED

The experience of the Hollinger mine is seen as a best practice of a Canadian community and company working together to develop a solution-based approach to mine closure and reclamation. Some of the lessons learned include:

01 **Community Support**
Timmins is a mining town and its citizens understand the important role that mining has played in its development so they were very supportive of working with the company to build a future legacy for their community that reflected its mining heritage.

02 **Early and Frequent Communication with the Community**
Goldcorp made a commitment to engage with the City of Timmins and the community from the very early stages of closure planning. These consultations, which included open houses, regular presentations to council and the establishment of an information centre and Community Advisory Committee, have exceeded the expectations of the City.

03 **Partnership Approach**
Goldcorp has approached the closure and reclamation of the Hollinger mine as a partnership with the City of Timmins as witnessed by the signing of a Site Plan Control Agreement between the two parties. This approach aided the building of a relationship that is characterized by a high degree of trust and confidence between the company and the community, facilitating the development and approval of plans for the final land use of the site.

04 **Compliance versus Best Practices**
Although provincial regulations provided useful parameters for the development of a closure and reclamation plan, the municipality and the company worked together to develop strategies that allow them to exceed the legislative requirements and go beyond basic compliance to achieve this best practice.

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The Sustainable and Inclusive Communities in Latin America (CISAL) Program is an initiative of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) that seeks to strengthen local governments in mining contexts of Colombia and Peru to achieve greater social benefits and sustainable economic opportunities for communities. The Sustainable and Inclusive Communities in Latin America program is undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada.