



# SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT CHILD CARE ACTION PLAN



Township of  
**Langley**  
Est. 1873



**This Summary Report was prepared by CitySpaces Consulting**

**June 2020**

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# Summary Introduction

The Township of Langley is completing a Child Care Action Plan funded by the UBCM Community Child Care Planning Program. This document is a summary of the draft action plan to be completed at the end of June, 2020.

Child care is an integral element of complete, sustainable communities. The Child Care Action Plan aims to improve access to affordable, quality child care that meets the diverse needs of all Township children and families.

Currently, many families in the Township do not have access to child care that meets their needs. With nearly 20,000 children aged 12 and under and less than 4,000 licensed child care spaces, the Township has only about 1 licensed space per 5 children aged 12 and under. Many families in the Township are on child care waitlists, and most feel that child care is unaffordable. Families requiring child care outside of regular business hours or with children needing extra support face even greater challenges accessing quality care.

Improving the current situation will require, among other actions, a substantial increase in the number of licensed child care spaces in the community. The Action Plan sets an ambitious target of creating more than 10,000 new spaces over the next ten years. As the Township alone is not responsible for creating these spaces, achieving this target will require bold action from other levels of government and collaboration across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

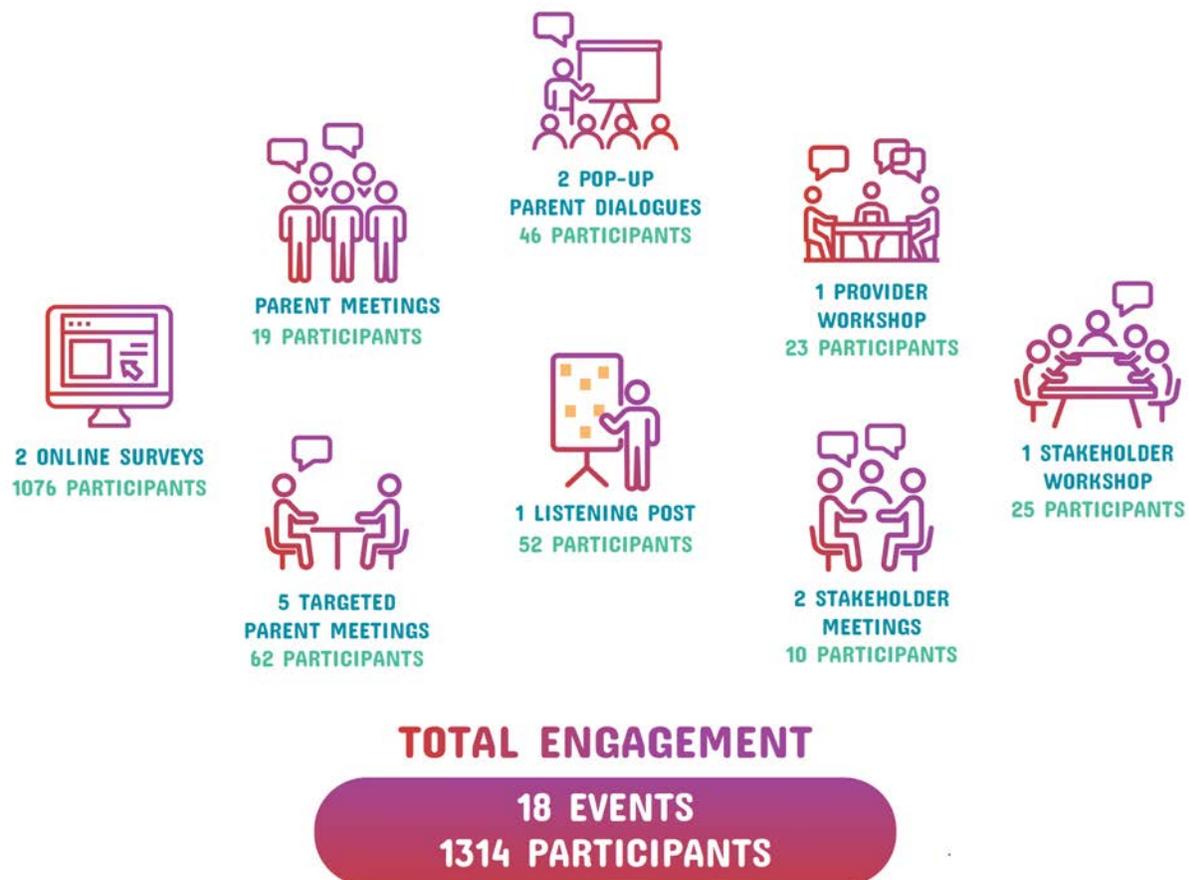
To support space creation, address related challenges, and harness emerging opportunities, the Child Care Action Plan establishes five priorities:

1. Increase the number of licensed child care spaces
2. Improve child care affordability
3. Strengthen partnerships and collaboration
4. Address staffing challenges
5. Enhance before and after-school recreation programming

# Creating the Plan

The work to prepare the Child Care Action Plan was extensive, involving policy and best practice research, data collection and analysis, and community engagement with parents and guardians, child care providers, and other stakeholders.

The community engagement provided insight into the current child care situation in Langley, key concerns and priorities, and possible opportunities and areas for change.<sup>1</sup> In total, 1,314 people were engaged through 18 engagement activities. The [Phase One Community Engagement Report](#) can be found on the Township of Langley's website.



<sup>1</sup> The community engagement phase of this project was undertaken in partnership with Langley City.

# Current Child Care Coverage Rates

The following tables (1 to 2) show the current population of children in Langley from 0 to 12 years old, their access to child care and the child care availability by community. The coverage rate is determined by calculating the number of child care spaces per 100 children.

**Table 1: Child Care Coverage Rate, Township of Langley, 2020**

Township of Langley			
Age Group	Children	Child Care Spaces	Child Care Spaces Per 100 Children
<b>Under 3 years</b>	4,600	745	16.2
<b>3 - 5 years</b>	4,271	2,079	48.7
<b>6 - 12 years</b>	11,113	1,130	10.2
<b>0 - 12 years</b>	<b>19,984</b>	<b>3,954</b>	<b>19.8</b>

Source: 2016 Census (Township Community Level Custom Data, Age in Single Years Data), Township Building Permit Data, Fraser Health Authority

Table 2 (below) indicates the child care coverage rates at the community-level for all children aged 0 to 12. As shown, coverage rates in Aldergrove, Brookwood-Fernridge, Walnut Grove, and the Rural communities are lower than the Township average of 19.8 spaces per 100 children.

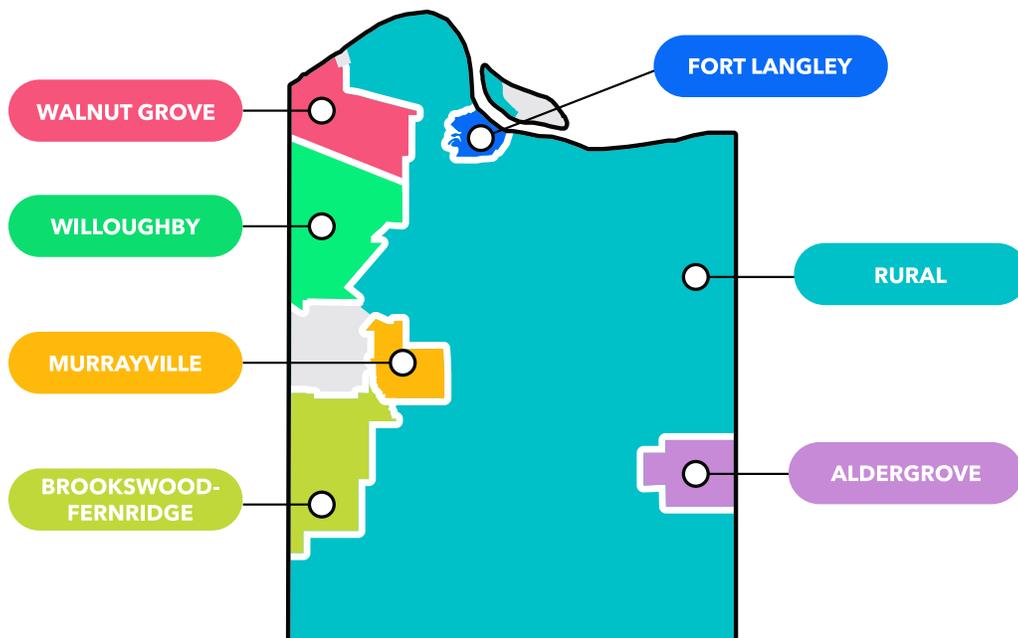
That said, due to its relatively large population of children, Willoughby may have the highest number of children unserved, with over 7,000 children aged 12 and under and less than 2,000 licensed child care spaces.

**Table 2: Child Care Coverage Rate, Community-Level Analysis, Children 0 to 12, 2020**

Township of Langley Community	Children Aged 0-12	Child Care Spaces	Child Care Spaces Per 100 Children
Aldergrove	2,179	331	15.2
Brookswood-Fernridge	1,819	253	13.9
Fort Langley	476	165	34.7
Murrayville	1,323	286	21.6
Walnut Grove	3,954	770	19.5
Willoughby	7,282	1,903	26.1
Rural	2,951	246	8.3

Source: 2016 Census (Township Community Level Custom Data, Age in Single Years Data), Township Building Permit Data, Fraser Health Authority

## TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY COMMUNITIES



# Child Care Strengths, Gaps, and Trends

A number of strengths, gaps, and trends related to child care in the Township were identified from the background research, data analysis, and community engagement. This baseline provides a foundational understanding of child care in the Township, and facilitated the development of priorities and actions that build on existing assets and address current needs.

- ★ **Availability of Child Care:** More space is needed to address current demand and the Township's projected population growth. Space needs are greatest for infant/toddler (under 3 years) and school aged (6 - 12 years) care, and the needs vary in different communities.
- ★ **Cost of Child Care:** High costs are an access barrier for many families. Some parents and guardians end up spending over \$1,000 a month per child for care.
- ★ **Location of Child Care:** Parents and guardians want child care close to home and, when applicable, close to their child's school, but many families cannot access care in these preferred locations. Proximity to public transit is important for child care staff and some families.
- ★ **Flexibility of Child Care:** There are very limited licensed child care options for families that need care outside of regular business hours.
- ★ **Child Care for Children Requiring Extra Support:** Care options for children needing extra support are limited and more expensive. Child care providers face challenges in finding qualified staff for children requiring extra support.
- ★ **Staffing:** Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is a significant challenge for child care providers, and constrains their ability to provide more space.
- ★ **Cost of Facilities for Providers:** The cost to buy or lease child care spaces that meet provincial licensing and safety requirements is a barrier to space creation.
- ★ **Policy and Regulatory Framework:** Although the Township has a relatively permissive regulatory environment for child care, unintended barriers to the creation of more spaces may exist, and there appears to be opportunities to clarify the different roles of the Township and Fraser Health Authority.

- ★ **Partnerships and Collaboration:** Existing community planning tables and liaison groups provide a solid foundation for coordination, but there are opportunities to strengthen partnerships and collaboration on child care.
- ★ **Data Monitoring:** The Township does not currently monitor data related to child care on a regular basis, including child care space data available from Fraser Health Authority.
- ★ **Anticipated Systems Change:** The Province of BC has committed to universal child care, but the details of this system and how the transition will unfold are unclear.



# Child Care Space Creation Targets

The child care space creation targets are the number of child care spaces required to adequately address the needs of families in the Township of Langley. The Township has identified coverage rate targets of 70% for children under the age of 3 and between the ages of 3 to 5, and 55% for children between the ages of 6 to 12. In other words, for children aged five and under, the target coverage is 70 spaces per 100 children, and for children aged 6 to 12, the target is 55 spaces per 100 children.<sup>3</sup>

Based on population projections for children in each age group to the year 2030, the following tables (3 to 5) outline the number of child care spaces needed to maintain the current 2020 coverage rates over the next 10 years and the number of child care spaces needed to reach the target coverage rates by 2030. The Township of Langley is not solely responsible for ensuring these targets are met – rather, collaboration and partnerships with the Province and local stakeholders can support the creation of additional child care spaces.

**As shown in the following tables, a significant increase in spaces will be required to provide Township families with an adequate supply of child care to meet their needs.**



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<sup>3</sup> The methodology used to determine space creation targets is informed by other child care studies, including the Surrey Child Care Gap Assessment (2011), the Comox Valley Child Care Plan (2019), and research completed by Statistics Canada. The results from stakeholder consultation and public engagement confirm that additional child care spaces are needed in the Township of Langley.

## Space Creation Targets for Children Under 3

To reach the target coverage rate of 70% by the year 2030 for children under the age of 3, an average of 284 spaces would need to be created each year.

**Table 3: Child Care Space Creation Targets, Children Under 3**

					
Year	Number of Children	MAINTAIN Current 2020 Coverage Rate of 16.2%		REACH New Target Coverage Rate of 70% by 2030	
		TOTAL Spaces Required	Net New Spaces Required (Total - Existing)	TOTAL Spaces Required	Net New Spaces Required (Total - Existing)
2020	4,600	745	-	745	-
2021	4,601	745	0	1,364	619
2022	4,656	754	9	2,007	1,262
2025	4,820	781	36	2,726	1,981
2030	5,123	830	<b>85 (8.5 spaces/year)</b>	3,586	<b>2,841 (284 spaces/year)</b>

Source: 2016 Census (Township Community Level Custom Data, Age in Single Years Data), Township Building Permit Data, Metro Vancouver Population Projections, Fraser Health Authority

## Space Creation Targets for Children Ages 3 to 5

To reach the target coverage rate of 70% by the year 2030 for children between the ages of 3 to 5, an average of 148 spaces would need to be created each year.

**Table 4: Child Care Space Creation Targets, Children Ages 3 to 5**

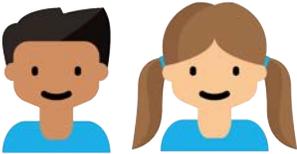
					
Year	Number of Children	MAINTAIN Current 2020 Coverage Rate of 48.7%		REACH New Target Coverage Rate of 70% by 2030	
		TOTAL Spaces Required	Net New Spaces Required (Total - Existing)	TOTAL Spaces Required	Net New Spaces Required (Total - Existing)
2020	4,271	2,079	-	2,079	-
2021	4,401	2,143	64	2,378	299
2022	4,626	2,253	174	2,746	667
2025	4,774	2,325	246	3,008	1,009
2030	5,082	2,475	<b>396 (40 spaces/year)</b>	3,557	<b>1,478 (148 spaces/year)</b>

Source: 2016 Census (Township Community Level Custom Data, Age in Single Years Data), Township Building Permit Data, Metro Vancouver Population Projections, Fraser Health Authority

## Space Creation Targets for Children Age 6 to 12

To reach the target coverage rate of 55% by the year 2030, an average of 575 spaces would need to be created each year.

**Table 5: Child Care Space Creation Targets, Children Ages 6 to 12**

 <h3>Children Age 6 To 12</h3>					
Year	Number of Children	MAINTAIN Current 2020 Coverage Rate of 10.2%		REACH New Target Coverage Rate of 70% by 2030	
		TOTAL Spaces Required	Net New Spaces Required (Total - Existing)	TOTAL Spaces Required	Net New Spaces Required (Total - Existing)
2020	11,113	1,130	-	1,130	-
2021	11,095	1,132	2	2,374	1,244
2022	11,040	1,126	(4)	3,599	2,469
2025	11,445	1,167	37	5,013	3,883
2030	12,500	1,275	<b>144 (14 spaces/year)</b>	6,875	<b>5,745 (575 spaces/year)</b>

Source: 2016 Census (Township Community Level Custom Data, Age in Single Years Data), Township Building Permit Data, Metro Vancouver Population Projections, Fraser Health Authority

Based on the Needs Assessment, it is estimated that approximately 5% to 10% of the new spaces created over the next ten years should provide flexible care (i.e. child care outside of regular business hours).

Overall, approximately 10,000 new spaces will be required to support a universally accessible child care system by 2030, an average of 1,000 new spaces per year. For comparison, between 2015 and 2020, an average of about 100 new spaces were developed in the Township per year.

# Proposed Action Plan

The Action Plan consists of a ten-year vision and five five-year priorities with associated actions. It provides a roadmap for the Township to support space creation, address related challenges, and harness emerging opportunities, in collaboration with community partners.

The Implementation section will outline the timelines and potential partners for the actions.

## Vision

A vision is meant to inspire and give direction, providing a motivating stretch goal to work towards. Our ten-year child care vision is:

**Affordable, accessible, and quality child care that meets the diverse needs of all Township of children and families.**

- ▶ Affordable care means care that is attainable for all Township families.
- ▶ Accessible care means the right kind of care in the right place.
- ▶ Quality care creates a safe and healthy environment for children to thrive.
- ▶ Care that meets the needs of all Township families and children means that different approaches will be needed to address care needs given individual circumstances and context.

## Priorities and Actions

Five five-year priorities are established to advance the Township towards its child care vision:

1. Increase the number of licensed spaces;
2. Improve child care affordability;
3. Strengthen partnerships and collaboration;
4. Address staffing challenges; and,
5. Enhance before- and after-school programming.

Within each priority area there are concrete actions for the Township to undertake over the next five years. These actions aim to build on existing community assets and reflect the Township's role as a local government.

## **PRIORITY 1: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF LICENSED CHILD CARE SPACES**

Township families currently do not have sufficient access to child care. While coverage rates reflect a lack of child care for all age groups, there is a greater need for infant/toddler care, and school-aged care.

In order to increase the number of quality, licensed child care spaces, a comprehensive approach is recommended, inclusive of multiple elements: policy and regulatory updates, consideration of available funding opportunities, and additional guidance around the location of new child care facilities.

### **ACTIONS**

- A. Develop location criteria to help guide decision-making and ensure child care is developed in suitable and priority locations (e.g. adjacent to schools and near transit).
- B. Review the Township's Official Community Plan with a view of seeking opportunities to strengthen child care policies, removing unintended barriers to space creation, and reducing possible inconsistencies across communities and neighbourhoods.
- C. Review the Zoning Bylaw for unintended barriers to the development of additional child care.
- D. Create a short guide for prospective operators that clearly articulates zoning, business licensing, child care licensing, and other pertinent requirements and processes.
- E. Assess existing municipal facilities that could be retrofitted with child care spaces and consider including child care spaces in any new facilities, with support from available provincial capital funding, and look to prioritize leases to providers that address the needs of underserved groups and provide flexible care.
- F. Explore strategies to transform spaces that may be underused in the Township into child care facilities (e.g. schools, religious assembly spaces, and amenity spaces in strata developments).
- G. Complete additional research on municipal best practices for providing more direct support for child care (e.g. space or funding support through community amenity contributions).
- H. Explore the feasibility of the Township delivering licensed child care.

## **PRIORITY 2: IMPROVE CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY**

Child care is too expensive for many families, and, for some, the cost prevents them from accessing care. These actions outline an approach to address child care affordability that is based on advocacy and education.

### **ACTIONS**

- A. Advocate to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) to establish \$10/day prototype sites in the Township of Langley.
- B. Include links on the Township website to information on provincial funding that lowers child care fees for families.

## **PRIORITY 3: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION**

The Township of Langley is well-positioned to facilitate partnerships among key stakeholders to encourage the development of child care facilities. This priority guides the Township to strengthen partnerships with other government agencies, community organizations, and local businesses to address child care issues.

### **ACTIONS**

- A. Continue Township staff participation on the Langley Children Committee to monitor child care trends and emerging issues and work collaboratively on solutions.
- B. Seek and implement opportunities to discuss child care at Langley Healthier Community Partnership steering committee meetings more regularly, to promote enhanced information sharing and collaborative action.
- C. Create an internal Township staff child care working group, and convene meetings on a regular basis to discuss community issues and initiatives.
- D. Explore and implement opportunities to strengthen collaboration with Langley School District No. 35 on child care.
- E. Enhance communication with providers to monitor trends and emerging issues.

## **PRIORITY 4: ADDRESS STAFFING CHALLENGES**

Many local child care providers struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff, which makes it difficult to keep existing spaces and make child care more available. The actions outlined below focus on convening government agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders to develop local solutions that address staffing challenges and support related provincial initiatives.

### **ACTIONS**

- A. Initiate discussions with local post-secondary institutions and other stakeholders regarding the establishment of an Early Childhood Education (ECE) program in Langley.
- B. Convene stakeholders for a social innovation lab to develop and prototype local solutions that address staffing challenges, including recruitment and retention.
- C. Explore opportunities to support and communicate initiatives under the Province's Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy and advocate for further advancement in this area.

## **PRIORITY 5: ENHANCE BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL RECREATION PROGRAMMING**

Many parents and guardians rely on recreation programming as a means of child care for school age children, given the limited availability of licensed child care. The Township's Active Beyond the Bell after-school recreation program runs for two hours after school in select elementary school gymnasiums and recreation centres. Although Active Beyond the Bell is not a licensed child care program and is currently limited by provincial regulations to a maximum of two hours, this program plays an important role in after school child minding.

These actions recognize the importance of recreation in filling child care gaps with fun programs that promote physical activity and healthy living.

### **ACTIONS**

- A. Seek opportunities to enhance and expand the Active Beyond the Bell program to additional school locations, with a focus on those without sufficient after-school care.
- B. Explore piloting a before-school recreational program, possibly in partnership with another local organization.
- C. Advocate to the Province for amendments to child care regulations that would allow for longer before and after-school recreation programming.

## Conclusion

Child care is an important part of a complete and sustainable community, providing economic and social benefits. The Child Care Action Plan envisions an affordable, accessible, and quality child care system that meets the diverse needs of all Township children and families. To work towards this vision, the Action Plan sets ambitious space creation targets and lays the foundation for Township action over the next five years. The Township, however, cannot do this work alone - realizing the vision will require bold action from other levels of government and enhanced collaboration across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.



