

Township of
Langley



Est. 1873

Public Engagement Charter



The Public Engagement Charter commits the Township of Langley to strengthen a spirit of collaboration and to ensure meaningful community consultation contributing to the best possible quality of life for all residents, current and future.


engageTOL

Aspirations

The Township of Langley aspires to:

- initiate deeper dialogues among Council, staff, and community stakeholders
- foster mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities for all involved
- provide the right information at the right time
- explore ideas and information that enrich a policy direction which also incorporates best practices and technical studies
- have greater responsiveness and creativity in providing solutions and strategies
- promote civic pride as the community grows and changes
- build mutual trust and respect

Principles

Guiding Principles set the general direction for the Township of Langley to build organizational capacity and become an engagement-friendly and responsive community-serving institution. The following Guiding Principles establish the fundamental standards for public engagement:

- provide early, ongoing, and meaningful opportunities for participation
- strive for inclusivity, representativeness, and diversity in participation
- ensure accountability, transparency, and responsiveness
- provide clear, simple, and timely communications
- make appropriate information available at the right time in a variety of ways
- identify and eliminate barriers to participation
- make engagement activities fun and worthwhile for all ages
- provide sufficient staff and funding resources for engagement activities
- consider input gathered and provide rationale for decisions
- evaluate results and improve engagement activities on an ongoing basis



Commitments

As a responsive community-serving institution, the Township of Langley is committed to public engagement as an organizational priority, by implementing the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower residents. Mayor and Council, citizens, and staff have a responsibility to participate and engage in shaping the future of our community.

Mayor and Council are committed to:

- valuing public input as a community asset
- identifying, supporting, and funding public engagement opportunities
- raising awareness of public engagement opportunities among all residents
- remaining neutral during public engagement activities
- reviewing public engagement processes, including input gathering, participation rates, findings, and staff recommendations
- retaining their right as duly elected officials to make decisions which they feel are most appropriate for the overall community
- showing consideration and value for another person's point of view

Citizens are committed to:

- being informed of planning and development issues and processes
- understanding the decision-making process
- obtaining information from trusted and reliable sources
- sharing accurate information and raising the awareness of fellow citizens
- contributing constructively to minimize conflict
- offering perspectives and identifying important issues to address
- listening with an open mind
- acknowledging the potential for compromise in evaluating options thoughtfully

Staff are committed to:

- identifying planning and development initiatives for public engagement
- designing engagement activities that include timely and appropriate communications
- supporting broad citizen awareness to reduce barriers to participation
- using diverse engagement tools and formats most suited to a variety of audiences
- reporting back to participants, including recommendations and decisions made
- acting with professionalism and consistency



Policy Framework and Process

The Public Engagement Charter builds on a high-level policy framework, which aims to build a sustainable community characterized by a high quality of life and active citizen participation, as follows:

- In 2008, the Township of Langley adopted the Sustainability Charter to build a legacy for future generations by leading and committing the community to a lifestyle that is socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally balanced. The Sustainability Charter aims to integrate and balance competing community expectations, by committing to community involvement: “Council believes that open, inclusive, and consultative community involvement is vital to effective decision making.”
- The Official Community Plan (2013, at third reading) has a goal to support meaningful community engagement: “Good planning requires transparent and collective decision making for the long-term good of the community. Meaningful community engagement during the planning process (especially at the neighbourhood level) promotes greater understanding and more responsive decisions.”
- In 2015, a Mayor’s Standing Committee on Public Engagement was struck to explore better ways of engaging residents and enhancing communications between the public and Council. The Mayor’s Standing Committee presented a draft Public Engagement Strategy for Planning and Development, which was adopted by Council in March 2016. One of the main deliverables is a Public Engagement Charter.
- On May 30, 2016, Council received a draft Public Engagement Charter for Planning and Development. The draft Charter was based on the work of the Mayor’s Standing Committee, a review of best practices, provincial legislation, current Township policies, and discussions with staff. In addition, a public open house was held on June 7, 2016 to obtain community input. Other engagement activities included an online project website and online input opportunities that took place between June 7 and June 29, 2016.
- On October 3, 2016, Council adopted the Public Engagement Charter.

