

City of Maple Ridge

SPECIAL COUNCIL WORKSHOP AGENDA

July 25, 2022

9:00 a.m.

Virtual Online Meeting including Council Chambers

The purpose of the Council Workshop is to review and discuss policies and other items of interest to Council. Although resolutions may be passed at this meeting, the intent is to make a consensus decision to send an item to Council for debate and vote or refer the item back to staff for more information or clarification.

The meeting is live streamed and recorded by the City of Maple Ridge.

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3. PRESENTATIONS AT THE REQUEST OF COUNCIL

4. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

4.1 PRC Master Plan Update

Presentation by Danielle Pope, Director of Recreation and Community Engagement

4.2 Parking Bylaw Regulations Review

Staff report dated July 25, 2022, identifying topics within the existing Parking Bylaw that are likely to see the most change on a preliminary review of best practices and seeking Council's high-level comments at this stage in the review process.

4.3 CMR Strategic Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Plan

Staff report dated July 25, 2022, providing a Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Plan and recommending that the Outcomes and Actions from that plan be incorporated into the 2023-2027 Business Plan process.

Presentation by Katie Hamilton, Tavola Group

5. CORRESPONDENCE

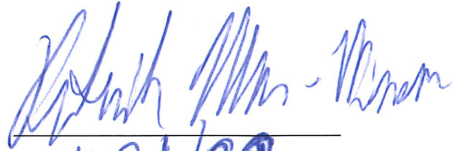
6. BRIEFING ON OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST/QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL

7. MATTERS DEEMED EXPEDIENT

8. NOTICE OF CLOSED COUNCIL MEETING

9. ADJOURNMENT

APPROVED BY:



DATE:

JUL 21 / 22

PREPARED BY:

Corinn Howes

CHECKED BY: _____

DATE:

July 21, 2022

DATE: _____

TO: His Worship Mayor Michael Morden
and Members of Council
FROM: Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Parking Bylaw Review

MEETING DATE: July 25, 2022
FILE NO: 13-6440-20
MEETING: Workshop

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A full review of the [Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw No. 4350-1990](#), also known as the “Parking Bylaw” is identified as a Planning Department work item in the City’s 2022 Business Plan. The current Parking Bylaw, originally adopted in 1990, regulates the location, number, and size of off-street vehicle parking spaces, loading spaces, bicycle spaces, and passenger spaces, to balance the needs of residents, commuters, and visitors. This review of the Parking Bylaw does not include on-street parking regulations as on-street parking is regulated through other bylaws, such as the Highways and Traffic Bylaw No. 6704-2009.

A new Off-Street Parking Bylaw is the anticipated outcome of this review and the goals of the new Parking Bylaw are to:

- better align the Bylaw with best practices accepted in the transportation planning industry,
- respond to emerging market trends,
- address the City’s sustainability goal of net zero community greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (Official Community Plan Policy 5-45), and
- improve layout, functionality, and clarity to be more user-friendly and effective in regulating off-street parking.

This report identifies eight topics within the existing Parking Bylaw that are likely to see the most change and what those changes might look like based on a preliminary review of regional best practices (Section 2.0). Some of the topics that are discussed in this report include parking minimums, payment in-lieu rate and eligible area, tandem parking provisions, accessibility, electric vehicle charging, and bike parking and storage.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s high-level comments at this stage in the review process, such as:

- What additional items should be considered?
- What areas would Council like to have additional information on?
- What potential changes or approaches should be reconsidered?

Council’s feedback will help guide the next steps and refine the list of potential changes. Staff will be seeking feedback from the community in the Fall 2022 and anticipate bringing a draft of the new Parking Bylaw to a future Committee of the Whole meeting in early 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information Only.

1.0 BACKGROUND:

1.1 Introduction to the Parking Bylaw

The City of Maple Ridge *Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw No. 4350-1990*, also known as the “Parking Bylaw”, was adopted in 1990 and various components have been amended several times over the years. Maple Ridge’s current approach to parking regulations is to require a minimum number of parking spaces for every kind of development – large residential buildings, low density residential houses, commercial spaces, retail, office buildings, industrial buildings and everything in between. The approach taken for the parking requirements of this Bylaw largely follows best practices from the 1990’s era and the more modern approach has evolved to include trends in facilitating sustainable and transit-oriented development, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and more opportunities for walking, rolling, or transit use over transport by single-occupancy vehicle.

In addition to incorporating current best practices in transportation planning and ensuring alignment with the objectives, goals, and policies of the OCP (see Section 1.2 below), it is intended that the Parking Bylaw review will incorporate the broader goals of Metro Vancouver’s Regional Growth Strategy, Translink’s Strategic Transportation Plan, as well as recent studies completed on parking provision within the region.

Currently, the Parking Bylaw generally contains the following regulations related to off-street parking:

- Minimum parking requirements that dictate the number of spaces that must be provided off-street with a specific land use (including accessible spaces);
- Payment In-lieu requirement, rate, and the applicable area;
- Tandem parking requirements;
- Shared use parking requirements (example- if two businesses want to share a space);
- Electric Vehicle charging and station requirements;
- Bike Storage and Parking (currently only for the Town Centre);
- Parking space design (including accessible spaces);
- Commercial Vehicles and Loading requirements; and
- Signage.

1.2 Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan provides the policy framework for creating compact communities in high density areas, such as the Town Centre and Lougheed Transit Corridor, as well as livable neighbourhoods with varying density levels throughout the rest of Maple Ridge. Chapter 2 “Growth Management”, Chapter 5 “Natural Features”, and Chapter 7 “Transportation” of the Official Community Plan contains policies that support how the City should develop, including:

- 2-3** *Within the Urban Area Boundary, growth will be directed to the Town Centre (through Town Centre Area Plan policies), Community Commercial Nodes, areas with Area Plans, and to other locations where Official Community Plan policies are satisfied.*
- 5-45** *The City of Maple Ridge has a goal to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 from 2010 levels, with an interim target of 45% reduction by 2030, in alignment with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Chapter 5).*
- 7-30** *Maple Ridge will encourage the development of cycling infrastructure and support programs, such as ‘end-of-trip’ facilities for cyclists at key destinations and new developments.*

In Maple Ridge, the majority of the growth in population, jobs, and housing will be accommodated within the Urban Area Boundary where services are readily available, or the infrastructure is already in place for their provision. By concentrating growth and density in key areas, such as the Town Centre and the Lougheed Transit Corridor, it is more likely that transportation alternatives, such as, transit, rolling, and walking will become more viable and attractive.

1.3 Parking Regulations for High Density Neighbourhoods

1.3.1 Town Centre Area

The Town Centre Area Plan (TCAP) outlines the long-term vision for growth and development in this high-density neighbourhood that is anticipated to accept a large portion of the municipal population growth over the long-term. Section 3.2 of the TCAP provides the framework for the general development of the Town Centre by identifying policies that encourage increasing transit modes and making the Town Centre a distinct, attractive, and vibrant urban environment. Policies, such as 3-15 and 5-1, that encourage below grade parking structures to create a more attractive Town Centre and encourage development to design with accessibility in mind, are included in Town Centre Area Plan and the supporting Development Permit Guidelines (in Section 8.11 of the OCP).

- 3-15 *Concealed parking structures are encouraged in all commercial, mixed-use, multi-family uses, and institutional uses in the Town Centre. Below grade parking structures are particularly encouraged for Low-Rise, Medium, and High-Rise Apartment, Mixed-Use, Flexible Mixed-Use/Live-Work, Commercial, and Institutional buildings. Above grade concealed parking is a viable option where building height (six or more storeys) coupled with challenging site conditions make it cost prohibitive to provide all required parking spaces in an underground structure. Above grade parking structures should be designed in such a manner that the pedestrian realm, streetscape façade, and protected views of the Town Centre are not impaired.*
- 5-1 *Universal accessibility is encouraged in transportation planning and design within the Town Centre. Wherever possible, the accessibility needs of wheelchairs, the visually impaired, strollers, scooters, and other mobility devices used by pedestrians with disabilities, as well as by families, teenagers, and seniors will be accommodated in the design of sidewalks, public plazas, and other public spaces throughout the Town Centre.*

The Town Centre's Central Business District (CBD) (Appendix A) has a separate section in the Parking Bylaw, which contains the lowest minimum parking space requirements for residential and non-residential uses (including, retail, office, hospital, and tourist accommodations). The separate Town Centre CBD section was incorporated into the Parking Bylaw at the same time the TCAP was adopted in 2008. These changes to the Parking Bylaw reflect the OCP policies and vision for the area and incorporated the findings from the 2008 Town Centre Area parking study that was undertaken to support implementation of the Town Centre Area Plan.

Town Centre Parking Study Findings

The 2008 Parking Study was undertaken during development of the Town Centre Area Plan and incorporated the vision and principles of the Town Centre Concept Plan, endorsed by Council in 2005. The study looked at parking demand for current and anticipated future uses/densities and found that the Town Centre was oversupplied with parking and that efficiencies could be created with the current parking supply if businesses were willing to share parking and create local economic synergies through allowing customers the ease of parking in one location and walking or cycling to multiple destinations. The study also found that the majority of the parking in the Town Centre was at-grade and the payment

in-lieu parking alternative option was rarely used by developers at the time. However, the study also noted at the time that once underground parking becomes more prevalent, due to redevelopment in the form of higher density mixed-use development, developers may start choosing the payment in-lieu parking alternative option more frequently (which has been the case more recently as redevelopment of the area occurs).

1.3.2 Lougheed Transit Corridor Area

The Lougheed Transit Corridor Concept Plan, endorsed November 10, 2020, includes “Mobility Choice is Enhanced” as one of the guiding principles. The concept plan identifies opportunities that can be explored to support mobility choice through:

- Investigating strategies for public parking near rapid transit;
- Building complete communities to make walking and cycling more viable; and
- Reducing parking standards for commercial and residential development.

The proposed Commercial Mixed-Use Land Use Designation in the Concept Plan promotes greater flexibility of uses within the commercial land use designation, along with allowing building height greater than six storeys. With this land use designation, any new development for this area is encouraged to be a high-density built form with parking spaces provided within an underground parking structure.

1.4 Metro Vancouver Parking Studies

In 2012, Metro Vancouver published the findings from their Apartment Parking Study. The entire Metro Vancouver Area was part of the study, including a strata building in Maple Ridge, and found that parking supply exceeded parking demand in the range of 18% to 35% in the 80 study apartment sites.

In 2018, Metro Vancouver conducted and published the findings from their Regional Parking Study, which broadened the scope from the 2012 study by including on-street parking. For this study, a different strata building in Maple Ridge was selected. Overall, this 2018 parking study largely corroborates the findings from the 2012 Apartment Parking Study. Some of the key findings from the 2018 Regional Parking Study are:

- For both rental and strata buildings, apartment parking supply exceeds use across the region;
- Apartment parking supply and use is lower for buildings closer to frequent transit areas;
- Transit use is generally higher where apartment parking use is lower, especially for rental buildings; and
- The ineffective design and capacity of current bicycle parking facilities in apartment sites appear to discourage use by many residents.

Metro Vancouver is anticipating an update the Regional Parking Strategy by the end of 2023.

2.0 DISCUSSION:

Off-street parking requirements are sometimes viewed as a small technical detail connected to a larger development scheme, but parking requirements impact the design, form, and function of cities and neighbourhoods. When designing a development scheme, parking is often laid out prior to the design of a building since the form and function of parking spaces is relatively constant and cannot be molded and shaped like the architecture of a building.

Traditionally, off-street parking requirements took the approach of “one-size-fits-all” where the same off-street parking regulations for each use applied to the entire city, however, one of the best practices

accepted in the transportation planning industry is shifting away from a “one size fits all” off-street parking strategy and considering different parking requirements for different neighbourhoods. With transit corridors, multi-use paths, and varying levels of car dependency, off-street parking approaches that may have a positive effect in one neighbourhood may not have the same effect in another.

The City of Maple Ridge has been considering differences in neighbourhood needs since the adoption of the Town Centre Area Plan (TCAP) in 2008, which is when different minimum parking space requirements were incorporated into the Parking Bylaw at the same time the TCAP was adopted. With the Parking Bylaw review, this approach of considering different neighbourhood needs, such as how close people live to places of employment, commercial areas, educational institutions and public transit, will be reviewed and considered.

Section 2.0 of this report discusses the eight topics within the existing Parking Bylaw that are likely to see the most changes and what those changes might look like based on a preliminary review of regional best practices. The Parking Bylaw review is looking to enhance the existing regulations, as outlined in this report, but also include shared mobility provisions, such as ride sharing, bike sharing (Section 3.0).

2.1. Parking Minimums

Many cities across Canada are currently shifting from requiring a minimum number of parking spaces, that can result in an oversupply of parking, to parking minimums that are much more closely aligned to actual parking demand. Additionally, many cities are introducing maximums, or the outright removal of some off-street parking requirements all together and allowing the market to dictate the number of parking stalls.

In the Lower Mainland, the majority of municipalities still use the parking minimums approach, however, many have taken the step to reduce parking minimums in specific areas. One of the most common ways municipalities are reducing parking minimums is to require fewer parking spaces when a development is within or adjacent to a transit corridor and/or when a development proposes rental or non-market housing (reflecting the research findings that parking demand is lower in these scenarios). Reducing parking minimums also incentivizes developers to build a greater range of housing types (based on need and demand rather than sticking with more traditional housing forms in order to rationalize the profit/parking construction cost ratios), which also helps to incentivize transit use. Additionally, many municipalities base the minimum number of required parking spaces on the number of bedrooms in a dwelling unit, specifically for more denser forms of housing, such as apartment buildings and stacked townhouses.

Another approach is parking maximums, as used by the City of Vancouver for non-residential uses in the downtown. Parking maximums set the maximum number of parking spaces that the new development is permitted to construct. If a parking minimum is in place, it doesn't stop developers from providing more parking spaces than required, which can lead to an oversupply of parking spaces. With a parking maximum, a developer can, if they choose, provide fewer parking spaces than the maximum requirement. Ultimately, the number and use of parking spaces required in new developments influences vehicle ownership and travel choices, as well as affordability. Ultimately, parking maximums can help ensure that the City's vision and policies for the area are being met.

From the information collected through the Strategic Transportation Plan that was presented at the September 27, 2021 Workshop, Maple Ridge residents predominately use single occupancy vehicles to move around the City and the number, distance, and share of driving trips has increased. As neighbourhoods within the Urban Area Boundary continue to become more pedestrian-oriented, compact, and high-density, particularly in the Town Centre and Lougheed Corridor, it is more likely that transportation alternatives, such as, transit, rolling, and walking will become more viable and attractive.

The recent addition of the R-3 Rapid Bus to the City greatly increases the potential and practicality of more transit use by residents.

The new Parking Bylaw regarding parking minimums may include:

- Expanding the minimum parking requirements for the Central Business District to all multi-family developments in the Town Centre;
- Maximum parking requirements for commercial uses (over a certain size) on the ground floor in the Town Centre;
- No minimum parking requirement for secondary suites in the Town Centre;
- Introducing different minimum parking requirements for the Lougheed Transit Corridor;
- Adjusting parking minimums for denser housing forms within the Urban Area Boundary to reflect best practices;
- Move away from requiring a number of parking spaces per bedroom, and simplifying minimum requirements to whether the unit is market, non-market and/or rental, and/or located close to urban amenities, such as shopping/services, and public transit.

2.2 Payment in-Lieu

The current provisions within the Parking Bylaw permit a payment in-lieu option for the required number of parking stalls on a property zoned for multi-family, commercial, or institutional use located within a 930m radius of City Hall (see Appendix B). The current area that is eligible for payment in-lieu includes areas within the Town Centre Area Plan and the Lougheed Transit Corridor, but does not directly align with either of the boundaries.

On January 11, 2022, Council approved a payment in-lieu rate increase to \$20,000 for all uses in the Town Centre except for single-detached, duplex, triplex, fourplex and courtyard uses. This increase is intended as an interim rate until the Parking Bylaw review is completed.

The monies collected from the payment in-lieu option go into the City's "Parking Reserve Fund". The Parking Reserve fund was established in 1992, by Bylaw No. 4686-1992, when the payment in-lieu program began. At the time of adoption, Provincial legislation stipulated that payment received in-lieu of providing parking spaces could only be used for the provision of off-street parking facilities and this was written into the 1992 Bylaw. Today, Provincial legislation permits municipalities to collect monies for transportation infrastructure, such as walking, bicycling, public transit, or other alternative forms of transportation. These alternative transportation options can be incorporated into the Parking Reserve Fund Bylaw by amending the bylaw.

The Metro Vancouver 2012 Apartment Parking Study found that the average construction cost per parking stall within a structure was noted to be in the range of \$20,000 to \$45,000, depending on site conditions and whether the parkade was at grade or below grade (based on two-levels of underground parking). The construction cost per parking stall increases with the number of below grade parking levels that are provided.

Most municipalities in Metro Vancouver have a flat rate per parking space, ranging from \$20,000 to \$40,000 per parking space, and include a maximum percentage of permitted parking reduction (such as parking requirements can only be reduced by 15%). However, the City of Coquitlam has taken a different approach. The City of Coquitlam's payment in-lieu rate is tied to the parking reduction percentage that is being requested. For example, if an applicant was seeking a 10% reduction to the required parking spaces, the rate per parking space would be \$30,000. Table 1 provides the City of Coquitlam's payment in-lieu rate for the Evergreen Line Core Area for visualization purposes only.

Table 1 – City of Coquitlam’s Payment In-Lieu Rate for the Evergreen Line Core Area

Allowable Off-Street Parking Reduction	Payment for each Off-Street Parking Space
Up to 5%	\$20,000
Next 5% up to 10%	\$30,000
Next 5% up to 15%	\$35,000

The rate of payment in-lieu parking needs to ensure that developers are not incentivized to seek the payment in-lieu options unless meeting the minimum parking stall requirements is truly too great of a challenge, since it is most effective for a developer to construct and operate parking through the development project, resulting in less financial burden to the City. A tiered approach, based on percentage of parking reduction, is being considered in the new Parking Bylaw as it may be effective in discouraging large parking reductions.

In addition to potentially creating a tiered approach to payment in-lieu, potential changes to the Payment In-Lieu provisions, include:

- Expanding the area where payment in-lieu is eligible within the entire Town Centre and the Lougheed Transit Area (part of the Frequent Transit Network); and
- Expand the provisions for the parking reserve fund, in order for the funds to be used for transportation infrastructure for walking, bicycling, public transit, or other alternative forms of transportation.

2.3 Tandem Parking

Tandem Parking means the placement of one parking space behind another parking space, such that only one parking space has unobstructed access to a drive aisle or driveway. Currently, the City of Maple Ridge permits 30% of parking garage units within a development, zoned RM-1 (Low Density Townhouse Residential), to be tandem. As per Policy No. 6.35, should site-specific conditions, such as geotechnical, watercourse or natural features significantly impact the developable area of the site, up to a maximum of 50% tandem parking garage units may be permitted at the discretion of the Director of Planning.

Municipalities, such as Mission and Pitt Meadows, permit tandem parking provisions in townhouses, and apartment developments with similar maximums as Maple Ridge. With the new Parking Bylaw, potential changes to the tandem parking provisions may include:

- Permitting Tandem Parking in all Duplex zones (RT-1) provided that both parking spaces are held by the same owner;
- Permitting Tandem Parking in all Triplex and Fourplex zones (RT-2) provided that both parking spaces are held by the same owner; and
- Permitting Tandem Parking in all Townhouse zones, provided that both parking spaces are held by the same owner.

2.4 Accessibility

In December 2018, accessible parking requirements were removed from the BC Building Code Regulations and municipalities were left to adopt their own design standards and supply rates within their respective bylaws for off-street parking. Maple Ridge has accessible parking requirements within the Parking Bylaw, however, the requirements likely fall short of the community’s needs and should be updated to align with best practices.

Accessibility is a part of the City's broader equity and inclusion efforts that contribute to improved social health and well-being of residents. Accessibility of a parking space is based on several factors, including the:

1. number of spaces;
2. dimensions of the space;
3. location of spaces; and
4. path of travel, including access aisle and proximity to an accessible entrance.

Currently, the City's Parking Bylaw identifies the number of spaces required, dimensions of the spaces, and signage. However, the Parking Bylaw does not account for van-accessible stalls, access aisles, or specify location of the spaces or requirements for path of travel (such as ensuring the route from exiting the vehicle to entering a business is accessible).

When reviewing the Parking Bylaw to better align with best practices and respond to emerging trends, one of the most challenging and critically important details for consideration is the effect on accessible parking. For example, requiring less parking in a transit corridor should not come at the expense of a sufficient supply of accessible parking. It is therefore important to consider ensuring a sufficient accessibility parking supply if the overall total supply is reduced.

The new Parking Bylaw regarding accessible parking spaces may include:

- Requiring one accessible space regardless of total number of spaces being required;
- Increasing the number of accessible parking spaces based on use (such as medical offices);
- Introducing two types of requirements for standard accessibility space size and aisles (to include van-accessible stalls) and aligning the dimensions of each type to reflect best practices;
- Including signage requirements that reflect best practices; and
- Requiring accessible EV charging stations.

2.5 Micromobility Parking and Storage

On May 25, 2021, the City of Maple Ridge amended the Official Community Plan to set the goal to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 from 2010 levels, with an interim target of 45% reduction by 2030, in order to be in alignment with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Official Community Plan Policy 5-45). To reduce transportation emissions, the number of vehicle kilometres traveled must be reduced and a greater share of those trips must be made by electric vehicles. According to the data collected through the Strategic Transportation Plan, the number, distance, and share of driving trips has increased. Therefore, there is an opportunity to increase electrification, while also making walking, rolling, and transit trips more safe, comfortable, and efficient.

Micromobility, such as electric scooters, bicycles, segways, etc., is becoming a growing share of trips in the region. Micromobility can be privately owned, or owned and operated as part of shared transportation systems. It can be used for personal travel or play a role in goods movement via cargo e-bikes. Development in the Town Centre and along Lougheed Corridor will create opportunities to move more people with less reliance on single occupancy vehicles. However, the City only requires bike parking and storage in the Town Centre, which limits the incentive for residents to bike to other locations within the City and does not include parking for other micromobility options.

The bike parking space ratios and storage requirements for the Town Centre are currently separated into two general categories. The first category is long-term spaces that are geared towards multi-family residential occupants or commercial use employees who intend to stay at their destination for a longer period of time (typically more than two hours), and have access to secured locations on the property;

and the second category is short term spaces that are geared towards visitors or customers who are likely to have a shorter stay at their destination (typically less than two hours), with such spaces typically found in the public realm and typically considered significantly less secure.

The perceived safety of accessing micromobility parking and the level of security within a parking facility are typically factored into the decisions that people make about cycling. For example, if a long-term bicycle parking area is located in a secluded and dark area of an underground parkade, where it feels unsafe and/or is a hassle to get in and out, potential riders may feel discouraged from biking to work, running errands, or even for recreation.

The safety of the micromobility users and security of the micromobility parking are the two main factors when updating the section of the Parking Bylaw that identifies bike parking. The new Parking Bylaw regarding micromobility may include:

- Expanding the requirement of long and short term bike parking and storage city wide;
- Specifying desired location of long-term storage within a development;
- Specifying the desired form of long term micromobility storage;
- Requirement for “end of trip facilities” (such as showers and change rooms);
- Requirements for electrified electric bike parking and storage; and
- Requirements for e-scooter parking and storage.

2.6 Electric Vehicle Charging and Stations

Metro Vancouver’s Climate 2050 Strategic Framework (2019) estimates that 31% of greenhouse gas emissions in the region are a result of cars and trucks. Moving towards higher adoption of zero emissions vehicles, including electric passenger cars and trucks, is an important component of achieving the City’s Climate Action Goals. Demand for electric vehicles is increasing and the Province of BC has a goal to reach 100% of passenger zero-emissions vehicle sales by 2040.

Other new forms of mobility, including electric bicycles, electric cargo bicycles, and electric scooters can also help lower greenhouse gas emissions by expanding the number and type of trips that are feasible by non-auto modes of transportation. These vehicles also benefit from electric outlets in parking lots, particularly where there is secure bicycle parking. Since 2019, the City has required “roughed-in” electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure as per the following in Table 2:

Table 2 – Current EV Charging Requirements

Ground Oriented Residential Development	Apartment Residential Development	Commercial Development
Require 1 space for each principal dwelling unit of single family, duplex, triplex, fourplex, courtyard and townhouse developments to be roughed-in (Level 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary suites and detached garden suites exempt. 	Require all off-street residential parking spaces in apartment developments to be roughed-in (Level 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% visitor parking be able to achieve a minimum of Level 2 charging 	Require 10% of parking spaces to be roughed-in (Level 2). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicable to developments with 10 or more off-street parking spaces.

‘Roughed-in’ means some of the infrastructure required for EV charging is provided, including panel capacity and conduit, making it easier to retrofit the building to provide for EV charging in the future. Circuit breakers, wiring, outlet and charging stations (and the costs to acquire and install these) is the responsibility of the property owner(s) to deal with at some point in the future in order to fully energize and operationalize each space.

Since the adoption of the City's roughed-in requirements, more municipalities have adopted bylaws requiring new parking spaces to be fully energized. To fully energize each space, all of the infrastructure would need to be required for the charging of an EV, including the charging stations. Every municipality requires a different proportion of parking spaces to be energized, however, many municipalities require energizing spaces instead of permitting roughed-in infrastructure. Table 3 presents which municipalities require roughed-in or energized requirements or both.

Table 3 – Municipal scan of “energized” parking space requirements

Municipality	Requires “Roughed-in” or “Energized” infrastructure
City of Abbotsford	Energized
City of Chilliwack	Energized
City of Coquitlam	Energized
City of Delta	Energized
Township of Langley	Energized
City of Mission	Roughed-In (some energized requirements)
City of Port Coquitlam	Roughed-In
City of Surrey	Energized
City of White Rock	Energized

The new Parking Bylaw may include the following changes to the EV charging requirements may include:

- Requiring a specific number of energized outlets capable of providing Level 2 Charging or higher for residential, commercial, institutional and industrial development;
- Requiring some EV charging spots to be to accessibility standards;
- Provisions for fast charging stations that are added post development (such as tesla stations); and
- Provisions for electric bike and scooter charging stations.

2.7 Shared Use Parking Provisions

The current Section 3.7 of the Parking Bylaw sets out regulations for developments that have multiple uses, also known as shared parking facilities. Currently, shared parking facilities of two or more Commercial, Educational, Assembly, Civic and Institutional establishments may be permitted when the maximum demand for such parking facilities by the individual establishments occurs at different periods of the day, and is supported by a parking study. The parking spaces provided shall not be less than 75% of the total required by the individual uses.

The Town Centre Parking Study (2008) supported this provision in the Parking Bylaw as the study found that that efficiencies could be created with the current parking supply if property owners were willing to share parking and create local economic synergies through ease of parking in one location and walking or cycling to multiple destinations.

When reviewing and updating this section of the Parking Bylaw, the main goal is to clarify the requirements (for example, two businesses on adjacent properties can utilize each other's parking lots) and potentially reduce the parking stall requirements for individual properties in the Town Centre if Town Centre businesses were willing to capitalize on the collective parking space provision benefits.

2.8 Landscaping and Screening

The Zoning Bylaw includes landscaping requirements for unconcealed surface parking spaces. For example, unenclosed off-street parking for commercial zones, the landscape screening is required to be at least 1metre high and 1.5 metres wide. These requirements will be reviewed in conjunction with the Parking Bylaw to ensure that surface parking areas are required to add aesthetic elements, such as climate resilient flowering shrubs, ornamental trees, grasses, in-ground irrigation to help ensure plantings survive and thrive, while also ensuring sightlines are kept clear and principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) are considered to address safety considerations. The Parking Bylaw may also potentially include lighting requirements, updated signage requirements, and pedestrian walkway requirements for parking areas that have more than one commercial or mixed-use building on the same lot or are of a certain size (such as large retail parking lots).

3.0 Shared Mobility Provisions

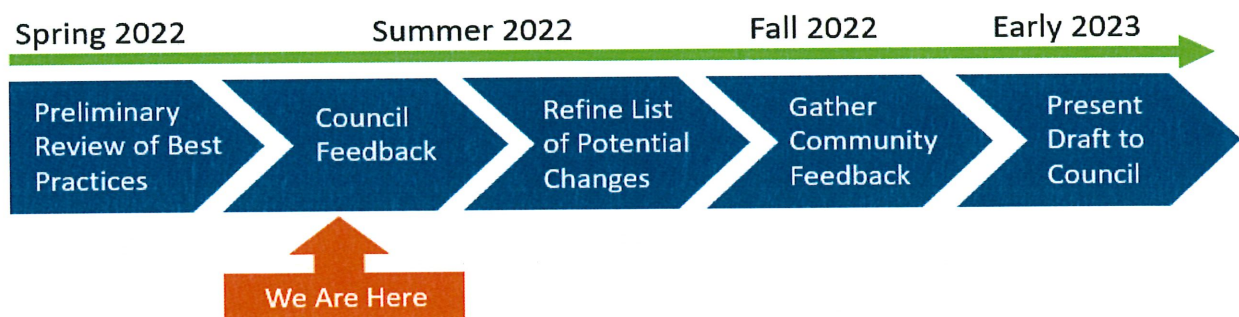
Currently, there are no shared mobility provisions in the Parking Bylaw. It is anticipated that the new Parking Bylaw may include provisions for some shared mobility. Shared Mobility can be defined as transportation services and resources that are shared among users, either concurrently or one after another. Shared mobility provisions often include regulations for:

- taxi pick up stations;
- car sharing (such as Modo or Evo parking);
- shared micromobility (such as bike sharing or scooter sharing), and
- bus parking provisions.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

The comments and feedback received on this report from Council will help guide the next steps in the review process, as outlined in Figure 1. Once staff have refined the list of potential changes, staff will be seeking feedback from the community in the Fall 2022. Staff will be engaging with the City's advisory committees, specifically the Transportation Advisory Committee and the Municipal Advisory Committee on Accessibility as well as with the development community through Urban Development Institute (UDI) and HAVAN. Additionally, staff will be providing the opportunity for all residents to provide feedback by identifying the changes on the City website and promoting the opportunity through the typical communication channels.

Figure 1: New Parking Bylaw Process



In early 2023, staff anticipate bringing forward the draft new Parking Bylaw to a future Committee of the Whole meeting. In the Committee of the Whole report, staff will also provide an approach to instream applications and when the amendment to the Parking Bylaw would take effect.

5.0 STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Achieving long term sustainability through thoughtful planning and policy work, such as the subject review of the Off-Street Parking Bylaw, is established under the Growth pillar of Council's 2019-2022 City of Maple Ridge Strategic Plan.

6.0 INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:

Staff will continue to work with various departments, including Engineering, Bylaw & Licensing Services, Building, and Fire on the new Parking Bylaw.

7.0 CONCLUSION:

A full review of the *Off-Street Parking and Loading Bylaw No. 4350-1990*, also known as the "Parking Bylaw" regulates the location, number, and size of off-street vehicle parking spaces, loading spaces, bicycle spaces, and passenger spaces, to balance the needs of residents, commuters, and visitors. On-street parking is regulated through other bylaws and is not included within this review. A new Off-Street Parking Bylaw is the anticipated outcome of this review.

This report identifies eight topics within the existing Parking Bylaw that are likely to see the most change and what those changes might look like based on a preliminary review of regional best practices (Section 2.0). Staff are seeking Council's high-level comments at this stage in the review process to guide next steps. Staff will also be seeking feedback from the community throughout the Fall and anticipate bringing forward the draft new Parking Bylaw to a future Committee of the Whole meeting in early 2023.

"Original signed by Krista Gowan"

Prepared by: **Krista Gowan, HBA, MA**
Planner 1

"Original signed by Charles Goddard"

Reviewed by: **Charles R. Goddard, BA, MA**
Director of Planning

"Original signed by Christine Carter"

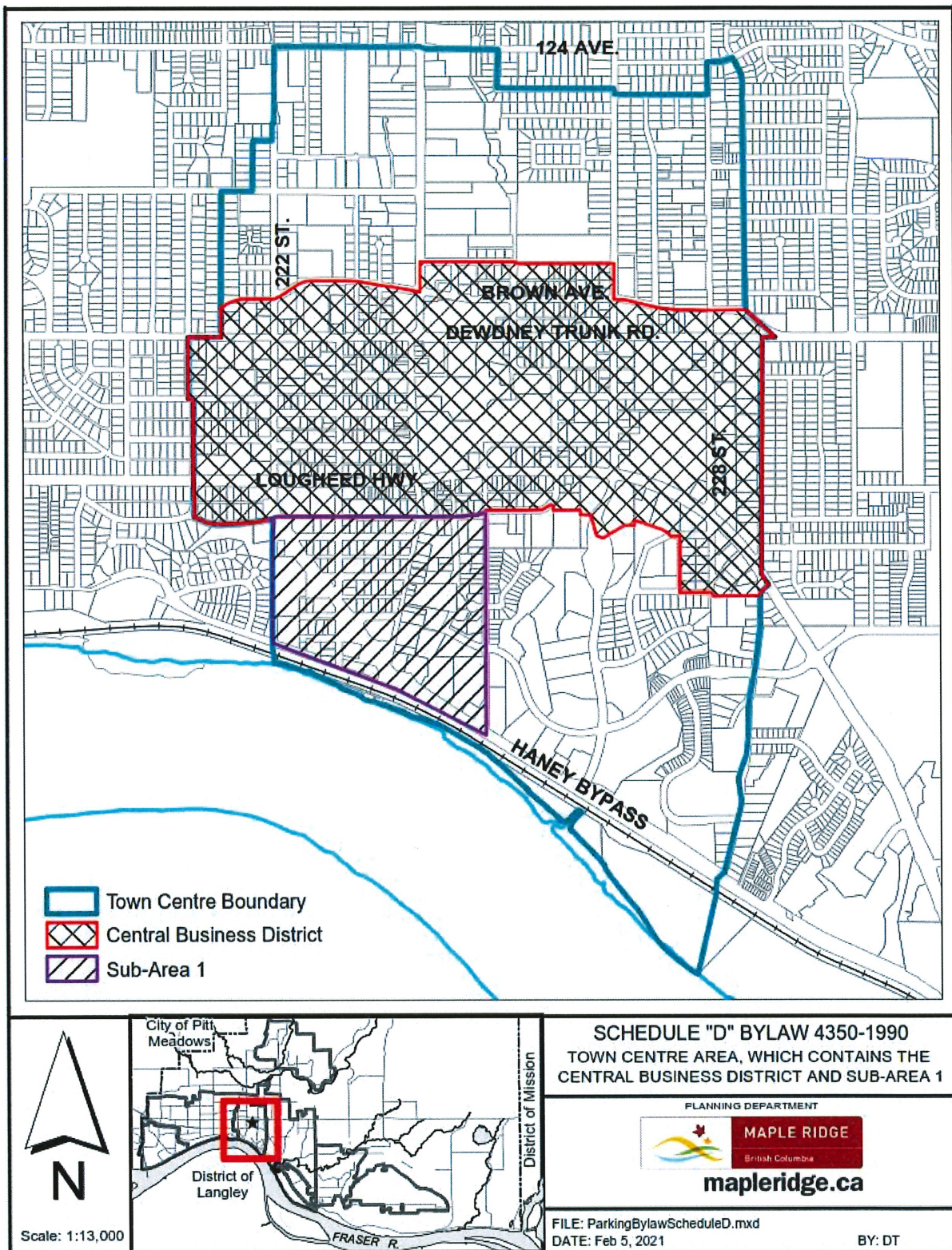
Approved by: **Christine Carter, M.PL, MCIP, RPP**
GM Planning and Development

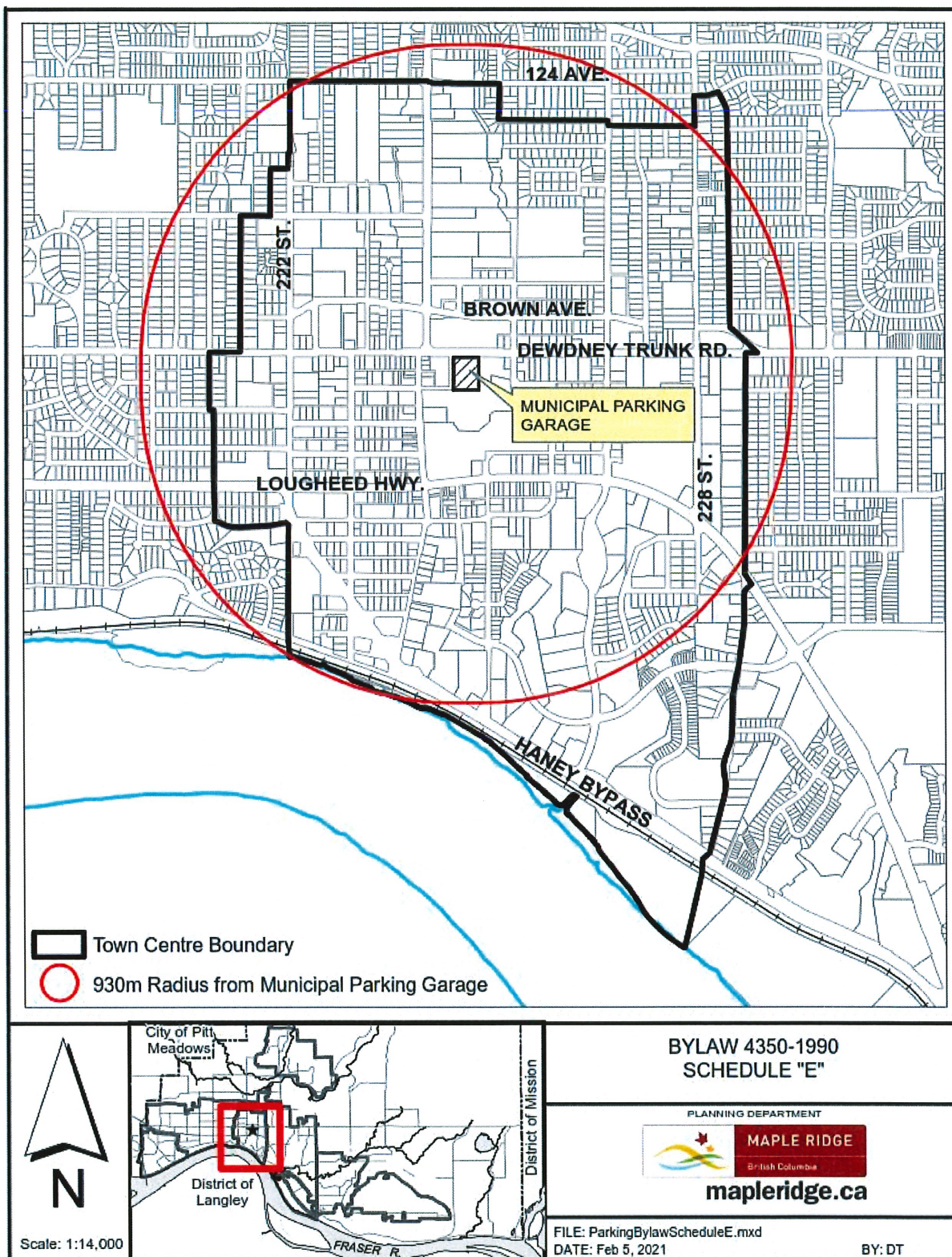
"Original signed by Scott Hartman"

Concurrence: **Scott Hartman**
Chief Administrative Officer

The following appendix is attached hereto:

- Appendix A – Central Business District Area Map
- Appendix B – Payment In-Lieu Area Map





City of Maple Ridge

TO: His Worship Mayor Michael Morden
and Members of Council

MEETING DATE: July 25, 2022
FILE NO: 0110-01-2022

FROM: Chief Administrative Officer

MEETING: Workshop

SUBJECT: Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In early 2022, the City of Maple Ridge retained Tavola Strategy Group to complete an external review of the City's Corporate communications and public engagement practice. The assessment included consultation with staff and Council, best practices research, and a review of citizen input, to develop a Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Plan (Plan) for the City of Maple Ridge.

The Plan includes analysis and recommendations related to governance and City decision-making, structure, resourcing and systems along with technology and tools to ensure Maple Ridge is well-positioned to support the information and participation needs of citizens and stakeholders through this period of expected growth and change.

Tavola Strategy Group also has a key role in the parallel work underway to implement the actions from the Building Permit Process Review.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Plan dated June 2022, be received for information; and further

That the Outcomes and Actions be incorporated into the 2023-2027 Business Plan process.

DISCUSSION:

The Tavola Strategy Group led a collaborative process engaging staff across the organization, Council, and the City's leadership group to assess current practices, resources, perceptions and needs. In addition, there has been a review of the policy framework, communications and marketing assets, decision-making process for communications, staff resources, budgets and public input as it relates to communications preferences.

The process has been highly collaborative with a strong shared commitment to ensuring that the final recommendations reflect the current and future needs of the community and the Corporation.

a) Background Context:

The City of Maple Ridge continues to be one of the fastest growing communities in BC. As the community grows, staff must adapt their approach to communication and engagement strategies with citizens.

The City's communications and engagement approach had not been reviewed in 10 years.

b) Desired Outcome:

The purpose of the review is to ensure the City has a strong Corporate Communications and Public Engagement framework along with resources to deliver on the expectations of citizens, elected officials and the Corporation.

c) Strategic Alignment:

Effective communication strategies and engagement tools and approaches are fundamental to support the implementation of Council's Strategic Plan. Ensuring that citizens are aware, engaged and active participants in delivering on the City's vision and advancing strategic priorities is a priority.

The Plan is well-timed to help support the next strategic plan early in the term of a newly-elected Council and increases emphasis on strategic and corporate priorities.

d) Citizen/Customer Implications:

The primary focus is to ensure that City information and public participation opportunities are timely, responsive, and easy to access and understand. The City is committed to creating a positive customer experience that is consistent and coordinated across all City departments.

The Plan outlines several Priority Actions intended to improve the customer experience.

e) Interdepartmental Implications:

All City divisions have provided input into the Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Plan and equally share responsibility for a consistent and coordinated communications approach and effective implementation.

f) Business Plan/Financial Implications:

The recommendations include a realignment of communications and engagement staff under the Chief Administrative Officer's Office, reporting to the new Director of Corporate Communications and Public Engagement position which is currently being recruited. Additional resourcing requests will be considered as part of the 2023 -2027 Business Plan discussions.

g) Policy Implications:

Relevant City policies will be updated to reflect the recommendations that Council endorse.

CONCLUSION:

This process has highlighted the strategic role communications and public engagement play in fostering positive two-way relationships with the community, as well as driving innovation and culture change.

The Plan will guide the entire organization in its renewed commitment to fostering a citizen-centric culture, making information and participation opportunities easy to access and positioning Maple Ridge as a destination for investment and opportunity.

The Plan outlines priorities within five areas that will provide increased support for the next Council's Strategic Plan and will inform departmental workplans.



Prepared by: Fred Armstrong
Manager Corporate Communications



Concurrence: Christine Carter, M.P.L, MCIP, RPP
General Manager Planning & Development Services



Concurrence: David Pollock, P.Eng.
General Manager Engineering Services



Concurrence: Stephane Labonne
General Manager Parks, Recreation & Culture



Concurrence: Christina Crabtree
General Manager Corporate Communications



Approved by: Scott Hartman
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

(A) Corporate Communications and Public Engagement Plan



TAVOLA
STRATEGY GROUP

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

City of Maple Ridge

Submitted by:
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July 2022



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Process Undertaken	6
Strategic Considerations	7
The Plan – Vision, Principles And Areas Of Focus	13
Audiences	14
Focus Area 1: Strengthen Strategic Focus	16
Focus Area 2: Amplify Maple Ridge’s Story	18
Focus Area 3: Meaningful Public Engagement	19
Focus Area 4: Fostering A Culture Of Service And Engagement.....	20
Focus Area 5: Customer Experience.....	21
Measurement	22
Appendix A: IAP2 Spectrum.....	xxiii
Appendix B: IAP2 Core Values	xxiv

INTRODUCTION




Maple Ridge is one of the fast-growing cities in British Columbia, with an expected increase of 50,000 new residents over the next 20 years. The City of Maple Ridge has placed high importance on ensuring that its communications and public engagement efforts reflect the evolving needs of the community. This report outlines a review of current practice, associated strategic considerations and a Communications and Engagement Plan.

Effective communications are essential to increasing understanding, garnering input, and demonstrating value for tax dollars. A memorable and human City voice that resonates with the community is key to providing a compelling vision and context for potential investment and change. Meaningful public participation in City decision-making helps:

- *Establish direction*
- *Generate new ideas or improve on ideas*
- *Increase understanding of issues, challenges, and opportunities*
- *Build community capacity*
- *Foster relationships and trust*

The overall approach to how the municipality shares and invites input must be clear, coordinated, and consistent, to achieve the desired outcomes and offer predictability for residents and stakeholders.



Grounded by corporate values, communication and public engagement strategies can be an internal catalyst and foundation for fostering a robust citizen-centric culture. Modern society has high expectations around their ability to access information and provide input in an easy and timely way. Consequently, there is a direct inter-relationship between communications, public engagement, and customer service.

Communications and public engagement are strategic levers for innovation and culture change. The Communications and Public Engagement Plan guides the entire organization in its renewed commitment to fostering a citizen-centric culture, making information and public participation opportunities easy to understand and access. Communicating the role and services of the municipality and conveying the City's pride in providing exemplary services motivates continuous improvement.

Every community is unique. Community demographics, history, growth, municipal services, and structure all influence how municipalities engage with their citizens. As a result, there is no "cookie-cutter" approach to how cities engage. The Plan benefits from the experience and best practices of other local governments while acknowledging the character and needs of Maple Ridge are distinct to Maple Ridge. The City has a vital role in sharing Maple Ridge's story, a responsibility that is intensified by the City's goals for attracting investment and development growth.

The Plan draws on research and best practices of local governments across Canada. It is responsive to the needs and experiences articulated by City Council, staff, and the community, as expressed in the 2020 Citizen Survey. Ongoing evaluation is embedded as a key principle, upholding a commitment to continuous improvement based on feedback and experience.

The Communications and Engagement Plan centers around five areas of focus:

- 1. *Strengthen Strategic Focus***
- 2. *Amplify Maple Ridge's Story***
- 3. *Meaningful Public Engagement***
- 4. *Fostering a Culture of Service and Engagement***
- 5. *Customer Experience***

This critical work is well-timed. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape, as the way people communicate and rely on government services has shifted over the past two years. With a new term of Council to commence in November 2022, the Plan will position the City positively to support effective communications and public engagement efforts to deliver on new strategic priorities.



PROCESS UNDERTAKEN

In the Spring of 2022, Tavola Strategy Group was retained by the City of Maple Ridge to develop:

A Corporate Communications and Engagement Strategy, identifying key themes and messaging, along with communication and engagement plans encompassing various communication vehicles, to build a corporate narrative that will effectively communicate the work of the City and as directed by the Council, to key community stakeholders.

The analysis and recommended Communications and Engagement Plan within this report are informed by interviews with staff across all City departments, discussions with the leadership team, individual interviews with the Mayor and Councillors, an online staff survey, and a scan of communications and engagement practices across Canada.

The 1:1 interviews and survey of staff generated constructive insight into the current practice and ideas for growth and improvement. Several overarching themes emerged:

- *Organization would benefit from a vision for City communications*
- *Desire for more proactive, strategic communications*
- *Need for consistency across departments, centralized information sharing, and process*
- *Desired for streamlined reviews and approval process*
- *Internal and external communications inconsistent across departments*
- *There is a need for increased resources and/or training to build organizational capacity*
- *Different methods of communication are needed for staff who work in the field*
- *Positive relationships exist with communications and their willingness to help*
- *Dedicated communications portfolios (e.g., Police and Parks, Recreation and Culture) are viewed positively*
- *Website and online tools could be improved*
- *Tendency to overlook communicating the positives, default to reactionary communications*
- *Desire for consistent frameworks, standards, and procedures.*

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

2020 Citizen Survey

Since 2003 the City of Maple Ridge has routinely surveyed the community to understand citizen satisfaction and service level and funding preferences. Citizen surveys provide important insight into perceptions and preferences. How a municipality communicates and engages with citizens can impact both levels of service and perceptions of service. Of note:

- 49% of residents rated their satisfaction with municipal services as very good or good, 31% being undecided, 7% unsure, and 13% giving negative assessments. When it comes to the perceived value of taxes paid for the services received, 28% offered positive assessments, 45% were undecided and 27% provided negative ratings.
- The service areas where the importance accorded by residents outweighs how residents feel the City is performing in these areas include 1) growth, 2) streets and sidewalks and 3) City communications.
- Also of note, 68% of respondents indicated they would like see services levels increased to attract new businesses and employers.
- Respondents rated the importance of communications from the City as a 4/5, with performance rated as a 3.4/5. Most respondents (60%) believe that the current service level should be maintained. A further 23% indicate it should be increased. The findings indicate "City communications and announcements received a fair level of importance, but residents feel performance could be better.
- Overall, residents indicated they prefer website updates, email alerts, social media, and newspaper as preferred communications channels. Younger demographics note a much higher preference for social media to engage and receive information, in comparison to older demographics.


Unfortunately, the 2020 Citizen Survey did not include specific questions that gauged citizen preferences for providing input into decision-making (e.g., email, online surveys, workshops, speaking at Council meetings or providing written input to Council) to the City of Maple Ridge.

External Landscape

The external context must be top of mind when determining the level and type of communications support required in Maple Ridge. Projected population growth and attracting residential, commercial, and industrial investment rely heavily on quality and timely information about services, decisions, and context for change. The City must position itself as an attractive destination to live, work, play and invest. A vivid organizational narrative is a fundamental requirement for placing the City positively within the Metro Vancouver landscape. Few local governments share the same context at this scale.

About 65% of Maple Ridge residents commute to other communities for work each day, so many services and capital investments are not "seen". There is a greater onus on the City to communicate progress and municipal investments, reaching folks where they are, using channels they prefer.

Attracting economic investment and growth also requires the involvement and investment of other public sector partners and stakeholders. Regional transportation and affordable housing are just two key service areas that must also adapt to meet the growing community's needs. Intergovernmental relationships and communications with other levels of government and service providers are crucial. The strategic relationships between the CAO, City Council, and counterparts in other agencies must be well supported.



Strategic communications and engagement to support economic development are critical to the organization's ability to attract and retain investment. Currently, there is limited communication support given to sustained communications with other levels of governments or to support economic development efforts.

British Columbia is facing a labour shortage across all sectors, with an expected shortage of 1 million workers within the next 10 years. Local governments are already feeling the pressures of a highly competitive recruitment environment highlighting the need for progressive recruitment, retention, and recognition strategies. Honing a Maple Ridge brand that promotes a strong culture of service and innovation, and professional growth may prove attractive to retaining staff and enticing new employees. A full staff complement, including specific professional skillsets, will be necessary to serve the growing demand for services.

Brand Story

How Maple Ridge presents itself in a busy and competitive environment is key to how the municipality is perceived and influences the community's confidence in the city government to deliver on commitments. It's also crucial that the brand story acknowledges the community's history and how it has evolved.

As the municipality strengthens its messaging and reach, the City must be walking the talk. For example, a community that depicts it as open for business must be easy to do business with; therefore, the customer service experience must match the brand promise.

The community's visual identity must also evoke the feeling and imagery that conveys a modern and positive image of the City of Maple Ridge. The current visual identity is outdated and does not conjure the City's vision and values.

Streamlined text, cleaner templates, and improved graphics can present a more modern and recognizable visual identity that resonates more broadly.

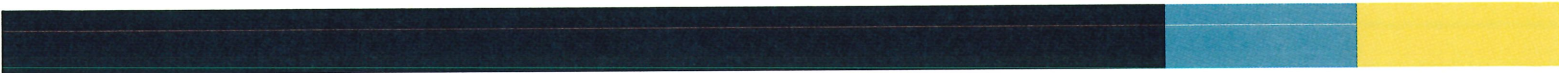
Community Demographics

Every community is unique. Communications and engagement approaches must be tailored to the characteristics and preferences of the population, which can be more challenging when the community is changing rapidly. With the population expected to grow significantly, the complexity and scale of change anticipated in Maple Ridge are unique. Effective communications and engagement may require a higher level of service than a community experiencing minor change.

Data and analytics and routine engagement with the community should inform how the City engages with residents and businesses. City staff should be experts in the community they serve, supported by a strong understanding of community demographics such as age, household composition, commuting patterns, business sectors, and cultural diversity. Incorrect perceptions or broad-based assumptions employees hold can create blind spots and missed opportunities when planning for communications and engagement.

Strategic Orientation

Overall, the current communications practice is stronger tactically than strategically (i.e., shorter-term view, tools-oriented, reactive.) The organization utilizes many commonplace communications tools; however, there isn't a holistic or objective-driven strategy. At a project level, there is a lack of communications planning rigour. Greater alignment of communications resources with organizational priorities is required, and a robust planning ethic is needed. Integration with a corporate project management framework is recommended.



It is unclear how staff determine priorities without an overall vision and framework to guide communications and engagement. Inconsistent efforts are attributed to resources being spread thin, the personal style or preferences of different managers, the hybrid organizational structure, and resource allocation. This has resulted in somewhat inequitable service levels and awareness for specific departments and topics, with limited communication of other important priorities and services.

Governance Support

As an evolving community, the community must understand the vision the municipality is working towards, the context for change, and the potential opportunities and challenges associated with that vision. The municipality must support the decision-makers in their ability to communicate the City's vision, priorities, and decisions and to listen and respond to the emerging issues of residents and stakeholders. A high level of coordination and strategic alignment between the Mayor's Office, Chief Administrative Officer, and corporate leadership team is essential. More strategic communications capacity at a senior level and tactical communications support on a daily or routine basis are necessary.

Public Engagement and Decision-Making

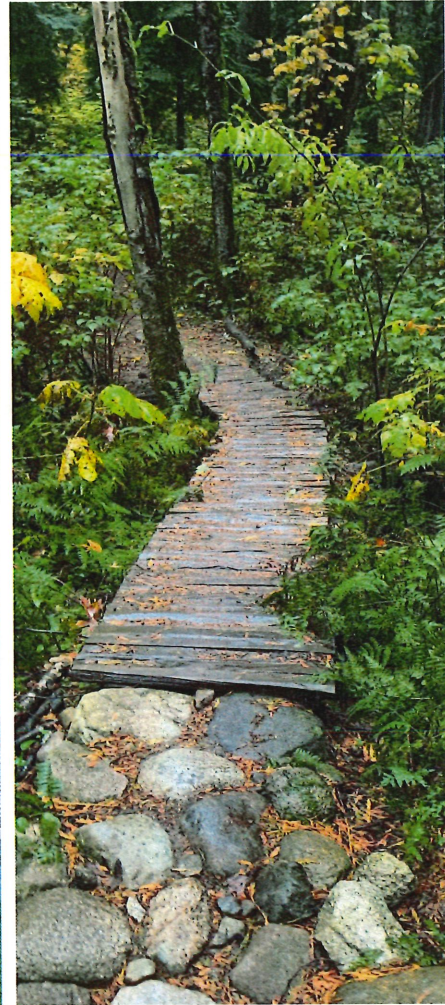
Consistent organizational understanding of public engagement from governance, planning, and policy perspectives is low. However, the need to improve in this area is recognized, and a draft framework is under development by an internal working committee. Staff interviews generated many tactical examples of public engagement in terms of tools and techniques; however, it is unclear how engagement priorities, resourcing, and scoping are determined and how it informs decision-making and public reporting. A consistent corporate framework and tool kit, including guidance on prioritization, establishing clear engagement objectives, scoping the level of engagement, and documenting and reporting on public engagement, is needed. Increased in-house expertise and training will build the organization's capacity, understanding, and consistency.

A scan of municipal public engagement strategies across Canada indicates that most local governments have adopted engagement frameworks and introduced tool kits to outline consistent expectations for planning, implementation, and evaluation. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values and Spectrum for Public Participation (see Appendices) are the accepted standard across the globe.

Project Management

Communications and public engagement are core tenets of effective public sector project management and citizen-centered planning. Engagement planning early in project development instills higher potential for successful project implementation, helping mitigate schedule and budget risks. Project management frameworks should identify public impacts and determine appropriate levels of information and engagement to inform project planning, including timelines and budgets. Communications and engagement plans should be considered a core practice within all projects and routinely outlined in Council reports and briefing notes. The earlier involvement of communications staff in project planning is required to ensure appropriate scope, timelines, and allocate budgets.

A new Director role (currently under recruitment) will increase leadership capacity in this area and facilitate earlier involvement in corporate strategy discussions.





Role Clarity

Elected officials are formally responsible for making decisions that represent the interests and values of the community. They have an essential role as decision-makers and advocates for public engagement. Employees are responsible for leading the planning, implementation, and reporting back from engagement initiatives, offering professional expertise, and being technical experts that provide background and advice on decisions. Residents contribute to informed decision-making and the quality of life in their community by sharing their ideas, experiences, and concerns constructively and respectfully.

Internally, a high degree of cooperation between the CAO, General Managers, Mayor, and Council is required. The involvement of other agencies is also often necessary, particularly on intergovernmental initiatives and projects with a high public interface or impact. e.g., economic development, capital projects, long-term planning, and safety.

Internal Communications

Internal communications are critical to nurturing a high-performing workplace and culture that is supported and aligned with the corporate vision. A strong vision and context must be well-communicated across the organization, and the respective roles of the Mayor and Council, CAO, and staff in corporate strategy must be clear.

Meaningful external engagement occurs when there is a strong internal culture of communication and collaboration. “Early and often” employee communications about opportunities and issues affecting the organization and two-way communications options are required to stimulate innovation. There is also a direct correlation between the level of communications and the timeliness of decision-making. The sooner employees are aware and understand the direction, the more motivated and empowered they feel to make decisions and act in that direction.

There is a desire within senior leadership to renew the organization’s commitment to service excellence and cultivate a service-oriented culture across the organization. Interviews highlighted “silos” within the organization resulting in fragmented communications and differing approaches. Currently, Corporate Communications staff support internal communications in terms of the employee intranet, a monthly newsletter, and messages from the CAO; however, effective internal communications require strategy, systems, and time to be meaningful and timely. A renewed focus on internal communications would support culture transformation and foster a supportive and highperforming workplace, as articulated in the new Human Resources strategic plan.

Technology

As society emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, digital literacy has increased, and citizen reliance on technology for accessing information and services has never been greater. The City of Maple Ridge offers a variety of digital tools (e.g., open data site, website, e-services, apps, dashboards); however, they aren’t necessarily intuitive or integrated for a seamless customer experience. The data is also not being utilized to its full potential in messaging and communications planning. Although best practice in communications and engagement combines traditional and digital tools, online services must be robust, instinctual, mobile integrated, and designed with the user in mind. The IT Strategic Plan should be informed by the Corporate Communication and Public Engagement Plan to align priorities. The latest citizen survey indicates that younger demographics have a higher preference for digital tools. As such, a desire for self-serve web options, video, and social media will likely grow.

Structure and Resources

Comparatively, based on current population and future projections, the City of Maple Ridge has fewer communications/engagement professionals than municipalities of similar size. The City has a combination of centralized roles and some decentralized positions serving specific departments. Upon review of municipalities of similar size, centralized structures are typical across other local governments. They offer a more formalized clientservices model than what is currently in place in Maple Ridge. Centralized models tend to provide greater strategic and equitable communications capacity to all City departments and a more coordinated and equitable level of service across City departments. At the same time, the City of Maple Ridge is growing at a much higher rate than most BC municipalities. As a result, in-house strategic leadership and capacity are needed to meet the City's current and anticipated future communications needs.

First Nations

Some staff identified the need for more guidance on First Nations engagement. The scope of this Plan does not apply to fostering relationships and engagement with local First Nations. Planning for consultation in an inclusive way that acknowledges and embraces different approaches is vital to ongoing conversations and relationship building with Indigenous communities. We understand the City of Maple Ridge is working with the Katzie and Kwantlen Nations to inform staff resources for territorial acknowledgments, protocols, and increased awareness and understanding of the history and relationships of the lands.



THE PLAN

Vision, Principles And Areas Of Focus

Our Vision

The community is aware of City services and engaged in the decisions affecting them. Employees are informed, supported, and appreciate the importance of effective communications and public engagement. The organization is responsive to what it hears and works together with the community and partners to shape Maple Ridge's future. The City is recognized for communications and engagement excellence.

Guiding Principles

How we communicate and engage with the community is underpinned by clear principles.

- 1. Accurate, timely and accessible information is the foundation of everything we do*
- 2. We have a responsibility to ensure our community is aware of the programs and services available and the decisions affecting them*
- 3. Our approach is tailored to each opportunity*
- 4. Access to information and protecting personal privacy is imperative*
- 5. Diversity of perspective and experience makes for better outcomes*
- 6. Removing barriers to participation makes it easier for all voices to be heard*
- 7. We demonstrate how input informs the result*
- 8. Communities continually evolve and so must our communications and engagement practice*

Five Areas Of Focus



**1. Strengthen
Strategic Focus**



**2. Amplify Maple
Ridge's Story**



**3. Meaningful
Public Engagement**



**4. Fostering a
Culture of Service
and Engagement**



**5. Customer
Experience**

AUDIENCES

Many individuals and organizations are interested or affected by municipal decision-making and service delivery. It's important that the City of Maple Ridge has its finger on the pulse of the community it serves.

Community Snapshot

- Land mass 267.82 km²
- Located on the traditional territory of the Katzie First Nation and Kwantlen First Nation
- Population 90,990 population - up 11% in five years
- Average age is 41 years
- 33,100 households
- 80% Ownership vs 20% rental
- Median annual household income: \$105,000
- Average household size is 2.7 people
- Top languages spoken at home: English, Mandarin, Punjabi, and Korean
- Approximately 4,900 businesses
- Largest employment sectors are Retail, Construction, Health Care and Social Assistance
- 65% of working residents commute outside of Maple Ridge for work

Broad Public

- Current Maple Ridge residents
- Future Maple Ridge residents
- Businesses
- Individuals who visit, shop and work in Maple Ridge
- Property owners (taxpayers)

Economy

- Individual businesses
- Builders, contractors, and developers
- Construction associations
- Downtown Maple Ridge Business Improvement Association
- Maple Ridge Chamber of Commerce
- Property management companies
- Urban Development Institute

Community Groups

- Cultural associations
- Environmental groups
- Active transportation groups
- Neighbourhood groups
- Non-profit Housing Providers
- Non-profit sector
- Seniors' Centres
- Service clubs
- Social agencies
- Sports and recreation groups
- Accessibility groups

Education

- School District #42 Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
- Schools
- Parent Advisory Councils
- Post-secondary institutions

First Nations

- Katzie First Nation
- Kwantlen First Nations
- Golden Ears Metis Society
- Fraser River Indigenous Society

Other Governments and Agencies

- Government of Canada
- Province of BC
- Fraser Health
- Metro Vancouver
- Neighbouring municipalities: Pitt Meadows, Mission, Langley
- TransLink

City of Maple Ridge

- City Council
- Employees
- Employee Unions
- Fire Rescue Services
- RCMP/Police Services

Media

- Newspaper
- Online
- Radio
- Social media
- Television





FOCUS AREA 1: Strengthen Strategic Focus


Alignment of communications resources with strategic and corporate priorities.

Desired Outcomes

- 1. Improved community awareness and understanding of strategic priorities and Council decision-making.***
- 2. Increased organizational capacity to support communications excellence.***

Priority Actions:

- 1. Create Director of Communications and Public Engagement role as part of senior leadership team.*
- 2. Shift Corporate Communications division reporting relationship to the Chief Administrative Officer*
- 3. Centralize communications and engagement staff under Director of Communications and Public Engagement and introduce business partner model to create central hub of resources to serve the organization.*
- 4. Develop workflow management system and approvals process for communications and engagement planning.*
- 5. Include communications and public engagement session within new Council orientation. Include overview of division roles and functions, Council's role, benchmarks, and priorities.*
- 6. Issue Council Highlights document after each Council meeting to convey the outcomes of Council meetings. Share with media distribution list, interested stakeholders, staff, and post online.*
- 7. Develop communications plan for overall strategic plan and each strategic priority: Community Safety, Inter-government Relations, Growth, Community Pride & Spirit, and Natural Environment*
- 8. Develop a communications plan for each City department based on operational workplan identifying annual services, changes to services, projects, public education campaigns etc.*
- 9. Create annual communications content calendar informed by strategic plan and departmental plans. Include intergovernmental consultation and communications activities affecting Maple Ridge.*
- 10. Develop issues management guide for potential issues or crisis (e.g., flooding, privacy breach, workplace accident etc.)*
- 11. Introduce an internal monthly "Issues/Opportunities Briefing Note" outlining upcoming activities and events underway across the organization and share with Council, senior leadership team.*
- 12. Develop a budget communications and consultation strategy to increase awareness of City budget process, planned investments, and value for tax dollars.*

- 
- 13. Develop easy to understand and visual Capital Projects Book to provide brief project overview, project timing and capital investment planned. Document can further support grant applications and project communications plan.*
 - 14. Update Council report templates to include mandatory section for "Communications and Public Engagement Considerations".*
 - 15. Include Director of Communications and Public Engagement in Council report review process to ensure communications and engagement impacts and opportunities are understood and prepared for.*
 - 16. Integrate communications and public engagement objectives into project management framework and operational planning to estimate level of engagement for each project, including estimated timing, resourcing, and budget, at project initiation phase.*
 - 17. Report annually on communications and engagement activities to measure against benchmarks and goals, outline analytics and trends, what's working and what's planned next.*



FOCUS AREA 2: Amplify Maple Ridge's Story

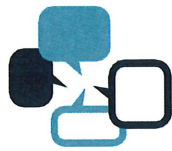
The City of Maple Ridge has a compelling story to share. Enhancing understanding of municipal operations helps demonstrate value for tax dollars. A strong brand and story builds optimism and momentum for a positive future and instills confidence in the City's ability to deliver.

Desired Outcomes

- 1. Greater awareness of the City's vision, leadership, and context for change.**
- 2. Captivating communications that demonstrate leadership, innovation, and pride in service.**
- 3. Increased reach and engagement of Maple Ridge residents, business, and community groups.**
- 4. The City of Maple Ridge is seen as an employer of choice.**

Priority Actions:

1. Reinvalidate the City's brand voice and refresh visual identity to convey strong leadership, innovation, and pride in service.
2. Embrace a story-telling approach to demonstrate pride in service, humanize the City voice, and make City programs and services more accessible.
3. Increase the City's social media impact through the increased use of video, images, and memorable content.
4. Integrated with a new website and enhanced social media strategy, expand use of video to paint a compelling and visual picture of the progress, innovation and context associated with City services and issues
5. Introduce a routine practice of developing "Issues/Opportunity Notes" to share relevant background, key points, and contacts for planned and reactionary issues with Council and affected staff to facilitate timely, anticipatory, and consistent information sharing.
6. Differentiate types of media materials, including media releases, information bulletins, and backgrounders and corresponding roles and approvals to improve timeliness and maximize reach.
7. Develop clear spokesperson matrix and provide training to Council and identified subject matter experts to facilitate timely media opportunities and relationships.
8. Identify opportunities for media "hard hat tours" and technical briefings as part of communications planning process on strategic priorities and major projects.
9. Balance messaging about impacts with the associated benefits (e.g., traffic disruptions necessary to improve drainage, or IT outage to add enhanced customer service functionality)
10. Utilize data and information within open government site and dashboards to help provide greater data driven communications about departments and major initiatives.
11. Position the City as an employer of choice by leveraging the vision and strategic priorities to attract new employees who want to be part of an exciting opportunity to have a positive impact.



FOCUS AREA 3: Meaningful Public Engagement

Public participation in City decision-making helps build trust and understanding and greater responsiveness in municipal services. A diversity of perspectives can help inform decisions that reflect the needs of the broad community.

Desired Outcomes

1. ***Greater public engagement in City decision-making.***
2. ***Strengthened two-way relationships with stakeholders and partners.***
3. ***Consistent and coordinated public engagement efforts across City departments.***
4. ***Greater participation from less heard voices***

Priority Actions:

1. *Update City organizational chart to reflect accountability relationship with community.*
2. *Introduce a public engagement spectrum that guides the levels of engagement, corresponding tools, and associated promise to the public.*
3. *Embed the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values within the City's public engagement philosophy.*
4. *Develop a Communications and Public Engagement Tool Kit to outline how to consistently plan, resource, and deliver public engagement activities across all departments, including detailed guidelines and resources.*
5. *Introduce engagement plan and What We Heard Summary report templates to consistently plan and report on engagement activities.*
6. *Conduct audience and stakeholder analysis to understand interests, needs and opportunities to work together with community groups and government agencies.*
7. *Create a "one-stop shop" for public engagement opportunities off the front page of website to easily access information about public engagement opportunities, how to participate in Council decision-making, as well as the City's vision/framework for public engagement.*
8. *Introduce an online consultation platform to create a consistent, accessible, and user-friendly online engagement experience.*
9. *Explore services for translating some City information into the most spoken home languages (i.e., Mandarin, Punjabi, Korean) among new immigrants.*
10. *Introduce accessibility features within redeveloped website to meet needs of individuals with hearing or visual impairment.*
11. *Ensure Public Engagement Toolkit includes guidelines for accessibility (e.g. transit routes, physical spaces, hearing and visual aids, translation services, etc.)*
12. *Establish a roster of public engagement consultants to support large-scale projects with greater public engagement needs. Provide engagement toolkit as a guide to facilitate consistency across all departments and projects.*
13. *Incorporate specific questions about public engagement preferences into next citizen survey.*



FOCUS AREA 4: Fostering a Culture of Service and Engagement

Engaged employees are foundational to a positive citizen experience. A shared understanding of the importance of meaningful engagement with the community can create ownership and build capacity for improved information sharing, responsiveness, and results.

Desired Outcomes

- 1. Increase understanding amongst employees of the value of communications and engagement across the City.***
- 2. Staff feel confident, supported, and engaged in fostering innovation and providing citizen-centric services.***

Priority Actions:

- 1. Develop an internal communications plan for increasing employee updates, celebrating success and capturing the City's pride in service.*
- 2. Introduce new strategic plan through internal staff sessions to build understanding and ownership for how everyone plays a role in achieving priorities.*
- 3. Review employee intranet with an eye to improving functionality, mobile integration, and information sharing across the City and providing access to all employees regardless of position or department.*
- 4. Include all staff on media distribution list to ensure they are hearing about City news directly from the City*
- 5. Ensure new employee onboarding/orientation program includes information about the community, strategic priorities, and highlights the importance of proactive communications and engagement with citizens, including associated communications protocols.*
- 6. Develop an overview of Corporate Communications and Engagement division to outline team roles, services, and how the division works with business partners.*
- 7. Provide training in communications and public engagement planning, media training, plain language writing, and report writing to build staff confidence and increase organizational capacity.*
- 8. Develop a Writing Style Guide to facilitate consistent written communications across all channels including reports, media materials, and signage.*
- 9. Develop self-serve templates to guide routine communications, maximizing capacity for strategic priorities and providing easy-to-use tools for employees to communicate.*
- 10. Establish a Communications Working Group that meets quarterly to inform communications calendar of upcoming issues and activities, lessons learned and opportunities to celebrate success.*



FOCUS AREA 5: Customer Experience

Thousands of people interact with the City of Maple Ridge each day, directly and indirectly. Each experience informs their perception of the City government. Maximizing the community's access to services and easy-to-understand information is an important responsibility.

Desired Outcomes

1. *Easy, timely, multi-channel options to access information and services.*

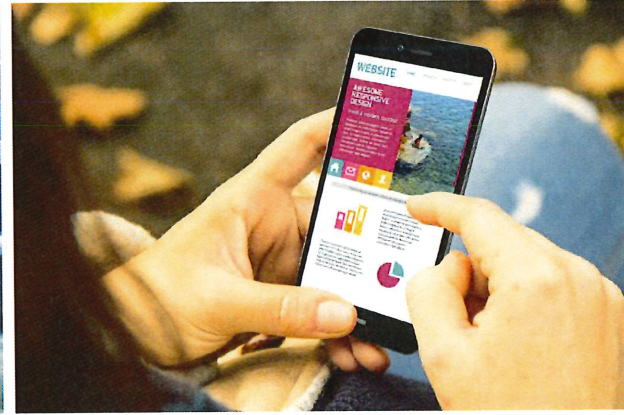
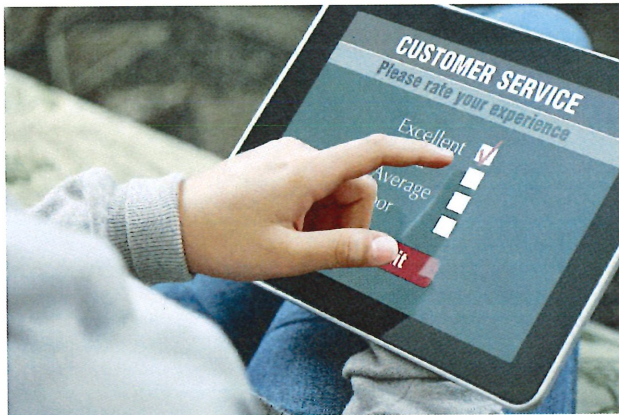
Priority Actions:

1. *Redevelop the City website with the user in mind. Streamline content and introduce more intuitive design to make information and functionality easier to access.*
2. *Evaluate and enhance first impressions in high traffic physical spaces (e.g., main floor of City Hall, City signage, and Welcome to Maple Ridge signage) to ensure they convey Maple Ridge branding, and demonstrate professionalism, service-orientation and open for business philosophy.*
3. *Explore City Hall ambassador role to welcome customers to City Hall and help customers connect to services and information*
4. *Map specific customer journeys to identify possible improvements (e.g., new resident, potential business owner)*
5. *Consider renaming of Cashier/Collections counter to better reflect customer service and information, shifting focus from purely collecting payments*
6. *Improve signage within main floor City Hall to improve wayfinding from main entrance and better indicate respective counter services*
7. *Increase use of QR codes to make City information more accessible where people are (e.g., parks signs, capital project signs, surveys, or event promotion)*
8. *Consider piloting modified service hours at times to accommodate development and commuter schedules (e.g., extended evening or early morning hours).*
9. *Introduce Development Tracker to enable land-use and building permit applicants to track status of applications online.*
10. *Expand online payment options.*
11. *Update after-hours phone messages to introduce brand voice and include references to website.*
12. *Develop customer service standards for response to phone, correspondence, and email enquiries*
13. *Determine where corporate responsibility for customer service lies.*

MEASUREMENT

A responsive local government is continually monitoring and adapting its approach. Guiding principles are a touchstone that remind us that communities continually evolve and so must our communications and engagement practices. Baseline data must be collected to measure and report progress over time. Measurement indicators include:

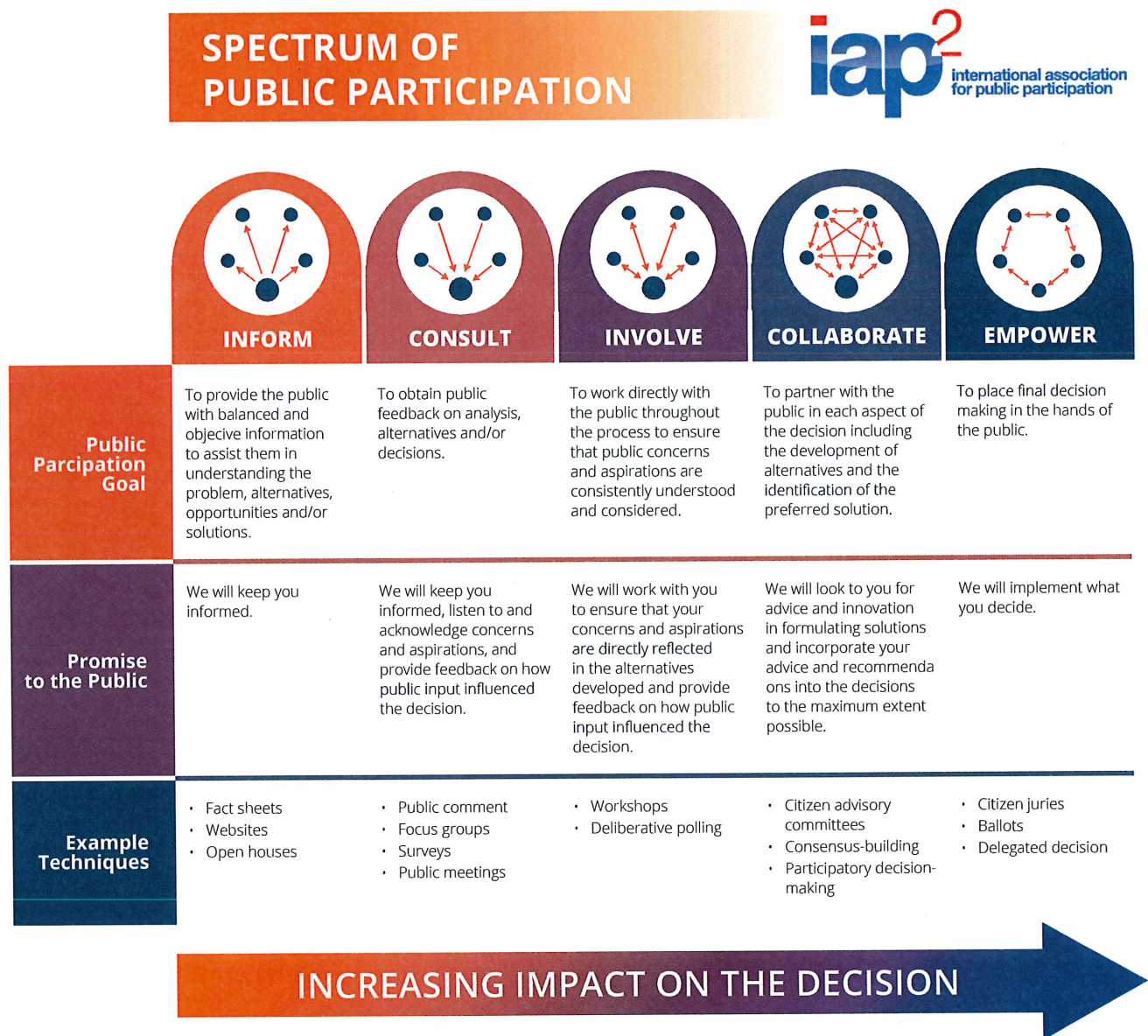
- *Website analytics (e.g. visits, page views, downloads, viewing time)*
- *Online consultation platform (e.g. # of active projects, visits, page views, participation, viewing time)*
- *E-services (e.g. registrants, transactions)*
- *Social media across all City channels (e.g. engagement, impressions, followers)*
- *Project-specific inputs (e.g. surveys, feedback forms, event attendance/participation at open houses and meetings)*
- *Service requests*
- *Citizen survey*
- *Business surveys*
- *Employee engagement data*
- *Media releases*
- *Media monitoring (e.g. accuracy, frequency, tone)*
- *Census data*



APPENDIX A

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.



APPENDIX B

IAP2 Core Values

IAP2 developed the Core Values for the Practice of Public Participation for use in developing and implementing public participation processes to help inform better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. The Core Values were developed with broad international input to identify those aspects of public participation that cross national, cultural and religious boundaries.

CORE VALUES



- 1 Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- 2 Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- 3 Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- 4 Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- 5 Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- 6 Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- 7 Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



The Core Values define expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. Processes based on the Core Values have been shown to be the most successful and respected.

