

City of Langley Sustainability Framework

May 2010

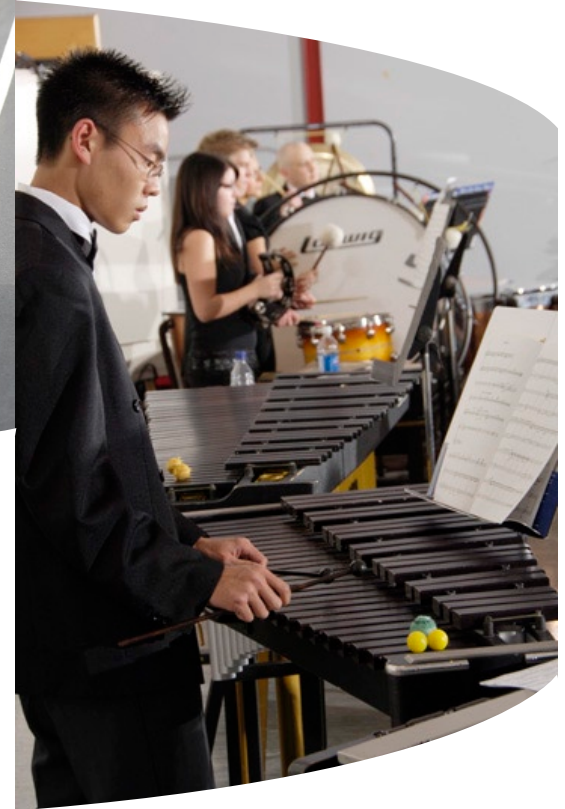
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INTRODUCTION

The City of Langley contracted Stantec Consulting in the winter of 2010 to create the City's Sustainability Framework. This was developed collaboratively, with input from community members, Council and city staff.

The Sustainability Framework is a guiding document that defines what our community will look like when sustainability is achieved. It also identifies and celebrates current City initiatives that contribute towards the community's sustainability as well as identifies future opportunities that will move the City closer towards achieving our goals.

This document is a living document which will be updated as we take on new initiatives that move us closer to our sustainability goals.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is about having a strong and healthy community. This means having a vibrant economy, well protected environment, and healthy citizens. It is about living well today, and ensuring that future generations will live well too.

Sustainability is something we all want - quality of life. The challenge is defining how we can make decisions today that will help ensure we maintain our quality of life over time.

WHY A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK?

The City of Langley has created a Sustainability Framework to express the City's commitment to sustainability, affirm the community's sustainability goals, and define a structure that aligns the City's policies, plans & actions towards a common direction. The Framework provides City Council and staff, citizens, and our community partners with a clear reference point for the future. This will help ensure that decisions made today are in line with and work towards the community's sustainability goals.



INTRODUCTION

HOW DID WE CREATE OUR SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK?

The making of the City of Langley Sustainability Framework included several events and activities. These included:

- Hosting a public workshop with residents to identify and discuss what sustainability means for the City of Langley.
- Reviewing existing policies, plans and initiatives to identify the focus areas and existing sustainability goals already reflected in official documents.
- Creating goal statements based on input from the Public Workshop and the document review.
- Gathering feedback from Council and senior staff on the draft Framework and finalizing the Framework based on the feedback.



Figure 1. Public Workshop at the Public Library

DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

- Official Community Plan
- Corporate Strategic Plan
- Downtown Master Plan
- Social Plan
- Cultural Master Plan
- Transportation Master Plan
- Affordable Housing Strategy
- Accessibility/Inclusiveness Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Parks Recreation Culture Master Plan
- Community Energy and GHG Plan
- City of Langley 2010 Community Survey
- Business Retention and Recruitment Study
- Integrated Stormwater Management Plan
- Retail Trade Area Analysis and Retail Demand Brief
- Secondary Suites Study

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CITY'S SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

The City's Sustainability Framework has three key components: a 1) **sustainability commitment**, 2) **focus areas and goal statements**, and 3) associated **current initiatives and future opportunities**. The figure below illustrates the Framework structure; followed by an explanation of each component of the Framework.



Figure 2. Sustainability Framework Structure

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT

A sustainability commitment is the Sustainability Framework's starting point. It expresses the City's pledge to demonstrate leadership in sustainability. It should be inspiring and is a call for collective action, because we will have a greater chance for success if we all work together.

FOCUS AREAS & GOAL STATEMENTS

Cities are complex as they are made up of many interconnected systems. **Focus areas** were defined to reflect these interconnected systems. These focus areas categorize where the City, its partners and the community at large have influence to create a more sustainable future.

A **goal statement** was defined for each focus area. Collectively, the goal statements define the desired future for the community. They answer the question, "What will the City of Langley look like if sustainability is achieved for this focus area?" Each goal statement is written with the intention that the goal has been achieved.

Existing City of Langley policies and plans were used to define the focus areas and goal statements. (See "documents reviewed" text box for the complete list of documents reviewed on Page 4).

9 FOCUS AREAS

- Arts, Culture & Heritage
- Energy, Climate Change & Air Quality
- Health, Safety & Well-Being
- Land Use & Housing
- Local Economy
- Natural Areas, Parks & Recreation
- Solid Waste
- Transportation
- Water

CURRENT INITIATIVES & FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

For each focus area, current initiatives and future opportunities are described. These include policies, plans and initiatives currently underway that contribute towards the community's sustainability as well as future opportunities that will move the City closer towards achieving its goals.

These are living lists that will be updated as new initiatives that move us closer to our sustainability goals are implemented.

LEADERSHIP

To be a sustainable community requires leadership, both from the municipality and from our partners and residents.

At the municipal level, it is important for both Council and staff to support sustainability initiatives. For example, the City has demonstrated leadership through its recent commitment to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings and fleet vehicles. The City also plays a role creating more awareness about the importance of sustainability and how everyone can be a part of this transformation.

At the community level, our citizens provide valuable input to the City about how it is run. We are asking our partners and residents to take active roles and spearhead initiatives to support, care for and safeguard fellow residents, the environment and the local economy.



SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT

The City of Langley is committed to demonstrating leadership that inspires its citizens and partners to work towards a sustainable future. Together we can build and sustain a safe community that is inviting to all and filled with healthy, active residents of all ages who are connected to an environment that is protected and cherished.



ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

GOAL: We have a vibrant arts and culture community that is actively supported and attended by local residents and visitors, and heritage is valued and enhanced.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City of Langley is committed to the support and enhancement of arts and culture in the community. This is articulated in the City of Langley Cultural Master Plan (2007) which supports creating awareness of arts and culture and increasing attendance at arts and cultural events. Facilities that house arts and cultural events are addressed in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan (2005). Currently the City:

- Funds a Public Art program which commissions art for public spaces.
- Provides tax exemptions and community support to the Langley Community Music School.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

Culture is based on shared attitudes, values, goals, practices and history. Arts and Culture has many components, including performing, literary, visual arts, heritage buildings and biographies.

Heritage resources include the built environment as well as natural features that may have historic, architectural, archaeological, or scenic significance that are considered to be of value to the community.

This focus area is about how arts, culture and heritage will be supported, enhanced and delivered.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The Cultural Master Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan have recommendations that currently support and will enhance arts and culture in the City of Langley in the future. Several opportunities have been identified that can integrate with these ongoing processes, some of which include:

- Exploring opportunities to increase awareness about arts and cultural events.
Example: Foster local partnerships with interested groups to create a broader based arts and cultural network.
- Exploring opportunities to develop strategies to increase attendance at arts and cultural events.
Example: Conduct a community survey that asks residents what kinds of arts and cultural events they would like to attend.

ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND AIR QUALITY

GOAL: We are an energy efficient community with low greenhouse gas emissions and good air quality. We have also adapted to the impacts of climate change.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City of Langley has committed to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions at the municipal and community level. The Corporate and Community Energy Plans have targets, policies and actions that will guide the municipality and the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Initiatives the City has already undertaken include:

- Being a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners for Climate Protection Program. This program provides a framework for communities to develop Community Energy Plans.
- Completion of Corporate and Community Energy Plans.
- A signatory of the provincial Climate Action Charter – which commits local governments to be carbon neutral in their operations by 2012.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

Energy consumption in the City of Langley is largely from the heating and cooling of buildings, and using cars to move people and goods. This focus area is about how our community energy needs can be met whilst managing our associated greenhouse gas emissions and air quality.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The Community and Corporate Energy Plans have provided a baseline for reducing GHG emissions. There are several opportunities that have been identified in these plans. Key recommendations include:

- **Existing Buildings:** Upgrading insulation, installing energy efficient windows, upgrade to energy efficient appliances.
- **New Buildings:** Exploring opportunities to develop district energy systems which provide energy from a centralized plan to groups of buildings and have a high rate of efficiency. Explore opportunities to install solar heating for hot water, which has the potential to increase efficiency by 50% or more. Encourage mixed use development, which can more efficiently utilize infrastructure, provide opportunities for co-benefits for energy use, reduces transportation costs for residents, etc.
- **Transportation:** Designing more walkable communities, improve cycling infrastructure, encourage “right-sizing” of vehicles, build more accessible and attractive public transit shelters, and encourage multi-modal street design.
- **Solid Waste:** Reducing the amount of solid waste going to the landfill by increasing the amount of recycling, and composting of kitchen and garden waste.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

GOAL: We are a community that embraces all ages and backgrounds; we have a safe community that promotes active lifestyles and has a healthy citizenry.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City is committed to the health, safety and well-being of its residents. This is articulated in the Social Plan (2007), the Accessibility and Inclusiveness Study (2007), and the Crime Reduction Strategy. The following are current initiatives that are connected to these policies and plans:

- The City has one of the few disability accessible playgrounds for children in Douglas Park.
- There is a community garden in the Nicomekl Elementary School.
- The City provides grants to non-profits and tax exemptions to support social infrastructure.

Fact

The City recently won the Communities in Bloom international awards for medium sized municipalities. British Columbia Communities in Bloom is a program that inspires communities to enhance the visual appeal of neighbourhoods and public spaces, through the creative use of regionally appropriate plants and landscaping with an overall respect to environmental stewardship and preservation of heritage assets.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The plans and policies mentioned above have recommendations that support health, safety and well-being in the City of Langley. One area of opportunity is to support the growing of food locally and establishing local food distribution networks in the City. This includes:

- Exploring opportunities to develop a food policy to encourage the development of local food systems and support local farmers and support local food distribution networks.
Example: Host a series of community workshops to identify barriers and opportunities to encourage growing food in the City and establishing food distribution networks.
- Exploring partnership opportunities for developing urban farms within the City.
Example: Within the B.C. Hydro Right-of-Way.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

A healthy lifestyle is a combination of physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being. Physical well being includes the accessibility and availability of nutritious food.

LAND USE AND HOUSING

GOAL: We are a complete, livable community that offers a wide range of housing choices to meet the needs of all residents.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City oversees the delivery of a range of initiatives that govern land use and housing. Policies that govern land use and housing include the Official Community Plan, Affordable Housing Strategy, the Zoning By-law. The City's current initiatives for this area are too numerous to list here, but here is a selection as they relate to the Sustainability Framework:

- Zoning bylaw amendment in 2006 to allow secondary suites and waived all permit fees until 2008.
- Restrictive policies on converting rental housing into condominiums, resulting in the retention of a significant rental housing stock over the last 25 years.
- Partnerships with non-profits to develop social housing.
- The City of Langley leases land to the Salvation Army for \$1 a year for its Gateway of Hope development, which houses the homeless and the at-risk of being homeless. Gateway of Hope also receives a property tax exemption from the
- Completion of a Downtown Master Plan that focuses on strengthening the unique local economy in combination with design solutions that integrate its existing character with a vision of a vibrant, thriving community.
- Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption for Commercial Property Owners who are interested in improvements to their property. Tax exemptions are available to those owners who have an assessed improvement value of over \$100,000.

- Support for higher multi-family residential densities in and around the downtown core as recommended by the MF Density Review Study.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Future opportunities will generally arise from continuing the long term transition to more intensive land uses that support the viability of the downtown core and promote sustainable transportation choices such as public transit, walking or cycling. Some specific areas of opportunity include:

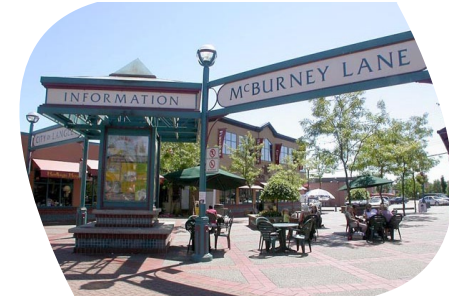
- **Downtown Core:** Implementing the Downtown Master Plan to achieve Special Design Districts of a unique and sustainable character connected by strong public realm elements.
- **Service Commercial Areas:** Enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to improve sustainability in arterial commercial districts.
- **Industrial Areas:** Promoting infill and vertical intensification to achieve higher employment density and an enhanced tax base.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

The City manages the development and renewal of buildings and neighbourhoods. This focus area is about identifying how we will develop the City's lands, neighbourhoods and housing in a livable, affordable and sustainable way.

LOCAL ECONOMY

GOAL: We have a diverse, strong economy with secure jobs close to home, and a mixture of well-established and new businesses that makes our Downtown unique, and complements the City's other shopping areas.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City is committed to strengthening and diversifying its local economy, and increasing the number of good local jobs.

Fact

Approximately 17,000 jobs were located in the City of Langley in 2006 while only 12,800 residents were part of the labour force. Thus the jobs/worker ratio was approximately 1.3, one of the highest ratios of any municipality in Metro Vancouver. (2006 Census, Statistics Canada)

Current initiatives include:

- Completion of the Downtown Master Plan process, which places a large emphasis on economic development and capitalizing on the unique economic offerings of the downtown core.
- Completion of a Retail Trade Area Analysis.
- Completion of a Business Retention and Recruitment Strategy.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

Local businesses and jobs form the backbone of the City's local economy. This focus area is about how to meet the community's needs for a strong local economy that supports the community and City operations.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The City has completed several economic development planning efforts. These initiatives have identified how our local economy can be strengthened. One key area of opportunity is the development of Downtown Langley in accordance with the Downtown Master Plan vision. The City's unique identity and character are strongly related to Downtown Langley and its development will play a vital role in the achievement of a sustainable local economy. Other examples include:

- *Attaining a "critical mass" of population and employment density to attract rapid transit service to the City.*
- *Building on promotional and "branding" initiatives to market the community as a distinctive and high quality location for visiting, residing or conducting business.*

NATURAL AREAS, PARKS AND RECREATION



GOAL: We have a community that is filled with parks and natural areas that are the keystone of its local ecology and biodiversity. Our green spaces are connected by trails and greenways and provide a range of recreation opportunities that are used by residents of all ages.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City of Langley has a Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan that outlines services/initiatives and policies to maintain the parks system and recreation programming in the City. City of Langley currently maintains over 17 outdoor areas including natural areas, parks, gardens, and trails. There are two main recreation facilities: the Douglas Recreation Centre and the Timms Community Centre.

Fact

The City of Langley has more hectares of parkland and higher per capita spending on parks and recreation than neighbouring municipalities.
(City of Langley Social Plan, 2007)

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

Natural areas and parks help protect the local ecosystem and biodiversity while also providing opportunity for recreation and leisure activities. This focus area is about how to protect, restore our green spaces, and provide recreation and leisure activities for residents and visitors.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES:

According to the 2010 Community Survey, residents place a high value on recreation and natural areas as an important component of a high quality of life. Future opportunities that can integrate with existing initiatives and services are activities that bring the community closer to nature and create a sense of ownership and responsibility for parks and natural areas. Examples include:

- *Establishing more community gardens.*
- *Creating stewardship programs for parks and natural areas.*
- *Developing and maintaining greenways to connect Downtown Langley with parks and natural areas as proposed in the Public Realm Plan.*

SOLID WASTE

GOAL: We are committed to being a zero waste community, and we minimize the amount of waste going to the landfill.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City of Langley oversees the Single Family Residential Garbage Collection, Yard waste and Recycling Collection program, which collects waste from City of Langley homes. The City of Langley is also part of the regional Zero Waste Challenge that is coordinated by MetroVancouver, which is a commitment to reduce, re-use or recycle 70% of our garbage from the waste stream. Solid waste collection activities for the City of Langley are under the jurisdiction of the MetroVancouver Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan. The City currently does not have its own local Solid Waste Management Plan.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

This focus area is about the garbage we create and dispose of in our landfills and how we can reduce and better manage the amount of waste that is created.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES:

There are a number of solid waste management opportunities, including:

- Implementing relevant portions of the Metro Vancouver Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan to coordinate local waste reduction and collection activities.
Example: Develop baseline data for the amount of waste generated by City of Langley residents and businesses and identify additional strategies for waste reduction.
- Working with Metro Vancouver and the City of Surrey to develop a kitchen waste composting program.

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL: We have attractive and convenient transportation choices that move people and goods efficiently both within the City and to and from other Lower Mainland communities.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City has completed a Master Transportation Plan (2004) that has policies and actions for the existing road network, pedestrians, cycling, and strategies to increase transit ridership. The City also has a separate policy for traffic calming in residential neighbourhoods. A major transportation initiative that has begun recently in the City is the replacement of the bridge on the Fraser Highway over the Nicomekl River. It will replace the Fraser Highway/Nicomekl Bridge and expand it from two to four lanes, connecting the City of Langley with the Township of Langley. This is expected to provide local jobs, and promote safer local transportation as well as encourage alternative forms of transportation with the addition of bike lanes and sidewalks for pedestrians. The City also participates in transit planning with TransLink in the form of the South of Fraser Area Transit Plan and the Surrey Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Study.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

Transportation is about the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services. This focus area is about how our transportation system can facilitate this movement in a more sustainable manner.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES:

There is an opportunity to build on current transportation initiatives in a number of ways. The following are several examples of future opportunities the City may consider to encourage alternative transportation choices in the City. Future opportunities include:

- *Supporting the future provision of rapid transit service to the City through continuing densification and station area planning as envisioned in the Downtown Master Plan.*
- *Providing transit incentives to local businesses – explore the feasibility of providing bus passes to local businesses to give to their employees.*
- *Exploring the potential of establishing a Ride Share Program in the City of Langley.*
- *Increasing the amount of on and off-street bicycle lanes.*
- *Amending the Zoning Bylaw to require end-of-trip facilities for cyclists.*

WATER

GOAL: We have clean, safe water and residents are committed to reducing water use to ensure that it remains pristine and plentiful for future generations.



CURRENT INITIATIVES

The City of Langley completed an Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP) in 2009 with policies and actions to address storm water quality and stream water quality issues. The City is responsible for ensuring that existing infrastructure can accommodate precipitation runoff, as well as ensure that water quality in streams is not degraded. The ISMP's recommendations are expected to be implemented over several years through the annual capital works program budget.

FOCUS AREA DEFINITION

Protecting our natural water bodies and providing a dependable supply of clean and safe water requires maintaining aquatic environments and using water efficiently. This focus area is about how to protect natural water bodies and their buffer areas and effectively manage water use and stormwater.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES:

It is important to continue reducing our water use, not only to prevent our storm sewer system from overload but also to continue to provide a dependable supply of water. Future opportunities include:

- *Exploring the feasibility of establishing a rain barrel program that collects rainwater to use for garden watering.*
- *Exploring the development of a water education program whose curriculum could include promotion of water-wise gardens, reduction of water use in the home; encouraging installation of low volume plumbing fixtures.*

CONCLUSIONS

The Sustainability Framework provides guidance to create a more sustainable future for our city. The value of this Framework is that it defines a structure for understanding how our community can work towards becoming more sustainable. The Framework organizes and communicates our sustainability goals and aligns these goals with what we are already doing while also outlining future opportunities.

Below is a brief discussion on some key considerations we will apply as we work towards achieving our sustainability goals:

HOLISTIC AND INTERCONNECTED FOCUS AREAS

The Sustainability Framework is holistic in nature; it identifies nine focus areas that together represent the key systems that make up our community. Being holistic, each of these focus areas do not operate in isolation, they are all linked to each other in various ways. For example, energy and climate change are closely linked to our land use and transportation choices. As we consider future opportunities it is important that we are aware of how one initiative may affect another.

CELEBRATING OUR CURRENT SUCCESSES

The Sustainability Framework is a living document. The initiatives in this document will change as new policies, plans and programs are implemented. We will continue to celebrate and create awareness about what the City of Langley and its residents are doing to achieve our sustainability goals. We hope that by promoting our current initiatives we will gather support for future initiatives.

EXPLORING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

There are a range of future opportunities that have been identified in the Sustainability Framework. Each of these opportunities does one of two things: builds on recommendations for future action in existing policies and plans, or proposes areas where more action is needed in order to meet our sustainability goals. In either case, careful consideration is required when defining these next steps. This will ensure we have a balance between social, economic, and ecological objectives and that we will initiate activities that will provide multiple benefits for a sustainable future.

LEADERSHIP

Every person in the City of Langley has the responsibility to take action so that we can achieve our sustainability goals. The City of Langley is committed to taking a leadership role to achieve our goals, but we also need our partners and residents to join in this commitment.

