



# REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: **Mayor and Councillors**

Subject: **Ottawa Mission Summary April 17 – April 18, 2024**

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From: Nathan Pachal  
Mayor

Date: April 22, 2024

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## RECOMMENDATION:

THAT City Council receive the Ottawa Mission Summary report dated April 23, 2024 for information.

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## PURPOSE:

This report is a summary of the discussions held with Members of Parliament on our recent mission to Ottawa to discuss and advocate Langley City's position with respect to housing, infrastructure, transportation, culture, immigration, and refugee issues.

## POLICY:

Not applicable.

## COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

Langley City Council's recent mission to Ottawa to engage with Members of Parliament from the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties was extremely informative and productive. Mayor Nathan Pachal and Councillors Paul Albrecht, Leith White, and Mike Solyom had constructive meetings with members of the Pacific Caucus; MP Peter Fragiskatos, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities; MP Paul Chiang, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; MP Tako van Popta; MP Brad Redekopp; MP Scott Aitchison, Shadow Minister of Housing; and MP Tom Kmiec, Shadow Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

The following is a brief summary of our discussions:

- **Immigration and Settlement Considerations** - Langley City Council noted that our community is experiencing the arrival of an unprecedented number of individuals who are choosing to settle in our community due to several factors including affordable living, school, work, and quality of life. Data from the 2021 Census indicated that there were 4,395 newcomers representing a 48.6 percent increase in new immigrant population growth between 2016 and 2021, which is reported to be the highest percentage in British Columbia. Langley City Council noted that language training is one of many needs to support the influx of newcomers in our community. Many newcomers initially arrive in communities to the west of Langley City like Surrey or Coquitlam and funding is provided to the immigration agencies and services in those communities. However, they soon relocate to Langley City mainly due to housing affordability. Therefore, there is a real need for funding to build infrastructure capacity for affordable housing, transportation, childcare, and multi-function service spaces that are inclusive and culturally appropriate, as well as social infrastructure for language training and services.
- **Housing Accelerator Fund** - Langley City Council noted that there were close to 450 homes completed in 2023, with over 1,000 homes currently under construction and another 2,600 in the application process. We will soon have two SkyTrain stations in Langley City and our Official Community Plan was developed with the lens of attracting Transit-Oriented Development to densify the areas around the SkyTrain corridor and stations, in support of the significant Federal investment into the Surrey Langley SkyTrain project. Langley City is doing our part to provide more housing as well as affordable housing to address the national housing crisis. Although we were not successful with our Housing Accelerator Fund application, we look forward to reapplying under the second round of the \$400 million HAF top up.
- **Infrastructure** – Langley City Council noted that much of our infrastructure is aging and needs repair or replacement to accommodate the growth of the community. We have made, and will continue to make, significant investments to replace aging infrastructure, however the costs are well beyond the financial capacity of local governments. We need a sustainable infrastructure assets management fund to increase investment in infrastructure renewal. Additionally, Langley City has several ‘Shovel Ready’ projects that may be eligible under upcoming infrastructure funding programs.
- **Performing Arts and Cultural Centre** – Mayor Pachal noted that “there is no life if there is no art”. Langley City Council noted that there is no performing arts and cultural centre in the Langleys and the eastern part of Surrey. With the Langley

City Centre SkyTrain station within 200 metres, and within downtown Langley, from the proposed performing arts and cultural centre, this will be a highly attractive and sought after location for local and regional acts.

- **Airport Zoning Regulations (AZR)** – Langley City Council noted development in Langley City can only be built up to 150 feet above ground (12 to 13 storey). With the significant Federal investment in the Surrey Langley SkyTrain project and the desire of all levels of government to support Transit-Oriented Development and provide additional housing for all segments of our population, especially affordable housing, and to reduce GHG emissions, we need the ability to increase the height of buildings within the AZR by either a blanket exemption from the Aeronautical Act or an exemption for specific sites.

MPs from both parties were extremely engaged and interested in understanding our issues. There were robust discussions between Langley City Council and MPs at each meeting and we received valuable advice and feedback on how Langley City can achieve our objectives. Some of the takeaways and action items include:

#### Immigration and Settlement Considerations

MP Paul Chiang, Parliamentary Secertary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship noted that, being an immigrant himself, he is fully aware of the challenges facing newcomers. Almost 60% of the populations in his riding of Markham—Unionville are immigrants and hence he is fully aware of the programs and support necessary to support newcomers to Canada. MP Chiang noted he would very much like to visit Langley City the next time he travels to BC to see first-hand the issues facing newcomers in our community.

MP Tom Kmiec, Shadow Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship noted that the current immigration policy limits foreign construction workers from coming to Canada. This has significant impact on attracting skilled workers to come to Canada to mitigate the skilled workers shortage problem. MP Kmiec noted that the Provincial Nominee Program<sup>1</sup> (PNP) in other provinces, such as Manitoba, is more refined than BC and that BC may wish to consider reviewing and adopting the PNP processes from other provinces.

#### *Action Item:*

1. *Follow up with MP Paul Chiang's office to set up meetings with immigration and settlement services agencies in Langley to discuss the support and needs for built infrastructure (housing, transportation, childcare, and multi-function service*

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<sup>1</sup> The Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) is for workers who have the skills, education, and work experience to contribute to the economy of a specific province or territory who want to live in that province and want to become permanent residents of Canada.

*spaces that are inclusive and culturally appropriate), social infrastructure (programming, language training, peer navigators, and services), and communication infrastructure (early warning systems that are accessible in multiple languages, culturally sensitivity training, and civic orientation into Canadian life).*

- 2. Forward the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) feedback from MP Tom Kmiec to MLA Andrew Mercier for his consideration.*

#### Housing Accelerator Fund

MP Peter Fragiskatos, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities noted that he has reviewed our Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) file and informed us that CMHC will provide Langley City with an explanation on why we were not successful with our initial HAF application. This will allow Langley City to adjust our HAF application to have a better chance for success for the \$400 million top-up.

#### *Action Item:*

- 1. Staff to follow up with CMHC to obtain an explanation of why we were not successful with our initial HAF application.*

#### Infrastructure Asset Management Fund

MPs from both parties were keenly aware of the funding challenges facing municipalities to replace aging infrastructure.

Reference was made to Budget 2024 where the Federal Government is proposing to provide \$6 billion over 10 years, starting in 2024-25, to Infrastructure Canada to launch a new Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund to accelerate the construction and upgrading of housing, enabling water, wastewater, stormwater, and solid waste infrastructure that will directly enable a new housing supply and help improve densification.

#### *Action Item:*

- 1. Staff to follow up on the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund as more details to follow from the Federal Government.*

#### Performing Arts and Cultural Centre

MP Harjit Sajjan, President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic

Development Agency of Canada suggested that Langley City should explore potential funding opportunities for the Performing Arts and Cultural Centre through the PacifiCan program.

*Action Item:*

- 1. Follow up with MP Harjit Sajjan's office to set up a meeting to discuss the PacifiCan program and explore potential funding opportunities through the program.*

Airport Zoning Regulations (AZR)

MPs from both parties appreciated the need to amend the Airport Zoning Regulations (AZR) for the Langley Regional Airport (CYNJ) to allow taller buildings above 150 feet above ground (12 to 13 storey) to maximize Transit-Oriented Development along the SkyTrain corridor and stations. The MPs supported our efforts to engage with Transport Canada to consider amending the *Aeronautical Act* to relax the height restrictions within the AZR by either a blanket height exemption or a height exemption for specific sites.

*Action Item:*

- 1. Staff to re-engage with Transport Canada and BC's Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to explore the possibility of amending the Aeronautical Act to relax the height restrictions within CYNJ's AZR by either a blanket height exemption or a height exemption for specific sites.*

As the Mayor of Langley City, I am really proud of what we presented to the MPs and how we presented ourselves. It was a great team effort, and we are starting to get Langley City on the map in Ottawa.

On behalf of City Council, I would like to express my sincere thanks to MP John Aldag and MP Tako van Popta for organizing the meetings with MPs from both parties.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

Not applicable.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

None provided.

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Respectfully Submitted,



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Nathan Pachal  
Mayor