



REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: **Mayor and Councillors**

Subject: Langley City's Citizens' Assembly Testing and Activation Update

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From: Dena Kae Beno
Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Social Planning

Date: December 4, 2024

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Report titled, "Langley City Citizens' Assembly Testing and Activation Update" be received for information.
 2. THAT Staff be authorized to mobilize the Langley City Citizens' Assembly's Solution Lab testing outcomes and resulting proposed solutions and actions for further research and deliberation and be brought back to Council for future consideration.
 3. THAT staff be authorized to proceed with the Citizens' Assembly mobilization plan, with a priority focus on Community Safety, Health and Well-being Pathways and Transformation activities.
 4. THAT subject to Council consideration and adoption, integrate the municipal Indigenous relations, reconciliation, and action framework elements into the Citizens' Assembly and other strategic initiatives that the City currently has underway (e.g., Resiliency Framework, Social, Cultural and Economic Development Framework, and KPI Dashboard-performance measurement system).
 5. THAT the Citizens' Assembly resource plan be advanced for City capital and operating budget consideration.
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PURPOSE:

This report responds to the September 20, 2022, Council Resolution to authorize resources and staff to convene a Citizens' Assembly, that provide background of the Citizens' Assembly development activities, and in four sections cover the following areas:

1. Citizens' Assembly Concept Testing: Solution Labs and the 2024 Village Café-Resource and Referral Fair Events
2. The Citizens' Assembly Plan
3. Next Steps and Timeline
4. Summary and Conclusion: Bringing it All Together through Consensus-Building

POLICY:

As part of Council's endorsed resolution, Staff was authorized to conduct the required work to launch a Citizens' Assembly with a focus on improving community safety and well-being. A Citizens' Assembly is like a special group of people who get together to talk about important issues and give advice to the city council. It functions in some ways as a "Mini-Government" made up of ordinary Citizens's. Citizens' Assembly members will represent different parts of the community – including Indigenous people, newcomers, and people with different experiences – to make sure everyone's voice is heard.

Citizens' Assemblies are not meant to be regular meetings, rather it's a carefully designed process. Members will:

- **Research:** Learn about the problems and solutions from experts and residents.
- **Discuss:** Hold sessions to have open and respectful conversations. They will consider many viewpoints.
- **Decide:** Work together to find the best solutions.
- **Recommend:** Give advice and suggestions to the Langley City Council to help improve community safety and well-being.

The Assembly will focus on things like:

- Improving health and safety.
- Increasing access to affordable housing.
- Creating stronger families and communities.
- Improving health and safety.
- Helping people access connected services, employment, training and transportation.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

Citizens' Assembly Concept Testing: Solution Labs and the 2024 Village Café-Resource and Referral Fair Events

Before the full Assembly starts, Langley City held smaller "solution labs" and a Village Café Resource and Referral Fair series to test the idea and gather feedback. The "solution labs" were like smaller versions of the Citizens' Assembly. They focused on issues, such as supportive housing helping families to build resiliency, comprehensive community safety, health and well-being pathways, and connecting transportation, employment and education access and opportunity.

The key was to get many people involved in the discussion, who have different experiences and perspectives. These labs led to some important ideas:

- **Supportive housing:** Build different kinds of housing that meet and are connected to responding to people's various needs. This could involve small houses alongside or integrated into larger housing complexes, in addition to culturally appropriate accommodations.
- **Families:** Create more ways for families to connect, get support, and share information. This may involve activating shared learning and innovation labs where people can learn new skills, connect with each other, or get help with different services.
- **Community Health:** Improve how services work together to support people's health and well-being prior to crisis or emergency situations arising.

The Village Café- Langley City Resource and Referral Fair series was held to inform people about the available resources and services. They also served to bring together different organizations and community members to strengthen and deepen relationships. The focus of the fair was also the focus of the solution labs, which offered an opportunity for a deeper conversation about challenges and proposed solutions.

Langley City's Citizens' Assembly Plan

Langley City's Citizens' Assembly will follow a set plan to ensure it is fair, effective and comprehensive. The plan includes:

- **Selection:** Members will be carefully chosen to ensure the Assembly represents the whole community fairly. This is done through a random selection process, making sure different groups and people are involved.

- **Meetings:** The Assembly will have regular sessions and discussions. These will be facilitated by an experienced person to ensure they are productive and fair.
- **Research:** The Assembly and its supporting research design teams will use different ways to research issues and understand them well. This could include surveys, interviews, meetings with experts, or collaborative research and design processes.
- **Recommendations:** The Assembly will create recommendations for the council. They will also participate in community events like the inaugural Community Forum to make sure their suggestions are heard by the community.
- **Indigenous Relations:** Special attention will be paid to ensure that Indigenous perspectives are included at every stage of the process and the City's policies and practices are supportive of these outcomes. This includes working with local First Nations and incorporating traditional Indigenous knowledge.

Next Steps and Timeline

The Citizens' Assembly is proposed to officially start in November 2024, and it's expected to run for a little over a year. The process will include:

- **Recruitment:** Choosing members to fairly represent Langley's diverse community.
- **Meetings:** Holding regular meetings and discussions.
- **Research:** Gathering information through various methods.
- **Recommendations:** Developing suggestions for the City Council to improve community safety and well-being.

The Assembly will use a variety of methods to make sure it hears from many people and considers different viewpoints. It will include input from subject matter experts, Indigenous communities, and other community partners and voices.

In summary, the proposed timeline to activate Community Safety Assembly and Solution Lab design team process is as follows:

- Prepare social marketing, circulate invitations, and initiate screening and selection process of Assembly and design team participants (November-January 2024).
- Launch orientation, training, onboarding and launch of Integrated Assembly activities (January/February 2025).

- Activate six (6) Assembly Sessions and Design Team Pods (3-4 sessions, each (February-June 2025)
- Host inaugural Annual Community Forum, presentation of Community Safety Assembly recommendations, and Solution Lab pitches (June 2025)
- Assembly Report to Council (July 2025)
- Conduct Impact Evaluation and report to Council (September 2025)
- Quarterly monitoring reports (On-going)
- Outcome and progress reporting at Annual Community Forum (June 2026)

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

There is a projected budget of \$88,455 to cover all costs directly related to the Citizens' Assembly and its integrated mobilization plan that activates community development initiatives, social planning outcomes, and enhanced coordination across systems to support more effective delivery of services with reduced impact to the City.

SUMMARY:

Bringing it All Together through Consensus-Building

The Langley City Citizens' Assembly is a unique approach to improving community well-being. By bringing together diverse voices and using research, dialogue and collaboration, the Assembly aims to create meaningful and lasting change.

The process involves regular communication with Council, integration with community development initiatives, and other activities so everyone is informed and involved.

Ultimately, the goal is to make Langley City a safer, healthier, and more resilient place for everyone. The plan incorporates a strong focus on equity, inclusion, and collaboration between local organizations and community members.

The information from the Citizens' Assembly will help shape policies and actions that will make a real difference in Langley City.

ALTERNATIVES:

Conducting traditional decision-making processes without the inclusion of Citizens' Assembly.

Respectfully Submitted,

"Dena Kae Beno"

Dena Kae Beno
Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Social Planning

Attachment:

1. Invitation letter to participate on Langley City's Inaugural Citizens's Assembly

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

I support the recommendation.



Francis Cheung, P. Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer