



REPORT TO COUNCIL

To: **Mayor Schaffer and Councillors**

Subject **Langley City: Nexus of Community**

Report #: 18-41

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From: Francis Cheung, P. Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

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RECOMMENDATION:

THAT City Council endorse the report entitled ***Langley City: Nexus of Community*** and its companion document entitled ***Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report***.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from City Council on the report entitled ***Langley City: Nexus of Community*** and its companion document entitled ***Langley Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report*** which sets out the vision of Langley City, with an implementation plan, to capitalize on the unique opportunity of the new fixed rail rapid transit line that is coming to Langley City in the next eight to ten years.

POLICY:

Moving forward, the implementation of various strategies under ***Langley City: Nexus of Community*** and its companion document entitled ***Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report*** will require consultation with the public, various agencies and pertinent stakeholders on policy changes.

COMMENTS/ANALYSIS:

On June 28, 2018, the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and the TransLink Board finalized more than \$7 billion in transportation improvements under

Phase 2 of the Mayors' 10-Year Vision. The transportation improvements under Phase 2 include the introduction of the Fraser Highway B-Line, which is scheduled to be operational in 2019, and a \$30 Million investment for project development and potential early works for the Surrey-Langley Light rapid transit Line. Langley City Council expects that the Federal and Provincial governments and TransLink will fulfill their commitment to fund Phase 3 of the Mayors' 10-Year Vision to construct the Surrey-Langley Light Rapid Transit Line (LRT) within the next 8 to 10 years.

The extension of the fixed rail rapid transit to Langley City is no longer a distant vision; the associated Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities will provide new access and connections to Metro Vancouver, opening up a new awareness and market opportunity for the City. It will further cement the City as the regional city centre within Metro Vancouver and a growth hub in the Fraser Valley. To this end, the City needs to explore how it can take advantage of future opportunities which are expected to include rapid transit, less reliance on motor vehicles and more pedestrian oriented development. It will also require more affordable housing, more mixed-use development, meeting the needs of an aging population, small business support and resources for start-ups to ensure "Langley City is the Place to Be... for Business". This will create a thriving and complete community supporting the new digital economy. These components represent opportunities but their implementation will not automatically occur. This will require a strategy and a commitment to implement that strategy, including allocating necessary resources.

Langley City: Nexus of Community and its companion document entitled ***Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report*** are the culmination of many months of planning and consultation with City Council and a panel of experts, all of whom contributed toward creating a visioning document. The document establishes a comprehensive future plan that predicates transformational growth and that builds on Langley City's strengths to create a vibrant and thriving model community over the next 25+ years. Aspirational and functional goals along with an implementation strategy, including a communication plan, will ensure that the City continues to move from dream to practical reality.

Following is the journey that we took to create this visioning document:

Information Gathering and Market Intelligence

A broad team of consultants, led by the Arlington Group, including Andrew Yan Consulting, MVH Urban Planning & Design Inc. and Rennie Market Intelligence provided a detailed picture of the current state of Langley City, including the obstacles to be overcome as well as the opportunities that merit exploration and future action. The background research consisted of:

- A review of the 2016 census results, current market conditions and recent development patterns;
- A review of existing strategic land use planning tools including the Official Community Plan (adopted 2006) and Zoning Bylaw (adopted 1996);
- Interviews with key stakeholders and local agencies concerning the City's current image, future potential and key indicators for change; and
- Exploration of potential triggers for change in the community, such as a rapid transit connection.

Visioning Workshops

The background research was followed by two visioning workshops over two days. The workshops were organized and facilitated by Lucent Quay Consulting Inc. The first session brought together a carefully selected group of leaders and experts¹ in areas like city planning, place-making, sustainability, architecture, politics, recreation and wellness, education, technology, and lifestyle. They brought their curiosity, creativity, passion and a wealth of experience from a variety of fields. The second session was held with the Mayor and all Langley City Councillors who actively participated in a series of idea-sharing exercises providing their wisdom and advice on how to launch Langley City forward.

The starting point for the workshops, and for any journey of discovery, was to define and give shape to the ideas that connect to our hopes and dreams.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT CITY?

- A feeling of welcome and safety
- Friendliness and people on the streets, day and night
- A sense of place, character and identity that showcases the values and ideals of the residents
- History around you as a reminder of the past and to give context to the present
- The diversity of people and ideas which makes a community whole and multifaceted
- A walkable city of pedestrian scale
- Development on a smaller scale to emphasize community
- A magnet of entertainment and attractions
- Greenspace and easy access to nature and recreation

¹ Stephen Beatty, Janet Burden, Christopher Bush, Hugh Carter, Lilian Chau, Dr. Michael Chung, Dr. Alan Davis, Murray Dinwoodie, Peter Fassbender, Dr. Lawrence Frank, Michael Gellar, Mike Harcourt, Andy Hobbs, Norman Hotson, Teri James, Kokila Lochan, Craig Sheather, Lindsay Smith, and Casie Stewart

Langley City has the building blocks for many of the things which make a city great. Participants in the visioning workshops recognized this and the sentiment was unanimous: Langley City has enormous potential. There was also consensus that it will require the right vision and commitment to realize the full potential. The advice was clear:

- Don't be afraid to think big
- Be bold and make big leaps
- Build for diversity of people; create new zoning to encourage a range of possibilities
- Create spaces that promote livability; gathering areas connected by walking and cycling trails with low and mid-rise density around them
- Renew the downtown core to protect and invest in the heart of the community
- Attract young wealth creators by providing the right mix of education, culture, environmental efficiency, business and social networks
- Focus on innovation and creativity, develop something really new
- Embrace holistic health for residents of all ages and focus particularly on all residents' ability to age in place
- Act now, don't wait

Creation of **Langley City: Nexus of Community**

The incredible wealth and depth of material collected in the workshops formed the basis and the raw materials to build the four cornerstones for a future vision. The insights and advice, concepts and examples spoke continually to our idea of nexus and fell into these four key areas. The cornerstones set a strong course for our journey ahead and give us focus and motivation.

Community – Community is the place where everyone knows you. The place where you say hello to your neighbours and the clerk at the local store. Where you raise your children. Where you grow old surrounded by your support network of friends and family. Where residents and visitors alike feel safe, capable, valued, and held up. Community is what gives us strength, feeds our hearts and minds, and supports us to reach our potential.

Connected – We are all looking for more from our cities. Young adults are seeking authenticity and uniqueness in their lifestyle and the desire to connect in a concrete and personal way. Employers are looking to locate in areas with transit-oriented developments because employees are demanding it. Connection requires easy access and pedestrian-scale, walkable areas across the city, not just in the heart of downtown. Whether it is along the Nicomekl Flood Plain, or a residential street in Uplands, we want to move between the different areas of our life with ease.

Experiences – People need a reason to come to our city. It is not enough to give them the means – we must also provide them with culture, entertainment, recreation and places to meet. Developing lifestyle is as important to a city's health as developing infrastructure. Langley City has experimented with destination entertainment, food, activities and retail and shown that it is possible. The key is to create things that are truly unique and appeal to locals and tourists alike and build on the work we have already done.

Integrated – Integration is the comfort of knowing that your city possesses the employment and services to provide for all residents according to their needs. It is a place where you live, work and play, and a place where everything you need is close by. We strive for a city that is self-sustaining, efficient, and welcoming. A place where city government partners with business and industry to build places where people want to be, where it's easy to do business and where community funds offer benefits to all.

Carried within each cornerstone are the keys to our success: supporting plans, policies and actions. We will focus our efforts within these key areas on:

- Building a strong base – developing and sustaining policies, plans and initiatives
- Working with partners – advancing key projects
- Demonstrating action – communicating, building excitement and co-leading at every step

Why Nexus? Nexus is defined as a connection or series of connections linking two or more things. A focal point, the central and most important point or place.

Langley City has always been a nexus, a place of meeting, and a space between places. The Nicomekl River that runs through our community offers a snapshot of journeys past: items left behind by Indigenous groups along its banks, perhaps en route from the coast to the fishing grounds of the lower Fraser Canyon. A route travelled later by European explorers and now marked forever in our history as Portage Park. We are now the nexus between the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver—a portal between two worlds.

Langley City is nexus and this is our vision. We are at the nexus of community, connection, integration and experiences.

Companion Document - **Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report**

A companion document entitled **Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation** has been created that outlines the recommendations which form an implementation strategy with a proposed timeline for rolling out projects. It is

anticipated that many, if not all, of the recommendations will require public consultation and Council approval prior to implementation.

The recommendations provide implementation measures that address the four themes - 'community', 'connected', 'experiences' and 'integrated' - of the vision, a vision that includes aspirational goals and implementation measures, including a communication plan, to ensure that the City continues to move from dream to reality.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Many of the recommendations outlined in the ***Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report*** will require staffing and financial resources. The financial requirements to implement these recommendations will be allocated in future financial plans for Council consideration.

ALTERNATIVES:

That City Council decline to endorse the report entitled ***Langley City: Nexus of Community*** and its companion document entitled ***Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report***.

SUMMARY:

Langley City has often been described as the Hub of the Fraser Valley, not only geographically but also economically. From a historical perspective and into the future, Langley City is the central point and a vital link between Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. So, it is fitting that this visioning document is entitled ***Langley City: Nexus of Community***.

We have a unique opportunity to capitalize on the new light rapid transit line that is coming to Langley City in the next eight to ten years. This visioning document tells the story of that opportunity. But the story isn't just about transit. It is about the city and the people that will grow around it—before it even arrives—so that when the train comes, its stations are places of arrival, not departure. It is a story that builds on our existing community strengths of compact design, natural beauty and job-creating industries, and evolves in a bold and sustainable way.

We will create a city that attracts people not only with the promise of a better life but with the assurance that culture, inclusion, and tolerance matter and are part of the fabric of our community identity. Culture is more than museums, galleries and theatres; it is also about the spirit of the City. We are a community that welcome

strangers and helps them to adapt. We see difference and diversity as opportunities, not as threats. We seek to attract not just the wealthiest, but all those seeking a better life and we invite them to be part of our story. We embrace the younger generations from where we draw new energy, dynamism and a sense of constant renewal. These are the magic ingredients that set Langley City apart.

A window of opportunity has presented itself, requiring “all hands on deck” to seize the moment.

Respectfully Submitted,



Francis Cheung, P. Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. Langley City: Nexus of Community
2. Langley City Vision: Recommendations and Implementation Report