

**The Public Input Process for Development Approvals:
A Comparative Policy Review of Leading Practices in British Columbia's
Local Governments**

By

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Local governments are important partners in the Province of British Columbia's (B.C.) strategy to build new homes and support affordable housing (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 10, 18). Each local government develops its requirements and processes for development approvals (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 16). These vary widely between local governments, including adjacent ones, adding a layer of complexity for developers while also recognizing the differences among communities (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 6). The development approval process strives to find a fair balance between the desire for communities to provide input on new developments that might impact them while at the same time providing a consistent and fair regulatory framework for builders. The development approvals process can have a major impact on how quickly housing projects can be built. These processes can be complex, lengthy and expensive, with significant uncertainties for the development community (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 3).

In 2018, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) initiated the Development Approval Process Review (DAPR) to support local governments in eliminating barriers to affordable housing and accelerate home construction. As a first step, MAH engaged a broad range of stakeholders to discuss the challenges of the current development approvals process and to develop an informed list of ideas about how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 2). During the stakeholder consultation, there was significant interest in, and high importance placed on, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public input process, including the need to improve, supplement, or replace the public hearing process and identification of options for receiving more meaningful, earlier input from the public.

This report provides recommendations to the Province of B.C. on how it can strengthen public engagement in the local government development approval process. The report entails a *comparative jurisdictional review* of guidance and practices for public participation in development approvals process for all municipalities in BC with populations greater than 50,000. It provides a comparative review of these standards and policies and identifies leading practices.

The foundation of this report rests on the set of principles outlined in provincial legislation for municipalities, specifically the *Community Charter*, which recognizes municipalities as an "order of government" that is autonomous, responsible, and accountable (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 23). The *Community Charter* provides a legal framework of municipal powers/duties providing authority and flexibility for municipalities to address community needs. It also sets out important principles for municipal-provincial relations that emphasize such things as "no downloading," mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonization (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 23). The policy options provided in this report conform to the Province's role in this system and provide local governments with guidance on how to create more effective and efficient development approval processes.

Methodology and Methods

To meet the research objectives, this report used a qualitative methodology and analyzed documents and data with thematic and content analysis methods. A jurisdictional scan was conducted, and the documents analyzed were sourced from government websites, public engagement organizations and academic articles for 20 municipalities chosen based on having populations over 50,000.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted. The local governments selected to be interviewed were the result of the jurisdictional scan and were identified as “leading local governments”. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments across B.C. experienced financial restraints, resulting in the layoffs of many local government employees. As a result, not all targeted stakeholders were able to provide the time and resources to be interviewed. The following stakeholders were interviewed:

- City of Victoria;
- District of Saanich;
- City of Langford;
- City of New Westminster; and
- Aryze Developments

Together, these methods have been used to: identify key concepts and themes from the literature review; conduct a comprehensive jurisdictional scan of municipal engagement methods; and analyze the key issues and institutional contexts through semi-structured interviews. This work will inform Provincial policies concerning the public input process for development approvals.

Findings

There is significant diversity with local government public engagement throughout the province (Table 1). All B.C. local governments have some form of a public engagement strategy, be that a citizen engagement website or a formal citizen engagement framework. However, only a handful of B.C. local governments have a multitude of strategies and are currently utilizing a variety of tools and resources influenced by the principles and themes outlined through the International Organization for Public Participation (IAP2) and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD).

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted, and three themes were identified: “Results Oriented”, “Values-Based” and “Goal Setting”. While these themes were not explicitly stated, undercurrents related to these themes were evident throughout each discussion. Relating these themes to the day-to-day work of each stakeholder aimed to assist the identification of efficient and effective public engagement tools. The questions asked during the semi-structured interviews were shaped around these three themes and the interviews were able to shed light on if each stakeholder kept these themes in mind during the discussion.

TABLE 1 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OVERVIEW

BC Local Government	Citizen Engagement Framework	Public Engagement Tools	Citizen Engagement Website	Development Committee	Engagement Framework Timeframes	Development Tracker Website
*City of Langford (Population 42,653)	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✘
City of Prince George	✘	✘	✓	✘	✘	✓
City of Chilliwack	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✓
City of Burnaby	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓
City of Delta	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Maple Ridge	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓
City of North Vancouver	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Port Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✘
City of Richmond	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Vancouver	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Nanaimo	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Victoria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
District of Saanich	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Kelowna	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓
City of Abbotsford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of New Westminster	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Surrey	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘
Township of Langley	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓
City of Kamloops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Policy Options

The options for the Province in this report were supported by the literature review, jurisdictional scan and semi-structured interviews. They take into consideration the Province’s post-DAPR work, which includes Phase 4: Initiate Solutions – a long-term process of evaluating and acting on opportunities for updating the local government development approvals process in B.C. (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 20). The client has not requested a recommended option.

Instead, this report presents three options that can be championed by the provincial government while guiding B.C. local governments within the established legislative frameworks of the *Community Charter* and the *Local Government Act*.

This section of the report presents the model for B.C. local governments to determine the available and preferred methods for creating effective and efficient public engagement in a variety of scenarios. While there is no “one size fits all” model, the identified leading practices can help inform B.C. local governments to make better decisions around the public input process for development approvals. The options identified below can only be implemented depending on a variety of factors, including political interest, available funds and local demographics (population, economy, etc.). The options also recognize the Province’s legislative framework for municipalities, which understands they are democratically elected, autonomous, responsible and accountable within their jurisdiction.

To fully realize a public engagement vision, local governments will need to pilot or implement new ways to engage community members and take steps to build upon their internal knowledge and capacity. Chapter 6 of the report provided a detailed assessment of the policy options including the benefits and risks of their adoption. A summary of each policy option has been provided below.

Option 1: Develop Formalized Local Government Engagement Frameworks

A formalized local government engagement framework ensures each local government sets a standard of excellence when working with citizens and stakeholders by following engagement leading practices consistently. An engagement framework can spell out the leading practices and is intended as a guide to assist Council and staff in understanding the purpose of engagement as well as their responsibilities within the process. It outlines the concepts of public and internal engagement as well as each local government’s approach, commitment and expectations. It also explains the benefits of engagement and includes various tools to help Council and staff integrate engagement into projects. The purpose of setting engagement standards is not to make everyone happy; it is to ensure all voices are heard and considered when making decisions impacting others (City of Calgary, n.d., p. 2).

Option 2: Institute Development/Housing Committees

A development/housing committee can help lead the local government’s visions, goals, objectives and put them into practice. Committees with established terms of reference ensure the scope is well defined and clear to everyone on the committee and the public. A committee can also keep both local government Council and staff accountable in achieving their development goals and public engagement strategies. A committee might have established key performance indicators and can help ensure the following:

- Serve as an advisory/liaison body between Council and the development, building, and real estate community;

- Provide advice to Council on the implementation of Affordable Housing Strategies, the Official Community Plan and policies and strategies to address housing needs in the community;
- Provide advice to Council to its bylaws and policies and their application the building and development industry; and
- Consistently report findings and opinions to Council.

Option 3: Continue to Digitalize Development Services

Local governments should continue to implement engagement technologies to increase the breadth and depth of public involvement. With a general public accustomed to on-demand information, local governments providing crucial services, and making crucial decisions, need to catch up to meet their goals of serving the public. One of the first steps a local government can take is to inform their citizens in becoming more digitally accessible (Digital City Hall, 2019). It is as simple as putting information online so a citizen can find up to date information. By bringing the local government’s activities online, it can also look at the possible benefits of using social media tools to enable increased accessibility and interactions, such as remote viewing and/or participation in appropriate workshops and providing questions/feedback to Council and staff. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments have already begun to use electronic meetings, which give flexibility to municipal councils and regional district boards to conduct business using telephone and video conferencing without compromising the rights of the public to access the decision-making process. Local governments may also integrate and automate other services related to public engagement and the development community online.

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1.0 Introduction

The processes required for approving development has a major impact on how quickly housing projects can be built. While local government development approvals play an important role in ensuring community interests are met, lack of identification of leading practices has resulted in complex, lengthy and expensive processes with significant uncertainties for the development community (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 3).

This master's project compiles the tools, actions and reports being carried out by British Columbia (B.C.) local governments to identify leading practices on options for receiving more meaningful, earlier and effective input from the public.

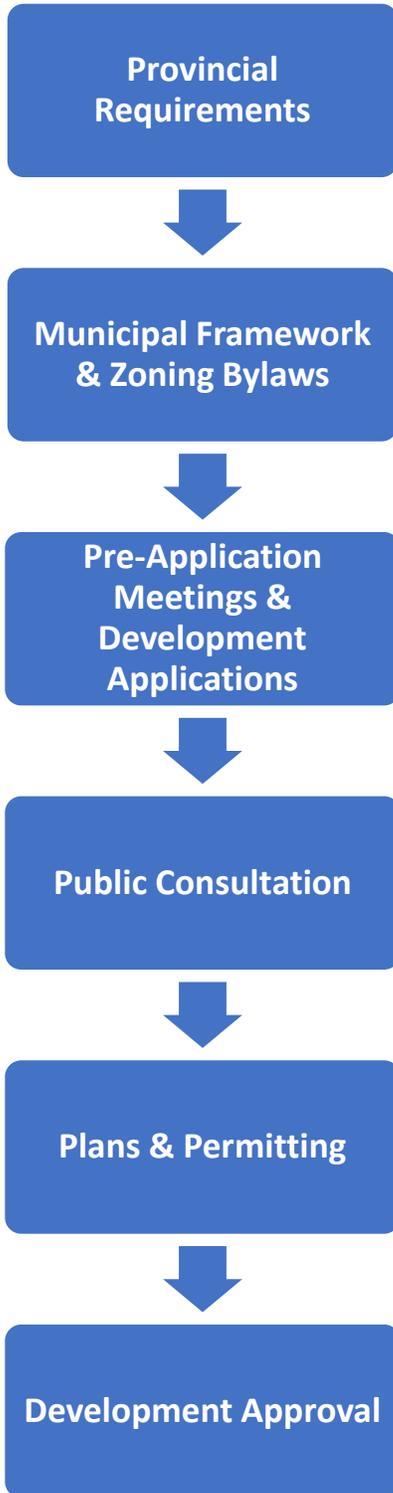
1.1 Defining the Problem

Local governments are important partners in the Province of British Columbia's strategy to build new homes and support affordable housing (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 10, 18). Each local government develops its requirements and processes for development approvals (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 16). These vary widely between local governments, including adjacent ones, adding a layer of complexity for developers while also recognizing the differences among communities (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 6). Therefore, the development approval process strives to find a fair balance between the desire for communities to provide input on new developments that might impact them while at the same time providing a consistent and fair regulatory framework for builders.

The process for approving developments (Figure 1) has a major impact on how quickly housing projects can be built. Timeframes vary from region-to-region and depend upon the complexity of the application. For example, in the City of Victoria, the average time to process a rezoning application takes four to six months (City of Victoria, 2019) and a comprehensive development rezoning, being more complex, may take six to twelve months (City of Victoria, 2019). It is not uncommon for complex projects throughout the Capital Regional District (CRD) to take twelve to fourteen months before approval (Capital Regional District, 2014, p. 7). As part of the report, thematic and content analysis will be conducted in further detail. Project proponents also have a role in the rezoning process and are required to support local government engagement by attending regular meetings, responding to enquires, going door-to-door and generating content (Capital Regional District, 2014, p. 7).

Minimum public input requirements for planning and land use tools are described in legislation, with public hearings having a framework set out in common law. Civic-minded local governments often conduct early engagement efforts in the development of Official Community Plans (OCP). A variety of engagement tools and techniques are used, including Citizen Advisory Committees, Community Circles, Open Houses, Information Booths, Charrettes, Social Media and Web-Based Tools (UBCM, 2012, p. 3). Public hearings are only required for development applications seeking an amendment to an OCP and a zoning bylaw. Local governments may choose to waive a public hearing for a zoning bylaw if the zoning bylaw is consistent with the OCP. However, many local governments choose to hold public hearings regardless (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 14).

FIGURE 1 – B.C. DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESS



1) Provincial Requirements

BC establishes its own building codes, modelled after the National Building Code, Fire Code and Plumbing Code. These codes must be applied to new construction and renovation, as well as commercial and residential construction. The BC Energy Step Code is a provincial standard establishing progressive performance steps in energy efficiency.

2) Municipal Framework & Zoning Bylaws

Parts 13, 14 and 15 of the *Local Government Act* (LGA) provide municipalities and regional districts with a range of tools to manage land use. These include the power to adopt Official Community Plans (OCP) and for regional districts, a Regional Growth Strategy, which incorporate the framework for the future land use of the area. Each municipality has zoning bylaws. Zoning outlines the permitted use of land based on mapped zones. Zoning bylaws stipulate things such as minimum and maximum density, size and height.

3) Pre-Application Meetings & Development Applications

Local government staff are available to discuss projects to ensure they are feasible before an application is submitted. Once you know what zoning restrictions may apply to your property, you are now ready to file your application or ask for a rezoning.

4) Public Consultation

Each local government utilizes their own methods. Gaining community support is an important part of any development. The public input process may vary depending on the application and if there are minor or major alterations to the bylaw. There are several opportunities for interested parties to make their views known to their elected officials. This is commonly through statutory public hearings related to an OCP or zoning bylaw. As per Part 14, Division 3 of the LGA, when a local government is creating or amending a bylaw for an OCP, zoning, phased development agreement or to terminate a land use contract, public hearings must be held after first reading of the bylaw and before third reading. Public hearings are not required for other types of bylaws and permits.

5) Plans & Permitting

Many municipalities require both a development permit and a building permit. Development Permit Areas (DPA) are designated to protect the natural environment, help revitalize commercial areas, or establish form and character of development. If a proposed development is within a DPA, a Development Permit must be obtained. If a lot has unique features or circumstances that makes it hard to meet Land Use Bylaw requirements, you may choose to apply to Council for a Development Variance Permit.

6) Development Approval

The length of the development approval process is dependent upon the complexity of the project and the preparedness of the applicant. Once approved, permits will be issued, which stipulate a time period for construction and next steps.

Complicating the matter, public hearings typically occur late in the development approval process, after considerable time and significant cost has gone into a proposed project (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 14). Public hearings also tend to attract and empower well-organized interest groups that may not represent the broader perspectives of the community (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 14). This can result in applications being denied despite being aligned with adopted community and neighbourhood plans. This NIMBY (an acronym for “not in my backyard”) attitude often contributes to opposition to development in their neighbourhood, although raising no objections to similar developments in other neighbourhoods.

NIMBYism, particularly as it relates to affordable housing, is often shaped by specific fears, including increased crime, poverty, and service and education costs, coupled with decreased property values and open space preservation (Sally, 2013, p. 720). Some studies over the years have found positive effects of the development of affordable rental housing on many of the areas of concern (Deng, 2009; Ellen et al., 2007, p. 258; Freeman & Botein, 2002, p. 362). Yet NIMBY attitudes persist, and many local governments still oppose such housing through institutional actions (Pendall, 2007, p. 36). This suggests certain local concerns and conditions have not been adequately addressed by existing policies (Dear, 1992, p. 288; Sally, 2013, p. 720) and there is a need to identify leading practices on meaningful, earlier input from the public.

1.2 Project Client

The Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Branch in the B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) works with all levels of government to support sustainable land use planning and to advance provincial and local interests where they intersect with the local government planning and development system. PLUM staff work on a variety of issues and projects related to land use, including housing, climate change mitigation and adaptation, transportation, bylaw approvals and development finance.

PLUM operates as a part of MAH, which helps make B.C. communities great places to live by providing access to more affordable, safe and functional housing and by taking leadership in supporting local governments to build vibrant and health communities (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 3).

1.3 Project Objectives and Research Questions

A clear framework is needed to enable local governments and applicants to better understand when and how public involvement is appropriate, resulting in more certainty around the process. This comparative policy review of B.C. municipalities examines the variance of approval timelines and public participation methods across diverse municipalities. The primary research questions are:

- **What guidance and practices are municipalities in B.C. using to structure public participation in development approvals?**
- **What are the similarities and differences across B.C. municipalities? (i.e., are there common standards or do they differ, if so, how?)**

Based on these research questions, this project:

- Identified leading practices for engagement by municipalities in B.C. based on an evaluation criterion that considers factors such as timeliness and transparency;
- Identified the general strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers associated with local government public engagement;
- Sought a better understanding of public expectations associated with community and developer involvement with approvals, service delivery and programming; and
- Established a set of recommendations for receiving more meaningful, earlier and effective input from the public.

The foundation of this report rests on the set of principles outlined in provincial legislation for municipalities, specifically the *Community Charter*, which recognizes municipalities as an “order of government” that is autonomous, responsible, and accountable (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 23). The *Community Charter* provides a legal framework of municipal powers/duties providing authority and flexibility for municipalities to address community needs. It also sets out important principles for municipal-provincial relations that emphasize such things as “no downloading,” mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonization (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 23). The policy options provided in this report conform to the Province’s role in this system and provide local governments with guidance on creating more effective and efficient development approval processes.

1.4 Background

B.C.’s population is expected to increase from a total of 5,050,481 persons in 2019 to 6,334,378 in 2041 (Frank Ip and Sebastien Lavoie, 2020, p. 1). The Lower Mainland, home to about 61 percent of all residents in 2019, is expected to see the highest population growth among all regions. Mainland/Southwest along with Nechako are the two development regions in B.C. that will experience population growths consistently higher than the provincial level. The Northeast, Thompson-Okanagan, Vancouver Island-Coast and Northeast development regions will see similar population growth but at a slightly lower rate than the provincial level (Frank Ip and Sebastien Lavoie, 2020, p. 1).

As B.C.’s population growth continues to rise, the demand for housing will exceed the supply of new units created. This is also complicated by the fact that the average age of the social housing stock is approximately 35 years, and many buildings are approaching a time when major building components require replacement or repair (BC Housing, 2020, p. 12). Therefore, the Province must actively work to increase the supply of housing, but also ensure its existing stock is maintained so that it remains in good condition for current and future residents, meets targets for Green House Gas emission reductions and ensures public investment in infrastructure is protected.

In February of 2018, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing released *Homes for B.C.: Government’s 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia*. Under this plan, the Province committed to stabilizing the housing market, cracking down on tax fraud, building the homes people need, improving security for renters, and supporting the building and preservation of affordable housing (Government of British Columbia, 2018, p. 18). However, over the past few decades, expectations around developments have changed significantly in B.C. (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 1). The development sector has grown and changed to become one of the largest industries in the province. In 2017, residential development alone was responsible for

nearly \$12 billion in wages and nearly 200,000 jobs (V. J. Caiozzo, F. Haddad, S. Lee, M. Baker, 2019, p. 1). Demand has increased competition for building sites, particularly in high-growth areas, resulting in shorter periods when acquiring land. This creates a greater risk for developers and heightens the need for more certainty at the outset of the development process.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) initiated the Development Approval Process Review (DAPR) to support local governments in eliminating barriers to affordable housing and accelerate the construction of homes. DAPR identifies opportunities to increase the efficiency (including timeliness, predictability, certainty and consistency) and effectiveness (including fairness, balance, transparency, inclusivity, and outcomes that are in the public interest) of local government development approvals processes. As a first step, MAH engaged a broad range of stakeholders to discuss the challenges of the current development approvals process and to develop an informed list of ideas about how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the process (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 2).

The scope of the DAPR consultations addressed the wide range of considerations, processes and tools associated with the development approvals process, including legislated and non-legislated elements (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 7). Eleven meetings were held throughout the province to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to reflect on current approaches, identify challenges and opportunities, and to suggest ideas for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of development approval processes (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 7). During the stakeholder consultation, qualities of effective processes were identified as fairness, balance, transparency, inclusivity, and outcomes that are in the public interest. On the other hand, efficient processes were defined as timeliness, predictability, certainty and consistency for proponents (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 7).

1.5 Organization of Report

This report is organized in a manner that follows the order in which the research for the project was conducted. This report begins with an analysis of the literature on relevant legislation, public engagement, “NIMBYism” and social capital. The literature review discusses the legislative requirements for local government public engagement, what engagement is, its significance, theories on developing social capital and the drivers of “NIMBYism”. The second section explains the conceptual framework for this study that will guide the analysis of the research findings in the report. The next section of the report discusses the findings of a jurisdictional scan of 20 B.C. local governments with established engagement frameworks, committees and programming for development approvals.

Building on the major themes and leading practices of the jurisdictional scan, the report provides a summary of the research findings from five interviews with local planners at four B.C. local governments and the head of development services at a local development firm. Following this section, the report analyzes the findings in the context of the conceptual framework and project deliverables. Finally, the report concludes with three options for engagement leading practices based on an evaluation criterion, which considered factors such as timeliness and transparency.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to build a better understanding of the local government development approval process and the challenges associated with public engagement and NIMBYism. The review first discussed the legislated requirements of local government public engagement, particularly the use of public hearings. Following an understanding of when public engagement is legally required, the review then examined how various organizations and academics have measured public engagement and how researchers have identified the barriers to effective engagement and communication. Lastly, the literature review examined the concept of social capital, which can be a powerful driver affecting the quality of life among a community's, a city's, or a nation's inhabitants and their ability to achieve both individual and societal goals.

The literature review used the University of Victoria's Library search engine. Key phrases performed in the search included "NIMBY", "development approvals", "public hearings", "local government-citizen engagement", "local government land use", "public participation" and "social capital". The identified literature focused on urban planning and the public hearing process. Most of the literature identified was found from planning and policy journals, including *Urban Affairs Review*, *Public Administration Review* and *Public Performance & Management Review*. There was also a review of pertinent legislation, including the B.C. *Local Government Act* (LGA) and the *Community Charter*, which provided context on the legislated use of public hearings. Most of the literature reviewed identified alternative citizen engagement strategies. However, there was no consensus on a strategy that was more effective than the other.

As there is a significant amount of literature on local government public engagement, the report examined the trade-offs between what communities want, what developers need, what municipalities want, what is timely, fair and consistent. As a guide to performing the research for this literature review, the search variables were influenced by the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) core values (IAP2, 2020).

TABLE 2 - IAP2 CORE VALUES

IAP2's Core Values for Public Participation define the expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. (IAP2, n.d.)	
1) Public Participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have the right to be involved.	2) Public Participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those affected or interested by a decision
3) Public Participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.	4) Public Participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate
5) Public Participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants.	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.

2.2 B.C. Local Government Legal Requirements

With two types of local governments – municipalities and regional districts – B.C.’s local government system is resilient and adaptable, with only targeted provincial oversight (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 2). Most of the rules enabling local self-government are outlined in the LGA and the *Community Charter*. Municipalities and regional districts in B.C. are empowered by provincial legislation to govern a wide range of areas, including the requirements and processes for development approvals. Land-use regulation has general objectives and specific ones. One of its general objectives is to help developers predict future land use patterns with some degree of certainty (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 155).

The legislation specifies which decisions must be made by elected officials, which may be delegated to staff, and which must be made by staff. Under the current system, amendments to zoning bylaws (i.e. rezoning applications) and development variance permits must be approved by elected officials, while development permits, temporary use permits, and tree cutting permits may be delegated (Province of British Columbia, 2019b, p. 10). The City of Vancouver has more flexibility and some additional powers concerning land use matters and has more matters specifically stated in its legislation (*Vancouver Charter*) as delegable to staff (Province of British Columbia, 2019b, p. 13).

Local government land-use regulations enable local governments to implement a long-term vision described in their regional growth strategies and OCPs. Other planning tools include zoning bylaws, Development Permit Areas, phased development agreements, housing agreements and subdivision servicing bylaws (City of Victoria, 2019, p. 2). The LGA includes several provisions for public information and participation in the land use regulatory process (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 156). For example, OCPs are adopted by bylaw, and once such a plan has been adopted all future bylaws and public works in the planning area must be consistent with it or require an amendment (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 160). Public hearings must be held before the third reading and adoption on an OCP. Local governments must comply with these provisions; however, they may also use other methods to enhance public participation in the regulatory process such as onsite signage, open houses, workshops, surveys, focus groups, and special advisory committees (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 156).

At a public hearing, all persons who believe that their interest in the property is affected by the proposed bylaw must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard (Province of British Columbia, 2020d, p. 2). This involves an opportunity to make a speech or presentation to the elected officials or to present a written submission. In many cases, notices about the public hearing may also indicate a time and location to submit comments before the public hearing (Province of British Columbia, 2020d, p. 3).

The notice must be given in the newspaper before the hearing. The notice must be in at least two consecutive issues of the newspaper, the last publication to appear not less than three days and not more than 10 days before the public hearing (Province of British Columbia, 2020d, p. 3). The notice must state:

- The time, date and place of the hearing;
- In general terms, the purpose of the bylaw;
- The land or lands that are the subject of the bylaw; and

- The place, time and dates where the bylaw and related materials may be viewed (often the municipal hall or regional district office).

The public hearing process, therefore, acts much like a Court procedure. These procedural requirements are a statutory pre-condition of the enactment of a zoning bylaw and do not always promote proactive, efficient communication and understanding of land use issues/community needs. As a result, public hearing participants – including the development community – often find the process to be adversarial and provide winner/loser outcomes instead of compromises that can move a project forward.

2.3 Limitations of Public Hearings

Both Canadian and American researchers have noted the limitations of the public hearing process. For example, if misleading information arises during a public hearing, there are few mechanisms for correction (Baker et al., 2005, p. 491). As well, allowing anyone to speak, regardless of their knowledge about the facts of a proposal, can generate increased misunderstandings and contribute to unnecessary conflicts that preclude a reasoned analysis of a proposal. However, local governments must also educate the public during the prehearing phase, including attempts to combat false information.

Public hearings often fail to achieve their intended goals, frustrating both agencies and communities. After analyzing various public participation methods, King, Feltey, and Susel (2018, p. 323) concluded that “the most ineffective technique is the public hearing.” One reason is that administrators may comply minimally with laws requiring a public hearing, simply going through the motions without real intent (Burby, 2003, p. 36). Walters, Aydelotte, and Miller (2000, p. 357) point out, however, that laws requiring public hearings are usually only minimum standards, and additional input methods can be used to great advantage. For example, if the law requires hearings, public administrators can employ other input methods earlier in the decision process (Baker et al., 2005, p. 491).

2.4 Meaningful Communication

The increasing emphasis on collaborative governance and citizen engagement in local government points to an underlying issue of how communities can build capacity for collaboration and engagement. Local government leaders may have a strong commitment to citizen engagement and collaboration, but success, ultimately, is dependent upon the capability and willingness of citizens, groups, and organizations to be engaged partners in the governance process (Morse, 2012, p. 79). The development of citizens' academies is an emergent practice in the United States that represents direct efforts by local government to build such capacity for citizen engagement (Morse, 2012, p. 79).

While local public officials are generally supportive of citizen engagement, there are questions about the capacity of individuals and communities to successfully be engaged as partners in governance. A national study of “civic health” sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference on Citizenship (CNCS, 2010, p. 2) in the United States found that only nine percent of respondents had attended a public meeting in the preceding two years. Another study of citizen involvement effort in local government found that citizens and administrators were often too busy for “meaningful citizen participation in the

governing process” (Morse, 2012, p. 79; Yang, Kaifeng and Callahan, 2007). Many local governments have begun to offer civic education programs. These programs, known as citizens academies, teach residents about the functions of their local government and offer the promise of developing a more informed and ultimately better-engaged citizenry (Morse, 2012, p. 79).

Strong communication in local government creates trust in its citizens. This ties in with the idea that the more trust citizens have in their local government the more involved they will be in their communities (Eisenstein, 2020). As the relationship builds between governments and citizens, over time, citizens will come to realize that their concerns matter (Eisenstein, 2020). The animosity between citizens and government stems from an inability to conduct a successful dialogue. As such, the advancement of technology gives local governments a multitude of ways to communicate. This is evidenced by municipal jurisdictions in B.C. that are currently utilizing websites dedicated to engagement and websites that list new developments in communities.

Moving forward, technology will help local government staff and officials to remember the basics of good communication. Communication has three parts—the sender, the message, and the receiver (Eisenstein, 2020). To make communications strong between the local government and its citizens, staff needs training on how to be effective and they need to know what their expectations are for managing social media and other types of communications (Eisenstein, 2020). Present-day communication is different than just writing a news story or a press release. Creating a framework for new communication channels such as blogs and social media outlets bring a measure of accuracy and accountability with them (Eisenstein, 2020).

2.5 Social Capital

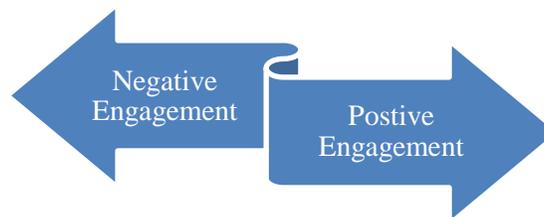
People’s bonds, associations, and networks—as well as the civil, political, and institutional characteristics of the society in which they live—can be powerful drivers affecting the quality of life among a community’s, a city’s, or a nation’s inhabitants and their ability to achieve both individual and societal goals (Prewitt et al., 2014, p. 15). This ties in with MAH’s purpose to build vibrant and healthy communities that are well-governed, livable, safe, economically resilient and socially and environmentally responsible (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 3). As such, civic engagement and social cohesion can often be viewed as components of social capital, which is a way to measure shared norms or values that promote social cooperation (Fukuyama, 2002, p. 2).

The concept of social capital has been popularized by Robert Putnam (Putnam, 1993, p. 164) and is defined as the features of social life that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam, 1993, p. 169). Putnam (2000, p. 19) describes social capital as a system of “norms and reciprocity” that exist within a social network. This system develops in two ways: bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital manifests itself through interpersonal interactions among similar people within a horizontal relationship while bridging social capital is a vertically manifested relationship between people and authority. According to Putnam (2000, p. 22), bonding is exclusive (“bolstering our narrower selves”) and bridging is inclusive (“generating broader identities”). Each of these relationships, when strong, facilitates a system of understanding that contributes to a greater flow of information and quick action. Building awareness of social capital and the importance of expanding government data collection is consequential to the effective functioning of society.

Civic engagement – a driver of social capital – is a cluster of individual efforts and activities orientated toward making a difference in the civic life of communities and developing the combination of skills, values and motivation to make a difference (Prewitt et al., 2014, p. 34). If a government can measure the social capital of its community, it can measure the sense of connection, belonging and influence at the beginning of ongoing engagement activities and again at the end. As such, a community with a high level of social capital is more informed and connected with the decision-making process. Local governments in B.C. have begun to implement social capital into their engagement (Figure 2). The City of Victoria installs a belief in their engagement that as organizers they want to engage people, so they see themselves as part of the solution. This will help the community understand to act on their rights and responsibilities as citizens, which can only be done by building social capital through relationship building and reflecting on experiences (City of Victoria, 2015, p. 16).

FIGURE 2 - CITY OF VICTORIA SOCIAL CAPITAL RUBRIC

1	2		3	4	5	6
Avoidance	Awareness		Wake Up	Engagement	Access	Organizer
“Disconnected”	“I see beyond myself”	“I influence”	“I affect change”	“Needed”	“Part of the Solution”	



(City of Victoria, 2015, p. 16)

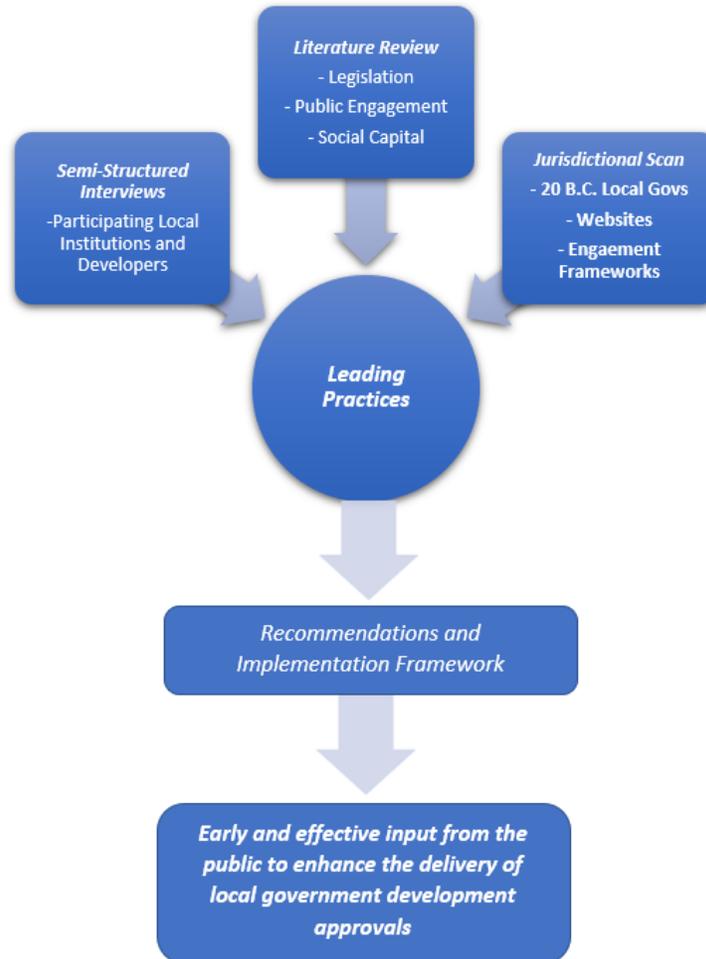
2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides this report with focus and intent. It is developed and presented to enable the researcher and the project’s audience with a clear understanding of the fundamental purpose of the research.

This report addressed the questions “what guidance and practices are municipalities in B.C. using to structure public participation in development approvals and what are the similarities and differences across B.C. municipalities?” The conceptual framework for this project guided the researcher to maintain a focus on the research questions. In describing the conceptual framework, a literature review was conducted with topic areas being basic elements and principles of legislation, engagement, communication and areas for improvement. The literature review was complemented by a jurisdictional scan of 20 B.C. local governments and three interviews with the City of Langford, the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria. Collectively, the literature review and complementary yet distinct sets of research yielded a breadth of knowledge on local government public engagement that can be described as leading practices. As described in the conceptual framework (Figure 3), the leading practices provide the overarching themes for this project’s deliverables. These deliverables will enable B.C. local governments to diversify their engagement strategies away from the public hearing process to

obtain more meaningful, earlier and effective input from the public and enhance the delivery of development services.

FIGURE 3 - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



2.7 Conclusion

This literature review explored themes associated with mandatory and voluntary public engagement including the basic elements of public engagement as provided by IAP2's core values, the use of technology as it relates to communication and measuring a community's social capital. Finally, a conceptual framework integrating the report's literature review was provided. The findings of the literature review can now be used as a foundation for the high-level jurisdictional scan and semi-structured interviews that are described in the following methodology and methods section.

3.0 Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and methods for this research project, which received approval from the University Victoria Human Research Ethics Board on April 30, 2020 (Protocol Number: 20-0176).

3.2 Methodology

The methodology for this report was predominantly qualitative as it conducted a policy review of local government leading practices on citizen engagement and the development approval process. The methodology highlighted leading practices by understanding the different processes currently being utilized by local governments and their limitations. The research used a combination of methods to obtain the data, including a jurisdictional scan of 20 B.C. local governments with populations over 50,000 and five participating interviews.

3.3 Methods

Local governments in B.C. have considerable discretion over the use of the resources provided to them in the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter* to plan for their communities, achieve land use control and approve development proposals (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 6). As such, processes and requirements often vary widely between local governments, including adjacent ones. To better understand the processes local governments are utilizing, 20 B.C. local governments were selected for a jurisdictional scan (i.e. to determine if there are common standards or if they differ).

3.3.1 Jurisdictional Scan

Jurisdictional scanning becomes relevant when there are complexities and uncertainties in the situation to better plan and control the future (Terry, 1977, p. 2). There are several areas in which organizations search for information to gain a broader situational context. One of the most commonly used scan models typically uses elements such as political and regulatory trends (e.g. legal frameworks; electoral trends, social trends, and geographical trends (e.g. climate and natural resources) (Fahey & King, 1977, p. 70; Management, 2016, p. 137). By utilizing this method, this research project was designed to evaluate and compare leading practices in community planning with a focus on engagement strategies used in the development approval process.

To scope the jurisdictional scan, all B.C. local governments with populations over 50,000 were selected. The only exception was the City of Langford, which has an estimated population of 42,653. This is because Langford is one of the fastest-growing local governments in B.C. (BCStats, 2020). The following local governments were analyzed during the jurisdictional scan:

- City of Langford
- City of Prince George
- City of Chilliwack
- City of Burnaby

- City of Coquitlam
- City of Delta
- City of Maple Ridge
- City of North Vancouver
- City of Port Coquitlam
- City of Richmond
- City of Vancouver
- City of Nanaimo
- City of Victoria
- District of Saanich
- City of Kelowna
- City of Abbotsford
- City of New Westminster
- City of Surrey
- Township of Langley
- City of Kamloops

The scan reviewed how local governments define, use and categorize levels of engagement; values and principles for engagement; citizen involvement in the decision-making process; and planning and resources to assist and support engagement activities. The analysis was conducted in Microsoft Excel and was categorized to compare the different guidelines across various elements such as timeframes, structure and accessibility to the public (i.e. websites dedicated to development tracking or citizen engagement). This document was the basis for the comparative policy analysis. Lastly, it provided a wide view of what all these guidelines look like and where/how leading practices can be differentiated from others.

As the different categories of the jurisdictional scan were identified, the following questions were asked: Does this problem exist in another jurisdiction? What is that jurisdiction doing or what have they done to address this problem? Is their solution working? How has the solution been perceived? Is the solution something that could be adopted or modified for B.C.? Can the other jurisdiction offer any “lessons learned” or advice on how to proceed?

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges, context and how local governments have achieved success with citizen engagement activities. As this report is predominantly qualitative, purposive sampling methodology and stakeholder sampling methods were chosen. This is because the project is interested in case study analysis of why particular people (or groups) feel ways, the processes by which these attitudes are constructed, and the role they play within an organization or group. As such, the research participants were not always created equal - stakeholders will advance the research far better than a randomly chosen sample of people. Stakeholder sampling is particularly useful in the context of evaluation and policy analysis, this strategy involves identifying the major stakeholders who are involved in designing, giving or administering the program or service being evaluated, and who might be affected by it.

Interview invitations were sent to three sectors (local government [staff and Councillors], the development community and neighbourhood associations). The local governments that were sent interview invitations were highlighted as “leading local governments” from the jurisdictional scan. Unfortunately, as a result of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, local governments across B.C. experienced financial restraints, resulting in layoff and time constraints. Because of this, not all local stakeholders were able to accept interviews to participate. The following stakeholders were interviewed:

- City of Victoria;
- District of Saanich;
- City of Langford;
- City of New Westminster; and
- Aryze Developments.

Primary data was obtained by asking a series of qualitative questions (Appendix 9). Qualitative interviewing is a flexible and powerful tool to capture the voices and the ways people make meaning of their experiences (Rabionet, 2011, p. 203). As a result, the report set out a series of questions that guided the conversation along topics related to citizen engagement; however, the flexibility of the questions allowed the conversations to explore new topics, which contributed to the research. These interviews were originally going to be conducted in-person; however, due to concerns associated with COVID-19, interviews were restricted to the telephone or Microsoft Teams.

3.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the literature review, jurisdictional scan, and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic and content analysis to support the finding of the jurisdictional scan and the identification of leading practices and the development of options for the client.

As defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 6), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in rich detail. This method was used to define public engagement strategies and frameworks applicable to B.C. local governments. The literature review gathered consistent and reoccurring themes. This includes the mandated use of public engagement strategies – public hearings – and terms like efficiency, civic health and social capital. The thematic analysis was also beneficial for identifying leading engagement practices of B.C. local governments.

After reviewing data from the jurisdictional scan and the conceptual framework of this report, common initiatives across B.C. local governments were discovered (Table 1), which can help the Province identify leading practices on citizen engagement. This resulted in identifying jurisdictions that were similar in population (Over 50, 000) and analyzing their initiatives and evaluating them against the criteria of the jurisdictional scan. Generally, there was a focus on

finding out how many local governments utilized dedicated engagement frameworks, education materials, website accessibility and development committees.

TABLE 1 - JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OVERVIEW

BC Local Government	Citizen Engagement Framework	Public Engagement Tools	Citizen Engagement Website	Development Committee	Engagement Framework Timeframes	Development Tracker Website
*City of Langford (Population 42,653)	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
City of Prince George	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
City of Chilliwack	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
City of Burnaby	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
City of Coquitlam	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
City of Delta	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
City of Maple Ridge	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
City of North Vancouver	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
City of Port Coquitlam	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
City of Richmond	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
City of Vancouver	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
City of Nanaimo	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
City of Victoria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
District of Saanich	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Kelowna	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
City of Abbotsford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of New Westminster	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Surrey	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Township of Langley	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
City of Kamloops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Content analysis for the semi-structured interviews was conducted by comparing the themes, commentary and experiences from the five participants. Detailed notes from each of the telephone/Microsoft Teams interviews were analyzed, to acquire an overall understanding of content related to the aim of the study; the interviews were repeatedly read and discussed to gain

a sense of the whole process, and reflections were jotted down (e.g. similarities and differences between participants).

3.5 Project Limitations

A limitation of this project is associated with the breadth of literature available as well as the opportunities for interview participation. Due to high levels of literature available on citizen engagement, a complete review of the extensive and growing literature cannot be undertaken. There are also time limitations associated with this project. It is designed to be completed within six months. This means individuals interviewed will not be complete representatives of the local government and development community. As such, only five interviews were conducted. Furthermore, as my location is in Victoria, there may have been some selection bias due to easier access to stakeholders located in the CRD.

Another limitation of this research was the subjectivity involved in analyzing the responses of those being interviewed. There may be some responses that will be more significant than others depending on the length of the response, the content or example provided, or my perspectives regarding specific issues that will be discussed. Lastly, the interviews were limited to the telephone and Microsoft Teams because of COVID-19. As such, some of the flexibility of semi-structured interviews was lost as I was not able to physically read some of the participant's facial expressions when there may have been an opportunity to further explore certain topics.

This project also does not address local government leading practices regarding public engagement in the "new normal" of a global pandemic as it is constantly evolving and changing the landscape of in-person interactions. For context, on March 18, 2020, the Province of British Columbia declared a state of emergency, which allows the Province to continue to use extraordinary powers under the *Emergency Program Act* to support the COVID-19 pandemic response (Order, 2020). Local governments are required to hold public hearings before adopting certain land-use bylaws, such as OCPs and some zoning bylaw amendments.

At a public hearing, persons who believe that their interest in a property is affected by a proposed land use bylaw must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard or to present written submissions. Local governments are now enabled to hold public hearings electronically so they can continue to make important land-use decisions while complying with the public health order on mass gatherings and the recommendations on safe physical distancing (Order, 2020).

4.0 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The findings section begins with a description of the current state of public engagement as it relates to DAPR, and how the Province can plan the next steps and act on opportunities for updating B.C.'s local government development approvals process. Summaries are provided on the findings of the jurisdictional scan and semi-structured interviews including tools, strategies and policies. Leading practices are then identified to better understand strategies for efficient and effective development approval processes.

4.2 Current State – The Province of British Columbia Post-DAPR

Consultations from DAPR brought together diverse stakeholders, which enabled the Province to identify an informed list of ideas for improving the development approvals process in B.C. (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 20). As part of its further analysis, the Province intends to conduct a comprehensive review of the effect of the legislative and non-legislative project on the land use planning framework. The non-legislative project work includes identifying leading practices on local government engagement. The final phase of the DAPR project, Phase 4: Initiate Solutions is now underway and includes a longer-term process of evaluating and acting on opportunities for updating the local government development approvals process in B.C. (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 20). As part of this phase, the Province is committed to ensuring that work undertaken to implement the opportunities identified in this report is fully informed by the knowledge and experience of those who are directly working with and impacted by development approval processes. (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 20)

4.3 Jurisdictional Scan

The jurisdictional scan focused on initiatives that were introduced by B.C. local governments. As such, it was critical to the research to highlight local government-led programs, frameworks, strategies, technology and timeframes around public engagement and the development approval process. This project's conceptual framework influenced the criteria for comparing jurisdictions and for identifying leading practices. Part of the conceptual framework was the relationship between the jurisdictional scan and the literature review, which informed the identification of leading practices. The literature review highlighted the importance of public engagement strategies, legislated requirements and technology and was used as key components in selecting B.C. local government initiatives in the jurisdictional scan.

4.3.1 Engagement Frameworks

Dedicated frameworks for citizen engagement are important tools for local governments because they entrench organizational values and guiding principles to foster a cultural shift in the organization whereby the potential value of internal and external stakeholder participation is an automatic consideration in their planning activities. As such, creating opportunities for

participation is also integral to good governance (City of Victoria, 2015, p. 3). When people participate in engagement activities, they get to know others in their neighbourhoods, they meet people they would not have met otherwise, and they feel like they have an active voice and role in shaping the future of their community (City of Victoria, 2015, p. 3).

When conducting the jurisdictional scan, 40 percent (8 out of 20) of the B.C. local governments had formalized engagement frameworks (Appendix 2). These frameworks also varied in length and quality. High-quality frameworks (City of Victoria, City of New Westminster, Township of Langley and City of Surrey) were established with strong involvement from the public.

Interestingly, half of the engagement frameworks did not refer to having public consultation inform the drafting process. On the other hand, the City of Victoria hosted a Public Engagement Road Map workshop with drop-in sessions and the City of New Westminster utilized surveys to solicit information from community members on how they interact with the City and what their experience is with New Westminster's public engagement.

Effective engagement ensures feedback is always taken under consideration as decisions are made and that it is reviewed with equal consideration as part of the decision-making process. Therefore, effective engagement frameworks need to be living documents that are updated with lessons learned and new tools and strategies. Only two of the eight engagement frameworks identified a plan to be updated (City of Victoria and Township of Langley). Regarding the City of Victoria, it identified that the Engagement Department in the City is responsible for reviewing the framework annually and updating as required. The Township of Langley's framework identified that public engagement practices are ever-evolving and related policies, action plans and procedures should be reviewed regularly and revised as needed. However, the Township did not specify how frequently its framework was to be updated. Updating frameworks are particularly relevant to create consistency as some frameworks were established as early as December 2013 (City of Kamloops) and late as June 2019 (City of Surrey).

4.3.2 Engagement Strategies

True consultation means a commitment to listening to what is being said and acting on this input. It is very frustrating for the public to be told they are being "consulted" when they are just being informed about what the local government intends to do. No one knows their community better than the people who live, work and play in those neighbourhoods. There are many ways to present information and to receive comments and input from the public and other interested parties (development community). There is no "best" method as it depends on each community, the resources available and the degree of controversy in the options being proposed. However, local governments can mitigate concerns by utilizing techniques from organizations such as the International Association of Public Participation (Table 3).

TABLE 3 - CITY OF VICTORIA ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM

IAP2 Value	Public Participation Goal	Promise to the Public	Tools and Techniques
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.	The City will keep you informed throughout the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpages • Newspaper Ads • Signs
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and decisions.	The City will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, aspirations and will provide feedback on how the public influenced the decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Focus Groups
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood.	The City will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Deliberate Polling
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	The City will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees • Working Groups
Empower	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.	We will implement what you decide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections • Referendums • Assent Votes • AAP

(City of Victoria, 2015, p. 6)

When conducting the jurisdictional scan, 40 percent (8 out of 20) of the B.C. local governments indicated the use of a public participation organization as a Terms of Reference for their engagement activities (Appendix 3). Of the eight local governments, they all indicated they were influenced by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). However, the District of Saanich Indicated that their engagement strategies were also influenced by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD).

Guiding principles are the foundation for how a local government decides on its engagement strategies. Principles help set goals and standards for good public engagement. While the scale and design of engagement strategies differ depending on topics of circumstance and controversy, principles guide how a local government can maximize public participation and create accountability as it expands upon its existing engagement strategies (New Westminster, 2016, p. 10). Importantly, all eight local governments that indicated the use of IAP2 or NCDD had established guiding principles for their engagement strategies. Table 4 contains an example of the City of New Westminster’s Principles for Public Engagement as well as definitions for each principle.

TABLE 4 - CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Diversity	Involves community members who reflect the diversity of interests in the community.
Accessibility and Inclusion	Achieves accessibility for all community members, recognizes their right to participate and values the knowledge and experience they contribute.
Respect	Creates a respectful environment that builds trust and maximizes the contributions of community members and staff.
Informed Discussion	Provides community members with accessible and timely information on City matters and processes.
Partnership	Works in partnership with community members and builds on community initiative and ownership.
Transparency	Actively communicates transparent information about processes and outcomes for each public engagement initiative.
Responsiveness	Acknowledges and responds to community members’ input and requests for information.
Commitment to Learning and Improvement	Continuously improves public engagement practices through measurement and evaluation, and the use of innovative methods and technologies.

(New Westminster, 2016, p. 11)

4.3.3 Engagement Websites

In today’s fast-evolving and well-connected world, better and deep public engagement is not just an option – it is a requirement for local governments that want to shape their future and respond to increasing demands from community members to be part of the process (Westminster, 2016, p. 4). Moving forward, technology will help local government staff and officials to remember the basics of good communication. As such, when establishing a formalized engagement framework or by making engagement more accessible, local governments will have to use innovative methods and technologies such as dedicated websites, online surveys and online public meetings through tools like Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams.

When conducting the jurisdictional scan, 80 percent of local governments had a website dedicated to citizen engagement (Appendix 4). The local governments that did not have a

website for engagement were the City of Langford, City of Chilliwack, City of Coquitlam and the City of Port Coquitlam. Content and background information were reviewed. While most local government engagement websites included contact information, hyperlinks to PDFs containing policies and initiatives and ways citizens can get involved, both the City of Kamloops and City of Richmond utilized programs called: “LetsTalkRichmond” and “LetsTalkKamloops”, which were engagement websites dedicated to citizen feedback/input.

For example, “LetsTalkKamloops” empowers citizens to be more active in shaping the community by listening to what citizens have to say, taking their opinions into account and reporting back. Citizens are also able to report to their respective cities on areas that might need improvement including potholes and park spaces.

4.3.4 Development Committees

A Committee or a task force is the most important form of a formal group appointed by management/decision-makers to perform certain functions or tasks (Kukreja, 2013). Committees and task forces have become more and more necessary and important, as local governments grow larger and more complex. Because of collective information and analysis, committees are more likely to come up with solutions to complex problems (Kukreja, 2013).

The advantages of installing a local government committee include the pooling of information, improved cooperation, increased motivation, greater representation and the dispersion of power (Kukreja, 2013). Since members of a local government committee may have different interests and opinions that oppose each other, the process of committee deliberations allows making balanced outcomes. However, as noted by Kukreja (2013), even though a committee should be highly representative of diverse interests, the capabilities of the members should take precedence over the representation – this is particularly poignant regarding local government development approvals as local governments should be mindful of “NIMBY” voices commandeering their processes.

When conducting the jurisdictional scan, 80 percent of local governments had some form of a committee that represented development (Appendix 5 & Appendix 6). Committees ranged from diverse with representatives from the local government, development community and citizens (City of Langford, District of Saanich, City of Abbotsford), to uniform with the only representatives being members of Council (City of Nanaimo and City of Kamloops). While most of the local governments had a Committee, very few had established Terms of Reference. A strong example of a Terms of Reference came from the City of Chilliwack and its Affordable Housing & Development Advisory Committee (AHDC). Not only was AHDC membership diverse, but the Terms of Reference were also clear about its purpose and vision. The purpose of AHDC is to serve as an advisory/liason body between Council and the development, building, and real estate community. The AHDC also provides advice to Council on the implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy and other policies and strategies to address housing needs in the community.

Of the 16 local governments that had a Committee, five of them were named either an “Advisory Design Panel” or an “Advisory Planning Commission” (City of Surrey, City of New Westminster, District of Saanich, City of Victoria, City of North Vancouver). Interestingly, two of the local governments did not have a Committee and instead use a Task Force. These included the City of Delta’s “Mayor’s Task Force on Building Permits and Development Applications” and the City of Nanaimo’s “Health and Housing Task Force”. While Delta’s Task Force was diverse and representative of the greater community at large, Nanaimo’s Task Force was strictly led by one-two members of Council.

Not a single Committee or Task Force was given decision-making authority. Instead, they provide advice to Council on community planning aspects of the following: their OCP, including amendments, federal, provincial or neighbouring municipal development plans which may affect their OCP; plans or strategies such as transportation plans, economic development situations, or strategic plans which offset their OCP; Zoning Bylaws, Development Permits and Development Variance Permits. In some examples, including the City of Vancouver, the Committees also organized conferences, consultations, competitions, presentations, and research on topics including housing, public realm, neighbourhoods, transportation, and public engagement.

4.3.5 Timeframes

Effective engagement needs to be both timely and consistent. During the jurisdictional scan, 40 percent of local governments identified a timeframe for engagement (Appendix 7). The City of Victoria took the strongest stance amongst local governments as it incorporated a two-week minimum notice to the community of any upcoming engagement initiative. Other methods included monthly communications about project progression, plan reports and upcoming events (City of Abbotsford) and more general statements such as engaging the public as early as possible in the project development process (City of Kamloops).

Regarding timeframes on Development Committees, most Committees met once a month. With bi-monthly exceptions coming from the City of Langford and City of Delta. The most active Committees were from the City of Port Coquitlam and the District of Saanich, which met twice a month. The least active Committee was from the City of Chilliwack, which holds meetings quarterly or as determined by the Chair of the Committee on an ‘as needed’ basis.

4.3.6 Development Tracking Websites

While committees are strong ways of increasing representation, they are not practical for most citizens as they are both time consuming and voluntary. The advent of local government development tracking websites can keep informed of what is happening throughout the municipality. These sites are often created by a local government’s development services department and provide residents, realtors and developers with a quick and easy way to check the status of projects underway.

Developing tracking websites provide interactive maps with clickable portions where parcels of land are highlighted, enabling users to find details like legal and civic addresses, rezoning information and approval status. As well, information on detailed project descriptions, names of applicants, site and floor plans and the status of a project with council is also available. While this is not the case with some local government websites, the tracker typically lists projects that fall under rezoned applications, development permits and development variance permits.

During the jurisdictional scan, 85 percent of local governments had a development tracking website (Appendix 8). The only outliers were the City of Langford, City of Port Coquitlam and the City of Surrey. While most local governments utilized a development tracking website, their quality ranged from strong to poor. For example, only 9 out of 17 tracking websites broke down each project by neighbourhood. Breaking down tracking by neighbourhood is important, as most citizens want to see projects underway in their local proximity and they would like to have easy access to plans, contact information and consultation dates.

A strong example of a development tracking website is the City of Victoria’s, which at the outset of the webpage gives users the option to look up a project by address or by neighbourhood.

TABLE 5 - CITY OF VICTORIA DEVELOPMENT TRACKER CHECKLIST

Application Type		Application Status	
Development Permit with Variance	✓	Active Applications	✓
Development Variance Permit Heritage Alteration	✓	Archived Applications	✓
Rezoning Application	✓	Applications by Neighbourhood	✓
Temporary Use Permit	✓	Application Files and Resources	✓

(City of Victoria, 2020)

4.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges, context and how projects can be successful with citizen engagement activities. As this research project is predominantly qualitative, purposive sampling methodology and a stakeholder sampling method have been chosen. Stakeholder sampling is particularly useful in the context of evaluation and policy analysis, this strategy involves identifying the major stakeholders who are involved in designing, giving or administering the program or service being evaluated, and who might be affected by it. The interview participants were from three sectors (local government, development community and neighbourhood associations).

Local governments are the predominant stakeholder because the LGA provides local governments in B.C. with a variety of planning and land use tools. These include regional growth

strategies, OCPs, zoning bylaws, development permits, development cost charges, density bonusing, subdivision and development control bylaws (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 6). The *Community Charter* provides local governments with tools for building bylaws. Local governments may vary some of the above provisions by issuing development variance permits, temporary use permits, and heritage alteration permits (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 6).

On the development side of the equation, the development sector has grown and changed over the past few decades to become one of the largest industries in the province. In 2017, residential development alone was responsible for nearly \$12 billion in wages and nearly 200,000 jobs (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 6) Strong demand has increased competition for building sites, particularly in high-growth areas, resulting in shorter option periods when acquiring land. This creates a greater risk for developers and heightens the need for more certainty at the outset of the development process.

Community groups are important organizations at the neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood Associations within the City of Victoria are community development organizations that meet regularly to discuss neighbourhood issues (City of Victoria, 2020). Their meetings are attended by City councillors and staff who provide information and respond to queries. Council appoints a councillor to act as a liaison to each community or neighbourhood association. Neighbourhood Associations also have land-use committees that help review proposed property developments in the neighbourhood. Community Association Land Use Committees (CALUC) are an important part of the land use application process. One of the main roles of the CALUC is to facilitate the dialogue between applicants and the community to identify and resolve issues (both positive and negative) regarding land use applications (City of Victoria, 2020). Applicants are required to contact the applicable CALUC representative to initiate this process. The procedures for processing rezoning and variance applications require that the CALUC host a Community Meeting on all proposed Rezoning applications to ensure the community is notified about proposed land use applications (City of Victoria, 2020).

While invitations were sent to multiple City of Victoria Neighbourhood Associations, none were able to participate in time for this report's completion.

4.4.1 City of Victoria

An interview was conducted with the City of Victoria's Planning Department. This interview predominantly focused on the day-to-day operations of the Department as well as an explanation of the role of the City's Advisory Design Panel (ADP). The ADP is an initiative of the City that provides advice to Council on the design merits of plans as part of a:

- Rezoning Application
- Development Permit
- Development Variance Permit Application

- Statutory Building Scheme
- Board of Variance application involving a house conversion
- Special Projects referred to the Panel by City Council.

Representatives are recruited by Council and have training in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, engineering, land development or are an interested member of the general public. While the Planning Department is separate, ADP meetings are open to the public but are not participants. I enquired about the typical public attendance of these meetings, and while they are usually low, controversial development applications have seen large public turnouts. This is also particularly relevant depending on the neighbourhood the development is being proposed. An advantage of sending a development proposal to the ADP is that it gives City Staff and Council “more teeth” when up against stubborn developers. This is because advice from the ADP is often given by respected professionals in the community.

City staff are given neighbourhood responsibilities for development approvals. For example, these neighbourhoods might consist of Fernwood or Harris Green. The City also has a long-term planning team that typically focuses more on public engagement, while the development services team, works more directly with the development community. As the work of the development services team is often so technical, the creation of the Development Tracking Website was an important tool for the branch to make its work more accessible to the public. There was a clear theme from the interview about moving the City’s services into the digital realm and how it was an important step in getting the public more aware and informed of development applications earlier in the process. This was evident from the fact that ADP meetings are streamed online and that the Development Tracking Website allows the public to access ongoing and archived applications.

4.4.2 District of Saanich

An interview was conducted with the District of Saanich Planning Department. It began with an overview of the District’s Planning teams, which include current planning, community planning, environmental services and a sustainability group. The interview was conducted with the current planning team and they are responsible for development applications, variances, rezoning ALR exclusion/inclusion and subdivisions. The different branches of the Department conduct diverse sets of work. For example, the community planning team is very policy-oriented and looks at local area plans and local housing plans. While on the other hand, the sustainability and environmental services groups look at the District’s climate plan. As stated in the interview, public engagement can vary from group-to-group.

Similarly, with other local governments, a bulk of public engagement for development approvals is conducted by the developers themselves. However, the District provides advice early and often to each developer as they begin to plan their proposals. Some of these tools that the District

utilizes include the Advisory Design Panel (ADP) and Community Associations/Local Area Plans.

The ADP is a neutral evaluator that makes recommendations to Council. It is officially run through the Clerk's Office and provides advice to major rezoning projects. District staff are separate from the ADP, and when it meets, applicants are required to provide the presentation themselves. The ADP is made up of a diverse group of professionals, including architects with very specific sets of expertise. The advantage of having an ADP is that it gives District staff more leverage when a proposal might need amendments as the expertise of the different professionals is difficult to argue with. An example that was given during the interview consisted of a development that provided very little accessibility for disabled persons and the developer took the advice of the ADP and accommodated those concerns.

The District staff member emphasized the importance of Community Associations and the development of Local Area Plans. Separate from the OCP, a Local Area Plan provides a policy framework for Council by addressing issues such as land use, transportation, environment, urban design, housing, economic development, parks, climate change, and community amenities. Furthermore, the example of the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan was used. Action Plans, like Local Area Plans, translate OCP objectives into detailed policies and initiatives that reflect local community values and context. Action Plans, while inclusive and holistic, usually focus on certain objectives specific to an area's needs. For the Shelbourne Valley, the most urgent needs are mobility network enhancements to better accommodate walking, cycling, and public transit and land use and urban design changes to create Centres and Villages that are exceptional places to live, work and play. This Plan was developed in close consultation with members of the development community and is a great resource for developers to better understand the needs of a community before making a formal application.

A reoccurring theme of the interview was early and often engagement. The staff member called preliminary meetings with applicants as "tire kickers" and emphasized that while the developer oversaw the engagement process, the District was available to provide advice along the way. The more engagement a developer takes, the higher chance that their proposal becomes successful down the line. A community should not be hearing about a new development the moment a sign goes up. A community's comments should be incorporated in the design of a proposal before it goes to District staff so that it can avoid issues down the line at the Public Hearing process.

4.4.3 City of Langford

While the City of Langford was not identified as one of the five local governments that fit each category of the evaluation framework established by the jurisdictional scan, as one of the fastest-growing local governments, I felt like it was necessary to reach out (BCStats, 2020). Langford has seen 12,000 more residents in its community since 2011 (Duffy, 2020). What made Langford interesting as a case study is that its record growth is understandable as they have had a pro-development mayor in place for more than a quarter-century. This mentality was also evident

within City staff. For example, the representative interviewed had been with the local government for 22 years.

The discussion began with the City's Planning, Zoning and Affordable Housing Committee, which has been a part of the City since its incorporation in 1992. The Committee has always been set up as a tool for public input with minor Council oversight. The Committee will make recommendations to Council on a significant amount of priorities including, land use regulatory bylaws and permits – under part 14 of the LGA; development/variance permits; community planning; heritage; and planning initiatives for the establishment of a business improvement area and downtown revitalization program. The City participant indicated that a big reason the public hearing process in Langford is a non-factor is that the Committee often reviews issues early and often with the development process.

What also helps with the Committee, is that it operates based on moving the ball forward and seeing how a proposal can progress, instead of how they can stop it. This makes it different than the neighbourhood association process, which often is given a de facto veto without having all the facts or information. The interviewee stated that Neighbourhood Associations do not bring accountable governance. They are not comparable to cities with ward systems that have democratically elected representatives, instead, they are a minority that often has too much time on their hand and approaches each project with anti-development bias. It is Langford's perspective that they will not waste taxpayer money having a public hearing when they already have an internal development review committee, which sits down with City staff and Council and goes through each proposal indicating what works and what doesn't.

When inquiring about a formal public engagement framework within the community, City staff indicated that there used to be a protocol around “door knocking” or canvassing affected neighbourhoods. However, it was found that this was neither effective nor productive. Instead, the City has moved towards more Committees and Associations, including the Development Association Committee, which is foundationally similar to a Chamber of Commerce.

4.4.4 City of New Westminster

An interview was conducted with the City of New Westminster Planning Department. The interview began with a quick description of the City's Planning Department and how the work is divided. This is typical for most larger-scale local governments as the Department was composed of individuals from Social Planning, Heritage and Development Planning. The interviewee did emphasize that the City has a strong culture of public participation, and as a growing local government in Metro Vancouver, it is seeking more diversity in its internal public participation methods.

It was interesting to obtain more context on the City's Advisory Planning Commission (APC). The APC reviews and advises Council on rezoning applications, amendments to the Official Community Plan, proposed community and neighbourhood plans, and in respect to proposed or

revised City policies and procedures relating to planning and development. What makes the APC unique from other local governments and their strict use of an ADP, is that the APC is citizen-led. Council appoints citizens to two-year terms (with one-year overlapping the other so that half of its members have one-year of experience each year). These citizens often have diverse backgrounds and do an excellent job of representing the greater community. Furthermore, APC meetings also provide an opportunity for public participation so that members of the public can also feel like their perspectives are being heard on land use considerations and policy development. Consultation for New Westminster is very much City-based, and they try to avoid decisions being made or heard from for the first time during the Public Hearing Process or at other statutory requirements.

While the City tries to employ an “open door” policy as much as possible for the Development community, a significant amount of their consultation comes through events held within the Urban Development Institute (UDI), which is a non-profit association of the development industry and its related professions that is non-partisan in its activities. With over 850 corporate members, UDI Pacific represents thousands of individuals involved in all facets of land development and planning, including developers, property managers, financial lenders, lawyers, engineers, planners, architects, appraisers, real estate professionals, local governments and government agencies. It was also evident from the interview that to City staff, best practices include accessibility. As such, an emphasis is placed on having resources being made available to the public online. This includes application materials and guides/procedures.

Lastly, a unique example of early and effective engagement with the development community is the City’s use of a Pre-Application Review process. For a nominal fee, the Pre-Application Review is a formal process that allows City staff to review a preliminary application in detail and provide written comments to an applicant before a full application is made. The proposal will be presented to the Land Use and Planning Committee for preliminary feedback. Feedback from other City Departments and Committees may also be provided. This process is an excellent opportunity to have an application put forward to members of Council for feedback before even being submitted. Many applications can benefit from a formal Pre-Application Review as the process helps to identify key considerations and potential issues of a proposed development before significant investment is made in a full application. Large or complex projects are particularly likely to benefit from the process.

4.4.5 Aryze Developments

A telephone interview was conducted with Justin Filuk, Director of Development for Aryze Developments, which is based out of Victoria. The discussion began with a conversation about how the company approaches its engagement processes. Mr. Filuk explained that the development and design management teams were well versed in the complexity and constraints of delivering homes to the Victoria market. This is because Victoria is a unique case study with a unique set of Neighbourhood Associations, which have a strong influence on Council approved

projects. Mr. Filuk brought an interesting perspective as he explained that he was a Planning School graduate and understood the many nuances around the importance of putting quality information together to both the public and local government staff. While the company utilizes many digital tools such as social media and a web presence, there was an additional recognition that these tools often present a way of quickly spreading misinformation around a quality project and can negatively affect a decision around Council. Therefore, Mr. Filuk stated that he preferred to spend time connecting with nearby residents on a one-to-one basis. This includes canvassing the neighbourhood as a proposal is being put together to gather information on what the neighbourhood would like to see and to make sure the community is well informed. It is also an effective tool at combatting the spreading of rumours and misinformation. An additional engagement strategy is canvassing nearby businesses. According to Aryze, 66 percent of Victoria's business owners (surveyed) have had to increase salaries to attract employees and a large issue is a lack of housing stock and affordable rentals.

The second half of the interview consisted of questions around how closely the company works with stakeholders that are not members of the general public. For example, Mr. Filuk discussed that his relationship with local government staff has been strong because he has a professional background in planning. This has brought out many commonalities as well as a strong understanding of local needs and local processes. Additionally, the company has a strong relationship with the UDI, which does a good job of putting like-minded individuals together to discuss the needs and wants of communities across the province.

Aryze stated that they try to approach their developments with unique and innovative proposals. This is because members of the public and local governments have indicated that new urban development needs to create healthy, resilient places for communities to call home. The interview also highlighted some issues with the current system, particularly around the dichotomy of approving development for business and approving homes. On one hand, an acre can get approved to serve as a car dealership lot in a prime uptown/downtown location with little uproar, while on the other hand, a rezoning to provide multiple homes in a jurisdiction going through a severe housing crisis can be met with severe neighbourhood opposition.

4.4.6 Interview Commonalities

While the interview participants varied, consisting of local government staff and members of the development community, many commonalities still arose. For example, all participants share many common tensions and common challenges associated with the repercussions of NIMBYism and well-organized interest groups that may not represent the broad perspectives of the community or even those who would be the most directly impacted by a development approval decision. There is also a growing recognition that it is necessary to solve housing developments by having them spread throughout a community rather than isolated in one area. A challenge of accomplishing this is a lack of dialogue and engagement done across the greater community. Local governments and stakeholders must focus on values held in common within

the greater community and problems that most can agree upon that must be solved (housing prices, housing stock, municipal solvency, the quality of local education, etc.). While these may be already identified in a community's OCP or Local Area Plan, not all local governments have finalized these initiatives, which hinders moderate citizens from setting aside differing values to find solutions to shared concerns.

4.5 Summary

The jurisdictional scan and semi-structured interviews conducted with B.C. local governments, illuminated the current state of engagement and leading practices available for future efforts. Analyzing the actions and experiences provides valuable information about what efforts should be more understood and what efforts should be championed for local governments across the province. While the interviews were able to provide insight into many similarities of Planning Departments across B.C. local governments (i.e. staff composition and the use Design Panels), certain local governments stood out in their rejection of traditional community association models and other local governments provided detailed resources for addressing development applications early in the process.

5.0 Discussion and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The discussion and analysis section integrates the findings from the literature review, jurisdictional scan and the semi-structured interviews to address the research questions, which are: “what guidance and practices are municipalities in British Columbia using to structure public participation in development approvals?” and “what are the similarities and differences across British Columbia municipalities?” This section also draws from the conceptual framework. The analysis will guide the options available to the Province of British Columbia for supporting local governments to highlight leading practices on the public input process. The most important impacts of the public input process are intangible and result in positive economic externalities.

5.2 Jurisdictional Scan – Leading Practices

The jurisdictional scan demonstrated that B.C. local governments are at various stages in the development of public engagement frameworks. Some local governments offer diverse support for increasing public engagement, while others leave the bulk of the decision-making process up to members of Council. Many local governments utilize the Committee process regarding development approvals; however, the regularity of their meetings and the involvement from the public and the development community varies. Lastly, with the increase in technological resources for local governments, the dissemination of online information through development tracking websites and website content also varies.

The jurisdictional scan proved to be valuable in identifying local governments that are currently leading the way for the public input process regarding development approvals. Firstly, of the 20 B.C. local governments analyzed, five local governments met all six jurisdictional scan criteria (engagement frameworks, engagement strategies, engagement websites, development committees, timeframes and development tracking websites). The five local governments were:

- The City of Victoria;
- The District of Saanich;
- The City of Abbotsford;
- The City of New Westminster; and
- The City of Kamloops.

Public Input Process Self-Assessment and Risk Management

While the categories and local government examples from the jurisdictional scan have been identified as leading practices, local governments will need to self-assess the structures they have in place before they can implement similar measures. Self-assessments are often the first step in an organization’s journey towards effective outcomes. The goal of assessments is to collect data

that can help evaluate whether an organization is making progress towards various goals, including whether a local government Council can demonstrate that it is making progress advancing its mission. Organizations that are serious about measuring their progress and evaluating their outcomes typically engage in a self-assessment process, whether organization-wide or focused on certain aspects of their programs or activities. For example, Council members can conduct self-assessments to determine how engaged Council is, or to identify knowledge or experience gaps. Self-assessments are typically used in conjunction with annual/regular performance evaluations. Self-assessments can help Council and staff quickly identify areas in which their organization can improve its effectiveness to serve its mission. In the context of this report, a self-assessment on an organization's public input process is imperative for change.

As with any action undertaken by a public body, effective public engagement requires careful risk management and mitigation. Possible sources of risk may include failed projects, insufficient feedback on how public input is being used, limited capacity, lengthy and/or inconclusive processes, and lack of trust in the capacities of participating citizens (OECD, 2008, p. 42). While the initiatives identified below have been successful, it must also be recognized that sometimes consultation and participation exercises result in expensive failures (OECD, 2008, p. 43). It is important to avoid these failures as they waste public funds and they waste goodwill among the general public, civil servants and politicians.

Financial risk is particularly relevant to B.C. local governments because they must not budget for a deficit (planned expenditures and transfers to funds cannot exceed planned revenues, transfers from funds, and other cash contributions). They also must annually adopt a financial plan under the LGA and the *Community Charter* (Province of British Columbia, 2020). The planning period for the financial plan must include the current fiscal year and the next four fiscal years (five-year plan). One way of reducing the financial risks of public engagement would be to stop conducting consultations or promising participation on issues. However, this would not solve the issues identified in this report. As such, local governments should concentrate efforts and resources on designing meaningful public participation that is delivered to the highest professional standards so that they obtain results that are worth the money spent (OECD, 2008, p. 43).

5.2.1 Leading Practices

Engagement Frameworks

Differentiating the City of Victoria from the rest of the field begins with the clear foundations it set before the development of its Engagement Framework. This begins with awareness to create an engagement strategy that is both accessible and inclusive. Furthermore, the City of Victoria was one of the few local governments analyzed that engaged with the public on how its framework should be created. This included hosting a Public Engagement Road Map workshop and a drop-in session. The goal was to work with the community to develop clear expectations on opportunities for the public to participate in City decision-making.

The Framework was easily accessible online and well set up including a Table of Contents that provided background on the initiative, information on how Council and City staff conduct their day-to-day duties as well as various charts, tables and engagement tools. Lastly, the Framework was one of the few that specifically mentioned a need to update the framework as well as highlighting appropriate engagement "windows" and timeframes.

The City of New Westminster's Framework provides insight into the importance of building a Framework from the "ground up". It began with a commitment from Council to invest in new ways to meaningfully engage the public to meet the expectations of community members and to be able to shape the City's future. The City's Framework provides information on how a local government can begin the process of developing an Engagement Framework through the creation of a Task Force. The City's Strategy was also developed with citizen involvement including a public survey to solicit information from community members on how they interact with the City. Furthermore, the City conducted two public workshops as well as focus groups with five of the City's Advisory Committees.

These discussions provided an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the Task Force's draft engagement principles and suggestions on how to put them into use. The City also worked with the community to create a Toolkit including concrete tools and methods that were provided by a specialist from the SFU Centre for Dialogue's Civic Engage program. The Framework is well organized, easily accessible online and includes an Action Plan as well as details on dedicated City staffing for implementing the Framework by the City's Communications Division.

The engagement strategy for the Township of Langley was established by the Mayor's Standing Committee on Public Engagement. This is a strong example of how the political will of a Council can influence stronger public engagement from the top-down. This committee made a dedicated effort to look at methods to better connect staff and Council with the public on planning and development processes and projects. As such, the Township's goal was to ensure that meaningful two-way dialogue occurs consistently between community members, stakeholders and government during these processes.

This Framework was one of the only ones created to look at development processes. This Framework was also handled professionally through the assistance of Modus Planning Design & Engagement Inc. What stood out was the work with the community as well as the thorough review of previous processes. The Committee analyzed past practices, researched best practices, survey Lower Mainland municipalities, interviewed stakeholders and hosted three Open Houses. Many local frameworks compared to the Township's only conducted one Open House.

Public Engagement Strategies

Municipalities are encouraged to utilize IAP2 Engagement strategies because they are detailed, materials exist, training opportunities are prevalent, and they adhere to the core values developed

by the Federation with broad international input. Furthermore, these values and strategies identify the aspects of public participation, which cross national, cultural, and religious boundaries. The purpose of these core values is to help make better decisions that reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. Differentiating Saanich from the other municipalities that were analyzed was its use of engagement strategies outlined by the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD). NCDD is a network of innovators who bring people together across divides to tackle today's toughest challenges. NCDD serves as a gathering place, a resource clearinghouse, a news source, and a facilitative leader for this extraordinary community.

Engagement Websites

Leading examples of engagement websites came from the City of North Vancouver, which offered links to different ways citizens can get involved with the City, ways to join different committees, becoming a park steward, participating in public meetings, volunteering as well as a mobile app that shows the City and its different parts of the street that might need to get upgraded and "City Connect", serving as an online City new hub. Other strong examples were mentioned previously, including the City of Kamloops and City of Richmond and their "LetsTalkRichmond" and "LetsTalkKamloops" programs.

Development Committees

An effective development committee represents the community at large, municipal staff, Council and stakeholders in the development sector that can represent a diverse set of needs and provide guidance on all development proposals, which culminate in a balanced and fair set of interests. The leading local governments in this regard were: The City of Langford, City of Chilliwack, City of Delta, District of Saanich, City of New Westminster and City of Surrey. These local governments stood out because they make a specific initiative to create more diversity, which refers to a range of human differences. By doing so, they can counter a process that might draw upon loud/outspoken neighbourhood voices that do not properly represent the community at large. More specifically, the inclusion of diversity refers to creating an environment in which people feel involved, respected, valued and connected, and to which individuals bring their authentic selves (ideas, backgrounds and perspectives) to the broader community.

Timeframes & Development Tracking

Effective Development Tracking websites provide information that is laid out and easy to find. For instance, municipalities utilizing websites that outline developments by neighbourhood as well as with maps make proposals easy to find for citizens that might be concerned. Furthermore, these sites also include information about each development proposal and information on when a public meeting might occur. Leading local governments were: The Township of Langley, City of Kamloops, City of Maple Ridge, City of Nanaimo, City of Victoria and District of Saanich.

5.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

The following three themes were identified before the semi-structured interviews were conducted: “Results Oriented”, “Values-Based” and “Goal-Setting”. While these themes were not explicitly stated in the interviews, undercurrents related to these themes were likely to be evident from the discussions. Relating these themes to the day-to-day work of each stakeholder aimed to assist with the identification of efficient and effective public engagement tools. These themes were identified through the literature review were informed by IAP2 and NCDD values and strategies and confirmed during the interviews. IAP2 views public participation as any process that involves the public in problem-solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions (International Association of Public Participation (IAP2), 2020). On the other hand, NCDD views public engagement as convening diverse, representative groups of people to wrestle with information from a variety of viewpoints all to the end of making better, often more creative decisions (National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation, 2009, p. 2). Public engagement aims to provide people with direction for their community activities, or with public judgments that will be seriously considered by policy-makers and power-holders (National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation, 2009, p. 2)

The questions asked during the semi-structured interviews were shaped around these three themes and the interviews were able to shed light on if each stakeholder kept these themes in mind during the discussion. While each set of questions was slightly modified to accommodate each stakeholder and their processes, a general set of leading questions asked can be found in Appendix 9.

5.3.1 Results Oriented

Many of the important decisions that affect our day-to-day lives are made at the local government level (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 1). The community benefits the most when there is a strong working partnership between citizens, Council and local government staff. The more informed and involved citizens and community groups are, the better able a local government can build an inclusive and sustainable community. Involving the public in discussions on matters that affect them improves the quality of decisions made and ensures that diverse opinions, information and experiences are considered in the decision-making process (Saanich, 2015, p. 3). Public participation is a reciprocal process that involves the public (anyone who is interested in or affected by the issue under discussion) in problem-solving or discussion and links public input to the decision. It is not a single engagement event, but rather a journey with an opportunity to build relationships and trust. This was evident in the practices of the City of Langford. Many of the processes it utilized have been around for decades, and this has resulted in a mentality in the public that the City is “development-friendly”.

The City of New Westminster has many resources that provide the development community with the tools they need to have positive results. This was evident with the Pre-Application Review process that allows City staff to review a preliminary application in detail and provide written

comments to an applicant before a full application is made. The Pre-Application Review helps to identify key considerations and potential issues of a proposed development before significant investment is made in a full application. By instilling these perspectives in the local government decision-making mechanisms, it provides positive results in the advent of new housing. Therefore, a decision needs to be made and the input of the public and stakeholders will have a clearly stated degree of influence over the outcome or decision. Mayor and Council still must make the final decisions, but with valuable input from citizens, those decisions are more informed and responsive to public concerns and values.

5.3.2 Values-Based

There needs to be a predictable and accessible cycle when local governments set the policies that guide their operations, programs and activities. An example of this can be found in the District of Saanich's vision, which at each phase of the cycle, welcomes public input (Saanich, 2015, p. 6). In Saanich, their cycle begins with the creation of a vision statement that articulates the dreams and hopes of the District's future (Saanich, 2015, p. 6). These values are often highlighted in a local government's OCP. The OCP is the umbrella document providing the overall community values, vision, direction and focus. It helps Council and citizens manage future growth and change in each community. It applies to the entire municipality and is the principal policy document that Council uses to make decisions on matters such as land use, growth management, design of the built environment, protection of the environment, transportation and mobility, economic development, infrastructure, and housing needs (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 161).

Values are made even more clear using Local Area Plans and Local Action Plans. Separate from the OCP, a Local Area Plan provides a policy framework for Council by addressing issues such as land use, transportation, environment, urban design, housing, economic development, parks, climate change, and community amenities. Local Action Plans, like Local Area Plans, translate OCP objectives into detailed policies and initiatives that reflect local community values and context. Action Plans, while inclusive and holistic, usually focus on certain objectives specific to an area's needs. Therefore, the dialogue and interaction between the public/stakeholders and the local government need to be grounded in sharing and understanding the needs, interests and values of all participants and the unique needs within each local government's different communities.

5.3.3 Goal Setting

When development applications are submitted and considered by a local government, planning tools such as OCPs, Regional Sustainability Strategies, Local Area Plans and Zoning Bylaws help the local government make decisions and realize their goals as a community. Regarding the public input process, the goal is often to create opportunities for citizens from different cultures, backgrounds and different points of view to come together to share their opinions and views with staff and elected officials (Saanich, 2015, p. 15). Listening and learning from citizens assists the local government as they move forward in solving problems, making decisions and achieving

their goals. With that said, the goal of public participation is not always meant to achieve absolute consensus or agreement, nor is it intended to delegate the final decision-making authority to the community. This has been made evident from local government and development community concerns with the Neighbourhood Association model being provided too much decision-making authority. Therefore, a goal-driven process will have clearly defined goals and objectives and will determine specific, purposeful and productive outcomes that will be achieved throughout a project and where the role of the public is clear.

Leading local governments take the values associated with their OCPs and establish them within Terms of Reference throughout the work of their different committees. When committees – especially those consisting of members of the public – begin their work, those expectations and goals need to be entrenched so they can better work with Council, staff and the development community. A term of reference document outlines how a group of people agree to work together to accomplish common goals. A term of reference is an important step in creating a shared set of expectations and building accountabilities for members, as well as explaining some of the supporting roles. Some characteristics of effective terms of reference include:

- It clearly describes the council’s purpose, structure and operating rules;
- It defines roles and accountabilities for the council, senior leaders and support staff;
- It is collaboratively developed, and it is approved by the whole council;
- It is easy to read and understand; and
- It can change as the nature of the work of the council evolves.

The Province has already begun to support B.C. local governments with its goal setting by legislating housing needs reports. Housing needs reports are a way for communities to better understand their current and future housing needs. These reports can help identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information about local demographics, economics, housing stock, and other factors. A housing needs report is critical to developing a housing strategy or action plan (Province of British Columbia, 2020). As a basis for determining current and projected housing needs, local governments are required to collect approximately 50 kinds of data about:

- Current and projected population;
- Household income;
- Significant economic sectors; and
- Currently available and anticipated housing units.

All housing needs reports are required to contain the following content, based on the analysis of the information collected (Province of British Columbia, 2020).

- The number of housing units required to meet current housing and anticipated housing needs for at least the next five years, by housing type;

- Statements about key areas of local need;
- The number and percentage of households in core housing need and extreme core housing need; and
- Standardized summary forms.

5.4 Summary

Most of the research objectives have been delivered at this point with public engagement defined, the current state of development approvals outlined, a scan of how other jurisdictions support their communities develop public input processes for development approvals and semi-structured interviews with local governments to better understand lessons learned. These objectives were intended to provide the client with the necessary information on the diversity of the public input process for development approvals and support future initiatives concerning the highlighting of leading practices. The next chapter of the report will identify some options for the client regarding future initiatives.

6.0 Policy Options

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this report was to identify leading practices regarding the Province's role in supporting local governments for receiving more meaningful, earlier and effective input from the public regarding the development approval process. This section of the report presents the model for B.C. local governments to determine the available and preferred methods for creating effective and efficient public engagement in a variety of scenarios. While there is no "one size fits all" model, the identified leading practices can help inform B.C. local governments to make better decisions around the public input process for development approvals.

The options identified below can only be implemented depending on a variety of factors, including political interest, available funds and local demographics (population, economy, etc.). The options also recognize the Province's legislative framework for municipalities that understands they are democratically elected, autonomous, responsible and accountable within their jurisdiction. As such, the Province cannot enforce local government implementation of the policy options below. The success and resiliency of B.C.'s municipalities and regional districts depend on collaboration with and through organizations in the local government system.

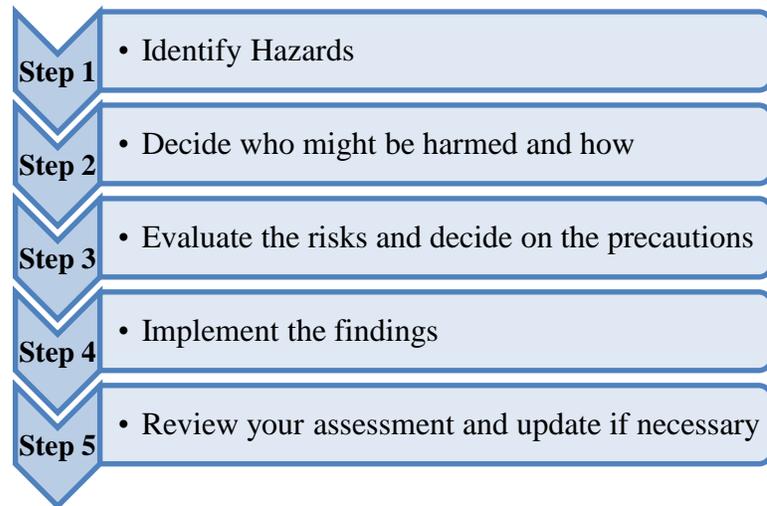
It is recommended the Province champion the policy options to local governments through B.C. local government system organizations. System organizations are a key resource for local government elected officials and staff. They provide local governments with opportunities to collaborate, co-operate and build relationships with the organizations and with each other (Province of British Columbia, n.d.). There are two organizations to assist the Province in promoting the policy options: The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and the Local Government Management Association (LGMA).

UBCM represents and serves all local governments in the province. Formed in 1905, UBCM provides a common voice for local governments represented by their elected officials. In addition to advocating policy positions of its members, UBCM represents a local government perspective in consultations on changes to key Provincial legislation and policies and delivers grant programs and other services to local governments (Province of British Columbia, n.d.). UBCM also has a record of successfully delivering a range of funding programs to local governments, including many on behalf of or in partnership with the Province. Current examples in which the Province is a partner or has an interest include the Housing Needs Reports Funding Program, the Gas Tax Agreement, the Community Emergency Preparedness Fund, and the Asset Management Planning Program.

LGMA provides professional development and resources for local government administrators and staff. Since 1919, the LGMA has promoted professional management, leadership and awareness of the role of local government officers (Province of British Columbia, n.d.). LGMA is dedicated to supporting excellence in local government by providing high quality, practical training and resources; encouraging the development of professional networking and connections; and facilitating the exchange of ideas and best practices among members. With that said, to fully realize a public engagement vision, local governments will need to pilot or implement new ways to engage community members and take steps to build their internal knowledge and capacity.

Each of the options also contains a risk assessment, which identified potential risks to avoid consequences down the road. A comprehensive risk assessment is fundamental to mitigation. With the risk assessment process (Lucidchart, n.d.), it identifies processes and situations that may cause harm, determines how likely it is that each hazard will occur, how severe the consequences might be, and decides what steps the organization can take to stop these hazards from occurring or to control the risk (Lucidchart, n.d.). With a risk assessment (Figure 4), it is important to note the difference between hazards and risks. A hazard is anything that can cause harm, including work accidents, employee conflicts, stress and more (Lucidchart, n.d.). On the other hand, a risk is a chance that the hazard will cause harm. As part of a risk assessment, it identifies hazards and then calculates the risk or likelihood of the hazards occurring. The goal of a risk assessment is to help organizations prepare for and combat risk. There are five steps in a risk assessment (Lucidchart, n.d.).

FIGURE 4 - RISK ASSESSMENT STEPS



6.2 Options to Consider

Option 1: Develop Formalized Local Government Engagement Frameworks

A formalized local government engagement framework ensures that each local government sets a standard of excellence when working with citizens and stakeholders by following engagement leading practices consistently. An engagement framework can spell out the leading practices and is intended as a guide to assist Council and staff in understanding the purpose of engagement as well as their responsibilities within the process. It outlines the concepts of public and internal engagement as well as each local government’s approach, commitment and expectations. It also explains the benefits of engagement and includes various tools to help Council and staff integrate engagement into projects (Table 7).

The purpose of setting engagement standards is not to make everyone happy; it is to ensure that all voices are heard and considered when making decisions that impact others (City of Calgary, n.d., p. 2). In short, an engagement framework provides the following:

- Better project outcomes or decisions;
- Objective input;
- Strengthened relationships with citizens and stakeholders; and
- Credibility as a government that is responsive to its citizens.

TABLE 6 - ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

IAP2 Level of Engagement	Examples of Tools and Techniques
Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Forces and Advisory Committees • Mayor and Council Community Drop-ins • Email to Mayor and Council • Stakeholder meetings • Signs
Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Open houses • Pop-up kiosks • Design charrettes • Stakeholder meeting • Neighbourhood Working Group • Surveys • Feedback via social media • Public hearings
Involve	
Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Committees
Empower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assent Vote • Alternative Approval Process • Local Elections

Each local government is different and has different needs. Regarding development, a community may need more supportive housing, condominiums, detached housing, etc. Therefore, a formalized engagement framework can be broken down into different components that ultimately reflect the principles and values of engagement for the needs of that community. For example, a framework may have a section on understanding the stakeholder. Stakeholders can be members of the community at large, customers, businesses, non-profit organizations, community organizations and partners, other government agencies, and internal departments, business units and staff. Stakeholders might be directly or indirectly affected by a proposed project or community need and the engagement framework needs to find a balance between the two. The engagement process should include as many stakeholders as feasibly possible. An inclusive process provides:

- Understanding of all perspectives on an issue and ensure diverse views are shared;
- Balance for the loud voices of a few with the silent thoughts of many; and

- Ensures those stakeholders who are typically difficult to reach because of barriers and constraints, are identified, invited and encouraged to participate by removing the barriers.

Lastly, an engagement framework is meant to be flexible. It reflects the values of each community and is not always linear. The roles and responsibilities of Council and staff may differ from the local government-to-local government. This is also the case for the different engagement tools and techniques that will be used. It may be appropriate to conduct an open house on one development project within a community, while another local government may hold a workshop for a similar initiative. The engagement framework is designed to reflect your own community's values, not the values of others.

Risk Assessment

When undertaking public engagement activities, it is imperative to understand who your target audience is, and this is regardless of the form your engagement will take (Newfoundland Labrador Office of Public Engagement, 2013, p. 15). Hazards may be created without properly understanding what decisions are at stake, what the timeframe is, and what financial and human resources are available when determining who should be involved in the process. Based on these factors and constraints, it is important to assess where or not a framework or public engagement team, can effectively and efficiently engage the required audience. If the wrong people are engaged, or if not all relevant stakeholders are engaged, there is a risk in undermining the engagement process and fostering a culture of cynicism within the community (Newfoundland Labrador Office of Public Engagement, 2013, p. 16).

Lastly, there is a difficult balance of over engaging and under engaging the public. A framework will have to sometimes find a middle ground to these two issues. On one hand, engaging the public for the sake of 'rubber stamping' a predetermined decision may result in cynicism, particularly if the decision runs counter to much of the received input. Understanding the damage that may occur if engagement activities are used inappropriately is an important consideration (Newfoundland Labrador Office of Public Engagement, 2013, p. 6). On the other hand, the risks associated with over engaging the public

Option 2: Institute Development/Housing Committees

According to institutes like the Vantage Point – a not-for-profit that provides organizations with consulting and coaching that helps them navigate organizational change (Vantage Point, 2015, p. 1) – building the right committee begins with recruiting the right people. Committees can identify prospective members by various sources including advertising, current committee members or Council members, skilled volunteers engaged within the local government, community association members and members of the development community that have previously had successful track records with having projects approved and built. Once a committee has an initial list of candidates, it is important to approach those people and cultivate relationships in advance. As such, Council and staff may want to do their homework to

determine the interests, abilities and appropriateness of each prospective committee member (Vantage Point, 2015, p. 2).

During the jurisdictional scan, leading local governments had developed solid and accessible terms of reference for their committees. Council and staff must be clear regarding the committee's objectives and goals. Terms of reference ensure the scope of the committee's work is well defined and clear to everyone. The terms of reference typically begin by setting the responsibilities of the committee to ensure the scope is well defined and clear to everyone on the committee and the public. Each year, the committee should develop a plan and timeline for meeting these responsibilities. Sample terms of reference can be found in Appendix 10.

Each year, the committee will engage in a review of key Council governance documents, such as the terms of reference, bylaws and role descriptions. This will ensure ongoing clarity, completeness and currency. Ideally, each governance document will include the date created, last modified and how frequently it will be reviewed (Vantage Point, 2015, p. 3). Documents do not need to be reviewed each year; a committee may instead stagger their reviews. For example, bylaws could be reviewed one year, in the following year it might be the terms of reference and in the third-year roles and responsibilities (Vantage Point, 2015, p. 3).

The committee will need to work with Council, staff and the Chair to develop consistent processes to evaluate the performance of the committee. This should be done by establishing clear goals, which can be stated in terms of Key Performance Indicators (Vantage Point, 2015, p. 4). To accomplish this, tools can be utilized such as questionnaires/surveys for citizen feedback. Questions can be asked about the structure, flow and effectiveness of committee meetings as well as results from the goals. Once collected, this feedback can be used to make recommendations regarding the future format of the committee and its meetings.

Risk Assessment

There are certain hazards and risks associated with a local government creating a housing/development committee. For instance, there may be concerns with cost/inefficiencies. Committee meetings, and the research/tasks associated with them, are time-consuming and can take individuals away from their primary job responsibilities. There may also be instances where a Committee is indecisive or takes longer than an individual to conclude because of differing opinions. If a local government needs an answer quickly, a committee may not be the right choice. For instance, "groupthink" is the most notable obstacle in coming up with accurate conclusions and suggestions. This occurs when the conclusions are a compromise and do not represent any single opinion within the group. It may be acceptable to everyone on the committee, but it is not always the best solution.

With any unelected body, there will also be issues with accountability. Without representatives from Council, when the group presents its findings, there is no individual held personally responsible for a wrong decision or for passing the buck and there is no tool for replacement.

This also means it could be difficult to control personalities. For example, when one or two members of a Committee dominate the group, it ceases to be a democratic process. Individual opinions may be suppressed, ignored and discouraged. This is a similar issue to the public hearing process, which tends to attract and empower well-organized interest groups that may not represent the broad perspective of the community or even those who would be the most directly impacted by a decision.

The public's view of the Committee may be cynical if they believe it puts together biased views that are in the best interest of Council. For instance, some studies in the United States have found that there is a persisting controversy as to whether committees are inherently biased and configured to promote policies that favour narrow special interests, or largely representative of the political masses to supply policies that serve the collective interests of the political decision-makers (Parker et al., 2004, p. 431).

Lastly, Committee bias may create a lack of diversity. Diversity refers to a range of human differences, which include but are not limited to visible dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, and, invisible dimensions such as religion, political beliefs and sexual orientation. Diversity also recognizes human differences in personality and organizational characteristics. As such, it is important to create an inclusive Committee, which is an environment where people feel involved, respected, valued and connected, and to which individuals bring their authentic selves (ideas, backgrounds and perspectives) to their work with colleagues, entrepreneurs, investors and the broader community. Diverse Committees can ensure that NIBMY attitudes are avoided.

Option 3: Continue to Digitalize Development Services

Local governments should aim to implement engagement technologies to increase the breadth and depth of public involvement. While many local governments are increasingly working to provide user-friendly experiences, people are becoming more and more accustomed to finding information quickly online and some local governments are being left behind. With a general public that is accustomed to on-demand information, local governments that provide crucial services, and make crucial decisions, need to catch up to meet their goals of serving the public. Local government limitations with online platforms were highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as many small local governments did not have the resources put in place to accommodate virtual public meetings.

One of the first steps a local government can take is to inform their citizens in becoming more digitally accessible (Digital City Hall, 2019). It is as simple as putting information online so that a citizen can find up to date information. By bringing the local government's activities online, it can also look at the possible benefits of using social media tools to enable increased accessibility and interactions, such as remote viewing and/or participation in appropriate workshops and providing questions/feedback to Council and staff. For example, since Spring 2020, local

governments are now enabled to hold public hearings electronically so they can continue to make important land-use decisions while complying with the public health order on mass gatherings and the recommendations on safe physical distancing (Province of British Columbia, 2020). Local governments are also able to hold open meetings electronically, which gives them the flexibility to conduct business using telephone and video conferencing without compromising the rights of the public to access the decision-making process.

Local governments may also integrate and automate other services related to public engagement and the development community online. For example, the City of New Westminster – in response to COVID-19 – introduced an online building permit software and a new interim development review process that allows the public and staff to meet City service needs online (Westminster, 2020). The software allows clients to conveniently make preliminary building permit submissions online. This is an example of development applications proceeding to the committee for review and public consultation through online methods. It also includes more City-led public consultation, which could replace the need for some development applications being referred to a public hearing (Westminster, 2020). Additional benefits of digitalizing these kinds of service delivery include 24/7 availability of City services, clearer instructions and guidance online submissions.

A local government may look at utilizing such methods in gradual steps, as did the City of New Westminster. For example, the City proceeded with a three-month pilot program for the processing of development applications that address Council's strategic priorities and that would generate relatively low interest at public consultation events and meetings, nor would they require an amendment to the City's OCP so that the public could become more accustomed to these strategies (Westminster, 2020).

While these are some examples of how a local government move forward digitally, everything does not have to be done at once. A local government may adopt an iterative approach and prioritize cases based on goals, insights, and funding. Digital transformation depends on a senior leadership championing an organization-wide vision and bringing the right initiatives and plays into the process at the right time (Digital City Hall, 2019). Delivering continuous improvement to the digital space starts with a robust understanding of what needs to be done and what can be added/gained from the digital transformation initiative.

Risk Assessment

There are certain financial and infrastructure-related concerns with digitalizing services for small and remote local governments. A large proportion of rural and remote areas experience broadband connectivity issues resulting in weak or no access to the Internet. There are still several households across the province that do not have access to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) target speeds of 50 Mbps (Commission, 2020). These areas are primarily on the outskirts of connected communities or in rural or remote areas

where populations are small or dispersed, making access to internet connectivity expensive and challenging. According to the CRTC, 92 percent of households in B.C. with access to target speeds of 50 Mbps are largely in urban areas. Looking at rural B.C., only 36 percent of rural communities and 38 percent of rural Indigenous communities have access to the recommended broadband internet speeds (Province of British Columbia, n.d.-a). As a result, local governments may not be able to rely on technologies (e.g., web-based applications, the streaming of live videos, smartphones) that are widely available in urban centres to facilitate program delivery. Further complicating the matter for the Province, telecommunication and radiocommunication are both areas of federal government jurisdiction (Marzari & Moll, 2010, p. 1).

While Connectivity Funding Programs are available from the Province and Federal Government (Province of British Columbia, n.d.-a), the high cost of providing infrastructure for residents in and around rural and remote communities in B.C. has been identified by municipal governments, First Nations, Regional Districts, regional Internet service providers, and community advocates as one of the key barriers to expanding internet services (Province of British Columbia, n.d.-a). Financial risks for local governments have also been exacerbated since the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in capital project cuts due to major revenue shortfalls (Fumano, 2020).

6.3 Summary

Three options were presented in this section, addressing the main objective of this report. The options are developing a formalized local engagement framework, institute a diverse development committee with an accessible term of reference and digitalize development services. These options also recognize that the Province of British Columbia has established a legislative framework for municipalities that understands they are democratically elected, autonomous, responsible and accountable within their jurisdiction. These principles are outlined in the *Community Charter* – a legal framework of municipal powers/duties providing authority and flexibility for municipalities to address their own community needs (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 23). It also sets out important principles for municipal-provincial relations that emphasize such things as “no downloading,” mutual respect, cooperation, and harmonization (Bish & Clemens, 2008, p. 23). Therefore, the options do not provide the client with a series of recommendations. Instead, the options presented in this report highlight three key components of leading practices that can be championed by the Province for local government implementation.

7.0 Conclusion

The main objective of this report was to provide options to the Province of British Columbia on how to support local governments better understand when and how public involvement is appropriate, resulting in more certainty around the development approvals process. Three broad options were presented to the Province on how they can present a clear framework for local governments. These included developing formalized engagement frameworks, promoting diverse development committees and emphasizing the importance of digitalizing development services. The Province and local governments are however not limited to just one of these options and should consider multiple strategies to meet commitments under *Homes for B.C.: Government's 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia* to stabilize the housing market, build the homes people need, improve security for renters, and support the building and preservation of affordable housing (Government of British Columbia, 2018, p. 18). Specifically, developing education materials and continued consultations are popular initiatives in providing this information to local government partners.

The Province is currently in the final phase of the DAPR project, Phase 4: Initiate Solutions, and includes a longer-term process of evaluating and acting on opportunities for updating the local government development approvals process (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 20). As part of this phase, the Province is committed to ensuring that work undertaken to implement the opportunities identified in this report is fully informed by the knowledge and experience of those who are directly working with and impacted by development approval processes. (Province of British Columbia, 2019, p. 20). The literature review highlighted common themes and principles around public engagement and the B.C. development approval process. Based on these themes, the public input process for development approvals needs to be built on a strong local foundation of guiding principles. Examples of guiding principles were identified as diversity, accessibility, transparency, informed discussion and responsiveness.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted as part of this report. The interviews consisted of questions relating to the local government's engagement priorities, lessons learned and engagement tools and techniques. The interviews were an important component of this report because they should result in better information on the current state of local government urban planning-engagement techniques in the Capital Regional District and parts of Metro Vancouver. three themes were identified and then later confirmed during the semi-structured interviews: "Results Oriented", "Values-Based" and "Goal Setting". While these themes were not explicitly stated, undercurrents related to these themes were evident throughout each discussion. As such, relating these themes to day-to-day work helps to make public engagement tools more efficient and effective.

This report presented three options for the Province based on the literature review, semi-structured interviews and the jurisdictional scan; however, it is not making specific recommendations because specific initiatives will need to target the needs, wants and resources

of each local government. These options do however validate that increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the public input process for development approvals requires the identification of options for receiving more meaningful, earlier input from the public. They also provide valuable insight for the Province as it works in partnership with local governments.

While the Province sets the framework within which local governments are organized and function, the legislation established by the province permits institutional flexibility. The success and resiliency of B.C.'s municipalities and regional districts depend on collaboration with and through different organizations. The emphasis on collaboration in B.C.'s local government system is one way it is distinct from many other jurisdictions. Therefore, this report was able to identify leading local government practices, which were fully informed by the knowledge and experience of those who are directly working with and impacted by the development approval process.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - JURISDICTIONAL SCAN OVERVIEW

BC Local Government	Citizen Engagement Framework	Public Engagement Tools	Citizen Engagement Website	Development Committee	Engagement Framework Timeframes	Development Tracker Website
*City of Langford (Population 42,653)	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✘
City of Prince George	✘	✘	✓	✘	✘	✓
City of Chilliwack	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✓
City of Burnaby	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓
City of Delta	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Maple Ridge	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✓
City of North Vancouver	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Port Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✓	✘	✘
City of Richmond	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Vancouver	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Nanaimo	✘	✘	✓	✓	✘	✓
City of Victoria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
District of Saanich	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Kelowna	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓
City of Abbotsford	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of New Westminster	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Surrey	✓	✘	✓	✓	✓	✘
Township of Langley	✓	✓	✓	✘	✓	✓
City of Kamloops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX 2 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN: ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

BC Local Government	Citizen Engagement Framework	Date Established	Was the Public Consulted on its Creation?	How Often are the Frameworks Updated?
City of Langford	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Prince George	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Chilliwack	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Burnaby	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Delta	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Maple Ridge	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of North Vancouver	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Port Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Richmond	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Vancouver	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Nanaimo	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Victoria	✔	Jul-17	In February 2017, the City hosted a Public Engagement Road Map workshop and drop-in session.	The Engagement Department is responsible for reviewing the framework annually and updating as required
District of Saanich	✔	Aug-15	In September 2013, the District of Saanich developed a Public Participation Policy that guides the way the District and residents will engage in dialogue on issues that are important to them.	✘

City of Kelowna	✓	Apr-14	*	*
City of Abbotsford	✓	Apr-17	In February 2017, the Plan200K project was launched to the public, including 9 Master Plans, 4 Neighbourhood Plans, and 7 Studies. From February to June, the various projects progressed through their respective stages.	*
City of New Westminster	✓	Nov-16	In the fall of 2015, the Task Force conducted a public survey to solicit information from community members on how they interact with the City and what their experience is with New Westminster's public engagement.	*
City of Surrey	✓	Jun-19	Since the launch, research was conducted looking at best practices in engagement locally and globally, explored the challenges and opportunities with current engagement processes, started to reach out and develop relationships with community members/groups that represent the seldom heard, and gathered feedback from the public attending city-led engagement events.	*
Township of Langley	✓	Mar-16	Committee activities in 2015 included analyzing past processes, researching best practices, surveying other Lower Mainland municipalities, interviewing key stakeholders, and hosting three Open Houses to hear from the community about new and different ways of providing input on planning and development. An "engageToL" webpage was developed for people to provide their ideas and opinions and follow the Committee's progress.	Public engagement practices are ever-evolving and related policies, action plans and procedures should be reviewed regularly and revised as needed.
City of Kamloops	✓	Dec-13	*	*

APPENDIX 3 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

BC Local Government	Public Engagement Strategies	Guiding Principles
City of Langford	✘	✘
City of Prince George	✘	✘
City of Chilliwack	✘	✘
City of Burnaby	✘	✘
City of Coquitlam	✘	✘
City of Delta	✘	✘
City of Maple Ridge	✘	✘
City of North Vancouver	✘	✘
City of Port Coquitlam	✘	✘
City of Richmond	✘	✘
City of Vancouver	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	Assigned staff are trained in the community engagement process. The relative effectiveness and cost of techniques to achieve objectives inform the selection of resources. The process includes a balance of people who represent others and people who represent only themselves.
City of Nanaimo	✘	✘
City of Victoria	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	The City makes the best efforts to reach, inform and engage all people who are impacted by the decisions being considered. The City provides people with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. The City will provide the community with ample notice of opportunities to participate.

District of Saanich	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement & National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD)	The District of Saanich believes that decisions are improved by engaging citizens and other stakeholder groups. The District is committed to undertaking public participation in issues that affect citizens' lives and their District. The District is committed to reporting back to citizens on how their views have been considered in the decision-making process. The District is committed to transparent and inclusive processes that are supported by information, are inclusive of the diversity of Saanich and are within the District's ability to finance and resource.
City of Kelowna	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	Public engagement means to inform and/or involve those affected or interested in a decision. It leads to sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, early in the process and describes how citizen input affects the decision. The City recognizes that the decision-making process is improved by engaging citizens and other stakeholder groups when appropriate. Public engagement will apply to four areas where Council has responsibility for the final decision making which include: project, policy or planning initiatives; customer service changes; volunteer participation; and community and neighbourhood development/programming.
City of Abbotsford	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	Plan and implement a robust and well-coordinated stakeholder and public communication and engagement strategy for all Master Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and Studies;
City of New Westminster	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	Involves community members who reflect the diversity of interests and opinions in the community. Achieves accessibility for all community members, recognizes their right to participate and values the knowledge and experience they contribute. Creates a respectful environment that builds trust and maximizes the contributions of community members and staff. Provides community members with accessible and timely information on City matters and processes. Works in partnership with community members and builds on community initiative. Actively communicates transparent information about processes and outcomes for each public engagement initiative.
City of Surrey	✘	✘
Township of Langley	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	Increased opportunities for and ongoing practices of meaningful and timely community input could improve the planning and development process and outcomes in numerous ways while reducing conflict and building stronger community connections.
City of Kamloops	IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement	Careful Planning and Preparation, Inclusion and Demographic Diversity, Collaboration and Shared Purpose, Openness and Learning, Commitment and Accountability, Transparency and Trust, Impact and Action and Sustained Engagement and Participatory Culture

APPENDIX 4 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN: ENGAGEMENT WEBSITES

BC Local Government	Website	Reference	Content	Background
City of Langford	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Prince George	✔	https://www.princegeorge.ca/City%20Services/Pages/SocialDevelopment.aspx	The site contains a contact email, various PDFs to different social strategies and hyperlinks to different City initiatives.	In 2010, an integrated community sustainability plan for Prince George, branded myPG, was completed to help Prince George realize a sustainable and prosperous future. myPG captures the results of extensive public and stakeholder engagement that created a vision of the long-term future of Prince George and outlines what the community needs to do to achieve that vision.
City of Chilliwack	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Burnaby	✔	https://www.burnaby.ca/City-Services/Planning/Social-Planning/Civic-Engagement.html	The site contains a contact email, various PDFs to different social strategies and hyperlinks to different City initiatives. It also contains "City Connect" online and in print, about City of Burnaby initiatives, programs and upcoming events.	Burnaby welcomes citizens to be involved with their City. A range of volunteer opportunities exist including on civic Boards and Committees, through Citizen Support Services, in Community Policing initiatives and for the Burnaby Emergency Program
City of Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Delta	✔	✘	✘	✘
City of Maple Ridge	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of North Vancouver	✔	https://www.cnv.org/get-involved/civic-engagement	Hyperlinks: Join a City Committee, become a Park Steward, participate in a Public Meeting, Volunteer, Watch a Council Meeting (Online or In-Person) and Vote. The site also contains links to different mobile initiatives including the CityFix app.	There are so many ways you can get involved and play a role at City Hall. From attending public meetings and serving on advisory committees to sharing your thoughts and feedback with us through our online surveys, social media channels, apps, public open houses and email.
City of Port Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘

City of Richmond	✓	https://www.richmond.ca/newsevents/haveyou rsay.htm	The City offers LetsTalkRichmond.ca, an interactive discussion forum and community engagement website where you can give feedback on a current project or read the archives of past discussions.	It is our commitment to being accessible, inclusive and accountable to our citizens. Please take the time to visit one of our open houses, fill out one of our online surveys or write to us. Your views and comments are important to us, and we want you to have your say.
City of Vancouver	✓	https://vancouver.ca/your-government/citizen-involvement.aspx	A series of hyperlinks are offered including contacting the Mayor, options for speaking to council, volunteering, speaking at council meetings and different agencies.	Vancouver citizens have a long tradition of participating in city government and community affairs. It's one of the reasons why Vancouver has been ranked as one of the best places in the world to live. Public involvement is a vital part of the democratic process. Both City Council and the Park Board makes it a priority to be accessible to all citizens
City of Nanaimo	✓	https://www.nanaimo.ca/get-involved/community-engagement	A series of hyperlinks are offered including contacting the Mayor, options for speaking to council, volunteering, speaking at council meetings and different agencies.	Welcome to the City of Nanaimo's Community Engagement portal. We want to hear from you, the residents of Nanaimo. Here you will find several ways you can engage with us and find information on various City projects and initiatives.
City of Victoria	✓	https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/communications/citizen-engagement.html	The site contains a link to the City's Engagement Framework, the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Engagement and City contact information.	At the City of Victoria, the decisions we make impact the daily lives of people in our community. Public participation creates opportunities for individuals with diverse perspectives to come together and share their ideas with staff and elected officials. It's also an opportunity to listen and learn from others and to assist decision-makers as they explore ways to improve plans, programs and services.
District of Saanich	✓	https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/community/get-involved/public-participation.html	The site contains a link to the District's Engagement Framework, the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Engagement, a Guide on how to interact with Council and District contact information.	It's simple. We make better decisions with your input. Our leaders and decision-makers can also better understand your perspectives, opinions, and concerns when you share your thoughts. It also helps us build trust, generate ideas and create a community between citizens and local government.
City of Kelowna	✓	https://getinvolved.kelowna.ca/engagement-process	The engagement site contains registration to receive news about the latest City-led projects, timely public input opportunities, contact information and opportunities to help shape policy, projects and other initiatives in your community.	Decisions made by the local government are improved through open and transparent processes and the input of citizens and stakeholders. The key to a balanced process is ensuring City leaders and decision-makers understand the perspectives, opinions, ideas and concerns of people potentially affected by decisions. Before decisions are made, public input is collected, where appropriate, and included along with other considerations such as financial, environmental and technical limitations, as well as longer-term plans (e.g. Official Community Plan).

City of Abbotsford	✓	https://letstalkabbotsford.ca/	Here is where you can share your opinions, ideas and give feedback on issues and projects that matter to you! Sign up and help us create the community that you want to live in.	Let's Talk Abbotsford is the City of Abbotsford's online engagement portal where you can have your say and stay up to date on projects that the City is working on.
City of New Westminster	✓	https://www.newwestcity.ca/publicengagement	The Site contains contact information, a link to the City's Engagement Framework, Committee information and Initiative Updates.	The City of New Westminster recognizes the need to respond to the demand for high-quality public engagement - not as a nice-to-have - but as a central component of how the City does business and delivers services to community members. We are committed to investing in new ways to meaningfully engage the public to be able to shape New Westminster's future together in a pro-active way.
City of Surrey	✓	https://www.surrey.ca/city-government/13071.aspx	The Site contains contact information, a link to the City's Engagement Framework, Committee information and Initiative Updates.	The City of Surrey encourages public participation from residents through surveys, open houses, public meetings, and more.
Township of Langley	✓	https://www.tol.ca/connect/get-involved/engagetol/	The Site contains contact information, a link to the Township's Engagement Framework, Committee information and Initiative Updates.	With input from over 300 community members who participated in a consultation process, including 3 open houses, the Mayor's Standing Committee prepared a Public Engagement Strategy for Planning and Development. On March 21, 2016, Council endorsed and authorized the implementation of the Public Engagement Strategy
City of Kamloops	☐	https://www.kamloops.ca/our-community/get-involved/lets-talk	Let's Talk Kamloops is the City of Kamloops' online engagement site where you can contribute your ideas and feedback on City matters. We want to empower you, our residents, to be more active in shaping your community and future. We will listen to what you say, take your opinions into account, and report back to you on how community input contributes to City projects.	Let's Talk Kamloops is our engagement website where you can share your voice and shape our city.

APPENDIX 5 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN: DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

BC Local Government	Development Committee	Terms of Reference	Who is on the Committee?	How Often Does It Meet?
City of Langford	Planning, Zoning and Affordable Housing Committee	The Planning, Zoning and Affordable Housing Committee provides advice to council but does not have decision-making authority.	Two councillors and five appointed citizens.	Bi-monthly
City of Prince George	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Chilliwack	Affordable Housing & Development Advisory Committee	The Affordable Housing and Development Advisory Committee (AHDC) is a Select Committee established by Council. The purpose of AHDC is to serve as an advisory/liason body between Council and the development, building, and real estate community. The committee provides advice to Council on the implementation of the City of Chilliwack’s (COC) Affordable Housing Strategy and other COC policies and strategies to address housing needs in the community. The committee will also be advisory to Council concerning its bylaws and policies and their application to the building and development industry.	Two elected officials representing Council as Chair and Vice-Chair, a COC liaison staff member from Planning, and up to ten voting members appointed by Council as follows: (1) member from the building sector; (1) member from the survey sector; (1) members from the engineering sector; (1) member from the real estate sector; (2) members from the development sector; (1) member from the Builders Association; (1) members from the rental housing sector.	The meetings shall be held quarterly or as determined by the Chair on an ‘as needed’ basis.
City of Burnaby	Planning and Development Committee	The Planning and Development Committee advises Council on transportation planning, affordable housing, City land leasing for non-market and special needs housing, planning issues for residential land use and the reports on the impacts of federal and provincial policies on the topics.	Five Councillors; Director Planning & Building; Assistant Director, Long Range Planning; Assistant Director Engineering, Infrastructure Services; Assistant Director, Current Planning; and Realty and Lands Administrative Officer.	Monthly
City of Coquitlam	✘	✘	✘	✘

City of Delta	Mayor's Task Force on Building Permits and Development Applications	The Task Force will, consistent with the general purpose described above, provide advice to Council on actions and measures that could be implemented to streamline development & building permits, reduce applicant wait times and improve communications with applicants.	Mayor and two Councillors; City Manager; Director of Public Engagement & Intergovernmental Affairs; Director of Engineering; Director of Community Planning & Development; Administration & Customer Service Manager, Engineering. The Task Force also consists of representatives from Delta's business and development sector.	The Task Force shall meet six (6) times per year and/or at the call of the Chair.
City of Maple Ridge	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of North Vancouver	Advisory Planning Commission	To advise Council on the community planning aspects of the following: Official Community Plan (OCP), including amendments, federal, provincial or neighbouring municipal development plans which may affect our OCP; City Plans or strategies such as transportation plans, economic development situations, or strategic plans which offset the City's OCP; Zoning Bylaws, Development Permits and Development Variance Permits.	Yusra Al-Nakeeb, Keegan Balcom, Claudia Castro, Sara Huber, Mack McCorkindale, Adrien Rahbar, Mary Tasi Baker (SD #44 Rep), Brett Thorburn, Steve Tornes and Antje Wilson	Monthly
City of Port Coquitlam	Committee of Council	The Committee of Council will replace all previous committees. All city matters requiring a Council decision will now first be discussed by the Committee of Council, which will either request changes or further information or send them on to Council for a formal decision.	Council designates for the following areas: Cllr. Glenn Pollock: housing and Mayor Brad West: development, planning, and economic development.	The second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.
City of Richmond	Planning Committee	✘	Five Councillors	Tuesday preceding the first Council meeting.

City of Vancouver	Vancouver City Planning Commission	The commission advises City Council on planning and development issues in the City and may report to Council on any proposal likely to have a significant effect on the future of the City. The commission organizes conferences, consultations, and research on topics including housing, public realm, neighbourhoods, transportation, and public engagement.	The commission consists of 11 voting members appointed by City Council, and two members appointed by the commission itself. The commission also has four non-voting members from City Council (2), Park Board (1) and School Board (1).	The commission generally meets once a month on a Wednesday from 3 to 5 pm.
City of Nanaimo	Health and Housing Task Force	The purpose of the Health and Housing Task Force is to address the health and housing crisis in our community.	One-two (1-2) members of Council and Ten members	The meeting schedule is established by the task force.
City of Victoria	Advisory Design Panel	The Advisory Design Panel provides advice to Council on the design merits of plans as part of a: Rezoning Application; Development Permit; Development Variance Permit Application; Statutory Building Scheme; Board of Variance application involving a house conversion and Special Projects referred to the Panel by City Council.	Sorin Birliga; Pamela Madoff; Jason Niles; Marilyn Palmer; Jessi-Anne Reeves; Carl-Jan Rupp; Karen Sander; Stefan Schulson; Elizabeth Balderston and Brad Forth.	Monthly
District of Saanich	Advisory Design Panel	The Advisory Design Panel advises Council and the Director of Planning on the design merits of certain public and private development applications.	The Committee will consist of eight (8) members appointed by Council including two architects; Two landscape architects; One representative of the building industry; One representative of the disabled community; and Two community representatives.	The Committee will meet twice per month by its regular schedule of meetings established annually at the first meeting of the year.
City of Kelowna	✘	✘	✘	✘

City of Abbotsford	Development, Transportation and Infrastructure Advisory Committee	The purpose of the Development, Transportation and Infrastructure Advisory Committee is to maintain an effective channel of communication between Council and the community on issues related to land use, transportation, infrastructure, heritage (as it relates to development), bylaw and policy development and master plans and strategies.	11 voting members appointed by Council: (1) member of Council; (1) member from School District; (1) member from ICBC; (2) members from the development industry; (2) members from the consulting professionals industry; (1) member from the University of the Fraser Valley; (1) member from the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce; (1) member from the heritage community; and (1) member from the accessibility community.	Monthly
City of New Westminster	Advisory Planning Commission	The APC reviews and advises Council on rezoning applications, amendments to the Official Community Plan, proposed community and neighbourhood plans, and in respect to proposed or revised City policies and procedures relating to planning and development.	Chair: Community Member, currently Christa MacArthur	Monthly
City of Surrey	Advisory Design Panel	The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is appointed by City Council to advise the General Manager of the Planning & Development Department on the quality of design of the built environment in the City, and specifically to provide comments and suggestions to improve the design quality of the development projects being reviewed by the department. Recommendations are advisory only.	The panel includes design professionals (architects, landscape architects, and engineers), a heritage consultant, representatives of the development industry, the RCMP, and a disabled access advisor from the community.	Monthly
Township of Langley	✘	✘	✘	✘
City of Kamloops	Development and Sustainability Committee	✘	Councillor Singh (Chairperson), Councillor Hunter, Councillor Dudy and Councillor O'Reilly (Alternate)	Monthly

*** Committees listed exclude Boards of Variance: The BC LGA requires a local government that has adopted a zoning bylaw to establish a Board of Variance. This is a quasi-judicial body that is independent of City Hall.**

APPENDIX 7 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN: ENGAGEMENT TIMEFRAMES

BC Local Government	Engagement Framework Timeframes
City of Langford	
City of Prince George	
City of Chilliwack	
City of Burnaby	
City of Coquitlam	
City of Delta	
City of Maple Ridge	
City of North Vancouver	
City of Port Coquitlam	
City of Richmond	
City of Vancouver	
City of Nanaimo	
City of Victoria	Incorporate a two-week minimum notice to the community of any upcoming engagement initiative
District of Saanich	Committee and board meetings are open to the public with their location and start time published weekly in the newspaper and an open forum is held following the third regular Council meeting of the month.
City of Kelowna	Summary of neighbour consultation efforts, feedback and response must be provided to City staff, identifying how the efforts meet the objective of this form of consultation. This must be provided to City staff a minimum of 20 days before Council initial consideration of the application(s) for inclusion in the report to Council.
City of Abbotsford	Provide monthly communications about project progression, plan reports and upcoming events to those registered on the site.
City of New Westminster	Integrate Public Engagement Strategy into the City's strategic planning and decision-making processes and adopt the Strategy's Strategic Framework and Public Engagement Principles as a basis for planning and evaluating all public engagement activities.
City of Surrey	The mandate of the Public Engagement Task Force will be to review best practices in project and process-based community engagement with a focus on moving beyond traditional public consultation to more innovative solutions.
Township of Langley	Increased opportunities for and ongoing practices of meaningful and timely community input could improve the planning and development process and outcomes in numerous ways while reducing conflict and building stronger community connections.
City of Kamloops	To be most effective, it's important to engage the public as early as possible in the project development process. This can have a tremendous positive impact by saving time and money and helping to build public trust and support for a project or issue.

APPENDIX 8 – JURISDICTIONAL SCAN: DEVELOPMENT TRACKING WEBSITE

BC Local Government	Development Tracker Website	Identified by Neighbourhood
Langford	✘	✘
Prince George	https://www.princegeorge.ca/Business%20and%20Development/Pages/Planning%20and%20Development/LandUse.aspx	✘
Chilliwack	https://www.chilliwack.com/main/page.cfm?id=1976	✘
Burnaby	https://www.burnaby.ca/City-Services/Policies--Projects--Initiatives/Community-Development/Major-Development-Projects.html	✔
Coquitlam	https://www.coquitlam.ca/planning-and-development/resources/current-applications.aspx	✔
Delta	http://www.delta.ca/your-government/delta's-projects	✘
Maple Ridge	https://gis.mapleridge.ca/LandDevelopmentViewer/LandDevelopmentViewer.html	✔
North Vancouver	https://www.cnv.org/property-and-development/projects-and-developments/current-developments	✘
Port Coquitlam	✘	✘
Richmond	https://www.richmond.ca/plandev/devzoning/currentdevapps.htm	✘
Vancouver	https://development.vancouver.ca/	✘
Nanaimo	https://www.nanaimo.ca/WhatsBuilding	✔
Victoria	https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/planning-development/development-tracker.html	✔
Saanich	https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/local-government/development-applications/active-development-applications/carey.html	✔
Kelowna	https://www.kelowna.ca/homes-building/property-development/current-developments	✔
Abbotsford	https://www.abbotsford.ca/business_and_development/development_planning/development_application_status.htm	✘
New Westminster	https://www.newwestcity.ca/planning-building-and-development/projects-on-the-go	✔
Surrey	✘	✘
Township of Langley	https://www.tol.ca/at-your-service/engineering-building-development/development/development-activity/	✔
Kamloops	https://www.kamloops.ca/homes-business/building-development/development-applications	✔

APPENDIX 9 – SAMPLE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your current role in your local government?
2. Is there a formal public engagement framework in place?
 - a. If yes, can you briefly describe that framework?
 - b. How does it relate to the public hearing process?
3. Tell me about how often and in what manner your position interacts with the public to gather input, share information, educate and find solutions.
4. What issues does your municipality consult the public on?
 - a. How do you obtain this information?
5. Is there one person in charge of public engagement in the planning department?
6. How often does the municipality utilize public hearings?
7. What specific engagement efforts can you recall that were particularly successful?
 - a. In what context or setting were those efforts conducted?
 - b. What keys to success were incorporated into the delivery of that engagement effort?
8. What specific engagement efforts can you recall that were not successful?
 - a. What were the barriers?
 - b. What lessons were learned?
9. How frequently, and to what extent are you engaging with the development community?
10. Are you aware of the development community engaging directly with the public without local government supervision?

APPENDIX 10 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Development Committee Sample Terms of Reference

Goals

This will reflect the values of your local government and the needs of your community. The goals, visions and principles of the committee may be informed by a citizen engagement framework of policy.

Role

The roles of the committee are focused on ensuring continuity, leadership and the competencies required by committee members. It will also determine the make-up and potential gaps in competencies required in current and potential committee members.

Core Values and Principles Guiding the Committee

- Accountability;
- Inclusiveness;
- Transparency;
- Commitment; and
- Responsiveness

Membership

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Selected Committee Members (Council, Local Government Staff, Development Stakeholders, Transportation Experts, Architects, Not-for-Profit Sector and Citizens)

Purpose/Objectives

- To serve as an advisory/liaison body between Council and the development, building, and real estate community.
- To provide advice to Council on the implementation of Affordable Housing Strategies, the Official Community Plan and policies and strategies to address housing needs in the community.
- To provide advice to Council to its bylaws and policies and their application to the building and development industry.
- To consistently report findings and opinions to Council.

Accountability

- The committee is responsible to the Chair;
- The committee will meet as often as required (monthly or bi-monthly); and
- The committee will report its discussions to Council and staff by making minutes available and will provide status reports when requested.