

City of Maple Ridge **Community Engagement Framework**



Introduction

Driven by community, Maple Ridge values meaningful engagement to ensure transparency and that City decisions reflect diverse needs, priorities, and aspirations.

This Community Engagement Framework guides when, how, and why the City engages with the community, fostering collaboration to build a vibrant, connected, and resilient Maple Ridge. It ensures a clear, consistent, and transparent approach to key decisions, policies, and projects to help promote trust and active participation.

Note: This document provides high-level guidance and is supported by a Toolkit for staff that outlines the procedures and tactics necessary to ensure consistency across engagement initiatives.

What is Community Engagement?

Also known as public participation or public engagement, community engagement is the process of educating and requesting input (when applicable) from interested and impacted community members and other “interest holders”.

Community Engagement Benefits

Maple Ridge City Council and staff benefit from effective community engagement by:

- learning from diverse perspectives, concerns, and priorities of the community
- thoughtfully considering and integrating learnings into decision-making
- demonstrating accountability to those they serve

The community benefits from effective engagement by:

- gaining a greater understanding of how government works
- seeing their input reflected in action
- reducing the risk of sharing misinformation
- building trust and confidence in municipal decisions, operations, and services

The City of Maple Ridge respectfully acknowledges that we are located on the traditional and unceded territories of the Katzie (q̓íçǎy̓) First Nation and Kwantlen (qʷa:ń̓ǎ̓) First Nation.



Framework Objectives



- Foster collaborative and inclusive relationships with residents, businesses, and community organizations.
- Guide when, how, and why the City engages with the community, including when it will inform versus seek input on a decision to ensure consistency, transparency, and accessibility.
- Explain how decisions are made and the factors that inform them, including engagement.
- Promote diverse and meaningful participation through clear guidelines that foster inclusivity.
- Equip staff with standardized tools, methods, and processes to deliver timely, effective, and inclusive community engagements.

Our Framework Foundation

Engagement with residents, businesses, and organizations

Input was gathered from two phases of engagement via an online survey, in-person outreach at local events, and meetings with a variety of local community organizations. Results from the 2024 Citizen Satisfaction Survey were also reviewed.



Engagement with City Staff and Council

City staff were interviewed for their feedback on current engagement practices and suggested improvements. City Council members were asked for their input on the role of engagement and its potential to inform decision-making.

International and Local Best Practices Research

Our framework integrates the values and engagement spectrum of the International Association of Public Participation ([IAP2](#)). Frameworks from other municipalities across Canada were also reviewed to determine best practices. Please note the IAP2 spectrum is under review and updates will be made as required.

Table 1: City of Maple Ridge Community Engagement Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles	City Commitment
<p>Be transparent and open</p> <p>The community has access to clear, accurate, and timely information that is openly shared.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the goals of community engagement, the methods and timing for participation, and the expected role and degree of involvement for the community. • Always strive to share accurate information. • Listen and seek feedback. • Seek to understand different perspectives.
<p>Be inclusive and accessible</p> <p>Those who are interested or impacted by City business, projects, or operations can access opportunities to participate in meaningful ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create inclusive and safe environments (physical or virtual) where participants can express themselves, with a focus on respect and security. • Actively seek and ensure the diversity of voices are listened to while addressing power imbalances and barriers to participation for all groups. • Use a variety of engagement methods (e.g., digital, in-person) to ensure broad accessibility and reach individuals who may be impacted or interested.
<p>Work together</p> <p>Ongoing relationships and partnerships exist between the City and residents, businesses, and organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurture our relationships and partnerships by continually providing information, updates, and opportunities for participation, not only when active engagement is taking place.
<p>Be accountable</p> <p>Community input is incorporated in Council decision-making processes to reflect the needs and desires of the Maple Ridge community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the results of community engagement in a timely fashion. • Share how community input shaped our choices and decisions and, if not, why. • Keep the community informed about the status of projects. • Respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
<p>Keep getting better</p> <p>Community engagement is continuously improving at the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly evaluate our engagement outcomes and adapt them based on insights gathered from the community and best practices to ensure ongoing effectiveness. • Share when we update or change approaches to community engagement.

Make Balanced Decisions

Community engagement is an essential part of the City's decision-making process, along with other critical factors such as community needs, budget constraints, existing strategies and plans, legislation, operational and technical considerations, and staff expertise. This holistic approach ensures that decisions are well-informed, transparent, and aligned with the City's long-term vision.



City decision-making involves balancing diverse, and sometimes competing, interests. While public feedback is always carefully considered, it may not always result in direct action, depending on the engagement level due to other requirements. The community also has the opportunity to submit project ideas through the annual budget and business planning process.

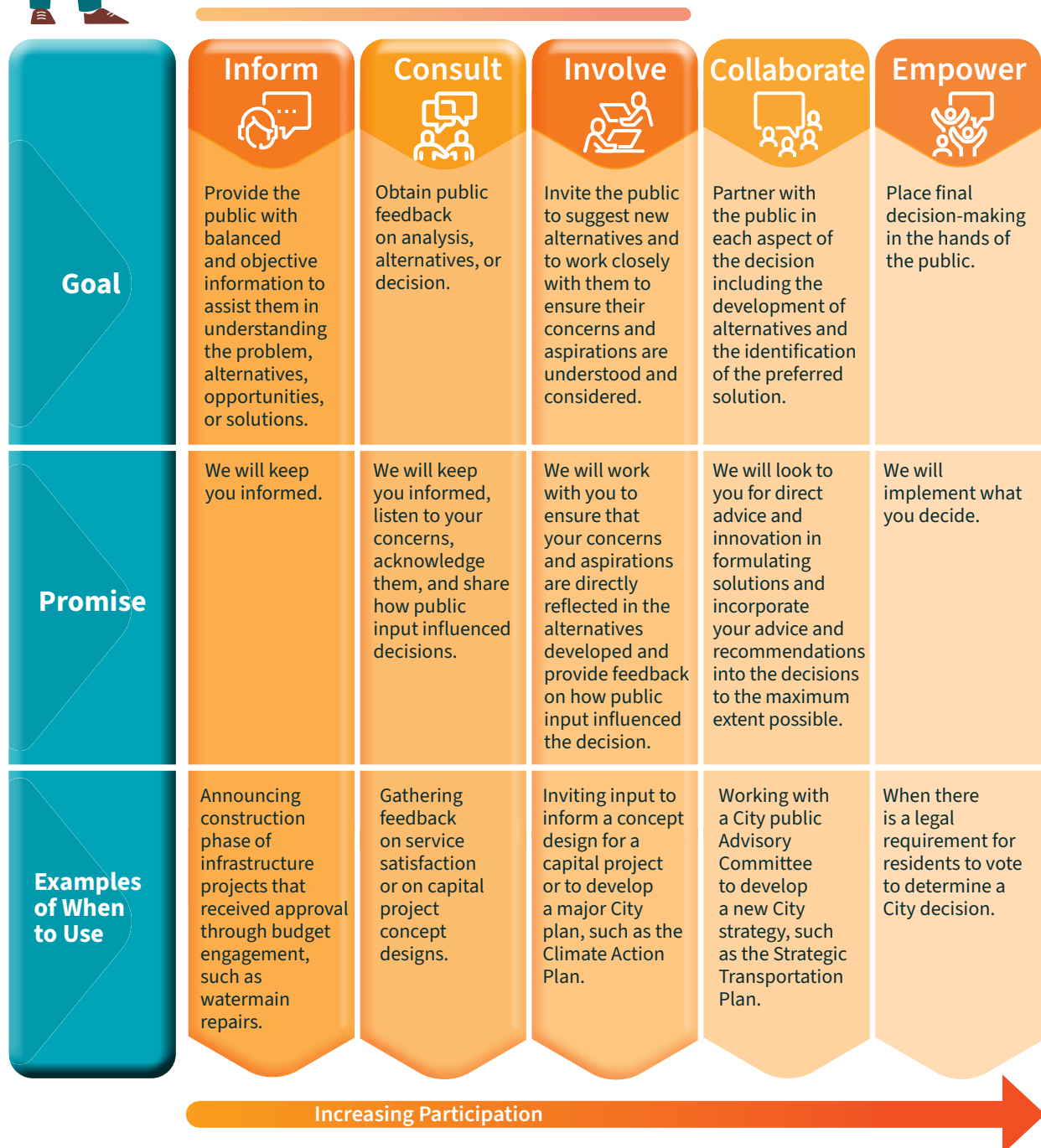
How We Engage



The Community Engagement Spectrum

Each engagement process is assigned one of five levels of engagement. The City has adapted the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) community engagement spectrum.

Most of the City's community engagement involves the Inform, Consult, and Involve levels. The Inform level is considered a baseline for engagement involving a one-way flow of information from the City to the community.



When and What Level to Engage

1

An impactful decision:

Decision that significantly affects the community, such as financial implications, access to services, community spaces, cultural and social activities, or infrastructure projects.

2

Opportunity to influence:

Community members have relevant knowledge or experience to contribute meaningfully, and their input can genuinely influence the decision-making process.

Additional factors may strengthen the case for community engagement:

Need For Input

Community information or insights needed to make informed decisions.

Interest Holders

Individuals or groups with strong opinions, concerns, or expectations of participation.

Complexity

Complex or contentious issues may benefit from diverse perspectives and transparent dialogue.

Project Objectives

Initiative aims to foster collaboration, gather input, or build trust.

Resource Availability

Sufficient time, budget, and personnel are available for meaningful engagement.

Regulatory Requirements

Legislation safety or regulations mandate or limit engagement.

Other questions to consider:

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- Does the City need public input or need to inform?
 - What level of engagement supports decision-making?
 - What are public expectations for participation?
 - How do other communities engage on similar topics?
 - How will this decision impact the public?
 - What existing community insights do we have?



Engaging Diverse Interest Holders

An interest holder is any individual or group with interest in, or the potential to influence or be influenced by, a decision, project, or initiative—either directly or indirectly. The term replaces the previously used term “stakeholder” which has a reference historically to colonization.

Interest holders may include residents, neighbourhood associations, community groups, business leaders, Council Advisory Committees, and First Nations. They may also include groups or individuals with diverse needs or backgrounds, such as youth, seniors, the LGBTQ2S+ community, people with low incomes, recent immigrants, and people with mental or physical challenges.

Engaging a wide range of interest holders is essential for ensuring that diverse viewpoints are considered, acknowledged, and valued. This approach helps to balance the influence of dominant voices—which may be limited in number—with the perspectives of those who are more reserved or less inclined to engage in the civic process.



Through interest holder mapping, the City will consider who might need to be involved in the engagement process.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and expectations are key to effective engagement and will be communicated to the community.

Council

- Endorse the Community Engagement Framework and Communications and Engagement Policy to integrate engagement into the City's culture.
- Provide strategic direction around City projects, programs, and initiatives.
- Encourage participation in engagement activities.
- Participate when possible, without influencing input.
- Consider community input, staff recommendations, and public benefits when making decisions.

City Staff

- Apply the Community Engagement Framework in daily work.
- Provide clear, accessible information with sufficient notice for participation.
- Design inclusive engagement processes.
- Offer meaningful opportunities for feedback on elements that are not predetermined.
- Compile and share community feedback with both the public and Council.
- Report back on how public input influenced decisions.
- Ensure consultants and facilitators comply with the Community Engagement Framework.

Community Organizations

- Represent their groups by sharing insights with the City.
- Provide expertise on relevant topics.
- Partner with the City to expand outreach and facilitate engagement opportunities.

Residents and Businesses

- Communicate concerns and advocate for community needs.
- Stay informed through City communications.
- Participate in engagement processes and share perspectives.
- Respect all participants and remain open to diverse ideas.
- Collaborate with Council, City staff, and other interest holders to develop solutions.

Katzie First Nation and Kwantlen First Nation

The City is committed to working closely with our First Nations communities. Engagement with them occurs independently from the broader public and in part through the City's Indigenous Relations Strategy.



Engagement Process

A structured process for identifying and assessing engagement opportunities ensures opportunities or requirements are not overlooked and resources are allocated appropriately.

The engagement process at the City of Maple Ridge involves five critical phases that are each supported by standardized methods and resources. The process is supported by a toolkit that outlines all necessary procedures and tactics.



Step 1

Identify and Assess

Identify and assess the need for engagement, including:

- the purpose, scope, and level of engagement
- the decision to be made and interest holders
- if, when, and why engagement may be required or wanted



Step 2

Plan

Create a well-understood engagement plan that is supported and actioned by staff, including:

- interest holder identification (mapping exercise)
- a variety of outreach methods to reach diverse interest holders
- actions to reduce barriers and make the process equitable and inclusive
- key milestones and overall timeline
- roles and responsibilities
- resources (e.g., time, budget, personnel)
- potential risks, opportunities, and synergies (internal and external)
- data requirements and how data will be analyzed and reported
- measurements for success
- alignment with applicable policies/standards



Step 3

Communicate and Connect

Ensure interest holders clearly understand the project, potential outcome or decision, and their role in the process by:

- developing a communication and engagement plan outlining clear key messages and how information will be provided to interest holders through a variety of channels with an appropriate amount of notice
- ensuring inclusion, diversity, and accessibility by providing multiple channels to share input, addressing barriers to participation (e.g., accessible event spaces, opportunities in the evenings and weekends), and communicate using clear language



Step 4



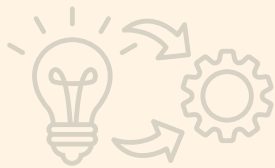
Analyze and Report

Analyze the results of the engagement process and report them to the community in a clear and understandable way. This includes:

- analyzing the collected data to provide meaningful insights
- reporting results at the end of each engagement phase
- producing an engagement summary separate from broader project reports
- reporting how input was used and/or influenced the decision

Reporting results helps the City demonstrate transparency and accountability, strengthens the City's relationship with interest holders, and supports the success of future engagement initiatives.

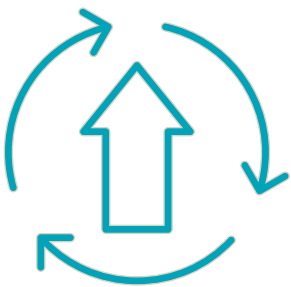
Step 5



Review and Build

After the engagement is complete, review the process and results. This includes:

- analyzing engagement outcomes; identifying key themes, strengths, and areas for improvement
- reflecting on and documenting lessons learned
- applying lessons learned to the next project or engagement phase
- incorporating into the final project or decision



Continuous Improvement

This framework will be a living document, updated with emerging best practices—ensuring staff stay current through ongoing training and a community of practice.

Connect With Us

There are many ways to get involved and share your ideas with the City.



Digital

Engage.MapleRidge.ca: View all active and completed engagements and sign up to receive updates for those that interest you.

City Projects Webpage: Learn more about all of the City's planned, current, completed, and archived projects at MapleRidge.ca/CityProjects.

Social Media: Follow the City @YourMapleRidge on Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), and @City of Maple Ridge on LinkedIn.

E-Connect Newsletter: Get the latest City news right to your inbox! Sign up at MapleRidge.ca/StayConnected.

BizNews Newsletter: Get the latest news for businesses. Sign up at MapleRidge.ca/StayConnected.

Council Meetings: Watch a Council meeting live or a recording. See the schedule and how to connect at MapleRidge.ca/CouncilMeetings.



Print

Watch for posters, postcards, and advertisements in the local newspaper, at bus stop shelters, in your home mailbox, at City facilities, or through local organizations.



In-Person

City Council Meetings: Attend in person or online. See the schedule at MapleRidge.ca/CouncilMeetings.

Events: Engage with us at workshops, focus groups, open houses, or information booths at City events.

Formal Groups: Take part in committees, working groups, or task forces.



Email or Phone

Community Engagement Team: Engage@MapleRidge.ca or 604-466-4300 (dial 4 and extension 5305)

Council and Other City Departments: MapleRidge.ca/Directory or 604-463-5221

Report a Concern Form: MapleRidge.ca/Report or 604-463-9581



Bold by Nature



City on the Move



Driven by Community

**We can't wait to
engage with you!**