

DRAFT PHASE 2 SPRING 2025

CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER

Community Engagement Framework



Learn more at:
letstalk.cnv.org/engagementframework

city
of north
vancouver



Land Acknowledgment

The City of North Vancouver respectfully acknowledges that we live and work on the traditional and unceded territories of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and sə́lílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). The City of North Vancouver is committed to Reconciliation with these local First Nations, who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. We thank them for sharing this land with us and for their ongoing partnership with the City on mutual priorities.

A Commitment to Truth & Reconciliation

The City is committed to Truth and Reconciliation. We humbly recognize that we need to learn and share the truth about Indigenous history in Canada and are at the beginning of our journey of Reconciliation with local First Nations.

We are committed to working collaboratively, cooperatively, and respectfully with Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) and sə́lílwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) acknowledging the legacies of colonialism and the importance of rebuilding relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and understanding.



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Introduction

This document is a draft of the City of North Vancouver’s first Community Engagement Framework. The Framework outlines why, when, and how the City of North Vancouver conducts community engagement processes.

Engagement in the Healthiest Small City in the World

The City of North Vancouver is repeatedly ranked one of Canada’s most livable cities, distinguished by high levels of volunteerism, charitable giving, and vibrant public spaces for gathering. We are a community where residents take an active interest in their neighbourhoods and the local government.

In 2019, City Council adopted its first-ever Strategic Plan declaring its vision to be the “Healthiest Small City in the World,” a city in which residents and visitors experience a high quality of life and well-being. We believe that community engagement is core to creating healthy communities, fostering a sense of belonging and nurturing the values and practices of democratic governance.

The City of North Vancouver Council’s Strategic Plan outlines five priorities. All five pillars require creative solutions that strengthen the relationship between the City and those who live, work, and play here.

CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



A City for People

Cultivating an inclusive, equitable, and safe community where every resident feels valued.



A Resilient City

Leading the charge in climate action and environmental stewardship for a sustainable future.



A Connected City

Building sustainable, efficient mobility networks that unite the city and its people.



A Prosperous City

Fostering a thriving, diverse economy that supports local businesses and innovation.



A Vibrant City

Celebrating the culture, history, and spirit of the residents through dynamic public spaces and community events.



Civic Health in a Changing City

The City of North Vancouver is unique regionally and nationally. We are currently the [third densest city in Canada](#), and one of the smallest urbanized communities in the Metro Vancouver region, occupying a grand total of 12 square kilometres. Like many cities in British Columbia and across Canada, we are a city in transition, growing to meet new urban realities while welcoming new residents.

As of the [2021 Census](#), the City of North Vancouver had the highest average levels of population growth across the three North Shore municipalities, with immigration accounting for more than half of overall growth.

We know there is work to do to foster a sense of connection and community (the foundations of meaningful and effective community engagement) and to realize our vision as an inclusive, equitable, and safe community where every resident feels valued.

Listening to residents, businesses, intergovernmental partners, and organizations representing the voices of thousands of community members, we have received important advice and guidance. We have heard we must do more to ensure transparency in City processes, to increase accessibility of information, and to strengthen opportunities for residents across all backgrounds to participate fully.

A thoughtfully designed Engagement Framework, powered by the knowledge and input of community, is a critical tool that will move the City closer to achieving its aspirations.

Engagement Framework Goals

The City of North Vancouver's Engagement Framework is a strategic tool to guide how the City engages with its community on projects, policies, and decisions. Specifically, the Framework seeks to achieve the following:



Increase trust and confidence in the City's local government by ensuring that engagement efforts are transparent, easy to understand, and based on clear guidelines and standards.



Increase participation in engagement by all communities with a focus on those who have been underrepresented or missing in the past.



Ensure Council has the most comprehensive and rigorous **data-driven insights** to help them make informed choices that reflect the community's needs and aspirations.



Create guidance, training and tools for staff to build their skills and capacity to improve the quality and standardization of engagement activities.

What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement refers to processes led by the City where there is a genuine opportunity for participants (residents, community organizations, businesses, other levels of government, etc.) to help shape the outcome of a project, policy or decision.

Community engagement can take many forms and employ a range of tools, but it frequently involves gathering experiences, ideas, and/or recommendations to help shape City policies, programs, designs, and initiatives. At the core of all engagement is a two-way process for information sharing and gathering.

Why is Engagement Important?

Well-designed community engagement should generate positive impacts:

Improved trust and transparency: Engagement can foster trust by making municipal processes more transparent. It creates spaces for dialogue between the Mayor, Council, City staff, and the community, allowing the public to help shape the kind of City they want to see.

More equitable and inclusive outcomes: Successful engagement means collaborating with diverse community members, especially those who have been historically marginalized. This allows the City to better understand the needs of all residents and visitors, leading to policies, programs, and projects that address those needs and reduce systemic inequities.

Increasingly innovative solutions: Active public involvement in decision-making brings diverse perspectives, fosters creativity and encourages the City to explore more innovative solutions. Access to knowledge and experience (including those who stand to benefit or to be impacted) can guide decision-makers as they develop solutions. Hearing diverse opinions can lead to better outcomes, especially for projects that involve competing underlying values and trade-offs that cannot be resolved through technical solutions alone.



Hearing from people with diverse lived experiences leads to more innovative ideas, better decisions, greater public support of outcomes and stronger democracies.

- Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement -
SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 2020



Is Community Engagement a Requirement?

In many cases, engagement processes take place when the elected Mayor and Council decide to directly involve the community in a particular initiative. In other instances, City staff may initiate an engagement process to strengthen their work with critical public and interest holder knowledge.

It is both an expectation of and a commitment by most local governments in Canada to meaningfully involve the public in their decision-making processes, but only certain types of community engagement or public consultation are required by provincial legislation.

The City of North Vancouver is governed by the British Columbia's Local Government Act, which legislates local government powers and responsibilities, including specific requirements for consultation, including with regional districts, First Nations, and other relevant authorities.

PROVINCIALY LEGISLATED PUBLIC CONSULTATION IN BC

**Public Hearings:**

Statutory public hearings are required for certain types of planning and land use bylaws, like amendments to Official Community Plans (OCPs), allowing residents to share their views.

**Official Community Plan (OCP) Development:**

Local governments must provide opportunities for consultation with affected parties during the development or amendment of OCPs.

**Public Notice:**

Municipalities must provide advance public notice of matters of public interest, such as public meetings, elections, and public hearings, to facilitate transparency and accountability.

**Financial Plans:**

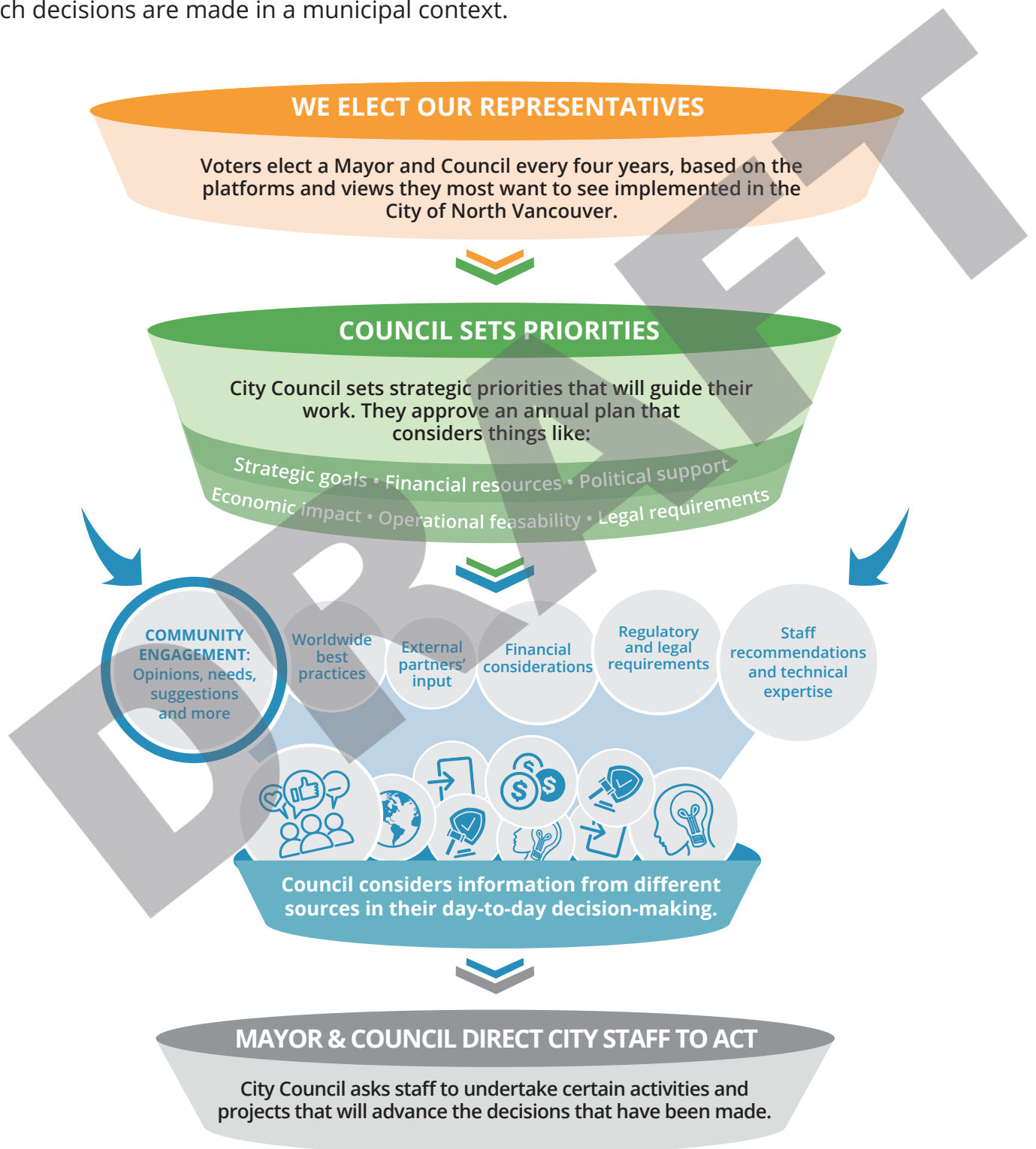
Local governments must undergo public consultation before adopting financial plans, allowing citizens to review, comment, and ask questions.

**Public Health Bylaws:**

Municipal councils or regional district boards must consult with the regional health board or medical health officer before adopting health-related bylaws.

How Does Engagement Factor into Municipal Decision-Making?

Local governments make decisions by considering a variety of sources of input, including community engagement and factors like technical requirements, leading practices, economic considerations, and legal and regulatory requirements. The diagram below shows the ways in which decisions are made in a municipal context.



Who is Involved in Municipal Decision-Making?

Their role in decision-making	
Mayor and Council	• Represent community interests in decision-making. • Approve policies, budgets, and initiatives. • Ensure oversight and accountability for projects and spending. • Provide direction to City staff and partners to implement decisions.
City Staff	• Provide expert analysis and recommendations to Council. • Develop policies, programs, and plans as directed by Council. • Manage daily operations to implement strategies. • Engage with the community for input and feedback. • Monitor and report on project progress.
Intergovernmental Partners (First Nations, School district, Metro Vancouver, Translink, etc.)	• Provide specialized knowledge, data and best practices. • Collaborate on joint projects and community goals. • Ensure adherence to agreements and partnerships. • Ensure the protection of Indigenous rights and interests as rights holders.
Council Committees	• Act as a liaison between the public, staff, and decision-makers. • Offer specialized advice and recommendations. • Ensure decisions consider long-term community impacts.
Community Organizations	• Advocate for policies that align with community values and priorities. • Provide insights and feedback on local issues. • Collaborate with the City and other partners to develop solutions and share resources.
Community Members at Large	• Seek information on decision-making and its impacts. • Participate in engagement processes, offering feedback and proposals. • Advocate for changes within the City that they feel are necessary.

How the Draft Engagement Framework was Created

To develop this draft Framework, City staff engaged with the community, evaluated learnings from past initiatives, and researched leading practices across Canada. Throughout this process, the City considered Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) principles to ensure the Framework fosters fairness, inclusivity, and representation for all community members.

PHASE 1

The first phase of engagement took place in 2023- 2024 and included a year of research, interviews, community and interest holder engagement, including various in-person and virtual opportunities for the community to help build the guiding principles and emerging directions. In total, nearly 500 people participated in this first phase.

For further details, please refer to the [Community Engagement Framework - What We Heard Report](#).

PHASE 2

In May and June 2025, the City will continue to engage with community organizations and groups to test the guiding principles and identify processes and tools required to bring the Community Engagement Framework to life. The City will conduct workshops with youth, seniors, cultural communities, subject-area experts, intergovernmental partners, and community organizations. In June, the City will gather final feedback from community members by making the draft available online and via several open house sessions at City Hall.

For greater detail, you can consult the future [Phase 2 Community Engagement Framework – What We Heard Report](#).

In summer 2025, staff will bring the draft Engagement Framework to Council for consideration and adoption.



Guiding Principles

Based on the input received through community engagement, reflections on past engagement, and research into leading practices, we have developed seven key guiding principles for the City of North Vancouver's engagement activities.

Transparency and Timely Communication

Our Commitment:

The City is committed to sharing clear, accurate, and up-to-date information with the public and interest holders in a timely manner. This principle promotes accountability and trust, ensuring that community members can remain informed, contribute meaningfully, and understand how decisions are made.

Our Approach:

To uphold this principle, the City will:

- Notify interest holders well in advance of upcoming engagement opportunities.
- Use a diverse range of communication channels to ensure broad and effective outreach.
- Clearly explain how issues and decisions may impact both interest holders and the wider community.
- Provide relevant materials in advance of engagement activities to support meaningful participation.
- Maintain transparency around rules, constraints, research, and best practices.
- Share feedback summaries and decisions with interest holders, including rationale for how input was considered.



Inclusivity

Our Commitment:

The City is committed to ensuring that all segments of the community have equal opportunity to participate in community engagement processes. We strive to reflect diverse voices and perspectives, fostering equitable participation across demographic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Our Approach:

To support inclusivity in engagement, the City will:

- Provide multiple engagement options tailored to diverse needs, including both online and in-person opportunities.
- Adapt engagement strategies to respect cultural differences and promote cultural sensitivity.
- Offer supportive services to reduce barriers to participation.
- Ensure engagement tools and methods are user-friendly and accessible to all.
- Foster safe and welcoming environments where participants feel valued, heard, and included.

Accessibility

Our Commitment:

The City is dedicated to creating inclusive environments where everyone can easily access information, services, and opportunities, empowering full and meaningful participation.

Our Approach:

To ensure accessibility in engagement, the City will:

- Ensure physical spaces are accessible with accommodations for mobility and other physical needs.
- Make online platforms and digital content compatible with assistive technologies and available in various formats.
- Schedule meetings and workshops at varied times to support broad participation, including those with caregiving responsibilities.
- Provide translation services and materials in multiple languages.
- Use clear, accessible language to support different literacy levels and language proficiencies.

Impact-Oriented

Our Commitment:

The City aims to ensure that engagement processes are designed to lead to actionable decisions and meaningful change in the community.

Our Approach:

To remain focused on impact, the City will:

- Clearly communicate how public input will be used in decision-making.
- Gather input to deepen understanding of community needs and priorities.
- Foster internal and external collaborations to act on engagement results.
- Create mechanisms for ongoing engagement and monitor progress over time.
- Ensure timely sharing of engagement outcomes with relevant municipal teams to inform decision-making.

Data-Driven

Our Commitment:

The City is committed to using data analysis and interpretation of data to inform its strategies, decisions, and actions.

Our Approach:

To support data-informed engagement, the City will:

- Collect data to understand community needs, demographics, and emerging trends.
- Ensure data collection, analysis, and reporting respects privacy and ethical standards.
- Analyze engagement findings rigorously to guide decision-making.
- Communicate relevant data in clear, engaging, and accessible ways to the public, City staff, partners, and interest holders.





Relationship-Focused

Our Commitment:

The City prioritizes cultivating trust and building strong connections with the community through open, respectful, and ongoing dialogue.

Our Approach:

To build and sustain strong relationships, the City will:

- Create safe spaces that support open dialogue and diverse perspectives.
- Clearly explain how community voices influence decisions and outcomes.
- Actively listen and show how input shapes decisions.
- Evaluate all feedback impartially, ensuring a fair and balanced process.
- Adapt engagement approaches and timelines in response to feedback when possible.
- Use trauma-informed approaches to foster compassionate and inclusive engagement experiences.

Continuous Improvement

Our Commitment:

The City is committed to regularly assessing and refining engagement practices to enhance their relevance and effectiveness.

Our Approach:

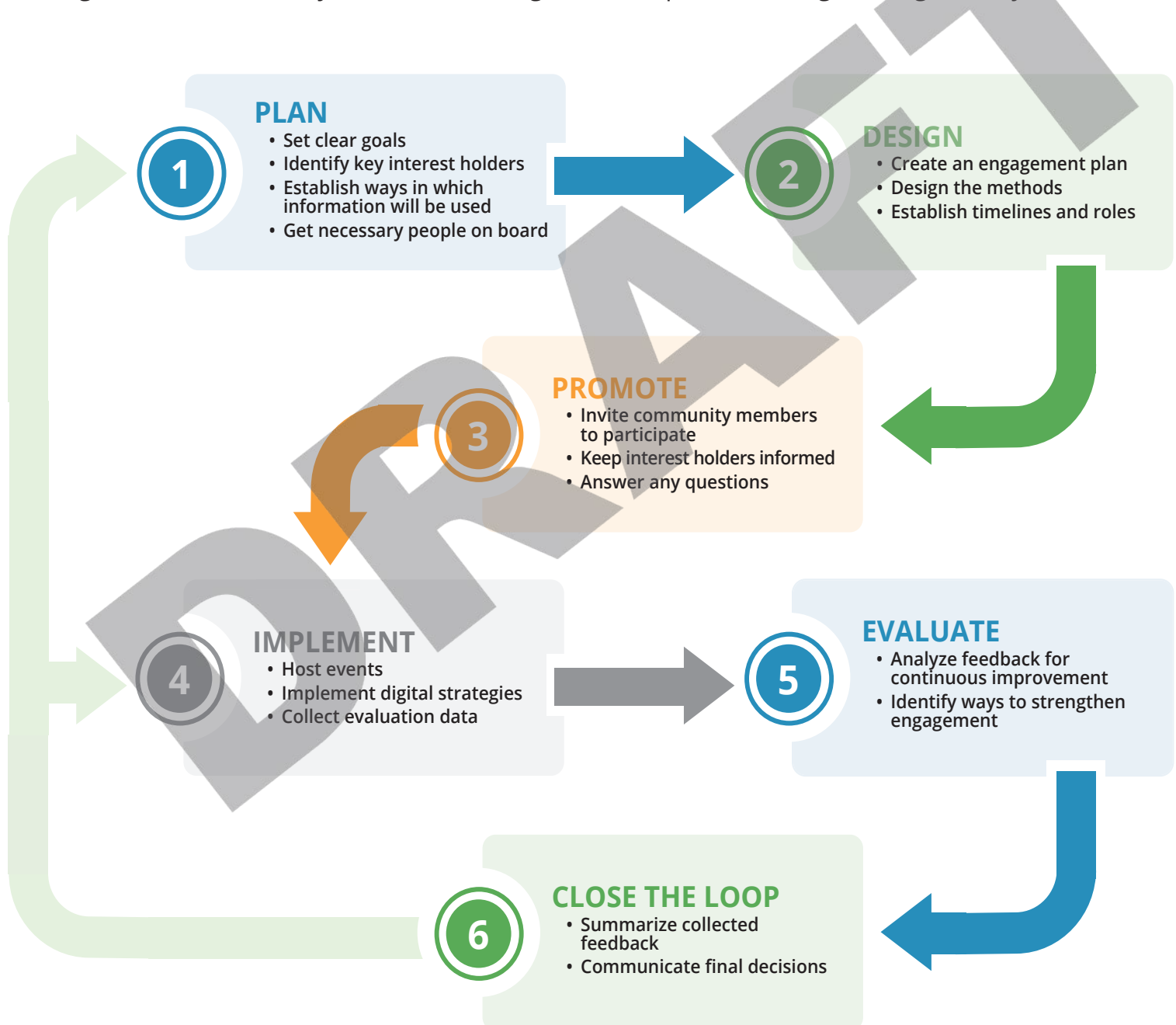
To continually enhance our engagement efforts, the City will:

- Routinely evaluate engagement processes to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Stay current on leading practices and integrate innovative engagement methods.
- Create opportunities for public feedback to inform continuous staff learning, internal reflection, and process improvement.

The Engagement Process

The City of North Vancouver's engagement process follows a structured approach to ensure all opportunities for participation are identified and addressed effectively. The process includes six key phases, each supported by methods and tools to guide the planning, execution, and evaluation of community involvement.

The engagement process is dynamic and often involves adjusting and refining as you go. The initial plan may need to be revisited to gather additional input, adjust strategies, or address emerging concerns. This iterative approach ensures that final outcomes—whether policies, programs, or designs—are informed by continuous dialogue and responsive changes along the way.



1

PLAN

- Assess if engagement is appropriate based on whether input can shape the outcome.
- Set clear, measurable goals to align efforts with community needs.
- Identify key interest holders affected by or interested in the engagement.
- Articulate what success looks like, e.g. the number of participants from specific communities.

2

DESIGN

- Create an engagement plan that outlines strategies to involve the public and interest holder groups and how their input will be utilized.
- Design an action plan with timelines, tasks, and roles for organized execution.
- Develop a communication plan to keep the public and interest holders informed and engaged in decision-making.
- Craft clear messages about the purpose, expectations, and benefits of the engagement.
- Identify milestones to track progress.

3

PROMOTE

- Use diverse channels to invite participation and make involvement easy.
- Implement and adjust the communication plan to keep interest holders well-informed.
- Communicate the purpose and rationale to build understanding and encourage support.

4

IMPLEMENT

- Host engagement events for community interaction, questions, and feedback.
- Ensure the engagement plan is implemented effectively, adjusting as needed to maintain momentum and participation.

5

EVALUATE

- Compare outcomes to initial goals to assess success and identify improvements.
- Evaluate engagement methods for accessibility, inclusivity, and appropriateness.
- Analyze feedback quality to ensure it represents the broader community.
- Identify lessons learned to improve future engagement strategies.
- Measure the impact on decision-making and the integration of community input.

6

CLOSE THE LOOP

- Provide a summary of the collected feedback to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Communicate how community input influenced the final decisions.
- Inform the community about outcomes and next steps, ensuring ongoing communication.

Defining the Impact of Community Engagement

The International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation outlines a range of engagement levels that allow communities to progress from simply sharing information to actively shaping outcomes. The IAP2 Spectrum spans from 'Inform' to 'Empower'.

CNV strives to conduct the majority of its engagement at the 'Consult' level or higher, where meaningful input is sought to affect decision-making. By involving residents, interest holders and partners in opportunities for community engagement, the City ensures that decisions reflect the needs and priorities of the community.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Source: www.iap2.org

To What Degree Does Community Engagement Influence Decision-Making?

The degree to which community opinions, preferences, suggestions and recommendations will impact a final decision is different for each initiative.

Community engagement will tend to have a **GREATER** impact on a decision when:

A successful outcome is greatly defined by our personal perception or preference

An example could be:

The City designs a public park that makes people feel safe, welcomed and comfortable. Community engagement could help us understand what makes people feel safe and welcome.

We need to better understand the community's day-to-day experience, needs or knowledge of an issue

An example could be:

The City defines the service levels and services that are funded through the annual budget. Through engagement, we can understand what is important to residents, what kinds of services people need and expect and what trade-offs they are willing to make in delivering these services.

Community buy-in is critical to ensure the success of an initiative

An example could be:

The City builds an action plan for emergency management in the event of a flood or seismic event. The action plan would only be successful if it can be defined in collaboration with community members who will need to have the right information at the right time to be able to act.

Community engagement will tend to have a **LESSER** impact on a decision when:

There are few options that would be technically feasible

An example could be:

The City needs to select the site for a new fire hall that has stringent technical requirements. Although community members might have many ideas about where to locate the facility, only one or two options are technically feasible.

The objectives are highly technical

An example could be:

The City builds a plan to increase biodiversity in the City's green spaces. Community engagement could help define what the community wants to see, but much of the decision-making will depend on biodiversity expert knowledge.

Possible options are highly regulated or legislated

An example could be:

The City is required to update their land use planning documents. Community engagement can help define changes, within a limited scope outlined by rigid guidelines for land use planning.

How Do We Choose Methods for Community Engagement?

Engagement processes can be built with a wide variety of creative techniques and tools, such as workshops, pop-ups in public spaces, mapping exercises, and community forums. When deciding what techniques will be used in a particular engagement process, City staff consider the strengths and weaknesses of each tool, including these factors:

BREADTH

Some tools like surveys or pop-ups are better for reaching a higher quantity of participants BUT offer less opportunity to gather in-depth feedback and are not very interactive.



DEPTH OF TOOLS

Workshops or interest holder conversations will typically involve fewer participants BUT allow for more in-depth conversation.



CONSULTATIVE

Some methods are consultative, in that they ask people their opinion or perception at one moment in time. They allow for less nuanced contributions BUT require a lower commitment of participation.



DELIBERATIVE

Others are deliberative, meaning that people engage in dialogue and discussion, often changing their opinion as they hear new information. They often generate results that can be directly implemented, making them effective inputs for decision-making, but require a much greater contribution of time from participants.



OPT-IN

Opt-in techniques require fewer municipal resources to execute BUT cannot guarantee that the voices of many different demographics are heard.



REPRESENTATIVE

Representative techniques give a more accurate picture of the community's needs and/or opinions BUT require greater financial resources and time to execute.





How Can You Be Part of Decision-Making?

There are a number of ways to get involved in City decision-making, and the City is working to build capacity for even more opportunities. Find out about the latest initiatives on our Let's Talk online engagement portal, available at www.letstalk.cnv.org

When you participate in one of the following activities, your input becomes a formal part of City decision-making.

- **Voting and elections:** Voting in local elections allows residents to choose their elected representatives based on the individual and/or party's platform. The City Mayor and Council are then tasked with representing the voters' priorities in day-to-day operations.
- **Advisory Committees:** A number of City committees were developed to focus on specific topics. The committee provides advice to City Council and staff.
- **Attend Council meetings:** Community members can attend City of North Vancouver Council meetings online or in person to gather information and/or to speak on issues important to them during the public input period or during Public Hearings.

The City additionally opens a wide variety of engagement processes on a project-by-project basis. Each project may use different engagement techniques, including a mix of digital and in-person opportunities. Based on the definitions of the projects, these opportunities may be consultative, deliberative, or informative in nature.



Civic Participation Initiated by Members of the Public

Members of the public can also seek to dialogue or collaborate with the City outside of the formal City-led community engagement processes. At any point in time, community members can contact their elected representatives (Mayor and Council) or City staff to communicate priorities or concerns.

The City of North Vancouver is committed to engaging residents and visitors on the issues that impact us all.

*Be a part of an upcoming engagement process!
Together, we can build the healthiest small city
in the world.*



Visit www.letstalk.cnv.org for information about engagement processes, or scan the QR code above.