

Township of
Langley



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NEWS RELEASE

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NEW MUSEUMS, CULTURAL CENTRE, AND ABORIGINAL ARTS LODGE PROPOSED FOR FORT LANGLEY

Known as the Birthplace of BC, the village of Fort Langley is an attraction for those who enjoy creative expression, learning about the past, and exploring the great outdoors.

Those attributes will strengthen as the Township of Langley hopes to enhance Fort Langley into a community hub that celebrates history, heritage, the arts, Indigenous culture, and recreation.

In December, Township staff made a presentation to Township of Langley Council outlining several unique initiatives conceived for Fort Langley. The projects include new community facilities, trails, and park infrastructure that would be funded through the sale and development of Township owned properties, and through government grants.

Two new museums, a library, conference centre, small Aboriginal-themed lodge accommodations, new homes and shops, along with park and trail improvements, are proposed for Fort Langley. A few projects may be developed in partnership with the Kwantlen First Nation with potential support from other levels of government.

“This is an amazing concept that will bring so much more to Fort Langley and build on its already unique character,” said Township of Langley Mayor Jack Froese. “Our past, present, and future will come together in a place where people can learn, explore, share knowledge, and gain an understanding and appreciation for all those who made this community what it is today, all within the natural beauty that can be found along the Fraser River.”

The proposed Fort Langley initiatives include:

- A library, two museums, and a small conference centre with a presentation theatre that will be housed under one roof to create a new cultural centre for the community
- Townhouses and detached homes on the lands adjacent the new cultural centre
- A mixed retail/condo development on the current site of the Langley Centennial Museum
- A pedestrian overpass linking the new cultural facility to a realigned TransCanada Trails system
- Restoration and relocation of the historic Jacob Haldi House on the Fraser River, east of its current location, as a community amenity for paddlers and artists
- An artist work/live housing project with space dedicated for small Aboriginal-themed lodge accommodations on the current site of the Bedford House
- Improvements to the Fort-to-Fort Trail in front of the new development that would create outdoor spaces for arts and crafts activities

“Staff have had preliminary and positive discussions with representatives from BC Housing, Canadian Heritage, CN Rail, and the Government of Canada on a few of the projects,” said Peter Tulumello, the Township of Langley’s Director of Arts, Culture and Community Initiatives. The projects presented meet criteria for federal and provincial funding. Applications will be written and submitted early in 2018 after public input has been obtained.

Kwantlen First Nation will be a key partner in moving the initiatives forward, Tulumello said, noting he has had numerous discussions with the Seyem’ Qwantlen Business Group, KFN’s business development arm, regarding some of the projects.

The new cultural facility will house a community museum, archives, art gallery, library, conference facilities, and a new Indigenous museum.

“The Langley Centennial Museum does a fine job of telling colonial history to modern times, but it can’t rightly tell the First Nations’ story,” Tulumello said. “That story needs to be told by those nations on whose traditional unceded territories the Township of Langley was established.”

Langley Centennial Museum will be sixty years old in 2018 and does not meet the required industry standards for museum operations today, Tulumello added.

The aboriginal arts-themed developments proposed for the Fort Langley waterfront are partly modelled after the Skwachàys Lodge & Gallery in Vancouver, and Kwa’lilas Hotel in Port Hardy. Skwachàys Lodge includes artist-in-residence accommodations, hotel rooms, studio spaces, and a dining amenity.

“This is such a special, beautiful, and unique place to us and others, and it is important that we consider future uses carefully and respectfully,” said Tumia Knott, President of the Seyem’ Qwantlen Business Group and Kwantlen First Nation Councilor. “We look forward to our discussions continuing with the Township on these new initiatives.”

Knott noted that, “It is early days and there is still much yet to consider and confirm, particularly from the public consultation on these concepts. We are pleased to have our voice involved and considered.”

A preliminary public open house on the proposed projects will be held Thursday, February 8, from 3:00pm to 8:00pm, at St. Andrew’s United Church at 9025 Glover Road in Fort Langley. Public consultation will continue through 2018, as concepts are finalized and more detailed architectural plans are completed for each project.

For updates, news, and to receive notifications on the Fort Langley Projects over the coming months, the public is encouraged to visit **tol.ca/flp**. Proposed designs for the museums/cultural centre project and the accompanying housing and commercial development will be posted following the February 8 open house at **tol.ca/flp** and **museum.tol.ca**, along with preliminary concepts for the other projects.

“With its many festivals, celebrations, museums, restaurants, and cafés, Fort Langley has become a tourist friendly destination,” Tulumello added. “All these projects infused with arts, culture, and Indigenous themes will further enhance this unique, vibrant, and walkable community.”

Two Fort Langley firms, Site Lines Architecture and van der Zalm + Associates, have worked with Township staff to develop the concepts specific to the museums project.

For more information, contact Peter Tulumello, Township of Langley Director of Arts, Culture and Community Initiatives, at 604.533.6158 or ptulumello@tol.ca.