

Inaugural Address

Mayor Ted Schaffer

December 1, 2014

Good afternoon,

On behalf of my fellow Council members – Paul Albrecht, Jack Arnold, Dave Hall, Gayle Martin, Rudy Storteboom and Val van den Broek – we are deeply honoured to be sworn in today as the City of Langley’s 38th Council.

We are humbled by the trust that you have placed in us to provide the leadership that is required to move the City of Langley forward and seize our bright future.

In 2015, we will be celebrating our 60th year as a municipal government. There is **so** much to be proud of in the City of Langley. As a community, we can celebrate the positive growth and the great many achievements and successes that have taken place in recent years.

As we’ve grown, we’ve managed to retain our small city atmosphere and community spirit, while offering all the amenities of a major urban centre. This has proven to be a unique trait that appeals to a wide spectrum of people and businesses.

We continue to be aggressively at the forefront of economic development opportunities and have made positive strides revitalizing our downtown core, including transforming previous brownfield, contaminated or vacant sites into economically viable employment destinations that attract investors to our city.

We've been recognized nationally, provincially and regionally for our innovative land use plans, economic development strategies and ongoing commitment to the success of our local business community.

Most recently, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities named the City of Langley as one of the winners of its 2015 Sustainable Communities Awards, recognizing innovation and excellence in municipal sustainable development.

This commitment to improving the livability of our city is reaffirmed in our recently completed Master Transportation Plan to address growth and shape long-term investment in the City's transportation infrastructure and programs over the next 20 years.

It is also at the heart of our new Parks Recreation and Culture Master Plan, which aims to guide the development and expansion of our parks and trails, playgrounds, recreation and cultural facilities, as well as the programs and services needed to meet the needs of our changing and vibrant community.

However, as a Council – and, more importantly, as your neighbours – we recognize that there is still much work to be done. As we continue to build upon our successes, we – as a community – must continue to address the issues that face our community and seize the opportunities that are before us.

Guiding the City's planning process is the 2013 – 2017 Strategic Plan. The plan emphasizes seven key result areas: improving our infrastructure; enhancing the quality of life in our City; communicating with our residents more effectively; revitalizing our downtown core; protecting, preserving, restoring, sustaining and enhancing our

environment; ensuring our citizens' safety and security; and investing in organizational development.

As we move into 2015, addressing public safety concerns continues to be a top priority. As part of the City's crime reduction strategy, over the last year new policing initiatives have resulted in a marked improvement in key areas. We will continue to work closely with the Langley RCMP, transit police, our bylaw enforcement team, community partners and other stakeholders to ensure we are being responsive to the needs of our community. I am confident that by working together we will be successful in the continued downward trend of our crime statistics, leading to an enhanced feeling of safety and security.

As a core city, we recognize that homelessness is a challenging and complicated social issue. Work is currently underway on a proposal to create a homelessness task force to facilitate collaborative idea generation and a multi-jurisdictional approach to homelessness and affordable housing. Senior staff members are working on the terms of reference and should have a proposal ready for council in the New Year.

Transportation continues to be a top priority – not only for the City of Langley but the region as a whole. We have been working closely with the Township of Langley, the City of Surrey, the Corporation of Delta and the City of White Rock on various transportation initiatives, which include the pursuit of rapid transit connecting Surrey City Centre to Langley Centre, along Fraser Highway. As part of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, we have created an ambitious but practical vision for the next 30 years. The Plan focuses on growing the economy, protecting the environment and improving our quality of life. This

ambitious transportation vision has been approved by the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation. We hope this vision and related transportation network improvements receive public support in the upcoming referendum in the spring of 2015.

As we work towards achieving our goals, the **ultimate challenge I see facing our community is the management of expectations. As a council, we have the difficult task of balancing the need to retain competitive taxation levels with our efforts to not only maintain, but also enhance infrastructure, municipal services and, ultimately, our citizens' quality of life.**

This requires thoughtful prioritization based on feedback from the community, as well as finding solutions to help offset the pressures of taxation. Through wise allocation of casino proceeds and our valued partnerships with community service providers, we are able to fund important infrastructure projects and support the provision of much-needed community services without an impact to taxpayers.

We also recognize that the business and development sectors are key partners in helping us to implement our community plans and to revitalize our City. We are grateful to the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Langley Business Association for their efforts in helping us to create an Open for Business culture. Investing in the success of our local business community and attracting potential investors, developers, and business owners is an investment in our city's future.

Communication and collaboration are key to local government success. Citizen engagement and feedback strengthen the quality of policy-making, programs and service delivery. As a Council, we need to expand

opportunities to enhance communication to better engage our citizens in municipal decision making processes, and better communicate our objectives, strategies and vision for our City.

As we embark upon our future, we must continue to support volunteerism and celebrate our unique community spirit. It is the heart of our community and integral to the success of our beautiful city.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize my colleague Peter Fassbender for his leadership and dedication to our community and thank our retiring members of council –Teri James and Rosemary Wallace – for your long-time service. It has been a great pleasure to work with you and I wish you the very best.

I would also like to acknowledge our exceptionally dedicated and hard-working staff who provide our community with excellent and responsive customer service.

To our new council – I look forward to working with you to address the challenges and opportunities before us. While we may not always agree, we will respect each other's opinions as we share a common passion to do our very best in serving the citizens of the City of Langley.

And to our citizens, I pledge my commitment to represent you with positive leadership and to be a strong advocate for our city in dealing with regional and provincial issues that have a direct impact on our quality of life. Our council will work diligently to fulfill our mission to build a vibrant, healthy and safe community.

With that said, the responsibility belongs to all of us to ensure that the City of Langley always remains a community that we are proud to call home.

If you are passionate about an issue, we encourage you to get involved and to help effect the change that you want to see in our community.

We must continue to work together to move the City of Langley in a positive and forward direction. And we must challenge ourselves to forever maintain our reputation as The Place to Be.