

# Public Engagement Charter

## Official Community Plan Review 2009 - 2011

*The District of North Vancouver's Public Engagement Charter is a guiding document describing the values and commitments underlying the consultation process associated with the review of the Official Community Plan (2009-2011).*

*It is a point of reference for ensuring an authentic, engaging, inclusive and transparent public engagement process.*



**DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER**

April, 2009  
Sustainable Community Development Department

## PREAMBLE

*What is at the heart of what defines the District of North Vancouver as a great place to live?*

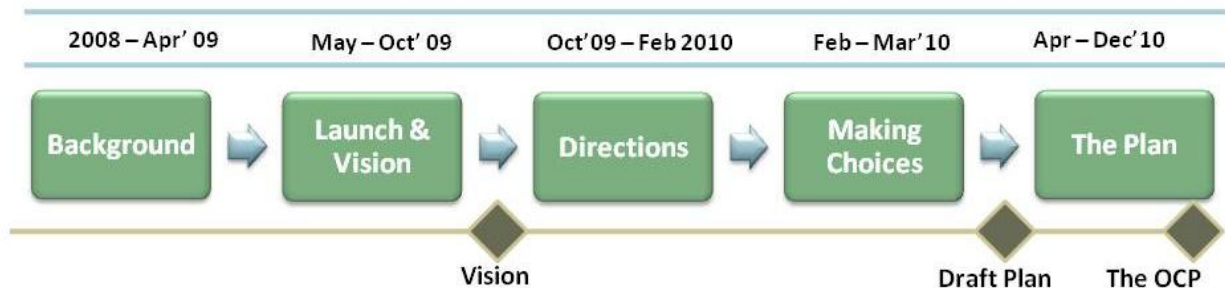
*What does the future have in store for the District of North Vancouver? What will our identity look like in 25 years?*

*What can the municipality, its partners and the community do to shape a common desired future for the District?*

To answer these and other fundamental questions, the District of North Vancouver is undertaking an Official Community Plan Review. The review process, which begins in 2009 and is expected to end by 2011 will fulfill the requirements outlined in Sections 875 to 879 of British Columbia's Local Government Act, address commitments required as part of Bill 27 and the BC Climate Change Action Charter, include statement(s) on adherence to the Regional Growth Strategy, and pursue the goal of sustainability as articulated, for example, in Council's commitment to The Natural Step.

A key element for this OCP review is a thorough consultation process that not only educates, informs, consults and involves key-stakeholders and the public but does so in an engaging and thought-provoking way. Informed and inclusive public engagement is seen as critical as it will help to ensure that the resulting OCP reflects the aspirations and ideas of a full spectrum of community interests, increasing the probability that the implementation of the OCP elements will receive a broad base of community support and meet our future community needs.

The OCP review process is envisioned in five stages, as illustrated diagrammatically below.



Specifically, the process moves from articulating a broad and inclusive vision at the early stages, to exploring desired directions and making strategic choices about policies and actions that move the District closer to the vision. Stakeholder and public engagement forms an essential backdrop to every single stage of this process as outlined in this Public Engagement Charter.

# ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

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The District Official Community Plan will be guided by a community engagement process that adheres to the following principles:

***Broad-based, inclusive and balanced*** – Engagement efforts reach out to all segments of the public, involving participants in a rewarding way, and welcoming diverse perspectives on addressing the needs and aspirations of current and future District residents.

***Based on informed engagement*** – Relevant, clear, and evidence-based information is made readily accessible throughout the engagement process, using a variety of methods and media to encourage understanding and effective participation.

***Authentic, transparent and responsive*** - Participants are well-informed about consultation and decision-making structures and mechanisms, and clearly understand how their input influences decisions through each phase of the engagement process.

***Well-led and inspirational*** – The District demonstrates leadership by raising awareness of current issues, articulating the need for sustainability thinking and doing, exploring and communicating the implications of opportunities for change, and fostering collaborative opportunities for imagining a better future for the District.

***Consistent and continuous*** – The process invites public involvement early on and on an ongoing basis until the adoption of the OCP and includes effective monitoring mechanisms after the Plan is adopted.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Official Community Plan review is a complex process and will include many actors with varying roles and corresponding responsibilities. The following pages provide a summary of the governance system envisioned for this process.

### ***Pre-Plan the Plan Team***

The Community Planning Working Group (CPWG) was established in May, 2008 and included approximately 25 citizen volunteer members from different areas of interest throughout the District. During a year-long period leading up to the launch of the OCP review process in May 2009, the CPWG prepared the ground by carefully considering a range of community planning processes and issues faced by the District and providing advice to District staff and Council on the appropriate directions for the OCP review process. The CPWG's term ended with the submission of a Discussion Paper which identified key District challenges and issues the OCP must address, some proposed principles for a sustainable future, a set of recommendations on the OCP framework and the characteristics of the final Plan, as well as a set of recommendations on the desired public engagement process for the OCP review. This Public Engagement Charter is based on the recommendations of the CPWG with regards to the public engagement process and the OCP framework. Other recommendations of the CPWG are to be taken under advice at appropriate stages of the OCP review process.

### ***OCP Roundtable***

The OCP Roundtable is to be established in May, 2009 and will include approximately sixteen (16) citizen volunteers, representing various major interests in the community, who will act as a sounding board for District staff and consultants as they design and implement the OCP review process. The most important role of the Roundtable will be to support the implementation of the public engagement process following the directions outlined in this Public Engagement Charter. As the process goes on, the Roundtable will take on the additional role of supporting the development of OCP content (targets, policies, implementation plans etc) in line with the Community Vision identified and endorsed in principle by Council. Members of the OCP Roundtable will encourage participation of various sectors of the community in consultation events, and will themselves participate in them with an eye to the quality of the process and the consistency of its outcomes. The detailed terms of reference for the Roundtable can be found in Appendix 1 of this Charter. An ongoing monitoring role for the Roundtable may follow the adoption of the OCP in 2011.

### ***The Community***

An important consideration in developing the new OCP is to ensure that it speaks to the needs and aspirations of the community as a whole. The term community is used in its fullest sense and includes those who live, work and play in the District. The role of the community is to contribute information and become informed about the issues, trends and patterns facing the District, give input into the development of content at various stages of the process, and provide staff and Council with feedback on draft *elements of the Plan as they are developed*.

### ***Key Stakeholders***

There are various existing associations, agencies and committees that work on representing various key interests within the District. These include registered and non-registered community associations, committees, boards, commissions and reference groups, agencies and service providers for various sectors of the population, as well as the Province, Metro Vancouver, TransLink and neighbouring jurisdictions. It is recognized that these stakeholders have a key role to play in mobilizing the interests of different sectors of the population, and in encouraging participation of their constituents in the process. District staff will be reaching out to the key stakeholder groups specifically to invite their participation and to reach the broader community. The input and feedback from the key stakeholders will be received and valued alongside the contributions from other community members.

### ***District Mayor and Council***

As the main decision-making body in charge of the OCP, District Council approves resources to undertake the review, considers, endorses outcomes and policies in principle at each phase of the process and will similarly consider and must ultimately approve the Plan and subsequent District initiatives to implement the Plan, once adopted. Mayor and Council will display leadership in building trust for an open, inclusive and engaging process by acting as champions for the OCP. They will actively participate in the various engagement activities and help build understanding of issues and consensus on a vision and course of action amongst community members. Mayor and Council will reinforce the commitment to completing the OCP by making endorsements in principle at key milestones to ensure it moves forward through all phases to adoption of the Plan.

### ***District Staff and OCP Consultants***

Staff and consultants will be responsible for developing policies and strategies within the Plan informed by sound analyses, their own technical knowledge and professional experience, as well as the input gained through public consultation. With respect to the consultative elements of the OCP review process, staff and consultants' main role will be to translate the input from community consultations into OCP content for consideration and decision-making by Council. More specifically, District staff and consultants will be responsible for organizing and facilitating the consultation process, undertaking research and communication, providing information on the community to help inform participants, helping explore possibilities for the future in engaging and meaningful ways, articulate the need for sustainability "thinking and doing", document and illustrate materials generated, listen and encourage the inclusion of all voices and clearly illustrate how participants feedback is used to influence decisions.