



2025
**LGLA
LEADERSHIP
FORUM**

Effective Engagement for
Inclusive and Transparent
Governance

12-14
MARCH
2025



Forum Program

Radisson Hotel Vancouver Airport

www.lgla.ca

Forum Theme

Effective Engagement for Inclusive and Transparent Governance



In today's evolving political environment, local and Indigenous governments must prioritize effective engagement to build strong relationships and foster trust with their communities and all orders of government.

The 2025 Local Government Leadership Academy Forum will explore how to manage relationships with new provincial governments, communicate effectively regardless of political leadership, and engage inclusively with various stakeholders.

Join us to explore how transparent, inclusive, and strategic engagement is the key to moving governance forward and ensuring the trust and confidence of the public.

Topics will include:

- Managing relationships with a new provincial government and communicating openly across political shifts
- Exploring different types of engagement, from one-on-one meetings to digital platforms and social media, and developing best practices for connecting with constituents, community groups, and fellow leaders
- Emphasizing the importance of open communication, inclusivity, and collaboration to enhance public confidence and foster good governance at all levels
- Understanding the power of your personal brand online and leveraging social media for transparent, impactful public engagement
- Looking at engagement “up and down”—with senior orders of government, peers, and the communities you serve—to build strong, trusting relationships

Forum Overview

All sessions to be held in President Ballroom. All breaks and meals will be served in the ballroom foyer.

Wednesday

March 12 | 2025

1:30–2:00 PM	Opening Ceremony
2:00–3:30 PM	Engaging with the Province: Observations from the Balcony
3:30–3:45 PM	Refreshment Break Sponsored by Municipal Insurance Association of BC
3:45 PM–5:00 PM	Align, Prioritize Communicate: How Coordinated Planning and Budgeting Realizes Community Vision
5:00–6:30 PM	Networking Reception Sponsored by Destination BC

Thursday

March 13 | 2025

7:30–8:30 AM	Breakfast Sponsored by Young Anderson Barristers and Solicitors
8:30–9:45 AM	Building Trust Around the Table
9:45–10:00 AM	Refreshment Break
10:00–11:15 AM	Empowering Your CAO: Key Strategies for Effective Leadership in Local Government
11:15 AM–12:15 PM	Effective Community Engagement & Visioning
12:15 PM–1:30 PM	Lunch Sponsored by FortisBC
1:30–2:45 PM	Engagement with First Nations
2:45–3:00 PM	Refreshment Break
3:00–4:15 PM	Community Engagement and Revising your OCP
4:15–5:15 PM	Signals in the Noise

Friday

March 14 | 2025

7:30–8:30 AM	Breakfast Sponsored by BC Assessment
8:30–9:45 AM	Consultation and Cooperation under EDMA
9:45–10:00 AM	Refreshment Break Sponsored by Lidstone & Company Law Corporation
10:00–11:30 AM	Beyond the Term: Local Leaders Reflect
11:30 AM	Closing

Session Details

Day One Wednesday | **March 12 | 2025**

1:30 PM **Opening Ceremony**

- **Councillor Laurey–Anne Roodenburg**, President, LGLA
- **Chief Wayne Sparrow**, Musqueam Nation
- **Councillor Carol Day, Acting Mayor**, City of Richmond
- **Councillor Trish Mandewo, President**, UBCM

2:00 PM **Engaging with the Province: Observations from the Balcony**

- **Terry Lake**, Former Mayor, City of Kamloops, and Former Cabinet Minister (Health, Environment)
- **Carole James**, Former BC Minister of Finance, Deputy Premier
- **Mike Bernier**, Former Mayor, City of Dawson Creek, Former MLA for Peace River South

We are just emerging from a hard-fought election and local governments in BC will need to re-think their engagement strategies with the Province. Is your current approach to engagement on key priorities working? Does it need to be adjusted? As community leaders, how do you convey the important local needs of your community to provincial decision makers? In this session we will turn to three retired MLAs and seek their guidance and opinions on what an effective provincial engagement strategy should look like. What caught their attention when they were MLAs? Some suggestions around engagement “Do’s and Don’ts” will be offered in a reflective environment. This session is intended to provide food for thought for local elected leaders as you devise your engagement strategies with the Provincial Government.

3:45 PM **Align, Prioritize Communicate: How Coordinated Planning and Budgeting Realizes Community Vision**

- **Moderator: Chris Paine**, Principal, FIT Consulting
- **Carla Fox**, CFO, Thompson–Nicola Regional District
- **Colton Davies**, Communications & Marketing Manager, Thompson–Nicola Regional District

This panel discussion will focus on the relationship between budgeting and other planning documents and why developing priorities is the first step in a successful budgeting and finance process. As an elected official you will gain an understanding of: what your role is in the finance planning and budgeting process, which key questions should be asked to understand how to make priorities a reality, and how finance and budgeting link to, and align with, other local government planning processes (OCPs, strategic planning, and other framework documents).

Day Two

Thursday | March 13 | 2025

8:30 AM **Building Trust Around the Table**

- **Mayor Maria McFaddin**, City of Castlegar
- **Chris Barlow**, CAO, City of Castlegar

Local governments are increasingly being challenged by complex problems that are stretching their operating capacity and financial resources to the limit. Tackling these problems requires strong working relationships between the elected officials around the table, as well as between the staff and the elected officials - relationships that are based on trust, respect, and a shared understanding of the issues. So, the question is, what are the tools, challenges, opportunities and best practices we can use to build the relationships needed to tackle increasingly complex problems?

In this session delegates will hear the story of how the City of Castlegar took on one such problem – the challenge of documenting and funding their infrastructure gap. We will hear from both the CAO and the Mayor who will each share their perspective. They will walk us through the journey to date, and outline the process developed to assist Council with its decision-making and ultimately sustainable service delivery. Delegates will learn how the Council was engaged through sharing data that communicated the extent of the problem, the way they built a common understanding of Council's role vs staff's role, how they resolved individual council member's differences, and finally the tools they used to engage with the public to help build acceptance of the property tax increases needed.

10:00 AM **Empowering Your CAO: Key Strategies for Effective Leadership in Local Government**

- **Moderator: Jamie McEwan**, Principal, Broadwater Governance & Strategy
- **Ron Poole, Senior Consultant**, Poole Consulting Ltd., Former CAO
- **Al Siebring**, Principal, Siebring Consulting, Former Mayor, District of North Cowichan
- **Karen Elliott**, General Manager of Community Engagement and Cultural Services, Resort Municipality of Whistler and Former Mayor, District of Squamish

In today's rapidly evolving local government landscape, supporting your Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to lead effectively is more critical than ever. As the labour market crisis has led to a 250% increase in local government job postings over the last decade, municipalities are facing unprecedented challenges in recruiting and retaining leadership. This session will explore how local government officials can engage with their CAO to create an environment where they can thrive—fostering inclusion, enhancing communication, and driving positive organizational change. Hear directly from former mayors/chairs and CAOs about the strategies that work—and the pitfalls to avoid—while supporting your CAO. Whether you're looking to strengthen your working relationship with your CAO or to better understand the leadership challenges they face, this session will provide practical insights and proven approaches to build a more resilient and effective leadership team.

11:15 AM Effective Community Engagement and Visioning

- **Councillor Jason Lum**, City of Chilliwack
- **Mayor Scott Goodmanson**, City of Langford
- **JoAnne Kleb**, Manager of Engagement, City of Delta

Learn from local leaders and engagement experts about what it takes to lead successful community engagement and visioning to shape the future of your community. What questions should you be asking your staff and teams? How do local governments generate meaningful input from diverse voices within the community? And how can this input be reflected back to your community in strategic, financial and other planning documents? Panelists will present examples of leading practice to effectively capture community priorities and aspirations. By the end of the session participants will have a better understanding of strategies empowering them to make the tough choices while ensuring that residents feel heard.

1:30 PM Engagement with First Nations

- **Aftab Erfan**, Executive Director, SFU's Centre for Dialogue and Associate Member, SFU School of Public Policy
- **Lisa Pastro**, Director of Operations, Westbank First Nation
- **Michelle Corfield**, CEO of Corfield & Associates, Former Chair, Legislative Council of the Ucluelet First Nation

In having brave conversations, the role of the "in-betweeners" as described by Jody Wilson-Raybould (Sept. 2024, UBCM), is an important one. Our panelists will discuss their experiences as cross-cultural bridge-builders in the context of colonization, and the impact that gender has played in their roles as facilitators in uncomfortable spaces.

3:00 PM Community Engagement and Revising Your OCP

- **Allison Habkirk**, Instructor, Capilano University and LGLA Board Member
- **Guy Patterson**, Partner, Young Anderson Barristers and Solicitors
- **Robert Miles**, Long Range Policy Planning Manager, City of Kelowna
- **Erin Hemmens**, Councillor, City of Nanaimo
- **Tricia McKay**, Acting Mayor, Town of Ladysmith
- **Jake Belobaba**, Director of Development Services, Town of Ladysmith

To help local governments deliver needed housing supply, municipalities are now required to update their OCPs and zoning bylaws by December 31, 2025, to reflect the 20-year housing needs identified in their Interim Housing Needs Report, and then by December 31, 2028 (and every five years thereafter, following future housing needs reports). These changes are part of a wider shift away from site-specific zoning decisions and towards pro-active planning. This shift places greater emphasis on engagement, including a public hearing, at the OCP stage of community planning. This session will equip elected officials and local government staff with strategies to support and participate in meaningful OCP processes, with attention to the roles and responsibilities of community leaders. Local government leaders and planning experts will discuss how elected officials, and staff can work together to navigate difficult community conversations, set a community vision through public engagement, and outline the considerations for OCP updates under a pro-active planning framework.

4:15 PM **Signals in the Noise**

- **Moderator: Paul Taylor**, Director of Communications, UBCM
- **Kelly Kay**, Community Engagement Manager, City of Kelowna
- **Sam Oliphant**, Senior Vice President, Kirk and Co. Consulting
- **Samantha Piper**, Manager of Communications, Fraser Valley Regional District

Community engagement is one of the foundations of effective municipal and regional governance. Increasingly though, engagement efforts are beset by the “noise” of misinformation, polarization, and information fatigue. Our panel will identify obstacles that impede community engagement, and the principles, tools, and practices that are helping local governments to recognize the signals residents are providing. Indigenous consultation, contextualizing campaigns, and utilizing feedback in Council and Board decision-making are just some of topics to be explored in this dynamic discussion—strategies empowering them to make the tough choices while ensuring that residents feel heard.

Day Three **Friday | March 14 | 2025**

8:30 AM **Consultation and Cooperation Under EDMA**

- **Jessica Miller**, Manager, Indigenous Peoples Policy, Partnerships, Agreements and Reconciliation Initiatives Branch, EMCR
- **Matt Critchley**, Sr. Advisor, Indigenous Community Relations and Partnership Engagement, Partnerships, Agreements and Reconciliation Initiatives Branch, EMCR
- **Director Jerrilyn Kirk**, Regional District of Fraser–Fort George
- **Stephanie Masun**, Manager of Intergovernmental Relations, Cariboo Regional District
- **Irene Israel**, Manager of Emergency Programs & Disaster Resilience, Cariboo Regional District
- **Director Cyra Yunkws**, Chair, Regional District of Kitimat–Stikine

Community engagement is one of the foundations of effective municipal and regional governance. Under the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*, locally elected leaders are facing many new responsibilities, including consultation and cooperation during all phases of emergency management. This session will support elected officials in navigating these new responsibilities by exploring the Act, available resources, and best practices.

10:00 AM **Beyond the Term: Local Leaders Reflect**

- **Henry Braun**, Former Mayor, City of Abbotsford
- **Wendy Booth**, Former Vice–Chair, Regional District of East Kootenay
- **Dr. Kerry Jang**, Former Councillor, City of Vancouver

This insightful panel discussion will feature former local government leaders reflecting on their time in office. Candid discussions will explore the panelists’ experiences engaging with and shaping their communities, highlighting the successes and challenges they faced while serving. Panelists will share their most significant achievements, the lessons learned along the way, and what they might adjust if the clocks were turned back. Join us as we engage with seasoned local government officials who have come out on the other side, and glean wisdom from their journeys.

11:30 AM **Closing Remarks**

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The Local Government Leadership Academy gratefully acknowledges the support of the following Partner Organizations and Sponsors:



Thank you for attending

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