



ABBOTSFORD

2020-2021

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT strategy

February 2020

*You* Said...

...*We* Listened

**Making the City of  
Abbotsford a great  
place to work.**

A scenic view of a park with tulips and trees at sunset. The foreground is filled with white and red tulips. In the background, there are bare trees and a bright sun setting behind a line of trees, creating a lens flare effect. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

*You Said...*

*...We Listened*

**"Our collective commitment to ongoing continuous improvement will ensure we are successful in continuing to make the City of Abbotsford a great place to work and an employer of choice."**

- Peter Sparanese



## Introduction

The City of Abbotsford actively strives to be an employer of choice. We know that our employees are our most valuable resource and we are committed to promoting an engaged workforce by fostering an organizational culture of diversity, inclusion, continuous improvement, servant leadership and open communications.

Our 2019 Employee Engagement Survey was a success with 61% participation across the organization. The feedback we received through this inaugural internal survey process has provided us with an opportunity to create an organizational Employee Engagement Strategy to address many of the opportunities identified across our operations.

As City Manager, I am 100% committed to implementing the actions included in this document that were identified by our employees from our 2019 Employee Engagement survey. I believe the opportunities outlined across the following pages will assist us in improving the day-to-day experiences of all of our employees as they strive to provide the best in customer service for more than 150,000 Abbotsford residents.

Our collective commitment to ongoing continuous improvement will ensure we are successful in continuing to make the City of Abbotsford a great place to work and an employer of choice.

Sincerely,

Peter Spananese, City Manager  
February, 2020



# You Said... ...We Listened

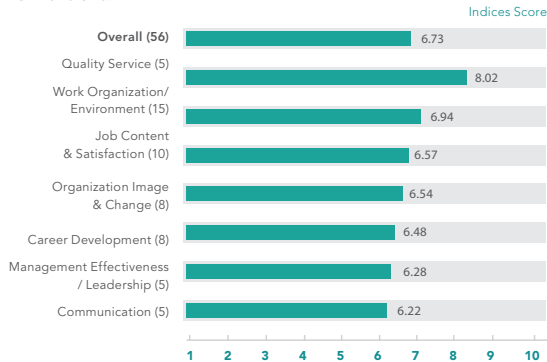
## Engagement Survey 2019

### What We Heard



#### Dimension Summary

Here are the results of the 56 survey questions asked under 7 dimensions.

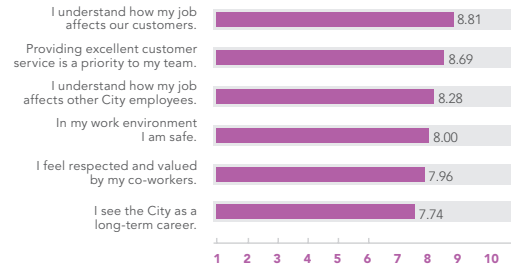


**Our 2019 Employee Survey was a success with an overall engagement score of 6.73**



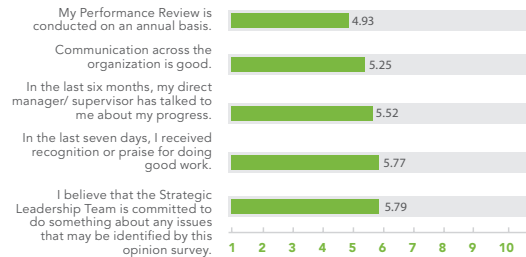
#### Celebrate the Wins!

Following are the most positive areas within City of Abbotsford as represented in the employee survey results – these are areas of strength to celebrate:



#### Take Action Now!

Following are the greatest challenges facing City of Abbotsford as represented in the employee survey results – these are areas of opportunity for improvement:



# Employee Engagement Cycle

Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan prioritizes the development of an Employee Engagement Strategy. The first step in the development of that Strategy was the launch of an inaugural Employee Engagement Survey conducted in September and October of 2019. The organizational results of that first survey were shared with all employees in December of 2019.

The next step in the development of the Strategy took place in January of 2020. Focus Groups were conducted with cross-departmental teams of internal employees to assist in developing specific action items that will have the most impact for our employees. The input from both the survey and the Focus Groups are captured in this Employee Engagement Strategy. The action items included in this Strategy have been broken down into the seven key delivery areas utilized in the 2019 Employee Engagement Survey (shown as icons below).

The next step in the cycle sees us return to the Survey process to take a read on how we are doing. A 'Pulse Survey' (a quick 15-20 question survey that takes the 'pulse' of how employees feel) will be conducted in September 2020. From there we will adjust or update the Strategy as required. The next full Employee Engagement Survey will be conducted in the Fall of 2021.

## Our Key Delivery Areas



Communication



Job Content & Satisfaction



Organizational Image & Change



Work Organization & Environment



Career Development



Service Quality



Management Effectiveness & Leadership



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EMPLOYEE  
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## Communication

Communication is the cornerstone of an engaged workforce and open lines of communication can have an enormous impact on the success of any organization. Effective communication can increase employee engagement, boost workplace productivity, and drive organizational success. Yet it remains that one of the most difficult challenges for any organization today is to find ways to effectively speak to employees. The following actions were recommended by City of Abbotsford employees as opportunities for our organization to improve communication channels.





## Spring/Summer 2020

- Raise awareness of the availability for employees to login to the Intranet from remote locations.
- Create more Podcasts to assist all of us with cross-organization knowledge
- Increase publication frequency and distribution of CityLine employee newsletter
- Widely publish a monthly list of employee 'Hellos, Farewells & Moves'
- Ensure 'out of office' email is activated for all departing employees
- Improve poster program to ensure up-to-date information in each location
- Develop 'meeting standards (templates for agendas, minutes, reporting out)
- Post meeting-room etiquette in each meeting room
- Regular reporting out to employees from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings
- Ensure all managers are included in the flow of communications between employees and senior leaders



## 2020-2021 Actions

- **Develop Employees Information Bulletin Boards to be located in key work areas**
- **Expand digital rotation of 'top-stories' on civic TV monitors where possible**
- **Increase number of workstations accessible at satellite operations (e.g. Yard)**
- **Increase the number of City Manager – All-exempt meetings**
- **Create opportunities for City Manager and General Managers to visit employees located at satellite operations**

You Said...

...We Listened



## Job Content & Satisfaction

Each day, every one of us makes a unique contribution to the success of our teams and our organization. Supporting a culture that allows for employees to do their best work each day, as well as opportunities for our managers to be able to recognize those contributions is a key component of fostering an engaged working environment. Our employees have indicated that the following actions will help to support overall satisfaction across our organization.



## Spring/Summer 2020

- Develop recognition tools for all employees to access
- Develop Manager toolkit to support recognition activities to take place
- Enhance opportunities for recognition from residents and employees-to-employees kudos to be seen by all



## 2020-2021 Actions

- Update the Abbotsford Staff Appreciation Program (ASAP)





## Organizational Image & Change

Becoming an employer of choice means that employees across the organization believe that the organization is a great place to work. At the City of Abbotsford, our commitment to continuing to address those things that employees identify through the annual Employee Engagement Survey cycle will support the ways in which we continue to foster a culture of organizational excellence. To meet this commitment, the following actions have been identified.



### Spring/Summer 2020

- Implement Engagement Strategy action items
- Conduct Employee Engagement “Pulse Survey”



## 2020-2021 Actions

- Conduct full Employee Engagement Survey, 2021

You Said...

...We Listened



## Work Organization/Environment

Systems and processes play a significant role in the successful operations of any organization. They serve as the essential building blocks and support for employees in delivering efficient and effective services. By regularly reviewing and considering the efficiency and accuracy of all business systems, organizations can help to ensure the effectiveness of services and reinforce the connection to the strategies of the business. Our employees have signaled areas where a keener focus on improving the existing systems will help support improved service delivery.

Additionally, hand-in-hand with systems and processes working well, we know that a healthy workplace environment improves productivity and can help in reducing absenteeism, turnover, workers' compensation, and medical claims, and helps us to retain our best employees.

Our employees have provided us with the following actions that will help us continue to support a healthy workplace for everyone on our team.





## Spring/Summer 2020

- Continue with Business Process Reviews of key/identified service delivery areas
- Develop a Digital Strategy
- Review Organizational Alignment opportunities for synergies
- Review/enhance flexible workplace opportunities
- Create a consistent and aligned job application framework
- Support development of a Wellness Committee
- Continue enhancing intranet tools for employees



## 2020-2021 Actions

- Continue with Business Process Reviews across the organization

*You Said...*

*...We Listened*



## Career Development

Our employees are our organization's biggest asset and investing in their development is vital to the City experiencing sustainable growth and success. We know that training and development opportunities support us becoming an employer of choice and help to attract and retain talent. Further, it is vital for all employees to have access to the expectations, policies and procedures within our organization so that we have a consistent experience across our workplace. Ongoing investment in our employees through training and development opportunities provides a benefit to both individuals and our organization as a whole. The following actions have been identified by our employees in support of this endeavor.



## 2020-2021 Actions

- Support management to implement Employee Development Plans
- Create new-manager training program (provided to all management employees)



## Spring/Summer 2020

- Review and update the Training and Development Policy
- Provide Team Building/Optimization workshops
- Update recruitment system
- Enhance cross-training and development opportunities



## Service Quality

Customer Experience Excellence is a core capability through which we fulfill our obligations to Council's Strategic Vision & Mission. Providing service excellence and meeting the diverse needs of all of our customers is a top focus for everyone at the City of Abbotsford. We strive to provide a positive experience for everyone we interact with and fulfill our Mission to continually improve the quality of life within our community. Through the delivery of key services for current and future generations, we will meet Council's Strategic Plan cornerstones of building a Vibrant Economy and a Complete Community for all in Abbotsford. To ensure we continue to provide excellence in customer service, we will make it easy for our customers to access, learn about and use our services. Alongside all of the preceding action items, the City will deliver on the following actions to support us providing ongoing service quality.



## Spring/Summer 2020

- Implement Customer Culture Strategy



## 2020-2021 Actions

- Update Customer Culture Strategy

*You Said...*

*...We Listened*



## Management Effectiveness/Leadership

Employee engagement can be defined as “the positive emotional connection an employee has to their work and their workplace.” Employee engagement studies and surveys consistently cite management and leadership credibility as a crucial factor in this connection. The City of Abbotsford is committed to supporting all of our leaders/managers in their ongoing development so that they can continue to support our employees in an effective and meaningful way. The following actions have been identified in support of this ongoing goal.



## Spring/Summer 2020

- Develop Succession Plans for senior positions
- Identify core leadership qualities/competencies



## 2020-2021 Actions

- Create a Leadership Development program



*You Said...*

*...We Listened*

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CELEBRATING  
**25**  
YEARS  
OF COMMUNITY