

SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# I Am Resilient, I Am Langford: Pandemic Economic Recovery, the Langford Way



BRIGHT IDEAS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## SYNOPSIS

As one of Canada's fastest-growing cities, Langford has given top priority to business development and innovation. Through strong partnerships between the business community and a progressive mayor and council, a culture focused on finding solutions rather than putting up red tape is engraved in Langford's DNA.

## LOCATION

Langford

## INNOVATORS

City of Langford

## REGION

Vancouver Island  
and Coast

## POPULATION

45,000



## INTRODUCTION

[Langford](#) is the thriving economic heart of Greater Victoria's West Shore. With the recent hire of an economic development manager, the City expanded its ability to go the extra mile to support its businesses.

When the Province announced mandatory temporary closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Langford quickly stepped up and supported residents and businesses alike through the captivating "[I Am Langford](#)" campaign. The campaign went deeper than encouraging residents to shop locally; it was positioned to connect the entire community like never before.



## THE CHALLENGE

Langford is an evolving city with hundreds of new businesses opening every year, but this time of rapid growth can make community connection challenging.

The pandemic provided an opportunity to remind residents to keep local businesses top of mind and foster a culture of community support and connectivity.

## THE STRATEGY

Aligned with Provincial Health Services Authority recommendations, the City took a phased approach.

"When we say 'we're all in this together' it is more than just words, we have each other's backs in the true Langford way."

- Mayor Stewart Young

## OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

City staff were reassigned from other departments to aid in community outreach to ensure engagement with as many individuals as possible.

To connect the community and provide support, outreach through phone calls, business visits, supplies deliveries and a mobile information centre were implemented. →



For more information, visit [gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment](http://gov.bc.ca/economicdevelopment)



To date, there have been more than 500 business connections, not including email alerts and online correspondence through the following actions:

- Information and survey phone calls to residents and businesses
- Partnered with Forbes Pharmacy to establish a [Langford COVID-19 helpline and website](#)
- Digital signs, boulevard signs, and mobile advertisements
- Social media videos, radio and print advertisements
- Mobile information centre in commercial and neighbourhood hubs

For local businesses:

- A weekly resource guide was made available via email
- Directional and physical distancing signage and floor decals were available at no cost
- Non-medical grade masks and face shields delivered to businesses at cost to serve as a reminder that the City was there to support and help as much as possible

## RANDOM LANGFORD ACTS OF KINDNESS

When Phase Three was implemented provincially, the City extended the campaign further. An “I Am Langford” Acts of Kindness van has been travelling throughout the community spreading good vibes and rewarding shoppers for their loyalty to Langford businesses. Sponsored by local developers, \$15,000 was donated to support this initiative.

Local developers whose industry was not negatively affected by the pandemic, united together to give back to the City by donating funds to support this initiative.

## SUCCESSSES

The City’s actions demonstrated excellence in providing the community with information and assistance in addressing the immediate needs and well-being of residents and the business community.

The initiatives highlighted stemmed from the idea of building a strong and vibrant community that feels supported and understood by its leaders. This program highlights the importance of having infrastructure and leadership that supports staff’s ability and requirement to respond quickly and efficiently to a rapidly changing environment.

The I Am Langford microsite received 6,384 pageviews throughout July and August 2020.

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## STORYTELLING

A [microsite](#) on I Am Langford was created to share stories behind many of Langford’s well-loved local businesses. Through photos and phone interviews, heartwarming biographies were created to remind residents of the story behind their favourite store or restaurant. By positioning neighbourhood businesses at the centre of the recovery process, it served as a friendly reminder to provide extra support to the entrepreneurs behind their favourite shops.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- An up-to-date business database is necessary for effective communication.
- Each business has unique needs. Stronger relationships between city staff and business owners allows for more personalized support systems. This can be accomplished through frequent outreach throughout the year.
- Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, this program relied on the ability of staff and departments to be adaptive and innovative. City hall departments and individual staff were required to collaborate and bring outside knowledge from various experiences to accomplish initiatives.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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