

## **Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda**

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Open to public attendance in Committee Room G

Lower Level, City Hall

Committee members may attend electronically

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

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	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</u> The Chair will open the meeting and provide a land acknowledgement.	
2. <u>INTRODUCTIONS</u>	
3. <u>CHANGES TO THE AGENDA</u> Additions or deletion of items.	
4. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u>	
4.1 January 24, 2024	3
5. <u>REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS</u> Staff and guest reports and presentations for information, discussion, and/or action	
5.1 Committee Orientation and Affirmation of Office	10
a. Orientation Presentation	43
b. Election of Alternate Chair	
5.2 Draft Accessibility Plan	64
6. <u>UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS</u>	
6.1 Terminology	

**7. NEW BUSINESS**

Items added to the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

**8. END OF MEETING**

**9. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Remaining scheduled meetings for 2024, which take place at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted:

May 22, 2024

July 24, 2024

September 25, 2024

November 27, 2024



**Accessibility Advisory Committee**

**MINUTES**

**Wednesday, January 24, 2024, 5:30 p.m.**

**Open to public attendance in Committee Room G**

**Lower Level, City Hall**

**Committee members may attend electronically**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy  
Karen Basran  
Shannon Dolton\*  
Hazel Fitzpatrick\*  
Nancy Kato  
Vic Leach  
Karla Olson  
Julia Schoennagel

Chair  
Human Resources Business Partner  
Committee Member  
Committee Member  
Committee Member  
Committee Member  
Committee Member  
Committee Member

**REGRETS:**

Anne Bélanger  
Taryn Bruckshaw  
Iris Cheng

Committee Member  
Committee Member  
Committee Member

**GUEST:**

Karin Pasqua

Meaningful Access

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Mike Anderson  
Hailey Finnigan  
Chris Koth

Manager of Transportation, Engineering  
Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO  
Manager of Programs and Community Development,  
Library  
Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

Carilyn Cook

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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 5:34 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

## **2. INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions took place.

## **3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Item 6.1 – Terminology; and
- Item 6.2 – Letters of Support for New Westminster Police Department Local Community Accessibility Grant Applications

## **4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **4.1 September 27, 2023**

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** the Minutes of the September 27, 2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

### **4.2 October 25, 2023**

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** the Minutes of the October 25, 2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

### **4.3 November 22, 2023 (Notes)**

MOVED and SECONDED

**THAT** the Notes of the November 27, 2023 Accessibility Advisory Committee be adopted with the following amendment:

- Under Item 6.1 Local Community Accessibility Grant Application, with respect to the letter of support for the New Westminster Police Department's grant application that "all Committee members were in agreement" be removed from the minutes.

**Carried.**

All members present voted in favour of the motion.

## 5. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

### 5.1 Draft Accessibility Plan

#### a. Presentation (On Table)

Karen Basran, Human Resources Business Partner, introduced Karin Pasqua of Meaningful Access Consulting, who provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the City's draft accessibility plan.

**Procedural note:** Due to technical difficulties the Committee took a break from 6:19 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Pasqua noted that the BC Provincial Government is encouraging all mandated committees to focus on what is most relevant to their communities and, as such, not all communities will have a transportation representative on their committee. She encouraged the Committee to focus on what the draft accessibility plan is already addressing.

Ms. Pasqua posed the following questions to Committee members and received the following responses:

*What is the role of the Accessibility Advisory Committee?*

- The Committee should advocate for accessibility, including that around active transportation;
- Committee members could support the City and provide information to the Committee from their lived experiences;
- Provide input for projects and strategies moving forward, possibly in conjunction with the New Westminster Design Panel and other city committees;
- The Committee's Terms of Reference notes that the Committee is to "consult" and we need to define what that means. Our efforts should be collaborative;
- Would like to see the Committee's "voice" come through the accessibility plan rather than just providing our opinion and that staff follow the Committee's direction and not just take things into consideration;
- Staff are transparent and open and the responsibility should be taken off of their shoulders and placed with the Committee throughout the plan;
- In terms of first steps, implementation meets a lots of chokeholds;

- If we do not recognize the importance of intentionality and universal design in terms of accessibility, then everything else looks like accommodation and after-the-fact adapting;
- The City needs to re-orientate to a disability lens. It's been a struggle to get on track with that; and
- Universal Design was skipped over in the presentation and that should be part of everyone's framework when considering any kind of plan.

Ms. Pasqua noted that this is the Committee's opportunity to create a plan that is meaningful for this group, and that there should be a leadership position in the community and on staff to ensure that the plan is successful.

*What are your top priorities for the next 2 years of an accessibility plan?*

- To recognize the invisible disability of poverty and provide accessibility through affordability. The cost to access healthcare programs such as swimming should be 25 percent instead of 50 percent. The Provincial Wage Enhancement could indicate what someone is receiving and that subsidy could be linked to recreation services, residential parking permits, etc., however, the challenge of that is recognized;
- Regarding parking, ideally the City would model after Portland, Oregon, where they have two types of colour coded placards and those with low income do not have to pay for parking. As well, the City of Victoria has a scratch card for \$4.50 that allows people to park in a City stall all day;
- Cities, in general, have their disability work done by staff that care about it and sometimes with the work being done as an "access" but without a capital program to ensure that all we have is fully accessible;
- There needs to be a mandate that empowers staff to get the work done and there must be discussions about resources to further this work to be new and better than what is already being done;
- We access a lot of grants but that funding should be in the City's budget to allow staff to get things done;
- There is not enough lived experience in discussions. Ableism is usually accidental;

- People must be taught to think consciously about access, and we need guidelines that are kept up to date including who at the City to talk to about this work and the implementation of it;
- The Committee should be included in the discussions of projects at the planning stage, not after the design has been made;
- The City could commitment to only using designers that have people with disabilities as a part of their team. That would also help employ those with disabilities;
- The low-hanging fruit model needs to go as it takes away from our real needs;
- Universal design, which is an opportunity for creativity, must to be used at every approach so that things do not have to constantly be adapted and redone;
- Colleges could offer courses to planners, designers, and builders around accessibility and universal design;
- Years ago, Mayor and Council would spend a day using wheelchairs and blindfolds so that they could experience what it is like to live at a disadvantage. It would be beneficial City staff do the same thing;
- Invisible disabilities need to be acknowledged and addressed;
- The community should be educated on how to recognize and assist fragile seniors, including during times such as snow events which saw a lot of seniors housebound;
- The City should not sanction public events, such as the Farmer's Market, unless accessibility is addressed including ensuring that there is available parking nearby and that there are seats and places for people to rest;
- We have to change how we see accessibility as we usually only consider those with visible and larger disabilities; and
- Many seniors will not patronize the Anvil Centre Theatre because there are no handrails in the theatre which essentially excludes them from patronizing the venue.

Ms. Pasqua left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Terminology**

Karla Olson, Committee Member, noted that terminology was discussed at the September 27, 2023 meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding people who use wheelchairs and other mobility aids. She advised

that the accessibility plan should include a list of terms that the Committee is using, for example, wheel chair users or people who use wheel chairs. The list could be created for the accessibility plan and also as a style guide that can be used throughout the City. She noted that, initially, the word “disability” was not used on the City’s new accessibility webpage and suggested that instead of using no terminology at all, that the city use person first / identity first language and that each section of any important report or document begin with “our Chair has recognized that people living with invisible and visible disabilities need to be addressed.” The recommended practice is to alternate terms to include everyone in our community who have different ways to identify which is better than to not say anything at all. This should be used in our accessibility plan and on the webpage. Ms. Olson suggested that a motion be created to facilitate the implementation of this terminology and acknowledgement of both invisible and visible disabilities.

Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator, advised that since this was discussed last, the webpage has been updated to include the phrase “people with disabilities.”

Karen Basran, Human Resources Business Partner noted that part of what we are developing this plan for is to be able to come up with appropriate terminology and phrases to be used and built upon and shared with other staff. She acknowledged that it will evolve over time.

Councillor McEvoy advised that this topic would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee to allow people time to do some research and contemplation of the topic, and that a motion could be worked on in the meantime.

A committee member noted that terminology needs to be kept simple for those with cognitive challenges and that the City tends to use a lot of “city speak” which should be avoided.

## **6.2 Letters of Support for New Westminster Police Department Local Community Accessibility Grant Applications**

Karla Olson, Committee Member, reminded members of the requested letters of support for the New Westminster Police Department to apply for two Local Community Accessibility Grants (Grant). One of which is for a feasibility study to replace the lift at one of the entrances to the Police station. She advised that, currently, the entrance segregates people and that segregation of entranceways has an historical significance of



discrimination against groups of people. She noted that the message from this is that it is an “after the fact” fix and that the stairs are still challenging and, as such, she suggest that consideration be given to having the whole entrance re-assessed so that it can be redone to remove the separate entrance. She stated that fixing only the lift would be sending the wrong message.

In response to Ms. Olson’s request, Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator, advised that adding additional work may exceed the amount of money that can be accessed through the Grant and is unsure what that would mean for the letter of support.

Councillor McEvoy advised that this would be left with Ms. Finnigan and that he would speak with staff as to how the Police Board could be brought into the discussion that is being had with Council regarding accessibility.

Ms. Finnigan noted that the request is for someone who specializes in elevators to assess updating the elevator and that including assessments for other upgrades would require the services of an architect.

It was noted that the applications were due to be submitted by the end of March.

A committee member voiced agreement with Ms. Olson’s perspective on the entrance, but noted that the current lift is 30 or 40 years old and must be replaced because if it breaks down, those who cannot use the stairs will have not access to the Police Department at all.

7. **END OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 7:48 p.m.

8. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

To be determined.

Certified correct,

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Councillor Jaimie McEvoy

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Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

**Accessibility Advisory Committee**  
Terms of Reference

Committee Name	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Vision / Goal Statement	To provide input and direction to the City and Library Board on the development of a City of New Westminster organizational accessibility plan and in creating a mechanism for public feedback on accessibility in accordance with the <i>Accessible British Columbia Act</i> .
Mandate	<p>The Committee's role is to advise the City's Reconciliation, Social Inclusion, and Engagement Task Force on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying accessibility and inclusion barriers that City staff and community members experience or may experience in the course of interacting with the City in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment,</li> <li>Delivery of Service,</li> <li>The Built Environment,</li> <li>Information and Communications,</li> <li>Transportation, and</li> <li>Procurement;</li> </ul> </li> <li>Development of an organizational accessibility plan by September 1, 2023; and</li> <li>Development of a mechanism for public feedback on accessibility.</li> </ul>
Voting Members	<p>The Committee has a maximum of 13 members including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member of Council (1)</li> <li>Indigenous community representative (1)</li> <li>Persons with disabilities or individuals who support or represent organizations that support persons with disabilities (at least 7)</li> <li>City Staff member (1)</li> <li>Member Appointed by the Library Board (1)</li> <li>Community members (2)</li> <li>New Westminster Police Department representative (1)</li> </ul>

	Per Section 9 of the <i>Accessible British Columbia Act</i> , members of the Committee should reflect the diversity of persons with disabilities in BC.
Advisors	<p>The primary staff advisors to the Committee are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer; New Westminster Public Library, Climate Action, Planning and Development; Parks and Recreation; and Engineering Services.</li> <li>• Committee Clerk</li> </ul>
Term of Service	<p>In 2023</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 members will be appointed for a one-year term (February 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024)</li> <li>6 members will be appointed for a two-year term (February 1, 2023 – January 31, 2025)</li> </ol> <p>In 2023 and in all <b>odd numbered</b> years thereafter, 6 members will be appointed for two-year terms. In 2024 and in all <b>even numbered</b> years thereafter, 6 members will be appointed for two-year terms.</p> <p>This Committee responds to the committee requirements of the <i>Accessibility British Columbia Act</i>.</p>
Chair	The member of City Council shall be designated Chair. At the first meeting of the year, voting members shall elect an acting chair from its membership to preside over meetings when the Chair is absent.
Quorum	<p>A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Committee's appointed members.</p> <p>If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes following the time at which the meeting was to commence, the Committee Clerk shall record the names of the members present at the meeting, and the meeting shall stand adjourned.</p>
Attendance	<p>Members shall advise the Committee Clerk of their intent to attend or to be absent from a meeting.</p> <p>Any member who is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Committee, or in excess of one third of all meetings over any six-month period without leave of absence from the Committee, or a reason satisfactory to the Committee, shall by Committee resolution, cease to be a member of the Committee.</p>

	Section 144 of the <i>Community Charter</i> gives Council the power to rescind an appointment at any time.
Meeting Frequency	The Committee shall meet monthly in the first year of formation and thereafter 5 times a year alternating months to the Reconciliation, Social Inclusion and Engagement Task Force. The Committee may in extraordinary circumstances with the permission of the Mayor/City Clerk meet more frequently.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Accessibility British Columbia Act</i></li> <li>• <i>Community Charter</i> Section 142</li> <li>• City of New Westminster Advisory Committee Policy (adopted September 9, 2019 and attached here)</li> </ul>
Rules of Procedure	<p>Committee procedures are governed by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New Westminster Council Procedure Bylaw No. 6910, 2004.*</li> <li>2. “Rules of Conduct: Standing Committees and Advisory Bodies” provided to members and available on the City’s website.*</li> </ol> <p><i>*This refers to the most recent version.</i></p>

## **Advisory Committee Policy**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy guides the creation and management of all Advisory Committees created by the City of New Westminster under Section 142 of the Community Charter (Select Committees of Council).

### **2. PURPOSE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Advisory Committees exist in the City of New Westminster to provide Council access to external expertise and lived experience on issues of strategic importance.

Advisory Committees should normally exist only where they:

- Are directly relevant to the City's strategic priorities, as defined by Council
- Have clear mandates, objectives and outcomes that add value to City governance
- Are the most appropriate process to achieve the desired outcomes compared to alternate forms of stakeholder and resident engagement

Benefits to the City achieved through Advisory Committees may include:

- Providing access to lived experience or technical expertise missing from Council and/or staff
- Achieving the City's strategic priorities more quickly by working in partnership with community champions and organizations to achieve shared goals
- Improving the City's ability to hear from and respond to issues raised by equity-seeking populations
- Increasing the effectiveness of the City's stakeholder and resident engagement through leveraging the networks and advice of Committee Members.

Advisory Committees are not appropriate mechanisms to seek community input on matters related to City management (rather than governance) or on issues that are not strategically important to the City. In such cases, City staff may choose to engage residents and stakeholders using other processes, or to convene staff-led advisory groups that are not subject to this policy.

### **3. CREATION AND RENEWAL**

When establishing a new Advisory Committee, Council must approve a Terms of Reference that includes:

- Mandate, with reference to the City's strategic priorities
- Member composition and quorum
- Length of appointment terms for Members and Chairs (if different than default term length)
- Start and end dates for Advisory Committee annual terms (if different than default start/end dates)

### **4. GOVERNANCE AND EVALUATION**

#### **Annual Work Plans:**

Unless otherwise stated in an Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference, the Annual Term for all Advisory Committees will begin on February 1 and end on January 31.

Prior to the start of each new Annual Term, Council must approve an Annual Work Plan for each Advisory Committee that identifies:

- The name of the Council Member who will serve as Committee Chair
- The name of the Staff liaison(s)
- Desired outcomes/outputs for the work year in relation to Council's strategic priorities

## **Reporting and Evaluation:**

On an annual basis, the Staff Liaison for each Advisory Committee should submit an Annual Report to Council that summarizes the Advisory Committee's activities over the past year, describes how these activities contributed to Council's strategic priorities and provides a breakdown of all expenses incurred. The Annual Report should also include the results of a formal evaluation completed by Committee Members to support ongoing improvement and provide suggestions for the next year's work plan.

## **Reporting to Council:**

When responding on an issue referred by Council, Advisory Committees, with the assistance of the Staff Liaison(s) and the Committee Clerk, will submit reports to Council in accordance with the Advisory Committee Policy and Council Procedure Bylaw.

## **5. MEMBER SELECTION/RENEWAL**

Advisory Committees Members must be appointed by Council and may include Committee Members who are residents or property owners in the City, or representatives from organizations that Council has invited to participate (Organizational Representatives).

### **Application and Appointment:**

1. Appointments to committees should be made in advance of each annual term, or as vacancies arise.
2. Opportunities to serve as a Committee Member must be widely advertised so that all interested residents can apply.
3. Staff will submit recommendations for Advisory Committee membership to Council for amendment or approval, including Committee Members and Organization Members.
4. Where Organizations are invited to nominate an Organizational Representative to an Advisory Committee but fail to do so, Council may fill the vacancy with a community Committee Member instead.
5. Committee members will serve without pay, unless otherwise specified.
6. Committee Members must be New Westminster residents and may not be employees of the City, except by special waiver from the Mayor.

In developing their recommendations for Advisory Committee Membership to Council, staff should consider such criteria as: the skills and expertise of potential members, including lived experience; the resources and networks provided by potential members to help achieve City objectives; the degree to which Advisory Committees reflect the diversity of the City; and the City's commitment to ensure representation from equity-seeking and under-served communities.

### **Term Length and Renewal:**

1. The term of appointment for Advisory Committee Members is two years unless otherwise stated in the Advisory Committee Terms of Reference.
2. Appointment terms should generally be staggered so that half the members for each Advisory Committee will be replaced or renewed each year.
3. A Committee Member can serve a maximum of two consecutive 2-year terms on any one committee, except by special waiver from the Mayor.
4. Advisory Committee Members cannot simultaneously serve on more than one committee, except by special waiver from the Mayor, unless the Committee Member sits on a second committee as the representative of the first committee (e.g. an Arts Commission representative sits on the Public Art Advisory Committee).

### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:**

Committee Members should reflect the diversity of their community and include representation by under-heard voices and equity-seeking communities. The City will collect data to measure and evaluate its progress on equity, diversity and inclusion, and will provide appropriate supports to reduce barriers for equity-seeking communities.





## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY**

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<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY</b>
<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>2010 June</b>
<b>Revised Date:</b>	<b>2018 October</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>
<b>Document #:</b>	<b>133506</b>

## 1. PURPOSE

The City of New Westminster values all of its Employees and is committed to providing a Workplace where people are treated, and treat each other, professionally and respectfully in their interactions. Through this Policy, the City supports the maintenance of a respectful workplace by providing education about human rights, harassment, bullying, and appropriate behaviour in the workplace and by setting out processes for resolution of respectful workplace complaints.

Principles:

- A Respectful Workplace enhances job satisfaction, teamwork and productivity and thus is in the best interests of the City, its Employees, Council, Boards and those providing services to the City and the citizens of New Westminster.
- This Policy responds to the City of New Westminster's responsibility under the BC Human Rights Code to prevent discrimination and harassment, to provide procedures to handle complaints, to resolve problems and to remedy situations when a breach of this Policy occurs. This Policy is also intended to comply with WorkSafeBC's policies on workplace bullying and harassment.
- The City of New Westminster will not tolerate disrespectful behaviour. All persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster are accountable for their own conduct and are required to conduct themselves in a respectful and appropriate manner at the workplace and at work-related gatherings. They are also responsible for reporting any breaches of this Policy to Human Resources and for participating in the City's initiatives to improve respect and conflict management within their work units.

- The City of New Westminster will provide training designed to support the administration of this Policy and to ensure that all persons governed by this Policy are aware of their responsibilities under this Policy.

## 2. **SCOPE**

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all Persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster, elected officials, and Boards, and to all aspects of the employment relationship. It governs conduct at the workplace and at work-related gatherings.
- 2.2 This Policy does not limit the rights or responsibilities of the City of New Westminster to manage work performance appropriately and in good faith. Actions by City Managers that are part of their responsibilities and performed for legitimate business purposes, such as changing work assignments or performance management, do not constitute a breach of this Policy.
- 2.3 The City may investigate an incident(s) on its own initiative where there are concerns about alleged breaches of this Policy, and the potential impact of inappropriate conduct on a respectful workplace.
- 2.4 This Policy supersedes previous City operating guidelines and/or policy on this matter.

## 3. **DEFINITIONS**

**A Respectful Workplace:** is characterized by courteous and considerate behaviour towards others; inclusion of all persons of different backgrounds, cultures or opinions; safety from inappropriate behaviour; and includes constructive resolution of disputes.

**Disrespectful Behaviour:** means any conduct in breach of this Policy and includes Workplace bullying and harassment which are defined as including any inappropriate conduct or comment that a person knows or reasonably ought to know would cause another person to be humiliated or intimidated but excludes any reasonable action taken by the City relating to the management and direction of its Employees or the workplace. Examples include verbal aggression or insults, calling a person derogatory names, reprimanding in the presence of others, harmful hazing or initiation practices, vandalizing personal belongings or the City's equipment, and spreading malicious gossip or rumours.

For the purposes of this Policy, disrespectful behaviour also includes discrimination and harassment as defined below.

**Allegation:** is an unproven assertion or statement.

**Complainant:** is the person bringing forward a complaint or allegation of disrespectful behaviour. There may be more than one Complainant in a complaint.

**Discrimination:** is unfair differential treatment of an individual or group, whether intended or not, on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, or unrelated criminal conviction. Discrimination of this nature imposes burdens or obligations on an individual or group that serve no work-related function. Such conduct is not only a breach of this Policy; it may also be a breach of the BC Human Rights Code.

The City of New Westminster is under a legal duty to accommodate individuals, or groups protected from discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code, unless it would create undue hardship for the City.

**Employee:** includes all employees (exempt, unionized, full-time, part-time, auxiliary, temporary, and probationary), applicants, apprentices, students, volunteers, members of Council and City Boards, contractors and consultants working for the City of New Westminster.

**Harassment:** any behaviour that satisfies one or more of the following definitions of harassment:

(a) **Harassment based on a prohibited ground of discrimination:** Behaviour directed towards another person or persons that:

- is abusive, unfair, offensive, or demeaning; and
- is related to a prohibited ground of discrimination under the BC Human Rights Code; and
- a reasonable person would know or ought to know would have the effect of interfering with an individual's work or participation in work-related activities or would create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for work or participation in a work-related activity.

(b) **Sexual harassment:**

- conduct or comment of a sexual nature made by a person who knows or ought reasonably to know that the behaviour is unwanted or unwelcome; or
- the expressed or implied promise of a reward for complying with a request of a sexual nature; or
- the actual reprisal or an expressed or implied threat of reprisal for refusal to comply with such a request; or
- conduct or comment of a sexual nature which is intended to, or has the effect of, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include unwelcome advances or flirtations, comments or physical contact, propositions or invitations for sexual favours; unwelcome suggestive jokes, the display or circulation of sexually suggestive or pornographic materials.

(c) **Personal harassment:** Behaviour directed towards a specific person or persons that:

- serves no legitimate work-related purpose; and
- a reasonable person would know or ought to know would create an intimidating, humiliating, or hostile work environment.

Examples of personal harassment include making derogatory comments, swearing, yelling, inappropriately interfering with another's work, embarrassing practical jokes, ridicule, gossip, abuse of authority, physical assault.

**Mediation:** is a voluntary process where the Complainant and the Respondent consent to meet with a Human Resources representative to determine whether the dispute can be informally resolved in a mutually satisfactory manner. In some instances the City may determine that an external mediator should be called upon to assist in achieving resolution. Mediation discussions between the parties are treated as private and confidential.

**Person(s):** includes all Employees, suppliers delivering material to the City, and members of the public who are accessing City services or City operated facilities.

**Workplace(s):** includes City buildings, facilities, sites, offices or work environment, locations visited by Employees while traveling on City related business including conferences, meetings, vendor/supplier or customer sites and locations of work-based social gatherings.

**Reasonable Person Standard:** refers to whether or not a reasonable person in roughly the same position as the Complainant would determine disrespectful behaviour to have occurred.

**Respondent:** is a person or persons against whom an allegation of disrespectful behaviour has been made pursuant to this Policy.

**Retaliation:** is taking adverse action against another person for making a complaint in good faith or providing information in connection with an investigation or as a result of the resolution of a complaint. Examples of retaliation may include withholding information, sabotaging a person's work, denial of a transfer or promotion, unjust negative evaluations or references.

#### 4. **POLICY**

4.1 Disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated by the City. All persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster are responsible for conducting themselves in

- a respectful manner in the Workplace and at work-related gatherings. Any person found to be in breach of this Policy will be subject to discipline up to and including termination from employment, cancellation of contract or denial of services.
- 4.2 All persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster will be treated equitably under this Policy. All matters arising under this Policy will be dealt with in a fair, unbiased and timely manner.
- 4.3 All persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster have a responsibility for ensuring that the City's working environment is free from disrespectful behaviour. Council, Boards, management and union representatives bear the primary responsibility for maintaining a working environment free from disrespectful behaviour. They are expected to act on this responsibility whenever necessary, whether or not they are in receipt of a complaint. The expertise of the Human Resources department is available to all persons associated with and employed by the City to assist with the interpretation and implementation of this Policy.
- 4.4 Efforts at informal resolution will be encouraged as a first avenue to resolution of a complaint.
- 4.5 This Policy will be interpreted, administered and applied in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. In particular:
- (a) All persons will be advised of the provisions of this Policy and of the procedures available to them under the terms of this Policy.
  - (b) Any Complainant who wishes the City to assist in the resolution of a complaint through mediation or investigation must be prepared to be identified to the Respondent.
  - (c) Complainants and Respondents must be given the opportunity to present evidence in support of their positions and to defend themselves against allegations of disrespectful behaviour.
  - (d) Complainants and Respondents may be accompanied by a support person, or a representative of their union, or legal counsel (for exempt Employees) throughout the process established by this Policy.
  - (e) All complaints that proceed beyond the informal resolution phase must be submitted in writing. All submissions, responses, comments and decisions pursuant to the Policy will be made in writing if the complaint proceeds beyond the informal resolution phase.
- 4.6 Those responsible for interpreting, administering and applying this Policy will use a Reasonable Person Standard.



- 4.7 This Policy will not be applied in such a way as to limit the rights and responsibilities of those in supervisory roles to manage and discipline Employees in accordance with collective agreements or applicable City policies and procedures.
- 4.8 Persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster have an obligation to participate in the procedures established under this Policy and to cooperate in a forthright manner by providing honest, accurate and timely information.
- 4.9 If, following an investigation, the City determines that a complaint has been made in bad faith or is frivolous, vexatious or malicious the City may take disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment, cancellation of contract or denial of services. A misunderstanding, a misinterpretation or an unfounded complaint do not constitute a complaint made in bad faith.
- 4.10 A Complainant or a Respondent may object to the participation of a person in the administration of this Policy on grounds of conflict of interest or reasonable apprehension of bias. Such objection should be submitted in writing to the Director of Human Resources whose decision will be final. Where the objection relates to the participation of the Director of Human Resources, the Chief Administrative Officer will make the determination.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Employees:**

- 5.1 Employees must participate in appropriate training, familiarize themselves with this Policy and know their rights and obligations arising from it. They must not engage in disrespectful behaviour as defined in this Policy.
- 5.2 Employees must treat every person with dignity and respect; attempt to resolve differences with other Employees in a respectful way as soon as possible; raise concerns in a timely manner; cooperate in interventions and investigations to resolve complaints of disrespectful behaviour; and maintain confidentiality related to such complaints.

### **Council, Management and Union Representatives:**

- 5.3 Management has primary responsibility for the administration of this Policy and must have a thorough knowledge of this Policy. Management will set and enforce standards of appropriate workplace conduct and will intervene as soon as practicable when they witness or receive a report of any disrespectful behaviour.
- 5.4 Council, Boards, management and union representatives will lead by example in treating all Employees with dignity and respect and exercising authority and, or leadership in a respectful manner.
- 5.5 All complaints of disrespectful behaviour will be taken seriously.

- 5.6 Management will assist a Complainant to resolve a concern, including by facilitating a discussion between the Complainant and the Respondent. Where possible they will coach the Complainant and the Respondent to change their behaviour.
- 5.7 Management will take all reasonable steps to deal with alleged disrespectful behaviour that they are aware of, or reasonably should have been aware of (even if a direct complaint has not been made), in a timely fashion while maintaining as much confidentiality as possible. Reasonable steps may include referring the matter to the City of New Westminster Police Department for further investigation.
- 5.8 Management will consult with Human Resources for guidance to address complaints of disrespectful behaviour.

#### **Human Resources:**

- 5.9 The Human Resources department will take a leadership role in providing training for management and employees on respectful workplace behaviour. They will also give advice on this Policy, addressing and providing assistance to resolve issues of disrespectful behaviour.
- 5.10 The Human Resources department will provide mediation where the Complainant and the Respondent consent to meet to determine whether the dispute can be resolved in an informal and mutually satisfactory manner. In some instances, the Human Resources department may determine that a third party mediator should be called upon to assist in achieving resolution.
- 5.11 The Human Resources department will determine how and when investigations will occur and will oversee the investigation process.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 6.1 Allegations of disrespectful behaviour may involve the collection, use and disclosure of sensitive personal information. Confidentiality is required so that those who may have experienced disrespectful behaviour will feel free to come forward. Confidentiality is required at all stages of the investigation process including following the conclusion of the investigation so that the reputations and interests of those accused of disrespectful behaviour are protected. However, either the Complainant or the Respondent may discuss the case in confidence with their supervisor, a support person, union representative or Human Resources
- 6.2 Subject to any limits or disclosure requirements imposed by law or required by this Policy, any and all information, oral and written, created, gathered, received or compiled through the course of a complaint is to be treated as confidential by the Complainant or the Respondent, their representatives, witnesses, and any other

persons designated by this Policy. Information will be disclosed only to the extent necessary to investigate and resolve the complaint.

- 6.3 All investigatory and evidentiary documents as gathered and/or prepared by Human Resources or their designate(s) including summary investigation reports will be deemed the property of the City and will be held in the strictest confidence. Such documents will not be copied or distributed, subject to disclosure requirements imposed by legal proceedings or required by this Policy or by agreement between the parties.
- 6.4 All recorded personal information will be treated as "supplied in confidence" for the purposes of compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* of BC and responding to access requests under that legislation.
- 6.5 The Director of Human Resources may provide information concerning a complaint, to appropriate City officials on a need-to-know basis.
- 6.6 Any person breaching confidentiality may be subject to discipline or other appropriate action.

## **7. PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING DISRESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR IN THE WORKPLACE**

- 7.1 The City of New Westminster recognizes that conflicts and disagreements can occur within the workplace and expects such issues to be resolved in a manner that contributes to a healthy and productive workplace. Employees are encouraged to resolve disputes at an early stage through respectful and open dialogue between themselves, or by calling upon the assistance of their supervisors and, or, an HR representative.
- 7.2 The following procedures have been established so that complaints can first be addressed informally; and only if that is not possible, then formally. The goal of this Policy and its procedures is to prevent, correct and remedy situations of disrespectful behaviour and not to be punitive; although, depending on circumstances, discipline may result.
- 7.3 Complaints against, or by members of City Council or Boards should be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer.

### **The Informal Process**

#### **Step 1: The Informal Conversation**

- Persons who experience disrespectful behaviour are strongly encouraged to engage in a conversation with the Respondent to clarify and resolve the concerns.
- Where a Complainant is unable to have the conversation directly with the Respondent, he/she should contact his/her Manager or Supervisor as soon as possible. If needed, the

Manager/Supervisor will offer assistance such as scheduling the conversation between both parties or attending the meeting as an observer.

- Union participation and support is welcome.

### **Step 2: Mediation with the Direct Assistance of a Manager/Supervisor or Human Resources Representative**

If there is no resolution under Step 1 and the Complainant continues to seek resolution, then he/she should approach his/her Manager or Supervisor with the concern(s). The goal is to understand and mutually resolve the issue so that persons conduct themselves in a civil, respectful and cooperative manner.

Steps taken by the Manager/ Supervisor/ or Human Resources representative could include:

- Meeting separately with the Complainant and the Respondent to review the concerns;
- Meeting together with the Complainant and the Respondent to facilitate a conversation aimed at understanding and resolving the issue;
- Reviewing applicable policies with the Complainant and the Respondent and reinforcing expectations of respectful conduct;
- Seeking commitments from the Complainant and the Respondent that they will conduct themselves in a respectful manner;
- Following-up where appropriate with the Complainant and the Respondent after the resolution process to ask whether commitments to respect are being adhered to; and, or
- Recording steps taken in the resolution process.

In the event Employees cannot resolve their differences by informal conversation between themselves, or with the help of management or a Human Resources representative, the Human Resources department may provide the assistance of an external mediator to support the Employees informally, and to find a mutually acceptable way to resolve the conflict. This external mediator will report to Human Resources on the conclusion of the mediation.

### **Interim Measures**

It may be necessary that interim measures be taken while a complaint is being resolved, investigated or decided. Such measures will be precautionary, not disciplinary and may include separating the Complainant from the Respondent by transfer or by assignment of different hours, etc.

## **The Formal Process**

### **Step 3: Formal complaint**

If there is no resolution under Steps 1 and 2, and the Complainant continues to seek resolution, then he/she must file a written complaint to his/her Manager or to the Director of Human Resources.

A complaint must be filed within three (3) months of the alleged incident, or of the last incident if there is more than one incident. The Director of Human Resources may extend that time limit in exceptional circumstances.

If a Complainant requires assistance in filing a written complaint, they may request assistance from their Supervisor or Human Resources, who will ensure there is support for the filing of the written complaint.

Information required for a written complaint

- The specific incident(s) that have led to the filing of the complaint — if there is more than one, number them;
- The date the incident(s) occurred;
- The identity of the Respondent;
- What the Respondent(s) said or did that was in breach of this Policy;
- The names and department(s) of any potential witnesses;
- How the incident(s) affected the Complainant; and any impact the incident(s) had on the Complainant's work.
- Any attempts made to resolve the complaint under Steps 1 or 2; what those were, and who assisted.

### **The Investigation**

Once a written complaint is received, the Director of Human Resources or HR representative will undertake an investigation immediately.

The names of the parties and the circumstances related to the complaint will not be disclosed except where necessary to investigate the complaint, or to take appropriate disciplinary measures, or as the law requires.

The Director of Human Resources may reject a complaint on the grounds that it is made in bad faith, is frivolous, vexatious or malicious, or that it lies outside the jurisdiction of this Policy, or

is beyond the time limits for making a complaint. This decision must include the reasons for the decision and will be communicated to the Complainant in writing.

If a complaint of disrespectful behaviour is made against the Director of Human Resources, the Chief Administrative Officer will receive the complaint and handle all matters related to the investigation and resolution of the complaint.

If a complaint proceeds, the Director of Human Resources may appoint an external investigator to investigate the allegations made in the complaint. The Complainant and the Respondent will be notified that an investigation will proceed and given the name and contact information of the investigator. The Director of Human Resources or HR representative, will oversee the investigation process.

Respondents will be provided with the opportunity to explain themselves and to have those explanations fully considered by whoever is carrying out the investigation.

The investigator's mandate will include interviewing the Complainant, Respondent and witnesses where appropriate; making findings of fact; determining whether the facts constitute disrespectful behaviour in breach of this Policy; and issuing a summary report consistent with the mandate. The investigation will be thorough, objective, expeditious and fair for all parties involved.

In reaching a decision on whether this Policy has been breached, the investigator will use a standard of proof corresponding to the civil burden of proof on a balance of probabilities.

The investigator's report will be delivered to the Director of Human Resources. All documentation related to the investigation is the property of the City. The Complainant and the Respondent will be advised of the outcome of the investigation, but will not be provided with a copy of the report. Witnesses who participate in the investigation will be advised that the investigation has concluded.

In the event of legal proceedings (e.g. grievance and arbitration); documentation required for the judicial process will be made available by the Director of Human Resources to the requesting legal counsel, or union representative, representing the parties.

The Director of Human Resources will consider the findings contained in the report and determine what steps or remedy to take. These may include education, counseling, discipline, or some other action. The Director of Human Resources will communicate this decision in writing to the Complainant, the Respondent, and their representatives, if applicable.

The Complainant or Respondent may request a review of this decision by the Director of Human Resources; this request must be made in writing within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Director's decision.

This Policy is meant to foster a respectful workplace environment through fair and equitable process and does not contemplate any form of financial remedy.

**8. THE CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY**

- 8.1 Any person who breaches this Policy will be subject to remedial measures and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, cancellation of contract or denial of services.
- 8.2 Every person has the right to report, in good faith, incidents of disrespectful behaviour without fear of retaliation. The City prohibits any form of retaliatory action against any person who, in good faith, files a complaint. Retaliation by any person against anyone involved in an informal, internal or external formal complaint process will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment, cancellation of contract or denial of services.

**9. EMPLOYEE'S RIGHTS**

- 9.1 In the event an Employee makes a complaint under this Policy, the Employee retains the right to make a complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal or WorkSafeBC. If the Union has filed a grievance on behalf of the Employee, the Employee will not be entitled, later, to make a complaint under this Policy based on the same facts.

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>
<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>January 2012</b>
<b>Revised Date:</b>	<b>October 2013</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>JOAN BURGESS, Director of Human Resources</b>
<b>Document #:</b>	<b>179625</b>

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## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for public communication using electronic social media tools. This policy provides appropriate and reasonable guidelines, direction and awareness for social media usage at the City of New Westminster and sets forth the City's expectations and requirements concerning such participation.

This policy is intended to:

- Ensure effective online communication while adhering to legal requirements, particularly Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Legislation.
- Ensure that you understand your responsibilities to the City and your co-workers.
- Protect the privacy, confidentiality, interest and reputation of employees and the City.
- Ensure a respectful workplace free from harassment and discrimination.
- Establish a standard for professional and respectful online communication.
- Protect the City's confidential business information.

## **2. Definitions**

- a) Social media is defined as freely accessible online tools used to produce, post and interact using text, images, video and/or audio to communicate, share, collaborate or network with others. Social media includes, but is not limited to, personal



websites, blogs, wikis, online forums, message boards, email groups, social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc) and any other similar online tools.

The absence or lack of explicit reference to specific social media does not limit the extent of the application of this Policy.

- b) Personal information is defined as information about an identifiable individual, but does not include contact information. Personal information includes, among other things, an individual's name, email address or username if it includes the individual's name, a portion of their name, or is a pseudonym that is attributable to an identifiable individual by using other readily available information; home address or email; appearance and image; educational and employment history; and personal opinions.
- c) Contact information means information to enable an individual to contact an individual at a place of business, such as business name, business title, business address, business telephone number, business email, etc.

### **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to all persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster, elected officials and Boards, and to all aspects of the employment relationship (Regular Full-Time, Regular Part-Time, Temporary, Auxiliary, Seasonal, Volunteer, Contractor, etc).

This Policy applies to all social media using any type of Internet-enabled device, whether work issued or personal.

### **4. Related Policies and Procedure**

This policy is applied in conjunction with the following City Policies which include but are not limited to:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy
- Record Management Policy
- Email/Internet Policy

This policy is governed by the following legislation which includes but are not limited to:

- BC Human Rights Code
- BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation

## 5. **Social Media Usage**

### **Guidelines**

- All information placed on social media sites is considered public information similar to information published on City pages.
- All communications on behalf of the City should adhere to the highest professional standards of communication.
- Social media sites will not be the primary distribution method for City information.
- Information that the City posts on social media sites should be duplicates that can be retrieved on our Internet or traditional media sources and will not be considered a record of the City.
- The City will monitor its' social media sites and will remove any material that uses ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any objectionable or inflammatory conduct that are contrary to Canadian law.
- Consideration will be made to forwarding these types of postings to the City's Human Resources Department and/or the Police Service for possible investigation.
- The City will post a disclaimer on its' social media sites informing users that they are providing personal information to the site and the City and that the City does not have ownership or control of the information because this information resides with the social media service.
- The City will post a disclaimer if the social media site is hosted outside of Canada.

### **Social Media User Responsibilities**

- You are expected to use common sense, caution and good judgment when participating in social media and conduct ourselves in a way which reflects positively on the City.
- Social media usage, even when anonymous or conducted under a pseudonym, must be in compliance with the BC Human Rights Code, BC Criminal Code, BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation, copyright and patent laws as well as must be in accordance with the City's Code of Conduct Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy and Email/Internet Policy.
- When making work-related postings as a representative of the City, you must not post anonymously or use a pseudonym; you should use your work email address, identify yourself by name and your role at the City.

- When commenting online about work-related issues in a personal capacity, you should use a private email address, identify yourself by name, your role at the City and make every effort to make it clear that you are speaking for yourself, not as a representative of the City.
- You are personally responsible for the content of anything you send, receive, download or post on social media sites.
- You should be aware that communication made through social media is public, even if posted anonymously, or to a limited group of individuals, and can exist online in perpetuity or in individual computers even if the original posting is removed.
- You should ensure that any comment on City matters is appropriate to your position and does not conflict with your role at the City.
- You should not disclose any City information or content that you are not specifically authorized to disclose.
- You should not use the City's logo or trademarks when using social media unless specifically authorized.
- You should be aware that your connection to the City may be indirect or even implicit based upon the use of your name and your association with the City.
- Your participation in social media should in no way harm the City's reputation or the reputation of any persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster, elected officials and/or Boards.
- You will be held accountable for off-duty conduct on social media sites if it negatively impacts the City.

#### **Access to Social Media**

- Only designated persons should access and use social media during work hours as part of your job duties.
- You are permitted to access social media sites using your work computer for personal use only outside of work hours (e.g. prior to the start of your shift, after the end of your shift, on coffee and/or lunch breaks).

#### **Unacceptable Uses of Social Media**

- Social media activities should not interfere with work commitments and/or job performance.
- Persons who do not have social media job responsibilities are not permitted to access social media sites using their work computer for personal use during work hours.
- Work computers should not be used to view or transmit sexual and/or pornographic images, offensive or illegal material.
- Any behavior or conduct that would not be appropriate in the physical work environment is also not appropriate in the virtual online environment.

## **Duty of Fidelity**

- You must not breach your duty of fidelity (loyalty) to the City.
- The duty of fidelity states that you are under a duty to serve the City with good faith, loyalty and fidelity and not deliberately do something which may harm the City.
- You will have breached your duty of fidelity if you engage or even threaten to engage in conduct which is detrimental to the City's legitimate business interests or reputation, regardless whether the City is named directly or identifiable in any other manner.

## **Privacy**

- You should not share or disclose personal information such as comments, posts, photographs or video about co-workers without their express consent because this breaches the co-worker's privacy.
- The City may post images of you performing your work and/or participating in City events or functions as these images are City records.
- You should not post or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the City.
- You should not cite or reference employees, members of City Council, contractors, suppliers, partners or customers without their approval, even if such persons are not directly identified.

## **Respectful Communications**

- You have the right to a respectful and harassment free workplace. If you encounter harassment on a social media site from the general public or a City employee, you should report this to your supervisor immediately for appropriate action under the City's Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy and/or Criminal Law.
- The City's Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy prohibits unlawful harassment and discrimination and applies to all social media communications whether such communications are posted during work hours, personal time at work, or at home where you are identified as a City employee.
- Social media sites are not appropriate forums to engage in differences of opinion with respect to work-related issues, engage in criticism of management or co-workers (constructive or not), or address concerns regarding the performance or competence of employees.
- You are prohibited from posting threatening comments and from the harassment and bullying of co-workers, customers and others when using social media.
- You are prohibited from posting insubordinate, derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive comments in social media sites about the City and any persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster, elected officials and/or Boards, even if such persons are not directly identified.

- Comments that would otherwise be inappropriate because they are considered insubordinate, constitute harassment, result in a poisoned work place, or have potentially negative consequences for the City should not be posted on social media sites.
- You must respect your audience and should not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any objectionable or inflammatory conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace.

### **Confidential Business Information**

- You must not breach your duty of confidentiality to the City.
- Social media discussions, comments and posts, including textual or visual material (both during work time and personal time) should not disclose confidential business information belonging to the City and any persons associated with and employed by the City of New Westminster, elected officials and/or Boards.
- Confidential information includes any non-public financial or operational information, and anything else that is of value to the City that is not already public.
- You must not use City identifiers, such as logos or trademarks without the express consent of the City.

## **6. Monitoring**

- The City reserves the right to monitor Internet use and the use of social media to ensure Policy compliance.
- The City retains ownership of all computer systems and data.
- Social media usage on the City's network, computers or electronic devices is neither private nor confidential and may be monitored or recorded without any further notice by the City as per the City's Email/Internet Policy.
- The City reserves the right to investigate social media sites if any matter comes to its attention which it considers may constitute a potential breach of this Policy.
- The City reserves the right, at any time and without any further notice, to revoke, limit or alter your rights to access any Internet use, including the use of social media, on your work computer or electronic devices.

## **7. Consequences of Non-Compliance**

- Any breach or violation of this policy or the components contained herein, or any breach of law, will be treated as misconduct regardless if it occurred during work hours or otherwise and whether committed on City equipment or communication systems or otherwise.

- Any person suspected of breaching this Policy shall be required to cooperate with any investigation.
- Misconduct will be reviewed and investigated without any further notice and may result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal from employment, legal action, and/or seeking restitution.
- The City reserves the right to require the removal of certain posts or content which is deemed by the City to constitute a breach of this Policy or if it is necessary to ensure compliance with applicable laws.
- Failure to comply with any such request may result in further disciplinary action being taken.

#### **8. Responsibilities**

- Overall management of this Policy is the responsibility of the Director of Human Resources.
- This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Director of Human Resource and will be amended or updated to ensure that it is current and relevant.



## PERMISSION FORM

From time to time, the City is asked to forward to committee, board, commission, panel, or task force members, information regarding City business not necessarily related to your appointment. This could include invitations to workshops, forums, discussions, projects or other City and non-City events. In order to deliver this type of information to you we need permission to use your personal information as listed below.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print) as a member of the \_\_\_\_\_  
committee, board, commission, panel, or task force, agree that the City of New Westminster:

☐ **May use** my personal contact information to deliver to me information regarding, but not limited to; invitations, workshops, forums, discussions or other projects or functions not necessarily related to my appointment on the above-noted committee, board, commission, panel, or task force.

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **May not use** my personal contact information to deliver to me information regarding, but not limited to; invitations, workshops, forums, discussions or other projects or functions not necessarily related to my appointment on the above-noted committee, board, commission, panel, or task force.

This permission may be changed at any time by contacting your committee secretary. The consent given here will cease when you are no longer a member of the above-noted committee, board, commission, panel or task force.

Signature of Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## 2024 COMMITTEE APPOINTEE AFFIRMATION

**ADVISORY BODY NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ (the “COMMITTEE”)

I solemnly affirm that, as a Committee member and thereby a representative of the City, I will honestly and to the best of my knowledge and ability:

- participate in Committee meeting discussions with an open mind and respect for all other members of the Committee and the variety of perspectives one can expect from a group of community members brought together to provide Council with information and advice on matters within the Committee’s mandate;
- be mindful of not allowing personal, financial or outside interests to conflict with the best interests of the community and to declare when such conflicts may exist;
- maintain any confidential information provided to me in my position;
- not use the authority or influence of my position on behalf of any political party or candidate;
- refrain from or exercise restraint and caution in publicly expressing personal opinions on matters of political controversy;
- abide by the City’s:
  - Social Media Policy, and
  - Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy,both of which I have read.

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Print Name

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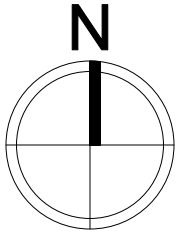
Signature

Affirmed before me this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, at New Westminster, BC.

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Committee Clerk





Sixth Street



Driveway in front of City Hall

Sidewalk to Meeting Room G

Royal Avenue

Parking lot

6th Street

**City Hall**



**Enter here**





# Committee Orientation

Accessibility Advisory Committee



NEW WESTMINSTER

# Introductions to AcAC

## Legislative Services:

- Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

## Chair/Interim Chair:

- Councillor Jaimie McEvoy
- Councillor Tasha Henderson

## Staff Liaisons:

- Karen Basran, Human Resources Business Partner (voting member)
- Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, Engineering
- Hailey Finnigan, Communications Coordinator, Office of the CAO
- Erica Mark, Recreation Services and Facilities Manager, Parks and Recreation
- Chris Koth, Manager of Programs and Community Development, Library
- Anur Mehdic, Social Planner, Climate Action Planning and Development

## Committee Members:

- |                  |                     |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Anne Belanger  | • Hazel Fitzpatrick | • Karla Olson       |
| • Asifa Lalji    | • Nancy Kato        | • Katie Marshall    |
| • Colleen Vogler | • Vic Leach         | • Julia Schoennagel |
| • Julie Drew     |                     |                     |



# Orientation Overview

What will be covered?



- Role of Advisory Committees
- Orientation Package Overview
- Attendance and Quorum
- Meeting Conduct
- City Policies and Freedom of Information
- Oaths of Office
- Election of Alternate Chair

# Orientation Package

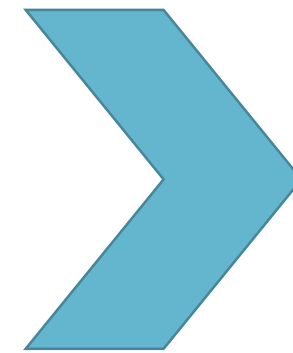
## Contents:

- Committee Terms of Reference
  - *Defines the purpose and structures of the committee*
- Committee Advisory Policy
  - *Guides the creation and management of advisory committees*
- Rules of Conduct
  - *Prescribes roles, responsibilities, and procedures*
- Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy
  - *Guides how we treat each other*
- Social Media Policy
  - *Provides a framework for communication on social media*
- Committee Meeting Schedule (also available on City website)
  - *Advises when our meetings take place*
- Freedom of Information (FOI) Permission Form
  - *Permits (or not) the City to contact you*



# What is the Role of an Advisory Committee?

Advisory Committees are  
created by Council  
to provide information  
and advice to Council  
on issues of interest  
to the public.



This assists Council in its  
decision-making process!

Advisory Committees are not autonomous.

This means Council must approve a Committee  
to discuss issues outside of their mandate.



# Attendance is Key

You are expected to attend regularly scheduled meetings.

To make sure we have quorum\*, let us know **whether or not** you will attend.

Without quorum, the Committee can't hold an official meeting or pass recommendations.

\* *Quorum is the majority of appointed members.*



If you can't attend meetings anymore, please discuss it with the Chair or staff liaison.

If you miss three consecutive meetings, Council may, without further notice, remove you from the committee.

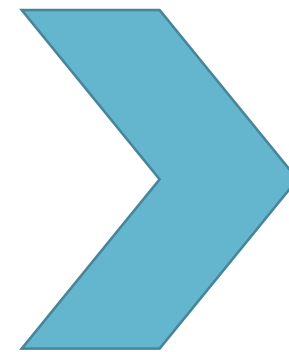
Please submit resignations via email to the staff liaison and [committees@newwestcity.ca](mailto:committees@newwestcity.ca)



# Working with Staff

Remember:

The commitment of staff resources and time is the responsibility of Council.



Requests to have staff conduct work outside their work plan must be brought to Council for approval.

Committee work is just one part of staff's work plan, and staff may work on multiple committees.

Please be respectful of staff time. 😊



# Meeting Documents

## Agendas

- Sent one week in advance of the meeting
- Read in advance so you can come prepared
- Additions at the beginning of the meeting

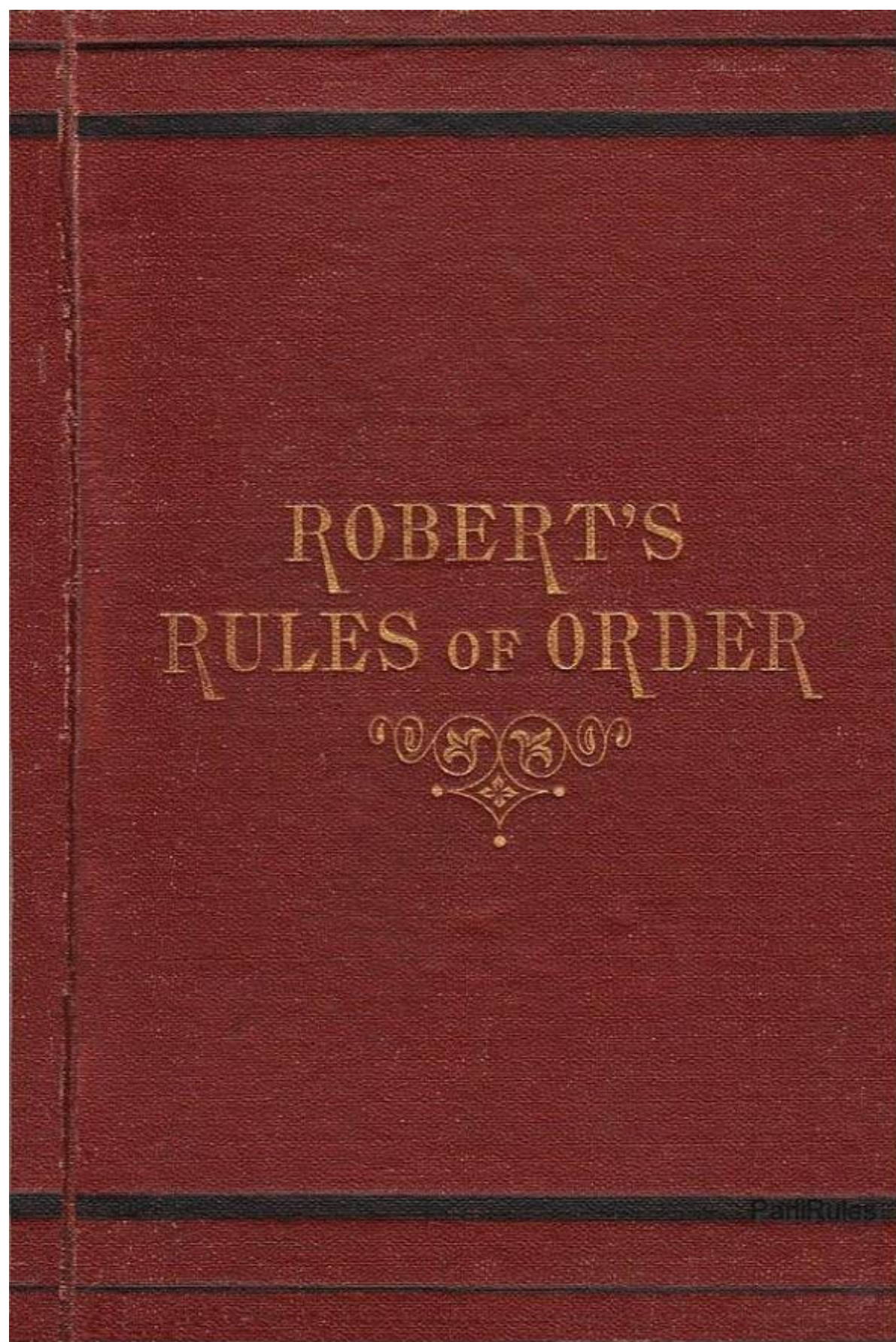


## Minutes

- Not verbatim, are meant to summarize the discussion
- Read and let us know if you see errors or omissions
- Posted to the website after they are adopted

\*Read aloud available on website

# Rules of Order and Meeting Conduct



You do not have to know all of Robert's Rules of Order to participate in the meeting.

In the next few slides, we will cover:

- Conflicts of Interest
- Motions
- Voting

If you *want* to learn more about Robert's Rules, there are many resources online and at the library!



# Conflicts of Interest

A Conflict of Interest must be declared if you believe you have a direct or indirect interest in an item, and you must leave the room.

## Examples of Conflicts of Interest:

- You live within 100 metres of a proposed development;
- A family member or member is involved;
- You would receive monetary benefit;
- You're involved in an organization under discussion.

When in doubt,  
discuss  
and declare!

# Discussion

During discussion of an agenda item, the Chair will maintain a speaker's list.

Raise your hand to have your name added to the list.

Committee discussion is meant to be inclusive, not a back-and-forth between members.



Please bring common courtesy to discussion: wait your turn to speak, use respectful language, etc.

# What is a Motion?

A motion is how a Committee makes a decision.

A Committee member must **MOVE** (or introduce) a motion for consideration.



A motion must be **SECONDED** to proceed with discussion of the motion.

A seconder does not need to agree with the motion that is being moved; they are simply agreeing to debate the motion.

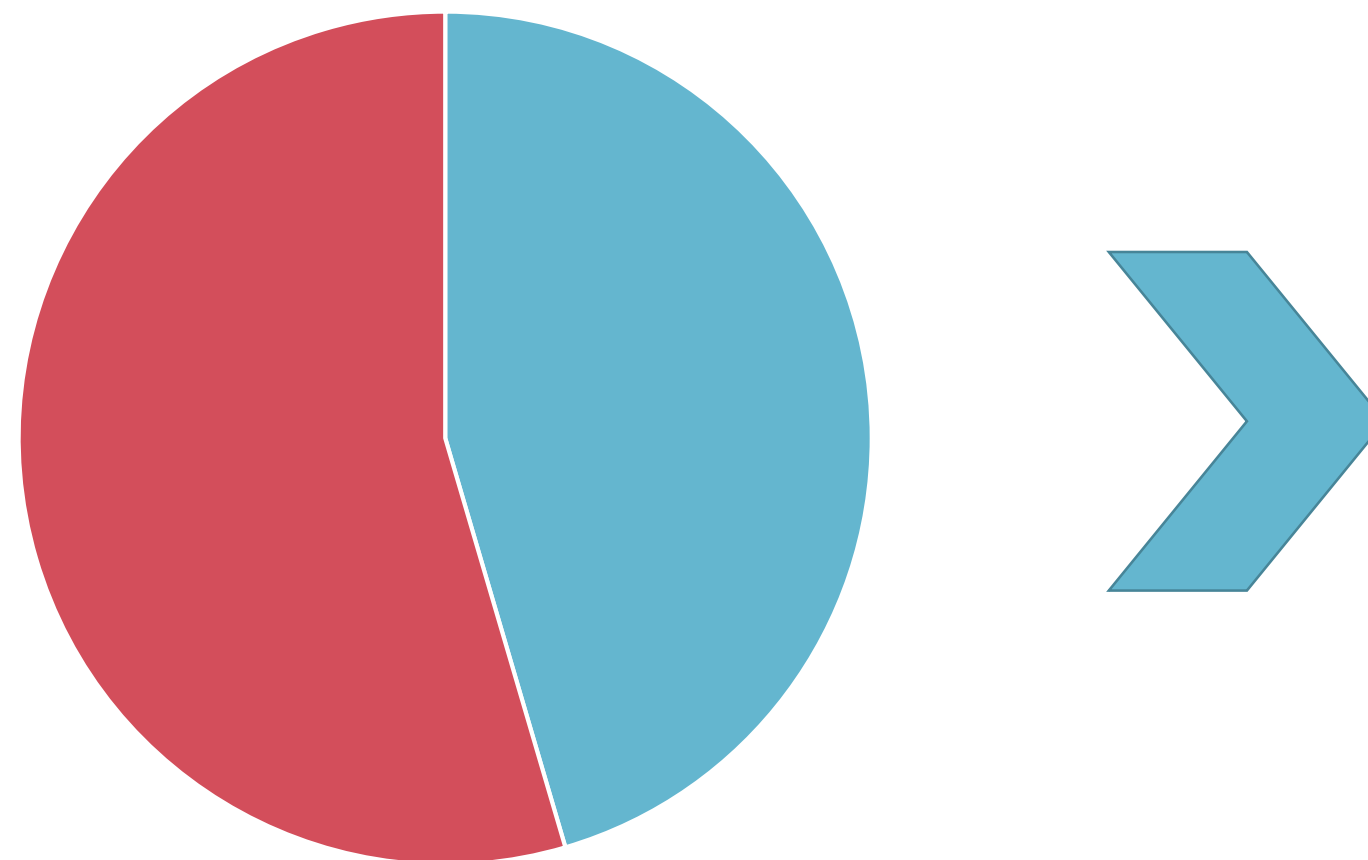
A seconder may still vote in opposition to the motion.



# Voting – in Favour

“Call the question”

The Chair will put the motion to a vote.



To be carried, a motion must have 50% +1 of voting Committee members.

Committee members cannot abstain during a vote.

If a member does not clearly indicate how they vote, the vote will be noted in favour of the motion.

# Voting – in Opposition

Those voting in opposition must clearly raise their hand, or verbally indicate they are voting in opposition.

A tie vote is considered a lost (defeated) vote.

Members who vote in opposition to a motion will have their names recorded in the minutes.





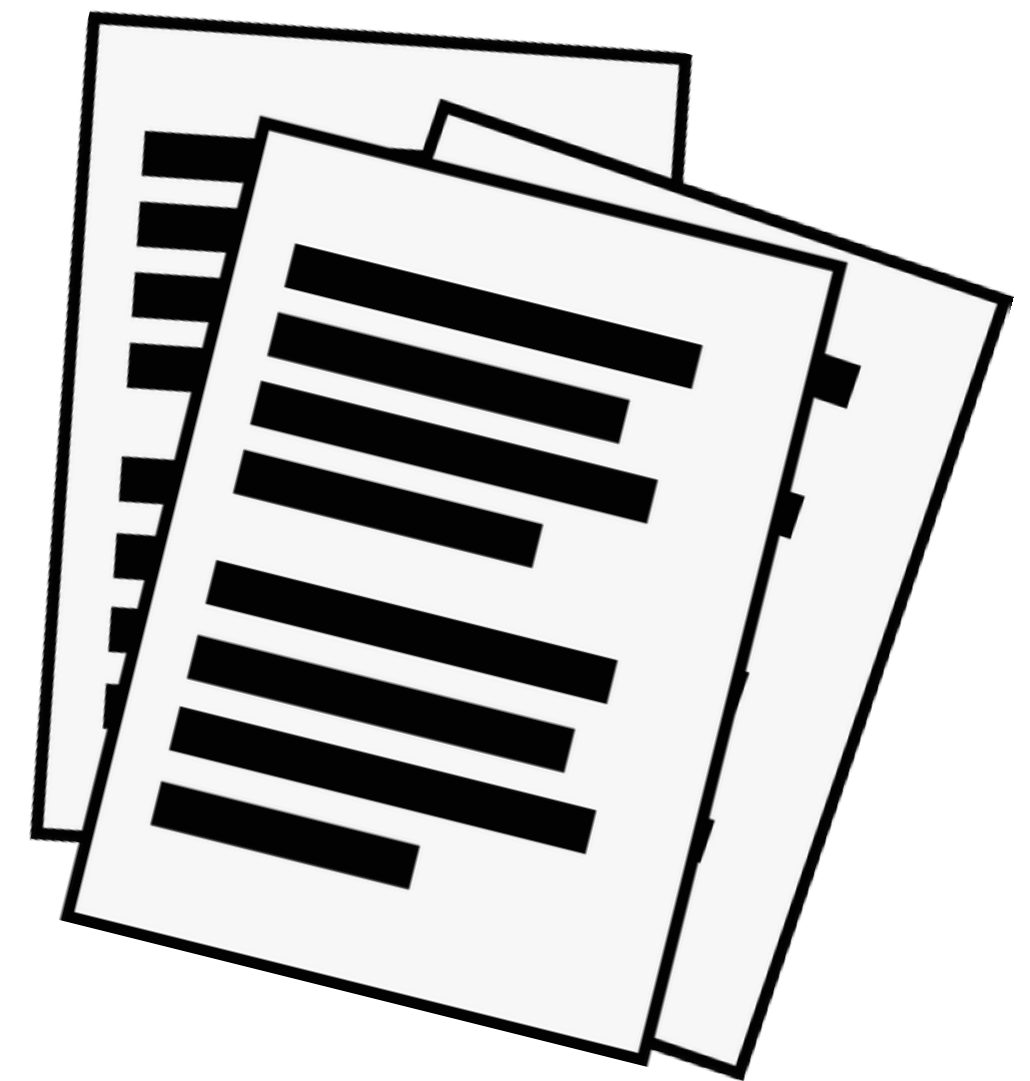
# How does Council receive the motion?

Any committee motion that is passed and requires action or an expenditure of funds must be submitted to Council through a Committee report.

Committee reports include staff comments on the Committee recommendation.

Staff may or may not support the Committee recommendation.

Council may or may not pass a Committee recommendation, or may pass an amended Committee recommendation.



# Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy

All persons associated with the City of New Westminster have a responsibility to ensure the City's working environment is free from disrespectful behaviour.

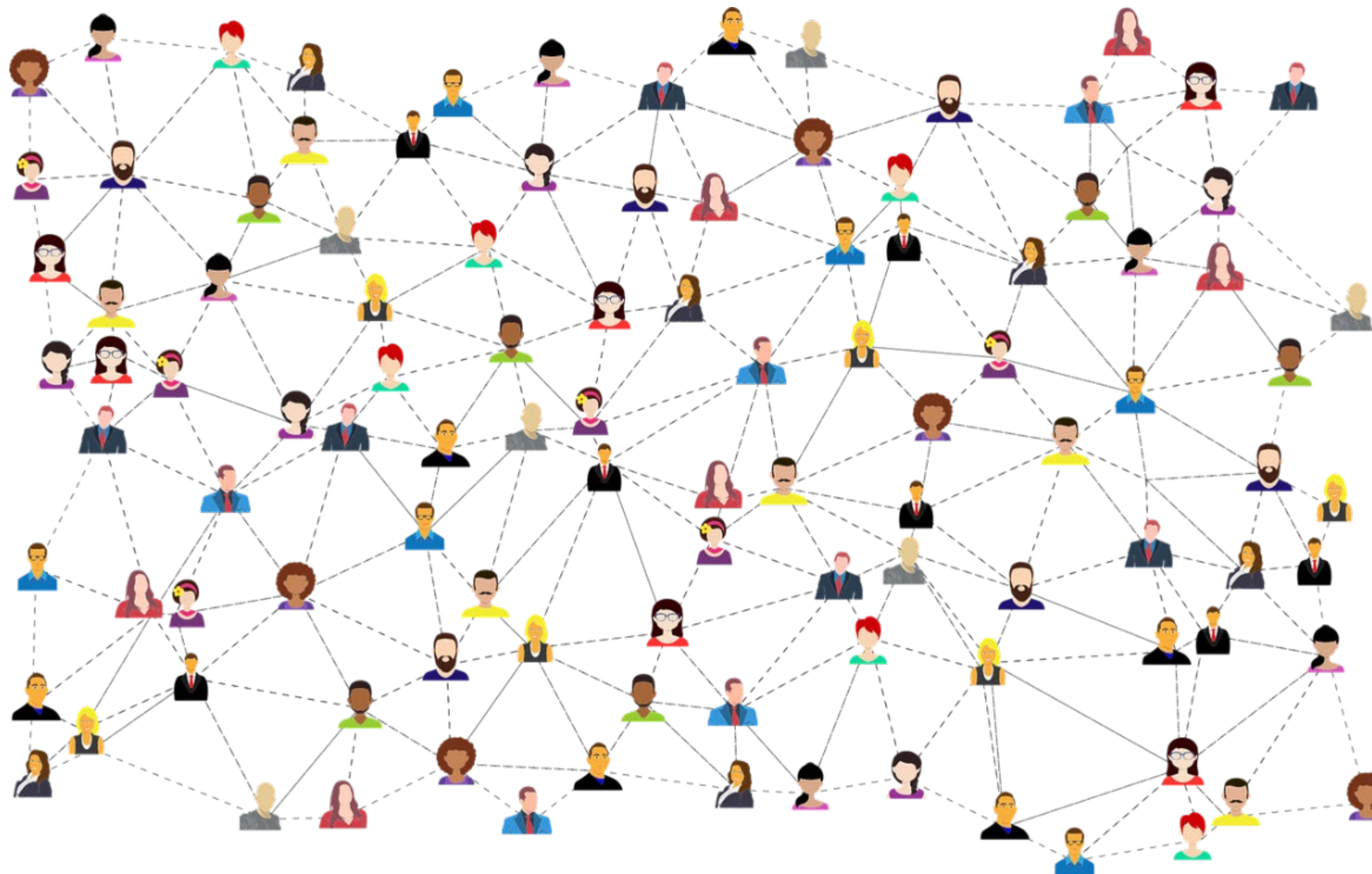
Disrespectful behaviour toward Council, staff, and other Committee members is not tolerated.



# Social Media Policy

As a member of this Committee, you represent the City and the Committee.

Be careful of your social media posts and activity, especially when referencing the City.



# FOI Permission Form

Your personal information is collected under the  
*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*

Staff cannot share Committee members' contact  
information with other Committee members.



It is not mandatory that Committee members indicate yes on the form.  
However, please tick a box and return the form!



# Affirmations of Office

**I solemnly affirm that, as a Committee member and thereby a representative of the City, I will honestly and to the best of my knowledge and ability:**

- participate in Committee meeting discussions with an open mind and respect for all other members of the Committee and the variety of perspectives one can expect from a group of community members brought together to provide Council with information and advice on matters within the Committee's mandate;**
- be mindful of not allowing personal, financial or outside interests to conflict with the best interests of the community and to declare when such conflicts may exist;**
- maintain any confidential information provided to me in my position;**
- not use the authority or influence of my position on behalf of any political party or candidate;**
- refrain from or exercise restraint and caution in publicly expressing personal opinions on matters of political controversy;**
- abide by the City's: Social Media Policy, and Respectful Workplace and Human Rights Policy, both of which I have read.**

# Alternate Chairs

Each Committee will elect an Alternate Chair at the first meeting of each term.

The Alternate Chair will serve as the Chair if the Chair is unable to attend a meeting.



# Additional Questions?

Questions and comments can be submitted to the Legislative Services Department.

Email: [committees@newwestcity.ca](mailto:committees@newwestcity.ca)

Phone: 604-527-4523



# City of New Westminster

## Accessibility Plan





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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Located along the Lower Fraser River, on the unceded homelands of the Halkomelem speaking people, New Westminster is a diverse city, rich with people from a wide range of lived and living experiences. It has long been a crossroads of people, pathways, and ideas, where innovation and culture are interwoven and celebrated, making this city a great place to live, work, and visit. This diversity is a strength, and the City of New Westminster is committed to fostering an equitable, inclusive and welcoming community that is accessible to all community members, regardless of their ability or disability.

The City values recognizing and celebrating differences, elevating the contributions made by all staff and community members in creating a welcoming and inclusive city for people of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities. By implementing this Accessibility Plan, we look to identify and remove attitudinal, systemic, physical, sensory, information, communication, and technology barriers. We recognize that individuals have diverse identities and lived realities that intersect and affect how they experience barriers and accessibility.

Regardless of identity, the City of New Westminster is committed to providing people of all abilities and life experiences the opportunities to participate in their community through work, play, and other daily activities.

### BACKGROUND

The City of New Westminster recognizes that increasing accessibility in our city means removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone. As a City, we are continually developing and enhancing a variety of plans, standards, programs and initiatives through community engagement, coordinated and collaborative research, and community-based assessments. One of our objectives is to ensure our practices, services, and communication are inclusive and accessible for everyone in our community, regardless of ability. In alignment with the Accessible BC Act (the Act), the City of New Westminster aims to create a culture change, working closely with the disability community to ensure that their perspectives are included in the work we do.

“Nothing about us, without us” is an integral component of accessibility and it is a priority for the City to ensure that the voices of people with lived experience with visible and invisible disabilities are not only heard but included. It is long recognized that the disability community

has faced historic challenges, systemic barriers and unconscious bias that has resulted in the barriers to meaningfully participating which many individuals still face today.

The Accessible B.C. Act, was passed into law in June of 2021 to set up a comprehensive legal framework aimed at identifying, eliminating, and preventing barriers that hinder the full and equitable participation of individuals with disabilities. This groundbreaking legislation marks a significant stride towards genuine accessibility throughout the province.

Under the Accessible B.C. Act, the government is mandated to create an accessibility plan that is regularly updated, at minimum once every three years. The plan's development involved close cooperation and consultation with various government agencies, the disability community and insights brought forward by the Provincial Accessibility Committee.<sup>1</sup>

The legislation requires that when developing or updating your plan, the following principles must be followed:

- Inclusion;
- Adaptability;
- Diversity;
- Collaboration;
- Self-determination; and
- Universal design

## The Purpose of New Westminster's Accessibility Plan

The purpose of creating Accessibility Plans is to:

- Identify, remove and prevent barriers experienced by people with disabilities and those who have additional access needs when interacting with the City;
- Ensure that New Westminster is a place where people of all abilities, backgrounds and ages are able to fully participate in and contribute to all aspects of community life in the manner of their choosing; and
- Foster a community that recognizes and values the contributions of people with disabilities and collaboratively works to promote accessibility across sectors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> AccessibleBC: B.C.'s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

## The Accessibility Advisory Committee

As part of the Accessible BC Act, the City established the Accessibility Advisory Committee, (“the Committee”) a Committee of council, chaired by Councilor Jamie MacEvoy with members representing a variety of internal departments, collaborating with the City of New Westminster’s police department, fire department, library and including members of our community.

The goal and mandate for the Committee is to provide input and direction to the City and Library Board on the development of a City of New Westminster organizational accessibility plan, focusing on three key areas:

- Identifying accessibility and inclusion barriers that City staff and community members experience or may experience in the course of interacting with the City: Employment; Delivery of Service; the Built Environment; Information and Communications; Transportation; and Procurement;
- Development of an organizational accessibility plan; and
- Development of a mechanism for public feedback on accessibility.

The Committee held its first meeting in March of 2023 and continues to meet on a regular basis as they will be reviewing current practices, standards, and services to assist with continuous learning and improvement through recommendations, new standards, and inclusivity measures to support people with a variety of disabilities (both visible and invisible) in order to enhance and develop equitable opportunities to access, participate and contribute to City life.

## Moving Forward

Part of the work going forward includes developing definitions and principles that reflect what accessibility means for the City and the greater community. This includes understanding and addressing seen and unseen barriers, conscious and unconscious biases, and systemic limitations, through conversations, research, audits, partnerships, and outreach.

Our work will include enhancing our physical environment as well as the various services and programs provided throughout the City to increase active opportunities to enhance inclusion, adaptability, diversity, collaboration, self-determination, and universal design.

The overall intent of this Plan is to explore and apply various accessibility tools, guidelines and standards, informed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee, to enhance our built environment, service delivery, information and communications, and employment in order to prioritize accessibility and inclusion for people of all abilities, ages, cultures, identifies and backgrounds.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the work and contributions of our staff liaisons and our community members for their contributions to the Committee and to improving accessibility across the City.

### Staff Liaisons:

- Councillor Jaimie McEvoy;
- Karen Basran, Human Resources Business Partner;
- Mike Anderson, Manager of Transportation, Engineering;
- Shelly Schnee, Program Coordinator, Seniors, Parks and Recreation;
- Hailey Finnigan, Communications Officer, Office of the CAO & New Westminster Police Department;
- Anur Mehdić, Social Planner, Climate Action, Planning and Development;
- Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, Legislative Services;
- Zaria Alibhai, Coordinator, Public Engagement and Communications;
- Hazel Fitzpatrick, New Westminster Police Department;
- Christopher Koth, Manager of Programs and Community Development, Library; and
- Erica Mark, Recreation Services and Facilities Manager, Parks and Recreation.

### Community Members:

- Anne Belanger;
- Taryn Bruckshaw;
- Iris Cheng;
- Shannon Dolton;
- Hazel Fitzpatrick;
- Nancy Kato;
- Vic Leach;
- Susan MacAndrew;
- Karla Olson;
- Wendy Parry; and
- Julia Schoennagel

This Accessibility Plan was created in partnership with the accessibility and universal design consultant team at Meaningful Access Consulting.



## KEY TERMS

The terms of accessibility and disability are complex and ever-changing as society grows and develops. Moving from a previous medical model of disability to the current social model, the B.C. Government, defines Accessibility as follows:

**“Accessibility means that all people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities.”<sup>3</sup>**

Below are some key terms and their definitions that will be found within this document. A full glossary can be found in the appendix.

**Barrier:** “Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with [a disability]. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.”<sup>4</sup>

**Built Environment:** The constructed aspects of physical surroundings, “including homes, communities, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas, roads and green spaces, [that vary] in size from large-scale urban areas to smaller rural developments.”<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of the Plan, the built environment applies to all public spaces. This includes buildings, sidewalks, road systems, parks, playgrounds, and other public infrastructure encountered by people in their everyday life.

**Disability:** A complex term that is based on a person’s physical body experiencing barriers created by the environment that prevent a person from fully participating in the community to the greatest extent possible. Many members of the disability community prefer the term disability, however this is not necessarily the case for everyone, and other terms may be preferable for some members of the community.

**Equity:** “Equity is the fair treatment and access to equal opportunity (justice) that allows the unlocking of one’s potential, leading to the further advancement of all peoples. The equity pursuit is about the identification and removal of barriers to ensure the full participation of all people and groups.”<sup>6</sup>

**Inclusion:** “Inclusion is a universal human right and its objective is to accept, welcome and embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. Inclusion

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<sup>3</sup> AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Accessible British Columbia Act. Government of British Columbia, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Healthy Built Environments. Government of British Columbia, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2021



consists of the efforts and practices to ensure groups or individuals with different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and treated equally.”<sup>7</sup>

**Universal Design:** “The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”<sup>8</sup>

**Wayfinding:** “Wayfinding has the function to inform people of the surroundings in the (unfamiliar) built environment, it is important to show information at strategic points to guide people into the right directions.”<sup>9</sup> This includes elements like signage, acoustics, illumination and surface finishes.

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7 What is Inclusion? Inclusion Ontario. 2022

8 Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. National Disability Authority, 2020.

9 Introduction to Wayfinding. Design Workplan. 2023

## OUR ACCESSIBILITY STORY AND PURPOSE

As one of western Canada's busiest ports, a major rail junction and one of British Columbia's largest industrial and marketing centres, the City of New Westminster is a principal hub for commerce, industry, government, education, health care, and goods and services within the Lower Mainland and the Metro Vancouver Regional District. The City is also noted for its flourishing community of arts and history, athletics, community service organizations and special events.

We recognize the importance of all our citizens participating in all aspects of community life. As a City who has committed to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility, we look forward to building on the work that we have already done, and to work collaboratively to continue making New Westminster a welcoming community to people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities.

### New Westminster's Accessibility Successes

#### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion anti-Racism Framework

In 2022, New Westminster adopted a Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Anti-Racism Framework (DEIAR) that seeks to provide the residents of New Westminster with the best possible municipal services that reflect the diverse strengths and needs of the community. That means recognizing and celebrating difference, valuing the contributions made by all current and future staff, identifying power differences linked to social inequities and acting every day to eliminate those inequities.



For the City of New Westminster, the DEIAR Framework is intended to be a starting point for culture shift that aims to work towards equity and a better world for all. The City will work towards becoming a community that supports and fosters a diversity of perspectives and provides equal opportunities for its residents. The aim is for the City to provide programs and services that meet the diverse needs of the community and equally committed to an inclusive workplace that welcomes, respects and values a diverse workforce that reflects the qualities and differences of the broader population it serves.

This Framework also supports the outcomes of the Accessible BC Act and the Accessibility Plan by understanding that diversity and inclusion speak also to the needs of individuals who have disabilities or diverse accessibility needs.

## Employment

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion anti-Racism Framework (DEIAR)

Through a collaboration with LevelUp Planning and Consulting, we conducted city-wide research through various consultation strategies to develop and implement a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIAR) Framework for the City, including the Police and Library Boards.

The framework includes next step recommendations, toolkits, and resources to ensure there are opportunities to review current practices, obtain different perspectives and incorporate equitable options to enhance inclusivity and diversity through learning and training.

### Recruitment and Hiring Practices

Through the development of the DEIAR framework, the Human Resources Department has been working in conjunction with hiring managers to review and update our current recruitment strategies to include a diversity statement, reviewing postings for inclusive language and adopting alternate strategies to enhance the recruitment process such as offering virtual interviews, providing interview questions in advance and providing feedback to candidates.

The Human Resources department has the ability to offer virtual and in-person interviews as well as has a separate, accessible, entrance to City Hall.

We work with various post-secondary institutions to explore co-op learning opportunities as well as establish long-term partnerships. We conduct outreach to form and deepen relationships with diverse organizations including local agencies, post-secondary institutions and return-to-work program providers.

### Taleo

The Human Resources Department for the City uses the software known as Taleo for its recruitment and onboarding of employees. This software, which is mobile-friendly (adding to its accessibility), allows for job seekers to be more organized, receiving alerts and being able to enable automatic uploading of resumes and forms being completed. Internally, it allows for a greater information sharing as to what roles candidates have applied for and where they may be well-suited.

### Community Action Network (CAN)

In 2019 the City of New Westminster partnered with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition on a unique project called the Community Action Network (CAN), through which people with lived and living experience share their perspectives to support with planning and policy development. This enduring partnership is intended to ensure:

- That planning and policy development processes are inclusive of all community members, including those with lived experiencing in poverty and homelessness;
- That barriers to meaningful engagement are identified and addressed;
- That people with lived and living experience are acknowledged as subject matter experts and compensated accordingly; and,
- That plans and policies are more responsive to the diversity of community needs.

In 2023, the City was awarded the Gold Award for Excellence in Planning Practice – City & Urban Areas from the Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC) for its Community Action Network.

### Recreation and Health

#### Access and Inclusion Program

New Westminster's Parks and Recreation Access and Inclusion program aims to enable as many people in our community to participate in our programs as possible. We do this by removing barriers to participation in our programs and facilities, offering financial assistance for those in need, and consistently providing low-cost activities.

The City is proud to work with community partners to match funding, staff or volunteers to help customers that need support to participate in our programs one on one, based on availability.

#### Healthier Communities Committee

The Healthier Community Partnership Committee is a health promotion initiative to encourage the community to *EAT WELL, BE ACTIVE, AND LIVE TOBACCO-FREE*. It is a three-way partnership between the City of New Westminster, Fraser Health, and School District No. 40 and looks at the preventable risk factors of chronic disease - specifically nutrition, physical activity, tobacco and the built environment (e.g. how neighbourhood design affects our health). The focus is on education, programming and policy recommendations to ensure lasting behaviour change and better health for all.

#### Access Tickets

The Access Tickets initiative provides bulk sales to pre-approved qualifying Social Service agencies that offer mental health residential or transitional services in New Westminster. We

have established partnerships with these agencies and they in turn dispense the Access Tickets that provide a 50% discount on admission fees to their clients.

#### Facility Accessibility Audits

In 2022, our recreation centres received accessibility audits for staff to better understand the current state of accessibility within our facilities as well as the areas of improvement that would make a positive impact for the disability community. We are continuing to improve accessibility in our facilities and building to higher accessibility standards in the future.



#### The təməsewtx<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre

The təməsewtx<sup>w</sup> Aquatic and Community Centre is a multi-year project that is scheduled to open in 2024. The City is working with Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification professionals to ensure it is built to a universal design best practice. The facility will feature accessible parking spaces, pools with a range of access types including beach and ramped entry, intermittent and dispersed seating, accessible showers and changing facilities, as well as a range of fitness equipment that is designed to accommodate users with a variety of abilities.

#### Information, Communications and Technology

To ensure equitable access to information, the City uses a variety of ways of communicating with the public including both digital and print formats as well as social media and traditional media opportunities. The City offers digital newsletters, a City Calendar of Events, web content, is active on social media (YouTube, Facebook, X and Instagram) and shares information regularly using digital billboards, reports, posters and advertising in local new publications.

We are working to integrate digital accessibility best practices and currently have closed captions enabled on our YouTube videos with some pertinent videos including hard or embedded captions. We strive to include photos that demonstrate diversity and inclusion as well as use plain language in our publications.

#### Be Heard New West

Be Heard New West is the City's online community engagement platform is an accessible public engagement tool. The website offers a number of ways for people to contribute feedback and meets WCAG standards.

### Committees of Council and Council Meetings

The Social Inclusion, Engagement and Reconciliation Advisory Committee, formed in 2021 was a Committee of Council, whose mandate included supporting and facilitating social equity and inclusion for under-recognized groups and vulnerable populations and implementing the City's Public Engagement Strategy and develop public engagement tools and practices that are accessible to and reflective of the entire community.

The City holds hybrid Council meetings and workshops which allow people options for attending committee meetings and engagement opportunities in ways that work well for them. With support from Councilor McEvoy, we are working to better understand how to increase accessibility of our various meeting rooms, particularly from an auditory disability perspective.

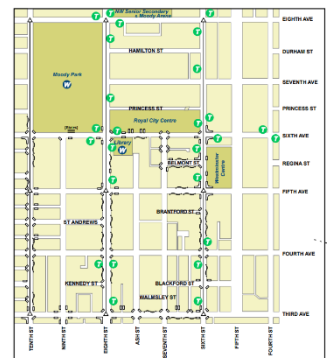
### Digital Technology Program

The City partners with the Purpose Society to donate devices that have completed their use cycle by City employees to elevate digital accessibility for those with financial barriers.

### Getting around the City

In March 2019, the City received a Built Environment and Active Transportation Grant of \$25,000 to implement the Wheelability Assessment Project to improve mobility and transportation options for people who use mobility aids. This project resulted in the [Wheelability Map of Uptown and Downtown New Westminster](#), showing the location, designation and configuration of curb ramps, presence of slopes, gradients of transportation corridors and the location of accessible transit stops and washrooms.

The City has installed curb letdowns, accessible pedestrian signals (APS), and improved pedestrian crossings across New Westminster to enhance safety and accessibility. There are also a variety of accessible design examples within our City, such as Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) along the Agnes Greenway, universally designed picnic tables at the Victoria Hill Play Space and Moody Park, improved accessible parking at Moody Park Arena, and improved pathways in Riverside Park.



### Signalized Intersections Policy

This policy outlines best practices for consistency in the design and installation of traffic signals and crosswalks that are focused on pedestrian convenience, comfort, and accessibility with a central emphasis on addressing accessibility barriers for people using streets networks.

### Improvements and Enhancements to Bylaws

The *Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw* was recently updated to outline how private developers can ensure that new public infrastructure is accessible. It includes details regarding construction materials, measurements and other factors that need to be considered. As well, the updated Zoning Bylaw includes provisions for off-street accessible parking in new developments.

### City of New Westminster Design Criteria

The criteria laid out in Bylaws 8128 and 8369 specify that these design criteria are considered to be a minimum standard and designers are encouraged to seek superior solutions as appropriate. These criteria reflect many of the best practices put out by the Canadian Standards Association for accessibility such as the design of curb cuts, widths and material-use for sidewalks and lighting levels when developing City infrastructure.

### Agnes Greenway Project

The Agnes Greenway Project is improving pedestrian and cyclist safety along Agnes Street and includes features such as a raised crosswalk and additional street furniture such as benches.

### New Westminster Police Department (NWPD)

The New Westminster Police Department has a new accessibility landing page that offers insights on how to get to the building and the building's accessibility features allowing for community members be aware of how the building may meet their needs if police services are required. Overall, the police have demonstrated a commitment to identifying access barriers through community input, and developing solutions. While constrained by resources, they are working to make gradual improvements through both small and large changes.

### Training

Recruits at the Justice Institute of British Columbia receive training on how to serve people with apparent and non-apparent disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, as well as mental health disabilities including Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Schizophrenia and Schizo-Affective Disorder. Officers also receiving training through the Deaf Wellbeing Program. Officers are trained to adapt and use creative problem solving as needed. The NWPD uses these trainings and other ongoing trainings to ensure that officers are confident and comfortable in providing community members with respectful and dignified interactions.



### E-COMM 9-1-1

E-COMM 9-1-1 provides support with some of the non-emergency call taking and offers translation services in over 200 languages.

### Mental Health

The New Westminster Police Department has had a Mental Health Unit since 2013. Working closely with community partners (mental health clinicians, probation officers, forensics, crown counsel and other service providers) strategies are developed to support and reduce a client's incidents of crisis. As a result, citizens of New Westminster receive the support they need, further reducing their reliance on emergency service providers such as police, ambulance and hospitals.

The New Westminster Police Department has a close working relationship with the Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT). PACT is an alternative or auxiliary response to police intervention, providing crisis support that focuses on prevention, health and well-being. Front line police officers and the Mental Health Unit speak to community members about PACT and their services on an ongoing basis.

### The Built Environment

The New Westminster Police Department building has a number of accessible features including a lift, lowered counters and some available seating with many plans to provide improvements to improve accessibility of the space. The NWPD is looking at ways to improve or replace the current lift, offer a greater range of seating and explore the ability to install power doors for the entrance and washrooms. The department is also looking at installing a second reports phone inside the accessible entrance which not only would increase accessibility overall, but another reports phone would allow more than one person to file a police report at a time with privacy and independence.





## Communications and Information Sharing

A newly developed accessibility webpage outlines what all visitors to the police department can expect when they make a visit. Information about accessibility is now being provided for large-scale police organized public events. On the NWPD's website people can read about accessibility as it relates to upcoming NWPD events such as Soccer School. Information provided on this website includes: Accessible washrooms, transit, entrances, viewing platforms, and places to seek refuge from the heat. The webpage includes a text-based description and photos, featuring ALT-text of the entry, parking and lobby for individuals. The NWPD uses Youtube's caption feature as well as offers hard coded captions on the short form videos.

The NWPD communicates the different options available to people including: 9-1-1, non-emergency line, online reporting, attending the police department in person, and email. Additionally, we share E-Comm's information about the text to 9-1-1 service which is offered in New Westminster (users must register to use this service).

The NWPD has developed a rack card that allows an officer to use symbols and pointing to communicate with someone who may not speak English as a first language or who may have a cognitive or hearing disability. The cards are available to officers and are now found in all police vehicles including patrol cars and motorcycles.



## Employment

The New Westminster Police Disability Management Policy provides a framework for supporting both sworn and civilian employees with health situations impacting their ability to attend work regularly and/or perform their regular job duties. The policy outlines the responsibilities of the NWPD in creating and maintain an inclusive and accessible workplace in which employees can make meaningful and productive work contributions as well as the accommodation process.

## New Westminster Public Library

The City Library provides access to collections, services and programs free of charge to residents of New Westminster through both our Main and Queensborough branches. The library operates a Home Library Service for those experiencing challenges using print materials, as well as other challenges that make it difficult to access the library in person. This service also includes free loan of audiobook devices equipped with text-to-speech technology, access to the Centre for Equitable Library Access's (CELA) extensive audiobook collection, as well as access to digital materials available from the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS).

In addition, the library's team of community librarians work directly outside the walls of the library to meet individuals 'where they are', identifying and addressing visible and invisible barriers to library services in support of the library's strategic goal of inclusive access for all.

## Programs

In order to begin addressing invisible accessibility needs, the library has recently begun adding materials such as 'sensory kits' for those living with neurodiversity. These kits contain noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, reusable writing pads, weighted blankets, adjustable bouncy seats, as well as fidget toys and stress balls. The library has also begun to provide a number of core information materials such as a 'Welcome Brochure' in a number of different languages other than English, as well as deploying a translation option for content available via the library website.

The library works closely with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind to best understand the low vision experience and to review ways for the library services to be more inclusive of persons who are blind or experience low vision.

## Accessible Computer Station

Equipment and software have been purchased to install an accessible computer station in the library with the intention of creating a workstation that can meet the needs of a variety of community members with disabilities including those who are blind or experience low vision as well as those using mobility devices. The station will feature a range of adaptive equipment including a height-adjustable computer table to be available in the summer of 2024.



## Technology and Communications

The library is also continuing to introduce hybrid programming options that will allow residents the choice to attend programs in person or virtually, depending upon their preference. Throughout 2024 the library website will start to introduce increased accessibility options to enhance the effectiveness of screen reading technology.

## Our Building

The library is reviewing ways to renew its interior spaces to be more welcoming and functional for a diverse range of emerging needs, incorporating key principles of Universal Design as a part of that process.

## Alignment with Current Strategies and Plans

### New Westminster's Official Community Plan (OCP)

New Westminster's Official Community Plan highlights accessibility directly in the transportation and accessibility section but also has goals that speak to the needs of individuals with disabilities directly. The Plan's first goal is to be an equitable, inclusive, safe place where all community members have opportunities to contribute, while feeling connected and accepted. It speaks to diverse housing choice, excellent programs and being a liveable city, all elements that speak to the needs of all residents, regardless of ability. It acknowledges that social and physical accessibility to civic amenities, infrastructure and services is key to achieving community and individual wellbeing.



*Walking routes need to be accessible for people with walkers and scooters.*

The OCP highlights that the public realm should be accessible to all with accessibility being a guiding principal of excellent urban design. It acknowledges that urban design extends to creating complete streets and neighborhoods that create a more livable community for people of all ages and abilities.

The OCP includes Development Permit Areas with guidelines to address how buildings combine with streets and public spaces to create unique, attractive places that fit and include accessibility. Additionally, it speaks to the partnership and collaboration with TransLink to provide accessible and complete public transportation networks.

### Council Strategic Priorities

The Accessibility Plan strategically aligns with the Council Strategic Priorities Plan (2023-2026), which includes five areas of focus, with Community Building and Connection being a central focal point. The other focus areas include Asset Management and Infrastructure, Homes and Housing Options, People-Centered Economy, and Safe Movement of People.

*A vibrant,  
compassionate,  
resilient city where  
everyone can thrive.*

The outcomes of the plan speaks directly to many of the needs of the disability community including:

- Belonging and Connectedness;

- Greater Awareness and Appreciation;
- New and Growing Connections;
- City Services Alignment and Support;
- Addressing Homelessness;
- Affordable Housing;
- High quality jobs;
- Strategic Infrastructure Investments;
- Culture Change; and
- Sustainable Service Delivery .



**Collectively, we strive to recognize, inspire, and empower all residents by developing and nurturing relationships with and across communities.** We recognize identities and values to support the development of welcoming, respectful, and inclusive processes, activities, and spaces and places. The social and cultural make-up of New Westminster has fundamentally changed and is more diverse now more than ever, and it is vital that we all foster a community in which everyone feels they belong.

### Master Transportation Plan (MTP) & Neighbourhoods Plans

The Master Transportation Plan & Neighbourhood Plans are overarching long-term plans for transportation in New Westminster that prioritize sustainable modes of transportation (walking/wheeling, cycling, transit) and call for improved sidewalk accessibility and integrating principles of Universal Design.

The MTP provides long-term direction that will guide transportation policies, priorities and investments within each element of the transportation network over the next 25 years. It relates directly to increasing accessibility by creating a walkable community that ensures walking is a safe, convenient and universally accessible way to get around the city and by providing attractive and convenient transit for trips within the city and region. “The focus of the City’s efforts to create a walkable city will be on making walking a safe, comfortable, accessible and pleasant mobility choice for people of all ages and abilities, be they residents or visitors.” The document highlights the need for curb cuts, accessible pedestrian signals, countdown timers and ensuring that sidewalks remain free and clear of barriers. Lighting is also a primary point of consideration.

The MTP will be updated within the next three years, with the opportunity to be more explicit about accessibility, particularly as it relates to transit.

Through the MTP, the City aims to have 100% of its public bus stops as accessible with the intention of creating a universally accessible transit system.

#### **New Westminster's Age and Ability Friendly Community Strategy**

The City was officially recognized as an Age-Friendly British Columbia (AFBC) community in 2018. Ahead of its successful application to become an AFBC community, the City developed an Age-Friendly Community Strategy. This strategy proactively addresses present and future needs associated with an aging population and supports a vision of the City as a welcoming, inclusive and accessible community in which older adults and seniors can continue to lead fulfilling, involved and meaningful lives.

With over half of New Westminster Seniors reporting a disability and many more experiencing even temporary disabilities or accessibility barriers, an Age Friendly Community Strategy also directly helps support the disability community as a whole, especially as the principles of the strategy reflect an accessible, inclusive, engaged and respectful community.

The strategy speaks directly to accessibility in the Built Environment and also includes a Transportation focus area, directly aligning with an Accessibility Plan: "Buildings, parks and open spaces, and transportation systems must be accessible, comfortable and safe to build trust and confidence in the built environment. Removing barriers that prevent connections between "home" and the larger "community" will increase the mobility and independence of seniors, while promoting health and well-being."

The City is planning to update its Age and Ability Friendly Community Strategy.

#### **New Westminster Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan**

A Dementia-Friendly Community Action Plan was developed in conjunction with the Alzheimer's Society in February of 2016, which included creating a framework through a project working group, survey, and literature review.

A Dementia-Friendly Community is one that aligns with universal design best practices and is highlighted throughout the document: "A dementia-friendly community is defined by both its physical and social characteristics. Physical characteristics include accessible public bathrooms, clear and legible signage, distinctive structures and landmarks for orientation and way-finding, and welcoming and inclusive civic facilities, open spaces and parks. Social characteristics include recognizing that people with dementia are more than their diagnosis and that dementia can

affect a person's cognition, behaviour, emotions and physical capabilities (Alzheimer Society of B.C., 2015)."

### Public Engagement Policy and Public Engagement Strategy

Public engagement is based on the principle that those impacted by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. The City of New Westminster understands that public engagement builds trust and connection with residents and community members and implements the principles of public engagement which include that of diversity and accessibility and inclusion, specifically, that public engagement includes accessibility for all community members, recognizes their right to participate and values the knowledge and experience they contribute.

- Venues, language and communications channels are assessed for their accessibility when planning public engagement initiatives;
- Planning for public engagement initiatives includes concrete steps to mitigate barriers to participation; and
- Participants are offered multiple channels and formats to engage for different abilities and learning styles.

### Community Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Community Poverty Reduction Strategy incorporates a five-year action plan and is based on extensive research and a comprehensive community consultation process, including with those with lived experiences. It focuses on families living in poverty and with low incomes but recognizes that families reside in communities. The strategy acknowledges the intersectionality with disability and highlighted the need for greater awareness of programs and services available as well as the financial barriers faced by the community to access quality recreation programming. It also highlights the importance of employment in the community.



## New Westminster Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy

New Westminster adopted the New Westminster Children's Charter, based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which includes a number of focus, including:

- Creating accessible, inclusive and safe neighbourhoods;
- Maintaining a healthy, natural and sustainable environment; and
- Facilitating involvement and participation regardless of ability, age, culture or income.

- **CONNECTIVITY:** Healthy streets connect places where people live, play, shop and work. Pedestrians, cyclists and wheelchair users should have more than one route to get to their destinations.
- **DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE AND ACTIVITIES:** Healthy streets have a diversity of people ranging from children to seniors. Healthy streets have people engaged in different activities, including sidewalk café dining, sitting on benches, strolling, visiting with friends, walking dogs and window shopping.
- **MOVEMENT CHOICES:** Healthy streets allow for a diversity and co-existence of movement. The streets support people who want to walk, cycle, use transit or drive to their destinations.

## THE ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

### Focus Areas

In alignment with the focus areas put forward by the BC Government, New Westminster's inaugural Accessibility Plan themes are crucial for ensuring that all community members can participate fully in city life, enjoy equal opportunities, and have access to the resources they need. The focus areas put forward by the Province include accessibility in the Built Environment, Employment, Information Technology and Communications, City Programs and Services, Transportation, and Procurement and Financial Services.

### Built Environment

Physical access in the built environment is important for everyone to create thriving, inclusive cities as it directly impacts the places where people live, work and play. The Built Environment includes City operated parks and open spaces, sidewalks and roads, and civic facilities, including libraries, recreation centres, arenas, trails and dog-parks.

Physical access looks at how people can walk or wheel through the City, interact with City facilities independently and safely and effectively navigate the environment to participate in the spaces and places the City offers for residents and visitors alike.

### Employment

As a major employer in the region, the City has an important role in promoting inclusive hiring practices and workplace accessibility. This creates opportunities for people with disabilities and diverse backgrounds to contribute their perspectives as valued members of the City's workforce. By ensuring hiring processes are welcoming and accommodations are available, the City can support each candidate and employee to fully participate and thrive throughout their employment journey. An accessible and inclusive workplace benefits the City through new insights and talents while reflecting the community it serves.

### Information, Technology & Communication

As technology advances, there are more opportunities and ways for individuals to obtain information and participate in community discussions. Ensuring accessible information formats and diversity in communication methods is imperative in improving the access to information for everyone.

When looking at access to Information, Technology and Community printed, digital, and in-person communication, closed captioning, interpreters, alternative methods of communication, accessible websites and PDFs should be considered.

### Programs and Services

The City wants to make sure all community members can participate fully in all the programs and services that New Westminster has to offer. By taking a proactive approach to identify and remove barriers, the City can make its wide range of programs, services, events, and facilities



more welcoming and inclusive over time. This means people with disabilities won't have to be excluded or needing to arrange last-minute accommodations.

Whether it's paying bills, using parks and recreation programs, attending special events, or accessing any City service, the goal is for accessibility to be built in from the start. The more accessible the City's offerings, the easier it is for all residents to take part in community life.

## Transportation

Transportation around the City is an integral part of community life. It is important that we look to meet the diverse needs of New Westminster residents, whether it's utilizing active transportation such as walking or wheeling, taking a bus, driving your own vehicle or taking a taxi or ride-hail vehicle.

The City is responsible for City sidewalks, street parking and city-owned parking lots, snow removal at these locations and civic facilities, taxicab and ride-hail licensing, and the partnership with TransLink for public transportation services.

## Procurement & Financial Services

Procurement is the act of finding and acquiring goods and services for the City to support its daily operations. The aim of accessible procurement is to not only ensure the City works with contractors that deliver products or services at the right time, right price and best cost, but also includes accessibility and universal design in the bidding and proposal process.<sup>10</sup>

Taking an accessibility-oriented approach to the policies, practices, and decision-making processes of an organization is essential to advancing accessibility in the City. By incorporating accessibility into the organizational structure, it promotes an inclusive, diverse, and fair workplace and corporate culture.

## Recommended Actions

### Interdepartmental

1. Establish a baseline for understanding City's current state and capacity for advancing accessibility.
2. Determine a reporting structure for accessibility in addition to the annual report to Council. There is an opportunity to ensure that projects and plans being brought forward include an accessibility lens before being brought to Council. Consider how the Accessibility Advisory Committee may play a role in offering recommendations and consultation so that the Plan outcomes are being integrated into the greater work being done by the City.
3. Develop a budget and financial plan to integrate accessibility across departments to remediate and prevent barriers to access City-wide.

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<sup>10</sup> Procurement. Business Development Bank of Canada.

4. Revise emergency management plans to include the perspectives of persons with disabilities including safe exit from civic facilities, activations of reception centres and ensuring that the ESS supplier list includes services that offer accessible accommodations.
5. Review opportunities for community outreach to better understand the City's current state of accessibility and the barriers that residents and community members face when interacting with City facilities, programs or services.
6. Review opportunities to use plain language in meeting minutes and public-facing documents.
7. Alignment across City departments is encouraged with ongoing sharing of the work being accomplished or piloted from an accessibility perspective.

#### Built Environment

8. Complete the developed plan to review the recommendations from the accessibility audits and implement the changes based on the action plan and budget to remediate and remove barriers to access in a prioritized way.
9. Complete an accessibility audit of remaining facilities including the libraries, police department and City Hall.
10. Upon receiving grants to upgrade City facilities, enact these upgrades and communicate outwards to the community the new features and accessibility improvements.
11. NWPD to continue working with City staff to explore options for installing power doors and necessary signage on the entrance and washrooms of the NWPD building.
12. Develop a strategy to include universally designed equipment in the replacement of fitness equipment, park infrastructure and playground equipment.
13. Consider leveraging the work being done by the Intermunicipal Committee and their work in developing Enhanced Accessibility Design Guidelines to promote meaningful access and design for transportation infrastructure. These guidelines can also be provided to developers to supplement the current Design Guidelines and increase accessibility across the City.
14. Explore opportunities to include an accessibility outreach package for developers which includes high level accessibility information that supports universal design and accessibility such as wayfinding and space use best practices.

#### Employment

15. Include accessibility and accommodation in the diversity statement. An example of an accommodation statement would be: "We are happy to provide reasonable accommodations throughout the recruitment process and while working at the City of New Westminster. If you require support applying online because you are a person with

a disability, please contact us by phone or email. We welcome the opportunity to discuss accommodations and ensure fairness in our hiring process.”<sup>11</sup>

16. Develop a training plan that includes inclusive hiring training for managers and integrated disability awareness training for all public-facing staff members. Integrate disability awareness training into the onboarding process for all new hires.
17. Create a consistent conversation with hiring managers for screening candidates who declared a disability and ensure those candidates are viewed and considered.
18. Foster ways to increase employee self-declarations for diversity and inclusion to both explain the importance of declaring and update employee representation.
19. Seeks ways to empower first responders with additional awareness training including, but not limited to autism, dementia and disability awareness training.
20. Consider ways to expand the current DEIAR Framework to also include accessibility and the intersectionality of disability as this framework has already been widely adopted within the City’s departments.
21. Work with disability service organizations (such as Neil Squire Society and the Canucks Autism Network) and City staff who have disabilities to develop and implement a workplace accommodation process during recruitment, onboarding, and retention of new and existing employees.
22. Consider developing a video that provides potential candidates information on the hiring and onboarding process.

### Information, Technology & Communication

23. Captions, Alt-text and Plain Language: Create a communications procedure or guideline to ensure that all new webpages or webpages being updated include captions on videos, alt-text and plain language as a matter of process. All newly uploaded videos should have at least closed captions enabled on YouTube as an interim step until hard coded captions is a matter of practice. Social media posts should also include ALT-text.
24. Public Engagement: Leverage the Seniors Engagement Toolkit and expand upon it to create an inclusive and accessible toolkit for engagement that highlights accessibility best practices in both digital engagement and in-person activities.
25. Refine public engagement procedures to ensure that the public engagement process is accessible and ensuring the inclusion of targeting outreach to include the disability community during the engagement process.
26. Explore the possibility of offering an honorarium or contribution of gratitude for providing lived expertise, for members of task forces and committees.

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<sup>11</sup> Adapted from the Vancouver Airport Authority’s accommodation statement, [accessibleemployers.ca](https://www.accessibleemployers.ca)

27. Develop a policy for the hiring of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for special events, announcements and important information dissemination from the City.
28. Develop a communications plan to highlight accessibility successes, current projects and achievements of the City to further elevate accessibility and the disability community as well as demonstrate the 'wins' to help build trust and transparency.
29. Implement consistent and inclusive language use: Simplify language, particularly on external facing documents and resources such as the website and add informational content on accessible features and programs. Ensure that features are descriptive and using disability-friendly terminology (See appendix), limited the use of overly medical jargon, restrictive or redundant.
30. Update the information provided about New Westminster's parks, community centres and pools to include tangible information as to what features are available for users. Providing descriptions on what features exist is much more inclusive than labelling something as "Accessible" or "Fully Accessible." For example: Moody Park Outdoor Pool features changerooms with benches and a variety of lockers heights, a wheel-in shower with a fold-down bench and grab bars and ramped entry into the pool with an available aquatic wheelchair.  
This information should be found on the accessibility webpage as well as the individual facility webpages.
31. Develop a photo bank of people with diverse disabilities and abilities from the community to be included in communications materials.
32. Develop a process for fielding questions or concerns related to accessibility. One suggestion may be to have a designated person or to create a living document that offers the breadth of accessible resources across the City, available for front-desk clerks and the City's call-centre.
33. The NWPD will communicate the differences between police officers and bylaw officers to the public to help the public better understand the differences and support the work being done by both departments.
34. Develop a communications plan to communicate to the community the current accessibility offerings and integrate this plan into ongoing event communications and when programs or facilities have been upgraded such as when sensory friendly kits are made available and what they include.

### Programs and Services

35. Create "accessibility kits": Offering additional supports for facilities and programs could be as simple as loanable kits that amplify accessibility for a user. For example, an inclusive fitness kit might include tools and equipment that can help someone modify a piece of equipment or exercise such as "active hands" and weightlifting hooks. An

inclusive art kit could include wide handled paint brushes, ergonomic scissors, or an extender for chalk. A sensory friendly kit would include noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys and sensory toys. (A sensory kit is also a great idea to include for lead fire engines and available at the police department.)

- a. Develop a communications plan to inform the public of the availability of these kits and instructions to staff on how to loan them out to the public when requested.
  - b. Integrate the already existing kits at the library into other programs offered such as the outdoor programming offered by librarians.
36. Consider the development of an adapted recreation plan that aligns with the current strategic plan but also provides insights on the adaptive and inclusive programs available to the public and creates an overall strategy for offering accommodations and communications on accessible and inclusive programming.
  - a. Review opportunities for more inclusive and accessible program offerings to better address the recreational and leisure needs of persons with disabilities.
  - b. Increase the number of and deepen partnerships with disability service organizations to better offer programs, coordinate volunteering opportunities and apply for grants that would expand services for people with disabilities across the City.
37. Review City events plans and develop a process to include accessibility best practices such as elevated viewing platforms, accessible toilets, maps, parking, rest areas that include seats, and ASL interpretation.
38. Ensure that other formats/alternative book formats are available for current collections including large print and audio books.
39. Review current library programs and plans with accessibility as a lens and review the opportunities for accessibility to be named and highlighted in the next iteration of the library strategic plan.
40. Review and investigate the current barriers to accessing community services including the recreation, leisure, cultural and library programs and develop a plan to progressively address the identified barriers.
41. The library will complete the installation of the accessible computer station and will develop a communications plan to inform the community and particularly those with disabilities of the availability of this new resource. Direct communications with organizations such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind is highly recommended.

## Transportation

42. Fulfill the City of New Westminster Transit Master Plan goals and implement all recommendations related to accessibility and universal design while consulting with the disability community around recommendations for prioritizing initiatives.
  - a. 1.2 Address barriers to walking cycling, transit and ride-sharing within the community.
  - b. 3.3 Serve transportation needs for persons of all abilities.
  - c. 4.3 Provide transportation system that connect the City's diverse neighbourhoods.
43. Review urban design features and pedestrian amenities that improve the attractiveness and comfort of pedestrian environments and include universally designed amenities such as benches with adjacent rest areas and universally designed drinking fountains and washrooms.
44. Complete the few remaining bus stops as part of the bus stop accessibility project so that as close to 100% of bus stops are as accessible as possible.
45. Continue to implement the signalized intersections policy and retrofit intersections with APS as requested by community members.
46. Review the approach to accessible parking stalls including the number of offered stalls, the design (width, access aisle and curb cut) as well as the timing and financial implications.
47. Consider increasing the time limit for drop offs from 15 minutes to 30 minutes for accessible stalls.
48. Investigate the opportunity to review the expressed financial barriers for residential parking permits and paid accessible parking stalls on City streets and properties.
49. Develop language and guidelines for the installation of Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) at intersections and crossings.

## Procurement & Financial Services

50. Review opportunities for including accessible housing in affordable housing developments and strategies.
51. Review the opportunity to include accessible and universal design language in the procurement process so that an accessibility lens is applied to the review of all proposals.

## Appendix 1: Resources

### Accessible British Columbia Act

- [Legislation](#)
- [Plain Language Summary](#)

### ASL Interpreters

- [Language Linx](#) ASL Interpreting

### Built Environment Canadian Best Practices

- [CSA B651:23 Accessible Design for the Built Environment](#)
- [City of Richmond Enhanced Accessibility Guidelines](#) is a document created internally by the City of Richmond to enhance accessibility in their facilities. Note, this guideline is currently being updated so isn't the most current version.

### Communications

- [Accessibility Features of Microsoft Teams](#) Making Teams meetings more accessible.
- [Inclusive Design for Social Media](#) offers best practices from the Hootsuite team.
- [Hemmingwapp](#) is a website that offers tools to help writers be aware of the language level of their writing and provides suggestions on how to simplify the language into plain English.
- [Learn Accessibility](#) A free course on web accessibility (a11y) best practices
- [Microsoft 365 Accessibility Features](#) Support for making Word, PowerPoint and Excel documents more accessible.
- [Playground Communication Boards](#) inclusive play with our playground communication boards, expertly designed by speech pathologists to bridge the communication gap for children of all abilities
- [Zoom](#) Making Zoom more accessible.

### Emergency Preparedness

- [Inclusive Emergency Planning](#) includes resources for individuals as well as communities
- [Clearing our Path \(CNIB\) Emergency Exits and Safety](#) provides information on emergency planning that includes the perspectives of people who are blind.
- [PreparedBC](#) Resources for People with Disabilities

### Grants

- [Disability Alliance of BC](#) DABC grants These grants are for community-based projects focusing on one of the prescribed service areas to increase accessibility for people with disabilities.

- [Enabling Accessibility Fund](#) provides funding for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities.
- [Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Training](#) Tuition grants for individuals to take the RHFAC training to be able to fully audit the built environment.
- [Sparc BC](#) has launched the Local Community Accessibility Grant Program. This program is designed to support persons with disabilities by funding the removal of barriers identified by local governments Accessibility Committees, feedback mechanisms or Accessibility Plans.

#### Inclusive Employment

- [Hire for Talent](#) provides resources to help employers tap into the talent pool of people with disabilities during their search for skilled workers. They offer a free employer toolkit with resources on the hiring process, providing accommodations, customized employment and more.
- [Managers Guide to Reasonable Accommodation](#): provides guidance to BC Public Service managers and supervisors for employee accommodations.
- [The Neil Squire Society](#) services are designed to assist individuals to stay in the workforce or re-enter the workforce with suitable workplace accommodations and technologies.
- [The Presidents Group](#) is a B.C. based network of 25 change-driven BC business leaders who are champions for more accessible, inclusive workplaces. They provide free inclusive hiring training courses as well as downloadable resources created by employers for employers.

#### Public Engagement

- [Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Guide for Public Engagement](#) provides guidance on ensuring the public engagement process is accessible for people of all abilities including how to embed the process of accessible public engagement into engagement strategies.

#### Training

- [Accessible Spaces 101](#) On completion of the course, participants will understand how people with disabilities interact with the built environment, to communicate in a respectful and inclusive manner, and to apply universal design principles to designing, operating, and delivering services in physical spaces.

#### Universal Design

- [Rick Hansen Foundation Tip Sheets](#)
- [Rick Hansen Foundation – A Guide to Creating Accessible Play Spaces](#)
- [Rick Hansen Foundation – Let’s Play Toolkit](#)



- [Rick Hasen Foundation – Let’s Play: Inclusive Playgrounds](#)

#### Wayfinding

- [Canadian Museum for Human Rights Inclusive and Accessible Design Guidelines](#)

## Appendix 2: Glossary

**Accessibility:** A barrier-free experience that offers the same opportunity for everyone to participate in their community

**Accessible Pedestrian Signage (APS):** “Provides auditory, visual and tactile information so that a person with vision and/or hearing loss will know when it’s safe (i.e., when the walk phase begins) to cross at a set of traffic signals. In addition, an APS may provide information to help a person with blindness travel in a straight line across a street or roadway.”<sup>12</sup> APS was previously referred to as audible pedestrian signals.

**Accommodations:** “An alteration of environment, program format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access<sup>13</sup>” or participate in a space, place, event or program in a way that meets their needs.

**Adaptability:** The quality of being able to adjust to new conditions.

**American Sign Language (ASL):** “A complete, natural language that has the same linguistic properties as spoken languages, with grammar that differs from English. ASL is expressed by movements of the hands and face”<sup>14</sup> and utilized by the Deaf community.

**Attitudinal Barriers:** “When people think and act based upon [assumptions and misconceptions that limit how a person with a disability can participate], such as making decisions about people with disabilities without including them or not believing that a person with a disability can contribute to the workforce.”<sup>15</sup>

**Barrier:** “Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with [a disability]. Barriers can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and affected by intersecting forms of discrimination.”<sup>16</sup>

**Bias:** “A way of thinking or operating based explicitly or implicitly on a stereotype or fixed image of a group of people.”<sup>17</sup> Individuals can be aware or unaware of their biases, the latter of which is referred to as having unconscious bias.

**Braille:** “A form of written language for [people with sight loss], in which characters are represented by patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips.”<sup>18</sup>

**Built Environment:** The constructed aspects of physical surroundings, “including homes, communities, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas, roads and green spaces, [that vary] in size

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12 Clearing Our Path. CNIB Foundation, 2019.

13 Add Reference Uni of Western Washington

14 American Sign Language. National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2021.

15 AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

16 Accessible British Columbia Act. Government of British Columbia, 2021.

17 Working Glossary – Addressing Racism. Government of British Columbia, 2023.

18 Braille – The Reading Fingers. Translate Plus, 2015.

from large-scale urban areas to smaller rural developments.”<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of the Plan, the built environment applies to all public spaces. This includes buildings, sidewalks, road systems, parks, playgrounds, and other public infrastructure encountered by people in their everyday life.

**Collaboration:** The act of two or more people, organizations or departments working together to create or achieve the same outcome.

**Cross-Disability:** An umbrella term that describes the inclusivity of all forms of disability.

**Diversity:** Ensuring that there is an honouring and respect for the variety of backgrounds, perspectives, cultures, and experiences that each of us bring.<sup>20</sup>

**Disability:** When the features of a person’s body and mind meet a barrier created by the design of the society in which they live, preventing their full and equal participation. Individual features can be permanent, temporary or episodic; visible or invisible; range in severity; and include physical, sensory, mental health-related, developmental, cognitive and multiple features.<sup>21</sup>

**Hard Captions:** Also known as open captions or embedded captions are seen by everyone who watches the video. These are permanent and cannot be turned off.

**Inclusion:** The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

**Information and Communication Barriers:** When communication methods are not accessible by people with disabilities, such as information that is communicated using complex language or jargon or materials that are only available in small print without large print options.<sup>22</sup>

**Multi-use pathways:** “Offstreet pathways that are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic and can be used by any nonmotorized user. This includes people walking, cycling, skateboarding, kick scootering, in-line skating, and using other active modes. Multi-use pathways may also be referred to as shared-use pathways, multi-use trails, and boulevard multi-use pathways.”<sup>23</sup>

**Neurodiversity:** An umbrella term “used to describe differences in the way people’s brains work. The idea is that there’s no ‘correct’ way for the brain to work. Instead, there is a wide range of ways that people perceive and respond to the world, and these differences are to be embraced and encouraged.”<sup>24</sup>

**Pedestrian:** A term that refers to travelling by their own locomotion outside of a vehicle including on foot or using a wheelchair.

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19 Healthy Built Environments. Government of BC, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> City of New Westminster DEIAR Framework, 2022

21 Federal Disability Reference Guide. Government of Canada, 2022.

22 AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

23 British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide. Government of British Columbia, 2019.

24 What is Neurodiversity? Child Mind Institute, 2023.

**Physical Barriers:** “When obstacles in an environment make access difficult, such as a washroom with an accessible stall but no automatic door opener”<sup>25</sup> or a meeting that is hosted in a space with no wheelchair access.

**Self-Determination:** The process by which a person controls their own life.

**Sensory Barriers:** “When sensory information such as lights, sounds, smells, etc. prevent participation in the environment, such as co-workers wearing perfume in the workplace or use of fluorescent lighting in the workplace.”<sup>26</sup>

**Stigma:** “The negative social attitude attached to a characteristic of an individual that may be regarded as [an attitudinal barrier]. A stigma implies social disapproval and can lead unfairly to discrimination against and exclusion of the individual.”<sup>27</sup>

**Systemic Barriers:** When policies or procedures are not inclusive, such as a process that only permits individuals to submit or access information through an online system without alternatives being provided or a driver’s licence being required for a job when another form of transportation could be used.<sup>28</sup>

**Tactile:** Tactile information, signals and wayfinding provide the means for individuals to access information through touch, either by input through their hands (e.g. raised print) or information received by tapping a white cane.

**Technological Barriers:** “When technology can’t be accessed by people with disabilities,”<sup>29</sup> such as self-service kiosks without accessibility features or touch screens without screen reader software or tactile keyboards.

**Universal Design:** “The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.”<sup>30</sup>

**Wayfinding:** “Refers to information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space.”<sup>31</sup> This includes elements like signage, acoustics, illumination and surface finishes.

**WCAG:** Web content accessibility guidelines.

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25 AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

26 AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

27 APA Dictionary of Psychology. American Psychological Association, 2023.

28 AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

29 AccessibleBC: B.C.’s Accessibility Plan 2022/23–2024/25. Government of British Columbia, 2022.

30 Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. National Disability Authority, 2020.

31 What is Wayfinding? The Society of Experiential Graphic Design, 2022.