

# New Westminster Community Advisory Assembly

## Assembly Meeting 8

October 26, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Queensborough Community Centre, Multipurpose Room 4  
920 Ewen Ave

### Objectives

- To discuss and propose an approach (or set of approaches) for how the City can recognize cultural observances in an equitable way

### Before the Session

We invite you to re-read the briefing note on the City of New Westminster’s practices for cultural observances and the demographic profile of New Westminster

### Agenda

*The following is a draft agenda for the meeting. Exact times may vary in response to the needs of the group. Additional breaks may also be added as needed.*

<b>8:45 am</b>	<b>Doors open</b> for Assembly members
<b>9:00-9:10</b>	<b>Opening</b> and overview of the day’s agenda
<b>9:10-9:45</b>	<b>Framing Our Discussion on Cultural Observances</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap of key themes from September discussion including what we heard from the group</li> <li>• Presentation of initial draft approach(es) to recognition based on what we heard from the group</li> </ul>
<b>9:45-11:15</b>	<b>Group Activity 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test the proposed approach(es) by considering implications for cultural observances that matter to residents of New West</li> <li>• Adjust models, or propose new models</li> </ul>
<b>11:15-11:30</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:30-12:30</b>	<b>Group Activity 2 (time permitting – may also move to the November session)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For each category of recognition, define decision-making criteria</li> <li>• Identify areas of convergence and disagreement, as well as emerging questions</li> </ul>



<b>12:30-1:00 pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assembly members are invited to stay for lunch and social conversation after the morning meeting</li></ul>
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**COMMUNITY ADVISORY ASSEMBLY  
MINUTES**

**Saturday, June 15, 2024, 2:00 p.m.  
təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centre**

**PRESENT:**

Aftab Erfan

Facilitator, Executive Director  
SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Nicole Armos

Facilitator, Manager, Knowledge and Practice  
SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Juno Avila-Clark

Assembly Member

Sergio Barbon

Assembly Member

Mandy Chan

Assembly Member

Diana Cruz

Assembly Member

Jadyn Gibson

Assembly Member

Heidi Hizsa

Assembly Member

Melody Kruppa

Assembly Member

Rahul Kumaar

Assembly Member

Anne Ladouceur

Assembly Member

Eri MacArthur

Assembly Member

Marlene Mydske

Assembly Member

Bob Petrusa

Assembly Member

Nyomi Ross

Assembly Member

Stuart Rushworth

Assembly Member

Erika Sanabria Medina

Assembly Member

Dave Seaweed

Assembly Member

Richard Schabler

Assembly Member

Rosemary Sojka

Assembly Member

Paul Toth

Assembly Member

Jordan Van Brakel

Assembly Member

Kumar Varma

Assembly Member

Taz Visram

Assembly Member

Margaret Wanyoike

Assembly Member

Declan Williams

Assembly Member

Erica Wong

Assembly Member

Keysa Yanez Leon

Assembly Member

Titus Yip

Assembly Member

**REGRETS:**

Iyad Al Khatib

Assembly Member

Rajdeep Dhaliwal

Assembly Member

Ella Durning	Assembly Member
Michele Kelly	Assembly Member
Leo Li	Assembly Member
Maria Nguyen	Assembly Member
Romy Senghera	Assembly Member

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Jennifer Miller	Manager, Public Engagement
Leya Behra	Deputy Director, Climate Action
Laura Sampliner	Manager, Climate Action
Sayano Izu	Public Engagement Coordinator

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**1. Opening and Overview of the Agenda**

Facilitator Aftab Erfan opened the meeting at 1:58 p.m. and acknowledged the amazing facility that the meeting was being held in, the t̄m̄es̄ew̄tx̄w Aquatic and Community Centre. Members discussed the pronunciation and meaning (Sea Otter House) of the Centre's name.

Aftab provided a brief reminder of the discussion that took place at the last meeting regarding road reallocation and reviewed the topics that the Assembly would be discussing at this meeting, including approving the road allocation summary which was circulated along with the meeting agenda package.

She advised that the majority of the time today would be spent on climate change and social identity, noting that this topic came about at the request of Assembly members.

Leya Behra, Deputy Director of Climate Action, and Laura Sampliner, Manager of Climate Action, introduced themselves and shared information on the work that they were doing as it relates to climate action.

Sayano Izu, Public Engagement Coordinator, introduced herself, noting that she would be attending all Assembly meetings from now on.

**2. FINALIZE ROAD REALLOCATION DISCUSSION**

Facilitator Nicole Armos recalled the conversation that occurred at the last Assembly meeting about the concerns and benefits of road reallocation, as well as recommendations or ideas for how City staff could introduce road reallocation projects to the public in a way that would address some of those concerns. She noted that no feedback was received from Assembly members regarding the summary document that was emailed to them. She then recapped the recommendations and advised that members would share their acceptance of them by a show of hands.

At this point in the meeting, a land acknowledgement was provided and it was recognized that it should have been done at the start of the meeting.

Nicole reviewed the draft recommendations that were previously circulated to Assembly members and there were no comments.

By a show of hands, Assembly members almost unanimously approved sending the summary document with the recommendations to City staff.

In response to an Assembly member's question regarding why the group does not meet over the summer, Jennifer Miller, Manager of Public Engagement, explained that City committees do not usually meet in July and August, and that public engagement is usually avoided during these months as people are usually on vacation during this time. She urged members to include feedback on this issue when the evaluation of the Assembly is done at the end of the year.

Some members shared that they did not want to meet over the summer while other expressed that they did wish to meet during that time.

Discussion ensued and Assembly members provided the following comments:

- A WhatsApp group has been created for members that wish to keep in touch (managed by members themselves; coordinated outside of the City's organization);
- The connection with each other would be lost a bit with a two-month break;
- A social gathering could be planned for over the summer that staff and facilitators do not have to attend;
- The City could assist in the coordination of a get together by emailing information to members; and
- A recommendation for next year would be to have contingencies in place for things such as how to ensure that we will have quorum for meetings.

### **3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND INTERSECTIONALITY - FACILITATED DISCUSSION**

Aftab advised that the Assembly would explore how climate change and climate action efforts impact different groups of people.

She advised that the discussion would be facilitated by use of the fishbowl method wherein there are fish in the water and the rest of us are not in the water but enjoying watching the fish (an inner circle of chairs for the primary participants, surrounded by a larger outer circle for those listening). The first

group will be children and youth under 20 years of age, the second round will be Indigenous and racialized people, the third group will be elders, and the fourth group will be those with experience of disability, neuro-divergence and mental health.

The questions posed to each group included:

1. How does this group experience the impacts of climate change?
2. How does this group experience the benefits of climate action?
3. What climate solutions are emerging from this group?

Aftab reassured members that they did not have to participate in the activity if they were not comfortable doing so.

Afab noted that the posters on the floor included climate considerations or indicators from the Equity Framework document, which was circulated before the meeting, to serve as reminders and that she and Nicole would make note on the posters of what was being shared.

The activity began and the following feedback was received regarding the climate change and climate action impacts that each group may experience.

**Group 1 / First Circle – youth, under age 20:**

- We are aware that we are the generation that is going to experience what is done now and we want to help out but do not know where to start;
- This is talked a lot about in school and that if we continue with our habits right now it is going to get bad. There is a lot of anxiety and people do not know how to help;
- It is very hard to imagine a future and what we will be able to do as adult and a lot of people in my community, my age feel hopeless. It is not something that other generations have experienced in the same way. There is a psychological aspect to it;
- We get reminded of this issue in a big way through the media and it is a permanent fixture of what you see online. It is not too much for me because I want to know the impact and what is currently happening; however, it is stressful for a lot of my classmates and friends;
- Online the opinions vary from those that do not believe in climate change to those that think the world is ending but you do not hear much about solutions;
- Those of us in the middle are going to have to deal with the effects of what we are doing and deciding on right now;

- We need to do something and take action but that is where the conversation stops;
- We are starting to see it in the weather with early and late summers and fires. We see there is an issue but society is not doing enough; and
- People reconsidering whether or not they want to have children due to climate change.

By show of hands, many Assembly members shared that they were also having the conversation about whether or not to have children.

- Having children is something that we need to address as a society. We need more kids;
- There is not enough objective information available for youth, such as studies, so that they can make decisions using their own critical thought processes. There is a lack of information. Worried kids may not be seeing all the information related to how / why adults make the decisions they do as they relate to climate change and action;
- Many schools are not providing students with information or education about the climate crisis. They are not asking us to talk about it as much as I would like;
- The group, Sustainabiliteens, planned the climate strikes in 2019 and the SD40 Climate Group got the School Board to declare a climate crisis;
- As an activist, I know that there is a lot of information about climate solutions and we are able to do them any time but we are not. It is interesting to hear that people do not have information about the solutions we do have to address this issue;
- You can find out information and resources if you are motivated to as you may not see it during the normal course of life;
- Some teachers are very active in teaching about climate change while others are not;
- There is a lot of information about climate change such as the Paris Agreement, what the federal and municipal governments have done; however, implementation of solutions is very expensive;
- Limited information will not allow the younger generation to come up with real solutions and those educating our youth need to have objective information. There is a psychological impact when you do not see all sides;
- Information is out there and quite hopeful when delve deeper as we can mitigate these impacts and make the world better in the process;
- Challenges include cooling stations located far away from where some people live and racism and language barriers encountered at the stations as well as smoke from the wildfires – especially for those with asthma;

- Many newcomers to not have the information about where cooling stations are located;
- Climate groups are coming up with a lot of solutions and each school has at least one activism club;
- Being in proximity to nature is very important and if you love and care about the land you are on, you want to help it;
- Providing more trees and having more shade is a positive action that the City has done;
- Inclusivity is everything – we need everyone to speak out;
- Thank you to the youth for the work they are doing;
- Access to public transit is very important was many youth are not pursuing getting their driver's licences;
- People who are worried about paying their bills may not have the mental or emotional space to care about climate change. People's capacity for change depends on the supports they have and having their needs met;
- It is hard to know who to trust as some companies pay to participate in programs, such as the dolphin-friendly tuna label, but no one is checking up on their fishing practices. It is a hoax;
- It may be worth having a place where segregated groups can come together to have conversations with our youth;
- Incentives for participation may get more people involved;
- We need to talk the causes, not just the solutions;
- There are different ways for groups to connect with each other;
- Housing security is a big worry for young people and it is hard to think about anything else;
- Youth are coming up with new ways to take care of each other with respect to the psychological impacts of climate change;
- Sustainabilityteens members talked about their anxiety and held potlucks and other events as ways to support each other. We need to keep coming up with new ways to support each other;
- People in the youth climate action spheres are the ones that care; however, a large percentage of youth either do not care or do not think it is a big issue; and
- Youth are fed up as well. It is too much information.

**Group 2 / Second Circle – racialized and Indigenous members:**

- Immigrants may hit a ceiling when it comes to salary and cannot afford a house nor an electric car;
- There is no place for me to charge an electric car if I had one, and when the



batteries expire they are worse than a gas car but the information is very limited;

- When recycling, people put the wrong things in the bins and do not seem to care;
- You should care about the environment regardless of whether or not you have kids or grandkids;
- Recycling can be inconvenient and the infrastructure in apartment buildings may require that extra steps be taken in order to recycle;
- Sometimes those coming from a third world country, where there was no recycling, bring that here;
- You have to seek out information about recycling and those that do not care about it, will not seek it out and just put things in the garbage bin;
- People keep quiet about things that are wrong out of fear of losing their homes;
- People seeking refuge in places not affected by drought has an impact on immigration and Canada has a reputation of anti-immigration and how we treat newcomers. There is a very strong anti-immigration sentiment the is being heard more and more;
- More places in the world are being affected to a greater extent – climate change is a global issue;
- It is not enough to recycle, we need to reduce what we have;
- In order to get the immigrant community involved, services need to be offered in languages other than English and French;
- The Council Chamber is not a space that feels welcoming;
- The priority for most immigrants is paying their rent, etc., and taking care of themselves first so they may not have the capacity to take care of others;
- As a Native person it comes down to land rights and freedoms, migration, cultural inclusion, socio-economic status, education. The answer to how climate change affects me is huge but when you sit quiet, people assume it doesn't affect you;
- Natives live off the land, fish, use the materials, berries, and plants in their natural state. The increase in and leaching of tanker traffic parking in Coal Harbor has poisoned the water and affected fishing and the growth. Things are not allowed to grow naturally so people are less able to follow their traditions;
- Some people do not do as much as they should to address the climate crises due to laziness;
- Sometimes it is hard to get the images and thoughts of the climate crises out my head as they are pretty scary;

- There are a lot of things in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action related to climate change, culture, the environment, and partnership and only one thing has been done in seven years;
- Consuming less animal products and consume more locally does the planet a favour;
- If you read or watch something that makes you feel discouraged, be sure to fact check it as it may be blown out of proportion. As well, people may be getting their information from unreliable sources;
- People do better when they have incentives to do so; therefore the City and the Province should put more funds to incentivizing things, such as grants for certain things that you may install in your home. The incentives need to be big so that people want to make changes;
- Make it easier for people to get to drop-off centres with their bottles and cans and receive their money back. This could be available in supermarkets or possibly in all buildings as a standard;
- Bike lanes are an incentive for people to ride their bikes more as they are safer;
- B.C. is doing better than most placed across the world;
- A movement called “Prepare and Connect” to help people prepare for climate disasters and connect with their neighbours has started and will soon be across B.C.;
- There seemed to be a hesitancy in the report to use words like decolonization and it would be a great to have a discussion around that topic. It would be great if the City would be able to incorporate that in the report; and
- The new logo for the City is a part of decolonization.

Aftab summarized some of the points made during the discussion, including:

- There is an intersection between being racialized and socio-economic class, and how much that limits climate action;
- Some may feel that if they are seen to raise the alarm about climate change, they would be in danger due to racism;
- Indigenous people are experiencing a cultural loss, not just access to materials;
- Racism is worsening for climate refugees coming into Canada; and
- For new immigrants there is a period where they are trying to figure out how to live here and it is easier to introduce climate-positive habits during that time.

### **Group 3 / Third Circle – elders:**

- Seniors here and elsewhere are dying from extreme heat as their bodies do not regulate temperature the same way as younger people, and the City needs to look at solutions to address this issue;
- The City could put a spray park in at Belmont for seniors, with shade trees nearby that would be watered by the spray from the park. Other mini parks could be built elsewhere around the City to help seniors cool off;
- New builds should be mandated to have air conditioning (A/C);
- Council passed a motion for staff to investigate how to require the provision of cooling rooms in apartments buildings without it leading to renovictions;
- Renters need to have permission from their landlord to install A/C in their apartment;
- Many people are experiencing negative impacts on their health as a result of climate change inhibiting the growth of healthy foods and the inability to afford the rising costs of food overall;
- The Community Living Society has developed their own policy wherein every dwelling will have A/C. New Westminster should look at implementing that kind of policy as well to fund residences the house those with special needs as many are immobile, have catheters, etc.;
- There is a program that provides free A/C units to people; however, people who live in single-room occupancy dwellings cannot apply for this program as they do not own their unit and are not allowed to install an A/C. The City should be able to override that;
- Medications that seniors and mental health patients must take may make them more sensitive to the heat;
- The City should explore having Royal City Centre open later so that people can enjoy the A/C. Security guards could be provided to ensure that the outside of businesses are secure of the businesses are protected;
- A map could be provided of where the misters are located around the city, such as the one by the bus stop near Century House;
- Cooling centres should be opened earlier, prior to the temperature becoming extreme;
- We started talking about climate issues in the 1970s and it is frustrating that we still do not get it right sometimes because if we do not have water and clean air, we are all in trouble;
- It will only benefit us if elders and youth help each other out;
- Many people are concerned with things that have an immediate impact them, such as the air quality from forest fires;

- A segment of the senior population agrees that there is climate change, but is in denial that we have contributed to it or that there is anything we can do about it;
- Workshops have been held at Century House and of the four issues that came forward as pillars, climate did not come up as a high enough priority to become one of the pillars;
- People have become disillusioned with the solutions and recycling became challenging when the recycling station was moved out of New Westminster;
- The New Westminster Environmental Partners are involved in invasive species removal in the Glenbrook Ravine with the majority of participants being seniors. Intergenerational connection is a big topic among elders right now and youth interfacing with this and other seniors groups would be beneficial;
- There was a time when we did not use plastic containers for things, so maybe there are solutions to be had from the past;
- More grocery stores are offering the bulk purchase of items which do not have packaging;
- Early co-ops saw people growing and packaging their own food without the use of plastic bags, instead using other containers and brown paper bags;
- Years ago even people in Vancouver had their own food gardens instead of a beautified lawn.

In response to the discussion regarding cooling rooms in apartment buildings, staff advised that this spring the BC Building Code was changed to require one cool room in apartment buildings that did not have air conditioning.

**Group 4 / Fourth Circle – mobility, disability, physical disability, neuro-divergence, mental health:**

- People taking medications will be affected by things differently and those that are neuro-divergent may connect specifically with something, such as birds. You connect more with subjects you learn about and will care about how the climate is affecting them;
- Reducing the stigma around mental health is very important and, while the climate change may be the last thing on the minds of those with mental health challenges, extremeness in the weather may exacerbate their symptoms;
- It is important to check on people, even if they appear to be doing okay and if someone does not look like they are okay, do not be afraid to start a conversation with a simple “hi”;

- The Fire Department shared a presentation at a recent Council meeting about a new outreach program that Residents' Associations have an opportunity to get involved in and where outreach workers can be contacted to assist people unhoused people in finding a place to stay and get something to eat;
- Some people may be are intimidated by outreach workers or be comfortable coming inside and they may find a regular citizen less intimidating and be more receptive to receiving help;
- Many solutions come from the autistic community because they care so deeply; however, autistic and neuro-divergent people face many barriers to feel safe and accommodated in order to come up with those solutions;
- Those with autism experience peaks of brilliance but also intense disability and may have a great idea but not have the life skills to take care of themselves. Social supports and being understood, believed, and supported need to be in place in order for them to be able to offer something. Many marginalized people may feel this way;
- A program should be set up where those that reside in multi-family dwellings can drop off their refundable containers that can be picked up by volunteers and the money used to help others. This would give people a purpose provide a more respectful and safe way for people to earn some money other than going through dumpsters;
- There are no province-wide supports for autistic adults to learn how to cope and take care of themselves unless you are able to pay for them and if you get diagnosed after age 19 you are on your own;
- The autistic community can share and motivate other people to do positive things for the climate;
- Neuro-divergent people tend not to drive and the ability to engage in New West is largely dictated by access to get around. Some may find public transit too challenging to use due to sensory overload and the cycling infrastructure has considered those with other needs but do not accommodate neuro-diversity in the universal design theory such as wayfinding with visual clues;
- People experiencing physical and developmental disabilities are more susceptible to heat, so if there is a heat wave they will experience physical and sensory effects.

Aftab summarized some of the points made during the discussion, including:

- Vulnerable people can be very impacted by these intersectional issues. If you cannot properly shelter yourself or get proper food you are vulnerable and the stigma on top of that makes things even more difficult; and

- We need to be careful talking about people who are not here. There is nothing wrong with going through garbage unless we put that lens on it.

**Other identities / final thoughts:**

- The queer community also needs to be considered as climate action does not need to look a certain way and they are good at shaking things up and making them fun. For climate action to be sustainable, it should be fun and regenerative;
- Additional spray and cooling stations will also help people keep their pets cool as they also struggle with the heat;
- Volunteerism is dying and needs to be made fun and cool so that it is embraced by more people as it builds community. It tends to be the same people volunteering all the time and they get burned out;
- It should be highlighted that tenants are impacted by things they have less control over their home;
- Trans people who are on hormones will also be more affected by the heat and supply chain issues caused by disasters will affect anyone on medication;
- Mobile cooling stations could be provided.

By show of hands, many Assembly members agreed that bringing the human element of the climate issue into the conversation made it more interesting.

- We need to consider the impacts that the solutions may have for example, while A/C is a solution, it will cause another problem, and driving to the recycling station seems counterproductive. We need to track initiatives;
- Hybrid cars are heavily promoted but there are not enough charging stations to support them;
- People are inclined to return recyclable items when they can get refunded for it but we should also offer other incentives for conserving and using less such as implement a pay-for-use water (or other use) program;

Leya noted that during her time with the City this is the first time that she has had the opportunity to have this type of discussion with this many people and that she focused on listening to members' feedback. She shared that today's conversation has added much more to the equity considerations that staff have been marking down.

Leya advised that she will look at what staff are working on right now and what else can be added based on the feedback received today, noting that it will involve many city departments. She expressed interest in joining the Assembly

again to review where the feedback connects with work that is being done and what will be done in the future in relation to the City's climate plans and strategies.

4. **END OF MEETING**

Aftab closed the meeting and noted that staff will help share information about a social get-together for the group over the summer.

5. **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

September 19, 2024

October 19, 2024

November 19, 2024

December 11, 2024

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Aftab Erfan, Facilitator

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Carilyn Cook, Legislative Services  
Assistant / Committee Clerk

## Cultural Observances: Background Information for Community Advisory Assembly, September 2024

### What are cultural observances?

A cultural observance is a practice or event that is based on the traditions, beliefs, and customs of a particular community. These observances often mark major occasions like religious festivals, historical events, days of remembrance, or seasonal changes, etc. They serve to respect a group's legacy, bring communities together, and act as way to respect cultural identity and build a sense of community connection and belonging.

Specific dates and times of the year may hold various significance for New Westminister residents. Recognizing these occasions is one way we can honour and value the different perspectives, cultures, and experiences that exist in our community.

### What are the City of New Westminister's current practices when it comes to cultural observances?

The City of New Westminister does not have an official list of holidays and observances that it recognizes, and there are no official policies in place to guide decision-making around which observances to mark and at what level. The one exception is some written guidelines on practices for lowering flags to half-mast and flying guest flags at Friendship Park next to City Hall.

Currently, the City's practice of acknowledging holidays and observances is largely driven by past practices, and requests from community organizations and individuals.

The City's current practices include a range of activities that recognize a wide variety of holidays, days of significance, cultural celebrations, and other observances. A summary and examples are included below. **Note:** this is not intended as a list of observances that are acknowledged by the City, and many others that are not mentioned below are also observed.

Recognition Activity	Description	Examples
Proclamation	A statement is read out by the Mayor during a City Council meeting, declaring a holiday, remembrance or other observance. Proclamations are done by request to the Mayor's office from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethiopian New Year</li><li>• Child and Youth in Care Week</li><li>• World Polio Day</li></ul>



	community organizations, individuals, or City staff. The Mayor reviews the request for approval. The requester is responsible for providing the wording of the proclamation. There are no ongoing proclamations – they must be requested each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia</li> </ul>
Lighting of City Hall	An observance is marked by coloured lights illuminating the outside of City Hall at night. A specific colour or colours are requested that connect with the observance. Lighting of City Hall is done by request to the Mayor’s office from community organizations or individuals. The Mayor reviews the request for approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Transgender Day of Visibility</li> <li>• World Tuberculosis (TB) Day</li> <li>• Big Brother &amp; Big Sister Day</li> <li>• Red Dress Day: National Day for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls</li> </ul>
Guest flag raising	The flag of another nation or group can be temporarily raised on the flagpole in Friendship Park, which is located to the east of City Hall. This is done by request through the Mayor’s office. Flag raising events are also sometimes held; again these are considered by request through the Mayor’s office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filipino Heritage Month And Philippine Independence Day</li> <li>• Bulgarian Independence Day</li> <li>• Pride</li> </ul>
City Hall flags at half-mast	Flags at City facilities can be lowered to half-mast as a sign of respect and mourning. The City follows direction from the Province on when flags should be lowered. In addition, the City has some written guidelines for other occurrences when flags should be lowered to half-mast (for example, upon the death of a current New West mayor or councillor).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism</li> <li>• Death of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney</li> </ul>

Parks and Recreation and/or Cultural Services programming	The City develops and delivers registered workshops, classes or other activities that relate to a holiday, cultural observance, or museum exhibition opening. These can include crafts for children, food-related activities, and other cultural activities. Some of these programs are offered for free, with registration required and limited capacity, and some are offered for a fee. Some programs are also offered in collaboration with local cultural and community organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunar New Year</li> <li>• Diwali</li> <li>• Black History Month</li> <li>• Easter</li> </ul>
Community-led event with City support	The City provides some level of support for a public observance event that is organized and led by a community organization or group. Different types of City support can be provided, such as event supplies (tents, etc.), staff and volunteer support, grant funding, street closures, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Day for Truth and Reconciliation</li> <li>• Red Dress Day</li> <li>• Nagar Kirtan</li> <li>• Filipino Lights and Lantern Festival</li> <li>• May Day</li> </ul>
City-led event	A large-scale public event is organized by the City, widely publicized, and is free to attend with no registration required. This can sometimes be a festival-style event with a variety of activities and performances, or a ceremony. This is the most resource-intensive recognition activity, with multiple staff contributing significant time to plan and implement, as well as volunteer support and significant costs for materials, performers, etc. Typically, registered programs are also offered by the City for these occasions, in addition to the large-scale event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remembrance Day</li> <li>• Canada Day</li> <li>• National Indigenous Peoples Day (co-led by Qayqayt First Nation, Spirit of the Children Society, and the City)</li> </ul>
Unveilings and Openings	On occasion, the city of New Westminster unveils city artworks, heritage features or new facilities. When the subject matter of these features support the commemoration of a past event, cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Komagata Maru Perimeter Trail and commemorative plaque</li> </ul>

	<p>group, or remarkable individual, the unveiling event usually includes a cultural presentation or public recognition of their impact. These occasions become a time of learning and sharing with the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• t̄m̄əsew̄tx̄w Aquatic and Community Center opening</li> <li>• Eva Markvoort plaque unveiling in Rose Garden</li> <li>• Salmon Run mural unveiling on the back of the Purpose Society building</li> </ul>
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A couple of other details to note:

- Programs and events that mark cultural observances are often promoted on the City’s social media channels, which means the cultural observance is also recognized on social media in advertising the activities. However, the City does not typically acknowledge any cultural observances on social media if there is no City-led event or program connected to it.
- Some observances may be acknowledged with more than one or several of the above activities. For example, Pride Week in New Westminster is often marked with a proclamation, guest flag raising, Parks and Recreation programming, and community-led events that are supported by the City.

# New Westminster population (2021 Census)

New Westminster's population according to the 2021 Census is 78,916. Below are breakdowns of the city's population that are important considerations to continue with the conversation of Cultural Observances.

Table of contents (click on the topics to jump to the sections)

- [Indigenous population](#)
- [Ethnic or cultural origin](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [Age](#)
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## *Indigenous population*

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*Please note that some of the terms may seem outdated as Statistics Canada uses language based on [the Indian Act](#).*

The category of **Indigenous identity** includes persons who identify as First Nations, Métis and/or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who report being Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who report having membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

The category of **single Indigenous responses** includes persons who identify as only one Indigenous group, that is First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit).

The category of **multiple Indigenous responses** includes persons who identify as any two or all three of the following: First Nations, Métis and/or Inuk (Inuit).

The category of **Indigenous responses not included elsewhere** includes persons who do not identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit) but who report having Registered or Treaty Indian status and/or Membership in a First Nation or Indian band.

**Registered or Treaty Indian status** refers to whether or not a person is a Registered or Treaty Indian. Registered Indians are persons who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who belong to a First Nation or Indian band that signed

a treaty with the Crown. Registered or Treaty Indians are sometimes also called Status Indians.

<b>Total</b>	<b>78,055</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Indigenous identity</b>	2,425	3.1%
<b>Single Indigenous responses</b>	2,340	3.0%
<b>First Nations (North American Indian)</b>	1,275	1.6%
<b>Métis</b>	1,015	1.3%
<b>Inuk (Inuit)</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Multiple Indigenous responses</b>	60	0.1%
<b>Indigenous responses not included elsewhere</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Non-Indigenous identity</b>	75,630	96.9%
<b>Registered or Treaty Indian</b>	845	1.1%
<b>Not a Registered or Treaty Indian</b>	77,210	98.9%

From [Statistics Canada: Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population Profile table "New Westminster"](#)

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### *Ethnic or cultural origin*

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"Ethnic or cultural origin" refers to the ethnic or cultural background of the person's ancestors. Ancestors may have Indigenous origins, origins that refer to different countries or other origins that may not refer to different countries.

The total counts in this table is greater than the total population estimate because a person may report more than one ethnic or cultural origin in the Census.

*\*The options are listed in the descending order and those groups and places that have no (zero) people have been removed in this list*

<b>Total</b>	<b>78,060</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>English</b>	12,705	16.3%
<b>Scottish</b>	10,815	13.9%
<b>Irish</b>	9,065	11.6%
<b>Chinese</b>	8,275	10.6%

<b>German</b>	6,325	8.1%
<b>Filipino</b>	6,265	8.0%
<b>Canadian</b>	5,540	7.1%
<b>Indian (India)</b>	4,890	6.3%
<b>French</b>	4,045	5.2%
<b>Ukrainian</b>	3,280	4.2%
<b>Italian</b>	2,730	3.5%
<b>Polish</b>	2,365	3.0%
<b>British Isles</b>	2,340	3.0%
<b>Russian</b>	2,090	2.7%
<b>Dutch</b>	1,980	2.5%
<b>Norwegian</b>	1,835	2.4%
<b>Korean</b>	1,585	2.0%
<b>Spanish</b>	1,425	1.8%
<b>Welsh</b>	1,355	1.7%
<b>Punjabi</b>	1,310	1.7%
<b>Japanese</b>	1,275	1.6%
<b>European</b>	1,175	1.5%
<b>Swedish</b>	1,165	1.5%
<b>Asian</b>	1,060	1.4%
<b>Caucasian (White)</b>	1,025	1.3%
<b>American</b>	1,000	1.3%
<b>Métis</b>	980	1.3%
<b>Vietnamese</b>	905	1.2%
<b>Portuguese</b>	885	1.1%
<b>Sikh</b>	885	1.1%
<b>Romanian</b>	845	1.1%
<b>Serbian</b>	830	1.1%
<b>Taiwanese</b>	830	1.1%
<b>First Nations (North American Indian)</b>	825	1.1%
<b>Hungarian</b>	810	1.0%
<b>Brazilian</b>	800	1.0%
<b>Mexican</b>	770	1.0%
<b>African</b>	705	0.9%
<b>French Canadian</b>	655	0.8%
<b>Austrian</b>	650	0.8%
<b>Hong Konger</b>	555	0.7%
<b>Jewish</b>	540	0.7%
<b>Danish</b>	530	0.7%
<b>Iranian</b>	525	0.7%

<b>South Asian</b>	505	0.6%
<b>Finnish</b>	490	0.6%
<b>Latin, Central or South American</b>	470	0.6%
<b>Icelandic</b>	435	0.6%
<b>Czech</b>	430	0.6%
<b>Northern European</b>	410	0.5%
<b>Greek</b>	405	0.5%
<b>Fijian</b>	360	0.5%
<b>Croatian</b>	355	0.5%
<b>Eritrean</b>	355	0.5%
<b>Afghan</b>	345	0.4%
<b>Arab</b>	335	0.4%
<b>Hindu</b>	315	0.4%
<b>Swiss</b>	305	0.4%
<b>Indonesian</b>	295	0.4%
<b>Colombian</b>	290	0.4%
<b>Slovak</b>	290	0.4%
<b>Cree</b>	280	0.4%
<b>Belgian</b>	265	0.3%
<b>Persian</b>	260	0.3%
<b>Australian</b>	260	0.3%
<b>Ethiopian</b>	260	0.3%
<b>Salvadorean</b>	255	0.3%
<b>East or Southeast Asian</b>	255	0.3%
<b>British Columbian</b>	255	0.3%
<b>Christian</b>	250	0.3%
<b>Bosnian</b>	250	0.3%
<b>Turkish</b>	245	0.3%
<b>Tigrinya</b>	245	0.3%
<b>Jamaican</b>	235	0.3%
<b>Mennonite</b>	230	0.3%
<b>North American Indigenous</b>	225	0.3%
<b>Slavic</b>	220	0.3%
<b>Eastern European</b>	200	0.3%
<b>Muslim</b>	190	0.2%
<b>Black</b>	190	0.2%
<b>Bulgarian</b>	190	0.2%
<b>Pakistani</b>	185	0.2%
<b>Lebanese</b>	180	0.2%

<b>Sri Lankan</b>	180	0.2%
<b>Tamil</b>	175	0.2%
<b>Egyptian</b>	170	0.2%
<b>Hispanic</b>	170	0.2%
<b>Malaysian</b>	170	0.2%
<b>South African</b>	145	0.2%
<b>Ilocano</b>	145	0.2%
<b>Malay</b>	140	0.2%
<b>Chilean</b>	135	0.2%
<b>Tibetan</b>	135	0.2%
<b>Western European</b>	130	0.2%
<b>Jatt</b>	130	0.2%
<b>Trinidadian/Tobagonian</b>	125	0.2%
<b>Celtic</b>	125	0.2%
<b>Singaporean</b>	125	0.2%
<b>Thai</b>	120	0.2%
<b>Iraqi</b>	115	0.1%
<b>Guatemalan</b>	115	0.1%
<b>Acadian</b>	105	0.1%
<b>Albanian</b>	105	0.1%
<b>Kurdish</b>	105	0.1%
<b>Nigerian</b>	100	0.1%
<b>West or Central Asian or Middle Eastern</b>	100	0.1%
<b>Peruvian</b>	100	0.1%
<b>Armenian</b>	95	0.1%
<b>Caribbean</b>	95	0.1%
<b>Northern Irish</b>	90	0.1%
<b>Azerbaijani</b>	90	0.1%
<b>Bangladeshi</b>	85	0.1%
<b>Palestinian</b>	85	0.1%
<b>Latvian</b>	85	0.1%
<b>Byelorussian</b>	85	0.1%
<b>Québécois</b>	80	0.1%
<b>Ojibway</b>	80	0.1%
<b>Slovenian</b>	80	0.1%
<b>Lithuanian</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Israeli</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Czechoslovakian</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Venezuelan</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Nicaraguan</b>	75	0.1%



<b>Mayan</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Ugandan</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Oromo</b>	75	0.1%
<b>Cuban</b>	70	0.1%
<b>Southern or East African</b>	70	0.1%
<b>Bengali</b>	65	0.1%
<b>Syrian</b>	60	0.1%
<b>Inuit</b>	60	0.1%
<b>African Canadian</b>	60	0.1%
<b>Estonian</b>	60	0.1%
<b>Mongolian</b>	60	0.1%
<b>Igorot</b>	60	0.1%
<b>Macedonian</b>	55	0.1%
<b>Argentinian</b>	55	0.1%
<b>North American</b>	55	0.1%
<b>Burmese</b>	55	0.1%
<b>Somali</b>	50	0.1%
<b>Barbadian</b>	50	0.1%
<b>Yugoslavian</b>	50	0.1%
<b>Laotian</b>	50	0.1%
<b>Telugu</b>	50	0.1%
<b>Costa Rican</b>	50	0.1%
<b>Newfoundlander</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Yoruba</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Albertan</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Ghanaian</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Nepali</b>	45	0.1%
<b>New Zealander</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Saskatchewanian</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Anishinaabe</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Tajik</b>	45	0.1%
<b>Guyanese</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Ontarian</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Cambodian (Khmer)</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Maltese</b>	40	0.1%
<b>African American</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Moldovan</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Kenyan</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Cherokee</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Pashtun</b>	40	0.1%
<b>Zimbabwean</b>	40	0.1%

<b>Amhara</b>	40	0.1%
<b>West Indian</b>	35	0.0%
<b>Iroquois (Haudenosaunee)</b>	35	0.0%
<b>Sinhalese</b>	35	0.0%
<b>Central or West African</b>	35	0.0%
<b>African Caribbean</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Nova Scotian</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Gujarati</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Mohawk</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Dominican</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Blackfoot</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Sudanese</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Buddhist</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Honduran</b>	30	0.0%
<b>Mi'kmaq</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Igbo</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Burundian</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Vincentian</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Manitoban</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Basque</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Roma</b>	25	0.0%
<b>Moroccan</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Algonquin</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Congolese</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Berber</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Ecuadorian</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Coptic</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Dene</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Pennsylvania Dutch</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Mauritian</b>	20	0.0%
<b>United Empire Loyalist</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Tanzanian</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Tunisian</b>	15	0.0%
<b>Cameroonian</b>	15	0.0%
<b>Franco Ontarian</b>	15	0.0%
<b>North African</b>	15	0.0%
<b>Norman</b>	15	0.0%
<b>Goan</b>	15	0.0%
<b>Kashmiri</b>	15	0.0%
<b>Haitian</b>	10	0.0%
<b>Huron (Wendat)</b>	10	0.0%

<b>Malayali</b>	10	0.0%
<b>Malayali</b>	10	0.0%
<b>Flemish</b>	10	0.0%
<b>Uruguayan</b>	10	0.0%

From [Statistics Canada: Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population Profile table "New Westminster"](#)

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## *Religion*

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"Religion" refers to the person's self-identification as having a connection or affiliation with any religious denomination, group, body, or other religiously defined community or system of belief. Religion is not limited to formal membership in a religious organization or group.

For infants or children, religion refers to the specific religious group or denomination in which they are being raised, if any.

Persons without a religious connection or affiliation can self-identify as atheist, agnostic or humanist, or can provide another applicable response.

<b>Total</b>	<b>78,055</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Christian</b>	30,345	38.9%
<b>Sikh</b>	3,750	4.8%
<b>Muslim</b>	2,655	3.4%
<b>Hindu</b>	2,000	2.6%
<b>Buddhist</b>	1,455	1.9%
<b>Jewish</b>	255	0.3%
<b>Traditional (North American Indigenous) spirituality</b>	20	0.0%
<b>Other religions and spiritual traditions</b>	980	1.3%
<b>No religion and secular perspectives</b>	36,595	46.9%

From [Statistics Canada: Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population Profile table "New Westminster"](#)

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## Age

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<b>Total</b>	<b>78,915</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>0 to 19 years</b>	12,925	16.4%
<b>20 to 34 years</b>	18,880	23.9%
<b>35 to 49 years</b>	18,035	22.9%
<b>50 to 64 years</b>	16,385	20.8%
<b>65 and older</b>	12,680	16.1%

From [Statistics Canada: Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population Profile table "New Westminster"](#)

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## Disability

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*There is no census data specific to New Westminster when it comes to people with a disability. Please refer to the BC and Canada-wide information for disability.*

According to Statistics Canada, a **person with a disability** refers to a person whose daily activities are limited as a result of an impairment or difficulty with particular tasks. The only exception to this is for developmental disabilities where a person is considered to be disabled if the respondent has been diagnosed with this condition.

Area	People with a Disability
<b>Canada-wide</b>	27.0%
<b>British Columbia</b>	28.6%

From [Statistics Canada: New data on disability in Canada, 2022](#)

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## Gender

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*There is no census data specific to New Westminster when it comes to gender. Please refer to the BC information for gender.*

Gender refers to an individual's personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person (a person who is not exclusively a man or a woman).

Gender includes the following concepts:

- gender identity, which refers to the gender that a person feels internally and individually;
- gender expression, which refers to the way a person presents their gender, regardless of their gender identity, through body language, aesthetic choices or accessories (e.g., clothes, hairstyle and makeup), which may have traditionally been associated with a specific gender.

A person's gender may differ from their sex at birth, and from what is indicated on their current identification or legal documents such as their birth certificate, passport or driver's licence. A person's gender may change over time.

Some people may not identify with a specific gender.

The data below is based on BC's population 15 years old or older.

<b>Total</b>	<b>4,200,505</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Cisgender persons</b>	4,182,170	99.6%
<b>Cisgender men</b>	2,039,990	48.6%
<b>Cisgender women</b>	2,142,185	51.0%
<b>Transgender persons</b>	9,910	0.2%
<b>Transgender men</b>	4,460	0.1%
<b>Transgender women</b>	5,450	0.1%
<b>Non-binary persons</b>	8,420	0.2%

From [Statistics Canada: Broad age groups and gender: Canada, provinces and territories](#)

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## LGBTQ2+

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*There is no census data specific to New Westminster when it comes to sexual orientation. Please refer to the Canada-wide information for sexual orientation.*

An estimated 1 million people in Canada are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or of another sexual orientation than heterosexual – **representing 4% of the Canadian population aged 15 years and older**. Among this population, about 52% are women, 44% are men, and 3% are non-binary.

From [Statistics Canada: LGBTQ2+ people](#)

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## *Resources*

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If you are interested in learning more about New Westminster's population and their background, visit the resources listed below.

- [City of New Westminster Statistics Page](#)
- [Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population: Profile table "New Westminster"](#)
- [NewtoBC Immigrant Demographics, New Westminster, BC](#)
- [City of New Westminster Council package, 2021 Census Update](#)

## Climate Change and Intersectionality - Summary of Assembly Discussions

September 2024

In May 2024, the New Westminster Community Advisory Assembly members brainstormed a list of topics that could be addressed by the group in future months. Amongst these, the topic of climate action was a clear priority for the group (receiving votes in support from 61% of members in attendance). In particular, the theme of “climate change and intersectionality” stood out as important. “Intersectionality” describes how a person’s experiences are affected by many aspects of their identity at once, including their gender, race, income level, age or disability. Depending on the social and physical environment in which someone lives, they may be more or less affected by climate change based on their identities.

To explore this topic further, in June 2024 the Assembly met to discuss how diverse groups in New Westminster experience climate change and climate action differently based on their intersecting identity. Staff from the City’s Climate Action team, Leya Behra and Laura Sampliner, attended the meeting as active listeners.

In preparation for the meeting, Assembly members were invited to review the Climate Equity Framework prepared by UBC Sustainability Scholar Lekha Tlhotlhemaje for the City of New Westminster in 2021. The framework proposes a set of “climate equity outcome indicators.” These outcome indicators can help the City measure where climate change is impacting some groups in the community more than others and create climate policies or programs to support groups that are experiencing more difficulties. The report recommended that the City conduct public engagement to further explore and understand diverse personal experiences of climate change.


At the June meeting, Assembly members reflected on their direct experiences of climate change in relation to their identity. The meeting focused on a series of four dialogues between members of the Assembly who shared common aspects of identity. These included dialogues between youth members, Indigenous and racialized members, elder members, and members with experience of disability, neuro-divergence and/or mental health. Members who identified with each of these identities were invited to sit in an inner circle of chairs and participate in a facilitated discussion, while the remaining members listened from the outside of the circle.

Each focused dialogue reflected on three questions:

- How does this group experience the impacts of climate change?
- How does this group experience the benefits of climate action?
- What climate solutions are emerging from this group?

The Assembly’s discussions identified many themes that were not reflected in the 2021 report on climate equity indicators, which further supported the report’s recommendation to conduct public engagement around climate equity.

The following sections summarize key themes from the Assembly’s discussion, organized by the four identities that members focused on during the dialogues, as well as two additional identities that emerged in the discussion as key factors that affect people’s experience of climate change and climate action (lower income and experiences of being newcomers to Canada). This report offers just a sample—not a



comprehensive list—of the intersecting identities that impact climate experiences and the challenges experienced by these groups. It was also noted that although the experiences with climate change may vary amongst groups, climate change impacts are affecting all residents. Experiences such as extreme heat, food insecurity caused by flooding and heat, contamination of water supplies with fertilizers, and more are pressing concerns that require action.

## Youth

- Climate change can have deep **emotional and psychological impacts**, including causing feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, powerlessness and uncertainty about the future. These feelings can be felt more by youth because they are more likely to experience the long-term, future impacts of current climate policies. Many older Assembly members also expressed that they have questioned whether to start a family because of the anticipated impacts of climate change on future generations.
- The availability of information about climate change through **social media and technology can increase climate anxiety** or a desire to disconnect from climate discussions. At the same time, this is a powerful tool for raising awareness of climate issues and solutions and encouraging climate action.
- Despite the availability of information, youth experience **different levels of access to credible information** about the climate crisis and climate solutions. Some youth seek out information or receive information from school and peer groups, and others experience a lack of information. **Information gaps can increase negative psychological impacts** of climate change (e.g. lack of information about climate solutions can increase hopelessness) and can also create a generational divide between youth and middle generations if youth do not have the same information about the trade-offs and barriers involved in implementing climate solutions. Similarly, encountering **misinformation can lead to a sense of distrust and disengagement** from climate discussions.
- The group described how **participation in youth environmental advocacy groups and local climate action** can support youth's sense of agency and wellbeing in relation to the climate crisis. Through these opportunities, youth can become involved in advocacy efforts for policy change, develop greater sense of care for their environment as they become familiar with their local ecosystem, have conversations about how to cope with the psychological impacts of climate change such as climate anxiety, and foster supportive community relationships.
- The group described approaches to encourage youth participation, such as offering youth **academic credits for volunteering, ensuring access to public green space and connecting youth with local environmental organizations**.
- **Access to public transit** is a priority for younger generations who may be less likely to drive.

## Lower Income Groups

- **Income intersects with various other social identities**, increasing the challenges and barriers faced by other groups. At the same time, groups facing other systemic barriers are more likely to experience lower income.
- **Income can be a significant barrier** to people's ability to take individual climate action (e.g. electric vehicles are unaffordable to many).
- Individuals experiencing insecurity around basic needs such as housing or food are also **less likely to have the time and capacity to engage** in climate discussion and action.



- Climate change is a factor in the increasing cost of food, leading to more food insecurity or less nutritious diets for low-income households.
- Lower income groups are more likely to live in **housing that is inadequate for climate crises** (e.g. lacking air conditioning or balconies in heat waves) and/or **housing that lacks the appropriate physical infrastructure for climate action** (e.g. lack of recycling options, charging stations for electric vehicles, etc.).
- **Tenants face barriers to accessing some programs** that are designed to support lower-income groups reduce the impacts of climate change (e.g. tenants require permission from their landlords to access BC Hydro’s free air conditioning program). Tenants may also **fear speaking out about climate inequities they experience** due to their housing insecurity (e.g. not alerting about issues with drinking water in their housing).
- **People experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable** to extreme weather. Social stigma and discrimination can be barriers to them accessing support services.
- **Financial incentives and accessible services** can help people with lower incomes engage in climate action (e.g. financial incentives and close access to recycling depots, access to bike lanes and public transportation, financial support to access air conditioning or housing retrofits, etc.).

## Indigenous and Racialized People

- Indigenous and racialized people face higher poverty rates due to systemic barriers, making them **more likely to experience the climate inequities based on income** described above.
- **Experiences of racism** can pose barriers to people safely accessing climate-related support services such as cooling centres, speaking out about climate inequities, or feeling a sense of belonging in environmental action groups. The group described the value of having diverse people represented in environmental movements, as role models for their communities.
- The impacts of climate change have far-reaching **impacts on Indigenous people’s material and cultural wellbeing**. For instance, impacts to local ecosystems or polluted water impacts their livelihoods, health, and ability to practice cultural traditions such as seasonal harvesting. Efforts toward decolonization were identified as valuable.
- Urban Indigenous people and newcomers to Canada are more likely to live far from their home communities and face **environmental and financial costs of travel** to see their families.
- The group also raised the importance of initiatives such as the “Connect and Prepare” program that encourage neighbors to work together to prepare for climate disasters.

## Newcomers to Canada

- **Newcomers to Canada can face greater barriers accessing information** about climate change, climate solutions and available supports due to language barriers, lack of awareness about existing information channels, differences in cultural norms, and increased risk of receiving misinformation. As with youth, increasing access to credible information is a priority for this group, as well as encouraging people to fact check information they receive.

- There is a **unique opportunity to introduce climate-positive habits** to newcomers when they are adjusting to their new home, through information campaigns and other activities.
- The global impacts of climate change are resulting in more people moving to new countries, which can in turn worsen **anti-immigration sentiments and racism** faced by newcomers to Canada.

## Elders

- Elders are **more physically vulnerable to climate crises such as extreme heat**, which in turn increases experiences of climate anxiety. Members cited the 2021 heat dome which led to 33 deaths in New Westminster, two-thirds of which were seniors.
- **Public infrastructure to lessen the impacts of heat**, such as green spaces, spray parks and cooling centres are high priorities for elders, as well as **programs to enhance cooling infrastructure in housing**, such as air conditioning and cooling rooms. While building codes are changing for new construction, elders are more likely to have existing homes in older buildings and face greater barriers to accessing public cooling spaces.
- Elders who earn less income in retirement are **more likely to experience climate inequities based on income** as described above. They are also **more likely to experience climate inequities related to experiences of disability** as described below.
- **Connecting across generations for climate action** opens unique opportunities to exchange knowledge (e.g. youth learning from seniors about sustainable lifestyle habits from the past) and promote a sense of hope, connection and agency.

## People with Experience of Disability, Neuro-divergence and Mental Health

- People with disabilities or facing health challenges may have **reduced mobility and access to public cooling programs**, making it more **important to have access to cooling infrastructure in their housing**. Group homes or low-barrier housing for people with disabilities or mental health needs are not always equipped for extreme heat.
- **Medications, chronic health conditions and disabilities can increase people's vulnerability to climate impacts** such as extreme heat or air pollution. Similarly, climate crises can also **affect supply chains for medications**. It was noted that members of the trans community who rely on medications are also more sensitive to heat and vulnerable to supply chain issues.
- Extreme weather and climate change can **increase existing mental health challenges**, as well as create new emotional and psychological challenges as described above.
- People with disabilities, neuro-divergence and mental health are more likely to experience poverty and **the climate inequities based on income** described above.
- **Community-led outreach programs and networks of caring neighbours** can be important to support people facing increased vulnerability to climate change due to disabilities, neuro-divergence and mental health.
- With enough supports and accommodations, **people with experiences of disability, neuro-divergence and mental health can offer unique skills and insights for the development of climate solutions**.



However, they often face a variety of barriers to mobility, communication and participation. For instance, it was mentioned that universal design doesn't incorporate considerations for neuro-divergence.