



**Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**Thursday, April 10, 2025  
10:00 a.m.**

**Committee Room 2, Second Floor & Zoom  
New Westminster City Hall, 511 Royal Avenue**

**Present:** Councillor Ruby Campbell, Chair  
Councillor Paul Minhas  
Gerardo Corro Amador (*left at 11:51 a.m.*)  
Amandeep Duhra\*  
Jorden Foss  
Laura Grady  
Vera Kobalia  
Gwendolyn Maddock  
Jessica Schneider\* (*left at 11:24 a.m.*)  
Catherine Williams\*

**Absent:** Janelle Mikka Lim  
Fikayo Ogundare  
Angelene Prakash  
Saurabh Sood  
Paige Strand

*\*Attendance by electronic means*

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. It was acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. It was recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

## 2. AGENDA ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Agenda of the Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held on April 10, 2025 be approved, as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

## 3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

### 3.1 February 13, 2025

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the Minutes of the Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held on February 13, 2025 be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED**

## 4. REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

### 4.1 Retail Strategy Implementation: Zoning Changes for Enhancing Active Streets

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Carolyn Armanini, Acting Manager, Economic Development, outlined recommendations to enhance the City's commercial areas, and the following information was highlighted:

- to enhance the City's commercial areas, at-grade uses in Great Streets could be limited to active uses;
- the Sign/Business Licence Bylaw will be amended to promote visual connections between storefronts and pedestrians;
- development guidelines will be strengthened to ensure functional retail spaces, with a variety of storefront configurations to support small businesses and foster business incubation;
- active retail uses were defined as uses that generate street-level activity and vitality, including restaurants, retail stores, specialty food stores, arts, culture, entertainment, and personal service that generally draw frequent foot traffic;
- other uses, such as finance, insurance, and real estate offices, could be designed to be more active to better support street-level vibrancy; however, general office uses are not considered active uses.

C. Armanini outlined several initiatives aimed at improving window transparency, including:

- the development of an awareness campaign, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, to create a guide to illustrate existing and new signage standards for active retail/commercial uses at street level; and
- in an effort to increase awareness of these initiatives, staff will conduct walkabouts, mail information to stakeholders, as well as utilize the City's social media channels;
- the implementation of these initiatives will be monitored and voluntary compliance through education and awareness will be sought.

In referencing maps of priority commerce areas, C. Armanini spoke on zoning regulations and reviewed the boundaries of commercial districts, including:

- Columbia Street;
- Uptown;
- Queensborough;
- Upper Twelfth Street and Lower Twelfth Street; and
- Sapperton.

C. Armanini advised that regulating active uses aims to create more vibrant and engaging street frontages by encouraging businesses that promote transparency and interaction with the public realm; however, while this supports more active streets, it may be perceived as a burden for businesses and potentially affect commercial unit values.

C. Armanini outlined the next steps for the Active Streets Initiative, with a Council workshop to follow and community engagement planned thereafter.

In response to questions from the Committee, C. Armanini provided the following information:

- a zoning amendment bylaw is anticipated in order to effect the initiatives, as well as a new regulation within the Business Licence Bylaw, to support the Retail Strategy Implementation Plan;
- regulations regarding vape businesses are considered restricted and limited active use;
- office use may potentially be relocated to allow opportunity for retail and entertainment use in the Downtown in an effort to promote vibrancy and liveliness of the area;
- tattoo parlors are defined as personal service establishments, and are not regulated in the same manner as non-active use businesses;
- business owners may apply for a variance within the Sign Bylaw;

Discussion ensued and the following Committee comments were noted:

- the transparency of cannabis and vape stores, including their signage, is concerning given their visibility from the street and potential exposure to minors;

- the potential to examine businesses through a lens of public safety and the consideration of potential financial, accessible, and visibility impacts to businesses with regard to permitted uses on the ground level was considered;
- consideration was given to the relocation of businesses to areas which may have potential leasing barriers; and
- as part of the commercial zoning strategy for Sapperton, it was suggested that retail development extend along the full length of East Columbia Street to support area growth and increase tourism.

#### **4.2 Economic Development Strategy: Brainstorm for Workplan Scope**

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, C. Armanini spoke regarding the Economic Development Strategy: Brainstorm for Workplan Scope, and the following structure plan and key economic priorities were outlined:

- overarching strategy on how to support and foster the local economy;
- acknowledgement of the important role community partners play in setting and achieving the economic vision;
- identification of key economic priorities to focus on in support of a healthy local economy;
- guiding staff work in retaining and attracting businesses and supporting a diverse employment base; and
- working in alignment with other City plans and initiatives, such as the Official Community Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and Riverfront Vision.

C. Armanini provided the following accomplishments of the Economic Development Plan:

- working with City departments to update business-related bylaws, policies, and practices;
- establishing a business hub type function at City Hall;
- establishing the Economic Development Office as the advocate for business at City Hall;
- collaborating with local partners on initiatives that encourage buy/spend local;
- collaborating with partners, including post-secondary institutions, Fraser Health, and local developers on the IDEA Centre strategy around Royal Columbian Hospital;
- establishing new inventory of business resources – how to guides, welcome package, webinars;
- development of the Retail Strategy; and
- working with Planning on the lower Twelfth Street Plan that facilitates the area as a creative employment zone and supports a mix of uses such as ultra-light industrial, maker space, commercial, and retail.

C. Armanini advised that the Economic Development Plan is based on four key principles:

- i. solid data and analysis for employment-generating land uses, industry sectors and job targets;
- ii. meaningful engagement with local businesses, community partners, and residents;
- iii. opportunity to set an aspirational vision for the local economy; and
- iv. tangible actions that the City and community partners can take to achieve the vision.

C. Armanini outlined four current objectives to the existing plan goals that require further reflection or current relevance:

- establish New Westminster's reputation as an ideal location for start-ups and established businesses to thrive and grow;
- drive New Westminster's commitment to delivery of a positive business experience at City Hall;
- secure diversity in the local economic base through recruitment, retention and expansion activities; and
- support livability initiatives.

C. Armanini advised of Economic Development Plan stakeholders, focusing on six major groups:

- i. local businesses;
- ii. indigenous Groups;
- iii. New Westminster Residents;
- iv. non-profit organizations;
- v. New Westminster workers; and
- vi. anchor organizations.

C. Armanini noted roles and tools for the Plan's implementation within the City, including:

- land use planning to identify where and what type of development is needed;
- permitting, which includes business licensing and general building and planning input to facilitate with projects;
- Utilizing the City as a Convener by bringing groups together to facilitate larger projects, such as health care clusters;
- city infrastructure projects such as Anvil Centre and Westminster Pier Park and identification of gaps that would support businesses; and
- grant program opportunities to foster overall community support.

Discussion around the definition of success of the Economic Development Plan ensued and the following Committee comments were captured:

- clear vision and action items for various City departments;

- immediate execution of items to showcase a proactive mindset;
- tracking actions taken using metrics and targets; and
- acknowledgement of immediate results in order to promote the recognition of the contribution and feedback of the community.

C. Armanini noted key milestones from spring 2025 to 2026. Phase one will begin in spring 2025 with a project scope proposal and consultant retention. In summer 2025, an Employment Lands and Economy Review will be conducted, followed by public engagement in fall and winter. Final plan completion and implementation are anticipated in 2026.

*Jessica Schneider left the meeting and did not return (11:24 a.m.).*

In response to questions from the Committee, staff provided the following information:

- there are sector roundtables working with various organizations to create a wider variety of stakeholders in order to promote active engagement within the community; and
- anchor organizations that are part of the stakeholders outlined in the Economic Development Plan Update include large employers, such as malls, developers, and Douglas College.

Discussion ensued and the following Committee comments were captured:

- positive business experiences at City Hall is a good start to building a thriving community;
- supporting the livability initiative is a key aspect in enhancing the City's reputation in the community;
- the safety of community members and visitors to the City is essential to the City's goal of retention, especially during evening hours; and
- additional stakeholders for the Economic Development Plan could include the Art and Culture Organization, youths, senior citizens, visitors to the City, and the hospitality sector.

## 5. STAFF UPDATES

### 5.1 Crises Response Pilot Project

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation (attached to and forming part of these Minutes as Schedule 1), Ria Renouf, Communications Coordinator, Crises Response Pilot Project spoke regarding the One Number to Call campaign, advising on its origins and function.

## 5.2 Advertising & Promotion Activities

Chair Campbell opened the floor to brainstorm the possibilities of how can the members' organizations aid in supporting each other through advertising and promoting activities throughout the City.

Discussion ensued and the following Committee comments were captured:

- access currently appears limited, and expanding it could enhance outreach and community engagement. Improved access would also support the City's Economic Development Plans;
- acknowledgement of challenges in advertising and promotion, including funding limitations and concerns over potential bias, were noted. Consulting a representative from sectors such as Education, Health Care, Manufacturing, Non-Profit, Retail, Technology, Planning and Public Realm, or Arts and Creative Professions to explore the feasibility of establishing a centralized point of contact could be considered; and
- there is a potential to engage co-op, intern, or marketing and communications students from local colleges to support City advertising and promotion efforts.

In response to questions from the Committee, Staff provided the following information:

- the City faces challenges in advertising to individual commercial bodies directly;
- the City can aid with advertisement through the events calendar on the City's website, as well as within the Active Living Guide where the free-of-charge community insert page is located; and
- further policy development and budgeting are needed in order to expand advertising capabilities.

*Gerardo Corro Amador left the meeting and did not return (11:51 a.m.).*

At this point in the meeting, quorum was lost (11:51 a.m.).

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## 6. MEMBER UPDATES

Jorden Foss spoke about the May 31<sup>st</sup> beer run event at Steel & Oak Brewery and the June 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary party.

Paul Romein advised that the Sapperton Business Collective will be holding its Annual General Meeting on May 1, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Gwendolyn Maddock updated the Committee on upcoming New West Chamber events:

- Women in Business event on April 18, 2025, at the Queensborough Community Centre; and

- the April Beer Friday on April 25 at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #2.

Chair Campbell spoke regarding the upcoming Arts Strategy Refresh, as well as commercial spaces at Pier West and upcoming tenant improvements with childcare facilities. The Chair highlighted a motion brought to Council for consideration during the May 5 Regular Council meeting.

Councillor Paul Minhas advised that a Councillor Café will take place on April 22, 2025 at Queen's Park, and May 22, 2025 in Queensborough.

Laura Grady highlighted summer planning and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual New West Cultural Crawl taking place in October. L. Grady also noted Indigenous Programming in June and July.

Catherine Williams advised the Committee of the current hiring process at Douglas College.

Vera Kobalia acknowledged the recent increase in support for local businesses and expressed appreciation for this trend. She suggested that the City could further enhance this momentum by actively promoting local businesses through a variety of channels.

C. Armanini informed the Committee on updates in park spaces and corresponding opening dates.

Vali Marling spoke regarding updates on the 10-Year Review of the Anvil Centre and the availability of advanced polling being held at the Anvil Centre for the federal election.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

None.

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED and SECONDED

*THAT the meeting adjourn (11:51 a.m.).*

**CARRIED**



Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Arts, Culture and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held on April 10, 2025.

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Councillor Ruby Campbell  
CHAIR

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Yuliya Dmitriieva  
COMMITTEE CLERK