

ON TABLE
City Council Meeting
May 8, 2023
re: Item 3.1



NEW WESTMINSTER

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PLAN

2023-2026



Message from Mayor and Council

On behalf of New Westminster City Council, I am excited to share our 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan. This plan is the result of many hours of conversation and collaboration, guided by the principles and perspectives of all Council members, and supported by the foundational knowledge of our incredible City staff.

The five areas of focus reflect the issues we have heard from the community. We need renewed action on housing; we need to make our transportation spaces safer and more comfortable; we need to address gaps in our infrastructure; and we need to support a local economy that centres the people it serves. Perhaps most importantly, we need to build back the community connections that the pandemic and economic uncertainty frayed, to assure we are a community where everyone feels they belong.

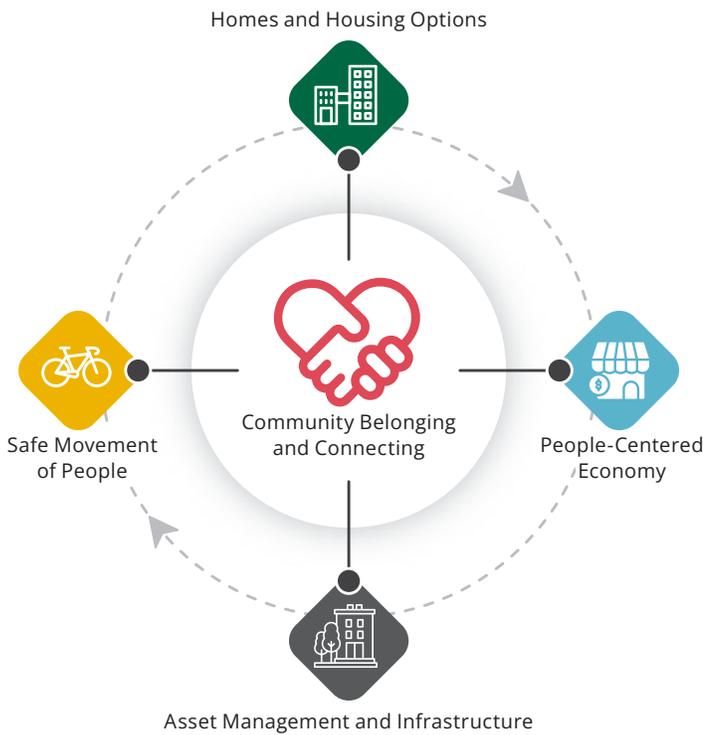
While we work on these focus areas, we recognize the contexts through which all of our work must be measured: Reconciliation, Public Engagement, Climate Action and Environment, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (DEIAR). These are not separate work areas, but are woven through all of our work. They are the new standards that the public expects from a local government, and they are promises that all of Council made to the community during the election.

We can only do this work building on a foundation provided by an effective, healthy, and resilient organization. This means transparent budgeting, investing in the systems that support our community, and building a culture of respect in City Hall, in Council Chambers, and in the community.

With this Strategic Priorities Plan as our guiding document, Council will be taking action on the issues most important to New Westminster, and we will be accountable for that work by regularly reporting back to the public about progress on our priority areas. We will also explore new ways to engage the public in decision-making, assuring that the voices heard at Council reflect the diversity of lived experience in our community.

Through this work, we will continue New Westminster's tradition of being the vibrant and compassionate centre of a growing metro region. We will support the young families putting down roots here while we invite them to join in the community closeness that makes New Westminster different. As we will build on our reputation as a regional leader in sustainability, social development, and resiliency, we will meaningfully move New Westminster towards being a community where everyone can thrive.

Patrick Johnstone
Mayor



Community Belonging and Connecting

A community where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to connect and contribute.

Homes and Housing Options

Clear the way for all types of homes needed by people today and tomorrow, prioritizing homes for those with the greatest need.

People-Centered Economy

A local, nimble, resilient economy that serves our local community.

Safe Movement of People

Prioritize the movement of people on foot, cycle and transit on streets that are safer for all.

Asset Management and Infrastructure

Resilient infrastructure that meets the community’s needs today and into the future.



The 2023-2026 Council Strategic Priorities Plan includes five areas of focus with community belonging and connecting at the heart.

The City of New Westminister is driven by the following vision to be:

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

Contexts

The strategic priorities should be viewed using contexts that are both *foundations* and *lenses*. Foundations are the historical context and work done to date that we build on and adapt from. Lenses are how we should view the work as we move forward.

Reconciliation

We are in the early stages of learning about the richness of the land's Indigenous connections and the destruction of those connections at the hands of colonial forces. The City of New Westminster is also examining internal structures that are incompatible with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in order to create more holistic and equitable policies, processes and programs. Reconciliation will be an ongoing journey. Through the newly formed Reconciliation Working Group, staff will engage in a process that will improve upon its engagement with Indigenous people and communities and develop a reconciliation strategy, co-created with local First Nations and the urban Indigenous community which includes urban Métis and Inuit. Council priorities are people-centered with a focus on relationship, belonging, and well-being for all. These principles have always motivated Indigenous ways of life, so by committing to reconciliation and Indigenous engagement, the City will better learn from Indigenous people how to exemplify those qualities while also learning how to make reparations for past harms.

Public Engagement

Public engagement provides community members a voice in the projects and initiatives that impact their lives – before all parts of the decision have been made. The City often hears different perspectives and a wide range of opinions and feedback from residents, and works to incorporate that input as much as possible. The City's engagement work is guided by the **Public Engagement Policy** and **Public Engagement Strategy**. We are committed to ongoing learning and improvement, and trying new methods to hear from the community. A key focus for this term of Council is to build relationships and encourage participation of more diverse voices.

Climate Action and Environment

In this term of Council, progress will continue toward protecting and restoring natural areas, and minimizing the environmental footprint of our highly urbanized community, as outlined in the **Environmental Strategy and Action Plan** and **Biodiversity and Natural Areas Strategy**. Climate action refers to the efforts and measures taken to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change. It encompasses a wide range of activities and initiatives aimed at reducing carbon pollution in the form of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), adapting to the changing climate, and promoting sustainable practices such as

energy conservation. Climate action involves both individual and collective actions including policies and regulations to combat climate change and its consequences. The City's climate initiatives are driven by the **2019 Climate Emergency Declaration** and associated carbon pollution reduction targets. The pathway to achieve these targets is outlined in **corporate, community** and **eMobility** strategies and needs to be rooted in Climate Justice, recognizing the impacts of Climate Action and Climate Disruption are not felt equally across the community.

DEIAR (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Anti-Racism)

The internal work of DEIAR is to recognize and celebrate difference, value contributions made by staff, identify power differences linked to social inequities, and act every day to eliminate those inequities. The application of a DEIAR lens will lead to an inclusive public service, a safe, respectful and inclusive work environment, equitable employment, and inclusive decision-making. This produces a stronger, more resilient, and more engaged workforce, which can provide higher quality services and better meet the needs of our residents. The work we do will be guided by the **DEIAR Framework**, which provides a vision and approach towards diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism within the City.

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is the ability of the City of New Westminster to achieve its strategic plan goals and objectives by efficiently aligning its resources including people, processes, technology, work space, fleet, and financial resources. It also involves the organization's capacity to meet customer needs and adapt to changes in the environment while maintaining high levels of employee engagement, performance, and productivity. The City will be developing three strategies to guide and support organizational effectiveness: a people strategy, an information technology strategy, and a space planning strategy.

Measurement and Monitoring

Through monitoring and measurement, New Westminster's Council Strategic Priorities can be evaluated. The Senior Management Team will review the progress of actions in support of these priorities and report to Council using a colour-coded dashboard method that is simple and transparent. These check-ins will allow for adaptation as required, and will help inform budget and human resources allocation while maintaining focus.



Community Belonging and Connecting

New Westminster is a community where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to connect and contribute.





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.

Objectives

- ✔ People feel belonging through a shared sense of connection and identification with others. They feel accepted, included, and supported, and feel a sense of responsibility and commitment to the well-being of the community as a whole.
- ✔ People experience shared connection points, created through an environment where their ideas, impact, and contributions matter, and where new community members feel welcome and included.
- ✔ The City is a place where individuals, groups, and organizations are interconnected, linked, and work towards common goals and interests through community-building initiatives, and through platforms that facilitate communication, collaboration, and understanding among community members.
- ✔ Community connectivity creates a strong sense of belonging and social cohesion and enables individuals and groups to support each other.

Outcomes

- ✔ **Belonging and Connectedness:** Contribute to individuals, groups and organizations in New Westminster feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness individually and collectively.
- ✔ **Greater Awareness and Appreciation:** Celebrate the diversity across our city and share an understanding of community and culture.
- ✔ **New and Growing Connections:** Empower and support groups and organizations to more fully reflect the evolving diversity of the community and feel welcome to establish, grow, and evolve.
- ✔ **City Services Alignment and Support:** Equip City staff, services, and processes to reflect a range of diverse community needs to support community belonging and connecting aspirations.



Homes and Housing Options

Clear the way for all types of homes needed by people today and tomorrow, prioritizing homes for those with the greatest need.





The City of New Westminster is a recognized leader in housing. For many years, the City has advanced housing options across all spectrums, from emergency shelters to market units. This is essential to our city’s livability and ongoing prosperity, and is increasingly part of our community dialogue.

We will intensify our focus on housing by making a bold commitment to be even more ambitious in how we tackle the ongoing crisis. This work will be guided by the implementation of the clear actions and targets set by the City’s **Housing Needs Report**, and enhancing our commitment to preventing and addressing homelessness through implementation of the **Homelessness Action Strategy**.

Objectives

- ✔ Implement policies and procedures to further support the delivery and maintenance of homes that meet our community’s diverse needs.
- ✔ Focus inter-governmental collaboration on the creation of homes and providing supports to keep people housed.
- ✔ Ambitiously advance climate action strategies that create more resilient homes.
- ✔ Publicly share our housing successes and challenges to foster an open dialogue with the community in order to provide meaningful engagement.

Outcomes

- ✔ **Addressing Homelessness:** Implement the Homelessness Action Strategy and related initiatives.
- ✔ **Affordable Housing:** Collaborate with senior government to facilitate the construction of new affordable housing units.
- ✔ **More Homes Near Transit:** Advance planning for transit-oriented development using a climate action lens.
- ✔ **Infill Housing:** Allow for diverse housing options in all neighbourhoods of New Westminster.
- ✔ **Build More Homes Faster:** Implement a simplified and streamlined development approvals process to get more homes built across the entire housing spectrum, from apartment buildings to laneway homes, while also facilitating amenities and infrastructure to support growth.
- ✔ **Policy Alignment:** Update housing policy to protect existing rental housing and maximize delivery of new housing that meets identified needs.
- ✔ **Climate Action:** Reduce emissions from new buildings, increased support for the retrofit of existing buildings, and continue designing our city to allow community members live and move in alignment with climate goals.



People-Centered Economy

A local, nimble, resilient economy that serves our local community.





The City of New Westminster works to create conditions that give people business opportunities and sustainable employment, and an environment that supports growth and innovation. At the geographic centre of Metro Vancouver, we recognize the important role New Westminster plays in the broader regional economy. We also understand that our local economy needs to serve our local community. To that end, we collaborate and build relationships to support people now, and into the future, by ensuring quality jobs and enhanced livability for our community.

Objectives

- ✔ Support for business in ways that improves processing and permitting times, and allows operators to grow and thrive.
- ✔ Create a vibrant and resilient local economy that provides sustainable employment opportunities for all, to improve economic well-being, including Indigenous and equity-seeking communities.
- ✔ Establish strong, positive, and collaborative relationships with local business-focused partners and regional organizations to promote and grow our local economy which includes arts, culture, tourism and non-profits that make New Westminster a richer place.

Outcomes

- ✔ **Active Commercial Areas:** Implement the Retail Strategy to support active and welcoming commercial areas with a mix of diverse and vibrant business and cultural offerings.
- ✔ **High Quality Jobs:** Continue to support the creation of livable and sustainable employment opportunities.
- ✔ **The Role of Culture:** Align the structure of the organization to acknowledge the important role of arts and culture, filming, and special events in economic development.
- ✔ **Business-Focused Relationships:** Maintain strong relationships and collaborations with business-focused groups and organizations that represent the breadth of diversity here.
- ✔ **Business Support:** Meet operators wherever they are in their business and entrepreneurial life cycle and improve process through customer service excellence.
- ✔ **Policy Modernization:** Update business-related regulations and plans to meet the needs of our modern economy and better serve our local community.
- ✔ **Resilient Economy:** Leverage our commercial and industrial tax base while prioritizing people for a balanced economy with a range of business and employment opportunities.
- ✔ **Data-driven Decisions:** Continue to collect and monitor data and performance metrics to inform policy and decision-making.



Safe Movement of People

Prioritize the movement of people on foot, cycle, and transit on streets that are safer for all.





The City of New Westminster will continue to improve transportation options and safety for people, with a focus on those who walk, wheel, cycle, and take transit. We will make the City safer, more equitable, and more accessible for all people, particularly for vulnerable community members. The City will work to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities on our transportation network by improving our understanding of safety through enhanced data systems and by building collaborative relationships across agencies.

To create change in both safety outcomes and the way people get around, the City will be more proactive about informing, educating, and learning from the community, and enforcing measures that directly contribute to road safety.

Objectives

- ✔ Continue to implement Council-endorsed transportation plans while delivering on actions to achieve the Climate Action Bold Steps.
- ✔ Build collaborative relationships across agencies to advance a 'Vision Zero' mindset in New Westminster which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities or serious injuries.
- ✔ Work with partners to develop an inclusive and equitable education and enforcement program to encourage a different way of thinking about transportation and safety, both as a City and as a community.

Outcomes

- ✔ **Resilient Funding:** Ensure a long-term funding strategy to support completion of the Active Transportation Network Plan, key safety and accessibility initiatives, and other infrastructure that makes it easier to walk, wheel, cycle, and take transit.
- ✔ **Safety Governance and Maturity:** Improve alignment and coordination between Council and the Police Board, build relationships with other agencies, and improve data systems to enhance our safety intelligence, crash prediction, injury prevention, and safety monitoring.
- ✔ **Strategic Infrastructure Investments:** Implement planned infrastructure that provides more sustainable options to get around New Westminster, and that proactively addresses safety concerns.
- ✔ **Culture Change:** Work with partners to create strategic, inclusive, and equitable communications, education, survey, and enforcement programs that encourage sustainable travel choices, improved safety outcomes, and a different way of thinking about transportation.



Asset Management and Infrastructure

Resilient infrastructure that meets
the community's needs today and
into the future.





The City of New Westminster plans, builds, operates, and maintains essential community infrastructure that supports public health, safety, and wellness, such as water, sewer, sidewalks, greenways, roads, electrical, parks, natural assets, buildings and other facilities to deliver core services to the community.

Asset management is a structured approach that commits all departments to work in a coordinated way to plan and manage existing and new assets. Success in this priority focus area will enable the City to improve its asset management practices, improve decision-making, strengthen technical and leadership capabilities, and develop long-term financial outlooks that incorporate new infrastructure from master plans and ensure we replace and renew existing infrastructure that serves the community. Our goals include an increased ability to make decisions based on risks and vulnerabilities and an increased ability to communicate essential infrastructure data and information to the community.

Objectives

- ✔ Champion asset management leadership and staff capabilities across the organization to enhance how we plan, deliver, maintain, and operate our infrastructure to meet the community's needs.
- ✔ Expand the use of data and information to inform long-term infrastructure planning and decision-making.
- ✔ Clearly communicate asset management and infrastructure information to the public.
- ✔ Maximize infrastructure reliability and ensure long-term financial health through a rigorous approach to asset management.

Outcomes

- ✔ **Sustainable Service Delivery:** Deliver sustainable service today and into the future, including several asset management and master plans.
- ✔ **Rigorous Approach:** Benchmark and improve data management and improve communication and information sharing.
- ✔ **Long-term Financial Planning and Resilience:** Continue to deliver on the five-year plans and major capital projects currently planned or underway, and improve on internal capacity.



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