

September 18, 2023

City of New Westminster
511 Royal Avenue
New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the **Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth** (the Task Force), we are writing to invite a City of New Westminster City Council member to join the Task Force, a community collaborative working since 1998 to address the sexual abuse of children and youth in the sex trade.

As chair of the Task Force, we represent a multi-sectorial coalition with staff representation from the City of Burnaby; the City of New Westminster; the Burnaby and New Westminster School Districts and School Board Trustees; the Burnaby RCMP; the New Westminster Police; the Fraser Health Authority; the Ministry of Children and Family Development; and a number of non-profit agencies who provide services to youth. The Task Force operates as a sub-committee of the City of Burnaby Public Safety Committee for which I currently serve as a Burnaby Councillor. Please see attachment for the Terms of Reference.

The purpose of the Task Force is to increase awareness of youth sexual exploitation, identify gaps in service and advocate for needed at-risk youth services and programs, and stay up to date on trends relating to youth sexual exploitation in Burnaby and New Westminster. Recent Task Force activities include information sharing, networking, and curating related professional development opportunities. In particular, Task Force members share information and trends (e.g. recruitment activities, age of recruitment, geographic instances of recruitment, etc.) to prevent sexual exploitation and identify intervention methods to support at-risk youth. As well, the Task Force aims to curate related capacity building and professional development opportunities virtually and in-person, including 'lunch and learns' and educational sessions on topics such as online safety and gang recruitment prevention.

Please note that all Task Force members contribute in-kind support to committee activities including members' staff time, provision of even venues (if in-person), and contributions towards the development of educational content and awareness activities.

The success of the Task Force necessitates a commitment to collaboration and partnership in addressing the prevention of sexual abuse of children and youth. Currently, we have a Burnaby City Councillor, Burnaby School Board Trustee and New Westminster School Board Trustee sitting on the Task Force. The Task Force would benefit for a New Westminster City Council member to join and have opportunities to learn, share and be informed of the local insights and resources regarding youth sexual exploitation for your City Council.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Maita Santiago, City of Burnaby Councillor
Chair

Jen Menzei, Burnaby School Board Trustee, SD 41
Vice Chair

Attachment 1: Terms of Reference (2023)

Burnaby New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The Burnaby New Westminster Task Force on Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth (hereafter the “Task Force”) is a community collaborative established in 1998. Its main functions being to:

- increase awareness of youth sexual exploitation in Burnaby and New Westminster;
- identify gaps in service and advocate for needed at-risk youth services and programs in Burnaby and New Westminster; and
- to keep current on trends relating to youth sexual exploitation.

MEMBERSHIP

Representatives of the following youth serving organizations serve on the Task Force:

City of Burnaby
City of New Westminster
Burnaby School District No. 41
New Westminster School District No. 40
Fraser Health, Public Health
Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families
Ministry of Children and Family Development
Burnaby Neighbourhood House
Children of the Street
Pacific Community Resources Society, IRAYL
St. Leonard’s Youth and Family Services Society
Cameray Child & Family Services
Burnaby RCMP
Burnaby RCMP, Youth Services
Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vancouver, Odyssey
Burnaby Youth Custody, Ministry of Children and Family
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Additional representatives of youth serving organizations may be invited to join the Task Force through consultations with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

Youth connected with Task Force membership will be called upon from time to time to provide youth perspectives on the work of the Task Force.

CHAIR and VICE CHAIR

Task Force general membership meetings will be chaired by a Burnaby City Councillor. The duties of the Chair include:

- developing the agendas with support from City of Burnaby staff;
- chairing Task Force general meetings; and
- representing the Task Force at meetings with external agencies or senior levels of government.

Vice-Chair: the Vice-Chair will assist the Chair with any of the above duties as required. The Vice-Chair will be a Burnaby or New Westminster School Trustee or Councillor.

STAFFING

Staff from the Burnaby Planning & Development Department will provide administrative support to the Task Force.

TASK FORCE MEETING AND DECISION MAKING

The Task Force is comprised of general members. Decisions of the Task Force will be made through consensus of the general membership. Members are encouraged to bring ideas/proposals to the general membership for decisions. Task Force members may recuse themselves from a decision in the event of a personal or professional conflict and this will be recorded within the meeting minutes.

REPORTING STRUCTURE

The Task Force will report on its accomplishments and future work plans biennially to the Public Safety Committee of Burnaby City Council. It may appear as a delegation before the Committee as required. The Task Force may advocate directly to Burnaby and New Westminster Ministers of the Legislative Assembly and Ministers of Parliament regarding the service needs of sexually exploited and at-risk youth in Burnaby and New Westminster. When advocacy to senior levels of government (e.g. Ministries) is deemed necessary, the Task Force may make appropriate recommendations for action to the Burnaby City Council.

MEETINGS

The Task Force general membership will meet quarterly for 1.5 hours unless decided otherwise by Task Force members. An annual schedule of meetings will be provided to the Task Force membership. Task Force members may submit proposed agenda items for regularly scheduled Task Force meetings to the City of Burnaby staff liaison two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.

MEETING LOCATION

Meetings will be held at Burnaby civic facility, virtually or an alternate location agreeable to the Task Force.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Commitment to the work of the Task Force is essential for success. Regular attendance is expected for all Task Force members. If a member is unable to attend, it is expected that regrets with cause be sent to the City of Burnaby staff liaison. Where possible, Task Force member organizations could consider identifying a permanent alternate and sending that individual to meetings when regular members are unable to attend in an effort to maintain continuity in the work of the Task Force. The alternate will receive meeting minutes to remain informed about the ongoing work of the Task Force.

BUDGET

The Task Force will submit its request for annual budget allocations to Burnaby City Council through the Burnaby Public Safety Committee every two years. Cost for minor printing, mailing, and other incidental support for the Task Force will be absorbed by the Burnaby Planning and Development Department.

AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Task Force Chair and Vice Chair will review the appropriateness of these Terms of Reference on an ongoing basis with a formal review annually. The Chair and Vice Chair will recommend amendments to the Task Force, as deemed appropriate, at a Task Force meeting. Amendments will be decided by consensus of the general membership.

DEFINITIONS

Sexually exploited: youth who are taken advantage of through the exchange of sexual acts for food, shelter, a ride, drugs/alcohol, money, and/or approval.

At-Risk: Youth who, due to the presence of one or more risk factors and the absence of positive influences in their lives, have an increased likelihood of participating in high-risk activities such as being sexually exploited. "Risk factors" include, but are not limited to mental illness, low self-esteem, addiction, criminal involvement, homelessness, poverty, alienation, problem sexting, and history of abuse or trauma.

Consensus Decision-making: a group decision-making process in which group members develop and agree to support a decision in the best interest of the whole group.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Task Force approaches issues from a broad perspective, however, confidential information from a service delivery or political perspective is shared with the membership from time to time. When sharing confidential information, Task Force members are required to identify the information as such prior to sharing. Those members in attendance are required to maintain confidentiality of the shared information. Information that is identified as confidential will not be recorded in the meeting minutes.