

Attachment #1

Strategic Priority 1

Community Belonging and Connecting

Year 2 Q1 Status Report

Strategy Priority: Community Belonging and Connecting

Year 2: Q1 Status Report

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

Objectives and Outcomes	Status	Comments/issues
<p><i>Because this strategic priority area is more conceptual than other areas, the information below is presented as a whole, with all objectives and outcomes noted.</i></p> <p>Work has been initiated that supports Community Belonging and Connecting, but staff are still learning what role the City plays in delivering and facilitating this strategic priority, and what resources are available. A great deal of the work is in analyzing what is already taking place; staff in several departments undertake projects and programs that support residents feeling a sense of belonging and connectedness. Anecdotally, staff have heard from community members about the importance of the functional areas in Community Partnerships (Special Events, Grants, Volunteer Services, and the Film Office), but evaluation metrics are also not yet known and no baseline has been established.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: 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. • Objective 2: 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. • Objective 3: 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. • Objective 4: Community connectivity creates a strong sense of belonging and social cohesion and enables individuals and groups to support each other. 		
<p>Strategic Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belonging and connectedness. - Greater awareness and appreciation. - New and growing connections. - City Services alignment and support. 		
Grant Program		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff finished the review of the grant program and brought recommendations for a phased approach for improvements to Council. • Staff have been working to configure the new online platform for grant applications and prepare for the fall intake of grants, utilizing staff from another division to initiate the work. <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Phase 1 recommendations and launch the 2025 intake of grants, prepare for a staff enhancement request for a grant coordinator, and support community organizations to apply for their grants.

		<p>Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff capacity does not exist for this work, and staff from another division have been temporarily reassigned to complete the work, meaning a reduction in available capacity in that area. If the staff enhancement for 2025 budget is not approved, Phases 2 and 3 will not be implemented and fall 2025 intake for 2026 grants will not have sufficient staffing. <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The grant program is on track to have proposed refinements made in time for the fall 2024 intake of grants; however its future sustainability is not secure.</i>
Community Partnerships function		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have worked to specify a Community Partnerships function incubating within the Economic Development division, now housed in the Community Services Department. This new function incorporates the grant portfolio, special events, filming, and volunteer coordination. Staff have worked to find efficiencies and identify ways to improve this functional area. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some staff roles continue to be adjusted to meet the needs of the community. <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited staff capacity is the largest factor in determining risk for this item. There is a definite need for more staff in order to meet both the community and Council's expectations. <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Staff enhancement requests to support this functional area will be included in the 2025 budget.</i>
Special Event Portfolio		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned 2024 events have taken place; however, there has not been staff capacity to conceptualize and see new events come forward. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Q3, staff anticipate reviewing some policies and practices to acknowledge the new alignment within Economic Development and to respond to community needs. <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff capacity is a challenge, across all departments that support special events. <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Special Events are an integral part of the community. Staff capacity has impacted the ability to enhance offerings for this year.</i>

Community Advisory Assembly Pilot Project		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assembly members are highly engaged and approaching their work diligently. • Staff have observed strong relationships among Assembly members, and members have acknowledged the benefits of the diverse and inter-generational model. <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assembly continues to meet, next tackling the topic of cultural observances. <p>Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly members and staff from other divisions are starting to have questions about the future of the Assembly initiative. <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Community Advisory Assembly is meeting regularly and is on track with a detailed work plan for the year. Evaluation of the pilot project is planned for early 2025, following the end of the group's one-year term.</i>
Volunteer Services Program		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Volunteer Services program has been shifted into the Community Partnership function. • The volunteer program has completed a volunteer framework to address city-wide volunteer needs and volunteer applications have increased. <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to establish relationships with volunteers and grow the database. • Continue to seek opportunities within the organization where volunteers may be able to contribute. • Analyze options to support community organizations' volunteer needs by leveraging the City's system. Additional resources will be required, so analysis is needed before this can be promoted or formalized, though some informal sharing is occurring now with success. <p>Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success of the Volunteer Services Program is almost entirely reliant upon one full-time coordinator, leaving the program vulnerable to unplanned personnel issues. • There is a limited budget for recruitment and retention of volunteers. Administratively, there is a great deal of work to onboard a new volunteer, so retention and appreciation is an important component of the program. <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The volunteer program is growing and developing, and bringing value to the City.</i>
Summary of Progress in Q2 2024		Anticipated progress in Q3 and Risks

This is a new strategic priority area and is in the early stages of understanding what it means to the City and what falls under this area. Work has been initiated to identify interdepartmental work plan items that support this strategic priority area.	Continued work in several areas to strengthen relationships between the City and community partners, and to identify the role that the City should take in order to increase the opportunities for residents to feel connected and that they belong, in whatever that looks like to them. Risks to this strategic priority area relate to a more difficult time in identifying the resources required, and in evaluating success. As a result, this strategic priority area can easily be put off track, and with limited staff working on the portfolios that are captured in some of the areas, it means that not as much progress may appear to be made.
Financial Implications	
Staff anticipate enhancement requests for 2025 that are integral to the delivery of this strategic priority area.	
Interdepartmental Collaboration	
Throughout all projects, there is a high degree of interdepartmental collaboration, and especially so for community belonging and connecting, as all staff have a part to play in supporting the objectives and outcomes in the strategic plan.	
Lenses and Foundations - Implications	
In development of work plans, staff take into consideration the contexts – lenses and foundations – of the City’s goals and objectives related to Reconciliation, Public Engagement, Climate Action and Environment, DEIAR, Measurement and Monitoring, and Organizational Effectiveness, to ensure these are considered and form a component of the work approach. While the highlighted projects may not directly relate to the contexts, staff continue to ensure these are considered in all work.	

Instructions and Legend:

Strategic Outcome: Community Belonging and Connecting	
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.	
Status	Project performance indicators Rating Summary
Green	On Track - The project aligns with all four performance indicators
Yellow	Concerns to address - The project does not align with one or more of the performance indicator which is resulting in or could result in a delay or material impact

Red	Project Impacted - The project does not align with one or more performance indicator which could result in a major delay or inability to complete
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Performance Indicator	Description	Rating Status
Budget Variance	Operating and capital budget variances that are linked to action	Green: On or Under budget Yellow: Slightly over budget: - Less than 10% Red: Significantly over budget: - More than 10%
Schedule Variance	The variance between the actual project progress and the planned schedule	Green: On or ahead of schedule Yellow: Slightly behind schedule: - less than 3 Months Red: Significantly behind schedule: - more than 3 months
Scope Compliance	The frequency and impact of changes to the project scope	Green: Fully compliant Yellow: Partial compliance Red: Significant scope deviations
Staffing Adequacy	The extent to which the action has the correct amount of staff with the required skills and resources to effectively drive the project forward	Green: Adequate staff Yellow: Some staffing issues Red: Insufficient staffing