



## Attachment #3

*Staff Presentation to Assembly, January 2025*



# Community Belonging and Connecting Assembly Report Back

January 16, 2025

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NEW WESTMINSTER

# Community Belonging and Connecting

Community Belonging and Connecting was the first topic the Assembly tackled. We met on this topic three times, sharing personal experiences and ideas.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Together, the group developed and worked towards consensus on a set of 12 recommendations from four themes that were presented to Council in May 2024.

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

Council passed a motion directing staff: “to respond to each recommendation – including providing information on any related plans or strategies, and conducting a high level feasibility review – and report back to Council and the Assembly”.

# Recommendations by Theme: Animating the Public Realm

## INCREASE ART AND MUSIC

*Increase opportunities for interactive music and visual arts to make the public realm inviting, interesting and engaging.*

Aligns with several programs and projects: Mural Pilot program, Artist in Residence Pilot Program, Public Art Plan, and Busking Pilot Project. To achieve this: more staff, funding, and time is needed.

## INCLUSIVE DESIGN

*Transform physical infrastructure through thoughtful, people-oriented, inclusive design.*

Engineering and Parks often work together on plans and will continue to do so. A city-wide Public Toilet Strategy is under development now, as well as road re-allocation. This item takes a lot of time as development sets the pace.



# Recommendations by Theme: Animating the Public Realm

## FESTIVALS

*Revitalize year-round festivals incorporating layers of culture and history.*

Cultural observances work is just starting after the Assembly's recent recommendations and there will be more to report! Most fests are organized by community groups, and the City's events office works closely with them. The Community Events Office is focusing on free, public, no-registration-required events.

## QUEENSBOROUGH AMENITIES

*Expand sports and recreation amenities in Queensborough.*

Work is happening on this! The People, Parks, and Play Plan is under development and will outline recommendations for future parks and recreation facilities across New West, including Queensborough. A new artificial turf field is also being considered in QB. If approved, construction would take place in 2026.



# Recommendations by Theme: Expanding Facilities and Civic Spaces

## **ACCESS TO SPACES: GRANTS**

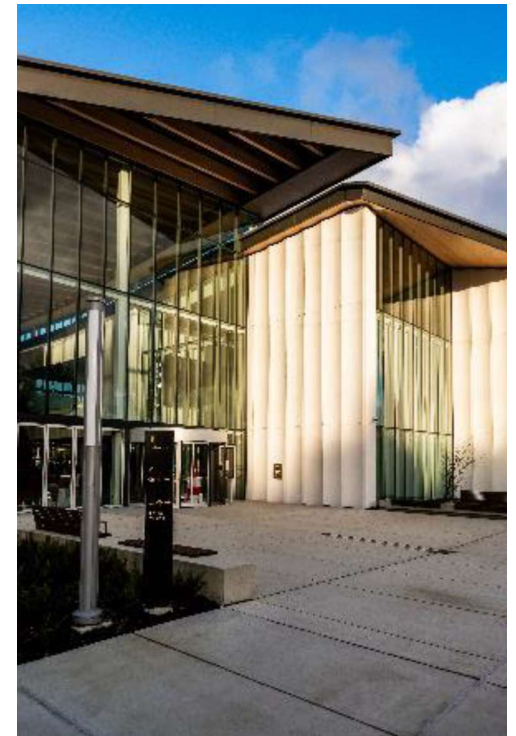
*Focus on offering and facilitating more access to free or low-cost indoor spaces and activities by: a) offering more and actively promoting grants to support organizations that are delivering events and programming that support belonging and connecting.*

Hiring a Grants Coordinator is the first step, and this new role will continue to improve and promote the grants program. A budget request for more money for grants will go to Council for 2026. In the meantime, Community Belonging and Connecting is already a criteria for the grants adjudication committee.

## **ACCESS TO SPACES: REDUCED FEES**

*b) offering free/low-cost space use in City facilities for these activities, and improving the booking policies and processes to prioritize access for New Westminster community groups to access City-owned spaces.*

Parks and Recreation will be conducting a review of fees in 2025. Anvil Centre is also working to update community access. In the meantime, several programs exist to support lower-cost use of City facilities.



# Recommendations by Theme: Expanding Facilities and Civic Spaces



## **AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS**

*Encourage developers to prioritize spaces for community gathering in amenity contributions for new developments, either in the immediate neighbourhood or in other neighbourhoods of New Westminster where there is greater need.*

In an effort to address the housing crisis in BC, the Province has made a number of significant changes to the legislation related to how cities get amenities through development. The legislation is intended to reduce negotiation through the rezoning process to fund identified amenities. The City has a number of pressing needs and the amount of contribution that development can afford to pay means the City will have to make some tough choices on what amenities to prioritize. By mid-2025, staff will seek direction from Council about which amenities to prioritize.

# Recommendations by Theme: Protecting Renter Communities

## **TENANT PROTECTION**

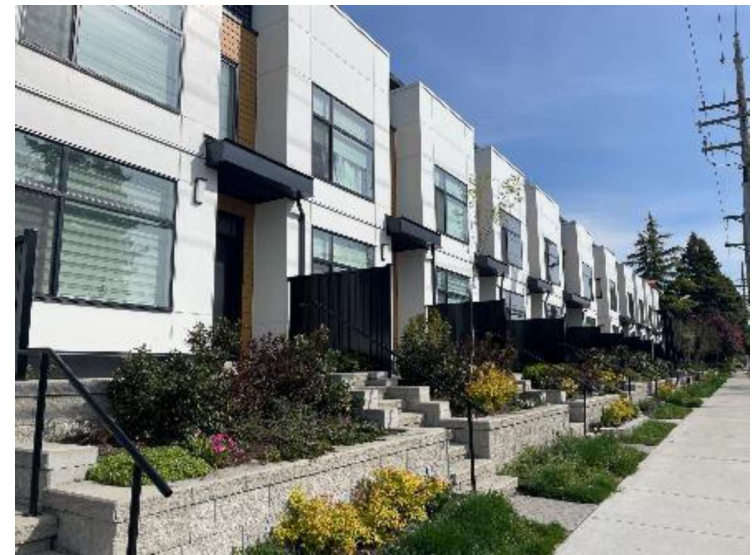
*Prioritize the update to the City's tenant protection policies to provide greater support for tenants who may be displaced from their homes, including through redevelopment.*

Staff have concluded initial engagement with the City of Burnaby staff to better understand their Tenant Assistance Policy and are now preparing an analysis. A Council report is expected this spring to present findings back for consideration.

## **DIVERSE HOUSING**

*Prioritize diverse housing types in zoning, including co-op housing, independent living facilities and other alternative housing forms.*

Work is underway on this important topic, including the recent completion or start of many new housing policies and updating existing ones. This work is a mandated priority by the Province and the City has hired many additional staff to do the work.





# Recommendations by Theme: Strengthening Outreach and Communications



## **AMBASSADORS**

*Develop a community ambassador program, recruiting residents.*

This has been an idea for several years, but in order to achieve it, there would be resource requirements including budget and staff capacity.

# Recommendations by Theme: Strengthening Outreach and Communications

## WELCOME PACKAGES

*Send welcome letters/packages to new residents to introduce City events, opportunities and available resources and where to find further information.*

There are challenges in implementing this recommendation. The City does not have access to a list of newcomers, and there are challenges related to spam legislation. Some opportunities do exist in the future: a new website is coming in 2026 and additional budget could be requested to do what the City is able within these constraints.

## COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

*Maintain a mix of print and online City information, recognizing that not everyone depends on or prefers digital media and online resources for information.*

The City currently uses a wide range of formats of communications, including several print options. Utility bills can't include unrelated info due to spam legislation. With more staff and budget resources, Communications could offer more. New display racks are coming soon at community centres.



Thank you!