

Attachment #1

**Strategic Priority 1 -
Community Belonging and
Connecting**



Strategy Priority: Community Belonging and Connecting 2025: 1st Semi-Annual Status Report

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

Objectives and Outcomes	Status	Comments/issues
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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.

Work is ongoing that supports Community Belonging and Connecting, but it remains unclear what role the City plays in delivering and facilitating this strategic priority, and what resources are available. While a staff enhancement request was approved and will be filled soon, staff capacity is still limited to meet Council and community expectations. 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.

- 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.

Strategic Outcomes:

- 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 successfully ran the 2025 Grant Intake in fall 2024, and all community groups eligible to receive their funding upfront for 2025 have had cheque requisitions submitted to Finance. The rest will be required to submit their reporting after their program or event. • The 2025 New Westminster Community Grants program had \$1.8 million in asks (with \$272.5k already committed to multi-year funded grant recipients) and \$1.01 million in available / distributed funds <p>Next steps:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the job posting to recruit and hire for the approved Grants Coordinator position, begin the work of continuing the refinements to the program and initiate preparations for 2026 Grant cycle (fall 2025). <p>Risk: The program is on track, but next steps will rely on a successful recruitment and onboarding process.</p> <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The grant program is on track.</i>
Community Partnerships function		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Partnerships function has been developed into its own division within Community Services and is currently hiring for a Manager of Community Partnerships, which was included in the 2025 budget. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This division continues to form, and is developing processes and guidelines to help shape it. <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited staff capacity is the largest factor in determining risk for this item, with emergent items such as unplanned events requiring staff attention. <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This division is continuing to form and develop standardized policies and practices.</i>
Community Advisory Assembly Pilot Project		<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assembly pilot year wrapped up in January 2025. Assembly members unanimously recommended to Council to continue with the Assembly model. Formalized evaluation of the pilot is underway and includes surveys and research interviews with Assembly members, City staff, Council, and Steering Committee members. <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation results and staff recommendations will come forward to Council in spring 2025. <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause in Assembly meetings / activity could impact momentum. Temporary resources were requested to deliver the Assembly pilot; permanent budget and staff would need to be secured if the model is continued. <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Community Advisory Assembly pilot term has concluded, and the future of this model of committee-style engagement will be determined by Council in the coming months.</i>
Community Advisory Assembly – Community Belonging and Connecting Recommendations		<p>Progress to Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Advisory Assembly made 12 recommendations to Council. Staff conducted analysis on the recommendations in

		<p>terms of what is already happening, what can be done, what requires resources, and what is not possible, and reported back to the Assembly on Jan 16.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update report was brought to Council on Feb 24. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are continuing to advance the work that is already underway related to these recommendations, and are exploring additional actions where feasible. <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendations span across numerous departments with different resource allocations and timelines. The work is not likely to occur in a linear way and it is challenging to track. Some of the recommendations involve work / multiple projects that will continue over several years. <p>Key Messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Assembly’s recommendations on Community Belonging and Connecting both confirm existing work plans and give staff ideas for further actions to make progress on this priority area.</i>
<p>Cultural Observances: Updating City procedures</p>		<p>Progress to Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Advisory Assembly developed and presented a potential framework to help guide the City in which cultural observances to acknowledge, and to what level. • The Assembly presented its recommendations to Council on December 16, 2024. • Staff have started meeting inter-departmentally to determine next steps and actions. <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are working to compile a list of known observance activities planned in 2025 across different divisions / departments. • More formally establish an inter-departmental working group to action and further develop the Assembly’s recommendations. <p>Risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited staff capacity to implement the Assembly’s recommendations. <p>Key Messages:</p> <p><i>The Assembly has given staff great suggestions to start adjusting and updating the City’s procedures related to cultural observances. Staff are starting work to implement the recommendations, and it will take time.</i></p>
<p>Summary of Progress</p>		<p>Anticipated Progress and Risks</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>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.</p>	

items that support this strategic priority area.	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.
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Financial Implications

At this time, no additional financial implications require consideration, though staff anticipate the Grants program may include an enhancement in 2026 based on the recommendations from the Community Advisory Assembly, and from the Grants Coordinator.

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

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