

## **REPORT**

### ***Planning and Development***

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** May 5, 2025

**From:** Jackie Teed, Director,  
Planning and Development  
**File:** #2664114

**Item #:** 2025-107

**Subject:** **Response to Council Motion Regarding the City of New Westminster joining the Strong Cities Network**

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*THAT the City of New Westminster enrol as a member of the Strong Cities Network.*

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#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council motion of January 13, 2025 regarding the Strong Cities Network, which calls for the City of New Westminster to become a member of the Strong Cities Network.

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### ***Council Motion***

At the January 13, 2025 Regular Meeting, Council endorsed the following motion related to the Strong Cities Network:

*WHEREAS the City of New Westminster has a focus on Community Belonging and Connecting as a core priority in the current Strategic Plan, and*

*WHEREAS division, extremism, and polarization are on the rise both locally and globally,*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of New Westminster join the Strong Cities Network.*

#### **EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE**

Existing policy is summarized within Attachment 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Strong Cities Network is a global network of cities dedicated to addressing all forms of extremism, hate and polarization. It believes that cities and local governments have key roles in preventing and responding to hate, extremism and polarization. It also recognizes that cities are uniquely placed to provide services, and to understand and engage with their communities.

The Strong Cities Network builds and strengthens interaction and connections between cities, city leaders and practitioners, to realize the full potential of local action in addressing these challenges.

The Strong Cities Network principles align well with the City's 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan, which includes Community Belonging and Connecting as a strategic priority. Additionally, the City is considered a local leader in this area and would make a strong member for the following reasons:

- the City chairs the Welcoming and Inclusive New Westminster (WINS) Local Immigration Partnership Council;
- the City is a member of the New West Spokes Committee, a community-driven anti-hate and anti-racism body;
- the City developed and is implementing the Sanctuary City Policy;
- the City and School District developed a Welcome Centre, with the City funding the Community Navigator position;
- the City coordinates the annual New to New West Intercultural Festival and Information Fair;
- the City coordinates and is implementing the Community Action Network, which engages people with lived and living experience, including related to settlement and integration, in planning and policy development processes;
- the City proclaims World Refugee Day; and
- the City developed and is implementing the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Framework.

## **ANALYSIS**

Membership in the Strong Cities Network is free and the benefits of membership include but are not limited to:

- connecting and interacting with elected officials and practitioners of member cities for the purpose of learning from each other;
- facilitating collective impact through joining forces with member cities on important regional, national and international issues related to extremism, hate and polarization;

- supporting member cities to develop and strengthen programs in response to extremism, hate and polarization; and,
- providing opportunities for member cities to participate in Strong Cities Network Global Summits.

The Strong Cities Network is comprised of hundreds of member cities from around the world, including from nine Canadian cities and two BC cities (i.e., Prince George and Victoria).

### **WORK PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS**

Based on the description of what the benefits could entail, staff anticipates that there could be staff time associated with membership. Staff will conduct monitoring to determine if this can be accommodated within the Social Planning work program without impacting other projects. Should this work exceed the ability to accommodate it within the work program, then staff will come back to Council for direction.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the City becoming a member of the Strong Cities Network. There is no fee associated with membership, and engagement in activities is voluntary.

### **OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That the City of New Westminster enrol as a member of the Strong Cities Network.
2. That Council provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommends option 1.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Existing Policy/Practice

### **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
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This report was reviewed by:  
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