

City of New Westminster
Public Attendance at Regular Meetings During the COVID-19 Pandemic Policy

1. Purpose and Principles

Grounded in the Community Charter and democratic process is the right of individuals to attend open Council meetings. During the COVID-19 pandemic there have been new restrictions and parameters placed on this access. Ministerial Order No. M192 provides Council procedural freedoms but requires that municipalities make a best effort to ensure public participation at Regular Council meetings. This policy documents the changes in procedures required to permit access to Council meetings in a safe manner that takes into consideration the physical and technological constraints of Council Chamber. Council meetings are also subject to the Public Health Officer's Order on Gatherings and Events. Based on the size of the Council Chamber and City Hall,

2. Definitions and Limits on Numbers

In this document:

“Applicant” means someone who has requested to address Council as delegate or attend a Council meeting as an Onsite Observer but has not yet been approved or refused;

"Delegate" means someone who has signed up to speak to Council as an Open Delegation during a Regular Council meeting, and can mean either an In-person or Virtual Delegate;

"In-person Delegate" means someone who has signed up to speak as an Open Delegation at a Regular Council meeting, and physically attends the Council meeting in the Council Chamber.

"Onsite observer" means someone who is attending a Regular Council meeting to view the proceedings.

"Virtual Delegate" means someone who has signed up to speak to Council as an Open Delegation at a Regular Council meeting, and uses video conferencing or telephone to speak.

At any given time, a maximum of 22 people shall be allowed to attend a Regular Council meeting in Council Chamber in person:

- Six staff members (Chief Administrative Officer, City Clerk, two or three Directors, and one staff member to assist delegates and onsite observers);
- The Mayor and three Councillors;
- One camera operator;
- One member of the media; and
- 10 people attending the meeting in person.

An additional 10 seats will be set up in the foyer to allow a maximum of 20 members of the public to attend in person.

3. Procedures for signing up as a Delegate

The COVID-19 pandemic requires that procedures be adapted to ensure safety of all participants, and take into account Public Health, physical and technological constraints. Starting in October 2020, and throughout the remainder of the State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council will hear open delegations with the following procedures. These procedures function in addition to those listed in Section 15 of the *Procedure Bylaw* (Attachment 1) and where needed modifies them:

Numbers, Participation Method and Registration

- i. A maximum of 10 delegates will be permitted at each Regular Council meeting where open delegations are scheduled.
- ii. Delegates must register and may participate in person, by video conference or telephone (Zoom). -
- iii. The Application for Open Delegations will open on the Monday one week before the meeting and close at 12 pm on the day of the meeting. The methods of registration are:
 - a. Filling out the form on the City's website; or
 - b. Emailing to clerks@newwestcity.ca; or
 - c. Calling 604-527-4523; or
 - d. Submitting the required information in the mailbox on the north side of City Hall; or
 - e. Mailing: Legislative Services
City of New Westminster
511 Royal Avenue
New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9
- iv. Applicants must provide the following information to sign up to speak:
 - a. First and Last name
 - b. Phone number
 - c. Email address
 - d. The organization they are representing (if any)
 - e. The topic they wish to address
- v. Contact information will be kept for 30 days, pursuant to the Order of the Public Health Officer on Events and Gatherings.

- vi. If registering on behalf of an organization, only one delegate per organization will be permitted, in order to allow the greatest number of people possible to speak.
- vii. If a delegate wants to show a presentation, it must be submitted to the City Clerk's Office by 12:00 p.m. on the Friday before the Council meeting. The presentation will be displayed and controlled by City staff and streamed on the City's website.

Determination of Delegates:

- i. Applicants will be declined if the topic relates to one under discussion at an upcoming public hearing as per the City's normal procedures.
- ii. If 10 or fewer delegations are received, all delegations will be placed on the agenda.
- iii. If more than 10 applications for delegation are received:
 - a. If there are 11 or more topics for the delegations, the delegations will be placed on the agenda on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - b. If there are multiple delegation requests on the same topic, and others on different topics:
 - i. The delegations will be prioritized to allow the greatest number of topics to be heard by Council.
 - ii. The individual on a topic with more than one speaker who will address the issue is the one whose request was received first, or the speaker requested by the group, with the permission of the individual whose request was received first.
 - iii. Multiple speakers will be allowed on a topic if there are fewer than 10 topics.
 - c. Council will be informed of the number of delegation requests on a topic if not all are able to speak.
 - d. In-person requests for delegation will be prioritized for people who have no other way of speaking to Council.

Confirmation of Delegate

The City Clerk's office will confirm that an applicant is approved as a delegate to the Council meeting by 1:00 pm on the day of the Council meeting.

4. Members of the Public Attending Council Chamber as onsite observers:

- i. Members of the public wishing to attend Council Chamber to observe the meeting at City Hall must reserve a spot as there is a limited amount of seating. Reservations may be requested as follows:
 - a. Filling out the form on the City's website; or

- b. Emailing clerks@newwestcity.ca; or
 - c. Calling 604-527-4523; or
 - d. Submitting the required information in the mailbox on the north side of City Hall; or
 - e. Mailing Legislative Services
City of New Westminster
511 Royal Avenue
New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9
- ii. Applicants must provide the following information to request a seat at City Hall for the Council meeting and for contact tracing purposes:
- a. First and Last name
 - b. Phone number
 - c. Email address
 - d. Reason for wanting to attend
- iii. Onsite Observers and In-person delegations will be assigned a seat either in the Council Chamber or in the Foyer of City Hall where the meeting will be displayed on a screen. Seats in Council Chamber will be prioritized for in-person delegations. Reservations will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.
- v. Applicants will be advised that only one person may attend per request. If an applicant wishes to have someone (e.g. a spouse) accompany them, that person must apply separately.

5. Meeting Protocols for In-Person Delegations and Onsite Observers Attending Council Meetings at City Hall

- i. An onsite observer or in-person delegation requiring assistance from another person to enter and exit City Hall or the Council Chamber or for interpretation purposes, may bring one person to help them. This must be indicated when applying to be a delegate or onsite observer.
- ii. The person providing assistance to the onsite observer or in-person must also fill out a registration form and note the name of the person they will be assisting.
- iii. To enter Council Chamber, anyone attending the meeting in person must identify themselves to the staff member at the door of Council Chamber, and confirm that they are on the in person attendance list for the meeting. City staff will track arrivals, confirm the COVID-19 guidelines, and ask the individual if they would like a mask, and to sanitize their hands.
- iv. In communication with people attending the Council meeting in person, it will be made clear that they should not attend if they have symptoms of illness.

v. If a person registered to attend a Council meeting in person is not permitted in the Council Chamber because of symptoms of illness staff will provide a list of ways the delegate can contact Council.

vi. People attending the Council meeting in person:

- will enter through the front doors of Council Chamber and proceed to the seat indicated by staff;
- must remain seated unless moving to the speaker's table or leaving the meeting;
- should refrain from touching any surfaces or objects unnecessarily;
- must leave the chairs provided in the marked place;
- must not leave any objects behind;
- will exit the Council Chamber through the northwest doors, and if able exit the building via the stairway on the second floor, or by using the elevator.

Attachment 1
Extract from Procedure Bylaw No. 6910, 2004

Delegations and Presentations

15. (1) Council may allow an individual or an organization to address the Council during the delegation period of the evening session of the Regular Meeting. The following procedures apply to delegations:
- (a) Public delegations and Presentations will be heard starting at 7 pm and ending no later than 8:30 pm at Regular Council Meetings.
 - (b) Council may extend the scheduled length of time for the delegations and presentations period by majority vote;
 - (c) There will not ordinarily be Public Delegations and Presentations on the Regular Council meeting agenda when there is a Public Hearing on the same night as a Regular Council meeting;
 - (d) Any person or organization wishing to appear as a delegation at a regular meeting must:
 - i. Fill out a delegation form located at the entrance to the Council Chamber on the same evening as the meeting and before the presiding member calls for the recess in e(i) below.
 - ii. Leave the filled out form in the place provided
 - (e) At the start of the hearing of delegations, the presiding member must:
 - i. Call a short recess to allow the City Clerk to collect delegation requests, copy and distribute them to Council;
 - ii. Advise of the rules of conduct and the length of time for public delegations and presentations;
 - iii. Provide a count of the number of delegations;
 - (f) Each delegation is allotted 5 minutes to speak unless a longer period is agreed to by unanimous vote of the members present.

BYLAW 7744, 2015

- (g) Council must not permit a delegation to make representations of any kind regarding a bylaw if:

- (i) an enactment requires Council to hold a public hearing before adopting the bylaw;
 - (ii) the required public hearing has been scheduled or held; and,
 - (iii) the bylaw has not yet been adopted or defeated.
- (2) Council may allow an individual or an organization to make a presentation to the Council at a Regular, COTW or standing committee meeting. The following procedures apply to presentations:

BYLAW 8162, 2019

- (a) Requests to make presentations must be made in writing to the City Clerk at least two weeks in advance of the preferred meeting stating the subject, purpose and time required.
- (b) The City Clerk in consultation with the Mayor or City Administrator or both will schedule the presentation on the appropriate agenda.
- (c) The length of a presentation should be kept brief and in most cases will be allotted a maximum time of ten (10) minutes.
- (d) No more than two presentations will be scheduled for any one meeting.

BYLAW 8162, 2019

- (e) If the presenter has a presentation to display (e.g. PowerPoint) the presentation must be submitted to the City Clerk no later than the Friday at 12:00 p.m. (noon) before the meeting.