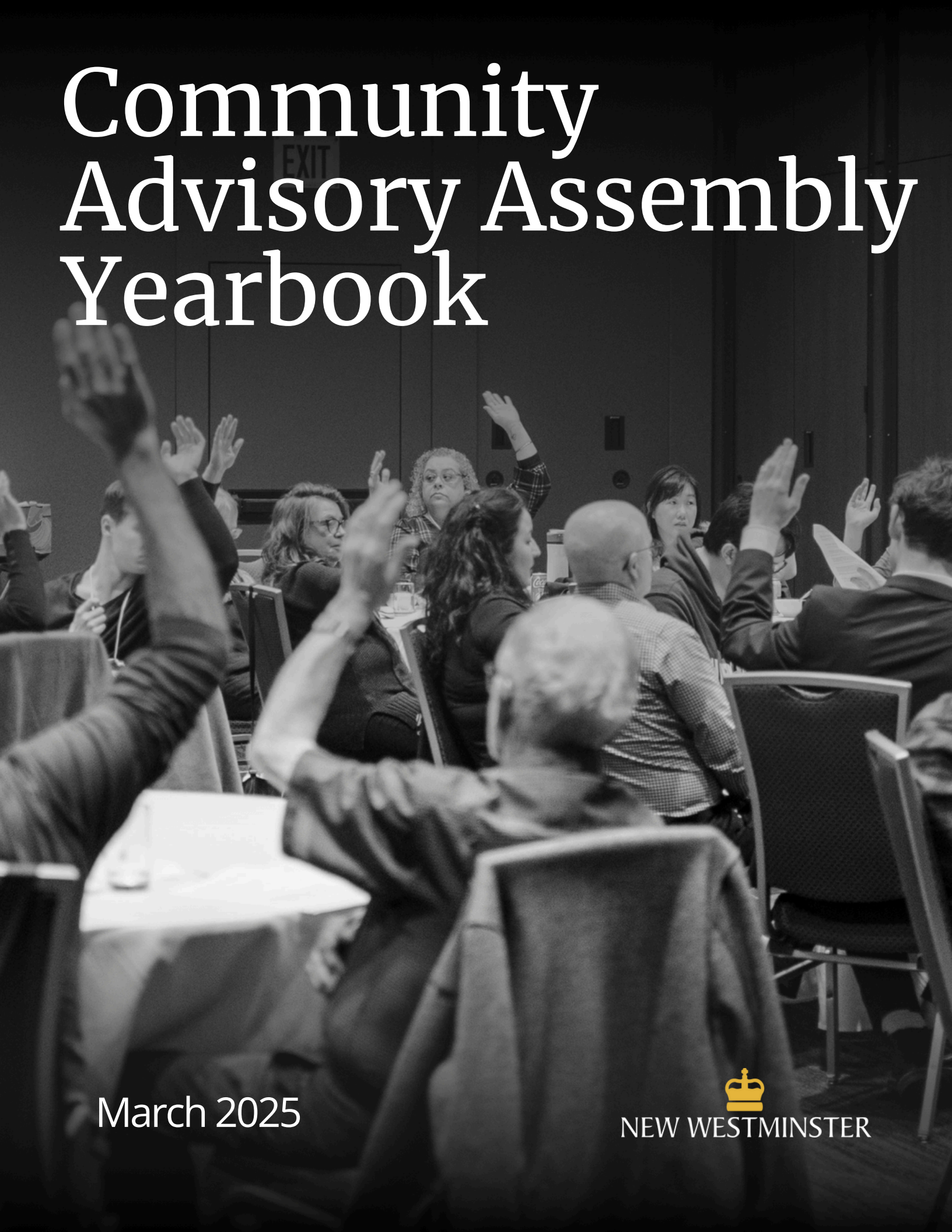
Community Advisory Assembly Yearbook

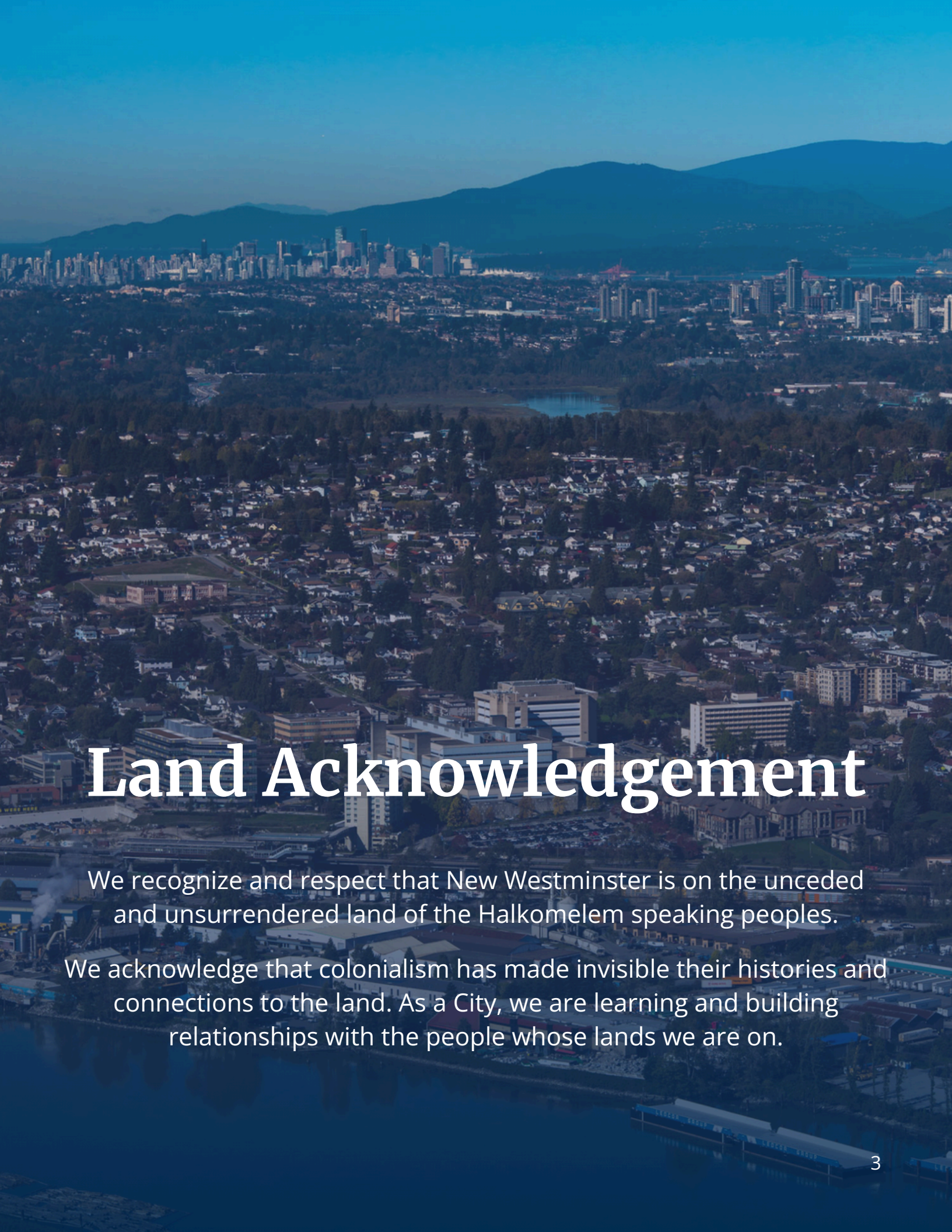


March 2025

NEW WESTMINSTER



The City had the pleasure of working with a local photographer, Diana Hojdan (dianahojdan.com), at the Community Advisory Assembly's final event in January, 2025. Some of the photographs featured in this document were taken by Diana.



Land Acknowledgement

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples.

We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

A Letter from the City

We would like to thank the Community Advisory Assembly for a year of dedication as members of this group. They came into this role as volunteers and shared their thoughts and passions to make New Westminster a better place. They also found a community among themselves, across a diverse range of ages, cultural backgrounds, genders, and neighbourhoods. We had the pleasure of getting to know them on an individual level and are looking forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.





The 34 Assembly members included:

Anne Ladouceur
Bob Petrusa
Dave Seaweed
Declan Williams
Diana Cruz
Ella Durning
Eri MacArthur
Erica Wong
Erika Sanabria Medina
Heidi Hizsa
Iyad Al Khatib
Jadyn Gibson
Jordan Van Brakel
Juno Avila-Clark
Keysa Yanez Leon
Kumar Varma
Leo Li
Mandy Chan
Margaret Wanyoike
Maria Nguyen
Marlene Mydske
Melody Kruppa
Michele Kelly
Nyomi Ross
Paul Toth
Rahul Kumaar
Raj Dhaliwal
Richard Schabler
Romy Senghera
Rosemary Sojka
Sergio Barbon
Stuart Rushworth
Taz Visram
Titus Yip

We would also like to thank Aftab Erfan, Nicole Armos, and Melvin Singh from the SFU Centre for Dialogue for facilitating the Assembly meetings and holding meaningful dialogues with members.

We are committed to continued conversations with the Community Advisory Assembly members and others. Thank you for joining this journey, and sharing the space and your thoughts with us.

With kind regards,

The City of New Westminster Public Engagement team:
Jennifer Miller, Zaria Alibhai, and Sayano Izu





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About the Community Advisory Assembly

The Community Advisory Assembly was a diverse group of New Westminster community members appointed to talk about City of New Westminster policies and projects that impact residents, and provide advice and recommendations back to staff and Council. The Assembly was a pilot project, with the pilot term running from January 2024 – January 2025.

The City tried this new model for committee-style public engagement to:

- include a larger group of residents than our traditional committees (approximately 36 members),
- meet more regularly than most other committees,
- focus on dialogue and deliberation,
- include a membership that mirrored the overall demographic profile of the city, and
- offer a variety of supports to participants to help address barriers to participation.

The Assembly's role was to advise City Council and staff across City departments on plans and actions related to Council's Strategic Priorities, and other current City projects, plans and policies. Professional facilitators from the SFU Centre for Dialogue were contracted by the City to design and lead the Assembly meetings.

For frequently asked questions about the Community Advisory Assembly, visit this webpage. Click here.

The Community Advisory Assembly Terms of Reference can be found here.



The pilot year of the Community Advisory Assembly

Council approval of the pilot

June 2023

Assembly application period

September - November 2023

Member selection process

November 2023

Launch of the pilot year

January 2024

Monthly meetings
(no meetings in July and August)

January - December 2024

Wrap-up event

January 2025

Evaluation process

January - April 2025

Council decision on the future of the Assembly model

TBD 2025

Selection process

The application period for the Community Advisory Assembly ran from September 25 through October 31, 2023, and a total of 216 residents applied. Recruitment was extended until November 13 for applicants ages 19 and under.

Thirty-six members were then selected based on demographic characteristics such as the area of New West where they live, their age group, gender identity, housing tenure (renter or owner), visible minority, Indigenous identity, and a diversity of lived experiences.

To select the Assembly members, City staff first compiled all application information into a spreadsheet, assigned a unique number to each applicant, and removed all applicants' names and other identifying information such as email addresses.





Staff from a separate department were then provided with the de-identified data. Staff applied a variety of filters in the spreadsheet to first identify the demographic groups where there were the fewest number of applicants, such as age 19 and under, non-binary/gender diverse, Indigenous, and experiencing homelessness/precariously housed. Given the relatively low number of applicants with these characteristics, these members were selected first. Then staff selected applicants who had a number of typically under-represented characteristics, such as renters, visible minorities, low-income, and experiencing disabilities.

The group was then rounded out with selections based on age group, geographic area of the city, and gender identity in order to meet the overall community profile, as per the 2021 Census, as closely as possible. Selected applicants were then contacted and asked to confirm their participation in the Assembly.

Please see Appendix A for the demographic profile of the Assembly from the 2024 pilot year.

Note: Out of the 36 members selected, 34 members completed the term.



Meeting details

The Community Advisory Assembly met monthly from January 2024 to January 2025 to discuss various topics, pausing for a summer break in July and August.

Details of each meeting are found on the subsequent pages:

January 25, 2024 - 14

February 24, 2024 - 15

March 13, 2024 - 16

April 20, 2024 - 17

May 14, 2024 - 18

June 15, 2024 - 19

September 19, 2024 - 20

October 26, 2024 - 21

November 19, 2024 - 22

December 11, 2024 - 23

January 25, 2024: Meeting 1

- 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- Council Chambers, City Hall
- Topic: City 101 and Assembly orientation
- Food supplier: Massawa Restaurant
- Menu: Ethiopian Cuisine
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

During the first official meeting, members were introduced to the City's work through a presentation, *What the City Does in Your Community,* and a group activity, *Understanding the Role of Diverse Groups and People that Support the City's Work*.

A presentation with an overview of procedures and related policies such as the City's Respectful Workplace Policy was also delivered to the Assembly. Members had a chance to review the draft Assembly Terms of Reference and ask questions. Assembly members were asked to complete several forms, including a pre-term evaluation survey, and an Affirmation of Office.





February 24, 2024: Meeting 2

- 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Multipurpose Room 4, Queensborough Community Centre
- Topic: Belonging and Connecting Part 1
- Food supplier: Columbia Street Sandwich Co.
- Menu: Lasagna, garlic bread and salad
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

At the beginning of the second meeting, participants adopted the Assembly Terms of Reference and a set of "group agreements" to uphold positive working relationships with one another (see Appendix B).

Sitting in a large circle together, a group dialogue on the topic of Belonging and Connecting was held where each member shared their stories and feelings of connection, or lack of connection, as residents of New Westminster. Community Belonging and Connecting is one of City Council's priorities within the 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Plan.



March 13, 2024: Meeting 3

- 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- Auditorium, New Westminster Public Library
- Topic: Belonging and Connecting Part 2
- Food supplier: Sushi Well
- Menu: Assorted sushi platters
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

Assembly members continued their discussion on Belonging and Connecting during this meeting. They first talked in groups based on their neighbourhood, and then divided into theme-based groups that the facilitators identified from stories shared at the previous meeting: Animating Public Spaces (outdoor), Strengthening Third Places and Facilities (indoor), and Expanding Outreach and Communication. Assembly members advocated for a fourth theme to be added: Protecting Renter Communities. Through these facilitated group discussions, Assembly members identified potential actions the City could take to strengthen community belonging.

April 20, 2024: Meeting 4

- 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Sapperton Community Hall
- Topic: Belonging and Connecting Part 3, and Road Reallocation Part 1
- Food supplier: Gino's Restaurant
- Menu: Greek souvlaki platters
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

The Assembly spent a significant portion of time at this meeting wrapping up their conversation on Belonging and Connecting. During this meeting, members refined and voted on the recommendations they developed at the previous meeting. The group reached consensus on 11 recommendations to present to Council. These recommendations on Belonging and Connecting were presented to Council on May 6, 2024.

During the last portion of the meeting, the Assembly was introduced to the topic of road space reallocation and the Active Transportation Network Plan as background information for a discussion to better understand how the City can introduce and implement road reallocation projects in a more positive way.





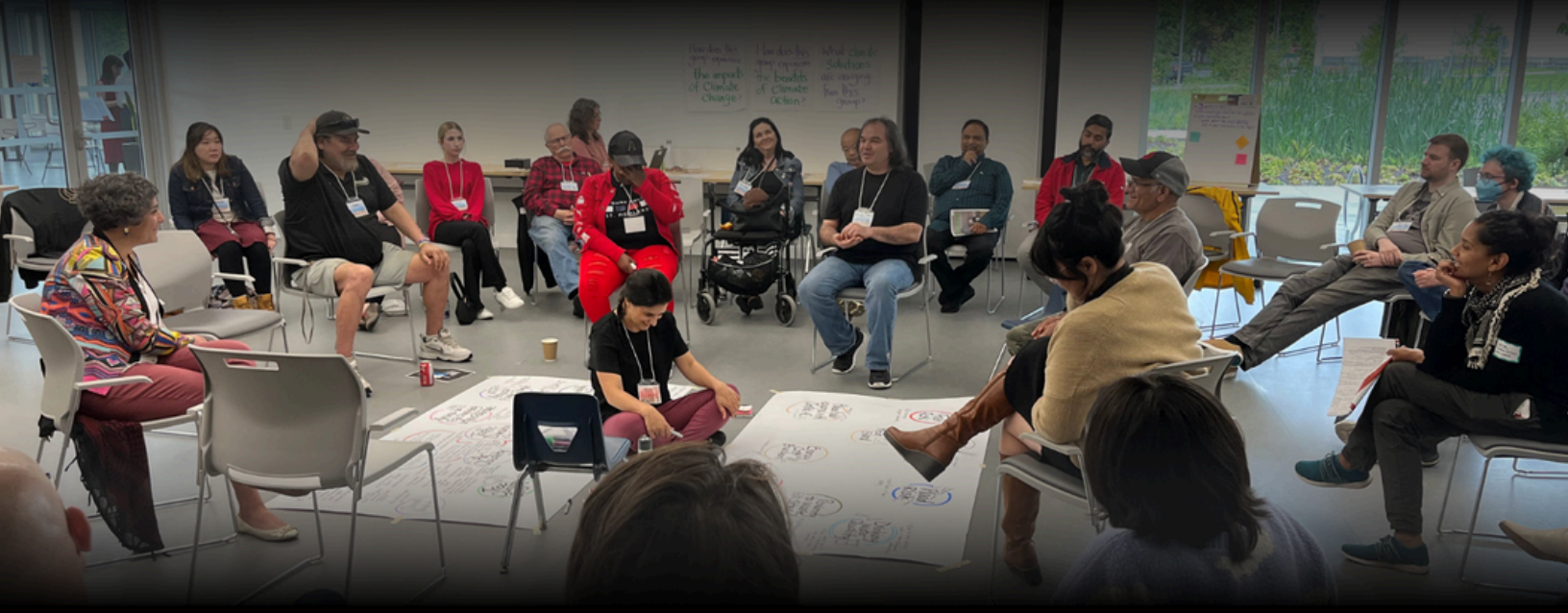
May 14, 2024: Meeting 5

- 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- Century House
- Topic: Road Reallocation Part 2 and Member Topic Development
- Food supplier: Century House Catering
- Menu: Butter chicken, vegan Thai curry, rice, salad, cheese plate
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

The Assembly began the meeting debriefing the presentation members made to Council on May 6, 2024 on the group's recommendations for Belonging and Connecting.

The first topic of discussion at this meeting was Road Reallocation. Members started the conversation by reviewing the City's policy, and then shared their concerns, wishes, and recommendations about how to increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians, encourage people to use more active transportation, and calm and slow down the traffic.

In the second half of the meeting, in small groups, members brainstormed what topics should be discussed at the upcoming June meeting and beyond. The Assembly also discussed making updates to the attendance section of the Terms of Reference as two members withdrew from the Assembly.



June 15, 2024: Meeting 6

- 2:00 – 5:30 pm
- təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre
- Topic: Climate Change and Intersectionality
- Food supplier: Taqueria Playa Tropical
- Menu: Burrito bowls
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

After approving the Road Reallocation report, summarizing discussions from the previous meeting, the Assembly discussed Climate Change and Intersectionality. This was a topic the Assembly members generated and voted on at their previous meeting.

The discussion focused on the impacts and realities of climate change from the lenses of particular lived experiences and identities: youth (under 20); racialized and Indigenous; elders; mobility, disability, physical disability, neurodivergence, and mental health; and other identities. Assembly members with these identities were asked to share their experiences of climate impacts and climate action, and what solutions are emerging from these groups.

September 19, 2024: Meeting 7

- 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- Century House
- Topic: Cultural Observances Part 1
- Food supplier: Century House Catering
- Menu: Afghan cuisine
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

At the beginning of this meeting, the Assembly revised and unanimously approved the summary report from the previous meeting on Climate Change and Intersectionality.

City staff then introduced a new topic for discussion, Cultural Observances: practices and events that are based on the traditions, beliefs, and customs of particular communities. The City of New Westminster does not currently have an official list of holidays and observances that it recognizes, and needs policies to guide decision-making on which observances to mark and at what level.

Assembly members first talked in small groups about what observances they find meaningful. Staff from different City departments then shared some of the challenges they experience in deciding how and which holidays and observances to acknowledge. With that information, Assembly members began discussing ideas for how the City could make decisions about which observances to mark.



October 26, 2024: Meeting 8

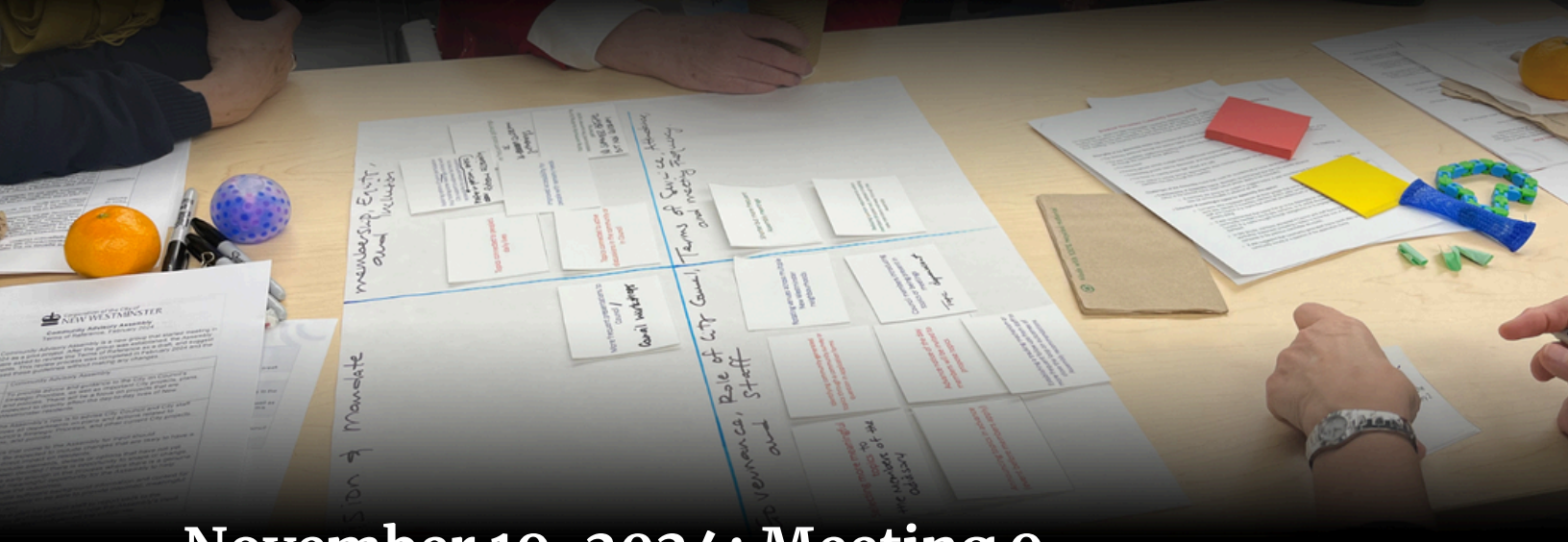
- 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- Queensborough Community Centre
- Topic: Cultural Observances Part 2
- Food supplier: Kalash Indian Kitchen
- Menu: Assorted curries, rice and naan
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

During this meeting, the Assembly members picked up their conversation on Cultural Observances and turned their attention to developing a framework for the City to use when deciding which events and holidays to observe.

Based on the initial discussions at the September meeting, the facilitators created a draft framework that outlined three potential categories of observances: City-led; City-supported; and acknowledgements or "City-makes-visible."

To test and further develop the potential framework, Assembly members participated in activities to place example holidays or events in the categories, allocate funding to each category from a defined budget, and identify a set of criteria for each category.





November 19, 2024: Meeting 9

- 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- Council Chamber, City Hall
- Topic: Cultural Observances Part 3, Reflecting on the Community Advisory Assembly Model Part 1
- Food supplier: Dan's Diner
- Menu: Roast chicken with fixings, vegan chili
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

Assembly members spent the first half of the meeting refining and finalizing their proposed framework on Cultural Observances. In small groups, they suggested any edits to the draft criteria, and came back together to gain consensus on each of the categories of observances. Assembly members voted to approve the Cultural Observances Framework Recommendations, and discussed how the recommendations would be presented to Council in December.

In the last hour of the meeting, members began discussing another topic they generated and voted on at the May meeting: How can the City sustain and expand on the Assembly model? Small group discussions focused on the question "What would 2.0 of this particular Community Advisory look like?"

December 11, 2024: Meeting 10

- 6:00 – 9:00 pm
- təməsewtxʷ Aquatic and Community Centre
- Topic: Reflecting on the Community Advisory Assembly Model Part 2
- Food supplier: Banh Mi Bar
- Menu: Vietnamese sandwiches and salad rolls
- More information:
  - Agenda Package
  - Meeting notes

This meeting picked up the conversations from the previous month, and focused on the Assembly-generated topic of Reflecting on the Community Advisory Assembly Model. In small groups, members used the Assembly Terms of Reference as a framework to organize their ideas from the previous meeting.

Members then had another small group discussion about what to keep or change in the Terms of Reference. Then, each of the groups shared their key recommendations with the rest of the Assembly. Together, members discussed and reached agreement on the recommendations. At the end of the meeting, members unanimously supported a recommendation to Council that the Community Advisory Assembly model should continue beyond this pilot year.



Highlights of the pilot year

January 10, 2024: Welcome Dinner & Launch Event



On January 10, 2024, members met each other, the facilitators, and City staff for the first time to kick off the pilot year of the Community Advisory Assembly. Some members of City Council also attended to welcome the group. This event provided an opportunity for members to connect and start getting to know each other.

May 6, 2024: Council Presentation - Recommendations on Community Connecting and Belonging

A few Assembly members volunteered to present the group's recommendations on Council's strategic priority of Community Belonging and Connecting. Council voted to direct staff to report back on related work and feasibility of each of the Assembly's recommendations.



December 16, 2024: Council Presentation - Cultural Observances Framework

Four members presented the Assembly's Cultural Observances framework. Council unanimously approved the recommendations, and staff are working to implement and further develop the Assembly's ideas for future City events and other observance activities.



January 10, 2025: Wrap-up Event



During this final meeting and wrap-up celebration, the Assembly finalized and approved their comments on the Terms of Reference from the December meeting.

Members also received updates from City staff on work being done to action the recommendations the Assembly made throughout the pilot year. Progress updates were shared on the topics of: Community Connecting and Belonging, Road Reallocation, Climate Action and Intersectionality, and Cultural Observances.

Some City Council and Steering Committee members also joined the event to reflect on and celebrate the Assembly's experiences and accomplishments. Assembly members were invited to fill out an individual "yearbook" page and share their experience being on the Assembly.



Next steps for the Community Advisory Assembly

The City is currently conducting a formal evaluation of the pilot term of the Community Advisory Assembly, in collaboration with researchers from Simon Fraser University. This evaluation process involves: feedback from the Assembly as a group; evaluation surveys by the Assembly members, Council members, Steering Committee members, and City staff who have been involved in the process; and optional one-on-one research interviews with the SFU researchers.

Based on the evaluation results, City staff will develop recommendations related to the future of the Assembly initiative and suggestions for adjustment if the Community Advisory Assembly is continued. Evaluation results and staff recommendations will be presented to City Council in mid-2025 (tentative). Council will then decide whether or not to continue with the Assembly model.

How to stay involved in City activities

There are several ways to stay involved in City activities beyond the Community Advisory Assembly.

Volunteering

The City has a number of volunteering opportunities in various areas including advisory committees, Emergency Support Services, Animal Services, and with the Public Library. Get more information about the City's volunteering opportunities here.

Be Heard New West

Be Heard New West is the City's public engagement website. Any City projects that seek the community's input and opinions get posted on this website. You can learn about the projects, share feedback online, and find out about in-person ways to participate. Visit Be Heard and share your voice here.

Public Delegations

Anyone can sign up to speak to Council for up to five minutes during a Council meeting. The topic can be about anything you'd like to share. To learn more and sign up to speak, visit here.

Appendix

A. Demographic Profile of the Assembly from the 2024 Pilot Year

Demographic Measure	2021 Census Profile for City of New Westminster	Community Advisory Assembly Membership
Geographic Area of the City		
West End	10.7%	8.3%
Uptown	34.8%	36.1%
East End	21.3%	22.2%
Downtown	19.3%	16.7%
Queensborough	13.9%	16.7%
Gender Identity		
Man	49.3%	44.4%
Woman	50.7%	44.4%
Non-Binary/Gender Diverse/Other	0.44% (province wide)	11.1%
Age Group		
19 and under	16.4%	19.4%
20-34	23.9%	22.2%
35-49	22.9%	25.0%
50-64	20.8%	16.7%
65 and older	16.1%	16.7%
Housing Tenure		
Owner	54.7%	47.2%
Renter	45.3%	47.2%
Other (unhoused; living temporarily with family/friends)	~0.8%	5.6%
Visible Minority		
Visible Minority	46.8%	47.2%
Indigenous Identity		
Indigenous Identity	3.1%	5.6%

B. Group Agreements for New Westminster Community Advisory Assembly

1. **Taking care of ourselves**: Recognizing that each person knows themselves and their body best, I will take care of my needs during Assembly meetings and respect others in taking care of their needs. I will ask facilitators for help if there is a serious barrier to my participation.

2. **Being present for each other**: To the extent possible, I will limit distractions while in the room, and will bring my best listening to try to understand the perspectives and experiences of others, especially those different from mine.

3. **Sharing airtime**: During group discussions I will be mindful of how much I am participating. If I have been speaking often, I will step back to give others space to share, and if I haven't yet shared my perspectives I will try to step in.

4. **Speaking from experience**: I will try to be concrete and specific in the stories I tell, grounding ideas in my own experience or specific evidence, and avoiding generalizations, speaking on behalf of others, and stereotypes about groups of people.

5. **Showing respect**: I will consider the impact my words and actions could have on the diverse people in the room, while assuming good intentions from others. I recognize that we are generally not used to speaking across differences, and that we are all doing our best to balance caring for each other with speaking our truths.

6. **Repair**: If I unintentionally hurt someone, or if I am hurt by someone, I will try to be quick to apologize, and eager to forgive. I will approach facilitators if a conflict with another Assembly member escalates and I would like some help addressing it.

7. **Privacy and consent**: I will ask permission before touching someone or their belongings or taking someone's picture. If I learn something interesting in the room, I will respect others' privacy by sharing the lessons, but not sharing details or names.

8. **Protecting group process**: I will work with Assembly colleagues to draft public report-backs that reflect our collective views, and will avoid speaking publicly on behalf of the Assembly or sharing what is being discussed before group consensus has been reached.


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