City of New Westminster

Public Engagement Strategy

Recommended for Adoption by New Westminster's Public Engagement Task Force November 2, 2016

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1. Public Engagement in New Westminster

Why a Public Engagement Strategy for New Westminster?

New Westminster is a vibrant and engaged city. People in New Westminster care deeply about the future of their community and want to shape it together. As a major urban centre in the heart of BC's Lower Mainland, the City will continue to face many fast-evolving opportunities and challenges. From long-time residents to newcomers, community members expect to have a say on questions affecting their lives, ranging from traffic and transit policy, to housing affordability, to community identity.

The City recognizes the need to respond to the demand for high quality public engagement—not as a nice-to-have—but as a central component of how the City does business and delivers services to community members. New Westminster is committed to investing in new ways to meaningfully engage the public in order to meet the expectations of community members and to be able to shape New Westminster's future together in a pro-active and positive way. In January 2015, Mayor Jonathan X. Coté established a Public Engagement Task Force to help put this commitment into practice. Chaired by the Mayor, the Task Force consisted of Councillors Patrick Johnstone and Mary Trentadue, seven community members and five staff members.

Task Force Members:

Mayor Jonathan X. Coté (Chair)
Cllr. Patrick Johnstone (Member)
Cllr. Mary Trentadue (Member)
Chinu Das (Member)
Daniel Fontaine (Member)
Gabriella Scali (Member)
Jennifer Arbo (Member)
Nadine Nakagawa (Member)
Nancy Shaw (Member)
Rnold Smith (Chamber of Commerce Representative, non-voting member)

Staff:

Ashleigh Young (Communications Coordinator)
Blair Fryer (Manager of Communications & Economic Development)
John Stark (Senior Social Planner)
Lynn Roxburgh (Planner)
Renee Chadwick (Manager, Queensborough Community Centre)

Community Voice:

"I want my city to feel like my city and I don't want to feel like a nuisance when I have questions or concerns."

The Task Force guided the development of this Strategy to help embed and reinforce a culture of and capacity for public engagement at City Hall. New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy provides guidance for the City's engagement practice. This includes:

- a set of principles for public engagement by the City of New Westminster;
- considerations for evaluating the City's public engagement against these principles;
- recommendations for implementation, and
- an action plan to expand upon the City's current engagement practices.

Community Voices:

"All city employees and managers who work out of City Hall must […] realize they are on the 'frontline' & their response either on the phone or email is crucial to individuals continuing to be engaged with the city."

The Strategy is accompanied by a Toolkit that includes a strategic framework for decision-making and a guide to planning engagement initiatives and selecting concrete tools and methods. The strategy and toolkit build on the Task Force's work in reviewing the City's engagement practice, identifying principles and promising practices, and soliciting input from community members on their hopes and ideas for future engagement. The Task Force further engaged specialists from the SFU Centre for Dialogue's Civic Engage program to help deliver the Strategy and Toolkit.

Promising Practice: Love Your City!

On Valentine's Day 2015, the City asked residents to share their love for the community and engaged them in a conversation about New Westminster's new Official Community Plan (OCP). The event included fun and interactive ways to get involved.

"Love your City" was part of an extensive engagement process on the OCP that many community members and staff highlighted as a rewarding experience and a way of getting diverse people together in shaping the future of New Westminster.

The OCP engagement process included a traveling community workshop and a "pop-up planning" information booth. The workshops and booths reached twelve different locations, including six community events, allowed people to participate at different times of day, and engaged them in mapping, drawing, writing and other creative exercises.

The Strategy reflects the ideas and feedback from community members, staff and elected officials who participated in the process, and it leverages existing public engagement standards and tools. Together with the toolkit, it provides guidance for designing public engagement initiatives that enable purposeful public involvement in City decision-making and service delivery.

What is public engagement?

In a general sense, public engagement comprises all ways in which the City of New Westminster interacts and communicates with community members. Meaningful public engagement, however, goes beyond standard communications. It is a transparent and collaborative way of shaping decisions, policies and plans, and as such, it supports the democratic process and helps build community involvement and ownership.

In today's fast-evolving and well-connected world, better and deeper public engagement is not just an option—it is a must for cities that want to shape their future and respond to increasing demands from community members to be part of this process.

Public Engagement from a User's Perspective

Good public engagement makes a difference for community members. Imagine the following scenarios:

Mark recently moved to New Westminster with his young family and is just starting to learn more about the community. For Mark, good engagement means hearing about engagement opportunities early, receiving background information on the issue that he can read on his way to work, and being able to provide feedback in a way that fits his family's busy schedule.

Dorota is a business owner. New by-laws, policies or construction projects can have direct impacts on her operations. As a result, she wants the City to work in partnership with the business community and be open and responsive to their ideas and initiatives.

Jara is a newcomer to Canada and identifies as gender-queer. For Jara, it is important to know that public events are safe, welcoming and give a voice to people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences—including those who are not always heard.

The benefits of high-quality engagement

Successful public engagement meets important needs for decision-makers and community members: Elected officials want to hear from citizens who are informed about the issues, understand real world trade-offs, and reflect the views of the general public rather than the "same ten people." Community members wish to be active participants in shaping their communities and to know that engagement is more than lip service, providing genuine opportunities to affect decisions.

When designed to meet these aspirations, public engagement can provide a powerful tool that compliments—not replaces—expert advice and the mandates of elected officials. The outcome is mutual learning between citizens and government, resulting in high quality decisions that are owned by the communities they affect.

Failing to engage the public in an appropriate and meaningful way has real consequences for the community and for civic governance. This includes increased conflict, loss of trust, delays in decision-making, higher costs for implementation—and often the need to revisit and revise decisions. Not least, a lack of good engagement can mean missing out on important opportunities that benefit community members and decision-makers, including finding innovative solutions for challenges the City faces and inspiring citizen action to address problems or to help build a stronger and more resilient community.

Public Engagement from a Decision-maker's Perspective

Good public engagement meets the needs of the public as well as those of the elected officials who are accountable for considering what is best for the entire community based on the wider implications of decisions, including associated trade-offs as well as financial, technical or other constraints.

How do I know …	**Good engagement …**
… that the results represent the different perspectives existing in the community?	*… makes sure that people in the room broadly reflect the diversity of perspectives and experiences in the community.*
… that participants will consider the interests of the entire community?	*… gives people a voice, while also encouraging them to listen to others and step outside their individual roles.*
… that people's suggestions don't contradict the City's existing plans, our financial responsibilities and technical constraints?	*… provides participants with a common fact base to inform their feedback and deliberations.*
… that the meeting won't incite polarization and conflict?	*… is carefully designed and facilitated to allow participants to express differing points of view in a respectful way as well as search for common ground.*

Investing in public engagement does require resources, but it typically pays off in many ways, including by reducing costs for implementing projects, reducing consultant fees, focusing spending on what the community needs the most and developing new ideas that help use resources efficiently.

The public's unique contributions to decision-making

The public's contributions complement those of elected officials, staff, stakeholder groups and experts.

Contributions of the public include:
• *Sharing lived experience* • *Judging options relative to values and identities* • *Representing own interests* • *Contributing new ideas* • *Participating in collective action* • *Supporting implementation*

Contributions of other actors include:	
Elected officials: • Fulfilling electoral mandate • Deepening democratic process • Fulfilling fiduciary duties • Accountable for decisions	Staff: • Institutional memory • Increasing understanding of legislative context/process • Providing expert research & analysis • Framing options and trade-offs
Stakeholder groups: • Reflecting perspectives and interests of specific groups, minorities • Providing topic expertise • Mobilizing networks • Representing groups with no voice (sometimes)	3rd party experts: • Providing evidence-based information • Developing policy options • Long-term thinking • Cross-pollinating innovations and lessons learned • 3rd party neutrality

New Westminster's current engagement practice

New Westminster can build upon a strong foundation to improve its public engagement practice. In a summary review provided to the Task Force, the Development Services Department and its Planning Division reported that in 2014 alone, it used a range of methods to meet the diverse communications needs of community members, including New Westminster's CityPage (print and online), newspaper and website ads; and notifications to advisory & community committees and/or community-run associations.

Promising Practice: Child Care Needs Assessment

In 2014, the Development Services Department conducted a representative analysis to determine if certain groups were adequately represented in a child care parent survey. This analysis found that aboriginal, ESL (English as Second Language) and lone parent respondents, as well as those in five neighbourhoods, were equally represented in the survey compared to data from the 2011 Census and 2011 National Household Survey. The analysis also found that other groups and neighbourhoods were under-represented. These findings prompted New Westminster to hold focus groups with under-represented groups.

Many projects also involved deeper forms of engagement, conducting open houses, public meetings and surveys early in engagement processes to explore options and gain initial feedback. Advisory committees, charrettes and focus groups were used later in engagement processes to refine options and develop specific actions. In the case of five projects, ad hoc bodies were established to help define the options, inform the engagement process, interpret the results and draft the policy or strategy, including possibly making recommendations to City Council.

Promising Practice: New West's "CityPage"

The City has been informing community members for many years through CityPage, a full page in the New Westminster Record reserved for information about important events, upcoming decisions and engagement opportunities. Both the newspaper page and the online version distributed by email are popular ways for people to stay informed. In a 2015 survey, 41% of respondents reported that they get their information from the newspaper version and another 11% use CityPage Online.

Departments also highlighted several barriers they face when engaging the public, including tight project schedules and the number of projects currently in progress. This Strategy seeks to improve public engagement by both building on New Westminster's promising practices and expanding this toolbox with new methods.

What we've heard from the public

In the fall of 2015, the Task Force conducted a public survey to solicit information from community members on how they interact with the City and what their experience is with New Westminster's public engagement. Most respondents gave the City a good, average or fair rating (33%, 30% and 12%). When it comes to limitations to engagement, lack of time (43%), lack of awareness (40%) and inconvenient times (32%) were the most common barriers reported by participants.

Community Voices:

"The City seems to have a culture of committed, approachable staff."

~

"Thank you for listening and being enthusiastic about our ideas."

In April and May 2016, the Task Force hosted two public workshops as well as focus groups with five of the City's Advisory Committees (Seniors, Multiculturalism, Access Ability, Youth, and Community & Social Issues). These discussions provided an opportunity for participants to provide feedback on the Task Force's draft engagement principles and make suggestions for how to put these into practice.

Community Voices:

"I want to know who to talk to at City Hall."

~

"Transparency and openness are very important. Residents need to have all the information available in order to make an informed decision and stay aware of issues/concerns/changes."

~

"Please tell me what I can contribute. What purpose can I offer? Please tell me what activities are going to happen and provide information ahead of time so I can think about it."

~

"Promote 'we' thinking – empower citizens to engage in a way they feel comfortable as the instigators."

Among the many suggestions that community members shared, there were a number of themes that emerged. Perhaps the most prominent message participants had for the City is that they want to be kept in the loop about how their input is being used and what the outcomes of an engagement process are. It is very important to many community members that they receive a response or acknowledgement if they approach the City with questions or feedback.

Many participants of the focus groups and workshops also asked the City to engage the public in accessible ways, which includes enabling participation for people with different schedules and with different abilities, speaking accessible language and offering multiple

channels for participation (e.g. in person, online, paper surveys). Providing information that is easy to find and access and raising awareness about City processes emerged as another important theme.

The comments and suggestions from community members have informed the principles, tools and planning framework presented in this Strategy.

Promising Practice:

Seniors Engagement Toolkit & Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy

New Westminster has taken steps to ensure that planning and engagement meet the needs of everyone in the community, including youth and seniors who are not always well-represented in public meetings and standard engagement processes. In 2011, the City produced a Seniors Engagement Toolkit with proven practices and techniques for engaging seniors, with a goal to ensure that civic policies, programs and services are more responsive to the needs of seniors.

In 2014, the City engaged youth, children and parents to develop a Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy to inform the future design and development of the city and help ensure that neighbourhoods better meet the needs of children, youth and families.

2. A Vision for Public Engagement

Community members do and should expect the best possible engagement opportunities from City Hall. Being involved in City issues and decisions matters to them. And when they share their time and energy with the City, they want to know that their participation and input is valued and makes a difference.

Working with community members, elected officials and staff, the Task Force has developed principles that set goals and standards for good public engagement in New Westminster. While the scale and design of public engagement can differ depending on topics or circumstances, the principles provide guidance for how the City of New Westminster can maximize public participation and create accountability as it expands upon its existing engagement practices.

Principles for public engagement in New Westminster

	Public Engagement by the City of New Westminster:
Diversity	Involves community members who reflect the diversity of interests and opinions in the community.
Accessibility & Inclusion	Achieves accessibility for all community members, recognizes their right to participate and values the knowledge and experience they contribute.
Respect	Creates a respectful environment that builds trust and maximizes the contributions of community members and staff.
Informed Discussion	Provides community members with accessible and timely information on City matters and processes.
Partnership	Works in partnership with community members and builds on community initiative and ownership.
Transparency	Actively communicates transparent information about process and outcomes for each public engagement initiative.
Responsiveness	Acknowledges and responds to community members' input and requests for information.
Commitment to Learning & Improvement	Continuously improves public engagement practices through measurement and evaluation, and the use of innovative methods and technologies.

What does good engagement look like?: Considerations for evaluation

How will the City know whether New Westminster is succeeding in putting its public engagement principles into practice? The table below lists considerations for measuring the success of public engagement initiatives against those principles.

Diversity	• Groups directly or indirectly affected by decisions are identified • Planning for public engagement initiatives includes concrete and inclusive measures to achieve diverse participation • Inclusion of diverse experiences, interests and perspectives is measured
Accessibility & Inclusion	• Venues, language and communications channels are assessed for their accessibility when planning public engagement initiatives • Planning for public engagement initiatives includes concrete steps to mitigate barriers to participation • Participants are offered multiple channels and formats to engage for different abilities and learning styles
Respect	• Public engagement events and initiatives establish ground rules that ensure respectful conversations • Surveys and evaluations measure the experiences and attitudes of community and staff
Informed Discussion	• Community members have access to the information necessary for meaningful participation • Information is provided in simple language and with adequate time to process • Community members have an increased understanding about how the City makes decisions
Partnership	• Relationships with individuals and organizations in the community are established and strengthened • Public engagement builds on initiatives from the community

Transparency	• The public is informed about the intended outcomes of public engagement initiatives and how their input will be used and affect decision-making • A summary of the public's input is compiled and released following each public engagement activity • Participants and the public receive information on the results of engagement initiatives, how decisions were made and what role their input played
Responsiveness	• Input provided by community members is acknowledged and considered • Community members' requests for information are responded to in a timely manner
Commitment to Learning & Improvement	• City progress towards achieving these engagement principles is measured, documented and used for improvement • Engagement initiatives integrate evaluation tools beginning in the early planning stages • Engagement initiatives apply innovative methods and technologies

3. Task Force Recommendations

To fully realize its vision for public engagement, the City of New Westminster will need to pilot new ways to engage community members and take steps to build upon its internal knowledge and capacity. To achieve these objectives, the Public Engagement Task Force has developed the following recommendations.

The Task Force recommends that the City of New Westminster:

1. Provide clear and easy-to-access information about engagement initiatives and civic operations, and improve the City's consistency in "closing the loop" with community members who provide input.
2. Pilot new methods to engage residents and stakeholders in ways that maximize collaboration, relationship building and the quality of engagement outcomes.
3. Develop new methods that bring engagement "to the people" to increase accessibility, convenience and diversity of input.
4. Select and implement engagement technologies consistent with New Westminster's Intelligent City Strategy to increase the breadth and depth of public involvement.
5. Integrate New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy into the City's strategic planning and decision-making processes, and adopt the Strategy's Strategic Framework (Appendix B) and Public Engagement Principles (Section 2) as a basis for planning and evaluating all major public engagement activities.
6. Expand the mandate of the Communications Division (Office of the Chief Administrative Officer) to oversee and implement New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy.
7. Offer ongoing engagement training, coordination and recognition for City staff to support organizational learning and improvement.

See Appendix A for a list of specific actions associated with each recommendation.

Appendix A: Public Engagement Action Plan

The Public Engagement Action Plan provides a series of measurable steps for the City of New Westminster to implement its Public Engagement Strategy, in support of the recommendations and detailed priorities developed by the Public Engagement Task Force. Dollar signs (**$$**) have been used to identify the relative cost of each action, considering both staff time and financial resources. Actions are divided by completion date: "quick starts" by March 2017, medium-term actions by March 2018, and long-term actions by March 2019. Detailed cost estimates for Action Plan items will be developed at the start of each phase.

Recommendations	**Actions**
1. Provide clear and easy-to-access information about engagement initiatives and civic operations, and improve the City's consistency in "closing the loop" with community members who provide input.	Quick start (by March 2017) a) Revise City of New Westminster website (complete). **$$** b) Work with Finance Department to mail an infographic[1] to every resident at tax time communicating the value residents receive from their tax dollars. Include an invitation inviting residents to register in order to receive email notifications of future online and in-person engagement opportunities. **$$** Medium-term (by March 2018) c) Develop corporate branding standards for public engagement activities, including templates for frequently required collateral. **$$** d) Work with Literacy New Westminster to develop plain language guidelines and conduct targeted training with key staff in each Department, including reviewing plain language guidelines for development application notice boards[2]. **$** e) Provide community members with a central and accessible web presence[3] to find information about upcoming engagement opportunities, as well as report out on past engagement results and how they impacted final decisions (beginning with engagement results from the Official Community Plan). **$** Long-term (by March 2019) f) Conduct a communications review in collaboration with all public-facing units to identify opportunities to integrate visuals and plain language descriptions in their communications materials. Provide graphic design support to make improvements. **$$$**

Recommendations	Actions
2. Pilot new methods to engage residents and stakeholders in ways that maximize collaboration, relationship building and the quality of engagement outcomes.	Medium-term (by March 2018) a) Pilot Deliberative Dialogue[4] as a model for collaborative decision-making, where participants who reflect the diversity of their community receive background information and work in small groups to develop recommendations for Council. The timeline for this action will depend upon the identification of a suitable engagement topic. **$$$** Long-term (by March 2019) b) Study the feasibility of Participatory Budgeting[5]—a process where the City allocates discretionary funds to support community-initiated projects, with community members developing project ideas with staff assistance and voting to select winning projects—and report back to Council with potential benefits and costs. **$$ - $$$$** (funds may be re-allocated or net new)
3. Develop new methods that bring engagement "to the people" to increase accessibility, convenience and diversity of input.	Medium-term (by March 2018) a) Pilot a "Pop-up City Hall[6]" kiosk, tent or truck that brings frequently required city services and information to major community events. Create a fully costed implementation plan. **$$$ - $$$$** b) Identify constituencies that are most under-represented in public engagement and create a centralized list of known relationships, communications vehicles and methods to better reach these constituencies. Examples include, but are not limited to: youth, recent immigrants, renters, low-income residents and residents with dis/abilities. **$** Long-term (by March 2019) c) Explore training "Pop-up City Hall" auxiliary staff to act as engagement ambassadors for street-level interaction during major public consultations (funded by budgets of individual engagement initiatives). **$** d) Identify or develop community-based engagement champions who can encourage and/or facilitate participation within under-represented communities. **$$** e) Create an accessibility policy to identify and support City responsibilities in mitigating barriers to participation. Provide training for staff to operationalize policy. **$$**

[3] For examples, see City of Vancouver: http://vancouver.ca/your-government/citizen-involvement.aspx) and Province of British Columbia (https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/

[4] For example, see process used by District of North Vancouver: https://www.sfu.ca/dialogue/watch-read-discover/deep-cove-community-dialogue.html

[5] For an overview of Participatory Budgeting in Canada and the United States, see: http://www.publicagenda.org/pages/public-spending-by-the-people

[6] For example, see City of Vancouver: http://vancouver.ca/your-government/pop-up-city-hall.aspx

Recommendations	Actions
4. Select and implement engagement technologies consistent with New Westminster's Intelligent City Strategy to increase the breadth and depth of public involvement.	Quick start (by March 2017) a) Initiate a pilot for a standardized online engagement platform, to be centrally supported by the Communications Division and available for use by all departments. **$$$** Long-term (by March 2019) b) Work with the Finance Department to pilot an online budget tool or calculator early in the budgeting process, for the purpose of increasing community member knowledge of City budget processes and trade-offs and to allow for higher quality feedback. This tool could also be applied to large capital projects. c) Evaluate the benefits and costs of using social media tools such as Twitter or Google Hangouts to enable increased accessibility and interaction, such as remote viewing and/or participation in appropriate workshops, and providing questions/feedback to Council. **$$** d) Work with the Intelligent City Digital Literacy Working Group to ensure that all community members have access to computers and the Internet as the City embraces digital communications and engagement. **$$$** e) Complete a feasibility study for establishing a single point of contact for resident communications—such as collaborating with other municipalities on a Civic 311 phone and social media information service, reverse 311 services allowing the City to contact local residents (e.g. alerts for water main break), or implementing a web-based question and answer system[7]—and report back to Council with potential benefits and costs. **$ (study); $$$$$ (311 service)**
5. Integrate New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy into the City's strategic planning and decision-making processes, and adopt the Strategy's Strategic Framework and Public Engagement Principles as a basis for planning and evaluating all major public engagement activities.	Quick start (by March 2017) a) Provide a Public Engagement Toolkit for New Westminster engagement staff to help create consistency in engagement practices (complete). **$** b) Implement a policy to improve consistency for planning and reporting on all engagement initiatives designated as medium or high impact/risk. This policy should require staff to: I. Submit an engagement plan for sign-off by the final decision-makers or project sponsors, answering the questions posed in New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategic Framework (see Appendix B). II. Present a summary of engagement outputs and evaluation results to the final decision-makers or project sponsors, using the public engagement principles and evaluation considerations in Section 2 as a basis for evaluation (e.g. number of participants, demographic profile, etc.). III. Create a summary of how public input impacted final decisions (including any reasons for why public input was not acted upon, if applicable). This summary should use accessible language and visuals, and should be circulated to participants and posted to the City's public engagement web presence. **$**

[7] For example, see City of Surrey MySurrey mobile application: http://www.surrey.ca/city-government/17502.aspx

Recommendations	Actions
	Medium-term (by March 2018) c) Work with relevant departments to develop a checklist of minimum corporate standards for engagement activities (e.g. notification periods, formats offered, accessibility requirements, information provided, etc.). d) Publish a concise annual summary on the City's public engagement activities, using standard indicators to evaluate performance against New Westminster's engagement principles (see Section 2). **$$** e) With reference to New Westminster's engagement principles and evaluation standards, clarify expectations for third parties (e.g. property developers, other government agencies) in conducting independently managed public engagement activities that will inform Council decision-making.
6. Expand the mandate of the Communications Division (Office of the Chief Administrative Officer) to oversee and implement New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy.	Quick start (by March 2017) a) Allocate $150,000 in new annual funding[8] to implement the Public Engagement Strategy starting in fiscal year 2017/2018. This funding would be invested in 1 FTE of temporary, dedicated staff support to build New Westminster's public engagement capacity, as well as a Strategic Engagement Initiatives Fund to support Strategy operationalization. **$$$$** b) Confirm detailed responsibilities of the Communications Division[9] in supporting and overseeing New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy, while also reaffirming the ongoing responsibilities of individual departments in planning and implementing public engagement initiatives. **$** c) Hire a dedicated public engagement staff person beginning on a temporary basis, with a target start date of April 1, 2017. **$** Medium-term (by March 2018) d) Top-up budget for the Strategic Engagement Initiatives Fund to support the addition of medium and long-term engagement priorities. Examples of potential increments include the costs of Participatory Budgeting and Civic 311, if pursued. **$ TBD**

[8] Potential line items include: staffing, strategic engagement initiatives, outreach and advertising, training, accessibility, an online engagement platform, graphic design to improve public facing information, and pop-up city hall operations. This budget does not replace existing public engagement budgets within individual departments/projects.

[9] Appendix C includes a list of responsibilities in draft form. These responsibilities are illustrative in nature only and will be subject to further direction from the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

Recommendations	Actions
7. Offer ongoing engagement training, coordination and recognition for City staff to support organizational learning and improvement.	Quick start (by March 2017) a) Identify engagement leads within each department who can provide internal coaching and support, liaise with the Communications Division, and participate in the City's community of practice for engagement staff. **$** b) Create an engagement calendar to allow staff across departments to coordinate initiatives. **$** c) Provide Public Engagement Strategy training for affected staff on a range of relevant topics (e.g. how to plan engagement initiatives, facilitation training, addressing sensitive topics, etc.). **$** Medium-term (by March 2018) d) Initiate a community of practice for engagement staff across all units to build staff capacity, reinforce organizational learning and provide professional development opportunities. **$$** e) Work with Human Resources to offer a leadership training series focused on public engagement. **$$** f) Create reference materials and build expertise to provide guidance on structure of formal engagement structures such as advisory committees, public hearings, residents' association liaisons, etc. **$$** Long-term (by March 2019) g) Work with Human Resources to update staff job descriptions and performance reviews to highlight duties related to public engagement. **$** h) Work with Human Resources to create a system for recognition and positive reinforcement of staff/departmental engagement success stories.

Table 1 presents a summary of New Westminster's Public Engagement Action Plan by planned completion date:

Quick Starts (by March 2017)	**Medium-term (by March 2018)**	**Long-term (by March 2019)**
• Revise website (complete) • Provide public engagement toolkit (complete) • Mail infographic at tax time • Initiate pilot for standardized online engagement platform • Create planning and reporting policy for high/medium impact engagement initiatives • Confirm Communications Division's oversight of Strategy and allocate new annual funding to support implementation • Identify engagement leads within each department • Create engagement calendar • Provide training on Public Engagement Strategy	• Top-up Strategic Engagement Initiatives Fund to implement medium-term deliverables • Develop plain language guidelines • Create a central engagement web presence • Pilot Deliberative Dialogue • Pilot "Pop-up City Hall" and create fully costed implementation plan • Identify under-represented constituencies and document methods to reach these • Publish annual summary and evaluation of City's engagement • Initiate community of practice • Offer an engagement leadership series • Create reference materials for formal engagement processes • Develop minimum engagement standards • Offer leadership training series • Create branding guidelines and templates	• Train Pop-up City Hall auxiliary staff to act as street-level ambassadors for engagement initiatives • Communications review • Study feasibility of Participatory Budgeting • Identify community champions to facilitate participation by under-represented groups • Create accessibility policy • Evaluate benefits and costs of interaction through social media tools • Work to ensure community members have access to computers and the Internet • Update job descriptions • Complete feasibility study of Civic 311 or similar customer service system • Create system for recognition and positive • Pilot online budget tool or calculator reinforcement

Table 1: Summary of Action Plan by planned completion date

Appendix B: Strategic Framework for Public Engagement Initiatives

Strategic consideration 1: What question(s) are we asking the public?	
What is the opportunity for engagement?	What are the risks of not engaging (more deeply)?
What is on or off the table?	

Strategic consideration 2: What are we trying to achieve?	
Raising awareness and education	Transforming conflicts
Exploring ideas and information	Contributing to decision-making
Mobilizing collaborative action	

Strategic consideration 3: How will our decisions affect communities?
What is the impact on the whole community?
What is the impact on specific areas and/or groups within the community?

Strategic consideration 4: How will the community's input affect decisions?				
What is our promise to the public? (IAP2 Spectrum)				
Inform: "We will keep you informed."	**Consult:** "We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals."	**Involve:** "We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision."	**Collaborate:** "We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible."	**Empower:** "We will implement what you decide."

Strategic consideration 5: What is the scale of engagement?
How broad should the reach of engagement be?
What is the budget for engagement and how does it relate to the overall project budget?

Strategic consideration 6: How will we follow through?
How will we report back to the community?
How will we continue to engage and work with the community?

Appendix C: Draft Public Engagement Oversight Responsibilities for Communications Division

The responsibility for overseeing and implementing New Westminster's Public Engagement Strategy will rest with the Communications Division, contingent on sufficient resources being provided to take on this additional scope. This centralized support role does not replace the responsibilities of individual departments to conduct public engagement initiatives and build internal engagement expertise.

Draft responsibilities include:

- Supporting departments in building capacity to plan and carry out engagement activities, and coordinating activities across departments.
- Allocating funding from the Strategic Engagement Initiatives Fund to create centralized engagement tools and infrastructure, pilot and operationalize new engagement methods, and support New Westminster's public engagement priorities.
- Overseeing organization-wide evaluation and learning, including documenting promising practices and recognizing the success of City staff and departments.
- Maintaining centralized, public-facing engagement information, and supporting units across the City of New Westminster to provide accessible information and a positive user experience.
- Partnering with departments in the strategic planning and evaluation of major engagement projects, including:
    - Coordinating prioritization and timing across the full suite of City engagement activities.
    - Helping to standardize the "look and feel" of engagement collateral by providing feedback on adherence to branding standards and referring departments to internal or external graphic designers familiar with the City's design standards.
    - Jointly outlining the draft purpose and scope of each engagement initiative using New Westminster's strategic framework and presenting in draft form to final decision-makers (e.g. Council, senior staff) for confirmation.
    - Advising on the design of engagement strategies using New Westminster's Public Engagement toolkit.
    - Jointly developing evaluation process and indicators.
    - Reviewing major public-facing collateral to ensure use of simple language, visual aids, and consistency with corporate branding standards.
    - Assisting in the implementation of engagement tasks requiring specialized skillsets (e.g. online engagement, deliberative dialogues, etc.).

References

In developing this Engagement Strategy, the Task Force has benefited from the following resources that provide further useful information on public engagement best practices.

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- City of Vancouver (2014), **Vancouver Mayor's Engaged City Task Force, Final Report**, *http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/final-report-engaged-city-task-force-2014.pdf*