Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

Community Advisory Assembly
Terms of Reference
Adopted August 2025

Note: The Community Advisory Assembly ran as a pilot project in 2024. Members of the pilot term were asked to review and provide feedback on the Terms of Reference at the end of the pilot. The previous Terms of Reference were updated based on this feedback. The updated document was reviewed and endorsed by the Assembly Steering Committee in August 2025, and adopted by Council in August 2025.

Committee Name	Community Advisory Assembly
Vision / Goal Statement	To provide advice and guidance to the City on Council's Strategic Priorities, as well as important City projects, plans, and policies. There will be a focus on projects that are expected to directly affect the day-to-day lives of New Westminster residents. There will be an opportunity for the Assembly to help determine which City projects are most important to provide guidance on. The City will report back to the Assembly on the feasibility of implementing the group's recommendations.
Mandate	The Assembly's role is to advise City Council and City staff across all departments on plans and actions related to Council's Strategic Priorities, and other current City projects, plans, and policies. Members will have the opportunity to help prioritize discussion topics that are proposed by City staff, Council, and the Steering Committee. Assembly members will also be invited to suggest topics, and a balance will be sought between City-generated topics and Assembly-generated topics. Topics discussed by the Assembly for input should: • Be expected to include changes that are likely to have a direct impact on residents; • Include elements, details, or options that have not yet been decided / there is opportunity to shape or change;

	• Be early enough in the process where there is a genuine and meaningful opportunity for the Assembly to help shape the outcomes; • Provide sufficient background information and context for the Assembly to be able to provide informed, meaningful input; and • Include a plan for project staff to report back to the Assembly and the community how the Assembly's input was incorporated / influenced the outcomes. Assembly members will bring their lived experience, values, stories, and expertise as residents of New Westminster to discussions.
Membership	The Assembly will have a maximum of 36 members who are all current residents of New Westminster. Membership of the Community Advisory Assembly will mirror the overall demographic profile of the city, based on the following characteristics: • Geographic area of the city (i.e. neighbourhood) • Gender identity • Age group • Housing tenure (i.e. renter or owner) • Visible minority • Indigenous identity In addition to these characteristics, the membership of the Assembly will include: • Newcomers to Canada, • People with disabilities, • People with low incomes, • People who speak English as an additional language, and • Other diverse lived experiences that may reflect the city's demographic profile. The aim is for the Assembly members to include a wide diversity of lived experiences, and truly represent the New Westminster community.
Equity and Inclusion	The City recognizes that residents face different barriers to participation in civic processes such as the Community

	Advisory Assembly. To support the inclusion of a diversity of voices and experiences, a variety of supports will be offered to Assembly members. Any direct expenses of Assembly members to attend meetings will be reimbursed. This includes the cost of transit fares, parking, and other direct costs for which members can provide receipts. Members who require childcare and/or elder care to attend meetings will receive a stipend based on the meeting length and the current living wage hourly rate. Members who are low-income, who must miss paid work to attend meetings, or who otherwise need financial support in order to participate will be offered compensation for their time. Compensation will be based on the meeting length and the current living wage hourly rate. Assembly members are not required to have any previous committee or civic experience.
Governance	A Steering Committee helps advise City staff on what topics/projects are presented to the Assembly, as well as the group's process, evaluation, and other parameters of the Assembly. The Steering Committee will include representatives from City Council, City staff, former members of the Community Advisory Assembly, one expert on deliberative processes, and the Assembly's Facilitator. The Assembly will also adhere to the City of New Westminster Advisory Committee Policy (adopted September 9, 2019, and available on the City's website).
Role of City Council	While members of City Council will not have an official chair or membership role in the Assembly, Council needs to be accountable for the efforts made by the Assembly to provide advice and guidance. Reporting on the progress of implementation of Assembly recommendations should regularly occur during the term.

	Efforts will be made to provide opportunities for relationship and trust building between Council and Assembly members through informal gatherings, such as a welcome event at the start of the Assembly term. The Assembly will provide regular updates to City Council on their work, through reports, delegations, and presentations at Council meetings and Council workshops. The Assembly members will select Assembly representatives to present their recommendations to Council.
Staff Supports	Depending on the projects, plans and policies brought forward to the Assembly, a wide range of City staff will be available to the group to provide information, technical expertise, and feedback on feasibility, including financial implications where possible. Staff are also responsible for tracking progress and providing updates on the outcomes of the Assembly's recommendations. Updates should be provided as part of every meeting agenda. The agenda for the meetings and public engagement direction/advice will be provided by the City's Public Engagement Division. Administrative support will also be provided to Assembly members by staff. This will include detailed notetaking during Assembly meetings. Meeting notes will be provided to Assembly members for review and any corrections before they are finalized. Final notes will be shared publicly, and other methods of sharing the Assembly's work with the broader community will be discussed and determined as a group.
Term of Service	To support both continuity and renewal within the Community Advisory Assembly, members can serve for up to two years. At least half of the Assembly will consist of new members each year to ensure fresh perspectives alongside returning experience. Returning members will be asked to apply again if they wish to serve for a second year. Demographic representation of the overall Assembly membership will remain a key consideration and may affect the ability to accommodate returning members.

	Former Assembly members will have opportunities to stay involved, such as through attending events and applying to join the Steering Committee.
Facilitation	Rather than appointing a Chair, a professional, external, dedicated facilitator who is not an Assembly member and who will not participate in the content of Assembly discussions (i.e. not provide their opinions/perspective on the topic under discussion) will lead the group in its discussions. The Facilitator's role is to support the Assembly in fulfilling its mandate.
Deliberation	Assembly members are tasked with providing advice and direction to the City, and in many cases, this will involve finding common ground among the membership. The Facilitator will work to ensure every participant has an opportunity to speak, and that a variety of formats and methods of collecting input are applied in meetings. Assembly members will be asked to commit to careful and active listening, and to weighing and considering multiple perspectives. Whenever possible, the group will be asked to aim for consensus: recommendations or advice that all members can accept. The root of consensus is "consent" – this is different from full agreement or majority rule. When consensus is not possible, minority opinions will still be recorded and acknowledged in meeting notes, reports to Council, and other methods of reporting on the Assembly's work.
Quorum	Regular attendance and active participation of Assembly members is a high priority, given the aim of the group to provide advice as a representative cross-section of the community. A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the Assembly members (24 out of the 36 members). If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes following the meeting start time, the members who are present may decide to adjourn the meeting, or continue to meet with the understanding that no decisions or consensus can be reached.

Attendance	Members will be asked to tell City staff in advance whether they will be able to attend a meeting. Assembly members will be asked to do their best to attend meetings, with exceptions made for unexpected life events. If a member does not stay in communication over two missed meetings, they will be notified by staff that they have the option of resuming communications, withdrawing from the Assembly, or being subject to removal from the Assembly. Efforts should be made by staff to understand the member's circumstances and to gather any feedback they might have about how the Assembly process is going for them. If a member remains uncommunicative, staff will recommend to Council that they be removed from the Assembly. Any members who withdraw from the Assembly should be offered an exit interview with City staff or the Facilitator. With consent, feedback from any such interviews will be incorporated in the term-end evaluation findings. After the first four months of the Assembly term, members who leave or are removed from the Assembly will not be replaced by new members, and instead the size of the group would be adjusted down for that term to reflect active membership. This is in recognition that key learning takes place and relationships are formed in the initial meetings of the term. Quorum requirements would also be adjusted to reflect the new total membership.
Meeting Frequency	The Assembly will meet approximately once per month. Meetings will alternate between weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. The meeting schedule will be established and shared as part of the recruitment process for the Assembly, with the expectation that applicants have reviewed the meeting dates and can confirm general availability to participate according to the schedule. In extraordinary circumstances, and with the permission of the Mayor/Corporate Officer, the Assembly may meet more frequently and/or be included in other City events and engagements as needed.

Evaluation	Assembly members will be invited to participate in pre- and post-term evaluations surveys to share feedback on the Assembly process, experience, and outcomes. Evaluation results will be shared with participants, Council, and the broader community.
Rules of Procedure	Committee procedures are governed by the current version of the City's Council procedure bylaw. The City also has an established set of "Rules of Conduct" for advisory groups; however, for the Community Advisory Assembly, the group will co-develop a set of meeting guidelines to ensure respectful and productive discussions.