Daniel Fontaine
Mayor

November 16, 2026

Councillor Tasha Henderson
City of New Westminster

Re: Council Responsibilities, Committee Assignments and Strategic Priorities — 2026–2030

Dear Tasha,

As we begin another four-year term on New Westminster City Council together, I want to thank you for your willingness to take on several important leadership responsibilities. I look forward to working collaboratively with you as we advance the priorities of our community and build a better New Westminster.

One of my priorities as Mayor is to ensure that every member of Council has a meaningful opportunity to contribute their experience, interests and talents toward advancing the priorities of our community.

While we may approach certain issues from different perspectives, I believe we share a commitment to public service and to making New Westminster a welcoming, inclusive and successful city. Our residents expect us to work together constructively, find common ground wherever possible and focus on delivering results.

This approach is not about creating a municipal cabinet or assigning executive authority to individual Councillors**.** Rather, it is about providing greater clarity to Council, City staff and the public regarding the initiatives and policy areas that individual Councillors will help champion over the next four years.

Our objective is to establish a collaborative working relationship with the City's professional public service, ensuring that staff understand our collective priorities and which elected officials have been asked to take a particular interest in advancing them. All formal decisions and directions to staff will continue to flow through Council and the City's established administrative processes.

1. Council Committee and Board Responsibilities

Based on our discussions and the Council appointments process, your responsibilities include:

- **Planning, Housing and Public Engagement Committee** — Chair. You will help guide the establishment of this new committee, with particular emphasis on housing policy, responsible development, community planning and meaningful public engagement. The committee's formal establishment and mandate remain subject to Council approval of its Terms of Reference.
- **New Westminster Public Library Board** — Council Representative**.** You will contribute to the governance and strategic direction of the City's public library services, including opportunities to strengthen library accessibility, programming and facilities.
- **City–School District No. 40 Working Group** — Member. You will work alongside me and our School District partners to strengthen collaboration on shared priorities, including facilities, community services, youth programming and opportunities for coordinated planning.
- **Community Heritage Commission** — Member. You will contribute to discussions concerning heritage preservation and the protection and celebration of New Westminster's historic character.
- **Council/Fraser River Discovery Centre Board Lease Advisory Committee** — Member. You will participate in discussions concerning the future of this important waterfront facility and its relationship with the City.

I also appreciate your willingness to serve as Acting Mayor during January and February through to 2030, in accordance with the approved rotation.

These responsibilities provide an important opportunity to contribute to housing, community planning, public engagement, education, heritage preservation and the long-term development of municipal services.

2. Neighbourhood Liaison Responsibilities

An important part of our new approach will be strengthening the relationship between City Hall and our neighbourhood and residents' associations.

I am pleased to confirm that you will serve as the primary Council liaison for:

- Brow of the Hill Residents' Association
- Connaught Heights Residents' Association

You will also serve as the alternate Council liaison for the Moody Park Residents' Association and Quayside Community Board.

In these roles, I encourage you to maintain regular communication with neighbourhood representatives, attend meetings when practical, listen to emerging concerns and help ensure that community priorities are understood by Council and the appropriate City departments.

These assignments are intended to strengthen communication, not limit residents' access to other members of Council.

3. Councillor's Signature Project — Advancing a New Downtown Public Library

As part of our initial discussions, I invited each Councillor to identify a major project or initiative they are personally passionate about advancing during this four-year term. These are intended to be meaningful initiatives that may require sustained political leadership, advocacy, partnerships and the active support of the Mayor's Office to bring across the finish line.

I believe every Councillor should have the opportunity to champion a project that reflects their own priorities and leaves a lasting, positive legacy for our community.

You identified an important and ambitious initiative: advancing the development of a new Downtown public library that better serves the needs of our growing community.

I am pleased to support this as your signature project for the 2026–2030 term.

Signature Project — Developing a Shovel-Ready New Downtown Library

As Downtown New Westminster continues to grow, it is important that our public infrastructure and community amenities keep pace with the needs of residents.

A new Downtown library could become an important community gathering place, offering accessible learning resources, digital services, programming for children and families, study spaces and opportunities for residents of all ages to connect.

I would like to work with you to champion a coordinated initiative focused on:

- Developing a clear vision and preliminary concept for a new Downtown public library, informed by the needs of residents and the expertise of the New Westminster Public Library Board.
- Exploring suitable locations, including opportunities to integrate a library into a broader civic, cultural or community facility.
- Engaging residents, community organizations, library users and other stakeholders to help shape the facility's design and programming.
- Identifying potential partnerships with senior governments, educational institutions, community organizations and other funding partners.
- Developing realistic capital cost estimates, operating projections and a long-term financial strategy.
- Advancing the necessary planning, design and approvals to bring the project to a shovel-ready stage.

I would also encourage you to explore how this initiative could complement the proposed Downtown–Quayside Community Hub being championed by Councillor Rick Folka and the Anvil Centre revitalization project being advanced by Councillor Maryann Morrison.

While each project will have its own objectives and leadership, there may be opportunities to coordinate facilities planning, programming and capital investments to create a stronger network of Downtown community amenities.

Our shared objective should be to have a clearly defined, financially credible and shovel-ready plan for a new Downtown public library before the conclusion of our Council term in October 2030, with significant progress toward securing the necessary capital funding.

If opportunities arise to advance construction sooner, I would welcome working with you to pursue them.

My Commitment to Your Signature Project

Tasha, I want to be clear that this is not simply a project I am encouraging you to pursue independently.

As Mayor, I am committed to working alongside you to help bring this initiative across the finish line. That includes providing political leadership and advocacy, helping build support among our Council colleagues, engaging community and external partners, and supporting efforts to secure the resources necessary for implementation.

I recognize that developing a new Downtown library will involve important decisions concerning location, capital funding, long-term operating costs and competing municipal priorities.

My commitment is to work collaboratively with you to navigate these challenges, identify practical solutions and maintain momentum throughout the term.

I would welcome an early discussion with you, the City Manager and appropriate library representatives to establish a preliminary project roadmap and identify the support required to advance this initiative.

4. Mayor's Priority Project — Advancing Supportive Housing and Reducing Homelessness

In addition to your committee, neighbourhood and signature project responsibilities, I would like you to take a particular leadership interest in advancing one of New Westminster's most pressing social and community challenges: securing senior government funding and advancing construction of a shovel-ready supportive housing project that makes a measurable contribution to reducing homelessness in our city.

Homelessness is a complex challenge that affects individuals experiencing housing insecurity, local businesses, neighbourhoods and the broader community.

While municipalities cannot address this issue alone, I believe New Westminster has an important role to play in working with senior governments, housing providers, health authorities and community organizations to deliver practical, sustainable solutions.

I would like you to champion a coordinated initiative focused on:

- Working with City staff and appropriate housing partners to identify an existing shovel-ready supportive housing proposal, or the most advanced viable project capable of moving toward construction during this Council term.

- Engaging BC Housing, the provincial government, the federal government and other potential funding partners to secure the capital and operating commitments necessary for implementation.
- Working with experienced non-profit housing providers and community service organizations to develop an appropriate operating and support-services model.
- Ensuring that any proposed development incorporates suitable on-site supports, effective property management, neighbourhood engagement and measures that contribute to the safety and well-being of residents and the surrounding community.
- Identifying opportunities to coordinate housing supports with health care, mental health, substance-use treatment, employment and other relevant services.
- Establishing measurable outcomes that demonstrate how the project contributes to reducing homelessness and improving housing stability in New Westminster.
- Advancing the necessary approvals, partnerships and funding arrangements to enable construction to begin as soon as reasonably possible.

I recognize that supportive housing projects require careful planning, meaningful community engagement and sustained financial commitments from senior governments.

I also believe that the success of this initiative should be measured not simply by the number of housing units proposed, but by the number of people who are successfully housed and supported over time.

My expectation is that by October 2030, we will have secured the necessary senior government commitments and commenced construction of a viable supportive housing development, with a clear framework for measuring its contribution to reducing homelessness in New Westminster.

Where opportunities exist to accelerate delivery, I would welcome working with you and our external partners to pursue them.

I would appreciate your assistance in working with me, the CAO and the appropriate housing and community service partners to establish an initial project roadmap and begin the necessary advocacy.

5. Working Together and Delivering Results

Tasha, these assignments are intended to provide a clear framework for collaboration, accountability and results over the next four years.

They are not intended to change the collective authority of Council or the City Manager's responsibility for directing municipal staff and managing City operations.

I will be sharing these letters with the City Manager so that the senior leadership team has a clear understanding of the committees, neighbourhoods and major projects each Councillor has been asked to champion.

My expectation is that this will help facilitate appropriate staff coordination, strengthen communication and ensure that our shared priorities receive the attention necessary to move forward.

I would also like us to establish reasonable milestones for your signature project and the Mayor's priority project, with opportunities to review progress periodically throughout the term.

These assignments may be updated from time to time as Council priorities evolve, projects are completed or new opportunities emerge. Any changes requiring formal Council approval will be brought forward through the appropriate process.

Above all, I want this approach to reflect a spirit of teamwork and mutual support. Every member of Council has something valuable to contribute, and I believe we will accomplish far more by working together than by working independently.

While we may not always agree on every issue, I believe that respectful debate, constructive collaboration and a shared commitment to the public interest will serve our community well.

Thank you again for your commitment to public service and your willingness to take on these important responsibilities. I value the perspective and experience you bring to Council, and I look forward to working with you on initiatives that will make a meaningful difference for New Westminster residents.

By October 2030, I hope we can look back with pride at the tangible improvements we have delivered together for the people of New Westminster.

Sincerely,

Mayor Daniel Fontaine, ICD.D

Daniel Fontaine
Mayor
City of New Westminster

cc: Chief Administrative Officer / City Manager
cc: Corporate Officer

Office of the Mayor
Corporation of the City of New Westminster
511 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, BC • Canada V3L 1H9 **T** (604) 527 4522 **F** (604) 527 4594
www.newwestcity.ca