Mayor's Youth Climate Leadership Team (YCLT)
Minutes

Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
New Westminster City Hall, Council Chamber
511 Royal Avenue

PRESENT:	
Mayor Patrick Johnstone	Facilitator
Silisha Ali	Youth Services Coordinator
Leya Behra	Deputy Director of Climate Action
Erika Mashig	Manager, Parks and Open Space Planning, Design + Construction
Laura Sampliner	Manager, Climate Action
Paolo Zenone	Youth Centre Supervisor
Juno Avila-Clark	YCLT Member
Elizabeth Cavanagh	YCLT Member
Uliana Chernykh	YCLT Member
Ruqaiyah Clouden	YCLT Member
Shreeya Jagadeesh	YCLT Member
Curtis Lever	YCLT Member
Leo Li	YCLT Member
Max MacInnes-Cann	YCLT Member
Lili Mizuno	YCLT Member
Justine Rosendo	YCLT Member
Mahsa Soltani	YCLT Member
Lucille Stathis	YCLT Member
Jasmine Claypool	Notetaker, Raincoast Ventures Ltd.
REGRETS:	
Irene Lu	YCLT Member

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Patrick Johnstone opened the meeting at 4:02 p.m. and welcomed participants. A land acknowledgement was offered, recognizing that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered lands of the Halkomelem-speaking peoples.

A round of self-introductions was followed by ice-breaker activities led by Paulo Zenone, Youth Centre Supervisor.

2. City of New Westminster Staff Presentations

Mayor Johnstone informed that the age range of the Members was 15-24 years old, which aligns with the United Nations' youth definition. It was explained that the first meetings will focus on getting to know one another, understanding what can be done, and developing ideas for potential action. The Terms of Reference were also mentioned.

Leya Behra, Deputy Director of Climate Action, reported on the 2019 Climate Emergency declaration that resulted in the development of Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action, aimed to help envision what the City would look like if targets were achieved. Leya Behra reviewed the following Seven Bold Steps:

1. Carbon Free Corporation
2. Car Light Community
3. Carbon Free Homes and Buildings
4. Pollution Free Vehicles
5. Carbon Free Energy
6. Robust Urban Forest
7. Quality People-Centered Public Realm.

Leya Behra highlighted strategies to meet the goals, including BC Building Code reviews, development of a climate action decision-making framework, defining the sphere of influence, multi-lingual materials, advocacy, and education and awareness. The shift to adaptation and prioritizing resilience were mentioned, while plans to gather the City's input on an adaptation plan were noted.

Erika Mashig, Manager, Parks and Open Space Planning, Design + Construction, reported on a tree canopy coverage project which measured 18% coverage in the City in 2015 and advised on the City's current 27% goal. While the 2024 project of planting 2,400 trees in parks is nearly complete, the planting of 6,300 trees on streets and boulevards will be underway soon.

Mayor Johnstone acknowledged challenges related to the second bold step, "Car Light Community" which aims to reallocate 10% of the City's street space to places for people.

Mayor Johnstone outlined the three levels of government and highlighted their clearly defined responsibilities.

3. Help Yourself to Dinner and Voting Exercise

Silisha Ali, Youth Services Coordinator, invited YCLT to eat and participate in a voting exercise to identify which of the Seven Bold Steps is most interesting to them. Discussion ensued, and the following was highlighted:

- In response to a question, it was noted that the Seven Bold Steps were developed through staff collaboration

- We want to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and having targets for 2030 is a way of measuring progress at the one-third mark
- In response to a question about BC Building Code authority, it was noted that there is a progressive Building Code in BC and that cities can, and New Westminster did, opt into a performance-based Code
- One of the challenges with road reductions is balancing the needs of the communities
- Suggestion that roads could be temporarily designated as other spaces during non-peak use times
- In response to a question, it was noted that Urban Forest and Carbon Free Corporation targets are progressing while other targets are difficult to measure.

Four key elements – Mitigation, Adaptation, Advocacy, and Education – were mentioned, with descriptions provided for each. Members were encouraged to consider which category an action would fall into.

4. Discuss Results of Voting Exercise

Preliminary voting results showed priorities for Robust Urban Forest, Carbon Free Corporation, Car Light Community, and Quality People-Centered Public Realm.

A question was raised about a smart grid, and staff responded, highlighting elements of the City's large-scale capital improvement project, including an advanced metering system, substation upgrades with interconnectivity, and improved solar integration. It was mentioned that the efforts will create a smarter grid, improve energy tracking, and ensure power reliability.

It was noted that projects could overlap into more than one of the Seven Bold Steps.

In response to a question about the absence of Indigenous perspective, it was noted that the creation of the Seven Bold Steps preceded the City's reconciliation journey. It was noted that if Indigenous knowledge and involvement are important to the group/participants, then it should be brought into the conversation.

During additional discussion, comments were offered regarding the simplicity of the Robust Urban Forest, competition between greenery and solar applications for roof space, and the absence of water use, solid waste, or recycling mitigations. In response, the YCLT were advised that they need not limit themselves to the established Seven Bold Steps.

Additional comments were offered regarding the lack of new space for parks, an opinion that existing space should be used for native plants, and a recommendation that waste management be included, given Canada's high waste production output.

5. Wrap Up

Mayor Johnstone outlined next steps, asking Members to consider the way forward.

Action (01): *The City will report back to the Youth Climate Leadership Team regarding the voting results of the Seven Bold Steps prioritization exercise during the November 20, 2024, meeting.*

Action (02): *It was requested that the Youth Climate Leadership Team members consider and report back regarding the most effective way to collaborate and engage all Members in discussions, global projects underway, and positive/negative takeaways from the November 20, 2024, meeting.*

The meeting concluded at 6:02 p.m.