

**TO:** MAYOR & COUNCILLORS  
**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
**SUBJECT:** **BURNABY COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY**  
**PURPOSE:** To provide Council with an overview of the Burnaby Community Assembly process.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** staff be directed to include the recommendations of the Burnaby Community Assembly as input in the Phase 3 engagement for Burnaby 2050.

## 1.0 POLICY SECTION

The receipt of this report for information is pursuant to:

- City of Burnaby Equity Policy (1994, updated 2020);
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011);
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016);
- Burnaby Climate Action Framework (2020);
- Burnaby Official Community Plan (1998); and
- Local Government Act (2015).

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of September 20, 2021 Burnaby City Council authorized City staff to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue (CfD) and Vancity for the Urban Resilient Futures (URF) Initiative. This three-year project responds to Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and has the overarching goal of engaging community residents and other stakeholders to accelerate climate action via direct local engagement. Funding for the project included a \$150,000 contribution (over three years) from the City of Burnaby with additional funding and in-kind resources contributed by Vancity and the CfD. The project was further supported via a generous financial contribution from an anonymous donor, and from the Renovate the Public Hearing project (RPH)<sup>1</sup>. The URF consists of three components: the Zero-Emission Buildings Retrofit Taskforce<sup>2</sup>, the Neighbourhood

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please visit: [www.renovatethepublichearing.ca](http://www.renovatethepublichearing.ca)

<sup>2</sup> For more information, please visit: [www.sfu.ca/dialogue/what-we-do/initiatives/urban-resilient-futures/retrofit-task-force-final-report.html](http://www.sfu.ca/dialogue/what-we-do/initiatives/urban-resilient-futures/retrofit-task-force-final-report.html)

Climate Action and Awareness Projects<sup>3</sup>, and the Burnaby Community Assembly (the 'Assembly') on Livable and Resilient Neighbourhoods<sup>4</sup>.

The Assembly is a representative group of 40 Burnaby residents who met between February and June 2024 over a period of 7 full-day sessions to learn, hear from experts and community voices, work through trade-offs, and develop recommendations for Burnaby 2050.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the URF work provided the CfD with editorial autonomy for the Assembly work. However, CfD staff worked in close partnership with relevant City staff to ensure that the Assembly engaged in an evidence-based process supporting the Burnaby 2050 development process and timeline while complementing City-led engagement activities. This process is being further supported by the Civic Innovation Lab (CIL), which is a non-profit society formed in 2022 by founding partners the COB and SFU. The mandate of the CIL is to research and develop innovative solutions to civic issues and challenges.

Via the MOU, Burnaby City Council has committed to receiving and responding to the recommendations submitted by the Assembly.

### **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

The 7 sessions of the Assembly were designed to follow an arc from learning and visioning on a range of associated topics through a deliberative dialogue process to arrive at its recommendations. COB and CIL staff supported the work of the Assembly throughout the sessions by providing technical background information and reviewing prepared materials to support Assembly members in considering the often complex factors that impact local government planning decisions.

Attachment 1 outlines the policy areas for which assembly members have developed recommendations. These recommendations are being formally presented to Burnaby City Council by Assembly representatives, supported by CfD staff, at its regular meeting of July 22, 2024.

#### **3.1 The Burnaby Community Assembly Process**

The activities and process taken by the Burnaby Community Assembly is described briefly in Attachment 2. This included a mix of learning opportunities, personal reflection, group discussion, deliberation, and decision-making activities. In addition, there were two public community engagement periods where the Assembly's thinking was shared with the broader public and feedback sought through a survey and other methods. Through the process, members learned about the many policy topic areas that are considered in an Official Community Plan as well as came to understand the complexity

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, please visit: [www.sfu.ca/dialogue/what-we-do/initiatives/urban-resilient-futures/climate-action-fellowship.html](http://www.sfu.ca/dialogue/what-we-do/initiatives/urban-resilient-futures/climate-action-fellowship.html)

<sup>4</sup> For more information, please visit: [www.burnabyassembly.ca](http://www.burnabyassembly.ca)

of local government decision-making. They also developed their skills in democratic dialogue, listening, and consensus-building.

**3.2 Complementing Burnaby 2050 Public Engagement**

Burnaby 2050 is a project to develop a new Official Community Plan that will guide and manage Burnaby’s growth over the next 25 years. The process began when Council received a report at its June 20, 2022 meeting entitled “Official Community Plan (OCP) – Project Initiation, Process, and Upcoming Next Steps” which described the scope of the OCP update as well as the timeline and engagement objectives. That report outlined a four-phase engagement strategy (Figure 1).

*Figure 1: Four Phases of Burnaby 2050*



During the Phase 3 public engagement period for the OCP, staff presented preliminary Policy Directions and potential growth scenarios to the community for feedback. From April to June 2024, staff held engagement activities including distributing a Policy Guide, public surveys on different policy topics, in-person and virtual open houses, community partner sessions, workshops for Indigenous peoples living in Burnaby, a Youth Advisory Council meeting, and host Nations referrals.

While these OCP public engagement activities provide opportunity for broad community input, with many tens of thousands of community members engaged over the multiple phases of consultation, the Community Assembly complements these processes by allowing for in-depth discussions and consensus-building on specific topics.

**3.3 Next Steps**

The Assembly has concluded with a set of recommendations, presented on July 22, 2024 for Council’s consideration in relation to the development of Burnaby 2050. These recommendations are intended to be considered alongside other engagement data as public input, enriching the decision-making process and ensuring the final OCP reflects the diverse perspectives and priorities of the Burnaby community. An assessment of the Assembly’s recommendations will be included as part of the summary report on the Phase 3 OCP engagement process.

The Assembly is proposed to be reconvened when the draft text of the OCP is released for public engagement in order to review how the submitted recommendations shaped the presented content and to provide final feedback.

**4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Community Assembly augmented its work with two periods of wider community consultation, organized and directly hosted by the Assembly with support from CfD staff. The first period of community engagement took place in late March/early April, culminating in a public workshop held on April 9, 2024, at Bonsor Recreation Complex with approximately 50 members of the public in attendance.

The second period of consultation took place in May 2024, focusing on engagement with a broad range of community groups in their first languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Korean, Spanish, Farsi, Arabic, Kiswahili, and Somali. The first Community Assembly engagement period also featured an online public survey. Findings from these community engagement efforts have been provided to the City of Burnaby to complement the Burnaby 2050 public engagement data.

The overarching Burnaby 2050 community engagement process has included multiple phases as noted in Section 3.1 above. A final phase of consultation, ‘Confirming’, is anticipated for Q1/2 2025 to connect with the Burnaby community and verify that the draft OCP reflects their values and priorities for the future.

**5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Sufficient funding for all OCP-related work in 2024 is included within the Planning and Development department operating budget in the 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

E.W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – Burnaby Community Assembly: Recommendation Policy Areas
- Attachment 2 – Burnaby Community Assembly: Overview of Process

**REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Rebekah Mahaffey, Executive Director – Civic Innovation Lab and Shirley Zhong, Planning Assistant 3 and reviewed by Erin Rennie, Planner 3, Johannes Schumann, Director Community Planning and Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development.