

**MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

A Regular Meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee convened on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 7:01 p.m. in the Council Committee Room, City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, with the following persons present:

*\*Indicated Virtual Attendance*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Councillor Matt Djonlic, Chair  
Councillor Brent Asmundson, Vice Chair  
Parmis Bagher Zadeh, Citizen Representative  
Tina Balachandran, Citizen Representative  
Leo Chen, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:09 p.m.)  
Carolina Echeverri, Citizen Representative\* (arrived at 7:04 p.m.)  
Honore Gbedze, Citizen Representative\*  
Ann Johannes, Citizen Representative  
Nikki Kasravi, Citizen Representative  
Edgar Sanchez, Citizen Representative  
Bibi Singh, Citizen Representative  
Lucie Wee, Citizen Representative (arrived at 7:22 p.m.)

ABSENT: Bita Rezaei, Citizen Representative (Regrets)

STAFF: Peer-Daniel Scheer, Manager Housing and Social Policy  
Hilary Letwin, Manager Cultural Services  
Victoria Elahi, Planner 1  
Meghan Malkowich, Committee Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and provided an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement.

The Chair conducted roundtable introductions of Committee members and Staff.

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

### **1. Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024**

The Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024 were approved.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **2. Committee Welcome**

The Committee Clerk gave a presentation entitled “2025 Advisory Committee Orientation Session” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

### **3. Review and Adoption of the 2025 Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Work Plan**

Planner 1 provided introductory comments relative to the 2025 Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Draft Work Plan.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- The status of the Welcome to Coquitlam Event and a desire to see it return as a yearly event at the City.
- Opportunities for collaboration with School District No. 43 and increased youth engagement.
- Inquiries into the Cultural Understanding Project.
- Concerns over wide-spread funding issues for non-profit settlement service providing organizations for newcomers to Canada and impacts relating to Item 7 on the Work Plan.

## **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

That Council approve the 2025 Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Work Plan.

#### **4. Streetscape Enhancement Program**

The Manager Cultural Services gave a presentation entitled “Streetscape Enhancement Program” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Appreciation for the inclusion of youth and First Nations artists in the City’s 2024 Streetscape Enhancement Projects.
- Opportunities to utilize the public school system to organize and promote guided tours or art walks of the City’s public art to immigrant families.
- Opportunities to use multiple languages for social media posts promoting the City’s art and guided public art walks, and using QR codes to access information in other languages on public art signage.
- Interest in facilitating more public art installations with new construction, such as the planned mural for the SoCo Development by Anthem on Alderson Avenue.
- Opportunities for the City to facilitate local artists meeting in public spaces to showcase their art.
- Opportunities for the City to facilitate storytelling through public art installations by referencing different groups histories.
- Interest in incorporating the use of alternative forms of art such as sculpture and textiles in the City’s Streetscape Enhancement Program.
- Opportunities to utilize functional infrastructure as a platform for art, such as public seating areas.
- The lifespan of murals and the City’s plans for when existing murals have reached the end of their lifespan.
- Interest in an accessible archive of public art to preserve temporary art and art that has reached the end of its lifespan.
- Opportunities for community engagement with collaborative public art projects that allow individuals or groups to contribute a piece of art to the greater installation.

#### **5. Committee Members’ Roundtable / Emerging Multiculturalism Issues**

The Chair invited Committee members to share emerging multiculturalism issues and events in their communities.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Interest in increasing the Summer Concert Series at Town Center Park and Blue Mountain Park and opportunities to engage with the city’s youth by incorporating performances by school bands and choirs.
- Upcoming events and free resources for newcomers at the Coquitlam Public

Library.

- Concerns over rising anti-immigration rhetoric and interest in exploring initiatives to strengthen inclusion and belonging.
- Opportunities to bridge the gap within immigrant communities between newcomers and immigrants who have resided in the City for a length of time.
- Interest in making one of the remaining Multiculturalism Advisory Committee meetings a potluck.
- Concern due to increasing cuts to public funding for settlement services resulting in a major reduction in resources that can be provided to newcomers and the City's role in monitoring the changes and advocating for these service providers.
- Concern for the impact of funding cuts on the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program and the loss of opportunity for immigrants to obtain higher levels of English proficiency and skills that would assist in finding better employment.
- Importance of anti-racism workshops and promoting bystander training and advocacy.
- Opportunities to address multiculturalism issues in more isolated communities in Coquitlam.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**NEXT MEETING DATE - Wednesday, April 16, 2025**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

**MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT:**

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Councillor Matt Djonlic, Chair

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Meghan Malkowich, Committee Clerk