

Our Place Inner City Assembly Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

To establish a new approach to neighbourhood based planning within the City of Vancouver, located within Coast Salish Territory, grounded in a process of co-creation with other levels of government, agencies, associations, and local residents.

Mission: To establish a participatory governance* model as a permanent mechanism to empower local decision-making.

**Governance: How societies, and groups within it, organize to make decisions. (Institute on Governance)*

Our Place Assembly Pilot: To develop local resources and leadership within the five communities located in Vancouver's Inner City for true cooperation, co-creation, and collaboration in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects, programs, strategies, and service delivery models that advances the wellbeing of children, youth, families and all community residents.

2. Area of Operation

The five communities located in Vancouver's Inner City: Strathcona, Downtown Eastside, Mount Pleasant, Hastings Sunrise, Grandview-Woodlands. Defined boundaries for the neighbourhoods will be established at the inaugural Assembly Meeting in April 2020, and reviewed annually at the discretion of the Stewardship Committee working in collaboration with the City of Vancouver planning department. .

For the remainder of this document, the term "Inner City" will be used to denote the five neighbourhoods described above.

3. Membership

The Assembly will have three classes of membership: *organizational* membership, *associate* membership and *individual* membership.

- Organizational class of membership will be granted to bona fide groups and organizations within the five neighbourhoods which represents one of the categories defined in Appendix “A”.
- Individual class of membership is for individuals who reside in one of the five neighbourhoods. Individual members cast a single vote as a group. (Individual members can determine their own procedure for exercising their vote). **Individuals are encouraged to participate at the local level
- Associate class of membership shall be assigned to individuals or organizations which do not have resident-based membership or are not located within the Inner City, and who wish to be associated and support the work of the assembly. Associate members are non-voting.
- The eligibility for each class of membership is contained in Appendix "A". The Stewardship Committee, or a Committee so delegated, shall determine the eligibility of each.
- Membership in the Assembly is valid until revoked by the member or terminated by special resolution of the Members at a General meeting. The Stewardship Committee may establish membership fees, and each year will determine the application steps necessary for members in all categories.
- A member organization may resign its membership through written notification to the Stewardship Committee, and such written notice must be signed by an authorized signing authority of the member organization.

Membership terms are for three years. All membership categories must apply to renew their membership to begin a new term. Membership renewals will be reviewed by the Stewardship Committee to ensure criteria in Appendix A are met.

Neighbourhood Hubs will be convened by members in each of the 5 neighbourhoods in the Inner City. Neighbourhood Hubs will select representatives to participate in the Stewardship Committee (described in #5 below), to coordinate the overall work of the Assembly, and to lead General Meetings of the Assembly.

4. Mandate

Our Place Inner City is intended to provide a participatory and place-based approach to decision-making concerning neighbourhood planning, projects, programs, and initiatives that enhance and support the wellbeing of children, youth and families. This could include reviewing initiatives and projects in the following areas:

- Prosperity and Economic Development

- Urban Planning and Land Use
- Urban Indigenous Inclusion and Representation
- Community planning initiatives, proposed developments, and projects in Vancouver's Inner City

Examples:

- City of Vancouver Healthy City Strategy
- Planning for Child and Youth Friendly Communities
- Poverty Reduction Strategies
- City of Reconciliation
- Resilient Cities Strategies
- Social Procurement Policies and Strategies

Decision-Making Process:

1. Based on submissions from members and Neighbourhood Hubs, the Stewardship Committee will coordinate and develop meeting agendas for the Our Place Inner City Assembly. *All membership* categories are eligible to submit topics for deliberation.
2. In their submissions, participating liaisons, partners, and members will clearly identify the stage of deliberation and decision-making they are looking for from the Assembly:
 - a. **Advice and Framing:** an issue that has come up in one or more neighbourhoods, and proponents are seeking advice about how to proceed, and who to include in developing a proposal
 - b. **Proposal - Shaping:** a proponent has an idea for a proposed action, strategy, or solution they wish to implement, and is looking for support from the Assembly to further develop the idea into a more complete proposal, and to identify people that should be involved in shaping the proposal
 - c. **Proposal - Consultation:** a proponent has developed a proposal for action, and is looking for feedback (eg, clarifications or proposed alterations to a proposal)
 - d. **Proposal - Formal Support:** after a proposal has been shaped and feedback has been sought via consultation, a proponent is looking for a formal vote of support for the proposal action/strategy/issue.
 - e. **Proposal - Final Decision:** depending on the complexity, cost, and potential consequences of the proposal, final decision-making authority may be delegated by the responsible government agency or organization to the Assembly. In all cases, community support for the initiative in question, as indicated by a formal vote at the Assembly, will be taken into account by legal decision-makers, as will the Assembly's reasons for this support.

**Note: Although it is encouraged, it will not always be possible or necessary for all issues brought forward to the Assembly to go through all of the above stages.*

For example, unless such authority is delegated, the Assembly will not have final decision-making authority concerning strategies or plans that are within the purview of another government agency or organization. Some proposals may only come to the Assembly for advice, framing and shaping, before moving to another decision-making body.

3. Based on this information, the Stewardship Committee will determine how deliberation and review will take place by participants in the Assembly. For example, proposals that impact a single neighbourhood may be referred to a Neighbourhood Hub. Items related to the community economic development could be referred to Exchange Innercity or other relevant networks for their recommendation(s). Working groups can also be created to deal with specific projects/tasks.
4. Submissions must also detail how projects and initiatives will support local accountability, and how they will support and augment local capacity to participate meaningfully in both decision-making and implementation of projects and strategies.
5. The City of Vancouver, in addition to other participating agencies, will encourage individuals and organizations with projects, development proposals, or community strategies to begin any consultation process at the Our Place Inner City Assembly, through a submission to the Stewardship Committee.
6. If the issue being discussed is time sensitive, a member of the Steering Committee can call a vote. In the case of a vote, the majority makes the decision (majority = 50%+1 of total existing committee)
7. Conflict of interest: While participation is open to anyone who is interested in being involved in the Our Place Inner City Assembly, those who may have a conflict of interest with regard to items on meeting agendas are required to inform the Steering Committee so that this can be recorded, and so that the Steering Committee can determine appropriate next steps for ongoing inclusion in decision-making. Should it be determined that a conflict of interest exists, the participant in question will be required to not participate in the relevant discussions and votes.

5. Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee will comprise of 2 or 3 voting members from each of the five neighbourhoods in the Inner City, selected annually from amongst the voting members by the Neighbourhood Hub. The Stewardship Committee will self-assign roles. Representatives elected to the Stewardship Committee must be residents in the Inner City. Our Place endeavours to empower diverse residents, from traditionally underrepresented communities, to take on positions of leadership. To this end a mentorship and support building program for Stewardship Committee members will be established.

To encourage the development of leadership skills across a diverse range of residents and organizational representatives, and to share decision-making power, Stewardship Committee members will be selected for 1 year terms, renewable one time (for a total possible time as a Stewardship Committee member for 2 years). This is also to encourage Neighbourhood Hubs to rotate their selected representatives on the Stewardship Committee from amongst different organization types and membership classes (defined in the Appendix).

Subject to support and available funding from Associate Members and partners, the Stewardship Committee may hire an Administrative Coordinator or Community Manager to support the work of the Assembly, and to provide support to each Neighbourhood Hub.

6. Meetings

a. Membership meetings

Decisions of the Assembly will be held at General Meetings, which are open to attendance and participation from all current members in any of the Neighbourhood Hubs, to be held at least four times per year. The Stewardship Committee will determine agenda items for general assembly meetings, based on submissions from members. In the inaugural year, meetings will follow the dynamic approach to governance, based on *objections, proposals, and a consent based approach* to decision-making.

b. Stewardship Committee meetings

The Stewardship Committee may hold meetings to coordinate the work of the Assembly at their discretion.

7. Accountability, Capacity Building & Operations

Capacity Building - Participation and inclusion of diverse member groups

Through support from community partners and funders, *Our Place Inner City* can provide capacity building, additional supports, and training to prospective member community groups and leaders to enable them to participate. *Our Place Inner City* will provide capacity building to support communities of leaders to participate as members, and to convene to implement the various strategies that the city and partners are looking to implement, and to address other issues raised by members.

Coordination, Capacity Building, and Administration

Administrative and functional support for the work of Our Place is to be provided by backbone support funded by partners. For this initial pilot, backbone support will begin with a **Community Organizer** - a staff position to support the work of Our Place through the following primary functions:

- 1) Liaison with the City of Vancouver and Our Place partners; an **agent for the partnership**
- 2) Provide capacity building support to member organizations
- 3) Administrative and functional support, mentorship to committees and workgroups to implement community strategies

Appendix "A" - Eligibility For Membership

The Stewardship Committee will be responsible for determining eligibility for membership in each of the various classes. As a general criterion, the Steering Committee should ensure all applicant organizations:

- A. Support the aims and objectives of the Assembly
- B. Meet the eligibility criteria specific to the appropriate class of membership, as outlined below.

Organizational Members (Voting)

Organizations which fall into at least one of the categories below, and who also meet all of the following core criteria:

- Operate primarily in Vancouver's Inner City
- Have aims and objectives that are compatible with the Assembly,

Have a substantial number of their members who are residents of the Inner City, and have a democratic governance structure.

**Note: Organizations that fall within one or more of the categories below, but that do not meet the criteria above, are eligible to be Associate members.*

1) Business Organizations

Any bona fide registered business organization located and representing businesses within the neighbourhoods of the inner city that has a specific mandate to represent or service businesses and that is controlled by members of the business community shall be eligible for membership in this category. Eligible organizations include Business Improvement Associations, Chambers of Commerce, etc.

2) Indigenous Organizations

Any bona fide organization that has a specific mandate to represent or service Indigenous people, and is controlled primarily by resident members of an indigenous community in the inner city shall be eligible for membership in this category. For purposes of eligibility, indigenous shall be deemed to include Métis, Status Indian, non-Status Indian, and Inuit persons.

3) Residents' Organizations

Any bona fide resident-based organization where a substantial portion of their constituency, and with leadership roles that are democratically selected, shall be eligible for membership. This may include, but is not restricted to, neighbourhood associations, parent councils, tenant's associations, housing groups, resident's associations, and community organizations where a substantial portion of the members and governors are residents of the Inner City. It shall not include organizations or committees where the leadership is appointed.

4) Community Service Organizations

Any bona fide not-for-profit corporation or other democratically elected organization that provides community services and has operations located within the inner city. Must have explicit and defined practices to include residents in organizational decision making, and a substantial portion of members who are residents of the inner city.

5) Religious and Fraternal Organizations

Any bona fide religious or fraternal organization that has premises or operations located within the inner city shall be eligible for membership in this category.

6) Labour Unions

Any bona fide local union or labour umbrella organization that represents workers who are employed or who live at work sites within the inner city will be eligible for membership in this category.

7) Cultural Organizations

Any bona fide organization within the Inner City that has a specific mandate to promote, present and facilitate the development of artists, art forms, cultural traditions, history, activism, people and great stories about a cultural community, and is controlled by members of a cultural community, shall be eligible for membership in this category.

8) Individual Members

Any individual whose residence is within the Inner City will be eligible to hold individual membership.

Associate Membership

Non-voting Associate Membership is available to Individuals or organizations who do not live within the boundary areas of the Inner City but who would like to support the work of the Assembly. Associate memberships are non-voting memberships. (eg. VCH, Park board, the Port of Metro Vancouver). Also, organizations that fall into one of the categories above, but that do not meet the core criteria, are eligible for Associate membership.

Appendix B - Principles¹

- 1. Our Place Inner City will ensure that community development strategies and initiatives in the community foster holistic, people-centred, service delivery and coordination, that builds the capacity of communities to support and implement programs and services.*
- 2. The inclusion and involvement of Indigenous peoples in community decision-making will be a priority. Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and making decisions must be adopted in organizational processes and governance approaches to ensure meaningful inclusion.*
- 3. Our Place Inner City will adopt practices and policies that reinforce accountability that begins with people and place first, at the beginning of the decision-making process.*
- 4. The steering committee and all members of the Assembly will take active efforts to ensure that representatives and participants in the assembly reflect the diversity and difference in Vancouver's Inner City.*
- 5. Voting members and participating organizations agree to the principles and definition of accountability contained in the Our Place Pledge, whereby accountability is defined as being answerable to neighbourhoods first.*

¹ These principles emerged from a full day forum on governance held on May 4, 2018. The full report from the forum can be accessed here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VpLjsKbtZKjTA1uLsBYqjMxf2vyRLZO1/view>