DREAM IN COLOUR

Victoria Welcoming City Strategy

A journey from where we are to where we need to be…

Help Make Victoria a More Welcoming City

City logo in blue?

NEUQUINN CONSULTING

Caring, connected, communities

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Chief Sam and Chief Thomas

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Acknowledgements

Before we begin sharing the story of our journey in the making of this Welcoming City Strategy, we would like to acknowledge that Victoria is a culturally diverse place where we, as newcomers, are grateful to live, work and play on the homelands of the Lekwungen speaking people known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

We the Welcoming City project team consisting of The City of Victoria, the Welcoming City Task Force, and Neuquinn Consulting (Patricia Quinn and Rachael Seupersad) wish to acknowledge those who participated - community partners, stakeholders, and residents of Victoria - in shaping this strategy by being courageous and authentic in addressing challenging subjects.

Welcoming City Task Force Members

In 2020, Council appointed a Welcoming City Task Force comprised of community experts with a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences to develop the Welcoming City Strategy. The Task Force has led this work with the assistance of consultants and City staff and shares deeply their own expertise and lived experience and provided key connections to the community. The Task Force is committed to work with the City and to hold the City accountable to this Welcoming City Strategy.

The Welcoming City Task Force was comprised of the following representatives:

Agnes Myhre	Bayanihan Community Centre
Annie Djiotsa	Société francophone de Victoria
Bruce Williams	Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
Chief Del Manak	Victoria Police Department
Daniela dos Santos Pinto	Member at Large
David Lau	Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
Florentien Verhage	Intercultural Association
Garry Sam	Songhees Nation
Jefus Godwin-Enwere	International Student
Jerome Thomas	Esquimalt Nation
Jibril Mohamed	Member at Large
Kareece Whittle-Brown	Here in Canada Magazine
Maureen Sawa	Greater Victoria Public Library
Nora Butz	Chinese Community Services Society
Sandra Hough	George Jay School PAC
Silvia Mangue	Kulea Culture Society
Tracy Ryan	Victoria Silver Threads

Executive Summary

Victoria's Welcoming City Strategy is our roadmap to support newcomers' sense of belonging through social, cultural, economic, and civic participation. This strategy calls for individual and organizational leadership to support our communities in welcoming new residents, and in doing so supporting Victoria's recovery, reinvention, and resilience. It maps out the route our community will take and what we will do to make our city more welcoming to all newcomers.

For this strategy, a 'newcomer' is defined as a recent immigrant (up to five years in Victoria), refugees, international students, temporary foreign workers, and recent in-migrant Canadians relocating to the city. Welcoming cities recognize that communities are healthier, happier, and more productive when newcomers are welcomed and can participate fully in society and the local economy.

'Settlement' focuses solely on supporting newcomers, whereas 'welcoming' extends further to actively involve members of the receiving communities (i.e., long-term residents or those living here for more than five years) in welcoming initiatives. This approach promotes the building of strong connections between long-term residents and newcomers.

Following Council's direction, this strategy has been co-developed by the City of Victoria and the Welcoming City Task Force. The Task Force oversaw and participated in the necessary research and investigation, current state assessment, stakeholder and community engagement, follow-up analysis, and final recommendations for this Welcoming City Strategy.

The strategy reflects two phases of community-wide engagement which helped to determine our goals and priorities. We utilized the Welcoming Standard as our guidebook and referenced Welcoming International resources to assess Victoria in these seven key categories or outcome areas:

- Government Leadership
- Equitable Access
- Civic Engagement
- Connected Communities
- Education
- Economic Development
- Safe Communities

The assessment we undertook highlighted the numerous welcoming initiatives, programs and events that already exist in Victoria as well as other critical pieces of work currently underway. This was weighed against the lived experience of community members and organizational leaders to help identify gaps in services and opportunities for improvement. Together this input helped to guide decisions on the recommended short, medium, and long-term actions and measures designed to move us from where we are today to where we need to be as a City and as a community.

The Strategy focuses on three significant areas of opportunity:

- Ease of access to information for newcomers

- Harnessing the economic benefits of diversity
- Holding ourselves individually and collectively accountable to a better future

This Strategy is intended to create opportunities to promote inclusivity, understanding, and collaboration across cultures to ensure a welcoming, compassionate, and neighbourly community that takes a collective response to fear mongering, racism, and human suffering. Based on the results of the community survey on the potential recommendations for Victoria the priorities are as follows:

Primary Recommendations:
- *The City to continue to provide access to municipal **programs** and services regardless of immigration status.*
- *In **partnership** provide education on City bylaw, law enforcement, justice, and legal systems.*
- *Incorporate Indigenous leadership and communities in all municipal welcoming **practices, programs,** and events.*
- *Implement Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and Anti-Racism **policies and programs** at the City of Victoria.*
- *In **partnership** develop a visual identifier for businesses, organization, partners, institutions, and schools which are recognized as being inclusive and welcoming.*
- *In **partnership** with law enforcement, safety agencies and emergency services provide policies and programs for greater EDI education and accountability.*
- *In **partnership** create mentorship opportunities for pairing newcomers and long-term residents*
- *The City to establish a Welcoming Leadership Committee to support community **partnerships**, events and activities that highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and inclusion.*
- *The City to advocate for access to subsidized transportation services and **programs.***
- *In **partnership** support **programs** that bridge the gap in settlement services for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons without access to critical services.*

Secondary Recommendations:
- *In **partnership,** Parent Advisory Councils establish and advocate for newcomer family needs and create safe spaces for children in schools.*
- *The City increase newcomer youth and young adult social **programs.***
- *The City to increase **programs** that bring together long-term residents and newcomer to co-develop and co-deliver community events and projects.*
- *The City EDI **Policy** to include newcomer representation on Council Advisory Committees.*
- *In **partnership,** establish a centrally located newcomer information centre that includes a reporting structure to provide confidential support for incidents of racism, fearmongering, discrimination, and barriers to access.*
- *The City to establish a newcomer classroom where students can learn about the role of municipal government, city services and **programs.***
- *In **partnership** create opportunities for informal connections and information sharing between law and Bylaw enforcement and newcomers.*

Additional Recommendations:
- *The City advocate for increased access to health care services and **programs** for newcomers.*
- *The City to develop an employment readiness **program** for foreign workers, international students, refugees, and undocumented persons.*

- *The City to expand community liaison and develop positions to include creative and arts-based **programs** for community building.*
- *The City to establish a **practice** of hosting an annual welcoming event for newcomers to promote and celebrate social, economic, and cultural benefits and contributions that newcomers bring and officially welcome those who have recently called Victoria home.*
- *In **partnership** create multiple opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to share stories and life experiences.*

Our Direction - The Plan(s)
What inspired this journey?

The motivation for a Welcoming City Strategy comes directly from **Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan**, specifically Strategic Objective 5: Health, Wellbeing, and a Welcoming City. Two outcomes for this Welcoming Strategy were defined in the Strategic Plan as:

1. Increase sense of belonging and participation in civic life.
2. Increase cultural literacy, deepening understanding and welcoming of diversity.

In developing the Welcoming City Strategy, it became clear that six of the remaining outcomes are also crucial on the journey to becoming a truly welcoming city:

3. Increase in number of people who feel safe and part of the community.
4. Increase in number of people who have a family doctor.
5. Increase in availability of free recreation options.
6. Increase in registrations in the City's recreational programs.
7. Increase in food security.
8. Fewer people living below the poverty line and more people have access to a living wage.

In addition, of the remaining seven strategic objectives, six of them have key elements which directly impact the Welcoming City Strategy:

Strategic Objective 1: Good Governance and Civic Engagement
Strategic Objective 2: Indigenous Relations
Strategic Objective 3: Affordable Housing
Strategic Objective 4: Economic Inclusion
Strategic Objective 7: Sustainable Transportation
Strategic Objective 8: Strong, Livable Neighbourhoods

> 2016 Total Population 81,650
>
> Immigrant population 15,935 or 19.5%
>
> Recent immigrants (2011 to 2016) 2,570 or 3.1%

In 2020, Council launched **Victoria 3.0 – Recovery Reinvention Resilience 2020 – 2041**, an economic action plan with "a clear goal of improving the quality of life and well-being of the community." It aims for "a sustainable, influential city that will … create a strong and resilient economy now and for the future."

It is significant to note that to achieve resilience, the city requires progressive actions in multiple areas to create an environment within which newcomers can settle successfully into a kind and supportive community, one that embraces them and celebrates their arrival with curious anticipation for everything they bring with them.

The Start of our Journey - The Context

Where did we begin?

In the co-creation of Victoria's Welcoming City roadmap, it is important that we acknowledge the start of our journey. The beginning of any journey is significant because once we get going, we will never be in that particular place again. Every experience from then forward impacts us, shapes or thoughts and shifts our outlook.

We began at a tumultuous intersection in the wake of a pandemic that was disproportionately impacting the lives of front-line workers many of whom were Indigenous, Black, and people of colour - in other words - our racialized community members. Many more important events have converged over the year since the inception of this work, each one adding to our lived experiences and shaping our response to the task before us.

Our journey commenced in the midst of a global pandemic with no historic equivalent. Unease, disease, and uncertainty permeated every aspect of our lives. The pandemic magnified inequalities, hostility, racism, discrimination, prejudice, oppression, and white privilege. It induced fear, fear-mongering, divisiveness, exclusivity, forced isolation, as well as mental, physical, relational, and economic breakdowns.

As the pandemic progressed and the number of lives lost continued to rise, the need to place blame landed squarely on people of Asian descent and anti-Asian sentiment rose steadily.

Our proximity to the United States and the death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers sparked the Black Lives Matter movement which spread like a wildfire and quickly escalated anti-police sentiment and public calls to Defund the Police and address "access without fear".

The enormity of the issues, proliferation of protests and the sheer magnitude of velocity with which the challenge to established power structures was occurring caused many otherwise impartial and unaware residents, to take notice. The cry for systemic change and decolonization became topics that could no longer be ignored or disregarded.

As we entered a new year and approached the anniversary of a world with COVID-19, we began to recognize that we were never "getting back to normal". Life as we knew it had pivoted. When the pressure eased just a bit as the production of vaccines began to signal a paradigm shift in the management of the virus, a darkness enveloped Canada. The reality that faced us was ugly and painful. The ongoing discovery of unmarked indigenous children's graves at residential school sites across the country literally exposed the skeletons beneath us. This reality is brutal. The decades long cries of Indigenous peoples for Truth & Reconciliation were finally being heard and non-Indigenous Canadians all bore witness to their collective trauma.

As we venture forward on our journey, we must acknowledge that Victoria will continue to carry burdens of the past. The weight of colonialism is entrenched and continually reaffirmed in the name of our city and our province. As a capital city, the colonial systems of power and authority are more pronounced. Government and long-term residents must therefore consistently and tirelessly acknowledge the rightful owners and stewards of the lands we reside upon and work towards truth, reconciliation, and close relations with our Indigenous neighbours. Respecting their history and

traditions, acknowledging their status and rights, inviting their leadership and guidance, and conveying this to all newcomers.

The City of Victoria cannot carry the burden of creating a welcoming city alone. A welcoming city needs to be embedded in a welcoming region, which will require shared commitment and accountability across all Greater Victoria municipalities. We must celebrate our diversity, encourage curiosity, practice inclusivity, disrupt entrenched systems, demand decolonization, and simply be kind and loving to each other.

Our Destination - The Vision
What does success look like?

While we acknowledge that we will probably never "get there" because this journey is a process rather than a place, our **destination** for success is Victoria as a globally influential, culturally vibrant, and inclusive community with equitable opportunity and access for all. We want to support the receiving community – those who have lived here for a long time – with the tools to be more welcoming and to take ownership and responsibility for making Victoria a city where everyone feels a sense of connection and belonging.

This strategy is our road map, as defined by our community. It outlines the short, medium, and long-term actions we will take along with an accountability framework to track our progress along the way.

CORE PRINCIPLE #1: *NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US*
This slogan has been used in many ways for many varied reasons, for us it embodies inclusivity and togetherness, this is about working together for change. It means listening to the real-life experiences and challenges of newcomers and working with them (not for them) to make things better. It is fundamental to our authenticity in approaching this work.

> **What we heard:** *"Consult with the affected communities/groups and move forward on their approval.*

CORE PRINCIPLE #2: *NOTHING WITHOUT OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY*
We cannot welcome newcomers to someone else's house. It is vital to the fundamental nature of this strategy that we acknowledge who's land we call home. Non-Indigenous people we are all newcomers to this island and only together, with consideration and respect for Indigenous peoples, their culture, and traditions can we truly become a welcoming city.

> **What we heard:** *"Need to ground this work with Indigenous peoples… we are on their homelands first and foremost."*

CORE PRINICPLE #3: *NOTHING ALONE, EVERYTHING TOGETHER*
We acknowledge a welcoming city means no one agency, program or policy is responsible for success, it is a community effort that requires long-term residents, newcomers, community partner organizations, businesses, and government all working together towards our common purpose to be a stronger more inclusive community where newcomers are a part of the community not apart from it.

Our **vision** is for Victoria to be a city where newcomers are warmly welcomed and well supported.

Our **goal** is to bridge the gaps between newcomers and long-time residents.

Our **values** are:

- To be *curious* about the people we share our city with.

- To be *caring* and help others wherever and whenever we can.

- To be *kind* to everyone we encounter in our daily lives.

- To be *better* tomorrow than we are today.

Our Guidebook - The Welcoming Standard
What did we use to guide us?

The Welcoming Standard is an international system of established requirements and indicators that outline the core of what it means for a community to be welcoming. It sets out, and facilitates assessment of, the local policies, programs, and partnerships that give communities a welcoming edge. The Standard also sets benchmarks that community organizations, residents, and others can use to hold themselves accountable and spur innovation. The Standard is designed as a self-check tool that helps municipalities analyze their current work and further develop their inclusion practices.

"Being welcoming is much more than being friendly, tolerant, or peaceful. We believe that truly welcoming places have intentional, inclusive policies, practices, and norms that enable all residents to live, thrive, and contribute fully — including immigrants.

Welcoming places are made possible by welcoming people and leaders, including immigrants themselves. Whether you're a student, librarian, government worker, or business owner, each of us is empowered to foster more welcoming places at work, in our neighborhoods, and places of gathering.

*Communities that have worked for many years to become more welcoming have helped us shape the **Welcoming Standard**. Together, welcoming places, communities, and individuals can create the conditions for a thriving community that embraces, harnesses, and fully leverages the contributions of all residents."*
~Welcoming America

KEY OUTCOME AREAS: The Welcoming Standard has seven critical (and rigorous) categories or key outcome areas with clearly defined requirements and indicators for each one. Communities that consistently work toward meeting these requirements and paying attention to the indicators will achieve their highest civic and economic potential by unleashing the power of their greatest asset – their people. The Welcoming Standard categories are defined as follows:

Government Leadership: In welcoming places, local governments implement systems, programs, and comprehensive equity, diversity, and anti-racism policies that strengthen community efforts and embed inclusion within government agencies.

In Victoria, acknowledging the impact and repression of non-white people by colonial structures that perpetuate white privilege, fosters courageous governance that invites co-created solutions, shared leadership, and participatory government.

> **What we heard:** *"Provide opportunities to bring diverse communities together such as festivals (bring back the original Folkfest), support efforts at the partnership level with sustainable funding, and encourage projects at the neighbourhood level through advocacy."*

Equitable Access: Welcoming places work to ensure community services and opportunities are available to all residents, including newcomers.

For Victoria, simply providing settlement services is not enough, welcoming communities strive to make all newcomers feel a sense of belonging by meeting them where they're at with kindness, caring for their well-being, removing the barriers they face, and providing the support they need to succeed. This includes access to healthcare, childcare, transportation, housing, education, recreation and more.

> **What we heard:** *"Acknowledge …newcomers' contributions to society."*

Civic Engagement: Welcoming communities actively ensure that residents, including newcomers, fully participate in civic life by increasing access to leadership and democratic spaces.

The City of Victoria is already working toward a more inclusive and equitable community *Engagement Framework* by championing a reciprocal relationship model that accounts for power imbalances and addresses barriers to participation to ensure a diversity of perspectives, identities and lived experiences inform all City processes.

> **What we heard:** *"Create a civic engagement/mentorship/coaching program …with immigrant newcomers and our elected officials."*

Connected Communities: Welcoming communities build connections between newcomers and long-term residents by strengthening relationships and communicating shared values.

From city-wide programming to neighbourhood activities, finding ways to bring people together in Victoria is vital to bridging the gap between newcomers and long-term residents; and increasing cultural literacy by celebrating the benefits of cultural, social, and economic diversity.

> **What we heard:** *"Create more opportunities to meet and discuss issues/concerns of mutual interest."*

Education: Welcoming communities strive for an educational system that ensures all students have the support they need to succeed in school and the education they need to succeed in the workforce. In Victoria, informal supportive approaches, and advocacy by school parent councils to address the needs of school aged children and mentorships between long-term residents and newcomers entering the workforce are community-based solutions to gaps in the education system.

> **What we heard:** *"Ensure all teachers* [administrative and support staff] *have Cultural Literacy/Anti-racism/Anti-Bullying training and encourage them to create anti-racism programs and safe spaces for children in their schools."*

Economic Development: Welcoming communities harness the full potential of all residents. Newcomers have the skills and assets to thrive, and economic development systems are prepared to leverage new and existing talent.

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce has set the example by issuing a "statement of truth" which acknowledges how the economy and culture we have created was built by suppressing Indigenous peoples, and how we continue to restrict people of colour and minority groups with barriers to economic prosperity.

> **What we heard: "**Create incentives for employers that hire immigrants based on their credentials, skills, and experience."

Safe Communities: Welcoming communities foster trust and build relationships between residents, including newcomers, and local law enforcement and safety agencies.

In Victoria, providing opportunities for ongoing interaction and communication without fear must be a priority if people are to feel safe in their communities.

> **What we heard:** *"Hold regular community engagement/info sessions to build trust, build stronger relationships, improve communications, and highlight the differences between Canadian policing and policing in birth countries."*

KEY ENABLERS OF SUCCESS: How communities develop and implement the requirements of their welcoming roadmap is as critical as the content. There are four **core strategies** which increase the impact and sustainability of all welcoming initiatives, and they are considered essential to the successful implementation of programs and partnerships designed to foster welcoming.

1. **Engage longer-term residents.**
   To reshape the boundaries of "us" and "them" the receiving community must continue to make efforts to increase awareness of unconscious bias, promote inclusivity, appreciate diversity, and champion equity.

2. **Set goals, monitor impact, and adjust strategies as needed.**
    While a Welcoming City Strategy is a shared responsibility, the City holds the accountability to monitor progress and work with community partners to advance the Strategy and adjust the Action Plan where necessary. This ensures that limited resources have maximum impact.

3. **Design for equity and inclusion.**
    Policies, programs, processes, and partnerships must be designed to increase access to all cultures, religions, abilities, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and identity groups. This ensures increased access for *all* residents.

4. **Implement in partnership.**
    Collaboration can leverage new resources and build program capacity. When it happens across sectors, new partnership possibilities become evident and community support expands.

IDEAS we heard:

"Make it easier to participate if one's first language is not English."

"Prioritize our most marginalized and vulnerable folks."

"Make Victoria safe, clean and beautiful…" (provide) *"rest and conversation seating areas".*

"…services for newcomers and long-time residents to have a voice in a workplace without a fear of repercussion or work problem".

"Once you've heard someone tell a personal, lived experience, you can never go back to being strangers. You can never not appreciate that person as another human being and as an equal."

"Have culturally supportive training, unconscious bias training and anti-racism training built into partnership opportunities."

"Culture is identity, and it is a doorway to understanding a person's lifestyle and worldview. We all come from different backgrounds, but many "Canadians" don't know or recall their culture of origin, which leads to misunderstanding about how culture shapes the lives of newcomers and the difficulties they face".

Co-Pilots – The Community
who needs to be involved?

The City of Victoria invited residents to bring their expertise and lived experiences to help co-create a Welcoming City Strategy that reflects our collective voice, vision, and values.

The Welcoming City Strategy is based on input and feedback from the Welcoming City Task Force, community experts and a cross-section of newcomers to Victoria and long-time residents. It is intended to foster a compassionate and neighbourly community where all residents, including immigrants and refugees are accepted, respected, and encouraged to participate in civic life.

Welcoming cities invite curiosity from both newcomers and long-time residents, actions and activities are meant to bring connection, build trust, and provide opportunities to discover common values, desires, and life experiences. We know that people who come to Victoria from different places enhance our community in many ways.

Newcomers diversify our business sector creating a more resilient economy. The also often volunteer time and energy to make life better for everyone by sharing different cultures and customs. This adds to the rich vibrancy and vitality of our city, and of course we gain a greater appreciation of the world around us.

> **What we can do along the way…**
> *A simple exercise we can use to test our unconscious bias and enhance self-awareness is to look at the people in our personal circles and consider whether they reflect inclusivity and diversity.*

When we began to compile a list of who needs to be involved in this process of welcoming and fostering a community of belonging, we landed on these critical groups, but we also recognize and acknowledge that every one of us is a necessary co-pilot on this journey as we co-create a welcoming community together :

- Long-time residents (the receiving community)
- Newcomers
- The City of Victoria
- Victoria Police Department
- Community Partner Organizations
- Business Leaders
- Educators
- Healthcare Professionals
- Faith Leaders
- Cultural Organizations

Our Vehicle(s) - Policies, Programs, & Partnerships
What will get us there?

Successfully co-creating Victoria's Welcoming City Strategy requires the implementation of **policies, programs** and **partnerships** that foster a compassionate and neighbourly community where all residents, including immigrants and refugees are accepted, respected, and encouraged to participate in civic life.

Equally important to this journey are the **people, processes** and **practices** that invite curiosity for both newcomers and long-time residents, where actions and activities bring connection, builds trust, and provides opportunities to discover common values, desires, and lived experiences.

Engaging long-term residents
- The City and Community Partners commit to providing opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to learn from, and about each other; and
- Establishing practical tools to check biases, identify discrimination and educate long-term residents on the needs of newcomers.

> **What we heard:** *"Racism is a colour and the colour is white."*

Setting goals, monitoring impact, and adjusting the route (strategies) as needed
- The City and Community Partners commit to helping to make Victoria more welcoming by implementing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies and programs aimed at changing systemic practices and processes across local government and partner agencies by addressing:
  - Human resource practices
  - Cultural safety training
  - Access to services
  - Anti-oppression processes
  - Gender bias training
  - Career advancement

> **What we heard:** *"… we are resistant to new ideas and there is a lack of readiness within community to take action, so we need to get involved, take responsibility and share accountability."*

Design for equity and inclusion
- The City and Community Partners commit to helping to make Victoria more welcoming through conducting regular reviews and redefining measurements for success that:
  - make life better for newcomers,
  - bridge the gap between newcomers and long-term residents,
  - increase cultural literacy and inclusion,

> **What we heard:** *"When I arrived in Canada, I became black."*

Implement in partnership
- The City and Community Partners commit to helping to make Victoria more welcoming by:
  - coordinating, creating, and sharing up-to-date information newcomers need to settle in a central location,
  - sharing responsibility and accountability for creating a welcoming city,
  - including newcomers in decisions that impact their lives,
  - designing spaces that encourage community connection.

> **What we heard:** *"People in Victoria show a polite absence of curiosity."*

Our Route – The Action Plan
What do we need to do, and when?

Our accompanying Victoria Welcoming City Action Plan defines our recommendations with targeted timelines of short (1-2 years), medium (2-3 years), and long (4-5 years) term implementation schedules based on ease of execution, resource requirements, the need for collaborative development with community partners, and measurability.

It also includes an accountability framework which is unique to Victoria and designed to measure progress against the applicable Welcoming Standard requirements.

The City is well positioned to continue to lead in the shared vision of Victoria as a city of inclusion, increasing a common sense of belonging and participation in civic life for all. Increasing cultural literacy, combined with a commitment to a shared responsibility amongst community partners, all residents will benefit from a deepened understanding and welcoming of diversity. These recommendations reflect the

informed desires of the community translated into practical, implementable actions that can be accomplished *in partnership* and *in community* over the next five years.

Key findings that informed our action plan:

- Government plays a pivotal role in creating a city that is welcoming.
- Information that newcomers need is not centrally located and is difficult to find.
- Programs and services can be challenging to locate and access, and do not meet all newcomer needs.
- Mentorship-type relationships would benefit both newcomers and long-term residents.
- Services must be accessible without barriers or fear.
- There is a desire to learn from and about each other's culture.
- Increase opportunities to share, build community, and celebrate our diversity.
- Communicate in multiple languages and a variety of media.

Check Points – Our Framework of Accountability

How do we course correct as we go?

Our framework of accountability tracks our progress to determine if the recommended actions *make life better* for newcomers and long-term residents. Monitoring progress can be achieved through an annual community survey that tracks increasing participation in programs and activities, as well as access to essential services.

Identifying whether anyone is better off as a result of the implemented actions, is the most challenging part of this Strategy. In all cases, measurements tell us how particular policies, programs, and processes as well as changes in practices, make a difference to the lives of newcomers. Results will determine if adjustments are necessary to achieve our defined goals. It is important to note that the measures themselves are guidelines and may need to be further refined as each recommended action is defined, developed, and delivered.

Traffic Controls – Our Commitments (to each other)

What needs to be in place to ensure success?

Shared Responsibility

In collaboration with our community partners, we will honor the work of the City, the Welcoming City Task Force, and the residents of Victoria in seeking out opportunities to collaborate and support community groups, events, and activities that highlight the benefits of cultural diversity and inclusion for all Victoria residents.

Government Leadership

The City will monitor and report on the implementation of the Welcoming City Strategy and Action Plan.

Honoring Indigenous Rights

We will acknowledge, respect, and learn from Indigenous communities through their stories, history, and traditions to better understand their culture and move forward together in truth and reconciliation.

Frequent Community Check-ins

We will listen with curiosity, to gain a better understanding of the needs for both newcomers and long-term residents and model participatory involvement and decision making.

Alignment

We will continue to utilize the Welcoming International model to ensure our road map is in alignment and seek out the necessary knowledge and expertise of others doing this work to assess our progress.

When our Council created their 2019-2021 Strategic Plan and vision for Victoria, they laid the foundation for change. In 2020, Council adopted **Victoria 3.0 – Recovery Reinvention Resilience 2020 – 2041** which is meant to create a city for everyone and has "a clear goal of improving the quality of life and well-being of the community". The Welcoming City Strategy is a result of and is in alignment with these two key documents.

This Welcoming City Strategy is a direct result of Council's visionary leadership and commitment to making our city better. It puts Victoria on the map as a globally fluent city that understands and values newcomers and is committed to working with the receiving community, community partnership organizations, and government agencies to ensure newcomers to our city are welcomed in Victoria, supported, and share a strong sense of communal belonging.

What the words we use mean:

Government is the City of Victoria.
Government Agencies are funded by government to provide support services.
Community Partners have a vested interested in creating a community that is welcoming.
Stakeholders have a common interest in successful newcomer settlement.
Community is every resident of Victoria.
Mentorship is relationship based, providing guidance and general assistance.