

Background

Governance involves the structures and processes for decision making, focusing on openness and accountability. A governance review provides the opportunity to consider opportunities to modernize the City of Victoria’s governance systems. A governance review was identified as a strategic initiative in the City of Victoria’s 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. MNP was engaged to conduct a review of the City’s governance structures and processes to consider ways the current model is effective and how it may be improved to further enable responsible and accountable governance.

Engagement

Public engagement aimed to understand residents’ opinions of City of Victoria governance structures, processes, and priorities for improvement. Residents were invited to provide input through an online survey (self-selected participation), an in-person public event, and an online public event.

Table 1: Public and Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities

Date	Activity	Details
April 14 – May 13, 2022	Public Survey (self-selected participation, registration on Have Your Say site not required)	881 responses (resident or property/business owner)
April 14 to May 13, 2022	Written Submission	3 submissions
May 2, 2022	In-Person Public Session	3 participants
May 4, 2022	Virtual Public Event	10 participants
April 29, May 6 (2), May 9	Stakeholder Focus Groups (4)	23 participants from 18 organizations

Who We Heard From

881 City of Victoria residents or property/business owners completed the survey (not all participants answered all questions), 13 participants in total attended the public sessions and 23 individuals representing 18 stakeholder organizations participated in a focus group.

Survey Respondents

- 46% Female, 45% male; 7% prefer not to disclose, 1% non-binary, 1% prefer to self-describe.
- 33% of survey respondents were 65 years old or older

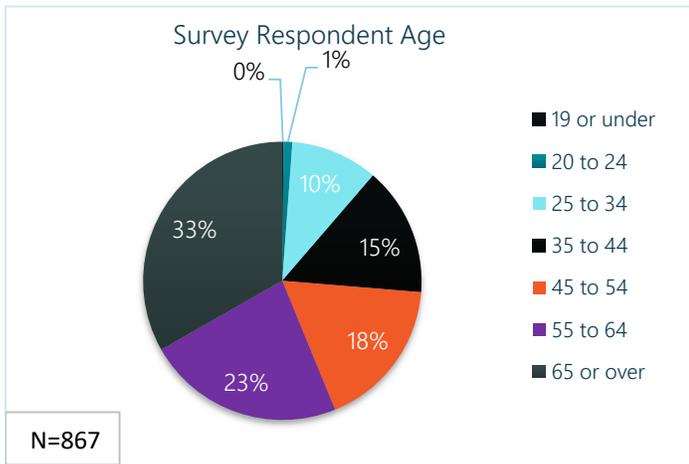
Stakeholder organizations were also invited to provide input through focus groups and written submissions. Details on engagement opportunities are outlined in Table 1.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

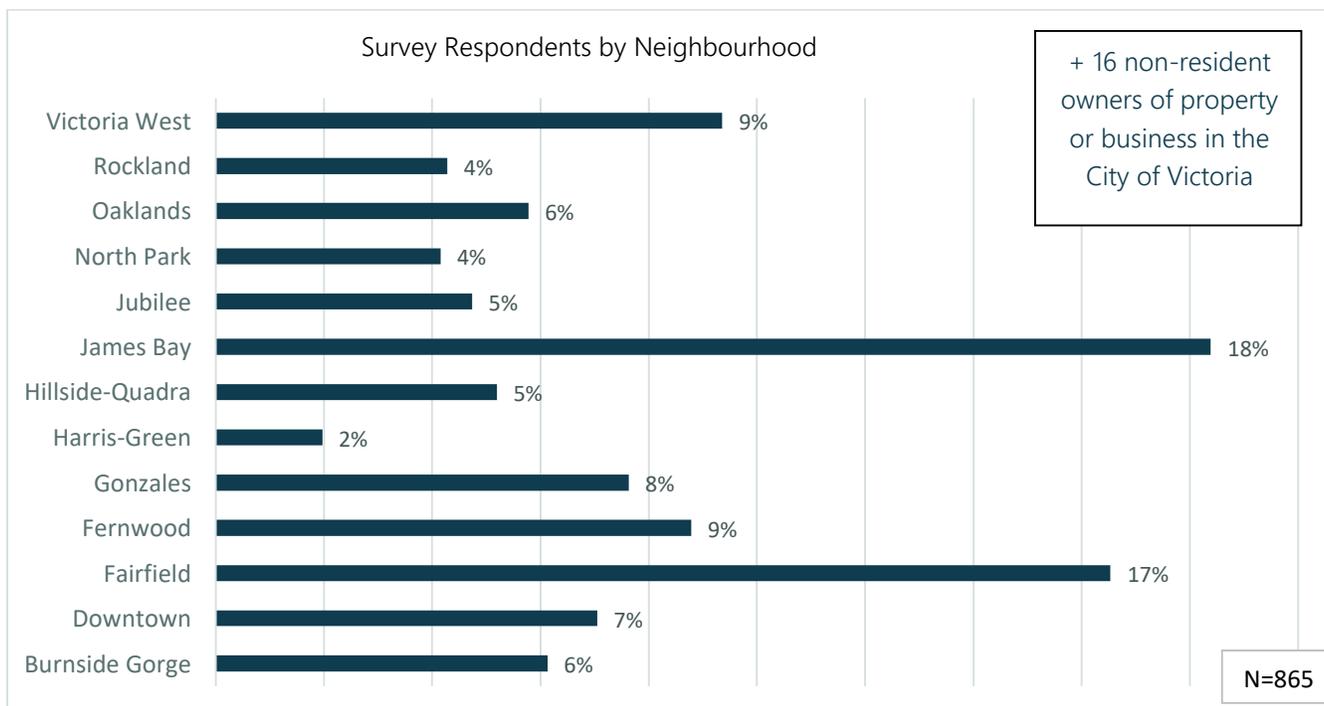
- City of Victoria website – launched April 14, 2022
- News release – April 21
- Facebook and Instagram posts with over 4,300 views
- Twitter posts with over 25,000 views
- Email to 42 identified governance stakeholders
- Newspaper advertisements in The Times Colonist on Saturday, April 16, April 23, and April 30 and The Victoria News on Thursday April 21
- Have Your Say Newsletter – Issued April 20

- 40% of respondents have a bachelor’s degree or college diploma, 30% have an advanced degree (Masters or Doctorate)
- 25% of respondents have an annual household income above \$125,000
- Survey responses were reasonably representative of the breakdown of city population by neighbourhood (Census, 2016)



Focus Group Participants

Participants in the stakeholder focus groups represented neighbourhood associations, CALUCs, persons with disabilities, seniors, active transportation, other vulnerable populations, business, and planning and development organizations. (See the complete list in Appendix C)



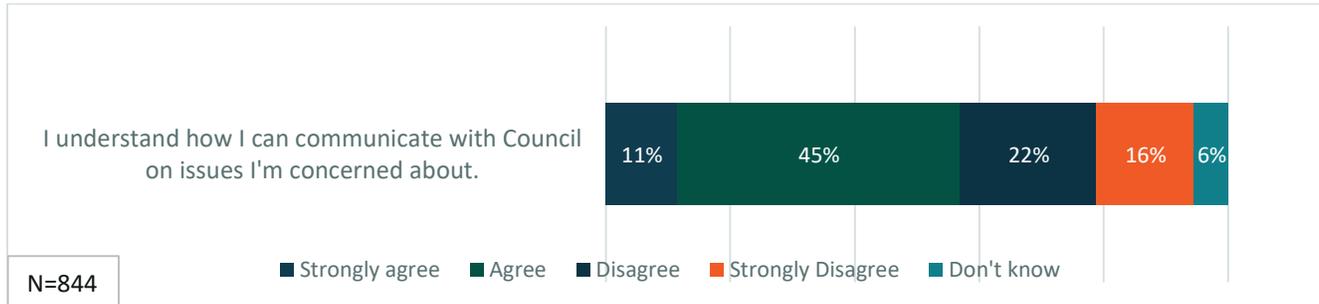
Key Findings

Each section presents survey results and related themes from input received through the public events, focus groups and written submissions. A summary table of key themes from what we heard and how it has been incorporated in MNP's recommendations for improvement to the City's governance structures and processes is included in each section.

Detailed results and additional information are included in the appendices.

Participation in Council Decision-making Processes

The majority of survey respondents (56%) agreed or strongly agreed that they understand how to communicate with Council on issues they are concerned about. Communication with Council outside of formal Council meetings was noted by some public session participants as being less accessible and effective.

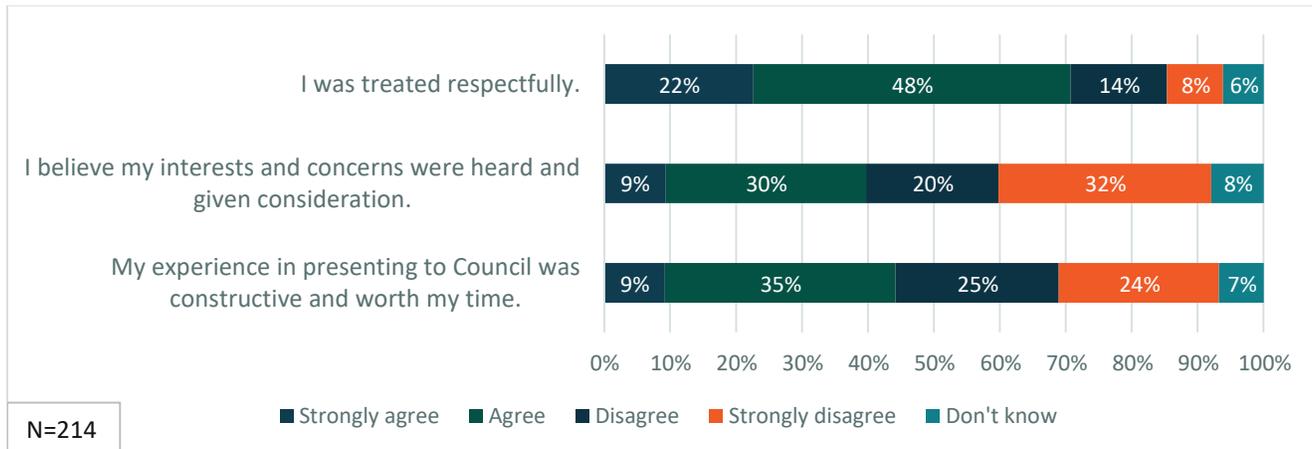


Council and Committee of the Whole Meetings / Hearings

Stakeholder focus groups, public session participants and written submissions noted that generally, there is reasonable opportunity to participate in Council decision-making processes, however identified barriers to effective participation. Most participants acknowledged that virtual participation has increased the ability to participate in Council meetings and public hearings, and that video submissions are especially helpful for individuals who may not be comfortable speaking in public. It was noted by groups representing persons with disabilities that the City has made progress in implementing technologies to facilitate participation for individuals with visual or hearing impairments and hope to see improvements as technologies evolve. They did note however, that not all policies and practices are followed consistently, such as verbalizing council votes and amendments to motions, or ensuring that all supporting documents meet accessibility standards.

Sufficient time to consider Council agenda items and prepare a response was mentioned frequently by individual and group participants and included in open-ended survey comments. as was the length of meetings, which can go late into the evening. Access to user-friendly information, difficulty navigating the City of Victoria website and website search functionality were mentioned in focus groups and public sessions in terms of information to support participation in Council decision-making processes. (further detail is included on page 6 of this report).

Twenty-six percent of survey respondents (219) have presented to Council either in person or virtually. These respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the following statements regarding their experience.

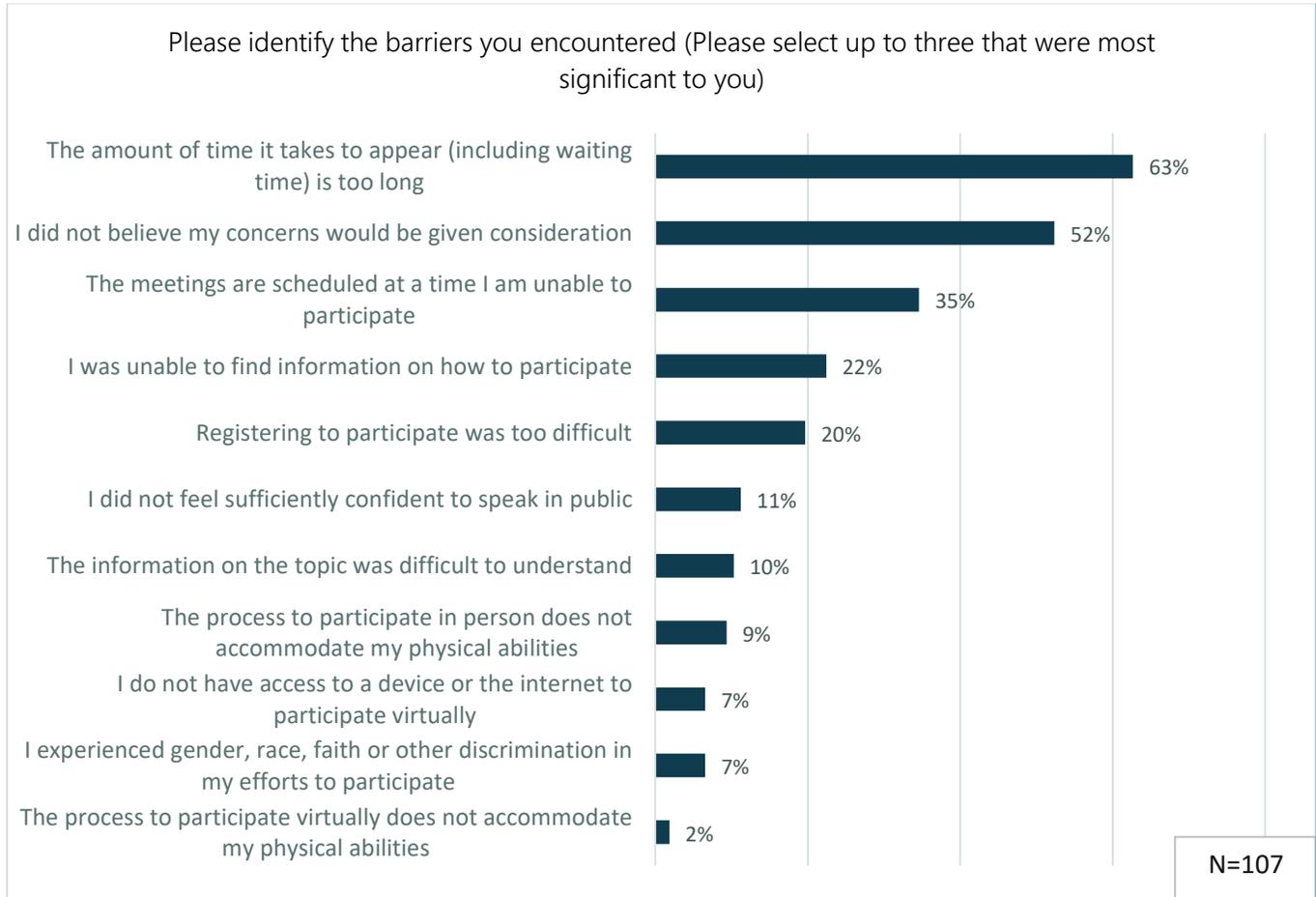


Among survey participants that had presented at a City Council meeting (request to address Council or speak at a public hearing) the majority (70%) felt that they had been treated respectfully. However, only 39% agreed that their interests and concerns were heard and given consideration. Survey respondents were split on whether the experience was constructive and worth their time, with 49% disagreeing and 44% agreeing. Further insight provided by focus groups participants and some public session participants indicated the opportunity to appear before Council occurs too late in the decision-making process and it appears that Council has already made up their mind on the matter prior to hearing from the public. Two major themes in open-ended survey comments were that Council’s decisions appear to be made based on personal agendas and are not aligned with public opinion; and that public input is not considered in Council decision-making. Further detail on Council decision-making is included on page 11.

Barriers to Presenting at Council

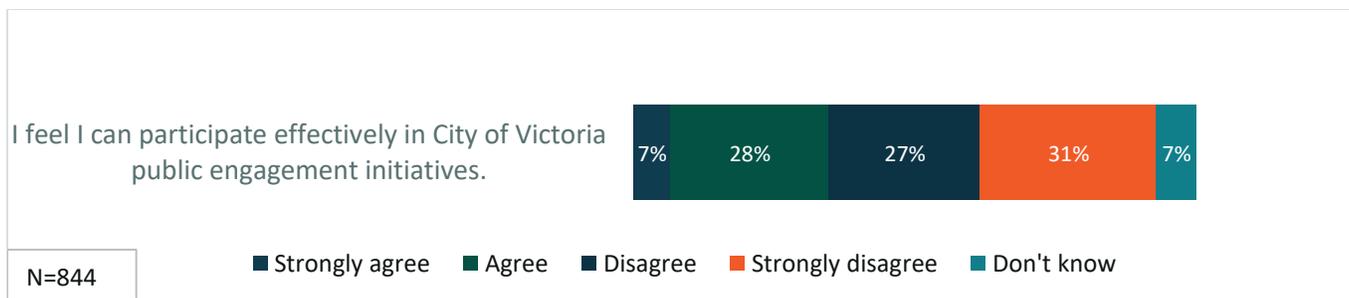
The set of survey respondents who had presented to Council were asked if they had experienced barriers with this activity and if so, to identify the most significant. Fifty-one percent (107) of this set of respondents indicated that they had encountered a barrier that made it difficult to present to Council. The three most frequently selected barriers were the amount of time required to appear (including waiting time) (63%), a belief that input would not be considered (52%) and Council meeting times (35%).

Stakeholder, public session and written submission feedback elaborated on barriers to participation in Council decision-making processes. These participants also identified lengthy meetings and late start times (for public hearings). Additional barriers identified were lengthy and difficult to digest Council agendas and challenges navigating the City website to find information on matters before Council, lack of ASL interpreter, imperfect accessibility features of online platforms, difficulty hearing in Council chambers, and safety, health, financial and transportation issues related to attending in-person meetings. Some focus group and public session participants added that the five-minute presentation time limit may not be adequate, adds pressure and can be a source of discomfort for public presenters.



Public Engagement

Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they can effectively participate in City of Victoria public engagement activities.



Seventy-nine survey respondents commented on improvements they would like to see in Council's processes for gathering public feedback including continued efforts to reach a more diverse group of citizens and creating earlier and greater awareness of initiatives and input opportunities. There were mixed opinions in survey responses on engagement with neighbourhood associations and CALUCs, with some feeling there should be more engagement

with them and others feeling there should be less emphasis, as membership often does not represent the diversity of neighbourhood demographics.

Stakeholder groups provided further insight, commenting that current practices are insufficient to engage marginalized groups, who are often the most impacted by initiatives and decisions. Specifically they noted communities such as lower income, newcomers, and property renters. In addition, they would like to see more proactive features to enable accessibility and inclusion, including interpretation, transportation, access to computers, verbal explanation of graphical information etc.

Stakeholders and the public commented frequently that there are many opportunities for public engagement with the City of Victoria, however, input is often taken into consideration too late in a project process, for example during the implementation phase, to be fully considered by Council. Stakeholder groups also specified that advance notice or longer engagement periods would allow time for them to engage their members and provide collective feedback.

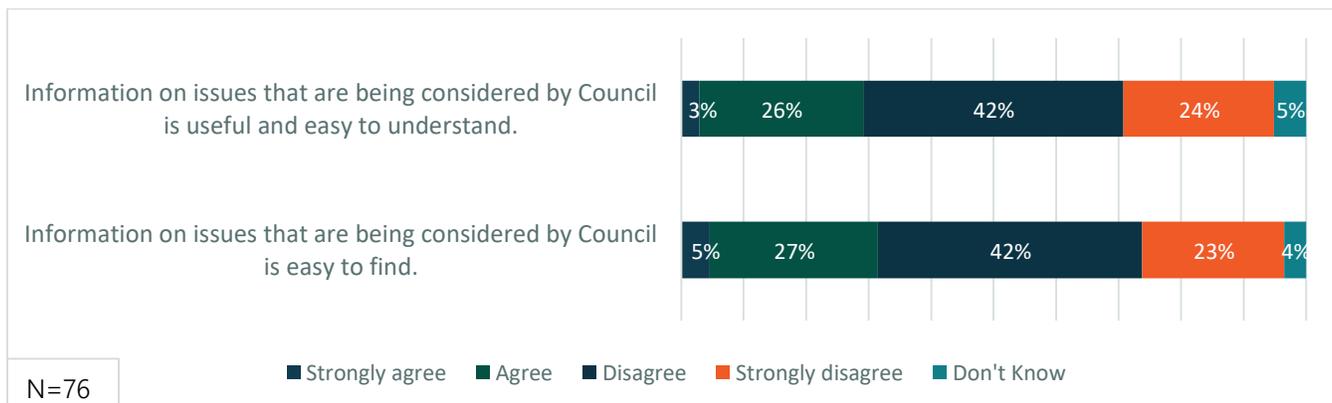
Members of the public and stakeholders expressed their frustration with taking the time and effort to provide input that does not appear to be considered in Council decision-making.

Twenty-six survey respondents commented positively on the City of Victoria’s current public engagement practices, citing the many opportunities available to provide input.

Further feedback on Council decision-making is included on page 11 of this report.

Information to Support Public Involvement in Council Processes and Public Engagement

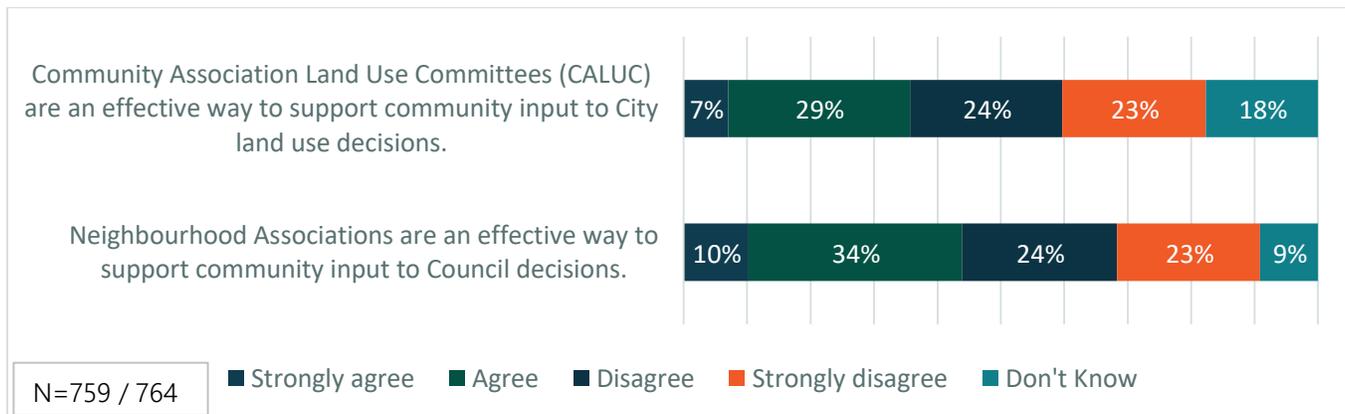
Sixty-six percent of public survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that information on issues that Council is considering is useful and easy to understand. Additionally, 65% of public survey respondents do not consider information on issues that are being considered by Council easy to find. Comments provided in the public survey indicated that communication to the public is not user friendly or widely accessible. Specific reference was made to the inability for members of the public to devote the time and energy to review and provide comment on voluminous documents such as the 120- page budget document or 1200+ Middle Middle document. As mentioned previously, complex agenda materials are one of the barriers to effective public participation in Council meetings.



Feedback in focus groups, written submissions and survey comments suggested that materials be written in plain language, summarized, in accessible formats and available in advance. Some participants suggested that more time

is required to understand complex materials before providing feedback, a suggestion was put forward that a City staff member present the materials in advance to help increase understanding.

Neighbourhood Associations/CALUCs and Advisory Committees



CALUCs

Public survey respondents were split on their response regarding CALUCs. Thirty-six percent of the public survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that CALUCs are an effective way to support community input to City and land use decisions while 46% of the public disagreed or strongly disagreed. Feedback from focus groups and survey comments indicated CALUCs often represent a very small demographic of a neighbourhood and therefore do not represent the views of all residents. Feedback from written submissions indicated it is unclear how input from CALUCs is considered in Council decision-making.

There were mixed opinions in survey comments on the effectiveness of engagement with neighbourhood associations and CALUCs on land use matters, with some feeling there should be more engagement with them and others feeling there should be less, due to the narrow demographic represented, and/or a desire to streamline approval of development applications that are consistent with the OCP.

Neighbourhood Associations

Public survey respondents were also divided on the effectiveness of neighbourhood associations. Forty-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that neighbourhood associations are an effective way to support community input to Council decisions while 47% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Feedback from written submissions and stakeholder groups noted that stronger terms of reference are required for neighbourhood associations to better understand the roles and responsibilities and how they interact with Council, including expectations for association input on relevant initiatives. Some members of the public and stakeholders stated that there are inconsistencies support for neighbourhood associations and the extent of their involvement with Council. Public survey respondents indicated some lack of connection between the neighbourhood associations and City staff and/or Council Liaisons.

Advisory Committees

Participants in focus groups, public sessions and written submissions also provided feedback on advisory committees. Focus group participants, and written submissions indicated that the role of advisory committees in Council decision-making is unclear, and that terms of reference are not clear or consistent. Specific concerns include having a better

understanding of the advisory committees’ role in supporting Council, a desire for broader terms of reference, and clear expectations for when advisory committees are to be engaged on relevant matters. A clear and consistent process for including advisory committee input in staff reports was a common theme, as was a process for bringing forward recommendations directly to Council if a committee does not believe their input has been allocated sufficient weight in City reporting to Council. Stakeholder groups indicated advisory committees should be engaged earlier to ensure that there is stronger engagement on projects that effect various populations.

Table 2 –Key themes from public engagement about participation in Council decision-making

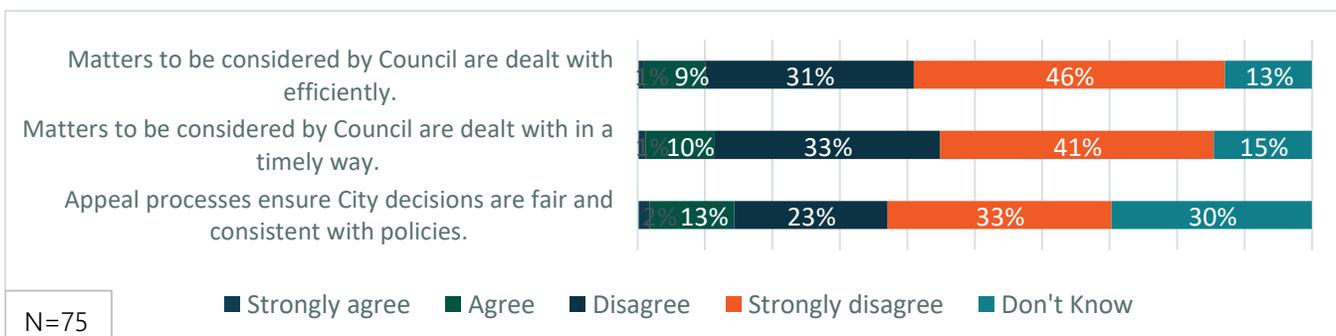
What We Heard	How it is Reflected in Recommendations
<p>The public is not provided with adequate time and information to effectively participate in Council decision-making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time between published agendas (and updates) and meetings is not enough time to absorb lengthy, complex materials. <p><i>Challenges with advance notice and information available also apply to public engagement.</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations include</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline Council agenda materials to include a short, high-level summary of key decision considerations, followed by detailed background with user-friendly cross references. Limit late submissions to already published agendas to only matters that are determined to be emergent by the Mayor
<p>Long, lengthy Council meetings are a barrier to participation by members of the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Please see Table 3 – key themes about Council Decision-making</i>
<p>Public engagement would be improved through greater engagement with marginalized groups and the residents most affected by a decision.</p> <p>Technology has enhanced the ability to participate in Council decision-making processes, however could be improved.</p>	<p><i>Recommendations include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate and apply the updated principles of equitable engagement in the Engagement Framework and more broadly to other ways of providing access to Council decision-making. e.g. engage Advisory Committees as a means of developing relationships within equity deserving communities and work with them to co-create inclusive engagement processes. Update technology so that the public address to Council, whether in delegation or at a public hearing, may use video. Allow pre-recorded video submissions for public hearings and delegations on matters to be considered by Council.
<p>Stronger terms of reference and understanding of roles and responsibilities are required for Advisory Committees.</p>	<p><i>Recommendations include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review terms of reference for alignment with requirements in City bylaws (open meetings, publishing agendas and minutes etc.). Relieve members of Council from formal appointments as liaisons to Advisory Committees. Formalize the expectations of the administration with respect to engaging and supporting Advisory Committees.

What We Heard	How it is Reflected in Recommendations
Forgoing income, low income or incurring direct costs to participate on an Advisory Committee may be a barrier to participation.	Establish a policy for remuneration and to reimburse expenses for public members of Council committees to remove barriers to participation.
Feedback from Advisory Committees, and Neighbourhood Associations is not incorporated into staff reports. Advisory Committee recommendations are not being received or considered by Council.	<i>Recommendations include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalize the expectation that staff work on policy matters related to an advisory committee mandate will include early engagement with the committee including a summary of committee input with the administrative report. Include a summary of “what we heard” back to the committee to correct any errors or omissions prior to finalizing the report Formalize the process for Advisory Committee recommendations to be brought to Council with regular Council packages, including minutes, reports or recommendations. Remove the expectation that the Council Neighbourhood Liaison will convey the concerns of the Neighbourhood Association to Council and establish a procedure to receive information or advocacy positions from Neighbourhood Associations so that there is a record of the information being received by Council
Reporting from CALUC meetings may be influenced by the personal views of the CALUC members.	Establish a requirement for recorded input from CALUC meetings to be posted to allow participants the opportunity to identify any errors or omissions before the information is officially submitted.

Council Decision-Making Processes

Efficiency of Council

Public survey respondents were asked to provide their input on the efficiency of Council.



Seventy seven percent of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that matters to be considered by Council are dealt with efficiently. Additionally, 74% of public survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that

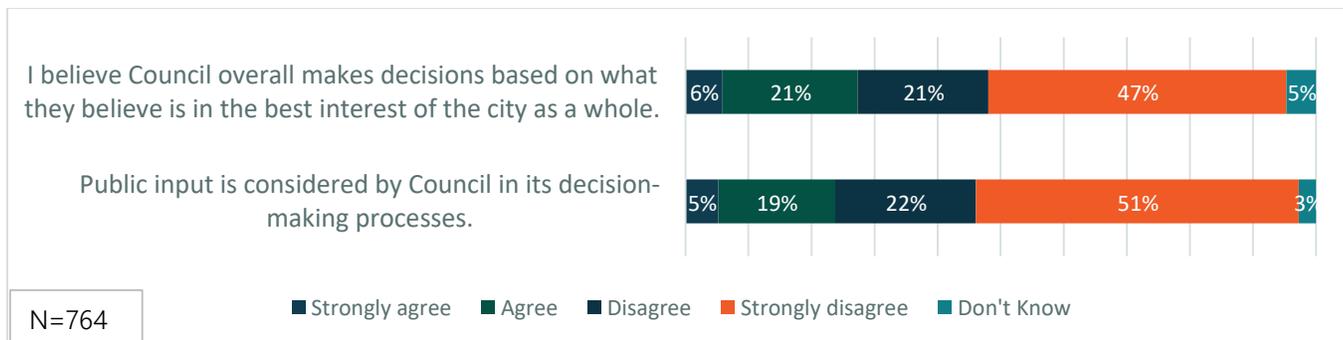
matters to be considered by Council are dealt with in a timely way. Feedback received from stakeholder groups with experience with Council processes indicate that Council decisions may be delayed if a matter gets sent back to the administration for advisory committee input or further public engagement. The timing of public input at the end of a decision-making process may also cause delay if it causes Council to reconsider their position on a matter. They also noted there can be lengthy delays in receiving staff reports. Stakeholders commented that lengthy delays in Council decision-making can negatively impact initiatives if new issues have arisen, or data supporting the recommendations is no longer relevant or accurate.

Fifty-six percent of survey respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that appeal processes ensure that City decisions are fair and consistent with policies; a substantial percentage of responses to this question (30%) indicated “don’t know”.

Thirty-three survey respondents commented on Council meeting processes, noting that meetings are too long and can go late into the evening. These respondents stated that the meetings may be longer than required due to Council getting into administrative details, grandstanding, endless debate and veering off-course in discussions. Some respondents also commented that last minute Council member motions add to meeting length.

Effectiveness of Council Decision Making

Seventy-three percent of survey respondents also disagreed or strongly disagreed that public input is taken into consideration during Council’s decision-making processes. Sixty-eight percent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that Council overall makes decisions based on what they believe is in the best interest of the city.



The most frequent mention in open-ended survey comments is that Councillors appear to make decisions based on their own personal agendas rather than aligning with the priorities and needs of the public majority. Another frequent mention was that Council seems to only consider the opinion of the loudest rather than considering the opinion of the broader public. Some respondents also commented that staff expertise seem to be discounted in the Council decision-making process.

A major concern raised by many who engaged is that the City does not appear to use the feedback collected through engagement processes. Meeting participants noted that stakeholder input is not consistently reflected in reports, resulting in a lack of transparency regarding how public input was considered. Several comments noted that requesting public input is just an exercise to “check the box”. Many also commented that Council decisions on matters appear to have been made prior to the public being able to provide any input. This leaves many members of the public feeling disrespected and that their time was not constructive. Meeting participants also commented that

Council may not recognize that volunteer groups do not always have the resources to respond to requests for input with the timeframes set by Council.

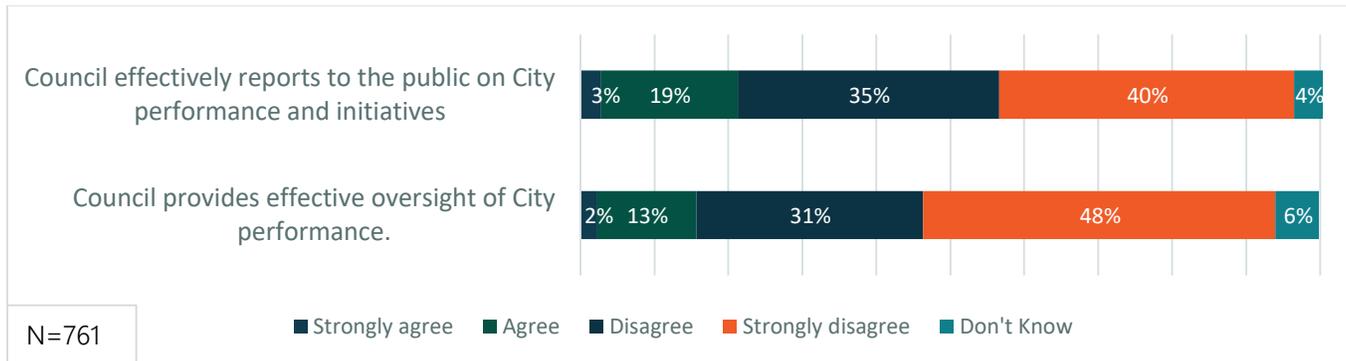
As mentioned previously, there were mixed opinions among survey respondents on the effectiveness of CALUCs in land use decisions. Some comments in surveys and written submissions favoured delegating more land use decisions to staff.

Table 2 - Key Themes from Public Engagement about Council Decision-Making Processes

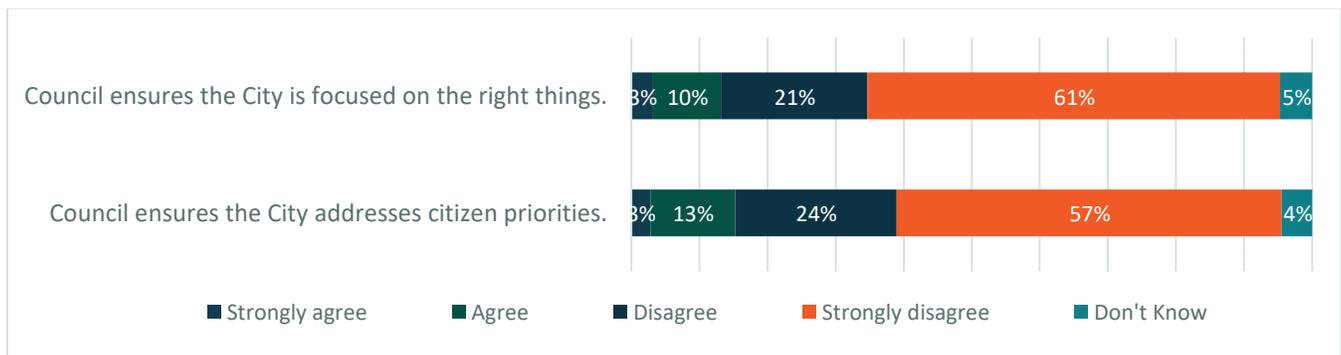
What We Heard	How it is Reflected in Recommendations
<p>Council meetings are overly long partially due to Council digging into administrative details, grandstanding, endless debate and veering off-course.</p> <p>Long, late Council meetings are a barrier to participation by members of the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable immediate ratification at Council of COTW recommendations to eliminate duplication of debate at Council meetings. • Delegate more authority to staff to reduce the number of matters to be considered by Council and eliminate discussion of administrative details. • Create a separate, distinct meeting for public hearings.
<p>Council appears to make decisions based on personal agendas, the vocal interests of a few rather than the majority of the public.</p> <p>Public input (individual and representative) does not appear to be considered in Council decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive public delegations on agenda items at COTW to enable fuller consideration of input • Ensure engagement feedback is effectively summarized for Council materials. Include an analysis of how the input is reflected in recommendations to Council and the public report of what was heard.
<p>Public engagement would be improved through greater engagement with marginalized groups and the residents most affected by a decision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate and apply the updated principles of equitable engagement in the Engagement Framework and more broadly to other ways of providing access to Council decision-making. e.g. engage Advisory Committees as a means of developing relationships within equity deserving communities and work with them to co-create inclusive engagement processes.

Council Oversight of City Performance

Survey respondents were asked to provide their input on Council’s oversight of City performance. Seventy-five percent of public survey respondents did not feel that Council effectively reports to the public on City performance and initiatives. 79% of survey respondents also did not feel that Council provides effective oversight of City performance. Meeting participants commented that reporting on progress is very delayed and measures appear be output based vs. outcome based, which makes it difficult to monitor outcomes and understand progress on the initiatives. Participants in focus groups and the public sessions noted that the Tri-Annual reports which report on many of the city’s initiatives are not widely reviewed by the public and stakeholder groups. Focus group participants noted that action items not completed do not appear to be prioritized for follow-up.



Overwhelmingly, 82% of online survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Council ensures that the City is focused on the right things. Additionally, 81% of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Council ensures the City addresses citizen priorities.



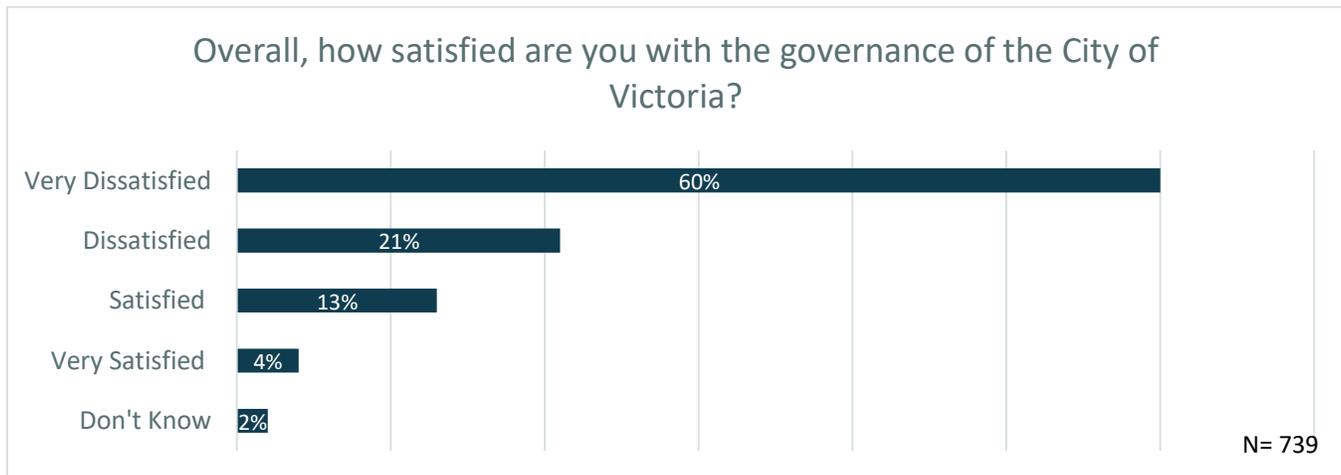
A common theme in survey comments is that Council priorities, represented in their agendas and decision-making, seem misaligned with broader public needs. A smaller number of survey comments expressed a different view with 24 respondents commenting on their satisfaction with Council’s forward looking and socially responsible priorities. Some focus group participants commented that the strategic plan seems unfocused with its long list of objectives (action items).

Table 3 - Key themes from public engagement about Council oversight of City performance

What We Heard	How it was reflected in recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cities strategic plan is very detailed and not overly strategic. Progress measures appear to be outputs rather than outcomes. Tri-annual reports include significant detail and are widely accessed by the public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a higher level focus for the municipal strategic plan. Clearly identify the target results and align specific measures to evaluate progress. Develop user-friendly materials for public consumption for both the strategic plan and progress reports.

Overall Satisfaction with the Governance of the City

Public survey respondents were asked to provide their input on the overall satisfaction of the governance of the City of Victoria. Sixty percent of respondents were very dissatisfied, 21% were dissatisfied, 13% were satisfied and 4% were very satisfied.



Top Themes from Survey Open-ended Questions

Following the overall satisfaction question, survey respondents were asked to respond to two open-ended questions that asked what they are most satisfied with and what they would most like to see improved in the City of Victoria’s Governance. Over 675 survey participants provided a response to one or both questions. Respondents tended not to differentiate between the two questions, ie. many commented on something they were dissatisfied with when asked what they were satisfied with. Therefore, the responses have been combined and results reported according to the nature of the comment. Responses also covered many topics not related to City governance, such as police, parks, and infrastructure. These comments have not been included in the summary analysis. Common themes related to governance from the open-ended responses are provided in the table below.

Table 5 – Top Themes from Survey Open-ended Questions

Most Satisfied With	#
Progressive, forward-looking Council with socially responsible priorities	39
Variety of opportunities for public input; addition of online options has increased access	28
Individual access to Mayor and Councillors to discuss concerns	19
Communication with the public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including videos, social media, newsletter, townhalls 	19
Council that is getting things done	8

Most Needs Improvement	#
<p>Councillors' personal, ideological agendas impact their decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions may not be in the best interest of the whole city and/or aligned with majority public opinion Often focusing attention on ad-hoc, pet-projects vs. long-term, core municipal needs 	186
<p>Council straying into matters beyond its municipal mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stick to core services e.g. road maintenance, parks, framework that supports local businesses Concerns that taxpayer money being spent on initiatives that are provincial or federal responsibility (e.g. addictions, health, public housing, social justice matters) 	125
<p>PUBLIC INPUT</p> <p>Public input not considered in decision making process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns raised by neighbours/CALUCs not reflected in reports and Council decisions Generally, requesting public input is just "checking a box", decision has been made prior to requesting public input. <p>Public input processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of input opportunities not always timely or reaching all who would be interested in participating Further efforts to facilitate input from more diverse, harder to reach public required CALUC / neighbourhood association demographics not representative of neighbourhood population and opinions 	118
<p>Council decision-making overly influenced by squeaky wheel - should consider majority public opinion, staff advice, not just loudest voices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff expertise discounted; more decisions should be delegated to staff 	64
<p>Land use specific public input processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed opinions on use of CALUC / neighbourhood input <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood input should be sought on all development Development that aligns with OCP should be approved, to speed up the process and increase consistency 	19
<p>Lack of transparency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would like more information on reasons for decisions that went against public opinion Too many decisions made in-camera City Family process lacks transparency 	61
<p>Council meeting management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings are too long, made longer by Council nitpicking small details, grandstanding, endless debate, veering off-course Last minute motions consume Council time and do not provide an opportunity for the public to weigh in. 	43
<p>Better connection with neighbourhoods</p>	33
<p>Better connection with neighbourhoods</p>	28

Most Needs Improvement	#
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward system • More engagement with Council neighbourhood liaison Neighbourhood associations that better represent the demographics of community	
Accountability for performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement and reporting on progress towards goals, outcomes is lacking • Outstanding items do not appear to receive follow-up • More honesty in reporting progress, review policies and admit when something is not working 	26
Information available to the public <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need user friendly, summarized, accessible information on matters being considered, decisions that have been made by Council, and for reporting on significant initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ e.g. 120 budget document or 1200+ page Missing Middle documents too long for the public to review and comment on. 	24
Council member conduct and conflict of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrespectful behaviour, involvement in external groups that may be in conflict of interest 	19

Next Steps

Key findings from stakeholder and public engagement have been considered along with a review of current documentation, engagement with City of Victoria Council members and senior leadership and comparison with other Canadian cities to inform MNP's Report of Recommendations to improve the City of Victoria's governance structures and processes. The report of recommendations is expected to be submitted to Council at the Committee of the Whole meeting on July 21, 2022 for their consideration.

Appendices

Appendix A – Survey respondent demographics

Appendix B - Written Submissions

Appendix C – List of organizations that participated in a focus group

Appendix D - Promotional Material (Facebook & Twitter Ads, Newspaper Ads)

Appendix E – Comparison of City of Victoria and Other Jurisdictions Governance Processes

Appendix F - Data Collection Tools

- Survey
- Written Submission Guide / Focus Group Question Guide
- Public Event presentation and questions

Appendix A - Survey Respondent Demographics

What City of Victoria neighbourhood do you live in?

Burnside Gorge	53
Downtown	61
Fairfield	143
Fernwood	76
Gonzales	66
Harris-Green	17
Hillside-Quadra	45
James Bay	159
Jubilee	41
North Park	36
Oaklands	50
Rockland	37
Victoria West	81
Resident of other area that owns property or business in the City	16
TOTAL	881

Non-resident, does not own property or business in City of Victoria (not included in survey analysis) 70

2. Please select the category that includes your age

	%	#
19 or under	0%	1
20 to 24	1%	9
25 to 34	10%	88
35 to 44	15%	130
45 to 54	18%	152
55 to 64	23%	199
65 or over	33%	288
TOTAL		867

Appendix A - Survey Respondent Demographics

What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

	%	#
Prefer not to say	5%	46
Some high school	1%	7
High school diploma or equivalent	4%	32
Apprenticeship or trade certification	3%	29
Some university or college	17%	146
Bachelor's degree / college diploma	40%	349
Advanced degree (Master or Doctorate)	30%	258
TOTAL		867

What is your total annual household income?

	%	#
Prefer not to say	20%	172
Under \$25,000	3%	22
\$25,000 to \$49,999	10%	87
\$50,000 to 74,999	15%	133
\$75,000 to \$99,000	12%	106
\$100,000 to 124,999	15%	130
\$125,000 or over	25%	217
TOTAL		867

What gender do you most identify with?

	%	#
Prefer not to say	7%	63
Female	46%	397
Male	45%	389
Non-binary	1%	9
Transgender	0%	4
Prefer to self-describe:	1%	5
TOTAL		867

Do you consider yourself part of an equity-seeking group?

	%	#
Yes	26%	223
No	74%	644
TOTAL		867

From: stan bartlett <grumpytaxpayers@gmail.com>
Sent: April 28, 2022 10:03 AM
To: Consulting Services Public Consultations
Subject: City of Victoria Governance review - Submission by Grumpy Taxpayer\$

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Inconvenient truths about municipal governance

Judgement day for local politicians is a few months away and voters are already getting a little twitchy.

It's never easy figuring out who should come and who should go, and then living with the municipal election results for the next four long years. Critics believe there are insufficient ways to even make an educated decision about the fate of 93 local politicians across the South Island.

There are inconvenient truths.

To our dismay there's no municipal government for Greater Victoria that's directly responsible to voters.

Instead there's a patchwork of 13 neighbourhood municipalities, three electoral areas, and the Capital Regional District that delivers 200 or so services region-wide or through a shared service delivery model.

Only one small problem: As a result of this convoluted governance model, the 24-member CRD board cannot respond effectively to serious regional issues such as crime, health and transportation. Members for the most part are responsible only to their own municipality.

Next, there's the frequent meetings closed to the public held in accordance with the Community Charter. To encourage transparency these in-camera meetings are supposed to be held in very specific circumstances, for example, discussion of a legal or human resources matter.

But some local councils spend more time in closed-door meetings than they should, especially during the last two tumultuous years. If there's a controversy or a sensitive topic, transparency disappears and meetings sometimes default to a shut door.

There's a grey area around what justifies a closed door meeting and senior administration - employed by council - usually make the ruling. Voters get the sanitized, short version of the discussion later, if at all.

It's an inconvenient truth when legal disputes - that reflect poorly on the performance of a local council - often don't reach the ears of the public.

If you sit around a corporate board table, directors demand to know who is suing the company, the result and the cost of any settlement. It's one way to judge the competence of organizations and the management.

There were several lawsuits in conjunction with the Johnson Street bridge replacement fiasco for example and we still don't know the outcome. Perhaps the governance structure should change to avoid lawsuits next time around. Perhaps the performance of council was exemplary and there were no payouts.

Annual reports, statements of financial information and the rest of the verbiage that comes out of municipal

halls don't report on lawsuits, the results and costs. Although councils must follow the rule of law, sometimes you never learn about the liabilities put on the taxpayer.

There's also a challenge to all councils to represent all voters not just those who voted for them or represent one faction.

Some do this better than others while recognizing there's a finite amount of budget dollars, various priorities and sober choices to be made.

A dose of fiscal reality is required to moderate ideological based policies, councillors chasing their pet projects, or hell bent on changing the world.

The business community often says privately they are afraid of reprisals if they speak out and so avoid running for council. Some chambers of commerce rarely take a controversial stand and function more as a social club than a partner in leading the community.

On the other hand, some councils have plenty of business representation, arguably to the detriment of broader community representation and focus on critical issues.

Finally, the quality of reliable information taxpayers receive is inadequate and inconsistent.

A priority for most municipalities - particularly in the months prior to an election - is to put out endless public relations stories. The controversial stuff is censored or eliminated.

If asked by the media about sensitive issues, municipalities will often hide behind freedom of information legislation and delay informing the public.

Media increasingly run one-source stories instead of providing varying views. At one time journalists would be told to find another job if they ran a sole-source story.

Social media outlets and the trolls that frequent them - such as Local Governance 2.0 - seem to spend more time on sniping than civil discussion.

Taxpayers are often forced to go to the municipal online source itself and to believe the government version.

At the end of the day there are various inconvenient truths around local governance. These roadblocks are often designed to sustain the status quo and present a sanitized version of municipal governance.

Fortunately there are other ways to hold your council more accountable. Do your research and arm yourself with as much knowledge as possible before heading to the poll.

A better informed electorate holds our local governments more accountable and gets better value for our tax dollar.

-30-

Stan Bartlett, Vice Chair
[Grumpy Taxpayer\\$ of Greater Victoria](#)

grumpytaxpayers@gmail.com - 250.477.9907

Stakeholder Focus Group Guide

The City of Victoria has engaged [MNP LLP](#) to conduct a review of its governance structure, systems and practices. MNP will be providing the City with recommendations for changes to any key by-laws, policies, guidelines and practices to support efficient, effective and inclusive governance. The review will consider ways the current model is effective and how it may be improved to further support these principles.

As part of this review, we are seeking input from organizations and individual residents regarding what is working well and where improvements could be made, particularly regarding transparency, accountability and how these stakeholders are able to participate in Council decision-making. A summary of stakeholder input will be included with the public report on the governance review.

Background information on the Governance Review project can be accessed at engage.victoria/governance-review.

Confidentiality

Individual feedback will be retained by MNP and will not be released to the City of Victoria or any other party without your express permission. Findings will be reported as summary themes, with no identifying information. If an organization elects to provide a formal written submission, the submission will be provided in its entirety to the City of Victoria.

Questions

1. What is your organization's mandate. How is it your organization or its members typically involved in interactions with the City Council or a committee of Council?
Silver Threads Service (STS) is a charitable, not-for-profit senior serving organization with centres in Victoria and Saanich.
The City of Victoria delivers recreation through the Crystal Pool and a decentralized model by providing funding to 7 community and 3 senior centres. STS is one of the 3.
The 7 community centres are connected in some way to their respective Neighbourhood Association, the Neighbourhood Associations are assigned a Council Liaison so the members and leadership of the community centres would have access and a relationship with City Council.
The Senior Centres do not have a formal connection with a Neighbourhood Association. As a result, they do not have access to City Council in the same way.
2. Do you feel there is reasonable access and opportunity for organizations/citizens to participate in the decisions before Council? What barriers may exist?
For our members the barriers include transportation, safety issue, finance and health, specifically to attend in person meetings. Lack of access to Wi-Fi and computer skills to access on line is also a concern.

3. Is information on issues being considered by Council easy to access? How would you describe the information that is available? What gaps might exist?
Personally, I find it easy to access information through the web site. Written general communications are sent to my home and work with City updates. The gap is really for those who are not tech savvy (most of our clientele).
4. Have you participated in any of the City's hearings or appeal processes? If yes, what works well? What do you believe are priorities for improvement?
Yes, I have had to present or lobby on occasion, not having late night meetings would be an improvement.
5. In your experience, are matters to be considered by Council brought forward and dealt with in a timely way? Efficiently? Please explain.
Generally, yes, there is a structure and process.
6. How would you describe Council's role in providing oversight of the City? What seems to work well? Any priorities for improvement?
Concerns of seniors are top of mind for me. Our Victoria Centre is located at Quadra and Caledonia (across from the Police Station) and we do get feedback that people don't feel safe in this neighbourhood. The relationship and level of support from Council to the Police Department is needing improvement.
7. Does available information meet your needs to understand City budgets or performance? Please explain. Yes.
8. How well does Council address citizens' priorities? Support the overall effectiveness of the city? There is effort, but resource challenges.
9. Do you believe Council is effective overall in making decisions based on the best interest of the city? Please explain.
It is easier to hear and react to the vocal minority, and the squeaky wheel does get the grease. I would like to see more effort to reach out to our elders.
10. Other Key Topics of Interest . . .
In 2019/20 there was a Seniors Tasks Force with many members of seniors serving organization as well as the public, a document with recommendations was accepted by Council. Sadly, nothing has happened with it and that is unfortunate.

Thank you for taking the time to share your insights

Please continue to promote the public input opportunities available at engage.victoria.ca/governance-review to those in your network. The survey is open until May 13.



VICTORIA DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION SUBMISSION TO THE CITY OF VICTORIA GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Victoria Downtown Residents Association (“DRA”) is the official community organization representing people living in Victoria’s Downtown neighbourhood (formerly the Downtown-Harris Green neighbourhoods). We have identified a number of issues respecting the City’s Governance Review specific to our organization.

While being officially recognized by the City¹ as representing people living in the Downtown neighbourhood, we operate without any formal terms of reference to guide not just our role and responsibilities to the City and to the residents we represent, but also the role and responsibilities of the City to our organization and to our residents. This also means a lack of formal means of, or requirement for, communication to and from the City on matters directly affecting our neighbourhood and our residents. Additionally, our funding is limited and precarious, and we face a substantial inequity when compared to many of the City’s other neighbourhood associations, not just in funding but also in physical amenities.²

No formal terms of reference

Within this vacuum, as required by the BC Societies Act, we have adopted a formal Constitution and Bylaws and hold an annual general meeting at which our 100% volunteer Board is elected by resident members. The Board meets monthly, and we have six formal committees. We have adopted internal governance policies and communicate with members and others through our website, monthly e-newsletter, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

¹ In this submission “City” includes both Council and staff unless otherwise noted.

² In conducting this review, MNP needs to be aware that the Neighbourhood Associations differ substantially in terms of funding and amenities, with several of Victoria’s NAs having substantial physical assets and funding.

Without terms of reference, we have adopted as our mandate the fostering of a diverse, vibrant, and safe Downtown neighbourhood. In carrying out that mandate we promote, facilitate, support and undertake activities to enhance the quality of life and the environment of the Downtown neighbourhood for our residents including, but not limited to:

- promoting the downtown core as a good place to live,
- fostering residents' control of land development and redevelopment within the area,
- helping preserve cultural and architectural heritage sites within the area, and
- fostering a sense of community for residents in the Downtown neighbourhood.

In these activities, we look to engage our residents in civic activities, and we support Council's Strategic Plan objectives, including but not limited to: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods; Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City; and Good Governance and Civic Engagement.

Formal terms of reference would provide us with greater legitimacy and stronger focus in undertaking our activities and would acknowledge and support the critical role NAs play in effective and responsive local governance.

Communications with the City/Lack of Transparency

While Council appoints a councilor liaison for each NA who is expected to inform the NA of City programs, initiatives, and activities and to bring forward the NA's concerns to Council, the timeliness and extent of that communication can be limited and frequently inadequate. And the assigned staff liaison is often limited in what they can share with us. Often City programs, initiatives and activities are presented as a finished product – without any consultation with the NAs, even where directly affected.

A prime example is the City's proposal for a Downtown community centre at 926-930 Pandora – in the middle of Victoria's equivalent of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with significant issues of drug use, homelessness and crime. This plan was developed without ANY input from the DRA and communicated to us only a matter of hours

before a media announcement. While invited to be the community centre operator (to be shared with North Park Neighbourhood Association), this lack of consultation was followed by a failure to effectively engage with us for over four months, and the withholding of key information, such that we had no option but to decline to participate.

A second example is Council's initiative for adjustments to the NA boundaries. The NAs were not consulted whether such adjustments were necessary or required before the City distributed an information package to residents that was lacking in information about what NAs do and what Council's proposed changes might mean. The City's survey was overly simple and when its results were inconclusive, council off-loaded the issue onto affected NAs to try to resolve.

So while the City claims to apply the IAP2 consultation protocols, those protocols are frequently not applied, and when applied are often seen to be simply window dressing rather than truly meaningful and effective consultation.

Another consequence of the two above-described matters, and a number of others, is that the City in effect "hijacks" our own strategic plan and agenda, forcing us to drop what we are working on to respond to the City's perceived priorities, taking up our very limited volunteer capacity to serve the City's agenda, and not our own equally valid agenda and plans.

Further, often our communications with the City are not only not formally or even informally acknowledged, and on more than one occasion they did not make it into the materials placed before Council.

Far too often, when the Community Land Use Committee (CALUC) holds a public meeting on a development proposal and submits a letter to Mayor and Council with a summary of comments from meeting participants and CALUC members, there is virtually never any feedback from the City and it is far too often felt that the voices of the neighbourhood are being either dismissed or ignored.

And the lack of communication and transparency extends to the City's determinations when to move forward with or when to shelve an initiative. For example, the City initiated a liquor policy review, engaging a contractor to make recommendations for a consistent framework when considering liquor licencing applications. The DRA

and many others participated in the review. Despite the significant work, that review has been shelved for a number of years without any explanation, while literally hundreds of additional seats have been added to the existing liquor capacity, with almost all of those seats being located in our neighbourhood, often close to existing or under-construction residences, and hours of operation extended to late nights, all on an ad hoc basis.

Access to Information

The City does not make important information easily available to us or to our residents.

Council meeting agendas frequently use bureaucratic terminology so that finding an item, or determining what a listed item is about, is difficult. Plus working one's way through the sometime voluminous supporting material can be very difficult.

The City's Development Tracker, to which citizens are directed to find out information about developments, is for the most part inaccessible to all but the most highly knowledgeable due to the number and complexity of the documents. Simple easy-to-understand summaries and concise updates are sorely lacking.

In addition, information that the City could share with us to make our work easier is not provided. We have no list of resident occupied buildings in the Downtown neighbourhood (a more difficult determination than most other neighbourhoods), and City mailing lists are not made available to us so that we can more easily contact our residents.

Access to Stable Funding

While we are grateful for the per capita base grant funding provided by the City, it is based on often outdated census information, which does not reflect the rapidly increasing population due to the significant construction projects recently and continuing to be completed in our neighbourhood.

Our very recently approved funding for part-time staffing is, at best, precarious, and is provided only on an annual approval basis, which can make it difficult to attract and retain staff or to effectively plan. Other NAs have assured annual funding.

Access to Equitable Amenities

Unlike many other NAs, the DRA has no physical presence by way of a community centre. This limits our ability to raise our profile with our significant challenges of no common meeting places - our neighbourhood has no public schools, no playgrounds, and no dog parks where our residents, who almost exclusively live in multi-unit silos, can meet and build community.

Our parks are seriously limited in number and size, despite Council's repeated objective to provide green space downtown, even though almost all of the Downtown residents live in high rises without any access to private yards or gardens.

The City continues to approve numerous density bonuses for Downtown developers without requiring sufficient financial contributions to Downtown amenities, and even diverting what little amenity funding that does exist to providing affordable housing instead. While affordable housing is desirable, it should not be at the cost of simple public amenities within our high-density neighbourhood.

Conclusion

The City governance review should include a strong recommendation for a consultative process to develop formal terms of reference to support NAs in effectively representing their residents to Council and to ensure that the City is effectively supporting the NAs to do that.

Submitted by,

Sandra Severs
President
Victoria Downtown Residents Association

Appendix C – Organizations that Participated in a Focus Group

Action Committee of People with Disabilities

Cool Aid

City of Victoria Active Transportation Advisory Committee

City of Victoria Accessibility Advisory Committee

Downtown Residents Association

Downtown Victoria Business Association

Fairfield Gonzalez Community Association

Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness

Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce

James Bay Neighbourhood Association

James Bay New Horizons

MS Wellness Centre

North Park Neighbourhood Association

Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee

Urban Development Institute

VE Harbour Society

Victoria Construction Association

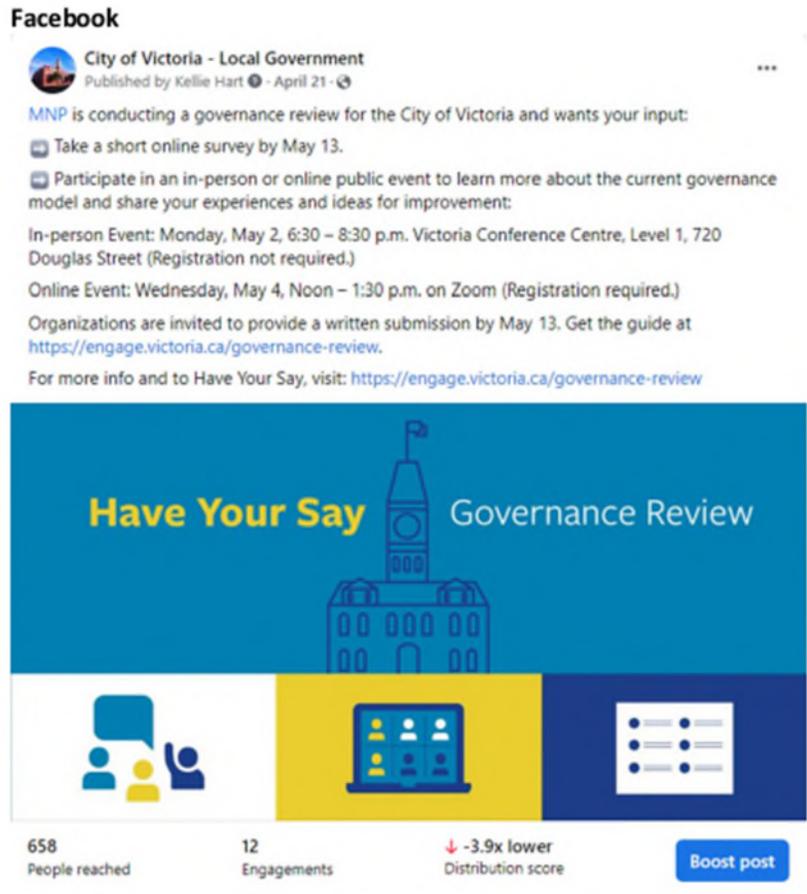
Victoria Disability Resource Centre

Appendix D – Promotional Materials

Twitter post



Facebook post



Instagram Post

Instagram



City of Victoria @cityofvictoria
Apr 21

@mnplp is conducting a governance review for the City of Victoria and wants your input:

- Take a short online survey by May 13.
- Participate in an in-person or online public event to learn more about the current governance model and share your experiences and ideas for improvement:

In-person Event: Monday, May 2, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Victoria Conference Centre, Level 1, 720 Douglas Street (Registration not required.)

Online Event: Wednesday, May 4, Noon – 1:30 p.m. on Zoom (Registration required.)

Organizations are invited to provide a written submission by May 13. Get the guide at engage.victoria.ca/governance-review

For more info and to Have Your Say, visit:
engage.victoria.ca/governance-review
[Read less](#)



Boost post

Times Colonist and Vic News Ad



**Have Your Say
Governance Review**

MNP^{LLP} is conducting a governance review for the City of Victoria. Governance is about the City's leadership and responsibility to Victoria residents. It includes understanding residents' needs and making decisions in the best interests of the city.

Learn more about the current governance model. Participate in a small in-person or online discussion to share your experiences and ideas for improvement.

In-person Session:	Online Session:
Monday, May 2	Wednesday, May 4
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Victoria Conference Centre	Zoom
Level 1, 720 Douglas Street	(Registration required.)

Online Survey
You can also provide input by **completing an online survey by Friday, May 13.**

If you have questions or require alternate formats to participate, please email participate@mnp.ca or call 250.410.2841.

To take the survey, register for the online event and for more information, visit:
engage.victoria.ca/governance-review




Media Release

Media Release



Thursday, April 21, 2022 | For Immediate Release

Residents Invited to Get Involved in City of Victoria's Governance Review

VICTORIA, BC – MNP LLP, the consulting firm engaged to conduct the governance review for the City of Victoria, is looking for public input to help shape the City's governance structures and processes. The review will consider ways the City's current governance model is effective and how it can be improved.

Governance involves the structures and processes for decision making, focusing on openness and accountability. It's about the City's leadership and responsibility to residents. It includes understanding residents' needs and making decisions in the best interests of the city.

The goal of the review is to provide Council with recommendations for changes to any key bylaws, policies and guidelines and to support best practices for efficient, effective and inclusive governance.

The public is invited to get involved by completing a 10-minute online survey or attending a public event.

MNP will also be meeting with representatives of groups with an interest in business, planning and development and community well-being. Written submissions on behalf of organizations can be submitted to participate@mnp.ca.

For those who wish to participate in a group setting, in-person and virtual public events will be offered where people can learn more about the City's governance and share their experiences and ideas for improvements. Each session will include a brief presentation and facilitated, small break-out discussions.

In-Person Session:	Online Session:
Monday, May 2, 2022	Wednesday, May 4, 2022
Victoria Conference Centre	Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Level 1, 720 Douglas Street	Zoom
Registration is not required.	Registration is required.

Feedback is being accepted until **Friday, May 13, 2022**. Take the survey, register for the online event and learn how the City's current governance model compares to other Canadian cities at: engage.victoria.ca/governance-review.

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For More Information:
Bill Eisenhauer
Head of Engagement, City of Victoria
250.858.1061 | beisenhauer@victoria.ca

Regulatory Framework – the rules for how the City is governed

Legislation (Provincial Authority)



- *The Community Charter**
 - *The Local Government Act*
 - Bill 26 – Proposed amendments to the *Community Charter* (including Code of Conduct, streamline development approvals)
- * Province and Municipality have concurrent authority in four areas [public health, natural environment, wildlife, soil removal or deposit]*

Bylaws (Municipal Authority)



- Council Procedures Bylaw 16-011
- Land Use Procedures Bylaw 21-055

For more information go to engage.victoria/governance-review

Opportunities for the Public to Communicate with City Council



City-directed Public Engagement Processes

City staff may directly seek the input of citizens of Victoria on various topics. The process may vary, depending on the topic, and is guided by the Engagement Framework approved by Council.



Request to Address Council

A person or group who wishes to address Council on an agenda item, or any other topic at a Council Meeting, can make a request to Legislative Services. [\[click here\]](#)



Public Hearing / Opportunity for Public Comment

Citizens may convey their views on development applications under a City bylaw at *public hearings*. For applications where a public hearing is not required, Council may invite *Public Comment*. Council meetings and public hearings are open to all members of the public. [\[Public Notices\]](#)



Neighbourhood Association

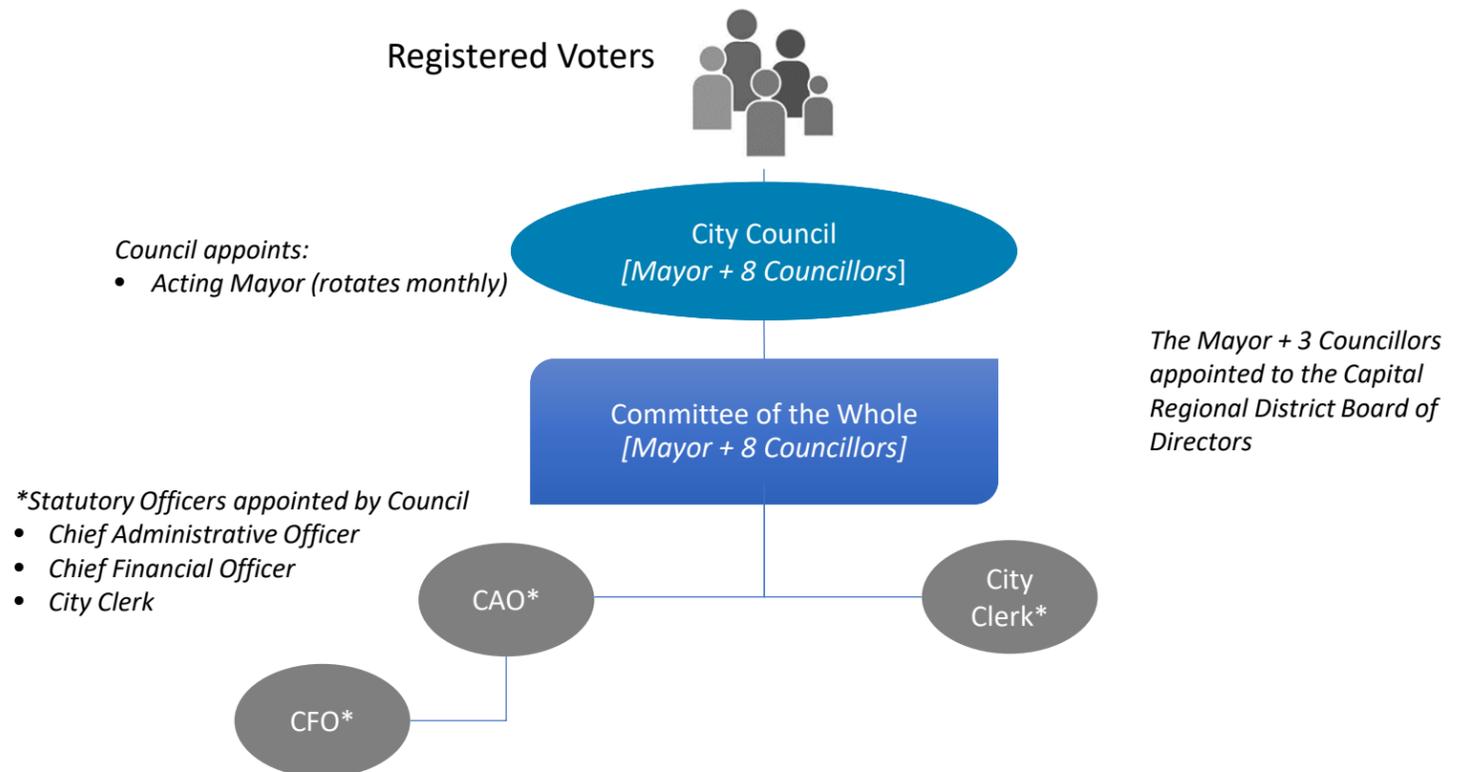
Council Liaisons and City staff attend Neighbourhood Association meetings to provide information and respond to inquiries. Councillors may also relay neighbourhood issues to Council if an issue requires Council attention. [\[click here\]](#)



Contact Members of Council

Share your feedback on any topic with all of Mayor and Council or individually. Contact information is posted on the City's website. [\[contact information\]](#)

Current Governance Structure – the way City Council is organized



Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees provide feedback and recommendations to the City to inform the development and implementation of City policies. They may conduct related independent research. Members are appointed by Council, include a Council Liaison and are governed by Terms of Reference. Council may also appoint task forces for specific, time-limited initiatives.



City of Victoria Neighbourhoods (13)

Councillors are appointed as the Neighbourhood Liaison for one or more Neighbourhood Associations.

Neighbourhood Associations appoint a **Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC)**

The procedures for processing rezoning and variance applications require that the CALUC host a Community Meeting on all proposed rezoning applications in order to ensure the community is notified about proposed land use applications and to facilitate discussion of the application between the applicant and the community.

How Do We Compare?

City	Size of Council	Population (2021)	Committees of Council / Advisory Committees	Public Access to Council	Strategic Plan	Development Approvals * Public Hearing Body	Council Code of Conduct / Integrity Commissioner
Victoria, B.C.	Mayor + 8 Councillors (all elected at large)	91,867 397,237 (CMA)	Committee of the Whole 12 Advisory Committees	Agendas published 4 business days prior to meeting Public can request to speak at Council Meeting - agenda item or any other matter 5 minutes per individual or group	4-year strategic plan Tri-annual Report on progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Board of Variance • Council * 	No (both)
Vancouver, B.C.	Mayor + 10 Councillors (all elected at large)	662,248 2,773,148 (CMA)	2 Standing Committees of Council 38 Civic Agencies or advisory committees.	Agendas published 5 days prior to meeting. Public can request to speak at Standing Committees, Council Meeting. 5 min. per individual or group.	1-year corporate plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director/ Development Permit Board (staff) • Council* 	Yes – Code of Conduct Yes – integrity commissioner
Kelowna, B.C.	Mayor + 8 Councillors (all elected at large)	144,576 229,400 (CMA)	7 Advisory Committees	Agendas posted minimum of 48 Hours prior to meeting. No delegations at Council meetings unless by special request of Council. Public hearings – 5 minutes per individual or group.	4-year council priorities 1-year action plan Annual report on progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager • Council* 	No (both)
Regina, SK	Mayor + 10 Councillors	226,404 263,659 (CMA)	2 Committees of Council (Exec., Planning) 2 Advisory Committees	Agendas posted 5 days prior to meeting. Public can request to speak to agenda items at Council or Committee; any other matter at Executive Committee. 5 min. per individual or group.	4-year strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director/staff* • Planning Commission • Council 	Yes – Code of Conduct Yes – Integrity Commissioner
Windsor, ON	Mayor + 10 Councillors	229,660 351,116 (CMA)	4 Standing Committees 20 Advisory Committees	Agendas published minimum 3 days prior to meeting. Public can request to speak at Standing Committee and Council meetings – agenda items only. 5 min. per individual or group.	20-year strategic vision 4-year strategic plans (not yet implemented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Development and Heritage Standing Committee* • Committee of Adjustment* 	Yes – Code of Conduct Yes – Integrity Commissioner
Kitchener, ON	Mayor + 10 Councillors	256-885 575,847 (Kitchener-Waterloo, CMA)	3 Standing Committees 9 Advisory Committees	Agendas published 3 days prior to the meeting. Public can request to speak at Standing Committee and Council meetings – agenda items only. 5 min. per individual, 10 minutes for group of 5 or more.	4-year strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council • Committee of Adjustment • Planning and Strategic Initiatives Standing Committee* 	Yes – Code of Conduct Yes – Integrity Commissioner
Québec City, QC	Mayor + 21 Councillors	549,459 836,837 (CMA)	1 Standing Committee (Exec.) 6 Borough Councils 27 Neighbourhood Councils	Agendas published minimum 1 day prior to meeting. Public question period at Council meetings, total 45 minutes. Public questions read, Council response at Borough Council meetings.	Not available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council* • Borough Council* 	Yes – Code of Conduct Yes – Provincial Commission
Halifax, NS	Mayor + 16 Councillors (Regional Council)	439,819 460,274 (CMA)	6 Standing Committees 4 Community Councils ~15 Advisory Committees	Agendas published 2-4 business days prior to meeting. Public can request to speak at Community Council, Standing Committee – agenda item or any other matter. 5 minutes per individual or group – agenda items 10 minutes per presentation – other items.	5-year strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director/staff • Community Council • Regional Council* • Design Review Committee 	Yes – Code of Conduct No – Integrity Commissioner
St. John's, NL	Mayor + Deputy Mayor + 9 Councillors (5 ward, 4 at large)	110,525 205,955 (CMA)	Committee of the Whole (portfolios assigned) 4 Advisory Committees	Agendas published 3 days prior to meeting. Public can request to speak at Committee of the Whole – agenda item or any other matter. 15 minutes per presentation.	10-year strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council* 	Yes – Code of Conduct No – Integrity Commissioner

Advisory Committees – committees comprised of members of the public that provide advice to Council on matters referred to it



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

We are seeking resident input on what is working well and where improvements could be made to the City of Victoria's governance structures and practices, particularly on transparency, accountability and how residents are able to participate in City decision-making.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. It will be available until May 13, 2022.

Introduction

Governance and Civic Engagement is identified as a strategic objective in the City of Victoria's Strategic Plan. As part of fulfilling that objective, the City is currently conducting a review of its governance structures, bylaws and practices.

MNP LLP has been engaged as an independent third party to conduct the governance review, considering ways the current model is effective and how it may be improved to further support efficient, effective and inclusive governance.

As part of the review, we are seeking public input, to understand residents' experiences with and opinions of the City's governance structures, processes and priorities for improvement. The input provided through this survey will be considered in MNP's report of recommendations to Council.

Confidentiality

MNP LLP, an independent third party, has been engaged to conduct the governance review, including this survey. All responses will be kept confidential by MNP. Only overall results, without individual identifying information will be shared.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the MNP project team at participate@mnt.ca.



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

Please help us understand our survey respondents:

* 1. What City of Victoria neighbourhood do you live in?

- Burnside Gorge
- Downtown
- Fairfield
- Fernwood
- Gonzales
- Harris-Green
- Hillside-Quadra
- James Bay
- Jubilee
- North Park
- Oaklands
- Rockland
- Victoria West
- I live in another municipality (please specify)



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

* 2. Do you own property or a business in any of the City of Victoria neighbourhoods listed on the previous page?

- Yes
- No



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

* 3. Please select the category that includes your age

- 19 or under
- 20 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or over

* 4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- Some high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Apprenticeship or trade certification
- Some university or college
- Bachelor's degree / college diploma
- Advanced degree (Master or Doctorate)
- Prefer not to say

* 5. What is your total annual household income?

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to 74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,000
- \$100,000 to 124,999
- \$125,000 or over
- Prefer not to say

* 6. What gender do you most identify with?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer to self-describe:

- Prefer not to say

* 7. Do you consider yourself part of an equity-seeking group?

- Yes
- No



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

8. Please explain if you wish.



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

9. Please review the following statements and select your level of agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I understand how I can communicate with Council on issues I'm concerned about.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel I can participate effectively in City of Victoria public engagement initiatives.	<input type="radio"/>				

10. Have you personally presented at a City Council meeting?

- Yes - in person
- Yes - virtually
- No



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

11. Please review the following statements and select your level of agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My experience in presenting to Council was constructive and worth my time.	<input type="radio"/>				
I believe my interests and concerns were heard and given consideration.	<input type="radio"/>				
I was treated respectfully.	<input type="radio"/>				

MNP

Administered by MNP LLP



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

12. Have you encountered any barriers that make it difficult to present to Council?

- Yes
- No

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City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

* 13. Please identify the barriers you encountered (Please select **up to three** that were most significant to you)

- I was unable to find information on how to participate
- Registering to participate was too difficult
- The meetings are scheduled at a time I am unable to participate
- The amount of time it takes to appear (including waiting time) is too long
- The information on the topic was difficult to understand
- I did not feel sufficiently confident to speak in public
- I did not believe my concerns would be given consideration
- I experienced gender, race, faith or other discrimination in my efforts to participate
- I do not have access to a device or the internet to participate virtually
- The process to participate virtually does not accommodate my physical abilities
- The process to participate in person does not accommodate my physical abilities



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

14. Please review the following statements and select your level of agreement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Information on issues that are being considered by Council is easy to find.	<input type="radio"/>				
Information on issues that are being considered by Council is useful and easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>				
Council provides effective oversight of City performance.	<input type="radio"/>				
Council effectively reports to the public on City performance and initiatives	<input type="radio"/>				

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A
Appeal processes ensure City decisions are fair and consistent with policies.	<input type="radio"/>				
Matters to be considered by Council are dealt with in a timely way.	<input type="radio"/>				
Matters to be considered by Council are dealt with efficiently.	<input type="radio"/>				
Public input is considered by Council in its decision-making processes.	<input type="radio"/>				
Council ensures the City addresses citizen priorities.	<input type="radio"/>				
Council ensures the City is focused on the right things.	<input type="radio"/>				
I believe Council overall makes decisions based on what they believe is in the best interest of the city as a whole.	<input type="radio"/>				
Council Advisory Committees are an effective way to support community input to Council decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
The purpose of Council Advisory Committees is clear.	<input type="radio"/>				



City of Victoria Governance Review Public Survey

15. Overall, how satisfied are you with the governance of the City of Victoria?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
<input type="radio"/>				

16. What are you most satisfied with?

17. What would you most like to see improve?

WRITTEN SUBMISSION GUIDE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Victoria has engaged [MNP LLP](#) to conduct a review of its governance structure, systems and practices. The review will consider ways the current model is effective and how it may be improved to further support efficient, effective and inclusive governance.

As part of this review, we are seeking input from community organizations and individual residents regarding what is working well and where improvements could be made, particularly regarding transparency, accountability and how these stakeholders are able to participate in the Council decision-making. A summary of stakeholder input will be included with the public report on the governance review.

Background information on the Governance Review project can be accessed at engage.victoria/governance-review.

Organizations may wish to provide input in writing, which may include more background or detail than is possible through the focus groups. Questions to help guide written input are provided below.

Confidentiality

Individual written responses will be provided to the City of Victoria in whole, identifying you or your organization as the source, **unless you specifically instruct otherwise**. In that case, your submission will be included in summary form as part of the information collected for this project.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The following questions are provided to help guide your submission. We would appreciate your input on any or all of these questions or on any additional topics related to the City of Victoria Council's governance structure and practices.

1. What is your organization's mandate. How is it your organization or its members typically involved in interactions with the City Council or a committee of Council?
2. Do you feel there is reasonable access and opportunity for organizations/citizens to participate in the decisions before Council? What barriers may exist?
3. Is information on issues being considered by Council easy to access? How would you describe the information that is available? What gaps might exist?
4. Have you participated in any of the City's hearings or appeal processes? If yes, what works well? What do you believe are priorities for improvement?

5. In your experience, are matters to be considered by Council brought forward and dealt with in a timely way? Efficiently? Please explain.
6. How would you describe Council's role in providing oversight of the City? What seems to work well? Any priorities for improvement?
7. Does available information meet your needs to understand City budgets or performance? Please explain.
8. How well does Council address citizens' priorities? Support the overall effectiveness of the city?
9. Do you believe Council is effective overall in making decisions based on the best interest of the city? Please explain.

HOW TO RESPOND

The format of your response is entirely up to you. It can be a simple email or a longer document. Responses may be submitted by email to participate@mnp.ca until May 13, 2022.



City of Victoria

Governance Review

Stakeholder Focus Group
[date]



1



Welcome

- Introduction
- Meeting / Teams housekeeping
- Participant Introductions
- Discussion



2

Introduction



Introductions

- MNP
 - Yvonne Morrison
 - Sarah Kenyon

Why are We Here?

- MNP engaged by the City of Victoria to conduct a review of its governance structures, systems and practices.
- MNP will be providing the City with recommendations for changes to key by-laws, policies, practices to support efficient, effective and inclusive governance. The report will be made public and will include a summary of public input.
- To seek input from organizations on what is working well, where improvements could be made.
- Key areas of focus today are transparency, accountability and access to participate in Council decision-making.

Phase 2

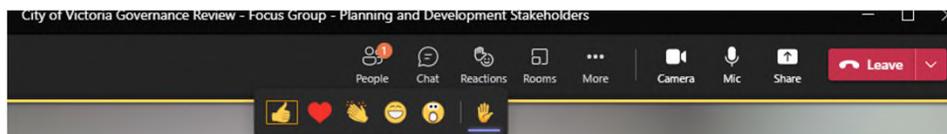
Wherever business takes you MNP.ca

3

Housekeeping



- We have a total of two (2) hours today.
- Please make one point at a time, so that all who wish to can contribute. As time allows, we can go back to you for more.
- Please use the "raise your hand" tool in Teams when you wish to contribute. (under reactions)



- Please keep your camera on if you are comfortable and mute your mic when not speaking.

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4

Introductions – Participants



- What is your organization's mandate?
- How is it your organization or its members typically involved in interactions with City Council or a committee of Council?

5

1. Do you feel there is reasonable opportunity for organizations/citizens to provide input to the decisions before Council?



Opps to provide input

What barriers may exist?

6

2. Do you have access to user friendly info to understand what council is deciding on?
Please explain.



7

3. Have you participated in any of the City's hearings or appeal processes? If yes, what works well? What do you believe are priorities for improvement?



What works well?

-
-
-
-

Areas for Improvement?

8

4. In your experience, are matters to be considered by Council brought forward and dealt with in a timely way? Efficiently?



-

9

5. Do you believe Council is effective overall in making decisions based on the best interest of the city? *(are they objective, fair, unbiased?)*



-
-
-

10

6. How well do you feel Council is doing in fulfilling its role to provide oversight of the City? What seems to work well? Any priorities for improvement?

MNP

What works well?

Priorities for improvement?

Oversight role

- Review and monitor policies, plans, programs.
- Ensure they are applied appropriately, achieving the expected results.
- Reporting to the public on progress, results

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11

Other

7. Are there other Key Topics of Interest?

MNP

•

•

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12

Thank you!



- Remember to complete the online survey. Open until May 13.
- Please help promote the public engagement opportunities within your circle of influence.
 - Online survey – open until May 13
 - Public events:
 - May 2 – in-person 6:30-8:30
 - May 4 – virtual noon to 1:30

[Engage.victoria.ca/governance-review](https://engage.victoria.ca/governance-review)

Wherever business takes you 



City of Victoria

Governance Review

Online Public Event — May 4, 2022 noon to 1:30pm

Project Background and City of Victoria Governance Structures



Wherever business takes you

[MNP.ca](https://www.mnp.ca)

City of Victoria Governance Review

What is Governance?

- Governance is about leadership and responsibility for the City to the residents of Victoria. It includes understanding residents' needs and making decisions in the best interests of the city. It is concerned with the structures and processes for decision-making.

What are We Doing Today?

- Good governance and civic engagement is identified as a strategic initiative in the City of Victoria's Strategic Plan and a governance review was identified in the 2021/2022 action plan.
- MNP has been hired as an independent consultant to conduct the review and provide recommendations for improvement. The review will consider the City's governance structure and processes to determine what is working well and what isn't.
- We are seeking input from the public (organizations and individuals) to help identify the public's priorities, perceptions and experiences with the current City of Victoria governance system.
- Today, we want to hear your perspectives on a set of questions for discussion. In this group setting it also an opportunity for you to learn from each other.
- We have provided some high-level information on the governance of the City to help you participate.

Note: Individual participants will not be identified. In MNP's report, your contributions and comments today will be included in summary themes only.

Regulatory Framework

Legislation (Provincial Authority)



- The Community Charter*
- *The Local Government Act*

**Bill 26 – Proposed amendments to the Community Charter (Including Code of Conduct, streamline development approvals)*
**Province and Municipality have concurrent authority in four areas (public health, natural environment, wildlife, soil removal or disposal)*

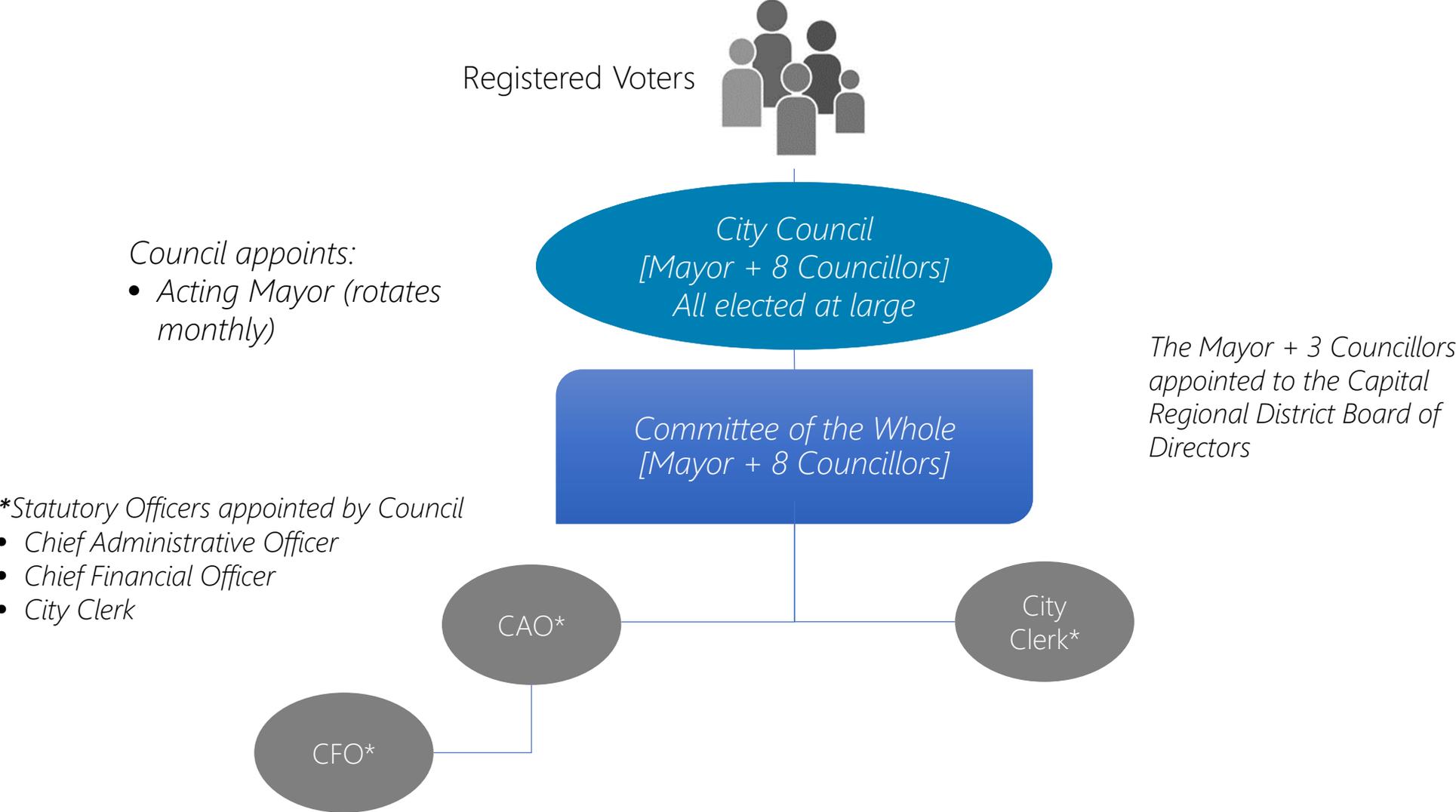
By-laws (Municipal Authority)



Primary Governance bylaws include:

- Council Procedures Bylaw 16-011- *sets out the Council and administrative structure, rules for meetings, hearings, appeals, passing by-laws*
- Land Use Procedures Bylaw 16-028 – *approval procedures for development in the City of Victoria*
- Board of Variance Bylaw 07-097 – *a board that decides certain variance hearings.*

Current Governance Structure – the way City Council is organized



Advisory Committees

- Advisory Committees provide feedback and recommendations to the City to inform the development and implementation of City policies.
- They may conduct related independent research.
- Members are appointed by Council, include a Council Liaison and are governed by Terms of Reference.
- Council may also appoint task forces for specific, time-limited initiatives.

City of Victoria Advisory Committees

Accessibility

Active
Transportation

Art in Public
Spaces

External Grant
Review

International
Decade for People
of African Decent

LAND USE
Design Panel ,
Heritage Advisory
Panel

Music

Renters

Seniors

Urban Food
Table

Welcoming City

Neighbourhood Associations and CALUCS



Neighbourhood Associations (13)

- Neighbourhood Associations are community development organizations formed by its residents.
- Councillors are appointed as the Neighbourhood Liaison for one or more Neighbourhood Associations.
- Neighbourhood Associations appoint a Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC).
- CALUCS must be endorsed by the City. The CALUC determines its own membership requirements (size of committee, length of terms, etc.) Must hold well-publicized, open election process annually.
- The City's procedures for processing rezoning and variance applications require that the CALUC host a Community Meeting on all proposed rezoning applications, where the applicant presents their proposal and community members may ask questions and provide their views.

Opportunities for the Public to Communicate with City Council



City-directed Public Engagement Processes

City staff may directly seek the input of citizens of Victoria on various topics. The process may vary, depending on the topic, and is guided by the Engagement Framework approved by Council. (*Engagement Framework in process of being updated*) [[COV Public Engagement](#)]



Request to Address Council

A person or group who wishes to address Council on an agenda item, or any other topic at a Council Meeting, can make a request to Legislative Services. [[click here](#)]



Public Hearing / Opportunity for Public Comment

Citizens may convey their views on development applications under a City bylaw at *public hearings*. For applications where a public hearing is not required, Council may invite *Public Comment*. Council meetings and public hearings are open to all members of the public. [[Public Notices](#)]



Neighbourhood Association

Council Liaisons and City staff attend Neighbourhood Association meetings to provide information and respond to inquiries. Councillors may also relay neighbourhood issues to Council if an issue requires Council attention. [[click here](#)]



Contact Members of Council

Share your feedback on any topic with all of Mayor and Council or individually. Contact information is posted on the City's website. [[contact information](#)]

City of Victoria Strategic Plan

- The City's [Strategic Plan](#) has identified eight Strategic Objectives and Measurable Outcomes for each
- Detailed actions are identified by year.
- The City reports on progress toward the objectives in the Strategic Plan 3 times a year in the Tri-Annual Report

2019-2022 Strategic Objectives



1. Good Governance and Civic Engagement



2. Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations



3. Affordable Housing



4. Prosperity and Economic Inclusion



5. Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City



6. Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship



7. Sustainable Transportation



8. Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

Strategic Objective 1 – Good Governance and Civic Engagement



MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

- > There is clear, open and transparent two-way communication between the City and the public, with the ability for public input to effect change
- > There is broad engagement with a diversity of participants conducted in a respectful and inclusive way
- > The community feels heard
- > The City demonstrates regional leadership in transparency and open government initiatives
- > There are clear, relevant measurable outcomes for each objective that Council measures and reports on

Actions | *Good Governance and Civic Engagement*

Actions
2022-2023
highlighted

See
Strategic
Plan for
complete
list

	Responsibility
2022	
16. Develop and implement processes for convening the community and gathering input on what the community is interested in giving input on – not only engaging when City Hall has a question for the community	<i>Council (give direction and participate in community gatherings); Staff (implement)</i>
2019 – 2022	
17. Begin holding four town halls per year, one per quarter to engage residents, youth, business, organized labour and other stakeholders, including a quarterly check-in with Council on the topics for these town halls <i>Continuing</i>	<i>Council; Staff</i>
2023	
18. Develop a measurement and monitoring process to assess community happiness and well-being.	<i>Staff</i>
19. Offer training to staff, Council members and community leaders in best practices in respectful facilitation; identify challenging topics for engagement in advance and ensure that everyone involved (staff and community leaders) have adequate training to lead engagement	<i>Staff</i>

Comparison with other Canadian Cities

- Highlights of differences with Other Cities
- For full set, please see document entitled Current Governance Structures – Victoria and Other Canadian Cities at:

[Engage.victoria.ca/governance-review](https://engage.victoria.ca/governance-review)

Council and Committees

City	Population	Council
Victoria, BC	91,867 397,237 (CMA)	Mayor + 8 Councillors (all elected at large)
Vancouver, BC	662,248 2,773,148 (CMA)	Mayor + 10 Councillors (all elected at large)
Kelowna, BC	144,576 229,400 (CMA)	Mayor + 8 Councillors (all elected at large)
Regina, SK	226,404 263,659 (CMA)	Mayor + 10 Councillors
Windsor, ON	229,660 351,116 (CMA)	Mayor + 10 Councillors
Kitchener, ON	256,885 575,847 (Kitchener- Waterloo, CMA)	Mayor + 10 Councillors
Quebec City, QC	549,459 836,837 (CMA)	Mayor + 21 Councillors 6 Borough Councils, 27 Neighbourhood Councils
Halifax, NS (regional municipality)	439,819 460,274 (CMA)	Mayor + 16 Councillors (Regional Council)
St. John's, NL	110,525 205,955 (CMA)	Mayor + Deputy Mayor + 9 Councillors (5 ward, 4 at large)

- We have compared 8 other Canadian cities.
(Considered cities of similar size, Capital cities, urban)
- B.C. typically elected at large (vs. wards)
- B.C. Councillors typically elected at large, other provinces elected by ward
- Quebec City and Halifax are “regional” councils – composed of representatives of boroughs or community councils which have some powers of their own.

Committees of Council

City	Standing Committees (Council members)	Advisory Committees (Citizens)
Victoria, BC	Committee of the Whole (all Council members)	12 Advisory Committees
Vancouver, BC	2 Standing Committees (Committee of the Whole)	38 Civic Agencies or Advisory Committees
Kelowna, BC	none	7 Advisory Committees
Regina, SK	Executive Committee (Committee of the Whole)	2 Advisory Committees
Windsor, ON	4 Standing Committees (1 Committee of the Whole and 3 with 5 members only)	20 Advisory Committees
Kitchener, ON	3 Standing Committees (Committee of the Whole)	9 Advisory Committees
Quebec City, QC	1 Standing Committee	Not available
Halifax, NS	6 Standing Committees 4 Community Councils	~15 Advisory Committees
St. John's, NL	Committee of the Whole (Council members assigned to portfolios)	4 Advisory Committees

- B.C. typically has a “committee of the whole” system.
- Committee of the Whole intended for thorough discussion, debate. Less formal than Council meeting.
- Standing Committees – dealing with specific areas of responsibility. Typically composed of a selection of Councillors.
- Vancouver standing committees – composed of all members. Essentially committees of the whole.
- 8/8 comparator cities have Advisory Committees
- Where the city has Standing Committees – this is where the Advisory Committee is created, and where reports go.

Public Access to Council / Committee meetings

Which Meetings Can the Public Speak At?

- Victoria – public can speak at Council meeting only
- Kelowna does not allow the public to speak at Council meetings.
- 4 cities public can speak at either Committee meeting or Council meeting
- 2 cities public can speak at Committee or Community Council only
- City of Quebec – Public question period at Council meeting.

Topics the Public Can Speak to at Council / Committee Meeting

- Victoria – the public can Request to Address Council on any topic. (on agenda or another topic)
- 4 cities allow the public to speak to items on the agenda only.
- 3 cities allow the public to speak on any topic

- City of Victoria provides 5 minutes per individual or group – typical in most cities.

Code of Conduct

City	Code of Conduct / Integrity Commissioner
Victoria, BC	X (both)
Vancouver, BC	√ – Code of Conduct √ – integrity commissioner
Kelowna, BC	X (both)
Regina, SK	√ – Code of Conduct √ – Integrity Commissioner
Windsor, ON	√ – Code of Conduct √ – Integrity Commissioner
Kitchener, ON	√ – Code of Conduct √ – Integrity Commissioner
Quebec City, QC	√ – Code of Conduct √ – Provincial Commission
Halifax, NS (regional municipality)	√ – Code of Conduct X – Integrity Commissioner
St. John's, NL	√ – Code of Conduct X – Integrity Commissioner

- City of Victoria does not currently have a Code of Conduct for members of Council
- Bill 26 establishes the requirement for B.C. municipal councils to consider establishing a Council Code of Conduct.
 - If Council decides not to adopt a Code of Conduct it must make reasons for the decision publicly available.
 - Council must consider established a Code of Conduct or reviewing the existing Code of Conduct every 4 years.
- 6 of 8 cities have Code of Conduct for Council members
- 5 of 8 cities have an Integrity Commissioner or equivalent
- The City of Quebec falls under the jurisdiction of a provincial commissioner.