

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on October 9, 2024*

### 3. **Reviewing Council's Committees & Structure to Enhance Decision-Making Processes**

Submitted by: Mayor Sim

#### WHEREAS

1. Committees allow boards and elected government bodies, such as municipal Councils, to split up tasks to get their work accomplished, while enabling a more granular level of community and stakeholder engagement. As a rule, committees are not decision-making bodies. Rather, they make recommendations to a board or Council which then make the final decisions;
2. Committees are a practical way to divide the work of a board into manageable tasks that structure the work. Committees can be smaller groups that can be more focused and efficient in dealing with specific issues than a full Council or board, allowing time to thoroughly discuss issues in support of good decision making;
3. Section 159 of the *Vancouver Charter* authorizes Council to provide for any such committees it may see fit to establish and to refer any matter to a committee for report. Likewise, section 161 authorizes Council to delegate any of the executive or administrative powers exercisable by the Council, with or without restrictions or conditions, to any committee comprised of members of the Council, employees of the city, or members of the Council and employees of the City;
4. Council also has the authority to establish (and to disband) committees, whether they be ad-hoc, time-limited committees or standing advisory committees, as well as the power to strike task forces to explore specific questions;
5. There are approximately 30 civic agencies (Boards, Commissions, Committees, Panels) appointed by City Council <sup>1</sup>, most of which are advisory to Council and/or staff, while some are administered by external organizations such as the PNE or the Vancouver Public Library;
6. The City's Procedure By-law (BY-LAW NO. 12577) includes several definitions relevant to committees under section 1.2 including "advisory committee" which means a committee of persons, who are not Council members or staff members, and who are appointed by Council to advise the Mayor, Council or staff. Likewise, "standing committee" means a Council committee established by Council;
7. As a matter of good governance practices, boards are frequently encouraged to be self-reflective and ask themselves key questions on a periodic basis such as (but not limited to):
  - Does the board have too many committees such that board members are being stretched thin and having to attend too many meetings?

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://vancouver.ca/your-government/civic-agencies.aspx>

- Are committee assignments distributed evenly across the board so that every member has a chance to be involved in committee work?
  - Are there committees that could be turned into task forces or ad-hoc committees with a specific objective to be accomplished within a specific time frame?
  - Are committees focused on policy and strategic items, or are they getting involved in operations?
  - Are any committees duplicating another committee's work or the staff's work?
8. Although the City's Advisory Committees and civic agencies provide valuable insights and recommendations to the Council, there is a continuous need to evolve and adapt municipal governance structures to meet the changing needs and demands of the city and its residents. As with any governance body, it is incumbent upon Council to pay close attention to the changing needs of the organization and to make sure that its committees and committee structures continue to meet those needs effectively;
  9. The City's current committee structure has been in place for a significant period of time and would therefore benefit from a comprehensive review, with an eye to potential renewal and reorganization, to ensure that it meets the evolving needs of the City's from a governance and community engagement perspective;
  10. A streamlined and efficient committee structure has the potential to enhance the work of City committees, as well as the decision-making processes of Council, and foster more direct and effective communication between the public and Council; and
  11. It is the responsibility of Council to ensure that the governance structures in place are efficient, effective, and provide the best possible framework for decision-making and public participation and are in alignment with the strategic priorities of the City and Council.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back in Q1 2025 with a review and assessment of the City's current committee structure(s) and system(s), including options for alternative approaches to efficiently align committee structure(s) and system(s) with the strategic priorities of the City and Council.

\* \* \* \* \*