

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on
October 8, 2025*

4. Prioritizing Accessibility and Public Participation at City Council

Submitted by: Councillor Orr

WHEREAS

1. 41% of Canadians believe [people like them don't have a say](#) in government actions, and trust in public institutions across Canada is faltering, which risks undermining public safety, democratic resilience, and economic well-being;
2. Data from the [OECD Survey on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions](#) shows that “people who feel they have a say in what the government does are more likely to trust government”;
3. City Council meetings provide a rare opportunity to speak directly to elected representatives, but many residents face barriers to participation, especially people with disabilities, people in caretaking roles, newcomers, and people with inflexible work schedules or life commitments;
4. Residents benefit from timely access to agendas and reports in order to prepare informed comment and contribution to Council proceedings and decisions;
5. City Councillors are empowered by knowledgeable citizens that can give meaningful and informed feedback on City Council agenda items;
6. City Council agendas frequently total hundreds of pages of reading and are often published for public review less than a week before they are brought to Council;
7. City reports are sometimes delivered to the public with less than a week's notice, despite being prepared months in advance;
8. Members of the public who wish to speak to City Council experience significant unpredictability at what time they will be called on, creating undue barriers to participation;
9. Any residents find the process of speaking at a council meeting challenging and intimidating, particularly people with disabilities and people who speak English as a second language, and would benefit from improved communication and clarity about the process to help them prepare and fully participate;
10. City Council can prioritize making public participation more accessible and effective for working people in Vancouver, accommodating busy families, people with disabilities, and workers; and

11. Open and accessible participation in municipal decision-making by members of the public is a cornerstone of Vancouver's democratic governance.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back with recommendations and required by-law or procedure changes to:

1. Extend the minimum public release window for upcoming Council agendas and supporting reports a minimum of 8 days in advance of scheduled meetings;
2. Make completed reports publicly available as soon as practicable once finalized by staff, even prior to the release of agendas, unless restricted for legal or confidentiality reasons;
3. Allow members of the public to give public comment at meetings of Council by submitting a two-minute video or audio statements in advance, which can be played during the Council meeting in place of a comment that would have otherwise been made in person or on the phone.

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to work with the Accessibility Committee and other civic engagement experts to assess and improve official communications related to public participation in Council meetings, and if needed, report back with recommendations or procedural changes including but not limited to:

1. Publishing the number of registered speakers for each agenda item to allow members of the public to make an informed assessment of how long proceedings may take;
2. Communicating when Council typically breaks for meals or goes in camera, and providing clear updates following a decision of council to recess or go In Camera;
3. Publishing official updates on Council meeting proceedings on third-party platforms that are accessible to people without accounts on those platforms and safe regardless of an individual's identity, and/or exploring options to embed Council meeting updates on the City of Vancouver's website;
4. Providing detailed, accurate, and plain-language communication on the process of registering to speak at a meeting of Council, requesting additional time for people with disabilities or people using a translator, what to expect when participating in a meeting at city hall or by phone, and the process of submitting written feedback;
5. Publishing reports, motions, and official communications about Council meeting agendas in formats that are accessible for people who use screen readers or other access devices, and when possible, publishing plain-language summaries of reports.

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