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**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**CC:** ["City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"](#)  
["Penney, Tina" <Tina.Penney@vancouver.ca>](#)  
**Date:** 1/4/2021 9:09:41 AM  
**Subject:** Memo: Making It Easier for the Public to Speak At Council - RTS#13924  
**Attachments:** Memo - Making It Easier for the Public to Speak At Council - RTS#13924.pdf

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Dear **Mayor and Council**,

On February 11, 2020, Council directed staff to implement a pilot initiative for Council meetings that would allow registered speakers who missed their speaking time to have an opportunity to speak after the registered speaker's list concludes. A summary of the memo is below:

- Since data collection began, there were 608 speakers heard at Council and Standing Committee Meetings.
- 574 of these speakers spoke in sequence and 34 spoke out of sequence, when Council provided them another opportunity to take their turn to speak at the end of the registered speaker's list.

Please contact Tina Penney, Director of Legislative Operations at [tina.penney@vancouver.ca](mailto:tina.penney@vancouver.ca) if you require any further clarification.

Best,  
Sadhu

**Sadhu Afochs Johnston** | City Manager  
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Pronouns: he, him, his



*The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*

## MEMORANDUM

January 4, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administrative Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Gail Pickard, Director Civic Engagement and Communications  
Tina Penney, Director of Legislative Operations

FROM: Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk

SUBJECT: Making It Easier for the Public to Speak At Council (RTS#13924)

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On February 11, 2020, Council directed staff to implement a pilot initiative for Council meetings that would allow registered speakers who missed their speaking time to have an opportunity to speak after the registered speaker's list concludes.

The adopted motion reads as follows:

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to initiate a variation to the Procedure By-law as a time-limited pilot initiative to specify that those speakers who are registered on the speakers list for Council or Standing Committee meetings, and have missed their turn to speak, should be given an opportunity to speak at the conclusion of all other speakers on the registered list.*

*FURTHER THAT the above-mentioned pilot run from the next scheduled Council meeting through the end of June 2020, and that staff report back following the conclusion of the pilot with findings and any proposed amendments to the Procedure By-law that might be beneficial in order to better facilitate members of the public speaking at Council meetings.*

Due to COVID-19, this direction for staff to report back was delayed throughout the summer months but speaker data continued to be collected. Staff has now reviewed this motion's direction and conducted a preliminary analysis of the Council and Standing Committee speaker data collected since the pilot initiative began. This information-gathering involves tracking how many of the registered speakers spoke in sequence of the speakers' list versus after the conclusion of the speaker's list.

## DISCUSSION

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Staff tracked speaker activity at Council and Standing Committee meetings throughout 2020 to determine the consequences of the pilot project. Speakers who missed their scheduled turn to speak during a meeting were given a second chance at the end of the speakers' list, when Council would allow those who missed their speaking time a second opportunity to do so. Through an analysis of the collected speaker data, staff is responding to Council's direction to assess whether this change in practice makes a meaningful difference in public input during meetings. Note that Special Council meetings and Public Hearings speaker data were not collected and are not included in the analysis.

During the pilot project, there were 608 speakers heard at Council and Standing Committee Meetings. 574 of these speakers spoke in sequence and 34 spoke out of sequence, when Council provided them another opportunity to take their turn to speak at the end of the registered speaker's list.

<b>2020 SPEAKERS WHO WERE HEARD IN SEQUENCE VS OUT OF SEQUENCE</b>	
Total Speakers Heard in 2020 Council and Standing Committee Meetings	608
Total Speakers Heard in Speaker # Sequence	574
Total Speakers Heard out of Speaker # Sequence	034

Even though 34 speakers out of 608 does not seem like a particularly high number, this is nevertheless an easily employed practice that increases the overall accessibility of meeting participation. Whether these speakers accidentally missed their sequenced turn or chose to speak at the second opportunity, providing both options makes it more convenient for speakers to participate in the meeting.

Due to Covid-19, this year's Council meeting practices have shifted to increase convenience and accessibility for attendees, with such changes as allowing speakers to phone into the meeting rather than attending in person. The City is invested in continuing to pursue strategies that optimize civic engagement, and it is important that we continue to track the outcomes of this policy change in order to determine what it will look like in the long term.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff will provide recommendations regarding the Procedures By-law amendments in the spring. The pilot project and data collection will continue in the meantime.

Please contact Tina Penney, Director of Legislative Operations at [tina.penney@vancouver.ca](mailto:tina.penney@vancouver.ca) if you require any further clarification.

Regards,



Rosemary Hagiwara  
Acting City Clerk  
[rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca](mailto:rosemary.hagiwara@vancouver.ca)