

WRITTEN BY THE CLIMATE EQUITY WORKING GROUP

# A CLIMATE JUSTICE CHARTER FOR VANCOUVER



NOVEMBER 2022

The work to develop this Climate Justice Charter began on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We recognize the contributions of past and current generations towards surfacing the needs and hopes of those often denied a voice in climate discussions. We, as members of the 2021-2022 Climate Equity Working Group (CEWG), hope we have carried their work forward with this Charter.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Climate Equity Working Group also thanks those who contributed their time, experience and knowledge towards this project.

**Consulting team that worked with us to co-create this Charter:** Andrea Oakunsheyld (Oakunsheyld Consulting), Ginger Gosnell-Myers (Ginger Gosnell-Myers Consulting), Keltie Craig (Keltie Craig Consulting), 月愛心 / Luna Aixin (GaGiNang Productions), and Rocky James\* (Salish Social Policy Design & Practice).

**City of Vancouver project team:** Brad Badelt, Lisa Brideau, Lindsay Cole, and Sarah Labahn.

**City of Vancouver staff who provided feedback and advice:** Aaron Lao, Angela Danyluk, Doug Smith, and Mumbi Maina.

**All those who shared your perspectives through consultation:** Annita McPhee, TahlTan Nation; Audrey Siegl, Musqueam First Nation; Candace Campo, shishálh Nation; Chrystal Sparrow, Musqueam First Nation; Conrad Desjarlais, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation - Treaty 8; Isaiah Campbell, Nisga'a & Tsimshian Nations; Joanna Prince, Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation; Laura Mackenrot, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee; Naxnogam Algax, Tania Percival, Lil'wat & Nisga'a Nations; Robbie Knott, Red River Métis Nation; Sheryl Rivers, Squamish Nation; Sophie Tang, Sustainability; Tasia Alexis, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee; Varouj Gumuchian, Seniors' Advisory Committee; members from the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee.

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**Charter reviewers from Tsleil-Waututh Nation.**

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# Introduction from the Climate Equity Working Group

**With the pressing climate emergency, and a growing divide between haves and have nots, what MUST we do? What CAN we do?**

As the 2021-2022 City of Vancouver Climate Equity Working Group (CEWG), we collaboratively put forward this Climate Justice Charter to City of Vancouver staff to guide their actions in response to the climate crisis. We also share this with our communities who are on the frontlines of climate action and too often bear the brunt of climate change impacts, and with the residents of Vancouver to help them towards action that addresses climate change in a fair and just way.

The “we” throughout this Charter refers to us, as members of the CEWG, inviting the reader into our shared vision for the future that centers climate justice.

**We MUST enact the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples now** if we want to still have this world to share with future generations, 500 years and beyond. In the current climate emergency, Indigenous leadership, wisdom, knowledge, relationships, responsibility, and collective power to care for and live in balance with the natural environment have important teachings to guide us.

**We MUST undo the oppressive systems perpetuating climate injustices** and commit to transforming ourselves and our systems toward justice, reciprocity, equity, inclusion, access, dignity, care and accountability - for all relationships.

**We MUST take care of each other - now, and in the future.** Continuing to pollute our environment is an injustice to the communities who continue to be heavily impacted, and to our future generations. Natural ancestors (including the trees, plants, and soil microbes) gift us with the ability to sustain life and ensure our collective future. We need to bring the same care to our relationships so we can sustain the planet and each other.

**There is so much we CAN do.** As the 2021-2022 CEWG, we had the responsibility and privilege to shape the first ever Climate Justice Charter for Vancouver (the Charter). Through months of truth-telling, reflection, imagination, and mutual guidance, this document emerged. The Charter provides direction and describes possibilities where climate-related injustices are not repeated; where healing is prioritized over harm; and where new benefits and opportunities from climate actions are equitably shared. We know this work cannot, and does not, rest on our shoulders alone, and there are voices still missing in this conversation.

The Climate Justice Charter will act as a living vision for the City of Vancouver that will adapt and flow with the needs and direction of the community over time. This iteration contains our efforts to bring the vision into existence and guides us all to address the climate injustices of our time.

With care,  
*Members of the Climate Equity Working Group*  
2022

# Reading the Charter

This document is composed of four main sections, which can be read separately or all together.

**Section 1: Introduction to the Climate Justice Charter** provides much of the important context for the Charter, including the purpose, impacts of climate change on various communities, and the historical context that has given rise to the climate crisis.

**Section 2: The Climate Justice Charter Framework** outlines the framework for climate justice by defining what climate justice means and putting forward a vision for the future, guiding principles, and goals to inspired equitable climate action.

**Section 3: Moving Towards Climate Justice** looks forward to the future and presents a call to action to local government for implementing the Charter, including recommendations for accountability and evaluation.

**Section 4: References & Appendices** provides more detailed information and explanations of some of the key terms, concepts, processes, and policies related to the Charter.

We feel all the parts of the Charter are important to understand the whole. We encourage you to read it in its entirety while we also support your autonomy as a reader. We welcome you to engage with this work in whatever way feels best to you.





## Section 1

# **Understanding the Climate Justice Charter**

# Why a Climate Justice Charter?

## Purpose of the Charter

The purpose of the Climate Justice Charter is to act as a 'north star' to provide high-level vision, guidance, and accountability to the City of Vancouver and the wider Vancouver community by outlining principles, goals, and other key directions to create the future of climate justice we want.

The Climate Justice Charter acts as a pebble to create ripples of climate justice, Indigenous sovereignty, racial justice, and intersectionality that are repeated from the smallest to the largest scale, reinforcing that climate action needs to be taken collectively by local, regional, provincial, federal, and international governing bodies. Ultimately, the Charter works to transform both our current reality of the climate emergency as well as the next 500+ years into a future that prioritizes healing and hope.

*"We need to narrow the gap between the climate future we envision and the current situation we are in with regards to the climate crisis. We hope the Climate Justice Charter will set us up in a way that leaves no one behind on this journey to narrow the gap."*

*- Asha Sahota, CEWG Member*

## Charter uses

The primary audience for this Charter is City of Vancouver staff, with the intention of enabling them to best serve Vancouver communities through equitable climate action.

It is for communities disproportionately-impacted by climate change in particular that we hope to support with the Charter (more on these communities in the following section). This support can come from influencing the direction and use of the tools at the City's disposal: things like policy, regulations, programs, grant funding, advocacy, budgeting, purchasing, and operations.

This Charter further seeks to be a source of education, reference, and inspiration for anyone interested in taking climate action. It can be used by all who read it to create a land- and place-based practice of unlearning and relearning around climate justice. It can be used to support community efforts in seeking action and accountability from dominant institutions, such as local governments, that currently hold decision-making power around climate response, helping communities speak truth to power.

In service to the wider Vancouver community, this Charter is also for our future generations. As the urgency of the climate crisis grows, youth have shown incredible leadership, passion, and dedication in climate action. As we ourselves seek to be good ancestors, we offer this Charter as a legacy for the young people who will grow up in the world we leave behind us.

# Communities facing disproportionate impacts of climate change

Communities that are prioritized in this Charter are those who face disproportionate (uneven/unfair) impacts from climate change.

In some cases, the climate change impacts a community faces are direct, such as the disproportionate health impacts of extreme heat, storms, flooding, and wildfire smoke on those living or working outside; experiencing homelessness; people with existing health conditions; pregnant people; people with disabilities/disabled people<sup>1</sup>; fat people<sup>2</sup>; elders; and children and youth.

People who live in rental housing may face housing precarity (especially in the case of non-purpose-built rental housing) and have limited resources to control changes to their homes to reduce the impacts of climate change, such as cooling systems, air filtration, and insulation. People with low incomes or who are living below the poverty line may face similar impacts, and additionally have limited access to afford food, utilities, and basic necessities, especially in the case of rising food and utility costs related to climate change.

In other cases, the unfair impacts of climate change are due to underlying systemic inequities, wherein some communities face stigma and discrimination because of their identities. This affects their ability to secure safe, healthy housing, a livable income, and access to resources which can help them respond to and recover from climate change impacts.

Disproportionately impacted communities include:

- Indigenous, Black, and other racialized peoples
- migrants and refugees
- people with limited English
- sex workers
- substance users
- fat people
- people with disabilities/disabled people
- 2SLGBTQIA+ people
- women and girls
- and more.

This is not an exhaustive list of every disproportionately impacted community and each community experiences marginalization differently, as do individuals within these communities. Further, many identities and experiences intersect within these communities, creating compounding oppression for those who live within these intersections.<sup>3</sup>

*"All of us are aware of how hard it is to make ends meet with the rise of inflation, but for many racialized people, this has long been the reality of how difficult it is to live in Vancouver. Racialized people are more often in service roles, are front-line workers, or are subject to low or stagnant wages, and will feel the pinch to leave Vancouver in search of a place that is more affordable, but also be more harmful to them in the process as they will face more microaggressions, invalidations, and difficulty in finding secure places to live."*

*- Will Shelling, CEWG member*

## Footnotes:

1 Within the disability community, there are those who prefer the term "People with Disabilities" and others who prefer using "Disabled People." To honour these preferences, we have used both.

2 The term "fat" is being reclaimed by many as a neutral descriptor and respectful term in this community, but we acknowledge that there may be individuals who feel too harmed to use this term personally.

3 For more information, explore Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on intersectionality.



### Unique impacts on Indigenous people

With strong enduring cultural linkages to land, air, water, and the living kin that inhabit these spaces, Indigenous communities also face additional and unique direct impacts on their way of life from changes to climate.

With Indigenous sovereignty as a principle for this Charter, the project consultants spoke with individuals from Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations as well as urban Indigenous communities in order to intentionally center Indigenous voices. The stories that emerged from these conversations around climate change highlight key concerns stemming from the negative impacts on Indigenous lives and cultures. Many of these stories are also shared in quotes throughout the Charter. Key themes that emerged are:

- **Loss of traditional food.** A way of sustainable life is disappearing and access to traditional food such as salmon, crab and mountain goat is extremely limited for many, impacting families, whole communities, cultural traditions, and the ecosystems that rely on healthy populations of these animal kin.
- **Waterways are damaged.** Streams throughout the city are gone, the Salish Sea is polluted, snow packs on the mountains are eroding, and there are fewer and fewer secluded places for spirit baths and ceremonies.
- **Seasons are shifting.** Access to seasonal foods and medicines is unpredictable and uncertain, making harvesting more difficult, impacting cultural traditions that are deeply connected to the seasons.
- **Unaffordability.** High living expenses are limiting people's access to healthy foods and necessary resources. This is further impacted by disruptions in supply chain and rising costs linked to extreme weather and climate change. Unaffordability also impacts the rights of people to live where they choose, and puts limits on travel to gather traditional resources, or to be with extended family.

- **Global South.** The comfortable lifestyles for those of us in the global north are due to exploiting peoples (including Indigenous peoples) in the global south, where inequities arising from climate change and extreme weather are even more devastating.
- **Corporate Accountability.** Accountability is needed for the corporations who benefit from the decision to poison the lands and waters - they must take responsibility and pay for this damage.

### Impacts on animal, plant, and other natural kin

The consequences of climate change are ongoing and now experienced on both global and local scales as we witness climate disasters that threaten to overwhelm our collective ability to survive and thrive. These consequences impact not just humans but also animals, plants, and other natural kin.

For animals, plants, and other natural kin, green and blue spaces act as important habitats that provide food, shelter, and safety. Vancouver has become an economic hub that, in the process, has destroyed much biodiversity and habitat, trading the wellbeing of many species for profits. Indigenous land stewardship, which is shown to reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gasses while also maintaining the highest amounts of biodiversity, is the path forward that unifies and balances the needs of humans with our animal, plant, and other natural kin.

*"It's not just water, land and our wildlife we need to protect; we have to think about our berries and medicines too. Our local First Nation communities need to share our knowledge of the land to the urban First Nation communities and to people from other countries who live here too. I believe our First Nation communities are the stewards and protectors of mother earth. We have to ensure everyone is taken care of in a good way."*

*- Chrystal Sparrow, Musqueam First Nation*

# Colonization as the root of the climate crisis

*"Indigenous ways of knowing and living are directly connected to the land and beings. Like the tree people, whale people, herring peoples, etc. They are informing us of natural laws. Our potlatch system that was modelled after natural relational systems were taken away and disrupted. Now young Indigenous peoples don't even know about these systems anymore."*

*- Candace Campo, shíshálh Nation*

To understand the significance and scale of climate justice, we must look back at the devastating legacy of settler colonialism in the climate crisis we are facing. Settler colonialism was used across Turtle Island (North America) to remove Indigenous Peoples from their lands so that white settlers could steal them and profit from rampant resource extraction such as logging, mining, fishing, whaling, and trapping.

Prior to colonization, Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations lived in thriving communities throughout the Salish Sea since time immemorial. Colonizers tried to destroy the traditional protocols of the Nations - systems that created respectful, reciprocal relationships to maintain balance throughout the ecosystem, ensuring all could enjoy the abundance of resources available. As a result, Vancouver lost access to the guidance and leadership from Indigenous land-based and place-based ways of being, and resources were taken from the land at an unsustainable rate. Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations were pushed onto small reserves and Vancouver now has the third largest urban Indigenous population in Canada, due to widespread displacement of members from other Indigenous Nations. Indigenous Peoples across the world also faced similar violence and genocide due to colonization, resulting in even more global displacement.

Settler colonialism evolved as the urbanization of Vancouver grew, and these colonial policies and practices were used to segregate non-white settlers through the adoption of Bartholomew's racist and environmentally destructive zoning practices.<sup>4</sup>

White colonial dominance and attitudes of white supremacy were further gained by targeting different racialized communities, many of which have been displaced from their lands and denied their rights:

- Black peoples (e.g. through the destruction of Hogan's Alley, a predominantly Black neighbourhood, to make space for a planned highway)<sup>5</sup>;
- Chinese peoples (e.g. through the Chinese head tax demanded for immigration to Canada, and restrictions on livelihoods and voting rights and segregation);
- South Asian peoples (e.g. through denied entry to Canada when passengers on the Komagata Maru steamship arrived in Vancouver and were then forced to remain onboard for months before being forced back to India where many were killed);
- Japanese peoples (e.g. through forced relocation to internment camps during World War II, and the subsequent auctioning off of their property, homes, and boats).

## Footnotes:

4 Harland Bartholomew was an American civil engineer involved in designing more than 500 cities, including early Vancouver. His plans called for rigid single-family zones, which effectively segregated the city by class. Due to systemic racism, many racialized families were low-income, so in effect, this segregated the city by race.

5 In response to these past injustices, a recent City agreement will provide a community land trust to the Hogan's Alley Society to help revive this area as the focal point of Vancouver's Black community.

### The ongoing impacts of colonization

*"My parents are from northern remote First Nations and I grew up as an urban Indigenous youth in Surrey. My family has experienced displacement from a racist and sexist Indian Act, which has facilitated land dispossession and climate catastrophe at the bloody hands of settler colonialism. Yet, still I find myself alongside other BIPOC communities taking more action to make things right with Host Nations and impoverished countries that have been the expense of capitalism's gains and our relative privileges and comforts organizing in Coast Salish Territories. It is paramount to have government, corporate, & white settler responsibility and reparations being enacted to create climate justice."*

*- Qani Queiroz McKay-Reid, CEWG member*

We can look at racist policies and events of the past, and draw a line to the experiences that Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities face while working to respond to climate change, such as:

- Loss of important historical and environmental knowledge of complex ecosystems that only Indigenous Peoples hold.
- Silencing of experiences and wisdoms of many racialized peoples who often come from lands that have experienced drastic climate change impacts.
- Impact of economic losses on the accumulation and passing down of generational wealth that white settlers have had consistent access to, and the resulting economic hardships faced while trying to afford housing, basic necessities, and resources.
- Displacement from safe, secure, and affordable homes and community.
- Disruption of kinship ties and support networks through forced relocation and displacement.
- Legal and/or societal barriers to positions of decision-making and power.

Settler colonialism and white supremacy also spurred other systems of oppression like capitalism, patriarchy, the gender binary, and ableism in order to create a hierarchy of power. These systems of oppression continue today. We see how capitalism causes unrestricted and unsustainable resource extraction leading to the destruction of biodiversity and the degradation of lands, waters, and air, and populations of animal kin. Capitalism has extended to current efforts for Indigenous stewardship through guardian and land management programs which offer important opportunities to protect land and waters while strengthening cultural bonds, but often fail to include remuneration by governments for loss of access through extracting those economic natural resources. Patriarchy, the gender binary, and ableism extend the destruction of the environment to the destruction of bodies and cultures, such as missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit folks (MMIWG2S). This ultimately prevents us from living in good relationship to the land and to each other.

In our current moment, the climate crisis overlaps with other crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid crisis, where the COVID-19 virus brings new risks to emergency responses like fire and flood evacuations and opioid use makes people more vulnerable to factors like extreme heat. The deadly impacts felt from these additional layers leads us to believe even more strongly in the need to draw on decolonial approaches to address root causes of our fundamental problems.

*"One of the biggest issues in the city is the opioid and mental health crisis. We have a huge population that are lost and hurting. We use more resources trying to control these folks, rather than create safe spaces for them. The most marginalized folks feel the worst effects: their building burns down, and there is nowhere for them to go. Within the climate response, there has to be room for healing. Anywhere you are going to work with Indigenous people, you need a space for healing. We need to help people in order to help the planet."*

*- Annita McPhee, Tahltan Nation*

# What is the experience of climate change in Vancouver?

## Extreme Heat

Extreme heat is increasingly an issue in Vancouver, as shown with events like the heat dome in 2021, which resulted in at least 595 heat-related deaths of people within BC, and countless deaths of animal, plant and other natural kin. Extreme heat is expected to increase in duration and intensity over future summers, which will have serious, direct impacts on health for all local life, such as increased heat-related deaths, in addition to indirect impacts such as affording basic needs. High indoor temperatures, especially in homes without air conditioning, and on higher floors, are a major cause of negative health impacts during extreme heat events. Older adults, infants and young children, people who are pregnant, people with chronic conditions, people with disabilities/disabled people, people on certain medications, people experiencing homelessness and/or poverty, people living alone, and people who work or exercise outdoor are especially sensitive to the health effects of heat.

*"I make good money but gas is high, food prices are high, and there isn't enough money anymore to buy healthy foods. I'm starting to go without some foods. With hydro going up due to air conditioning, I'm not sure how to move forward. I'm concerned for those with elderly parents who don't have money to be okay. Even trading back home won't happen this year because people back home are saying there isn't any fish to trade!"*

*- Naxnogam Algax, Tania Percival, Lil'wat & Nisga'a Nations*

*"In my neighbourhood many people don't have housing with reliable heating, or reliable cooling. We also have the least greenery in the city. In climate-related weather events like the heat dome, this is the hottest area. Many people who live here don't have choices to get to other areas of the city to cool down. These injustices are well known - but the urgency isn't met with interjurisdictional action. This needs to change."*

*- Meghan Winters, CEWG member*

## Wildfire and air quality

Vancouver has experienced the impacts of wildfires on air quality in recent years, with smoke clouding our skies and lungs in five of the last seven summers. Warmer temperatures are expected to increase concentrations of aeroallergens (such as pollen), which can increase the prevalence of allergic reactions and respiratory illness as well as their severity. Exposure to wildfire smoke can also make it more difficult to fight respiratory infections such as COVID-19. Atmospheric warming has the potential to concentrate specific pollutants, such as ground-level ozone, which can impact the health of humans and animal, plant, and other natural kin. A warmer, drier climate also increases the frequency and severity of wildfires, as well as the length of fire season. Older adults, infants and young children, people who are pregnant, people with existing respiratory conditions, and outdoor workers are especially susceptible to the health effects of poor air quality.

*"When there is a lot of wildfire smoke, the guidance is to close windows to keep your air cleaner. I live in older apartments that rarely have any cooling system or air conditioning, so we have to keep the windows open and fans on for a bearable temperature. It feels like there is no way to escape - either we suffer from the heat or the smoke (or both)."*

*- CEWG member*

*"We need money for people with disabilities to deal with climate change issues. We need to look at heat domes, air conditioning, indoor air quality, etc."*

*- Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee member*





*"I'm so devastated when I think of the changes to the land and water that will come because of climate change. Will we lose the cedars? The salmon? The abundant ocean life? There is so much at stake. The grief that wells up in my body is enormous."*

- CEWG member

### Storms and urban and coastal flooding

As a coastal city, and with increased precipitation expected in fall and winter months of coming years, sea level rise, coastal erosion, coastal storm surges and flooding, landslides, and polluted fresh water are all climate change impacts that Vancouver is facing. Windstorms are expected to remain a feature of the regional climate. With the vast majority of BC's power coming from hydro-electric, our energy production can be affected by changes in the amount and frequency of precipitation. The cost of supplying residential water is also expected to increase as a result of climate change. Other impacts could be weakened infrastructure, damaged food and water sources, displacement, injuries, drownings, and other storm-related health risks. Storms and floods increase vulnerability for populations that have been placed at risk, such as people experiencing social isolation, mental illness, or homelessness, and people experiencing poverty.

*"During the atmospheric river my house was one of the most damaged in [the Musqueam] community. My house is 5 feet below sea level. To get houses to sea level, it was decided by the City in the 1950s that they would put in toxic landfill from the dump under the houses - Lil Rose who raised her beautiful family in the home, said no. So there is no toxic landfill in our land but we are still below sea level. They took away the trees, there is erosion from leeching, and landslides happening pervasively around UBC. In 2018 a healthy tree fell on my house because the root system wasn't anchored."*

- Audrey Siegl, Musqueam First Nation

### Changes to Ecosystems

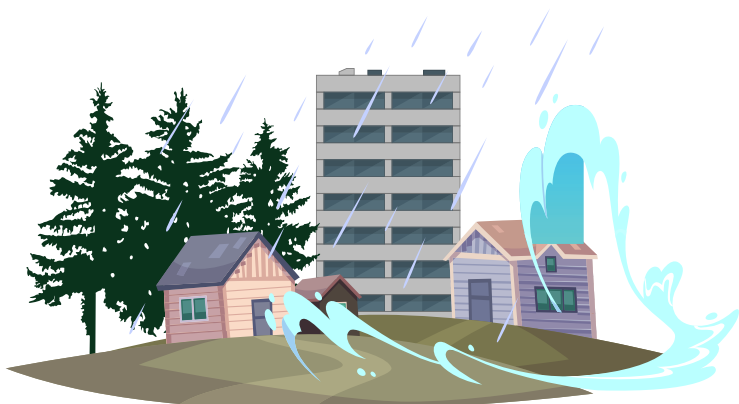
Ecosystems in the region will undergo changes as a result of increasing annual temperatures, ocean warming and acidification, and longer periods of drought. These changes will impact growing conditions, affecting the amount and quality of food and medicines that can be grown and harvested. Other impacts will be water safety and security, forest conditions, land-based cultural practices, and impacts on animal, plant, and other natural kin. Environmental toxins such as blue-green algae may increase, leading to marine shellfish poisoning. These ecosystem changes will impact animal, plant, and other natural kin disproportionately, as well as Indigenous communities by impacting cultural practices centered around land and traditional foods. Ecosystem changes - and climate change generally - are also affecting mental health in ways that we are only beginning to understand. This includes a sense of loss experienced when familiar landscapes undergo significant changes.

*"Most of my concerns are around water. I can't get sea urchins or clams anymore. We have a saying, "when the tides are out the table is set" - not any more. The fish, food sources are all gone."*

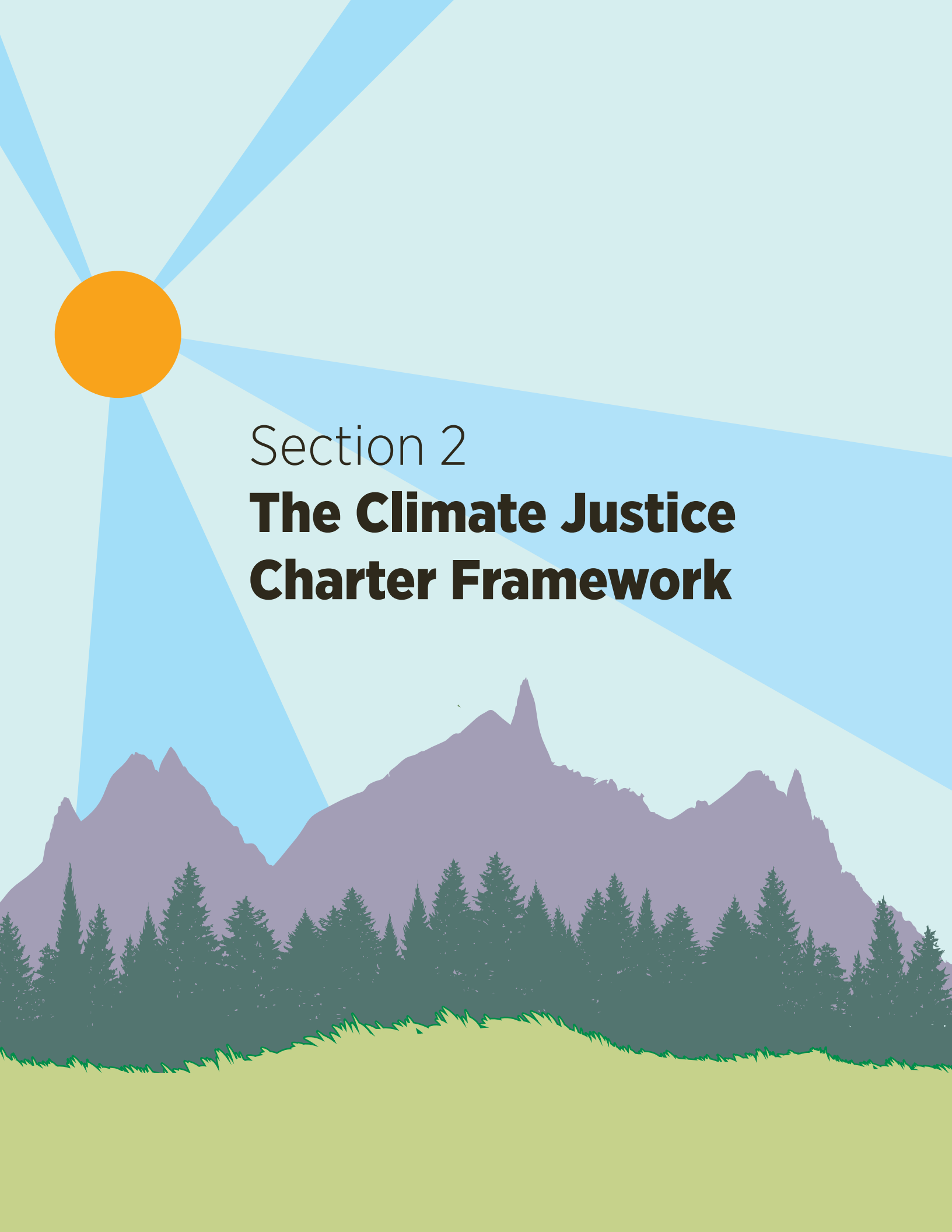
- Sheryl Rivers, Squamish Nation

*"Trees help with drainage and shape the river run and water flows. People who live on the island and people who live upriver and downstream, they are experiencing more flooding because trees are gone to hold back the soil. This impacts the spawning. Going back to salmon and fish, Indigenous people use salmon in cultural practices. There is less salmon available and medicines as well. Plant medicines are impacted - where they can be collected and what times of year."*

Joanna Prince, Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation





A stylized landscape illustration featuring a bright orange sun in the upper left corner, with several light blue rays extending across the sky. Below the sun, a range of purple mountains is visible, with a dense line of dark green evergreen trees in the foreground. The ground is a solid light green color.

## Section 2

# **The Climate Justice Charter Framework**

## Defining climate justice

Climate justice is an approach that applies a social justice framework to the ways we understand and respond to climate change. It recognizes that climate change is a collective, global crisis but its impacts are not felt evenly around the world, nor evenly within communities or between species.

Climate justice has existed as long as Indigenous Peoples around the world, including Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh who have lived on and stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial.

*"For me, climate justice means my culture is not at stake anymore, that I can be on the land, the Ucwalmicwa, and know that those who come after me will have the ability to continue to practice our ways while continuing to evolve as people. Land and water rights, respect for the future of traditional practices, and not just seeing them as the past."*

*- Tatyana Schneider, CEWG member*

Climate justice seeks to equitably distribute the costs and benefits related to climate adaptation and mitigation<sup>6</sup> measures by centering the wellbeing and wisdom of those most impacted by climate change. Without climate justice, tackling the climate crisis can only address symptoms, not root causes.

### Footnotes:

<sup>6</sup> Climate adaptation means understanding what climate we are likely to experience in the future, and creating proactive plans that take advantage of opportunities and prepare for impacts. This is different than climate mitigation, which refers to our efforts to limit climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## Framework for developing a Climate Justice Charter

This Charter introduces vision, principles, and goals as a north star to guide climate justice in Vancouver. This framework can be used to shape responses to the climate crisis, ensuring specific actions which City staff and other community actors in Vancouver pursue are both equity- and climate-oriented.



### Vision for climate justice

Our vision for climate justice in the City of Vancouver is:

*A city of interconnected communities collectively advancing climate action, Indigenous sovereignty, intersectionality, equity, and social justice towards a shared future of healing and hope.*

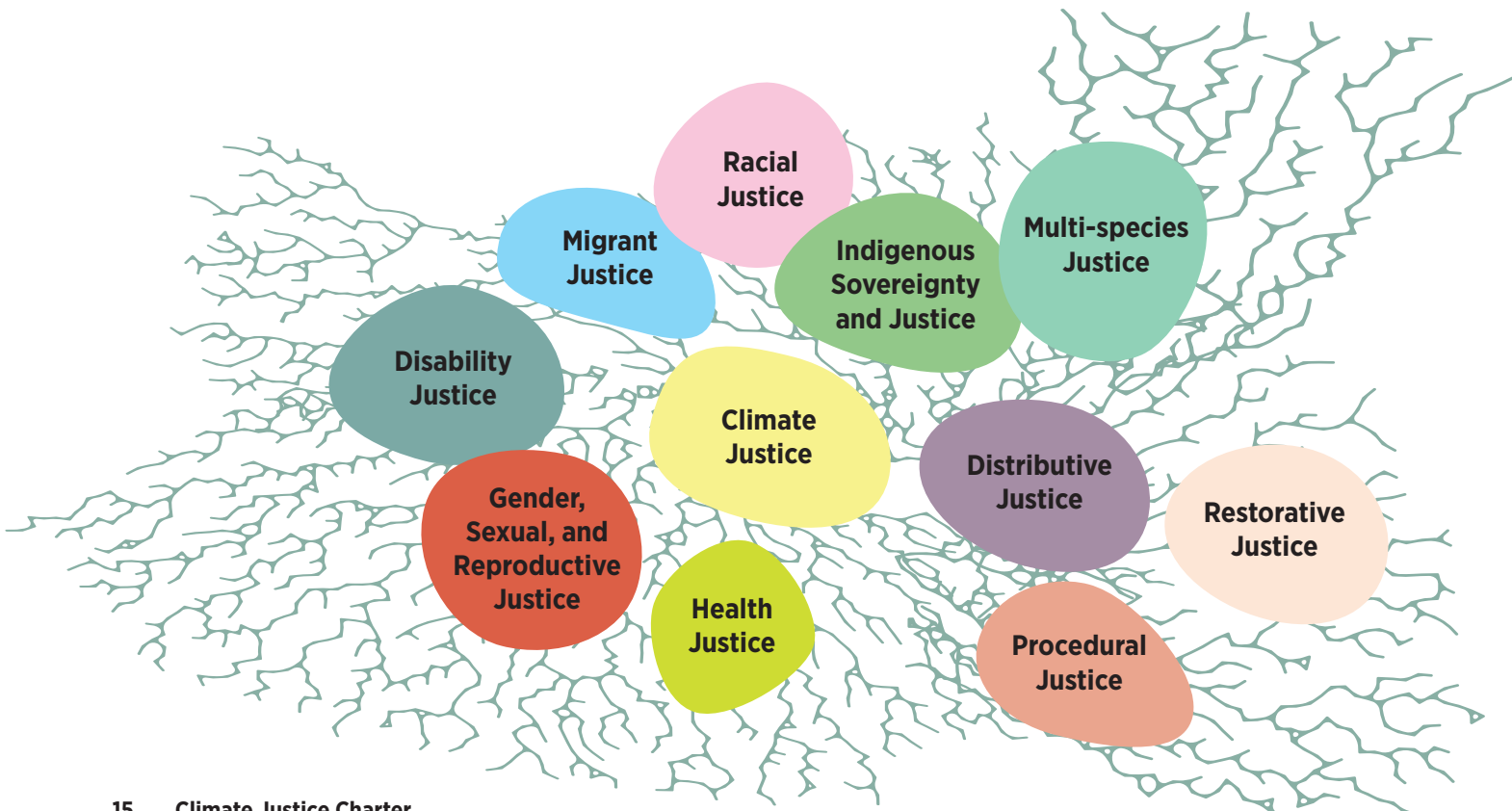
Focusing on climate justice in the absence of other forms of justice will not get us to the robust, durable, and fair climate solutions we need. Climate justice requires an interconnected approach that addresses all forms of inequity and injustice. Reaching our vision will require collective work to transform our current reality into a future where no one gets left behind. A description of each of these forms of justice can be found in Appendix C.

*As we navigate through an ever-changing climate and towards the end of the pandemic, it is clear more than ever that the climate crisis we face today is inextricably linked to many other forms of oppression in society. These crises are caused by our current colonial systems, which operate through oppression and harm. We need to rebuild through transformative justice and hope, so that our communities have strong and regenerative roots, and will be able to weather the storms we face ahead.*

*- Sophie Tang, Sustainabiliteens*

*Climate justice for people with disabilities and others necessarily means housing justice- healthy, affordable living spaces and not just SROs (single room occupancy) in poor repair.*

*- Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee member*





## Guiding principles

The Climate Justice Charter is grounded in the following five principles.

### **1** náčaʔmat tə šxʷqʷeləwən ct (We are of One Heart and Mind)

We echo the Musqueam concept of náčaʔmat tə šxʷqʷeləwən ct, which helps us come together as one heart and mind. The way we work together is as important as the outcomes. We each have responsibilities to care for the well-being of others - human and animal, plant, and other natural kin. These responsibilities need to reflect intersectional equity, which may be determined by access, distribution, and privilege (related to age, race, language, ability, gender, class and more).

### **2** Indigenous Sovereignty

We acknowledge the existing sovereignty of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations (whose lands the City of Vancouver now resides on) were never surrendered or settled through a treaty. We work to abolish colonial controls and ensure Host Nations and urban Indigenous communities can act in self-determination.

### **3** Thinking Beyond Borders

Climate justice extends beyond boundaries - it is rooted in global systems, and requires work that falls outside jurisdictions. What we do - and don't do - today will have impacts and consequences elsewhere that can contribute to a worsening climate crisis, or alternatively can help to mitigate the crisis faster and on a larger scale.

### **4** Redistribution

We center equitable redistribution of costs, benefits, opportunities, and resources of climate action in response to the disproportionate burdens and impacts of climate change placed on communities and environments. We leave no one behind on this journey.

### **5** Fluidity

There is no “one way” out of the climate crisis. We need to take a systems change approach that draws on multiple solutions and perspectives, reflects on and learns from mistakes, and recognizes the intersections and connections within and between living beings and systems. To be fluid is to be open to changes and unpredictability, and to flow across boundaries.

## Section 2: The Climate Justice Framework

### Goals

Goals are high-level directions that work toward our vision and further inform on-the ground actions and implementation for the City of Vancouver.

The six goals described below reflect where we, as a community, are now in our journey towards climate justice. Each goal includes supporting examples of what implementation may look like in the future. As the City of Vancouver continues to advance their climate justice work, we hope these goals will change and adapt to reflect lived realities and progress made.

1. Recognize and accept Indigenous sovereignty as a foundation of climate justice.
2. Ensure climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions are guided by those who are most impacted by systemic oppression and climate change.
3. Support the equitable redistribution of the burdens and benefits of climate response.
4. Restore and sustain our relationship to nature.
5. Respond to the need for accountability and resulting repair work related to climate injustices.
6. Catalyze systems change within climate policy and practice.

*Protocol shows that Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh (MST) need to take priority, and rightly so but more work needs to be done with the urban Indigenous community. Vancouver is the third largest urban Indigenous population in Canada. When you're not tapping into urban Indigenous, then you're not tapping into that complementary cultural expertise on environmental knowledge and creation of options. How do you balance MST relations and urban Indigenous voices, being mindful of the protocols that need to be followed?*

*- Conrad Desjarlais, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation Treaty 8*

### Goal 1: Recognize and accept Indigenous sovereignty as a foundation of climate justice, such as:

- Participating in ongoing decolonization and reconciliation processes, including:
  - tangible reparations such as returning lands and waters to Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations with potential areas for their exclusive cultural and spiritual uses;
  - adopting Indigenous-led land and water guardian programs that include environmental monitoring, enforcement and fines for overharvesting or pollution;
  - supporting Indigenous-led environmental organizations and validating the efforts of existing environmental organizations;
  - reviving Indigenous land-use names;
  - supporting the documentation of Indigenous knowledge in relation to climate.
- Respectfully and relationally following appropriate Indigenous protocols for collective stewardship of lands and waters. This can include recognizing key documents from the Host Nations such as the Musqueam Comprehensive Community Plan, the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Xay Temíxw Land Use Plan, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation Land Use Plan and their relevance not only for the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh People but for external governments.<sup>7</sup>
- Making staff, resources, and budgets widely available to the Host Nations and urban Indigenous communities to support their leadership in climate action and stewardship goals on their terms, without taking ownership of the decision-making process.

#### Footnotes:

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Appendix D for a summary of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations strategic planning documents.

### **Goal 2: Ensure climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions are guided by those who are most impacted by systemic oppression and climate change, such as:**

- Investing in robust, authentic relationships with Host Nations, and urban Indigenous to seek guidance in creating and implementing strategies to educate, mitigate, and adapt to, local impacts of climate change.
- Continuing to support a community-led Climate Equity group to advise on climate policy, regulations, programs, and services.
- Prioritizing engagement with communities disproportionately impacted by climate change, using appropriate languages and approaches, and using this guidance to develop bold, equity-supporting climate action.
- Making decisions based on the premise that every body and mind is considered an essential part of the community and that they cannot be left behind in climate emergencies or responses.

### **Goal 3: Support the equitable redistribution of the burdens and benefits of climate response, such as:**

- Using an equity-based approach to financing tools (such as fees & taxation) related to the costs of climate mitigation and adaptation responses, with higher burdens placed on those with the most resources who are responsible for a disproportionate share of emissions such as corporations, those holding positions of power, and the global north more broadly.
- Assessing resources and opportunities that climate action provides and more equitably redistributing these toward communities disproportionately impacted by climate change. This could include looking at:
  - staff positions, budget and time investments;
  - climate-related grants;
  - municipal infrastructure, programs, policies, services; and
  - climate-friendly initiatives such as healthy, safe, efficient housing; green spaces; pedestrian and cycling infrastructure; transit access; community food gardens; and purpose-built cultural spaces.

*As a parent I'm so worried for my kids, and my kids' kids. They and their peers don't get to have political votes, or decision-making power. It seems like the people around me are just operating status quo, and don't feel the urgency of the climate emergency. If they did, they would make different choices, every day. This is what it will take to move toward climate justice. We can come together on this issue. We have to.*

*- Meghan Winters, CEWG member*

### Goal 4: Restore and sustain our relationship to nature, such as:

- Recognizing land, water, air, and animal, plant, and other natural kin as rights holders in climate justice processes and outcomes, and treat these as equal.
- Engaging community and staff in transitioning our relationship to nature from one based on its transactional value to a more relational approach.
- Facilitating widespread, equitable access to nature by prioritizing neighbourhoods and areas with larger populations of people in disproportionately-impacted communities for new green public spaces for shade, cleaner air, and connection to animal, plant, and other natural kin. This can also include daylighting creeks and marshlands, and planting more Indigenous plants.

*"We have traditional times to harvest fish. In February we have oolichan, we go to get them because that's when they're spawning. In March/spring time to late summer, that's when we go for salmon. The heat messed with the water temperature and not that many fish came up a few years ago and the harvest wasn't that good."*

*- Isaiah Campbell, Nisga'a & Tsimshian Nations*

### Goal 5: Respond to the need for accountability and resulting repair work related to climate injustices, such as:

- Seeking to repair past climate-related harms and prevent future climate-related harms on the terms of the communities most impacted, such as:
  - impacts of the disappearance of salmon from the ocean, creeks and rivers on Indigenous communities;
  - extreme weather on people with disabilities/disabled people, seniors, and unhoused people;
  - impacts of policing and the justice system on migrant workers and racialized community members;
  - impacts of inflation and food shortages on low-income families; and
  - the legacy of damage being put on youth and left for future generations to address (among many other examples).
- Advocating regionally and nationally for other municipalities to engage in accountability and repair processes around climate-related harms, and look for opportunities to share lessons learned.
- Looking for ways to take accountability for the disproportionate impacts of climate change in the global south, which have resulted in displacement and forced migration, such as divesting from extractive Canadian companies and facilitating sanctuary for migrants.

*"The global north needs to be responsible to the global south. Often we have different standards of what we do here but we don't treat people in other places with the same standards. We need to treat people from different parts of the world in the same way."*

*- Navdeep Chhina, CEWG member*

### **Goal 6: Catalyze systems change within climate policy and practice, such as:**

- Creatively engaging in thinking beyond jurisdictional boundaries related to climate policy and practice, including roles in advocacy, partnerships, and collaboration.
- Integrating climate justice processes through related groups, plans, and policies (for example: the City of Vancouver United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Task Force, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, Vancouver Plan, Vancouver's Equity Framework, etc.) to ensure the 'how' and the 'what' of climate justice are equitable.<sup>8</sup>
- Complementing existing models of working (via plans and strategies) with other decolonized methods such as experiential, artistic and cultural, and relational modes.
- Increasing diversity of staff to ensure that those writing climate policy and carrying out climate actions reflect those most impacted by climate change in Vancouver.

#### **Footnotes:**

8 Refer to Appendix D for a summary of relevant City of Vancouver plans and policies to this work.





Section 3

# **Moving Towards Climate Justice**

## The opportunities of this moment

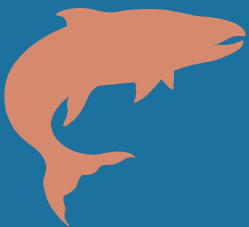
Cities are at the front line of climate change with compounding impacts and risks to human health, natural ecosystems, and infrastructure. However, with 4.2 billion inhabitants worldwide, cities are more than just major contributors to climate change - they are also hubs of connection, community, knowledge, and experience that we can draw from as we adapt to and mitigate climate impacts. As communities struggle with, learn from, and respond to climate change, we are also witnessing opportunities arising.

Some foundational work has already been done at the City to look at broader social issues and connect them to justice, such as adopting an Equity Framework and committing to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The City of Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy also strive to meet ambitious climate targets while working to ensure the equitable implementation of these policies to ensure climate actions work for everyone.

With these foundations, and now equipped with a deep understanding of our context (Section 1) and our climate justice framework (Section 2), the City of Vancouver is positioned to launch its work in equity and climate change mitigation and adaptation into true climate justice that continues for generations.

*"It's going to require a whole-hearted transition from the top echelons down to people at the grassroots doing this work. Implementation requires everyone being involved...I think the work is a matter of funding appropriately, allocating appropriately, creating fair and appropriate reporting requirements, looking towards the organizations and folks already doing the work on the ground."*

*- Robbie Knott, Red River Métis Nation*





# A call to action for local government

## Implementing the Climate Justice Charter

We want to see bold, visionary action to meet what is needed for a just climate response. As a local government with enormous impact on the ground, the City of Vancouver must be an accountable institution in responding to the climate crisis. While recognizing they are not the only entity that needs to step up, and that reaching effective climate justice will require action by us all - informed by Indigenous knowledge - the City can and should play a leadership role. This will involve learning, embedding, and modelling climate justice principles in their actions and processes.

*"There needs to be a way of working vertically, with both City policies and community, like roots of the tree, ground up and top down. I would like to see implementation and direct results."*

*- Varouj Gumuchian, Seniors' Advisory Committee member*

The City of Vancouver must reorient itself to where climate justice is the constant, non-negotiable priority behind all relevant decision-making that enables new possibilities in social structures, economy, and urban planning to emerge. Further, the City must commit to equitably distributing the benefits that these new possibilities bring, and consider when and where these benefits may in fact negatively affect disproportionately-impacted communities, and mitigate these impacts.

*"I find sometimes because people don't see me in the context of my wheelchair and my history and what I require...when I go into these workshops I feel like a villain when I say I'd like to keep a parking space. I require things that people are trying to work away from."*

*- Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee member*

Opportunities must be distributed equitably both spatially across Vancouver but also between communities, with careful attention paid to which communities are benefiting economically or otherwise from new initiatives - both during the creation and development of initiatives as well as through implementation and monitoring.

As the City of Vancouver rises to embrace their role in this effort, implementation will largely be shaped by staff in response to the guidance provided in this Charter.

Currently, staff indicate this will involve crafting a Theory of Change that describes how change happens within the City, which will be connected to key interventions that move climate work at the City in the direction the Charter outlines. These interventions will focus on the how, such as:

- How the City makes decisions, and who makes them.
- How the City collaborates, engages, and communicates.
- How the City plans, spends, and allocates financial resources.
- How climate justice informs future policies, regulations, programs, and services.
- Who the City hires, the kind of workplace they co-create, and what professional development supports and expectations are put into place.
- How the City advocates, and who benefits from this advocacy.
- How learning, outcomes, and impacts are monitored and evaluated at the City, and how these are communicated.

The resulting interventions will help City staff implement climate justice in their own work across departments, starting with a focus on areas connected to green buildings, transportation, climate adaptation, and embodied carbon.



### Section 3: Moving Towards Climate Justice

In connection with these interventions, and as the City works to implement this Charter, we urge the City to consider these opportunities:

- Acting as a convener and advocate, pushing the provincial and the federal government and bringing other municipalities and Indigenous leadership together to advance this work.
- Supporting new employment sectors opening up in the zero-carbon economy, facilitating a just transition to a regenerative economy.
- Building partnerships with local Indigenous communities and communities in the global south to support their climate actions strategies, including offering equitable climate financing.
- Encouraging increased recreational, cultural, and spiritual enjoyment of nature and wild spaces, arising from reframing our relationship with nature from an extractive to a relational one.
- Building partnerships with Host Nations, grassroots movements and communities on the frontlines of climate change, surfacing wisdom and strength emerging from shared climate leadership in the implementation process.
- Raising awareness on who the major global carbon emitters are through their corporate entities, and supporting corporate accountability in businesses, companies, and corporations that have demonstrated commitments to climate-friendly operations and equity through purchasing and procurement policies.

We hope the implementation process supports and inspires others to take climate action.

*City staff can hold an important role as “runners”<sup>9</sup> by using their influence, education and ceremony to spread awareness, mindfulness and action to the broader community.*

*- Candace Campo, shíshálh Nation*

### Accountability

Ultimately, accountability for mobilizing this Charter belongs to the City of Vancouver Sustainability Group and all City staff. As staff begin this work, building on their strengths and existing foundational work, it is essential that staff remain accountable to the frontline communities of those disproportionately-impacted by climate change outlined throughout this Charter.

*“We need to work as a team...People from our nation have been put aside for decades, resulting in a lack of involvement in this type of process. Our people are scared for our land, water, fish, trees etc. It is time for us Squamish people to change from not knowing what to do to knowing what to do. Our ancestors knew how, but that got taken away from us.”*

*- Squamish Nation*

Tangible ways that City staff can be accountable for this work include:

- Transparency in reporting (to Council/ community/others).
- Commitment to working with community leadership in the transition to implementation, and on an ongoing basis moving forward.
- Requirements for dedicated staff time and resources. This should center staff with lived experiences of climate injustice to lead the work, not just those with qualifications that systemically aren't accessible to marginalized communities.
- Embedding lessons and priorities from the Charter into related work, such as updates to the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.
- Required responsibilities and support to center learning, reflection, understanding of positionality and privilege, and how this shapes staff decisions and processes.
- Integration of ongoing reflection, learning, iteration, and reframing so that each year staff actions and activities are shaped based on what's being learned (fluidity principle in action).

#### Footnotes:

<sup>9</sup> “Runner” is a traditional Indigenous term designated to the ambassador responsible for delivering the message of the people.

### Monitoring & evaluation

Monitoring progress on climate justice ensures those making decisions and holding power are accountable for the expected actions and results, or pivoting if required. The City of Vancouver's Sustainability Group is supporting the development, implementation, and iteration of this Charter. We anticipate this staff group will help steward the direction of the Charter throughout the City and report back annually to Council and the community Charter implementation alongside reporting back on other climate policies including the Climate Emergency Action Plan and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. There should also be a commitment to sharing progress and information directly with Host Nations.

Determining how successful we are at striving towards climate justice will require gathering relevant data and statistics, and it will also need to be informed by stories. As a colonial institution, the City is much more familiar with evaluating with quantitative methods - data, numbers, and amounts. While this quantitative data can uncover important information, it needs to be disaggregated.<sup>10</sup> Further, quantitative data must be understood as only one side of the coin and must come together with qualitative data, like stories of lived experiences, to create a meaningful understanding of progress.

When monitoring and evaluating this Charter, assessing progress against goals should be paired with an evaluation of process-related criteria, because the way this work is done is as important as the outcomes. We hope the City will set new standards for developing an evaluation framework in subsequent phases of this work.

Most importantly, this Charter is a living document. This version of the Charter was created based on where Vancouver is right now with the knowledge that, as we collectively work toward climate justice, this Charter will change and adapt with us. Monitoring and evaluation will both ensure that our goals for climate justice are met and inform future iterations of this Charter, keeping this work alive and innovative.

*"This document can stay alive and strong when the community revisits the goals, and recommits to the outcomes seasonally, annually in practice and in ceremony."*

*- Candace Campo, shíshálh Nation*

#### Footnotes:

<sup>10</sup> Disaggregated data refers to information that is separated into key categories to show important trends and patterns. Disaggregated data is often requested around disproportionately-impacted communities such as Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities, gender, 2SLGBTQIA+, age, disability, and more.

## Conclusion

We offer a final message. We recognize that our current climate crisis is the result of half a millennia of colonization, capitalism, and other systems of oppression. While we are called to confront our most recent 500 years, we must also remember what came before. Prior to colonization, as well as in spite of it, there are long legacies of climate justice and thriving communities, here and around the world, that reach back to time immemorial. Although it is a long journey from the inequities that have created the climate crisis to restoring processes that support climate justice, we collectively have an abundance of strengths to draw from to act TODAY to secure our next 500 years. We recognize all of our ancestors and communities who have carried us up to today and we look to our youth and those yet to come to orient us as we move forward in climate justice.

We are proud to have shaped the inaugural version of the Climate Justice Charter. We are honoured to know this living document will eventually be renewed with new voices and the wisdom gained from the first lessons that come from its evaluation. We welcome these contributions and the futures these new leaders will shape. Perhaps you, reader, will be part of this effort.

*"The journey of the charter is carried by canoes that travel up and down the Salish Coast, establishing relationship and dependency lines between each of us, so that we can carry the responsibility of caring for the places we are on, always leaving it better and taking care of it the same ways we want our homes to be taken care of."*

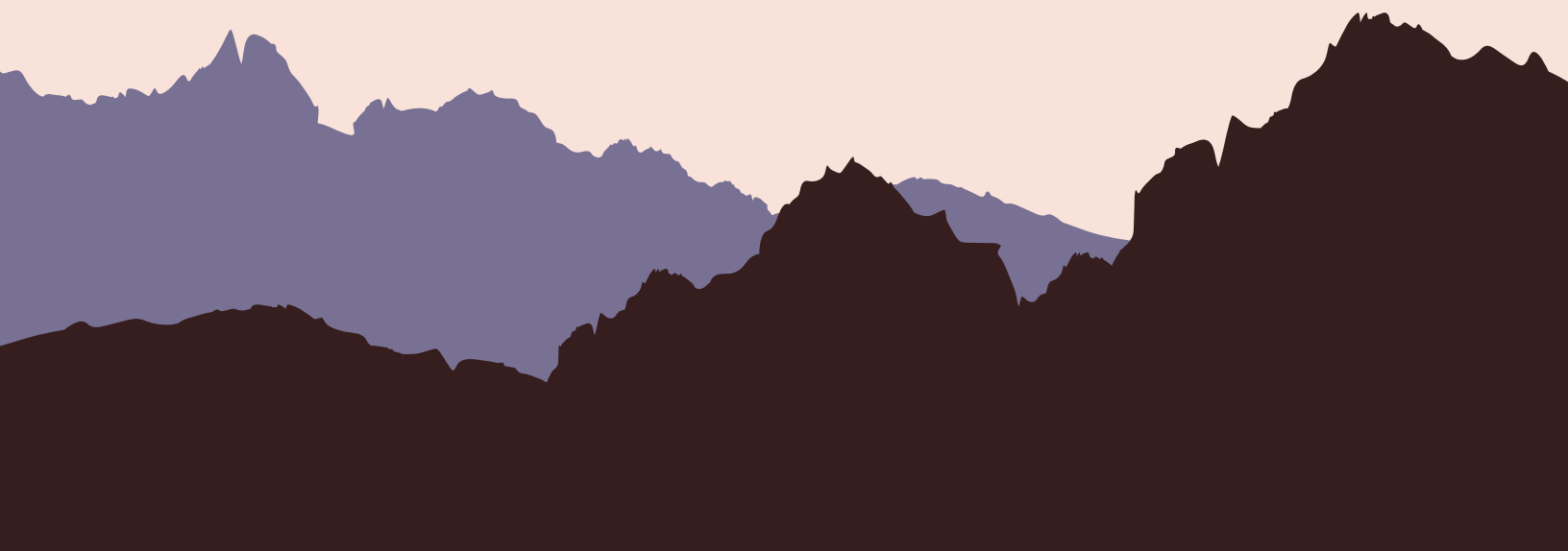
*- Luna Aixin, Climate Justice Charter engagement lead*





Section 4

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## Appendix A: Anti-oppressive terms glossary

**Ableism:** The system that positions non-disabled bodies and minds as superior to disabled bodies and minds, resulting in a world that centers the needs of non-disabled people to the exclusion of disabled people.

**Access Needs/Accessibility:** “Access needs are those things that are needed in order for someone to fully participate in a space or activity, which can include wheelchair access, scent-free space, ASL interpretation, etc. In a disability justice context, access needs are seen as universal - every bodymind has needs, not just disabled people.”<sup>11</sup>

**Colonialism:** “The formal process of an organized group or government taking land, resources, medicine, histories, and body- and land-autonomy away from the existing Indigenous peoples.”<sup>12</sup>

**Climate justice:** Climate justice is an approach that applies a social justice framework to the ways we understand and respond to climate change. It recognizes that climate change is a collective, global crisis but its impacts are not felt evenly around the world, nor evenly within communities or between species.

**Disability:** “Disability is a word that links people of common overlapping related experiences of oppression based in navigating a world designed and defined by able-bodied people. This term has been reclaimed by people whose bodyminds have been medicalized and pathologized, working from an empowered perspective.”<sup>13</sup>

**Dominant identity/ies:** Individuals or groups that have one or more identities associated with power, privileges, and higher social status within society. Those with dominant identities may not make up the majority of the population, but they hold the power. Intersectional identities can compound this power (ex. white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied man).

**Equity/Social Equity:** Social equity is the condition whereby fair and just treatment of people creates fair and just outcomes for people. As a process, we understand this to mean the replacement of unfair and unjust policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce or perpetuate negative or undesirable outcomes for the most affected and impacted. As an outcome, we understand this to mean a society in which anyone’s identities no longer unfairly and unjustly pre-determine their outcomes in community. Equity is “about recognizing harms and correcting for discrimination experienced over life times and generations, while dismantling discriminatory rules, societal systems, and cultures.”<sup>14</sup>

**First Nations:** Sovereign and distinct peoples Indigenous to what is currently called Canada who do not identify as Métis or Inuit (with lands and traditional presence extending beyond the colonial border between what is currently called Canada and the United States). “This term was originally coined by Indigenous Peoples in the late 1970s, partly as an alternative to inappropriate terms such as Native and Indian... the term also has a double meaning in that it is sometimes used to describe a reserve or a group within a larger Nation (e.g., the Westbank First Nation, which is actually a small portion of the Okanagan Nation).”<sup>15</sup>

**Genocide:** “Genocide means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group:

- A. Killing members of the group;
- B. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- C. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- D. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- E. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”<sup>16</sup>

### Footnotes:

11 Sins Invalid. (2019). *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People*, A Disability Justice Primer (2nd ed). Berkeley, CA.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid

14 City of Vancouver Equity Framework. (2021). <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/equity-framework.pdf>

15 Younging, G. (2018). *Elements of Indigenous Style* (pp. 63). Brush Education Inc.

16 United Nations. (2022). Genocide. <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>



## Section 4: References & Appendices

**Indigenous:** “Being of, arising from, or having ancestors who have always lived in a specific place; native.”<sup>17</sup> The term “tends to have international connotations, referring to Indigenous [P]eoples throughout the world rather than being country-specific. It can be both a legal and colloquial term... [in Canada this] includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.”<sup>18</sup>

**Indigenous Sovereignty:** Based on Articles 3 and 4 of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination, including rights to autonomy or self-government as well as their own economic, social, and cultural development.<sup>19</sup> “Equity work must be centered on upholding, recognizing, and protecting inherent and constitutionally protected Indigenous Rights.”<sup>20</sup>

**Intersectionality:** Coined by American legal scholar Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.”<sup>21</sup> Some intersections include: sex, gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ability, neurotype, size, etc. Together, these intersections may combine to create unique modes of oppression or privilege.

**Global South:** Refers to regions of the world that are largely oriented toward the southern hemisphere, though not exclusively below the southern hemisphere, broadly meaning the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. The global south is marginalized by the global north (e.g. Canada, U.S., Europe, Australia) from systems such as colonization where land, resources, and people were stolen, now resulting in less socioeconomic and political power.

**Marginalized:** “A person or group who is treated as unimportant or outside the range of normal(ized) perspective or experience.”<sup>22</sup> Marginalized peoples experience different forms of marginalization: social, cultural, economic, political and ecological.

**Migrants & Refugees:** A migrant is “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from [their] habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.”<sup>23</sup> Within this definition, a refugee is a migrant who is “outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and, as a result, require international protection.”<sup>24</sup>

**Person with Disability/Disabled Person:** Using the social model of disability, this term refers to people whose minds and/or bodies (bodyminds) are disabled by a society that has failed to meaningfully include them. Whereas the medical model of disability locates the ‘problem’ within disabled individuals, this definition locates ‘problems’ and the onus of accessibility on society collectively.<sup>25</sup> There are strong opinions in the disability community around person-first (person with a disability) or identity-first (disabled person) language, so this project will honour both styles.

**Racialized people(s):** Those whose race and/or ethnicity are made ‘other’ to whiteness by white supremacy culture, practices, and actions. Also refers to “non-white people.”

### Footnotes:

17 Sins Invalid. (2019). *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People, A Disability Justice Primer* (2nd ed). Berkeley, CA.

18 Vowel, C. (2016). *Indigenous Writes* (pp. 10). HighWater Press.

19 United Nations (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf).

20 City of Vancouver Equity Framework. (2021). <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/equity-framework.pdf>

21 Crenshaw, K. (2018). “She Coined the Term ‘Intersectionality’ Over 30 Years Ago. Here’s What It Means to Her Today” (Katy Steinmetz). TIME. <https://time.com/5786710/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality/>

22 Sins Invalid. (2019). *Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People, A Disability Justice Primer* (2nd ed). Berkeley, CA.

23 United Nations. Global Issues: Migration. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/migration>

24 United Nations. Refugees and Migrants. [https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions?gclid=Cj0KCQjwn4qWBhCvARIsAFNAMijL\\_7oQBAOsLFKSXOM3PBOnQ4URYKaulbb4FaiOfyBpF9-eJdov5BkaAiCzEALw\\_wcB](https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions?gclid=Cj0KCQjwn4qWBhCvARIsAFNAMijL_7oQBAOsLFKSXOM3PBOnQ4URYKaulbb4FaiOfyBpF9-eJdov5BkaAiCzEALw_wcB)

25 Inclusion London. (2022). The Social Model of Disability. Inclusion London. <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/>



## Section 4: References & Appendices

**Racism:** Racism “creates unequal power in which those who are not white have unequal access to opportunities for economic, political and social mobility.”<sup>26</sup>

**Settler Colonialism:** Canada is based on settler colonialism specifically, which is the “policy or practice of ‘acquiring full or partial political control’ over another nation, ‘occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically’.”<sup>27</sup>

**Systemic Oppressions:** “Forms of discrimination and inequality that are backed by laws and policies and work together to compound negative impacts and make it difficult to fight back against them.”<sup>28</sup>

**Two Spirit/2 Spirit:** “An umbrella term ... introduced by [Indigenous Peoples]... that bridges Indigenous and western understandings of gender and sexuality.... There are many understandings of Two Spirit and each is Nation-specific.”<sup>29</sup> “The term “Two-Spirit” originated in Winnipeg, Canada in 1990 during the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference”<sup>30</sup> and does not replace Nation-specific names for various genders.

**Unceded:** “The word ‘unceded’ means ‘taken without consent’ and refers to a process by which settlers from Western Europe sought to replace Indigenous laws and take Indigenous land, for the purpose of building wealth.”<sup>31</sup>

**White Supremacy:** The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to racialized people and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural

assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of colour as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, inhuman, and “undeserving.” Drawing from critical race theory, the term “white supremacy” also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.<sup>32</sup>

**2SLGBTQIA+:** This acronym seeks to articulate sexual and gender identities and is not an exhaustive acronym. This acronym has many forms and may include more or fewer letters in other spaces. Here, it includes 2 Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic people with a “+” at the end that acknowledges the inclusion of more identities.

### Footnotes:

26 City of Vancouver (2021). Getting Our House in Order: The City of Vancouver’s Equity Framework.

27 West Coast Environmental Law. (2020). Colonialism Is Alive and Well in Canada. <https://www.wcel.org/blog/colonialism-alive-and-well-in-canada>

28 Sins Invalid. (2019). Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People, A Disability Justice Primer (2nd ed). Berkeley, CA.

29 Neptune, G. (2018). What Does “Two-Spirit” Mean? THEM. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A4lBibGzUnE>

30 Rainbow Resource Centre. Two-Spirit People of the First Nations. <https://rainbowresourcecentre.org/files/16-08-Two-Spirit.pdf>

31 City of Vancouver (2021). Getting Our House in Order: The City of Vancouver’s Equity Framework.

32 Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks). (2021). Racism Defined. Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks). <https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>

## Appendix B: How the Climate Justice Charter was created

In 2020, a Climate Equity Working Group (CEWG) was formed to “provide guidance and support for the City’s efforts to transition off of fossil fuels in ways that prioritize those most vulnerable to climate impacts and most in need of support in transitioning to renewable energy.”

This working group was made up of 16 members who brought a diversity of perspectives, including that of new immigrants, people with disabilities, queer and trans folks, people with low income, and urban Indigenous folks. This group helped inform how actions in the Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) could best consider equity, either in the way policies are developed or implemented. They also provided initial direction and shape to what a Climate Justice Charter could look like.

Building on the idea to create a Climate Justice Charter, Adriana Laurent conducted interviews with Advisory Groups, members from the 2020 CEWG, City staff, and community organizations to create a scoping report. The report resulted in a set of recommendations and a potential pathway to develop a Climate Justice Charter.

A key finding from this report was that “while the charter would continue to align with the CEAP, it would discuss broader themes of climate justice issues within the City of Vancouver and reflect on process oriented concerns, such as engagement mechanisms and decision making power distribution. The tone of the charter was to be bold, brave and ambitious while its commitments would have to be implementable.”

In May 2021, the City reconvened and expanded the Climate Equity Working Group with the dual purpose of advising staff on implementation of the Climate Emergency Action Plan policies and co-developing the Climate Justice Charter. The group is made up of 16 individuals - a diverse range of people with lived experiences of systemic inequities and those who work or volunteer to address racial and climate justice.

### The creation of the Climate Justice Charter

In January 2022, the City of Vancouver’s Sustainability Group provided funding to hire a consultant team to lead the development of the Climate Justice Charter and accompanying implementation tools in collaboration with the CEWG.

With the consulting team on board, the important work of determining how and what to do to create the Climate Justice Charter was underway. Giving power to the CEWG to author the Charter was identified early in the process as a way to ensure that the voices of those more impacted by climate policy could be heard bravely and boldly. Everyone involved was committed to following a process rooted in equity on the journey to the desired outcomes. Initial sessions were held as a group, to build relationships and identify key values and visions for the Charter. The CEWG was organized into three sub-groups, each with a consultant acting as support and specific focus areas of the Charter to dive into more deeply. Sub-groups discussed various topics, and then brought their ideas back to the full group for peer input. Little by little, the Climate Justice Charter emerged as a draft.

Recognizing that members of the working group are not able to represent or speak to all aspects of identity and experience related to equity, further engagement and research was done by the consultants to include as many experiences as possible. This includes engagement sessions by the consultants with City Advisory Groups (Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee; Seniors’ Advisory Committee) and Sustainabiliteens (a group of young people engaged in sustainability). Ideas around potential missing perspectives and feedback on content were gathered and then brought back to CEWG for consideration.

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Select documents from Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations were reviewed by consultants as one method of including their perspectives and priorities in the Climate Justice Charter using existing resources (and complemented by other methods elsewhere). A summary of these documents is included in Appendix D.

In addition to engagement with City Advisory Groups and building on a review of key Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh documents, a series of discussions were held by consultants with Indigenous participants to better reflect Indigenous knowledge throughout the Climate Justice Charter. Ten Indigenous people from Musqueam, Squamish, and the local urban Indigenous community were interviewed to explore the high-level directions and potential strategies for the Climate Justice Charter. The format of these engagements were one-on-one conversations that emphasized relationships. Questions were based on a discussion guide developed by the Indigenous consultant from the consulting team, and were designed to offer a guided, open opportunity for participants to share their perspectives organically. Following this, a draft of the Charter was shared with interview participants for high-level feedback.

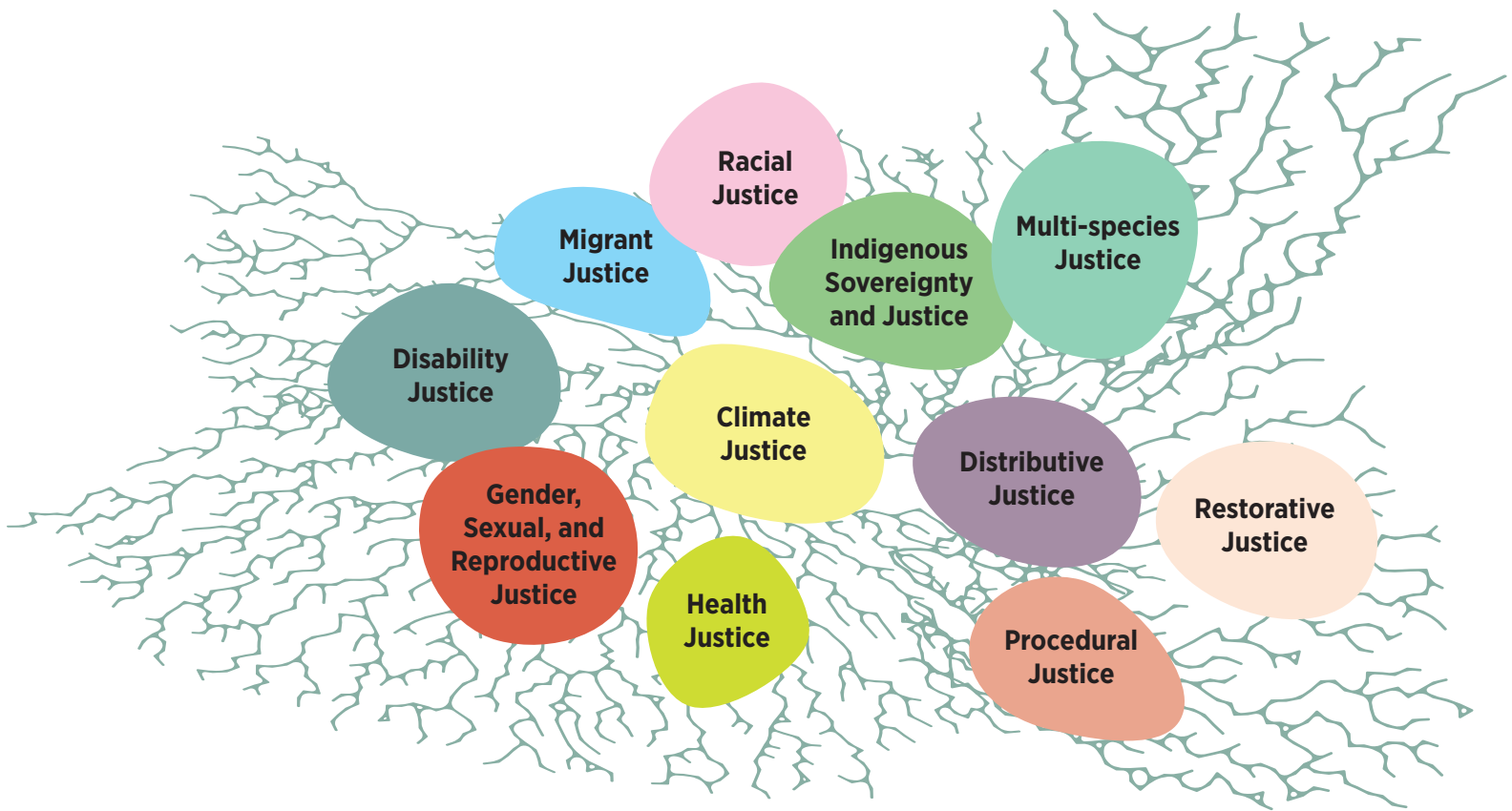
An invitation to engage with the Charter was also circulated through the City of Vancouver Intergovernmental Relations process to the Host Nations. Representatives of the Squamish Nation reviewed a draft of the Charter and provided feedback and while Tsleil-Waututh Nation also reviewed a draft of the Charter, they indicated they had no feedback/comments at this time. An open invitation was given to the Musqueam Nation to connect with the Charter if and when this feels right, acknowledging many important and competing priorities for time and resources may mean this is not possible at the current time.

## Appendix C: Constellation of climate justice

The constellation of justice below illustrates the overarching future states that are needed to effectively reach our vision and goals.

Descriptions for the following forms of justice are included on the following page:

- Climate Justice
- Indigenous Sovereignty and Justice
- Racial Justice
- Migrant Justice
- Disability Justice
- Gender, Sexual, and Reproductive Justice
- Health Justice
- Multi-species Justice
- Distributive Justice
- Procedural Justice
- Restorative Justice



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**Climate Justice:** Climate justice applies a social justice framework to the ways we understand and respond to climate change. It recognizes that climate change is a collective, global crisis but its impacts are not felt evenly around the world, nor evenly within communities or between species.

Climate justice seeks to equitably distribute both the costs and benefits related to climate action (mitigation and adaptation) by centering the wellbeing and wisdom of those most impacted by climate change. Without climate justice, tackling the climate crisis can only address symptoms, not root causes.

**Indigenous Sovereignty and Justice:** Indigenous sovereignty is the foundation of climate justice in Vancouver, and Indigenous communities are the ultimate leaders of climate justice, mitigation, and adaptation on their territories.

**Racial Justice:** Climate justice in Vancouver uplifts the wisdom of racialized communities and results in local liberation and safety for racialized communities from white supremacy while catalyzing these impacts regionally, nationally, and globally.

**Migrant Justice:** Vancouver locates colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalism as the root causes of migrant and Indigenous rights issues, where Canadian extractive and exploitative practices have impacted both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, locally and globally, resulting in displacement and forced migration at every scale. Vancouver works in solidarity with migrants at all scales to seek justice on their terms.

**Disability Justice:** Vancouver is a place where all bodies and minds, in their full diversity, have their needs met and are celebrated. Disabled people/people with disabilities are considered essential in climate justice and Vancouver's climate-related plans, strategies, and solutions prioritize the wisdom, needs, and experiences within the disability community.

**Gender, Sexual, and Reproductive Justice:** People of gender and sexual identities marginalized by systems of oppression are provided adequate support and resources by the City and wider communities to survive, adapt, and mitigate climate change impacts. They are liberated from systems of oppression and both direct and indirect impacts of climate change, including sexual violence, gender-based violence, medical violence, forced birthing and sterilization, and family policing.

**Health Justice:** The collective health of land, water, air, animal, plant, and other natural kin, and humans is prioritized above economics. Healthcare is safe, anti-oppressive, accessible, and consensual for all.

**Multi-species Justice:** Animal, plant, and other natural kin are recognized as rights holders and are prioritized as equal to humans in climate action.

**Distributive Justice:** Vancouver is a place of abundance where burdens, benefits, and resources are equitably distributed to meet the diverse needs of land, water, air, animal, plant and other natural kin, and humans, sharing resources in just relationship regionally, provincially, nationally, and internationally when called upon.

**Procedural Justice:** Mainstream/dominant systems and worldviews within Vancouver as a municipality and a community are shifted or dismantled and recreated to center climate justice as an intersectional, ongoing, and iterative process. Climate justice work in Vancouver is led by communities marginalized by systems of oppression and balances power, process, and outcomes to ensure that the how and the what of climate justice are equitable.

**Restorative Justice:** Climate justice and accountability in Vancouver focus on the safety and healing of those harmed and work to restore all parties to safety, dignity, wellbeing, and relationship. Ultimately, the path of restorative justice seeks to move toward Indigenous-led justice systems enacted by the broader outcome of Indigenous sovereignty.

## Appendix D: Policy context

In the [2022 Corporate Plan](#), the City emphasizes its commitment to “addressing affordability and the housing crisis, protecting and building a resilient local economy, increasing focus on equity and critical social issues, advancing Indigenous relations and Reconciliation, and accelerating action on climate change, alongside the delivery of core services.”

The City has done some foundational work looking at broader social issues and connecting them to justice. The City has also been working on addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation for over a decade. The list of strategies and frameworks described below is not exhaustive but highlights key initiatives underway that the Climate Justice Charter will connect to and amplify.

These important related strategies and frameworks are presented in the following groupings:

- City of Vancouver Reconciliation, Equity, and Accessibility Frameworks
- City of Vancouver Climate Policies and Strategies
- Host Nations Guiding Policy Documents

### City of Vancouver Reconciliation, Equity, and Accessibility Frameworks

The City of Vancouver [Reconciliation Framework](#) was adopted in 2014 in recognition of the need to move towards reconciliation with Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, and urban Indigenous communities. The Reconciliation Framework highlights three primary goals:

1. Cultural Competency amongst City staff
2. Strengthened Relations - with Reconciliation Canada, the three Host Nations of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, as well as with urban Aboriginal community (through the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council)
3. Effective Decision-making - decolonial systems change based on mutual respect, strong relationships and economic empowerment

In 2021, City Council created the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People \(UNDRIP\) Task Force](#) composed of elected officials from the three Host Nations and City Councillors. The Task Force has the following priorities in its efforts to develop recommendations on how the City of Vancouver can implement UNDRIP:

- Consult and collaborate with the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh in the development of the Task Force report
- Consider urban Indigenous communities today living in Vancouver, recognizing the importance of both title and rights in UNDRIP implementation
- Seek ways to engage women, youth, and elder voices
- Build on past and current work in the City of Vancouver on reconciliation
- Consider the BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) as a model

The City of Vancouver’s [Equity Framework](#) was approved by Council in 2021, an important step to getting the City’s own “house in order” in relation to addressing injustices and inequities experienced by a broad cross-section of society - including Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people; women and other marginalized genders, and people with disabilities/ disabled people. The Equity Framework is a conceptual, grounding document that lays the foundation for culture change within the organization, and rests on six commitments:

1. Doing equity work long-term
2. Creating spaces for accountable learning
3. Reflecting equity in City leadership
4. Fostering strong relationships
5. Adequately resourcing equity work
6. Shared accountability

The Equity Framework is founded on an ethic of care, and draws on the application of four distinct and related lenses: Indigenous rights, racial justice, intersectionality, and systems orientation.



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The City of Vancouver [Accessibility Strategy](#) was approved in 2022. The strategy outlines the City's commitment to "supporting the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs, and infrastructure, and by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers." The Accessibility Strategy includes eight focus areas:

1. Built environment and public spaces
2. Transportation services, policies, and programs
3. Housing policies, programs, and design
4. Information and communication
5. Employment
6. Governance and engagement
7. Capacity and collaboration
8. Advocacy and working with other orders of government along with other agencies

The Accessibility Strategy commits to overturning ableist narratives and relies on four approaches to drive the implementation of the strategy: education and awareness, racial justice lens, intersectionality, and a social inclusion approach.

In addition to the comprehensive plans and policies outlined above, there is a broader suite of related plans that focus on supporting particular communities and lived experiences. These include:

- [Vancouver Park Board Reconciliation Strategies](#)
- [Anti-racism and cultural redress](#)
- [Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture, Vancouver Culture Plan 2020-2029](#)
- [Vancouver – A City for All Women: Women's Equity Strategy 2018-2028](#)
- [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2-Spirit People \(MMIWG2S\) Response Report](#)
- [Healthy City Strategy](#)

### City of Vancouver Climate Policies and Strategies

The City of Vancouver recognizes that the climate is already changing. By 2050, we are expecting hotter, drier summers, wetter falls and springs, and warmer winters. Extreme weather events will be more frequent and intense, and sea levels are anticipated to rise by a minimum of 1 meter by 2100. Adapting to climate change means creating proactive plans that prepare for these and other climate-related impacts. The City's [Climate Change Adaptation Strategy](#), first adopted in 2012 and updated in 2018, has the following objectives:

1. Maximize climate resilience of infrastructure and buildings
2. With a focus on equity, minimize the health and safety impacts of climate change on communities and maximize their preparedness
3. Maximize the health and vigour of natural systems in the face of climate change
4. Develop shoreline resilience to sea level rise and storm surge
5. Maximize enabling factors within the organization that build adaptive capacity

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy addresses how the City can better offer services, build and maintain infrastructure, and design programs and policies that take advantage of, or prepare for, the anticipated high risk climate change related impacts. The Strategy also looks to improve the overall resilience of the community to shocks and stresses, and to address inequities and systemic vulnerabilities that challenge resilience.

In 2020, the [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) (CEAP) was adopted. The City of Vancouver has targets to cut carbon pollution in half by 2030, and to be carbon neutral before 2050. This requires tackling Vancouver's largest sources of carbon pollution locally: buildings and transportation. CEAP identifies the following 'big move' areas for action on carbon reduction:

1. Complete walkable neighbourhoods
2. Active transportation & transit
3. Zero emissions vehicles
4. Zero emissions space & water heating
5. Low carbon materials & construction practices
6. Restored coasts & forests

Within this action plan, there is a recognition that climate change is inherently inequitable. It affects people differently: those who contribute the least carbon emissions often will experience the worst impacts. Ensuring that approaches to both mitigation and adaptation to climate change are just and equitable is a goal of CEAP, and the Climate Justice Charter is key to setting the direction for this work.

In 2022, [Vancouver Plan 2050](#) was approved: the first citywide land-use strategy that will create a more equitable, livable, affordable, and resilient city. The plan will influence how the city grows over time, allowing more housing options across all neighbourhoods,

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building complete neighbourhoods that connect people to public spaces, shops, services, and transit. It also contains a comprehensive ecological framework that will make Vancouver more climate resilient by restoring ecosystems and protecting green space and tree canopies.

There are multiple other strategies at all levels of government that strengthen one another to meet global climate targets. These include:

- City of Vancouver [Housing Vancouver Strategy](#)
- Vancouver Park Board [VanPlay: Park & Recreation Strategy](#)
- Vancouver Economic Commission's [Zero Emissions Economic Transition Action Plan](#) (including Just Transition efforts)
- TransLink's [Regional Transportation Strategy: Transport 2050](#)
- Metro Vancouver's [Regional Growth Strategy: Metro 2050](#)
- Metro Vancouver's [Climate 2050 Strategic Framework](#)
- Metro Vancouver's [Clean Air Plan](#)
- BC's [CleanBC Roadmap to 2030](#)
- BC's [Climate Preparedness and Adaptation Strategy](#)
- BC's [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#)
- Canada's [2030 Emissions Reduction Plan](#)
- Canada's [National Adaptation Strategy](#)
- Canada's [Climate Actions for a Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy](#)

### Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations Guiding Policy Documents

As documents that outline the priorities and values of the Rights holders and stewards on these lands since time immemorial, the guiding policy directions outlined by xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish Nation), and sə́lilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) are critically important, including wisdom and direction that inform an approach to climate justice.

The [Musqueam Comprehensive Community Plan](#) (CCP) is a high level holistic plan that encompasses key planning areas identified by the community, and outlines important values and recommendations. Major themes in the CCP include:

- Centering the value of náćəmat tə šxwqweləwən ct (we are of one heart and mind)
- Recognizing relationships as central
- Importance of contributing to a complete, healthy Musqueam community
- Musqueam's right to protect and manage their lands and conserve resources for their own use
- Interconnected priorities include economic development and governance
- Hold space for, and celebrate, Musqueam's culture

The [Skwxwú7mesh \(Squamish\) Xay Temíxw Land Use Plan \(2001\)](#) describes the community's vision for the future of the forests and wilderness of the traditional territory. The Land Use Plan describes how the community wants the Nation's land and resources to be protected, managed and utilized for the benefit of present and future generations. As the plan states, "Squamish culture is inseparable from physical places in the traditional territory."

The objective of the [Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumíxw: Squamish Nation Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#) is to create a shared understanding of the vision, values, and principles to shape who they are and where they go as an organization. Squamish Nation's vision for the future is for all to understand the value of their land and water. The plan states, "a child born today will be able to walk with guidance, confidence, support, identity, and independence in the life they choose and see Squamish language and culture reflected to them anywhere in the traditional territory."

Major themes from these documents include:

- It is essential for Squamish Nation to have unmediated access to, and autonomy over, their traditional territories to meet the diverse physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental needs of their members
- Squamish Nation has inherent sovereignty over their territories and their right to steward their lands according to their laws
- Honour holistic frameworks and understandings of what it means to care for the land
- Prioritize collective knowledge and wellbeing
- The environment is connected to everything and always needs to be cared and accounted for
- Land and water must be recognized as spiritual, particularly that Squamish Nation's territory is uniquely spiritual to the Nation



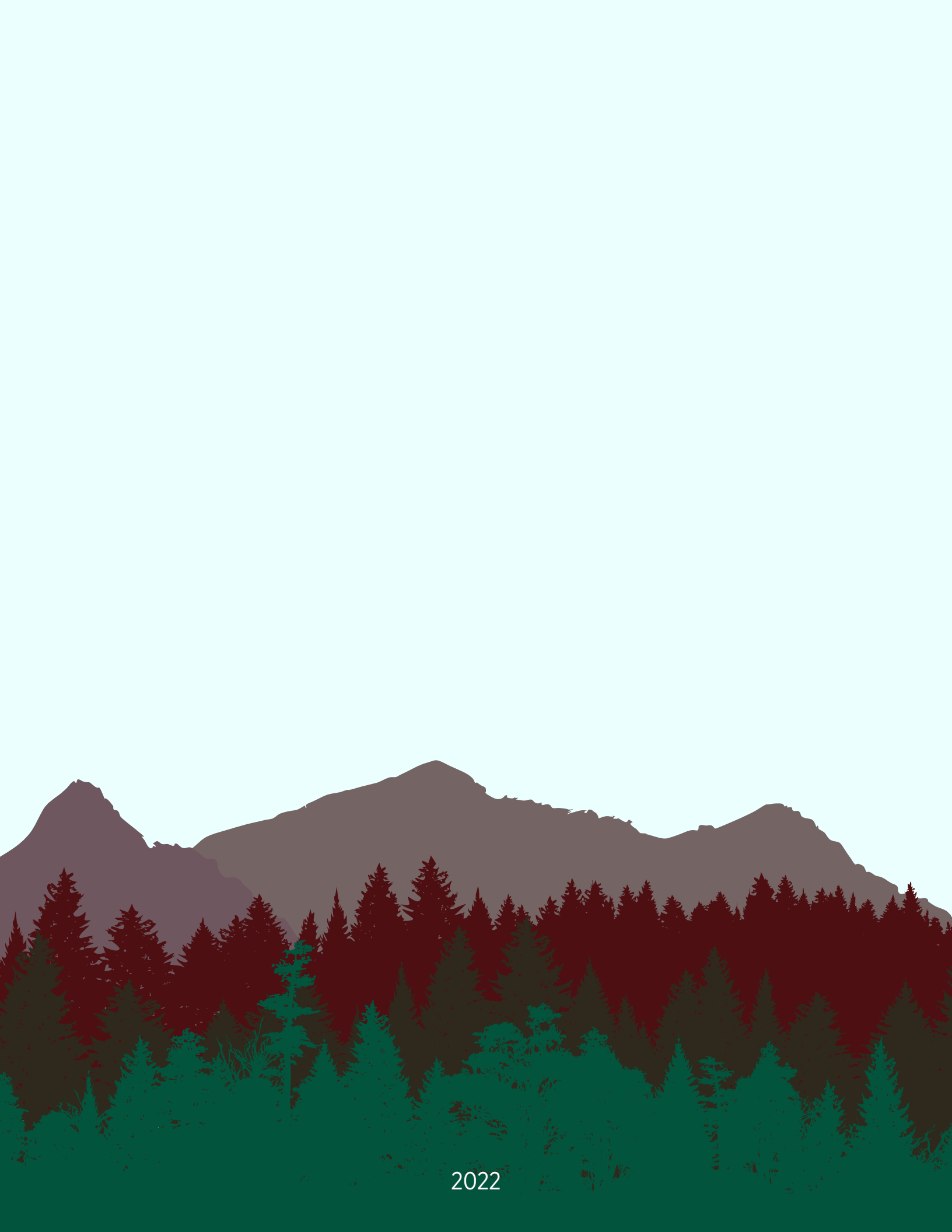
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- Climate justice must recognize that culture, laws, and more are embedded in the land
- It is essential to centre language, naming, and a recognition of the land
- Working collaboratively (i.e. with various levels of settler government) is essential for effective ways forward and mutual benefit
- Planning need to be intergenerational and long-range to ensure effective impact
- Squamish Nation will hold guests in their land and water responsible
- Restore and maintain the health and wellbeing of marine life and environment to ensure the land is cared for, there is an abundance of food, and biodiversity is strong
- Clean, healthy land and water is necessary for cultural, spiritual, ceremonial, and/or recreational activities
- Tsleil-Waututh Nation's community health is directly linked to their ability to access and sustainably manage their land
- Planning needs to holistically integrate infrastructure as well as species, habitats, and ecosystems, cultural and community health, sites of archaeological and cultural significance, community services, and current and future economic activities

The [Tsleil-Waututh Nation Land Use Plan 2018-2118 \(2019\)](#) guides the use and development of reserve land over the next 100 years. [Understanding Our Community's Climate Change Vulnerabilities: Community Climate Change Resilience Planning \(2019\)](#) builds an understanding of Tsleil-Waututh community vulnerability to climate change and explores potential climate adaptation actions. The [Tsleil-Waututh Sacred Trust Burrard Inlet Action Plan \(2017\)](#) summarizes scientific knowledge, identifies priority environmental issues and knowledge gaps, and fosters development of a shared vision for environmental stewardship. It also identifies near-term actions pertaining to the Burrard Inlet.

Major themes from these documents include:

- Future land uses must respect Tsleil-Waututh culture and traditions, and allow for the continuation of traditional practices by future generations of Tsleil-Waututh people
- Recognize Tsleil-Waututh's legal obligation to protect, defend, and steward the water, land, air, and resources of their territories
- The environment is connected to everything and always needs to be cared and accounted for. Recognize that culture, laws, and more are embedded in the land
- There is a need to increase scientific environmental knowledge as well as identify knowledge gaps and areas and causes of concern (e.g. pollutants, water quality, etc.) so that they can be effectively responded to
- Create science-based, First Nations-led strategies for environmental preservation and restoration based on increased knowledge and evidence so that strategies assert Indigenous sovereignty and meet First Nations' needs



2022