

# Civic Agencies Training: Module No. 2

## How the City Works



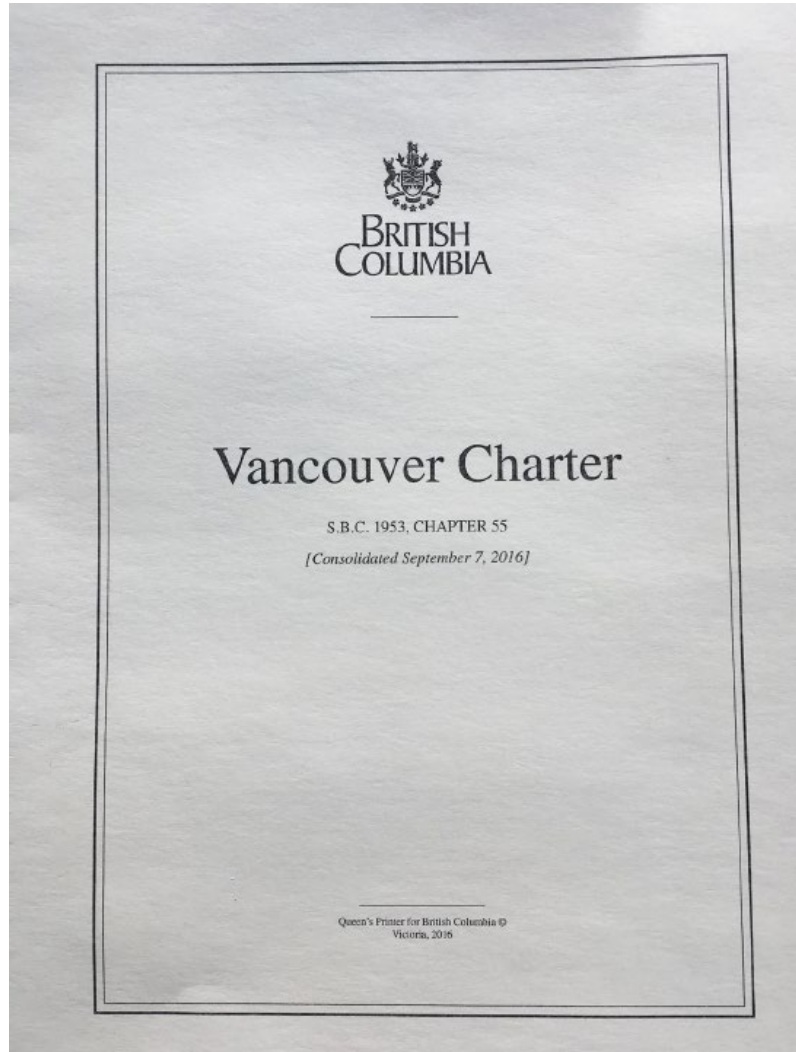
Canada has two main orders of government: federal and provincial. The third order, municipal, is created and administered by provincial governments. Different orders of government have unique powers and responsibilities:

## **Federal (Ottawa)**

- Direct/indirect taxation
- Census
- Defense
- Currency
- Crown-Indigenous relations
- Citizenship
- Criminal law
- Postal service
- Trade/commerce

## **Provincial (Victoria)**

- Provincial taxation
- Prisons
- Hospitals
- Municipalities
- Marriages
- Property and civil rights
- Civil/criminal justice
- Education
- Incorporation of companies
- Natural resources
- Social services



- The City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Park Board are incorporated and regulated by the *Vancouver Charter*, a provincial statute that governs how the City operates, what by-laws City Council can create, and how budgets are set.

The City of Vancouver has jurisdiction in the following areas. Please note, the list is not exhaustive:

- Public services and utilities
- Land use, planning, development
- Budget planning and approval
- Roads, sidewalks, public spaces
- Police and firefighters
- Parks
- Property taxes
- Committee, board, and commission appointments

- City Council is made up of a Mayor and 10 Councillors, who are elected “at-large” for a four-year term (meaning they represent all of Vancouver instead of specific neighbourhoods).
- City Council represents Vancouver residents in setting City directions and priorities.
- In addition to City Council, voters also elect 9 School Board Trustees and 7 Park Board Commissioners.

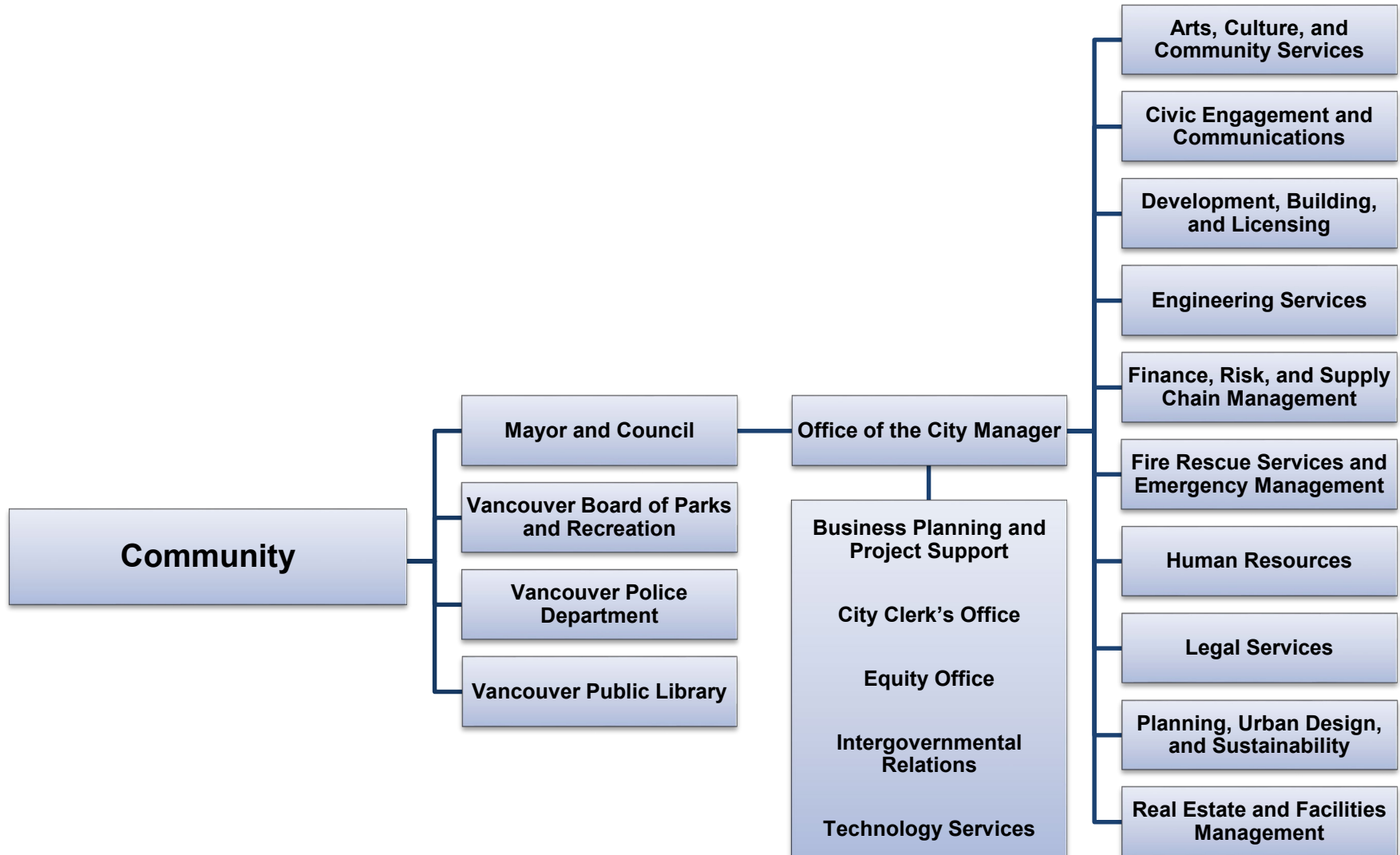
- The Coast Salish *hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓* and *skwxwú7mesh* speaking peoples, the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *səl̓ilwətaɁ / səl̓ilwítulh* (Tsleil-Waututh), also known as the “Host Nations,” have occupied these unceded lands since time immemorial. “Unceded” means that the land was never legally given up to the Crown through a treaty or other agreement.
- The Host Nations control the administration of their people, land, resources, and related programs and policies, through agreements with the federal and provincial governments.
- The City of Vancouver has a government-to-government relationship with each Host Nation.

- Vancouver also has the third largest Urban Indigenous population of any Canadian city (these are Indigenous peoples who live in a metropolitan area away from their traditional territories).
- The City's Reconciliation goals are to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the City of Vancouver, and to uphold and advance the rights of the Host Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples.
- On October 25, 2022, City Council received the report of the UNDRIP Task Force, beginning the process of implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in the City of Vancouver.

- The City of Vancouver is organized into Departments, all subject to the direction of Mayor and Council, and managed by the City Manager, supported by the City Leadership Team.
- See the next slide for an organizational chart and list of all City Departments, followed by slides describing each Department's responsibilities and activities.



# City Organization (continued)



## **Office of the City Manager**

- Reviews departmental programs, budgets, and initiatives.
- Provides strategic advice to Mayor and Council.
- Ensures directives are carried out efficiently and effectively.
- Directly manages several offices, including the City Clerk's Office, Equity Office, and Technology Services.

## **Arts, Culture, and Community Services**

- Develops policy frameworks related to cultural and social development, including responses to homelessness.
- Provides affordable housing, childcare spaces, social and wellness services and spaces, and arts and cultural services and spaces.
- Provides direct services to marginalized residents, and grants to non-profits and community organizations.

## **Civic Engagement and Communications**

- Provides communications and engagement planning and support for all City departments.
- Develops strategic external communications plans.
- Provides media relations support.

## **Development, Building, and Licensing**

- Ensures the quality and safety of buildings.
- Provides and enforces permits and licenses.
- Engages with developers, architects, small and large business owners, and residents.

## **Engineering Services**

- Responsible for public streets, sewer and water operations, transportation planning, zero waste and resource recovery, and major infrastructure.

## **Finance, Risk, and Supply Chain Management**

- Responsible for supply chain, accounting, treasury risk management, and financial planning and analysis.
- Leads the annual budget process.

## **Fire Rescue Services and Emergency Management**

- Provides fire suppression, pre-hospital care, vehicle rescue, marine response, hazardous materials response, technical rescue, and other emergency services.
- Coordinates emergency management initiatives and supports departments in emergency planning.
- Manages the Emergency Operations Centre.

## **Human Resources**

- Manages hiring, collective bargaining, compensation and benefits, career development, health and safety, retirement and pensions, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## **Legal Services**

- Ensures the City functions within its governing legal framework.
- Minimizes the City's exposure to liability and expense.
- Helps to ensure municipal government is constitutional, effective, and publicly accessible.

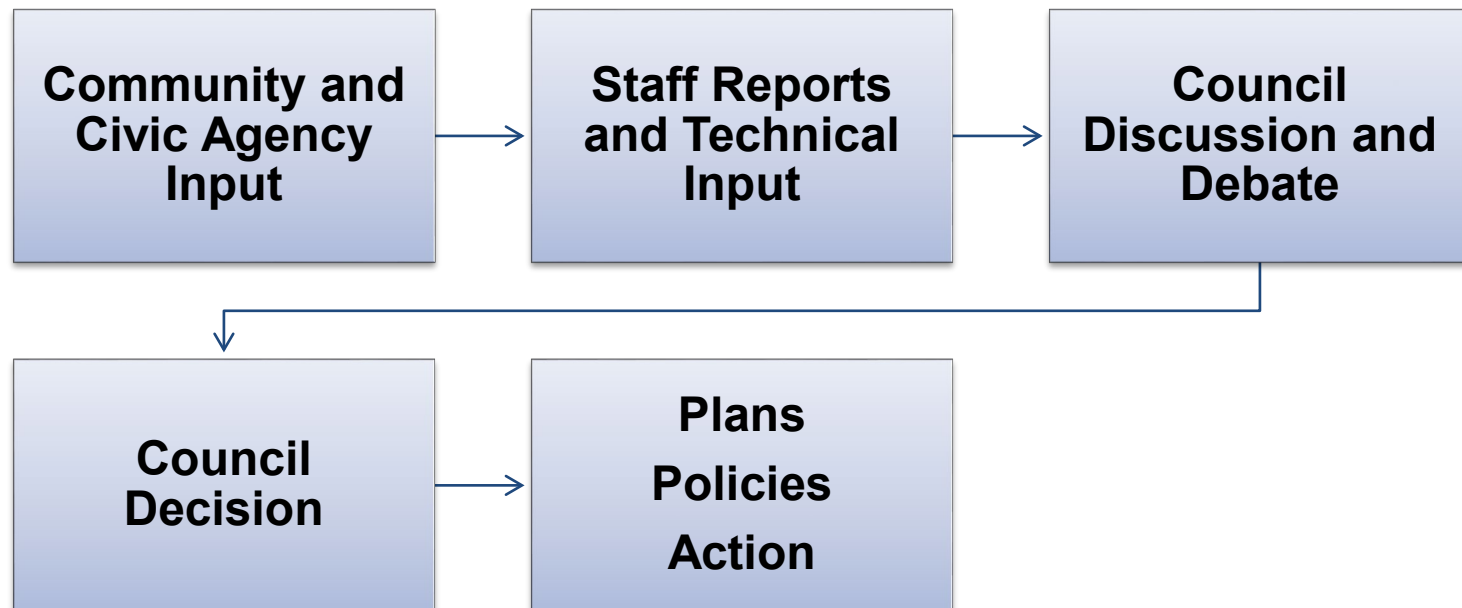
## **Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability**

- Creates plans, policies, and by-laws that guide the physical and economic development of the City.
- Approves development applications.
- Assists with numerous Civic Agencies related to planning matters (e.g., Urban Design Panel, Vancouver City Planning Commission, Vancouver Heritage Commission).

## **Real Estate and Facilities Management**

- Leads the safe, sustainable, and innovative stewardship of the City's properties and facilities.
- Provides lifecycle management and long-term portfolio planning for City-owned and City-leased property and building assets (e.g., community centres, theatres, libraries, fire halls, office spaces, non-market housing).

- Civic agencies help the City connect and build relationships with local communities, understand local interests, priorities, and concerns, and ensure decisions are well informed.
- Along with staff reports and other technical input, civic agency recommendations help to inform Council debate and decision-making, leading to plans, policies, and action.



- For an example of the decision-making process in action, we can look to the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee (UIPAC).
- After the declaration of Vancouver as a City of Reconciliation in 2013, UIPAC began advocating and advising that the City's commitment to Reconciliation include implementation of the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).
- In 2021, based on UIPAC's recommendations and input from other groups, Council voted to implement the principles, and formed an UNDRIP Task Force for this purpose, together with representatives of the Host Nations. UIPAC continues to advise on this vital work.

- For another example, in 2022 Council approved the first phase of a citywide Accessibility Strategy, to support the full participation of persons with disabilities by establishing and maintaining inclusive services, programs, and infrastructure, and by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers.
- The Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee were both instrumental in developing this Strategy, with members of both committees sitting on a designated Accessibility Task Force.
- Based on expertise and lived experience, these committees conveyed crucial insight and recommendations, which were reflected in the resulting Council report and approved as City policy.



- There are many policies and processes that operate across all City departments, but one worthy of note here is the Equity Framework. In all civic agency activities, members are encouraged to consider ways to improve and maintain Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI).
- The Equity Framework creates a unified vision and shared understanding of equity across City departments, and defines the City's orientation to this work.

- The Equity Framework defines equity in two ways:
  - As an outcome, it is the condition that would be achieved if one's identity no longer predicted how one fares.
  - As a process, it is the replacement of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes or fail to eliminate them.

- The City's equity commitments are as follows:
  1. We commit to doing equity work long term;
  2. We commit to creating spaces for accountable learning;
  3. We commit to reflecting equity in City leadership;
  4. We commit to fostering strong relationships;
  5. We commit to adequately resourcing equity work;
  6. We commit to shared accountability.

- To ensure that meetings and other civic agency activities are conducted in an equitable manner, it is important to keep several ideas and concepts in mind:
- **Equity vs. Equality**
  - Equality tries to achieve fairness by treating everyone the same, regardless of need, opportunity, and circumstances.
  - Equity tries to achieve fairness by treating people differently based on a context of need, opportunity, circumstances, and historical and structural inequities.
- **Colonialism**
  - The historical and present use of force to intimidate, manipulate, and physically remove Indigenous peoples from their lands and extinguish their cultures.
- **Supremacism**
  - The implicit or explicit assertion that one group of people is superior to others, or that one's value is a function of one's appearance or behavior (e.g., white supremacy; ableism; religious intolerance).

- **Privilege**

- Inherent advantage possessed by a person on the basis of traits like race, education, class, age, ability, gender, and sexual orientation.

- **Intersectionality**

- A lens used to examine how multiple forms of systemic discrimination, including racism, classism, homophobia, trans antagonism, ageism, and ableism create compounding negative impacts for people situated within these intersections.

- **Microaggression**

- Brief and subtle actions or remarks in everyday interactions that convey negative ideas or stereotypes (intentionally or unintentionally), about a group of people (usually an equity-deserving group).

- As part of our commitment to equity, the City of Vancouver has developed a series of videos in partnership with LightWork Co-Op, an organization focused on fostering justice and belonging through safer, inclusive, and more diverse work environments.
- The series consists of four videos, lasting approximately one hour overall, that will help further familiarize you with equity concepts and help you create civic agencies that are safe, respectful, and equitable.
- Links to each video will be provided to members via email. All members are encouraged to complete and reflect upon the videos.

- 1. How many elected officials make up Vancouver City Council?**
- A. 1 Mayor and 15 Councillors
- B. 7 Park Board Commissioners
- C. 338 Members of Parliament
- D. 1 Mayor and 10 Councillors

**2. Which of the following is a municipal jurisdiction?**

A. Property Taxes

B. Defense

C. Hospitals

D. Criminal Law



- 3. Which of the following is *not* a City of Vancouver department?**
- A. Engineering Services
  - B. Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability
  - C. Ministry of Finance
  - D. Arts, Culture, and Community Services

- 4. Which of the following is *not* a City of Vancouver equity commitment?**
- A. We commit to doing equity long term
  - B. We commit to treating everyone the same
  - C. We commit to reflecting equity in City leadership
  - D. We commit to adequately resourcing equity work

# Module No. 2 Quiz Answers

1. D

2. A

3. C

4. B

- Considering the mandate of your civic agency, which City departments do you think you will most likely work with over the course of your term? Which departments would you like to learn about, and are there any questions about specific initiatives or projects that your liaisons may be able to help with?

- Can you think of some ways that Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles can be incorporated into your work with your civic agency? What are some ways that you have seen JEDI incorporated into community, advisory, or other work in the past?

Module Complete