

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Citizens' Assembly?

A Citizens' Assembly is a representative body of citizens tasked by a government to study, deliberate and develop recommendations on a specific issue.

Typically, members of a Citizens' Assembly are randomly selected from among a pool of volunteers who pledge to work on behalf of all members of a community during a fixed term of less than one year. The Assembly's recommendations are generally developed by consensus and are intended to represent the best interests of the community.

Why have a Citizens' Assembly in Grandview-Woodland?

The City of Vancouver wants to strengthen the community's involvement in the creation of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.

In April 2012, the City of Vancouver began the process of creating a new Community Plan for the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood. In addition to extensive planning work, the process included consultations with residents and community organizations in Grandview-Woodland. When the City released its draft *Emerging Directions* in June 2013, there was concern with some of its proposals. The community asked for additional consultation opportunities to address these issues. City Council decided to create a Citizens' Assembly, an important, pioneering initiative that will put local residents at the centre of the planning process.

What will be the focus of the Citizens' Assembly?

The Citizens' Assembly will develop a final report outlining its recommendations for the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. The Assembly's final report will be presented to Vancouver City Council no later than June 30, 2015.

More specifically, the Assembly will develop:

- A shared 30-year vision describing the community's aspirations for Grandview-Woodland.
- A set of community values to guide neighbourhood change and growth in Grandview-Woodland.
- A set of recommendations for how the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan should address key community concerns and planning issues at a neighbourhood and sub-area scale. These recommendations will help to resolve concerns about the City's June 2013 *Emerging Directions* draft policy directions.

- A Neighbourhood Planning Map that will identify areas within Grandview-Woodland for growth, indicate preferred land-uses, and outline high-level built-form and building-height directions.

Why are the members of the Assembly randomly selected?

In 2005, British Columbia created the first Citizens' Assembly in Canada to examine the issue of electoral reform. 15,800 invitations were mailed to randomly identified British Columbians; 1441 volunteered to serve; and ultimately 161 were randomly selected to participate. Random selection has been used since 2005 to form Assemblies across Canada on a wide range of important issues.

Random selection is an important principle for any Citizens' Assembly because it provides a fair and unbiased way to select an Assembly's members. It helps ensure that the membership of an Assembly reflects the full diversity of thought and experience within the community.

What would be my role as a Citizens' Assembly member?

Over 10 Saturdays beginning in September 2014 and ending in April 2015, you and your fellow Citizens' Assembly members will learn about community planning and important neighbourhood issues from a variety of planning experts and community representatives. You will also consult with the broader community through three public roundtable meetings and receive reports from City-led community workshops.

You will then work with other Assembly members to reach broad agreement on your recommendations concerning the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.

How will members of the Citizens' Assembly be chosen?

All residents, business owners, and property owners in Grandview-Woodland are invited to volunteer to serve on the Citizens' Assembly until July 31, 2014. On August 6, 2014, the 48 members of the Citizens' Assembly will be selected via a random draw from the pool of registered volunteers.

We will ensure that this random draw selects:

- equal numbers of men and women;
- representative numbers of members from six neighbourhood zones;
- representative numbers of members from each age cohort; and,
- representative number of members who rent their home, own their home or reside in a co-op.

We are also asking volunteers to identify if they are Aboriginal to make certain we have representation from this community. In addition, we will reserve two seats on the Citizens' Assembly for business owners in Grandview-Woodland and one seat for a property owner who does not reside in the neighbourhood study area.

Who is eligible for the Citizens' Assembly?

To be a member of the Citizens' Assembly you must be 16 or over and be a resident, business owner, or property owner within the Grandview-Woodland study area.

Although all residents, business owners, or property owners may register as volunteers, only one volunteer per household or business address will be eligible for membership on the Citizens' Assembly. You do not need to be a Canadian citizen to participate.

Business owners and property owners who do not reside in the Grandview-Woodland study area may not transfer their eligibility to another person.

Employees of the City of Vancouver Planning Department, as well as elected municipal officials are ineligible to serve as Citizens' Assembly members.

How many people will be on the Citizens' Assembly?

The Citizens' Assembly will have 48 members. This is a big enough group to reflect the diversity of Grandview-Woodland, and yet also a small enough group to support friendly and effective deliberations.

What are the boundaries of the Grandview-Woodland study area?

For the purposes of the Citizens' Assembly, the Grandview-Woodland study area is defined as:

- West to Clark Drive (east side of street);
- East to Kamloops Street (west side of street);
- North to Burrard Inlet; and
- South to East 12th Ave (south side of the street between Clark and Lakewood), South to Grandview Highway (south side of the street between Lakewood and Nanaimo), and North Grandview Highway (south side of the street between Nanaimo and Kamloops).

What are the six neighbourhood zones?

Please see map below. These six neighbourhood zones do not correspond to any existing sub-communities in Grandview-Woodland. They were created to ensure that there would be a proportionate distribution of Assembly members across all areas of Grandview-Woodland.

How do I become a member of the Citizens' Assembly?

First, you must respond to this invitation no later than July 31, 2014. You can register over the phone at 1800 858-0435, online at grandview-woodland.ca, or by mail.

On August 6, 2014 members of the Citizens' Assembly will be randomly selected from among those who have registered as volunteers. At this time, candidates will need to show proof of residency, or business or property ownership, within the Grandview-Woodland study area.

I am unsure whether I can attend all 10 Saturday sessions, can I still volunteer?

It is very important that all members of the Citizens' Assembly attend each session. We realize, however, that this is a significant commitment. At minimum, members must be available to attend at least nine of the ten Saturday sessions. Please consider and confirm your ability to participate before applying.

Each Saturday session will run from 9am to 4pm, and the dates of the sessions are:

September 20, 2014	October 4, 2014	October 25, 2014
November 22, 2014	December 13, 2014	January 24, 2015
February 28, 2015	March 28, 2015	April 11, 2015
April 25, 2015		

I am not very familiar with neighbourhood issues—can I still be involved?

Absolutely. We do not expect you to have any specialized knowledge about the neighbourhood or community planning. Your perspective and experience as a resident, business owner, or property owner in Grandview-Woodland matters most. Staff and experts will be on hand to answer any questions you may have throughout the sessions.

Will I get paid to serve on the Assembly?

We are asking you to donate your time and volunteer as a member of the Assembly. There is no cost to participate. Lunches and snacks will be provided, and basic travel costs, including parking, will be reimbursed. Childcare and eldercare costs will also be provided as needed. However, we do not provide an honorarium or any additional compensation.

Will the Citizens' Assembly have translation services?

The Citizens' Assembly's sessions will be in English and simultaneous translation will not be available.

If you would like to be a member of the Citizens' Assembly, but are concerned about a potential barrier to participating please call 1 800 858-0435. We are committed to assisting all members of the Citizens' Assembly so that they can participate successfully.

If I do not get chosen for the Citizens' Assembly, can I still be involved?

Yes. You can contribute to the process by:

- Attending the three public roundtable meetings hosted by the Citizens' Assembly
- Attending the open sessions of the Citizens' Assembly
- Submitting ideas on the Citizens' Assembly website for the members of the Assembly to consider
- Following the progress of the Citizens' Assembly on its website
- Participating in City led sub-area workshops, which will report back to the Citizens' Assembly

What if I attend school or work in Grandview-Woodland, how can I participate?

Although you are not eligible to be a member of the Assembly, you are an important member of the Grandview-Woodland community and we encourage you to participate in the Citizens' Assembly process. Please see above for the different ways you can be involved.

If I am not a member of the Citizens' Assembly, can I attend Citizens' Assembly meetings?

Throughout the 10 meetings of the Citizens' Assembly there will be sessions that will be open to the broader community. These open sessions will take place during some of the learning portions of the Assembly. Community members will be able to listen and ask questions of speakers alongside Assembly members. However, to ensure that Assembly members are able to freely discuss and weigh difficult issues, not all Assembly meetings will be open to the public.

Who is designing and hosting the Citizens' Assembly?

Following a competitive tender, the City of Vancouver contracted MASS LBP, an independent specialist in the design and delivery of deliberative programs, to lead the Citizens' Assembly. MASS is responsible for the success and impartiality of the work of the Citizens' Assembly, and will form an Assembly Design Team, which will include the Chair, program staff, and Advisory Committee. The City of Vancouver is

funding the Citizens' Assembly and will provide planning and logistical support to the Assembly Design Team.

What is the role of the Chair of the Citizens' Assembly? How will the Chair be selected?

The Chair is an impartial guide for the Citizens' Assembly. It is the Chair's responsibility, with the support of the Assembly Design Team, to:

- Oversee a fair and representative member selection process.
- Develop a balanced learning program that involves residents, community organizations and experts to provide a range of perspectives.
- Support respectful dialogue and deliberation amongst members.
- Ensure that regular updates concerning the Assembly's proceedings are made publicly available.
- Provide opportunities to inform and convey perspectives from local residents and stakeholders to Assembly members.
- Produce and deliver a Final Report concerning the Assembly's activities and recommendations to City Council in Spring 2015.
- Exercise discretion in ensuring the integrity and sound conduct of the Assembly.

The Chair of the Citizens' Assembly will be an employee of MASS LBP and an expert in public deliberation and facilitation. The Chair is expected to remain neutral with regards to the recommendations or direction of the Citizens' Assembly.

What is the role of the Advisory Committee? How will the Advisory Committee be selected?

The role of the Advisory Committee is to provide guidance to the Chair and Assembly Design Team to ensure that the Assembly's curriculum is balanced and that the conduct of the Assembly is consistent with good democratic practices.

The members of the Advisory Committee will be selected by the Chair and will include representatives with expertise in deliberative processes and urban planning. The Advisory Committee will not comment on the recommendations made by the Citizens' Assembly.

How will the topics and the speakers of the Citizens' Assembly be chosen?

The topics and speakers for the Citizens' Assembly will be selected during the summer of 2014 by the Assembly design team. The Assembly design team will draw from previous community consultations conducted by the City of Vancouver and

community responses to the draft *Emerging Directions*. The Assembly design team will also be seeking input from the community on the curriculum on its website and through interviews with community members.

The Assembly design team will rely on the advice of the Advisory Committee made up of planning and process experts to ensure that it has developed a balanced curriculum for the Citizens' Assembly.

Will there be an opportunity for community groups to provide input to the Citizens' Assembly?

Community groups and organizations will be able to participate in the Public Roundtable meetings, and will also be invited to submit their ideas for the Citizens' Assembly's consideration on the Assembly's website. Community groups and organizations may also be invited to make presentations to the Citizens' Assembly.

An important note: the Citizens' Assembly is intended to be a gathering of residents, business owners and property owners who strive to represent the interests and perspectives of all members of the neighbourhood. Members of the Assembly who belong to local clubs, associations and committees are encouraged to volunteer but will not be recognized as official representatives of these groups.

How will the Citizens' Assembly represent all Grandview-Woodland residents, business owners and property owners?

Members of the Citizens' Assembly will not simply represent their individual interests or the interests of their particular community. Instead, members will be asked to represent the interests of all Grandview-Woodland residents, business owners, and property owners.

To ensure that members are able to consider the diverse perspectives of Grandview-Woodland, the Assembly design team will:

- Design a balanced curriculum that reflects the issues and concerns of the community
- Invite people from under-represented groups to speak to the Assembly
- Host focus groups for under-represented groups (such as youth or new immigrants)

What are the constraints on the Citizens' Assembly? Why do these constraints exist?

The Citizens' Assembly will be able to make any recommendations it chooses in its final report. However, for the Assembly's recommendations to be incorporated into the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan they must:

- Be broadly consistent with the City's planning principles and professional planning practices
- Take care not to contravene City policy, and
- Avoid placing an undue fiscal burden on the City or area residents.

Vancouver City Council will also have the final authority to accept, modify or reject specific recommendations from the Assembly at its discretion.

These constraints are in place to make clear to the Citizens' Assembly what can be feasibly included in the Grandview-Community Plan. In no way are these constraints intended to limit the discussions and deliberations of the Citizens' Assembly.

What is the Citizens' Assembly's role after it releases its final report?

The Citizens' Assembly will officially conclude after it presents its final report to City Vancouver Council.

Former Assembly members will be encouraged, like other residents in the community, to respond to the resulting draft of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. In particular, former Assembly members will be asked to respond to the draft Community Plan by completing an online survey. Results of this survey will be made public before the draft Community Plan is submitted for consideration to Vancouver City Council.