

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, May 14, 2026

TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

PLACE: Council Committee Room
Coquitlam City Hall
3000 Guildford Way
Coquitlam, BC

CALL TO ORDER AND TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 1. Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday, March 5, 2026**

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Multicultural Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday, March 5, 2026 be approved.

OLD BUSINESS

- 2. Canada Day 2026 (Verbal Update by Jenny Lush, Director Partnerships and Planning)**
7:05 - 7:20 p.m. (15 minutes)

NEW BUSINESS

- 3. Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership (Presentation by Abigail Cameron, Associate Program Director Strategic Initiatives and Development, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.)**
7:20 - 7:50 p.m. (30 minutes)
- 4. Departmental Staff Updates (Introductory Comments by Jenny Lush, Director Partnerships and Planning, and Victoria Elahi, Planner 1)**
7:50 - 8:10 p.m. (20 minutes)



5. Committee Members’ Roundtable / Emerging Issues (Standing Agenda Item)
8:10 – 8:40 p.m. (30 minutes)

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE – Thursday, July 23, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

MULTICULTURALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 5, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee convened on Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 7:01 p.m. in the Council Committee Room, City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC, with the following persons present:

**Indicates virtual attendance*

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Councillor Brent Asmundson, Chair
Councillor Matt Djonlic, Vice Chair
Tina Balachandran, Citizen Representative
Ann Johannes, Citizen Representative*
Nikki Kasravi, Citizen Representative*
Bita Rezaei, Citizen Representative
Bibi Singh, Citizen Representative
Lucie Wee, Citizen Representative

ABSENT: Parmis Bagher Zadeh, Citizen Representative (regrets)
Leo Chen, Citizen Representative
Carolina Echeverri, Citizen Representative (regrets)
Honore Gbedze, Citizen Representative (regrets)
Edgar Sanchez, Citizen Representative

STAFF: Heidi Hughes, Manager Tourism and Visitor Economy
Rebecca Laurie, Manager Civic Engagement
Chris Siddaway, Manager Community Partnerships and Policy
Victoria Elahi, Social Planner
Alex McLellan, Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER AND TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and provided an Indigenous territorial acknowledgement.

The Committee Clerk announced changes to improve access to City Hall for Committee meetings.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES**1. Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday, January 22, 2026**

The Minutes of the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee Meeting held on Thursday, January 22, 2026 were approved.

OLD BUSINESS**NEW BUSINESS****2. Festivals and Events Strategy Update**

The Manager Tourism and Visitor Economy gave a presentation entitled “Festivals and Events Strategy” and referred to slides contained in the Agenda package.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Suggestions to reflect cultural diversity and creativity in events by ensuring representation relative to demographic information, ensuring cultural groups are integrated in event planning, and promoting local artists.
- Suggestions to support a sense of belonging in events by encouraging “co-creation” and participation between cultural groups and generations to both celebrate unique cultures and provide integrative experiences based on a common theme such as music, food, art, or film.
- Suggestions to support a sense of belonging in events by identifying volunteers amongst newcomers through settlement and language-learning groups, and by providing information to newcomers at predictable points of contact such as the school district.
- Suggestion to increase the multicultural success of events through interactive activities that allow participants to engage directly with other cultures, and activities that promote communication and engagement between diverse persons, following the examples of Coquitlam’s Canada Day and Richmond’s Diversity Symposium.
- Suggestion to increase the multicultural success of events by promoting and presenting events in multiple languages.
- Suggestion to increase the multicultural success of events by creating a multicultural advisory table to help plan for coordination, cohesion, and integration of cultural festivals and events.
- Suggestions for services and supports for event planners including a clear checklist with key deadlines, training through a multicultural advisory table,

promotion through City social media and attendance of City officials, and funding.

In response to Committee discussion, staff noted the following:

- Staff hold pre-meetings with festival and event planners using outdoor spaces and event planners have access to a special events coordinator for support in permitting.
- The Festival Planners Network meets a few times a year and includes staff from the City, event planners, suppliers, and vendors to share information about event sites, permitting, and funding.
- The City hosts a central calendar online where events can be submitted, and, while this is populated by the City where events are permitted, the onus is on event organizers to submit in most cases; the City also hosts a Tourism Coquitlam website with a specific events calendar and other promotional information.
- The Community Services department has a volunteer services team that hosts an application and screening process and posts volunteer opportunities.

3. Departmental Staff Updates

The Chair introduced the Manager Community Partnerships and Policy as a staff liaison to the Committee for this year.

The Manager Community Partnerships and Policy gave a verbal update regarding organizational changes in the City. The former *Parks, Recreation, Culture, and Facilities* department has been reorganized into two departments, *Community Services* and *Parks and Capital Projects*, respectively. Regular department updates from *Community Services* will be provided to the Committee meetings going forward.

The Manager Community Partnerships and Policy and the Social Planner gave a verbal update regarding the Welcome to Coquitlam event, which will be held again this year after being interrupted for a number of years. Previously, this was an open house style event in City Hall with tables representing City departments and community organizations. The direction for the event this year is to be focused, easy to navigate, inclusive, and interactive. The primary audience will be newcomers to Coquitlam with a focus on newcomers to Canada.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Suggestion to have staff or volunteers with proficiency in common newcomer languages available to support and encourage participants to engage widely in the event.

- Suggestion to provide brief biographies of Councillors to increase relatability and approachability.
- Suggestion to explain the roles of Council and Councillors because they may be different from that of newcomers' countries of origin, with a focus on promoting the openness and accessibility of local government.
- Suggestion to focus information on City services related to daily life such as waste management, finance, wildlife, and community events.
- Suggestion to focus information on City and other services related to safety such as RCMP, Fire and Safety, Emergency Management, and health and mental health services.
- Suggestion that the event would be best held on a weekend to avoid school and work conflicts, particularly Saturday morning; otherwise, a weekday late afternoon would be reasonably accessible.

The Social Planner gave a verbal update on the Work Plan. The Festivals and Events Strategy was addressed at this meeting, as was the Welcome to Coquitlam event, which will be discussed further at the next meeting. The draft Accessibility and Inclusion Plan and the Canada Day event will be discussed at the next meeting. The Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership will present at the July or September meeting. The Emergency and Disaster Management Act Implementation Strategy is awaiting the selection of a consultant before determining Committee input. Coordination is underway with staff to determine whether the Talent and Retention Strategy may be brought to the Committee this year.

4. Canada Day 2026

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

5. Committee Members' Roundtable / Multicultural Communities and Emerging Issues (Standing Agenda Item)

The Chair invited Committee members to share emerging issues and information regarding events occurring in their communities.

Discussion ensued relative to the following:

- Report of a successful Indian art and dance performance at the Evergreen Cultural Centre with a large and multicultural audience, which demonstrated growth in cultural participation and belonging as supported by the Centre and by the Indus arts and culture community through respect and patience.
- Offer by a cultural events organizer to collaborate with City events to make cultural dance programming accessible to the public.
- Report of a Nowruz event at the Library City Centre branch on March 14.

- Suggestion that Nowruz event organizers and participants should be mindful of conflicting feelings within the Iranian community due to conflict in that region.

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING DATE – Thursday, May 14, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

MINUTES CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Councillor Brent Asmundson, Chair

Alex McLellan, Committee Clerk

Emerging Immigrant Needs

City of Coquitlam Multicultural Advisory Committee

May 14, 2026



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Land Acknowledgement



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We acknowledge that our work takes place on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Kwkwetlem First Nation and lies within the shared territories of the Tsleil- Waututh, Katzie, Qayqayt, Musqueam, Squamish and Sto':lo Nations



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About the Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership

- Multi-sectoral collaborative
- Foster welcoming and inclusive communities to improve immigrant outcomes through:
 - Community & Partner Engagement
 - Capacity Building
 - Collaboration
- Strategic Priorities:
 - Immigrant Labour Market Integration
 - Access & Navigation of Community Resources
 - Social and Civic Inclusion of Newcomers



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Policy Changes & Impacts to Immigrant Settlement



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Recent Policy Changes

- IRCC announced reduction to immigration levels from 2025- 2028: funding of settlement services linked to immigration levels
- IRCC to identify \$100 million of savings between 2025-2028
 - Stage 2 Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes reduced and no longer funded by Fall 2026
 - Eligibility for settlement services reduced for economic immigrants and dependents to 6 years and will be further reduced to 5 years in 2027
 - Introduction of co-payment for supplemental health products and services for those using the Interim Federal Health Program (for refugee claimants, protected person, resettled refugees) as of May 2026



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Impacts to Newcomers & Communities

Policy Change	Community Impact
Reduced and unfunded Stage 2 LINC classes	<p>Reduced capacity to improve English language proficiency to support meaningful economic integration</p> <p>Fee-based Intermediate English classes available</p>
Reduced eligibility for settlement services for economic immigrants & dependents	<p>Reduced settlement services funding</p> <p>Limited mainstream community service capacity</p> <p>Risk of dependents with more complex needs not receiving timely and accessible supports</p>
Introduction of co-payment for healthcare supplemental services for refugees and refugee claimants	<p>Prescription medication, vision and dental care and counselling services are costly services that are most needed</p> <p>Highest risk of not accessing care due to cost: higher likelihood of underemployment rate</p>

Community Consultations



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Summary

- 5 Community Consultations across Tri-Cities
 - City of Port Moody Seniors Try-It Week: 22 seniors engaged (95% were immigrants)
 - Tri-Cities Volunteer Fair in Port Coquitlam: over 30 youth and seniors engaged (70% were immigrants/ racialized)
 - Film Screening & Dialogue with Coquitlam Public Library: 22 residents were engaged (85% were racialized)
 - Coquitlam Focus Group: 8 newcomers were engaged (100% were racialized)
 - Virtual Mature Workers Focus Group: 10 participants aged 55+ were engaged
- Used community development-based approaches to engage individuals in identifying needs



Focus Groups applied community-based research protocols

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Findings

Employment

- ◀ More networking opportunities and connections with employers needed
- ◀ Education, health, tech sectors identified as areas of interest
- ◀ Mature workers experience discrimination in employment despite updated training and demonstrated skills and experience
- ◀ Need to engage employers in inclusive workplace practices

Access to Community Information

- ◀ Identified need to understand Canadian systems (e.g. education, healthcare, governments)
- ◀ Need for welcoming community spaces for seniors to engage in activities (e.g. music, arts, games)
- ◀ Accessible infrastructure to support seniors to participate in the community (e.g. benches around trails)



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Findings (continued)

Social & Civic Inclusion

- ◀ Awareness of volunteer opportunities- particularly for youth and newcomers
- ◀ Community education on anti-racism and inclusion
- ◀ Need for more social opportunities for newcomers to create meaningful connections with established residents



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Our Action Plan



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Priority 1: Immigrant Labour Market Integration

- Employment Forum to be planned for October 2026
- Forum Goals:
 1. Create opportunities for newcomers to connect with employers and gain increased professional connections and apply labour market strategies learned.
 2. Access employment-related services that would support newcomers' employment needs.
- Challenge: economic uncertainty and identifying employers hiring immigrant talent



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Priority 2: Access to Community Services

- Promote community events (e.g. Welcome to Coquitlam) and feature community resources on our communications platforms
- Develop Information Sheets on navigating local systems (e.g. education, healthcare, municipal)



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Priority 3: Social & Civic Inclusion of Newcomers

- Identify opportunities to improve civic inclusion of newcomers in the Tri-Cities (funding dependent)
- Tri-Cities Intergenerational Belonging Project: scaling Coquitlam Public Library's Holiday Hellos initiative to other Tri-Cities municipalities- support in engaging immigrant youth to participate
- Organize community education activities on anti-racism, equity and inclusion (funding dependent)

Our 3 Year Community Action Plan is on our website: [Priorities & Projects | TCLIP Website](#)



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Your Voice Matters

Share your ideas on the Employment Forum

- What would be important to include?
- What key considerations should be put in place?

Thoughts on the 3 Year Action Plan

- What excites you?
- What are we missing?



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Thank You

Nothing about us without us

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