

**City of Coquitlam**  
**Multiculturalism Strategy and Action Plan**

**July 18, 2011**



Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada

**Coquitlam**

## **Acknowledgements**

This project was made possible by a grant from Citizenship and Immigration Canada along with matching funds from the City of Coquitlam. Mayor and Council supported the development of the Multicultural Strategy and Action Plan through their leadership and participation in the project activities, committees, and advisory groups.

Community leaders and organizations provided their input and direction in shaping the vision, goals, objectives and strategies of the plan. Development of the Multicultural Strategy and Action Plan also involved Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee, whose understanding of the community and commitment to multiculturalism in Coquitlam shaped both the overall direction as well as specific actions within the plan. Development of the plan was also guided and shaped by the experiences, opinions and statements of many immigrants, established residents and staff who willingly shared their experiences and views for enhancing Coquitlam as a welcoming and inclusive community. The plan is infused with their expertise and experience and their ability to identify and build the supports required by a culturally diverse community.

**Introduction**

Cultural diversity has been a longstanding hallmark of the Coquitlam community, beginning with the First Nations people and followed by the early settlements at Fraser Mills and Maillardville. With nearly 40% of Coquitlam's current population born outside of Canada and at least 37 different first languages spoken in the homes of residents, the ability to effectively deal with a multicultural population is a key component of how the City of Coquitlam does business.

Multicultural linkages enrich our community and offer opportunities to create new connections. Communities that are best able to create a welcoming and inclusive environment will be positioned to receive new populations and investment and create rich, harmonious environments that value difference.

With the assistance of a matching grant from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Coquitlam has prepared the Multiculturalism Strategy and Action Plan (the Strategy) to guide the organization in adapting business practices and refining approaches to respond to an increasingly culturally diverse community. It is acknowledged that the City is only one partner in responding to multiculturalism and that senior governments need to take the lead in establishing necessary legislation and guidelines and in providing appropriate resources in this area.

**Background**

To develop the Strategy, project work was divided into three phases:

- Phase 1 – “Taking Stock”;
- Phase 2 – “Development of Community Vision”; and
- Phase 3 – “Strategy and Action Plan Development”.

Phase 1 - “Taking Stock” exercise involved reviewing the City's historical and current activities and strategies related to multiculturalism and diversity, providing an overview of key demographic trends and facts and identifying all currently delivered programs and services specifically designed for new immigrants and refugees within Coquitlam. This information was published in a “Guide to Programs and Services for Newcomers to Coquitlam” on the City's website.

Phase 2 - “Development of Community Vision” focused on gathering input from City representatives, a Project Advisory Group comprised of key community stakeholders, the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee comprised of residents and from focus groups with recent immigrants to develop a united and agreed-upon Vision Statement and Goals to inform the development of the Strategy. Also included in this phase was a survey of City staff which provided an understanding of staff's perceptions regarding existing multicultural policies, practices and behaviours at City Hall and within the broader Coquitlam community.

Phase 3 - “Strategy and Action Plan Development” involved the City's Project Team composed of City staff and the Project Advisory Group working through a strategic planning process that informed the development of the Strategy, with input from the Project Advisory Group and the Multiculturalism Advisory Committee.

## Strategy

This Strategy is designed to improve and refine municipal practices to be more welcoming and inclusive of the many cultural backgrounds that are represented in the Coquitlam community. It is intended to add a “cultural diversity lens” that takes into account the needs and opportunities presented by an increasingly culturally-diverse community in the day-to-day practices of the organization. As such, many of the actions in the Strategy will be incorporated into existing City practice and will not require significant new resources.

The Strategy is guided by a vision and is organized into three themes that are supported by corresponding goals, objectives and actions. The process of creating the Strategy in itself generated change within the day-to-day practices of the organization and builds on practices already in place to connect and serve our culturally diverse community. A two-year plan of action, which includes some actions that are already part of departmental work programs, is outlined.

The Strategy focuses on key strategic opportunities in creating change within the organization. The actions are identified as ‘A’, ‘B’ or ‘C’ priorities according to their potential to create positive change, the resources required to implement, and the ease with which each action might be achieved.

## Our Vision

***The City of Coquitlam values cultural diversity and will lead in the growth of Coquitlam as a welcoming and inclusive community.***

### Themes:

Through this Multiculturalism Strategy and Action Plan, Coquitlam will:

**1. Communicate our diversity**

Coquitlam will communicate our City’s diversity to community, internal (staff) and external audiences with the goal of improving understanding of diversity, advancing staff competencies in relation to serving a diverse public and reflecting our multicultural community.

**2. Connect with our diverse community**

As a community that values and celebrates diversity, the City will seek ways in which to connect diverse communities and build on social, recreational and economic opportunities that arise from these valued connections. These connections take place within our City boundaries, but also reach back to the communities of origin of our citizens.

**3. Include our diverse community in the life of the City**

Through various avenues, including community committees, programs, services and resources, Coquitlam will strive to be a City that is inclusive and that values diversity as a key component of our identity.

**Theme 1: Communicating Our Diversity**

**Goal 1 – In partnership with the community, the City will ensure that the cultural diversity of Coquitlam is communicated, respected and reflected within all City staff, services, departments and divisions.**

**Objectives:**

- Reflect the value of diversity in internal and external communications.
- Improve staff competencies related to culturally diversity and multiculturalism.
- Raise awareness of cultural diversity for all departments and staff.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
A	As part of the update to the City's website, explore ways to highlight the City's increasing diversity	Corporate Communications	2011
A	Organize "Diversity in Community Engagement/Public Participation" workshop for staff	Community Planning/Human Resources	2011
B	Undertake ongoing updates to the City's photo library for use in marketing materials	Corporate Communications	Ongoing
B	Include relevant community and cultural demographic information in City Hall visit materials and inform community service agencies about City Hall visits	City Clerk's Office/Community Planning	Ongoing
C	Partner with local service agencies to host cultural competency sessions for staff about emerging ethnic communities (e.g. Korean and Farsi)	Community Planning/Human Resources	2012

**Goal 2 - In partnership with the community, the City will distinguish Coquitlam as a culturally diverse community.**

**Objectives**

- Market, promote and communicate Coquitlam's cultural diversity to the public.
- Broaden communication channels in the community.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
A	Through various communication platforms build an understanding of the economic benefits of and the business case for cultural diversity	Economic Development	Ongoing
B	Continue to reflect Coquitlam's cultural diversity in all City documents and Open House display material	Corporate Communications	Ongoing
C	Explore ways to incorporate permanent and temporary installations (public art, banners, displays) related to cultural diversity and welcome messages at City Hall facilities	Corporate Communications	Ongoing

**Theme 2: Connecting with our Diverse Community**

**Goal 3 - In partnership with the community, the City will raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism to increase the community’s capacity to be welcoming and inclusive**

**Objectives:**

- Market the value of cultural diversity as a core value, diversity initiatives and benefits to the City organization and the community.
- Harness the potential of Coquitlam’s culturally diverse communities and drive opportunities for increased trade and investment.
- Work with ethnic communities and community agencies to bridge the gap between individual ethnic communities and the community-at-large.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
A	Continue to build on the third pillar of the City’s Economic Action Plan 2009 - “Build on our Cultural Diversity to Create Trade and Investment Opportunities”	<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
A	Develop coordinated City contact list for cultural and new immigrant groups	<i>Community Planning</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
A	As a component of the City’s Customer Service Initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a survey to identify training needs</li> <li>• Based on survey results:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ develop diversity training needs for all staff;</li> <li>○ hold training sessions focused on cultural sensitivity awareness in recruiting processes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Completed</i>  <i>Ongoing</i>  <i>2012</i>
B	Research ways of improving recruitment processes to encourage applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>2012</i>
B	Continue to strengthen relationships with ethnic media	<i>Corporate Communications</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
B	Utilize annual City Manager’s “Roadshow” as a key opportunity to provide information and promote cultural diversity	<i>Corporate Planning</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
B	Assess translation needs of the community on an ongoing basis	<i>Corporate Communications</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
B	Maintain and promote City language bank	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
B	Organize sessions to provide staff with ongoing educational opportunities to raise awareness on the business and operational implications of Coquitlam’s growing diversity	<i>Economic Development/ Human Resources</i>	<i>2012</i>
C	Maintain (through a biannual review) and promote the Guide to Programs and Services for Newcomers to Coquitlam.	<i>Community Planning in partnership with Coquitlam Public Library</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
C	Work with local festival and event producers to explore opportunities to provide information on Coquitlam's diversity and related resources at local cultural festivals and celebrations	<i>Parks, Recreation and Culture</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
C	Include community demographic data and information related to ethnicity and language in staff orientation practices and materials	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>2011</i>
C	Review the City's "Residents' Guide to Coquitlam Municipal Services" to ensure that it uses plain language.	<i>Corporate Communications</i>	<i>2011</i>
C	Take advantage of existing opportunities and community partnerships to build understanding and capacity in the community e.g. City's Leadership Speaker series to present speakers on cultural diversity issues	<i>Corporate Planning</i>	<i>2012</i>

**Theme 3: Including Our Diverse Community in the Life of the City**

***Goal 4 - In partnership with the community, the City will encourage civic engagement and participation of Coquitlam's culturally diverse population by increasing awareness and understanding of the City's roles, functions and services.***

**Objectives:**

- Work to reduce barriers to residents' abilities to access information on City services.
- Continue to promote and recruit culturally diverse representation for all City Advisory Committees.
- Strive to ensure that all community engagement processes are inclusive and reflective of the community.
- Raise awareness among diverse cultural groups of employment opportunities with the City.

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
A	Continue to ensure that positions within the City are advertised in a way that reaches different cultural communities in Coquitlam e.g. through local service agencies, City's website and ethnic media	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
A	Integrate the Multiculturalism Policy into the 2014-2016 Corporate Strategic Plan.	<i>Corporate Planning</i>	<i>2012</i>
B	Continue to encourage cultural diversity on Council's Advisory Committees	<i>City Clerks</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
C	Continue to encourage and support staff celebration of their cultures through the Wellness Program	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
C	Promote, raise awareness and provide resources for internal "career planning" services through Human Resources	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>2011</i>
C	Expand the City's Mentoring Program to include a cultural diversity/workplace culture component for new staff	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>2012</i>

**Goal 5 - In partnership with the community, the City will support the participation and belonging of Coquitlam’s culturally diverse population by developing and/or promoting programs, services and resources.**

**Objective:**

- Establish and sustain ongoing collaborative relations with community stakeholders.

Priority	Recommended Actions	Department	Timelines
B	Work with local community service agencies/providers to share information on new City programs, services and initiatives.	<i>Parks, Recreation and Culture/Planning and Development/City Clerks/Corporate Planning</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
B	Host the 2011 Welcome Event to inform and educate Coquitlam’s new immigrant population about involvement in local government including providing information on career opportunities, participating on committees and electoral processes	<i>Corporate Initiative – all Departments</i>	<i>2011</i>

**Resourcing**

The focus of the Strategy is on practical, achievable steps to that create a “cultural diversity lens” in order to stimulate change throughout the organization without the need for significant new resources. As part of its work program in 2011-2013, Community Planning will coordinate and work with departmental representatives to implement the Strategy. Staff resourcing requirements from each department are expected to be moderate, although some of the proposed actions require resourcing for consulting services. Actions requiring additional resourcing scheduled for 2011 (including the Welcome Event for new and recent immigrants planned for September 2011) will be funded out of the City’s contribution under the matching grant agreement with CIC. These funds were set aside in 2008. Actions scheduled for 2012 will require a moderate budget request.

**Progress Reporting**

Annual implementation progress reports will be completed at in mid-2012 and mid-2013 Community Planning and presented to Council.

**Conclusion**

The Multiculturalism Strategy and Action Plan will enable the City to increase its cultural competence by emphasizing the continuous process of shared learning, communicating, and understanding cultural strengths in both the City organization and broader Coquitlam community. Through the implementation of the Strategy, the City will demonstrate an ongoing commitment to enhancing its programs and services to serve a continually evolving and highly diverse community.