

# Vancouver and District Labour Council

## Strategic Plan 2021-2022

### Our Priorities

The strategic priority areas of work of our Labour Council during the current two-year term will be political action, labour education, and supporting affiliates and workers. Each of these areas represent a basket of activities which, in themselves, include higher and lower priority tasks.

### **Political Action**

In the realm of political action the top priority of our Labour Council in this term is the 2022 municipal election. We will work to ensure progressive majority governments at every level and in each municipality within our district. These majorities must be composed of worker-friendly politicians who will be prepared to work cooperatively with one another on a bold progressive agenda which include tackling the housing crisis, opioid crisis, and a just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The top priority municipality for this work will be the City of Vancouver, with the City of Richmond, City of North Vancouver, and District of North Vancouver being other high priorities.

Part of this work will include a new, strengthened endorsement process. This will include revisions to our candidate survey and how/when we conduct interviews. It will also put greater focus on commitments around specific policies and consequences for failing to follow through. Finally, the amended process will include early review and re-endorsement of incumbents, followed by endorsements of new candidates. This will strengthen accountability, generate early media attention for our work, and somewhat simplify the endorsement of new candidates.

The endorsement process will be followed by a robust VDLC-led labour campaign to support our endorsed candidates and get out the vote. This campaign will utilize paid organizers and mobilize volunteers to carry out campaign activities.

The second major priority in the realm of political action will be building engaging in municipal politics on a more regular and proactive basis. This will include continued work to build our capacity to remain on top of municipal event and respond to motions of interest. Our Municipal Engagement Committee will lead this work, and its Housing Action Team will focus on housing-related issues as one of the key areas of municipal political action. Another ongoing area of focus will be supporting efforts to address the opioid crisis.

Our political action work will include participation in the coming Federal Election. The VDLC will endorse the candidates of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the election and will focus on the re-election on incumbent NDP MP's while also looking to support the election of new MP's. Potential target ridings include Burnaby North-Seymour (in conjunction with the New Westminster and District Labour Council), and Vancouver Centre. Our Federal Election work will also be guided by the strategic direction of the CLC.

Additional political action activities will include support for Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) campaigns (e.g., Forward Together), and engaging around political actions provincially and federally in conjunction with the CLC and the BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) respectively.

## **Labour Education**

Our Labour Education Program has become one of the greatest success stories of our Labour Council in recent history. Formed under the leadership of our previous president, Joey Hartman, the program has grown steadily year after year and has become known across the country. It has become an important source of accessible, affordable, worker-focused, high quality labour education. It has also come to provide an important revenue stream during difficult times brought on by disaffiliations from the CLC, the pandemic, and decreased density in our district caused by the affordability crisis.

We will continue to expand the Labour Education Program over the next two years, adding additional courses and working hard to promote them broadly so as to encourage participation from our region and beyond.

Following the lifting of restrictions on in-person gatherings, we will continue to utilize Zoom for many courses, while trying hybrid options where appropriate and returning to the classroom for specific courses that benefit tangibly from that setting. Online courses have proven to improve registration numbers, enhance accessibility, and reduce costs. These benefits have not been offset by any substantial difficulties or concerns that would dissuade us from continuing to utilize Zoom going forward.

Two courses that have been identified for potential addition to the program during this term are anti-racism, and retirement.

## **Supporting Affiliates and Workers**

Our third and final priority area of work is also our broadest. Supporting affiliates and workers includes standing in solidarity with striking or locked out workers, supporting campaigns or initiatives of our affiliates, the CLC, BCFED, or other Labour Council's, and fighting or reforms that will benefit all workers (e.g., paid sick days, Employment Standards Act improvements, Workers Compensation Board reform, Labour Code reform, etc.)

Much of this work is ad hoc in that it arises for a period of time, and our engagement continues until the campaign or issue concludes. Generally, we have little control over what these issues will be but can scale our activity around them based on our capacity.

This work also includes the facilitation of Joint Union Committees, which is a practice we have started in the past two years. Both our YVR Joint Union Committee and our Downtown Eastside Joint Union Committee have been very successful in bringing affiliates together to do work on common issues. They have also succeeded in building important relationships with decision makers and ensuring that workers' voices are heard and considered in decision making processes. This work demonstrates a direct benefit of Labour Council participation to affiliates and to unions we seek to recruit to our Labour Council.

## **Our Other Work**

### **Meetings**

We will continue to hold our Executive Board and Regular Meetings per our usual schedule. We will invite up to one guest speaker per meeting. Proposed guests for 2021 outlined in the attached sheet. We will continue not to schedule educational sessions until such time that we can once again meet in person.

We will continue to welcome rank and file members and other guests but will tighten up our practices around granting voice to non-delegates. We will grant standing voice to the Director of the United Way of the Lower Mainland Labour Participation Department for the purposes of delivering a report.

In addition to this, we will also look at other methods of expediting the business of meetings including ensuring the proper use of New Business and Good and Welfare.

Following the lifting of restrictions on public gatherings we will review our current practice of meeting via Zoom and consider alternating between Zoom and in-person meetings, and/or hybrid meetings.

### **Days to Acknowledge**

Over the course of this term we will acknowledge the following dates:

February	Black History Month
February 14	Women's Memorial March
February 24 <sup>th</sup>	Pink Shirt Day
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	International Women's Day
March 21 <sup>st</sup>	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Day of Mourning
May	Asian Heritage Month
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	May Day
June	National Indigenous History Month
June (third week of)	National Public Service Week
June 21 <sup>st</sup>	National Indigenous Peoples Day
June 27 <sup>th</sup>	Canadian Multiculturalism Day
July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Canada Day
July (various)	Pride events
September 6 <sup>th</sup>	Labour Day
September 30 <sup>th</sup>	Orange Shirt Day
October 18 <sup>th</sup>	Persons Day
November 11 <sup>th</sup>	Remembrance Day
December 1 <sup>st</sup>	World AIDS Day
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
December 6 <sup>th</sup>	National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	Human Rights Day

At minimum, each of these dates will be acknowledged through a social media post and/or the sharing of CLC materials. Some dates will be further acknowledged through guest speakers at regular meetings (see attached). Other dates will be acknowledged through events or other activities, including:

Black History Month	Support NWDLC event
International Women's Day	Host event (Women's Committee)
Day of Mourning	Co-host event with BCFED/WCB/BCBC
May Day	Host event or activity
Pride Day	Participate in Multi-Union Pride
Labour Day	Host event, potentially in conjunction with NWDLC

Remembrance Day  
December 6<sup>th</sup>

Lay wreath at North Shore ceremony  
Support NWDLC event

### **Committees**

We will continue to work to strengthen the capacity of our committees to carry out Labour Council work. We will also review committee appointments annually.

Our current committees are as follows:

Anti-Racism: Works to oppose systemic racism and build an anti-racist labour movement.

Education: Coordinates the labour council's educational programs.

Housing Action Team: Working group of the Municipal Engagement Committee dedicated to advocating around issues of affordable housing and tenant rights.

Municipal Engagement Committee: Identifies and mobilizes around issues affecting working people at the municipal level.

Political Action: Coordinates the vetting and endorsement process and campaign strategy for municipal elections and participates in lobbying.

Solidarity in Action: Provides support for workers and unions engaged in labour disputes.

Women's: This women-only committee organizes an annual International Women's Day Dinner and offers educational programs for women.

Young Workers: Brings together young workers (30 years and under) for education, discussion, and support to develop skills, and gain experience in labour activism.

### **Media & Digital Presence**

We will continue to focus on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as our primary social media platforms, with an aim to further build our online following. We also have a YouTube channel; however, this has only been used for hosting digital event recordings to-date. We will continue to introduce more memes and graphics as these have shown to garner the most engagement.

Our website is in good shape, but we look forward to the additional of new tools during this term. These should include the ability to register people for events and courses on our website rather than using EventBrite, and the introduction of NewMode for the purpose of digital campaigning and list building.

In terms of traditional media, we will continue to work to improve the frequency of earned media. Municipal elections will be a great opportunity for this, but we will also look at other opportunities and consider this more when looking at the motions we adopt each month. We will also look to develop relationships with a handful of reporters rather than relying on an indirect approach of merely sending a media advisory to a list of outlets.

### **Other Activities**

Additional organizations, coalitions, and activities that our Labour Council engages with include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Adopt an Organizer Program

- BC Employment Standards Coalition
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition
- International solidarity
- New Affiliate Recruitment
- Queen Alexandra Elementary School Wishing Tree
- Support for marginalized members of our community
- Trade Unions for Energy Democracy
- Union Protein Project
- United Way
- Worker Education and Labour Learning Society

### Conclusion

The 2021-2022 term will be a busy one, with many important and challenging tasks. Perhaps the largest and most crucial will be our work in the 2022 municipal election. But we will not be afforded the opportunity to put everything else on hold in order to carry out that work. All of our strategic priorities are heavily time-consuming and yet absolutely crucial.

This makes building our capacity to do more absolutely fundamental to our success. To achieve this, Executive Board members must provide active leadership to ensure that our committees are strong and functional, and our activist base grows.

We should continue the discussion of our strategic priorities on a regular basis through our Executive Board meetings and check in on our work to ensure we are on the right track.

Through successful work on our strategic priorities, we will make a meaningful and lasting impact on not only our Labour Council, but our movement and our communities.