



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Westminster Residents to Receive Proposed Land Use Change Notifications

Residents of New Westminster will now have the option of being automatically notified online about proposed land-use changes within their immediate area.

The City of New Westminster recently launched its [open data website](#) providing residents and businesses with better access to a wealth of information and data sets. Vancouver-based startup [PlaceSpeak](#) is making the city's data about development applications easier to access by monitoring changes and delivering relevant updates to nearby residents.

Registered PlaceSpeak users will receive notifications directly in their inbox about projects that are planned for their neighbourhood, ensuring that they are well-informed and properly engaged in the decision-making process.

Free, open and user-driven access to public information is an important foundation for local governments who seek to deepen and broaden citizen engagement in their communities.

“The City of New Westminster’s Open Data website underscores our commitment to open and transparent government,” said Mayor Jonathan X. Coté. “This new tool developed by PlaceSpeak for their users is a perfect example of how the City’s data can be used by others to inform and engage on initiatives that impact the community.”

In 2014, [Open Data BC](#) conducted a survey of the the [10 Most Wanted Municipal Datasets in Canada](#). Based on the results, PlaceSpeak focused its efforts on three of those datasets namely: 1. Rezoning permit applications; 2. Land use changes, and; 3. Development permit applications. PlaceSpeak has initially prioritized these datasets, but plans to add other types of notifications for delivery to residents according to their location and preferences.

Receiving land-use change notifications from PlaceSpeak is only the first step. Users who wish to engage further with New Westminster’s growing PlaceSpeak online community can opt to receive updates on specific projects, or post comments and participate on an online noticeboard.

“Keeping residents informed is the first step toward a more engaged community,” said Colleen Hardwick, founder and CEO of PlaceSpeak. “People are always complaining that they have not been notified or consulted about relevant issues in their neighbourhoods. PlaceSpeak changes all that with its citizen-centric approach, allowing residents to choose how and when they are notified online.”

Residents can learn more and sign up for notifications at [PlaceSpeak](#).

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About PlaceSpeak

PlaceSpeak is a location-based consultation platform launched in 2011 and developed with the support of the National Research Council of Canada. PlaceSpeak has been developed to solve the problem of how to consult with people online within specific geographical boundaries. Use of the platform has expanded beyond Metro Vancouver, throughout British Columbia and across Canada, with initial consultations beginning in the USA, Northern Ireland, UK and Tasmania, Australia. For more information, please visit www.placespeak.com.

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